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SALUD, DIGNIDAD, JUSTICIA: ARTICULATING <CHOICE> AND  
<REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE> FOR LATINAS IN THE UNITED STATES

AN IDEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS EXAMINING THE RHETORIC OF THE NATIONAL  
LATINA INSTITUTE FOR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

By

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Bachelor of Science in Journalism, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, 2009

Thesis

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

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in Communication Studies

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## ABSTRACT

de Onís, Kathleen M., M.A., May 2011

Communication Studies

**Salud, Dignidad, Justicia: Articulating <Choice> and <Reproductive Justice> for Latinas in the United States (184 pp.)**

**Adviser: Dr. Sara Hayden**

This investigation explores the rhetorical evolution of the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health. The author argues that the rhetors of the reviewed texts reveal the organization's dual goals of both altering and resonating with the values and attitudes of Latinas regarding their <reproductive rights> concerns, as well as the necessity of combating systemic barriers and oppressive dominant ideology hindering Latinas' ability to exercise a full range of choices. Although this two-fold purpose is persistent throughout the artifacts, as the Latina Institute embraces the language of reproductive justice, the agency gradually shifts its rhetorical efforts from addressing internal issues directed toward its constituency to outward concerns seeking to alter the dominant societal structure. This study also uncovers that reproductive justice must be a precondition for real choices to exist. As such, choice emerges as a secondary language term that functions as an outcome of reproductive freedom. Furthermore, the Latina Institute's rhetoric suggests that abortion rights, choice, reproductive freedom, and reproductive justice can and must expand to encapsulate a comprehensive agenda capable of capturing the diverse needs of Latinas and immigrant Latinas living in the United States. Although these language terms possess sufficient mutability to encompass a wide-reaching agenda, it is imperative that they be employed strategically, as rhetors consider audience and associated ideologies. Finally, this inquiry argues that while a comprehensive approach to movement-building is often essential for meeting the intersectional needs of marginalized women, at times it may be necessary to center efforts on a particular issue in response to key exigencies necessitating change.

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Finally, to all my sisters who suffer daily oppression, it is my sincere hope that this project serves as my first of many efforts to strive for a world where all girls and women are finally free from the chains which weigh heavily upon us—some far more than others. To my sisters! Tenemos que luchar por salud, dignidad y justicia para todos y para siempre. ¡La lucha sigue!



*This Master's thesis is dedicated to my mom, Ann, whose unceasing loving kindness toward me despite enduring domestic abuse and other trials has made her a true survivor, a pillar of strength, and an exemplar of the arduous yet achievable quest of securing self-determination.*



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

*[T]here is no force for good on the planet as powerful as the liberation of women. There are also few things as radical. The history of our species is, by and large, a history of male domination. The subordination of women, and their reduction to their reproductive function, has been such a constant that it can appear somehow normal and right, while the upending of old roles seems to cause a disorienting chaos. All over the planet people are reacting to the confusing, bumptious world wrought by globalization by clinging ever more tightly to tradition or to the illusion of tradition. Emancipated women become a symbol of everything maddening and unmooring about modernity. To tame them seems a first step to taming an unruly world. But the oppression of women doesn't create order; it creates profound social deformities. It is universal the way violence is universal... Women's rights alone will not solve our massive problems, but none of them can be solved unless women are free. (Goldberg, 2009, p. 234)*

This thesis embraces the call for women's liberation and, in so doing, seeks to examine the rhetoric of Latina activists within the reproductive justice movement by exploring the intersectional challenges and injustices encountered by Latinas and their immigrant sisters living in the United States. More specifically, this investigation studies the rhetoric of members from the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (NLIRH or Latina Institute)—a social justice organization serving Latinas and their communities in the United States. Given the realities and needs of the women they serve, members of the NLIRH support a reproductive justice framework which

recognizes that reproductive oppression is a result of the intersection of multiple injustices at work and is inherently connected to the struggle for social justice and human rights...[This struggle] is comprised of poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, and social injustice. Health issues among women of color are associated with a number of interrelated socio-cultural, biological, and economic factors, including...low social status of women, low levels of education, racism, rapid urbanization, and local customs. The synergistic effect of these factors often reduces...and constrains the ability to seek quality reproductive health care. (Paz, 2010, pp. 1-2)

Within this framing, the reproductive justice movement places high value on both a woman's decision not to have children as well as her right to motherhood; it also insists that all resources

and services required for effective parenting and attainment of decent health for both mother and child be accessible (Gerber Fried, 1990; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman, Gerber Fried, Ross, & Gutiérrez, 2004). Consequently, it is imperative that the movement for reproductive freedom<sup>1</sup> be

one that is broad-based in its membership, its leadership, and its politics; a movement that goes beyond reaffirmation of *Roe [v. Wade]* to demand access not just to abortion, but to the full range of reproductive rights; a movement that is based on a class- and race-conscious feminism. (Gerber Fried, 1990, p. ix)

A fundamental component of reproductive justice is the concept of intersectionality. This posits that the oppression experienced by marginalized individuals results from not one, but numerous interconnected issues. These often include “class, disability, ethnicity, gender and age” (Taylor, Hines, & Casey, 2011, p. 3) Together, these “interrelated categories of inequality” amalgamate to engender multi-faceted forms of injustice for people living on the margins (McDermott, 2011, p. 239). For Latinas, in particular, some of the many intersectional concerns confronting them pertain to country of origin, acculturation, sex, occupation, health insurance, education, and class; immigrant status also plays a large role (Zuniga, 2004). These issues reveal the precarious positioning of Latinas and their families as they seek self-determination and a respectable quality of life.

Cognizant of the vast number of challenges and health concerns confronting Latinas and immigrant women living in the United States, this paper illumines and critiques the discursive evolution of the NLIRH. Given this focus, I suggest examination of Latina activist rhetoric is useful both within and beyond the academic sphere. From the perspective of a communication studies scholar, extant research on reproductive justice is limited and, of the material that does exist, the literature concerning Latinas and immigrants is slight. Although some inquiry has

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the evolution of the reproductive justice movement, activists and scholars have utilized the following terms interchangeably: reproductive freedom, reproductive rights, and reproductive justice (Silliman et al., 2004).



chronicled organizations serving women of color (Gerber Fried, 1990; Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004), there remains a lacuna in analysis of Latina feminist groups and the dynamic immigrant landscape of the United States in relation to women's reproductive freedom. As a consequence, the present investigation contributes to the field of feminist studies by exploring the rhetoric of members from the NLIRH. Through this process, the complex realities of Latinas living on the margins are exposed and made accessible to the academic community for further analysis. Additionally, beyond academia, chronicling the development of the reproductive justice movement from a diachronic perspective reveals the systemic, pervasive, and enduring oppression experienced by Latinas and their communities; regrettably, the complex manifestations of this injustice are persistent and continue to be debilitating factors in the present day. While health care policy and other legislation affecting marginalized groups continues to be introduced, negotiated, and contested, Latinas and their immigrant sisters await the day when reproductive rights will at long last constitute human rights—a central tenet of the reproductive justice platform explored extensively in this project (Gerber Fried, 1990; Goldberg, 2009; Silliman et al., 2004). Until this aim is realized, however, activists and scholars from several movements and disciplines must work assiduously and in accord, as they seek reproductive freedom for all women (and men) through collaborative efforts.

In this investigation, I explore NLIRH members' rhetoric diachronically beginning three years after the organization's inception in 1989 and extending to the period of health care reform in 2010. Based on an examination of the artifacts written within the last two decades, I suggest that the Latina Institute's rhetoric is marked by three phases revealing both distinctive and shared discursive qualities. These time periods are: the group's discourse during the 1990s; its rhetoric

coinciding with and following the March for Women’s Lives in 2004; and its messages during health care reform in 2010. Significantly, the first phase relies on pro-choice language to articulate an agenda centered on family planning, HIV/AIDS, and abortion, while the second employs rhetoric paralleling the reproductive justice platform via a human rights perspective. The third period blends elements of both the first and second phases. Notably, all three of these stages prioritize abortion rights when discussing Latina and immigrant Latina reproductive health, as NLIRH members simultaneously acknowledge the imperative of an intersectional reproductive justice framework. Members’ persistent focus on abortion reveals a potential strain within the movement, for this emphasis challenges traditionally accepted articulations of reproductive freedom by other women of color groups and activists (Gerber Fried, 1990; Silliman et al., 2004). I argue this tendency questions the consistency of reproductive justice agenda-setting across the diverse membership base of the movement and also calls into question whether the goals of the movement should be consistent given the extensive cultural differences and experiences of women of color.

Furthermore, I observe the tension between using the <choice><sup>2</sup> and <reproductive freedom> language terms to articulate the needs of diverse women. On one side of the debate, individuals such as former NLIRH member Caricia Catalani reveal the importance of utilizing <choice> to capture a broad social justice and human rights perspective to reflect the needs of Latinas and other women of color. Catalani asserts that “choice means more than legal freedom. It means access to doctors. It means access to education. It means access to care in your language. We will have a choice when our communities *survive*” (Hayden, 2009, p. 122). Catalani suggests that the meaning of <choice> can expand to encompass a comprehensive reproductive justice

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<sup>2</sup> The employment of < > symbols around selected words or phrases is the standard procedure within the rhetorical criticism field for signaling ideographs, which are key political discourse terms expressing ideology. I provide a detailed discussion of ideographs and their function in the theoretical framework section of this investigation.

focus. Given the concerns confronting those living in marginalized communities, however, other activists and scholars argue that for women who lack the ability to exercise their self-determination because of restrictive situations, the use of <choice> is insufficient. Based on its historical usage, these activists and scholars maintain that the term is unable to capture the needs and realities of all women—both privileged and marginalized (Gerber Fried, 1990; Palczewski, 2010). In other words:

The decision to fight for choice rather than justice is itself a decision to appeal to those who already have choices. This keeps the visible movement primarily white and middle-class despite the fact that the abortion rights of poor women, of whom a disproportionate number are women of color, have been, and continue to be, the most vulnerable. (Gerber Fried, 1990, p. 6)

This viewpoint critiques the use of <choice> and, as a consequence, lends support for the alternative language terms of <reproductive justice> and <reproductive freedom>. This is a key reconfiguration and a point of contention among feminist scholars and reproductive justice advocates. While some academics and activists argue that <choice> can sufficiently expand to accommodate a comprehensive <reproductive justice> perspective (Condit, 1990; Hayden, 2009), others suggest that the term is too closely associated with abortion to adequately encompass intersectional movement goals (Gerber Fried, 1990; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004). Still others argue that the term is rooted in United States culture and therefore fails to resonate with non-English speakers (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, August 3, 2010). By exploring this tension through analysis of the Latina Institute's rhetoric, the present investigation seeks to clarify and work toward resolving this strain to engender a more discursively conscious and efficacious movement rhetoric.

The remainder of this chapter is composed of seven sections. First, I discuss the historical framing of women's reproductive health issues in the United States; second, I highlight reproductive health data and concerns reflecting the barriers encountered by Latinas and their

immigrant Latina sisters; third, I provide a background on the Latina Institute's mission and its past efforts within the pro-choice and reproductive justice movements; fourth, I explore the benefits and limitations of health care reform in relation to the needs of Latinas, immigrant Latinas, and their communities; fifth, I introduce and describe the texts examined in this paper; sixth, I detail the conceptual frameworks of ideographic criticism and articulation theory which assist my analysis; and finally, I outline the content contained in the subsequent chapters of this investigation.

### **Contextual Analysis**

#### **The Personal is Political: Historical Framing of Reproductive Issues in the United States**

Essential in investigating the reproductive justice movement is the assumption that although not all women share the same needs and concerns, *all* women should possess an equal opportunity to achieve reproductive freedom (Palczewski, 2010). Historically, this has not been the case, as the rights of marginalized women have sometimes been compromised to further the goals of middle-class women and other more privileged sisters (Gerber Fried, 1990; Silliman et al., 2004). Accordingly, if the aims of reproductive justice are to be achieved, it is imperative that advances for one group of women do not hinder the well-being of less privileged individuals (Gerber Fried, 1990). Based on this core idea, the contextual analysis which follows explores how the issues and challenges affecting women and their families have evolved and been articulated, as diverse groups of women have engaged in the quest for liberation from oppression. As such, a thorough examination of the movement for reproductive rights requires a historical analysis, beginning with the first restrictions placed on women's reproductive health via the enforcement of anti-abortion laws and concluding with the formulation of the comprehensive reproductive justice frame.

## Early Rhetoric and Legislation Impacting Women's Reproductive Rights

Historically, women have been relegated to the role of oppressed procreators, as their ability to decide if and under what circumstances to have children has been controlled (D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988; Stormer, 1997). In response to this oppression, the quest to secure women's reproductive rights in the United States has been an arduous undertaking that has spurred debate in the private and public spheres since the nineteenth century (Bone, 2010; D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988). This discourse addressing women's reproductive health has traditionally centered on abortion,<sup>3</sup> a procedure which was legal for much of the 1800s (Boston Women's Health Book Collective, 1984, 2008; Gerber Fried, 1990; Greenhouse, 2010; Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010; Rosen, 2000; Silliman et al., 2004). During this period, however, efforts to criminalize abortion were building momentum, as several states began to pass legislation banning the procedure (Boston Women's Health Book Collective, 1984; D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988; Stormer, 2002a). Encouraged by American Medical Association physicians to classify abortion as a criminal act, "between 1860 and 1890...forty states and territories enacted antiabortion statutes... [which] helped transfer legal authority for abortion from women to doctors" (D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988, p. 66; Stormer, 2002a). The passage of the 1873 Federal Comstock Act, which "prohibited the production, print, transmission, or sale of medicine to prevent conception or produce abortion[,]” confined discourse on reproduction to the private sphere and restricted women's agency regarding their reproductive health (Bone, 2010, p. 20; Comstock Act, 2010; D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988). With the confluence of this anti-abortion

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<sup>3</sup> The contextual overview of reproductive justice is initially framed in terms of abortion and birth control in this thesis because for several decades access to these resources was perceived by many to be one of the most pressing issues inhibiting women's liberation from compulsory procreation. Even today, several women's advocacy groups, including the NLRH, acknowledge the importance of abortion and contraception access. (In fact, the Latina Institute frequently prioritizes abortion over other reproductive health concerns.) Consequently, to understand how and why the reproductive justice movement has addressed and extended efforts beyond abortion and birth control, an historical exploration of these reproductive health services is required.

sentiment and legislation, by the 1890s abortion was considered a crime and only permissible in situations where the woman's life was in danger (Boston Women's Health Book Collective, 1984, 2008; D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988; Stormer, 2002a).

The milieu of anti-abortion support in the 1800s can be attributed to several factors.

Anti-abortion legislation was part of a backlash to the growing movements for suffrage and birth control—an effort to control women and confine them to their traditional childbearing role. It was also a way for the medical profession to tighten its control over women's health care. (Boston Women's Health Book Collective, 2008, para. 1)

Additionally, concerns with the often unsanitary nature of the procedure and wariness about declining birth rates among white, upper-middle class protestant women fueled efforts to criminalize abortion (Boston Women's Health Book Collective, 1984; D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988).

As a form of resistance to this reproductive oppression, family planning and women's health advocates, such as Margaret Sanger, worked to address the abortion needs of women.

Its illegality makes precise figures on the number of abortions impossible to obtain, but various sources suggest that it was certainly widespread. A study of ten thousand mostly working-class clients at Margaret Sanger's clinic in the late 1920s found that one out of five pregnancies were [sic] intentionally terminated. Although half of the women had not had an abortion, those who did averaged between two and three each. (D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988, p. 253)

The prevalence of the illegal procedure persisted during the next forty years. In fact, by the early 1960s, after narcotics and gambling, abortion was considered the third-largest crime in the United States (D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988).

### **Abortion Horrors, Second-Wave Feminism, and *Roe v. Wade***

By the 1960s, nearly a century had passed since the instatement of most anti-abortion laws; the legislative policies had resulted in a deadly situation for women who wished to terminate their pregnancies (Boston Women's Health Book Collective, 1984, 2008; Condit,

1990; D’Emilio & Freedman, 1988; Rosen, 2000). In response to the restrictions placed on women’s right to choose, several medical professionals and activists initiated underground operations to facilitate the unmet needs of women (Condit, 1990; D’Emilio & Freedman, 1988; Rosen, 2000). While some females had access to this resource, many did not. Consequently, countless women turned to self-induced abortions and back-alley methods carried out by non-physicians who were often strangers; typically these abortionists cared little for those who desperately sought their services (Boston Women’s Health Book Collective, 1984; Condit, 1990; D’Emilio & Freedman, 1988; Rosen, 2000). During the years that abortion was considered a criminal act, nearly one million women underwent the procedure annually, resulting in a yearly average of 5,000 deaths based on complications (Rosen, 2000).

Several hundred thousand women a year were treated for health complications due to botched, unsanitary, or self-induced abortions; many were left infertile or with chronic illness and pain. Poor women and women of color were at the greatest risk. Nearly four times as many women of color as white women died as a result of illegal abortion. (Boston Women’s Health Book Collective, 2008, p. 1)

Thus, not only was the burden of the illegalization of the procedure carried out on the backs of women, often with deadly outcomes, but it also resulted in disproportionate impact for poor women and women of color.

After years of silence, narratives of illegal abortion horrors began to surface in the public sphere (Condit, 1990). Circulated by the popular press in the early 1960s, tales of the procedure were both detailed and distressing. One such narrative characteristic of the stories disseminated publicly depicted the death of a mother of four who died after being injected with a caustic substance in her womb by an amateur abortionist (Condit, 1990). In another story, a young woman became paralyzed after an engineering student terminated her unwanted pregnancy.

He used the flashlight as a speculum...through this “speculum” he pushed a catheter into which he had threaded a wire. He then forced air through the

contraption, which...had penetrated a blood vessel in the girl's womb. An air bubble entered the blood stream and in seconds reached her brain. (Condit, 1990, p. 27)

In response to these tales of brutality and suffering, calls to reevaluate abortion laws began to permeate public discourse (Condit, 1990; Rosen, 2000). With the emergence of this rhetoric also came demands for other forms of social reform from members of the women's liberation movement.

The 1960s ushered in the second-wave of feminism in the United States. Although not all members of this movement overlooked the reproductive freedom concerns of marginalized women, liberal feminists centered their preliminary efforts on addressing the sexism experienced by white, upper-middle class women (Rosen, 2000). Within this salient but limited framework, these second-wave activists initially did not include reproductive rights issues in their agenda for social change (Greenhouse, 2010). Instead, they focused their efforts on advocating that housewives seek relief from their mundane lives in the private sphere by venturing into the workplace (Rosen, 2000). This objective was coupled with pursuing equal pay for equal work and demanding child care services (Greenhouse, 2010; Rosen, 2000). It was not until the end of the 1960s that economic and reproductive rights became viewed as interconnected issues imperative for achieving female empowerment within the liberal feminist cause (D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988; Greenhouse, 2010). Movement members began to ask: How could women contribute to the public arena when continually occupied with the task of raising children at home? As a consequence of this rearticulation of concerns, elimination of anti-abortion laws became a priority of liberal feminists and women's liberationists (D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988; Greenhouse, 2010). This was a critical alteration, for although individual activists in the late 1950s and early 1960s had called for decriminalization of abortion, it was not until second-wave feminists included the procedure in their agenda that repeal of abortion laws received legitimacy



in the public sphere (Rosen, 2000). During this period, in an attempt to counter the opposition's claims, feminists began to equate anti-abortion laws with discrimination that jeopardized women's equality and thus violated their rights (Condit, 1990).

With their revitalized agenda came legal changes reflecting the demands of feminists and other abortion advocates. As the 1960s drew to a close, despite strong resistance from pro-life supporters, Alaska, Hawaii, and New York implemented state laws repealing abortion restrictions (Condit, 1990). Finally, in 1973 a pivotal victory was realized with the landmark legal precedent of *Roe v. Wade*, which decriminalized abortion by recognizing women's constitutional right to terminate their pregnancies without government interference (D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988; Greenhouse, 2010; Rosen, 2000). It was a historic achievement for women but signaled only the first step toward achieving other vital reproductive justice advancements. The passage of *Roe v. Wade* also served as the impetus for galvanizing substantial opposition against the decision from staunch anti-abortion advocates (Boston Women's Health Book Collective, 1984; Condit, 1990; Rosen, 2000). As the women's movement and other activists would soon learn, this opposing faction would prove to be a formidable foe.

Taken together, the two previous sections illumine the historical proclivity of privileging abortion over other relevant reproductive rights issues in the United States. As such, the decision to include an exploration of the procedure's history provides a foundation for understanding why activists were outraged with abortion restrictions resulting from health care reform and other legislative measures, given past efforts to establish and defend the legal precedent of *Roe v. Wade*. Previous struggles reveal the consequences when women's ability to access safe abortions is restricted; this necessitates that reproductive rights activists continue their efforts to preserve the procedure's legality by legitimizing abortion as a public health care service. In the next

section, I explore the moral divide which surfaced between pro-choice and anti-choice advocates on the heels of *Roe v. Wade*, as well as reproductive justice activists' arguments against abortion-centric discourse.

### **A Dangerous Dialectic: The Life and Choice Debate**

The focus of traditional white feminist organizations, the news media, and dominant public discourse has centered on abortion access narrowly constructed to the neglect of other related reproductive health concerns and challenges. By framing reproductive freedom in terms of women's right to choose an abortion—whereby other intersectional issues are obscured—unfortunate rhetorical consequences result (Gerber Fried, 1990; Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004; Weitz, 2010). These are: 1) the equating of <choice> with death, loss, and ignorance and 2) the generation of discourse which fails to address the needs of *all* women (Gerber Fried, 1990; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004; Stormer, 2002b).

A detrimental outcome of abortion-centric rhetoric is its reliance on the utilization of the binary ideographs of <life> and <choice> to describe the ideological positioning of anti-<choice> and pro-<choice> advocates respectively (Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010). As a result of this dialectic, a stalemated and irresolvable moral divide has emerged, resulting in substantial discursive challenges for pro-<choice> advocates (V. Bayetti Flores, personal communication, August 3, 2010; Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010; Weitz, 2010).

The strategies [employed by abortion rights opponents] were multidimensional and included humanizing the fetus through the widespread distribution of fetal images and exposing the “truth” about abortion by disseminating graphic images of the abortion procedure. (Weitz, 2010, p. 162)

Accordingly, fetal imagery, often depicted as a bloody mass, has come to symbolize anti-<choice> (i.e., pro-life) supporters' preferred rhetorical representation and falsely casts those advocating for women's right to choose as anti-<life> (Condit, 1990; J. Gonzalez-Rojas,

personal communication, August 3, 2010; Stormer, 1997, 2002a, 2002b; Weitz, 2010). Other related problems arise within these dichotomized terms, as <choice> is employed to signal loss and ignorance, for abortion seems to forget women's culturally prescribed procreative role and our dependence on children for societal advancement.

Treating abortion as a loss of knowledge about life places abortion practices in a dialectic of life-death in which death is a function of ignorance and the regeneration of life is a function of knowledge. The slogan "They're Forgetting Someone" that has been used on placards and billboards in the last two decades is at least cursory evidence of that. (Stormer, 2002b, p. 265)

Based on this binary framing and emphasis on the alleged loss of <life> resulting from selecting ignorance over knowledge, opponents of <choice> have painted those favoring abortion as reckless individuals who privilege death over <life>. As such, anti-abortion advocates have traditionally argued

that the humanity and Right to Life of the fetus was paramount in all cases...[T]he major rhetorical effort of the pro-Life movement was therefore expended in constructing and amplifying the verbal linkages between the terms *fetus* and *Life*. (italics in original) (Condit, 1990, p. 61)

As a result of this association, the value of the fetus is elevated above the <life> of the pregnant woman.

Another problematic outcome of this binary is that it causes an internal strain within the women's <rights> movement, as many <reproductive justice> activists argue that <life> and <choice> fail to address the realities confronted by women of color and other marginalized women because these terms are narrowly linked with abortion (Palczewski, 2010). According to Loretta Ross—the executive director and co-founder of SisterSong, a women of color <reproductive justice> collective—the challenges and issues facing women of color are far more complex than <choice> suggests, as racism, classism, sexism, and a number of other debilitating factors amalgamate to create powerful barriers. In addition, historically, women of color have experienced sterilization and forced abortions, procedures which eliminated the possibility of

motherhood and the <choice> to have children (Gerber Fried, 1990; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004). For low-income women and women of color, then, it is far more than a question of “should I or shouldn’t I” have an abortion (Ross, 2006; Silliman et al., 2004). While marginalized women’s lack of self-determination in the past is true, the aforementioned perspective overlooks the utility of <choice>, as the term may be applied to articulate the options previously denied marginalized women as well as to demonstrate how <choice> has been foreclosed through economic, political, and racial oppression (Condit, 1990). Given these two competing viewpoints, the use of <choice> elucidates a tension within the quest for women’s liberation.

It is clear that though the dialectic of <life> and <choice> functions well for anti-abortion advocates, it has negative rhetorical effects for those who support <choice> and <reproductive justice>. Furthermore, <choice> linked with lean articulations of <abortion rights> simplifies women’s reproductive health by obscuring other needs and issues (Gerber Fried, 1990; Hayden, 2009; Silliman et al., 2004). In light of the rhetorical vulnerabilities of <choice>, many abortion advocates have acknowledged the need to revitalize the debate surrounding these language terms (Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010).

In short, the pro-<choice> movement exhibits the following limitations: it frames arguments through civil <rights> and privacy concerns instead of via discourse advocating for the liberation of women and their sexual freedom; it addresses the interests of white, middle-class women by neglecting the realities of other women; it looks to those in power as the source of change rather than working on community mobilization and empowerment at the grassroots level; and it detaches abortion from other connected issues (Gerber Fried, 1990; Silliman et al.,

2004). Based on these tendencies, reproductive justice activists argue it is imperative that traditionally accepted articulations of <reproductive rights> in terms of abortion be reformulated.

### **Beyond the Binary: From <Choice> to <Reproductive Freedom>**

In her exploration of the contemporary controversy over abortion in the United States, Condit (1984) argues the debate is marked by seven stages, beginning with discussion in the 1950s among professionals (i.e., predominately physicians) in the public arena and concluding with a stage of fragmentation in the late 1970s, whereby public reconciliation acknowledged “the undesirability and desirability of abortion for its roles in protecting women, fetal life, and social family structures” (p. 418). Condit’s diachronic analysis has been critiqued for its failure to accurately reflect the efforts of marginalized women in reframing the agenda-setting of pro-<choice> (white) feminist groups; members of these mainstream organizations often exhibited a privileged perspective by ignoring the intersectional challenges encountered by women of color and poor women (Gerber Fried, 1990; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004).

During the 1970s, in an attempt to counter the dominant, abortion-centric rhetoric on <choice> engendered by the news media and white second-wave feminists, women of color and poor women created a counter-public sphere by reframing <reproductive rights> discourse to better reflect their realities (Palczewski, 2010; Rosen, 2000). By employing alternative rhetorical appeals, advocates of the holistic <reproductive justice> framework were able to successfully craft a new language term: <reproductive freedom>. With this rearticulation also came new alliances, as women of color, international women, lesbians, and poor women joined forces to establish and promote the tenets of the <reproductive justice> movement (Palczewski, 2010).

The activism exhibited by marginalized women, particularly women of color, deserves recognition, for their crucial contribution to advancing women’s issues has been both under-acknowledged and under-studied (Gerber Fried, 1990; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004).

Women of color have always been at the forefront of Reproductive Justice, although feminist history won't say that or you may not read that... We see women of color as leaders in this movement... Once they learn about the issues, they're out there... [at the] forefront. They understand how this impacts their community. (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, Aug. 3, 2010)

As such, during the latter portion of the twentieth century women of color actively “fought for their right to bear children in addition to struggling around a host of other issues such as labor organizing, welfare rights, education, and childcare” (Silliman et al., 2004, p. 223).

As an illustration of Latinas' early contribution to the feminist cause, in 1970 a convention for El Partido de la Raza Unida convened to address stereotypes associated with the Chicano community (Baxandall & Gordon, 2000). Notably, nearly half of the delegates were women, and although the majority of attendees were Catholic, the delegates advocated the repeal of all antiabortion laws (Baxandall & Gordon, 2000). Through participation in this event, Chicanas effectively created a caucus which

adopted a remarkably wide-ranging platform, including both issues specific to the Chicano community, such as the provision of interpreters, and matters of the most universal concern, such as child care. (Baxandall & Gordon, 2000, p. 77)

Another instance of activism is visible with Latina participation in the Young Lords Party, a Puerto Rican organization which offered services to the community and raised awareness about racism and colonialism (Baxandall & Gordon, 2000). Numerous Latinas were members of this party and expressed frustration with their treatment within the organization by Latino men as well as within the larger societal sphere. In a 1973 position paper, these unidentified female activists addressed the intersectional plight of women of color by elucidating: “First, they are oppressed as Puerto Ricans or Blacks. Second they are oppressed as women. Third, they are oppressed by their own men” (Baxandall & Gordon, 2000, p. 38). The position paper continues by highlighting a number of oppressive practices inhibiting the liberation of women of color, including marriage and family structure, machismo in Latino communities, sexual fascism, birth

control testing, abortion restrictions, and medical abuses through sterilization (Baxandall & Gordon, 2000). With regard to this latter concern, at the time of the position paper's release, fourteen states were considering legislation created to coerce women on welfare to undergo sterilization, a procedure which was experienced by as many as two-fifths of Native American and Puerto Rican women of childbearing age (D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988). This reveals that while "white women may have fought compulsory motherhood...women of color have had to fight for the right to procreate, and to procreate on their own terms" (Palczewski, 2010, p. 75). The prevalence of this medical abuse coupled with the depiction of other relevant issues confronting Latinas lends support for a holistic framework that extends beyond limited definitions of <choice> to address the realities and concerns of diverse groups of women. Consequently, the early community-based efforts of Latina activists in El Partido de la Raza Unida and the Young Lords Party illustrate the salience of equating <reproductive rights> with women's emancipation by acknowledging a wide range of issues and needs affecting women of color. This approach illumines the substantial deficiencies of discourse limited to a woman's right to choose narrowly defined.

In many ways, early <reproductive justice> movement activities are echoed by another cause for social change—welfare reform. As such, while Latina activists sought to have their voices heard in often male-dominated, community-based organizations, those in search of welfare reform<sup>4</sup> also encountered several intersectional, shared challenges as they confronted economic, and often racial, oppression (Nadasen, 2005).

Comprised of an alliance of grass-roots groups, the welfare rights movement gave a political voice to one of the most disenfranchised sectors of U.S. society and

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<sup>4</sup> Although exploring the efforts of welfare reform activists is a worthy scholastic pursuit, an in-depth examination of their rhetoric is beyond the scope of this thesis. While some Latinas did seek to reform the United States welfare system, historically they have exhibited greater involvement in addressing cultural issues affecting the Latino community as well as concerns regarding women's <reproductive rights> (Silliman et al., 2004).

worked toward improving the living standards of all poor Americans. (Nadasen, 2005, p. 2)

While the official inception of the welfare <rights> movement began in 1966, poor women of color initiated calls for reform of discriminatory welfare practices as early as the 1950s (Nadasen, 2005). Welfare recipients were frequently discriminated against based on race, whereby poor white women often received better assistance than their sisters of color (Nadasen, 2005). As such, through prejudicial conduct, some case workers revealed their bias against non-white women by frequently neglecting the economic and social needs of African-Americans and Latinas (Nadasen, 2005).

The intersectional positioning of these low-income women of color revealed “complicated identities [which] emerged from their experiences with racism in the welfare system, their work as mothers, as well as their involvement in numerous community issues” (Nadasen, 2005, p. 3). Although movement participants were overwhelmingly African-American women, some Latinas, such as activist Clementina Castro, joined the cause. Castro explains the dilemma of countless Latinas through her lived experiences:

When I first came on welfare, they didn't have any Spanish-speaking caseworkers at all...I was so shy because I had never talked to white people, because I had been working in the fields...Some whites can speak it [Spanish], but they just know the language, they don't know the problems. (Nadasen, 2005, p. 30)

Given this insight elucidating the difficulties encountered by Latinas on welfare, addressing discrimination based on race, nationality, and linguistic ability was just as salient as mitigating poverty for movement activists. In addition to these burdensome challenges, welfare recipients were also tasked with combating stereotypes which characterized them as lazy, undeserving, and promiscuous individuals in search of an easy handout (Nadasen, 2005; Smith, 2007).

Taken together, these illustrations of past activist concerns across movements illumine the importance of acknowledging the complex realities and obstacles confronting those living on



the margins. Instead of addressing one issue in isolation, the abundance of relevant problems affecting Latinas and their immigrant sisters necessitates that the challenges faced by this demographic be approached comprehensively, whereby gender, race, class, immigration status, language ability, and a host of other characteristics are taken into account. After all, members of this diverse group occupy a precarious intersectional positioning, as they dwell at the crossroads of several discriminatory practices jeopardizing their survival and inhibiting their liberation. One means of mitigating this oppression is through implementation of the <reproductive justice> framework.

### **The Reproductive Justice Lens**

The term “Reproductive Justice” first emerged in the early 1990s after a group of African American women unified their efforts to challenge the Clinton administration’s health care reform plan, which failed to address abortion access (ACRJ, 2010a). As part of their quest for justice, the women sought a label that would rearticulate their cause beyond <choice>—a term which they felt inadequately expressed their community’s frequent inability to exercise their <rights> and <choices>. To address this incompatibility, the activists amalgamated the themes of social <justice>, human <rights>, and <reproductive rights> to create <Reproductive Justice> (ACRJ, 2010a). This term is rooted in women’s ability to choose whether or not to have children and, if motherhood is desired, that all necessary resources be accessible and safe for both mother and child. This includes access to pre- and post-natal care, adequate food, housing, education, and numerous other resources required for survival (Gerber Fried, 1990; Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010, Silliman et al., 2004). Similarly, as highlighted in previous sections, the issues confronting marginalized women extend far beyond the issue of abortion, as race, class, sex, sexual orientation, legal status, language skills, education level, and other factors pose unique

challenges for diverse groups of women (Gerber Fried, 1990; Silliman et al., 2004). As a consequence, many scholars and activists argue abortion-centric rhetoric must be supplanted by a more holistic framework addressing the interaction of multi-faceted needs (Palczewski, 2010).

Given these aforementioned core characteristics, the work of <reproductive justice> activists is guided by the following goals: “Transforming the abortion rights movement from a relatively narrow one focused on defending the legal right to abortion to a movement for reproductive freedom” and addressing the predominately white membership and leadership by creating a more “inclusive movement with a broad and diverse grassroots base” (Gerber Fried, 1990, p. x). Also pivotal in exploring the aims of the <reproductive justice> movement is the idea that an ample framework acknowledging the needs and interests of *all* women is essential if <reproductive freedom> is to be achieved (Gerber Fried, 1990; Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004). Within the women’s movement this has not historically been the case, as the <rights> of low-income women and women of color have, at times, been traded in exchange for achieving the demands of their more privileged sisters (Gerber Fried, 1990; Silliman et al., 2004; Solinger, 2001). As such, if the goals of <reproductive justice> are to be realized, it is imperative that advances for one group of women do not hinder the efforts of another (Gerber Fried, 1990). Thus, collaborative efforts unifying the interests of diverse groups of women should be attempted, all the while ensuring that no perspective is given primacy over another.

Progressive collaborative efforts of this nature were evident in the 2004 March for Women’s Lives in Washington, D.C. Through the coordinating efforts of SisterSong, thousands of activists representing diverse women of color groups partook in the event (ACRJ, 2010a). Formerly named the “March for Freedom of Choice,” the march signified a momentous milestone in the history of the <reproductive justice> movement, as women of color succeeded in expanding

the limited discourse of mainstream feminist groups (e.g., NARAL Pro-Choice America) (Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010). Sylvia Henriquez, the executive director of the NLIRH, explained her organization's involvement:

We took the risk and we agreed to participate if we could play a leadership role. A few months later we were at the helm of organizing the largest march in U.S. history on behalf of women's lives and for the first time in the history of organizing these mass protests, a Latina-focused organization was on the steering committee, on the stage, and in the crowd by the thousands. (Henriquez, 2010c, para. 5)

This landmark event proved to be momentous not just for the women's <rights> movement but also for the NLIRH, as the group's members emerged as leaders of <reproductive justice> activism.

### **Vivir Latina: Latinas and their Immigrant Sisters in the United States**

For many Latinas and immigrant women, their race and cultural heritage, financial situation, legal status, and other factors pose considerable challenges to daily survival. Latina activist Roxana Pastor expresses the obstacles encountered by those living in Latina and immigrant communities. She writes:

People who live in poor neighborhoods in this country have so many daily struggles. Staying alive is a struggle. Having food on the table is a struggle. Being able to understand the teacher at school is a struggle. Understanding the transportation system is a struggle. (Pastor, 1990, p. 217)

This passage elucidates that the daily activities and interactions which people of privilege may take for granted are complicated when poverty, language barriers, and unfamiliarity with surroundings amalgamate to make seemingly simple tasks exceptionally difficult. These challenges reflect the lived realities encountered by countless Latinas and immigrant women in the United States. Hence, because of the numerous hurdles confronted by this demographic and the growing number of Latinas and immigrant Latinas living in the United States, it seems

essential to explore how health care reform and other legislation affects their efforts toward achieving a decent quality of <life>.

According to a report released by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2006,<sup>5</sup> the estimated number of Hispanics<sup>6</sup> living in the United States as of July 1, 2005 was just shy of 43 million; this statistic indicates that members of this group constitute the largest ethnic or race minority in the United States.<sup>7</sup> Approximately half of the people who contributed to the nation's population increase between 2004 and 2005 were Hispanic. Looking to the future, in 2050 the Hispanic population in the United States is projected to reach 102.6 million people and will account for 24 percent of the nation's total population. In 2005 there were 9.5 million Hispanic families living in the United States, with the majority composed of children younger than 18 years of age. Meanwhile, research by the Pew Hispanic Center reported that 8 percent of children born in the United States in 2008 were the offspring of at least one undocumented immigrant (Preston, 2010).

With regard to specific Latina demographics, 40 percent are less than 21 years old, about 25 percent are heads of households in comparison to 14 percent of White women, and 25 percent of Latinas live below the poverty line (Aguirre-Molina & Molina, 2003). Furthermore, many Latinas occupy jobs that are seasonal, part-time, and offer little pay; their unemployment rate is twice that of their White female counterparts (Aguirre-Molina & Molina, 2003). Additionally, per 1,000 women, Latina fertility rates are 106 compared to 67 for Whites, 72 for Blacks, and 71

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<sup>5</sup> This report includes immigrant Latinos.

<sup>6</sup> According to the U.S. Census Bureau, "[t]he terms 'Hispanic' or 'Latino' refer to persons who trace their origin or descent to Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Spanish speaking Central and South America countries, and other Spanish cultures. Origin can be considered as the heritage, nationality group, lineage, or country of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before their arrival in the United States. People who identify their origin as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race" (U.S. Census Bureau: Population Division, 2010, para 1). As this homogenized definition suggests, the "national, linguistic, social, historical, cultural, gendered, racial, political, and religious experiences" of this diverse group are obscured by the generic Latino/Hispanic label (Vélez-Ibáñez & Sampaio, 2002, p. 77).

<sup>7</sup> This figure does not include Puerto Rico.

for Asian Pacific Islanders (Aguirre-Molina & Molina, 2003). The causes for Latinas' high pregnancy rates are numerous and should not be dismissed with the over-simplified and ignorant stereotype that this trend is caused by irresponsible, excessive sexual activity. Rather, this statistic is the result of several factors, including lack of exposure to comprehensive sexual education classes and inadequate access to contraception and health care (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, August 3, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004).

A young woman is much more likely to seek reliable contraceptive advice and appropriate services from a doctor or nurse if she has confidence that she will be treated with respect; poor teen women have no reason to anticipate dignified treatment from the typical public clinics and hospitals that can be found in low-income neighborhoods. (Smith, 2007, p. 170)

Given this insight, the quality of care received by poor women, who are disproportionately women of color, reveals just one reason why Latinas might hesitate to request contraception and seek reproductive health advice from medical professionals.

In response to the dearth of research on the Latina community living in the United States, in 2005 the NLIRH released its National Latina Agenda for Reproductive Justice. The publication addressed the following issues: diversity and growth of Latinas in the United States, dangerous health trends, structural and institutional barriers to reproductive health care, <reproductive rights> barriers encountered by Latinas, perspectives on issues pertaining to reproductive health, and a proposal for action (NLIRH, 2005). The Agenda highlights the following data in its executive summary of findings:

By all measurable standards, Latinas are faring far worse than other groups in numerous areas of reproductive health, including breast and cervical cancer, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections and teen pregnancy. For example, the rate of cervical cancer among Latinas is twice the rate of white women, the rate of HIV infection for Latinas is seven times higher than white women, and Latinas have the highest teen birth rate of any racial/ethnic group. A number of factors contribute to Latinas' reproductive health problems, such as lack of health insurance, language barriers, institutional challenges in the public health care system, and poverty. (NLIRH, 2005, p. i)

Also revealed in the Agenda is information on prenatal care and maternal and infant mortality.

The report explains:

Latinas have the highest fertility and birth rates of any racial/ethnic group. Latinas account for 18.6% of U.S. births, with more than 70% of these occurring among Mexican-American women. Despite the high number of Latino births, Latinas are less likely to secure prenatal care during the first trimester... This poses a serious problem since later or lack of prenatal care can increase the risk of low birth weight, as well as infant and maternal mortality. (NLIRH, 2005, p. 4)

An explanation as to why many Latinas are not receiving prenatal care is sure to be complex.

One potential obstacle giving impetus to this trend involves legal barriers. For example, in 2001 the reversal of a ruling which required the government to offer prenatal care to undocumented immigrants led to the denial of this service to 13,000 undocumented immigrants living in New York during that year (NLIRH, 2005). In addition to legal barriers, other possible contributors to this trend include insufficient resources for health care facility visits, language and cultural barriers, and lack of exposure to reproductive health education (Gerber Fried, 1990; Silliman et al., 2004).

The aforementioned data on the reproductive health of Latinas and immigrant women is far more than mere words and numbers. These are the lives of millions of women and their children whose survival is determined largely by access to quality health care and the opportunity for Latinas and their immigrant sisters to exercise their <reproductive rights> (Gerber Fried, 1990; Silliman et al., 2004).

### **Diversidad y diferencias culturales (Diversity and Cultural Differences)**

Linguistic differences are an obvious point of diversity among Latinas, as English is not always spoken in Latino communities; more significant, however, is the extent of cultural variation among Latinas (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, August 3, 2010). As such, in addition to linguistic differences, religious, ethnic, and racial diversity is substantial (Silliman

et al., 2004). Recognition of these differences is necessary, as these variations create distinct day-to-day realities and challenges for Latinas depending on their background and intersectional positioning.

The experience of a Dominican immigrant in New York is very different [sic] than the experience of an undocumented Mexican woman in the Rio Grande Valley [which] is very different from a Puerto Rican in Chicago. I think that's challenging to find a frame and to find languages and to find ways to present information that makes sense to all those communities... You have to think about the regional diversity, too, and then there's U.S.-born Latinas too [sic] that have oftentimes different experiences, different levels of education... different socio-economic status. (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, August 3, 2010)

This characterization reveals that the term “Latina” is over-generalized and does little to convey unique experiences and backgrounds. As such, members of the women’s <rights> movement and other social justice organizations must adapt their message and mission to avoid rhetoric and agenda-setting which insufficiently addresses this culturally and ethnically rich demographic of society (Silliman et al., 2004). I use “Latina” in this investigation, for NLIRH rhetors tend to identify their sisters using this term. As their rhetoric progresses, however, the group’s members address the needs of immigrant Latinas specifically. My analysis documents this shift by exploring the differences and similarities between the lived realities of Latinas and their immigrant sisters. In so doing, I illumine the potential implications when messages are/are not tailored to reflect the experiences of diverse women generically labeled as “Latina.”

**“They’re somewhere in the Middle.”** From a linguistic perspective, some Latina <reproductive justice> activists claim the pro-<choice> label is problematic, for when translated into Spanish, it carries little meaning. *Pro-elección* and *derecho a elegir* have been attempted transcreations, both of which are said to inadequately convey the concept as it is understood in English (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, August 3, 2010). According to this perspective, identification with <choice> is difficult for Spanish-speaking Latinas. However, the

term *justicia reproductiva*—the Spanish equivalent of <reproductive justice>—more adequately reflects the interests and concerns of non-English speaking Latinas and their immigrant sisters (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, August 3, 2010).

Moreover, the use of the binary terms of <life> and <choice> may inadequately convey the ambivalent cultural feelings many Latinas (and others) harbor about abortion, as Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas, the NLIRH deputy director, explains:

I don't think Latinas find themselves in that binary: I'm pro-choice or pro-life...A lot of [Latinas] find themselves in a place where they themselves might have a personal conflict with abortion. They may have differential feelings about it, but we find that through polling and research that...they would respect someone's choice, whatever it is. They themselves may not have an abortion, but if their daughter had an unwanted pregnancy or was raped...they may then support that daughter and that choice, or sister...We find that that's where Latinas live. They live in this gray area...culture and religion may play a factor into their perspective, but they don't find themselves in one of the two camps on the extremes. They're somewhere in the middle, which is good for us because we bring in other issues to the movement. We find that that reproductive justice frame is more comprehensive and more reflective of where they are. (Personal communication, August 3, 2010)

This insight from Gonzalez-Rojas elucidates the challenge confronting <reproductive justice> activists, as they seek to deconstruct the binary terms of <life> and <choice> beyond their community. It also suggests the importance of the <reproductive justice> framework, as it resonates well with the realities of Latinas and their immigrant Latina sisters living in the United States (Silliman et al., 2004).

### **Debunking the Myths of Latina Culture**

Latinas are typically depicted using the virgin/whore dichotomy, whereby it is presumed that use of birth control is not a standard practice (Silliman et al., 2004). Within this dialectic, on the one hand Latinas are viewed as childlike and in need of male control, while concurrently they are also perceived as hypersexual, exotic beings objectified for their stereotypically curvaceous



figures (Baxandall & Gordon, 2000; Silliman et al., 2004). This has interesting implications, as exemplified in the complex treatment of the female body in Latino communities.

The body represents the unique and culturally revered capacity to procreate, symbolizes the taboo realm of sexuality, and carries with it the honor or shame of the family. The body is at once a valued (often exploited) instrument for social survival and an object for enforcing social control. (Flores, Davison, Rey, Rivera, & Serrano, 1990, p. 221)

In addition to the virgin/whore dichotomy, a number of stereotypes and misconceptions exist regarding the reproductive sexual health practices and beliefs of Latinas. The NLIRH executive director, Sylvia Henriquez, describes the conundrum in terms of abortion:

There are a lot of myths out there about how Latinas feel about abortion. Some say we're all Catholic, some say we're all pro-life. Some say we access abortion more frequently than other groups, others say we never use it. (Henriquez, 2010b, para. 1)

Although a large percentage of Latinas are Catholic, it cannot be assumed that they are anti-  
<choice>, do not use birth control, and care little about <reproductive rights> (Silliman et al., 2004). On the contrary, Latinas and immigrant women are organizing within their communities in search of <reproductive freedom> and increased <choices>; their struggle is a complex one, as sexism, racism, classism, and several other debilitating social ills complicate their task (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, August 3, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004).

### **Salud, Dignidad, Justicia: The National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health**

The Latina Institute serves as an advocacy group for Latinas and their immigrant Latina sisters living in the United States and employs the <reproductive justice> lens to guide its efforts. Founded in 1989, the NLIRH began as an outreach project of Catholics for a Free Choice and was referred to as the Latina Initiative (NLIRH, 2010a). During its time as an outreach group, the focus of the NLIRH was limited to advancing pro-<choice> efforts in the Latino community and assisting Hispanic organizations interested in reproductive health issues (Silliman et al., 2004).

In 1994 the Latina Institute opened its doors as an independent agency, becoming the first <reproductive rights> organization to serve Latinas at the national level (Silliman et al., 2004). With its newfound autonomy also came a new mission for the organization, which broadened the Latina Institute's focus to consider issues beyond <abortion rights>. This shift toward a more holistic framework to better address the interests of Latinas and their community is reflected in the NLIRH's current mission.

### **The Mission and Efforts of the NLIRH**

The Latina Institute strives “to ensure the fundamental human right to reproductive health and justice for Latinas, their families and their communities through public education, community mobilization and policy advocacy” (NLIRH, 2010a). The policy priorities outlined by the grassroots organization are: “expanding access to health care, demanding culturally competent and linguistically appropriate services, ensuring access to family planning and contraceptive equity, promoting comprehensive sexuality education, protecting and enhancing the reproductive rights of Latinas, fostering a pipeline of Latina/o health professionals, and generating accurate and unbiased Latina focused public health research” (NLIRH, 2005a, p. i). The agency's slogan—salud, dignidad, justicia (health, dignity, justice)—reflects well the principles guiding the work of NLIRH members as well as the cultural and linguistic roots of the population it seeks to serve.

According to Latina Institute members, the two principle concerns driving the organization's community mobilization and policy strategy are abortion and immigrant <rights>. As such, one key mission of the NLIRH is to reframe the abortion debate so that discourse regarding the procedure is transformed from a moral issue to a public health care service (Henriquez, 2010a). As for the organization's focus on immigration, members work to ensure

that the interests and complex intersectional realities of immigrant Latinas are included within the <reproductive justice> framework. This includes, but is not limited to, consideration of the following issues: legal status, transportation access, and culturally and linguistically competent health care.

While immigrant Latinas are typically portrayed as having minimal interest in political involvement, certain issues affecting their community have spurred action, including immigration reform (García, 2003). In the past, immigrant Latinas rallied around the issues of inadequate access to quality education, language barriers, poverty, and human <rights> violations (García, 2003). During the 1990s, their interest in local political participation swelled as “focus on entrance opportunities for legal entry into the United States, access to public services, increased regulation of labor, health, and safety standards, and limited voting rights for non-citizens in school board elections” were identified as key issues affecting the immigrant Latina community (García, 2003, p. 184). The diversity of concerns subsumed by this cause illuminates the multiple exigencies confronted by these immigrants as they maneuver systemic challenges both within and beyond their communities. Accordingly, given the historical and continued struggle surrounding Latina immigration in the United States, the NLIRH’s attention to this issue via an <reproductive justice> frame is necessary for addressing the lived realities of its diverse constituency.

Also of interest to the organization, although certainly not a primary focus, is the examination of reproductive health problems linked to environmental justice and racism. In the past, the NLIRH has advocated for migrant farm worker women who are exposed to pesticides, specifically in rural Michigan. The organization would like to heighten its attention to similar issues surrounding environmental justice, although members acknowledge their resources and

current projects leave little room for a broader focus (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, August 3, 2010).

To achieve their goals within the <reproductive justice> movement, NLIRH members work closely with a number of sister organizations (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, August 3, 2010). As such, the Latina Institute frequently aligns itself with the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) and Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice (ACRJ). In addition, the NLIRH provides support to the following grassroots Latina advocacy groups: Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR), California Latinas for Reproductive Justice (CLRJ), Raising Women's Voices (RWV) in New York, and Mujeres Latinas en Acción (MLA) in Chicago.

As an illustration of the Latina Institute's advocacy, members organized the first annual Latina Week of Action for Reproductive Justice in August 2010, with contraception as the central theme. Throughout the week, in addition to community mobilization on the ground, NLIRH members encouraged Latinas, immigrants, and other women to share their personal contraception stories online, in effect creating a consciousness-raising group adapted for the twenty-first century. According to the executive director of the NLIRH, Silvia Henriquez, more than twenty blog posts were written during the week by women sharing their experiences with contraception and access. Efforts such as these reveal that the second-wave feminist maxim of the "personal is political" is viable now more than ever (Rosen, 2000).

In September 2010, the Latina Institute was recognized as a top non-profit organization in the United States. According to a post on the group's blog, a committee of nearly 200 reproductive health and justice experts identified 19 reproductive rights and justice organizations worthy of tribute. Of those agencies selected, the NLIRH ranked sixth. The reproductive health

specialists highlighted the Latina Institute’s “unique role of...serving the intersection of race and reproductive justice issues. In substantiating this support, they cite numerous policy areas in which the organization played a leading voice in mobilizing the [reproductive justice] movement” (NLIRH, 2010c).

Most recently, on November 9, 2010, the Latina Institute announced that its executive director, Sylvia Henriquez, is leaving the organization after eight years of serving as the non-profit’s leader. While the memo detailing Henriquez’s departure addressed her many accomplishments as head of the agency, it did not mention the reasons for her leaving (Perez, 2010). Currently, NLIRH members are searching for Henriquez’s replacement when she relinquishes her position some time during 2011. This leadership change will likely play a salient role in shaping the organization’s future trajectory regarding its policy priorities and community mobilization efforts, particularly as the Latina Institute maneuvers the benefits and limitations engendered by the recently passed health care reform law. After all, during the past few years and recent months, concerns regarding this legislation have motivated many of the organization’s appeals.

### **“The Short End of the Stick”: The NLIRH Response to Health Care Reform**

During a personal interview, the NLIRH Deputy Director, Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas, reflected on the effects of health care reform and the obstacles it poses for the organization and the community it serves. She explained:

What does health reform come down to? The fight over immigrants and the fight over abortion. So we’re at the center of that debate, and it made it really, really challenging because again we’re working with colleagues who are primarily committed to reproductive health access and not per se access for immigrants. That doesn’t mean they don’t care, it’s just that that’s not their thing. And we’re also working with women of color and immigrants rights organizations that were concerned with those issues. And some of the immigrant rights organizations didn’t want to touch abortion, so we’re sort of straddling those two silos in the

movement [abortion and immigrant rights], which was really, really challenging. And basically women and immigrants got the short end of the stick. (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, August 3, 2010)

Given the NLIRH appraisal of health care reform and the impact the legislation will have on the lives of Latinas and their immigrant sisters, it is instructive to examine relevant issues and effects of the bill, which I address in the next section.

### **Recent History: The Passage of Health Care Reform in the United States**

From town hall meetings across the country discussing the health care system with President Barack Obama to Tea Party protesters warning against the takeover of “Obamacare,” public discourse during the past few years has centered on heated disagreements over health care reform in the United States. Despite the polarizing debate that was sparked and which continues to ignite strong responses, the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, reforming the health care system, was signed into law on March 23, 2010 (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010b). Prior to signing the legislation, amidst cheers, whistles, and applause from supporters, the President reflected on the moment:

Here, in this country, we shape our own destiny. That is what we do. That is who we are. That is what makes us the United States of America. And we have now just enshrined, as soon as I sign this bill, the core principle that everybody should have some basic security when it comes to their health care. (White House, 2010a, paras. 44-45)

But the belief that passage of the bill into law achieved “basic security” for all was disputed by a number of feminist activist groups whose members were concerned about the legislative implications for women’s <reproductive freedom> (Bayetti Flores, 2010; O’Neill, 2010a, 2010b).

Throughout the health care debate, the conversations addressing women’s reproductive health largely isolated the discussion to abortion, a trend facilitated by the media (Herszenhorn, 2010; Kantor, 2010). A simple keyword search on the *New York Times* Web site substantiates

this claim. This abortion-centric framing, which excluded an abundance of other issues, is not a new phenomenon (Palczewski, 2010). The news media is known to limit the breadth of its coverage of reproductive issues to <abortion rights> narrowly presented, rather than confront the larger issues of <reproductive freedom>—which include but are certainly not limited to deciding whether or not to have children, accessing quality pre- and post-natal care, and being provided with resources for contraception and reproductive education (Gerber Fried, 1990; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004). One problematic aspect of the news media’s limited approach toward <reproductive freedom> is its failure to consider the day-to-day realities of the large population of Latinas and their families living in the United States—a demographic which will be affected by health care reform as Latinas and immigrant women continue to confront the effects of racism, poverty, and other debilitating intersectional issues (Silliman et al., 2004). Thus, the news media’s failure to reflect the challenges and concerns of women living on the margins through their abortion-centric framing obscures the salience of intersectionality; consequently, the unique needs and issues facing Latinas are ignored—a tendency also present in the new health care reform policies.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Acts (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010b) reform several aspects of the United States health care system. The Obama administration explains that, because of the reform, health care insurance will be more affordable, a new insurance market (the Exchange) will be established, insurers will be held accountable for keeping premiums low and monitored so as to not deny care, discriminatory practices against those with pre-existing conditions will be eliminated, and the federal budget and the economy will be placed on more sturdy financial ground (White House, 2010a). The bill also pledges to expand Medicaid and to eliminate

restrictions based on income, which currently make qualifying for the program difficult. Additionally, community health centers will acquire \$11 billion in additional funding and insurance providers will not be able to charge co-pays or other fees for mammograms, Pap smears, and similar preventive health procedures (NLIRH, 2010b).

Despite these benefits, however, the legislation contains significant limitations inhibiting positive health outcomes for women, and especially immigrant women (NLIRH, 2010b). In fact, analysis of the Kaiser Family Foundation's implementation timeline for health care reform within the next five years and beyond is startling, in that so few of the changes enhance the <reproductive freedom> of women (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010a). For example, undocumented immigrants will not have access to federal funds for purchasing insurance and will be unable to buy insurance through the Exchange. Also, the Nelson provision is included in the bill, requiring that insurance holders write two separate checks for abortion coverage, assuming providers cover the procedure (NLIRH, 2010b). In other words,

if an individual who receives federal assistance purchases coverage in a plan that chooses to cover abortion services beyond those for which federal funds are permitted, those federal subsidy funds (for premiums or cost-sharing) must not be used for the purchase of the abortion coverage and must be segregated from private premium payments or state funds. (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010b, p. 2)

Of all these inadequacies, however, what received the greatest backlash from women's advocacy groups was President Obama's stance on federal funding for abortions (Bayetti Flores, 2010b; O'Neill, 2010a, 2010b). On March 24, 2010, just one day after signing the health care reform bill into law, the President penned his signature on an executive order reinstating the Hyde Amendment. This order bans federal funding for abortions, except in cases of incest, rape, and when the mother's life is in jeopardy (White House, 2010b). Because of this move to restrict a woman's right to choose, some feminist advocacy groups were "incensed" by the legal action



and viewed the executive order as an indication of the President's "shaky at best" commitment to women's <reproductive rights> (O'Neill, 2010b).

In the months following the passage of health care reform, conversations over which services and treatments constitute preventive care under the new legislation have been debated—a debate which currently places access to free contraception in question (V. Bayetti Flores, personal communication, August 3, 2010). According to the Latina Institute's policy analyst, Veronica Bayetti Flores, the Institute of Medicine has established a panel of "experts" charged with the task of determining which services will be deemed preventive care. Should the panel agree to the recommendations offered by the NLIRH and other reproductive health advocacy groups, women would receive coverage for contraception; however, if included, this free service would not be implemented until 2012 (V. Bayetti Flores, personal communication, August 3, 2010).

Having discussed the history of <reproductive rights> rhetoric, the emergence and evolution of the <reproductive justice> movement, the health challenges and realities confronted by Latinas and their immigrant sisters, and the outcomes of health care reform, it is clear that these women, their families, and their communities face substantial impediments in securing a decent quality of <life>. This multi-faceted context outlined in the aforementioned sections assists in situating a diachronic analysis of the rhetoric of the NLIRH and provides a foundation for discussing the artifacts explored in this study, which I will now introduce.

### **Overview of Artifacts**

The texts studied in this investigation are a collection of eight documents written by members of the NLIRH over the course of nearly two decades, a period extending from January 1992 to March 2010. The authors of the artifacts are full-time staff members and include the organization's senior policy analyst and executive director. Of these texts, half were acquired

from the Latina Institute’s archives housed in the library at Smith College. The remaining artifacts were retrieved from the NLIRH Web site and from the group’s headquarters in New York City.

Prior to selecting the eight texts reviewed in this investigation, an examination of the official written rhetoric of NLIRH members from 1992 to the present was conducted.<sup>8</sup> Upon completing this preliminary analysis, I found that three stages of discursive development emerged, all of which emphasize <abortion rights>. First, early discourse from the organization was framed to reflect values characteristic of the pro-<choice> movement—values which emphasize <choice> and <life> distinctions in terms of abortion access—as well as discussions of family planning and HIV/AIDS (Gerber Fried, 1990; Silliman et al., 2004).<sup>9</sup> Second, the group’s rhetoric coinciding with and following the 2004 March for Women’s Lives echoed the broader <reproductive justice> framework emphasizing a human <rights> philosophy, while still highlighting abortion. Third, a few years later, discourse during the period of health care reform in 2010 again featured abortion—often in conjunction with intersectional issues affecting access to the procedure. Consequently, in determining the documents for inclusion in this investigation, I selected texts written during these three specific time periods to explore the evolution of the Latina Institute’s discourse at key moments of rhetorical development and transformation.<sup>10</sup>

Listed from oldest to most recent, the artifacts to be analyzed in this investigation are:

- the organization’s first newsletter released on January 22, 1992 introducing the “Hispanic Project” and its goals (when the NLIRH was funded by Catholics for a Free Choice)
- a bilingual bulletin written in August 1995 centering on AIDS and abortion (when the NLIRH was no longer affiliated with Catholics for a Free Choice)

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<sup>8</sup> The starting point for rhetorical analysis was 1992 because the earliest text on record for the organization was released that year.

<sup>9</sup> This is perhaps not surprising given the Latina Institute’s roots as an initiative of Catholics for a Free Choice.

<sup>10</sup> The process of selecting texts for this study was affected by time periods/years where the organization’s rhetoric was scant and/or unavailable.

- a bilingual newsletter released in December 2003 addressing reproductive justice and the organization's participation in the March for Women's Lives
- a bilingual bulletin published in March 2005 discussing the human <right> to <reproductive freedom> and the significance of community mobilization
- a handbook addressing how to advance reproductive justice in immigrant communities published in January 2010
- an online article posted on January 22, 2010 commemorating the 37<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* and the implications of using <choice>
- a document demanding comprehensive immigration reform and march participation posted on March 19, 2010
- a response to health care reform the day following its passage by the House of Representatives on March 22, 2010 condemning the legislation's abortion restrictions

As I examine these texts, I explore the suggested audience for the artifacts and the ways in which the presented appeals do/do not reflect the lived realities of Latinas and immigrant women. The group's messages are directed at those both internal and external to the movement, whereby depending on the document and context, Latinas, immigrant Latinas, women of color and mainstream groups, and other social justice organizations are targeted. While early NLIRH discourse is in the form of mailed, hard-copy newsletters, more recent rhetoric is frequently dispersed via press releases and other documents on the organization's Web site. This varied format for disseminating information is significant, as it reveals how the group has evolved its means of relaying messages over the years. Furthermore, it also highlights the widening scope and increased accessibility of NLIRH rhetoric. For example, mailed newsletters are likely to reach a narrower, more specific audience, while documents on the organization's Web site are apt to receive attention from a larger readership base.

Through analysis of the selected texts, I seek to explore the following four questions:

1) In what ways do the artifacts contribute to understanding <reproductive justice> movement goals during the organization's three stages of rhetorical development? 2) How and why do group members favor an abortion-centric rhetoric, and what are the implications of prioritizing

this procedure over other issues? 3) How do members, whose rhetoric also addresses immigrant Latinas' <rights>, negotiate the strain between their acknowledgement of the importance of the <reproductive justice> agenda and the concurrent focus on abortion? 4) What specific insights can be gleaned by employing a rhetorical lens to examine <reproductive freedom> in association with the evolution of NLIRH members' rhetoric and the quest for <reproductive justice>?

Given these points of inquiry, I hope to uncover the ways in which the Latina Institute utilizes and challenges <reproductive justice> movement ideology. After years of assiduous efforts by <reproductive justice> activists and scholars to expand discourse beyond a woman's <right to choose> (Gerber Fried, 1990; Silliman et al., 2004), it seems prudent to explore how and why NLIRH members increasingly center their efforts on abortion in conjunction with intersectional issues affecting access to the procedure, as this proclivity exposes interesting tensions within the <reproductive justice> cause. As such, this exploration elucidates that though members of reproductive health organizations serving marginalized women may employ similar language (i.e., <reproductive justice>, <reproductive freedom>, and <reproductive rights>) to articulate their agendas, points of disagreement emerge regarding how these terms are utilized to express social commitments driven by various exigencies.

In recent years, some feminist scholars and numerous social justice activists have embraced <reproductive freedom> to explore and address the needs of women living on the margins (Gerber Fried, 1990; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004). However, discussion of <reproductive justice> using a theoretical lens has been underexplored. In fact, investigations examining <choice> and <reproductive freedom> have been undertaken by only a few feminist scholars in the communication discipline (Condit, 1984, 1990; Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010). This demonstrates a significant deficit considering that "communication studies scholars, in

particular recognize the power of language to direct people’s attention, to shape the way people understand the world” (Palczewski, 2010, p. 88). Based on this assumption, I argue examining the efforts of the NLIRH via a rhetorical, communication-oriented perspective offers great utility, as it enlivens discussion on the <reproductive justice> movement in relation to the needs of Latinas and their immigrant sisters. To guide this process, I employ the conceptual lenses of ideographic criticism, articulation theory, and cluster criticism—approaches which I suggest facilitate the exploration of my research questions through analysis of the selected artifacts; I substantiate this claim by addressing these frameworks in the subsequent section.

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

*Within a discursive frame, rhetoric is no longer an instrument in the service of reality, but, rather, becomes constitutive of the meaning of the world. (DeLuca, 1999a, p. 342)*

*The important fact about ideographs is that they exist in real discourse, functioning clearly and evidently as agents of political consciousness. They are not invented by observers; they come to be as a part of the real lives of the people whose motives they articulate. (McGee, 2005, p. 456)*

### **Ideology and its Implications**

A presidential address. An anti-abortion rally. A press release issued by a women’s advocacy organization. Although these rhetorical acts may appear to share little in common, the discourse engendered from these communicative actions is injected with *ideology*. This term denotes the ways in which our beliefs, values, and behaviors are shaped by the language which circulates in society at a given time (McGee, 2005). Because ideologies govern public consciousness, exploration of this concept is an essential endeavor in any rhetorical study which seeks to uncover the linkage between language and human perception and action (Cloud, 1998; Condit, 1990; DeLuca, 1999a, 1999b; McGee, 2005).

## **Ideographic Criticism**

One theoretical framework guiding this investigation is ideographic criticism, a conceptual lens introduced by Michael Calvin McGee. This theorist defines ideology as “a political language, preserved in rhetorical documents, with the capacity to dictate decision and control public belief and behavior” (McGee, 2005, p. 454). He argues that linking rhetoric and ideology elucidates a dominant collective commitment by exposing the “relationship between the ‘power’ of a state and the consciousness of its people” (McGee, 2005, p. 462). The dissemination of this dominant ideology in the public sphere is carried out via key language terms, which McGee (2005) identifies as ideographs.

An ideograph is an ordinary-language term found in political discourse. It is a high-order abstraction representing collective commitment to a particular but equivocal and ill-defined normative goal. It warrants the use of power, excuses behavior and belief which might otherwise be perceived as eccentric or antisocial, and guides behavior and belief into channels easily recognized by a community as acceptable and laudable. (McGee, 2005, pp. 462-3)

Given this definition, exemplars of this compact form of social commitment include <equality>, <justice>, and <freedom>. Though an ideograph may maintain a particular meaning grounded in its historical usage, it also has the ability to evolve, as it can expand, contract, and clash with other language terms based on the motives of various stakeholders and the circumstances at a given time (McGee, 2005).

Ideographic slogans are inherited; “they are conditions of the society in which each of us is born, material ideas which we must accept to ‘belong’” (McGee, 2005, p. 457). As such, these slogans have the power to dictate what a society, group, or individual defines as right and wrong. When we embrace a given ideology then, we agree to the corresponding defined expectations required for belonging to that community (McGee, 2005). In contrast, when we deviate from a prescribed ideological framework, societal penalties often result. For instance, failing to pay

taxes, disobeying traffic signs, and opting to keep one's maiden name engender judgments and punishments for straying from accepted norms valued in mainstream American society.

Consequently, by acquiring the meaning of ideographs even the "freest" members of society appear prone to "structured mass responses" (McGee, 2005, p. 462).

In seeking to understand the rhetorical function of an ideograph, both its diachronic (i.e., the history of a given language term) and synchronic (i.e., the unifying relationship with a language term and other slogans in the current moment) structures are relevant dimensions.

No present ideology can be divorced from past commitments if only because the very words used to express present dislocations have a history that establishes the category of their meaning. And no diachronic ideology can be divorced from the "here-and-now" if only because its entire *raison d'être* consists in justifying the form and direction of collective behavior. Both of these structures must be understood and described before one can claim to have constructed a theoretically precise explanation of a society's ideology, of its repertoire of public motives. (McGee, 2005, p. 462)

According to McGee (2005), it is the synchronic structure which represents the site of ideological struggle, for a grouping of ideograph clusters must adjust to the current context while still preserving its unity. Despite this assertion, it has been noted that "most important analyses of ideographs focus on the diachronic dimension or the synchronic dimension of a particular ideograph in isolation" (DeLuca, 1999b, p. 37). Instructive in understanding these structures and McGee's emphasis on rhetoric and the power of ideographs to define our collective commitments is the concept of articulation. This theory assists in elucidating the creation, preservation, and transformation of the synchronic dimension of language terms (DeLuca, 1999a, 1999b).

### **Articulation Theory**

When employing a rhetorical approach, exploring the manner in which concepts and ideas are articulated discursively is a fundamental endeavor. This process of articulation involves

“establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified” (DeLuca, 1999b, p. 37). The linking of these elements reveals that the meanings we associate with various concepts and ideas in our everyday language can be rearticulated by associating these rhetorical terms in unfamiliar ways; this, in turn, engenders the expression of new ideas and understandings (DeLuca, 1999a, 1999b).

The motive force driving the articulation process is based on antagonisms, which reveal the limitations of a particular discourse by challenging the notion that the rhetoric constitutes an objective reality. Through this process alternative meanings emerge, which challenge the accepted hegemonic discourse (DeLuca, 1999a, 1999b). Consequently, “previously construed ‘natural’ relations of subordination are articulated as socially constructed relations of oppression and domination” (DeLuca, 1999b, p. 42). This is significant given that today’s social movements seek to transform dominant discourse by exposing problematic accepted practices and assumptions. As such, activists in these movements would be wise to “link the different antagonisms that give rise to environmental struggles, workers' struggles, feminist struggles, and antiracist struggles” to synergize efforts to achieve more efficacious societal change (DeLuca, 1999a, pp. 345-6). This claim and the aforementioned discussion of antagonisms within articulation theory is particularly relevant for the <reproductive justice> movement, as the disarticulation of hegemonic discourse surrounding women’s reproductive health and other key issues has been and continues to be the primary challenge confronting activists.

### **Cluster Criticism**

To systematically explore the ideographs employed in the selected artifacts, I utilize cluster criticism throughout my analysis. This approach is compatible with ideographic criticism and articulation theory, for it assists in determining the motives of rhetorical actors (Foss, 1989).



To discover the meanings a rhetor has for key terms and what those meanings suggest about the world view of the rhetor, the critic, using cluster criticism, goes through four major steps: (1) identification of key terms or symbols in the rhetorical artifact; (2) charting of terms that cluster around the key terms; (3) discovery of patterns in the clusters around the key terms to determine meanings of the key terms; and (4) naming of the rhetor's motive on the basis of the meanings of the key terms. (Foss, 1989, pp. 367-8)

Using this four-step process as a guide, I explore how the presence and/or omission of the ideographs of <choice>, <reproductive justice>, <reproductive freedom>, <reproductive rights>, and other key slogans function rhetorically to express the motives and implications of Latina Institute members' discourse.

### **Rationale for Selection of Theoretical Frameworks**

When considering the ideology guiding causes dedicated to social change, examination of movement member rhetoric is necessary to uncover the motivations and implications of activists' symbolic action (DeLuca, 1999a, 1999b). Through this approach, scholars encounter the ways in which rhetoric is able to articulate "identities, ideologies, consciousnesses, communities, publics, and cultures" (DeLuca, 1999a, p. 346). Furthermore, the perspective that "social movements are materially manifest not in groups but in public discourse such as ideographs" lends support for an ideographic rhetorical approach that recognizes salient articulations and antagonisms within campaigns to effect social change (DeLuca, 1999b, p. 36).

Regarding the specific ideographs utilized in the <reproductive justice> movement, I previously illumined the use of <choice>, <life>, and <reproductive freedom> in my discussion of feminist literature and the evolution of discourse on women's <reproductive rights> in the United States. The utilization of ideographic criticism in rhetorical scholarship has examined the evolution of the <life> and <choice> binaries in the American abortion controversy (Condit, 1984, 1990), explored the use of images representing these dialectical terms during the 2004

March for Women's Lives (Hayden, 2009), and chronicled the transition from the stalemated debate between <life> and <choice> to the ideograph of <reproductive freedom> (Palczewski, 2010). When reviewing these investigations a strain emerges, for while Hayden (2009) argues that the 2004 March for Women's Lives served to broaden <choice> to encompass a comprehensive framework, Palczewski (2010) suggests that <choice> lacks the mutability to accommodate the <reproductive justice> platform; thus, the latter scholar advocates replacing <choice> with <reproductive justice> and <reproductive freedom>. Based on the tension engendered by the work of Hayden (2009) and Palczewski (2010) regarding <choice> and <reproductive justice>/<reproductive freedom>, further analysis of the function and implications of these ideographs is needed from those in the communication discipline.

My investigation contributes to and complicates this point of contention, as a diachronic exploration of Latina Institute members' rhetoric highlights a shift in language term preference from <choice> to <reproductive freedom>, all the while featuring <abortion rights>. As such, I wish to explore in what ways and with what motivations the Latina Institute prioritizes abortion within a <reproductive justice> frame. When shifting from <choice> to <reproductive freedom>, Latina Institute members increasingly orient their rhetoric toward seeking to change societal barriers precluding marginalized women's ability to make <choices>.

I argue ideographic criticism coupled with articulation theory assists in understanding this phenomenon and my points of inquiry, for together the theories highlight the importance of exploring both the diachronic and synchronic dimensions of ideographs as the language terms expand, contract, and even clash with competing slogans. More specifically, in this investigation the conceptual lenses help elucidate the strain within the <reproductive justice> movement created by the use of the abstract slogans of <choice> and <reproductive freedom>. As such, my

finding that Latina Institute members' rhetoric prioritizes <abortion rights> while utilizing different ideographs within the same synchronic cluster may have implications for the larger debate within ideographic criticism regarding the flexibility and mutability of language terms. Moreover, due to the frequent employment of ideographic criticism in feminist communication studies scholarship, it is prudent to build on this extant body of research to glean new insights and uncover potential strengths and vulnerabilities of utilizing particular ideographs associated with the <reproductive rights> movement.

### **Outline of Chapters**

In Chapter One, I outlined the evolution of discourse addressing women's reproductive health in the United States during the last two centuries. Then, I discussed Latina culture and reproductive health challenges confronting this demographic of society and detailed the mission and efforts of NLIRH members. Finally, I introduced my eight selected artifacts along with the theoretical frameworks guiding my investigation, which I argued facilitate my analysis of the texts. In Chapters Two and Three, I outline the rhetoric of the NLIRH chronologically. In Chapter Two I discuss the early discourse of the Latina Institute, beginning in the early 1990s, when the organization's discourse reflected language terms consistent with the pro-<choice> movement. Also in this chapter, I highlight the organization's discursive transformation from the ideograph of <choice> to <reproductive freedom> around the time of the March for Women's Lives in 2004. Then, in Chapter Three, I explore the NLIRH's rhetoric during the period of health care reform in 2010. Finally, in Chapter Four, I conclude with a section clarifying my findings, where I offer a discussion of the implications of my investigation and my contributions to ideographic criticism and rhetorical research exploring women's reproductive health and the

<reproductive justice> movement. Having presented this outline of chapters, I now turn to my analysis of the first set of texts selected for review in this study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ANALYSIS OF ARTIFACTS: 1992-2005

#### Artifacts, Audience, and Analysis

**Artifacts.** In this chapter I explore four newsletters produced by the Latina Institute between 1992 and 2005. These artifacts are titled *Instantes*, a Spanish word signifying *Happenings*. *Instantes* “featured educational articles about reproductive health and rights from a Latina viewpoint and included legislative analysis” affecting the <reproductive justice> movement and Latinas and their communities (Silliman et al., 2004, p. 230). Accordingly, these early newsletters offer rich rhetorical data, illumining ideological underpinnings and key issues addressed by the NLIRH.

**Audience.** The newsletters investigated in this chapter were administered to the group’s mailing list recipients via standard mail and, in later years, also electronically via e-mail.<sup>11</sup> The mailing list consisted of a collection of names and addresses compiled by the group’s members while at various Latina conferences and other events around the United States. According to the organization’s deputy director Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas:

We would bring a sign-up sheet, and people will voluntarily sign up to receive the *Instantes*—either in print or our email version. If we received a mailing address, we would add them to our mailing list. Also, during other networking opportunities, if people gave us business cards and expressed interest in learning more about the organization, we would add them to the mailing list. (Personal communication, Mar. 16, 2011, para. 2)

The deputy director specified that newsletter recipients include those concerned with health policy and immigration, Latino civil <rights>, and women’s <rights> movement issues. The list is also composed of former volunteers, interns, and employees of the organization, as

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<sup>11</sup> *Instantes* are still produced by the NLIRH today and are disseminated electronically via e-mail and can also be accessed through the organization’s Web site. The online version of the newsletter surfaced around 2003, when the organization’s current executive director, Sylvia Henriquez, assumed command of the Latina Institute. In 2009, the group elected to no longer print and administer *Instantes* in hard copy format. Consequently, the last available print version of the newsletter is from 2009 (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, Mar. 16, 2011).

well as donors and members of the group's LOLA trainings.<sup>12</sup> In addition, the mainstream feminist organizations of NARAL Pro-Choice America, the National Organization for Women (NOW), and Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) also have access to these newsletters and began receiving *Instantes* around the time of the 2004 March for Women's Lives (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, Mar. 16, 2011). Along with these more traditional women's rights agencies, the Latina Institute has broadened its alliances with other women of color organizations, particularly with the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) and other member groups of the SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, August 3, 2010).<sup>13</sup>

**Analysis.** Regarding my methodology for examining the selected artifacts, rather than evaluate individual articles in each newsletter separately, each bulletin and its contents are treated as a complete text. For each newsletter, first, I examine the *Instantes* by highlighting the text's contents and by providing an overview of my findings from the newsletter. Second, I situate the artifact contextually by addressing relevant political discourse; the efforts of mainstream feminist organizations (i.e., NARAL Pro-Choice America, NOW, and PPFA); and the campaigns of women of color groups during the time period when each newsletter was written. This contextual background assists in understanding why and in what ways the organization responds to certain exigencies affecting its constituents. Third, after discussing the historical context surrounding each artifact, I analyze the text.

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<sup>12</sup> Latinas Organizing for Leadership and Advocacy (LOLA) workshops are three-day training sessions where Latinas from around the United States converge to discuss their experiences and to acquire knowledge about the reproductive justice cause and grassroots-level organizing. The NLIRH hosts these trainings, which center on empowerment and consciousness-raising, to foster the emergence of new Latina leaders in the reproductive justice movement (NLIRH, 2010d).

<sup>13</sup> Notably, the NLIRH is not listed as one of SisterSong's member groups (SisterSong, 2010). This is curious, given that the Latina Institute worked closely with the reproductive justice collective's co-founder, Loretta Ross, during the 2004 March for Women's Lives (Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010).

In this chapter, I find the rhetors position <choice> and <reproductive justice> within a comprehensive agenda, as they move toward the articulation that <reproductive rights> are human <rights>. By employing both <choice> and <reproductive justice>, the rhetors reveal that the slogans possess sufficient mutability to address a broad <reproductive rights> agenda for Latinas. The group seeks to educate, empower, and encourage its readership to take action by relying on consciousness-raising to present exigencies affecting the lives of Latinas at the time of each bulletin's release. Though the newsletters reflect different foci in response to internal movement issues as well as external factors relevant to the organization's constituency—such as major women's <rights> marches, election cycles, HIV/AIDS, and <abortion rights> threats—the NLIRH exhibits a steady recognition that the lived realities of Latinas are rooted in intersectional, not isolated, challenges. Moreover, as the Latina Institute embraces the language of <reproductive justice>, a slight yet salient rhetorical shift takes place, whereby the group's goals move from focusing on Latinas' <reproductive rights> beliefs to addressing larger societal issues hindering the advancement of its constituency's <reproductive freedom>. Through this process, the imperative of securing <reproductive justice> as a means to deconstruct oppressive societal structures is illuminated, whereby the ability to make <choices> is an outcome of this quest. As a result, <choice> emerges as a secondary term dependent on <reproductive justice>.

### ***Instantes: January 1992***

The first available artifact on record for the NLIRH is dated January 22, 1992. At the time of its release, the organization was referred to as the Latina Initiative and was sponsored by Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC)<sup>14</sup> through its Hispanic Project (Latina Initiative, 1992). According to the newsletter, the Project offers “information about reproductive health care and

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<sup>14</sup> Since the publication of this newsletter, CFFC underwent a name change and is now referred to as Catholics for Choice (CFC) (CFC, 2010).

public policy to Hispanic and Latino organizations by providing technical assistance, educational materials, workshops, networking opportunities, and other services to Hispanic and Latino organizations across the country” (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 2). The text centers on the following issues: President George H.W. Bush’s veto of a bill funding Title X;<sup>15</sup> the results of a poll measuring reproductive health perceptions among women of color; a brief letter from the Hispanic Project director; an analysis highlighting pro-~~choice~~ lawmakers’ voting records on family-relevant issues; a short explanation of CFFC, its goals, as well as an advertisement for free access to the organization’s publications; a report on the Centers for Disease Control’s revised definition of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV); a form requesting that readers fill out and mail in the contact information of two individuals who might be interested in joining the Hispanic Project’s mailing list; and a call for readers to participate in the 1992 March for Women’s Lives to advocate for the preservation of legal abortions (Latina Initiative, 1992).

**Preview of findings.** Upon reviewing the newsletter, three key findings emerge. First, the mutability of ~~choice~~ is apparent, whereby the term expands to support a holistic pro-~~family~~ framework including and extending beyond abortion. Second, as part of its holistic philosophy, the group uses consciousness-raising to highlight two themes problematic in mitigating the spread of HIV/AIDS. Third, the Latina Initiative highlights a tension between its ideology and mainstream feminist groups by including these organizations’ appeals for Latina participation in the 1992 March for Women’s Lives in the newsletter.

**Context.** The early 1990s in the United States witnessed several key legislative and political changes affecting the pro-~~choice~~ and budding ~~reproductive justice~~ movements. ~~Abortion rights~~ were placed in jeopardy during the late 1980s and early 1990s through the Supreme Court cases of *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, *Rust v. Sullivan*, and *Planned*

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<sup>15</sup> I explain Title X in my discussion of the context surrounding this newsletter in the next section.



*Parenthood v. Casey*, all of which eroded women's abortion access and disproportionately affected low-income women (Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010; Saletan, 2003; Shrage, 2003).

*Webster v. Reproductive Health Services* (1989) set the stage for restrictions at state funded health care facilities and *Rust v. Sullivan* (1991) allowed the denial of information at federally funded clinics. (Palczewski, 2010, p. 79)

In *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, although the Supreme Court did not overturn *Roe v. Wade* constitutionally, it opened the door for increased intrusion into a woman's <right> to seek an abortion by lowering the standard for what would be considered "undue burden" of interference from the state (Saletan, 2003, p. 146). Partially in response to these legislative moves and anti-abortion climate, the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL)<sup>16</sup> and other pro- <choice> groups embraced a very narrow view of <choice> in an effort to preserve *Roe v. Wade* (Gerber Fried, 1990; Hayden, 2009; Silliman et al., 2004).

As for key pro- <choice> movement events, 1992 marked the largest rally in the nation's history, when 750,000 supporters participated in the third March for Women's Lives in Washington, D.C. (Silliman et al., 2004). The historic demonstration was organized by the National Organization for Women (NOW), NARAL, Feminist Majority, and the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) (Feminist Majority, 2009; NARAL, 2006; NOW, 2006; PPFA, 2011; Silliman et al., 2004). Although some women of color participated in the march, they were excluded from the planning process; thus, a limited agenda of <abortion rights> was presented, as those organizing the march concentrated efforts on protesting the pending case of *Casey v. Planned Parenthood* (NOW, 2011; Silliman et al., 2004). In addition to organizing this march, during the early 1990s, NOW engaged in advocating for potential feminist candidates to run in the upcoming congressional elections of 1992 and protesting

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<sup>16</sup> In 2003, the organization changed its name from NARAL to NARAL Pro-Choice America (NARAL, 2011; Palczewski, 2010).

President George H. W. Bush's Gag Rule, which barred funding to international family planning groups (NOW, 2006; PPFA, 2011). Meanwhile, NARAL assisted in mobilizing Americans to help elect Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton as president of the United States based on his "pro-choice" ideology (NARAL, 2006). Added to these efforts, Planned Parenthood (2011) worked to raise awareness regarding so-called "pregnancy crisis centers," which claim to help women with their unintended pregnancies but actually seek to deter patients from undergoing abortions (PPFA, 2011).

While mainstream feminist groups were occupied playing defense against moves eroding <abortion rights>, women of color engaged in their own efforts to articulate their broad array of needs (Gerber Fried, 1990; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004). In 1989, women of color who participated in the "In the Defense of *Roe*" conference shared their realities with those in attendance; the issues addressed included concerns with coercive sterilization, HIV testing, infant mortality, infertility treatment, abortion, and access to basic healthcare (Palczewski, 2010, p. 82). Two years later, in 1991, the Women of Color Partnership Program offered a definition of <reproductive freedom>, further revealing a holistic agenda that recognized the multi-faceted needs of diverse women (Palczewski, 2010). Efforts made by women of color to articulate their lived realities were largely spurred by their discontent with mainstream definitions of <choice> which limited discourse to <abortion rights> rather than focus on intersectional, systemic issues such as classism and racism (Gerber Fried, 1990; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004). Because "fledgling women of color organizations did not command the political or economic clout in terms of organizational resources to negotiate a place at the policy table," these groups' efforts to persuade the pro-<choice> movement to embrace a broad agenda beyond <abortion

rights> effected little change in altering mainstream agencies' guiding ideology (Silliman et al., 2004, p. 297).

On the political front, President George H.W. Bush held the country's highest office from 1989-1993. During his presidency, several anti-woman and anti-family planning legislative moves were made (PPFA, 2011; Saletan, 2003). For example, in 1991, the then commander-in-chief vetoed a bill funding Title X, a federal program offering low-income individuals family planning resources (e.g., contraception). At the time of this denial for funding, "[a]pproximately 4,000 family planning clinics in the country [were] supported by Title X, serving roughly 4 million people" (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 1). Of these clinics, more than 10 percent of patients were Latina or Latino (The Latina Initiative, 1992). In addition to this action, Bush proposed a welfare reform plan to address what he deemed to be irresponsible childbearing by predominately low-income women (Saletan, 2003). The measure placed a "family cap" on welfare recipients, whereby low-income families were denied supplementary funds to support additional children (Saletan, 2003; Smith, 2007). Some scholars have characterized this policy as "grounded in the misogynist and racist panic about the 'welfare queen' rather than demographic truths" (Smith, 2007, p. 148). Although not all may agree with this view, according to statistics on family size, those on welfare do not have larger families than non-welfare recipients; in fact, the family size of these federal aid recipients is actually on the decline (Smith, 2007).

Also politically significant was the year 1992, as both a presidential election and elections for members of the House and Congress took place. At the presidential level, Bush was defeated by his opponent, Bill Clinton, who ran on a pro-<choice> ticket (Silliman et al., 2004). This change in leadership ushered in the country's first "pro-choice administration" in twelve years (Hayden, 2009; Silliman et al., 2004, p. 77). However, Clinton's conception of <choice>

included parental consent laws and regressive public abortion funding policies (Hayden, 2009; Saletan, 2003). As such, his position reflected a “‘middle ground’ of restricted choice” at best (Saletan, 2003, p. 6).

Following the election of Clinton and [Vice President] Gore, restrictions on abortion were reinforced and extended. The Hyde Amendment was renewed with widespread, bipartisan support; federal health insurance plans were barred from covering abortions, overseas military hospitals were prohibited from providing abortion services to US servicewomen, and funding for global family-planning agencies that provided abortion or abortion-related information was eliminated. (Hayden, 2009, p. 120)

Another health-related concern generating attention during this period was HIV/AIDS. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, groups supporting AIDS awareness took root around the United States (Boehmer, 2000). One organization in particular, ACT UP, sought to free women from unfair victimization as propagators of the disease (Boehmer, 2000). During the release of the NLIRH’s first newsletter, ACT UP “fought the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) to change its AIDS definition to include the women-specific HIV/AIDS-related symptoms” which had previously been excluded (Boehmer, 2000, p. 15).

**Analysis.** Within the newsletter’s six pages, nowhere are the terms <reproductive justice> or <reproductive freedom> used. Instead, pro-<choice>, anti-<choice>, pro-<life>, pro-<family>, <abortion rights>, and <reproductive rights> are employed (Latina Initiative, 1992). In the following section, I explore the utilization of these included language terms as they articulate <choice> as a <family value>, capable of encompassing a wide range of issues. I also examine the Latina Initiative’s discourse on HIV/AIDS, which serves to educate and motivate readers in response to the exigencies confronting women and the illness. Finally, I conclude by discussing the 1992 March for Women’s Lives and the text’s salient revelation of differences between mainstream and women of color group rhetoric.

*“Pro-**<choice>** equals pro-**<family>**.”* The dominant articulation which emerges within the newsletter is the association of **<choice>** with **<family values>**—a key ideograph in the modern-day United States (Cloud, 1998; Hayden, 2009). By linking these two language terms, the organization appeals to its Latina readership by highlighting the importance of family and, in so doing, seeks to educate and encourage its readers to support pro-**<choice>** congressional candidates in the upcoming 1992 elections. Furthermore, this articulation suggests that **<choice>** can accommodate a host of issues subsumed by pro-**<family>** ideology.

In one instance illustrating **<choice>** as a **<family value>**, the Latina Initiative’s director of the Hispanic Project, Claudia Lopez Muñiz, writes of her “commitment to the empowerment of women and families, as well as to the diverse Hispanic and Latino communities” (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 2). She reveals the organization’s holistic approach when she writes, “I hope we will be able to work together toward our common goal of addressing the health and social issues facing Hispanics and Latinos” (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 2). Given these assertions, Lopez Muñiz’s goals are broad and rooted in **<family values>** in conjunction with empowerment, acknowledgement of diversity, as well as health and social issues. It is evident that the group’s agenda-setting is driven not by isolated concerns but rather by larger overarching issues addressing the intersectional positioning of Latinas and their communities. Thus, though **<choice>** and **<reproductive freedom>** are absent from the rhetor’s discourse, the director of the Hispanic Project clearly advocates a framework that extends beyond **<abortion rights>** narrowly constructed and emphasizes Latinas’ self-determination and the importance of recognizing health and social concerns. This reveals salient assumptions underlying the group’s efforts and ideology. Given that the audience for this earliest newsletter was composed largely of Catholic Latinas interested in grassroots mobilization efforts—in part due to the organization’s affiliation

with CFFC—this articulation emphasizing “the empowerment of women and families” resonates with readers who view the importance and preservation of <family> as a core belief (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 2). The term *familismo* in the Latino community is revered and refers to strong interpersonal connections with family members, “resulting in greater identification with the group and dependence on the family” (Aguirre-Molina & Molina, 2003, pp. 152-3). As such, aligning <choice> and <family values> is a persuasive framing given the organization’s constituency.

Similar pro-<choice> and pro-<family> language is echoed in the text when the efforts of CFFC are outlined; this reveals that the linkage of these two ideographs by the Latina Institute is mirrored by its Catholic sponsor. According to the newsletter, the CFFC “works to reduce the incidence of abortion and to increase women’s choices in childbearing and child-rearing through the advocacy of a variety of social and economic programs for women, families, and children” (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 2). In this excerpt <choice> is directly linked to pro-<family> discourse, as “childbearing and child-rearing” are articulated as <choices> carried out by women. This rhetorical positioning illumines that <choice> encapsulates <family values> by emphasizing the well-being of women and their families. Because the Latina Initiative was under the auspices of CFFC at the time of this newsletter, it is not surprising that members of the Initiative reflect the values of the Catholic organization in their rhetoric, as they, too, associate pro-<choice> with pro-<family>. This articulation encourages readers to construct an ideological bridge between <family values> and <choice>.

In this passage, an interesting argument is made advocating that efforts should be made to reduce the number of abortions that take place by supporting practices that foster Latina health and well-being. This is reflected in the CFFC’s goal to “reduce the incidence of abortion”

(Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 2). This assertion is not usually made by women of color groups, as securing the <right> to access a safe and affordable abortion is often challenging to achieve in the first place because of limited resources. Therefore, for women of color, minimizing “the incidence of abortion” could indicate that restrictions are being placed on the procedure, limiting women’s reproductive <choice> (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 3). Given the text’s articulation, it is likely the Latina Initiative is influenced by the rhetoric of CFFC, as in later newsletters the call to make abortion “less necessary” is not issued (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 2).

Yet another textual example revealing the connection between <choice> and <family values> is elucidated in the organization’s discussion of lawmakers’ voting habits on abortion and family-related issues, whereby the text argues that “congressional members’ records show prochoice equals profamily” (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 1). This assertion by the Latina Initiative demonstrates the organization’s linkage of pro-<choice> and pro-<family> ideologies, suggesting that the two language terms are compatible and that <choice> possesses the mutability to encompass concerns beyond <abortion rights> narrowly defined. The newsletter explains that

the majority of antichoice members tend to oppose the very policies that would enhance conditions for childbearing and child-rearing and would increase options for women. Conversely, the majority of prochoice Senators and Representatives support programs that promote the equal status of women and improve conditions for rearing children. (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 1)

Given these findings, the Latina Initiative argues that congressional representatives who express an anti-<choice> ideology through their voting habits also fail to support policy actions necessary for quality parenting. As such, the text reveals that these lawmakers place <family values> in jeopardy, for the development of families is incumbent upon women’s ability to bear and raise their offspring within adequate conditions. As a result of this articulation, anti-<choice> is equated with an anti-<family> belief system. In contrast, the organization treats pro-

<choice> advocates—in this case Latino democratic lawmakers—as supportive of <family values> “through their commitment to the prochoice position and their votes on policies that contribute to better conditions for raising families” (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 3). Based on this connection, legislators who support <choice> also promote healthy families, which positions pro-<choice> and pro-<family> as compatible rather than conflicting terms. Moreover, any challenge to <choice> also threatens <family values>. Hence, women’s command over their own reproductive <choices> is vital in facilitating “the right to mother and to mother well” (Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010, p. 81).

The Latina Initiative’s argument that “prochoice equals profamily” engenders an important antagonism, suggesting that lawmakers who identify as anti-<choice> (i.e., pro-<life>) may also be anti-woman and anti-<family values> (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 1). As such, the agency elucidates that it is anti-<choice> proponents who fail to support women and their families through regressive legislation. This is evident not only through restricting legal abortion access but also by failing to support policies that are pro-<family> regarding child care, minimum wage, civil rights, health program funding, and environmental issues (Latina Initiative, 1992). As such, the Latina Initiative asserts that “the antichoice faction is seemingly thwarting its own efforts to discourage women from undergoing abortions” by voting against pro-<family> legislation (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 3). It stands to reason that if the necessary resources and adequate conditions needed for good parenting and quality living were accessible to women, perhaps abortion would be as the organization explains “less necessary” (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 3). However, given the voting record data of anti-<choice> lawmakers, the <right to choose> along with women’s reproductive control and the means for proper parenting are jeopardized. Further establishing this antagonism, the text claims that pro-<choice> legislators, through their



voting habits, foster good parenting by supporting women's self-determination to decide if and when to have children and, if motherhood is desired, that the proper resources and conditions be available. This directly challenges anti-*<choice>* supporters' claims that those who advocate for a woman's *<right to choose>* are morally irresponsible and favor practices which violate *<life>*—namely abortion (Condit, 1990; Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010). Based on the revitalized articulation offered by the Latina Initiative, anti-*<choice>* advocates—who have long rhetorically constructed the fetus as a separate entity or person disconnected from its mother—must respond to the argument that pro-*<choice>* also signifies pro-*<family>* (Condit, 1990; Hayden, 2009). In this way, interest in the fetus cannot overlook the well-being of the mother, as well as factors affecting childbearing and childrearing. Through this alternative articulation, the Latina Initiative argues that *<choice>* and *<family values>* share a compatible set of beliefs, rendering opponents' claims that pro-*<choice>* advocates are anti-*<family>* defunct. Accordingly, the group's framing challenges existing ideology surrounding the anti-*<choice>/<life>* and pro-*<choice>* language terms, whereby the latter slogan includes a wide range of issues via its association with pro-*<family values>*.

In a similar passage, the newsletter again hints at the comprehensive quality of *<choice>*, further equating the ideograph with *<family values>*. According to the text,

CFFC [Catholics for a Free Choice] feels that policies which are truly prolife and prochoice are those which ensure that all parents are able to raise their children in a caring [sic] loving environment with physical safety, good education, and sound health, regardless of socioeconomic status. It is in their votes on profamily policies that congressional members put their beliefs into practice, where they express their values and visions through the legislation they create. (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 3)

In this excerpt, the use of *<choice>* is associated with the creation of a nurturing and safe physical environment and access to quality education and health care for children. Accordingly, in this illustration, pro-*<choice>* expands to address issues beyond a woman's *<right>* to an

abortion. By rhetorically linking <choice> with pro-<family> policies, the text broadens contracted articulations of women's reproductive health to include women's <rights> and their children's developmental needs.

The opening sentence stating that CFFC aligns itself with both pro-<life> and pro-<choice> ideologies that support <family values> is a curious rhetorical move. In this example, pro-<life> and pro-<choice> are not positioned as binaries; instead, the language terms are framed as compatible slogans, expressing the need to foster the healthy development of all children. Arguably, this articulation reveals an effort to inject the pro- <life> term with revitalized meaning to minimize the gulf which exists between the <life> and <choice> camps. Rather than having these historically opposed ideographs clash, in this instance, the Latina Initiative presents the <choice> and <life> language terms as complementary, whereby both camps must work to “ensure that all parents are able to raise their children in a caring [sic] loving environment with physical safety, good education, and sound health, regardless of socioeconomic status” (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 3). This rhetorical appeal appears purposeful, as earlier in the text legislators opposed to abortion are referred to as anti-<choice> but never as pro-<life>. Through this articulation, it seems the organization seeks to disassociate <life> from anti-abortion ideology to inject the term with new meaning. In this example, the Latina Initiative links the <life> ideograph with <choice>, elucidating that both terms can be associated with <family values>, whereby the well-being of women and their children is fostered through enjoying a certain quality of <life> complete with women's ability to exercise reproductive <choices>.

By adapting the pro-<life> ideograph in its discussion of <choice>, the Latina Initiative echoes previous rhetorical efforts within the abortion debate, as appropriation of the other

camp's ideographs by pro-⟨choice⟩ and pro-⟨life⟩ proponents is not uncommon (Shrage, 2003). In the past, pro-⟨choice⟩ proponents have utilized the language of the opposition to reveal that ⟨life⟩ without ⟨choice⟩ may not be desirable (Shrage, 2003). For example, in one of its advertisements, the Pro-Choice Education Project provided "a glimpse of what life without choice looks like" by presenting photos of a "geeky" boyfriend on a poster (Shrage, 2003, p. 80). The advertisement concluded: "Not having a choice sucks, doesn't it? Well, being pregnant and not having a choice would suck even more" (Shrage, 2003, p. 81). In this illustration, pro-⟨choice⟩ advocates employed the term of ⟨life⟩ to reveal the imperative of ⟨choice⟩, if self-determination and ownership of one's decisions is to be achieved. Similarly, anti-abortion proponents have historically co-opted the language of ⟨choice⟩. Slogans such as "Life—What a Beautiful Choice" or "Without life there is no choice" demonstrate the use of ⟨choice⟩ to advance the pro-⟨life⟩ cause (Shrage, 2003, p. 79). In these illustrations, rather than situating ⟨choice⟩ as a positive option providing women with free agency, these examples reveal how ⟨life⟩ is also a ⟨choice⟩ and that ⟨life⟩ must be a precondition before a ⟨choice⟩ of any kind can be made. Compared to these previously employed exemplars of appropriation by both camps, the Latina Initiative's rhetorical move is somewhat different, for the text does not argue that either ⟨life⟩ or ⟨choice⟩ must be a prerequisite for the legitimacy or viability of the other language term. Instead, the discourse frames ⟨life⟩ and ⟨choice⟩ as compatible slogans. This suggests that the group seeks to rearticulate these traditionally polarized ideographs by revealing that ⟨choice⟩ is not opposed to ⟨life⟩; in fact, ⟨life⟩ includes ⟨choice⟩, just as making ⟨choices⟩ is part of ⟨life⟩. Through this positioning, both terms can facilitate the safe and healthy development of women and their children, should motherhood be desired, via the advancement of ⟨family values⟩. Thus, ⟨choice⟩ and ⟨life⟩ are both broadened to include

issues beyond abortion, as the multiple, complex concerns impacting the well-being of women, children, and quality parenting are linked with these language terms.

The Latina Initiative's decision to include a critique of lawmakers' voting records by specifically pinpointing the detrimental effects of supporting anti-*<choice>* and thus anti-*<family>* policies is likely an outcome of the political climate at both the state and federal levels. As noted above, politically, 1992 was a significant year, for it not only marked a presidential election but also elections for members of the House and Congress. With the upcoming election looming, the text functions to warn readers that there are substantial implications for nominating pro-*<choice>* or anti-*<choice>* lawmakers and leaders. As such, readers who advocate a pro-*<family>* ideology are encouraged through the organization's rhetoric to vote for pro-*<choice>* candidates, as the extant notion that only anti-*<choice>* politicians support *<family values>* is rearticulated. This is an effective appeal, as *la familia* (the family) is revered within Latina culture (Aguirre-Molina & Molina, 2003). By creating a connection between *<choice>* and *<family>*, Latinas are more likely to support pro-*<choice>* candidates based on their dedication to *<family values>*. Thus, the rhetoric creates a support base for pro-*<choice>* lawmakers by raising the reader's awareness about voting records and the detrimental implications for women and their ability to exercise *<choice>* and parent when anti-abortion *<rights>* representatives secure positions of power.

***<Choice> and HIV/AIDS.*** The text further illumines a holistic agenda of *<choice>* in its discussion of HIV/AIDS. Although *<choice>* is not used in the organization's rhetoric detailing the epidemic, situating the illness within an artifact laden with the language term creates an implicit link between the *<choice>* ideograph and HIV/AIDS. In the newsletter, both the imperative of accurately defining the illness to include symptoms of women and addressing

Latinas' misguided perspectives about their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS are highlighted. The newsletter's articulations regarding this illness serve the purpose of consciousness-raising among readers, which in turn facilitates a call to action.

The text's description of the sex-biased definition of AIDS allows the Latina Initiative to raise readers' awareness regarding possible manifestations of the disease in women, the possibility of misdiagnosis, and the life-threatening implications of this oversight on the lives of women. It also issues a "call to action" encouraging readers to write the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and petition for an expanded definition of the disease to include women's symptoms (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 5). In issuing this call for reader response, the newsletter expresses the inadequacies of the extant AIDS case definition currently limited to the symptoms experienced by men.

More than a decade into the epidemic, clinical conditions specific to women such as cervical cancer and pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) are still not included in the revised AIDS case definition. This omission of these illnesses can have serious repercussions for women. Women may continue to be mis-diagnosed, reducing their chances for early treatment that could prolong their lives. Some studies have shown that women are dying twice as fast as men, but nothing is being done to address this. (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 5)

This passage engages in Latina consciousness-raising as the text illumines that cervical cancer and PID often result from AIDS and, without proper awareness and education regarding these manifestations, women face the risk of having the disease go undetected or misdiagnosed. Also, the excerpt reveals that "women are dying twice as fast as men" (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 5). This further assists in raising Latina awareness, as historically the disease was thought to only affect men who engaged in sex with other men (Ratcliff, 2002). Although in the present day it is generally known that the spread of HIV/AIDS is not limited to this demographic, in 1992 when this newsletter was published, misconceptions of this kind were still pervasive (Barnett & Whiteside, 2003; Ratcliff, 2002). Thus, by violating misconceptions that only gay men are

susceptible to the disease, the organization assists in offering potential life-saving information to its constituents. Additionally, by asserting that women are dying from the illness, the organization's "call to action" is all the more persuasive as the urgency of revising the CDC's oversight is exposed. Notably, one year after the newsletter was released, the definition for AIDS was finally revised to include the gynecological diseases of cervical cancer and PID (Ratcliff, 2002). This suggests the Latina Initiative's willingness to engage in campaigns, such as HIV/AIDS awareness, to address issues other than <abortion rights>. As such, the organization reflects a broad articulation of the <choice> ideograph as it expands to encapsulate HIV/AIDS.

Also related to HIV/AIDS is the text's inclusion of survey data revealing Latinas' perceptions regarding the illness. Through the organization's rhetoric, a strain between cultural expectations of Latinas and safe reproductive health practices is articulated, providing a consciousness-raising opportunity for its readership. The report illumines some significant and surprising findings regarding Latinas' attitudes surrounding HIV/AIDS and their susceptibility to the illness. The poll found that "91% [of Latinas] think they are at no risk of contracting AIDS and therefore believe there is no reason they should be tested" (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 4). This is an alarmingly high percentage, as recent research on Latinas reveals they are seven times more likely to contract HIV than white women (NLIRH, 2005). It appears those surveyed were unaware of their susceptibility to AIDS and the prevalence of the disease among Latinas. Although language terms associated with <choice> are not utilized to frame the message, the organization certainly seeks to address broad issues by embracing holistic concerns affecting both the well-being of women and their families. By sharing these poll results in conjunction with its earlier mention in the text that even more women than men are dying from the disease, the Latina Initiative raises its readership's awareness about the perils associated with the growing

epidemic. This appeal would be more effective, however, if the organization emphasized the use of condoms and other safe-sex practices salient in mitigating the spread of HIV/AIDS. Thus, the Latina Initiative takes an important, initial step toward educating its constituents about the disease, though more could be done to explain the illness to readers.

Overall, the newsletter's emphasis on the importance of HIV/AIDS functions to raise the Latina readership's awareness about the epidemic and problems putting this demographic at risk, both with the CDC's failure to adequately reflect the symptoms of women in its definition of the illness as well as some Latinas' own risky behavior falsely assuming they are not vulnerable to the virus or disease. As such, important consciousness-raising emerges between the rhetors and readers, whereby Latinas are confronted with the insufficiently addressed intersection of gender, sexual health practices, and HIV/AIDS infection.

*Mainstream appeals for <choice>*. Of the rhetoric presented in the Latina Initiative's debut edition of *Instantes*, one section of the text—an article previewing the 1992 March for Women's Lives—distinguishes itself from other sections of the newsletter, as rather than associating pro-<choice> with pro-<family values>, the text situates <choice> within <abortion rights> narrowly defined. Although authorship of the article is not attributed specifically to any group or individual(s), given the audience addressed and the appeals made, it seems the message was crafted by the organizers of the demonstration (e.g., NOW, NARAL, PPFA) to elicit support from the newsletter's readership.

The first indication that this section of the text was not written by the Latina Initiative involves the message's intended audience. The text states:

A powerful way to convince politicians that we will not accept illegal abortion is to come to Washington on April 5<sup>th</sup>, joining hundreds of thousands of others to demonstrate your own commitment to reproductive rights for women. Please urge your organization to send a delegation to the march. A strong showing of

Hispanic and Latina organizations sends a very important message to Hispanic and Anglo political leaders. Please let us know if you/your organization will be participating in this event. (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 6)

This passage clearly functions as a call to action by organizers of the march, whereby “a strong showing of Hispanic and Latina organizations” is encouraged. This suggests that it is these groups, including the Latina Initiative, that are being targeted by the protest’s planners. The final sentence requesting that organizers be alerted as to the group’s interest in attending the event clearly elucidates that the mainstream organizations are soliciting support from Latinas. This is an interesting appeal, as women of color were excluded from planning the 1992 March for Women’s Lives, which prompted the interests and realities of diverse women to be overlooked (Silliman et al., 2004). In light of this, the excerpt suggests that though women of color may not have been included in organizing the event, their participation in the march was desired.

Another reason why this message is likely produced by mainstream organizations and not the Latina Initiative is the rhetoric’s deviation from broader articulations of <choice> apparent in the remainder of the newsletter. Throughout the text, neither the Latina Initiative nor CFFC exhibit rhetoric echoing such a restricted agenda. As such, the following passage previewing the upcoming event diverges from the document’s consistent articulation of <choice> as a <family value>. This is reflected in the following excerpt:

On April 5, 1992 a massive demonstration will be held in Washington to demonstrate to the president, the Congress, the courts, the media, and state legislators that a prochoice majority will not accept the recriminalization of abortion in the United States...1992 promises to be a critical year for reproductive rights issues in the United States...The reality of the election and the intensity of feeling in the electorate about this issue ensures that abortion rights will be a campaign issue. (Latina Initiative, 1992, p. 6)

Based on this passage, it is evident that the originators of the message are keenly aware of the importance of the upcoming election and its effects on women’s reproductive health. This is a timely concern, given that this newsletter was distributed just ten months before voters headed to



the polls in November. Unlike in previous sections, however, the employment of the pro-  
<choice> ideograph is situated within abortion-centric rhetoric, as the document identifies the  
procedure as the sole issue associated with women's reproduction and well-being.

This observation regarding the message's intended audience and appeals is instructive  
for two reasons. First, it illumines dominant pro-<choice> ideology at the time by demonstrating  
differences between the rhetoric of mainstream organizations and the broad agenda of the Latina  
Initiative. Second, it elucidates the Latina Initiative's willingness to promulgate the call of  
traditional organizations by including the appeal for march participation in its *Instantes*. This  
move is likely due to the anti-<choice> climate at the time of the newsletter's release, whereby  
Latina Initiative members recognized the exigencies impacting their demographic—one of which  
was threats to <abortion rights> via legislative attempts to erode *Roe v. Wade*.

**Findings from *Instantes* 1992.** This newsletter employs ideographs consistent with the  
pro-<choice> movement and, consequently, does not embrace language terms paralleling  
<reproductive justice> efforts. Because this bulletin was published in 1992, prior to significant  
<reproductive justice> movement-building, the Latina Initiative's ideographic selection reflects  
the dominant reproductive health slogan of the time: <choice> (Condit, 1990; Gerber Fried,  
1990; Shrage, 2003; Silliman et al., 2004). Despite the fact that the Latina Institute does not  
utilize <reproductive justice> language, the organization's shift toward a comprehensive  
framework is elucidated via three key findings.

First, the Latina Initiative broadens narrow articulations of the language term by  
suggesting that <choice> and <family values> express compatible ideologies. By pairing these  
two ideographs, the Latina Initiative argues that control over one's reproduction is necessary to  
ensure quality parenting and the well-being of women and children. This connection provides an

important reframing of <choice> that strays from pro-<choice> movement ideology—which “has been dedicated to a single issue: ‘choice’ equated with legal abortion” (Gerber Fried, 1990, p. 9). By presenting a holistic agenda addressing abortion, HIV/AIDS, contraception, access to quality education and health care, and resources for proper child-rearing, the Latina Initiative elucidates that <choice> need not be restricted to a single issue. A similar rhetorical move is observed in extant scholarship arguing for the mutability of <choice> and its ability to encompass a broad <reproductive rights> agenda (Hayden, 2009).

The appeal to <choice> as a <family value> is particularly persuasive given the document’s audience at the time and the potential political benefits from such a framing. Because the Latina Initiative’s readership was composed of Latinas and those interested in mobilizing Latinas around relevant reproductive health issues, its constituency’s regard for *familismo* and preserving the family unit aligns well with the <family values> articulated in the text (Aguirre-Molina & Molina, 2003). Thus, the organization effectively creates identification with its audience members by recognizing the reverence paid to *familismo* by the Latina community. This is an important achievement, as this enables the Latina Initiative to rally its constituents to support pro-<choice> candidates in the upcoming congressional elections based on the articulation that pro-<choice> legislators tend to also be pro-<family>. As such, the ideological bridge joining <choice> and <family values> serves to educate and empower audience members to support their families and community by voting pro-<choice>.

Through the articulation of <choice> as a <family value>, the Latina Initiative generates an antagonism between extant anti-<choice> and pro-<choice> ideologies, as the anti-<choice>/<life> ideograph can no longer obscure the connection between fetus and woman when linked with the important pro-<family> qualities of childbearing and childrearing. Consequently,

the anti-*<choice>* claim that the fetus is an autonomous person separate from its mother must be revised when *<choice>* and *<family values>* function to highlight the presence of women and their *<reproductive rights>*. This substantiates the argument that “the Right to Life does not entail the right to use the body of another human being [a pregnant woman]” (Condit, 1990, p. 205). This serves to emphasize the role, agency, and rights of women within discussions of abortion and other reproductive health practices. Furthermore, the presented antagonism suggests that contrary to the *<life>/<choice>* dialectic characteristic of the *<abortion rights>* debate, the two terms can function to promote the concept of a quality *<life>* complete with self-determination through the exercise of *<choices>*. This rearticulation suggests the organization seeks to reinvigorate the ideology accompanying the slogans by framing them in terms of *<family values>*.

Second, the text reveals a holistic framework of *<choice>*, whereby it engages in consciousness-raising among its readership and issues a call to action through its discussion of HIV/AIDS. Although I argue the text could do more to expose the imperative of condom use in preventing the disease, the newsletter offers some potentially life-saving information regarding the manifestations of the illness in women, the risk of misdiagnosis, and the prevalence of the disease among females. Also, the newsletter’s discussion of HIV/AIDS urges readers to pressure the CDC to revise its existing AIDS definition to reflect manifestations of the disease in both men *and* women. In so doing, this demonstrates the organization’s ability to engage in efforts assisting larger campaigns affecting their community—such as HIV/AIDS awareness—by seeking to effect change through small mobilization efforts that solicit a “call for action.” Thus, *Instantes* plays a salient role in not only educating its constituents but also empowering them with the agency to make change.

Third, by including an appeal seeking to rally Latinas to support the 1992 March for Women's Lives, the Latina Initiative exposes key differences between its rhetoric and that of mainstream organizations at the time. During the period of this newsletter's release, NOW, NARAL, and Planned Parenthood set their sights on defending *Roe v. Wade* by contesting Supreme Court rulings in *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, *Rust v. Sullivan*, and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. One means for bringing awareness to these legislative challenges was the 1992 March for Women's Lives, which centered on recognition of preserving <abortion rights>. By including the rhetoric of mainstream organizations calling for march participation by Latinas in its newsletter, the Latina Initiative illumines both the dominant pro-<choice> <abortion rights> rhetoric of the time as well as its own willingness to further the mainstream agenda of these organizations. This rhetorical move by the Latina Initiative suggests the group's acknowledgment that action was required to combat the substantial legislative efforts jeopardizing *Roe v. Wade* at the time.

In sum, these three findings offer insights into the organization's agenda-setting and the exigencies facing the Latina community in the early 1990s. These observations illumine the group's interest in persuading Latinas that its conception of <reproductive rights> aligns with the beliefs and values of their communities. Moreover, the newsletter reviewed functions as a tool for consciousness-raising as well as for mobilization in response to the upcoming 1992 election and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The presented observations and arguments assist in understanding the evolution of the NLIRH's rhetoric and its early efforts to establish a broadening framework amidst single-issue discourse on <abortion rights> narrowly defined (Gerber Fried, 1990; Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004). In the remaining sections of this chapter, I explore other newsletters which chronicle salient rhetorical transformations within the

organization, as the Latina Initiative sheds its affiliation with CFFC to embody its new identity as the NLIRH.

***Instantes: August 1995***

The second text explored is a newsletter released in August 1995. This document differs from the organization's first *Instantes* in that it was written when the group was no longer affiliated with CFFC. As a result of this shift, the group exchanged its former title (i.e., the Latina Initiative) for the agency's current name—the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (NLIRH)—which “more clearly reflects [the agency's] mission and goals” (NLIRH, 1995, p. 2). Because this is the first newsletter released since the Latina Institute's organizational makeover and its debut as an autonomous group, analysis of this document offers instructive rhetoric on the organization's early ideological underpinnings. In this text, the artifact provides an overview of the NLIRH's organizational structure; policy directives; mission statement; guiding principles; and pro-choice statement. In addition, the overarching theme of the newsletter centers on HIV/AIDS awareness and exposing biased research practices which exclude consideration of the realities and reproductive health concerns of Latinas. The text also addresses the role of the Catholic Church in hindering efforts to mitigate the spread of the illness.

Unlike the first installment of *Instantes*, which contained articles written only in English, the content within this newsletter is provided in both English and Spanish. The change to a bilingual format likely reflects the NLIRH's autonomy after severing its sponsorship ties with CFFC, for the termination of this affiliation was accompanied by the emergence of revitalized group priorities to better serve the Latina community (NLIRH, 1995). Given that Spanish is the primary language spoken by nearly half of Latinas and Latinos living in the United States

(García, 2003; Pew Hispanic Center, 2004),<sup>17</sup> providing a bilingual newsletter assists in ensuring the Latina Institute's rhetoric is accessible to all members of its readership. This dual presentation of information advances the organization's aims of raising awareness about Latina <reproductive rights> issues among its constituents and facilitates community mobilization, as readers of *Instantes* have an opportunity to consider the group's rhetoric regardless of linguistic preference or ability.

**Preview of findings.** Within this bilingual newsletter, articulations of <choice> are central in outlining the organization's multi-issue campaign, which I argue facilitates consciousness-raising and fundraising appeals. The concerns addressed by the NLIRH reflect the political and public health climate in the United States during the period of the newsletter's release, as <abortion rights>, definitions of <choice>, and HIV/AIDS received substantial discursive recognition. Similar to the first text reviewed in this chapter, the present bulletin centers its efforts on addressing Latinas' guiding ideology and needs regarding their <reproductive rights>, particularly with HIV/AIDS.

**Context.** In the middle of the 1990s, growing pressure from women of color activists prompted some mainstream feminist organizations to broaden existing agendas, which focused on a woman's <right to choose> in terms of abortion only (Gerber Fried, 1990; Palczewski, 2010). One source of the demand for traditional groups to broaden articulations of <choice> emerged during the 1994 United Nations International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Egypt (Silliman et al., 2004). At the event, participants established "a program to advocate for women's empowerment and for the expansion of global family planning

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<sup>17</sup> In 2002, the Pew Hispanic Center and the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation amalgamated efforts "to conduct a comprehensive national survey of the Hispanic population" with a focus on assimilation and language (Pew Hispanic Center, 2004). Of those Hispanics surveyed, 47 percent reported Spanish as their primary language, 28 percent specified they were bilingual, and 25 percent reported English as their primary language.

and reproductive health services (Planned Parenthood, 2011). It was during this meeting that the Women of Color Coalition for Reproductive Health Rights (WOCCRHR) formed the Women of Color Delegation Project, representing the interests of African American, Asian, Latina, and Native American women from six women of color groups in the United States (Silliman et al. 2004).<sup>18</sup> Through their rhetoric, the Project's members "made clear that many women in the US did not enjoy reproductive rights" because of racism, classism, sexism, and political injustice (Silliman et al., 2004, p. 42).

One year later, in 1995, NARAL, NOW, Planned Parenthood, WOCCRHR, and numerous other organizations represented the United States at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China. At this Conference, women of color from the United States again voiced their concerns regarding the overlooked needs and realities of diverse women. Despite these efforts and the convergence of both women of color and traditional pro-  
<choice> groups at the Conference, mainstream feminist organizations largely maintained a limited focus on <abortions rights>, although small adjustments to broaden agenda-setting did occur (Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004).

The mainstream groups which attempted to resituate <choice> within abortion *and* other <reproductive rights> included Planned Parenthood, NARAL, and the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights (RCAR) (Palczewski, 2010). The move to embrace a more holistic <reproductive rights> philosophy was reflected in the latter two organizations' name changes. RCAR became the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) and, in 1993, NARAL transformed itself into the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (Gerber Fried, 1990; Palczewski, 2010). NARAL explained its name change was necessary "to more

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<sup>18</sup> The Latina Institute was not one of the groups represented by the Women of Color Delegation Project, nor did it send delegates to the 1994 United Nations International Conference on Population and Development.

accurately reflect the organization’s comprehensive approach to reproductive health policy” (NARAL, 2006, p. 2). That same year, the agency began its campaign for “Real Choices” to illuminate the guiding principles of its revitalized mission: “to preserve access to abortion while working to enact policies to make abortion less necessary” (NARAL, 2006, p. 3).

In the political and public health spheres, the years 1994 and 1995 witnessed heightened HIV/AIDS awareness and efforts by the Clinton administration to mitigate the spread of the illness. In 1994, AIDS was determined to be the primary cause of death in the 25-44 age demographic; this deadly trend persisted in the following year (HIV Policy Program, 2004). Also in 1994, the National Institute of Health (NIH) established guidelines requiring that women and “minorities” be included as subjects in applications for AIDS research grants (HIV Policy Program, 2004). One year later, federal government interest in the epidemic prompted President Clinton to create the Presidential Advisory Council for HIV/AIDS. Also in 1995, the commander-in-chief hosted the first White House Conference on the illness (HIV Policy Program, 2004; Shipman, 1995). Through these efforts, the administration was credited with: providing funds for AIDS research, backing key legislation, and sponsoring AIDS awareness advertisements (Shipman, 1995). The news media also played a role in informing the public about the epidemic, for in both 1994 and 1995, *ABC World News* aired stories about famous HIV positive individuals both living and deceased (HIV Policy Program, 2004). This exposure produced a public dialogue about whether individuals’ HIV status should be disclosed or remain private.

**Analysis.** In this installment of *Instantes*, Aracely Panameño, the group’s first director, highlights the Latina Institute’s ideology, after its disaffiliation with CFFC. The NLIRH leader is credited with having “developed the organization to more broadly define its mission to include a



broad array of health issues that spoke to the diversity of Latina/o communities in the US” (Silliman et al., 2004, p. 231). In this edition, the effort to articulate the needs of the NLIRH’s constituents in wide-reaching terms is apparent in Panameño’s rhetoric, whereby <choice> is frequently employed. Through this ideograph, the text elucidates the flexibility of <choice> via appeals for a holistic <reproductive rights> framework and HIV/AIDS awareness directed at its Latina constituency.

*The comprehensiveness of <choice>.* In the NLIRH director’s “prochoice statement” articulating the philosophy of the organization, the group’s leader highlights key issues, revealing a broad approach to women’s reproductive health.

The National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health affirms that Latinas are aware of and can make informed choices about their reproductive health by having access to comprehensive, accurate information and services including, but not limited to, the following areas: sexuality education, sexually transmitted infections (including HIV/AIDS), family planning and contraception, abortion, treatment for diseases of the reproductive health system (including breast and cervical cancer), sterilization, perinatal care, and infertility care. (NLIRH, 1995, p. 3)

The passage outlines a framework consistent with <reproductive justice> rhetoric based on the breadth of issues addressed and an expanded focus beyond <abortion rights>. In this excerpt, pro-<choice> encapsulates education, access to contraception and abortion services, resources for treating diseases impacting reproductive health, sterilization, and prenatal and infertility care. Notably, Panameño explains that <choice> includes but is “not limited to” these areas (NLIRH, 1995, p. 3). Thus, presumably a host of other issues are also subsumed by the ideograph, further revealing that the slogan must and does expand to account for Latinas’ complex realities and intersectional positioning. Furthermore, the second line of this passage hints at Latinas’ agency, empowering them to make “choices” about their own reproductive health when “accurate information and services” are available (NLIRH, 1995, p. 3). This links the language term with

women's reproductive empowerment broadly defined and suggests that the <choice> language term possesses sufficient mutability to encompass the organization's holistic <reproductive rights> agenda. Thus, given the recognition of multiple needs in its "prochoice statement," it is clear the NLIRH seeks to broaden articulations of <choice> to better reflect its philosophy, policy objectives, and the needs of its constituency.

In addition to noting the salient concerns embodied by the <choice> ideograph, Panameño problematizes and disavows extant articulations which narrow the slogan's meaning.

Be it right or wrong, there is a perception that the prochoice movement is a single issue movement: pro-abortion. Therefore, we felt it was necessary for us to define the comprehensiveness of our agenda based on our experience. (NLIRH, 1995, pp. 2-3)

In this example, the NLIRH director, instead of rejecting the pro-<choice> language term, seeks to redefine it by challenging hegemonic discourse engendered by mainstream feminist organizations and news media that frames <choice> in terms of <abortion rights> (Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004). Panameño suggests that defining pro-<choice> as a single-issue does not reflect the NLIRH agenda and, as such, the meaning of the slogan must be broadened to encapsulate a host of issues extending beyond a woman's termination of her pregnancy. This argument is derived experientially, as Panameño notes that the organization's articulation of <choice> is "based on our [the Latina] experience" (NLIRH, 1995, p. 3). Elaborating on this claim, the rhetor asserts: "The NLIRH definition [of pro-<choice>] reflects the comprehensiveness and complexities of reproductive health in the Latino community" (NLIRH, 1995, p. 3). The director reaffirms her earlier statement that <choice> must be based on Latina experiences by highlighting "the comprehensiveness and complexities" of exigencies facing the Latino demographic. Together, these excerpts reveal that compressed definitions of <choice> inadequately reflect the experiences of Latinas. This functions to create a sense of shared identity

based on Panameño's intimation that Latinas' day-to-day realities are insufficiently addressed by narrow articulations of <choice>. As a result, the NLIRH director's rhetoric effectively evokes feelings of groupness, encouraging identification based on readers' common values and lived realities.

Given the organization's possible motivations for disseminating this *Instantes*, the articulation of <choice> in terms of identification is significant. Because this early newsletter was administered predominately to Latinas interested in the Latina Institute's work during conferences and LOLA training sessions, presenting a broad definition of <choice> facilitates consciousness-raising for readers. In so doing, Latinas are asked to reassess dominant views of <choice> in exchange for a holistic ideology, capable of reflecting the intersectional issues impacting their communities. Because language is central in shaping human understanding of the world and our guiding ideologies (DeLuca, 1999; McGee, 2005), resituating <choice> as a broad term violates traditionally accepted articulations of the slogan, encouraging readers to associate their own <reproductive rights> needs with the ideograph. Because one purpose for the newsletter is to solicit contributions, as is evident from the donation form contained in the text, Panameño appeals to a larger group of possible donors by linking <choice> with a wide-reaching agenda. While traditional feminist groups are likely to rally around <choice>, for women of color and other organizations on the mailing list, this ideograph can be off-putting due to its roots in single-issue <abortion rights> advocacy (Gerber Fried, 1990; Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004). Thus, by associating <choice> with women's <reproductive rights> broadly defined, Panameño attracts a greater number of the group's constituents, thus establishing a more substantial support-base for donations. By tailoring her message to resonate with the majority of *Instantes* readers by modifying extant definitions of <choice>, Panameño's

rhetoric advances the aims of her organization by raising Latina awareness regarding salient <reproductive rights> issues in terms of <choice> and by presenting a holistic agenda appealing to potential donors.

<*Choice*> as *inclusive of HIV/AIDS*. Although the text's discussion of HIV/AIDS is devoid of key <reproductive rights> ideographs, the NLIRH's rhetoric offers important insights into pressing reproductive health concerns for Latinas and the group's interest in issues beyond abortion. As such, by combining discussions of revitalized pro-<choice> ideology with discourse on the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the same newsletter, the language term and public health illness are linked. Through this connection, the newsletter suggests that avoiding and/or coping with HIV/AIDS requires the ability to make reproductive health <choices>. This echoes a similar articulation asserted in the Latina Institute's pro-<choice> statement reviewed above.

With regard to the growing spread of the illness, the artifact discusses the striking similarities between the epidemics of syphilis during the nineteenth century and AIDS in the present day; through this articulation, the text facilitates consciousness-raising among its readership. The text draws the following parallels between the two public health crises: "Both have been seen as the result of sexual transgression, have generated moral panic, and are sexual epidemics" (NLIRH, 1995, p. 1). In this instance, the organization highlights its willingness to defy ill-conceived judgments that the illness should be viewed as a "transgression" and a moral wrong-doing. The newsletter pinpoints the Catholic Church as playing a detrimental role in producing the unfounded moral judgments frequently associated with diseases transmitted via sexual activity. The rhetors write: "Events from the past, such as the Catholic Church's opposition to condoms, invented in 1846, and to any other artificial form of protection against the disease [syphilis], remind us too much of our present situation" (NLIRH, 1995, p. 1). As

evidence for this claim, the authors explain that a Catholic bishop in Puerto Rico at the time opposes the use of condoms in combating the spread of AIDS—a position which the rhetors believe reveals that “too much energy has been spent on fighting humans and not the disease” (NLIRH, 1995, p. 1). In keeping with this argument, the rhetors conclude:

Fighting the disease and not among ourselves would make way for new approaches and health strategies that are just and equal, founded in scientific knowledge instead of fanaticism, prejudice and stereotypes. (NLIRH, 1995, p. 1)

Rather than alleviating the epidemic’s effects, the text suggests members of the Church actually facilitate the spread of the illness through oppressive dictates limiting reproductive <choice> and fostering “fanaticism, prejudice and stereotypes” (NLIRH, 1995, p. 1). This articulation places culpability on the Church for hindering progressive health practices by prohibiting the use of condoms—a key reproductive resource essential in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS (Aguirre-Molina & Molina, 2003; NLIRH, 1995). Because the readers of this newsletter are overwhelmingly Latina—some of whom are practicing Catholics—the text exposes the imperative of combating the disease by using condoms and other preventive measures, thus defying the mandates of the Church. This argument inspires consciousness-raising, whereby Latina readers are called upon to question religious ideology and scrutinize the motives of Church officials. This is a significant move, as for some Latinas (but certainly not all) conceptions of *marianismo*, rooted in conservative Catholic Church doctrine and conceptions of women as obedient and chaste, are directly challenged by the organization (Aguirre-Molina & Molina, 2003). This generates an antagonism, as a tension between Latinas’ cultural linkage with religion and the realities of the present day pose an underlying strain, whereby readers are asked to question the potentially deadly policies of the Catholic Church and cast aside unrealistic, oppressive ideology dictating that women must be obedient and sexually pure. As such, the

rhetoric asks readers to violate extant expectations regarding the Church and *marianismo* to further their own reproductive health.

A question which remains unanswered is why the central theme of the newsletter is HIV/AIDS awareness. The impetus for this rhetoric is multi-faceted and appears to be fueled by both the exigencies of the Latina community and the recognition of the illness as part of a public health crisis. Together, these two factors provide a backdrop for the NLIRH to attract attention to the vulnerability of its constituents amidst public discourse surrounding the epidemic.

Given that Latinas are far more likely to contract HIV/AIDS than their white sisters and often lack the resources for proper health care, the effects of this illness on the group's constituency is certainly one motivation for centering rhetorical efforts on the epidemic (NLIRH, 2005a). As noted in the context section preceding my analysis of this newsletter, in 1994 and 1995 the leading cause of death for people ages 25-44 was HIV/AIDS (HIV Health Policy, 2004). Because Latinas and Latinos living in the United States tend to represent the young adult to middle-aged age demographic, this statistic has a particularly significant impact on their communities (García, 2003). In addition to the specific health repercussions for Latinas, concerns regarding the illness were prevalent in public sphere discourse via policy initiatives and other efforts to combat the disease. At the time of the newsletter, the NIH had recently announced a mandate that women and minorities be included in clinical HIV/AIDS trials. Because some health organizations were on the NLIRH's mailing list back in 1995, the organization's rhetoric serves as an appeal for HIV/AIDS research to include Latinas as participants in clinical trials.

The NLIRH's focus on the epidemic is also employed to call attention to the needs and reproductive health challenges of Latinas in response to the federal spending initiatives and

policy efforts made by the Clinton administration. After all, just four months after the newsletter's release, President Clinton assembled the first White House Conference on HIV and AIDS (HIV Policy Program, 2004). Given this context, the Latina Institute chooses to feature HIV/AIDS in response to the larger public dialogue at the time, thereby exposing the substantial effects of the illness on Latinas and their community. This is carried out in an effort to enhance support for the issue not only by Latinas but also by others sympathetic to the NLIRH's cause.

**Findings from *Instantes* 1995.** Given the passages examined in this newsletter, it is clear that Panameño and other Latina Institute members seek to expand the pro-*<choice>* ideograph to reflect a broader framework for agenda-setting that includes family planning, education, prenatal care, necessary resources for proper childrearing, HIV/AIDS awareness, and several other issues and resources. The presented articulations bolster claims that *<choice>* can adequately expand to encompass a comprehensive agenda. When comparing the first and second newsletters, the focus from *<choice>* as a *<family value>* to *<choice>* as a comprehensive term inclusive of HIV/AIDS is evident. This suggests that the organization tailors its messages to both acknowledge Latina community beliefs and to address societal inadequacies contributing to the vulnerability of its constituency. In this text, the NLIRH raises awareness among its readers regarding HIV/AIDS and the problematic religious dictates associated with the illness. As a result of this articulation, the organization's rhetoric serves to convince Latina readers that its goals are in-keeping with their values and *<reproductive rights>* concerns, as it concurrently capitalizes on the public discourse circulating around key issues affecting the Latina community.

Based on the excerpts explored in this newsletter, the *<choice>* language term possesses a protean quality, whereby the Latina Institute stretches the mutability of the slogan to encompass broad articulations of women's reproductive health. While this engenders an important

antagonism challenging existing public consciousness surrounding pro-<choice> ideology, the organization does not explicitly embrace a human <rights> framework. It is in the subsequent newsletter that the NLIRH begins to reflect this perspective by incorporating the language terms of <reproductive freedom> and <reproductive justice> in conjunction with its already broad use of <choice>.

### ***Instantes*: December 2003**

The third text reviewed in this investigation is a newsletter released in December 2003. This installment of *Instantes* is, like the aforementioned newsletter, written in both English and Spanish. Similar to the previous texts, this volume coincides with a key period in the organization's history. In 2001, the group closed its main office in Washington, D.C. due to a lack of sufficient funding (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, August 3, 2010; NLIRH, 2009). Two years later, in 2003, the organization reopened its doors, this time in Brooklyn, New York, under the direction of a new executive director, Sylvia Henriquez (NLIRH, 2003, 2009). Given this timeline, the newsletter reviewed in this section is "the premiere edition of the new *Instantes*" released after the reopening of the organization (NLIRH, 2003, p. 1). As such, the text provides insights into the guiding ideology of the NLIRH after two years of formal group inactivity.<sup>19</sup> The newsletter includes these topics, issues, and themes: a word from the executive director rallying support for the organization's renewed efforts; a section soliciting donations; an outline of the Latina Institute's health and dignity campaign; a discussion of the aims of an affiliated <reproductive justice> group: the Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights; the utility of using emergency contraception; and a preview of the upcoming 2004 March for Women's Lives.

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<sup>19</sup> Latina activists and community board members of the Latina Institute engaged in limited <reproductive rights> movement activities during the two years that the organization ceased formal operations (NLIRH, 2003).



**Preview of findings.** This newsletter, like the *Instantes* before it, offers a broad articulation of issues subsumed by the NLIRH agenda. In this instance, however, the organization frames its messages using both <choice> and <reproductive justice> language terms to unveil a human <rights> perspective for addressing <reproductive rights>. The utilization of these ideographs is instructive as it reveals: the ability of both language terms to encompass a holistic framework, as the NLIRH gradually shifts its focus from addressing Latina cultural beliefs and values to articulating social and political demands in response to the systemic injustice encountered by its constituency; the organization's movement-building strategy for the upcoming March for Women's Lives; and the featuring of <abortion rights> as human <rights>.

**Context.** This *Instantes* was released just months before the March for Women's Lives, held on Sunday, April 25, 2004. Seven organizations representing both traditional and women of color groups co-sponsored the march: the NLIRH, the Black Women's Health Imperative, NOW, NARAL-Pro-Choice America, Planned Parenthood, the Feminist Majority, and the American Civil Liberties Union (Hayden, 2009; Silliman et al. 2004). The protest marked the fourth demonstration for <reproductive rights> in the nation's capitol; the years 1986, 1989, and 1992 marked other similar marches (Gerber Fried; 1990; Hayden, 2009; Silliman et al., 2004). Unlike previous demonstrations, however, women of color organizations were included in the organizing process, but only after demanding that the interests of diverse women be included (Hayden, 2009). SisterSong's Loretta Ross, members of the NLIRH, and others petitioned mainstream organizations for the march's name to be changed so that the event might better reflect the needs of all women (Condit, 1990; Gerber Fried, 1990; Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004). With this insistence from women of color, the original name of the demonstration—the March for Freedom of Choice—was altered to the March for Women's

Lives on December 16, 2003 (NOW, 2003). In describing the name change, NOW provided this rationale:

The name change reflects the urgency of the issue and the huge diversity of the groups co-sponsoring the march. The new name better represents the broad agenda of those who support women's reproductive health, justice, and freedom, as well as access to family planning and abortion. "The March for Women's Lives" addresses the assaults on women's rights and lives, both nationally and globally, that restrict women's access to reproductive health services and limit women's ability to have a child or to end a pregnancy. (NOW, 2003, paras. 1-2)

One impetus fueling the 2004 march was the uncertain terrain of <reproductive rights> under the leadership of anti-<choice> President George W. Bush (Hayden, 2009; Saletan, 2003; Shrage, 2003). Even though his predecessor, former President Clinton, conceived of <choice> in narrow terms, the new commander-in-chief worked to further limit women's reproductive options (Hayden, 2009; Saletan, 2003; Shrage, 2003). Through changes in language to the State Children's Health Insurance Program in 2002 and efforts to implement the Unborn Victims of Violence Act throughout his first term in office, President Bush facilitated arguments for the personhood of a fetus (Hayden, 2009; Saletan, 2003).

As the upcoming presidential election of 2004 neared, concerns over Supreme Court Justices' divided views regarding abortion and *Roe v. Wade* prompted interest from both the anti-<choice> and pro-<choice> camps (Hayden, 2009). With the news that Justice Sandra Day O'Connor might relinquish her position in the Court, the potential vacancy spurred supporters of <choice> to rally those sympathetic to their cause (Hayden, 2009). As such, in 2004, acknowledgment that women's <reproductive rights> rested on perilous ground stimulated activist efforts.

**Analysis.** The rhetoric contained in the text situates Latinas' reproductive health and well-being within a human <rights> framework using <choice>, <reproductive freedom>, and

<reproductive justice>. As the organization embraces the language of <reproductive justice>, a slight alteration in rhetorical focus emerges. Earlier appeals rely heavily on <choice> and are directed at Latinas to persuade them that the group's quest for <reproductive rights> aligns with their values, beliefs, and lived realities. While this effort persists in the newsletter, the rhetors also insist that social <justice> be achieved by mitigating poverty and discrimination which restrict women's self-determination, respect, and dignity. This brings the organization's growing interest in orienting its messages toward effecting systemic, societal change to the forefront. In my analysis, I explore the framing of <reproductive rights> as human <rights>; the equating of <choice> with <reproductive freedom>; the language terms used to present the 2004 March for Women's Lives for movement-building purposes; and the imperative of viewing <abortion rights> as human <rights>.

*<Reproductive rights> are human <rights>*. The Latina Institute emphasizes certain exigencies affecting its constituency within a human <rights> framework. One illustration of the group's utilization of this perspective is evident in the organization's mission statement. The text explains:

NLIRH works to ensure the fundamental human right to reproductive health for Latinas, their families and communities through education, advocacy and coalition building. NLIRH locates reproductive health within a broader social justice framework that seeks to bring an end to poverty and discrimination and affirms dignity and the right to self-determination. (NLIRH, 2003, p. 2)

In this instance, the organization frames its discussion of women's reproductive health around the assumption that <reproductive rights> are human <rights> (Gerber Fried, 1990; Silliman et al., 2004). Additionally, the NLIRH situates its agenda using a "social justice framework" rooted in self-determination (NLIRH, 2003, p. 2). These articulations are significant, as they parallel guiding assumptions of the <reproductive justice> cause which, at the time of the newsletter's release, was gaining momentum after a decade of early movement building (ACRJ, 2010a;

Gerber Fried, 1990; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004). The Latina Institute's framing of reproductive health as a "human right" and "social justice" concern reveals a language shift from the group's earlier newsletters, as these terms were not previously utilized (NLIRH, 2003, p. 2). Coupled with this alteration is the organization's emphasis on poverty and discrimination in its mission statement—two issues not featured in the agenda-setting of earlier texts (Latina Initiative, 1992; NLIRH, 1995). This suggests that as members embrace a broad human <rights> perspective, they also put forth appeals demanding social and political transformation. This modification signals a slight but salient change, as the organization's use of a social <justice> framework somewhat redirects the group's focus from internal issues (e.g., Latinas' HIV/AIDS and contraceptive beliefs) to external ones (e.g., systemic barriers that preclude Latinas' ability to make <choices>).

The pairing of human <rights> and social <justice> issues with the well-being of Latinas persists throughout the text. According to the newsletter, there is a

need to preserve the full range of freedoms that we [Latinas] enjoy. The Latina Institute believes that there are two basic ingredients upon which all human rights are based; these are the right to self-determination and right to be treated with respect and dignity. For these reasons, the Latina Institute supports the right of every Latina to be in charge of her own life, to determine if and when to have children and, to seek the full range of reproductive health options available. These health options include access to quality gynecological care, family planning and contraception, fertility treatment, and abortion services. (NLIRH, 2003, p. 3)

This passage employs language paralleling <reproductive justice>, as it situates women's reproductive health in terms of "freedoms" and "human rights" (NLIRH, 2003, p.3). Moreover, the excerpt reflects the <reproductive justice> movement agenda by discussing the importance of securing the following <rights>: to enjoy autonomy over one's decision through self-determination, respect, and dignity; to decide if and when to become mothers; and finally, to gain access to a host of reproductive health resources. With regard to this final <right>, the passage

underlines several services necessary for positive reproductive health outcomes for women and their children. This reflects a holistic agenda that is inclusive of abortion but also encapsulates quality gynecological care, family planning, and fertility treatment. Although issues affecting the well-being of women and their children vis-à-vis <family values> and HIV/AIDS are mentioned in previous texts, featuring self-determination, respect, and dignity as “ingredients” in securing key health options demonstrates a small shift in the organization’s rhetoric (Latina Initiative, 1992; NLIRH, 1995). Rather than directing attention to the values and beliefs of Latinas regarding these health care services, the group argues that self-determination and other fundamental <rights> are the basis for exercising <reproductive freedom>. In this way, the Latina Institute orients its rhetoric more toward addressing external factors hindering its constituency’s ability to make <choices> and less on consciousness-raising for Latinas. This shift also intimates that in order to <choose> from a full range of options, certain “ingredients” must first be in place. Thus, in embracing a social <justice> framework, the NLIRH appears to increasingly direct its appeals toward transforming societal structures limiting Latinas’ <choices> by framing self-determination, respect, and dignity as preconditions.

Analysis of this passage is instructive based on its use of ideographs reflecting pro-<choice> and <reproductive justice> movement ideology. Although, the excerpt is devoid of specific references to <reproductive freedom> and <reproductive justice>,<sup>20</sup> the mention of the “full range of freedoms” in the first line of the passage articulates the reproductive health needs of women using language compatible with <reproductive freedom>. Similarly, the text’s mention of “human rights” and “the right of every Latina to be in charge of her own life” illumines discourse in line with the <reproductive rights> ideograph, whereby <reproductive rights> are

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<sup>20</sup> The newsletter states that the article continues on page 10, but this page is missing from the artifact I received from Smith College’s archives, which houses the Latina Institute’s earliest rhetorical documents. Thus, my analysis of this section is based on an incomplete version of the original text.

human <rights> (NLIRH, 2003, p. 3). In addition to these <reproductive justice> language terms, <choice> is also alluded to in the passage. For example, the text argues that a Latina woman possesses the “right...to be in charge of her own life” (NLIRH, 2003, p. 3). Given this human <rights> articulation, the importance of self-determination and the ability to make <choices> is illuminated. Although the language term of <choice> is not used explicitly to frame the message, the assertion certainly reflects language consistent with the ideograph. In a similar vein, the excerpt’s mention of accessing “the full range of reproductive health options available” also conjures up notions of <choice> when able to pursue available “options” (NLIRH, 2003, p. 3). This suggests that though the <reproductive justice> and human <rights> platform is embraced by the organization, remnants of the <choice> language term persist. Also in this passage, <life> is used in conjunction with women’s <right> to self-determination. Unlike its traditional dialectical positioning in the <abortion rights> debate, in this case, <life> is framed as offering women the capacity “to be in charge” (NLIRH, 2003, p. 3). The text resituates this term beyond the <life>/<choice> abortion binary, revealing the slogan’s ability to exist away from a limited anti-<choice> ideology. Through exploring the implicit use of ideographs in this excerpt, the rhetoric clearly expands beyond traditional single-issue <abortion rights> discourse to reflect a holistic social <justice> and human <rights> framework for change, whereby the ability to seek self-determination, respect, and dignity must be achieved through <reproductive freedom> via <choices> made in a woman’s <life>. Ultimately, as the organization seeks to employ a <reproductive justice> and human <rights> framework, it cannot divorce its rhetoric from hinting at pro-<choice> language used in the organization’s past.

*Equating <choice> with <reproductive freedom>.* Though the previous sections of analysis centered on the group’s framing of <reproductive rights> in terms of human <rights>

and social <justice>, the text's direct employment of the <choice> slogan also requires attention. As in earlier newsletters, this volume highlights the mutability of the pro-<choice> ideograph, as it expands to encompass a broad Latina reproductive health agenda.

While the previously reviewed passage detailed the implied use of <reproductive justice> and pro-<choice> movement language terms, the Latina Institute is explicit with this blending of ideographs when it addresses the work of one of its sister organizations, the Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR). The text argues that “the preservation of reproductive freedom” is incremental and, consequently, is realized “one step at a time” (NLIRH, 2003, p. 4). The newsletter also suggests that the meaning of pro-<choice> must be expanded to better reflect the diverse needs and realities of Latinas. The newsletter asserts:

As Latinas, we approach reproductive health from many different perspectives and believe that being pro-choice also means being concerned about birth control, HIV/AIDS, and sexuality education as well as having safe access to abortion. (NLIRH, 2003, p. 4)

In this excerpt, pro-<choice> functions to articulate the goals of COLOR and reveals that the language term possesses sufficient elasticity to embody the group's multi-issue campaign to preserve <reproductive freedom> “one step at a time” (NLIRH, 2003, p. 4). By mentioning birth control, HIV/AIDS, sexuality education, and abortion, the artifact elucidates that pro-<choice> is not limited to a single issue; rather, it has the potential to include other reproductive health concerns and services beyond abortion. Furthermore, in the two aforementioned quotations, the <reproductive freedom> and pro-<choice> ideographs are both used. As such, the language terms function rhetorically to articulate the same broad agenda for <reproductive justice>. This is significant, for as noted before, while some women of color activists (Gerber Fried, 1990; Silliman et al., 2004) and communication studies scholars (Palczewski, 2010) argue that

<choice> does not possess sufficient elasticity to adequately address the complex intersectional positioning of women living on the margins, the newsletter suggests that the slogan can, indeed, reflect a holistic <reproductive justice> ideology.

The text continues to situate pro-<choice> language within a larger <reproductive freedom> framework throughout its discussion of the NLIRH's sister organization. According to the newsletter, COLOR identifies itself as a "pro-choice group...working to improve the reproductive rights and overall health of Latinas" (NLIRH, 2003, p. 4). COLOR simultaneously embraces the pro-<choice> and <reproductive rights> language terms to articulate its overarching quest. As a result of this framing, <choice> is associated within a larger context of reproductive health concerns and is also connected with the <reproductive rights> language term, reflective of <reproductive justice> movement rhetoric. In another example revealing a similar discursive move, whereby <choice> expands to express a broad agenda, the text states:

At the heart of COLOR's work is the fundamental belief that if Latinas are aware of their reproductive choices, they will be empowered to make healthy choices concerning their bodies. (NLIRH, 2003, p. 4)

This quotation links awareness of reproductive "choices"—presumably realized through education and knowledge of available resources—with achieving positive reproductive health outcomes for Latinas via their ability to make "healthy choices" (NLIRH, 2003, p. 4). In this excerpt, Latina empowerment and agency is essential in leading healthy lives and seeking desired options. As such, <choice> swells to accommodate a range of reproductive <choices> broadly-defined concerning women's bodies; this is a comprehensive articulation that implicitly includes access to abortion; family planning and contraceptive resources; comprehensive sex education; the ability to decide if and when to have children; pre- and post-natal care; and access to affordable and quality health care that is linguistically and culturally sensitive. Because the scope of issues and needs involved when women are allowed to make <choices> about their own



bodies and reproductive health is vast and individualized, the mutable quality of the <choice> ideograph is stretched to encapsulate a comprehensive framework for women's <reproductive freedom>. This illustrates the “fluidity and flexibility of the term necessary to account for the different meanings <choice> holds in women's lives” (Hayden, 2009, p. 129). This finding directly disputes <reproductive justice> movement arguments claiming the language term cannot adequately address the lived realities of low-income women of color and other marginalized groups. Additionally, it challenges existing dominant public consciousness which defines <choice> as a single issue. By generating these two substantial antagonisms—both with women of color and mainstream group ideology—the newsletter substantiates the assertion that <choice> serves to articulate the needs of diverse women, as it expands beyond abortion to encompass the wide-reaching <reproductive freedom> of women.

*The 2004 March: <Choice> and women's <lives>.* The newsletter persists in revealing a comprehensive <reproductive rights> framework through an advertisement announcing the upcoming “March for Freedom of Choice,” whereby the blending of <reproductive justice> and <choice> language terms again occurs. The rhetoric in the *Instantes* addressing the event offers insights into the tension experienced between mainstream and women of color groups at the time, as both factions sought to advance <freedom> for women during a political climate which threatened <choice> and <reproductive justice>. While the organization uses the “March for Freedom of Choice” advertisement previewing the demonstration, it employs the terms of <reproductive justice> and <reproductive freedom> in its description of the event following the announcement. The text explains:

Latinas experience severe health problems, lack access to the full range of reproductive options available and are the targets of punitive and coercive policies that seek to restrict Latinas' reproductive freedom. **The Latina Institute will be Marching for Reproductive Justice.**” (bold in original) (NLIRH, 2003, p. 7)

In this passage, both <reproductive freedom> and <reproductive justice> are used in lieu of pro-<choice>. Through this articulation, the organization again demonstrates an interest in addressing external threats to Latinas' <reproductive rights> by acknowledging societal constraints which allow "severe health problems," insufficient "access to the full range of reproductive options," and "punitive and coercive policies" to fester. In highlighting these realities, the NLIRH suggests that the larger societal structure must change if the needs of its constituency are to be realized. Furthermore, this excerpt hints that when these oppressive limitations are in place, enjoying "the full range of reproductive options" is impossible. As such, the ability to make <choices> is only feasible once these constraints have been eliminated. Because the organization relies on <reproductive justice> ideographs to relay this argument, <choice> emerges as a secondary term reliant on first securing <reproductive justice> via liberation from systemic subjugation.

Because this newsletter was published sometime in December 2003 and the official name change of the march occurred on the 16<sup>th</sup> of this same month, the use of <choice> in the advertisement (and not in the text describing the demonstration) likely reflects that the protest's name alteration had yet to occur when the *Instantes* went to print. By bolding "**The Latina Institute will be Marching for Reproductive Justice**" in the text detailing the event, the organization appears to resist the use of <choice> in the march's formal name (NLIRH, 2003, p. 7). This suggests that the organization believes the language term may be inadequate for conveying the <reproductive justice> realities and systemic barriers encountered by Latinas. Given that the Latina Institute worked closely with the Black Women's Health Imperative and SisterSong's Loretta Ross in articulating the demands of women of color preceding the demonstration (Hayden, 2009), there was likely substantial pressure from the NLIRH's African-American sisters to articulate the march in <reproductive justice> terms. Additionally, because

other women of color groups were on the Latina Institute's mailing list at the time, it was important for the NLIRH to demonstrate a unified front regarding its agenda-setting and language use for the march. It is curious—given the pressure exerted by women of color groups at the time to alter the name of the demonstration—that the Latina Institute neither explicitly identifies weaknesses associated with the name of the march nor calls for the demonstration to be renamed in its newsletter. Perhaps this is because, by December 2003, mainstream feminist groups planning the march (e.g., Planned Parenthood, NARAL, and NOW) had yet to receive the organization's newsletters. These more traditional organizations were added to the Latina Institute's mailing list in 2004 as alliance-building between women of color and feminist groups increased in anticipation of and in response to the march.

In keeping with the goals of <reproductive justice> and <reproductive freedom>, the document suggests that several reproductive health agenda items be demanded at the march. These are: funding for culturally competent health education and screening programs; funding for culturally and linguistically competent affordable family planning and prenatal care services; comprehensive sexuality education; universal health care coverage for those without insurance; and the repeal of the Hyde Amendment (NLIRH, 2003). These aforementioned concerns include both culturally specific issues as well as the economic needs of Latinas, revealing the need to deconstruct societal barriers infringing upon Latinas' <reproductive rights>. Moreover, a broad agenda paralleling the comprehensive aims of the <reproductive justice> movement is apparent, as abortion access and federal funding is listed among several other issues. Because this newsletter was released about four months prior to the March for Women's Lives, the organization's move to publicize the needs of its Latina constituency is well-timed. By clearly outlining its goals and the resources and conditions needed to advance the <reproductive rights>

of Latinas, the NLIRH makes known its viewpoints and holistic agenda, as well as its desire to participate in the march.

As a result of highlighting the specific exigencies encountered by Latinas, the organization creates a sense of groupness, whereby the NLIRH's constituents identify with shared struggles and interests. Given this rhetorical move, it is clear that the target audience of the message is Latinas and other supporters on the organization's mailing list. The document galvanizes readers to participate in the march's Latina delegation by stating: "Join us! Because what is at stake is the fundamental human right to dignity and self determination!" (NLIRH, 2003, p. 7). So that readers may support the event, the text offers a form where interested individuals can sign up to join the NLIRH delegation, help organize the group's delegation, or "sponsor a Latina" to march in the demonstration (NLIRH, 2003, p. 7). As such, the document functions to rally support for the organization's cause, while it simultaneously positions itself as a key organizer for the demonstration.

*<Abortion rights> are human <rights>*. In outlining its "Health and Dignity Campaign," the Latina Institute addresses a host of issues affecting its constituents, in-keeping with its comprehensive philosophy and acknowledgment of <reproductive rights> as human <rights>. Within this broad articulation, however, the text features abortion as a particularly salient issue. This is likely in response to the anti-abortion climate created by the Bush administration, which prompts the recollection of the painful, deadly abortion struggles experienced by Latinas in the past. Through this articulation, the text functions as a tool for consciousness-raising among its readership, whereby the organization suggests that reelecting President Bush in the election the following year brings with it significant repercussions for women's <reproductive rights>. As

such, the NLIRH encourages its readership to carefully consider its voting habits in the 2004 election cycle.

While the newsletter highlights several concerns relevant to Latina's <reproductive rights>, including prenatal care, health care insurance coverage, cervical and breast cancer, HIV, access to culturally sensitive health care professionals, gynecological care, family planning and contraception, fertility treatment, and abortion, only the latter topic receives two full paragraphs.

The text reads:

Contrary to popular belief and despite its status as a taboo subject within the Latino community, Latinas in the United States do access abortion services. Each year in the United States, there are nearly three million unintended pregnancies resulting in 1.4 million abortions. Women from many different backgrounds – women of all races and ethnicities, religions, income levels and marital statuses have chosen to terminate their unintended pregnancies. Latinas are no exception. In 1995, 322,000 pregnancies occurred among Latinas [in the United States] and of those, 73,000 resulted in abortion. (NLIRH, 2003, p. 3)

This excerpt uncovers the substantial need for access to safe and affordable abortions for all women, particularly Latinas. This articulation offers support as to why preservation of the procedure is significant when seeking <reproductive freedom> given its high demand. The statistics in the excerpt reveal that nearly one-fourth of Latina pregnancies are terminated; thus, safe and affordable access to this procedure is a legitimate concern for the organization. This figure elucidates that, contrary to what some may believe about Latinas' religious beliefs and reproductive practices, many in this demographic group do, indeed, utilize abortion services.

By placing discussions of abortion within a host of other issues presented in its "Health and Dignity Campaign," the organization effectively (re)situates the reproductive health service among several other issues affecting human <rights> and social <justice>. Through this articulation, abortion is not conceived of in terms of the dialectical <choice>/<life> debate but within a range of <reproductive rights> concerns relevant to the Latina demographic. This assists

in counteracting sentiments that treat abortion as a “taboo subject” by demonstrating that this procedure is a necessary component of the reproductive health of its constituency.

In addition to seeking to deconstruct the taboo nature of abortion, another possible motivation for the Latina Institute’s prioritizing of this procedure over other <reproductive rights> issues is due to Latinas’ painful and deadly history of seeking to secure access to the procedure. The text uses the tragic death of a young Latina to reinforce and defend the call for unrestricted, safe access to the reproductive health service.

Latinas have also paid with their lives, when a safe, legal abortion was unavailable to them. Many of us remember the story of Rosie Jimenez, a Latina college student who was unable to pay for an abortion from a licensed health provider and thus became the first woman to die from a back alley abortion after the passage of the Hyde Amendment, which prohibited public funding for abortion. (NLIRH, 2003, p. 3)

This passage reveals that the need for public abortion funding is a legitimate concern for Latinas, based on the past struggles experienced by their sisters—some of whom, as in the case of Jimenez, “paid with their lives.” As such, within a human <rights> and social <justice> platform, emphasis on abortion and its deadly implications exposes how denying public funding for the procedure is a clear human <rights> violation. Similarly, lack of abortion access is detrimental to achieving <reproductive freedom> for women, as the procedure “provides the most effective control over human reproductive labor” (Condit, 1990, p. xi).

In conjunction with the historical and cultural exigencies faced by the Latina community, contemporary policies threatening to erode abortion access also no doubt contribute to the NLIRH’s decision to highlight this issue in its unveiling of its health and dignity campaign. This rhetorical effort responds to anti-<abortion rights> policies supported by the Bush administration, as well as fears that the upcoming 2004 presidential election would usher in not only the anti-abortion president once more, but also a conservative Supreme Court, already

divided on issues regarding the preservation of *Roe v. Wade*. Thus, given this climate, concerns over access to affordable, legal, and safe abortions by the Latina Institute respond to the looming election cycle and trepidation surrounding the implications should an unfavorable outcome result.

Through exploring Latinas' past struggles with <abortion rights> violations and the anti-woman political climate produced by the Bush administration, the privileging of abortion over other issues seems well-founded. In light of the upcoming 2004 presidential election season, the NLIRH's rhetorical move associating <abortion rights> with Latinas' deadly history and the procedure's present-day restrictions raises the awareness of newsletter readers revealing that four more years of a Bush presidency risks replicating past atrocities. As such, the organization issues an appeal for voter participation in the upcoming election cycle, whereby action must be taken to avoid the potentially deadly repercussions likely to result from a Bush victory.

**Findings from *Instantes 2003*.** Based on the newsletter explored in this section, the group's multiple challenges and goals are reflected in its persuasive appeals. Significantly, although the health care services addressed by the organization exhibit no remarkable changes from the 1995 newsletter, these <reproductive rights> issues are no longer primarily directed at resonating with the beliefs and values of Latinas. Instead, appeals are increasingly geared toward discussing external factors impacting these concerns, as societal strictures frequently limit the self-determination of this demographic group. This suggests that as the organization embraces <reproductive justice> language, its focus on <reproductive rights> issues yields a heightened interest in addressing systemic oppression hindering women's liberation. These societal barriers include poverty, discrimination, and other obstacles to self-determination, respect, and dignity.

Also in this text, the number and types of language terms used to express key reproductive health concerns undergoes a transformation. As such, the issues of the NLIRH are, for the first time, situated within a human <rights> and social <justice> framework using the <reproductive justice> and <reproductive freedom> ideographs. While in some cases these language terms supplant <choice>, the slogan maintains a presence throughout the newsletter, as it is employed both implicitly and explicitly to articulate the organization's goals. Echoes of this ideograph remain, as the group utilizes rhetoric intimating the salience of making <choices> regarding women's reproductive health and well-being. On other occasions, the term is employed directly to encapsulate the organization's comprehensive reproductive health agenda. This is evident particularly in the article discussing the NLIRH's sister organization—COLOR. This finding suggests that though the organization embraces key <reproductive justice> ideographs, it is difficult to disassociate its rhetoric from <choice>, as the term is capable of expressing a holistic agenda compatible with the NLIRH's goals.

The section of the bulletin addressing the “March for Freedom of Choice” documents the tension created by the demonstration's name and conflicting ideologies between mainstream and women of color groups. In this case, the Latina Institute embraces the <reproductive justice> and <reproductive freedom> ideographs in lieu of <choice>. Because of the organization's alliance with other women of color organizations at the time, the NLIRH's willingness to employ <reproductive justice> ideographs reveals its desire to align with these less-mainstream groups by signifying a collective commitment. As such, it is rhetorically efficacious for the organization to avoid <choice> to create solidarity with other women of color receiving its newsletter who advocated <reproductive justice>. Ideographic theory assists in explaining this phenomenon, as McGee (2005) asserts that certain situations will call for a “god-term” to emerge among



ideographs that “are meant to be taken together” in a cluster (p. 461). In the present investigation, this cluster of terms includes <reproductive freedom>, <reproductive justice>, <reproductive rights>, and <choice>. The theorist argues that a “god-term” may come to the foreground when the situation surrounding the slogan creates an exigency revealing that one ideograph is better suited to express an ideology than others in its group (McGee, 2005, p. 461). In the case of the March for Women’s Lives, it seems that <reproductive justice> and <reproductive freedom> function as “god terms.” As such, in some cases these ideographs are framed as preconditions of <choice>, as the ability to exercise a range of reproductive health options depends on the eradication of certain oppressive constraints via efforts to secure human <rights>. This finding reveals the group’s initial move to position <choice> as a secondary language term to <reproductive justice>.

In articulating <abortion rights> as human <rights>, I suggest the organization’s privileging of the procedure over other issues is a result of three factors—the desire to reframe the taboo nature of this reproductive health service in the Latina community; Latinas’ past trials with barriers to the procedure; and the Bush administration’s erosion of women’s <abortion rights>. With the 2004 presidential election the coming year, the linkage of past, deadly injustice experienced by Latinas because of a lack of safe, affordable, legal access to the procedure and the present-day menace of abortion restrictions creates an opportunity for consciousness-raising. Through this process, the organization calls upon readers to engage in the upcoming election cycle so that the deadly events of the past are not repeated during the next four years with the reelection of President Bush. The NLIRH’s rhetorical decision to feature abortion above other issues in light of the past and present realities surrounding Latinas and the procedure suggests

that even within a holistic framework, it may be necessary to highlight one issue (or issues) over others to effect change in certain situations.

Ultimately, <choice> and <reproductive freedom>/<reproductive justice> exist simultaneously in the organization's rhetoric and are framed within a larger human <rights> and social <justice> framework. Though certain issues and ideographs may be featured at different times depending on the situation, the mutable quality of these slogans remains intact, whereby all the terms expand to express the Latina Institute's broad-reaching agenda. That written, a shift in the hierarchy of the <reproductive justice> and <choice> language terms is apparent, whereby insinuations that <choice> is a secondary slogan to <reproductive justice> emerge. This restructuring of the ideographic hierarchy grows more pronounced in the final newsletter reviewed in this chapter.

***Instantes: March 2005***

The fourth and final newsletter explored in this chapter is dated March 2005. Nearly one year after the pivotal movement event of the 2004 March for Women's Lives, this text provides insights into the rhetorical effects of the demonstration and the Latina Institute's response to its role in organizing the protest. As such, included in the newsletter is a message from executive director Sylvia Henriquez recounting the March for Women's Lives and her organization's involvement with the demonstration. In addition, the bulletin also discusses the human <right> to <reproductive freedom> and Latina community mobilization updates. Also included in this text is an overview of the efforts of Mujeres Latinas en Acción, a Latina <reproductive justice> group in Chicago's predominately Mexican Pilsen neighborhood, as well as a definition of what constitutes the movement's ideal activist or "La Mujer Maravilla" (translated "Wonder Woman").

**Preview of findings.** In this newsletter, three over-arching findings emerge. First, the Latina Institute argues that both <choice> and <reproductive rights> can and must expand from narrowly defined frames to articulate women’s <reproductive rights> broadly constructed. Second, the organization’s executive director capitalizes on the 2004 March for Women’s Lives by building on the momentum generated by the demonstration to create a renewed sense of commitment to <reproductive justice> movement-building. Third, the Latina Institute’s rhetoric suggests that within its wide-reaching campaign for <reproductive freedom>, certain situations engender exigencies dictating that some issues be privileged over others—in this case abortion.

**Context.** Between December 2003—when the previously reviewed newsletter was released—and the publication of the current text, several key events unfolded within the feminist movement and beyond. First and foremost, the March for Women’s Lives was held in April 2004 on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.; in attendance were more than one million people (Hayden, 2009). The demonstration was a pivotal moment in the movement’s history, as it was the first time a mass <reproductive rights> march convened to articulate the needs of diverse women beyond narrow articulations of <abortion rights> (Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010). As a result of this demonstration, women of color and mainstream groups engaged in important alliance building, synergizing their efforts to better address the issues and interests impacting all women (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, Mar. 16, 2011; Palczewski, 2010).

Important political changes also transpired, as President George W. Bush was reelected to the country’s top office in 2004 (Weissert & Weissert, 2006). With his continued leadership, concerns that conservative, anti-<choice> Supreme Court Justices would fill the Court’s two vacant seats prompted NARAL Pro-Choice America to initiate a “Choose Justice” campaign to warn of the potential threats to *Roe v. Wade* (NARAL, 2006; Planned Parenthood, 2011). The

fears of <abortion rights> supporters were confirmed with the appointment of Justice John Roberts in 2005 followed by Justice Samuel Alito the subsequent year (Planned Parenthood, 2011). With these additions to the Supreme Court, the President's abortion ban of 2003, which was the first legislative move since *Roe v. Wade* to criminalize the procedure, was upheld by the Court in 2007 (Planned Parenthood, 2011). It was decisions like these which typified the anti-<choice> leadership and legislative control at the time of the newsletter's release.

**Analysis.** In recollecting the 2004 March for Women's Lives, NLIRH executive director Sylvia Henriquez characterizes the march as a tremendous success. She writes: "1.15 million women and men march[ed] in Washington, DC for reproductive rights. This was said to be the 'most diverse pro-choice march in history'" (NLIRH, 2005b, p. 1). Through the text's discussion of the demonstration and trajectories for future agenda-setting, continued movement efforts that recognize broad articulations of <choice> and <reproductive rights> are encouraged; the executive director capitalizes on the momentum generated by the march to rally continued support for <reproductive justice> efforts; and the exigency to prioritize the preservation of <abortion rights> is exposed.

***Broadening <choice> and <reproductive rights>.*** Henriquez reflects upon the demonstration by focusing on the language of <choice> and the importance of expanding the term to reflect a social <justice> perspective. She explains:

The leadership emerging from the Latina community understands that in order to make change, all pro-choice activists must shift their frame. We have to center our movement building work in a social justice framework – a framework that seeks to bring an end to poverty and discrimination and one that affirms human dignity and the right to self-determination. This means recognizing that preserving the right to a safe abortion is as important as dismantling discriminatory, coercive, and punitive policies that prevent Latinas and other women of color from choosing to be mothers. (NLIRH, 2005b, p. 1)

In many ways, this passage echoes the human <rights> and social <justice> perspective presented in the previously reviewed newsletter from 2003. Henriquez argues that mitigating poverty and discrimination as well as establishing an environment fostering dignity and self-determination are goals that must be embraced. This claim also reflects the previous bulletin, whereby addressing these external systemic issues are essential for women's <reproductive rights>. In this excerpt, the executive director calls for pro-<choice> supporters to broaden their agenda-setting so that <choice> may reflect the needs of "Latinas and other women of color" (NLIRH, 2005b). Given this articulation, <choice> includes not only a woman's <right> to an abortion but also her <right> to determine if and when to have children. This is often an argument presented by <reproductive justice> activists and is typically framed in terms of <reproductive freedom> not <choice> (Gerber Fried, 1990; Silliman et al., 2004). Though it is not explicitly clear that the Latina Institute is composed of these "pro-choice activists," Henriquez's specific focus on the "Latina community" and the inclusive use of "we" in the excerpt suggests that the NLIRH and its constituents are integral in the effort to reshape and broaden articulations of <choice> (NLIRH, 2005b, p. 1). This is an interesting appeal, for rather than stating that pro-<choice> activists should discard their language terms in favor of <reproductive justice> slogans, Henriquez argues that <choice> is viable when conceived of in broad terms within a social <justice> perspective; as previously observed in this chapter, this implies that <choice> is possible only after societal barriers mitigating one's ability to exercise a range of options is achieved.

The executive director's association of the march with a call for rearticulating <choice> is likely not coincidental, as a key point of disagreement leading up to the demonstration was whether <choice> could encapsulate the intersectional positioning of women of color (Hayden,

2009). Because the NLIRH was one of the organization's instrumental in changing the name of the march so that <choice> would not be in the title (Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010), it is especially interesting that Henriquez selects the language term to articulate the Latina Institute's future <reproductive rights> efforts. Notably, rather than arguing against the use of <choice>, as might be the assumed action from a leader of a women of color organization, Henriquez instead suggests that the language term can expand to encompass a broad array of issues, including and extending well beyond abortion. Therefore, as in several past examples of the organization's *Instantes* rhetoric, <choice> possesses sufficient mutability to encapsulate a holistic framework capable of capturing the needs of diverse Latinas.

Much like Henriquez's call for the expansion of <choice>, a similar argument is made regarding <reproductive rights>, whereby the text asserts that the ideograph must expand from the single issue of abortion to address broad concerns.

Too often the words reproductive rights elicit narrow images of abortion battles in the courts. While these battles are critical, the failure of the public imagination to put them in a broader context and the lack of an integrated analysis inclusive of economic and social rights among reproductive rights advocates hinders reproductive rights work[er]s in the U.S. from harnessing the transformative potential of human rights. (NLIRH, 2005b, p. 3)

Through a human <rights> perspective, the excerpt argues that the <reproductive rights> slogan is often employed to articulate a narrow agenda. This argument is atypical of most <reproductive justice> movement claims, for while <choice> is often critiqued for its narrow connotations, the same argument is not usually presented with <reproductive rights>. This assertion, in conjunction with Henriquez's previous claim that <choice> is able to and must expand, suggests that regardless of which <reproductive justice>/pro-<choice> ideograph is selected for articulating movement ideology, the language term must be situated within a social <justice> framework that addresses intersectional concerns. This challenges <reproductive justice> claims

that only select ideographs—namely <reproductive freedom> and <reproductive justice>—can embody a holistic agenda. Thus, a tension emerges, whereby the organization’s rhetoric in this newsletter hints that <choice> and <reproductive rights>, although frequently articulated narrowly, possess the ability to reflect a comprehensive set of issues; as such, these slogans can and must swell to ensure the needs of women of color and low-income individuals are not overlooked.

*<Reproductive justice> movement building after a major milestone.* Through her recollections, Henriquez employs the March for Women’s Lives as a platform to encourage continued efforts to mobilize Latinas and their sisters to further the <reproductive justice> cause and spark societal change. As a result of this articulation, a sense of groupness emerges among *Instantes* readers. She explicates:

It was a moment of historic magnitude as Latinas turned out in record numbers and we stood together demanding reproductive justice. However, that was one day in our collective history—while significant, one day alone can not [sic] and did not change the fate of our reproductive freedom. Rather, it is new leadership, base-building and powerful progressive alliances that are working everyday [sic] to forge a united vision around reproductive justice that will ultimately create social change. (NLIRH, 2005b, p. 1)

In this passage, the executive director employs <reproductive justice> and <reproductive freedom> to craft her argument calling for future collaborative efforts necessary for effecting social change. Henriquez’s employment of these terms serves to articulate Latinas’ reproductive health and overall well-being using a social <justice> platform which emphasizes coalition-building and societal transformation. Accordingly, through her description of the event, the executive director seeks to build on the momentum and energy generated by the march by creating a sense of groupness that encourages similar efforts in the future. Her language assists in engendering feelings of shared purpose by framing her message in terms of “progressive

alliances” and “a united vision” capable of yielding “social change” (NLIRH, 2005b, p. 1). Furthermore, by linking her call for renewed efforts with the <reproductive justice> movement milestone of the 2004 March for Women’s Lives, the leader of the Latina Institute appeals to emotion by engendering feelings of pride, shared commitment, and triumph through this association. As a result, the rhetor cultivates further support for future collaborative efforts via this sense of groupness and common achievement. Moreover, this appeal is oriented toward addressing issues requiring societal transformation, further revealing that the incorporation of <reproductive justice> and <reproductive freedom> language terms signals an increased focus on changing accepted societal practices restricting Latinas’ <reproductive rights>.

As Henriquez continues to develop the organization’s goals and capitalize on the energy and momentum created by the march, she empowers new leadership to inject the <reproductive justice> movement with a progressive approach that seeks innovative solutions to the problems and challenges encountered by Latinas and their immigrant sisters. She writes:

New leaders are also more seasoned activists who have been on the frontlines in their communities fighting poverty, fighting anti-immigrant policies or fighting for the right to universal health care but are new to the reproductive justice movement. (NLIRH, 2005b, p. 1)

This passage reveals the importance the organization places on challenging economic barriers via poverty and health care funding. This emphasis again illumines the move from focusing predominately on Latina beliefs and values to systemic issues precluding <choice>; this shift in direction from internal to external concerns suggests that NLIRH members increasingly center their efforts on advocating for societal change, rather than on transforming dominant Latina community ideology. Also in the excerpt, anti-immigration sentiment is mentioned; of the previously reviewed newsletters, this marks the first time that immigrant issues are introduced when articulating the organization’s philosophy. The group’s inclusion of immigration here and



not in prior texts demonstrates the agency's continued efforts to recognize the intersectional positioning of Latinas—a growing number of whom are immigrants—by broadening its agenda to address this prejudice. It also again reveals that the organization's focus is not so much internally directed at the Latina community as it is externally oriented, as the need to combat anti-immigrant sentiment requires a change in dominant societal views if immigrant Latinas are to enjoy the <right> to self-determination fostered by the social <justice> platform. In addition to highlighting poverty, health care, and immigration, the text addresses the imperative of “new leaders” who have experienced injustice directly. This is a key articulation presented by <reproductive justice> movement activists who argue that it is those with experiences living on the margins who are best equipped to identify the challenges and realities of their own communities (ACRJ, 2010b; Gerber Fried, 1990; Silliman et al., 2004). This functions to empower individuals on the organization's mailing list who are members of human <rights> coalitions, immigration advocacy groups, and other Latino agencies to join the ranks of the <reproductive justice> movement and emerge as “new leaders” to revitalize the cause for women's <reproductive freedom>.

In conjunction with outlining the importance of welcoming new leaders to the cause, Henriquez also emphasizes the imperative of a social <justice> approach that addresses several reproductive health issues, including abortion. Through this articulation, the executive director highlights the imperative of unrestricted access to the procedure, revealing the value placed on <abortion rights> by the organization.

[W]e are building a solid, unified vision and movement that places reproductive health rights in a broader social justice framework that includes a full women's health agenda, but that also remains committed to keeping abortions safe, legal and accessible. (NLIRH, 2005b, p. 1)

Though key ideographs are not used in this excerpt, the executive director makes clear the comprehensive aims of the organization—which she specifically notes include abortion. As was observed in the previously reviewed newsletter, emphasis on this procedure demonstrates the NLIRH’s interest in ensuring that Latinas have barrier-free abortions. Also, instead of outlining specifically what resources, services, and issues are included in “a full women’s health agenda,” the reader is left to infer that these concerns are wide-reaching. Meanwhile, in the case of abortion, not only does Henriquez acknowledge this procedure separately from the vague health agenda she mentions, but she also notes that abortion must be kept “safe, legal and accessible” (NLIRH, 2005b, p. 1). In so doing, the NLIRH executive director creates an antagonism within the <reproductive justice> movement by suggesting that while a holistic social <justice> framework is essential, abortion should not be obscured by other issues. Some women of color activists would challenge this articulation with the rejoinder that this concern is not as vital as the systemic issues of poverty and racism and would likely claim that Henriquez’s argument reflects the rhetoric of <abortion rights> (Gerber Fried, 1990; Silliman et al., 2004). In light of this criticism, while the Latina Institute embraces the <reproductive justice> platform, it is not willing to relinquish its claim that abortion is a particularly salient issue for the demographic it represents. As mentioned earlier in my investigation, this focus can be attributed to a number of factors, including the taboo sentiments associated with the procedure; Latinas’ historical struggle with deadly “back-alley” abortions; their high pregnancy rates which are associated with a high demand for abortions; and the threats to *Roe v. Wade* during George W. Bush’s administration (NLIRH, 2005b; Silliman et al, 2004). Encouraged by these motivations, the organization provides a framework for agenda-setting around key issues, as the movement shifts its gaze from

the 2004 March for Women's Lives to future efforts; significantly, abortion is central in this articulation for continued movement-building.

**Findings from *Instantes* 2005.** In this newsletter, the organization calls for both <choice> and <reproductive rights> to expand beyond narrow articulations limiting the terms to abortion narrowly defined. While such a claim is common for <choice>, this call is not typically issued for <reproductive rights>. In the text, the rhetor does not argue that one ideograph is preferable to another, but rather that all the language terms can and must expand to reflect a holistic agenda. Importantly, this articulation is presented within a human <rights> frame emphasizing <reproductive freedom>. Through this perspective, although <choice> is not fully supplanted by <reproductive justice> ideographs, it is relegated to a secondary role dependent upon the eradication of political, economic, and social ills such as poverty and prejudice.

In addition to language terms and their ability to reflect the organization's philosophy, the newsletter employs the 2004 March for Women's Lives as a means for encouraging future movement efforts. As such, the NLIRH's executive director uses the energy and momentum generated from the demonstration to issue an appeal for coalition-building. This is achieved by creating a sense of groupness around a shared future purpose and through appeals to emotions regarding the success of the historic march. Additionally, in seeking new leaders from beyond the <reproductive justice> movement, Henriquez calls upon readers of *Instantes*, many of whom have personal experience with other social justice issues, to join the cause. This effectively revitalizes the movement's support base by encouraging leaders with diverse backgrounds and experiences to inject the <reproductive justice> movement with new perspectives rooted in a holistic philosophy recognizing self-determination, respect, and dignity. Also in outlining its efforts for the future, the text elucidates that securing <abortion rights> is a key campaign of the

NLIRH. I argue this can be attributed to taboo feelings surrounding the procedure; Latinas' deadly past experiences with abortion restrictions; their high pregnancy rates with a correspondingly high demand for the health service; and the anti-abortion climate produced by President Bush and his administration.

### **Closing Thoughts**

In closing, I wish to clarify my findings in this chapter. The dates of dissemination for the four newsletters reviewed mark pivotal moments during the organization's history and, as such, offer instructive insights into the rhetoric of the NLIRH at significant turning points in its ideological development. Through analysis of the foci and themes of each *Instantes*, important articulations elucidating Latinas' reproductive health needs and the agenda-setting of the NLIRH emerge. These texts serve a variety of functions crucial in the organization's development. Through funding appeals; consciousness-raising about policies, health practices, and risk factors; calls for action through community mobilization, petitioning the CDC, and encouraging march participation; and empowering new leaders to emerge in the movement, the *Instantes* newsletters serve as a powerful organizing tool for the NLIRH.

My analysis of the four newsletters reveals the diachronic use of <choice> and the emergence of the <reproductive justice> ideographs of <reproductive rights>, <reproductive freedom>, and <reproductive justice> to form a synchronic cluster with <choice> (McGee, 2005). Through this evolution of language term use, the organization's dual goals of 1) orienting efforts internally to identify with and influence Latina attitudes and 2) directing appeals externally to change societal structures restricting self-determination are apparent. Examples of these systemic barriers include, anti-immigration sentiment, poverty, insufficient health care funding, and other political and economic issues. As the Latina Institute alters its language term

usage to reflect the <reproductive rights> movement's preferred slogans of <reproductive freedom> and <reproductive justice> in its third and fourth newsletters, a subtle move from an internal to an external orientation is visible. As such, the NLIRH slightly shifts its focus from Latinas' beliefs and values regarding <reproductive rights> to structural phenomena precluding the <choices> of constituents. For example, the first two newsletters largely center efforts on persuading Latinas that <abortion rights> and other reproductive health issues are essential to their well-being. This appeal is evident in the NLIRH's framing of <choice> as a <family value>, which aligns the former slogan with Latinas' belief in *familismo*. A similar move is apparent when the rhetors argue that the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS must be seriously considered by Latinas, especially because of the Catholic Church's role in facilitating the spread of the illness by condemning condom use. Through this appeal, the organization seeks to reshape its constituency's ideology regarding the religious institution and its oppressive dictates. Meanwhile, as the organization aligns its language with a social <justice> and human <rights> perspective, issues such as poverty and discrimination come to the forefront. Mitigating these systemic problems requires that the organization go beyond seeking to alter Latinas' values by arguing that society, itself, must undergo a transformation to make real <choice> possible for marginalized groups.

In conjunction with these dual goals, the issues the NLIRH seeks to address tend to reflect and respond to public discourse as well as pro-<choice> and <reproductive justice> movement rhetoric regarding key issues circulating during the time of each newsletter's release. As an illustration, in 1995, HIV/AIDS received substantial attention because of news media reports and several efforts by the Clinton administration (HIV Policy Program, 2007). In response to this, the main theme of the *Instantes* published that same year is HIV/AIDS and

centers on the effects of the illness on the health and well-being of Latinas. In another example, the newsletters published in 2003 and 2005 center on <abortion rights> issues in light of the anti-abortion political climate engendered by the George W. Bush administration and awareness of the implications of the 2004 election cycle. Similarly, the organization is also influenced by <reproductive justice> movement discourse and its women of color sister organizations. This is evident in the NLIRH's preview of the upcoming "March for Freedom of Choice" in its 2003 bulletin, whereby the Latina Institute uses ideographs consistent with <reproductive freedom> to reveal its solidarity with other women of color groups which opposed mainstream organizations' use of <choice> in the event's original title (Hayden, 2009). Through these rhetorical responses, it is clear the NLIRH is impacted by and appropriates both external and internal movement stimuli.

My examination of the texts reveals that <choice> can expand to encapsulate a broad framework for Latina reproductive health. This ability to swell from its originally narrow confines is supported by extant rhetorical scholarship on <choice> suggesting that the language term can become unfixed due to its mutable quality (Hayden, 2009). As such, throughout its development, the organization utilizes <choice> in every newsletter to articulate its comprehensive goals and agenda-setting.

While I discover that the language term encapsulates a holistic framework in the NLIRH's rhetoric, <choice> is often framed as dependent on <reproductive freedom>. More specifically, despite the prevalence of the slogan in *Instantes*, the final two texts reviewed in this chapter suggest that without <reproductive justice> and <reproductive freedom> in place, there is no opportunity to exercise <choice>. This is because "choice has come to be intimately connected to the possession of resources" (Solinger, 2001, p. 6). As such, <choice> hinges on the

<reproductive justice> language terms which seek to mitigate poverty, discrimination, and other debilitating, interconnected systemic issues. This framing has important implications, as situating these <reproductive rights> ideographs within a social <justice> agenda affects the other slogans sharing the synchronic dimension, as <choice> becomes secondary to <reproductive freedom>. As such, the question becomes not what is the “best” meaning of <choice> or any other ideograph associated in its synchronic cluster, but rather what is its relationship with other language terms and the corresponding effect on ideological beliefs given those associations (McGee, 2005, p. 461). In this case, <reproductive justice> and <reproductive freedom> emerge as “god-terms” or prerequisites necessary for making <choices>.

Women of color activists, including some members of the Latina Institute, agree with the perspective that securing real <choice> is not possible for women who lack the ability to exercise their own <right> to self-determination (Gerber Fried, 1990; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004). In keeping with this perspective, while there are some people who have access to <choices>, namely white, upper-middle class women, less privileged individuals do not. Accordingly, the concept of <choice> is useful for those who possess sufficient funds to <choose>; however, for low-income individuals this option is unavailable (Solinger, 2001). Thus, by seeking to address poverty via <reproductive freedom> this inequity is mitigated. Many who share this viewpoint also argue that <choice> fails to adequately expand to reflect the lived realities of marginalized women. My findings both corroborate and challenge these critiques of <choice>. While my observations substantiate the claim that for <choice> to be possible, certain systemic barriers such as poverty and discrimination must be removed, my findings do not reveal that the language term lacks the mutability to expand to encapsulate a holistic framework. Disagreement over the mutability of this language term is significant, as “it is precisely the effort

to control the meaning of ideographs that forms long-term power struggles” (Condit, 1990, p. 68). Accordingly, because <choice> and other <reproductive justice> language terms possess the power to reflect and shape key social commitments (McGee, 2005), the use of these slogans has implications for movement and non-movement members alike, as the well-being of women is directly connected with symbolic action addressing <reproductive rights>.

Given my observations presented in Chapter Two, I hope to further explore and elaborate on these findings in the subsequent chapter. I turn to this task, as I analyze more recent rhetoric from the Latina Institute.



## CHAPTER THREE

### ANALYSIS OF ARTIFACTS: HEALTH CARE REFORM 2010

#### Artifacts, Audience, and Analysis

**Artifacts.** The four texts reviewed in this chapter surfaced in 2010 amidst a flurry of public debate surrounding the Obama administration's efforts to reform the extant United States health care system. Although only two of the artifacts examined make explicit reference to this legislation, all of the documents entertain topics that are directly linked with health care issues—namely via immigrant and <abortion rights>. As noted in Chapter One, these are the two concerns that the NLIRH claims are the driving forces for its agenda-setting (V. Bayetti Flores, personal communication, August, 3, 2010; J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, August 3, 2010).

The artifacts in Chapter Three reflect the organization's diversification of its information dissemination as the Internet and other technology continues to transform the methods for information-sharing and -seeking. As such, *Instantes* are no longer the primary means of communication for the Latina Institute. In this chapter, one reviewed text is a handbook which addresses methods for advancing <reproductive justice> in immigrant communities. The booklet is administered during the Latina Institute's community mobilization events and is also disseminated at women's <rights> conferences attended by both mainstream and women of color groups. The remaining three documents examined in this chapter are from the NLIRH and the Reproductive Health (RH) Reality Check Web sites. This latter online source publishes information and analysis fostering <reproductive rights> via blog posts from numerous contributors, including Latina Institute members; those who frequent the Web page include journalists and reproductive health advocates (RH Reality Check, 2011). These three online texts

address the following issues: the 37<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* and the call for revitalized <abortion rights> rhetoric; demands for comprehensive immigration reform to rally support for participation in an upcoming immigrant <rights> march; and a response to the passage of health care reform, condemning the legislation's abortion violations.

**Audience.** Since the 2004 March for Women's Lives, the Latina Institute has increasingly labored to align its efforts with other women of color and women's <rights> organizations. According to one NLIRH member:

During our big debut during the March for Women's Lives in 2004, we definitely positioned ourselves as a women of color reproductive justice org[anization]. We've continued to build alliances within the WOC [women of color] RJ org[anization]s, but have also strengthened our relationships [with] mainstream org[anization]s as well, who [sic] have begun to recognize the power/needs of women of color. (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, Mar. 16, 2011, para. 8)

Accordingly, through the Latina Institute's alliance-building efforts, individuals who receive the organization's rhetoric represent a range of diverse women and advocacy groups, including mainstream agencies such as Planned Parenthood, NARAL Pro-Choice America, and NOW. In fact, these three organizations assisted in sponsoring the NLIRH's Quinceañera, a celebration held in 2009 to commemorate the group's 15 years of service to the Latina community (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, Mar. 16, 2011; NLIRH, 2009).

The Latina Institute belongs to a communications consortium, which disseminates the group's online press releases, "Breaking News" articles, and other rhetoric to organizations on the listserv. Included on this list are both mainstream and women of color groups including the Black Women's Health Imperative, the Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR), and members of Expanding the Movement for Empowerment and Reproductive Justice (EMERJ)—a <reproductive justice> strategy team headed by Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice (ACRJ, 2010b). In addition to the NLIRH, member

organizations of EMERJ are California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, the Center for Young Women's Development, Choice USA, the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF), the Rebecca Project for Human Rights, and the Western States Center (ACRJ, 2010b). As is evident from the aforementioned alliances, the NLIRH works frequently with its Asian and Latina sisters to foster immigrant women's <rights> reform and other related intersectional issues (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, August 3, 2010).

As for those who frequent the NLIRH Web site and its *Nuestra Vida*, *Nuestra Voz* blog, much viewer traffic comes from other <reproductive justice> advocates as well as pro-<choice>, immigration and Latino <rights> organizations, and health policy groups (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, Mar. 16, 2011). Because the Latina Institute utilizes a holistic agenda to meet the intersectional needs of its constituency, the organization attracts diverse readership that often possesses divergent goals. For example, while Latino and immigrant <rights> groups tend to share the agenda of bettering the lives of Latinos and immigrants, members avoid discussing pro-<choice> group issues because of the polarizing abortion debate associated with them. This tendency demonstrates resistance to <abortion rights> by some Latinas and Latinos. Meanwhile, pro-<choice> groups are not typically invested in immigrant <rights> issues, even though in recent years these organizations have shifted platforms to embody a more comprehensive approach (Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004). As a result of this division, the NLIRH confronts the difficult task of generating rhetoric which—depending on specific exigencies and appeals—must resonate with <reproductive justice>, pro-<choice>, immigrant, and Latino groups, along with other diverse readership.

Prior to the passage of health care reform, the Obama administration included several people of color organizations and women's agencies in its meetings discussing the legislation.

Throughout these political negotiations, the NLIRH was one of the groups asked to participate and, as a result of this opportunity, the organization conveyed the reproductive health realities and needs of Latinas and immigrant Latinas to the committee. The responsibility of conducting these conversations largely rested with NLIRH senior policy analyst Veronica Bayetti Flores. As such, prior to the passage of the reform bill, the Latina Institute and other groups representing marginalized individuals were consulted. However, in the final analysis, NLIRH members suggest that though gestures to include them at the negotiation table were initially inspiring, few of their recommendations are reflected in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (V. Bayetti Flores, personal communication, August 3, 2010). Given the NLIRH's interaction with the White House's health care planning committee and the less-than-fruitful outcome of this process, the final text examined in this chapter targets the Obama administration and its failure to address the reproductive needs and realities of Latinas.

**Analysis.** My process for examining the selected artifacts in this chapter begins with a description of the context accompanying these documents. The political and cultural milieu surrounding these artifacts centers on the election of President Obama and his health care reform and women's <rights> policies. It also includes the political and social responses to the United States' growing immigrant Latina/Latino population. By noting the events coinciding with the NLIRH's discourse, understanding the organization's rhetorical appeals and motives is facilitated. After establishing the contextual setting for the Latina Institute's rhetoric, I examine each of the four texts by addressing the content, key themes or patterns which emerge, and my interpretations.

In the four texts reviewed in this chapter, instead of gearing agenda-setting toward the general Latina population, the organization demonstrates a new interest in immigrant Latinas,

particularly in relation to <abortion rights> situated overwhelmingly within a comprehensive frame that recognizes intersectional issues. Also in these artifacts, <reproductive justice>, <choice>, and <abortion rights> are positioned as reflective of <family values>. In one text it is argued that <abortion rights> must expand to encompass the intersectional lived realities of Latinas, while in another <choice> and <rights> contract due to narrow articulations of the procedure. This reveals the mutable quality of ideographs and the outcomes when key <reproductive justice> social commitments are framed using a holistic or narrow perspective. Furthermore, though some rhetors convincingly suggest that <choice> as a label inadequately resonates with immigrant Latinas, I find the language term still preserves sufficient flexibility to encompass a holistic agenda. Bayetti Flores' discussion of intersectional issues impacting the well-being of immigrant Latinas in terms of <choice> lends credence to this claim. Moreover, the texts in this chapter persist in revealing the two-pronged goal of the NLIRH, as rhetors seek to both alter the attitudes of their constituency and change external societal barriers hindering the well-being of marginalized women via the <reproductive freedom> platform. Notably, as observed in the previous chapter, the organization continues to direct its efforts toward the latter challenge. Finally, the rhetors reveal both effective and ineffective methods for responding to particular exigencies encountered by the organization. More specifically, in Bayetti Flores' rhetoric on the immigrant <rights> march, her message facilitates a sense of groupness around shared concerns. In contrast, in her response to health care reform, the senior policy analyst frames her discourse using an adversarial rather than cooperative approach, which limits progressive future efforts among important stakeholders invested in advancing <reproductive justice> and social change; it also situates <abortion rights> within a narrow articulation, as the ideograph contracts to obscure intersectional issues.

## **Context**

The texts reviewed in this chapter emerge during a period of political change in the United States. In 2009, President Barack Obama assumed the role of commander-in-chief as the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. Having run on a “change we can believe in” platform, many Americans viewed his election to the country’s top office as a victory for people of color and a signal that a progressive trajectory for the nation’s future lay ahead (Traister, 2010). Soon after taking office, President Obama reversed the “Global Gag Rule” reinstated by the previous administration (Stein & Shear, 2009). Obama’s repeal of the measure “lifted a ban on U.S. funding for international health groups that perform abortions, promote legalizing the procedure or provide counseling about terminating pregnancies” (Stein & Shear, 2009, para. 1). Additionally, the president passed legislation favoring women’s economic progress, namely through the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which seeks to mitigate wage discrimination in the workplace based on sex (The White House, 2010d, Issues: Women Section). The commander-in-chief also created the White House Council on Women and Girls to address issues affecting the female population in the United States (The White House, 2010d, Issues: Women Section).

As noted previously in this investigation, the Obama administration’s efforts to reform the health care system fueled a polarizing debate across the United States. The passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Acts in March 2010 reform several aspects of the United States health care system (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010b). According to the White House, once the legislation is fully implemented, health care insurance will be more affordable and insurers will be penalized for discriminating against those with pre-existing conditions (White House, 2010a). The bill also pledges to expand Medicaid and to provide \$11 billion in additional funding to community health care clinics. Furthermore,

providers will be barred from charging co-pays or other fees for mammograms, Pap smears, and similar preventive procedures fostering women's health (NLIRH, 2010b).

These progressive moves, however, are eclipsed by President Obama's implementation of some of the most dastardly anti-woman legislation in years (V. Bayetti Flores, personal communication, August 3, 2010; NLIRH, 2010b). According to the White House, the commander-in-chief "has been a consistent champion of reproductive choice and believes in preserving women's rights under Roe v. Wade [sic] (White House, 2010e, Support Reproductive Choice Section, para. 1). Despite this appraisal, the president's support of regressive legislation via restrictions placed on the health and well-being of United States women and their immigrant sisters suggests otherwise. With regard to health care reform and immigrants, undocumented individuals will not have access to federal funds for purchasing insurance and will be unable to buy insurance through the Exchange. Furthermore, immigrants who are lawful residents must wait five years to receive Medicaid benefits. As for women generally, the Nelson provision, which requires insurance holders to write two separate checks for abortion coverage, is included in the health care reform bill (NLIRH, 2010b). Also, it has yet to be determined if family planning and contraception will be considered within the "preventative care" label; this places coverage of vital women's reproductive health services in jeopardy of being excluded from federal funding. Of the inadequate public health policies put forth in the legislation, what received the most attention from women's <rights> groups is President Obama's stance on federal funding for abortions (V. Bayetti Flores, personal communication, August 3, 2010; O'Neill, 2010a, 2010b). His executive order signed one day after health care reform became law bars federal funding for abortions, except in cases of incest, rape, and when the mother's life is in jeopardy (White House, 2010b). Efforts to restrict women's <right to choose> at the national

level have been echoed by individual states as well, spanning the nation from Montana to Mississippi (Deines, 2009; McKinley, 2010). The political focus on <abortion rights> has prompted women's advocacy groups to respond by exerting substantial efforts to combat the threats of oppressive legislation. As a result, discussions of <choice> and <reproductive justice> within a more holistic framework have in many ways been overshadowed by dominant discussions of abortion.

Regarding another phenomenon that often sparks debate, according to the 2010 United States Census, more than 16 percent of the country's current population is composed of Latinos or Hispanics.<sup>21</sup> This marks a 43 percent population increase within this demographic since the previous census in 2000. As of 2008, nearly 14.5 million Latinas live in the United States; of these women, 52 percent are immigrants (Perez, Fuentes, Henriquez, 2010e). Recognizing the needs of this substantial population, the Obama administration has offered some promising steps toward advancing the lives of foreign-born individuals living in the United States. For example, the commander-in-chief signed the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act which eliminates barriers hindering legal immigrant children from receiving health care coverage (White House, 2011). Similarly, the president has worked to have the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act passed. This measure fosters citizenship for undocumented immigrant youth who have lived in the United States for at least five years and who entered the country before sixteen years of age (White House, 2010c, Myth vs. Fact Section). The bill offers these individuals "the chance to obtain legal status by pursuing a higher education, or by serving in the U.S. armed forces for the country they've grown up in" (Modi,

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<sup>21</sup> In the 2010 Census, the identifiers of Latino or Hispanic refer to individuals from a Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish background regardless of race (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011).



2010, para. 1). As of April 2011, this bill has yet to receive congressional approval (White House, 2011).

Despite these promising efforts at the federal level, the twenty-first century has witnessed intense political anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States. For example, in 2010, Arizona governor Jan Brewer signed Senate Bill 1070, which stipulates that local police must question those suspected of being undocumented immigrants (Oppel, 2011). According to the law, “failure to carry immigration documents [is] a crime and give[s] the police broad power to detain anyone suspected of being in the country illegally” (Archibold, 2010, para. 6). Many critics of the legislation equate the measure with racial profiling of Latinos. The NLIRH’s Sylvia Henriquez went further to argue that, “The law goes beyond encouraging racial profiling; it demands local police seek out ‘foreign characteristics’ in order to hunt down immigrants without documents” (RH Reality Check, 2010, para. 1). Such concerns prompted the Justice Department to sue the state of Arizona (Alfano, 2010). Since this initial effort to monitor and control undocumented immigrants, states such as Utah have worked to achieve similar legislation (Nelson, 2011).

Sadly, this anti-immigrant sentiment is neither isolated to the political arena nor new. The brutal beating of Luis Ramirez in Pennsylvania by four white high school athletes in 2008 offers a glimpse of the country’s deep-seeded hatred fueled by fear of people who are foreign-born, particularly Latinos (Grinberg, 2009; Hamill, 2008). Revealing the little value placed on immigrants’ lives, only two of the young men received punishment for the crime—nine years in prison—as they were found not guilty of “the most serious charges” (Grinberg, 2009, para. 1).

### **“Advancing Reproductive Justice within Immigrant Communities”**

The first artifact in this chapter is a handbook released in January 2010 describing the NLIRH’s methodology for achieving <reproductive justice> in immigrant Latina communities.

The text, titled “Advancing Reproductive Justice in Immigrant Communities,” serves as a guidepost for future community organizers by sharing the Latina Institute’s philosophy toward mobilization efforts at the local, state, and national level. The handbook also addresses achievements and insights gleaned from a conference in Rio Grande Valley, Texas held to foster the development of leaders from these marginalized communities. These individuals or “promotoras/promotores” seek peer relationships with their neighbors by advocating for their health and well-being via community empowerment and grassroots organizing (Perez et al., 2010e). Given the presented information, the audience for the artifact is diverse, as it includes individual activists (i.e., promotoras/promotores) as well as <reproductive justice> organizations, mainstream feminist groups, and immigrant and Latino agencies likely to participate in events attended by the NLIRH; these include local, state, and national conferences, rallies, and planning events.

**Preview of findings.** Through my analysis, I uncover four findings. First, both <reproductive justice> and <choice> are presented alongside rhetoric mirroring the <family values> ideograph. Second, the rhetors assert that <choice> fails to resonate with the realities of immigrant women and, as a result, they prefer <reproductive justice> when addressing the diverse realities of this demographic group. While I agree with this viewpoint, this does not exempt <choice> from retaining a mutable quality capable of encapsulating a wide-reaching agenda. Third, by placing <abortion rights> at the forefront of its activism, the NLIRH challenges extant <reproductive justice> movement ideology and questions whether streamlining agenda-setting for diverse groups of women is always viable. Fourth and finally, rather than centering its rhetoric on a host of reproductive health issues affecting the general Latina

population, the organization refines its focus to immigrant Latinas, particularly in conjunction with <abortion rights>.

**Analysis.** The text reviewed in this section utilizes the ideographs of <reproductive justice>, <right>, pro-<choice>, anti-<choice>, and <choose> to articulate the arguments presented. Through these language terms, the NLIRH elucidates two primary concerns imperative in addressing the realities of its constituency: immigration issues and <abortion rights>.

*Equating <reproductive justice> with <family values>.* The NLIRH rhetors begin their discussion of mobilization in immigrant Latina communities by outlining the organization’s mission and the necessity of a <reproductive justice> framework. To do this, they use <reproductive justice>, <justice>, and <right> to present their human <rights> and social <justice> perspective rooted in the well-being of Latinas and their families.

The first illustration of the salience of <family values> emerges within the mission statement provided by the rhetors. According to the text, the NLIRH works “to ensure the fundamental human right to reproductive health and justice for Latinas, their families and their communities through public education, community mobilization and policy advocacy” (Perez et al., 2010e, p. 5). Through this articulation, the authors frame reproductive health and <reproductive justice> in terms of human <rights>—a common assumption within the <reproductive justice> movement. By mentioning families and communities, the organization recognizes the importance of both Latinas as individuals as well as those who benefit from Latinas’ well-being and self-determination—their families and communities. In so doing, the text equates <family values> with the human <right> to realize <reproductive justice> for Latinas and those whose lives are improved by their empowerment. This framing is useful for the

NLIRH, as it positions women's self-determination as central to bettering the lives of families who dwell in marginalized immigrant communities. Through this appeal, activists with several different agendas are attracted to the efforts of the Latina Institute, expanding the organization's support base for community mobilization efforts via coalition-building across movements. The insinuation that fostering strong immigrant Latino families hinges on empowering Latina women appeals not only to <reproductive justice> movement members but also to those sympathetic toward the Latino and immigrant cause. Thus, framing <reproductive justice> for immigrant Latinas as a precursor for strong families and communities synergizes the NLIRH's efforts by relaying a message that resonates with diverse groups.

In a similar instance, the rhetors acknowledge Latinas' individuality as well as their relationships with other family members, again linking <reproductive justice> with <family values>. The text states that "the reproductive justice framework resonates within these [Latina immigrant] communities. This framework resonates with their lived experiences as women, immigrants, mothers and daughters" (Perez et al., 2010e, p. 6). In this articulation, Latinas are identified both as individuals and as mothers and daughters; this calls attention to their relationships with others within the family dynamic, namely their children and parents. As a result, when considering <reproductive justice> issues and women's reproductive health, the artifact elucidates that the lived realities of this demographic not only centers on the needs of individual Latinas but also the concerns of their families. In this way, the NLIRH recognizes that securing <reproductive justice> not only improves the lives of individual Latinas, it also fosters the well-being of parents and children who share their same realities in immigrant communities. Just as before, this framework appeals to women of color groups and immigrant and Latino

organizations. It also reveals to more traditional feminist groups that the lived realities of diverse women—complete with multiple relationships—must be taken into account.

In yet another example, the rhetors suggest that the intersectional positioning of immigrant Latinas must be recognized within <reproductive justice> efforts to foster the well-being of women and their families. The NLIRH authors write: “For women in rural communities, their access to transportation is inseparable from their access to reproductive health care. Moreover, like so many Latinas, women in the Rio Grande Valley [of Texas] are acutely aware that their immigration status has an impact on the health of their families” (Perez et al., 2010e, p. 6). This passage illumines that in order to secure proper health care, a means of transportation must be available, otherwise accessing these vital services is rendered impossible. Additionally, immigration status is a persistent barrier for these women as they may be unable to receive necessary services due to insufficient documentation and lack of health insurance. These hindrances impact women’s ability to care for themselves and their families. As such, the highlighting of these problems reveals the organization’s interest in directing its gaze externally to address systemic barriers limiting immigrant Latinas’ self-determination. This articulation makes clear the imperative of acknowledging interconnected issues which impact health care access, namely transportation and immigration status. As such, the articulation of <reproductive justice> as a <family value> emphasizes the well-being of women and families in conjunction with their lived realities, whereby access to proper health care is particularly challenging to secure for this demographic group. This mandates that the <reproductive justice> frame reflect the intersectional positioning of immigrant Latinas via consideration of the repercussions of insufficient transportation and undocumented immigration status. Consequently, the rhetors rely

on the <reproductive justice> ideograph's mutable quality to accommodate their broadening agenda-setting needs for the immigrant Latina population in the United States.

*Equating <choice> with <family values>.* While the previous section uncovered that <reproductive justice> is compatible with <family values>, the rhetoric relayed in the handbook also associates the well-being of the family unit with language consistent with <choice>. In this case, however, <choice> depends on <reproductive freedom>, for only when the systemic barriers addressed by <reproductive freedom> are dissolved can real <choices> be made. Based on this assumption, <choice> is relegated to a secondary position within the <reproductive rights> synchronic cluster. The rhetors substantiate this claim by arguing that a <reproductive justice> perspective assists in ensuring that "Latinas will also be self-empowered to make informed decisions and choices for themselves, their families and their communities" (Perez et al., 2010e, p. 5). This excerpt elucidates the potential agency of Latinas when <reproductive freedom> is embraced, allowing them "to make informed decisions and choices." As such, for oppressed women, exercising the <right> to make <choices> is only possible when enabled by <reproductive justice> efforts challenging the obstacles threatening those <choices>; these multiple, intersecting barriers include poverty, lack of universal and linguistically and culturally competent health care, and anti-immigration policy. In other words, <reproductive justice> and <reproductive freedom> bring the limitations that preclude women from making various <choices> to the forefront by seeking to combat systemic oppression limiting the exercise of a full range of options. Accordingly, within the synchronic cluster of <reproductive rights> slogans, <choice> occupies a secondary position dependent on <reproductive justice >.

In this passage it is clear the <choice> ideograph encapsulates family concerns, for the "decisions and choices" made by Latinas affect not only themselves but also their loved ones,

relatives, and the communities where they live. This suggests a broad framework encompassing a host of issues, as <choice> is associated with <family values>. This observation echoes my finding in Chapter Two, where I identified the same ideographic coupling. The resurfacing of this articulation is not surprising given the Latina cultural significance placed on celebrating the family unit through *familismo*. Notably, in the present example, <choice> is employed to articulate the lived realities of not just Latinas but immigrant Latinas and their diverse communities. This suggests that <choice> possesses sufficient flexibility to accommodate the NLIRH's broadening agenda inclusive of immigrant <rights>.

**<Reproductive justice> and pro-<choice> frameworks in Latina immigrant communities.** The rhetors argue that a pro-<choice> framework does not resonate with the lived realities of diverse Latinas and their families. As such, they claim that <reproductive justice> offers a preferable perspective efficacious for fostering discussions about <reproductive rights> in immigrant Latina communities. The authors assert:

In NLIRH's work with Latina immigrant women, we have found that, contrary to myths portraying these women as staunchly anti-choice, their views lie on a broad spectrum. The label of "pro-choice" is an English term defined within a narrow U.S. context and therefore often does not resonate with immigrant communities. So although an immigrant woman may never identify as "pro-choice," her core values and politics around sexual and reproductive health and rights are actually aligned with the values of the reproductive justice movement. (Perez et al., 2010e, p. 6)

This passage testifies that while many immigrant Latinas do not express anti-<choice> ideologies, they also do not identify with the pro-<choice> label. As such, an alternative means for expressing immigrant Latinas' <reproductive rights> philosophy is necessary; the rhetors signal <reproductive justice> as the alternative. The excerpt reveals that though <choice> is compatible with a United States <reproductive rights> perspective, the ideograph does not resonate with immigrant Latinas who have experienced a different reality and possess distinct

cultural understandings. This complicates discussions regarding the viability of <choice>, as linguistic and cultural differences are brought to the fore reflecting the variation of complex, multiple social commitments held by different groups (McGee, 2005).

In another instance, the authors intimate that when <choice> stems from <reproductive justice> it possesses the ability to express the needs and issues confronting the Latina Institute's constituency. The text states:

NLIRH has found that the majority of Latinas want women to have access to a full range of reproductive health care, including abortion if they choose it. (Perez et al., 2010e, p. 6)

This excerpt suggests that many immigrant Latinas are indeed pro-<choice> based on their desire to support <reproductive rights> for their sisters. Furthermore, the use of "choose" certainly references <choice> and women's ability to enjoy self-determination and ownership of their reproductive health decisions, as the term expands to encapsulate "a full range of reproductive health care, including abortion." However, the exercising of real <choices> is only possible when efforts to mitigate poverty and other societal constraints are in place via <reproductive justice> (Gerber Fried, 1990; Palczewski, 2001). As such, though it is true the framing of the message in this passage suggests the language term may be a viable slogan capable of expressing a host of issues once the deconstruction of oppressive barriers is realized, <reproductive justice> slogans function as a precondition of <choice>. Hence, within a <reproductive justice> framework, <reproductive freedom> and <choice> need not be mutually exclusive, although the latter term does rest beneath <reproductive justice> on the hierarchy of <reproductive rights> slogans.

According to the text, one motivation for the NLIRH's preference for <reproductive justice> centers on the polarizing debate surrounding the language terms of the pro-<choice> movement. By embracing the <reproductive justice> perspective, the rhetors argue that abortion



can be framed as an essential public health service rather than as a moral issue rooted in a political binary of <life> and <choice>. The rhetors claim that this framing facilitates promotoras' willingness to discuss <abortion rights> and the challenges faced by their community regarding the procedure:

In effect, the reproductive justice framework de-polarizes the choice debate and moves abortion away from being a black and white issue to one allowing more nuances. The de-polarization of abortion was further evidenced at the Annual Conference of Promotoras/es. This conference brought together a diverse group of community health workers. Many of them had never openly discussed the issue of abortion and were very hesitant to engage in discussion on this issue. However, by using a reproductive justice perspective and new points of entry, it allowed participants to discuss the legal, clinical, and social aspects of abortion—not the political aspect—along with other critical reproductive health topics. (Perez et al., 2010e, pp. 6-7)

In this excerpt, the rhetors argue that not only does a <reproductive justice> perspective prompt <abortion rights> to be viewed in a less adversarial light, but it also elucidates that immigrant Latinas are more apt to discuss abortion when it is framed using this alternate term. It is interesting the authors argue that abortion positioned within <reproductive justice> is more palatable for its constituents than abortion framed in terms of <choice>. One reason for this apparent language preference could be that immigrant Latina hesitancy when discussing <abortion rights> is rooted in the stigma associated with the “taboo” procedure itself rather than with its association with particular labels. When connected with other concerns, restricted access to abortion services is incorporated into the broader effort to address political and social systemic barriers facing Latinas—including racism, sexism, heterosexism, language and cultural challenges, and poverty. This linkage with other issues elucidates the group's increasing interest in casting an outward orientation which seeks to address societal structures constricting <abortion rights>.

Also instructive is the rhetors' emphasis on the salience of <abortion rights> for those living in immigrant Latina communities. By highlighting this procedure specifically, while only briefly mentioning "other critical reproductive health topics," it is clear that access to affordable and safe abortions is a key <reproductive rights> issue for this marginalized group. Notably, the organization does not situate <abortion rights> narrowly, but instead presents it as a procedure linked with "legal, clinical, and social aspects" that must be considered. While the <reproductive justice> movement traditionally argues that its comprehensive framework assists consideration of issues including but not limited to abortion, in this case, the NLIRH employs the same language term to refocus attention on abortion so that its constituents may express their views and realities regarding the procedure via an intersectional framework. This engenders an antagonism within extant <reproductive justice> ideology, whereby movement members must reconsider the salience of promoting <abortion rights> and the possibility of focusing efforts on this specific procedure in conjunction with its intersectional influences.

Although the rhetors do not offer explicit motivations for featuring abortion, this emphasis can be attributed to several factors. First, Latinas have the highest birth rates of any other demographic in the United States; this increases the likelihood of unexpected and unwanted pregnancies—thus heightening the need for abortions. In fact, about twenty percent of reported abortions in the United States involve Latinas; if unreported procedures are also taken into account, this statistic may be substantially higher (NLIRH, 2005c). Second, because many immigrant Latinas face isolation due to their undocumented status, fears of deportation if this information is discovered substantially limits abortion access, as contact with hospital or clinic personnel risks exposure. Compounding this issue is the physical location of immigrant communities, which are often along the U.S.-Mexico border. This segregates Latinas from

necessary resources due to a lack of transportation. Given the isolation caused by legal status and geographic location, immigrant Latinas are disproportionately likely to resort to unsafe abortions to terminate their pregnancies. For instance, due to its comparatively low financial cost, many Latinas have turned to ulcer medication for self-induced abortions (NLIRH, 2005c). Third, the Latina Institute may highlight the salience of <abortion rights> because of the need to reveal that the procedure is compatible with its constituency's attitudes toward <family values> and should still be supported despite the Catholic Church dictates influencing the ideology of many Latinas. This effort seeks to speak to the specific cultural beliefs and values of its constituency. Fourth, the emphasis on the procedure is also symptomatic of the persistent exigencies encountered by Latinas and other marginalized women as abortion is jeopardized via political and legal efforts to erode <abortion rights>. As such, the organization responds to and strives to combat this external movement stimuli threatening Latinas' well-being and <reproductive rights> by bringing abortion to the forefront of its activism. Although the aforementioned reasons as to why the NLIRH highlights <abortion rights> are far from exhaustive, it is clear that numerous multi-faceted issues and motivations are at play. Furthermore, the NLIRH's appeal to prioritize abortion questions whether alignment of <reproductive justice> movement concerns should be consistent across diverse groups of women due to their unique intersectional positioning and immediate realities. This finding has potentially significant implications for agenda-setting in the movement as <reproductive justice> activists and scholars consider the future trajectory of the cause for women's <reproductive freedom>.

**Findings.** All in all, this text proffers four instructive insights regarding the NLIRH's ideology surrounding its two primary agenda-setting issues: immigration concerns and <abortion rights>. First, the rhetors illumine that both <reproductive justice> and <choice> are reflective of

<family values>. This broadens the potential support base for the NLIRH and its community mobilization and movement-building efforts. Second, in discussing <abortion rights> and other <reproductive rights> concerns, <reproductive justice> resonates with immigrant Latinas and assists in depolarizing abortion to foster discussions regarding the procedure. While this does not challenge the mutable quality of <choice>, it does suggest that the ideograph obscures consideration of other issues that preclude making <choices>. As such, <reproductive justice> offers a term that assists in bringing systemic issues and the necessity of eradicating these barriers to the forefront. Third, the Latina Institute’s featuring of abortion along with the procedure’s intersectional influences generates an antagonism in the <reproductive justice> movement, whereby supporters must reconsider the salience of <abortion rights> and the efficacy of streamlining agenda-setting among diverse groups of women. Finally, this artifact elucidates that for immigrant Latinas living in the United States, the <right> to terminate their pregnancies lies at the nexus of their intersectional positioning. As such, through their rhetoric, the authors highlight the precarious positioning of these women and the necessity to acknowledge and mitigate the problems contributing to their complex lived realities. Based on this observation, the NLIRH shifts from focusing on general discussions of <reproductive rights> issues affecting Latinas in the United States to discourse specifically facilitating the lived realities and well-being of its diversifying constituency—namely immigrant Latinas.

### **“Securing Real Choices Means Going Beyond ‘Choice’”**

The second text explored in this chapter appears as a post on the NLIRH’s *Nuestra Vida*, *Nuestra Voz* blog and on the Reproductive Health (RH) Reality Check blog on January 22, 2010 in commemoration of the 37<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. As part of the online celebration, Latina Institute executive director Sylvia Henriquez published a blog post titled, “Securing Real

Choices Means Going Beyond ‘Choice,’” which expresses her views regarding <choice> nearly four decades after the passage of the historic <abortion rights> legislation. On the RH Reality Check blog, Henriquez’s article is accompanied by eighteen other texts by women’s <rights> activists. The blog posts reflect a blend of personal experiences, reflections on *Roe v. Wade*, and present-day challenges to women’s <reproductive rights>. The rhetors represent the following groups: the Big Push for Midwives, the International Women’s Health Coalition, LatinoSexuality.com, the National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum, the NLIRH, the Pro-Choice Public Education Project, Racialicious.com, and RH Reality Check-Southeast Asia.

**Preview of findings.** Given my analysis of Henriquez’s assertions, I find that <abortion rights> and <family values> are framed as compatible ideographs; similarly, the executive director argues that <abortion rights> must expand to encompass the intersectional positioning of Latinas. Also in the text, Henriquez supplants <choice> with <reproductive justice> to reveal her perspective that the former language term signifies little for those who lack real <choices>. She also uses <reproductive justice> to facilitate her appeal for cross-movement alliance building. Ultimately, the willingness of the rhetor to participate in an effort centering on <abortion rights> and *Roe v. Wade* elucidates the importance of this procedure for the NLIRH and its constituency.

**Analysis.** The blog post reviewed in this section employs several ideographs to articulate the perspective of the NLIRH’s leading Latina. These slogans are: <choice>, <justice>, <reproductive freedom>, <lives>, and <abortion rights>. Using these language terms, Henriquez asserts that the ability to make <choices> is not included in the lived realities of Latinas when considering their <abortion rights> concerns and needs. Although several women of color provide posts on the RH Reality Check blog to commemorate the *Roe v. Wade* anniversary,

Henriquez and one of her Latina sisters are the only contributors to make such a claim. As noted above, this framing produces several salient rhetorical outcomes.

<Abortion rights> foster <family values>. Henriquez chronicles her development from a once pro-<choice> advocate to a woman who challenges the language term's ability to reflect the <abortion rights> of diverse women. To achieve this, she relies on personal experiences and the testimonial of her father to argue for the importance of <abortion rights> broadly defined. As a consequence of this framing, the association of abortion with <family values> emerges.

Henriquez begins by highlighting her father's experiences in El Salvador as a medical student. She explains that "he saw women in the emergency room with unfinished or botched abortions. Many of them died trying to do the best for their families" (Henriquez, 2010a, para. 2). This passage elucidates a link between <family values> and <abortion rights> in two ways. First, it demonstrates that Latinas who seek abortions do so with their families' best interests in mind. As I suggested in Chapter Two, this challenges the false assumption that those who seek abortions are anti-<life> and anti-<family>. Accordingly, the executive director's rhetoric elucidates that when women are prevented from accessing safe and affordable abortions death often results. This substantially threatens the well-being of families, as women all too frequently pay the ultimate price with their <lives> when affordable abortion access is impeded. Thus, this passage illumines that if <family values> are to be preserved, then <abortion rights> must also be fostered. This excerpt also elucidates that Henriquez, herself, recognizes the importance of <family> and this procedure, as she shares her father's recollections of abortion horrors in El Salvador. Through recounting his story, she suggests that his experiences influence her own views on the imperative of the procedure. This reveals the importance of appreciating the lived realities of family members and their unique and shared encounters regarding women's

reproductive health issues. As such, the association of <abortion rights> and <family values> is apparent in the text.

*"Choice is more of a privilege than a rallying cry."* In her blog post, Henriquez argues that <choice> when situated in terms of abortion narrowly defined inadequately encompasses the lived realities of marginalized Latinas. In so doing, she makes a case for repositioning <abortion rights> in terms of <reproductive justice>. The executive director asserts:

The term “choice” was not used to describe the decision that led women to the emergency room in El Salvador 37 years ago. And in 2010 as we in the United States commemorate the 37<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Roe vs. Wade* “choice” does not encompass the reproductive health decisions that low-income Latinas are making every day. The term pro-choice does not describe the complexity of our lives that leads to the need to consider abortion. (Henriquez, 2010a, para. 3)

In this illustration, Henriquez argues that <choice> fails to reflect the realities of many Latinas, for low-income women lack the ability to make unfettered <choices> based on financial constraints. Because marginalized women lack the monetary capability and other necessary resources for exercising real <choices>, they are denied the <right to choose> from different <reproductive rights> options. Accordingly, for some, this deficit of <choice> can lead to emergency room visits after botched abortions. The NLIRH leader asserts that this was true back in 1973 and remains true to this day. Given this articulation, unrestricted <choice> is only available once <freedom> from economic disparities is achieved for diverse, marginalized women. Accordingly, only after the disproportionate impact of poverty is addressed—with its multiple intersectional manifestations—will all women have the essential tools for enjoying self-determination. This suggests that the viability of <choice> hinges on these preconditions, as eradicating poverty via <reproductive freedom> must first be achieved. Based on this perspective, the argument is not that <choice> lacks sufficient mutability to encompass a broad agenda but rather that <choice> is not a reality until <reproductive freedom> is enjoyed by all

women. Once this <freedom> is secured, then <choice> may encapsulate the lived realities of Latinas and other marginalized women. In other words, <choice> can expand to include a broad set of issues; however, the systemic barriers impacting low-income women must first be deconstructed. This reveals that <choice> is a secondary term dependent on <reproductive justice> movement ideographs. Ultimately, Henriquez’s focus on external issues impacting the <reproductive rights> of her sisters elucidates the NLIRH’s growing interest in addressing systemic concerns, particularly poverty, in an effort to change societal structures infringing upon Latinas’ <reproductive rights> to secure “real choice.”

The executive director continues to frame <abortion rights> “within the context of women’s real lives,” as she further substantiates her claim that using <choice> to address abortion and other <reproductive rights> inadequately conveys the needs and realities of her constituency (Henriquez, 2010a, para. 4). She explains that

when a Latina is told by her school teacher that she’s better off getting pregnant than trying to go to college, we’ve determined her “choice” for her future. If the closest family planning clinic is located miles away, if public transportation is lacking or dangerous, if anti-immigrant rhetoric instills fear both for immigrants and native-born members of a household, if politicians ban abortion funding for the poorest among us, the concept of “choice” is more of a privilege than a rallying cry. (Henriquez, 2010a, para. 4)

In this passage, Henriquez outlines specific barriers limiting the self-determination and empowerment of marginalized women. She argues that when Latinas face oppressive dictates regarding their procreative function, their agency and <choices> are constricted. Similarly, she identifies lack of access to family planning resources and transportation, affordable abortions, and anti-immigrant racism as all detrimental to women’s ability to exercise their <abortion rights>. Through these illustrations, Henriquez argues that <choice> inadequately functions to reflect the needs of oppressed women, as they are denied the ability to make unconstrained decisions affecting their well-being. As in the previous example, the rhetor echoes the



perspective of many within the <reproductive justice> movement by challenging the viability of <choice> when violations of certain <freedoms> (e.g., poverty and racism against immigrants) persist. By addressing these issues, Henriquez' claims again support the organization's rhetorical orientation toward addressing external issues requiring societal change.

Henriquez's articulation that <choice> fails to reflect the lives of less privileged women echoes many <reproductive justice> activists' calls who insist that these women do not enjoy the same <freedoms> as their more advantaged sisters because of economic, political, and social barriers. Consequently, according to this view, marginalized women lack the ability to exercise real <choices> (Gerber Fried, 1990; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004; Solinger, 2001). Others challenge this articulation arguing that <choice> adequately encompasses a broad framework of issues necessary for fostering the lived realities of diverse women (Condit, 1990; Hayden 2009). Condit (1990) explains that for years women have described their lived experiences and struggle for <rights> using the word <choice>. She writes that "the term was frequently employed by real women, expressing their own personal needs... The promotion of 'choice' to ideographic status thus represents a uniquely direct and powerful expression by women of their own political needs in a particular time and place" (Condit, 1990, p. 68). Although the feminist scholar does not elaborate on just who these "real women" are, it is clear through her scholarship that making real <choices> is limited to privileged individuals—namely white, upper-middle class women. In addition to well-off women, however, the ideograph is also frequently employed by their English-speaking marginalized sisters, as they express their inability to <choose> among desirable <choices>. For example, that Henriquez titles her article *Securing Real Choices Means going Beyond "Choice"* suggests the rhetor does not deny that <choice> is a valid term; instead, she hints that until all women have the ability to exercise real

<choices>, <reproductive freedom> and <reproductive justice> must reside at the forefront of agenda-setting to meet the needs of less-privileged women. As such, the very use of the word suggests that <choice> encapsulates a broad array of issues—though, as I noted above, certain preconditions must first be secured so that all women may enjoy true self-determination.

Given the tumultuous past of the <choice> ideograph within the stalemated abortion debate, which has cast the procedure as a moral issue rather than as a basic public health service, it is certainly understandable that the NLIRH leader seeks to resituate <abortion rights> within a broad framework in terms of <reproductive justice>. In considering the public consciousness and dominant ideology associated with notions of <choice>, <reproductive justice> offers an opportunity to move beyond the polarized abortion debate by bringing obstacles that make real <choice> impossible to the forefront. This articulation, again, suggests that <reproductive justice> displaces <choice> as the dominant term within the synchronic dimension of <reproductive rights> slogans.

***Resituating <abortion rights> for movement building.*** One motivation for framing <abortion rights> in terms of <reproductive freedom> and not <choice> pertains to NLIRH movement-building efforts both within and across the <reproductive justice> cause. By framing <abortion rights> using a human <rights> and social <justice> platform, Henriquez features salient intersectional issues affecting safe, affordable, and accessible abortions for Latinas which are often obscured due to dominant ideologies associated with <choice> in public discourse. The executive director writes:

Looking ahead, it is time to collectively expand our messaging and embrace a holistic vision for reproductive freedom. Building bridges and intersecting reproductive health care with other progressive movements such as the education reform movement or supporting communities to improve the public transportation systems are steps in de-polarizing abortion...I am confident that by embracing a

social justice paradigm to pursue abortion rights we will continue to build an energetic and unified movement. (Henriquez, 2010a, para. 5)

In this excerpt, the NLIRH leader proposes that a social <justice> perspective facilitates alliance building across movements and synergizes the <reproductive justice> cause. Through this appeal, she calls attention to the intersectional issues affecting <abortion rights>, including education reform and public transportation systems. This framing is useful for the NLIRH's organizing purposes as "other progressive movements," such as education reform, may be more likely to respond favorably to alliance-building with the Latina Institute and other <reproductive justice> groups when <choice> is downplayed. Henriquez hints that this is due to the polarizing nature of <choice> and the negative connotations some associate with the term based on the abortion debate that is so often accompanied by the <life>/<choice> binary. Given the varied <reproductive justice> activist readership of RH Reality Check and the NLIRH's Nuestra Vida, Nuestra Voz blog, Henriquez's rhetorical move is strategic. Phrases such as "it is time to collectively expand our messaging and embrace a holistic vision for reproductive freedom" and "we will continue to build an energetic and unified movement" support the rhetor's effort to influence other activists to frame <abortion rights>utilizing <reproductive justice> slogans (i.e., <reproductive freedom>, <reproductive justice>) to synergize efforts and build momentum through identifying with cross-movement groups. Through this rhetorical framing, the rhetor seeks to heighten support for the <reproductive rights> cause.

**Findings.** In this text, abortion emerges as a key issue, as Henriquez reflects upon the significance of <choice> nearly four decades after *Roe v. Wade*. Her efforts yield several important outcomes surrounding the role of <reproductive rights> ideographs in shaping <reproductive justice> movement agenda-setting and ideology.

First, the rhetor aligns <family values> with <abortion rights>, an ideographic pairing which is usually not observed in the women's <rights> movement. Similarly, the executive director hints that <abortion rights> must expand to reflect a broad array of issues that impact a woman's decision in determining whether to terminate her pregnancy. This requires that the ideograph encapsulate several intersectional issues affecting the lived realities of Latinas, including immigrant status and transportation. The claim to expand <abortion rights> is not often heard, as the <reproductive justice> movement's focus tends to center on whether <choice> can expand to address the intersectional positioning of diverse women (Gerber Fried, 1990; Hayden, 2009; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al., 2004).

Second, while Henriquez asserts that <choice> is too often associated with the polarized debate surrounding abortion, her use of the term in conjunction with several issues and needs suggests that <choice> possesses sufficient mutability to encapsulate a holistic agenda. However, until marginalized women have access to the resources necessary for making real <choices>, <reproductive justice> provides a means for addressing and calling attention to the obstacles barring less-privileged women from exercising their self-determination. Similarly, Henriquez's call for other <reproductive justice> activists to embrace <reproductive freedom> rather than <choice> is a strategic organizing move which serves to rally a cross-movement support base for furthering the reproductive health and well-being of marginalized women and their families.

Finally, through the articulations put forth in the text, it is clear that the NLIRH places high value on <abortion rights>, as well as the recognition that women's reproductive health is impacted by specific challenges based on their intersectional positioning. As such, Henriquez offers key insights and perspectives surrounding <abortion rights> and the ideograph's mutability. These findings have substantial implications for movement-building both within and

across <reproductive justice>, as women’s <rights> activists contemplate the future trajectory of their efforts based on the needs of diverse sisters. Taken together, my observations reveal that debating whether <choice> encapsulates a broad agenda should not be a point of contention within the <reproductive justice> movement, as my findings, and those of others, elucidate that clearly the ideograph does encompass a comprehensive framework (Hayden, 2009). A strain remains, however, in whether <choice> can exist without the precondition of <reproductive freedom>. According to my analysis, the answer is no. Consequently, this signifies that movement members and feminist scholars should direct their energy toward addressing systemic barriers precluding marginalized women’s ability to make real <choices>.

### **“Reproductive Justice for Latinas: The Struggle Continues”**

The third text explored is authored by the Latina Institute’s senior policy analyst, Veronica Bayetti Flores. Like the preceding article, this document was published on the RH Reality Check Web site and was released on March 19, 2010—just days before the passage of Health Care Reform. In the document, titled “Reproductive Justice for Latinas: The Struggle Continues,” Bayetti Flores demands comprehensive immigration reform and encourages readers to join in a march scheduled two days later on March 21. Given the article was disseminated via RH Reality Check, the audience for the artifact includes a diverse array of <reproductive justice> activists, as well as journalists covering <reproductive rights> issues.

**Preview of findings.** The text strategically associates women’s reproductive health with immigration concerns in an effort to rally a cross-movement support base for the upcoming demonstration. Through this process, the NLIRH displays renewed interest in further broadening its comprehensive agenda by employing <reproductive justice> to articulate several intersecting issues affecting both the <reproductive justice> and immigrant <rights> movements. Based on

this framing, Bayetti Flores questions the extant epistemologies guiding both causes, so that diverse members may amalgamate efforts to better address the realities of their immigrant sisters. Concurrently, the text also serves to orient its rhetoric toward addressing external oppressive barriers necessitating social change.

**Analysis.** Within the text, <choice>, immigrant <rights>, and <reproductive justice> are utilized to frame the NLIRH policy analyst's argument. Through these language terms, Bayetti Flores highlights several reasons why a reproductive health organization, such as the NLIRH, should concern itself with a march demanding immigrant <rights>.

*<Choice>, <reproductive justice>, and immigrant <rights>.* Bayetti Flores bridges the immigrant <rights> and <reproductive justice> movements when explaining that Latinas encounter oppression in manifold ways when they attempt to exercise their <reproductive rights>. Through this appeal, she associates <choice> with women's reproduction and the ability of the term to encapsulate issues contributing to prejudicial assumptions about Latinas and immigrants. The rhetor asserts that "the reproductive choices of immigrants get scrutinized and talked about in ways that are xenophobic, racist, and sexist...regardless of whether we have been here for generations or got here yesterday" (Bayetti Flores, 2010a, para. 4). This passage elucidates that the societal ills of xenophobia, racism, and sexism result in unwarranted judgments when Latinas—whether immigrants or not—make <choices> regarding their reproductive well-being. The rhetor highlights the collective concerns shared by members of both the immigrant <rights> and <reproductive justice> causes, as multiple forms of discrimination are directly linked with reproductive <choice>. While concerns regarding women's <reproductive rights> and sexism are traditionally a focus of <reproductive justice> and not the immigrant <rights> movement, the framing by Bayetti Flores resituates these issues

to reveal shared interests in fostering the well-being and reproductive <choice> of immigrant women to prevent xenophobia and other prejudicial outcomes. Similarly, because numerous <reproductive justice> activists and organizations receive e-mail alerts from the RH Reality Check Web site, Bayetti Flores seeks to raise awareness regarding the plight of immigrant women and how their reproductive health is affected by issues traditionally addressed by the immigrant <rights> movement (e.g., anti-immigrant xenophobia). This calls attention to the intersecting issues of both movements and suggests that synthesizing efforts is necessary to effect change and address the unique intersectional positioning of immigrant Latinas.

In another appeal, the rhetor illumines the <reproductive rights> violations and social <injustice> endured by immigrants based on their lived realities both in and outside of immigrant detention facilities. Through detailing these abuses, the rhetor uncovers the imperative of cross-movement building that acknowledges the overlapping concerns of both the <reproductive justice> and immigrant <rights> causes. In conjunction with this rhetorical accomplishment, her arguments uncover the continued ability of <choice> to expand when addressing issues affecting immigrant Latinas, namely <abortion rights>, shackling during labor, and transgender <injustice>. As a result of this framing, the rhetor effectively appeals to the <reproductive justice> activists reading the blog post, as she solicits their participation in the upcoming immigrant <rights> march.

Bayetti Flores highlights the precarious intersectional positioning of immigrant Latinas which hinders their ability to seek adequate abortion services. Through this articulation, the rhetor employs the <choice> ideograph, which reveals the lack of <choices> available to marginalized women as they seek self-determination via <abortion rights>. This substantiates earlier assertions that <choice> is subordinate to <reproductive justice> in the hierarchy of

<reproductive rights> terms, for only when <reproductive freedom> is secured can <choices> actually be enjoyed. Bayetti Flores (2010a) remarks:

It is no surprise that the women who have caused media stirs because of their self-induced abortions have been immigrant Latinas, who because of financial constraints, fears about accessing health care services as an undocumented person, or a lack of culturally and linguistically competent providers in their communities, were forced to take matters into their own hands when they felt they had no other choice, putting their own health at risk. (para. 3)

In this example, economic, political, and cultural/linguistic barriers amalgamate to hinder the <abortion rights> of immigrant Latinas. Until these systemic societal obstacles are addressed via <reproductive justice>, the feeling of having "no other choice" dominates. As such, <choice> signifies little when the ability to select from a variety of options is unavailable, suggesting that <reproductive justice> must be a prerequisite for <choice> to occur. However, the latter language term does possess the ability to encapsulate these intersectional issues, as it is employed in the passage detailing a host of concerns. Through highlighting the <reproductive freedom> needs of abortion, health care, immigrant legal status, and linguistic competency, Bayetti Flores illuminates that the constituencies of <reproductive justice> and immigrants <rights> groups occupy shared terrain. As such, efforts to mitigate abortion atrocities must be pursued by members from both movements. As a result, <reproductive justice> activists reading the rhetor's blog post are encouraged to join in the upcoming march to support their immigrant sisters.

Bayetti Flores makes a similar plea for cross-movement efforts when explaining the dangerous surroundings that immigrant women confront in immigration detainment facilities. The rhetor asserts that "the abuses encountered by people in immigration detention centers are unspeakable, and are often tied with issues of reproductive justice. Sexual abuse is not uncommon, and access to emergency contraception or abortion services while in detention is



spotty at best” (Bayetti Flores, 2010a, para. 5). This articulation provides important consciousness-raising for readers, as the rhetor illumines the interconnected issues affecting both movements when immigrant women are maltreated. While emergency contraception and abortion services are typically issues addressed by the <reproductive justice> movement, the fact that these resources are being denied to immigrant women also involves immigrant <rights> activists. As such, both movements have a stake in these human <rights> violations because of a shared concern: the well-being of immigrant women. In addition to this maltreatment, the rhetor also addresses the occurrence of shackling pregnant immigrant women during child birth in detention centers. Bayetti Flores offers the example of Juana Villegas who, after being shackled during labor, was not permitted to keep her child; this led to several detrimental health effects for both mother and infant (Bayetti Flores, 2010a). Given this specific illustration of <injustice> against immigrant women in detention centers, the rhetor elucidates that the salience placed on motherhood by <reproductive justice> is threatened when immigrant <rights> violations persist. This suggests that by aligning efforts, both the goals of <reproductive justice> and immigrant <rights> can be cultivated to better mitigate the oppressive dictates confronted by immigrant women.

In another example of maltreatment in detention centers, the rhetor addresses an issue not typically mentioned in NLIRH rhetoric: trans-gender discrimination. By situating this concern within the realities of detained immigrant women, Bayetti Flores again engages in consciousness-raising, whereby she exposes her readers to an issue that seldom, if ever, enters public discourse regarding immigrant <rights>. The rhetor asserts, “Trans people are rarely given the choice of men or women’s facilities rather, they are placed where detention officers decide that they belong, possibly exposing them to violence, or in isolation, a practice which is

increasingly likened to torture” (Bayetti Flores, 2010a, para. 5). This calls attention to a little-known occurrence that threatens the self-determination of transgender Latinas and other gender non-conforming immigrant women. By framing this issue as relevant to the lived realities of immigrants, both members from the <reproductive justice> and immigrant <rights> movements are encouraged to align efforts to mitigate this incidence. Using <choice> to articulate this human <rights> abuse also illumines the ideograph's ability to reflect a comprehensive agenda, as these immigrants are "rarely given the choice" to <choose> their facilities based on their gender identifications. This suggests that though <choice> can expand to encapsulate issues not typically associated with the term, such as gender identity issues, <reproductive freedom>—which seeks to change systemic barriers, such as transgender oppression—must again be a precondition before making <choices> is possible. As such, <choice> is relegated to a secondary position on the hierarchy of <reproductive rights> terms.

Bayetti Flores’ articulation revealing the utility of <reproductive justice> and <choice> is particularly interesting, for as the NLIRH policy analyst, she is the key negotiator when discussing legislation relevant to the group’s constituency. Throughout health care reform, her policy efforts included negotiations on Capitol Hill with lawmakers and activists across several movements to ensure that the realities of all Latinas were bettered by the bill (V. Bayetti Flores, personal communication, August 3, 2010a). Though the rhetor’s role in these discussions was small, her broad use of <reproductive justice> and <choice> in the reviewed text suggests her efforts seeking to broaden extant narrow articulations of <reproductive rights> reached important political circles. Rhetorical moves of this kind facilitate the dissemination of <reproductive rights> ideographs broadly constructed in public discourse to reflect the needs of all women by

calling attention to systemic and other often obscured concerns by challenging dominant social commitments in need of revision (Cloud, 1998; Condit, 1990; McGee, 2005).

*Health care and immigrant <rights>*. In one of her justifications for aligning the efforts of the <reproductive justice> and immigrant <rights> movements, Bayetti Flores identifies health care access as a shared concern for both causes. Given the challenging day-to-day lives of immigrant Latinas, the rhetor illuminates that issues impacting women's and immigrants' <rights> must be addressed in health care reform. She explains that "immigration status is tied to health care access in many ways. Immigrant women are often forced to work in low-paying industries, such as food service and seasonal farm work. These jobs provide neither health benefits nor the incomes needed to purchase private insurance plans for themselves or their families" (Bayetti Flores, 2010a, para. 2). This excerpt situates the <rights> of women and immigrants as interconnected, as the employment realities of Latinas often restrict their ability to enjoy basic health care services based on a lack of sufficient benefits and wages. Through this articulation, if the well-being of immigrant Latinas is to be fostered, adequate health care access must be in place. As such, this common concern links the agenda-setting of both movements so that members may work to improve the reproductive health and well-being of immigrant women.

In concluding her post, Bayetti Flores explains that efforts to reform the United States health care system have detrimentally affected the well-being of women and immigrants. As such, for immigrant women, the reform process has been particularly devastating. The rhetor states:

[T]he battle for health care reform has been fought on the bodies of women and immigrants – we are constantly used as wedges in the extreme right's divide-and-conquer strategy. For these reasons, and many more, reproductive justice advocates from all over the country are descending on DC this weekend to demand an end to the unfair and destructive deportations, raids and detentions. (Bayetti Flores, 2010a, para. 8)

In this passage, the NLIRH policy analyst employs a battle metaphor via the language use of “battle,” “bodies,” and “divide and conquer” to suggest the urgency of the situation. By framing health care reform as yet another injustice committed against women and immigrants, the rhetor effectively rallies support for the immigrant <rights> march in D.C., as she suggests that the self-determination of immigrant women must be fostered via activism.

Bayetti Flores continues to seek backing for the demonstration from readers by creating identification through her continued development of the battle metaphor. She writes that “reproductive health and immigrants’ rights advocates share a common opposition: the same legislators who try to chip away at abortion rights and contraceptive access are behind anti-immigrant policies” (Bayetti Flores, 2010a, para. 7). The creation of a common enemy is a potent rhetorical move that calls upon the text’s <reproductive justice> activist readers to engage in the immigrant <rights> movement, as both causes are fighting the same foe. This further justifies the alignment of both movements. Given this framing, the rhetor explicitly appeals to her audience members to attend the rally by urging, “I encourage you to join me” (Bayetti Flores, 2010a, para. 9). Based on the claims issued earlier in the text, Bayetti Flores’ final line is persuasive, as she questioned extant epistemologies in both movements revealing that <reproductive freedom> and immigrant <rights> share considerable overlap. Additionally, she elucidated the importance of tackling systemic barriers and prejudice threatening the well-being of immigrant women. Consequently, the rhetor effectively broadens the support base for the immigrant <rights> march by soliciting <reproductive justice> movement activist participation.

**Findings.** All in all, by addressing intersecting issues affecting the <reproductive rights> and well-being of immigrant women, the rhetor reveals the imperative of aligning the <reproductive justice> and immigrant <rights> movements. The rhetor’s utilization of the

<reproductive justice> and <choice> ideographs reflects a broadening agenda that encapsulates <abortion rights>, shackling during labor, and trans-gender issues. This suggests that the language terms not only possess mutability within the women's <rights> cause but also contain sufficient elasticity to swell to address cross-movement concerns as well. Added to this articulation, the policy analyst also highlights the importance of health care for immigrant women, just days before the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Given the timing of the demonstration, Bayetti Flores calls attention to the urgency of supporting immigrant <rights> during this reform process. Through this framing, she effectively solicits support from <reproductive justice> activists reading her blog post, as she encourages them to participate in the upcoming demonstration. As a result, the text highlights the rhetor's simultaneous interest in orienting rhetoric toward internal and external factors by revitalizing existing <reproductive justice> movement epistemologies and altering oppressive societal structures limiting the self-determination of immigrant women. Furthermore, as observed previously, <choice> relies on <reproductive freedom> as a prerequisite.

In many ways the NLIRH exemplifies the call made by Bayetti Flores to engage in cross-movement building. Even though the organization identifies as a <reproductive justice> advocacy group, members are aware of the substantial number of immigrants within their constituency. As such, not only does the Latina Institute participate in immigrant <rights> demonstrations, such as the event discussed by the rhetor, but the organization also frequently works alongside the National Coalition for Immigrant Women's Rights (NCIWR) to synthesize agenda-setting and mobilization efforts. Accordingly, through its rhetoric and alignment with other groups, the NLIRH embraces the philosophy that essential to any "movement's coalitional activities is an attempt to bring together a wide range of other social movements" (Fischer, 2000,

p. 120). As the subsequent text elucidates, this call to unify efforts across movements is salient, given the injustices encountered by both women and immigrants through the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

### **“A Bittersweet Health Care Reform Victory...at the Expense of Women and Immigrants”**

The fourth artifact reviewed in this chapter is an article released by the NLIRH on March 22, 2010 in response to the passage of health care reform. The text, titled “A Bittersweet Health Care Reform Victory...at the Expense of Women and Immigrants,” was published under the “Breaking News” section of the organization’s Web site. The rhetor of the text is Bayetti Flores, who directs her message to other <reproductive justice> and women’s <rights> activists. In the text, she acknowledges the benefits offered by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act which include: increased funding for community clinics; increased access to Medicaid for low-income individuals; insurance coverage for nine million currently uninsured Latinos; and health insurance benefits previously denied to Puerto Ricans (Bayetti Flores, 2010b). While these are progressive steps, the law also contains regressive legislation for women and immigrants. Bayetti Flores highlights that the Nelson amendment, requiring women to write a separate insurance check for abortion coverage, and the president’s executive order, barring all federal funding for abortions except in cases of rape, incest, or when the mother’s life is threatened, place substantial restrictions on abortion access, thus increasing the likelihood of unsafe and even deadly procedures.

**Preview of findings.** My analysis of the text reveals that Bayetti Flores frames health care reform as a battle over women’s <reproductive rights>. As a result of the exigencies at the time, the ideographs employed in the text deflate to reflect a narrow focus addressing abortion access violations narrowly defined, as a result of the legislation. Additionally, the battle metaphor portrays women as victims and potential allies as villains. Based on this articulation,

division rather than alliance-building is created, which overlooks the opportunity for working alongside the Obama administration and other women's <rights> organizations. Considered together, these observations reveal the rhetorical challenge confronting groups seeking to represent the intersectional interests of marginalized women, as determining how to respond to legislation with both beneficial and limiting elements is a complex endeavor.

**Analysis.** In her response to the passage of health care reform, Bayetti Flores employs anti-<choice> and <rights> as language terms to formulate her argument. Through these ideographs, she frames women's <abortion rights> in terms of a battle. Just as ideographs assist in illustrating key social commitments and ideological underpinnings encouraging certain forms of action over others, metaphor plays a similar role in shaping language, thought, and action (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). As such, examination of metaphor is useful in analyzing Bayetti's rhetoric as this language device possesses the potential to shape human reality and ideological beliefs (Foss, 1989). I find the battle metaphor in the text constricts the Latina Institute's response to the passage of health care reform, as the organization confronts both victory and defeat in the same legislation as some but certainly not all concerns associated with <reproductive rights> are satisfied in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

***Intersectionality and health care reform.*** The intersectional positioning of Latinas as both people of color and women engenders ambivalent feelings when formulating a response to the changes ushered in by health care reform in the United States. Because the NLIRH represents a diverse constituency, the legislation produces both progressive and regressive results. This poses a dilemma for the organization regarding how to respond to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, for Latina women and their immigrant sisters encounter simultaneous

triumph and defeat with the passage of the bill. The rhetor reveals this strain in the following two quotations:

If passed by the Senate, [the] reconciliation package will cover an estimated 9 million uninsured Latinos and increase funding for community health centers, which is a lifeline for many in our neighborhoods. (Bayetti Flores, 2010b, para. 5)

While health reform might lead to more Latinas being covered, it leaves out a significant portion of the population. By excluding and stigmatizing immigrants and women who need abortions, we are pushing them to the shadows of our health care system and placing unfair burden on the already-strained system of community health care centers and emergency rooms. (Bayetti Flores, 2010b, para. 3)

Given these passages, the dialectic of both the potential for progress in the Latino community and the setback for Latinas is evident. By noting the outcomes of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the NLIRH highlights its mixed emotions, as despite the strides made for the Latino community, the organization cannot ignore the substantial <abortion rights> violations resulting from the legislation.

Perhaps no articulation expresses this strain better than Bayetti Flores' title: "A Bittersweet Health Care Reform Victory...at the Expense of Women and Immigrants." Through this perspective, the rhetor elucidates that health care reform is "bittersweet," for while the Latino population will enjoy increased funding for Medicaid and community health clinics, Latinas have far less to celebrate based on the legislation's <abortion rights> restrictions. This calls attention to the challenges and complexities confronted by women of color, for due to years of discrimination based on racism, they have found refuge in their own ethnic communities (Baxandall & Gordon, 2000). Given this experience, determining whether or not to support legislation partially beneficial to those in their community engenders a complex internal strain for these marginalized women and the organizations representing their interests.



*Contracting articulations of <choice> and <rights>*. Ideographic criticism explains that at times an ideograph may contract to reflect particular exigencies of the time (McGee, 2005). This is certainly visible in the present text, whereby Bayetti Flores frames health care reform as a battle over women's <abortion rights> narrowly constructed. By choosing to downplay certain issues by presenting a limited framing of the procedure, the rhetor responds to what she and the NLIRH perceive to be the most pressing issue at the time—threats made against a woman's <right to choose> to terminate her pregnancy. The following two excerpts reveal the use of <choice> and <rights> respectively to address the reproductive health violations experienced by women, which yield salient rhetorical outcomes.

In the eleventh hour, President Barack Obama caved to the demands of a handful of anti-choice Democrats by agreeing to use the lives of women as trade. (Bayetti Flores, 2010b, para. 2)

...that women were used as wedges in this process is absolutely unacceptable. Over and over, our needs were compromised away. The fact that health care reform has passed in the House represents a truly historic moment for the United States. That it is marred by the President's inability to protect the rights of women is truly disappointing. (Bayetti Flores, 2010b, para. 6)

Based on these textual illustrations, the battle metaphor emerges, whereby the struggle for women's <abortion rights> is illuminated in limited terms obscuring important intersectional issues. Because metaphor assists in shaping our understandings of the world and social commitments, by highlighting narrow motivations for fighting for women's <reproductive rights> (i.e., abortion), both the <choice> and <rights> ideographs contract to center on the legislation's detrimental effects on access to safe and affordable abortions. Although the limited focus on abortion is not necessarily a limitation of Bayetti Flores' argument—as oftentimes a situation dictates that one issue must be focused on to effect change—it does obscure salient other concerns that are worthy of consideration. For example, though the text devotes one sentence hinting that family planning should be considered preventive care, this issue is

insufficiently addressed. Also, the reproductive health implications (beyond abortion) that arise when new and undocumented immigrants are excluded from Medicaid receives no attention in the NLIRH's response.

Another rhetorical outcome of these excerpts involves the problematic framing of women and President Obama, as an adversarial approach to the battle metaphor comes to the foreground. Through this depiction, women are cast as victims, for they have been used, abused, and are now disregarded after having been employed to achieve the ends of those in power. This limits women's perceived agency instead of enabling them as active agents of change (or even heroines) ready to rally for renegotiations. Furthermore, both passages portray President Obama's culpability and failure to protect women by using their lives as bargaining chips in his health care reform agenda. The framing of President Obama as the enemy is potentially debilitating, for this representation fails to acknowledge the utility of working in concert with the commander-in-chief, who achieved some positive health care gains for the Latino demographic. In this case, by narrowing the <choice> and <rights> ideographs to focus principally on abortion restrictions, the adversarial victim/villain dichotomy comes to the fore. Had a greater number of issues been addressed, perhaps the pitting of potential allies (i.e., Latinas and President Obama) against one another would have been less likely if the language terms expanded rather than contracted in response to the passage of health care reform. Based on these observations, the NLIRH's use of the battle metaphor to frame its reaction to the legislation is problematic. Given the readership of this text includes <reproductive justice> and pro-<choice> supporters, the artifact could offer the opportunity to motivate readers to petition the President to amend the reform bill. However, rather than attempting to magnify the potential survivor, ally, and renegotiation aspects of the metaphor, the components of the rhetorical device highlighted center

on defeat and victimization. This obscures the possibility that an alliance and cordial relationship could be forged between President Obama and the NLIRH, as an adversarial version of the battle metaphor is embraced by Bayetti Flores.

The rhetor's response reflects justifiable hostility and anger toward the Obama administration's complicity in jeopardizing women's reproductive health in exchange for the successful passage of health care reform. These sentiments contribute to the utilization of the more negative aspects of the battle metaphor, allowing divisive characteristics of the trope to fester. While it is true that in many ways the quest to secure Latinas' <reproductive rights> and overall well-being is a battle, this effort must reveal an ideology characterizing women as heroines and active agents of change who are willing and able to defend their sisters by working alongside various stakeholders.

**Findings.** In this document, I found that because the NLIRH represents Latinas and their immigrant sisters—individuals who possess complex, diverse, and multi-faceted needs and realities—a substantial challenge arises when determining an adequate response to health care legislation. After all, as noted above, the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was simultaneously beneficial and damaging to the group's constituency. Also in the Latina Institute's response, I discovered the organization's continued emphasis on arguing for Latinas' <abortion rights>. While a narrow focus on abortion articulated in terms of <choice> and <rights> is not surprising given the exigencies faced by the Latina Institute during the period of health care reform, activists must be careful not to ignore other intersecting issues (e.g., transportation barriers and immigrant legal status) in their zealous effort to highlight one concern. Furthermore, because metaphors, like ideographs, assist in shaping public consciousness and action, it is imperative that members of the <reproductive rights> movement

be cognizant of the potential effects of their rhetoric, as efforts toward <reproductive justice> continue to be challenged in the United States. As such, framing women as defeated victims and potential allies as enemies engenders an unproductive framework for progressive efforts.

Ultimately, these findings encourage the NLIRH and other groups to practice reflexivity when framing arguments, as the ability of ideographs to contract produces significant implications, as observed in this text.

### **Closing Thoughts**

This chapter examined recent rhetoric written by NLIRH members in 2010 during health care reform in the United States. The reviewed texts emerged amidst a milieu of anti-abortion and anti-immigrant sentiment. Partially in response to this climate, the Latina Institute identifies both abortion and immigration <rights> as its two key concerns driving its agenda-setting; these emphases are certainly reflected in my analysis of the rhetoric reviewed in this chapter.

Compared to discourse in Chapter Two, where the NLIRH addressed issues affecting the general Latina population in the United States, this text clearly seeks to feature the specific challenges facing immigrant Latinas, as their numbers continue to climb in the United States. Notably, <abortion rights> and the intersecting issues affecting access to this public health care service is the key exigency identified for this group. Moreover, my findings from Chapter Three reveal that the NLIRH continues to shift its focus from rhetoric directed at addressing the beliefs and values of Latinas regarding their <reproductive rights> to an orientation geared toward seeking to change society's systemic barriers which hinder marginalized women's ability to make real <choices>.

As far as the language terms used in this chapter, the first two texts argue that addressing <abortion rights> with a pro-<choice> label is too polarizing and linked with the stalemated

<life>/<choice>debate. The rhetors also assert that for women who lack the self-determination to exercise <choice> due to poverty and other forms of oppression, the language term fails to resonate with their lived realities. Thus, the NLIRH members advocate that <choice> be supplanted by <reproductive justice> when discussing abortion. Based on this finding, it is evident that only once <reproductive freedom> is secured can <choice> encompass a host of <reproductive rights> options necessary for self-determination. The rhetors of the four texts depict the repercussions when their constituents are restricted from exercising a full range of unrestricted <choices>. For instance, shackling immigrant Latinas when giving birth and ignoring transgender individuals' gender identity preferences are both intolerable practices frequently conducted in immigrant detention centers. In this way, the organization's rhetoric reveals that while the use of <reproductive freedom> and <choice> both encapsulate a comprehensive <reproductive rights> agenda, the former term must be a precondition of the latter. As such, <reproductive justice> and <reproductive freedom> occupy the highest position on the hierarchy of ideographs associated with women's <reproductive rights>.

Also in this chapter, I found that <family values> are linked with immigrant <rights> and <abortion rights> issues, as well as with the <choice> and <reproductive justice> ideographs. This positions the slogans within a framework recognizing the importance of the family unit and the interconnected issues affecting the well-being of women and their children. As a result, a more comprehensive understanding of the lived realities of the NLIRH's constituency and the mutability of language terms emerges. In seeking to expand the issues associated with <abortion rights>, Henriquez challenges an important social commitment within the <reproductive justice> movement, as she features the procedure and links it with issues affecting access to the health care service. This rhetorical effort suggests that <abortion rights> are particularly important for

the diverse demographic represented by the NLIRH. Meanwhile, in the final document, the narrowing of the <choice> and <rights> ideographs occurs in response to the <abortion rights> threats which resulted from health care reform. Given the organization's consistent emphasis on abortion in the past, as it simultaneously broadened articulations of <choice>, perhaps this well-established focus enables the organization to contract the <choice> and <rights> ideographs more easily to address present-day exigencies. As a result of this framing, both the <choice> and <rights> language terms deflate to reflect a narrow focus addressing <abortion rights> violations caused by the legislation without sufficiently mentioning other intersectional issues impacting the procedure and Latinas' well-being. When the slogans are constructed narrowly, as they are in this case, "the connections between abortion rights and broader issues [are] obscured" (Hayden, 2009, p. 128).

The artifacts also elucidate that cross-movement building efforts are essential if both <reproductive justice> and immigrant <rights> barriers are to be mitigated. For example, according to Bayetti Flores, the shackling of women during labor when detained in immigrant detention centers should not be viewed as a purely <reproductive justice> or uniquely immigrant issue, as both women's reproductive health and the <rights> of immigrants are affected by this despicable practice. This offers an innovative epistemological framework for these movements, whereby members from both causes can align their efforts to effect change. Through this articulation, the support base for both movements is enhanced.

Finally, these artifacts are useful in documenting the salient issues surrounding health care reform, according to the NLIRH. It is evident that though the legislation offers some beneficial contributions to the well-being of Latinas and their communities, there are also substantial drawbacks to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Through highlighting

these concerns, it is clear that immigrant and <abortion rights> are substantially jeopardized by the reform measure. Furthermore, the final text reveals that organizations such as the NLIRH, which seek to address the intersectional realities and challenges of diverse communities, have a particularly difficult task in responding to legislation that produces mixed outcomes. This calls on women's <rights> organizations to be reflexive in their responses to policy changes and proposals by weighing carefully the portrayal of key players (e.g., villains and victims) and their perceived roles and interactions.

Having analyzed eight texts in the previous two chapters, I now explore the significance of my findings. In the subsequent chapter I consider the implications of my observations regarding the nature of ideographs. I also explore the consequences of my findings in shaping movement discourse on women's <reproductive rights> and the imperative of a framework that fosters women's liberation from oppression, procreative and otherwise.

## Chapter Four

### Conclusion

The rhetoric engendered by NLIRH members elucidates the social commitments of the organization, as the group responds to cultural and political exigencies confronting its constituency. Chapter Two documented the group's early rhetoric, both while it operated under the auspices of CFFC and as it gained autonomy repositioning itself as the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health. During the years of 1992-2005, the issues of HIV/AIDS, <abortion rights> threats, and public demonstrations protesting women's <rights> violations typified the group's rhetorical concerns. Meanwhile, the artifacts in Chapter Three centered on more contemporary texts disseminated amidst public debates on health care reform, <abortion rights> restrictions, and immigration issues.

I argued the NLIRH employs several rhetorical appeals to advance its agenda by calling attention to the Latina community's complex needs and by encouraging movement-building within and beyond the <reproductive justice> cause. Through consciousness-raising, identification, and other techniques, the organization elucidates a comprehensive agenda rooted in the lived experiences of its constituency. Moreover, the rhetors relay the organization's dual goals of 1) transforming and resonating with extant Latina ideologies surrounding their <reproductive rights> as well as 2) altering oppressive societal structures hindering the <reproductive freedom> of its constituency. Notably, as the NLIRH's rhetoric evolves to embrace a human <rights> and social <justice> platform, it increasingly orients its efforts toward the latter challenge.

In this chapter I examine the contribution of my investigation for understanding the function of ideographs in shaping public consciousness, as "rhetors dip into, add to, and reshape the shared cultural stock" of these key slogans (Cloud, 1998, p. 389). I also present the



implications of my findings for feminist studies and for the <reproductive justice> movement as academics, activists, and others seek to make sense of and engage in the rhetorical appeals surrounding women's <reproductive rights>.

### **Implications of Ideographs**

As highlighted in Chapter One, an ideograph may evolve as it “expands and contracts” based on the motives of various stakeholders and the circumstances dictating public consciousness at a given time (McGee, 2005, p. 458). The chapter also mentioned that to understand the rhetorical function of a slogan, both its diachronic (i.e., the history of a given language term) and synchronic (i.e., the unifying relationship with a language term and other slogans in the current moment) structures are relevant dimensions (McGee, 2005). Using this framework as a guide, I explored <choice> and its historical evolution, as well as its synchronic cluster of <abortion rights>, <family values>, <life>, <reproductive freedom>, <reproductive justice>, and <reproductive rights>. Given my findings, it is clear that these ideographs possess sufficient mutability to encapsulate a host of issues when positioned within a comprehensive framework. When presented this way, all of the slogans utilized by NLIRH rhetors exhibit the ability to encapsulate a wide array of issues, as the organization broadens its agenda to encompass the dynamic needs of Latinas. In fact, the Latina Institute makes explicit arguments asserting that <choice>, <reproductive rights>, and <abortion rights> can and must expand from extant narrow frames. Though, I found that Bayetti Flores' response to health care reform revealed a compressed version of the <choice> and <rights> ideographs, I argue this exposes the exigencies of the time and also reveals the protean quality of a language term, whereby it may contract in certain contexts (McGee, 2005). Given my observations, these phenomena reflect the assertion that an ideograph “has meaning through its specific application” (McGee, 2005, p.

458). Taken together, the NLIRH's use of ideographs parallels well McGee's theory of these abstract terms, as they mutate and fuel tensions based on their usage throughout history and in specific situations. Accordingly, my findings substantiate the claims issued by several communication studies scholars asserting the influence of these slogans in shaping our understanding of the world and in articulating key social commitments (Cloud, 1998; Condit, 1984, 1990; DeLuca, 1999a, 1999b; Edwards & Winkler, 1997; Hayden, 2009; Lucaites & Condit, 1990; McGee, 2005; Palczewski, 2010).

As suggested above, the NLIRH's rhetoric demonstrates the mutability of multiple ideographs within the same synchronic cluster. Within this grouping, the emergence of the "god-terms" of <reproductive justice> and <reproductive freedom> emerge throughout the organization's rhetoric. Efforts to change the societal structures restricting marginalized women's ability to make real <choices> prompted Henriquez, Bayetti Flores, and other NLIRH rhetors to "make [the terms] 'come first'" (McGee, 2005, p. 461), as they embraced a human <rights> philosophy. Through this framing, <choice> depends upon securing <reproductive freedom> and consequently is a secondary term. This observation reflects extant ideographic assumptions, as McGee (2005) explains that "when we engage ideological arguments, when we cause ideographs to *do work* in explaining, justifying, or guiding policy in specific situations, the relationship of ideographs changes" (p. 461). Through this protean positioning of language terms, which is reflected in Latina Institute discourse, the importance of acknowledging the role of ideographs when discussing rhetoric and its conveyance of public consciousness is further substantiated.

Lastly, this investigation contributes to and builds upon extant conceptions of ideographs by introducing linguistic and cultural concerns surrounding key language terms. Through my

analysis of the texts, I discover that some NLIRH rhetors prefer <reproductive justice> over <choice> when seeking to address the needs of Latinas and immigrant Latinas, as they claim the former term resonates with their lived experiences. Moreover, when considering public consciousness associated with the <reproductive rights> slogans, although <choice> possesses the ability to reflect a holistic agenda, it still often conjures up ideology associated with abortion narrowly defined. This risks disguising the core issues and obstacles which hinder the possibility of making genuine <choices>. These systemic barriers include—but are certainly not limited to—immigrant legal status, linguistic and cultural incompatibilities, racism, sexism, and poverty. As such, the texts reviewed complicate extant assumptions surrounding these slogans when approached from a non-Anglo, marginalized perspective. Accordingly, exploring the impact of language and cultural differences is instructive when employing ideographic criticism in future studies.

### **Implications for Feminist Scholarship and the <Reproductive Justice> Movement**

As noted above, through my investigation of the NLIRH's rhetoric and ideological underpinnings, the organization illuminates the ability of <abortion rights>, <choice>, <family values>, <life>, <reproductive freedom>, <reproductive justice>, and <reproductive rights> to encapsulate a holistic perspective. Extant communication studies scholarship testifies that <choice> possesses sufficient elasticity to capture a comprehensive framework for women's <reproductive rights> (Condit, 1984, 1990; Hayden, 2009). My investigation contributes to this body of scholarship by corroborating this finding and by suggesting that the <abortion rights> ideograph also swells when framed within a wide-reaching agenda. Furthermore, it appears that as long as the language terms pertaining to women's reproductive health are positioned within a host of related intersectional issues, they may all expand to encapsulate a broad perspective. This

is not, however, meant to imply that <choice> automatically resonates with diverse, marginalized Latinas. My analysis reveals that for women who lack the ability to make <choices> due to systemic barriers, <reproductive freedom> is a prerequisite for self-determination and for selecting among several <reproductive rights> options. Because both <reproductive freedom> and <choice> are employed by the rhetors to express the reproductive needs, realities, and well-being of Latinas as well as their lack of <choices>, like Condit (1990), I am loath “to prefer or oppose either label” (p. 68). After all, this investigation somewhat quiets the debate over whether certain <reproductive rights> ideographs can capture a broad framework for women’s well-being; according to my findings, the language terms in the synchronic cluster can, indeed, encapsulate a wide-range of issues. Instead, I find it more instructive to touch on the benefits and limitations of strategically employing certain slogans broadly defined within different contexts and with distinct parties. In this way, activists within and beyond <reproductive justice> may be cognizant of the implications of their rhetoric and its effects in shaping public consciousness via their language term use.

When considering the use of <choice>, <reproductive freedom>, and other related language terms included in the <reproductive rights> synchronic cluster, examining the effects of using a particular slogan in specific situations is strategically necessary for the NLIRH and those invested in the <reproductive justice> cause. On the one hand, when seeking support from organizations typically adverse to supporting abortion, which include many Latino or immigrant <rights> groups, emphasis on <reproductive freedom> or <reproductive rights> broadly defined is prudent to avoid alienating potential allies who associate <choice> with abortion narrowly constructed (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, August 3, 2010). Similarly, given the assertion by Latina <reproductive justice> activists that <choice> fails to resonate culturally and

linguistically with immigrant Latinas, avoiding this term in immigrant Latina circles seems necessary. Several issues contributing to this lack of compatibility include the taboo nature of the procedure, the polarizing <life>/<choice> binary, and the inability of the term to translate into Spanish (J. Gonzalez-Rojas, personal communication, Aug. 3, 2010). Ultimately, because I am neither a native Spanish speaker nor an immigrant, I must defer to my Latina sisters at the NLIRH on this latter issue. After all, the sections of the texts reviewed in this investigation were written in English, therefore making it difficult to argue for or against the mutability of <choice> in the Spanish language. On the other hand, because the use of <choice>—both to express the presence and absence of the <right> to make real <choices>—is pervasive in discussions regarding women’s <reproductive rights> in the United States, utilizing this ideograph to articulate a broad agenda may be useful, as the language term is more recognizable and accepted than <reproductive justice> or <reproductive freedom> (Palczewski, 2010). The challenge in this case, of course, involves transforming extant public ideology regarding <choice> to embrace a more holistic framework for women’s liberation from procreative oppression—which the NLIRH most certainly seeks to do. Ultimately, regardless of the ideographs that are selected in a given situation, <reproductive justice> activists and feminist scholars alike must seek to frame arguments that reflect the multi-faceted and diverse lived experiences of all women—both marginalized and privileged.

Throughout the texts, the rhetors question extant epistemologies held by their constituency, <reproductive justice> supporters, other social movement activists, those perpetuating hegemonic viewpoints, and society itself. As a result of this process, important violations of key social commitments result as NLIRH members engage articulations which directly challenge accepted ideology surrounding women’s <reproductive rights>. It is clear that

these efforts are affected by the contextual realities dictating that specific exigencies impacting Latina well-being receive attention; in particular, abortion, HIV/AIDS, and immigrant <rights> emerge as essential issues for the organization's constituency. The featuring of these concerns during the group's discursive evolution is useful for understanding the complexities of the day-to-day realities experienced by Latinas and their immigrant sisters.

As an illustration of these antagonisms, I found the rhetors associate <choice>, <reproductive justice>, and <abortion rights> with <family values>. In so doing, the NLIRH members frame their agenda using a comprehensive perspective fostering women's empowerment and quality parenting. Chapter Two chronicled the use of pro-<choice> to reflect a multi-issue campaign advancing women's and children's well-being. The linkage of pro-<choice> and pro-<family> serves the organization well, as this association resonates with Latinas' cultural beliefs revering the family unit. Through establishing identification with the group's readership, the rhetors intimate that Latinas should vote for pro-<choice> candidates during the 1992, 1996, and 2004 elections to foster policies and philosophies supportive of <family values>. Chapter Three also linked <choice>, <reproductive justice>, and <abortion rights> with <family values>. This rhetorical move is apparent in the rhetors' discussion of community-building in Latina communities and the <abortion rights> violations experienced by marginalized women. In these instances, the rhetors reveal that at the center of women's self-determination is their ability to make healthy <choices> for themselves; this affects not only the well-being of women but also the prosperity of their loved ones. Accordingly, the use of <choice> and <abortion rights> in conjunction with <family values> creates an antagonism challenging dominant anti-abortion ideology. By positioning pro-<choice> and <abortion rights> as ideologically complementary with women's and family well-being, the claim that abortion

supporters are anti-*<life>* is challenged. Through this rearticulation, the argument that *<reproductive rights>* are contrary to a pro-*<family>* ideology is no longer valid. This rhetorical move suggests that the organization seeks to revitalize these language terms to further its comprehensive agenda.

The NLIRH's rhetoric also engenders antagonisms within the *<reproductive justice>* movement itself via its articulation of *<abortion rights>*. As noted above, in many of the texts reviewed in this investigation, abortion access emerges as paramount in the organization's agenda-setting. In contrast, the *<reproductive justice>* frame argues that *<abortion rights>* should be included in agenda-setting but certainly not be featured as the priority, as is too often witnessed in the rhetoric of mainstream feminist groups (Gerber Fried, 1990; Palczewski, 2010; Silliman et al. 2004). As such, by placing *<abortion rights>* at the forefront of its activism, the NLIRH challenges extant ideology within the *<reproductive justice>* movement. The articulation suggests that prioritizing *<abortion rights>* need not always be associated with narrow articulations. For instance, the rhetors reveal how the ideograph can and must expand to accommodate the intersectional positioning of diverse women, as poverty, transportation access, linguistic and cultural barriers, and immigrant legal status interact to confine a woman's ability to exercise her *<reproductive right>* to terminate her pregnancy. As such, the imperative of approaching this issue with an intersectional perspective is necessary for comprehending the lived realities of diverse Latinas. Ultimately, the group's emphasis on *<abortion rights>* and the resulting antagonism with *<reproductive justice>* ideology questions whether the agenda-setting for diverse groups of women should be streamlined, or if certain exigencies facing particular demographics (e.g., Latinas) necessitate more specific mobilization efforts.

As <reproductive justice> and other human <rights> organization members engage in movement building efforts—an action advocated by the NLIRH—they must be careful that aligning goals through holistic frameworks does not obscure certain exigencies posed by political, cultural, and other issues uniquely impacting some groups and not others. In this investigation, on several occasions the rhetors issue rhetorical appeals to facilitate movement building both within and across the <reproductive justice> cause by generating a sense of groupness and identification around the shared exigencies confronted by marginalized populations. These appeals for pooling resources and forming alliances tend to center on organizing for and responding to public marches. Given this illustration, though a comprehensive, cross-movement approach to women’s <reproductive rights> is certainly worth pursuing, at times a particular situation may call for the privileging of one issue over other concerns, whereby agenda-setting may center on more specific goals. As such, in order to combat external threats to a movement’s aims, it may be necessary to focus on one issue to sufficiently address that strain and effect change. This has particular implications for the <reproductive justice> cause, as members seek to foster the needs of diverse women affected by their unique intersectional positioning at the crossroads of numerous challenges and complex realities.

**Looking to the future: Envisioning a better world.** The quest for <reproductive justice> is one of the most divisive and decisive efforts of the twenty-first century. After all, whether or not women achieve liberation through <reproductive freedom> plays a substantial role in shaping the future of humankind, as exigent social <justice> and environmental concerns amalgamate amidst a backdrop of political unrest and anti-woman sentiment (Goldberg, 2009).



One significant facet of addressing women's <reproductive rights> in the United States centers on the needs and lived realities of Latinas and their immigrant Latina sisters. According to the 2010 Census, during the last decade, the Hispanic population in the United States grew by more than 46 percent; more than half of the entire population increase between 2000 and 2010 is attributed to this demographic (Guevara, 2011). Additionally, every one in five women in the United States is Latina; by 2050, this number will rise to one in four (Guevara, 2011). These figures do not account for the millions of undocumented Latinas living in the United States. Despite the prevalence of Latinas and Latinos in this country, there is still much work to be done before <reproductive rights> and social <justice> are enjoyed by this demographic. Echoing this sentiment, one NLIRH activist writes: We [Latinas/Latinos] are considered the largest growing minority population, and yet as a people we are lagging behind in educational achievement, job equity, and health insurance coverage" (Guevara, 2011, para. 3). Given these inadequacies, along with a host of other <reproductive freedom> concerns and <choices>, it is clear that feminist scholars, Latina Institute members, <reproductive justice> activists, and other social <justice> crusaders have substantial hurdles to surmount as they address the diverse needs of Latinas.

In addition to the specific challenges confronting the Latina and immigrant communities in the United States, as a global society we have reached a point where arguing for women's <rights> affects not only women as individuals, or only their families, or immediate communities—it affects all of humanity. Today, in 2011, our world population hovers at the seven billion mark; by 2045, nine billion people are expected to be living on this planet (Kunzig, 2011).

With the population still growing by about 80 million each year, it's hard not to be alarmed. Right now on earth, water tables are falling, soil is eroding, glaciers are melting and fish stocks are vanishing. Close to a billion people go hungry each day. (Kunzig, 2011, p. 43)

An essential component of addressing this grave dilemma lies in women's empowerment and their ability to exercise control over their own procreative function (Goldberg, 2009; Kristof & WuDunn, 2009). Countless environmental and feminist activists agree that one solution for our world's growing population problem involves humanitarian efforts to secure <reproductive rights> and facilitate women's <choice> of if and when to have children (Connelly, 2008; Goldberg, 2009; Gordon, 2002; Halfon, 2007; Kristof & WuDunn, 2009; Kunzig, 2011). Female education, paid employment opportunities, reduction in infant mortality, and knowledge and ability to control family planning are all essential in achieving women's <reproductive freedom> and a sustainable world population (Connelly, 2008; Goldberg, 2009; Gordon, 2002; Halfon, 2007; Kunzig, 2011). As interested parties seek to make these goals a reality, we must not lose sight of the underlying systemic issues that continue to marginalize women, for the majority of <injustice> in our world stems from poverty (Goldberg, 2009; Kristof & WuDunn, 2009).

I am under no illusion that a great tension exists for women's <rights> activists and others invested in addressing the intersection of <reproductive freedom> and the overpopulation problem. For low-income women of color, past injustice regarding coercive sterilization practices and other measures implemented to constrain their <reproductive rights> makes any mention of population curtailment a sensitive issue (Gerber Fried, 1990; Silliman et al., 2004). Consequently, rather than approaching this concern via the lens of those focusing narrowly on population, a more efficacious route may be to explore the shared cause of <reproductive justice> and environmental justice activists, who acknowledge the importance of sustainability for the well-being of marginalized individuals (Agyeman, Bullard, & Evans, 2003). Human beings can no longer afford to treat sex and procreation as inconsequential activities—both the planet and womankind simply cannot sustain continued abuse. Accordingly, now more than ever,

human beings must be cognizant of the implications which result when women are denied the means of controlling their own reproduction (Goldberg, 2009). Bearing this in mind, it is paramount that women receive adequate resources for raising children as well as the health care services and education required to release women from their procreative function, which continues to obstruct their path to empowerment.

In the year 2011, the landscape of women's <reproductive rights> in the United States rests on perilous terrain. From health care reform legislation restricting women's abortion access to legislative efforts jeopardizing funding for Planned Parenthood, the need to address the pervasive injustices facing women is imperative. As such, the resolute call for women's liberation reverberates from the NLIRH's headquarters in the heart of downtown New York City to the Latina communities nestled along the border near El Paso. Despite continued efforts to oppress Latinas and their immigrant Latina sisters, the fight for <reproductive justice> will continue, as women and men from all backgrounds and interests unite in the common pursuit of salud, dignidad y justicia...health, dignity, and justice for all.

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