
Mobilization, Participation, and *Solidaridad*

Latino Participation in the 2006 Immigration Protest Rallies

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This article tests multiple hypotheses regarding participation in the 2006 immigration rallies in American cities. Specifically, the authors test whether the movement was widespread among Latinos or limited to Mexican immigrants, as speculated by the media, or whether group solidarity can be credited with mobilizing participation and support of Latino citizens for a largely immigrant cause. The consistent findings using both qualitative and quantitative approaches provide robust support for the conclusion that Latino support for the protests was strong across the population as a strong sense of solidarity unified the population around the immigration issue.

Keywords: *Latino politics; 2006 immigration rallies; mobilization*

During four short months in the spring of 2006, an estimated 3.5 to 5.1 million Latinos protested in the streets of over 160 cities in the United States (Bada et al. 2006). Several cities held multiple marches, each drawing tens of thousands of participants. The unprecedented Latino activism was a public response to the threat of House Bill 4437 (HR 4437) that

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would have increased penalties on undocumented immigrants as well as those who employ and assist them. Extensive mobilization efforts in Latino majority schools, Catholic churches, and Spanish-language media were widely reported across the country (Brennan and Kim 2006; Carter 2006; Fears 2006; Kim 2006; Pomfret 2006; Shapira 2006; Sterngold and Hendricks 2006; Turnbull 2006; Vara and Karkabi 2006). Rather than an exclusive march at the nation's capitol, mass protest against a pending federal policy took place in cities where millions of Latino immigrants work and reside. Extensive coverage of the marches in local and national television, newspaper, and radio outlets pushed immigration to the top of the political agenda and onto Sunday morning news shows.

Although there was widespread speculation about the causes and consequences of the rallies—especially why Latino citizens who were not the primary targets in HR 4437 participated—little in the way of empirical evidence has been produced or analyzed on this matter. This article tests multiple hypotheses regarding participation in the 2006 immigration rallies using a combination of elite interviews with immigrant rights organizations and two nationwide public opinion surveys of Latino adults. Specifically, we test whether the movement was widespread among Latinos or limited to Mexican immigrants, as speculated by the media, or whether group solidarity can be credited with mobilizing participation and support of Latino citizens for a largely immigrant cause. The consistent outcomes using both qualitative and quantitative approaches provide robust support for our findings and theoretical expectations regarding Latino solidarity and mass participation.

Media coverage of the proimmigrant marches yielded many characterizations. Chief among these was the view that this was a Mexican immigrant movement. Perhaps this is because Mexico is referenced six times in HR 4437 and the fact that the largest proportion of undocumented immigrants are of Mexican origin. Others labeled it more generally as a “Latino movement,” pointing to different flags and the thousands of signs and speeches in Spanish as evidence. Still, others simply suggested that this was a spontaneous and short-lived response to one specific bill by a range of immigrant rights supporters. Regardless of the media's characterization, the response to HR 4437 as measured by actual participation in the marches resonated across cities and towns in the United States.¹ It is also the case that the reactions to the immigration protest rallies reverberated among supporters and gave rise to a sentiment among a majority of Latinos that “the immigrant marches were the beginning of a new Hispanic/Latino social movement that will go on for a long time” (Suro and Escobar 2006, p. 1).²

Whether or not the outcome of the marches is undeniably a new Latino social movement or an immigrant rights social movement, many Latino citizens participated. The two common slogans that emerged in the demonstrations—"We Are America" and "Today We March, Tomorrow We Vote"—indicate multiple constituency support, in particular among eligible or soon-to-be eligible voters. We explore whether there was, in fact, a broad base of support among Latinos, irrespective of legal status and national origin. In particular, we argue that HR 4437 represented a powerful external threat that activated multiple Latino constituencies, including the Latino citizenry and organizational elite, to come together in *solidaridad*, or group solidarity, for immigrant rights. Interviews with community organization elites provide insight and evidence from the frontlines that support the theoretical narrative and lead into the quantitative analysis. In the empirical testing, our measure of solidarity is based on self-reported participation in the protests and support for the immigrant marches.

Solidarity resembles but is distinct from the concept of "linked fate" (Dawson 1994). We do not focus on whether Latinos, today or in the future, believe that their individual fate is linked to that of other Latinos, as that is beyond the scope of this article. Nielson's (1985) definition of ethnic solidarity provides the first theoretical step in understanding and interpreting the sociopolitical dynamics of the immigration protests of 2006. Ethnic group solidarity requires both the formulation of specific goals defined by the group that are distinctive from other groups in society and ideological and organizational mobilization for the implementation of these goals. Unlike linked fate or group consciousness, solidarity assumes that individuals have multiple identities that may be salient in varied contexts. Ethnic solidarity is rooted in social conditions that trigger heightened ethnic awareness across other identities. In the case of the 2006 marches, the hostile political context was the social condition that mobilized group members across other identities such as gender, national origin, and nativity. Group members were mobilized via organizations and media with the specific goal of defeating pending legislation. Solidarity is not predictive of lifelong political behavior, which is distinctive from linked fate or group consciousness concepts that assume that racial identity has a fixed, highly salient, and enduring effect on individual political attitudes and behavior.

We agree with Chong and Rogers (2005) that although linked fate is found to shape African-American policy preferences, Michael Dawson "does not investigate the influence of solidarity on political participation" (p. 372). Moreover, their comparative analysis of the effects of the multidimensional forms of group solidarity on African-American electoral and nonelectoral

participation “suggests reasons to be cautious in applying the same measures of racial solidarity of African Americans to the emerging research on Latinos, Asians, and other minority groups” (Chong and Rogers 2005, p. 368). We take heed of this caution and turn to emerging literature on transnational solidarity movements and the efforts to construct transnational problems. This work builds on earlier work on ethnic solidarity by expanding the number of identity groups that are mobilized by an issue and offers considerable theoretical leverage for the study at hand. As noted by Olesen (2006), “Constructing transnational problems is a complex process of making issues and problems in one locality intelligible and concerning for people in other and distant localities The transnational problem construction of organizations requires them to bridge physical, social and cultural distances” (p. 7). Our analysis focuses on Latino citizens and their willingness to participate and support immigration marches that were opposed to a resolution primarily targeting undocumented immigrants. It is therefore appropriate to draw upon the extant literature that focuses on efforts to make a particular issue “of concern and intelligible to audiences not directly affected by it” (Olesen 2006, p. 1).

Theoretically, we rest on work that seeks to expand the understanding of solidarity to a transnational interpretation that explains large group mobilization as a result of transnational framing. In particular, a synthesis of Olesen’s 2001 and 2006 work on transnational framing notes three necessary conditions for successful transnational solidarity movements. First, consciousness is not new but instead rooted in previous solidarity organizations or mobilizing structures and can be viable. Second, an appropriate frame must be developed to enlarge the scope of conflict by mobilizing support of the audience.³ Finally, the frame is linked to key political opportunities that facilitate the emergence of social movements. We argue that the success of the immigration marches, especially in garnering support by Latino citizens, can be attributed to the success in meeting these necessary conditions.

This article presents our evidence to address these necessary conditions and proceeds as follows. In the first section, we give an overview of the viability of social movements in an urban context and discuss the established precedent of Latino political mobilization and participation in protest politics. In the second section, we discuss how the frames that were developed helped enlarge the scope of the conflict and mobilized support by Latino citizens, further demonstrating that the established mobilizing structures were important. Specifically, we focus on the patterns that emerged in the interviews of Latino elites who were involved in the contemporary immigration

protest rallies. The third section compares the contemporary demonstrations to those in the 1960s and mid-1990s. We make the case that unlike previous Latino social movements, the immigrant protest marches and subsequent public sentiment among Latinos are distinct from the Chicano Movement, because HR 4437 was a strong external impetus for solidarity among the multiple constituencies who would be affected by the bill. The frames developed, we argue, were tied into a key political opportunity that brought the issue of immigration to the forefront of national dialogue. Next, we present the results of the quantitative analysis and focus on the congruence between Latino mass political behavior related to the immigrant protest marches and perceptions and characterizations of elite who were interviewed. We conclude with some preliminary assertions of the possible longevity of the solidarity that was induced by an external threat and the prospects for a new Latino social movement.

Urban Dynamics, Mobilization, and Protest Politics

For various reasons, cities have long served as ideal settings for many social movements and causes, including civil rights, women's, Chicano, environmental, antipoverty, and antiwar movements (Eisinger 1973; Schumaker 1975; Hammerback, Jensen, and Gutierrez 1985). Citywide protests draw elite and mass public attention to the regional salience of the particular issue (Lipsky 1970). Demonstrations in multiple venues also send a message that a large-scale movement is at hand, illustrated by the critical mass of like-minded participants situated across the country.

Organizers and activists have some incentives for localizing their efforts. Local newspapers and television news programs are more likely to commit coverage to a demonstration story than the national media (Lipsky 1968). Cities that are specifically associated in a symbolic way with the political agenda are choice settings to elicit a local response and launch a larger public campaign. The United Farm Workers, for example, began their symbolic 1966 march in Delano, California, because of the strong association the city had with grape workers and strikes. The controversy associated with protest politics, the large number of participants, and the relatively rarity of such an event make it newsworthy for city news bureaus (Oliver and Maney 2000). At the city level, it is easier for activists to move an issue to the top of the agenda (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993). A simple Lexis-Nexis or Google search of city newspaper articles on the immigration

protests brings this point to bear; thousands of metropolitan newspaper articles discuss the local relevance of immigration in the community, the national policy debate, and related policy implications.

The urban context also provides an efficient means to mobilize and legitimize a cause. National and local organizations that coalesce around a particular issue can marshal large numbers of participants on their own turf and thus illustrate the authenticity of a grassroots movement with a wide-ranging appeal (Fisher, Brooks, and Russell 2007). Furthermore, protest is the least discriminating form of political participation: There are no citizenship, age, or residency requirements to participate. Thus, political and social causes that deal specifically with the disenfranchised and less resourceful are particularly well suited for demonstrations. Over the past 10 years, the growth and dispersion of the Latino immigrant population has dramatically altered the demographics and politics in many American cities. It is reasonable that the marches were situated in the communities where large numbers of Latino immigrants reside. Citywide marches minimized participation costs and maximized opportunity to air grievances, build sociopolitical networks, and directly engage in politics.

There is also a long history of Latino social activism in the United States (Marquez and Jennings 2001). The Chicano Student Movement and the United Farm Workers Union movement, two components of the Chicano Movement from the late 1960s to 1970s, highlight the early role of protests as a core component in a larger political strategy to garner national attention. Decades later, there was a resurgence of highly visible Latino protest movements: The first arose in California in the 1990s and the most recent in 2006 took place in scores of American cities. It should be noted that the leadership in many Latino advocacy groups are former activists of these earlier social movements (De Leon 1993; Rosales 2000). Consequently, there are fundamental similarities between the two eras of social movements.

The mobilization targets, symbolic use of religious images and flags, and protest activities such as high school walkouts and large public demonstrations, are shared features. Extensive mobilization efforts took place in Latino-majority Catholic churches and public schools (Hammerback, Jensen, and Gutierrez 1985; Gomez-Quinones 1990; De Leon 1993; Shapira 2006; Moran 2006; Pomfret 2006). A common goal in all of these cases was to gain national attention and allies through multiple constituencies by turning the moral tables on the opposition (Majka and Majka 1982; Jenkins 1985; Vara and Karkabi 2006). Organizational structure and formal leadership were central to this dual strategy of recognition and mobilization of multiple constituencies. It has been well established that individuals who

are asked to participate are more apt to do so across a variety of political activities (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). These appeals are enhanced when both parties share ethnicity. Among Latinos, this impact is particularly strong; researchers consistently find that direct mobilization is the most significant predictor of Latino political participation in both electoral and protest politics, especially when the mobilization is undertaken by a coethnic (Nuño 2007; Ramírez 2005, 2007; Shaw, de la Garza, and Lee 2000; Wrinkle et al. 1996). It is no coincidence then that the most well-attended Latino public protests have been spearheaded by Latino organizations, media, political elites, and activists.

Beyond direct appeals, there are additional reasons to expect that groups feeling directly threatened by a policy will be most inclined to become politically engaged around the issue (Ramakrishnan 2005). California Latinos had a strong, enduring political reaction to the anti-Latino and anti-immigrant sentiment and rhetoric surrounding several statewide initiatives between 1994 and 1998. In the span of 4 years, three statewide ballot measures were passed that had direct punitive effects on Latino community: Proposition 187 denied public services to undocumented immigrants and required public employees to report suspected illegal immigrants; Proposition 209 was an initiative to end affirmative action at public universities; and Proposition 227 sought to eliminate bilingual education programs in public schools. The multipronged political response included mass protests, a rise in naturalization rates, increased attention to politics, and higher voter turnout across several elections (Ramakrishnan 2005; Pantoja and Segura 2003; Ramírez 2002; Pantoja, Ramirez, and Segura 2001; Barreto and Woods 2005).

California's large and diverse Asian community also responded to the series of nativist ballot measures through political action. More than 60 Asian American advocacy groups worked collaboratively to oppose the propositions (Kang 1994). Although Asian-Americans' participation in the protests was relatively small, there was substantial support for the antiproposition movement from the organizational leadership and larger community (McDonnell and Lopez 1994). These groups worked to inform their constituents, organize public protests, and fund lobbying against the series for statewide initiatives (Nguyen 1994; Kang 1994; Bernstein 1994). Statewide polls also indicated that 53% of California's Asian population opposed the measures as well (Geron 2005). Before delving into a quantitative analysis of this phenomenon, we explore the grassroots perspective on crafting the transnational solidarity effort, including diverse groups that ultimately materialized with millions in the streets.

Framing and the Mobilization of Multiple Constituencies

The Latino and Asian alliance over this issue is a theoretically expected outcome; both ethnic groups have significant noncitizen populations, many whose first language is not English. Thus, these communities perceived themselves to be the target of a threatening political environment and were especially receptive to mobilization efforts.⁴ To explore solidarity and mobilization on the immigration issue, a series of 19 in-depth interviews were conducted with leaders of immigrant community-based organizations (CBOs) located in California, Illinois, New York, Texas, and Washington, D.C.⁵ These semistructured, open-ended interviews allowed Latino CBO leaders to discuss their involvement in participating and/or organizing the rallies and specific strategies used to mobilize different individuals and groups. Initially, 50 CBOs whose primary focus is on political action or serving immigrant communities were recruited for interviews based on listings in the 2001-2002 National Directory of Hispanic Organizations.⁶ Using a snowball sampling technique to recruit subsequent interviews, contact information of other activists who were either involved in or organized the immigration rallies was requested of those who agreed to be interviewed from the original list.

A snowball sampling technique was used for two reasons. First, a random sample of activists would produce many leaders in the sample that had no participatory or organizing role in the immigration rallies. Because this study requires an investigation of the recruitment activities of organizations that actually participated in and organized the immigration rallies, a snowball sample, rather than a random sample, was most effective in identifying legitimate organizers of the rallies. Second, contacting subsequent activists based on referrals likely increased the overall response rate of subsequent interviewees and may also have led to higher quality interviews, because the interviewees were introduced to the project by fellow community activists and/or members of their coalition with whom they have an existing relationship. Background questions about the history of the organization and past involvement in issues related to immigration were asked of all interviewees.⁷

The interview data with Latino leaders strongly suggest that CBOs played a significant role to draw attention to HR 4437 through various political actions, including the formation of a human chain, hunger strikes outside of government building, and more importantly, by mobilizing participation in the rallies in both rural areas and major cities across the United

States. CBOs used multiple strategies to recruit people to attend the rallies, including mass distribution of flyers, door-knocking, phone banking, and word of mouth. Web sites, e-mails, and faxes were used to coordinate within existing coalition networks and to communicate with CBO members. Several CBO leaders worked in conjunction with religious institutions to educate relevant constituencies regarding the issues surrounding HR 4437 and to mobilize participation in upcoming rallies. For example, a Latina CBO leader in San Francisco explained:

One way we got people to come out was to do church speak outs, so on February 11th, we organized about 40 people to go to about 18 different churches . . . for example, St. Elizabeth has seven masses on Sundays, so we would have two people take the morning masses, and after each mass, the church would allow us to make announcements about, first of all, what HR 4437 was, and the rally that was organized to express opposition to it, and we would send another two people to take the evening masses.

In addition to recruiting participants, churches were also used to garner support for the cause among potential allies who may not be directly affected by the legislation but might be sympathetic to the issue for other reasons. A Latina CBO leader in Los Angeles explained:

A lot of the work was done through congregations, I think, because we tried to hit on the moral issues . . . so how do you appeal to a conservative White base where, for instance, in an area close to Los Angeles, you know that Congress member, who is very conservative on this issue; you try to go to congregations where a priest or someone would actually talk about how this is a moral issue.

As these interviewees suggest, the church was an important platform used to inform and mobilize large numbers of people from both immigrant and nonimmigrant communities to oppose the bill and participate in the demonstrations.

In terms of media use, leaders of CBOs frequently held press conferences and used radio, television, and newspapers to spread information about the rallies. When asked about the use of ethnic media versus mainstream media, most interviewees indicated that the primary reason for using ethnic media was to mobilize the individuals that compose their primary constituency. A Latina CBO leader in Chicago, for example, described the significant role that Spanish-language radio stations played in spreading information, "It was very helpful to talk to them about this, they understood

the problems of the community, they were very collaborative . . . every radio deejay was talking about this big thing that was going to happen.”

For many immigrant communities, ethnic media is used more often than mainstream media and thus had a powerful influence in reaching the main constituencies of CBOs. A Latina leader of an immigrant CBO in Los Angeles explained how ethnic media served a distinct function from mainstream media to spread information, “To mobilize people it was the ethnic press . . . the mainstream media was more about educating the public about why people were being mobilized, what the conditions were, what the issues were . . . the mainstream press was used more to explain why.” Both ethnic and mainstream media were used for recruitment, but as the former interviewee suggests, each was used strategically depending upon which audience, whether main constituencies or potential allies, the CBOs wished to address.

When asked if CBOs targeted specific individuals or groups, many interviewees indicated that their constituency was the primary focus for mobilization. One interviewee offered clear political reasons for why they focused primarily on their predominantly Latino constituency for support. For example, a Latino CBO leader in San Antonio, Texas, stated, “We targeted the Hispanic community because immigration affects all Hispanics. We did not attempt to mobilize the African Americans in the community because they have a history of not supporting or participating on Hispanic issues or concerns.” However, many interviewees in the sample described extensive collaborative efforts with fellow CBOs in their coalitions to expand participation beyond their respective constituencies. Some interviewees also expressed concern that the framing of the immigration issues by some as a strictly Latino or Mexican issue created extra challenges for CBOs to overcome in increasing racial and ethnic diversity. As one Latina CBO leader based in Los Angeles explained:

I think that sometimes what happens is that people are not careful to remember to make the invitation, to translate documents. In terms of putting flyers that are red, white, and green, it sends a certain message, not just to non-Latino organizations but also to Latino organizations, so Salvadorans, when they see red, white, and green, they say, this is a Mexican issue and has nothing to do with us as Salvadorans or Guatemalans or anybody else from South America because it is already invoking Mexican participation. So we need to be careful in the manner that we do our outreach and just be more careful and more self-observant to make sure that we are inclusive in our call.

As illustrated by this interviewee, increasing racial and ethnic diversity at the rallies was a concern for several CBO leaders, and as a result, they made conscious efforts to be as inclusive as possible in their mobilization strategies.

The immigration protest rallies have been viewed by some as an event that transpired spontaneously. However, as noted previously, there was a history of consciousness and viable mobilizing structures that proved instrumental in facilitating the logistics and in forming the necessary frames. Consistent with the view that the rallies were highly organized and coordinated, a Latina leader in a Los Angeles-based CBO explained,

A lot of people say it's a reaction against Sensenbrenner, but we've had bad laws before, we've had Real ID, we've had drivers license taken away, we've had a whole host of attacks—obviously this was way up there, but this is not the first time our community was attacked even with Proposition 187; we didn't have these numbers. What occurred was, there was an attack and there was a coordination of rallying together by all these different sectors towards one particular series of actions and mobilizations. I think that was the catalyst; it was a perfect storm.

CBO leaders are aware that many overlooked the strategic coordination, organization, and fundraising that CBOs, unions, and churches facilitated. Funding for the rallies was primarily used to cover costs associated with hosting large-scale public events: portable bathrooms, water, sound and stage, and security detail. In sum, the CBOs effectively used their resources to tap into a latent set of attitudes and identities that cut across various social groups and also provided the logistical might to coordinate, mobilize, and oversee the events. The identities that the CBOs discussed, targeted, and mobilized (e.g., religiosity, language, and nativity) are later tested in the empirical analysis.

Political Threat Becomes a Political Opportunity

There are visible similarities between contemporary and earlier protest marches with respect to endogenous (i.e., influence of Latino demographics for the composition of those who participate in political protests) and exogenous factors (political threat as a mobilizing opportunity). However, there are also fundamental differences between the modern immigration marches and the previous Latino social movements in their nature and the effects of the exogenous political factors. Whereas the Chicano movement inherently challenged the status quo with respect to working conditions, quality of education, and access to political representation, the immigration protest rallies were first and foremost focused on maintaining the status quo with a secondary push for an improvement of the status quo through a call

for a path to legalization. Thus, the Chicano Movement can be generally characterized as a social movement that seized on political opportunities, including elite receptivity to protestors and changing power relations, initiated by societal unrest and protest activity in the 1960s and 1970s (Jenkins, Jacobs, and Agnone 2003; Meyer 2004; Meyer and Minkoff 2004). Two additional characteristics of the earlier social movements should be highlighted. First, localized institutional and policy change was a primary and specific goal for both of these groups. It was assumed that local victories would have implications for other parts of the state or country facing similar challenges. Second, the emphasis was not on Latinos as an immigrant group but rather as an ethnic minority suffering from institutional neglect and systematic exploitation. Accordingly, as Olzak and Ryo (2006) stated, "movement mobilization is likely when changes in the political climate make collective action more likely to succeed" (p. 7). Through effective organizational structure and leadership, the Chicano Movement ably capitalized on the favorable political conditions.

The contemporary immigration protest rallies, on the other hand, did not arise due to changing power dynamics or elite receptivity. Instead, as was the case in California during the mid-1990s, the political opportunity was created but in response to HR 4437 as a political threat with associated steep costs of inaction. According to Olzak and Ryo (2006), "political threat is not a simple inverse measure of political opportunity because . . . increased threat does not necessarily imply 'reduced opportunities'" (p. 7). HR 4437 became a common enemy, because its expansive reach mobilized multiple constituencies and provided the basis for *solidaridad*, or solidarity, even among disparate groups: "If multiple groups feel that their interests are in jeopardy and that collective action around an issue is in their best interests, they will be more likely to participate in an event with other organizations" (Van Dyke 2003, p. 230).

Participation in and support for the immigration protest rallies were paradoxically helped by the far-reaching punitive nature of HR 4437. A key provision of the House bill made any organization or person liable for criminal penalties and up to 5 years in prison for knowingly assisting any undocumented immigrant "to reside in or remain" in the United States. Not only would educators and health care workers be affected but so too would priests and pastors, family and friends, and anyone providing aid of any kind.⁸

Diverse organizational constituencies were also mobilized by the political threat in this bill. Political elites in both parties along with many in the business community—most notably the U.S. Chamber of Commerce—opposed HR 4437 and favored legislation that would provide a pathway to

citizenship (Ferris 2006). In a highly publicized *New York Times* editorial, Cardinal Roger Mahoney, archbishop of Los Angeles, urged his fellow clergy, parishioners, and the general public not to comply with anti-immigrant legislation and continue offering assistance (Mahoney 2006). Across the country, Catholic parish facilities were used for organizational meetings and preparation for the marches.

Unlike earlier social movements that specifically targeted Mexican-origin Latinos, the contemporary protests incorporated a broad base of national origin and ethnic groups. While Latinos from Mexico were the most likely to be threatened by HR 4437⁹ because of the sheer size of their population, the Spanish-language media coverage of the protest rallies made it clear that this was not exclusively a Mexican or even a Mexican-American response. Moreover, many Latino households and extended families are composed of both citizens and noncitizens (frequently, citizen children of noncitizen parents). Thus, penalties proposed in House bill had direct implications for undocumented immigrants as well as family members who were U.S. citizens. The provisions of the HR 4437, therefore, activated multiple communities in solidarity to oppose its provisions. We argue that churches, community organizations, and Spanish-language media, through the provision of information about upcoming protests, became primary agents of particularized mobilization as a necessary complement to the context-induced mobilization (McManis 2006; Peralta 2006). The elite interviews provide preliminary evidence to support this contention that can be further tested and substantiated with individual-level data.

Theoretical Expectations

Certainly, there are similarities between the aforementioned instances of Latino political activism and the current levels of engagement and participation in the immigration protest rallies. It is also true that similarities in the reaction to a political context by Latinos is dependent on the characteristics of who is affected by the proposed change in the status quo as well as the socio-political realities of said Latino constituency. Given the similarities of socio-political realities of Latinos today and historically, it is therefore expected that Mexican-origin Catholic and younger Latinos are the most likely participants in the 2006 immigration protest rallies.

Latino mobilization efforts inherently target a younger constituency than would be expected of non-Latinos, simply because of the demographic

reality; the median age is 27, compared to age 36 among non-Latinos according to 2005 Census figures. It is not surprising that students were extensively mobilized to participate in both generations of protest movements. Similarly, information about the marches and the pending legislation was widely disseminated in Latino-majority high schools in 2006 and many walkouts were planned (Jesse 2006; Moran 2006). Another commonality was the incorporation of the Catholic Church as a venue of mobilization of Latinos. Again, this is driven by the demographic reality in which 65% of all Latinos and 71% of Mexican origin identify as Catholic (Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation 2004). In other words, the characteristics of Latino constituency that participate in social movements are inextricably linked to the overall demographic composition of the Latino population. The CBO targets also evidenced these demographic trends. The existing literature, coupled with the elite interviews, reveals several patterns of Latino social movement participation. We focus on a few broad themes and test whether or not the 2006 immigration protest rallies were widespread throughout the Latino community or limited to Mexican immigrants. We apply each hypothesis to two different dependent variables: participation in the rallies and support for the rallies:

Demographic mobilization:

Hypothesis 1: Latinos of Mexican origin are more likely to be mobilized.

Hypothesis 2: Foreign-born Latinos are more likely to be mobilized. Institutional mobilization:

Hypothesis 3: Latinos who watch and listen to Spanish TV and radio are more likely to be mobilized.

Hypothesis 4: Catholic Latinos are more likely to be mobilized.

Data and Method

To assess individual level participation and approval of the spring 2006 rallies, we use two national surveys of Latino adults sponsored by the Latino Policy Coalition (LPC) in 2006. The LPC surveys are unique in their timing and range of questions and a perfect fit for this study. The first LPC survey was fielded April 20-26, 2006,¹⁰ just 2 weeks after the April 10th immigration rallies, and was one of the only surveys to ask respondents if they participated in the rallies. The second LPC survey was fielded June 11-22, 2006, a month after the second wave of immigration rallies and May 1 boycott and also contained key questions about support for the rallies.

Both surveys were national in scope, surveying Latinos in the 22 states with substantial Latino populations.¹¹

In conjunction with the elite interviews, the survey data provide a detailed look at the factors that mobilized more than 3 million people to participate in more than 50 cities across America. The main objective of the LPC surveys was to establish the policy preferences of Latino adult citizens in the United States, leaving out a large component of the protest population: noncitizens. Despite this limitation, the data are informative, because they demonstrate that a significant number of Latino citizens participated in and supported the immigration rallies, a point many observers called into question. More practically, we are limited by the availability of data, and unfortunately, no national survey of Latino noncitizens was fielded in the months following the immigration rallies, making the LPC surveys all the more valuable.

Dependent variables. We present three regression models predicting participation in and support for the immigration rallies among Latinos. The first two models (see Table 1) estimate participation in the immigration rallies using two different dependent variables from the April 2006 LPC survey. The survey asked, "Did you, anyone in your family, or any close friends participate in any of the rallies or marches held on the immigration issue in the last three weeks, or don't you know anyone who participated?" In Model 1, we created a dichotomous variable in which respondents who answered yes to any level of participation were coded as 1 and respondents who answered no were coded as 0. Thus, Model 1 attempts to capture both individual and familial participation in rallies to cast a wider net. So although the respondent may not have participated, they are still coded as 1 if their spouse, children, or best friend participated in the rallies. In contrast, Model 2 only focuses on individual participation. Respondents who indicated that they themselves participated were coded as 1, while all other respondents were coded as 0. In full, 10% of Latinos said they participated in the rallies and an additional 16% said a family member or friend participated. Although the data are self-reported measures of participation, it is impossible to obtain individual-level validated data on the participation in the immigration rallies; thus, the LPC data are the best available.¹² This approach allows us to examine the two different levels of participation that were often discussed by Spanish-language media: the individual and their family and friends. While multiple members of a family may have wanted to attend the rallies, participation often meant a day without wages, and in some instances, a

Table 1
Probit Regression Results for Participation in the March-April 2006
Rallies Among Latino Adult Citizens Nationwide

Independent Variables	Model 1: Individual, Family, or Friend Participated in Rallies		Model 2: Individual Participated in Rallies	
	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
Catholic	0.1878	0.0972*	0.0614	0.1294
Spanish at home	0.2446	0.1179*	0.4136	0.1487**
Foreign born	0.2177	0.1122*	-0.0365	0.1498
Second generation	-0.0135	0.1206	-0.0625	0.1603
Mexican origin	0.3784	0.0982***	0.2242	0.1329†
Immigration is an important issue	-0.0135	0.0146	-0.0031	0.0195
Pro citizenship	-0.0247	0.0492	-0.0574	0.0663
Rate Congress negatively	0.0943	0.0621	0.1628	0.0843*
Rate the president negatively	-0.0297	0.0588	-0.1185	0.0785
Wrong track	0.0267	0.0327	0.0820	0.0437†
Party identification	-0.0345	0.0258	-0.0639	0.0348†
Registered to vote	-0.0652	0.1058	-0.0480	0.1378
State's Latino size	-0.0003	0.0004	-0.0007	0.0006
Female	-0.0119	0.0936	-0.1336	0.1244
Age	-0.0811	0.0137***	-0.0792	0.0185***
Education	0.0109	0.0309	0.0313	0.0408
Income: Medium-low	-0.0930	0.1361	-0.0389	0.1751
Income: Medium	0.0559	0.1532	0.0045	0.1985
Income: Medium-high	0.0993	0.1801	-0.0746	0.2355
Income: High	-0.1809	0.1778	-0.4023	0.2549
Income: Missing	0.2318	0.1572	0.0526	0.2108
Constant	-0.8353	0.3877*	-1.3573	0.5006**
N	985		985	
Percentage predicted correctly	75.0		91.0	

Note: Dependent variable is 0 for no participation, 1 for participation.

Source: Latino Policy Coalition, 2006a. "National Survey of Latino Adults, Spring 2006." April 2006. San Francisco, CA.

† $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

family may have discussed who should attend and who should go to work, even though all family members were equally supportive of the marches. Thus, the expanded dependent variable in Model 1 is an important conceptualization of participation, especially in this unique case.

The third model gauges support for the rallies and uses a combination of three questions asked on the June 2006 LPC survey. Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with three statements: “(1) the marches showed that Latinos—immigrants or not—are united and won’t put up with discrimination any longer; (2) the marches showed elected officials in the United States that Latinos are a force to be reckoned with; and (3) the marches will have a positive effect on the final outcome of immigration reform.” Respondents could answer *strongly agree*, *somewhat agree*, *somewhat disagree*, or *strongly disagree* to the three statements. The combined scale¹³ ranges from a value of 3 for respondents who *strongly disagreed* with all three, to 12 for respondents to *strongly agreed* with all three. Overall, Latinos were supportive of the rallies, with more than 60% of respondents receiving a score of 9 or higher on the scale.¹⁴

Independent variables. For each of the three models, we use a consistent set of independent and control variables to test our hypotheses about participation in and support of the immigration rallies. We include dummy variables for Catholic, female, foreign born, second generation, Mexican origin, registered to vote, and Spanish spoken at home. In the June survey, respondents were asked about media consumption and the variable *Spanish media* is based on the frequency of Spanish television and radio consumption (i.e., *everyday*, *few times a week*, *once a week*, *once a month*, *never*). Although the Spanish spoken at home variable is a good proxy for language of media, it is not perfect, and the Spanish media variable in the June data allows us to specifically assess the impact of Spanish television and radio. Age and education are coded as categorical variables—and income, which is also categorical—is included as several dummy variables (with the lowest income category omitted) because of the higher nonresponse rate to the income question.

We also included several policy and political variables, to determine the effect of political interest on mobilization. These include the level of importance of the immigration issue, level of support for pathway to citizenship, and approval rating of Congress and the president. Each of these is a simple 4-point categorical variable ranging from *strongly oppose/disapprove* to *strongly support/approve*. Party identification is included as a 7-point scale, ranging from *strong Republican* to *strong Democrat*. From the April survey, we included a question about the future direction of the country, headed in the right direction (value of 0) or seriously off on the wrong track (value of 2), with respondents who stated “don’t know” in the middle (value of 1). Finally, we control for the size of

the Latino population within a state to assess whether or not Latinos in California and Texas were more involved than Latinos in North Carolina and Washington.

Results

In this article, we lay out several testable claims about participation in the Spring 2006 immigration rallies. The role of the Spanish media, the Catholic Church, nativity, country of origin, and policy preferences were all thought to play an important role in mobilizing support for the immigration rallies. Through a series of elite interviews and analysis of two national surveys, we find that participation in and support for the marches was widespread and well organized, consistent with the notion that a political threat can serve to mobilize multiple constituencies toward a common goal. There also appears to be congruence between the characterizations provided in the elite interview and the regression analysis. For example, a repeated theme of the elite interviews was the importance of ethnic media and the Catholic Church in getting out the message as well as a strong reliance on an immigrant rights campaign. Likewise, the survey data reveal a statistically significant relationship between Spanish media, the Catholic Church, immigrant rights policy attitudes, and participation in or support for the marches.

Specifically, the empirical analysis from the two LPC surveys reveals interesting patterns of participation among Latinos. In the first model—predicting individual, family, or friend participation in the rallies—we find that Catholics, Spanish speakers, foreign-born individuals, and Mexican-origin individuals are more likely to report participation. Younger Latinos were also more likely to participate. In the second model, looking only at individual-level participation, Catholic and foreign born are no longer statistically significant, while Spanish at home, Mexican origin, and age remain significant. Most interesting here is that second-generation and third-generation Latinos are as likely to participate in the marches as the foreign born. Furthermore, a few classic protest-related variables also spurred individual-level participation. Respondents who felt that the country was on the wrong track or who disapproved of the U.S. Congress were more likely to participate, as were Democrats.

In both Models 1 and 2, no differences existed with regard to education or income, suggesting that Latinos from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds participated or had family members participate. Likewise,

there were not different rates of participation for men and women. Both registered voters and nonregistered voters participated in the rallies at similar rates. Another variable of interest with null findings is the state's Latino size, which was negative but insignificant. This suggests that participation in the rallies was widespread throughout the country and not limited to areas of Latino political incorporation such as Los Angeles or San Antonio. Consistent with the findings of Alvarado, DeSipio, and Montoya (2009), our data suggest that Latinos in Georgia, Indiana, or North Carolina were as likely to participate in a rally as those from California, Texas, or New York.

Turning to Model 3, we find many similar results for support of the immigration rallies. Younger Latinos and Catholics were significantly more likely to support the rallies, as were Spanish speakers and those who relied on Spanish TV or radio. Both the foreign born and the second generation (children of foreign born) had high rates of support for the marches, as compared to the third generation. One interesting difference from Models 1 and 2 is that Mexican origin is not a significant predictor in Model 3. Although Mexican origin respondents were more likely to participate in the rallies, we find no difference in levels of support by national origin. Again, this suggests that there was widespread support for the rallies throughout the Latino community, even as the marchers themselves were more likely to be Mexican. Similarly, the state's Latino size variable is once again negative and insignificant, which indicates that Latinos in sparsely populated areas supported the rallies as much as those in East Los Angeles.

We also found great congruence between policy preference and support for the marches. Latinos who ranked immigration as an important issue and those who supported a pathway to citizenship for the undocumented were much more likely to be supportive of the rallies. Furthermore, while disapproval of the Congress was a predictor of participation, we found that disapproval of the president was related to support for the rallies. It is not surprising that Democrats were more supportive of the rallies.

With respect to the findings for being of Mexican origin and being Catholic, the survey data are consistent with our expectations and theory. For national origin, we find that Mexicans were more likely than other Latinos to have actually participated in the rallies, evidenced in Models 1 and 2 in Table 1. In Model 3 of Table 2, we do not find Mexicans more likely to support the rallies; instead, we find that support was widespread across Latino subgroups (also see Figures 1 and 2). These results are compatible with our solidarity thesis, and even though Mexican-origin

Table 2
Robust Regression Results for Support of the March-April-May 2006
Rallies Among Latino Adult Citizens Nationwide

Independent Variables	Model 3: Support for Rallies, Index of Three Items	
	Coefficient	SE
Catholic	0.2718	0.1596†
Spanish at home	1.0315	0.1856***
Spanish TV or radio	0.1205	0.0236***
Foreign born	0.5521	0.1965**
Second generation	0.5775	0.1940**
Mexican origin	0.1659	0.1702
Immigration is an important issue	0.1866	0.0738*
Pro citizenship	0.6295	0.0985***
Rate Congress negatively	-0.0553	0.0966
Rate the president negatively	0.2186	0.0897*
Party identification	-0.1312	0.0397***
Registered to vote	-0.0915	0.1724
State's Latino size	-0.0009	0.0007
Female	-0.1261	0.1487
Age	-0.0893	0.0226***
Education	0.0079	0.0548
Income: Medium-low	-0.1868	0.2193
Income: Medium	-0.1852	0.2583
Income Medium-high	-0.5524	0.3003†
Income: High	-0.2028	0.2702
Income missing	-0.2466	0.2452
Constant	5.1107	0.7223***
<i>N</i>	958	
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	.229	

Note: Dependent variable ranges from 3 for no support to 12 for full support.

Source: Latino Policy Coalition, 2006B. "National Survey of Latino Adults, Summer 2006." July 2006. San Francisco, CA.

†*p* < .10. **p* < .05. ***p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

Latinos may have been more likely to be mobilized to participate, support for the rallies was fairly high across national origin groups.

For Catholics, we find that this group was more likely to report participation in Model 1 and support in Model 3. In Model 2, Catholics were positive but not statistically significant. Thus, we have consistent findings that Catholic Latinos were more mobilized and supportive of the immigration rallies, in line with our expectation that the Catholic Church played an important role. The statistically significant results for the dummy variable *Catholic* make

Figure 1
Index of Support for Immigration Rallies by National Origin

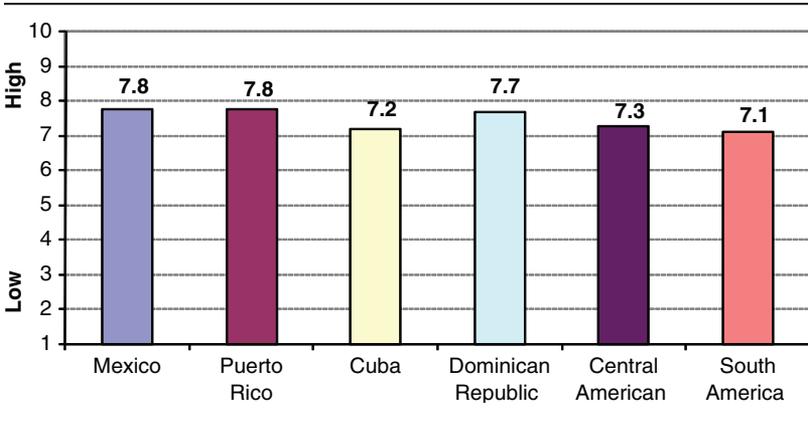
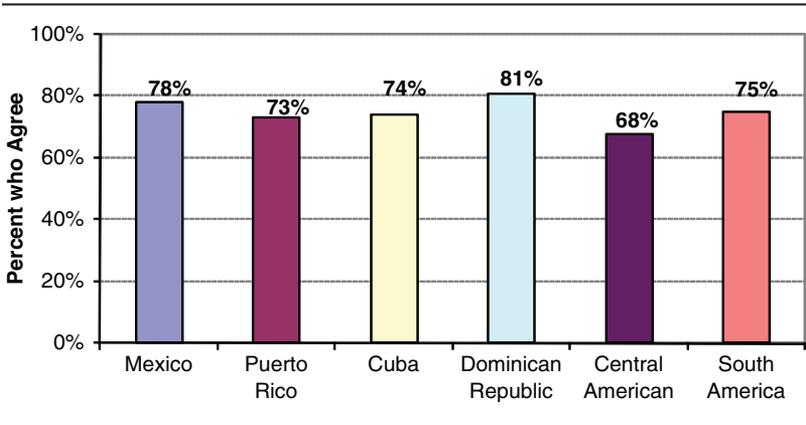


Figure 2
The Marches Showed that Latinos - Immigrants or not - are United and Won't Put up with Discrimination any Longer



clear that Latino Catholics did demonstrate unique patterns different from non-Catholics.¹⁵ Had multiple churches had different mobilization strategies, we would have wanted to test each religious denomination, but this was not at all the case in 2006. It was the Catholic Church that took a lead role in organizing and disseminating information in the Latino community; thus, we expect only Catholic Latinos to be more engaged.

In full, the data from the two LPC surveys provide support for our hypotheses. The Catholic Church and Spanish media outlets were shown to be important mobilizing agents among Latinos. In addition, we have revealed widespread support for and participation in the rallies by the Latino community through the null findings. The data demonstrate that Latinos from all walks of life participated in and showed support for the immigration marches. The qualitative findings comport nicely with the quantitative evidence in demonstrating that the marches were national in scope, included immigrants and native born, transcended socioeconomic boundaries, and were supported by Latinos of all national origins.

Prospects for a New Latino Social Movement

The Spring 2006 immigration protest rallies yielded both positive and negative consequences, leaving many to question whether the marches marked the beginning of a new Latino social movement or a short-lived response to a specific policy. In this article, we do not directly answer the question of whether this was a social movement or not; that was not our primary intent. Instead, we focus on the paths toward mobilization in understanding participation in the rallies and support for their agenda in America's urban centers. However, through our analysis and findings, it is possible to offer insights on the future of the immigrant rights movement. Specifically, we find that the multiple constituencies were mobilized in 2006, creating the foundation for a broad Latino movement, cutting across generation and country of origin and being national in scope.

In particular, there appeared to be widespread Latino solidarity throughout the rallies, whether individuals participated themselves or were supportive of the objectives. These trends are consistent in both the elite interviews and empirical analysis and provide strong support for our theoretical expectations. The LPC surveys asked Latino registered voters whether or not they agreed with the principles, objectives, and themes of the 2006 immigration rallies. As Figure 1 shows, Latinos demonstrated incredible solidarity across national origin groups. On a scale of 1 to 10, all Latino groups registered at least a 7 out of 10 in level of support. Furthermore, when asked if they agree or disagree that the marches showed Latino unity, more than two-thirds of Latinos of all national origin groups agreed that the marches showed that Latinos are united and "won't put up with" discrimination (see Figure 2). Altogether, we believe this is strong evidence of Latino solidarity on immigration.

The magnitude of the Spring 2006 events should not be underestimated. Protests were held simultaneously in scores of American cities, indicative of the widespread grassroots support for immigrant rights. Literally millions actively engaged on this policy issue in their home towns or the nearest urban setting. Many towns, large and small, witnessed the largest public protest in city history. The 2006 protests also gave CBOs the opportunity to expand their reach in terms of networks and membership. While it is fair to say that the 2006 movement was based on a single issue, the issue of immigration is one that is likely to be contested for quite some time.

The Latino population is already the largest ethnic minority in the United States and the fastest growing. Despite increased attention to border security since 2001, immigration from Latin America continues to be a reality of the American economic system. Similar to other contentious issues, the immigration policy debate sparked heated exchanges by conservatives and liberals. With private armed militias declaring their right to patrol the border and 5,000 National Guard troops deployed to the U.S.-Mexico border, it is reasonable that Latinos in America feel threatened and side with other Latinos on immigrant-rights issues. Given our findings of extensive support and participation in the 2006 rallies, as well as the failure of Congress to address immigration policy, it is realistic to expect the politics of protest to continue among Latinos well into the future.

Notes

1. In Los Angeles, over a million protesters took to the streets between March and May 2006. Tens and hundreds of thousands set records in America's largest cities, including Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Phoenix, Denver, and San Diego (Bernstein 2006; Korosec and Garza 2006; Prengaman 2006). Several more cities and states with substantially smaller Latino and immigrant populations held unprecedented protests with tens of thousands of participants, including St. Paul, Omaha, Milwaukee, Seattle, Atlanta, Santa Ana, Fort Meyers, Fresno, and Milwaukee (Smith and Hopfensperger 2006; Cardenas and Deggans 2006; Delson 2006; Gorman and Kennedy 2006; Johnson and Spice 2006; Jubera 2006). Even small, rural America was part of the movement; in Albertville, Alabama (population 25,000), 2,000 marchers participated in the largest public protest in the town's history.

2. According to a Pew Hispanic Center study, the first major nationally representative public opinion poll of the Latinos in the United States since the proimmigration marches took place, 63% of Latinos agreed with the statement that the marches were the beginning of a new Latino/Hispanic social movement.

3. We agree with Olesen's (2006) definition of *audience* as the media and public opinion.

4. Despite the lower turnout relative to their Latino counterparts in 2006, Asian-Americans marched in almost every major city across the nation. For instance, Korean-Americans marched

in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. (Fears and Williams 2006; Bernstein 2006; Hernandez 2006; Lee 2006; Koch 2006). Chinese-Americans marched in these same cities in addition to rallies held in Boston (Abraham and Kramer 2006). Filipino-Americans marched in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. (Micek, Goossen, and Ciria-Cruz 2006; Ilustre 2006; Klein 2006; Hussain and Herman 2006); South Asians in Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and New York (Swapan 2006); and Vietnamese-Americans in Chicago and San Francisco (Shore 2006; Lee 2006).

5. The distribution of the 19 interviews consisted of 12 from California, 4 from Illinois, and 1 each from New York, Texas, and Washington, D.C.

6. The 2001-2002 National Directory of Hispanic Organizations provides information on Hispanic organizations that are national, statewide, and regional in both membership and scope and is supported by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute. A similar method was employed using the 2005-2006 directory of Asian Pacific American Organizations; however, for the purpose of this article, only the Latino interviews are discussed.

7. Questions about the CBO's involvement and specific mobilization efforts included, "How informed was your organization about the rallies before they transpired?" "What strategies did your organization use to spread information about the rallies to potential participants?" "In mobilizing individuals or group, did your organization target any segments of the community in particular?" "Did your organization focus on certain racial or ethnic communities more than others in the mobilization effort?" Interviews were conducted over the phone or face to face and lasted for 30 minutes on average.

8. These provisions were substantially more expansive and punitive than those in California's Proposition 187, which was passed by the voters in 1994 but overturned through a legal challenge.

9. Puerto Ricans are American citizens by birth. Cuban immigrants are recognized as political refugees, which grants them protected status that guards against deportation. Immigrants from more than 16 Central and South American countries, though increasing in size, total approximately 24% of the total Latino population.

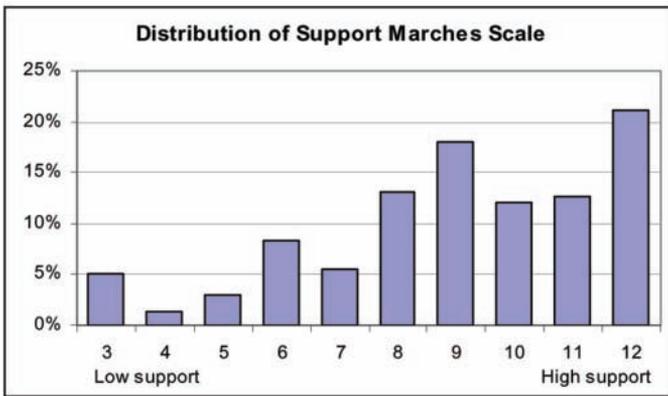
10. Full information on both Latino Policy Coalition surveys can be found on the Latino Policy Coalition Web site: <http://www.latinopolicycoalition.org/poll2006.htm>. Data from all three waves of the national survey can be downloaded from <http://faculty.washington.edu/mbarreto/data/>

11. The surveys were conducted in Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and Washington, and together account for 94% of the Latino adult population in the United States.

12. Self-reported measures of participation almost certainly include some overreporting and social desirability bias to answer in favor of participation. However, self-reported participation is the only available data, because participation in the 2006 marches cannot be validated at the individual level. Thus, we are faced with the most common challenge in empirical analysis, of using the best available data we can. Furthermore, the frequency distribution for participation is consistent with our expectations: 10% of the interviewees stated that they themselves participated in the rallies. As of 2006, the Current Population Survey reported 18 million Latino citizen adults, which would be 1.8 million participants in the rallies. The Wilson Center estimates referenced in this article (Bada et al 2006) put the total number of participants—citizen adults, noncitizen adults, and youth—between 3.5 and 5.1 million.

13. The scale has an average interitem covariance of .5268 and a scale reliability coefficient of .7536 (Cronbach's alpha).

14. Distribution of Support Marches Scale



15. While the control group or comparison group may be difficult to pin down in a Catholic/non-Catholic dichotomy, the dummy variable for Catholic is exactly what we are interested in. Because of the intense role of the Catholic Church alone, we are not trying to test multiple religious denominations against one another but rather carry out a bright-line comparison of Catholic versus non-Catholic participation and support for the immigration rallies.

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