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1

1 On 1 May 2006, over a million mostly Latino/a, but also Middle Eastern, Asian, and Eastern European immigrants took to the streets of major U.S. cities—such as New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Miami, Phoenix, and Denver—to express disapproval of H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005.[2] The proposed bill, which passed the House of Representatives on 16 December 2005, included turning unlawful entrance into the United States a felony, punishable by imprisonment; militarizing the U.S.-Mexican border, complete with 700 miles of fencing erected along the border; and deporting undocumented and "terrorist" aliens.[3]

2 Because of its sweeping provisions, the proposal—dubbed as the "Sensenbrenner Bill" after its sponsor James Sensenbrenner (R-Wisconsin)—immediately created uproar across the United States.[4] The conflation of immigrants, documented, undocumented, and citizens alike, with criminality and terrorism in the post-9/11 period, in particular, was a source of outrage among many immigrant communities. In the words of 22-year-old Mexican immigrant Ricardo Vargas, "When you are a citizen and you don't agree with the system, you are a 'liberal.' When you are undocumented and you don't agree, you are a 'terrorist.'"[5] In 2003, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) created the National Fugitive Operation Program (NFOP) under the Department of Homeland Security to specifically "identify, locate, apprehend, process and remove fugitive aliens from the United States," as a result of which especially Latino/a and Middle Eastern immigrants became targets of state-level search and seize operations across the nation.[6]

3 The "Day Without Immigrants" protest were part of a series of events staged in spring 2006 as a grassroots political response to the plight of the growing number of non-citizen immigrant workers in the United States. At the time of the protests, there were some 37 million legal immigrants in the United States, especially from Latin America, Asia, and the Caribbean; alongside them, some 10-12 million people—four per cent of the population—worked in the country without authorization.[7] Yet while the protests called attention to

the grievances the immigrants were facing—and the problems of the existing immigration law—they also triggered some unintended consequences. Heated political responses in the media and public discourses became marked by an ideological pattern by which various ethnoracial groups were pitted against each other to invoke the age-old question of *entitlement*: that is, who has the right to be in the United States to begin with?

4 These debates assumed a distinctly racial character by which the class-based immigrant labor force was accused of siphoning off "mainstream" society's resources, while posing additional threats to national security at a time when the United States was in the midst of fighting two wars against "terrorism." This paper will consider the debate from the perspectives of scholars, pundits, policy makers, and participants. By giving voice to divergent viewpoints, it seeks to underscore the complexity of the power dynamics at stake in the entire immigration issue.

5 To probe into the different sides of the controversy, then, I will first discuss the notion of national identity—that is, "Americanness"—as a socio-historically constructed racial category. I will then turn to the May Day rallies and the counter-reactions prompted by the protests across the U.S. political spectrum, as voiced by grassroots activists and various interest groups in the so-called "ethnic" and "mainstream" media alike. Since Latino/as constitute the largest numbers of both authorized and unauthorized immigrants currently residing in the United States, they will be the main focus of my discussion.[8] Despite this dominance, I want to emphasize that the immigrant rights movement itself is much more heterogeneous than my discussion allows for; indeed, it is a collaborative effort by a range of different ethnoracial groups as well as a whole host of religious, political, labor, and grassroots civil rights organizations together.

6 Thirdly, I will address some of the larger implications of the current controversy in the light of occurrences of nativism in U.S. history. Through these diverse perspectives, I will argue that the immigration debates prompted by the "Day Without Immigrants" protests did not, ultimately, seek to offer solutions to the proposed legislation but rather commented on the ramifications of an increasingly multiracial nationhood, that is, the delineation of "Americanness" beyond a black-and-white paradigm. Yet, I want to suggest, such debates in the future might better be conceptualized not from the perspective of the United States alone, but as part and parcel of broader hemispheric socioeconomic power relations within the Americas.

7 As historians and scholars on racial relations have in recent years frequently pointed out, ever since the United States was founded, race has been a central concern in defining citizenship, national identity, and nationhood. After the Naturalization Law of 1790 first granted U.S. citizenship to free "white" persons alone, the position of newcomers to the country was assessed for over two and a half centuries against the socio-historical and legal construction of "whiteness."[9] Because immigration law was tied to racial categorization, it determined both who was able to legally enter the country *and* who had the right to claim belonging in the U.S. nation-state at any one time.

8 Race, in effect, became a policy matter, albeit a contentious one due to the discrepancies between the nation's legal scripture and everyday practices. While the 14th amendment, for example, granted citizenship to African Americans in 1868, the egalitarian principle was undermined by *Plessy v. Ferguson*'s "separate but equal" doctrine that established de jure segregation in 1896. Moreover, as evidenced in the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (and its corollary, the so-called "Asiatic Barred Zone" in 1917), the Quota Law of 1921, the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act of 1924, the Mexican

repatriation campaigns in the 1930s, Operation Wetback of 1954, and a series of other legislative efforts from the past half century, certain immigrant groups have been deemed less "desirable" than others at particular historical moments, also contingent upon the geopolitical situation of the world.[10] Indeed, Lina Newton aptly makes the case that such "policy designs rest on a national mythology about what types of immigrants made America, and which ones lack the values, traits, or contributions that would earn them inclusion in that story."[11]

9 Even if the racial premise of naturalization was overturned with the McCarran-Walter Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, the socio-cultural question of who is entitled to claim "Americanness" continues to have widespread ramifications up until today. Because non-white immigrant experiences have historically been compared against the backdrop of the early European immigration waves of the 19th and early 20th centuries, "the idea of being an 'American,'" to quote Richard Dyer, "has long sat uneasily with ideas of being any other colour [sic] than white."[12]

10 The ambiguous position of Latino/as, the fastest growing U.S. minority, between the racial hierarchy of whiteness and blackness is the product of a complex historical relationship between the United States and Latin American nations. For example, while the Treaty of the Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, which ended the war between the United States and Mexico, granted de jure "whiteness" to Mexicans in the Southwest, it failed to bring about de facto citizenship rights to most of them. After the annexation, lower-class Mexicans became a racialized labor force serving as domestics and farm workers in the Southwest, frequently facing dual wage structures, segregation, and racism. Up until today, Mexicans from both sides of the border have comprised the largest number of migrant workers—especially in the agribusiness sector—and both the U.S. and Mexican governments have promoted such movement of labor through various bilateral initiatives.

11 During World War II, the so-called *Bracero* Program allowed 4.6 million Mexicans to come to the United States as farm workers. By the 1950s, however, there was a surplus of Mexican laborers, and the U.S. Border Patrol started implementing the Operation Wetback campaign to deport these migrant workers (some of whom were U.S. citizens) back to Mexico.[13] Thus a dual system came into being during the course of the twentieth century whereby a racialized labor force without citizenship rights was allowed into the nation during political stability and economic prosperity; but once a downward tide seemed imminent, legal measures were taken to extradite them.

12 Latino/as' situation within contemporary U.S. racial hierarchies is complicated further by the often ignored interdependence of race and ethnicity: namely, that they embrace a range of different racial markers, all the while representing various ethnic backgrounds, as the saying goes: "Latino/as come in all colors."[14] *Latinidad* as an identity label, then, may signify a variety of positions, such as ethnic/racial affiliation, citizenship status, generational experiences, and language use, complicated further by such relations of power as class, gender, age, sexuality, regionalism, if not all of them combined. What is more, the choice of any individual or collective nomenclature easily turns into a sensitive issue in which intercultural and interracial conflicts take on volatile meanings, with a marked difference in terms of who appropriates any particular label and where they may be used.

13 The U.S. Census Bureau's appropriation of the term "Hispanic" to lump together remarkably heterogeneous ethnoracial groups under one linguistic category, for example,

has generated resentment among those who prefer the racially inclusive term "Latino/a" as a pan-ethnic label of choice. The adoption of an identity label for a broader political purpose, in turn, speaks to Coco Fusco's notion of "strategic essentialism," or "a critical position that validates identity as politically necessary but not as ahistorical or unchangeable."[15] The ongoing "browning" of U.S. demographics and everyday culture continues to generate questions regarding where, in effect, do Latino/as fit in the social order of 21st-century U.S. nationhood, an issue that is central to the entire immigrant rights movement as well.

14 On 1 May 2006, a sea of protesters trampled the streets of U.S. cities as part of the "Day Without Immigrants" demonstrations, vowing to neither go to work or school or to purchase any consumer goods for 24 hours. Some employers sympathetic to the cause made arrangements for their workers to take the day off as unpaid leave; others warned that dissidents need not come back the next day. Across the nation, organizers of the protests were giddy with a sense of optimism, synergy, and agency that the movement was engendering.[16] In New York, a multiracial human chain was formed to symbolize the divisive nature of the Sensenbrenner bill. In a speech in Washington, D.C., Jaime Contreras, president of the National Capital Immigrant Coalition, evoked the Civil Rights era's marches in Selma, Alabama, and the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965: "I have a message for all of the politicians in Congress and...our president. Today we march, tomorrow we vote!"[17] According to New Mexico's governor Bill Richardson, "this is bigger than the civil rights movement in the 60s. This is huge."[18] Across the country, Latino/a protesters were chanting the slogan "¡*Sí se puede*!" ("Yes we can!"), made famous in the 1970s by César Chávez, the late labor activists and leader of the United Farm Workers.[19] In Los Angeles, an unnamed African American religious leader spontaneously expressed his support of the movement: "We stand in solidarity with our Latino family, to say thank you to Congressman Sensenbrenner...because a power greater than [hurricane] Katrina has been unleashed here in Los Angeles!"[20]

15 The boycotters' "We Are America" signs called attention to the legacy of the entire United States as an immigrant nation. As Rene Ochart, a hotel doorman of Puerto Rican descent put it: "Everyone's an immigrant here. The only real American is the Indian."[21] Reports from supporters of the rallies, by and large, were overwhelmingly positive in their emphasis of immigrants' "ownership" of the movement.[22] In the words of Cecilia Muñoz, Vice President for Policy of the National Council of La Raza: "History Is Unfolding Before Our Eyes."[23]

16 The protests were organized on the International Workers' Day, which is not a public holiday in the United States, in an effort to call attention to the intersecting issues of human rights, workers' rights, and immigrant rights. Above all, as laborers on the bottom-rung of the food chain, the protesters demanded the legalization of the millions of undocumented workers, who quite literally kept many cities up and running on an everyday level.[24] In light of the history of unsuccessful attempts at long-term labor organizing in the United States, the focus on labor issues was quite noteworthy. Indeed, "the privileging of nationalist politics," Laura Pulido argues, has allowed the avoidance of "a worker consciousness, especially an international worker consciousness, which could conceivably allow us to develop a radically different attitude toward immigrant workers." [25] Whether cities saw businesses and factories close down for the day, the message of the impact of these workers on the U.S. economy was brought home to many. Those cities

that witnessed mayhem due to a lack of general maintenance, in turn, saw the importance of the invisible pool of workers in tangible ways in their everyday lives.

17 Throughout the campaign, the point the proponents of immigrants' rights wanted to underscore was that the root and cause of unlawful immigration was not some inherent wander-lust of the trespassers but the fact that non-skilled foreigners were continuously welcomed into the country as a labor force without adequate channels to legally enter the system. According to one estimate, there were some 500,000 unskilled jobs available within the U.S. economy each year; yet the annual quota for visas in that category of workers was only 5,000.[26] The incongruous system itself, as one commentator put it, was untenable:

> [W]e have two signs posted at our borders: "Help Wanted" and "Keep Out." The byproduct of this schizophrenia is that businesses, families and law-enforcement agencies are stuck between a rock and a hard place. There's an unsustainable contradiction between U.S. economic policy and U.S. immigration policy, and economics is winning. We can either continue to spend billions of dollars in an immigration-enforcement battle against our own economy and our own labor force, or we can create an immigration system that's not only good at keeping people out, but also effective at letting people in.[27]

18 Immigration from Mexico, in particular, has for the past century been fraught with inconsistencies in relation to policy-making. As Nicholas De Genova points out, "while no other country has supplied nearly as many migrants to the United States as has Mexico since 1965, most major changes in U.S. immigration law during this period have created ever more severe restrictions on the possibilities for 'legal' migration from Mexico."[28]

19 The exception to this trend was the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, which granted amnesty to undocumented immigrants, a premise which has been sporadic in its implementation. For the most part, the undocumented work force without prospects of an accessible path to citizenship is in no position to negotiate their conditions of employment; hence it is, to quote De Genova again, their "deportability, and not deportation as such, that has historically rendered Mexican labor to be a distinctly disposable commodity."[29]

20 While the national polemics over illegal immigration have largely focused on the question of border security, a key issue has been strikingly absent from mainstream media debates: that migration in the Americas is part of a broader process of hemispheric relations and the United States' historically powerful economic role in the Americas. Yet, as David Bacon argues, the North American Free Trade Agreement in fact aided and abetted the mass mobilization of the migrant labor movement that we have seen in the U.S. during the past two decades: "During the years following NAFTA's implementation in 1994, a greater number of people moved from Mexico to the United States than in almost any other period in our history."[30] Even as the treaty created a favorable environment for U.S. entrepreneurs south of the border, real Mexican wages dropped some 22 per cent, with drastic consequences for the local labor force. According to a Mexican government estimate, the country lost a million jobs in the year 1995 alone, and the newly displaced people had few other options than to seek employment north of the border, where it was readily available.[31] In the United States, however, many commentators have turned a blind eye to the de facto benefits that the porous borders accrued for U.S. businesses in reductions of production costs and for the so-called "ordinary" people's buying power as retail prices were kept low.

21 The critics of the "Day Without Immigrants" had an entirely different approach to the protests. To them, the immigration issue boiled down to a legal question—cracking down unlawful trespassers—albeit one that entailed a range of moral, security, and ideological ramifications. Lou Dobbs of the CNN, for example, opined that "It is no accident that they chose May 1 as their day of demonstration and boycott. It is the worldwide day of commemorative demonstrations by various socialist, communist, and even anarchic organizations."[32] Jerome Corsi of the *World Net Daily* elaborated on the imminence of the rise of the red scare: "Radical organizations, including active communist and revolutionary socialist organizations, were the driving force organizing the immigration boycott rally...to deliver an anti-American, anti-imperialist message under the guise of an 'immigration rights' rally."[33] Jim Gilchrist, founder of the Minutemen Civil Defense Corps, explained the sense of urgency to national security: "When the rule of law is dictated by a mob of illegal aliens taking to the streets, especially under a foreign flag, then that means the nation is not governed by a rule of law—it is a mobocracy."[34] Former presidential candidate Pat Buchanan called the boycotts "a strike against America"; while conservative commentator Michelle Malkin saw the movement driven by a Mexican conspiracy to "reconquer" the U.S. Southwest.[35] John Tanton of the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), in turn, compared Latino/a immigrants to "bacteria," whose high birthrates allowed them to multiply and, ultimately, "take over" the United States.[36] While both sides of the debate express strong views about the immigration issue from their particular perspectives, few can come up with permanent solutions to the problem. The Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005 was ultimately halted in the Senate; and as its spin-off, the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006 also failed to pass the Senate, the issue will remain unresolved until addressed by the Obama administration.[37]

22 While the legal issue may currently be at a stalemate on a federal level, the practical ramifications of the debates are experienced on an everyday level across the United States. The conspicuous pattern that emerged after the rallies in spring 2006 was that, unlike the immigration debates throughout the twentieth century, immigration was no longer racialized as a white/non-white issue. Quite the opposite, the immigration debate of the twenty-first century had specifically turned into a black-and-brown labor affair.[38] Anti-immigrant proponents, in particular, made specific efforts to turn African American workers against Latino/a workers, arguing that not only do Latino/as take away jobs that rightfully belong to African Americans, but that they depress the wages of all non-skilled laborers.[39] In the words of eighteen-year-old Stacey Bennett, "They give most of the jobs to the Latinos...I was born over here. My ancestors shed blood and sweat. I can't get work but the Mexicans can—it ain't right. To get right down to it, they are stealing our jobs and should be sent home."[40] According to Ted Hayes, a former homeless advocate turned Republican, "illegal immigration is the biggest threat to Blacks since slavery."[41] In May 2007, an activist group calling itself "Choose Black America" staged marches against illegal immigration in Washington, D.C., and a month later a group of African Americans protesters sponsored by the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) organized a similar event in Los Angeles.[42] However, soon a counter-movement in support of immigrant rights, the "Black Alliance for Just Immigration" (BAJI), emerged to argue against such divisive rhetoric and to urge African Americans to bury the hatchet and enter into dialogue with Latino/as to promote concerns over a variety of class agendas across ethnoracial boundaries.[43] Indeed, especially after the 2008 presidential

primaries, both Latino/a and African Americans have increasingly emphasized that the rhetoric of pitting the two groups of workers against each other not only ignores their commonalities but it also fails to acknowledge their intra-group heterogeneity, as created and lived through by class, immigration status, and generational differences.

23 Immediately after the immigration rallies, signs of a nativist backlash became evident across the United States at several geographic scales, and racist incidents have continuously increased with the downturn of the U.S. economy.[44] Different parties involved have resorted to the question of entitlement to justify their claims for inclusion/exclusion in the nation, but it is typically the immigrants who have been at pains to justify their claims in these debates. For "nativism," Nicholas De Genova argues, always evaluates "migration from the standpoint of citizens who authorize themselves to debate the question in terms of 'what is good for the nation.'"[45] An important recent policy shift has brought about nativist measures by granting states and local governments the authority to enforce violations of immigration statutes, an area traditionally the domain of the federal government. Although Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1996 has permitted police to enforce immigration law locally for the past 12 years, such measures have only been taken by local law enforcement agencies in practice for the past five years.[46]

24 Vigorous new strategies have been implemented on state level, ranging from workplace raids, detaining and deportation of immigrants, and prosecuting employers who hire undocumented workers.[47] During the period of 2005-2008, the number of unauthorized immigrants in the United States, in effect, declined from about 800,000 to 500,000.[48] According to a report dated 17 October 2008, there were a total of 1,172 worksite raids across the country within the preceding 11 months, complete with 4,956 arrests made, with charges of identity theft, Social Security fraud, or violation of the immigration law.[49]

25 Worried accounts from immigrant communities across the nation soon began to circulate in local and national media.[50] Marta Moreno of Longmont, Colorado shares her experience as follows: "Colorado passed four to five anti-immigrant bills...targeting services provided to the undocumented. One bill requires that police report anyone who they hear speaking Spanish to ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement). One woman went to buy orange juice and they asked her for her license and photo ID. The same thing happened to a man who went to buy gas."[51] In a recent article in the *Nation*, Roberto Loveto labels the racial profiling of Latino/as in Georgia as that of "Juan Crow":

> [T]he younger children of the mostly immigrant Latinos in Georgia are learning and internalizing that they are different from white—and black—children not just because they have the wrong skin color but also because many of their parents lack the right papers. They are growing up in a racial and political climate in which Latinos' subordinate status in Georgia and in the Deep South bears more than a passing resemblance to that of African-Americans who were living under Jim Crow. Call it Juan Crow: the matrix of laws, social customs, economic institutions and symbolic systems enabling the physical and psychic isolation needed to control and exploit undocumented immigrants.

26 In the Southwest, traditionally a Latino/a stronghold, many families have experienced tragic consequences because of workplace raids and their ensuing deportations. Dee Ann Newell of Arkansas recounts:

> In the last year, we have had two significant raids. One was on a poultry plant in southern Arkansas, in a town called Arkadelphia. Homeland Security came in during the night shift and arrested 52 adults. Their children awakened to find one

> or both parents arrested and, within 36 hours, deported. Some of the children were infants and toddlers who awakened in day care centers with both parents gone. Because the majority of these children were also undocumented, they were not eligible for any state assistance formally.[52]

27 In Iowa, Erik Camayd-Freixas, an interpreter hired for legal assistance with undocumented immigrants, witnessed a workplace raid on a meatpacking plant in the town of Postville in May 2008:

> Then began the saddest procession I have ever witnessed, which the public would never see, because cameras were not allowed past the perimeter of the compound (only a few journalists came to court the following days, notepads in hand). Driven single-file in groups of 10, shackled at the wrists, waist and ankles, chains dragging as they shuffled through, the slaughterhouse workers were brought in for arraignment. They sat and listened through headsets to the interpreted initial appearance, before marching out again to be bused to different county jails, only to make room for the next row of 10.[53]

28 The nativist backlash is also evident in the mushrooming of anti-immigration organizations. The *National Illegal Immigration Boycott Coalition* (N.I.I.B.C.) has over one hundred member affiliates active nationwide, including such groups as *America In Danger*, *American Patrol*; *Get My Country Back*; *Invading America*; *Secured Borders U.S.A*; *US Border Watch*; *USA Border Alert*; *Friends of the Border Patrol*; and the state-based *Minutemen* chapters, to mention just a few.[54] In addition, various hate groups have shifted their focus to immigration issues. According to one estimate, for example, there was a 63 percent increase in membership among Ku Klux Klan groups between 2000 and 2005.[55] A recent FBI intelligence report states that there was an estimated 25 percent increase in hate crimes against Latinos or those perceived to be illegal immigrants between 2004 and 2006. [56] In February 2007, the Oakland, California police released a statement about a new crime wave referred to as "amigo checking," because it targets Latino/a immigrant workers, who may not have a bank account and often carry large amounts of cash with them.[57] On 4 May 2007, a day-labor center for immigrant workers was burnt down in Gaithersburg, Maryland; and on 30 September 2007, a U.S. Latino mechanic found his garage destroyed in an arsonist attack in Avon Park, Florida, with a message sprayed on the premises by the perpetrators: "Fuck Puerto Rico."[58] In the words expressed by Hal Turner, a white supremacist internet radio talk host, "All of you who think there's a peaceful solution to these invaders are wrong. We're going to have to start killing these people...I advocate using extreme violence against illegal aliens. Clean your guns. Have plenty of ammunition. Find out where the largest gathering of illegal aliens will be near you. Go to the area well in advance, scope out several places to position yourself and then do what has to be done."[59] Such expressions of hatred serve as testimony to the intrinsic link between ongoing nativism, xenophobia, and racism.

29 On 25 September 2006, nearly four months after the "Day Without Immigrants" protests, immigrant rights activists across the nation were asked to evaluate the immediate outcome of the movement. The respondents perceived inter-group collaboration between different ethnoracial minorities and religious groups as an important positive change as a direct result of the movement. In the words of Mohammad Razvi of Brooklyn, New York, "the impact was that many individuals saw people coming together from different ethnic groups and we had a collective voice. Different faith-based communities came out: Christian, Jewish, Muslim. We felt more comfort that there were other people in the same situation and political and elected officials have also changed their tone. Before they did not want to discuss the matter openly. Now immigration is discussed more openly."[60]

30 In a similar vein, Rashida Tlaib of Detroit, Michigan reports: "Our [ACCESS, the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services] ties with the Latino community are growing stronger, and we're involved with a church-based coalition. We wouldn't have started working with them if it wasn't for the immigrant rights movement. They're broadening their base. We built an alliance with them that's probably been the most effective in our work."[61] Unlike the collaboration between different minority groups, the overwhelming majority of those interviewed perceived the relation between minorities and the so-called "mainstream" society as significantly worse.

31 Small towns, in particular, witnessed an array of negative consequences. Bill Chandler of Gulfport, Mississippi, explains: "the results have been xenophobia and racism revealing themselves very openly in white districts where more Latinos are moving in."[62] In the words of David Oslo of Wichita, Kansas, immigrant presence has turned the town into "a hotpot of hate in the last few months." Marilyn Daniels of Lexington, Kentucky describes her predicament as follows: "I don't feel that I'm part of a movement. I feel I'm in a terrible problem. I'm afraid that we're heading for even worse times. I'm afraid that they will pass punitive measures between now and the end of the year. What it does to families and children is what bothers me the most."[63]

32 In September 2008, a Pew Hispanic Center report stated that 63% of Latino immigrants felt that their situation in the United States was worse than it had been just a year before.[64] To quote former protester Sylvia Rodríguez, "The hopes we had are slipping from our hands. Amnesty will never come."[65] On 1 May 2008, two years after the "Day Without Immigrants," the protests staged in the United States were a pale shadow of the earlier events. In New York, only 1,000 people from civil rights and labor organizations showed up to support the cause; for the workers themselves, the demonstrations had proved much too risky.[66]

33 Notwithstanding the discouraging evidence from the period after the first "Day Without Immigrants" marches, I will end this paper with a cautious note of optimism. The cross-racial mobilization between ethnoracial minorities and some of the predominantly white interest groups witnessed during the presidential campaign of 2008 may indicate a paradigm shift in class-based inter-group collaborations in the years to come. The understanding of "Americanness" itself may no longer be as stable a category as it seemed only a couple of years ago; its meanings may in the future be much more inclusive than the black-white dichotomy indicates. However, any evidence to such effects will have to wait until Congress introduces its next round of proposals to tackle the complicated immigration issue in law—or the entitlement for "Americanness" in practice—once again.

NOTES

1. This paper was written for the European Association for American Studies conference in Oslo, 9-12 May 2008. I would like to express thanks to Stepanka Korytova for organizing the workshop entitled "Nativism Revisited? Political

Responses to Immigration in the United States." Thanks also to Jørn Brøndal, Frederick Douzet, Catherine Lejeune, Jonathon Moses, Rune Reimar Christensen, Stepanka Korytova, and the editor and the anonymous reviewers at EJAS for their comments and suggestions on the manuscript.
2. See H.R. 4437 [109th]: Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005, http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h109-4437 [last accessed 26 June 2009].
3.The bill passed the House of Representatives on 16 December 2005 by a vote of 239 to 182.
4. The protests were referred to as "*Un día sin inmigrantes* in Spanish." They were also known as the "Great American Boycott"—"*El gran paro Americano*."
5. Ricardo Vargas, "I'm No 'Anchor Baby,' I'm an American." *New America Media*, 17 February 2006, http://news.pacificnews.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=8aca573fa65b26ce5b6a70da305f642e [last accessed 26 June 2009].
6. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, http://www.ice.gov/pi/dro/nfop.htm [last accessed 26 June 2009].
7. On annual estimates of unauthorized immigrants in the United States in the twenty-first century, see Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, *Trends in Unauthorized Immigration: Undocumented Inflow Now* (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, 2 October 2008) http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/94.pdf [last accessed 26 June 2009], 2-6.
8. Latinos are the fastest growing U.S. minority, comprising about 14.8 % of the population in 2006. See Pew Hispanic Center, "Statistical Portrait of Hispanics in the United States, 2006," http://pewhispanic.org/files/factsheets/hispanics2006/hispanics.pdf [last accessed 26 June 2009].
9. On the legal history of immigration, see Ian Haney-López, *White By Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: New York University Press, 2006); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); and David Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White. The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).
10. On the history of illegal immigration and immigration restriction in the United States, see Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).
11. Lina Newton, *Illegal, Alien, or Immigrant: The Politics of Immigration Reform* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 4.
12. Richard Dyer, "The White Man's Muscles" in Rachel Adams and David Savran, eds., *The Masculinity Studies Reader* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 264.
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ABSTRACTS

This article considers the debates surrounding the "Day Without Immigrants" protests organized in major U.S. cities on 1 May 2006, prompted by H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005, from the multiple perspectives of scholars, pundits, policy makers, and participants. Although much of these debates ostensibly centered around illegal Latino/a immigration to the United States, underneath the discussion ran a curious ideological thread, one that invoked groups' right to be in the United States in the first place. The article argues that the rhetoric used in these discourses pitted various class-based ethnoracial groups against each other not so much to tackle the proposed immigration bill but, rather, to comment on the ramifications of an increasingly multiracial United States.

INDEX

Keywords: immigration reform, class, labor, nativism, U.S. Latino/as, ethnoracial identity

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