



Figure 1

ation: “Lesbians and Gays Support Immigrant Rights!” and “Latino Gay Community.”

In fact, there were some rainbow flags at the 2006 rallies, but they were few in number, do not appear in most photographs at the time, and were not readily understood as signaling an immigrant-gay rights alliance. Blogs after the 2006 rallies capture the difference. For example, one blogger, Cinnachick, posted a few photos of people holding rainbow flags at the immigrant rights rally on Flickr on May 1, 2006 with the following comment attached: “I was hoping for more signs like this from a variety of organizations. I hope some of them were on the other leg of the march, but I kinda doubt it.” Several bloggers responded to Cinnachick’s post echoing her uncertainty. One comment stated: “I saw rainbow flags here in L.A. and hoped they were about LGBT support for immigrant rights. I suspect they may have been about diversity but I prefer to believe the former.” Another blogger replied: “I saw several rainbow flags and assumed they were all gay rights, but now I wonder if they were more for diversity.” By 2008 the uncertainty has gone: rainbow flags proliferate, are readily visible, and are assumed to be signaling LGBT support for immigrant rallies (Flickr 2006).

While the images are from Chicago rather than Boston, they echo data from our Boston fieldwork. The Latino gay and lesbian communities in Boston have been active within the Mass Equality coalition, celebrating Latino LGBT Pride for the last six years, and participating with a float in the Boston LGBT Parade. The most active group is the Somos Latinos LGBT organization, with smaller groups of individuals participating in the large LGBT organizations of Massachusetts.<sup>19</sup> Both the directors of Somos Latinos LGBT and Marcony Almeida from MIRA mentioned that they had held meetings with Mass Equality to have them join the MIRA coalition, but that has yet to happen. Somos Latinos LGBT has been actively organizing events aimed at bringing issues of sexuality and immigration together. We attended one such occasion at Roxbury Community College on May 15, 2008.<sup>20</sup>

To be sure, a few images or meetings cannot establish whether new coalitions are being formed, but they can alert us to possible changes at hand that can be corroborated through additional research. In fact, this



Anonymous/GayLiberation.net (May 2, 2008)

Figure 2

is what happened. We entered the field intending to examine the intersection of race and immigration, but initially through the photographs and then through our interviews, we came to see the cutting edge of politics forming at the intersection of sex and faith rather than race and immigration. Moreover, the contrast between the 2006 and 2008 photographs suggests that things may be changing rapidly, since there is only a two-year gap between these very different images. Our interviews also suggest a generational dynamic at work around the place of gay rights within a new politics of opposition: older interviewees, in more established immigrant advocacy organizations, frequently ignored LGBT issues, while younger organizers more readily embraced gay rights within a broad conception of anti-discrimination. A decade ago, one might occasionally see same-sex couples at Gay Pride marches, holding signs saying "Binational-Biracial couple."<sup>21</sup> But such placards drawing attention to the intersection of immigration and sexuality were rare and seldom garnered much attention. Today, pride parades frequently have immigrant-LGBT groups marching alongside national organizations.

However, linking immigration and sexuality is not without its risks, especially for those working closely with conservative synagogues and churches; many opposed this new alliance and have worked hard to keep immigrant and gay rights issues apart. Tracking opposition to this new political formation offers another gauge of the changes at hand while revealing the dilemmas of coalition building in which many immigrant rights advocates find themselves caught between the competing demands of diverse coalition partners.

Almeida, one of our interviewees, made the tension between immigrant and gay rights explicit. He had long been involved in immigration reform and was responsible for planning the route for the April 10, 2006 rally. Once he announced the route for the march, he recounted, he immediately received several phone calls from gay rights activists protesting his decision.

Our rally started in the Boston Common and ended up in the Baptist Church, the very famous one that they have on