

Tremont Street. So there was the final speech and the end of the rally. And I remember because my name was out there, cause I was kinda the head of the organizers for that rally, I got two phone calls, from two gay activists who said, "do you know that that church, the past of that church is of Romney's friends, and he is part of the national group to defeat gays, and they say that the gays are the devil." . . . I had no clue (Almeida May 2008).

For Almeida, the tension between the Baptist Church's progressive position on some issues and its hostility to gay rights was palpable. Ending the rally at the Tremont Street church brought divisions between immigrant and gay rights to the fore. How to navigate these tensions was not always clear.

Opposition to an immigrant-gay rights coalition also was evident in the pressure some evangelical churches placed on a local Brazilian newspaper. Among his many other activities, Almeida is also coeditor of a local Brazilian newspaper, *The Brazilian Journal*, published in Everett, Massachusetts. During our interview, Almeida recalled occasions in which one of the neighborhood churches servicing a significant Brazilian population made clear that it would withhold advertising in *The Brazilian Journal* if it ran gay-friendly ads and articles. Since church advertising revenue was crucial for keeping the paper afloat, the pressure to keep issues of sexual orientation and immigration apart was considerable. Thus far, *The Brazilian Journal* has resisted the pressure, but Almeida was well aware of the costs his decision to ignore church demands might entail (Almeida May 2008).

A recent post from the Center for Immigration Studies—one of the most influential restrictionist think tanks on this issue—also revealed increased awareness of the opportunities that the emerging immigration-sexuality alliance offers to anti-immigrant advocates. The post by David North entitled "Same-Sex Marriage and Immigration Rights—An Issue That Could Tear Apart the Open Borders Coalition?" strategized about contemporary immigrant politics:

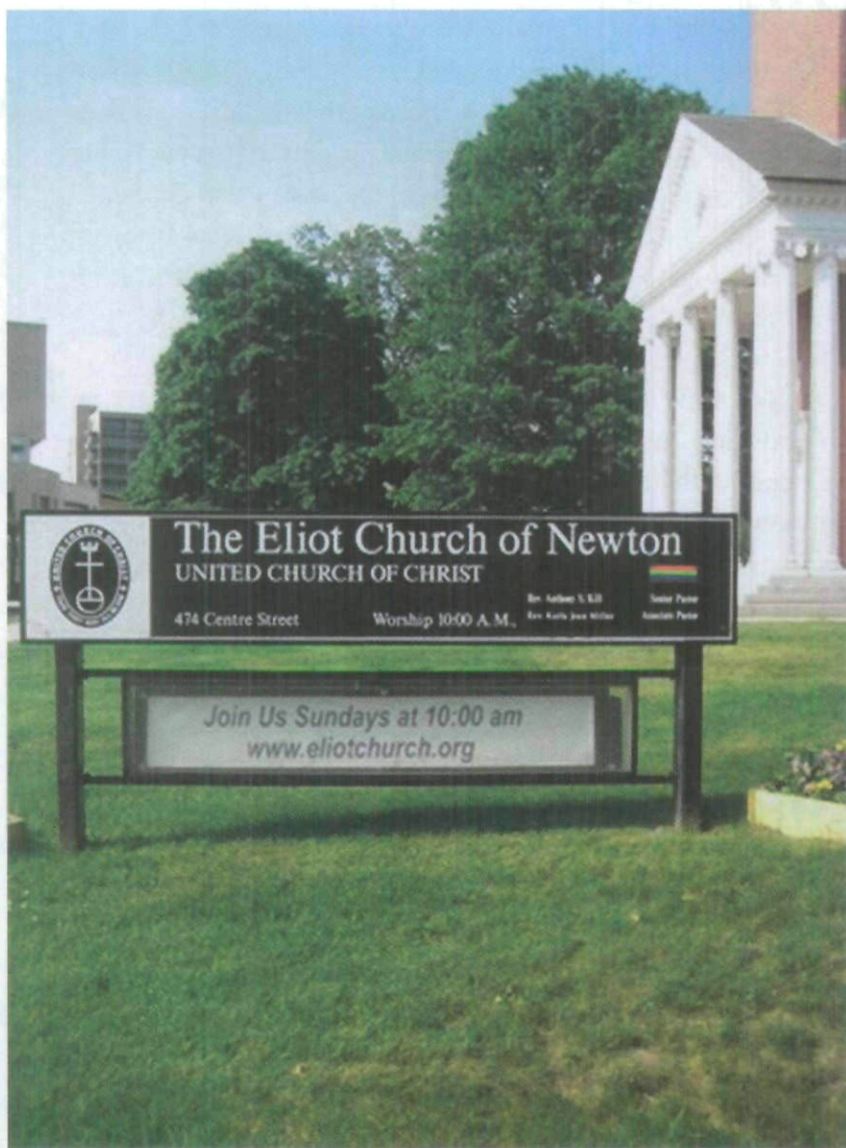


Figure 3

It appears to me unlikely that an immigration bill acceptable to the restrictionists will come out of the current Congress; perhaps the most that the restrictionists can hope for is no bill at all—and a lusty gay marriage dispute among the Open Borders types would, indeed, be very helpful.

Were I a restrictionist lobbyist I would encourage the addition of Barney Frank's bill in the overall immigration reform legislation at the committee level; this would be an (admittedly devious) effort to build into the legislative package a provision that would make the whole bill less likely to pass. In the field of corporate mergers such maneuvers are called "poison pills" (North 2009).

Many, it seems, are aware of the new political formations and are planning how best to turn it to their own advantage. Political analysts and immigrant rights advocates would do well to attend more closely to this new battleground.

To be sure, churches are by no means monolithic when it comes to questions of sexuality: some are considerably more open than others. Indeed, it has become a common practice for congregations to signal an openness on questions of sexuality by placing a rainbow flag on the notice board (see figure 3). Such actions underscore the importance of attending to internal conflicts over immigration and sexuality within particular denominations and congregations. It would be useful for immigrant advocacy groups to design a logo that could be used by various institutions—including the churches—to signal a pro-immigrant position along side the rainbow flag. A simple visual cueing would facilitate the complex task of coalition building within this hotly contested terrain. As of now, no such signaling device exists and it is difficult to discern a particular congregation's views on immigration from a distance.

### **WHY AN IMMIGRANT-GAY RIGHTS COALITION?**

Even though coalition building at the intersection of immigration and sexuality has met with considerable opposition, our research shows that this remains a vibrant area of political mobilization. If this is indeed the cutting edge of immigrant politics, we need to understand what undergirds this emerging immigration-gay rights coalition. Is the affinity a product of historical contingency in which the close temporal proximity of the gay marriage and immigrant rallies in Boston made