

WALKOUT: THE FOOTSTEPS
OF LATINO YOUTH
ACTIVISM

by

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ABSTRACT

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This qualitative study analyzes contemporary social action through the lens of Latino youth activism. A total of 11 people including Latino student demonstrators and non-demonstrators and teachers/administrators all shared their experiences and perspectives concerning the 2006 Latino youth immigration reform walkout that took place at a local high school. It was found that Latino youth secretly coordinated a walkout and executed it. Escorted by police they marched in the streets, recruited other students along the way, attended a rally, and were bused back to campus afterward. Demonstrators were both criticized and praised for their actions by peers and teachers/administrators. While demonstrators were discredited for many reasons as detailed in the text, demonstrators and non-demonstrators felt empowered with a renewed sense of pride after the walkout. Categorized as form of collective behavior, this walkout

was deemed significant due to the agency Latino youth exhibited and the attention they brought to the issue.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I think the children woke us up.

Juanita Salinas, 65
Fort Worth Demonstrator
Quoted in The Star-Telegram*

On Sunday, April 9, 2006, over half a million Latinos, primarily of Mexican descent, took to the streets of the Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex and marched in protest of restrictive immigration reform legislation being proposed in the US Congress. Referred to as H.R. 4437, the “Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005” called for tougher penalties for illegal immigration, including criminalizing the actions of those who helped undocumented immigrants stay in the country. Carrying signs that read “Helping another human is not a felony” and “Today we march, tomorrow we vote,” entire families of mixed legal statuses shouted “Sí se puede!” (“Yes we can!”) in what was termed as the Mega March in Dallas and the March for Justice in Fort Worth. Although it seemed to catch the majority of the public off guard, this protest was long in the making within the Latino community. Similar demonstrations in Los Angeles, Chicago, and other cities also made headlines all over the nation. While these marches were deemed a success, they have largely overshadowed previous similar action taken by Latino youth.

A few days prior to these coordinated marches, it was the *children* of these demonstrators making headlines. Over a three-day period thousands of high school aged students from across the United States walked out of their classrooms, despite being warned of the consequences of doing so by school administrators. The walkouts were a protest against the perceived unfair treatment of Latino immigrants. In some instances, it was reported that many student protestors “sounded more like they were on a mall outing, giggling as they followed their friends’ lead” and were criticized for carrying mostly Mexican flags instead of US flags (Yan, Hobbs, and Meyer 2006).

Based on this information, the primary purpose of this study will be to understand how the youth Latino walkouts inform us about contemporary social action. In other words, how do these events add to our understanding of collective behavior and social movement research and theory? How much predictive power do we have over social movements and collective behavior? Do the actions of Latinos challenge or reinforce these theories? How do these events reflect race and ethnic relations in the US? These questions will be investigated through the lens of Latino activism.

For example, what was the purpose underlying the walkouts? What were the conditions that facilitated the walkouts? Were these spontaneous or organized actions? How did the youth recruit fellow demonstrators? What were the outcomes of this protest? What was accomplished? Were there any unintended consequences? Can these actions be considered as the emergence of a social movement?

Such research is relevant due to sheer numbers. As of 2003 Latinos became the largest “minority-majority” (Vaca 2004), yet most collective behavior and social

movement literature continues to focus primarily on African American activism (Martinez 2005:136). Black civil rights politics have become the standard by which other so-called “minority” issues have been assessed: “Casting the Black experience in graphic and separatist terms appears to be an attempt to preserve the Black-White analytical framework that has dominated race-relations scholarship for years and limits any role that Latinos may play in such dialogue” (Vaca 2004:196). In that sense, this paper will attempt to claim analytical space (Flores and Benmayor 1997) for Latinos.

This study also intends to shed light on Latino protest politics, which have been understood less than other forms of Latino political behavior like voting (Magaña and Mejia 2004:59). Most importantly, it will analyze the role of Latino youth within protest politics in a contemporary context. Not since the days of the Chicano Movement have Latino youth attracted so much attention for civic participation.¹ According to Ginwright, Noguera, and Cammarota (2006), youth as a whole have been negatively portrayed by the media. Implied in this are the notions that youth are “objects of policy” (Ginwright, Cammarota, and Noguera 2005:29) as opposed to having a voice *in* policy, and that they need to be controlled and contained by society. Therefore, I argue that the Latino youth participants in the recent high school walkouts were exhibiting a form of agency in their own right. In the process, I also hope to dispel Navarro’s (1995) notion that Latinos “get no respect because we show no fear factor or power” (pg. 46).

¹ The Chicano Movement (1965-1975) was a civil rights movement which sought Mexican American empowerment. Chicanos wanted social and political justice in the forms of improved education and employment opportunities, improved housing, political representation, and recognition of their cultural heritage. This study will enhance Latino scholarship by creating a dialogue about recent social action that will extend beyond the events that took place during the Chicano Movement.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In attempting to thoroughly cover the scholarship on social action and Latino activism, this literature review is divided into five main sections. The first section highlights background information about social movements and collective behavior. It defines these concepts and discusses how various theories explain the emergence of social action. Sections 2.2-2.4 focus on youth involvement in demonstrations. They discuss past student protests in order to examine how current Latino youth began to mobilize and incorporates descriptions of the Chicano Movement as a basis for comparison. The fifth section traces how the topic of immigration became an important one for Latinos. In other words, it shows how demographic changes, migration patterns, and globalization laid the foundation for immigration controversies. The sixth section situates the Latino student demonstrations in terms of current context and background. It analyzes the media interpretation of the walkouts. The final section lists my project expectations based on the literature review.

2.1 Theory

“In modern societies, more than ever before, people have organized themselves to pursue a dizzying array of goals” (Goodwin and Jasper 2003:1). However, the way in which such social action is explained in sociological literature is not only voluminous,

but diverse in every sense of the term. One major issue involves the interchangeable use of the terms collective behavior and social movements. In order to situate this case study within the social movement and collective behavior scholarship, it is necessary to review these concepts and related theories.

2.1.1 Collective Behavior vs. Social Movements

2.1.1.1 Collective Behavior

The differences between the terms highlighted above have caused much debate among scholars, in particular when attempting to describe the emergence of social action. In classical collective behavior theories, the collective action of people was originally thought of as irrational, deviant, and spontaneous behavior (Blumer 1969; Morris 2000).

Buechler (1999:20) states that classical behavior theories assume the following:

- Collective behavior, such as panics, crazes, crowds, and social movements are seen as interchangeable events that can be analyzed in the same way.
- Movements are seen as “formless, shapeless, unpatterned, and unpredictable.”
- Movements are understood as a reaction to “societal stress, strain, or breakdown.” Once in the state of anomie, collective behavior is likely to occur.
- The cause of collective behavior is rooted in forms of discontent and anxiety.
- Collective behavior is seen as psychological rather than political.
- Movements are sometimes taken to be a dangerous, threatening, extreme, or irrational form of behavior.

As evidenced by the list of assumptions, both social movements and the people who participate in them are viewed in negative terms. For example, it is assumed that participants in social movements are psychologically different than those who do not participate; that people who engage in collective behavior are in some way crazy or abnormal. Once participants are viewed in these terms, political dimensions of activism

are easily denied. Another concern is the claim that social movements are responses to social strain, as popularized by Smelser's (1962) value-added theory. However, this is not always the case. In many instances, social strain has always been present, yet the people have not instantly mobilized (Goodwin and Jasper 2003). Perhaps the most problematic assumption is combining forms of collective behavior such as riots, panics, crazes, fashions, and fads under the same category as social movements. These limits to classical behavior theory have led scholars to differentiate between forms of collective behavior and social movements.

2.1.1.2 Social Movements

In defining what a social movement is, we simultaneously imply what it is not. In other words, it has been assumed that by defining a social movement we would have a better idea of how it differs from collective behavior. Thus far, there is no clear consensus as to what constitutes a social movement (Crossley 2002:1-7). There are numerous definitions of social movements:

Many definitions have been offered in the literature but all are problematic. Some are too broad, such that they include phenomena which we would not wish to call social movements, and yet any attempt to narrow the definition down seems destined to exclude certain movements or at least the range of their forms and activities (Crossley 2002:2).

Many scholars offer their own definition of what a social movement is, yet all these definitions have both common and unique characteristics (Crossley 2002:2). The similarities among these definitions refer to what Wittgenstein (1953) calls a "family resemblance." Using this concept, my definition of a social movement consists of a combination of other social movement definitions.

In general, there is a consensus on the following descriptions of a social movement; a social movement tends to:

- Be large and geographically broad in scope
- Persist over time
- Share a collective identity
- Have shared goals
- Use various strategies to reach those goals
- Have an organized division of labor

In addition to these components, I would like to include the element of social control. According to Smelser (1962) and McAdam ([1988] 2003), an important element of a social movement is the notion of social control. Both Smelser (1962) and McAdam ([1988] 2003) note that social control occurs before and after a social movement; examples of these external forms of social control include the police and media: “social control agencies...can play a preventive role, smoothing over strains and problems before movements emerge, and their response to collective behaviour, when it does begin, can be a very important factor in determining what happens next” (Crossley 2002:43). In other words, external threat has been documented to create internal cohesion (Haney Lopez 2001, 2003; Escobar 1993).

Additionally, *internal* social control has been known to occur in social movements (Laraña 1994:219) in the forms of ideology and symbols (Goodwin and Jasper 2003; Haney Lopez 2001; Buechler 1999; Hunt, Benford, and Snow 1994:185) because they create boundaries of membership (Simone 2006; Johnston, Laraña, and Gusfield 1994:20): “boundaries, [which] provide context for perceiving the ‘other,’ and offer a basis for developing shared goals and issues...which in turn support group coherence” (Simone 2006:350). As people are “othered” on the basis of in group

membership, a collective sense of identity can be socially constructed and reinforced through symbols and ideology to empower a movement and sustain it. This information indicates that social control is an important component of social movements which should be included in its definition.

Since there is no official academic definition of a social movement, social action believed to constitute a social movement must pass a “pattern test.” In other words, a social movement must have certain elements. The more of these elements that fall under a “family resemblance” pattern, the more likely that it is a social movement. However, because some elements add more value to a social movement, they will have to be weighted more heavily. In order for the youth Latino walkouts to be considered as a social movement, the events would have to pass this pattern test.

2.1.2 Explaining Social Action

Many competing theories attempt to explain the emergence of social movements (Mees 2004:311). Morris (1999) refers to McKee’s (1993) observation as “to why no sociological scholar anticipated the civil rights movement and Black protest” (pg. 530) and responds that previous theories “lacked a theory of Black agency” (pg. 531). Likewise, I extend this observation to include the lack of a *Latino* agency theory. As such, this sub-section examines the two dominant social movement theories and then specifies which framework will be used for this study.

Crossley (2002) states that some approaches “reflect upon the conditions which enable and facilitate mobilization” whereas others consider “the problems and issues around which movements tend to mobilize” (pgs. 152-153). U.S. based theories tend to

concentrate on *how* social movements emerge by analyzing social and political structures (McAdam 1982). Resource mobilization theory has led the way in this area of social movement research. However, European schools of thought focus on *why* social movements occur and therefore advance new social movement theory, which emphasizes moral and identity based issues.

2.1.2.1 Resource Mobilization Theory

Resource mobilization theory appeared during the 1970s as much social change was beginning to take place (Buechler 1999:33). It is a recent social movement theory that questions the assumptions and addresses the limitations of classical behavior theory. Resource mobilization theory states that not only are participants political and rational, but that social movements require funding to emerge and remain sustained (McCarthy and Zald 1977). One of the theory's most important features is its recognition that formal organizations are often a part of social movements because they provide the resources necessary for social movements to sustain themselves (Goodwin and Jasper 2003:11). This is in contrast to Smelser's value-added theory.

For example, one of Smelser's (1962) arguments pointed to structural strain as being the actual cause of collective behavior. Resource mobilization theorists argue instead that "there were always enough discontented people in a society to fill a protest movement, but what varied over time—and so explained the emergence of movements—was the resources available to nourish it" (Goodwin and Jasper 2003:11). However, it has been noted that resource mobilization theory often excludes the emotional connections to a social movement: "The traditional theories of social movements did not

emphasize the link between grievances and identity as relevant to explaining movement formation” (Johnston et al. 1994:22).

According to Buechler (1999):

Perhaps the most common criticism is that the theory oversimplifies the role of grievances and downplays the role of ideational factors in general. The theory has also been criticized for overstating the importance of formal organizational structures as opposed to informal or decentralized networks. The model of the rational actor has attracted criticism for its hyperrational assumptions about movement participants and for its individualistic orientation to what is essentially a collective process. For the same reason, resource mobilization has been inattentive to the role of collective identity in movements, and it has done little to acknowledge the internal diversity of many movement groups. Pgs. 37-38.

Therefore, I argue that a collective identity also plays a major role in maintaining a social movement (Johnston and Lio 1998:462).

Despite resource mobilization theory being the “dominant paradigm guiding social movement analysis since the late 1970s” (Buechler 1999:34), it does not adequately apply to the Latino youth walkouts. For example, the initial Latino youth walkouts were not coordinated by formal organizations; they were purely a student grassroots initiative. Additionally, it is doubtful that any funding prompted these demonstrations. Most importantly, many students chose to walkout in the name of their families: “Yo soy de aquí, pero mi papá, mi mamá están aquí ilegalmente, trabajan muy duro y merecen ser residentes legales” [I am from here, but my mother and father are here illegally, they work very hard and deserve to be legal residents] (Estrada and Salinas 2006). This quote not only describes the emotionality involved in these walkouts, but indicates that many of the students walked out for personal reasons which resource mobilization theory does not adequately address. This is not to say that this theory is not

useful in examining mobilization techniques, however, I choose to also include new social movement theory as part of the framework for this study.

2.1.2.2 New Social Movement Theory

New social movement theory turns the personal into the political (Crossley 2002:152). In fact, this is considered to be the “newness” of new social movement theory; issues are mostly postmaterialist as opposed to economic (Buechler 1995; Simsek 2004). In describing new social movement theories, many scholars have listed common themes independently. According to Johnston et al. (1994), new social movement theory consists of the following characteristics (pgs. 6-9):

- “The social base of new social movements” tend “to transcend class structure.”
- The ideological characteristics of new social movements focus more on everyday life issues rather than “political dimensions of society.”
- “NSMs often involve the emergence of new or formerly weak dimensions of identity.” Grievances focus on symbolic issues rather than economic (Melucci 1985, 1989). “They are associated with a set of beliefs, symbols, values, and meanings related to sentiments of belonging to a differentiated social group.”
- “The relation between the individual and the collective is blurred.”
- “NSMs often involve personal and intimate aspects of human life.”
- “Radical mobilization tactics of disruption and resistance” as “characterized by nonviolence and civil disobedience” are used.
- “The organization and the proliferation of new social movement groups are related the credibility crisis of the conventional channels for participation in Western democracies.”
- “New social movement organizations tend to be segmented, diffuse, and decentralized.”

However, I would also like to incorporate one other salient component.

According to Simsek (2004), one of Melucci’s (1995) characteristics includes “they have a planetary dimension: social movements display global interdependence and trans-

national dimensions” (pg. 114). This globalized notion in social movements has also been reviewed by authors Johnston and Lio (1998) as well as others. Zolniski (2008) suggests that “the study of Latino grassroots politics” should be situated “in the larger picture of social movements that emerge in the context and as a response to globalization” (pg. 365). Stated differently, a globalized perspective should be included when analyzing Latino social action.

Still, issues that have been shown to spur Latino protest tend to be culturally based concerns such as language and immigration (Tedin and Murray 1994:776). New social movement theory helps to account for such cultural factors (Morris 1999; Simsek 2004): “[T]he new social conflicts are struggles over meanings as well as resources” (Tarrow 1992:197). In discussing new social movement theory, Johnston et al. (1994) state that:

Mobilization factors tend to focus on cultural and symbolic issues that are associated with sentiments of belonging to a differentiated social group where members can feel powerful; they are likely to have subcultural orientations that challenge the dominant system. New social movements are said to arise “in defense of identity.” P. 10.

Hence, the authors conclude that “The new social movement perspective holds that the collective search for identity is a central aspect of movement formation” (Johnston et al. 1994:10).

Also, they specifically point out that “The search for identity is a youthful activity” (pg. 14). The Latino youth walkouts consisted of mostly high school aged students carrying primarily Mexican as well as some American flags. This youthful display of identity sparked controversy amongst spectators because it seemed to *question*

the identity of the demonstrators. In this sense, these individuals were seeking out “new collectivities” while simultaneously producing “‘new social spaces’ where novel lifestyles and social identities can be experienced and defined” (Johnston et al. 1994:10): “What individuals are claiming collectively is the right to realize their own identity: the possibility of disposing of their personal creativity, their affective life, and their biological and interpersonal existence” (Melucci 1980:218).

Moreover, the personal aspect of new social movement theory brings back the concept of emotions. Theorists like Smelser (1962) identified emotionality as a component of collective action but failed to establish it as a legitimate tactic. Crossley (2002) discusses emotions in rational terms (pg. 49) as does Morris (2000:448).

Emotions are said to “help sustain movements in their less active phases” (Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001:21) and create solidarity, or what Collins (2001) calls “emotional energy” (pg. 29). According to Eyerman (2005):

Emotions provoke responses which lead to action or reaction, or to its opposite, a sense of being unable to act, being paralyzed by fear or dread. Both of these, the impetus to act and the fear of acting, are aspects linking emotions to social movements and other forms of collective action. Emotional responses can move individuals to protest and to contend and, once in motion, social movements can create, organize, direct and channel collective emotion in particular directions, at particular targets. Emotions are part of the dynamic of movements, internal conflicts within a movement, stimulating anger and frustration, may spur fractionalism and even a new movement. P. 42.

Likewise, I suggest frame analysis is an extension of emotions in social movements (Flam 2005:24): “Successful frames must not only analyze events and identify who is responsible but also ring true with an audience—or *resonate*” (Noakes and Johnston 2005:2); that is, frames have to *felt* in order to be effective. Cadena-Roa’s

(2005) study on strategic framing connects the concept of emotions to collective action frames (pg. 70). Furthermore, frames are very useful when it comes to amplifying emotions (Benford and Snow 2000:614), in particular when the media becomes part of the framing process (Flam 2005:12; Klandermans 1992:88; Marwell, Oliver, and Prahl 1993:178), which helps to define “what is going on in a situation in order to encourage protest” (Noakes and Johnston 2005:2). Tarrow (1998) points out that media actors “do as much if not more to control the construction of meaning than the state or social actors” (pg. 119) because print or visual media can “select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text” (Entman 1993:52), thus becoming a form of social control as it may define causes, problems, and solutions (Noakes and Johnston 2005:19).

Snow and Benford (1988) popularized the framing perspective and show how framing helps to mobilize and recruit potential activists: “framing activity plays a crucial and independent role in recruitment” (Hewitt and McCammon 2005:47). The authors indicate that frames are communicated through the processes of articulation and amplification. Frames are articulated and amplified both verbally and non-verbally. For example, catch phrases and bumper stickers serve the same purpose (Noakes and Johnston 2005:8). Likewise, the “presentation of self, tactics, and organizational forms” are also powerful symbols of communication (Noakes and Johnston 2005:8). Master frames, a collection of shared collective frame aspects, evoke cultural symbols which are linked to intense cycles of protest (Noakes and Johnston 2005:8). These master frames tend to resonate because they convey notions of cultural compatibility, consistency, and

relevance (Noakes and Johnston 2005:15). It is equally important to note that frames resonate if they strike a balance between people and society:

We recognize that the great challenge for movement actors is to construct frames so that they simultaneously resonate with *and contest* elements of the broader cultural and political environment. For collective action frames to succeed in organizing potential recruits, they must strike the appropriate *balance* between resonating with the existing cultural repertoire and challenging the status quo (Hewitt and McCammon 2005:34).

Jasper and Poulsen (1995) indicate the importance of creating a frame balance by observing the different mobilizing processes involved when it comes to recruiting friends versus strangers: “they argue that framing is a crucial mechanism in recruiting strangers because the movement must tap into beliefs the potential recruit already holds” (Hewitt and McCammon 2005:37).

2.1.2.3 Combining Theories

This literature review suggests that neither resource mobilization nor new social movement theories alone explain social movement persistence, but rather emergence. Additionally, neither theory can fully explain why the Latino youth immigration reform walkouts occurred. Instead, a combination of both resource mobilization and new social movement theory more fully explains how and why these demonstrations occurred.

I argue that while the students may not have had monetary resources to help them organize as resource mobilization theory suggests, some invaluable resources that they did possess were the Internet and cell phones. These information and communication technologies (ICTs) allowed the students to mobilize quickly and bring attention the situation. In addition, the emotionality involved in a sensitive and personal concern like immigration reform can help explain why collective behavior emerges around a particular

issue as suggested by new social movement theory. Likewise, media framing about the issue provided a credible perception of threat to the social and economic position of the students and their families in the U.S. Therefore, an amalgamation of these two paradigms provides a more in-depth description of these recent occurrences than either could alone.

2.2 Youth Activism

According to Ginwright and Cammarota (2002):

Popular notions of urban youth have led the public to believe that young people create more problems than possibilities. The idea is most evident in public policy that tends to view them as delinquents, criminals, and the cause of general civic problems...Central to these initiatives is the notion that young people, particularly urban youth of color, are a menace to society and therefore need to be controlled and contained. P. 82.

But what happens when the youth refuse to be “silenced and restricted from participating in important civic affairs” (Ginwright and Cammarota 2006:xiii)? Are they granted full participation in the democratic process? The following section explores these questions by discussing the literature on youth activism.

2.2.1 Youth Involvement?

“Despite our collective agreement that ‘youth are our future,’ policy makers, researchers, and teachers have voiced little concern about how these policies severely cripple America’s democratic vision and destroy opportunities for young people on the margins” (Ginwright and Cammarota 2006:xiv-xv). Ginwright and Cammarota (2006) note that while various policies are enacted that affect their lives, the youth themselves rarely have voice in such legislation: “For youth, the lack of opportunity to enjoy such democratic activities as voting, creating policies, and having a voice in local government

represents a forfeiture of basic citizenship rights” (pg. xx). They go on to state that “The category of *youth* as a socially distinct group of people fundamentally imposes a second-class status upon young people” (Ginwright and Cammarota 2006:xix).

Part of the problem is that “theorists have not taken seriously enough the actual cultural productions or lived experiences of young people” (Maira 2004:205). Maira (2004) argues that the youth have been portrayed as “inadequately formed adults, as subjects lacking in the presumably desired qualities of adulthood, rather than as subjects in their own right with specific (even if they are not always unique) needs and concerns” (pg. 206). Implied is the notion that they are “less able to exert” agency because they are “less fully formed social actors” (Maira 2004:206). As people “in transition,” society’s youth-focus tends to revolve around their future more so than their present lives (Wyn and White 1997:115): “By focusing entirely on the future, there is little need for young people to have decision making responsibilities about issues that impact their lives in the present” (Ginwright and Cammarota 2006:xix).

Buckingham (2000) points out that there is also an underlying assumption that the youth should be socialized into adult normative ways of political participation (pg. 13). However, Wacquant (2001) indicates that this is often done under the watchful of eye of the police, schools, and zero-tolerance policies. Males (2006) specifically states that:

The United States is the most anti-youth society on earth...[it] affords its young people fewer rights in relation to adults than any other country. America is the only country to impose curfews (literally house arrest) on its youth...The United States is the only country whose federal administration, both Democratic and Republican, has proposed mandatory, random drug testing of public school students. While many nations deny fundamental rights to their citizens of all ages, no country other than the United States permits its adults to exercise rights of free speech, expression, assembly, press, privacy, exemption from corporal and

other cruel punishments, and use of alcohol and tobacco while subjecting its youth to such sweeping denial of those same rights. Pgs. 301-302.

According to Maira (2004), this is due to “the suspicion that young people are not mature citizens who can act effectively and, simultaneously, the fear that they are actually citizens with the power to effect change that some may not desire” (pg. 206). All this “public safety” surveillance is argued to threaten youthful democratic engagement (Wacquant 2001).

Yet within these constraints, youth are still more likely to learn about civic participation through their educational institutions. For example, Fako and Molamu (1995) discuss how “the university environment, to some extent, provides a context and rationale for the attitudes and actions of student protestors” by providing “intellectual liberation from the constraints of everyday expectations” and promoting “aconstant [sic] search for ways to improve the social, economic and technological order” (pg. 6**). Prior to that, youth are assumed to be exposed to these principles within their high schools.

According to Damon (2006), some of the main concepts taught in contemporary schooling include: “political freedom; equal rights under the law; the distinct nature of a democratic republic; the economic costs and benefits of political choices; the need for checks and balances; and the meaning and importance of patriotism” (pg. 7). Similarly, Fako and Molamu (1995) note that “as long as students continue to cherish the virtues of democracy, they should be expected to take authorities publicly to task whenever they detect inconsistencies in the articulation of democracy” (pg. 16**). Likewise, I argue that as long as young students are taught and socialized to believe in an equal and free

society, it should not come as a shock when they exhibit social resistance as a form of agency.

However, the rights which students perceive they have often differ from rights they actually have according to law. For example, Damon (2006) states that students have an idealist, naïve, and poor understanding of democracy: “The problem is that too few of our students have learned the kind of understanding necessary to realize that a successful democracy can make people equal under the law but it cannot make people equal in fact, and systems that attempt to do that usually stray from democratic principles” (pg. 7). Based on his own research, Damon (2006) explains that to students the term democracy literally means “a place where people are equal...[that] it should make people equal...a system where everyone has an equal say...a place where people are free to do whatever they want as long as it doesn’t hurt other people” (pg. 7).

In reality, he points out these are naïve notions of equality because perfect equality in democracy does not exist (Levine and Youniss 2006:3). The youth have yet to realize that “there are trade-offs between equality and freedom” (Levine and Youniss 2006:3) including that not everyone in society has an equal say in democracy and that “self-governance” often requires “certain forms of authority [which] are necessary for the preservation of liberty” (Damon 2006:7). When these idealistic notions of equality are put to the test, law rather than ideology dictates the rights youth have.²

² For example, the *Tinker v. Des Moines* (1969) supreme case court tested the rights of youth in a court of law; students were suspended for wearing black armbands as a form of protest against government policy in Vietnam. This court case questioned whether this kind of civil expression was protected form of free speech. According to Landmarkcases.org, “Generally, the Court has held that the First Amendment protects adult symbolic speech that does not harm or threaten to harm.” Although the silent student protest was not particularly disruptive nor did it violate the rights of other students, “at the time of *Tinker*, it was

In spite of these forms of social control, the youth have always had the capacity to respond as social actors (Ginwright and Cammarota 2002:86): “agency is really about how young people negotiate, contest, and challenge the institutionalized processes of social division within such which they are situated” (White 1989:17). While the youth are more likely to have their rights challenged, they have more rights than they realize. Indeed, “Youth activism has always played a central role in the democratic process and continues to forge new ground for social change” (Ginwright and Cammarota 2006:xiii).

2.3 Student Protests

From the anti-war protests of the 1960s to the recent Latino youth immigration walkouts, “Young people have always been in the vanguard of social change” (Ginwright and Cammarota 2002:93). In fact, Sherrod (2006) states that, “Youth who face disadvantage, discrimination, and injustice should be more likely to look to activism” (pg. 294). But in which form of activism are they most likely to engage?

According to Ginwright and Cammarota (2006), “Youth who grossly lack political and economic power, use school walkouts, marches, and other forms of civil disobedience” (pg. xviii) because these are often the only open channels for grievances available to them when legitimate institutional channels have been closed. History has shown that these are not new forms of protest; such forms of civil disobedience were popularized during the Civil Rights Movement. The Civil Rights Movement has provided scholars the context with which to analyze recruiting and mobilization

unclear whether students’ rights in this area were different” (Landmarkcases.org). The ruling was in favor of the students, “School environments imply limitations on free expression, but here the principals lacked justification for imposing any such limits. The principals had failed to show that the forbidden conduct would substantially interfere with appropriate school discipline” (Oyez.org).

techniques. A brief overview of these strategies will help to explain how social movements are organized; the application of these concepts to the Chicano Movement will illustrate how young Latinos, particularly Mexicans, made use of these methods of organization in the past, and how they could affect future organizing.

2.3.1 Civil Rights

According to Griswold del Castillo and De Leon (1997):

During the 1960s, the United States underwent a profound social revolution. Chronic poverty, along with the failure of promised reforms affecting America's poor, nonwhite minorities, produced demonstrations, sporadic riots, and violence that shocked the white middle class...As a result of these deep divisions, by the mid-1970s a whole generation had grown to distrust institutional authority of all kinds-the officials, the police school administrators-in a word, the "establishment." The result was a new willingness to experiment with the alternative forms of social and political expression. P.125.

Under this turmoil, the youth put themselves at the forefront for social change:

"Throughout history, youth have been the segment of the population most likely to refuse to accept the status quo and to act to change society for the better" (Sherrod 2006:291).

In the process, social movement researchers took note of the various methods employed by the youth to gain and sustain participation for their cause.

McAdam ([1988] 2003) discusses the importance of recruiting youth for the Civil Rights Movement through the SNCC's (Student Nonviolence Coordinating Committee) summer project. He points out that biographical availability, favorable attitudes and values toward the movement, and having social connections to the project all increased the likelihood of participation. Biological availability, being free of time consuming demands such as work, family, and marriage, makes activism permissible. I also extend

biological availability to refer to those whom are in the company of each other; that is, people who are located in the same vicinity as others are physically available to each other. Overall, the youth is in this unique position; freedom from “adult” responsibilities simply allows them to “express their political values through action” (McAdam [1988] 2003:58). Likewise students are usually in the company of each other at school, which allows for the rapid expression of ideas with each other. Attitudinal affinity, or having high personal connections to a cause, deepens one’s commitment to it. Finally, social integration into a cause through organizational or personal ties to other participants strengthens the pull toward recruitment. However, not all recruits become lasting participants to a cause (McAdam [1988] 2003). Recruits have to remain active in order to contribute to the success of a cause and the overall movement.

For this reason, Hirsch ([1990] 2003) points out that generating commitment is also very important. This is done through consciousness-raising, collective empowerment, polarization, and collective decision-making. Consciousness-raising, as defined by Hirsch ([1990] 2003) “involves a group discussion where such beliefs are created or reinforced” (pg. 95). Such conversations are likely to occur without the presence of a threatening authority figure in loosely organized structures (Hirsch [1990] 2003). Collective empowerment begins when recruits witness other fellow participants unite to face authority as a whole such as in a sit-in. This then facilitates polarization, which can be described as a process of creating in and out groups by trying to convince others that the opposition is wrong. This threat however often “strengthens participants’ belief that their fate is tied to that of the group. They develop a willingness to continue to

participate despite the personal risks because they believe the costs of protest should be collectively shared” (Hirsch [1990] 2003:95). Finally, collective decision-making can motivate the emergence, continuity, or end of a cause because participants often feel obligated to stand by the particular group decision whether or not they agree with it.

Additionally, another important element in maintaining commitment is creating a collective identity and ideology. Whitter ([1995] 2003) discusses how group boundaries are constructed and sustained through ideology and symbols to which facilitate a collective identity. For instance, radical feminists tended to critique sexism in language; whether one conformed or not to such terminology became an ideological way with which to distinguish feminists and non-feminists (Whitter [1995] 2003:108-109). Such an identity discourse then creates boundaries with which to “perceive the ‘other’” and allow for the development of similar goals and concerns, thus supporting group coherence (Simone 2006:350). Once these mechanisms are all in place, the organization of a potential social movement has been facilitated.

2.4 Power to the People: Action Potential

How do these concepts apply to Latino activism? The study of Latino activism primarily stems from the Chicano Movement. The Chicano Movement has served as exemplar in understanding how Latino participation in social movements can be mobilized. As such, I will also briefly discuss the Chicano Movement and its mobilization/recruitment techniques. In doing so, I also seek to establish a possible connection between Latino activism of the past and of the present.

McAdam (2004) suggests that collective identity, the role of emotions, and framing have become increasingly more important as scholars reevaluate social movement literature (pg. 225). Likewise, I also suggest that these components greatly contributed to the success of the Chicano Movement and were also evident in the youth Latino immigration walkouts.

2.4.1 Ideology

“In the development of activism in the Mexican community, identity, in particular racial identity, played a more important role than rights” (Haney Lopez 2001:214). By far, the most important aspect of the Chicano Movement that made it a social movement was the shared sense of a collective identity (Haney Lopez 2001:212). Mexican Americans took a derogatory word previously implying that one did not belong-*Chicano*- and turned it into a term of pride. Less emphasis was placed on their Spanish (i.e. European) heritage and instead they proudly proclaimed their indigenous roots as they rejected assimilation into mainstream America. *Chicanismo*, then, became an ideology as well as a source of motivation to challenge the American society. This was in contrast to what LULAC (the League of United Latin American Citizens) members and the previous GI (Government Issue) Generation had done.³

By the 1960s, what it meant to be a “Mexican American” in dominant society had changed. The Mexican people had not physically changed, but rather, they redefined

³ The American G.I. Forum focused on assimilation and like LULAC, pointed out their American status. This was evidenced not only through their organizational names but through American flag-like logos, symbolic of American patriotism. In addition, both organizations argued that since they were racially categorized as white by the U.S. Census, they should have “the same social status and civic position as the White group” (Haney Lopez 2001:206). Further, many did believe that they were biologically white (Haney Lopez 2001:205-206): “I resent the term ‘brown power.’ That sounds as if we are a different race. We’re not. We’re white. We should be Americans” (Mariscal 2005:25).

what being Mexican American meant: “racial distinctions are socially defined and socially constructed rather than physiologically grounded” (Burkey 1978, as cited by Buechler 1999:112). Changing these social perceptions became important for recruitment as more and more Chicanos became congruent to these beliefs. According to Buechler (1999), “Once these socially constructed classifications become embedded in societal institutions and cultural codes, they become a fundamental feature of societal organization and relations” (pg. 112). Being a young Chicano/a did not require proving that they were Americans and therefore White; rather, it embraced being Brown. Phrases such as “La Raza” (literally, “the race” but used to mean “the people”), “Chicano Power,” and “Brown Pride” helped to inspire the mobilization of Mexican Americans in the U.S.

2.4.2 Symbols: Creating In and Out Groups

The use of symbols reinforced the ideology of *Chicanismo* and a racial identity which served to recruit many to join the cause. Additionally, the emotionality conveyed by such symbols consolidated collective action (Flam and King 2005; Goodwin et al. 2001; Loftland 1985:39) because they allowed for cultural expression as a form of agency (Futrell, Simi, Gottschalk 2006). The interpretation of four symbols in particular allowed Chicanos to redefine their seemingly powerless situation to one of reconquest of what was theirs (Jensen and Hammerback 1982):

1. La Virgen de Guadalupe (The Virgin Mary): This was used both a religious symbol (La Virgen is considered to be the protector of the Mexican people) and political symbol (La Virgen is also said to appear on behalf of the marginalized people).
2. Yo Soy Joaquín (I Am Joaquín): This poem written by Rudolph “Corky” Gonzales is credited to have helped the “rise of Chicano militancy” (Jensen and

Hammerback 1982:73). It is much like a historical essay that criticizes and discusses the oppression and injustices of Mexicans by dominant society as well as pride in mestizaje (mixed roots culture), and the courage to pull forward.

3. Aztlán: This is the mythical location of the ancestors of Mexicans as well as the name given to the to the Southwestern U.S. that was once Mexican territory, which during the 1960s and 1970s was claimed to be rightfully Mexican property. This is often symbolized by an eagle or pyramid.

4. El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán (The Spiritual Plan of Aztlán): This was the result of the first national Chicano Youth Conference. It was a plan for mobilizing Chicano youth for political, social, and economic change through cultural nationalism.

These symbols were used to represent all Chicanos; in other words, to be a Chicano during the 1960s meant that one had to embrace these symbols. By embracing these symbols as part of one's identity, it created in group boundaries of membership (Whitter [1995] 2003). Such symbols also become powerful forms of social control; they dictate not only who can be a member of a particular group, but also who is *worthy* of membership. As such, these symbols of identity were used as sanctions and distinctions for those who were not a part of the Chicano Movement. The younger, more militant Chicanos considered those of the GI generation to be sell-outs to their own race because they did not embrace their indigenous roots, but rather emphasized their American status. Once membership was determined, mobilization for change was further facilitated.

2.4.3 Framing and Police Brutality: External Threat Creates Internal Cohesion

A collective identity can also be described in terms of framing (Goffman 1974, as cited by Haney Lopez 2001). Haney Lopez (2001) states that:

Snow and Benford, among many now, argue that the development of social movements depends to a considerable degree on innovations in the conceptualization of certain key problems, in particular regarding the nature of grievances, visions of potential futures, and, most importantly here, understandings of group identity...The construction of collective identity is now

understood to be a major antecedent to, as well as a significant accomplishment of, social movements. P. 211.

Likewise, several authors indicate that threat as a mobilization frame further serves to create a collective identity (Flacks 2004:148; Meyer [2003] 2008:423). This means that the extent to which a group of people believe they are excluded based on a particular characteristic (or set of characteristics) from society, the more likely this group will bond with one another on the basis of this characteristic(s). In the case of the Chicano Movement, Mexican Americans bonded with each other through the experience of police brutality which served to highlight their racial identity (Haney Lopez 2003).

According to Haney Lopez (2001) and Escobar (1993), police brutality helped to mobilize young Chicanos and make them aware of their racial status in society: “the police and their tactics became issues around which Chicano activists organized the community and increased the grassroots participation in movement activity” (Escobar 1993:1485). For example, in southern California during the student walkouts and Chicano Moratorium demonstrations, the LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department) used different strategies as they attempted to destroy the Chicano Movement demonstrations that were beginning to take place (Escobar 1993:1485). Using legal means, they attempted to harass, intimidate, and sometimes arrest and prosecute protestors. They also infiltrated Chicano organizations such as the Brown Berets and the NCMC (the National Chicano Moratorium Committee, later renamed the Chicano Moratorium) to gain organizational information and “destroy those organizations within” (Escobar 1993:1485). Finally, they attempted to close any open and legitimate channels for grievances. By attempting to censor Chicano propaganda (newspapers, flyers, radio

programs, TV coverage) and frame any police violence as self-defense, they attempted to discredit Chicano Movement participants “with the public and, in particular, the Mexican-American community” (Escobar 1993:1485). Escobar (1993) specifically points out that:

the conflict between the LAPD and the Chicano Movement helped politicize Mexican Americans by making clearer their subordination, giving them an increased sense of ethnic identity, and arousing a greater determination to act collectively to overcome subordination. P. 1486.

However, an ethnic identity was also heavily influenced by the Black Liberation Movement.⁴ As a result of becoming involved with African American civil rights, Chicanos too sought to change their own situations.

2.5 People + Problems = New Activism?

Until recently, the Chicano Movement has been the primary basis for Latino collective behavior studies. However, the immigration reform demonstrations of 2006 have opened up the doors for new discussion, interpretation, and analysis in the field of Latino activism. While this explosion of research may seem sudden, it makes demographic sense. Demographers had long predicted the so-called Latino boom as a

⁴ According to Haney Lopez (2001), Black mobilization was the initiator movement that helped mobilize others including “women’s liberation, gay and lesbian rights, and disability rights” as well as the Chicano Movement (pg. 213). Specifically, he states that:

For Chicanos, the most directly influential component of the African-American fight for social rights was not the southern organizing of the 1950s, but the Black Power movement of the mid- to late-1960s. Black Power exercised a direct influence on the Chicano movement because it established racial identity as the principal means of self-conception and group empowerment. P 214.

Terms like Black Power and Black Pride, turned into Brown Power and Brown Pride. Many Chicanos had also been exposed to community organizing by helping Black activists (Haney Lopez 2001:215). Chicanos attended Black Power meetings and worked with the SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee). “These direct contacts between the Black Power movement and the leaders of the nascent Chicano struggle reflect the importance of personal networks--interpersonal relations within and between activist groups--in the rise of social movements” (Haney Lopez 2001:215).

consequence of the younger-than-average age of the Latino population and higher birth rates. In addition, globalization has created an economic system in which immigrants, particularly Latinos, are both embraced and rejected. It is the latter issue of immigration which appears to be the fervor behind the recent Latino demonstrations.

2.5.1 Demographics: The Latino Tsunami

2.5.1.1 The Browning of America

Several authors trace this demographic change to U.S. legislation and other political issues.⁵ Vaca (2004) simply states that Latinos were given an invitation by the U.S. to stay, which included “making citizens of the residents of Puerto Rico and then encouraging them to immigrate to the U.S. mainland; encouraging illegal immigration from Mexico; and accepting political refugees from Cuba, Nicaragua, and El Salvador” (pg. 27). These factors, combined with the presence of U.S. born Latinos, have led to phrases like the *Latin explosion*, the *Hispanic boom*, and the *majority-minority* to indicate the dramatic growth of the Latino population in the U.S. They also give the impression that Latino immigration is “out of control” (Mohl 2003). In 2003, Latinos officially became the largest “minority” (Vaca 2004:19).

2.5.1.2 Changes in Migration: The “Invasion”

The migration patterns of different Latino groups add to the impression of a “Latino takeover.” The main Latino groups tend to be concentrated in specific areas. For

⁵ In 1965, the color of migration to the U.S. changed. Referred to as the “new” immigration, “liberalized provisions of the 1965 Immigration Act” opened the doors to immigrants of color (Portes and Rumbaut 2006:12); in other words, the act abolished previous national quotas for non-White immigrant groups. For Latinos in particular, geopolitical factors also played a role. The U.S. became active militarily in Latin America and exacerbated political and social instability. Many Latin American groups began to find their way to the U.S. to seek refuge. In addition, Portes and Rumbaut (2006) and Espitia (2006) note that the U.S. has a history of recruiting potential workers from Latin America.

example, Puerto Ricans tend to settle in the East coast, particularly in New York, New Jersey, and Chicago; Central Americans in Los Angeles, Houston, Miami, New York, San Francisco, and Washington D.C.; Cubans primarily in Florida; South Americans in New York, Florida, California, Texas, and Virginia; and Dominicans in the Northeast and Florida.

Perhaps the most problematic migration patterns are those of Mexicans, the largest Latino group. Not only are the numbers increasing in areas where Mexicans have historically located, but also in places where the group was minimal or non-existent, mostly due to different employment opportunities (Mohl 2003). Mexicans have been generally concentrated in the Southwestern portion of the U.S., particularly in Texas and California. Recently, this population has been migrating to non-traditional locations such as states in the Midwest (particularly Nebraska, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, and Iowa), the Deep South (Georgia, Alaska, Arkansas, South Carolina, and Mississippi), and in New York (R. Smith 2006). It is in these areas where for the first time in many cases, non-Hispanic citizens have had to come in daily contact with Latinos, in particular immigrant Mexicans. I suggest that the “problem” is not that Latinos are migrating to the U.S., but rather that they are increasingly deciding to settle *permanently* in the U.S.

Research has indicated that Latinos are choosing to settle in the U.S. rather than to return to their home countries. Most research confirming this fact has focused on Mexican immigrants because this group tends to fuel the majority of Latino immigration. In addition to wanting to enhance their economic situations and life chances, Hondagneu-Sotelo (1992, 1994, 1995) points out that it is the *women* who also influence the

likelihood of settlement within the U.S. for various reasons.⁶ Therefore, migrating Latinos have become both concentrated in certain areas in a dispersed fashion within the U.S. and are more likely to permanently settle in the Midwest and the Deep South.

2.5.1.3 Globalization

Globalization is another major reason for the change in demographics (Torres and Katsiaficas 1999). It has been argued that “Latino politics can only be fully understood and adequately theorized within the context of the U.S. political economy and the international division of labor” (Torres and Katsiaficas 1999:4). Zolniski’s (2006) ethnographic study on low-wage Mexican immigrant workers in the Silicon Valley demonstrates how globalization has affected the U.S. economic system.

Zolniski’s (2000) analysis indicates that economic restructuring due to various global forces have made these immigrants a fundamental part of the economy: “The first step is to recognize that immigration of low-skilled workers is driven by structural demands of the U.S. economy, hence that the issue of low-skilled workers cannot be thought of as the result of an ‘immigration problem’ but rather as a labor issue” (pg. 10). As jobs have become polarized, both professional and low and unskilled jobs have been

⁶ One major reason concerns employment; women who stayed behind while their husbands migrated were forced to take on bread-winning roles. Employment thus began to give women a sense of autonomy which they were reluctant to give up as they later joined their husbands. As Latina immigrant women begin to enjoy a relatively better status in the U.S., they become primarily responsible for establishing social networks that facilitate settling (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1992, 1994; Gordillo 2005). According to Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994), “As traditional family patriarchy weakens, immigrant women assume active public and social roles, and these activities ultimately advance their family in the United States” (pg. 148). Most importantly, women take the main role in community building. They tend to become involved in civic and educational associations, organize social gatherings, and participate in church-related activities (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994:174-182). Gordillo (2005) similarly adds that “They have created a community by being exposed and participating in U.S. structures such as schools and hospitals, by performing reproductive and productive labor, through church-related activities, and lastly but most importantly through kinship” (pgs. 91-92).

created. By subcontracting immigrants, in particular Mexican immigrants, labor costs have been reduced. This is only one example of the ramifications of globalization.

Additionally, the process of globalization is viewed as challenging national identity:

In other words, by tolerating economic policies and practices that have intensified the process of globalization and the subsequent displacement and emiseration of growing numbers of people, the ruling elites of the United States and their “junior partners” in Latin America have contributed to an erosion of the institution of national citizenship. The great irony here is that by making a vast and growing pool of both sanctioned and unsanctioned noncitizen worker a permanent feature of the labor force based in U.S. territory, and simultaneously contributing to the constant expansion of a denationalized labor sector that is constantly in motion, following “outsourced” production facilities wherever they may alight in the global marketplace, governing national elites may well have prepared the ground for the eventual undermining of the basis of their own authority and legitimacy (Gutierrez 2004:28-29).

As Suarez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard (2004) suggest, issues of “national identities and cultural belonging” (pg. 3) are now being questioned: “Increasing globalization has stimulated an unprecedented flow of immigrants worldwide. These newcomers—from many national origins and a wide range of cultural, religious, linguistic, racial, and ethnic background—challenge a nation’s sense of unity” (Suarez-Orozco 2004:173).

Suarez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard (2004) go on to say that “Managing difference is becoming one of the greatest challenges to multicultural countries” (pg. 4). Suarez-Orozco (2004) agrees: “Globalization threatens both the identities of the original residents of the areas in which newcomers settle and those of the immigrants and their children” (pg. 173). This demographic transformation has led to what Navarro (2005) describes as a *latinoization* of the U.S. and a *re-mexicanizacion* of the southwest (pg.

571). As proof, he points to the many ways in which Latinos are culturally changing the U.S. through their business establishments and Spanish media (pg. 614).

As the racial composition of the U.S. has begun to physically and culturally change, a backlash on Latino immigration has ensued and drastic measures have taken place to control migration. Preventing migration by sealing the border and related legislation efforts have been viewed as solutions to the “problem”: “These measures helped cement the notion that they [Latinos] are second-class citizens and fortunate to be in this country at all” (Johnson 2004:396).

2.5.2 Immigration and Politics

2.5.2.1 Problems of Immigration

Martin (2004) says that “Immigration is viewed as serving the U.S. national interest; it permits immigrants to better themselves as they enrich the United States” (pg. 51). Yet, he simultaneously notes that immigration tends to become a concern when immigrants start to “organize and demand catch-up assistance” (Martin 1994:84). Although immigration is a cumulative and self-perpetuating phenomenon (Martin 1994:92), part of problem is that “the United States still perceives itself as a nation of immigrants—a tradition that makes it difficult to restrict or control any type of immigration” (Cornelius, Martin, and Hollifield 1994:13).

Cornelius et al. (1994) conducted a multi-country comparative study on immigration and concluded the following: “Of all the countries in this study, the United States has by far the largest gap between the stated goal of controlling immigration and the actual results of policy: ever increasing numbers of both legal and illegal immigrants”

(pg. 11). Martin (1994) indicates that opinion polls in the U.S. and Canada “report that most residents want immigration levels reduced, but controlling immigration generally ranks well below controlling taxes, crime, and health care costs in public priorities” (pg. 87). However, events such as 9/11 have elevated concerns over immigration (Martin 2004:83). Issues over immigration have spurred an increase in Latino activism since 2003 and has continued since then (Navarro 2005:592): “It is only when undocumented workers are visible that the suburbanites become incensed and begin demanding their ‘removal’” (Sanchez 1998:104).

2.5.2.2 Politics

With the increase of the Latino population, it might be assumed that beneficial changes for this group have taken place. Unfortunately, several authors have conceded that these large numbers do not necessarily translate into equality much less empowerment (DeSipio 1996; Aparicio 2004:359; Torres and Katsiaficas 1999:1). Desipio (1996) points out that there are several barriers which prevent the Latino community from “exercising its full political influence” (Chavez 2004:39) while Navarro (2005) states that “Latinos will constitute demographically the new majority but they will be an impoverished and marginalized majority”(pg. 681). Based on DeSipio’s (1996) study, Chavez (2004) states that this is due to “Low income, low educational levels, and the widespread lack of citizenship status are conditions that must be overcome before Latinos can improve their collective circumstances through increased political participation and enhanced political influence” (pg. 39).

Moreover, Latino political participation has often been judged by civic engagement through citizenship participation such as voting and campaigning: “As a representative democracy, much emphasis is placed on citizen involvement in as many facets of public life as possible” (Garcia and Sanchez 2004:124). Garcia and Sanchez (2004) also point out that “many Latinos are not being exposed to the mobilization process” (pg. 148). They cite lower income, educational, and occupational levels as reasons why Latinos have limited political resources; without these political resources in place, Latinos are less likely to be contacted by mobilization groups who would rather “contact individuals who are able to utilize their political resources to become politically active. The strategically oriented nature of mobilizing groups often involved, older, and educated segments of society are target for political mobilization” (Garcia and Sanchez 2004:148).

For these reasons, it has been observed that “protest activity is an important component of minority group and low-income group politics” (Magaña and Mejia 2004:58). Under these conditions, Latinos have always exercised protest (Zlolski 2008; Magaña and Mejia 2004:59; Johnson 2004:399), which are further intensified by controversies such as immigration reform (Johnson 2004:399). Additionally, the growth of the Latino population due to migration, globalization, permanent settlement, and other demographic factors, have given this group strength in numbers which makes social change seem plausible.

Latino demonstrations are also due in part to the U.S. socialization experiences of the participant. In other words, part of the promise of “living the American Dream” is

that equal opportunity and democracy is available to all. When these principles are called into question, it should come as no surprise that an immigrant constituency may put into practice the ideals it has been socialized to believe in. Why social resistance does not occur more frequently under such conditions remains to be answered, but for a brief period in March 2006 Latino youth acted upon these principles.

2.6 Latino Youth Demonstrations

All it took was having one person walk out of class and others soon followed. In many instances, students were warned by teachers and administrators not to leave their classes. Students were said to be threatened with various forms of punishment ranging from unexcused absences to suspension. Despite of such forms of social control, many students walked off campus and later gathered with other students from different schools to march in unison. Signs that read “Immigrants founded the U.S.” and other similar phrases were displayed along with a barrage of Mexican flags and Mexican-themed clothing and paraphernalia. Observers reported hearing shouts of “México! México!” and “Viva México!” [“Long live Mexico!”] by the students as they attempted to recruit others.

Emotions ran high as youth being interviewed by reporters stated they walked out as a way to stand up for their parents and undocumented workers who should be given the opportunity to stay in the country which they helped build. Others were caught giggling unable to give a clear response as to why they walked out. While there were also many reports of students being escorted or followed by police officials as they marched, the majority of these walkouts were described by the media as peaceful and

well organized, with few reported incidents. Afterwards, some schools provided bus rides back to campus or escorted them as they returned. Similar scenarios such as this would continue for a few days in major U.S. cities.

But what instigated thousands of students from all over the U.S. to participate in these school walkouts? What follows is a description of the issue that sparked initial protests, how the students mobilized, and the media's interpretation of the events.

2.6.1 Sí Se Puede!: The Beginning

2.6.1.1 The Issue

Headlines reading “Classrooms Clear Out for Immigration” (Yan et al. 2006), “Students Defy Lockdowns, Continue Walkouts” (Bugado 2006), and “U.S. Student Walk Outs Against New Immigration Law” (Infoshop News 2006) were commonplace during the week of March 27, 2006. It was during this time that the children of mostly immigrant parents took it upon themselves to protest the “Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005,” or H.R. 4437, as it is commonly known. The purpose of the bill was “To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to strengthen enforcement of the immigration laws, to enhance border security, and for other purposes” (U.S. House of Representatives 2005: H.R. 4437). Although the bill never became law, its mere proposal of increased border patrol services and surveillance, sealing off the border with a physical infrastructure, an immigrant identification system, and the further criminalization of undocumented immigrants, including making felons of those who help them, was enough to initiate early protests by Latinos in major cities like Chicago (Chicago Immigrants 2006).

However, legislation that would potentially affect all immigrants of various nationalities quickly turned into a Latino only issue. Latinos in the U.S., who composed 14.8% of the population as of 2006—39.9% of whom were foreign born—perceived themselves to be the group most likely to be affected by the tougher penalties being proposed in Congress (Pew Hispanic Center Tables 1 and 3, 2006). According to census 2006 statistics, other immigrant groups including Filipinos, Indians, and the Chinese composed 4.4%, 4%, and 3.6% respectively of the U.S. foreign born population; combined, these groups were 12% of the undocumented population (Pew Hispanic Center Table 5, 2006). Therefore, census statistics suggest that this mere perception of disproportionate enforcement was plausible for the Latino community. For this reason, it was the Latino youth who became the predominant faces of the student walkouts.

2.6.1.2 Spreading the Word: Organizing Mobilization

Newspaper sources have not indicated exactly how this information first spread to the students, but it is likely that the media and family conversations played a role in relating the information. For example, Latino radio DJ's greatly contributed by promoting the coordination of demonstrations through their radio programs (Block 2006). Yet, it was the students who were able to spread the word quickly and simultaneously to the English speaking Latino youth primarily through the Internet and texting, as well through more grassroots methods such as word of mouth and flyers, thus diversifying the protest population; that is, the Internet aided in recruiting a more youthful as well as an English speaking public rather than just an immigrant population.

“In terms of organization and mobilization, the web provides more extensive capabilities than what is possible with traditional social movement tactics” (Simone 2006:355). This is what happened in the case of Latino youth. According to *The Dallas Morning News*:

It started with a posting on MySpace.com. E-mail and text messages spread like wildfire. And with the help of old-fashioned paper fliers, a mass student protest materialized in an instant...In what some Internet users are calling a “Net-roots” effort, a 24-hour blitz of activity by youthful organizers inspired as many as 4,000 Dallas-area students to walk out of school Monday and assemble at Kiest Park and City Hall, protesting legislation that would crack down on illegal immigration. Tens of thousands of students in California and other states also walked out of classes in protest (Yan et al. 2006).

In short, the use of the Internet to mobilize served in amplifying the situation (Wasserman 2005):

Using the Internet for political organizing is nothing new, but doing that through MySpace.com—a site known more for social networking than for political activism—seems to be, said Barry Parr, a media analyst for Jupiter Research, a West Coast firm that studies information trends. “I’m not aware of anyone doing this with MySpace,” he said. “Typically, e-mail and other bulletin boards are common political tools” (Yan et al. 2006).

This indicates that the use of information and communication technologies in such demonstrations played a significant role in making these particular youth protests different than previous ones; information and communication technologies not only quickly coordinated action, but they also permitted the youth to have a voice in such political and personal matters. Therefore, ICTs should be recognized as resources used for mobilization.

2.6.1.3 Claiming Digital Space

Through the use of the Internet, the youth are allowed to produce messages (Wilson 2002:208-209), which in turn enables them to “collectively express sometimes oppositional perspectives” (Wilson 2002:210). Stated more concisely, the Internet has become a tool of defense for marginalized and alienated segments of the population such as the youth (Wilson 2002:209).⁷ Therefore, I argue that the Latino youth participants in the recent high school walkouts were exhibiting a form of agency in their own right. The Internet has given the youth a new form of expression.

The use of the Internet has created new public spaces for grievances: “By creating new opportunities for the interactive exchange of information, not only in local contexts but also internationally, new media technologies can contribute a new dimension to the concept of the public sphere” (Wasserman 2007:119). When legitimate channels for grievances are closed to marginalized publics, new ones are opened. In this digital age, I suggest that these new open channels for grievances come in the form of interactive websites, emails, text messaging, and video images. As such, this allows for a new form of citizenship—technological citizenship (Andrews 2006).

I suggest that “part of the building blocks for conceptualizing youth activism and democratic engagement” (Ginwright and Cammarota 2006:xx) involves the use of ICTs

⁷ Kellner (2002) notes that while the Internet has opened “new terrains of political struggle for voices and groups excluded from mainstream media and thus increases potential intervention by oppositional groups” (pg. 2), it simultaneously shows that Internet access is unequal; ICT use has created a digital divide (Wasserman 2002, 2007) by class, race, age, and gender (Kreimer 2001:141), thus reproducing “existing social inequalities” (Atton 2003:4). However, marginalized people are not necessarily technological determinants (Wasserman 2007:114; Pool [1987] 2000:16); in other words, the use or lack of technology does not determine one’s destiny. Wasserman (2007) argues that the real focus should not be on the accessibility of technology, but on the *agency* of those who do use it.

as the youth begin to practice a form of technological citizenship (Andrews 2006): “Technologies like the Internet change the ways we function as citizens” (pg. 4). Technological citizenship “asks whether our rights and obligations as citizens should change as technology changes, and it offers ways to think about how technology influences democracy” (pg. 4).⁸ In other words, technology engages new possibilities in redefining who is a legitimate citizen, what rights they have in society, and how these issues influence our notions of democracy: “The fact that they did it [coordinated the walkouts] through technology created a whole different kind of awareness: They are digital kids. Look at all the text messaging” (Solis 2007).

2.6.1.4 Virtual Coordination and Grassroots Tactics

Cell phone text messaging, emailing, and blogging were all ways in which the Latino youth helped spread the word. However, an interactive website known as MySpace, a “virtual community site [which] allows users to network, meet people, browse their profiles, and make friends from all around the world” (MySpace 2003-2008), proved to be a more efficient way to instantly post all kinds of information through several methods.

Bulletins allow information to be sent to everyone on their friends list simultaneously and instantly. These bulletins then show up on all the home pages of their friends and can be quickly reposted. However, they can only be read if clicked on. Potentially, they can be ignored if the user chooses not to click on them. Another way to

⁸ Websites such as Revolution-Youth.org (2007) and Bamn.com (1997-2003) encourage the spread of political information, provide a virtual forum with which people can use to mobilize for action, and in particular target the youth. For example, Bamn.com (1997-2003) has a link to its very own MySpace page which contains protest videos and extra information on how to get involved with the community.

send information is through *comments*. Comments have to be posted individually but almost guarantee that everyone who visits that profile will read the information. Also, images can be attached to these comments in order to amplify the message or bring more attention to it. *Messages* can also be sent on MySpace, which are similar to emails. Using MySpace to blog grievances and as an instant messenger service were other instant connections that easily spread the word of the walkouts on a local and national level. This virtual worldwide connection in addition to text messaging and emailing information gave the impression that many would be willing to challenge authority collectively (Hirsch [1990] 2003).

Once the word was spread, students were able to take the information to the classrooms and have mini discussions about it. Latino youth, for the most part, were free from “adult” responsibilities and localized within their respective schools in the company of each other which facilitated participation and communication. Second, their attitudes and values toward immigration and their personal connections to the issue were high. For the children of immigrants (legal or illegal), the *perception* that their parents and other family members could be criminalized because of the lack of a piece of paper was more than enough incentive to join. In addition, peer pressure—the likelihood that many probably had family and friends joining in protests—also contributed to them joining.

Offline activities were also coordinated by traditional methods of organizing, namely the handing out of flyers. Such grassroots methods aided the likelihood of mobilization for protest but also created a sense of collective identity. These flyers framed a general immigrant issue in terms of a specific Latino identity, which I argue

allowed the youth organize at a national level in terms of ethnic solidarity. This aspect will be discussed further in the paper. Therefore, it seems that technology alone is not enough to sustain a movement, but rather it appears to increase the likelihood of having the emergence of a social movement by aiding in grassroots activism; that is, ICTs have facilitated the coordination of protests but do not replace people on the streets.

2.6.2 Defiance or Social Resistance?: Framing the Walkouts

As young Latinos marched in protest, controversy ensued. Rather than encouraging civil disobedience, the attempts and displays of youthful agency were met with resistance and criticism. Though students walked out in the face of punishment, they also ran into collective identity issues and negative media framing which questioned the credibility of the majority of potential youth activists. I suggest that these problems led to the demise of these youth-led protests.

2.6.2.1 External Social Control: Creating a Collective Identity

Research has not indicated whether teachers and other administrators had sanctions in place before the walkouts occurred or until the threat of walking out became inevitable. However, what has been documented were the different ways in which these authority figures attempted to socially control any protest behavior. While some teachers suggested that students write letters to their state representatives expressing their concerns on the issue instead of missing class, other schools opted to count these walkout absences as unexcused absences. Others went as far as to threaten students with suspension or with the possibility of being arrested.

There were also reports of schools performing lockdowns; that is, securing a school in such a way that would make it difficult for students to leave once they have entered the building. Nonetheless, there were reports of students climbing over chain-linked fences and struggling with administrators to keep doors open so they could join other demonstrators (Jablon 2006). Such sanctions and administrative threats more than likely reinforced their belief that participating in these protests was the right thing to do and helped to increase commitment, or polarity (Hirsch [1990] 2003).

As with the Chicano youth of the 1960s, these external threats created internal cohesion for the students. During the East L.A. high school walkouts in 1968, administrators attempted to lock Chicano students inside the school to prevent them from leaving the campus (Escobar 1993:1495). Young Chicanos retaliated by throwing objects at the police and climbing over the locked fences. As the protests continued, several demonstrators were arrested in attempts to get them off the streets. Similarly during the immigration reform walkouts, there were instances in which students were caught throwing objects such as rocks and bottles at police cars (Jablon 2006) in apparent retaliation. In one instance, it was reported that students spray painted a patrol car with green spray paint (Hundreds Walk Out 2006). Some students were issued citations and even arrested for minor infractions (Hundreds Walk Out 2006). Such occurrences served to establish boundaries of membership for the students of the past and the present. It is easy to see how and why school administrators, law enforcement, and the government in general would be labeled as the out groups as students could easily bond with each other based on these experiences. As such, these forms of external social control functioned as

a mobilization frame to help strengthen the notion of a collective identity for the students (Flacks 2004:148; Meyer [2003] 2008:423). However, internal issues prevented a collective identity from solidifying into a unifying ideology.

2.6.2.2 Internal Social Control? The Flag Controversy over Identity

Various news reports, news segments, and individual videos all showed images of students marching with Mexican flags while chanting and shouting slogans in Spanish. These actions were viewed as un-American and even racist by some spectators. Different websites publishing these headlines were all subject to angry comments by readers.

Some called for these “bunch of Mexican flag waving illegals” to be expelled, locked up, and even deported “IMMEDIATELY” (School Walkouts Continue 2006). Others felt that “waving their dam* Mexican flag” (School Walkouts Continue 2006) was no way to gain outside support:

“Waiving [sic] Mexican Flags.
That’s a real good way to get grass roots support. What morons!”

“Ironic that they wave Mexican flags. They come to the U.S. to try and make the U.S. more like the Mexico that sucks so much they left it. Why not stay and make Mexico more like the U.S.? Oh, that would require more effort than a one-day party in the streets, I guess.”

One respondent simply stated, “BURN THE MEXICAN FLAG!” (School Walkouts Continue 2006). Such comments became common responses to an incident in a California high school, where student protestors took down the American flag and raised the Mexican flag with the American flag upside-down beneath it (American Flag v. Mexican Flag 2006):

“The protestor put up the Mexican flag over the American flag flying upside down at Montebello High. Our laws state that NO Flag will fly higher than the

US Flag, so why does an American school in the USA allow this??? How is this acceptable? These students are in America, not Mexico!!!!

If you want to stay here, America comes first, last, and otherwise go back and make it better where ever you came from but don't try to turn my country into yours by ILLEGALLY entering mine and then demanding all the benefits of a LEGAL citizen of our nation.....NO funding from federal tax dollars for any student out of class that day or any other day for such subversive activities.....teacher led or not.”

I argue that the Mexican flag was used as a symbol of ethnic pride and solidarity to recruit potential protestors. Waving the Mexican flag during the walkouts was an attempt to create a sense of collective identity; that is, it symbolized the marginalization of a growing population, not necessarily national allegiance to the country of Mexico. Monsivais (2004) argues that “when the news shows a demonstration of a Hispanic group here in the U.S. waving flags of their home countries, they are not expressing their loyalty to their home country over the U.S., but rather they are expressing their identity as a cultural group within the U.S.” (pg. 134). His study employs both quantitative and qualitative data to question Hispanic immigrants about the meaning of being an American. He concludes that Hispanic immigrants in the U.S. identify with cultural aspects of their country more so than with the political. It is this cultural preference that tends to overshadow political allegiance to the U.S. in the eyes of American citizens.

Waving Mexican flags not only hurt the possibilities of non-Hispanic support, but it inadvertently created internal differences among student protestors. First, while immigration largely affects the Latino community as a whole, not all Latino immigrants are Mexican. Other Latino groups faded into the background within these demonstrations. In addition, immigrants come from all over the world, not just Latin

America. Many other groups have not been as visually predominant. Second, there is diversity within the Mexican community itself. Mexicans can be categorized as either native or foreign-born. Those that are foreign-born can be residing in the U.S. legally or illegally. Within those categories, the children of immigrants can themselves be illegal, legal, or American citizens.

Due to such diversity, a consensus was never fully reached as to what the rallying symbol for these walkouts should be; what could have been a powerful source of internal social control led to controversy. According to J. Gamson ([1995] 2003), conflict over collective identity can weaken if not halt continued social action. This is because claims cannot be made “if we do not know who ‘we’ and ‘they’ are” (pg. 316). Often “the existence of an *established* [original emphasis] collective identity is assumed” (W. Gamson 1992:58). As evidenced by the flag controversy, the students failed to fully establish a collective identity. Because Mexicans are the largest “minority,” pride in one’s “Mexicanness” was evoked. However, others argued that the proper symbol of identity should have been the American flag, to show pride for the country that has now become their home. In other words, disagreements over the symbols created in and out groups and were source of contention among youth protesters. This disagreement over identity symbols more than likely contributed to the eventual decline of school walkouts.

2.6.2.3 Behavior: Conflict, Credibility, and Demise

Another controversy concerned the seemingly flippant behavior of some of the youthful protestors. Several news reports described some students marching with red, green, and white balloons (Gorman and Keller 2006), while others showed images of

students posing with a piñata and wearing sombreros (American Flag v. Mexican Flag 2006). In Dallas, Texas, it was reported that students rushed the Dallas City Hall as hundreds poured into its hallways and disrupted a council meeting as they chanted and cheered in Spanish (Gormely 2006; Police Make Arrests 2006). Those who did not make it inside began to splash around and play in the pond in front of Dallas City Hall (Gormely 2006; Police Make Arrests 2006). These images and reports conveyed a party-like atmosphere which not only called into question the seriousness of the issue but the credibility of the protestors themselves: “For the most part, I suspect the kids see this less a protest and more as a fun way to miss school and hang out with their friends” (School Walkouts Continue 2006). Unfortunately, this demonstration ended with reported injuries; one of the more severe occurrences involved an 18-year-old protestor’s hand being severed as the speeding vehicle she was riding in overturned (Gormely 2006; Police Make Arrests 2006). These sort of episodes prompted media outlets to question whether these demonstrators were engaging in acts of social resistance or defiance.

Gitlin (2006) lists categories of negative media frames, among which lies *marginalization* (pg. 301). Marginalization refers to “showing demonstrators to be deviant or unrepresentative” (pg. 301). He states that “Some of this framing can be attributed to traditional assumptions in news treatment: news concerns the *event*, not the underlying condition; the *person*, not the group; *conflict*, not consensus; the fact that ‘*advances the story*,’ not that explains it [original emphasis]” (pg. 301). Notions of disarray instead of organization, chaos rather than peaceful protest, and insubordination in place of civil disobedience were exemplified as these video clips were repeatedly

shown in homes all over the U.S. and served largely to discredit the agency of the students. These images also appeared to indicate and justify punishment for these acts; that it was necessary to impose external social control on the youth, not only for their safety, but also for their presumptuousness in mimicking adult protest behavior.

Additionally, these images generated angry responses from many people. For example, one Hispanic person stated: “Immature, uninformed, and uneducated children looking for a reason to skip school should not be our voice. I have spoken to many of my Hispanic friends who are responsible adults, and most agree that these kids are drawing the wrong kind of attention to the issue” (Police Make Arrests 2006). Others pointed the costliness of such actions stating that these protests created extra police, bus, and medical expenses on top of the already high cost of illegal immigration for “the law abiding citizens” (Police Make Arrests 2006).

Student and Hispanic organization leaders began to urge students to go back to their classrooms and discontinue the walkouts. One Dallas student protestor said, “We were heard. We came, we said, we said everything we wanted to. We were heard, but now we should all peacefully protest,” while an educator emphasized “Tomorrow it is very possible that students will begin to be arrested for truancy. Your place is in school” (Gormely 2006). Such exhibitions of social control were also made by public figures: “The message was subtle but clear: the [school walkout] mobilizations were a smashing success, but any further activity would be gratuitous [sic] and counter-productive. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa joined in by expressing gratitude to the demonstrators while

admonishing students to return to school on Tuesday” (Blumenthal 2006). Slowly but surely, youthful participation in these kind of mobilizations dissipated.

2.7 Expectations

It seems that everybody has had the opportunity to analyze and discuss the events surrounding the demonstrations except the students themselves. With all that has been said and disputed, what do the students have to say? How do their perspectives relate to and reflect current societal tensions about youth rights and ethnic relations? Similarly, what are the perspectives of the administrators caught between seeking the safety of the students and supporting student protest rights? How do the views of authority figures affect the rights of youth groups and future protest behavior?

These are the kinds of questions which will inform us about how youth Latino activism fits into the existing collective behavior and social movement research and theory. Additionally, an analysis of recent Latino activism will enhance Latino scholarship by creating dialogue about social action extending beyond the events that took place during the Chicano Movement. The literature review has taken the first step toward these goals. The presented information leads me to formulate certain expectations. This qualitative study allows for certain themes to guide the interview process, which will be discussed more in depth in the Methodology section. Therefore, based on the literature review I expected that:

Theory

- Both resource mobilization and new social movement theory can collectively better explain the Latino youth walkouts. Internet and communication technologies became a vital resource which allowed for the rapid recruitment and coordination of social action, particularly through the use of MySpace. Additionally, the culturally-based issue of immigration reform tied into

concerns of identity and struck an emotional cord for Latino youth which also facilitated protest.

Walking Out

- Latino youth were influenced by their educational socialization regarding civil rights to protest. It is unlikely that students would simply walkout of class unless they had been socialized to believe that it had been successful in the past and that they had the “right” to engage in civil disobedience.
- Similarly, it seems likely that the U.S. born children of immigrants were more likely to walkout because they would not have the fear of being deported or facing some similar sanction for engaging in protest when compared to immigrant children themselves. Moreover, citizen children have been socialized to believe that based on their status, they have the right to protest. Likewise, children who were not born in the U.S. but were raised here have also likely been socialized into believing that they have the same right to protest as citizens do.

Collective Behavior vs. Social Movement

- The available literature suggests that the Latino youth demonstrations fall under the category of collective behavior rather than a social movement. As presented in the literature review, the events did not pass the “family resemblance” pattern test. In other words, the following missing features of the walkouts did not allow these demonstrations to be categorized as a social movement and led to their eventual demise. In particular, negative media framing greatly contributed to a chain reaction of issues which prevented protest persistence:
 - While identity and ideology were important mobilization and recruitment techniques for the walkouts, a shared collective identity never fully developed because of the controversy over identity symbols such as the flags. Furthermore, immigration reform became framed primarily as a Latino issue which hurt the possibilities of gaining outside support as well as the support of other immigrants.
 - News reports strongly suggest that many students did not know the true purpose of walking out and took it as an opportunity to miss out on classes. Without knowing the purpose behind the walkouts, shared goals cannot fully develop, much less strategies to reach those goals. Under such conditions, an organized division of labor cannot exist. Only by interviewing the demonstrators themselves can we confirm or reject this claim.
 - Negative media framing discredited the intentions of the students by focusing on minor infractions. This then provided authority figures with the justification needed to control and contain the students through various forms of sanctions.

- The issues above contributed to the lack of persistence of continued walkouts by the students, a final and important feature of social movements.

These preliminary expectations derived from the literature review will be either supported or not after the interviews have been completed, transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted; no definitive conclusions can be made until then.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study intends to explore how the Latino youth immigration reform walkouts inform us about contemporary social action. Through the lens of Latino youth activism, the events surrounding the 2006 high school walkouts will add to our understanding of the kinds of issues that trigger acts of social change. Thus far, this research has been compiled through the use of academic sources, newspapers, and the Internet, but a qualitative methodology will allow for a more in-depth and personal look into Latino activism.⁹

3.1 Limitations

Before settling on a qualitative methodology, its possible limitations were considered. Threats to measurement included social desirability and random measurement error. Respondents may not have wanted to share their true feelings regarding the walkouts and in order to appear favorable in the eyes of the interviewer or may have given responses based on the kind of answers they thought I wanted to hear. Other concerns included rushing through an interview, giving incomplete answers, unwillingness to answer some questions, or distraction. A different concern focused on

⁹ O'Neill (n.d.) notes that "Qualitative methods are preferred when researching sensitive subjects. Rather than being constrained by pre-set answers, they allow sensitive subjects to be approached in a sensitive way by allowing the researcher to employ personal skills to help lessen the difficulties of the subject matter" (pg. 2).

the retrospective nature of the responses. These immigration reform student walkouts occurred two years ago. Therefore, I relied on the notion that the respondents were accurately recalling the details of the Latino youth demonstrations to the best of their ability.

All these possibilities greatly affect the quality of answers to any given question. However, these concerns did not seem to affect the interview process. All interviewees had the opportunity to ask questions, stop the interview without penalty, and take as much time as they needed for a particular response. All interviews were more like conversations indicating a high level of comfort on both sides. No respondent stopped an interview and many asked me questions after the interview was over. By honestly replying to any and all questions, I hoped to “create openness between all parties” in which “observation can take place allowing attitudes to be revealed, and patterning and interrelationships to be observed” (O’Neill n.d.:2).

A final limitation involved generalizability. The non-random sample being used for this study will not be generalizable beyond this case study. This is a convenient sample; only those students contacted by a key informant were interviewed thus leaving out other potential interviewees. Those who were interviewed were by no means representative of the entire Latino youth population at the high school much less of the entire student body. Likewise, only the administrators and teachers contacted by the interviewer were questioned and their perspectives were not meant to represent all of the administration and staff points of view. Still, their unique experiences regarding the walkout will give insight into a collective behavior and social movement narrative that

can be used as a foundation for other similar research and will in particular give a more in-depth look into Latino activism.

3.2 Advantages of Method

The limitations addressed by this study do not overcome the advantages of using this qualitative methodology. First and foremost, a qualitative study allows for a holistic approach to understanding the various issues at hand. It enables the understanding of both connections and strains between people and their realities. For example, one teacher felt affected by the proposed immigration reform legislation but likewise felt constrained by their position to publicly support students in their demonstrations. The use of qualitative methods helped detail the complications of coming to a decision.

Qualitative methods also recognize that multiple realities exist and do not seek to constrain perspectives with simplified categories or questions. Rather, they “highlight the voices of those who are most disadvantaged” (Mayoux n.d.:5) and seek to collect the experiences of such people in the form of personal narratives and not numbers. In this case, the voices of Latino youth have been relatively unheard and they have not been given the extensive opportunity to give their perspectives.¹⁰

Additionally, this methodology permitted the natural comparison of demonstrators to non-demonstrators and their perspectives compared to those of the administrators and teachers. These natural control groups are key for assessing large

¹⁰ The Denton, Texas, youth Latino walkouts were documented in a short video produced by Mariela Nuñez-Janes (2007) entitled “Unheard Voices” as well as in a journal article, “Unheard Voices: Latino/a Youth Activism” with Israel Garcia and Esther Reyes. Both references focus on student involvement and use qualitative methods to give voice to the demonstrators. I seek to follow in the footsteps of their study as well as go beyond by including the voices of non-demonstrators and teachers/administrators to give a more holistic view of these walkouts.

scale ideas about what happened and why, who was affected and in which way or ways, and how related policies (i.e., immigration reform) can be improved to better understand the involvedness of the situation (Mayoux n.d.:5-6).

3.3 Ethical Considerations

All research raises ethical issues and this study was not an exception. To ensure confidentiality, a cover letter was provided that described the purpose of the study in detail. Similarly, a consent form was given to all interviewees that informed them that participation was voluntary and all responses would be kept private and later erased, emphasizing that information would only be used for research and course requirement purposes. Most importantly, I let them know that their personal information would not be revealed and that pseudonyms would be used when necessary in order to maintain anonymity. Consent forms, transcriptions, voice recordings, and other related research items and documentation were locked in a file cabinet that nobody other than myself had access to. I also provided interviewees with contact information if they were interested in a copy of the transcribed interviews or the results.

The personal aspect of this project involved sensitive and often private of views of the situation of others which might have caused many of the interviewees to be reluctant about being voice recorded. However, I assured them that all information would be erased as I had no intention of holding on to such information once this project has been complete. I also suggested that the responses could be hand recorded. Moreover, they were reminded that their participation was completely voluntary and that at any time they could pause, interrupt, or completely stop an interview with no penalty.

3.4 Sampling and the Selection Process

Student respondents consisted of those who participated in the demonstrations as well as those who did not. While participatory students were interviewed for obvious reasons, it was just as important to talk to students who did not walk out. This is because one cannot assume that students who did not walk out were less informed than those who did, just like one cannot assume that those who did walk out were better informed than those who did not. For instance, a teacher pointed out that many student non-demonstrators student decided to partake in a different method of protest as opposed to leaving the classroom and later having to face the consequences. I strongly felt that students who did not walk out must also have had their own stories to tell but perhaps had been overshadowed by those who made the headlines.

School administrators and teachers were also interviewed. Research strongly suggests that they played a simultaneous role in student protests by providing civil rights information via class lecture and in the demise of the walkouts through enforcing sanctions for student demonstrators. As authoritative embodiments of external social control, their involvement in the student walkouts could not be undermined. Thus, I intended to generate eight student (four demonstrator and four non-demonstrator interviews) and four administrator/teacher interviews for a total sample size of 12.

The sample of interviewees were selected using a snowballing method from a local high school involved in the 2006 Latino youth immigration reform walkouts for

specific reasons; a key informant greatly facilitated this process.¹¹ My key informant was a senior student at the high school when the walkout took place. I myself would have run into a slight problem trying to find students who were involved in the walkouts a few years after occurred, but my key informant maintained contact with both student demonstrators and non-demonstrators after graduation and was able to put me in contact with them. In addition, I maintained contact with administrators and teachers throughout my volunteering experience at the local high school. This volunteer experience gave me the added benefit of already being familiar with the student and teacher/administrator population, thus I had no reservations about being able to relate to them.

Students were contacted in two ways. After the key informant initiated contact, I was given their e-mail addresses and/or MySpace links. I messaged them using both methods, explaining the purpose of the interview in an IRB approved e-mail letter. I received most of my agreement replies through MySpace and through this social network I was able to schedule a time and date for an interview. None of the students indicated being uncomfortable with the use of the voice recorder and all were willing to answer any and all my questions. Our conversations many times extended beyond the recording which allowed me to develop friendships with all the interviewees which I actively maintain.

Administrator and teacher interviewees were also conveniently selected. They were contacted through e-mail and replies were immediate. I initially contacted three

¹¹ Student demographics indicate an increase in the Latino student population and a decrease in others at this high school (Student Demographic Reports 2009). During the 2001-02 school year there was a total of 983 Latino students, 953 Blacks, 273 Asians, and 583 Whites. At the time of the walkout, the 2005-06 school year shows a total of 1428 Latino students, 800 Blacks, 203 Asians, and 340 Whites. The 2008-09 school year indicates 1559 Latino students, 691 Blacks, 149 Asians, and 236 Whites.

interviewees myself and was referred to another by one of the interviewees. All interviews were conducted at the high school and were friendly and comfortable. All agreed to the use of the voice recorder except for one respondent. Although assured that the recordings were only going to be used for transcription purposes, the respondent preferred that I hand write all the responses.

3.5 Delays and Other Issues

No study goes smoothly without a few bumps in the road. As such, I ran into a few issues before my interview process even began. Before going through a lengthy three month IRB process, I had to get permission from the school district in order to interview school employees on the school campus. This consisted of going to the school district main office with letters of research approval and authorization in hand and receiving permission from a school district representative. Afterwards, I presented the approved school district letter to the principal of the high school as well as a separate letter of research approval to ensure that I had the authority to enter the school and interview without running into problems. With the signatures of both the principal and school district representative in my possession, I was finally able to successfully submit my research protocol to the IRB for approval.

My concern with the IRB process involved timing. I originally submitted my protocol in April of 2008 in hopes of getting approval before the end of the semester so that I could conduct the administrator/teacher interviews before their summer break. Attempting to gain permission from both the school district and high school principal proved to be a conflicting task due to scheduling problems. Instead of receiving IRB

approval in early May before the semester ended, I did not receive it until the end of July of 2008 (see Appendix A). By then, the fall semester was about to begin which put me a good yet delayed interview position because all school employees were back on campus preparing for the first day of classes. I was able to obtain all four interviews.

Another issue involved one student interviewee. I had previously contacted a student whom had organized the walkout at the high school. Previously in a casual e-mail the interviewee responded in agreement to an interview. However, when attempting to set up an official meeting with the interviewee I never got a response. This person was contact through several ways, none of which proved to successful. I sent messages and comments through MySpace to no avail. Even three of my other interviewees tried to establish contact through phone calls, e-mails, and MySpace messages and also received no response. After several weeks of this, it was decided by the chair of my committee and I to move forward with the project as the thesis was not dependent on a single interview. Though the perspective of the organizer would have added to this project, the fact it was not attained does not take a way from the valuable information I received from the other seven students. Therefore, seven student interviews (three student demonstrator and four student non-demonstrator interviews) took place out of the intended eight.

3.6 Data Collection

Eleven face-to-face interviews were conducted with Latino students and administrators and teachers from a local high school; seven student interviews and four

with administrators and teachers.¹² Two of the student demonstrators were female, one of Mexican descent and the other a U.S. born Salvadorian American. The other student demonstrator was a male also of Mexican descent. Both Mexican students were legal residents. Only one of the student demonstrators reported working at the time of walkout and the others did not. All student non-demonstrators were female; two U.S. born Mexican Americans, one naturalized Dominican American, and the other a Mexican legal resident. All student non-demonstrators reported not working at the time of the walkout. All student respondents indicated that they were from mixed-status families. At the time of the interviews, the students ranged between the ages of 16-18 years when the walkout episode occurred.

Three of the teachers/administrators were U.S. citizens of Caucasian, African American, and Mexican American backgrounds; the other was a naturalized Mexican American citizen. One was an administrator, the others were teachers in Spanish and Journalism subjects. All were present at the time of walkout and personally witnessed the students walking out.

Interviews allowed for better detail, validity, and authenticity because those involved were able to put into words their own reality. Respondents were free to say as much or as little as they chose on about a particular topic or question; in many instances,

¹² Unlike surveys, intensive interviews are very time consuming; transcribing one hour worth of an interview can take up to six to eight hours (Singleton and Straits 2005:334). This was a task I was more than willing to put in the time for as my previous experience in transcribing has assisted and prepared me for it. Further, the interpretation of the information depends largely on the skills of the researcher (Singleton and Straits 2005:310). Therefore, the accurate analysis of the information depended on how well I conducted the interview. I have had experience in interviewing students, teachers, professors as well as other administrators and have never had a problem doing so. My previous experience in journalism as well as working with high school age populations aided me in conducting my interviews.

our conversations lasted well beyond the interview. Concepts were not imposed on the interviewees; any concepts were defined for the purposes of creating an interview guide.¹³

There were three interview guides (see Appendix B). All interview guides contained questions pertaining to the events that led to the walkout, the walkout itself, and the outcomes of the walkout. Student interview guides had questions concerning youth activism, recruiting and mobilizing techniques, the purpose of the walkout, media frames, consequences, and any aftermath of the walkouts; one guide was for student demonstrators and the other for students who chose not to walkout. The difference between the two guides revolved around the purpose of walkout—one group spoke about why they walked and the other about why they did not. Questions for administrators and teachers focused on their role of authority during the walkouts. Based on some of their responses, new issues were introduced that were not covered by the literature review.

¹³ With interviews, it can be hard to remain consistent which can greatly affect reliability. For example, the same questions can be asked differently by emphasizing different words or changing the tone of the voice which can lead to different answers. Also, some unexpected topics may surface during the interview and may cause additional probing; this aspect will require a restructuring of the later interviews. However, I did my best to adhere to the interview guide but did not hesitate to go on an interesting tangent if a new topic came up. The true validity of this study can only be assessed after the interviews have been transcribed and any patterns have been coded. However, based on the extensive literature review and interview guide topics that came from it, this study has face validity.

3.7 Data Analysis

These interviews were expected to last between an hour to an hour and a half minimum, but no more than two hours. In reality, the majority of the interviews averaged about 45 minutes on record though our entire conversations often lasted more than an hour. The location of these interviews depended largely on where the interviewee felt most comfortable and where it was most convenient. For example, administrators and teachers were interviewed inside their offices or classrooms at their convenience. Student interviews were conducted in various places such as a local coffee shop, their homes, and even mine at their choosing. This ensured that the setting was both a comfortable and familiar one in which a friendly yet informative conversation could take place. A voice recorder was used to guarantee that the interviewee would not be misquoted. Only in one instance was it requested that I not use a voice recorder. During that particular interview, I hand wrote all the responses. It is important to note that during all interviews I had pen and paper handy to jot down my personal observations and thoughts.

I took advantage at the time of the interviews to ask each respondent if they had any related materials they would be willing to share such as flyers and news clippings. I pleased that I was able to receive copies of flyers, news clippings, and pictures related to the walkout. These materials greatly supplemented the interviews. After the interviews were completed, they were transcribed by myself, conceptualized, and then categorized thematically.

3.8 The Coding Process

The coding process was conducted multiple times. First, I played back each interview and did a general transcription; that is, I simply typed out what I heard without worrying about grammatical errors or missing words. After that, I heard each interview in slow play back and filled in any omitted words. The interviews were played back a third time, this time to ensure that each interview was transcribed correctly word for word including sighs, laughter, and any pauses, and typed in clear sentence form. Finally, they were played back again to make sure I was able to follow along with it perfectly.

Once the interviews were properly transcribed, I read them carefully line by line, both following along with and without the play back, and wrote general notes in the margins. I re-read them more specifically and began to highlight familiar concepts. A separate set of summary notes were also taken. I then stayed away from the interviews for a while, re-read them again, and took another set of notes to make sure I was consistent with my analysis. I began to chart my interviews; that is, I created a chart for each interview which consisted of the questions and responses and the corresponding concepts. These charts allowed me to easily cross-examine and compare each group.

First, each group was compared within itself to see if respondents had similar responses which were written down on index cards. Then, each group was compared to each other. Student demonstrators were compared to the non-demonstrators and similarities were highlighted. These student similarities were then compared to administrator and teacher responses. Patterns of responses were later grouped into

overall themes in hopes of contributing useful information for collective behavior and social movement and theory as well as Latino scholarship.

Chapter 4, entitled “Controversial Beginnings,” points out different problems which laid the foundation for criticism throughout the walkout episode. Chapter 5, called “You Can’t Stop What You Can’t Stop,” details more specifically the kinds of problems the demonstrators, non-demonstrators, and teachers/administrators faced during the walkout and how the Latino youth coordinated the walkout and marched despite the controversy. Chapter 6, “Educated Through Protest,” focuses on the outcomes and accomplishments of the demonstration.

CHAPTER 4

CONTROVERSIAL BEGINNINGS

Problems with the walkout began to surface before it even took place. The majority of these set the stage for controversial issues throughout the walkout episode. For example, all interviewees indicated a lack of information concerning H.R. 4437, yet all students felt strongly about the issue as well as their human right to walkout regardless if they demonstrated or not. Despite being vaguely informed on the issue and on organizational aspects of the walkout, students articulate how the decision to walk out was based on emotion rather than logic. They also explain how quickly they and their peers were recruited for the walkout. This chapter explores how these troubles contributed to aspects of collective behavior more so than social movement action, began to question the credibility of the student demonstrators, and how mobilization resulted as a way to have their voices heard.

4.1 “H.R. What?”: Human Rights and New Social Movement Theory

Protests by Latino youth were a response to the “Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005,” or H.R. 4437. It proposed to “strengthen enforcement of the immigration laws” by implementing tougher penalties for undocumented immigrants as well as those who helped them, “enhance border security” through increased border patrol surveillance and other services, and build a fence along

the Texas-Mexico border (U.S. House of Representatives 2005: H.R. 4437). This bill potentially threatened not only the social and economic position of many Latino students and their families, but called into question the American ideals they were socialized to believe in. For example, one student demonstrator said:

...even though people are here illegally they are not all bad and some of them are here for *good* reasons and they wanna stay *here* to finish their dream.

Under the idea that the majority—if not all—of undocumented workers were in this country to work and better themselves, this ideal was not viewed as a crime as many perceived the bill stated. The notion of the “American Dream” was either explicitly stated or clearly implied during the interviews with students. With this mentality in mind, the majority of students never questioned whether they had the right to walkout (Damon 2006; Levine and Youniss 2006):

Student Demonstrator: Well, some might think I did it because I was born here, but I mean it was my opinion and I feel like I was just voicing it by (corrects self) with my actions so that gives me the right. I’m entitled to what I believe and by walking out it shows what I believe so...I don’t know if that makes sense.

Student Non-Demonstrator:...you have the right to stand up for what you believe in. They can’t tell you stay or—you know—regardless of citizenship.

Student Non-Demonstrator: I think I *did* just cuz it was something that I completely felt strong for...like, “We have the right to protest, we have the right to free speech and all this,” you know?

All of the seven students interviewed came from mixed-status families and thus potentially could have been affected by this bill whether directly or indirectly through friends or other relatives. However, these perceived threats did not prompt them to look more into the issue or find out specifically how it would affect them and/or their families. All students (with the exception of one non-demonstrator) as well as

teachers/administrators (with the exception of one teacher) reported either not knowing or vaguely knowing about H.R. 4437. Yet, when asked if they found the bill to be fair or unfair the majority of students overwhelmingly replied “unfair” and admitted that they did not know if it affected them in any way. The following conversation with a student demonstrator illustrates this contradiction:

Interviewer: Ok. So, at the time were you aware if this bill affected you?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Did you...I guess you don't remember if you found it fair or unfair?

Respondent: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: You found it unfair?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Can you explain what you found unfair?

Respondent: Well see, I can't remember what it was, but I know I just found it unfair.

When student demonstrators were asked why they walked out answers were given not by individual terms but rather in collective terms; that is, responses did not focus on the individual but instead on others or in support of their families:

...I was doing it for the people that needed it, not just for me because I don't *think* I need it but I was just supporting the other people...I guess it was just, uh, a reason for me to—I thought it was going to help people that needed the help...that's the reason I walked out. I mean, I have probably family here that aren't legally that's probably why I walked out. In the name of them or whatever.

Um, *my* citizenship status didn't [affect her decision to walkout], I guess *my parents* and *my sister's* status did more because since I *am* a citizen and I was born here and I didn't have to *go* through any of it [naturalization process] like they did. I was always, you know, literally next to them while they had to, you know, wait in line, fill out papers, get denied time and time again so, you know, I guess that's, you know, a reason.

The fact the student demonstrators would proclaim such strong feelings against a bill they were not completely informed about and simultaneously protest in the name of their

families and in support of others suggests that the decision to walkout was not necessarily a logical one, but one based on emotion.

According to new social movement theory, cultural based factors (Morris 1999; Simsek 2004) like immigration will more often than not tend to be grounds for mobilization (Johnston et al. 1994). This is because new social movement theory is characterized by issues that focus on the everyday, personal, and intimate aspects of life, particularly those that are symbolic rather than economic (Johnston et al. 1994:6-9). Johnston et al. (1994) also indicate that the relationship between the individual and the collective becomes blurred. Most importantly, new social movement theory focuses on the concept of identity. “The sentiments of belonging to a differentiated social group” often give rise to the “defense of identity” (Johnston et al. 1994:10). Such appears to be the case with the student demonstrators. In the above quotes, both demonstrators mentioned being part of a differentiated social group—family members that lack U.S. citizenship. The second student demonstrator comment particularly mentioned the trouble her parents went through in order to become naturalized citizens. Later in conversation she also notes:

...my outlook on citizenship has always been different from all my American friends because they don't always have to go to the immigration office and...sit in that room, and watch my parents fill out papers, and try do their hardest just to, you know, stay in a country that doesn't want them.

Such a quote indicates how she perceives that witnessing these struggles as part of everyday life for her parents set her apart from her “American” friends though she is an American citizen herself. Likewise, the fact that both of the student demonstrators

indicate walking out for personal reasons suggests they were defending this differentiated and often stigmatized identity.

Perceptions of true or false information of situations often tend to become a reality for people. It is these “realities” that often become the basis for mobilization if it is believed that many will be willing to collectively challenge authority (Hirsch [1990] 2003). Similarly, in many instances the perception becomes more important than the reality. With the student demonstrators, it appears that their reality focused on possible consequences for their families and significant others compelling them to take action.

4.2 Latino Mobilization: Resource Mobilization Theory and Framing

Student demonstrators began to mobilize through both grassroots methods and technological means. All interviews indicated the use of both these methods to coordinate the walkout. This signifies that in addition to the emotional connection to the issue that prompted initial thoughts of walking out, additional resources were required to organize. According to resource mobilization theory, the importance of resources cannot be undermined as they are required to “nourish” (Goodwin and Jasper 2003:11) protest. While resource mobilization theory emphasizes that monetary resources may be necessary to initiate protest, this was not the case with the high school walkout. No interviewee indicated that funding was a part of the walkout. Rather, this walkout was described as a grassroots initiative as Latino youth took it upon themselves to pass out flyers and forward text messages.

For example, one flyer states (see Appendix C):

!~LaTiNoS~!

DO YOU HAVE ANY FAMILY OR FRIENDS THAT ARE IMMIGRANTS (sic) AND WANT THEM TO STAY? COME OUT AND HELP PROTEST ON FRIDAY MARCH 31 IN THE COURTYARD (after 1st period). LET THE PEOPLE KNOW THAT WE WON'T STOP STICKIN UP FOR WHAT WE BELIEVE IN. Wear Brown. Duces (sic).

While this particular flyer was passed out a few days after the initial day of protest, it is very similar to the descriptions of flyers received before the walkout. Such flyers carried specific instructions that served to frame the issue in Latino-only terms that later functioned as a form of internal social control.

First, headlines clearly target the Latino student population. This suggests the onset of creating a Latino-only issue as a frame for protest. As the beginnings of an attempt at creating a sense of collective identity, the social construction of group membership for the demonstration is defined (Simone 2006; Johnston et al. 1994). When questioned about this aspect, most students replied that their was no target group because “everybody had the opportunity to walk out” or that they recognized flyers were aimed at Latinos, but that it was unintentional. Even if they did feel there was a target group, it was still not thought to have been done intentionally. For example, a conversation with a student demonstrator illustrates this inconsistency:

Interviewer: And, uh, do you know who the target group was of the walkout?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Ok. Do you think other immigrant groups were being left out of the walkout?

Respondent: I actually do. Like, since it only affected Hispanics, you know, we aren't the only ones that are affected but we would be affected by this bill, but that's basically 100% of who walked out.

Interviewer: Right. So do you think that when it was being organized that that was done intentionally? To target only, I guess, the Latino students?

Respondent: I don't think it was intentional...like I don't think anyone was deliberately left anyone out. I just don't think anybody thought about it.

Yet, such responses are contradictory because this was not the only flyer with a Latino-aimed headline (see Appendix C). Whether or not the students believed it was intentional, a close analysis of the flyers suggests otherwise.

Second, noting that the family and friends of a Latino population tend to have a differentiated immigrant status and that Latino youth are willing to defend this identity shows how the emotionality of the issue is connected to their everyday lives (Johnston et al. 1994). This “emotional energy” (Collins 2001:29) plays an additional role in creating a Latino-only issue. Flam (2005:24) indicates that emotions are an extension of frame analysis because they appeal to an audience (Noakes and Johnston 2005:2) and the frame itself not only amplifies the emotion (Benford and Snow 2000:614), but socially constructs a perception of reality which makes an issue more significant to social actors (Entman 1993:52). Framed in terms of a Latino-only issue, these flyers played a relevant role in recruitment (Hewitt and McCammon 2005:47). These flyers aimed to recruit a large and primarily Latino population by tapping “into the beliefs the potential recruit” (Hewitt and McCammon 2005:37) more than likely already held. Distributed all over campus to a student body of about 3000, these flyers functioned as a form of internal social control (Goodwin and Jasper 2003; Haney Lopez 2001; Buechler 1999; Hunt et al. 1994:185) as boundaries of membership were drawn (Simone 2006:350).

Moreover, the flyer instructs potential recruits to wear a specific color. In this flyer, the color is brown. Incorporating the use of a specific color in the flyer strongly suggests an attempt at creating solidarity during the walkout, and perhaps specifically *ethnic* solidarity since the color brown is often used to symbolize a Latino-based origin

such as during the Chicano Movement; the color brown was used in catch phrases such as “Brown Pride” were common throughout the movement. Likewise, the idea that the color brown referred to Latino pride was echoed by students off record. The use of color terms as a source pride was found to be a common theme in the high school walkout, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Like the “emotional energy” (Collins 2001:29) constructed in the flyer, the color brown also became a source of internal social control.

The distribution of flyers was not the only recruitment method that framed the walkout as a Latino-only issue or that used color terminology. Information and communication technologies also functioned as form of internal social control in the same way as the flyers:

Question: How did you hear about the walkout?

Um, I heard it like in school saying like “Oh, we’re going to walkout,” you know, flyers. I had like—I was given—handed like a couple of flyers, and also I had a text saying that we were going to walkout tomorrow in school during 7th or 6th period. You know, bring your Mexican flags. I remember that; I remember not liking that part of “bring your Mexican flags” because not everyone is Mexican.

Oh my God, MySpace! Freakin bulletins—so many of them, and like texts messages. Everybody was just like texting everybody. Like, like “If you’ve got Brown Pride, you’re gonna walkout.” And like a whole bunch of things, and I’m like “Oh my God.”

These comments indicate many things. First, both of these non-demonstrators articulate how through texts the walkout was from the beginning framed in Latino-only terms.

Next, the first quote specifically mentions that demonstrators should bring their Mexican flags. This indicates more specific framing that goes beyond just that of a Latino walkout; it suggests that this walkout was thought of as a Mexican-only issue.

Instructing that one bring their Mexican flag as opposed to their home country flag strongly points to the notion that the population of demonstrators were meant to be not only Latino, but specifically Mexican. Students explained why they viewed this to be the case:

Um well...I'm not Mexican myself, but the majority of the Hispanic population is, so I could see why *that* would be predominant...I mean, if that's where they were from then if they had their own flags then I can't, you know, be mad because I didn't bring my Salvadorian flag.

I don't think it was done intentionally because when you think illegal immigrant, for *me*, I automatically think Mexican persons. I think that's what we all grew up on when we were little, in movies and like stuff, and so when you think "illegal" you automatically think "Mexican."

I think it was targeted more toward at the Hispanics, just because like that's like with Texas that's what (inaudible), you know? That's what you think of when they say illegal immigrants: "Oh Mexican border." That's what you think of.

These student replies suggest that a primarily Mexican walkout was for the most part assumed by the organizer(s).

Furthermore, as in the flyer example, these comments point out the use of color terminology as a form of internal social control. The first comment refers to the Mexican flag; later in this study, the use of Mexican colors (red, green, and white) are described by all interviewees and were found to be symbolic in attempting to create a collective identity. Likewise, the phrase "If you've got Brown Pride, then you're gonna walk out" in the second comment incorporates color with instruction; only those that are "Brown," referring to Latino descent, will have the courage to walk out and defend their beliefs. Attempting to create a collective identity through the use of color terminology in turn becomes a powerful symbol of communication (Noakes and Johnston 2005:8) important

in mobilization. Correspondingly, the term “Mexican” has the same social control and collective identity frame effect. However, as the first student non-demonstrator previously mentioned, the term “Mexican” did not necessarily prove effective in recruiting all Latino students.

Although Mexican American herself, the student non-demonstrator disagreed with the kind of message the term Mexican conveyed, pointing out that not everyone is Mexican. Finding this unfair to other immigrants, she did not forward similar texts and noted that this disagreement over identity was one of the reasons she did not demonstrate with her fellow peers. A student protestor stated that she feared that “people would *only* think of Mexicans, they wouldn’t branch out like they wouldn’t like think of Salvadorians or Guatemala or anyone else really” in this kind of frame. Such collective identity concerns began to cause controversy about the credibility of the students. W. Gamson (1992:58) states that claims against the “other” group cannot be made if the reference group does not even know who “they” are. These sort of collective identity conflicts can weaken social action (J. Gamson [1995] 2003). These kinds of arguments against a collective identity will be discussed in more detail further in the study. Despite these sort of problematic issues, the important roles of flyers, text messages, and other ICT’s cannot be undermined.

4.3 Digital Space: Claiming Technological Citizenship

These kinds of recruitment methods seemed to impress the teachers and administrator interviewed. The term “great” was used by two teachers when describing the use of ICT’s by students like in the following quote:

I think it's great. Cuz I mean, you've always got to stay one step ahead of everyone else, you know. I mean before when I was in high school it was always gonna be the notes, the rumors and stuff and now it's text messaging, and all through MySpace. There was a webpage for that, um, there were some notes going around but the majority was text messaged. So you know...in that sense it's cool...

When asked how the students began to spread the word about the walkout, an administrator replied:

Text messaging. In this day and age, it's called text messaging, that's how they did it. Text messaging can alert thousands in a short period of time. It's just a sign of the times.

The idea that such technology has "created a whole different kind of awareness" (Solis 2007) is fast becoming commonplace in particular among the youth. For example, text messaging, email forwarding, and Internet access have increased the speed in which information is spread. Such information can easily be spread to thousands of people instantly at minimal cost. This also increases the chances of recruiting people to a particular cause, retaining them through constant updates, and amplifying the importance of a cause both locally and internationally. The Internet and other technologies have also helped quickly coordinate demonstrations. Through the use of these digital methods, students began to engage in technological citizenship (Andrews 2006). Technological citizenship permitted Latino youth to create new public spaces for grievances, thus they gave themselves a new form of expression. Latino youth slowly started to claim space for themselves.

An added advantage of text messaging as a recruitment method is that it greatly facilitates how information is spread in ways that go beyond McAdam's ([1988] 2003) concepts of biological availability, favorable attitudes and values, and social connections

in protest behavior and the use of flyers. Text messaging has the ability to create both favorable attitudes and values as well as social connections through phrasing whether one is biologically available or not. While McAdam ([1988] 2003) noted that being free from time consuming demands made activism possible, text messaging makes it simple to coordinate thousands of people simultaneously whether time consuming demands are present or not. Perhaps work, marriage, and family demands made mobilization difficult in the past, but cell phones have made it much easier to create and maintain social connections with others. One does not even have to be in the presence of others to help spread information to one another. For these reasons, ICT's proved to be invaluable resources for the walkout.

4.4 Unaware: Signs of Collective Behavior, Questioning Credibility, and Empowerment

As students were becoming mobilized through grassroots and technological methods, they were all largely unaware of other organizational aspects of the walkout including how much planning was involved, the division of labor, the goals, and where the idea came from. As recognized by one teacher, "Our students were not educated about the goals, the problems. That is one our problems." In fact, not one student interviewee was able to properly verbalize how much planning took place before the walkout, who was involved in or how the division of labor was divided, or what the overall goals were of the demonstration were.

While some students mentioned the name of the student responsible for organizing the walkout, they were unable to say much more than that. They did not know how the organizer got the idea to protest, how helpers were recruited, or what happened

in order to make the protest possible. Other students were under the impression that it was a Spanish teacher who organized the walkout; this was not found to be the case. Some students did mention youth LULAC involvement but this was never confirmed and it is also unlikely based on the majority of student interviews.

These interviews suggest that because students were not aware of *any* goals, *shared* goals among demonstrators could not fully develop. Without these goals, a shared division of labor could not fully develop because strategies to reach these goals likely were not discussed. These issues coupled with the beginning stages of the inability to fully form a collective identity through recruitment methods have pointed this walkout in the direction of collective behavior more so than of a social movement and began to question the credibility of the students.

Thus far, the presented information suggests collective behavior action, although other circumstances described later in the text also factor into this conclusion. This is because a social movement has a set of “family resemblance” (Wittgenstein 1953) characteristics that categorizes it as such. “Family resemblance” refers to the similarities shared by all social movements such as the kinds of organizational aspects these students were generally uninformed about. Because these family resemblance characteristics were not shared, these student conversations preliminarily hint at collective behavior.

However, one issue that all interviewees shared agreement on was the purpose of the walkout: to bring attention to the issue. Sometimes described as giving the issue of immigration reform “notoriety” or “recognition,” there was a general consensus that the walkout was instrumental in amplifying the topic of immigration reform to the public.

For both student demonstrators and non-demonstrators, the walkout served the additional purpose of giving the youth a voice:

The purpose of the walkout was to like...I guess...well from what *I* believe, it was to get the attention of—I don't know, I guess the media or the community and see what exactly is going on. It's just to show them that even though we are young and underage, we still care enough to do this. *We* got your attention, we're doing it for a reason because we find this unfair and we find it unjust.

I think the purpose was to get everyone's attention. Saying that made, I think, um since like, "We may just be students, but we know what's going on and this is what we think about it," you know, because maybe, you know, they are doing it for their parents or their friends or their relatives or something, you know, this is for them to know that, you know, we're behind them.

The purpose of the walkout was to show like, I guess like...I don't know—like show them that "We are not gonna like stand for this" kinda like a protest like, you know? That we're not going to be ignored and like we have like a voice too, you know?

Idealist views of democracy (Damon 2006) not only fueled the students with the energy to mobilize, but these quotes also point out that the youth often feel left out of democratic activities (Ginwright and Cammarota 2006). As one student non-demonstrator put it: "A lot of people don't pay attention to young people. They don't think we like have importance." All the quotes in one way or another note how as youth it is often assumed that they are not interested the issues and policies that affect them (Maira 2004:205). They also indicate that because of their youth status, their "lived experiences" are many times not taken seriously (Maira 2004:205). With this second-class status (Ginwright and Cammarota 2006:xix) comes the presumption that they are not "mature citizens who can act effectively" (Maira 2004:206).

The quoted students clearly expressed these frustrations and their desire to have the right to have a voice in these matters (Ginwright and Cammarota 2002:93; Sherrod

2006:294). Feeling empowerment by emotional ties to the issue, the perception that many of their Latino peers were also recruited for the cause, and the belief that they had the human right to protest, student demonstrators claimed space as they were on the verge of showing agency.

CHAPTER 5

YOU CAN'T STOP WHAT YOU CAN'T STOP

This phrase was uttered by an administrator in conversation to describe the inevitability of the walkout despite its many problems and it appropriately captures the content that will be described in this chapter. As such, this chapter narrates the specific controversies that questioned the integrity of the walkout but did not stop it. It traces the walkout from the moment the student demonstrators gathered together and began to march until their return to campus. As the student demonstrators were claiming space and exhibiting agency, conflict seemingly followed. In the words of the participants and witnesses of the walkout, particular disagreements over credibility and the use of cultural symbols during the march are highlighted as they detail their perspectives on collective identity, possible consequences as a result of walking out, and whether they supported the walkout or not.

5.1 On the Verge of Walking Out

5.1.1 The Element of Surprise

According to the interviews, word about a walkout began to spread through flyers and especially text messages. Rumors turned into reality when students then began to talk to each other about walking out and news spread to the teachers:

Student Demonstrator: Ok. I remember it...was after...6th...period—after I finished class, uh, everybody got together outside and they had banners, and stuff like that and everybody was already outside waiting for everybody else, and all of a sudden everybody started walking on the parking lot...

Teacher: I remember there were text messages going around and then people just walked out of their classes. I think they walked out during lunch time. I got a phone call from one of *my* students...um saying, that “Hey we’re walking out etc., etc.”—and that a whole bunch of people left.

As students were informed of the walkout, many planned to walk out and did so during the passing period before their class began. For others, it was a more spontaneous decision:

Student Demonstrator: I got a text message after the bell rang for the second class. I got text messages that we were going to walkout and stuff like that...and, um, my friend was there and was like, “Are you gonna walkout? Do you wanna walk out?” “Yeah sure, let’s go” so we left right after announcements. We started walking out. Um...we ended up at the parking lot.

Students detailed how they were encouraged (or at times pressured) by their friends to participate in the walkout or how they witnessed spontaneous student recruitment by other students. In many instances where perhaps flyers and texts were not received or convincing, friendly pressure or encouragement worked for some:

Student Non-Demonstrator: It was like all done before classes started because a lot of teachers were in the hall telling students to hurry up and get to your class and all that. And I remember just sitting there and I remember this one girl, she came in...I remember these two girls outside the door talking about it and I just looked at them and I went inside and I remember that girl, she sat down, and then someone came and talked to her, and her got her, and she got up and left before even class started. And I am like, “Wow,” you know?

Such descriptions suggest that the decision to walkout is not necessarily a premeditated one nor one made in isolation. The notion that friends can serve as recruiters shows that traditional methods of recruiting still function even in more technologically advanced

times as well as the importance that social ties continue to play in mobilization (McAdam [1988] 2003).

Although each interviewee had their own version of how they witnessed the demonstrators walking out, one element in each story remained constant: the walkout itself caught everyone off guard.

Student Non-Demonstrator:...he [organizer of walkout] wasn't in his seat and then [names another friend] was in front of me and we're like, "Hey did he walkout?"...And I was like, "Oh my...oh my gosh, people are actually *doing* this."

Teacher: I'm walking out the class...and this kid comes up to me and says, "Hey [teacher's name] why are all the Mexicans walking out?" "What are you talking about...all the Mexicans walking out?"..."No they're all walking out, what are they all walking out for?" So I start walking out...walking towards the other side of the school, look outside and I see about 10 or 15 kids and I'm thinking "Ok, it's not a big deal"...keep on further out and I turn the corner and I just see 100 plus kids...and I say "Wow"...in the parking lot and they're all just...and then more kids and more kids are streaming out...It caught everyone by surprise except for the kids that were in the know, and they really kept it quiet, they didn't let any teachers know about it or nothing like that because if they would have let teachers know you know...it's gonna be worse if word gets out to the security and the administrators and would have let down a lockdown at the school and then there was no way the kids would've been able to get out. So they kept really tight lipped about it. So it's like I said, the first time I heard about it was when that kid asked me coming out of that class "Why are all the Mexicans walking out?" And then...when I looked outside when I saw the kids walking out then that's when it clicked, "Oh my gosh, they're doing it," you know.

Administrator: From what I recall, we knew to expect something [based on other school walkouts that had occurred]. We are not totally clueless, we got a sense that something was going on...I was most surprised that there *was* a walkout. That's the way the young protest and how you make your thoughts heard. People here protest for any and everything and it is the understood way of Americans to make your thoughts heard.

All students described how talks about the walkout were meant to be kept secret.

Teachers—much less administrators—were not supposed to find out about the walk out

due to fears that students may be prevented from walking out through threats such as punishment or by a school lockdown.

When the administration got word of the walkout, announcements were made asking students to remain in their classrooms. Other than being told not to leave, there was no mention of students being forcefully prevented from walking out or spreading the word:

Administrator: They were told not to leave campus and then they started gathering in the parking lot. We tried to maintain control for the students to be safe. We don't want any major disruptions.

Ignoring administrator and police requests, they began marching toward one junior high school, then another, until they reached a centralized high school campus. Along the way, they recruited students from the other schools through text messaging (Branch and Smith 2006:1A, 11A). Students stated that if fellow demonstrators had friends at the other schools, they were text messaged and asked to join the growing crowd of students gathering outside their campuses:

Student Demonstrator: We started walking and the police said, "You need to stop and go back to class." We ignored it...You know, cuz we were enraged or, you know, or we didn't want to do it. Then we started walking to [junior high 1]...steadfully...They surrounded us. Then security or policemen they were like, "Do not get on the campus or you will be arrested." So we just went around [junior high 1] and, uh...We got on [names a street] and we went to...[junior high 2]—to the north side of [junior high 2]—and they told us if we were going to get on the campus we would be arrested as well...I believe some people knew some students from [junior high 1] and then sent text messages saying..."Do you want to walkout? Go ahead we're outside or were about to get there"...you know...So, uh, they told us you need to get off the road and, uh, get on the sidewalk so we did that and we ended up like near a park. We needed to get off the road cuz there's traffic—and you don't want to make it worse, you don't want someone to get, you know—so after that we went to [a centralized high school campus].

As conversations continued, demonstrators told stories of marching peacefully with signs, Mexican flags, and chanting, all the while escorted by police. All interviewees stated that the police were there as a safety precaution against traffic as well as some unsupportive civilians and many even deemed them necessary in that respect. Though a form of external social control, the police were not said to try to stop the students from marching. A front page picture of students marching confirms the police escorting the students as they walked in the middle of the street and does not show them interfering with the protest in any way (Branch and Smith 2006:1A). Only one student demonstrator reported the crowd of students being threatened with arrest by the school campus police for trespassing if they got onto campus grounds. A non-demonstrator noted that the police served another purpose in addition to being escorts:

Well...they are teens you know and everyone's like—they are just “whatever,” you know, and they would just ignore them. But if it was just them walking everyone would be like, “Why are they walking?,” but with the police there it was like, “What’s going on why are they in trouble?” because the police would attract everyone’s attention.

Whether this was the intention of the organizer(s) is unknown, but the idea that police would bring forth added curiosity about the walkout is plausible. This student non-demonstrator suggests that protestors on their own on their own do not bring enough attention to an issue because of their youth status (Ginwright and Cammarota 2006:xx, xix; Maira 2004:205-206). Because of this youth status, forms of youth civic participation are often done under observation by police (Wacquant 2001) which in turn creates curiosity in the eyes of the public audience.

Once the centralized high school location was reached, a rally was held at the football field. A speech was given by the father of the student organizer and the crowd was later addressed by the district superintendent:

Teacher: They had a rally. They were all in the football field. It was a peaceful assembly. A lot of people sitting on the grass. Um, there was (pause) um...the organizer guy, had a...megaphone...And he was saying, you know, "We want this, we deserve that" something to that affect. I don't remember what...um the students were shouting back. Some students frankly just looked really bored, like "Hey, the excitement is over now," (chuckles) um, which I found kind of amusing. Um and [the superintendent]...there was a lot of security personnel, a lot of um school security guards, and I believe a lot of the SRO's, school police officers. Um, it was all peaceful. I didn't see anything at all that was on the students part or the administration support um, I know that the...it wasn't actually as big as you might have thought...Um...the uh...[the superintendent] came out there and said something, uh, like, "Hola amigos," uh...or something. He said something in Spanish...

The teacher continued:

Yeah, it was something like, "Hola amigos," and then he said, you know, "We care about your cause and we know that this is important to you, but we also believe that education is important to you" and you know, "You're...you're...we're glad to see that you," you know, "you are participating in political action but, um, your point has been made here we would love to see you now go *back* to your school and take advantage of the education"...something to that affect. I thought it was pretty good damage control. I mean, he wasn't saying, "You guys are a bunch of criminals, you guys are bunch of slackers." He was saying, "Hey, you're making a political statement. I am glad you care about politics at the same time you are wasting valuable opportunity to be back at school. Your statement has been made. Please peacefully return to your schools and I understand and hear your cries and I understand how you feel," so...

Student Demonstrator: Consequently, they [the students from the centralized high school location] were in their lunch so they were outside, so we just got them...So really, we just walked and talked. And they were like, "What are you all doing?" And we were like, "We're walking out from [one campus high school], [junior high 1], [junior high 2]," stuff like that...Um, we all sat down because we were hot...on the field—We were on the football field. And then the teacher that was leading us got up and said, "This is the end of our journey for *right now*," you know, cuz, you know, we gotta go back to school we have to, uh,

the police will stop us—we get off this campus or we will be arrested. And the superintendent...came to the football field and addressed us...Just a good encouragement of, you know, the way to protest, but this is not the place to...there is a time and place to but not this way. He did say some comments...it was more of...I know where he was coming from—it was during school but he wasn't mad, you know, but he was a good person about it and after that we were just sent back to school...there were buses waiting for us.

Student Demonstrator:...yeah, a lot of the students sat in the grass of like, I think, in [the centralized high school location] football field where some of them—I guess they were the people who coordinated it—they were at the front kind of on the bleachers and then somebody had a megaphone and then they, you know, announced what was going on and *how* this is making a difference and *how* this is important and *how* this was worth it and then there were a lot, you know, there were moms, there were, you know, some...he *may* have been a father or just an active...I don't know but, he, you know, they gave a speech and he congratulated us and they gave us a good pat on the back and then we were sent back with the bus system.

As these narrations state the students were sent back to their respective campuses with the school bus system, but that was not the end of the walkout episode.

5.2 Marching on Through Controversy: Problematic Concerns

There were many points of contention during the walkout itself that raised a few eye brows. First, there was much discussion about whether or not the student demonstrators knew why they were walking out. Many of the interviewees believed participants used the walkout as an excuse to skip class for the day. Second, the kinds of perceived possible punishment for walking out were described as “unfair” for those who protested and as threatening enough to student non-demonstrators to prevent them from walking out. These punishments put a teacher in a conflicted position; that of wanting to outwardly support the walkout but being constrained to do so by the administration. However, the issue that perhaps most visibly questioned the credibility of the student demonstrators and their participation in the walkout was that of the predominance of the

Mexican flags in the march. The use of these flags called into question the identity of the demonstrators and the meaning of the walkout. These problems are detailed in the voices of both demonstrators and non-participants.

5.2.1 “What’s the Point?”: Questioning the Purpose of the Walkout

One of the more obvious problems had to do with the purpose of the walkout.

Many non-participants viewed the walkout as an excuse for students to miss class for the day rather than as an opportunity to affect change (School Walkouts Continue 2006):

Teacher: Some of them, I think truly were passionate about what they were doing. Uh, one of those people was actually on my [school newspaper] staff...But, um, again, I don’t think that most of them—I think unfortunately a lot of the people who went were not the students in the school you wanted to see politically involved because they’re really walking out because they wanted to skip school.

Student Demonstrator: I mean it *was* organized, but um...you had a lot of people going there that they were just going because they didn’t want to be in school—yeah joking around everything. If you wanna be *serious*, be *serious* about something and stop joking about things.

Student Non-Demonstrator: To me, it was kind of like...everybody didn’t know what they were there for. Sort of like...I mean, it was a big thing, but more than half of the people don’t know what they were going for. So I was like there’s...I don’t think it was like worth me going. I would get mad like “You don’t even know what you are here for.”

Student Non-Demonstrator:...this one guy [non-demonstrator] was like, “What did you do? What was the point?” And then this girl [demonstrator] was saying—she was trying to explain it to him but then she was like, “Well, I don’t know,” you know...

Student Non-Demonstrator: I think it was good but I think some students like just did it, just like to skip class which I thought was really dumb and made us look stupid...Cuz like...you saw like the reporters asking the students like “Oh, why’d they do it” and they were like, “I don’t know to stand up for my culture.” “Oh I just wanted to walkout.” Oh, some of them didn’t actually know, so a lot of them were like mixed about it...

From the interviewees' perspectives, all these quotes imply that the majority of demonstrators did not know or were unable to explain not only their reasons for walking out but the purpose behind the walkout. One student non-demonstrator stated that this was the reason she did not walk out with her peers. Despite the fact that she did support the idea behind the walkout, she disagreed with those who walked out without knowing why they did so. For her, this negative impression influenced her decision not to walk out.

According to conversation after the interviews, other interviewees also mentioned similar concerns either about themselves or their friends as being influential in their choice to stay in class. One teacher said:

I don't think that means they [non-demonstrators] didn't have an opinion on the issue. And it doesn't mean that they are a better student than those who *truly* understood the issue and believed that what they were doing was right. But I definitely think they were better than the students who said, "Hey cool, let's go skip class for some cause."

These comments suggest that it cannot be assumed that all non-demonstrators stayed in class because they *did not* support the walkout or that all demonstrators *did* support the walkout.

On a similar note, all interviewees (except for one) acknowledged that there was non-Latino participation in the walkout but there were disagreements over whether they knew the purpose in taking action or not. One student demonstrator felt that non-Latinos participated because "either their friends were Latino, or they grew up around them, or they know of the bill so they just wanted to show their support" while one student non-demonstrator argued, "I don't know if they supported it, but they did walk out."

Likewise, it was pointed out that "...a lot of people no matter what they were, they kinda walked out just to get out of class." According to one teacher:

...the White people who walked out I cannot recall—I say White, but White, Black, whatever—I cannot recall one single...non-Hispanic person who walked out who could have told you intelligently what the walkout was about... including the newspaper staffer who called me and said "Can I cover this?"...

Such notions indicate how problematic perceptions and assumptions about student participants can be. That is, inaction does not necessarily mean that one does not care about an issue or that taking action implies complete knowledge over an issue.

However, not all opinions were as critical of demonstrators:

Teacher:...of course, there were a minority that I know of that just ran out because, or walked out because they wanted to skip school. And that's what the press kinda focused on is those kids, that "Oh look how ignorant they are" but I mean that was in my opinion that was the minority amount of students that were that were doing that... I had a lot of my kids that walked out on that day and the majority of it...we spent the next couple of days talking about it and most of the kids knew exactly why they were doing and what they were doing.

Moreover, a student demonstrator gave her own opinions of those who did not demonstrate:

Um, a few students didn't walkout and for the most part a lot of them did not know. And then people who disagreed with it I found that like...the reasons that they disagreed with it didn't make sense to me. And...like...for students who didn't walk out *but* like you know agreed with the walkout I...think it was kind of like cowardice for them *not* to...or...just, you know, kind of like one of those contradicting things where they say one thing but they don't act on it so...you know, I didn't find them...I didn't find that at all of good character for them not to walk out...because their reasons were they were either too scared, or they didn't feel like walking, or they didn't agree with it completely or they didn't know why, but, you know, not, none of them were like good enough reasons for me to remember.

This student demonstrator most importantly articulates the idea that some students felt conflicted about openly supporting a walkout of which the consequences were yet

unknown. It was the uncertainty of these consequences that the students and even a teacher were at issue with.

5.2.2 Threatened with Punishment: Student Fears and Conflicted Roles

Possible penalties for walking out were found to be threatening enough to persuade non-demonstrators to stay in class. All non-demonstrators mentioned that fear of punishment was exclusively or at least partially responsible for their decision to stay in class whether they supported the walkout or not. A teacher described the kinds of punishment that were suggested:

Basically, that if you walked out it would be an unexcused absence, that you'd receive all zeros for that day, and you'd be assigned to OCS [on-campus suspension]...I mean, they made it sound like "Hey guys, it's not worth it." Skipping class—that's an OCS offense anyway—so it's not like they were gonna be, you know, rewriting any laws for it, they were just following what was in place already...I can't remember if they said something about graduating. I think they were just kind of throwing out there the idea that, "Hey you could end up..."...Like if you do this, it means this, it means this, it means this and in the end you could jeopardize your graduation. Not like the walkout jeopardized your graduation, but more the choices that you are making *such* as this would lead to attendance problems and grade problems, which could affect your graduation. It was the more of a cause and effect thing, not like if you go on this walkout you will not graduate kind of thing.

To the majority of the students, such consequences for expressing their rights whether or not they protested were described as unfair. Although it was reported that there were no consequences for walking out on the initial day of protest, only one student demonstrator mentioned being marked absent for the day as a result for walking out and assured that he would "endure more consequences" if he had to for his actions. All demonstrators indicated that they were not thinking of the consequences as they walked

out and stated that they did not care if there were any when they returned. However, non-demonstrators did not share this sentiment:

Question: And what were the consequences for walking out?

That you would get suspended and that you would not be able to walk on stage for graduation.

[**Question:** How did you respond when asked if you were going to walkout?]
How did I respond? That I couldn't do that. I told them that I had plans...that I had to graduate. And they said that if I do that you would not walk on stage and I needed to walk on stage.

...I didn't want to get like a ticket and written up...Yeah, I didn't want to get in trouble cuz...I wanna graduate really good with no ISS [in-school suspension] on my record so, that's why I was like, "I don't wanna do it."

Although the consequences mentioned above were just rumors, the belief that these extreme punishments would be executed prevented many students from walking out. This indicates that these examples of punishment became a frame of threat that functioned as a form of external social control. The *perception* that these penalties were real and could in fact affect their attendance record, grades, and even their graduation were risks many wanted to avoid and were unwilling to take.

However, the enforcement of any consequences were in the hands of teachers. This put one teacher in the conflicted position of both wanting to outwardly support the demonstrators yet constrained to do so by the administration:

They were supposed to be given unexcused absences and depending on how many unexcused absences they have it could led to OCS time or on campus suspension. Um, which of course could then lead to the repercussions, you know, for example if you already served OCS time and your principal or AP (assistant principal) told you if you get more OCS time this is what's going to happen to you, you know, so that was that whole thing and to me it's like I mean I just thought these kids were expressing their freedom, freedom of expression. Yeah it took up class time, yeah it did this but I mean that was probably one of the biggest lessons these kids ever learned and they did it on their own and I'm gonna, you know, mark them

absent?...You know, it's like no...we were told every kid who was gone had to be marked absent and be written up and what I did, I just didn't hear that...So as far as any one else is concerned those students that were mine, they were in school the entire time.

This teacher was the only teacher that conveyed complete support for the walkout and felt that the students appropriately expressed their idea of walkout:

I was extremely proud of them, I...I shook their hands, I gave them hugs and I did everything I could even though it was against the school rules. I wasn't supposed to talk about it. I wasn't supposed to do this or that. I didn't go into education just to be a quote unquote teacher. It was more to educate the students and to, you know, help them to be able to find their way to things, so what they were doing in a sense it made me proud because, you know, those were things that I was active in in college whether it was a protest or whatever and now seeing a whole other generation of students doing that and taking charge of it...you know, that was...it was...I mean, I was very proud.

On the other hand, he detailed how officially he could not have an active role in the walkout or he would get fired. In fact, he communicated how easily teachers could get in trouble if it was thought that they were involved in the walkout:

but I didn't want them [demonstrators] know that I was there [outside catching a glimpse of the walkout] because if word got out, which it kind of did—that there was teachers there—and well, for one example was [teacher's name]...was there taking pictures...as a journalist, you know, but word got out...word was getting back that she was there walking out with the students in support so that was one of the issues. There was another story of a teacher who was walking as well too. A [subject] teacher here and then, um, he got apparently...they talked to him. And then another part was there's a teacher that used to be here that *looked* like the guy [student organizer's father] who set the whole thing up. He got called into the office because they found him on the Internet and then when they asked him how he knew about it, he just said "Well [names self] told me about it," so then they ask me how I know about it (laughs)...so it was...yeah, it was a fun week.

Another teacher had a similar experience:

Um, teachers were not allowed to participate...I went because it was during my conference period and I'm a journalism teacher so I was running over there to take pictures...[then mimics what students were saying] "[Teacher's name]

you're with us, yay!" and I am like, "No guys, I am not with you I am taking pictures of you." Um, and I went into the principal's office that next day and said, "Just in case anybody tells you I *was* there, I was taking pictures, I was *not* marching" because uh...there would have been *severe* disciplinary actions had there been teachers participated... I mean, I *heard* that any teacher who participates *automatically* would get, um, administrative leave or whatever. Or, um, they would leave with pay or something like that...But I *heard* people *saying* things like that, so I don't know...There was a teacher—a [subject] teacher here who the issue was close to his heart—um, and people *thought* he was there because he had a physical resemblance to the guy who was, uh, on...the mega phone. But I was *there* and it *wasn't* him. But I think he got called in about that I wanna say...

Similar to student descriptions, these teachers described how perceived punishments prevented them from taking a more active role in the walkout. In the case of teachers, this frame of threat was a form of internal social control set in place by the administration. If teachers wanted to show support without having to face the consequences, it was best to do so "unofficially" verbally or through positive gestures as first described.

On the day of protest, the "conflicted" teacher happened to be showing the movie "Walkout!" to his students. The movie is based on the student protests of young Chicanos during the Chicano Movement. Stopping the movie about halfway, students left his classroom for their next class when suddenly a student coming down the hall asks him, "Why are all the Mexicans walking out?" Caught off guard, he proceeded to check out the situation:

...and from there I jumped in my car and I went out to [a street near the school] to the other side and I saw a huge group of kids and they just kind of blocked the whole street. So of course, you know, I support the kids I honk the horn but I can't walk with them because I'm on duty even though it was my off period. So I mean it was, it was great because the day before Los Angeles walked out, Chicago walked out, New York City walked out and I'm thinking, "Well what about Texas? You know, what's going on, are we sleeping or what?" Of course

they did it and I was just...I was just happy. I was just jumping for joy thinking it was one of the greatest things that was happening; that finally these kids are being mobilized, they're doing something.

However, the teacher recognized that trouble could follow:

Then of course, the thing, you know, kind of going off of this a little bit was when the kids came back. You know, it was of course the end of the day there were kids stopping me in the hallway or just yelling in the hallway “[teacher’s name] just like the movie you showed us: Walkout! Walkout! [Teacher’s name] just like the movie.” Wow...and I was like “Oh crap,” you know. “Oh no..shhh, I didn’t show you nothing.” So I didn’t show that movie for about another month and then we finished and then I explained to the students—I was honest—and said, “Look here’s what happened, I’m showing this, how is this going to look? So we’re just going to cut it and when things cool down we’ll watch it later.” But I mean, I thought it was great. I mean, it was just one of those things that you see on TV where the principal gets on the intercom and starts going “Students get back to your class”....then all these kids regardless of their race, they were all there for the same exact thing. You know, some of them—yeah, they were there because they wanted to skip that was true—but the majority of the kids they were there for the real reason, which was the immigration issues they were having.

This entire teacher account demonstrates the complexities of being a teacher, a supporter, and vulnerable to punishment. This teacher has described how handshakes, hugs, verbal congratulations, honking a car horn, and not enforcing punishment were all unofficial ways which compensated for not being allowed to actively participate in the walkout by the administration. Words such as “proud” and “happy” indicate the satisfaction this teacher felt witnessing a student-led walkout on his campus. Yet, the fear of sanctions followed these feelings such as when he describes how showing a movie about a walkout could have implied and implicated him in amore active role in the protest for which he could have faced severe disciplinary actions, despite it all being a coincidence.

These descriptions show how perceived punishment can be just as threatening as the actual punishment. It seems that the threat of punishment as a form of external *and*

internal social control in both student and teacher narratives, respectively, had the potential to affect non-participants and participants alike.

5.2.3 “Viva México!”: *In Search of American Rights?*

Perhaps the most controversial issue focused on the predominance of the Mexican flag during the march. Although accompanied by Spanish chanting and signs, and demonstrators wearing Mexican-themed paraphernalia, it was the Mexican flag that seemed to capture the most attention. According to one student non-demonstrator:

...anybody that sees a foreign flag that is not, I guess, American, they'd be like, "What is that about?"...Any flag will get anyone's attention.

And it did. Pictures show student demonstrators flaunting the Mexican flag with smiles, throwing up peace signs as they posed with it, and even hanging outside a bus window continuing to wave it (see Appendix D). The controversy over the Mexican flag as a rallying symbol during the march gave the demonstrators an overwhelmingly Mexican identity; yet, it also called that very identity into question.

The interviewed demonstrators did not disagree over the use of the flag. One demonstrator stated:

That Mexican flag is still in our hearts so that kinda pushes us harder to fight for our rights. Yes, we don't have rights by the constitution but we are getting there, we do have rights. It just drives us more. Because it's our pride.

A non-demonstrator similarly stated:

I thought it was nice. I was like "Yeah! All right!" I have a weird philosophy: I'm like we had this land first—if you really think about it—so that's how I feel. I'm just saying, why can't we just share the land? That's what I think....I think, well, they were trying to show their pride for like Hispanics and stuff...Cuz like a lot of people are closed-minded. Especially like...I don't want to say what race, but a lot of them are closed minded and...I just think they need to open up their eyes and realize that the world is changing and it's not going to be *one* certain

race all your life. And like, they need to learn to accept different races. And I don't think it was that bad because we were all, they were all immigrants if you think about it. We are all immigrants.

The concept of cultural pride (Morris 1999; Simsek 2004) was a common reference made by the majority of students and two teachers. The Mexican flag seemed to be the symbol with which to express that cultural pride. According to Monsivais (2004), carrying one's own home country flag is a symbol through which one's identity is expressed "as a cultural group within the U.S." (pg. 134); that is, Latino immigrants use the flags of their home country to identify with cultural aspects of their country and not necessarily to show their allegiance.

Likewise, both students implied the idea of claiming space in society as a cultural group within the U.S. The flag in this case symbolized a way with which to acknowledge heritage and demand recognition; the kind of recognition "having rights" would bring. Thus, it seems that demonstrators were attempting to produce "new social spaces" (Johnston et al. 1994:10) with which to "realize their own identity" (Melucci 1980:210).

For this reason, the non-demonstrator later stated:

I don't think they were carrying the wrong flag. Cuz like, I think if they carried the American flag they would be supporting the *American* way and...they weren't trying to support it.

For this non-demonstrator, carrying the American flag would have implied supporting the existing laws for immigration reform as well as those that were proposed. Later in conversation, the student demonstrator reasoned that he carried the Mexican flag because he was not an American citizen yet. Until he earns his American citizenship, he stated that he cannot carry an American flag because he has to "prove" he is an American. His

status as a legal resident causes him to feel that he is not an American yet, despite being raised in the U.S. since the age of three months.

However, others found these arguments were unconvincing. Although one teacher sympathized with the demonstrators, carrying the Mexican flag was heavily criticized by others:

Teacher: I thought that was counterproductive. Because, I mean, I can understand...I saw a similar protest a couple of days later in Chicago and um I thought, “Listen, the whole point here is that you want better rights in the United States and that you want citizenship.” I can’t remember the details, but...whatever it was it had involved citizenship and um more so, legal residency, and I’m thinking, “Ok, so you’re gonna show us the...Mexican flag?” We’re in America and you’re saying “We want American rights” and “This is the Mexican flag”...that doesn’t make a lot of sense to me... I think it turned a lot of the White people that have the power off. White people were saying, “What the hell are you doing walking down our streets and...and skipping school if...like aren’t you grateful for what we’re giving us [sic: you]”...I think it was counterproductive in that regard. But it got the word out there, so it depends on what their goals were. It’s hard to know if they were successful if you don’t know what they’re...what they were trying to do.

Administrator: I have heard different perspectives on it; that maybe the Mexican flag should have been coupled with American flags. People that have been here...some are citizens. Speaking personally, I think that if you want to be here in America, it gives the wrong message to have Mexican flags. Had they put more thought into it—from my perspective—they should have taken into consideration having both Mexican and American flags.

These disputed issues focus on identity concerns. Suarez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard (2004) and Gutierrez (2004), respectively, state that one of our biggest challenges are “managing difference” (pg. 4) in an increasingly multi-cultural society and the “erosion of the institution of national citizenship” (pg. 28). The youthful display of Mexican flags in the eyes of non-participants appeared to question “national identities” and “cultural belonging” (Suarez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard 2004:3).

Additionally, Jasper and Poulsen (1998) discuss the role framing plays in recruiting friends versus strangers. The overall Mexican-only and Latino frame the use of the Mexican flag was creating failed to recruit “the White people with power” as potential allies as mentioned by the teacher. Rather, it seemed to turn them off and offend them. Stated in terms of giving the “wrong message” and being “counterproductive,” the Mexican flag as a rallying symbol was not the appropriate way with which to “demand” American citizenship rights from a non-Latino perspective.

Similarly, not all *Latino* youth agreed with the use of the Mexican flag. As previously stated, a non-demonstrator pointed out that it was inappropriate to display the Mexican flag because “not everyone is Mexican” causing potential participants to feel unrepresented and un-recruited. Like the flyers, the Mexican flag also functioned as recruiting method, a way to create a Latino-only (primarily Mexican) frame, and a form of internal social control which created boundaries of membership (Simone 2006:350). The Spanish signs and chants and Mexican-themed paraphernalia served the same purpose. For example, Spanish chants like “Si Se Puede” and signs with the same slogan inadvertently left out a non-Spanish speaking audience as potential active participants. Similarly, other catchphrases used like “Viva México,” Mexican-themed clothes, and other accessories aided in creating a Mexican-only frame which assumed a Mexican audience and participation. As such, these Mexican colors and symbols were attempts at creating an ethnic solidarity and collective identity but also sources of contention.

Creating a sense of collective identity and ideology are significant in maintaining a social movement (Johnston and Lio 1998:462) and generating future commitment.

However, interviews with demonstrators and non-demonstrators indicated that a collective identity was never created. Not all Latino youth agreed with the overall Mexican theme the walkout was taking, particularly disagreeing with the display of the Mexican flag. This rallying symbol thus failed to recruit all Latino youth for the walkout as well as some outsiders.

This flag controversy, in addition to the lack of knowledge concerning organizational aspects of the walkout and the bill that sparked initial protests, contributed to this walkout becoming a form of collective behavior rather than a social movement. In spite of this, the cultural symbols exhibited as the students marched to the walkout location allowed them to employ cultural expression as a form of agency (Futrell, Simi, Gottschalk 2006) as they acknowledged themselves with pride.

5.2.4 Returning to Campus: Reactions and More Credibility Concerns

Upon their return, student demonstrators recalled being greeted with a wide range of reaction from shock and curiosity to disagreement:

Uh, they were pretty shocked, they didn't realize that so many of them went (corrects self) left because the school was pretty much empty while we were gone. And, you know, they all asked questions to everyone and asked why, and asked how'd it go, and asked what's gonna go on now...I guess everyone was kind of curious and, you know, they were shocked...

They thought it was stupid...when I got back I was in French class—it was French period—and there was this, you know, Asian person—girl...and “You all are so stupid, why the hell are you walking out for?” and this and that and was telling my friend and I was so frustrated and she was “Like you criminals”...they were about to fight...you know?

Positive and negative comments from administrators and peers led to questions over credibility, which will be discussed further in the chapter. Through these reactions, demonstrators learned who were the most supportive of their actions.

For instance, as they made it back in time for their last class period, many of the demonstrators were congratulated and admired by some of their fellow peers:

Student Non-Demonstrator: Everybody was like, “Yeahhh!”...I was like high fiving them. I was like, “Good job.” “Like, was it fun?” I was like...yeah, a lot of people took pictures and like videos on their camera phones. I’m like I thought that was cool. I was like, basically, we all welcomed them back, we were like yeah that was cool and stuff... I thought that was cool. I’m like, “As long as you stood up for the right reasons.” I thought it was respectable; and I thought it was like “Y’all, y’all had balls to do that,” you know? I’m like, “Y’all had guts to actually go out there and like be proud”...But yeah so I thought, yeah. I was proud of them—it made me proud, I was like “yeah.”

Others were curious about the details of the walkout:

Student Non-Demonstrator: We were just talking about it...“Well I saw [friend 1] and [friend 2] walk out” and I’m like, “Really?” And we were like, “Yeah and [organizer of walkout] organized it” and we were like “What [disbelief]” and cuz, we knew them, we were like that’s cool!

The word “cool” was used on a consistent basis by the non-demonstrators and a teacher as a way to describe how impressed they were with the entire walkout episode. For example, one student non-demonstrator and a teacher remember that:

Student Non-Demonstrator: It was kinda cool because one, because some of my friends were like, “I walked out” or “I did too” and like, you know, I was like that was so cool because I know them. And I just thought because in the history books like each big thing they have a walkout and I am like, “Wow, this is happening in *my* time, *my* school, *my* last year”...I think it was kind of like daring. I guess kind of cool because I’m like, “Wow, you know, they are taking a risk or a chance” and that just makes *me* think that like those walkouts in the 60s and the 70s how people on campuses and high schools and whatever like they left to *do* something and I’m like, “Wow, they are going to be talked about for years to come.”

Teacher: Um, in terms of organization, um, it started off pretty good and considering that the kids so quickly were able to get in touch with the [on-campus high school] kids, the [centralized] high school kids, and as the kids were walking out they were able to get the junior high kids from [junior high 1] and from [junior high 2] to come out of their schools and walk all the way to [the centralized] high school from here to over...I mean that's pretty cool that they were able to organize like that.

All teachers reported being impressed at some level with walkout. An administrator and a teacher noted:

Administrator: To a great extent they are to be commended for taking appropriate steps to bring attention to the issue when too many times students are apathetic...It was a good thing, but aggravating that they did [walkout]. We didn't want kids running all over the place, but they had to.

Teacher: I think the ones who were already going to be politically involved, I think it was a *good* experience for them to feel, "Ok, this is what it feels like stand up for my political rights." So the ones who were sincerely *aware* of the circumstances, who saw this as like their first opportunity to, um, you know, get across their belief and stand up for themselves. I think that was good, because that's an important part of growing up. You know, finding out what *you* think *your* rights are and to uh...trying to, you know, uh, let people know that you believe this way. Making the decision to stand up for your rights and then following *through* with it is a *valuable* thing to do for any student. Um, whether or not all of them were *doing* that was questionable, but I think the ones who sincerely were, I think it's good that they did it. It was something they needed to do.

On the other hand, not all reactions were positive. One demonstrator recalled:

Um, well for the most part like a lot of people did say it was an opportunity to skip class and that it wasn't very fair. Other people did say that they didn't know *what* they were walking out *for* and I didn't really like that either. And then also when you like came back a lot of people disagreed with it and there were people who...who like, you know, went completely against what the walkout was for and the things that *they* would say I would find that unfair because I didn't really believe that they were ever really in a position to pass judgment upon it.

A teacher articulates from a personal perspective why the demonstrators lacked credibility:

...the ones who *actually knew* what was going on, if they truly believe that that was going to affect political action...if they actually believed that this is going to affect political, um, changes, maybe [they were right to walkout], but to be honest, the majority of them did not know why they were walking out they just thought, “Hey, cool let’s walk out of school.” And second...for the *most* part, in very, very rare circumstances, walking out of your free education is not going to say a damn thing about your rights (slight laugh). I mean it doesn’t...You know, walking out of a *job* is one thing, but walking out of your own free education whether you are legal or not doesn’t seem to make as much sense to me. So it was more a *practicality* issue and *more* the fact that I think the majority of the students who walked out didn’t really know why they were walking out. They just thought, “Hey, this cool let’s go protest something, whatever that is”...

The teacher then discussed why many teachers disagreed with the walkout:

I was not pleased with the uh... *choice* of the demonstrators to *encourage* students to leave school. I think that was poor planning...like I said, I don’t see how walking out of a free *education* says anything good to actually accomplish anything. So I think that *adults*—how ever passionate they may be about this issue and however important they may think it is to, um, educate the students about it—because I think that is important because the issue *directly* affected kids—but I frown on the idea that they would choose to encourage those kids to *leave school*, like the...one of the few *free* services they were getting regardless of their immigrant status. “Let’s walk out on the one thing the government was giving us for free (laughs) without asking any questions about it.” It’s like what...it’s like...that’s like spitting in the face, you know, it seems kind of counter productive to me.

According to one non-demonstrator, some teacher comments were offensive:

A lot of teachers didn’t like it. I know my history teacher [did not like it]—I’m not going to say her name. I didn’t like her and we got into an argument before about immigration law, so I already didn’t like her that much. And then...she was like—she said it out loud in class—“I think it’s dumb.” And...then a lot of people got mad at her and...we had like a big discussion about it and we made her like really mad and...and I’m like I got really mad. I didn’t even wanna say anything because I knew I was going to like yell or cuss at her cuz I was like, “Are you dumb or something?” But yeah...she was like, “Good job...you all shouldn’t have [walked out].” Like, “Yeah. Good.” And I’m like—it made me kind of mad like, “I don’t want your compliment, leave me alone.”

Similarly, a teacher mentions negative teacher reactions:

There were a small core group of teachers that were really happy. Basically your young teachers, your open-minded teachers, um, more liberal minded I guess you could say were very proud of them. But the majority of them were extremely pissed off and they were making lots of racist comments to the students. Even after the fact for example, the day after one of my students, she was, uh...she was gone the day of...and but the day of some of those students were wearing white to show solidarity and this kid she did not, she wasn't even here, she had a doctor's appointment. She came in as all these kids were gone so she comes into her classroom wearing a white t-shirt and like white sweat pants. And the teacher looks at her and says "Well, aren't you going to walkout with the rest of your people?" You know, she looked at her like "What are you talking about?" And uh...so then, there was *a lot* of stuff like that and I think that a whole other side of teachers came out.

Later in conversation, the teacher began to discuss how some reactions and comments were more racist in nature:

There were some teachers that were putting out English only signs in their classrooms which is against the law, they could get the school sued for that. Um...they started writing up...you saw more write ups for kids who were speaking Spanish in the classrooms and just you know not even here but in other places too you just always heard about these teachers that were charging students 25 cents every time they spoke Spanish. You know...it's like come on, you know...it's just, I guess you could say the claws started to come out from some people that, you know, "You don't do that, you disrespected us and you're not supposed to do that kind of stuff and who do you guys think you are?" This whole you're "mooching off it" and there were some teachers that, you know, had discussions about illegal immigrants but it was very biased, you know, view. Myself, I have to, you know, obviously you can probably tell what point, you know, what view I have and on it and when I talk to the students, I have to say both sides good and bad, ugly, you know, both sides of it and there was a lot of teachers where I stood outside the classrooms and listened to them and I mean they were just talking about how "Illegals are sucking all this money out of there and that we need to leave if you are an illegal in this class you should not be in this country" and you're telling this to a kid who is actually getting up and going to school and now you're telling him that he doesn't belong here?...I mean you know, you wonder why people drop out (laughs).

This description relates to the previous description given by a student demonstrator; both recalled racist comments by non-participants. These similar statements suggest that racism or at the very minimum biased views are still prevalent in today's society

concerning immigration issues. However, it is important to note that not all teachers had these kinds of opinions.

Some student non-demonstrators recognized that that some teachers were proud of the demonstrators:

Um, I know some of the teachers were mad. But some of the other ones were like “Yeah” (in agreement)...they wanted to join but couldn’t because they could, um...they could get, probably get fired. Or I don’t know, but I know they would get in trouble.

Some teachers were actually proud. But others were the opposite about it; that that was not the method of doing things.

I know some were, you know, for it, and others not, they were against it...Like some of them were like “Ok, they’re like it’s not right,” there’s like a whole other way and like some of them are like I think...like in a way it’s good, but there was like another way they could have done it better. Where they wouldn’t have no consequences or interfere with school.

These student comments convey different aspects. First, they all share a positive aspect: they acknowledge that not all teachers were negative about the walkout. Rather, they recognized that many perhaps were put in a conflicted position which prevented them from being outwardly supportive of the walk out. Second, these non-demonstrators realized that in many instances, it was not that teachers were necessarily against the idea of the walkout itself but instead of the method they were using to express their idea of protest. This was also recognized by a student demonstrator:

A lot of teachers disagreed with it. They disagreed with our form of action, not necessarily of the point we were trying to convey but *how* we were trying to convey it.

For one teacher in particular, this was found to be the case:

...having marches after school, uh, soliciting support um from community organizations, writing letters to the editor, distributing newspapers and flyers to

tell what's going, hold city council meetings, write their state representatives, write their state senators, uh, petition the city hall, maybe sit-in at the city hall, you know...those were all...those would have been effective, or maybe not effective, but they all were different options and I didn't see as many of those being pursued, which I...why I think kind of think the whole "Hey, let's all skip class"...I support any student's attempt to become politically involved in their community and make a statement. Because I don't think the walkout was an appropriate demonstration for that, I can't say that I supported the walkout.

It appears that a lack of credibility is at the core of this teacher not being supportive of the walkout. For an administrator, the students lacked credibility for another additional reason. Not only was it pointed out that the demonstrators had "no clear perspective on what they were doing," it was believed that the walkout was initiated by adults to bring attention to the issue. As the administrator stated, "It gets more attention if students are in the streets rather than the adults."

This implies that the students did not come up with the idea to protest on their own; that instead of it being a student-led initiative, adults were really the ones behind the whole idea. As one teacher states, the problem with this is the following:

Um, one of the issues that I had with it was that it wasn't totally student organized there were some adults behind the whole thing. And my issue with that is then it... the kids are the ones that are going to lose out, because they don't get to learn about leadership, plus they don't get to really take ownership of the things they are doing and they can also lose validity in it because now it's an adult doing it and so the kids look like puppets. And now you have this adult where it's gonna be "Oh he wants to be the new Cesar Chavez or Corky Gonzalez so that's why he's doing it" and he's manipulating these kids when that's not the case. But then it just loses some of its credibility, cuz now you have an older person whose doing this whole thing.

Whether or not this was the case, interviews did verify that that there were adults at the high school rally. One student demonstrator stated that parents spontaneously joined in the march or were present at the rally. Pictures clearly show the father of the student who

organized the walkout (see Appendix D). How involved parents were in the organizational aspects of the walkout remains unclear, but two of the three demonstrators and three of the four non-demonstrators reported not having parental support to walkout whether they did or did not:

Question: Was it important to have parental support?

Student Demonstrator: No.

Question: No?

Student Demonstrator: No.

Question: Why not?

Student Demonstrator: Um...you know...It was my choice...it was my choice to walk out or to stay. Yeah...And if would have I walked out [with parental consent] my mom was [sic: would have been] like “You shouldn’t have done that.” It’s like, “Well, it’s my idea of how to protest.”

Question: Right...

Student Demonstrator: And you have your own so...

Question: So you would have walked out either way?

Student Demonstrator: Either way, yeah.

Question: And was it important for you to have parental support?

Student Demonstrator: Um...I guess so. I mean, I think I supported *them* more than they supported *me*.

Question Me: So would you have participated even if you didn’t have parental support?

Student Demonstrator: Um, I don’t really think that would even be an option.

Question Me: Oh, you would have participated either way?

Student Demonstrator: Yeah.

These interviews suggest that parental support was not crucial in determining demonstrator participation in the walkout. However, it appears that having adult support would have *added* to the credibility of the student walkout because it presumes that adults could have provided guidance for them.

According to Okada (2006), “the student protests of the ‘60s—all of them—spawned the activists of today. But, perhaps, not as organized or safely done as 1968 Lincoln High School, where a teacher mentored the student movement” (pg. 9A). The

idea that students on their own can become better organized with adult mentoring puts them in an awkward position: they *gain* credibility because authority in the form of adult supervision legitimizes their actions yet they simultaneously *lose* credibility with adult help because then they cannot fully take credit for their actions. Despite this, it cannot be denied that demonstrators took action to the best of their ability:

Teacher: I mean it's amazing because as teachers you know you can't get them to do their homework, you can't get them to come to class on time well you give them an idea and these kids got together and they mobilized and they did something pretty big. They made it all over the press. You know, so it just shows that they're not dumb, they know what they are doing they just have to be properly motivated.

Yet, it appears that this motivation slowly dwindled away for different reasons.

CHAPTER 6

EDUCATED THROUGH PROTEST

The days following the walkout led to both positive and negative results. While student demonstrators managed to bring attention to the topic of immigration reform, it appears that they did so at a cost. Consequently, their actions as well as those of the administration led to a quick demise of continuous walkout activity. However, throughout this learning process Latino youth gained a new perspective on the meaning of pride. Likewise, they seemed to be more open about discussing previously taboo subjects like immigration and immigration reform and willing to defend their beliefs. Some students went on to become more involved in their communities and even participated in the historic Mega March in Dallas, Texas, as part of a crowd of nearly half a million. This chapter details these outcomes as a learning process; how Latino youth were educating themselves in multiple ways through protest.

6.1 Demonstration Demise

Shortly after the initial day of the walkout, the demonstrators faced a new set of concerns. According to student interviews, there were future walkouts planned. For example, students stated that a mini protest was planned to take place in the school courtyard though it was not executed. It also seems that more physical walkouts were

planned which never took place. Despite their feeling of accomplishment, the possibility of future sanctions for missing class was one reason why walkout activity ceased:

Teacher: And I don't believe that it happened again because there was a very strong response from the administration basically saying, "You're putting your graduation at risk here." I don't think they actually said their graduation but again they made it very clear that it wasn't going to be worth it.

The student body was informed via announcements of unexcused absences and other kinds of punishment if they were to miss future class sessions. The administration felt it was necessary to clamp down on students because their main concern "all the time is to make sure we can provide a safe environment; an environment for students to learn and also to give guidance and direction." While the students were "commended for taking appropriate steps to bring attention to the issue," it was also believed that the best way for them to continue taking action was through more "organized" means:

Administrator: I commended them for being concerned but also told them there was a right place and right time for it. I told them that "If you care [about the issue], contact elected officials, collect petitions, go to the park and be part of an organized protest."

Teacher: They said on the announcements, um, "Students, if you have a political concern that you want your voice heard regarding"...um, you know..."if you have a political concern that you want your voice heard"—I think [names an administrator] said that—"You, um, have the option of following other"—and this is pretty relative too..."you have the option of following other political avenues such as writing to your congressman." They said, "We love to see students involved in,"...you know, "political, um, causes but done in an effective way." They actually told them, "Hey, if this matters to you, do this do that." I think it was important to the administration to say, "Hey we're not trying to tell you that you don't have a political voice. We're not trying to tell you that...you shouldn't participate in things that you believe in. We *are* telling you that you know leaving behind an important education is defeating your purpose and you should explore other opportunities." So I was pretty impressed with that. I thought it was good. It passed the message that, "Hey, you know, we want you to get your voice *heard* but through more appropriate means."

Under the assumption that the youth should be socialized into adult normative ways of civic expression and participation (Buckingham 2000:13), the first step in this direction was made by council member Robert Rivera. He was invited to come speak to the students via announcement. Though he did praise the students for their actions, he also suggested that there were alternative methods with which to make their voices heard. He gave the students the names of people to contact and direct letters to. After the announcement and during lunch period, several administrators were present and had with them pencils and paper available for any student who wanted to write a letter to their state representative. However, an administrator noted that very few students took advantage of the opportunity:

Administrator: Nobody really took us up on it because it requires action. What would you rather do? Go walkout with your friends or write a letter?

After much thought, students took it upon themselves to spread the word through the use flyers and ask students not to walkout in the courtyard (see Appendix C):

Teacher: Yeah, there were more walkouts [planned] in fact, for the next couple of days but it died out because the kids themselves were...they were pretty much saying, “Look ok we’ve made our point, we walked out. If we continue walking out, it’s gonna come off that all we’re trying to do is skip instead of trying to bring the issue to the table.” So what they did, is they made out a flyer in English and Spanish saying “Let’s stay in school. Let’s prove to these people that we can, we wanna be here”—cuz those were the kinds of discussions that we had had. Not just in my class but just after school and just getting people and just kind of talking about the whole thing and “Look, people believe that you shouldn’t be here because of this well when you are walking out, what does that look like then? So prove them wrong. Stay in here.” And so they ran off their letter and they needed help making copies and so I just ran off hundreds of copies and the kids ran around all over the school and just taped them all over the hallways, taped them in the bathroom, put them everywhere, basically telling people, “Don’t walk out, you know stay in school, do your stuff, show your support, there’s going to you know be a big rally on Saturday let’s do that instead but don’t walk out of

school anymore because it's only going to wind up hurting our image that we're trying to create here."

As described, students created new flyers asking their peers not to walkout during class time in order to avoid sanctions such as tickets or possible arrest (see Appendix C). With a clear heading of "Latinos Escuchen!" ("Latinos Listen Up!"), the flyer suggests instead that they write to their representatives in Congress and no longer partake in walkouts because they do not want to give the impression that they are doing "something bad and try[ing] to make it look good when it's not accomplishing anything anymore." Finally, it states that if students really want to help, they should be participating in a march "organized with the help of adults" over the weekend and warns "Don't make us look worse" (see Appendix C for a copy of the flyer in its entirety). Not only do these statements imply that adults somehow bring a more legitimate status to their actions, but it suggests that the students were becoming more concerned about the kind of image they were bringing forth; that is, they no longer wanted to send out the wrong message or attract the wrong kind of attention (Gormley 2006; Police Make Arrests 2006).

Through this form of internal social control, students attempted to monitor, manage, and restrain students from walking out again much in the same way the threats of punishment did (Gormley 2006). Also by once again targeting the Latino student population, the creator(s) of this flyer seem to acknowledge that the walkout and consequences of the walkout were aimed at a primarily Latino audience. Likewise, another flyer completely in Spanish invites Latinos without using the word Latinos to a weekend march with their families and schoolmates to the mayor's building to protest.

Not feeling the need to acknowledge a non-Latino audience, these flyers contribute to the idea that recruitment methods used created a Latino-only frame.

Soon after these flyers were handed out, students chose to participate in a different form of protest. Instead of walking out, they wore a different colored shirt everyday of the week to show solidarity and each color was supposed to have a separate meaning. In this instance, colors were once again used as a recruiting method and to symbolically represent cultural pride as the colors chosen were the colors of the Mexican flag:

Teacher: The shirts were supposed to represent like pride and unity. And, you know, friendship. Everything. So then what they did is that they would wear a white shirt or wear everything white so they said “instead of walking out on this day we’re going to wear a white t-shirt, or a white shirt”...Um then from there you’d wear like a brown color, and then a green color, and then a red color, you know, the Mexican flag, kinda the whole thing but you know the white it was the final day because they walked out on Tuesday and then you got Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday and I think Friday was the day that everyone was just wearing white.

Through this method, students chose a silent and less punishable form of protest. While this was mentioned by several students, only one person recalled that the school attempted to address student concerns by conducting several forums:

Teacher: Afterwards, umm, not directly that year, it wasn’t til a year later they started doing forums at the school. But then the forums weren’t focused on the Latino students, Hispanics, Mexican Americans or immigrant students. Umm, it was more um...like for example, one of the topics was “Does Hip-Hop um create stereotypes?” And now, ok, come on, we’ve talked about that before so you know it’s kind of old. So the kids weren’t really given an outlet to continue doing this so I think that’s part of it that that was the hope that maybe it would just die out which it kind of did or it did in my opinion. But to me it’s like you positive or negative, if you don’t agree with what the kids did, they were motivated. You know, and they had that spark, esa chispa [literal translation]. They had that for a while so why not use it but have them do some other things? You know, have them do more. But then its one of those thing where it’s like “Let’s wait them out

and it will eventually die off.” And, you know, some of the kids graduated, some of the kids dropped out, and some of the kids moved away and now it’s kinda like its back to where it was before. Where the kids are complaining but they’re not doing anything about it...

The teacher then stated the different ways in which student concerns could have been addressed by the school:

I would have called for a big meeting at the school with all the students going into the auditorium or the gym, uh, I thought that was a perfect opportunity for the administration and the teachers to be able to communicate with the students. Cuz there’s always gonna be that discourse. You know, it’s always gonna be teachers against students or students against authority because that’s just the way it is. And now here’s an opportunity for everyone to get together and say “Ok, we understand you all were pissed and we know you did what you did, we let it go that time but let’s sit down and talk about it.” You know, cuz if you’re that angry, “What can we do to mobilize?” I mean, everyone knows that writing letters isn’t going to do crap to your congressman but I mean maybe showing up to your congressman’s office is going to; so if getting a whole bunch of students and form a club to deal and to cool off and then, you know, and just go in in pockets like some are doing week after week this just hitting up over an over again or being more proactive where they can do...radio-stations—they always give out public service announcements so why not be able to teach kids...“Hey we’re gonna teach you how to write and produce a small little PSA [public service announcement].” You’re still teaching but *what* you’re teaching is a little bit different and what the outcome’s gonna be. So I think the school really screwed up and lost an opportunity to take something and make it for a wonderful opportunity for *learning* for these kids. And what they did was basically give them the middle finger and say “We’re not going to listen to you.”

In this interview excerpt, this teacher criticizes the school on three different levels.

The teacher first implies that the students should not be faulted for choosing to walk out as opposed to writing their representatives hinting that their actions spoke much louder than written words ever could. Second, it is stated that the forums did not focus on the Latino students or their issues. Rather, they spoke of topics that had previously been discussed. Whether or not this was done intentionally, the teacher lastly remarks that the school lost an opportunity to teach, communicate with, and encourage a new

generation of potential activists or at minimum take the time to acknowledge the happenings of the walkout episode. Because the concerns of the students were not adequately addressed, it was opined that the administration ignored a large proportion of the students and just let the “emotional energy” (Collins 2001:29) that initially motivated them simply “die off.” Thus, the presented information suggests that the demise of demonstrations occurred for multiple reasons.

First, the perception of punishment described in terms of safety and precaution (Wacquant 2001) by the administration, prevented students from taking part in future walkouts. For example, one student demonstrator stated that the year following the walkout the administration increased its security and surveillance based on the belief that students were going to planning another walkout so “the teachers and the principals were ready for it.” Though this was just based on the administration’s assumption and possibly rumors, it shows the means and extreme precaution they were willing to take to prevent “major disruptions.” While it is important to note that this was not done to necessarily imply that the students do not have the right to walkout, even for safety reasons the outcome is the same: students were unable to walkout.

Second, the alternative methods of protest offered and executed provided the students with a different outlet to continue protesting without the risk of punishment. The principle behind the colored shirts was not only to show unity, but to let outsiders know that they were still defending their beliefs. Students were able to internally control themselves in this way through the distributed flyers which passed the message along. Any future protest behavior would be mentored by adults and take place on the weekend

so it would not interfere with school. So instead of walking out, students chose to color coordinate themselves and protest silently.

Third, the passive role the school took following the walkout did not help future activity nor did it address their concerns in such a way that would have kept them motivated to take a stand. These occurrences, in addition to the credibility issues and the lack of student organizational aspect knowledge, all appear to have contributed to the demise of similar demonstrations on this campus. Yet, there were some major changes that occurred after the walkout.

6.2 Pride and Empowerment

After the momentum “teetered out” and it “wasn’t cool anymore” to walkout as described by two teachers, interviewees discussed different outcomes as a result of the walkout. For Latino students, one significant change revolved around pride. As stated by one teacher and a student demonstrator:

Teacher:...but I mean overall considering that that’s one of the first ones [walkout] they ever did and it’s the first time these kids were acknowledging, you know, their ethnicity, you know, for the fact that they were proud of it as opposed to trying to hide it, I think it was really well, that it went very well...I mean, the big thing I know is that a lot of the kids had more pride in who they are opposed to being, you know, ashamed. That’s something that I saw more kids being and it wasn’t like stick it down their throats or whatever it wasn’t like “Soy Mexicano” [“I’m Mexican”] or whatever to anyone else, it wasn’t like that. It was like kids actually had pride in themselves as opposed to feeling like they’re inferior...the majority of the kids were finally able to see or acknowledge that this is something to be proud of for their ethnicity.

The teacher continued:

Um, that’s something that, you know, I can speak for because that was one thing that *I* struggled as a kid that all “Mexicans are dirty, Mexicans are inferior, Mexicans don’t know how to do this, they don’t go to college,” you know, all these things you always hear. And then these kids, that’s what they’ve all been

fed. That's what they've been *told* is that you can't do something because "Oh look where you live" and, you know, "Look at your family" and all these different kinds of, you know, crap and now these kids were able to get together. I mean, yeah there were some adults involved but for the most part it was them doing it. You know, I mean I just think that *they* learned how to be able to take action and that if they mobilize and take action and realizing they get *together* then something's gonna happen and they're gonna get noticed.

Student Demonstrator: A lot of us cared more and like paid more attention to politics and were more involved in, and, I guess, felt more like a sense of pride... because that'll like...I don't know...I guess it will like attach you more...to what's going on around you because if you are prideful you're gonna *care*, and you're gonna *wanna* be involved, you're gonna *want* you know what's going on in the politics that it's gonna hit *you* so drastically close to home also, I mean I really don't know [how to put it into words], I can't answer [properly]...

This reignited pride empowered the Latino students not only to bring up topics like immigration and immigration reform, but most importantly to defend their beliefs:

Student Non-Demonstrator: Um...I think the...I think a lot of teachers...they were more like open about it, like more open-minded about stuff like that. And like also, they didn't try to force their beliefs on us that much; cuz like a lot of them were like, "This is wrong, this is right," you know? And now they were like "Whatever you believe"...Yeah. More people were more open to talk about it [immigration-related issues]. Cuz like before it was like a weird subject before that, we wouldn't really like want to talk about immigration—like whose a resident, whose an alien, you know—but now it's like whatever. Yeah it was more open to everybody.

[Question: And what about the teachers that didn't agree? Did they like...]

Student Non-Demonstrator: They just had to suck it up, cuz we weren't gonna let them—I wasn't going to let them try to talk about their ways, so I'm like "whatever." **[Later in conversation]**...I noticed that a lot of people that were born in Mexico recently like started putting that on their MySpace. I know I changed my thing [updating personal information]. I put where I was actually born. I wanna show that I was born over there, that's my home town. Yeah, it made me more proud because like before like people would say "illegal immigrant" and it would be like "Oh" [in a negative tone]...now it's like there's more people that are accepting of it and they don't care and stuff. And people don't like being called wetbacks and stuff like we are more against it like before we would just take it or whatever, but now it's like "Don't call us that" whatever. You know, we're just more—we want more respect, we don't want to be made fun of anymore, but yeah.

Similarly, this encouraged some students go beyond just discussing and defending their views:

Student Non-Demonstrator:...I guess before I like wasn't really into immigration but now I'm like *really* into it. And cuz I was always in LULAC and ...basically like really into school, like clubs like Interact. And I was always involved in the community. And then like I guess like seeing that [walkout] I guess it like made me more proud. It's like—I don't know—like now, like I wanna study like public administration and all that stuff, like all the political science, cuz like, I wanna help my people out again [referring to participation in the Mega March]...I got a nice feeling from it and I like showing that I am proud of my heritage and all that. And that way I can help them through getting my college degree and all that...

These examples indicate that pride was both empowering and motivational for these students. On the other hand, one teacher noted:

I think it [the walkout] actually facilitated my *job* in discussing politics and after the fact. You know, the walkout had happened it gives you something to talk about the next day about *was* this an effective way to protest, was there a valid reason to protest (inaudible). The walkout sort of facilitated *my* ability to assess it critically...I think it had to by default, but it also blew over pretty quickly too. It was forgotten within a week. And by the time then when our newspaper came out everyone was like, "Oh yeah"...so I do think a lot of teachers talked about it in classes, though.

Although there is no question that the walkout sparked both positive and negative discussion on campus (Sullivan 2006:1; Duncan 2006:3), questions if whether it made a difference lingered:

Administrator: It takes a lot more than one walkout in a given moment to change people.

According to Hirsch ([1990] 2003), generating and in particular maintaining commitment is important because active recruits are the ones who contribute to the overall success of a protest. All demonstrators indicated that they would walk out again if they had to and two non-demonstrators regretted not joining in the walkout.

In this case, none of the demonstrators considered themselves to be activists and did not remain active in related issues. The main problem appears that no “consciousness-raising” (Hirsch [1990] 2003) took place. Hirsch ([1990] 2003) states that this is when beliefs are reinforced or created in group discussions without the presence of an authority figure (pg. 95). Based on these interviews, it appears that no physical discussion took place until *after* the walkout with teachers during class. As embodiments of authority, it is unlikely that consciousness-raising took place in the presence of teachers. In this instance, it is also unlikely that collective empowerment which facilitates polarization and leads to collective-decision making occurred at all. Without this process, commitment on the part of the student demonstrators could not have been generated (Hirsch [1990] 2003).

What did occur on the other hand was that the walkout along with these discussions inspired two *non*-demonstrators to participate in the Mega March:

Student Non-Demonstrator: I just felt like *so* proud, I seriously wanted to *cry* when I got there...I thought it was like the most beautiful thing *ever*. Like there were so many Hispanics like united for like one cause. And it really just like brought tears to my eyes. It's like—I don't know—it made me really proud to be like Mexican that day, you know? And, um, there were like a lot of people that were like anti-supporters there. Uh...I let my tongue loose and I started saying mean things in Spanish that I shouldn't of but, I don't know. I just thought like....it made me really proud that day, it made me like almost cry—like seeing all the flags and stuff, and so many people like going for like the same cause and stuff. Like there was other races there like Black people and stuff, they were also there. I don't know if they were immigrants *too* or maybe they were there to support *us*, and it was like cool, you know. Like and there was other people there—like all kinds of races like White people, Asians and stuff—they were there to support us, like “We support,” like you know, “We support Mexicans” and all that. I thought that was nice.

Student Non-Demonstrator: It was exciting, yeah it was...people, like reporters would be talking to you and you know they would like take pictures and

everything. And it was like, “Oh,” you know, “our kids are going to get to see this,” I mean, we’re going to be in the history books.

This historic march was organized by various Latino leaders and featured many guest speakers including a Latino youth named Gustavo Jimenez, who organized a much publicized high school walkout on a different campus. Protestors marched near Dallas City Hall where half a million Latino friends and family heard speeches and cheered in unison. Described as peaceful and organized, this demonstration was deemed a success due to its organization, leadership, and use of American flags.

However, one student participant recalled that not everyone praised the Mega March:

...when we went, I remember—one thing that got us really really mad—we had to go the restroom really really bad. So, we were like...we were like, “well let’s just go through”—cuz McDonalds was full everybody wanted to go to the restroom there so that was the only thing. And then like everything else was open and then we went to Grey Hound and it was some like Black guy there. And I’m pretty sure he was being racist because he would not let us go in to use the restroom...Like he noticed cuz we were with bottled water, you know, and we were wearing white and he was like, “Well, I know you are coming from the march” and he was like, “You can stay at the march” and he was like, “If you come in you have to get a ticket for the bus,” and he was like, “I am not going to let you in just to use the restroom”...There was *nobody* [to complain to]. And there was *no* way for us to go in, you know, and we needed to go like really really bad...So we were like screw you and we went to like Subway...but that made me really really mad you know...

This excerpt exemplifies the notion that racism is still evident in our society. While racial and ethnic relations have improved greatly, they are far from being perfect. How the students take these kinds of experiences and learn from them is important in improving racial tensions. The walkout in a sense was the first step in addressing these issues.

Although there were no major policy changes within the school, the walkout episode was dubbed a success by both demonstrators and non-demonstrators and a teacher. When asked, “What is the most important thing that Latino youth can do now?” the response was surprisingly consistent on the part of the teachers:

That Latino youth can do right now? Um, write their representatives. Hold after school protests that are peaceful and that don't have the Mexican flag (slight chuckle) and who honestly, get the White people on their side, you know? If it's only Hispanics walking then it's us against them—that's not going to solve anything—so I think that they need to involve a larger percentage of the community.

[Question: And how do you suggest they get other involvement?]

Education. Any protest is about education. If you're not *educating* people on the *issues*, then they have no reason to be involved. Uh, I think that ways of educating are flyers, canvassing from door to door, holding community meetings, showing up...I think these are valuable ways to get the word out. Um, writing newspaper articles, writing letters to the editor, canvassing, you know, anything that let's people know what is *really* going on.

Get an education, you know that's the bottom line I mean you gotta get an education. If you don't have an education tu no valez nada [you're worthless]. I mean, I'm sorry I mean I'm not trying to put down people who don't have schooling...but you gotta *have* an education to be able to do anything. These kids *wanna* make a difference? Get an education...Continuing education. College. I tell my students—this is going to sound really bad—but I tell students that high school, no vale nada [it's worthless], I mean, your high school diploma isn't worth anything because I mean no offense but I mean what is a high school diploma gonna do for you? It gets you into college that's great but if you're not going to college then what are you going to do with a high school diploma? It's not worth it, it's not worth anything. I mean, I'm sorry, I mean but if these kids really want to make a difference they have to get educated, higher educated. That's where all the power players are at, the people who have an education. And if you don't have any education, you're fine pero [but] it's not going to do anything for you.

Get an education. Fight discrimination not with a fist or [by] walking out, but with education. Go and stay in school become a lawyer or congressman, get involved with the community and fight racism with knowledge. Fight it in congress, in the courts. Become a judge. Become a governor, become a president. You can do it.

These comments suggest that education is the key to taking this entire experience and making it worthwhile. It is believed to be the best method through which one's opinions and actions can make a difference. For many students, they expressed that what is most important for them is to maintain cultural pride as an empowering and mobilizing mechanism.

In essence, it seems that this walkout episode has become an important learning process for the Latino youth. As social actors, Latino youth negotiated, contested, and challenged (White 1989:17) our preconceived notions of activism and agency as they experienced both success and set backs and learned of the power they possess once they are motivated to mobilize for change.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

The initial intent of this paper was to understand how the Latino youth walkouts inform us about contemporary social action. In order to do this, qualitative methods were employed to gain a more direct perspective on the 2006 immigration reform walkout episode that occurred at a local high school campus. A total of 11 people were recruited using a snowballing technique; all students were of Latino descent—three student demonstrators and four student non-demonstrators, three teachers, and one administrator. They were asked questions concerning recruiting methods, organizational aspects of mobilization, the outcome of the walkout, among others. Because the sample is not representative, their views were by no means meant to be generalizable beyond this study; their perspectives were meant only to be illustrative.

Still, these interviews were intended to provide us with a glimpse of what others in their position might have experienced during the occurrence, the different processes and conflicts involved in making a walkout possible, and how these aspects fit into collective behavior and social movement literature as well as Latino studies. An extensive literature review was first conducted to address the previous work done on collective behavior and social movement theory, youth activism, immigration, and the youth Latino walkouts. Each section was meant to build upon the next in order to lead up

to the expectations I had of my own research. I will describe how the literature review led me to create four expectations and then detail why they were supported or not based on the results as I summarize my findings.

7.1 Restating Expectations and Recalling Results

7.1.1 Resources and Emotion in Mobilization

Literature suggested that using resource mobilization theory to explain the walkout emergence would have provided a partial explanation. While resource mobilization theory states the value of resources, it undermines the emotional components embedded in issues that cause people to mobilize. In contrast, new social movement theory accounts for this oversight; it states that symbolic and personal attachments to cultural issues are important reasons that justify mobilization. In addition, identity politics and framing were found to be significant concepts in new social movement theory. The concepts have been found to account for past Latino protest. Based on this information, the expectation that resource mobilization and new social movement theory combined would provide a more in-depth explanation of how and why this walkout occurred was formulated. This expectation was supported.

Instead of monetary resources, technological resources were found to be the means that helped coordinate the walkout. Information and communication technologies such as the Internet and cell phones were significant in this case, overshadowing the principle of biological availability yet continuing to reinforce the important principles of attitudinal affinity and social connections to an issue. Through a social network known as MySpace, Latino youth were able to spread the word quickly and simultaneously to all

their friends via bulletins and comments. More noteworthy, text messages provided a more instant form of communication than did the Internet. This is because the portability of cell phones allows communication to be more accessible in ways that perhaps the Internet cannot. Through these recruitment methods, Latino youth were creating new channels for grievances. That is, they claimed digital space with which to express themselves and engage in a form of technological citizenship. Technological citizenship permitted them to engage in civic participation in ways their youth status tends to prevent through more conventional ways.

However, these technological resources were not enough in terms of mobilization. What spurred the idea of walking out was the controversy surrounding H.R. 4437. Latino youth expressed perceptions of feeling personally attacked by a bill that potentially threatened the social and economic well-being of mixed status families and friends. Frustrations were described in collective terms rather than individual. The emotional attachment to the situation superseded making a logical decision in walking out. For the demonstrators interviewed, walking out was not about them but about their families and friends. Two of three demonstrators were not U.S. citizens; revealing their stigmatized status by walking out could have had many repercussions in the long run. All demonstrators interviewed also reported not caring about the consequences upon return to the campus. Logically, they could have avoided all these threats but emotionally choose to take that risk.

They began to distribute flyers about the walkout, a more grassroots approach for recruitment in addition to the technological means used. The distribution of these flyers

began to create a distinct Latino-only identity that set the stage for both problems during and criticism after the walkout. While students claimed all had an equal opportunity to walk out, the recruiting methods did not necessarily comply with this belief. These details would not have been discussed if either theory was used in isolation as an explanation for the emergence of the walkout. Resource mobilization theory alone would have focused only how the students coordinated the walkout leaving out the reasons why they chose to demonstrate. Although new social movement theory explains the personal choice attachments to an issue, on its own it would not have detailed the significant role the different recruitment methods used. Instead, a combination of both theories provided a more in-depth analysis.

7.1.2 Citizenship as a Human Right

With regard to youth involvement in demonstrations, the literature review found that youth are socialized to believe in democratic principles yet simultaneously denied the fundamental rights of any other citizen based on their youth status. Research also shows that the youth in general have a poor understanding of how democracy functions. However, information on the Civil Rights Movement indicated that the youth were still the most likely to respond as social actors using civil disobedience techniques. This led me to a second expectation; that Latino youth were influenced by their educational socialization regarding civil rights to protest. While supportive evidence for this expectation was not explicitly stated, the interviews strongly suggest that it was implied.

During the interviews, all students proclaimed having the human right to walk out whether they chose to or not. They described how they felt their opinions were often

overlooked because of their youth status, as if what they experienced had no importance. When questioned why they felt they had that right, the majority of students seemed to be caught off guard as if to be shocked that anybody would ever question this assumed right. It soon became apparent that the right to fight for rights in their mind had nothing to do with citizenship, but with the engrained belief that everyone should have an equal opportunity to do so. By participating in the walkout or expressing support of it, they began to feel empowered; that despite being young, they too had a voice in important issues.

The implication here is that the youth tend to have a sense of entitlement and freedoms to having certain rights. Thus, the idea that they should have to fight for the right to have human rights does not make sense to them. Growing up in a globalized society, the meaning of citizenship for the youth does not seem to relate to being born a citizen but rather it refers to those who are part of society or feel they have a right to belong.

Part of any youth's education undoubtedly involves civil rights and the idea of democracy. Though not stated in those exact terms by students, two of the three teachers mentioned that the students adequately expressed and applied their idea of protest in the walkout thus indicating that such forms of civil disobedience have taken precedence in civil rights studies. In other instances, students mentioned how in "history books" walking out was an appropriate way with which to bring attention to an issue. For these reasons, my second expectation was supported in implied ways.

7.1.3 Citizenship Status = Protest?

Research on the topic of immigration was voluminous. Demographic changes, migration patterns, and globalization were all integral in making immigration a personal and significant issue for Latinos today. Specifically, the controversies that immigration is synonymous with such as citizenship, managing cultural differences and similarities, and political involvement, were all concerns that set the stage for the walkout. Thus, it was believed that citizenship status would affect participation in the walkout. That is, U.S. born children were likely to have walked out because their citizenship status would have protected them from serious consequences like deportation and they have been socialized to believe that their citizenship status gives them the right to protest. In addition, the socialization of democratic principles and citizen protest rights were extended to include U.S. raised children. This implies that immigrant children would have been less likely to walkout. This expectation was only partially supported.

Interestingly, citizenship was not necessarily a determining factor in walking out. For example, four of the seven interviewees were U.S. citizens by birth (except for one who was naturalized) and only one citizen student chose to participate in the walkout even though they all indicated coming from mixed status families. Likewise, two of the three student demonstrators were not U.S. citizens but rather legal residents whom had been practically raised in the U.S. since the ages of three months and six to seven years old. Though it appeared that non-citizens were more likely to demonstrate, not all did. One legal resident was a non-demonstrator and had been raised in the U.S. since six

months of age. What seemed to determine the likelihood of participation more so than citizenship status was the fear of consequences.

All student non-demonstrators articulated fear of possible consequences to a certain degree whereas student demonstrators did not. Rather, demonstrators mentioned not caring if they had to face punishment upon return and even reported not thinking of any consequences as they walked out. Even when it came to maintaining and generating commitment in related and future issues, two non-demonstrators participated in the Mega March that took place after the walkout ended whereas none of the demonstrators did. Of the non-demonstrators, one was a citizen and the other was a legal resident that went to the Mega March. It appears that part of the problem with generating consistent commitment was that the process never took place as described in the results. Therefore, it was not quite clear in this case study how citizenship status related to the likelihood of walking out. Taking all these aspects into consideration, my third expectation was only partially supported.

7.1.4 Collective Behavior, Not a Social Movement

An analysis of the Latino youth demonstrations news reports that took place nationwide suggested that these walkouts were a form of collective behavior rather than a social movement. This is because a collective identity and ideology were never formed which led to a lack of shared goals, goal strategies, and an organized division of labor. Also, they did not persist over time; various forms of social control and sanctions led to a seemingly quick demise of the walkouts. These were social movement criteria that were not met as a whole according to news reports. Based on these media interpretations, a

final expectation stated that this particular walkout would also likely fall under the category of collective behavior as opposed to a social movement for those same reasons. This expectation was supported.

Comparisons to the Chicano movement were almost immediate when the walkouts took place. For instance, both were large and geographically broad gatherings of young people of Latino descent, used various catch phrases and chants, exhibited cultural pride, used identity as a form of internal social control dictating membership, and fought for both recognition and legitimacy as a cultural group all under the watchful eyes of the media and in some cases the police as well. On the surface, those similarities constituted as grounds for many to categorize the walkouts as a social movement. However, by analyzing a single walkout episode as a case study I was able to see that that was where the similarities ended and the differences began.

For example, one important component in any social movement revolves around the concepts of a collective identity and ideology. In the 1960s, young Mexican Americans were able to take a negative term like Chicano and turn it into a term of power; they were able to come to a consensus about their redefined identity and mobilize for social action around it. On the other hand, this did not happen during the walkout at this campus; the walkout lacked a shared collective identity. While the majority of students claimed that there was no target group during the walkout, a close analysis of the recruitment methods used indicates that they did not comply with their statements. Flyers in particular clearly targeted Latino youth only as did some texts and MySpace bulletins

and comments. This created some internal differences among Latino youth because some felt that other immigrant groups were left out of this immigration reform protest.

In addition, there was also disagreement over the distinctly Mexican identity the walkout was beginning to take. This was due to the lack of consensus over the Mexican flag as a rallying symbol. Students marching with the Mexican flag were heavily criticized not only by outsiders but by their own Latino peers as well. Along with Mexican-themed clothing and other similar paraphernalia, exhibition of the Mexican flag not only added to the disagreement over a collective identity, but limited non-Latino support. While there is no denying that there was some student non-Latino participation, the students were not successful in drawing in other non-Latino support. In fact, teachers stated that they needed to attract the support of people in positions of power which tend to be primarily Caucasian. All in all, the Mexican flag was described as sending the “wrong message” by all but one non participant whereas demonstrators discussed the flag in terms of it being a symbol of cultural pride.

Finally, external threat did not create internal cohesion for the students in the walkout as it did for those in the Chicano Movement. Rather, external threat in the forms of punishment appeared to have been one of the reasons for the quick demise of the walkout episode. Additionally, the police involved in the walkout did not “racialize” the identity of the students causing them to bond through it like in the Chicano Movement. Instead, all interviewees acknowledged that the police were there as a safety precaution and nothing more. For all these reasons, a shared collective identity or ideology never

fully developed in the walkout. This was one major component that was missing if it were to be categorized as a social movement.

Another missing component involved the organizational aspects of the walkout. Interviews indicated that demonstrators were generally uninformed of the specifics of the bill they were protesting. Without being aware of the purpose behind the walkout, shared goals could not develop. The interviews also pointed out that none of the students were able to properly articulate what the goals of the walkout were other than to bring attention to the issue. With no goals in place, there can be no set strategies to reach those goals or a way to create a division of labor to put those strategies into practice. These were all issues that began to point this walkout in the direction of collective behavior.

I also mentioned that, “Negative media framing discredited the intentions of the students by focusing on minor infractions. This then provided authority figures with the justification needed to control and contain the students through various forms of sanctions,” as part of my collective behavior expectation. While this may have been true for the student walkouts as a whole as discussed in the literature review, this was not exactly the case with this particular student walkout. Although the Latino youth demonstrators were not credited for their actions by the majority of non-demonstrators and teachers/administrators interviewed, it was not due to negative media framing.

There was in general no mention of the media affecting their views on their own walkout as opposed to all other walkouts. Thus, it was not because of the media that the school put sanctions in place specifically; rather, any punishment was described in terms of safety precautions and as ways to avoid any major disruptions during school hours.

All these issues in conjunction with each other contributed to the demise of future walkouts as did other occurrences which will be discussed further in the text. In a social movement, a collective identity and knowledge of organizational aspects are crucial components that were missing in this case study and which categorize this walkout episode as collective behavior, thus supporting my final expectation.

7.1.5 Additional Findings

In addition to the expectations, the analyses and interpretation of the results also incorporated different elements that were not covered by the literature review. For example, one finding indicated that the students were not prevented from walking out; this did not comply with other news reports that mentioned lockdowns and attempts to fence students in. Instead, students and teachers reported no attempts by the administration forcibly attempting to keep the students from protesting. According to the interviews, students were asked via announcements to remain in their classrooms but many chose to walk out anyway. Part of this may have been due to the element of surprise in the walkout. That is, the fact that students coordinated a walkout caught the faculty off guard much like the walkout itself, leaving the administration unprepared to handle the situation.

Students on the other hand were aware of the walkout and very secretive about it. Still, non-demonstrators reported being surprised that it actually occurred even though they were aware of it in advance; in other words, the walkout itself was an organized action, but the participation and recruitment involved were spontaneous actions. Also absent in the literature was the finding that students and teachers/administrators whether

they agreed with the walkout or not were on some level impressed with the coordination and execution of the walkout. They used terms like “cool” and in other instances mentioned that it was a “good thing” or “good that they did it” to describe their feelings regarding the walkout. Many even described being impressed with the spontaneous recruitment of other students as demonstrators marched past two junior highs and stopped at another high school campus.

The role of the teachers and administration was also not specifically addressed in the literature. This study found that Latino teachers were more likely to be sympathetic toward the walkout as opposed to non-Latino teachers/administrators. However, only one of the two Latino school employees interviewed supported the walkout whereas the other did not. The supportive Latino teacher articulated being in a conflicted position; one in which he wanted to be outwardly supportive of the demonstrators but was constrained to do so by sanctions put in place by the administration for teachers. This led him to come up with unofficial ways of showing support.

On a similar note, two of three teachers interviewed and one administrator reported being supportive behind the idea of the walkout and student protest right but not necessarily of the method of protest. This was because they did not believe that all demonstrators were thoroughly informed on H.R. 4437, the goals, or purpose behind the walkout. Only one teacher credited the students for their actions whereas the others were under the impression that the majority used the walkout as an excuse to skip school. Both demonstrators and non-demonstrators acknowledged that some students only wanted to miss class.

The role of parents was also overlooked by news reports. This case study found that the father of the organizer of the walkout was present at the student rally and spoke to the crowd. How critical parental involvement was to the walkout was never established. After many months of attempting to contact the organizer and in the end being unable to set up an interview, this question was left unanswered. On the other hand, some of the other students interviewed did recall a parental presence at the rally. When asked about the importance of parental support in making the decision to walkout, demonstrators responded that they would have participated in the walkout with or without parental consent.

All interviewees stated that the main purpose of the walkout was to bring attention to the issues surrounding immigration reform. Yet, walking out of school as a form of civil disobedience was no longer the preferred method of protest after it initially happened. While newspaper reports indicated that it was very likely that the sanctions put in place by school administrators as form of external social control caused continued walkout activity to stop, this study found that there were other reasons as well. First, this particular campus offered alternative, more normative forms of protest such as writing letters to their state representatives and even enlisted the help of a council member. In addition, the students took it upon themselves to pass out different flyers asking their peers to discontinue walking out of class and help the cause in other ways including participating in more organized and adult mentored protests.

These flyers also noted that school punishment can and should be avoided. The perceptions of threat likely aided their idea to silently protest by wearing different

colored shirts everyday of the week. Each color was symbolic and the colors happened to be the colors of the Mexican flag. This method of protest allowed students to continue supporting their beliefs while avoiding punishment. Additionally, it provided students who did not initially walkout an opportunity to protest. Lastly, one teacher detailed the passive role the school took after the walkout. The school began to conduct forums that were supposed to address student issues yet the specific concerns of Latino students over immigration reform were never discussed. The teacher opined the school lost an opportunity to educate the students on their actions and interest in further mobilization was not encouraged and eventually died off.

As students reflected on the walkout episode, demonstrators did not consider themselves to be activists though both demonstrators and non-demonstrators reported a renewed sense of pride as an unintended consequence. Fellow peers in many instances congratulated demonstrators and expressed curiosity and shock over the walkout. Students and teachers also pointed out that discussions over immigration reform and other related issues started to take place whereas before such conversations were avoided. In some cases, racist comments were mentioned. As a word of advice to the Latino youth, the majority of the interviewees suggested that education was of the utmost importance. It was described as the key that would open up future doors of opportunity and the minds of others for later causes.

7.1.6 Final Conclusions

The Latino youth immigration reform walkouts of 2006 have generated much research since they occurred. This particular case study differentiates itself from others

by attempting to provide a more holistic narrative by giving voice not only to the student demonstrators, but to non-demonstrators and teachers/administrators as well. Their perspectives combined have added to our understanding of collective behavior and social movement research in many ways. This study shows that we are still in the early stages of understanding collective behavior and social movement. Latino activism only adds another chapter to voluminous information on social action.

First and foremost, the lack of a Latino theory of agency is evident. To date, there is no theory that can adequately predict any form of collective behavior or social movement, much less one specific to an ethnic group. We can only speak of the likelihood that activism can take place based on how certain situations build on one another until mobilization occurs. This research recognizes that the precipitating events that led to mobilization have contributed to current Latino activism. Many have considered these Latino youth walkouts as the emergence of a social movement and there is no denying that this is a plausible possibility.

Through the lens of Latino activism, we were able to see that the actions of Latinos both challenged and reinforced current social action theories. While resource mobilization theory provided a partial explanation, the kinds of resources used were not monetary and no interviewee ever indicated that monetary resources were required. Instead, the kinds of resources that made coordination possible were technological and grassroots in nature. Moreover, Latino protest actions were initiated by the emotion and cultural ties involved in the issue of immigration reform as characterized in new social movement theory. Thus, it seems that past and present Latino activism reinforces new

social movement theory but the importance of resource mobilization theory cannot be undermined. However, it appears that when it comes to Latino activism the *kinds* of resources used are not necessarily accounted for in resource mobilization theory.

This study detailed many of the problems before, during, and after the walkout took place. Yet, this form of collective behavior pointed out many positive benefits. This study indicated that the actions of the Latino youth were significant in bringing attention to the issue of immigration reform through controversy. Police involvement, the use of the Mexican flag, and Latino youth on the streets were some aspects that created curiosity among spectators and these images and reports began to spread. Encouraged by the actions of their children, it was adults as well as youth that began to mobilize for The Mega March, the largest demonstration in recent Texas history. Since then, boycotts and other protests have taken place related to immigration and immigration reform.

By amplifying the issue through controversy, political consciousness among the Latino community was increased. Protest went beyond just marching in the streets; this emotional energy manifested itself in a different form and Congress was set on another course of action because of it. Social resistance action on the part of Latinos and other immigration reform support groups managed to kill the bill; H.R. 4437 never went into effect and Latino agency made this outcome possible.

The actions of Latino youth also brought to light racial and ethnic tensions. Though not the focus of this study, these results revealed racist comments which are indicative and reflective of the current anti-Latino immigrant sentiment in the U.S.

Descriptions of racist comments by interviewees recalled that many non-Latinos disagreed with the walkout and Mega March entirely or different aspects of both protests. The majority of these comments seemed to question whether Latino immigrants had rights or in other cases declared that they did not. It is not clear whether the student walkouts as a whole further agitated these sentiments or merely made them public, but the walkouts did shed light on this continuing problem.

Most importantly, what was accomplished by the walkout was the recognition that Latino youth have the power with which to mobilize themselves when an issue hits home. Amidst the controversy and criticism, there is no denying that Latino youth exhibited a form of agency within their own right. Taking the initiative to secretly coordinate a walkout, execute it, and bring media attention to the issue of immigration reform brought renewed interest to Latino protest politics. As these actions were claiming virtual and public space, my personal goal was to claim analytical space for Latino youth activism. I believe that was accomplished.

7.1.7 Final Thoughts and Future Research Suggestions

When the 2006 immigration reform walkout first occurred, I was unaware of what was going on or why. I was both shocked and impressed that Latino high school students would take it upon themselves to organize themselves to walkout of class, march to a different campus, recruit other students along the way, and grab the attention of the superintendent and of the media. To see the Latino youth take to the streets in such a way was something I had only studied about. At the same time, I was disappointed by the images I saw on many different media outlets and the kinds of negative comments I

heard. Students unable to convincingly explain the purpose of the walkout followed by images of them as carefree and playful individuals dominated television and the Internet. Negative and even racist comments by the public went on for days. When the fervor around this event quieted down, I recall many radio stations with a primarily Latino audience praising the youth for taking action yet urging them to remain in class and asking them for their participation in a more organized protest.

Under these observations as well as informal conversations with some Latino youth demonstrators, I began to write a short essay about the topic for my graduate course in social movements. I, like many others, was very critical of the event recognizing that the most successful movements must move beyond emotions but simultaneously saw it as an opportunity or stepping stone for future mobilization. Was I the only one with this perspective? Apparently not. With the encouragement of the head of my committee, I pursued this area of research. My preliminary findings indicated that many had judged the occurrence without giving the Latino youth a voice. Headlines began to focus on the Mega March and left the youth in the shadows. I decided to credit the Latino youth for inspiring the adults to organize and use the walkout(s) as a blueprint for coordination.

While some researchers had started to do this by focusing on student demonstrators, I felt this was an incomplete way to recount what happened. I felt the walkout episode encompassed more social actors whether they walked out or not; this included non-demonstrators and the school administration. Recognizing that their perspectives as supportive/unsupportive peers and authority figures respectively had been

unheard, I chose to interview demonstrators, non-demonstrators, and teachers/administrators. Though I feel this was accomplished to the best of my ability, the qualitative methods I employed provided me with different aspects and questions not included in the interview guide. Soon after my draft was complete, it became evident that my study could benefit from future research by incorporating other points of view.

For example, the roles of authority figures could be expanded to include the views of parents, the superintendent, and police. The perspectives of parents on immigration reform may have affected the students' decision to walk out or stay even though many claimed it did not. Additionally, they may have been able to provide more information regarding organizational aspects of the walkout. How much credit, if any, do they deserve for contributing to the walkout? On a similar note, did the superintendent's role in the rally contribute to the demise of the walkout or did it encourage students to seek more conventional methods of protest? Finally, what do the police opine about the demonstration? How significant were all their roles?

As another example, the youth sample size could be increased to allow the study to be more representative and generalizable.¹⁴ This could be done by not only including more Latino youth, but non-Latino youth as well. The role of non-Latino youth has been left unexplored by this and other similar research. Did non-Latino demonstrators add to or take away from the credibility of the walkout? What reasons did they have for walking out? Likewise, in-depth studies such as this should be done on other schools to

¹⁴ Because of the small sample size, this study should be considered as exploratory in need of further research as discussed in this final chapter.

compare similar findings and explain any differences in the coordination and execution of their own walkout.

Whether or not the student demonstrators made their point is no longer the pressing concern, rather it is the attention this event is receiving that makes it a worthy topic to study. As a professor of mine once stated, “If it is not written about, it never happened.” For this reason, it is of much importance to remain focused on the youth as they begin to learn about democracy and how they can affect change through agency.

Once social change begins, it cannot be reversed.
You cannot uneducate the person who has learned to read.
You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride.
You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore.
We have seen the future, and the future is ours.

—Cesar Chavez

APPENDIX A
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
APPROVED DOCUMENTS



THE UNIVERSITY
OF TEXAS
AT ARLINGTON

Office of
Research Administration

Box 19188
202 E. Border St., Suite 201
Arlington, Texas
76019-0188
T 817.272.3723
F 817.272.1111
<http://www.uta.edu/research>
Expertise at UTA Arlington
www.uta.edu/expertise

July 28, 2008

Marta Alicia Galvan
Susan G. Baker, PhD
Sociology & Anthropology
Box 19599

RE: Expedited Approval of Protocol

TITLE: *Walkout: the Footsteps of Latino Activism*

IRB No.: 2008.451s

The University of Texas Arlington Institutional Review Board (UTA IRB) has determined that this research is eligible for expedited review in accordance with Title 45 CFR 46.110(a)-(b)(1), 63 FR 60364 and 63 FR 60353, category (6)(7).

The IRB Chairman (or designee) approved the protocol effective July 28, 2008. IRB approval for the research shall continue until July 27, 2009. In order for the research to continue beyond the first year, Continuation Review must be completed within the month preceding the date of expiration indicated above. A reminder notice will be forwarded to the attention of the Principal Investigator (PI) at that time.

The approved subject sample size is 12.

Important Note: The IRB approved and stamped informed consent document (ICD), showing the approval and expiration date of the article must be used when prospectively enrolling volunteer participants into the study. The use of a copy of any consent form on which the IRB-stamped approval and expiration dates are not visible, or are replaced by typescript or handwriting is prohibited. The signed consent forms must be securely maintained on the UT Arlington campus for the duration of the study plus three years. The complete study record is subject to inspection and/or audit during this time period by entities including but not limited to the UT Arlington IRB, Regulatory Services staff, OHRP and by study sponsors (if the study is funded).

Please be advised that as the principal investigator, you are required to report local adverse (unanticipated) events to this office within 24 hours. In addition, pursuant to Title 45 CFR 46.103(b) (4) (iii), investigators are required to, "promptly report to the IRB any proposed changes in the research activity, and to ensure that such changes in approved research, during the period for which IRB approval has already been given, are **not initiated without prior IRB review and approval** except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subject."

All investigators and key personnel identified in the protocol must have documented *Human Subjects Training* or *CITI Training* on file with this office.

If applicable, approval by the appropriate authority at a collaborating facility is required prior to subject enrollment. If the collaborating facility is *engaged in the research*, an OHRP approved Federalwide Assurance (FWA) may be required for the facility (prior to their participation in research-related activities). To determine whether the collaborating facility is engaged in research, go to:
<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/assurance/engage.htm>

The UT Arlington Office of Research Administration Regulatory Services appreciates your continuing commitment to the protection of human research subjects. Should you have questions or require further assistance, please contact Jan Parker by calling (817) 272-0867.

Sincerely,



Judy Wilson, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
UT Arlington IRB Vice-Chair

Encl (if applicable):
Consent Form(s)
Questionnaire(s) or Survey(s)
Recruitment Advertisement
Project Summary

INFORMED CONSENT

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR NAME:

Marta Galvan

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Walkout: The Footsteps of Latino Youth Activism

INTRODUCTION

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Your participation is voluntary. Please ask questions if there is anything you do not understand.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this research is to explore how the Latino youth immigration reform walkouts of 2006 inform us about contemporary social action.

DURATION:

The interview is not anticipated to last more than two hours and it can be scheduled at your own convenience.

PROCEDURES:

If you choose to voluntarily participate in this research, you will be asked questions about your involvement in the school walkout, the purpose underlying the walkout, how the walkout was coordinated, youth activism, media reports about the walkout, and of the consequences and other outcomes of the demonstration. This face-to-face interview will be conducted with an audio recording device by Marta Galvan, a sociology graduate student at the University of Texas at Arlington. You may request for your responses to be handwritten if the use of the audio recording device makes you uncomfortable.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS:

The information you provide will be useful in examining contemporary social action as exhibited through Latino youth activism which will benefit existing collective behavior and social movement literature as well as Latino scholarship.

COMPENSATION:

None

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS:

Some of the questions asked are intended to probe into your personal views regarding the 2006 Latino youth immigration reform walkout and student involvement in social action. Questions are not intended to elicit negative responses, but rather ones that are to help inform on contemporary social action. Should this occur however, be assured that it was not the principal investigator's intention to do so and that any and all responses are confidential and only to be used to research purposes; extra time may be taken to answer such questions. Although this event has occurred two years ago, it is important to note that your contribution to this research is significant and the quality of your responses whether positive or negative will be greatly appreciated.

JUL 2 8 2008

APPROVED BY THE UTA-IRB
The IRB approval for this consent
Document will expire on

16 October 2007

1

JUL 2 7 2009

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES/TREATMENTS:

There are no alternative procedures if you refuse to participate.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE STUDY:

You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits, to which you are otherwise entitled.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:

We expect a minimum of 12 participants to enroll in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. A copy of the records from this study will be stored in a locked personal file cabinet in the investigator's office for at least three (3) years after the end of this research. These interviews will be audio recorded and will be heard only for research purposes by the investigator and viewed after transcription by her academic associates. The audio recording is important in order to properly transcribe the interview and to ensure that you will not be misquoted or misinterpreted; it will be kept completely confidential and later erased once the interview has been transcribed. Pseudonyms will be used and identifying characteristics will not be revealed or may be altered without affecting the integrity of the research to further ensure confidentiality. Any computer stored information will be password protected. If the results of this research are published or presented at scientific meetings, your identity will not be disclosed. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the UTA IRB, the FDA (if applicable), and personnel particular to this research (individual or department) have access to the study records. Your (e.g., student, medical) records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

If in the unlikely event it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review your research records, then The University of Texas at Arlington will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. Your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate you with it, or with your participation in any study.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS:

Questions about this research or your rights as a research subject may be directed to Marta Galvan at (817)272-3291. You may contact Marta Galvan at (817)272-3291 in the event of a research-related injury to the subject.

CONSENT:

Signatures:

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study:

JUL 2 8 2008

APPROVED BY THE UTA - IRB
The IRB approval for this consent
Document will expire on

16 October 2007

2

JUL 2 7 2009

Signature and printed name of principal investigator or person obtaining consent Date

By signing below, you confirm that you have read or had this document read to you.

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time

You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and the you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits, to which you are otherwise entitled.

SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER

DATE

JUL 28 2008

APPROVED BY THE UTA - IRB
The IRB approval for this consent
Document will expire on

JUL 27 2009

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW GUIDES

Interview Guide 1: Student Demonstrators

I. Demographic/Opening Questions

1. How old were you at the time of the walkout? What grade were you in?
2. Did you have any responsibilities other than school at the time of the walkout? If so, what were they?
3. How old are you now? What do you do?
4. What is your ethnic background? Where were you born?
5. If foreign-born, how old were you when you came to the US? What is your current citizenship status?
6. Do you feel like an “American”? If so, how? If not, why not?
7. How many people live in your household? What is your relationship to them? What is their current citizenship status? What do they do for a living?

II. Youth Activism

1. Did your citizenship status affect you walking out?
2. Did you feel you had the right to walk out? Why or why not?
3. Do you know where the idea of walking out came from? Did you agree with this method of protest? Why or why not?
4. Before the walkout, did you know about H.R. 4437 (The Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005)? How did you hear about the bill? Does this bill affect you? If so, how? Did you find it fair or unfair?

III. Mobilizing and Recruiting

1. How did you hear about the walkout? Did you help spread the word? If, so how? If not, why not?
2. Who was the target group? Why?
3. Did you think other immigrant groups were being left out? Do you think this was done intentionally?
4. Were you encouraged to participate? If so, by whom? Did you feel pressure to participate?
5. How did you feel about people talking about the walkout?
6. Whose idea was it to organize a walkout?
7. How did you become involved?
8. How much planning was involved? How was the work divided?
9. Were there any organizations involved? If so, which ones?
10. Did you have parental support in either organizing or participating in the walkout? Was it important to have parental support? Why or why not? Would you have participated even if you did not have parental support?
11. What was the purpose of the walkout? What were the goals of the walkout?
12. Was there more than one walkout planned? If so, how long were these walkouts supposed to last?
13. If the walkouts were not successful, what do you think would have been the next step?

14. What was the walkout location? What was the significance of walking there?
15. Were you made aware of the consequences of walking out? How did you find out about these consequences? Were you informed of these consequences before or after the walkout took place?

IV. Walking Out

1. Can you describe the walkout? Do you recall any chants or slogans? If so, what are they? Do you recall any signs being held? If so, do you remember what they said?
2. Did you participate in other forms of protest in addition to the walkout? If so, which ones?
3. Why did you decide to walkout? How do you feel about those who did not walkout?
4. Did you have previous experience in activism? If so, can you describe your experience(s)?
5. At the time of the walkout, were you thinking about the consequences you would have to face?
6. Did anyone try to stop you from walking out? If so, who? What were their reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with your decision?
7. How did you feel at the time you walked out? Did you feel guilty for walking out? Did your friends walkout?
8. How did other classmates react when you walked out or when they saw others walking out? Did non-Latino classmates support the walkout? Why or why not? Did any non-Latino classmates join in the walkout?
9. What was the teacher's reaction to the students walking out? Did the teachers say anything as students began to walkout? Did any teachers participate in the walkout?
10. Was there police involvement during the walkout? What did you think of the police escorts during the walkout? Do you know who called them? Did they try to stop you from walking out? Were there other school administrators that served as escorts?
11. Was there any significance to the color of clothes or other paraphernalia being worn or carried on the day of the walkout?
12. What did you think about the predominance of the Mexican flags on the day of the walkout? How did that idea come about or whose idea was it? Were there disagreements about the appropriateness of the Mexican flags? What did you think the reaction would be concerning the Mexican flags? Did other people's reaction to the Mexican flags matter at the time?
13. What happened once the walkout location was reached? What were your expectations at the walkout location? Were your expectations satisfied once there?
14. What surprised you most about the walkout?
15. What happened the next day of the walkout? What were the consequences for the students who walked out? What were your personal costs associated with your

- decision to walk out? Did you think the consequences were fair? Why or why not? Was it worth it?
16. What were the reactions of your classmates when you went back to class? What were the teacher reactions?
 17. Why do you think the walkout stopped? Why did you personally decide to stop?
 18. What did you think about how the walkouts were reported in the media?

V. Accomplishments and Other Consequences

1. Do you think walking out made a difference? Why or why not? Do you think the goal(s) was accomplished?
2. What changed, if anything, at your school after the walkout took place?
3. Do you regret joining in the school walkout? Would you do it again? Why or why not? Would you do anything differently? If so, what? Why would this change be significant?
4. After this experience, do you consider yourself an activist? Why or why not? Did the school walkout encourage you to get involved in your community regarding similar issues? If so, in which ways? If not, why not? Did this encourage you to participate in the Mega March? Why or why not? Have you done anything after that to maintain your involvement in this issue?
5. What do you consider to be the most important thing Latino youth can do now? In other words, how can walkout participants take this experience and make it worth while?
6. Has the walkout changed your outlook about the meaning of citizenship? If so, how?
7. In retrospect, what was the most memorable aspect about the walkout?

I appreciate you taking the time to help me with this study. Do you have any questions or final comments?

Thank you for your participation.

Interview Guide 2: Student Non-Demonstrators

I. Demographic/Opening Questions

1. How old were you at the time of the walkout? What grade were you in?
2. Did you have any responsibilities other than school at the time of the walkout? If so, what were they?
3. How old are you now? What do you do?
4. What is your ethnic background? Where were you born?
5. If foreign-born, how old were you when you came to the US? What is your current citizenship status?
6. Do you feel like an “American”? If so, how? If not, why not?
7. How many people live in your household? What is your relationship to them? What is their current citizenship status? What do they do for a living?

II. Youth Activism

1. Did your citizenship status affect you walking out?
2. Did you feel you had the right to walk out? Why or why not?
3. Do you know where the idea of walking out came from? Did you agree with this method of protest? Why or why not?
4. Before the walkout, did you know about H.R. 4437 (The Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005)? How did you hear about the bill? Does this bill affect you? If so, how? Did you find it fair or unfair?

III. Mobilizing and Recruiting

1. How did you hear about the walkout? Did you help spread the word? If, so how? If not, why not?
2. Who was the target group? Why?
3. Did you think other immigrant groups were being left out? Do you think this was done intentionally?
4. Were you encouraged to participate? If so, by whom? Did you feel pressure to participate? How did you respond when asked if you were going to walkout?
5. How did you feel about people talking about the walkout?
6. Whose idea was it to organize a walkout?
7. Were you involved in the walkout in any way? If so, how?
8. How much planning was involved? How was the work divided?
9. Were there any organizations involved? If so, which ones?
10. Did you have parental support in either organizing or participating in the walkout? If so, why did you not walkout? If not, would you have participated if you had parental support?
11. What was the purpose of the walkout? What were the goals of the walkout?
12. Was there more than one walkout planned? If so, how long were these walkouts supposed to last?
13. If the walkouts were not successful, what do you think would have been the next step?

14. What was the walkout location? What was the significance of walking there?
15. Were you made aware of the consequences of walking out? How did you find out about these consequences? Were you informed of these consequences before or after the walkout took place?

IV. Walking Out

1. Can you describe the walkout? Do you recall any chants or slogans? If so, what are they? Do you recall any signs being held? If so, do you remember what they said?
2. Did you participate in a different form of protest? If so, can you describe it?
3. Why did you decide not to walkout? How do you feel about those who did?
4. How did you feel at the time of the walkout? Did you feel guilty for not walking out? Why or why not? Did your friends walkout?
5. How did other classmates react when you did not walkout? How about when they saw others walking out? Did non-Latino classmates support the walkout? Why or why not? Did any non-Latino classmates join in the walkout?
6. What was the teacher's reaction to the students walking out? What did they say to those who did not walk out? Did any teachers participate in the walkout?
7. Was there police involvement during the walkout? What did you think of the police escorts during the walkout? Do you know who called them? Did their presence prevent you from walking out? Were there other school administrators that served as escorts?
8. Was there any significance to the color of clothes or other paraphernalia being worn or carried on the day of the walkout?
9. What did you think about the predominance of the Mexican flags on the day of the walkout? How did that idea come about or whose idea was it? Were there disagreements about the appropriateness of the Mexican flags? What did you think the reaction would be concerning the Mexican flags?
10. Do you know what happened once the walkout location was reached? If so, what?
11. What surprised you most about the walkout?
12. What happened the next day of the walkout? What were the consequences for the students who walked out? Did you think the consequences were fair? Why or why not?
13. What were the reactions of your classmates when the demonstrators returned to class? What were the teacher reactions?
14. Why do you think the walkout stopped?
15. What did you think about how the walkouts were reported in the media?

V. Accomplishments and Other Consequences

1. Do you think walking out made a difference? Why or why not? Do you think the goal(s) was accomplished?
2. What changed, if anything, at your school after the walkout took place?

3. Do you regret not joining in the school walkout? Why or why not? If you could go back, would you have joined the walkout? Why or why not?
4. Did the school walkout encourage you to get involved in your community regarding similar issues? If so, in which ways? If not, why not? Did this encourage you to participate in the Mega March? Why or why not? Have you done anything after that to maintain your involvement in this issue?
5. What do you consider to be the most important thing Latino youth can do now? In other words, how can walkout participants take this experience and make it worth while?
6. Has the walkout changed your outlook about the meaning of citizenship? If so, how?
7. In retrospect, what was the most memorable aspect about the walkout?

I appreciate you taking the time to help me with this study. Do you have any questions or final comments?

Thank you for your participation.

Interview Guide 3: Administrators

I. Opening/Demographic Questions

1. What is your position at the high school?
2. What is your ethnic background?
3. What is your current citizenship status?

II. Walking Out

1. Does this school have a history of protest? Has there ever been a similar kind of demonstration? If so, can you describe it? Do you feel that students had the right to walkout?
2. What do you think the purpose was behind the students walking out? Do you think the students knew why they were walking out? Why or why not?
3. Before the walkout, did you know about H.R. 4437 (The Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005)? What are your thoughts about it?
4. What do you think of the students that chose to demonstrate? What do you think of the students who did not demonstrate?
5. Do you know how the students began to spread the word about the walkout? Do you have any thoughts regarding those methods?
6. Do you think the walkout was well organized? Why or why not?
7. How would you describe the walkout? Do you recall any chants or slogans? If so, what are they? Do you recall any signs being held? If so, do you remember what they said?
8. Do you know if there were more walkouts planned? If so, why did they not occur? What methods were used to prevent subsequent walkouts?
9. Do you know if there was non-Latino participation in the walkout?
10. Do you know if there was any significance to the walkout location? If so, what is it?
11. Do you know what happened once the walkout location was reached? If so, what?
12. What did you think about the predominance of the Mexican flags on the day of the walkout?
13. What surprised you most about the walkout?
14. What did you think about how the walkouts were reported in the media?
15. Why do you think continued walkout activity stopped at this campus?

III. Role of Authority/Educator

1. What did you feel your role was as an administrator in the walkout? Did you or did you not support the student walkout? Why or why not?
2. What was your advice to students who planned to walkout?
3. How did the administrators hear about the walkout?
4. Were there attempts to try to stop the students from spreading information about the walkout? Why or why not?

5. How did other administrators feel about the students walking out? Did you participate or not? Do you know of other administrators who participated?
6. Do you feel your role as an educator facilitated the walkout?
7. Were other forms of protest offered to the students instead of walking out? If so, what were they? If not, why?
8. Do you feel that the students applied civil rights teachings they had previously learned during the walkout appropriately?
9. Was there police involvement during the walkout? Who called the police? Do you feel police presence was necessary? Why or why not?

IV. Consequences

1. What were the consequences for students who participated in the walkout?
2. Did you feel the consequences were appropriate?
3. Were these consequences put in place before, during, or after the walkout?
4. How many students were sanctioned?
5. Was there parental reaction to the sanctions? If so, can you give some examples?

V. Changes

1. Has this experience created any changes in school policy? If so, can you describe them?
2. What would you do different in handling the walkout situation?
3. What do you think the walkout achieved?
4. How do you think this has changed students?
5. What do you consider to be the most important thing Latino youth can do now? In other words, how can walkout participants take this experience and make it worth while?

I appreciate you taking the time to help me with this study. Do you have any questions or final comments?

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX C
RECRUITMENT FLYERS

!~LaTiNoS~!

DO YOU HAVE ANY FAMILY OR FRIENDS THAT ARE IMMAGRANTS AND WANT THEM TO STAY? COME OUT AND HELP PROTEST ON FRIDAY MARCH 31 IN THE COURTYARD (after 1st period). LET THE PEOPLE KNOW THAT WE WON'T STOP STICKIN UP FOR WHAT WE BELIEVE IN. Wear Brown.

Duces 

;;LATINOS ESCUCHEN!!!

Todos queremos lo mismo. Todos estamos en esto juntos pero hay que ser honestos, estas “protestas” o “marchas” nos están ayudando sólo en parte. Ya se logró el propósito salimos en las noticias, periódicos y creemos que también nuestra voz haya llegado al congreso (y nos escucharan mas si mas de nosotros mandamus cartas). Ya se cumplió nuestro objetivo, ser escuchados. Si queremos [sic] en verdad ayudar, esta no es la forma. No hagan cosas malas que parezcan buenas. Si seguimos así, sólo lograremos empeorar la situación y eso es lo que menos queremos.

Si de verdad queremos aydar en una marcha organizada, valla nen [sic] sábado 1 a “[Smith]” Park [nombre de las calles] esta marcha va hacer algo organizado con adultos, y con verdadero apoyo. No den una imágen más mala de la que ya tememos.

NO MARCHEN MAÑANA EL LA COURT YARD. No vamos a lograr nada más que terminar con una multa o arrestados!!!!

CORRE LA VOZ, SU DEVERDAD QUIERES AYUDAR A HACER LA DIFERENCIA.

Translation: ;;LATINOS LISTEN UP!!!

We all want the same thing; we’re all in this together. But we have to be honest with each other: these “protests” and “marches” are only helping us in one way. We’ve already accomplished part of what we want. We came out on the newspaper, the news and hopefully our voices have been heard in Congress (and they’ll more if enough of us write letters). We’ve already accomplished our objectives by being heard. If we really want to help this issue, this is not the way. Don’t do something bad and try to make it look good when it’s not accomplished anything more. If we keep on doing this, we’re just going to make the situation even worse and that’s the least we want to do. If you really want to help by marching, come to “[Smith]” park on Saturday @ 12:00 p.m. [street names]. This march is going to be organized with the help of adults. Don’t make us look worse.

DON’T MARCH TOMORROW @ THE COURT YARD. WE’RE NOT GOING TO ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING ELSE THAN TO GET A TICKET OR GET ARRESTED.

TELL EVERYBODY YOU KNOW IF YOU REALLY WANT TO HELP TO MAKE THE DIFFERENCE.

GRAN MARCHA!

LA CASA [MÉXICO] Y LAS REDES CIUDADANAS DE [NOMBRE DE LA CIUDAD]

TE INVITAN ESTE **SABADO 1 DE ABRIL A LAS 12:00 DEL MEDIO DIA**, EN EL PARQUE “[**SMITH**]” QUE SE ENCUENTRA EN LA ESQUINA DE LAS CALLES [NOMBRE DE LAS CALLES] DESDE DONDE MARCHAREMOS ASTA [SIC] EL EDIFICIO DE LA ALCALDIA DE [NOMBRE DE LA CIUDAD].

LA MARCHA SE HARA PARA PEDIR QUE SE APRUEBE UNA LEY MIGRATORIA JUSTA Y TAMBIEN PARTICIPARAN MIEMBROS DE LA IGLESIA DE [NOMBRE DE CIUDAD]. INVITA A TUS COMPAÑEROS DE ESCUELA, ASISTE CON TU FAMILIA, **ESTA MARCHA ES PARA TODOS.**

Translation:

THE GRAND MARCH!

LA CASA [MÉXICO] AND CIVIL NETWORKS OF [CITY NAME]

WE INVITE YOU **THIS SATURDAY APRIL FIRST AT 12 NOON**, TO “[**SMITH**]” PARK LOCATED ON THE CORNER OF [STREET NAMES] FROM WHERE WE WILL MARCH TO THE MAYOR’S BUILDING IN [CITY NAME].

THE PUROSE OF THIS MARCH IS TO ASK THAT A FAIR IMMIGRATION REFORM BE PASSED AND MEMBERS OF [NAME OF CHURCH] WILL PARTICIPATE. INVITE ALL YOUR CLASSMATES, COME WITH YOUR FAMILY, **THIS MARCH IS FOR EVERYONE.**

APPENDIX D
WALKOUT PHOTOS
(PHOTOS COURTESY OF
TARA HAELE)



Latino demonstrators chant as they arrive at the rally.



Police at the rally keep watch over the crowd.



The father of a demonstrator speaks to Latino youth at the rally.



The superintendent addresses the concerns of Latino youth at the rally.



Students sit on the football field as they listen to speakers at the rally.



Students display the Mexican flag.



The crowd begins to cheer at the rally.



A student poses wearing Mexican-themed paraphernalia and throws up peace signs.



A student holds up a sign that reads: “Long Live Mexico [expletive]”.



Students pose with the Mexican flag, signs, and the superintendent. The Spanish sign reads “We want the right to study”.



As students are bused back to campus, they pose with a Mexican flag and throw up peace signs and “L’s” for “Latino/a”.



Students hang outside the bus window with a Mexican flag as the bus drives away.



Once back on their campus, some students immediately return to class while others pose for a picture.

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