



# Faith and Values in Action: Religion, Politics, and Social Attitudes Among US Latinos/as

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*A version of this report was presented at “The Changing Face of American Evangelicalism” a project of The Institute for the Study of American Evangelicalism at Wheaton College, Illinois. The authors wish to thank the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, The Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation, and the Adrian Feurst grant from the Saint Meinrad School of Theology, for funding the research and writing of this report.*

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**The Center for the Study of Latino Religion  
was founded in 2002 within Notre Dame's  
Institute for Latino Studies to serve as  
a national center and clearinghouse for  
ecumenically focused research on the  
US Latino church, its leadership, and the  
interaction between religion and community.**

**For more information, please go to  
[www.nd.edu/~cslr](http://www.nd.edu/~cslr).**



The three wavy lines shown here are a symbol from ancient times representing the human intellect in action. From *The Book of Signs*, collected, drawn, and explained by Rudolf Koch (London: The First Edition Club, 1930, page 8).

## About the Researchers

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**Edwin I. Hernández**, a research fellow with the Center for the Study of Latino Religion, is foundations research director at the DeVos Family Foundations. His current research includes an extensive survey of Latino congregations in Chicago and a comprehensive study of religious congregations in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Dr. Hernández is coauthor of *Citizens of Two Worlds: Religion and Politics among American Seventh-day Adventists*, *AVANCE: A Vision for a New Mañana*, and *Reconstructing the Sacred Tower: Challenge and Promise of Latino/a Theological Education*. Recent publications include the edited book *Emerging Voices, Urgent Choices: Essays on Latino/a Religious Leadership* and the reports “Answering the Call: How Latino Churches Can Respond to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic” and “Equipped to Serve: Latino/a Seminarians and the Future of Religious Leadership in the Latino/a Community.”

**Kenneth G. Davis, O.F.M., Conv.**, is an associate professor of theology at St. Meinrad School of Theology in Indiana. He received his Bachelor of Arts (*cum laude*) from Saint Louis University and began intensive Spanish courses at the Interamerican Theologate of Central America in San Jose, Costa Rica while at the same time completing a Master of Arts at the Washington Theological Union. His terminal degree is from the Pacific School of Theology where he completed his doctoral thesis: *The Mexican American Alcoholic: Alcoholics Anonymous as a Treatment Modality for the Catholic Male of Mexican Descent*. For more information, see: <http://kennethgdavis.com/>.

**Milagros Peña** is the director of the Center for Women’s Studies and Gender Research and associate professor of sociology and women’s studies at the University of Florida. She is author of *Latina Activists across Borders: Women’s Grassroots Organizing in Mexico and Texas*, *Theologies and Liberation in Peru: The Role of Ideas in Social Movements*, and *Punk Rockers’ Revolution: A Pedagogy of Race, Class, and Gender*. Recent publications also include “Latinas, Border Realities, Empowerment, and Faith-based Organizations,” published in 2003 in *Handbook for the Sociology of Religion*, and “Encountering Latina Mobilization: Lessons from Field Research on the US-Mexico Border,” published in, *Personal Knowledge and Beyond: Reshaping the Ethnography of Religion*.

**Georgian Schiopu** holds a Masters in Sociology from the University of Notre Dame. A native of Romania, he has done work focused on religion, immigration, and the role of ethnicity in the labor market.

**Jeffrey Smith**, a research assistant at the Center for the Study of Latino Religion, is pursuing a PhD in sociology at the University of Notre Dame with research focused on religious pluralism, congregational dynamics, and ethnicity. An ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, he holds a Master’s of Divinity from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and has served several congregations in Nebraska, Missouri, and Kansas.

**Matthew T. Loveland**, assistant professor of sociology at Le Moyne College, is Principal Investigator of the Contemporary Catholic Trends survey. His current research focuses on Catholic belief and commitment as well as on wider issues of political and civic involvement. Recent publications have appeared in *Social Forces*, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, and the *Journal of Catholic Social Thought*.

## Executive Summary

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This research paper examines the role of religion in shaping the political views and civic engagement of US Latinos/as. Drawing upon the Pew Hispanic Center's 2002 and 2004 surveys of Latino political attitudes, this report explores the degree to which religious affiliation (Catholic or Protestant) and intensity of church attendance (religiously “active” vs. “inactive”) shape Latinos/as' political attitudes and civic behavior. The report also examines how place of birth (US vs. another country) interacts with religion to explain such attitudes and behaviors.

The report reveals that among Latinos/as, religious affiliation and church attendance influence political party preference, degree of support for the war in Iraq, and positions on the so-called moral issues that distinguished the 2004 presidential election. We find that a majority of Latinos/as still affiliate with the Democratic Party — particularly Latino/a Catholics — but that Latino/a Protestants comparatively lean toward the Republican Party, especially those who are religiously active. Religiously active Latino/a Protestants also have decidedly more conservative political views than their Catholic counterparts and take less accepting stances toward abortion, same-sex marriage, and divorce. Place of birth also shapes Latinos/as' views on social and cultural issues, with increased length of time in the United States having a notably liberalizing effect. But though Latinos/as are divided along religious lines in both their political identification and their views toward social morality, Latino/a Protestants and Catholics agree that bread and butter issues like health care, the economy, and education are more pressing than the issues about which they disagree.

Religion also impacts Latinos/as' civic engagement by encouraging community volunteering. Our study finds that whether Catholic or Protestant, Latinos/as are more likely to volunteer in their community if they also volunteer at church. Further, churches provide roughly half of the volunteering capital among Latinos/as and their surrounding communities.

We conclude that Latinos/as are facing the same cultural divide that separates other Americans over political and social issues. In the years ahead as the Latino population continues to grow rapidly, religion may well become a prominent fault line within these communities. Time and further research — including studies that take additional sociological factors into account — will help pinpoint the precise determinants of Latino political attitudes, civic behavior and community engagement.

# Introduction

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Now almost 42 million strong, Latinos/as<sup>1</sup> are the largest ethnic minority group in the United States. As their numbers increase, Latinos/as are exerting a growing influence on the broader civic discourse and culture, with the mounting social and political importance of the Latino constituency catching the attention of marketing executives and political strategists alike.

Though Latinos/as have many perspectives and values in common and have been shaped by shared cultural and historical influences, a closer look at the Latino population reveals diverse perspectives and beliefs. Socio-economic class, country of origin, length of time lived in the United States, and citizenship status all influence the way Latinos/as engage the broader US society. Religious beliefs also influence the way Latinos/as perceive political, social, and moral<sup>2</sup> questions, including those surrounding marriage and family configuration, when and how life begins and ends, and the role of religion in the public sphere. Though Catholics remain the dominant majority within the Latino community, particularly among recent immigrants, current research has detected a growing tendency toward Protestantism that is especially evident among third generation Latinos/as.

Religion not only impacts views and attitudes toward social and political questions, it is also a rich resource for civic involvement (Putnam 2000; Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995). Indeed, religion — particularly the Catholic tradition — permeates Latino culture and identity and churches are often the frontline institutions providing social welfare assistance to immigrant communities (Cnaan, Hernández, and McGrew 2006; Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000; Warner and Wittner 1998). Yet despite the prevalence of religion and religious institutions within Latino communities, we know surprisingly little about the relationship between religion, politics, and civic participation among Latinos/as. In what specific ways, for example, does religion influence or motivate Latinos/as to engage civically and politically? What role does religious affiliation and intensity play in predicting voting behavior and partisan alignment within the Latino population? What political difference does it make whether one is Catholic or Protestant? How do US- and foreign-born Latinos/as compare in terms of their religious commitment and civic behavior? And how do religiously-active foreign-born Latinos/as differ from their US-born counterparts on social and political issues?

To answer these questions, this report analyzes national survey data to assess how religion impacts Latino civic engagement and political identification. To frame our discussion, we analyze religious identification and participation among Latinos/as and the changes in religious affiliation that take effect as Latinos/as remain in the United States for multiple generations. We then examine how religion impacts political party preference and the role of churches and other religious organizations in generating community volunteering before examining whether religious identification and level of religious involvement yield differing political and social perspectives among Latinos/as. Finally, we consider the impact of integration and acculturation on the religious and social views of Latinos/as and investigate whether nativity status impacts one's degree of religious commitment.

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1 In this paper, we use the term “Latino/a” to describe people who live in the United States and share a connection, by birth or ancestry, to Latin America.

2 Though what constitutes a “moral” issue varies considerably among the populace in general as well as among Christians, we use the term in the manner in which it was most widely used in the run-up to, and subsequent analysis of, the 2004 presidential election to pertain to questions of when life begins and ends (e.g., abortion, stem cell research, euthanasia), familial configuration (e.g., gay marriage), and sexual conduct (e.g., divorce and sex education). As will be discussed briefly below, exit polls for the 2004 election included the term “moral issues” without further definition but also listed separately issues like the war in Iraq, the economy, education, and health care, which by implication excluded these matters from the definition of “moral issues” even though many Christians and non-Christians believe they have deeply moral implications and consequences.

## Data Sources and Methodology

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To assess the relationship between religious affiliation and commitment to the social and political views of Latinos/as, we analyzed data from four national surveys of Latinos/as living in the United States. The primary data for this paper come from the Pew Hispanic Center's 2004 National Survey of Latinos: Politics and Civic Participation (for detailed information about this survey's methodology, see Appendix A).<sup>3</sup> To help identify developing trends and shifts in views and political identification, we compare this 2004 survey to the Pew Hispanic Center's 2002 National Survey of Latinos,<sup>4</sup> the Princeton University Survey Research Center's 2000 Religion and Politics Survey,<sup>5</sup> and *The Washington Post*/Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard University 1999 National Survey on Latinos in America.<sup>6</sup>

Of the participants who answered the religious identification question in the 2004 National Survey of Latinos, 66 percent identified as Catholic, 19 percent identified as Protestant or other Christians, and 15 percent of the sample answered "other" or "none."<sup>7</sup> Only 2 percent of the entire sample identified as Protestant without also describing themselves as born-again, which is consistent with Espinosa, Elizondo, and Miranda's finding that 85 percent of US Latino Protestants belong to Evangelical or Pentecostal communities (Espinosa, Elizondo, and Miranda 2003). Accordingly, a central fact underlying this paper is that Latino/a Protestants<sup>8</sup> come mainly from Evangelical and Pentecostal backgrounds.

One key to understanding whether and how religion impacts a person's social and political views is measuring the intensity of one's religious practice. To measure this, we primarily consider frequency of church attendance, which is one of two variables used to assess religious involvement in the Pew data sets (the other measure, "salience" — i.e., the importance of religion in one's everyday life — is addressed further below). To be sure, church attendance is just one of several ways to assess an individual's involvement in his or her religious tradition. Catholic scholars in particular have noted that institutionally inactive people may be active in observing saint days and religious feasts, or by having home altars or regular private prayer practices (Peña and Frehill 1998). Despite these limitations, however, frequency of church attendance does indicate how intensely one relates to a religious community and how immersed one is in that community's ongoing life, which is a critical consideration for weighing how a religious community impacts an individual's beliefs. For analytical purposes, we classified those who attend church services at least once a month as "religiously active" and those who attend less frequently as "religiously inactive."

Based upon these measures, 63 percent of the Catholics in the 2004 Pew data set (940 respondents) are classified as religiously active and 36 percent (541 respondents) as religiously inactive. Among the Protestants, 76 percent (313 respondents) are religiously active and 24 percent (98 respondents) religiously inactive.<sup>9</sup>

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3 Unless otherwise noted, the data shown in the figures and tables in this report come from the 2004 National Survey of Latinos.

4 For more information on the 2004 and 2002 National Surveys of Latinos visit the Pew Hispanic center's website: [www.pewhispanic.org](http://www.pewhispanic.org).

5 See Wuthnow 2000.

6 For more information about this survey, go to [www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/3023-index.cfm](http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/3023-index.cfm).

7 For the remainder of the paper, statistics will refer to the categories of "Catholic" and "Protestant." We do not consider the "other" or "none" category in our analysis.

8 Because it is common for non-Catholic Christians from Latin America to self-identify as Evangelical, Pentecostal/charismatic, or just "Christian" without further identification, we include people who described themselves simply as "born-again Christians" in our Protestant category.

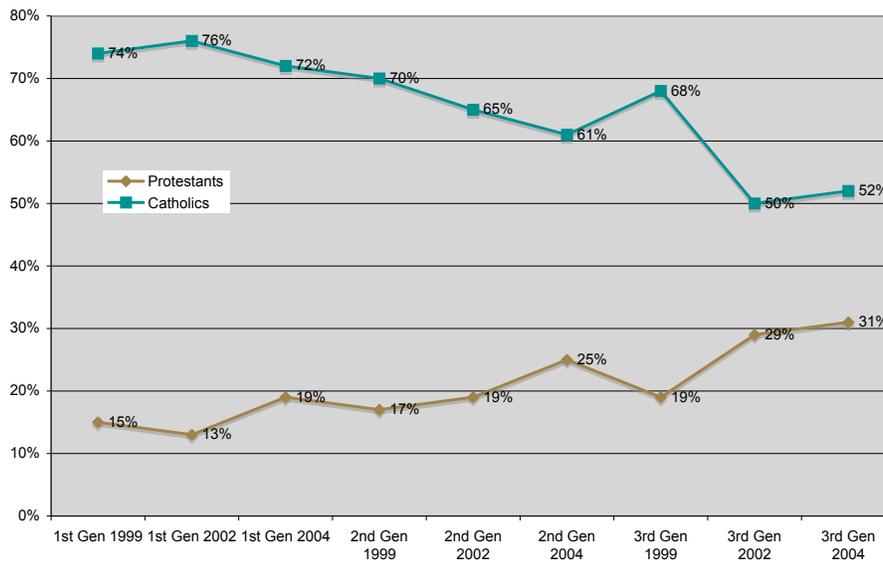
9 Due to the small number of inactive Protestants in the Pew data set, analysis in which they are included must be interpreted cautiously. All findings that are reported as significant are statistically significant at  $p \leq .05$  or higher.

# Demographic Characteristics of Latino/a Catholics and Protestants

In recent years, research has observed a shift from Catholicism to Protestantism among Latinos/as (Pew Hispanic Center 2007), with one analyst calling it the “greatest defection” in the American Catholic Church (Greeley 1998). While the majority of Latinos/as are still Catholic, analysis of surveys from 1999, 2002, and 2004 shows a shift toward Protestantism particularly among second- and third-generation Latinos/as (see Figure 1). This shift is most pronounced in the 2004 data set. For that year, nearly one-third (31 percent) of third-generation Latinos/as (i.e., US-born of US-born parents) identified as Protestant compared to only 19 percent of first generation immigrants. While 72 percent of first generation immigrants that year identified as Catholic, only 52 percent of third generation respondents did so.

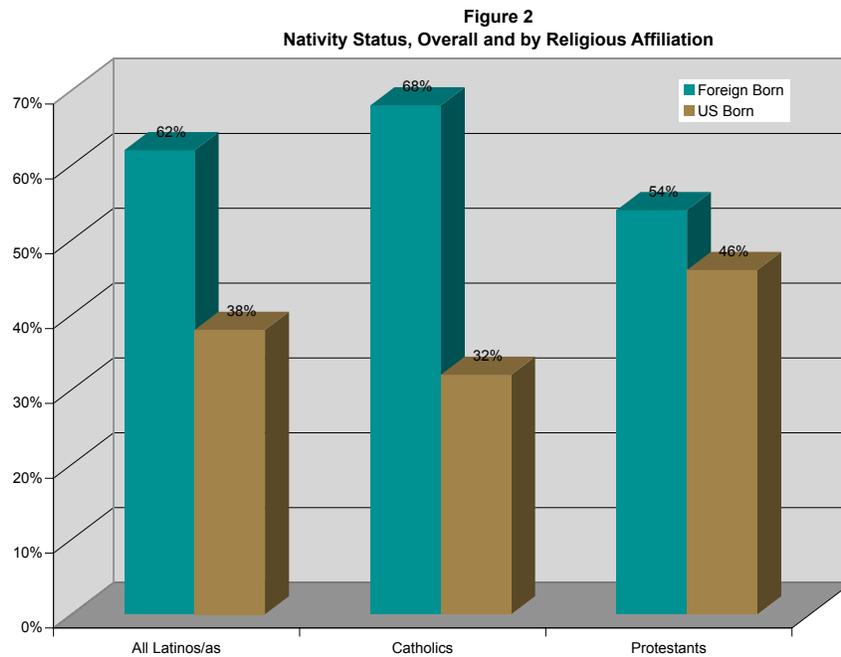
Despite increased numbers of Latino/a Protestants, the overall number of Latino/a Catholics in the United States has remained fairly stable over the past five years due in part to the steady influx of new immigrants to US Catholic churches, most notably from Mexico (Espinosa, Elizondo, and Miranda 2003; Davis, Hernández, and Lampe 2002). Evidence of this tendency for newer Latino immigrants to be Catholic can be seen in our finding that Latino/a Catholics are more likely to be foreign born (68 percent) than Latino/a Protestants (54 percent).

**Figure 1**  
**Religious Affiliation Change among US Latinos/as from 1999-2004,**  
**by Generation in the United States**

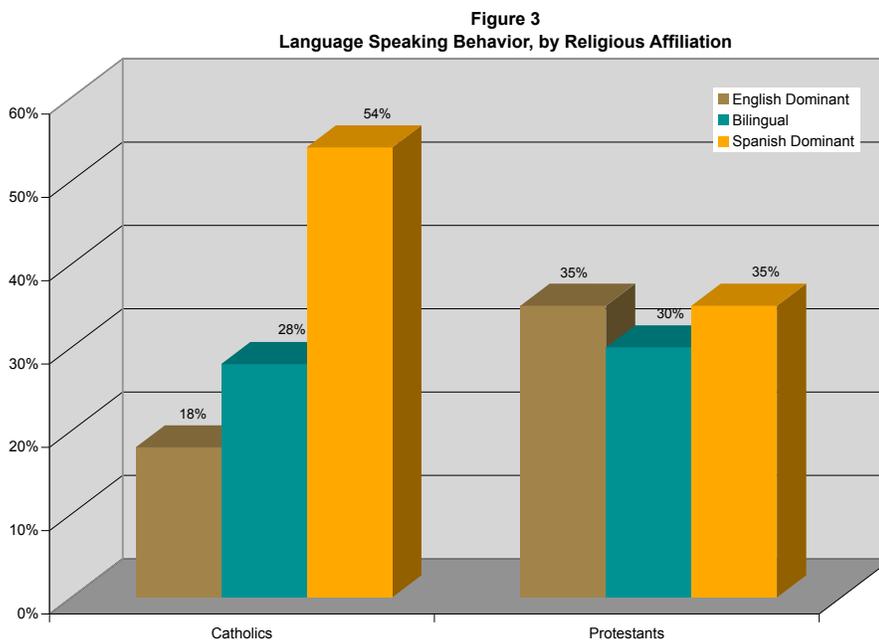


Sources: 2002 and 2004 National Surveys of Latinos and 1999 National Survey on Latinos in America

As Figure 2 shows, 46 percent of Latino/a Protestants were born in the United States compared to 32 percent of Latino/a Catholics.

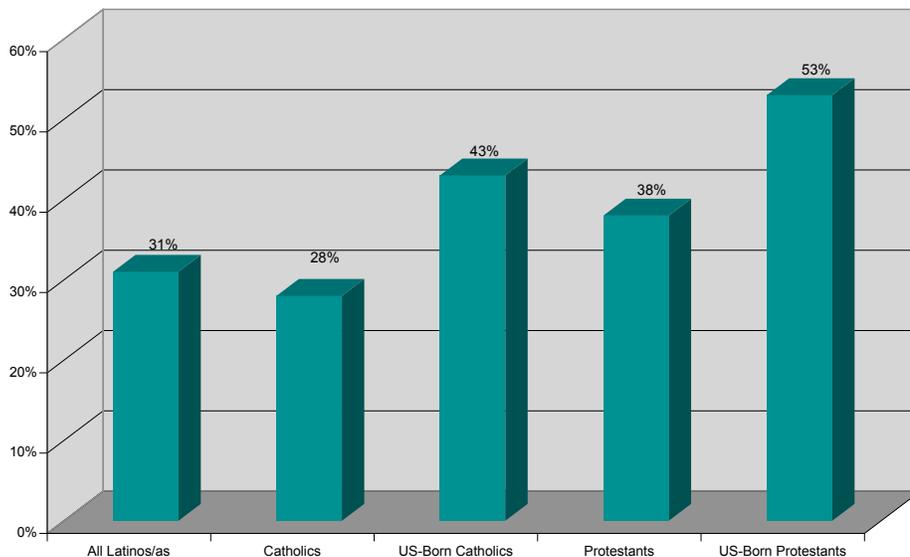


Protestant Latinos/as also report higher levels of English language proficiency compared to Catholics, which can be explained in part by the fact that a larger percent of the former were born in the United States and/or come from families that have lived in the United States for more than one generation. As Figure 3 shows, 35 percent of Latino/a Protestants speak English primarily or exclusively compared to 18 percent Catholics. Conversely, 54 percent of Catholics speak Spanish primarily or exclusively compared to just 35 percent of Protestants.

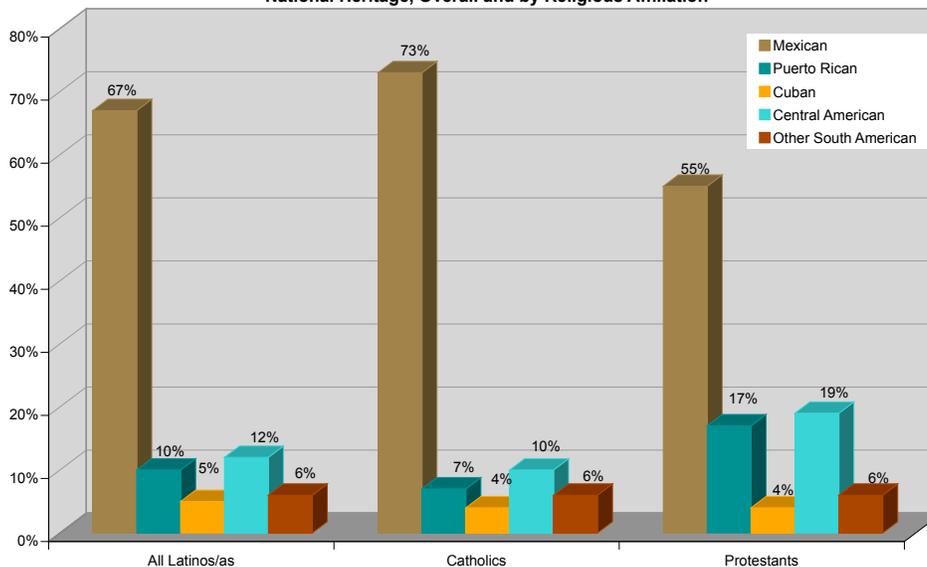


US-born Latinos/as in both religious groups have higher education levels than foreign-born Latinos/as (Figure 4), with US-born Protestants reporting the highest educational attainment rates of all of the studied groups. As Figure 4 shows, 53 percent of US-born Latino/a Protestants and 43 percent of US-born Latino/a Catholics have completed some college or have a college degree. In comparison, 38 percent of Latino/a Protestants and 28 percent of Latino/a Catholics overall have done so. The national backgrounds found among the Latino Protestant and Catholic communities also varies by religious subgroup. While a majority of both groups are of Mexican-ancestry, 73 percent of Latino/a Catholics are Mexican compared to just 55 percent of Latino/a Protestants (Figure 5).

**Figure 4**  
**Level of Education, Overall and by Religious Affiliation and Nativity**  
 (percentage with some college or a college degree)



**Figure 5**  
**National Heritage, Overall and by Religious Affiliation**

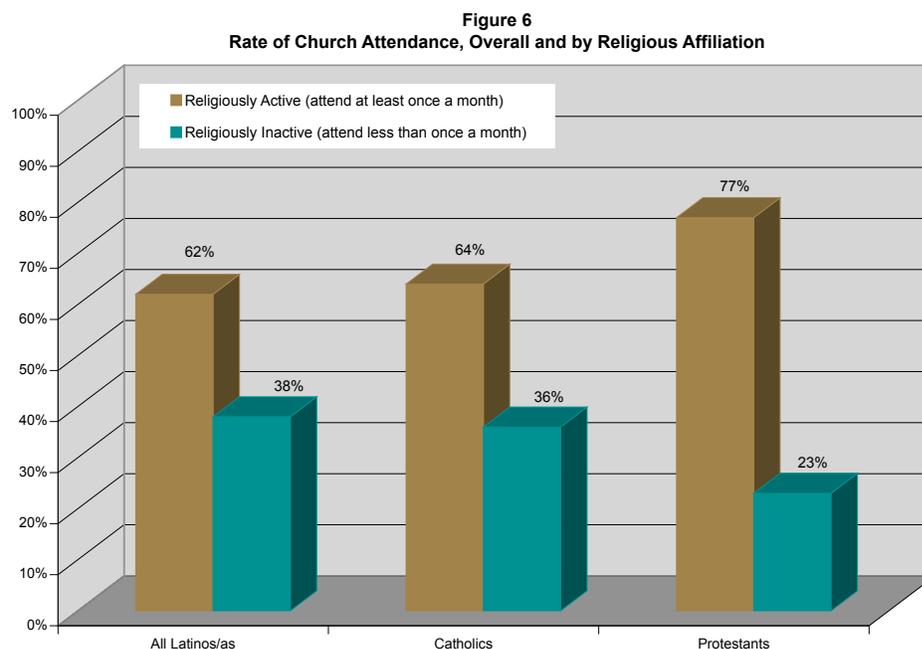


As these findings show, clear demographic differences exist between Latino/a Catholics and Protestants. The Latino Catholic population contains a higher representation of persons who are of Mexican descent, are foreign born, and are less educated compared to the Latino Protestant population, which contains a higher portion of persons who are of Puerto Rican or Central American descent, who are US born, and who are more educated.

## Latinos/as and Religious Intensity

As we indicated in the data sources and methodology section above, to get a sense of how intensely religion is manifest among US Latinos/as we relied on two commonly used quantitative measures: how frequently someone attends church, and the degree of importance one ascribes to religion in his/her everyday life. In the 2004 Pew sample, 62 percent of respondents said they attend church at least once a month. This is consonant with the Princeton University 2000 Religion and Politics Survey finding that 61 percent of Latinos/as attend church at least once a month. This latter survey allows us to make comparisons with non-Hispanic Americans and shows that 77 percent of African Americans and 58 percent of white non-Hispanics attend church regularly.

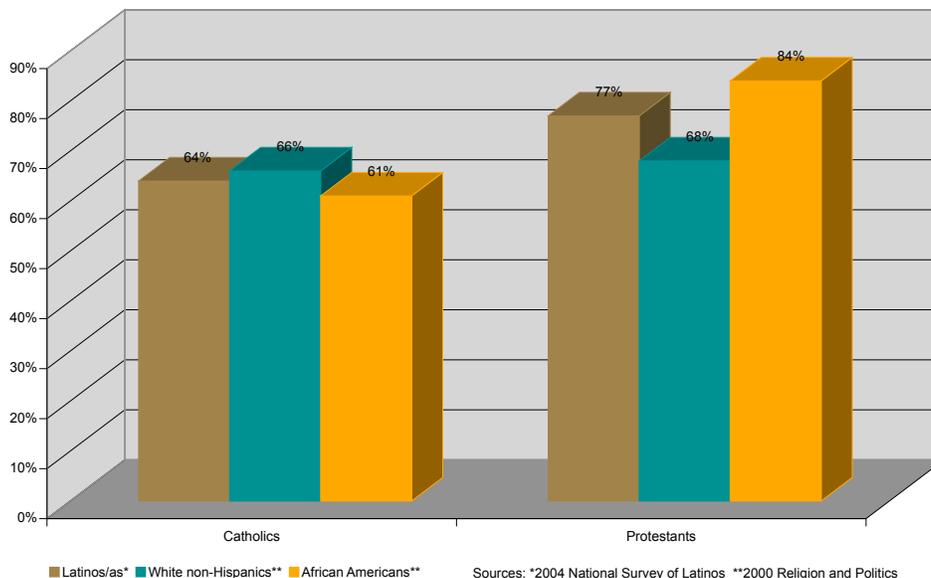
Among Latinos/as, church-going behavior varies between Protestants and Catholics, with 77 percent of the former attending church at least once a month compared to 64 percent of the latter (Figure 6). Though we expected these denominational tendencies to change when nativity status was taken into consideration, they did not. Rather, US-born and foreign-born Latino/a Protestants attend church at the same rate, as do US-born and foreign-born Catholics.



The 2000 Princeton survey shows Latino/a Protestants report higher rates of church attendance (77 percent) than do white non-Hispanic Protestants (68 percent); however, African American Protestants attend at even higher rates (84 percent; see Figure 7). In contrast, Latino/a Catholics (64 percent) attend church regularly at approximately the same rates as white non-Hispanic (66 percent) and African American (61 percent) Catholics.

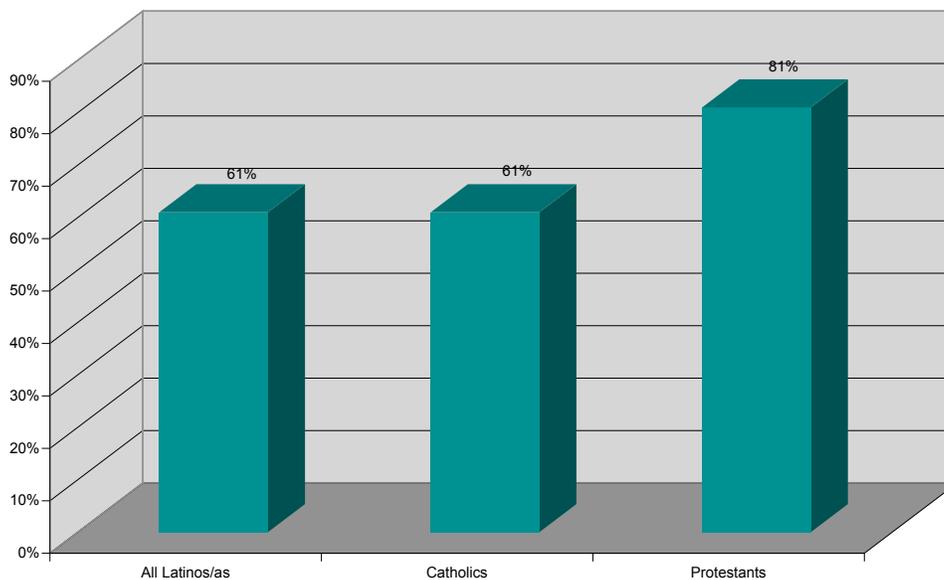
Further, both Latino/a and African American Protestants attend church at higher rates (77 percent and 84 percent, respectively) than their Catholic counterparts (64 percent and 61 percent, respectively), whereas white non-Hispanic Protestants and Catholics attend church at essentially the same rate (68 percent and 66 percent, respectively).

**Figure 7**  
**Churchgoing Rates among Latinos/as, White non-Hispanics, and African Americans,**  
**by Religious Affiliation**  
 (percentage who attend church at least once a month)



Latino/a Protestants also show higher levels of religious intensity according to the religious salience measure. As Figure 8 shows, 81 percent of Latino/a Protestants say that religion is the very- to most-important thing in their everyday lives compared to 61 percent of Latino/a Catholics.<sup>10</sup>

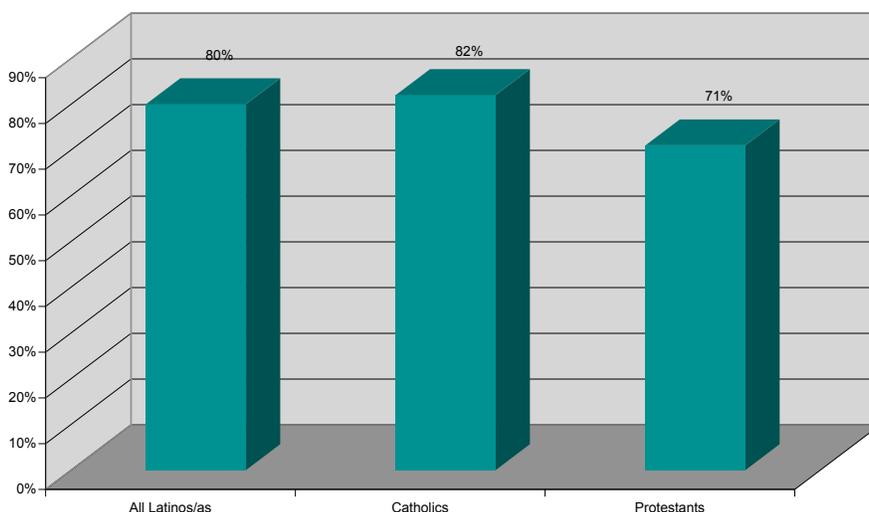
**Figure 8**  
**Importance of Religion in Everyday Life, Overall and by Religious Affiliation**  
 (percentage who say religion is very or most important in their everyday lives)



<sup>10</sup> We do not have comparative data for African Americans or white non-Hispanics in this area because the 2000 Princeton survey did not ask a commensurate question to Pew’s “how important is religion in your everyday life?”

Thus, though religion plays an important role in the majority of Latinos/as' lives, Protestants are more likely than Catholics to attend church regularly and to claim that religion occupies a very important place in their everyday lives. This centrality of religion in Latinos/as' lives does not translate into a corresponding belief that religion should overtly influence political debates, however. As Figure 9 shows, 80 percent of Latinos/as overall agree that religion is a private matter that should be kept out of public debates over social and political issues. Among Catholics, 82 percent said that religion should be kept out of public debates, and 71 percent of Protestants share this opinion (Figure 9).

**Figure 9**  
**Views toward Public Role of Religion, Overall and by Religious Affiliation**  
 (percentage who agree that "religion is a private matter that should be kept out of public debates over social and political issues")



## Voting Rates, Political Identification, and Civic Engagement among Latinos/as

Nearly six out of every ten (59 percent) respondents were US citizens — 39 percent by virtue of having been born in the continental United States, and 20 percent as foreign-born naturalized citizens or island-born Puerto Ricans (Table 1).<sup>11</sup> As we saw in Figure 2 above, a higher percentage of Latino/a Protestants were born in the United States than found among Latino/a Catholics (46 percent vs. 32 percent, respectively). Moreover, nearly half (48 percent) of the Latino/a Catholics in our sample are not US citizens compared to 29 percent of Latino/a Protestants.

Table 1	Nativity and Citizenship Composition of 2004 National Survey of Latinos/as, Overall and by Religious Affiliation		
	All Latinos/as	Catholics	Protestants
US Born	39%	32%	46%
Foreign-born US Citizens	20%	20%	25%
Foreign-born non-US Citizens	41%	48%	29%

<sup>11</sup> Because of the significant cultural differences between the island of Puerto Rico and the mainland United States, island-born Puerto Ricans who live in the mainland United States are classified as foreign born US citizens in Table 1 and throughout the remainder of this report.

General voter registration and voting rates in the 2004 Pew sample were quite high — 75 percent of the US citizens indicated that they were registered voters, and an overwhelming majority of these registered voters (86 percent) said they had voted in a US election (Table 2).<sup>12</sup> We tested to see if nativity had any impact on registration or voting behavior among Latinos/as, but found no differences between US-born and foreign-born US citizens in either measure.

We also found no differences between Catholic or Protestant voter registration and voting rates among the US citizens in both religious subgroups, as Table 2 shows.<sup>13</sup> Further, the registered voters in each denominational cluster reported voting at equally high rates.

Table 2	Voter Registration and Voting Rates among 2004 National Survey of Latinos, Overall and by Religious Affiliation		
	All Latinos/as	Catholics	Protestants
Voter Registration Rates (among US citizens only)	75%	78%	76%
Voting Rates (percentage of registered voters who have ever voted in a US, election)	86%	87%	92%
of these:			
Percentage who voted in 2002 congressional election	78%	79%	79%
Percentage who voted in 2000 presidential election	82%	83%	83%

12 In comparison, according to the Pew Hispanic Center’s recent analysis of the Current Population Survey, approximately 54 percent of eligible Latino voters were registered to vote in 2006, and 60 percent of registered voters actually voted in that election (see: “The Latino Electorate: An Analysis of the 2006 Election,” Pew Hispanic Center Fact Sheet, July 24, 2007, available at [www.pewhispanic.org](http://www.pewhispanic.org)). We suspect that the high rates of voter registration and voting in the 2004 Pew sample are due to either over-reporting on the part of participants, or, given that the survey was about politics and civic participation, from a higher percentage of politically engaged persons agreeing to participate in the survey than found in the general population.

13 Since the survey was conducted before the 2004 presidential election, we do not have voting rates for this. All subsequent discussion of voter registration and voting rates are based only on the US citizens in the 2004 Pew survey. For a more recent analysis of Latino voting behavior, see the Pew Hispanic Center’s “The Latino Electorate: An Analysis of the 2006 Election.”

Voter registration and voting rates differed between religiously active and inactive Latinos/as in only a few areas. As Table 3 shows, religiously active Catholics register to vote at slightly higher rates than religiously inactive Catholics (81 percent vs. 72 percent). The inverse is true for Latino/a Protestants, among whom the religiously inactive are more likely to be registered voters (83 percent) than are the religiously active (73 percent). Inactive Protestants also register to vote at higher rates than inactive Catholics (83 percent vs. 72 percent) and report the highest voting rates of any of the subgroups analyzed in Table 3 (94 percent); however, the low numbers of inactive Protestants in the sample (N=98) demand that we interpret these results cautiously.

Table 3	Citizenship and Voting Rates in the 2004 National Survey of Latinos, Overall and by Religious Affiliation and Intensity			
	Active Catholics	Inactive Catholics	Active Protestants	Inactive Protestants
US born	36%	39%	56%	56%
Foreign-born US Citizens	16%	14%	14%	20%
Foreign-born non-US Citizens	49%	47%	30%	24%
Voter Registration Rates (among US Citizens only)	81%	72%	73%	83%
Voting Rates (percentage of registered voters who have ever voted in a US election)	89%	82%	91%	94%
of these:				
Percentage who voted in 2002 congressional election	82%	71%	81%	72%
Percentage who voted in 2000 presidential election	85%	80%	84%	81%

These high rates of voter registration and voting are not matched by correspondingly high levels of other forms of political engagement, however. As Table 4 shows, only 18 percent of the 2004 Pew survey respondents reported having attended a public meeting or demonstration and only 12 percent had contacted an elected official. While religious affiliation made no apparent difference in these rates, we were not surprised to find that registered voters of either religious identification were more likely to have engaged in these activities.

Table 4	Civic and Political Involvement in 2004 National Survey of Latinos, Overall and by Religious Affiliation and Voter Registration Status				
	All Latinos/as	All Protestants	Protestant Registered Voters	All Catholics	Catholic Registered Voters
“In the past year, have you...?”					
Attended a public meeting or demonstration in the community where you live	18%	18%	28%	17%	24%
Contacted any elected official	12%	14%	26%	10%	19%
Attended a political party meeting or function	9%	9%	14%	9%	17%
Contributed money to a candidate running for public office	8%	11%	17%	7%	15%
Worked as a volunteer or for pay for a political candidate	4%	5%	8%	4%	6%

These low rates correspond to those found in the 2000 Princeton survey,<sup>14</sup> as Table 5 illustrates. This survey found that Latinos/as are less involved (17 percent) than white non-Hispanics (25 percent) or African Americans (35 percent) in church leadership positions. They are also comparatively less involved in church and other volunteer work. Not surprisingly and in accordance with other scholars' findings (Segura, Pachon, and Woods 2001), Latinos/as are also less engaged in political or civic endeavors such as giving money to political candidates and attending political rallies. The widest gap occurs in terms of contact with public officials: only 11 percent of Latinos/as in the Princeton survey indicated that they had contacted an elected official, compared to 29 percent of white non-Hispanics.

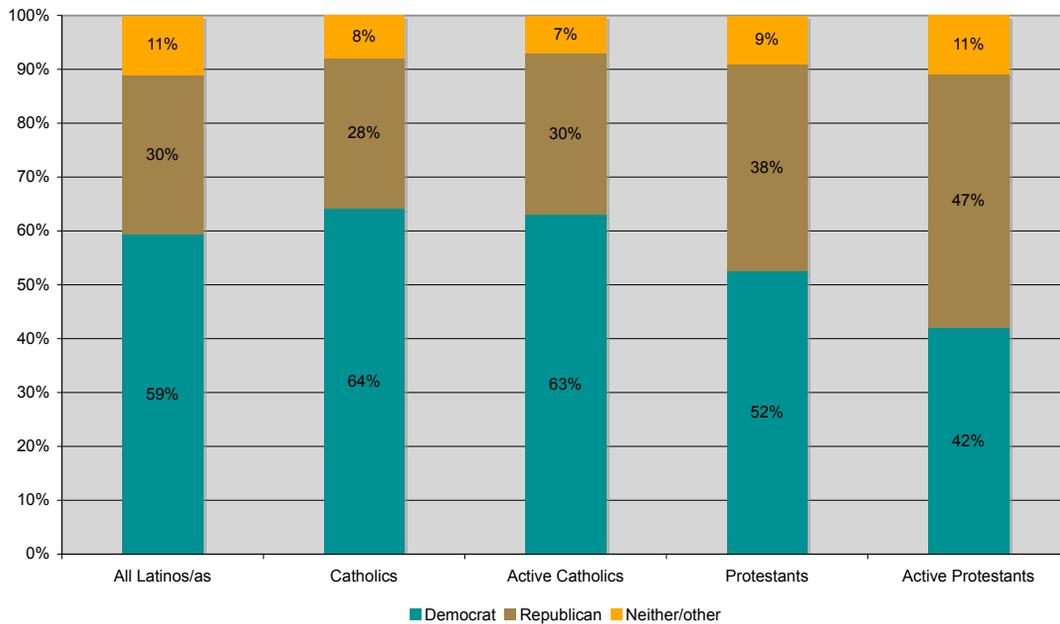
Table 5	Civic and Political Involvement by Race/Ethnicity		
"During the past twelve months, have you...?"	Latinos/as (N=547)	African Americans (N=509)	White non-Hispanics (N=3955)
Contacted an elected official about an issue of concern to you	11%	18%	29%
Given money to a political candidate or party	7%	9%	14%
Attended a political rally or meeting	9%	14%	11%
Worked for a political campaign or voter registration	4%	11%	5%
Attended a class or lecture about social or political issues	15%	18%	19%
Read about social or political issues on the Internet	20%	24%	31%
Done volunteer work at a church or other place of worship	37%	56%	49%
Done volunteer work for an organization other than a church or place of worship	28%	39%	47%
Do you hold any leadership position at your place of worship, such as serving on a committee, serving as an elder or deacon or teaching a class?	17%	35%	25%
Source: Princeton University Religion and Politics Survey 2000.			

14 While the results from the Princeton Religion and Politics Survey (N=5,317) enable us to compare Latinos/as, African Americans and white non-Hispanics, the survey also has limitations due to the small numbers of Latinos/as in the sample (Wuthnow and Evans 2002).

In terms of party identification, the 2004 National Survey of Latinos shows that a majority of registered Latino/a voters (59 percent) identify with the Democratic Party (Figure 10).<sup>15</sup> When we divide Latinos/as according to their religious affiliation, however, we find that a larger majority of Latino/a Catholics (64 percent) identify with the Democratic Party than found among Latino/a Protestants (52 percent). So, too, Latino/a Protestants are more likely to identify as Republicans (38 percent) than are Latino/a Catholics (28 percent).

Religious intensity also correlates with Latinos/as' political alignment, but only among Protestants. Specifically, attending church regularly (i.e., once a month or more) substantially decreases the Democratic Party's dominance among Latino/a Protestants but not among Latino/a Catholics (Figure 10). A smaller percentage of church-going Latino/a Protestants identify with the Democratic Party (42 percent) than do Latino/a Protestants in general (52 percent), and a larger share of active Protestants identify with the Republican Party (47 percent) than found in the general Latino/a Protestant population (38 percent). In contrast, roughly the same percentage of active Catholics identify as Democrats (63 percent) as do Catholics overall (64 percent).

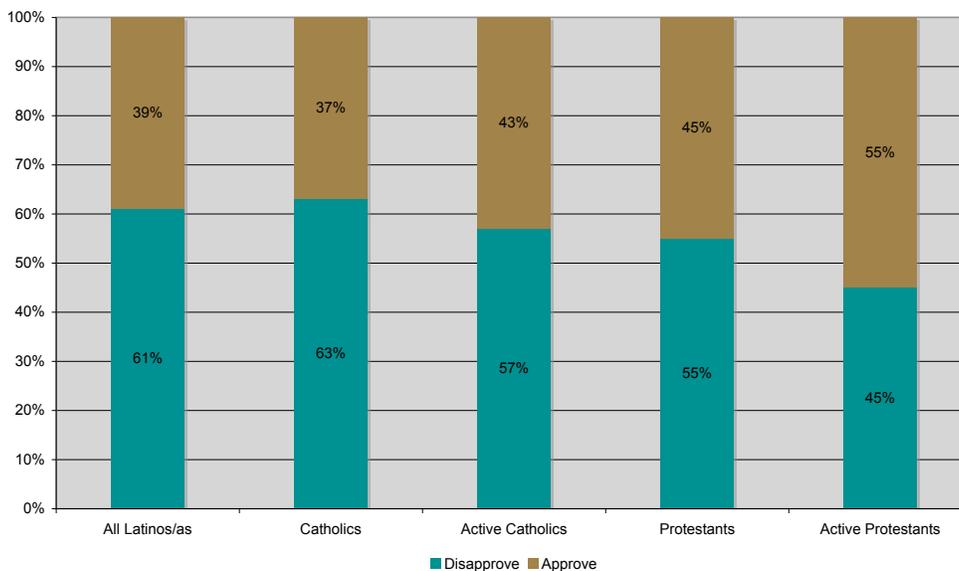
**Figure 10**  
**Political Party Alignment, Overall and by Religious Affiliation and Intensity**  
 (registered voters only)



<sup>15</sup> The Pew survey asked two questions about party preference, first: “do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?” Of the registered voters who answered the question, 48 percent said Democrat, 21 percent Republican, 22 percent Independent, and 9 percent something else. To those who self-identified as Independent or “something else,” the survey further asked: “do you consider yourself closer to the Republican Party or the Democratic Party?” the answers to which, tallied with the first question, gave us: 59 percent Democrat, 30 percent Republican, 8 percent neither, and 3 percent other. The survey did not ask whether people belonged to a political party, but simply what kind of partisan they considered themselves to be.

These differences in political party preference between Latino/a Catholics and Protestants correspond with only slight differences in levels of support for President Bush’s handling of the war in Iraq. As Figure 11 shows, a somewhat higher percentage of Latino/a Catholics disapproved of the President’s management of the situation (63 percent) than found among Latino/a Protestants (55 percent). However, religious intensity did increase the level of support for the president among Protestants, with 55 percent of the religiously active saying they approved of how he was handling of the war — the only group in which a majority expressed such a view.<sup>16</sup>

**Figure 11**  
**Views toward President Bush's Management of War in Iraq**  
 ("Do you approve or disapprove of the way the President is handling the situation in Iraq?")



<sup>16</sup> For a recent survey of Latino views about the war in Iraq, see the Pew Hispanic Center’s “Latinos and the War in Iraq,” available at [www.pewhispanic.org](http://www.pewhispanic.org). That report does not include analysis of how these views vary by religious affiliation or intensity.

## Civic Engagement and Religion

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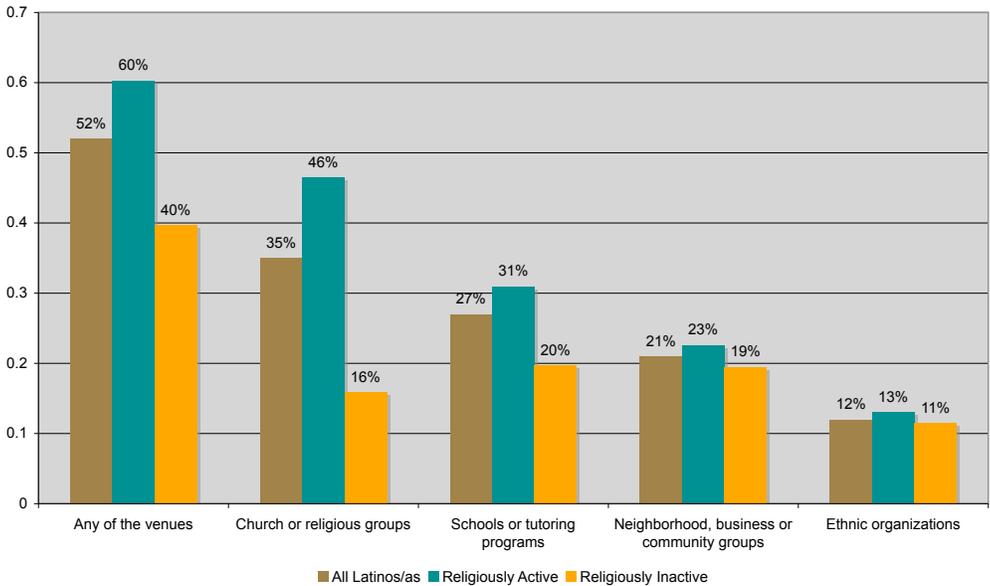
The role of religion in mobilizing civic and social engagement has been well documented. Among the scholars noting its significance, Robert Putnam argues that “faith communities in which people worship together are arguably the single most important repository of social capital in America” (2000). Recent research demonstrates the economic, educational, and social impact that churches have in disadvantaged minority communities (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Chaves and Tsitsos 2001; Cnaan 2002; Sikkink and Hernández 2003). Studies have highlighted the importance of religion as a generator of social capital among African Americans (Billingsley 1999; Harris 1999 and 2003; Smith 2003) while others have shown how the work of churches is particularly important in incorporating and building immigrant communities (Warner and Wittner 1998, Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000).

Churches also tend to incubate and generate skills that are beneficial to broader civic life. Activities such as leading a Bible study class, working with others in church committees, or contacting government officials or nonreligious agencies about church-related issues can have the beneficial side effect of building important skills that can be used outside of the religious community (Putnam 2000, Wuthnow 1999). In this vein, Verba and his colleagues (1995) found that church attendance strongly influences social and civic involvement among Latinos/as. Recognizing that many Latino communities are resource-poor in terms of educational and socio-economic levels, Verba’s study concludes that congregations provide a critical context for developing and nurturing civic building skills among Latinos/as that are needed to engage in the larger community. These scholars found that this was particularly true for Latino/a Protestants, who were more civically engaged (e.g., contacting elected officials, donating money to a political candidate or party) than Latino/a Catholics. One reason for this difference, Verba suggests, is that the small, close-knit structure of most Protestant Latino communities encourages participation from a comparatively large share of its members in the kinds of activities that cultivate skills that can be transferred to civic life.

Religious institutions also contribute to community well-being by mobilizing volunteers. According to Harvard researcher Robert Putnam (2000), church-related volunteering represents as much as 50 percent of the total volunteering that takes place in the United States and is the primary source of volunteers in the poorest communities. But does this finding hold true for the Latino community? Our findings indicate that churches or religious groups receive more volunteering time from Latinos/as than any other community or civic organization. Over half (52 percent) of those surveyed indicated that they had volunteered within the past year, most of whom (791 persons or 35 percent of the total sample) had given time to a church or religious group. In comparison, 27 percent had volunteered at schools or tutoring programs, 21 percent at neighborhood, business or community groups, and 12 percent at ethnic organizations (see Figure 12).

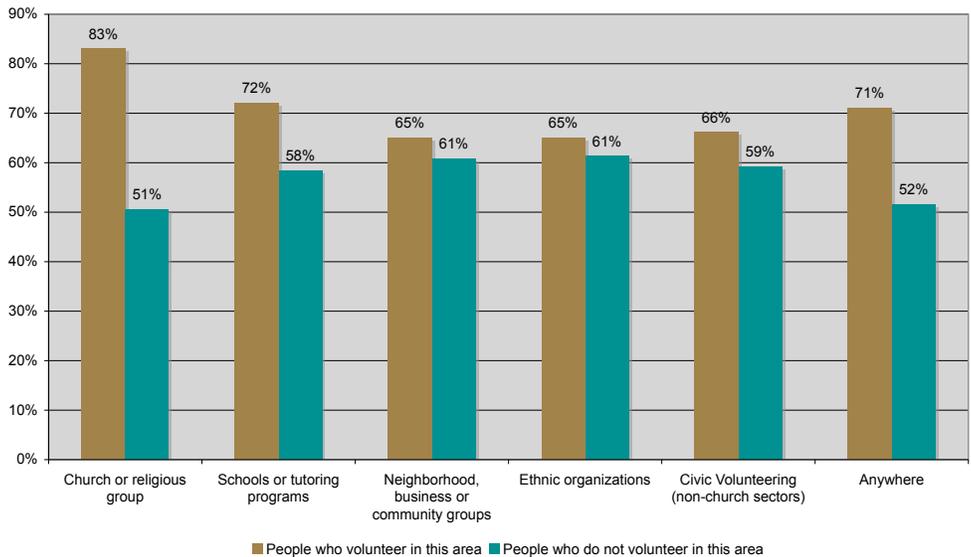
Not surprisingly, religiously active Latinos/as volunteer at higher rates in churches or religious groups (46 percent) than those who attend church less frequently (16 percent). A higher rate of the religiously active also volunteer at schools or tutoring programs (31 percent vs. 20 percent of inactive; Figure 12).

**Figure 12**  
Volunteering Rates in Various Community Sectors, Overall and by Religious Intensity



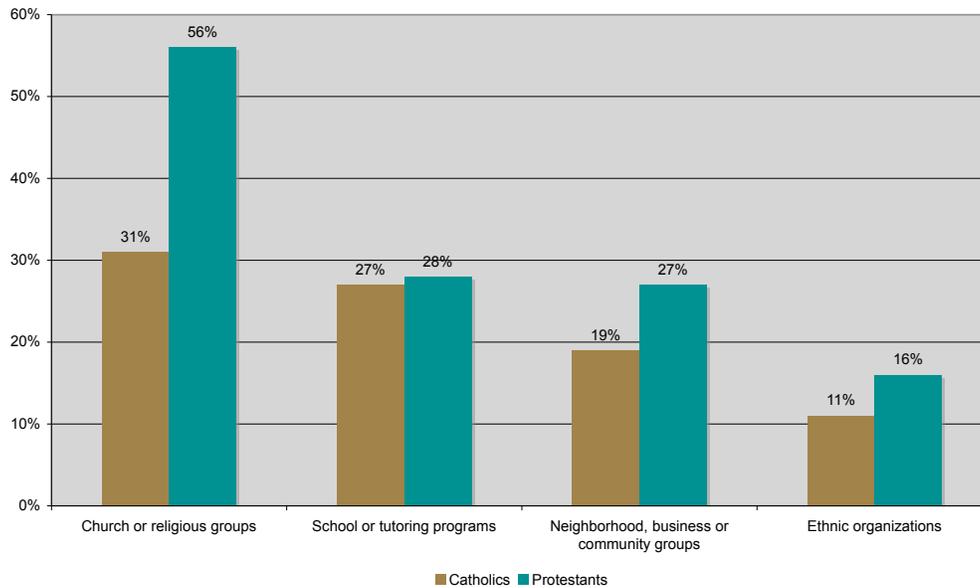
Comparing the churchgoing behavior of volunteers with those who do not volunteer we see that religiously active Latinos/as comprise a larger share of the volunteering pool than they do the pool of non-volunteers in two of the sectors under survey (Figure 13). As Figure 13 shows, of the people who volunteer in churches or religious groups, 83 percent attend church regularly. In comparison, of the people who do not volunteer in churches or religious groups, 51 percent are regular churchgoers. Similarly, of the people who volunteer in schools, 72 percent attend church once a month or more while only 58 percent of those who do not volunteer in school settings attend church regularly.

**Figure 13**  
Churchgoing Behavior of Volunteers vs. Churchgoing Behavior of Non-Volunteers  
(percentage of volunteers vs. non-volunteers in each category who attend church once a month or more)



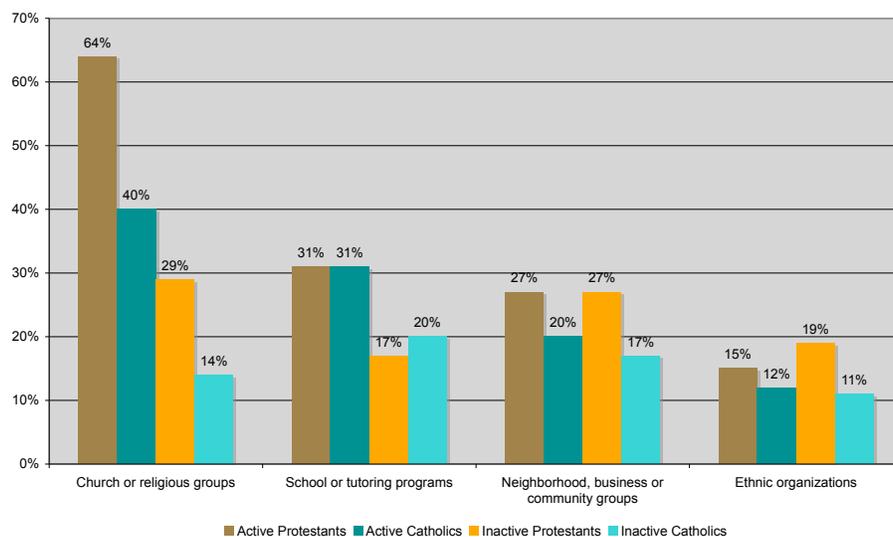
Denominationally, we found that volunteering rates vary only in the area of churches and religious groups (Figure 14), with Protestants reporting significantly higher rates of volunteering in this sector than Catholics (56 percent vs. 31 percent).

**Figure 14**  
Volunteering Rates in Various Community Sectors, by Religious Affiliation



When religious intensity and affiliation are both taken into consideration, we find that religiously active Protestants volunteer at notably higher rates in churches or religious groups than religiously active Catholics (64 percent vs. 40 percent, respectively; see Figure 15). However, religiously active Protestants volunteer at similar rates as active Catholics in schools or tutoring programs (31 percent of each) and ethnic organizations (15 percent and 12 percent, respectively), and at only slightly higher rates in neighborhood, business, or community groups (27 percent vs. 20 percent). As we saw above, while church participation is associated with higher incidences of church and school volunteering among both Protestants and Catholics, it does not seem

**Figure 15**  
Volunteering Rates in Various Community Sectors, by Religious Affiliation and Intensity

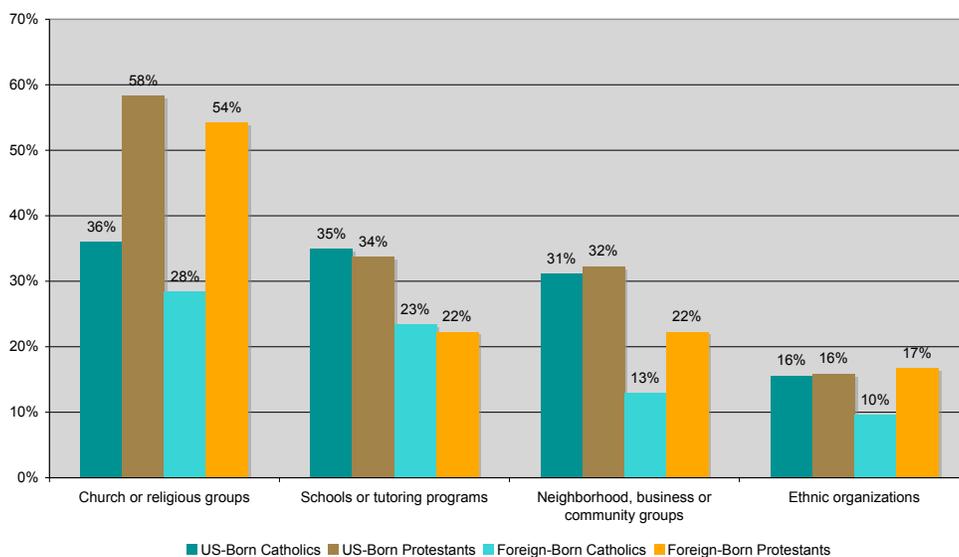


to be associated with volunteering levels for either denominational grouping in neighborhood, business or community groups; or in ethnic organizations (Figure 15).

We also found that Latinos/as' volunteering behavior differs in some areas according to their nativity status (Figure 16). US-born Latino/a Protestants volunteer at higher rates than foreign-born Latino/a Protestants for neighborhood, business, or community groups (32 percent vs. 22 percent, respectively); and for school or tutoring programs (34 percent vs. 22 percent, respectively), findings that might be related to their comparative English-speaking skills. Similarly, US-born Latino/a Catholics volunteer in neighborhood, business or community groups at higher rates than the foreign born (31 percent vs. 13 percent, respectively); as well as for schools (35 percent vs. 23 percent, respectively). However, foreign-born Protestants (22 percent) volunteer in neighborhood, business, or community groups at a slightly higher rate than foreign-born Catholics (13 percent).

Thus nativity apparently informs volunteering behavior in neighborhood, business, and community groups and in schools or tutoring programs whereas denominational affiliation has no apparent impact upon these sectors. US-born Latino/a Protestants and Catholics volunteer at equal levels in these places, as do foreign-born Latino/a Protestants and Catholics (Figure 16). In contrast, religious affiliation rather than nativity strongly correlates with levels of volunteering for churches or religious groups. Specifically, 58 percent of US-born Protestants and 54 percent of foreign-born Protestants give time to churches, compared to 36 percent of US-born Catholics and 28 percent of foreign-born Catholics (Figure 16). This finding, per Verba's suggestion noted above, might be linked to the comparatively small size of Protestant congregations facilitating and even necessitating that a higher fraction of these churches' members become involved in their congregational efforts.

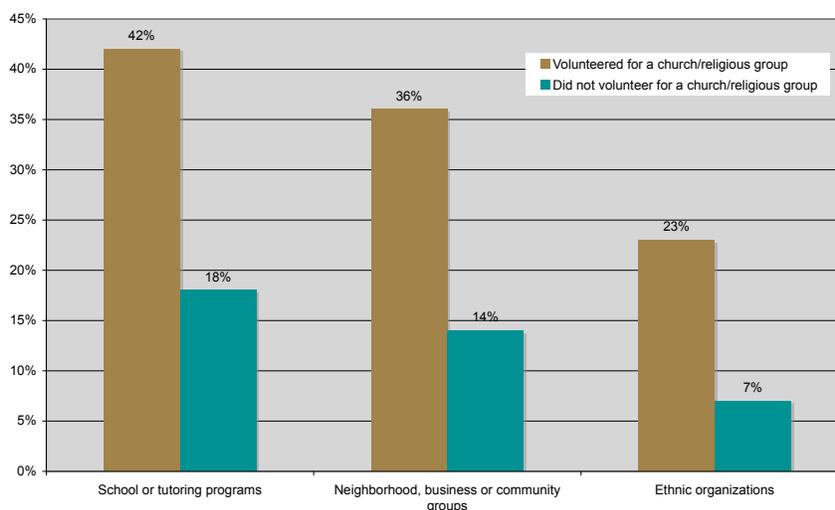
**Figure 16**  
**Volunteering Rates in Various Community Sectors,**  
**by Nativity and Religious Affiliation**



The positive association between religion and civic engagement is evident in the relationship between church-based volunteering and other community sectors (Figure 17). To determine whether the same people who volunteer in churches or religious groups also give their time to schools, community groups, or ethnic organizations, and to see whether people who volunteer in churches also give time to non-religious community sectors, we compared the volunteering behavior of church volunteers with those who had not given time to a church or religious group.

As Figure 17 shows, Latinos/as who volunteer in churches or religious groups are more active as school, community, and ethnic organization volunteers than are those who have not volunteered for churches. Church volunteers (42 percent) are twice as likely as non-church volunteers (18 percent) to contribute time to a school or tutoring program. Similarly, 36 percent of church volunteers also serve neighborhood, business or community groups compared to 14 percent of those who do not volunteer for churches, and 23 percent of church volunteers also serve ethnic organizations compared to just 7 percent of those who do not volunteer for a church or religious group. These findings show that religiously connected Latinos/as are heavily represented among other civic sector volunteer pools.

Figure 17  
Relationship between Church Volunteers and Volunteers in Other Community Sectors

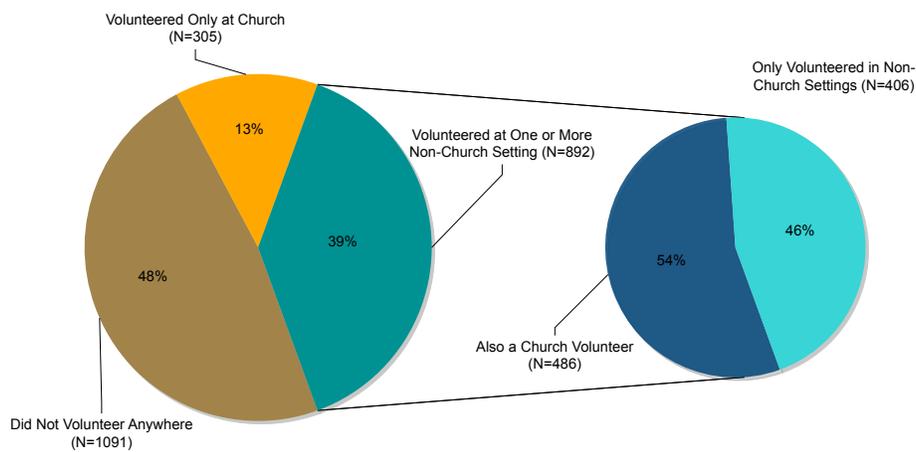


Recognizing that the overlap depicted in Figure 17 might simply reflect the reality that people who are inclined to volunteer do so in lots of places, we conducted regression analysis to filter out the possible impact of such volunteerism in order to see more clearly the unique effect of religious volunteering on volunteering in other community sectors (see table 7 in Appendix B). This analysis found that even when controlling for other relevant variables, volunteering in churches is the primary link between being religiously connected and civically engaged. In contrast, the effects of religious salience (i.e., the importance of religion in one's daily life) and denominational affiliation make no apparent difference in whether or not someone volunteers outside of the church. Moreover, combining all three types of non-church volunteering into a single variable, the effect of church attendance on volunteering outside of the church disappears when religious volunteering is taken into consideration. Said another way, our analysis indicates that the reason those who attend church regularly appear more likely to volunteer in their communities is because they are engaged as volunteers in their churches.

But while church volunteering is a stronger indicator that someone will engage in some form of non-church civic volunteering than is church attendance, when the non-church community sectors are examined individually we see that independent of church volunteering, regular churchgoers are more likely to volunteer in educational settings when controlling for other variables, which confirms the bivariate findings shown in Figure 12 (see Appendix B). But regular churchgoers are less likely to volunteer in ethnic organizations than persons who do not attend church regularly.

The relationship between religion and volunteerism is further seen when we consider that of the 892 individuals (or 39 percent of the sample) who volunteered in at least one of three non-religious settings — schools, community groups, or ethnic organizations — 486 (or 54 percent) had also volunteered for a religious organization (see Figure 18). This indicates that religiously connected Latinos/as account for over half (54 percent) of the non-church-based volunteering capital in the Latino community.

**Figure 18**  
**Overlap of Church Volunteers with Volunteers in Non-Church Settings**



As previously noted, other researchers have observed that congregations provide opportunities not only to acquire values of service but also social and leadership skills that are transferable to other settings. While our data does not overtly illustrate that such a direct transference is taking place, our findings do suggest that churches are a critical venue in which civic engagement is fostered among Latinos/as. Churches are the single largest recipients of Latino volunteering capital, and these church volunteers are not isolated from other sectors of the society but rather are heavily represented among non-church volunteering pools as well. Moreover, Latinos/as who volunteer in churches or other religious organizations are considerably more likely to volunteer in outside community sectors than are people who do not volunteer in churches. This comparatively greater tendency to volunteer is not simply a factor of people who volunteer in one setting being more likely to volunteer elsewhere, since our regression analysis found that church volunteering still significantly predicts other forms of volunteering even after factoring out the impact of a general predisposition toward volunteering. We also found that church volunteering remains strongly associated with other kinds of volunteering regardless of one's denominational affiliation, level of church attendance, or the degree of importance one ascribes to religion in one's daily life. Interpreting these findings through the insights of scholars like Putnam and Verba we conclude

that churches play a critical role in creating social resources and community bonding in the Latino community quite possibly because they provide a place in which Latinos/as make social connections, gain skills, and receive encouragement to become involved in other sectors of their communities. (For similar conclusions, see Putnam 2000 and Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995.)

## Latino Religion and Current Social Issues

After the 2004 presidential election, journalistic reports focused on the convoluted results that stemmed from the insertion of “moral values” into the list of issues whose potential influence voters were asked about in exit polls. According to some analyses, 80 percent of the electorate indicated “moral values” as the most important factor influencing their vote for a presidential candidate. However, innovative research by the Pew Research Center found that while “moral values” were an important factor, the “war in Iraq” and “leadership” played more decisive roles in determining voter behavior (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life 2004).

Interestingly, Latino/a voters ranked other issues well ahead of both the Iraq war and “moral values.” Table 6 compares the issues that Catholic and Protestant Latino/a voters considered extremely important in the spring prior to the 2004 election. As Table 6 shows, though the exact order varies, Latino/a Protestant and Catholic voters who participated in the 2004 Pew survey identified the same four issues — education, health care and Medicare, the economy and jobs, and the US campaign against terrorism — as their top priorities for the 2004 elections. Latino/a Catholic and Protestant voters alike ranked “moral values” far beneath most of the other issues polled about (eighth and sixth, respectively) and thus indicated that “moral values” were less critical to their vote than bread and butter issues — a finding that holds true even for religiously active individuals.

Issue	Catholics	Ranking	Issue	Protestants	Ranking
Education	52%	1	Health care and Medicare	62%	1
The economy and jobs	48%	2	Education	54%	2
Health care and Medicare	47%	3	The economy and jobs	54%	3
US campaign against terrorism	43%	4	US campaign against terrorism	51%	4
Crime	40%	5	The war in Iraq	45%	5
Social Security	39%	6	Moral values	45%	6
The war in Iraq	38%	7	Crime	44%	7
Moral values	35%	8	Social Security	38%	8
Taxes	32%	9	Taxes	34%	9
The federal budget deficit	29%	10	Immigration	30%	10
Immigration	27%	11	The federal budget deficit	24%	11

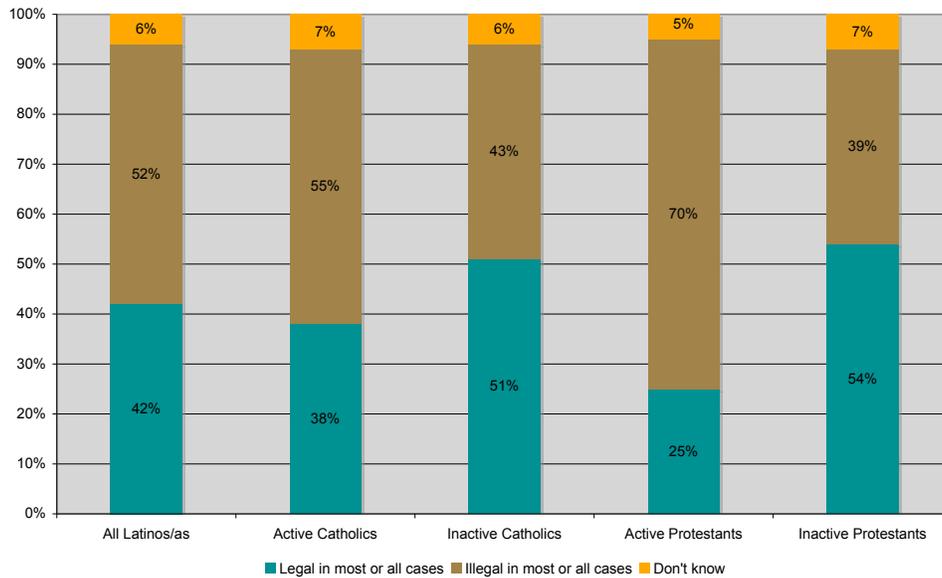
Source: 2004 National Survey of Latinos

Nonetheless, a deep divide among the American public over gay marriage, abortion and other social and cultural matters remains apparent. To assess whether and how religion and religious affiliation impacts Latino views on these issues, we analyzed the responses to questions the 2004 National Survey of Latinos asked about abortion, gay marriage, divorce, and non-marital childbearing. On the issue of abortion, the survey asked respondents whether abortion should be: 1) legal in all cases; 2) legal in most cases; 3) illegal in most

cases; or 4) illegal in all cases. The majority of Latinos/as (52 percent) held that abortion should be illegal in most or all cases, while 42 percent said it should be legal in most or all cases (Figure 19).

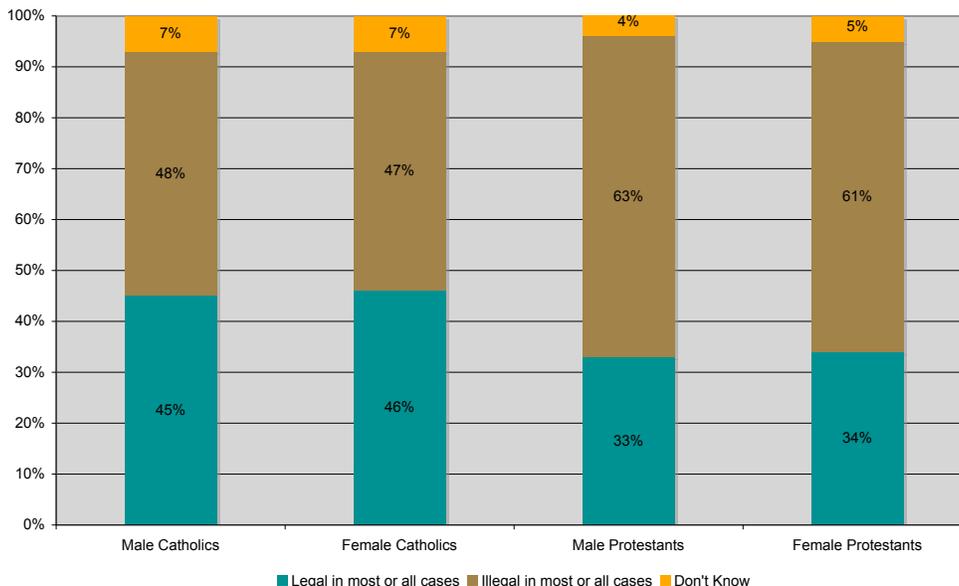
Religious affiliation and intensity make an apparently considerable difference in Latinos/as' views toward abortion, as Figure 19 illustrates. A majority of religiously active Catholics (55 percent) maintain that abortion should be illegal in most or all cases compared to 43 percent of inactive Catholics. But the difference between religiously active and inactive Protestant views on this topic is considerably larger, with 70 percent of active Protestants saying that abortion should be mostly or always illegal compared to just 39 percent of inactive Protestants (Figure 19). While religiously inactive Protestants and Catholics weigh in similarly on this question (54 percent and 51 percent respectively say abortion should be legal in most or all cases), religiously active Catholics are less likely to adamantly oppose abortion (55 percent) compared to religiously active Protestants (70 percent).

**Figure 19**  
Views about Legality of Abortion, Overall and by Religious Affiliation and Intensity



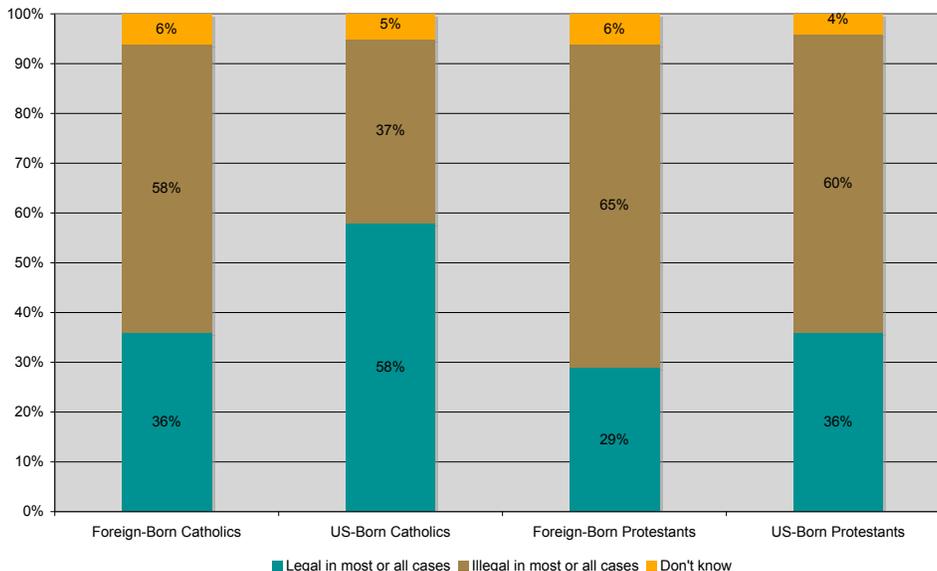
Though gender is often thought to influence views on abortion, our analysis found no significant differences between the views of Latino/a men and women within faith groups (Figure 20). Catholic respondents were evenly split with nearly half of Catholic men and women (48 percent and 47 percent, respectively) agreeing that abortion should be illegal in most or all cases, and 45 percent of Catholic men and 46 percent of Catholic women saying it should be legal. A majority of Protestants of both sexes (63 percent of men and 61 percent of women) believe that abortion should be outlawed while roughly one-third of Protestant men and women (33 percent and 34 percent, respectively) believe it should be legal. Thus religious affiliation seems to matter more than gender in predicting Latinos/as' views on abortion.

**Figure 20**  
Views about Legality of Abortion, by Gender and Religious Affiliation

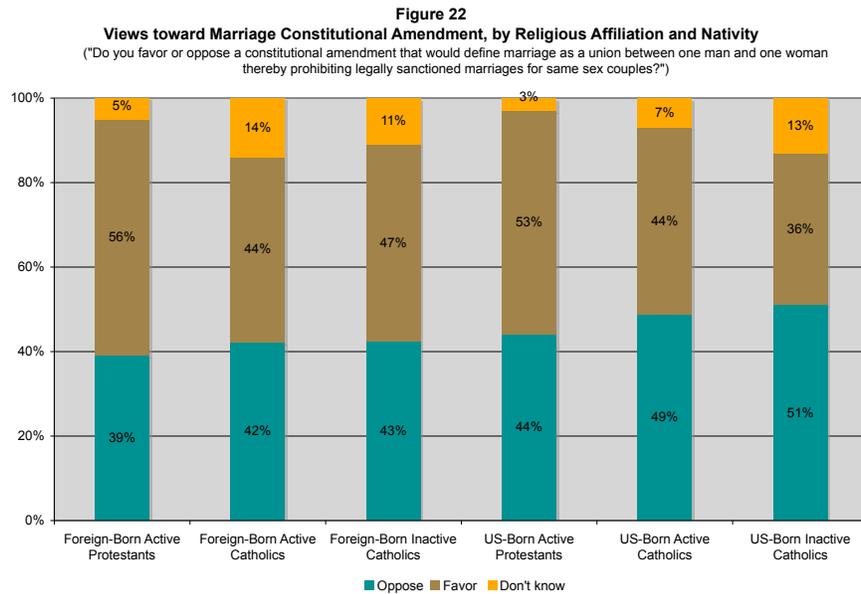


Place of birth had a considerable relationship to Latino/a Catholics' views on abortion, with 58 percent of foreign-born Catholics opposing abortion compared to 37 percent of their US-born counterparts (see Figure 21). In contrast, nativity made a considerably smaller difference in Latino/a Protestants' views on abortion (65 percent of foreign-born and 60 percent of US-born Protestants believe it should be illegal). Thus, on the issue of abortion, regular church attendance rather than place of birth strongly corresponds with an anti-abortion stance among Protestants (see Figure 19), whereas among Catholics it is nativity — specifically, being foreign-born — rather than church attendance that does so (Figures 19 & 21).

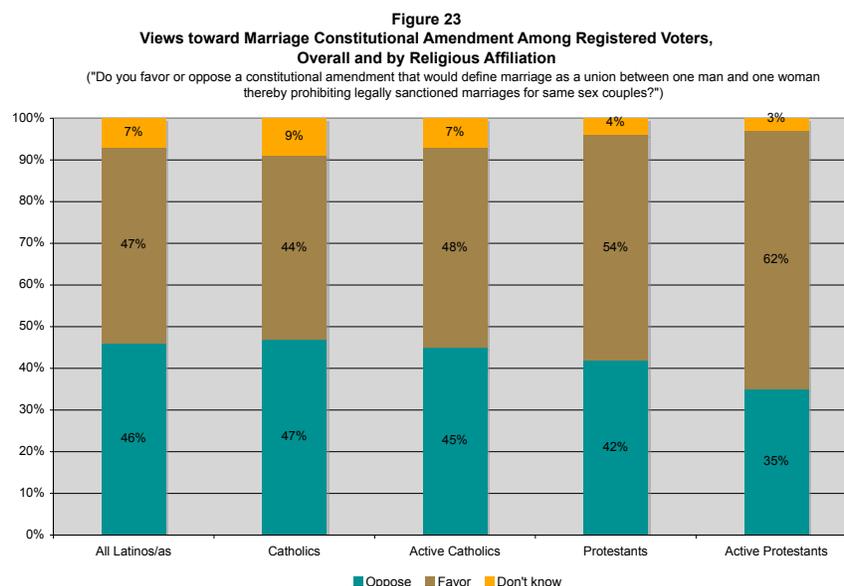
**Figure 21**  
Views about Legality of Abortion, by Nativity Status and Religious Affiliation



Another issue that received much attention during the 2004 election was homosexuality and same-sex marriage, particularly the eleven state ballot initiatives banning same-sex marriage. As *The Washington Post* reported, these initiatives were credited with helping mobilize get-out-the-vote drives among Evangelicals and other conservative Christians (Milbank 2004). Figure 22 shows how Latino/a Catholics and Protestants weighed in on the marriage amendment initiative and indicates that Latinos/as do not oppose same-sex marriage with the same level of intensity as they do abortion.<sup>17</sup> The only group in which a slight majority favored a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage was active Protestants (53 percent of US-born and 56 percent of foreign-born).



To determine whether registered voters varied from the overall sample, we analyzed the responses of the 1,166 registered voters in the 2004 survey (51 percent of the overall sample) and found that they exhibit the same level of ambivalence toward a constitutional marriage amendment as the overall group. As Figure 23 shows, Latino/a Catholic voters were evenly split on the matter regardless of their religious involvement, whereas a slight majority of Latino/a Protestant voters in general (54 percent) and a larger share of religiously active Protestant voters (62 percent) expressed support for a constitutional amendment defining marriage as

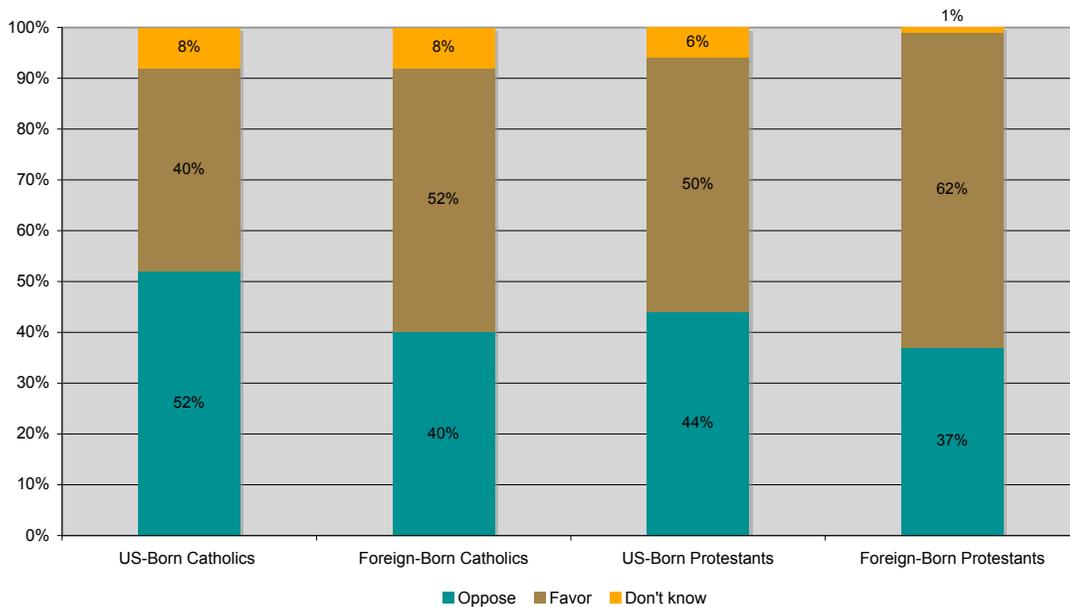


<sup>17</sup> Because of the small number of inactive Protestants in our sample, we cannot comment on the attitudes of this subgroup by nativity since when we further break this subgroup down by nativity (i.e., 42 US-born inactive Protestants and 58 foreign-born inactive Protestants), the resulting Ns are too small for legitimate analysis.

a union between a man and a woman. In contrast, only 48 percent of active Catholic Latino/a voters support such a measure.

When we examined the impact of nativity on the views of Latino registered voters we found that foreign-born Protestants expressed the strongest support for a marriage constitutional amendment, with 62 percent in favor and 37 percent opposed (see Figure 24). In contrast, only 50 percent of US-born Protestant voters support such a measure. A similar gap exists between foreign-born (52 percent) and US-born (40 percent) registered Catholics. US-born, registered Catholics constitute the most resistant group to this initiative with more than half (52 percent) of the respondents saying they oppose a constitutional amendment defining marriage. In both faith groups, US-born Latinos/as are more likely to oppose a marriage amendment than Latinos/as who were born outside of the United States.

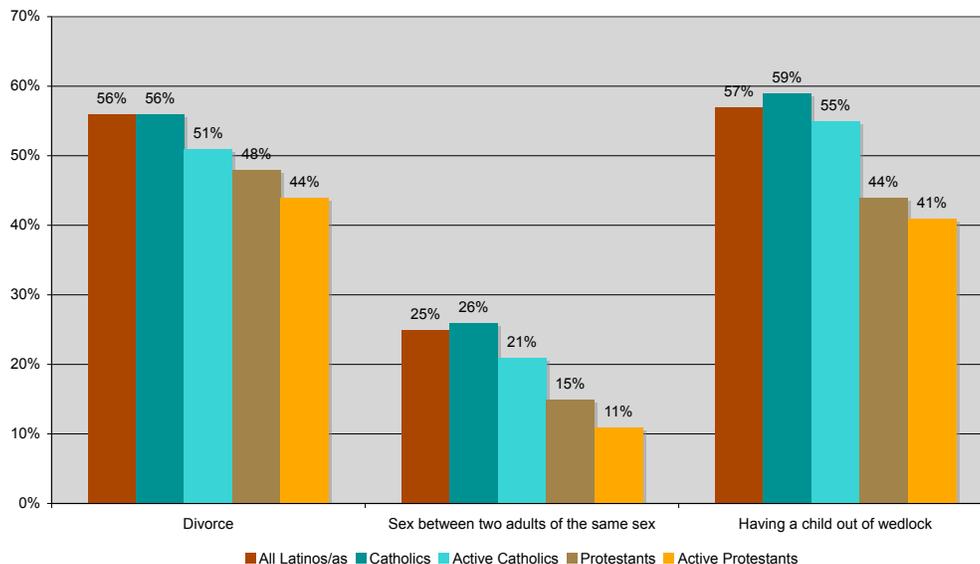
**Figure 24**  
**Views toward Marriage Constitutional Amendment Among Registered Voters,**  
**by Nativity and Religious Affiliation**  
 ("Do you favor or oppose a constitutional amendment that would define marriage as a union between one man and one woman thereby prohibiting legally sanctioned marriages for same sex couples?")



Divorce, sexual relations between adults of the same sex, and having a child out of wedlock are other social and cultural issues that separate Latinos/as of different faith traditions. Because the 2004 Pew survey did not ask about these issues, we analyzed Pew’s 2002 National Survey of Latinos since it provides helpful information to examine these attitudes. This survey found that the majority of Latino/a Catholics, including religiously active ones, consider divorce and having a child outside of marriage acceptable. About divorce, 56 percent of the overall Catholic respondents and 51 percent of religiously active Catholics said the practice is acceptable (Figure 25). And 59 percent of Catholics overall and 55 percent of religiously active Catholics accept having a child out of wedlock.

In contrast, most Latino/a Protestants, particularly the religiously active, are considerably less accepting of both of these practices. Only 48 percent of Protestants in general and 44 percent of religiously active Protestants said divorce is acceptable, and 44 percent of Protestants overall and 41 percent of religiously active Protestants consider having a child outside of marriage acceptable (Figure 25).

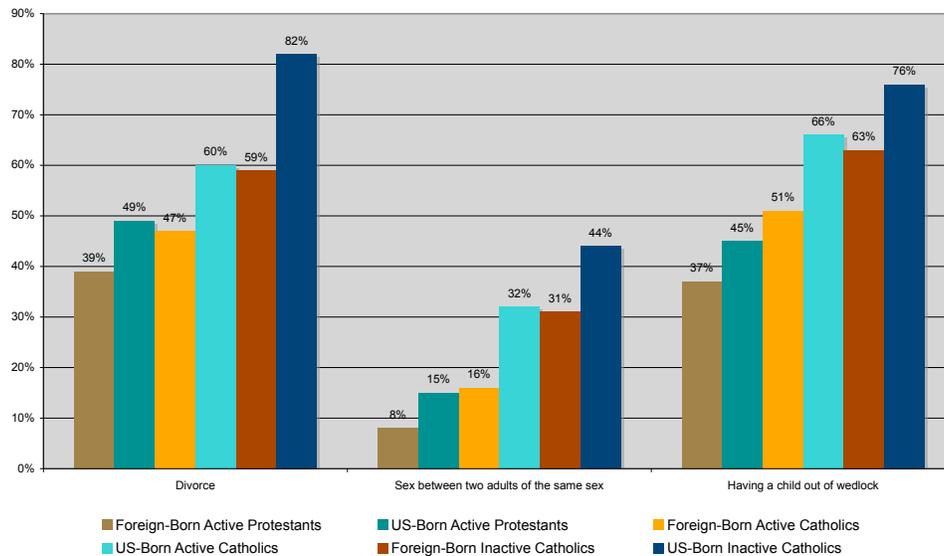
**Figure 25**  
**Percentage of Latinos/as Who Consider These Behaviors Acceptable,**  
**Overall and by Religious Affiliation and Intensity**



Compared to their views on abortion and divorce, Catholics were less accepting of sex between two adults of the same sex, with only 26 percent of Catholics in general and 21 percent of active Catholics saying the practice is acceptable. Here, again, Protestants were even less likely to consider the behavior in question acceptable — just 15 percent of Protestants in general and 11 percent of the religiously active said homosexual sex is acceptable.

Figure 26 shows how Latinos/as weighed in on these three issues and what differences nativity, religious affiliation and religious intensity make. As the data show, homosexuality received the least level of acceptance across the studied groups, with place of birth strongly corresponding to differences of view. On every issue in question, foreign-born Latinos/as in each subgroup show lower levels of acceptance than their US-born counterparts. Among religiously active Catholics, first generation immigrants (16 percent) were less likely than their US-born counterparts (32 percent) to accept homosexual sex. Opposition to homosexual sex was even greater among religiously active Protestants, with just 8 percent of foreign born and 15 percent of US-born saying sex between two adults of the same sex is acceptable (Figure 26).

**Figure 26**  
**Percentage of Latinos/as Who Consider These Behaviors Acceptable,**  
**by Nativity and Religious Affiliation and Intensity**



This same generational difference is evident in Latinos/as' views toward divorce and having a child out of wedlock. Religiously active US-born Protestants are more likely than their foreign-born equivalents to accept divorce (49 percent vs. 39 percent, respectively) and having children out of wedlock (45 percent vs. 37 percent, respectively). Likewise, religiously active US-born Catholics are more accepting than their foreign born equivalents of divorce (60 percent vs. 47 percent, respectively) and of having a child out of wedlock (66 percent vs. 51 percent, respectively).

As these findings indicate, active religious involvement correlates with reduced acceptance levels on all three of the issues under consideration. A roughly 10-22 percent spread exists between religiously active and inactive US-born Catholics, and between religiously active and inactive foreign-born Catholics. Interestingly, however, being born outside of the United States seems to have as significant a conservative effect upon Latinos/as' views as being active in one's religious community. Religiously inactive foreign-born Catholics reported nearly identical levels of acceptance for all three of the issues as religiously active, US-born Catholics. And while religiously active Protestants of either nativity status show considerably less tolerance of all three practices than religiously active Catholics, US-born active Protestants reported similar levels of acceptance on all three issues as foreign-born active Catholics (see Figure 26).

The apparent impact of nativity, religious intensity, and religious affiliation on Latinos/as' views is further confirmed by our finding that inactive US-born Catholics are the most accepting of these three behaviors (82 percent of divorce, 76 percent of having a child out of wedlock, and 44 percent of homosexual sex) while foreign-born, active Protestants are the least accepting (39 percent of divorce, 37 percent of having a child out of wedlock, and 8 percent of homosexual sex).

In summary, our analysis reveals that active religious involvement coupled with being born outside of the United States has a markedly conservative effect on the attitudes of US Latinos/as. Though this holds true for both Catholics and Protestants, Latino/a Protestants are much more likely to espouse conservative views on family and reproduction issues than are Latino/a Catholics.

## Discussion and Conclusions

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At the dawn of a new century, one of the most important challenges facing the United States is how to deal with the demands of an increasingly multicultural society. The task is as clear as it is complex: how can we build communities that respect and value differences while nurturing a sense of common purpose? Undeniably the country's composition is changing profoundly and those who are considered minorities today will constitute a majority of the population by the final quarter of this century.

Researchers and casual observers alike have observed that one of the Latino population's most important resources is its deeply rooted religious commitment. Our findings indicate that churches are a critical source of volunteering capital in Latino communities. Religiously active Latinos/as volunteer at higher rates in both churches and educational venues, and over half of church volunteers also volunteer in non-religious community sectors. Moreover, church volunteering strongly corresponds with volunteering in other civic sectors, which suggests that churches provide an important context in which Latinos/as gain skills and receive encouragement to engage in their broader communities.

Our research also indicates that religious affiliation and involvement are crucial to understanding the diverse perspectives of Latinos/as living in the United States. Though the majority of Latinos/as are still Catholic, the number of Latino/a Protestants continues to increase. This growing community is marked by a comparatively higher degree of religious intensity, with larger percents of Latino/a Protestants than Catholics attending church regularly and identifying religion as one of the most important aspects of their lives. The religious intensity of the US Latino Protestant community is further evident in our finding that the vast majority of this group describes itself as "born again."

Latino/a Catholic and Protestant attitudes toward the two hot button issues that sparked so much contention during the 2004 campaign — same-sex marriage and abortion — manifest the religious divide among Latinos/as. At first glance we might have expected that Latino/a Catholics, influenced by the Catholic Church's unequivocal teachings on abortion and the sanctity of traditional marriage, would have elicited stronger adherence to these issues. Yet this was not the case. Protestants, regardless of whether they were foreign- or US-born, consistently adopted a more conservative position on these issues. And while foreign-born, active Catholics were the most conservative on these issues within their faith tradition, they still did not oppose them with the same level of intensity as Protestants.

That said, place of birth, and by implication degree of acculturation to the broader US society, also has a big impact on how Latinos/as weigh-in on issues of family configuration, sexuality, and reproduction. On all of the issues under survey (abortion, homosexual marriage and sex, divorce, and having a child outside of marriage) first-generation immigrant Latino/a Catholics are markedly more conservative than their US-born counterparts. Protestants show a similar pattern in every area but abortion, about which both generations share equally strong negative opinions. Thus integration into the American mainstream seems to have a liberalizing effect among Latinos/as. If this pattern continues, as we expect it will, Latino adherence to the more conservative social positions measured in this study is likely to decrease — an issue that will concern religious leaders, political pundits, and others who are interested in inter-generational transmission of religious values.

In short, our research finds that the Latino population evidences the same divisions along religious lines as the broader US population. Given the marked growth of Latino/a Protestants in this country, it is quite possible that we will see considerable repositioning within the political and social movements of our nation. But though strategists from either side of the political aisle are paying increasing attention to the Latino community, considerable majorities of both Protestants and Catholics maintain that religion is primarily a private matter that should be kept out of public debate. Thus, it remains to be seen whether appealing to Latinos/as' religious identity in future social and political campaigns will prove effective.

The Latino population is young, diverse, complex and changing. In the years to come it will be Latinos/as who are born in the United States, rather than recent immigrants, who will drive future Latino population growth. Factors like education, identity, and English-language acquisition may carry increasing weight as Latinos/as go out to vote, volunteer in their communities and take public stands on the issues. Along with this, however, our study suggests that religion will continue to play a critical role Latino public life — a reality that politicians, policy analysts, community activists, religious leaders, public officials, the media, and scholars alike will continue to reckon with in the future.

## Appendix A: 2004 National Survey of Latinos: Politics and Civic Engagement Methodology

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The Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation 2004 National Survey of Latinos: Politics and Civic Engagement was conducted by telephone between April 21 and June 9, 2004 among a nationally representative sample of 2,288 Latino/a adults, 18 years or older, who were selected at random. Latinos/as were identified based on the question “Are you, yourself, of Hispanic or Latino/a origin or descent, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Central or South American, Caribbean, or some other Latin background?” Representatives of the Pew Hispanic Center and The Kaiser Family Foundation worked together to develop the survey questionnaire and analyze the results. International Communications Research of Media, Pennsylvania conducted the fieldwork in either English or Spanish, based on the respondent’s preference.

The sample design employed a highly stratified disproportionate RDD sample of the 48 contiguous states. The results are weighted to represent the actual distribution of adults throughout the United States.

In this paper, Latinos/as are classified into 6 groups: Catholics, Protestants, active and inactive Catholics, and active and inactive Protestants. Catholics are those who identified as such, including Catholics who described themselves as “born again.” The category “Protestant” is comprised of people who self-identified as Protestant and people who described themselves as a born-again Christian without further identification. Including this latter group among Protestants is legitimate since it is common for non-Catholic Christians from Latin America to identify as “evangelical,” “Pentecostal,” “Charismatic” or simply “Christian” without further specification. Active Catholics and Protestants are those who attend church at least once a month, and those who attend less frequently than this are classified as inactive.

The sample size and margin of error for these groups is shown in the table below:

	<b>Unweighted Number of Respondents (N)</b>
<b>Total Latinos/as</b>	<b>2288</b>
Catholics	1489
Active Catholics	940
Inactive Catholics	541
Protestants	413
Active Protestants	313
Inactive Protestants	98

## Appendix B: Logistic Regression Models for Religious Effects on Civic Volunteerism (Odds Ratio Coefficients)

Table 7  
Logistic Regression Models for Religious Effects on Civic Volunteerism (Odds Ratio Coefficients)

	Civic Volunteering				School Volunteering				Community Volunteering				Ethnic Volunteering			
Church Attendance	1.44	***	0.93		1.32	*	1.46	**	0.88		0.88		0.70	*	0.65	*
Religious Salience	1.19		0.97		0.81		0.82		0.94		1.06		0.81		0.84	
Protestant	0.97		0.69		0.86		0.84		0.94		0.95		1.17		1.19	
Catholic	1.24		1.23		1.26		1.27		1.00		0.91		1.23		1.25	
Female	1.74	***	1.77	***	1.84	***	1.88	***	1.22		1.10		1.01		0.85	
US Born	1.39	*	1.49	*	1.57	*	1.43		1.50	*	1.37		1.34		1.17	
PR Born	0.96		1.11		0.88		0.72		1.43		1.40		1.75		1.74	
Spanish Dominant	0.84		0.83		0.97		1.03		0.78	*	0.77	*	0.88		0.96	
Age	0.89	*	0.85	***	0.89	*	0.90	*	0.96		1.02		0.87	*	0.89	
Education	1.44	***	1.47	***	1.35	***	1.22	*	1.57	***	1.44	***	1.38	***	1.22	
US Citizen	1.09		1.00		0.89		0.87		1.21		1.30		0.85		0.79	
Income	1.04	***	1.03	***	1.01		1.01		1.02	*	1.02	*	0.99		0.98	
South	1.15		1.04		1.15		1.16		1.00		0.97		1.01		0.99	
Urban	0.98		1.07		0.90		0.87		1.00		0.98		1.23		1.28	
Married	1.02		0.97		1.36	**	1.39	**	1.04		0.94		0.92		0.80	
Full-Time Employed	0.77	*	0.68	***	0.68	***	0.67	**	0.78	*	0.81		1.23		1.52	*
Religious Volunteering			5.33	***	3.12	***	2.25	***	3.57	***	2.32	***	4.19	***	2.72	***
School Volunteering							-----				3.33	***			2.43	***
Community Volunteering							3.22	***			-----				4.28	***
Ethnic Group Volunteering							2.34	***			4.32	***			-----	
Constant	0.20	***	0.19	***	0.08	***	0.06	***	0.08	***	0.06	***	0.07	***	0.05	***
Pseudo R2	0.16		0.27		0.17		0.26		0.21		0.33		0.12		0.24	
N	1913		1913		1913		1913		1913		1913		1913		1913	

\*p≤.05 \*\* p≤.01 \*\*\*p≤.001; numbers in parentheses represent standard errors

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