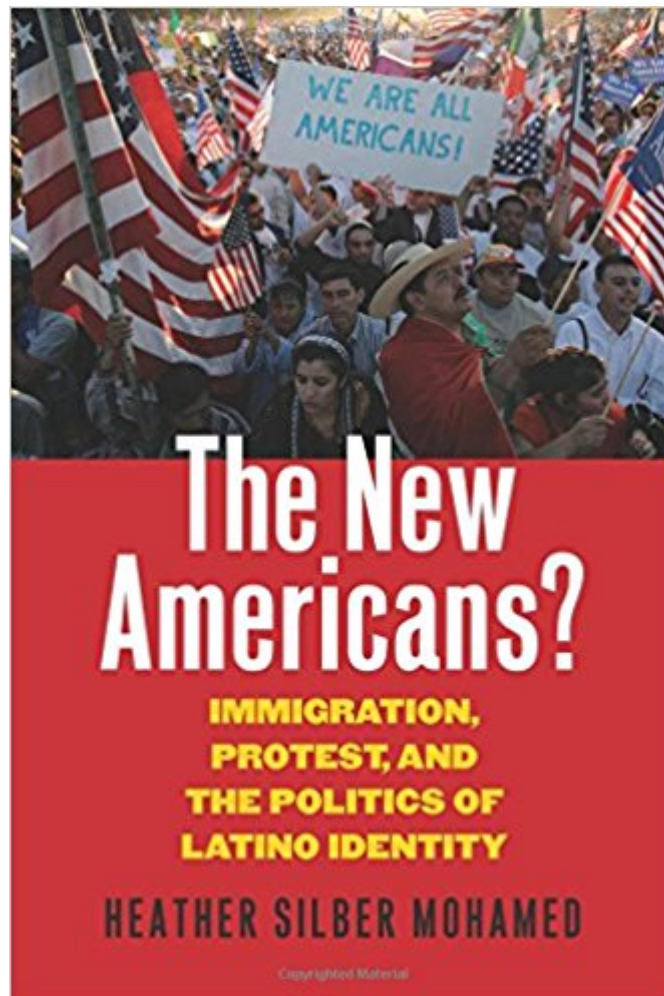




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The New Americans?: Immigration, Protest, And The Politics Of Latino Identity



Synopsis

In 2006, millions of Latinos mobilized in opposition to H.R. 4437, an immigration proposal pending before the US Congress. In her new book, Heather Silber Mohamed suggests that these unprecedented protests marked a turning point for the Latino population—a point that is even more salient ten years later as the issue of immigration roils the politics of the 2016 presidential election. In *The New Americans?* Silber Mohamed explores the complexities of the Latino community, particularly as it is united and divided by the increasingly pressing questions of immigration. The largest minority group in the United States, Latinos are also one of the most diverse. *The New Americans?* focuses on the three largest national origin groups—Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans—as well as two rapidly growing subgroups, Salvadorans and Dominicans, charting similarities and differences defined by country of origin, gender, tenure in the country, and language. Taking advantage of a unique natural experiment, Silber Mohamed's study also shows how the messages advanced during the 2006 protests led group members to raise immigration rights to the level of traditional concerns about economics and education and think differently about what it means to be American—and, furthermore, to think more distinctly of themselves as American. A concise discussion of major developments in US immigration policy over the last fifty years, *The New Americans?* explores the varied historical experiences of the different Latino national origin groups. It also traces the evolving role of Latino social movements as a vehicle for political incorporation over the last century. In its in-depth analysis of the diversity of the Latino population, particularly in response to the politics of immigration, the book illuminates questions at the heart of American political culture: specifically, what does it mean to become American?

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"Relying on public opinion data, the author seeks to explain the trend of Latinos framing themselves as Americans rather than occupying a separate identity. Focusing on the period surrounding the 2006 immigrant rights protests, the book illustrates how those events transformed Latino identity and fueled greater political engagement." —Choice —The New Americans? offers a persuasive and timely argument that the immigration protests marked a significant change from previous Latino social movements in the way it positioned Latinos as Americans and not as a cluster of distinct subgroups. A thought provoking contribution that will make a timely addition to undergraduate and graduate courses on race and ethnicity in the US, identity politics, and Latino politics. —Marisa Abrajano, Associate Professor of Political Science, University of California San Diego —In this compelling and engaging book, Heather Silber Mohamed illustrates the role of public policy debate in shaping the course of Latino immigrant incorporation and identity formation. She draws on lessons from the past to help make sense of contemporary debates about immigration and their likely impact on Latinos in the United States. Notably, she capitalizes on a unique natural experiment to offer original findings on a timely and contentious set of issues. Even though federal immigration reform has stalled for years, Mohamed shows how the very act of debating policy change can alter one's sense of belonging and spark political engagement; she shows that policy feedback doesn't require policy change. Her book also raises important normative questions about the conditions that promote a sense of belonging in an increasingly diverse United States. —Deborah Schildkraut, author of Americanism in the Twenty-First Century: Public Opinion in the Age of Immigration —Using rich survey data and accessible prose, Heather Silber Mohamed's The New Americans? shows how watershed political events, like the 2006 Immigrants' Rights protests, don't just reflect, but affect how Latinos see their place in US society. Contrary to fears coming from both the left and the right, Silber Mohamed offers an account of how the politics of anti-immigrant backlash is leading America's largest ethnic group to weave themselves more firmly into the American National fabric. This is a must read for anyone hoping to understand politics in America today. —Tomás R. Jiménez, author of Replenished Ethnicity: Mexican Americans, Immigration, and Identity

Heather Silber Mohamed is assistant professor of political science at Clark University, Worcester,

Massachusetts. Her work has appeared in publications including American Politics Research and Politics, Groups, and Identities.

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