

# Latino Electoral Participation: Variations on Demographics and Ethnicity



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*Using the 2012 Latino Immigrant National Election Study, the 2012 American National Election Study, and the 2012 Current Population Survey, we document the demographic factors that influenced Latino (native-born and immigrant) voter turnout and participation in the 2012 presidential election. We estimate multi-variable models of turnout and participation, including standard demographic characteristics (education, income, age, gender, marital status) as explanatory variables. Our findings indicate that the relationships between these characteristics and participation are much less consistent across these datasets than the conventional wisdom would suggest. Understanding these results likely requires survey data—with large sample sizes—including information on the resources (including education and income) available to immigrants in their home countries to better understand the lingering influences of immigrants' experiences in their countries of origin on voter turnout.*

**Keywords:** Latino, voter turnout, political participation, immigrants, socioeconomic status, country of origin, 2012 presidential election, party contact

In the early stages of the 2016 presidential primaries in the United States, the increasing size and political presence of Latinos—and Latino immigrants—has clearly been reflected in candidates' campaign rhetoric and strategies. Because immigrants and immigration policy are central to the campaign dialogue at this stage, it is especially important to understand the possible, or even likely, political responses of Latinos, both foreign- and native-born. Although scholars have repeatedly emphasized the increasing electoral relevance of Latinos (see, most recently, Barreto and Segura 2014), studies of Latino turnout and political participation present a complex and unclear picture

of the factors that influence Latino political engagement.

This complexity contrasts with Sidney Verba, Kay Schlozman, and Henry Brady's (1995) seemingly simple description of how to think about why individuals participate: because they can, because they want to, or because they are asked. Surely individual resources such as money, time, and skills are important for understanding political engagement in contemporary democratic politics (most recently, see Leighley and Nagler 2014). Yet a challenge to understanding broad patterns of political engagement is that traditional demographic models such as Verba,

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Schlozman, and Brady's may be less applicable for a community that is distinctive in terms of immigration status and experience, language skills, and social integration (Junn 2010). Sergio Garcia-Rios and Matt Barreto, for example, emphasize in this volume the critical role of immigrant identity in predicting political engagement but suggest that identity is independent of the important role of resources in understanding immigrant participation.

The study of Latino voter turnout has shifted over the past several decades from comparisons of whether Latinos vote more or less than whites to more recent studies focusing on factors distinctive to Latinos or to Latino turnout in specific elections (see, for example, Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, in contrast to Abrajano and Panagopoulos 2011; Barreto 2005; Barreto, Segura, and Woods 2004; Bueker 2013). These new studies have not clearly resolved the extent to which the standard demographic variables repeatedly associated with citizens' decisions to vote in presidential elections likewise influence Latinos' decisions to cast a ballot.

Latino political mobilization around immigration issues has also shifted some attention to Latino political activity other than voting. These studies point to the importance of political issues and community organizations in mobilizing Latinos to take action, and in modes of participation not requiring citizenship or voter registration status (see, for example, Leal et al. 2008; Levin 2013; Mohamed 2013; in this volume, see both Garcia-Rios and Barreto and Waldinger and Duquette-Rury). Yet these studies, too, offer an unclear picture as to how the basic resources of Latinos—such as education, income, and age—influence their political engagement.

In this chapter, we use the 2012 Latino Immigrant National Election Study (LINES) and the 2012 American National Election Study (ANES) to document the demographic factors that influenced Latino voter turnout and political participation in the 2012 presidential election, and to assess the extent to which demographic resources such as education, in-

come, and age are similar or different in their effects on Latino native-born and immigrant engagement. To put these findings in broader context, we also compare them with similar analyses for non-Hispanic whites in the 2012 presidential election.

### LATINO TURNOUT: U.S.-BORN AND FOREIGN-BORN

Although demographic factors remain central in discussions of voter turnout in studies focused on mass political behavior in the United States (Leighley and Nagler 2014), studies focusing on specific racial and ethnic groups report inconsistent findings regarding the importance or meaning of the demographic correlates of turnout. Most studies of specific racial and ethnic groups, for example, find that education is an important predictor of turnout in elections, presidential and otherwise, but many report that income is not associated with greater likelihood of voting (Barreto 2005; Bueker 2013; Jang 2009; Pantoja, Ramírez, and Segura 2001; Parkin and Zlotnik 2011; Shaw, de la Garza, and Lee 2000; Tam Cho 1999).<sup>1</sup> The studies that tend to report statistically significant (and positive) estimates of the effects of education and income on Latinos' decisions to vote are typically based on surveys with large sample sizes (Bass and Casper 2001; Cassel 2002; Jackson 2003). Whether null findings regarding income (and sometimes education) based on smaller, typically more local or regionally based samples emerge solely due to sample size or for other reasons associated with the sample, survey administration or local political context is not clear.

Benjamin Highton and Arthur Burris (2002) analyze Latino turnout using the 1996 Current Population Survey (CPS), estimating a demographic model of turnout separately for Cuban Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Mexican Americans (sample sizes of 204, 654, and 1,958, respectively). They find education to be a significant predictor of turnout for each group, but income to be a significant predictor for only Mexican Americans. Other variables included in the model include residential stability, for-

1. See Leal (2002) regarding nonelectoral political participation being unrelated to education and income but related to information, identity, and English language proficiency.

eign born, and years in the United States, along with state dummies. Highton and Burris also note the importance of including how long individuals have been in the United States in models estimating the importance of nativity, and show that lower immigrant turnout, compared with native born, is modified or reduced when conditioning on years of residence in the United States. "Citizens who have lived in the country for longer periods of time," they conclude, "have had more experience with the American political system and have higher levels of political information and understanding. All these factors facilitate turnout" (2002, 301).

Many studies of Latino turnout tend to emphasize *nondemographic* factors associated with the social and political context, immigration experience or cultural characteristics and resources. These characteristics include English language use (Johnson, Stein, and Wrinkle 2003; Parkin and Zlotnik 2011; Pearson-Merkowitz 2012a, 2012b; Tam Cho 1999); length of time in United States (Highton and Burris 2002; Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001); and the political environment in which one naturalizes (see, for example, Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001). The importance of political environment is underscored by Barreto's (2005) and Adrian Pantoja, Ricardo Ramírez, and Gary Segura's (2001) findings that Latino foreign-born turnout is higher than Latino native-born turnout. Some studies also include Spanish-language ballot access and interview language in models, though the precise nature of the effects of these variables is quite variable in what is expected, how it is modeled, and the significance of the estimates (Johnson, Stein, and Wrinkle 2003; Parkin and Zlotnik 2011; Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001).

Recent research has, importantly, pointed to a decidedly *nondemographic* factor associated with Latino voter turnout: political mobilization. As in the case of studies of turnout focusing on Anglo-dominant samples based on self-reports (for example, ANES-based survey data; see Rosenstone and Hansen 1993), Latinos who report being contacted to vote are more likely to also report having voted (Pantoja, Ramírez, and Segura 2001; Ramírez 2005). More rigorous causal inferences on the importance of mobilization, of course, can be drawn

from studies relying on field experiments (see, most recently, García Bedolla and Michelson 2012; Michelson 2003, 2005, 2006; Michelson and García Bedolla 2014; Stevens and Bishin 2011; Matland and Murray 2012). These studies find that Latinos who are mobilized are more likely to vote than those who are not mobilized, but also suggest that political parties are less likely to contact Latinos (than whites) and that nonparty mobilization may be less effective in mobilizing Latino turnout than party mobilization is (Stevens and Bishin 2011).

Studies of Latino immigrant turnout point to potentially distinctive influences on those Latino immigrants who have become citizens and are eligible to vote. Barreto (2005) argues that the political environment at the time of naturalization influences the level of subsequent political engagement of Latino immigrants who become eligible to vote and observes that these contextual influences vary across states (Florida, California, and Texas). As a result of these differences, naturalized Latinos may participate as much as or more than native-born Latinos (see also Pantoja, Ramírez, and Segura 2001).

Finally, studies of Latino participation beyond voter turnout are few in number (Valdez 2011; Wrinkle et al. 1996). The assumption might be made that the same factors predicting Latino turnout should be relevant to other types of participation such as attending meetings or contacting officials, but this may not be the case for Latino immigrants. In a study of Latino noncitizen participation, David Leal (2002) concludes that education, income, and length of stay in the United States were not significant predictors of Latino immigrant participation, but that political identity, English skills, and age were. Ines Levin (2013) concludes that immigrants who have gained citizenship status are no more likely to engage in community activities such as belonging to political groups or engaging in problem-solving. However, these citizens are more likely to contact government officials than are immigrants who have not completed the naturalization process.

Leal, Jerod Patterson, and Joe Tafoya report elsewhere in this issue mixed findings for the effects of education on turnout, civic participa-

tion, and campaign participation of immigrants, but no effects of income on these types of participation. However, their analyses and discussion focus primarily on the influence of religion, as opposed to demographics, on participation.

The analyses here seek to use the most recent and comprehensive data on Latino immigrants to reflect on the sources identified in the previous literature as important to understanding both turnout and other types of political participation. We examine the similarities and differences in the correlates of citizen and noncitizen participation of Latino immigrants, with comparisons to native-born Latinos and whites. We do not speak directly to the role of party or nonparty mobilization, the mobilizing effects of issues, or the importance of group identity. The focus on demographics to the exclusion of these important factors is motivated in part by the importance of documenting the distinctively different role of demographics to understanding Latino immigrant turnout and nonelectoral participation as an important first step toward understanding more fully Latino political engagement.

#### DATA AND SAMPLES

We use data from the 2012 LINES, the 2012 ANES, and the 2012 U.S. Census Bureau CPS. The LINES survey is a representative survey of immigrants from Latino-speaking countries, while the ANES is a nationally representative survey of U.S. citizens, including both foreign-born and native-born Latinos. The CPS is a monthly survey conducted by the Census Bureau that includes questions about voter turn-

out in its November survey. Together, these survey data allow us to study the turnout of native-born and foreign-born Latino citizens as well as the nonelectoral participation of native-born and foreign-born Latino citizens and non-citizens; it also allows us to compare our findings to the turnout and political participation of non-Hispanic white citizens.

Although the large sample size of the LINES survey allows questions regarding immigrants to be addressed more fully than previous studies have allowed (as demonstrated in other papers in this volume), the number of survey respondents eligible to vote remains quite small. The LINES postelection wave, which provides the measure of self-reported turnout, has 886 respondents, of whom only 327 are eligible to vote based on citizenship status.

Our measure of self-reported voter turnout is based on individuals' responses to the LINES question asking whether they had voted in the November election. Only individuals who responded "I am sure I voted" were coded as voting; those who responded "I did not vote," "I thought about voting this time, but didn't," or "I usually vote, but didn't this time" were coded as not voting.<sup>2</sup>

The same question wording, set of response categories, and final coding details are used for the ANES 2012 self-reported turnout measure, where we restrict the sample to three groups: U.S.-born Latinos, foreign-born Latinos, and whites. Using subsamples of U.S.-born Latinos and foreign-born Latinos in the ANES allows us to assess whether the determinants of turnout are the same for these two groups, and allows a comparison of both of

2. Self-reported voter turnout measures undoubtedly overestimate actual voter turnout. Since a primary goal of this paper is to compare empirical findings across the LINES and ANES samples, it is important to use the same type of measure available in both datasets. In relying on the self-reported turnout measure, it is important that the misreporting rates of Latinos and whites do not differ to draw appropriate conclusions regarding turnout differences across these two groups. We compared misreporting rates between Hispanics and the entire electorate using the 2008 Cooperative Congressional Election Survey (CCES). The sample includes 32,800 respondents, including 2,000 self-identified Hispanic respondents. For the entire sample, 79.7 percent of reported voters were validated as having voted. For Hispanic voters, 76.3 percent were validated as having voted. The misreporting rate as measured by the proportion of reported voters who were verified as being not registered, or verified as not voting, was 12.5 percent for all respondents and 13.2 percent for Hispanics. Thus we think our results for Hispanics presented using the LINES and ANES data can safely be compared with results based on reported vote for other non-Hispanic samples. [All values computed by the authors from the CCES cumulative file using the supplied weight variable.]

these groups to Latino immigrant behavior as documented in the LINES study.

In both the LINES and ANES data, we use a measure of nonvoting participation that indicates whether the respondent reports engaging in any one of five activities over the course of the election year: trying to influence another's vote; attending a campaign rally, speech, or dinner in support of a particular candidate; wearing a button or displaying a sign or sticker; doing campaign work; or contributing to a political candidate.

The demographic variables we examine in both datasets are coded the same to facilitate comparison. Our education measure has four categories: less than high school, high school graduate, some college, and college degree or higher. Income is coded into four categories: less than \$20,000, \$20,000 to 40,000, \$40,000 to 80,000, and more than \$80,000. Age is coded into four groups for presenting descriptive statistics: eighteen through thirty-four, thirty-five through forty-four, forty-five through fifty-four, and fifty-five and older.

### THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF TURNOUT AND ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION

Table 1 reports the turnout and electoral participation rates (as appropriate) for five subsamples: LINES noncitizens, LINES citizens, ANES Latino foreign-born citizens, ANES native-born Latinos, and ANES (non-Hispanic) whites.<sup>3</sup> Of course, turnout is not reported for the noncitizen group. The ANES data suggest that Latino foreign-born citizens report voting at about the same rate as white respondents—84.3 percent compared to 85.5 percent—and that U.S.-born Latinos report voting

at slightly lower levels, 78.9 percent. In contrast, only 72 percent of (LINES) Latino immigrant citizens report having voted. The discrepancy between turnout of Latino immigrant citizens across the two samples could be because of the different sampling frames used, or other survey administration differences between LINES and the ANES.<sup>4</sup> We also note that although all calculations are reported using weights for education and age, the LINES citizens were substantially more likely to be in the lowest income group than ANES foreign-born citizens were: 46.9 percent of the LINES citizens were in the lowest income group, compared to only 30.7 percent of ANES foreign-born Hispanics in the lowest income group.

The two (LINES and ANES) immigrant groups, however, report participating in nonvoting campaign-related activities at about the same level as U.S.-born Latinos and whites. This contrasts with the substantially lower reported nonvoting participation rate of 34.3 percent reported by (LINES) noncitizens. This could be because though these noncitizens are eligible to engage in these participatory acts, someone who is not eligible to vote themselves may simply be much less likely to attend a campaign rally or try to convince someone else how to vote.<sup>5</sup>

Table 2 includes the self-reported turnout rates for LINES citizens and for ANES Latino foreign-born citizens, Latino native-born citizens, and white citizens, by education, income, age, and gender. The clear pattern of increasing education level being associated with higher turnout rates that is observed for whites does not hold for the other samples, although

3. Throughout the paper, we use the term *whites* to refer to the non-Hispanic white subsample. See issue appendix for details on the weights used for each group: non-Hispanic whites, Hispanic immigrant citizens, and Hispanic native-born citizens.

4. We note that calculating turnout using the CPS from 2012 would yield estimates of 52.3 percent for Latino naturalized citizens, and 64.1 percent for non-Hispanic whites. Thus respondents in LINES seem to overreport turnout in ways similar to ANES respondents, or persons more likely to vote are more likely to respond to both surveys. The difference in turnout between Latino immigrant citizens and non-Hispanic whites based on the CPS data is 12.8 percent, which is similar to the difference in turnout between these two groups when using LINES and ANES data (13.5 percent).

5. However, Leal and Patterson (this volume) report immigrants' participation in civic (noncampaign) activities to be lower than the 34 percent of LINES noncitizens who engage in political participation other than voting.

**Table 1.** Self-Reported Turnout and Participation

	LINES Latino Immigrant Noncitizens	LINES Latino Immigrant Citizens	ANES Latino Foreign-Born Citizens	ANES Latino U.S.-Born Citizens	ANES White Citizens
Turnout		72% (351)	84.3% (124)	78.9% (260)	85.5% (2757)
Participation	34.3% (508)	46.0% (360)	43.2% (176)	45.4% (305)	45.9% (3259)

Source: Authors' calculations using ANES 2012, McCann and Jones-Correa 2012.

Note: Cell entries are the (weighted) proportion of each sample in the row who repeat voting (row 1) or participating (row 2); values in parentheses are the number of respondents of each sample in the row.

**Table 2.** Self-Reported Turnout by Demographic Characteristics

	LINES Latino Immigrant Citizens	ANES Latino Foreign-Born Citizens	ANES Latino U.S.-Born Citizens	ANES White Citizens
<b>Education</b>				
Less than high school	73.5% (184)	73.5% (39)	54.1% (26)	71.1% (150)
High school graduate	70.4% (63)	82.1% (38)	85.2% (74)	82.4% (636)
Some college	68.1% (60)	86.2% (32)	77.7% (91)	86.5% (875)
College graduate	77% (35)	100% (32)	92.9% (66)	91.6% (1070)
<b>Income</b>				
Less than \$20,000	68.0% (132)	81.2% (43)	63.6% (70)	75.2% (416)
\$20,000-\$40,000	77.9% (78)	79.4% (35)	81.2% (49)	82.9% (494)
\$40,000-\$80,000	68.0% (49)	86.9% (43)	88.5% (73)	86.8% (813)
\$80,000 and above	71.6% (22)	94.2% (21)	91.0% (62)	91.5% (884)
<b>Gender</b>				
Men	70.0% (158)	83.2% (79)	79.5% (149)	85.7% (1363)
Women	74.0% (193)	85.4% (65)	78.1% (111)	85.3% (1394)
<b>Age</b>				
Eighteen to thirty-four	57.8% (31)	83.0% (12)	92.0% (91)	73.2% (480)
Thirty-five to forty-four	77.5% (52)	85.9% (23)	85.1% (40)	86.0% (398)
Forty-five to fifty-four	69.5% (66)	89.7% (39)	68.7% (46)	87.9% (517)
Fifty-five and older	80.7% (177)	79.8% (70)	76.3% (83)	92.0% (1343)

Source: Authors' calculations using ANES 2012, McCann and Jones-Correa 2012.

Note: Cell entries are the (weighted) proportion of each sample in the row who report voting; values in parentheses are the number of respondents of each sample in the row.

in each group high school graduates and those who failed to graduate from high school vote less than college graduates. Across the four groups, U.S.-born Latinos with less than a high school education report voting substantially less than the others.

A positive relationship between income and voter turnout is confirmed for three groups, Latino immigrant citizens being the exception. Although the poorest (LINES) Latino immigrants report voting at slightly higher rates than the poorest Latinos born in the United States (68 percent compared to 63.6 percent), these immigrant citizens do not seem to benefit from additional income, because the level of turnout in this group at the highest level of income increases only to 71.6 percent (compared to reported turnout over 90 percent for each of the other samples).

The LINES immigrant citizens and ANES Latino foreign-born citizens are also distinctive in reported turnout rates by gender, where they are the only groups to report slightly higher turnout rates for women than for men—though the difference in turnout between men and women is small in all samples.

The self-reported turnout rates by age category are more complex for the three Latino subsamples than for the white citizen (ANES) sample. Conventional wisdom is that turnout increases as individuals age, and presumably gain more experience with democratic politics, but this is documented only for the white citizens. For (ANES) Latino foreign-born citizens and U.S.-born citizens, the youngest age group reports quite high levels of turnout. The lowest turnout among youth is reported by (LINES) immigrant citizens (57.8 percent).<sup>6</sup>

Table 3 reports levels of electoral participation other than turnout for LINES noncitizens, LINES citizens, ANES Latino foreign-born citizens, ANES Latino native born, and ANES whites, by education, income, age, and gender. Here, the expected pattern of higher levels of education being associated with greater levels of participation is confirmed for each group. Although Latino immigrant noncitizens with the least education report the least participa-

tion, Latino immigrant citizens (LINES and ANES) report participating at higher levels than U.S.-born Latinos and whites. The same positive pattern between income and turnout is observed for every group except for (ANES) Latino foreign-born citizens.

Women in the (LINES) citizen and noncitizen groups report participating less than men, as do women in the white citizen sample. Gender differences are minimal or not observed for the (ANES) Latinos, whether foreign born or U.S. born. Age is distinctive for its clear positive association with self-reported turnout for white citizens, in contrast to the other samples.

### MULTIVARIABLE MODELS OF TURNOUT AND NONVOTING PARTICIPATION

We now turn to estimating multivariable models of turnout and participation, seeking to understand better the associations between each demographic characteristic and turnout or participation while conditioning on the other characteristics. These findings are important because they provide the first precise estimates of the similarities and differences of the effects of demographic characteristics on turnout and participation for Latino immigrants and for native-born Latinos with direct comparisons to white citizens. Our demographic model of turnout includes the standard measures used in studies of voter turnout: education, income, age, gender, and marital status.

Table 4 presents estimates for the demographic model of turnout estimated for the four citizen groups (LINES citizens, ANES Latino foreign-born citizens, ANES Latino U.S.-born citizens, and ANES white citizens). As predictors of turnout, we include respondents' level of education and income, as well as age and gender, and a dummy variable indicating whether the respondent is married. We also include variables for whether the respondent lives in the South, California, Florida, or Texas. Using these three state variables is a minimal way to include state-fixed effects in the model. We do not have enough observations to include fixed effects for each state. But these

6. The sample size in the lowest age group is quite small for ANES foreign-born citizens, which of course makes the turnout estimate much less reliable.

**Table 3.** Participation by Demographic Characteristics

	LINES Latino Immigrant Noncitizens	LINES Latino Immigrant Citizens	ANES Latino Foreign-Born Citizens	ANES Latino U.S.-Born Citizens	ANES White Citizens
<b>Education</b>					
Less than high school	28.6% (331)	40.9% (187)	42.8% (51)	39.8% (30)	35.2% (216)
High school graduate	35.3% (94)	46.1% (64)	30.6% (47)	44.3% (89)	40.1% (787)
Some college	44.2% (46)	45.4% (61)	55.5% (40)	50.2% (107)	49.3% (1019)
College graduate	60.0% (25)	50.0% (37)	56.3% (35)	47.3% (74)	53.1% (1200)
<b>Income</b>					
Less than \$20,000	35.4% (240)	38.3% (134)	44.4% (50)	40.6% (85)	37.0% (549)
\$20,000–\$40,000	35.6% (128)	41.5% (81)	35.7% (46)	46.7% (61)	43.6% (607)
\$40,000–\$80,000	41.0% (45)	49.2% (51)	38.4% (53)	45.3% (85)	49.6% (915)
\$80,000 and above	47.8% (9)	60.2% (22)	72.0% (24)	49.9% (67)	51.8% (993)
<b>Gender</b>					
Men	36.3% (222)	50.2% (162)	43.2% (92)	46.5% (169)	49.5% (1627)
Women	31.9% (286)	42.4% (198)	43.2% (84)	44.2% (136)	42.2% (1632)
<b>Age</b>					
Eighteen to thirty-four	38.5% (101)	47.6% (32)	35.8% (19)	47.8% (106)	36.8% (613)
Thirty-five to forty-four	31.4% (136)	34.9% (55)	34.3% (28)	39.6% (44)	43.5% (456)
Forty-five to fifty-four	36.3% (121)	45.9% (66)	50.0% (43)	36.4% (53)	44.8% (602)
Fifty-five and older	37.3% (114)	49.1% (179)	47.6% (86)	50.1% (102)	53.7% (1565)

Source: Authors' calculations using ANES 2012, McCann and Jones-Correa 2012.

Note: Cell entries are the (weighted) proportion of each sample in the row who report participating; values in parentheses are the number of respondents of each sample in the row.

three states capture where a large number of Hispanics reside, and thus allow us to condition on any state-based fixed effects on turn-

out.<sup>7</sup> We see in table 4 that, as expected, higher levels of education, income, and age, as well as being married, are associated with higher re-

7. State-based fixed effects would capture any specific characteristics of the state—such as a more competitive state-wide election or laws that impose fewer hurdles to voting—that could raise or depress the level of turnout in the state relative to other states. This is especially important in studying Latino turnout as Latinos tend to be overrepresented in noncompetitive states such as Florida and Texas.

**Table 4.** Demographic Model of Turnout

	LINES Latino Immigrant Citizens	ANES Latino Foreign-Born Citizens	ANES Latino U.S.-Born Citizens	ANES White Citizens
Education	0.007 (0.157)	0.583** (0.262)	0.458** (0.227)	0.450*** (0.073)
Income	0.321* (0.181)	0.105 (0.267)	0.378* (0.199)	0.226*** (0.066)
Age	0.018* (0.011)	-0.017 (0.020)	0.034*** (0.013)	0.038*** (0.004)
Woman	0.265 (0.302)	0.013 (0.484)	0.357 (0.394)	-0.055 (0.129)
Married	-0.191 (0.317)	0.391 (0.511)	0.879** (0.430)	0.307** (0.140)
South	-0.950* (0.571)		1.183 (1.124)	-0.042 (0.181)
California	-0.053 (0.375)		0.032 (0.482)	0.515* (0.295)
Texas	0.433 (0.580)		-1.854 (1.152)	-0.604** (0.277)
Florida	1.290* (0.692)		-0.679 (1.346)	0.124 (0.345)
Constant	-0.470 (0.867)	0.871 (1.388)	-2.176*** (0.825)	-1.849*** (0.321)
Observations	264	139	252	2,573
LR	0.110	0.109	1.22e-05	0
Log likelihood	-147.5	-56.22	-90.83	-834.7

Source: Authors' calculations using ANES 2012, McCann and Jones-Correa 2012.

Note: Cell entry is the logit coefficient; standard errors in parentheses.

\* $p < .1$ ; \*\* $p < .05$ ; \*\*\* $p < .01$

ported turnout for white citizens.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to our expectations based on recent research, women are no more likely to report voting than men are for any of the four groups.

Our two primary indicators of socioeconomic status, education and income, are significant and estimated to be positive for both white and Latino U.S.-born citizens. In contrast, only education is significantly and positively associated with reported turnout for

(ANES) Latino foreign-born citizens, and only income is positively associated with reported turnout for (LINES) immigrant citizens. These different findings might well reflect differences in the sampling frames or survey administration of LINES and ANES as much as any "real" difference in the predictors of turnout for these two samples, though this is a finding that likely requires additional investigation.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to these standard demographic

8. We also estimated each of the multivariable models including age at time of immigration. The coefficient for this variable was never significant, and did not substantially alter any of the other results. These results are available from the authors.

9. We also estimated the turnout model with each of the demographic variables and all four contextual variables (South, Florida, Texas, California) using data from the CPS. In this model education was a strong predictor of

characteristics, we also include whether the respondent lives in the South, California, Florida, or Texas in three of the models.<sup>10</sup> Including these variables in the model estimated for the ANES foreign-born citizens is not possible due to high multicollinearity among these variables (owing to the ANES foreign-born Latino respondents being drawn disproportionately from these three states). The only group for which living in the South is estimated to be significant at even the 10 percent level is for the (LINES) Latino immigrant citizens. Latino immigrant citizens living in the South are less likely to report voting than Latino immigrants living outside the South are. These immigrants are also significantly more likely to report voting if they live in Florida, again the only group for which this state context seems to influence reported turnout rates.

Although none of the contextual measures are significant for U.S.-born Latinos, both living in California and living in Texas is significantly related to turnout for white citizens. Whites living in California are significantly more likely to report voting, whereas whites living in Texas are significantly less likely. These distinctive results for Latinos and whites might reflect the different mobilization contexts of each of these states for these two groups, a point to which we return to in the conclusion.

Table 5 presents our estimates for the impact of these demographic characteristics on nonvoting participation. The additional benefit of these analyses is that they provide more detailed information regarding the correlates of participation of Latino noncitizen immigrants. Recent studies have emphasized the importance of immigration as a political issue as a mobilizer of Latino political engagement, but the question remains as to whether the socioeconomic correlates of participation enhance the political engagement of noncitizens.

As reported in table 5, the demographic correlates of nonvoting participation are signifi-

cant and as expected for white citizens. Education, income, age, and being married are all positively associated with nonvoting participation, and being a woman is negatively associated with nonelectoral participation, conditional on values of the variables included in the model. However, examining the first three columns of table 5, we see that few of these demographic characteristics are systematically associated with nonvoting participation for Latino immigrants, whether citizen or not. For (LINES) noncitizens, only education significantly predicts participation, but for foreign-born Latino citizens, education and age significantly predict participation. For (LINES) immigrant citizens and (ANES) U.S.-born Latinos, none of the demographic predictors are significantly associated with participation.

These systematic estimates of the demographic correlates of turnout and nonvoting participation suggest that theories that posit the importance of socioeconomic status are more relevant to Latinos for voter turnout rather than nonvoting participation. For nonvoting participation, it appears that factors other than demographic resources might provide a different path to political engagement. We provide some additional data as to these alternative possibilities next.

#### **IF NOT—OR ONLY—DEMOGRAPHICS, THEN WHAT?**

Our focus thus far has been on Verba, Schlozman, and Brady's (1995) first explanation of why individuals participate—because they can. Given somewhat mixed evidence for the systematic importance of education and income as predictors of turnout and nonvoting participation for Latinos (whether immigrants or not), we now turn briefly to two other explanations that Verba, Schlozman, and Brady noted (and many others since then have recognized): individuals participate because they want to, or because they are asked.

Investigating these explanations fully is be-

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voting among naturalized Latino citizens and U.S.-born Latino citizens. However, income was not a strong predictor, nor was it statistically significant for naturalized Latino citizens. This could reflect fundamental differences in sampling design between the CPS and LINES, or it could simply reflect the fragility of estimates from LINES based on only 264 respondents (for the full model results from the CPS, see table A1).

10. We use the standard eleven-state measure of the South.

**Table 5.** Demographic Model of Nonvoting Participation

	LINES Latino Immigrant Noncitizens	LINES Latino Immigrant Citizens	ANES Latino Foreign-Born Citizens	ANES Latino U.S.-Born Citizens	ANES White Citizens
Education	0.536*** (0.131)	0.038 (0.135)	0.308** (0.156)	0.190 (0.141)	0.237*** (0.043)
Income	0.115 (0.145)	0.242 (0.157)	0.136 (0.165)	0.127 (0.120)	0.091** (0.040)
Age	0.013 (0.009)	0.006 (0.010)	0.024** (0.012)	0.002 (0.007)	0.017*** (0.002)
Woman	-0.124 (0.226)	-0.324 (0.269)	0.028 (0.320)	0.053 (0.245)	-0.253*** (0.075)
Married	-0.227 (0.227)	-0.205 (0.278)	0.040 (0.354)	-0.081 (0.252)	0.201** (0.082)
South	0.281 (0.415)	-0.426 (0.598)		-1.126** (0.572)	0.007 (0.108)
California	-0.125 (0.280)	0.596* (0.333)		-0.048 (0.303)	-0.089 (0.134)
Texas	-0.347 (0.431)	0.465 (0.615)		0.817 (0.591)	-0.147 (0.185)
Florida	0.327 (0.650)	0.946 (0.648)		0.528 (0.694)	0.209 (0.188)
Constant	-1.994*** (0.593)	-1.094 (0.777)	-2.474*** (0.904)	-0.839 (0.530)	-1.843*** (0.199)
Observations	386	268	170	295	3017
LR	0.00358	0.234	0.0914	0.327	0
Log likelihood	-239.4	-177.2	-112.8	-198.6	-2022

Source: Authors' calculations using ANES 2012, McCann and Jones-Correa 2012.

Note: Cell entry is the logit coefficient; standard errors in parentheses.

\* $p < .1$ ; \*\* $p < .05$ ; \*\*\* $p < .01$

yond the scope of this paper, but we do think it is important to take advantage of the unique details regarding motivation and mobilization that the LINES data provides, to reflect on whether these are fruitful strategies to pursue in future research. Most conventional studies of how motivation influences participation focus on positive attitudinal orientations toward participation of citizens, attitudes such as political interest or political engagement. Although the empirical patterns reflected in these studies support arguments that motivated individuals are more likely to participate, the causal inferences drawn by predicting behavior by attitudes both measured at the same time in cross-sectional surveys are especially limited.

The LINES dataset provides an opportunity to investigate whether individuals' orientations or previous experience frames subsequent behavior by relying on immigrants' self-reported political engagement in their country of origin. It also provides an opportunity to advance two contrasting hypotheses about these relationships. On the one hand, we might expect that individuals who were politically engaged in their country of origin will be more likely to participate in the United States, the implication being that such individuals have a preference, personality, or worldview that values political engagement. On the other hand, we might expect that individuals who were politically engaged in their country of origin do not increase their overall level of engagement

**Table 6.** Self-Reported Turnout

	LINES Immigrant Citizens
<b>Active in politics in country of origin</b>	
Very active (N=17)	66.50%
Somewhat active (N=30)	80.70
Not active (N=122)	79.00
<b>Voted in country of origin</b>	
Sometimes (N=75)	80.90
Did not vote (N=92)	76.50
<b>Think government in country of origin pays attention to elections</b>	
Good deal (N=14)	96.20
Some (N=58)	73.10
Not much (N=93)	80.80
<b>Voted in country of origin while in United States</b>	
Yes (N=21)	91.80
No (N=148)	76.40
<b>Interested in politics in country of origin</b>	
A lot (N=63)	93.20
Some (N=30)	73.70
Little (N=24)	60.90
None (N=52)	68.30

Source: Authors' calculations using McCann and Jones-Correa 2012.

Note: Table entries are the (weighted) proportion of each sample in the row who report voting.

by also participating in U.S. politics, but instead continue their engagement in country-of-origin politics and are therefore less likely to engage in U.S. political matters. Roger Waldinger and Lauren Duquette-Rory discuss elsewhere in this issue the complexities of the relationships between home country and host country political orientations and experiences. Their analysis suggests that home country political engagement of immigrants sometimes “carries over” to the United States (host country) with respect to political orientations such as political trust and confidence in elections. The most relevant (for our purposes) carry-over they document is that individuals who were active in political parties in the home country are more interested in elections in the United States. But this leaves the question of whether individuals who were politically engaged in the home country are more likely to participate in the host country.

We provide some initial data on these arguments, using the self-reported turnout rates of (LINES) immigrant citizens by their level of engagement in their country of origin, in table 6. These data provide some support for the argument that individuals who voted in their country of origin are more likely to vote in the United States, once they achieve citizenship: 81 percent of individuals who reported voting in their country of origin report voting in the United States, compared to 77 percent of those who did not vote in their country of origin. More broadly, however, individuals reporting that they were somewhat active in politics in the country of origin are not substantially more likely to report voting than their non-active country-of-origin counterparts (81 percent compared to 79 percent).

On our second point as to whether continued engagement in the country of origin depresses political engagement in the United

**Table 7.** Reported Party and Nonparty Contact

	LINES Immigrant Noncitizens	LINES Immigrant Citizens	ANES Latino Foreign-Born Citizens	ANES Latino U.S.-Born Citizens	ANES White Citizens
Contacted by party	12.9% (510)	41.4% (361)	44.2% (176)	35.4% (305)	44.8% (3259)
Contacted by other than party	10.3% (511)	18.0% (358)	17.0% (176)	18.3% (305)	20.0% (3254)

Source: Authors' calculations using ANES 2012, McCann and Jones-Correa 2012.

Note: Cell entries are the (weighted) proportion of each sample in the row who report being contacted; values in parentheses are the number of respondents of each sample in the row.

States, we have more consistent evidence. Individuals who report continuing to vote in the country of origin while in the United States are more likely to report voting in the U.S. than are individuals who report not continuing to vote (92 percent compared to 76 percent). Those who report being very interested in the politics of their country of origin also report voting in the United States at substantially higher levels than those with less interest (93 percent compared to 74 percent and lower).

Together, these bivariate patterns suggest that immigrants who enter the United States with political interest and engagement are more likely to vote in the United States, but that continued political interest in their country of origin does not detract from their political engagement in the United States.<sup>11</sup> As Waldinger and Duquette-Rory suggest in this volume, the linkages between home and host country political experiences and attitudes are surely complex, yet our evidence on self-reported political participation suggests a more direct linkage.

Similar challenges of establishing rigorous causal inferences in studying attitudinal motivations and participation are associated with studying mobilization and participation. Numerous field studies have provided more rigorous evidence regarding the effectiveness of being mobilized to vote on individuals' prob-

ability of voting. These studies have pointed to the effectiveness of both party and nonparty mobilization of Latinos. Given the limited utility of including mobilization measures in cross-sectional models of turnout, we did not include such measures in the multivariable models. However, we do think it important to describe the mobilization environments reported by our different Latino and white samples, and whether such patterns are associated with self-reported turnout.

Table 7 presents the percentage of each sample that reports being contacted by either a party or a nonparty group. The dramatic difference observed in comparing the groups is the substantially lower mobilization rate for (LINES) immigrant noncitizens, where only 13 percent report being contacted by a party, and 10 percent report being contacted by a nonparty group. This group thus has dramatically lower levels of mobilization by parties. This is, of course, what we would expect because parties rely so heavily on voter registration files for voter contact efforts and are unlikely to reach out to people not eligible to vote.

However, the noncitizen group also had substantially lower contact rates by nonparty groups. U.S.-born Latinos report the lowest party-contact rate among citizens, whereas foreign-born Latinos report party-contact rates comparable to those of whites. This suggests

11. Of course, these are only bivariate patterns and ignore differences across countries of origin, as well as other individual-level characteristics that might be associated with voter turnout (such as other attitudinal orientations or experiences, among others).

that immigrants who naturalize may be more likely to be reached by traditional party mobilization efforts than U.S.-born Latinos are.

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Demographics are at the heart of theories of political behavior, especially voter turnout. Our interest in documenting the importance of demographic characteristics such as education, income, age, gender, and marital status for Latinos in the United States was motivated in part by challenges to the conventional wisdom regarding the demographic bases of voter turnout for Latinos in the United States. As the Latino population grows in size and political presence, understanding whether Latino electoral behavior is explained by the same factors explaining the behavior of other groups is critical to understanding electoral politics in the United States.

The availability of a new dataset focusing on Latino immigrants, along with a large oversample of Latinos in the 2012 ANES, provides a unique opportunity to document both similarities and differences between white citizens and U.S.-born Latinos, and foreign-born Latino citizens. Although relying on two different datasets introduces the possibility that some differences reflect survey-specific factors rather than actual differences in reported behavior across these groups, we nonetheless think it important that the ANES data suggest that white citizens and Latino foreign-born citizens report voting at the same rate—and a higher rate than that reported by Latino U.S.-born citizens.

Reconciling this finding with the much lower self-reported voter turnout rate of 72 percent by Latino immigrant citizens from LINES must be considered in future studies of Latino voter turnout. That the self-reported nonvoting participation rates of Latino immigrant citizens from LINES are approximately the same as those reported by each of the ANES subsamples—Latino foreign-born citizens, Latino U.S.-born citizens, and white citizens—suggests that LINES does not systematically underestimate participation levels but still does not reconcile the two estimates.

Perhaps our most notable finding is how poorly the demographic characteristics that are central to predicting whites' political en-

agement in the United States fare in predicting either turnout or nonvoting participation of Latino immigrants in the LINES dataset. Studies of turnout in the United States always begin by identifying education and income as key predictors of participation, and their empirical findings typically emphasize the consistency and strength of the relationships between education and turnout and income and turnout. Yet this may not be the case for Latino immigrants. In both simple bivariate relationships (table 2) and in a multivariable model conditioning on other factors (table 4), we fail to find a significant relationship between education and turnout for Latino immigrants. Failure to identify a statistically significant relationship in a multivariable model with only 264 observations could simply result from relying on a small sample size, even in our estimates based on CPS data. But even when the sample size is almost two thousand respondents (a size similar to many studies of Anglos finding the traditional relationships between education and turnout and income and turnout), we find no significant relationship between income and turnout among Latino immigrants. We note that within the ANES data, estimated coefficients for Latinos are generally comparable in magnitude to those of whites—they simply fail to achieve statistical significance because of the much smaller sample size (hundreds of observations rather than thousands).

Thus, drawing strong inferences here is extremely difficult. The lack of a consistent finding may suggest that we are simply measuring education poorly—that comparing education levels of people from countries with very different overall levels of education is not the same as measuring education for people brought up in the United States. It may also suggest that immigrants go through other routes of political activation. Evaluating these possibilities likely requires survey data—with large sample sizes—on the resources (including education and income) available to immigrants in their home countries as well as in the United States to better understand the lingering influences of immigrants' experiences in their countries of origin on voter turnout.

We also believe it is important that subsequent research consider how different sam-

pling frames and survey research practices used to produce data sets on immigrant political attitudes and behaviors might be responsible for the many differences we observe. Understanding these differences and developing a clear understanding of best practices in

terms of surveying Latinos is essential to properly studying Latino political behavior. Doing so would help sharpen our understanding of the importance of demographic, as well as nondemographic, resources to Latino immigrant political behavior.

## APPENDIX

**Table A1.** Demographic Model of Turnout

	CPS Latino Immigrant Citizens	CPS Latino U.S.-Born Citizens
Education	0.439*** (0.050)	0.534*** (0.032)
Income	0.070 (0.050)	0.136*** (0.028)
Age	0.026*** (0.003)	0.024*** (0.002)
Woman	0.075 (0.097)	0.200*** (0.056)
Married	-0.053** (0.026)	-0.008 (0.014)
South	0.360 (0.251)	-0.202 (0.161)
California	0.254** (0.117)	-0.082 (0.070)
Texas	-0.570*** (0.280)	-0.175 (0.169)
Florida	0.174 (0.278)	0.459** (0.197)
Constant	-2.373*** (0.264)	-2.718*** (0.165)
Observations	1,936	5,876
LR	0	0
Log likelihood	-1242	-3730

*Source:* Authors' calculations using U.S. Census Bureau 2012.

*Note:* Cell entry is the logit coefficient; standard errors in parentheses.

\* $p < .1$ ; \*\* $p < .05$ ; \*\*\* $p < .01$

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