THE ISSUE WITH LATINO VOTER TURNOUT: HOW DOES THE ISSUE OF IMMIGRATION AFFECT LATINO VOTER TURNOUT?

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In this study, I investigate how the issue of immigration affects Latino voter turnout. I hypothesize that U.S. Latino citizens who view immigration as highly important and helpful to the United States will be more likely to turn out to vote in midterm and presidential elections. In addition to a contextual analysis on elections in Arizona and California, I perform a probit regression analysis on survey data from Pew Hispanic's 2004 National Survey of Latinos on Politics and Civic Participation. The results are mixed with respect to the initial expectations. While respondents who view immigration as important and helpful are more likely to turn out than those who view immigration as important and hurtful, the results suggest that respondents who find immigration as unimportant may not be less likely to turn out. Further, there are some differences between Latino subgroups, although these differences are minor. Ultimately, the hypotheses presented in this study find moderate support.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Latino citizens represent the fastest growing demographic and voting bloc in the United States, yet remain one of the least likely ethnic groups to turn out to vote in political elections. In recent decades, scholars and candidates alike have begun to investigate ways to increase this disproportionately low turnout rate. Adding to early theories of socioeconomic factors (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980), more recent scholars have posited that socialization factors (Cho 1999), cultural factors (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995), and social connectedness (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987; Leighley and Vedlitz 1999; McClurg 2003; 2006) might provide insight into Latino political behavior.

In this paper, I offer a different approach that deals with the Latino attitudes toward the issue of immigration. I argue that Latino citizens who view the issue of immigration as important and helpful to the United States will be more likely to turn out to vote. My theory is based in the idea that Latinos have a unique affinity to the issue of immigration and, through symbolic politics or self-interest, will be more likely to participate if they feel this issue is important and hold a positive opinion of it. Drawing upon past research, I posit that the highly controversial and specific nature of immigration with respect to Latino citizens will generate a political interest that results in greater turnout in American political elections. In the following sections, I will review the current literature on Latino turnout, lay out my theoretical framework and research design, and provide empirical tests of my hypotheses.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Latino Voter Turnout

Highton and Burris (2002) investigate the turnout gap between Latinos and other groups and offer two approaches that have been considered in relevant literature: socioeconomic disparity and cultural characteristics. With respect to the socioeconomic characteristics of the Latino population in the U.S., it can be said that Latinos are generally younger, have lower income, and lack extensive education than other groups (DeSipio 1996). These characteristics are all typically associated with lower voter turnout in U.S. political elections. While this is one likely contributor to the lack of participation among Latinos in the United States, there has been research to suggest that even when these factors are controlled for, the turnout rate among some Latino groups is still disproportionately lower than other demographics. Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) analyzed the 1974 midterm election using the Current Population Survey and found that, among Mexican Americans, the voter turnout disparity compared to Anglo-Americans disappeared when these socioeconomic characteristics were held constant. However, this finding did not hold true for Puerto Ricans within the same study and Cho (1999) later found evidence that socioeconomic characteristics alone were not sufficient to explain the relatively low Latino voter turnout.

Cho (1999) argues against the idea that these socioeconomic characteristics are solely important by suggesting that the "socialization process is the mechanism that determines which elements are prominent in the cost-benefit analysis preceding participation" (1144). This is an idea that may be important with relation to my
underlying theory and hypotheses and will be revisited throughout this paper. In other words, Cho (1999) is arguing that the presence of education or the passive act of aging does not inherently lead to greater turnout, but that the socialization processes within drive the likelihood of voting. Gaining more education and growing older within the United States represent the mechanism by which one gains "exposure to and embracing of the norms of the American political system" (Cho 1999, 1144). She is sure to point out that her arguments are not meant to completely dismiss the value of socioeconomic theories, but rather that the increasingly heterogeneous nature of the United States population serves to create an environment in which socioeconomic theories are not the only valuable models of political participation (Cho 1999, 1153).

The second approach to Latino participation offered by Highton and Burris (2002) is one that focuses on the cultural characteristics of the Latino, such as religion and nativity. Focusing on these cultural characteristics helps distinguish the Latino population from the rest of the American population and provides a more specific context to explain why Latinos have seen a relatively low participation rate given their fast growing population within the country. Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) argue that the emphasis on religion within the Latino community may be one major factor limiting their political participation. In this case, the Latino population, which is mostly Catholic, is unable to gain certain participatory skills within the church context and thus less likely to participate in the political process (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Often, the presence of increased church attendance acts as a legitimate indicator of increased political participation. Specifically, the African-American church organizations have been found to play a fairly major role in mobilizing participation among the African-
American population (Harris 1994). Further, Highton and Burris (2002) continue their second approach by turning to the difference between native born Latinos and naturalized Latinos. Cho (1999) argues that native-born citizens will be more likely to participate because they will have grown up in the American system, meaning they will likely have more knowledge, understanding, and comfort within the system. Foreign-born, naturalized Latino citizens will lack this familiarity, knowledge, and understanding and thus may be less likely to participate in the American political system. In spite of this, naturalized citizens may benefit from having gone through the naturalization process, thereby gaining some familiarity and comfort with the system. While they still lack the experience of growing up in the system, the naturalization process may offer them some direct experience in dealing with the government as they perform the steps necessary to become a citizen and register to vote (DeSipio 1996; Highton and Burris 2002). Cho (1999) found limited evidence that, when controlling for socioeconomic characteristics, natural-born Latino citizens would be more likely to vote than naturalized Latino citizens.

Highton and Burris (2002) set out to test the two approaches using a relatively large sample size in the Current Population Survey provided by the United States Census Bureau. On the general level, Highton and Burris (2002) find that socioeconomic factors, in large part, can account for the disparity between Latinos and Anglos in terms of voter turnout, however within the Latino population, nativity can play an important role. Latinos who have resided in the United States for a longer period of time will be more likely to turn out due to multiple driving factors: experience within the American political system, familiarity with the system, understanding of how the system
works, and a higher proficiency in English.

Leighley and Vedlitz (1999) find support for three models of ethnic political participation: socioeconomic status, psychological resources, and social connectedness. As has been discussed, the socioeconomic model takes into account specific SES characteristics as explanatory factors in voter turnout. However, as has been mentioned here, Leighley and Vedlitz point out that much of the research done with respect to the socioeconomic model has not been done with consideration of U.S. Latinos (Leighley and Vedlitz 1999, 1094). The psychological resources model suggests that, beyond socioeconomic status, there are certain psychological characteristics (political interest, political efficacy, trust in government, civic duty, etc.) that contribute to political participation. This model may be the most relevant to the theoretical framework of this paper as it includes the idea that political interest can be a driving force behind turnout. More specifically and relevant to my theory, Latinos who have a greater interest in the issue of immigration will be more likely to vote.

Leighley and Vedlitz (1999) also consider social connectedness when investigating potential causes of voter turnout. Based deeply in social theory, the model of social connectedness focuses on "structural or behavioral factors such as organizational involvement, church attendance, home ownership, and marital status" as potential driving forces behind political participation. The idea is that the more involved a group of people are within their community and with each other, the more likely they are to get politically involved. Proponents of this theoretical model suggest that the general decline in voter turnout past few decades can be attributed to the decline in group involvement. Although there is limited literature that supports the idea that
generalized social connectedness has an impact on participation within ethnic groups, there is evidence to suggest that ethnic-based institutional resources can have a positive effect on participation. Shaw, de la Garza, and Lee (2000) found support that “Latino group mobilization variables had a greater impact on Latino voting than other group mobilization or ethnicity-based variables” (345).

One of the classic studies on the relationship between group membership and political participation was Verba and Nie (1972). After controlling for basic socioeconomic status characteristics, Verba and Nie (1972) found that Americans who were involved in groups or organizations would be more likely to participate in the U.S. political process. Their findings were quite robust, claiming that Americans who were involved in a group were twice as likely than nonmembers to participate politically and those who were involved in more than one group participated three times more than nonmembers (Verba and Nie 1972). However, Verba and Nie (1972) only used Anglo-Americans and African-Americans within their sample and did not separate Latino-Americans in their analysis.

McClurg (2003; 2006) further argues for the participatory-inducing power of social connectedness, but stipulates that group participation alone is not necessarily the driving force. Instead, McClurg (2003; 2006) argues that social connectedness is a separate entity from mere group membership in that the social context has a greater depth and magnitude. Huckfeldt and Sprague (1987) also argue that social context can play an important role in the flow of information and eventual participation. In their study, Huckfeldt and Sprague (1987) argue that majority political groups in a social context will be more likely to incorrectly perceive political views that do not align with
their own. This idea is consequential towards participation in that the political majority of a social context will participate at a higher level with respect to social connectedness, while the political minority continues to perceive alienation. The idea of social connectedness will be further discussed in the theoretical framework of this paper, as it plays an important role in understanding the way in which attitude importance can influence participation.

Diaz (1996), building off of Verba and Nie (1972) finds support that Latinos, with the exception of Cuban Americans, who participate in group organizations are, like other Americans, more likely to participate in United States' political elections. The likely reason for the lack of impact in Cuban American participation is their already high political participation rates. Because Cuban Americans participate at a fairly high rate as it is, group membership does little to improve their participation rates. Participating in a group or organization results in participant socialization and works to increase the likelihood that the individual will participate politically. However, as previously mentioned, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) argued that the religious involvement of many Latinos actually hindered their likelihood of politically participating, as the church activity in that context may limit civic skills.

The literature seems generally split between approaches that look to attribute the disparity between Latino voter turnout and other ethnic group turnout to that of the general socioeconomic disparity found within the Latino population and to cultural or psychological factors. While many scholars have found support for the socioeconomic models of voter turnout in the Latino community, there have been almost as many that have questioned whether these models are too simple or explain only some of the
factors that drive voter turnout in the Latino population. Other scholars have suggested that cultural differences or psychological factors such as political interest and political efficacy play an important role. In this study, I posit that the individual interest towards the issue of immigration may be a significant driving force behind the decision to turn out within the Latino population. Those Latinos who consider immigration to be of greater importance will be more likely to turnout to vote.

Issue Salience and Voter Turnout

Going beyond the generally accepted theories of voter turnout, I now turn to a more focused look at issue salience and how, when coupled with political interest towards immigration, this salience can drive voter turnout in the Latino population. Much of the existing literature with respect to issue salience focuses on the ballot initiative process used in some of states in the U.S. There is little in the way of literature on issue salience from the individual level, an area that I plan to explore in this study. However, the ballot initiative process does offer a unique way to analyze issue salience in a given election and thus is one way I intend to pursue my underlying theoretical assertions.

Tolbert et al (2001) finds that "states with frequent usage of citizen initiatives have higher voter turnout over a 26-year period than noninitiative states in both presidential and midterm elections" (643). This finding seems to indicate that, on a general level, issue salience among voters in the form of ballot initiatives can lead to increased turnout. Beyond the general idea that the presence of ballot initiatives result in an increased voter turnout, the authors hypothesize and find that the frequency of ballot initiatives has a positive relationship with voter turnout.
Methodologically, Tolbert et al (2001) uses the Voter Age Turnout (VAT) over 2 year periods as a dependent variable for presidential candidates or, in midterm elections, United States Representatives. To measure the presence of initiatives within states, the authors first use a dummy variable to code between states that have an initiative process and states that do not, and later include the actual number of initiatives over two year periods for each of the qualifying states. Using OLS with panel corrected standard errors (to control for variation across the states), the authors look separately at the impact of the initiative process on presidential elections and midterm elections. Consistent with other literature, the mere presence of initiatives within a state does not have a significant effect on voter turnout during presidential elections. However, the authors do find support for the notion that a greater number of initiatives within a state during a presidential election does have a positive impact on voter turnout, leading the authors to suggest that "salient issue contests can encourage citizens to turn out and vote in presidential elections" (Tolbert et al 2001, 635). The idea that the saliency of issues can stimulate turnout is a key concept within the formulation of my theory and hypotheses that Latino citizens who lend more importance to the issue of immigration will be more likely to turnout. The finding that these initiatives can have an effect in presidential elections contradicts much of the other relevant literature that suggests only midterm elections are prone to increased turnout. As expected, however, the threshold for the initiative process’ effect on midterm elections is not as great and the authors find that the presence of this process is enough to positively impact voter turnout in midterm elections.

With respect to Latinos, it seems this effect may be even stronger when we
consider immigration as that issue, given their unique affinity with the issue. Further, Grummel (2008) finds that "when moral policy issues appear on a given state's midterm ballot, such measures generate significantly higher turnout, possibly as much as eight percent higher than if the measure had not appeared on the ballot" (289). Again, this finding seems to indicate a strong relationship between a specific issue salience and voter turnout. Because Grummel's (2008) finding is generalized to the entire population and pertains to moral issues, I suspect that similar measures with respect to Latinos and immigration may have similar results, only at the individually salient level. I expect that, much like ballot measures, individual importance placed on specific issues within the Latino community will help to drive voter turnout, independent of the aforementioned traditional indicators. More evidence towards a specific issue being the driving factor with respect to ballot initiatives, rather than the sheer number of initiatives themselves, is found in Biggers (2011). Biggers (2011) finds that "while social issues are able to increase turnout because they are well known and of significant importance to some citizens, the average measure on the ballot, which does not meet either or both of these requirements, poses little ability to raise turnout (19). Once again, it seems apparent that issue salience must be important to the voting populace to be a significant driver of turnout. This is relevant to my theory in that it establishes that, with respect to Latinos, immigration issue salience within the respondents should be a more significant indicator of turnout than other issues. Finally, Lacey (2005) finds that "salient ballot questions increase a person's likelihood of voting in midterm elections but not in presidential elections" (176). Across these cases, it seems that midterm elections are often more greatly impacted by issue salience via ballot initiatives. Ultimately, the literature seems
to bear out that, given a salient issue in the form of a ballot initiative, the general public will often be more likely to turn out to vote, especially during midterm elections.

Latino Attitudes Toward Immigration

A key component of my theoretical development is distinguishing what should be considered the main driver behind the attitude and behavior of the individual Latino citizens. Given Latinos' aforementioned affinity with the issue of immigration, it seems two main theories of behavior, self-interest and symbolic politics, are the most likely culprits of these attitudes and behaviors. For those Latinos who are naturalized citizens or have family and friends who wish to immigrate to the United States, self-interest may be a legitimate reason for the formation of their political attitudes on immigration. However, recent research on the subject on self-interest suggests that there may be a lack of empirical evidence to support the idea that self-interest can have a large impact on one's political attitudes and voting behavior. Instead, it has been offered that, for many controversial issues, symbolic attitudes have a more significant impact on voting behavior. Here, I will address the existing research on these two theories and relate these theories to the relationship between Latino political attitudes and voter turnout.

Much research has been done to determine whether self-interest is a significant driving force behind the political attitudes and voting behavior of United States citizens. Initially, it was argued that political attitudes and behavior were motivated as a product of the individual's direct self-interest (Downs 1957, Kramer 1971, Riker and Ordeshook 1970). An early example used by proponents of the self-interest argument is the economic voter theory. In this theory, it is argued that voting behavior is going to be influenced by public perceptions of which candidate will garner the greatest economic
conditions for the individual. In support of the theory, aggregate level data showed that economic conditions in the United States correlated positively with incumbent vote share (Kramer 1971).

*The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960) offered another of the early arguments for the impact of self-interest on voting behavior in American politics. In the book, Campbell et al (1960) suggested that "individuals who already enjoy high prestige under the *status quo* should not, on the basis of self-interest, wish to have existing arrangements tampered with" and that "individuals who are not faring well under existing arrangements should be liberal or radical advocates of change in social and political institutions" (203). Ultimately, Campbell et al. (1960) suggests that "political action is, in itself, a roundabout route to the fulfillment of most forms of self-interest" (204).

Despite these early arguments in favor of the self-interest theory, recent research has often shown that self-interest is not a strong motivator of political attitudes and behavior. Sears et al. (1979) argued that self-interest has been overestimated in previous studies as an indicator of public opinion and voting behavior. In this study, Sears et al. (1979) argued that previous research had inadequately tested the theory in three ways. First, aggregate-level studies lack the ability to determine whether the individuals being affected by self-interest are the ones whose votes are being swayed. Second (and likely most relevant to the theoretical framework of my study on Latinos), group attitudes typically vary and thus group-level studies may not capture the change in voting behavior of relevant members of a given group. In this case, Sears et al. (1979) give the example of women's rights activists, arguing that the women most
passionate about the subject are not those who are being the most affected by the lack of women's rights. Finally, the authors argue that typical studies on self-interest at the time defined self-interest at times in a subjective manner. Here, researchers might ask respondents for their perception of changes in a given field (such as economic well-being) instead of measuring the respondents' actual income level at two different points. Sears et al. (1979) argue that these disparities lead to results that are not equal and thus lack consistency.

Instead, Sears et al. (1979) argues that theories of symbolic politics may be more meaningful predictors of attitude formation and voting behavior. The theory of symbolic politics, as described by Sears et al. (1979), holds that individuals are given predispositions early on in their lives that later serve to influence their adult attitudes. Then, as adults, the individuals respond to symbolic issues that relate to these predispositions, regardless if said issues have an actual, direct impact on their lives. To illustrate the different effects of these competing theories, Sears et al. (1979) uses the issue of busing of school children and White opposition to this program in the 1950s and 60s. Some had argued that White's opposition to busing was based on self-interest in that children would be forced out of local, neighborhood schools and into schools further from their homes. Further, the children would be forced out of their current relationships and may have to attend a school of lower quality. Finally, the potential for higher taxes on the basis of the cost of busing presented another legitimate material concern for those affected. However, Sears et al. (1979) argued that, on the aggregate level, there were far more people opposed to busing than people who could actually be affected by it. Instead, the authors suggested that racial attitudes that had been formed at a young
age were being tapped into with the idea of busing and racial integration. To many whites, busing represented an unwanted social change and a forced, intimate contact with blacks. If individuals had been predispositioned to racial attitudes at a young age, the symbolic nature of busing could be enough to evoke opposition to the idea, instead of an issue of direct self-interest.

Through the use of multiple statistical models, Sears et al. (1979) tested the theories of self-interest and symbolic politics on attitude formation and voting behavior. Across the models, the authors found a lack of evidence to support the idea that self-interest was driving the formation of attitude opposition to busing. Additionally, the authors found no evidence to support the theory that self-interest was motivating voting behavior among the respondents. Instead, evidence that symbolic factors (such as racial or conservative attitudes) are a much more significant factor in the formation of these attitudes and the motivation of voting behavior. Even when only respondents who resided in busing zones were considered, self-interest variables lacked a significant impact on attitude and voting behavior. The authors ultimately concluded that symbolic politics was a far better predictor of attitude formation and voting behavior than theories of self-interest with respect to white opposition to busing. In a later study, Sears et al. (1980) found similar results for other controversial issue areas (national healthcare, unemployment, and crime). However, the authors did concede that these tests of self-interest theories may produce greater results if the definition of self-interest was extended to include longer term effects. Given that symbolic attitudes rely on the idea that predispositions are set during early development, self-interest as a motivating factor may be more viable over a longer period of time. Further, the authors suggested that
"perceived shared group interests" may be an avenue through which self-interest operates indirectly (Sears et al. 1980, 681). If this were the case, it is argued, short-term self-interest variables would likely not capture the effect (Sears et al. 1980). With respect to Latinos, this may be one way in which immigration attitudes could manifest as a perceived group self-interest. Jacobson (1985) also found symbolic racism to be a greater predictor of attitude formation and voting behavior with respect to white opposition to affirmative action. Sears and Funk (1990) strengthened the argument for symbolic politics over self-interest by surveying a wide array of issues, but still conceded that, in some cases, self-interest could be a motivating factor (although these findings were very infrequent). With respect to issue publics, Sears and Funk (1990) found that "in some cases then, there is a tendency for self-interest to generate greater public attention, concern, and knowledge, and thus to be one factor in helping to create 'issue publics' for a particular policy area" (247). However, they still maintained that these findings lacked strength and consistency.

Citrin et al. (1997) found that self-interest also failed to be a significant predictor of attitudes towards immigration reform in the mid-90s. Instead, the authors found that political ideology and feeling towards Hispanics and Asians had a stronger connection to the attitudes on immigration reform. The authors set out to test the extent to which personal economic conditions played into attitude formation towards immigration reforms in the United States. Despite finding that personal economic conditions had a lessened role in attitude formation, the authors did find that those who believed immigration would be harmful to the U.S. economy were more likely to favor restrictive policies of immigration. The authors argue that this type of sociotrophic judgment may
be indirectly related to self-interest in that the individual may project their personal interest as that of the nations' as a whole. This line of thought is not too far from Sears et al.’s (1980) argument that longer term self-interest may be displayed through a perception of shared group interests. This is relevant to the argument in this paper on whether Latino attitudes and behavior towards immigration is driven by self-interest or symbolic politics.

Branton (2007) finds that acculturation plays an important role in attitude formation within the Latino population in the United States. Generally, Branton (2007) argues that more acculturated Latinos will be less likely to support policies that benefit immigrants and will be less likely to support government spending on policies that benefit minorities when compared to less acculturated Latinos. The study also finds that Mexican-Americans were less likely than Latinos of Cuban or Puerto Rican descent to prefer decreased levels of immigration within the United States (Branton 2007). This difference is likely a result of how the immigration process is viewed between the subgroups. Cuban-Americans are typically admitted to the United States as refugees or exiles without facing many obstacles in the U.S. immigration system. Puerto Ricans are born citizens and thus wholly exempt from the immigration process. Latinos of Mexican descent, however, often face great difficulty navigating the U.S. immigration process due to the large number of immigrants vying for citizenship. These findings help to shed light on the attitudinal differences within the Latino subgroups in the United States. The hypotheses in Branton (2007) are, in part, based on the idea that as Latinos become more acculturated, their attitudes begin to more closely resemble those of the dominant group (Anglos). In this sense, it may seem that symbolic racism is playing a part in the
difference between acculturated and non-acculturated Latino citizens. The more acculturated citizens may have different predispositions than less acculturated citizens that lead to these negative feelings towards positive immigration policies and immigrant assistance programs. However, there is something to be said for the idea of self-interest within these differing attitudes. More acculturated Latinos are found to typically have a better socioeconomic standing within the United States. When this is considered, it might be reasonable to suggest that these Latinos may be acting in self-interest, at least with respect to policies that support increased spending on minorities and immigrants. Those with a higher socioeconomic standing are likely going to be less willing to support policies that increase benefits for those of lower socioeconomic status.

With this in mind, acculturation characteristics are more likely aligned with symbolic characteristics than characteristics of self-interest, indicating that Latino immigration attitudes are often a greater product of symbolic factors. Ultimately, Branton (2007) offers evidence that attitudinal differences towards immigration issues within Latino subgroups is, at least in part, a product of different levels of acculturation.

Another study that lends support to the idea of symbolic politics over self-interest is Abrajano and Singh (2008). This study suggests that the Latino attitudes toward immigration will vary with the news source they frequent. In this case, the hypothesis is made that Latinos who frequently use Spanish-language news sources will be more likely to hold a positive view of immigration and those who frequent English-language sources will be less likely to hold this positive view. The reasoning for this disparity may be due largely to language skills and social identity. Latinos who prefer Spanish-language news sources may do so because they lack proficiency in English or because
they prefer to gather news from a source they can socially identify with. I argue that this disparity should be classified as symbolic over self-interest given that the language and context in which immigration is covered between the differing news sources varies on a symbolic level. However, the authors do posit that the differences between the news sources is likely a result of their desire to please their audience, therefore Spanish-language news sources likely have a greater audience of less acculturated Latinos, while those watching English-language news are likely more acculturated (Abrajano and Singh 2008).

Rouse et al (2010) provides multiple models to test differences between self-interest and symbolic politics as well as attitudinal differences between Latino subgroups. In the study, the authors found that symbolic characteristics had a greater impact on immigration attitude formation among Latinos than economic self-interest variables. Ultimately, the authors find that variables representing economic vulnerability were not found to be significant indicators of Latino attitude toward immigration. Additionally, the authors find that acculturation and symbolic characteristics are strong indicators of immigration policy attitudes. Rouse et al (2010) finds that "Latinos who are strongly attached to and incorporated in American culture are significantly less supportive of immigration" (878). Finally, the authors find that Mexican-Americans are more likely to be pro-immigration than other Latino subgroups in the United States. This study lends a more direct look at Latinos and immigration that the previously discussed literature does not. In this case, it seems that symbolic politics are a far greater indicator of immigration attitudes among Latinos than self-interest.

Perhaps the most compelling and relevant literature to my study comes from
Newton (2000). In this study, the author tested whether Latino support for Proposition 187 (an anti-immigrant proposition in California) was based on self-interest or ideology. Although Latinos largely opposed the initiative, there were some Latinos who came out in support. Given that Proposition 187 is a major part of my contextual analysis in the next section, this study is quite relevant when discussing the theories behind Latino immigration attitude formation. One of the hypotheses offered by Newton (2000) is that ethnic identity alone should be enough to account for opposition to Proposition 187. Another relevant hypothesis was that "Latinos who are legal residents but who also fall on the lower ends of scales measuring education, income, and own/rent status will support Proposition 187" (Newton 2000, 185). The reasoning behind this hypothesis is that these Latinos will be more likely to face economic competitions from illegal immigrants if the Proposition was not passed. Thus, if they were to act in self-interest, they would need to support Proposition 187 to eliminate this economic threat of competition. In the models, Newton (2000) finds no support that socioeconomic variables had an impact on Latino attitudes toward Proposition 187. Likewise, the study found that ideology and partisanship was indicative of only Anglo attitudes towards the initiative and not that of Latinos. Finally, the study found support for the ethnic identity hypothesis. Ultimately, it seems that symbolic and cultural politics were a far greater indicator of Latino attitudes toward Proposition 187; however the author does indicate that a group benefits model may also be appropriate. The idea of group benefits acting as a form of self-interest has been previously discussed in this section, and seems to gain some support from Newton (2000). As with the other Latino-specific literature, Newton (2000) favors the idea of cultural/symbolic politics as the motivating factor.
behind Latino attitudes over self-interest.

Symbolic Politics and Identity

As evidenced, there have been an increasing number of studies that favor the idea that symbolic politics are more a motivating factor behind attitude formation and voting behavior than self-interest factors. With respect to Latinos and the issue of immigration, I expect similar impact between symbolic attitudes and self-interest. It seems more likely that, within the Latino community, individuals will be more likely to form attitudes and enter the issue public of immigration on the basis of group identity and symbolic factors. Given the close proximity of Mexico and the United States, Mexican-Americans represent the largest immigrant group in the country, and thus are more likely to be directly affected by immigration policy (either themselves or their family). Despite this, Mexican-American attitudes and participation should not be greatly affected by self-interest. The recent literature on Latino attitudes toward immigration seems to be wholly supportive of symbolic politics as a main driving factor. While there is some evidence to support the possibility of group self-interest as a motivating factor, the Latino-specific literature falls more heavily on the side of symbolic politics and is consistent with what the literature finds for other issues among other groups. To be sure, there is a hazy line between purely symbolic factors and group benefits, but it seems clear that individual self-interest is not a significant motivating factor behind Latino attitudes toward immigration. Ultimately, given the past research, I expect that symbolic attitudes are a greater motivator of immigration attitudes and political behavior within the Latino community.

Group identity and perceived discrimination against their group are likely strong
motivators of opinions towards immigration reform and immigrant rights and a strong motivator of political action against legislation and ballot initiatives that attempt to restrict immigration and immigrant rights. Further, identity plays an important role in the formation of attitudes and how these attitudes affect turnout. Latinos who identify with the Latino community will likely be more impacted by immigration attitudes than those who do not. For example, a Latino citizen who identifies more with the Anglo community might be more likely to turnout to vote for reasons outside of immigration attitudes. Also, there may be some differences between Latino subgroups with respect to identity and how identity affects attitudes and participation. Cuban-Americans, for example, often identify more with the Republican party than Mexican-Americans. In this sense, Cuban-American participation may be less affected by immigration attitudes than Mexican-Americans or Puerto Ricans.

In this sense, Cuban-Americans have competing identities (group and party) that contradict one another with respect to the issue of immigration. With this in mind, I argue that the presence of these competing identities or, as with Mexican Americans, a lack thereof can lead to differences in how immigration attitudes can influence participation. I will go into more detail in a later section dealing with subgroup differences, but it is important here to understand how group and party identities can interact to create different causes of participation among subgroups with respect to immigration attitudes.

In a following section, I will provide a contextual analysis of California and Arizona voter turnout among Latinos to illustrate how ballot initiatives that attempt to restrict the rights of illegal immigrants can motivate turnout and opposition. This
contextual analysis will give an idea of how symbolic attitudes can drive voter turnout among Latinos. Given that the ballot initiatives in question are generally considered to be anti-illegal immigrant, it follows that increased turnout among Latinos would be related to symbolic attitudes as those turning out to vote will be legal citizens and not directly affected by the measures.
CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

While the existing literature seems often split between socioeconomic theories of voter turnout and cultural/psychological theories, there seems to be a lack of literature that taps into the salience individual Latinos place on specific issues and how that specified interest or salience drives their likelihood to head to the polls at election time. In a general sense, we may expect to find that the importance placed on certain issues would vary for each individual, and any driving force behind this individual salience may not be static across a group of people. However, with respect to U.S. Latinos, I argue that their unique affinity with the issue of immigration allows us to expect that this singular issue can drive voter turnout, as long as they associate immigration in a positive light. Put another way, Latino citizens who view the issue of immigration as being more important and consider immigration to be a good for the nation will be more likely to turn out to the polls than Latino citizens that view other issues as important, view immigration as unimportant, or view immigration in a negative light. Of course, I will still want to control for the common socioeconomic factors that have been found to be explanatory in previous research, but I feel that these factors are only partially explanatory and fail to tap into the unique cultural affinity that Latino-Americans have with the issue of immigration. Additionally, it will be imperative for me to include attitudes towards other issues outside of immigration (economic, education, and moral) to show that it is not simply political interest that is driving the increased likelihood of turnout, but instead the specified interest in immigration. Economic, education, and
moral issues are generally perceived as important across elections and therefore serve as adequate controls in this study.

Establishing a link between issue-attitudes and political participation is especially important when we consider the research done with respect to priming and the effect it can have on the salience placed on certain issues. If there is a legitimate link between the importance Latino citizens place on immigration and their likelihood to turn out to vote, the implications could be seen from an academic and a practical perspective. Beyond the academic benefits of furthering the knowledge on the subject, political campaigns and news media may be able to use this knowledge to help drive voter turnout, a goal that democratic societies constantly pursue.

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The Pew Hispanic Center states that more than half of the United States' population growth in the past decade has been made up of Hispanics (Passel, Cohn, and Lopez 2011). As many of these Latinos are immigrants, it follows that their personal experience with the immigration process should carry over into a higher affinity with the issue of immigration reform and immigration policy within the United States. While many issues will always be important across ethnic groups (economic, moral, war, etc.), the issue of immigration reform and policy is one that many Hispanics have personally experienced that other ethnic groups in the United States have not. This personal experience can manifest itself in multiple ways to add saliency in the mind of the individual Latino. Even among those Hispanics who are born in the United States, it is likely that their immediate family members have had personal experience within the United States immigration system. This salience is likely driven by the social connectedness previously discussed in relation to the issue publics hypothesis. As these Latino-Americans identify with other Latinos in the United States, they may empathize with immigrant and illegal immigrant situations even if they, themselves, have not personally experienced the transition of immigrating to the United States. Therefore, even if the individual in question was born in the United States and is not close with any Latino immigrants, their social identity may lead to a greater focus on immigration issues.

Unlike economic issues, issues of morality, foreign policy issues, taxation, or other common issues in American political elections, immigration policy uniquely and directly affects the immigrants looking to move their lives to the United States. To be sure, immigration does have an indirect effect on other American citizens, but the effect
lacks the major, direct impact on their lives that immigration policy has on Latino immigrants and non-immigrant Latino families. Latinos in the United States often must find a balance between maintaining their culture and assimilating into American culture. One way to do this is to participate in Latino groups that focus on Latino issues within the American political system. As Diaz (1996) found, Latinos who participate in group organizations will be more likely to participate in the American political process. Group organizations within the Latino community may generally drive political participation, but it should be expected that such groups help do so by focusing on issues that Latino members can relate to, including a heavy emphasis on immigration policy.

Despite what may seem as clear reasoning for Latino citizens to consider immigration to be a top policy, there has been evidence to suggest that, overall, Latino citizens do not consider immigration to be of great importance in their list of priorities among other election issues (de la Garza and DeSipio 1992). While, at a glance, this may seem to be detrimental to my central theoretical argument, I consider it to be the opposite. As it stands, Latino citizens are among the least likely to vote in the United States. Thus, Latinos, a group that, despite straightforward reasoning, does not necessarily consider immigration to be of top priority, are also a group that does not seem to consider voting a top priority. Therefore, I believe the citizens that do hold immigration to be of high priority will be among those Latinos that turn out to vote and are more politically active. In this paper, I argue that it is this innate political interest coupled with the positive view towards immigration that can drive a higher turnout rate among Latino voters.

Ultimately, from a theoretical standpoint, I argue here that U.S. Latino citizens
should generally have a pull towards the issue of immigration. While other issues may be held to similar levels of importance (or even higher), the issue of immigration, when held to be positive and of high importance, is an issue that can drive Latinos to go to the polls for two main reasons. First, they may have personal experiences or may have close family/friends with personal experiences and feel a duty to participate in order to change or alter the current U.S. immigration policy. Second, symbolic attitudes might drive Latinos to turn out even if they do not have personal experience within the immigration system. If there is a legitimate connection between this individual issue salience and voter turnout among Latinos in the United States, it stands to reason that political campaigns, news media, and group organizations (ethnic, political, or otherwise) would have a legitimate interest in using this connection to help drive Latino turnout at the polls.

Attitude Importance, Formation, and Social Connectedness

The idea that issue salience can drive voter turnout among Latinos is a key concept to my overall theory of Latino voter turnout. There is limited literature with respect to individual issue salience acting as a driving force behind voter turnout. Often, scholars will look at how ballot initiatives or the outside salience of an issue can affect turnout. My goal, however, is to find the effects that the perceived importance of an issue (immigration, in this case) can have on driving individuals to turn out and vote when coupled with a positive opinion of that issue. My theory, put simply, is that individual Latinos who consider immigration to be of high importance and view immigration (legal or illegal) as having a positive impact on the nation will be more likely to turn out to vote. While I expect that ballot initiatives dealing with immigration would
also have this effect in drawing Latino voters, I expect that just a general level of salience within the individual can have a similar effect. Even if the individual knows they will not vote on a specific ballot initiative, they will still believe they are going to have a hand in influencing future immigration policy at the state and federal level by voting for elected officials that will ultimately craft and pass this legislation.

Grummel (2008) was able to link the issue of morality with driving turnout among the general public in the form of ballot initiatives. I posit that this idea can be extended to the issue of immigration when Latino voters are being studied. I expect that, among Latinos, immigration issue salience at the individual level, as I have defined it, will be a stronger indicator of voter turnout than morality individual issue salience. Likewise, Biggers (2011) found that social issue initiatives, and not typical ballot measures, can have positively affect voter turnout. Once again, this evidence seems to suggest that relevant issues can have a greater impact on voter turnout than the simple presence of ballot initiatives in general. Therefore, I believe it is reasonable to suggest that, with respect to Latino citizens, they will be uniquely motivated by the issue of immigration. Next, I will go into greater detail on the idea of attitude importance,

Krosnick (1988) defines issue salience, or attitude importance, as "a person's interest in or concern about an attitude" (197). Further, Krosnick (1988) suggests the reasoning for this importance comes from a link between the an "attitude and values, needs, and goals as one possible cause of importance" (197). While there are various theories that attempt to explain how attitudes become important to an individual, I feel that the issue public hypothesis (Converse 1975, Krosnick 1990) may be the most reasonable and relevant with respect to my theory of Latinos and their attitude
importance towards immigration. Three considerations play into the formation of attitude importance under the issue public hypothesis: material self-interest, social identification, and relevance to social values (Krosnick 1990).

The first consideration, material self-interest, applies when a person believes that a given issue can have a direct impact on their life or interests. With respect to Latinos and immigration, there can be a perceived self-interest in influencing immigration policy as well as immigrant rights and therefore a high attitude importance placed on the issue. The second consideration, social identification, refers to those who may not be directly affected by a given issue, but are part of a greater social group that, generally, is affected by such policies. In the Latino population, Latino-Americans may have family or friends that are illegal immigrants and thus wish to use the political system to influence or protect the rights of their friend or relative. Further, even in the absence of a close relative or friend, the general social connectedness of being a Latino-American may be enough to influence attitude importance and perceive immigration as a highly important issue. Finally, a link between a policy issue and a person's values can be a strong creator of attitude importance. This consideration likely plays as a symbolic value with respect to Latinos and immigration in that a Latino-American could hold values related to immigrant rights and therefore consider immigration policy to be a highly important issue. A major distinction in my theory is that a Latino-American's opinion of illegal immigration plays an important part in addition to their perceived importance of immigration in general. The three considerations discussed here undoubtedly all apply more specifically to the opinion of illegal immigration held by Latino-Americans.
Ultimately, on the subject of attitude importance, Krosnick (1990) determines that, as a whole, Americans generally fall into many of these small issue publics. The voting public will generally base their vote on smaller, salience criteria rather than a complete survey of relevant issues (Krosnick 1990). It then follows that those who find immigration to be more important and helpful will turnout to support immigration-friendly candidates and initiatives, while opposing anti-immigration candidates and initiatives. Those who view immigration as being more important are likely going to use the issue to evaluate candidates. For example, those who view immigration as being important will evaluate all candidates based on their immigration stance and ultimately vote for the candidate that most closely matches their own attitudes towards the issue. In this paper, I argue that, within the Latino community, the unique affinity with the issue of immigration and specific opinions towards that issue will be indicators of political participation in the form of voter turnout. Krosnick's research deals mostly with candidate preference (beyond attitude formation), and he argues that voters who are part of these issue publics will be more likely to align with the candidate that shares a similar viewpoint, especially when other candidates vary strongly on the direction of their position (Krosnick 1990). I argue that the increased action on the state-level with respect to immigration and the inclusion of ballot-initiatives in some states allows for an extension of Krosnick's (1988; 1990) research to include turnout, beyond candidate preference. Further, I posit that the attitude importance towards the issue of immigration as a whole, and towards the opinion that illegal immigration is helpful, can be a driving factor behind increased turnout among Latino-Americans as attitude importance continues to form on the basis of the aforementioned considerations of the
issue publics hypothesis.

Another important concept is the idea of social connectedness and how it relates to political behavior. Huckfeldt and Sprague (1987) argue that social networks can influence the flow of political information and therefore influence political behavior. The authors point out that "citizens choose with whom to discuss politics, they reinterpret dissonance-producing information, and they may deliberately misrepresent their true opinions", all factors that work to "undermine the potential impact of socially transmitted information" (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987, 1199). The main argument and findings in the study revolve around the idea that the political majority within a social context will be less likely to both encounter and correctly perceive viewpoints that are opposed to their own. Conversely, the political minority within a social context will be more likely to encounter and correctly perceive opposing viewpoints. This interaction serves to reinforce the majority opinion within a context given that the majority will ignore dissenting information. Further, because the political minority will accurate perceive dissenting information, they may be more vulnerable to "a process of informational coercion" (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987, 1213). Likewise, McClurg (2003; 2006) finds support that political participation can be influenced by the presence of social networks. Through his studies, McClurg (2003; 2006) argues that political participation can be positively affected by social networks, especially when these social networks contain members that are of greater political sophistication. Further, the more homogenous the political discussion, the more likely the individual will participate in the political process (McClurg 2006). More generally, McClurg (2003) argues that when social networks are able to provide greater exposure to politically-relevant information, members of those
social networks will participate at a higher rate.

This idea of social connectedness can relate to the aforementioned idea of issue publics in that the political majority of a social context can subscribe to particular issue publics that will be reinforced as the majority interacts. The three considerations within the definition of issue publics (material self-interest, social identification, and relevance to social values) all serve as connecting factors within a social context. Thus, where issue publics might be a catalyst for attitude formation, the social connectedness described by Huckfeldt and Sprague (1987) acts as the reinforcing flow of information for the political majority. In the context of U.S. Latinos, I argue that the immigration acts as a main issue public that is subscribed to by the political majority. Once the majority has identified this issue in terms of importance and opinion, the nature of social connectedness helps to spread and reinforce the majority opinion.

The theory of symbolic politics can be defined more simply as a situation in which “political symbols evoke longstanding emotional responses rather than rational, self-interested calculations” (Sears and Funk 1990). In this case, predispositions are created at an early age regarding certain group identities and attitudes. Later, in adulthood, these predispositions are linked to certain symbols within certain policy positions and serve to influence political attitudes and behavior. With respect to Latinos, it is easy to see how group identity and racial politics can be gained at an early age and later used to influence attitude importance and opinions with respect to immigration reform and immigration rights, especially among those whose parents were born outside the United States. In a later section, I will go into greater detail on the implications of the self-interest and symbolic politics theories on this study.
When referring to the issue of immigration, I am speaking to all policy initiatives that fall within the realm such as immigration reform, illegal immigration, immigrant-worker rights (such as the proposed E-Verify system), and any other immigration-related initiatives. At the individual level, this distinction may not be of much importance, as many surveys are going to simply ask for the individual's overall opinion on immigration. However, at the group level, the distinction between types of immigration issues may be important in the sense that they must all be considered when attempting to look at how ballot initiatives drive participation.

Focus on Midterm Elections

The existing literature indicates that, generally, issue-salience and ballot-initiative approaches to explaining voter turnout in the Latino and general population carry greater explanatory power when used to study midterm elections instead of presidential elections (Biggers 2011; Grummel 2008; Lacey 2005; Tolbert et al. 2001). Often, the allure of having a major presidential candidate on the ballot is enough to change the game and draw higher levels of output across the board. However, as we know, midterm elections are a very important part of the United States' government at the federal, state, and local level. Although the presidential elections are typically more widely covered in the media and seem to carry a higher perceived level of importance within the general population, midterm elections account for the election of the entire United States House of Representatives, one-third of the United States Senate, state governors, state ballot initiatives, state legislative positions, and local government measures/seats. Midterm elections have a clear importance and impact on the United States political system yet suffer from a significantly reduced voter turnout across all
ethnic groups. When looking at the turnout rates among ethnic groups in some heavily-
Latino states (California and Arizona), I came across some interesting variations
between specific years of midterm elections. The Census Bureau Current Population
Report provides a look at the percentages of registered voters that turned out in each
U.S. political election in recent years. Below are the voter turnout statistics across
ethnic groups for midterm and presidential elections in recent years from California and
Arizona and help to illustrate this variation. Shown is the percent of registered voters
who turned out for each ethnic group in a given election.

Table 3.1. California Voter Turnout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>White</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>69.3%</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
<td>78.60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>82.0%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
<td>92.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>82.9%</td>
<td>72.8%</td>
<td>84.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>78.7%</td>
<td>85.5%</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
<td>69.5%</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
<td>84.0%</td>
<td>88.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
<td>68.5%</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
<td>90.7%</td>
<td>91.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
<td>71.8%</td>
<td>79.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>90.7%</td>
<td>97.1%</td>
<td>93.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>68.03%</td>
<td>75.97%</td>
<td>78.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first observation we can pull from this descriptive table is that, generally, the
turnout across the midterm elections (grayed years) is far lower than that of presidential
elections (the non-grayed years). Further, in eight of the eleven years shown above, the
Latino vote was lagged behind Black and White votes in California in terms of the
percentage of registered voters who actually turned out to vote. Also, in all eleven
years, the Latino vote lagged behind the White vote across elections. However, the midterm election of 1994 stands out as being abnormally high in terms of Latino voter turnout. At 82.9% of registered Latinos turning out to vote, it is much higher than any other midterm election turnout in that time and among the highest turnouts even when presidential elections are considered. In fact, the average Latino turnout across all elections in this range of elections stands at 72.6%. The average Latino turnout in midterm elections over this period stands at a measly 61.2%. Thus, it is clear that the 1994 midterm election is unique in that Latinos turned out on a very large scale for a midterm election that they, generally speaking, have failed to turn out for consistently in the past twenty years.

In 1994, Proposition 187, a ballot initiative for a proposed state statute was placed on the general election ballot in California. Proposition 187, titled "Illegal Aliens. Ineligible for Public Services. Verification and Reporting. Initiative Statute", proposed to make illegal immigrants ineligible for public services - such as public health care, public education, and other public social services provided by the state. Further, the proposition required state and local agencies to promptly report anyone suspected of being an illegal alien to the California Attorney General and the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Finally, the proposition would make it a felony to manufacture, distribute, or sell any forged citizenship or residency documentation. The proposition was controversial in its time and a clear, strong message that illegal immigration would not be tolerated in the state of California. Years later, Arizona would propose their controversial immigration law that was, in part, modeled after this California state initiative. The proposition passed with roughly fifty-
eight percent of the vote in California, but was immediately met with legal challenges from the Mexican-American Legal Defense/Education Fund (MALDEF), the League of Latin American Citizens (LULAC), and the ACLU, among others. In light of the legal challenges, the initiative was never enacted or enforced, despite being passed by the general public in the 1994 midterm election. Latino voters in the 1994 midterm election in California turned out strongly against the proposition and 73% of Latino voters in the state voted to deny its passage (The Field Institute 1995).

From a contextual analysis of the 1994 midterm election in California, it seems that the presence of a major ballot initiative dealing with immigration rights may have played a legitimate part in drawing Latinos to the polls. As has been stated, the Latino turnout among registered Latino voters was far above average and on par (if not higher) than that of their typical presidential election turnout. The fact that Latino voters were so heavily opposed to the proposition coincides with my theory that Latinos who are interested with the issue of immigration and view immigration (legal or illegal) as beneficial to the nation will be more likely to turnout to vote. By opposing Proposition 187, the Latino community in California made it clear that they would be against the denial of public services to illegal aliens. Even if they still view illegal aliens to be negative from a legal standpoint, they seem to recognize that these immigrants can be beneficial to the local and state economies and that they should not be treated as wanted criminals. Again, it seems reasonable to suggest that this state initiative was a major motivating factor behind the unprecedented Latino turnout in a midterm election, especially given that these Latinos turned out in force of opposition to the initiative.

Given that these Latinos were clearly not illegally residing in the country (as they were...
eligible to vote), it seems that this may be an example of symbolic attitudes motivating behavior, as opposed to self-interest. Proposition 187, for the most part, did not serve to harm legal Latino immigrants in any material way, given that it targeted illegal immigrants for the denial of certain rights. However, it could be argued that the potential loss of non-material interests in the form of raised suspicion and potential harassment could fall within the broadened definition of self-interest discussed earlier in this paper.

Table 3.2. Arizona Voter Turnout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>92.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>69.7%</td>
<td>82.9%</td>
<td>74.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>70.9%</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
<td>81.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>78.0%</td>
<td>66.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
<td>67.9%</td>
<td>88.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
<td>77.4%</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>83.6%</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
<td>90.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>68.0%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>78.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>78.5%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>66.72%</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
<td>75.01%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the same Census Bureau Current Population Report, I also noticed a similarly interesting situation in Arizona. Arizona’s influx of Latinos has grown much more rapidly in recent years. In 1994, the Latino Voting Age Population (VAP) in Arizona stood at only 580,000 people, but by 2010 it had grown to roughly 1,389,000 people. Once again, I will provide a table of both midterm and presidential elections held from 1990-2010 in Arizona with respect to the voter turnout among the three major ethnic groups in the state. While the variation in specific years is not quite as great as
California, there is still some interesting context that should be discussed and that I feel is supportive of my theoretical framework. Below is the table of Arizona election statistics from 1990-2010.

The Arizona Latino population exploded in the late 1990s and continued to grow at a fast rate throughout the 2000s. Initially, as the voting age population of Latinos in Arizona began its major rise in the mid-90s, the percent of registered Latino voters that turned out to the polls for midterm elections dropped substantially, from 77.2% in 1990 to 59.8% in 2002. However, this declining trend was turned around for the midterm election of 2006. From 2002 to 2006, the voting age population increased by roughly 300,000 Latinos in Arizona. Previously, an increase of this magnitude within the state was met with a significant decline in voter turnout percentage. From 1994-1998, for example, the voting age population of Latinos increased by roughly 250,000 people and the voter turnout among registered voters dropped over 10%. However, after a similar increase in voting age population among Latinos from 2002-2006 (and after two consecutive midterm elections of sub-60% turnout), the turnout rate jumped to almost 70%.

The 2006 midterm election in Arizona saw multiple ballot measures dealing with immigration: Propositions 100, 102, and 300 all dealt in various ways with illegal immigrants and their eligibility for public services. Proposition 100 provided a few measures, but notably prohibited bail for any person charged with a serious felony that was found to be residing in the country illegally. Proposition 102 prohibited illegal immigrants from receiving punitive damages from state lawsuits they filed in Arizona. Opponents to this proposition argued that it would protect the people who might commit
a crime against illegal immigrants by saving them from potential civil charges. Finally, Proposition 300 required that anyone applying for state-funded aid (such as child care or student financial aid) provide proof of their immigration status (if applicable).

Although the relationship does not seem as clear as in the case of California's 1994 election, there does seem to be some contextual evidence that suggests the influx of immigration-related ballot initiatives might have been, at least in part, a driving force behind the increased turnout of Latinos in Arizona in the 2006 midterm election. Once again, it seems that the motivating factor behind the increased turnout and opposition to these ballot initiatives were likely more related to symbolic politics than self-interest. As the propositions were mainly proposed to limit rights of illegal immigrants, the direct, short term self-interest of those Latinos voting in the election was not in jeopardy. However, as before, it could be argued that the broader definition of self-interest to include non-material benefits or group self-interest might include these propositions.

Still, it seems reasonable to suggest that symbolic politics was the main motivating factor, at least on a contextual analytical level, behind the increased Latino turnout in the 2006 Arizona midterm election.

Going forward, it seems reasonable to continue to focus on midterm elections and how their turnout is impacted by the immigration attitudes within the relevant Latino populations. Given the heightened awareness and media coverage of presidential elections, it is often more difficult to extrapolate individual factors that may drive turnout. However, because midterm elections are so often overlooked by the voting public, individual driving factors of turnout may be more relevant and easier to parse out. To be clear, my analysis will still include the presidential election, but it is worth noting that the
results may be more pronounced in midterm elections for the aforementioned reasons.
From here, I will extend my theory to include thoughts on the Latino subgroups and continue to go into detail on the theoretical framework behind issue salience and voter turnout.

Latino Subgroups

As some of the existing literature has argued, Latinos as a whole are not a homogenous group. Within the Latino community are various countries-of-origin whose members often hold different ideas and attitudes towards certain issues and who exhibit different participation behavior. For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on the three most prominent subgroups in American politics: Cuban-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Mexican-Americans. Also, within my quantitative analysis, I will test my theory on Latinos as a whole and also test it on the differing subgroups in order to parse out any differences between these groups. With regard to overall turnout, Highton and Burris (2002) seem to find similar patterns between the three distinguished groups, however I expect there may be some difference with respect to my theory and model. For example, Cuban-Americans are typically more involved politically and generally turn out to vote at a higher rate than Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans (Highton and Burris 2002).

Group and party identity are also factors that could be the cause of differences between Latino subgroups. Cuban-Americans, a group that often identifies more with the Republican party, might possess competing identities with conflicting views of immigration. These immigration views may conflict in both opinion of immigration and how much importance is placed on the issue. If the Republican party does not pushe
immigration as a reason to vote within their base, Cuban-Americans who identify as
Republicans may be less likely to participate on the basis of their immigration attitudes.
Similarly, Mexican-Americans often identify more heavily with the Democratic party. In
this instance, their group and party identities likely do not conflict with respect to
immigration attitudes. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect Mexican-American
participation to be more greatly impacted by immigration attitudes than Cuban-American
participation. Likewise, Puerto Ricans might identify with native-born citizens and their
Latino roots, leading to a conflict with respect to immigration attitudes. In the case of
competing identities, a lack of cohesion with respect to immigration attitudes may
develop, leading to a relatively lower impact on participation. If this is the case,
subgroups with greater cohesion between identities and immigration attitudes, such as
Mexican-Americans, will likely see immigration attitudes lend a greater impact to
participatory behavior. Conversely, Cuban-Americans and Puerto Ricans might be less
likely to participate on the basis of their immigration attitudes if they recognize
competing identities. In a following section, I provide some descriptive statistics that
show the differences between subgroups with respect to importance and opinion of
immigration.

The United States Census Bureau reports that, in 2011, Mexican-Americans
made up roughly 65% of the entire Latino population in the United States. Further, the
contextual analysis of the midterm elections in California and Arizona indicated that
Latinos will turn out and oppose measures that attempt to limit the rights of illegal
immigrants within the state. The 2010 U.S. Census revealed that California and Arizona
were two of the top states in terms of Mexican-American population. Of the roughly
33,000,000 Mexican-Americans that reside in the United States, one-third reside in the state of California, representing the largest state total in terms of total Mexican-American population and the second largest total in terms of overall percentage of the state population. Arizona, similarly, ranks 3rd and 4th in those categories, respectively. It seems apparent that both Arizona and California contain some of the largest populations of Mexican-Americans in the United States. Therefore, I feel it is reasonable to suggest that, given my previous contextual analysis and the general proximity of the United States and Mexico, Mexican-Americans will be more likely to see an impact on voter turnout among those who consider immigration to be "extremely important" in their vote and "helpful" to the United States. The strong Mexican-American presence along border states, high visibility of pro-Latino political groups, and relatively high level of related legislation and initiatives lend to a higher likelihood of strong symbolic attitudes being an influence to opinion and behavior.

Beyond differences in terms of country of origin, a major factor that can differentiate Latino citizens in the United States is whether they were native-born or naturalized. Further, if they were naturalized, the time they have spent in the United States can be another major factor that differentiates Latinos in terms of participation behavior. Cho (1999) argues that, while socioeconomic theories can be valuable in explaining turnout among Latino voters, the heterogeneous nature of the Latino population (in terms of varying time spent in the United States among naturalized citizens) may limit the effect these socioeconomic variables have on turnout. Cho (1999) suggests that later generations of immigrants will likely be more affected by socioeconomic variables as they will likely have certain skills such as better English
proficiency and more experience and education within the system.

Overall, there are arguments on both sides that suggest being a naturalized citizen (as opposed to native-born in the United States) can hinder and increase voter turnout among Latinos in the U.S. Cho (1999), for example, argues that native-born citizens will be more likely to participate politically than naturalized citizens because they will have grown up in the American political system and thus have an advantage in terms of education and experience. However, others argue that naturalized citizens will have familiarity with the American political system because they have personally navigated the system to gain citizenship (DeSipio 1996, Highton and Burriss 2002).

Ultimately, the subgroups in terms of country of origin and naturalized vs. native-born Latino citizens should offer some additional variation within my model, given that Latinos are not necessarily a homogeneous ethnic group. While I will still investigate Latinos as a whole, I would like to further investigate if this variation is significant and, if it is, offer some theoretical possibilities for why it is present.

Expectations

Given the theoretical framework that has been laid out in this section, I will now lay out some general expectations of my model on Latino voter turnout. First, I expect that Latino voter turnout will be affected by the general socioeconomic factors that have been traditionally used in the existing literature. Because these factors tend to have a general impact, I will control for them in my model as control variables to aid the explanatory power of the model and help isolate the true effects of my main explanatory variable. Further, I expect that, beyond the socioeconomic factors, the individual Latino citizens’ perceived importance towards immigration, when coupled with positive feelings
towards immigration, will have a positive relationship with their likelihood to self-report as voting in a given election. I believe that this relationship will be far more pronounced in midterm elections as opposed to presidential elections because of the increased media coverage and perceived importance placed on presidential elections. Midterm elections, while arguably as important as presidential elections, are often not perceived as so and thus suffer from far lower levels of voter turnout. I further expect to find some variation between Latino subgroups in terms of both country of origin and naturalization vs. native-born citizens. In this capacity, I reason that Mexican-Americans will be more likely to be driven to vote based on their attitudes towards immigration than Puerto Ricans and Cuban-Americans. These expectations lead me to the following hypotheses:

H1: Individual salience of immigration will be a significant indicator of voter turnout likelihood among Latino voters in United States political elections when it interacts with a positive attitude toward immigration in general

H2: The effect will be felt more profoundly in midterm elections and may lack a significant effect in presidential elections

H3: The effect will be greater among Mexican-Americans, but still present among Cuban-Americans and Puerto Ricans

In the next section, I will outline the research design that will be used to test my theoretical expectations and hypotheses laid out here.
The data for this study comes from the 2004 Pew Hispanic National Survey of Latinos on Political and Civic Participation. I found this an appropriate study for various reasons, one of which is its use by Parkin and Zlotnick (2011). Going forward, I will provide many of the same justifications and point out advantages used in this study as acknowledged in Parkin and Zlotnick (2011). This study, conducted between April and June of 2004, questioned Latino respondents within the United States about various demographic and politically related topics. The original study consisted of 2,280 respondents, however after eliminating non-citizens, my sample will consist of just over 1,100 respondents. The NSL asks two questions to determine whether the respondent voted in two elections: the 2000 presidential election and the 2002 midterm election:

“Do you remember for sure whether you voted in the November 2000 presidential election when George W. Bush ran against Al Gore and Ralph Nader?”

"We often find that a lot of people aren't able to vote because they were not registered, or they were sick, or they just didn't have time. Do you remember for sure if you voted in the November 2002 congressional election in your district?"

In both questions, the survey makes a point to ask if the respondent "for sure" remembers voting. It is important that the question is worded in this way to help limit the amount of over-reporting due to respondents who do not remember clearly if they
did or did not vote, given that the two elections in question happened two and four years prior to the survey (Parkin and Zlotnick 2011). Further, Parkin and Zlotnick point out that many past studies have also used lagged recall variables in voter turnout models, including Johnston, Stein, and Wrinkle (2003); Leighley and Vedlitz (1999); Masuoka (2008); and Stokes (2003).

To test my three hypotheses, I ran three statistical models over three samples of respondents (Mexican-Americans, Cuban-Americans/Puerto Ricans, and all subgroups). The models varied only through the dependent variable used. First, I tested the model using a dependent variable that captures the total number of votes the respondent claimed to have voted in (out of the two elections in question). The value of the dependent variable for this model ranges from zero to two. However, because the previous literature has indicated so heavily that importance typically drives voter turnout more in midterm elections, and not as much in presidential elections, I also provided a model using only the 2000 presidential election turnout as well as a model using only the 2002 midterm election as the dependent variable. I feel these models will further help to continue the past research done with respect to importance and opinion on voter turnout in varying types of elections. In both models, the dependent variable is a dummy variable coded as a "1" if the person reported as voting in that particular election and a "0" if they did not.

My main independent variables measure importance of immigration and opinion on immigration using questions asked within the survey. To measure the individual importance of immigration, the survey asked the following question:
"Now I'm going to read you a list of issues that might be discussed during this year's presidential campaign. For each item I name, please tell me how important it will/should be in your vote for president this year."

The interviewer then followed up by listing several issue topics and allowing the respondent to answer on a four-point scale, ranging from "Not very important" to "Extremely important". I then coded these responses on a scale of one (1) to four (4) in ascending order (1 = "Not very important" and 4 = "Extremely important").

The question on their opinion of immigration was worded as:

"Some people say UNDOCUMENTED or ILLEGAL immigrants Help the economy by providing low-cost labor. Others say they Hurt the economy by driving wages down.

   Which is closer to your views?"

The respondent was then allowed to answer whether they found this type of immigration to be helpful or hurtful to the U.S. economy. I felt this question was appropriate to gauge respondents' feelings on immigration given that illegal immigration is typically the most controversial form of immigration, thus those who found this type of immigration as helpful would likely hold similar views with respect to legal immigration and may also better understand the context behind why many immigrants (illegal or not) come to the country. Basically, if they feel illegal immigration is helpful to the economy, they will likely feel that legal immigration is helpful to the economy. This is not to say that the inverse is necessarily true, however. Further, many of the ballot initiatives that seemed
to drive Latino turnout in California and Arizona were based around rights for illegal immigrants. From a theoretical standpoint, I have argued that the fight for rights of all immigrants, legal or not, is a significant driving force behind Latino turnout. I coded this question as a dummy variable (0 = "hurtful" and 1 = "helpful). In order to test my first hypothesis, however, I created an interaction variable between the importance and opinion variables. This interaction term enabled me to view how the two main variables acted together with respect to the dependent variable, as my theory called for the presence of both a high importance and opinion of immigration to drive turnout.

In addition to my variable on immigration, I included variables to control for respondent importance placed on the economy, education, and moral issues. I consider these important controls as they will help to give at least some ability to differentiate between simply caring about any issue and caring about immigration in general, which is what my theory is ultimately trying to test. The question above (with relation to issue importance) is also used to gather respondent importance placed on these three other issues. Although they will likely lack the explanatory power as the variable on immigration given that they do not include any information outside of importance (as opposed to including opinion), they should still be adequate controls against the immigration variable to help tease out the effects of a specific issue like immigration. These variables are coded on the same scale as the immigration variable (1 = “not too important”- 4 = “extremely important”). I chose these three issues as tests against the immigration variable because they are typically considered of high importance, generally, within the electorate. As previously mentioned, Grummel (2008) found that when moral ballot initiatives are present, voter turnout can be significantly and positively
impacted. Education and economic issues are also generally perceived as being important within elections and are therefore appropriate variables to include within the model. To maintain robustness within my results, I also tested the model using a relative measure of importance. This measure was constructed by creating a dummy variable for respondents who viewed immigration as being more important than other issues. However, the results were not significantly different from my main model that parses out the various issues, therefore these results are not included within this study.

Finally, I used controls for the traditional indicators of voter turnout: age, annual income, church attendance, political participation, naturalized vs. native-born, years in the United States, and English language proficiency. Age and annual income were measured via categorical variables produced by the survey by asking the relevant questions. The variable for age is a four point scale (18-29, 30-39, 40-54, and 55+). The variable for annual income is a three category variable that measure income as: less than $30,000; $30,000-$50,000; and $50,000+. I expect the likelihood of voting to increase as age and annual income increase. Church attendance was also a categorical variable that asked the respondents how often they attended church on a descending six point scale (more than once a week, once a week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, seldom, or never). As church attendance increases, I expect voter turnout to increase, given that church attendance often acts as a proxy for community involvement. However, there has been evidence in the literature to suggest that the high involvement in the Catholic Church by Latinos may actually be a negative factor towards voter turnout (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Still, I would argue that church attendance will likely be a positive influence on voter turnout, given that
churches are often used as polling places within districts, thus church goers may have a natural comfort in returning to their place of worship to cast their vote (as well as being less likely to be hindered by transportation or familiarity issues). Political participation is measured by combing the total number of questions a respondent answered affirmatively pertaining to political participation: whether they had contacted any elected official, had contributed money to a political campaign, or had attended a political rally. I would expect political participation to be a very strong indicator of eventual voter turnout, as those who participate in other ways will be much more likely to participate in the election by voting. To determine which respondents were naturalized citizens, I used a question in the survey that asked about citizenship to only respondents that reported being born outside of the United States or Puerto Rico. Respondents who were asked this question and reported as being a citizen were coded as a "1", while others were coded as a "0". Those coded as a "0" were respondents who reported being born in the United States or Puerto Rico, and thus are native-born citizens. Lastly, to determine the time spent in the United States, the survey asked respondents how long they had spent in the United States (if they were not born in the U.S.). Thus, the variable is coded as simply the actual number of years they reported. In the case of native-born citizens, this variable is coded as their age. I expect time spent in the United States to be a motivating factor of voter turnout, given that they will have had more time within the system. Finally, English language proficiency is measured by combining the scores from questions relating to the respondent's ability to read and speak English.

I used an ordered probit model to test my first hypothesis using the total number
of elections an individual voted in, given the ordered categorical nature of the
dependent variable. Because my dependent variable for the individual election models
is dichotomous, I used a probit regression model to test my midterm vs. presidential
election hypotheses. I believe these models will be appropriate to adequately test my
hypotheses and provide meaningful statistical inference to determine the overall effect
that my main explanatory variable has on my dependent variable, voter turnout. As
previously noted, I will run three models to parse out the differences between the
respondents reporting turn out in the presidential election, the midterm election, and
both elections. Additionally, I will use these models to test varying samples of the
survey to determine differences in Latino subgroups. One model will consist of only
Mexican-Americans and another will consist of only Cuban-Americans/Puerto Ricans.
In the next section, I will provide the empirical results of my models and analyze what
these results can tell us about my theory and the study of Latino voter turnout in
general.

Descriptive Statistics

Below are some descriptive statistics that help show the differences between
subgroups with respect to their attitudes on immigration. These statistics help to
provide some further context between subgroups that relates to earlier discussion on
how differing identities between subgroups might affect their attitudes toward
immigration and, ultimately, their behavior.
Table 4.1. Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mexican-Americans</th>
<th>Cuban-Americans</th>
<th>Puerto-Ricans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Extremely Important&quot;</td>
<td>155 (28.6%)</td>
<td>44 (20.5%)</td>
<td>60 (27.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Very Important&quot;</td>
<td>195 (36.0%)</td>
<td>105 (48.8%)</td>
<td>81 (36.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Somewhat Important&quot;</td>
<td>153 (28.4%)</td>
<td>46 (21.4%)</td>
<td>57 (25.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Not Very Important&quot;</td>
<td>38 (7.0%)</td>
<td>20 (9.3%)</td>
<td>22 (10.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Helpful&quot;</td>
<td>418 (77.3%)</td>
<td>143 (66.5%)</td>
<td>104 (47.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Hurtful&quot;</td>
<td>123 (22.7%)</td>
<td>72 (33.5%)</td>
<td>116 (52.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear that Mexican-Americans generally view immigration as being more important and hold a more positive opinion than the other subgroups. Again, this relates back to the earlier discussing regarding subgroups and how identities can affect attitudes towards immigration. Mexican-Americans overwhelmingly view immigration as being "helpful", while Puerto Ricans are more split with respect to their opinions. Likewise, Cuban-Americans, while heavily favoring a positive view of immigration, are significantly less likely to view immigration as being "extremely important", giving an indication of how the varying identities between subgroups can affect their immigration attitudes.
CHAPTER 5
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The first model I ran used voter turnout in both elections as the dependent variable. Again, respondents coded "2" for this variable self-reported turning out to vote in the 2000 presidential election and the 2002 midterm election. I feel this model provides the most generalizable value within my theory of Latino participation and individual issue importance. The results of the first model are provided in Table 5.1 below:

Table 5.1. Ordered Probit of Total Vote Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient (Std. Error)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Importance</td>
<td>-0.176 (0.076)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Opinion</td>
<td>-0.589 (0.274)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance * Opinion (Interaction)</td>
<td>0.212 (0.091)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Importance</td>
<td>0.083 (0.048)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Importance</td>
<td>0.036 (0.067)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Importance</td>
<td>-0.056 (0.067)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.314 (0.057)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Attendance</td>
<td>0.073 (0.028)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td>0.103 (0.019)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Participation</td>
<td>0.326 (0.043)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in the U.S.</td>
<td>0.011 (0.004)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalization</td>
<td>0.245 (0.108)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Proficiency</td>
<td>0.078 (0.032)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[n = 1105\] \[\text{Threshold 1} = 1.098 (.367)\] \[\text{Threshold 2} = 1.476 (.367)\]

Log-likelihood = -893.39

In the first model, the interaction term is signed as expected and statistically
significant, indicating an interactive effect of importance and opinion on voter turnout.

As expected, the control variables were all signed as expected and statistically significant. Age and income were coded in ascending order (the higher the coded value, the higher the age and income category), so the positive coefficients indicate that the likelihood of voting in one or more elections as age and income rise. Likewise, political participation was signed positively, indicating that people who participate in more ways are more likely to report voting. Church attendance was also signed as expected and statistically significant, indicating that higher church attendance correlates with higher turnout. The variable for years within the U.S. was signed in the expected direction and was highly significant within the model. As we can see, most of the traditional controls used in the model were signed correctly and significant, indicating their appropriate use in this study. The naturalization variable was signed negatively, indicating that being a naturalized citizen (and not native-born) reduces voting in both elections. It stands to reason that, because the years within the U.S. variable was signed positive and significant, that naturalized citizens are likely going to have less overall time in the U.S. and thus be less likely to vote.

With respect to the main explanatory variable - the interaction between importance and opinion on immigration - the results were signed correctly and significant at the 95% confidence level. This is consistent with my initial expectations and indicates that Latino voters who consider immigration to be very important and have a positive opinion of the value of immigration are more likely to turn out to vote. However, the variables for moral, education, and economic individual issue importance were not statistically significant. This is helpful to the model in that it seems to indicate
that Latino voters who consider those issues as being more important are not necessarily more likely to turnout to vote. A more meaningful interpretation of these results can be seen in the predicted probabilities calculated from the model. To fully understand the interaction, it is necessary to hold the individual importance and opinion variables at each possible value while viewing the differing values of the interaction and their respective probabilities (holding the controls at their means). First, I will provide the predicted probabilities of voting in 0 elections. Figure 5.1, below, illustrates the predicted probabilities from the first model.

Figure 5.1. Predicted Probabilities of Respondents Voting in 0 Elections

The results in Figure 5.1 are mixed. First, the probability of voting in 0 elections increases between the two extreme combinations (hurtful and not very important vs.
helpful and extremely important). This is contrary to my initial expectation that respondents who viewed immigration positively and as being more important would be more likely to turn out to vote (or, in this case, less likely to vote 0 times). However, some moderate support is lent to the first hypothesis when comparing respondents who view immigration as “extremely important” and “very important”. Among these respondents, those who hold a positive opinion of immigration have a lower probability of reporting turnout in 0 elections compared with respondents who have a negative view of immigration. It then seems to follow that respondents who view immigration as more important will be less likely to report turnout in 0 elections. Below are the predicted probabilities of voting in 2 elections.

Figure 5.2. Predicted Probabilities of Respondents Voting in 2 Elections

These results are similar to the results shown in Figure 5.1 in that the two extreme values contradict initial expectations. However, as before, respondents who
hold immigration to be of higher importance are more likely to turn out to vote in 2 elections if they view immigration as “helpful”. Once again, this lends moderate support to the first hypothesis that a respondent who views immigration as highly important and helpful will be more likely to vote. It seems, however, that among those who view immigration helpful, there is only a slight increase in reporting turnout in 2 elections as importance increases.

Overall, the results from the first turnout model are mixed. There is some support for the first hypothesis when those who view immigration with higher importance are compared across their opinion. In both cases (the likelihood of voting in 0 elections and voting in 2 elections), respondents who hold immigration to be either “very important” or “extremely important” are more likely to turnout if they view immigration as “helpful” (either by having a lower likelihood of reporting turnout in 0 elections or a higher likelihood in reporting turnout in 2 elections). However, this support is tempered by the results that suggest those who view immigration as “hurtful” and “not very important” are less likely to report turnout in 0 elections and more likely to report turnout in 2 elections than those who view immigration as “helpful” and “extremely important”.

Next, I examine the second hypothesis that the main explanatory factors affect midterm elections more than presidential elections. To do so, I run two probit models using the same explanatory variables as before with dependent variables accounting for respondents who report a vote in the midterm election and those who report a vote in the presidential election. Below are the probit results from the first model on midterm elections.
The results of this model are similar to the results from the ordered probit model using total number of votes as the dependent variable. The main explanatory variables are all statistically significant and many of the main contextual controls are statistically significant and correctly signed. It is worth noting that three of the contextual variables are not statistically significant in this model (years in the U.S., naturalization, and English proficiency). While not extremely relevant to the hypotheses, it seems that these variables may also be affected as indicators when only the midterm election is considered. Like before, however, it is necessary to view these results using predicted probabilities to better depict the relationship. Figure 5.3, below, illustrates the predicted
probabilities of voting in the midterm election.

Figure 5.3. Predicted Probabilities of Respondents Voting in Midterm Election

The results from Figure 5.3 follow the same conclusions as the results from the total votes model. As before, the differences in the extreme values (“hurtful” and “not very important” to “helpful” and “extremely important”) contradict the expectations of the first hypothesis. In this case, respondents are more likely to report a vote in the midterm election if they view immigration as “hurtful” and “not very important” than they are if they view immigration as “helpful” and “extremely important”. However, like before, among respondents who view immigration as being “very important” or “extremely important”, the likelihood of voting in the midterm election increases moderately if they hold an opinion of “helpful” versus an opinion of “hurtful.” Likewise, among those who view immigration as “helpful,” higher importance corresponds to a higher likelihood of
turnout in the midterm election. Next, I provide results for the model that uses turnout in the 2000 presidential election as the dependent variable for comparison. The expectation in the second hypothesis is that turnout in the midterm election would be more drastically affected by immigration opinion and importance than turnout in the presidential election. Table 5.3 reports the results from the presidential election model.

Table 5.3. Probit of Presidential Election Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coefficient (Std. Error)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voter Turnout</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Importance</td>
<td>-0.194 (0.082)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Opinion</td>
<td>-0.412 (0.300)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance * Opinion (Interaction)</td>
<td>0.166 (0.099)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Importance</td>
<td>0.073 (0.050)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Importance</td>
<td>0.092 (0.072)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Importance</td>
<td>0.0009 (0.072)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.290 (0.061)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Attendance</td>
<td>0.064 (0.030)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td>0.108 (0.022)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Participation</td>
<td>0.312 (0.047)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in the U.S.</td>
<td>0.014 (0.004)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalization</td>
<td>0.364 (0.118)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Proficiency</td>
<td>0.097 (0.034)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.761 (0.403)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 1105
*** = p > .001
** = p > .01
* = p > .05
Log-likelihood = -592.74

The results from this model are, for the most part, quite similar to the midterm election model. However, the magnitude of the interaction term is somewhat lower in this model, causing the variable to fall out of statistical significance at the 95% confidence level. Given that the results do remain somewhat similar, however, I cannot
say with any certainty that the results are substantively different and therefore cannot confirm my second hypothesis. Another disparity between the two models is seen in the three contextual variables that lacked statistical significance in the midterm election model (years in the U.S., naturalization, and English proficiency). These variables have increased in magnitude and are now highly significant within the model. As previously stated, these variables are not essential to the main hypotheses being tested, but the disparity is worthy of note. All three variables are related in that they represent individuals’ assimilation into American society, perhaps indicating that presidential elections are more likely to be influenced by this assimilation than midterm elections. Greater mobilization efforts and higher overall turnout are the most likely reasons for this disparity. With respect to the main explanatory variables and the interaction, it is worth investigating the relationship via predicted probabilities as has been done with the previous models, despite their lack of statistical significance (because, as has been pointed out, the variables are still fairly close in magnitude to the midterm election model). Figure 5.4 shows the predicted probabilities of voting in the presidential election.
The results in Figure 5.4 mostly reflect the results from all the previous models. As before, respondents who viewed immigration as “very important”/“extremely important” and “helpful” were more likely to turnout than those who viewed immigration as “very important”/“extremely important” and “hurtful.” This relationship is consistent with initial expectations from the first hypothesis, however it does not support the second hypothesis (that midterm elections will be more affected by this relationship than presidential elections). Further, the initial expectations are once again, in part, contradicted by the finding that respondents who view immigration as “not very important” and “hurtful” are more likely to report voting than those who view immigration as “extremely important” and “helpful.”

The results from the midterm and presidential elections models add robustness to
the original total votes model, but lend little support to the second hypothesis that midterm elections will be more greatly affected by the relationship between immigration importance and opinion on voter turnout. Going forward, I have provided a final group of models meant to test the third hypothesis that Mexican-Americans will be more likely to exhibit this effect than Cuban-Americans or Puerto Ricans. To examine this hypothesis, I have provided two models that test the total number of reported votes among the subgroups in individual samples. Table 5.4 shows the ordered probit results of the model using only Mexican-Americans.

Table 5.4. Ordered Probit of Total Votes Model, Mexican-American Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voter Turnout</th>
<th>Coefficient (Std. Error)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Importance</td>
<td>-0.203 (0.129)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Opinion</td>
<td>-0.991 (0.438)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance * Opinion (Interaction)</td>
<td>0.383 (0.146)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Importance</td>
<td>-0.076 (0.070)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Importance</td>
<td>0.116 (0.095)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Importance</td>
<td>0.106 (0.093)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.180 (0.116)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Attendance</td>
<td>0.169 (0.043)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td>0.143 (0.030)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Participation</td>
<td>0.329 (0.060)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in the U.S.</td>
<td>0.022 (0.009)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalization</td>
<td>0.447 (0.214)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Proficiency</td>
<td>0.128 (0.047)**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 541

*** = p > .001
** = p > .01
* = p > .05

Log-likelihood = -417.48

The results in Table 5.4 are, for the most part, consistent with the results found for the entire sample of Latino citizens. In this case, the interaction term has a greater
magnitude and remains consistent in the expected direction. The contextual variables all maintain significance, with the exception of age. While the age variable remain statistically significant, the difference is fairly minimal. Figure 5.5 reports the predicted probabilities of voting in 0 elections for Mexican-American respondents.

Figure 5.5. Predicted Probabilities of Respondents Voting in 0 Elections, Mexican-American Sample

The sample of Mexican-Americans follows the full sample with respect to the probabilities of voting in 0 elections. However, the probability of a respondent reporting turnout in 0 elections drops significantly more (compared to the full sample) when a respondent who views immigration as “extremely important” holds an opinion of “helpful” versus “hurtful”. In this case, the probability of reporting turnout in 0 elections drop nearly 16% when a respondent views immigration as “extremely important” and “helpful”
instead of “extremely important” and “hurtful.” Also, for respondents holding an opinion of “helpful,” the probability of voting in 0 elections drops significantly as importance rises. However, as before, the lowest likelihood of reporting turnout in 0 elections remains with a respondent who views immigration as “not very important” and “hurtful.”

Next, I report the predicted probabilities of turnout in 2 elections in Figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6. Predicted Probabilities of Respondents Voting in 2 Elections, Mexican-American Sample

The results in Figure 5.6 follow the findings of Figure 5.5. There is a consistent upward trend among respondents who find immigration as “helpful” in terms of turnout in 2 elections when their importance value increases. Further, there is a sharp decline among respondents who view immigration as “extremely important” if they also view it as “hurtful” and not “helpful”. Finally, as before, the respondents most likely to report
Voter Turnout in 2 elections are those who view immigration as “not very important” and “hurtful”, contrary to initial expectations.

Overall, Mexican-Americans follow the same trends as the full sample, but with greater magnitude. This, in part, gives moderate support to my third hypothesis that the Mexican-American sample would be more greatly display the expected relationship.

Finally, I ran a model that used only Cuban-Americans and Puerto Ricans to compare the results with the Mexican-American sample. Table 5.5 reports the results of the ordered probit using total votes as the dependent variable.

Table 5.5. Ordered Probit of Total Votes Model, Cuban-American and Puerto Rican Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coefficient (Std. Error)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voter Turnout</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Importance</td>
<td>-0.223 (0.107)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Opinion</td>
<td>-0.378 (0.420)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance * Opinion</td>
<td>0.121 (0.140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Importance</td>
<td>0.224 (0.081)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Importance</td>
<td>-0.094 (0.117)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Importance</td>
<td>-0.165 (0.116)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.343 (0.085)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Attendance</td>
<td>0.002 (0.045)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td>0.065 (0.031)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Participation</td>
<td>0.338 (0.072)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in the U.S.</td>
<td>0.009 (0.005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalization</td>
<td>0.309 (0.167)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Proficiency</td>
<td>0.083 (0.049)**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 435

Threshold 1 = .682 (.581)
Threshold 2 = 1.02 (.582)

Log-likelihood = -341.40

Table 5.5 reveals some disparities between the samples that have implications on the
study. First, the results with respect to the main explanatory variables lack the magnitude and significance of the Mexican-American sample. However, the variables are signed in the same direction and may not be too substantively different. Still, it does appear that there is at least some drop off in explanatory power between the samples, lending moderate support to my third hypothesis.
CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results lend mixed support for my first hypothesis and moderate support for my second and third hypotheses. To test my first hypothesis, I used a full-sample model of total votes cast (between 0 and 2).

H1: Individual salience of immigration will be a significant indicator of voter turnout likelihood among Latino voters in United States political elections when it interacts with a positive attitude toward immigration in general (illegal or legal).

The results showed that, among voters who considered immigration to be “very important” or “extremely important”, holding an opinion of “helpful” resulted in a higher likelihood of reporting voter turnout across all elections. However, one disconcerting result across all the models was that respondents who reported immigration as being “not very important” and “hurtful” garnered the highest predicted probabilities of voting across all models. One potential reason for this disparity is the relatively low number of respondents who meet these qualifications. Within the total model of 1,105 respondents, only 33 report immigration as “not very important” and “hurtful”. The other combinations of the interaction are far more equally distributed. Overall, however, the results of my analyses were fairly consistent with my first hypothesis. It does seem that, considered together, importance and opinion of immigration can act as a moderate indicator of voter turnout among Latino citizens.

My second hypothesis was tested using two bivariate election models to test the
difference between voter turnout in presidential and midterm elections.

H2: The effect will be felt more profoundly in midterm elections and may lack a significant effect in presidential elections

With respect to this second hypothesis, the results in the midterm election model were only moderately more supportive than the presidential election model. While the magnitude of the results was slightly greater, the difference was not clearly significant. Therefore, there is not much support for my second hypothesis that midterm elections will be more greatly affected by the proposed relationship between immigration importance and opinion. My third hypothesis is below:

H3: The effect will be greater among Mexican-Americans, but still present among Cuban-Americans and Puerto Ricans

The third hypothesis was moderately supported given the effect was far greater in the Mexican-American sample. However, I am cautioned with support given the main explanatory variables were signed in the same direction across the two samples. While the magnitude may be greater in the Mexican-American sample, there may still be an effect within the Cuban-American and Puerto Rican sample. Mexican-Americans are, by far, the largest subgroup of Latinos in the United States and face the issue of immigration more directly than Cuban-Americans or Puerto Ricans, given the large land border shared between Mexico and the United States. The contextual analysis of anti-
immigration ballot initiatives from an earlier section in this study were conducted in two of the highest Mexican-American populated states, California and Arizona. Thus, it is not surprising that Mexican-Americans were the only subgroup individually affected by the relationship between the main explanatory variable and voter turnout. Going forward, it seems clear that Latino subgroups are certainly different in their voting behavior and what drives their voter turnout. It seems Mexican-Americans are more in tune with immigration issues and, if they feel these issues are important and view immigration in a positive light, are more likely to turn out to vote. With respect to the attitude formation and the role of self-interest/symbolic politics, the stronger results among Mexican-Americans might indicate that self-interest can, in fact, play a role. Given that Cuban-Americans and Puerto Ricans have little self-interest at stake in immigration policy, they might typically be motivated by symbolic factors. Conversely, Mexican-Americans are far more likely to consider immigration law a matter of self-interest. With this in mind, the strong disparity in the results between the two samples might further the debate on the role of self-interest in the formation of attitudes and participation. While this study does not directly test for differences in self-interest and symbolic politics, the disparity between the two subgroups is noteworthy in terms of implications for future research.

Another interesting disparity came in the church attendance variable. In the Mexican-American sample, church attendance was highly significant and signed in the direction that would indicate a higher church attendance would result in a higher likelihood to vote. The Cuban-American/Puerto Rican sample, however, found church attendance to have an almost nonexistent effect, falling far outside the realm of
statistical significance. I would argue that church attendance in the Mexican-American community may have a more traditional relationship with political participation in that the social groups that attend these churches will be more likely to discuss relevant political topics and encourage participation among one another. The reason for this more traditional relationship might be related to the higher involvement in relevant political topics like immigration, whereas Cuban-American and Puerto Rican church groups may lack a unifying, salient political issue. While church attendance was used only as a contextual variable in this study, I feel the disparity of its impact across Latino subgroups does highlight an importance difference in the way these groups interact towards political issues and participation. While Cuban-Americans do turn out at higher rates than Mexican-Americans, it seems that their turnout may be more driven by factors outside of immigration or church attendance. Ultimately, the results in this study find that Mexican-Americans are far more likely to vote if they find immigration to be an important issue and something that is helpful to the country.

Overall, the hypotheses presented in this paper were, for the most part, only moderately supported by the empirical tests. It seems clear, however, that a relationship exists between Latinos and the importance and opinion they place on the issue of immigration. These findings advance the knowledge on Latino voting behavior and shed light on how relevant, salient issues can drive specific voting blocs to participate in the United States' political elections.
APPENDIX

PROBIT RESULTS OF RELATIVE IMPORTANCE MODEL
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coefficient (Std. Error)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voter Turnout</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Importance - Relative</td>
<td>-0.300 (0.136)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Opinion</td>
<td>-0.087 (0.115)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance * Opinion (Interaction)</td>
<td>0.239 (0.165)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.317 (.061)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Attendance</td>
<td>0.08(0.027)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td>0.097 (0.019)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Participation</td>
<td>0.325 (0.042)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in the U.S.</td>
<td>0.010 (0.004)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalization</td>
<td>0.269 (0.107)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Proficiency</td>
<td>0.076 (0.031)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 1105  
*** = p > .001  
** = p > .01  
* = p > .05  
Log-likelihood = -895.49
REFERENCES


