UC Irvine
CSD Working Papers

Title
Immigrant Organizing, Civic Outcomes: Civic Engagement, Political Activity, National Attachment, and Identity in Latino Immigrant Communities

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4pf4c1tz

Author
DeSipio, Louis

Publication Date
2002-11-01

The recent renewed scholarly awareness of the importance of and evident decline in civic engagement and community social structures (Putnam, 2000; Skocpol and Fiorina, 1999) highlights a contradiction in the academic study of Latino politics, particularly Latino immigrant politics, and community-based organizations. While there is extensive evidence that Latino politics emerged from community-based civic and organizational activities, there is little comparative study of how organizational activities shape civic participation, national attachments, and ethnic identity in Latino communities today. Case studies of contemporary Latino community-based organizations exist, but they are often limited by a focus on a single organization and the results are often shaped by contextual factors unique to that organization and the environment in which it operates. My objective here is to measure the impact of civic organizational activity on several forms of political activity and attitudes.

I test three possible venues in which community-based organizational experience could be expected to increase political activity or shape political attitudes. First, I measure three forms of civic and school-focused behaviors (among parents). It is in this first category that I would most expect the membership or participation in a community-based organization to spur political activity. The three behaviors that I test are: engaging in non-electoral political activities, participating in school-based activities (among parents), and contacting a government office about a problem or to get information. U.S. citizens and non-U.S. citizens can engage each of these activities. Second, I measure two sets of attitudes towards toward the United States and the respondent's country of origin or ancestry. These attitudes are: plans to make the United States a permanent home and the country of political focus. My expectation is that these models tap different dimensions of the process of acculturation and I would expect that community organizational participation would generally increase connections to the United States. Finally, I assess the link between community organizational activity and identity formation in Latino communities. The ethnic identity that I focus on is a pan-ethnic Latino or Hispanic identity. I hypothesize that the organizationally active are more likely to perceive a common Latino culture because these organizations will expose respondents to Latinos of other national origin groups. As will be evident, each of these six models also includes socio-demographic and immigration factors that might shape the dependent behaviors, attitudes, or identities.

In order to test these models, I tap a unique data source. It is the *Emerging Latinos Survey* conducted in 1997 by the NALEO Educational Fund and the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute. The survey name is slightly misleading. The "emerging Latinos" of the title are not all Latino immigrants, but instead national-origin groups other than the dominant ones with the longest history in the United States (Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban Americans). The Emerging Latinos Survey measures the political attitudes, values, and behaviors of the next four largest groups in the United States—Colombians, Dominicans, Guatemalans, and Salvadorans. I have selected this survey for analysis because of the newness of these Latino

populations. Most are immigrants and they reside in areas where another Latino population dominates the local Latino identity. As a result of both of these characteristics, I think that these Latino populations offer a particularly rich palate on which to test the impact of community-based organizational activities on political behaviors and attitudes.

Immigrants, Latinos, and Organizations

A survey of the emergence of Latino politics in the United States shows a pattern, one that is not uncommon among other immigrant populations in the United States. Electoral and institutional politics appear only after a foundation of mutualist, fraternal, civic, and community-focused politics is laid. This pattern appeared in the early Latino populations—Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban Americans—as its is among today's Latino immigrants.

In the Latino experience, the earliest forms of mass politics appeared in the Southwest in the period after the transfer of Mexican lands to the United States by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. These include such activities as unions in mining areas in the late 19th Century, mutualist organizations designed to offer specific protections for their members such as burial insurance, and clandestine social action groups such as *Las Gorras Blancas* in New Mexico (Arellano, 2001; De León, 1982; Griswold del Castillo, 1979). These local level community-based organizations were most Mexican Americans' first opportunities to shape the relationship to the U.S. community and they preceded the development of civic and electoral organizations by 50 years (Márquez, 1993; Orozco, 1992; Ramos, 1998). The roots of the early Mexican American civic organizations can be found in these non-explicitly political community-based organizations and the leaders of the first civic organizations came from these groups. The civic organizations, then, provided the foundation for the first electorally focused Mexican American organizations (García, 1994; García, 2000; García and de la Garza, 1977).

Similar patterns appeared in Puerto Rican and Cuban American communities, though the movement from community-based organizing to electoral organization was somewhat quicker than in the Mexican American population. The earliest Puerto Rican community-based organizations in the United States appeared in the 1880s and 1890s (Sánchez-Korrol, 1994 [1983]). These neighborhood-based organizations established the foundation for efforts as early as the 1930s to influence city and state politics (Jennings and Rivera, 1984). The unique circumstances of the Cuban migration (at least after 1959) and their relatively quick (for an immigrant group) rise to national influence in U.S. foreign policy should not obscure the fact that Cuban Americans were quick to organize a rich network of issue-based and civic organizations at the community level (García, 1996). As community leaders realized that domestic political influence was also needed, they were able to tap this resource to build Cuban American influence in Miami and Florida politics (Moreno and Rae, 1992; Portes and Stepik, 1993).

In the new Latino populations, the development of community-based organizations, civic organizations, and tentative efforts at electoral politics are blended. The high share of immigrants in these populations makes electoral influence difficult to achieve, but this demographic barrier can be overcome by statutory requirements that mandate building minority electoral districts. In areas where emerging Latino populations are concentrated, such as Dominicans in the Washington Heights neighborhood of New York, a Latino district would become a Dominican district. Case studies offer insights into issues that spur organizational involvement in the emerging Latino populations. Probably the most important relate to the delivery of city services (DeSipio et al., 1997; Popkin et al., 1997; Sainz, 1990); structuring the

immigration experience for family members (Pessar, 1996); and negotiating the relationship between connections with home countries and the United States (Graham, 2001).

As this discussion should indicate, community-based and civic organizations have played a continuing role in shaping the Latino politics. This is particularly true in immigrant populations for whom electoral participation is not an option. Thus, this organizational net plays an even more important role for Latinos than it does for others in U.S. society.

Measuring Latino Membership in Community-Based Organizations

Empirical measure of Latino membership in community-based organizations indicates that Latinos are less likely than non-Hispanic whites (hereafter Anglos) to be members of such organizations. The Latino National Political Survey, conducted in 1988-89 found, for example, that only a slight majority of Latino U.S. citizens reported that they were organizational members. A companion survey found that 75 percent of Anglos reported that they were (de la Garza et al., 1992: Table 8.2; de la Garza, with Lu, 1999). Non-citizens were less likely to be organizational members than were Latino U.S. citizens (Díaz, 1996).

The 1990 American Citizen Participation Study reinforces these findings (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995: chapter 8). Latinos were less likely than Anglos or African Americans to report participation in informal community activity or affiliation with a political organization. Latinos were approximately one-third less likely to be involved in informal community activity. They were about half as likely as Anglos to report affiliation with a political organization.

The Sample Population

Although there has long been national discussion and analysis of "Latino politics," until recently, at the mass level, the reality has been somewhat different. In most areas of high Latino residence (the Southwestern United States, South Florida, New York, Southern New England, and the Chicago area), one Latino national-origin group dominated. The geographic distinctiveness of Latino populations that minimized the perception of a common Latino identity or political agenda began to decline in the 1980s and 1990s. The largest Latino cities (Los Angeles, New York, Miami, and Houston) followed Chicago's model in becoming home to multiple Latino populations. Dominicans and Colombians, for example, moved in large numbers to New York joining Puerto Ricans in the city's Latino community. Salvadorans migrated to Los Angeles and Houston joining Mexican Americans. Miami's Cuban Americans were joined by Latinos from Central and South America. These new Latino migration patterns are on-going and are certainly not limited to these cities or these specific Latino national-origin groups. These new migration patterns did not overnight shift the political and ethnic attitudes of the pre-existing Latino populations in each of these cities. They did, however, ensure that an increasing share of the Latino population has regular contact with Latinos of a national origin group other than their own and that they have begun to have the opportunity to build civic and political linkages with other Latinos (Jones-Correa, 1998; Hamilton and Chinchilla, 2001). Thus, by the 1990s, it was increasingly accurate to understand Latino politics as a local as well as national phenomenon.

The "emerging" Latino populations are making the rhetoric of Latino politics real. Although there is only a small academic scholarship on their experience (Hamilton and Chinchilla, 2001; Itzigsohn and Dore-Cabral, 2000; Torres-Saillant, 1996), two characteristics are particularly notable. First, each has moved into areas dominated by another Latino population. Their politics, then, from it earliest days, developed in the context of a Latino

politics that they do not dominate and may not initially understand. Second, they are largely immigrant populations (and will continue to be for the foreseeable future). To the extent that there is a Colombian, Dominican, Guatemalan, or Salvadoran politics in the United States, it is not structured by the experiences of several generations of U.S.-born co-ethnics who initially have to fight very different fights for political inclusion.

The Emerging Latinos Survey

The Emerging Latinos survey was conducted by telephone in 1997 by the by the NALEO Educational Fund and the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute using random-digit-dialing in areas of concentration for each of the four populations under study. Of the 1,503 respondents, 376 were of Guatemalan origin or ancestry, 375 were Salvadoran, 377 were Dominican, and 375 were Colombian. All interviews were conducted by bilingual interviewers and followed a detailed inventory of adults in the household. The interview subject was randomly selected from eligible adults (an adult born in or tracing his/her ancestry to one of the four countries). Unlike many surveys, then, not only was the household randomly identified, so was the respondent (interviewers called the household back as many as six times to speak to the individual identified through the random selection of eligible household adults).

Three limitations with these data need to be discussed. First, the Emerging Latinos survey focuses on these four populations in the areas of the United States where they are most concentrated—Los Angeles County for Salvadorans and Guatemalans and New York City and several Northern New Jersey counties[1] for Colombians and Dominicans. This is less of a limitation that it may initially seem. More than one-third and as many as three-quarters of each of these populations resides in these metropolitan areas. Colombians are the least concentrated; just 36 percent of Colombians counted in the 1990 census lived in New York or Northern New Jersey. Dominicans are the most concentrated with 73 percent residing in these areas. Approximately half of Guatemalans and Salvadorans (47 percent and 55 percent, respectively) resided in Los Angeles County. No other metropolitan area is home to these populations in these numbers. These areas are the cities of first residence for immigrants from these countries. As a result, the sample will likely over-represent immigrants relative to the population. The sample will also over-represent the socio-demographic traits of immigrants.

Second, budget constraints dictated that sample be limited to areas identified through the 1990 census as having population densities of at least 10 percent of one of the survey populations. As a result, these respondents are Columbians, Dominicans, Salvadorans, and Guatemalans who live around others of the same origin or ancestry. Most of the Emerging Latino survey respondents reside around Latinos of other national origins. This reinforces the bias introduced by the survey's geographic focus. The sample is likely to have a higher share of immigrants than the populations as a whole.

Finally, the Salvadoran sample is somewhat biased in that Salvadorans have one of the highest levels of non-telephoned households of any racial or ethnic population in the United States; approximately 6 percent of Salvadorans resided in households without telephones at the time of the survey. Although there are no empirical analyses of the residents of these non-telephoned households, I expect that that they are more likely to include recent migrants, particularly single males, and the undocumented who are generally younger with low incomes and lower levels of formal education. The other three surveyed populations had telephone incidence rates exceeding 97 percent at the time of the survey.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Emerging Latino Survey Respondents

	Colombian	Dominican	Guatemalan	Salvadoran
Age (average)	39	38	34	35
Gender				
Men	37.5	32.7%	47.3%	41.9%
Women	62.5%	67.3%	52.7%	58.1%
Nativity				
U.S.	1.3%	5.1%	0.5%	1.6%
Abroad	98.7%	94.9%	99.5%	98.4%
Marital Status				
Married	47.9%	49.7%	54.5%	53.8%
Separated	14.7%	14.8%	10.2%	10.2%
Divorced	12.5%	10.8%	2.4%	3.5%
Widowed	1.5%	3.7%	1.9%	2.2%
Never married	23.4%	21.1%	31.0%	30.4%
Education (Years and Degrees Completed)				
0-8 years	16.1%	29.0%	45.9%	40.1%
9-12 years/no degree	43.5%	36.0%	33.5%	28.8%
HS graduate	24.6%	15.4%	9.5%	15.9%
Post-HS education	10.6%	14.7%	8.4%	11.3%
BA/BS or beyond	5.2%	5.0%	2.7%	4.0%
Income Range (1995)				
Less than $9,999	14.3%	28.6%	24.5%	17.9%
$10,000-$19,999	32.7%	24.1%	40.1%	41.2%
$20,000-$29,999	18.2%	10.1%	9.3%	12.6%
$30,000-$39,999	7.2%	7.2%	2.7%	6.4%
$40,000 or more	4.5%	4.6%	3.2%	3.2%
Refused	23.1%	25.3%	20.2%	18.7%

Source: Emerging Latinos Survey.

With a few exceptions, demographic characteristics of the sample mirror those of the populations as a whole. There are a few differences that deserve note (see Tables 1 and 2). Education levels closely resemble population characteristics at the lower levels, but the sample has fewer respondents with post-high school education. The Colombian and Dominican samples have higher shares of women than the population as a whole. Finally, the sample has a higher share of immigrants. These differences result from the fact that young people (those under 18) are more likely to be born in the United States than their parents (the sample only includes adults) and sampling decisions that I have discussed. The sample broadly mirrors the populations as a whole in terms of age, income, marital status, and labor force participation rates.

Table 2. Immigration and Acculturation Measures Among Foreign Born Respondents (in percent)

	Colombian	Dominican	Guatemalan	Salvadoran
Immigration Year (Naturalized Citizens and Permanent Residents)				
Before 1965	1.7	5.6	-	0.5
1966-1980	36.2	26.3	11.2	7.3
1981-1985	20.3	15.2	14.2	14.1
1986-1990	15.1	23.6	37.3	46.9
1991-1997	26.8	29.3	37.3	31.3
Age at Immigration (Immigration to Reside "Permanently" in the United States)				
6 or younger	6.9	7.4	4.2	5.5
7-18	27.5	28.0	29.2	27.4
19-30	37.0	42.3	52.4	51.8
31 or older	28.5	22.3	14.2	15.3
Self-Reported Ability to Understand English				
Very well	35.5	22.6	18.1	22.9
Well	39.8	40.3	48.5	50.4
Not very well	18.7	24.2	24.8	18.9
Not at all	6.0	12.9	8.5	7.7
Immigration Status (Among Foreign Born)				
Permanent resident	60.7	71.5	41.6	50.9
Naturalized citizen	27.1	25.4	13.4	14.1
Neither permanent resident nor naturalized citizen	12.2	3.1	44.9	34.9

Note: I suspect that the respondents over-reported being either naturalized citizens or permanent residents. In a sample of 80 respondents who reported that they were either naturalized citizens or permanent residents, approximately 20 percent subsequently stated that they were neither when they were re-interviewed.

Source: Emerging Latinos Survey.

Political Activity and Ethnic Identity

The models that I test include three sets of independent variables. Two of these—socio-demographic characteristics of the respondent and immigration/nativity/immigrant settlement characteristics of the respondent have long been understood to influence civic and electoral engagement of all racial and ethnic populations in the United States, including Latinos (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995). The impact of socio-demographic characteristics and immigration/nativity/immigrant settlement on ethnic identity are less well understood, but should reasonably, by extension, shape identity questions as they do civic and school engagement, though perhaps not as strongly. I also seek to measure civic attachment and distance. The Latino experience contains elements of both, so I do not mean to

present them as mutually exclusive. Instead, I understand them as part of a continuum that for most Latinos includes elements of both engagement and distance. It is on this dimension that I will explore the connection between organizational involvement and my dependent variables.

I test the impact of these independent variables on three sets of dependent variables. The first of these sets includes various dimensions of civic and school activities (non-electoral political activities, school activities [among parents], and contacting of government). The second set looks at two dimensions of residential and nationalistic attachments (plans to make the United States one's permanent home [among immigrants] and country of political focus). Finally, the third—perceptions of a common Latino culture—only has one measure. Citizens and non-citizens can equally engage each of these behaviors or attitudes.

Socio-demographic Characteristics

The demographic measures that I tap include several that are not unique to the Latino (or immigrant) experience—age, education, income, and gender—and one that is—racial self-identification (race in this context means Latinos who identify as white, black or other, which I would interpret as an effort to assert a Latino racial identification).

For all populations, young adults, individuals with lower levels of education, and individuals with lower incomes are less likely to participate in civic or electoral politics and I would expect these patterns to continue here. These patterns also appear among Latinos, though income is generally a less reliable predictor for Latinos than it is for non-Hispanic whites (DeSipio 1996). There is no such consistent pattern for the impact of gender on political behaviors. Women in the population as a whole vote at slightly higher levels, but depending on the type of civic organization, men are more likely to be involved. Among parents, school-based activities see higher participation among women. Latinas and Latinos vote at comparable rates, controlling for the other socio-demographic variables. But, immigrant women may carry with them some of the traditional gender roles of their countries of origin. Thus, I do not expect a consistent impact from gender on the dependent variables.

The other socio-demographic variable is more unique to the Latino experience. I include race as a control. Respondents who reported one of the four ancestries or origins that were the subject of the survey were included whether or not they identified with that national-origin group. It is quite possible, for example, that a Dominican, particularly a Dominican immigrant, who identifies racially as Black has little identification with other Latinos. By including race in these models, I control for any consistent difference based on racial identification among these Latino groups. I would expect the racial self-identification to have a particular impact on the model testing for perceptions of a common Latino culture.

Immigration Characteristics

The model also controls for immigration characteristics. They are: ancestry/origin, English speaking ability, percentage of life spent in the United States, immigration/citizenship status, and the sending of remittances to people in the country of origin or ancestry. I measure consistent differences across the four national origin groups in the survey. English-speaking ability and share of life spent in the United States measure access and exposure to U.S. society. I expect respondents with greater English fluency to be more engaged in non-electoral political activities and to be more like to perceive a common Latino culture. I also expect that Spanish-dominant Latinos would have stronger ties to their countries of origin.

The remaining variables in this category test connections to the United States and the country of origin. Percentage of life spent in the United States blends age and age of immigration. Arguably, the longer an immigrant is in the United States, the longer s/he has to access U.S. cultural markers. Length of U.S. residence alone, however, does not capture the cultural and political exposure to the country of origin. So, an immigrant with twenty years of U.S. residence who migrated at age twenty would likely have somewhat less substantive exposure to the sending country than an immigrant with twenty years of U.S. residence who migrated at age fifty. Respondents born in the United States are coded as having spent 100 percent of their lives here (which may not quite be accurate). While percentage of life spent in the United States is a somewhat mechanical measure, remittance behavior taps a voluntary tie to the sending country. Respondents who send remittances (approximately 60 percent of respondents) choose to maintain ties with family, friends, or communities in their countries of origin or ancestry. I expect that respondents who remit would be less likely to plan to make the United States their permanent homes and would be more focused on the country of origin than the United States. Finally, I include citizenship status. The survey did not ask explicitly about legal status. Instead, it asked about nativity and naturalization as a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident status among the foreign born. Many of the remaining respondents (the control group in the logistic regression) are either undocumented or in a temporary legal status. I hypothesize higher levels of civic activity and pan-ethnic identification among legal permanent residents and U.S. citizens than respondents in the residual category.

Civic Attachment and Distance

Finally, I want to measure how civic engagement and civic distance shape Latino propensities to engage in civic and school activities, Latino residential and national attachments, and Latino perceptions of Latino unity. I use three measures—one of collective action, one of perceptions of personal or familial exclusion, and one of national-origin based discrimination. The measurement of collective action is a tally of membership in community-based organizations. The survey asked about membership or participation in nine different types of clubs.[2] I sum the number of memberships here (see Table Three). Since even civically engaged respondents are ineligible to participate in all of these (for example, senior citizen clubs or parent teacher associations), I collapse all respondents with two or more memberships/participations. I expect that the higher the number of memberships the higher the level of civic engagement and the lower the levels of attachment to the country of origin. I also expect that memberships would increase the perception of Latino unity since many of these clubs would probably have memberships that include Latinos of other national origins that the respondent.

I also expect that Latinos who experience discrimination would be pushed away from U.S. society and, possibly, from perceived connections with Latinos of national origins other than their own. To capture this dynamic, I include a second scale in this category. This is personal experience of discrimination.[3] As is evident in Table Four, most respondents reported that they had not experienced any of these types of discrimination *themselves*. In the model, I distinguish respondents who reported experiencing none of these forms of discrimination from those who had experienced one and those who had experienced two or more kinds.

Table 3. Civic Organization and Club Memberships by National Origin Group (Number of Memberships out of Nine Organizational Types in percent).

Number	Colombian	Dominican	Guatemalan	Salvadoran	Total
None	56.5	46.2	61.7	64.8	57.3
One	20.5	29.2	26.1	21.9	24.4
Two or more	23.0	24.6	12.2	13.4	18.3

Note: Civic organizations and clubs included: Labor unions, parent teacher associations, sports clubs, senior citizen clubs, fraternal orders, political clubs, home country clubs, social clubs, and clubs of other types.

Source: Emerging Latinos Survey.

Table 4. Perceptions of Personal Discrimination (out of discrimination by five entities in percent)

Number	Colombian	Dominican	Guatemalan	Salvadoran	Total
None	68.3	78.5	68.9	71.3	71.8
One	18.9	13.4	21.0	18.7	18.4
Two or more	12.9	8.3	10.1	10.0	10.3

Note: Modes of discrimination potentially experienced: by the police, by school officials, by other government offices, as a renter or buyer of a home, and/or some other type of discrimination.

Source: Emerging Latinos Survey.

Finally, respondents reported much higher levels of discrimination against their co-ethnics (here defined as people of the same national origin) than they did against themselves. Approximately two-thirds of respondents agreed with the statement that there is discrimination against their co-ethnics in the United States. I expect that the perception of discrimination against their national origin group, like the effect of discrimination against respondents as individuals, would drive respondents away from civic engagement in the United States and would diminish the likelihood of establishing residential or nationalistic attachments to the United States. I am unsure of its impact on identity formation.

Civic and School Activities of Latinos

I test three the impact of these categories of independent variables on three measures of civic and school engagement. The first captures respondents who engaged in any one of a standard survey battery of civic or electoral activities other than voting.[4] Few respondents participated in any of these activities. When they are collapsed, approximately 28 percent of respondents had engaged in at least one. Just 10 percent had undertaken two or more, so I feel comfortable dichotomizing the variable with the model predicting to those who had undertaken at least one activity.

Clearly, the share participating in these civic and non-electoral political activities is small. Previous scholarship on immigrants indicate that schools often serve as an entry point into community civic life and these data would bear that finding out for these Latino populations.

Among parents, approximately 70 percent had undertaken at least one of four school-related activities that do not require U.S. citizenship.[5] The second model I test predicts to whom among the parents are likely to undertake these activities.

My third civic and school activity model measures a more proactive effort to influence government, specifically contacting a government office about specific problem or need for information. Relatively few respondents reported that they have done this in the twelve months prior to survey—just 19 percent.

Residential and Nationalistic Attachments of Latinos

I test two models that measure Latino attitudes toward making a permanent home of the United States and toward where they focus their political attentions. The first of these, tested only for immigrants, predicts to those respondents who reported that they planned to make a permanent home of the United States. Approximately 89 percent of respondents reported this intention, a figure comparable to other studies (Pachon and DeSipio, 1994).

Recognizing that residential intentions may not reflect political loyalty or self-identification, I also test a model that predicts to where respondents report that their political concerns lie. My goal here is to develop an explicit test that distinguishes respondents who reported that they were *more* concerned with government and politics in the United States. Thus, this model predicts to those primarily focused on the United States. Approximately one-quarter of respondents meet this qualification.

Perceptions of a Common Latino Culture

The final model distinguishes respondents who believed that Latinos share a common culture from those who do not. This is a very tentative effort to develop a measure of "Latino linked fate" modeled on Dawson's (1994) analysis of the African American community. The measure I use here is constructed through a scaling of two questions. One questioned perceptions of whether Latinos have a great deal in common culturally and the other perceptions of whether Latinos are working together on community needs. Unfortunately, these questions were not asked using the same answer scales. As a result, I have constructed a composite variable that distinguishes respondents who took the most pan-ethnic position in response to either of these questions and one of the two most pan-ethnic answers in response to the other from all other respondents. The goal here is to distinguish respondents who saw a great deal of Latino unity on both dimensions measured. Approximately 43 percent of respondents score "high" on their perceptions of Latino pan-ethnicity.

<div align="center">

Results

</div>

Overall, the impact of civic engagement was seen most dramatically in the models testing civic and school-focused behaviors. Perceptions of group discrimination had little impact on these, or other, models, but experiences of individual discrimination did. These civic engagement and distance variables had less impact on the residential and nationalistic attachments of Latinos and on the perception of a common Latino culture. In terms of civic and school activities, the civic engagement and distance variables' impact was greater than either the variables in the socio-demographic characteristic category or the immigration characteristic category. The immigration characteristic variables dominated the models predicting to residential and

nationalistic attachments. Few variables proved significant in the model predicting perceptions of a common Latino culture.

Not surprisingly, organizational participation predicted the likelihood of engaging in at least one of the non-electoral political activities (see Table Five). This impact increased with additional organizational membership or participation. Personal discrimination also proved to have a significant impact, but not in the predicted direction. As respondents experienced more discrimination as individuals, the likelihood that they would engage in civic activities increased. In other words, personal discrimination motivates U.S. civic activity rather than to push people away from it. Perceptions of discrimination against one's national-origin group, however, had no effect. Higher shares of life spent in the United States and, perhaps, increasing English language skills increased the likelihood of non-electoral political behaviors. Higher incomes intermittently increased their probability and, controlling for the other variables, Guatemalans were somewhat less likely than Colombians to be civically engaged.

With slight variations, these patterns repeat themselves for contacting government. The likelihood of contacting government offices or officials increased only among respondents who were involved in two or more community-based organizations. Income, again, had an intermittent impact. Women were more likely than men to contact government, and increasing share of life spent in the United States, counterintuitively, decreased the likelihood of contacting government. Discrimination, again, acted as a positive incentive to participate and, unlike the non-electoral political activity model, the magnitude of the impact is greater than for discrimination than for organizational participation.

Parents involved in organizations were between four and five times as likely to have undertaken at least one of the school-based activities. This impact was stronger than any of the socio-demographic or immigration variables, except for increasing share of life spent in the United States. The impact of having experienced personal discrimination proved insignificant. Replicating the finding of other studies, men were less likely than women to be involved in school activities. Here, Guatemalans were significantly more likely than Colombians to be involved. And, respondents who sent remittances to their countries of origin or ancestry were less likely to be involved in school-based activities by approximately 35 percent. The sending of remittances was highly correlated to having family members abroad, so this result may indicate that these respondents have children in schools both in the United States and in the country of origin or ancestry. U.S. citizen parents were more likely than immigrants without legal status to be involved in their children's schools and respondents with better English-language skills were more likely than those with poor skills to be involved.

The civic engagement and distance variables proved largely unimportant for the remaining three models. Although the coefficients for organizational participation were in the predicted directions for planning to make a permanent home of the United States and country of political focus, they proved to be statistically insignificant, as did personal experiences of discrimination or perceptions of group discrimination (see Table Six). The immigration characteristic variables proved significant and in the expected directions for the country of political focus. Language proved significant for plans to make a permanent home of the United States. Generally, national origin groups other than Colombians were more likely to plan to make a permanent home of the United States and to focus more on U.S. politics. Remitters were less likely to focus on U.S. politics and citizens and permanent residents were more likely. Language had no effect on country of political focus.

Table 5. Civic and School Activities of Latinos.

	Non-electoral political activities Exp(B)	School activities (among parents) Exp(B)	Contacted government Exp(B)
Socio-demographic characteristics			
Age	1.003	1.012	0.989
Years of education	1.026	0.991	1.019
Household income (*$9,999 or less*)			
$10,000-$19,999	1.307	1.360	0.982
$20,000-$29,999	0.975	2.058**	0.909
$30,000-$39,999	2.074**	2.520**	0.870
$40,000-$49,999	1.632	0.956	2.163*
$50,000 or more	2.549**	4.618*	1.154
Refused	0.959	0.894	0.618**
Gender (*Female*)			
Male	1.073	0.366***	0.720**
Race (*Other*)			
Black	1.060	0.901	1.292
White	0.988	0.810	1.134
Immigration characteristics			
Ancestry/origin (*Colombian*)			
Dominican	1.050	1.057	1.033
Guatemalan	0.592**	1.585*	1.038
Salvadoran	0.856	1.310	0.870
English-speaking ability (*Not at all*)			
Not very well	1.388	1.612	1.369
Somewhat well	1.766*	2.448***	1.200
Very well	1.734	2.048**	1.476
Share of life in U.S.	1.944**	5.085***	0.498*
Citizenship status (*Neither citizen nor LPR*)			
Permanent resident (LPR)	1.126	1.327	0.851
U.S. citizen	1.103	1.630*	0.836
Remittances sent (*No*)			
Yes	1.193	0.634**	0.952
Civic engagement and distance			
Organizational participation (*None*)			
1	2.176***	4.766***	1.253
2 or more	4.624***	4.193***	2.140***
Discrimination experienced (*None*)			
1	1.560***	0.984	2.236***
2 or more	2.367***	1.266	2.625***
Perception of discrimination against co-ethics (*No*)			
Yes	1.039	0.766	0.862
-2 Log likelihood	1395.192	940.215	1253.017
Total cases	1371	950	1375
Predicted correctly	76.1%	75.9%	81.0%

Key:* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01; comparison category italicized in parentheses
Source: Emerging Latinos Survey.

Table 6. Residential and Nationalistic Attachments of Latinos

	Plan to make U.S. a permanent home among immigrants) Exp(B)	Country of political focus Exp(B)
Socio-demographic characteristics		
Age	1.014	1.007
Years of education	1.000	1.003
Household income (*$9,999 or less*)		
$10,000-$19,999	1.327	1.061
$20,000-$29,999	1.412	0.950
$30,000-$39,999	4.999**	1.481
$40,000-$49,999	2.829	1.139
$50,000 or more	392.372	1.793
Refused	1.030	0.702
Gender (*Female*)		
Male	1.021	1.169
Race (*Other*)		
Black	1.084	1.331*
White	1.385	1.210
Immigration characteristics		
Ancestry/origin (*Colombian*)		
Dominican	1.805**	1.512**
Guatemalan	1.338	2.480***
Salvadoran	1.373	2.662***
English-speaking ability (*Not at all*)		
Not very well	1.263	0.995
Somewhat well	2.251**	1.414
Very well	2.378**	1.593
Share of life in U.S.	0.910	1.808*
Citizenship status (*Neither citizen nor LPR*)		
Permanent resident (LPR)	1.430	1.559**
U.S. citizen	1.646	2.608***
Remittances sent (*No*)		
Yes	0.858	0.635***
Civic engagement and distance		
Organizational participation (*None*)		
1	0.968	1.001
2 or more	1.547	1.076
Discrimination experienced (*None*)		
1	1.255	1.179
2 or more	1.559	1.419
Perception of discrimination against co-ethics (*No*)		
Yes	0.841	0.890
-2 Log likelihood	769.413	1401.655
Total cases	1214	1294
Predicted correctly	89.3%	72.7%

Key: * p < 0.1; ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01; comparison category italicized in parentheses.
Source: Emerging Latinos Survey.

For the most part, the model had little to tell us about perceptions of the existence of a common Latino culture (see Table Seven). Each year of education added about 5 percent to the likelihood that a respondent would perceive the presence of a common Latino culture. Increasing income also intermittently proved significant and positive on this perception. Latinos who identified racially as white or black were less likely perceive a Latino identity. Again, personal experience of discrimination provides a confounding result. Respondents reporting that they had experienced two or more of the forms of discrimination were approximately 50 percent more likely than respondents reporting no personal experiences of discrimination to perceive a common Latino culture. That said, my reading of these results would be that perceptions of pan-ethnic identity are not driven by socio-demographic characteristics, immigration characteristics, or civic engagement and distance.

Conclusions

The results provide two insights into the role community organizational membership plays in shaping contemporary Latino politics. Organizational activity spurs civic engagement. The skills, networks, and information provided through this group-focused community activity vest Latinos with the resources they need to take on more individualist forms of politics. The second finding is that the spur provided by organizational activities does not shape the three attitudes measured. While organizations undeniably offer contacts with other individuals and networks, these resources do not drive attitudes toward either the United States or a pan-ethnic identity.

In the first three models, where organizational activity had their most dramatic impact, the community-based organizational participation (and personal experience of discrimination) variables absorbed much of the variance usually attributed to socio-demographic characteristics in survey-driven studies of Latino political behavior. These traits, however, are outside of the control of community elites or other leaders. Community-based organizations, on the other hand, can be structured in such a way as to encourage broader-based memberships. Outreach and personal invitations to become involved have been shown to build involvement. As new issues emerge, new organizations are continually being born and these, too, can bring current non-participants into participation. Thus, to the extent that Latino distance in politics is explained as a function of demographics, it is only manipulable over time or through changed circumstances. A renewed focus on building the infrastructure of community organizational life, on the other hand, will have a rapid impact on civic life and school-based involvement.

Should this happen, a growth in Latino (or Latino immigrant) involvement in community-based organizations would not have an immediate impact on attitude formation. This is a particularly important finding in terms of the final model—on pan-ethnic identification. Most of the scholarship on pan-ethnicity understands the shift from a national origin-based identity to a pan-ethnic identity in terms of instrumental recognition that political and economic opportunities are more easily achieved with the broader identity. The results presented here offer a caution to such a narrowly instrumental understanding of pan-ethnicity. Community-based organizations connect individuals to collective action and help build such group-group alliances. Yet, they appear, at least in these populations, to have little connection with a perception of common Latino culture.

Table 7. Perceptions of Latino Unity Among Latinos

	Perception of a common Latino culture Exp(B)
Socio-demographic characteristics	
Age	1.000
Years of education	1.045***
Household income (*$9,999 or less*)	
$10,000-$19,999	1.578***
$20,000-$29,999	1.311
$30,000-$39,999	1.600*
$40,000-$49,999	0.861
$50,000 or more	1.202
Refused	1.237
Gender (*Female*)	
Male	1.077
Race (*Other*)	
Black	0.759*
White	0.760*
Immigration characteristics	
Ancestry/origin (*Colombian*)	
Dominican	1.136
Guatemalan	1.083
Salvadoran	1.168
English-speaking ability (*Not at all*)	
Not very well	0.657*
Somewhat well	0.873
Very well	0.555**
Share of life in U.S.	1.220
Citizenship status (*Neither citizen nor LPR*)	
Permanent resident (LPR)	0.700**
U.S. citizen	1.071
Remittances sent (*No*)	
Yes	1.025
Civic engagement and distance	
Organizational participation (*None*)	
1	1.067
2 or more	1.027
Discrimination experienced (*None*)	
1	0.877
2 or more	1.582**
Perception of discrimination against co-ethics (*No*)	
Yes	0.832
-2 Log likelihood	1833.292
Total cases	1386
Predicted correctly	61.1%

Key: * p < 0.1; ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01; comparison category italicized in parentheses
Source: Emerging Latinos Survey.

Finally, the impact of perceived discrimination against oneself is dramatic and somewhat counterintuitive. Remembering that most respondents did not report that they themselves had been the target of one of the five types of discrimination identified, those that had were dramatically more likely to be civically engaged and, perhaps, to be somewhat more likely focus on U.S. politics and perceive a common Latino culture. Clearly, this experience too could be manipulated by leaders in an effort to build the depth and strength of Latino politics, though not in a way that would have a positive impact on American civil society more broadly. An alternative explanation is that discrimination is a learned response and their learning of it reflects acculturation. This would explain the wide gap between perceptions of discrimination against the group as a whole and perceptions of the personal experience of discrimination.

References

Arellano, A. 2001. "The People's Movement: Las Gorras Blancas." In Erlinda Gonzalez-Berry and David R. Maciel, eds. *The Contested Homeland: A Chicano History of New Mexico*, pp. 59-82. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

Dawson, M. 1994. *Behind the Mule*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

de la Garza, R. O.; L. DeSipio; F. C. García; J. A. García; and A. Falcón. 1992. *Latino Voices: Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban Perspectives on American Government*. Boulder, O: Westview Press.

de la Garza, R. O., with F. Lu. 1999. "Explorations into Latino Voluntarism." In D. Campoamor; W. A. Díaz; and H. A. J. Ramos, eds. *Nuevos Senderos: Reflections on Hispanics and Philanthropy*, pp. 55-78. Houston, TX: Arte Publico Press.

De León, A. 1982. *The Tejano Community, 1836-1900*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

DeSipio, L. 1996. *Counting on the Latino Vote: Latinos as a New Electorate*. Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia.

DeSipio, L.; S. Ospina; H. Pachon; and A. Hoffman. 1997. *Diversifying the New York Area Hispanic Mosaic: Colombian and Dominican Leaders' Assessments of Community Public Policy Needs*. Los Angles and Claremont, CA: NALEO Educational Fund and the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute.

Díaz, W. A. 1996. "Latino Participation in America: Associational and Political Roles." *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 18 (2) (May): 154-174.

García, F. C., and R. O. de la Garza. 1977. *The Chicano Political Experience: Three Perspectives*. North Scituate, MA: Duxbury Press.

García, I. M. 2000. *Viva Kennedy: Mexican Americans in Search of Camelot*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press.

García, M. C. 1996. *Havana USA: Cuban Exiles and Cuban Americans in South Florida, 1959-1994*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

García, M. T. 1994. *Memories of Chicano History: The Life and Narrative of Bert Corona*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Graham, P. 2001. "Political Incorporation and Re-Incorporation: Simultaneity in the Dominican Immigrant Experience." In H. Cordero-Guzman; R. C. Smith; and R. Grosfoguel, eds. *Migration, Transnationalization, and Race in a Changing New York*, pp. 87-108. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Griswold del Castillo, R. 1979. *The Los Angeles Barrio, 1850-1890: A Social History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hamilton, N., and N. Stoltz Chinchilla. 2001. *Seeking Community: Guatemalans and Salvadorans in a Global City*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Itzigsohn, J., and C. Dore-Cabral. 2000. "The Manifold Character of Panethnicity: Latino Identities and Practices Among Dominicans in New York City." In A. Laó-Montes and A. Dávila, eds. *Mambo Montage: The Latinization of New York*, pp. 316-336. New York: Columbia University Press.

Jennings, J., and M. Jennings, eds. 1984. *Puerto Rican Politics in Urban America*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Jones-Correa, M. 1998. *Between Two Nations : The Political Predicament of Latinos in New York City*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Márquez, B. 1993. *LULAC: The Evolution of a Mexican American Political Organization*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Moreno, D., and N. Rae. 1992. "Ethnicity and Partisanship: The Eighteenth Congressional District in Miami." In G. Grenier and A. Stepik, eds. *Miami Now! Immigration, Ethnicity, and Social Change*, pp. 186-204. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida.

Orozco, C. E. 1992. "The Origins of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement in Texas With an Analysis of Women's Political

Participation in a Gendered Context, 1910-1929." Ph.D. Dissertation. University of California, Los Angeles.

Pachon, H., and L. DeSipio. 1994. *New Americans by Choice: Political Perspectives of Latino Immigrants*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Pessar, P. 1996. *A Visa for a Dream: Dominicans in the United States*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Popkin, E.; L. Arguelles; L. DeSipio; and H. Pachon. 1997. *Diversifying the Los Angeles Area Latino Mosaic: Salvadoran and Guatemalan Leaders' Assessments of Community Public Policy Needs*. Claremont, CA and Los Angeles: The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute and the NALEO Educational Fund.

Portes, A., and A. Stepik. 1993. *City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Putnam, R. D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Ramos, H. A. J. 1998. *The American G.I. Forum: In Pursuit of the American Dream, 1948-1983*. Houston, TX: Arte Público Press.

Sainz, R. A. 1990. "Dominican Ethnic Associations: Classification and Service Delivery Roles in Washington Heights." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. Columbia University.

Sánchez-Korrol, V. 1994 [1983]. *From Colonia to Community: The History of Puerto Ricans in New York City*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Skocpol, T., and M. Fiorina, eds. 1999. *Civic Engagement in American Democracy*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

Torres-Saillant, S., and R. Hernandez. 1996. *The Dominican Americans*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Verba, S.; K. Lehman Schlozman; and H. E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wolfinger, R., and S. Rosenstone. 1980. *Who Votes?* New Haven, Yale University Press.

Endnotes

[1] Passaic, Hudson, Essex, and Union counties, including the cities of Patterson, Jersey City, Newark, and Elizabeth.

[2] The survey inquired about membership or participation in nine types of clubs organizations: Labor unions, parent teacher associations, sports clubs, senior citizen clubs, fraternal orders, political clubs, home country clubs, social clubs, and clubs of other types. The survey also inquired about church membership which I exclude from this analysis.

[3] The survey inquired about five types of discrimination: by the police, by school officials, by other government offices, as a renter or buyer of a home, and some other types of discrimination.

[4] These include signing a petition, contacting the media or a public official, attending a public meeting, wearing a campaign button or placing a campaign sign in one's yard, attending a political meeting, working for a party or candidate, or contributing to a campaign.

[5] They are: meeting with a teacher, attending a PTA meeting, meeting with the principal, and attending a school board meeting.