

Local Context and Latino Political Socialization: Why Immigrant Destinations Matter

**Karen M. Kaufmann
Antonio Rodriguez**

**Department of Government and Politics
University of Maryland
kkaufmann@gvpt.umd.edu**

As the size of the Latino immigrant population has grown dramatically over the past several decades, scholarly interest in Latino politics has increased as well. Conventional theories of party acquisition, political participation, and voting behavior have been reinvestigated and re-specified to reflect the unique circumstances and attributes of Latino immigrant populations. Within this growing literature, however, insufficient attention has been given to the notion of “place”, and, in particular, to the differential effects that immigrant entry points have on Latino propensities to engage in American political life (But see, Benjamin-Alvarado, DeSipio and Montoya 2009; Marrow 2005).

Latinos – native and foreign born – are increasingly migrating and immigrating to new destinations. Whereas 82% of Latinos lived in traditional gateway metro areas in 1980, only 76% do as of the 2000 census (Suro and Singer 2002). Even more telling, in 1990, 67% of new immigrants (those who arrived in the previous 5 years) located in one of the “big five” gateway destination states (California, New York, Texas, Illinois, and Florida). By 2005, this number had dropped to 51%, and the level of immigrant dispersion across the remaining 45 states had increased significantly (Massey and Capoferro 2008).¹ Simply, greater numbers and higher proportions of the Latino population are now located across a wider array of states and metropolitan areas. The rate of Latino population diffusion is growing and will likely continue over the near and long term. And while the dispersal of Latinos may augur an array of economic and educational benefits not explored in this research, this paper maintains that contemporary immigrant settlement patterns in nontraditional locales currently present obstacles to the full political incorporation of Latinos into the U.S. political system (But see Jones-Correa 2008).

¹ Using a compilation of Public Use Microdata Samples and the 2005 Current Population Survey, Massey and Capoferro (2008) estimate an increase in the immigrant diversity index from 66.2 in 1990 to 77.8 in 2005. For a discussion of their methodology, see page 37.

This paper looks to contribute to our current understanding of Latino politics by focusing on the difference between patterns of immigrant political acculturation in traditional gateway environments versus new immigrant destinations.² Using the most recent Latino National Survey (LNS 2006) to study the significance of this distinction, we explore two competing, albeit not mutually exclusive, theories as to how immigrant populations come to politically engage. The most common immigrant assimilation perspective maintains that the development of political views and participatory behavior among Latinos is typically tied to nativity, socioeconomic status and lifecycle learning; resources matter and length of residency in the U.S. is a key component to an emerging political consciousness (DeSipio 1996; Tam Cho 1999; Arvizu and Garcia 1996; Wong 2000; but see Barreto 2005). From this perspective, political differences between Latinos who live in traditional Hispanic metros and nontraditional communities likely reflect the fact that new destination populations are disproportionately comprised of younger, more recent arrivals.

As an alternative, we propose that various aspects of residential context influence political socialization independent from individual-level characteristics, and that Latinos who live in traditional immigrant locales are more likely to engage with U.S. politics than are those who live in nontraditional immigrant communities. Extant research on residential context covers a broad array of factors including questions of group size, residential segregation, co-ethnic empowerment, social networks, state institutions and state electoral competitiveness. (Leighley 2001; Deleon and Naff 2004; Bobo et al. 2000; Barreto, Segura and Woods 2004; Hritzuk and Park 2000; Pantoja, Ramirez and Segura 2002; Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001). Most of

² While we use the terms “gateway” and “traditional locale” interchangeably throughout this paper, it is important to note that all mature Latino communities are not necessarily contemporary gateways. Metro areas in New Mexico, for example, represent sizeable, mature Latino communities, although they are not currently magnets for large influxes of new immigrants. The crucial contextual distinction between the “gateways” and the “new destinations” is the respective maturity of the communities.

this work, however, is limited to studying the contextual variance that occurs within traditional immigrant destinations, while virtually no empirical attention has been paid to the contextual differences between gateway and nontraditional immigrant communities. Additionally, most of the research pertaining to political context is focused on questions of participation and mobilization, with little direct concern for the antecedent socialization processes that generate sustained political interest and engagement.

This paper argues that immigrant residential context influences the political socialization process via the comparative access and exposure Latinos have to politically aware social networks and to Hispanic-serving organizations. Specifically, we propose that individual engagement in U.S. politics is enhanced by living in traditional gateways (and otherwise mature Latino communities) and is dampened substantially by residing in nontraditional destinations, in part, because Latino civic, social, labor and advocacy organizations enable more effective mass political socialization in gateway destinations than do their relatively scarce, and often understaffed, counterparts in nontraditional locales.

Using multivariate analyses that control for a wide array of individual-level factors that typically correspond with political engagement and often distinguish mature Hispanic metros from nontraditional communities, this research confirms the powerful influence of local context on political engagement. Latinos who reside in new destinations are simply less likely to be politically active in U.S. politics than their gateway counterparts. This finding holds true for native as well as foreign born Latinos.

In her study of immigrant naturalization patterns, Kristi Andersen (2008) notes that political parties no longer play “a central role in the political incorporation of immigrants. Other groups and organizations such as unions, churches, nonprofits, and neighborhood organizations may be filling this gap, but the patterns are distinctive by locale and more research is needed to

specify the conditions under which the traditional role of political incorporation has been replaced by social organizations” (p.37). This paper answers Anderson’s call for more research by comparing immigrant socialization outcomes in gateway locations (that are generally rich with such Latino-serving social organizations) to nontraditional immigrant destinations that are relatively poor in this regard. This study not only identifies a significant difference in the level of political acculturation between Latinos in gateways versus those who live in newer locales, but it also strongly suggests that the political information and incentives resulting from social networks and organizational participation constitute more effective socializing agents in gateways than elsewhere. These findings make a strong case for enhancing Latino organizational development in nontraditional immigrant communities. For Hispanic Americans to enhance their electoral potential, Latino social and political organizations need to expand the depth and breadth of their activities, especially in new Latino destinations.

Developing a U.S. Political Identity

As participation rates constitute the focal point for much of the Latino politics literature, most studies use eligible citizen or registered voter samples (See, for example, Alvarez and Garcia Bedolla 2003; Arvizu and Garcia 1996; Barreto, Segura and Woods 2004; Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001; Highton and Burris 2002; and Tam Cho 1999). For immigrants, however, the process of political acculturation does not begin with naturalization. Rather, developing an interest in U.S. politics, accumulating political information and forming a political identity – especially a preference for one of the main political parties – can be an impetus for, rather than a byproduct of, naturalization (Pantoja and Gershon 2006). Quite simply, the development of a U.S political identity is an important precursor to political participation. Latinos with low levels of political knowledge, who discern no salient differences between parties, and who report no preference, even a weak one, for any political party are, on average, much less likely to be

politically active. This is not to say that the presence of a Latino candidate or an anti-immigrant ballot proposition might not draw otherwise apolitical Latino citizens to the polls, but there is little evidence that this kind of candidate or issue specific participation evolves into *sustained* political interest (Ramakrishan and Espenshade 2001; Pantoja, Ramirez and Segura 2001; Barreto, 2005). To the extent that enhancing U.S. oriented political identities within the Latino community is an important foundation for a more participatory Hispanic electorate, this study focuses on exploring the differences between Latinos who identify with a political party versus the large proportion of Latinos in the U.S. who demonstrate no affinity for any party, due to lack of interest or inadequate knowledge.

Predicting Political Engagement

A reading of the extant research on Latino participation and party acquisition points to four main categories of explanation: socioeconomic factors; levels of Latino acculturation; social networks and organizational involvement; and the development of salient social identities beyond nation of origin attachments.

Much of the research on Latino politics emphasizes the important role that socioeconomic status plays in the propensity to become politically active. Consistent with resource models of participation, Latinos with higher levels of income and education are more likely to naturalize, develop party attachments, and participate in a range of political activities (Arvizu and Garcia 1996; Garcia 1997; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995; Tam Cho 1999).

Because most immigrants come to the U.S. with relatively little knowledge of and experience with U.S. politics, the length of time one spends in the country is consistently shown to be a potent predictor of political assimilation. Among the foreign born, this factor has significant implications for political knowledge, acquisition of partisanship, partisan strength,

and turnout (Cain, Kiewiet, and Uhlaner 1991; Wong 2000; Ramakrishnan 2005; Tam Cho 1999). Extending this logic, native born citizens typically have a participation advantage over the foreign born as they are more likely to use English as a primary language, are educated in U.S. schools, and can benefit from the intergenerational transmission of political knowledge (But see Barreto 2005).

Social Networks and Organizational Participation

One of the unique attributes of immigrant populations – especially Latinos – is their disproportionate reliance on non-familial social networks as part of the political socialization process. Many scholars emphasize the importance of social integration to the political acculturation of Latino immigrants (Hajnal and Lee 2004; Pearson-Merkowitz 2009; Hagan 1998). Latinos who remain physically and socially isolated from other Americans are less likely to acquire general information about mainstream American politics and institutions than their more socially integrated brethren (Bobo et al. 2000; Cohen and Dawson 1993; Massey 2000; Pearson-Merkowitz 2009).

In addition to benefits derived from diverse social networks, individuals who participate in organizations such as political parties, labor unions, workers' centers, ethnic voluntary associations, religious institutions, and advocacy or social service organizations are more likely to naturalize and to participate politically (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995; Wong 2006; Andersen 2008; Hritzuk and Park 2000). Janelle Wong (2006) emphasizes the important role that community organizations play in the political development of immigrant groups, especially as political parties are reticent to commit resources to immigrant mobilization.

“Organizations provide immigrants with tools explicitly needed for naturalization (such as English proficiency and a knowledge of U.S. history and civics.) Furthermore, by providing services, sharing information, and reinforcing group identity, organizations

help to give their constituents some of the traits that are generally characteristic of civically active segments of the population – social and economic stability and positive self-identity. Finally the provision of these things builds a connection between the organization and its constituency so that the organization is positioned to mobilize people around relevant issues.” (Wong 2006, p.91)

Wong also notes that even among ostensibly non-political community groups, they often sponsor events that offer cultural as well as political content. Finally, Wong maintains that immigrant oriented community organizations play a critical role in the political development of Latinos because they help fill the mobilization void created by the parties’ tendencies toward selective mobilization of regular voters. Not only do the parties have little apparent will to mobilize immigrant communities during elections, parties and campaigns are, at best, sporadic mobilizers that engage in short-term election centered strategies, not long-term community building ones. This is yet one more reason why community-based groups are so crucial to immigrant political socialization; they are typically there for the long haul, not just during election seasons.

Social Identities

It is well documented that the Latino collective is not a monolith and that, in spite of cultural and linguistic commonalities across Latin American countries, levels of pan-ethnic identity among American Latinos is not always high. Unlike the relative political cohesion of the African American community, Latinos vary considerably in the extent to which they perceive a sense of pan-ethnic commonality (Calderon 1992; Jones-Correa and Leal 1996; Kaufmann 2003a). Studies of Latino participation, nonetheless, point to the role that pan-ethnic identities and Latino group consciousness play in stimulating political activity (Stokes 2003, Sanchez 2006). Latinos who identify with the larger Hispanic community are more likely to develop party affinities and to participate in politics.

In a similar vein, research suggests that co-ethnic mobilizing strategies are more effective in immigrant communities than traditional party-based efforts. Most scholars argue that the Democratic and Republican parties have done little to engage the Latino community (Leighley 2001; Wong 2006; Andersen 2008). Beyond the periodic use of Spanish-language advertising, relatively few party and candidate resources are expended on high quality Latino mobilization efforts (DeSipio 2002). Even if the Democratic and Republican parties were to expand their mobilization efforts, however, there are questions as to whether political party contacts would be particularly effective in generating Latino turnout. The preponderance of research suggests that co-ethnic mobilization via Latino organizations is considerably more valuable than political party mobilization for rallying Latino voters (Shaw, de la Garza and Lee 2000, Barreto, Ramirez and Woods 2005; Pantoja and Woods 1999). The relative effectiveness of co-ethnic mobilization underscores the comparatively weak ties many Latinos have to the Democratic and Republican parties and further implies that co-ethnic affinity provides an important psychological impetus to participate.

Finally, recent research on Latino politics shows that the presence of Latino candidates on the ballot, an anti-immigrant issue context, and living in minority majority districts all enhance rates of Latino turnout (Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001; Pantoja, Ramirez and Segura 2001; Barreto, Segura and Woods 2004). Considerable evidence suggests that Latino turnout spikes upward in the face of a hostile issue environment or when co-ethnic candidates are on the ballot; however, the heightened levels of political participation that occur in such cases do not appear to be wholly durable. Latino turnout tends to revert to prior levels when threatening issues subside from the political arena or when Latinos are no longer on the ballot (Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001; Gilliam and Kaufmann 1998; Kaufmann 2003b; but see Pantoja, Ramirez and Segura 2001). To the extent that Latino candidates and particular Latino-

interest issues invigorate Latino voters, they do not appear to generate substantially higher residual levels of general interest in American politics.

Why Immigrant Destinations Matter

In addition to the individual-level factors that correspond with political engagement among Latinos, contextual factors add another layer of explanation for why some Latinos are drawn to U.S. politics and others are not. In spite of the existing work on various context effects, no empirical work has considered the implications that traditional and nontraditional immigrant locales have for the political development of Latino populations. There are important theoretical reasons, however, to believe that the differences between gateways and nontraditional locales are more than a straightforward reflection of differences in population characteristics. Traditional immigrant gateways tend to be rich with the kinds of social networks and civic organizations that provide information, skills and incentives for new immigrants to naturalize and participate. Nontraditional destinations have seemingly exploded onto the national scene over the past two decades, in many cases posting some of the highest rates of Latino population growth in the country. Like Latino immigrants who gravitate to gateway locales, Latinos in new destinations often reside in Latino enclaves and can experience substantial social isolation from the larger community. Unlike the immigrant experience in the traditional points of entry, these new destinations are not flush with civic, labor and advocacy organizations (DeSipio 2001). As noted by Benjamin-Alvarado, DeSipio, and Montoya (2009), “Immigrant political mobilization rarely occurs without a rich civic infrastructure. This infrastructure, however, has traditionally been weaker in new areas of migration.” (p.720)

A simple counting of Latino-serving organizations in gateway versus new destination states helps illustrate this point. Using the *Anuario Hispano/Hispanic Yearbook (2007-2008)* as a resource, we aggregated the total number of Latino serving organizations for the gateway and

new destination states included in the LNS survey.³ Table 1 reports the aggregated numbers of political organizations in these states.⁴ By this accounting, there are approximately 1,494 Latino-serving organizations in the eight gateway states compared to 193 groups in the seven new destination states. Beyond the total number of groups, we also tallied the respective number of politically oriented groups in both locales. There are 90 advocacy, civil-rights, political action and immigration support groups located in the eight gateway states, while there are only 13 of such organizations in the seven new destination states. Similarly, organizations committed to employment and housing assistance are more numerous in the gateway destinations (87) than they are in the nontraditional immigrant states (3). This simple mathematical accounting of Latino-serving organizations may overstate the organizational advantage of the gateway states in that the Latino populations they serve are much more numerous. Conversely, these data might also underestimate the relative advantage in gateway areas. Unlike the new community organizations that have sprung up in nontraditional destinations over the past ten years or so, many of the Latino-serving organizations in the gateway states have long histories in the community, not to mention higher levels of funding, staffing and local visibility. Without extensive information regarding the individual history, size, and scope of each community group, it is impossible to quantify the organizational advantage that gateway communities likely have by virtue of their richer civic infrastructure. Interviews with staff members at two prominent national Latino organizations (League of United Latin American Citizens and the National Association of Latino Elected Officials), however, do verify that Latino-serving organizations in

³ The gateway/mature Hispanic population states included in the LNS sample are: Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York and Texas. The New Destination states include: Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Iowa, Nevada, North Carolina, and Washington. We chose to exclude Washington, D.C. (a new destination metro) from this analysis as there is a vast number of Latino organizations located in the District of Columbia, but it is not possible to easily distinguish those that are local serving organizations from national headquarter or administrative offices.

⁴ The total number of Latino-serving organizations includes all of the listed groups, with the exception of those affiliated with universities and colleges.

new destination states are typically much smaller in scale and scope than their more established counterparts in the gateways.

[Insert Table 1 about Here]

Beyond the organizational disadvantage faced year round by Latino communities in new destination states, election year efforts to register Latino voters are also overwhelmingly targeted toward gateway communities. According to a 2008 report by the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project (SVREP), planned voter registration projects (in collaboration with other Latino organizations) aimed at preparing for the November general election numbered 104 in gateway states versus 19 in new destination states (SVREP President's Report #1, 2008).⁵ According SVREP, the organization registered 60,207 new Latino voters in gateway states compared to 1,618 in new destination states (SVREP President's Report #3, 2008).⁶ Part of this discrepancy may reflect differences in their respective eligible voter pools, but much of this is also explained by the disproportionate resources devoted to traditional Latino communities.

Scholarly and journalistic accounts of civic and social organizations in new immigrant destinations emphasize their relative scarcity and their comparative lack of sufficient staff and funds. As Gouveia, Carranza and Cogua (2005) note in their study of Latino immigrants in Schuyler, Nebraska, "There is a visible explosion of nonprofit community and advocacy organizations dedicated to facilitating immigrant incorporation, though these are still inadequate to the need." This notion of inadequacy is a common thread through many of the case studies on new immigrant destinations. Organizers in these locales describe their worker centers and social service agencies as understaffed and "overwhelmed" (Pearson-Merkowitz 2009). While it would

⁵ The consortium of Latino organizations aligned with SVREP in the 2008 Latino mobilization drive include the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the Hispanic Federation (HF), the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC), the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA), and la Hermandad Mexicana Latinoamericana (HMLA).

⁶ The total new registrations claimed by collaborative registration effort called "Movimiento 10-12", exceeded 120,000 new voters. These numbers reflect the results of SVREP solo efforts in TX, CA, NM, AZ, CO, and WA and joint efforts between SVREP and NALACC in FL and NC.

be incorrect to say that nontraditional immigrant entry points have no organizational infrastructure, it is also clear that immigrant demand for services in these locations typically outstrips the supply. And, in the face of the overwhelming material needs of their constituents, few of these organizations have the extra resources needed to engage in the kind of politically oriented education and mass mobilizing activities that are quite common in gateway locales. Beyond the organizational resource disparities that exist between traditional and non-traditional immigrant communities, the Latino social context in gateway communities provides more basic political information than it does in new destinations. Even when the Latino communities in new destinations are large in an absolute sense, they are much less mature with lower baseline levels of mass political awareness. Given these important distinctions in social context and organizational capacity, we offer two hypotheses regarding the process of Latino political socialization in gateways versus new destinations.

H₁: Latinos who reside in nontraditional locales will be significantly more apolitical than comparable Latinos who live in gateway destinations.

H₂: Organizational participation and diverse social networks will contribute more to the development of political identities in gateway destinations than in newer immigrant locales.

Research Design:

The ensuing analyses use the Latino National Survey (2006) to explore Latino political acculturation in the context of gateway versus nontraditional immigrant destinations. The central premise guiding this research is that the development of party affinity is an important prerequisite for sustained political involvement. The U.S. political system is organized around party competition and political candidates generally come with party designations.⁷ Party

⁷ Local elections are the most notable exception to the prominence of party, and, not coincidentally, they also have the lowest overall average turnout rates. The fact that non-partisan elections on average have lower turnout than

identification is a readily accessible heuristic device that significantly underwrites the cost of participation (Campbell et al. 1960). Some research on Latino voting has found that party identification plays a less significant predictive role in voter choice than it does among whites. And while this is likely the case, it is also true that Latinos who have no party ties are, at best, destined to be occasional political actors who are less likely than partisans to develop a sustained U.S. political consciousness.

Table 2 presents the party distribution of a representative national sample of Latinos that includes native born, naturalized and non-naturalized immigrants. While almost 40 percent of all Latinos identify with or lean toward the Democratic Party, an almost equal proportion have no party ties, reporting that they do not know or do not care which party they identify with or lean toward. And while it is true that more recent immigrants who have not naturalized are the most likely to be apolitical (54%), 20% of native born Latinos and almost 30% of naturalized immigrants claim no party ties as well. Among Latino citizens, those who claim political identities are 30 percentage points more likely to have reported voting in the 2004 presidential election than are those who claim no party affinities (69% vs. 39%). While voter self-reports are certain to be overinflated, the substantial thirty point difference between the turnout rates of political and apolitical Latinos supports the premise that the development of a U.S. political identity facilitates participation, especially voting.

[Insert Table 2 about Here]

In order to create a measure that differentiates between the political and apolitical, we partitioned the answers to the seven category party identification question into two categories. Latinos who identify with or lean toward any political party are coded 0 (political). Those who identify as independents, even after the follow-up leaner probe, are also coded 0. Others who

partisan ones further substantiates the important role of party attachments and party labels to political participation – especially voting.

respond that they do not know what party they prefer or do not care about parties are coded 1 (apolitical). At first blush it may seem as though self-identified independents should be labeled as apolitical, however, the decision to include independents in the “political” category was based on theoretical and empirical considerations. First, the fact that they are aware of the “independent” label may indicate a higher level of political acculturation than those who say that they do not know; furthermore, independents tend to participate at significantly higher rates than apoliticals (52% vs. 39% in 2004).

The 2006 LNS used a stratified sampling design that included 15 states and the District of Columbia. Within larger states, the sampling design stratified by metro areas and other regions within the state that house substantial numbers of Latino immigrants. In order to categorize the LNS sample into traditional and nontraditional locales, we relied on two independent sources that designate Latino gateway versus new destinations (Suro and Singer 2002; Massey and Capoferro 2008).⁸ The “New Destination” variable was then constructed by matching the LNS sampling regions with the gateway and new destination designations as reported in these sources.⁹ The data set includes a total of 7477 cases, of which 4753 fall into the gateway designation and 2724 into new destinations.

The central proposition of this study is that gateway destinations provide a more effective context for Latino political socialization than new destinations. A simple comparison of the proportion of apolitical Latinos by immigrant destination supports this expectation and reveals a 14.5 percentage point difference between nontraditional destinations (47.3%) and gateways (32.8%). Looking at the expanded party identification measure across these two contexts reveals

⁸ The Suro and Singer (2002) report for the Brookings Institutions identifies gateway and new destinations by SMSA, while the Massey and Capoferro (2008) analysis identifies states. Suro and Singer (2002) define New Latino Destinations as metropolitan areas with small Latino populations (less than 8% as of 1980) and high rates of growth (in excess of 145% from 1980 to 2000). Any discrepancies between the two sources were decided in favor of the SMSA analysis as it provided greater within-state specificity.

⁹ For a list of the regions included in the gateway and new destination designations, see the notes in Table 2.

that the difference in levels of party affinity between traditional and nontraditional locales is almost entirely explained by variation in rates of Democratic Party identification - 45.3% in the gateways versus 29.1% in the new destinations (see Table 2). The percentage of Republican identifiers equals 14% in both, and the percentage that identify as independent is roughly equal, as well.

The fact that Latinos in traditional locations are much more likely to identify as Democrats and much less likely to be apolitical is itself evidence of differential patterns of socialization. As explained by Alvarez and Garcia Bedolla (2003), “As Latino voters become more socialized into the political system, they tend to move away from independence and toward the dominant party for their group...” (p.45). With the exception of Cuban Americans and Nicaraguans, who are disproportionately Republican, the dominant party for Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans and Central Americans is the Democratic Party; therefore, the higher rate of Democratic Party identification in traditional immigrant destinations potentially signals more effective socialization and higher levels of political acculturation.

There are, of course many individual-level differences between the Latino populations in mature communities and new destinations. In order to test the proposition that immigrant destinations have an independent and significant effect on the development of a U.S. political identity, a multivariate analysis controlling for these individual level differences is warranted. The dependent variable in this analysis is a dichotomous measure. As described above, those who claim political identities are coded “0” and those who claim none are coded “1”, so that positive coefficients suggest a greater propensity to be apolitical, while negative coefficients indicate a higher probability of claiming a political identity.

The explanatory variables in the model fall into six broad categories: Socioeconomic; Latino Acculturation; Social Networks and Organizational Participation; Social Identities; State Level Factors; and Other Controls. The following describes the various measures.

Socioeconomic Status

These measures include a five category education measure ranging from low (less than 8th grade) to high (college or more). Income is measured with a set of three dummy variables. “Low Income” (the excluded category) includes those who report annual household incomes less than \$45,000/per year and “High Income” are those reporting over \$45,000. Almost one quarter of the sample refused to answer the income question, and, not wanting to lose 25% of the cases, we included a dummy variable, “Refused to Report Income”. While we held no *a priori* expectations for those who refused, the findings (across various analyses) strongly suggest that refusal comports with very low incomes. In all cases, higher incomes and education are expected to reduce the probability of being apolitical.

Latino Acculturation

There are two primary measures of Latino acculturation employed in this analysis. First, we use the respondent’s language preference for the survey as an indicator of linguistic acculturation. The measure is coded (0) for English and (1) for Spanish with the expectation that Spanish speakers will be more apolitical than English speakers. The second acculturation measure combines nativity with naturalization. It is a four category dummy variable where native born Latinos who are 3rd generation or more are the excluded category. The other categories encompass native born, second generation Latinos; foreign born, naturalized citizens; and foreign born, non-naturalized immigrants. Our original intent was to build a measure that included nativity as well as length of time in the U.S., and to include citizenship as a separate factor. The correlation between immigrant naturalization and length of stay in the U.S. is so high

(.89), however, that it was not possible to use both simultaneously. Given the extraordinarily high correlation between this acculturation measure and length of time in the U.S., one can reasonably infer that the findings pertaining to these factors result from some combined effect of length of residence and naturalization. The general expectation is that lower levels of acculturation correspond with higher rates of apolitical identities.

Social Networks and Organizational Participation

The social network measure is concerned with friendship networks and, in particular, exposure to social networks that include Anglos. The social network question asked if one's friends were mostly Latino, mostly White, mixed Latino/White, mostly Black, mixed Latino/Black, mostly Asian; mixed Latino/Asian; or a mix of all groups. The model includes three dummy variables derived from this question. Those who claim to have mostly Latino friends are the excluded category. Those who have mostly white or a mix of Latino/white friends constitute "Have White Friends" and the other answers are included in the "Mixed Race Friends" category. Given the importance of bridging capital and the detrimental effects to acculturation imposed by social isolation, we expect that those who have Anglo friends will be less apolitical than those in the other two categories.

In addition to friendship networks, we include measures for church attendance (from none to weekly), religious affiliation, and whether or not the respondent participates in activities of "social, cultural or political groups" (0 = no, 1 = yes). Higher levels of church attendance and organizational participation are expected to result in lower levels of apolitical identification.

Social Identities

We include two social identity measures in the model. Latino Group Consciousness reflects whether it is "not important", "somewhat important", or "very important" that political candidates are Latino. Unlike frequently used indicators of pan-ethnicity based on perceived

linked fate or Latino self-identification, this consciousness measure reflects the extent to which pan-ethnic sentiments are politicized and, as such, is more theoretically appropriate.¹⁰ The second identity factor pertains to how strongly one identifies with being an American (scaled from low to high). In both cases, higher levels of Latino consciousness or American identity should correspond with lower rates of apolitical identification.

State Level Factors

The state level factors control for electoral competitiveness and state participatory culture. The competitiveness measure divides the states into three categories: 2004 battleground; 2004 safe Republican; and 2004 safe Democratic. The general presumption is that battleground status may establish a context with more political information and partisan cues than safe states. Further, the sheer electoral closeness of battleground states may induce political interest. We use the official state turnout rate from the 2004 presidential election as a measure of state participatory culture. By including this as a control, we are able to test and control for the alternative hypothesis that higher political engagement in gateway locales is driven by state-specific participatory norms.

Other Control Factors

In addition to the individual-level factors discussed above, the model also includes controls for nationality groups (with Mexicans as the excluded category), gender, and age. Based on the extant literature, one would expect increases in age to correspond with lower levels of apolitical identity.

Findings

¹⁰ In the same way that Black group consciousness is defined as a politicized Black identity, Latino group consciousness should incorporate the strength of pan-ethnic identities as they pertain to politics. (Shingles 1981; McClain et al. 2009; Chong and Kim 2008) We also ran the model with the Latino pan-ethnicity measure, but it was not significant.

The findings from the logistic regression analysis described above are shown in Table 3. Unstandardized logit coefficients and standard errors are reported in the first two columns of data. Table 3 also displays (in the far right column) the predicted changes in probability associated with all of the statistically significant factors. The changes in predicted probabilities reflect the increase or decrease in the probability of being apolitical, moving from the lowest to the highest value of each variable, holding all other variables at their natural values (Hanmer and Kalkan 2009).

[Insert Table 3 about Here]

Most of the factors included in this analysis demonstrate the expected effects. Latinos with a college degree are 10 percentage points less likely to be apolitical than those with less than an 8th grade education. High income appears to be a less robust predictor of political identity than education; however, those who refused to respond to the income question are 14 percentage points more apolitical than Latinos who report incomes under \$45,000 per year. Among the acculturation variables, primary Spanish speakers are 7 percentage points more likely to be apolitical than primary English speakers. Second generation, native-born Latinos are not significantly different from later generations. Naturalized citizens are approximately 7 percentage points more apolitical than native-born Latinos, and non-naturalized immigrants are almost 19 percentage points less likely to claim a political identity than their native-born counterparts.

Among the social network and organizational factors, the effects are consistent with expectations but not terribly large. Latinos with mix of white and Latino friends are more politically engaged than those with mostly Latino friends or mixed race friendship networks, but the magnitude of these effects range from 3 to 5.5 percentage points. Likewise, church attendance and participation in social organizations reduces the probabilities of apolitical

identities by 4 and 7 percentage points, respectively. It is crucial to note that the political importance of Latino social, civic, labor and political organizations is only tangentially tapped by this measure. Approximately 18% of Latinos report participating in such organizations, but individual-level participation in organizational activities is not necessarily required for such organizations to perform vital socializing and mobilizing roles. Community organizations can have direct and indirect effects on the political engagement of community members. To the extent that they provide crucial information, incentives and mobilization to some Latinos directly, social networks and media coverage enable secondary and tertiary effects.¹¹

The social identity findings in Table 3 are also consistent with prior expectations. Higher levels of Latino Group Consciousness and stronger feelings of American identity both lead to lower probabilities of being apolitical (6 and 10 percentage points, respectively). As is often noted in the Latino politics literature, Cuban Americans are typically outliers on many fronts. In this case, Cubans are 7 percentage points less likely to be apolitical than Mexicans, while none of the other nationality groups were significantly different, all else being equal. Latinas are less political than their male counterparts, and, age remains a robust predictor of political identity. An 18 year old Latino is almost 20 percentage points more likely to be apolitical than a 97 year old.

¹¹ We went to great lengths to quantify the Latino-serving organizational infrastructure in the sample metro areas so that we could include this measure in the model, but the available data are not comprehensive or consistent enough to do this. A simple per capita organizational index (number of organizations/# of Latinos) is a poor measure to be sure, as it does not capture the relative size and scope of these organizations. Even so, we did include this measure in an earlier version of the model but yielded null results. Using a non-profit database (Guidestar) we attempted to compile more complete data on all Latino-serving organizations in the sample metro areas from their federal non-profit tax reports. The reporting threshold, however, is sufficiently high that it excludes many of the smaller organizations, and the reports themselves are wildly inconsistent with respect to reporting the number of full time employees, annual operating budgets, range of activities, etc. Short of contacting every Latino-serving organization on our list and collecting the data ourselves, there is simply no feasible way to identify the kind of comprehensive organizational data that could be used in this kind of large-n analysis. Furthermore, data collection efforts conducted in 2010 will not necessarily yield an accurate depiction of local organizational activity during the period when the survey was taken.

Given the breadth of individual controls in the model, it is not entirely surprising that the state level factors (battleground vs. safe and relative state turnout rates) did not retain their significance. By the same token, the same cannot be said for the difference between Latinos who live in gateway destinations versus those who reside in nontraditional locales. Controlling for a nearly exhaustive list of the individual-level factors known to predict party identification and participation among Latinos, those who live in new destinations are nonetheless more than 8 percentage points more apolitical than their comparable brethren who live in mature Hispanic communities. This finding highlights the importance of residential context and further suggests that the increasing dispersion of Latino immigrants in the United States presents a growing problem for political parties, interest groups, and Latino advocacy organizations looking to engage the burgeoning Latino population in political causes. Currently three in four Latinos live in traditional gateways, but recent trends indicate increased Latino migration within the U.S. away from gateway areas and growing proportions of Latinos immigrating directly to nontraditional ports of entry. To the extent that patterns of Latino dispersion continue, it is all the more essential to understand the political consequences of living in nontraditional immigrant destinations.

How Context Matters: Gateway versus New Destinations

The results in Table 3 strongly suggest that immigrant destinations have an influence over the political acculturation process, but they do not provide much illumination as to what these differences are. While the model identifies a broad range of factors that certainly play a role in Latino political socialization, one must really split the sample between the gateway and nontraditional destinations to gain any leverage on how contextual differences result in distinctive socialization patterns.

Using the same sets of factors from the model in Table 3, we conducted separate regression analyses for Latinos who live in gateway versus nontraditional destinations.¹² Table 4 presents a comparison of the significant predicted probabilities across these two samples. There are several notable findings.

[Insert Table 4 about Here]

Increasing Latino acculturation in the gateway locales yields higher levels of political engagement. Native born, third generation (and beyond) Latinos are significantly more political (6.8 percentage points) than second generation Latinos. Naturalized immigrants are less political than the native born (8.7 percentage points), and non-naturalized immigrant are by far the least likely to claim a party preference (22.6). This pattern of gateway political socialization confirms much of the conventional wisdom pertaining to Latino immigrants; the longer they live here, the more politically engaged they become. Contrast this pattern, however, to the results from the new destination model. In the case of Latinos who reside in new destinations, there are no significant gains in political engagement beyond the process of naturalization. Naturalized immigrants and native born Latinos are indistinguishable in terms of their relative levels of party affinity. Newer, non-naturalized immigrants, however, are almost 10 percentage points less likely to have a party preference than their citizen counterparts.

These results are particularly telling when viewed in conjunction with the comparative political influence of social networks and organizational participation. Among Latinos in gateway locations, involvement in Anglo social networks, regularly attending church, and participating in social, political or civic organizations all enhance political engagement (a cumulative 18.7 percentage point increase). In nontraditional immigrant locales, however, *none*

¹² The only difference in this model specification was that we combined the ethnicity variables into a binary dummy variable Mexican versus other. This was necessary as the number of Puerto Ricans, Cubans Dominicans in the new destination locales were too small to generate reliable results.

of these factors influence the development of a U.S. political identity. It is important to note that Latinos who live in new destinations are equally likely to participate in civic organizations, more likely to attend church and more likely to have Anglo friendship networks than those in the gateways. Thus, the differences between these two populations – the significant political effects in the gateway locales versus the null effects in the nontraditional places – do not simply reflect distinctive levels of activity. Latinos who live in new destinations do go to church, participate in community organizations and make Anglo friends; these activities simply do not provide a social context that enhances political socialization. Taken in their entirety, these results strongly imply that the social context in new destinations is lacking in participatory incentives, short on adequate political information, and bereft of community organizations that enhance interest and mobilization. Put simply, the social context and organizational activity that “fills the void” left by political parties with respect to immigrant political socialization is not equally distributed across the national landscape. Gateway communities have long histories of immigration, a critical mass of politically active citizens and a rich civic infrastructure catering to the needs of these communities. New immigrant destinations have neither the politically aware Latino social context nor or the critical mass of organizational activity to effectively fill this void.

Alternative Hypotheses

Over the course of this research we have tried a large number of different model specifications. Many of the factors that we tried in earlier iterations of this research yielded null results that, indirectly, reinforce the theory of Latino political socialization we offer in this paper. One obvious alternative explanation for our findings relates to the overall size of the Latino population in any given area, with the notion that larger communities will enhance the prospects of political socialization. Latino population size variables, however, were insignificant across all three models, strongly suggesting that the maturity of the community is more relevant to

socialization outcomes than its size. We also tested for the relative influence that various levels Latino empowerment may have on individual political awareness, yielding insignificant results. The LNS asks a question regarding the availability of Spanish language services from government agencies. The level of Spanish language government services in the gateways was marginally higher than in the new destinations, but both were relatively high and neither has any significant relation to levels of political acculturation. This is not surprising as government agencies pertaining to health care, public schools, and police services – whether they offer Spanish assistance or not – are not likely to be important sources of political information and mobilization. The organizational infrastructure that we credit, in part, for Latino political socialization falls under the auspices of non-profit community organizations as opposed to government services.

Discussion

A good deal of recent research on Latino politics persuasively argues that Hispanic-serving civic organizations play a crucial role in the political socialization of Latino immigrants. As local political parties have generally lost their vitality, and as state and national parties are wary to devote scarce resources to mobilizing immigrant communities, civic groups, labor unions, and interest groups have, in part, filled this role when it comes to engaging Latino immigrants with the U.S. political system. The vast majority of research on this topic, however, has looked to traditional immigrant areas for confirmation of this proposition, and, in the context of mature Latino communities, it is clear that the efforts of Latino civic organizations make a difference. These same kinds of organizations, to the extent that they exist in new destinations, are more recent, fewer in number and narrower in scope. As a result, they have yet to become effective agents of political socialization. The social context in mature Latino communities provides additional sources of political information via its longer history of mass Latino political

involvement. New destination communities are less likely to have the kind of experienced local activist base that operates through personal social networks. Given these factors, Latinos who live in nontraditional immigrant communities are less likely to naturalize, register and vote than Latinos with comparable demographic traits who live in traditional gateway communities.

From a partisan standpoint, the disparate socialization outcomes between gateways and new destinations are also not politically neutral. In terms of party identification and presidential voting behavior, the Democratic Party appears to be the disproportionate loser. As shown in Table 2, Latinos in new destinations are approximately 16 percentage points less likely to identify with the Democratic Party, and further analysis of the 2006 LNS shows that their presidential vote choices also tend to be more Republican. In 2004, Hispanics living in nontraditional communities voted for Bush 8 percentage points more than Latinos living in gateways. Collectively, these findings strongly suggest that new destination Latinos – the vast majority of whom are of Mexican or Central American descent – have not followed the partisan or participatory trajectory of their gateway counterparts. In the absence of an abundant Latino-serving civic infrastructure, Hispanics who live in nontraditional locales may never reach their political potential in terms of participation. For those who do participate, they may not necessarily evolve into reliable Democratic voters. These facts create both dilemmas and opportunities for the political parties who vie for their votes. From the standpoint of Hispanic advocacy organizations looking to augment Latino voices in the political realm, however, the findings are clear. The scope and breadth of Latino-serving organizations must grow in the new destination communities in order to enhance the political engagement of Hispanics who live there.

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Table 1: Latino Organizations in Gateway and New Destination States

	Gateway	New Destination
Total Latino Organizations	1494	193
Latino Advocacy, Civil Rights, Political Action, and Immigration Support	90	13
Jobs, Housing and SER affiliates	87	3

Source: Anuario Hispano/Hispanic Yearbook 2007-2008

Notes: **Gateway States:** Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Texas.

New Destination States: Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Iowa, Nevada, North Carolina and Washington.

Total Latino Organizations includes all organizations listed by state in the Hispanic Yearbook, excluding organizations affiliated with universities and colleges.

Latino Advocacy, Civil Rights, Political Action and Immigration Support groups include: NCLR affiliates, LULAC affiliates, American GI Forum affiliates, SVREP affiliates, MALDEF affiliates, PRLDEF affiliates and any other organizations listed under the political action or immigration services sub-headings.

Jobs, Housing and SER Affiliates include: Organizations listed under these subheadings that are not affiliated with any of the previous listed groups.

Table 2: Party Identification by Immigrant Locale

	Gateway	New Destination
Democrat	2452 (45 %)	795 (29 %)
Independent	430 (8 %)	259 (10 %)
Republican	756 (14 %)	386 (14 %)
Apolitical	1773 (33 %)	1294 (47 %)
Total	5411	2734

Notes: Latino National Survey Regional Codes were separated into Gateway Destinations and New Destinations.

Gateways : Arizona, Central Valley, Chicago Metro, Dallas-Fort Worth Metro, Denver Metro, El Paso Metro, Houston Metro, Inland Empire, Los Angeles Metro, Miami Metro, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Rio Grande Valley, San Antonio Metro, San Diego Metro, San Francisco Metro

New Destinations: Arkansas, Atlanta Metro, DC Metro, Georgia other, Iowa, North Carolina, Seattle Metro, Tampa Bay Metro, Orlando Metro, Washington other, Yakima Valley, Other Nevada

Table 3: Acquiring Party ID (predicting apolitical)

	B	S.E.		△ %
Socioeconomic Status				
				-
Education	-0.134	0.031	***	10.15*
Income over 45K	-0.18	0.082	*	-3.30*
Refused to report Income	0.708	0.088	***	13.95*
Latino Acculturation				
Spanish Preference	0.383	0.093	***	7.24*
2nd generation - born US	0.148	0.131		
Naturalized Citizen	0.384	0.128	**	7.11*
Non-naturalized immigrant	0.939	0.129	***	18.71*
Social Network				
Have White Friends	-0.299	0.085	***	-5.50*
Mixed Race Friends	0.174	0.08	*	3.31*
Church Attendance	-0.116	0.051	*	-4.26*
Protestant	0.086	0.164		
Catholic	-0.244	0.152		
Organizational Participation	-0.31	0.094	**	-7.10*
Social Identities				
Latino Group Consciousness	-0.158	0.044	***	-5.87*
				-
American Identity	-0.18	0.033	***	10.39*
State Level Factors				
Battleground 2004	0.097	0.103		
Safe Republican 2004	-0.07	0.123		
State Turnout Rate 2004	0.004	0.013		
New Latino Destination	0.432	0.089	***	8.11*
Other Control Factors				
Cuban	-0.382	0.164	*	-6.86*
Dominican	-0.121	0.151		
Puerto Rican	-0.068	0.148		
Central American	-0.148	0.131		
Other Latino	-0.2	0.139		
Gender	0.352	0.068	***	6.51*
		0.002	***	-
Age	-0.015			20.12*

N 6617

Notes: Dependent Variable is “don’t care/don’t know” on standard 7 point party identification question. Cell entries are unstandardized logistic regression coefficients and standard errors. Bold entries are changes in predicted probabilities moving from lowest to highest value on each variable, holding other variables at their natural values. The confidence intervals for the predicted probabilities were generated through simulation (Hanmer and Kalkan 2009) and are displayed in Appendix Figure 1.

Table 4: Predicting Apolitical -- Gateway versus New Destinations

	<u>Gateway</u>	<u>New Destination</u>
	% Change	% Change
Socioeconomic Status		
Education	-7.55	-15.63
Income over 45K	ns	-6.79
Refused to report Income	15.02	11.24
Latino Acculturation		
Spanish Preference	6.55	9.02
2nd generation - born US	6.8	-4.32
Naturalized Citizen	8.71	1.46
Non-naturalized immigrant	22.58	9.98
Social Network		
Have White Friends	-6.58	ns
Mixed Race Friends	ns	ns
Church Attendance	-4.46	ns
Protestant	ns	ns
Catholic	ns	ns
Organizational Participation	-7.62	ns
Social Identities		
Latino Group Consciousness	-4.68	-7.79
American Identity	-9.7	-11.87
State Level Factors	all ns	all ns
Other Control Factors		
Mexican	4.1	ns
Gender	7.29	ns
Age	-14.36	-35.18
N	4454	2163

Notes: Dependent Variable is “don’t care/don’t know” on standard 7 point party identification question. Cell entries are changes in predicted probabilities moving from low to high values on each variable, holding other variables at their natural values. Full models are in Appendix Tables 1 and 2. The confidence intervals for the predicted probabilities were generated through simulation (Hanmer and Kalkan 2009) and are displayed in Appendix Figures 2 and 3.

Appendix Table 1: Predicting Apolitical – Gateway Destinations

	B	S.E.	
Education	-0.106	0.037	**
Income over 45K	-0.111	0.100	
Refused to report Income	0.792	0.108	***
Spanish Preference	0.370	0.118	**
2nd generation - born US	0.382	0.152	*
Naturalized Citizen	0.500	0.151	**
Non-naturalized immigrant	1.188	0.154	***
Latino and White Friends	-0.385	0.107	***
Mixed Race Friends	0.179	0.098	
Church Attendance	-0.128	0.062	*
Protestant	0.248	0.212	
Catholic	-0.188	0.197	
Organizational Participation	-0.449	0.116	***
Latino Group Consciousness	-0.136	0.055	**
American Identity	-0.177	0.042	***
Battleground 2004	0.014	0.269	
Safe Republican 2004	-0.019	0.260	
State Turnout Rate 2004	0.012	0.042	
Mexican	-0.240	0.106	*
Gender	0.420	0.086	***
Age	-0.011	0.003	***
Constant	-1.304	2.530	
N	4454		

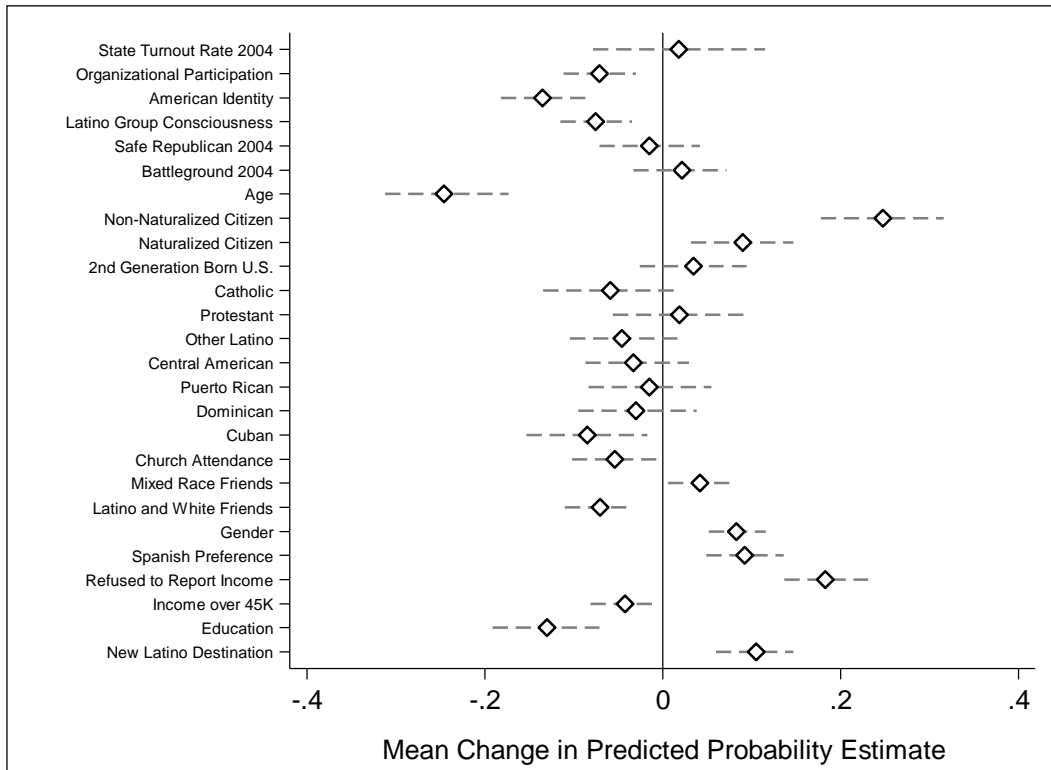
*** p<.001 ** p<.01 * p<.05

Appendix Table 2: Predicting Apolitical – New Destinations

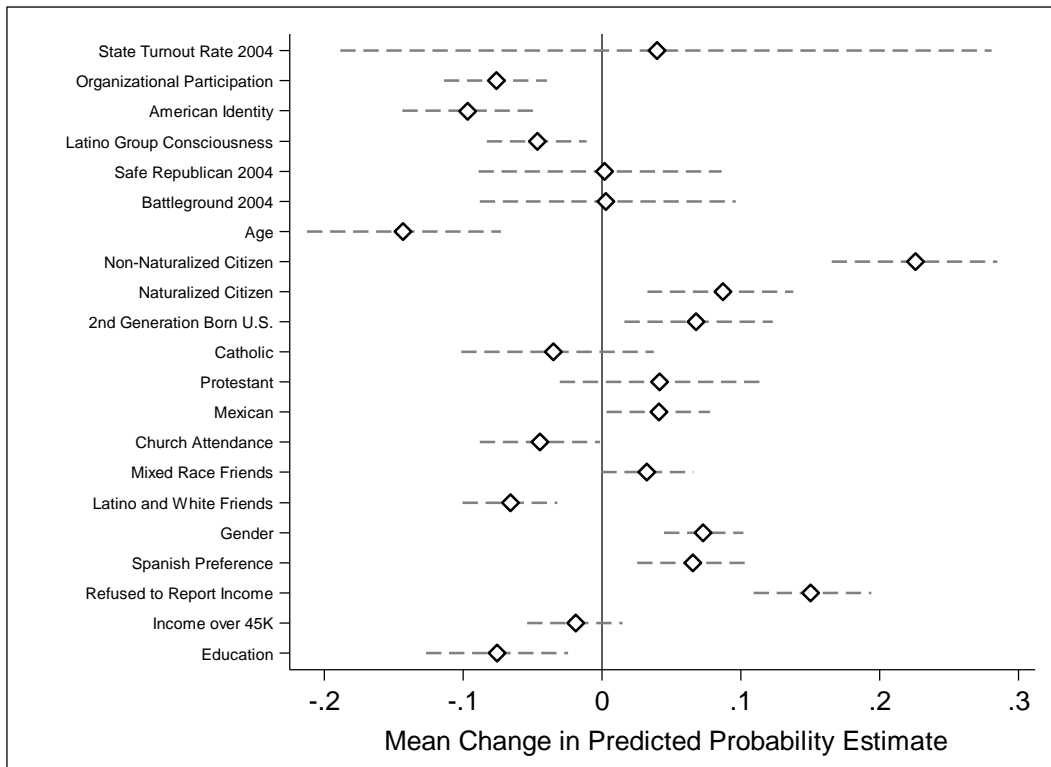
	B	S.E.	
Education	-0.185	0.054	**
Income over 45K	-0.330	0.142	*
Refused to report Income	0.533	0.149	***
Spanish Preference	0.424	0.156	**
2nd generation - born US	-0.214	0.243	
Naturalized Citizen	0.078	0.220	
Non-naturalized immigrant	0.475	0.221	*
Latino and White Friends	-0.164	0.139	
Mixed Race Friends	0.220	0.136	
Church Attendance	-0.082	0.088	
Protestant	-0.197	0.253	
Catholic	-0.338	0.231	
Organizational Participation	0.010	0.160	
Latino Group Consciousness	-0.196	0.073	**
American Identity	-0.187	0.054	***
Battleground 2004	0.034	0.168	
Safe Republican 2004	-0.172	0.237	
State Turnout Rate 2004	-0.003	0.016	
Mexican	-0.045	0.149	
Gender	0.210	0.111	
Age	-0.024	0.004	***
Constant	1.694	1.192	
N	2163		

*** p<.001 ** p<.01 * p<.05

Appendix Figure 1: Confidence Intervals for Predicted Probabilities (Full Sample)



Appendix Figure 2: Confidence Intervals for Predicted Probabilities (Gateway Destinations)



Appendix Figure 3: Confidence Intervals for Predicted Probabilities (New Latino Destinations)

