

Politicized Immigrant Identity, Spanish-Language Media, and Political Mobilization in 2012



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Social identity theorists have long studied identity as one of the prime determinants of behavior. However, political scientists have had a hard time identifying consistent patterns between ethnic identity and political participation, especially among immigrants. In this paper, we take a more complex approach and explore whether a sense of immigrant linked fate is salient in explaining political participation among immigrants and, further, what may have caused immigrant identity to become so politicized. Specifically, we look at the issue of immigration reform in 2011 and 2012, and the manner in which both positive and negative messages were a catalyst for a politicized immigrant identity, and the resulting mobilizing effects. Using the 2012 Latino Immigrant National Election Study data, we argue that exposure to Spanish-language news media and feelings of immigrant-linked fate created a politicized immigrant identity among Latino immigrants, which resulted in greater political participation and civic engagement. Rather than seeing immigrants as low-resourced and unengaged in American politics, our theory of politicized immigrant identity explains that Latino immigrants draw on their identity as immigrants and as Americans to participate in their new homeland.

Keywords: immigrant identity, Spanish-language media, linked fate, Latino politics, 2012 election

In December 2005, Republican Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner introduced House Resolution 4437, which was viewed as one of the strictest anti-immigration bills introduced in the U.S. Congress in modern times. In response, millions of immigrants and their allies took to the streets in protest in the spring of 2006 and suddenly immigration reform was thrust on to the national stage as a major policy issue. In the years since, the immigration issue has only grown more important to both immigrant-rights advocates and their opponents. Indeed, a steady drum beat of high-profile issues have created the space for immigration to become a major political issue in the Latino commu-

nity: attempts to pass a comprehensive immigration bill in 2006–2007, then candidate Barack Obama’s promise that he would get immigration reform passed in 2009, Arizona’s controversial anti-immigration racial profiling law in 2010, sit-ins by DREAMers in 2011, record deportations by the Obama administration, Mitt Romney’s infamous self-deport policy, and finally the executive administrative order known as DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) in 2012. Indeed, the polling firm Latino Decisions reports that immigration reform became the top issue for Latino voters in 2012, a shift from 2008 when the economy was the top issue. According to new research on the

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Latino vote in 2012, both Loren Collingwood, Matt Barreto, and Sergio Garcia-Rios (2014) and Barreto and Collingwood (2015) argue that the anti-immigrant rhetoric on the Right, and pro-immigrant response from the Left framed the entire election climate for Latinos. Likewise, Leonie Huddy and her colleagues report in this issue that perceived hostility by Republicans strongly affected Latino immigrant partisan identity as Democrats in 2012. In this paper, we ask what effect exposure to immigration messaging had on political engagement and participation among Latino immigrants. Did the discussion of immigration as a political issue influence a politicized immigrant identity that contributed to immigrant political participation, or did it leave them frustrated and disenchanted with the political system?

Social identity theorists have long studied identity as one of the prime determinants of behavior. However, political scientists have had a hard time identifying consistent patterns between ethnic identity and political participation, especially among immigrants. We take a more complex approach and explore whether a sense of ethnic linked fate among Latino immigrants is salient in explaining political participation and, further, what may have contributed to immigrant identity becoming so politicized. Specifically, we look at the issue of immigration reform in 2011 and 2012, the manner in which both positive and negative messages were catalysts for a politicized immigrant identity, and the resulting mobilizing effects. Using the 2012 Latino Immigrant National Election Study (LINES) survey data, we argue that exposure to Spanish-language news media and feelings of immigrant linked fate created a politicized immigrant identity among Latino immigrants, which resulted in greater political participation and civic engagement. Rather than seeing immigrants as low-resourced and unengaged in American politics, our theory of politicized immigrant identity explains that Latino immigrants draw on their identity as immigrants and as Americans to participate in their new homeland.

IDENTITY THEORY AND IMMIGRANTS

The social psychologists Henri Tajfel and John Turner argue that human interaction ranges

on a spectrum from being purely interpersonal on the one hand to purely intergroup on the other (Tajfel 1978; Tajfel and Turner 1979). They maintain that moving from the interpersonal to the intergroup end of the spectrum changes how people see themselves and each other. Drawing on his own social cognition work (Tajfel and Wilkes 1963), Tajfel argues that the mere process of making salient “us and them” distinctions changes the way people see each other. The motivating principle underlying competitive intergroup behavior was a desire for a positive and secure self-concept (Turner 1975; Ethier and Deaux 1994; Ullah 1987). Therefore, if people are motivated to have a positive self-concept, they should be motivated to think of their groups as good groups. Striving for a positive social identity, group members are motivated to think and act in ways that achieve or maintain a positive distinctiveness between ones’ own group and relevant out-groups. Thus, ethnic identification is one of the prime bases for participation in social movements (Simon et al. 1998).

However, although social identity theory suggests that upholding a positive distinctiveness is a natural instinct, doing so is difficult for Latin American immigrants, who are usually pushed from their country of origin and pulled into the United States precisely because of their lack of resources (Staudt and Garcia-Rios 2011). For Latino immigrants in America today, identities are complex and dynamic. The very act of migration implies the confrontation of a new set of norms and expectations that shape how immigrants see themselves and, consequently, how they act. For instance, the acquisition of English opens an important door into American culture, particularly thorough English-language media. Conversely, the Spanish-language media reflects the immigrant experience and reinforces ties to the home country (Suro 1994). Although English-language media prevails in terms of availability, Spanish-language media has been increasing exponentially in recent years. Given the dual challenge of learning a new culture and preserving their culture and identity, immigrants choose to criss-cross between media outlets. A study by the Pew Hispanic Center shows that about two-thirds of first generation

Latinos watch at least some of their news in English, more than those who report using English at work. Moreover, an overwhelming 78 percent of all Latinos say that the Spanish-language media is “very important to the economic and political development of the Hispanic population” (Suro 2004, 2.)

Given the increase in Spanish media availability and Spanish-language news outlets, as well as the increased politicization of Latino identity, we hold that the choice of news consumption has political implications. How you get your news not only shapes how you see the world but, as social identity theory suggests, also affects how Latino immigrants see themselves and act politically.

CURRENT THEORIES OF IMMIGRANT POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

One of the most commonly accepted theories in studies of political participation is that of resource mobilization. Those with more stake in the system, more income, education, or age, are more likely to participate. From *The American Voter* to Steven Rosenstone and John Hansen (1993) to the latest research on participation, political scientists have demonstrated unequivocally that higher-resourced individuals participate more. The implication then is that communities with fewer resources are unengaged and perhaps even disengaged from American politics. When it comes to studies of immigrant communities, this is a common explanation given for the comparatively low levels of participation by Latino and Asian immigrants.

Primarily because of lower levels of education, income, English-language skills, and exposure to American political institutions, immigrant voters have consistently demonstrated low levels of political participation. In addition to a lack of resources, naturalized Latinos are rarely, if ever, the target of voter mobilization drives, further decreasing their awareness of campaign issues and likelihood to turn out (Cassel 2002; de la Garza et al. 1992; de la Garza 1996; de la Garza, Menchaca, and DeSipio 1994; DeSipio 1998; DeSipio and de la Garza 1992;

Guerra 1992; Mollenkopf, Olson, and Ross 2001; Pachon 1991; Shaw, de la Garza, and Lee 2001). Wendy Tam Cho argues that naturalized citizens are likely to participate less than native-born citizens because they have had less exposure to the U.S. political system. Her data analysis of a 1984 public opinion survey in California leads her to conclude that “the lower participation rate among minorities is now largely dependent upon being foreign-born and not being able to speak English” (1999, 1150). Examining data from 1996, Loretta Bass and Lynn Casper also find that among naturalized citizens, “the odds of voting are 26 percent lower than those of native-born citizens” (2001, 504). Like Tam Cho, they argue that because naturalized citizens are newer to American politics and less “integrated into U.S. institutions and social customs” (504), they are less likely to cast a ballot. However, this premise is based on two assumptions: that immigrant identity suggests lower levels of acculturation and that lack of exposure to English is a negative and demobilizing factor.

Early models of political participation found a significant relationship between socioeconomic variables and the propensity to vote (Campbell et al. 1960; Verba and Nie 1972; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). In particular, age, education, income, and marital status were found to be strong predictors of an individual’s likelihood of voting. Given that many immigrants, particularly those from Latin America, come to this country for economic opportunities, they typically have not demonstrated high levels of these socioeconomic status (SES) indicators, and as a result have typically not had high levels of participation.¹ Further, previous research into Latino immigrants noted that they were detached from American politics and often more interested in happenings in their home country. An additional “resource” for navigating the political system that increases the likelihood of Latino turnout is English-language proficiency. As a result of these trends, candidates and campaigns typically ignored immigrant communities (see Stevens and Bishin 2011). Given the

1. Again, the historical exception here was the politically charged Cuban immigrant communities, who needed higher resource levels to escape Cuba for the United States.

importance of mobilization and recruitment to political participation, foreign-born citizens often found themselves uninformed, unaware, and uninvolved in elections (Shaw, de la Garza, and Lee 2000).

Although these assumptions have proven true in data analyses in the 1990s and early 2000s, we argue that today, both of these premises are misguided. It is true that recently arrived Latino immigrants have less knowledge of U.S. institutions and processes. Models of political economy, however, suggest several reasons why better-informed citizens are more likely to turn out and that less-informed voters might have an incentive to delegate their vote to better-informed citizens by abstaining (Feddersen and Pesendorfer 1996, 1999; Gerber and Green 2000). Thus, given the rapidity of demographic and political changes, Spanish media outlets have begun to fill the knowledge and information gap. With these changes in mind, we offer a new theoretical framework for understanding foreign-born political engagement. In doing so, we draw on existing research by Barreto and José Muñoz (2003), and confirmed by David Sears, Felix Danbold, and Vanessa Zavala in this issue, that foreign-born Latinos are eager to engage politics, and that this eagerness extends to noncitizens.

HOW IMMIGRATION BECAME A POLITICAL IDENTITY

Over the last decade, immigrant communities gained a higher profile in American politics. Rather than seeing immigrants as stuck “in between” homeland and new home, scholars are beginning to find evidence that immigrants are participating in politics at higher rates (Voss and Bloemraad 2011). Research on Latino immigrants in California best exemplifies this new trajectory and establishes a theory of politicized immigrant identity that we draw heavily on. The anti-immigrant environment in California in the mid-1990s gave way to a new cohort of politically active immigrants (Pantoja, Ramírez, and Segura 2001; Milkman 2011). One of the main proponents of this theory, Ricardo Ramírez, has documented extensively that Latino immigrants reacted with frustration and political engagement when faced with policies and rhetoric that negatively targeted

immigrants in California (2013). In *Mobilizing Opportunities* (2013), Ramírez argues that the contentious political environment, coupled with a steadfast coverage of the immigration issue by Spanish-language media and the growth of Latino advocacy groups, resulted in heightened levels of naturalization and political participation among California Latinos, in particular immigrants. Through a series of published articles and book chapters, Ramírez and his colleagues changed the way scholars think about Latino immigrant participation (see Fraga and Ramírez 2004; Barreto, Ramírez, and Woods 2005; Barreto, Ramírez, Fraga, and Guerra 2009; Ramírez 2013).

Notably, Taeku Lee (2008) has warned scholars not to oversimplify the politics-to-identity link, rejecting those analyses that put in a single dummy variable for race and attempt to assign some sort of group-based identity politics. We wholeheartedly agree. Rather than assuming that all immigrants will carry this identity-to-politics link, we need to be able to account for context, exposure to different stimuli, and strength of ethnic identity, as Lee (2008) recommends. New research on Latino political mobilization continues to focus on how the immigration issue can mobilize or demobilize. Francisco Pedraza argues that how welcoming or unwelcoming a state or locality is to immigrants can greatly affect how Latino immigrants view and engage the political system (2014). When confronted with a hostile political environment in which immigrants seem to be under attack, Pedraza finds lower levels of political trust; Gabriel R. Sanchez (2006) finds that perceived discrimination leads to increased political participation. Perhaps because their numbers have grown, Latino immigrants appear to be mobilizing together to push back against anti-immigrant rhetoric and policy. Indeed, this has been a relatively new finding of those studying the 2006 immigration rallies. For example, Barreto and his colleagues (2009) find that Latinos who said immigration was their top issue of concern were the most likely to have a favorable view of the 2006 immigration rallies. They argue that the immigration rallies laid the groundwork for a sense of immigrant linked fate—which they call *solidaridad*—because so many immigrants

felt targeted: “HR 4437 became a common enemy, because its expansive reach mobilized multiple constituencies and provided the basis for *solidaridad*, or solidarity, even among disparate groups” (Barreto, Manzano, Ramírez, and Rim 2009, 747). Similarly, but using the 2006 Latino National Survey and date of interview as a quasi-experiment, Chris Zepeda-Millán and Sophia Wallace (2013) find clear evidence that exposure to the immigration marches had a lasting effect on Latino racial identity. Although it may seem obvious, immigration created a bridge to political participation during the 2006 immigration rallies that we believe continues today. Likewise, research on the rallies by Zepeda-Millán (2014) finds that group identity was cued as a result of the 2006 rallies, and that the anti-immigrant sentiment spurred participation and mobilization.

Thinking about participation in 2012, we argue that two factors spurred the creation of an immigrant political identity that motivated civic and political engagement. The first was the constant attention to undocumented immigrant rights by both the DREAM Act activists and the Spanish-language news media (Barreto and Garcia-Rios 2012). In particular, we identify Univision news anchor Jorge Ramos as a leading figure in promoting a politicized immigrant identity. Ramos was joined in this effort by coanchor Maria Elena Salinas, as well as by dozens of Spanish-language radio and print news journalists who kept attention on this issue of critical importance to their audience (see Subervi-Vélez 2008). The second factor at play in 2012 was the often harsh anti-immigrant rhetoric from politicians and political candidates for office. This took the form of negative statements about immigrants from Republican candidates trying to court the far Right conservative vote, and was most visible during the lengthy 2012 Republican presidential primary. We discuss each of these two factors in turn.

To understand why immigration continued to be a salient issue to Latinos in 2012, we can start with expectations created by Barack Obama in 2008. As a presidential candidate, Obama told Latino audiences that passing comprehensive immigration reform would be his top priority. He promised immigrants that he would get legislation passed in 2009, in his

first year in office. In an effort to gain trust from Republicans that his administration would enforce immigration laws, and ultimately win their support for a bipartisan immigration bill, the Obama administration increased resources and attention to interior deportations. However, when it became clear that comprehensive immigration legislation would not be moving forward in Congress, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) did not slow deportations. To the contrary, they picked up the pace and began deporting even more immigrants, an overwhelmingly majority of whom were Latino. Under the Obama administration, the number of Latino immigrants deported reached record highs. ICE officials liked to say that they were targeting known criminals, but the facts on the ground proved otherwise. Latino journalists such as Pilar Marrero, Jorge Ramos, Maria Elena Salinas, and José Diaz-Balart began reporting—daily—the stories of everyday working immigrants who were being deported. Many who were deported had young U.S.-born children. In some instances, parents were apprehended and sent to detention centers during the day while their children were in school. Young adults were also being deported, the so-called DREAMers. Children who were brought to the United States at a young age, raised in America, but did not have documentation were sometimes detained or deported as they prepared to enroll in college or even join the U.S. military. For Spanish-language media, the deportations were a real crisis facing their audience, and therefore they covered the story in depth. As immigrants were reading the newspaper or watching Univision in 2011 and 2012, they became very informed about how the political system was taking its toll on immigrant communities.

While Obama was being criticized for his deportation policy, on the other side of the aisle Republicans oscillated between pushing for positive reforms (McCain, Rubio), being accused of hate-speech against immigrants (King, Sessions), or willfully ignoring and obstructing reform (Boehner, Cantor). As immigrant rights advocates pushed for passage of the DREAM Act and comprehensive immigration reform, many Republicans protested, call-

ing immigrants criminals, job-stealers, and un-American. For example, Georgia Republican Congressman Paul Broun said, “these illegal aliens are criminals and we need to treat them as such” (Foley 2013). Iowa Republican Congressman Steve King compared immigration policy to corralling animals, saying we should electrify the border fence with Mexico just like we do with livestock. As a follow-up, Mr. King said, “They came here on their own, they came here to live in the shadows. There’s no moral calling for us to solve the problem they created for themselves” (Le 2013). Dozens more examples abound as Republicans at all levels of office, backed by the Tea Party, came out with aggressive negative statements about immigrants.

Perhaps the most salient to the 2012 context was the way in which the Republican presidential candidates called to make English the official language and to stop making government services or forms available in Spanish. They vowed to veto the DREAM Act and encourage more states to follow Arizona’s lead in encouraging police to stop and question immigrants for proof of legal status. And then of course there was Mitt Romney’s infamous self-deport policy statement when asked how he would deal with the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants. Throughout 2012, Latino immigrants were exposed to constant anti-immigrant, anti-Latino comments by politicians seeking to be their representatives (DeFrancesco Soto 2012). The *USA Today* editorial board questioned why Republican presidential candidates were “hellbent on proving who can be the harshest and least thoughtful on the subject of illegal immigrants” (2011). U.S. Senator Marco Rubio “told his party to tone down its hard-edged stance on immigration” (Fox News Latino 2011). Spanish media in particular covered these issues as key to their audience, leading the *Washington Times* to proclaim in a headline that “Spanish-language media ‘obsessed’ on immigration issue.” Stephan Dinan (2012) explains in a lengthy article about the role of Spanish-language media:

For Hispanic voters getting their news from Spanish-language press, the view is very different—and decidedly unsympathetic to the

Republican Party. . . . Spanish-language reports zeroed in on an immigration battle, which saw Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach win passage of a strict enforcement plank in the document. While the English press this week has wondered about which Republicans would mention Medicare, and who would play the attack-dog role for the GOP, Spanish-language media have been focused on what hasn’t been addressed: immigration. That is not good news for Mitt Romney, whose position—the strictest enforcement stance of any major political party nominee in history—does not go over well with Hispanic voters.

In a comprehensive analysis of Spanish-language media, Federico Subervi-Vélez and Xavier Medina Vidal (2015) detail the growing importance of Spanish news coverage with respect to elections. The authors note that 2012 was a watershed year for the Latino media, in large part due to their strong coverage of the immigration issue. Later in this issue, Leonie Huddy, Lilliana Mason, and Nechama Horwitz discuss strong evidence that group identity was related to immigrant political participation in 2012. As a result of perceived anti-immigrant discrimination among Republicans, many Latino immigrants increased their strong Democratic partisanship, and ultimately their political engagement in 2012, as Huddy and her colleagues report.

In response to both the Obama deportation policy and the obstruction by Republicans in Congress, young undocumented immigrants began political protests in the nation’s capital and across the country. The DREAM movement was ever-present in 2011 and 2012 and provided a space that bridged immigrant identity and politics, and allowed immigrant political and civic engagement to build. Further, a synergy was evident between the DREAM movement and Spanish-language media: print, radio, and television all covering and promoting the political engagement of the DREAMers. In addition to pure reporting, Spanish-language media also played an implicit and explicit role in political mobilization, especially in encouraging Latino immigrants to vote. In a comprehensive review of

the role of Spanish- and English-language political media, Subervi-Vélez (2008) argues that research “should pay more attention to the intersection between media and Latinos when assessing political socialization and mobilization of Latinos.” In one of the most sophisticated tests of the Spanish media hypothesis, Jennifer Merolla and her colleagues (2012) implement a series of control-treatment experiments in which they expose Hispanic and non-Hispanic respondents to media primes about immigration. Across four tests, conducted in 2007, they find consistent evidence that Latinos report higher levels of interest in political engagement, as well as validated political action (sending a letter to a public official) after being exposed to media information about immigration. Although this study was only measuring exposure to English-language media, it does demonstrate quite powerfully that immigration coverage can be a mobilizing force for Latinos. We agree, and attempt to focus our theory of Latino immigrant mobilization, in part, on the critical role of Spanish-language news media.

Implicitly, Spanish-language media played a mobilizing role by its constant coverage of “the Latino vote.” Print, radio, and television all devoted extensive news stories to the 2012 election and to the role Latinos could play as a growing and influential electorate. Simply from reports about the election, Latino immigrants who consume Spanish-language media were constantly reminded that they could be an important voting bloc. Explicitly, Spanish-language media such as Univision, Entravision, and impreMedia partnered with Latino advocacy groups such as NALEO, NCLR, and Mi Familia Vota to promote public service announcements telling Latinos to get out and vote. This effort, *Ya es hora—ve y vota*, was first launched in 2008. By 2012, it was an extensive campaign to get out the Spanish-speaking Latino vote. In a postelection review, the *New York Times* described the effort by Spanish-language media and advocacy groups as critical to the Latino vote: “But how Latinos got that message—the relentless call to register, to vote, to participate—was as important as the message itself: Hispanic television and grass-roots groups working together generated a civic

campaign they called *Ya Es Hora*. Now is the time” (Alvarez 2012).

In countless households, Latinos tuned their television sets to Univision and heard Jorge Ramos, the host of *Al Punto*, the Spanish version of *Meet the Press*, discuss the candidates’ positions on issues critical to them. They switched on Spanish-language radio and heard myriad reasons their vote could spur change. And if voters in some battleground areas needed a ride to the polls, television and radio stations owned by Entravision Communications, Univision’s largest affiliate, offered those, too. The drumbeat lasted for months.

Univision, which reaches 96 percent of all Hispanic households, and Telemundo, the second-largest network, and their affiliates ran information about the election and the issues regularly, not just on newscasts but also on their most popular news programs. They sponsored hundreds of public service announcements, giving Latinos local information on where to register and vote. The effort, by and large, was nonpartisan.

These accounts were echoed by journalists themselves in the Spanish-language media. In a discussion about the Latino vote following the 2012 election, Pilar Marrero, head political writer for impreMedia newspapers explained that Spanish-language news had a unique connection to the Latino immigrant community—most of the journalists themselves are immigrants—and have a strong commitment to covering issues related to immigration politics accurately and thoroughly:

Since the mid-1990s, *La Opinión* and the rest of the Spanish language media has been intensely covering the latest “anti-immigrant” era that has dominated public policy since that time. But that attention has been particularly intense over the last few years, and particularly during the Obama Administration and the drive to pass immigration reform and the increase in deportations promoted by the administration.

Our work has been not only to chronicle what’s happening in our immigrant communities and the policies that drive those realities, but to move away from the partisan Democrat versus Republican rhetoric and to

connect the dots between the actions on both sides and the policies that are affecting people on the ground.

The reason we have an impact in that community and its political participation and opinions is because we reflect their reality and the policies that affect it. Those communities are pretty much invisible in other media or they are covered only from the point of view of the “other.”²

Thus, naturalized citizens seeing the immigration debate unfold before their eyes were more attuned to politics in 2012 than in years past. In particular, those consuming Spanish-language media were getting an extra dose of immigrant identity and politics. In some ways, this is consistent with research by Benjamin Bishin and Casey Klofstad (2012) among Cuban communities in Miami that finds a strong immigrant-politics link to political activism. Rather than rejecting politics, as Sears, Danbold, and Zavala report in this issue, many Latino immigrants in 2012 were actively engaged, demonstrating moderate to high levels of party crystallization. Even among those not declaring an immediate party preference, Sears and his colleagues find Latino immigrants leaning toward political parties at higher rates than anticipated, suggesting well-formed political ideologies and attitudes that map on to the political parties, perhaps as a consequence of the heightened attention to immigration issues in 2012.

OUR EXPECTATIONS

As stated, social identity theorists suggest that individuals are strongly driven to maintain a positive self-image and that threats to one's group will catalyze actions on political participation that depend on the level of identification with the group. Given the political discourse during the 2012 presidential campaign, we form the following hypothesis:

H₁: Latino immigrants with a politicized immigrant identity will be more likely to participate in nonelectoral activities.

We operationalize politicized immigrant identity as those respondents who have high

degrees of both immigrant linked fate and interest in politics. Although we expect politicized identity to serve as a mobilizer, it will not necessarily translate into actual votes. To this end, we expect the Spanish-language news to serve as a funnel to translate mobilization into intention to vote.

H₂: Latino immigrants who are heavy consumers of Spanish-language TV news will have a higher interest in voting and campaign activity in 2012.

We operationalize heavy consumers of Spanish-language news as those respondents who are Spanish dominant and said they pay a great deal of attention to national politics on television.

These expectations are driven by our theory as described. First, we think that ethnic linked fate will be most relevant in nonelectoral participation, consistent with research by Sanchez (2006), Natalie Masuoka (2006), and Attiya Kai Stokes (2003), each of which find that group commonality and linked fate matter greatly for nonelectoral participation but are insignificant when it comes to, or even negatively associated with, voting. We emphasize politicized immigrant identity in the first models for nonelectoral participation. Although we shift the focus to Spanish-language media in models 2 and 3, we continue to control for linked fate. However, we do move the theoretical focus to the importance of the Spanish-language news media in tables 2 and 3 because we believe the explicit attention on the 2012 election by Univision and Telemundo should be associated with electoral participation. This is consistent with the research by Subervi-Vélez (2008) and Barreto, DeFrancesco, and Merolla (2011), which both suggest exposure to Spanish-language television can mobilize voter turnout.

OUR FINDINGS

We use the 2012 Latino Immigrant National Election Study developed by James McCann and Michael Jones-Correa (2012) to model immigrant political behavior. Funded by the Russell Sage Foundation, the LINES is a com-

2. Pilar Marrero, May 8, 2014, personal correspondence.

panion to the American National Election Study (ANES) in which Latino immigrants—regardless of their citizenship status—are asked many of the core questions from the ANES, as well as immigrant-specific demographic questions. The ANES now maintains a Latino oversample, but only about 30 percent of respondents are immigrants and all are naturalized citizens. The LINES offers an important correction to the ANES by extending the respondent pool to include all adult residents within the Latino community.

As stated, the first part of our analysis is concerned with testing the extent to which a politicized Latino identity will mobilize immigrants. For this model, we use an index of civic participation as our outcome variable; this index includes participating in a rally, attending a political meeting, signing a petition, and donating money. The index ranges from 0 to 6. Further, we operationalize politicized identity as a high degree of linked fate with other Latinos—a unique question presented to Latino immigrant respondents on the LINES. We do not, however, expect all those with immigrant linked fate to be politicized, so we also rely on a measure of interest in politics and interest in the 2012 election, which we combine into a scale of 2 to 8. To isolate those with a politicized immigrant identity, we interact linked fate with political interest to test our first hypothesis of politicized immigrant identity.

To further assess how the immigration narrative in 2012 affected immigrant political participation, we have included a key independent variable for immigration policy preference, which ranges from less welcoming (Make all unauthorized immigrants felons and send them back to their home country) to more welcoming (Allow unauthorized immigrants to remain in the United States and eventually qualify for U.S. citizenship, without penalties). We expect those who have the strongest support for a pathway to citizenship to also be the most likely to engage in nonelectoral politics.

Building on the extant literature in Latino politics, our first model includes control vari-

ables for language spoken at home, whether the respondent has naturalized, percentage of life lived in the United States, and whether the respondent is of Mexican origin. Finally, we control for traditional SES indicators and gender.³ Given the nature of our outcome variable—a count of nonelectoral participation—we use an ordered logistic regression and test using a Poisson count model. Results are entirely consistent.

Table 1 shows the results of the first set of models: a base model with all main variables, and another with an interaction of linked fate and political interest, our measure of politicized immigrant identity.

In the base model, both political interest and linked fate are positive and significantly related to political participation among Latino immigrants, that is they both have an independent direct effect on participation. However, once we include the interaction term, we see that the direct effect of these variables is muted and no longer significant for linked fate, and that the interaction item is statistically significant. Therefore, interest in politics translates into greater civic engagement, especially for Latino immigrants who also have a high sense of linked fate identity. The results support our first hypothesis.

Second, we see significant results for our immigration policy item. Immigrants who support a path to citizenship for the undocumented were more likely to participate in 2012 than those who supported deportation of the undocumented. Again, this is supporting evidence of how immigration became a mobilizing issue for Latino immigrants in 2012. People who felt strongly about this issue were indeed more likely to get involved in politics across a variety of types of participation. Finally, in looking to model fit statistics, mostly the Bayesian information criterion (BIC) score, we see model improvement in the second model with the interaction item for linked fate and interest in politics.

Our second set of models use vote intention as the outcome variable. This variable measures presidential vote interest in a scale of 1

3. Because of sample size considerations, we have used multiple imputation to regain missing cases for socioeconomic control variables, which allow us to employ a larger sample size.

Table 1. Predictors of Nonelectoral Civic Participation Among Latino Immigrants in 2012

	Base Model		Politicized Identity Model	
	Coef	SE	Coef	SE
Political interest	0.151***	0.044	0.078*	0.036
Linked fate	0.265***	0.069	-0.194	0.224
Interest X linked fate			0.098**	0.030
Path to citizenship	0.204*	0.095	0.199*	0.092
Attention to political news	0.105	0.133	0.090	0.137
Spanish at home	-0.371***	0.119	-0.360***	0.119
Naturalized citizen	-0.272	0.235	-0.272	0.234
Mexican	0.081	0.221	0.072	0.221
High school graduate	0.421	0.271	0.489*	0.255
Some college or more	0.622**	0.270	0.620***	0.269
Age eighteen to thirty-four	-0.052	0.309	-0.018	0.308
Age thirty-five to forty-four	-0.011	0.269	-0.001	0.270
Age forty-five to fifty-four	0.302*	0.152	0.289*	0.144
Income \$20K to \$40K	-0.195	0.242	-0.186	0.241
Income \$40K and higher	0.091	0.324	0.144	0.323
Missing income	-0.477*	0.237	-0.474*	0.236
Female	0.023	0.194	0.039	0.194
Percentage of life in United States	0.551*	0.256	0.548*	0.255
Cut 1	-0.568	0.876	-0.996	0.897
Cut 2	0.670	0.876	0.241	0.896
Cut 3	1.557	0.877	1.137	0.897
Cut 4	2.261	0.881	1.854	0.899
Cut 5	2.982	0.889	2.592	0.907
Cut 6	3.646	0.903	3.269	0.919
Observations	453		453	
Log-likelihood	-639.46		-619.56	
Maximum likelihood R ²	0.159		0.263	
BIC	1466.53		1421.25	

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

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

to 5 (5 = extremely interested in casting a vote) and was asked across all respondents regardless of citizenship status. To our knowledge, this is the first attempt to measure explicit interest in voter participation among noncitizens. We think it holds much promise in understanding Latino immigrant political engagement (see Jones-Correa 2001). Beyond interest in politics, in this model we focus specifically on attention to political television news to assess whether the efforts of Spanish

media effectively boosted vote intention. We also include our original interest in politics variable used in the first set of models as a control measure to ensure that our new political attention variable accounts just for exposure to TV news and not overall interest in politics. To ensure that we capture Spanish-language TV news watchers, we include an interaction between Spanish-dominant household and how much attention the respondent pays to news about national politics on television.⁴ Al-

4. We also considered using a direct measure of Spanish-language news consumption, but this question was asked only of the postelection sample and is not present for all respondents. Further, the question on the post-

Table 2. Predictors of Interest in Voting in 2012 Election Among Latino Immigrants

	Base Model		Spanish TV Model	
	Coef	SE	Coef	SE
Political interest	0.141**	0.071	0.137*	0.072
Attention to political news	0.0736	0.109	-0.711*	0.422
Spanish at home	-0.151	0.123	-0.738**	0.331
Spanish X political news			0.189*	0.099
Path to citizenship	0.331**	0.141	0.323**	0.141
Linked fate	0.135	0.083	0.137	0.083
Naturalized	-0.550**	0.248	-0.569**	0.250
Mexican	0.0656	0.234	0.103	0.235
High school graduate	0.372	0.288	0.359	0.288
Some college or more	1.004***	0.304	1.015***	0.304
Age eighteen to thirty-four	-0.881***	0.327	-0.923***	0.327
Age thirty-five to forty-four	-0.36	0.287	-0.402	0.289
Age forty-five to fifty-four	-0.024	0.276	-0.0418	0.278
Income \$20K to \$40K	0.113	0.252	0.145	0.252
Income \$40K and higher	0.356	0.360	0.471	0.363
Missing income	-0.264	0.277	-0.247	0.278
Female	-0.0805	0.203	-0.0811	0.204
Percentage of life in United States	0.371	0.520	0.384	0.521
Cut 1	-1.660*	0.918	-4.165***	-1.600
Cut 2	-0.862	0.905	-3.360**	-1.588
Cut 3	0.692	0.901	-1.79	-1.577
Cut 4	1.915**	0.906	-0.559	-1.575
Observations	434		434	
Log-likelihood	-486.17		-468.42	
Maximum likelihood R ²	0.141		0.156	
BIC	1001.68		985.10	

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

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

though access to Spanish-language television can vary by geography, access is less of an issue today with Univision and Telemundo covering more than two hundred media markets (Medina Vidal 2012). As with the first set of models for nonelectoral participation, we also include the respondents' immigration policy preference, higher values representing support for a path to citizenship for the undocumented. All other additional controls used in the first set of models are also included.

The results for our 2012 vote interest model are shown in table 2. As in the base model, neither attention to politics nor Spanish dominant seem to predict a higher interest in voting by themselves. Political interest does continue to show a significant and positive relationship, as in the first set of models, as we should expect. We also continue to see a mobilizing effect from those who support immigration reform with a path to citizenship, being more likely to express interest in voting. However,

election sample about Spanish-language news did not measure how closely respondents followed news about politics on television, but rather was a question about how often they rely on Spanish- rather than English-language media. We feel our interaction item much more accurately captures exposure to Spanish TV political news.

once we include our interaction term to assess the actual effect of Spanish-language TV news attention we find several significant relationships. First, the direct effects of exposure to political news and speaking only Spanish are both negatively related to interest in voting. However, these direct effects are typically interpreted as the absence of the interacted item. For example, in the Spanish-language TV news model we see that paying attention to news when Spanish at home is not present holds a negative relationship. This means that English-speaking households that watch a great deal of television news are demobilized. Further, speaking Spanish mostly at home is also negative on its own, when attention to television news is not present, suggesting that Spanish-dominant households not watching Univision or Telemundo are not being mobilized. Consistent with research by Subervi-Vélez (2008), it is only the confluence of attention to TV political news in Spanish-dominant households that produces heightened interest in voting—what we call the Jorge Ramos effect.⁵

Although not all immigrants are eligible to vote, anyone can get involved by volunteering for a campaign, helping canvass door-to-door and get out the vote, or affiliating with a candidate by wearing a campaign button or attending a campaign rally. Because it mirrors the ANES, the LINES asked its sample of Latino immigrants if they participated in any of these campaign-specific activities. These are typically reserved for only die-hard political activists, but the LINES dataset reveals that 25 percent of Latino immigrants participated in one or more campaign acts. Participation among naturalized U.S. citizens was slightly higher (28 percent), but nearly one in five noncitizen immigrants (19 percent) took part in a campaign,

consistent with the Barreto and Muñoz findings (2003). Thus, in our third set of models, we examine a four-item index of campaign activity,⁶ and once again look toward the effect of Spanish TV news as a possible source of mobilization.

Table 3 presents the results of our regression predicting participation in campaign activity. High levels of political interest continue to motivate participation; however, independent of political interest, immigrants who are Spanish dominant and pay serious attention to political news on television are significantly more likely to become involved in campaign activity. As in the earlier findings, Spanish-dominant immigrants not watching a great deal of TV news are statistically less likely to become involved in campaign activity; however, the interaction term reveals that Spanish-language political news clearly mobilized Latino immigrants in 2012. The Jorge Ramos effect was present not only in heightened interest in voting but also in directly engaging with campaigns—an empirical finding consistent with the theory Subervi-Vélez (2008) established about the political engagement fostered by Spanish-language media.

We also find support for immigrant identity and campaign activity, the variable linked fate showing a positive and significant relationship with participation in the interaction model.

Interpreting the Size of the Effects

The substantive effects of immigrant identity and Spanish-language news media are best illustrated in the form of predicted probabilities. Figure 1 portrays the predicted number of acts a Latino immigrant will engage in from our nonelectoral participation scale. The x-axis represents degree of political interest and two

5. Although we cannot specifically isolate Univision news anchor Jorge Ramos in these data (no question was asked about which show respondents watched), Ramos has the highest ratings of any nightly news anchor in America—in English or Spanish. Univision reaches 96 percent of Hispanic households and has a 72 percent unduplicated audience, which means that 72 percent of their viewers are not reached by any other network. Between Univision and Telemundo, Univision carries a 3-to-1 advantage in viewers. Further, Ramos has 1.3 million Twitter followers, against 346K for Ilia Calderon (Univision), 336K for Maria Elena Salinas (Univision), and 134K for José Diaz-Balart (Telemundo). Thus, we are fairly confident in calling Ramos a leading voice in Spanish-language TV news.

6. The campaign activities were as follows: asked others to vote for or against a candidate, attended a campaign rally or event, wore a campaign button or posted a yard sign, and volunteered directly for a campaign.

Table 3. Predictors of Campaign Activity During 2012 Election Among Latino Immigrants

	Base Model		Spanish TV Model	
	Coef	SE	Coef	SE
Political interest	0.213**	0.078	0.209***	0.069
Attention to political news	0.199	0.117	-0.532	0.399
Spanish at home	-0.213*	0.105	-0.801**	0.332
Spanish X political news			0.179*	0.083
Path to citizenship	0.060	0.145	0.054	0.140
Linked fate	0.094	0.072	0.103*	0.052
Naturalized	-0.178	0.243	-0.196	0.233
Mexican	-0.719***	0.226	-0.704***	0.219
High school graduate	0.609*	0.279	0.591**	0.268
Some college or more	0.218	0.275	0.210	0.264
Age eighteen to thirty-four	-0.127	0.317	-0.165	0.307
Age thirty-five to forty-four	-0.090	0.283	-0.141	0.274
Age forty-five to fifty-four	-0.111	0.274	-0.138	0.264
Income \$20K to \$40K	-0.199	0.250	-0.167	0.241
Income \$40K and higher	-0.272	0.342	-0.164	0.333
Missing income	-0.130	0.291	-0.128	0.281
Female	-0.219	0.201	-0.225	0.194
Percentage of life in United States	0.551	0.521	0.529	0.502
Cut 1	0.919	0.907	-1.560	1.570
Cut 2	3.327	0.921	0.851	1.574
Cut 3	4.413	0.944	1.938	1.585
Observations	449		449	
Log-likelihood	-399.62		-331.13	
Maximum likelihood R ²	0.178		0.191	
BIC	917.96		986.91	

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

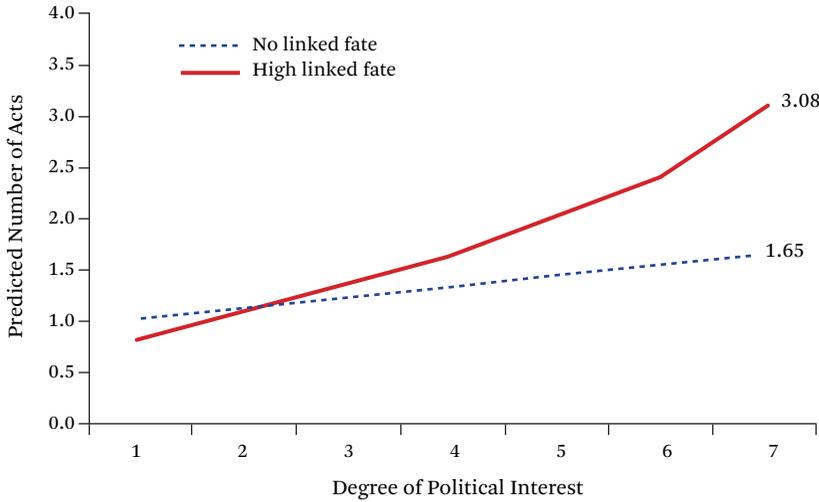
* $p < .1$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$

lines are plotted for immigrants who say they have no sense of linked fate (blue, dashed line, light blue confidence band in background) and for immigrants who say they have a high degree of linked fate with other immigrants (red, solid line, light red confidence band in background). Latino immigrants with no sense of linked fate demonstrate only a modest and nonsignificant increase in political participation across values of political interest, from an estimated 1.02 acts to 1.65. However, among Latino immigrants with a strong sense of linked fate, increased political interest is strongly associated with increased political engagement. In fact, those with linked fate and political interest are estimated to take part in 3.08 acts, more than three times the rate of

those who have no sense of linked fate (at 0.81 acts). The combination of a linked fate identity and heightened political interest create the politicized immigrant identity we hypothesized and result in very high levels of political engagement among Latino immigrants in 2012. These results support and reinforce the research of Huddy and her colleagues in this issue, who find in-group identity to be positively associated with political participation among Latino immigrants.

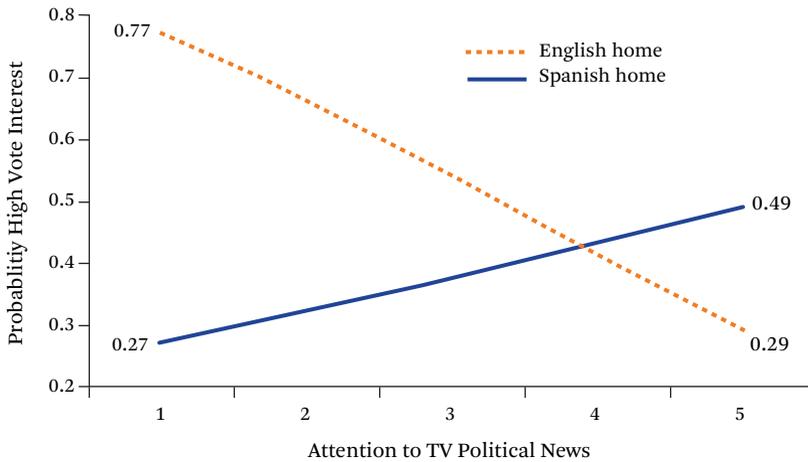
In figure 2, we explore how exposure to Spanish-language TV news is associated with higher levels of interest in voting. Here, the x-axis represents how closely respondents followed television news coverage of politics and the election, and the two lines depict English-

Figure 1. Predicted Political Acts



Source: Author’s calculations based on McCann and Jones-Correa 2012.

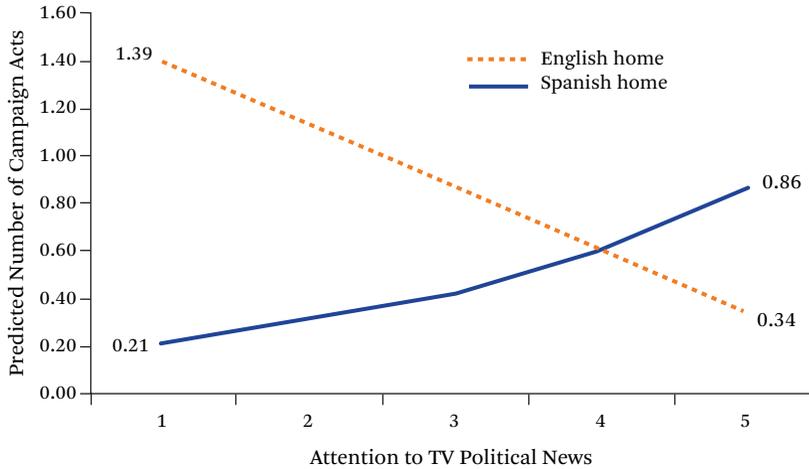
Figure 2. Predicted Vote Interest



Source: Author’s calculations based on McCann and Jones-Correa 2012.

dominant (orange, dashed line) and Spanish-dominant (purple, solid line) respondents. For English-dominant immigrants, increased attention to TV news actually decreased interest in voting in 2012 by almost 50 percentage points. This could be the result of a mostly negative news environment about politics and the lack of any empowering messages for immigrants. As Spanish-language journalist Pilar Marrero said, “Those communities are pretty much invisible in other media or they are cov-

ered only from the point of view of the ‘other’” In contrast, Spanish-dominant immigrants who paid close attention to political news on television had a statistically significant increase in reporting the highest level of interest in voting. This finding is consistent with the *New York Times* account of Spanish-language television in 2012: “In countless households, Latinos tuned their television sets to Univision and heard Jorge Ramos, the host of *Al Punto*, the Spanish version of *Meet the Press*, discuss

Figure 3. Predicted Campaign Acts

Source: Author's calculations based on McCann and Jones-Correa 2012.

the candidates' positions on issues critical to them." Comparing respondents who said they were paying very close attention to TV news about politics and the election in 2012, Spanish-dominant respondents had a 49 percent probability of being extremely interested in voting; English-dominant were 20 points lower, at 29 percent probability. Thus, exposure to television news coverage of politics only increased voting intensity among the Spanish dominant, presumably because only Spanish-language media was stimulating Latino immigrant interest in voting, whereas English-language media was not speaking directly to Latino immigrants. As Jorge Ramos himself stated in a 2014 interview with *New York Magazine*, "The Latino community expects from us much more than just news. They expect from us leadership. And they expect from us somehow to represent them" (Cherlin 2014).

Finally, we see the same effect for participation in campaign activity in figure 3. The gap in campaign involvement between English-dominant (dashed line) and Spanish-dominant (solid line) immigrants is large when attention to political news is not considered. English-dominant and fully bilingual immigrants have, potentially, many more opportunities to get involved and participate in campaigns. Campaigns are presumably less likely to reach out and try to include the least acculturated,

Spanish-dominant immigrants. However, once we incorporate attention to TV news into the model, this trend reverses. Spanish-dominant immigrants who closely followed political news on television were more likely than their English-dominant counterparts to get involved in campaigns, growing from an estimated 0.2 political acts to 0.86 political acts for Spanish-language TV news viewers. English-language TV news viewers dropped from 1.39 acts to 0.34 acts (figure 3).

CONCLUSION

Many election observers called 2012 the year of the Latino vote, with record numbers of Latinos turning out at the polls and a historic vote in favor of Obama. However, a closer read indicates that it may have been the election year of the Latino immigrant. Immigration was front and center as a campaign issue from the Republican primary debates that pushed the candidates further to the Right to embrace anti-immigrant positions, to the executive order issued by Obama in June 2012 offering relief from deportation to nearly one million DREAMers. We argue that Latino immigrants found themselves constantly referencing their immigrant identity during the 2012 election cycle, and that this became a way of psychological engagement and political mobilization. This was further reinforced by the Jorge Ramos

effect, whereby Spanish-language media played an important role in engaging, informing, and mobilizing Latinos in 2012. Leading journalists such as Ramos, Maria Elena Salinas, Pilar Marrero and more highlighted what was at stake for immigrant communities in 2012. Their reporting on immigration issues was relentless and offered a perspective to Latino immigrants that was missing in English media. The result was a Latino immigrant community that was highly informed and highly engaged in the 2012 election. Not only was interest in voting high, but our analysis also demonstrates high levels of nonelectoral participation, such as attending a protest or writing a letter to an elected official. In addition, we find heightened levels of participation in campaigns, especially among those who closely followed Spanish-language political news.

The LINES dataset provides an opportunity to test many of our deeply held notions about political participation among an immigrant community that is largely absent in the ANES. Among Latinos, the 2012 ANES face-to-face component offers only 125 foreign-born respondents, all of whom are U.S. citizens and eligible to vote, as per ANES sample frame standards. In contrast, the LINES contains a total of 1,304 interviews with Latino immigrants, about 40 percent of whom are naturalized citizens. Thus the data allow us to test and extend our analyses of political participation to Latino immigrants living in the United States, citizens and noncitizens alike, and the data reveal an actively engaged Latino immigrant community in America. As the Latino immigrant population continues its path of incorporation in America, these findings suggest a politically aware immigrant community poised to participate fully in the politics of the nation.

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