GOD MADE THE COUNTRY, AND MAN MADE THE TOWN:
The Impact of Local Institutions on Latino Political Engagement

Narayani Lasala-Blanco[1]

University of California, Santa Barbara

Abstract

Are all immigrants in the United States willing and able to integrate successfully into the polity? Low levels of turnout among voting eligible native and foreign-born Latino origin citizens in the United States have been used as evidence that some immigrant groups are unable to integrate into a liberal democratic polity. Using data from an original in-person survey collected in major American cities, and containing representative and independently collected city samples of, whites, Asians and blacks, I explore the relationship between local political institutional environments and participation in national elections. Contrary to what others have found when using representative national samples, I find that the well-documented and persistent turnout gap between Latino and white voters varies significantly across cities. The findings suggest that the differences in turnout between Latinos and other ethnoracial groups, especially white and black Americans observed in national samples could be driven by the concentration of voting eligible Latinos in Southwestern cities where local political institutions, established during the Reform Era, inhibit overall political competition and turnout.

[1] Narayani Lasala-Blanco is Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of California, Ellison 3834 Mail Code: 9420 Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA 93106. Phone: 805.893.6050 (narayanilasala@polsci.ucsb.edu). The author thanks the Institute for Research of African American Studies at Columbia University for funding the data collection as well as to the undergraduate students at Columbia and other Universities who participated in the in-person surveying. The author is also grateful to Robert Y Shapiro, Alfred Stepan, Ira Katznelson, Fredrick Harris, Andrew Gelman, and Rodolfo de la Garza for their feedback, comments and suggestions. A special thanks to the encouragement, extensive and useful comments provided by Kent Jennings in the preparation of the manuscript.

INTRODUCTION

The low level of turnout among Latinos[2] in comparison to white and black U.S. citizens has puzzled behavior scholars since the 1970s. Voting eligible Latinos have voted at a rate at least 15 percent lower than whites in every general election since the 1980s. Latinos, one oldest and most numerous immigrant groups in the United States, live in a democracy with some of the most culturally tolerant laws, but remain a marginal portion of the electorate. This fact has been often cited in academic and political debates engaging with the question of whether certain immigrant groups are unable and unwilling to integrate politically, and if they become numerous enough could pose a threat to a polity's democratic values and institutions.

Scholars in the 1970's and 1980's made important contributions to this debate and were able to show that low turnout among Latinos was attributable to the formal and informal barriers to political participation including the social, economic and political structures that obstructed the full political participation of Latinos and blacks at the time, (see Menchaca 1994 and De la Garza 2004 for a detailed account. However, black turnout showed considerable improvement in the aftermath of the civil rights movement while Latino turnout continued to lag behind and explanations that focused on religion, culture culture, and the lack of political integration including disloyalty towards the host country resurfaced.

[2] This ethnic group includes persons of Cuban, Puerto Rican, Mexican, Central American, or South American origin, as well as any other culture in the Spanish historical sphere, regardless of their race. I use Latino and Hispanic interchangeably to refer to a person who belongs to this group.

As immigration and diversity surged in many liberal democracies in 1990s, politicians and scholars have argued, along the lines of influential political scientist Samuel Huntington (2004), that certain immigrant groups are unable to integrate politically. They possess, according to this view, deeply embedded and rigid religious beliefs and cultural values that prevent the development of democratic attitudes and patriotism (Lucassen 2005 and Goldberg 2006; for a discussion see Kymlicka 2012). These rigid and anti-democratic beliefs, according to Huntington (2004) and others, are the root cause of political maladjustment of the first and subsequent generations, as these attitudes are transmitted to native-born generations. This view sees the success of immigrant integration and multiculturalist policies[3] as contingent on the *types* of immigrants (country of origin or practicing religion) that allowed into the country. This view, contradicts the one that led termination of the quota system and general tenements of the immigration regime in the United States since 1965 influenced by World Ward II, the shameful events that led to the repatriation of Germans of Jewish origin refugees fleeing Nazi Germany in Florida and the Civil Rights Movement (Zolberg 2004). The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 end of the quota system announced to the world that America no longer saw itself as a white Anglo-Saxon protestant nation but a nation of immigrants with shared liberal democratic values.

Much of the scholarly work in the United States examining immigrant and minority political participation, including many large-n observational and experimental research studies, has been a reaction to this simplistic view that explains minority political attitudes

[3] Multiculturalism advocates legal and political accommodation of ethnic diversity as the best way to promote harmonious political integration of immigrants, especially non-Western ones, and often cites the United States as an exemplary case of its success (Kymlicka 2012).

and behavior using the country of origin or religion (Barreto and Segura 2014; Lee, Ramakrishnan, and Ramírez 2012; Wong et. al. 2011; Barreto 2007; de la Garza, Falcon, and Garcia 1996; García Bedolla and Michelson 2012). Latino Politics scholars in particular have tried to explain why 60 percent or more of this group's eligible voters, which includes a large portion of native-born citizens, do not turn out in elections (for a discussion see de la Garza 2004 and Lee, Ramakrishnan, and Ramírez 2012). While there is substantial progress in terms of what turns Latinos to politics and what results in higher voter turnout in specific cities and states, none of the answers point to one underlying cause that can account for the persistence of the white-Latino turnout gap once most of the formal barriers for minorities were dismantled. The puzzling and unexplained persistence of low levels of turnout among Latino origin citizens, including those born in the United States and with roots dating back to the 1800's, at the national level (Figure 1) is in part, why Huntington's mono causal theory of a deep rooted anti-democratic belief in the United States has remained so powerful.

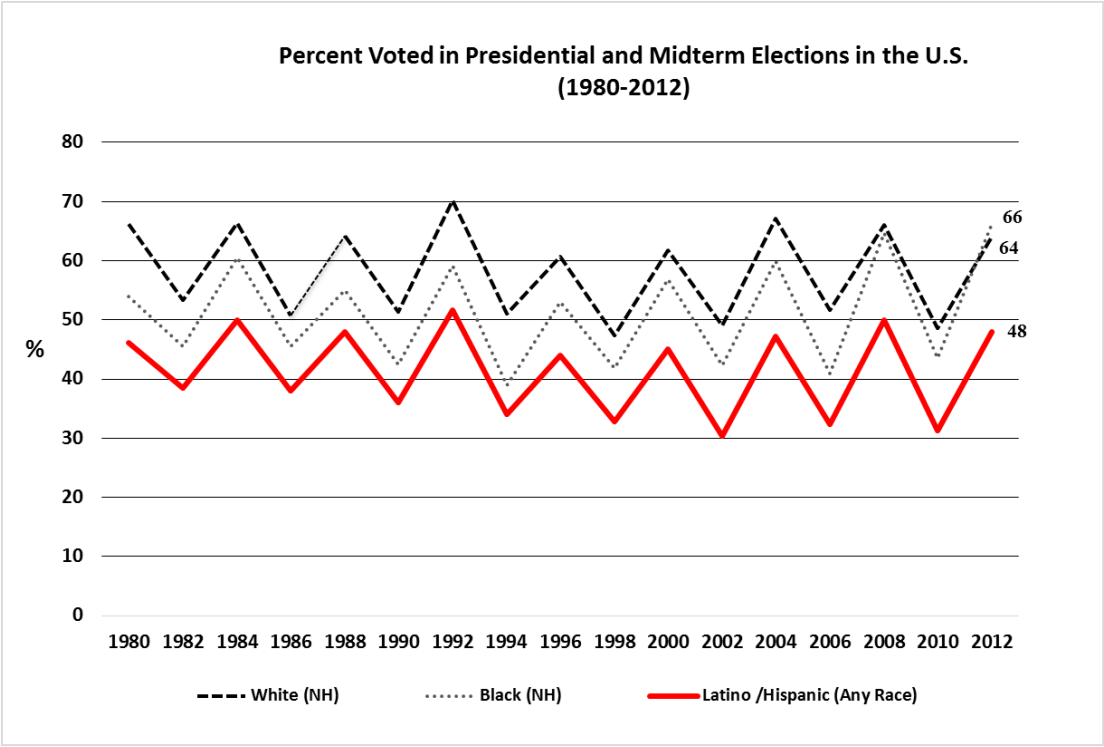

Figure 1. Percent Voted by Race & Hispanic Origin of Citizen Population (1980- 2012). Elaborated with U.S. Census Data.

In this paper, I argue that the white-Latino turnout gap could be due to the concentration of Latinos (as opposed to more evenly dispersed black and white populations) in local institutional environments that depress political participation, especially that of racial and ethnic minorities. I find that electoral participation varies significantly across local political contexts, even within ethnic and immigrant groups and within generations. That is, even native and foreign born Latinos with similar socio demographic characteristics vary in voting behavior depending on the type of locality they were socialized in. Contrary to the mono causal theories that advance the rigid anti-democratic or a-political beliefs among certain immigrant groups, I find significant variation at the local level. The low levels of Latino turnout in Soutwesten cities with institutions that lead to lower levels of turnout compared to older Midwestern and

Northeastern cities and the concentration of most of the Latino population may be the missing link between the persistent low levels of turnout when examining national data and the empirical findings of the Latino political behavior literature. Behavior scholars have shown that Latinos are as democratic, patriotic and respond to shifting electoral contexts (including hostile ones) in the same ways white and black citizens do. A larger proportion of them may be living in places with institutions known by urban politics scholars (Alford and Lee 1968; Bridges 1997) to depress turnout by 20 to 30 percent.

THE LATINO TURNOUT PUZZLE

The Civil Rights movement was successful in reducing many of the formal barriers to political participation and increasing political participation of racial and ethnic minorities. The black-white gap in turnout has since diminished and, in fact, black turnout surpassed that of whites in 2012. Latino voter participation in general elections has not followed the same pattern and has remained fifteen to twenty percentage points lower than that of white voters. Some have argued that this is a function of the group's characteristics as they are on average younger, poorer and less educated than whites, and have a higher proportion of native born among them. However when using individual level data and taking into account these differences Latinos on average participate in elections at much lower rates. The socioeconomic model used to explain most of the differences in political participation among blacks and whites[4] even native born, educated and wealthier Latinos exhibit relatively lower levels of electoral participation than similarly situated blacks and

[4] See de la Garza (2004) for a summary of contradictory findings with respect to age, income and education and their effect on Latinos, also Wong et al. (2011).

whites. This puzzle has been the object of study of race and ethnicity political behavior scholars since the 1950's.

Anthropologists and sociologists conducted the first studies about the low levels of political participation of U.S. born Latinos in 1950s and 1960s. These scholars favored country of origin culture and religion explanations and argued that low levels of political participation at the national level stemmed from Mexican Americans' cultural dysfunction (Menchaca 1994). The cultural dysfunction thesis stated, that Mexican Americans and similar groups with peasant origins in Latin America possessed cultural traits that produced "factionalism, suspicion, fatalism, invidiousness and peasant like apolitical attitudes" which prevented them from developing civic skills and organizations that could be used on behalf of their political advocacy (Menchaca 1994, 44).

The next wave of scholars, explored the formal and informal barriers to political participation including the social, economic and political structures that obstructed the full political participation of Latinos, at the time, mostly Mexican Americans. These scholars (see Menchaca 1994 and De la Garza 2004 for a detailed account) provided ample evidence that cultural explanations were inadequate to explain lower levels of political participation among Latino origin citizens when compared to white Americans. However, structural explanations were submitted to renewed scrutiny when many of the structural barriers faced by Latinos were eliminated through the 1975 Voting Rights Act, the Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project (SWVRP), and its Puerto Rican counterpart, the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (de la Garza 2004). Although these reforms promoted the political participation of traditionally marginalized Latino groups, national level data showed little or no improvement on turnout rates compared to their black counterparts well after the 1970s. Cultural and other explanations reviving the religious

preferences of the group as important explanatory variables (Verba et.at. 1993) eventually resurfaced.

Samuel Huntington (2004) revisited cultural and religious explanations top account for the low levels of political participation of Latinos. Huntington argued that Latinos and Mexican Americans in particular, were not integrating politically as well as other immigrant groups had in the past due to a set of resilient, inherited beliefs that prevent them from acquiring the civic skills necessary for participating in a democratic political system. More than 40 percent of Mexican Americans were 3rd or higher generation, and this is partially why Huntington (2004) focused on the transmission of cultural, religious and other beliefs that Mexican parents passed on to their native-born children to explain the low levels of political participation and other indicators of integration[5]. Political behavior scholars have since conducted large-N surveys with nationally representative samples and shown that Latinos, especially Mexican Americans, are as loyal and patriotic as other Americans (Citrin and Sears, 2009; de la Garza, Falcon and Garcia 1996). Furthermore, the country of origin research strategy to explain variation across 2nd and higher generation Latino sub-groups also assumes successful transmission of political and other beliefs between the first and the second generation. These theories are unable to explain why third and older generation Mexican Americans are less politically active than naturalized and second generation ones. Also, they fail to take into account that immigration seems to be an experience of this sort, since it is a life event that radically breaks prior social relations and roles and is therefore likely to transform even highly stable political behaviors:

[5] According to Huntington, the inherited beliefs of Latinos stem, first, from Catholicism, which has a history of religious leaders fostering an anti-democratic and apolitical ethos. Second, because of the massive loss of territory suffered by Mexico in the 1847 War with the United States, Mexican Americans and their descendants have inherited the resentment of their forefathers towards Americans.

> Immigration is one of the most stressful events a person can undergo … it removes individuals from many of their relationships and predictable contexts ... Immigrants are stripped of many of their sustaining social relationships as well as of the roles which provide them with culturally scripted notions of how they fit into the world (Suárez-Orozco 2000,136). [6]

As demonstrated by Sears and Valentino (1997) information rich events experienced by those whose attitudes are not yet fully form about the political system and their place in it, such as adolescents, result in substantial gains in political engagement. Immigrants, like adolescents, have not yet fully formed an opinion about their role in the host country's political system. At arrival, their first experiences occur in the locality and neighborhood they settle in and while they do not arrive as empty slates regarding the new polity, these opinions are malleable and influenced by the day-to-day experience. The pre-existing layers are, similarly to the process described by Sears and Valentino (1997) in adolescents by rich events and consistent cues in their new social and political context. Preconceived notions are updated as the fact that the resistance hypothesis, the idea that pre-immigration beliefs are stable, has not found any support (White et.al. 2008). What then, if not pre-immigration beliefs or parental transmission explain the persistent negative correlation between Latinos and their electoral participation?

Another set of factors that have been considered relevant to rates of political participation among Latinos are mobilization, concentration and specific electoral contexts that increase or decrease group identity and co-ethnic mobilization at the national or state level.

[6] See also, García Coll and Magnuson (2005).

Scholars have looked into the types of communities Latinos live in (minority-majority or minority-minority district) because in theory, communities within ethnic enclaves may develop group solidarity, consciousness and social capital that may help to overcome the obstacles of organization and thereby enhance turnout levels (Uhlaner 1989; Leighley 2001; Erie 1990). However, empirical studies focusing on concentration have yielded contradictory results in different states and counties. (Leighley 2001 and de la Garza et al. 2001). This may be due to the fact that, as I argue in this paper, concentration works to elicit participatory behavior only under certain institutional conditions.

The work examining the relationship between the nature of each election and its consequences some scholars have championed mobilization (or lack thereof) as the most important factor in explaining turnout differences between Latino and other groups. In *Mobilizing Inclusion: Transforming the Electorate through Get-Out-the-Vote Campaigns,* García Bedolla and Michelson (2012) reported a substantial increase in turnout for those Latinos who were contacted in person and phone and asked to vote[7]. However, this multiyear effort was circumscribed to low-income communities in California and we are unable to gauge how similar efforts would fare in places like Texas or Arizona. As shown on Figure 2, mobilization efforts during presidential elections have doubled for Latinos from 1992 to 2008, while Latino turnout remained between 45 and 50 percent.

[7] "These experiments indicate that in-person canvassing is the most powerful method of turning out voters" (García Bedolla and Michelson 2012, 11).

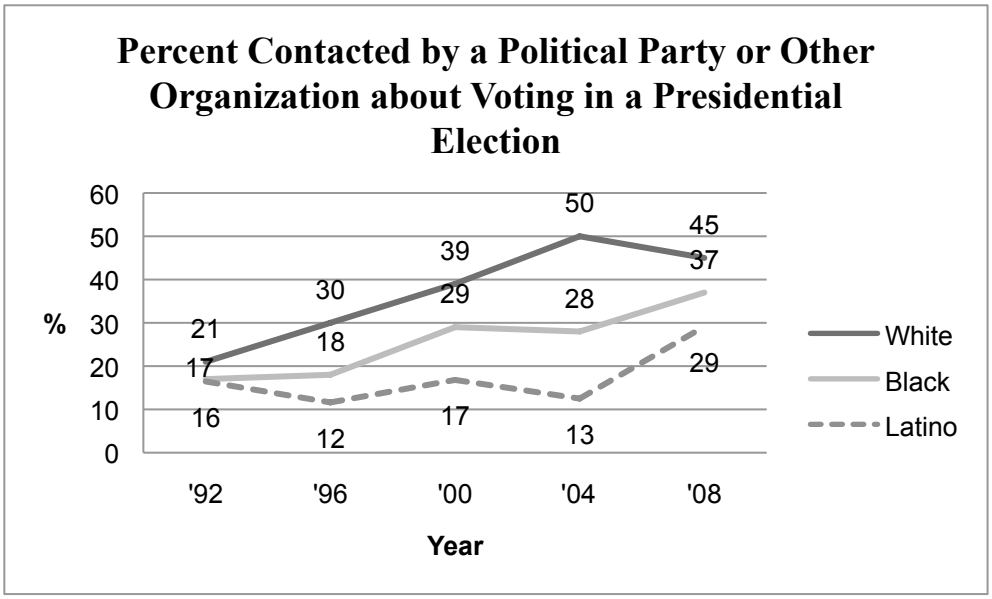

Figure 2. Percent Contacted by Race & Hispanic Origin of Citizen Population (1992-2012). ANES 2012

Some scholars have researched how specific local or national elections, especially hostile rhetoric or initiatives directed at Latinos affect group political conscience, solidarity and electoral participation. Barreto and Woods (2005) and Barreto, Segura and Woods (2004) demonstrate that the increase in Latino voter turnout in California is linked to the passing of California's Proposition 187 (passed in 1994 and voided in 1998) and the negative media campaign targeting Mexican Americans that preceded it. Also, preliminary results from the Latino Decisions Election Eve Poll, which contain larger oversamples of Latinos, Sanchez and Barreto (2016) estimate that Latinos cast 13.1 to 14.7 million of the total ballots in the 2016 election, compared to the previous presidential election where they only cast 11.2 million of all the ballots. Yet, it may be the case that location may influence the perception of hostility and its consequences. Latinos experiencing mild but constant institutional discrimination are more likely to distance themselves from the political system (Schildkraut 2010).

THE LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The starting point of my theory about the explanation of the white-Latino turnout gap is the empirical finding of the urban politics and American political development scholarship that cities with powerful political machines that did not adopt reforms (especially form of government and type of elections) continued to exhibit 20 to 30 percent higher levels of voter turnout during the second half of the 20th century than cities that did (Alford and Lee 1968; Bridges 1997). This finding challenged well-known relationships in American politics between individual characteristics and turnout because machine cities (e.g., Chicago, New York, and New Haven) also have a higher proportion of non-white, foreign-born, poor and uneducated voters than do their reform counterparts.

During the reform era, in the early years of the 20th century, when the excesses of the political machines in American cities were rampant, Southwestern cities established municipal charters and began to hold non-partisan elections. Replacing an elected mayor with a city manager and holding non-partisan elections eroded political competition quite effectively, but numerous empirical studies have found that these reforms are associated with a decline in voter turnout (Alford and Lee 1968; Karnig and Walter 1983; Hajnal and Lewis 2003; Hajnal and Trounstine 2005; Bridges 1997). As Bridges (1997) has pointed out, the Southwest cities that adopted these institutions are quite similar to those described by V.O. Key in *Southern Politics* (1949); popular controversy in the political sphere is practically nonexistent and very few politicians gain prominence. In contrast, in New York and Chicago, the traditional partisan infrastructure that was left behind by the political machines of the 19th century continues to produce higher overall rates of turnout.

I theorize that there is a connection between these findings regarding local political institutions and turnout and the work of political socialization scholars who have found that consistent cues are essential for the formation of political attitudes (Stoker and Bass 2013; Niemi and Sobieszek 1977; Jennings and Niemi 1978).

The local political environment provides all individuals living within it a view of what the political system is and its connection and importance to their lives. When institutions promote political competition and individuals are exposed regularly to political events and information about politics, they are more likely to be informed and interested in politics than their counterparts who live in environments where institutions have purposely reduced exposure to political actors and parties (Campbell, 2006; Gimpel, Lay, and Schuknecht, 2003). As Schlozman, Brady, and Verba (2012) have pointed out, motivation, rather than resources such as time, income and education, seems to be the key component of greater electoral participation. Voting is the least "costly" of political acts an individual can undertake (compared, for example, to donating time and money for a political campaign). The motivation to participate increases with exposure to political events, opportunities to participate (interactions that may facilitate participation such as GOTV campaigns, easier access to registration and polls), and the degree to which winners and losers are easily identifiable.

The percentage of foreign bon population does not seem to affect overall turnout in the machine cities (Alford and Lee 1968; Bridges 1997) to this day, this may be because it provides the first-generation and second-generation immigrants, with a local political environment with consistent cues about the political system and their place in the polity. In fact, longitudinal studies have found that part of the explanation for parent-child

congruence in political behavior and attitudes is that "children and parents are influenced by the same events, by interpreting these events through the same media, and by evaluating them with similar frames of reference" (Jennings and Niemi 1978, 217). While national events may influence their perceptions, the local environment provides additional cues and that may account for variation at the local level among Latinos.

In some cities, individuals, especially those disadvantaged ones in terms of resources, are less motivated to vote because they have less frequent and meaningful exposure to political events, have fewer opportunities to participate and can less easily identify political actors and policy platforms with policy outcomes directly affecting them (i.e. trash collection, social services, institutional discrimination, quality of public services and infrastructure). This framework challenges both the academic and popular perceptions that second-generation immigrants' political behavior or lack of political integration is explained by the first generation's cultural and religious background or anti-democratic attitudes that are passed on; I focus instead on the socialization individuals receive in the locality the settle or are born in to explain immigrant group behavior. Differences in the local institutional environments where immigrant groups settle and subsequent generations are socialized into the polity are crucial because immigration is a network-driven process and groups tend to concentrate in a few localities (Massey and España 1987).

Figure 3 shows the geographical concentration of Latino eligible voters in certain congressional district as estimated by Pew (2015) utilizing U.S. Census data. According to the U.S. Census (2010) Latinos in California accounted for 14.0 million (28 percent) of the total Hispanic population, while the Hispanic population in Texas accounted for 9.5 million (19 percent). The fact that most national representative samples of voting eligible Latinos

are bound to include more individuals from the shaded areas matters to understand the trends observed at the national level because it signals that the majority of Latinos live in reform cities.

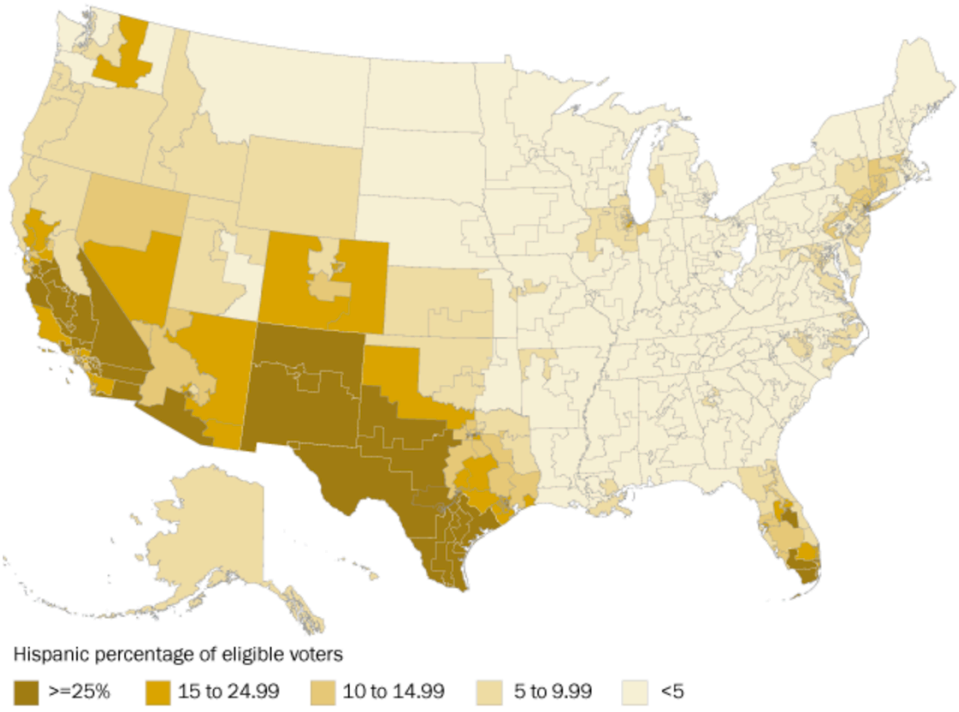

Figure 3. Hispanic Percentage of Congressional District Eligible Voters. Pew Research Center, Hispanic Trends (2014)
Pew using American FactFinder (2014 ACS 1-year estimates, tables B05003 and B05003I)

Hypotheses

The main goal of this paper is to examine whether the political behavior of native-born Latinos who are similarly situated in terms of ancestry, generation, education, gender, and income varies across different local institutional contexts (H1). The alternative hypothesis is simply that holding all demographic and socioeconomic characteristics constant, the

probability of Latinos voting in a given election follows similar patterns to what is observed at the national level. I also examine (H2) whether in cities where local political institutions promote political competition, the gap between Latino and black and white turnout is diminished. And finally, I test (H3) whether once we account for prevalent local institutions, the socioeconomic model that works well to predict the political behavior of other groups (blacks and whites in the United States can be used also to predicting Latino political behavior. I use the 2008 presidential election to test my hypotheses because attentiveness and interest in presidential elections change over time, particularly among individuals with low socioeconomic status. This election is ideal for studying Latino political participation because we can assume, based on the events preceding it and post-election data from the ANES, that the combination of the mobilization tactics of Obama campaign and the saliency of the election in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis resulted in an unusually high level of political awareness and interest among underrepresented minorities, younger generations that did not vary by region or state (Jacobson 2016). Thus, finding local differences within a group would be more difficult in this type of highly competitive presidential elections which promote overall higher levels of mobilization and information among all voters.

Data

Why another survey? The U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS), which contains a sample of 60,000 households, would in theory be ideal to explore whether Latinos' voting patterns vary at the local level. However, obtaining voting estimates at the

city or even at the county level from the CPS is impossible due to confidentiality laws.[8] Another option would be to use actual voting data from cities with varying local institutional conditions. Unfortunately, official city board of elections turnout data are not broken down by race/ethnicity and nativity, nor do they include basic demographic characteristics. Voter files also exclude more than half of voting-eligible Latinos and other groups such as Asians. It may make sense to use these data sources to explore what drives the non-Hispanic white population to vote, 75 percent of which is registered according to the 2010 U.S. Census, but they are problematic for studying the Latino electorate as the percent of registered voters is 51.3 percent of the Latino voting eligible population.

The 2012 ANES and the 2006 Latino National Survey (LNS) have large Latino samples, but their smallest geographical unit is the state. It is not possible to use these surveys to explore whether the voting behavior of Latinos, blacks and whites varied across local institutional contexts in the 2008 election (H2). Consider California: San Francisco resembles the older and highly politically active cities of the Midwest and Northeast, but San Jose and San Diego look more like the traditional Southwestern cities that have very mild political competition.

I collected a representative and independent sample from six cities using three criteria. First, the cities had a distribution that closely resembled the makeup of the Latino population nationally: about 60 percent trace their origin to Mexico, 10 percent to Puerto Rico, and the remaining 30 percent was a mix of Caribbean, Central American and South American country of origin. New York was the exception to this rule, but given its size and importance as the city with the largest Latino population in the United States, I included it

[8] "The sample size does not allow reliable estimates to be obtained at the county level. In fact, not all counties are included in the sample, and data are not available for most counties that are sampled due to confidentiality laws" (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/about/faqs.html)

in the sample and used oversampling of Mexican Americans to obtain a large enough sample of this group. The second criterion was variation in local political institutional features—machine versus reform historical legacy, mayor-council versus council-manager form of government, and partisan versus non-partisan elections. The third requirement was a combination of the number of Latinos living in the city as well as the proportion of Latinos relative to other racial and ethnic groups. In these cities Latinos constituted a significant proportion of the population but not a majority. The selected cities (Table 1) are among the ten cities with the largest Hispanic/Latino population, according to the 2010 Census[9] and vary significantly in terms of their local political institutions.

Table 1. Selected Cities' Political Institutions

City	Historical legacy	Type of government	Type of election
New York, NY	Machine	Mayor-Council	Partisan
Los Angeles, CA	Reform	Mayor-Council	Non-Partisan
Houston, TX	Reform	Council- Manager	Partisan
Chicago, IL	Machine	Mayor-Council	Partisan
Phoenix, AZ	Reform	Mayor-Council	Non-Partisan
San Francisco, CA	Reform	Mayor-Council	Non-Partisan

The city samples were drawn in 2011 with a simple random sampling procedure of all deliverable addresses. Deliverable addresses were bought from a compiler (USA data) and respondents from each household were selected randomly by asking the adult with the nearest birthday at the time of contact. The interviewers were asked to participate in a survey that took 15-20 minutes, and if the interviewer said they did not have time to answer

[9] An additional criterion was the percentage of Mexican-origin population. This was done to control for country of origin.

or were not home, they were given the option to mail in their responses and given a self addressed envelope with a stamp. Respondents who were not eligible to vote due to their immigration status were excluded from the sample. The in-person response rate was 70 percent for those households where the respondent was home, although this dropped significantly for the mail-in option, only 12 percent of those households where the respondent was not home returned the survey (see Table 2 in the Appendix).

Measures

The dependent variable, voting in the 2008 presidential election, was measured by the response to the question*: "In 2008, John McCain ran for President on the Republican ticket against Barack Obama. Do you remember for sure whether or not you voted in that election?*". I use the 2008 presidential election and the dependent variable to test my hypothesis because attentiveness and interest in presidential elections change over time, particularly among individuals with low socioeconomic status. This election is ideal for studying Latino political participation because we can safely assume, based on the events preceding it and post-election data, that all racial and socioeconomic groups were aware of the election and as pre-election public opinion data has shown, the combination of the Obama campaign and the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis resulted in an unusually high level of political interest among underrepresented minorities and younger generations (Jacobson 2016).

To measure the main independent variable, the local institutional environment in each city, I conducted a principal components factor analysis based on the localities' institutional features that were theorized to have an effect on voting behavior of all residents, including Latinos. As shown in Table 2 below, I assigned the code "0" to cities that have governmental, electoral, and immigration institutions that could discourage

minority political participation (according to the literature in urban politics discussed earlier) and the code "1" to cities where institutions provide incentives to parties to encourage minority political participation and political competition in general. As explained earlier, some scholars (Schildkraut 2010) have argued that hostility or institutional discrimination experienced in every-day activities toward a particular racial, ethnic or immigrant group could result in a group member's political apathy; others suggest that such hostility generates greater solidarity and willingness to participate (Barreto, Segura and Woods, 2004). I coded cities in states that had never introduced legislation that chastised undocumented immigrants that were perceived as targeting Latinos as 1, those who were in states that had introduced and passed such legislation, like Arizona SB 1070 as 1. Finally, using qualitative and secondary sources I characterized cities as having developed an urban infrastructure conducive to mobilization (structured around neighborhoods with ethnic enclaves, sidewalks and features that would facilitate party workers' get out the vote campaigns) in the early part of the 20th century, as having developed an urban environment early and I coded them as 1.

I then combined all the scores to create an index using these items (machine legacy, urban development, type of government, and immigration state legislation), which loaded on one factor, thereby justifying the construction of a single scale (Cronbach's alpha was 0.8). The scale was a simple additive index of the number of institutional features in each city considered conducive to a more active political environment.

Table 2. Local Institutions Index (Created using Factor Analysis)

	Historical legacy (Machine=1)	**Type of Government** (Mayor-Council=1)	**Election Type** (Partisan=1)	**State Anti-Immigrant Legislation** (Absence=1)	**Urban Development** (Early=1)	**Score**

New York	1	1	1	1	1	5
Chicago	1	1	1	0.5	1	4.5
San Francisco	1	1	0	0.5	1	3.5
Los Angeles	0	1	0	0.5	0	1.5
Houston	0	1	0	0.25	0	1.25
Phoenix	0	0	0	0	0	0

Models

To explore whether Latino voting behavior varies at the city level (H1), I estimate the probability that an individual who self-identified as Latino, Asian, black, white or other voted in the 2008 presidential election, controlling for educational attainment, household income, gender, age, and whether he or she was foreign- or native-born.

The first model is a simple classic logistic regression model. The general model for a voting-eligible citizen *i* is:

(1) $\Pr(y_i = 1) = \text{logit}^{-1}(\alpha_{[i]} + \beta * race_{[i]} + \beta * income_{[i]} + \beta * Education_{[i]} \ \beta * age_{[i]} + \beta * male_{[i]} + \beta * bornUS_{[i]});$ for $i = 1, \ldots, n,$

where $Pr(yi = 1)$ represents the probability that given his/her race, a person will vote in the 2008 presidential election, controlling for the sociodemographic features listed above.[10] The second model predicts turnout in 2008 (also holding constant age, gender, income, and education), but allowing the slope of race/ethnicity to vary for different localities or cities at the individual level.

The second part of the model, the multilevel component, is the model for all α_j 's and β_j's. As discussed in Gelman and Hill (2007, 257), the above model seems a complete

[10] Model 1.1 uses the New York City sample; Model 1.2 the Chicago sample, Model 1.3 the San Francisco sample, Model 1.4 the Houston sample, Model 1.5 the Los Angeles sample, and Model 1.6 uses the Phoenix sample.

pooling, except that the α_j 's and β_j's are assigned as probability distribution. This model was chosen because it allows for the estimation of the relationship between the local environment and the turnout of each racial/ethnic group, with estimates for the larger groups coming largely from their own data and the estimates from the smaller groups relying more on the pooled estimate. Also, it allows for the estimation of the patterns of variation between groups (in this case, the racial and ethnic groups), while considering the hierarchical nature of the data (individuals within each ethno racial group). The third model is also a simple classical logistic regression model, (Model 1) except that it includes the index (the city's form of government and type of election, and the state's anti-immigration laws or initiatives). I expect the inclusion of the index to decrease the importance of race/ethnicity as predictors of turnout.

DOES LATINO TURNOUT VARY ACROSS CITIES?

In this section I examine whether the voting behavior of similarly situated Latino (native-and foreign-born) immigrants varies by city (H1) and, if Latino individuals who live in institutional environments that have historically dampened general turnout are less likely to turnout, even in an information rich election, like the one held in 2008 where both parties focused on targeting and mobilizing minority groups.

Table 3 compares the percentage of people from each group who reported voting in each city. As expected, the cities with institutions that are theorized to stimulate political activity (Table 3, first row) exhibit larger percentages of having voted in the 2008 election. The second row shows cities that have institutions and micro political environment that is largely the legacy of the reform era (reform institutions, non-partisan elections and state anti-immigrant legislation).

Table 3. Did you vote in the last presidential election (2008)?
Percent Yes by City among Eligible Voters

	Latinos	Blacks	Whites	Asians*
Institutional Environment Score	*(%)*	*(%)*	*(%)*	*(%)*
5-3.5 (New York, Chicago, San Francisco) (n=1,007)	78	90	95	71
1.5 (Los Angeles, Houston, Phoenix) (n=398)	58	82	91	68
All Cities combined	70	87	93	70

**Asian sample obtained in Phoenix n < 5, so it was excluded from the analysis.*

As shown in the first column, the percentage of native-born Latinos who reported voting is considerably greater (78 percent) among those who lived in Chicago, New York, and San Francisco than among those living in Los Angeles, Houston and Phoenix (58 percent). A similar but weaker effect appears for blacks and basically disappears for whites and Asians. The positive correlation between Latino voting and living in a city with institutions that provide more opportunities, exposure and clarity is striking given that they are all located in the non-battleground states of New York, Illinois, and California.

These findings provide initial support for the hypothesis that voting behavior of similarly situated Latino (native-and foreign-born) immigrants varies by city, and that variation might be explained by the type of political institutional arrangement in the city. However, a possible explanation for these findings is that the Latino population in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco had characteristics associated with higher turnout compared with Latinos in the other three cities-- they were better educated, wealthier and native born. To probe this further, in the next subsection, I control for these variables in the logistic regression analysis and see whether these initial results hold.

The proportion of people who reported voting in each city may seem too high, and there is, indeed, over-reporting or bias (people who vote are more likely to participate in surveys). However, over-reporting is constant (~15 percent) across cities and milder than that of the self-reported turnout measure for the same election (2008) in the 2012 ANES in those states (see Appendix, Table 1).

The results of the simple logistic regression are presented in Table 4. As theorized, the political behavior of similarly situated native-born Latinos in terms of basic characteristics varies across local institutional contexts (H1). As shown in the first column of Table 4, Latino origin is negatively associated with voting when using the combined city data (Model 1). However, analyzing each city sample separately (Columns 3-6) produces different results. For the New York, Chicago and San Francisco citywide samples, the coefficient for Latino is insignificant. The opposite is true in other cities, most prominently so in Houston. In other words, variation in Latino political behavior occurs in the hypothesized patterns: those residing in political contexts that provide more exposure, opportunities and clarity about political electoral outcomes (New York, San Francisco and Chicago) voted as much as blacks and whites in the 2008 election.

Table 4. Logistic regressions: effect of race/ethnicity and SES on political behavior

Dependent variable: Turnout in 2008 (Yes=1)

Sample	All Cities		New York	Chicago	San Francisco	Houston	Los Angeles	Phoenix
Model	(1.0)	(1.01)	(1.1)	(1.2)	(1.3)	(1.4)	(1.5)	(1.6)
Intercept (base: Black)	0.12	-0.57	0.36	**-2.72**	0.34	-0.24	-1.05	-1.95
	(-0.27)	(0.35)	(0.56)	(1.17)	(1.34)	(1.32)	(0.95)	(1.07)
White	0.01	0.07	0.11	0.56	0.29	-1.60	0.29	-0.01
	(-0.27)	(0.27)	(0.43)	(0.76)	(1.24)	(1.09)	(0.76)	(0.72)
Latino	**-0.79****	**-0.50****	0.27	0.52	-1.34	**-3.24****	-0.72	0.09
	(-0.25)	(0.25)	(0.52)	(0.81)	(1.18)	(1.14)	(0.67)	(0.72)
Asian	**-1.50*****	**-1.07*****	**-1.07****	-0.59	-1.67	**-2.90****	-0.50	
	0.28	(0.31)	(0.49)	(1.13)	(1.19)	(1.39)	(0.82)	
Other	-0.37	-0.22	-0.38	0.45	-0.56	14.23	14.42	1.29
	(0.38)	(0.39)	(0.52)	(1.23)	(1.54)	(2000.7)	1007.06	(1.31)
Income	0.06	0.06	-0.02	0.29	0.06	0.26	-0.07	0.13
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.10)	(0.21)	(0.16)	(0.24)	(0.17)	(0.18)
Education	**0.44*****	**0.41*****	**0.36*****	0.32	**0.48*****	0.25	**0.71*****	0.25
	(.06)	(0.06)	(0.10)	(0.21)	(0.18)	(0.24)	(0.20)	(0.19)
Age	**0.25*****	**0.29*****	0.05	**0.67*****	0.23	**0.87****	**0.34****	**0.57* ****
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.09)	(0.21)	(0.15)	(0.34)	(0.17)	(0.17)
Gender (Female 1)	0.16	0.20	0.23	**1.49****	-0.32	-0.80	0.01	0.04
	0.17	0.18	(0.30)	(0.57)	0.47	(0.72)	(0.47)	(0.48)
Nativity (Born US=1)		**0.71**	**0.71****	1.31	0.35	1.32	0.40	1.04
		(0.21)	(0.33)	(0.78)	(0.59)	(0.99)	(0.60)	(0.70)
N=	1359	1350	495	230.00	197	126	170	132
k=	9	10	10	10	10	10	10	9
Residual deviance	949.2	931	329.4	107.2	124.6	62.7	125.4	118.2
Null Deviance	1139.0	1129.1	373.5	158.1	164.6	95.9	172.9	146.2
Difference	189.8	197.3	44.1	51	40.1	33	47.4	28

Notes: The dependent variable is the self-reported turnout in 2008. The base category for race/ethnicity is "Black or African American." White represents non-Hispanic Whites who self-identified as such. All immigrants and citizens not eligible to vote were excluded from the sample.
****p < .01 **p <.05*

The multi-level model (Table 5, columns 2-7) confirms that the slope of the Latino dummy variable and its predictive power vary by city. As expected, Latinos who are similar in

terms of age, income, gender, education and nativity vary significantly in their reported voting in the 2008 election. The results from the multilevel model (Model 2) shown in columns three to six (Table 5 below) reveal that the probability of voting in the 2008 election for each racial and ethnic group, but especially for Latinos, varies by city. Higher intercepts and flatter slopes for Latinos in New York, Chicago and San Francisco mean that they were more likely to vote. However, since logit coefficients cannot be interpreted directly, the results of the logistic models[11] presented are summarized in Figure 4 by plotting the probability of voting in the 2008 presidential elections against educational attainment for native born Latinos.

[11] Model 1.0 uses pooled data from all cities, and Models 1.1 through 1.6 uses data from each city sample separately. In addition to the city-by-city regressions, I also pooled the data from all cities to estimate a varying slope intercept logistic multilevel model.

Table 5. Varying intercept and varying slope model (Model 2): The slope and intercept of race on turnout in the 2008 presidential election varies substantially depending on the city of residence for Latinos and to a lesser degree for blacks and Asians

Dependent variable: Turnout in 2008 (Yes=1)								
Sample	All Cities		New York	Chicago	San Francisco	Houston	Los Angeles	Phoenix
Model	(1.0)		Varying Intercept, Varying Slope Multilevel Logistic Regression Coefficients (2)					
Intercept (Black base category)	**0.12** (-0.27)	**-0.57** (0.35)	**-1.12*** ** (0.14)	**-1.15** ** (0.14)	**-1.20** ** (.0002)	-1.03 (0.35)	**-1.31** (0.19)	**-1.32** ** (0.21)
White	**0.01** (-0.27)	**0.07** (0.27)	**0.03** (0.12)	**0.21** (0.12)	**0.09** (.0002)	-0.06 (0.32)	**-0.07** (0.17)	-0.09 (0.19)
Latino	**-0.79** ** (-0.25)	**-0.50** ** (0.27)	-0.05 (0.12)	-0.02 (0.12)	**-0.36** ** (.0002)	**-0.98** ** (0.35)	**-0.77** ** (0.16)	**-0.83*** ** (0.18)
Asian	**-1.50** 0.28	**-1.07** (0.31)	**-1.02** (0.15)	**-0.99*** ** (0.15)	**-1.01** (.0002)	**-1.22*** ** (0.36)	**-1.00** (0.20)	
Other	-0.37 (0.38)	-0.22 (0.39)	-0.03 (0.19)	-0.23 (0.19)	**-0.13** (.0002)	0.04 (0.45)	0.00 (0.25)	
Income	0.06 (0.06)	0.06 (0.06)	0.07 0.06	0.07 0.06	0.07 0.06	0.07 0.06	0.07 0.06	0.07 0.06
Education	**0.44** (.06)	**0.41** (0.06)	**0.40** -0.07	**0.40** -0.07	**0.40** -0.07	**0.40** -0.07	**0.40** -0.07	**0.40** -0.07
Age	**0.25** (0.05)	**0.29** (0.05)	**0.28** -0.06	**0.28** -0.06	**0.28** -0.06	**0.28** -0.06	**0.28** -0.06	**0.28** -0.06
Gender (Female= 1)	0.16	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20
(Native born=1)	0.17	0.18 **0.71**	-0.17 **0.73**	-0.17 **0.73**	-0.17 **0.73**	-0.17 **0.73**	-0.17 **0.73**	-0.17 **0.73**
Observations	**1359**	**1350**	0.21 **1350**	-0.21 **1350**	-0.21 **1350**	-0.21 **1350**	-0.21 **1350**	-0.21 **1350**

Notes: The dependent variable is the self-reported turnout in 2008. The base category for race/ethnicity is "Black or African American." White represents non-Hispanic Whites who self-identified as such. All immigrants and citizens not eligible to vote were excluded from the sample.
****p < .01 **p <.05*

Predicted probabilities for native-born Latinos are shown in Figure 4, below. Overall, variation seems to follow the patterns described in the theory section. Latinos, and to a lesser other groups, when living in an environment that provides greater contact and more exposure to politics (New York, Chicago and San Francisco) seem to be more likely

to vote (or at least report having voted) in the 2008 election. Lower intercepts and flatter slopes, correspond to an institutional environment that has historically depressed turnout (Bridges, 1997), in this case Houston and Phoenix. The multilevel model uses the information about individuals of similar race and ethnicity from other cities in order to calculate the estimates when the samples are small. For this reason, the differences between groups diminish. Still, it is noteworthy that even a multilevel model would pick up differences in the slopes, indicating the robustness of the finding that the strong correlation found between race ethnicity and voting, especially in the case of Latinos changes once local level data is taken into consideration.

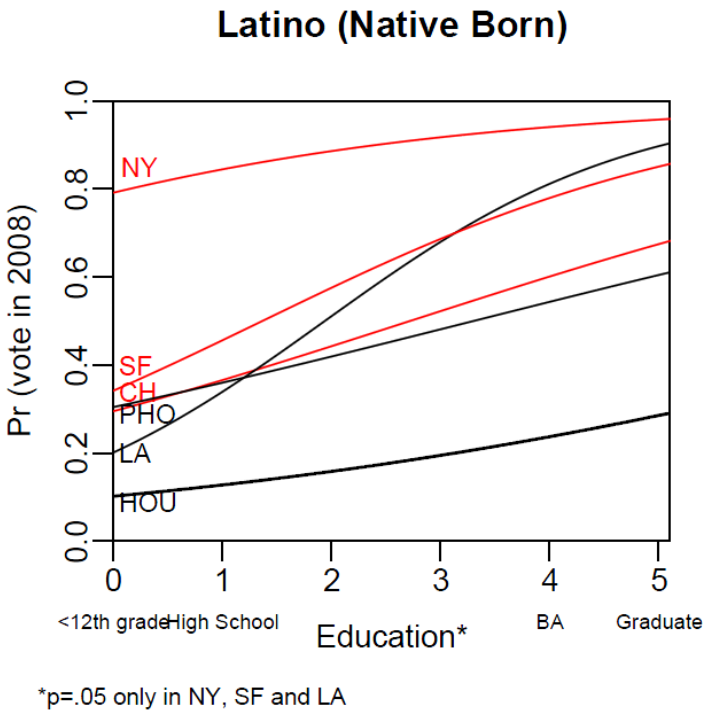

Figure 4. Estimated logistic regression lines from the varying slope and intercept model (Model 2) presented in Table 5. The probability of voting in 2008 for native born Latinos at low levels of educational attainment is greater in machine descendant cities like New York, San Francisco and Chicago.

In addition to the varying slopes and the different effect of education on voting (or reported voting) in 2008, Figure 4 indicates how vastly different intercepts are (baseline probability of voting) in each city for Latinos. The probability of voting for poor, male and uneducated native-born Latino males in these cities is very different. Houston, one of the cities where Latinos have lived since the end of the Mexican–American war, has the lowest intercept and men with these characteristics are less than 20 percent likely to report having voted in 2008. One could argue a la Huntington that New York and Houston are different basically because of the national origin composition. New York is the only of the six cities where Latinos of Mexican origin are less than 50 percent. However, even taking New York out of the sample, there is still plenty of within group variation across cities. Moreover, the assumption that national origin provides explanatory leverage falls apart when examining Chicago vis-à-vis Houston or Phoenix. All cities have a similar proportion of Mexican origin Latinos (80, 75 and 89 percent respectively).

WHY DOES THE LATINO-WHITE GAP PERSIST?

The results of the city-by-city logistic regression models as well as the multilevel model can be used to compare Latino voter turnout with other groups residing in the *same* local and institutional context. According to the theory, if local institutional contexts matter, Latinos should be more likely to vote in cities that provide greater exposure and opportunities for participation. Latino turnout, especially by the native- born, should resemble that of white and/or black citizens living in that same context once socioeconomic characteristics are taken into consideration. In other words, the expectation is that in cities that discourage participation the turnout gap between this group should be more

pronounced than the one observed at the national level; in cities that encourage participation the gap should be smaller.

I examined the voting behavior of Latinos in the 2008 election side by side with other groups in the same locality. For a detailed look at Houston and New York see Figures 1 and 2 in the Appendix which plot the predicted probabilities of each group. As shown in the third column in Table 4 (city by city regressions) in New York, the predictive power of race was insignificant, except for Asians; other variables explain the variation. Education and nativity were the only significant predictors. Education and being born in the U.S. mainland territory, rather than being of Latino origin, explained variation in turnout. As can be appreciated in Figure 1 (Appendix) native born Latinos voted at similar rates than similarly educated blacks and whites. Similarly, being of Latino origin in Chicago, another city hypothesized to be an environment that stimulates political participation among minorities is not statistically significant. As shown in Table 5 (multilevel model) the coefficient for the slope of the variable capturing Latino origin are large, negative and statistically significant in Houston and Phoenix, less so in San Francisco and Los Angeles. The same coefficient is insignificant and positive in Chicago and New York.

DO LOCAL INSTITUTIONS EXPLAIN VARIATION IN LATINO TURNOUT ACROSS CITIES?

In this final section, I explore whether including the key characteristics associated with turnout in local elections improves the traditional socioeconomic model used to explain the black-white turnout differences at the individual level. Two other measures were included as controls: local negative stereotypes (operationalized as the percent of non-Hispanic whites who said they would be "uncomfortable" living in a mostly Latino

neighborhood)[12] and the parties' mobilizations efforts in the 2008 presidential election (contacted and asked to get out and vote by parties and other organizations in person or over the phone).

Table 6 presents the results obtained from Model 3, based on a logistic regression using data from all cities combined as in Model 1, but adding the group-level predictors. The coefficient for the political institutions index is positive and significant, even when including a mobilization and contact measure. A one-unit increase in the 0 to 5 point-scale institutions index (Table 6), results in an 11 percent increase in the probability of voting, holding constant all other predictors in the model. In other words, individuals were more likely to vote in the cities that have a combination of mayor rather than a city manager, partisan elections, a machine political legacy instead of a reform political legacy, an urban environment that facilitates in-person GOTV mobilizations, and less restrictive immigration laws at the state level.

[12] "*How comfortable on a scale of 1 to 7 would you be living in a neighborhood where your neighbors were mostly Latinos?*" The measure is the percentage of white respondents who answered 1 or 2 (very/extremely uncomfortable).

Table 6. Logistic model with group level predictors. Effect of race/ethnicity by city on political behavior (turnout in Nov. 2008 elections), political institutions, public opinion, and parties' mobilization strategies

Sample	All Cities	All Cities	All Cities
	(Model 1.0)	(Model 1.01)	**(Model 3)**
Intercept	**0.034**	**-0.68**	**-1.1****
(Black)	(.27)	(0.35)	(.43)
White or Caucasian	**-0.06**	**0.007**	**0.01**
	(0.27)	(0.27)	(0.27)
Latino or Hispanic	**-0.79****	**-0.51***	**-0.42**
	(-0.25)	(0.27)	(.28)
Asian	**-1.46****	**-1.0****	**-01.04***
	0.28	(0.31)	(1.06)
Other race/ethnicity	**-0.39**	**-0.23**	**-0.27**
	(0.39)	(0.39)	(.39)
Income	**0.05**	**0.06**	**0.06**
	(0.5)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Education	**0.43*****	**0.40*****	**0.39*****
	(.06)	(0.06)	0.07
Age	**0.22*****	**0.25*****	**0.24*****
	(0.05)	(0.05)	0.05
Gender (Female=1)	**0.14**	**0.17**	**0.15**
	0.17	0.18	0.17
Nativity (Native-born=1)		**0.71*****	**0.76*****
		0.21	0.21
Contacted/Mobilized	**.83*****	**0.83*****	**0.82*****
	.19	0.19	0.21
Group level predictors			
1. Institutions Index			**0.13****
			0.05
2. Public opinion (Whites with negative stereotypes of Latinos)			**-1.07**
			0.97
Observations	**1359**	**1350**	**1350**
k=	9	10	17
Residual deviance	949.2	931	918
Null Deviance	1139.0	1129.1	1129.1
Difference	189.8	197.3	211

****p < .001, **p < .05., *p < .1 of the logistic regression coefficient and marginal effects of this coefficient, holding all other variables at their means*

CONCLUSION

This paper provides evidence that the comparatively lower level of electoral turnout by Latinos at the national level is of a contingent, perhaps even spurious, nature. The voting behavior of Latinos is explained by a combination of the local political institutional environment and socioeconomic factors. The political behavior and attitudes, measured by voting behavior in the 2008 presidential election and interest in politics, of similarly situated Latino immigrants varied across localities with different institutions even when holding constant nativity, education, gender, and income. This variation does not seem related to common inherited cultural beliefs and attitudes but rather to the types of institutional environments in which Latinos live.

Latinos living in cities where exposure to political events and opportunities to participate in politics are scarce vote significantly less than those residing in cities where local political institutions promote political competition, as in New York City and Chicago. It is only in places with institutions influenced by reform forces, where previously “every city policy—hiring of municipal employees, planning and annexation, housing, utilities, and education—reinforced racial division and hierarchy" (Bridges 1997, 20), where the Latino-white turnout gap is prominent.

The findings of this paper suggest that using national data can be misleading even when the population of the ethnic or group in question is not as geographically dispersed as those being compared to, in this case whites. The Latino samples may be representative of the population at the national level but if local institutional environments are not taken into consideration, the results will be biased by the behavior of the largest portion of the group living and having been socialized in a particular environment. This conclusion is not exclusive to Latinos in the United States but to all immigrant groups in western

democracies because all are heavily concentrated in cities and influenced by the political dynamics in them. My findings are also relevant for political socialization[13] and public opinion scholars because they show that the immigrants' cultural attitudes and behavior are not as stable as some scholars have argued: they vary in accordance with the national and local political institutions of the host nation, rather than with mindsets that were developed in the sociopolitical environment of their (or their ancestor's) country of origin.

In contrast to Huntington's (2004) influential argument about the reasons behind Latinos lagging in political participation, the empirical findings of this paper show that the degree of political integration of immigrant communities is associated with the type of local political environment they face at arrival. Identities matter, yes, but they are shaped by the local institutional context; common ancestry is helpful to understand behavior of individuals belonging to an immigrant group only when it is a good proxy of shared experiences within the institutions and political context of the host country.

Integrating immigrants successfully into a democratic political system is a matter of central concern to the United States (and to other democratic countries in the developed world). In a world where immigration continues to be a wedge issue for many countries, it is important to carefully consider the influence of certain contexts of reception on the development of immigrant's civic skills, loyalty and affect to the receiving country. This paper brings together key insights from the academic literature on public opinion, urban

[13] The political socialization literature is unique in that unlike other political behavior or public opinion research that studies changes in the political views or actions of individuals it is concerned with understanding when the baseline attitudes are formed and how this impacts the stability or volatility of these attitudes and behaviors through a person's life span (see Stoker and Bass 2013; Niemi and Sobieszek 1977 for an overview of this literature and its key debates).

politics and on political participation, to motivate inquiry into how local political institutional environments mediate attitude formation and political behavior of immigrants in the U.S. and other liberal democracies grappling with questions regarding immigrant political integration.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Actual Voter Turnout vs. Reported in 2008

City	**Chicago** (%)	**Houston** (%)	**NY** (%)	**Phoenix** (%)	**SF** (%)	**LA** (%)
American Cities Survey N=1755	77	74	75	64	67	60
Actual Turnout*	73	53	59	47	59	45
Difference (ACS-Actual City Turnout)	**4**	**21**	**16**	**17**	**8**	**15**
State	**IL** (%)	**TX** (%)	**NY** (%)	**AZ** (%)	**CA** (%)	
NES 2012** (N=2,054)	71	50	56	73	65	
Actual Turnout*	57	46	51	49	50	
Difference (NES- Actual State Turnout)	**14**	**30**	**5**	**24**	**15**	

**Information compiled using city and state board of elections official number of total ballots as a percentage of Voting Eligible population.*

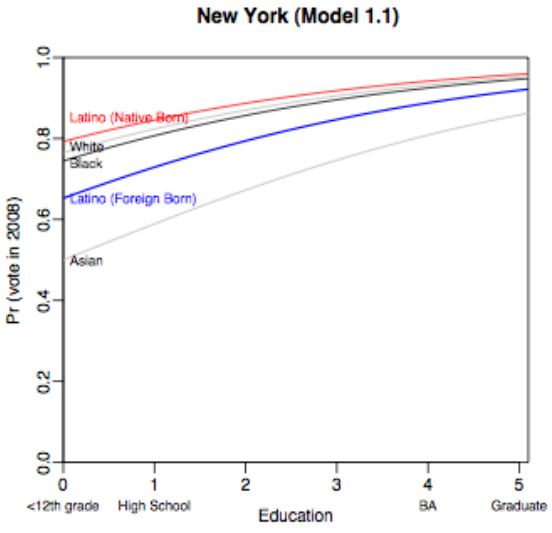
***The pre-election 2012 ANES was used as a comparison because it replicates the same question at the closest point in time. In 2008 Barack Obama ran on the Democratic ticket against John McCain for the Republicans. Do you remember for sure whether or not you voted in that election?*

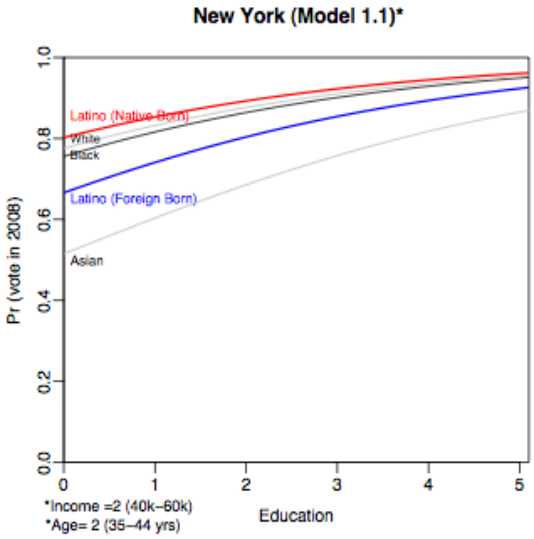
Table 2. Total Sample Size and Response Rate by City

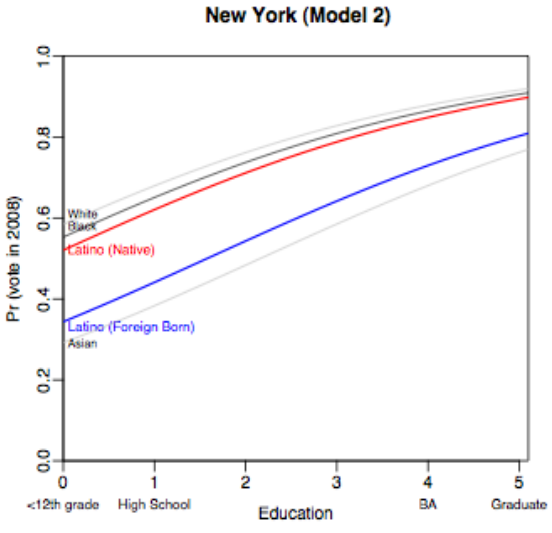
City	**Contacted in-person, responded to interviewer**		**Contacted in-person, responded by mailing**		**Total N=**
	Number of Interviews	Response Rate (%) (AAPOR-RR1)	Number of Interviews	Response Rate (%) (AAPOR-RR1)	
Chicago	107	54	171	17	278
Houston	95	48	109	12	204
Los Angeles	179	90	68	10	247
New York*	479	68	405	8	884

Phoenix	124	62	65	16	189
San Francisco	153	77	113	16	266
Total N=	1,126	70	892	12	2,068

**Some of the NYC sample was obtained through a pilot study in New York City (done by the author in collaboration with Thomas Ogorzalek in 2010).*







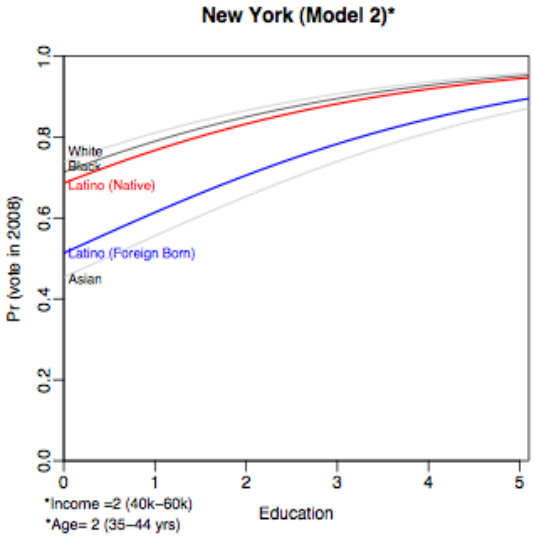


Figure 1. Top: Predicted probabilities of voting in 2008 (Model 1) for males with age and income at their lowest value. Right: Same model with income and age at their mean. Bottom Predicted probabilities of voting in 2008 using multilevel model (Model 2). Left, using with age and income at their lowest value and right, these variables at their means

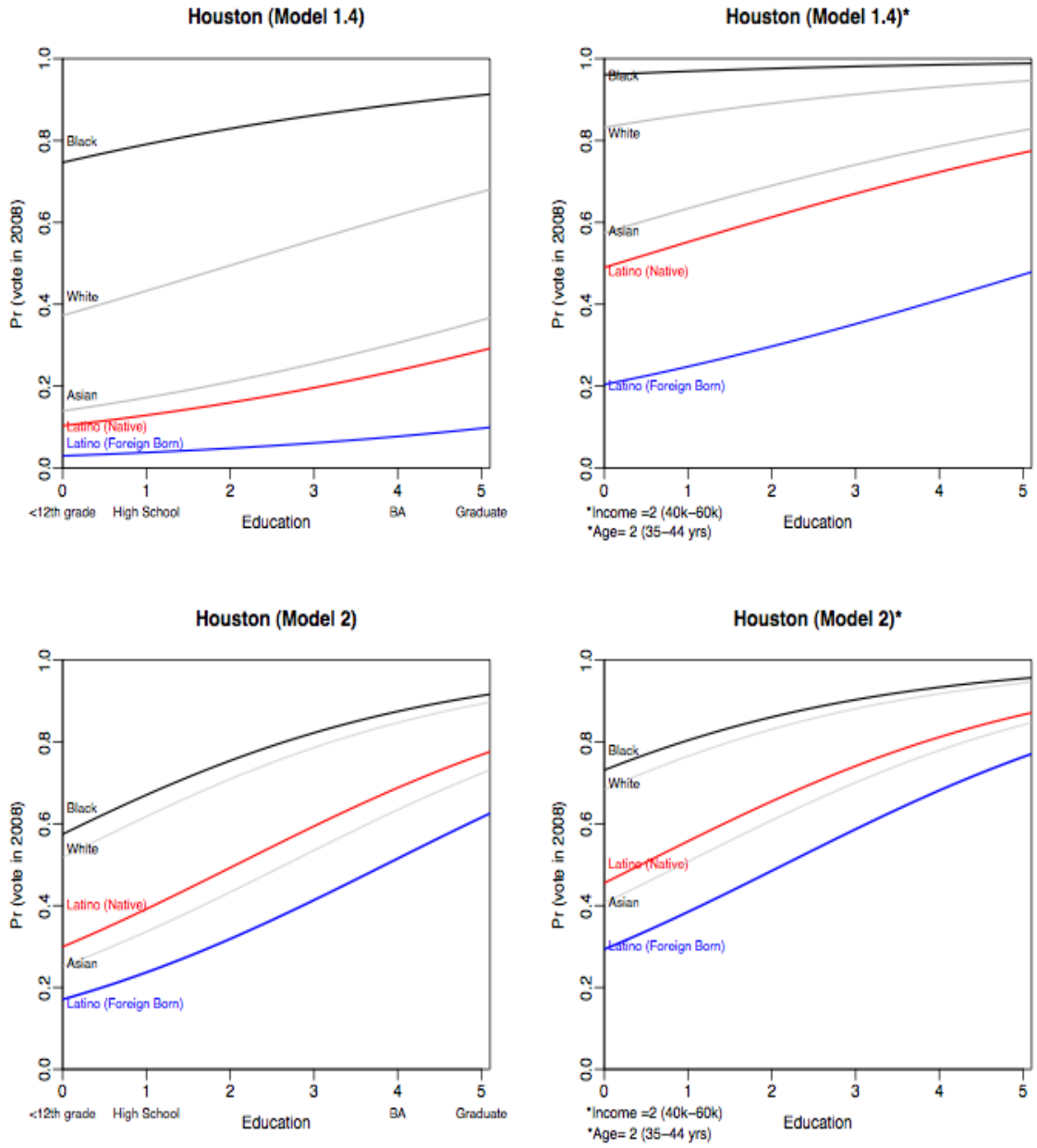


Figure 5. *Top: Predicted probabilities of voting in 2008 (Model 1) for males with age and income at their lowest value. Right: Same model with income and age at their mean. Bottom Predicted probabilities of voting in 2008 using multilevel model (Model 2). Left, using with age and income at their lowest value and right, these variables at their means.*

Notice that the predicted probability of voting for low-income native-born Latinos in Houston is *lower* rates than Asians living in the same city. Latinos have been living in

Texas since the early 19th century, while Asians have only recently migrated. Rather than lending support to the idea that some immigrants and their children are more likely to develop civic skills due to their origin, these findings reveal the intra group variation contingent on the time and city of settlement. The majority of the Latinos were socialized politically under very different circumstances (e.g. segregation, formal barriers to participation) than those experienced by more recent immigrants. While the Asian sample is small and this limits the inferences we can make with it, there are some patterns worth mentioning from the qualitative interviews and interviewers comments in the areas. Many Asian respondents in cities where the population is composed of first generation, such as Houston, arrived as refugees due to their religious minority status in their home country. They reported being aggressively courted in their churches (many of them were Christian) by conservative political organizations.