

IMMIGRANT POLITICS AT HOME AND ABROAD:

HOW LATINO IMMIGRANTS
ENGAGE THE POLITICS OF
THEIR HOME COMMUNITIES
AND THE UNITED STATES

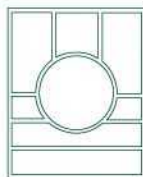
LOUIS DeSIPIO

with

HARRY PACHON

RODOLFO O. de la GARZA

JONGHO LEE



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The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute
1050 N. Mills Avenue
Scott Hall, Pitzer College
Claremont, CA 91711-6101
Tel: 909/621-8897 • Fax: 909/621-8898

with offices at:
Columbia University, NY, NY

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Executive Summary

The rapid expansion of migration to the United States over the past 40 years has changed the nation in ways that could not have been predicted when Congress amended the Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965. Not only did the 1965 act initiate the current wave of large-scale immigration to the United States, it also created the foundation for a new U.S. ethnic politics in which migrants from Latin America and their descendants would play a key role. Immigrants and their children are now becoming actively engaged in the politics of major cities and states across the nation. Political leaders recognize that, though their electoral impact is small today, immigrants and their children will increasingly shape national and local policy agendas and will be a necessary part of the winning political coalitions of the next few decades.

A more recent phenomenon among U.S. immigrants that has been less noticed is that immigrants are seeking to engage the politics of their communities and nations of origin. This "transnational" politics is an opportunity for immigrants to be political in a manner that was not so common or easily achieved by immigrants in the past. These

efforts by immigrants to shape the politics of their countries of origin may have long-term implications for both the United States and the immigrants' sending nations. If transnational politics among immigrants (and their children) becomes common, the politics of the United States and immigrant-sending nations will be connected in previously unknown ways.

While some cross-border politics among émigrés has always been part of the U.S. immigration experience (Moore and Pachon 1985; González 1999; González 2000; Foner 2001; Morawska 2001), the potential exists among today's immigrants to have a more regular voice in the politics of their homelands. The volume of contemporary immigration ensures a critical mass of émigrés from towns and regions (and nations, in a few cases) to the United States so that the émigrés can make up a significant share of these sending-communities' citizens. Modern transportation and communication resources make possible ongoing, real time contact between émigrés and residents of the home community. Immigrant sending countries are increasingly creating mechanisms for émigrés to maintain rights of nationality and citizenship, even after naturalizing in a foreign country. Finally, immigrants themselves see economic opportunities in their sending countries and seek to ensure the protection of those economic interests through a political voice in their countries of origin.

Transnational Political Activity Among Contemporary Immigrants

Transnational politics has been discovered by scholars of immigration over the past decade and is quite the vogue in contemporary migration scholarship. This emerging scholarship has made important contributions to our understandings of the mechanisms of immigrant participation in home-community and home-country society and politics. This scholarship includes both theoretical explorations of the meanings of transnationalism and case studies of immigrant-sending communities in which émigrés maintain an on-going relationship with the politics of their communities of origin (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992; Basch, Glick Schiller; and Blanc 1994; Guarnizo 1997a, 2001; Smith and Guarnizo 1998; Levitt 2001; Mahler 2001; de la Garza and Lowell 2002; Vélez-Ibáñez and Sampaio 2002). For the most part, the case studies of active political transnationalism examine a specific immigrant sending community (e.g. Levitt 2001) or a specific form of transnational behavior across multiple immigrant-ethnic

populations (e.g. migrant remittances in de la Garza and Lowell 2002). A few seek to theorize about the opportunities and barriers to the creation of sustained transnational connections between immigrants and their sending communities (e.g. Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992; Glick Schiller; and Blanc 1994; Smith and Guarnizo 1998).

The new scholarship of transnational politics has also explored the administrative structures and political implications of sending-country efforts to extend nationality or citizenship to emigrants abroad (de la Garza and Velasco 1997; González-Gutiérrez 1999; de la Garza and Pachon 2000; Jones-Correa 2001). These studies evaluate the impact of the changing policies in many Latin American immigrant sending countries toward the nationality status of their émigrés abroad, including émigrés who have naturalized as U.S. citizens. Some are comparative while others focus on a specific country, primarily Mexico.

Scholars have also begun to explore whether transnational political attachments extend into the second generation (Fouron and Glick Schiller 2001; Levitt and Waters 2002, particularly chapters by Rumbaut; Kasnitz, Waters, Mollenkopf, and Anil; Jones-Correa; and Foner). These authors are cautious with their findings because a disproportionate share of today's second generation is young (not the ages associated with high levels of political activity). They find that the second generation maintains symbolic ties to their parents' country of origin,

but have little interest in or experience with engaging the politics of their parents' countries of origin.

Finally, political theorists have also begun to explore the impact of new transnational political formation among émigrés on traditional conceptions of citizenship (Guarnizo 1997b; Ong 1999). As more émigrés and, perhaps, their children begin to maintain political ties in both the United States and the country of origin/ancestry, traditional notions of citizenship, which tend to be exclusive to one country, may have to be recast (Soysal 1994; Bosniak 2001).

This emerging scholarship of immigrant transnational politics does have some recurring weaknesses, however. First, there is no effort to assess the overall frequency of transnational politics among immigrants. Instead, most existing transnational scholarship focuses on immigrants (or migrant sending communities) who are actively engaged in transnational politics (selecting, if you will, on the dependent variable). Thus, many of these studies find high levels of transnational political engagement, but do not include immigrants or immigrant sending communities that are not engaging in transnational politics. As a result, it is simply not possible to say whether transnational political activity is the norm or the exception among today's immigrants. While this may appear to be simply a counting task, the answer has considerable policy implications for U.S. politics. If transnational political engagement is the

norm then the transnational networks offer a rich resource to connect U.S. political institutions to immigrants. If, on the other hand, transnational political engagement is uncommon among immigrants, then, while an interesting phenomenon that may prove very important to the settlement experiences of some immigrants, it is not a tool to engage most immigrants in politics.

A second recurring weakness in the scholarship of transnational political activity is that it assumes, often uncritically, that such transnational political activity is durable over time and offers immigrants resources that they can use to shape not just the politics of their sending communities/countries, but also their communities in the United States. An assumption that often appears in scholarly discussions of transnational communities is that immigrants who are engaged in the politics of their home communities or countries are less likely to become engaged in U.S. politics. Their transnationalism gives them a tool to maintain distance from a "hegemonic" U.S. political culture. In an uncritical way, then, some scholarship of transnationalism reintroduces an outdated myth that used to characterize scholarly analysis of Latino immigrant political behavior. This is the notion of Latino immigrants as sojourners, who are primarily short-term visitors to the United States who do not develop long-term political, social, or economic ties to the United States.

A final weakness in the existing scholarship relates to the relative newness of this scholarly inquiry. Most analyses focus only on a single sending community or a single country of origin. As a result, it is more difficult to identify general patterns in the exercise of or significance of transnational political activity among all Latino immigrants.

The TRPI Immigrant Political Participation Survey

The TRPI Immigrant Political Participation Survey analyzed here seeks to address each of these weaknesses in the transnational political scholarship and address three basic questions:

- 1** Do Latino immigrants participate in transnational politics?
- 2** Among Latino immigrants who do, do they also participate more in U.S. politics than do other, comparably-situated, Latino immigrants?
- 3** Are there variations in transnational political behaviors across Latino national origin groups and, if there are, do they have any effect on the likelihood of Latino immigrants engaging in U.S. politics?

The first of these questions is relatively straightforward, though as we have indicated, it has gone unasked in the existing scholarship. The second question seeks to measure the policy consequences of transnational political involvement. We designed the survey in such a way that

we can test the relationship between engagement in the politics of sending communities (whether prior to migration or after) and political incorporation in the United States. Although we cannot speak to directionality, in other words whether participation in the United States or the country of origin comes first, we can see if engagement in one predicts engagement in the other or if they are exclusive. Finally, we measure the transnational political behaviors of four Latino immigrant/migrant populations so we are able to offer some comparative analysis of the exercise of and significance of transnational political activity among Latino immigrants.

The following analysis is based on a telephone survey with 1,602 Latino immigrants conducted in July and August 2002 (a complete survey methodology appears in Appendix One). The survey focuses on four nationality groups—three of the four largest Latino immigrant populations (Mexicans, Dominicans, and Salvadorans) as well as Puerto Ricans. Although not immigrants, we included Puerto Ricans as a focus of our analysis because we hypothesize that their political adaptation as migrants parallels the experiences of Latino immigrants. We explore this decision, as well as our decision to exclude Cuban immigrants from the analysis further in Appendix One.

Transnational Political Behaviors and Contemporary Latino Migrants

The TRPI Immigrant Political Participation Survey finds that the minority of immigrants is engaged in transnational political behaviors. Although there is certainly some variation, the survey leaves little doubt about this general pattern. In answer to our first question, then, immigrant transnational politics is more the exception than the rule among these Latino immigrant/migrant communities.

We assess the patterns of transnational political engagement among contemporary immigrants in two manners. First, we measure a series of electoral and partisan behaviors focused on the country of origin. Because the opportunities for these sorts of behaviors are episodic, we measure these behaviors across the totality of each respondent's time in the United States. The average respondent had resided in the United States for twenty years at the time of the survey. Second, we look at more time-consuming, organizationally focused

forms of transnationalism. We assess the frequency of these activities in the year prior to survey to get a better sense of current behaviors and the current opportunities for transnational political activity.

With one exception: following politics in the news, the minority of Latino immigrants engaged in transnational electoral or partisan activities (see Table One). Slightly more than six-in-ten Latino immigrants followed politics in the news, but no more than one in nine had voted in home-country elections. Few had contributed money to candidates or parties in the home country, attended a rally in the United States for a home country party, or had been contacted by a representative of the home country to become engaged in home country political or cultural affairs. So, while the majority of respondents followed home country politics in the news, a minority engaged in all other transnational electoral or partisan activities.

These general patterns are consistent across the four national-origin groups included in the analysis. It is worth observing, however, that the two Caribbean-origin Latino populations were somewhat more likely to engage in transnational electoral or partisan activities. Dominicans and Puerto Ricans were more likely than Mexicans and Salvadorans to report that they had voted in nation of origin elections since they migrated. Between 8.5 and 9.5 percent of Mexicans and Salvadorans had voted in home-national elections. The rates for

TABLE ONE

Latino Immigrant/Migrant Participation in Country of Origin-Focused Political Activities in Period Since Migration

MEXICAN IMMIGRANT	PUERTO RICAN MIGRANT	SALVADORAN IMMIGRANT	DOMINICAN IMMIGRANT
Followed politics of nation of origin in the Spanish-language media			
63.6 %	66.5 %	48.0 %	67.1 %
Voted in a nation of origin elections			
9.5 %	14.6 %	8.5 %	15.0 %
Contributed money to a candidate running for office or a political party in nation of origin			
2.0 %	5.3 %	2.8 %	6.3 %
Attended a rally in the United States in which a home nation-candidate or representative of a home-country political party spoke			
2.7 %	11.6 %	2.3 %	17.3 %
Respondent been contacted by representative of home nation representative to become involved in home nation political or cultural affairs			
3.0 %	8.1 %	1.8 %	11.5 %

Source: The TRPI Immigrant Political Participation Survey, 2002.

Puerto Ricans and Dominicans were approximately 50 percent higher, 14.6 and 15.0 percent, respectively.

Although few engaged in these activities, Dominican immigrants were the most likely to report that they had attended a rally in the United States for a home country party or candidate or to report

having been contacted by a representative of their home country asking them to become involved in political or cultural affairs. These findings bear out anecdotal and journalistic accounts of candidates for office in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico campaigning for office and raising funds for their candidacies in New York and other cities in the Northeast. Neither Mexican nor Salvadoran parties nor candidates have made comparable efforts among their nations' émigrés in the United States.

Organizations, meetings, and sending-country government offices offer a second mode of connection between immigrants and their countries of origin. The TRPI Immigrant Political Participation Survey inquired about five such potential connections. Approximately one-third of respondents reported that they had attended a cultural or educational event related to their home country within the previous year (see Table Two). Again, Puerto Ricans and Dominicans were more likely than Mexicans or Salvadorans to have engaged in such an activity. Dominicans were also more likely than other respondents to have attended a meeting in the last year to discuss home country politics or to have been a member of an organization of people from the respondent's hometown. Despite being more likely than Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, or Salvadorans to have engaged in these activities, just one in five Dominicans had undertaken these transnational organizational behaviors.

TABLE TWO

Latino Immigrant/Migrant Participation in Country of Origin-Focused Political Activities in the Year Prior to the Survey

MEXICAN IMMIGRANT	PUERTO RICAN MIGRANT	SALVADORAN IMMIGRANT	DOMINICAN IMMIGRANT
Attended a meeting to discuss home-country politics			
6.2 %	14.6 %	5.8 %	21.8 %
Attended a cultural or educational event related to home country			
26.6 %	42.7 %	23.1 %	43.9 %
Been a member of an organization promoting cultural ties between U.S. and home country			
6.7 %	15.2 %	5.6 %	12.8 %
Been a member of an organization of people from respondent's hometown			
8.5 %	12.1 %	7.8 %	22.6 %
Sought assistance from embassy or consulate (for non-Puerto Rican-respondents) or the Puerto Rican government (for Puerto Rican-respondents)			
6.0 %	4.5 %	5.0 %	3.0 %

Source: The TRPI Immigrant Political Participation Survey, 2002.

The survey finds that there were a small group of immigrants, no more than one-in-five, who engaged in multiple transnational political activities. In terms of the electorally focused home-nation activities—voting, giving money, or attending a rally—approximately 80 percent of respondents had taken part in none of these activities. Of the

remainder, approximately one in four had participated in two or more. In terms of the organizational activities migrants could have engaged in over the year prior to the survey, approximately one-third of respondents had engaged in none of these activities. Of the remaining respondents, however, the average number of such activities was two and approximately 10 percent of respondents had participated in four or more of the activities over the past year. These multiply engaged transnational actors will be a particular focus of this analysis.

The survey offers a second insight, however. There exists in immigrant Latino communities the opportunities to build more extensive transnational bonds. Approximately 40 percent of respondents reported that the people that they were most often in contact with in their neighborhoods, at work places, and at places the respondents go for entertainment were either from the same town (16 percent) or from other parts of the home country (23 percent). Thus, as issues present themselves, many Latino immigrants have a natural community in which they could build a coalition and this "community" could easily compose itself around transnational political activities. For this 40 percent of respondents who are primarily in contact with people from their hometowns or home countries, these coalitions would naturally build on existing transnational political or organizational

activities or establish new networks among these co-nationals. It is these Latino immigrants, who are connected to others from the same community or country of origin and who have either existing or potential networks, that many scholars of immigrant transnational politics see as the foundation for a more substantive and long-lasting transnational politics. As we find, however, these co-ethnic contacts—the potential “transnational political community”—have yet to build a broad based transnational politics.

As there are no previous surveys of the level of transnational political and civic behaviors that compare immigrants from multiple countries and measure their political activities in both the country of origin and the United States, it is not possible to offer a comparative analysis of these findings. Despite the fact that the share of immigrants who are participating in most of the transnational political activities are small, they still represent a large number of immigrants. In 2000, the Current Population Survey found that there were approximately 8.4 million non-U.S. citizen Latino adults and approximately 3.5 million naturalized citizen adults (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2002). Thus, the 13 percent of immigrants in the survey who reported that they had been a member of an organization of people from the home country or home community could number as many as 1.6 million people. Second, the nature of a survey is to capture a snapshot. So, we have

TABLE THREE

**Latino Immigrant/Migrant Political Behaviors
Prior to Migration**

MEXICAN IMMIGRANT	PUERTO RICAN MIGRANT	SALVADORAN IMMIGRANT	DOMINICAN IMMIGRANT
Followed politics in the news			
51.0 %	62.6 %	48.6 %	65.6 %
Wore a button for a candidate running for office			
10.0 %	24.6 %	7.9 %	25.8 %
Wrote letters to government officials			
4.5 %	9.7 %	1.0 %	8.4 %
Distributed literature for candidates for office			
6.2 %	15.6 %	4.5 %	12.7 %
Canvassed or marched			
13.8 %	25.2 %	7.9 %	29.1 %
Contributed money to a political candidate			
2.1 %	10.2 %	2.4 %	7.0 %
Was a member of a political party			
6.9 %	36.4 %	6.5 %	24.1 %

Note: We asked these questions only of respondents who were 16 years of age or older when they migrated. Respondents to these questions included 290 Mexicans, 238 Puerto Ricans, 292 Salvadorans, and 299 Dominicans.

Source: The TRPI Immigrant Political Participation Survey, 2002.

no way of knowing if the likelihood of engaging in transnational political behaviors is on the increase or decrease. The survey offers one possible measure of the question. We asked a series of questions about engagement in political activities prior to migration (see Table Three). We asked these questions only of migrants who migrated to the United States after they turned 16.

Respondents who were adults when they migrated were slightly more likely to be following politics of their home countries in the news today than they were when they lived there. These respondents, on the other hand, were more likely to have been involved in direct political behaviors prior to migration—such as canvassing or marching, joining a political party, or wearing a campaign button—than they are to have voted, attended a rally, or contributed money to shape home country political issues or campaigns since migration.

Despite the fact that some immigrants engage in multiple transnational political or organizational activities, the norm would appear to be that the majority of migrants from these four countries are not transnationally engaged in politics. Clearly, a survey is a snapshot, so transnational political behaviors of the future may change and, we would suspect, increase slowly over time simply because there will be a greater concentration of immigrants from specific communities of origin in Latin America and the Caribbean. For now,

however, it is important to dampen expectations about the depth of transnational politics among Latino immigrants that are derived from case studies of highly politically engaged communities of origin.

Latino Immigrants and U.S. Political Activity

A related question that we asked in the survey is whether immigrants are more or less involved in U.S. political activity than they are in the politics of their nations of origin. We find that, on average, immigrants are more involved in U.S. politics than in home country politics.

Immigrants are able to participate in a range of U.S. political activities. While most jurisdictions bar voting by immigrants, they are not precluded from other forms of U.S. politics, such as working in political campaigns, raising money for candidates or interest groups, protesting, or community organizing. Despite their eligibility, however, previous studies of immigrant political adaptation and organizational participation have shown that immigrants are less likely than comparably situated U.S. citizen Latinos to be so engaged and, overall participate at rather low rates (de la Garza et al. 1992; Pachon and DeSipio 1994; DeSipio 1996; Jones-Correa 1998; de la Garza, with Liu 1999; U.S. Bureau of the Census 2002).

With these cautions in mind, Latino immigrant respondents to the TRPI Immigrant Political Participation Survey participate in U.S. organizational activities and U.S. political/civic activities in which immigrants can legally participate at rates comparable to other recent surveys. In other words, we find that Latino immigrants participated at relatively low rates. The only organization to which a majority of Latino immigrants reported that they participate in was a church (see Table Four). Nearly 54 percent reported church activity. Approximately one-third had been involved with parent-teacher associations and smaller shares with sports clubs (21 percent), labor unions (17 percent), and hometown associations (14 percent).

Approximately one in four migrants reported that they participated in none of these types of organizations. Of the remaining migrants who were members of at least one organization, the average migrant participated in about two and a half. Approximately 10 percent of respondents reported membership in between four and seven organizations in the United States.

With some exceptions, Latino immigrants also reported low levels of engagement in U.S. political activities. These exceptions are worth noting. Fully, four in five respondents reported that they followed U.S. politics in the news. Among the Puerto Rican and naturalized citizen respondents (who make up 28 percent of the non-Puerto Rican

TABLE FOUR

Latino Immigrant/Migrant Participation in United States Political Activities

	MEXICAN IMMIGRANT	PUERTO RICAN MIGRANT	SALVADORAN IMMIGRANT	DOMINICAN IMMIGRANT
Followed U.S. politics in the news	76.0 %	81.9 %	79.6 %	88.6 %
Worn a campaign button for a candidate running for U.S. office	9.0 %	17.6 %	8.5 %	18.8 %
Written letters to U.S. government officials	7.7 %	16.1 %	8.5 %	10.5 %
Distributed literature for U.S. candidates for office	5.7 %	12.1 %	4.3 %	12.3 %
Canvassed or marched in the United States	5.0 %	11.8 %	2.8 %	11.5 %
Contributed money to a U.S. political candidate or political party	3.2 %	8.6 %	3.8 %	6.3 %
Helped people to register or vote in U.S. elections (among U.S. citizens)	14.1 %	23.6 %	17.0 %	28.3 %
n	85	398	94	138
Voted in U.S. elections (among U.S. citizens)	72.9 %	72.6 %	79.8 %	81.3 %
n	85	398	94	139
Been a member of ...				
A church	46.3 %	67.0 %	54.4 %	46.5 %
A labor union	9.0 %	21.4 %	10.8 %	24.6 %
A parent-teacher organization	28.7 %	40.1 %	25.0 %	35.8 %
A sports club	21.9 %	20.9 %	20.8 %	20.0 %
A fraternal order	2.8 %	5.0 %	2.0 %	3.3 %
A club whose members are from respondent's home nation	10.5 %	15.1 %	8.0 %	22.9 %
Any other social club	9.0 %	15.6 %	3.8 %	11.0 %

Note: All respondents asked all questions except two about voting. We provide n's (number of respondents asked these questions).

Source: The TRPI Immigrant Political Participation Survey, 2002.

respondents), more than 75 percent reported that they had voted in U.S. elections. No other political activity surveyed saw participation by more than one-in-four respondents. Nearly 23 percent of U.S. citizen respondents reported that they had helped people register to vote. Just five percent of immigrant respondents reported that they had contributed money to a political party or political candidate in the United States.

More than three-quarters of migrants reported that they engaged in none of these U.S. political activities. Of the remainder about half participated in just one and the remainder in two or more. Few engaged in three or more.

As was the case with transnational political and organizational behaviors, migrant participation in U.S.-focused political activities saw some variation based on national origin. In most cases, Dominican migrants were the most likely to report that they had been a member of organizations in the United States and that they had participated in U.S. political activities. Although sampling error makes the significance of these intra-group variations difficult to interpret in each specific case, the pattern suggests some consistent differences.

Comparing migrant engagements in the politics of their home countries and the organizations that seek to engage them with their participation in U.S. political activities indicates that they are

somewhat more likely to participate in U.S. politics. In neither case, however, were the majority engaged. Although there are a couple of exceptions to this pattern—following politics in the news, membership in a church, and voting in U.S. elections among the naturalized, respondents to the TRPI Immigrant Political Participation Survey followed the pattern of other surveys and saw low levels of political and organizational engagement. It should be noted that immigrants are not unique in seeing the majority disengaged from politics (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995).

This pattern of greater involvement in U.S.-focused activities appears in both political and organizational activities. Respondents were more likely to be members of organizations in the United States than of organizations focused on transnational linkages. Similarly, although the vast majority were involved in no political behaviors in either country, they are somewhat more engaged in U.S. political activities.

Does Transnational Engagement Shape U.S. Behaviors?

Simply knowing the frequencies of home country political activities and U.S. political activities, however, only gets to part of the question that TRPI sought to address in this survey. We also want to understand the connection between home country focused activities and U.S. political involvement. In order to test this relationship, we developed and tested two multivariate models predicting two types of U.S. civic activity (the specification of the models and the results of the logistic regression appear in Appendix Three).

We find that migrants who were engaged in transnational political activities, and particularly transnational organizational activities, were more likely to be members of U.S. civic organizations and to participate in U.S. electoral activities than were those migrants who were not engaged transnationally. This impact was most evident among the "multiply-engaged" migrants who were members of two or more transnational organizations. Thus, the answer to our second question,

then, is that transnational political activity and U.S. political activity are related. Transnational politics neither crowds out U.S.-focused activities nor comes at the expense of U.S. political engagement.

Relative to immigrant demographic and immigration characteristics, transnational political engagement proves most important in predicting engagement in U.S. civic activities. As would be expected based on previous study, immigrants with higher incomes, family in the United States, and those who had experienced discrimination in the United States were more likely to be members of a U.S. organization. Recent immigrants, controlling for the other characteristics in the model, were less likely to be members of U.S. organizations. Puerto Ricans were slightly more likely than Mexican respondents to be members of U.S. organizations (this was the only national-origin effect we found in the multivariate tests).

But, the single characteristic that had the most impact on U.S. organizational membership was being a member of two or more transnationally-focused organizations. Relative to respondents who were not members of any such organization, those who were members of two were three and a half times as likely to also be members of U.S. organizations. Home-country electoral behavior also increased the likelihood of being a member of a U.S. organization.

When we shifted our focus to U.S. *electoral* activities, we also found that the likelihood of such activity increased among transnation-

ally engaged immigrants. Respondents who were involved in home country electoral behaviors since migration were more likely to be involved in U.S. electoral behaviors than those who were not. Respondents involved in two such organizations were three times as likely to have undertaken U.S. electoral activities. Higher levels of education and the experience of discrimination in the United States also proved to be significant predictors of U.S. electoral engagement. Finally, the naturalized were approximately twice as likely to be involved in U.S. electoral activities than were respondents who were neither naturalized nor permanent residents.

These findings answer our final question. There may well be some variation across specific countries of origin, but other factors such as demographic and immigration characteristics, and particularly transnational activities, are much more important in predicting the likelihood of U.S. political engagement.

In sum, we find that transnational political engagement is a statistically significant and positive predictor of engagement in two forms of U.S. civic activity among Latino immigrants. While the presence of these transnational ties do not eliminate the traditional importance of demographic characteristics in predicting U.S. political engagement, transnational political behaviors have a greater impact on U.S. organizational and political behaviors than did demographic variables or immigration characteristics.

Conclusion

The TRPI Immigrant Political Participation Survey set out to answer three questions that had not previously been addressed in the scholarship of Latino transnational politics. First, we wanted to assess how common transnational behaviors are among contemporary Latino immigrants. Second, we wanted to evaluate what the connection was, if any, between engagement in transnational politics and engagement in U.S. politics. Finally, we wanted to examine transnationalism comparatively to evaluate whether there were distinct patterns of transnational behavior among immigrants from different parts of Latin America (or, at least, among the four national origin groups under study here).

In answer to the first question, the majority of Latino immigrants engage most forms of transnational politics. With the exception of following home-country politics in the news, the majority of survey respondents participated in home country electoral activities or had attended meetings or had been members of organizations that sought to facilitate on-going connections between migrants and their

countries of origin. To put these participation rates in context, they are slightly lower than rates of engagement by the same migrants in U.S. politics. With one exception, they are also lower than the rates of participation of these same respondents in the politics of their home countries prior to migration (at least for those respondents who migrated to the United States at age 16 or above). Transnational political activity, then, is an important form of political activity meriting on-going study, but does not appear to overcome the barriers to Latino political participation that have been found in previous study which has focused primarily on U.S. political behaviors.

The TRPI Immigrant Political Participation Survey demonstrates conclusively that there is a connection between engagement in transnational politics and participation in U.S. politics. The specific dimensions of those connections will have to await further analysis of the survey data, but three reasonable hypotheses present themselves. First, the skills learned in engaging one form of politics can easily transfer to the other. So, for example, migrants who participated in organizations learned the value of collective action and transferred that knowledge to organizational activities in other areas. Second, the distinction that we make between transnationally-focused political activity and U.S.-focused political activity is not so rigid. Finally, the issues that engaged immigrants in the politics of their home countries

or of the United States are increasingly transnational. Thus, to address the needs of their communities in the United States, these migrants must tap both U.S. and home country political institutions.

Finally, there appears to be little difference in the impact of transnational engagement on U.S. political activity across the four national origin groups studied. While transnational political and organizational activities are somewhat more common among the Caribbean-origin Latino populations studied, once an immigrant has engaged transnational political activities, the likelihood of participating in U.S. politics is similar.

Policy Recommendations

Transnational social networks offer a new resource for U.S. political actors to mobilize Latino communities. Most Latino immigrants have not naturalized, so electorally-focused activities are the exception to this pattern. But, there are many ways in which immigrants can shape U.S. politics and existing transnational political and organizational networks are a valuable tool to identify those among the immigrant population who are most likely to be politically savvy, interested, and skilled.

The number of Latin American nations seeking to engage their émigrés in home country politics has increased considerably in the 1990s. Non-governmental political actors such as candidates and parties have done more, but these efforts are in some senses in their infancy. The TRPI Immigrant Political Participation Survey demonstrates that these efforts have only reached a minority of migrants. The impact of such efforts is clearly more felt among Puerto Ricans and Dominicans than among Mexicans and Salvadorans. These findings suggest both an avenue for further academic study, but equally

importantly a challenge for Mexico, El Salvador, and other immigrant-sending nations whose émigrés show lower-than-average levels of transnational political activity.

Finally, U.S. political leaders should not fear transnational political behaviors among recent immigrants to the United States. The TRPI Immigrant Political Participation Survey demonstrates conclusively that transnationally-focused political or organizational activity does not dampen engagement in U.S. politics. Quite the contrary, it encourages it and has an impact as great or greater than demographic and immigrant characteristics that have previously been shown to shape the likelihood of U.S. political engagement. While it would arguably be inappropriate for the United States or state and local governments to promote transnationalism among U.S. immigrants, they should do nothing to discourage it as it appears to lead to a more politically engaged immigrant population.

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Appendix One

Survey Design and Sample Demographics

Survey Design

This report is based on the results of a telephone survey with 1,602 Latino immigrants conducted in July and August 2002. In order to ensure that we could analyze within Latino national-origin groups, we targeted the survey to four nationality groups—three of the four largest Latino immigrant populations (Mexicans, Dominicans, and Salvadorans) as well as Puerto Ricans. Although not immigrants because of the Jones Act, we hypothesize that Puerto Ricans experience a political adaptation as migrants that parallels most experiences of immigrants. Puerto Ricans have, for the most part, been neglected in the scholarship on transnational politics.

We decided to exclude Cuban immigrants from our analysis for two reasons. First, due to Cuba's non-democratic government, Cubans do not have the same opportunities to participate in Cuban politics that the four nationality groups under study do. Second, the Cuban American-Cuban relationship has been, and continues to be extensively analyzed (Calvo and Declercq 2000; Croucher 1997; García 1996; Torres 1999 as examples).

The survey includes at least 400 respondents from each national origin group. In households with more than one eligible adult, we randomly selected the respondent (using the "most recent birthday" method) to reduce bias in sample. Respondents were given the opportunity to respond in either English or Spanish and all interviewers were fully bilingual. Approximately 94 percent of respondents answered the questionnaire in Spanish. On average, surveys took 17 minutes to complete, once the screening was completed.

All respondents were at least 18 years of age and immigrants/migrants from one of the four nations under study. In order to complete the 1,602 surveys, TRPI completed calls to 10,470 phone numbers. Of these 4,454 were disconnected, businesses, or had call screening software in place. Nearly 1,200 potential respondents refused to participate at the point of initial contact. Approximately 2,000 potential respondents were found to be ineligible to participate during the six question screening process (for example potential respondents who were not of Mexican-, Dominican-, Salvadoran-, or Puerto Rican-origin). Initial attempts were made to contact an additional 8,207 phone numbers. These numbers remained available in the sample pool at the end of survey. Contact had not been made for such reasons as reaching an answering machine, the phone not being answered, or reaching a busy signal.

The respondents' demographic characteristics, characteristics of respondents' families, and respondent immigration characteristics follow. A quick review of these data indicate that the respondents to the TRPI Immigrant Political Participation Survey are broadly representative of the immigrant populations from these four nations.

Sample Demographics

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Age (average)	41.8 years
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Education

Grade school or less	35.0%
Some high school	25.5%
High school degree	17.8%
Some college/vocational school	11.2%
College graduate	7.5%
Post-graduate education	3.2%

Country where majority of education received

The United States	20.1%
Nation of origin	73.8%
Both countries equally	6.1%

Gender

Male	43.4%
Female	56.6%

RESPONDENT FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

Marital status

Married	50.7%
Domestic partner	8.5%
Single	21.5%
Separated	7.3%
Divorced	7.7%
Widowed	4.3%

Percentage with children living in the United States

69.8%

Percentage with children under 18 living in the nation of origin

12.4%

Location of majority of immediate family

Most in United States	30.0%
Most in nation of origin	26.2%
Equally divided	43.8%

Percentage sending remittances in past year

64.9%

Family income (2001)

\$14,999 or less	36.6%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	29.5%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	15.2%
\$35,000 - \$49,000	10.0%
\$50,000 or more	8.8%

Note: Approximately 28 percent of respondents refused to answer this question, which is not unusual in telephone surveys. Of those who refused, approximately 58 percent answered a less specific question about household incomes above or below \$35,000 in 2001. Of those answering this follow-up question, 88 percent reported incomes below \$35,000 and 12 percent reported incomes above \$35,000.

RESPONDENT IMMIGRATION CHARACTERISTICS

Year of migration (average)	1982
Year of naturalization (average)	1993
Immigrant status (asked of non-PuertoRican respondents)	
Legal permanent resident	47.8%
Naturalized U.S. citizen	27.5%
Something else	24.7%
English-speaking ability	
Very well	15.4%
Well	18.4%
Not very well	44.3%
Not at all	21.8%

Appendix Two

Predictors of U.S. Civic Activity

The models the we tested included three components: respondent demographics, respondent immigration characteristics, and respondent transnational political and organizational engagement. Although our primary interest is the impact of transnational political and organizational involvement on the likelihood of engagement in U.S. politics, we tested a model that also included respondent demographics and respondent immigration characteristics because these factors have been shown in previous studies to influence the likelihood of political activity. As a result, in testing the model, we were able to assess whether transnational political behavior has an impact on U.S. civic activities controlling for other factors known to influence these behaviors.

Demographic characteristics have long been known to influence political behaviors (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). This influence has also been found to influence the likelihood of Latino political behavior (DeSipio 1996). We include three demographic traits in our model: age, education, and income. Generally, older people, people with more formal education, and people with higher incomes are more likely to be engaged in politics.

We also control for the impact of several immigration-related characteristics. We include length of residence in the United States, location of the respondent's immediate family, experience of discrimination in the United States, and country of origin in the model. We would anticipate that migrants who have resided in the United States for longer periods will be more likely to be engaged in U.S. civic activity. We would also expect that respondents whose immediate families are in the United States or are divided between the United States and the country of origin will be more likely to engage U.S. civic activities than are those whose family members are primarily abroad. We include discrimination experiences and would expect that respondents who perceive greater levels of discrimination in U.S. society will be more likely to be engaged in U.S. civic activities (DeSipio 2002).

We also include country of origin as a control. We do not have a prediction here. It was found that Puerto Ricans and Cuban Americans were somewhat more likely than Mexican Americans to vote and the Cuban immigrants were more likely than Mexican immigrants to naturalize (DeSipio 1996). Including country of origin allows us to measure whether the patterns we saw in the bivariate analysis represent a real pattern once multiple variables are introduced to the model. In the bivariate analysis, Puerto Rican and Dominican

respondents generally had higher rates of participation than did the Mexican and Salvadoran respondents.

We also want to test for immigrant status. This, however, presents a bit of a problem since one of our respondent populations—Puerto Ricans—are U.S. citizens by birth. Were we to include immigrant status and national origin with Puerto Rican as one of the response categories we would bias the analysis and introduce problems of colinearity. As a result, we ran a separate analysis for each of the models that includes immigration status as a dependent variable. We exclude Puerto Rican respondents from this specification of the model. We would expect that immigrants who have naturalized or those who are permanent residents are more likely to be engaged in civic activities than are those who are not in either of these categories (which includes respondents on short-term visas and the undocumented).

Finally, we include the two forms of transnational political engagement discussed earlier in this TRPI report in the model—participation in organizations facilitating transnational engagement in the past year and participation in home-country electoral behaviors. Because so few of respondents have participated in the later, we include a dichotomous measure that distinguishes respondents who have engaged in home country politics from those who have not. Since there is more variation in organizational participation, we distinguish

respondents who have no transnational organizational ties from those involved in one such organization and those involved in two or more. This variable captures the phenomenon that we have documented of the "multiply-engaged" immigrant transnational actor.

Some respondents fail to answer some survey questions and are particularly likely not to answer questions about their age and incomes. So as not to lose these respondents who fail to answer one or more questions from the analysis, we include a "missing/refused" category for several of the variables. Respondents included in this residual category probably include individuals with a variety of individual characteristics. Except for allowing these respondents to remain in the analysis, these response categories do not permit analysis and we will neglect them in our discussion.

We test the impact of the individual traits and characteristics on two sets of U.S. civic activities: membership in organizations in the United States and participation in U.S. electoral activities. In terms of organizational memberships, we distinguish all respondents who were members of one or more of the following organizations from those who were not members of any:

- churches
- labor unions
- parent-teacher organizations

- sports clubs
- fraternal orders
- clubs of people from the home community
- other social clubs

Approximately 28 percent of respondents reported no memberships in any of these organizations. In terms of U.S. electoral activities, we distinguished respondents who had participated in one or more of five electoral activities that can be engaged regardless of citizenship status. These include:

- wearing a campaign button
- writing letters of government officials
- distributing literature for candidates for office in the United States
- canvassing or marching in the United States
- contributing money to a political candidate or party in the United States

Approximately 76 percent of respondents have participated in none of these activities.

TABLE APPENDIX 3.1

Predictors of Membership in U.S. Organizations

Independent Variable	Model w/immigrant status			
	Odds Ratio	SE	Odds Ratio	SE
DEMOGRAPHICS				
Age (18-29)				
30s	1.179	0.183	1.062	0.198
40s	1.016	0.207	0.853	0.227
50s and beyond	1.452	0.230	1.436	0.266
Missing/refused	1.078	0.222	0.982	0.245
Education (Grade School or Less)				
Some high school	0.845	0.166	0.853	0.189
HS graduate	0.676**	0.184	0.590**	0.209
Post-high school	1.067	0.200	0.945	0.224
Didn't answer/refused	1.314	0.402	1.113	0.433
Household Income (\$15,000 or less)				
\$15,000 - \$24,999	1.513**	0.179	1.584**	0.196
\$25,000 - \$34,999	1.735**	0.235	1.870**	0.262
\$35,000 - \$49,999	1.928**	0.289	2.188**	0.335
\$50,000+	3.304***	0.371	2.880*	0.406
Don't know/refused	1.091	0.160	1.302	0.181
IMMIGRATION CHARACTERISTICS				
Period of residence (1964 or before)				
1965 - 1980	0.769	0.301	0.490	0.534
1981 - 1990	0.782	0.311	0.632	0.539
1991 - 2002	0.381***	0.317	0.296**	0.549
Refused	0.422***	0.317	0.310**	0.552
Location of family (Most in home country)				
Equally divided	1.317*	0.149	1.220	0.167
Most in United States	1.599***	0.175	1.552**	0.199
Missing/refused	1.670	0.461	1.556	0.522
Country of Birth (Mexico)				
Puerto Rico	1.592**	0.194	Excluded	
El Salvador	1.036	0.165	0.830	0.169
Dominican Republic	1.247	0.179	0.757	0.194
Experience of discrimination in U.S. (None)				
One form	1.538**	0.167	1.599**	0.187
Two or more forms	3.305***	0.264	2.835***	0.292
Immigration Status ("Something else")				
Legal permanent resident	-	-	1.417**	0.180
Naturalized citizen	-	-	1.339	0.236
Refused	-	-	0.501*	0.359
TRANSNATIONAL POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT				
Organizational behaviors (None)				
One organization	1.625***	0.142	1.683***	0.160
Two or more organizations	3.616***	0.174	3.502***	0.198
Home country electoral behaviors (None)				
One or more	1.170	0.179	1.242	0.208
Total cases	1,600		1,202	
Predicted correctly	74.0%		71.4%	

Key: *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.10.

Source: The TRPI Immigrant Political Participation Survey, 2002.

TABLE APPENDIX 3.2

Predictors of U.S. Electoral Behaviors

Independent Variable	Odds Ratio	Model w/immigrant status		
		SE	Odds Ratio	SE
DEMOGRAPHICS				
Age (18-29)				
30s	0.897	0.215	0.925	0.235
40s	1.437	0.227	1.394	0.258
50s and beyond	1.560*	0.247	1.579	0.291
Missing/refused	1.212	0.261	0.859	0.309
Education (Grade School or Less)				
Some high school	2.066***	0.191	2.155***	0.231
HS graduate	2.009***	0.210	2.029***	0.253
Post-high school	2.652***	0.206	3.075***	0.245
Didn't answer/refused	1.977	0.503	1.642	0.597
Household Income (\$15,000 or less)				
\$15,000 - \$24,999	1.344	0.192	1.098	0.228
\$25,000 - \$34,999	1.341	0.232	1.244	0.271
\$35,000 - \$49,999	1.885**	0.257	1.309	0.314
\$50,000+	1.887***	0.280	1.740	0.360
Don't know/refused	0.860	0.202	0.850	0.238
IMMIGRATION CHARACTERISTICS				
Period of residence (1964 or before)				
1965 - 1980	1.010	0.251	1.270	0.464
1981 - 1990	0.614*	0.276	0.982	0.480
1991 - 2002	0.454***	0.297	0.778	0.506
Refused	0.661	0.302	0.870	0.506
Location of family (Most in home country)				
Equally divided	1.112	0.173	0.994	0.207
Most in United States	1.293	0.186	1.163	0.222
Missing/refused	1.270	0.569	2.338	0.653
Country of Birth (Mexico)				
Puerto Rico	0.907	0.200	Excluded	
El Salvador	0.945	0.201	0.862	0.205
Dominican Republic	1.035	0.198	0.910	0.214
Experience of discrimination in U.S. (None)				
One form	1.438**	0.167	1.502**	0.194
Two or more forms	2.071***	0.188	1.896***	0.243
Immigration Status ("Something else")				
Legal permanent resident	-	-	1.060	0.231
Naturalized citizen	-	-	1.808**	0.267
Refused	-	-	0.578	0.577
TRANSNATIONAL POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT				
Organizational behaviors (None)				
One organization	1.255	0.233	1.016	0.217
Two or more organizations	3.621***	0.184	2.900***	0.214
Home country electoral behaviors (None)				
One or more	1.771***	0.157	1.624**	0.196
Total cases	1,600		1,202	
Predicted correctly	79.3%		81.0%	

Key: *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.10.

Source: The TRPI Immigrant Political Participation Survey, 2002.



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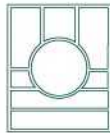
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1050 N. Mills Avenue • Scott Hall, Pitzer College
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