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The Political Consequences of Latino Immigrant Transnational Ties

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The manner by which immigrants incorporate themselves into the American political system has generated much scholarly attention in recent years (Rogers 2006; Wong 2006; Ramakrishnan 2005; Barreto and Muñoz 2003). Although research on immigrant political incorporation is not new (Grebler 1966; Glazer and Moynihan 1963; Dahl 1961), recent scholarship has turned to examining how transnational ties shape the incorporation process (Staton, Jackson, and Canache forthcoming; DeSipio 2006; Cain and Doherty 2006; Pantoja 2005; Jones-Correa 1998).

An ambiguous concept, immigrant transnational ties are typically defined as “the process by which transmigrants, through their daily activities, forge and sustain multi-stranded social, economic, and political relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement, and through which they create transnational social fields that cross national borders” (Basch et al. 1994, 6). While the ability of some immigrants to maintain a foothold in two countries is not a new phenomenon

(Morawska 2001; Foner 2000), it is argued that advances in technology facilitating communication and travel, increased economic and political ties between the United States and immigrant-sending countries, and intense outreach efforts by ancestral homelands have enabled immigrants to forge and sustain transnational links to a greater degree than immigrants from earlier waves (Foner 2001; Guarnizo 2001).

There is little controversy surrounding the existence of immigrant transnational ties, as they have become an intrinsic feature of the migration process (Itzigsohn 2000; Levitt 2001; Glick Schiller et al. 1992). Yet there is much debate over their political consequences. In particular, the field is divided into three competing camps: some argue transnational ties are an impediment to immigrant political incorporation (Huntington 2004; Stanton, Jackson, and Canache forthcoming; Cain and Doherty 2006); others argue they spur political incorporation (Ramakrishnan 2005; Jones-Correa 2001, 1998); still others take a middle position, suggesting its impact is negligible or can be both positive and negative, depending on the nature of the transnational activity (DeSipio 2006; Pantoja 2005; Barreto and Muñoz 2003).

This study seeks to enter this debate by examining Latino immigrants, the largest immigrant group in the United States; they constitute 53 percent of the 33.5 million foreign-born persons in the country (Larsen 2004). We draw on the 2002 “National Survey of Latinos” conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center and Kaiser Family Foundation. The survey is one of the largest on the Latino population with a representative sample of 2,929 adult Latinos, 1,852 of whom are foreign-born. The 2002 survey is used for several reasons. First, the survey includes a plethora of questions tapping immigrant transnational ties beyond dual citizenship, a widely used measure of transnational networks. Second, as one of the more recent national surveys on Latinos, the data offers a more contemporary portrait of this population beyond that offered by the Latino National Political Survey (LNPS) or the National Latino Immigrant Survey (NLIS), which were carried out over fifteen years ago. Third, unlike the LNPS or NLIS, the 2002 survey includes representative samples of Latin American ancestry groups beyond Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans. Finally, as a national survey, the 2002 Latino survey is preferable to more parochial surveys since its conclusions

are far-reaching rather than regional in scope (Barreto and Muñoz 2003). Before analyzing the data, we provide a brief overview of the literature examining the political consequences of immigrant transnational ties.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The meaning and significance of transnational ties is an emerging field across various disciplines (Itzigsohn 2000; Jones-Correa 1998; Basch et al. 1994). This research has transformed our understanding of the immigrant experience by challenging the assumption that migration is a unidirectional process whereby uprooted immigrants travel to a new country and begin a process of severing ties with the old country while developing ties with the new homeland. Although much of the existent literature on immigrant transnational ties analyzes them along an economic (Menjivar 2000; Portes, Haller, and Guarnizo 2002; Grasmuck and Pessar 1991) or sociocultural dimension (Menjivar 2000; Levitt 1998; 2001), political scientists have started to analyze their effects on immigrant political participation (Pantoja 2005; Jones-Correa 1998).

Michael Jones-Correa (2001 and 1998) was among the first to systematically explore the political consequences of immigrant transnational ties. He found that naturalization rates among Latin American immigrants in New York City were dismally low because many possessed a “myth of return ideology,” or a strong desire to return to the home country. In addition, becoming a U.S. citizen often meant a loss of citizenship in their countries of origin or other forms of severing of formal ties, further discouraging immigrants from seeking naturalization. The end result was that most Latino immigrants prolonged their decision to naturalize and thus remained in a liminal political status for decades.

To break this impasse, Jones-Correa argued that Latin American governments should recognize and extend dual-citizenship to promote naturalization by enabling immigrants to sustain formal ties to the home country while incorporating themselves into the American polity. He found empirical evidence supporting this proposition, noting that

Latin American immigrants from countries recognizing dual citizenship naturalized at higher rates than those from countries that did not recognize dual citizenship (Jones-Correa 2001). In short, transnational ties are a facilitator of immigrant political incorporation, a finding Ramakrishnan (2005) echoed.

The proposition noted above has recently come under challenge (Staton, Jackson, and Canache forthcoming; Cain and Doherty 2006). Drawing on the 1999 Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard University “Latino Survey,” Cain and Doherty (2006) found that naturalized Latinos from countries that allow for dual citizenship are less likely to register to vote and vote in the United States than similarly situated Latinos from countries that do not permit dual citizenship. The same relationship holds true for naturalized Latinos who have formally acquired dual citizenship. Staton, Jackson, and Canache (forthcoming) reported similar results, finding that Latino immigrants who are dual citizens are less politically connected than are immigrants who are not dual citizens. Their measure of political connectedness included language use, self-identity, civic duty, voter registration, and voting. Hence, for these scholars transnational ties *via* dual citizenship were an impediment to Latino immigrant political incorporation.

Pantoja (2005), Barreto and Muñoz (2003), and DeSipio (2006) put forth an alternative perspective to these two propositions. Pantoja (2005) drew on a unique survey specifically designed to measure a wide-range of transnational activities among Dominicans in New York City. He found that the degree to which transnational ties foster or impede political incorporation was largely the result of how one defines and operationalizes political incorporation and transnational ties. When political incorporation is defined and measured by naturalization, two forms of transnational ties depressed its pursuit: (1) participation in the politics of the home country and (2) having family abroad. When incorporation is defined and measured by non-electoral political participation, two forms acted as catalysts: (1) participation in the politics of the home country and (2) participation in hometown associations. Moreover, there is no evidence that the so-called “myth of return ideology” exerts a powerful influence on immigrants’ decision to naturalize or become politically engaged. Barreto and Muñoz (2003) also

presented findings that could be grouped into this camp—they observed that (1) Mexican immigrants are more likely to be civically engaged than native-born Mexicans, and (2) transnational ties (as measured by the sending of remittances) had no discernible impact on civic engagement. DeSipio (2006) also noted that transnational ties had a negligible effect on Latino immigrant political incorporation, but when they did, it was in a positive direction. Thus, transnational ties can impede, foster, and/or have no effect on immigrant political incorporation depending on the measures used to capture them.

In short, political scientists do not agree about the political consequences of immigrant transnational ties. For some, the effects are positive (Ramakrishnan 2005; Jones-Correa 2001, 1998), for others they are negative (Staton, Jackson, and Canache forthcoming; Cain and Doherty 2006), and for others the relationship is more complex (DeSipio 2006; Pantoja 2005; Barreto and Muñoz 2003). This study revisits these debates by examining the political consequences of transnational ties among Latino immigrants through data drawn from the 2002 Latino National Survey.

THE ARGUMENT

The task at hand is to sort out these competing propositions on the political consequences of transnational ties. Political incorporation is a value-laden concept whose meaning and measurement is subject to contestation. Various political attitudes, beliefs, orientations, and behaviors have been used as measures of political incorporation. What is clear is that the degree to which individuals or groups are politically incorporated is largely based on whether one employs an expansive or narrow definition of politics (Jones-Correa 2002). This study uses two popular behavioral measures of political incorporation: (1) naturalization and (2) political participation.

In addition, transnational ties encompass a wide-range of diverse practices that are not solely limited to the acquisition of dual citizenship. While dual citizenship is among the most politically controversial of these activities, many others, such as voting in country of origin elec-

tions, are not without controversy. This chapter analyzes five measures of transnational ties: (1) dual citizenship; (2) voting in home country elections; (3) sending remittances; (4) affective attachments toward the homeland; and (5) the myth of return ideology.

The ties immigrants maintain with their countries of origin are wide-ranging. Some of these linkages require greater resources to develop and sustain such as voting abroad, while others require little effort, such as maintaining psychological attachments to the country of origin. Since individual costs are associated with naturalization and voting in the United States, it follows that immigrants who are engaged in costly transnational political projects are less likely to naturalize and vote in the United States since migrants possess finite resources (Cain and Doherty 2006). Hence, voting abroad and being a dual citizen are likely to depress naturalization and voter participation in the United States.

What makes these transnational activities costly relative to the others is that immigrants must not only possess psychological attachments to their respective countries of origin, but they must take an additional step and act on those attachments by actively maintaining their citizenship with the home-country and voting in home-country elections. In each case, immigrants must also spend time gathering and processing information about the legal requirements for maintaining their citizenship status and about the candidates/policies in the country of ancestry before casting a vote abroad. Of course, additional bureaucratic hurdles must be overcome to accomplish both tasks, and these are likely to vary across country. Given similar hurdles in the United States, it is unlikely that an individual will have the time and resources to effectively be engaged/incorporated here and abroad.

Adopting a myth of return ideology, or seeing the country of ancestry as the “real homeland,” may deter some from involvement in U.S. citizenship and its politics, but for many others these feelings and activities can coexist, since affective attachments abroad are easily maintained with minimal costs, even among second-generation children of immigrants whose socialization has largely occurred in the United States (Kasinitz et al. 2002). If affective ties to the country of ancestry are significant, however, they will likely impact naturalization, as the

acquisition of U.S. citizenship is typically seen as a public renouncement of old allegiances. For immigrants with strong affective ties to the ancestral homeland, the possibility of being considered a *vendepatrias* (someone who sold out the country) by fellow immigrants is likely to deter them from naturalization (Jones-Correa 1998). I expect that affective ties to the ancestral homeland are unlikely to impact voting once naturalization occurs since the decision to participate in politics is unlikely to be considered a betrayal of the ancestral homeland.

Finally, it is anticipated that the effects of sending of remittances on immigrant naturalization and voting will be nonexistent. Of course, the costs associated with sending money abroad may be significant, depending on the amount sent. Unfortunately, this survey merely asked whether the individual “regularly” sent money back to the country of origin, but did not ask to specify a dollar amount or calculate the percentage of earned income to amount sent abroad. Nonetheless, even with a more refined measure of remittance costs at the individual level, it is unlikely that they would impact voting since there is no additional monetary cost associated with this activity. On the other hand, remittance behavior could impact other political activities such as donations, and to some degree naturalization due to the processing fees involved. However, given the available measure of remittance behavior, we anticipate its effects will be negligible on naturalization and non-existent for voting.

DATA AND ANALYSIS

In order to understand the effects of transnational ties on Latino immigrant political incorporation as measured by naturalization and voter participation, multivariate analysis is used to isolate the relevant predictors and assess their relative causal importance. The analysis in Model I (naturalization), is limited to immigrant Latinos (Puerto Ricans excluded) who are eligible for naturalization, or have been residing in the country at least five years. In Model II (examining voter participation), the analysis is limited to immigrant Latinos who are U.S. citizens.

The main concern is with the effects of the five independent transnational variables. The first, *dual citizenship*, is a dichotomous measure, with “1” for respondents who claim to be a legal citizen of their country of origin. In our sample, 80.2 percent (1,151) claimed to possess citizenship from their ancestral homelands. The second variable, *Voting Abroad*, is dichotomous with “1” for respondents who answered yes to the question, “Since you moved to the United States, have you voted in your country of origin or not?” In our sample, 13 percent (187) claimed to have participated in the politics of the home country since moving to the United States. The third variable, *Remittances*, is dichotomous with 1 for respondents who claim to “regularly send money back to [their] country of origin.” Remittances were regularly sent by 44.9 percent of the sample. The fourth variable, *Real Homeland* captures identification with the country of origin and, therefore, affective attachment. The question asked, “Which country do you consider your real homeland?” Among the respondents, 53.7 percent (770) noted “the country where I was born” as their real homeland. The final variable captures Jones-Correa’s (1998) “myth of return ideology.” The variable, *Myth of Return* is dichotomous, with 1 for respondents who noted that they planned to someday move back to the country where they were from. Over a quarter (29.9 percent) possessed this ideology of return. Taken as a whole, it is clear that a large percentage of Latin immigrants have developed transnational ties and identities. Of course, the concern here is not with their existence but their political consequences.

Most of the demographic control variables included in the models are traditional predictors of naturalization and voter participation and do not need much explanation. These include controls for age, education, gender (female), income (homeowner), English language ability, length of residency, and dummies isolating Mexican, Central American (includes Dominicans), and South American respondents from Cuban respondents (see Appendix for coding). In addition to these variables, others merit some discussion. Two variables, *Credit Card* and *Bank Account* can be used as proxies for income, but can also reflect immigrants’ financial establishment and acculturation in the United States (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). A variable measuring perceptions of discrimination is included. The variable *Discrimination* is dichotomous

with 1 for respondents who believed discrimination against (Hispanics/Latinos) was a major problem. Experience or perceptions of discrimination has been found to foster naturalization and civic engagement among Latinos (DeSipio 1998). Specific to naturalization, discrimination may foster a sense of vulnerability, leading immigrants to seek out citizenship in order to enhance their legal rights and social standing (Pantoja and Gershon 2006).

The variable, *Life Better in the U.S.*, was based on four questions which asked immigrants to compare their experiences in the United States with their ancestral homeland on the following items: treatment of the poor, moral values of the society, strength of the family, and opportunities to get ahead. Each question is dichotomous with 1 for “better in the U.S.” and 0 for better in the country of origin. The questions are combined to create a four-point scale ranging from 0 to 3. Two measures of political orientation found to influence civic engagement, *political alienation* and *political trust*, are included. Immigrants who possess positive civic orientations are anticipated to be more likely to seek out naturalization and participate in politics (Pantoja and Gershon 2006). Finally, the voter participation model includes the variables, *Registered Voter* and *Party Identification*.

The two dependent variables are naturalization and voted in a U.S. election. Both are dichotomous variables. The naturalization variable captures Latino immigrants who are naturalized U.S. citizens. Among the respondents, 43.1 percent (619) were naturalized U.S. citizens. The second dependent variable is based on a question asking if they have “ever voted in an election in the U.S.?” In the sample, 33.2 percent (477) of naturalized Latinos stated that they have voted in a U.S. election. Table 4.1 reports the results of the multivariate estimates. Since the dependent variables are dichotomous, logistic regression analyses are used to estimate the impact of the predictors. Because logistic coefficients are not directly interpretable, the second column reports the changes in predicted probabilities, which essentially provides the probability of a change in the dependent variable as a result of the minimum to maximum change in the independent variable (Long 1997).

Model I (Latino naturalization) correctly predicts 80.2 percent of the cases and has a proportional reduction of error (PRE, Lambda-p) of .539. The variables *Dual Citizen*, *Registered Voter*, and *Party identification*

Table 4.1. Determinants of Naturalization and Political Participation among Latino Immigrants

	<i>Model I</i> <i>Naturalization</i> β (S.E.)	<i>Predicted</i> <i>probabilities</i> <i>min>max</i>	<i>Model II Voter</i> <i>Participation</i> β (S.E.)	<i>Predicted</i> <i>probabilities</i> <i>min>max</i>
Dual citizen	--	--	-.875 (.320)**	-.093
Voted Abroad	-.249 (.214)	-.059	-.815 (.404)*	-.115
Remittances	-.057 (.148)	-.014	.036 (.291)	.004
Homeland	-.346 (.149)*	-.084	-.220 (.291)	-.025
Myth of Return	-.001 (.170)	-.000	.185 (.349)	.020
Age	.029 (.007)***	.479	.055 (.014)***	.413
Education	.094 (.038)*	.162	.225 (.078)***	.176
Female	.340 (.145)*	.092	-.187 (.302)	.020
Homeowner	.147 (.154)	.036	-.239 (.295)	-.021
Credit Card	.341 (.165)*	.082	.702 (.327)*	.089
Bank Account	.256 (.180)	.062	-.492 (.368)	-.049
English Language	.270 (.045)***	.371	.090 (.096)	.066
Length of Residency	.087 (.010)***	.813	.024 (.016)	.169
Discrimination	.063 (.143)	.015	.164 (.275)	.018
Life Better in the US	-.000 (.045)	.000	.011 (.087)	.010
Political Alienation	-.113 (.144)	-.027	.023 (.276)	.002
Political Trust	.252 (.144)†	.061	-.245 (.276)	-.027
Registered Voter	--	--	2.917 (.336)***	.549
Party Identification	--	--	1.122 (.273)***	.151
Mexican	-.740 (.226)**	-.175	-.150 (.418)	-.017
Central American	-.422 (.218)*	-.100	.074 (.408)	.008
South American	-.401 (.238)	-.095	-.509 (.424)	-.064
Constant	-4.370 (.483)***		-5.078 (1.055)***	
Chi-Square	630.37		270.31	
Significance	.000		.000	
PPC	80.21		87.20	
PRE	.539		.833	
Sample Size	1400		602	

Significance levels: † $p < .075$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, two-tailed.

are excluded from this model. Obviously, immigrants who have not naturalized are not eligible to vote or become affiliated with a party. In addition, the variable *Dual Citizen* is excluded for three main reasons. First, immigrants who have yet to naturalize remain citizens of their country by default and therefore are not really dual citizens. Second, selecting dual citizens alone is problematic since they have already gone through the naturalization process. Third, using aggregate immigration statistics is questionable since dual citizenship may simply be a proxy for national origin (Yang 1994) or may be capturing a particular time period unrelated to the recognition of dual citizenship within a single country or set of countries (Jones-Correa 2001).

Given these methodological problems, the effects of dual citizenship on immigrant naturalization cannot easily be determined. Nonetheless, the results clearly show that respondents who see the country of origin as their real homeland are less likely to naturalize *ceteris paribus*. While other variables have a larger effect on naturalization, the variable does highlight the negative consequences of affective ties to the homeland on immigrant naturalization (Jones-Correa 1998). Clearly, for immigrants who possess strong orientations toward the country of origin, the psychological costs associated with naturalization as defined as transferring one's loyalty to the new homeland remain formidable.

Consistent with other findings, naturalization is strongly tied to the acculturation and settlement process (Pantoja and Gershon 2006; Yang 1994; DeSipio 1998; Portes and Curtis 1987). Length of residency exerted the strongest impact on Latino naturalization. Knowledge of the English language and having a credit card also had significant and positive effects (Pantoja and Gershon 2006), and the sociodemographic resources immigrants possess (Yang 1994; DeSipio 1998) had significant and positive effects, playing important roles in the decision to naturalize. Naturalization increases with age and education. Women are more likely to naturalize than men (Pantoja and Gershon 2006). Finally, being a Mexican or Central American immigrant significantly lowers rates of naturalization.

Model II examines the determinants of Latino immigrant voter participation. Model II includes three variables excluded in the first model, *Dual Citizen*, *Registered Voter*, and *Party identification*. In Model II, 87.2 percent of the cases are correctly predicted and the PRE (Pro-

portional Reduction of Error) is .833. Of the five transnational variables, two are significant and negatively related to voter participation: *Dual Citizenship* and *Voter Participation Abroad*, as hypothesized. Being a dual citizen decreased the probability of voting in the United States by .09 and participation in elections in the country of origin decreased electoral participation in the United States by .12. The finding that dual citizenship is an impediment to immigrant political incorporation is similar to those of Staton, Jackson, and Canache (forthcoming) and Cain and Doherty (2006). However, the model also highlights that other transnational activities (sending remittances and affective attachments to the country of origin), as anticipated, have no impact on Latino immigrant voter participation.

The socioeconomic resources immigrants possess, such as age, education, and income (credit card as proxy) also shape participation in voting (Barreto and Muñoz 2003; Highton and Burris 2002; Leal 2002; Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001; Tam Cho 1999). Beyond the impact of these variables, partisanship (Barreto and Muñoz 2003) and voter registration (DeSipio 1998) were significant predictors of voter participation. Model II's insignificant predictors are also noteworthy. We find no evidence that the following factors shape voter participation among Latino immigrants: (1) length of residency (Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001; Leal 2002), (2) increased knowledge of the English language (Barreto and Muñoz 2003; Johnson, Stein, and Wrinkle 2003), (3) perceptions of discrimination (DeSipio 1998), and (4) having positive political orientations. While several studies highlight the negligible effects of sociodemographic factors in shaping political participation among foreign-born populations (Ramakrishnan 2001; Tam Cho 1999), this study also observes that immigrant-specific predictors such as knowledge of the English language (Johnson, Stein, and Wrinkle 2003) and length of residency (Leal 2002), as well as traditional predictors such as political efficacy and trust (Michelson 2000), may not be as significant either.



Contemporary immigrants are developing and sustaining ties with their countries of origin to a greater degree than previous immigrant groups.

Their ability to do so has led a number of political elites and academics to view such ties with suspicion and use them as evidence to claim that contemporary immigrants have dual loyalties and are less inclined to embrace the United States as the new homeland (Huntington 2004). These concerns are not without merit. Although this study finds that most transnational activities have no impact on Latin American immigrant naturalization or voter participation, we also observe that certain ties exerted a negative influence.

The findings that affective attachments to the country of ancestry are an impediment to naturalization parallel Jones-Correa's (1998) study of Latino immigrants in New York City. The in-depth interviews he carried out with community leaders and other participants revealed that many felt pressured from fellow immigrants not to naturalize because it was considered an act of betrayal to the homeland. Some subjects recounted a rumor that one of the requirements during the Oath of Citizenship ceremony was the stepping on the flag from the ancestral homeland; a symbolic renouncement or rejection of the homeland. Immigrants felt conflicted about choosing a single homeland and in the end maintained their allegiances with the homeland by not becoming U.S. citizens. To break this impasse, Jones-Correa contends that dual citizenship provisions would allow immigrants to pursue U.S. citizenship without feeling they were turning their backs on the ancestral homeland. Nonetheless, even if the country of ancestry offers dual citizenship provisions, immigrants continue to feel conflicted about acquiring U.S. citizenship. In our sample, over half claimed that the ancestral homeland was their real homeland and this feeling dampened the pursuit of naturalization.

Dual citizenship may potentially act as a catalyst for naturalization; yet our data reveal that its effects on voter participation are negative. In addition, we find that participation in the politics of the homeland also depresses voter participation in the United States. These findings mirror those by Cain and Doherty (2006), who argue that the limited resources immigrants have can be spent on participating in U.S. politics *or* participating in the politics of the homeland, but not both. Participation in one naturally comes at the expense of the other. Hence, immigrants who use their limited resources abroad will participate in U.S. politics sparingly. The converse is true of immigrants who allo-

cate their scarce resources for U.S. political participation. Our findings seem to support the zero-sum perspective on transnational political engagement.

Although our findings are rather pessimistic when it comes to the effect of transnational ties on immigrant political incorporations; it should be noted that we merely explored two indicators of incorporation, naturalization and voter participation. Moreover, the transnational ties we considered are by no means the only forms of connections immigrants maintain abroad. Hence, it remains to be seen whether other transnational practices have similar effects on these or other measures of political incorporation. Finally, much of the research on transnationalism and immigration incorporation centers on the experiences of Latin American immigrants. Few researchers have undertaken empirical work examining the political consequences of transnational ties among other immigrant groups. Thus, it is unclear whether these findings apply to immigrants from other regions. While this study has sought to advance the literature on the political consequences of transnational ties, it is clear that any definitive conclusions can only be made as a result of additional research.

APPENDIX

Dependent Variables

Naturalization Q68. Now we would like to ask you about U.S. Citizenship. Are you . . . (1 U.S. citizen; 0 other responses)

Voted in U.S. Q78. Have you ever voted in an election in the U.S.? (1 yes; 0 no)

Independent Variables

Dual Citizen Q83. As you know, some countries allow people to be legal citizens of their country even if they are also U.S. citizens. Are you a legal citizen of your country of origin? (1 yes; 0 other responses)

Voted Abroad Q84. Since you moved to the U.S., have you voted in your country of origin or not? (1 yes; 0 other responses)

Remittances Q85. Do you regularly send money back to your country of origin? (1 yes; 0 other responses)

Homeland Q88. Which country do you consider your real homeland? (1 the country where I was born; 0 the United States)

Myth of Return Do you plan someday to move back to the country you are from, or not? (1 yes; 0 other responses)

Age Q 105. What is your age (continuous variable from 18 years +)

Education Q101. What is the last grade you completed (scale ranging from 0 none, or grade 1–8 to 7 post graduate)

Female Q 114. Gender (1 female; 0 male)

Homeowner Q103. Do you own the place where you live or do you pay rent? (1 own; 0 pay rent)

Credit Card Q102. Do you happen to have any credit cards, or not? (1 yes; 0 other responses)

Bank Account Q104. Do you have an account with a bank or not? (1 yes; 0 no)

English Language Q50. Would you say you can carry on a conversation in English, both understanding and speaking (3 very well; 2 pretty well; 1 just a little; 0 not at all); and Q51. Would you say you can read a newspaper or book in English (3 very well; 2 pretty well; 1 just a little; 0 not at all)

Length of Residency Q67. How many years have you lived in the United States (continuous from 5 years +)

Discrimination Q57d In general, do you think discrimination against Latinos/Hispanics is a major problem, minor problem, or not a problem in preventing Latinos/Hispanics in general from succeeding in America (1 major problem; 0 other responses)

Life Better in the U.S. Q22a,b,c,d. Overall would you say (a) treatment of the poor; (b) the moral values of the society; (c) the strength of family; (d) opportunity to get ahead) is better in the United States, better in the country where you came from, or about the same? (1 better in the US; 0 other responses)

Political Alienation Q13. Based on your experience, do you think political leaders are interested in the problems of particular concern to Hispanics/Latinos living here or not? (1 yes; 0 no)

Political Trust Q8. How much of the time do you trust the government in Washington to do what is right (1 just about always and most of the time; 0 other responses)

Registered Voter Q77. Some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you currently registered to vote at your present address? (1 yes; 0 no)

Party Identification Q90. In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else? (1 for Republican and Democrat; 0 other responses)

Mexican, Central American, and South American (Dummies used to isolate these groups)

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