

Segmented Mobilization

Latino Nonpartisan Get-Out-the-Vote Efforts in the 2000 General Election

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Using data from a nonpartisan get-out-the-vote (GOTV) campaign conducted by the National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO) prior to the November 7, 2000, election, I use a quasi-experimental approach to address three distinct questions. First, are phone canvassing efforts targeting Latinos effective in increasing voter turnout? Second, are the effects of these efforts the same among all Latinos, or are there distinct patterns of effectiveness by nativity and/or registration cohort? Finally, in conjunction with elite mobilization, what forms of political context need to be considered when explaining levels of participation? I find that although nonpartisan voter mobilization efforts in majority-Latino precincts can be effective, these efforts may not be equally effective among all of the targeted Latinos. Specifically, I find that those who were primed for participation, as opposed to those who mobilized in reaction to the political context, are more receptive to phone mobilization requests.

Keywords: *Latino politics; political participation; field experiments; voting; elections; voter turnout*

The transformations of the composition of the workforce, of the student population, and of the electorate are among the most significant changes that have accompanied the population change of the past 20 years. It is particularly important to recognize the role that Latinos and specifically Latino immigrants play in these transformations. Both scholars and policy makers recognize the significant role that Latinos played in the transformation of the workforce and the education and have considered the

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consequences of this change (Fullerton, 1997; Fullerton & Toossi, 2001; Passel & Suro, 2003; Vernez, 1998, 1999; Vernez, Krop, & Rydell, 1999). Less has been done to understand the contemporary and future ramification of the influx of both native-born and naturalized Latinos in the electorate or their respective patterns of participation. In 1980, there were 2.5 million Latinos voters in the United States. By 2000, this figure had more than doubled to 5.5 million voters. Although Latinos composed less than 6% of the electorate in 2000,¹ the growth rate of that group has been impressive. Perceived as an untapped resource of possible votes and support, it is often suggested by the popular media that both partisan and nonpartisan organizations must engage in mobilization efforts to appeal to the Latino community through Latino-specific events or by campaigning in Spanish. Recognizing this potential, both presidential candidates in the 2000 presidential election made significant overtures to attract the growing Latino electorate, though these were largely symbolic in nature (de la Garza & DeSipio, 2004).

The relevance of Latinos for American politics cannot be fully understood simply by focusing on the existing or potential aggregate number of Latino voters in national elections. Instead, the contemporary and future significance of the Latino electorate must be understood within particular electoral contexts. With a few exceptions, Latinos do not tend to live in the states considered most competitive in presidential elections. However, they are concentrated in the states with the largest populations. Thus, Latinos make up a substantial proportion of the local and state electorate in the most populous states but are rarely critical in deciding presidential elections (de la Garza & DeSipio, 2004; Fraga & Ramírez, 2004).² This helps explain why efforts of both major political parties in 2000 engaged in symbolic outreach rather than particularized mobilization.³ Lack of direct mobilization of Latinos by political parties is consistent with theoretical expectations that political elites focus their attention on likely and influential voters (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993). It is also consistent with reports that parties and other organizations contact Latinos less often than either African Americans or Whites, regardless of electoral context (Leighley, 2001; Ramírez, 2005; Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, 1995; Wong, 2006). Despite the relative neglect by political elites in 2000, the growth of the Latino electorate necessitates a clearer understanding of existing patterns of Latino participation. It is also important to identify the source of motivation for their participation. This is not an easy task given that the Latino electorate is not homogeneous and is further complicated by the fact that Latino immigrants have helped to grow the electorate. Not only have Latino naturalized immigrants become a larger percentage of

Latino voters, but through their distinct political attitudes and participation patterns across the various state contexts, they have also diversified the expected behavioral patterns of the Latinos in the United States. For example, we know that since 1996, naturalized Latino voters in California have turned out to vote at higher rates than their native-born counterparts. This is not the case in Texas, where native-born Latino U.S. citizens turn out at higher rates than naturalized Latino voters (NALEO Education Fund, 2006, p. 48). Is one segment of the Latino electorate more likely to be targeted by political elites than the other? Or are certain segments of the electorate more responsive to such appeals? Conventional wisdom posits that mobilization increases participation, but the strength of this relationship has not been systematically studied among Latinos. It becomes necessary to identify the effects of mobilization on turning out distinct segments of the Latinos.⁴

Using data from a nonpartisan get-out-the-vote (GOTV) campaign conducted by the National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO) prior to the November 7, 2000, election, I use a quasi-experimental approach to address three distinct mobilization questions. First, are phone canvassing efforts targeting Latinos effective in increasing voter turnout? Second, are the effects of these efforts the same among all Latinos or are there distinct patterns of effectiveness by nativity and/or registration cohort? Finally, in conjunction with elite mobilization efforts, what forms of political context need to be considered when explaining levels of participation?

The article proceeds as follows. The first section examines the leading theoretical frameworks regarding the role of mobilization on participation. The second section introduces “segmented mobilization” as a new lens by which to differentiate the targets of mobilization and explains why this conceptual lens is particularly useful for study of Latino mobilization and participation since 2000. In the third section, I describe the research design and the methods used to test the effects of phone canvassing on Latino turnout. The final section presents the results of the study and its implications for understanding Latino politics.

Political Participation, Mobilization, and Voter Segmentation

Political scientists most often measure political incorporation by political participation, particularly voter turnout. The dominant paradigm in explaining who votes and why they vote underscores the significance of socioeconomic status (SES). Higher SES, as measured by income, education, and

occupation, is consistently correlated with higher levels of political participation (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993; Teixeira, 1992; Verba et al., 1995; Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980). Although SES is not the single determinant of voting, the utility of the SES model for explaining levels of participation is well established. Equally as important as the personal characteristics of voters is the extent to which they are asked to participate (Caldeira, Clausen, & Patterson, 1990; Caldeira, Patterson, & Markko, 1985; Crotty, 1971; Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1987; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993; Verba et al., 1995). One problem in this line of inquiry is how to disentangle the effects of participation and mobilization when the same personal characteristics that explain participation also explain propensity to be mobilized (Leighley, 2001).

Given the relevance of mobilization for participation, it is important to understand what accounts for differential rates of mobilization among subgroups. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) argue that levels of participation are reflective of mobilization activities by elites. More specifically, they argue that efficiency and outcome-driven concerns lead political elites to be very selective in deciding which voters to mobilize. The reason for the selectivity is because "once political leaders decide to pursue a mobilization strategy, they want to get the most effective number involved with the least amount of effort" (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993, pp. 30-31). Accordingly, differences in mobilization are largely determined by whether the groups or individuals fall into 1 or more of the 4 categories of citizens whom leaders are likely to target. These include (a) people they already know, (b) those centrally positioned in social networks, (c) influential individuals, and (d) those likely to respond to mobilization. Unfortunately, Latinos (and other minority voters) do not fit neatly into 1 of the 4 categories of preferred targets of mobilization and are therefore often neglected.

The practical politics and political marketing literatures also shed light into how political elites a priori target segments of the electorate based on key demographic and political variables such as age, gender, lifecycle, previous voting history, and registered party affiliation (Baines, 1999; Bowler & Farrell, 1992; Butler & Ranney, 1992; Lees-Marshment, 2001; Mancini & Swanson, 1996; Mauser, 1983; Smith & Hirst, 2001). According to Baines (1999), "Segmentation of voters becomes an important process in political marketing because the voter market is not homogeneous and different voter groups contribute more or less to different [electoral] campaign outcomes" (p. 404). It is also clear that the segmentation of voters has significantly evolved with technological advances and greater access to consumer information that can be manipulated for campaign strategies. "Since 1990 the development of segmentation has seen as shift in emphasis from the

traditional (geographic and demographic) methods of segmentation toward an increased use of psychographic/attitudinal bases to segment political markets” (Smith & Hirst, 2001, p. 1059).

Although the concept of voter segmentation can shed light on one of the components of the modern campaign, it does little to make the link between mobilization and participation in a similar vein to what is done by scholars of political behavior. However, to use mobilization as an explanatory variable for participation, political participation scholars have had to rely on four key assumptions: (a) that being contacted leads to higher turnout, (b) the accuracy of the respondent’s claim of being contacted and voting in the election in question, (c) that all forms of contact have similar positive effects, and (d) that mobilization efforts are equally effective among all voters. This too can be problematic for several reasons.

First, it is well documented that voter mobilization efforts disproportionately target likely voters (Gershtenson, 2003). Therefore, to the extent that there is a relation between contact and turnout, the apparent causal relation may be spurious if contact is endogenous (Green & Gerber, 2004; Ramírez, 2005; Wong, 2005). This has ramifications on the ability to disentangle the effects of participation on mobilization but also has normative consequences if mobilization efforts largely neglect Latino and other voters (Ramakrishnan, 2005; Ramírez, 2005; Shaw, de La Garza, & Lee, 2000; Verba et al., 1995; Wielhouwer, 2002; Wong, 2006). Second, one of the drawbacks of survey-based studies of mobilization has to do with the potential for misreporting of contact from political parties or of voter turnout. Self-reported contact or voter turnout may have occurred in a different election than the one in question or may not have occurred at all. Third, by failing to distinguish among the effects of contact via mail, via phone, and in person, the conclusions drawn about the effects of voter mobilization efforts are incomplete at best (Bennion, 2005; Green & Gerber, 2001).

Studies utilizing randomized field experimental methods can, by design, address the above concerns. Specifically, field experiments tackle the uncertainty underlying the relation between mobilization and participation by manipulating whether a person is mobilized to vote, randomly assigning different modes of contact, and verifying turnout with voter rolls. This experimental tradition in political science is exemplified by early works on the impact of GOTV efforts (Eldersveld, 1956; Gosnell, 1926, 1927). More recently, there has been a renewed interest in using field experiments to distinguish the effects of the different forms of GOTV campaigns on voter turnout (Gerber & Green, 2000; Green & Gerber, 2004; Ramírez, 2005;

Wong, 2005). In addition to their contribution to the understanding of the effectiveness of different voter mobilization efforts, these studies serve to caution against broad assumptions that pervade the literature on the positive effects of all GOTV efforts. Beyond the general effects of GOTV, Green and Gerber (2001) have shown that the varying effectiveness of phone contacts from one experiment to another may depend on the message being conveyed to the treatment population and/or who administers the contact. Specifically, they claim that a conversational approach of phone canvassing of young voters by young volunteers and workers in the Youth Vote 2000 coalition may have helped make the phone canvassing more successful than it was in previous field experiments. In addition, it is possible that certain modes of voter mobilization can be more effective in certain types of elections (e.g., presidential vs. off year) and among those less likely to vote or be contacted (e.g., youth). It is possible that the reason why they found phone canvassing to be effective in raising turnout among youth but not in their earlier experiment or experiments is precisely because of the experiment's targeting of a group who had greater possibilities of increased turnout.

The fourth concern is that failure to control for contextual and demographic factors that may affect turnout makes it hard to identify possible differential effects of mobilization on turnout. Although randomized field experiments have a methodological advantage over observational studies in addressing the first three concerns, there has been little work to determine whether certain segments of the electorate are more responsive than others to mobilization. In other words, there may be greater effects among segments of the electorate with distinct demographic traits or who are uniquely affected by particular political contexts (e.g., youth, naturalized citizens, elderly, racial and ethnic minorities). Survey research attempts to account for this through the use of multivariate regression analysis, whereas field experiments utilize a two-stage least squares approach. Although these methods are useful, neither is able to directly test the relative effects of the same mobilization effort across segments of the electorate that one believes may behave differently.

The comparison of young and mature voter responsiveness to GOTV appeals by Nickerson (2002) and Bennion (2005) represent the sole efforts among recent field experiments to tackle the fourth concern. They both find that young voters may be more responsive to mobilization efforts precisely because they tend to be neglected by political elites. However, both find that conducting separate models for young and older voters significantly reduces the sample size and reduces the robustness of the findings. Bennion's analysis of GOTV efforts in a hotly contested congressional race is reduced from

2,178 voters in the combined model to 401 when considering the effects of mobilization only on young voters. In his meta-analysis of six randomized controlled experiments, Nickerson (2002) is forced to pool together the data from the six experiments because none of the individual experiments contained "sufficient numbers of young people to determine if they react differently to the treatment" (p. 5). Although their studies have not been replicated by others, there is some value in their initial findings that responsiveness to similar mobilization requests can vary across segments of the electorate.

Segmented Mobilization

Latino outreach during the 2000 general election was symbolic rather than substantive (de la Garza & DeSipio, 2004; Ramírez, 2005). Is it possible that the few GOTV campaigns that targeted Latino voters had differential effects on different segments of the electorate? Borrowing a phrase from Portes and Zhou's (1993) work on patterns of immigrant assimilation and adaptation, I make the case that rather than uniform effects of mobilization, Latinos in California during the 2000 election experienced "segmented mobilization."

Portes and Zhou (1993) reject the "straight-line assimilation" model of immigrant adaptation, which assumes that immigrant groups will become more "American" with length of residence or with each successive generation that is born in the United States. Instead they propose an alternative "segmented assimilation" model that posits that patterns of assimilation vary by immigrant group and that the immigrant group's path to assimilation and incorporation is dependent on favorable factors including location, skin color, and occupational opportunities that then determine whether the outcomes are favorable and conducive to assimilation. Similarly, I argue against the assumption that mobilization efforts will have equivalent, positive, and homogenous effects on voter participation rates among all voters because the existing patterns of voter turnout of distinct segments of Latino voters is dependent on key individual characteristics. In this case, I specifically focus on nativity and the unique political context when Latino voters first entered the electorate. Moreover, the political socialization of Latinos is so influenced by these two variables that the effectiveness of mobilization efforts is significantly affected over and above the effects of age or political party affiliation. Note that segmented mobilization is very different from the voter segmentation. The former focuses on the heterogeneous effects of mobilization efforts on different segments of the electorate,

whereas the latter has to do with the strategic decision to devote resources targeting certain segments of the electorate and not others.

It is hardly a novel idea that time of political socialization can have significant cohort effects. It has been well established that exogenous political events can serve as catalysts for preadult socialization (Sears & Valentino, 1997) and that being involved in the 1960s protest movement had long-term effects on rates of participation and political attitudes (Jennings, 1987). Similarly, the case has been made that higher turnout among Democrats between 1932 and 1944 can be largely explained by the high turnout among the newly mobilized cohorts of young, substantially female, urban, working class, and foreign born (Nie, Verba, & Petrocik, 1976).

Despite the relevance of political socialization and cohort effects for party realignment, only a small subset of research on minority voter turnout has simultaneously operationalized both political socialization and cohort analysis to explore contemporary patterns of participation of racial and ethnic minorities, particularly Latinos. Drawing on this emerging literature, it becomes increasingly evident that cohort analysis based on nativity and/or political context is a useful way identify the key differences among Latinos in the United States. First, Pantoja, Ramírez, and Segura (2001) develop a model of Latino electoral participation that captures fluctuations in voter turnout among native and naturalized Latinos across naturalization cohorts. They are perhaps the first to fully explore the possibility that when Latinos obtained citizenship, in conjunction with the political environment, it affected voter turnout. Their comparison of Latinos in California, Texas, and Florida finds that California Latinos who naturalized between 1992 and 1996 had substantially higher rates of validated voter turnout in the 1996 general presidential election than native-born Latinos, those who naturalized in an earlier period in California or those who naturalized at any point in Texas and Florida. They attribute this mobilization and increased turnout to the high-profile ballot initiatives and polarizing rhetoric in California. More recently, Barreto (2005) reaffirms the continued significance of nativity as he finds that Latino naturalized voters had higher turnout rates than in the 2002 general election in California than native-born Latino voters.

It is also the case that the highly charged political context in California during the mid-1990s has been found to have some impact on the political socialization of Latinos in the state. Barreto and Woods (2005) test for turnout rates of Latinos who first registered between 1994 and 1998 in Los Angeles County. Using validated voter registrar data, they find that Latinos who first entered the electorate during this politicized climate have higher turnout than non-Latinos entering the electorate during the same period. The

partisan implications among these newly mobilized Latinos who first registered between 1994 and 1998 in Los Angeles County make the advantage gained by Democrats during the New Deal realignment pale in comparison. According to Barreto and Woods, of those Latinos in this registration cohort who voted in 1998, 75% were registered Democrats, whereas only 7% were registered Republicans. Similarly, García Bedolla (2005) finds that the differing levels of community identity and stigma, combined with the racialized environment of the mid-1990s, resulted in a more politically engaged cohort of Latinos.

Two cross-sectional studies have focused on the influx of Latinos into the electorate and whether they are distinct from Latinos who were already part of the electorate before 1994. Barreto and Woods (2005) find that the increase in Latino voter turnout in Los Angeles County between 1994 and 1998 can be linked back to the racially divisive political context. Moreover, Barreto, Ramírez, and Woods (2005) find that the heightened political context explains most of the increase in voting among naturalized voters since 1996 beyond what would be expected with normal influx of Latino immigrants eligible for naturalization.⁵

Starting with a 1996 postelection survey of Latinos in California, Ramírez (2002) supplemented the survey with a longitudinal validated measure of participation to determine whether mobilization by political context is temporal in nature or long lasting. More specifically, he finds that the date of first registration (or their "political baptism"), in conjunction with nativity, can serve as useful tools to identify four cohorts of Latino voters. Among Latinos in California, he identified a mobilization cohort effect based on nativity and date of voter registration, where those who first registered to vote during a politically charged climate (1994-1996) turned out at higher levels in five statewide elections between 1996 and 2000 than did Latinos who first registered at any other time. Furthermore, he found that among this mobilized group of Latinos, and contrary to the findings of previous empirical studies, those who were naturalized citizens had the highest levels of participation. Conversely, among those Latinos who were not mobilized by the political context, the native-born cohort had higher rates of participation than the naturalized. His findings confirm the mobilizing effect of a state's political context and further add a conceptual tool to differentiate the effects among subgroups or segments of Latino voters. These findings suggest that not all Latinos react to the same negative political context and in particular suggest that an analysis of Latino mobilization and participation must consider nativity and date of first registration as important intervening variables.⁶

The concept of segmented mobilization is important because it goes beyond racial and ethnic intergroup comparisons of the rates of mobilization experienced by population subgroups. Instead, it recognizes that a separate analysis is needed to capture intragroup receptivity to mobilization requests. In addition to the theoretical significance of expanding GOTV field experiments to racial and ethnic minorities, results from these experiments can have profound normative consequences. Given both parties' increased interest in Latinos, any insights into this population's receptiveness to mobilization can transform the changing perceptions of Latinos as an inactive electorate (Fraga & Ramírez, 2004).

Experimental Design and Method

In general, political parties and other political organizations are selective when deciding what population to target in their voter mobilization efforts. It is no surprise that political elites focus on likely voters or that Latino voters who live in areas with large minority populations are often overlooked by partisan organizations because of the view that they are less likely to turn out. NALEO's attempt to break this cycle of neglect led to their focus on areas with concentration of Latino unlikely voters. To this end, NALEO decided to target entire precincts in Los Angeles with at least 70% Latino registered voters but with 50% or less Latino likely voters.⁷

In the first phase of the selection process, a political data company identified the 188 precincts with populations of registered voters that were at least 70% Latino.⁸ Given that NALEO wanted to contact all Latinos living in precincts that were unlikely targets of partisan mobilization efforts, NALEO had to incorporate other factors that make precincts targetable, such as percentage of Latinos in the precinct with a telephone number listed in Registrar of Voters records and the percentage of likely voters. The data company ranked the precincts by the percentage of Latino likely voters.⁹ NALEO then decided to target those precincts where the pool of Latino likely voters composed no more than 50% of the precinct's registered voters. In total, 59,460 Latinos living in 96 precincts met the criteria, and 56,453 Latinos living in 92 precincts did not. All Latinos in the 96 precincts were targeted for treatment by phone canvassing, regardless of partisanship, previous voting history, and so on.

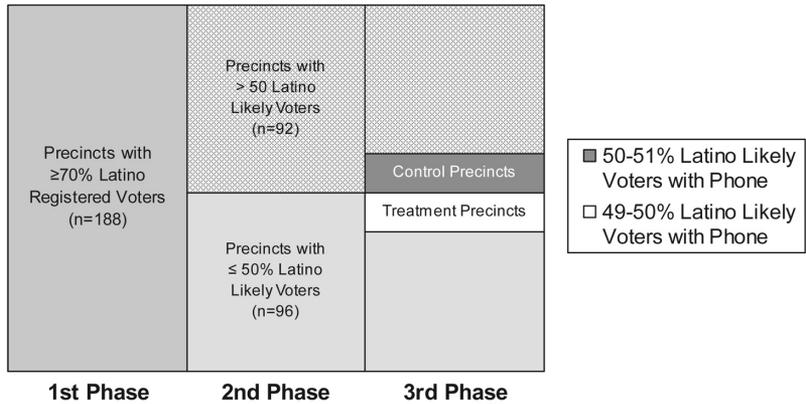
I was not involved in the selection process, so I was not able to suggest that they randomly select a control group within the target precincts. Without a control group, one cannot directly estimate the effects of phone contact on

turnout. Therefore, the third phase was to identify the necessary criteria for a valid control and treatment comparison. The decision to only target precincts with less than 50% Latino likely voters was not based on a scientific formula or on any particular theoretical expectation by NALEO. This arbitrary cutoff point allows for a comparison of the precincts that barely met the inclusion criteria with those that barely missed being included. The precincts in the 49% to 50% likely voter group were assigned to the treatment group and those precincts in the 50.01% to 51% likely voter group were assigned to the control group. In other words, I compared those in the first group who were assigned to receive a phone call from NALEO to those in the second group, who were very similar to the first group but were not assigned to receive a call. This process yielded 19 precincts in the treatment group and 23 precincts in the control group. To determine whether the 19 precincts in the treatment group were in fact similar to the 23 precincts in the control group, census data were appended to the respective precincts. These include percentage Latino, percentage White, percentage homeowner, percentage with at least a high school degree, household income, family income, percentage below poverty line, percentage monolingual English speakers, percentage of the population 60 years or older, and percentage foreign born. Based on independent-samples tests, there was no statistically significant difference between the control and treatment groups. Thus, although not a randomized experiment, this real-world quasi-experimental approach allows us to make some cautionary estimates of the impact of phone contact on Latinos in Latino supermajority precincts and of whether certain cohorts or segments were uniquely receptive to the same mobilization effort (for a graphic overview of the three-phase sample selection, see Figure 1).

In total, there were 95 volunteers involved in the NALEO GOTV effort. These canvassers were bilingual and received small compensatory stipends. The sum of the logged hours worked was 2,017.32 hours, spread over a period of October 28, 2000, through November 6, 2000, to attempt to contact nearly 60,000 people in the 96 target precincts. Short training sessions were conducted prior to the phone canvassing. Each phone canvasser was given a "scripted message" to follow, but they were encouraged to conduct the call in a more conversational style. In practice, this conversational approach was the norm among phone canvassers. They were also given short descriptions of important ballot propositions with short pro and con statements to facilitate the dissemination of information and answer basic questions about these propositions (see the appendix for the scripted message).

One drawback to the quasi-experimental approach employed here is the reduced certainty of the treatment effects. Existing field experiments,

Figure 1
Selected Sample Precincts by Phase



however, are not large enough to determine whether it is possible that the same localized effort had different impacts on distinct segments of the Latino electorate. More specifically, the experiments by Michelson (2005) are too small, and the experiments by Ramírez (2005) lack sufficient voters in the control group to produce robust findings beyond the overall effects on Latinos.¹⁰ Thus, the quasi-experimental approach is the only option for testing the segmented mobilization theory.

Given the pattern of Latino participation in California that has been identified above, we can generate hypotheses given the expectation that the existing voter propensity is inversely related to the effects of a single phone contact. Although the contentious politics in California since 1994 generally showed little impact on native-born voters and those who were already registered to vote, there is reason to believe that these existing Latino voters may still be receptive to coethnic mobilization appeals (Shaw et al., 2000). On the other hand, there is also reason to believe that it will be harder to significantly raise the levels of turnout among the segment of the electorate whose political baptism came as a result of a perceived attack on Latinos in California. It is not that these Latinos are disengaged from the political system and will therefore ignore requests to participate. On the contrary, because they are already participating at higher levels than one would expect given their SES levels, it will be harder to further increase

their rates of participation with a single phone call. Thus, the overarching hypothesis is that successful phone contact will have a positive effect on voter turnout on the segments of the Latino electorate that were not already motivated by the political context in the mid-1990s. Specifically:

Hypothesis 1: Native-born Latino voters are more likely to respond to successful phone contact by a coethnic.

Hypothesis 2: Latino voters who registered to vote before 1994 are more likely to respond to successful phone contact by a coethnic.

Multivariate Results and Discussion

The underlying logic of segmented mobilization is that the contextual factors that significantly altered the patterns of Latino participation since the mid-1990s also had an impact on the receptivity of segments of the Latino electorate to mobilization requests. In particular, it has become essential that any study of Latino electoral participation in California consider nativity of voters and when they first entered the electorate. The unique political behavior of particular registration cohorts to different political contexts suggests the possibility that the effectiveness of direct GOTV messages may be masked if one lumps together all Latino voters rather than considering the effects on distinct segments of the Latino electorate. As such, I present the general results of the quasi-experimental approach and then consider whether when a voter enters the electorate and/or the nativity of voters is important intervening variables to consider in studies of Latino mobilization.

I test for the effects of contact on turnout using two-stage least squares regression.¹¹ In each model, I include two additional covariates, age and registered Democrat party affiliation, as one would expect older voters and registered Democrats to turn out to vote at higher rates.¹²

Several of the works cited above suggest that foreign-born Latinos reacted to California's politically charged context during the mid-1990s by increasing their voter registration and turnout rates. Although native-born Latinos were less receptive to context-related mobilization, it is possible that they may actually be more receptive to particularized mobilization. In fact, when comparing the effects of contact on turnout, I only find statistically significant effects among native-born Latinos. The effect of contact on turnout is an increase in the probability of voting by 7.6 percentage points.

Furthermore, there are promising results of the phone contact when we further separate Latino voters into four cohorts or segments by nativity and

Table 1
The Effect of Contact on Turnout on
Naturalized Latino Voters by Registration Cohort

	All Naturalized	Registered Pre-1994	Registered Since 1994
Contact	.047 (.041)	.139* (.096)	.024 (.045)
Age	.004*** (.000)	.006*** (.001)	.004*** (.000)
RegDEM	.104*** (.01)	.004 (.022)	.127*** (.011)
Constant	.395*** (.017)	.416*** (.043)	.399*** (.019)
<i>N</i>	9,733	1,536	8,197

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses.

* $p < .10$, one-tailed. *** $p < .001$, one-tailed.

date of registration. Recall that prior research found that Latinos who newly registered to vote were more mobilized by the political context than the existing Latino electorate. The models in Tables 1 and 2 indicate that NALEO's nonpartisan mobilization campaign actually has a relatively large effect on those Latinos who were registered to vote before the highly charged political context. According to the regression results, phone contact had no real effect on voters who registered to vote since 1994. Conversely, phone contact boosts the probability of voting among the native-born, pre-1994 cohort and among the naturalized, pre-1994 cohort by about 14.2 and 13.9 percentage points, respectively. As large as these findings are, why should we have expected differential effects of GOTV efforts on Latino subgroups? As stated earlier, there is existing evidence that the political context in California mobilized segments of the Latino electorate (Barreto, 2005; Barreto et al., 2005; Barreto & Woods, 2005; García Bedolla, 2005; Pantoja et al., 2001; Ramírez, 2002). All of these scholars agree that Latinos in California were mobilized to participate because of the racially charged political context in the mid-1990s and likely resulted in a cohort effect. Although native-born and naturalized Latinos who were already part of the electorate may not have responded to the indirect mobilization by the political context at the outset, it appears that they were primed to respond positively to phone contact as a mobilizing tool. This is not to imply that those who first registered to vote during the politicized context are not

Table 2
The Effect of Contact on Turnout on
Native-Born Latino Voters by Registration Cohort

	All Native Born	Registered Pre-1994	Registered Since 1994
Contact	.076** (.038)	.142** (.060)	.017 (.048)
Age	.005*** (.000)	.003*** (.000)	.003*** (.000)
RegDEM	.113*** (.008)	.052*** (.016)	.128*** (.011)
Constant	.281*** (.011)	.470*** (.022)	.291*** (.016)
<i>N</i>	14,280	5,542	8,738

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses.

** $p < .05$, one-tailed. *** $p < .001$, one-tailed.

receptive to recruitment; rather, it is to highlight the difficulty in finding significant mobilization effects of one phone call among a group of voters who were already considerably mobilized by the political context.

Conclusion

What are the theoretical and normative implications of the above findings? First, theoretically, it does appear that GOTV efforts have positive effects on segments of the Latino electorate. The implications of the findings are twofold: (a) They reinforce the finding regarding the positive effects of phone canvassing (Green & Gerber, 2001; Ramírez, 2005; Wong, 2005) and (b) they suggest the possibility that mobilization effects are more likely among lower propensity voters. In other words, it is possible that the studies mentioned earlier found positive effects of phone canvassing efforts among youth, Latinos, and Asian Americans precisely because they targeted a segment of the electorate with a lot of room for improved levels of political participation. Previous efforts, on the whole, targeted the general population with much higher rates of voting than youth or Latinos or Asians. It makes sense that a simple phone call would not dramatically improve voting rates of those who already vote. If we are to gain some insights into Latino political participation and mobilization, it is important to ask whether these results can be

generalized to Latinos living in other states. It is also important to consider whether the identified patterns will continue in elections after the 2000 presidential election. Answers to these questions require mobilization field experiments of Latinos with sufficient Latino voters to conduct tests for these effects. It is unknown whether the same patterns emerge in other states or in other elections. However, the relevance of the segmented mobilization hypothesis to the political behavior literature is that it is possible that mobilization efforts do not have equivalent, positive, and homogenous effects on voter participation rates among all voters. Moreover, these effects may be affected by intervening key individual characteristics.

The normative implications are harder to predict given the remaining questions left unanswered. With what confidence can scholars conducting field experiments tell campaign managers not to waste their finite resources? Does it make sense to invest more of these resources on unproven political targets of mobilization? It is also possible that as the effects of political context wear off, those Latinos who registered to vote after 1994 may be more receptive to mobilization efforts given an established pattern of participation. A less likely possibility is that both political parties will seek out Latinos who were already in the electorate before the contentious politics in California, even if they are deemed unlikely voters. Of course, contacting unlikely voters goes against the primary concerns of political parties regarding effectiveness, efficiency, and limiting uncertainty. More specifically, there is no guarantee that what a well-known and respected Latino nonpartisan organization was able to accomplish can be replicated by either political party across diverse settings (i.e., majority Latino, mixed, or majority Anglo precincts). Furthermore, this study was only concerned with turnout, not with turnout of particular partisans or with how they voted. This combined uncertainty regarding voter choice, efficiency, and effectiveness may be more than presidential campaigns or either major political party are willing to risk. On the other hand, it is quite possible that nonpartisan organizations interested in increased political participation of Latinos, such as Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project (SVREP) or NALEO, are willing to undergo those risks.

Appendix

National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund
Election Watch 2000
Phone Bank Scripts

Today's goal is to ensure that new voters understand what to do at the poll and that they inform themselves of the propositions appearing on the ballot. Hello my name is _____. I am a volunteer calling on behalf of the NALEO Education Fund.

Are you familiar with NALEO?

No: NALEO is a non-profit organization that empowers Latinos to fully participate in the American political process. NALEO wants to let you know that if you have any questions in regards to voting on November 7th, that you can call our office at 1-800-346-2536. This election is very important to our community. Access to healthcare, the cost of prescription drugs for the elderly and the future of our schools are important issues to our community that need your vote.

Yes: Great! NALEO want to let you know that if you have any questions in regards to voting on November 7th, that you can call our office at 1-800-346-2536. This election is very important to our community. Access to healthcare, the cost of prescription drugs for the elderly and the future of our schools are important issues to our community that need your vote.

NALEO urges you . . . for your family, for your community, for our future. Vote! Can we count on you to vote on election day?

Responses:

Yes, I will vote: Mark the "Y" on the phone list.

"Thank you very much. Have a good day/evening."

Go to the next number on the phone list.

No, I will not vote: Mark the "N" on the phone list.

"Is there an issue that would motivate you to vote?." List up to three issues.

"Thank you very much. Have a good day/evening."

Go to the next number on the phone list.

If voters have any questions about NALEO, our project, make a note next to their name or give them the number to NALEO (800-346-2536).

Notes

1. According to the 2000 census, Latinos represented 12.6% of the U.S. population. Researchers speculate that levels of integration and incorporation will not be commensurate with the size of the Latino population precisely because citizenship and minimum age requirements for voting in state and federal elections result in a situation where only 40% of Latinos are eligible to register to vote (see de la Garza & DeSipio, 2004; Fraga & Ramírez, 2004).

2. It is important to note that 65% of all Latinos live in the four states with the largest Latino populations (California, Texas, New York, and Florida). These four states elect nearly one third of the members of the U.S. House of Representatives and control more than half of the 270 electoral college votes needed to win the White House. However, except for Florida, these states were among the least competitive in both the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections.

3. Particularized mobilization can range from self-reported contact by a political party or organization to “specific requests of individuals to participate in particular types of activities such as campaigning, contacting government officials, or getting involved in local politics” (Leighley, 2001, p. 102).

4. Most of the money targeting Latinos has been spent on the most passive and least personalized types of mobilization, consisting of national and local political television ads. During the 2000 presidential election cycle, \$3.1 million was spent on Spanish-language ads. The other types of mobilization efforts, from least to most personal, include automated calls (i.e., prerecorded “get-out-the-vote” messages from celebrities and leading politicians), direct mail, door-to-door canvassing, and transportation to the polls.

5. It is particularly important to consider that the Immigration Reform and Control Act granted permanent residence status to nearly 2.7 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States before January 1, 1982.

6. Discussions of California’s politicized climate focus on the passage of two statewide ballot initiatives. In 1994, Proposition 187 limited the access that undocumented workers had to public education, social services, and health care. In 1996, Proposition 209 outlawed the use of race and ethnicity in admissions to state colleges and universities and in the awarding of contracts by state agencies and substate governments.

7. Likely voters were defined as those who had voted in at least 2 of the past 4 elections. Unlikely voters would therefore be those who voted in 1 or none of the previous 4 elections.

8. Leading Edge Data Services provided National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO) with the list of registered voters.

9. Only voters with a listed telephone number in the registration rolls were eligible for NALEO’s mobilization effort.

10. Michelson’s (2005) Latino sample was 764 (466 received treatment and 298 did not). Although the live-call experiments conducted by Ramírez (2005) included more than 100,000 voters, only 3% of the voters were assigned to the control group.

11. The instrumental variable for phone contact is a dummy variable indicating assignment to treatment, and actual phone contact is the independent variable, with age and registered Democrat as the covariates.

12. See Barreto and Woods (2005).

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