



Latino Immigrants at the Polls: Foreign-born Voter Turnout in the 2002 Election.

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Research on voting and elections has generally found that Latino foreign-born citizens turnout to vote at lower rates than native-born Latinos as well as non-Latinos. Primarily as the result of lower levels of education, income, and English language skills, immigrant voters have demonstrated low levels of political participation. In addition, naturalized Latinos are rarely, if ever, the target of voter mobilization drives, further decreasing their likelihood to turnout. However, with extensive mobilization drives targeting naturalized voters in California in 2002, and low levels of political interest among the general electorate, higher rates of turnout among the foreign-born are anticipated. Probit models predicting turnout are explored here and the results reveal that in California in 2002, for the first time, Latino immigrant voters were significantly more likely to vote than were the native-born Latinos.

Decades of scholarship on voting and elections has consistently found that Latino foreign-born citizens, turnout to vote at lower rates than native born Latinos as well as non-Latinos¹ (Cassel 2002; de la Garza et al. 1992; de la Garza 1996; de la Garza, Menchaca and DeSipio 1994a; DeSipio 1996; DeSipio and de la Garza 1992; Guerra 1992; Mollenkopf, Olson and Ross 2001; Pachon 1991; Shaw, de la Garza and Lee 2001). Primarily the result of lower levels of education, income, English language skills, and exposure to American political institutions, immigrant voters have consistently demonstrated low levels of political participation. In addition to a lack of resources, naturalized Latinos are rarely, if ever, the target of voter mobilization drives, further decreasing their awareness of campaign issues and likelihood to turnout.

Recently, however, some scholars have found evidence that foreign-born voters are not destined to a life of political exclusion, and in some instances, the recently naturalized may participate at equal or higher rates than the native born² (Pantoja, Ramírez, and Segura 2001). Pantoja et al. examined turnout in the 1996 election, just after the contentious Proposition 187 had been enacted, and during the

election that an anti-Affirmative Action measure (Proposition 209) was on the ballot. This research empirically details one example where foreign-born Latinos voted at higher rates than native-born Latinos and, in some instances, at rates higher than non-Latinos. Using official vote records from Los Angeles and Orange counties, California, this article examines voter turnout in the November 2002 general election for more than five million registered voters, including differences between foreign-born and native-born Latinos. In short, the results surprisingly reveal that immigrant voters are driving the growth of the Latino vote in California, and further that in an election with generally low voter turnout foreign-born Latino voters outvoted native-born Latinos and non-Latinos.

NATURALIZED CITIZENS AND VOTER TURNOUT: A NEW THEORY?

Early models of political participation found a significant relationship between socioeconomic variables and the propensity to vote (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960; Verba and Nie 1972; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). In particular, age, education, income, and marital status were found to be strong predictors of an individual's likelihood of voting. Given that many immigrants, particularly those from Latin America, come to this country for economic opportunities, they typically have not had high levels of these SES indicator,³ and as a result have typically not had high levels of participation. Further, previous research into the Latino immigrant noted that they were detached from American politics and often more interested in happenings in their home country. An additional "resource" for navigating the political system that increases the likelihood of Latino turnout is English language proficiency. As a result of these trends, candidates and campaigns typically ignored immigrant communities. Given the

¹ One exception has been among Cuban immigrants in Miami who have sustained high levels of political participation (see Moreno and Rae 1992; Moreno and Warren 1992, 1996).

² Pantoja, et al. grouped foreign-born voters by date of naturalization and found elevated turnout only among those immigrants who naturalized between 1992-1996, a period of contentious politics for foreign-born Latinos in California who may have felt "under attack" from statewide propositions aimed at curtailing benefits for immigrants and Latinos.

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³ Again, the exception here are the politically charged Cuban immigrants, who needed higher resource levels to escape Cuba for the United States.

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

Building on the resource model, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) proposed a civic volunteerism model of political participation that stressed civic skills, engagement, and recruitment. Their study, which included a large subsample of Latinos, found that generally speaking, Latinos demonstrated a lower propensity for all three of these crucial variables. Further, when they separated native and foreign-born Latinos, they found a larger gap, with native born Latinos behaving more like Anglos and Blacks, and foreign-born Latinos to be the least engaged, least recruited, and have the lowest level of civic skills (1995: 234). The only exception to their finding was higher rates of church attendance among Latinos than among Anglos, but because of the hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church, to which most Latinos (particularly immigrants) belong, they are not gaining access to the types of civic skills that might promote political participation.

In a thorough examination of Latino voting, DeSipio (1996a) outlines the determinants and barriers to a growing Latino electorate. In *Counting on the Latino Vote*, DeSipio brings together data from the Census Bureau and survey research that indicates foreign-born Latinos have low rates of naturalization, low rates of voter registration, and low rates of voter turnout. For the 1988 presidential election, “the addition of naturalization status to the model for voting... indicates that naturalization has a negative impact. In regressions for all Latinos U.S. citizens, the naturalized proved less likely to register and to vote than did native-born Latinos” (DeSipio 1996a: 157). In concluding the chapter on foreign-born voting, DeSipio notes that naturalized voters offer great promise for increasing the Latino electorate, and that if more aggressive mobilization campaigns are targeted at immigrant voters, their turnout rates may grow, but when this will happen is difficult to know. Despite these findings, elsewhere DeSipio (1996b) provides a theoretical basis to expect higher rates of participation among the foreign-born. The naturalization process itself may serve as a lesson on American politics and democracy. Immigrants that go through the naturalization process learn the practical, and normative, rules of the game when it comes to democracy. Yet, DeSipio’s findings don’t change: naturalized citizens participate at lower rates.

Tam Cho (1999:1142) notes that part of this puzzle is that our basic understanding of voter turnout was developed before the rise in immigration from Asia and Latin America and the increasingly diverse electorate that exists in the 21st century. Dahl’s three-stage evolution of ethnic politics assumed that acculturation and assimilation over generations would eventually bring ethnic voters into the political mainstream. His model cautioned that continual immigration flows slow this transition and keep ethnic groups behind the norm, but at the time he was writing, no new immigration tides were apparent (1961). Thus, a new

focus on the immigrant voter is essential to understanding political participation in large and diverse states like California, Texas, New York, Florida, and others. Tam Cho argues that naturalized citizens are likely to participate at lower rates than native-born citizens due to their lack of exposure to the political system. Her data analysis of a 1984 public opinion survey in California leads her to conclude, “the lower participation rate among minorities is now largely dependent upon being foreign-born and not being able to speak English,” (1999: 1150). Examining data from 1996, Bass and Casper (2001: 504) also find that among naturalized citizens, “the odds of voting are 26 percent lower than those of native-born citizens.” Similar to Tam Cho, they argue that because naturalized citizens are newer to American politics and less “integrated into U.S. institutions and social customs,” (504) they are less likely to cast a ballot. However, this premise is based on the assumption that (1) immigrant voters are new to the political system, and (2) that exposure to the political system is a positive and mobilizing factor. I argue that both of these premises are misguided and offer a new theoretical framework for understanding the foreign-born voter.

This new theoretical framework builds on DeSipio’s (1996b) *making good citizens* argument and is also based on recent work by Wattenberg (2002), Pantoja, Ramírez, and Segura (2001), and Segal (2002; 2003) which provide an underlying model allowing for naturalized Latinos to vote at higher rates than native-born Latinos and even non-Latino citizens. There are three basic components to this argument that, taken together, provide a new rationale for understanding Latino immigrant voters. First, as evidenced by Wattenberg, the American electorate is in continual decline, growing weary of elections with long ballots and low stakes. As native-born citizens have been socialized into the process of uncompetitive elections, negative candidate images and low levels of political efficacy, *not voting* has become a learned behavior. Second, Segal details the expansion of outreach to Latino voters in 2000 and 2002 that primarily focused on positive Spanish-language campaign commercials and get-out-the-vote drives. While the “traditional” side of political campaigns may be alienating their non-Latino targets (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995), both major parties are scrambling to find new techniques to reach out to Latino voters and “devoted millions of dollars to voter registration, education, mobilization efforts and even Spanish-language proficiency courses for elected officials, candidates and activists,” (Segal 2003). Third, naturalized Latino citizens are not necessarily at a deficit in their exposure to the American political system (Barreto and Muñoz 2003). The naturalization process itself requires immigrants to (a) become familiar with U.S. institutions; (b) learn to fill out extensive paperwork; (c) pass a basic course on civic responsibility; and finally (d) gain confidence, as new citizens, in the American political process. Indeed, two recent surveys of immigrants found that the number one reason for seeking citizenship was to get the right to vote (DeSipio and Pachon 2002; Farkas, Duffett, and Johnson 2003). Further,

the lack of exposure argument referenced above (Tam Cho 1999; Bass and Casper 2001), assumes that the exposure to the political system is positive, but Wattenberg explains that despite increases in education and income, American citizens are becoming less efficacious, less certain that their vote counts, more tired of frequent elections with long ballots, and in the end, less likely to vote (2002). Instead, naturalized Latino voters might bring new enthusiasm to the American political system, given that many are now being exposed to positive political ads and outreach efforts by candidates and civic organizations (Segal 2002; Ramírez 2002).

Finally, the naturalized Latino voter has lifecycle advantages over native-born citizens that make them potentially more likely to vote. Native-born Latinos and non-Latinos alike are “baptized” into the political system at age eighteen when their interest in politics and rate of turnout are known to be very low. In contrast, as Ramírez (2002) argues, many foreign-born Latinos have been politically baptized when the stakes are higher. Ramírez notes that this is due to contextual factors, such as perceived attacks against immigrant rights, however these issues are not always present. There are additional demographic assets that immigrant voters possess such as age, marital status, children and jobs that make them more likely voters at the date of their political baptism than native-born citizens.

This review has been purposely brief. Rather than a full survey of voting literature and nativity, the intent has been to demonstrate the leading viewpoints that explain why foreign-born Latinos vote at low rates, and provide a basis for comparison to the results presented below. The next section examines some of the contextual expectations of foreign-born Latino voters in California’s 2002 election, and why higher rates of turnout might be expected.

THE 2002 ELECTION IN CALIFORNIA

It is important to understand the contextual factors at play in California during the 2002 election and how the political environment impacted voter turnout. In California, the midterm election coincides with the gubernatorial election, and in 2002 neither of the U.S. Senators was up for election, leaving most of the media attention on the election for Governor between incumbent Democrat Gray Davis and Republican challenger Bill Simon. What started with millions being spent on attack ads in the primaries, resulted in one of the most negative campaigns in California history, leaving voters frustrated by both major candidates. Simon was portrayed as a failed businessman, being sued by the U.S. Justice Department, and as having no political experience. Davis was blamed for mishandling a statewide energy crisis and creating a large budget deficit, all the while handing out favors to special interests. As the election drew near, opinion polls by the *L.A. Times*, reported that voter interest was low, both candidates had negative ratings, and most voters thought the state was headed in the wrong direction (Barabak 2002). According to a poll conducted one week before the election a majority of likely voters said they pre-

ferred their candidate because he was the “best of a bad lot,” leaving front page news to conclude, “with dissatisfaction so widespread among Californians, experts are predicting record low participation,” (Barabak 2002).

Alongside the general trend of dissatisfaction, many Latino voters reported even lower interest in the election and candidates. Davis had recently vetoed legislation that would have allowed non-citizen immigrants from obtaining driver’s licenses, and had called for significant changes that weakened a bill that would have given farm worker’s mediation rights. According to a pre-election poll of Latino registered voters,⁴ a majority opposed Davis’ veto of the driver’s license bill and only 16 percent were “very satisfied” with his performance as Governor. However, given the recent history of anti-Republicanism among Latinos in California, their dissatisfaction with Governor Davis was unlikely to translate into support for Simon. Instead, the low enthusiasm might result in fewer Latinos at the polls.

Yet there is reason to suspect differences for foreign-born voters. As noted above, in a thorough examination of political advertising in 2002, Segal found that a record number of dollars were spent on Spanish-language commercials that were predominantly positive (2002). According to Segal (2002: 3), because many Latinos are first-time voters, “candidates and the parties continue to seek a positive long-term relationship with Hispanic voters and therefore continue to introduce themselves in positive ways.” While both Davis and Simon spent millions on negative ads attacking each other on English-language television, they combined to spend \$2,000,000 on exclusively positive ads across the state on Spanish-language television.

Countering the potentially demobilizing effects of the two candidates, civic organizations and labor unions promoted positive messages in their get-out-the-vote (GOTV) drives. Organizations such as Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project (SVREP), and the National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO) conducted significant GOTV efforts targeted at low-propensity immigrant voters. According to estimates from the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS), more than 65,000 immigrants from Latin America naturalized in California in 2001, making November 2002 the first election they were eligible to vote. In conjunction with mobilization drives, Latino civic organizations conducted voter registration drives in heavily immigrant neighborhoods, where voter registration levels are traditionally low (DeSipio 1996b). By some accounts, these efforts resulted in 25,000⁵ new foreign-born Latino registered voters in Southern California alone. While other Californians were turned off by the 2002 election, new citizens and first time voters might be more interested in exercising their right to vote. Coupled with the positive outreach

⁴ Poll of 400 registered Latino voters conducted by the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, October, 2002.

⁵ Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project estimates 23,174 new citizens were registered to vote as part of their 2002 efforts: http://www.svrep.org/latino_vote/2002/vr/ag_outreach_report4.html

messages promoted by NALEO, SVREP, and labor unions, urging immigrants to voice their opinion on behalf of their community or group affiliation. NALEO's *Voces del Pueblo*⁶ campaign targeted over 125,000 low-propensity and first-time Latino voters in Southern California with mailers, phone calls and door-to-door canvassing. Indeed, well-developed theoretical and empirical research by Uhlaner (1989) demonstrates that group-based mobilization results in higher levels of voter turnout. In California, an "immigrant-led resurgence of unions" has made them heavily comprised of naturalized Latino citizens, and their 2002 GOTV efforts targeted this important part of their base (Rojas 2002). Specifically, previous research on mobilization efforts by SVREP (Pantoja and Woods 2000) and NALEO (Ramírez 2002) have demonstrated their effectiveness in turning out Latino voters. Controlling for likely voters, Pantoja and Woods found that in areas where SVREP was active, Latinos were more likely to vote in the 1998 election. Similarly, Ramírez found in an analysis of GOTV drives in Southern California, low-propensity voters that were contacted by NALEO were significantly more likely to turnout.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This research employs a unique dataset from Southern California for the November 2002 general election. Voter lists from the Los Angeles County and Orange County Registrar of Voters were acquired shortly after the November election containing the official validated vote record for the 1998 and 2002 election, for all registered voters in the two counties. While I would like to examine records for the entire state, as well as states beyond California, I am limited by access to data. Given the limitation, Southern California does represent a compelling study site. In the 2000 election, more than 750,000 Latinos cast a ballot in Los Angeles and Orange counties, accounting for half of all Latino voters in California and one out of seven Latino voters nationwide. Further, with 22 Congressional districts, and a population of over 13 million, the two-county area would rank as the 5th largest state, just after Florida, and larger than Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Michigan.

The voter lists include individual level records for more than 5 million voters including date of birth, date of registration, partisanship, gender, last name, and place of birth. In combination with the U.S. Census Spanish Surname database,⁷ it is possible to identify Latino and non-Latino voters, as well as whether they were born in the United

States or abroad. This gives us the ability to review the voting patterns of Latinos and non-Latinos, and among Latinos to differentiate between foreign-born and native born. In addition, through use of Asian surname lists,⁸ it is possible to identify individual Asian American voters (Lauderdale and Kestenbaum 2000). Finally, by including ecological data from the U.S. Census Bureau, we can assess the probability that a non-Latino, non-Asian voter is either Black or White based on the ratio of Blacks to Whites in their zip-code (for more, see Barreto, Segura, and Woods 2004).

The voter list improves on conventional methods of survey research because it provides the universe of registered voters in a given jurisdiction, rather than a sample, alleviating any concerns of confidence intervals and tests of significance. Thus, the differences that we note with respect to foreign-born and native-born levels of turnout, are the actual known differences, as opposed to estimates.

Two methodological tests are employed to examine turnout levels of foreign-born Latinos in 2002. First, we review the descriptive tabulations of total votes cast, broken down by ethnicity and nativity for all registered voters in Southern California. This provides an overview of political participation, and gives us confidence in moving to the next stage, multivariate probit regression. In addition to the demographic variables included at the individual level on the voter lists, we also merge contextual data from the 2000 Census for average income and education at the zip code level, to include as controls in the regression analysis. For the probit models, the dependent variable is simply whether or not an individual voted in the 2002 election.

THE FINDINGS

Before looking at turnout in 2002, we first offer a picture of the changing electorate in Southern California by examining growth in the number of voters between 1998 and 2002. Table 1 reports the total number of votes cast in those years, broken down by ethnicity for the two counties combined. While the non-Latino electorate remained stable between the two gubernatorial elections, the Latino electorate grew by a modest 5 percent, adding 23,948 new voters in 2002. However, when broken down by nativity, the results are more interesting. What's immediately apparent is that the growth of the Latino vote in Southern California is being driven entirely by new naturalized citizen

⁶ For more information on this campaign: http://www.naleo.org/voces_del_pueblo.htm, Marcelo Gaete, Director of Programs.

⁷ The Spanish Surname list is based on the 1990 Census and is constructed by tabulating the responses to the Hispanic origin question. Each surname is categorized by the percent of individuals that identified themselves as "Hispanic." Each surname is then given a numeric value for the probability that persons with the surname are Hispanic. The list contains over 25,000 surnames. For a full explanation on the methodology of the list see Word and Perkins (1996).

⁸ Asian American voters are identified in the same manner as Latino voters, through use of six Asian American surname lists that have been developed by demographers, medical anthropologists, and political scientists. The Asian surname lists includes names from Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese, Indian, and Filipino ancestry. The Asian surname list is employed by the Institute of Governmental Studies, Statewide Database at UC Berkeley to identify California voters by race and ethnicity in the 1992-2000 elections (<http://swdb.berkeley.edu/data/d00/index.html>). Recently, Lauderdale and Kestenbaum (2000) have detailed the creation and application of the Asian surname list. For more, see Lauderdale and Kestenbaum 2000. "Asian American Ethnic Identification by Surname." *Population Research and Policy Review* 19: 283-300.

≡ TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF VOTE GROWTH 1998-2002
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

	1998	2002	Growth	Percent
Latino	454,923	478,871	23,948	5.3%
Non-Latino	1,879,201	1,891,209	12,008	0.6%
Total	2,334,124	2,370,080	35,956	1.5%
% Latino	19.5%	20.2%	0.7%	3.7%
Latino Foreign	172,241	210,310	38,069	22.1%
Latino Native	282,682	268,561	-14,121	-5.0%
% Foreign	37.9%	43.9%	6.1%	16.0%

voters. While the number of native born Latino voters dropped from 282,682 in 1998 to 268,561 in 2002, a decrease of 14,121 votes, foreign-born Latino voters increased by 38,069 new votes to 210,310 in 2002, resulting in an overall increase of Latino voters. This growth in foreign-born Latino voters resulted in naturalized citizens accounting for 44 percent of the Latino electorate in 2002, up from 38 percent in 1998. The raw growth of 38,069 Latino foreign-born voters is more new votes in the electorate than native-born Latinos and non-Latinos (12,008), as is the 22 percent growth rate. The clear implication of these findings is that foreign-born Latino voters are the fast-growing segment of voters and playing an increasingly larger role in the California electorate.

In addition to larger growth in votes cast than native-born Latinos and non-Latinos, naturalized Latino voters also demonstrated high rates of voter turnout in 2002, contrary to the existing literature. At first glance, the numbers reported in Table 2 do not challenge the basic premise of Latino voting, namely that Latinos vote at lower rates than non-Latinos. Among registered voters in Southern California, 39 percent of Latinos voted compared to 47.4 percent of non-Latinos in the 2002 election for Governor. However, upon closer inspection of the aggregate data, Table 3 reveals that among Latinos, naturalized immigrants voted at rates much higher than native-born Latinos, and almost equal to non-Latinos. In an election that produced record low turnout, just 34.6 percent of native-born Latinos went to the polls, compared to 46.5 percent of foreign-born Latino voters. This difference of 11.9 percentage points is statistically significant by nature of the dataset (the universe of all registered voters in the two counties), but also substantively significant. Further, the aggregate turnout rate of naturalized Latino voters is almost equal to the voting rate of non-Latinos (46.5 vs. 47.4 respectively).

When the voter turnout rates for 2002 are disaggregated by Congressional district ($n = 22$), we find evidence of foreign-born Latinos voting at higher rates than non-Latinos. Table 3 details the turnout rates of non-Latinos, foreign-born Latinos, and native-born Latinos by Congressional district in Southern California. In addition, it lists the percent of the district population that is Latino. In all 22 jurisdictions,

≡ TABLE 2
TURNOUT RATE AMONG REGISTERED VOTERS 2002,
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

	Registered	Voted	Turnout
Latino	1,228,466	478,871	39.0%
Non-Latino	3,992,250	1,891,209	47.4%
Total	5,220,716	2,370,080	45.4%
Latino Foreign	451,844	210,310	46.5%
Latino Native	776,622	268,561	34.6%

immigrant Latino voters out-vote their native born counterparts. The results are more pronounced in majority-minority districts, consistent with recent empowerment theory findings for California (Barreto, Segura and Woods 2004; Gay 2001a, b). Foreign-born Latino turnout exceeded native-born turnout by 18 points in Roybal-Allard's district (77 percent Latino), by 16 points in Sanchez's district (65 percent Latino), and by 16 points in Becerra's district (70 percent Latino). Not only were there large differences between foreign-born and native born Latino rates of voting in majority-minority districts, but naturalized citizens also voted at *higher rates* than non-Latinos in nine out of the ten majority-minority districts in Southern California.⁹

The descriptive analysis reported to this point is interesting, but does not conclusively demonstrate that foreign-born Latinos are more likely to vote, *ceteris paribus*. Here, we turn to multivariate probit regression analysis to determine whether or not being foreign born is a positive and significant predictor of turnout. Using individual level records from the County Registrar of Voters lists we model validated voter turnout, among all registered voters ($n = 5,220,716$) in Southern California in 2002.

Two turnout models are presented in Table 4 for the 2002 election. Model 1 includes basic SES, demographic, ethnic, and partisanship variables, while Model 2, adds two additional variables to test the consistency and independence of our findings: percent Spanish speakers within the zip code, and vote history for the previous midterm election (1998). Likely due to the large number of observations, all values reported are statistically significant at $p < .001$. In both sets of estimates, the SES/demographic variables return expected results, consistent with the literature. Age, education, and being married are all positive determinants of casting a ballot. Income has a negative effect, as does gender, although both effects are very small. Because probit coefficients are not readily interpretable in the same way as OLS coefficients, we include the changes in predicted probability that each variable will change the

⁹ In addition to Latino majority districts, the 33rd (Watson), 35th (Waters), and 37th (Millender-McDonald) are majority-minority African American and Latino population combined. The only majority-minority district where foreign-born Latinos did not witness higher rates of turnout than non-Latinos was the 47th (Sanchez).

≡ TABLE 3

LATINO AND NON-LATINO TURNOUT AMONG REGISTERED VOTERS IN 2002 BY CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

District	Elected Official	% Pop Latino	Non-Latino Turnout	Latino Turnout		For-Nat Difference
				Foreign	Native	
22†	R—Thomas	22%	43.7%	39.4%	30.6%	+8.8
25	R—McKeon	27%	44.9%	39.2%	33.2%	+6.0
26	R—Dreier	24%	49.3%	42.8%	38.6%	+4.2
27	D—Sherman	36%	49.7%	48.3%	39.2%	+9.1
28	D—Berman	56%	48.4%	50.4%*	35.6%	+14.7
29	D—Schiff	26%	43.6%	43.5%	36.8%	+6.7
30	D—Waxman	8%	50.1%	48.5%	43.5%	+5.0
31	D—Becerra	70%	39.7%	49.6%*	33.8%	+15.8
32	D—Solis	62%	39.6%	47.1%*	32.8%	+14.3
33	D—Watson	35%	43.9%	48.4%*	35.5%	+12.9
34	D—Roybal-Allard	77%	40.2%	49.1%*	30.8%	+18.2
35	D—Waters	47%	41.1%	45.3%*	30.5%	+14.8
36	D—Harman	30%	48.9%	45.4%	37.1%	+8.3
37	D—Millender-McDonald	43%	37.2%	40.6%*	28.3%	+12.4
38	D—Napolitano	71%	41.2%	47.8%*	34.2%	+13.6
39	D—Sanchez	61%	43.7%	45.1%*	31.6%	+13.5
40	R—Royce	30%	52.8%	44.9%	38.4%	+6.4
42†	R—Miller	20%	51.3%	44.8%	40.6%	+4.2
44†	R—Calvert	15%	52.3%	46.4%	41.0%	+5.4
46	R—Rohrabacher	17%	51.2%	46.3%	39.2%	+7.1
47	D—Sanchez	65%	46.9%	44.1%	28.1%	+16.0
48	R—Cox	15%	53.1%	46.4%	38.9%	+7.5

*Denotes districts where Foreign-born Latinos voted at higher rates than Non-Latinos

†Indicates that part of this district is outside LA/Orange County

dependent variable from a zero to one (Long and Freese 2001). Holding all other values at their mean, changing age from its minimum to its maximum value would make someone 48.9 percent more likely to vote (Model 1). When additional controls are added (Model 2), age still has large impact on turnout, with the elderly 35.8 percent more likely to vote than the young.

Moving next to the race and ethnicity set of variables, our hypothesis is confirmed. While all other racial and ethnic groups are decidedly less likely to vote, as compared to White non-Latinos, foreign-born Latinos are more likely to vote. In the first model, naturalized Latinos were 11.4 percent more likely to vote in 2002. Given that English language skills have been shown to be a positive predictor of turnout (Cassel 2002), we include contextual data from the 2000 Census regarding the percent of persons that speak Spanish within the voter's zip code. Even when this control is included, foreign-born Latinos are 10 percent more likely to cast a ballot. When foreign-born is interacted with Latino, the Latino variable included in the model carries the weight of non foreign-born, or native-born, Latinos and allows us to directly compare the participation rates of Latinos by nativity. Further, because Asian is also interacted with foreign-born, we do not include a measure for foreign-born alone because almost all foreign-born adults in South-

ern California are either Latino or Asian.¹⁰ An additional control for foreign-born alone would be highly collinear with the Latino-foreign and Asian-foreign interaction variables and skew the model results, for this, the key independent variable.

DISCUSSION

This discovery carries important implications for two reasons: first, native born Latinos are found to vote at lower rates than foreign-born Latinos, and second, the coefficients reported for foreign-born Latinos are positive, suggesting that, as compared to the excluded reference group (Whites), they are more likely to vote. Given the additional control variables, especially registration date in Model 1, and vote history in Model 2, these findings are conclusive, however we cannot answer if they are long lasting. A key question remains as to whether or not foreign-born Latino voters will turnout to vote at rates higher than native-born Latinos, and equal to non-Latinos. The results seem to be due in part to

¹⁰ According to the 2000 Census 89 percent of the foreign-born population in Los Angeles and Orange counties is either Latino (58 percent) or Asian (31 percent).

≡ TABLE 4
PROBIT REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF LIKELIHOOD TO VOTE IN 2002

Independent Variables	Model 1: Basic			Model 2: Expanded		
	Coef.	S.E.	Min → Max	Coef.	S.E.	Min → Max
SES						
Median Income [^]	-0.000	0.000	-2.9	-0.000	0.000	-3.7
Age	0.014	0.000	48.9	0.010	0.000	35.8
Percent College [^]	0.461	0.008	14.6	0.220	0.009	7.0
Married	0.371	0.001	14.6	0.288	0.001	11.3
Female	-0.020	0.001	-0.8	-0.017	0.001	-0.7
Ethnicity						
Probability Black [^]	-0.149	0.003	-5.6	-0.149	0.003	-5.6
Asian	-0.152	0.003	-5.9	-0.120	0.003	-4.7
Asian × Foreign	-0.096	0.004	-3.8	-0.027	0.004	-1.0
Latino	-0.162	0.002	-6.3	-0.142	0.002	-5.6
Latino × Foreign	0.288	0.003	11.4	0.258	0.003	10.2
Percent Spanish [^]	—	—	—	-0.096	0.006	-3.0
Political						
Democrat	0.183	0.002	7.2	0.103	0.002	4.1
Republican	0.241	0.002	9.5	0.165	0.002	6.5
Registration Date	-0.013	0.000	-47.7	0.004	0.000	16.9
Voted 1998 Midterm	—	—	—	0.874	0.001	33.6
Constant	25.611	0.180		-9.928	0.193	
N		4,603,752			4,603,752	
Pseudo R ²		0.077			0.1393	
LR Chi ²		486,708			880,353	
PPC		64.56%			70.00%	
Lambda-P		19.75%			32.07%	

***All values reported are significant at $p < .001$

[^]Indicates variable is based on ecological data at zip code level.

a lackluster gubernatorial election in California (leading to depressed turnout of the native born), as well as targeted voter mobilization drives in immigrant communities (leading to elevated turnout of the foreign-born).

Further, given the growth of the Latino electorate, more candidates, campaigns, and civic organizations are paying greater attention to foreign-born Latino voters. Already, leading candidates for the Democratic nomination for President in 2004 have held debates in English and Spanish, fielding questions about immigration, English only laws, and guest worker amnesty on national television. If this trend continues, as national newspaper headlines suggest ("Hispanic Seen as Key in California"; "Democrats Using Debate to Court Hispanics"), there is reason to suspect that Latino voters will be increasingly targeted in mobilization drives. For example, recent news articles by the *Associated Press* indicate that both parties are targeting Latino voters: "The Democratic presidential debate (in Albuquerque) is providing the party with a high-profile opportunity to deliver a simple message: *Queremos tu voto*, which translates to 'we want your vote'" (Hoffman 2003) and "Republicans

are reaching out to new immigrants at naturalization ceremonies in a program called its 'New Citizens Initiative,'" (Lester 2003). Further, the hyper-ethnic theme that most candidates target at the Latino community is likely to play best with immigrant voters. At the same time, it is easy to envision growing GOTV efforts by groups such as NALEO, Southwest Voter, and labor unions, targeting foreign-born Latino voters in 2004 and beyond. If these developments become reality, foreign-born Latino turnout may continue to be high.

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