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Does What Happens in Los Mochis Stay in Los Mochis? Explaining Postmigration Political Behavior

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Abstract

This article seeks to understand how immigrants' premigration political socialization experiences shape their views of the new polity, the extent to which this imported socialization affects their degree of postmigration political engagement, and how long the content of immigrants' political suitcases remains consequential during their civic lives in America. The author offers tests utilizing unique survey data of Mexican immigrants residing in the United States. Results reveal that attachment to a Mexican political party heightens the prospects for political engagement in the American context, and trust in the Mexican government corresponds with trust in the U.S. government.

Keywords

immigrants, political behavior, political socialization, partisanship, political trust, political engagement, Mexican

Any serious effort to devise a comprehensive account of American political behavior requires attention to the unique experiences of immigrants. After all, the United States is a nation of immigrants, a nation in which the cultural and political contours have been shaped and defined by its policies regarding large-scale waves of immigration. For instance, in 1965, the United States radically redefined immigration policies, abolishing national origin quotas, establishing new criteria for selecting immigrants, and providing for an unlimited number of family reunification visas. In debate on the floor of the Congress, no one admitted to believing that these measures would have a marked effect on the ethnic makeup of America. Just the same, the result was an unprecedented influx of immigrants from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia (Pachon and DeSipio 1994; Gerstle and Mollenkopf 2001). As a consequence, the "white" proportion of the population has been in steady decline and, indeed, is on pace to lose its majority status in the next fifty years.

Immigrants represent an increasing group of recruits (DeSipio 1996) for the American polity. In other words, they are "prospective citizens" who will decide either to engage or to ignore the ebb and flow of the political tides in their new home. Their engagement in politics, however, need not wait until they are eventually enfranchised through naturalization. In a nation with norms of robust free speech and free assembly, public demonstration is a tactic open not only to citizens but to all residents. In the spring of 2006, for instance, congressional debate on immigration reform spawned widespread protests and demonstrations. Participants included many individuals who had not lived long in the United States, let alone obtained citizenship.

Besides the physical engagement displayed by newly arrived immigrants, psychological attachments may develop among some of them shortly after their arrival in the United States. The Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation 2004 National Survey of Latinos: Politics Engagement (NSL 2004) shows that among those Latino immigrants who have lived one year or less in the United States, more than half of them (54 percent) already identify themselves as either Republicans or Democrats. The proportion is not that different (44 percent) when analyzing the National Bank of Mexico's (Banamex's) Division for Economic and Sociopolitical Studies 2003 Mexican Values Survey (MVS 2003). Protesters and partisan identifiers illustrate the point that immigrants can and do engage in political action well before they obtain citizenship and the right to vote. In my view, this engagement signals a need for reconsideration of the familiar accounts of political participation found in the literature.

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Pioneering explanations of immigrants' political behavior focused on *post*arrival factors such as mobilization efforts (Garcia and de la Garza 1985) and immigrants' minority status, levels of economic advancement, and foreign policy concerns (Cain, Kiewiet, and Uhlaner 1991). More recent work in this postarrival tradition addresses the role of English language skills, media exposure to politics (Wong 2000), the naturalization process and the relevance of the political atmosphere (Michelson and Pallares 2001), and dual nationality (Jones-Correa 1998; Staton, Jackson, and Canache 2007). Although these factors surely do contribute to patterns in political behavior, it is important to note that these forces may be influenced by both the migration and the premigration experiences themselves. With regard to the former, immigrants' sense of identity in the new land is profoundly influenced by the experience of crossing one or multiple borders (Garcia Bedolla 2005). As to the latter, immigrants do not enter the United States as political blank slates. Instead, premigration political experiences may shape or modify the effects of these postmigration factors. For instance, if an individual emigrated from a country in Latin America where the views on U.S. foreign policy were generally negative, one should not assume that those prearrival attitudes will vanish once the person arrives in the United States. In fact, McClain et al.'s (2006) findings suggest that Latino immigrants' prearrival knowledge of their own countries' racial hierarchies may color to some extent their attitudes once in America.

Another line of research has studied the impact of *pre*arrival factors such as ethnic or national backgrounds. Under this framework, attention has focused on comparisons *across* national and even regional or pan-ethnic groups (e.g., Black 1987; Pachon and DeSipio 1994; Lien 1994; Wong 2000). While national and ethnic backgrounds are of importance for immigrants' political behavior, much remains unknown regarding the nature of these background effects. Immigrants' backgrounds encompass a broad set of potential explanatory factors that remain unexplored. Most critically, by focusing on general differences across countries of origin, we gloss over what may be important differences *within* those countries. Some past works have considered the possible impact of experiences within countries of origin on postmigration political behavior. Noteworthy works in this tradition include Wilson (1973), Black (1982), Gitelman (1982), Finifter and Finifter (1989), and White et al. (2008). Unfortunately, none of these studies address immigrants to the United States. Thus, any lessons learned from these works may be of only indirect relevance to the American case, and especially to the question of whether Latino immigrants' prior political experiences matter for political behavior after migration.

In summary, the study of how immigrants' backgrounds influence their political attitudes and behaviors is not new. However, while scholars have studied how different national backgrounds lead to different patterns of participation (e.g., de la Garza et al. 1992; DeSipio 1996) focusing on comparisons *across* groups, little attention has been paid to the wide variance in political backgrounds that exists *within* national origins. Even less research has examined subsidiary questions such as whether the effects of premigration socialization on postmigration political behavior decline over time as the immigrant becomes more firmly enmeshed in the U.S. political arena. Immigrants bring political suitcases to the United States. These suitcases abound with attitudes and experiences from their countries of origin. We must peek inside these suitcases if we are to develop a more comprehensive account of postmigration political behavior.

Toward this end, this article seeks to understand how immigrants' political socialization experiences in their countries of origin shape the way they view the new polity, the extent to which immigrants' political baggage affects their degree of political engagement and the direction of that engagement, and how long the content of immigrants' political suitcases remains consequential during their civic lives in America. The present inquiry focuses on Mexican immigrants to the United States, the largest immigrant cohort during the past forty years. However, there is no reason to believe that the findings of this research project are necessarily limited to this immigrant group alone. To the contrary, this research will shed light on processes that may operate on multiple immigrant groups in the United States and perhaps even elsewhere in the world. Hence, this study should contribute new insight to the broad literatures on topics fundamental to our discipline such as political socialization, participation, and partisanship.

This article addresses two specific questions: (1) Are Mexican immigrants who held some partisan identification in their country of origin more likely to become politically engaged once in the United States? and (2) Are Mexican immigrants who held higher levels of trust for the Mexican government more likely to display higher levels of trust in American government?

Why Study Premigration Politicization?

In part, my thesis holds that premigration experiences matter for the tendency toward political engagement in the new country. The development of partisan attachments provides an important foundation for subsequent political behavior. Historically, scholars have construed partisanship either as an affective attachment or as a rational

calculation of party performance. From the former perspective, citizens' partisan identifications come to life through a socialization process. These social identities remain remarkably stable over time (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Campbell et al. 1960; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002).[1] From the latter perspective, citizens react to short-term party performances and choose to identify with the party that better represents their interests. In this case, partisan attachments change as performance and "party differentials" vary (Downs 1957; Fiorina 1981).

Pioneering work by Cain, Kiewiet, and Uhlaner (1991) used Fiorina's model to explain the acquisition of partisanship among Latinos and Asians in California. Fiorina's (1981) argument has two key components. He posits that when citizens first attain political awareness, the socialization process might indeed dominate partisan attachments, but as time goes by such attachments should come to reflect more and more the current conditions that surround individuals. The distinction between the socialization component and the updating component of Fiorina's argument seems crucial, especially in the case of first-generation immigrants, because many of them were socialized in a different country. Cain, Kiewiet, and Uhlaner's findings account for only the second component of this theoretical conceptualization: the updating process that immigrants experience once they arrive in the United States. However, some scholarly work has posited that differences in levels of participation between first- and later-generation Asian Americans can be explained by differences in socialization patterns (Cho 1999). Therefore, a fuller account of the origins of partisan attachment and corresponding political engagement may be developed if we endeavor to incorporate the effects of premigration experiences.

The two "classic" approaches of partisan identification, which apply largely to native U.S. citizens, offer only limited insight into attitudes of migrants. Immigrants who come to the United States at a very early age may simply inherit their parents' American partisan attachments. Immigrants who arrive in the country as adults cannot experience such a process. Among these adult immigrants, one possibility is that they import the sense of (non-) partisanship that they already held in their countries of origin to the new polity.[2] After all, partisanship is a rather enduring and consistent attachment across time (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Campbell et al. 1960; Sears and Funk 1999), and partisanship can be an important predictor of political behavior in emerging democracies such as Mexico (Moreno 2003), just as it is in the United States. Therefore, one should expect that immigrants' partisan affiliations may endure after the migration process. More importantly, partisanship may help immigrants make sense of the new political landscape. In other words, immigrants may pack premigration partisan views in their political suitcases, and then draw on these contents later to help navigate American politics.

Two aspects of partisanship must be distinguished: *directionality* and *intensity*. Directionality refers to the individual's preference among parties—for most Americans, whether one identifies with the Democrats or the Republicans. As argued below, premigration experiences may matter for directionality, although it should be clear that there rarely will be a perfect match between party systems in a person's old and new nations. Intensity involves the strength of attachment. Partisans of all stripes can hold weak, moderate, or strong attachments to their preferred parties. What is most pertinent for present purposes is that a person's tendency to hold a partisan attachment will endure from premigration to postmigration.[3]

A few hypothetical examples will help to demonstrate the key logic I propose. Suppose that "Jose" and "Juan" were born in Mexico, in the town of Los Mochis, in the state of Sinaloa. Jose grew up in the 1960s under the dominance of the Institutionalized Revolutionary Party (PRI). There was certainly political activity in Los Mochis, where he lived all of his life until he decided to migrate *"al otro lado*."[4] However, all of the political activity in town, elections included, was centered on only one party, the PRI. By contrast, Juan grew up in a context of electoral vibrancy and change, during the Mexican transition to democracy. In fact, he actually witnessed how the PRI lost some elections at the local and the state levels before migrating to the United States. This firsthand experience fueled Juan's sense of personal efficacy, which in turn made him more likely to engage politically.

It can also be argued, however, that certain authoritarian regimes might display interest in socializing individuals into political participation for legitimacy-seeking purposes. This seems to be the case of Mexican children under the single-party era: among fifth graders, on average, seven out of ten expressed their willingness to participate in elections when they reached voting age. Among ninth graders, the average almost reached the 90 percent level (Segovia 1975). To reinforce the latter point, consider that in two former Soviet republics, Russia and Lithuania, the highest levels of turnout after the communist breakdown have occurred among those citizens who were socialized into the habit of voting under utterly noncompetitive but regular elections. These symbolic elections seem to have created positive political experiences for these older cohorts of the electorate, and induced a habit of participation (Chernykh 2007).

Now, let us recall "Jose" and contrast him with "Nacho." Nacho was also born and grew up in Los Mochis in the 1960s. However, Jose and Nacho have a significant political dissimilarity. Jose was an active member of the

local PRI youth organization before migrating, whereas Nacho never engaged in party politics at all. The political socialization Jose experienced, even if authoritarian in nature, may have allowed him to develop a sense that "party matters," which Nacho plainly cannot have, at least not to the same extent as Jose. These examples illustrate my first working hypothesis regarding the impact of imported socialization on an immigrant's likelihood of engaging in political activity in a new nation following migration:

> *Hypothesis 1:* Partisan affiliation in one's country of origin increases the likelihood of political engagement following migration to the United States.

Next, let us consider the role of immigrants' premigration levels of political trust in their political attitudes toward the new country's political system. According to Hetherington's (2005) conceptualization, political trust is a running tally in which individuals weigh the extent to which government outcomes are consistent with their expectations. In the case of immigrants, one needs to acknowledge that individuals' perceptions of government and their expectations regarding government outcomes might be colored by the way these immigrants were politically socialized in their countries of origin. In other words, exposure to more or less democratic regimes should have an effect on the individuals' levels of trust in the country of origin's political system, which in turn might have an effect on levels of trust toward the political institutions of their new host country. For example, Michelson (2007) shows that there are different mechanisms through which Latino immigrants can become distrustful of American government. However, we still need to know what the immigrants' baseline values of trust are as they enter the American polity. Taking this into consideration, we can say that our hypothetical immigrants Jose and Nacho were socialized under a more authoritarian context than was Juan. Individuals who grow up under such circumstances, lacking the opportunities and rights to become engaged in the political process, might eventually develop an overall pattern of indifference towards the whole political process; and as some scholars would argue, once institutional support is lost, it is difficult to recover (Hetherington 1998). Thus, this contextual effect experienced in their country of origin may in turn affect Jose's and Nacho's individual levels of political trust. If this is indeed the case, they both should be expected to display lower levels of trust in American political institutions than Juan does.

> *Hypothesis 2:* Higher levels of trust in the political institutions of their countries of origin increase the likelihood that immigrants to the United States will exhibit political trust in the American government.

If we ask, "Does what happens in Los Mochis stay in Los Mochis?" our intuitive answer should be no. I would certainly expect that all of our hypothetical immigrants, Jose, Juan, and Nacho, consciously or not, packed their political suitcases and brought them along when they crossed the border and entered the United States. Hence, by accounting for variance in premigration attitudes and experiences, I contend that we will be able to develop more comprehensive accounts of immigrants' political actions in the United States.

Data and Methods

This article's analyses rely upon the MVS 2003. The MVS 2003 has several advantages for present purposes. The original study contains a sample of 2,380 Mexicans living in Mexico and 1,213 U.S. residents. Among these U.S. residents, the dataset includes 808 first-generation Latino immigrants (399 were born in Mexico, 409 in nineteen other countries). My analyses are limited to the 399 first-generation U.S. residents who were born in Mexico. This dataset is, to the best of my knowledge, the only one available that includes questions on vote intention in both countries (Mexico and the United States) for the subsample of respondents living in the United States. Such questions do not provide ideal representations of partisan preferences. However, particularly given the scarcity of data such as these, the vote intention measures certainly provide reasonable proxies.

The vote intention items permit me to test whether those immigrants who held any sort of partisan leaning in Mexico are more likely to exhibit American partisan ties. The dataset also includes items regarding trust in government in the United States (at the federal, state, and local levels) as well as a measure of trust in the Mexican government. These latter items will be used to test hypothesis 2.

Dependent Variables

The first hypothesis concerns the extent to which immigrants are politicized once in the United States. Specifically, I have posited that holding a partisan attachment in Mexico increases the likelihood that the person will be politically engaged in the United States. The dependent variable used to test this hypothesis is a measure of expected electoral participation in the United States. Respondents were asked, if "elections were held today," would they expect to vote for a Democratic candidate, a Republican, a candidate other than a Democrat or a Republican, or would they opt not to participate. These responses are recoded, with a

Table 1. Mexican Immigrants' Trust in U.S. Government (Federal, State, and Local Level)

Variable	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Min.	Max.
Trust in federal government	391	2.990	0.874	1	4
Trust in state government	394	2.934	0.880	1	4
Trust in local government	393	2.842	0.875	1	4

Source: National Bank of Mexico's (Banamex's) Division for Economic and Sociopolitical Studies 2003 Mexican Values Survey (MVS 2003).

value of 1 used to indicate that the respondent would expect to vote (64.7 percent of respondents) and 0 used to indicate that the respondent would not expect to vote (35.3 percent).

The MVS 2003 also includes three items regarding trust in government in the American context. Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics for these items. The striking similarity suggests that respondents did not differentiate greatly across levels of government. A factor analysis was then run to assess whether all of the items could be used to build an index for trust in American government. The items loaded on a single factor, with a minimum factor loading of .808; the items combine to form a reliable scale with an alpha of .899. A simple additive index was constructed, adopting a minimum value of 0 and a maximum of 9,[5] where 0 indicates the *lowest level of trust* and 9 the *highest level of trust*. This additive index of Trust in U.S. Government is the dependent variable used in tests of hypothesis 2.

Independent Variables

The chief independent variable pertinent to hypothesis 1 is an indicator variable for whether each respondent had an attachment with any Mexican political party, coded 1 (57.4 percent) for yes and 0 if otherwise. Again, my expectation is that respondents who were politicized in Mexico to a sufficient extent that they held partisan attachments will be relatively more likely to become politically engaged once in the United States. Trust in the Mexican government, the key predictor relevant to hypothesis 2, is measured with responses from a four-category item. Given the original question wording[6] and its potential for debate regarding the distance between item's categories, the Trust in the Mexican Government item was recoded to obtain a set of indicator variables: *a great deal*, *somewhat*, and *not very much*—using *none at all* as the reference category.

In addition to conducting tests of my core hypotheses, a second round of tests was run to gauge whether the impact (if any) of premigration political experiences attenuates over time. To consider this possibility, models include a count of years spent in the United States, along with interactions between this variable and the key predictors, Mexican partisanship and the set of indicator variables of trust in Mexican government. Additional variables included in the models are income, education, and frequency of attendance at religious services. Income reflects estimates of respondents' household income in thousand of dollars per year. The midpoint of the range of every category was the value assigned for every respondent. The resulting variable contains some measurement error, but there is no reason to believe it to be systematic. And the variable is now in a metric with interval and ratio properties. In the case of education, the variable values reflect the number of completed school years by every respondent. Upper cap values were assigned when any given level was indicated as complete. However, if respondents indicated truncated studies at the elementary level, they were assigned with the midpoint value between no studies and completed elementary. The same coding rule was applied to all subsequent levels. Religious attendance[7] was also recoded following the logic of the income and education categorical variables and produced a measure that provides with an estimate number of days attended per year for every respondent. For instance, if respondents indicated attending religious services once per month, they were assigned a value of 12, whereas if respondents indicated attending once a week, they were assigned a value of 52.[8] Also, to account for language skills, two indicator variables were operationalized, bilingual and English-dominant at home, where the reference category is Spanish-dominant at home. Table A1 in the appendix displays the corresponding descriptive statistics for all of the variables included in the models (see http://prq.sagepub.com/supplemental/).

Findings

Table 2 presents a simple cross-tabulation of the item gauging expected U.S. electoral participation and the measure of Mexican partisan identification. A strong relationship is evident. Among Mexican partisans, nearly 81 percent expect to hold a partisan vote preference in the U.S. elections; conversely, among Mexican nonpartisans, nearly 55 percent indicate that they likely would not vote were the U.S. elections held today. At the bivariate level, these results offer solid corroboration of hypothesis 1. Premigration politicization predicts patterns of postmigration political engagement.

To test whether this same effect emerges when other factors that also predict participation are considered, Table 3 presents results from two logistic regression models. The first model offers the central test of hypothesis 1, whereas

Table 2. Immigrants' Expected Electoral Participation in the United States by Partisanship in Mexico

Mexican partisan status	Expected electoral participation in the United States: Projected nonvoter	Projected voter	Total
Mexican nonpartisan	54.7% (93)	45.3% (77)	100.0% (170)
Mexican partisan	19.2% (44)	80.8% (185)	100.0% (229)
N			399

Source: National Bank of Mexico's (Banamex's) Division for Economic and Sociopolitical Studies 2003 Mexican Values Survey (MVS 2003).

Table 3. The Impact of Premigration Partisan Attachments on Postmigration Political Engagement

	Model 1: Expected electoral participation	Model 2: Longitudinal attenuation
Mexican partisan	2.004*** (0.271)	1.738*** (0.482)
Years in the United States	0.032** (0.015)	0.025 (0.018)
Mexican Partisan × Years in the United States	— —	0.018 (0.027)
Age upon arrival	0.001 (0.013)	0.002 (0.013)
Bilingual	0.761 (0.591)	0.779 (0.596)
English	0.747** (0.378)	0.797** (0.387)
Religious attendance	0.005 (0.003)	0.005 (0.003)
Education	0.004 (0.035)	0.006 (0.035)
Income	0.014* (0.008)	0.014* (0.008)
Constant	−1.798*** (0.574)	−1.679*** (0.599)
N	394	394
LR χ^2	LR χ^2 (8) = 84.58	LR χ^2 (9) = 85.02
Prob > χ^2	.000	.000
Pseudo *R*	.168	.169

Standard errors are in parentheses.
*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$. ***$p < .001$ (two-tailed test).

the second model adds an interaction between years in the U.S. and Mexican partisanship to account for any possible attenuation of socialization effects over time. In Table 3's initial model, we see that the coefficient for Mexican partisan affiliation attains statistical significance. Thus, even with a battery of control variables,[9] the evidence still provides corroboration for hypothesis 1. Politicization in one's home country—captured here with a measure of partisan attachment—predicts postmigration political engagement. Immigrants are *not* political blank slates when they enter the United States. Instead, their prior experiences yield effects that resonate across national borders. Furthermore, the second model in Table 3 provides no evidence that this effect evaporates over time. The coefficient on the interaction term is statistically insignificant, and contrary to the logic of an attenuation effect, its sign is positive.[10] Figure 1 highlights both of these points even further. Roughly four out of ten immigrants who held no partisan attachment in their countries of origin will decide to participate electorally in the United States. This proportion doubles for those immigrants who actually held some sort of partisan attachment. The pattern is substantively the same for both immigrants who have arrived recently in the United States and for those who have spent an average of seventeen years in their new host country. In short, prior partisan attachments not only make immigrants approximately twice as likely to be politically engaged once in the United States but also provide them with an enduring political suitcase, with content that does not vanish with the passage of time.

My second hypothesis holds that immigrants who express trust in the government of their country of origin will be more likely to express trust in their new nation following migration. Table 4 presents results of two ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models designed to test this hypothesis. Again, the first model offers the central test of the hypothesis and the second model accounts for the possibility of attenuation of effects over time. Results again demonstrate that political experiences travel with immigrants. The inclusion of an Interpersonal Trust control variable in the model boosts confidence regarding this claim. A logical counterargument to this finding is that more trusting people in any given setting will be more trusting elsewhere once they have crossed nations' borders.[11] However plausible this explanation may be, the prevalence of my finding after controlling for interpersonal trust suggests that individuals who came to trust political institutions in their countries of origin are indeed more likely to become trusting of political institutions in the United States (or another host country) regardless of any variance in their more general tendencies to be trusting.

Recall that the dependent variable has values ranging from 0 to 9. Trust in the Mexican Government, the key independent variable, is coded as a set of indicator variables for distinct (ordered) responses, namely, *a great deal*, *somewhat*, and *not very much*, with *none at all* as the reference category. Thus, as can be seen in Figure 2,

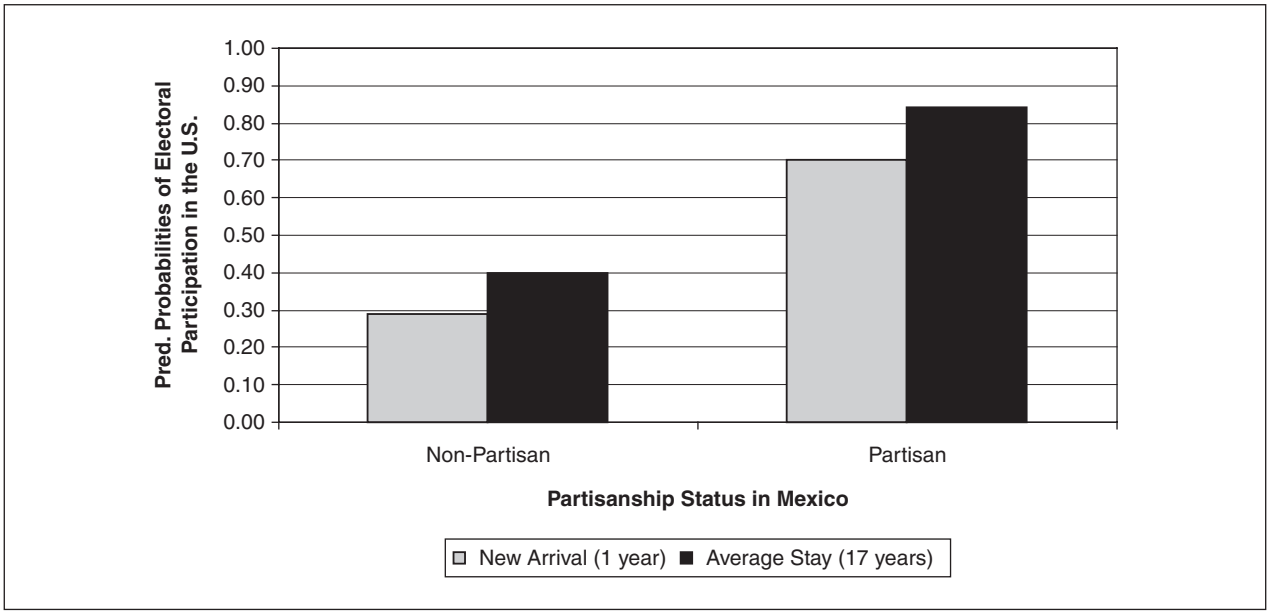

Figure 1. Expected electoral participation in the United States by partisanship status in Mexico and years in the United States
Predicted probabilities were computed using the longitudinal attenuation model in Table 3. The following predictors were varied for this calculation: (1) partisanship status in Mexico, which was assigned values of either 0 (nonpartisan) or 1 (partisan); (2) the number of years spent in the United States, with values of either 1 (new arrivals) or 17 (average); and (3) the corresponding interaction between these two terms. The rest of the predictors were held at their mean values or at their modal category in the case of indicator variables.

as trust in the Mexican government rises from its lowest to its highest category, the predicted trust in government in the United States increases by more than 1 full point on the 10-point scale. Furthermore, as was the case with partisanship and expected electoral participation, the second model in Table 4 reveals no evidence whatsoever that this effect diminishes over time.[12] This is easily confirmed when contrasting the predicted levels of trust in the U.S. government for immigrants who have spent one year in the United States with the predicted levels of those immigrants who have spent already seventeen years in their new home, as depicted in Figure 2.

The thesis advanced in this article is that immigrants' political connections and attitudes with regard to their countries of origin will influence postmigration political activity once these individuals have settled in the United States. This thesis incorporates multiple specific components. Two of those components have been examined in the present article. Specifically, I first considered whether Mexican immigrants' attachment to a Mexican political party influences the likelihood that the individual will be politically engaged in the United States. Second, I examined whether levels of trust in the Mexican government influenced individuals' broader views of the political sphere, including trust in American politics. The analyses reported here offer strong evidence to support both of these hypothesized effects. What happens in Los Mochis does not stay in Los Mochis. Instead, immigrants pack their prior political experiences and views in their political suitcases, later bringing them to bear when those immigrants encounter the American political arena.

Conclusions

The claim that immigrants bring political views with them to their new nations holds powerful intuitive appeal. Nonetheless, scholarly attention to this possibility has been scant. In part, the problem has been a simple lack of data. The ideal data to test the thesis I have developed would include premigration observations of individuals' political attitudes and actions in their nations of origin, coupled with corresponding postmigration data once they have settled in their new countries. Acquisition of such data would be an extraordinary undertaking, both for its magnitude and for the many years that respondents would need to be tracked before meaningful and instructive results could be obtained. Absent such ideal data, we must make do with the viable alternatives that are available. In the present study, analysis of data from the 2003 MVS has been quite revealing, but it is also important to recognize the limits of the current approach.

Empirical analyses in this article have focused on first-generation Mexican immigrants to the United States. What we have seen is that there is a correspondence between survey respondents' attitudes about Mexican politics and their views and actions within the U.S. context. In particular, the existence of an attachment to a Mexican political party is linked with a heightened

Table 4. The Impact of Trust in the Mexican Government on Trust in the U.S. Government

	Model 1: Trust in the U.S. Government	Model 2: Longitudinal Attenuation
Trust in Mexican government (a great deal)	1.303***	0.855
	(0.384)	(0.720)
Trust in Mexican government (somewhat)	0.714**	0.120
	(0.355)	(0.698)
Trust in Mexican government (not very much)	0.606*	0.357
	(0.368)	(0.705)
Interpersonal trust	–0.358	–0.365
	(0.304)	(0.305)
Efficacy	0.381**	0.393**
	(0.161)	(0.162)
Years in the United States	0.028**	0.005
	(0.014)	(0.031)
Trust in Mexican Government (A Great Deal) × Years in the United States	—	0.028
	—	(0.037)
Trust in Mexican Government (Somewhat) × Years in the United States	—	0.036
	—	(0.037)
Trust in Mexican Government (Not Very Much) × Years in the United States	—	0.016
	—	(0.036)
Age upon arrival	0.049***	0.048***
	(0.013)	(0.013)
Bilingual	–0.826	–0.868
	(0.530)	(0.533)
English	0.118	0.109
	(0.375)	(0.377)
Religious attendance	0.003	0.003
	(0.003)	(0.003)
Education	–0.001	0.001
	(0.035)	(0.035)
Income	0.004	0.004
	(0.007)	(0.007)
Constant	2.705***	3.056***
	(0.713)	(0.837)
N	376	376
F	$F(12, 363) = 3.92$	$F(15,360) = 3.19$
Prob > F	.000	.000
Adjusted R^2	.085	.081

Standard errors are in parentheses.
*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$. ***$p < .001$ (two-tailed test).

likelihood of participation in U.S. elections, and trust in Mexico's government corresponds with trust in American government. These findings are consistent with the thesis that premigration political experiences yield effects that travel to and endure in new political contexts. Consequently, it follows that explanations of immigrant political behavior necessarily will be incomplete if we fail to account for premigration politicization.

Although current results are strongly consistent with the hypotheses I have advanced, it should be clear that the tests conducted here are less than definitive. Survey respondents were queried about the United States and Mexico within the same survey instrument in interviews conducted postmigration. It is clearly quite reasonable to assume that a Mexican immigrant's attitudes about Mexican politics predate the person's attitudes about U.S. politics and also that the years the person spent living in Mexico were consequential for partisan attachment, trust in government, and so on. But although these assumptions are reasonable, the possibility remains that the person's attitudes about Mexican politics continued to develop postmigration, or even that the immigrant was apolitical before coming to the United States, with experiences in the United States shaping views of the immigrant's nation of origin. Therefore, as often is the case in research in the social sciences, present tests establish the continuing viability of my hypotheses, yet further opportunities remain to test my thesis more fully. For instance, two additional strategies warrant brief mention.

First, as a means to address the possibility that something about the immigration experience altered respondents' views of Mexican politics, it is possible to compare the views of Mexicans now living in the United States with those who still reside in Mexico. If, after controlling for demographics, their attitudes about Mexico are found to be fundamentally similar, this would strongly suggest that views of Mexican politics are indeed causally prior to political engagement in the United States. A second approach would entail modeling survey respondents' premigration political experiences with data on the political climate in their nations of origin at the time that they left for the United States. For instance, does it matter for future political behavior if a Nicaraguan migrated during authoritarian rule, socialism, or democracy? This approach would provide a less precise account of individuals' political views than does the current study's survey-based method. However, this alternative offers a strong response to questions of causal order, as it cannot be, to take one example, that a person's postmigration voting behavior in the United States caused the individual to flee the Somoza regime in the mid-1970s. Also, this approach would allow one to test whether democratic regimes equip individuals any better than authoritarian ones to become politically engaged after migration. Political engagement can be measured beyond electoral participation by incorporating other political acts as dependent variables. By the same token, this alternative approach would allow one to test whether democratic regimes produce citizens who are more likely to trust

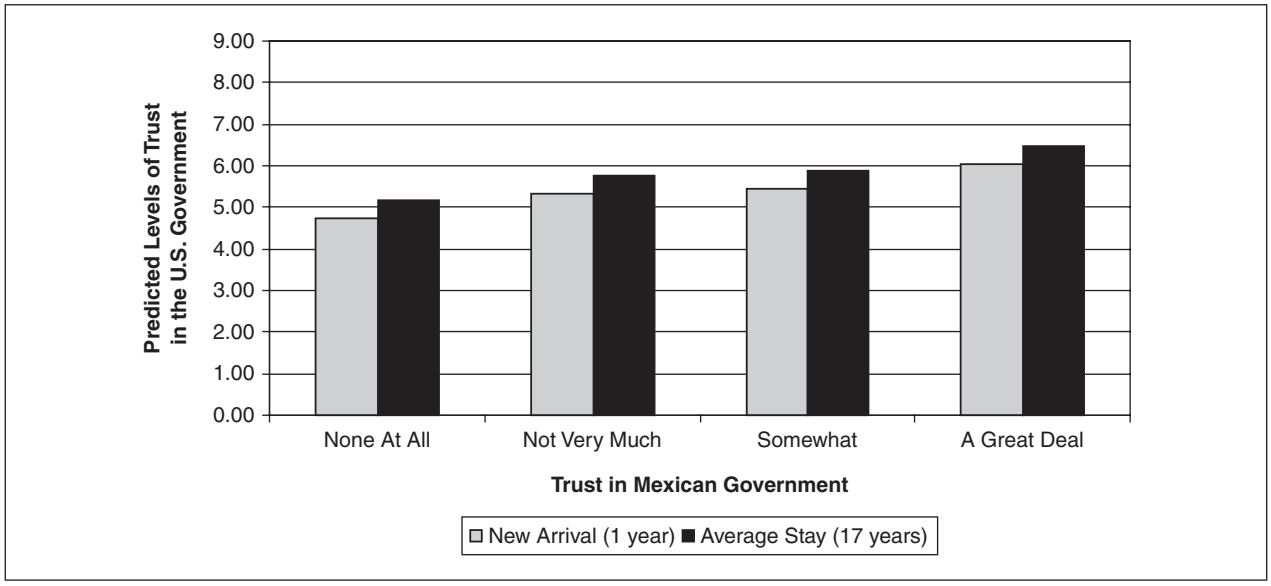

Figure 2. Expected levels of trust in the U.S. government by levels of trust in the Mexican government and years in the United States

Predicted probabilities were computed using the longitudinal attenuation model in Table 4. The following predictors were varied for this calculation: (1) the set of indicator variables regarding respondents' levels of trust in Mexican government; (2) the number of years spent in the United States, with values of either 1 (new arrivals) or 17 (average); and (3) the corresponding interactions between these terms. The rest of the predictors were held at their mean values or at their modal category in the case of indicator variables.

political institutions than their counterparts who are faced with authoritarian rule.

The core thesis advanced in this study is that immigrants' political suitcases will influence postmigration political predispositions and behaviors once these individuals have crossed nations' borders. In other words, immigrants' political attitudes and behaviors in their new political world are best understood if conceptualized as rooted in a process of "imported socialization." If one decides to ignore that immigrants' views of the old political world are linked to their views of the new political world, one's understanding of postmigration political engagement necessarily will be incomplete. When immigrants are treated as political blank slates, we completely overlook these important components of political behavior.

If policy makers and political strategists ignore "*el otro lado*" of immigrants' political behavior, their policy and strategy choices will be myopic, at best. For one, when treated as blank slates, immigrants may be required to fulfill unnecessarily long residency requirements before applying for citizenship. Although current policies may have been designed to ensure political incorporation, an incomplete understanding of immigrants' behavior may result in policies that delay rather than foster these individuals' engagement in the American polity. Also, my findings suggest that, though to varying degrees, identifications with any of the three main Mexican parties provide an important baseline to become engaged with either the Democrats or with the Republicans. Therefore, both Democrats and Republicans should not consider Latino immigrants political blank slates when designing outreach strategies targeting these individuals.

The challenge of studying the effects of prior political socialization is considerable. My assessment is that development of a full account of how immigrants' past experiences influence political behavior in the United States will require multiple complementary studies using multiple methodological strategies. Admittedly, the present study is but one among the very many efforts required for the task at hand. However, my hope is that the present findings will join with contributions from other scholars to test more comprehensively the claims I have advanced. The results of this article, which establish clear links between views of immigrants' old and new political worlds, provide an important first step.

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Notes

1. Admittedly, the inclusion of Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (2002) in the "sociopsychological" school is open to debate. I decided to include them for two main reasons: the authors' claim of partisan identification as a social identity and the further implication of stability over time that the social identity theory embraces. That said, *Partisan Hearts and Minds* is the most integrationist of all the scholarly efforts. Thus, not surprisingly, it is the one that departs the most from the other two sociopsychological schools and the one that shares a set of common assumptions with the rationalist approach.
2. Therefore, it will be important to account for age upon arrival in all of the analyses conducted throughout the study.
3. This article will not offer tests of directionality. Due to data constraints, tests regarding intensity are limited to the dichotomy attachment/nonattachment, as distinction between weak and strong partisans was not included in the questionnaire of the original survey.
4. "*Al otro lado*" is a very common phrase used among Mexican immigrants to the United States: it refers to the fact that they have crossed "to the other side" (literal translation of "*al otro lado*") of the border.
5. The three original items are coded on a 4-point scale, where 1 is the minimum value and 4 is the maximum one. The descriptive statistics of these original items are shown in Table 1. The items were rescaled to range from 0 to 3 and then summed, giving a final range from 0 to 9.
6. First-generation immigrants were administered the survey questionnaire in their language of preference, namely, either Spanish or English. Roughly seven out of ten preferred to be interviewed in Spanish (69.4 percent). In Spanish, the question wording utilizes the term "*confianza*," which properly translated into English should be "trust." However, the English version of the questionnaire incorporated the term "confidence." In an effort to determine whether this question wording may have altered the results, I compared the distribution of the dependent variable across groups. The distributions are substantively similar. In addition, I reran the analyses incorporating an indicator variable to account for the preferred language for the interview, with a value of 1 to indicate if the interview was conducted in English and a value of 0 if it was conducted in Spanish. Although the sign of the coefficient was negative, which is in line with other research suggesting that acculturation (measured here with English language skills) generally leads to more distrusting attitudes toward the U.S. government, the coefficient for this indicator variable did not attain statistical significance.
7. This variable was recoded in two different ways. The first procedure is denoted in the body of the text. The second one was a binary option, where regular attendees are differentiated from nonregulars. Two different cut-points to differentiate regulars from nonregulars were tested. On the first round, regulars included those respondents who either indicated attending religious services "once a week" or "more than once a week." On the second round, regulars were coded to include also those respondents who indicated attending "once a month." Regardless of the two different recoding schemes, this control variable rendered substantively similar and statistically identical results.
8. Respondents who indicated attending "once a year" were assigned a value of 1; respondents who indicated attending either "less frequently than once a year" or "practically never" were assigned a value of 0. Respondents who indicated attending "only on major holidays" were coded with a value of 2, which assumes that these individuals attend religious services during two major holidays per year. Finally, respondents who indicated attending "more than once a week" were assigned with a value of 104, which assumes that these individuals engage in two religious services per week.
9. Given data constraints, the model does not include any measure for party contacts in the American setting or for mobilization efforts, raising the question of a possible omitted variable bias in these models. However, the literature on the topic has made clear the direction of such effects. Partisanship and participation should be expected to increase as mobilization efforts take place (see, for an example, Garcia and de la Garza 1985).
10. In models 1 and 2, five cases are lost due to missing data on the independent variables. To address an anonymous reviewer's concern regarding the potential impact of these missing data on the results of the models presented here, I conducted a critical exercise of imputation. I am thankful to Brian J. Gaines, who provided me with extremely useful advice on this matter. Instead of random imputation, I systematically substituted missing data on the independent variables with values that would counter my core hypotheses. For instance, a person reporting not being a partisan in the United States was assigned with high values on education and income. In doing so, I tried to construct the most adverse possible scenario: the one that stacks the deck against my theory. It should be clear that this exercise poses

a much more rigorous test than would application of a standard imputation program. The results of this "worst-case" data imputation exercise rendered no substantive changes. Given the outcome of this exercise and the fact that my analyses only lose 1.25 percent of the cases in the models of partisanship, the models reported in this study are the original ones.

11. Consistent with my thesis, some research on social capital (Putnam 1995, 2000) suggests a possible transference of trust across contexts. My argument is that this transference occurs because the effects of prior socialization experiences endure following migration. An alternate possibility is that trust is partly rooted in forces apart from socialization, such as personality (e.g., Mondak and Halperin 2008). Controlling for interpersonal trust addresses any general tendency of some individuals to be more trusting than others. Importantly, note that even if trust is influenced by factors such as personality, the implication would be the same regarding my general thesis that immigrants do not come to the United States as political blank slates.
12. In models 3 and 4, twenty-three cases are lost due to missing data on the independent variables. I conducted the same critical exercise of imputation previously described. I systematically substituted missing data on the independent variables with values that would counter my core hypotheses. For instance, a person scoring high on trust in the U.S. government was assigned with low values of trust in the Mexican government. Once again, the results of this "worst-case" data imputation exercise rendered no substantive changes. In the case of the models of trust there were eleven missing cases. However, those were due to missing data on the dependent variable. Given the outcome of this exercise and the fact that my analyses only lose 5.75 percent of the cases in the models of trust, the models reported in this study are the original ones.

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