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The Political Impact of the New Hispanic Second Generation

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Abstract

The rapid growth of the Hispanic population in the United States, particularly those of the second generation, who have automatic rights of citizenship, could be expected to result in increased influence and representation in politics for this group. We show that the effect of a sheer growth in numbers at the national level is diminished by several factors: low probabilities of naturalisation by Hispanic immigrants; non-participation in voting, especially by the US-born generations; and concentration of growth in Congressional Districts that already have Hispanic Representatives. It is a challenge for public policy to reduce the lag between population growth and political representation.

Keywords

Immigration; Political Participation; Citizenship; Hispanic Second Generation; United States

Introduction

From less than 5 per cent in 1970, the Hispanic share of the US population jumped to nearly 15 per cent in 2006—unquestionably the largest minority group in the country. Among the many possible consequences of this growth, much attention has focused on its potential political impact. From local offices (the election of Antonio Villaraigosa as Mayor of Los Angeles) to national strategies (then-president Bush's intention to secure a new constituency for the Republican Party), the general assumption is that the demographic surge will translate into greater influence and group representation.

But if a group's population size can translate into political muscle, there are reasons to expect that this translation will not be immediate or smooth. Using annual population estimates by the Bureau of the Census for 1980–2004 (Gibson and Jung 2002; US Census Bureau 1999, 2004) and information on Hispanic Congressmen compiled by the Library of Congress (1995), Figure 1 illustrates the persistent lag in Hispanic political influence in Congress. For reference, the figure also includes 1970, when there was only one Hispanic Congressman and Hispanics were close to 5 per cent of the population. It was not until 2004, more than 30 years later, that the share of Representatives of Hispanic background (by then

6 per cent) reached their 1970 population share. And these two trend lines are, if anything, increasingly divergent.

It could be argued that the lag in representation is a function of the large size of Congressional Districts. Racially polarised voting, it has been posited, results in African American and Latino Congressional candidates rarely winning elections outside of majority-minority districts (Lublin 1997a). Given their scale, perhaps it is hard to create districts in which Hispanics can achieve the level of concentration required to elect a co-ethnic politician. This argument is weak on two grounds. First, the same lag has been documented even at the local level in cities like Los Angeles and New York, where Hispanics have a long-standing presence (Logan and Mollenkopf 2003). In LA, for example, Hispanics were 46.5 per cent of the population in 2000, but only four out of 15 City Council seats (26.7 per cent) were held by Hispanics—roughly proportional to the Hispanic share of the population 20 years earlier (27.5 per cent in 1980). Second, minority candidates frequently win elections in districts where they are less than half of the population. An absolute minority-majority is not a prerequisite to having effective political influence. Epstein and O'Halloran (1999) suggest that districts in the order of 45 per cent black voting-age population maximise the expected number of votes for minority-supported legislation. Black population shares as low as 45 per cent can provide black candidates with a 'near-certain chance of election' while, for Hispanics, a combined Hispanic and black population of 55 per cent was required to provide a 'substantial likelihood' of Hispanic success (Grofman and Handley 1989: 439–42).

Figure 2 shows that even smaller shares of Hispanics can offer a reasonable chance of electing a Hispanic Congressional Representative. This figure pools together all Congresses from 1972 through 2004. It is based on our tabulation of Hispanic origin from listings and biographies of Representatives provided by Library of Congress (1995) and data on the population composition of the voting-age population of the District at the time of Congressional elections (as estimated for 1972–1996 by Lublin 1997b and by the US Census Bureau 2000a for 1998–2004). Evidently it is common for districts to elect a Hispanic with a Hispanic population as low as 40 per cent, and possibly even smaller shares.

What, then, is the source of the lag in representation? A specific handicap for Hispanics is the large share of undocumented immigrants among them, possibly more than nine million in 2006 (Passel 2006). In the terms used by Bullock and Hood (2006), non-citizenship establishes a barrier between latent and potential political influence. Another handicap is low voter registration and turnout among citizens—the barrier between potential and actual influence. A report by the Pew Hispanic Center on the 2004 election also pointed out that:

A high percentage of Hispanics are either too young to vote or are ineligible because they are not citizens. As a result, a population increase of 5.7 million Latinos between 2000 and 2004 yielded only 2.1 million new eligible voters. In addition, Hispanic voter participation rates lag those of whites or blacks so that the number of Hispanic voters increased by just 1.4 million (Suro *et al.* 2005: 1).

Because citizenship is such a crucial element of electoral arithmetic, our analysis emphasises the role played by the second and later generations of Hispanic Americans who were born as citizens and who are reaching voting age in unprecedented numbers. We will show, however, that, although the second generation is a major source of potential voters, it has limited impact on actual voting. Further, the very heavy concentration of Hispanic voting strength in Congressional Districts that already have a Hispanic Representative means that the increasing influence for this group in the near term will be much more localised.

There are two main parts to our analysis. The first focuses on citizenship. We begin by presenting trends in the US population between 1990 and 2000 by race/ethnicity and citizenship. We use multivariate methods to analyse the determinants of naturalisation among immigrants, asking particularly how Hispanics compare to other groups and how assimilation (indicated especially by years in the US and English-language use) affects naturalisation among them. The second addresses the issue of electoral participation. Again we compare Hispanics to other groups, controlling for other personal characteristics, and among Hispanics we ask how their generation in the US, in conjunction with their country of origin, affects whether or not they vote. Finally we draw conclusions about the prospects for increasing Hispanic representation in Congress.

Demographic Shifts and Citizenship

Table 1 reports results from the 5 per cent Public Use Microdata Sample from Census 2000 showing racial/ethnic differences in citizenship status for adults and for young people. The PUMS has the advantage of a nationally representative sample offering large sample sizes of various foreign-born racial groups. Most immediately relevant to electoral participation is citizenship among persons aged 18 and above, the second panel in Table 1. The table reiterates what is already well known about the share of immigrants in the population: among white and black adults, well under 10 per cent are foreign-born, while immigrants are a majority of Hispanics and more than three-quarters of Asians. This means that differential rates of naturalisation have a great potential impact on the volume of Hispanic and Asian voters.

For Hispanics in particular, this is a depressing effect. Only 30.1 per cent of Hispanic adult immigrants are naturalised citizens, compared to the national average of 42.9 per cent for all adult immigrants. With nearly 9 million non-citizens in the over-18 Hispanic population—more than half the total non-citizen adult population of the US—it is clear that failure to naturalise is an important constraint on potential voting strength.

What is the source of the disparity across groups in rates of naturalisation? Much of the existing work has supported classic assimilation theory (Liang 1994) and has shown that many of the individual factors that influence political participation in the general population (see Verba *et al.* 1993) also apply to immigrant naturalisation. These include educational attainment, income, ability to speak English and length of time in the United States (Jones-Correa 2001; Liang 1994; Yang 1994). Two other measures represent what studies refer to as ‘rootedness’ in the United States (Portes and Curtis 1987): marital status and number of children. Marriage is thought to increase stability and social networks, and having children suggests greater levels of commitment to remaining in the United States (Bueker 2003, 2006). Because Hispanic immigrants differ from immigrants from other origins on these characteristics, it is possible that they can account for low overall Hispanic naturalisation. Alternatively or additionally there may be a specific ‘Latino effect’ that remains to be interpreted.

Data and Measures for Naturalisation

To address this issue we examine individual-level logistic regression models of naturalisation, paying particular attention to differences in predictors for non-Hispanic white, Hispanic, black and Asian immigrants. The analysis relies on the 5 per cent PUMS of the 2000 US census. Our multivariate analysis is restricted to the immigrants who were five years old and above in 2000. Most previous analyses using PUMS have been limited to immigrants, aged 18 and over, who stayed for at least five years in the United States and therefore became eligible to apply for citizenship. Table 1, however, shows that a considerable proportion (17 per cent) of those who were under the age of 18 were

naturalised. Therefore we exclude only those who are less than five years old, since the English-speaking variable used in our analysis is defined only for older persons. Because PUMS data include all household members, there are potential problems of autocorrelation in estimating each specific multivariate model. Our sampling procedure is first to select all immigrants of a given racial/ethnic category, then to select one person from every household.

The analysis utilises four broad racial categories, constructed from two different variables—race and Hispanic origin. Hispanic origin is understood by the Census Bureau to be a reflection of ethnicity rather than race, and therefore the Census determines Hispanic identity and racial identity separately. We combined these two variables to construct four racial categories that structure much of our analysis: non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic black, Asian and Hispanic. If a respondent is of any kind of Hispanic origin or descent—if they fit within any of the Hispanic-origin categories—we considered them ‘Hispanic’ regardless of their racial identity. Only those individuals who said that they were white alone but did not indicate any Hispanic identity were considered to be non-Hispanic white. Those who said they were black (in combination with any other race) but not Hispanic were considered to be non-Hispanic black. Asians are those who said they are Asian (alone or in combination with another race except for black) and not Hispanic.

Variables measured at the individual level include age, gender, marital status (married or not married), number of own children (of any age or marital status), length of residence in the United States, English-speaking ability, income, education (for persons aged 25 and above), age at immigration, country of origin and occupation. Dummy variables were created to reflect categories of education and age. Household income, originally a continuous variable, was reconstructed as a categorical variable with five categories in order to assess nonlinearity. English-speaking ability indicates whether the respondent speaks only English at home and also how well the respondent who speaks a language other than English at home, speaks English. Five categories are included in the analysis: the first is ‘Does not speak English’ and, among those who do speak English, the others are ‘Speaks, not well’, ‘Speaks well’, ‘Speaks very well’ and ‘Speaks only English’. Age at immigration is computed as actual age minus the years of US residence.

Occupation variables were included as a partial control for illegal status. We employ the occupation measure developed by Passel (2005) and Passell and Clark (1998). Using the 1998 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) in the PUMS file, 22 specific occupations in which illegal immigrants are highly represented (e.g. drywall/ceiling-tile installer, grounds maintenance workers, food preparation workers etc.) and whose proportion of illegal immigrants exceeds the proportion in the workforce (4.3 per cent) are classified as having a high probability of being illegal. High-level professional occupations such as physicians, lawyers and engineers, and protective-service occupations—police officers and firefighters—that require licencing, are classified as having a zero probability of being illegal immigrants. Passel (2006) has validated these categories with the results of survey research among immigrants whose status was legalised under the amnesty provisions of the 1990s.

Results for Naturalisation

These are reported in Table 2. Net of other factors, Asians are more likely than non-Hispanic white immigrants to naturalise, while both Hispanics and blacks are significantly less likely. Hispanics’ odds of naturalisation are nearly 20 per cent less than those of non-Hispanic whites. In most respects, however, the predictors of naturalisation are the same for Hispanics as they are for all groups combined. Those above the age of 55, who have lived for more than ten years in the US, who speak at least some English (even if not well), have at least a

high-school education and who own their homes, are much more likely to gain citizenship. These are the expected effects, and the general profile of Hispanic immigrants on these variables further contributes to their low odds of naturalisation.

Group Differences in Political Participation

The traditional next step in attaining political influence is to translate citizenship into electoral participation. African Americans are well known to be the most active in the political arena, controlling for compositional differences (Antunes and Gaitz 1975; Ulhaner *et al.* 1989; Verba and Nie 1972), though Bobo and Gilliam (1990) suggest that this advantage is diminishing over time. Latinos and Asian Americans are the least active (Leighley and Vedlitz 1999; Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Segura and Rodrigues 2006). Such group differences are often interpreted in conjunction with the much higher shares of immigrants in Asian and Latino communities—being an immigrant or being a member of a group in which newcomers predominate could offer a partial explanation of what appear to be racial or ethnic differences. Several authors argue that foreign-born status alone leads to a lower propensity to vote, even when controlling for other factors (Bass and Casper 2001; Cho 1999; DeSipio 1996).

In contrast, several studies of Hispanics point in the opposite direction: they suggest that naturalised Latino citizens actually vote *more* than native-born Latinos. Barreto and his colleagues (Barreto 2005; Barreto *et al.* 2005), in an analysis of a 2002 sample from Los Angeles and Orange County, demonstrate that naturalised foreign-born Latinos were more likely to vote than persons of any other background. Pantoja *et al.* (2001) also show that, in California, the rate of voting among recently naturalised citizens was the highest compared to all other groups (Latino and non-Latino). These authors call into question the notion that *ceteris parabis* we should expect foreign-born citizens to be more apathetic when it comes to voting. Especially in a ‘politically charged environment,’ argue Pantoja *et al.* (2001: 730), immigrants who choose to naturalise represent a select category of persons ‘who seek enfranchisement as an act of political expression’. Looking at the question from the perspective of the second generation, Barreto (2005, following Wattenberg 2002) argues that we should expect increased political socialisation—i.e. increased time spent in the US—to lead to *more* political apathy amongst immigrants, particularly given the overall low voting turnout in the American electorate. Naturalisation itself requires a certain amount of exposure to the political system, exposure that could be empowering and thus promote other forms of political participation (Segal 2002). Hritzuk and Park (2000) extend this point to other aspects of assimilation, pointing out that Hispanic immigrants with stronger ties to friends and organisations in their country of origin also participate more in US politics. Johnson *et al.* (2003) similarly show that Spanish-speaking Latinos in a South Texas border area were more likely to vote than English-speaking Latinos.

Hence we cannot take for granted that members of the second and later generations will participate more actively than naturalised immigrants. One of the most systematic studies of this question (Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001) found that generational differences vary by racial/ethnic group. Only for Asians is there a simple linear relationship between generation and voting: the second generation votes more than the first, and native-born Asians or native-born parents are the most likely to vote. Among whites, the second generation is more likely to vote than immigrants or later generations. For Latinos, the likelihood of voting was lower among second-and third-plus-generation respondents than among naturalised immigrants.

To explore this issue we focus on factors which may distinguish Hispanics from other groups and may be associated with being an immigrant. These especially include

generational differences between the foreign-born and their children and grandchildren, duration of residence in the US and English-language ability. Because standard assimilation perspectives might lead us to expect that the native-born children of immigrants would have more access to the resources and sources of motivation that enable and encourage political participation, we control for these, especially age, education and income. Some researchers argue that group differences should disappear when these variables are controlled. Low rates of political participation by Latinos and Asians, according to these authors, stem primarily from a shortage of socio-economic resources and high shares of non-citizens (Lien 1994). Group differences in voting do become insignificant in some studies when socioeconomic status (SES) is controlled for (Antunes and Gaitz 1975; Lien 1994; Uhlaner *et al.* 1989; Verba *et al.* 1993).

We also move beyond broad racial and ethnic categories by analysing specific national-origin groups. This is important, given the well-recognised proposition that immigrants from different countries ‘possess varied political histories, come with distinct cultural experiences, and encounter very different receptions’ (Bueker 2005: 105; see also Koopmans 1999; Portes 1995). Bueker’s analyses suggest that, as it does for other forms of incorporation, national origin importantly shapes immigrants’ political incorporation (Bueker 2005, 2006).

Overall, Bueker (2005) finds significant and persistent relationships between country of origin and voting among naturalised citizens from five out of the ten national-origin groups in her study, even when controlling for income, education, length of residence and other demographic characteristics. For Hispanic groups, she finds that naturalised Cubans have a higher voter turnout than any other national-origin group. Mexican origin has no statistically significant relationship with voting, after controlling for socio-economic and demographic variables.

Following this line of inquiry, we probe how country of origin—as a proxy for political socialisation and experiences in both the home and the host country—impacts on voting amongst naturalised Latino immigrants. We move further by investigating whether political experience, linked to country of origin, impacts on voting outcomes beyond the first generation of immigrants and into the second generation.

Data and Measures for Voting

This analysis is based on the Current Population Survey (CPS) from the years 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002 and 2004. In these years the November survey includes a voting and registration supplement. The CPS has been collecting data on voting and registration since 1994. It has the advantage of a nationally representative sample and, most importantly for our purposes, it is a large enough dataset to contain adequate samples of immigrants, both naturalised and non-naturalised, for four major racial categories. Since the CPS also contains questions that identify the nativity and citizenship status of respondents, it is well-suited for analyses of the voting and registration of immigrants, members of the ‘second generation’ and native-born persons with native parents.

The sample is composed of pooled data from each of five years of CPS data. Analyses were conducted only for those cases eligible to register. Therefore, to create our final sample, we selected only persons over 18 years of age in a given year who were also citizens (including both the US-born and the naturalised foreign-born). For the regression analyses, in order to correct for autocorrelation between household members, we then randomly selected one person per household. In all analyses, cases are weighted by the CPS ‘second stage/final step’ weight (PWSSWGT) and then divided by 1,000 to avoid artificially inflating the overall sample size.

The key outcome variable is self-reported information about whether or not individuals voted in the November election of the year of data collection. The specific question about voting is phrased as follows: ‘In any election some people are not able to vote because they are sick or busy or have some other reason, and others do not want to vote. Did (you/name) vote in the election held on Tuesday, November ____?’ This question is only asked of citizens aged 18 and above.

Most of our analyses utilise four broad racial categories, constructed from two different questions posed in the CPS basic survey—the race and the Hispanic-origin questions. The race question (‘PERACE’) in the basic CPS allows respondents to identify themselves as fitting within one of five racial categories, with the option to chose ‘other’ or ‘something else’. Specifically, respondents are asked to answer the question ‘What is your race? Are you White, Black, American Indian, Aleut or Eskimo, Asian or Pacific Islander or something else?’ It is important to note that, unlike the 2000 decennial Census, respondents are *not* given the option to select multiple race categories. A separate CPS question about Hispanic origin or descent (‘PRORIGIN’) allows individuals to identify as Mexican American, Chicano, Mexican (Mexicano), Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, Other Spanish, All Other or Don’t Know.

We constructed dummy variables to reflect ‘generation in the US’ for immigrants and their descendants. To do this, we used information contained in the Basic CPS about parental birthplace. Those born outside the US are considered to be first-generation; those born in the US who had at least one parent born outside the US are classified as members of the ‘second generation’; and individuals born in the US whose parents were also born in the US (or in US territories) are classified as the third-plus generation. For first- and second-generation Hispanics we added information on their (or their parents’) country of birth. This yields a set of variables that reflect both country of origin (relevant to theories of prior political socialisation or group mobilisation in the US) and generation.

The only language measure available in the November CPS is a variable—coded dichotomously—indicating whether a household is Spanish-speaking only (meaning that all members of a household only speak Spanish), or non-Spanish-speaking. We use this household variable as a rough indicator of the English ability of individuals within households in our analysis of the Hispanic subsample.

Variables reflecting information about both households and individuals were constructed to allow us to examine the effect of social and community ‘rootedness’ (Bueker 2006; Portes and Curtis 1987). These include family characteristics, marital status and measures of individual residential mobility—from the Voting and Registration supplement, this last is a measure of how long an individual has been at a specific address, for periods of time ranging from less than one year to over five years. The Basic CPS offers data on age, together with information about marital status for individual cases, and also has the advantage of offering information about the presence or absence of a spouse, shown to be important by Bueker (2003, 2006). We constructed a dichotomous variable indicating whether an individual is married or not, and an additional variable used as a proxy for family size or the presence of children: the number of individuals under age 18 in each household.

Home ownership can be understood as both an indicator of rootedness and also of economic attainment or SES, both of which are expected to promote political participation. It is treated here as a dichotomous variable indicating whether respondents were home-owners or renters/tenants. We also include total family income grouped into five categories.

Results for Voting

Table 3 provides an overall assessment of the differences across groups and generations in voting, combining cases across all years in the study. It reports the net percentage of eligible citizens who registered and voted in a given year. One way to read these data is to compare across groups in the same generation. In the third-plus generation, Hispanics stand out strongly for their low levels of voting—45 per cent compared to 59–60 per cent among other groups. Because a majority of voting-eligible Hispanic citizens are in this generation, their very low participation greatly depresses the Hispanic average. Within other generations, Hispanic voting-age citizens are more similar to Asians, but both of these largely immigrant groups are much less likely to vote than are whites and blacks. This is the participation hierarchy that has been noted in several other studies.

These same data can also be read in terms of generational differences within a racial/ethnic group. From an assimilation perspective one would expect a simple monotonic relationship, with participation lowest among the foreign-born. This is the pattern for Asians, but for no other group. Differences are modest but in the opposite direction for Hispanics. Results are inconsistent for second-generation blacks (the lowest voting level) and whites (the highest).

What explains the overall group and generational differences? We address this question with logistic regression analyses of voting. In an initial step we estimate a single model that pools together persons from all racial/ethnic groups. Dummy variables represent each group category to identify any effects of racial-group membership that might persist even when controlling for other factors or predictors. We then present a separate model for Hispanics. The models also include controls for the year from which the original CPS data were collected. This is of concern because registration and turnout are expected to be higher in Presidential election years than in Congressional election years.

Table 4 presents model coefficients. Net of other factors, are there racial and ethnic differences in these findings, and is there a significant difference in political participation across generations? Let us first consider only the third-plus-generation categories. Compared to whites, blacks are substantially more likely to vote; Asians and Hispanics are less likely. Now consider the generational differences within groups: among whites, immigrants are less likely but the second generation is more likely to vote than the third-plus. These differences are statistically significant and they demonstrate again the ‘second-generation surge’ for whites that was revealed in Table 3. For other groups we do not have a direct test of significance, but we can assess the pattern of differences in the size of the coefficient for each generation. For blacks and Asians there appears to be a monotonic progression from the lowest level of participation in the first generation to the highest in the third. But, for Hispanics, all coefficients are negative, and the smallest negative coefficient is for the immigrant generation. Hence once again we see that Hispanic immigrants are the most likely to vote and the third-plus generation the least likely.

Aside from generation and race/ethnicity, the multivariate analyses show significant and theoretically important effects of people’s resources and rootedness. As was also found in the analysis of naturalisation above, these variables generally add to the disparities between Hispanics and other groups:

- Effects of education, income, and home ownership are uniformly in the direction of higher participation for people with more resources.
- Measures of rootedness generally show higher participation among persons who could be expected to have stronger connections to the local community: those who have lived more than five years in their current place of residence, older persons,

women and married persons. However having more children in the household depresses voting.

Table 4 also includes a separate analysis for Hispanics. Here we assess national-origin differences along with generational effects, with Mexicans, Cubans and Dominicans being separately identified. Compared to Hispanics whose parents were born in the US (the third-plus generation), Latinos in the first and second generations are *not* consistently less likely to vote. There are, in fact, three different trajectories here that are more associated with country of origin than with generation: Mexicans (who can be separately identified in this dataset only in the first and second generations) participate less than other Hispanics, with little difference between the first and second generations; Dominicans are more likely than all others to vote, again regardless of generation; and Cubans have initially high participation—not surprising in light of the known political influence of Cubans, particularly in Florida—but this subsides toward an average level in the second generation.

Most individual background characteristics have similar effects among Hispanics as they do in the full sample. Hispanics are the only group for which the CPS provides a language measure. Persons living in households where only Spanish is spoken are more likely to vote, rather than less likely, as predicted by assimilation theory (mirroring the finding by Johnson *et al.* 2003). This finding adds to the indeterminacy of intergenerational acculturation.

Hispanic voting does decline by generation, but the multivariate analysis shows that this can be attributed in part to the weight of high-participating Dominicans and Cubans among immigrant citizens and in part to the positive effect of Spanish-language use that is also highest in the first generation. These effects are strong enough to outweigh the countervailing effect of lower income, education and other human capital variables in the immigrant generation.

The Hispanic Second Generation and Congressional Representation

We return now to the original question of how growth in the Hispanic population may affect this group's political influence at the national level. Our analyses show that the immigrant generation has a low probability of naturalisation and therefore we must discount its electoral force. Table 1 revealed that, in terms of sheer number of voting-age citizens, the greatest contribution will be from the surge of US-born Hispanics who are currently under 18 but who will inevitably—in 10, 15 or at least 18 years' time—become eligible to register. The 10 million Hispanics in this category will nearly double the Hispanic presence among voting-age citizens when these youths reach the age of 18. Their impact will be delayed, of course, because young adults tend not to vote. Whether Hispanic or not, 18–24-year-olds' odds of voting are only 8 per cent as high as those of people over 55. But in addition we have seen that Hispanic voting dips in the second and later generations, which will further diminish the effect of this natural demographic surge.

To these obstacles we now add one more: the regional concentration of the Hispanic second generation. Hispanics are not, of course, dispersed around the nation, despite some recent trends in that direction; rather they constitute a large share of the population in some areas while appearing in small numbers in most areas. Where will the national doubling of the voting-age Hispanic citizens be located, and how will this growth affect their likelihood of electing a Hispanic Representative?

It is not easy to answer this question, even with the simple approach that we take here: adding the current under-18 citizen population to the existing adult citizen population (a sophisticated projection of the future citizen population—based on group-specific age structure, mortality and migration—would be still more difficult). To do this requires

estimates by Congressional District of the number of Hispanic citizens over age 18 in 2000 (to represent the 'current' potential Hispanic vote) and the number of Hispanic citizens under age 18 who, when they come of age, will augment the potential Hispanic vote. Unfortunately this tabulation is not directly available from Census 2000. Our estimate has been built through the following steps. First, we drew on sample counts from *Summary File 3* for the distribution of population in each tract by citizenship status and race, as well as separate tables for the full-count population by race and age, as reported in *Summary File 1* (US Census Bureau 2000a,b). Second, these data gave us the marginal frequencies for the variables of interest, but did not reveal the full race–age–citizenship relationship. For this we turned to microdata samples (the 5 per cent PUMS), for which the smallest identifiable unit is the PUMA (an area with a population of about 100,000). We calculated the three-variable relationship within the PUMA and assumed that the same relationship could be applied to all census tracts within the PUMA (Missouri Census Data Center 2006). The third and final step was to aggregate tract-level data to Congressional Districts.

The result is depicted in Figure 3. The x-axis represents the percentage of voting-age citizens of the Congressional District (from Census 2000) who were Hispanic; the y-axis the sum of the percentage of Hispanic voting-age and under-18 citizens. We take this sum as an indicator of future Hispanic potential voting strength. The solid diagonal line is where the current and potential Hispanic population figures are the same. Almost all districts (represented by circles and triangles) fall above the diagonal. Certainly we project substantial Hispanic growth in many districts, especially those that already fall above 5 or 10 per cent Hispanic. In some of these—specifically in many districts that are already as much as 40 per cent Hispanic—there will be growth of 10 to 20 percentage points. But notice that many of these districts already have (based on the 2004 Congressional elections) a Hispanic Representative (shown by a triangle). Only three districts which currently do not have a Hispanic Representative would reach the 40 per cent threshold based solely on ageing of the under-18 citizen population, and four others are already above this level. These few locations are where one might count on a change in ethnic representation in the next decade or two. Many more districts are growing in the range of 20–40 per cent Hispanic but, as shown above, the odds of their electing a Hispanic Representative are considerably lower.

Conclusion

The composition of the population is not the only predictor of a minority group's representation among public officials. Political parties themselves, through the decisions made by their leaders on mentorship of staff and sponsorship of candidates in primary elections, can advance or retard representation (Logan and Mollenkopf 2003). A growing literature examines the effects of redistricting decisions (Lublin 1999) and changes in voting-rights legislation (Garcia 1986) on election results. Nor is electoral politics the only forum through which a group can project its influence. Nevertheless a fundamental assumption of the US constitutional system (reflected, for example, in the 'one man, one vote' philosophy) is that public officials represent the entire population regardless of whether residents are citizens, registered voters or undocumented immigrants. Political scientists have debated whether minority elected officials with the same race/ethnicity as their constituents (providing what is termed 'descriptive representation') actually advocate more effectively for their interests (termed 'substantive representation'). Several studies (Hero and Tolbert 1995; Kerr and Miller 1997) suggest that they do. Hence the question addressed here—how demographic shifts translate into electoral impact for Hispanics—is an important one.

This study has examined three kinds of constraint on the electoral impact of Hispanic population growth. These are the low rates of naturalisation among immigrants, the low

levels of electoral participation especially beyond the immigrant generation, and the segregation of the new voting-age population within districts that already have co-ethnic representatives. These constraints are not immutable. There has been a tendency towards the dispersion of Hispanics beyond their areas of initial settlement in the US, particularly by the second generation. Eventually this population shift may increase the number of districts where the Hispanic vote needs to be taken into account. The national debate on the incorporation of undocumented immigrants continues and, although recent discussion mostly centres on their role in the labour force, the political implications of creating a route to citizenship are also in play. It continues to be a challenge for local and national organisations—including the political parties—to promote the mobilisation of Hispanics so that the actual electorate will more closely match the citizen population of the nation.

At rallies around the country in May 2006, large numbers of Hispanics seemed to announce that ‘the sleeping giant has awoken’. We recall that an earlier era of civil-rights protest in response to decades of oppression was eventually coupled with African-American political organising. This mobilisation continues to translate into high levels of electoral participation. Black voting was not always high. Its emergence in the mid-twentieth century inspired political scientists to acknowledge the importance of group identity, ethnic consciousness and group mobilisation in US politics (see Uhlaner *et al.* 1989; Verba and Nie 1972; Verba *et al.* 1993). What are the conditions necessary for this model to be repeated?

One possibility is that the political dynamics already in play will have an impact. In the 2008 Republican Party primaries, the leading candidates competed on who would be the toughest on illegal immigration, and the eventual winning candidate—Senator McCain—felt the need to reassure conservative elites that he would defend the border. Local officials in many areas have decided to work in concert with federal authorities to apprehend undocumented workers. To the extent that immigration remains a hot issue in national and local politics, there is a possibility that second-generation Hispanics will be stimulated to participate more in the electoral process. However there is not yet much evidence showing that participation is stimulated by anti-immigrant sentiment. In analyses not reported here, we tested the hypothesis that Hispanic participation in California would be higher than otherwise predicted as a result of anti-immigrant constitutional amendments proposed in 1996. We found, on the contrary, that non-Hispanic white and black participation was increased, but not involvement by Hispanics or Asians.

One strategic question concerns the effects of redistricting. The regional concentration of Hispanic populations and the tailoring of districts in some cases to conform to their location ensure that some degree of Hispanic congressional representation will be achieved. Such direct representation may bring other political feedback, potentially creating a virtuous cycle of increased engagement and political participation. Here the African-American example may be instructive: Bobo and Gilliam (1990), for example, show that African-Americans are the most politically active in electoral politics in locales that have already successfully elected African-American mayors. New scholarship focusing on Hispanic representation shows this kind of positive feedback in political empowerment, in both electoral and non-electoral arenas (Barreto *et al.* 2004, but see Brace *et al.* 1995 who find mixed conclusions). Effective representation at the national level surely depends on a pyramid of public officials at many levels, down to city councils and school boards, where active group members develop the skills and connections that can propel their political careers. Districting (and the associated question of whether people are elected at-large or by districts) may be even more important at the local level as a precondition of mobilisation.

Another strategic question is the capability of creating cross-racial coalitions. Bridging the representation gap at any level may increasingly depend more on alliances than on Hispanic

efforts and presence alone. Several studies look at the combinations of black and Hispanic population numbers, showing that Hispanics' direct representation may be bolstered *or* hindered by the presence of large numbers of African-Americans in the district (Grofman and Handley 1989; Lublin 1997a, 1999). The popular press credited a biracial coalition for enabling the recent electoral victory of Mayor Villaraigosa in Los Angeles, but blamed Fernando Ferrer's loss in the New York mayoral campaign on the weakness of that coalition. Despite the explosion of the Hispanic population, the political prospects for America's newly largest minority group may hinge on connections with partners who have learned from hard experience how to work the party system and to translate numbers into effective influence.

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Figure 1.

Representation gap: percentage of national population and of congressional representatives who are Hispanic, 1970–2004

Source: Census Bureau (1999, 2004); Gibson and Jung (2002); Library of Congress (1995).

Figure 2.

Descriptive representation: percentage of districts with Hispanic congressional representatives by percentage of Hispanics in the district's voting-age population, 1972–2004

Source: Census Bureau (2000a); Library of Congress (2005); Lublin (1997b)

Figure 3. Congressional districts by current and projected share of Hispanic voting-age citizens and ethnicity of current incumbent (2004).
Source: Census Bureau (2000a, 2000b); IPUMS (2004); LexisNexis (2006).

Table 1

Nativity and citizenship by age and race/ethnicity, 2000

	Total	Native citizen	Naturalised citizen	Non-citizen	% citizen of foreign-born
All ages					
White	194,527,123	187,682,147	3,728,091	3,116,885	54.5
Black	35,237,875	33,064,583	971,487	1,201,805	44.7
Hispanic	35,204,480	21,072,230	3,917,885	10,214,365	27.7
Asian	11,886,283	4,444,223	3,693,427	3,748,633	49.6
Other race	4,566,145	4,025,242	223,042	317,861	41.2
Total	281,421,906	250,288,425	12,533,932	18,599,549	40.3
Age 18+					
White	150,488,985	144,134,950	3,628,743	2,725,292	57.1
Black	23,934,416	21,991,077	920,830	1,022,509	47.4
Hispanic	22,956,194	10,560,032	3,726,855	8,669,307	30.1
Asian	8,751,867	2,016,716	3,497,736	3,237,415	51.9
Other race	3,168,140	2,690,153	210,074	267,913	43.9
Total	209,299,602	181,392,928	11,984,238	15,922,436	42.9
Age under 18					
White	44,038,138	43,547,197	99,348	391,593	20.2
Black	11,303,459	11,073,506	50,657	179,296	22.0
Hispanic	12,248,286	10,512,198	191,030	1,545,058	11.0
Asian	3,134,416	2,427,507	195,691	511,218	27.7
Other race	1,398,005	1,335,089	12,968	49,948	20.6
Total	72,122,304	68,895,497	549,694	2,677,113	17.0

Source: IPUMS (2004).

Table 2

Logistic regression of naturalisation among immigrants (age 5+), all races and Hispanics alone, 2000

	Model for all races				Model for Hispanics			
	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)
Race (ref. cat. non-Hispanic white)								
Non-Hispanic black	-0.302	0.003	***	0.739				
Asian	0.533	0.002	***	1.704				
Hispanic	-0.191	0.002	***	0.827				
Age (ref. cat. 55+)								
41-55	-1.032	0.006	***	0.356	-1.009	0.010	***	0.364
25-40	-1.276	0.005	***	0.279	-1.161	0.008	***	0.313
16-24	-1.329	0.003	***	0.265	-1.177	0.005	***	0.308
5-15	-0.889	0.002	***	0.411	-0.882	0.004	***	0.414
Sex (male)	0.120	0.001	***	1.128	0.258	0.002	***	1.294
Years in US (ref. cat. 0-5)								
6-10 years	1.147	0.003	***	3.148	0.647	0.005	***	1.910
11-15 years	1.858	0.003	***	6.413	1.327	0.005	***	3.771
16-20 years	2.382	0.003	***	10.829	1.992	0.005	***	7.327
21+ years	2.821	0.004	***	16.797	2.470	0.006	***	11.818
English (ref. cat. no English)								
Speaks, not well	0.635	0.003	***	1.887	0.633	0.004	***	1.882
Speaks well	1.044	0.003	***	2.842	1.143	0.004	***	3.137
Speaks very well	1.048	0.003	***	2.852	1.241	0.004	***	3.461
Speaks only English	0.870	0.004	***	2.386	1.128	0.005	***	3.089
Household income (ref. cat. < \$15,000)								
\$15,000-39,999	-0.088	0.002	***	0.916	-0.075	0.003	***	0.927
\$40,000-74,999	-0.037	0.002	***	0.963	0.002	0.003		1.002
\$75,000-99,999	0.041	0.003	***	1.042	0.109	0.005	***	1.116
\$100,000+	0.047	0.003	***	1.048	0.149	0.005	***	1.161
Education (ref. cat. age 25+ and < HS)								
High-school graduate	0.294	0.002	***	1.341	0.432	0.003	***	1.541
Some college	0.423	0.002	***	1.526	0.640	0.004	***	1.896

	Model for all races				Model for Hispanics			
	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)
BA or associate	0.482	0.002	***	1.620	0.781	0.004	***	2.183
More than BA	0.286	0.003	***	1.331	0.561	0.006	***	1.752
Age at immigration	-0.018	0.000	***	0.982	-0.003	0.000	***	0.997
Number of children in household	-0.002	0.001	***	0.998	-0.029	0.001	***	0.972
Married	-0.027	0.002	***	0.974	0.029	0.003	***	1.030
Home-owner	0.373	0.001	***	1.453	0.414	0.002	***	1.512
Occupation (ref. cat. all others)								
No occupation	-0.167	0.004	***	0.846	-0.188	0.006	***	0.829
Low odds of being undocumented	0.072	0.002	***	1.075	0.235	0.004	***	1.265
High odds of being undocumented	-0.261	0.002	***	0.771	-0.231	0.003	***	0.794
Constant	-1.848	0.007	***	0.158	-2.673	0.011	***	0.069
N	688,981				273,762			
Model statistics								
Model Chi-Square	5818550.189		***		1996077.747		***	
Goodness-of-fit	9472.476		***		1444.585		***	

Note:

* p< .05;

** p<.01;

*** p<.001.

Source: IPUMS (2004).

Table 3

Registration and voting by race/ethnicity and generation in US, 1996–2004

	% Voting	Weighted N
Hispanic		
Foreign-born	51	7,745
2nd generation	47	8,765
3+ generation	45	18,271
Asian		
Foreign-born	47	6,745
2nd generation	49	2,713
3+ generation	59	3,077
Non-Hispanic black		
Foreign-born	57	1,815
2nd generation	53	1,224
3+ generation	59	54,858
Non-Hispanic white		
Foreign-born	60	8,726
2nd generation	70	31,653
3+ generation	61	329,002

Source: CPS 1996–2004.

Table 4

Logistic regression of voting (age 18+), all races and Hispanics alone, 1996–2004

Model for all races					Model for Hispanics				
	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)		B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)
Race and generation (ref. cat. white 3G)									
White 1G	−0.428	0.025	***	0.652	1G Mexico	−0.130	0.043	**	0.878
White 2G	0.205	0.014	***	1.228	1G Cuba	0.192	0.067	**	1.211
Black 1G	−0.100	0.053		0.905	1G Dominican Rep.	0.427	0.103	***	1.532
Black 2G	0.293	0.068	***	1.341	1G other countries	0.048	0.047		1.049
Black 3G	0.473	0.011	***	1.604	2G Mexico	−0.068	0.033	*	0.935
Asian 1G	−0.984	0.028	***	0.374	2G Cuba	−0.024	0.096		0.976
Asian 2G	−0.465	0.047	***	0.628	2G Dominican Rep.	0.531	0.143	***	1.700
Asian 3G	−0.196	0.043	***	0.822	2G other countries	0.181	0.056	***	1.198
Hispanic 1G	−0.105	0.019	***	0.900					
Hispanic 2G	−0.187	0.018	***	0.829					
Hispanic 3G	−0.184	0.014	***	0.832					
Age (ref. cat. age 55+)									
18–24	−2.503	0.019	***	0.082	18–24	−2.454	0.083	***	0.086
25–40	−1.025	0.010	***	0.359	25–40	−0.916	0.041	***	0.400
41–55	−0.646	0.010	***	0.524	41–55	−0.583	0.039	***	0.558
Sex (male)	−0.135	0.007	***	0.874	Sex (male)	−0.177	0.024	***	0.838
Length of residence (ref. cat. <1 year)									
1–2 yrs at address	0.298	0.011	***	1.347	1–2 yrs at address	0.216	0.040	***	1.241
3–4 yrs at address	0.536	0.012	***	1.709	3–4 yrs at address	0.541	0.041	***	1.718
5+ yrs at address	0.799	0.010	***	2.224	5+ yrs at address	0.819	0.037	***	2.269
Don't know years	0.266	0.033	***	1.305	Don't know years	0.297	0.124	**	1.346
					Spanish-speaking	0.102	0.047	*	1.108
Household income (ref. cat. <\$ 15,000)									
\$15,000–39,999	0.225	0.010	***	1.253	\$15,000–39,999	0.167	0.035	***	1.181
\$40,000–74,999	0.417	0.011	***	1.517	\$40,000–74,999	0.380	0.041	***	1.462
\$75,000 +	0.589	0.013	***	1.803	\$75,000 +	0.585	0.051	***	1.795
Don't know income	0.239	0.012	***	1.270	Don't know income	0.192	0.047	***	1.212

Model for all races					Model for Hispanics				
	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)		B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)
Education (ref. cat. age 25+ and >BA)									
Less than H.S.	-2.087	0.017	***	0.124	Less than H.S.	-1.656	0.075	***	0.191
High School	-1.413	0.016	***	0.243	High School	-1.218	0.072	***	0.296
Some college	-0.795	0.016	***	0.452	Some college	-0.687	0.072	***	0.503
BA	-0.301	0.017	***	0.740	BA	-0.314	0.077	***	0.730
Number of children	-0.053	0.003	***	0.948	Number of children	-0.089	0.011	***	0.915
Married	0.268	0.007	***	1.307	Married	0.132	0.027	***	1.141
Home-owner	0.282	0.008	***	1.326	Home-owner	0.257	0.028	***	1.293
Year of sample (re. cat. 2004)									
1996	-0.296	0.010	***	0.744	1996	-0.154	0.038	***	0.857
1998	-1.030	0.010	***	0.357	1998	-0.875	0.038	***	0.417
2000	-0.216	0.010	***	0.806	2000	-0.171	0.036	***	0.843
2002	-1.011	0.010	***	0.364	2002	-0.976	0.036	***	0.377
Constant	1.573	0.021	***	4.820	Constant	1.265	0.088	***	3.544
N	240,727					13,815			
Model statistics									
Model Chi-Square	112853.490		***			7000.564		***	
Goodness-of-fit	99.793		***			14.459			

Note:

* p < .05;

** p < .01;

*** p < .001.

Source: CPS 1996-2004.