

Immigration Enforcement and the Erosion of Latino Identity

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Eleven million unauthorized immigrants currently reside in the United States. Roughly half live outside of traditional destinations—California, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Texas. In 2013, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) forcibly removed over 400,000 of them. One-third of deportees were apprehended after successfully passing through the border and settling within the interior. Although almost half of all immigrants were born outside of Latin America, nearly everyone deported by ICE is Latino, 97% in 2013.

Immigrant enforcement has come to pervade the lives of Latino immigrants, authorized and unauthorized. A 2011 survey found that one-in-four foreign-born Latinos personally knew someone who had been deported in the previous twelve months. The effects of enforcement are even felt by some native-born Latinos who find their economic prospects tied to the status of immigrant laborers. We believe that the new norm of intense immigration enforcement, which has not abated during the Obama presidency, has changed the fabric Latino politics. Enforcement has made Latinos less trusting and efficacious (Rocha, Knoll, and Wrinkle N.d.) and has discouraged some Latinos from voting (Medenica, Thal, and Valenzuela 2014).

Here we ask whether ICE's actions affect Latino ethnic consciousness, an attitude that spurs many other forms of political activity. Only half of the Latinos residing in the US report believing that their lives are linked to those of Latinos generally. Immigrants, having not been socialized to accept the idea of Latino panethnicity promoted by the US government, feel loosely connected to individuals with different national origins. Native-born Latinos, who are more acculturated, do not always understand how their lives are connected with the foreign-born. Both explanations for why linked fate is not common among Latinos imply that Latino identity is socially

determined, as does most published work (Abrajano and Alvarez 2010; Sanchez and Masuoka 2010).

Eighty years ago, Schattschneider (1935) put forth the idea that “new policies create new politics,” and his statement has been routinely repeated (Mettler and SoRelle 2014). In *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, Skocpol (1996, 47) clarifies how policy shapes politics by arguing, “the identities, goals, and capacities of politically active groups are influenced by political structures and processes.” Policy theorists agree that the mechanisms identified by Skocpol—group identity, goals, and capacity—explain why feedback matters (see Mettler and SoRelle 2014), but almost all empirical work focuses on the latter two mechanisms. Group identity is surprisingly understudied even by those interested in the intersection of race and policy feedback, and it is the mechanism we focus on in this paper. We believe that contemporary patterns of immigration enforcement structure Latino ethnic consciousness, but that does not imply that political determinism should replace social determinism. Latino ethnic consciousness is a product of both social and political pressures.

Immigration enforcement, we argue, works to weaken identity, and this effect may be pronounced among the acculturated Latino population who wish not to be associated with negatively constructed immigrants. The normative ramifications are significant. Latino immigrants have no formal voice in American politics, but native-born Latinos, motivated by linked-fate, have advocated for immigrants in the past. Punitive enforcement practices may therefore make native-born Latinos less inclined to offer proxy representation. The end result may be a cyclical process wherein an increasingly powerless immigrant community is subject to harsh policy outcomes, further dampening its political influence.

We believe that immigration enforcement affects ethnic consciousness directly, and it also conditions the effect of social factors. Policy theorists generally argue that political determinants are distinct from social determinants. Most studying the effect

of social determinants on group identity largely ignore political factors, but when they include both, the effects are still viewed as independent. If “policy determines politics” (Lowi 1964), we propose that it does so, in this case, by moderating the effect of social determinants.

Residential context is one of the most consistent predictors of racial/ethnic attitudes. Its effects have been documented in studies of racial/ethnic consciousness, group affect, and policy preferences among minorities and non-Hispanic whites (Anglos). But the direction of these effects are disputed, and policy may explain why. We argue that immigration enforcement moderates the effect of immigrant group size on ethnic consciousness among Latinos by sending implicit signals about the value of immigrants in society. The presence of immigrants also makes enforcement salient by raising awareness about immigration as a policy issue.

Below, we review traditional, primarily social, explanations of Latino ethnic consciousness. We also consider how policy feedback effects have been shown to operate in previous work before sketching out how political and social determinants work together to shape attitudes. Our empirical test relies on county-level immigration enforcement rates from the Secure Communities program. Enforcement figures are combined with survey from the 2012 American National Election Study, which contains a Latino oversample. The results suggest that native-born Latinos have a weaker sense of ethnic identity when they live near large unauthorized immigrant populations and rates of immigration enforcement are high. The presence of unauthorized immigrants has a negligible effect on native-born attitudes when enforcement is low. Foreign-born Latinos’ sense of linked fate, however, is unaffected by residential and policy contexts.

### **Does Residential Context Affect Latino Ethnic Identity?**

Some Latinos feel a strong sense of linked fate with coethnics and some do not. Why? Individual characteristics offer a partial explanation. Latinos who are poor or speak

Spanish are more likely to believe that doing well depends on other Latinos doing well (Sanchez and Masuoka 2010). Education, age, national origin, and nativity also play a role (Masuoka 2008).

But the social determinates of ethnic identity go beyond individual traits because “in politics, localities matter” (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995, 5). Residential context affects public opinion, political participation, and vote choice. Racial context, often defined as the percentage of in- or out-group members, consistently predicts racial attitudes among most racial and ethnic groups (Oliver and Wong 2003).

Anglos feel more hostility towards out-groups when living in diverse areas (Giles 1977; Michael and Buckner 1993; Glaser 1994). However, a host of conditions affects the strength of this relationship. Anglos are more apt to be negatively affected by diversity if it is coupled with high levels of residential segregation (Zingher and Thomas N.d.). Linguistic differences and economic competition also exaggerate the effect of diversity (Branton and Jones 2005; Rocha and Espino 2009). Latino population growth rates may also directly affect Anglo attitudes and moderate the effect Latino population size (Newman 2013).

Context matters for blacks too. Blacks are more likely to express feelings of racial solidarity when living in highly segregated neighborhoods (Welch et al. 2001). Politically engaged blacks are more likely to report perceiving “a lot” of discrimination only when living among highly educated minorities (Gay 2004).

Whether findings produced by studies of black racial consciousness can be applied to Latinos remains unclear. Relying on a sample of Texans, Rocha et al. (2011) find that Latinos living in counties with many coethnics were more likely to hold expansionist immigration policy preferences. But, in a pair of national samples, Knoll (2012) and Rouse, Wilkinson, and Garand (2010) find that Latinos were more likely to express restrictionist immigration policy preferences when they lived among other Latinos. Hood and Morris (1997) make a more limited claim, finding that the

presence of unauthorized Latino immigrants causes Latinos to oppose allowing more immigrants legal entry into the United States.

Two things strike us. First, studies of the relationship between ethnic context and Latino attitudes primarily focus on immigration policy preferences. Policy preferences, while important, are unlikely to be directly related to context. In his study of Anglo attitudes, (Newman 2013) notes that immigration policy preferences are mediated by feelings of cultural and economic threat. For Latinos, we expect that policy preferences are the result of other attitudes, linked fate among them. Second, scholars have defined ethnic context inconsistently. Some researchers argue that Latino group size affects Latino attitudes Rocha et al. (2011); Rouse, Wilkinson, and Garand (2010). Others consider how the presence of particular subgroups, such as immigrants, affect attitudes Hood and Morris (1997); Knoll (2012).

In this paper, our concern is with the effect of the immigrant group, a source of difference among Latinos, on linked fate, an attitude that binds Latinos. Linked fate may be low among native-born Latinos where socially distant immigrants are present in large numbers because immigrants are more likely to speak Spanish, earn low wages, and have limited experience with civic institutions (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002). Anglos, we know, are more likely to feel threatened living near Latino immigrants (Hood and Morris 1998; Knoll 2009; Rocha and Espino 2009). However, ethnic identity among foreign-born Latinos may be bolstered by living near other immigrants.

In short, we argue that:

- Native-born Latinos are less likely to report feeling a sense of linked fate when living near large immigrant populations.
- Foreign-born Latinos are more likely to report feeling a sense of linked fate when living near large immigrant populations.

## **Does Policy Affect Latino Ethnic Identity?**

Public policy creates feedback effects. It bestows material resources onto some groups, and it takes resources from others (Lowi 1964; 1972). Policy can also promote or discourage civic engagement (Soss 1999; 2005). Individuals receiving benefits from policy are more likely to believe that government is open and responsive (Soss 1999; Mettler 2005; Bruch, Ferree, and Soss 2010). Those who are hurt by policy learn that government is unresponsive and uncaring and are discouraged from participating in politics.

Policy does more. It affects how we define ourselves and divides society into politically relevant groups (Campbell 2005). Most studies of group identity examine how cultural or socioeconomic factors affect group ties. However, such “socially determinist theories overlook the ways in which the identities, goals, and capacities of all politically active groups are influenced by political structures and processes” (Skocpol 1996, 47). By ignoring the role of policy, these studies miss how government systematically biases which types of groups are likely to form and grow.

Policy can either reinforce or discourage group identification. If policy offers a group benefits, individuals learn that the group is valued by society. But if policy punishes a group, such as unauthorized immigrants, individuals realize that group membership carries risks. However, because groups that are punished by policy tend not possess resources (Schneider and Ingram 1993), members cannot easily become part of other more powerful or well-liked groups.

Those who avoid punitive policy outcomes are nevertheless affected by policy feedback. Negative social constructions drift towards groups who occupy a nearby social space. For example, anti-immigrant sentiments have become intertwined with anti-Latino affect (Chavez 2008). Similarly, opinions about crime and welfare are associated now with feelings towards blacks (Gilens 2000; Peffley and Hurwitz 2010).

Faced with discriminatory economic and social conditions, individuals closely associated with but not directly targeted by unfavorable policies have incentive to disassociate from direct recipients.

Disassociation is most probable among those who already feel a sense of social distance between themselves and the policy recipients. Assimilated, English-dominant Latinos, therefore, should be more likely than their Spanish-speaking counterparts to express lower levels of linked fate when immigration policy is harshly enforced.

There are normative implications. Familiarity with English language use increases the odds of contacting elected officials, contributing money to a candidate, working for a candidate, attending a public meeting or demonstration, attending a political party meeting, and voting (Cassel 2002; Jeong 2013). Because of their elevated rates of participation, native-born and English-speaking Latinos are better represented by policymakers than are foreign-born and Spanish-speaking Latinos (Rocha and Matsubayashi 2013). If policy feedback causes well-represented, native-born Latinos to dissociate from relatively disengaged foreign-born Latinos, immigrants will find themselves increasingly ignored by government. As a result, the punitive enforcement practices that create perceived differences and reduce ethnic bonds are likely to perpetuate. We test this idea by conducting subsample analysis on the native-born population to see if the effects we describe are present across the entire group or occur primarily among those who speak English and are active in politics.

This leads to the following hypotheses:

- Native-born Latinos are less likely to report feeling a sense of linked fate when living in areas where immigration enforcement is high. This effect is most likely to be observed within the English-dominant and politically active subset of the native-born population.
- Foreign-born Latinos are more likely to report feeling a sense of linked fate when living in areas where immigration enforcement is high



## **Does Policy Moderate the Effect of Context?**

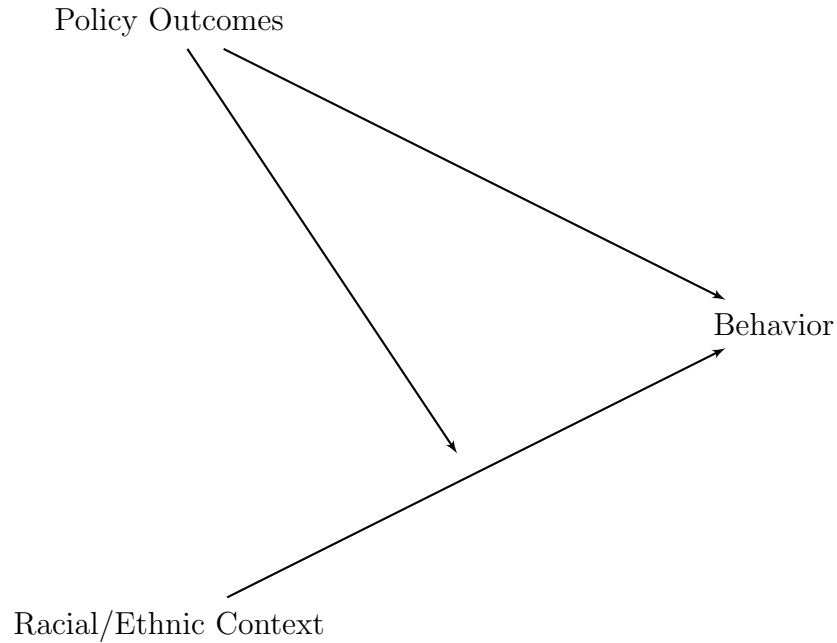
We expect both social and political factors to affect Latino identity. We also believe they matter together. We noted earlier that previous studies of the relationship between ethnic context and Latino attitudes report inconsistent findings. Some find that large immigrant populations are associated with pro-immigrant attitudes among Latinos. Others find the opposite. We suggest that differences in the effect of social determinants occur because researchers fail to account for the direct and moderating effect of political determinants. Policy structures the role of residential context because it tells individuals something about how they should view in- and out-groups. If out-group members are regularly coerced and sanctioned by government, individuals will react to exposure with hostility and by forming group-based boundaries. If in-group members are sanctioned, individuals will blur boundaries and identify more with out-group members. Or, as Lieberman (1995, 441) argues “public policies do not merely reflect the character of their target populations; policies also transform target populations by transforming the political, social, economic, and legal setting in which groups exist.” Our point, put simply, is that in localities, politics matters. Figure 1 illustrates our argument.

- The marginal effect of immigration population size on linked fate will be larger in areas with high levels of immigration enforcement.

## **Modeling the Interaction of Residential Context and Policy Feedback**

We test our hypotheses using data from the 2012 American National Election Survey (ANES) Time Series Study. Older versions of the ANES contain low-quality Latino subsamples, due in part to the lack of a Spanish-language instrument. But, recent versions of the ANES have provided a translation. The 2012 ANES was also designed

Figure 1



to contain a large enough number of Latinos to allow subgroup analysis. After missing cases are excluded, our sample contains 699 observations. Within the sample, 34% of participants are foreign-born.

Our dependent variable measures ethnic identity within the Latino community. The question asks about respondents' feelings of linked fate. It reads:

- “Do you think that what happens generally to Hispanic people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life? (Yes, No)”

51% of Latinos report feeling a sense of linked fate in the 2012 ANES. Native- and foreign-born Latinos are equally likely to respond affirmatively to this item, with 52% and 49% expressing a sense of linked fate respectively.

We supplement the survey data with contextual data from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). ICE has released county-level data on deportation proceedings initiated as part of the Secure Communities program. Most previous data on

deportations have never been reported at anything below the Area of Responsibility (AOR) level. Most AOR jurisdictions cover multiple states which makes the release of county-level data especially useful, although it does not include all immigration-related arrests and removals. Unfortunately, there are no county-level estimates of the size of the unauthorized immigrant population in the US. Instead, we use the total number of foreign-born individuals within each county to create a deportation rate that is comparable across counties. Our measure of immigration enforcement is the number of Secure Communities removals per 1,000 foreign-born residents with a county. Survey respondents live in states where the number of removals per 1,000 ranges from 0 to 20 with a mean of 3.5. Our measure of residential context is the percent of the county that is foreign-born.

Deportation rates vary widely across counties and are correlated at a relatively low .09. For example, no Secure Communities removals originated from Santa Fe County, New Mexico, which has a sizeable foreign-born population (12.8%). Cameron County, Texas, which is 24.5% foreign-born, also has a low removal rate (0.14 per 1,000 foreign-born residents). By contrast, other communities have high immigration enforcement despite having relatively small foreign-born populations. For instance, in Charleston County, South Carolina, which has a comparatively small foreign-born population (4.8%), Secure Communities has deported 12.4 immigrants per 1,000 foreign-born residents.

Our hypotheses state that the marginal effect of the foreign-born population size is conditional on immigration enforcement. We use an interaction term to test this idea. We control for individual-level characteristics known to affect linked fate including age, education level, partisan affiliation, and national origin (Binder, Polinard, and Wrinkle 1997).

Before linking objective policy outcomes to perceptions of linked fate, we ask whether individuals accurately perceive removal rates. The 2011 National Survey of

Latinos (NSL) conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center asked respondents “Do you personally know someone who has been deported or detained by the federal government for immigration reasons in the last twelve months?” A quarter of respondents claimed to have known someone who was detained or deported. We conducted a logit analysis using responses to this item as our dependent variable (1 = yes, 0 = no). Latinos in areas where the Secure Communities removal rate is high are more likely to report knowing someone who has been detained or deported ( $p = .005$ ).

## Analysis

Table 1 presents our full models for native- and foreign-born Latinos. Because our measure of linked fate is dichotomous, we use logit analysis to estimate the models with standard errors clustered by county. Table 1 shows that many of the individual-level variables are unrelated to feelings of linked fate among native-born Latinos. Salvadoran, Dominican, Guatemalan, and other Latinos from Central American and South American countries with smaller US-based populations as well as Puerto Ricans are less likely to believe that their fate is tied to other Latinos. Native-born Latinos are also less likely to report feelings of linked fate as they get older. The results inform us as to whether the mutual presence of immigration enforcement and a sizeable foreign-born population partially determines linked fate among native-born Latinos. While deportation rate and the size of the foreign-born population do not directly affect linked fate, the interaction between policy and residential context does have a significant relationship with feelings of linked fate.

The coefficients are not directly interpretable, so Figure 2 plots the marginal effects of the size of the foreign-born population on linked fate. This and subsequent figures are generated using the observed value approach recommended by Hanmer and Kalkan (2013). Figure 2 shows that the effect of foreign-born population size varies with deportation rates. In areas where enforcement is lacking (deportation rate = 0),

Table 1: Linked Fate

	Native Born	Foreign Born
Deportation Rate	.051 (.031)	-.118 (.079)
Proportion Foreign-born	-.015 (.009)	-.013 (.014)
Deportation Rate $\times$ Proportion Foreign-born	-.004** (.002)	.005 (.005)
Age	-.009* (.005)	-.003 (.012)
Democrat	.136 (.235)	.890* * * (.280)
Independent	.256 (.362)	.369 (.456)
Female	-.251 (.178)	.311 (.251)
Education	.064 (.094)	.211 (.139)
Puerto Rican	-.630** (.316)	
Cuban	-.137 (.552)	-.114 (.431)
Other	-.575** (.264)	-.434 (.306)
Constant	.949** (.437)	-.568 (.775)
N (Observations)	463	236

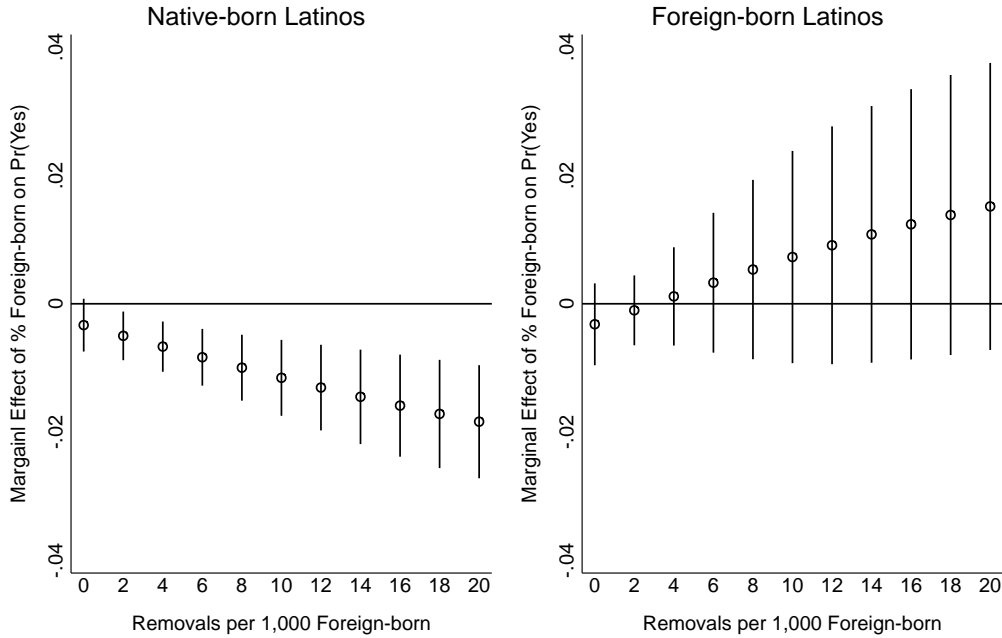
\*p<.10 \*\*p<.05 \*\*\*p<.01 (two-tailed test)

the foreign-born population does not have a statistically significant effect on linked fate. This is true until the deportation rate is reaches 2 removals per 1,000 foreign-born residents. When the deportation rate is moderate (deportation rate = 2), a percentage point, or unit, increase in the size of the foreign-born population reduces the odds of a respondent reporting a sense of linked fate by 0.004. The decline in probability is larger, 0.018, when enforcement is at the highest observed level in our data (deportation rate = 20).

Foreign-born Latinos do not react in the same way as native-born Latinos. Neither immigration enforcement nor the size of the foreign-born population have direct or moderated relationships with foreign-born Latinos' sense of linked fate. Only iden-

Figure 2

Do you think what happens generally to Hispanic people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?



tification as a Democrat is associated with linked fate among foreign-born Latinos.

Residential and policy environment matter for Latino identity at least for Latinos born in the US. But, does context matter equally for all native-born Latinos? We argue that context should matter more for native-born Latinos who have fewer ties to those being deported. We test this by splitting the native-born sample by English-language use. Native-born Latinos who use English as their dominant language are more socially distant from immigrants, especially those who are unauthorized, than native-born Latinos who speak predominantly Spanish or are bilingual.<sup>1</sup> The negative effect of immigration enforcement on linked fate among native-born Latinos should be strongest for those who are English-dominant. Table 2 shows that this is

<sup>1</sup>To determine English-language dominance, we use a question from the ANES that asks “What language to do primarily speak at home with your family? Is it only English, mostly English, only Spanish, mostly Spanish, or both languages equally?” Individuals who only or mostly speak English are considered English-language dominant. Within the native-born subsample, 60% of respondents use English as their dominant language.

so.

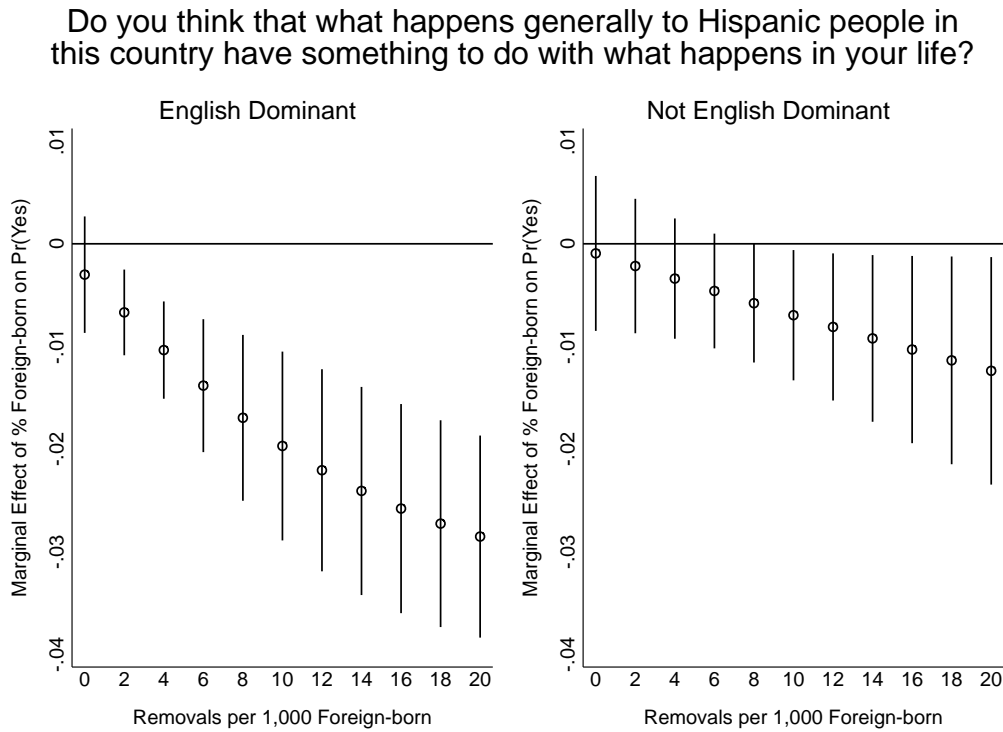
Table 2: Native-born Linked Fate by English-language Dominance

	English Dominant	Not English Dominant
Deportation Rate	.095 (.064)	.064 (.041)
Proportion Foreign-born	-.014 (.013)	-.004 (.016)
Deportation Rate × Proportion Foreign-born	-.008** (.004)	-.003 (.002)
Age	-.004 (.007)	-.015** (.007)
Democrat	.091 (.272)	.170 (.448)
Independent	-.233 (.476)	.688 (.583)
Female	-.092 (.222)	-.363 (.272)
Education	-.024 (.156)	.163 (.139)
Puerto Rican	-.889** (.385)	-.312 (.543)
Cuban	.074 (.651)	-.311 (.852)
Other	-.821** (.345)	-.061 (.460)
Constant	1.156* (.595)	.472 (.667)
N (Observations)	271	192

\*p<.10 \*\*p<.05 \*\*\*p<.01 (two-tailed test)

Similar to the full sample of native-born Latinos, Puerto Ricans, Salvadorans, Dominicans, Guatemalans, and Latinos from other Central America and South American countries with small US populations are less likely to report a sense of linked fate. The results also show that native-born Latinos who predominately speak English are affected by the mutual presence of immigration enforcement and a sizeable foreign-born population. The size of the foreign-born population has no effect on linked fate for this group when immigration enforcement is lacking (deportation rate = 0). But, at low levels of immigration enforcement (deportation rate = 1), a percentage point increase in the size of the foreign-born population reduce the odds that

Figure 3



English-dominant, native-born Latinos will have feelings of linked fate by 0.005. This reduction becomes larger as enforcement becomes stronger. At the highest level of enforcement in the sample, a unit increase in the size of the foreign-born population results in a 0.028 decrease in the likelihood that a respondent have a sense of linked fate.

As expected, the effect of context on native-born Latinos who do not use English as their dominant language is much smaller. Immigration enforcement and the size of the foreign-born population appears to have neither direct nor moderated effects for this group. However, it is possible for the effect of foreign-born population size to have a significant relationship with levels of linked fate even though all of the interaction parameters are insignificant (Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006, 70). For non-English dominant Latinos, the size of the foreign-born population does not affect linked fate at low levels of immigration enforcement. At high levels of enforcement



Table 3: Native-born Linked Fate by Voting

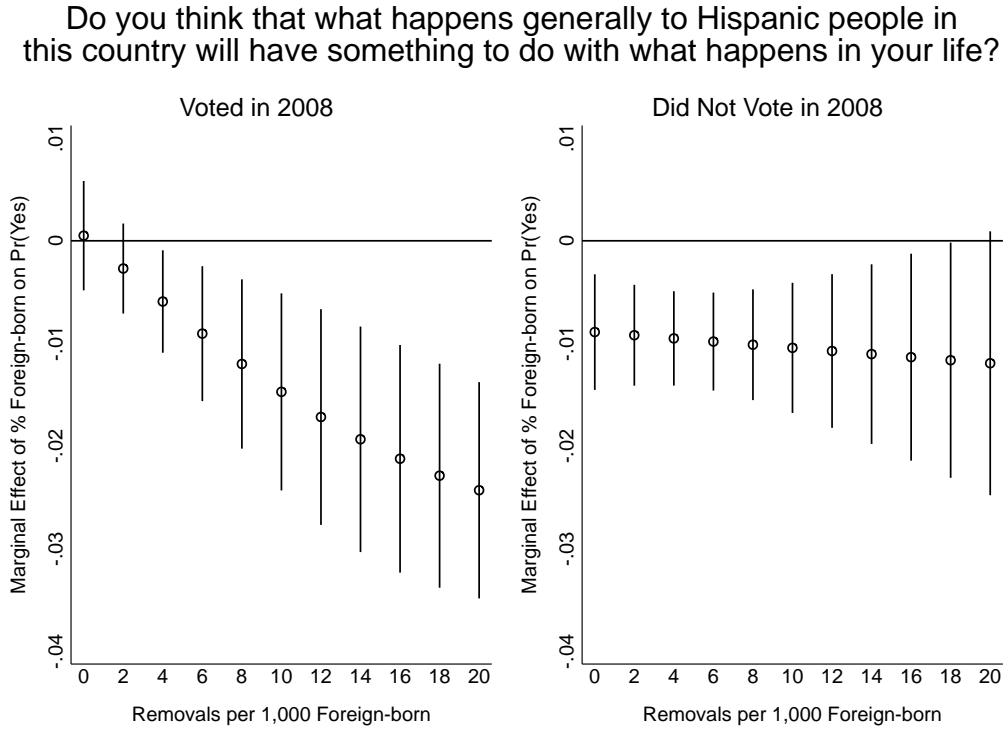
	Voted	Did Not Vote
Deportation Rate	.115** (.056)	-.006 (.044)
Proportion Foreign-born	.002 (.012)	-.043* * * (.016)
Deportation Rate × Proportion Foreign-born	-.007** (.003)	-.001 (.002)
Age	-.013** (.007)	-.002 (.010)
Democrat	.114 (.310)	.349 (.515)
Independent	.156 (.516)	.432 (.615)
Female	-.257 (.227)	-.435* (.241)
Education	.053 (.122)	.071 (.221)
Puerto Rican	-.370 (.387)	-1.182* (.622)
Cuban	.157 (.615)	-1.574 (1.237)
Other	-.438 (.276)	-.811* (.488)
Constant	.831 (.590)	1.306 (.869)
N (Observations)	296	166

\*p<.10 \*\*p<.05 \*\*\*p<.01 (two-tailed test)

(deportation rate = 8), a one unit—percentage point in this case—increase in the size of the foreign-born population leads to a 0.006 reduction in the odds of a non-English dominant Latino answering the linked fate item affirmatively.

These results show that both native-born Latinos who use and do not use English as their dominant language are sensitive to policy and residential contexts. But, these effects are larger for individuals who are more assimilated into US culture and, thus, have fewer connections to unauthorized immigrants. This finding has implications for how policy and residential context separate those who are politically active from those who are not. Native-born Latinos who primarily speak English are more likely to become politically active. In part, this may be because Latinos who use English as

Figure 4



their primary language have adopted more American customs and culture, including participation in the political process, than those who primarily use Spanish. Thus, dominant-English speakers may be more politically involved. We test this by analyzing the relationship between English-language dominance and whether or not the respondent voted in the 2008 presidential election. Our results (analysis not presented but available from the authors) shows that native-born Latinos who primarily speak English are significantly more likely to vote compared to native-born Latinos who do not mostly or always use English.

In part due to their lack of ties to immigrants, we argue that politically active Latinos are more sensitive to the interplay between residential and policy environments than Latinos who are not involved in politics. To see if this is true, we split the native-born sample according to whether or not the respondent voted in 2008. Table 3 shows the results. For respondents who voted in 2008, the observed effects are sim-

ilar to the full native-born sample. Immigration enforcement has an interactive effect with the size of the foreign-born population. The size of the foreign-born population has no effect on politically active Latinos' perceptions of linked fate in counties where the deportation rate is 4 removals per 1,000 foreign-born residents or lower. Where the deportation rate is higher (deportation rate = 5), a percentage point increase in the size of the foreign-born population reduces the odds that politically involved Latinos will identify with other coethnics by 0.005. This decline is larger, 0.024, when the enforcement rate is higher (deportation rate = 20). As politically involved Latinos get older, they are also less likely to report feelings of linked fate.

However, immigration enforcement does not combine with residential context in this way for native-born Latinos who are not politically active. For this group, the size of the foreign-born population has a direct effect on linked fate, but this relationship is not conditioned by policy. An increase in the foreign-born population has a negative effect on feelings of linked fate regardless of immigration enforcement, although this relationship is not consistently significant.

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