

Political Incorporation Among Immigrants from Ten Areas of Origin: The Persistence of Source Country Effects

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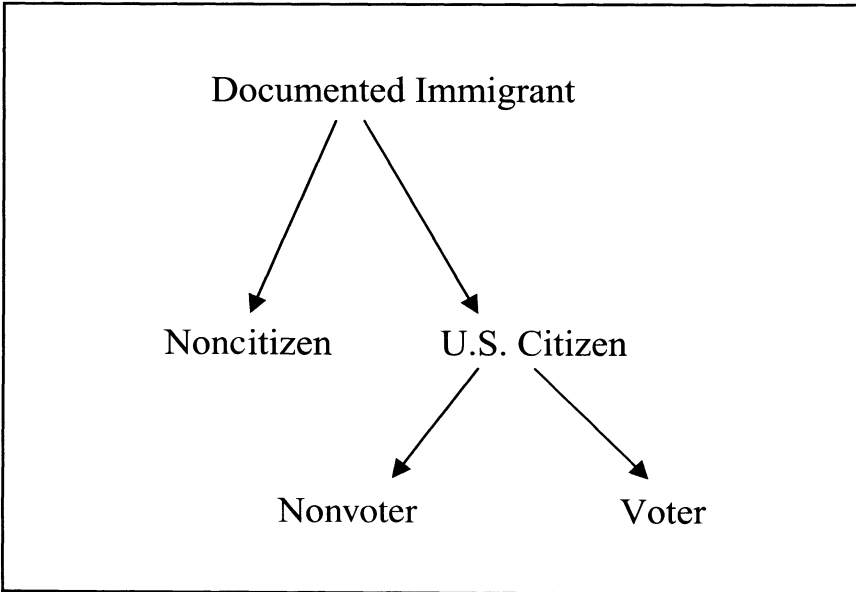
Using four years of data from the Current Population Survey, this study examines the effect of country of origin on two types of political incorporation among immigrants – citizenship and voting – in the contemporary United States. Results show that country of origin is a statistically significant predictor of citizenship acquisition for nine of ten immigrant groups and for voter turnout for five of ten groups, net of income, education, length of residence in the United States, and other demographic characteristics. The findings also suggest that country of origin matters as much for how it interacts with other key characteristics, such as education and income, as for the independent influence it exerts on these two political processes. For immigrants from most countries under examination, lower levels of education and income discourage citizenship acquisition. An exception is found among Britons, for whom lower levels of income encourages naturalizing. In the voting process, higher levels of education encourage voter turnout for most immigrant groups. Though country of origin has a greater effect on naturalizing than on voting, it significantly impacts both types of political incorporation. The differing effects of country of origin and other demographic factors on naturalizing and voting, respectively, suggest the two processes are distinct from one another.

Citizenship and voting are the primary components of political incorporation in the United States. Citizenship provides the foreign born with the opportunity to vote and run for most elected offices, giving immigrants the same legal and political rights and protections as the native born. Citizenship also unlocks economic benefits, from the ability to secure education and home loans to providing access to social welfare programs limited to citizens (Lister, 1998; Pachon, 1987). The benefits of naturalizing extend even beyond the individual, through giving preference to relatives of American citizens in the immigration process (Johnson *et al.*, 1999). With American citizenship also come new responsibilities, such as jury duty and, some would

argue, voting. All of these factors may play a part in an individual's decision to acquire American citizenship.

Though naturalizing is a necessary condition for voting in the United States, as Figure I illustrates, it is far from sufficient. Voting is frequently viewed as the embodiment of citizenship and the most fundamental political act in a democracy (Putnam, 2000). Some view it as the most precious right of democratic citizenship. Others view it as one's primary duty in a democracy. Whether viewed as a privilege or a duty, voting provides fewer immediate and tangible benefits than does citizenship. Individuals may receive a psychic reward for having participated in the electoral process. With enough group mobilization, voting may translate into the election of a preferred candidate or the implementation of favored policies. However, such outcomes and benefits are far from assured in the voting process and rely upon the turnout of large numbers of like-minded voters.

Figure I. Potential Paths of Political Incorporation



Given the differing incentives behind the two processes, it is likely that the causal structures of naturalizing and voting are distinct. Though certain factors, such as education, income, and English language ability, encourage both forms of political incorporation (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Jasso and

Rosenzweig, 1990; Yang, 1994), country of origin likely affects each of these respective processes in diverse ways.

Immigrants from different countries of origin migrate to the United States for many reasons, possess varied political histories, come with distinct cultural experiences, and encounter very different receptions (Koopsman, 1999; Portes, 1995). Therefore it is not surprising to find that country of origin affects political incorporation, with some immigrant groups, such as Filipinos or Chinese, naturalizing at higher rates than other groups, such as Mexicans or Britons (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Smith and Edmonston, 1997, Jasso and Rosenzweig, 1990). But, does country of origin continue to predict the type and extent of political incorporation, even after controlling for important socioeconomic and demographic characteristics? If so, what accounts for variation by country of origin? Further, are the direction, magnitude, and significance of effects similar across both naturalizing and voting?

In previous research, country of origin variables have been included in models as summary measures of home society characteristics (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996). A country of origin variable might stand for the ease of reverse migration, *i.e.*, how costly or difficult it is to return to one's country of origin. An individual migrating from a geographically proximate democracy would likely have an easier time returning to his or her home society than an individual migrating from a greater distance or from a more hostile political regime. The ease with which one can reverse his or her migratory course and return home is known as the level of "reversibility" (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996). An immigrant's previous political experiences may also influence his or her likelihood of participating in the electoral process. Individuals with previous democratic experience may be able to "translate" this political knowledge and apply it to new political experiences in the United States. The ability to apply prior political knowledge to a new political environment is known as "translation" (Black *et al.*, 1987; Finifter and Finifter, 1989). Greater distances or more hostile regimes may mean greater propensities to naturalize, while previous democratic experience likely translates into a higher likelihood of voter turnout, once naturalized. In these instances, country of origin may be acting as a proxy for something else, such as distance, previous political experience, or linguistic congruity.¹

¹In a larger study of immigrant political incorporation, I have examined the impact of home society characteristics on naturalizing and voting. Unfortunately, country of origin and country of origin characteristics cannot be included in the same model, due to problems

However, country of origin likely has its own influence on political incorporation, apart from these factors. For instance, immigrants from certain countries of origin, such as Cuba, are more warmly received and encounter greater help navigating through the naturalization process than immigrants from other countries, such as Haiti, who face more discrimination (Alvarez, 1987; Garcia, 1987). In other instances, an immigrant's country of origin provides access to ethnic social networks and organizations, as is the case with Cuban immigrants, encouraging voting through collective mobilization (Togebly, 1999; Fennema and Tillie, 1999; Forment, 1989). In these instances, it is likely country of origin that affects political incorporation, rather than some variable subsumed under the heading. Immigrants from different countries of origin, even those with similar geographic, economic, or political characteristics, enter into different environments in the United States that in turn influence political integration.

But country of origin must not simply be examined as a main effect. Where an immigrant comes from likely mediates the effect of other demographic characteristics, such as income and education. The selectivity of migration flows means that countries tend to send a particular type of immigrant. Immigrants from some countries, such as India, tend to come from the highest echelons of their respective societies. In other countries, such as Mexico, the lower economic and educational tiers of the society dominate immigration to the United States. Further, the reasons for migrating to the United States and the longer-term settlement plans may result not just from an individual's traits, but from the larger country of origin context. Does an individual migrant with a high level of education have professional opportunities in his or her country of origin? Is the goal of migration to the United States part of a larger plan to raise capital and return to opportunities in the home society, or are job opportunities for the highly educated so limited in the country of origin that the plan is to settle permanently in the United States? As a result, immigrants with shared economic or educational characteristics, but from different countries of origin, likely experience those common economic or educational traits in very different ways.

This study examines the relationship between country of origin and political incorporation among ten immigrant groups in the contemporary United States. I test the role of country of origin on citizenship and voting

of multicollinearity. For a summary of the results from this larger study, please refer to Appendix 1.

by pooling data from the 1994, 1996, 1998, and 2000 Current Population Surveys and examining the results of logistic regression models. I also split the sample to examine how income, education, length of eligibility in the United States, and gender interact with country of origin to affect the two measurements of political incorporation. The results clarify the connection between place of origin and the processes of naturalizing and voting in the United States within and among ten immigrant groups.

BACKGROUND: POLITICAL INCORPORATION

Within studies of political incorporation, citizenship has been repeatedly identified as a key measure of adaptation to the American political system and to American society more generally. The process of becoming a U.S. citizen requires considerable effort, implying a substantial commitment to the United States and indicating a high level of integration (Yang, 1994; Liang, 1994; Jasso and Rosenzweig, 1990; Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Rumbaut, 1999; Hirschman, 1999; Gordon, 1964; Foner *et al.*, 2000; DeSipio, 1996). United States law requires five years of U.S. residency,² the passage of civics, history and English-language exams, and a successful interview with the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Moreover, some immigrants must renounce their original citizenship upon becoming American citizens, thus ending formal political affiliation with their country of origin.³ Finally, citizenship has obligations, such as jury duty, as well as benefits, another consideration individuals must think about when contemplating naturalization.

Once naturalized, citizens may extend their political incorporation by voting. Voting is the path by which immigrant groups become political communities with the power to alter the American political system, gain representation, and influence the distribution of resources (Pachon, 1987; Garcia, 1987; Plotke, 1999; Fennema and Tillie, 1999). The incentives to vote, however, are not nearly as obvious, individual, or immediate as those accompanying naturalization. As a result, voting is in some ways a better

²Immigrants married to U.S. citizens can naturalize after three years of residency. The percentage of immigrants who fall into this category tends to be less than 5 percent. Therefore, I will use five years as the required residency within this study.

³Though the United States allows dual citizenship, other countries such as India require that only one citizenship be held, forcing immigrants to make decisions about which affiliation they will retain. I am not examining dual citizenship in this study because the meaning of citizenship and the benefits it provides vary significantly from country to country.

indicator of political incorporation than is naturalizing, with immigrants who turn out at the polls suggesting more extensive internalization of American democratic norms.

Socioeconomic theories have largely been used to explain both naturalizing and voting. Though a considered and conscious cost-benefit analysis is unlikely to be performed by individuals in either the naturalizing or voting realm, as many unquantifiable emotional factors are likely involved, consideration of some of the costs and benefits of participation is warranted. Studies of citizenship acquisition have specifically focused on the influence of income and education (Jasso and Rosenzweig, 1990; Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Smith and Edmonston, 1997; Yang, 1994). These characteristics may encourage naturalizing by increasing the benefits, or perceived benefits, of U.S. citizenship. Greater levels of income or schooling may also encourage naturalizing by easing the daunting citizenship process. Perhaps an individual with more disposable income can better afford a lawyer to help navigate through the maze of laws, tests, and procedures associated with naturalizing.

Interestingly, the impact of English language ability on citizenship acquisition is more mixed. Some studies find English language ability encourages citizenship acquisition (Liang, 1994), though others identify a negative relationship between linguistic ability and naturalizing (Yang, 1994; Rumbaut, 1999). These varying results likely speak to the effect of individual characteristics within different country of origin contexts. For instance, Britons and Canadians, two groups with fluent English language ability, may find the benefits of U.S. citizenship less appealing than do immigrants from the Philippines or India, who also tend to be fluent in English.

As with naturalizing, resource- or socioeconomic-based theories dominate the field of voting and identify education and income as the biggest predictors of turnout (Bass and Casper, 2001; Rosenstone and Hanson, 1993; Verba, Scholzman and Brady, 1995). Previous research argues that individuals compare the time and energy of voting with what may be won or lost by going to the polls (Verba *et al.*, 1995). More income means an individual has more to protect, with a greater stake in society encouraging voting. Greater levels of schooling translate into more interest in the political system and stronger feelings of political efficacy.

Though socioeconomic factors may have similar effects on naturalizing and voting, respectively, the causal mechanisms may vary. Higher socioeconomic status may help to facilitate the naturalization process by providing for lawyers or English language classes, thus encouraging citizenship acqui-

sition. The same socioeconomic factors may encourage voting by increasing feelings of political efficacy and self-interest.

An individual's length of residence in the United States also has been identified as influencing both naturalizing and voting. More time in the United States translates into more experience with American institutions, greater contacts with the native born, a more permanent view of migration, and higher levels of social capital (Liang, 1994). These factors, in turn, encourage citizenship acquisition. In the voting realm, increased time in the United States may translate into greater internalization of American political norms and more familiarity with the American democratic system (Gordon, 1964; Bass and Casper, 2001).

Demographic characteristics also have been explored in the naturalization and voting processes. Age tends to have a curvilinear relationship with citizenship acquisition, with the youngest and oldest immigrants less likely to naturalize than those in middle age. Middle-aged immigrants can recognize the benefits of naturalizing, accept the likelihood of staying in the United States, and possess a long enough life expectancy to make naturalizing worthwhile (Yang, 1994).

Age has a similar relationship with voting. The youngest and oldest citizens are less likely to vote than are individuals in their middle years. Abstention among the young is largely the result of apathy. At the oldest ages, nonparticipation is marked by infirmity rather than disinterest or disenfranchisement. This pattern has been identified among both native born (Rosenstone and Hanson, 1993; Verba *et al.*, 1995) and foreign born (Black *et al.*, 1987).

THE EFFECT OF COUNTRY OF ORIGIN ON POLITICAL INCORPORATION

Even after factors such as income, education, length of residence, and age have been taken into account, both naturalizing and voting vary by country of origin (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Alba and Nee, 1999; DeSipio, 1996; Sierra, 2000).

Previous research examining the effect of country of origin on political incorporation has identified the cost/benefit structure as one of the mechanisms mediating the relationship (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996). Individual immigrants assess the costs and benefits of acquiring U.S. citizenship within their country of origin context. Although applying a formal cost-benefit

analysis to something as emotionally driven as naturalizing or voting is questionable, using the general framework to think of both the positives and negatives for an individual immigrant can be useful. How difficult, expensive, or painful is it to return to the country of origin? Is reversibility dangerous or prohibitive in some other way? What will be gained by acquiring U.S. citizenship? Immigrants migrating from greater distances or from nondemocratic regimes are far more likely to naturalize than are those from geographically closer or more democratic countries where the financial or psychic costs of return are lower (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Jasso and Rosenzweig, 1990; Liang, 1994).

Country of origin also influences political incorporation indirectly by mediating the effect of other characteristics. In research conducted by Liang (1994), predictors of political incorporation vary by immigrant group. For instance, homeownership is a bigger predictor of naturalizing among Chinese, Koreans, and Cubans than among Mexicans, while residential integration matters the most for naturalizing among Mexican immigrants. In this instance, having an economic "stake in society" seems to encourage political incorporation for certain groups, while having social ties seems to matter more for other groups. These findings suggest that mechanisms vary by country of origin, making source country important to study as much for the influence it exerts indirectly as for its main effects.

Gender is another characteristic that is affected by country of origin and cannot simply be studied in a vacuum (Jasso and Rosenzweig, 1990; Portes and Rumbaut, 1996). Among some immigrant groups, women are more likely to naturalize than are men. For instance, Irish women are more likely to acquire U.S. citizenship than are Irish men, while among Israelis, men are more likely to naturalize than are women. Though scholars have not determined the mechanisms at work, the mixed gender findings by country of origin suggest that the impact of gender on political incorporation varies by home society.

Even characteristics found to affect political incorporation in the same way across immigrant groups must be examined more closely. For instance, greater levels of education translate into greater odds of naturalizing, but the importance varies by country of origin (Yang, 1994; Liang, 1994). A college-educated Mexican immigrant is more likely to naturalize than a compatriot with lesser education, but a Chinese immigrant with the lowest level of education has the highest odds of naturalizing (Mogelonsky, 1997).

Within the realm of voting, country of origin has repeatedly been

identified as a predictor of voter turnout (Junn, 2000; Sierra, 2000; Fennema and Tillie, 1999; Togeby, 1999). However, the mechanisms by which country of origin impacts voting versus naturalizing likely differ.

The process of voting generally provides little tangible, immediate, or individual benefit. Individuals vote because they gain psychic satisfaction from “doing their civic duty.” However, the process of voting does not provide everyone with such fulfillment. In fact, some scholars argue that this ingrained sense of civic responsibility results from having grown up in a democratic society (Black *et al.*, 1987). According to the “translation” argument (Finifter and Finifter, 1989), previous experience with democratic systems is among the best predictors of future participation for immigrants. Other scholars make a slightly different argument regarding the influence of country of origin on voting, contending that refugees are less likely to participate politically, not because of a lack of experience, but rather due to their histories of state-sponsored oppression and lack of trust in government institutions (Harles, 1993; Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Fennema and Tillie, 1999). In these instances, country of origin is influencing individual political incorporation, but through different mechanisms than impacted naturalizing.

More recently, the effect of country of origin on voter participation has been viewed as a mechanism of mobilization. Ethnic social networks and organizations encourage political participation by turning the powerlessness of one vote into the power of many (Fennema and Tillie, 1999; Togeby, 1999; Shaw, de la Garza and Lee, 2000). An isolated individual may vote for psychic satisfaction, out of a sense of duty, or simply out of habit. An individual who is part of a larger ethnic network may turn out in an effort to push a particular agenda or elect a certain official. As part of a mobilized group, an individual likely feels a sense of duty to others in the network, as well as the real possibility of electoral success. Being from a particular country of origin is what provides access to and involvement in such ethnic networks and organizations and the resulting political mobilization (Portes, 1995; Portes and Zhou, 1999; Gibson and Ogbu, 1991). Successful ethnic mobilization is best seen in the Cuban community, where extensive social networks and ethnic organizations have led to high levels of voter turnout (Forment, 1989; Pedraza Bailey, 1987; Portes and Bach, 1985).

Little work has been done to understand how different characteristics interact with country of origin to affect voting. Two studies that have begun to explore these relationships have focused on how gender varies in its effect across different immigrant groups. Female immigrants from Latin America

seem to have higher propensities to become politically active (Jones-Correa, 1998) and vote (Bass and Casper, 2001), as compared with their male counterparts. Scholars argue that women from Latin American countries experience new freedoms and opportunities in the United States, while Latin American men find economic and social adjustment difficult (Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991). The reaction of the women is to become more politically incorporated, flexing their new power. Men from the same countries react by retreating into ethnic groups and organizations that reflect the more traditional patriarchal structures (Jones-Correa, 1998). Because so little work has been done to explore how gender differentially affects political incorporation across immigrant groups, it is not known whether this gender pattern exists across all migrant communities. What we do know is that gender roles vary significantly by place of origin. Such diversity in gender structures suggests that it likely does impact the political incorporation of different immigrant groups.

LIMITATIONS OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

Though these empirical studies begin to shed light on how country of origin affects political incorporation, we are left with an incomplete picture. The largest of the empirical studies conducted on naturalization fails to control for a host of factors, such as income, education, and length of exposure – all factors known to be predictive of naturalizing (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Jasso and Rosenzweig, 1990). Liang's work makes up for this weakness by controlling for a host of key factors, but he only explores six immigrant groups (Mexicans, Canadians, Cubans, Colombians, Chinese and Koreans). Though these groups certainly comprise the bulk of today's migration flows to the United States, immigrants from a range of European countries continue to arrive in large numbers. This study tells us nothing about the effect of country of origin on naturalizing among any European immigrant group.

Other studies exploring naturalizing and voting patterns have been limited in their ethnic or geographic focus, examining panethnic groups in particular parts of the country (Sierra, 2000; de la Garza and DeSipio, 1996; Junn, 2000; Bass and Casper, 2001; Garcia, 1987; Pachon, 1987; Portes and Curtis, 1987; Alvarez, 1987). The problem with examining Latinos or Asians, generally, is that the unique effects of country of origin are hidden. For example, an Asian category would be comprised of Indians, migrating from the largest democracy in the world, and Vietnamese, migrating from a communist regime. Examining immigrants by region of origin, rather than

country of origin, is clearly problematic, particularly given the heterogeneity in migration flows.

Research in this area has also tended to focus on voting within particular areas of the United States. The Junn study (2000) focuses on immigrants in Texas. This state's border location, large number of Latino immigrants, and history of migration make it distinct enough to question its generalizability. Similar methodologies are seen elsewhere (de la Garza and DeSipio, 1992, 1996). Though this tack has been taken due to both a lack of national data and the heavy concentrations of immigrants in a handful of states, current data allow us to move past these previous constraints and gain a baseline of political incorporation of individual immigrant groups across the United States.

Some scholarship has attempted to move beyond the lumping together of immigrant groups to more systematically examine the influence of country of origin on political incorporation. Studies have found some groups, such as Mexicans, to have higher rates of return migration than other Latin American immigrant populations (Portes and Bach, 1985). Similarly, immigrants from certain countries of origin, such as Cuba, have been found to naturalize and vote at higher rates than other Latino counterparts – not surprising given the uniqueness of the Cuban migration (de la Garza and DeSipio, 1992, 1996; Pachon, 1987). Unfortunately the weakness of these studies has been the limited focus on immigrants from only certain parts of the world, specifically Latin America, significantly restricting the generalizability of findings.

A final weakness of previous studies is a failure to examine how characteristics consistently associated with political incorporation vary by country of origin. Length of eligibility, education, income, and gender may very well interact with country of origin to vary in their influence on civic integration. For instance, Mexicans with college degrees and well-paying jobs are not as likely to naturalize as Chinese with the same characteristics (Mogelonsky, 1997). The influence of country of origin can override certain characteristics deemed dominant or simply alter the way in which they mediate political incorporation. Though a few studies have touched on these interactions (Liang, 1994; Bass and Casper, 2001; Jones-Correa, 1998), these studies are limited by the relationships they explore and the number of immigrant groups investigated. Studying the interactions between country of origin and certain characteristics facilitates a greater understanding of the mechanisms that mediate between where immigrants come from and their level of political incorporation.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

The identification and discussion of previous studies' limitations is not meant to suggest that this is a study without weaknesses. I have chosen to use the Current Population Survey (CPS) to systematically examine the political incorporation process as it contains information on citizenship status and voter turnout, the two most formal measurements of political integration. Further, the CPS allows for the study of these two processes across multiple immigrant groups, providing data on country of origin, time period of entry, and a host of other important demographic characteristics.

However, like most secondary data sources, the CPS is not without problems. The data on which I rely are self-reported measurements of citizenship status and voter turnout. Because both questions touch on sensitive issues, albeit for different reasons, both are susceptible to misreporting. In the instance of citizenship status, individuals who are in the United States illegally may be hesitant to report that they are not citizens. Though the survey does not touch on questions of legality, the question of citizenship status may keep some people from answering the survey honestly and others from answering the survey entirely. A preliminary examination of the data suggests that the citizenship status reported by the respondents seems to be generally accurate. I have checked this variable by constructing cross-tabs with other variables that give hints at citizenship status, specifically questions on the respondent's country of origin and year of entry to the United States. For instance, by finding that virtually everyone who reports that they are native born also reports the United States as their birthplace suggests accuracy in the data. Finding that those who cite their status as naturalized citizens and who also report that they have been in the country for at least five years (the minimum amount of time needed to gain citizenship) also points to consistent self-reporting.

Certainly some immigrants, specifically the undocumented, may have been in the United States for five years but not be eligible for citizenship. The lack of information on visa type or legal status is a significant weakness of these data, particularly for this study, as the variation in legal migration flows by country of origin could be appearing as country of origin effects. For instance, lower naturalization rates among Mexican-origin immigrants could speak more to the selectivity of that particular migration flow, comprised largely of undocumented workers, than to country of origin effects. Mexican immigrants might be as likely to naturalize as any other group, given the opportunity. Unfortunately, these data do not allow for the iden-

tification of an immigrant's legal status. The best that can be done is to interpret the results with caution.

A perennial concern of survey data is nonresponse bias. In this study, the concern lies with individual's choosing not to participate due to their immigration or citizenship status. Some comfort can be found in the fact that previous scholars who tracked the naturalization trajectories of Mexican immigrants found little difference between those who "went missing" and those followed throughout the process (Portes and Bach, 1985; Portes and Curtis, 1987).⁴ Still, non-response bias remains a concern.

Finally, overreporting on questions of voter turnout is common, as respondents want to appear to be "doing their civic duty." A study of Latino voter turnout in the 1996 election found significant overreporting when aggregate self-reports were examined against aggregate validated rates (Shaw *et al.*, 2000). The self-reported voter turnout rate in the CPS is lower than what has been recorded in other surveys, such as the National Election Study, viewed as the "gold standard" of electoral data. In comparing self-reported rates of voter turnout of all respondents in the CPS with the Federal Election Commission's actual tally for the years 1994, 1996, 1998, and 2000, I have found an overreporting rate of approximately 10 percent. For instance, in 1994, the CPS has a self-reported turnout of 85,700,000 voters across the country versus the Federal Election Commission's tally of 75,105,860. In 1996, the CPS reports 105,000,000 Americans going to the polls versus 96,456,345 actual votes cast. In 1998, 73,117,022 Americans actually cast ballots versus 83,100,000 self-reported votes. Finally, in the 2000 election, 110,800,000 Americans self-reported voting versus an actual turnout of 105,586,274. The primary concern with overreporting is that it may not be randomly distributed, with certain groups, such as the better educated, overreporting at higher rates than their less educated counterparts. Though this study is concerned with actual political participation as a measurement of political incorporation, overreporting tells us something in its own right. An immigrant who incorrectly reports having voted suggests in its own way a form of political incorporation by recognizing the pressure to vote in American society.

The collection of certain demographic information is also wanting. Characteristics such as education, income, and year of entry were collected

⁴Portes and Bach (1985) were able to determine similarities between the tracked and "lost" Mexican immigrants by examining initial records and demographic characteristics collected on the immigrants upon their entry to the United States.

as categorical variables, rather than as continuous measurements. Other desirable information, specifically visa type and level of English language proficiency, was simply not collected.

A final weakness of the CPS, as it relates to this study, is the lack of over-sampling among immigrants. In order to achieve more reliable estimates, I have pooled four years of data. I have further made the decision to include two supranational groups in my analysis: former Soviets and Southeast Asians. This is not to suggest these two grouped categories are monolithic religiously, culturally, politically, or educationally. I have formed these supranational groups in an attempt to gain some insight into the political incorporation of these immigrants, who I would otherwise be unable to include due to small sample size. Immigrants from both the former Soviet countries, as well as those from the Southeast Asian countries of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, are too significant in American immigration flows to omit entirely.

Even with these shortcomings, these data continue to be the best available for the examination of country of origin and its effect on political incorporation.

HYPOTHESES

This study hopes to create a baseline of immigrant political incorporation of ten immigrant groups drawn from a large-scale, nationally representative data set. Five hypotheses are tested.

Previous research has identified ease or difficulty of reversibility as a factor affecting an individual's decision to naturalize (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Liang, 1994). Immigrants from greater distances, from more hostile political regimes, or generally from countries where return is more difficult are more likely to acquire U.S. citizenship than are immigrants from societies with fewer barriers to return. The first hypothesis tests this previous argument, examining immigrants from ten places of origin, each with distinct levels of economic, political, and geographic barriers.

The reversibility hypothesis: Because of the geographic, economic, and/or political difficulties associated with reverse migration, immigrants from China, the former Soviet Union, Cuba, Southeast Asia, the Philippines, and India should show higher propensities to naturalize than do immigrants from Mexico, Canada, Great Britain, and Italy.

Other scholars have argued that similarities between the home country and the host country lead to greater levels of political incorporation (Black

et al., 1987; Finifter and Finifter, 1989). Those that have experienced democratic elections in his or her home society will be more likely to participate in electoral politics in the United States, as previous political experience can be translated. Though earlier works (Black *et al.*, 1987; Finifter and Finifter, 1989) have identified these trends, this hypothesis has not previously been tested on voter participation in the United States, leading to the second hypothesis.

The translation hypothesis: The political environment of the country of origin impacts an immigrant's level of political integration in the United States. Immigrants from countries with histories of democracy, specifically Great Britain, Italy, Canada, and India, should be more likely to vote, once naturalized, than are immigrants from the former Soviet Union, Southeast Asia, and China, societies that lack a democratic tradition. Immigrants from Mexico and the Philippines are likely found somewhere between the extremes, given their more mixed democratic histories.

An immigrant group's initial reception in the United States has implications for its longer-term incorporation (Portes, 1995). Immigrants who are welcomed and targeted to receive financial aid and assistance will have a greater likelihood of integration, as has happened in the Cuban community (Pedraza-Bailey, 1987). Settlement patterns also play a role, with concentrations of immigrants both helping to integrate new waves from the home society into the political and economic systems in the United States (Formant, 1989), as well as increase the interest of major political parties who identify a voting bloc worthy of courtship. These multiple factors, unique to the Cuban community, lead to the next hypothesis.

The mobilization hypothesis: Cubans, though emigrating from a nondemocratic society, will have high levels of voter turnout due to the extensive ethnic Cuban social networks and organizations and targeted mobilization efforts from the major political parties.

Though country of origin, and all that it entails, is likely a significant predictor of citizenship acquisition and voter turnout, previous studies have identified education, income, and length of eligibility in the United States to predict immigrant political incorporation (Smith and Edmonston, 1997; Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Jasso and Rosenzweig, 1992; Yang, 1994). Unfortunately, these earlier studies have generally viewed immigrants as a monolithic group, failing to explore whether these characteristics vary by immigrant group. The assimilation hypothesis empirically tests the role of education, income, and length of eligibility on naturalizing and voting among different immigrant groups.

The assimilation hypothesis: As education, income, and length of eligibility in the United States increases, so does the propensity of immigrants from all countries of origin to naturalize and vote. However, the power of these predictors will vary by country of origin.

Though an increasing amount of attention has recently focused on the gendered nature of migration, much of the work has focused on one or two immigrant groups (Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991; Jones-Correa, 1998; Bass and Casper, 2001). The final hypothesis tests the effect of gender across ten distinct countries of origin, building on the growing body of research on gender and migration.

The gender diversity hypothesis: The effect of gender on political incorporation should vary by country of origin in both the naturalization and voting processes.

DATA AND METHODS

This project relies on the CPS, a monthly survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (for a detailed discussion of the CPS, *see* U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2000). Beyond collecting labor force data, the CPS also has special supplements each month. November includes questions on voter turnout, as well as a series of demographic questions. As a result, the key parameters for the study of political incorporation – citizenship status, voter turnout, and country of origin – are all included in each November CPS.

The specific citizenship question on which I will be relying asks, “In what citizenship group do you belong?,” with the possible responses including:

- 1) Native, born in U.S.;
- 2) Native, born in P.R. or U.S. outlying area;
- 3) Native, born abroad of U.S. parent(s);
- 4) Foreign Born, U.S. citizen by naturalization;
- 5) Foreign Born, not a U.S. citizen.

I subdivide this citizenship question into a dichotomous variable by using responses 4 and 5 of the original question.

The specific voting question that I will use in this study is asked 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 __?” with the

question asked only of those 18 years of age or older who cited U.S. citizenship by birth or naturalization. The format of this question is intended to limit overreporting by removing the stigma of nonvoting. This question is specifically asking about voter participation at the federal level.

The respondent's country of origin is asked as an open-ended question, and reads "In what country were you born?" Gender is dichotomous, male or female. The education variable is categorical, giving respondents a series of possible responses. I have recoded this variable to create two new variables, one that measures lower levels of education and one that measures higher levels. Country-specific migration flows tend to be characterized by higher or lower levels of skill or education due to selectivity. Creating the education-level variable in this manner does not appear to have country-specific effects, however, as each subgroup included in the study has enough educational variability. Income is similarly reported as a categorical variable. I have created a new economic variable, one that measures whether an individual is above or below the poverty line, by combining information on total family income and total family size. I have used the national poverty thresholds, released annually by the Census Bureau, to calculate whether an individual is above or below the poverty line. Individuals are assigned this status based on the poverty thresholds in the year in which they participated in the CPS. I have chosen to measure an immigrant's length of eligibility in the United States rather than his or her length of residence, as documented immigrants are not able to participate formally in the political sphere for the first five years. I have calculated length of eligibility in the United States by using the "year of entry" variable in the survey. The "year of entry" variable is categorical, asking in what period of time an individual entered the United States. I have calculated the mid-point of each of these categories and subtracted that year from the year in which the respondent participated in the survey. I have then subtracted five additional years from the total, as this is the usual length of time required before an immigrant has the opportunity to naturalize. The result is a "quasi" continuous variable, measuring the amount of time one has been eligible to formally participate.⁵

The construction of this length of eligibility variable is not ideal for a

⁵Correspondingly, age at migration could be calculated in a similar manner. The age at which an individual migrates to the United States is predictive of immigrant assimilation, with those arriving at younger ages more likely to become incorporated on a host of fronts. Unfortunately, it is not possible to include both current age and age at migration in the same model, due to issues of multicollinearity.

variety of reasons. First, the immigrant's time of entry is collected as a categorical variable, with categories of varying lengths. As a result, the final variable is not truly continuous. I could simply have used the initial categorical variables to measure length of time in the United States or collapsed them into a handful of time periods. Doing so would make it difficult to determine the effect of cohort versus period versus length of eligibility in the United States. The length of eligibility variable is also limited by our lack of information on entry status. Many, particularly Mexicans, may have entered the United States as undocumented immigrants. By subtracting five years from the date of entry, I am assuming that everyone has initially entered as documented migrants and are therefore eligible for citizenship five years later. This is certainly not the case. As a result, we could find that the length of eligibility variable does not appear to have a relationship with naturalizing or voting – or has a more limited relationship for certain groups – as a result of “starting the clock” on political eligibility too soon.

I have included three control variables of age, age-squared, and workforce participation. The age variables are both continuous. I have included both age and age-squared in the models, as previous studies have found a curvilinear relationship between age and political participation (Converse, 1969; Niemi, Stanley and Evans, 1984). The workforce participation variable is categorical and measures whether or not the respondent is working full time. I have also included control variables for the year in which the respondent participated in the survey. Appendix 2 presents the independent variables included in the regression models and their operationalization.

I have drawn individual cases from the November 1994, 1996, 1998, and 2000 CPS (“Voter and Registration Supplement”). Because the sample sizes of some of the immigrant groups are small, I have merged all four years of data to gain greater statistical reliability. Each wave of the survey contributes approximately one fourth of the cases to my pooled samples. The sample consists of the following ten immigrant groups: Mexicans, Cubans, Canadians, Britons, Italians, Former Soviets, Filipinos, Indians, Southeast Asians, and Mainland Chinese. I have chosen these ten immigrant groups in order to compare immigrants from a wide range of countries of origin. These ten groups provide diversity in terms of geography, history of migration, and political experience. Without such diversity, the study would be incomplete, as it would lack appropriate comparison groups.

For the citizenship sample, I selected those age 18 or older, who had lived in the country for at least five years, and who had answered the

citizenship question. This sample is comprised of 17,019 cases. None of the cases have missing data on citizenship status.

The voting sample is culled from the larger citizenship sample. The voting sample consists of 6,641 naturalized immigrants who met the age, residency, and citizenship requirements and answered the voting question. The total number of naturalized cases from the citizenship sample does not equal the total number in the voting sample, as approximately 10 percent, or 751, of the 7,392 individuals who have naturalized have missing voting information. I have made the decision to drop these cases from the second stage voting model. Though there may be some selectivity among cases with missing voting data, the “missings” look quite similar to the cases with complete information. Approximately 22 percent of those with missing voting information have less than a high school degree, as compared with 22 percent of voters and 34 percent of nonvoters. Similarly, 50 percent of those with missing voting information have more than a high school diploma, as compared with 39 percent of nonvoters and 55 percent of voters. In keeping with this educational distribution, approximately 14 percent of respondents with missing voting data live below the poverty line, versus 13 percent of voters and 21 percent of nonvoters. Women comprise 49 percent of those with missing data, versus 54 percent of both voters and nonvoters. Missing cases are fairly evenly distributed across country of origin. Between 11 percent and 14 percent of immigrants from Southeast Asia, China, the Soviet Union, Italy, the Philippines, and India lack data. About 9 percent of Mexicans have missing information, and between 5 percent and 7 percent of Canadians, Cubans, and Britons lack voting data. Based on the relative similarity of those with missing voting information versus those with complete voting data, I have chosen to take the more cautious route and restrict the two samples to immigrants with complete information on the respective form of political participation under study. Therefore, all of the data included in this study, including descriptive statistics, are based on cases with complete information on the dependent variables.

Approximately 10 percent of all of the cases have missing income data. I have calculated the median income for the respective immigrant group and filled in the missing information with these values.

Because both dependent variables are dichotomous, I use logistic regression analysis. I have run these models on both the pooled and split samples. Splitting a sample fulfills the same goals as adding an interaction term to each of the subsamples in the pooled model. By running split

models, I have been able to examine how country of origin interacts with education, income, gender and length of eligibility.⁶

FINDINGS

Descriptive statistics in Tables 1 and 2 identify some diverse patterns by country of origin. Table 1 examines the proportion of immigrants naturalizing, as well as the distribution of characteristics among all those at risk of naturalizing. The percentages of immigrants naturalizing varies widely by country of origin, ranging from 22.2 percent of eligible Mexicans to 74.5 percent of eligible Italians. This initial variation at the bivariate level presents *prima facie* evidence for further analysis of the relationship between country of origin and this first form of political incorporation.

TABLE 1
SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR THOSE ELIGIBLE TO NATURALIZE, BY IMMIGRANT GROUP

Immigrant Group	N in Citizenship Models	% Naturalized	% Less HS Degree	% More HS Degree	% Below Poverty	Mean Eligibility (in years)
Mexicans	7,373	22.2	66.4	13.3	45.9	12.8
Cubans	1,157	63.6	30.6	37.5	18.8	21.0
Canadians	1,060	55.4	17.7	55.9	7.9	27.1
Britons	854	54.1	9.0	56.7	9.4	25.0
Italians	967	74.5	47.7	21.0	11.1	30.0
Former Soviets	638	61.6	17.2	54.1	26.5	15.2
Chinese	1,047	50.8	29.0	49.5	16.5	12.3
Southeast Asians	1,255	51.9	31.5	39.2	26.0	9.9
Filipinos	1,768	69.0	13.4	68.5	8.1	13.4
Indians	900	50.4	9.8	80.0	5.8	11.3

Source: November 1994, 1996, 1998, and 2000 Current Population Survey.

Table 1 also displays variation in other characteristics by country of origin. Of particular note is the economic and educational diversity among these groups. For instance, two thirds of Mexicans have less than a high school diploma, while less than one tenth of Britons and Indians fall into this category. On the higher educational end, Indians and Filipinos dominate. Eighty percent of Indians and 68.5 percent of Filipinos have more than a

⁶Before making a final decision to run pooled and split models, I calculated Chi-Square statistics to determine whether split models were necessary. For both citizenship ($X^2 = 708.33$, $DR = 90$, $P < .001$) and voting ($X^2 = 12,711.06$, $DR = 90$, $P < .001$), the Chi-Squares were highly significant, suggesting the need for split models.

high school degree. These educational differences translate into economic outcomes. Mexicans have the highest rate of poverty at over 45 percent, while Indians have the lowest at under 6 percent. Though the initial relationship between citizenship and country of origin gives reason enough to move from a bivariate to a multivariate analysis, these educational and economic variations make an in-depth analysis even more important to determine whether country of origin is a proxy for other characteristics.

Table 2 examines the distribution of characteristics among all those who have naturalized and are eligible to vote. Southeast Asians and Chinese have the lowest turnout rates among all of those qualified to vote, with rates of 34.1 percent and 39.3 percent, respectively. At the high end of voter turnout are Canadians and Britons, with 67.0 percent and 66.1 percent, respectively. Clearly, voter turnout varies by country of origin.

TABLE 2
SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR THOSE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE, BY IMMIGRANT GROUP

Immigrant Group	N in Voting Models	% Voted	% Less HS Degree	% More HS Degree	% Below Poverty	Mean Eligibility (in years)
Mexicans	1,492	40.0	55.4	21.0	34.7	19.6
Cubans	693	64.4	24.2	44.4	16.3	24.4
Canadians	551	67.0	19.4	52.6	8.7	33.3
Britons	430	66.1	9.1	50.7	10.0	31.7
Italians	622	56.4	46.8	23.6	10.0	32.8
Former Soviets	348	48.6	16.4	56.6	25.9	21.4
Chinese	463	39.3	23.5	52.5	13.8	17.8
Southeast Asians	560	34.1	18.0	53.6	15.9	11.8
Filipinos	1,078	53.0	11.3	71.2	7.0	15.8
Indians	404	54.2	4.5	86.9	4.7	15.3

Source: November 1994, 1996, 1998, and 2000 Current Population Survey.

Table 2 also shows that those who have naturalized, by country of origin, vary on characteristics other than voter turnout. Educational attainment is wide-ranging, with 21.0 percent of Mexicans having more than a high school degree versus 86.9 percent of Indians. The mean length of eligibility also varies significantly, reflecting diverse migration histories. Canadians have the longest average length of eligibility at 33.3 years versus Southeast Asians who have the shortest mean eligibility at 11.8 years. These are the same two groups that define the upper and lower bounds of voting rates, suggesting a correlation between voter turnout and length of eligibility. Is country of origin a proxy for time spent in the United States, or

some other trait, or does it have an independent effect on political incorporation?

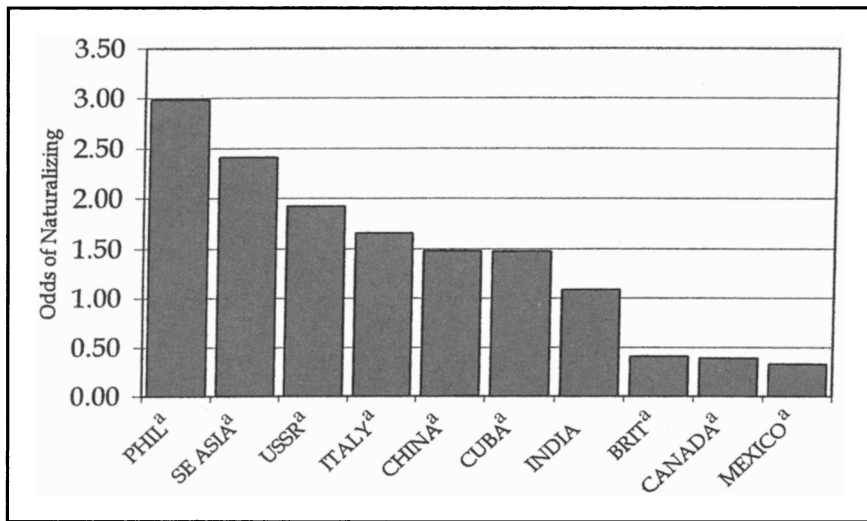
Both Tables 1 and 2 suggest a relationship between country of origin and political incorporation, but at the same time some important differences in the tables emerge. First, the range in naturalizations is larger than the range in voter turnout. The tables also show differences in education and income. Table 1, containing information on those eligible to naturalize, shows lower levels of education and income, on average, than among those who have naturalized (Table 2). In short, citizenship acquisition is not random, but is selectively sought out by those with greater schooling and/or economic means. However, the bivariate statistics in Table 2 suggest that income and education are not as predictive of voting as they are of naturalizing. Specifically, Britons and Canadians who have naturalized exhibit lower levels of income and education, on average, than among the larger sample of their eligible (but not necessarily naturalized) compatriots. Interestingly, naturalized Britons and Canadians have higher levels of voter turnout than any other eligible group. This preliminary finding suggests that “key” predictors of incorporation may work differently for different groups. Both the *prima facie* evidence of a relationship between country of origin and political incorporation and the variation in other types of predictors by country of origin require a more in-depth analysis.

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS: NATURALIZING

The relationship between country of origin and citizenship becomes clearer in the multivariate analysis. Figure II, based upon a multivariate model that includes the control variables of education, poverty status, length of eligibility, gender, workforce participation, age, and age-squared, shows country of origin to be a significant predictor of citizenship for nine of the ten immigrant groups under examination. For some immigrant groups, country of origin is the biggest predictor of naturalizing, net of these control variables. This is true both for groups naturalizing at the highest rates, specifically Filipinos and Southeast Asians, and for groups naturalizing at the lowest rates, specifically Canadians and Mexicans. Education, length of eligibility, workforce participation, and age are all statistically significant and positive predictors of naturalizing, as found in previous studies. Age-squared has an exceedingly small but statistically significant negative relationship

with naturalizing, in keeping with previous research (Converse, 1969; Niemi *et al.*, 1984).

Figure II. Relative Odds of Naturalizing by Country of Origin, N = 17,019



Source: November 1994, 1996, 1998, and 2000 CPS.

Notes: ^ap < .001.

Numbers reported are the odds-ratio of each group naturalizing, as compared to all of the other immigrant groups combined. Control Variables: age, age², female, less hs, more hs, poverty, workforce participation.

These multivariate findings clarify the results from the bivariate relationships. In Table 1, Italians had the highest naturalization rates and Mexicans had the lowest. But is the effect of country of origin real, or is it a proxy for some other characteristic? Controlling for key factors reveals the net effect of country of origin. After holding constant education, length of eligibility, and poverty status, as well as other predictor variables discussed above, Mexicans continue to have the lowest naturalization rates, being only about one third as likely to naturalize as all other immigrants included in the study. Filipinos now have the highest naturalization rates, being about three times as likely to become citizens as all other immigrants. Southeast Asians are second to Filipinos, with naturalization rates nearly two and a half times that of the rest of the sample, followed by former Soviets who are nearly twice as likely to naturalize as all other groups. Italians, who had the highest naturalization rate in the bivariate relationship are slightly over one and one

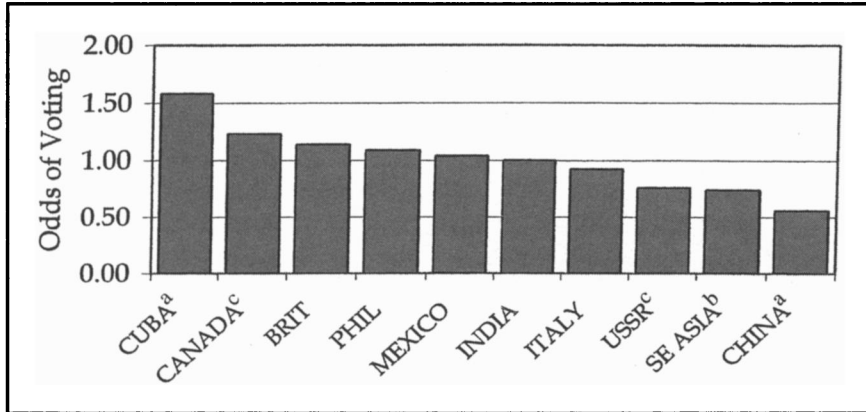
half times as likely to naturalize, followed closely by Chinese and Cubans. Britons, Canadians, and Mexicans are the least likely to naturalize, about half as likely to become citizens as are other immigrants. These results reveal that country of origin does matter, even after controlling for a host of factors.

The findings from Figure II suggest that immigrants who have migrated from greater geographic distances, such as Filipinos, as well as those from nondemocratic societies, such as Southeast Asians, former Soviets, Cubans, and Chinese, are the most likely to naturalize. Greater ease of reversibility is reflected in the lower naturalization rates of Mexicans, Canadians, and Britons. These patterns imply that citizenship is a status that may be acquired for longer-term security and protection, as well as an indicator of more permanent settlement.

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS: VOTING

The multivariate analysis of voting shows that country of origin also affects this form of political incorporation, net of education, poverty status, length of eligibility, workforce participation, gender, age, and age-squared. As Figure III shows, country of origin is a significant predictor of voter turnout among five of the ten immigrant groups, at both the highest and lowest levels of participation. Education, eligibility and age encourage voting. Poverty and age-squared discourage voting. Workforce participation is not a significant predictor of turnout.

Immigrants from nondemocratic regimes are generally most affected by their countries of origin. Former Soviets, Southeast Asians, and Chinese are about 25 percent to 40 percent less likely to vote than are other immigrants, while Cubans are about 60 percent more likely to vote. Immigrants from democratic societies tend not to be affected by their countries of origin, with the exception of Canadians. Canadians are about one quarter more likely to vote than are other immigrants. What the data show is that immigrants from nondemocratic societies are generally less likely to vote than are others, but immigrants from democracies are not necessarily more likely to vote. In short, the absence of democratic experience matters, while its presence may not. The results also support previous theoretical arguments suggesting that fear and lack of faith in government institutions leads to non-participation (Harles, 1998; Portes and Rumbaut, 1996). The translation hypothesis posited that previous democratic experience would lead to greater political participation in the United States. The findings show that previous

Figure III. Relative Odds of Voting by Country of Origin, N = 6,641

Source: November 1994, 1996, 1998, and 2000 CPS.

Notes: ^ap < .001.

^bp < .01.

^cp < .05.

Numbers reported are the odds-ratio of each group voting, as compared to all of the other immigrant groups combined. Control Variables: age, age², female, less hs, more hs, poverty, workforce participation.

experience does matter, but it is actually the absence of previous democratic experience that best predicts formal political (in)activity.

Cubans have higher voter turnout rates than any other group, supporting the mobilization hypothesis. Though refugees, their reception and resettlement in the United States is quite distinct from other refugee groups, likely explaining the variation in political behavior. Early waves of Cuban refugees were welcomed to the United States, settling predominantly in the Miami area. They received vast amounts of settlement money and support from the American government, facilitating the resettlement efforts (Pedraza-Bailey, 1987). The Cuban exile community reconstituted in Florida the social networks and organizations that had existed in Cuba, leading to internal community pressure on Cubans to naturalize and vote in an effort to gain and maintain political power (Forment, 1989). The mobilization efforts from within the Cuban community have combined with the external efforts from the major political parties to explain much of the Cuban deviation from the pattern of refugee nonparticipation.

Figures II and III support the argument that country of origin matters in both naturalizing and voting, even after controlling for key variables such as income, education, length of eligibility, and gender, but these two figures

also show an important difference. Though country of origin affects both naturalizing and voting, its effect on naturalizing is stronger and more significant than it is on voting. Country of origin is significant in predicting citizenship in nine of the ten cases. In the voting model, it is only significant in five of the groups. Further, country of origin is never the biggest predictor of voting, while it is the biggest determinant of naturalizing for four of the ten groups in the citizenship model. Country of origin is clearly important in determining political incorporation, but its effect varies by type of integration.

The results from these multivariate models also suggest a limited relationship between naturalizing and voting. Though citizenship is a necessary condition for voting, it is far from sufficient. Based on the mixed findings by immigrant group, with the most likely citizens being the least likely voters and vice versa, it appears that citizenship is acquired for a host of reasons, with the ability to participate in the electoral process only one motivation.

What these previous multivariate models fail to tell us is how factors vary in their effect on political incorporation by country of origin. For instance, does income affect naturalization more for Indians than for Cubans? Are women from Canada more likely to vote than are women from Italy? In order to examine how these characteristics interact with country of origin to impact different types of political incorporation, I have split the sample and run the multivariate models on each of the immigrant groups separately.

SPLIT MODELS

Tables 3 and 4 present the results of the multivariate citizenship and voting models run on the split samples. By dividing the sample and running the same multivariate models, it is possible to see the effect of particular variables on individual immigrant groups, net of the control variables.

Table 3 shows the important effect of education on naturalizing for the ten different groups. Having less than a high school education is the most consistent predictor of citizenship for nine of the ten immigrant groups, with immigrants of this educational level only between 30 percent and 65 percent as likely to naturalize as those with a high-school degree. Having more than a high school education is significant and positive for five of the ten immigrant groups. The range of its influence is larger – Southeast Asians with

TABLE 3
PREDICTORS OF CITIZENSHIP BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Nativity	Age	Age2	Female	Less		More		Poverty	Work	Elig Time	Year 96	Year 98	Year 00
				HS	HS	HS	HS						
Cuba, N = 1,157	1.02 ^a	1.00	1.04	0.52 ^d	1.89 ^d	0.75	0.94	1.10 ^d	0.95	1.38	1.60 ^b		
Mexico, N = 7,373	1.01 ^b	1.00	1.12 ^a	0.56 ^d	1.39 ^c	0.76 ^d	1.24 ^c	1.08 ^d	1.22 ^b	1.63 ^d	1.67 ^d		
Canada, N = 1,060	0.97 ^c	1.00 ^c	0.79	0.65 ^a	1.18	1.04	0.8	1.09 ^d	1.10	1.38	1.10		
SE Asia, N = 1,255	1.04 ^d	1.00 ^b	0.98	0.40 ^d	2.44 ^d	0.61 ^c	1.48 ^b	1.13 ^d	1.08	1.24	0.96		
India, N = 900	1.00	1.00	1.39 ^b	0.30 ^c	0.98	0.93	1.95 ^c	1.16 ^d	1.07	2.13 ^c	1.46 ^a		
China, N = 1,047	1.02 ^a	1.00 ^b	1.12	0.41 ^d	0.91	0.88	1.26	1.19 ^d	1.42 ^a	1.09	1.18		
Phil, N = 1,768	1.01 ^b	1.00 ^d	0.94	0.49 ^d	1.25	0.72 ^a	0.86	1.12 ^d	1.29	1.04	0.98		
USSR, N = 638	1.02 ^a	1.00 ^c	0.73	0.49 ^b	2.03 ^c	1.46	1.33	1.15 ^d	1.08	2.77 ^c	1.71 ^a		
Italy, N = 967	1.04 ^c	1.00 ^c	0.68 ^b	0.72	1.65 ^b	0.78	1.08	1.11 ^d	1.24	1.37	1.65 ^b		
Brit, N = 854	0.99	1.00	0.99	0.41 ^c	0.87	1.85 ^b	1.06	1.10 ^d	0.97	1.11	1.11		

Source: November 1994, 1996, 1998 and 2000 Current Population Survey.

Notes: Numbers reported are odds-ratios.

^ap < .1.

^bp < .05.

^cp < .01.

^dp < .001.

some college education are 2.44 times more likely to naturalize than are Southeast Asians with a high school degree, while Mexicans with some college education are only 1.39 times more likely to naturalize than are their counterparts with only a high school education.

An examination of Table 4, which presents the results of the multivariate voting model run on the split samples, shows the differing effect education has on voting. A higher level of education is one of the biggest and most significant predictors of voting. Eight of the ten groups are significantly and positively affected by greater levels of education. The size of the effect varies substantially across groups – Mexicans and Filipinos are both 67 percent more likely to vote than are those with only a high-school degree while Italians with greater levels of education are three times more likely to vote than are their high school educated counterparts.

TABLE 4
PREDICTORS OF VOTING BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Nativity	Age	Age2	Female	Less HS	More HS	Poverty	Work	Elig Time	Year 96	Year 98	Year 00
Cuba, N = 693	1.05 ^d	1.00 ^b	0.95	0.70	2.21 ^d	0.89	1.25	1.02	1.66 ^b	1.04	2.06 ^c
Mexico, N = 1,495	1.06 ^d	1.00 ^d	0.95	0.60 ^d	1.67 ^c	0.70 ^c	0.93	1.02 ^c	2.15 ^d	1.07	1.76 ^d
Canada, N = 551	1.13 ^d	1.00 ^d	1.47 ^a	1.10	3.28 ^d	0.51 ^b	2.16 ^c	1.01	1.46	0.76	1.60
SE Asia, N = 560	1.03 ^c	1.00	1.10	0.57 ^a	1.70 ^b	0.99	1.22	1.01	1.58 ^a	0.34 ^d	2.53 ^c
India, N = 404	1.03 ^a	1.00	0.66 ^a	0.80	1.81	1.51	0.87	1.01	0.97	0.44 ^c	0.90
China, N = 463	1.04 ^b	1.00	1.11	0.44 ^b	2.06 ^c	0.63	1.10	1.02 ^b	1.36	0.87	1.61
Phil, N = 1,078	1.03 ^d	1.00 ^a	0.92	0.69	1.67 ^c	0.69	1.22	1.03 ^d	1.72 ^c	0.90	1.47 ^b
USSR, N = 348	1.01	1.00	0.83	0.44 ^b	1.39	1.41	1.48	1.02 ^b	1.50	0.57	1.52
Italy, N = 623	1.07 ^d	1.00 ^d	0.80	0.86	3.10 ^d	0.60 ^a	0.95	1.05 ^d	1.48 ^a	1.34	2.03 ^b
Brit, N = 430	1.04 ^a	1.00 ^c	1.17	1.00	2.45 ^d	0.43 ^b	0.60 ^a	1.06 ^d	1.01	0.81	2.00 ^b

Source: November 1994, 1996, 1998 and 2000 Current Population Survey.

Note: Numbers reported are odds-ratios.

^ap < .1.

^bp < .05.

^cp < .01.

^dp < .001.

The important finding from these split models is not simply that education influences political incorporation, as this relationship has been identified before. Of note is the varying ways in which education works to affect different types of political incorporation. In the naturalization model, the absence of education is more likely to predict citizenship status. For most of the immigrant groups, those with lower levels of education are statistically less likely to have naturalized than those with a high school degree. Citizenship requires the passage of civics, history, and English-language exams. An individual with a high school diploma or GED could likely master such

tests, while someone without such a degree may have greater difficulty or be more intimidated by the process. At the same time, more education is not essential to conquer the process.

Higher education has the more significant relationship with voting. In eight of the ten immigrant groups, having more than a high school degree is what matters. Though having less than a high school degree is statistically significant for some of the groups in predicting turnout, the real predictor comes from more schooling. Higher levels of education likely means more interest in and knowledge of the political system and stronger feelings of political efficacy. These mechanisms likely matter more for voting than for naturalizing.

The varying effects of education both between types of political activity and across immigrant groups may also speak to the political institutions in the country of origin. Voting in some countries may be mandatory, thus largely eliminating the relationship between education and voter participation in the home society. Conversely, voting in some countries may be far more challenging, likely strengthening the relationship between education and turnout both in the home and host societies.

Like education, the impact of poverty varies in its effect by country of origin and political process. However, it is less universally significant and directionally consistent than the educational variables. Mexicans, Southeast Asians, and Filipinos living below the poverty line are all less likely to naturalize than are their counterparts living above the poverty line. Britons living below the poverty line are actually 85 percent more likely to become citizens than are their wealthier counterparts – in contradiction to expectations.

The significance of poverty on voting varies by country of origin. Mexicans, Canadians, Italians, and Britons living below the poverty line are significantly less likely to vote than are their wealthier compatriots, in keeping with expectations. Interestingly, poverty status is not a significant predictor of voting for the other six groups under investigation. Four of the six groups for whom poverty has no impact on voter turnout are from communist regimes (Southeast Asians, Former Soviets, Chinese, and Cubans). Societies that have engineered more even distributions of wealth may have removed the relationship between socioeconomic status and political activity. Immigrants from communist societies may generally be less likely to vote than are those from democratic countries for a range of reasons, but the political, social, and economic environment in the country of origin may

mean that the level of political activity among immigrants from communist societies varies little by an individual's economic situation.

Length of eligibility in the United States is the only variable that significantly predicts citizenship for all ten of the immigrant groups, in keeping with previous research (Bass and Casper, 2001; Black *et al.*, 1987). Each additional year of eligibility increases the odds of naturalizing by between 8 percent and 19 percent. The longer immigrants are eligible to become politically incorporated in the United States, the more likely they are to have developed ties in the United States, acquired the necessary linguistic skills, and view their settlement as more permanent, thus increasing the odds of formalizing their relationship with the U.S. government.

Length of eligibility in the United States impacts the voting process in much the same way as it does the naturalization process. It is a significant and positive predictor of voting among six of the ten immigrant groups. Each additional year of eligibility increases the odds of voting by 2 percent to 6 percent. Increased years of eligibility may encourage voting in different ways than in the citizenship process. More years of eligibility likely mean greater familiarity with and interest in the American electoral process and, perhaps, increased feelings of responsibility to vote.

The findings on education, income, and length of eligibility in Tables 3 and 4 support the assimilation hypothesis. As education, income, and length of time increase, so do the odds of naturalizing and voting for most groups under examination. In the naturalization model, length of eligibility is the one variable that is significant and positive for all ten immigrant groups – the strongest bit of support for the assimilation hypothesis. Though length of eligibility is not as universally significant in the voting model, nor as large in magnitude, it is directionally similar when significant. The longer an immigrant is eligible to participate in the political process, the more likely he or she is to become politically incorporated, across countries of origin.

The one exception to these assimilation findings is the effect of poverty status on naturalizing among Britons. Britons living below the poverty line are actually more likely to naturalize than are their wealthier counterparts. The increased odds of naturalizing among the most economically vulnerable may result from an interaction between economic need and accessibility of naturalization. Since citizenship status provides certain economic entitlements, particularly in the post-1996 welfare reform period, it can be particularly appealing for the most economically vulnerable. For many immigrants, however, poverty status is synonymous with lower levels of education, a lack of English-language ability, and a general lack of incorporation

into American society. Poverty status may very well have a different effect on Britons, as even the poor among them do not suffer from the latter two conditions. Though citizenship acquisition is equally accessible to Britons of all socioeconomic levels, its promise of certain entitlements makes naturalization most appealing to those most financially in need.

The role of gender in political incorporation is neither as clear nor as consistent as the "assimilation" variables. The split models find tremendous variation by country of origin and political process. Mexican and Indian women are 12 percent and 39 percent, respectively, more likely to naturalize than are their male counterparts. In contrast, Italian women are 32 percent less likely to naturalize than are Italian men. Gender's impact on citizenship clearly varies by country of origin.

Gender is even more limited and less consistent in its effect on voter turnout. Only two groups, Canadians and Indians, are significantly impacted by gender and each in a different way. Canadian women are 47 percent more likely to vote than are their male counterparts. Indian women are 34 percent less likely to vote than are Indian men. Gender does influence voter turnout for certain countries of origin, but its significance and direction are substantially affected by home society.

The variation in gender effects supports the gender diversity hypothesis. A shared country of origin may differentially influence the political incorporation of its respective sons and daughters. Unfortunately, these findings give little insight into the mechanisms mediating gender and political incorporation among immigrants from different countries of origin. No clear patterns emerge that would allow us to understand how the political or social structures in the respective country of origin influences political activity in the United States for men and women, respectively. Though beyond the scope of this study, future research must explore what gender means in different societies, how it reproduces itself in particular immigrant communities in the United States, and how this translates into political incorporation or exclusion for immigrants from different places.

CONCLUSION

This study has found country of origin to be a significant predictor of multiple types of political incorporation. Though previous research has identified the importance of home society in predicting citizenship acquisition (Pachon, 1987; Liang, 1994; Yang, 1994; Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Si-

erra, 2000) and voter turnout (da la Garza and DeSipio, 1992; DeSipio, 1996), the findings from this study help to move the field forward by systematically examining both citizenship and voting on a broader cross-section of immigrants.

For many of the immigrants included in this study, country of origin matters in both the citizenship and voting processes, but in different ways. Immigrants from societies where reverse migration is more difficult for political, economic, or geographic reasons tend to naturalize at higher rates than their counterparts where return migration is more of a possibility. Filipinos, Southeast Asians, Chinese, Cubans, and those from the former Soviet Union all show higher propensities to naturalize than Britons, Canadians, or Mexicans. These findings support the reversibility hypothesis.

Within the voting realm, the results are almost reversed. Immigrants from Britain, Canada, and Mexico, while the least likely to naturalize, are among the most likely to vote. At the same time, the Chinese, former Soviets, and Southeast Asians, all groups with very high odds of naturalizing, are the least likely to vote. The translation hypothesis clearly receives support from these results, through both the findings on which groups vote and which do not.

Cubans, a refugee group lacking previous democratic experience in their home society, show the highest levels of voter turnout. The mechanism at work in the Cuban case appears to be mobilization, with individual Cuban immigrants tapping into an extensive ethnic network that encourages political incorporation. Again, the unique reception of Cuban immigrants in the United States, their settlement patterns, and their overall experience in the home society must be remembered.

This study has moved beyond simply identifying the importance of country of origin variables as significant predictors of political incorporation. Country of origin matters as much for how it influences other factors as it does for the influence it exerts in its own right. Certain characteristics, such as education, income, and length of eligibility, are consistent predictors of political incorporation. When immigrants are examined more closely and broken down by country of origin, it becomes clear that the effect of these "key" factors varies in significance, magnitude, and even direction, by country of origin. For instance, greater levels of education substantially increase the odds of Southeast Asians naturalizing, while similar levels of education have no effect on the likelihood of Canadians acquiring citizenship. Clearly, the effect of different factors on political incorporation varies across groups,

with these effects likely even more pronounced due to the selectivity of migration flows by country of origin. The very fact that certain characteristics are important in predicting political incorporation for some groups but not for others only further underscores the importance of country of origin as an important mediator in the political incorporation process.

Finally, the differing effects of country of origin on naturalizing and voting, respectively, suggest the distinct natures of these two political processes. The benefits of citizenship are far more immediate and tangible than those gained from voting. Citizenship provides political, legal, and economic benefits (Johnson *et al.*, 1999). As such, immigrants from certain countries of origin, such as China or Cuba, will be more likely to seek out such benefits than will immigrants from countries such as Canada or Great Britain. At the individual level, voting does little more than offer an individual psychic satisfaction for having participated in the democratic process. Such an emotional payoff may vary by country of origin. Specifically, individuals from societies where democracy is less rooted and faith in government institutions is lower may receive little pleasure from voting. It appears that one way to override this individual antipathy toward government and electoral participation is through community mobilization.

Though citizenship has come to be viewed as *the* indicator of political incorporation (Rumbaut, 1999), the reality may be that different forms of political activity are needed to assess the level of civic integration for different immigrant groups. For immigrants from some countries of origin, citizenship acquisition may suggest a high level of political incorporation. For other immigrant groups, citizenship may be a status acquired for economic or legal benefits, with voting participation the better indicator of civic integration.

This study is just a first step in understanding the important role that country of origin plays in both naturalizing and voting in the contemporary United States. Though I have systematically examined predictors of naturalizing and voting among ten contemporary immigrant groups, future research must explore how immigrants from other countries of origin become civically integrated into American society. Future research must explore how the patterns of civic integration identified here compare to earlier trends for the same immigrant groups. Have immigrants from the same countries of origin seen changes in patterns and predictors of political integration over time? Further, students of political incorporation must examine other types of political activity as measurements of political integration among and across multiple country of origin groups.

APPENDIX 1
THE IMPACT OF HOME SOCIETY CHARACTERISTICS ON NATURALIZING AND VOTING

	Citizenship Model	Voting Model
Age	1.01 ^c	1.04 ^d
Age2	1.00	1.00 ^d
Elig time	1.10 ^d	1.03 ^d
Female	1.00	0.97
Less HS	0.51 ^d	0.67 ^d
More HS	1.41 ^d	1.95 ^d
Poverty	0.77 ^d	0.76 ^d
Work	1.15 ^c	1.06
Year 96	1.14 ^b	1.58 ^d
Year 98	1.40 ^d	0.82 ^c
Year 00	1.35 ^d	1.64 ^d
Spouse absent	0.63 ^d	0.63 ^b
Unmarried	0.93	0.79 ^d
Metropolitan area	0.79	1.60
Population size (log)	1.03	0.97
Percentage foreign born	1.00 ^c	1.01 ^d
White-Black dissimilarity	1.00	1.00 ^a
White-Hispanic dissimilarity	1.00	1.00
White-Asian dissimilarity	0.99 ^b	1.01
Level of civil and political oppression	1.08 ^a	0.80 ^d
GDP (log)	0.62 ^d	0.77 ^d
English as official language	0.89	1.27 ^b
Close geographic proximity (under 1,000 miles)	0.32 ^d	1.72 ^d
Medium geographic proximity (1,000–5,000 miles)	0.77 ^b	1.62 ^d
Ratio of boys to girls in primary school	0.97 ^d	1.00
-2 log likelihood	17,164.07	8,126.19
Pseudo R ²	0.30	0.15
Max. rescaled pseudo R ²	0.41	0.20
N	17,019	6,641

Sources: November 1994, 1996, 1998 and 2000 Current Population Surveys; 1997 World Development Indicators from the World Bank; United States Census Bureau; CIA World Fact Book 2002; and Freedom House Index.

Notes: Numbers reported are odds-ratios.

^ap < .1.

^bp < .05.

^cp < .01.

^dp < .001.

APPENDIX 2
OPERATIONALIZATION OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Name	Meaning	Measurement	Coding
Age	R's age at time of survey participation	Self-reported age	Continuous
Age ²	R's age at time of survey participation, squared	Self-reported age * Self-reported age	Continuous
Female	R's sex	Self-reported sex	1 = female, 0 = male
Lesshs	Whether R has less than a high school degree or GED	Calculated from multiple categories citing years of education completed	1 = less than a high school degree or GED, 0 = high school degree or GED
Morehs	Whether R has more than a high school degree or GED	Calculated from multiple categories citing years of education completed	1 = more than a high school degree or GED, 0 = high school degree or GED
Poverty	Whether R is living below the poverty line, as measured in survey year	Calculated from self-reported size of family and self-reported family income, compared with poverty line for family of that size and income in survey year	1 = living at or below the poverty line, 0 = living above the poverty line
Work	Whether R reports working for pay outside of the home	Self-reported workforce participation	1 = works outside of home, 0 = does not work outside of home
Elig	Length of time R has been eligible to naturalize and vote in the US	Survey year-midpoint of entry category-5	Quasi continuous
Year96	Whether survey year is 1996	Year of survey participation	1 = 1996, 0 = 1994
Year98	Whether survey year is 1998	Year of survey participation	1 = 1998, 0 = 1994
Year00	Whether survey year is 2000	Year of survey participation	1 = 2000, 0 = 1994

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