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Naturalized Mexican immigrants and their voting behavior

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the increasing population size of Latinos (individuals who are of Hispanic descent) in the United States, the number of Latino voters is not increasing. This is based on the ratio of Latino residents and those who are registered to vote.

Between 2000 and 2004, Latinos accounted for 50 percent of the population growth; however, they represented only 24 percent of new voters. When compared to white and black voters, only 59 percent of Latinos were eligible to vote in 2004 compared to the 97 percent of white eligible voters and 94 percent of black eligible voters. Even though Latinos rose to 41.3 million.

In 2004, Mexicans represented the largest documented immigrant group in the United States, but they also represented the largest group with the lowest voter turnout rates. Thus, it is important to understand the reasons why Mexican immigrants who have naturalized do not vote.

DATA & METHODS

The Latino National Survey (LNS) contains 8,634 un-weighted and completed interviews of self-identified Latino/Hispanic residents of the United States. Interviewing began on November 17, 2005, and continued through August 4, 2006. The survey covered several cities and states with a high number in Latino population.

The sample was stratified by geographic designation, meaning that each state sample was a valid, stand-alone representation of that state's Latino population. The survey asked questions regarding their demographics.

The primary independent variable of interest is membership in hometown associations. Controlling for other variables that are correlated with voting, the influence of membership in hometown associations will be produced.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

The logistic regression analysis shows that having an interest in politics has a positive effect on voting for Mexican immigrants who have naturalized. This result is not necessarily novel. However, the positive effect that hometown association membership has on voting behavior is. This shows that membership in hometown associations is a primary determinant in voting behavior among Mexican immigrants who have naturalized.

Further research is necessary to explain this effect due to the contradicting research that exists on the impacts of hometown association membership. This project will attempt to reconcile this contradiction.