

# **The Role of Country of Origin on Latinx Voter Behavior**

by

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## Abstract

This thesis investigates the different political behaviors and attitudes among the domestic Latinx community based on country of origin. Research conducted on the Latinx community commonly groups all respondents into a monolithic category of “Latino.” The responses of this complex group are then overgeneralized and in turn do not allow for a more in depth and advantageous analysis. When country of origin is used, it more often than not only includes countries such as Cuba and Mexico. This is better than grouping them all under “Latino,” but still leaves out all other Latin American groups. I hypothesize that when country of origin is taken into account, we will find more differences in political party affiliation than in attitudes towards policy. I also hypothesize that Latinx folks whose country of origin has more civil rights and freedoms according to the Global Freedom Score are more likely to vote Democratic than Latinx folks whose country of origin has limited civil rights and freedoms. After using regression analysis, I found that Latinx individuals are more divided on political party identification than in political attitudes about policies. I also found that countries with higher Global Freedom scores were associated with being more likely to be Democrats, thus confirming my hypothesis. In analyzing this, it can be seen how important breaking up the category of “Latino” can be to have more in depth research that can then be better equipped at creating better representation and policy advocacy. As the Latinx population grows, the importance of this group’s participation in elections cannot be ignored and should instead be researched with more intense detail.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The Latinx population in the United States continues to grow every year and is predicted to be at 106 million in 2050, double of what the population is today (Krogstad). Due to these large numbers, politicians and political parties are constantly trying to win over the Latinx vote as doing so can have the ability to swing elections in key areas in their favor. However, research on the Latinx vote is showing us that the population may not be as united as it may appear. For example, Donald Trump received 8% more of Latinx voters in the 2020 election than he did in the 2016 election (Narea, 2021). Although President Joe Biden received the majority of the Latinx vote with 61%, that is 10% less than what President Obama received from the Latinx voters in 2012 (Lopez, Taylor, 2012). The political behavior of specific Latinx subgroups such as those of Cuban-Americans and Venezuelan-Americans is known to lean in favor of the Republican party, however, this increase in votes for a Republican candidate cannot be solely due to the voting behaviors of these two subgroups (Russonello, Mazzei, 2021). The 2020 elections showed that this population is more complex than how it is currently understood. Due to the lack of extensive research of Latinx voters from other countries of origin, the conservative voting that extended beyond the previously mentioned subgroups in the Latinx community is not well known. More detailed research must be focused on this population in order to understand why this was surprising to many.

Political behaviors and attitudes voters differ when researchers take into account race and country of origin for specific populations. However, the generalization of Latinx voters that occurs in research, specifically in political science research, prevents us from being able to distinguish the different political behaviors and attitudes within the Latinx community that could help us better understand how to serve the needs of this community within the political realm.

Since not all Latinx voters are the same race or nationality, those two factors may have an impact on how they navigate society, thus influencing their political being. Because race is a social construct, it may or may not translate differently in individuals to Latin Americans when they immigrate to the United States. This may affect how Latinx of different skin complexions adapt and assimilate into American society. Specifically, Latinx who are racially white in Latin America do not experience the same discrimination as Latinx who are non-white (NPR, 2021). This gap in discrimination can influence the behavior and political ideology of both white and non-white Latinx. Differences in political behaviors and attitudes when we look at race can be anticipated because of the ways in which white supremacy acts within the United States. White supremacy and white supremacist views are not exclusive to the United States and exist in Latin America as well. This means that although Latinx Americans are historically underrepresented in the United States overall, there are still internal discrimination and inequalities within the communities that impacts the way Latinx individuals navigate American society.

In this thesis, I argue that the country of origin of Latinx individuals is an important factor when analyzing voter behavior. This is because of how different each country is, specifically in racial diversity and civil liberties. For example, results from research conducted on the Asian American community show that country of origin is a major factor for political disagreement among Asian Americans. This is due to differences in the political landscape in each country and their experiences in America (Wong 2021). Many South Asians feel that the term “Asian American” does not represent them or their experiences in America due to their different skin color and income levels as compared to East Asians (Zhou, 2021). I believe that similar reasoning surrounds the Latinx community in the way that the term “Latinx” is used to generalize the population. Thus, I believe similar results will occur when we investigate the

country of origin of Latinx respondents. Whether I am right or wrong, the conclusion of my thesis will help us better understand the complexities of the Latinx population. This is an important task not only to understand the Latinx community, but to create improved advocacy strategies to politically mobilize them and make sure they are well represented in our government.

My methodology will consist of one central data set and a smaller data set. The central data set I will be using will be the Cooperative Election Study, specifically for the year 2020. This data set is a nationally representative study that contains survey responses from 61,000 American adults about their age, race, gender, income, and education. From these 61,000 respondents, I will be focusing on the 6,978 respondents who identified as Hispanic and being from one of the following geographic areas: United States, Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Caribbean, Dominican Republic, Central America, South America, Spain. This survey also contains the respondents party preference, vote for president in the 2020 Presidential election, and attitudes towards immigration issues. This will allow me to see the political behaviors and attitudes of Latinx respondents from specific geographic areas.

My second data set comes from the non-profit organization Freedom House. Freedom House gives a score to each country called the Global Freedom Score. This score is determined by how many civil liberties, political rights, and freedoms citizens of each country have. The more of these that a country has, the more points are awarded to it. This score is given to a country is on a scale from 0-100 and then given one of the following labels: “Not Free,” “Party Free,” and “Free.”

In this paper, there are terms that are important to define and distinguish between. The term Hispanic refers to someone “relating to Spain or to Spanish-speaking countries, especially



those of Latin America” (Oxford English Dictionary). The term Latino means “a person of Latin American origin or descent, especially a man or boy” (Oxford English Dictionary). The terms Hispanic and Latino have one main difference, the inclusion of Spain. Nevertheless, these terms are used interchangeably in most research. To prevent any confusion, I will only be using one word, Latinx. The term Latinx is also used to describe “a person of Latin American origin or descent [,but is] used as a gender-neutral or nonbinary alternative to Latino or Latina” (Oxford English Dictionary). This choice was made in an effort to be more inclusive of all Latinx, regardless of their gender identity or gender expression.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this literature review I will examine what scholars have said about the variables of race and country of origin in voter behavior. In Ismail White's "Selling Out?: The Politics of Navigating Conflicts between Racial Group Interest and Self-Interest," he and other researchers examine whether or not an individual from the Black community will vote against the opinion of the community as a whole in exchange for a personal incentive. This study uses different behavioral experiments to test how Black subjects will respond and find that most conform to the racial group's ideals rather than go against them in exchange for a personal incentive. This research shows how well a racial group can maintain solidarity among its members. This can be reasoned to be why Black voters vote alike. White's research then begs the question, can this be applied to other racial/ethnic groups, specifically, the Latinx community? Or, will the Latinx community be divided on issues that impact them due to the other identities they hold?

Answering this questions is much more complex when it comes to the Latinx community as it is made up of individuals that come from different countries with different racial compositions and are racially different themselves. As of now, most research groups together the data collected from respondents who identify as Latino/Hispanic. However, some strides towards more specific data have been made. Researchers have examined the community of Latinx voters and found that factors such as gender, age, citizenship status, immigrant generation, and economic status expose differences in their political behavior. I predict that examining differences in race and national origin will only further expose just how differently members within the Latinx community feel about politics in America.

Some of the previous factors listed have been examined in Lisa García Bedolla's "They and We: Identity, Gender, and Politics among Latino Youth in Los Angeles" which is a study that

conducted interviews among Latinx Youth and found that their attitude towards voting differs when separated by income, immigrant identity, generation, and gender. Those who were less economically advantaged were more optimistic about using nonelectoral methods to help improve and support their communities. Additionally, how closely individuals identified with the term “immigrant” and how much contact they have with immigrants impacted how they felt about anti-immigrant propositions. These ideas are further reinforced in the findings of another one of her studies, “The Identity Paradox: Latino Language, Politics, and Selective Dissociation” that found that US born Latinos were more likely to vote for anti-immigrant policies than foreign born Latinos. This is the same conclusion that was reached in R. Michael Alvarez’s “Hispanic Public Opinion and Partisanship.” With these articles, we can already see how Latinx individuals vote differently, even when faced with issues that are typically associated with their own community. The variables examined in these articles are important, but I believe are missing more in depth information that can be found if we take into account race and country of origin of the respondents.

The reason why I believe that race will showcase differences within the Latinx community is because of how other scholars have noted the importance of race in politics. Stephen Ansolabehere & Hersh Eitan examined voter registration records in their study “Gender, Race, Age and Voting: A Research Note” and discovered that Black voters participate higher than White voters. Ebonya Washington examined political elections in her study “How Black Candidates Affect Voter Turnout” and found that voter turnout amongst Black and White voters increases when there is a Black candidate, but the votes from White voters for their preferred political party decrease when their candidate is Black. Here we see that racial context impacts the voting behaviors of both Black and White voters, however, the impact is different.

Race also affects the political decisions of voters as parties attempt to cater to certain demographics. In M.C.Ostfeld's, "The New White Flight?: The Effects of Political Appeals to Latinos on White Democrats," research experiments are conducted and find that as Democratic candidates increase their outreach to Latinos, White Democrats become less supportive of them. Similarly, in Michael U. Rivera's "Immigration, Latinos, and White Partisan Politics: The New Democratic Defection," the author finds that white people who are more anti-immigrant and view Latinos more negatively than others are less likely to identify as Democrats and less likely to favor Democratic candidates. In both we see that the relationship between racial imagery and political parties is impacting how voters choose to behave. Since Latinx voters are not all the same race, I predict that I will find results that show differences among Latinx voters due to race as well.

One reason why I believe country of origin will impact how we see the Latinx community as a monolith entity is because of how differently each Latin American country is populated in terms of racial identity. Some are more heavily populated by white Latinx than others as they have historically had immigrants from European countries. This theory comes from the articles I have read about race relations and how it impacts the attitudes of voters. In Eitan D. Hersh and Nall Clayton's research article, "The Primacy of Race in the Geography of Income-Based Voting: New Evidence from Public Voting Records" they examine geocoded registration records and conclude that income based voting is inseparable from racial context. This is because they find that the relationship between income and political party varies depending on the racial context. In non-Black areas, income differences do not have much of an influence on how voters in that area will vote. However, in heavily Black areas, income is a good indicator of how individuals will vote. This shows how complex voting patterns can be and how

impactful race is depending on the context. Similarly, heavily Black populated areas also lead to increased feelings of competition and lower feelings of commonality according to Brown individuals as examined in “Importance of State and Local Variation in Black–Brown Attitudes: How Latinos View Blacks and How Blacks Affect Their Views” by B. Gomez-Aguinaga, Gary Sanchez, and Matt Barreto. This article is another example of how racial composition impacts the feelings of individuals residing in those areas. I expect country of origin to impact voter differences because of the different racial compositions of each country. By racial composition, I mean how populated a country is by White versus Non-White Latinx. How will respondents from countries with a larger White population be different than respondents from countries with a larger Non-White population?

When looking into why the country of origin of Latinx individuals ought to be included in research, established studies show how including country of origin as a factor can expose possible connections when it is used as an independent variable and a population group is used as the dependent variable. In Eveet Gabriel’s “The Role of Country of Origin on Immigrant Voting Behavior,” she finds that immigrants are more likely to register to vote with the Democratic party if their country of origin is an democracy and more likely to register to vote with the Republican party if their country of origin is an autocracy. This study shows how a country of origin and the political landscape it has can be linked to certain voting behaviors. This can thus be applied to Latin American countries because the political landscapes are not identical and can differ drastically. A reason why I believe that country of origin will impact how we see the Latinx community as a monolith entity is because of how differently each Latin American country is politically. By this I mean whether a country is a politically right leaning democracy, or left leaning dictatorship, etc. In a way, this study added to Marta Tienda and Susana Sanchez’s

“Latin American Immigration to the United States,” in which they found that prolonged political instability was a motivating factor for Latin Americans to migrate to the United States.

Furthermore, established research of smaller Latinx categories such as Mexican, Cuban, and Puerto Rican Latinos show that there are differences that exist between the way that these groups vote. For example, in “Most Cuban American voters identify as Republican in 2020” by Jens Manuel Krogstad, data shows that in the 2016 election, Trump got more than half of Florida’s Cuban American vote, compared to only a quarter of non-Cuban Latino votes.

In “Latino Subgroups Political Participation in American Politics: The Other Latinos’ Electoral Behavior” by Angelica Maria Leon Velez, the author points out that the vote preference for Barack Obama over Mitt Romney in the 2012 election was different among Latinx individuals from the Dominican Republic, Salvador, and South America compared to that of Latinx individuals from Mexico and Cuba. The difference between Latinx individuals from the Dominican Republic, Salvador, and South America compared to that of Latinx individuals from Mexico may only be about 10%, but shows that there is a difference present.

Even with some of the existing literature, it is not extensive enough to properly compare and contrast nationalities within the Latinx population. Velez argues that there is not enough data to properly investigate differences within the U.S. Latinx population. Surveys more often than not do not conceive racial and cultural identities as identity categories which often leaves out the indigeneous populations in Latin America who do not identify with their country of origin or Latin American immigrants such as those from the Dominican Republic who consider themselves to be black as they have a stronger racial consciousness than their pan-ethnic or latinx ones. She then suggests further research to be conducted among the Latinx community that includes “a broader scale of categories of self-identification, but also a bigger sample.”

### Chapter 3: Argument and Hypothesis

I believe that the country of origin of a Latinx voter matters due to the different racial context and political landscape of each country in Latin America. I believe that the race of a Latinx voter matters due to the way white supremacist ideals impact the way a society functions. I predict that if the Latinx population is divided by country of origin, then differences in voting behavior will be seen compared to researching the Latinx community as a whole. My hypothesis are as follows:

- 1. Latinx voters will be more divided in political party affiliation than in political attitudes about policies

My reasoning behind this hypothesis comes from wanting to show that the Latinx vote is complex, such that even identifying with one political party does not always predict the political attitudes of individuals. I predict this because the Democratic Party targets Latinx voters as a monolithic group, thus, we can expect Latinx respondents to identify with the Democratic Party, even if they do not have political attitudes that align with what are considered to be Democratic policies. On the other hand, other Latinx might vote Republican even if they are not against “liberal” policies due to their prioritization of other issues that they feel that the Republican Party addresses more than the Democratic Party.

- 2. Latinx voters whose country of origin has a higher Global Freedom Score are more likely to be Democratic than Latinx voters whose country has a low Global Freedom Score. Latinx voters whose country of origin has a lower Global Freedom Score are more likely to be Republican than Latinx voters whose country has a high Global Freedom Score.

My reasoning for this hypothesis comes from what is known about countries with limited

freedoms versus those with a grand amount of freedoms. A low Global Freedom score indicates that a country provides its citizens with little to no civil rights, civil liberties, political rights, and freedoms. Since most countries that are associated with low levels of these rights and freedoms are autocracies, dictatorships, or places with no democratic elections, I believe that this results in citizens that are not in favor of a large government. On the other hand, countries that are democracies tend to have more rights and freedoms, which makes citizens more comfortable with large governments (Freedom House).

The Republican Party claims that Democrats want to bring in communism, socialism, and overall make the government powerful. These messages influence how Americans view the Democratic party. The Republican party is also portrayed to Americans as a party whose laws will reduce the government's ability to help its citizens by reducing its powers and abilities by lowering taxes and getting rid of social/financial programs. The way both parties are perceived by Latinx voters matters. If Latinx voters felt that they had a relatively good life under big government, then it is understandable why they would continue to vote in favor of it. Same goes the other way around. If Latinx voters felt that their lives were in danger under big government, then it is understandable why they would want to vote for a smaller government in America.



## Chapter 4: Research Design

### a) Country of Origin

To investigate the differences in political attitudes and behaviors among Latinx voters with different countries of origin, I will be using the Cooperative Election Study Common Content for the year 2020. For this dataset, I will be using the program Stata and will analyze the data using regression analysis. My sample will be constrained to individuals who responded to the survey and identified as Latino/Hispanic and will be grouped by which country they chose as their country of origin. My independent variable will be the country of origin chosen by the respondent from the following categories: The United States, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Caribbean, Central American, South America, and Spain. Although Spain and Spaniards are not always associated with the “Latinx” identity, I wanted to include this as there are individuals from Latin American countries that trace back their roots and consider themselves as “Spaniards” or “Spanish” (Herrera, 2020).

My dependent variables of “political attitudes” and “political behavior” will include answers to the following CCES questions:

- “For whom did you vote for President of the United States” (2020 election)
- “Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a...?” (Democrat or Republican).
- “How would you rate each of the following individuals:  
     Yourself (Liberal, Moderate, or Conservative).
- “Do you support or oppose each of the following:  
     Grant legal status to all illegal immigrants who have held jobs and paid taxes for at least 3 years, and not been convicted of any felony crimes.

Increase spending on border security by \$25 billion, including building a wall between the U.S. and Mexico.”

For these questions, I will be excluding answers that were any other political party that is not Democrat or Republican. I will also be excluding answers from respondents who chose to skip, did not know, or refused to state. When creating these regression tables, the country of origin that I will use as the country that the other countries would be compared to to be the United States. The gender will be compared to those who chose “men” as their gender, the education levels will be compared to those who chose “no high school” as their education, and the income levels will be compared to those who chose “prefer not to say.”

I picked these specific questions because they will be able to reveal what political attitudes different individuals have. Asking respondents which political party they identify with and will help me understand their political attitudes. According to previous research studies, issues regarding immigration and citizenship are politically tied to the Latinx community. Therefore, focusing on questions that ask about immigration and citizenship will also allow me to understand their political attitudes. Asking about the respondent's voting history such as which presidential candidate the respondent voted for will allow me to understand their political and voting behavior. The 2020 election, much like the 2016, showed just how polarized the United States is and is a good indicator of which side an individual considers themselves to be on in terms of political affiliation.

## **b) Global Freedom Score**

The way I will analyze my variable country of origin is by examining the political landscape that each country has. To do this I need to be able to determine the amount of civil

rights and freedoms granted to citizens of each Latin American country. For this I will use the Global Freedom Scores provided by the non-profit Freedom House. Freedom House rates people's access to civil liberties by looking into the access that citizens of each country have to freedoms such as the right to vote, freedom of expression, and equality before the law. The Global Freedom Score is on a scale of 0-100, 0 being "Not Free," 30-79 being "Partly Free," and 80-100 being "Free." The score thus shows that the higher the Global Freedom Score, the more freedom citizens of that particular country have.

### **Limitations**

To further explain how and if a country of origin shows differences within the Latinx community, I want to know how racially diverse the population in each country is. For that, I would need a dataset that allows a respondent who identifies as Latino/Hispanic to also separately identify their race. Unfortunately, as of now most, if not all, research surveys have "Hispanic" or "Latino" as an answer for when a respondent is asked to identify their race. If the race is a separate category after being asked if they are Hispanic or Latino, the answers are usually limited to White, Black, or American Indian. These answers leave most Latinx respondents confused as they feel as if they don't fit into any of those categories. Aside from that, if a respondent does choose to answer the question of race, they could be providing an answer that does not represent how they are viewed or treated in society. Since race is a social construct, even if a white Latinx respondent chooses not to identify with the "White" race label, it does not mean they are not seen as a white individual. As a result of not having a proper survey to further explore this, I will only focus on country of origin and its political landscape.

## **Chapter 5: Results and Analysis**

### **a) Country of Origin**

To test my hypothesis I used the Cooperative Election Study for 2020 in Stata for Latinx respondents with different countries of origin. I created dummy variables to take into account differences in age, gender, education, and income in the regressions.

There are some things to note before looking at the regression tables. When it came to the regression tables, I left out the dummy variable I wanted to compare the other dummy variables to. For gender, I left out 'male' so that the table would show how female respondents compared to male respondents. For education, I left out the dummy variable I created for those who said they did not complete high school so all other dummy variables of education would be compared to those respondents in the regressions. For income, I left out the dummy variable I created for those who choose not to disclose their income, therefore all dummy variables on the regression tables that show different income levels are being compared to the respondents who did not disclose their income.

Table 1

VARIABLES	Vote for Biden	Democrat	Republican	
Mexico	0.0788***	0.0954***	-0.0594***	
		-0.0169	-0.0197	-0.0161
Puerto Rico	0.107***	0.0998***	-0.0814***	
		-0.0212	-0.0229	-0.0187
Cuba	-0.0850***	-0.0879***	0.130***	
		-0.0294	-0.0308	-0.0252
Dominican Republic	0.132***	0.0979**	-0.0987***	
		-0.0497	-0.0431	-0.0352
South America		0.0218	0.0497	-0.0337
		-0.0277	-0.0306	-0.025
Central America		0.0136	-0.0213	-0.00388
		-0.034	-0.0367	-0.03
Caribbean		0.0825	0.0683	-0.0253
		-0.0566	-0.0602	-0.0492
Spain	-0.0366**	-0.0352*		0.0172
		-0.0172	-0.0213	-0.0174
age	-0.00318***		0.000191	0.00254***
		-0.00048	-0.000536	-0.000437
female	0.0727***	0.106***	-0.0548***	
		-0.0149	-0.0169	-0.0138
High school	-0.128**		-0.0558	0.0426
		-0.0603	-0.0559	-0.0456
Some college	-0.127**		-0.0594	0.0237
		-0.0593	-0.0555	-0.0454
two year	-0.156**		-0.0332	0.0363
		-0.0609	-0.0579	-0.0473
four year		-0.0849	-0.029	0.0128
		-0.0595	-0.0565	-0.0461
post graduate		-0.0229	0.0422	-0.0683
		-0.0616	-0.0604	-0.0493
\$39,999 and below	0.0963***	0.111***	-0.0519*	
		-0.0314	-0.0328	-0.0268
\$40,000-79,999	0.0671**	0.116***		-0.0156
		-0.0309	-0.033	-0.0269
\$80,000-119,999		-0.00297	0.0507	0.0309
		-0.0333	-0.037	-0.0302
\$120,000-249,999		-0.0237	0.0494	0.0513*
		-0.0339	-0.038	-0.0311
\$250,000-499,999		0.0962	0.160**	-0.046
		-0.0684	-0.0754	-0.0616
\$500,000 and above		-0.132	0.00499	0.131
		-0.112	-0.123	-0.101
Constant	0.790***	0.344***	0.162***	
		-0.0695	-0.0664	-0.0542
Observations		4,081	3,549	3,549
R-squared		0.055	0.038	0.052

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p&lt;0.01, \*\* p&lt;0.05, \* p&lt;0.1

For Table 1, we can see that Latinx voters whose country of origin is Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic were more likely to vote for President Biden than Latinx voters whose country of origin is the United States. The table shows that the probability of voting for President Biden increased by 7.8% percentage points per one unit change in  $x$  for those who chose Mexico, 10.7% for those who chose Puerto Rico, and 13.1% for those who chose the Dominican Republic. On the other hand, Latinx voters whose country of origin is Cuba and Spain were less likely to vote for President Biden than Latinx voters whose country of origin is the United States. The table shows that the probability of voting for President Biden decreased by 8.4% percentage points per one unit change in  $x$  for those who chose Cuba and 3.6% for those who chose Spain. Existing literature has already noted the attitudes and behaviors of Cuban voters as being right leaning and this data could be seen as further confirming those claims. The results of those who choose Spain as their country of origin are not surprising as they either could be direct immigrants from Spain, or Latinx individuals who identify more with their Spanish origins than that of their national origin. This decrease in likelihood for not voting for Biden could be due to a difference in how Spaniards interact with American politics. Certain Latinx issues are targeted to the “Latino population” meaning that they are not specifically targeted as issues for Spaniards. This could be why Spaniards voted differently.

Those who chose South America, Central America, and the Caribbean did not show statistically significant results when compared to those who chose the United States. This could mean that these four groups do not vote differently enough to be notable. If that is the case, then it is not surprising that those who come from such different geographic areas vote similarly for President because President Biden's campaign did attempt to target Latinx voters. Additionally,

voting for president could be much easier to understand for Latinx voters, than having to express their political identity or party affiliation. Latin American countries have different governments and different political parties, but voting for President is a more familiar action. I will touch on this more in the discussion after we see the results of Table 2 and 3.

For the second column in Table 1, those whose country of origin was Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic were more likely to choose to identify themselves as Democrats than those whose country of origin was the United States. More specifically, the probability of identifying as Democrat increased by 9.5% percentage points per one unit change in  $x$  for those who chose Mexico, 9.9% for those who chose Puerto Rico, 9.7% for those who chose the Dominican Republic. It is not surprising that the respondents from these countries are more likely to identify themselves as Democrats because the Democratic Party targets mobilization efforts to the Latinx community. Perhaps respondents who choose these countries of origin identified strongly with their Latinx identity, since we know that those who identify more with being “Latino” are more likely to be Democrats (Garcia Bedolla, 2000). Here, we see that there are differences within countries, not just generation, that shows different strengths of affiliation with the Democratic party.

On the other hand, respondents whose country of origin was Cuba were less likely to identify themselves as Democrats than those whose country of origin was the United States. The probability of identifying as Democrat decreased by 8.7% percentage points per one unit change in  $x$  for those who chose Cuba. This is consistent with existing literature as the Republican Party has voiced a strong stance against communism in Cuba and Fidel Castro. US Latinx whose country of origin is Cuba are known to be receptive to the messages of the Republican Party and could identify with their nation. This supports my thesis that the government of the country of

origin impacts how Latinx voters interact with US politics. Latinx voters may also not have as strong of a group consciousness as other groups such as Black voters. The rest of the countries did not show statistically significant differences in their responses compared to those whose country of origin was the United States. This could again be due to the Democratic Party's mobilization efforts to the Latinx community and respondents from these countries having a strong sense of Latinx identity. It could also be that those from other countries do not understand the differences between the political parties in America enough to identify with one.

For the third column on Table 1, those who chose Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic as their country of origin were less likely to identify themselves as Republicans than those who chose the United States as their country of origin. More specifically, the probability of identifying as Republican decreased by 5.9% percentage points per one unit change in  $x$  for those who chose Mexico, 8.1% for those who chose Puerto Rico, and 9.8% for those who chose the Dominican Republic. This is consistent with the findings in the second column which say that these countries are more likely to identify as Democrats.

On the other hand, those who chose Cuba as their country of origin were more likely to identify themselves as Republicans than those who chose the United States as their country of origin. The probability of identifying as Republican increased by 13% percentage points per one unit change in  $x$  for those who chose Cuba. This is supported by existing literature that has also found Cubans to identify as Republicans at high levels. The rest of the countries did not have statistically significant differences in their responses compared to those who picked the United States as their country of origin. This could be due to the same reasons mentioned above for the second column.



Table 2

VARIABLES	Identified as Liberal	Identified as Moderate	Identified as Conservative
Mexico	0.0411***		0.0162 -0.0211**
		-0.0107	-0.013
Puerto Rico	0.0245*		0.0173 -0.0285**
		-0.0137	-0.0167
Cuba		0.0236	0.0134
		-0.0202	-0.0245
Dominican Republic		0.0265 0.0604*	
		-0.027	-0.0328
South America	0.0411**		0.011
		-0.018	-0.0219
Central America		0.0214	0.0359
		-0.0214	-0.0259
Caribbean		-0.0308	0.0454
		-0.0361	-0.0438
Spain		-0.0125	0.0128
		-0.0121	-0.0146
age		-0.000139 0.00128***	0.00240***
		-0.000308	-0.000373
female	0.0338***		-0.00017 -0.0447***
		-0.00968	-0.0117
High school		0.0188 0.0637**	0.0411*
		-0.0247	-0.03
Some college	0.0526**		0.0882***
		-0.0249	-0.0303
two year		0.033 0.0890***	0.0406*
		-0.0268	-0.0325
four year	0.0864***		0.0588*
		-0.0258	-0.0312
post graduate	0.121***		0.0286
		-0.0287	-0.0348
\$39,999 and below		0.0252 0.0413**	
		-0.0173	-0.021
\$40,000-79,999	0.0444**		0.0303*
		-0.0179	-0.0217
\$80,000-119,999		0.0174 0.0646***	0.0476***
		-0.0206	-0.025
\$120,000-249,999		0.0319 0.0633**	0.0623***
		-0.0217	-0.0264
\$250,000-499,999		0.00421	0.0368
		-0.0477	-0.0578
\$500,000 and above		-0.0236	0.0408
		-0.071	-0.0861
Constant	0.0699**	0.157***	0
		-0.0305	-0.037
Observations		6,969	6,969
R-squared		0.013	0.007

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p&lt;0.01, \*\* p&lt;0.05, \* p&lt;0.1

For the first column on Table 2, the respondents whose country of origin was Mexico and South America showed to be more likely to rate themselves as “Liberal” compared to those whose country of origin was the United States. The table shows that the probability of the respondents rating themselves as “Liberal” increased by 4.1% percentage points per one unit change in  $x$  for those who chose Mexico and 4.1% points for those who chose South America. The other countries did not show statistically significant differences from the response of those whose country of origin was the United States.

For the second column, no country of origin has respondents that offered a statistically significant difference in their answer compared to those whose country of origin was the United States. This could be due to the fact that politics in the United States is quite polarized in this current time. As a result, respondents may be less likely to identify as moderate.

For the third column, we can see that those whose country of origin was Mexico and Puerto Rico were less likely to choose “Conservative” than those whose country of origin was the United States. The table shows that the probability of respondents rating themselves as “Conservative” decreased by 2.1% percentage points per one unit change in  $x$  for those who chose Mexico and 2.8% for those who chose Puerto Rico. The Republican Party is the one who identifies with being conservative and has expressed less support for Puerto Rico than the Democratic Party. President Trump also targeted Mexicans in his speeches at rallies which could explain why Mexicans would not want to identify with being a conservative. The rest of the respondents did not show statistically significant differences for this question. Other Latinx areas and countries are not mentioned as much as Mexico and Puerto Rico which can be why they do not have results that stand out as much.

Table 3

VARIABLES	Supports an Increase in Border Spending	Supports Legalization for Immigrant Workers
Mexico	-0.115***	0.0717***
		-0.0125
Puerto Rico	-0.0994***	0.0789***
		-0.016
Cuba		0.0207
		-0.0235
Dominican Republic		-0.0421
		0.0541**
South America	-0.0457**	-0.0315
		0.0538***
Central America	-0.0740***	-0.021
		-0.0249
Caribbean		0.0454
		-0.042
Spain		-0.00757
		-0.0304**
age	0.00369***	-0.014
		-0.00246***
female	-0.107***	-0.000358
		0.0568***
High school		-0.0113
		0.0333
Some college		-0.0287
		0.031
two year		-0.029
		-0.0252
four year		0.0282
		-0.0142
post graduate	-0.0780**	-0.0311
		-0.0271
		0.00831
		0.0226
		-0.0299
		-0.026
\$39,999 and below		0.0328
		-0.029
\$40,000-79,999		0.0046
		0.0805***
\$80,000-119,999	0.0580**	-0.0202
		-0.0175
\$120,000-249,999	0.104***	0.0208
		0.0720***
\$250,000-499,999		-0.0208
		-0.0181
\$500,000 and above	0.240***	0.0420**
		-0.024
		-0.0209
		-0.0253
		-0.022
		0.031
		0.00546
		-0.0555
		-0.0483
		-0.0826
		-0.0146
Constant	0.271***	-0.0719
		0.741***
		-0.0355
		-0.0309
Observations		6,969
R-squared		6,970
		0.057
		0.036

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p&lt;0.01, \*\* p&lt;0.05, \* p&lt;0.1

For the first column on Table 3, respondents whose country of origin are Mexico, Puerto Rico, South America, or Central America were less likely to support an increase in spending for border security than those who picked the United States as their country of origin. More specifically, 11.5% for those who picked Mexico, 9.9% for those who picked Puerto Rico, 4.5% for those who picked South America, and 7.3% for those who picked Central America. Immigration is seen as a Latinx issue and affects almost all Latinx, regardless of country of origin. This can be why respondents from almost all geographic areas do not support an increase in border security spending. The rest of the countries did not have significant statically differences in their response compared to those who picked the United States as their country of origin. The immigration history for Cubans is different to those from other Latinx countries and can explain why they do not show to be against this. Immigration from Spain is also different as it is seen as European immigration rather than Latinx immigration which has been treated differently in history.

For the second column, we can see that respondents who choose their country of origin to be either Mexico, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Cuba, or South American are more likely to support the legalization of status for undocumented immigrant workers than those whose country of origin is the United States. Respondents who chose Spain as their country of origin were less likely to support the legalization of status for undocumented immigrant workers than those whose country of origin is the United States by 3.04% percentage points per unit change in  $x$ . More specifically, the probability of supporting the legalization of status for undocumented immigrant workers increases by 7.1% percentage points per one unit change in  $x$  for those who chose Mexico, 7.8% for those who chose Puerto Rico, 5.3% for those who choose the Dominican Republic, 4.01% for those who chose Cuba, and 5.3% for those who chose South America. As

mentioned before, immigration is different for Spain and can impact how Spaniards view immigrants. Most immigrants that come to the United States are from Mexico and El Salvador which can be why respondents from Mexico and South America support the legalization of immigrant workers. The rest of the countries had respondents whose responses were not statistically significantly different to those whose country of origin is the United States. The surprising statistic here was Cuba. Since Cubans tend to vote more Republican, it can be inferred that Cuban voters would share Republican sentiments about the legalization of immigrant workers in the United States. However, we can see that it is not necessarily the case. Cubans are still seeking to immigrate into the United States today which could be why they support this as it would be of benefit to themselves or other Cubans.

## **b) Global Freedom Score**

To analyze how the Global Freedom Score of a country compares to higher or lower scores, I added the scores of all of the Latinx countries in the Cooperative Election Study for 2020 and added the average score for areas that were not limited to one country. The dummy variables are being compared to the same dummy variables as in part A.

Table 4

VARIABLES	Vote for Biden	Democrat	Republican
Global_Freedom	0.000840**	0.00128***	-0.00168***
	-0.000401	-0.000453	-0.000365
age	-0.00370***	-0.000609	0.00335***
	-0.000505	-0.00057	-0.00046
female	0.0638***	0.0938***	-0.0443***
	-0.0159	-0.0185	-0.015
High school	-0.133**	-0.118*	0.0932*
	-0.0653	-0.0636	-0.0513
Some college	-0.128**	-0.114*	0.0706
	-0.0642	-0.0629	-0.0508
two year	-0.159**	-0.0902	0.0910*
	-0.0659	-0.0654	-0.0528
four year	-0.0839	-0.088	0.0564
	-0.0643	-0.0639	-0.0515
post graduate	-0.0297	-0.0285	-0.0292
	-0.0665	-0.0679	-0.0548
\$39,999 and below	0.122***	0.103***	-0.0721**
	-0.0334	-0.036	-0.0291
\$40,000-79,999	0.0902***	0.109***	-0.0264
	-0.0328	-0.0361	-0.0292
\$80,000-119,999	0.00926	0.0502	0.012
	-0.0353	-0.0401	-0.0324
\$120,000-249,999	-0.0208	0.0465	0.0392
	-0.0359	-0.0413	-0.0334
\$250,000-499,999	0.0759	0.146*	-0.0579
	-0.0736	-0.0835	-0.0674
\$500,000 and above	-0.199	-0.134	0.197
	-0.131	-0.161	-0.13
Constant	0.803***	0.420***	0.167***
	-0.0779	-0.0793	-0.064
Observations	3,523	2,999	2,999
R-squared	0.042	0.021	0.043

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

For table 4, the first column shows that the probability of voting for Biden in the 2020 election increases by 0.084% percentage points per one unit change increase in the Global Freedom score. This percentage may be not as large as I expected, but is still statistically significant. This supports my hypothesis that countries with higher Global Freedom scores are more likely to vote Democratic. The second column shows that the probability of being a Democrat increases by 0.128% percentage points per one unit change in the Global Freedom score. This is also a number not as large as I anticipated, but still statistically significant which tells us that it also supports my hypothesis.

The third column shows that the probability of being a Republican decreases by 0.168% percentage points per one unit change increase in the Global Freedom score. This is consistent with the results from the second column and supports my hypothesis that respondents from countries with lower Global Freedom scores are more likely to vote Republican.

Table 5

VARIABLES	Identified as Liberal	Identified as Moderate	Identified as Conservative
Global_Freedom	-0.00037	5.67E-05	-0.000474*
	-0.000288	-0.000345	-0.000249
age	-0.000119	0.000847**	0.00248***
	-0.000335	-0.000401	-0.000289
female	0.0400***		-0.00173 -0.0484***
	-0.0109	-0.013	-0.00938
High school	0.0224	0.0753**	0.0517**
	-0.0293	-0.035	-0.0253
Some college	0.0479	0.0980***	0.0221
	-0.0292	-0.035	-0.0253
two year	0.0328	0.0844**	0.0503*
	-0.0312	-0.0373	-0.0269
four year	0.0846***	0.0564	0.0259
	-0.0301	-0.036	-0.026
post graduate	0.122***	0.0252	-0.0357
	-0.033	-0.0395	-0.0285
\$39,999 and below	0.0242	0.0408*	-0.00144
	-0.0198	-0.0237	-0.0171
\$40,000-79,999	0.0432**	0.0426*	0.0263
	-0.0202	-0.0242	-0.0175
\$80,000-119,999	0.0135	0.0560**	0.0486**
	-0.0232	-0.0277	-0.02
\$120,000-249,999	0.0275	0.0568*	0.0605***
	-0.0242	-0.029	-0.0209
\$250,000-499,999	0.0102	0.0325	0.0208
	-0.0532	-0.0636	-0.046
\$500,000 and above	-0.0192	0.0329	0.133*
	-0.087	-0.104	-0.0752
Constant	0.126***	0.200***	0.0515
	-0.0393	-0.047	-0.034
Observations	5,756	5,756	5,756
R-squared	0.01	0.004	0.028

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1



For table 5, the first column shows that the probability of identifying as a Liberal decreases by 0.03% percentage points per one unit change increase in the Global Freedom score. Although the Democratic Party associates itself and uses the term Liberal, perhaps respondents who identify as being a Democrat do not identify as Liberal.

The second column shows that the probability of identifying as a Moderate increases by 0.005% percentage points per one unit change increase in the Global Freedom score. This percentage is small and is not statistically significant. Nevertheless, it gives us a better understanding at how respondents from countries with higher Global Freedom scores may not automatically choose to identify as Liberal. This is then consistent with the small percentage increase in the first column which was also not statistically significant.

The third column shows that the probability of identifying as a Conservative decreases by 0.04% percentage points per one unit change increase in the Global Freedom score. This is the only statistically significant figure of the Global Freedom score in this table. This supports my hypothesis that the lower the Global Freedom score, then the more likely to identify as conservative.

**Table 6**

VARIABLES	Supports an Increase in Border Spending	Supports Legalization for Immigrant Workers
Global_Freedom	-0.000495	-0.000656**
	-0.000324	-0.00028
age	0.00440***	-0.00250***
	-0.000376	-0.000325
female	-0.0967***	0.0572***
	-0.0122	-0.0105
High school	0.0643*	0.0116
	-0.0328	-0.0284
Some college	0.0396	0.022
	-0.0328	-0.0283
two year	0.0741**	-0.0297
	-0.035	-0.0302
four year	0.0441	0.0154
	-0.0337	-0.0292
post graduate	-0.0279	0.0127
	-0.037	-0.032
\$39,999 and below	-0.0178	0.100***
	-0.0223	-0.0192
\$40,000-79,999	-0.00838	0.0926***
	-0.0227	-0.0196
\$80,000-119,999	0.0334	0.0487**
	-0.0261	-0.0225
\$120,000-249,999	0.0768***	0.0126
	-0.0273	-0.0236
\$250,000-499,999	0.00402	0.0176
	-0.0598	-0.0517
\$500,000 and above	0.236**	-0.0649
	-0.0978	-0.0845
Constant	0.160***	0.844***
	0.0441	-0.0381
Observations	5,755	5,756
R-squared	0.046	0.032

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 Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p&lt;0.01, \*\* p&lt;0.05, \* p&lt;0.1

For table 6, the first column shows that the probability of supporting an increase in border security spending decreases by 0.049% percentage points per one unit change increase in the Global Freedom score. The small percentage is not surprising because I anticipated that respondents with higher Global Freedom scores would be more likely to support government spending. I was not surprised that Latinx countries with higher Global Freedom scores would not support an increase in border spending because of how it impacts immigrants and is associated as a Republican policy rather than a Democratic one. However, this percentage is small and not statistically significant.

The second column shows that the probability of supporting the legalization of the status of immigrant workers decreases by 0.065% percentage points per one unit change increase in the Global Freedom score. This percentage is statistically significant and surprising. I was anticipating an increase of support rather than a decrease. This could be that respondents from countries with higher Global Freedom scores are comfortable within their country of origin and thus immigration is not as big of an issue whereas respondents from countries with lower Global Freedom scores may have immigrated due to their limited freedoms and therefore support the legalization of immigrants.

## **Chapter 6: Discussion**

I will summarize the results into two sections, one for each main hypothesis. A reminder that Latinx who choose the United States as their country of origin is what is being used for comparisons when using the phrase “more likely” and “less likely.”

### **Hypothesis 1**

“Latinx voters will be more divided in political party affiliation than in political attitudes about policies”

After examining the regression tables, I find that the data supports this hypothesis. In table 1, we can see that respondents who chose Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic as their country of origin are more likely to vote for President Biden, more likely to identify as Democrats, and less likely to identify as Republicans. However, the other variables of geographic location, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America, did not show statistically significant data that suggests that they have the same political affiliations of the previously mentioned countries. Furthermore, of these countries, table 2 shows that only Mexico and South America had respondents that were more likely to identify as Liberal. This suggests that although respondents may be aligning themselves with the Democratic Party, they do not identify themselves as individuals with the philosophy that the Democratic Party attempts to exhibit. This could also be due to the possibility that respondents are more aware and have more knowledge of the terms of political parties, but not of political ideologies due to being unfamiliar with American politics.

Respondents who chose Cuba as their country of origin were less likely to vote for President Biden and less likely to identify as a Democrat. This is consistent with existing literature and research about the Cuban demographic. Although this has been known for some

time now, it is still relevant as it continues to show us that Latinidad as a monolithic identity does not mean that all who are Latino vote the same way. I believe that Table 1 and 2 shows us how different the respondents are depending on what country of origin they identify with.

Now, when we look at Table 3 we can see that more countries are on the same side of an issue. For the first column of Table 3 that asks voters if they support an increase in border spending almost all countries have the same results. Mexico, Puerto Rico, South America, and Central America all have statistically significant data that shows that they are less likely to support this policy. Although the percentage of Mexico and Puerto Rico are almost double of what it is for South America and Central America, it still shows us how similar the attitudes are around a policy, regardless of political party affiliation and political ideology. There are also no statistically significant results showing a country that supports this policy which was surprising as we might expect a country like Cuba to be supportive because this is a Republican backed policy.

Furthermore, the second column of Table 3 shows that respondents who choose Mexico, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Cuba, and South America as their country of origin were more likely to support the legalization of immigrant workers. This is the regression that has the most countries being on the same side of a question. I was surprised to see Cuba on the supporting side as I would have expected the Cuban demographic to be against the legalization of immigrant workers due to the fact that they are aligned with the Republican Party who advocate against the government granting citizenship to immigrants.

After looking at Tables 1-3, I can say that the results confirm and support my hypothesis as we can see that more countries tend to be on the same side of a question when the question is about policy rather than party affiliation.

## Hypothesis 2

“Latinx voters whose country of origin has a higher Global Freedom Score are more likely to be Democratic than Latinx voters whose country has a low Global Freedom Score. Latinx voters whose country of origin has a lower Global Freedom Score are more likely to be Republican than Latinx voters whose country has a high Global Freedom Score.”

The data shown on table 5 supports and confirms my hypothesis. In Table 5, as the Global Freedom Score increases, so does the probability of identifying as a Democrat and the probability of identifying as Republican decreases. On top of that, the probability of voting for President Biden in the 2020 election increases and the probability of identifying as a conservative decreases as the Global Freedom score increases. This can also be seen as being consistent with my hypothesis as President Biden was the Democratic nominee and the ideology of conservatism is adopted by the Republican Party.

On the other hand, some surprising results that were not a part of my hypothesis, but are still relevant are the questions on policy. Table 6 shows that as the Global Freedom Score increases, the probability for supporting an increase in border security decreases, but the support for the legalization of immigrant workers decreases. Since the results in Table 4 and 5 were consistent with my hypothesis, I assumed that so would Table 6. However, the data shows us that although an increase in the Global Freedom Score means an increase in the probability of being a Democrat, it does not mean an increase in the probability of supporting Democratic policies. Although this relationship between the policy and political party is not explicitly mentioned in the questions, the connection is there. The same way that Latinx respondents disagreed more with party affiliation than with policies, here we see that the Global Freedom score does not

show coinciding results of political party and policies.

On the whole, having data to support my hypothesis shows how complicated the issue of understanding the Latinx vote is and why it is necessary to conduct more in depth surveys on the Latinx population that takes into account not only their ethnicity, but more specific factors such as their country of origin and race. I believe that including the factor of race would have made these results more complex.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

My goal in this paper was to understand the political differences in the Latinx community and to show how important it is to not group this demographic as one that has the same opinions and values within itself. In this paper I was able to use the Cooperative Election Study of 2020 and the Freedom House Index to analyze how different Latinx voters behave and believe when taking into account their country of origin. The outcome was this qualitative study that found that Latinx voters are more divided when it comes to party affiliation than policy preferences and that Latinx voters from countries with higher Global Freedom scores were more likely to be Democrats than Republicans.

Although these results may not be surprising to some, it is important that this work is put on paper. The Latinx community is a growing demographic in the United States and yet has the lowest voter turnout than any other racial group (Morris 2021). If politicians and organizations want the support of the Latinx community, they are going to have to understand what the Latinx voters want and what they want depends on who you ask. Existing literature has shown us how differences in gender, generation, and citizenship status impact how a Latinx voter will behave. Despite understanding these complexities, Latinx voters still have other identities that may influence how they vote. Existing literature has also shown us how race impacts voting behavior for Black and White voters and how country of origin impacts the voter behavior of Asian American voters. It is time to apply these approaches to Latinx research to break down this false idea that Latinx voters are a monolithic group and better understand the subgroups in it.

This paper examined differences between the Latinx community based on country of origin with the current available surveys. As other scholars who have attempted to do this work have noted, surveys do not ask enough questions about a Latinx individual's race to fully



understand how they might navigate society and how it might be different to a Latinx individual of another race. Future research would need a survey that asks for both a Latinx individual's race and specific country of origin, not just the geographic area or continent. Then to further analyze those factors, continue to monitor the political landscape of Latin American countries to see what specific traits of a country impact an individual.

The implications that this research could have are abundant. In our current political climate, parties on both the left and the right want the support of the Latinx community. Although it was believed that the Democratic Party had a strong hold on the Latinx community, we are learning that that is not the case. If either party wants the support of this demographic, they are going to have to understand the needs and wants of each subgroup to properly mobilize them, just as what is done with other demographics.

Overall, this research is a continuation of what other scholars have already done to better understand this diverse and complex community. A quote that I believe best summarizes my sentiments of its importance is one from a scholar who has devoted a career to research in Latinx politics and who has paved the way for my own research.

“I literally had somebody ask me in 2016 what’s the bumper sticker that is going to mobilize Latinos? What we actually needed were mobilization strategies that would talk to the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth generation English monolingual Mexican Americans in San Antonio... That’s the kind of specificity that we need.” - Lisa Garcia Bedolla for Time Magazine 2020.

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