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April 9, 2025

Parallelism and Polarity: Citizenship and Latino Partisanship in the United States

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An abstract of

a thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences

of Emory University in partial fulfillment

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Bachelor of Arts with Honors

Department of Political Science

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Abstract

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An observed rise in Latino support for the Republican Party in recent years may come as a surprise to some—or not. Some argue that “cultural conservatism” predisposes Latinos to align with the GOP, while research shows that the Hispanic community has historically aligned with the Democratic Party. In this study, I explore how partisanship is influenced by perceived threat, acculturation, and ethnic attachment with a focus on how this varies by citizenship status.

Building on threat mobilization theory, I argue that increased exposure to punitive immigration policy perceived as threatening may drive Latinos away from the Republican Party.

Acculturation considers ways in which people adopt languages and a country’s norms over time, and ethnic attachment posits that people with higher linked fate and feelings of community closeness are more incentivized to mobilize in a unified manner for their pan-ethnic group’s interests. Based on this framework, I posit the following hypotheses: 1) Latinos who are more likely to be affected by negative immigration policy and rhetoric (e.g. through personal experiences or family ties) are more likely to identify with the Democratic Party; and that 2)

Highly acculturated Latinos are more likely to possess a lower degree of ethnic attachment and consequently, identify less strongly with the Democratic Party. To test these hypotheses, I use data from the 2020 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS) to construct composite indices that measure acculturation, ethnic attachment, and perceived threat. I then run a series of regression models to test their effect on party affiliation.

Both hypotheses are partially supported—perceived threat shows a strong, significant association with Democratic affiliation, and acculturation appears to weaken ethnic attachment,

reducing the likelihood of identifying as a Democrat. I also find variation by citizenship status: naturalized citizens are more likely to identify as Republican across all measures of partisanship, while non-citizen immigrants lean heavily Democratic, followed by U.S.-born Latinos. These patterns also suggest that political socialization, shaped by unique experiences tied to citizenship status, may play a large role in how acculturation, perceived threat, and ethnic attachment influence partisanship.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Fraga for his guidance and for helping me bring what was once a vision to life. I am also incredibly thankful to Dr. Wakefield for his support with my data analysis and for helping me navigate the behemoth of a dataset that is the CMPS. I am grateful to Dr. Reingold and Dr. Crabtree for serving on my committee and offering their valuable insights. Finally, I'm endlessly appreciative of my friends and family, who have supported me along this journey. This endeavor would not have been possible without all of you!

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1. Introduction

Latino partisanship has long been a topic of debate among scholars, especially since the election and presidency of Donald Trump in 2016. Despite the expression of divisive rhetoric, such as the former president's claim that immigrants are "poisoning the blood of our country" (Layne 2023) and the promotion of policies perceived to be against the interests of the Latino population— it appears the Republican Party has gained some Hispanic support in recent years (Hernández-Echevarría 2024), including among some of the immigrant population (Wakefield, Fraga, and Fisk 2024). In the 2024 election, support for Donald Trump increased by 19% among Latino men and by 8% among Hispanic women since 2020 (Lange, Erikson, and Heath 2024).

As a group that has historically had and continues to hold strong preferences for the Democratic Party, this might seem unexpected or surprising to some. A large part of the Hispanic community has viewed the Democratic Party to be more concerned with representing their interests than the GOP (Krogstad, Edwards, and Lopez 2022). Support for Democrats can be reflected by Hispanic vote choice that has strongly favored the Democratic Party over the years (Hernández-Echevarría 2024). So why are loyalties changing?

The factors driving what appears to be a possible shift away from the Democratic Party remain unclear. Predictions about how party affiliation may change cannot be easily made, especially considering how partisanship can evolve over the years with changing politics and institutions. In addition, there is a lack of consensus regarding whether there are differences in party identification between citizenship status. For instance, some research states that foreign-born Latinos are more likely to identify as Democratic or lean Democratic (Lopez et. al., 2016),

while others say that their tendency to align with conservative ideologies might make them more likely to identify with the Republican Party.

Why does this matter? Following Asian Americans, Latinos are the fastest-growing racial group in the United States, reaching 19% of the population as of 2022 (Krogstad et. al., 2023). As one of the largest pan-ethnic groups, the Hispanic population is also a quickly growing electorate with the potential to shape future elections. Understanding the relationship between identity and partisanship is also important at a time in which politics are becoming increasingly polarized. This contributes to a discussion about how rhetoric and policies may influence how people vote and who they affiliate with, as well as insight into how such factors directly impact people's lives.

2. Literature Review

In this literature review, I examine differences in partisanship between U.S.-born and first-generation Latinos as a collective impacted by policy, and across national origin groups. I also seek to understand variation in party affiliation as a function of acculturation and ethnic attachment. I first explore how historical and contemporary policies from both parties (that affect Latinos as a pan-ethnic group) might explain party alignment. I argue that partisanship may be driven more by opposition to perceived threat rather than by showing support for a party seen as beneficial. This ties into threat mobilization theory, which posits that group threat can have a mobilizing effect among Latinos (Gutierrez et. al. 2019). I apply this framework to differences in national origin as well, although partisan affiliation may not vary as much in this aspect, seeing as how policy affects all Latinos, regardless of ethnic group. I then argue that diversity in

partisanship can be dependent on levels of acculturation among Latinos, which in turn may have an inverse relationship with ethnic attachment.

2.1 Pan-ethnicity and Policy

The collective experiences of Latinos as a pan-ethnic group are important to consider. Latino registered voters have historically supported Democrats and believed the party represents their interest more than the GOP (Lopez et. al 2016), which some may partly attribute to democratic policies, reform, and legislation that have benefitted the Latino community.

An example of a favorable policy is DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), created by the Obama Administration. This program provides temporary relief, or deferred action, as well as work authorization to immigrants who arrived in the U.S. as children (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services 2024). Without the threat of deportation and the granting of legal status, recipients have access to more opportunities, such as better employment, pay, and educational attainment (American Immigration Council 2024). The Affordable Care Act, also signed into law by Obama, has increased Latino access to healthcare and secured many with insurance plans (UnidosUS 2024). It is also worth mentioning that a large part of what can be perceived as the Democratic Party's advocating for Latino interests is attributed mostly to vocal and public opposition to the GOP's anti-immigrant rhetoric that has the potential to alienate Hispanic people. Democrats have also been more overt in their efforts to mobilize the Latino electorate, such as Kennedy's campaign and presidency, which saw large increases in Hispanic voter registration and alliances with Latino civil rights leaders (Francis-Fallon 2019).

However, the Democratic Party has not always consistently prioritized Latino interests, evident in policies such as mass deportations. Many Latinos disagreed with Obama's handling of

deportations, which rose significantly with his tenure and reached record levels (Lopez, Gonzalez-Barrera, and Motel 2011). The Biden Administration's deportation levels, while not reaching the Trump or Obama Administration's, have also risen with his time in office (Watson 2024). In Kamala Harris' visit to Guatemala, the vice president told potential displaced migrants: "Do not come" (Naylor and Keith 2021).

As I have mentioned, the Republican Party has not been viewed positively by Latinos in comparison to the Democratic Party. This is in large part due to policies and rhetoric that Hispanic people have perceived to be anti-Latino—but what about beneficial policies and actions? It appears that the Republican Party has sponsored and passed some legislation that, despite not being targeted toward Latinos, has positively impacted the Hispanic population. For example, the creation of Opportunity Zones from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 claimed to encourage investment in low-income census tracts (Hodge 2023). Latinos comprise the second-largest group in these Opportunity Zones, meaning many should benefit (Economic Innovation Group). As for the success of these Zones—results are mixed, with claims that this program has shown little growth in economically distressed communities and instead mostly benefitted high-income individuals (Hodge 2023). The GOP has also sponsored bills that have seen bipartisan support, such as the Small Business Act (United States Senate), which has supported record numbers of Hispanic entrepreneurs and businesses as of this year (U.S. Small Business Administration 2024).

However, any strides the Republican Party has made in gaining Latino support may have been overshadowed by negative policies and decision-making widely viewed as unfavorable or hostile towards Hispanic individuals in the U.S. (Krogstad, Edwards, and Lopez 2022). This has contributed to the GOP's reputation as a party not concerned with the interests of Latino

populations—a perception that has remained. Republicans have historically supported and passed restrictive immigration legislation, such as Arizona’s SB 1070, which permitted police to stop people they suspected to be undocumented (García 2012), essentially allowing for racial profiling. Proposition 187 in California sought to prevent undocumented individuals from being able to use and access public education and social services. H.R. 4437, the 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, and increasingly harsh voter ID laws are a few other examples of the Republican Party’s punitive and restrictive policies (García 2012).

Combined with negative rhetoric associated with Republican figures such as Donald Trump, the GOP’s policies have typically faced opposition from Latino communities. Changes in party affiliation have been shown to occur in response to influences such as salient political events, significant policy decisions by a party, and politically relevant personal experiences (Wakefield, Fraga, Fisk 2024). For instance, a person whose family members are deported or detained as result of increasingly restrictive immigration policies while a certain president is in office may negatively influence their attitudes towards the political party of the officeholder. This ties into threat mobilization theory, which posits that perceived threat and anger can often mobilize Hispanic individuals against a party. In this case, one would expect for Hispanic people who feel attacked by the Republican Party to be pushed toward the Democratic Party amid increasing polarization in the GOP concerning immigration policies (Fraga, Velez, West 2024).

2.2 National Origin and Perceived Threat

The histories of certain national-origin groups with political parties may play a part in shaping partisan opinions and levels of attachment, which could explain variation across Latinos as a pan-ethnic group. For instance, negative experiences with a political party would

presumably generate negative attitudes towards that party. An example in which this can be observed is among Cubans, who have generally been more favorably disposed towards the GOP. The failure of the Bay of Pigs attack under Kennedy, as well as the involuntary resettlement of Cubans from Miami to other parts of the U.S., betrayed the trust of the Cuban exile community (Francis-Fallon 2019). These actions were also met with criticism by Republicans, who, in doing so, who have managed to mobilize Cuban Americans and expressed strong anti-communist sentiment, which has resonated with this national-origin group given their negative experiences with Castro (Sanchez 2021). The Democrat president's actions were felt by many Cuban Americans to be harmful to their community, mobilizing them against this party and driving them toward Republicans. Since then, Cubans have enjoyed socio-economic and political prosperity in Florida (Grenier 1990) and continue to possess positive attitudes towards the GOP.

Another example of partisan support being shaped by opposition to a particular party is Democrat support among Central American national origin groups. Like most Latinos, Central American Latinos align more strongly with the Democratic Party (Krogstad, Edwards, and Lopez 2022). Republican President Eisenhower's intervention in the regimes of these countries, for instance, left legacies of authoritarian dictators. In Guatemala, for instance, Eisenhower authorized the deposition of the democratically elected President Arévalo and selected Castillo Armas, a dictator who regularly used violence as a political tool (U.S. Department of State). He also backed Somoza in Nicaragua, another dictator who held power for decades (Walker 1999). The Trump Administration made reductions in aid for El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala (Wroughton and Zengerle 2019).

Similar to pan-ethnic groups, the party affiliation patterns of national origin groups illustrate the dynamics under which threat mobilization theory operates under. Perceptions of

harm by a political party can create opposition, pushing communities to align with the “lesser evil”. It may be the case that party affiliation could be more dependent on threat mobilization rather than on the party perceived to advocate more for the Hispanic community. In addition, because Latinos (like other pan-ethnic groups) are often viewed as a monolith by the U.S. political system rather than a diverse group of national origin communities, policy affects all ethnic groups and national origin may not be as salient in this context.

2.3 Acculturation

Acculturation considers how people adopt a new language and a country’s norms over time. As individuals learn about a country’s culture, their identification and beliefs about political parties may shift. A U.S.-born Latino who has been exposed to American political culture and norms from their upbringing could likely have a different partisan opinion in comparison to a first-generation individual who may have been raised in or spent a significant amount of time in another country with a different political culture.

Generational differences can also tell us about how people have integrated into the dominant culture of the country they reside in. A second or third generation Latino is more likely to have adopted American norms and values that are passed down over time, including partisanship. A first-generation Hispanic individual may not have the same inherited party affiliation as a U.S. born Latino, or the internalized party preferences that are passed down through family ties. Fewer experiences with American institutions and with the country’s politics also leaves first-generation Latinos to find their own path to partisan attachment (Morin, Mejía, Sanchez 2021).

Current literature and research provide conflicting perspectives with respect to whether a higher degree of acculturation is linked to stronger identification with the Democratic or Republican Party. A study by the Pew Research Center conducted after Trump's first election, for instance, states that more Latino Clinton supporters were foreign born and more likely to identify with the Democratic Party (Lopez 2016). Of the Latino Trump supporters in the study, most appear to be U.S. born. However, other research indicates this may not be the case. For instance, Trump support appears to have increased in areas with larger shares of immigrant voters from 2016-2020 but demonstrates that limited English proficiency may indicate potential gains in backing Donald Trump (Fraga, Velez, West 2024). Because the adoption of a dominant country's language skills serves as a marker of acculturation, this may subsequently point to increases in Republican support among foreign-born Latinos.

Language and nativity are also crucial factors that help define the Latino community of cultures. There is variation—later generations are likely to speak more English and less likely to maintain Spanish proficiency, while foreign-born populations are more likely to be more fluent in Spanish. While this does ignore nuances such as bilingualism, it captures a broader trend where higher English proficiency is often associated with stronger levels of acculturation. Naturalization also provides an interesting perspective into the process of acculturation. The process requires knowledge of U.S. history, the government, familiarity with the law, and English competence (García 2012), which might indicate stronger levels of acculturation. Like gains in English and time spent in the U.S., naturalization contributes to the acquisition of partisanship as well (Wong 2020).

2.4 Ethnic Attachment

Higher levels of acculturation and becoming incorporated into a country's culture and politics may imply a trade-off with ethnic attachment. For instance, this may explain why some U.S. born Latinos who possess more English proficiency do not speak as much Spanish, and vice versa. However, this is somewhat of an oversimplification of complex and overlapping identities and overlooks other ways in which individuals can maintain ties with their community while also integrating into dominant cultures. The trade-off implied is more of a general trend rather than an all-encompassing explanation, and it is important to recognize that acculturation does not necessarily imply a weakening of ethnic attachment— but in this study, I focus on patterns that suggest how they may be related to one another and examine other indicators of beyond language.

Linked fate is a concept that frequently arises in the literature regarding discussions of ethnic identity among racial and pan-ethnic groups. This term captures how strongly people identify with their ethnic/national origin group, and whether they perceive their personal outcomes as intertwined with those of their larger pan-ethnic/racial community (Gershon et. al. 2019). Individuals with a higher degree of linked fate would therefore be expected to react more negatively to what affects their pan-ethnic group in a harmful manner. This concept, also known as group consciousness, was developed by Michael Dawson to explain collective behavior and cohesiveness in response to policy and political behavior among African Americans (Escaleras, Kim, and Wagner 2019).

While Latinos are a distinct racial group with different lived experiences in the U.S., linked fate has been applied to Hispanic communities because they share a minority status and have also historically been viewed as a pan-ethnic group in the United States. The term “Hispanic”

was first used by the U.S. government in the 1980 census to categorize people from Spanish-speaking backgrounds collectively, with “Latino” emerging in 2000 (Simón 2020). Since then, national-origin groups from Latin America have been studied under this pan-ethnic designation.

As previously mentioned, individuals concerned over outcomes that affect the Latino community are expected to have a higher degree of linked fate. People who are more aware of their pan-ethnic group’s minority status are also more likely to view united action as necessary important to advocating for their group. Because of this, Hispanic people who feel their fate is linked to the outcomes of other Latinos could be more likely to oppose Republican candidates and policies (Hickel, Oskooii, and Collingwood 2024).

3. Hypotheses

H1: Latinos who are more likely to be affected by negative immigration policy and rhetoric (e.g. through personal experiences or family ties) are more likely to identify with the Democratic Party.

We might expect the proximity of first-generation Latinos to immigration enforcement to drive them away from the Republican Party. These ties may cause Latinos to back leaders who have taken a stance against anti-immigrant politicians (who have traditionally been Republican or at least are associated with the GOP), which can lead to more Democrat support (Wakefield, Fraga, and Fisk 2024).

If this is not the case, the effects of immigration enforcement could disproportionately impact U.S.-born Latinos, who, despite having less direct proximity to enforcement, may be

reminded of their identity as members of a community with outsider status specifically in immigration contexts (Maltby et al., 2024). Because the immigrant status of first-generation Latinos is salient across all policy contexts (unlike U.S. born individuals), high levels of enforcement may have a comparatively smaller effect. The impacts of immigration enforcement may also extend to broader “immigrant experiences” that include negative experiences tied to their status, such as discrimination.

H2: Highly acculturated Latinos are more likely to possess a lower degree of ethnic attachment and consequently, identify less strongly with the Democratic Party.

Because acculturation consists of becoming more integrated into U.S. sociopolitical norms, we could expect to see a corresponding detachment from issues important or highly salient to the Latino community. Hickel, Oskoi, and Collingwood state that support for the Republican Party may signal distance from the “prototypical Latinx and loyalty to a U.S.-American identity, which is interpreted as hostile towards the interests of Latinx immigrants” (52). Separation from the Latino community could then be an attempt to elevate individual status by acculturating into a group with more privileges and political leverage.

Ethnic attachment, as I conceptualize it in this study, includes multiple dimensions, such as community ties, cultural solidarity, and linked fate, which has frequently been used in the literature to understand group solidarity. As stated previously, linked fate is a U.S.-centric concept that emphasizes on how connected individuals feel to the outcomes of a group to which they perceive themselves to belong to. While I use it as a measure of ethnic attachment in my study and it is important to understanding group solidarity in the United States, linked fate

emphasizes connections formed within the country and may not be as salient in foreign contexts, where there may be a lack of established networks among the broader Hispanic community and across different national-origin groups. This may be the case among individuals who have spent less time in the U.S., and who may have ties only among individuals of their own community or ethnic group. Even if it were the case that less acculturated Latinos demonstrated less linked fate, this might not necessarily imply a lack of ethnic attachment.

However, despite questions about the applicability of linked fate to immigrant Latinos, I still employ it as a useful foundation for understanding group political behavior and cohesiveness. This is also because it has been widely used by other scholars in the context of understanding political solidarity, decision-making, and the effects of racial and ethnic identities on said political factors (Mejía 2023). In addition, I use other factors such as community closeness and concern for the outcomes of the broader Latino community alongside linked fate to provide a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of ethnic attachment. Other potential measures are important to consider, such as connections to national-origin communities. This may especially be the case among communities that do not have bonds across ethnic groups, which might not necessarily translate into not caring for other Latinos.

On the other hand, if highly acculturated Latinos do not identify less strongly with the Democratic Party, this could suggest that acculturation reinforces affiliation through other mechanisms—particularly through political socialization. Because a higher degree of acculturation is associated with more exposure to American political parties and their behavior, we could expect people more familiar with the Republican Party's legislation and policies to be driven away from the GOP. More exposure also means more knowledge of Latino voting behavior, such as the historical norm to align with the Democratic Party. In addition, Latinos are

more likely to identify as Democrats with more time spent in the United States (Jones-Correa, Al-Faham, and Cortez 2018), so we may see those individuals with a higher degree of acculturation, who are more likely to be U.S.-born or naturalized, may be positioned against the Republican Party.

4. Measurement and Data

I test my hypotheses using individual level survey data from the 2020 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS). I conduct this analysis with a focus on citizenship differences within Latinos to identify variation between and within these groups.

The 2020 CMPS is nonpartisan post-election survey that focuses on political attitudes, immigration, policy, and minority experiences following the 2020 election. Collaborators consist of over 200 scholars from across 100 different colleges/universities, who submitted questions and survey content. The questionnaire was administered in English, Spanish, Chinese (simplified), Chinese (traditional), Korean, Vietnamese, Arabic, Urdu, Farsi, and Haitian Creole. The 2020 CMPS was distributed nationally, fielded between December 1, 2020, and February 1, 2021.

This dataset has large and generalizable samples of various identity groups, consisting of Black, White, Latino, and Asian individuals, also oversampling “hard-to-reach” groups that include Afro-Latinos, Native Americans, Muslims, Native Hawaiians, Black immigrants, and members of the LGBTQ+ community (Frasure et. al. 2020). Registered voters were selected from a national database matched to email addresses, where individuals were sent up to five email requests upon being randomly selected to participate. The participants of online panel vendors also partnered with the CMPS, and respondents were randomly selected and invited via

the panel platform they were registered with. To avoid duplication, both sample sources were cross-checked to ensure each participated was only invited once (CMPS 2019).

I conduct two regressions for H1: one is a simple bivariate regression testing the effect of perceived threat on party affiliation—an index that measures the potential impact of immigration policy. The second is a linear regression with the same dependent variable, but I control for demographic and contextual variables. For H2, I run four regressions. Again, one tests the effect of acculturation on ethnic attachment, and another does the same but with controls. The other two regressions each test the independent impact of acculturation and ethnic attachment on partisanship, using the same set of control variables.

I then run a final regression model that uses the indices from each hypothesis as separate independent variables, accounting for controls as well. This ultimately demonstrates how all factors influence partisanship and if their effects remain significant when tested at the same time. Because the questions use a variety of scales, consisting of Likert Scales with differing ranges, binary choice scales, and scales with categorical variables, I rescale response options to binary variables with values of 0, 0.5, and 1, depending on the degree of the measured attribute, to ensure consistency. This is with the exception of Q271 (Table 6), which I elaborate on below.

The populations of interest in this study consist of Latino respondents from the 2020 CMPS. Out of the 17,545 respondents, 4,577 or 26.1%, identify as Hispanic. They are divided in the following categories:

1. Non-naturalized Latinos: Foreign-born respondents who are not naturalized.
2. Naturalized/Immigrant Latinos: Foreign-born respondents who have become U.S. citizens.

3. U.S.-born Latinos: U.S. born respondents born in the United States to immigrant families across multiple generations.

4.1 Selecting Latino Respondents

Before any analyses, I subset for Hispanic respondents only. The question I use is:

S2_RACE: What do you consider your race or ethnicity? Mark one or more boxes.

White	1
Hispanic or Latino	2
Black or African American.....	3
Asian American	4
American Indian/Native American	5
Arab, Middle Eastern or North African	6
Native Hawaiian	7
Not Hawaiian, but other Pacific Islander	8

To maintain simplicity and a more straightforward analysis, I only include respondents who select “Hispanic or Latino”. However, it is important to recognize that this question excludes people who do not consider this as their primary identity and may not consider other nuances that come with ethnic/racial identity, which shrinks the sample size down to 3,873 respondents.

4.2 Identifying Citizenship Status

The questions I use to identify citizenship status are:

S7. Were you born in the United States, [if Latino “on the Island of Puerto Rico,”] or another country?

United States 1
 Another country 2
 Puerto Rico 3

Q807: S7=2. Which of the following best describes you...

I am a naturalized U.S. citizen 1
 I have applied for citizenship, but not yet finished 2
 Legal permanent resident, but not applying for
 citizenship..... 3
 I have a Visa 4
 I have temporary work authorization (DACA or similar) 5
 Not eligible to apply for citizenship..... 6
 Other: SPECIFY 7

I categorize U.S.-born citizens from respondents who have selected the United States (1) as their country of birth in S7. Those who indicated that they were born abroad (S7 = 2) but naturalized U.S. citizens (Q807 = 1), or who were born in Puerto Rico (S7 = 3) are categorized as naturalized/immigrant citizens. While Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens by birth, their political socialization, migration experiences, and identity formation resemble those of

naturalized immigrants more closely in my study. Lastly, respondents who were born in another country and selected options 2 – 7 in Q807—such as being in the process of citizenship, possessing a Visa, or having temporary work authorization are classified as non-naturalized immigrants.

4.3 Dependent Variable

In measuring partisanship, I use a binary party ID variable for my regressions. To test for robustness, I also use a 3-point and 7-point party ID scale as well. The 7-point scale differentiates between strong partisans, weak partisans, leaners, and independents from both parties, while 3-point party ID narrows the classification into Republicans, Independents, and Democrats. I measure party affiliation with the following survey questions:

Q21: Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an independent, or something else?

- Republican 1
- Democrat 2
- Independent 3
- Other party 4

Q22: [IF 21=1 or 2] Do you consider yourself to be a strong {Dem/Rep}, or not?

- Strong 1
- Not strong 2

Q23: [IF 21=3-4] If you had to choose, do you consider yourself closer to the Republican party or the Democratic party?

Republican	1
Democrat	2
Independent	3
Other party	4
Don't know	88

I initially intended to construct a binary party ID variable that compared Democrats to Republicans by combining Q21 (party ID) and Q23 (lean) responses. Democrats would include both strong identifiers and leaners, as would Republicans, excluding pure independents and people who selected “Other party”. While this would offer a cleaner contrast, I found that this initial approach drastically reduced my sample size, which is attributed to the complexity and branching logic of the CMPS.

To preserve a larger sample and avoid deviating from my core hypotheses, I opted for a Democrat vs. non-democrat binary. However, it is important to state that this slightly shrank my sample size to 3,477—likely because individuals who answered the binary PID questions may have skipped other variables included in the regression, leading to their exclusion due to listwise deletion. In this approach, respondents who selected “Democrat” in either Q21 or Q23 were coded as 1, and all others (including Republicans, independents, third-party, and non-identifiers) were coded as 0. This limits insight into Republican partisanship, but to supplement this, I use I use a 3-point (*Figure 2*) and 7-point PID (*Figure 3*) model in a robustness check.

Table 1: Binary Party Identification

Category	Scale	Criteria
Democrats	1	Q21 = (2) Democrat
		Q23 = (2) Lean Democrat — if Q21 = (3) Independent or (4) Independent/Other
Non-Democrat	0	Q21 = (1) Republican
		Q23 = (1) Lean Republican – if Q21 = (3) Independent or (4) Other
		Q23 = (3) Independent, (4) Other, or (88) Don't know

Table 2: 7-Point Party Identification

Category	Scale	Criteria
Strong Republican	1	Q21 = (1) Republican & Q22 = (1) Strong
Weak Republican	2	Q21 = (1) Republican & Q22 = (2) Not strong
Lean Republican	3	Q21 = (4) Other party & Q23 = (01) Republican
Lean Republican	3	Q21 = (3) Independent & Q23 = (01) Republican
Pure Independent	4	Q21 = (3) Independent & Q23 = (03) Independent Q21 = (4) Other party & Q23 = (03) Independent Q21 = (4) Other party & Q23 = (03) Independent Q21 = (3) Independent & Q23 = (88) Don't know
Lean Democrat	5	Q21 = (3) Independent & Q23 = (02) Democrat
Lean Democrat	5	Q21 = (4) Other party & Q23 = (02) Democrat
Weak Democrat	6	Q21 = (2) Democrat & Q22 = (2) Not strong
Strong Democrat	7	Q21 = (2) Democrat & Q22 = (1) Strong

Table 3: 3-Point Party Identification

Category	Code	Criteria
Democrats	3	5–7 (Lean, Weak, and Strong)
Independents	2	4
Republicans	1	1–3 (Lean, Weak, and Strong)

I create this measure by collapsing categories of 7-Point Party ID, as shown above.

4.4 Independent Variables

My hypotheses stem from three independent variables: threat, acculturation, and ethnic attachment. These are measured using individual survey questions that account for personal experiences and opinions/beliefs with respect to each construct. These questions are then combined into composite indices, forming a single score for each variable.

4.4.1 Perceived Threat

To measure perceived threat from immigration policy and political rhetoric, I draw from questions that ask respondents about their views on specific immigration laws and policies, their experiences with discrimination, and personal impacts resulting from immigration enforcement. These are then used to create an index. Levels of perceived threat are coded as follows: high exposure, proximity, or significant worry are assigned a value of 1; moderate exposure or concern is coded as 0.5; and little to no perceived threat is coded as 0.

Table 4: Measures of Perceived Threat

Survey Question	Original Response Options	Rescaled Values – Level of Perceived Threat
Q490: Do you know anyone who has been stopped/questioned for immigration reasons or detained/deported? [allow multiple]	(1) Yes, I have been stopped or questioned (2) Yes, a close family member has been stopped or questioned (3) Yes, a close family member has been detained or deported (4) Yes, some other relative has been stopped or questioned	High (1) = 1 Moderate (0.5) = 2-7 None (0) = 8

	(5) Yes, some other relative has been detained or deported (6) Yes, a friend or co-worker has been stopped or questioned (7) Yes, a friend or co-worker has been detained or deported (8) No, do not know anyone	
Q491: Do you know anyone who is currently undocumented? This is completely anonymous, and just for a simple demographic analysis. [check all that apply]	(9) No, I do not know anyone undocumented (1) Yes, one of my parents (2) Yes, one of my siblings (3) Yes, one of my children (4) Yes, another family member (aunt, grandparent, cousin) (5) Yes, a close personal friend (6) Yes, someone I work with	High (1) = 1-3 Moderate (0.5) = 4-6 None (0) = 9
Q492: How worried are you that someone you know could be detained/deported?	(1) A lot (2) Some (3) Not much (4) Not at all	High (1) = 1 Moderate (0.5) = 2-3 None (0) = 4
Q493: How worried are you that YOU could be detained/deported?	(1) A lot (2) Some (3) Not much (4) Not at all	High (1) = 1 Moderate (0.5) = 2-3 None (0) = 4

It is important to point out that variables Q490 and Q491 allow for multiple selection, meaning the same respondent can fall under different categories—all of which I count. This is reasonable given that participants who experience high levels of threat (such as personal experiences with being stopped or questioned) are also likely to know other people who have been as well. It is also worth mentioning that due to the sensitive nature of these questions and

privacy concerns despite assurances of confidentiality, there is also a possibility that respondents may underreport their connections or experiences.

4.4.2 Acculturation

To assess acculturation, I incorporate survey questions that ask respondents about language use and relationships with individuals of their communities. Levels of acculturation are coded so that 1 represents the highest level of acculturation, 0.5 moderate, and 0 the lowest. Unlike perceived threat, the rescaling of these measures does not necessarily reflect frequency or intensity, but rather consistency with my acculturation theory. For instance, in Q247, fewer/no ties to Hispanic individuals indicates higher levels of acculturation (1). In Q816, infrequent Spanish use is coded to indicate higher acculturation; Q820 reflects frequency, but this is because I expect higher frequency of English use to naturally align with higher levels of acculturation. English-speaking respondents are not required to answer this question.

Table 5: Measures of Acculturation

Survey Question	Original Response Options	Rescaled Values – Level of Acculturation
Q247: What share of your friends, co-workers, and family members are [Hispanic/Latino]?	(1) None of them (2) Some of them (3) About half of them (4) Most of them (5) Almost all of them	High (1) = 1 Moderate (0.5) = 2-3 Low (0) = 4-5
Q. 816: Regardless of what language you took	(1) Very often (2) Somewhat often	High (1) = 4-5

this survey, how often do you speak Spanish in your household or with friends and family?	(3) Occasionally (4) Not too often (5) Almost never	Moderate (0.5) = 2-3 Low (0) = 1
Q820: [ANY NON-ENGLISH RESPONDENT] Regardless of what language you took this survey, how often do you speak English in your household or with friends and family?	(1) Very often (2) Somewhat often (3) Occasionally (4) Not too often (5) Almost never	High (1) = 1 Moderate (0.5) = 2-3 Low (0) = 4-5

4.4.3 Ethnic Attachment

This variable is determined using questions that address community ties, linked fate, and caring for the outcomes of the broader Latino community. Rescaled values range from 0 to 1, with 1 indicating the highest level of ethnic attachment, 0 the weakest, and 0.5 reflecting a moderate level. This differs from how I have rescaled threat, as what I am measuring in this model is degrees of attachment. There are, however, a few changes to point out.

If this is the case, why is Q554 is not flipped? A high score on this item reflects a strong belief that what happens to White people has a significant impact on one's own life, and someone with a high degree of Latino ethnic attachment would likely not identify this way. However, I keep both Latino and white linked fate scaled the same way to capture the relative strength of in-group versus out-group attachment, so I construct a difference score between Latino linked fate and White linked fate. They're differenced such that:

$$\text{Ethnic_attachment_diff} = \text{Latino_linked_fate_num} - \text{White_linked_fate_num}$$

This difference score would then capture whether respondents feel more closely to Latinos than to white Americans, the reverse, or equally connected to both.

Additionally, Q271 — which asks about the importance of racial identity— is recoded into five levels (0, 0.25, 0.5, 0.75, 1), which is different from the rest of the variables. This is to preserve the nuance of the original 5-point scale, where the midpoint ("moderately important") had distinct conceptual meaning that justified a finer gradation. The other measures of ethnic attachment did not have as clear of a midpoint or spacing between the categories due to the framing of the original response questions.

Table 6: Measures of Ethnic Attachment

Survey Question	Original Response Options	Rescaled Values – Level of Ethnic Attachment
Q271: How important is being [Hispanic/Latino] to your identity?	(1) Extremely important (2) Very important (3) Moderately important (4) Slightly important (5) Not at all important	High (1) = 1 Significant (0.75) = 2 Moderate (0.5) = 3 Minor (0.25) = 4 Low (0) = 5
Q. 552: What happens to Hispanic people will have...	(1) Nothing to do with what happens in my life (2) Only a little to do with what happens in my life (3) Something to do with what happens in my life (4) A lot to do with what happens in my life (5) A huge amount to do with what happens in my life	High (1) = 4-5 Moderate (0.5) = 2-3 Low (0) = 1

Q554: What happens to White people will have...	(1) Nothing to do with what happens in my life (2) Only a little to do with what happens in my life (3) Something to do with what happens in my life (4) A lot to do with what happens in my life (5) A huge amount to do with what happens in my life	High (1) = 4-5 Moderate (0.5) = 2-3 Low (0) = 1
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5. Results

I first display descriptive statistics of Hispanic survey respondents, starting with their citizenship status (shown in Table 7). I implement three measures of party identification to examine variation across citizenship status: Binary, 3-Point, and 7-Point. Binary party identification (or binary PID) is my primary measure of party affiliation because my goal is to analyze the likelihood of identifying with one party (Non-Democrat = 0, Democrat = 1), and binary variables are the simplest way to test my hypotheses. I use 7-Point PID as the most detailed measure of political affiliation across, as it captures partisan strength and enhances the robustness of my findings (*Figure 3*). As seen in Figure 2, 3-Point PID is a more condensed version of the 7-Point PID and is created by collapsing its categories. Similarly, I implement this measure provide a more in-depth analysis of political affiliation that accounts for participants that would otherwise be lost in a strict Democrat and Non-Democrat dichotomy.

I display these in a series of grouped bar charts, which I use because of their effectiveness at displaying categorical comparisons in a way that makes proportions easier to visualize. Below them are tables displaying the percentages of each category. I normalize the data within citizenship groups so that the distribution within each group can be compared proportionally, adjusting for differences in sample size. Given how much larger the group of U.S.-born Latinos

is in comparison to the other two categories, bar charts of raw counts display this group as disproportionality larger, making visual comparisons of the groups difficult. In these, it is clear that most Latinos respondents are more likely to identify as Democrat, but I find that naturalized citizens emerge as more likely to identify as Republican than the other citizenship groups.

I then show the results of my regressions, where I test the relationship between perceived threat, acculturation, and ethnic attachment on Binary PID (the likelihood of identifying as Democratic). I include a composite index for perceived threat, and a disaggregated version of the index to identify statistically significant questions. This is based on H1, which suggests that some Latinos are more likely to identify with the Democratic Party than others. To test this, I analyze the demographic composition of responses to these questions, breaking them down by citizenship status. This method allows for a more accurate assessment of partisanship across different citizenship groups. I then include a linear regression accounting for controls in addition to the threat index, and I also run separate regressions examining the effect of acculturation on ethnic attachment—both with and without controls. Additionally, I test the effect of ethnic attachment on PID with controls, as well as the effect of acculturation on PID with controls to see their effects independently. My final hypothesis test is a final linear regression that uses all three independent variables and controls as predictors of affiliation with the Democratic Party.

5.2 Descriptive Statistics

After filtering the dataset to include only the responses of Hispanic participants, I create my groups of interest by determining citizenship status through responses to questions that capture birthplace (S7) and citizenship status (Q807). The majority are U.S.-born, followed by immigrants. Naturalized/citizens and immigrants are almost evenly split.

Table 7: Latino Respondents by Citizenship Status

Citizenship Status	Count	Percentage
U.S. Born	2440	63%
Naturalized/Immigrant Citizens	716	18.49%
Immigrants	717	18.51%

As can be seen below, Hispanic respondents affiliate more strongly with the Democratic Party—approximately 58.80% in comparison to 41.21% of non-democrats, which includes Republicans, Independents, and people who identify with the “Other” option.

Table 8: Binary Party Identification of Hispanic Respondents

Party ID	Count	Percentage
Democrat	2277	58.80%
Non-Democrat	1596	41.21%

In incorporating citizenship status, this tendency to lean towards the Democratic Party remains and is reflected across more granular measures of partisanship.

Figure 1 demonstrates the distribution of binary party ID across Hispanic respondents, where the majority identify as Democratic. The exact percentages of the figure are reflected in the table below, which shows the proportion of non-democrats (0) and Democrats (1) within each citizenship group. However, party ID appears to vary by citizenship status— Proportional to their category, immigrant respondents exhibit the highest levels of identification with the Democratic Party, followed by U.S.- born Latinos. Naturalized/immigrant citizens stand out—they display the lowest levels of Democratic partisanship and are the largest group within non-democrats.

Figure 1: Binary Party ID Across Normalized Citizenship Status

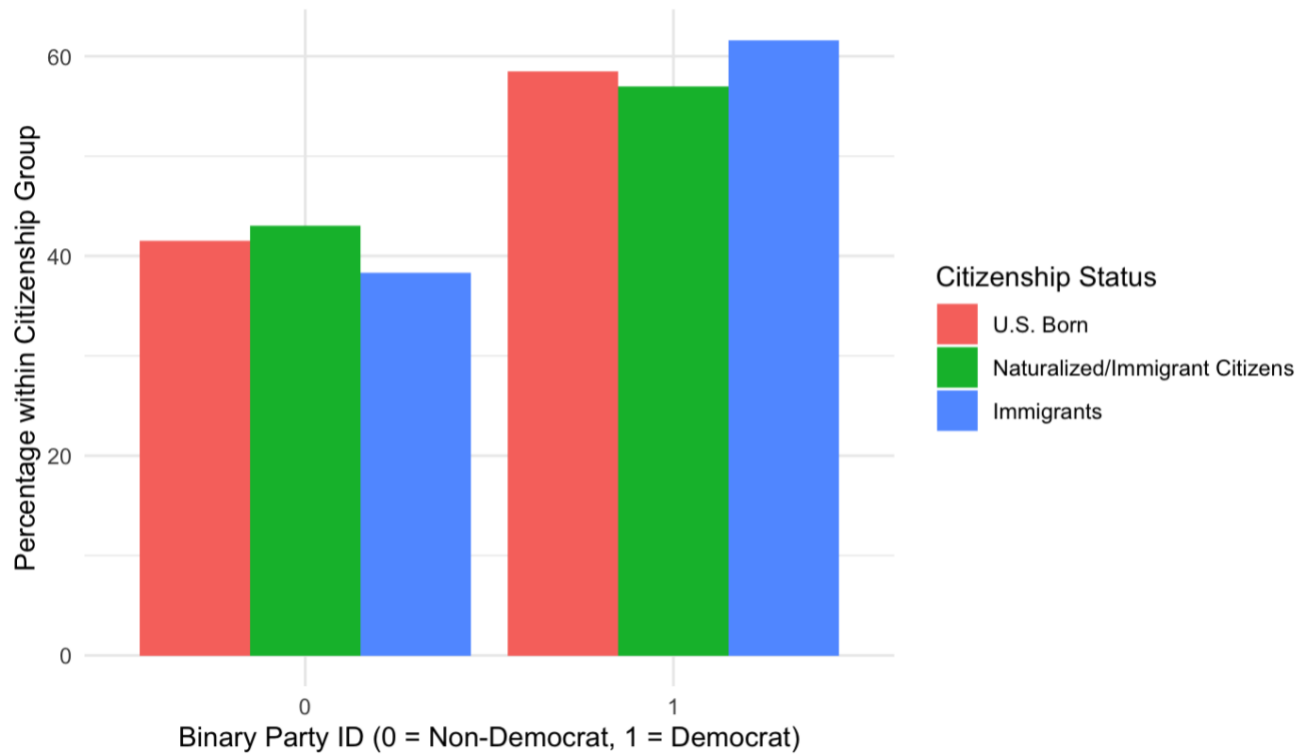


Table 9: Raw Percentages of Binary Party Identification Across Normalized Citizenship Status

Citizenship Status	Non-Democrat (0)	Democrat (1)
U.S. Born	25.6%	74.4%
Naturalized/Immigrant Citizens	34.03%	65.99%
Immigrants	22.86%	77.14%

Figure 2: 3-Point Party ID Across Normalized Citizenship Status

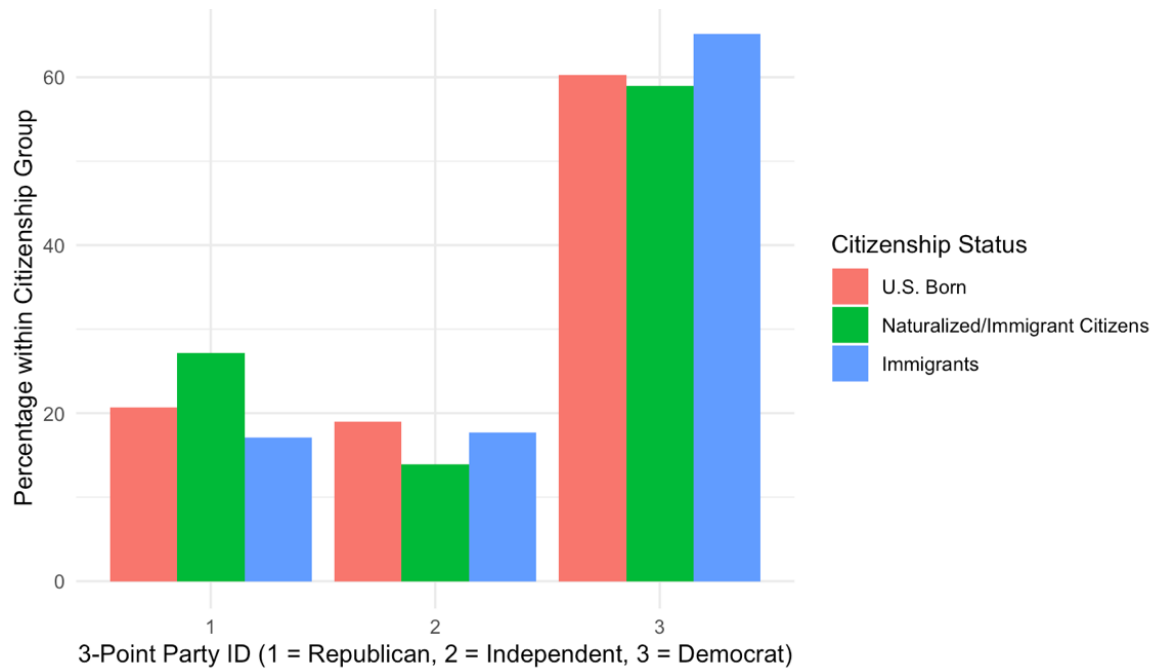


Table 10: Raw Percentages of 3-Point Party ID Across Normalized Citizenship Status

	Republican (1)	Independent (2)	Democrat (3)
U.S. Born	20.73%	19.038%	60.236%
Naturalized/Immigrant Citizens	27.17%	13.87%	58.96%
Immigrants	17.12%	17.70%	65.19%

Like Figure 1, Figure 2 shows greater overall Hispanic alignment with the Democratic Party. Immigrant respondents also appear to be the most Democratic and the least Republican, followed by U.S.-born Latinos. The Independent category is the lowest, which suggests that most Latino respondents tend to align with one major party or the other. U.S.-born Hispanic individuals appear to be the largest group among Independents, which may be explained by this group's greater exposure to American political norms where non-partisanship is increasingly

common. The second largest group is immigrant Latinos, which may reflect constraints on voting and political participation due to non-citizen status. The smallest group is naturalized citizens, which emerge as a distinct group.

Among the three citizenship categories, immigrant/naturalized citizens exhibit the highest levels of Republican identification, the lowest levels of Democratic identification, and the smallest share of Independents. This could indicate that naturalized citizens are more polarized in their political affiliation. Whether it is political socialization through naturalization or the rationale behind the active choice to become U.S. —which may correlate with greater political engagement— this may be significant as it creates questions about what aspects of the naturalization process create differences in political attitudes.

Figure 3: 7-Point Party ID Across Normalized Citizenship Status

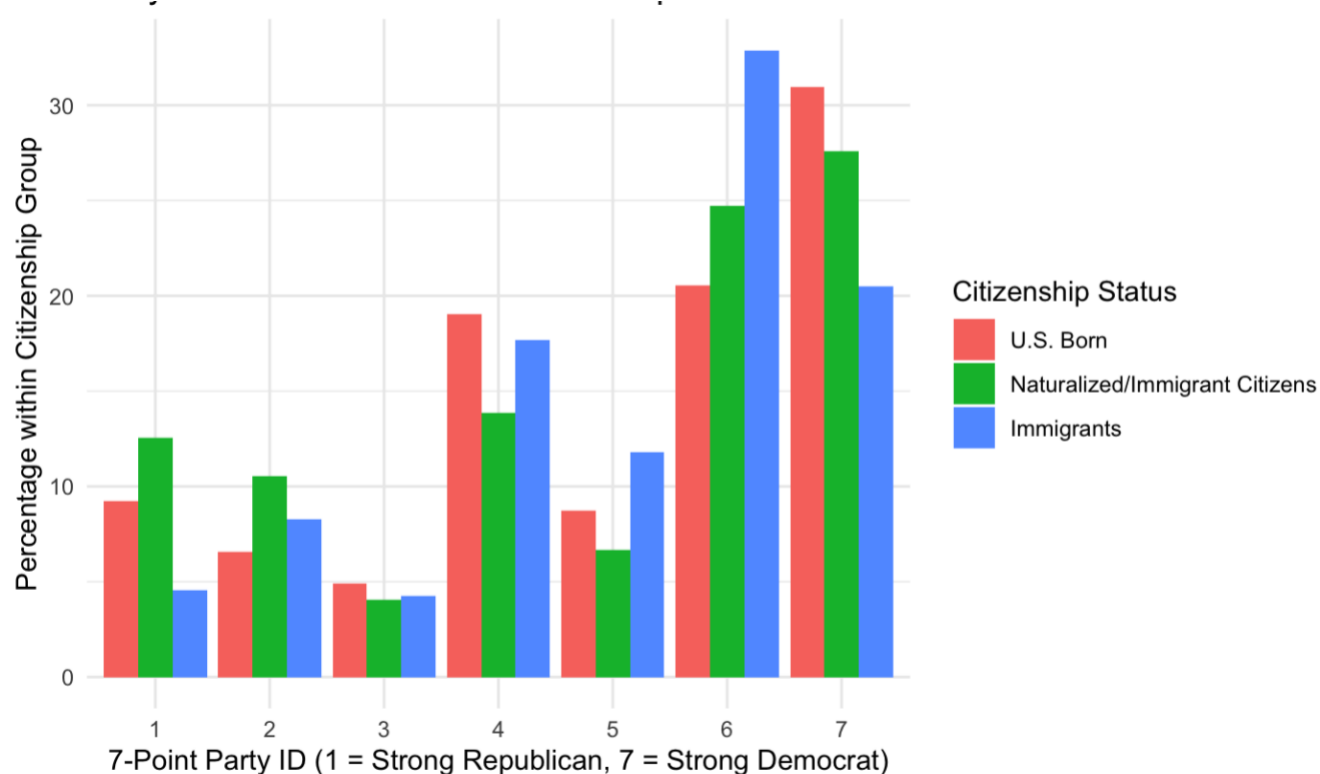


Table 11: Raw Percentages of 7-Point Party ID Across Normalized Citizenship Status

	U.S. Born	Naturalized/Immigrant Citizens	Immigrants
1 (Strong Republican)	9.24%	12.58%	4.57%
2	6.59%	10.55%	8.26%
3	4.90%	4.05%	4.28%
4 (Independent)	19.04%	13.87%	17.70%
5	8.74%	6.65%	11.80%
6	20.56%	24.71%	32.90%
7 (Strong Democrat)	30.94%	27.60%	20.50%

Once again, a left skew is apparent in Figure 3. Exact percentages are shown in Table 11. Consistent with the previous figures, stronger Democratic affiliation appears to be the most common among all groups. Overall, immigrants appear to be the most Democratic leaning, especially in the “weaker” Democratic categories overall. Naturalized/immigrant citizens show more polarization among Republicans and Democrats, with a lower tendency to affiliate with the Independent party. Once again, this group also appears to be the greatest in its identification with strong Republicans, which raises interesting questions about why naturalized citizens exhibit comparatively lower levels of Democratic identification in comparison to U.S.-born Latinos and non-naturalized immigrants. Meanwhile, U.S.-born and immigrant Hispanics are more likely to identify as Independents, indicating a tendency to avoid strong partisan attachments compared to naturalized citizens.

5.3 Regression Results

The results from my regression models confirm that higher levels of perceived threat are a predictor of Democratic affiliation, while acculturation is negatively associated with ethnic attachment—reinforcing the idea that greater integration into U.S. sociopolitical norms may imply a trade-off with ethnic group solidarity. When all independent variables are included in a final regression model, significance increases with controls, and ethnic attachment remains the strongest predictor of Democratic identification, followed by perceived threat. Acculturation, however, is less significant.

5.3.1 Perceived Threat

In my composite threat index, I aggregate and then average four measures of perceived threat that ask about worry, proximity to, and experiences with deportation, detainment, and undocumented status. Table 12 is a linear regression that examines the relationship between perceived threat and the tendency to identify as a Democrat—with and without controls.

The threat index has a positive and statistically significant coefficient of 0.196***, which indicates that as perceived threat increases, people are more likely to identify as Democrat (1) rather than Republican (0). When controls are incorporated, the effect of the threat index holds, with a similar coefficient of 0.200***. This is consistent with threat mobilization theory, which states that perceived threat and anger against a group can mobilize people against the perpetrators of said threat.

Table 12: Perceived Threat and Binary Party ID

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	PID (Binary)	
	(1)	(2)
Threat Index	0.196*** (0.033)	0.200*** (0.035)
Naturalized/Immigrant Citizens		-0.039 (0.029)
U.S. Born		-0.036 (0.023)
Male		-0.086*** (0.017)
Age		0.001 (0.001)
College Degree		0.026 (0.018)
Central America		-0.046 (0.033)
Mexico		0.057** (0.023)
East		0.024 (0.030)
South		-0.057 (0.036)
West		-0.037 (0.029)
Constant	0.543*** (0.012)	0.602*** (0.040)
Observations	3,477	3,477
R ²	0.010	0.027
Adjusted R ²	0.010	0.023
Residual Std. Error	0.489 (df = 3475)	0.486 (df = 3463)
F Statistic	34.440*** (df = 1; 3475)	7.290*** (df = 13; 3463)
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

The positive relationship with Democratic party affiliation, and conversely, a lean against the Republican party may indicate that punitive immigration policy is perceived to be characteristic of the GOP. Latino men are less likely to be Democratic in comparison to Latina women (-0.086***), and Mexican national origin also appears to be statistically significant (0.057**).

To reiterate, my first hypothesis (H1) posits that Latinos who are more likely to be affected by negative immigration policy and rhetoric—whether that be through personal experience or proximity to people who have undergone said threat—are more likely to identify with the Democratic Party. Among all groups, we see a positive likelihood of affiliating as a Democrat with an increase of perceived threat.

Table 13: Disaggregated Threat Index

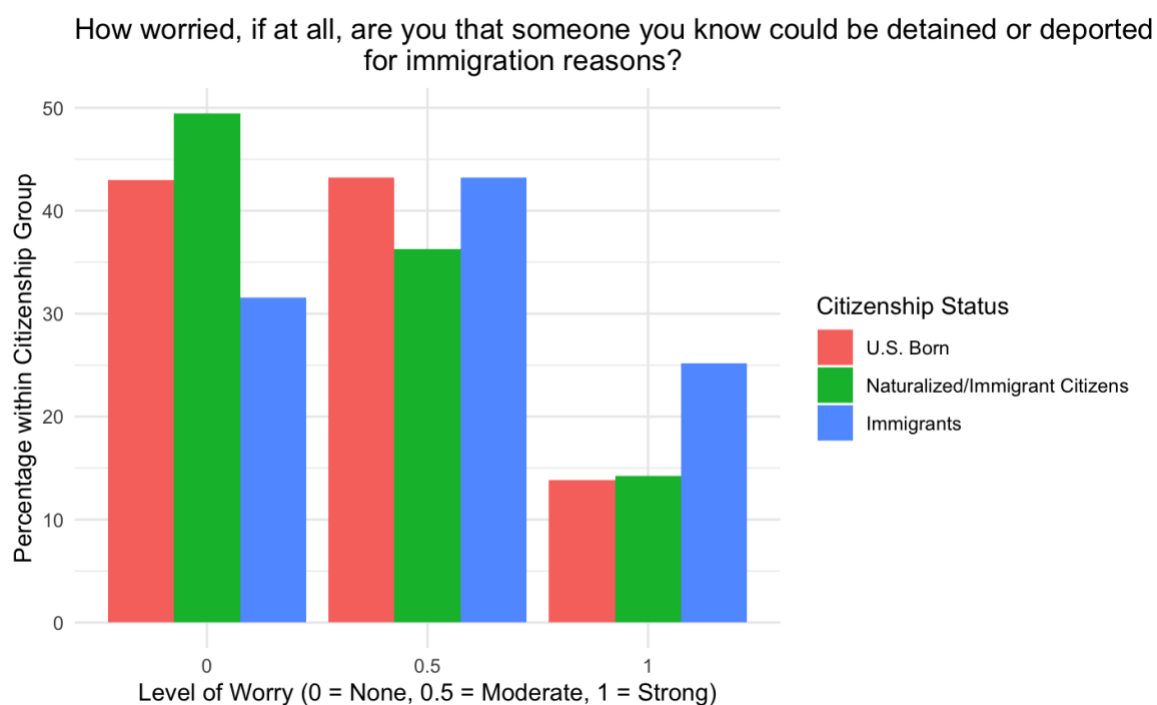
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>				
	(1)	(2)	PID (Binary) (3)	(4)	(5)
Worry About Others' Deportation/Detainment	0.200*** (0.029)	0.181*** (0.023)			
Personal Deportation/Detainment Worry	-0.031 (0.031)		0.087*** (0.026)		
Proximity to Undocumented Person	0.036 (0.031)			0.090*** (0.027)	
Proximity to Detained/Deported Person	-0.035 (0.029)				0.067*** (0.025)
Constant	0.526*** (0.012)	0.525*** (0.012)	0.574*** (0.010)	0.575*** (0.010)	0.576*** (0.010)
Observations	3,477	3,477	3,477	3,477	3,477
R ²	0.018	0.017	0.003	0.003	0.002
Adjusted R ²	0.017	0.017	0.003	0.003	0.002
Residual Std. Error	0.487 (df = 3472)	0.487 (df = 3475)	0.491 (df = 3475)	0.491 (df = 3475)	0.491 (df = 3475)
F Statistic	16.170*** (df = 4; 3472)	61.645*** (df = 1; 3475)	10.934*** (df = 1; 3475)	11.402*** (df = 1; 3475)	7.516*** (df = 1; 3475)
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01				

I disaggregate my threat index to see which variables matter the most for predicting party affiliation in response to perceived threat. Worry about the deportation or detainment of someone else is the most statistically significant, which could be for a variety of reasons—One could be that concern for the deportation or detainment of other people is more salient or mobilizing than first-hand experience. Worry is anticipatory and an uncertain future threat, which could make it more actionable. Regardless, this variable is statistically significant, and the question about whether threat varies depending on citizenship status remains. For that reason, I create a bar plot to assess the demographic composition of those who answered the question in Figure 4 below:

Those who exhibit the strongest degree of worry over someone being deported or detained for immigration reasons are Latino immigrant respondents, which makes sense—non-

citizen individuals who are also non-naturalized are likely to know other immigrants, who out of all groups are at the greatest risk of being detained or deported and therefore likely to have direct personal experiences with immigration enforcement. As seen in Figures 1-3, this group is also more likely to identify as Democrat. This is consistent with my first hypothesis, which posits that Latinos with more proximity to immigration enforcement may be driven away from the Republican Party, which is associated to more punitive policy.

Figure 4: Worry About Others' Deportation/Detainment



Following immigrants in the strongest level of worry are non-naturalized citizens, who express high levels of concern as well (1). However, they are also the largest group in the lowest category of worry (0), which seems counterintuitive. This may point at diverging experiences within naturalized citizens— for instance, people who naturalize actively choose to undergo the

American citizenship process, which is long and difficult, and once that is achieved, naturalized citizens may feel a stronger sense of security in their citizenship. However, feeling a strong sense of concern is also expected given that some naturalized citizens may maintain close connections to individuals at risk of deportation, such as family or social ties to undocumented individuals. This could also be attributed to ideological differences—previous figures show a tendency for naturalized citizens to identify more strongly with the GOP than the other citizenship groups, and this may be explained by internalized Republican narratives about law and order that may lead to feelings of safety and less apprehensiveness about deportation. However, others may find that their immigration experience is politically salient regardless of political affiliation and may continue to remain engaged with immigration issues, placing them in the category associated with stronger feelings of threat.

Lastly, U.S.-born citizens show lower levels of worry overall. Given their differences in generation, which is likely to also be the case among familial and social networks, this group is less likely to have connections to people vulnerable to immigration enforcement. However, they show a significant portion of moderate concern as do the other groups, which could indicate that immigration policy is highly salient to Hispanic political identity beyond citizenship status and serves as a driver of political mobilization.

5.3.2 Acculturation and Ethnic Attachment

One possibility of becoming more acculturated into the sociopolitical norms of the United States is a corresponding detachment from issues of high importance to the Latino pan-ethnicity and a person's national origin groups. This is essentially what I posit in my second hypothesis (H2)—that highly acculturated Hispanic individuals are more likely to experience a lesser extent

of ethnic attachment, and in turn, identify less strongly with the Democratic Party than less acculturated people. I find that this appears to be the case among Latino respondents in the 2020 CMPS, reflected in Table 14.

Table 14: Effect of Acculturation on Ethnic Attachment

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	Ethnic Attachment Index	
	(1)	(2)
Acculturation Index	-0.145*** (0.013)	-0.164*** (0.015)
Naturalized/Immigrant Citizens		0.015 (0.010)
U.S. Born		0.018** (0.009)
Male		-0.056*** (0.006)
Age		-0.0002 (0.0002)
College Degree		0.004 (0.006)
Central America		-0.030*** (0.011)
Mexico		-0.001 (0.008)
East		-0.036*** (0.011)
South		-0.019 (0.013)
West		-0.016 (0.010)
Constant	0.728*** (0.007)	0.779*** (0.013)
Observations	3,477	3,477
R ²	0.034	0.071
Adjusted R ²	0.033	0.067
Residual Std. Error	0.174 (df = 3475)	0.171 (df = 3463)
F Statistic	120.581*** (df = 1; 3475)	20.286*** (df = 13; 3463)
<i>Note:</i>	* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01	

Table 14 presents a linear regression displaying the relationship between acculturation on ethnic attachment, which I examine using the composite indices I constructed for both variables. A highly statistically significant and negative acculturation index (-0.145***) suggests that higher levels of acculturation are associated to a weaker ethnic attachment. This remains the case, even with control variables (-0.164***). So is being male (-0.056***), which is also the case in the other models. In comparison to South America, Central American national origin (-0.030***) is negatively correlated to ethnic attachment—this could be because of the smaller population size of Central Americans in the United States compared to larger Latin American regions, which may limit broader pan-ethnic attachment. Recent immigration patterns from Central America in recent years may also make it harder for Central Americans to form strong ties with other Latino-subgroups. Being from the East (-0.036***) is also negatively correlated with ethnic acculturation—this might be because of increased diversity in comparison to the Midwest, where individuals in this region may identify more with national-origin groups rather than pan-ethnicity, which may play a stronger role in community and in forming social networks.

Notably, U.S.-born Latinos showed higher ethnic attachment than immigrant Latinos (0.018*), despite being more acculturated. While this may seem counterintuitive, linked fate is a U.S.-centric concept that emphasizes on how connected individuals feel to the outcomes of a group they perceive themselves to pertain to. This may not be salient in foreign contexts, where broader pan-ethnic Latino networks may be less established among the broader Hispanic community and across multiple national-origin groups.

These findings support my hypothesis (H2) that higher levels of acculturation into U.S. cultural and political structures are associated with weaker ethnic attachment—measured through linked fate and community closeness, which declines.

Table 15: Ethnic Attachment and Binary Party ID

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	PID (Binary)	
	(1)	(2)
Ethnic Attachment Index	0.592*** (0.053)	0.505*** (0.047)
Naturalized/Immigrant Citizens		-0.048* (0.028)
U.S. Born		-0.036 (0.023)
Male		-0.052*** (0.017)
Age		-0.00000 (0.001)
College Degree		0.021 (0.018)
Central America		-0.024 (0.032)
Mexico		0.066*** (0.023)
East		0.048 (0.030)
South		-0.050 (0.036)
West		-0.032 (0.028)
Constant	0.143*** (0.041)	0.325*** (0.050)
Observations	3,477	3,477
R ²	0.035	0.050
Adjusted R ²	0.034	0.046
Residual Std. Error	0.483 (df = 3475)	0.480 (df = 3463)
F Statistic	124.511*** (df = 1; 3475)	13.921*** (df = 13; 3463)
<i>Note:</i>	* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01	

The linear regression presented in Table 15 above displays that a higher ethnic attachment is significantly associated with a greater likelihood of identifying as Democrat. This means that respondents who feel closer to the Hispanic community and feel greater concern for

its outcomes are significantly more likely to align with the Democratic Party. People more aware of their pan-ethnic group's minority status are more likely view mobilization as necessary to advocating for their group's status, and it would make sense that this would manifest as opposition from the Republican Party given its perceptions as detrimental to the Hispanic community's interests. Being male makes people slightly less likely to identify with the Democratic Party (-0.052**) and Mexican origin respondents are more likely to identify as with this party (0.066***) in comparison to the reference group (Other country).

Given the negative effects of acculturation, it would therefore make sense that individuals who are more acculturated exhibit lower levels of ethnic attachment (Table 14). This, in turn, reduces the likelihood of identifying as a Democrat. This aligns with the findings presented in Table 15, which show a greater likelihood of Democratic affiliation in response to stronger ethnic attachment.

However, this may not be uniform across citizenship groups. Figures 1 – 3 consistently show that naturalized/immigrant citizens are the most likely to identify as Republican, followed by U.S.-born and immigrant Latinos. Although U.S.-born individuals are generally expected to be the most acculturated due to their generational status and longer period of residence, these results may suggest that acculturation is not solely determined by these factors. Instead, experiences tied to citizenship status also play a significant role in shaping party identification. Naturalized citizens may be the most motivated to fully integrate into U.S. sociopolitical culture, including adopting partisan preferences that are purposefully distinct from non-citizen immigrants in an attempt to distance oneself from the broader Latino identity while affirming a U.S.-American identity, often perceived as being at odds with the interests of Hispanic immigrants (Hickel, Oskoi, and Collingwood 2024).

5.3.3 Final Model

Lastly, I run a final regression model that uses all variables (threat, acculturation, and ethnic attachment) as independent predictors of Democratic affiliation. I include both acculturation and ethnic attachment as independent predictors rather than ethnic attachment as a proxy through acculturation alone to also evaluate the direct effects of acculturation on party identification. This allows for a more comprehensive analysis of how both mechanisms shape party affiliation and demonstrates if their effects remain significant when tested all together.

The table below displays that higher perceived threat is positively associated with the likelihood of identifying as a Democrat, with this increasing in significance when all variables are held constant (from 0.147*** to 0.151***). This suggests that controlling for potentially confounding variables such as gender and national origin isolates the effect of threat perception as a driver of partisanship. There is a similar effect with acculturation, where there is an increased negative correlation once controls are incorporated (from -0.071* to -0.104**). Ethnic attachment is the most highly statistically significant and positively associated with Democratic affiliation, though this decreases when controls are incorporated (from 0.496*** to 0.462***). This effect, however, remains strong and highly statistically significant.

The effect of ethnic attachment on Democratic partisanship remains strong and statistically significant even when demographic and contextual controls are introduced. While the coefficient decreases slightly, this suggests that ethnic attachment shares explanatory space with other key predictors — such as perceived threat or nativity — but retains its independent importance in shaping Latino partisan identity. Men are also less likely to be Democrats (-0.052***), and respondents of Mexican national origin are significantly more likely to be as well (0.059***).

Table 16: Threat, Acculturation, and Ethnic Attachment

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	PID (Binary)	
	(1)	(2)
Threat Index	0.147*** (0.033)	0.151*** (0.035)
Acculturation Index	-0.071* (0.038)	-0.104** (0.042)
Ethnic Attachment Index	0.496*** (0.047)	0.462*** (0.048)
Naturalized/Immigrant Citizens		-0.031 (0.028)
U.S. Born		-0.004 (0.025)
Male		-0.059*** (0.017)
Age		0.001 (0.001)
College Degree		0.023 (0.018)
Central America		-0.031 (0.032)
Mexico		0.059*** (0.023)
East		0.046 (0.029)
South		-0.042 (0.036)
West		-0.032 (0.028)
Constant		-0.091*** (0.026)
Observations	3,477	3,477
R ²	0.044	0.057
Adjusted R ²	0.044	0.053
Residual Std. Error	0.481 (df = 3473)	0.478 (df = 3461)
F Statistic	53.767*** (df = 3; 3473)	13.973*** (df = 15; 3461)

Note:

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

6. Discussion

My threat hypothesis, H1, is partially supported. My earlier models show a positive and highly statistically significant association with a higher likelihood of identifying as a Democrat. Non-citizen immigrants experience the highest levels of threat, and are also the most likely to affiliate with the Democratic Party, and naturalized citizens who also have exposure to immigration and presumably, immigration related threats, are more likely to identify as Republican.

There is also partial support for my second hypothesis—acculturation appears to significantly weaken ethnic attachment, which is shown to have a strong bearing on the likelihood of identifying as a Democrat. The persistence of Democratic affiliation among more acculturated U.S.-born Latinos in comparison to immigrants in Table 15 may suggest that longevity or nativity does not always translate into weakening ethnic attachment or may not even fit into what we may conceptualize as acculturation. This may instead reflect more knowledge of Latino voting behavior or generational political socialization, while the party affiliation of naturalized citizens may be more dependent on adopting what is perceived to be the dominant political norm.

There are also important implications with the additions of control variables—across multiple models, identifying as male is highly statistically significant and negatively associated with Democratic affiliation. Mexican national origin is positively associated with a greater likelihood of being a Democrat in comparison to its reference group, South America. This is consistent with previous findings that demonstrates long-standing Mexican support for the Democratic Party (Krogstad et. al. 2022).

There are important limitations to my findings that should be addressed. To begin with, the way in which I set up my binary variables and the manner in which I subset for Hispanic respondents narrowed the sample size from 3,873 to 3,477—impacting statistical significance and the generalizability of my findings. There are also some important controls I did not incorporate, such as religion and economic status. However, many survey questions involved formats that would have created inconsistencies in measurement or in the construction of indices, such as questions with a split-sample format or those that require respondents to “insert” a characteristic. The creation of my indices, measurements of party identification, and the selection of my questions was also done in the interest of time and simplicity as well.

In this paper, I contribute towards existing literature on the evolving partisanship of Latinos varying in citizenship status and examine the implications behind perceptions of the Hispanic community shifting towards the right. A large part of this paper also consists of me questioning said literature and building on gaps as well—such as U.S.-centric notions of linked fate that overlook within-group variation, linear assumptions made about acculturation, and oversimplified narratives of Latino partisanship that view the Hispanic community as a monolith or a bloc. In finding differences by citizenship status, I suggest that models of identity and partisanship are more dynamic than is often given credit to.

7. Conclusion

I select the CMPS because of its larger and more representative sample of Latino respondents and because of its focus on political attitudes and personal experiences with civic engagement in the United States. To address the limitations in this study and build on these findings, future research should consider incorporating a variety of datasets to assess whether these trends persist

and evolve over time, which would also enhance the validity of these findings. Including tests such as variance factor inflation analysis could enhance the robustness of regressions and their findings, and do so in a way that is more cohesive.

Out of the citizenship groups, one stood out in particular—naturalized/immigrant citizens, due to their lower likelihood of identifying as Democrat. This is contradictory to the expectation that greater political incorporation would lead to stronger affiliation with the Republican Party because then U.S. born respondents would be more Republican, but this is not the case. As I stated previously, this may instead suggest that certain factors are behind the process of naturalization itself that influence party identification. A potential explanation is that naturalized citizens may be the most incentivized to integrate into the United States and its political norms, adopting preferences distinct from immigrants as a way of distinguishing themselves from non-citizen immigrants by emphasizing their legal pathway to citizenship and perceived elevated status from a group that is marginalized by American society. This could also shape their perception of threat, not in the form of mobilization as stated in this paper, but in response to perceived fear of immigrant individuals as undermining or “taking” what they have lawfully earned.

Conversely, immigrant respondents exhibit the strongest Democratic affiliation, likely due to more direct exposure from punitive immigration policy from the Republican Party. This group is also more likely to have a stronger degree of ethnic attachment due to networks, cultural ties, and connections to their countries of origin remaining intact. Their non-citizen status may reinforce these ties, as they are less integrated into U.S. socio-political institutions, making ethnic identity more salient to political behavior. And because the GOP has enacted legislation perceived to be against immigrant Hispanic individuals and their communities, a shift towards the Democratic

Party in response to that threat is expected. U.S.-born Latinos are in the middle between these two groups—they still strongly identify as Democrats, but less so than immigrant Hispanic individuals. Despite their generational status making them more highly acculturated, this group remains highly Democratic because ethnic identity and group solidarity continue to be salient to political behavior and participation. Shared experiences of racialization and mobilization do not disappear with acculturation or longevity of time in a country. Taken together, these findings may indicate that while acculturation, ethnic attachment, and threat perception all shape Latino partisan identification, these relationships are significantly impacted by citizenship status and the experiences that accompany it.

Something important to consider is the narratives that have been shaped or talked about a Latino shift towards the right. Despite Donald Trump's election in 2016 and his campaign in 2020, broader Hispanic community remains predominantly Democratic. Although this is the 2020 CMPS and the political landscape is constantly evolving, the focus on a supposed Latino rightward shift may potentially overlook other important structural, political, and economic factors in shaping electoral outcomes. By expanding the scope of analysis, future studies can provide a more comprehensive understanding of Latino partisanship, its future in the United States, and how citizenship status may factor into that.

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