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Mobilized Migrants: Return Migrant Voting Behavior

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Abstract

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My research examined the relationship between migration experience and higher levels of voting in a cross-national study of return migrants. I used data from both the World Health Organization's World Health Survey and a Los Angeles Times Survey. I conduct both a cross-national examination of migration experience's effect on voting behavior and an in depth examination of this effect in Mexico. My research was not able to support the hypothesis that migration experience causes greater levels of voting with statistical significance. However, in most countries studied, migration experience had a positive substantive effect on voting. The cross-national study found that migration to a similarly democratic country had no substantive or statistically significant effect on voting. While migration to a significantly more or less democratic host country increased the substantive levels of voting, the effect was not statistically significant. The results of the test on Mexico showed that migrants voted only slightly more than non-migrants and that those who have not migrated, but desire migration, were substantively less likely to vote than non-migrants with no desire to migrate. While these results all lacked statistical significance, the findings do support the claim that, in some countries, migration experience could increase voting levels in return migrants. This could be especially true for migrants who return from host countries that are much more or much less democratic than their home countries.

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Migration is a greatly debated topic, in part, because migration has such profound effects on the economies of the countries both sending and receiving migrants. There are currently 195 million people who live in countries that they were not born in, about 3% of the world's population, and, depending on the destination country of those migrants, somewhere between 20% and 50% return to their home country or move to a third country within 5 years of their initial migration. (International Organization for Migration 2010; Migration Information Source 2008). The importance of return migration is also growing. Since the recent economic slowdown, many of the millions of migrants who migrated to find work have been forced to return to their home countries (Migration Information Source 2008). These phenomenon lead researchers to ask: What effects could the migration experience have on individuals? Is it possible that the experience of migration has an effect on return migrants' political behavior? If so, might the experience of migration make individuals more likely to bring about political change or support democracy in their home countries once they return?

Evidence from studies done in the past decade indicate that the migration experience does increase political participation (Batista and Vicente 2010; Rother 2009). If migration does increase political behavior, such as voting, it could explain differences in the voting behavior of countries that are geographically and culturally similar, but have significantly different levels of voter turnout. For example, France had a voting age turnout for the Parliamentary elections of 54.52% in 2007 and 47.25% in 2002 and 69.92% for the 2002 Presidential election, while Spain had a voting age turnout of 77.20% and 79.84% for its 2008 and 2004 Parliamentary elections (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance). Is it possible that the impact of migration experiences could be responsible, in part, for the difference in voter turnout between France and Spain? Historically, emigration levels have differed significantly in France and

Spain. Spain had significant emigration between 1962 and 1976, much of which was work related, when almost two million Spaniards immigrated to other European countries. In the 1980's, more than 20,000 mostly retired Spanish citizens returned from these countries each year to benefit from the improved Spanish economy (Encyclopedia Britannica). Unlike Spain, France has never experienced significant emigration levels (Encyclopedia Britannica). Such anomalies between voter turnouts in different countries with different numbers of return migrants raise questions about how return migrants affect the countries they return to. It raises the question: does the migration experience increase an individual's propensity to vote?

In this thesis, I develop a theory of migration where individuals who experience temporary migration are more likely to vote once they return to their home country. I therefore hypothesize that the act of migration makes the act of voting more likely. I also examine the effect that the difference between the level of democracy in the home and the host country has on the increase in voting propensity. I believe that the greater the absolute difference between the level of democracy in a return migrant's host country and the level of democracy in his or her home country, the greater the increase in voting due to migration.

My research builds on a small amount of country-specific research that supports the theory that the migration experience increases voter turnout. However, only Rother's research on return migrants in the Philippines controlled for the effects of endogeneity. Rother's findings of a positive correlation between migration experience and political participation may not be generalizable to other countries. My research could support the generalizability of Rother's findings.

Using the World Health Survey, I conduct the first cross-national study testing if migrants who return home are more likely to vote than non-migrants. I also test if the increase in

voting is larger for those who traveled to significantly more or less democratic countries. Using data from a survey done by the Los Angeles Times, I also study Mexico, in particular, to examine the effect of migration on voting, while controlling for endogeneity. I compare the voting behavior of return migrants to that of those looking for jobs abroad who have never migrated, in order to see if the migration experience increases voting or if those who wish to migrate are more likely to vote than non-migrants even before migration. Both tests are sensitive to the effects of other factors that impact voting such as income, age, gender, and education. My research design examines whether the migration experience increases voting levels in nine different countries and focuses on Mexico to examine if the correlation still exists once endogeneity is controlled for.

The results of my research were inconclusive but suggestive of a correlation between past migration and higher voting levels in some countries. Due to the low number of final observations in both tests, the results were not statistically significant for the migration variable. In the first test, migration to a similarly democratic country had no substantive or statistically significant effect on voting. While migration to a significantly more or less democratic host country increased the substantive levels of voting, the effect was not statistically significant. Also, statistical predictions were made from data from only nine countries, and only two of the nine countries had return migrants from significantly different host countries. The results from the second test showed that a desire for migration had the opposite effect from what was expected. Those who have not migrated but wish to were substantively less likely to vote than non-migrants with no desire to migrate but these results were not statistically significant. Also, while migrants were substantively more likely to vote than non-migrants, the effect was not statistically significant.

The results suggest that if migration does increase voting levels, the effect is probably not large for most countries. The countries that are most likely to be impacted by return migrants are those with significant numbers of return migrants from much more or much less democratic countries. My research also suggests that those who wish to migrate might vote less than non-migrants who do not wish to migrate, meaning that migration may only increase voting levels of return migrants to the same level as non-migrants. My results underscore the need for the voting behavior of return migrants to be studied at the country level due to the differences in return migrant voting behavior between different countries. It also implies that if democratic countries, such as the United States, want to promote voting in other countries, issuing more temporary visas to immigrants of moderately democratic countries is unlikely to have a large effect, but increasing temporary visas to individuals from very undemocratic countries might have a visible impact on increasing voter turnout.

Literature Review

Little research has been done to study the effects of a migration experience on a person's political participation once he or she returns home. Many migrants come from new or struggling democracies, where widespread political participation is vital to democratic consolidation. If migration experience does increase political participation, it would have broad political implications.

Background on Migration

For the purposes of this paper, a migrant is defined as any person residing in a country that they were not born in and non-migrants are individuals who have never migrated. Return migrants are individuals who have lived abroad, as opposed to having vacationed, for a period of time but have returned to their home country. A host country or destination country is the

location of the migrant while abroad. Lastly, the birth country of the migrant will be referred to as the home country.

Developing countries, in particular, tend to have significant levels of migration. For example, in 2005, Mexico had over 11.5 million citizens living abroad, approximately 10.7% of its total population. Other developing countries, such as Turkey, had over 6% of its population living abroad, Burkina Faso had over 8%, Morocco had 8.8%, the Dominican Republic had over 12%, Ukraine had almost 13%, Serbia and Montenegro had over 21%, and Kazakhstan had over 24.6% (World Bank Bilateral Migration Matrix 2005; Population Reference Bureau). The percentage of the population that is abroad in developed countries is often smaller. For example, the United States had 0.7% of its population living abroad in 2005 and European countries, such as Sweden and Belgium had 3.3% and 4.3% of their populations living abroad respectively (World Bank Bilateral Migration Matrix 2005; Population Reference Bureau).

Since up to 50% of migrants return to their home country within five years, many developing countries have significant percentages of their population that have experienced migration (Migration Information Source 2008). In Mexico, for example, almost half of those who migrate return home within a year of migration (Gitter, Gitter, and Southgate 2008). In 2008, 216,920 Mexicans left Mexico and 96,196 Mexicans returned from abroad (Migration Information Source 2010). Although the percent of the population that experienced migration might be small in some countries, in others, such as Mexico, return migrants compose a significant proportion of the population.

The number of individuals who migrate internationally is also growing at a current annual rate of 2.9%, which is large compared to the 2009 world population growth rate of 1.2% (International Organization for Migration 2010; World Bank 2010). The percent of migrants who

return home is also increasing, especially in recent years. Half of the one million migrants from Eastern Europe that traveled to European Union countries in 2004 have returned home (Migration Information Source 2008). Return migration is growing due to the global economic slowdown, which in turn lowers the number of jobs available to migrants (Migration Information Source 2008). The sheer number of return migrants makes the study of their political behavior important.

When examining migration, it is important to distinguish among the migration experiences of migrants who traveled to similarly democratic, more democratic and less democratic countries. Mexico had a democracy score, from -10 to 10, of 8 in 2005. The three countries that had the largest stocks of Mexican migrants at that time were Canada, Spain, and the United States, all with democracy scores of 10 (World Bank Bilateral Migration Matrix 2005; Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers 2009). Therefore, Mexican return migrants likely migrated to a country that was only slightly more democratic. A country that was very undemocratic, like Morocco, with a democracy score of -6 is more likely to send its migrants to significantly more democratic countries (Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers 2009). Morocco had its three largest migrant stocks, totaling about 65% of its total migrants, in France, Italy and Spain with democracy scores of 9, 10, and 10 respectively (World Bank Bilateral Migration Matrix 2005; Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers 2009). However, other countries tend to send migrants to less democratic countries. In 2005, India had a democracy score of 9 and had almost 4.5 million of its almost 10 million migrants in Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates, with democracy scores of 6, -10, and -8 respectively (World Bank Bilateral Migration Matrix 2005; Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers 2009). The difference in the level of democracy of a migrant's home and host country

will affect their migration experience and therefore all migration cannot be examined together but must be looked at in the context of the home and host country democracy levels.

How Do Migrants Differ From Non-Migrants?

It is important to note that migrants differ from non-migrants even before the experience of migration. A migrant has, by definition, left his or her home for some reason. Often sending countries have unfavorable social politics, economic politics, or are politically unstable (Rother 2009; Itzogsohn and Villacres 2008). Even though many migrants leave for economic reasons, these migrants may consider the home government responsible for the economic problems of their country. Even before migration, many migrants may support changes in the economic or political situation that would make life in the home country more appealing. Such a desire for economic or political change could result in those who wish to migrate being more politically active than non-migrants with no desire to migrate.

Studies have also found that those individuals who will become migrants but have not yet left their home country, differ from non-migrants in ways that have an effect on voting behavior, such as economic or social status (Rother 2009, Moraga 2010). Jesus Fernandez-Huertas Moraga finds that Mexican migrants to the United States on average earned lower wages and had less schooling than non-migrants by using a survey that identifies emigrants before they left for the United States (Moraga 2010). Moraga also argues that these findings contradict earlier findings and are superior because he uses a survey that targets migrants before they migrate. When researchers use the traditional methodology that interviews migrants post migration, they are unable to question those individuals that do not wish to be observed because they are undocumented. Moraga was able to lessen the impact of missing data from these undocumented migrants by interviewing them before migration (Moraga 2010). Other studies have found that

migrants tend to be more entrepreneurial and may respond more quickly to economic opportunities (Fidrmuc and Doyle 2006).

If return migrants behave differently than non-migrants, the difference may be due to the migration experience, or the difference may be endogenous, meaning that the supposed dependent variable caused the variation in the independent variable. In the study of migrant behavior, that would mean that rather than migration causing differences in behavior between migrants and non-migrants, the pre-existing differences between those who wish to migrate and those who do not are a major factor determining who migrates and who does not.

What Is Known About How Migration Experience Affects Individuals' Political Participation?

Limited research has been done on the question of how the experience of migration affects the political behavior of return migrants. The existing research establishes that the experience of migration is correlated with changes in migrants' political views and actions in some countries. However, the majority of these studies cannot rule out the possibility that the relationship between migration and differing levels of political action is endogenous, and therefore these studies cannot entirely support the causal claim that migration changes the political behavior of migrants once they have returned home.

The behavior of migrants while abroad is related to return migrant behavior and is studied far more often. By understanding how migration experience can change political participation in migrants abroad, researchers can better understand the impact of migration experience on return migrants. It has been established that the political behavior of migrants abroad can have a substantial effect on the politics of the home country (Itzigsohn and Villacres 2008). Some countries allow migrants to vote in their home elections and therefore migrants abroad can have

a significant role in holding politicians accountable. In case studies on the Dominican Republic and El Salvador, Jose Itzigsohn and Daniela Villacres found that migrant transnationalism increases political transparency, accountability and large-scale participation (Itzigsohn and Villacres 2008). These case studies are useful in showing how migrants abroad can use migrant networks to effect change. In the Dominican Republic, Itzigsohn and Villacres found that the main reasons that the Dominican government granted voting rights to citizens abroad was because of a desire to continue receiving remittances, and because the government hoped that the enthusiastic migrants would lobby for the Dominican causes with the United States government (Itzigsohn and Villacres 2008). This explains why the transnational political connections were perpetuated on the Dominican side but does not explain why Dominicans in America participated in Dominican politics. A paradox from the Dominican case study is that while a large number of Dominicans abroad fought for the right to vote, only a small percentage of them exercised the right to vote once it was granted. This could be due to a belief that the Dominican government's elections were unfair or because the demand for the vote was more about recognition for migrants than a desire for political participation (Itzigsohn and Villacres 2008). This study focused on how those migrants that were politically active affected Dominican politics. While this research adequately explains why those non-migrants from the home country keep in contact with migrants abroad, the research does not explain why the migrants abroad were politically active or speak to whether the political activeness of migrants increased because of migration.

While understanding how migrants abroad differ from non-migrants in their voting behavior is an important step in understanding the political behavior of return migrants, current migrants and return migrants differ in many ways and these also must be understood. The

incentives for those migrants still abroad to participate politically are somewhat less than those for migrants who have returned home. The political situation is an immediate concern for return migrants. However, those migrants still abroad may plan to never return to their home country and therefore they may be less invested in their home country's political situation. They could also be unaware of nuances in the political situation in their home country because they are so far removed from it. This could help to explain why Dominican migrants abroad fought for the right to vote but exercise that right to a lesser degree than expected (Itzigsohn and Villacres 2008). Also, some migrants abroad may use political transnationalism to impose a personal agenda on their home country by pushing politicians to enact laws that allow current migrants to benefit from international business (Itzigsohn and Villacres 2008). This incentive to act politically would exist only when it was in the immediate best interest of the individual and only for a small number of wealthy migrants, and would not apply to the general migrant population. These attributes of migrants abroad, as opposed to return migrants, demonstrate the importance of understanding the population used in a research design and distinguishing between current and return migrants. Which population is used also affects what global conclusions can be drawn about how migration experience impacts political participation.

The past studies that are most relevant to my research have looked specifically at the political behavior of return migrants. Three studies relate directly to the question being asked by this paper but have differing levels of validity. These studies all find that return migrants are more politically active than non-migrants when political activism is defined broadly (Batista and Vincente 2010; Klesner 2009; Rother 2009). Only one of these papers controls for endogeneity and finds that migration experience causes higher levels of voting (Rother 2009).

In the first study, a discussion paper for the Institute for the Study of Labor, Catia Batista and Pedro Vicente found that return migrants, especially those who migrated to a country that was more democratic than their home country of Cape Verde, were more likely to demand accountability from their government than those who never migrated. The return migrants were also more likely to take action to demand political accountability. These migrants were more willing to accept the opportunity cost of mailing a pre-paid postcard to the researchers as a form of voting. The researchers claimed that if they did not receive a certain amount of postcards then they would not publish the results and any grievances the individuals had with the government would not be publicized (Batista and Vincente 2010). This research looks directly at the question posed by my paper and shows a clear correlation between return migrants and differing levels of political participation. Unfortunately, the research design does not allow for claims of causality. The researchers hold that the greater demand for accountability is a result of an increased appreciation for government accountability due to contact with more democratic government institutions (Batista and Vincente 2010). However, this causal link is suspect because the survey created for the study only asked about previous migration and did not ask about possible future migration or individual desire for migration (Batista and Vincente 2010). Since this type of research design did not take the possible self-selection of migrants into account, the findings have suspect validity due to problems with endogeneity.

The second study, done by Joseph Klesner on determinants of political action in Mexico, found no support for an increase in the act of voting, for those who had lived abroad. He did find a weak correlation between political participation defined as a combination of voting, communal activity, petitioning and direct action and the experience of living abroad (Klesner 2009).

However, this study also does not control for endogeneity and therefore cannot provide any support for a causal association between the variables.

The third study, however, finds the same correlation between the migration experience and increased political participation, and has a far superior research design that allows a causal inference to be drawn. In a study on Filipino migrants, Stefan Rother compared return migrants to individuals who were about to migrate, and therefore had the same pre-existing differences from non-migrants who did not wish to migrate. He found that return migrants were more likely than soon-to-be migrants to be discontent with the current Filipino government's performance. While Rother does not use an experimental design, he does account for endogeneity by comparing return migrants with those individuals contracted to foreign countries and about to migrate. The study finds that return migrants are more politically active than those about to migrate. Rother uses data comparing levels of political activity between the return migrants and those about to migrate, as well as survey questions asking return migrants how their level of political activism, defined as signing a petition, attending a demonstration, contacting media, attending a political meeting or running for office, has increased since they returned from abroad (Rother 2009). This evidence is both highly valid and highly relevant to my research.

The existing research in these three papers supports the notion that return migrants are more politically active than non-migrants. The literature is lacking, however, because there are few studies that can draw a sufficiently causal link between migration experience and greater levels of political participation. The purpose of this paper is to examine whether migration experience increases political participation in the form of increased voting.

What Else Could Cause The Observed Correlation?

There are two major factors, other than the experience of migration, which could account for the observed differences in political participation of return migrants and non-migrants. The first of these is the income effect and the second is endogeneity. The income effect could cause the increase in the political activism of return migrants because increases in wealth provide individuals with more leisure time to participate politically. However, this increase is due to economic factors, and an increase in income without migration might have produced the same effect. Studies have found that unemployment, poverty, and a decline in one's financial well-being all have a negative effect on an individual's likelihood of voting (Rosenstone 1982). In order to isolate the effect of the migration experience on political participation, one must understand all of the other effects that migration, and the additional income associated with it, has on migrants. Migrants often gain work experience abroad, as well as foreign language skills and possibly formal education (Fidrmuc and Doyle 2006). They form professional relationships and formal and informal networks that they can turn to later in life (Fidrmuc and Doyle 2006). These factors increase a return migrant's income and give them more time to follow politics and vote knowledgably. One study finds that factors including increases in relative income, homeownership, higher age and increased education all increase the likelihood that an individual will vote (Filer, Kenny, and Morton 1993). If return migrants increase their skills, education, and income while abroad, they might vote more once they return home than they did before migration. However, they may or may not vote more than non-migrants with equal wealth and education. All of these factors that impact voting propensity are observable phenomenon, and can therefore be controlled for in the research design. Using data from surveys to control for these effects in a regression model can help to support a causal link between migration

experience and increases in voting, by ruling out the possibility that a correlation is due to the income effect.

Endogeneity is also a factor that could explain the observed correlation. In this case, endogeneity would be due to a migrant's selection bias when choosing whether or not to migrate. If the relationship is endogenous, then individuals with a greater desire to participate politically will be more likely to migrate. This argument is made by Xiaoyang Li and John McHale, who explain how those unhappy with the government can stay or migrate and in both cases can then be either politically active or politically silent. Some see out migration as a form of political activism. It is possible that in some cases those politically active individuals will choose to migrate rather than stay in their home country and voice their political opinion at home (Li and McHale 2006). Li and McHale's study demonstrates how important it is to control for endogeneity since those individuals who do migrate are more likely to disagree with some government policies or be more distrustful of the political system in their home country. The study done by Batista and Vincente failed to control for endogeneity. Batista and Vincente compared return migrants to non-migrants and prematurely attributed the differences between them to the experience of migration without ruling out endogeneity.

The best way to avoid endogeneity in the data would be to use an experimental design. One example of experimental design that can control for the effects of endogeneity employs the use of migration lotteries (Gibson, McKenzie, and Stillman 2010). In one such experiment, John Gibson, David McKenzie, and Steven Stillman surveyed those households that were registered in a migration lottery. Since the lottery was random, the sample was obtained from the population group of those who desired migration and entered the lottery. The sample was divided into an

experimental group who migrated and a control group who did not win the lottery and was unable to migrate.

Migration lotteries are not always available to create an experimental design. For this reason some researchers, such as Rother, created a research design that was not experimental but was meant to control for endogeneity. Rother created the control group out of those migrants who were contractually set to leave for migration to a new country but have not done so yet. The individuals were separated by the country that they were going to so that comparisons could be made about those headed to a given country and those returned from the same one (Rother 2009). These distinctions were useful since those migrants about to leave for an authoritarian country differed significantly in their political views from those about to leave for a democratic country. This is similar to the experimental design; however, in this case the act of migration was not randomly assigned. Also, there is a time lag between those that had previously migrated and those who are about to. Such a time lag could span political or societal changes that affect the migrants' views and the migrants could incorporate these differences into their views, which could bias the data. Despite these shortcomings, Rother's research was able to control for the effects of endogeneity and was the first study on the impact of migration experience on political participation that did so.

Complications: Migrant Networks

Migrant networks are groups of individuals connected across international borders through family and community ties. These migrant networks allow individuals living and working in another country to keep in touch with family, friends, and members of their greater home communities through telephone calls, letters, emails and remittances. The migrant networks benefit the migrants by helping keep them in touch with their families and culture, and

keep them informed about changes happening in their home countries. They also benefit the family and community members at home who are able to keep in touch with family and who often receive remittances from family members that help them to pay bills or other expenses.

It has been well documented that migrant networks play a role in the spread of ideas and behaviors (Levitt 1998; Itzigsohn and Villacres 2008). These migrant networks can help to transfer political practices and opinions. Some political parties in countries with strong migrant network connections look to the connected citizen's political behavior as a model. In this way, political parties in the Dominican Republic that used to raise support through word of mouth began to use posters and bumper stickers, explaining that the idea came from American political parties (Itzigsohn and Villacres 2008). The problem associated with these migrant networks is that the changes that the migrant experiences may be passed to their family and even their community. For this reason, return migrants or migrants abroad who increase their political activism may encourage their community to increase their political activism as well. While this may be a positive outcome, it complicates the study of migrant behavior.

The political behavior of a return migrant may vary significantly from that of an individual who was unable to migrate from a town with little or no migrant network, but may vary only slightly from a non-migrant in a town with significant migration and cross-cultural interaction. It is important, therefore, to consider the effects of migrant networks in the research design of this paper.

Theory

Why Do People Vote? (The Big Picture)

If people were rational, they would understand that their single vote most likely will have no effect on the outcome of an election, but would still have a minimal opportunity cost. With

this knowledge, rational people would not vote. However, significant numbers of people do vote. Studies have found that this curious behavior is due to the fact the voter gets a benefit from voting that is separate from the benefit of their preferred candidate winning the election. This benefit can come from a utility from performing what the individual believes is a civic duty (Harder and Krosnick 2008; Blais and Young 1999). Also, studies show that increased knowledge or interest in politics increases an individual's likelihood of voting (Harder and Krosnick 2008). A return migrant is more likely to have the combined experience of a disappointment in their home government's policies and a new perspective gained from living under different political or economic conditions in their host country. I theorize that an individual's desire for government accountability and sense of duty is increased through the act of migration and this increase in a sense of duty to hold one's home government accountable would increase a return migrant's utility from voting, and consequently increase his or her propensity to vote.

Political Environment

Some research finds that migrants are more politically active after going to countries that are more democratic and offer their citizens a political voice and the ability to vote and hold the government accountable for its actions (Batista and Vincente 2010). The rationale behind this observation can be understood as a migrant adopting the prevailing views and increased level of political participation of their host country. Studies have found that migrant voting behavior is influenced in favor of the politics of the destination country (Fidrmuc and Doyle 2006). Fidrmuc and Doyle find that, for Polish and Czech migrants abroad and voting in their home country elections, migrants living in countries with a strong tradition of democracy and economic freedom vote more for right wing parties than left wing parties. Also, migrants living in

economically advanced countries vote more for right wing parties than left wing parties (Fidrmuc and Doyle 2006). These studies support the idea that changes in political participation of return migrants can be affected by the differences in the politics of their host countries.

Fidrmuc and Doyle's results may, however, have come from a flawed research design. They used aggregate data to make assumptions about individuals, such as the skill level of migrant voters, which would be impossible to know without individual level data. Their study found no evidence of political and economic self-selection of migrants (Fidrmuc and Doyle 2006). However, political and economic self-selection has been supported in research done by Rother and Moraga. Since the aggregate data found no evidence of self-selection, the study was unable to control for endogeneity. Fidrmuc and Doyle's use of aggregated data rather than individual data may have negatively affected the validity of their results.

Other research has found that political participation increases for migrants returning from authoritarian regimes (Rother 2009). Rother found that 42 percent of those migrants who returned from authoritarian Saudi Arabia were politically active. This 42 percent was an increase from the 33 percent of those same return migrants who claimed they were politically active before migration. This was also an increase from the 30 percent of soon-to-be migrants, about to travel to Saudi Arabia, who said that they were currently politically active. Rother also found that migrants who traveled to authoritarian regimes were even more likely than those who traveled to democratic regimes to increase their level of political participation (Rother 2009). Migrants returning from Saudi Arabia had an increased appreciation for the right to criticize the government, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the right to associate (Rother 2009). Migration experience increased support for factors leading to a stronger political voice of the people.

How Can Life Experiences Increase an Individual's Propensity to Vote?

Studies have shown how powerful the socialization of an individual by their home country can be. An individual's political views are formed at a young age by the environment and education in their home country and are difficult to change (Glaeser, Ponzetto and Shleifer 2007). However, such studies do not take into account the significant effects that the act of migration can have on an individual's understanding of the importance of government accountability. If an individual has never witnessed a country being run in a different way than their home country, then they can change their political views and actions once they recognize the power of political voice. They would therefore be more likely to vote after experiencing migration.

Multiple studies have shown how important life experiences can reshape an individual's desire to participate politically. One study found that the experience of working in the military increased Latino voting on US presidential, congressional, and local elections (Leal 1999). Leal credits this increase in part to a feeling of being part of the larger country unit, and an increased sense of duty towards one's country (Leal 1999). Another study found that Ugandan citizens who were captured and forced to fight in the civil war were significantly more likely to vote after the conflict ended (Blattmen 2009). The experience caused individual growth and increased political awareness (Blattman 2009).

How Can Migration Experience Increase an Individual's Propensity to Vote?

I offer the theory that the experience of migration increases the relative importance of political participation and government accountability for individuals and makes them more likely to vote. I also theorize that return migrants increase their political participation in the form of

voting as a response to having lived in a country with a level of government accountability and political participation that is different from their home country.

Important and extended life experiences can change the voting behavior of an individual (Blattman 2009; Leal 1999). I propose that the cultural shock that accompanies migration is similar to a positive military experience or a negative experience of abduction and war time violence in that the experience exposes the individual to a different political environment than they were previously experiencing and allows for a greater appreciation of voting freedoms and government accountability. This change in political environment can cause the migrant to internalize how different levels of political participation can create different levels of government accountability. This realization leads to increased political action, including increased voting.

The emotional response that a migrant feels toward a different country can be positive or negative and an increase in the migrant's propensity to vote will occur regardless of whether the migrant has a positive or negative response to the experience of migration. The experience of working in a country with a different government and different policies gives a migrant an understanding of how different policies affect the political and economic conditions of a country that non-migrants cannot experience but can only read or hear about. The experience of migration to either a more or less democratic country can therefore affect the return migrant's sense of duty to vote in order to hold his or her home government accountable for its policies.

Hypothesis

I hypothesize that the act of migration increases a migrant's likelihood of voting. My research will be broken down into two parts. Each part looks at the main research question in a slightly different way, by using different controls or different data. In the first section of my

research, I examine whether the migration experience and higher levels of voting are correlated for a cross-country statistical analysis. This section examines the effects of home government regime type, and host government regime type as well. My hypothesis is that return migrants will be more likely to vote than those individuals in the migrant's country of birth who never migrated.

In the first part my research, I also test my theory that the increase in propensity to vote is due to a migrants experiencing a different political atmosphere, level of government accountability, or political culture and would not be dependent on whether the host country is more or less democratic than the migrant's home country. Although some country's level of democracy and government accountability are similar, no two countries have exactly the same major political issues, level of community involvement in politics, and legal policies in place. It is therefore likely that a migrant will experience a political culture shock, to at least a small degree, regardless of the level of democracy in his or her host country. Therefore, I hypothesize that even those migrants traveling to countries with a similar democracy score will have a small increase in their propensity to vote. I also hypothesize those migrants who travel to a host country that is significantly more or less democratic than their home country will experience a higher likelihood of voting than those individuals migrating to a host country that has a similar level of democracy.

In the second part of my research I examine if the act of migration is the cause of the migrant's increased likelihood of voting, or if the correlation, if there if one, is due to antecedent differences in political participation levels between those individuals that wish to migrate and those who do not. Therefore, my hypothesis for the second portion of my research states that

return migrants will be more likely to vote than those who are currently searching for a job abroad.

The second part of my research also involves controlling for the effects of migrant networks, for example the receiving of remittances from abroad. My hypothesis states that even if migrant networks and the receiving of remittances are controlled for, migration experience will still increase an individual's propensity to vote.

Research Design

Based on the literature that has already been done on this subject, I hoped to find a survey data set with a large number of respondents from multiple countries. I would have needed the survey to ask the individual respondents:

1) If they ever migrated and to where.

2) If they had not migrated, if they would like to, or were trying to.

3) If they voted in the past election.

4) Background questions on their age, income, gender, health, and marital status.

I would also have liked to know:

1) What proportion of their community had migrated in the past.

2) What proportion of their community was currently migrated and sent remittances.

I was unable to find a single survey data set that answered all of these questions. Many surveys that asked about voting, such as the Latinobarometer and the Eurobarometer, asked for respondent's opinions on migration, but did not ask whether the respondent had ever migrated. Many other surveys on migration did not ask any political questions, including questions about voting behavior. Some surveys asked questions to current migrants about voting behavior, but

since my research was on return migrants' voting behavior, these surveys were also not a reasonable data source. Unfortunately, since the study of return migrant voting behavior is such a new field, very few cross-national surveys ask both migration and political participation questions. Also many cross-national surveys done for development purposes try not to ask political questions, especially about voting, in order to appease authorities and continue being able to conduct surveys within that country. For this reason, I use two different surveys for my research which each ask only a portion of the questions that I hoped to have answers for.

World Health Survey

The first study I use in my research is from the World Health Organization. The survey is called the World Health Survey. This survey asked respondents both whether or not they voted and whether they have lived abroad for at least six months within the past two or three years. The sample is not of the entire population, but rather of individuals who are in the medical field. Although the majority of the questions are asked to randomly selected individuals meant to be a cross section of society as a whole, the question on migration was part of a supplementary survey given only to someone who had received a medical degree, or someone who had worked in a health clinic by either caring for patients or doing any other work at the medical facility, or who dispensed medicine to anyone with a health problem (World Health Survey). This survey is available for 70 countries but not all of the countries surveyed had respondents who had migrated for at least six months within the past two or three years, so the final sample included respondents from 9 countries. The countries used in this part of my research are located throughout Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas.

The benefits of using this survey are that it contains respondents from multiple countries, and asks them if they voted in the last election and if they migrated for at least six months within

the past two years. The study also includes questions about respondent's age, gender, income and income indicators, education, and marital status. These questions allowed me to control for other factors that could affect voting propensity.

The survey excluded those on military reservations and group-homes from the survey population. Surveyors would, however, travel to hospitals and nursing homes if survey respondents were too sick to take the survey at home. For this reason, the health of the respondents is a complicating factor when measuring voting behavior since some of the respondents would be too sick to follow politics or vote. However, the survey did ask respondents to rank their own health and the answers to this question allow me to control for respondent health in my research.

The data for this first portion of my research does not allow me to know which country a migrant migrated to. I created a weighted average of the democracy scores for the countries that migrants from a given home country usually migrate to. The weights for each hypothetical host country correspond to the percent of the total migrant stock from each home country in each host country in 2005.[1]

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[1] I used PolityIV scores for 2005 since this was the closest date to when the data was collected and is the year of official production for the World Health Organization study. I also used World Bank data on migration stocks from 2005 to find a weighted average of the democracy score for all of the countries that migrants from a home country migrate to. I average the polity scores of all migrant host countries for a given home country and weight the average by the percent of the total migrant stock in each host country in 2005.
Marshall, Monty G, Ted Robert Gurr and Keith Jaggers. 2009. *Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2009*.[Computer File]. College Park, MD: Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland. [Distributor] Retrieved from http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm.
World Bank. Bilateral Migration Matrix 2005 [Computer File] Washington D.C.: World Bank [Producer]. Sussex, United Kingdom: University of Sussex Development Research. Center [Producer]. Washington D.C.: World Bank [Distributor].

This survey also did not ask questions about remittances or desire to migrate for non-migrants. For this reason, neither migrant networks nor endogeneity factors can be accounted for in the model made from this data.

Lastly, the portion of the survey that asks about past migration was part of a Health Occupation Questionnaire and was only asked to the person or persons in the household employed or trained in a medical field. A random member of the household, who may or may not have been the same individual who answered the Health Occupation Questionnaire, took the larger part of the survey, including questions on all other variables included in my research. I created a new dataset incorporating only those individuals who answered both parts of the survey; however, the number of respondents, especially the number of migrants, was so low that there was not sufficient variation to establish statistically significant results for even some known voting determinants.

In order to have sufficient variation and a sufficiently high number of respondents, I consider a person from a household with a return migrant to be a migrant. There have been studies conducted that show that personal experiences that are significant enough to change an individual's voting behavior also change the voting behavior of their direct family members. A study by Carmil and Breznitz shows that both Holocaust survivors and their children have voting behavior that differs from the general Israeli population (Carmil and Breznitz 1991). If the experience of migration is significant enough to cause a change in an individual then that change should transfer to the direct family to a greater level than it transfers to the community in general. I therefore did not use the individual level data in my final model, but instead use a variable *Migration* that measures if migration has occurred in the individual's household.

The major benefit of using this measure of migration over an individual level measure is that the number of observations more than doubles and the number of useable countries increases. The downside is that the measure is less exact. Since only those in the health care industry took the Health Occupation Questionnaire, only those migrants in the household who took the survey will show to be a migrant. A migrant who was not in the medical sector would not have completed the Health Occupation Questionnaire. He or she would still be part of a household where migration occurred, but the individual in the household taking the main survey will not be appropriately labeled a migrant for the purposes of my research. While this is a problem with the data, its effect is to lessen the appearance of a correlation between migration and higher voting propensity. If a significant number of migrants are labeled as non-migrants due to the use of this *Migration* measure, then my hypothesis becomes harder to support. Therefore, if a correlation is found, it is despite these data problems and not because of them.

Los Angeles Times Survey

In the second part of my research I will examine the case of Mexico. For this portion of my research I use a Los Angeles Times Poll taken in Mexico by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research. This survey is also done at the individual level and has a population of all Mexican adults. It was conducted using face-to-face interviews conducted between August 1st and 7th 1996, in the respondents' homes. The Los Angeles Times estimated a sampling error for the entire Mexican sample of plus or minus 3 percentage points. This survey looks only at Mexico to United States migration. The survey asks respondents whether or not they have ever had a job in the United States. It also asks how likely it is that they, or someone in their family, will look for work in the United States in the next twelve months. This second question allows me to compare return migrants from families hoping to migrate, return migrants from families

not seeking to migrate, non-migrants who would like to migrate or whose families would like to migrate, and non-migrants with no desire to migrate from families with no desire to migrate.

I would prefer to have responses to the question of an individual's desire to migrate, rather than combined individual and family desire to migrate. I believe, however, that the differences that I hope to account for by comparing return migrants to those who wish to migrate will be accomplished by comparing return migrants to individuals who wish to migrate or are in a family whose direct member wishes to migrate. I will therefore refer to those individuals who are somewhat to very likely to look for work in the United States, or have a direct family member somewhat or very likely to look for work in the United States, as a potential migrant.

This survey data also allows me to control for the complicating factor of migrant networks. The Los Angeles Times survey asks whether the individual has family living in the United States and whether or not they receive remittances. Remittances are a key indicator of migrant networks. For example, politicians in the Dominican Republic believe that Dominicans in the United States who send remittances have a large impact on the votes cast from non-migrant voters at home (Itzigsohn and Villacres 2008).

This survey data has the benefit of allowing me to examine if the correlation between the independent variable of migration experience persists once the effects of migrant networks and remittances are controlled for. It also allows me to examine if migration experience increases voting propensity, or if those who wish to migrate have higher voting propensities than those who do not wish to migrate and if the migration experience is the effect of these differences rather than the cause. This survey lacks respondents from more than one country or migrants returning from countries other than the United States and so no cross-national generalizations can be made in this portion of my research.

World Health Survey Test

Sample

The final sample used for the World Health Survey data has 2,762 total observations. There are nine countries represented in the sample. Although there were many more countries involved in the World Health Organization study, only a small proportion of respondents were in a household with individuals who filled out a Health Occupation Questionnaire. Similarly, only a portion of those who filled out the Health Occupation Questionnaire had migrated. For the purposes of my research it was best to use only countries that had a total of ten or more individuals from migrant households. This lowered the number of useable countries but prevented problems that would arise from extrapolating data from one or two migrants in a country. I use the number ten as a cut off point because most countries with less than ten migrants had significantly less than 10. Also, using countries with less than ten migrants would allow a single return migrant with outlier voting behavior to significantly skew the data. The average number of individuals per country in the first test was 306.9 but the number varied from 125 in Namibia to 552 in Paraguay.

Independent Variable: Migration

The main independent variable is *Migration*. This variable is a dummy variable of 1 if the person worked in any capacity in a medical occupation and migrated for at least 6 months in the past two years, or is in a household with someone fitting this description, and is 0 if they, and their family members, have not migrated. Of the 2,934 individuals in this part of my research, 693 were migrants or lived in a household with a migrant. Of the 693 migrants, 526 (75.90%) voted and 167 (24.10%) did not vote. Of the 2,069 individuals who were not migrants and did not have a medical worker migrant in their homes, 1,477 (71.39%) voted and 592 (28.61%) did

not vote. For a breakdown by country see Table 1. The average number of migrants per country was 77 but the number varied from 11 in Morocco to 148 in both Spain and Paraguay.

Table 1: Migrants and Non-Migrants By Country		
	Migrants	Non-Migrants
Dominican Republic	116	262
Guatemala	106	163
India	38	205
Morocco	11	324
Namibia	10	115
Paraguay	148	404
South Africa	26	172
Spain	148	196
Uruguay	90	228
Total	693	2,069

The second part of my hypothesis examines the interaction between migration and the democracy level of the host country. For this purpose, I created a variable *Absolute Difference* for the absolute difference between the level of democracy in the individual's home country and their probable host country. I would have preferred to have data on the country that each individual actually migrated to, however, this was not available. Instead, I created a hypothetical average host country with a democracy score that was the weighted average of the democracy scores of host countries for migrants from each of the nine home countries in my study. To get the *Absolute Difference,* I took the absolute value of the democracy score of the hypothetical host

country minus the actual democracy score of the home country.[2] This score was the same for all individuals from a given country.

The *Absolute Difference* variable had a variation between 0.169 and 15.458. Although India and Morocco both have high values for the *Absolute Difference,* Indian migrants have a negative directional difference between their theoretical weighted host country and India, meaning that they typically travel to less democratic countries. Moroccan migrants have a positive directional difference between their theoretical weighted host country and Morocco, meaning that they typically travel to more democratic countries. The variable *Directional Difference* measures this difference. For a table of *Directional Difference* by country see Table 2. An interaction variable for the variables *Migration* and *Absolute Difference*, called *Migration and Democracy Interaction*, is also a part of my model.

[2] I did this by the equation: *Absolute Difference* = | [Σ(# of Migrant stock from country A in country X * democracy score of country of country X) for all country X's that people from country A migrated to / (Total Migrant Stock)] - Home country democracy score|.

Table 2: Democracy Differences Between Home and Host County By Country	
Country	Directional Difference
India	-9.890
Uruguay	-1.199
Spain	-1.151
South Africa	-0.756
Namibia	-0.186
Paraguay	0.169
Guatemala	1.592
Dominican Republic	1.625
Morocco	15.459

Dependent Variable: Voting

The variable *Voting* is a dummy variable that measures if the individual voted in the past election. The question was posed as if the respondent voted in the past election. The question was phrased, "Lots of people find it difficult to get out and vote. Did you vote in the last state/national/presidential election?" The response "yes" is labeled 1 and the response "no" is coded as 0. If the respondent chose not to give a response, that respondent is also coded as 0 for the *Voting* variable. There were 2,003 individuals, across all countries, who voted and 759 who did not. The final results of the surveys from India were obtained from January to October of 2003. The last election was the Presidential election held on July 18, 2002 (Haidar 2002). The final results of surveys from Morocco were completed from April to August of 2003. The last

election in Morocco was the Parliamentary election on September 27, 2002 (PBS 2002). The dates of the most recent election in these two countries give examples of the typical time lag between elections and survey responses. At most, these two examples had time lags that were a little over a year.

Control Variables

There are many individual predictors of voting propensity that have been established over years of research. Education is a major predictor of voting because higher education increases an individual's political knowledge (Harder and Krosnick 2008). Researchers have found that unemployment, poverty, and a decline in one's financial well-being all have a negative effect on an individual's likelihood of voting (Rosenstone 1982). Therefore, an individual's income is also a large voting determinant. Other studies have found that marriage is an important link between a person and their community and that married people are significantly more likely to vote (Frizzell 2009). Age is also an important factor that increases an individual's propensity to vote (Goerres 2007; Filer, Kenny, and Morton 1993). Offsetting the positive effect of age, a person's poor physical health can prevent them from voting. While the factor of poor health can affect both young and old citizens, it is more likely to affect the elderly. Lastly, women are less likely to vote than men (Welch and Hibbing 1992). Since all of these factors have an impact on an individual's desire and ability to vote, they should be included as control variables in any model trying to examine the relationship between a migration experience and an increase in an individual's propensity to vote.

One of the control variables I use in my research is for *High Income*. The *High Income* variable is coded as a dummy variable and is 1 if the individual has a high level of more than one of five indicators of income. Although the total income, denominated in terms of the country's

currency, was available, this data would not have been comparable across countries. The five indicators are: whether the floor was hard or earth, whether the walls were cement, brick, stone, or wood or whether they were made of less sturdy materials, whether the water supply to the household was in the house or yard or was communal, whether the toilets flushed or not, and whether the household fuel was gas or electric, or whether it came from a cheaper and less reliable source. There are 2,543 individuals (92.07%) coded as having high income and 219 (7.93%) individuals are coded as not having high income.

Two other control variables that I include in the model are *Current Marriage* and *Past Marriage*. Both are coded dichotomously. *Current Marriage* has a value of 1 if the individual was married or cohabitating and 0 if the individual was single, divorced, widowed or separated. *Past Marriage* is 1 if the individual is divorced or widowed, and 0 if they are single, married or cohabitating. The percent of individuals that were currently married is 59.27% and the percent of individuals that were married in the past is 14.30%.

Health was included as a control variable, coded continuously, because bed-ridden individuals were included in the survey but, due to the severity of their health problems, would be significantly less likely to vote. 24.08% of respondents ranked their health as very good, 40.80% ranked their health as good, 27.37% of respondents ranked their health as moderate, 6.44% of respondents ranked their health as bad, and 1.30% of respondents ranked their health as very bad.

The education level of the respondents was controlled for using the dummy variable *College*. *College* was coded as 1 if the respondent finished college level or greater education and 0 if they completed part of their college education or less. The percent of respondents that had a college degree or higher education was 22.99%.

Gender was coded by including the dummy variable *Female*, which was coded 1 for female respondents and 0 for male respondents. The percent of respondents that were female was 58.73%.

Age was also included as a variable. Only individuals aged 18 or older were included in the study. The average age of respondents was 41.97. The oldest respondents were 98 years old.

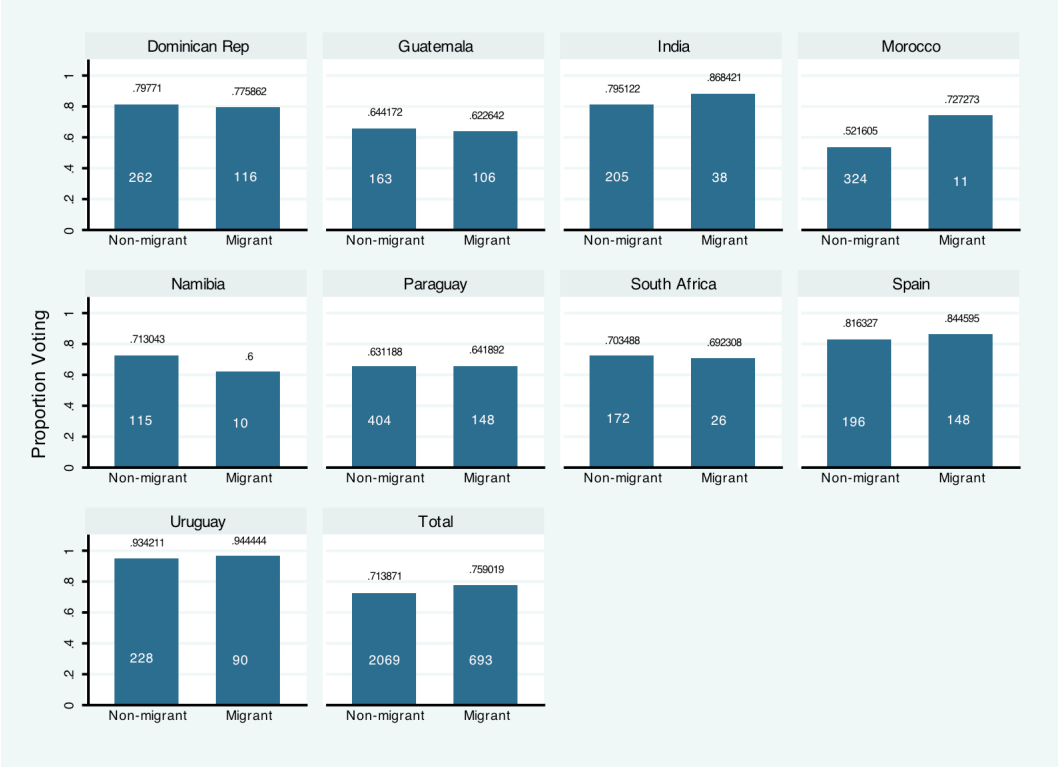
A variable for the democracy ranking of each home country *Democracy* was used to control for variance in the fairness of elections across countries. Country specific controls were also used in the regression to control for other cross-country differences.

Results Using World Health Survey Data

Test 1

Graph 1 illustrates the differences in voter turnout between migrants and non-migrants by country. The Y-axis measures the proportion, from 0 to 1, of migrants or non-migrants who voted. The first bar shows the proportion of non-migrants who voted in the last election, while the second bar shows the proportion of migrants who voted. There is a separate graph for each country and a graph that shows the total turnout rates for all nine countries combined. The number on top of each bar is the average proportion of the migrants or non-migrants who voted.

Graph 1: Voter Turnout Rates For Migrants and Non-Migrants Using World Health Survey Data



As shown in the "Total" graph, migrants on the whole voted somewhat more than non-migrants. However, the data varies significantly by country, and in some countries non-migrants voted at higher rates. Migrants voted more than non-migrants in India, Morocco, Paraguay, Uruguay and Spain. Non-migrants voted more in the Dominican Republic, South Africa, Guatemala, and Namibia.

The numbers inside the graphs are the total numbers of respondents in each category. Those countries with more than 100 return migrant respondents, such as the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Paraguay, and Spain, allow us to be more certain of the results that we receive. Countries with less than 25 return migrant respondents, such as Morocco, Namibia, and South Africa, can only suggest a difference between the voting behavior of migrants and non-

migrants in their countries as a whole. This is because with so few respondents, small differences between the sample population and the total country population could cause significant differences between the test outcome and the real life level of the migration effect. It is, however, supported by the data that Indian, Paraguayan, Spanish and Uruguayan return migrants might vote more than non-migrants and that the correlation in India might be sizable.

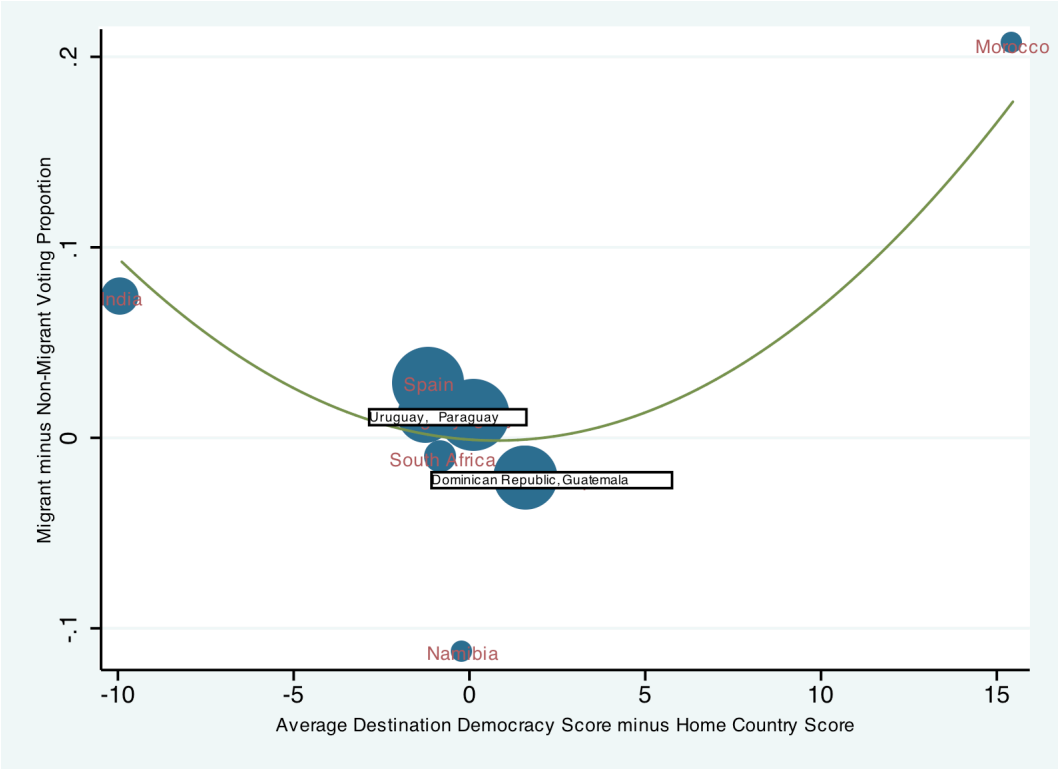
Migrants might differ from non-migrants significantly in voting levels due to differences in variables such as age, income, or education that are responsible for the difference in voting, rather than migration experience. These graphs do not take these differences into account. This data shows that while migrants from some countries are obviously different from non-migrants in their voting behavior, the effect is not constant across all the nine countries shown here. There is, therefore, not significant support in this set of graphs for a strong cross-country effect of migration on voting behavior. These graphs also cannot give any support for a causal relationship between the variables. They do, however, suggest that, in some countries, migration experience and a higher propensity to vote might be correlated.

Test 2

The next test, illustrated in Graph 2, looks at the directional effect of migration. On the X-axis is the measure of the *Directional Difference* variable from -10 to 15. The migrants from countries with a negative *Directional Difference* will, on average, travel to host countries with a lower democracy score. The migrants from countries with a positive *Directional Difference* will, on average, travel to host countries with a higher democracy score. The Y-axis measures the difference between the migrant and non-migrant voter turnout. A positive difference means that migrants vote at higher rates than non-migrants in that country. The circles that represent the countries studied are larger when more migrant respondents are present in the data and smaller

when there are less migrant respondents for that country. Therefore, the results from countries with larger points are better estimates of actual migrant voting behavior than the results from countries depicted with smaller points.

Graph 2: How Host Country Democracy Score Affects the Voting Behavior of Return Migrants Using World Health Survey Data



My hypothesis was that those who traveled to similarly democratic countries and returned home would increase their propensity to vote while those who traveled to countries with a significantly different democracy ranking would increase their propensity to vote significantly. This prediction would have produced a U-shaped graph.

The graph of the World Health Survey data is U-shaped, however, return migrants from Morocco and India hold up both ends of the graph. While the majority of respondents are clustered in the middle of the graph with a *Directional Difference* between -1.20 and 1.62, only India and

Morocco have *Absolute Differences* above two. Both India and Morocco also both have the highest difference between their return migrant voters and their non-migrant voters. This evidence is suggestive but by no means definitive. More countries with *Directional Differences* between 2 and 10 could help us to examine if the graph properly estimates the voting behavior of return migrants from countries with these *Directional Differences.* Also, Morocco only has 11 migrants, making the data from those few migrants a poor estimation of the voting behavior of Moroccan return migrants as a whole.

The results of this test show that if a relation does exist between migration experience, democracy differences between home and host countries, and voting behavior it is likely that the relationship is small, but follows the U-shape seen in this graph. A relationship between migration to a democratically different country and an increased propensity to vote might exist; however, this data from the World Health Survey does not include enough return migrant respondents to sufficiently support this possibility. This data can only imply a probable shape of how such a trend might look if a small substantive level of correlation between migration and higher voting propensity could be shown.

Test 3

The third test was a probit regression and the results are shown in Table 3. Although I include *Migration* and *Migration and Democracy Interaction* in the model, I do not include the second half of the *Migration and Democracy Interaction* variable, *Absolute Difference.* I leave this variable out because to include it would mean that I was assigning the difference between host and home country democracy levels to individuals who had not migrated. This would cause the model to account for factors that non-migrants never experienced. I therefore use only *Migration* and *Migration and Democracy Interaction* as independent variables in this model.

Table 3: Probit Regression Model For Migration and Voting Behavior Using World Health Survey Data			
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Predicted Change in Voting for 1 Unit Increase in Variable
Migration	0.011	0.077	0.003
Migration and Democracy Interaction	0.030	0.022	0.009
High Income	0.184	0.100	0.053
Current Marriage	0.412*	0.068	0.119*
Past Marriage	0.243*	0.105	0.070*
Health	0.026	0.033	0.007
College	0.286*	0.074	0.083*
Female	-0.188*	0.058	-0.054*
Age	0.016*	0.002	0.005*
Democracy	0.752*	0.154	0.217*
Number of Observations	2762		
Number of Countries	9		
Years of Final Survey Results	2002, 2003		
Model χ^2	385.83*		
Pseudo R^2	0.130		
* Denotes a P<0.05			

The model has a pseudo R squared of .130 meaning it explains about 13 percent of variation in voting. The coefficient for *Migration's* effect was positive but small and both the *Migration* and *Migration and Democracy Interaction* variables were not statistically significant. *High Income* and *Health* both have a positive effect on voting but the finding was not statistically significant. *Current Marriage, Past Marriage*, *Age*, *College* and *Democracy* all have a positive and statistically significant effect on voting propensity. Being *Female* had a negative and statistically significant effect on voter turnout. The majority of the control variables are acting in the way they were expected to. This lends support to the model because those things that have been established to have an effect are having an effect in this model. However, the model does not support the hypothesis that migration has a significant effect on voting levels.

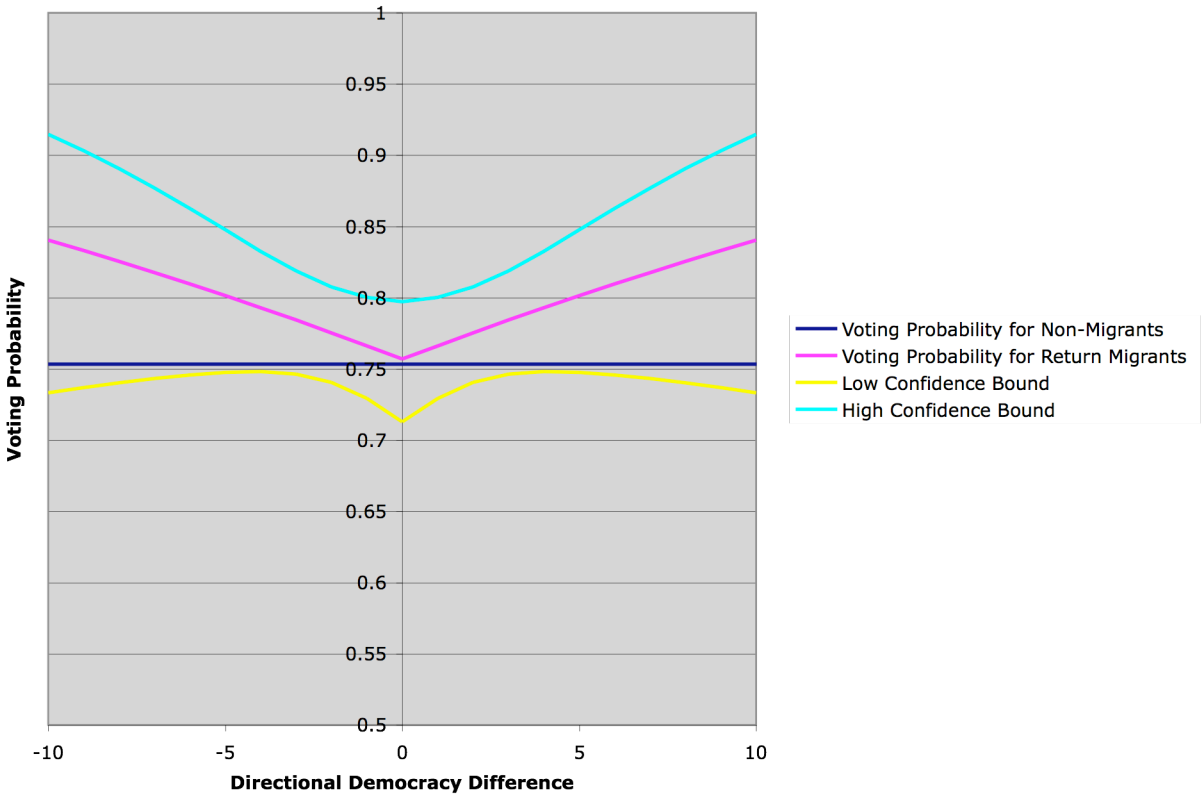
I conducted a lincom test after the regression to find the effect of the interaction between *Migration* and *Migration and Democracy Interaction* variables and *Voting*. These tests show that a migrant who went to an equally democratic country would increase his or her voting propensity by 0.011. A migrant who went to a country that was 1 point more or less democratic would increase his or her voting propensity by 0.041. A migrant who went to a country that was 2 points more or less democratic would increase his or her voting propensity by 0.071. A migrant who went to a country that was 10 points more or less democratic would increase his or her voting propensity by 0.311. Lastly, a migrant who went to a country that was 15 points more or less democratic would increase his or her voting propensity by 0.461. This shows that the *Migration and Democracy Interaction* variable does have the predicted effect of increasing voting propensity to a greater degree when migration was to increasingly more or less democratic countries. However, since neither the *Migration* nor the *Migration and Democracy Interaction*

variables were statistically significant, the substantive effect alone is extremely weak evidence of an increasing propensity to vote as a result of migration to increasingly more or less democratic countries.

The model also predicts that the probability of a non-migrant voting is 0.753. It predicts that a return migrant from a country with the same level of democracy would have a probability of voting of 0.757. It predicts that a return migrant who migrated to a country that is 1 point more or less democratic would have a probability of voting of 0.766 and a return migrant who migrated to a country that is 10 points more or less democratic would have a probability of voting of 0.841.

Graph 3 shows the predicted voting propensity on the Y-axis. The X-axis measures the *Directional Differences* in democracy scores between the home county and host country for migrants and spans from -10 to 10. This graph produces a similar U-shape to Graph 2 but this graph controls for all of the variables included in the regression. This graph also includes upper and lower bounds of confidence in the predictions made about return migrant voting probabilities. However, the upper and lower bounds of the confidence intervals include all of the predicted probabilities for non-migrant voting. This means that the model cannot predict with confidence that return migrants will vote more than non-migrants, if all other factors are held constant.

Graph 3: Predicted Voting Probabilities For Migrants and Non-Migrants Using World Health Survey Data



Los Angeles Times Survey Test

Sample

The final sample used for the Los Angeles Times Survey had 322 total observations, all from adult individuals living in Mexico. While this is not a particularly large number, there are over 100 migrants and 80 individuals who would like to migrate or have someone in their family who would like to migrate. Having significant numbers of both of these categories makes the data from this survey potentially valuable for its ability to distinguish between return migrants and those who would like to migrate but cannot.

Independent Variable: Migration

The main independent variable in this portion of my research is *Migration*. This variable is a dummy variable of 1 if the person ever had a job in the United States and 0 if they have not. One factor that could hurt my chances of finding a positive correlation between migration and voting is respondents intentionally lying in response to this question and reporting that they did not have a job in the United States when they had an illegal job or were in the United States looking for a job but could not find one.

Of the 322 individuals in this part of my research, 107 were migrants. Of these, 88 (82.24%) voted and 19 (17.76%) did not vote. Of the 215 individuals who were not migrants, 164 (76.28%) voted and 51 (23.72%) did not vote.

The second part of my research attempts to control for the effects of endogeneity by comparing return migrants to those who would like to migrate, or those with *Migration Desire*. In the Los Angeles Times Survey, the respondents were asked how likely it was that they or anyone in their family would look for a job in the United States in the next year. The responses "Very Likely" and "Somewhat Likely" were coded as a 1 for the variable *Migration Desire*. The responses "Somewhat Unlikely," "Very Unlikely," "No Plans," and "Don't Know" were all coded as a 0 for the variable *Migration Desire*. Of the 242 individuals coded as 0 for *Migration Desire,* 194 (80.17%) voted and 48 (19.83%) did not vote. Of the 80 individuals who were coded as 1 for *Migration Desire,* 58 (72.50%) voted and 22 (27.50%) did not vote.

Four categories were created from these two variables. These categories allow for comparisons between return migrants and those who desire migration and can help control for endogeneity in the model. The respondents are placed into one of the four categories:

1) *Migration and Desire (MD):* They have migrated and they or someone in their family is looking for a job in the United States in the next year. This category has 45 individuals in it.

2) Migration and No Desire (MND): They have migrated but neither they nor anyone in their family is looking for a job in the United States in the next year. This category has 62 individuals in it.

3) No Migration and Desire (NMD): They have not migrated but they or someone in their family is looking for a job in the United States in the next year. This category has 35 individuals in it.

4) No Migration and No Desire (NMND): They have not migrated and neither they nor anyone in their family is looking for a job in the United States in the next year. This category has 180 individuals in it.

Later, categories *Migration and Desire* and *Migration and No Desire* are combined to create the variable *Migration*, which is comprised of all individuals who migrated.

Dependent Variable: Voting

The variable *Voting* is a dummy variable that measures if the individual voted in the past Presidential election of 1994. The question was posed as what political party the respondent voted for in the past Presidential election in 1994. All respondents who responded with a listed political party or "other" that they voted for, are coded as 1 for the variable *Voting.* Any respondent who answered with the responses "Didn't Vote" or "Don't Know" is coded as 0. There were 252 individuals who voted and 70 who did not.

Control Variables

All of the important factors that affect voting and were controlled for in the first portion of my research are controlled for again in this portion with the exception of country specific effects and democracy ranking, which are no longer applicable since Mexico is the only country being studied, and a variable for health. In addition, the new variable of *Remittances* is included to control for the effects of migrant networks, which are mentioned as a confusing factor in studying the effects of migration earlier in this paper.

To control for the effects of higher income on voting behavior, I include *Income* as a control variable in this portion of my research. The *Income* variable is coded as a continuous variable and is the natural log of the total household income measured in pesos. A measure that is comparable across countries is not necessary here so the natural log of total income can distinguish between high and low income Mexican with significant accuracy. The weekly income ranges from 93 Pesos to 612 Pesos. The average weekly income is 275.4 Pesos.

Another control variable is *Current Marriage*. This variable is coded dichotomously. *Current Marriage* has a value of 1 if the individual was married or cohabitating and 0 if the individual was single, divorced, widowed or separated. There were 203 individuals (63.04%) who were currently married and 119 individuals (36.96%) who were not married.

The education level of the respondents was controlled for using the dummy variable *Graduate School*. *Graduate School* was coded as 1 if the respondent was educated past a college degree and 0 if they completed a college education or less. There were 14 individuals (4.35%) who were studying at the Graduate level and 308 individuals (95.65%) who had a college degree or less in my final model.

Gender was coded for by including the dummy variable *Female*, which was coded 1 for female respondents and 0 for male respondents. Of the respondents included in my final model, 40.06% were female.

Age 1-4 variables were also included as variables. Only individuals aged 18 or older were included in the study. Individuals were asked to identify themselves as within an age range. These ranges were 18-24, 25-29, 30-39, 40-49, and 50+. The lowest of these age range groups was dropped. As a result, only respondents 25 and older were included in the model. There were 54 individuals who were 25 to 29 year olds, 67 who were 30 to 39 year olds, 55 who were 40 to 49 year olds, and 88 individuals who were 50 or older.

A variable to control for the effects of migrant networks, *Remittances,* is included in this portion of my research. This variable is coded as 1 if the individual's family received remittances from the United States, and as a 0 if they did not. There were 282 individuals (87.58%) who did not receive remittances from the United States and 40 individuals (12.42%) who did.

Results Using Los Angeles Times Survey Data

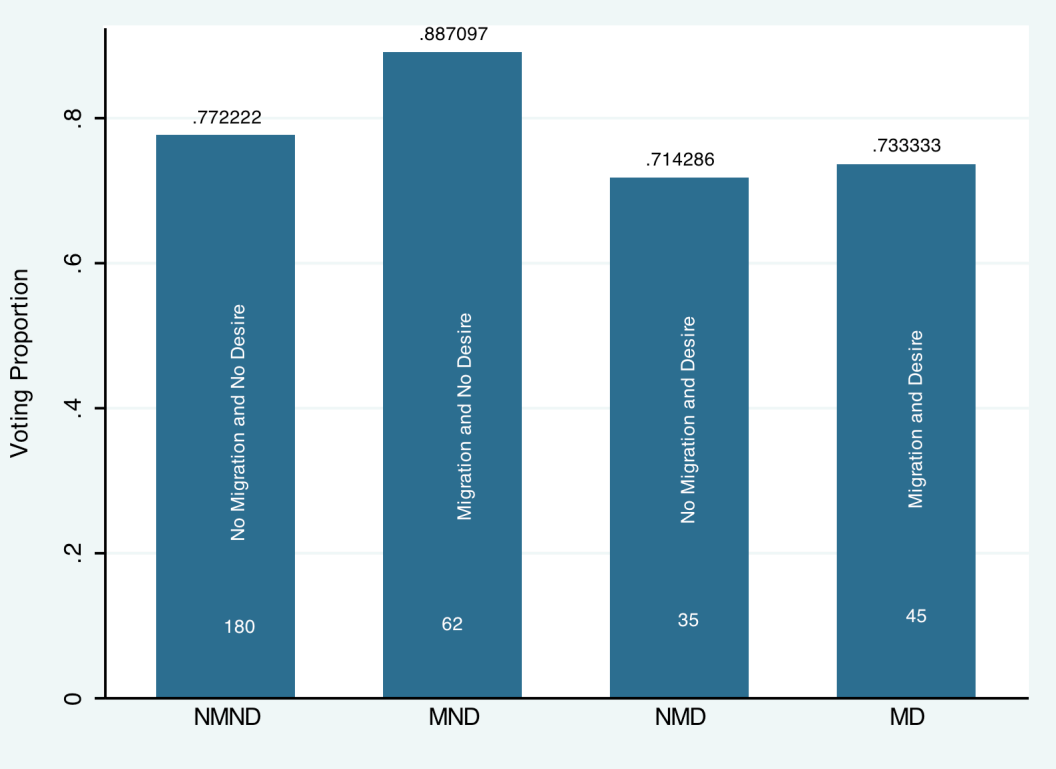
Test 1

The first test on this portion of my research is seen in Graph 4. This graph shows the relative voter turnouts in Mexico of individuals from each of the four categories. The Y-axis measures the proportion of the individuals in each category who voted. Those who had no desire to migrate and had not migrated voted at a rate of 0.772 while those who had no desire to migrate but had migrated voted at a significantly higher rate, 0.887. Of the individuals who wanted to migrate or had a family member who wanted to migrate, those who had not migrated voted at a rate of 0.714 and those who had already migrated voted at a rate of 0.733.

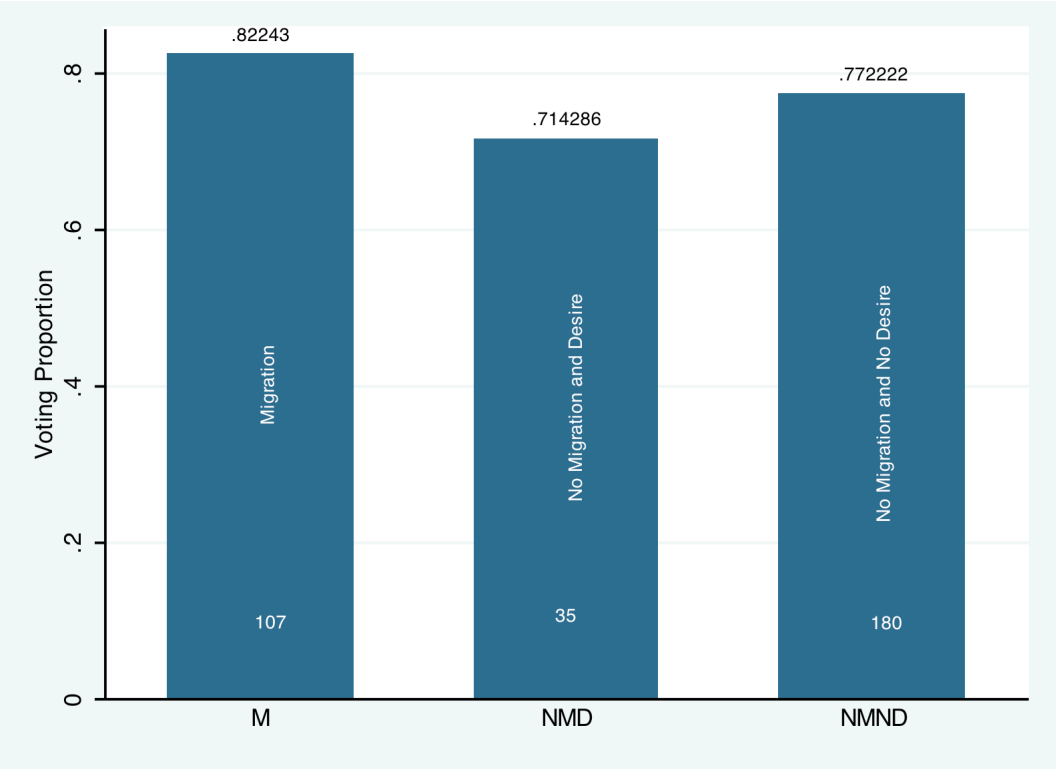
The next graph, Graph 5, combines the data for all return migrants. This graph also shows that migrants vote more than both non-migrants who desire to migrate and non-migrants with no desire to migrate. This graph emphasizes that those non-migrants with a desire to migrate are surprisingly less likely to vote than non-migrants with no desire to migrate.

Both graphs support the idea that return migrants vote at higher levels than non-migrants. Those who have migrated and do not wish to leave in the next year are the group with, by far, the highest level of voting. This supports my hypothesized causal mechanism that an increase in voting propensity would be correlated with a desire to improve one's country, which would cause one to stay rather than migrate.

Graph 4: The Relative Mexican Voter Turnouts for Four Categories Using Los Angeles Times Survey Data



Graph 5: The Relative Mexican Voter Turnouts for Three Categories Using Los Angeles Times Survey Data



Test 2

The second test that I run on this data is a probit regression. The results of this regression are found in Table 4. This model has a pseudo R squared of .106 meaning it explains about 10.6 percent of variation in voting. The coefficient for *Migration's* effect was 0.279 and was not statistically significant. Surprisingly, *Migration Desire, Graduate Education* and *Remittances* had a negative effect on an individual's propensity to vote, but all of these findings were not statistically significant.

Table 4: Probit Regression Model For How Migration and Desired Migration Affect Voting Behavior Using Los Angeles Times Survey Data			
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Predicted Change in Voting for a One Unit Change Increase in Variable
Migration	0.279	0.207	0.073
Desired Migration	-0.299	0.198	-0.079
Income	0.036	0.092	0.010
Current Marriage	-0.422*	0.191	-0.111*
Graduate School	-0.636	0.393	-0.167
Female	0.044	0.178	0.011
Age (25-29)	0.545*	0.271	0.143*
Age (30-39)	0.187	0.270	0.050
Age (40-49)	1.023*	0.331	0.269*
Age (50+)	0.574*	0.256	0.151*
Remittances	-0.116	0.250	-0.030
Number of Observations	322		
Survey Year	1996		
Model $\chi 2$	35.60*		
Pseudo R_2	0.106		
* Denotes a P<0.05			

The *Age* variables taken together had a mostly positive and increasing effect on voting propensity and were statistically significant except for the 30-39 year old range. Also, those over 50 were more likely to vote than those 30 to 39 but less likely to vote than those 40 to 49 years old. This may have been due to some health problems that came with age.

The effect of *Income* was positive but was not statistically significant and was smaller than expected. *Current Marriage* had a negative effect and was statistically significant. This is both the opposite direction from what was expected and from what was found in the first model using World Health Survey data. Lastly, being *Female* had a positive but not statistically significant effect on voter turnout. This was also the opposite effect from what was expected and what was found in the first model.

The majority of the control variables in this portion of my research are not acting in the way they were expected to or the way that they were found to act in the first portion of my research. This neither hurts nor helps in supporting my hypothesis. Since the model found no statistically significant effect on voting propensity due to migration but also no effect on voting propensity due to other established factors that effect voting, such as education and income, the fact that the model does not support my hypothesis is not strong evidence that there is not an association between migration and higher levels of voting. However, the model is unable to support the existence of a correlation if there is one.

Discussion and Sensitivity Tests

The purpose of my research was to examine if there was a correlation between migration experiences and higher voting propensities. I wanted to examine if this correlation existed across a range of countries and how the difference between the level of democracy in an individual's

home country and host country affected this increase. I also wanted to be able to control for the effects of migrant networks and endogeneity.

I was unable to study all of the factors affecting migration together, using one dataset, because I could not locate a dataset that included survey questions that addressed all of these issues. I was able to study the relationship between past migration and voting using the World Health Survey. However, three major problems arose while using the World Health Survey data.

First, due to the fact that only those working in the medical sector were included and, in order to have sufficient observations, the migration experience was measured at the family as opposed to individual level, the data from this survey have significantly fewer final observations than would I would have preferred. Also, if migration does have a small effect on the voting propensity of return migrants, the effect would be less visible in the model I created for a couple main reasons. Although significant experiences that change voting behavior can also change the voting behavior of direct family members, the increase in voting most likely decrease the further removed the voter is from the person who experienced the event. Therefore, defining migrants as those who belong to a family where someone has recently migrated may only capture some of the effect that migration has on the individual who experiences it. Also, by defining migration as having a member of one's household in the medical field, and who has migrated, does not include individuals who have migrated but are not in the medical field. The combined effect of these two factors would be to make any correlation that did exist in reality appear smaller in my data.

Second, the survey did not ask about where the individual migrated, but only if they migrated. I created an average democracy score of the countries that migrants from a given country migrate to, weighted by the migrant stock of foreign nations in each host country, to

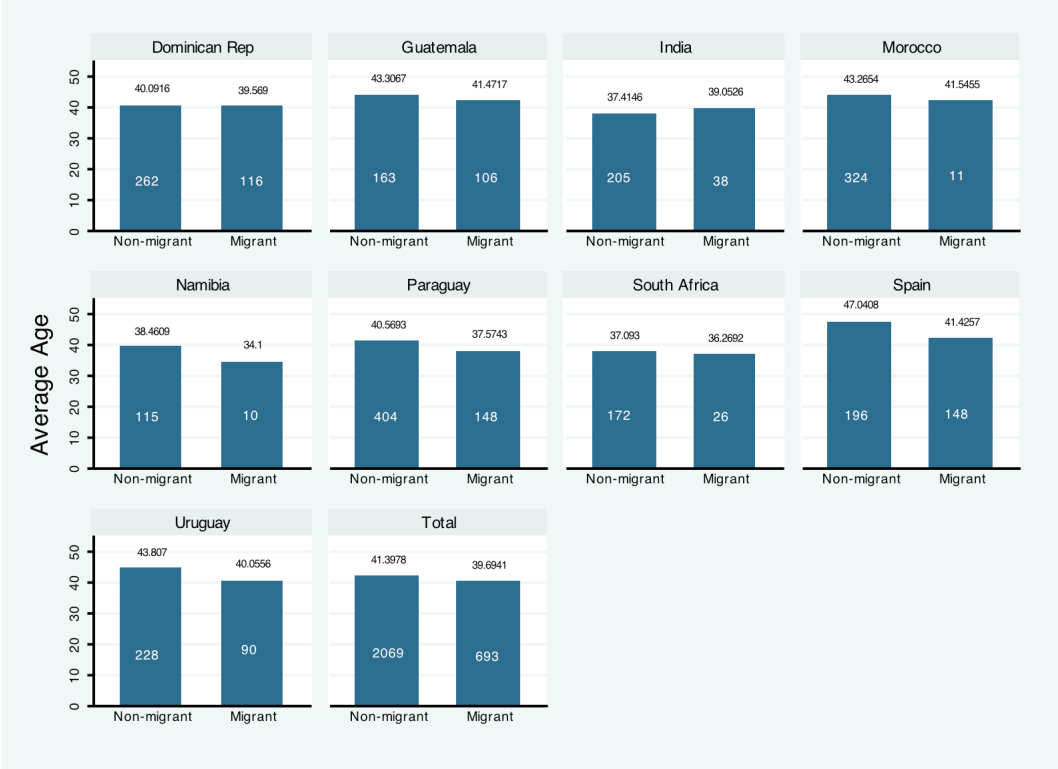
account for this problem. I believe that this created measure is a good estimate of the difference between the democracy levels of home and host countries for the majority of migrants from a country. However, since the numbers of migrants that I am dealing with in my research is small, the estimated measure becomes less accurate for countries with less migrants, since a single migrant who went to a non-typical host country may account for a relatively large proportion of the migrants.

Third, the world health survey only asks about migration within the past two years. This means that those who migrated more than two years ago, or have a family member who did, will not be coded as migrants. The advantage to this fact is that it allowed me to focus on the immediate effects of migration on voting in this part of my research. It is possible that the effect of migration fades over decades and the impact of time on any increase in voting propensity could be a topic for further research. The disadvantage of this question wording is that, since those who migrated more than two years ago are coded as non-migrants, any effect that exists will be less visible in my data.

Also, since migrants are more likely to be young, and voting propensity is known to increase with age, the return migrants in the data may be significantly younger on average than the non-migrants, making them less likely to vote for that reason. To test this possibility, I ran a sensitivity test where I measured the average age of migrants and non-migrants in all nine countries and as a total figure. Graph 6 shows the results of this test. This graph shows that, on average, non-migrants are older in the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Morocco, Namibia, Paraguay, South Africa, Spain, and Uruguay. In India the migrants are somewhat older. For most countries this age difference is less than 3 years. However, in Namibia, the only country where migrants voted significantly less than non-migrants, non-migrants were more than 4 years

older than migrants on average. It is possible that the low voting levels of Namibian return migrants could be explained by a combination of the age difference between migrants and non-migrants and the small sample size of Namibian migrants. Paraguay and Uruguay also have migrants who are about four years younger than the non-migrant respondents. This is important since Paraguay experienced low levels of migrant voting as well. Curiously, even in Spain where non-migrants were, on average, more than 6 years older than migrants, migrant voting levels were higher than those for non-migrants. Lastly, the graph shows that the voting results that were obtained for India and Morocco are not due to migrants being significantly older than non-migrants in those countries, since neither of these countries has a difference in age greater than 3 years.

Graph 6: The Relative Ages of Migrants and Non-Migrants Using World Health Survey Data



I do believe that the model using World Health Survey data uses controls that accurately measure what they are meant to measure. Education, marriage, and age are all known to increase voting and do in the model. The variable created for income, while not statistically significant to the .05 level, is positive, which is the expected direction. Due to the fact that so many of the controls were statistically significant and altered voting propensity in the expected direction, I believe that the data is believable and accurate and that the model is therefore accurate.

Taking into account the fact that many of the shortcomings of my data would lessen the presence of a visible correlation between migration and voting, I believe that the model from the first part of my research is suggestive of a correlation, but fails to provide strong statistically significant support for my hypothesis. This model does appear to control for other factors affecting voting accurately. It also suggests that if a correlation exists, those that migrate to significantly different host countries will experience more substantial increases in voting than those who travel to similarly democratic host countries.

When looking at the results of the second part of my research, which focuses on Mexico, the data appears much less accurate and the overall picture is much less obvious. It is clear that return migrants who do not plan to migrate in the coming year are more likely than any other group to vote; however, when all return migrants, both those with and without plans to migrate again, are compared to those who would like to migrate but have not, the distinction becomes significantly smaller.

I used my data from the *Directional Difference* variable created in the World Health Survey Test to find that Mexican migrants in 2005, on average, went to countries with a democracy score 1.99 points higher than Mexico, which had a score of 8. This means that, according to my hypothesis, an increase in voting due to migration experience would be fairly

small, since the democratic difference between host and home countries is fairly small. This is the substantive result that I observe; however, the increase is not statistically significant.

The regression controls are mostly not statistically significant and many have substantive values that go in the opposite direction than is supported by past research and the first portion of my own research. Not only does the examination of migration effects not show any statistically significant effect of migration, but also the model as a whole does not appear to accurately account for many other key voting determinants such as income and marriage.

The most significant information that the examination of Mexico provides is the evidence that a desire to migrate lessens an individual's propensity to vote. This is the opposite from what I expected. My initial worry was that a correlation between return migrants and higher voting levels was due to pre-existing differences between those who desired to migrate and those who did not. This model implies that those who wish to migrate vote less than other non-migrants. If this is true universally, then if return migrants vote at the same level as non-migrants with no desire to migrate, the return migrants may still have increased their voting propensity from their own initial level.

Conclusion

My research is not able to provide statistically significant evidence of a positive relationship between migration experience and higher voting levels. Due to a low level of final observations for both of the data sources I use, any relationship between migration and voting would have had to exist at high levels and be a strong predictive correlation in order to be visible in my results. I did find a small, substantive increase in voting for those individuals who traveled to countries with significantly different levels of democracy. I also found that those who

wish to migrate are substantively, but not to statistically significant levels, less likely to vote than non-migrants.

Both of these findings are important. First, evidence that those who migrate to very different countries are more likely to vote than non-migrants could mean that voting could be induced through a deeper understanding of the benefits of democracy. This does not imply that to get U.S. citizens to vote more we should encourage them to migrate to countries where their rights are infringed upon, but it does imply that if the United States allowed more temporary immigration for those from significantly less democratic countries, the individuals might be more likely to vote in their home countries once they return.

While my research could not establish a substantive and statistically significant correlation between migration and voting, further studies that have larger numbers of individual respondents could more accurately examine this question. Such research should include a cross-country analysis with particular effort to include migrants who migrated to countries with a democracy score between 2 and 10 points different from their own. These studies should also ask migrants the country that they migrated to. Information on this subject is particularly important since my research includes no individuals in this range and is therefore unable to tell if the data from Morocco and India is a two-country anomaly or is indicative of a larger pattern.

While my findings provide limited and not statistically significant evidence that those who desire migration vote less than non-migrants, more work should be done to see if this is true and the complicating factor of endogeneity should be controlled for in future research.

Also, in future research the extent of the effect of past migration should be extended past recent voting and should me measured in relation to the time since the individual migrated. It is possible that migration has a short-lived effect on voting behavior and since the World Health

Survey data only examined migration within the past two years, the model made from this data cannot speak to the enduring effect that migration may or may not have. While the Los Angeles Times Survey did include all past migration, a much less clear and smaller association was found between migration experiences and voting using this data. This fact underscores the importance of examining time since migration as a factor in further research on this subject.

Further research should also examine if return migrants increase their political participation in ways other than increasing their voting. While increases in voting can have important impacts on developing countries, evidence of past migration increasing community mobilization or the joining of political organizations would have a much larger impact on nation building and therefore be more likely to induce policy changes.

In summary, I believe that my findings present an initial sketch of what could be a relationship between past migration and voting. I believe that my findings provide for the possibility of a correlation and support the notion that if the correlation does exist, it becomes stronger for migration to increasingly more or less democratic host countries. I conclude that my research supports existing literature, which finds that personal experiences can influence an individual's voting behavior. I find that my research supports the link found by Rother in the Philippines where return migrants from both more and less democratic countries experienced greater political participation and expands his research to suggest that this effect may occur in other countries as well. Much future research is still needed on the subject to look at the impacts of migration on political behavior over time and to examine whether migration affects other forms of political participation. My research shows that the link between migration and political participation is far from understood. Due to the potential impacts on public policy, this subject deserves increased attention in future research.

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