

El voto desde el norte: The Mexican Diaspora in the US' Vote in the 2018 Mexican Elections

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Using original survey data, we analyze the factors contributing to participation and preferences in the 2018 Mexican election among the Mexican diaspora in the United States. Our empirical analysis of public-opinion data reveals that exposure to Mexican mass media is a significant predictor of voting from abroad among immigrants and US-born Mexicans. Diaspora voters' feelings of efficacy, their assessments of Mexican democracy, and structural factors yield mixed effects on the vote from abroad and candidate preferences. The study's design also allows for comparison of the transnational electoral preferences of Mexican emigrants and US-born dual nationals.

Keywords: dual nationality, elections, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, Mexican Americans, public opinion, transnational politics.

A través de datos provenientes de una encuesta original, analizamos y evaluamos los factores que informan la participación de ciudadanos en la diáspora mexicana radicados en Estados Unidos y sus preferencias electorales en las elecciones del 2018. Nuestro análisis empírico de la opinión pública revela que la exposición a los medios de comunicación mexicanos es un predictor significativo de la votación desde el extranjero entre migrantes y mexicanos nacidos en los Estados Unidos. Los sentimientos de eficacia de los votantes de la diáspora, sus evaluaciones de la democracia mexicana y factores estructurales producen efectos mixtos sobre el voto desde el extranjero y las preferencias electorales. El diseño del estudio también facilita la comparación de la participación transnacional de los emigrantes mexicanos y los mexicoamericanos con la doble nacionalidad.

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Palabras clave: doble nacionalidad, elecciones, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, mexicanoamericanos, opinión pública, política transnacional.

Members of Mexico's diaspora in the United States (US) include an estimated 11.2 million migrants and 25.4 million US-born Mexican Americans (Noe-Bustamante, Flores, and Shah 2019), forming the world's second largest diaspora. This population accounts for 22 percent of all Mexicans in North America and is 11 percent of the US population. Mexicans in the US and Mexico are also among the world's most interconnected and interdependent populations, with over \$26 billion in remittances being sent from the United States to Mexico in 2016 (Fundación BBVA Bancomer, A. C. 2017). Even as Mexican migrant political organizations, including *Fuerza Migrante*, have mounted a coordinated effort to secure formal-legal representation in the Mexican Chamber of Deputies (Zermeño 2019), much of the political analysis of this diaspora population continues to privilege its economic worth over its political engagement with home-country politics.

Previous research on transnational political engagement reveals that emigrants are as attentive to home-country politics as their compatriots still living in the homeland and that they are no less capable of evaluating the political situation of their sending country than those still living there (McCann, Escobar, and Arana 2019). In their 2006 query of the general interest in Mexican politics, of interest in the 2006 election, and of presidential evaluations of Mexicans in three metropolitan areas in the United States, James McCann, Cristina Escobar, and Renelinda Arana (2019) concluded that emigrants maintain high levels of intellectual involvement in Mexican politics long after settling in the United States, at least when compared to Mexicans in Mexico. Yet, we still know little about Mexicans' transnational political engagement after 2006, Mexico's first election in which expatriates could vote from abroad, and to our knowledge, we know nothing about the transnational electoral participation of US-born Mexican dual nationals generally.

The door for a political voice for the Mexican diaspora has slowly been opening since the 1996 constitutional reforms that allowed Mexicans living in the United States to become dual nationals. Access to diaspora voting expanded in 2014 when federal electoral-law reforms called for coordination between the National Electoral Institute (INE) and the Foreign Relations Secretariat (SRE), allowing Mexicans living abroad to acquire or renew their voter identification credentials in a consular office. For the 2018 election, eligible Mexican citizens in the diaspora were able to obtain their voter

credentials through an appointment with their local consular office, have their ballot sent to their home via United Parcel Service (UPS), and either return their completed ballot directly to the INE with prepaid postage or deposit it at their consular office. This reform carries special significance for Mexicans in the United States, given that Mexico's consular network of fifty offices in the United States makes it the largest of any country within another. While this important reform allows voting to become a part of the narrative of Mexico-US transnationalism, it remains a perplexing one. Official reports of historical electoral participation among Mexicans living abroad in the 2006, 2012, and 2018 elections (table 1) reveal the general upward trend in participation in the vote from abroad since those votes have been counted. Indeed, electoral management officials can, and often do, claim a dramatic (140 percent) increase in participation in 2018 over the previous presidential election. Nonetheless, as analysts and casual observers alike have noted, this rate of participation is dismal considering that the potential Mexican electoral power residing abroad exceeds 10 million potential voters. This gap in participation demands an analysis of what motivates the Mexican diaspora in the United States to participate in Mexican democracy and what structural factors encourage or discourage that participation.

To contextualize these rates of effective diaspora voting participation, we consider that in 2016, only 47.6 percent of eligible Latinos voted in the US election. Analyses of Latino turnout in 2016 point to a slight uptick in turnout from 11.2 million Latinos voting in 2012 to 12.7 million votes cast in 2016, an increase easily attributed to growth in the Latino electorate (Krogstad and López 2017). However, there were still more eligible Latinos (14 million) who did not turn out (Krogstad and López 2017; López et al. 2016). Our interest in exploring the factors that inform the Mexican diaspora's voting behavior also lead us to examine immigrant voting in the United States in 2016. The rate of Latino-immigrant voting in the 2016 US election reflects a gap between naturalized US citizens, 53.4 percent of whom voted, and US-born Latinos, whose turnout rate was just 45.5 percent. This gap between immigrant and US-born citizen participation is the inverse of the participation gap among all naturalized citizens (54.3 percent) and all US-born voters (62.1 percent) (López et al. 2016). Thus, even though we are only able to reliably compare all Latinos voting in the United States to Mexicans voting in 2018, we situate the patterns we observe in electoral participation among these groups within our purpose of understanding the Mexican diaspora's voting behavior in 2018. As a final preamble to our analysis, we note that there are upper socio-economic-status biases in electoral

Table 1. Historical participation and preferences in presidential elections among Mexicans living abroad

Year	Number of registered voters	Number of votes cast	Official participation		Diaspora vote*	Full vote
			rate (percent of registered voters)	rate (percent of registered voters)		
2006	40,876	32,621	79.8%	79.8%	Felipe Calderón Hinojosa (PAN) (58.29%)	35.9%
					Andrés Manuel López Obrador (PRD) (34.00%)	35.3%
					Roberto Madrazo Pintado (PRI) (4.17%)	22.3%
					Patricia Mercado Castro (PSD) (2.72%)	2.7%
2012	59,115	40,714	68.9%	68.9%	Josefina Vázquez Mota (PAN) (42.17%)	22.2%
					Andrés Manuel López Obrador (PRD) (39.00%)	32.6%
					Enrique Peña Nieto (PRI) (15.62%)	38.2%
					Gabriel Quadri (PANAL) (2.04%)	2.3%
2018	181,873	98,470	54.1%	54.1%	Andrés Manuel López Obrador (Morena) (64.86%)	53.2%
					Ricardo Anaya Cortés (PAN) (26.75%)	22.3%
					José Antonio Meade (PRI) (4.28%)	16.4%
					Jaime Rodríguez Calderón (Incl.) (1.90%)	5.2%

Source: Instituto Federal Electoral/Instituto Nacional Electoral. *Note:* Party affiliation reflects primary identification of candidate.

PAN: Partido Acción Nacional; PRD: Partido de la Revolución Democrática; PRI: Partido Revolucionario Institucional; PSD: Partido Socialdemócrata; PANAL: Nueva Alianza, Morena: Movimiento Regeneración Nacional.

*Diaspora vote excludes null votes, nonregistered candidates, and candidates receiving less than 1% of votes cast; totals do not sum to 100%.

participatory rates among citizens in both developing and established democracies (Klesner 2009; Cortina and Lasala-Banco 2015) and that for diaspora communities the added costs of political engagement assumed in transnational electoral politics are extraordinary.

In this analysis of the 2018 Mexican vote from abroad, we examine the preferences among the diaspora with the goal of understanding how the attitudes and orientations of Mexicans in the United States translate into a willingness to engage in transnational electoral behavior. According to the *2018 Mexican Vote from Abroad Survey (MVFAS)*, a national election-eve survey of Mexican citizens of voting age residing in the United States, 8.2 percent of respondents reported having voted, while another 21 percent said that they were definitely going to vote by the June 30, 2018, deadline for mailing in their ballot. Another 22.7 percent reported a desire to vote but missed the deadline to register. Meanwhile, 57.5 percent of survey respondents had no apparent interest in voting in the election, because they were either part of the 34.8 percent who were uninterested in voting in the election or part of the 13.3 percent who were unaware that an election was being held (Diane D. Blair Center of Southern Politics and Society 2018).¹ Among the Mexican citizens surveyed in the *MVFAS*, those living in the United States who had voted, planned on voting, or wanted to vote in the 2018 presidential contest favored candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO; 44 percent) by nearly three to one over his nearest rival, Ricardo Anaya Cortés (15.6 percent).² As we investigate these patterns of electoral behavior, we look to reveal what motivates voting from abroad among the Mexican diaspora in the United States and its reported electoral preferences.

Given the slow but steady growth in transnational voting among Mexicans in the United States since 2006, we seek to understand the attitudinal and behavioral characteristics of the Mexican diaspora living in the United States. We ask: Why do Mexican citizens in the United States—emigrants and US-born Mexican dual nationals—participate in Mexico's electoral process? And what predicted diaspora voters' presidential candidate preferences in 2018? The historic

1. The survey sample of Mexican citizens in the United States includes Mexican immigrants (n=325) and US-born (n=201) Mexicans (dual nationals) residing in forty-one US states. Mexican immigrants in the sample are from thirty-one Mexican federal entities.

2. The *MVFAS* included as a preference option the candidacy of Margarita Zavala, the 2018 race's only female candidate to qualify for the national ballot. However, by the time the study was fielded, Zavala had exited the race.

scarcity of public-opinion data capturing the sentiments that members of the Mexican diaspora have toward the Mexican government and its electoral system has hampered the study of the Mexican vote from the United States. To our knowledge, among contemporary survey studies of Latinos in the United States, only a handful of survey items concerning Mexican politics has been asked of Mexican-origin subsamples groups of Latino registered voters (see Félix 2019b), and these have been limited to specific policy areas.

In the following section of this article, we briefly situate our analysis of Mexico's 2018 vote from abroad within the larger bodies of research on Mexican electoral participation and transnational political behavior. Next, we present a theoretical framework and a set of research hypotheses relating voter efficacy, one's degree of pride in Mexican democracy, structural factors, and exposure to Mexican mass media to both the act of voting from abroad and diaspora voter support for 2018 presidential race winner López Obrador. Following a two-part statistical analysis, we discuss the substantive significance of our empirical findings and their broader implications for Mexican electoral governance and Latin American–North American transnational political behavior. In the final section, we conclude with some observations about potential avenues for future research.

Mexican Electoral Behavior and Transnational Politics

Our understanding of Mexican voting behavior is relatively new given Mexico's protracted experience with single-party rule and its challenges in the realm of democratic consolidation. Notwithstanding, contemporary studies of the Mexican electorate examine the significant roles played by social class, region, gender, partisanship, and social media (Camp 2013; Félix 2012; Gilbert 2012; Marcelli and Cornelius 2005) in shaping voting behavior among the modern Mexican electorate.

Intragroup solidarity and a collective consciousness are indeed reliable predictors of voter behavior, in particular for Latinos in the United States (Agnew 1987; Cortina and Lasala-Blanco 2015; Medina Vidal 2018; Medina Vidal and García Ríos 2017). Such collective consciousness manifests through processes of socialization (Agnew 1987; Cortina and Lasala-Blanco 2015) and sense of group belonging, an intuitive connection considering that Mexican voter preferences have been found to be intimately linked to location and proximity to members of other groups (Cortina and Lasala-Blanco 2015). And, at least in the era of PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional)–PAN (Partido Acción Nacional)–PRD (Partido de la Revolución

Democrática) party competitiveness, party attachment, and political ideology among in-territory Mexican voters have been found to be rather stable over time (McCann and Lawson 2003), an attribute not common in consolidating democracies.

The study of transnational voting behavior is traditionally divided into two schools of thought. Some scholars argue that assimilation into the host country by immigrant groups disconnects them from their home country; therefore, they are less likely to vote from abroad or remain politically engaged in home-country politics (Marcelli and Cornelius 2005; Waldinger and Soehl 2013; Waldinger 2014). This is particularly true for Mexicans in the United States who face additional institutional barriers that inhibit their voting from abroad (Félix 2012). Others contend that assimilation and naturalization into the host country incentivizes immigrants to continue to be politically engaged in their home country. This incentivization comes from a variety of factors: from the passage of the dual-citizenship reform in Mexico to access to new resources, including higher education, in the United States (Félix 2012; Portes 2007; Shain 2000).

There is ample evidence that transnational political behavior among Latin American immigrants does not encumber their political engagement in the United States (Jones-Correa 2001). Furthermore, the Mexican government has in recent years acted as a bridge between immigrants and US institutions and services, promoting naturalization and integration (Délano 2010). Such actions are driven by the notion that naturalization facilitates immigrants' political engagement and that immigrants' upward mobility does not change with assimilation, making assimilation an unreliable predictor of voting behavior (Portes 2007).

To be sure, efficacy and affect are also meaningful predictors of diasporic voting behavior. From research on the 2012 Mexican election, we know that self-esteem can reliably predict in-country voter participation (Moreno and Wals 2014). Because US culture strongly promotes democracy, feelings of efficacy often emerge in the process of assimilation to the dominant culture, which informs rates of voter turnout among migrants. As we explore in depth below, for Mexicans in the United States who are eligible to vote in Mexican elections from abroad, a sense of civic duty and efficacy are also among the most significant factors in the voting calculus. Assimilation theory has offered broad explanations for why immigrants naturalize in their new country and for why some immigrants neither return to their home country nor remain politically engaged in homeland politics (Portes 2007). However, the Mexican diaspora in the United States is unique for a variety of reasons, and even when Mexicans naturalize in

the United States, many of them continue to be informed on the social, political, and economic issues of their home country. Globalization and geography allow these Mexicans to continue to be connected to their hometowns and their families that remain in Mexico. Mexican migrants who are less assimilated tend to have stronger ties to their politics at home and therefore will be more likely to vote (Marcelli and Cornelius 2005; Portes 2007).

Economics and familial ties are likewise critical to transnationalism. Emigrants who continue to send remittances and frequently visit their hometowns remain politically and socially engaged in their communities (Portes 2007). The paradox then is that naturalization, seemingly an occurrence of assimilation, allows for Mexicans to move freely from home to host country without the fear of persecution (Marcelli and Cornelius 2005) and therefore potentially increases the likelihood of electoral participation from abroad. Those newly arrived in the United States, however, do not have the same access to the resources needed to be politically engaged in either home or host country, which has the effect of further diminishing ability to remain socially and politically engaged in their home country (Waldinger and Soehl 2013; Waldinger 2014).

One significant study that has closely examined the Mexican diaspora is that of Enrico Marcelli and Wayne Cornelius (2005), which estimates potential participation rates in the 2006 presidential election. Estimating the effects of socio-economic status, frequency of border crossing, having a Mexican political-party affiliation, and attending religious services, they find that Mexicans newly arrived in the United States lack a strong political-party affiliation, which the authors conclude is a function of migrants' exit from their home country being due to poverty, violence, and their governments responses to these problems. If migrants are leaving because they are unhappy with their current government, then the first political decision is to leave in opposition to the ruling party (Marcelli and Cornelius 2005). Building on this body of literature, and with the advantage of hindsight of the structural and attitudinal factors that informed the diaspora's participation in the 2006 and 2012 elections, we venture to provide the most comprehensive analysis to date of *el voto desde el norte*.

Theory and Predictions

Our framework of voter efficacy, pride in democracy, and mass-media effects is grounded in and compatible with previous research identifying significant overlap between transnational ties and multiple

national identities, and their effects on civic engagement among Latino migrants in the United States (Jones-Correa 2001; Allen Gershon and Pantoja 2014). From this school of thought, we know that positive political behavioral changes happen as a function of exchanges among people who are adaptable to the formation of transnational exchange.

Drawing on the wisdom of research on transnational political engagement and on the characteristics of the Mexican electorate, we contend that four key factors compel members of the diaspora in the United States to vote in Mexican elections from abroad. First, because the costs of voting from abroad are extraordinary as compared to voting in-territory on election day, we argue that structural factors facilitating or inhibiting extraterritorial voting are critical. We focus on the role of the Mexican state in fomenting ties to the diaspora in the United States and build on analysis of Mexico's programs and institutions such as the Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior (IME), developed to engage the diaspora (Cano and Délano 2007). We emphasize that the decision to leave one's home country is not a "clean break" detaching migrants from all of their ties to home (Smith 2003a) and that migrants remain tied to their home communities for explicitly political reasons. Immigrants do not arrive in the United States as political blank slates without political attitudes or behaviors; their imported socialization is key to understanding postmigration political engagement (Wals 2011). We further maintain that at the microlevel view of democratic diffusion, migrants transfer attributes of democracy learned in the United States to their friends and relatives in Mexico via new practices when they return home, transmitting information back home and sharing information within high-volume migration communities (Pérez Armendáriz and Crow 2010). From an understanding of this two-way street of democratic diffusion, we argue that feelings of transnational voter efficacy, the belief that voting matters in some way to Mexican political outcomes, must exceed the costs of voting from abroad for members of the diaspora.

We further maintain that pride in Mexican democracy among members of the diaspora is a factor that compensates for the high cost of participation and is critical to their political engagement with the home country. Recalling the metaphor of exit, loyalty, and voice as applied to the transfer of remittances—which are made possible by migrants' exit, continue to flow because of their loyalty, and encourage the exercise of voice (Fox 2005)—we deem the effort of voting from abroad among the diaspora to be a symbol of its loyalty and the expression of its voice. As research on Mexican migrant civil

society illustrates, the relationship between migrants and the Mexican government is complex and intimately connected to Mexico's bilateral relations with the United States (Bada and Gleeson 2019; Déllano Alonso 2018; Fox 2005). Still, migrants and migrant political organizations, including Hometown Associations, continue to engage the government through democratic channels. When calls to extend the franchise to Mexicans abroad have been made, we have been reminded that the members of the diaspora in the United States find it difficult to achieve their objectives if they do not link their voting rights to broader efforts to strengthen Mexico's democracy (Martínez Saldaña and Ross Pineda 2002). Thus, we seek to understand how pride in democracy relates to extraterritorial voting.

Finally, because of the highly integrated and interconnected media environment in which Mexicans in Mexico and Mexican Americans live, mass media play an extraordinary role in electoral behavior for members of the diaspora. The breadth and depth of available data on attitudes among the Mexican diaspora allow for the test of four research hypotheses that attempt to explain the roles of voter efficacy, pride in Mexican democracy, perceptions of structural effects, and exposure to mass media on its voting from abroad in 2018.

While Mexico's attempts at facilitating the elective franchise of its emigrants have been slow and incremental, election officials broadcast that the 98,470 votes cast in the 2018 presidential contest are nearly 2.5 times more than those cast in 2012 and over three times more than those cast in 2006 (Instituto Nacional Electoral 2019). But to what degree can one attribute this increase in participation to institutional efforts to promote the vote from abroad? To unpack whether the INE's various voter education efforts and administration of the vote from abroad played a significant role in stimulating turnout we offer the following two structural-effects hypotheses:

H_{1a}: Citizens in the diaspora with positive evaluations of the quality of voter education are more likely to vote from abroad than those with negative evaluations of the quality of voter education.

and

H_{1b}: Citizens in the diaspora with positive evaluations of the established procedures for casting a ballot are more likely to vote from abroad than citizens with negative evaluations of the ballot-casting procedures.

We argue that political efficacy is especially important to potential voters among the Mexican diaspora in the United States. We

situate political efficacy among citizens in the diaspora differently than efficacy among in-territory citizens because of its inherent inextricability from the many psychological, economic, and familial attachments that citizens in the diaspora have for their ancestral country. In positing why emigrants would continue to participate in home-country electoral politics, we argue that the ability to have a positive impact on Mexico's future helps explain why citizens in the diaspora in the United States participate in Mexican elections. We predict:

H₂: Citizens in the diaspora who are more confident that their vote will have a positive impact on Mexico are more likely to vote from abroad than citizens less confident in the positive impact of their vote.

Integrating the influence of democratic values and their diffusion into an explanation for voting among diaspora communities, we argue that citizen evaluations of the strength and quality of democratic institutions are important in encouraging electoral participation from abroad and predict:

H₃: Citizens in the diaspora with a stronger sense of pride in Mexico's democracy are more likely to vote from abroad than those with less pride in Mexico's democracy.

For both immigrant and US-born Latinos, mass media are especially important in shaping Latino political engagement. Spanish-language media in particular have acculturating and pluralizing effects on Latino political behavior (Subervi-Vélez 2008), and they are especially important to mobilizing Latinos en masse around immigration issues (Félix, González, and Ramírez 2008; Ramírez 2013). In spite of rapid linguistic assimilation and engagement with US-based English- and Spanish-language media, Latino immigrants in the United States, with the help of Internet and social-media conduits, continue to engage with mass media from their home countries. Such continued engagement is positively associated with political participation in the United States (Medina Vidal 2018). Home-country media exposure is also essential for the maintenance of emigrants' engagement in home-country electoral politics. We maintain that both US- and Mexican-based media are important sources of news and information in Spanish for Mexicans in the United States, though each for very distinct reasons and with unique consequences for political knowledge and behavior. Latin American television programming provides the images and references that transnational groups need to reinforce both their sense of connection to a distant homeland and their new connection to the "host"

state (De Santis 2003). Meanwhile, US-based Latino and Spanish-language media are an important conduit of acculturation to US politics and society (Subervi-Vélez 2008).

Spanish-language broadcast media in the United States trace their origins to the early 1960s, when Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans had all developed their own regional markets in Southern California, New York, and Florida respectively. While US-based Univisión's financial success depends heavily on access to Televisa-produced entertainment content (Moreno Esparza 2011), the network, which dominates the US market, has vigorously pursued a panethnic strategy. To be sure, Spanish-language media outlets based in the United States are the catalyst for Latino multiculturalism and for the standardization of a commercialized panethnic Latino identity (Castañeda 2008). Thus, over time, market forces have incentivized US-based Spanish-language media appeal to a broad, diverse, panethnic "Latino" audiences (Mora 2014).

While news and information about politics in Mexico certainly reaches the Mexican diaspora in the United States via US-based Spanish-language media, we maintain that a more meaningful test of the diaspora's transnationalism is its level of exposure to Mexican-based media. To understand the Mexican diaspora's relationship to mass media, we must consider the media's role in Mexico's periods of single-party rule and in its democratic consolidation. We expect the diaspora in the United States to be most familiar with the Televisa media conglomerate, which, together with TV Azteca, accounts for 90 percent of the Mexican audience share. Such dominance has developed by way of monopoly/duopoly status cultivated over long periods of symbiosis with the PRI (Paxman 2015). Televisa's antidemocratic practices guaranteed its success as a broadcasting monopoly in Mexico during most of the twentieth century (Esteinou Madrid and Alva De La Selva 2009). Mass media in contemporary Mexico were partly a vehicle for and partly a byproduct of democratic transition; various factors combined over a thirty-year period to convert them from a dependent component of a closed political system to a vibrant and salient component of a more plural and competitive democracy (Wallis 2004). Thus, we consider exposure to Mexican media separately from US-based Spanish-language media because of these structural differences that yield important differences in the content and ideological perspectives that they provide.

The study of mass-media effects on political participation routinely considers the role of individual attentiveness to political matters. Attentive publics are among the most active participants in

electoral politics, and access to news and information about politics and citizen engagement with mass media are crucial to any well-functioning democracy. Because attention to politics is an important intervening factor in establishing the effects of mass media on political behavior (Prior 2007, 2009), we predict:

H₄: Attention to politics has a positive moderating effect on the effects of Mexican mass-media exposure on citizens' likelihood of participating in the vote from abroad.

In part one of our empirical tests below, we employ these research hypotheses to explain voter turnout among the Mexican-citizen diaspora in the United States. In part two, we examine preferences among voters and present additional statistical tests of the effects of structure, efficacy, pride, and mass media on support for the candidates of the three partisan coalitions seeking the presidency in 2018.

Data

Few efforts to collect survey data on the political attitudes and orientations of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the United States are crafted with explicit emphasis on transnational political behavior. The survey data set used for this study, the *2018 MVFAS*, is unconventional and innovative in this regard. The *MVFAS* is a web-based survey of 526 Mexican citizens of voting age (18) residing in the United States with a margin of error of ± 5.4 percent. The survey recruited respondents from the 1.2 million-member YouGov panel and employs the sampling methodologies of the YouGov research firm. These methods allow for the selection of representative samples from nonrandomly selected pools of respondents (Mexican citizens in the United States). The survey was fielded from June 15 to June 27, 2018, on the eve of Mexico's July 1, 2018, presidential election. To our knowledge, this is the only such scientific research study conducted in the United States, and its design uniquely identifies the effects of Mexico's efforts to continue to expand the electoral franchise to its emigrants. Surveys were conducted in both Spanish (51 percent) and English (49 percent), and interviews lasted fourteen minutes, on average. For the statistical tests of voting from abroad, we code a series of variables drawn from the full sample and further differentiate between subsamples of immigrants and US-born Mexicans who are Mexican-US dual nationals. In the statistical test of candidate preference, we code variables for the full sample of the *MVFAS*.

Dependent Variables

To test for the effects of citizen perspectives of structure, efficacy, pride, and mass media on the voting behavior of the Mexican diaspora in the United States, we consider the social-desirability bias inherent in self-reported voting measures. The survey literature has shown that more survey respondents say they intend to vote than actually cast a ballot (Silver, Anderson, and Abramson 1986; Bernstein, Chadha, and Montjoy 2001). Nonetheless, we consider that data-availability limitations are most pronounced when studying marginalized and minority populations. We contend that multiple factors, including immigration status, qualify the Mexican immigrant population in the United States as one of these populations. Thus, to understand the vote from abroad of the Mexican diaspora in the United States, we operationalize the diaspora vote from the self-reported vote-intention measure worded in the survey as follows: “Mexico holds federal elections this year on July 1, 2018. Mexicans living abroad, in the United States and around the world, have the right to vote in federal elections via mail-in ballot if they obtained their voting credentials in time. Do you plan on voting by mail from the United States or have you already voted by mail from the United States?” (Diane D. Blair Center of Southern Politics and Society 2018). We code the dependent variable *voter* dichotomously, where 1 = “Already voted” or “Will vote” and 0 = “We missed the deadline to register to vote but wanted to vote,” “I am not interested in voting in this election,” and “I did not know there was an election.” Twenty-nine percent of the survey respondents reported either already having voted or declared an intention to vote, while 23 percent reported having wanted to vote but missed the deadline to register, 35 percent were uninterested in voting in the election, and finally 13 percent reported being unaware that an election was being held.

In part two of this analysis, we employ the dependent variables *AMLO voter*, *Anaya voter*, and *Meade voter*, which are created from the survey item that was asked only of self-reported potential voters and is worded as follows: “In the election for President of Mexico for whom [did you/will you] vote?” We code these variables from the response items dichotomously as 1 = “Andrés Manuel López Obrador” and 0 = “Ricardo Anaya Cortés, José Antonio Meade, Margarita Zavala, Jaime Rodríguez Calderón, and ‘Other.’” following the same strategy for both Anaya and Meade voter variables. Forty-four percent of the sample supported López Obrador (Juntos Haremos Historia Coalition), 15 percent supported Anaya (Por

México al Frente Coalition), and 16 percent supported Meade (Todos por México Coalition).

Explanatory Variables

Governments' efforts to extend the electoral franchise to their diaspora communities reflect the political will to include such communities' voices in citizen decision making; these efforts can be proactive or reactive to organized diaspora-citizen pressures. The most important quality of institutional-structural actions taken to facilitate voting from abroad is that the citizenry recognize them as beneficial. We operationalize structural factors facilitating the vote from abroad among the Mexican diaspora in the United States by employing two variables, *learning* and *casting*, coded from the following survey item: "We are interested in knowing how difficult or how easy it was for you to learn about the electoral process for Mexicans living in the United States. Would you say it was easy, more or less easy, somewhat difficult, or very difficult to [learn about the vote from abroad/vote in the election from abroad]?" (Diane D. Blair Center of Southern Politics and Society 2018). These two separate items are ordinal and coded as 1 = easy, 2 = more or less easy, 3 = somewhat difficult, and 4 = very difficult. Majorities of respondents report *learning* about the vote from abroad (67 percent) and *casting* a ballot from abroad (59 percent) being easy or more or less easy.

We operationalize *voter efficacy* from responses to the survey item, "How confident are you that your vote [is/will be] a positive impact for Mexico?" We code the variable as 0 = not at all confident, 1 = a little confident, 2 = somewhat confident, and 3 = very confident. Fifty-three percent of respondents report being not at all or only a little confident in the positive impact of their vote.

Pride in Mexico's democracy is an ordinal variable coded from the survey question, "How proud are you of Mexico regarding its democracy?" where 0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = somewhat, and 3 = very proud. Forty-one percent of respondents report being somewhat or very proud of Mexico's democracy.

The final independent variable of interest to this study, *Mexican mass-media X attention*, is a two-way interaction term constructed from the variables *Mexican mass-media* exposure and *attention* to politics. The media exposure variable is coded 0 = never, 1 = a few times per year, 2 = a few times per month, 3 = once a week, 4 = a few times per week, and 5 = daily, from a survey item measuring the frequency with which respondents rely on Mexican mass-media

sources for their news and information. Sixty-five percent of respondents report using Mexican mass media at least once per week. *Attention* to politics is coded as 0 = none, 1 = a little, 2 = some, and 3 = a lot of attention, in response to the item asking respondents how much attention they pay to politics in Mexico. Only 18 percent of respondents report paying absolutely no attention to Mexican politics.

Covariates

The set of covariates included in this analysis is drawn from the body of knowledge regarding voting and transnational political behavior, with special attention paid to the factors most meaningful to Mexican nationals in the United States. Nativity, years spent in the United States, and naturalized US citizenship are among the more important analytical tools for understanding political behavior among US populations with large proportions of immigrant experience or ancestry and are critical to this analysis. Observations in the *MVFAS* sample include 38 percent who are *US born*. Among the immigrant subsample, the average *years spent living in the US* is 19.8 years, and 33 percent are *naturalized US citizens*.

For many members of the Mexican diaspora in the United States, in particular the US-born children of Mexican immigrants, the idea of belonging to Mexico or of Mexico belonging to them can be highly contentious and deeply emotional. Thus, to begin to understand the motives for participation in Mexico's elections among Mexicans in the United States, it is important to account for the diaspora's sense of belonging to Mexico and the entitlement to participate in its democracy that accompanies this sense of belonging. To control for the effects of feelings of Mexican belonging on voting among the diaspora, we include a rigid exclusionary belonging measure, Mexican nativity, in this analysis. The measure *Mexican-born belonging* is ordinal, with values assigning levels of importance of being born in Mexico to being Mexican, that is, 0 = none 1 = a little, 2 = some, and 3 = a lot of importance.

Other covariates of diaspora voting are frequency of trips to Mexico, frequency of remittance sending, Spanish-language dominance, income, level of education, age, gender, and income. Covariates of diaspora support for the eventual winning candidate López Obrador also include political ideology and Democratic Party identification, which the Latino politics literature documents as the most common party affiliation for Mexican Americans. Descriptive statistics for all variables are reported in the appendix.

Table 2. Estimates of the vote from abroad of the Mexican Diaspora in the US in the 2018 Mexican presidential election (probit regression)

Predictors of support	Mexican Citizens in the US		Immigrant model (3)	US-born model (4)
	Base model (1)	Full model (2)		
Structural factors				
<i>Learning about voting</i>	-0.013 (0.098)	-0.022 (0.099)	0.092 (0.170)	0.063 (0.141)
<i>Ease of casting ballot</i>	-0.212* (0.094)	-0.207* (0.094)	-0.403* (0.167)	-0.116 (0.134)
Voter efficacy	0.291** (0.075)	0.293** (0.075)	0.471** (0.112)	0.223 (0.126)
Pride in Mex. dem.	0.049 (0.069)	0.064 (0.069)	-0.014 (0.098)	0.344** (0.125)
Mex. media x attn.		0.141** (0.048)	0.206* (0.081)	0.175* (0.070)
Use of Mex. media	0.128* (0.056)	-0.048 (0.081)	-0.037 (0.126)	-0.208 (0.124)
Attention to politics	0.113 (0.090)	-0.374* (0.189)	-0.890** (0.334)	-0.368 (0.252)
US born	0.615** (0.155)	0.627** (0.157)		
Years in US			-0.037** (0.014)	
Naturalized US cit.			0.472* (0.241)	
Freq. of Mex. visits				0.131 (0.072)
Remittance freq.	0.107** (0.031)	0.100** (0.031)	0.075 (0.046)	0.176** (0.052)
Mex.-born belonging	-0.013 (0.067)	-0.009 (0.067)	-0.067 (0.104)	0.017 (0.106)
Span.-lang. dom.	0.069 (0.158)	0.084 (0.160)	-0.075 (0.241)	-0.048 (0.269)
Income	0.050 (0.027)	0.051 (0.027)	0.173** (0.044)	-0.064 (0.042)
Education	0.041 (0.052)	0.039 (0.053)	-0.133 (0.080)	0.165 (0.089)
Gender (male=1)	0.253 (0.137)	0.250 (0.139)	0.0936 (0.203)	0.274 (0.232)
Age	-0.003 (0.006)	-0.003 (0.006)	0.006 (0.011)	0.009 (0.011)
Constant	-2.26** (0.427)	-1.73** (0.456)	-0.67 (0.705)	-2.65** (0.769)
Observations	526	526	325	201
Pseudo R^2 χ^2	0.267 169.5	0.281 178.3	0.338 112.1	0.307 83.65

Standard errors in parentheses * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Statistical Tests

In the first set of statistical tests, we employ probit regression to estimate voting participation among the Mexican diaspora in the United States given structural factors, efficacy, pride, and mass-media effects, controlling for other factors. In the full model estimation of voting from abroad (model 2) presented in table 2, we find mixed support for the independent-effects hypotheses tested. Among these are a negative effect of evaluation of the *ease of casting a ballot* from abroad ($p < .05$) and a positive effect of *voter efficacy* ($p < .01$) on voting among all Mexican citizens.

The interaction term capturing the moderating effect of attention to Mexican politics on mass-media exposure is also positive and significant ($p < .01$); the marginal effects of this interaction in model 2 (all Mexicans) are illustrated in figure 1. Here we observe

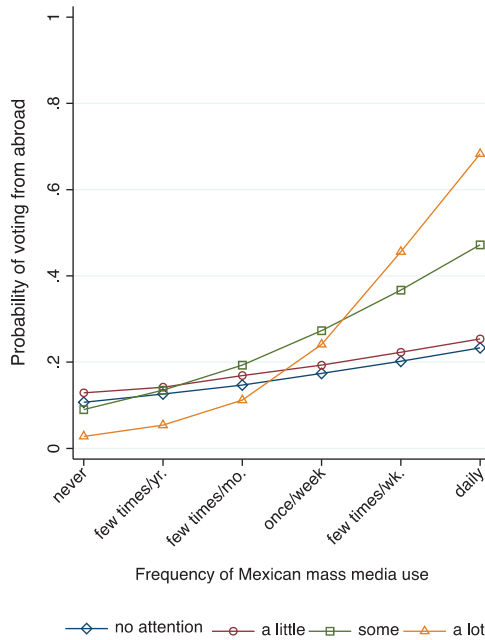


Figure 1. Marginal effect of Mexican mass-media exposure on the diaspora vote in 2018 by level of attention paid to politics

how exposure to Mexican mass media affects the probability of voting at different levels of attention paid to politics. The pattern of a positive and statistically significant effect ($p < .01$) holds at all levels with an average of a 32 percent probability increase when moving from no exposure to daily exposure to Mexican mass media, which supports the prediction in hypothesis 4. The effects of exposure to Mexican mass media on the likelihood of voting are, nonetheless, most pronounced among those who pay the most attention (a lot) to politics. For such a potential voter, the predicted likelihood of voting varies between 3 percent for those with no exposure to Mexican media and 68 percent for those who interact with Mexican media on a daily basis. This pattern of mass-media effects holds true in both the immigrant (model 3) and US-born (model 4) estimates of voting from abroad. As mentioned above, there is strong empirical evidence illustrating the positive effects of US-based Spanish-language media on Latino political engagement (Félix, González, and Ramírez 2008; Ramírez 2013). Thus, it is important to document here that in both bivariate and multivariate statistical tests, neither exposure to US-based mass media nor

a respondent's preference for the Spanish language yielded a statistically significant effect on voting from abroad.

Model 2 further reveals the positive and statistically significant response of nativity (*US born*) to casting a vote from the United States, revealing that Mexicans born in the United States are more likely to vote than immigrants. The marginal effect of nativity on the vote says that US-born Mexicans are 20 percent more likely to vote than immigrants. This significant difference in voting likelihood is cause for a closer examination of the independent effects of efficacy, facilitating the vote from abroad, pride in Mexican democracy, and exposure to Mexican mass media on diaspora voting among immigrants and the US-born members of the Mexican diaspora in the United States.

For an investigation of the aforementioned factors, we turn to separate predictions of voting behavior among immigrant and US-born Mexicans in the United States. These are reported in models 3 and 4 in table 2 where we observe that different factors are at play in predicting whether Mexicans participate in the vote from abroad based on nativity. Within the immigrant subgroup model, there is support for the structure-research hypothesis, H_{1b} (evaluations of the ballot-casting procedure), and the voter-efficacy hypothesis, H_2 . These relationships are illustrated in terms of their marginal effects on voting from abroad in figure 2. Immigrants who find the voting process to be very difficult are 22 percent less likely to vote than those who believe that it is easy to vote from abroad ($p < .05$). There is no such structural-evaluation effect among US-born Mexicans. It should come as no surprise even to a casual observer that efficacy and pride in democracy are found to positively influence voting. Given the unique cost structure of voting from abroad, we might even expect that these effects be especially pronounced among diaspora voters. Yet, a statistically significant effect of voter efficacy on voting ($p < .01$) is present only among migrants, not among US-born dual nationals. As figure 2 illustrates, migrants who are very confident that their vote from abroad has a positive effect on Mexico are 32 percent more likely to vote than those with no such confidence. Conversely, pride in Mexico's democracy (H_3) is found to affect the likelihood of voting from abroad among Mexicans born in the United States but not among immigrants. Among US-born Mexicans, those with much pride in Mexico's democracy are 39 percent more likely to vote than those with absolutely no such pride ($p < .01$).

Statistical findings linking the covariates described above to voting from abroad illustrate some logical relationships between these phenomena. First, regarding Mexican-born diaspora voters, the statistically significant findings for years spent living in the United

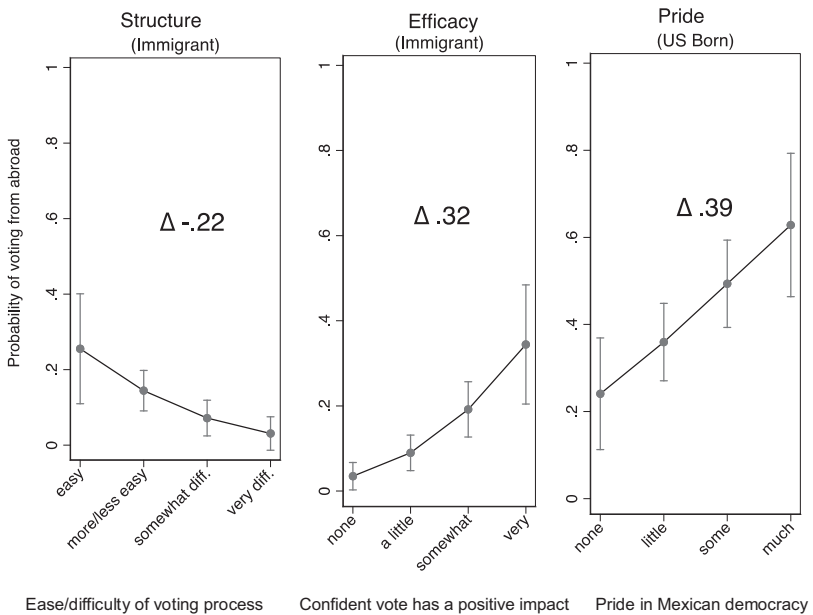


Figure 2. Marginal effects of structure, efficacy, and pride on the Mexican diaspora in the US's vote from abroad in 2018

States ($p < .01$) and naturalized US-citizen status ($p < .05$) support findings in previous research on assimilation and transnational political behavior. Recalling that in the sample the range of years spent in the United States among Mexican immigrants is between ten and fifty-eight years, the difference in the likelihood of voting from abroad between Mexican immigrants with durations at these two extremes is -31 percent. That is, the longer Mexican immigrants are in the United States, the less likely they are to cast a vote from abroad. The citizenship process, while an important marker of acculturation into US society, is also known not to encumber transnational political behavior among migrant communities (Jones-Correa 1998). Here, among Mexican immigrants, we observe that naturalized US citizens are more likely to vote from abroad than immigrants in the United States who are not US citizens.

Predicting the Diaspora's Support for AMLO, Anaya, and Meade

A separate probit regression model predicts diaspora voters' support for the eventual winner and current president, López Obrador, and

the leaders of the PAN-led and PRI-led coalitions. This secondary analysis tests the same four research hypotheses tested above and draws on previous findings citing the importance of stable levels of partisanship among Mexican voters to individual presidential campaigns (McCann and Lawson 2003) to also control for political-party identification and political ideology. Because López Obrador's campaign was explicitly antisystem, anti-PRI, anti-PAN, and anti-status quo, the effects of efficacy and pride in Mexican democracy are of particular interest here. As part of the larger Latino population in the United States, Mexicans' political behavior is subject to various forms of US political socialization, which invariably shapes attitudes and orientations about the Mexican homeland. Because Mexican-origin Latinos in the United States tend to identify most strongly as liberal and as Democrats (López et al. 2016), we add the covariates ideology and Democratic Party ID in the electoral support models. We report the results of these regression models, along with the marginal-effects differences between the maximum and minimum values of statistically significant factors, in table 3.

Here, diaspora voter efficacy yields significant explanatory power ($p < .01$) in predicting support for AMLO, which supports the prediction described in our second research hypothesis but has no such effect on support for either Anaya or Meade. In fact, the coefficients of efficacy for the latter candidates are signed in the opposite direction. Diaspora voters who are very confident that their vote has a positive effect on Mexico (the variable's maximum value) are 40 percent more likely to support AMLO's candidacy than voters with no such confidence (its minimum value).

The effects of feelings of pride in Mexican democracy play a statistically significant role in predicting support for all three coalition candidates. Unexpectedly, however, less pride in Mexican democracy predicts support for AMLO ($p < .05$) and Anaya ($p < .05$), opposite to our prediction. That is, voters with no pride in Mexico's democracy are 24 percent more likely to vote for AMLO and 16 percent more likely to support Anaya than voters who are very proud of Mexico's democracy. Conversely, but consistent with the general expectation that electoral participation is a tacit endorsement of the democratic system, pride in Mexican democracy positively predicts support for the PRI-coalition candidate, Meade. Diaspora voters who are very proud of the country's democracy are 15 percent more likely to translate this pride into support for the candidate of the ancien régime.

With these mixed statistical findings regarding our expectations in mind, we turn to the other thought-provoking revelations borne out in these tests. First, keeping in mind that in the AMLO-support

Table 3. Estimates of electoral support for party coalition presidential candidates in 2018 among Mexican diaspora voters in the US (probit regression)

Predictors of support	Vote for AMLO	Min→Max Δ	Vote for Anaya	Min→Max Δ	Vote for Meade	Min→Max Δ
Structural factors						
<i>Difficulty learning about voting</i>	-0.173 (0.137)		-0.225 (0.145)		0.032 (0.155)	
<i>Difficulty of the act of casting a ballot</i>	0.226 (0.124)		-0.108 (0.134)		-0.119 (0.140)	
Voter efficacy	0.363** (0.112)	+ .40	-0.145 (0.118)		-0.114 (0.124)	
Pride in Mexico's democracy	-0.208* (0.089)	- .24	-0.250* (0.105)		0.253* (0.110)	+ .15
Mexican mass media x attn. to politics	-0.139 (0.075)		-0.010 (0.077)		0.034 (0.082)	
Use of Mexican mass media	0.060 (0.141)		0.037 (0.141)		0.002 (0.153)	
Attention to politics	0.638* (0.297)	+ .60	-0.005 (0.303)		0.001 (0.331)	
Political ideology	-0.069 (0.093)		-0.064 (0.111)		0.304** (0.115)	+ .27
Democratic Party ID	-0.167 (0.177)		0.225 (0.207)		0.355 (0.224)	
Nativity (US-born)	-0.141 (0.206)		0.055 (0.237)		0.089 (0.238)	
Remittance sending frequency	0.099* (0.041)	+ .27	-0.090* (0.045)		0.011 (0.049)	
Mexican-born "belonging"	0.177 (0.090)		0.049 (0.010)		-0.286** (0.107)	- .19
Spanish-language dominant	0.308 (0.212)		-0.198 (0.240)		-0.332 (0.248)	
Income	0.012 (0.037)		0.001 (0.038)		-0.045 (0.039)	
Education	-0.271** (0.069)	- .65	0.200** (0.076)		0.300** (0.078)	+ .42
Gender (male = 1)	-0.082 (0.189)		0.090 (0.218)		-0.102 (0.222)	
Age (range: 18-86)	0.019* (0.008)	+ .44	-0.003 (0.009)		0.006 (0.010)	
Constant	-1.054 (0.785)		-0.375 (0.825)		-3.117** (0.907)	
Observations	309		309		309	
Pseudo R^2 χ^2	0.230 86.11		0.107 25.27		0.170 40.60	

Standard errors in parentheses * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

model there is no statistically significant difference between immigrant and US-born voters, the 27 percent difference in the likelihood of AMLO support between diaspora voters who send remittances to Mexico weekly and those who never send remittances ($p < .05$) is a potential signal from diaspora voters who are so deeply economically invested in Mexico that they trust the economic stewardship of a López Obrador government over that of other aspirants. The level of such economic trust in the PAN's Anaya is quite the opposite, as illustrated by the likelihood of supporting Anaya being 14 percent lower among frequent remittance senders than among those who send no money to Mexico ($p < .05$). One has to consider that the political-theater performance of AMLO protecting his wallet from Anaya during the second presidential debate in the northern border city of Tijuana possibly played a role in the minds of diaspora voters here (Zavala 2018). Finally, as is generally expected in predicting electoral behavior, level of education plays a powerful role in predicting coalition-candidate support among diaspora voters in 2018. To make sense of how López Obrador's approach to building the MORENA (Movimiento Regeneración Nacional) movement and his consistent political campaign promises to take Mexico back from the PRI and PAN elites translated among diaspora voters, a look at the effects of education on candidate support is helpful. The fact that these effects are highly significant ($p < .01$) and run opposite to predicting AMLO support when compared to Anaya and Meade support suggests that voters in the US diaspora are sharply divided, perhaps even more so than the electorate within Mexico.

Discussion

This multivariate analysis of the attitudes among Mexican-citizen immigrants to the United States regarding electoral participation from abroad establishes the importance of citizen evaluations of the voting process, perceptions of the efficacy of voting from abroad, assessments of the quality of Mexican democracy, and exposure to mass media in understanding why Mexicans living abroad participate in Mexico's federal elections. When controlling for factors previously identified as impacting transnational political behavior among emigrants, we find partial support for our claims that evaluations of structure, efficacy, and pride in democracy, along with exposure to Mexican mass media, have meaningful effects on diaspora voting among Mexicans in the United States. We identify significant differences in these effects on extraterritorial voting behavior among immigrants and US-born Mexicans.

Secondary multivariate analysis of the factors informing diaspora voters' support for the three partisan coalition candidates reveals that support for AMLO among voters in the United States is largely a function of voter efficacy. That is, AMLO supporters are much more likely than others to believe that their vote will have a positive impact on Mexico. Yet, efficacy's effects are not in line with the effects of pride in democracy for AMLO supporters. Pride in Mexican democracy is a strong positive indicator of support among diaspora voters for PRI-candidate Meade. Mexicans indeed value democracy over other forms of government while exhibiting low levels of respect for most of the institutions associated with democracy (Camp 2013). Our analysis of candidate preference affirms that politically active Mexicans in the United States are likely to punish and reward the PRI for the democracy it has had the heaviest hand in establishing. The fact that support for both AMLO and Anaya is a function of a *lack* of pride in Mexican democracy confirms the anti-PRI, anti-establishment positions of these candidates and resonates well with their supporters. That so many Mexicans in the diaspora and nationwide voted in 2018 against the status quo is not surprising. What should raise concern is the sustainability of such a movement as the Far Left coalition led by AMLO becomes more deeply entrenched in the institutions that uphold Mexico's democratic system.

Our analysis of Mexican migrants and US-born Mexican dual nationals' transnational voting in 2018 reveals important findings about this electorate not previously addressed by the literature on Latino political behavior and transnational politics. With our empirical findings we stress the significance of the differences between US-born Mexicans and immigrants in terms of what motivates them to engage in Mexican electoral politics from abroad. Finally, from the view that null findings can be as important to a study as those theoretically predicted—the absence of independent effects of structural factors—the voting-eligible diaspora-citizen assessments of the independent INE's outreach to the electorate in the United States have no effect on candidate preference. We see this as a significant finding of this research and as a positive artifact of electoral management in Mexico.

Conclusion and Future Directions

This study draws on original data and contributes significantly to our understanding of a grossly understudied phenomenon in Latin American electoral politics. The evidence presented here regarding transnational political behavior in the largest national-origin group of US Latinos contributes to the growing understanding of the

increasingly transnational political reality in which Mexicans in the United States find themselves. Even as Mexico and other Latin American countries continue to aid their diaspora communities in the United States with their political and social integration (Délano Alonso 2018), electoral reforms and the INE's efforts to engage Mexicans abroad in the electoral process are having a somewhat positive impact. Given the still remarkably low level of participation in 2018, we maintain that the resources committed by the Mexican government to facilitate voting from abroad are utterly inadequate. To promote the vote from abroad, the INE targeted only a handful of US cities with large Mexican populations to hold events and relied on Mexican, immigrant, or Latino community organizations in the United States to get out the vote (Instituto Nacional Electoral 2018). Certainly, migrant-community organizations provide a solid infrastructure for promoting the vote from abroad (Ross Pineda 2005), and the infrastructure should be formally expanded to include Consejos Electorales Ciudadanos (Ross Pineda 1999). However, because the INE has been inconsistent in demonstrating its full commitment to a streamlined vote-from-abroad process, the resources necessary for such an infrastructure to function have been lacking. Though registration, validation, and voting procedures have improved since 2012, when eligible voters in the diaspora needed to travel to Mexico to obtain their voter identification card and could find no assistance from the local consulate, the INE's failure to enact measures necessary to facilitate electronic voting is an unfortunate artifact of the 2018 election.

Scholars of migration and Latino politics alike will find in this study new dimensions of Latino political participation in the United States. Our ability to make generalizations about diaspora voting beyond Mexico and Mexicans in the United States is limited by the lack of data reasonably comparable to the Mexican-US case. Our conclusion that US-born Mexican dual nationals are more likely than their immigrant parents and grandparents to engage in transnational electoral politics should encourage more investigation into the transnational dimension of Latino politics.

Other empirical findings that we present here encourage further analyses of the effectiveness of the INE's efforts to expand access to the vote for Mexicans abroad, as well as of the effects of mass media and migrant political socialization on the political behavior of increasingly transnational citizens. We establish that an important and previously seldom explored avenue for understanding the Mexican diaspora's political orientations, needs, and demands is the electoral behavior of both migrant and US-born Mexicans in the United States. Advancing our understanding of Latin American

transnational electoral politics even further requires multiple and varied investigative approaches. For one, our study employs a web-based sample to reveal that US-born Mexicans and naturalized migrants are more likely to vote from abroad. And while we have a high degree of confidence in web-based surveys, we do not dismiss the fact that even the most sophisticated web-based sampling techniques operate in the context of a technology and information gap that divides many migrants, Latinos, and African Americans from White Americans. Further, our findings can be enhanced via a mixed-method approach, one that integrates multiple and varied vantage points of transnationalism. The blending of political ethnography to reveal the textures of a transnational social movement building among the diaspora's key political actors (Félix 2019a) and the views of the diaspora toward the Mexican government (Félix 2019a; Félix 2019b) are critical steps in the right direction.

With available data, future studies should compare the attitudes and orientations of in-territory Mexicans to those of expatriates. McCann, Escobar, and Arana (2019) compared these groups' attitudes and democratic engagement in the 2006 election, but their questionnaire was broad, and their US samples were limited to just three localities. The Mexican case of electoral reforms enacted in time for the 2018 federal elections allows for a comparative analysis of the diaspora's voting patterns in the 2006 and 2012 elections. As the Mexican case well illustrates, change in the arena of diaspora policy-making is incremental; how we measure such changes will be insightful for future studies of transnational politics. A comparative approach is needed to examine the effects of mass media on voting behavior, as this too has significantly changed since the 2006 presidential elections. Given vast and rapid advances in telecommunications technology, newer generations of immigrants in the United States have significantly more means by which to remain connected to home-country politics. The findings in the present study indicate that staying connected to Mexican mass media is critical to the Mexican diaspora's political engagement and participation from abroad. While social media has not been directly linked to patterns of voting from abroad in this study, it is worth looking into this development given our findings that attention to politics and Mexican mass-media exposure are critical to predicting voting from abroad. To complement the literature documenting the effects of Spanish-language media on Latino-immigrant political engagement mentioned above, we add our agreement with the assessment that Mexican voters are extraordinarily connected to social media, which makes them a potentially powerful force in Mexican elections (Camp

2013). With more available data, our measures of the diaspora's media exposure should be complemented by more nuanced information about their use of US-sourced Spanish-language media and social-media networks. While our data limitations restricted the analysis of media effects to US-sourced and Mexican-sourced media, we tested the effects of media through an interaction with language preference but found no statistically significant effects with our data. An analysis of the relationship among Mexicans' engagement with Spanish language and social media in the United States, and the influence of these on voting motivations and policy and candidate preferences would be a fruitful area of future research. With more available data, future research into the roles of specific media (e.g., social media and television) in shaping diaspora communities' political behavior is a necessary addition to this discussion. Regardless of whether governments develop and maintain the political will to engage their emigrants politically and extend political rights to them, practitioners and analysts alike will want to know what, in turn, emigrants do and do not respond to.

Electoral-governance scholars and analysts should study closely the Mexican diaspora's assessment of the effectiveness of the INE's efforts to mobilize the vote from abroad. We know that public evaluations of electoral management, cleanliness of elections, and trust in electoral institutions in Mexico tend to be, at least in part, a function of party identification, support for particular candidates, and region (Ugues and Medina Vidal 2015) and "winner's effects" (Ugues 2018). Yet, research on trust in electoral institutions has virtually ignored the perspectives of the electorate abroad, in particular the views of US-born dual nationals engaging in transnational politics. This is fertile ground for future research that will bridge the literature on electoral management with the Latin American transnational-politics literature.

We assert that the nuances of Mexicans' transnational electoral behavior identified in this study illustrate the response of the Mexican diaspora in the United States to meaningful electoral reforms. We also conclude that by voting from abroad, Mexicans in the United States engage in democratic diffusion practices that influence political behavior among their families and friends in Mexico (Pérez Armendáriz and Crow 2010). However, such diffusion is not strictly a one-way street from a more developed, democratic United States to a less democratic Mexico. In fact, by demonstrating that voting from abroad is significantly influenced by high levels of voter-efficacy pride in Mexican democracy, we find that the democratic values held by the diaspora cannot claim exclusively US or Mexican origins.

Although the Mexican diaspora overwhelmingly supported López Obrador in 2018, as president, his policy directives for the migrants in the United States reflect indifference to their well-being. AMLO's expressions of thanks to the migrant community for their continued economic support through record-setting remittance transfers have been accompanied by cuts, in the name of republican austerity, to critical programs such as the migrant-matching 3x1 Remittance Program and the IME-Becas Scholarships for Mexican and Mexican American university students studying in the United States. These and other political moves that alienate the diaspora serve to challenge, yet again, migrant civil society and the diaspora at large to stay engaged in transnational politics. Fortunately, it appears that a new generation will continue to flex the strength and resilience of the Mexican diaspora in the United States.

Appendix

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of dependent, independent, and control variables

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Min.</u>	<u>Max.</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. dev.</u>
Voter	0 = no	1 = yes	0.29	0.45
AMLO voter	0 = no	1 = yes	0.44	0.49
Anaya voter	0 = no	1 = yes	0.16	0.36
Meade voter	0 = no	1 = yes	0.16	0.37
Structural: learning about vote	1 = easy	4 = very difficult	2.17	0.94
Structural: casting a ballot	1 = easy	4 = very difficult	2.35	0.95
Voter efficacy	0 = none at all	3 = a lot	1.35	1.07
Pride in Mexican democracy	0 = not at all	3 = very proud	1.27	1.09
Mexican mass-media use	0 = never	5 = daily	2.99	1.66
Attention to politics	0 = none at all	3 = a lot	1.54	0.97
Democrat PID	0 = other	1 = Democrat	0.48	0.5
Ideology	1 = very lib.	5 = very cons.	2.72	0.99
Nativity	0 = immigrant	1 = US born	0.38	0.49
Years in US (immigrant)	< 1	58	19.81	11.24
Naturalized US citizen (immigrant)	0 = no	1 = yes	0.32	0.47
Freq. of visits to Mex. (US born)	0: never	5: > once/year	2.61	1.85
Remittance frequency	0 = never	7 = weekly	3.17	2.42
Mexican-born belonging	0 = not imp.	3 = very imp.	2.86	1.09
Spanish-lang. dominant	0 = English	1 = Spanish	0.49	0.51
Income	1: < \$10K	15: > \$350K	4.71	2.83
Education	1 = no formal	8 = postgrad	4.31	1.42
Gender	0 = female	1 = male	0.52	0.5
Age	18	86	35.28	11.94

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