

**POLITICAL ATTITUDES, SOCIAL CAPITAL,
AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION:
THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO COMPARED**

Joseph L. Klesner

Department of Political Science
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio 43022

TEL: 1-740-427-2274
FAX: 1-740-427-5306

klesner@kenyon.edu

June 7, 2001

**Political Attitudes, Social Capital, and Political Participation:
The United States and Mexico Compared**

Political values matter when they shape political behavior. We care about instilling democratic values in our children because we expect that socialization to democratic attitudes will lead them to participate democratically—they will want to participate in collective decision-making and they will be content to participate through democratic institutions and in a democratic way. Holding democratic views means little if one does not act on those democratic beliefs.

Early political culture research suggested that Mexicans did not hold democratic values to anywhere near the extent that their neighbors to the north did. Among other dimensions of their analysis in *The Civic Culture*, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba categorized the respondents to their surveys into holders of differing types of political attitudes, including “parochials,” those who expect nothing from the political system; “subjects,” those who look to government for the outputs they can get from it; and “participants,” those more inclined to be actively involved on the input side of government (1963: 17-19). Participants would be expected to form the basis of an active civil society and hence the foundation of democracy. However, few participants could be found in Mexico, where about one-quarter of respondents were parochials and two-thirds were subjects. In contrast, North Americans¹ were much more participative, although not to such a level that their participation threatened democratic stability. They held the balance of parochial, subject, and participant attitudes that made up the “civic culture,” in Almond and Verba’s memorable phrase.

Without citizens with democratic attitudes, who really embraced citizen roles, authoritarian practices naturally would be easily implemented by the ruling party, for who would oppose those practices? Since few independent organizations could be found in Mexican civil society, one might chalk up that absence to the lack of participant citizens to lead and to join them.. In the United States, in contrast, the strength of democracy may be seen as due to the associative and participative behavior of North Americans, as Tocqueville recognized long ago.

However, the situation may have been more complex than *The Civic Culture* suggested. For example, observers frequently cited the tendency to petition government officials for favors as a manifestation of Mexicans' "subject" political culture. So long as people saw the government as a dispenser of individualized benefits via the clientelist networks promoted by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and by government agencies, they would not likely organize viable civic organizations or opposition parties to oppose the PRI and the captive organizations it had created (like the official labor and peasant movements). However, perhaps a more fruitful way of explaining Mexicans' "subject" political attitudes is to argue that the structures of government and the official party had been created precisely to encourage individualized contacting of elected officials and bureaucratic agencies because distributing individualized benefits (extension of a water line to a petitioner's house or help in obtaining a government job, for example) was cheaper than extending benefits to large groups of mobilized people and at the same time less challenging to the PRI's rule. Mexicans who tended to see themselves as "subjects" instead of "participants" were simply reacting rationally to the clientelist institutions that had been created in the 1930s and 1940s. Indeed, in research based on surveys conducted in the 1970s, John Booth and Mitchell Seligson (1983) concluded that Mexicans held democratic attitudes; if Mexico

remained authoritarian and Mexicans engaged in modes of participation other than those regarded as ?participative,? that authoritarianism had to be attributed to factors other than the political culture, such as institutions like the presidency, at the national level, and the PRI and *caciquismo*, at the local level.²

Even taking account of the structurally-imposed constraints on participation identified by the critics of *The Civic Culture*, the connection Almond and Verba drew between political culture and participation remains a significant concern for research, especially in this time of political transition for Mexico.³ To the extent that different national communities hold varying degrees of commitment to democracy or different conceptions of democracy (Camp 2001), cross-national comparison offers fruitful opportunities to gain insight into the role of political attitudes in shaping patterns of participation. This survey of Mexicans and North Americans promises to provide us with insight into the attitudinal differences between citizens of the world?s oldest democracy and those of one of its newest. In addition, because the survey oversamples Mexican-Americans and Mexicans resident in the United States, we can gain some perspective on the processes by which the attitudes of North Americans have come to be shared by Mexicans and those of Mexican descent as well as whether those attitudes lead to different rates of political participation.

Measuring Political Participation: The Data

The Democracy through Mexican Lenses survey was designed primarily to allow researchers to explore the process of political learning and the acquisition of democratic values.⁴ It does not attempt to provide the extensive set of questionnaire items typically posed to respondents in surveys such as those conducted by Sidney Verba and his collaborators (e.g.,

Verba and Nie 1972; Verba, Nie, and Kim 1971, 1978; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995) to explore political participation. However, it does pose questions about non-electoral forms of political participation and membership in political organizations that allow us to tap patterns of political activity by Mexicans and North Americans.

In particular, the Democracy through Mexican Lenses survey asked respondents whether they had ever taken part in one of the following modes of political participation and, if not, whether they would consider doing so: asking a favor of a politician or public official, signing a petition, attending a demonstration, taking part in an unofficial strike, occupying land or buildings, and joining a boycott. In addition, the survey asked whether respondents belonged to a political organization.⁵ The survey did not ask respondents whether they had voted recently or regularly,⁶ thus we must confine our attention to non-electoral participation in this study. To provide a comprehensive measure of non-electoral political participation, I constructed an index in which each respondent was given one point for each mode of participation in which she indicated she had taken part, including belonging to a political organization. The index thus ranged from 0 to 7.

Attitudes and Political Participation: Cross-National Differences and Similarities

In this democratic age, respondents to surveys rarely admit openly that they prefer alternative political regimes. Yet, some respondents will admit that in some circumstances they might prefer an authoritarian regime. Table 1 indicates that when given a choice between always embracing a democracy and occasionally preferring an authoritarian regime, both North Americans and Mexicans overwhelmingly choose democracy. Indeed, in 2000, Mexicans did not differ significantly from their northern neighbors in the degree to which they espoused a preference for democracy.

Table 1 about here

However, democratic values must run more deeply than a willingness to choose democracy over authoritarianism when asked a preference between those two labels, one having a strongly positive meaning, the other a negative connotation. Table 1 also shows that when asked about one of the major components of modern democratic regimes—the rule of law and whether the government should be made to follow its own laws—the depth of commitment to democracy may be more shallow in Mexico. Both Mexicans and Mexican-Americans were much more inclined to allow authorities to violate the law in order to punish wrongdoers than North Americans generally. Other studies associated with this project will indicate that the understanding of democracy in Mexico differs from conceptions held in the United States.

If democracy is *of* the people and *by* the people as well as for the people, then political participation is at the center of the democratic experience. To what extent do North Americans and Mexicans differ in their political behavior? Specifically, do Mexicans and North Americans differ in the extent of political participation? Aggregate data on electoral participation in the two presidential elections of 2000 would indicate that Mexicans participate at a higher rate than people in the U.S., for 64 percent of Mexicans registered to vote turned out on July 2. In contrast about 51 percent of North Americans of voting age cast ballots in November. However, as most students of political participation suggest, voting is only one mode of participation, and not a particularly challenging form of involvement at that (Asher, Richardson, and Weisberg, 1984: 50-2). Indeed, Mexico's efforts in the past decade to register its electorate and to encourage turnout has been much more pro-active and significant than measures taken in the U.S. to lower barriers to voting, such as the National Voter Registration Act (otherwise known as Motor Voter).

Figure 1 about here

Political participation can take many other forms in democracies. As mentioned above, the data from this survey allow us to explore the following other modes of participation: contacting politicians and public officials to ask favors, signing petitions and protest letters, attending demonstrations or marches, participating in an unauthorized strike, occupying a building or land, participating in boycotts, and belonging to political organizations. Figure 1 illustrates the patterns of participation of Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, and the general U.S. sample. It clearly shows that participation rates for these non-electoral modes of participation are significantly higher for the U.S. than for Mexico, and within the U.S., the general population participates at a much higher rate than does the Mexican-American population. The U.S. respondents to this survey even reported engaging in political acts such as asking politicians for favors, a mode of participation ordinarily associated more with clientelistic regimes such as Mexico than the more voluntaristic U.S. regime, at a higher rate than Mexicans. Figure 2 provides another illustration of differences in the volume of participation, this time by showing the distribution of the participation index among the three major population groups we are studying.

Not only do these data indicate that residents of the US engage in political activities at a much higher rate than residents of Mexico, but they generally confirm the findings of past studies of Latino participation. As Rodney Hero, F. Chris Garcia, John Garcia, and Harry Pachon (2000: 529) summarize:

Latinos have lower overall participation rates than the general population, have generally positive participatory orientations (but actual participation does not follow), have lower rates of organizational memberships and activities, and lower rates of voter registration

and turnout. Also, a significant proportion of the Latino community is foreign-born, and noncitizens report feelings of distance and disinterest from the political life of the U.S.

How can we explain differences in levels of political participation across the two countries and between Mexican-Americans and others in the US? The literature on participation has focused on four major groups of factors that shape political participation: institutional opportunities and constraints, political values, resources, and social capital. I will explore each sequentially, and then I will examine the interaction of these factors in a multivariate analysis of political participation.

Figure 2 about here

Institutional Opportunities and Constraints

A survey focusing on political attitudes provides very little in the way of direct evidence about institutional opportunities and constraints that might shape patterns of political participation. Yet in a cross-national study we must recognize that there exist constraints on participation that operate differentially across national settings. Studies of political participation have placed heavy emphasis on the role of institutional constraints and opportunities in shaping the modes of participation pursued and the volume of that participation (Verba, Nie, and Kim, 1978; Asher, Richardson, and Weisberg, 1984). Without relying on the direct testimony of either frustrated or empowered participants, we can nevertheless discuss some of the key institutional dimensions of the United States and Mexico that may structure political involvement.

In particular, to the extent that the Mexican regime has only imperfectly protected its citizens' civil and political rights, all acts of voluntary participation entail accepting some risk of retribution by those officials who have been offended or by those partisan opponents who are

threatened by citizen involvement. During the heyday of the PRI, the regime did not discourage clientelistic behavior, such as asking politicians, public officials, and local strongmen for favors (Cornelius 1975). Indeed, it encouraged this form of participation because it reinforced vertical links between elites and the citizenry and headed off the formation of mass movements that could emerge from horizontal linkages among Mexican citizens. In contrast, voluntaristic political acts that the PRI could not coopt or control were regarded as threats to regime stability and often met with repression. Such characteristics of the Mexican institutional context are not relics of distant times either. In the 1980s and 1990s, political violence directed against the militants of the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) and against journalists caught the world's attention. In this context, occupying land or buildings to make a political statement entailed much risk.

Those Mexicans who live in the border region have faced the additional constraint that many of them are new to their places of residence. Indeed, many of the population centers near the border have grown so rapidly that calling them communities may stretch the meaning of the term unduly. Because many border area residents are recently arrived to the border region and likely more preoccupied with finding and keeping employment than Mexicans in other regions, we might expect that they would be less likely to find time to participate in politics and that the social networks by which people become involved in politics would be less likely to function there.

In the United States, voluntary acts of political involvement do not entail the risks that they have in Mexico. However, Mexican-Americans face some constraints. Many Mexican-Americans retain Spanish as their primary (in some cases, their only) language, which can limit the activities in which they might engage (writing petition letters to non-Spanish-speaking authorities or agencies, for example). Many Mexican-Americans do not have US citizenship, and hence

cannot engage in many political acts.⁷ For some Mexicans resident in the US, lack of papers can completely constrain even non-electoral modes of participation. For some Mexican-Americans and Mexicans resident in the US, the recency of residence in a community may so hamper their appreciation of political issues in their new locality that political participation has no meaning.

The differential rates of political participation shown in Figures 1 and 2 may have of their basis in these institutional differences. However, they may also be explained by other variables to be explained below. We must wait for a multivariate analysis to completely account for the independent effects of such institutional differences (see below).

Socioeconomic Status and Demographic Factors

Many past studies of political participation found the causal bases of political activity in class and other socioeconomic and demographic variables.⁸ For instance, older citizens have regularly been identified as more likely to engage in political activities than the young because those who are older have more experience and, typically, a greater stake in society that they need to defend. Those with greater socioeconomic resources, as evidenced by higher income levels, can apply those resources to their political activity (for instance, they can make greater contributions to political campaigns) and, of course, they have a greater property stake at risk in the political sphere that they may wish to protect by participating in the political sphere. More educated citizens are usually found to participate more in politics than their less educated fellow citizens. As Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, Henry Brady, and Norman Nie (1993: 466-7) summarize the results of numerous studies:

Education enhances participation more or less directly by developing skills that are relevant to politics—the ability to speak and write, knowledge of how to cope in an

organizational setting—by imparting information about government and politics, and by encouraging attitudes such as a sense of civic responsibility or political efficacy that predispose an individual to political involvement. In addition, education affects activity indirectly: those who have high levels of education are much more likely to command jobs that are lucrative and to develop politically relevant skills at work, in church and in voluntary organizations.

In addition to age, income, and education, students of political participation also typically examine the role of urban and rural residency in promoting political activity. Those studies have reached mixed conclusions: while modernization theorists had argued that urbanization would likely make political participation easier, hence encouraging higher participation rates in cities, others have noted that in large cities the lack of connectedness among citizens discourages them from engaging in collective endeavors, including participating in politics (Asher, Richardson, and Weisberg 1984: 42-3).

Table 2 shows the zero-order Pearson correlation coefficients between two different measures of political participation and the basic socioeconomic variables mentioned above. As Table 2 indicates, age, education, and index of material prosperity, and urbanization are all positively associated with actual political participation, although urbanization is only weakly associated with participation, as our discussion above would have suggested. When we consider both actual and potential participation, the coefficients for education and the index of material possessions rise—the better educated and the well-off who don't participate are inclined to say they might participate, whereas the less well-educated and the poor don't say they're likely to participate if in fact they don't. The urbanization coefficient declines to statistical insignificance,

which may suggest that those in rural areas who don't participate would do so if they felt they had the opportunity. Finally, the age coefficient even changes direction, an indication that the younger respondents who don't participate may be willing to do so in the future.

Table 2 about here

Political Attitudes and Participation

That the differences in rates of political participation are not solely due to structural conditions is suggested by Figure 3. The Democracy through Mexican Lenses study asked not only whether respondents had engaged in particular modes of political participation, but also whether they might do so. Figure 3 shows the distribution of combined responses to that question. When compared to the responses in Figure 1, Figure 3 clearly indicates that the gap between the general US sample and the both Mexican-Americans and Mexicans narrows when aspirations are considered rather than actual behavior.

Figure 3 about here

How do political attitudes shape political participation? Broadly, four different dimensions of political attitudes can conceivably shape political behavior: those related to fundamental political values (preference for democracy or authoritarianism, for example), to political efficacy, to political engagement, and to the evaluation of the political context in which one lives. Let us explore sequentially each of these dimensions and their implications for political participation .

Fundamental Political Values. Do those who profess to prefer democracy to any other political regime participate more than those who are willing to accept an authoritarian regime under some circumstances? We might expect, *a priori*, that those more committed to a

democratic regime would be more apt to see democracy as government *by the people*. Hence, we might hypothesize that confirmed democrats would be more committed to participate in politics than those who see authoritarianism as a viable alternative to democracy.

Table 3 about here

Table 3 illustrates the cross-tabulation of regime preference and the participation index, controlling for the major population groups that live in different institutional contexts. Although these contingency tables may suggest a relationship between regime preference and participation, in fact no statistically significant relationship emerges in any of the subsets of our sample. Similarly, if we examine another variable that taps into regime preference, *viz.*, the willingness to allow the authorities to use whatever means necessary to prosecute wrongdoers, no statistically significant relationship surfaces. In short, there seems to be no bivariate association between fundamental regime preferences and political participation. Embracing democracy apparently does not cause one to participate more frequently.

Political Efficacy. Past work on political participation has identified political efficacy as a key explanatory variable. Almond and Verba (1963) made the concept of citizen competence a centerpiece of their work, and others have built on their work. For example, in their study of participation in the United States, Verba and Nie (1972) found efficacy to be a factor for predicting the different modes of political participation a respondent might follow.

In our sample, the bivariate relationship between political efficacy and political participation holds for all groups except Mexican-Americans. As Table 4 suggests, the association between efficacy and participation is not particularly strong, but those non-Mexican-Americans in the US and Mexicans who feel that politics is not too complicated for the ordinary

person to understand are somewhat more involved in political activities. Conversely, those who regard politics as complicated tend to participate less. Mexican-Americans, however, do not manifest this relationship. One possible reason is that language constraints and legal barriers can stand in the way of even the most self-assured person.

Table 4 about here

Interestingly, within the Mexican-American portion of the sample, those Mexican-Americans who claimed American “nationality” did not evidence greater political efficacy than those who asserted they held “Mexican” nationality, or both nationalities. Similarly, those who reported having US working papers were no more likely to report that they felt able to have influence in political affairs than those who did not. That is, some of the typical structural vulnerabilities of Mexican-Americans do not seem to have impact on their sense of political efficacy. However, among Mexican-Americans, there is a weak but significant relationship between the number of years one has lived in the US and one’s political participation, including one’s aspirations to participate, as Table 5 shows.⁹ Likewise, there is a weak but significant relationship between a Mexican-American’s professed nationality and the number of forms of political participation in which he engages (those expressing American nationality participate more) and those who have US working papers report participating more often (see Table 5). So, if Mexican-Americans participate in politics less than do non-Mexican-Americans, that behavior seems to have little to do with their sense of political efficacy.

Table 5 about here

Political Engagement. By political engagement, I mean the psychological dimension of involvement in politics. While some scholars have suggested that following politics in the media

and discussing politics with acquaintances constitutes one mode of political participation,¹⁰ here I am distinguishing between a subjective engagement in political affairs which remains on the sidelines and an active participation in politics that requires going into the public sphere in one way or another. Major elements of political engagement include the level of one's interest in politics, the importance one attributes to politics, and the extent to which one discusses politics with others. Major studies of political participation have found that political involvement plays a role as an intervening variable between socioeconomic status and political participation (e.g., Nie, Powell, and Prewitt 1969).

Table 6 about here

Table 6 displays the relationship between one indicator of political engagement, the level of interest in politics, and our political participation index. A casual glance will suffice to demonstrate the strong relationship between political interest and the volume of political participation. Indeed, for all four groups of respondents, the association between these two variables is very strong and linear: those who are much more interested participate more frequently in politics. At the same time, Table 6 shows that the level of political interest varies considerably from group to group. Mexicans resident in the border region show far less interest in politics than does the general US population, hence their frequency of participation is much less.

Evaluation of the Political Context. It may stand to reason that those who perceive the political regime in which they live to be undemocratic will conclude that their political participation will be meaningless. Thus, they may be deterred from participating in political activities of various sorts. Of course, this relationship may hold more strongly for the modes of

participation most associated with democracy—e.g., voting and campaign activities. Similarly, those who feel strongly that their political system is democratic will be more likely to conclude that their own political participation can have impact on policy makers. Hence, those who believe they live under a democratic regime should be more likely to participate.

Table 7 about here

Table 7 reports the cross-tabulation of the participation index and one measure of the respondents' evaluation of the extent to which they live in a democracy, *viz.*, their responses to the question, "How democratic would you say this country is?" The sub-tables in Table 7 indicate that among the general populations of the US and Mexico, there is a weak but significant relationship between the evaluation of the democraticness of their political system and their propensity to participate politically. The relationship does not hold either for Mexican resident in the border region or for Mexican-Americans.

Social Capital

In recent years scholars have placed significant attention on the role of social capital in promoting the effectiveness of democratic systems (e.g., Putnam 1993, 1995). Social capital, understood to mean "features of social life—networks, norms, and trust—that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives" (Putnam 1995: 664-5), may be closely related to political participation, although the two concepts are not synonymous. Indeed, Robert Putnam argues that we must distinguish between political participation—"or relations with political institutions"—and social capital—our relations with one another." (Putnam 1995: 665) Whether social capital influences the propensity to participate politically is an empirical question, although Putnam (1995, 2000) has marshalled considerable evidence to argue that declining rates

of political participation in the United States are associated with the erosion of social capital. In a similar vein, Henry E. Brady, Sidney Verba, and Kay Lehman Schlozman (1995) have demonstrated that for acts of political participation requiring time, respondents who have acquired civic skills from their organizational or church memberships or from their jobs are more likely to participate (see also Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995 and the early study by Nie, Powell, and Prewitt 1969).

To operationalize the concept of social capital, from our survey we can use one attitudinal variable—social trust—and one set of behavioral variables, *viz.*, membership in organizations. Putnam characterizes membership in organizations as a major element of civic engagement. He suggests that social trust is essential for effective civic engagement (1995).

For this paper, I have constructed an index of organizational involvement by summing the number of types of organizations to which a respondent reports belonging. The survey asked respondents if they were members of the following types of organizations: sports, religious, union, neighborhood, PTA, and political. Membership in a political organization can be regarded as a form of political participation, so when exploring the relationship of organization membership to political participation, I drop political organization membership from the index.

Figure 4 about here

Figure 4 shows the distribution of types of organizational membership for Mexicans, Mexican-Americans in the US, and non-Mexican-Americans in the US. That Mexicans belong to social organizations of all forms at a considerably lower rate than people in the United States stands out in Figure 4. Even the neighborhood associations often touted as a new form of participation central to democratizing Mexican society involve only a small percentage of Mexican

respondents (Craig and Foweraker 1990). Figure 5 shows the distribution of the volume of organization memberships across the three groups (with political organization memberships included in the index for this chart).¹¹ This form of social capital is clearly more developed in the United States than in Mexico. Fully 64 percent of Mexicans belong to no organizations of the types shown in Figure 4. In contrast, 71 percent of non-Mexican-American US respondents and 62 percent of Mexican-Americans in the US reported belonging to at least one type of organization.

Figure 5 about here

Do these organization memberships have impact on one's political participation? Perhaps the easiest way to demonstrate the relationship is by considering the simple correlation coefficient relating the organizational membership index and the participation index. That Pearson's correlation coefficient is .387, which is relatively high for individual-level data (see the last row of Table 2). If we consider the relationship between both actual and aspired participation, on one hand, and organizational membership, on the other, the correlation is only slightly weaker at .369 (again, see Table 2).

Table 8 about here

To explore the attitudinal dimension of social trust, consider Table 8. In the general US sample, there exists a clear, although not overly strong, relationship between trust and the volume of participation. Similarly, for the general Mexican sample, a weak but significant relationship exists between trust and participation. No statistically significant relationship holds for either Mexican-Americans or those Mexicans from the border region.

Values, Social Capital, and Participation: A Multivariate Model

Of course, the political attitudes and dimensions of social trust discussed above are by no means unrelated to each other. Consequently, to gain a clearer understanding of the relationship of political attitudes, social capital, socioeconomic resources, and contextual (institutional) factors to political participation, controlling for the effects of each of these variables, I conducted a multiple regression analysis of the predictors of participation, using an alternative participation index as the dependent variable.¹² Table 9 lists the variables incorporated into the model as independent, explanatory variables.

Table 9 about here

Because analysts of political participation have long recognized socioeconomic status variables to be strong predictors of participation, I incorporated the following variables into the model: age, gender, educational level, the level of urbanization of the city in which the respondent lives, and an index of material possessions.¹³ In addition, because religiosity tends to predict participation, I included the frequency of church attendance with the demographic and socioeconomic variables. All except gender would be expected to have a positive relationship on participation: older, better educated urban dwellers would be expected to engage in more political activities than younger, less educated, rural residents. Those who attend church more often would be expected to engage in more political activities.

Social capital is tapped by three variables: the organization index, social trust, and the number of hours per day one watches television. I added the latter variable to the model because Putnam (1995) identifies television viewing as a substitute for engaging in the civic activities he associates with social capital: instead of joining bowling leagues, playing in bridge clubs, or working with the PTA, increasingly North Americans are spending their time in front of the tube.

While the organization index and social trust would be expected to have a positive impact on participation, television watching should be negatively related to political activities.

Under political attitudes, three variables can tap political engagement: one's self-professed interest in politics, the amount of time spent talking about politics with others, and one's assessment of the importance of politics. All should be positively related to participation (although the coefficients in the analysis should be negative because the scales are inverse). Two variables measure the evaluation of the regime: an assessment of how democratic the country is and the level of satisfaction with the functioning of democracy. The former we would expect to be positively related to participation. The latter's association with participation is unclear: those being more dissatisfied with democracy might choose to participate more (especially in protest activities) in order to encourage change in a democratic direction; at the same time, those very satisfied with democracy's functionality might be more inclined to take advantage of democratic institutions to participate more. Two variables explore regime preference: the direct question about whether one prefers democracy in all situations or authoritarianism under some conditions, and the respondent's opinion about whether authorities should be made to adhere to the rule of law when prosecuting wrongdoers or not. *A priori*, we would expect these variables to be positively associated with participation. Political competence is represented by the simple efficacy question, whether one considers politics too complicated for the average person or not. More efficacious respondents should be more willing to participate (however, the scale, as recoded, is inverse, so the coefficient should be negative). Risk propensity may influence political participation too: those more inclined to take risks may be more willing to become involved in political activities, especially those that require a greater effort than simply turning out to vote.

Finally, left-right placement (on a 0-10 scale) is included as a control for political ideology.

To capture contextual differences, such as those associated with political and other institutional factors, two dichotomous variables appear under the label “group.” The first divides the survey respondents into Mexicans and Americans. The second divides the US sample into Mexican-Americans and the non-Mexican-American population. We expect that the US portion of the sample will participate more than Mexicans because of the institutional constraints historically faced by Mexicans. Within the US, Mexican-Americans are expected to participate less frequently than the rest of the population owing to language limitations and lack of citizenship, as discussed above.

Table 10 about here

Table 10 reports the results of this multiple regression model. Two strong positive findings emerge in Table 10 and one negative finding. The positive findings are, first, that the social capital variables prove to be strong predictors of political participation. In particular, the index of organizational membership¹⁴ proves to be the strongest predictor of participation of all of the variables in this full model (see the standardized coefficient—or beta weight—for organization mean in Table 10). Social trust is an independently significant predictor of participation—more trusting individuals participate more frequently in politics. Further, those who spend their free time watching television do not participate as much in politics as those who abstain from television viewing.

Secondly, even after the socioeconomic, attitudinal, and social capital variables are accounted for in the model, the contextual (institutional) factors captured by the dummy variables for country (Mexico or US) and for Mexican-American ethnicity in the US remain strong

predictors of participation. Each is a relatively strong predictor of participation (again, see the standardized coefficients) in the expected direction—i.e., Mexicans participate less often in politics than residents of the US, controlling for the many other variables in the model, and Mexican-Americans are less involved than other US residents.

The negative finding in this multivariate analysis comes from the attitudinal variables. Except for those variables measuring political involvement—interest in politics, the perception of the importance of politics, and the frequency of discussing politics—only one other attitudinal variable proves to be statistically significant predictors of participation (other than social trust, which I have grouped with social capital, but which could arguable be placed with the attitudinal variables). That variable taps the respondent—s view about authority—whether those in charge of prosecuting crime should be held to the same standards of obedience to the law as those they are seeking to prosecute. That variable is only marginally significant (significance=.05). It appears that one’s views about democracy, one’s sense of efficacy, and other general political attitudes do not influence whether one participates in politics. However, the extent to which a respondent thinks politics matters very strongly shapes the volume of his political participation.

Finally, we should note that the socioeconomic variables reported in Table 10 mostly confirm our hypotheses about the roles of socioeconomic and demographic factors in influencing political participation. Older people, those living in urban areas, and those with higher levels of education participate more than younger folks, those living in the countryside, and the more poorly educated. However, these variables are not strong predictors of the volume of political participation (as shown by the relatively low betas). There seems to be no significant difference in participation between men and women. After controlling for other variables, those with more

material possessions (hence, more likely to be materially better off) are not significantly more likely to participate than those with less. Interestingly, those who attend church more regularly participate less in politics, a somewhat counterintuitive finding.¹⁵

To enrich the analysis, I ran alternative specifications of the model reported in Table 10. I dropped the statistically insignificant attitudinal variables from the model, along with one of the political involvement variables (frequency of discussing politics, since it is more of a behavioral variable than an attitudinal variable). I then estimated four alternative specifications of the model: the first used the same dependent variable as the model in Table 10, without the explanatory variables mentioned earlier in this paragraph; the second disaggregated the organizational membership index, replacing it with dichotomous variables for each of the possible organizational types in an attempt to determine which types of organization matter most for stimulating political participation; the third and the fourth replicate the first and the second, but a participation index that incorporates both actual and potential participation replaces the participation mean.¹⁶ Table 11 reports just the standardized coefficients produced by estimating those four alternative models. (The full statistical information from those estimations is reported in appendix tables A1 to A4.)

A casual glance at Table 11 will show that many of the variables in the four alternative models retain roughly the same explanatory power in each estimation. Social capital remains the strongest set of explanatory factors, and contextual matters (as captured by the dummy variables for country and Mexican-American ethnicity) also contribute much predictive power. When we move from an analysis of actual participation to an exploration of actual and potential participation, gender becomes a statistically significant predictor as men increasingly report that they might participate. The index of material possessions also becomes a powerful explanatory

variable when we examine actual and potential participation. One is tempted to suggest that materially better off men who don't participate in politics are simply unwilling to say that they would never consider participating even when their past behavior indicates otherwise.

When we disaggregate organizational involvement, all forms of organizational membership are positively related to political participation, with the possible exception of membership in religious organizations, which is statistically insignificant (although the sign is in the correct direction) for actual participation and weakly related to actual and potential participation.¹⁷ Whether a respondent belongs to a sports club, a PTA, or a union, that membership is likely to encourage her to participate politically. However, when we examine actual political participation, membership in a union or a neighborhood association is more likely to encourage participation than involvement with other types of organizations.¹⁸

The estimates reported in Tables 10 and 11 confirm our initial hunch that there remain differences in the volume of political participation between Mexico and the United States, and that within the United States, Mexican-Americans participate less often than other ethnic groups. Above I suggested that institutional constraints probably account for these different participation rates for non-electoral participation. We cannot, of course, directly measure these institutional (or any other contextual) differences directly with a survey of attitudes and perceptions. However, these survey data have confirmed our hypothesis that social capital plays a large role in promoting non-electoral political participation. Because social capital looms so large in explaining political participation rates, and because social capital is so disproportionately distributed among the population groups studied here (see Figures 4 and 5), it behooves us to give a brief exploration of the sources of the differences in social capital.

Explaining Social Capital: Some Exploratory Notes

In the same way that it is not primarily designed to examine political participation, the Democracy through Mexican Lenses survey was not intended for a thorough examination of the development of social capital. However, we can use the survey data from the Democracy through Mexican Lenses project to gain some preliminary insights into sources of the discrepancies in social capital observed in Figures 4 and 5. To undertake that preliminary examination, I regressed the mean of organizational involvement on the same set of socioeconomic and attitudinal variables used in the examination of political participation, including the social capital variables other than organizational memberships, as well as the variables introduced to control for country and Mexican-American ethnicity. The results of that multiple regression analysis are displayed in Table 12.

Table 12 about here

The overall differences in organizational membership between Mexicans and North Americans and between Mexican-Americans and others living in the US observed in Figures 4 and 5 can be attributed in no small way to socioeconomic and demographic differences. Among the strongest predictors (see the standardized coefficients) of organizational membership are age and the index of material possessions. Older people belong to more organizations. Those who are wealthier belong to more organizations. Mexicans are generally younger and poorer than North Americans. Mexican-Americans are likewise generally younger and poorer than the general US population. To the extent, then, that political participation is shaped by other organizational involvements, i.e., that one's stock of social capital permits one's participation in politics, Mexicans and Mexican-Americans are hindered by their relative youth and poverty compared to

the general US population. As Mexico's young population ages, and if it becomes materially better-off and thus acquires a stake in keeping its possessions, it may become more involved in social organizations and then more active politically. The same may be true for Mexican-Americans within the US.

The other socioeconomic and demographic variables offer more mixed messages about differences between the US and Mexico. Men have more organizational involvements than women, but the sexes are evenly distributed across countries and ethnic groups. Controlling for other factors, those in more rural areas belong to more organizations than those in more urban zones, but that variable is not particularly powerful as a predictor (see the low beta). Those who attend church more often have more organizational memberships (note that the variable is inverse, hence the negative coefficient actually means that the relationship is direct). Controlling for other factors, the education variable washes out.

Most political attitudes—including social trust—do not predict organizational membership. However, those attitudinal (and behavioral) variables that tap the disposition to political involvement—interest in politics and the frequency of discussing politics—prove to be significant predictors of organizational involvement just as they did for political participation. In short, some people think politics matters a lot, they discuss political matters with their friends, families, and coworkers, and they are joiners—they join a variety of organizations. Their organizational involvements probably reinforce their propensity to engage in political activities. Again, the distribution of people who are somewhat or very interested in politics is weighted against Mexicans and Mexican-Americans. In the general US population, 59% of respondents find politics somewhat or very interesting. Among Mexican-Americans, that percentage falls to

46%. Among Mexicans it is 39%. To the extent that interest in political matters disposes one to membership in social organizations (it is, perhaps, one of the main attitudinal manifestations of being a joiner), Mexicans and Mexican-Americans are disadvantaged compared to the general US population.

Finally, even taking account of these attitudinal and social structural factors, the strongest explanatory variable in the model displayed in Table 12 remains one's residence in Mexico. For reasons that apparently do not relate to political attitudes (since none of those variables was significant other than interest in politics), Mexicans join social organizations at a much lower rate than North Americans, including Mexican-Americans. The organizational landscape in which Mexico's stock of social capital must be built is not that conducive to actually constructing that social capital. Mexicans are simply less disposed to join social organizations than their North American neighbors, perhaps because fewer organizations exist south of the border. Whether the absence of such organizations owes to a history of efforts by the former ruling party to co-opt such organizations or to a tendency to non-associativeness by Mexicans is difficult to say with the data available for this research. However, whatever the reason, Mexicans and, to a lesser extent, Mexican-Americans suffer from a relative dearth of social capital.

Conclusions

Nearly four decades ago, Almond and Verba identified a "civic culture" to be a principal factor sustaining a healthy democracy in the United States and Britain and they worried about how the absence of a civic culture in other nations could inhibit success with democratic practices there. Insufficient numbers of participative individuals in Mexico helped to explain for Almond and Verba the anemic character of democratic practice there. The data analyzed in this paper do

suggest that Mexicans are less participative than their North American neighbors and that Mexican-Americans participate less in politics than the general US population. While I have not sought to argue that this propensity to political inactivity in Mexico and among Mexican-Americans hinders the functioning of democracy in either country—Mexicans just ousted the long-ruling PRI, after all—concerns about the implications of this non-participativeness for the long-term health of Mexican democracy could justifiably be raised.

Rather than engage in a lengthy discourse on the consequences of lower rates of political participation for the health of Mexican democracy and for the place of Mexican-Americans in the US political system, I will close this article with two comments, one more optimistic, the other more pessimistic about Mexican democracy in light of the research presented here. First, the more pessimistic note: Putnam's initial observations about the importance of social capital for the health of a democracy came from his study of regional governments in Italy (1993). His principal conclusion about the effectiveness of different regional governments in Italy's decentralization experiment was that those places in which regional government proved most successful were places with a long history of citizens' active involvement in civic affairs—i.e., in places where social capital had been developed over the course of decades and even centuries, new experiments in regional government succeeded; where no stock of social capital existed, they tended to flounder, despite the fact that the structure of governmental institutions was formally the same throughout the country. Putnam's concern in that study of Italy focused not on whether people participated in political affairs, but what the consequences of their participation would be for public policy. He concluded that good government depended on a citizenry with an abundance of social capital, hence his concerns about the decline of social capital, as manifested in the

disappearance of bowling leagues and other forms of social organization, for the health of US democracy (Putnam 2000).

As Mexico grapples with democratic policy formation and implementation in the aftermath of the PRI's fall from power, the nation's dearth of social capital may make governing the nation more difficult. The PRI wanted organizations it could control and political activists who would happily follow the national party's directives. One of the consequences of this preference by the former ruling party was that many people just stayed home and what the federal government could not accomplish—which became a lot after the debt crisis of the 1980s led to a downsizing of government—just didn't get done. One response to the overcentralization of power was a choice to decentralize government that began in the 1980s and has accelerated since then (Rodríguez 1997). Local governments have been given more money to spend and more latitude in how to spend it. However, if municipal governments have more to do and more revenue with which to do what they deem important for their localities, the successful expenditure of those funds will depend much on local citizens' capacity to make demands on their municipal governments, on their willingness to serve in locally-elected government positions, and their willingness to pitch in to accomplish collective tasks. The relative dearth of social capital in Mexico, as manifested in the relative absence of organizational memberships and high levels of mistrust, poses significant challenges for Mexico's new experiment in democracy, at the local level perhaps more than the national level.

On a more optimistic note, neither the low rates of political activity nor the absence of associational memberships in Mexico and among Mexican-Americans seem to be due to fundamental political values. Rather, they seem to be due to the relative youth of the Mexican

population, its lack of economic prosperity, and some important institutional constraints that plagued Mexico under PRI rule, most notably, the history of clientelism and the selective repression of political activists. Indeed, when Mexicans move to the United States and as they live longer in the US, they begin to join organizations and to participate in politics. Context rather than fundamental political values seems to matter most for the development of social capital and the emergence of a propensity to participate politically. If Mexico can consolidate its democracy and enjoy some years of stable democratic life, the prospects that Mexicans will come to have the opportunities to join social organizations and to become more active in political life should increase. Then Mexicans may come to approximate participative behavior that characterized the civic culture.

Table 1**Regime Preferences**

With which of the following phrases do you agree most?	Non-Mexican-American United States	Mexican-Americans	Mexicans
Democracy is preferable to any other form of government.	78	65	75
In some circumstances, an authoritarian government can be preferable to a democracy.	22	35	25
With which of the following phrases do you agree most?			
Authorities should apply the law strictly, even at the cost of not punishing a wrongdoer.	52	38	39
Authorities should try to punish wrongdoers even at the cost of not strictly following the law.	37	56	55

Table 2**Correlations between Participation, Organization Membership, and Socioeconomic Variables**

	Participation Mean Actual only	Participation Mean Actual and Potential	Organization Mean
Age	.115***	-.038**	.203***
Education	.288***	.346***	.183***
Index of Material Possessions	.298***	.368***	.398***
Urbanization	.039**	.023	-.085***
Organization Mean	.387***	.369***	---

*significant at .10 level; **sig. at .05 level; ***sig. at .001 level.

Table 3

Regime Preference and Political Participation

With which of these statements do you most agree: ? Democracy is preferable to any other form of government,? or ? In some circumstances, an authoritarian government can be preferable to a democracy.?	Number of Modes of Political Participation				N
	0	1	2	3 or more	
	Non-Mexican-American US				
Always Democracy	34	26	19	21	516
Sometimes Authoritarianism	43	19	21	19	146
Mexican-Americans					
Always Democracy	61	20	10	9	422
Sometimes Authoritarianism	70	17	6	7	224
Mexico					
Always Democracy	78	13	5	5	754
Sometimes Authoritarianism	83	12	3	2	255
Border Region (within Mexico)					
Always Democracy	78	13	4	6	379
Sometimes Authoritarianism	75	16	6	4	135

NB: None of the sub-tables are statistically significant.

Table 4

Political Efficacy and Political Participation

Which is closest to your way of thinking: ? Politics is very complicated and hard to understand,? or ? Politics is not very complicated and one can understand it.?	Number of Modes of Political Participation				N
	0	1	2	3 or more	
		Non-Mexican-American US			
Politics is complicated	45	26	15	15	377
Politics is not too complicated	31	23	24	23	338
	Mexican-American US				
Politics is complicated	69	17	7	7	347
Politics is not too complicated	61	20	10	9	374
	Mexico				
Politics is complicated	86	9	3	3	628
Politics is not too complicated	75	15	6	4	541
	Border Region (within Mexico)				
Politics is complicated	83	9	4	3	339
Politics is not too complicated	71	17	4	7	219

NB: Sub-table for Mexican-Americans is not statistically significant. Others significant at .01 level.

Table 5

**Institutional Constraints and Political Participation
Among Mexican Americans**

	Number of Modes of Political Participation				N
	0	1	2	3 or more	
What is your nationality?					
Mexican	82	11	4	3	544
American	71	13	8	8	76
Both	75	9	12	4	117
Do you have US working papers?					
Yes	78	11	6	5	498
No	83	13	4	0	137
Years living in the US					
Fewer than 5	76	18	5	2	67
5-10	80	14	6	3	104
More than 10	61	20	9	10	521

Table 6

Political Engagement and Political Participation

How much does politics interest you?	Number of Modes of Political Participation				N
	0	1	2	3 or more	
	Non-Mexican-American US				
A lot	22	22	22	34	179
Somewhat	35	25	22	18	262
Very little	44	28	15	14	174
Not at all	57	26	11	6	128
Mexican-Americans					
A lot	42	28	12	18	145
Somewhat	57	21	10	12	204
Very little	72	18	8	3	212
Not at all	83	10	4	2	187
Mexico					
A lot	56	27	7	10	156
Somewhat	76	15	6	3	304
Very little	88	9	2	2	381
Not at all	89	5	3	3	350
Border Region (within Mexico)					
A lot	51	27	8	14	49
Somewhat	82	10	5	4	115
Very little	75	14	7	4	159
Not at all	85	10	2	3	241

NB: All sub-tables significant at the .001 level.

Table 7

Evaluation of the Regime and Political Participation

How democratic would you say this country is?	Number of Modes of Political Participation				N
	0	1	2	3 or more	
	Non-Mexican-American US				
Very	35	22	21	23	289
Somewhat	35	30	18	16	306
A little	44	24	19	13	88
Not at all	58	11	5	26	19
Mexican-Americans					
Very	63	19	9	10	292
Somewhat	64	21	7	9	233
A little	60	20	13	7	146
Not at all	82	6	6	6	17
Mexico					
Very	77	17	2	4	167
Somewhat	79	14	4	3	309
A little	79	12	6	4	405
Not at all	85	7	3	5	164
Border Region (within Mexico)					
Very	77	15	9	0	34
Somewhat	81	11	2	7	170
A little	78	12	7	4	187
Not at all	74	18	2	6	103

NB: Non-Mexican-American US sub-table significant at the .05 level, Mexico sub-table at the .10 level; others not significant.

Table 8

Trust and Political Participation

Would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful about trusting other people?	Number of Modes of Political Participation				N
	0	1	2	3 or more	
	Non-Mexican-American US				
Most can be trusted	30	24	21	26	229
Need to be very careful	42	26	18	15	502
Mexican-Americans					
Most can be trusted	60	19	8	14	145
Need to be very careful	66	18	9	7	590
Mexico					
Most can be trusted	75	14	5	6	211
Need to be very careful	82	11	4	3	974
Border Region (within Mexico)					
Most can be trusted	70	21	6	3	113
Need to be very careful	81	10	4	5	453

NB: Only the Non-Mexican-American sub-table is significant at the .01 level; Mexico sub-table significant at the .10 level; others not statistically significant.

Table 9

Expected Relationships of Socioeconomic, Social Capital and Attitudinal Variables to Political Participation

Variable	Hypothesized Relationship
Demographic and Socioeconomic	
Age	positive
Gender†	positive
Education	positive
Religiosity?	positive*
Index of Material Possessions	positive
Urbanization	positive
Social Capital	
Television	negative
Organization Index	positive
Social Trust (0=cautious; 1=trusting)	positive
Political Attitudes	
Interest in Politics?	positive*
Talking Politics?	positive*
Importance of Politics?	positive*
How much Democracy??	positive*
Satisfaction with Democracy?	unclear
Regime Preference (0=authoritarian; 1=democracy)	positive
View about Authority (0=prosecute how ever ; 1=obey law)	positive
Efficacy (0=efficacy; 1=low efficacy)	negative
Risk Propensity (0=risk averse; 1=risk taker)	positive
Left-Right Self- Placement (0=left; 10=right)	unclear
Group	
Mexican (=1; US=0)	negative
Mexican-American (=1; non-Mexican-American=0)	negative

*Because the scale of the variable is inverse, coefficient should be negative ? inverse scale

Table 10
Multivariate Analysis of Factors Affecting Political Participation

Variable Dependent variable= Participation Mean	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	significance
	B	s.e.	Beta		
Constant	.086*	.046		1.872	.061
Demographic and Socioeconomic					
Age	.001**	.000	.049	1.970	.049
Gender	.003	.009	.008	.335	.738
Education	.004**	.002	.073	2.584	.010
Religiosity?	.007**	.004	.047	2.023	.043
Index of Material Possessions	.005	.003	.068	1.454	.146
Urbanization	.006*	.003	.040	1.726	.085
Social Capital					
Television	-.004*	.002	-.042	-1.851	.064
Organization Mean	.189***	.017	.291	11.228	.000
Social Trust	.023**	.010	.056	2.397	.017
Political Attitudes					
Interest in Politics?	-.011**	.005	-.062	-2.197	.028
Talking Politics?	-.032***	.007	-.119	-4.736	.000
Importance of Politics?	-.014**	.006	-.069	-2.526	.012
How much Democracy??	-.001	.005	-.003	-.100	.920
Satisfaction with Democracy?	.003	.003	.023	.891	.373
Regime Preference	.002	.010	.005	.213	.832
View about Authority	.017**	.009	.045	1.959	.050
Efficacy	.002	.009	.005	.201	.840
Risk Propensity	-.008	.010	-.018	-.758	.448
Left-Right Self- Placement	-.001	.002	-.013	-.578	.563
Group					
Mexican (=1)	-.048**	.020	-.128	-2.421	.016
Mexican-American (=1)	-.043***	.012	-.105	-3.491	.000
Adjusted R² = .29	F = 28.491		sig.=.000	N = 1442	

*significant at .10 level; **sig. at .05 level; ***sig. at .001 level.

? inverse scale

Table 11

**Multivariate Analysis of Factors Affecting Political Participation
Alternative Models**

Variable	Participation Mean Actual only		Participation Mean Actual and Potential	
	Beta	Beta	Beta	Beta
Demographic and Socioeconomic				
Age	.036*	.051**	-.106***	-.109***
Gender	.005	-.006	-.048**	-.036*
Education	.075***	.100***	.097***	.088***
Religiosity?	.035*	.030	.068***	.052**
Index of Material Possessions	.040	.114**	.134***	.141***
Urbanization	.039**	.021	-.015	-.019
Social Capital				
Television	-.043**	-.044**	-.042**	-.044**
Organizational Membership	.260***		.243***	
Sports Organization		.078***		.085***
Religious Organization		.017		.037*
Union		.173***		.168***
Neighborhood Association		.117***		.070***
PTA		.076***		.049**
Social Trust	.066***	.082***	.053**	.054**
Political Attitudes				
Interest in Politics?	-.116***	-.123***	-.159***	-.161***
Importance of Politics?	-.129***	-.052**	-.116***	-.113***
Group				
Mexican (=1)	-.170***	-.057	-.130***	-.132***
Mexican-American (=1)	-.164***	-.092***	-.102***	-.094***
Adjusted R²	.29	.27	.32	.33

*significant at .10 level; **sig. at .05 level; ***sig. at .001 level. ?inverse scale

Table 12

Multivariate Analysis of Factors Affecting Organizational Membership

Variable Dependent variable=mean of Organizational Membership	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	significance
	B	s.e.	Beta		
Constant	.574***	.062		9.296	.000
Demographic and Socioeconomic					
Age	.002***	.000	.109	4.724	.000
Gender	-.037**	.012	-.064	-2.935	.003
Education	.001	.002	.012	.420	.675
Religiosity?	-.026***	.005	-.114	-5.183	.000
Index of Material Possessions	.017***	.004	.160	4.298	.000
Urbanization	-.010**	.005	-.045	-2.066	.039
Other Social Capital					
Television	-.003	.003	-.020	-.930	.353
Social Trust	.005	.015	.008	.365	.715
Political Attitudes					
Interest in Politics?	-.029***	.007	-.106	-4.299	.000
Talking Politics?	-.028**	.010	-.068	-2.806	.005
How much Democracy??	-.007	.008	-.024	-.978	.328
Satisfaction with Democracy?	.004	.005	.018	.751	.452
Regime Preference	-.003	.014	-.004	-.174	.862
View about Authority	-.007	.013	-.013	-.579	.562
Efficacy	-.011	.013	-.019	-.856	.392
Risk Propensity	.008	.015	.012	.537	.591
Left-Right Self- Placement	.003	.002	.026	1.178	.239
Group					
Mexican(=1; US=0)	-.165***	.025	-.280	-6.520	.000
Mexican-American (=1)	-.058***	.018	-.095	-3.290	.001
Adjusted R² = .25	F = 29.799		sig.=.000	N = 1700	

*significant at .10 level; **sig. at .05 level; ***sig. at .001 level.

? inverse scale

APPENDIX

Multivariate Analysis of Factors Affecting Political Participation

Table A1

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	significance
	B	s.e.	Beta		
Dependent variable= Participation Mean					
Constant	.134	.030		4.417	.000
Demographic and Socioeconomic					
Age	.000*	.000	.036	1.869	.062
Gender	.002	.007	.005	.258	.797
Education	.004***	.001	.075	3.258	.001
Religiosity†	.005*	.003	.035	1.880	.060
Index of Material Possessions	.003	.002	.040	1.254	.210
Urbanization	.006**	.003	.039	2.119	.034
Social Capital					
Television	-.004**	.002	-.043	-2.386	.017
Organization Mean	.161***	.013	.260	12.548	.000
Social Trust	.027***	.008	.066	3.554	.000
Political Attitudes					
Interest in Politics†	-.020***	.003	-.116	-5.593	.000
Importance of Politics†	-.033***	.003	-.129	-6.242	.000
Group					
Mexican (=1)	-.062***	.013	-.170	-4.721	.000
Mexican-American (=1)	-.063***	.009	-.164	-6.795	.000
Adjusted R² = .29	F = 71.010		sig.=.000	N = 2186	

*significant at .10 level; **sig. at .05 level; ***sig. at .001 level.

†inverse scale

Table A2

Variable Dependent variable= Participation Mean	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	significance
	B	s.e.	Beta		
Constant	.042	.029		1.433	.152
Demographic and Socioeconomic					
Age	.001**	.000	.051	2.463	.014
Gender	-.020	.006	-.006	-.318	.751
Education	.004***	.001	.100	4.403	.000
Religiosity†	.004	.003	.030	1.506	.132
Index of Material Possessions	.007**	.002	.114	2.964	.003
Urbanization	.003	.002	.021	1.095	.274
Social Capital					
Television	.004**	.002	-.044	-2.350	.019
Organizational Membership					
Sports Organization	.027***	.007	.078	3.838	.000
Religious Organization	.006	.007	.017	.821	.412
Union	.075***	.008	.173	8.909	.000
Neighborhood Association	.043***	.008	.117	5.459	.000
PTA	.027***	.007	.076	3.681	.000
Social Trust	.032***	.007	.082	4.372	.000
Political Attitudes					
Interest in Politics†	-.020***	.004	-.123	-5.455	.000
Importance of Politics†	-.009**	.004	-.052	-2.345	.019
Group					
Mexican (=1)	-.020	.014	-.057	-1.340	.180
Mexican-American (=1)	-.034***	.009	-.092	-3.745	.000

Adjusted R² = .27	F = 51.147	sig.=.000	N = 2191
-------------------------------------	-------------------	------------------	-----------------

Table A3

Variable Dependent variable= Participation Mean, actual and potential	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	significance
	B	s.e.	Beta		
Constant	.657***	.067		9.857	.000
Demographic and Socioeconomic					
Age	-.003***	.000	-.106	-5.471	.000
Gender	-.038**	.014	-.048	-2.640	.008
Education	.010***	.002	.097	4.480	.000
Religiosity†	.022***	.006	.068	3.696	.000
Index of Material Possessions	.021***	.006	.134	3.621	.000
Urbanization	-.005	.006	-.015	-.809	.419
Social Capital					
Television	-.009**	.004	-.042	-2.344	.019
Organization Mean	.342***	.028	.243	12.129	.000
Social Trust	.050**	.017	.053	2.928	.003
Political Attitudes					
Interest in Politics†	-.062***	.008	-.159	-7.386	.000
Importance of Politics†	-.047***	.009	-.116	-5.398	.000
Group					
Mexican (=1)	-.103***	.032	-.130	-3.187	.001
Mexican-American (=1)	-.090***	.020	-.102	-4.409	.000
Adjusted R² = .32	F = 81.700		sig.=.000	N = 2191	

*significant at .10 level; **sig. at .05 level; ***sig. at .001 level.

†inverse scale

Table A4

Dependent variable= Participation Mean, actual and potential	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	significance
	B	s.e.	Beta		
Constant	.681***	.067		10.155	.000
Demographic and Socioeconomic					
Age	-.003***	.000	-.109	-5.508	.000
Gender	-.029*	.015	-.036	-1.945	.052
Education	.009***	.002	.088	4.072	.000
Religiosity†	.017**	.006	.052	2.758	.006
Index of Material Possessions	.022***	.006	.141	3.839	.000
Urbanization	-.006	.006	-.019	-1.034	.301
Social Capital					
Television	-.010**	.004	-.044	-2.476	.013
Organizational Membership					
Sports Organization	.070***	.016	.085	4.358	.000
Religious Organization	.029*	.016	.037	1.802	.072
Union	.174***	.019	.168	9.081	.000
Neighborhood Association	.062***	.018	.070	3.410	.001
PTA	.041**	.017	.049	2.474	.013
Social Trust	.052**	.017	.054	3.046	.002
Political Attitudes					
Interest in Politics†	-.062***	.008	-.161	-7.516	.000
Importance of Politics†	-.046***	.009	-.113	-5.290	.000
Group					
Mexican (=1)	-.105***	.032	-.132	-3.243	.001
Mexican-American (=1)	-.083***	.021	-.094	-4.002	.000

Adjusted R ² = .33	F = 65.485	sig.=.000	N = 2191
-------------------------------	------------	-----------	----------

Works Cited

- Almond, Gabriel A., and Sidney Verba. 1963. *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Asher, Herbert B., Bradley M. Richardson, and Herbert F. Weisberg. 1984. *Political Participation*. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag.
- Booth, John A., and Mitchell A. Seligson. 1983. "The Political Culture of Authoritarianism in Mexico: A Reexamination." *Latin American Research Review*, 19, 1: 106-124.
- Brady, Henry E., Sidney Verba, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1995. "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation." *American Political Science Review*, 89, 2 (June): 271-94.
- Camp, Roderic A., ed. 2001. *Democracy through Latin American Lenses*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Cornelius, Wayne A. 1975. *Politics and the Migrant Poor in Mexico City*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Craig, Ann L., and Wayne A. Cornelius. 1980. "Political Culture in Mexico: Continuities and Revisionist Interpretations." In *The Civic Culture Revisited*, ed. Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Craig, Ann L. and Joe Foweraker. Eds. 1990. *Popular Movements and Political Change in Mexico*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Garcia, John A. 1997. "Political Participation: Resources and Involvement among Latinos in the American Political System." In F. Chris Garcia (ed.), *Pursuing Power: Latinos and the Political System*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Hero, Rodney, F. Chris Garcia, John Garcia, and Harry Pachon. 2000. "Latino Participation, Partisanship, and Office Holding." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 33, 3 (September): 529-34.
- McDonough, Peter, Doh C. Shin, and Jos J.; Ivaro Mois J. 1998. "Democratization and Participation: Comparing Spain, Brazil, and Korea." *Journal of Politics*, 60, 4 (November): 919-53.
- Nie, Norman H., G. Bingham Powell, and Kenneth Prewitt. 1969. "Social Structure and Political Participation: Developmental Relationships." *American Political Science Review*, 63: 361-78, 808-32.
- Putnam, Robert D. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton:

Princeton University Press.

Putnam, Robert D. 1995. "Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 28, 4 (December).

Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Rodríguez, Victoria. 1997. *Decentralization in Mexico: From Reforma Municipal to Solidaridad to Nuevo Federalismo*. Boulder: Westview.

Seligson, Amber. 1999. "Civic Association and Democratic Participation in Central America: A Test of the Putnam Thesis." *Comparative Political Studies*, 32, 3 (May): 342-62.

Verba, Sidney, and Norman H. Nie. 1972. *Participation in America*. New York: Harper and Row.

Verba, Sidney, Norman H. Nie, and Jae-On Kim. 1971. *The Modes of Democratic Participation: A Cross-National Analysis*. Beverly Hills: Sage Professional Papers in Comparative Politics, no. 01-013.

Verba, Sidney, Norman H. Nie, and Jae-On Kim. 1978. *Participation and Political Equality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, Henry E. Brady, and Norman H. Nie. 1993. "Race, Ethnicity and Political Resources: Participation in the United States." *British Journal of Political Science*, 23: 453-97.

Notes

¹ English has no equivalent to *estadounidense* (as if that were a satisfactory term to refer to those who live in the United States). Hence, I will use the term "North American" to refer to the general U.S. population, understanding as I do that Mexicans and Canadians have every right to object to the appropriation of the term which is, at least, more specific than "American."

²See the review of factors shaping Mexican political participation in Craig and Cornelius (1980), esp. pp. 362-71.

³The recent resurgence of attention to political culture suggests that many scholars regard attitudinal factors as central determinants of political behavior.

⁴The Democracy through Mexican Lenses survey was given to 1204 randomly selected respondents in Mexico and 1506 respondents in the United States in September 2000. The U.S. sample includes 755 Mexican-Americans or Mexicans resident in the U.S. and 751 from the general U.S. population. In addition, 445 Mexicans living near the U.S. border were added to the study as an oversample to allow statistically meaningful comparisons of those living near the border and other groups in the overall sample. For simplicity, I will refer to both Mexican-Americans and Mexicans resident in the U.S. as Mexican-Americans.

⁵The modes of political participation about which this survey asked thus differ from those posed by Verba and his collaborators. Their modes of participation are identified as campaign activity, voting, communal activity, and citizen-initiated contacting. E.g., see Verba and Nie (1972). They thus focus more heavily on activities that would be regarded as democratic acts

(voting, participating in a campaign, attending a rally) than I can. The Democracy through Mexican Lenses questionnaire directed attention to a variety of behaviors that can be undertaken in both democratic and non-democratic regimes, with an emphasis on protest-oriented activities.

⁶The survey did ask those respondents living in Mexico but near the border and Mexicans resident in the United States whether they were able to vote and who they had voted for in July 2000.

⁷Lack of citizenship is the greatest constraint to voter turnout among Mexican-Americans, as John A. Garcia (1997) has shown.

⁸For an argument about the need to transcend socioeconomically-based arguments about political participation, see Brady, Schlozman, and Verba 1995.

⁹The zero-order Pearson correlation coefficient between the mean of the participation variables for actual participation (where 1.0 would equal having participated in all forms of political activity and 0.0 would equal no political participation at all) and years lived in the US was .091; the coefficient measuring correlation between the mean of actual and potential participation (where 2.0 would equal having participated in all forms of political activity and 0.0 would equal neither participating nor indicating any desire to do so) and years lived in the US was .113. Both coefficients are significant at the .05 level.

¹⁰See the discussion in Asher, Richardson, and Weisberg, 1984: 48-49.

¹¹Figure 5 illustrates an index of organization membership constructed by giving each respondent one point for an affirmative response to the question of whether he belonged to each

type of organization? sports team or organization, religiously-based organization, union, neighborhood association, political organization, or the PTA (*Padres de Familia* in Mexico). The organization index thus ranges from 0 to 6. The mean number of organizational memberships for the US and Mexico combined was 1.67. For the total US sample, it was 1.78, compared to 1.22 for the Mexican sample. Mexican-Americans mean score on the organization index was 1.70, compared to 1.83 for the general US sample. Those Mexicans in the oversample from the border region had a 1.09 mean number of organizational memberships.

¹²Ordinary least-squares regression, using pair-wise deletion. The alternative index of participation used for the multiple regression analysis was constructed by coding each form of participation as 1 if the respondent reported having participated, 0 if not (even if the respondent indicated that she might participate) and then calculating the mean of those participation variables. The index thus ranges from 0 (no participation) to 1 (those participating in all modes of political activity).

¹³The survey had no single measure of income that could apply to respondents in both countries. It did ask whether respondents possessed particular consumer durables, homes, and other major possessions indicative of wealth (coded 1 if the respondent has the item, 0 if not). The index was produced by adding the responses on those items.

¹⁴The index of organizational membership used in this multiple regression estimation was constructed in the same way as the alternative index of participation: each membership category was coded 1 if the respondent reported membership, 0 if not, and the mean of the categories was calculated. The index thus ranges from 0 (membership in no organizations) to 1 (membership in

at least one organization in each category).

¹⁵A number of recent studies of political participation, both within the United States (Verba, Schlozman, Brady, and Nie 1993) and in comparative perspective (McDonough, Shin, and Moisés 1998), have pointed to the role of organized religion in promoting political activism. Those studies generally conclude, however, that the context and the type of church with which one is associated matter significantly in determining whether church membership and/or frequency of attending religious services will promote or discourage political participation.

¹⁶In this case, the participation questions are recoded so that any reported participation is coded 2, the answer “might participate” is coded 1, and the response “would never participate” is coded zero. The index is created by calculating the mean of the seven types of participation. The index thus ranges from 0 to 2. Regressing the full set of variables reported in Table 10 on this index that incorporates potential and actual participation yielded roughly the same results as when the index that only measured actual participation was used as the dependent variable, hence I am not reporting those estimates.

¹⁷The statistical insignificance of the religious organization variable may be due to collinearity with the variable measuring the frequency of church attendance (labeled “religiosity”).

¹⁸The finding that almost all organizational memberships promote political participation is at variance with the conclusions of a recent study of political activism in Central America conducted by Amber Seligson (1999), who found that involvement only in community development organizations consistently predicted demand making in the six nations of Central

America.