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A Comprehensive Examination of the Determinants and Consequences  
of Political Trust among Latinos

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
Department of Political Science

by

Dean E. Bonner

B.A., California State University, Fullerton, 2000  
M.A., University of New Orleans, 2003

May 2009

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## **DEDICATION**

To my late Father, Farrell Mark Bonner and my mother, Wanzie Pierron Bonner,  
You will never completely understand the impact that you have had on my life.  
Thank You.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Marc Rosenblum (Dissertation Chair) for the countless hours he spent mentoring me during my graduate school years, I would not be at this stage without his help. Thanks to my dissertation committee members: Dr. Susan Howell, Dr. Christine Day, Dr. Mark Baldassare, and Dr. Robert Sims for their help throughout this process. A special thanks to go to Susan and Mark, both of you were/are excellent bosses who have always been there for me. Thanks to Dr. William Hoston for always being my brother, we have come a long way. Thanks to Dr. Michael Hess, my personal stats guru and great friend. Thanks to Stephanie Burchard for helping me throughout this process and for being a great friend. Thanks to all my coworkers at PPIC, you have always made me feel at home and have been a tremendous help over these last 3+ years.

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## ABSTRACT

Political trust is an important concept in a representative democracy because it defines citizens' expectations of their elected officials, their willingness to allow government to act on their behalf, and the quality of democratic accountability. Distrust, or when government outcomes fail to meet citizens' expectations, has been linked to discontent and disaffection, and to a broad decline in the legitimacy of government institutions.

Research consistently shows that Latinos are more trusting than non-Latinos—a finding which seems discordant in light of the socio-economic and cultural differences between these groups. The concept of expectations is especially interesting and useful in examining differences in levels of political trust among Latinos and non-Latinos. The literature on Latino trust lacks any comprehensive analysis of the determinants and consequences of political trust among Latinos.

This dissertation attempts to answer the following questions: What are the determinants of political trust among Latinos? Why are Latinos more trusting of government than non-Latinos? What impact does political trust have on Latino policy preferences and vote choice? Utilizing survey data of Californians, evidence I find that acculturation and country-of-origin variables account for differences between Latinos and non-Latinos, and that socio-economic variables do not. Latinos of Mexican origin are less trusting than other Latinos. Political trust has a negative impact on Latino support for health care reform, but no impact on non-Latino policy preferences in this area. Once again, trust impacts Mexican and non-Mexican Latinos differently. Finally, I confirm the positive relationship between political trust and voting for an incumbent (the negative relationship between trust and support for a major or minor party challenger); this relationship is constant across Latino and non-Latino groups.

Keywords: Latinos, trust, demographics

## CHAPTER 1

*“Will the process turn into a porkfest as it did in Washington with all the earmarks and the backroom deals? Or, when we have allocated the spending, will the people say, “They spent our money wisely?” Yet this is more than just about the people’s money. It is about the people’s trust. Let us not disappoint them.”*

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger  
January 9, 2007

### Introduction

Within a representative democracy you would be hard pressed to find many concepts that should be placed ahead of political trust in terms of importance (Gamson 1968; Bianco 1994; Levi 1997). Conceptually, the importance of trust focuses on the relationship between citizens and their expectations of government (Miller 1974). Hetherington (2004) defines trust as the relationship between the expectations of citizens and the outcomes of government and this is crucial to understanding political trust. Distrust, or when the outcomes of government fail to meet citizens’ expectations, has been linked to discontent (Gamson 1968) and Aberbach (1970) suggests that distrust could lead to disaffection and the “first step toward resistance (1199).” Miller (1974) goes further to say that a decline in trust can lead to a decline in legitimacy of government institutions.

While trust can impact government more generally it can also have particular effects on governance of political institutions as well. Hetherington (2004) theorizes that distrust leads to the shrinking of the policy agenda and specifically links distrust to the “demise of progressive policy in the United States over the last several decades (3).” It has also been posited that since Watergate it has become common to run against Washington because of the distrust of the American people. Over the last few decades we have seen the election of Washington outsiders, such as Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush as President. This

willingness to embrace an “outsider” speaks to Americans’ distrust and dissatisfaction with its leaders in Washington D.C. Furthermore, we have also seen prominent third party campaigns in 1992, 1996, and 2000.

The impact of distrust can also be seen regarding governance in California. However, Californians have more opportunities and methods to voice their displeasure than Americans nationwide. Over the last 30 years citizens have voiced their displeasure with the established government by increasingly turning to the ballot box to govern, electing governors that disrupted the status quo of the day and passing numerous initiatives that restricted the role of government. The underlying factor behind these maneuvers is a lack of trust in state government and its representatives. Specifically, Californians have passed a number of initiatives that have constricted the actions of elected officials. Whether it is Proposition 13, which established that a two-thirds majority was needed to pass tax increases or Proposition 98 that committed the state to spending 40 percent of the general fund on schools, Californians have voiced their discontent. Perhaps the most poignant example in recent years of Californians’ distrust impacting governance in the state was the recall of then Governor Gray Davis. Not surprisingly, in the fall leading up to the recall election, Californians’ trust in government sank to record lows (PPIC 2003). This connection between distrust and discontent illustrates the importance of our need to understand what drives political trust.

While many in America and California are distrustful of government, there are differences across racial ethnic groups. Research has consistently found that Latinos are more trusting than other groups (Garcia 1992; Cohen, Baldassare and Kaimowitz-Rodriguez 2003; Cole and Kincaid 2006), however a consensus has not been reached on why Latinos are more trusting.

This study, in attempting to answer why Latinos are more trusting than non-Latinos, undertakes an important function. Anytime that a racial/ethnic group is consistently different from the mainstream, it's important that research needs to question why. Furthermore, the answer to the question why is also pertinent to understanding why the mainstream holds the views that they do.

Research has found that assimilation has a negative effect on Latino political trust (Michelson 2003; Wenzel 2006) and that second and third generation Latinos are less trusting in government (Garcia Bedolla 1999). While acculturation may explain Latino/non-Latino differences, I posit that there may be other factors that play a role.

For example, the political context that many Latinos are linked to may play a role in Latinos exhibiting higher levels of trust. This political context includes the fact that many Latinos are of Mexican descent and that many still have connections to their country of origin (Pew Hispanic Center 2007). Closely tethered to this political context is that a Latino's expectations of government may be different than non-Latinos and thus impact their political trust. Another competing explanation involves the socio-economic status of Latinos. Latinos are more likely to live in a household with an annual income of \$40,000, more likely to be renters, and less likely to have attended college. These socio-economic factors increase the probability that Latinos may have to rely on government for some type of assistance and thus shape the way that Latinos view government.

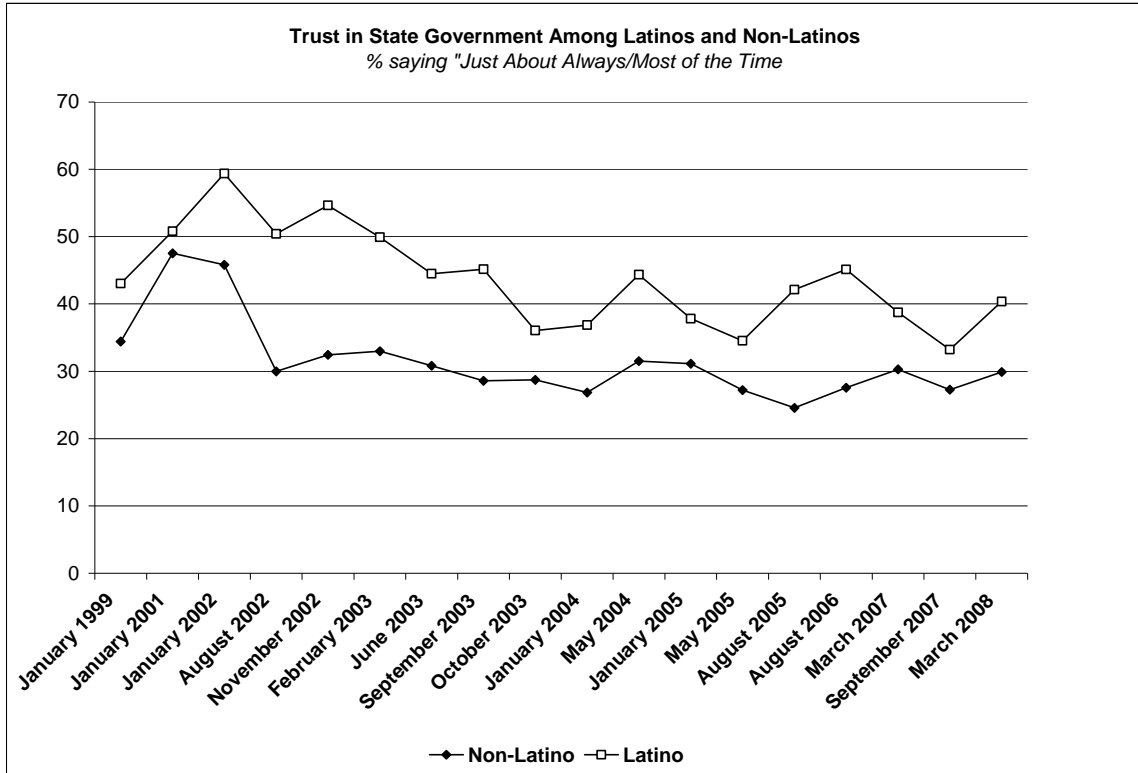
In this dissertation I examine the determinants of political trust and unravel why Latinos are more trusting than non-Latinos. While this first part of the analysis is crucial, it is also important to examine the consequences that political trust has within the political arena. Specifically, I explore the consequences that political trust has on policy preferences and voting

behavior. Integral to this analysis is an examination of the consequences of political trust among Latinos and non-Latinos to ascertain whether trust impacts these two groups differently.

### **Latinos, Non-Latinos, and Political Trust**

Early studies of Latino trust suggested that Latinos were less trusting than whites, but more trusting than African Americans (Guzman 1970; Garcia 1973). However, much more recently de la Garza and his colleagues (1992) presented findings from the Latino Political National Survey (LPNS) that indicated that Latinos were slightly more trusting than whites. Cole and Kincaid (2006), utilizing a national sample, also found that Hispanics or Latinos “were considerably more likely to report high levels of trust in the federal government than were non-Hispanics” (456). Furthermore, they find that Latinos express similar levels of trust in their state government, but this finding does not hold true at the local level. A nine year time series of trust in California state government using PPIC Statewide Survey data demonstrates that Latinos consistently express higher levels of trust in state government than their non-Latino counterparts (Figure 3.1). On average 43 percent of Latinos expressed they trust state government “just about always” or “most of the time”, compared to only 32 percent of non-Latinos.

**Figure 1.1**



Source: Public Policy Institute of California, Statewide Survey, 1999-2008.

While we know that Latinos are more trusting than non-Latinos, the current research has not reached consensus on why Latinos are more trusting. Research has found that assimilation has a negative effect on Latino political trust (Michelson 2003; Wenzel 2006) and that second and third generation Latinos are less trusting in government (Garcia Bedolla 1999).

The importance of a study of Latinos and political trust increases daily with the increasing prominence of Latinos within California and the United States. Although there have been studies of political trust among Latinos (Garcia 1973; de la Garza et al. 1992; Michelson 2001; 2003; Wenzel 2006), at this time there is no comprehensive model of Latino trust in government.

In addition to the void in the literature and the fact that Latinos are more trusting than others, an examination of Latino political trust is of interest for theoretical reasons as well.



When asking the question “Why are Latinos more trusting than non-Latinos?”, one must address the cultural aspects of Latinos. Seven in 10 Latinos in America and over three in four in California are of Mexican descent, but what impact does this have on Latino trust in California? While only about 40 percent of Latinos are foreign born, many Latinos have ties to their country of origin. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, six in 10 Latinos have at least moderate attachment to their country of origin (Pew Hispanic Center 2007).<sup>1</sup> Further, over half of Latinos say that the U.S. has “better political traditions” compared to their native country. Additionally, Portes and Rumbaut (1996) assert that since many Latinos come to America for economic reasons that they may view America more positively since the United States is giving them an opportunity for a better life. According to the 2007 Latino National Survey, 56 percent of foreign-born Latinos came to the United States to “improve (their) economic situation.” This connection with their native country along with their positive views of the U.S. politically could have an impact on their perceptions of political trust.

Also, the relationship of many Latinos have to Mexico further complicates this issue. Mexico consistently scores poorly on measures of corruption, and according to Transparency International’s 2008 Corruption Perceptions Index, Mexico currently ranks 72<sup>nd</sup> out of 179 countries in the world and 14<sup>th</sup> out of 32 countries in the Americas. Their score of 3.6 is much lower than Canada (8.7), the United States (7.3), and Chile (6.9) and just below Columbia (3.8). Theoretically we expect that Latinos from Mexico and first-generation Latinos would be less trusting than others.

Latinos as an out group in America and how that relates to political trust is also important. From research we know that African Americans in express low levels of trust in

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<sup>1</sup> See Pew Hispanic Center report titled “Between Here and There: How Attached Are Latino Immigrants To Their Native Country?” for a more detailed discussion.

government (Garcia 1973). What is it about Latinos, who are member of an out group as well, that produces higher levels of political trust? Furthering the discussion regarding differences between Latinos and African Americans is that both of these groups are part of another group that may impact trust, the low-income out group. Adding to this interesting quandary is that Latinos are somewhat more trusting than another out group, Asians.

Another possible explanation as to why Latinos are more trusting involves the socio-economic status of Latinos. Latinos are more likely to be from households that make less than \$40,000 per year, more likely to be renters than homeowners, less likely to have attended college and less likely to have health insurance. These socio-economic factors make them more likely to be reliant on government services than their non-Latinos counterparts and could potentially be a factor in determining why Latinos are more trusting.

It is also important to note that Latino trust in government is relevant nationally since Latinos are currently the fastest growing population in the United States. With the increased immigration of Latinos to the United States the Census Bureau projects that by 2042 America will be a majority minority with non-Hispanic whites making up less than 50 percent of the population. Also, by 2050 it is projected that the nation will be 54 percent minority (U.S. Census Bureau 2008). Furthermore, we know little of the consequences of trust among Latinos. Thus, in addition to examining the determinants of political trust, this research also will explore the consequences of political trust among Latinos particularly in the areas of policy preferences and vote choice.

## Why the State Level

The majority of the research on political trust has focused on trust of the national government<sup>2</sup>, however trust in state government is especially important today considering the degree to which policy devolution has become common in America since the 1990s<sup>3</sup>. According to Cole et al. (1999), devolution involves policies “intended to return a certain level of discretion in program planning, design, and implementation to state and local governments; while also reducing certain federally imposed rules, regulations, and unfunded mandates for those governments.” (99)

This dissertation will examine trust at the state level in part because of data limitations; however there are theoretical reasons to examine trust in state government as well. In the current political environment many important policies are enacted at the state level. However, can we expect the determinants of trust at the state level to be different than determinants at the national level? It may very well be the case that the determinants are the same. Variables like partisanship and executive approval could impact trust at both levels as could a plethora of control variables. However, theoretically there could be differences in the determinant and consequences of political trust at the two levels. Individuals have warmer feelings toward state and local government than federal government (Uslaner 2001) and constituents have closer contact with state government compared to the federal level. Many services, even federal services, are enacted by the state government and thus compared to the federal government; the state government is more involved in an individual’s life. This closer involvement will likely have ramifications on trust in state government.

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<sup>2</sup> See Uslaner (2001) for an exception.

<sup>3</sup> See for a more detailed discussion of the devolution see Nathan (1996). For an analysis of public opinion of devolution see Hetherington and Nugent (2001)

Jennings (1998) posits that respondents view the different levels of government differently and make judgments on government differently depending on the level. He identifies two dimensions that impact trust judgments: performance and linkage. At the federal he finds that trust judgments are leveraged by concerns about performance, which Jennings relates to the execution of government in performing its functions and the caliber of personnel. Judgments at the local level are dominated by the linkage between citizens and their government. The linkage dimension emphasizes the connection between the representativeness and accountability of leaders or as Jennings describes it, “how much they care about ordinary folks and how easy it is to understand what the government is doing—its transparency (232).” Jennings finds that trust judgments at the state level are more nuanced and influenced by both dimensions.

Building from the work of Jennings, Bowen (2007) finds that constituency size impacts a respondent’s level of trust with residents that reside in smaller constituency more likely to trust state government. In fact he finds that going from the maximum constituency size to the minimum results in a 17 percent increase in trust.

Drawing from the research of Jennings (1998) and Bowen (2007) I believe that trust in California’s state government may be similar to both state and federal determinants; however California’s large constituency size in the state legislature will make trust in state government in California more like trust in the federal government. Therefore, while utilizing California as the context of a study trust in state government is valid, California may also provide lessons regarding trust in the federal government as well.

From a theoretical standpoint the connection between devolution and political trust can not be ignored. While the thrust of theoretical contributions regarding political trust has focused on the debate regarding whether trust is specific or diffuse, a link between devolution and

political trust has been explored. While research is limited, Jennings (1998) posited that a decline in political trust at the federal level contributed to the devolution that took place during the 1990s. Jennings states, “the shifting assessments of the federal government provide a textbook example that trust can be a rather fragile commodity, just as it can be at the individual level. From its high-flying days when it held sway over state and local governments as the object of highest trust, the national government suffered a sharp and durable fall (241).”

In California, the concept of devolution can be taken a step further. California uses the initiative process more than any other state in the nation and its use of the initiative process has increased significantly in frequency over the last 4 decades (Baldassare and Katz 2007). Moreover, the tough decisions in California politics are increasingly being made at the ballot box. Whether it be campaign finance, Indian gaming, eminent domain, high speed rail, or redistricting, voters in California are often asked to make the tough decisions that the Legislature and Governor can not or will not make.<sup>4</sup> Temporally linked to this increase in the use of the initiative process is the decline in political trust among California voters.<sup>5</sup>

State governments and their policies in this era of devolution have a great impact on the lives of residents of each state and, at least in California, citizens want their state government to enact policy separate from the federal government.<sup>6</sup> Even though trust at the state level is greater than at the federal level, it is anything but overwhelming (Gallup 2007) and has

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<sup>4</sup> For a more detailed discussion of direct democracy in California, see *The Coming Age of Direct Democracy* by Baldassare and Katz (2007).

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of Californians decline in political trust see *Taking Back Your Government* (2008) by Baldassare et al.

<sup>6</sup> See PPIC Statewide Surveys in July 2008, January 2007, July 2006, and July 2005 for evidence that a majority of Californians think that California should make its own policies separate from the federal government.

decreased in the last twenty years as well (Cole and Kincaid 2006). Thus, an examination of trust at the state level is relevant<sup>7</sup>.

### **Political Trust**

Trust in government would seem to be, on the most basic level, a vital component of a representative democracy (Gamson 1968; Bianco 1994; Levi 1997). However, since the mid-1960s trust in government has decreased in America and remains low today (Citrin 1974; Miller 1974; Craig 1993; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Hetherington 2004). Still, America has operated as a functional democracy even with elevated levels of distrust in government. Although trust is a ubiquitous term in political science, there is some debate concerning its meaning. The debate focuses on whether trust is specific or diffuse (Easton 1965). Some scholars relate trust to specific support of political officials (Citrin 1974; Citrin and Green 1986); while others view political trust as a measure of diffuse support of the more general political environment (Miller 1974). This debate is important because of the consequences associated with each. The consequences of specific support are said to be limited due to the potential for the improvement of an elected officials' job performance, while lack of diffuse support is argued to be more detrimental because low levels of trust could impact the legitimacy of a democracy.

Much of the research on political trust has utilized the American National Election Studies (ANES) trust in government questions, which captures the diffuse sense of trust in that the measures were "designed to tap the basic evaluative orientations towards the national government." (Stokes 1962:64) According to Marc J. Hetherington (2004) political trust is "the degree to which people perceive that government is producing outcomes consistent with their

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<sup>7</sup>Uslaner (2001) found that trust in the national or state government is linked and that only 24% of respondents in his national sample trusted one level, but not the other. Therefore, an analysis of trust in state government is in some ways also an analysis of trust in government more generally.

expectation.” (9) Throughout the dissertation I will focus on trust in the broader diffuse sense of Stokes and Hetherington.

The body of literature on political trust has shown that trust in government has political consequences, both attitudinal and behavioral in nature (Rahn and Rudolph 2005). Furthermore, since the earliest studies of political trust, researchers have attempted to delve into the determinants of political trust (Agger et al 1961; Cole 1973; Miller 1974; Citrin 1974). Articles titled “Political Cynicism: Measurement and Meaning” and “Toward a Model of Political Trust: A Causal Analysis” sought to unravel the complexity of political trust. However, the bulk of contemporary research has focused more on the consequences of political trust and less on the origins of political trust.<sup>8</sup>

Examination of political trust as a dependent variable has focused on the impact of demographic factors (Aberbach and Walker 1970; Cole 1973; Michelson 2003; Wenzel 2006), attitudinal components (Cole 1973; Citrin 1974), policy preferences (Miller 1974; Williams 1985; Hetherington 1998; Ulbig 2002), the political landscape (Gamson 1968; Easton 1975; Hetherington 1998; Lock et al 1999 Anderson and LoTempio 2002) and contextual factors (Citrin and Green 1986; Miller 1983; Citrin and Luks 2001; Rahn and Rudolph 2005 ). Furthermore, differences in trust levels across ideological groups (Aberbach and Walker 1970; Rudolph and Evans 2005) and between racial/ethnic groups (Aberbach and Walker 1970; Miller 1974; Howell and Fagan 1988) have also been examined.

Regarding demographic variables, research has not established a consistent relationship to political trust. For example, a number of studies have found that age is negatively related to political trust (Cole 1970; Ulbig 2002), while other studies find no relationship (Hetherington

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<sup>8</sup> See Chanley et al 2000 and Rahn and Rudolph 2005 for examples of research that examines the origins of political trust.

1998; Luks 2001; Michelson 2003). Among other demographic variables, education tends to be positively related to trust (Cole 1970; Hetherington 1998; Ulbig 2002). Regarding race, African-Americans have consistently been found to be less trusting of government (Abramson 1983; Citrin and Green 1986).

While the determinants of political trust have been examined, a consensus on what drives a person to be more trusting has not been attained. There are some factors that have been consistently linked to political trust. These include a respondent's educational attainment, satisfaction with domestic politics and approval of office holders. My contribution to the literature will be to contribute to the investigation of outstanding questions, such as the role of income. Also, trust in state government has not been explored and thus the research at hand fills a significant void. Lastly, the void in the literature regarding Latino political trust is evident. This research seeks to fill that gap.

### **Trust and Policy Preferences**

The consequences of political trust have been debated since the Miller-Citrin debate on political trust. In this well known debate published in *The American Political Science Review* in September 1974 Miller argued that political cynicism was related to dissatisfaction with the policy alternatives that were on the table and posited that low levels of trust could raise "the probability of the occurrence of radical political change." Miller also asserts that sustained low levels of trust could challenge regime legitimacy. Citrin countered with the assertion that decreased trust was linked to discontent with the elected political leaders and not the policy options. Citrin also countered Miller's assertion regarding the relationship between distrust and acts of dissent, and asserts that between 1970 and 1972 the positive relationship between political trust and support for the incumbent grew.



More recently, political trust has served as an independent variable in research that suggests a positive relationship with the following dependent variables: support for devolution of policy to the state level (Jennings 1998; Hetherington and Nugent 2001), compliance with governmental demands (Tyler and Degoey 1995; Scholz and Lubell 1998), support for domestic policy spending (Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn 2000; Hetherington 2004), support for liberal racial policy preferences (Hetherington and Globetti 2002), positive evaluations of elected officials (Sigelman et al. 1992; Hetherington 1998) and voting for incumbents and third party candidates (Shingles 1981; Hetherington 1999).

### **Trust and Vote Choice**

When conceptualizing the role that political trust plays in vote choice it is important to understand that trust exists as a heuristic. The underpinning of the use of heuristics in political decision making can be found in Phillip Converse's seminal piece, "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics" (1964), which asserted that the majority of the voting lacks a well-formed ideology and has minimal drive to understand the political issues. With Converse's theory as a backdrop researchers have questioned how Americans make political choices absent political understanding and ideological bearing. Sniderman, Brody and Tetlock (1991) posited that many in the voting public utilize heuristics or shortcuts to make political choices. Hetherington (1999), citing the declining prominence of political parties in America (Wattenberg 1996) posits that "trust should be a powerful heuristic" (311).

While research has examined the consequences of trust on many elements within the political arena, there is a significant void in the literature regarding the consequences of trust on vote choice. In the wake of declining trust in America, initial research on the impact of trust on political behavior focused on the potential link between declining trust and declining turnout, but

research has found this link to be non-existent (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). However, scholarship has established a link between political trust and vote choice at the national level. Research has examined the link between trust and support for incumbents (Citrin 1974; Hetherington 1999) and between trust and support for third party candidates (Rosenstone, Behr, and Lazarus 1984; Peterson and Wrighton 1998).

To recap, increases in the Latino population, differences in the distribution of political trust between Latinos and non-Latinos, which previous research has demonstrated, and in general, the known attitudinal and behavioral consequences of trust all suggest the need for further investigation in the subject of Latino political trust. The present research attempts to meet this need by exploring the following questions: 1) What are the determinants of political trust among Latinos? 2) Why are Latinos more trusting of state government than non-Latinos? 3) What impact does Latino state political trust have on policy preferences? And 4) What impact does Latino state political trust have on gubernatorial vote choice?

### **Latinos as a Group**

Throughout this dissertation I will refer to Latinos, however it is important to mention that Latinos are not a monolithic group, especially as a political group. Hero (1992) states “Latinos may be a group in name—a nominal group—but not necessarily a politically identifiable group (2).” According to the 2006 American Community Survey, Latinos make up 36 percent of California’s population and 15 percent of the population in the U.S. Among the Latinos in the U.S., 69 percent are of Mexican descent, while Latinos in California are even more likely to be of Mexican descent—77 percent. Also, it is important to note that about 80 percent of Latinos in the survey data used in the empirical analysis in this article are of Mexican descent. So what does this mean to the study at hand? This means that while the survey data are for the

most part representative of the demographics of California, there is the need to include a variable to control for any nation of origin effects. Where appropriate I will utilize a dummy variable for respondents of Mexican descent that will serve as this control.

I will also refer to non-Latinos throughout the article. This group will include non-Hispanic whites, Asians, African Americans and respondents of other races.

### **Overview of Dissertation**

The remaining chapters of this dissertation will examine the determinants of political trust as well as the consequences of political trust. In doing so I hope to untangle the puzzle regarding why Latinos are more trusting than non-Latinos. Potentially more importantly I examine differences regarding how trust impacts these two groups differently and the implications of this.

Political trust is vital component of a representative democracy and therefore understanding the determinants of trust is important. Chapter two examines the determinants of Latino trust and discusses differences between Latinos and non-Latinos. In examining Latino/non-Latino differences, two potential theories were examined. Utilizing pooled statewide survey data from California this chapter confirms that Latinos are more trusting than others and that determinants of Latino trust include political variables, such as approval ratings, as well as assimilation and a respondent's nation of origin. Of the two explanations offered regarding Latino/non-Latino differences, acculturation and not socio-economic status explains why Latinos are more trusting than non-Latinos.

Chapter three examines the impact of political trust on policy preferences and seeks to determine whether trust impacts the policy preferences of Latinos and non-Latinos in the same manner. Utilizing statewide survey data, the results indicate that Latinos are more likely than

non-Latinos to be supportive of health care reform and that political trust impacts Latinos and non-Latinos in a different manner. Political trust has a negative impact on Latino preferences, while trust as an explanatory variable among non-Latinos is insignificant. There are also intra-Latino differences as well with political trust having a negative impact on Mexican preferences, while it has a positive impact on non-Mexican Latinos. I also examined two theories within the literature within the Latino context and found that at least at the state level, neither Hetherington's "sacrifice based" and Rudolph and Evans' ideological sacrifice theory can be applied to Latinos.

The final data analysis chapter examines the consequences of trust on gubernatorial vote choice and explores any differences between Latinos and non-Latinos. Utilizing post-election survey data of voters in the 2006 gubernatorial election I find that political trust has a negative effect on rejecting the incumbent and voting for both the major party challenger and a minor party challenger among the overall sample. Findings also suggest that Latinos are more likely than non-Latinos to reject the incumbent and vote for either the major party challenger or a minor party candidate and that trust has a similar effect among the two groups. In examining differences between Latino and non-Latino voters the results indicate that while there are differences between the two groups the main difference is that Latinos who are less trusting are more likely than their counterparts to stay within the mainstream political framework and vote for the major party challenger as opposed to the minor party candidate.

The final chapter of the dissertation presents a conclusion, a discussion regarding the key findings, and the suggestions for future research. Findings include Latinos being more trusting than non-Latinos and that of the two explanations offered regarding these differences, acculturation and not socio-economic status provides the best explanation. Subsequent chapters

establish that there are consequences of political trust among Latinos and they include trust having an unexpected negative impact on support for health care reform and a positive impact on voting for an incumbent governor in favor of either the major party challenger or a minor party candidate. Future research suggestion include a better understanding of trust and its consequences at the national level and a more detailed examination of how state level trust may differ from trust at the federal level.

## CHAPTER 2

### Introduction

Trust in government would seem to be, on the most basic level, a vital component of a representative democracy (Gamson 1968; Bianco 1994; Levi 1997). However, since the mid-1960s trust in government has decreased in America and remains low today (Citrin 1974; Miller 1974; Craig 1993; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Hetherington 2004). Still, America has operated as a functional democracy even with elevated levels of distrust in government.

From the limited literature on the political trust we know that Latinos exhibit more political trust than whites, and are much more trusting than African-Americans (Guzman 1970; Garcia 1973; Garcia 1992). However, we could potentially expect the opposite, that Latinos would exhibit low levels of trust. Considering that Latinos are a member of a disadvantaged group, similar to African Americans, we could expect that their level of trust would be similarly low to their disadvantaged brethren. Also, we could expect low levels of trust considering that many Latinos have been exposed to or come from countries that are ruled by authoritarian governments. Considering that the expanding prominence of Latinos in America, it is important that we unravel what makes Latinos more trusting than non-Latinos and examine the determinants of Latino trust.

It is also important to note that Latino trust in government is relevant nationally since Latinos are currently the fastest growing population in the United States. With the increased immigration of Latinos to the United States the Census Bureau projects that by 2042 America will be a majority minority with non-Hispanic whites making up less than 50 percent of the population. Also, by 2050 it is projected that the nation will be 54 percent minority (U.S. Census Bureau 2008).

While the majority of the research on political trust has focused on trust of the national government<sup>9</sup>, trust in state government is especially important today considering the degree to which policy devolution has become common in America since the 1990s<sup>10</sup>. According to Cole et al. (1999), devolution involves policies “intended to return a certain level of discretion in program planning, design, and implementation to state and local governments; while also reducing certain federally imposed rules, regulations, and unfunded mandates for those governments.” (99)

Throughout this article I will refer to Latinos, however it is important to mention that Latinos are not a monolithic group, especially as a political group. Hero (1992) states “Latinos may be a group in name—a nominal group—but not necessarily a politically identifiable group” (2). According to the 2006 American Community Survey, Latinos make up 36 percent of California’s population and 15 percent of the population in the U.S. Among the Latinos in the U.S., 69 percent are of Mexican descent, while Latinos in California are more likely to be of Mexican descent—77 percent. Also, it is important to note that about 80 percent of Latinos in the survey data used in the empirical analysis in this article are of Mexican descent. So what does this mean to the study at hand? This means that while the survey data are for the most part representative of the demographics of California, there is the need to include a variable to control for any nation of origin effects. Where appropriate I will utilize a dummy variable for respondents of Mexican descent that will serve as this control.

I will also refer to non-Latinos throughout the article. This group will include non-Hispanic whites, Asians, African Americans and respondents of other races.

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<sup>9</sup> See Uslaner (2001) for an exception.

<sup>10</sup> See for a more detailed discussion of the devolution see Nathan (1996). For an analysis of public opinion of devolution see Hetherington and Nugent (2001)

## **Political Trust**

Although trust is a ubiquitous term in political science, there is some debate concerning its meaning. The debate focuses on whether trust is specific or diffuse (Easton 1965). Some scholars relate trust to specific support of political official (Citrin 1974; Citrin and Green 1986); while others view political trust as a measure of diffuse support of the more general political environment (Miller 1974). This debate is important because of the consequences associated with each. The consequences of specific support are said to be limited due to the potential for the improvement of an elected officials job performance, while diffuse support is argued to be more detrimental because low levels of trust could impact the legitimacy of a democracy.

Much of the research on political trust has utilized the American National Election Studies (ANES) trust in government questions, which captures the diffuse sense of trust in that they were “designed to tap the basic evaluative orientations towards the national government.” (Stokes 1962:64) According to Marc J. Hetherington political trust is “the degree to which people perceive that government is producing outcomes consistent with their expectation.” (9) The research at hand will focus on trust in the broader diffuse sense of Stokes and Hetherington.

The body of literature on political trust has shown that trust in government has political consequences, both attitudinal and behavioral in nature (Rahn and Rudolph 2005). Furthermore, since the earliest studies of political trust, researchers have attempted to delve into the determinants of political trust (Agger et al 1961; Cole 1973; Miller 1974; Citrin 1974). Articles titled “Political Cynicism: Measurement and Meaning” and “Toward a Model of Political Trust: A Causal Analysis” sought to unravel the complexity of political trust. However, the bulk of



contemporary research has focused more on the consequences of political trust and less on the origins of political trust.<sup>11</sup>

Examination of political trust as a dependent variable has focused on the impact of demographic factors (Aberbach and Walker 1970; Cole 1973; Michelson 2003; Wenzel 2006), attitudinal components (Cole 1973; Citrin 1974), policy preferences (Miller 1974; Williams 1985; Hetherington 1998; Ulbig 2002), the political landscape (Gamson 1968; Easton 1975; Hetherington 1998; Lock et al 1999 Anderson and LoTempio 2002) and contextual factors (Citrin and Green 1986; Miller 1983; Citrin and Luks 2001; Rahn and Rudolph 2005 ). Furthermore, differences in trust levels across ideological groups (Aberbach and Walker 1970; Rudolph and Evans 2005) and between racial/ethnic groups (Aberbach and Walker 1970; Miller 1974; Howell and Fagan 1988) have also been examined.

Regarding demographic variables, research has not established a consistent relationship to political trust. For example, a number of studies have found that age is negatively related to political trust (Cole 1970, Ulbig 2002), while other studies find no relationship (Hetherington 1998, Luks 2001, Michelson 2003). Among other demographic variable, education tends to be positively related to trust (Cole 1970; Hetherington 1998; Ulbig 2002). Regarding race, African-Americans have consistently been found to be less trusting of government (Abramson 1983, Citrin and Green 1986).

Political factors, such as elected officials and institutions, attention to media coverage, policy satisfaction, and political participation have also been linked to trust in government. Discussion regarding the impact of positive political evaluations and an increase in trust dates back to the well known debate between Arthur H. Miller and Jack Citrin that was published in

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<sup>11</sup> See Chanley et al 2000 and Rahn and Rudolph 2005 for examples of research that examines the origins of political trust.

*The American Political Science Review* in September 1974. In more contemporary research Citrin and Green (1986) find that those who approve of the President are more likely to trust in the government in Washington. Erber and Lau (1990) present findings that the disapproval of a president or a president's specific action lead to greater distrust in the national government.

In their analysis of confidence in government during the 1980s Miller and Borrelli (1991) report that approval of the president is related to trust in government in 1980, 1982, 1984, however this relationship is not present in their analysis of 1986 or 1988 data. Using 1988 data, Hetherington (1998) finds that positive attitudes toward both President Reagan and Congress lead to greater trust in government. However, Hetherington's analysis of 1996 data indicates that, although the Congressional thermometer rating is positively associated with greater trust, no relationship exists between greater trust and the Presidential thermometer. Citrin and Luks (2001) find that Presidential approval and approval of Congress both impact political trust at each data point from 1980-1996.

While the determinants of political trust have been examined, a consensus on what drives a person to be more trusting has not been attained. There are some factors that have been consistently linked to political trust. These include a respondent's educational attainment, satisfaction with domestic politics and approval of office holders. My contribution to the literature will be to contribute to the investigation of outstanding questions, such as the role of income. Also, trust in state government has not been explored and thus the research at hand fills a significant void. Lastly, the void in the literature regarding Latino political trust is evident. This research seeks to fill that gap.

From a theoretical standpoint the connection between devolution and political trust can not be ignored. While the thrust of theoretical contributions regarding political trust has focused

on the debate regarding whether trust is specific or diffuse, a link between devolution and political trust has been explored. While research is limited, Jennings (1998) posits that a decline in political trust at the federal level contributed to the devolution that took place during the 1990s. Jennings states, “the shifting assessments of the federal government provide a textbook example that trust can be a rather fragile commodity, just as it can be at the individual level. From its high-flying days when it held sway over state and local governments as the object of highest trust, the national government suffered a sharp and durable fall (241).”

In California, the concept of devolution can be taken a step further. California uses the initiative process more than any other state in the nation and its use of the initiative process has increased significantly in frequency over the last 4 decades (Baldassare and Katz 2007). Moreover, the tough decisions in California politics are increasingly being made at the ballot box. Whether it be campaign finance, Indian gaming, eminent domain, high speed rail, or redistricting, voters in California are often asked to make the tough decisions that the Legislature and Governor can not or will not make.<sup>12</sup> Temporally linked to this increase in the use of the initiative process is the decline in political trust among California voters.<sup>13</sup>

State governments and their policies in this era of devolution have a great impact on the lives of residents of each state and, at least in California, citizens want their state government to enact policy separate from the federal government.<sup>14</sup> Even though trust at the state level is greater than at the federal level, it is anything but overwhelming (Gallup 2007) and has

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<sup>12</sup> For a more detailed discussion of direct democracy in California, see *The Coming Age of Direct Democracy* by Baldassare and Katz (2007).

<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of Californians decline in political trust see *The State of California Voters (2008)* by Baldassare et al.

<sup>14</sup> See PPIC Statewide Surveys in July 2008, January 2007, July 2006, and July 2005 for evidence that a majority of Californians think that California should make its own policies separate from the federal government. This perception has increased 12 points since 2005.

decreased in the last twenty years as well (Cole and Kincaid 2006). Thus, an examination of trust at the state level is relevant<sup>15</sup>.

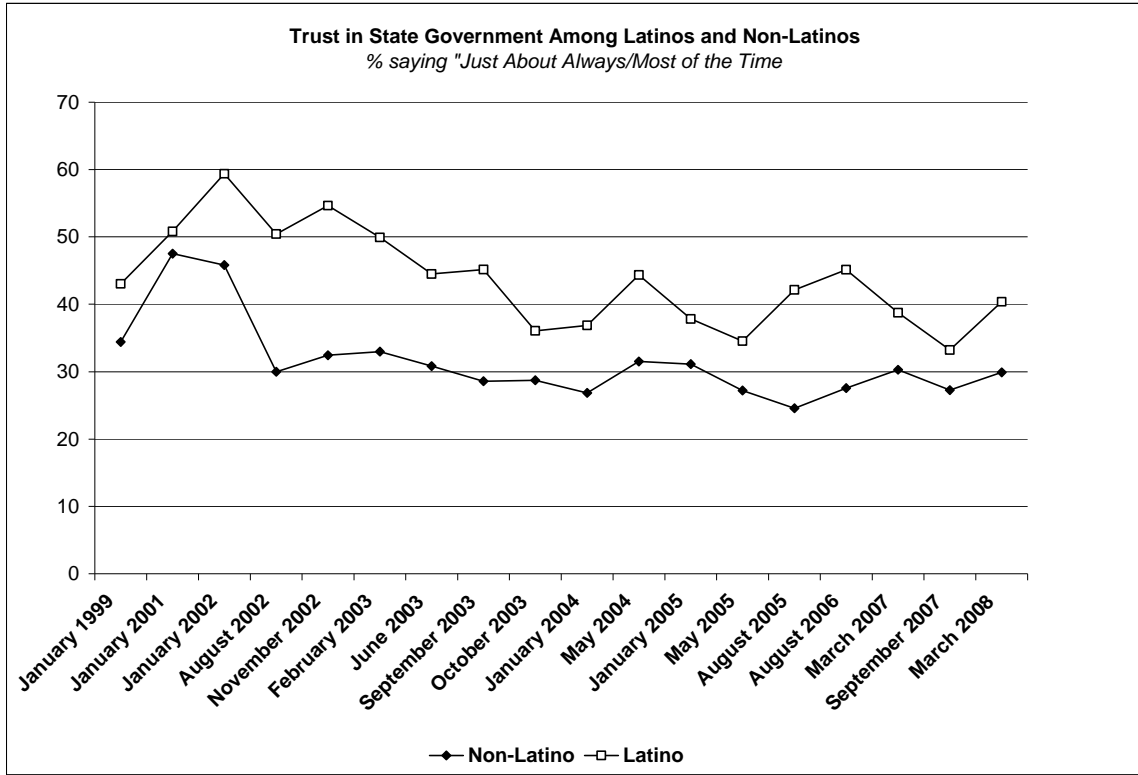
### **Latinos, Non-Latinos, and Political Trust**

Early studies of Latino trust suggested that Latinos were less trusting than whites, but more trusting than African-Americans (Guzman 1970; Garcia 1973). However, more recently de la Garza and his colleagues (1992) presented findings from the Latino Political National Survey (LPNS) that indicated that Latinos were slightly more trusting than whites. Cole and Kincaid (2006), utilizing a national sample, also found that Hispanics or Latinos “were considerably more likely to report high levels of trust in the federal government than were non-Hispanics” (456). Furthermore, they find that Latinos express similar levels of trust in their state government, but this finding does not hold true at the local level. A nine year time series of trust in California state government using PPIC Statewide Survey data demonstrates that Latinos consistently express higher levels of trust in state government than their non-Latino counterparts (See Figure 1). On average, 44 percent of Latinos expressed they trust state government “just about always” or “most of the time”, compared to only 32 percent of non-Latinos.

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<sup>15</sup>Uslaner (2001) found that trust in the national or state government is linked and that only 24% of respondents in his national sample trusted one level, but not the other. Therefore, an analysis of trust in state government is in some ways also an analysis of trust in government more generally.

**Figure 2.1**



Source: Public Policy Institute of California, Statewide Survey, 1999-2008.

Although there have been studies of political trust among Latinos (Garcia 1973; de la Garza et al. 1992; Michelson 2001; Michelson 2003; Wenzel 2006), at this time there is no comprehensive model of Latino trust in government. Within the limited literature there is a focus on the role of acculturation in Latino trust, but authors have not offered competing alternatives to assimilation. Michelson (2001) focuses on differences among Latinos of different national origins and the effect of acculturation, while Wenzel (2006) examines the impact of acculturation on trust at different levels of government. Even though there is not an established model of Latino trust, our knowledge of political trust more generally can inform our thinking. Nye (1997) suggested that determinants of trust can generally be classified as economic, social-cultural, or political. Political variables that have been linked to trust include approval of elected officials. Research has also established that positive perceptions of the economy have a positive

impact on trust. Lastly, we know that there are demographic or social-cultural factors that impact political trust, including racial/ethnic identity. Demographic differences between Latinos and non-Latinos could provide leverage on this issue, especially considering the Latino/non-Latino differences concerning socio-economic factors. All of these factors may play a role in explaining why Latinos are more trusting than non-Latinos; however there are factors that are specific to Latinos that may play a role in explaining these differences.

When asking the question “Why are Latinos more trusting than non-Latinos?”, one must address the cultural aspects of Latinos. These include a Latino’s assimilation into American culture and their generational status. Other important factors to consider include a respondent’s nation of origin, their connection to an authoritarian regime, and their level of attachment to their “homeland”.

Concerning these other factors we know that seven in 10 Latinos in America and over three in four in California are of Mexican descent, but what impact does this have on Latino trust in California? While only about 40 percent of Latinos are foreign born, many Latinos have ties to their country of origin. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, six in 10 Latinos have at least moderate attachment to their country of origin (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007).<sup>16</sup> Further, over half of Latinos say that the U.S. has “better political traditions” compared to their native country. This connection with their native country along with their positive views of the U.S. politically could have an impact on their perceptions of political trust. Also, the relationship of many Latinos have to Mexico further complicates this issue. Mexico consistently scores poorly on measures of corruption, and according to Transparency International’s 2008 Corruption Perceptions Index, Mexico currently ranks 72<sup>nd</sup> out of 179 countries in the world and 14<sup>th</sup> out of

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<sup>16</sup> See Pew Hispanic Center report titled “Between Here and There: How Attached Are Latino Immigrants To Their Native Country?” for a more detailed discussion.

32 countries in the Americas. Their score of 3.6 is much lower than Canada (8.7), the United States (7.3), and Chile (6.9) and just below Columbia (3.8). Theoretically we could expect that Latinos from Mexico would be less trusting and first-generation Latinos would be more trusting than others.

### **Determinants of Trust among Latinos and Explaining the Racial Differences**

Examining the determinants of trust in state government among Latinos and explaining the gap between Latinos and non-Latinos are not mutually exclusive. These two analyses actually go hand in hand and are the basis for both explaining trust among Latinos and explaining the Latino/ non-Latino differences regarding levels of trust in state government.

#### *The Socio-Economic Model*

Research has posited that socio-economic factors are not linked to political trust in the federal government (Lawrence 1997; Orren 1997), however that doesn't exclude socio-economic factors from being a potential explanation of Latino/non-Latino differences. One potential explanation of why Latinos are more trusting than whites could be related to socio-economic factors. Latinos in California are more likely than their non-Latino counterparts not to have attended college and less likely to be college graduates. Also, Latinos are more likely to have a household income less than \$40,000 and to rent their place residence (PPIC, 2008). These socio-economic differences may impact the level of trust among Latinos.

#### *The Acculturation Model*

Within the literature on Latino politics, a considerable amount of attention has been placed on generational status and acculturation variables that are virtually irrelevant among whites. Acculturation involves the assimilation of immigrants when they come into contact with a dominant culture (Park 1950; Gordon 1964). As part of the assimilation process, immigrants

gradually begin to mesh with members of the original culture group, and differences between groups are erased as immigrants begin to speak the native language of the dominant society, adopt societal values, and begin to follow cultural norms (de le Garza, Falcon, and Garcia 1996). According to Fuchs (1990), Mexican-Americans, who are the dominant group among Latinos in California and the U.S., follow this traditional pattern.

If Fuchs' assertion is a reality then we can expect that as Latinos acculturate they will become more like mainstream Americans, and in regards to political trust they should become more cynical of government. Michelson (2003) suggests this in her study of Mexican-Americans when she concludes that, "those who are more acculturated according to classic assimilation measures such as language use and proficiency are more likely to be cynical" (928). These results point to a corrosive effect of assimilation through exposure to and integration into mainstream American culture.

James P. Wenzel (2006) in his study of trust in the national and local government also finds that acculturation of Latinos negatively impacts trust. However, Wenzel goes further to say, "It would seem, at least when it comes to Latinos, that exposure to and acceptance of the language and culture of the United States has a dark side" (1080).

The issue of acculturation is especially important considering that 39 percent of Latinos in California and 40 percent of Latinos in the United States are foreign born (PPIC, 2008 and Pew Hispanic Center, March 2008). Of importance to the study at hand is the potential acculturation process that foreign born Latinos in California may experience and what impact this has on political trust. Thus, I expect that Latinos who are more acculturated will be less likely than those who are not to trust state government.



As mentioned above, nearly two-thirds of Latinos in America are foreign-born. However, this still leaves one-third who are born in the United States and whose parents and/or grandparents may have been born in the United States. Consistent within Latino politics literature is that first generation Latinos behave differently than those Latinos who are of second or third generation families. In their book, *Immigrant America: A portrait*, Portes and Rumbaut (1996) suggest that first generation immigrants stay focused on politics of their country of origin rather than involve themselves in the politics of their new country. Garcia Bedolla (1999), in her study of Mexican Americans in Los Angeles, finds that trust is much more distinct among first or second generation Mexican Americans than it is among members of the third generation.

To date there is no research on the impact of generational effects on trust in government. However, I assert here that it is logical that the generational effects that were present in other areas of political behavior will exist in regards to political trust. To this end, I expect that first generation Latinos will be more likely than other Latinos to trust state government.

While I expect that more assimilated and later generation Latinos will be less likely to trust the government it could be argued that the as Latinos move farther away from authoritarian political they would become more trusting. I theorize that Latino trust is driven by expectations that the United States has a more trustworthy government than those which they are more familiar with. However, as they are more exposed to and interact with government, these expectations may not be met. Thus, acculturation and generational status becomes corrosive to political trust.

It is important to note that the socio-economic and acculturation explanations are related. Latinos that are more acculturated are also likely to be higher in household income. This

research will examine these two explanations and estimate their relative explanatory power over Latino trust in state government and Latino/non-Latino differences in state political trust.

### **Data and Methodology**

California provides an ideal context for the study of trust at the state level because of the diverse nature of its population, especially regarding Latinos. In 2000, California became the first state to have a population that was majority minority. Since 2000, three other states and the District of Columbia have become majority minority states.<sup>17</sup> Considering where America as a nation is heading and where California has been, California provides an excellent setting for this analysis.

This article will explore the determinants of trust in state government among Latinos and explore why Latinos are more trusting than non-Latinos in California. Pooled data from three separate Public Policy Institute of California's (PPIC) Statewide Surveys will be utilized to determine what drives Latino trust in the state government and to test the socio-economic and acculturation Models as explanations for the differences between Latinos and non-Latinos.

As mentioned earlier, the research at hand will analyze Latino respondents in comparison to non-Latinos, which includes whites, Asians, African Americans and respondents of other races. Latinos (36%) and whites (43%) make up nearly 80 percent of the population, while Asians (12%), African-Americans (6%) and those of other races (3%) make up the remainder of the population (California Department of Finance, 2008).

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<sup>17</sup> Along with California, Texas, Hawaii, New Mexico, and the District of Columbia are majority minority states. According to the Census Bureau five other states—Maryland, Mississippi, Georgia, New York and Arizona—are in line to become majority minority states with each having minority populations of about 40 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).

### *Dependent Variable*

Trust is measured by a factor score which utilizes three of the four questions that makes up the American National Election Study (ANES) trust index.

- *Next, how much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Sacramento to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?*
- *Would you say the state government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves, or that it is run for the benefit of all of the people?*
- *Do you think the people in state government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?*

This measure is similar to those used in much of the political trust literature. The three questions load on a single factor<sup>18</sup> and have a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) score of .64, which is considered acceptable.<sup>19</sup> The three variable also have a reliability level ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.61<sup>20</sup>, which is an acceptable level within the social science literature. A Cronbach's alpha is used to examine how closely related a set of variables are when combined as a scale. The trust variable is coded from the lowest level of trust to the highest level of trust.

Figures 2.2 and 2.3 illustrate the distribution of the dependent variable that is used in this chapter and illustrate the low levels of trust in state government among Latinos and non-Latinos. However, the distributions mirror Figure 2.1 in that Latinos exhibit more trust than non-Latinos.

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<sup>18</sup> See Appendix A.2 for the factor loadings of this variable.

<sup>19</sup> The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy is an index that determines the proportion of variance among the variables that might be common variance. See Kaiser 1970 and 1974 for a more detailed discussion.

<sup>20</sup> The reliability of the additive scale was tested using a Cronbach's alpha. For a more detailed discussion of Cronbach's alpha see Cortina, 1993.

Figure 2.2: Distribution of Trust Among Latinos

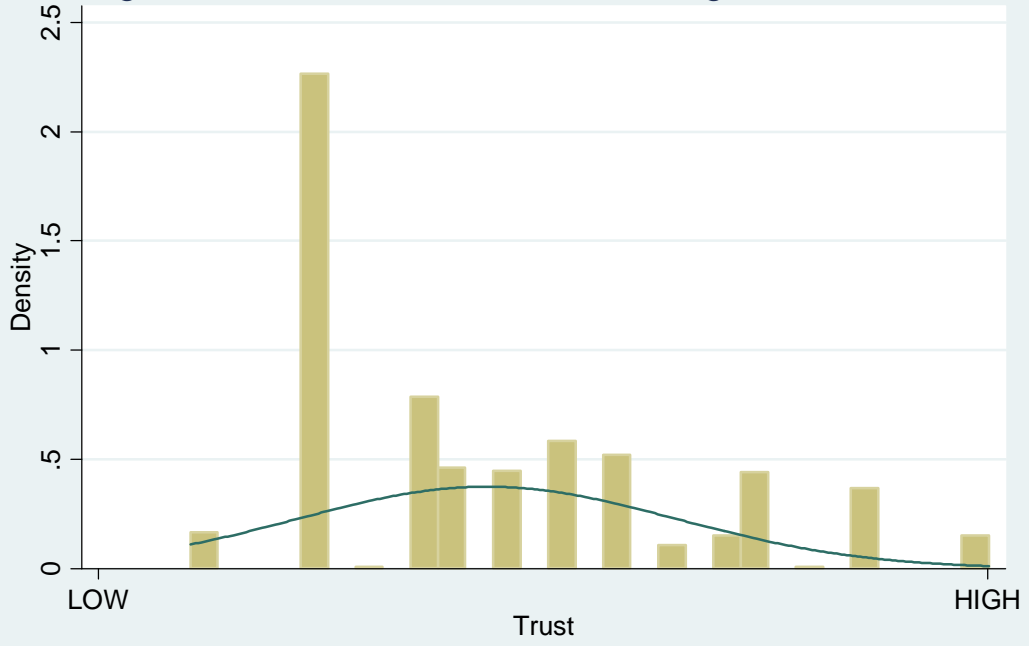
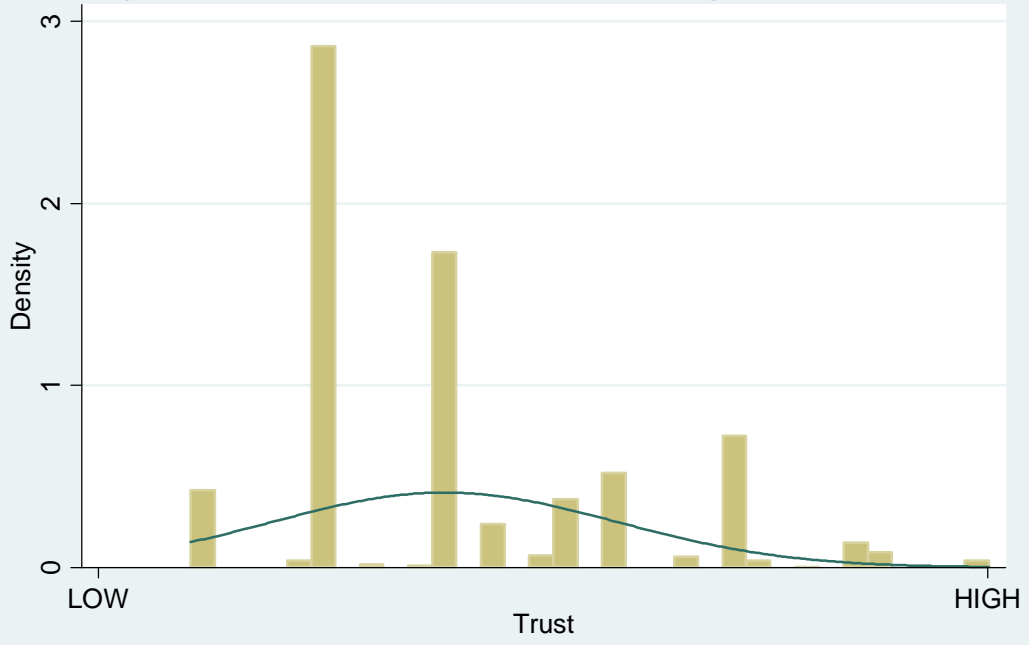


Figure 2.3: Distribution of Trust Among Non-Latinos



### *Independent Variables*

As mentioned earlier, there are two possible explanations to why Latinos are more trusting and why Latinos are more trusting: the socio-economic explanation and the acculturation explanation. The acculturation variables in this analysis are assimilation (HOMELANG), which measures the language Latinos usually speak at home and is coded 0 for “only Spanish” and 1 for “only English”, and generational status (LATGEN), which measures whether a respondent is a first generation, second generation, or third generation and beyond Latino and is coded 1, 2, and 3 respectively. The socio-economic variables are household income (INCOME), education level (EDUC), home ownership (OWNRENT).

The remaining variables included in the model are a mix of variables that are common within the determinants of political trust and include political or social-cultural variables (Nye 1997). These remaining variables are political approval of the governor (APPGOV), approval of the legislature (APPLEG), perception of the state’s economic future (GOODTIME), personal ideology placement (LIBERAL), age (AGE), sex (SEX), and partisan affiliation (DEMOCRAT). In the Latino-only model a dummy variable for a respondent being from Mexico (MEXICAN) is also included to examine country of origin effects.<sup>21</sup>

Ordinary Least Squares regression analysis will be employed in each model in this analysis. Three models will be used to examine the determinants of Latino trust and explanations for Latino/non-Latino differences. The first will include Latinos only and contain both the socio-economic variables and the acculturation variables. This allows for a comparison of the two potential explanations of trust in state government. This first model could potentially eliminate the socio-economic explanation or the acculturation explanation, or it could provide

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<sup>21</sup> For detailed question wording please see the Appendix A.1.

evidence that both the socio-economic and acculturation variables have independent effects on Latino trust.

In the second part of this analysis I will examine differences between Latino and non-Latino trust. To examine which explanation provides more leverage in examining Latino/non-Latino differences I will run multiple separate models. The first model of all Californians, not just Latinos, will include a Latino/non-Latino “dummy” variable as well as explanatory variables, but will not include the socio-economic variables. In the following models socio-economic variables will be added. I will first add all three of the socio-economic variables at once and then add each socio-economic variable separately. If the socio-economic variables are significant and the coefficient for the Latino variable is greater in model 2, then socio-economics has a role in explaining the difference in political trust among Latinos and non-Latinos. If the coefficient is about the same when socio-economic variables are introduced and the socio-economic variables are insignificant, then socio-economics does not explain why Latinos are more trusting than non-Latinos in California.

### **Analysis**

Prior to examining the results of the regression analysis I will examine the role of socio-economic factors, acculturation and trust among Latinos at the bivariate level. As mentioned earlier and displayed in Figure 2.1, there is a noticeable difference between Latinos and non-Latinos when it comes to trust, but are all Latinos alike? Figures 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 illustrate that there are differences among Latinos and that some Latinos behave in a similar fashion to non-Latinos, while others do not.

Figure 2.4 compares non assimilated Latinos, assimilated Latinos and non-Latinos. Non assimilated Latinos, those speaking more Spanish at home than English, are more trusting than

assimilated Latinos, those speaking more English at home than Spanish. This is significant because it provides preliminary evidence that acculturation is associated with political cynicism.

**Figure 2.4**

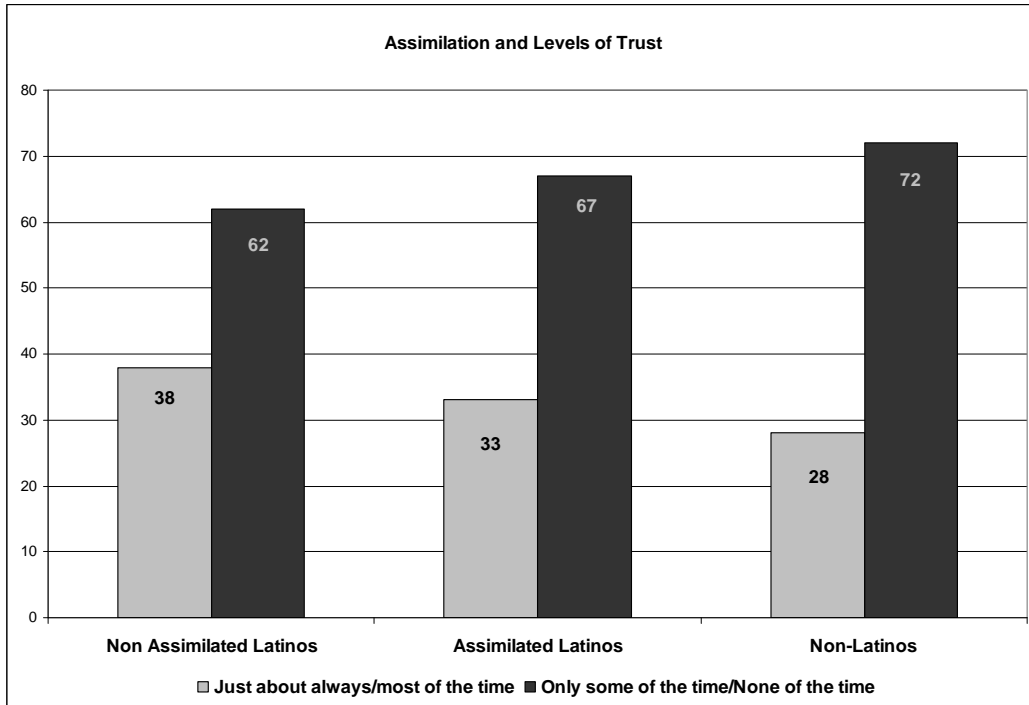
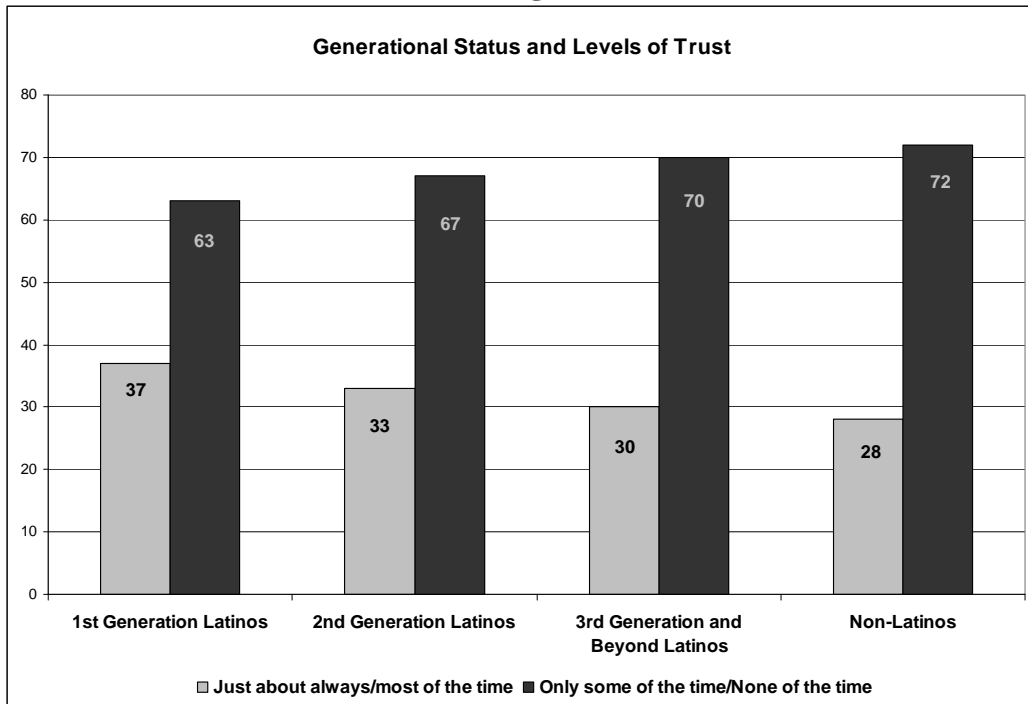


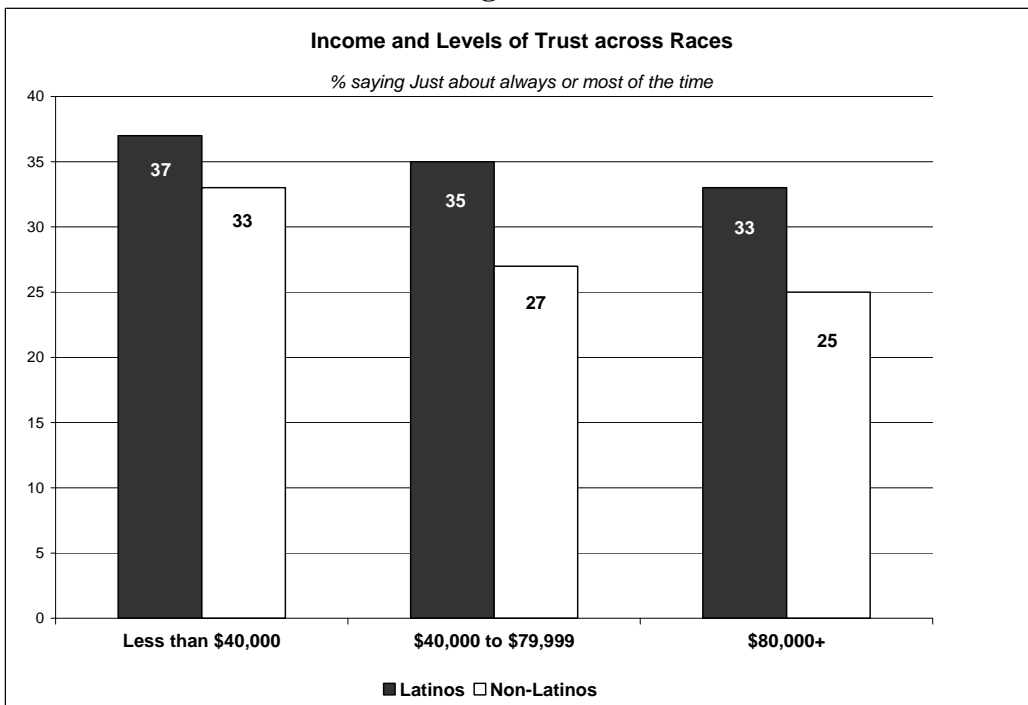
Figure 2.5 displays the bivariate relationship between generational status and political trust in state government. First generation Latinos are more trusting than second or third generation Latinos. Interestingly, third generation and beyond Latinos behave in a manner very similar to non-Latinos. Once again this is significant because it illustrates that acculturation is associated with a Latino’s political trust.

Figure 2.6 displays the relationship of income and political trust among Latinos and non-Latinos. As hypothesized, lower income residents of both groups are more trusting than middle-income residents and those that make more than \$80,000. This finding indicates that there is a negative relationship between income level and trust, although the relationship is weaker among Latinos than non-Latinos. Also of note is that the differences between non-acculturated and first generation Latinos and non-Latinos is greater than the differences present across income levels.

**Figure 2.5**



**Figure 2.6**





Attention will now turn to the results of the multivariate regression analysis and whether the acculturation or socio-economic explanation captures the determinants of trust among Latinos and explaining the differences between Latinos and non-Latinos. The results of the initial model, which includes only Latinos, are reported in Table 2.1. The analysis indicates that one of the two acculturation variables is significant that none of the socio-economic variables provide any leverage.

Regarding the socio-economic explanation, the results indicate that these variables are not among the determinants of Latino trust. In each case whether it be income, education, or homeownership, we can rule out a potential socio-economic explanation of Latino political trust. This finding bolsters those of Lawrence (1997) and Orren (1997), which examined this relationship at the federal level and among the general population and not just Latinos.

Regarding the acculturation explanation, the results indicate that language assimilation is negatively associated with political trust. The beta coefficient for language assimilation (-.154) illustrates that while acculturation matters, the relative effect compared to approving of the governor or legislature is smaller. This negative relationship between assimilation and political trust is illustrated in Figure 2.7, where we see that while holding all other variables at their means, trust declines significantly as you go from a non assimilated Latino to an assimilated Latino. This result mirrors the finding by Wenzel (2006) at the national level and is consistent with Michelson's (2003) postulation that use of the dominant group's language is associated with cynicism.

Regarding the other acculturation variable, Latino generational status, this variable is not significant. This finding runs counter to that of Garcia Bedolla (1999), however this was not specifically testing the relationship between political trust and generation status.

More generally, the results of this initial model provide support for the acculturation explanation regarding the determinants of Latino trust. Furthermore, while generational status was not significant the fact that assimilation was significant points to the overall corrosive impact of acculturation. This finding, along with the lack of leverage provided by the socio-economic explanation, establishes that among Latinos acculturation plays a significant role in Latino political trust.

While we know that socio-economic variables do not play a part in explaining Latino political trust and that assimilation does in part, what other variable explains Latino political trust? The results of this initial model provide us with evidence that politics matters as well. Approval of both the governor and the legislature are positively related to political trust. Approval of the governor does however provide more leverage than approval of the legislature. These findings at the state level are in concert with findings regarding approval of the president and congress and trust in the federal government (Erber and Lau 1990, Hetherington 1998, Citrin and Luks 2001). An examination of the beta coefficients for approval of the governor (.251) and the legislature (.229) further bolsters the finding that politics matters. Compared to the other determinants of trust these political variables account for a large portion of the model's explanatory power.

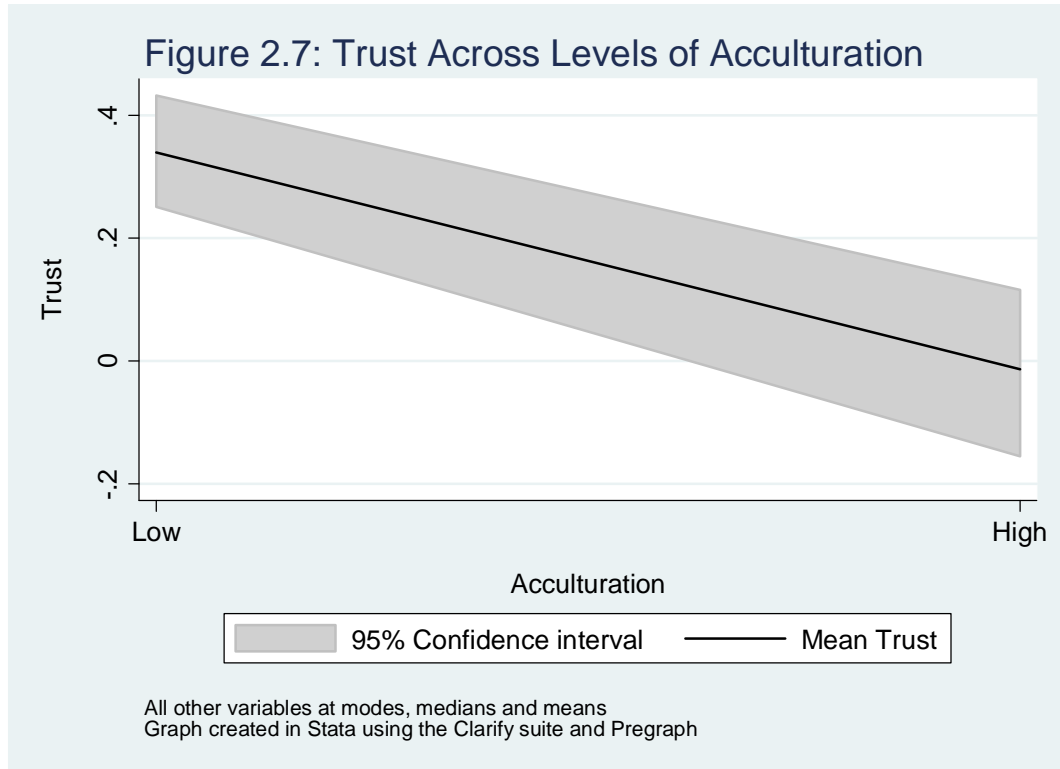
Other determinants of trust among Latinos include a respondent's prospective economic evaluation, with those that offer positive assessments being more likely to trust state government. Examining the beta coefficient for GOODTIME (.229) illustrates that the impact of a positive economic perception is only surpassed by approving of the governor. Also, a respondent's age is related to political trust among Latinos with older Latinos being more likely to trust state government. Also of note is that those respondents of Mexican descent are less trusting than

those from other countries, which is consistent with my hypothesis and lends credence to the argument that Latinos could be viewing the United States in comparison to their homeland. While it is important to know that Latinos of Mexican descent are less trusting than others, the beta coefficient for being Mexican (-.118) illustrates that this effect is substantially less than approving of the governor or legislature, or having a positive opinions of the economy. Also, the effect of being from Mexico is less than that of assimilation.

**Table 2.1. Determinants of Trust among Latinos Only**

<i>Variable</i>	<b>Parameter Estimate (Standard Error)</b>	<b>Beta Coefficient</b>
APPGOV	<b>0.576***</b> (0.080)	<b>0.251</b>
APPCALEG	<b>0.466***</b> (0.072)	<b>0.215</b>
GOODTIME	<b>0.505***</b> (0.074)	<b>0.229</b>
LIBERAL	-0.085 (0.074)	-0.037
AGE	<b>-0.063*</b> (0.028)	<b>-0.075</b>
GENDER	-0.060 (0.069)	-0.028
DEMOCRAT	-0.118 (0.079)	-0.05
EDUC	-0.062 (0.036)	-0.067
INCOME	0.168 (0.179)	-0.04
OWNRENT	0.131 (0.075)	0.06
HOMELANG	<b>-0.487***</b> (0.137)	<b>-0.154</b>
LATGEN	0.072 (0.063)	0.047
MEXICAN	<b>-0.325***</b> (0.088)	<b>-0.118</b>
Constant	0.266 (0.155)	---
R2		.300
Number of Cases		747

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001



In the second part of the analysis I will examine why Latinos are more trusting than non-Latinos. While the initial Latino only model provided some evidence that acculturation was responsible for Latino/non-Latino differences, this part of the analysis will provide a more definitive answer.

The results of the second part of this analysis are reported in Table 2.2. In model 1, which does not include socio-economic variables, we find that the same set of variables that were significant in explaining the determinants of Latino trust are also significant in this model. Approval of the governor, approval of the legislature and a respondent's prospective economic evaluation are all positively related to political trust. Age is once again negatively associated to political trust. New to this model is the Latino/non-Latino dummy variable. This variable is significant and positive which correlates with Figure 2.1 and illustrates that Latinos are more likely than non-Latinos to be trusting of state government. An examination of the beta

coefficients for the significant predictors in Model 1 illustrates that approval of the legislature (.329) has the greatest relative impact on political trust, followed by approval of the governor (.237), economic perceptions (.153), the dummy variable for Latino/non-Latino (.140) and a respondents age (-.072).<sup>22</sup>

In Model 2 of Table 2.2, the findings indicate that socio-economic variables do not help explain why Latinos are more trusting. None of the socio-economic variables are significant and the Latino/non-Latino variable is not reduced, but instead increased slightly. In Models 3, 4, and 5 the three socio-economic variables were added into the original model separately and in each case the socio-economic variable was insignificant. The results in Models 3-5 were similar to Model 2 regarding the significance of and relative impact of the variables. These findings along with the finding in Table 2.1 suggests that acculturation plays a significant role in explaining why Latinos are more trusting than non-Latinos of state government in California.

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<sup>22</sup> For a complete examination of the beta coefficients in the remaining tables in this chapter see Appendix A.2.

**Table 2.2 Trust among Latinos and Non-Latinos**

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model3	Model 4	Model 5
	Parameter Estimate (Standard Error)				
APPGOV	<b>0.490***</b> (0.040)	<b>0.484***</b> (0.041)	<b>0.492***</b> (0.040)	<b>0.485***</b> (0.041)	<b>0.498***</b> (0.040)
APPCALEG	<b>0.680***</b> (0.038)	<b>0.678***</b> (0.040)	<b>0.674***</b> (0.038)	<b>0.682***</b> (0.039)	<b>0.681***</b> (0.038)
GOODTIME	<b>0.321***</b> (0.038)	<b>0.325***</b> (0.039)	<b>0.319***</b> (0.038)	<b>0.326***</b> (0.039)	<b>0.319***</b> (0.038)
LIBERAL	0.051 (0.040)	0.060 (0.041)	0.058 (0.040)	0.056 (0.041)	0.050 (0.040)
AGE	<b>-0.047***</b> (0.012)	<b>-0.031*</b> (0.014)	<b>-0.046***</b> (0.012)	<b>-0.033*</b> (0.013)	<b>-0.045*</b> (0.013)
GENDER	-0.033 (0.036)	-0.018 (0.037)	-0.031 (0.036)	-0.015 (0.037)	-0.034 (0.036)
DEMOCRAT	0.015 (0.040)	0.016 (0.041)	0.015 (0.040)	0.015 (0.041)	0.019 (0.040)
LATINO	<b>0.305***</b> (0.043)	<b>0.306***</b> (0.049)	<b>0.281***</b> (0.047)	<b>0.321***</b> (0.046)	<b>0.307***</b> (0.043)
EDUC	---	-0.017 (0.019)	-0.018 (0.016)		
INCOME	---	-0.041 (0.076)		-0.082 (0.063)	
OWNRENT	---	-0.012 (0.044)			-0.026 (0.040)
Constant	-0.577 (0.066)	-0.565 (0.085)	-0.515 (0.083)	-0.608 (0.073)	-0.572 (0.067)
R2	.271	.268	.271	.273	.272
Number of Cases	2460	2299	2455	2311	2444

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

While these initial results fail to provide much support for the socio-economic model, they do not allow for an explanation of why Latinos are different than non-Latinos. In order to more closely examine Latino and non-Latino differences I will create a series of variables that interact the LATINO variable by the three socio-economic variables.

The results of these models are in Table 2.3 and we find that while the same pattern of significant predictors and relative effect is present, findings suggest that education and home ownership impacts Latinos and Non-Latinos differently. In Model 1 the LATINO\*EDUC interaction is negative and significant and education has a negative impact on Latino trust, while the impact on non-Latinos is positive and minimal. This finding is illustrated graphically in Figure 2.8 where we can see that education has a greater impact on Latinos than non-Latinos as we go from having a high school education or less to a respondent having a post graduate degree.

In Model 3 the LATINO\*OWNRENT variable is positive and significant and homeownership has a positive effect on Latino political trust, while the impact among non-Latinos is negative. As seen in Table 2.5, going from a renter to a homeowner among Latinos results in a 39% increase in the expected value of trust, while the same change among non-Latinos results in a 64% decrease.

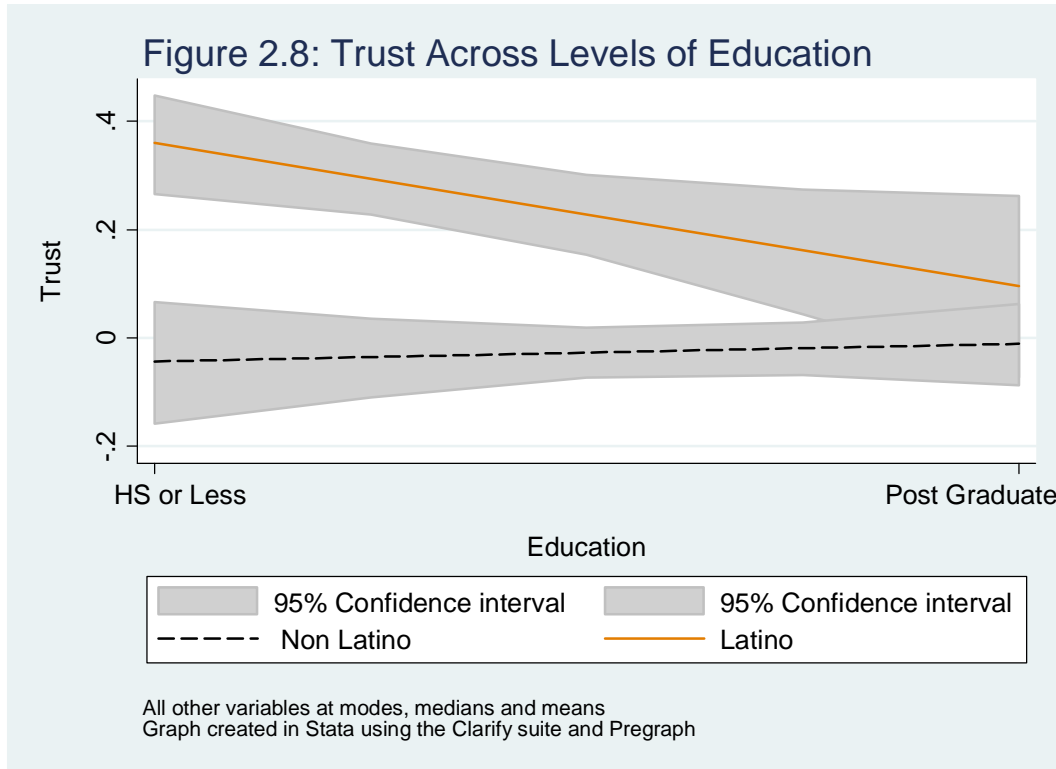
These findings regarding the impact of education and homeownership on Latinos and non-Latinos are especially important considering the significant socio-economic differences between these two groups. It is also interesting that as Latinos become more educated they become less trusting, however when they become homeowners they become trusting. One possible reason for this difference could be the concept of the “American Dream” of owning a home, and how this relates to the fact that many Latinos come to America to improve their economic situation.



**Table 2.3 Trust among Latinos and Non-Latinos**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>
	<b>Parameter Estimate (Standard Error)</b>		
APPGOV	<b>0.497***</b> (0.040)	<b>0.488***</b> (0.041)	<b>0.492***</b> (0.040)
APPCALEG	<b>0.672***</b> (0.038)	<b>0.682***</b> (0.039)	<b>0.679***</b> (0.038)
GOODTIME	<b>0.314***</b> (0.038)	<b>0.324***</b> (0.039)	<b>0.323***</b> (0.038)
LIBERAL	0.054 (0.040)	0.057 (0.041)	0.046 (0.040)
AGE	<b>-0.047***</b> (0.012)	<b>-0.032*</b> (0.013)	<b>-0.041**</b> (0.013)
GENDER	-0.028 (0.036)	-0.013 (0.037)	-0.039 (0.036)
DEMOCRAT	0.026 (0.040)	0.020 (0.041)	0.012 (0.040)
LATINO	<b>0.478***</b> (0.101)	<b>0.367***</b> (0.067)	<b>0.200***</b> (0.061)
EDUC	0.008 (0.020)		
LATINO*EDUC	<b>-0.074*</b> (0.034)		
INCOME		-0.047 (0.073)	
LATINO*INCOME		-0.139 (0.144)	
OWNRENT			<b>-0.101*</b> (0.050)
LATINO*OWNRENT			<b>0.020*</b> (0.079)
Constant	-0.608 (0.093)	-0.635 (0.078)	-0.524 (0.070)
R2	.272	.274	.275
Number of Cases	2455	2311	2444

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001



In an attempt to further understand why Latinos are more trusting than non-Latinos the next step of the analysis involved interacting the remaining independent variables by the Latino/non-Latino variable. Of the remaining independent variables the interaction terms including APPCALEG, GOODTIME, and LIBERAL were significant and contribute to understanding why Latinos are more trusting than non-Latinos.

The results of these models are in Table 2.4. In Model 1 the LATINO\*APPCALEG interaction is negative and significant. This means that approving of the legislature has a positive impact on Latinos and on non-Latinos. However the impact of going from disapproving to approving of the legislature is 2 times greater among non-Latinos than among Latinos. Also at play within this analysis is the fact that Latinos are more approving of the legislature than non-Latinos and therefore the impact of trust among non-Latinos is important.

In Model 2 the LATINO\*GOODTIME interaction is positive and significant. The results of model 2 indicate that the impact of a positive economic outlook is greater among Latinos than non-Latinos. This can be seen in Table 2.5 with the impact of going from a negative outlook to a positive outlook among Latinos results in a 580% increase in the expected value of trust. This same change among non-Latinos results in a 199% increase. This finding is especially relevant considering that Latinos are more likely than non-Latinos to have positive economic perceptions. This connection between a positive economic outlook and trust in state government may be related to the lower socio-economic status of Latinos.

In Model 3 of Table 2.4 the LATINO\*LIBERAL interactive term is significant and Table 2.5 presents results that being a liberal has a negative impact on Latino trust, while it has a positive impact on non-Latino trust. The result of going from a non-Liberal to a Liberal among Latinos results in a 25% decrease in the expected value of trust, while this change among non-Latinos results in a 190% increase in trust.

In Model 4 the LATINO\*DEMOCRAT term is significant and negative. A Latino who is a Democrat is less likely than those who are a non Democrat to trust in state government. The relationship among non-Latinos is the opposite with non-Latino Democrats being more trusting than those non-Latinos who are not Democrats. The impact of going from a non-Democrat to a Democrat among Latinos results in a 60% decrease in the expected value of trust, while this change among non-Latinos results in a 176% increase in trust. .

Latinos are increasingly becoming an important political group in California politics. Latinos who are registered as Democrats make up 61 percent of registered Latinos and 64% of Latino “likely voters” in California (PPIC Statewide Survey, 2008). The fact that this sub-group of Latinos is less trusting is especially important when considering the political implications.

With the Republican share of partisans consistently dropping (California Secretary of State, 2009), the finding that Latino Democrats are less trusting than non-democrat Latinos could impact future elections and ballot measures.

**Table 2.4 Trust among Latinos and Non-Latinos**

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	Parameter Estimate (Standard Error)			
APPGOV	<b>0.484***</b> (0.041)	<b>0.475***</b> (0.041)	<b>0.487***</b> (0.041)	<b>0.497***</b> (0.041)
APPCALEG	<b>0.734***</b> (0.047)	<b>0.675***</b> (0.039)	<b>0.670***</b> (0.039)	<b>0.667***</b> (0.039)
GOODTIME	<b>0.328***</b> (0.039)	<b>0.242***</b> (0.046)	<b>0.327***</b> (0.039)	<b>0.318***</b> (0.039)
LIBERAL	0.055 (0.041)	0.055 (0.041)	0.135 (0.050)	0.042 (0.041)
AGE	<b>-0.031*</b> (0.014)	<b>-0.030*</b> (0.014)	<b>-0.032*</b> (0.014)	<b>-0.032*</b> (0.014)
GENDER	-0.015 (0.037)	-0.015 (0.037)	-0.011 (0.037)	-0.008 (0.037)
DEMOCRAT	0.010 (0.041)	0.021 (0.041)	0.006 (0.041)	0.133 (0.050)
LATINO	<b>0.384***</b> (0.061)	<b>0.208***</b> (0.057)	<b>0.379***</b> (0.056)	<b>0.434***</b> (0.058)
EDUC	-0.017 (0.019)	-0.014 (0.019)	-0.019 (0.019)	-0.010 (0.019)
INCOME	-0.042 (0.076)	-0.036 (0.076)	-0.038 (0.076)	-0.026 (0.076)
OWNRENT	-0.008 (0.044)	-0.012 (0.044)	-0.006 (0.044)	-0.009 (0.044)
LATINO*APPCALEG	<b>-0.162*</b> (0.078)			
LATINO*GOOTIME		<b>0.256**</b> (0.079)		
LATINO*LIBERAL			<b>-0.211*</b> (0.083)	
LATINO*DEMOCRAT				<b>-0.345*</b> (0.085)
Constant	-0.589 (0.086)	-0.541 (0.085)	-0.587 (0.085)	-0.633 (0.086)
R2	.273	.275	.274	.277
Number of Cases	2299	2299	2299	2299

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

**Table 2.5. Percent Change in Expected Value of Trust**

<i>Variable</i>	<b>Latinos</b>	<b>Non-Latinos</b>
<b>OWNRENT</b> (going from renter to homeowner)	+39%	-64%
<b>APPCALEG</b> (going from disapprove to approve)	+94%	+207%
<b>GOODTIME</b> (negative perception to positive perception)	+580%	+199%
<b>LIBERAL</b> (going from non-liberal to liberal)	-25%	+190%
<b>DEMOCRAT</b> (going from non-Democrat to Democrat)	-60%	+176%

## **Conclusion**

The presence of Latinos in the politics of California and America is just beginning and the United States is going down the path that California has already traveled regarding a majority minority population. Latinos are increasingly becoming more important in politics in California and in America and it is important that we understand their political attitudes and what drives their behavior. These demographic changes will influence the election of future leaders and the direction of policy shifts.

The study of Latino political trust undertaken here provides a detailed examination of the determinants of Latino political trust and also why Latinos are more trusting than non-Latinos. Two potential explanations were offered regarding Latino trust and the research at hand provides evidence that suggests that acculturation factors, specifically language assimilation, and not socio-economic factors explain Latino political trust and why Latinos are more trusting than non-Latinos. This examination at the state level is important and as mentioned earlier is especially

important in this era of devolution where state governments are becoming more important players in the policy arena.

Findings also suggest important differences also emerged between Latinos and non-Latinos. Examining these differences illustrates that while being more educated, being liberal or being Democrat has a negative impact on Latino trust, these variables have a positive effect on non-Latino trust. This study also found that being a homeowner has a positive effect on Latino trust, while it has a negative impact on non-Latino trust. These differences highlight the differences that exist between Latino and non-Latino trust helps inform my research on the consequences of political trust.

As Latinos become increasingly more incorporated into the politics of America and California, a better understanding of Latino trust is important. Latinos are increasingly becoming an important voting block and the attention paid to Latinos, especially since 2000, in Presidential politics is indicative of this. Latinos, while a large part of the Democratic base, are also somewhat conservative on social issues and this adds the attention placed on them as swing voters. Understanding the determinants of political trust while important is just part of the puzzle. As later parts of this dissertation illustrate there is a connection between political trust and vote choice and policy preferences among Latinos.

The consequences of Latino political trust have very practical and political importance and also need to be examined. It is not enough to know that Latinos are more trusting of government than non-Latinos; an examination of the effects of this greater trust is also needed and is an important component of the future research that I am undertaking. This aspect of my current research agenda includes examining the impact of political trust in state government on policy preferences and political behavior. Other areas of needed attention include an

examination of trust at both the state and national government within the same study to examine if the determinants of Latino trust are the same at both levels. Lastly, a better understanding of how trust impacts a citizen's decision to register to vote and participate in politics is key to really understanding the role that trust plays in politics.



## CHAPTER 3

### Introduction

Trust in government is an important concept within political science and is important within a representative democracy (Gamson 1968; Bianco 1994; Levi 1997). Research has established that Latinos exhibit more trust in government than their counterparts (Garcia 1992, Cohen, Baldassare and Kaimowitz-Rodriguez 2003; Cole and Kincaid 2006; Bonner 2009) and that political trust impacts policy preferences (Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn, 2000; Hetherington and Globetti, 2002; Rahn and Rudolph, 2005), but what has not been examined is whether or not political trust impacts Latinos and non-Latinos in the same manner. Should we expect that the relationship that exists between trust and policy preferences be present among Latinos? If not, why should it be different?

Research has established that Latinos exhibit more political trust than whites, and are much more trusting than African-Americans (Guzman 1970; Garcia 1973; Garcia 1992). When examining the impact that political trust may have on policy preferences the fact that the determinants of Latino trust are different than determinants of non-Latino trust is important. I expect that the impact of trust on policy preferences will be different among Latinos and non-Latinos. Political trust is often conceptualized as the relationship between the expectations of citizens and the outcomes of government (Hetherington 2004) and thus it should not be surprising that political trust is linked to policy preferences. The same forces that are present in differentiating determinants of Latino and non-Latino trust will be present when examining the impact of trust on policy preferences among these groups. The expectations of Latinos that may lead to their elevated level of trust may impact the way that trust impacts policy preferences.

This article examines the impact of political trust on Latino and non-Latino preferences for state-level distributive policies. In specific, the research examines the 2007 debate over health care reform in California, a policy issue which could soon be front and center on the national stage. The article also explores Latino/ non-Latinos differences regarding the consequences of political trust. I find that trust impacts Latinos and non-Latinos differently and that Latinos are more likely to support health care reform. Political trust has a positive impact on non-Latino support for health care reform, while it has a negative impact among Latinos. I also examine two theories prevalent in the trust literature and find that neither the “sacrifice based” theory of Hetherington (2004) nor the ideological sacrifice theory of Rudolph and Evans (2005) extends to Latinos at the state level. Among non-Latinos, neither Hetherington’s or Rudolph and Evans’ theory did not hold true.

Throughout this article I will refer to Latinos, however it is important to mention that Latinos are not a monolithic group, especially as a political group. Hero (1992) states “Latinos may be a group in name—a nominal group—but not necessarily a politically identifiable group (2).” According to the 2006 American Community Survey, Latinos make up 36 percent of California’s population and 15 percent of the population in the U.S. Among the Latinos in the U.S., 69 percent are of Mexican descent, while Latinos in California are even more likely to be of Mexican descent—77 percent. Also, it is important to note that about 80 percent of Latinos in the survey data used in the empirical analysis in this article are of Mexican descent. So what does this mean to the study at hand? This means that while the survey data are for the most part representative of the demographics of California, there is the need to include a variable to control for any nation of origin effects. Where appropriate I will utilize a dummy variable for respondents of Mexican descent that will serve as this control.

I will also refer to non-Latinos throughout the article. This group will include non-Hispanic whites, Asians, African Americans and respondents of other races.

Political trust, as does other important political variables, has consequences and this research seeks to answer two main research questions: 1) What impact does political trust have on policy preferences? 2) Does political trust impact the policy preferences of Latinos in the same manner it impacts the preferences of non-Latinos?

### **Political Trust**

Although trust is a ubiquitous term in political science, there is some debate concerning its meaning. The debate focuses on whether trust is specific or diffuse (Easton 1965). Some scholars relate trust to specific support of political officials (Citrin 1974; Citrin and Green 1986); while others view political trust as a measure of diffuse support of the more general political environment (Miller 1974). This debate is important because of the consequences associated with each. The consequences of specific support are said to be limited due to the potential for the improvement of an elected officials' job performance, while lack of diffuse support is argued to be more detrimental because low levels of trust could impact the legitimacy of a democracy.

Much of the research on political trust has utilized the American National Election Studies (ANES) trust in government questions, which captures the diffuse sense of trust in that the measures were "designed to tap the basic evaluative orientations towards the national government." (Stokes 1962:64) According to Marc J. Hetherington political trust is "the degree to which people perceive that government is producing outcomes consistent with their expectation." (9) The research at hand will focus on trust in the broader diffuse sense of Stokes and Hetherington.

The body of literature on political trust has shown that trust in government has political consequences, both attitudinal and behavioral in nature (Rahn and Rudolph 2005). Furthermore, since the earliest studies of political trust, researchers have attempted to delve into the determinants of political trust (Agger et al 1961; Cole 1973; Miller 1974; Citrin 1974). Articles titled “Political Cynicism: Measurement and Meaning” and “Toward a Model of Political Trust: A Causal Analysis” sought to unravel the complexity of political trust. However, the bulk of contemporary research has focused more on the consequences of political trust and less on the origins of political trust.<sup>23</sup>

The consequences of political trust have been debated since the Miller-Citrin debate on political trust. In this well known debate published in *The American Political Science Review* in September 1974 Miller utilized political cynicism as an independent variable and posits that cynicism is positively related to dissatisfaction with the policy alternatives that were on the table. He states that low levels of trust could raise “the probability of the occurrence of radical political change.” Miller also asserts that sustained low levels of trust could challenge regime legitimacy. Citrin countered with the assertion that decreased trust was linked to discontent with the elected political leaders and not the policy options. Citrin also countered Miller’s assertion regarding the relationship between distrust and acts of dissent, and asserts that between 1970 and 1972 the positive relationship between political trust and support for the incumbent grew.

More recently, political trust has served as an independent variable in research that suggests a positive relationship with the following dependent variables: support for devolution of policy to the state level (Jennings 1998, Hetherington and Nugent 2001), compliance with governmental demands (Tyler and Degoey 1995, Scholz and Lubell 1998), support for domestic

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<sup>23</sup> See Chanley et al 2000 and Rahn and Rudolph 2005 for examples of research that examines the origins of political trust.

policy spending (Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn 2000; Hetherington 2004), support for liberal racial policy preferences (Hetherington and Globetti 2002), positive evaluations of elected officials (Sigelman et al., 1992, Hetherington 1998) and voting for incumbents and third party candidates (Shingles 1981; Hetherington 1999).

Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn (2000) provided evidence that political trust has consequences for policy attitudes. Utilizing aggregate level time series data and trust in the U.S. national government as an independent variable, their research finds a positive relationship between trust and public policy mood. Further, the authors postulate that this relationship highlights “the importance of trust in government for public willingness to commit public resources for policy ends”. (253)

Hetherington and Globetti (2002) put forth research that employs political trust as an independent variable with racial policy preferences as their dependent variables. Specifically, utilizing survey data from the ANES survey series they find that political trust among whites affects support for a myriad of racial policy preferences during the early 1990s, including support for affirmative action, aid to blacks and school integration. However, Hetherington and Globetti find that among African Americans trust is not significant. This research is closely tied to Hetherington’s sacrifice-based theory, which will be discussed later.

Rudolph and Evans (2005) examine individual level data from the National Annenberg Election Survey to analyze the role of trust in public support for government spending. Utilizing a ordered probit model, their research provides evidence that political trust as an independent variable has a positive relationship with support for redistributive policies including education, health care, Medicaid, and aid to mothers. Trust in government is not related to dependent variables that operationalize distributive policies such as spending on Social Security, Medicare,

or Defense spending. However, trust is positively related to support of one distributive policy, government spending on environment. This research is especially important to the research at hand, since the dependent variable is the redistributive policy of health care reform.

Konisky, Milyo, and Richardson (2008) also utilize political trust as an independent variable and suggest a positive relationship between trust and support for environmental policy. They find that trust in government impacts attitudes toward government action on environmental issues, in general, and on pollution issues in particular. Trust fails to provide any leverage on the government's role surrounding resource issues. This finding is yet another liberal policy area where political trust has an impact.

To recap, Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn suggest that political trust impacts the overall policy mood of a respondent. The findings from Hetherington and Globetti and Rudolph and Evans suggest that political trust is especially important when considering redistributive policy preferences. Konisky, Milyo, and Richardson provide a link between political trust and liberal policy.

The consequences of political trust are extensive; however, an examination of the consequences of trust among Latinos is absent from the literature. Gathering from what we know about the impact of trust, I hypothesize that political trust will lead to greater support for health care reform in California. I also hypothesize that political trust will have a different impact among Latinos and non-Latinos. Theoretically, this is related to the expectations of Latinos and the fact that the determinants of trust among Latinos and non-Latinos are different. Considering that trust is conceptualized as the intersection between a citizen's expectations and the outcomes of the government, it is logical that the differences in political trust among these two groups would impact the manner in which trust impacts policy preferences. These

differences will affect the manner in which trust impacts Latino policy preferences. The elevated level of trust in state government could make Latinos more open towards government action and thus make them more amenable to health care reform.

While trust is important in many areas of American politics, Hetherington's "sacrifice based" theory has captured the bulk of attention in the contemporary trust literature. In his book, *Why Trust Matters*, Marc J. Hetherington (2004) details how political trust impacts support for policy preferences. Furthermore, he posits that the impact of trust is not the same across different policy types. Specifically:

"Declining trust should not affect support for all things that the government does. Indeed, people do not need to trust the government much when they benefit from it. Instead, people need to trust the government when they pay the costs but do not receive the benefits, which is exactly what antipoverty and race-targeted programs require of most Americans" (4).

Hetherington's theory asserts that trust is a heuristic that is activated when a person is required to make sacrifices. "Sacrifices" in his analysis concern costs associated with redistributive policies, while he theorizes that distributive policies do not require trust since benefits and costs are universal. Specifically, he asserts that there is an interactive relationship between trust and beneficiary status. Hetherington finds that trust "exerts its influence among those who perceive that a government program will require sacrifice of them, but trust is less important among those who perceive that they will benefit" (132). While Hetherington has provided ample evidence of his sacrifice based theory among the general population concerning trust in the federal government; this thesis has not been tested at the state level or specifically among Latinos.

The role of ideology as a control variable within models of policy preference is generally straightforward and widely accepted. Conservatives are less likely to support social welfare

spending, while liberals are more likely to support it (Jacoby 2000). However, in an attempt to extend the work of Hetherington, Rudolph and Evans (2005) theorize that financial costs are not the only types of cost and find that ideology “conditions the effects of political trust on attitudes toward both distributive and redistributive spending” (660). Rudolph and Evans note that while Hetherington’s argument regarding material self interest is valid, other sacrifices may be involved when deciding to support or oppose a policy. Specifically, the authors posit that their results “suggest that political trust is activated when individuals are asked to sacrifice ideological principles as well as their own self-interest” and that “while conservatives are less supportive of government spending than liberals, ... political trust actually has a much larger impact on spending attitudes among conservatives” (668). The finding of Rudolph and Evans that conservatives of higher trust are more likely to be supportive of distributive and redistributive spending is quite important and illustrative of the consequences of trust and that consequences impact different groups differently.

The issues of ideology and trust are especially relevant among Latinos in California. While 64 percent of Latinos in California state that they are registered as Democrats , 34 percent self identify as conservatives when asked<sup>24</sup>. Regarding the conditioning role of ideology I will examine whether the moderating aspects of ideology present in the research of Rudolph and Evans extend to Latinos in California.

### **Importance of the Consequences of Political Trust**

As established above there are important consequences to political trust. However, what makes these consequences important? Political trust and its consequences are important within the policy arena because there is a positive relationship between the attitudes and preferences of the public and policy outputs (Erikson, Mackuen, and Stimson 2002; Stimson, Mackuen, and

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<sup>24</sup> Figures are based on ten PPIC Statewide Surveys conducted between July 2007 and July 2008.



Erikson, 1995). Therefore if political trust has an impact on policy preferences then it could lead to policy being enacted. Conversely, Hetherington (1998) posits that a lack of political trust could impact the size and scope of a president's policy initiatives. He states, "As the health care reform fiasco of 1993-94 suggests, however, a public no longer possessed of a core trust in its political system is easily frightened by negative campaigns against broad new initiatives. (804)." Lastly, Hetherington and Globetti (2002) take the argument a step further when they assert that "... distrust may not portend a legitimacy crisis, it may have less dramatic, yet still important, consequences for the America polity. One such consequence may be a truncated policy agenda" (253).

The consequences of political trust have also been evident with regards to "where" policy is enacted. Declining government trust is linked with the general preference for state or local responsibility for policy-making (Jennings 1998). This has important consequences on sources of funding and on the effectiveness of policy initiatives. Similarly, Brooks and Cheng (2002) question "the relationship between individuals' level of confidence in government and their preferences with respect to the level of involvement by the federal government in policy-making activities?" (1345)

### **Political Trust and Devolution**

While the majority of the research on political trust has focused on trust of the national government<sup>25</sup>, trust in state government is especially important today considering the degree to which policy devolution has become common in America since the 1990s<sup>26</sup>. According to Cole et al. (1999), devolution involves policies "intended to return a certain level of discretion in program planning, design, and implementation to state and local governments; while also

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<sup>25</sup> See Uslaner (2001) for an exception.

<sup>26</sup> See for a more detailed discussion of the devolution see Nathan (1996). For an analysis of public opinion of devolution see Hetherington and Nugent (2001)

reducing certain federally imposed rules, regulations, and unfunded mandates for those governments.” (99)

The connection between devolution and political trust can not be ignored. While the thrust of theoretical contributions regarding political trust has focused on the debate regarding whether trust is specific or diffuse, a link between devolution and political trust has been explored. Jennings (1998) posits that a decline in political trust at the federal level contributed to the devolution that took place during the 1990s. He states, “the shifting assessments of the federal government provide a textbook example that trust can be a rather fragile commodity, just as it can be at the individual level. From its high-flying days when it held sway over state and local governments as the object of highest trust, the national government suffered a sharp and durable fall (241).”

In California, the concept of devolution can be taken a step further. California uses the initiative process more than any other state in the nation, and its use of the initiative process has increased significantly in frequency over the last 4 decades (Baldassare and Katz, 2007). Moreover, the tough decisions in California politics are increasingly being made at the ballot box. Whether it be campaign finance, Indian gaming, eminent domain, high speed rail, or redistricting, voters in California are often asked to make the tough decisions that the Legislature and Governor can not or will not make.<sup>27</sup> Temporally linked to this increase in the use of the initiative process is the decline in trust in government among California voters.<sup>28</sup>

The role that trust has played in impacting devolution is especially important regarding policy preferences. The decline in trust at the federal level only heightens the importance of

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<sup>27</sup> For a more detailed discussion of direct democracy in California, see *The Coming Age of Direct Democracy* by Baldassare and Katz (2007).

<sup>28</sup> For a discussion of Californians decline in political trust see *The State of California Voters* (2008) by Baldassare et al.

understanding trust at the state level since more decisions are being made at the state level. This is also related to policy preferences because residents may prefer their state governments to enact policy instead of the federal government. State governments and their policies in this era of devolution have a great impact on the lives of residents of each state and, at least in California, citizens want their state government to enact policy separate from the federal government.<sup>29</sup> Even though trust at the state level is greater than at the federal level, it is anything but overwhelming (Gallup 2007) and has decreased in the last twenty years as well (Cole and Kincaid 2006). Thus, attaining a better understanding of the consequences of trust at the state level is relevant<sup>30</sup> and the presence of policy devolution only bolsters the importance of this examination. In addition to providing an in-depth analysis of state-level policy preferences, this analysis could shed some light on preferences at the national level as well.

### **Latinos, Non-Latinos, and Political Trust**

Early studies of Latino trust suggested that Latinos were less trusting than whites, but more trusting than African Americans (Guzman 1970; Garcia 1973). However, much more recently de la Garza and his colleagues (1992) presented findings from the Latino Political National Survey (LPNS) that indicated that Latinos were slightly more trusting than whites. Cole and Kincaid (2006), utilizing a national sample, also found that Hispanics or Latinos “were considerably more likely to report high levels of trust in the federal government than were non-Hispanics” (456). Furthermore, they find that Latinos express similar levels of trust in their state government, but this finding does not hold true at the local level. A nine year time series of trust

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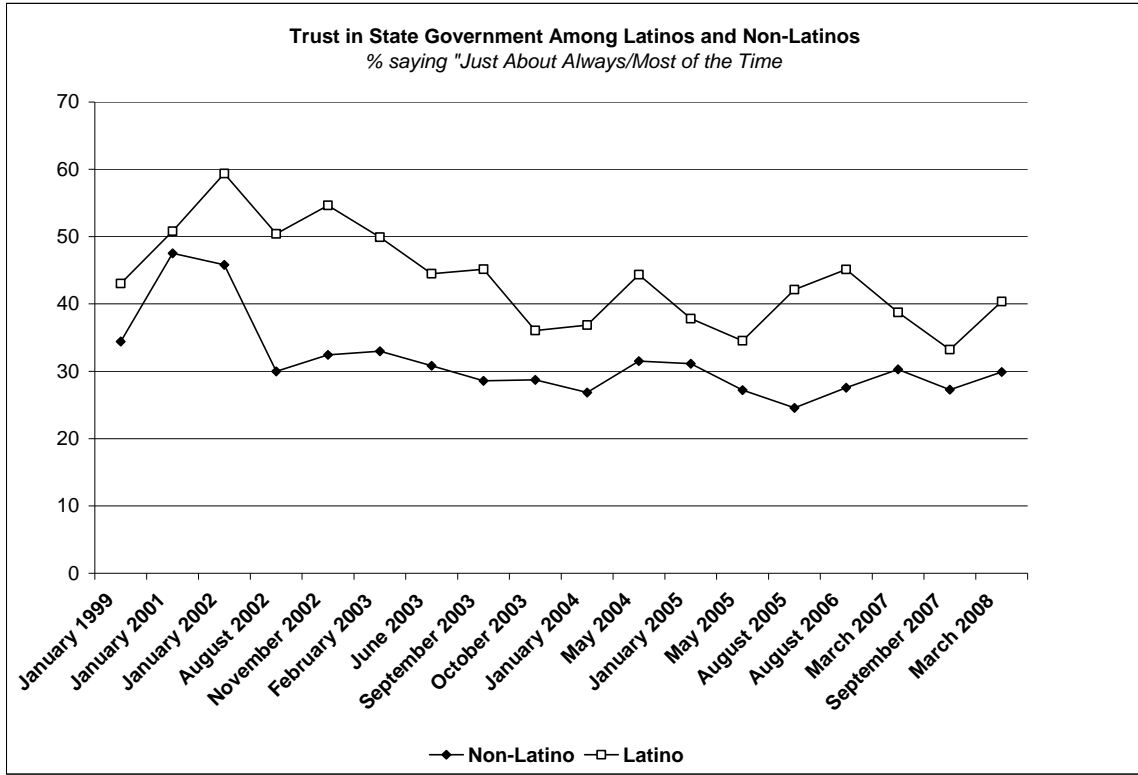
<sup>29</sup> See PPIC Statewide Surveys in July 2008, January 2007, July 2006, and July 2005 for evidence that a majority of Californians think that California should make its own policies separate from the federal government. This perception has increased 12 points since 2005.

<sup>30</sup>Uslaner (2001) found that trust in the national or state government is linked and that only 24% of respondents in his national sample trusted one level, but not the other. Therefore, an analysis of trust in state government is in some ways also an analysis of trust in government more generally.

in California state government using PPIC Statewide Survey data demonstrates that Latinos consistently express higher levels of trust in state government than their non-Latino counterparts (Figure 3.1). On average 43 percent of Latinos expressed they trust state government “just about always” or “most of the time”, compared to only 32 percent of non-Latinos. While Latinos may exhibit more political trust than non-Latinos, the research at hand is interested in the consequences this elevated level of trust may have on Latino policy preferences.

It is also important to note that Latino trust in government is relevant nationally since Latinos are currently the fastest growing population in the United States. With the increased immigration of Latinos to the United States the Census Bureau projects that by 2042 America will be a majority minority with non-Hispanic whites making up less than 50 percent of the population. Also, by 2050 it is projected that the nation will be 54 percent minority (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).

**Figure 3.1**



Source: Public Policy Institute of California, Statewide Survey, 1999-2008.

## Data and Methodology

California provides an ideal context for the study of trust at the state level because of the diverse nature of its population, especially regarding Latinos. In 2000, California became the first state to have a population that was majority minority. Since 2000, three other states and the District of Columbia have become majority minority states.<sup>31</sup> Considering where America as a nation is heading and where California has been, California provides an excellent setting for this analysis.

The article at hand will explore the consequences of trust in state government among Latinos and examine whether trust impacts Latino and non-Latino policy preferences in the same manner. Data from the March 2007 PPIC survey of California residents will be used for this analysis. Specifically, I will examine determinants of support for health care reform policy that would require all Californians to have health insurance including government programs for low-income people.

In 2007 Governor Schwarzenegger and legislative leaders indicated that health care reform would be a priority. The governor placed emphasis on insuring the estimated 6.5 million Californians that are uninsured.<sup>32</sup> The health care reform effort was a topic of state and national news for a good part of 2007 into early 2008. However, in the end, partisanship and budget concerns assured that the reform efforts would fail.

As mentioned earlier, the research at hand will analyze Latino respondents in comparison to non-Latinos, which include whites, Asians, African Americans and respondents of other races.

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<sup>31</sup> Along with California, Texas, Hawaii, New Mexico, and the District of Columbia are majority minority states. According to the Census Bureau five other states—Maryland, Mississippi, Georgia, New York and Arizona—are in line to become majority minority states with each having minority populations of about 40 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).

<sup>32</sup> According to a September 2007 UCLA Center for Health Policy Research Health Policy Fact Sheet 6.5 million Californians who lacked coverage for some or all of the year in 2005.

Latinos (36%) and whites (43%) make up nearly 80 percent of the population, while Asians (12%), African-Americans (6%) and those of other races (3%) make up the remainder of the population (California Department of Finance, 2008).

### *Dependent Variable*

Health care reform policy (HEALTH) is measured using four separate questions that gauge support for requiring all Californians to have health insurance, support for programs for lower income residents, support for doctors and hospitals paying a fee, and support for requiring employers to provide insurance to employees.<sup>33</sup>

- *Would you favor or oppose a plan requiring all Californians to have health insurance, with costs shared by employers, health care providers and individuals?*
- *All California residents should be required to have health insurance, with public programs available for low-income persons. (Is this a good idea or a bad idea?)*
- *Employers should be required to provide health insurance for their employees or pay a fee to the state to help cover the costs of health care. (Is this a good idea or a bad idea?)*
- *Physicians and hospitals should be required to pay a fee to the state to help cover the costs of health care. (Is this a good idea or a bad idea?)*

The four questions load on a single factor<sup>34</sup> and have a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) score of .74, which is considered acceptable.<sup>35</sup> The four variables also have a reliability level ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.71<sup>36</sup>, which is an acceptable level within the social science literature. A Cronbach's alpha is used to examine how closely related a set of variables are when combined as a scale. The index will range from low (oppose/bad idea) to high (favor/good idea). All models where health care reform is the dependent variable will utilize OLS regression.

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<sup>33</sup> For a detailed description of all the variables utilized in this paper please see Appendix A1.

<sup>34</sup> See Appendix A.3 for the factor loadings of this variable.

<sup>35</sup> The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy is an index that determines the proportion of variance among the variables that might be common variance. See Kaiser 1970 and 1974 for a more detailed discussion.

<sup>36</sup> The reliability of the additive scale was tested using a Cronbach's alpha. For a more detailed discussion of Cronbach's alpha see Cortina, 1993.

### *Independent Variables*

Political trust is the main independent variable of interest and is measured by a factor score that utilizes three of the four questions that makes up the American National Election Study (ANES) trust index.

- *Next, how much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Sacramento to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?*
- *Would you say the state government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves, or that it is run for the benefit of all of the people?*
- *Do you think the people in state government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?*

This measure is similar to those used in much of the political trust literature. The three questions load on a single factor<sup>37</sup> and have a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) score of .64, which is considered acceptable. The three variable also have a reliability level ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.61, which is an acceptable level within the social science literature. A Cronbach's alpha is used to examine how closely related a set of variables are when combined as a scale. The trust variable is coded from the lowest level of trust to the highest level of trust.

The control variables utilized in this analysis include a mix of political and demographic variables that are commonly utilized when examining policy preferences. These variables include approval of the governor (APPGOV), approval of the California Legislature (APPCALEG), personal evaluation of California's economy (GOODTIME), personal ideology placement (LIBERAL), age (AGE), sex (SEX), education level (EDUC), partisan affiliation (DEMOCRAT), and being a potential benefactor of proposed reform (BENEFIT). Latino specific variables will be included in the Latino only models and include the following.

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<sup>37</sup> See Appendix A.3 for the factor loadings of this variable.



Assimilation (HOMELANG), which measures the language Latinos usually speak at home and is coded 0 for “only Spanish” and 1 for “only English”, generational status (LATGEN), which measures whether a respondent is a first generation, second generation, or third generation and beyond Latino and is coded 1, 2, and 3 respectively, and a dummy variable for a respondent being from Mexico (MEXICAN).<sup>38</sup>. The predicted direction of the control variables is located in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 Predicted Directions of Variables’ Relationship with Pro-Health Care Reform**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Predicted Sign</i>
TRUST	+
APPGOV	-
APPCALEG	+
GOODTIME	+
LIBERAL	+
AGE	-
GENDER	-
EDUC	-
DEMOCRAT	+
BENEFIT	+
HOMELANG	-
LATGEN	-
MEXICAN	+

A number models will be used to examine whether political trust impacts Latino and non-Latino policy preferences differently and explore the consequences of political trust among Latinos and non-Latinos. The first model will include Latinos and non-Latinos in the same model and will include an interaction of LATINO\*TRUST to examine whether trust has the same impact among Latinos and non-Latinos. If the interactive term is insignificant then the

<sup>38</sup> For detailed question wording please see the Appendix.

effect of trust is the same for Latinos and non-Latinos. However, if it is significant then this means that trust in state government impacts Latinos and non-Latinos differently, and the nature of that difference will be explored. To examine the differences I will run separate models for Latinos and non-Latinos.

Next I will examine whether Hetherington's "sacrifice based" theory or Rudolph and Evans's ideological sacrifice theory holds true among Latinos or non-Latinos at the state level. In order to examine Hetherington's theory I will generate an interaction term (TRUST\*BENEFIT) that examines the interaction between trust in the state government and status as a benefactor of the proposed policy. A benefactor is someone in a household with an income of less than \$40,000 per year and is without health insurance. This interactive term will be added to Latino only model as well as a non-Latino model and will test whether political trust is less important among those that stand to benefit from the policy.

Lastly, in order to examine Rudolph and Evans's ideological sacrifice theory I will generate an interaction term (TRUST\*IDEOLOGY) that interacts trust in state government with ideological self-placement. The use of this interactive term in models of Latino and non-Latino policy preferences will allow for the examination of whether political trust is less important among liberals than among conservatives.

## **Analysis**

Focus will now be placed on the results of the multivariate regression analysis and what impact political trust has on health care policy preferences. I will first examine whether political trust has the same impact on Latinos as non-Latinos. In order to do this I will run a model that includes an interaction term, LATINO\*TRUST. The results of this model are in Table 3.2 and the finding suggests that trust impact Latinos and non-Latinos differently. The

impact of the interactive term is illustrated graphically in Figure 3.2 where we can see that the impact of political trust is positive among non-Latinos, while it is negative among Latinos. This negative relationship between Latino trust and support for health care reform runs contrary to the expected direction and this will be addressed in the next part of the analysis. Also, the impact of political trust is greater among non-Latinos than Latinos. It should be noted that while Latinos and non-Latinos were impacted by political trust, support for health care reform was strong in both groups regardless of level of trust.

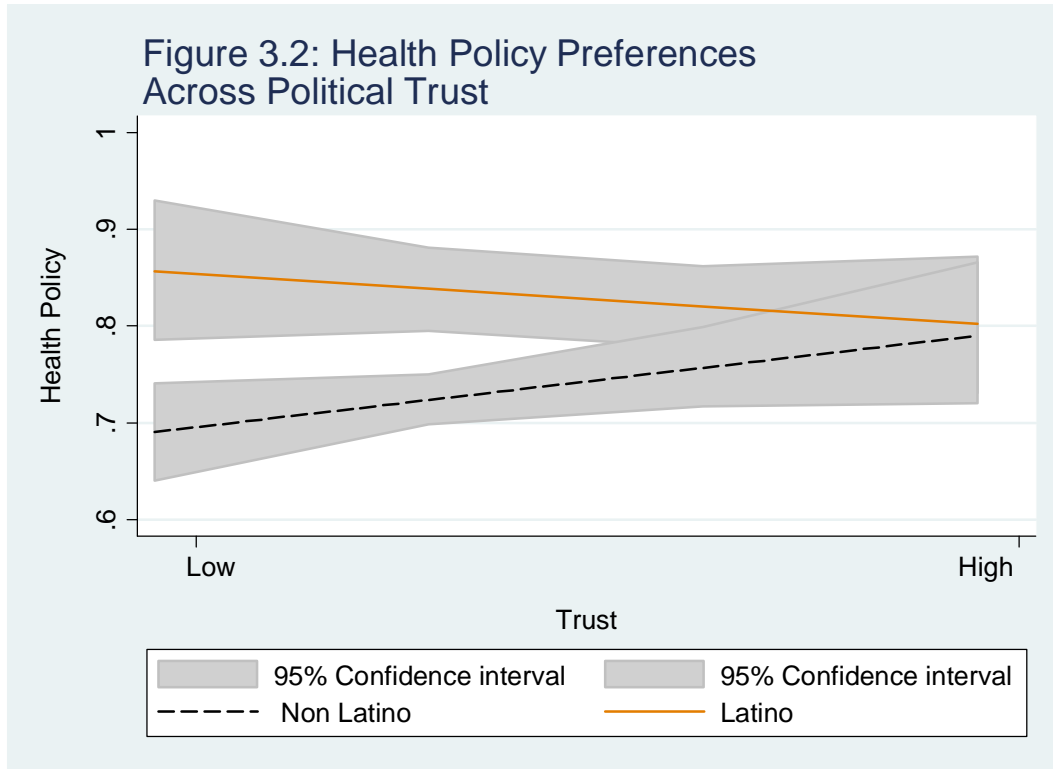
In addition to establishing that political trust impacts Latinos and non-Latinos differently, Table 3.2 provides us with a first glance at what significantly predicts health policy preferences. The research establishes that approval of the governor is negatively related, while approval of the legislature is positively related to support for health care reform. Being a liberal, a Democrat and a Latino are all positively related to supporting this distributive policy, while older people, less educated people, and men are less likely to be in support. These variables are all in the expected direction. According to the beta coefficients approval of the legislature (.148) has the greatest relative effect on health care reform, followed by being a liberal (.132) and education (-.123). It is interesting that the impact of being a Democrat (.071) is nearly identical, but in the opposite direction for approving of the governor (-.074).

This first step of the analysis establishes that political trust impacts Latinos and non-Latinos differently and that political trust has a greater impact among Latinos. However, it is important to explore these differences in a more detailed manner.

**Table 3.2. Consequences of Trust on Health Policy Preferences among Latinos and Non-Latinos**

<i>Variable</i>	<b>Parameter Estimate (Standard Error)</b>	<b>Beta Coefficient</b>
TRUST	0.032 (0.019)	.075
APPGOV	<b>-0.049*</b> (0.023)	<b>-.074</b>
APPCALEG	<b>0.100***</b> (0.022)	<b>.148</b>
GOODTIME	0.017 (0.021)	.026
LIBERAL	<b>0.092***</b> (0.021)	<b>.132</b>
AGE	<b>-0.014*</b> (0.007)	<b>-.064</b>
GENDER	<b>-0.043*</b> (0.020)	<b>-.064</b>
EDUC	<b>-0.033***</b> (0.009)	<b>-.123</b>
DEMOCRAT	<b>0.05*</b> (0.022)	<b>-.071</b>
BENEFIT	0.035 (0.031)	.037
LATINO	<b>0.108***</b> (0.026)	<b>.154</b>
LATINO*TRUST	<b>-0.049*</b> (0.024)	<b>-.076</b>
Constant		0.809 (0.047)
R2		.176
Number of Cases		993

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001



I will now examine some of the differences between Latinos and non-Latinos. Table 3.3 presents the findings of a basic model of health policy preferences. Model 1 includes only Latino respondents, while Model 2 includes only non-Latinos. The results indicate that political trust does not impact non-Latino preferences, but it does provide leverage concerning Latino policy preferences. However, it is interesting that political trust has a negative impact on health policy preferences meaning that Latinos with higher trust are less likely than those with lower trust to be supportive of California’s health care reform. This runs contrary to my hypothesis that political trust would have a positive impact on policy preferences and can be seen graphically in Figure 3.3. The magnitude of the impact of trust among Latinos is relatively small considering the number of control variables. However, considering that TRUST survives all the control variables that is important.

Other significant variables in Table 3.3 among Latinos include a respondent's economic perceptions and their generational status.<sup>39</sup> In the case of economic perceptions, Californians with positive perceptions of the economy are more likely to be in favor of health care reform. Regarding generation status, this finding is graphically illustrated in Figure 3.4 and shows that first generation Latinos are more likely than later generation Latinos to be supportive of health care policies. Among the three variables that are significant among Latinos a respondents generational status (-.270) has the largest effect, followed by political trust (-.174) and a Latino's perception of the economy (.125).<sup>40</sup>

Prior to discussing the findings of non-Latinos I will explore why political trust has a negative impact on support for health care reform among Latinos. This finding runs counter to my hypothesis and thus warrants discussion. Drawing upon the "dissatisfied democrats" thesis of Klingemann (1999) this relationship could be driven by the expectations of Latinos and the role expectations play in political trust. Klingemann identifies "dissatisfied democrats" as individuals who value democracy, but who are critical of their government. He states that these individuals "...put a high rating on the attractiveness of democracy as a form of government but at the same time place a low rating on the performance of their particular democratic regimes" (54). It could be argued that Latinos value democracy and thus would have high levels of trust, especially considering the research at hand is examining trust in the diffuse sense. However, these higher levels of trust by Latinos could be artificially elevated and would not necessarily exclude Latinos from being critical of the role of the government in their lives. Hence, even

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<sup>39</sup> With the knowledge that both political trust and generational status have a negative impact on health policy preferences, I created an interactive term, TRUST\*LATGEN, to assess whether political trust has the same impact on policy preferences among Latinos of different generational status. This interaction term was insignificant, which means that the impact of trust is the same across generations of Latinos.

<sup>40</sup> For a complete examination of the beta coefficients in the remaining tables in this chapter see Appendix A.3.

though Latinos may express greater trust, their expectations could be lower and this could result in the negative relationship between political trust and support for health care reform.

Among non-Latinos significant predictors include a negative relationship with governor approval, a positive relationship with legislature approval as well as being a liberal. Also, there is a negative relationship between support for health care reform and being a man and being more educated. These findings are all in the expected direction and the significance of these control variables may play a large role in explaining why political trust is not significant in the non Latino model. The beta coefficients allow us to ascertain that among non-Latinos the largest relative effect is provided by being a liberal (.191) followed by approving of the legislature (.156), and education (-.133). Approving of the governor (-.092) and gender (-.072) have smaller relative effects.

Examining the differences between Model 1 and Model 2 of Table 3.3 we find that the determinants of Latino and non-Latino policy preferences are completely different. Latinos are impacted mainly by their level of political trust, economic perceptions and generational status, while non-Latino support is influenced by political and demographic variables<sup>41</sup>. This is important because it further bolsters the argument that the elevated level of trust among Latinos may have important consequences on policy preferences. If we recall, the determinants of Latino trust were different than the determinants of non-Latino trust and this may play a role in both the impact that trust has on policy preferences among Latinos and explaining why the predictors of policy preferences are different.

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<sup>41</sup> The findings in Model 1 of Table 3.3 are similar when the Latino specific variables are removed from the model, which establishes that even without controlling for their generational status Latinos policy preferences are both different than non Latinos and impacted by political trust. However the impact of political trust is lessened when these variable are removed from the equation.

Prior to moving on the next step in this analysis it is important to highlight the finding that Latinos of Mexican descent are not different than other Latinos regarding their support of health care reform. However, while that is true it does not mean that political trust does not impact Mexicans differently than other Latinos considering we know that Mexicans are less trusting than other Latinos from Chapter 2. To examine the influence of trust among Mexicans I ran two additional models. The first is of Mexicans only and will allow for the comparison of Mexicans to other Latinos and to non-Latinos. Secondly, I ran a model of Latinos that included an interaction of LATINO\*MEXICAN, which allows for an analysis of the impact of trust on health care reform among Latinos and non-Latinos.

Model 3 in Table 3.3 illustrates that Latinos of Mexican descent are not that different than Latinos overall. The same variables that were significant among Latinos overall (TRUST, GOODTIME, LATGEN) and examining the beta coefficients, the relative impact of each of these variables are similar. The results in Model 3 are illustrative of the fact that the dummy variable for being Mexican was not significant, which means that Mexicans are not different compared to Latinos overall.

Model 4 in Table 3.3 includes all Latinos, but also includes an interaction term of LATINO\*MEXICAN. The results indicate that political trust impacts Mexicans differently than other Latinos. In fact, going from the lowest level of trust to the highest results in a 20% decrease in the expected value of support for health care reform, while this change among non-Mexicans results in a 5% increase in support for health care reform. This is especially important considering that a strong majority of Latinos in California and in America are of Mexican descent. However, one in four Latinos in California and three in 10 the U.S. are non-Mexican and thus the positive impact of political trust among non-Mexicans could have a political impact.



As Californians continually go to the ballot box to make policy, consultants and elected officials could use this information to target certain groups within Latinos.

**Table 3.3 Consequences of Trust on Health Policy Preferences Among Latinos and Non-Latinos--Basic Model**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Model 1 (Latino)</i>	<i>Model 2 (Non-Latino)</i>	<i>Model 3 (Mexican)</i>	<i>Model 4 (Latino)</i>
	<b>Parameter Estimate (Standard Error)</b>			
TRUST	<b>-0.039**</b> (.014)	0.029 (0.023)	<b>-0.060***</b> (.017)	0.012 (0.028)
APPGOV	0.025 (0.027)	<b>-0.071*</b> (0.031)	0.033 (0.032)	0.031 (0.027)
APPCALEG	0.023 (0.023)	<b>0.115***</b> (0.033)	0.045 (0.026)	0.019 (0.023)
GOODTIME	<b>0.048*</b> (0.023)	-0.002 (0.029)	<b>0.068*</b> (0.027)	<b>0.048*</b> (0.023)
LIBERAL	-0.004 (0.022)	<b>0.147***</b> (0.030)	-0.012 (0.026)	-0.004 (0.022)
AGE	-0.012 (0.008)	-0.016 (0.009)	-0.005 (0.010)	-0.011 (0.008)
GENDER	-0.007 (0.021)	<b>-0.053*</b> (0.028)	-0.020 (0.024)	-0.006 (0.021)
EDUC	-0.008 (0.010)	<b>-0.045***</b> (0.013)	-0.009 (0.013)	-0.008 (0.010)
DEMOCRAT	0.021 (0.023)	0.04 (0.032)	0.026 (0.026)	0.022 (0.023)
BENEFIT	-0.014 (0.025)	0.077 (0.058)	-0.023 (0.029)	-0.006 (0.025)
HOMELANG	0.032 (0.042)	---	0.027 (0.047)	0.024 (0.042)
LATGEN	<b>-0.145***</b> (0.037)	---	<b>-0.136***</b> (0.042)	<b>-0.141***</b> (0.037)
MEXICAN	-0.032 (0.027)	---	---	-0.004 (0.042)
TRUST*MEXICAN			---	<b>-0.064*</b> (0.031)
Constant	0.963 (0.048)	0.859 (0.064)	0.905 (0.047)	0.931 (.05)
R2	.100	.143	.100	.111
Number of Cases	336	649	275	336

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

Figure 3.3: Health Policy Across Levels of Trust Among Latinos

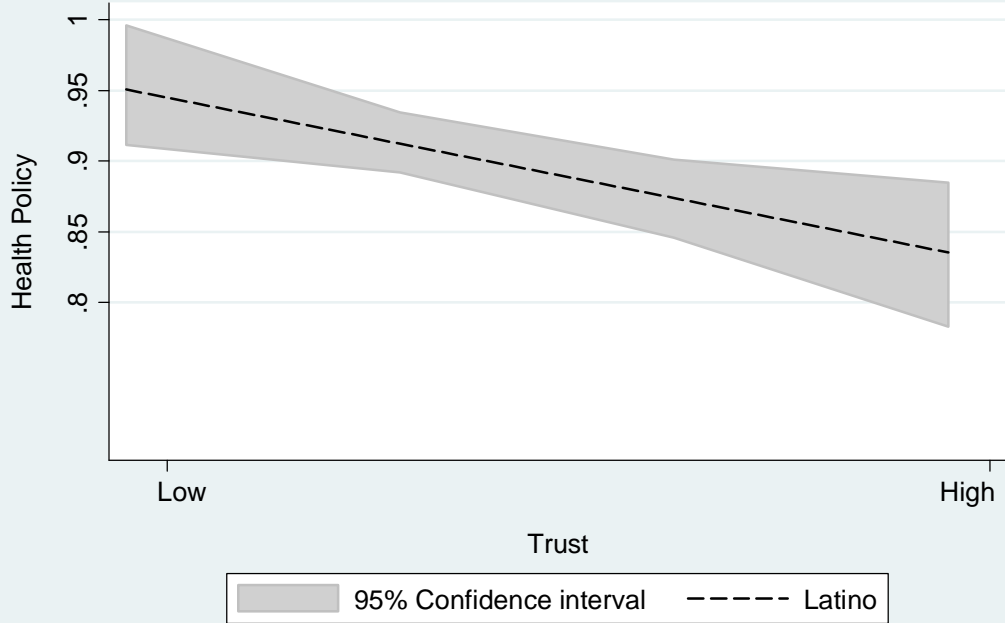
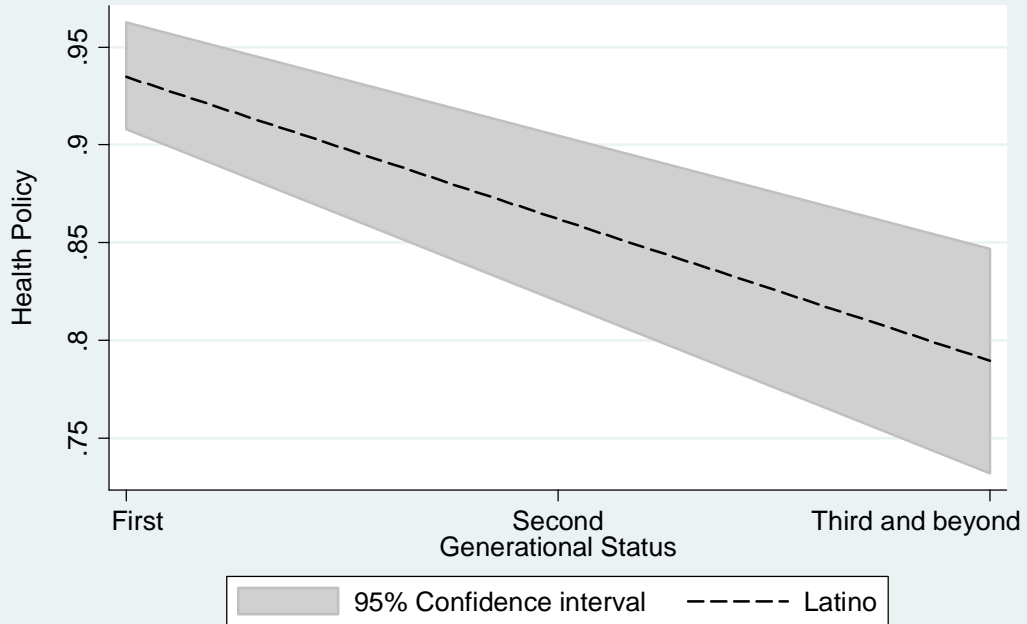


Figure 3.4: Health Policy Preferences Across Latino Generational Status



In the next part of the analysis I will examine whether Hetherington's theory regarding sacrifice and political trust hold true in California among Latinos and among non-Latinos. Hetherington asserted that trust would impact policy preferences among those that would have to sacrifice, but that trust would not be as important among those that stand to benefit from the redistributive policy. These findings are in Table 3.4 and results indicate that the theory does not extend to Latinos (Model 1) or non-Latinos (Model 2) in California. Also of note is that the same variables that were significant in Table 3.3 Models 1 and 2 were also significant in this step of the analysis.

It is important to note that while the R2 of this model is low, that is somewhat expected when working with survey data. Also, to allow for comparison to Hetherington's theory, the variables included in this analysis is nearly identical to his analysis. Lastly, I ran a test for omitted variables, which indicated that the model specification was proper.

The results regarding Hetherington's sacrifice based theory could point to the fact that the theory does not hold true at the state level or it could just be a California specific finding. However, the fact that results among Latinos, with their elevated trust level, were not different than results among non-Latinos is particularly interesting.

**Table 3.4 Consequences of Trust on Health Policy Preferences among Latinos and Non-Latinos—Trust\*Benefit Interaction**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>
	<i>(Latino)</i>	<i>(Non-Latino)</i>
	<b>Parameter Estimate (Standard Error)</b>	
TRUST	<b>-0.041**</b> (.017)	0.022 (0.023)
APPGOV	0.024 (0.027)	<b>-0.071*</b> (0.032)
APPCALEG	0.022 (0.023)	<b>0.114***</b> (0.033)
GOODTIME	<b>0.049*</b> (0.023)	-0.002 (0.029)
LIBERAL	-0.004 (0.022)	<b>0.153***</b> (0.031)
AGE	-0.012 (0.008)	-0.015 (0.009)
GENDER	-0.007 (0.021)	<b>-0.049*</b> (0.028)
EDUC	-0.008 (0.010)	<b>-0.044***</b> (0.013)
DEMOCRAT	0.021 (0.023)	0.039 (0.032)
BENEFIT	0.016 (0.026)	0.060 (0.059)
HOMELANG	0.032 (0.042)	---
LATGEN	<b>-0.145***</b> (0.037)	---
MEXICAN	-0.034 (0.028)	---
TRUST*BENEFIT	0.008 (0.026)	0.112 (0.075)
Constant	0.965 (0.049)	0.850 (0.064)
R2	.100	.146
Number of Cases	336	649

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

In the last part of the article I examine Rudolph and Evans' ideological sacrifice theory and whether their findings extend to Latinos and non-Latinos in California. The results of this analysis are in Table 3.5 and once again the analysis provides evidence that the theory does not hold true among Latinos or Non-Latinos in California. But, in this case the interactive term is significant in the model that only includes non-Latinos. The impact of the interactive term is illustrated graphically in Figure 3.5 where we can see that political trust has a negative impact on non-Latino liberals and non liberals, but that the impact of trust is greater on non liberals. However, these results run contrary to the findings of Rudolph and Evans where conservatives of higher trust were more likely to support distributive and redistributive policies.

Potential reasons for why this result runs counter to that of Rudolph and Evans begin with the fact that their sample was at the national level and dealt with trust in the federal government. Also, the inclusion of Latinos, with their elevated level of trust, could affect the analysis of Rudolph and Evans in comparison to the sample of non-Latinos in this analysis. Lastly, the difference in the nature of the dependent variables could account for some variation. While both studies examined redistributive policies, the health care reform policy examined in this study is perhaps more far-reaching than the policies under examination by Rudolph and Evans.

Also, in Model 2 political trust provides predictive leverage for the first time in our non-Latino models of health reform preferences. The rest of the findings in Model 1 and Model 2 are similar to the earlier models.

The significant finding regarding ideological sacrifice in the non-Latino context runs counter to the findings of Rudolph and Evans (2005) and therefore does not affirm that this theory. Also, at least in California, it does not hold true among Latinos. This finding could be

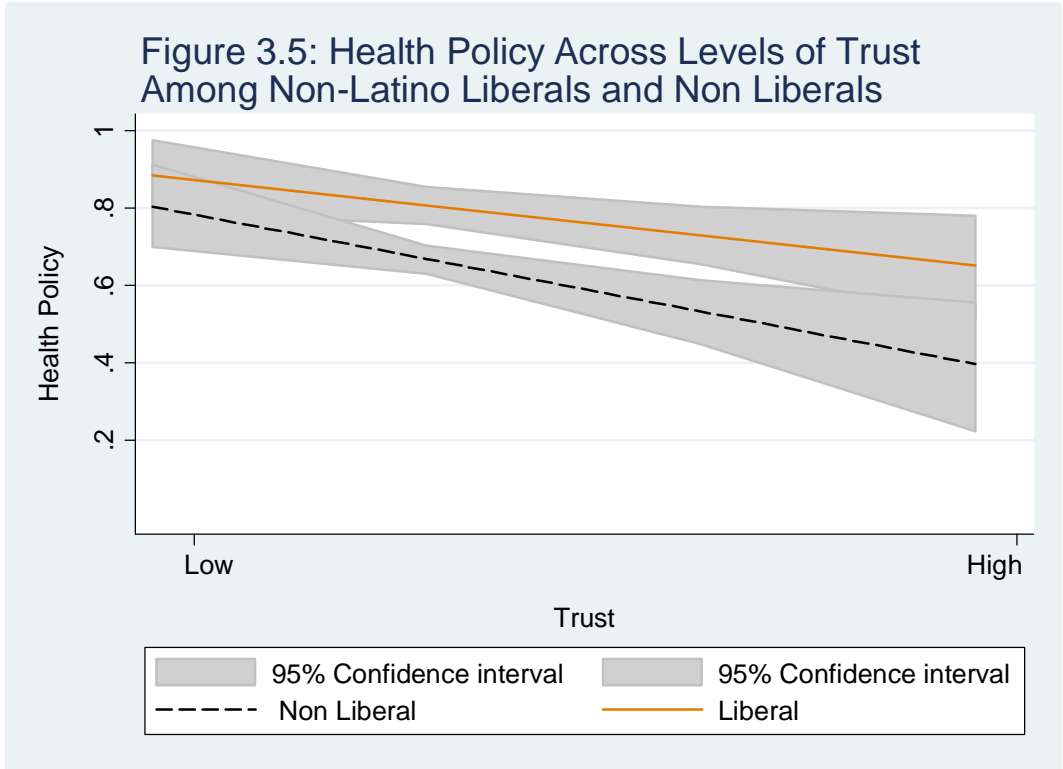
related to the role of ideology among Latinos considering that ideology was insignificant in the basic model of Latino health care policy preferences. It could also be the case that the elevated level of political trust among Latinos plays a role in the ideological sacrifice theory not extending to this group.

**Table 3.5 Consequences of Trust on Health Policy Preferences among Latinos and Non-Latinos—Trust\*Ideology Interaction**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>
	<i>(Latino)</i>	<i>(Non-Latino)</i>
	<b>Parameter Estimate (Standard Error)</b>	
TRUST	<b>-0.068*</b> (.033)	<b>-0.136**</b> (0.047)
APPGOV	0.023 (0.027)	<b>-0.07*</b> (0.031)
APPCALEG	0.023 (0.023)	<b>0.108***</b> (0.033)
GOODTIME	<b>0.048*</b> (0.023)	0.001 (0.028)
LIBERAL	-0.001 (0.023)	<b>0.148***</b> (0.030)
AGE	-0.012 (0.008)	-0.014 (0.009)
GENDER	-0.008 (0.021)	-0.048 (0.027)
EDUC	-0.008 (0.010)	<b>-0.046***</b> (0.013)
DEMOCRAT	0.021 (0.023)	0.042 (0.031)
BENEFIT	-0.014 (0.025)	0.049 (0.058)
HOMELANG	0.032 (0.042)	---
LATGEN	<b>-0.146***</b> (0.027)	---
MEXICAN	-0.035 (0.027)	---
TRUST*IDEOLOGY	0.011 (0.011)	<b>0.058***</b> (0.015)
Constant	0.964 (0.048)	0.861 (0.063)
R2	.100	.164
Number of Cases	336	649

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001





**Conclusion**

The presence of Latinos in the politics of California and America is just beginning and the United States is going down the path that California has already traveled regarding a majority minority population. Latinos are increasingly becoming more important in politics in California and in America and it is important that we understand their political attitudes and what drives their behavior. These demographic changes will influence the election of future leaders and the direction of policy shifts.

Political trust, while important on its own, has important consequences, both attitudinal and behavioral in nature (Rahn and Rudolph 2005). Those consequences were explored in this article, specifically the impact of political trust on health care policy preferences. The article sought to answer two important questions regarding whether trust impacted Latino preferences in the same manner that it impacted non-Latino preferences and the impact of political trust on

distributive policy preferences. The research at hand suggests that trust has a different impact on Latinos and non-Latinos and in fact political trust has the opposite effect on the policy preferences of Latinos than non-Latinos. Political trust has a positive impact on non-Latinos, which is interesting considering that Latinos are more trusting than non-Latinos. In examining the role of political trust in health policy preferences the research at hand suggests that political trust does indeed impact policy preferences of Latinos, however not in the hypothesized direction. Political trust has a negative impact on Latino policy preferences meaning that more trusting Latinos are less likely than less trusting Latinos to be supportive of health care reform. This negative relationship could be driven by higher expectations among Latinos or related to the role of generation status in support for health care reform. Political trust does not impact non-Latino policy preferences.

With the knowledge from Chapter 2 of this dissertation that Latinos of Mexican descent are less trusting than others I examined Mexicans and their policy preferences more closely. I examined whether policy preferences of Mexicans were different than non-Latinos and whether trust impacted the policy preferences of Mexicans differently than non-Latinos. Mexicans and their determinants of support for health care reform is very similar to the overall Latino sample. However, findings suggest that trust impacts Mexicans and non-Mexicans differently. In fact, going from the lowest level of trust to the highest results in a 20% decrease in the expected value of support for health care reform, while this change among non-Mexicans results in a 5% increase in support for health care reform. This finding has an important potential political impact considering that many Latinos are of Mexican descent within the United States and especially within California.

This article also sought to examine whether Hetherington's (2004) "sacrifice based" theory or Rudolph and Evans' (2005) ideological sacrifice theory extend to Latinos in California. In both cases the theory fails to hold true among Latinos. It is interesting to note that Hetherington's theory did not extend to non-Latinos, nor did Rudolph and Evans' theory of ideological sacrifice. However, the interaction term in the case of Rudolph and Evans' theory was significant among non-Latinos; however this finding runs counter to the original theory.

The examination of the consequences undertaken here is important; however the consequences of political trust extend beyond health care policy and beyond policy preferences. The research at hand is part of a larger research agenda that includes analyzing the impact of political trust on other policy areas and on voting behavior and examining the determinants of political trust. Other areas of needed attention include an examination of trust in both the state and national governments within the same study to examine if the determinants of Latino trust are the same at both levels. Lastly, a better understanding of how trust impacts a citizen's decision to register to vote and participate in politics is key to really understanding the role that trust plays in politics.

## CHAPTER 4

### Introduction

Political trust, especially in an environment where voters can make policy at the ballot box, is an important concept to understand. California, like no other place in the United States, epitomizes this skeptical environment (Baldassare and Katz, 2007). However, even with the prominence of the initiative process, California still has a governor who is extremely powerful and influential; that is until the citizens recall him or her. Over the last 30 years citizens have voiced their displeasure with the established government by passing an increasing number of initiatives and electing governors that disrupted the status quo of the day and restricted the role of government. The underlying factor behind these maneuvers is a lack of trust in state government and its representatives. Voters distrustful of government overwhelmingly passed Proposition 13 in 1978, established term limits for state legislators in 1990, and recalled then Governor Gray Davis in 2003 to name a few of the voters' deeds. From the Tax Revolt and Proposition 13 to the selection of political outsider Arnold Schwarzenegger as governor, California voters have acted on their distrust of state government and its elected officials.

An important component of California politics over the last 20 years has been the rapid assimilation of Latinos into the political landscape. Pachon, Barreto, and Marquez (2005) poignantly remark that "As the twenty-first century begins, California Latino Politics has reshaped the lens through which Latino politics nationally is viewed (84)." However, Latinos, which represent 32 percent of the overall adult population, only represent 15 percent of likely voters according to surveys from the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC 2009). It is important to keep in mind that, while Latinos in California have increased their prominence, they have only fairly recently assimilated into the political landscape. We do know that Latinos are

more trusting than other racial/ethnic groups (Garcia 1992, Cohen, Baldassare and Kaimowitz-Rodriguez 2003), but what impact does greater trust among Latinos have within the political arena? This elevated level of trust among Latinos, along with their recent assimilation in California politics, should have an impact on their voting behavior.

In this article, I establish a framework that examines the role of political trust in California politics, particularly the selection of its governors. More specifically, I utilize a multinomial logit model to examine whether distrust leads to anti-incumbent voting that focuses on the major party challenger or voting that focuses on minor party candidates. Additionally, knowing that Latinos are more trusting and more newly assimilated in California politics, I examine the behavior of Latinos compared to non-Latinos and analyze whether higher trust among Latinos results in different voting behavior. I find that there is not a significant difference between the impact of political trust on Latinos and non-Latinos regarding anti-incumbent voting and that higher political trust leads to a greater probability of voting for the incumbent among both groups. In analyzing voting for a minor party candidate, there is not a significant difference between Latinos and non-Latinos and low levels of political trust make non-Latinos more likely to vote for a minor party candidate; however trust is not significant among Latinos. Hence, when less trusting Latinos reject the incumbent they are more likely to voice their distrust by staying within the established political framework rather than going outside mainstream politics and voting for a minor party candidate.

Throughout this article I will refer to Latinos; however it is important to mention that Latinos are not a monolithic group, especially as a political group. Hero (1992) states “Latinos may be a group in name—a nominal group—but not necessarily a politically identifiable group” (2). According to the 2006 American Community Survey, Latinos make up 36 percent of

California's population and 15 percent of the population in the U.S. Among the Latinos in the U.S., 69 percent are of Mexican descent, while Latinos in California are more likely to be of Mexican descent—77 percent. Also, it is important to note that about 80 percent of Latinos in the survey data used in the empirical analysis in this article are of Mexican descent. So what does this mean to the study at hand? This means that while the survey data are for the most part representative of the demographics of California, there is the need to include a variable to control for any nation of origin effects. Where appropriate I will utilize a dummy variable for respondents of Mexican descent that will serve as this control.

I will also refer to non-Latinos throughout the article. This group will include non-Hispanic whites, Asians, African Americans and respondents of other races.

### **Political Trust**

Trust in government would seem to be, on the most basic level, a vital component of a representative democracy (Gamson 1968; Bianco 1994; Levi 1997). However, since the mid-1960s trust in government has decreased in America and remains low today (Citrin 1974; Miller 1974; Craig 1993; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Hetherington 2004). Still, America has operated as a functional democracy even with elevated levels of distrust in government.<sup>42</sup>

Although trust is a ubiquitous term in political science, there is some debate concerning its meaning. The debate focuses on whether trust is specific or diffuse (Easton 1965). Some scholars relate trust to specific support of a political official (Citrin 1974; Citrin and Green 1986); while others view political trust as a measure of diffuse support of the more general political environment (Miller 1974). This debate is important because of the consequences associated with each. The consequences of specific support are said to be limited due to the

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<sup>42</sup> According to a somewhat similar question in the most recent World Values Survey, “confidence in government” in the United States (37%) is better than the average and is similar to Canada (41%), greater than Japan (25%) and Pakistan (33%), but not nearly as great as Chile (57%) and China (95%).

potential for the improvement of an elected officials' job performance, while diffuse support is argued to be more detrimental because low levels of trust could impact the legitimacy of a democracy.

Much of the research on political trust has utilized the American National Election Studies (ANES) trust in government questions, which captures the diffuse sense of trust in that the measures were "designed to tap the basic evaluative orientations towards the national government." (Stokes 1962:64) According to Marc J. Hetherington political trust is "the degree to which people perceive that government is producing outcomes consistent with their expectation." (9) The research at hand will focus on trust in the broader diffuse sense of Stokes and Hetherington.

The body of literature on political trust has shown that trust in government has political consequences, both attitudinal and behavioral in nature (Rahn and Rudolph 2005). These consequences of political trust have been debated since the Miller-Citrin debate on political trust. In this well known debate published in *The American Political Science Review* in September 1974 Miller argued that political cynicism was related to dissatisfaction with the policy alternatives that were on the table and posited that low levels of trust could raise "the probability of the occurrence of radical political change." Miller also asserts that sustained low levels of trust could challenge regime legitimacy. Citrin countered with the assertion that decreased trust was linked to discontent with the elected political leaders and not the policy options. Citrin also countered Miller's assertion regarding the relationship between distrust and acts of dissent, and asserts that between 1970 and 1972 the positive relationship between political trust and support for the incumbent grew.

In the wake of declining trust in America, initial research on the impact of trust on political behavior focused on the potential link between declining trust and declining turnout, but research has found this link to be non-existent (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). More recently political trust has been linked to support for devolution (Jennings 1998, Hetherington and Nugent 2001), compliance with governmental demands (Tyler and Degoey 1995, Scholz and Lubell 1998), domestic policy spending (Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn 2000; Hetherington 2004), liberal racial policy preferences (Hetherington and Globetti 2002), evaluations of elected officials (Sigelman et al., 1992, Hetherington 1998) and voting behavior (Shingles 1981; Hetherington 1999).

Knowing that those voters low in trust do not stay away from the polls on Election Day (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993), how do these discontented voters behave on election day? Scholarship has established a link between political trust and vote choice at the national level. Research has examined the link between trust and support for incumbents (Citrin 1974; Hetherington 1999) and between trust and support for third party candidates (Rosenstone, Behr, and Lazarus 1984; Peterson and Wrighton 1998).

When conceptualizing the role that political trust plays in vote choice it is important to understand that trust exists as a heuristic. The underpinning of the use of heuristics in political decision making can be found in Phillip Converse's seminal piece, "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics" (1964), which suggests that the majority of voters lack a well-formed ideology and has a minimal drive to understand the political issues. With Converse's theory as a backdrop researchers have questioned how Americans make political choices absent political understanding and ideological bearing. Sniderman, Brody and Tetlock (1991) posited that many in the voting public utilize heuristics or shortcuts to make political choices. Hetherington (1999),



citing the declining prominence of political parties in America (Wattenberg 1994) posits that “trust should be a powerful heuristic” (311). While the general population may struggle to organize political beliefs, trust is more well-developed (Markus 1979) and a more accessible point of reference regarding government (Fazio 1986).

While trust exists as a heuristic, vote choice exists as an option to voice displeasure or discontent with the political system. In particular, voting against the incumbent or voting for a minor party candidate are active ways that citizens can act on their discontent.

#### *Trust and Incumbent Vote Choice*

Marc J. Hetherington’s more recent (1999) research on political trust is well established and his examination of the effect of political trust on the Presidential vote confirms Citrin’s 1974 finding of a positive relationship between political trust and support for an incumbent. Citing aggregate evidence of third party success and presidential turnover since the decline of political trust in America, Hetherington finds that political trust affects vote choice. More specifically, he finds evidence that when “only two candidates run for president, the distrustful are more inclined to choose the challenger over the incumbent (321).”

The relationship between trust and voting for an incumbent found by Citrin (1974) and Hetherington (1999) is echoed by Luks (2000). Utilizing ANES data she finds that trust is significantly related to voting for the incumbent or the incumbent’s party in 1988, but not 1984. In fact she finds that “trusting respondents were 24% more likely to vote for Bush in 1988 than cynical respondents were” (181-2).

#### *Trust and Third Party Vote Choice*

The relationship between distrust and voting for a third party candidate, or a non-major party candidate, hinges on voter dissatisfaction. Voting outside of mainstream politics indicates

that a voter has lost faith regarding change being enacted by one of the candidates. This differs from voting anti-incumbent, but staying within mainstream politics and it could be expected that higher levels of distrust should accompany support for non-major party candidates.

In an attempt to examine the link between voter distrust and third parties at the national level, Rosenstone, Behr, and Lazarus (1984) utilized data from 1968 to 1980 and found that lack of trust was related to voting for third party candidates. In fact, they find in their data that there is a 10 percent increase in the probability of third party voting when comparing voters who are the least trustful to those who are the most trustful.

Peterson and Wright (1998) examine three elections where there were prominent third party candidates: 1968, 1980, and 1992. In each of these elections those with low trust were more likely to vote for a third party candidate. Moreover, they state, “Low levels of trust, combined with the rigidity of the two-party system, may make voters increasingly frustrated with the political system as a whole” (30).

In a similar analysis, Hetherington (1999) examines presidential elections from 1968 to 1996. His analysis confirms the relationship between low trust and third party candidates when a third party candidate is on the ballot. He finds that when there is a legitimate option available, respondents with low trust are more likely to choose a third party candidate (317).

### **Models of Vote Choice**

Models of vote choice have proliferated in political science literature since Campbell et al.’s seminal book, *The American Voter*, introduced a model of Presidential vote choice.

Research on vote choice has detailed a plethora of determinants and focus has shifted from

partisan identification (Campbell et al. 1960), to issues (Converse 1964), to economic conditions (Kramer 1971), to campaigns (Kinder 1986) to name a few of the highlights.<sup>43</sup>

Research on elections has established that the determinants of vote choice include some combination of partisanship, economic perceptions, candidate traits, issues, and incumbent performance. The model of vote choice in the study at hand will include many of the variables employed in the voting behavior literature, but will also include political trust. The inclusion of trust in a model of vote choice at the state level will increase our understanding of gubernatorial elections.

Literature on models of vote choice has focused on the national level, while state-level voting behavior has not garnered as much attention. The reasons behind this lack of attention are both philosophical and practical. From a philosophical standpoint, the importance of governors has been downplayed in comparison to their federal brethren. Practically, a lack of data on preferences regarding gubernatorial elections has been a huge impediment in the past. However, with available data, models of gubernatorial vote choice are still sparse, a surprising realization considering the degree to which policy devolution has become common in America since the 1990s<sup>44</sup>. According to Cole et al. (1999), devolution involves policies “intended to return a certain level of discretion in program planning, design, and implementation to state and local governments; while also reducing certain federally imposed rules, regulations, and unfunded mandates for those governments.” (99) State governments and their policies in this era of

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<sup>43</sup> See Niemi and Weisberg 2001, Chapter 10 for a review of “What Determines the Vote”

<sup>44</sup> See for a more detailed discussion of the devolution see Nathan (1996). For an analysis of public opinion of devolution see Hetherington and Nugent (2001)

devolution have a great impact on the lives of residents of each state and, at least in California, citizens want their state government to enact policies separate from the federal government.<sup>45</sup>

With the growing importance of state governments, governors are also becoming increasingly more important. In this regard, it can be argued that vote choice for a Governor of California is extremely important considering that if California were a nation, its economy would be the eighth largest in the world<sup>46</sup>. Furthermore, with the increasing forward thinking of policymakers in California, the leader of the state assumes a very influential role, not only in California, but also within America.<sup>47</sup>

### **Latinos, Non-Latinos, and Political Trust**

Early studies of Latino trust suggested that Latinos were less trusting than whites, but more trusting than African Americans (Guzman 1970; Garcia 1973). However, much more recently de la Garza and his colleagues (1992) presented findings from the Latino Political National Survey (LPNS) that indicated that Latinos were slightly more trusting than non-Latinos. Cohen, Baldassare and Kaimowitz-Rodriguez (2003) utilizing a sample of Californians finds that Latinos are more trusting than other racial/ethnic groups. Utilizing a national sample, Cole and Kincaid (2006) also found that Hispanics or Latinos “were considerably more likely to report high levels of trust in the federal government than were non-Hispanics” (456). Furthermore, they find that Latinos express similar levels of trust in their state government, but this finding does not hold true at the local level. In addition, earlier research in my present research agenda

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<sup>45</sup> See PPIC Statewide Surveys in July 2008, January 2007, July 2006, and July 2005 for evidence that a majority of Californians think that California should make its own policies separate from the federal government. This perception has increased 12 points since 2005.

<sup>46</sup> Calculated using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration, “California: Exports, Jobs, and Foreign Investment” (September 2008) and the World Bank, “Gross Domestic Product, 2007” (September 2008).

<sup>47</sup> California has taken the lead on global warming policy, stem cell research, and immigration policy to name a few. For an excellent discussion of California’s role within the United States see Schrag (2006), especially the introduction.

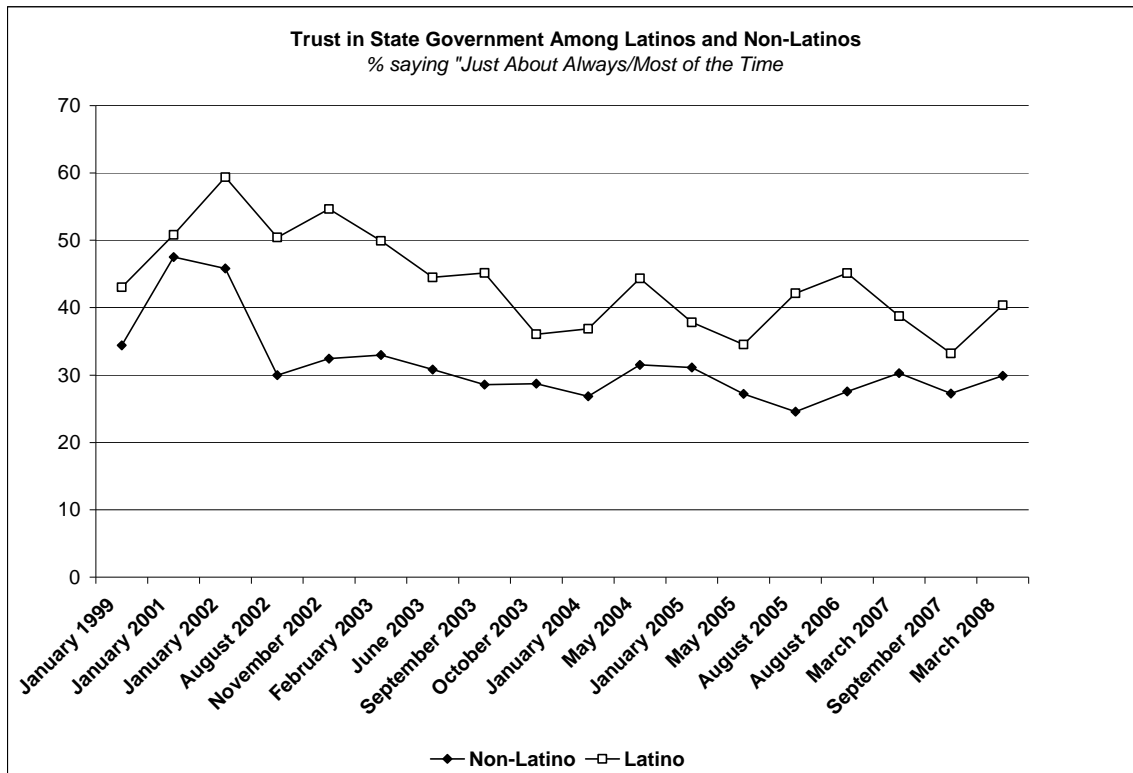
has established that Latinos are more trusting than non-Latinos and that the determinants of trust are different for Latinos and non-Latinos. A seven year time series of trust in California state government using PPIC Statewide Survey data demonstrates that Latinos consistently express higher levels of trust in state government than their non-Latino counterparts (Figure 3.1). On average 43 percent of Latinos expressed they trust state government “just about always” or “most of the time”, compared to only 32 percent of non-Latinos. While Latinos may exhibit more political trust than non-Latinos, I am interested in the consequences this elevated level of trust may have on Latino voting behavior.

Given the previous research, I expect declines in citizen trust to be related to higher levels of voting for the major party challenger and minor party candidates if they reject the incumbent. However, research has not examined whether trust impacts Latinos and non-Latinos in the same manner. Research has established that Latinos are more trusting than other racial/ethnic groups, but less is known about the consequences of this elevated trust. Furthermore, Latinos in California have only recently been assimilated into politics and this should affect the consequences of trust. Research has established that generational status (Michelson, 2003; Bonner 2009) and acculturation (Wenzel, 2006) have a corrosive impact on political trust. Taken together the elevated trust and more recent assimilation of California Latinos should result in trust among Latinos having a greater impact on vote choice than among non-Latinos. Also, I expect that Latinos who are more assimilated and those with a higher generational status should be more inclined to go outside the political mainstream and vote for a non-major party candidate.

There are several possibilities regarding a Latino/non-Latino comparison. It is possible that trust will have the same effect on vote choice among Latinos and non-Latinos, a greater

effect among Latinos, or a lesser effect among Latinos. The impact of trust on Latino vote choice is significant because if the effect is lower than among non-Latinos, then it means that, as more Latinos become acculturated and possibly more cynical, they will not threaten incumbents as much as cynical non-Latinos. If the effect on Latinos is the same as among non-Latinos, then as Latinos blend into mainstream culture, their trust does not change the current positive relationship between trust and voting for an incumbent. If the effect is greater among Latinos, then it means that, as more Latinos become acculturated and possibly more cynical, they will threaten incumbents more than cynical non-Latinos.

**Figure 4.1**



Source: Public Policy Institute of California, Statewide Survey, 1999-2008.

It is also important to note that Latino trust in government is relevant nationally since Latinos are currently the fastest growing population in the United States. With the increased immigration of Latinos to the United States the Census Bureau projects that by 2042 the U.S. will be a majority minority nation with non-Hispanic whites making up less than 50 percent of the population. Also, by 2050 it is projected that the nation will be 54 percent minority (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).

### **Data and Methodology**

California provides an ideal context for the study of trust at the state level because of the diverse nature of its population, especially regarding Latinos. In 2000, California became the first state to have a population that was majority minority. Since 2000, three other states and the District of Columbia have become majority minority states.<sup>48</sup> Considering where America as a nation is heading and where California has been, California provides an excellent setting for this analysis.

The article at hand will explore the consequences of trust in state government on vote choice among Latinos and examine whether trust impacts Latinos and non-Latino vote choice in the same manner. Data from the November 2006 PPIC survey of California voters will be used for this analysis. In the 2006 gubernatorial election in California the incumbent Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's main challenger was Democratic State Treasurer, Phil Angelides. However, minor party candidates were also in the race, and represented a choice for voters looking to go outside the established political framework. Thus in this analysis I will include voters that voted for the incumbent, the democratic challenger, or someone else.

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<sup>48</sup> Along with California, Texas, Hawaii, New Mexico, and the District of Columbia are majority minority states. According to the Census Bureau five other states—Maryland, Mississippi, Georgia, New York and Arizona—are in line to become majority minority states with each having minority populations of about 40 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).

As mentioned earlier, I will analyze Latino respondents in comparison to non-Latinos, which includes whites, Asians, African Americans and respondents of other races. Latinos (36%) and whites (43%) make up nearly 80 percent of the population, while Asians (12%), African-Americans (6%) and those of other races (3%) make up the remainder of the population (California Department of Finance, 2008).

### *Dependent Variable*

Gubernatorial vote choice (GOVCHOICE) is measured as a nominal variable, and is coded 1 when voting for the incumbent, Arnold Schwarzenegger, coded 2 when voting for the Democratic challenger, Phil Angelides, and coded 3 when voting for someone else.<sup>49</sup> Due to the nominal nature of the dependent variable a Multinomial Logit estimation will be utilized to analyze the consequences of trust on vote choice.

### *Independent Variables*

Political trust is the main independent variable of interest and is measured by a factor score which utilizes three of the four questions that makes up the American National Election Study (ANES) trust index.

- *Next, how much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Sacramento to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?*
- *Would you say the state government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves, or that it is run for the benefit of all of the people?*
- *Do you think the people in state government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?*

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<sup>49</sup> For a detailed description of all the variables utilized in this paper please see Appendix A.1.



This measure is similar to those used in much of the political trust literature. The three questions load on a single factor<sup>50</sup> and have a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) score of .61, which is considered acceptable.<sup>51</sup> The three variable also have a reliability level ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.6<sup>52</sup>, which is an acceptable level within the social science literature. A Cronbach's alpha is used to examine how closely related a set of variables are when combined as a scale. The trust variable is coded from the lowest level of trust to the highest level of trust.

The selection of the model of vote choice was influenced by the voting behavior literature which has established that the determinants of vote choice include a mix of partisanship, economic perceptions, and demographic variables. To this end, the control variables utilized in this analysis will include a mix of attitudinal and demographic variables and include personal evaluation of California's economy (GOODTIME), personal ideology placement (LIBERAL), age (AGE), sex (SEX), education level (EDUC), household income (INCOME), partisan affiliation (DEMOCRAT), and being a member of a labor union (UNION). Latino specific variables will be included in the Latino only models and include the following. Assimilation (HOMELANG), which measures the language Latinos usually speak at home and is coded 0 for "only Spanish" and 1 for "only English", and generational status (LATGEN), which measures whether a respondent is a first generation, second generation, or third generation and beyond Latino and is coded 1, 2, and 3 respectively.<sup>53</sup> Approval of the governor is not included in this analysis because many of the other variables in the analysis are determinants of gubernatorial approval, and because approval and vote choice for Governor Schwarzenegger are significantly

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<sup>50</sup> See Appendix A.4 for the factor loadings of this variable.

<sup>51</sup> The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy is an index that determines the proportion of variance among the variables that might be common variance. See Kaiser 1970 and 1974 for a more detailed discussion.

<sup>52</sup> The reliability of the additive scale was tested using a Cronbach's alpha. For a more detailed discussion of Cronbach's alpha see Cortina, 1993.

<sup>53</sup> For detailed question wording please see the Appendix.

and highly correlated (.67). The predicted direction of the control variables is located in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Predicted Directions of Variables on Anti-incumbent Voting**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Predicted Sign</i>
TRUST	-
GOODTIME	-
LIBERAL	+
AGE	-
GENDER	+
EDUC	+
DEMOCRAT	+
HOMELANG	+
LATGEN	+

A number models will be used to examine whether political trust impacts Latino and non-Latino vote choice differently and explore the consequences of political trust among Latinos and non-Latinos. The first model will include Latinos and non-Latinos in the same model and will include an interaction of LATINO\*TRUST to examine whether trust has the same impact among Latinos and non-Latinos. If the interactive term is insignificant then the effect of trust is the same for Latinos and non-Latinos. However, if it is significant then this means that trust in state government impacts Latinos and non-Latinos differently, and the nature of that difference will be explored. To examine the differences I will run separate models for Latinos and non-Latinos.

### **Analysis**

I will now examine the results of the multivariate analysis of vote choice to determine what impact political trust has on vote choice. This analysis will also allow for an examination of whether trust has the same impact among Latinos and non-Latinos. To achieve this goal I will include a variable that interacts political trust with the dummy variable for Latino/non-Latino.

The results from this analysis can be found in Table 4.2. Coefficients in a multinomial logit model<sup>54</sup> are of little use without examining the predicted probabilities of variables of interest, so I will only briefly examine these.

The results are consistent with the general expectations of the hypotheses. Political trust is negatively related to both voting in favor of the Democratic challenger and voting for the minor party candidate instead of the incumbent governor. These results are consistent with our hypothesis and also in line with earlier findings regarding the relationship between trust and voting for an incumbent (Citrin, 1974; Hetherington, 1999) and distrust and voting for a third party candidate in presidential elections (Peterson and Wrighton, 1998). Also of note is that political trust has a greater impact on rejecting the incumbent and voting for a minor party candidate, which logically makes sense. However, it is surprising that Latinos are more likely to voter for the minor party candidate considering that they are more trusting. Findings also indicate that Latinos are more likely than non-Latinos to vote for the Democratic challenger or a minor party candidate. An examination of the standardized coefficients indicate that being Democrat (3.02) has the largest relative impact on the odds of voting for a Democratic challenger, followed by being Liberal (2.15) and being Latinos (1.35).<sup>55</sup> The largest effect on voting for a minor party candidate is being Liberal (1.9), followed by being Democrat (1.56) and being Latino (1.54). The relative impact of being Liberal and being Democrat makes sense considering that the challenger was a Democrat and a good majority of minor party candidates were to the left of the Democratic party in California.

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<sup>54</sup> Results are very similar when examining gubernatorial vote choice as a dichotomous not-incumbent/incumbent therefore I decided to use the multinomial logistic model because of the capability to compare choice patterns.

<sup>55</sup> Standardized coefficients were calculated using the LISTCOEF command in STATA and a table of standardized coefficients for all models in this chapter can be found in Appendix A.4.

The model in Table 4.2 also examined whether political trust has the same impact on Latinos and non-Latinos. The interaction term that was included in the analysis was insignificant which means that trust has the same across these two groups. This runs counter my hypothesis and suggests that the elevated level of trust and their more recent assimilation into California politics does not alter the dynamic between political trust and vote choice.

**Table 4.2. Consequences of Trust on Vote Choice among Latinos and Non-Latinos**

<i>Variable</i>	Parameter Estimate (Standard Error)	
	Major Party Challenger	Minor Party Candidate
TRUST	<b>-0.346**</b> (0.122)	<b>-0.770**</b> (0.231)
GOODTIME	<b>-0.904***</b> (0.166)	<b>-0.567*</b> (0.253)
LIBERAL	<b>1.62***</b> (0.167)	<b>1.36***</b> (0.261)
AGE	<b>-0.189**</b> (0.06)	-0.122 (0.092)
GENDER	0.147 (0.157)	0.458 (0.247)
INCOME	<b>-0.125*</b> (0.05)	<b>-0.150*</b> (0.078)
EDUC	0.147 (0.079)	<b>0.271*</b> (0.125)
DEMOCRAT	<b>2.21***</b> (0.165)	<b>.889**</b> (0.256)
UNION	<b>0.620***</b> (0.174)	<b>0.604*</b> (0.263)
LATINO	<b>0.864***</b> (0.241)	<b>1.23***</b> (0.345)
LATINO*TRUST	-0.233 (0.277)	0.299 (0.491)
Constant	-1.12 (0.433)	1.05 (0.443)
Pseudo R2	.278	
Number of Cases	1283	

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

Examining the impact of these effects is best accomplished by translating the effects into probabilities. These probabilities can be found in Table 4.3. The predicted probabilities are calculated as “first differences,” which illustrates the change in categories of the dependent variable as you move an independent variable from its minimum to its maximum value.

The impact of political trust is positively related to voting for the incumbent and results in a 32 point increase in the probability of voting for the incumbent governor. Political trust is negatively related to rejecting the incumbent and voting for either of the alternatives. Trust has twice the impact on voting for the incumbent than it does on voting for either of the alternatives. Also, while the multinomial logit coefficients suggested that political trust has a greater impact on voting for minor party candidates than on voting for the major party candidate, examining the probabilities we see that the impact of voting for either of the anti-incumbent choice is nearly the same. This is interesting theoretically because it establishes that political trust actually has less impact on voting for a minor party candidate than for a major party candidate when rejecting the incumbent governor.

While the findings regarding political trust are interesting, it is beneficial to compare the impact of trust to the impact of a traditional determinant of vote choice, partisan identification. Results indicate that going from a non-Democrat to a Democrat results in a 43 point decrease in the probability of voting for the incumbent, while it results in a 43 point increase in the probability of voting for the Democratic challenger. This would indicate that going from low trust to high trust has less of an impact on voting for an incumbent than going from a non-Democrat to a Democrat. However, considering the leverage that a respondent’s partisan affiliation exerts in models of vote choice trust still has a sizable impact. Also, going from a non-Democrat to a Democrat has an insignificant impact the probability of voting for a minor

party candidate, while going from low trust to high trust results in a 15 point decrease in voting for a minor party candidate..

The results of our initial model established that political trust does not impact Latinos and non-Latinos differently, however there are differences across groups regarding their vote choice preferences. Going from a non-Latino to a Latino results in a 23 point decrease in the probability of voting for the incumbent, while the impact of being a Latino results in a 13 point increase in the probability of voting for the Democratic challenger and a 9 point increase in voting for a minor party candidate.

**Table 4.3. Predicted Probabilities on Vote Choice<sup>56</sup>**

<b>Change in support for:</b>	<b>Incumbent Governor</b>	<b>Major Party Challenger</b>	<b>Minor Party Challenger</b>
<b>Political Trust</b>	<b>0.32*</b> <b>(0.08)</b>	<b>-0.17*</b> <b>(0.07)</b>	<b>-0.15*</b> <b>(0.05)</b>
<b>Democrat</b>	<b>-0.43*</b> <b>(0.03)</b>	<b>0.43*</b> <b>(0.03)</b>	0.00 (0.02)
<b>Latino/non-Latino</b>	<b>-0.23*</b> <b>(0.05)</b>	<b>0.13*</b> <b>(0.05)</b>	<b>0.09*</b> <b>(0.04)</b>

\*p<.05

While the results of Table 4.2 indicate that there is not a difference in the impact of trust on Latinos and non-Latinos, it is still important to explore the determinants of vote choice among these two groups. Table 4.4 presents the results of Latinos and non-Latinos separately and results indicate that among Latinos that political trust has negative impact on rejecting the incumbent and choosing the Democratic challenger, however political trust among Latinos does not provide any leverage on the question of voting for a minor party candidate. Among non-

<sup>56</sup> Cell entries represent the effect of a change from the minimum to the maximum in each independent variable on the predicted probability of supporting Arnold Schwarzenegger, holding all other variable at their means. Political trust marks a changes from low trust to high trust. Democrat marks a change from non-Democrat to Democrat and Latino/non-Latino marks a change from non-Latino to Latino. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors, as calculated by Clarify for Stata.

Latinos, political trust has a negative impact on voting for the Democratic challenger or a minor party candidate. Interestingly, a Latino's generational status and level of assimilation have the opposite effect on voting for a non-major party candidate, while these variables do not predict voting for the major party challenger.

The remaining results among Latinos and non-Latinos are similar to the overall population, with the exception of age, income and union membership not being significant among Latinos. In both cases the results of the analysis are generally consistent with the hypothesized relationships. Also, the relative impact of the significant variables among Latinos and non-Latinos is similar to the findings of the overall sample

I would be remiss if I failed to mention that the sample size of Latino voters in this analysis is much smaller than the sample of non-Latinos. Furthermore, while the fact that Latinos of Mexican descent are less trusting is interesting, I was not able to examine this group in comparison to non-Mexicans because the sample size was too small. As we saw in Chapter 3 the relationship between political trust and Mexicans is interesting and I hope to study it in the near future.

**Table 4.4. Consequences of Trust on Vote Choice among Latinos and Non-Latinos**

Parameter Estimate (Standard Error)				
Rejecting Incumbent for:	Major Party Challenger	Minor Party Candidate	Major Party Challenger	Minor Party Candidate
<i>Variable</i>	Latinos		Non-Latinos	
TRUST	<b>-0.630*</b> (0.297)	-0.095 (0.439)	<b>-0.348**</b> (0.124)	<b>-0.756**</b> (0.233)
GOODTIME	<b>-1.10*</b> (0.474)	-0.910 (0.682)	<b>-0.886***</b> (0.177)	<b>-0.532*</b> (0.276)
LIBERAL	<b>1.20 *</b> (0.507)	<b>1.64 *</b> (0.710)	<b>1.71 ***</b> (0.179)	<b>1.27 ***</b> (0.291)
AGE	-0.261 (0.151)	-0.403 (0.231)	<b>-0.177**</b> (0.066)	-0.046 (0.106)
GENDER	0.285 (0.445)	<b>1.59*</b> (0.683)	0.123 (0.171)	0.207 (0.273)
INCOME	<b>-0.367 *</b> (0.146)	-0.386 (0.221)	-0.075 (0.057)	-0.113 (0.081)
EDUC	0.249 (0.206)	<b>0.074 *</b> (0.307)	0.140 (0.088)	<b>0.316*</b> (0.144)
DEMOCRAT	<b>1.87***</b> (0.483)	.504 (0.673)	<b>2.24***</b> (0.178)	<b>.942**</b> (0.284)
UNION	0.041 (0.491)	0.285 (0.712)	<b>0.757***</b> (0.189)	<b>0.596 *</b> (0.295)
LATGEN	0.104 (0.377)	<b>-1.20*</b> (0.536)	---	---
HOMELANG	-0.229 (0.224)	<b>0.664*</b> (0.337)	---	---
Constant	1.62 (1.01)	-0.178 (0.162)	-1.44 (0.483)	-3.43 (0.801)
Pseudo R2	.268		.280	
Number of Cases	175		1100	

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

Once again it is important to examine the predicted probabilities. Among Latinos, political trust does not have a significant predictive impact on voting for an incumbent; however going from low to high political trust does result in a decrease of 44 points in the probability of



voting for the Democratic challenger. This finding is especially important because it indicates that disgruntled Latinos expressing low trust are likely to remain within the mainstream political framework and vote for a major party challenger as opposed to voting for a minor party challenger. This has important implications for elections as Latino political clout increases.

Examining the impact of going from a non-Democrat to a Democrat among Latinos results in a 34 point decrease in the probability of voting for the incumbent governor, while it result in a 40 point increase in the probability of voting for the Democratic challenger. These results among Latinos indicate that the change in trust has a greater impact on voting for the Democratic challenger than does going from being a non-Democrat to a Democrat.

The findings among non-Latinos are similar to the overall findings. However, there are important differences that emerge when comparing Latinos and non-Latinos. The impact of political trust on voting for the incumbent governor, while non-existent among Latinos, results in a 30 point increase among non-Latinos. When it comes to rejecting the incumbent governor and voting for the major party candidate, the impact of trust among Latinos (-44) is sizably larger than the impact of trust among non-Latinos (-16). Also, while trust had a non-existent impact on voting for a minor party candidate among Latinos, the impact of going from low trust to high trust results in a 14 point decrease among non-Latinos.

In comparison to Latinos, being a Democrat has a greater negative impact on voting for the incumbent governor among non-Latinos, while the impact of party is similar on voting for the Democratic challenger. In both cases party does not have an impact on voting for a minor party candidate.

The predicted probabilities for the two Latino-specific variables tell an interesting story. Latinos as a group are newly assimilated into California politics and I suggested that this should

make more assimilated and those of higher generational status more likely to vote for a minor party candidate.. However, the results indicate that while assimilation is positively related to voting for a minor party candidate, generational status is negatively associated with minor party challenger voting. The impact of going from the lowest level of assimilation to the highest level results in a 25 point increase in the probability of voting for a minor party challenger, while the change from first generation to third generation results in a 20 point decrease in voting for a minor party candidate.

While these results regarding assimilation and generational status would seem to be in conflict there could be an explanation. It may be the case that some third generation Latinos rely more on things such as party cues, which would make them more likely to stay within mainstream politics, while Latinos that are more assimilated and thus more exposed to mainstream culture, act upon the cues picked up from these interactions. If this is the case, then if Latinos in America are becoming increasingly more assimilated as some research suggest (Alba and Nee, 2004), then this could have an impact minor party voting and elections in California and in America

**Table 4.5. Predicted Probabilities on Vote Choice<sup>57</sup>**

Change in support for:	Incumbent Governor	Major Party Challenger	Minor Party Challenger	Incumbent Governor	Major Party Challenger	Minor Party Challenger
	Latinos			Non-Latinos		
TRUST	0.35 (0.19)	<b>-0.44 *</b> <b>(0.18)</b>	0.09 (0.15)	<b>0.30*</b> <b>(0.07)</b>	<b>-0.16*</b> <b>(0.07)</b>	<b>-0.14*</b> <b>(0.42)</b>
DEMOCRAT	<b>-0.34 *</b> <b>(0.09)</b>	<b>0.40*</b> <b>(0.09)</b>	-0.06 (0.06)	<b>-0.43*</b> <b>(0.03)</b>	<b>0.42*</b> <b>(0.03)</b>	0.01 (0.02)
HOMELANG	0.08 (0.16)	-0.33 (0.16)	<b>0.25*</b> <b>(0.09)</b>			
LATGEN	0.03 (0.14)	0.17 (0.16)	<b>-0.20*</b> <b>(0.08)</b>	---	---	---

\*p<.05

### Conclusion

Californians over the last thirty years have consistently voiced their displeasure in their government and their elected officials by taking things into their own hands at the ballot box. Whether it be passing initiatives that limit the scope or power of government or shaking up the status quo by electing outsiders for governor, Californians voice their discontent. Political trust plays an important part in this and when government fails to meet expectations, the people react. Losing the people’s trust has consequences, and in California those consequences are substantial and visible.

Political trust, while important on its own, has important consequences, both attitudinal and behavioral in nature (Rahn and Rudolph 2005). The consequences of political trust, specifically regarding the impact of political trust on gubernatorial vote choice, were explored in this article. This research sought to answer two important questions regarding the impact of

<sup>57</sup> Cell entries represent the effect of a change from the minimum to the maximum in each independent variable on the predicted probability of supporting Arnold Schwarzenegger, holding all other variable at their means. Political trust marks a changes from low trust to high trust. Democrat marks a change from non-Democrat to Democrat. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors, as calculated by Clarify for Stata.

political trust and whether trust impacted Latino vote choice in the same manner that it impacted non-Latino behavior. This article finds that anti-incumbent voting among Californians is impacted negatively by political trust. Political trust has a negative impact among Latinos vote choice meaning that more trusting Latinos are less likely to reject the incumbent and vote for either the major party challenger or a minor party candidate. This article also examined differences between Latinos and non-Latinos and found that among Latinos political trust has a greater impact on voting for the Democratic challenger than among non-Latinos. Furthermore, the results indicate that less trusting Latinos are more likely than their non-Latino counterparts to stay within the mainstream political framework instead of voting for a minor party candidate. Furthermore, Latino only analysis provides an interesting story on the conflicting results regarding Latino assimilation vs. generational status.

The examination of the consequences undertaken here is important; however the consequences of political trust extend beyond voting behavior. The research undertaken here is part of a larger research agenda that includes analyzing the impact of political trust on voting behavior at different levels of government, on initiative preferences, and on policy preferences, as well as examining the determinants of political trust. Other areas of needed attention include an examination of trust in both the state and national governments within the same study to examine if the determinants of Latino trust are the same at both levels. Lastly, a better understanding of how trust impacts a citizen's decision to register to vote and participate in politics is key to really understanding the role that trust plays in politics.

## CHAPTER 5

### Conclusion

The preceding chapters have provided important findings related to Latino political trust. Latinos currently make up 32 percent of California's adult population and California is a majority minority state. The United States will likely travel down a similar path in the coming years. In both California and the United States, Latinos are becoming increasingly more important in politics and it is essential that we understand their political attitudes and policy preferences. This study focuses primarily on Latino political trust, the differences between Latino and non-Latino trust, and the consequences of trust among these groups.

This research began with the knowledge that Latinos were more trusting than non-Latinos in both California (PPIC Statewide Surveys) and in the U.S. (Cole and Kinkaid, 2006). However, little was known regarding the determinants of Latino trust at the state level or why Latinos were more trusting than non-Latinos. I argued in Chapter 2 that examining the determinants of trust in state government among Latinos and explaining the gap between Latinos and non-Latinos were not mutually exclusive. I put forth two potential explanations, an economic explanation and an acculturation explanation. The findings of Chapter 2 suggest that acculturation factors, specifically assimilation, and not economic factors explain why Latinos are more trusting than non-Latinos. Other important determinants of Latino political trust include approval of the governor, approval of the legislature and positive economic perceptions. Also of note is that Latinos of Mexican heritage were less likely to be trusting than others.

The study also provided evidence regarding the consequences of political trust among Latinos and non-Latinos. Prior research established that trust had political consequences that were both attitudinal and behavioral in nature (Rahn and Rudolph 2005). The research at hand

sought to examine the consequences of political trust on policy preferences and vote choice. This dissertation was especially interested in the consequences of the elevated levels of trust among Latinos.

Regarding the impact of political trust on policy preferences I sought to answer two important questions. First, did trust impact Latino preferences in the same manner that it impacted non-Latino preferences and secondly does trust impact distributive policy preferences, specifically health care reform in California? The findings of Chapter 3 provide evidence that trust does impact Latinos and non-Latinos in a different manner and in fact political trust does not impact the policy preferences of non-Latinos. Political trust has a negative impact on Latino policy preferences, which runs counter to the hypothesis that was laid out. In discussing why this may be the case, I put forth two potential explanations. In the first I drew upon Klingemann's (1999) "dissatisfied democrats" thesis and suggested that it could be that a Latinos high trust is driven by lower expectations. In thinking about this it is important to recall Hetherington's definition of political trust, which defines political trust as "the degree to which people perceive that government is producing outcomes consistent with their expectation" (9). These lower expectations, however, do not necessarily equate to a desire for more government involvement. Hence, this elevated trust, which is driven by low expectations, could result in the negative relationship between lower trust and more support for health care reform.

Findings also indicate that there are intra-Latino differences at work regarding the impact of political trust. The relationship between political trust and Mexican is negative, however among non-Mexican Latinos political trust has a positive impact on support of health care reform.

In Chapter 3 I also sought to examine two theories within the political trust literature in the state context and among Latinos. Hetherington's (2004) "sacrifice-based" theory and Rudolph and Evans' (2005) ideological sacrifice theory were both examined and in both cases the theories were not found to hold true among Latinos at the state level. Among non-Latinos, Hetherington's theory was not significant, nor was Rudolph and Evans' theory.

Vote choice was another consequence of political trust that was examined. Specifically, the research examined whether distrust leads to anti-incumbent voting that focuses on the major party challenger or voting that focuses on minor party candidates. I also examined the behavior of Latinos compared to non-Latinos to establish whether Latino's more recent assimilation and elevated level of trust impacted their vote choice. I find that trust impacts Latinos and non-Latinos in the same manner regarding anti-incumbent voting and that higher political trust leads to a greater probability of voting for the incumbent among both groups. In analyzing voting for a minor party candidate, there is not a significant difference between Latinos and non-Latinos and low levels of political trust make non-Latinos more likely to vote for a minor party candidate; however trust is not significant among Latinos. This is especially interesting because it indicates that less trusting Latinos who reject the incumbent are more likely to voice their distrust by staying within the established political framework and vote for a major party challenger rather than going outside mainstream politics and voting for a minor party candidate.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The study of Latino trust in state government in California provides a framework for future research of Latino political trust in other states and at the national level. Using a comparable approach, additional studies could take place. One such study could examine the determinants and consequences of political trust in other states, especially those with a sizable

Latino population. An examination of trust in larger states compared to smaller states is also interesting, because of the unique issues that states like California face. Lastly, an analysis that could examine the effect of a Latino respondent being from a Latino-represented district, either in Congress or the state legislature, would be interesting and have political implications considering the increasing role that Latinos are playing within the political establishment..

An analysis similar to the one at hand that examined the impact of political trust on initiative voting preferences in California would be especially important considering the growing prominence of the initiative process in California. As noted in Baldassare and Katz (2007), the use of the initiative process in California has increased significantly in frequency over the last four decades. In addition, strong majorities of Californians have consistently stated that decisions made at the ballot box are “probably better” than policy decisions made by the governor and legislature.<sup>58</sup> While voters trust themselves more than their elected leaders to enact policy, the role of trust in state government is still important considering that these leaders are in charge of enacting policy.

A study of Latino political trust at the national level would also be significant. This would be especially interesting not only because there is a void in the literature, but also considering the findings of this dissertation. Trust in state government among Latinos was found to have important consequences and it is important to examine whether these findings extend to the national level. As Latinos grow in political prominence at the national level, studies that examine the preferences and attitudes of Latinos will also grow in importance.

As with other minorities, Latino representation could impact the level of trust exhibited by Latino constituents of Latino representatives. It could be the case that Latinos who are represented by Latinos at the local, state, or national level are more trusting considering they

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<sup>58</sup> See PPIC Statewide Surveys from 2000 to 2008.



may feel a stronger connection to the government. Also, there could be important consequences of this relationship.

Finally, a study that includes state and national trust in the same analysis would be beneficial to our understanding of political trust. While we have evidence from Uslaner (2001) that only 24 percent of respondents in his national sample trusted one level, but not the other we do not know whether the consequences of trust at these two levels of government are the same. It could be the case that the consequences of political trust are greater at the national level, or that trust among Latinos is different at the national level, while it is the same among non-Latinos.

The results put forth in this study illustrated that political trust has important consequences among Latinos and non-Latinos. Acculturation had a corrosive impact on political trust, where economic factors did not. Political trust also had a negative impact on Latinos policy preferences, while it had a positive effect on Latino vote choice. The research also established important differences between Latinos and non-Latinos in both the determinants and the consequences of political trust.

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## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

- APPENDIX A.1- Question wording
- APPENDIX A.2- Additional Tables for Chapter 2
- APPENDIX A.3- Additional Tables for Chapter 3
- APPENDIX A.4- Additional Tables for Chapter 4

## APPENDIX A.1--Question wording

### TRUST-Trust in state government

*Next, how much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Sacramento to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?*

*Would you say the state government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves, or that it is run for the benefit of all of the people?*

*Do you think the people in state government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?*

- *Factor score of 3 trust variables coded from least trusting to most trusting*

### HOMELANG- A respondent's level of acculturation

*What language do you usually speak at home—only Spanish, more Spanish than English, more English than Spanish, or only English? (Both languages equally was a volunteer category)*

- *5 point scale ranging from 1 (least acculturated, Spanish speaking only) to 5 (most acculturated, English speaking only), with those that volunteered "both languages equally" coded 3*

### LATGEN- A respondents generational status

*Were you born in the United States*

*Were either of your parents born outside the United States?*

- *3 point scale ranging from 1 (first generation Latino) to 3 (3<sup>rd</sup> generation or greater Latino)*

### MEXICAN- Dummy variable for respondents of Mexican heritage

*I would like to ask you about you and your family's heritage. Are you Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Salvadoran, Guatemalan or are you and your ancestors from another country?*

*Coded 1 for Mexican heritage and 0 other heritage*

**APPGOV-Approval of Governor Schwarzenegger**

*Next, overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling his job as governor of California?*

- *Coded 1 for approve and 0 for disapprove*

**APPCALEG-Approval of California Legislature**

*Next, overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California legislature is handling its job?*

- *Coded 1 for approve and 0 for disapprove*

**GOODTIME- Perceptions of economic conditions**

*“Turning to economic conditions in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?”*

- *Coded 0 for negative perceptions and 1 for positive perceptions*

**Democrat- Partisan registration**

*Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or as an independent? (*

- *Democrat is coded 1 and others are coded 0*

**LIBERAL- Ideological self placement**

*On another topic, would you consider yourself to be politically--very liberal, somewhat liberal, middle-of-the-road, somewhat conservative, or very conservative? (Responses were rotated)*

- *Liberal is coded 1 and others are coded 0*

**AGE- Respondent’s age**

*What is your age?---18 to 24, 25 to 34, 35 to 44, 45 to 54, 55 to 64, 65 or older*

- *Categorized into 6 age groups,*

**GENDER- Respondent’s gender**

*Gender is coded by interviewer*

- *Coded 1 for male and 0 for female*

**EDUC- Respondent's educational attainment**

*What was the last grade of school that you completed?--- some high school or less, high school graduate/GED, some college, college graduate, post graduate*

- *5 point variable ranging from 1 (some high school or less) to 5 (post-graduate degree)*

**INCOME- Respondent's income level**

*Which of the following categories best describes your total annual household income before taxes, from all sources --under \$20,000, \$20,000 to under \$40,000, \$40,000 to under \$60,000, \$60,000 to under \$80,000, \$80,000 to under \$100,000, \$100,000 to under \$200,000, \$200,000 or more?*

- *7 category variable ranging from 1 (Under \$20,000) to 7 (\$200,000 or more)*

**OWNRENT- Home Ownership**

*Do you own or rent your current residence?*

- *Coded 1 for homeowner and 0 for renter*

**BENEFIT- Potential benefactor of proposed reform**

*Combination of being low income (less than \$40,000/year) and being without health insurance*

- *Coded 1 for potential benefactor and 0 for everyone else*

## Appendix A.2-Additional Tables for Chapter 2

**Table A.1 Factor Loadings for TRUST**

<i>Variable</i>	Factor Loading
Factor 1	.576
Factor 2	.608
Factor 3	.510

Prob>chi2=0.00

**Table A.2. Beta Coefficients for Significant Variables in Table 2.2**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>	<i>Model 5</i>
APPGOV	.237	.235	.238	.236	.241
APPCALEG	.329	.330	.327	.332	.329
GOODTIME	.153	.156	.152	.156	.152
AGE	-.072	-.048	-.071	-.05	-.069
LATINO	.140	.142	.129	.148	.14

**Table A.3. Beta Coefficients for Significant Variables in Table 2.3**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model3</i>
APPGOV	.241	.237	.238
APPCALEG	.326	.332	.328
GOODTIME	.150	.155	.154
AGE	-.073	-.048	-.063
LATINO	.219	.169	.092
OWNRENT			-.048
LATINO*EDUC	-.088		
LATINO*OWNRENT			.069

**Table A.4. Beta Coefficients for Significant Variables in Table 2.4**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model3</i>	<i>Model</i>
APPGOV	<b>.235</b>	<b>.231</b>	<b>.237</b>	<b>.242</b>
APPCALEG	<b>.357</b>	<b>.329</b>	<b>.326</b>	<b>.325</b>
GOODTIME	<b>.157</b>	<b>.116</b>	<b>.156</b>	<b>.152</b>
AGE	<b>-.048</b>	<b>-.047</b>	<b>-.063</b>	<b>-.049</b>
LATINO	<b>.178</b>	<b>.096</b>	<b>.175</b>	<b>.200</b>
LIBERAL			<b>.063</b>	
DEMOCRAT				<b>.061</b>
LATINO*APPCALEG	<b>-.060</b>			
LATINO*GOOTIME		<b>-.006</b>		
LATINO*LIBERAL			<b>-.065</b>	
LATINO*DEMOCRAT				<b>-.103</b>

### Appendix A.3-Additional Tables for Chapter 3

**Table A.5 Factor Loadings for HEALTH**

<i>Variable</i>	Factor Loading
Factor 1	.679
Factor 2	.649
Factor 3	.641
Factor 4	.441

Prob>chi2=0.00

**Table A.6 Factor Loadings for TRUST**

<i>Variable</i>	Factor Loading
Factor 1	.606
Factor 2	.620
Factor 3	.513

Prob>chi2=0.00

**Table A.7. Beta Coefficients for Significant Variables in Table 3.3**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Model 1 (Latino)</i>	<i>Model 2 (Non-Latino)</i>	<i>Model 3 (Mexican)</i>	<i>Model 4 (Latinos)</i>
TRUST	<b>-.174</b>		<b>-.256</b>	
APPGOV		<b>-.092</b>		
APPCALEG		<b>.156**</b>		
GOODTIME	<b>.125</b>		<b>.169</b>	<b>.123</b>
LIBERAL		<b>.191</b>		
GENDER		<b>-.072</b>		
EDUC		<b>-.133</b>		
LATGEN	<b>-.270</b>		<b>-.251</b>	<b>-.263</b>
TRUST*MEXICAN				<b>-.257</b>



**Table A.8. Beta Coefficients for Significant Variables in Table 3.4**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Model 1 (Latino)</i>	<i>Model 2 (Non-Latino)</i>
TRUST	<b>-.185</b>	
APPGOV		<b>-.092</b>
APPCALEG		<b>.154</b>
GOODTIME	<b>.127</b>	
LIBERAL		<b>.198</b>
GENDER		<b>-.066</b>
EDUC		<b>-.132</b>
LATGEN	<b>-.271</b>	

**Table A.9. Beta Coefficients for Significant Variables in Table 3.5**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Model 1 (Latino)</i>	<i>Model 2 (Non-Latino)</i>
TRUST	<b>-.309</b>	<b>-.269</b>
APPGOV		<b>-.091</b>
APPCALEG		<b>.146</b>
GOODTIME	<b>.124</b>	
LIBERAL		<b>.192</b>
EDUC		<b>-.134</b>
LATGEN	<b>-.272</b>	
TRUST*IDEOLOGY		<b>.363</b>

## Appendix A.4-Additional Tables for Chapter 4

**Table A.10 Factor Loadings for TRUST**

<i>Variable</i>	Factor Loading
Factor 1	.594
Factor 2	.598
Factor 3	.489

Prob>chi2=0.00

**Table A.11 Standardized Coefficients for Significant Variables in Table 4.2**

Rejecting Incumbent for:	Major Party Challenger	Minor Party Candidate
TRUST	<b>.774</b>	<b>.566</b>
GOODTIME	<b>.755</b>	<b>.756</b>
LIBERAL	<b>2.15</b>	<b>1.9</b>
AGE	<b>.774</b>	
GENDER		
INCOME	<b>.800</b>	<b>.765</b>
EDUC		<b>1.35</b>
DEMOCRAT	<b>3.02</b>	<b>1.56</b>
UNION	<b>1.31</b>	<b>1.30</b>
LATINO	<b>1.35</b>	<b>1.54</b>

**Table A.12: Standardized Coefficients for Significant Variables in Table 4.4**

Rejecting Incumbent for:	Major Party Challenger	Minor Party Candidate	Major Party Challenger	Minor Party Candidate
<i>Variable</i>	Latino		Non-Latino	
TRUST	<b>.609</b>		<b>.775</b>	<b>.575</b>
GOODTIME	<b>.579</b>		<b>.647</b>	<b>.770</b>
LIBERAL	<b>1.77</b>	<b>2.18</b>	<b>2.24</b>	<b>1.82</b>
AGE			<b>.791</b>	
GENDER		<b>1.92</b>		
INCOME	<b>.527</b>			
EDUC				<b>1.39</b>
DEMOCRAT	<b>2.4</b>		<b>3.05</b>	<b>1.60</b>
UNION			<b>1.39</b>	<b>1.30</b>
LATGEN		<b>.395</b>	---	---
HOMELANG		<b>2.55</b>	---	---

## VITA

Dean E. Bonner (Ph.D., University of New Orleans 2009) is Survey Project Manager at the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC). His research interest includes Latino politics, voting behavior, and political trust.

Dr. Bonner also has a keen interest in academia as well and has taught classes in American Government, World Politics, and the Politics of Asia. His interest in academia and teaching has not faded and in the upcoming years Dr. Bonner plans on returning to one of his true loves, teaching.

Dr. Bonner's research examines Latino political trust and also the relationship between state and national level trust. His dissertation entitled, "A Comprehensive Examination of the Determinates and Consequences of Political Trust among Latinos" explored the determinants of Latinos trust and the consequences of this trust as well as an analysis of how political trust is different among Latinos and non-Latinos. Dr. Bonner has published multiple reports while at PPIC and has served as Co-Principal Investigators on projects that have secured nearly \$1 million in funding support.