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Latino New Yorkers in the 2008 Presidential Election: The New Americans Exit Poll

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The New Americans Exit Poll Project

The University Collaborative/New Americans Exit Poll (NAEP) project began in 2000 as a collaboration between Prof. Lorraine C. Minnite of Rutgers University-Camden, Prof. John H. Mollenkopf of the City University of New York Graduate Center, and the New York Immigration Coalition. For the 2008 survey, we were joined by Prof. Robert Y. Shapiro of Columbia University and Prof. José E. Cruz of the University at Albany/State University of New York. Since 2000, we have interviewed over 17,000 New York City voters, including nearly 6,000 foreign-born citizens, and compiled a unique source of information on the political preferences, attitudes and behavior of New Yorkers participating in recent national, state and municipal elections. Surveys are made available to voters in English, Chinese, Spanish, Russian, and Korean translations and administered by a trained, multi-lingual survey staff recruited from the city's ethnic and immigrant neighborhoods. Over the years, funding has been provided by a variety of foundation and academic sources, including Barnard College, Columbia University, the City University of New York, the New York Foundation, the Russell Sage Foundation, and *el diario/La Prensa*, one of New York's two major

language daily newspapers. In 2008, funding was generously provided by the New York Latino Research and Resources Network (NYLARNet) in conjunction with the Center for Urban Research (CUNY), the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy (Columbia University), and the New York Immigration Coalition which has provided regular in-kind support to the project through staff time dedicated to implementation and survey supervision on Election Day.

Introduction

In his 2008 bid for the presidency, Barack Obama ran a daring campaign, forging a winning coalition that relied heavily on the support of youth and minority voters. Obama and his opponent, Senator John McCain (R-AZ), and their parties and allied supporters broke spending records and deployed new communications technologies to reach millions of voters. As a result, first-time voters may have determined the outcome of the election. Exit polls found that some 15 million ballots were cast by new voters, two-thirds of whom voted for Obama and in numbers that may have exceeded his margin of victory over McCain by as many as one million ballots.¹

By historical standards, voter turnout in the 2008 presidential election was high. In fact, more Americans voted than

ever before. But turnout also was uneven across regions, states and localities, and not as high as predicted in the months leading up to the election.

In New York City, where groups mobilized by the Obama candidacy at the national level have long contended for influence in city politics – racial minorities, organized labor, and the Democratic Party – turnout was surprisingly weak. Compared to 2004, the total number of ballots counted increased by about seven percent (or about 182 thousand out of some 2.6 million cast). But, due to difficulties in measuring the size of the eligible population, it is not clear whether this represents a small increase or a small decrease in the turnout *rate* of eligible voters.² Comparative survey data find virtually no change in turnout from 2004 to 2008 (see table 1). The city’s estimated turnout rate, 52.5 percent, was lower than both the statewide rate of 60.1 percent, and the national rate of 63.6 percent, as measured by the U.S. Census Bureau.³

This report focuses on the political attitudes and vote choices of the city’s growing Latino population. An analysis of population flows in New York City since the 9/11 terrorist attacks provides an important context for understanding shifts in turnout and the role immigration is playing in shaping the city’s electorate. These trends, in turn, bear on the continuing diversification of the city’s Latino population, and especially its Latino electorate.

Population and Turnout

Table 2 presents weighted estimates of the native and foreign-born voting age and voting eligible populations from

the Current Population Survey’s November Voting and Registration Supplements (the CPS) conducted during the past five federal election years.⁴ Table 3 summarizes the changes in population flows over each two-year and the eight-year interval, and figure 1 graphically displays the changes by demographic group.

The data suggest that in the immediate period just after the attack, the city’s voting age population declined, with a large drop in the non-citizen population (-13.2 percent) partially offset by an impressive increase in the naturalized citizen population (10.0 percent; see table 3). Contrary to predictions at the time, the city’s adult population rebounded with strong growth of nearly 10 percent between 2002 and 2004. During this period, we see even larger gains in the citizen population, which grew at six times the rate in the previous two-year period. It is highly likely that the anti-immigrant hysteria unleashed by the 9/11 attacks and the sudden and massive re-orientation of federal immigration policy toward homeland security accounts for the rush to citizenship among a large segment of the city’s eligible immigrant population.⁵ As a proportion of all adult citizens, naturalized citizens grew from 25.3 percent of the voting-eligible population in 2000, to 27.2 percent in 2002, to 28.4 percent in 2004, and 30.2 percent in 2006, before dropping back to 29.0

percent in 2008 (see table 2). Over the same eight-year period, the non-citizen population contracted by 9.8 percent (see table 3), reflecting both rising naturalization rates among the city’s foreign-born adult population and a drop off in foreign emigration to the city.

Across the longer period of 2000 to 2008, as table 4 reports, the city’s voting-age population grew by eight percent while the adult citizen population expanded at almost twice that rate (by 14.1 percent). Latinos and Asians drove citywide growth in these populations. There was virtually no change in the number of white adults, while the number of Latino adults expanded by 16.9, and the adult Asian population increased by 20.9 percent. Both of these groups expanded far faster than adult whites and blacks. The black adult population grew at a slightly lower rate than the adult population at-large. Given the higher rates of foreign birth among Latinos and Asians, this suggests that naturalization, perhaps spurred by the 9/11 attacks, and not just the aging into adulthood of a second generation, played an important role in increasing the voting-eligible population in New York City. Similarly, although registered voters in the city grew at only about a third of the rate of the eligible population during this period (by just 4.7 percent), all of the growth appears to be due to impressive increases in registration among Latinos (26.2 percent) and Asian Americans (50.4).

Nevertheless, registration rates for Latinos and Asian Americans are still lower than those for white and black adult citizens in New York City (see table 5).

The foregoing discussion of the larger population and turnout trends in New York City is important to our understanding of Latino voting behavior. On-going immigration from the Dominican Republic and Latin America continues to destabilize older political coalitions, and for some time now, has challenged Puerto Rican political dominance within the city's Latino communities.⁶ Next, we will examine the demographic profile of the Latino voter in the 2008 New York City presidential electorate, and analyze and compare the vote and policy choices of Latinos to those of white, black, and Asian American New Yorkers before breaking down the analysis to examine the role of ethnicity within the city's Latino electorate.

Demographic Profile of New York City Latino Voters

For an analysis of the Latino electorate, we turn to the New Americans Exit Poll.⁷ Measured in terms of education and income levels, Latino voters constitute the core of New York City's large working class electorate, estimated at about one million voters. First, Latino voters are distinguished by their immigrant status. Two-thirds of Latino voters were either born abroad (44.1 percent), or are the children of immigrants (an additional 22.2 percent; see tables 6a and 6b).

Compared to whites, Latino voters have achieved lower levels of education and earn lower incomes. In fact, Latinos have the least amount of formal education and the

lowest incomes of any of the four major ethnic/racial groups. One in three Latino voters has only a high school education or less (30.1 percent), compared to one in five (21.9 percent) black voters, one in five (18.3 percent) Asian American voters, and just one in ten (11.3 percent) white voters. At the other end of the education spectrum, Latinos are significantly less likely than whites to have completed post-graduate degrees (11.9 percent compared to 34.3 percent of whites), and fall below blacks (18.6 percent) and Asian Americans (23.4 percent) in this category, as well (see table 7).

Six in 10 Latino voters (59.0 percent) reported annual family income in 2007 of less than \$50,000, a figure just above the median for family income in the city for that year (\$48,246). This is twice the rate reported by white voters (29.2 percent), which means that Latino voters disproportionately fall below family median income levels, while whites are significantly concentrated above the median. The comparable proportion of Asian American voters in this low to moderate income category is 48.0 percent, similar to that of black voters, just under half of whom (49.4 percent) report income at about the median.

Marriage rates and the presence of young children in the home also give us some insight into the family context in which Latino voters live. With respect to marriage patterns, Latino voters are more similar to whites than they are to either black or Asian American voters. Latinos are as likely as whites to be married (43.1 percent of Latinos compared to 44.4 percent of white voters).

However, they are twice as likely as whites to have young children at home (only one in five white voters, or 21.4 percent, said they had children under the age of 18 living at home, compared to 41.6 of Latino voters).

In comparison, black voters demonstrate the lowest rates of marriage (30.6 percent), nearly half the rate of Asian American voters (57.8 percent); while Asian American voters are less likely than Latinos and blacks to have young children at home (29.9 percent).

As expected, given the demography of the larger Latino community in New York, Latino voters are younger than other voters, with more than half of all Latino voters falling into the child-bearing years of 18-39, compared to 46.3 percent of whites, 48.9 percent of Asian American voters and 50.5 percent of all black voters.

Finally, data on residency and housing tenure highlight important differences among racial groups. New York City Latino voters, in spite of their immigrant status, report fairly stable residency patterns. They appear to be somewhat less mobile than African American voters, with just one in 20 reporting residency at their current address of less than one year, compared to 8.5 percent of blacks, and 44.4 percent reporting living at their current address for more than 10 years, compared to 39.3 percent for blacks. In contrast, white voters are both a mobile and a rooted population (10.4 percent say they've lived at their present address for less than a year, while 42.5 percent report

residing at their address for more than 10 years). Latinos and blacks are much more likely to be renters – two-thirds of both groups rent – than whites and Asian American voters, about half of whom own their own homes (see table 8).

What these data suggest is that although the majority of voters in New York City are now people of color who are more likely to share a class background with each other than they are with whites, there are important demographic differences among Latinos, blacks and Asian Americans that may bear on their political attitudes and vote choices.

Vote Choice, Partisanship and Ideology

Like most New York City voters, Latinos are strongly Democratic in their party registration and vote choice, well above the national trends in Latino voting patterns. In the 2008 election, Latino support for Barack Obama neared levels reached among African Americans, 95 percent of whom said they voted for the president (see table 9a). Some 86 percent of Latinos reported voting for Obama, compared to two-thirds of whites (67.4 percent), and three-quarters of Asian Americans (73.1 percent). In partisan and racial terms, the vote for New York State Senate closely tracked presidential voting patterns, with 91 percent of blacks, 82 percent of Latinos, 70 percent of Asian Americans, and 66 percent of white voters saying they voted for the Democratic candidate (see table 9a). The lack of party competition in New York is one possible factor contributing to the

city (and state's) anemic voter turnout rates.

The heavy Obama vote among blacks and Latinos aligns with patterns of party registration. As New York City where whites have either modestly defected to the Republicans or otherwise drifted away from Democratic Party registration,⁸ Latino and black New Yorkers remain party stalwarts. About four in five Latinos who cast ballots in 2008 are registered Democrats, as are 86 percent of black voters, while 59 percent of whites and 57 percent of Asian American New Yorkers report Democratic Party registration (see table 9a).

And yet, party registration in New York City is not as reliable an indicator of what political scientists refer to as “ideology” (or vice versa) as it has become nationally.⁹ On the one hand, on this measure, the vast majority (80 to 85 percent) of New York City voters identify as either liberal or moderate in their political views (see table 9b). Non-white minorities are slightly more likely to identify as *moderate* rather than liberal, while a plurality of whites identify as *liberal*. Despite this, whites are more likely to be Republicans than any other group. Whereas some 18 percent of Latinos say they are conservative in their views, less than half that number report Republican Party registration. Similarly, 14 percent of blacks report conservative leanings, but only three percent report Republican Party registration. Asian Americans are even less likely than Latinos to call themselves conservative and they do report

Republican Party registration in numbers that track the measure of their conservative leanings (14.1 percent say they are conservative in their political views, and 12.1 percent say they are registered as Republicans). But Asian Americans are also twice as likely as whites, and three to four times as likely as blacks and Latinos to report “no party registration” at all (see table 9a).

In theory, another path into the issue of ideology is through attitudes toward the role of government. In the context of New York City politics, however, this too, is an unreliable predictor of party registration. The principle division appears to be a racial one. Survey respondents were asked to choose between two conflicting statements about the larger role of government and to pick which one came closest to their views. Whites and non-whites divide neatly on the matter, with whites twice as likely as blacks, Latinos and Asians to agree with the statement that, “Government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals” (see table 10). Only 12 to 14 percent of minority voters agreed with this view, compared to 24 percent of whites. And while we see a racial divide in this question, overall, strong majorities of all voters, but especially minority voters, expressed support for an alternative, more activist role for government.

As for any consistency in partisan ideology, there is little between the attitudes of New York City voters and national trends. Slim majorities of Republican (56.5 percent) and Conservative Party registrants (51.2

percent) said that their own views were closer to the alternative view of government offered in the statement, “Government should do more [not less] to solve problems.”¹⁰

Voter Mobilization

The lack of party competition raises questions about the dynamics of voter turnout in New York, since competition is believed to motivate turnout. In this field of research, political scientists have documented the importance of organized campaigns to encourage voting.¹¹ We asked 2008 presidential election voters whether they had been contacted in the month before the election by family, friends or neighbors, political campaigns, political parties, unions, immigrant organizations or through automated phone calls and encouraged to vote. About one in five of all New York City voters said that they had been contacted by family, friends or neighbors, with Latinos as likely as whites to report being contacted through their social networks, and blacks reporting the highest rates of contact (at 26 percent; see table 11).

Similarly, with the exception of Asian Americans we measured mostly even rates of contact among whites, blacks and Latinos by labor unions. Lower union outreach to Asian Americans is no surprise, given the lower levels of unionization reported by Asian American voters (24.4 percent report belonging to a union or living in a union household, compared to 37 percent of voters citywide, and 45 percent among black voters, with Latinos and whites reporting equal

rates of union membership at 35 percent; see table 12a).

While Latinos were equally likely to report having been encouraged to vote by family, friends, neighbors and labor unions, compared to white and black voters, Latinos and Asian Americans were significantly less likely to report having been contacted by professional political operations – political campaign organizations and parties. Citywide, some 17 percent of voters said they had been contacted in the month prior to the election by political campaigns, and 15 percent reported contacts by political parties (see table 11). Latinos reported the lowest rates of contact by political campaigns – 9.4 percent, compared to 23.7 percent of whites, 12.7 percent of blacks, and 11.1 percent of Asian Americans who said they had been contacted by campaigns. Even fewer Latinos said that they had been contacted by political parties. At 8.3 percent, Latinos were two-and-a-half times less likely to have been contacted and encouraged to vote by political parties than whites (at 20.9 percent). Blacks and Asian Americans were similarly overlooked by party organizations (10.9 percent of blacks and 8.2 percent of Asian American voters reported party contacts in the month before the election). And while Asian Americans report higher rates of party independence, as reported above, Latino New Yorkers are loyal and reliable Democrats. Given the much higher rates of reported party contact by whites, it is unlikely that the lack of party competition alone in New York (and the taking for granted of the Democratic Party

vote) explains why Latinos are not targets for voter mobilization by the parties.

Social capital theorists have argued that organizational membership is important to civic participation, in part, because it connects people to networks that can mobilize them to vote, and trains them for collective action.¹² Here, with the exception of union membership, we do see overall lower rates of reported community and organizational membership among New York City’s Latino voters (see table 12a). For example, blacks are twice as likely as Latinos to report belonging to a tenant association; whites are half as likely as Latinos to report belonging to a religious institution (like a church); and blacks and whites are almost twice as likely to report belonging to a community organization than Latinos. Asian Americans share this less engaged organizational profile with Latinos, which suggests immigrant or newcomer status may be playing a role, with Latino and Asian American voters less embedded in community institutions.

We see this in other evidence from the 2008 New Americans Exit Poll. Latinos are the least likely of the four major racial/ethnic groups to say that they contributed money to an organization in their community (51 percent, compared to 71.3 percent of whites, 65.1 percent of blacks, and 64 percent of Asian American voters report having made such contributions in the past).

Moreover, Latinos are the least likely of the four groups to say that they had volunteered time or contributed money to a political party (just one in

five or 18.9 percent said they had done this, compared to 43.3 percent of whites, 37.5 percent of blacks, and 22.9 percent of Asian American voters; see table 12b). However, at average levels for voters citywide, Latinos reported attending a meeting on voting in the last year (12.7 percent, compared to 14.2 percent citywide), which suggests that they are probably as interested in the election as any other group of voters, but, since they are more likely to be new voters, they are not as well integrated into the organizational networks that activate voters on election day. The fact that Latino voters, perhaps as relative newcomers, demonstrate weaker organizational memberships than white, and black voters, especially, points to the distance between them and traditional group-based mechanisms of voter mobilization.

There is at least some support for the effects of the newcomer thesis in the reported voting data from the survey. Latinos and Asian Americans are much more likely to report having voted for the first time in 2008 (see table 13). Whereas about 11 percent of white voters report voting for the first time (according to national exit polls, some 11 to 12 percent of all voters were first-time voters),¹³ over a quarter of both Latino and Asian American voters said the same (about one in five black New York voters said they were first-time voters). And for both Latinos and Asian Americans, first time voters are more likely to be immigrants than is the case for white or black first time voters (see Table 13). Consistent with the findings on the

immigrant electorate drawn from five previous iterations of the New Americans Exit Poll, Latinos, to the extent that they are an immigrant group (and the Puerto Rican exception is significant), demonstrate an equal interest in electoral participation – as equal rates with whites, they attend meetings on voting, discuss elections with family, friends and neighbors, and appear to be integrated into that part of the city’s labor union infrastructure that engages in electoral politics - but remain hampered by weaker organizational ties and an apparent disinterest on the part of professional political organizations to mobilize them.

National Issues

New Yorkers across racial lines are remarkably similar in their ranking of the issues that were most important in determining their choice for president, and their concerns closely track the issues that dominated the long national media campaign and the presidential contest. Among all racial/ethnic groups, when asked to identify the single most important issue in deciding their vote for president, New York City voters almost perfectly consistently replied with ‘jobs and the economy,’ ‘the financial crisis,’ and ‘the war in Iraq’ (there was one minor exception: by a tiny margin, black voters ranked education just above the war in the Iraq). The city’s majority minority electorate, in larger proportions than whites, said that jobs and the economy was the number one issue in determining their vote for president (41 percent of blacks, 35 percent of Asian Americans, and 30

percent of Latinos named this as the most important issue of the election, compared to 26 percent of whites; see table 14).

Relative to the issue profile of whites, education was also a strong motivator of vote choice for minority voters, but especially for Latinos. Some 11 percent of Latino voters said it was their number one issue, the largest percentage among voters of any racial group. For whites, smaller percentages said that education was the top issue than said taxes (5.5 percent), terrorism (5.5 percent) or energy and the environment (4.6 percent) were determining of how they voted. Immigration was more important to Latinos than any other racial group (including Asian Americans, who are more likely to be foreign born than Latinos), but not strongly evident in motivating their vote (only three percent of Latino voters ranked it as the single most important issue; see table 14).

Notably, minority voters were much more likely than whites to say that they believed that a candidate of the same racial or ethnic background would have a better understanding of the issues important to them than someone else (see table 14).

State and Local Issues

New York City voters were strongly disapproving of the way government business is conducted in the New York State Legislature in Albany, with blacks and Latinos the most disapproving among all racial/ethnic groups. Only 17.2 percent of Latinos and 17.6 percent of blacks said they approved of the conduct

of state government by the legislature, compared to 21.8 percent of whites and 26.9 percent of Asian American voters (see table 15). With respect to the job performance of the governor, Latinos gave then-governor David Paterson some of his lowest marks, with fewer than two in five (37.0 percent) approving of how he was handling his job (Asian Americans held a similarly low opinion at 37.1 percent, compared to about half of all whites who approved (49.3 percent), and six in ten blacks (59.9 percent)).

As with the national issue profile, New York City voters were in strong agreement about the top three issues they thought the New York State Legislature should be working on. These were: 1) jobs and the economy; 2) education; and 3) healthcare (see table 15). Immigration, again, was a more salient issue for Latinos than for any other racial/ethnic group. One in five Latinos said that it should be one of the top three issues dealt with by the state legislature, despite the more marginal role for state government in setting national immigration policy (i.e., border control, levels of immigration, family and employment prioritization, etc.). In fact, there was little disagreement in attitudes toward levels of legal immigration to the U.S. among racial groups (see table 16). Clearly, one would have to unpack “immigration” as a policy issue to better understand precisely what role voters might see for state government. The 2008 election followed on several years of debate at the state level about the issuance of driver’s licenses to undocumented immigrants, and

given the health and welfare functions of state government, one can imagine voters looking for state government to intervene in order to alleviate some of the hardships facing New York City’s immigrant communities.

With respect to the most important issues for local government, the mantra of jobs and the economy chanted as a mission statement for the federal and state governments rang through. Again, there was little in the way of racial difference to distinguish how New York City voters felt about the issue. Between 44 percent (of whites) and 52 percent (of Asians) of all voters (46 percent of Latinos and 48 percent of blacks) said that jobs and the economy was the single most important issue elected officials in New York City should be working on (see table 17). There is a clear rationale in the emphasis on jobs and the economy as the single most important issue voters want politicians and the government to work on. When asked to compare their family’s current financial situation to four years ago, between forty and fifty percent of all voters say their situation is worse today. This is especially true for Latinos, 50.2 percent of whom say they are worse off (see table 18).

Mayoral priorities also were reviewed in the survey, and a majority of all New York City voters opposed extending the city’s term limits law from eight to twelve years.¹⁴ If mayors can’t wave a magic wand and create more jobs or stimulate the economy, they do use budgets to express their political priorities.¹⁵

Survey respondents were asked what the mayor and city council should do to address the city’s chronic fiscal crisis – cut services, raise taxes, or both. On this question, minority voters are marked by their indecision: a third to nearly one half said they did not know what city officials should do (compared to 28 percent of whites). Latinos and Asian Americans expressed slim plurality views for cutting services (whites and blacks broke even), with 19.4 percent of Latinos and 25.4 percent of Asians favoring cuts, compared to 14.0 percent of Latinos and 11.5 percent of Asians favoring raising tax revenue (see table 17).

Comparison of Latino Ethnic Groups

Demography

For the past four decades, the Latino community in New York City has been undergoing a demographic, cultural and political transformation brought on by large and sustained waves of immigration, primarily from the Dominican Republic and Mexico. This section highlights key differences among Puerto Rican, Dominican, and other native and foreign-born Latinos, as measured in the New Americans Exit Poll in 2008.¹⁶ Most of the discussion will focus on the differences between Puerto Ricans, who are 9.5 percent of the city’s population, and Dominicans who comprise 6.7 percent.¹⁷

Table 19 summarizes the similarities and differences between the different ethnic groups. The lower income and education levels of Puerto Ricans in New York, and their

at least partial political and economic incorporation into the life of the city (as measured by their relative success in state and local electoral politics). Three-quarters (75.2 percent) of Puerto Rican voters say they speak English as a first language at home, compared to about half (52.1 percent) of Dominican voters and a third (32.4 percent) of all other foreign-born Latino voters (see table 20). As a group, Dominican voters demonstrate higher levels of educational achievement and are more likely to hold a college degree than Puerto Rican voters, despite the concentration of Dominicans at the bottom of the income scale.

There are other notable demographic differences among Latino groups. For example, Dominicans and non-Puerto Rican/non-Dominican native-born Latino voters are much younger than Puerto Rican and other foreign-born Latino voters. Nearly a quarter of Dominican voters (23.6 percent) are under the age of 25 and just over half (55.5) are under the age of 40, whereas only one in ten Puerto Ricans is under 25 and 41.5 percent are under the age of 40. Only one in twenty non-Puerto Rican/non-Dominican foreign-born Latinos is under the age of 25; moreover, we see very high rates of reported marriage among this group – 61.6 percent, compared to 39.2 percent of Puerto Ricans and 38.3 percent of Dominicans, and 29.2 percent of other native-born Latinos. This suggests that the non-Puerto Rican/non-Dominican foreign-born group of voters likely migrated to New York City some time ago (we have already noted the lack of representation in the New York City

electorate of Mexican Americans). Notably, some 87 percent of non-Puerto Rican/non-Dominican native-born Latinos is under the age of 40 – most likely a second-generation phenomenon, as these voters probably are the sons and daughters of an older heterogeneous population of Latino immigrants.

Vote Choice, Partisanship and Ideology

As noted above, New York City Latino voters are strongly Democratic in their vote choice and party registration (see table 21a). We find few significant differences among our Latino comparison groups, with Puerto Ricans just slightly more wildly enthusiastic about Barack Obama than Dominicans (87.6 percent compared to 84.9 percent of Dominicans) and in their choice for New York State Senate (83 percent of Puerto Ricans reported voting for the Democratic candidate, compared to 80.1 percent of Dominicans), but reporting slightly lower levels of Democratic Party registration than Dominicans (76.1 percent compared to 81.3 percent for Dominicans).

At the same time, when asked how they define themselves on most political matters – liberal, moderate, or conservative – Puerto Ricans weight their responses toward the conservative end of the spectrum, while Dominicans move toward the liberal end, though, again, these differences are quite modest (see table 21b).

The issue profiles for the different Latino groups are quite similar and therefore mirror what is reported for all Latinos above: jobs and the

economy are the number one issue. Latinos want their politicians to work on at all levels of government, followed by concerns about the global financial crisis and the war in Iraq at the national level, and education at the state and city levels (see tables 22, 23 and 24).

Finally, the data on voter mobilization are quite provocative, and here we offer a broad interpretation rather than draw conclusive findings from the data. The travails of Puerto Ricans in New York, with their vibrant history of political activism and radicalism, and their long struggle for respect and social and economic justice suggest the possibility that political incorporation for at least some urban minority groups, perhaps groups dissatisfied or disillusioned by the tribalism and clientelism of urban politics, can lead to less not more participation and trust in government.¹⁸ We did not directly measure these features of New York City politics, though the post-1950s political history of the rise of minority politics in New York is well-known, nor did we directly measure trust. But the patterns in differences between Puerto Ricans – an older, more politically incorporated group – and Dominicans – a newer immigrant group with weaker group representation in city and state politics – suggest that incorporation has not unfolded into a happy story of representative and responsive government for Puerto Rican New Yorkers.

All non-Puerto Rican Latino voters, native and foreign-born, were about twice as likely as Puerto Rican voters

to say that they were voting for the first time in the 2008 presidential election (see table 25). On the one hand, given the place of Puerto Ricans in the city's political life and the earlier success of Puerto Rican politicians in winning office at all levels of government and in gaining leadership roles in the city's Democratic party organization (especially in the Bronx), it is not surprising that lower percentages of Puerto Rican voters reported voting for the first time in 2008, compared to other Latinos. We see little differences among Latino groups with respect to membership in civic, religious and community organizations and labor unions (see table 26a), or in volunteering time or contributing money to community organizations or political parties (see table 25), and thus assume that all Latinos are roughly equally influenced to vote through their membership in these organizations. But Puerto Ricans were less likely than Dominicans to report having attended a meeting on voting in the previous year, and slightly less likely to report contacts from family, friends, neighbors, or political campaigns encouraging them to vote (see table 26b), suggesting some small measure of defection from politics that cries out for an explanation.

When we add to this the fact that smaller percentages of Puerto Rican voters say that a candidate of their same racial or ethnic background better understands the issues important to them than do Dominicans or other native or foreign-born Latinos (see table 22); and that Puerto Ricans are less likely

than Dominicans to say that they approve of the way government business is being conducted in Albany (see table 22) where Puerto Ricans first held office in 1937,¹⁹ and extended their influence, questions are raised about what it means to be politically incorporated.

Conclusion

Latinos are a growing force in the New York City electorate. New York has the largest Latino population of any city in the U.S., estimated at 2.3 million, but this population is not demographically representative of the Latino population nationally. Latino New Yorkers, and especially Latino voters, are heterogeneous in their national origins, cultural backgrounds and immigrant status, and are dominated by two groups – Puerto Ricans and Dominicans – that are represented among Latinos in much smaller proportions nationwide. The New Americans Exit Poll opens a window onto the diversity of the New York City Latino electorate, and raises questions about the interplay of immigrant political incorporation and Latino identity.

The survey finds that in terms of education and income, Latino voters form the core of New York City's large working class electorate, estimated at about one million voters. They are younger than other voters and have the least education and lowest incomes of the four racial/ethnic groups. The Latino electorate does not yet include the influence of Mexican Americans, who as the most recent newcomers,

estimated at about three percent of the city's population overall (and 12.2 percent of the city's Latino population), are less likely to be citizens and have higher rates of undocumented status than other Latino groups.

Like most New York City voters, Latinos are strongly Democratic in their party registration and vote choice, more so than Latinos nationally. Some 86 percent of Latino voters in the city voted for Barack Obama in 2008. We see similar patterns in the Latino vote for New York State Senate candidates, with 81.7 percent of Latinos reporting voting for Democrats.

But Latino voters – among the most loyal and reliable Democrats of any group – were significantly less likely to report having been contacted and encouraged to vote by professional political operations (campaigns and parties) in the month before the election. This is in contrast to white voters, whose support for the Democrats in the city has been decaying for more than two decades. Part of the explanation for weaker party mobilization among Latinos may be related to their higher rates of newcomers and first-time voting, and their lower rates of contributing money or volunteering time to a political party, all of which may place them outside the organizational networks that activate voters on Election Day. This hypothesis, however, is challenged by the historical record of activism, political participation, and electoral success of Puerto Rican New Yorkers (“Nuyoricans”), still the largest group of Latinos in the city.

At equal rates with whites, Latino voters demonstrate an interest in electoral politics – similar to rates among whites, they report attending a meeting on voting in the year before the election, discuss elections with family, friends and neighbors, and appear to be integrated into that part of the city’s labor union infrastructure that engages in electoral politics. But they remain hampered by weaker organizational ties and an apparent disinterest on the part of the professional political organizations to mobilize them to vote.

For Latinos, the most prominent issues conditioning their vote choice and the issues they want state and city officials to work on most are jobs and the economy. Immigration was important, but not among the top three most important issues in the election named by Latino survey respondents. Consistent with previous survey findings, Latino voters express concern about education and want government to work on the problems, especially at the state and local levels.

As noted above, New York City’s Latino electorate is diverse and not ethnically representative of Latinos nationwide. There are notable demographic differences among Latino groups. Puerto Rican voters are much older than Dominican voters - nearly a quarter of Dominican voters are under the age of 25, compared to just one in 10 Puerto Rican voters, and only about half of Dominican voters say they speak English at home, compared to three-quarters of Puerto Rican voters. Of course, Puerto Rican voters are U.S. citizens, while most

Dominican voters are foreign born. And despite their lower incomes, Dominican voters have achieved somewhat higher levels of education than Puerto Rican voters.

On the issues, partisanship, and vote choice, however, there are few differences among the different Latino groups. All named jobs and the economy at the number one issue that influenced their choice for president. Dominicans are slightly more likely to self-identify as liberals while Puerto Ricans bend marginally toward the conservative label. Puerto Ricans are more likely to say that they are registered in one of the city’s minor political parties or no party at all (17 percent, compared to 10.3 percent of Dominicans, but differences in ideology and party registration overall are small, and both groups are strongly Democratic in their reported party registration.

Finally, among the Latino groups under review, Dominicans show somewhat higher rates of political contact and organizational membership than do Puerto Ricans. Dominicans were more likely to say that they had been contacted by family, friends, neighbors, political campaigns or parties in the month before the election than Puerto Ricans, and Dominicans were much more likely than Puerto Ricans to report having attended a meeting on voting prior to the election. Almost one third of Dominicans reported having voted for the first time in 2008, compared to 15.8 percent of Puerto Ricans, which suggests that as the city’s Latino population continues its long ethnic transformation, we should expect Dominican New Yorkers to

dominate the Latino electorate. What impact this will have on electoral politics, especially at the local level, however, remains to be seen.

Tables & Figure

1²⁰. Registered Voters, Votes Cast, and Turnout Rates Estimated Voting-Age and Voting-Eligible (Adult Citizen) Population 2000, 2004 and 2008 Presidential Elections New York City

	2000	2004	2008	% Change 2000-2004	% Change 2004-2008	% Change 2000-2008
Total Voting-Age Population	5,764	6,221	6,224	+7.9	0	+8.0
Citizen Voting-Age Population	4,290	4,939	4,894	+15.1	-.9	+14.1
Non-citizen Voting-Age Population	1,474	1,283	1,330	-13.0	+3.7	-9.8
Total Registered Voters	2,659	2,965	2,803	+11.5	-5.5	+6.4
Votes Cast for President	2,377	2,606	2,571	+9.6	-1.3	+8.2
Turnout of Eligible Citizens	55.4	52.8	52.5	-2.6 ²¹	-.3 ²²	-2.9 ²³

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey: November Voting and Registration Supplement Files, 2000, 2004, 2008.

2. Nativity Estimated Voting-Age and Voting-Eligible Populations 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008 Federal Elections New York City (1,000's and Percent)

	2000		2002		2004		2006		2008	
Total (VAP)	5,764		5,670		6,222		6,045		6,224	
Native-born	3,204	55.6%	3,197	56.4%	3,535	56.8%	3,383	55.7%	3,473	55.8%
Foreign-born	2,560	44.4%	2,474	43.6%	2,687	43.2%	2,662	44.3%	2,753	44.2%
Citizens (VEP)	4,290		4,391		4,939		4,848		4,894	
Native-born	3,204	74.7%	3,197	72.8%	3,535	71.6%	3,383	69.8%	3,473	71.0%
Foreign-born	1,086	25.3%	1,195	27.2%	1,404	28.4%	1,464	30.2%	1,421	29.0%
Non-citizens	1,474		1,279		1,283		1,198		1,330	

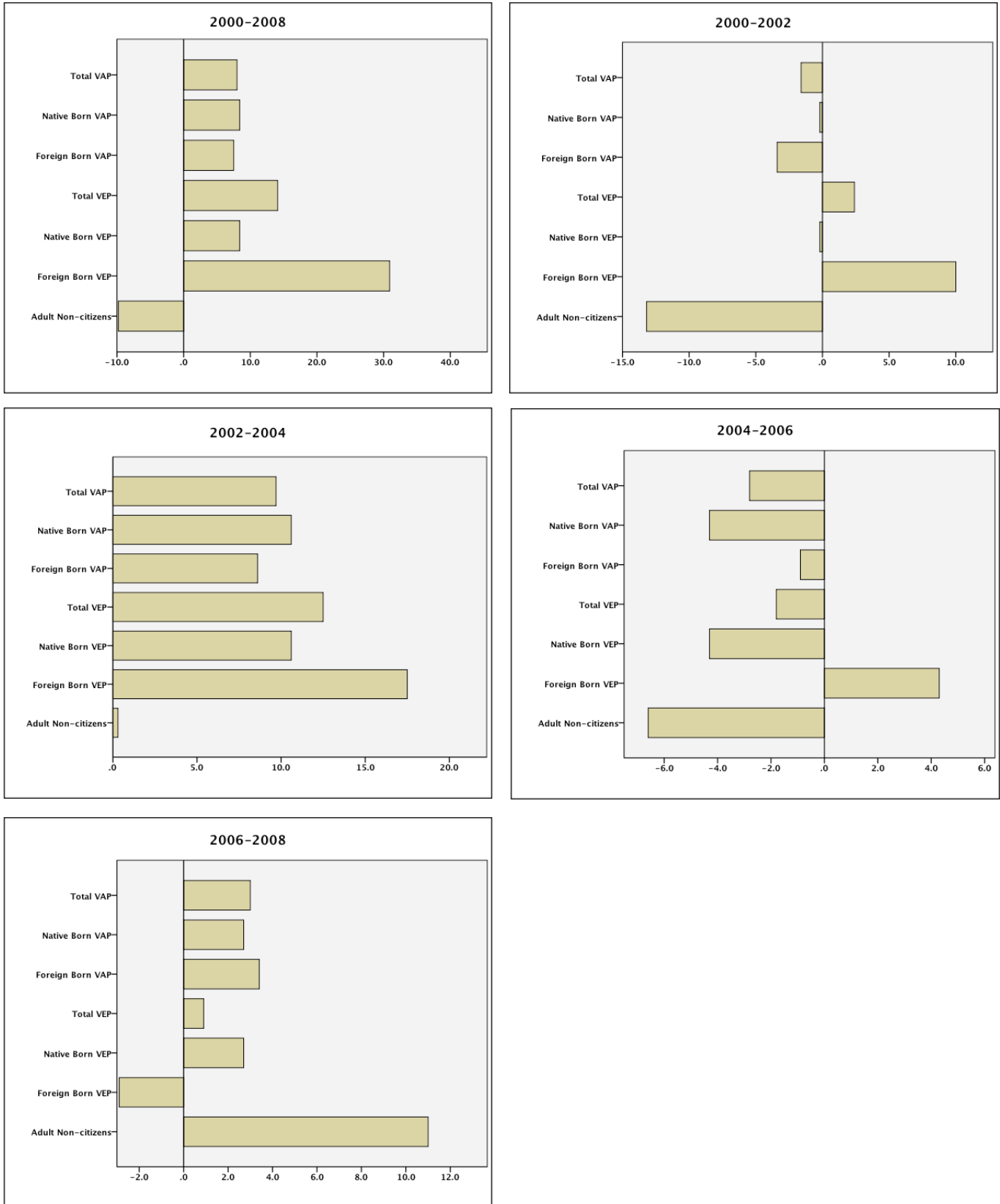
Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey: November Voting and Registration Supplement Files, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008.

3. Federal Election Cycle Change Estimated Voting-Age and Voting-Eligible (Adult Citizen) Population Two-Year Federal Election Cycles, 2000 – 2008 New York City (Percent)

	2000-2008	2000-2002	2002-2004	2004-2006	2006-2008
Total (VAP)	8.0	-1.6	9.7	-2.8	3.0
Native-born	8.4	-0.2	10.6	-4.3	2.7
Foreign-born	7.5	-3.4	8.6	-0.9	3.4
Citizens (VEP)	14.1	2.4	12.5	-1.8	.9
Native-born	8.4	-0.2	10.6	-4.3	2.7
Foreign-born	30.8	10.0	17.5	4.3	-2.9
Non-citizens	-9.8	-13.2	0.3	-6.6	11.0

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey: November Voting and Registration Supplement Files, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008.

Figure 1. Federal Election Cycle Change Estimated Voting-Age and Voting-Eligible (Adult Citizen) Population Two-Year Federal Election Cycles, 2000 – 2008 New York City



4. Change in Citizen and Registered Voter Populations Estimated Voting-Age Population by Race 2000 – 2008 New York City (1,000's and Percent)

	VAP Population			VEP Population			Registered Population ²⁴		
	2000	2008	% Change	2000	2008	% Change	2000	2008	% Change
White, Non-Hispanic	2,326	2,309	-7	2,012	2,033	1.0	1,309	1,275	-2.6
Black, Non-Hispanic	1,405	1,508	7.3	1,129	1,226	8.6	752	727	-3.3
Hispanic, Any Race	1,297	1,516	16.9	831	1,023	23.1	466	588	26.2
Asian, Non-Hispanic	719	869	20.9	308	595	93.2	125	188	50.4
Other	18	22	22.2	11	18	63.6	6	6	0
Total	5,764	6,224	8.0	4,290	4,894	14.1	2,659	2,785	4.7

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey: November Voting and Registration Supplement Files, 2000, 2008.

5. Estimated Registration Rates By Race/Ethnicity²⁵ Voting-Eligible (Adult Citizen) Population 2000, 2004, and 2008 Federal Elections New York City

	2000	2004	2008
White, Non-Hispanic	65.0	63.7	62.7
Black, Non-Hispanic	66.8	61.0	59.3
Hispanic, Any Race	56.1	56.6	57.5
Asian, Non-Hispanic	40.8	45.2	31.7
Other	63.3	37.8	35.8
Total	62.0	59.7	56.9

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey: November Voting and Registration Supplement Files, 2000, 2004, and 2008.

6a. Latino Voters by Nativity and Parents' Place of Birth Detail 2008 Presidential Election New York City

	Both Parents Born in U.S.	One or Both Parents Born in Puerto Rico	Only One Parent Born in U.S.	Both Parents Born Abroad	Total
Native-born	19.2	41.0	7.5	32.3	55.9
Born In the U.S.	22.1	32.3	8.6	37.1	47.0
Born In Puerto Rico	4.0	86.9	2.0	7.1	8.9
Foreign-born	1.2	2.4	1.4	94.9	44.1
N	126	268	54	670	1,118

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

**6b. Latino Voters by Nativity and Parents' Place of Birth Percentage of all Latino Voters 2008
Presidential Election New York City**

	Parents Native-born	Parents Foreign-born	Total
Native-born	33.7	22.2	55.9
Foreign-born	1.5	42.5	44.1
Total	35.2	64.8	100.0
N	394	724	1,118

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

7. Demographic Characteristics New York City Voters, 2008

Education	Latinos	Whites	Blacks	Asians	Others	Total
Less Than High School	8.3	1.2	4.5	3.8	6.7	3.7
High School Graduate	21.8	10.1	17.4	14.5	20.0	14.7
Some College	25.3	16.3	30.4	13.0	16.7	21.5
College Graduate	32.6	38.0	29.0	45.4	40.0	35.2
Postgraduate	11.9	34.3	18.6	23.4	16.7	24.9
N	1,039	2,358	1,285	346	30	5,058
Annual Family Income						
Less Than \$15,000	20.0	4.8	12.3	13.4	20.8	10.5
\$15,000 -- \$29,999	19.6	9.7	15.1	15.4	20.8	13.6
\$30,000 -- \$49,999	19.4	14.7	22.0	19.2	22.6	17.9
\$50,000 -- \$74,999	18.2	19.9	19.9	14.0	11.3	19.0
\$75,000 -- \$99,999	9.9	16.4	14.5	14.0	7.5	14.3
\$100,000 - \$149,999	7.1	17.1	9.1	13.0	7.5	12.7
\$150,000 - \$199,999	3.4	8.8	4.8	4.1	7.5	6.4
\$200,000 or more	2.4	8.6	2.4	6.8	1.9	5.6
N	933	2,151	1,128	292	53	4,557
Family Composition						
Married	43.1	44.4	30.6	57.8	35.5	41.5
N	1,039	2,360	1,287	348	31	5,065
Child Under 18 Years	41.6	21.4	35.5	29.9	32.1	29.6
N	9191	2,186	1,136	298	56	4,595

7 (Cont.). Demographic Characteristics New York City Voters, 2008

Gender	Latinos	Whites	Blacks	Asians	Other	Total
Male	40.8	46.3	42.1	52.3	43.5	44.6
Female	59.2	53.7	57.9	47.7	56.5	55.4
N	953	2,324	1,259	329	23	4,888
Age						
18 to 24 Years	17.0	9.1	15.2	13.1	12.0	12.5
25 to 39 Years	35.3	37.2	35.3	35.8	28.0	36.2
40 to 49 Years	17.7	16.5	23.5	18.2	20.0	18.5
50 to 65 Years	21.3	25.3	20.7	22.0	20.0	23.1
Over 65 Years	8.7	11.9	5.2	10.9	20.0	9.6
N	961	2,187	1,092	313	25	4,578
Place of Birth						
In the U.S.	45.9	87.0	82.7	25.9	68.0	72.9
In Puerto Rico	8.8	0	0	0	0	1.9
In Another Country	45.4	13.0	17.3	74.1	32.0	25.3
N	1,016	2,247	1,139	332	25	4,759

7 (Cont.). Demographic Characteristics New York City Voters, 2008

Parents' Place of Birth	Latinos	Whites	Blacks	Asians	Other	Total
Both Born in the U.S.	10.4	68.7	67.1	.6	39.3	51.2
Only 1 Born in U.S.	4.7	10.0	6.4	1.8	7.1	7.4
One or Both Born in Puerto Rico	23.7	0	0	0	0	4.9
Both Born Abroad	61.2	21.3	26.6	97.5	53.6	36.4
N	974	2,228	1,129	326	28	4,685

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

8. Residency and Housing Tenure New York City Voters, 2008

Length of Time At Present Address	Latinos	Whites	Blacks	Asians	Others	Total
Less Than 1 Year	5.3	10.4	8.5	7.8	15.3	8.8
1 to 2 Years	11.1	14.1	11.5	12.7	8.5	12.7
3 to 4 Years	13.3	16.0	12.7	15.4	6.8	14.5
5 to 10 Years	26.0	17.1	27.9	24.5	20.3	22.1
11 to 20 Years	23.0	15.9	20.7	24.5	18.6	19.1
More Than 20 Years	21.4	26.6	18.6	15.0	30.5	22.8
N	967	2,252	1,178	306	59	4,762
Housing Tenure						
Own	23.7	47.3	23.7	45.6	28.1	36.4
Rent	64.2	46.5	64.6	45.6	57.9	54.6
Neither	12.1	6.2	11.7	8.7	14.0	9.0
N	927	2,218	1,157	298	57	4,657

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

9a. Partisan Vote Choice and Party Registration New York City Voters, 2008

	Latinos	Whites	Blacks	Asians	Others	Total
President						
Barack Obama (D)	85.9	67.4	95.2	73.1	89.5	78.7
John McCain (R)	12.2	31.4	2.7	25.7	10.5	19.7
N	1,022	2,355	1,280	335	19	5,011
New York State Senate						
Democratic Candidate	81.7	65.5	91.3	69.8	86.5	75.7
Republican Candidate	11.4	26.8	3.2	19.7	11.5	17.2
N	950	2,220	1,159	295	52	4,676
Party Registration						
Democratic Party	78.4	59.4	86.3	56.8	55.2	70.0
Republican Party	8.8	20.2	2.6	12.1	20.7	12.8
Other Party	3.7	5.5	3.4	3.8	10.3	4.5
No Party Registration	8.9	14.9	7.7	27.4	13.8	12.7
N	1,041	2,169	1,167	322	115	4,054

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

9b. Self-Identified Political “Ideology”

Ideology	Latinos	Whites	Blacks	Asians	Others	Total
Liberal	39.1	43.9	39.1	38.8	25.0	41.3
Moderate	42.5	38.5	47.3	47.2	50.0	42.1
Conservative	18.4	17.6	13.6	14.1	25.0	16.6
N	964	2,229	1,076	320	24	4,613

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

10. Role of Government New York City Voters, 2008

	Latinos	Whites	Blacks	Asians	Others	Total
Agree:						
Government should do more to solve problems	88.0	75.3	87.7	86.1	78.0	81.6
Government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals	12.0	24.7	12.3	13.9	22.0	18.4
N	908	2,164	1,115	281	50	4,518
Approve of federal government’s bailout of financial institutions	30.1	37.2	24.5	38.7	19.4	32.6
N	1,000	2,222	1,138	331	31	4,722

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

11. Proportion of Voters Reporting Voter Contacts In the Month Before the 2008 Election New York City Voters, 2008

Contacted by:	Latinos	Whites	Blacks	Asians	Others	Total
Family, Friend, Neighbor	20.2	20.0	26.0	20.2	20.6	21.6
Political Campaign	9.4	23.7	12.7	11.1	14.7	17.0
Political Party	8.3	20.9	10.9	8.2	5.9	14.8
Union	11.7	12.1	15.0	6.7	11.8	12.4
Immigrant Organization	1.9	.6	.9	2.1	0	1.0
Automated Telephone Call	6.5	19.1	9.9	10.2	8.8	13.5
N	1,037	2,326	1,284	341	34	5,022

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

12a. Proportion of Voters Reporting Organizational Memberships New York City Voters, 2008

Type of organization	Latinos	Whites	Blacks	Asians	Others	Total
Political Club	2.7	3.9	4.7	1.4	1.7	3.7
Tenant Association	3.8	4.2	8.1	2.1	7.0	5.0
PTA	5.1	4.7	8.4	3.1	3.5	5.6
Religious Institution	21.2	31.9	33.5	27.1	28.1	29.8
Community Organization	8.1	13.9	13.6	7.7	10.5	12.3
Business Association	3.7	8.6	9.1	6.6	6.9	7.6
N	902	2,166	1,142	288	58	4,556
Labor Union (Member or member in household)	35.3	35.3	45.0	24.4	34.4	37.0
N	1,038	2,353	1,285	344	32	5,052

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

12b. Other Mobilization Measures New York City Voters, 2008

	Latinos	Whites	Blacks	Asians	Others	Total
Have Volunteered Time or Contributed Money to Organization in Community	51.0	71.3	65.1	64.0	66.7	65.0
N	994	2,229	1,144	331	30	4,728
Have Volunteered Time or Contributed Money to Political Party	18.9	43.3	37.5	22.9	28.1	35.3
N	1,008	2,239	1,148	327	32	4,754
Attended Meeting on Voting in Last Year	12.7	11.6	20.6	13.4	8.8	14.2
N	1,039	2,364	1,289	343	34	5,069

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

13. First-time Voters New York City Voters, 2008

	Native-born	Foreign-born	% Racial Group Voting for First Time	% First-time Voters by Racial Group
Latinos	55.2	44.2	28.0	20.2
Whites	62.1	37.9	10.5	46.9
Blacks	73.3	26.7	19.2	25.6
Asians	21.6	78.4	27.8	6.9
Other	75.0	25.0	23.8	.4
% Nativity of First Time Voters	74.4	25.6	100.0	100.0
N	820	3,826	4,867	4,646

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

14. Issues and Voting New York City Voters, 2008

	Latinos	Whites	Blacks	Asians	Others	Total
Single Most Important Issue in Deciding Vote for President						
Jobs/Economy	30.3	26.5	40.6	34.5	16.7	31.2
Financial Crisis	19.6	14.8	17.7	21.4	5.6	16.8
War in Iraq	15.6	15.7	8.7	12.3	16.7	13.7
Health Care	5.1	8.6	7.7	4.8	22.2	7.6
Education	11.9	3.7	8.9	4.8	22.2	6.6
Taxes	2.4	5.5	2.9	5.2	0	4.2
Terrorism	2.6	5.5	.7	2.4	0	3.5
Energy/Environment	1.3	4.6	1.4	2.0	0	3.0
Race	1.5	1.0	3.5	2.4	5.6	1.8
Immigration	3.0	.7	.6	1.2	0	1.1
Housing	1.5	.1	2.3	1.2	0	1.0
Other	5.2	13.3	5.0	7.9	11.1	9.4
N	745	2,070	1,036	252	18	4,121
Candidate of Same Racial or Ethnic Background Best Understands Issues Important to Respondent	42.6	14.7	51.1	41.1	37.9	31.3
N	938	2,219	1,143	297	58	4,655

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

15. New York State Issues New York City Voters, 2008

	Latinos	Whites	Blacks	Asians	Others	Total
New York State Legislature						
Approve of the way government business is conducted in Albany	17.2	21.8	17.6	26.9	18.8	20.1
N	1,008	2,317	1,257	331	32	4,945
Governor Paterson						
Job Approval Rating	37.0	49.3	59.9	37.1	33.3	48.5
N	938	2,215	1,161	294	57	4,665
Issue is Among Three Most Important Issues NYS Legislature Should Be Working On						
Jobs/Economy	67.7	63.9	73.2	65.2	61.0	67.0
Education	67.9	59.3	71.6	59.4	72.4	64.3
Health Care	46.3	47.1	49.3	51.0	47.5	47.7
Taxes	31.3	31.9	28.6	34.0	27.6	31.1
Housing	32.9	16.3	36.9	16.2	32.8	24.9
Energy/Environment	15.0	26.0	13.4	18.1	23.7	20.1
Transit	10.6	15.8	6.9	13.6	16.9	12.4
Infrastructure	5.6	15.3	6.7	7.3	6.8	10.6
Immigration	20.9	11.4	6.9	10.9	20.3	12.3
N	962	2,239	1,180	303	59	4,743

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

16. Attitudes Toward Levels of Legal Immigration to the U.S. New York City Voters, 2008

	Latinos	Whites	Blacks	Asians	Others	Total
Number of Immigrants Permitted to Come to the U.S. to Live Should Be:						
Increased a lot	20.6	15.8	13.2	19.1	12.5	16.3
Increased a little	13.9	16.7	13.8	18.7	12.5	15.5
Decreased a lot	10.8	18.3	14.1	6.0	12.5	14.9
Decreased a little	13.0	13.0	15.6	10.4	7.1	13.4
Same as now	21.2	20.4	21.0	28.1	26.8	21.3
Don't Know	20.6	15.7	22.3	17.7	28.6	18.6
N	957	2,209	1,163	299	56	4,684

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

17. New York City Issues New York City Voters, 2008

	Latinos	Whites	Blacks	Asians	Others	Total
Most Important Issue NYC Officials Should Be Working On						
Jobs/Economy	46.4	43.5	48.2	51.8	31.0	45.5
Education	25.3	25.7	22.3	17.4	31.0	24.4
Health Care	8.4	10.6	8.1	14.7	13.8	9.9
Housing	10.4	7.4	14.3	6.3	17.2	9.5
Taxes	6.0	8.9	4.3	8.5	6.9	7.3
N	617	1,883	819	224	29	3,572
Race Relations Over the Last Four Years in New York						
Gotten Better	25.9	37.6	22.5	30.4	20.4	30.8
Gotten Worse	22.3	9.7	23.6	14.9	16.7	16.1
Stayed the Same	51.9	52.7	53.9	54.7	63.0	53.1
N	943	2,176	1,140	296	54	4,609
On Extending NYC Term Limits from 8 to 12 Years						
Favor	23.7	34.0	22.9	28.7	22.2	28.7
Oppose	57.6	52.3	60.5	52.7	61.1	55.5
Don't Know	18.7	13.7	16.7	18.6	16.7	15.8
N	945	2,223	1,146	296	54	4,664
What Mayor and City Council Should Do to Address City's Fiscal Crisis						
Cut Services	19.4	22.8	17.9	25.4	24.0	21.1
Raise Taxes	14.0	22.6	18.0	11.5	16.0	19.0
Both	19.0	27.0	22.0	27.5	14.0	24.1
Don't Know	47.6	27.6	42.0	35.5	46.0	35.9
N	916	2,174	1,121	287	50	4,548

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

18. Family's Financial Situation Compared to Four Years Ago New York City Voters, 2008

	Latinos	Whites	Blacks	Asians	Others	Total
Better Today	19.9	27.0	21.9	24.9	14.3	24.0
Worse Today	50.2	40.2	47.6	40.7	46.4	44.2
About the Same	29.9	32.8	30.5	34.3	39.3	31.8
N	962	2,232	1,176	297	56	4,723

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

19. Demographic Characteristics New York City Latino Voters, 2008

	Puerto Ricans	Dominicans	Other Native-born Latinos	Other Foreign-born Latinos	Other Latinos	Total Latinos
Education						
Less Than High School	10.6	6.9	3.5	10.9	8.5	8.5
High School Graduate	19.0	18.8	19.1	28.0	23.3	21.5
Some College	30.0	23.7	32.2	19.8	26.5	25.5
College Graduate	29.7	38.3	26.1	30.4	31.7	32.6
Postgraduate	10.6	12.3	19.1	10.9	10.1	12.0
N	263	389	115	257	189	1,213
Annual Family Income						
Less Than \$15,000	20.6	27.0	11.0	19.9	12.5	20.2
\$15,000 -- \$29,999	20.2	22.6	8.3	23.5	19.0	20.2
\$30,000 -- \$49,999	14.8	18.7	23.9	20.8	23.2	19.5
\$50,000 -- \$74,999	16.9	16.3	20.2	17.7	19.0	17.5
\$75,000 -- \$99,999	11.1	6.2	13.8	9.3	10.7	9.4
\$100,000 - \$149,999	10.3	4.7	10.1	5.3	9.5	7.4
\$150,000 - \$199,999	3.3	2.7	7.3	2.7	3.6	3.4
\$200,000 or more	2.9	1.8	5.5	.9	2.4	2.3
N	243	337	109	226	168	1,083

19 (Cont.). Demographic Characteristics New York City Latino Voters, 2008

	Puerto Ricans	Dominicans	Other Native-born Latinos	Other Foreign-born Latinos	Other Latinos	Total Latinos
Family Composition						
Married	39.0	38.6	31.1	60.9	38.9	42.7
N	264	386	119	253	190	1,212
Child Under 18 Years	41.4	35.6	45.7	46.5	47.8	42.0
N	239	340	105	226	161	1,071
Gender						
Male	41.3	37.7	48.7	40.9	38.0	40.6
Female	58.7	62.3	51.3	59.1	62.0	59.4
N	254	345	115	236	179	1,128
Age						
18 to 24 Years	10.3	23.8	30.1	4.9	22.3	17.1
25 to 39 Years	31.2	31.4	61.1	29.9	41.0	35.2
40 to 49 Years	23.3	16.0	7.1	21.3	16.5	18.0
50 to 65 Years	27.7	18.2	1.8	29.1	16.5	20.8
Over 65 Years	7.5	10.6	0	14.8	3.6	8.9
N	253	369	113	244	139	1,118

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

20. Primary Language Spoken at Home New York City Latino Voters, 2008

	Puerto Ricans	Dominicans	Other Native-born Latinos	Other Foreign-born Latinos	Other Latinos	Total Latinos
English	75.2	52.3	78.0	33.5	65.2	57.8
Spanish	23.9	47.4	20.2	65.6	34.8	41.5
Chinese	.5	.3	.9	0	0	.3
Korean	0	0	0	.9	0	.2
Russian	.5	0	.9	0	0	.2
N	222	329	109	221	155	1,036

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

21a. Partisan Vote Choice and Party Registration New York City Latino Voters, 2008

	Puerto Ricans	Dominicans	Other Native-born Latinos	Other Foreign-born Latinos	Other Latinos	Total Latinos
President						
Barack Obama (D)	87.3	84.9	92.1	83.9	86.3	86.1
John McCain (R)	11.2	12.5	5.3	15.3	12.6	12.1
N	259	391	114	249	182	1,195
New York State Senate						
Democratic Candidate	83.0	80.3	79.8	83.3	81.4	81.6
Republican Candidate	8.9	12.7	11.0	12.3	12.0	11.5
N	247	355	109	227	167	1,105
Party Registration						
Democratic Party	75.8	81.6	73.0	80.2	76.6	78.5
Republican Party	7.2	8.2	9.6	8.3	13.8	9.0
Other Party	5.7	2.9	5.2	2.4	2.2	3.6
No Party Registration	11.3	7.4	12.2	6.4	6.4	8.9
N	265	392	115	253	188	1,213

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

21b. Self-Identified Political “Ideology” New York City Latino Voters, 2008

	Puerto Ricans	Dominicans	Other Native-born Latinos	Other Foreign-born Latinos	Other Latinos	Total Latinos
Ideology						
Liberal	34.3	42.2	50.4	36.2	35.5	39.1
Moderate	44.8	40.9	37.4	42.0	47.1	42.4
Conservative	20.8	16.8	12.2	21.8	17.4	18.4
N	259	374	115	243	138	1,129

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

22. Issues and Voting New York City Latino Voters, 2008

	Puerto Ricans	Dominicans	Other Native-born Latinos	Other Foreign-born Latinos	Other Latinos	Total Latinos
Single Most Important Issue in Deciding Vote for President						
Jobs/Economy	32.2	27.1	41.8	30.1	30.4	31.0
Financial Crisis						
War in Iraq	15.8	16.8	17.2	13.1	10.4	15.0
Health Care	4.5	4.6	4.0	3.3	8.9	4.9
Education	11.4	11.4	12.1	11.8	14.1	12.0
Taxes	2.0	3.9	0	0	4.4	2.4
Terrorism	1.5	6.1	0	1.3	1.5	2.8
Energy/Environment	1.0	1.1	5.1	.7	.7	1.4
Race	2.0	2.5	0	.7	.7	1.5
Immigration	20.8	16.4	15.2	23.5	23.7	19.7
Housing	2.5	1.8	1.0	.7	.7	1.5
Other	6.4	5.4	3.0	6.5	3.0	5.2
N	202	280	99	153	135	869
Candidate of Same Racial or Ethnic Background Best Understands Issues Important to Respondent						
	37.4	48.4	40.5	44.8	37.8	42.8
N	246	347	111	223	164	1,091

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

23. New York State Issues New York City Latino Voters, 2008

	Puerto Ricans	Dominicans	Other Native-born Latinos	Other Foreign-born Latinos	Other Latinos	Total Latinos
New York State Legislature						
Approve of the way government business is conducted in Albany	13.5	21.1	18.4	15.4	14.2	16.9
N	259	380	114	240	183	1,176
Governor Paterson						
Job Approval Rating	39.2	30.1	47.7	39.9	38.6	37.2
N	240	349	109	228	166	1,092
Issue is Among Three Most Important Issues NYS Legislature Should Be Working On						
Jobs/Economy	73.7	63.9	69.4	66.2	69.4	67.9
Education	65.7	67.2	66.1	69.3	71.2	67.8
Health Care	45.1	44.6	46.4	49.6	45.0	46.0
Taxes	34.4	28.9	40.2	25.9	31.8	31.0
Housing	36.8	38.6	24.3	26.8	30.2	33.1
Energy/Environment	15.0	13.3	20.7	14.3	13.5	14.7
Transit	14.6	10.1	7.2	7.4	13.5	10.7
Infrastructure	6.9	6.4	4.5	4.8	5.3	5.8
Immigration	12.1	24.2	8.9	32.0	20.1	21.0
N	248	360	111	231	170	1,120

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

24. New York City Issues New York City Latino Voters, 2008

	Puerto Ricans	Dominicans	Other Native-born Latinos	Other Foreign-born Latinos	Other Latinos	Total Latinos
Most Important Issue NYC Officials Should Be Working On						
Jobs/Economy	48.8	42.1	46.7	50.8	45.0	46.3
Education	22.0	26.9	26.7	22.0	30.3	25.3
Health Care	7.3	6.5	11.1	12.1	5.5	8.2
Housing	8.5	13.9	5.6	6.1	14.7	10.3
Taxes	5.5	6.5	7.8	7.6	3.7	6.2
N	164	216	90	132	109	711
Race Relations Over the Last Four Years in New York						
Gotten Better	24.2	25.8	32.7	22.9	30.3	26.2
Gotten Worse	24.6	26.6	14.5	20.3	18.2	22.4
Stayed the Same	51.2	47.6	52.7	56.8	51.5	51.4
N	248	349	110	227	165	1,099
On Extending NYC Term Limits from 8 to 12 Years						
Favor	21.5	27.4	26.4	20.0	24.2	24.0
Oppose	62.2	53.1	58.2	57.4	58.8	57.4
Don't Know	16.3	19.4	15.5	22.6	17.0	18.6
N	246	350	110	230	165	1,101
What Mayor and City Council Should Do to Address City's Fiscal Crisis						
Cut Services	20.3	19.2	20.2	19.1	21.6	19.9
Raise Taxes	10.4	15.3	11.9	15.8	16.6	14.21
Both	19.9	17.1	30.3	14.4	20.4	19.0
Don't Know	49.4	48.4	37.6	50.7	41.4	46.9
N	241	339	109	215	162	1,066

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

25. Other Mobilization Measures New York City Latino Voters, 2008

	Puerto Ricans	Dominicans	Other Native-born Latinos	Other Foreign-born Latinos	Other Latinos	Total Latinos
Have Volunteered Time or Contributed Money to Organization in Community	52.3	52.4	59.0	44.5	49.3	51.0
N	264	380	117	247	148	1,156
Have Volunteered Time or Contributed Money to Political Party	22.0	20.1	28.8	11.9	18.8	19.5
N	268	389	118	253	144	1,172
Attended Meeting on Voting in Last Year	10.2	18.0	16.9	8.3	11.7	13.2
N	264	389	118	252	188	1,211
First-time Voter	15.8	31.4	27.7	30.3	30.9	27.4
N	265	392	119	254	191	1,221

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

26a. Proportion of Voters Reporting Organizational Memberships New York City Latino Voters, 2008

	Puerto Ricans	Dominicans	Other Native-born Latinos	Other Foreign-born Latinos	Other Latinos	Total Latinos
Type of organization:						
Political Club	2.5	4.1	5.8	1.3	1.8	3.0
Tenant Association	5.8	6.3	1.0	2.2	2.4	4.2
PTA	7.9	5.1	7.8	3.1	3.0	5.2
Religious Institution	23.3	20.9	12.7	20.5	23.2	21.0
Community Organization	8.3	8.6	12.6	7.1	6.0	8.2
Business Association	5.0	5.1	4.9	2.2	1.8	3.9
N	240	315	102	224	168	1,049
Labor Union (Member or member in household)	35.7	32.8	37.8	37.1	34.6	35.1
N	266	387	119	248	191	1,211

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

**26b. Proportion of Voters Reporting Voter Contacts In the Month Before the 2008 Election
New York City Latino Voters, 2008**

	Puerto Ricans	Dominicans	Other Native-born Latinos	Other Foreign-born Latinos	Other Latinos	Total Latinos
Contacted by:						
Family, Friend, Neighbor	20.6	25.6	22.9	16.3	17.3	21.0
Political Campaign	9.4	11.9	9.3	7.3	8.4	9.6
Political Party	8.2	10.1	9.3	4.1	10.9	8.5
Union	13.1	9.0	10.2	13.0	12.5	11.4
Immigrant Organization	2.2	1.6	1.7	2.8	.5	1.8
Automated Telephone Call	7.9	6.2	4.2	7.3	5.7	6.5
N	267	387	118	246	192	1,210

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008.

Appendix 1

Methodology

The New Americans Exit Poll (NAEP) is a stratified random sample of voters exiting New York City polling places. In 2008, we surveyed 5,122 voters. The sampling strategy was originally developed in consultation with Prof. John Mollenkopf and the Center for Urban Research at the City University of New York. It involves linking census boundaries with the city's electoral geography and importing demographic data into election district boundaries; grouping the city's 6,291 election districts into 1,360 polling sites, and stratifying them by the proportion foreign-born. The demographic data used for sampling for the first five NAEP surveys (2000, 2002, 2004, 2005, and 2006) was drawn from the 1990 U.S. Census and adjusted with data from the 2000 U.S. Census. In 2008 we replaced the sampling frame with a new sample using only 2000 census data. Next, we randomly sampled polling sites within three strata. The lowest stratum is set at 25 percent foreign-born or less, the election district average for the percentage foreign-born in the population. Foreign-born voters, therefore, are modestly over-sampled in the NAEP. We do this in order to build up large enough representative samples of the city's major immigrant groups appropriate for finer statistical analysis.

Across the first five NAEP surveys, approximately 38 percent of the respondents were immigrant voters. The new 2008 NAEP sample is weighted less towards immigrant neighborhoods than the earlier surveys, reducing the proportion of foreign-born voters to 29 percent, roughly their equivalent representation among the adult citizen population. Compared to estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Surveys and the 2001 Edison Survey Research New York City exit poll, which identified immigrants but did not over-sample immigrant neighborhoods, we estimate that the foreign-born are over-represented in the NAEP by five to ten percentage points (depending on the survey year). In reporting the citywide results data are weighted to 1) actual turnout by polling place; 2) citywide vote percentages for Obama and McCain; and 3) citywide estimates of the racial and gender breakdown of the New York City electorate (as measured by the 2008 November CPS). A technical appendix and copies of all survey instruments are available upon request.

Appendix 2

How “Latinos” are measured in the New Americans Exit Poll

Who is a “Latino?”

What does it mean to be a “Latino/a?” It is beyond the scope of this study to engage the long-standing debates over racial and ethnic classifications in the U.S. and their associated methodological problems for the social sciences. We have a more modest task: to identify Latino voters participating in our exit poll. The first step began with survey design and deciding how to ask voters to identify themselves. Following good survey research practice in relying on validated measures, our questionnaire followed the wording of a question regarding race/ethnic identity traditionally used in national exit polls. Unlike the standard approach used by U.S. government agencies, the national exit polls fold together concepts of race and ethnicity. The federal government does not consider “Hispanic” (used interchangeably here with “Latino”) to be a racial classification. Thus, in defining racial categories “Hispanic” is omitted. Usually, U.S. Census and other government survey respondents are asked their race in one question (i.e., “white,” “black,” “Asian American or Pacific Islander,” “Native American,” or “other”); all respondents are then asked separately if they identify as “Hispanic.” Hispanics, then, can be of any race.²⁶

Thus, while the Census Bureau relies on self-reporting and self-identification, and separate concepts of race and language as a marker of ethnic difference, exit polls typically utilize a simpler method, asking, “Are you: white, black, Latino, Asian, [or] Other.” This approach to classification elides traditional race and ethnic categories; Latinos are either a racial or ethnic group, but they are not, as the Census Bureau would have it, a multi-racial ethnic group. We included the traditional exit poll version of the question, but because the New Americans Exit Poll aims to fill gaps in our knowledge about the voting patterns of naturalized citizens, we also collect data on respondents’ place of birth, parents place of birth, and respondents’ ancestry. The additional data allow us to go beyond the one-dimensional classifications obtained in the national exit polls and to classify New York Latinos as an ethnic and cultural group with roots in Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and Latin America. Thus, Latinos are those respondents who:

- 1) identify as “Latino” on the question that asks, “Are you: white, black, Latino, Asian, [or] Other;” and/or,
- 2) were born in Puerto Rico (for a copy of the exit poll questionnaire, see the appendix, specifically, see question “S”); and/or,
- 3) say that one or both of their parents were born in Puerto Rico (see question “T”); and/or,
- 4) were born in the Dominican Republic (see question “S”), or claim “Dominican” ancestry (see question “U”); and/or,
- 5) claim “Latin American” ancestry (see question “U”) and answered the place of birth question (question “S”); this group is divided between those born in the U.S. and those born in Central or South America (the “Other Native-born Latinos,” and “Other Foreign-born Latinos” categories thus exclude Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, defined by place of birth, parents’ place of birth, and ancestry, as explained above); and/or
- 6) fall into a residual category of “Other” Latinos; the latter group is comprised of people who, based on any one of the several criteria used to construct the separate Latino groups, can be identified as Latino, but who may not have answered all of the questions about their place of birth, parents’ place of birth, or ancestry that allow us to further break down the Latino groups.

Table A2. "Race" and Latino Identity 2008 Presidential Election New York City

	Latino Identity
White	7.7
Black	6.4
Latino	80.3
Asian	1.1
Other or None	4.2
N	1,248

Source: New Americans Exit Poll, 2008

Endnotes

¹ Lorraine C. Minnite, “First-Time Voters in the 2008 Election,” Project Vote (Washington, D.C., April 2011), available online at <http://www.projectvote.org/images/publications/Reports%20on%20the%20Electorate/FINAL%20First-Time-Voters-in-2008-Election.pdf>.

² The U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey November Supplement actually underestimates the number of ballots cast by about 70 thousand and shows almost no change in the citizen voting age population between 2004 and 2008. By these estimates, there was no change in the turnout rate of about 53 percent in both elections. For decades, political scientists have measured the turnout rate using the voting age population as the denominator in the turnout ratio. McDonald and Popkin persuasively argue that millions of people included in the voting-age population are actually ineligible to vote under most state laws, and therefore, should be excluded from the turnout ratio denominator. They also advocate for including overseas citizens in the calculations (see Michael P. McDonald and Samuel L. Popkin, “The Myth of the Vanishing Voter,” *American Political Science Review* 95:4 (December 2001), 963-974).

³ Here, reported turnout rates for the city, state and nation are consistently calculated by using the official vote counts as the numerator, and estimates of the voter eligible (adult citizen) population from the U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey: November 2008 Voting and Registration File; see also, Thom File and Sarah Crissey, “Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2008” Current Population Reports P20-562 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010).

⁴ Current Population Survey, November 2000: Voting and Registration Supplement [machine-readable data file], Conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (Washington: U.S. Census Bureau [producer and distributor], 2001); Current Population Survey, November 2002: Voting and Registration Supplement [machine-readable data file], Conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (Washington: U.S. Census Bureau [producer and distributor], 2003). Current Population Survey, November 2004: Voting and Registration Supplement [machine-readable data file], Conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (Washington: U.S. Census Bureau [producer and distributor], 2005); Current Population Survey, November 2006: Voting and Registration Supplement [machine-readable data file], Conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (Washington: U.S. Census Bureau [producer and distributor], 2007). Current Population Survey, November 2008: Voting and Registration Supplement [machine-readable data file], Conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (Washington: U.S. Census Bureau [producer and distributor], 2009). The universe consists of all persons in the civilian non-institutional population of the United States living in households. The probability samples selected to represent the universes across the five election years consist of approximately 48,000 to 54,000 households. The voting and registration questions were asked of all persons who were both U.S. citizens and 18 years or older, as applicable. All data are weighted to independent estimates for 1) states; 2) origin, sex and age; and 3) age, race, and sex. For details on the treatment of sampling and non-sampling error in the CPS voter files, see the “Source and Accuracy Statement for the November...CPS Microdata File on Voting and Registration” in the Technical Documentation for all data files.

⁵ See Lorraine C. Minnite, “Outside the Circle: The Impact of Post-9/11 Responses on the Immigrant Communities of New York City,” in John H. Mollenkopf, ed. *Contentious City: The Politics of Recovery in New York City* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2005).

⁶ For different perspectives on the strategic uses of conflict, cooperation and coalition in the construction and transformation of Latino politics in New York City see, Ana Aparicio, *Dominican-Americans and the Politics of Empowerment* (University of Florida Press, 2009); Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof, *A Tale of Two Cities: Santo Domingo and New York after 1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Gabriel Haslip-Viera, Angelo Falcón, Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, and Antonia Pantoja, eds., *Boricuas in Gotham: Puerto Ricans in the Making of Modern New York City* (New York: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2004; and Howard Jordan, “Dominicans in New York: Getting a Slice of the Apple,” *NACLA Report on the Americas* 30 (1997), X-X.

⁷ See Appendix 1 for a summary of the sampling methodology used in the NAEP, and Appendix 2 for an explanation of how Latinos are measured in the survey.

⁸ See John Hull Mollenkopf, *A Phoenix in the Ashes: The Rise and Fall of the Koch Coalition in New York City Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) for a discussion of changing racial patterns in New York City party registration.

⁹ For an analysis of the shifting relationship between partisanship and ideology, see Matthew Lendusky, *The Partisan Sort: How Liberals became Democrats and Conservatives Became Republicans* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

¹⁰ This finding says as much about the limits of the short, self-administered questionnaire as it does contradictions in public opinion. When asked if they approved or disapproved of the federal government's bailout of the nation's financial institutions, surely an example of massive government intervention into the economy and an effort to solve a major problem affecting the nation and world, only about a third of all voters said they approved of the action, with only modest differences by race (see table 9).

¹¹ See Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen, Mobilization, Participation and Democracy in America, Longman Classics in Political Science (New York: Longman, 2002); Donald P. Green and Alan S. Gerber, Get Out the Vote! How to Increase Voter Turnout, 2nd Ed. (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008).

¹² For a classic statement of this thesis, see Robert Putnam, Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001).

¹³ See Minnite, "First-time Voters in the 2008 Election," 2011.

¹⁴ After the election this sentiment was ignored by the mayor and city council which self-servingly passed an ordinance changing the law to give themselves and Mayor Bloomberg a shot at a third four-year term (which he took and won in 2009).

¹⁵ Ester R. Fuchs, Mayors and Money: Fiscal Policy in New York and Chicago. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

¹⁶ We divided all Latinos who did not identify as Puerto Rican or Dominican by nativity. Mexican Americans are a much smaller fraction of the New York City electorate than they are in the city's larger population, and do not yet show up as voters in any significant way. This no doubt has to do with their more recent arrival in New York City and their higher rates of undocumented status than other Latino groups. Similarly, beyond Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, no other Latino national group votes in numbers large enough in New York to produce statistically reliable samples for separate analyses. We hypothesized that nativity and immigrant status might be meaningful as a way to sort Latinos whose ethnicity could not be reliably measured, and classified non-Puerto Rican and non-Dominican Latinos as either native or foreign-born. The residual category of "Other Latinos" includes those who identify as Latino, but did not provide enough information about their place of birth or ancestry to permit classification.

¹⁷ These estimates are drawn from the 2005-2009 American Community Survey (see: http://www.factfinder.census.gov/servlet/CTTable?_bm=y&-context=ct&-ds_name=ACS_2009_5YR_G00_&-mt_name=ACS_2009_5YR_G2000_B03001&-tree_id=5309&-geo_id=32100US363562051000&-search_results=01000US&-dataitem=ACS_2009_5YR_G2000_B03001.B03001_1_EST%7CACS_2009_5YR_G2000_B03001.B03001_2_EST%7CACS_2009_5YR_G2000_B03001.B03001_3_EST%7CACS_2009_5YR_G2000_B03001.B03001_4_EST%7CACS_2009_5YR_G2000_B03001.B03001_5_EST%7CACS_2009_5YR_G2000_B03001.B03001_6_EST%7CACS_2009_5YR_G2000_B03001.B03001_7_EST%7CACS_2009_5YR_G2000_B03001.B03001_8_EST%7CACS_2009_5YR_G2000_B03001.B03001_16_EST%7CACS_2009_5YR_G2000_B03001.B03001_27_EST&-format=&-lang=en).

¹⁸ For an extended discussion of this question, see Lorraine C. Minnite, "Lost in Translation? A Critical Reappraisal of the Concept of Immigrant Political Incorporation," in Jennifer Hochschild and John H. Mollenkopf, eds., Bringing Outsiders In: Transatlantic Perspectives on Immigrant Political Incorporation (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2009).

¹⁹ Puerto Rican born Oscar Garcia Rivera, Sr. was elected to the New York State Assembly in 1937, and became the first Puerto Rican elected to public office in the continental United States (see Virginia E. Sánchez Korrol, From Colonia to Community: The History of Puerto Ricans in New York City, Updated Ed. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 190-191).

²⁰ All estimates are derived from U.S. Census Bureau survey data. As a representation of eligible voters, official voter registration numbers are inaccurate and often vary widely with estimates of the registered population made from government survey data. Federal law regulates the purging of state voter registration records and requires states and localities to leave names on lists until ineligibility is confirmed by the voter or by other government agencies. Population mobility and lags in data sharing between government agencies are responsible for a certain amount of "deadwood" on the voter rolls, or names of voters who are no longer eligible to vote in a jurisdiction. To address the problem of deadwood, the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 permits states to monitor voter eligibility by moving voters whom they suspect may no longer be eligible to vote to an "inactive" list before these voters may be legally purged from the rolls. "Active" registered voters, therefore, are those whose registration remains current, and where jurisdictions

report these numbers, they are the best measure of registered voters. “Total” registered voters sums the active and inactive voters. We use this number as reported by the New York State Board of Elections because the Board did not report separate tallies for active and inactive registrants in New York City until 2008. In 2008, “inactive” voters were 10.7 percent of total registered voters in New York City.

²¹ Percentage point difference, not percentage change.

²² *Idem.*

²³ *Idem.*

²⁴ See note 20.

²⁵ Reported percentages may underestimate registration rates among racial/ethnic groups. In every biennial voter supplement of the Current Population Survey, large numbers of respondents fail to report their registration and/or voter status. Nationally, in the 2008 CPS, 14.6 percent of the eligible (citizens of voting age) electorate failed to report. The presumption is that respondents who do not know, refuse or do not respond to questions about whether they voted and/or are registered to vote did not vote and/or are not registered. The percentages reported here represent estimates of the eligible population who positively reported voting; respondents who said they do not know or failed to report their registration and/or voter status are included in the denominator.

²⁶ Jeffrey Passel and Paul Taylor, “Who’s Hispanic?” Pew Hispanic Center, May 28, 2009; available at <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/111.pdf>.

NYLARNet

The New York Latino Research and Resources Network (NYLARNet) was created to bring together the combined expertise of U.S. Latino Studies scholars and other professionals from five research institutions within New York State to conduct non-partisan, policy relevant research in four target areas: Health, Education, Immigration and Political Participation. This network is constituted by recognized scholars and other professionals who are engaged in critical thinking, dialogue, and the dissemination of information on U.S. Latino issues. NYLARNet addresses a broad spectrum of concerns related to the four target areas mentioned above, and provides information services to legislators, public agencies, community organizations, and the media on U.S. Latino affairs. NYLARNet also pays special attention to the realities and needs of the largely neglected Latino populations throughout New York State and outside of New York City.

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