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RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences,
Volume 2, Number 3, June 2016, pp. 1-19 (Article)

Published by Russell Sage Foundation



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In the Public but Not the Electorate: The “Civic Status Gap” in the United States



JAMES A. McCANN AND MICHAEL JONES-CORREA

“You’re going to have a deportation force, and you’re going to do it humanely.”

—Donald Trump, candidate for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination, discussing the deportation of the eleven million undocumented immigrants currently residing in the United States (BBC 2015).

The 2016 presidential campaign is well under way, and debates concerning immigration have taken on ominous tones. Candidates from both major parties have talked about enforcement along the border, but the view of immigrants among Republicans vying for their party’s nomination is darker. Candidates promise to end “illegal” immigration, to track immigrants like FedEx packages (Spodak and Scott 2015), to dramatically increase the deportations of those in the United States without papers, and to reverse the executive order signed by President Obama deferring enforcement for those who arrived in the United States as children with their undocumented parents (Peoples and Caldwell 2015). The candidate leading the polls through the fall of 2016 called deporting the eleven million undocumented immi-

grants living in the United States “cheap, ‘doable’ and humane” (BBC 2015).

This vitriol is both a reflection of and a reaction to a remarkable feature of life in the United States today: the growing ethnic diversity across the nation, a phenomenon driven largely by the settlement of migrants from Latin America and Asia (see figure 1). According to the most current census figures, nearly 16 percent of the adult population in the United States is foreign born. Among these immigrants, more than half, or approximately one of every twelve adults living in the country at this moment, are not American citizens.¹

These noncitizens are in fact a heterogeneous mix—legal permanent residents, refugees, asylum seekers, people who entered the country without administrative authorization, and people who entered with a visa but overstayed (see figure 2).

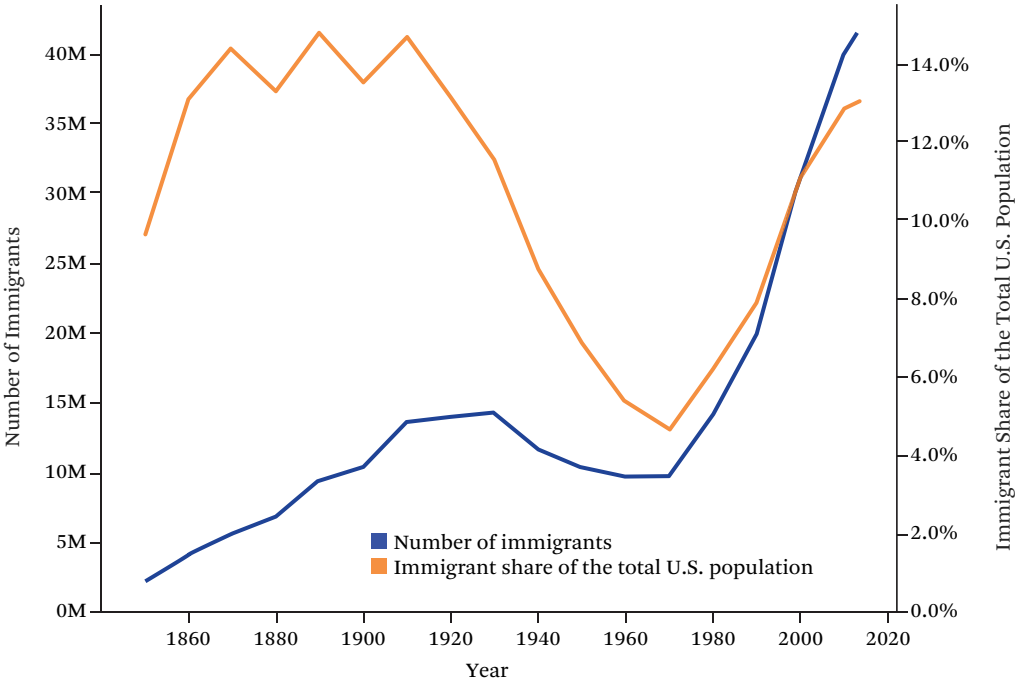
The image of immigrants portrayed in the 2016 presidential primary debates is of people who are not part of the United States, even though they reside in the United States. They are freeloaders or lawbreakers, sitting on the sidelines of civic life, making few contributions. But this is far from the case. The major-

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We thank Sheldon Danziger, Aixa Cintrón-Vélez, Geri Mannion, Elizabeth Cohen, Suzanne Nichols, Ann Marie Clark, and the anonymous reviewers for much helpful assistance and feedback. Direct correspondence to: James A. McCann at mccannj@purdue.edu, Department of Political Science, Beering Hall, Purdue University, 100 N. University Street, West Lafayette, IN 47907; and Michael Jones-Correa at mj64@cornell.edu, Cornell University, White Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853.

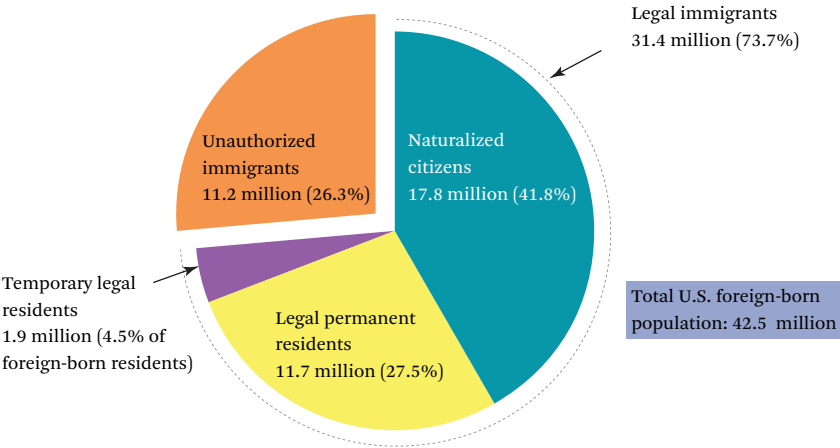
1. By recent historic standards, this percentage is rather high. In 1970, the number of foreign-born noncitizens over eighteen stood at only 2 percent of the total adult population (that is, one out of every fifty people).

Figure 1. Number of Immigrants and Their Share of the Total U.S. Population



Source: Authors' compilation based on Gibson and Lennon 1999; Migration Policy Institute 2015.

Figure 2. U.S. Foreign-Born Population 2012



Source: Brown and Stepler 2015.

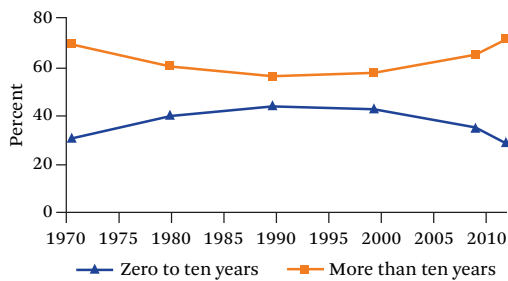
Note: Pew Research Center estimates for 2012 based on augmented American Community Survey data from Integrated Public Use Microdata Sample (IPUMS).

ity of immigrants, even those here without papers, have lived in the United States more than a decade (see figure 3). They are residents, not tourists or people just passing through the country. They are customers and neighbors

and coworkers. In short, they are part of how we think of the public, even if not necessarily part of the electorate.

In the nineteenth century, immigrants, even without being citizens, could be part of

Figure 3. Immigrants Who Have Lived in the United States More than Ten Years



Source: Brown and Stepler 2015.

Note: Pew Research Center tabulations of 1970–2000 decennial censuses and 2010 and 2013 American Community Surveys (IPUMS).

the public and the electorate: at least twenty-two states allowed noncitizen residents to register and vote. However, since the 1920s, only American citizens have had the right to vote in federal and state elections. In a few scattered municipalities around the country, noncitizens can still vote in local contests for school board and other offices.² These exceptions, however, prove a general rule: to be a citizen is to be a voter, or at least a potential voter within

the electorate. On occasion, lawmakers or news commentators charge that large numbers of noncitizens are finding ways to vote illegally. Little to no evidence, however, supports such a claim.³ Noncitizens in the United States may be long-term residents but not voters.

In the United States and other democracies, the tendency to equate political representation with voting by citizens is widespread. In an election, voters are charged with holding leaders and parties accountable for past actions in government and steering the future course of policymaking. Representation in this mold consists of a time-delimited delegation of authority from the mass public to lawmakers. This is an inherently noisy process. Some citizens may choose not to vote, and those who turn out may choose candidates based on considerations that have little to do with the past performance of government officials or the future course of public policies. Nonetheless, evidence is ample that government officials study the preferences of voters closely, perhaps to a fault. Even in an era of safe congressional seats and diminishing electoral competition in many parts of the country, officeholders take campaigning and elections quite seriously.⁴

This fact of political life raises a larger the-

2. In Chicago, noncitizens are eligible to vote in school board elections, and in Maryland six cities grant voting rights to noncitizens under certain conditions. The political scientist Ronald Hayduk notes that several municipalities are currently considering extending the franchise to allow noncitizens to vote in local races (2015). But most recently, on March 3, 2015, a ballot measure to this effect failed in Burlington, Vermont, by a margin of 58 to 42 percent.

3. Audits of voting registration records in a number of states and local jurisdictions show the incidence of noncitizen registration and subsequent turnout to be low—vanishingly low. In a probe of alleged illegal voting during the 2004 gubernatorial election in the state of Washington, for example, two instances of noncitizen voters, both university students, were discovered; nearly three million voters in total took part in this election. More recently, Ohio Secretary of State John Husted reported in March of 2015 that after an extensive investigation of voting records, forty-four noncitizens may have voted illegally in that state since the 2000 elections. Husted, who had earlier anticipated that the number of confirmed noncitizen voters would run into the thousands, concluded after this audit that noncitizen voting is not a “systemic or widespread problem.” In Colorado, an analysis of voting fraud spanning many years resulted in early 2015 in the conviction of one noncitizen voter, a Polish national. As part of a plea agreement, the defendant was ordered to complete forty-eight hours of community service and was put on supervised probation for two years (for more detail on these audits and outcomes, see Henderson 2012; Lerner 2015; Johansson 2015; and Thompson 2015; see also Marouf 2012, 66–73).

4. After spending significant amounts of time with congressional representatives and following them in their travels back to the home constituencies, Richard Fenno notes that “members of Congress do have an idea of who votes for them and who does not. . . . They have a pretty good idea. . . . They worry a lot. They exhibit great caution in making perceptual judgments. . . . They rarely allow themselves the luxury of feeling ‘safe’ electorally. They do not take their reelection constituency for granted” (see Fenno 1978, 19–20). This is the central mes-

oretical question: in a democratic system, should the preferences and needs of the substantial noncitizen resident population be taken into account in some fashion within policymaking processes? In short, should noncitizens count? As a matter of public administration in the United States, noncitizens certainly “count.” As residents, they are far from invisible in the eyes of many state and federal entities, and states and localities take their needs into account—even as the benefits immigrants receive have been curtailed.⁵ They count, too, toward the apportionment for legislative districts, which historically has been based on the total population within a locality, irrespective of voting eligibility—though this norm came under review by the Supreme Court in 2015.⁶ Noncitizens are also recognized as taxpaying members of society. Immigrants without a social security number are required to file tax returns annually—even if they will never see any benefits. Furthermore, under federal Selective Service rules, nearly all foreign-born male noncitizens under twenty-six must register for the draft.⁷ Supporting the country financially and protecting it—these are the fundamental responsibilities of the members of a democracy.

In the United States, citizens and noncitizens alike share in these duties.

We consider whether noncitizen residents have a right to political representation, given that they have some degree of recognition as part of American society. Is it proper and just for government officials to respond exclusively to members of the electorate? Or are members of the public who cannot participate in elections nevertheless entitled to representation? Political theorists have approached these questions from a variety of perspectives.

Discussion of the empirical research literature in this area examines how foreign-born noncitizens in reality behave in politics. If by some accounts noncitizens deserve political representation, how much potential is there for immigrants without voting rights to send signals to government officials through the participatory activities available to them? Voting is one way for many to have a voice in politics, the most common way, to be sure, but hardly the only way. If the ballot box is closed to foreign-born noncitizens, are other avenues of engagement pursued, so that government leaders might conceivably take their views into account?⁸

sage of another classic work on congressional representation, *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (Mayhew 1974).

5. Congress passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) in 1996, significantly limiting the eligibility of both undocumented immigrants and legal permanent residents for welfare and other public benefit programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), now Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF).

6. On April 4, 2016, the Supreme Court ruled that states are justified, in light of well-established administrative practices and arguments endorsed by the framers at the time of the constitutional founding, to apportion legislative seats based on total population rather than an estimate of the number of registered or eligible voters (*Evenwel v. Abbott*, case no. 14-940). Under current law, each U.S. congressional district must include approximately seven hundred thousand residents. Sanford Levinson (2013) estimates that the number of undocumented foreign-born residents of California equates to three such seats using the rule of “one representative equals seven hundred thousand constituents”; in Texas, the number of undocumented immigrants is the equivalent of two seats. If the Court had ruled to restrict the apportionment count to the voting-eligible population or to the actual number of registered voters when district lines are drawn, major political consequences would surely have followed. The more rural areas of the United States, which tend to lean Republican, would likely benefit in this instance. The justices chose not to rule on whether a state could legally draw districts to equalize the voter-eligible population rather than the total population; they indicated only that creating districts based on the full count of residents irrespective of voting eligibility was constitutionally sound.

7. The only exceptions to this are seasonal agricultural workers on H-2A visas, diplomatic personnel and their families, international students, and tourists.

8. If exclusion from the ballot box impedes other kinds of political engagement—for example, group activities

Much more work is needed to discern how noncitizens find their way into political activity, and what impediments to democratic engagement are most severe. With this motivation, we conducted a special survey of the Latin American-born population during the 2012 campaign season. The evidence from this survey is the basis for the papers included in this issue of *RSF*.

SHOULD A LACK OF VOTING RIGHTS MEAN A LACK OF VOICE IN REPRESENTATION?

From the standpoint of democratic theory, the existence of a sizable population that is formally outside the boundaries of the electorate raises questions. First and foremost, is this civic status gap troubling? That is, does the gap make American politics less representative? A number of approaches to answering these questions are possible.

For a political system to be fully democratic, every adult living within its domain and subject to its laws should have a say in how those laws are created, assuming that they are not temporary residents or intellectually impaired in some way. This is the ethical principle of inclusion and representation held by political theorists such as Robert A. Dahl and Iris Marion Young (see in particular Dahl 1989, chapter 9). The expansiveness of this premise, which Dahl labeled a categorical principle, is striking. On these grounds, few could be rightfully excluded from democratic politics. Dahl couples his categorical principle of inclusion with an emphasis on equality of voice. In short, in a democracy, the signals directed toward government officials should reflect the rich diversity of groups and interests within the public, and all members should have comparable oppor-

tunities to influence policymakers. This is echoed in Young's work, which argues that "the normative legitimacy of a democratic decision depends on the degree to which those affected by it have been included in the decision making processes and have had the opportunity to influence the outcomes" (2000, 5–6).

The roots of this perspective extend to the classical liberal writings of John Locke and the constitutional framers of the United States. As Dahl notes, "the argument is grounded on the moral axiom that no person ought to be governed without his consent" or "required to obey laws that are not of his own making" (1989, 122). In James Madison's seminal defense of the U.S. Constitution in the *Federalist Papers* and other writings, the founder spoke of a venerable "Republican Principle" under which just governments are obligated to take the full expanse of public opinion into account when devising policies (Sheehan 2004, 1992). "Public opinion sets bounds to every government, and is the real sovereign in every free one," argued Madison in a 1791 piece for the *National Gazette* (1962, 170).

Although this categorical principle of inclusion is straightforward in theory, its application in practice can be ambiguous. At what point does a person transition from a child, for instance, who lacks the standing to participate in the electorate, to an adult with full political rights? At the age of eighteen? At twenty-one? Citizens should clearly be included within the boundaries of the political system. But what about the varied group of residents in the United States—refugees, student-visa holders, legal permanent residents, guest workers, undocumented residents and their children, and others—who may not be citizens but are often

that are essentially expressive, such as attending protest rallies, or more conventional participation in election campaigns—it may still be possible for noncitizens to be represented in government. This would come about if officials or advocacy organizations step into the role of a "trustee" for this population (for an extensive discussion, see Pitkin 1967). In this latter vein, the duty of the representative to his or her constituents is said to consist of a devotion to their larger "interests" rather than simply their momentary opinions as expressed—or not expressed—through voting and other channels. The philosopher Edmund Burke is most closely associated with this perspective. Some have suggested that the surest way to represent noncitizens who lack voting rights is for leaders to adopt this "trustee" role (see, for example, Cohen 2014). If the available evidence indicates that foreign-born noncitizens express little to no voice in day-to-day politics, then some form of trusteeship would indeed be the most appropriate mode for representation.

also clearly not temporary either? These residents may live out their lives in the United States without full access to this country's system of political representation. And what exactly is the line between a temporary visitor and a permanent resident, anyway? When does a transient stop being a transient within a political system and become instead a resident?

Some theorists have argued that not even residence itself is a necessary prerequisite for political standing. Current practice in the United States affords citizens who may opt to reside abroad a right to political engagement equal to that of their co-nationals living within the country, even though they will inevitably experience the laws and politics of the United States in quite different ways. The political philosopher Robert Goodin goes further, arguing that neither citizenship nor physical residence is a necessary requirement, in an era of increasing globalization, for political standing. Invoking a principle of democratic inclusion in sympathy with Dahl's, Goodin posits that all individuals whose interests are affected by the policies of a government are rightfully entitled to have a say in how those decisions are made. This implies that even people living on the other side of the world who are not formally connected to the political system of that country should be included somehow in its democratic deliberations. However, although Goodin sees such an unorthodox stance as ethically defensible, he concedes that it is logistically unworkable (2007; see also Dahl 1970 and Rehfeld 2005). In any case, political community is not necessarily contiguous with geographic space.

Dahl recognized that fitting his one-size-fits-all categorical principle of democratic inclusion to the real world of politics would require compromises and judgment calls. To a certain extent, the criteria for incorporation would be worked out in practice, and boundaries for exclusion would be established. "Egalitarian inclusiveness," however, was his priority. If applied, his principle would surely encom-

pass the vast majority of foreign-born noncitizens living in the United States today. As estimated in the 2013 American Community Survey, noncitizens over eighteen have lived in the country for an average of fifteen years. Nearly 80 percent have spent five or more years in the United States. These are certainly not transients; these are individuals subject to government policies for a sustained period. As such, Dahl, Young, and Goodin would argue they should rightfully be considered participants in democratic society.

These theorists take the principle of inclusiveness as their starting point, whereas others start with the premise that questions of democratic inclusion have to be considered in particular historic contexts, where traditions and deep-seated cultural values shape beliefs about who belongs in the political community and who does not. This is a more particularistic, situational perspective, one that Dahl refers to as a contingent standard. This is a not-uncommon position. Michael Walzer, for instance, argues for the legitimate exclusion of nonmembers to enable the redistribution of public goods to members (1983). The boundaries of membership are drawn by geography. This, in fact, is how most liberal democracies function, offering full membership rights—citizenship—for those who are legal residents, and no rights at all for those not residing. Those who reside temporarily or illegally are entitled, at best, to partial membership.⁹

In a democracy, the conditions whereby some individuals or groups are invited to join and others are kept outside the fold could be said to stem from the collective judgments of the already-incorporated members of society. "By its very nature, a *demos*," writes Elizabeth Cohen, referring to a set of people comprising a given political unit, "must discriminate. It must develop a rule stating who is and is not included in the *demos* and then turn over enforcement of that rule to the state" (2014, 1051; this theme is also explored in Dovi 2009). In the United States, the offices of the U.S. Citi-

9. Elizabeth Cohen expands on this notion that citizenship rights are a gradient, not a binary. People are granted differentiated bundles of citizenship, with some holding "semi-citizenships" or partial rights. These semi-citizenships, she argues, are inevitable in any democracy. "People may possess some but not all" of the fundamental political/democratic rights, or may have a "weak version" of those rights (2014, 1048–49; see also 2009).

zenship and Immigration Services are charged with enforcing these rules. Under current law, approximately half of the noncitizen population, even individuals who have resided in the country for many years, have no standing to be represented as coequal participants in the political community by virtue of the fact that they do not have the legal authority to reside legally in the United States. The law has drawn the boundary in such a way to exclude them from inclusion in the political community. In fact, some have argued that by their voluntary presence in the United States noncitizen residents might be said to “consent” to their restricted political status. After all, immigration restrictionists have argued, noncitizens always have the option to leave and return to their countries of origin. However, if federal administrative laws are viewed as manifestations of collective democratic judgments, even permanent legal immigrants cannot be considered coequal participants in American politics. Immigrants who are not naturalized American citizens but are legally recognized as permanent residents possess certain statutorily and even constitutionally recognized rights—but not the right to vote.

There is thus a clash between two reasonable ethical perspectives on democratic inclusion. One way to resolve this clash, at least partly, might be to recognize that the collective preferences of the *demos* are difficult to ascertain in practice. Just as the application of Dahl’s principle of egalitarian inclusiveness to the everyday world of politics requires compromises, which entail some potential members being excluded, an interpretation of the will of the *demos* should be approached with an appreciation of uncertainties and inexactness. Federal administrative policies concerning immigration and naturalization are traceable to the *demos* in certain senses. Legislative representatives are elected, and the current policy infrastructure in this area is a legacy of past congressional actions. Administrative agencies are overseen by the president, who of course

is also elected. However, the connections between national immigration policies and the *demos* are not as tidy as Cohen’s quote implies. The members of the political community do not simply formulate rules for inclusion or exclusion, and then order administrative entities to act. Nominally democratic connections are insufficient in and of themselves to provide moral legitimacy to administrative policies without some recognition of the contingencies and uncertainties surrounding the will of the *demos*.

Furthermore, it is not hard to find other ways to gauge the general attitude of the *demos* toward noncitizens, methods that lead to a different interpretation. Research on how ordinary Americans view American identity—that is, the traits that make someone distinctly American—indicates that citizenship is closely linked with being a “true” member of the country (Theiss-Morse 2009, 88). This would seem to justify excluding the large noncitizen population from civic and political life based on democratic principles. But common notions of citizenship in the American context are not strongly linked to ethnicity, religious practice, or national origin. Some see whites, Christians, and the native born as particularly American, but the majority of Americans do not. This leaves open the possibility of genuine acceptance in many quarters of the diverse foreign-born population. Moreover, that citizenship is so closely tied to conceptions of American identity need not imply a widespread principled commitment on the part of the *demos* to impose a hard separation in public affairs between noncitizens and citizens. When asked in interviews whether immigrants without residency papers should be deported, remain in the United States only temporarily as guests, or have the opportunity to become a citizen, the modal attitude by a wide margin in survey reports since the mid-2000s has been to extend to undocumented residents some kind of avenue to citizenship.¹⁰ Americans are deeply committed to the status of citizenship

10. In June 2011, for example, 64 percent of the respondents in a survey sample stated a preference for permitting undocumented immigrants to become citizens. Only 21 percent favored deportation, and even fewer (13 percent) preferred allowing the undocumented to remain but only temporarily as guest workers. These breakdowns are rather stable across many years (see Muste 2013, 409; Segovia and Defever 2010, 387).

as a key marker of national identity but show relatively little desire to restrict the boundaries of this designation.

These observations suggest that the ethical judgments derived from either the categorical or contingent perspectives on democratic inclusion are not poles apart. Both frameworks could justify recognizing noncitizens as participants or potential participants in American democracy, participants whose voices should not be ignored. What are the contours of this voice? Does a lack of citizenship rights have a bearing on democratic involvement? We consider these questions next, for they touch directly on the potential quality of representation.

DOES A LACK OF VOTING RIGHTS MEAN A LACK OF VOICE IN REPRESENTATION?

“The tools of social research have made it possible, for the first time, to determine with reasonable precision and objectivity the extent to which the practice of politics . . . conforms to the assumptions of the theory of democratic politics,” declared Bernard Berelson in his 1952 presidential address to the then-fledgling American Association of Public Opinion Research. “The closer collaboration of political theorists and opinion researchers should contribute new problems, new categories, and greater refinement and elaboration to both sides” (314). Decades later in a retrospective essay to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of that same organization, Philip Converse echoed Berelson’s point. “From the very outset in the 1930s, public opinion polling has been closely wedded to the study of popular democratic politics” (1987, S12). These remarks frame our discussion in this section. If individuals without citizenship rights have the standing to be heard in politics, as some theorists have maintained, then it is incumbent on social scientists to examine the volume and clarity of their voice. What is the relationship between citizenship status and actual democratic practice? Does a lack of citizenship rights lessen the potential for effective representation? Diminish or distort political expressions above and beyond exclusion from the ballot box?

Over the last eighty years, much has been

learned through systematic survey research about how political engagement and “voice” vary across many different social and demographic categories—gender, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, religious denomination, generational cohort, marital and family status, occupation, income bracket, educational attainment, and region, among other groupings. Indeed, the scholarly literature on the contours of participation and public opinion in the United States and other democracies is voluminous. Studies of mass-level political behavior make up perhaps the largest body of work in the entire discipline of political science. Against this backdrop, however, relatively little is known about the political participation and aspirations of foreign-born noncitizens, and how their levels of involvement and aspirations compare with those of the U.S.-born population. Given that individuals without voting rights are able to take part in politics in any number of ways, and many democratic theorists would evaluate the quality of representation in the United States based in part on how well the system responds to the voices of noncitizens, reasons to include noncitizens in the sampling frames of major national opinion polls are compelling. If this were standard practice, social scientists could put a finer point on the political preferences and activities of individuals who are part of the public but not yet in the electorate, thereby enriching theoretical debates about their potential for effective democratic incorporation.

Yet, regrettably, the major academic survey archives that researchers, teachers, journalists, and policymakers routinely turn to when seeking information on the ebb and flow of political attitudes and involvement throughout the United States are essentially silent on the political behavior of noncitizens. Take, for example, the long-running American National Election Studies (ANES) series. Since the 1940s and continuing during each major national election campaign, the ANES has conducted extensive interviews nationwide with approximately 1,500 to 2,000 individuals per election year. This is a high-investment undertaking, in that surveys typically take place in the households of respondents. ANES questionnaires contain literally hundreds of items. Perceptions of the

principal candidates running for office, partisan attachments, ideological stances and public policy preferences, evaluations of incumbent officeholders, attitudes toward the political system on the whole, levels of involvement in a multitude of civic and political groups—all of these topics among others are regularly covered in ANES interviews. The ANES polling archive is rightly viewed as a crown jewel within the political science community. Countless scholarly articles, books, classroom lectures, and newspaper stories have drawn findings from the datasets in this archive. But throughout the long history of the ANES, only U.S. citizens have been eligible to take part in interviews.¹¹ Until recently, this feature of the design did not greatly affect sampling coverage. In the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, a survey of the electorate could for all practical purposes be considered a poll of the entire American public. Today, however, a representative survey of persons with voting rights leaving out the 8 percent of U.S. residents over eighteen who are not citizens will not necessarily cover the full range of political attitudes and behaviors within the total adult population, and the ANES series can shed no light on how noncitizens compare to citizens.

Another widely accessible academic survey

of political attitudes and behavior is the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) series, launched in 2006 and fielded in each election cycle since. Unlike the ANES, CCES interviews are conducted through the Internet, which allows sample sizes to be far larger. This opens new analytical possibilities for survey researchers. Comparisons across social and demographic groupings can be much more granular if one is working with, say, thirty thousand cases rather than two thousand. The sampling frame for these studies, however, is similar to that of the ANES: the CCES is designed to capture political attitudes and involvement within the electorate—not the public at large.¹²

In contrast to the ANES and CCES survey archives, the Gallup organization since the 1930s has fielded thousands of surveys with the aim of covering the public in its entirety. Many of these polls are archived for general use and have been well plumbed over the years by social science researchers, teachers, and news commentators. These opinion studies undoubtedly include a good many noncitizens, because Gallup generally selects study participants at random without regard for civic status and sample sizes are often quite large. Given that the firm usually conducts interviews in

11. In advance of the fielding of the 2012 ANES, the demographers and statisticians designing the sampling framework anticipated that as many as 270 noncitizens might be approached for participation in the study through random selection. When this happened, interviewers had no choice but to terminate the survey.

12. Respondents in the CCES are selected using matched random sampling techniques. The firm carrying out the polling begins with two lists—one listing of all consumers over eighteen in the United States and another with adults who have agreed to take part in an opt-in Internet-based survey. In the first stage of sampling, a random set of consumers is drawn. For the consumers in this set, key demographic variables such as age, income, education, race, and gender are noted. In the second stage, a matching algorithm is used to identify individuals in the opt-in Internet list who most closely fit the demographic profiles in the consumer file. The goal in this two-stage process is to obtain a representative sample of voters, including Americans who are eligible to vote but have not registered to vote in the current election. These procedures are described at the CCES website, <http://projects.iq.harvard.edu/cces/book/sample-design> (accessed May 20, 2015). Even though the intended sampling population is the voting-eligible public, it is theoretically possible given the matching procedures that some noncitizens might fill out a CCES survey. For this reason, respondents are asked to indicate whether they are foreign born and, if so, whether they are citizens; this allows CCES users to screen out noncitizens when estimating models of voting choices. In each installment of the CCES, very few respondents have marked that they are noncitizens. In the 2006 round, for example, 0.83 percent of the CCES participants fell in this category. The organizers of the CCES strongly caution against analyzing this tiny subsample of self-identified noncitizens who were unintentionally included in the study (see Ansolabehere, Luks, and Schaffner 2014). One recent attempt to analyze CCES data on noncitizens sparked a great deal of controversy among political methodologists (Richman, Chattha, and Earnest 2014).

English, the noncitizens taking part would not be fully representative of the entire foreign-born noncitizen population. Yet even a biased sample could contribute to our sense of how civic status shapes democratic engagement. As a matter of long-standing internal policy at Gallup, however, foreign-born respondents are not asked whether they are naturalized citizens.¹³ Consequently, it is not possible with Gallup data to compare foreign-born noncitizens with immigrants who have naturalized or to the U.S. born in general.

The random sampling techniques that Gallup pioneered to select respondents have been widely emulated throughout the polling industry for many years. It is thus conceivable that noncitizens have taken part in surveys conducted by the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and other major media outlets. As with Gallup polls, many of these studies are publicly archived for general use. The Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan and the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research index hundreds of such surveys. We are not aware, however, of any instances in which the citizenship status of foreign-born respondents was recorded in these polls. It appears that the policy at Gallup to avoid this topic is widely shared across the polling departments of leading news organizations. This was the case even in a 1995 *Washington Post* Poll on Race Relations, an ambitious national survey with oversamples of ethnic minority groups. Many participants in this study would not have been American citizens, but the *Washington Post* did not include an item to ask about this (Lien 2001, 232). As with the ANES and CCES, these surveys cannot help sharpen our understanding of the noncitizen population.

This brief overview of polling archives is far from comprehensive. Our intention is simply to demonstrate that the most prominent and sophisticated surveys of public opinion and political activities in the United States are better suited for examining the voting public than the public as a whole, and particularly that growing portion of the public that falls outside the formal boundaries of the electorate. To map and model political engagement among foreign-born noncitizens and assess how these patterns compare with American citizens (who have voting rights), one would ideally wish to administer an exceedingly large survey so that enough immigrants are included to make generalizations. One would also have to be sensitive to language barriers and devise strategies for overcoming the natural reticence on the part of many immigrants to participate in these kinds of studies. These challenges in principle could be met, but a survey of this magnitude would certainly be costly—perhaps prohibitively. It is not surprising, then, that such systematic polls of the 8 percent of the adult population in the United States that is excluded from the electorate have not yet been conducted. Immigrants who have not acquired voting rights arguably have a right to be represented in a democratic system. But capturing their many diverse voices in a representative public opinion poll may not be feasible.

More feasible is to conduct surveys within particular ethnic populations, where both U.S.-born respondents and immigrants—noncitizens as well as naturalized citizens—are included in the sampling frame. In the last several decades, many studies along these lines have been administered within the Latino and Asian American communities.¹⁴ Among the most extensive and influential are the fol-

13. In a personal nonconfidential correspondence dated April 13, 2015, a data specialist on the staff of the Gallup Poll reported that “we contact people with a variety of citizenship statuses—including people who might be living in the U.S. illegally. For this reason a question about citizenship was deemed too sensitive to ask on our survey.” Gallup’s concern about sensitivities notwithstanding, no evidence suggests that foreign-born survey respondents are reluctant to report their actual citizenship status (see McCann and Nishikawa 2012, 101; Jones-Correa and McCann 2013). As discussed, foreign-born respondents in more specialized ethnic surveys are routinely asked about their citizenship.

14. Since the 1990s, more than half of all immigrants in the United States have come from Latin America, and nearly 30 percent are Asian born (see Migration Policy Institute 2015).

lowing, all of which are publicly available for independent analysis.¹⁵

Surveys of Latinos

The Citizen Participation Study (CPS), conducted by Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, Henry Brady, and Norman Nie, was fielded in the spring of 1990. In spite of its name, the sample included seventy-three foreign-born Latinos who were not naturalized citizens. Although the number of noncitizens was not large, the fact that Verba and his colleagues extended the sampling frame in this way at all was noteworthy given that the central focus of the study was on citizen involvement.¹⁶ Data were gathered through in-person interviews.

The Latino National Political Survey (LNPS), conducted by Rodolfo de la Garza, Angelo Falcon, F. Chris Garcia, and John A. Garcia, was fielded between July of 1989 and March of 1990. In total, 2,817 Latino respondents of Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban heritage took part, 38 percent of whom were non-naturalized immigrants. The organizers of this study sought to cover up to 85 percent of the Latino population in the United States at that time, with interviews conducted in person.¹⁷

The Latino National Survey (LNS), conducted by Luis Fraga, John Garcia, Rodney Hero, Michael Jones-Correa, Valerie Martinez-Ebers, and Gary Segura, was fielded by telephone between November 2005 and August 2006. This telephone survey is by far the largest

of its kind, both in terms of the span of time in which data were gathered, the number of states covered (fourteen states plus the District of Columbia), and the sample size ($N = 8,634$, including 3,778 noncitizens) (for overviews of findings, see Affigne, Hu-Dehart, and Orr 2014; Fraga et al. 2011).

Surveys of Asian Americans

The Pilot National Asian American Political Survey (PNAAPS), conducted by Pei-te Lien, was fielded by telephone between November 2000 and January 2001. Many ethnic groups were covered in this study (Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese, Filipino, and South Asian), the total sample size of which was 1,218, of whom 388 were foreign-born noncitizens. Sampling took place in five major metro areas with substantial Asian American populations: Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Honolulu, and San Francisco (for more information, see Lien, Conway, and Wong 2004; Wong 2006).

The 2008 National Asian American Survey (NAAS), conducted by Karthick Ramakrishnan, Jane Junn, Taeku Lee, and Janelle Wong, was fielded by telephone between August and October 2008. This study included the same ethnic groups as the 2000–2001 PNAAPS, but was much larger. In total, 5,159 respondents were polled, including 903 immigrants who were not U.S. citizens (for the study design and core results, see Wong et al. 2011).

In the fall of 2012, we extended the research

15. As with our canvassing of the major public opinion archives in the United States, this overview of survey resources for studying noncitizen populations in particular is hardly comprehensive. We identify here those polls that are broadly national in scope and have attracted the most scholarly attention.

16. The major work that is based on the Citizenship Participation Study is Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady's *Voice and Equality* (1995; see also Verba et al. 1993). Verba, Scholzman, and Brady recognize the theoretical ambiguities surrounding conceptualizations of the "public" in an era when it is possible to reside in the United States for a prolonged period but not have citizenship rights (1995, 231 note 6). The authors do not attempt to resolve these ambiguities. Rather, they make the case, as we do here, that survey research on democratic engagement will make the greatest theoretical contributions if a more expansive understanding of the "public" is taken to heart. As they put it, "There are a number of philosophical questions as to whether noncitizens are appropriately part of the universe for a participation study. Although it could be argued that, from the perspective of democratic theory, this should be a study of citizens only, we did make a deliberate choice to interview noncitizens. Noncitizens are affected by American laws, and many are permanent residents (legally or illegally). . . . Thus, we decided to include noncitizens since they can always be separated in analysis."

17. The central findings from the National Latino Political Survey are presented in tabular form in Rodolfo de la Garza and his colleagues' *Latino Voices* (1992).

program on civic status and political engagement by fielding the Latino Immigrant National Election Study (LINES), a large-scale nationally representative survey of foreign-born Latinos from Spanish-speaking countries. This survey was designed both to coincide and to mesh with the ANES that year. Further details about the LINES survey and the papers in this issue of *RSF* follow in the next section. Before turning to LINES, we review some of the broader lessons to date about noncitizen involvement in politics. These lessons form a baseline on which LINES researchers can build.

The first lesson is that immigrants without citizenship rights are not politically quiescent. Exclusion from the ballot box is not tantamount to civic silence. This was very much evident in the outpouring of social movement activity between February and May 2006 in response to a harsh anti-immigrant measure that at the time was under consideration in the U.S. Congress. Sizable rallies took place not only in major urban centers like Los Angeles and Chicago but also in smaller cities and towns such as Fort Myers (Florida), St. Paul (Minnesota), and Goshen (Indiana). Not all of the participants in these events were themselves foreign born. Yet immigrants, particularly Latino immigrants, were the primary driving force behind this mobilization, including a good many noncitizens (see Bada, Fox, and Selee 2006; Barreto et al. 2009; Zepeda-Millán 2014; Voss and Bloemraad 2011).

If we consider more prosaic forms of involvement, findings from the 2006 LNS indicate that among foreign-born Latinos who were not citizens, 10 percent reported participating in political groups, nearly 80 percent stated that they had participated formally or informally in collective initiatives to solve community problems, and nearly one in five had contacted a government official about a particular concern. Rates of participation among Latino noncitizens were found to be somewhat lower in the 1990 CPS and the 1989–1990 LNPS but are nonetheless noteworthy. In the CPS, 13 percent of the Latino noncitizens reported an affiliation with a political organization, 5 percent had participated in informal community groups, and 7 percent indicated that they had

made contributions to election campaigns, among other activities. The NLPS gauged involvement in somewhat different ways. In this study, 6 percent reported signing a petition, 5 percent expressed political views symbolically by wearing a button, and 4 percent had written a politician. Fewer respondents reported attending rallies, volunteering for a campaign, or making political donations (see Levin 2013, 547; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Leal 2002, 361).

For Asian immigrants without voting rights, the 2008 NAAS reports that nearly 20 percent worked to solve a community problem, 5 percent contacted government officials, and another 5 percent contributed to political causes. These percentages are fairly comparable to what was recorded several years earlier for this population in the 2000–2001 PNAAPS. In this study, 14 percent of noncitizens had worked with others on community problems, 6 percent had written or telephoned a public official about a concern, and 6 percent had donated to a campaign (Wong et al. 2011, 60; Lien, Conway, and Wong 2004, 150).

Generalizing from these results, we are confident in asserting that a fairly large number of noncitizens are enthusiastic about taking part in politics even if they are unable to vote. Advocacy groups and government officials seeking to represent the interests of noncitizens could, if they listen closely, pick up these signals. There is, in short, the potential for some forms of delegate representation.

A second lesson, however, is that civic status casts a shadow over political practice: for both Latinos and Asian Americans, citizens participate more frequently than noncitizens. This appears to be true for a wide array of activities—signing petitions, expressing viewpoints by wearing a button or displaying a bumper sticker, communicating directly with officeholders, volunteering for campaigns, and attending community meetings. The gap between citizens and noncitizens is somewhat narrower for unconventional oppositional forms of participation, such as engaging in protest demonstrations, but it is still apparent. These patterns are in keeping with a statement Rodolfo de la Garza and Louis DeSipio made more than twenty years ago: “Lack of citizen-

ship serves to exclude participation in electoral activities and can make involvement in non-electoral activities even less likely” (1994, 18).¹⁸ Although it is possible for lawmakers and advocates to hear the voices of noncitizens, the raised voices of members of the electorate are often louder, more persistent, and more noticeable.

By way of illustration, consider these selected findings. In the 1990 CPS, nearly three times as many Latino citizens as noncitizens reported informal activity in local community groups to deal with a problem than noncitizens (14 versus 5 percent); approximately twice as many Latino citizens were affiliated with a political organization (27 versus 13 percent); and Latino citizens were more than twice as likely as noncitizens to take part in campaigns (8 versus 3 percent). Similar distinctions emerge in other major studies of the Latino population, and this gap between citizens and noncitizens is evident even when focusing solely on foreign-born Latinos. In the more recent 2005–2006 LNS, the rate of participation in political groups for Latino immigrants who had become naturalized American citizens was over twice that of Latino noncitizens (23 versus 10 percent); naturalized citizens were also twice as likely to have contacted government officials about an issue (Levin 2013, 547). Among the respondents in the 2000–2001 PNAAPS, foreign-born citizens were twice as likely as noncitizens to write or telephone an official or donate to a political campaign. These differences are echoed in the 2008 NAAS. By a 2:1 ratio, the citizens in this study were more inclined than noncitizens to make political contributions and get in touch with someone in government (Lien, Conway, and Wong 2004, 150; Wong et al. 2011, 60).

Anyone taking the democratic principle of equality of voice to heart and wishing to see the full public represented in politics would find these distinctions troubling. No formal legal barriers restrict volunteering on a campaign, working for a political party, attending

meetings of a local city council, or getting in touch directly with a government official. But surveys of the foreign-born population imply that barring noncitizens from registering to vote implicitly sets up obstacles to other avenues of political expression.

How this barrier, which is a product of federal administrative law, compares with other barriers to involvement remains an open question—a third lesson from the existing academic literature. Students of participation have long recognized a wide array of economic, social, and attitudinal factors that impede political activity. It is an unfortunate fact of political life that participation is costly. It takes time, material resources, and a certain level of expertise. Many people in the United States—individuals without a great deal of formal education, those on the lower rungs of the economic ladder, or people without as much life experience—may find themselves ill equipped to take part in politics. This may be especially true for much of the foreign-born population. The great majority of immigrants settle in the United States after their formative childhood years. Without an early familiarity with governing institutions and processes, American politics may appear mysterious for quite some time after arrival. Immigrants for whom English is not the first language face further challenges in acquiring information about the issues that most affect them.

Political parties, interest groups, and informal social networks help orient individuals toward politics and prompt involvement.¹⁹ However, it may take time for immigrants to develop deep and meaningful connections to political and social organizations. Noncitizens in particular could be especially reluctant to establish ties to the larger community, given their more precarious standing in American civic life. When assessing the contours of political voice for the foreign born, we should therefore be mindful of not only the civic status gap but also variations in economic status and well-being, exposure to American politics, and par-

18. Along similar lines, Gary Segura, Harry Pachon, and Nathan Woods write that “being a noncitizen is likely to be a substantial impediment to civic engagement, and noncitizen status does indeed reduce the likelihood of engagement in government” (2001, 89).

19. The canonical statement on this is Robert Putnam’s *Bowling Alone* (2001).

tisan and group ties and identities. The ways that these different forces shape political participation are most fruitfully explored through multivariate analyses. To what extent does a formal designation of citizen or noncitizen affect actual engagement in politics once other potentially debilitating factors are taken into account?

Turning to previous research, we encounter a mixed bag of results and conjectures. Working with the Citizen Participation Study, Sidney Verba and his colleagues examine who takes part in time-intensive political activities, such as working with others informally in the community to accomplish a certain political goal or attending meetings to deal with a particular issue. After statistically controlling for the education level of the survey respondent, the strength of attachment one feels to a political party, the information one has about political processes in the United States, family income, and various other factors having to do with organizational ties and personal resources, whether an individual was eligible to vote did not matter in the least in shaping involvement. Nor did civic status have a noticeable effect on the tendency to engage in informal political discussions (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995, 358). The implication of these findings for our discussion of the civic status gap is plain to see: exclusion from the electorate is not necessarily the obstacle that de la Garza and DeSipio made it out to be. Immigrants appear to have higher barriers to cross—barriers having to do with socioeconomic status, group belonging, and civic skills.

Subsequent research on Latino involvement in politics has not questioned the importance of socioeconomic status as a critical dividing line separating participants from nonparticipants, and that partisan and group attachments, as well as familiarity with American

politics, are among the strongest predictors of involvement is scarcely debated. However, in a 2002 piece that drew from the 1989–1990 LNPS, David Leal argues that civic status matters far more than Verba and his colleagues give it credit for. Its effect on a wide range of activities cannot be washed away statistically by taking into account an individual's level of education, family income, age, views of the major political parties, and a host of other factors. Leal speculates that the seeming insignificance of civic status in the earlier analysis could stem from differences in sampling between the CPS and the LNPS.²⁰ Drawing from the 2005–2006 Latino National Study, Ines Levin (2013) suggests that, after controlling for social and economic background characteristics, whether a Latino immigrant has become a naturalized citizen is only moderately relevant when predicting political involvement. This conclusion is somewhat at odds with both the Leal and the Verba and colleague pieces. Levin shows that citizens are more likely to contact government officials, particularly non-Latino government officials, but there is no measurable difference between citizens and noncitizens in other forms of involvement (participation in political groups and attendance at community meetings to address particular problems).²¹ Several more specialized studies of the Mexican immigrant population in particular have found that citizenship status does not have a large impact on political involvement once these same kinds of control variables are taken into account (see Lien 1994; Barreto and Muñoz 2003; McCann and Nishikawa 2012).

Much less systematic multivariate research has been conducted on the Asian American immigrant population. One study based on a sample of California residents in the 1980s found that citizens—both U.S.-born and foreign-born naturalized Asian Americans—

20. Other statistical analyses of participation based on the LNPS similarly conclude that civic status has a significant impact even when controlling for socioeconomic status, age, the time a respondent has lived in the United States, language abilities, partisanship, interest in American politics, and contacts with various political organizations (see Martinez 2005; Wong 2006, 222).

21. Levin's findings are in keeping with those presented by Karthick Ramakrishnan (2006, 252). Using data from the September 2002 Volunteer Supplement of the Current Population Survey, Ramakrishnan shows that among immigrants, civic status is unrelated to the incidence of volunteering in local community groups once length of stay in the United States is controlled.

were much more likely to take part in activities other than voting than noncitizen immigrants were. This relationship held up even when controls were put in place for socioeconomic status, group identifications and ethnic ties, age, partisanship, gender, and country of origin. In contrast to this, another piece that drew from a different survey, the 2000–2001 PNAAPS, concluded that for Asian Americans, citizenship status did not have a notable impact on political activities other than voting when a comparable set of control variables was factored in (Lien 1994, 251; Wong 2006, 224).

Taking a step back from the many works mentioned, it appears that little can be said with confidence about the impact of citizenship status on democratic practice relative to other economic, social, and cultural forces. Conventional wisdom in many circles claims that acquisition of citizenship rights is a key milestone in the course of immigrant incorporation. If it is the case, however, that the division of the foreign-born population into incorporated citizens and unincorporated noncitizens has no noteworthy bearing on everyday political involvement, that would be an intriguing finding—a welcome result for some, because it would speak to the potential for substantive democratic inclusion even in the face of administrative barriers, or an unwelcome result for those who wish to make membership and standing within the political system unambiguous. Whatever the normative viewpoint, it is important for empirically minded social scientists to arrive at a clear picture. So far, we do not have such a picture.

To advance our understanding of political engagement within the noncitizen population, it would be most beneficial to gather survey data during major political campaigns. American politics, after all, by virtue of its constitutional design follows a recurring cycle. During campaign periods, participatory opportunities abound, and in most parts of the country the airwaves are full of mobilization messages. For this reason, a long-standing tradition within political science is to survey the public most keenly during election campaigns, when elite-mass communication is most intense. These

are moments when any similarities or differences between citizens with voting rights and noncitizens should stand out in greatest relief. Only one of the studies discussed, the 2008 survey of Asian Americans, was fielded at such at time. More surveys along these lines are needed.

It would also move scholarship in this area forward if the noncitizen category were disaggregated. Included in this grouping are legal permanent residents (green card holders) who are similar to U.S. citizens in various respects, immigrants who entered the United States without papers, and individuals who have some form of government-issued identification but are not permanent residents. These statuses might well be linked in very different ways to political engagement in practice. Pooling them all under the label of noncitizen creates a classification that is rough at best.²²

In addition to comparing immigrants within the noncitizen population based on their particular administrative statuses, it would be helpful to gather survey data that permit wider comparisons across the public. As noted, some researchers compare noncitizens within a particular ethnic group to foreign-born coethnics who have become naturalized citizens. Other studies have compared noncitizens with all coethnics, including the U.S. born. Still others compare noncitizens with the U.S. public at large. Theoretically, any of these lines of comparison could be informative. The most useful survey designs would permit multiple levels of comparisons so that, say, foreign-born Latinos who are not American citizens could be compared with naturalized Latino immigrants, Latinos in general, the African American community, the Asian community (immigrant and native born), the Anglo community, and the country in general.

The nationwide LINES survey we fielded in 2012 had these three qualities—the scheduling of interviews to coincide with the peak of the campaign season, extensive instrumentation that allows for a richer recognition of noncitizen statuses, and a design that easily links with the ANES, so that the political attitudes and involvement of foreign-born noncitizens can

22. In his piece on noncitizen participation, Leal refers to the bluntness of this dichotomy (2002, 370).

be compared with naturalized immigrants and members of other ethnic and racial groups within the mass public. The features of this design are discussed in the following section.

THE 2012 LATINO IMMIGRANT NATIONAL ELECTION STUDY

Some weeks after the formal kickoff of the 2012 presidential campaigns, we conducted the LINES, a nationally representative survey of 1,304 foreign-born Latino adults. Interviews were administered over the telephone, with respondents selected at random using listings provided by marketing research firms. Approximately 60 percent of the LINES participants were not U.S. citizens, a proportion that comports with estimates from the U.S. Census.²³

Unlike previous polls of Latinos, such as the LNS and the LNPS, only immigrants from Spanish-speaking Latin American countries were targeted for interviewing. Although this sampling strategy was more narrowly focused than earlier studies of ethnic populations, the findings can be placed in a much broader context. This is because LINES was fielded in parallel with the ANES: the first wave of data gathering for both studies took place before the election, and then a follow-up round was conducted shortly afterward. Most of the questionnaire items for LINES—the measures of political participation, views of the parties, attachments to particular social groups, and levels of trust in American policymakers, among others—were adapted directly from the ANES.²⁴ These two studies thus readily allow joint analysis.

This was our way of making the study of public opinion and political behavior during a major campaign cycle more representative of the public at large. It was not possible to cover

the entire noncitizen population. The challenges of surveying immigrants from regions other than Latin America would have been insurmountable. Given constraints, interviews were conducted only in English or Spanish, which meant that Brazilian immigrants could not be included in the sampling frame either, though of course they are considered Latin American born. Nevertheless, the coverage of LINES encompasses most of the current noncitizen population, especially noncitizens who lack residency documentation.²⁵ Participants who have been largely invisible to election-year public opinion researchers now stand out.

The many contributors in this issue of *RSF* offer the first fruits of this initiative. We do not list the claims of each piece one by one. Readers are encouraged to see for themselves how the authors have exploited the novel features of the LINES surveys. By way of heralding these works, we emphasize here that when put alongside other subgroups within the American public, Latino immigrants—including noncitizens—appear relatively engaged in politics. Federal administrative policies that deny particular rights to immigrants who have not gone through the process of naturalization should not be seen as affixing a kind of Scarlet Letter that pushes foreign-born noncitizens to the periphery of civic life. Several of the articles in this issue chart the ways that noncitizens become involved in politics. One piece finds that undocumented Latino immigrants are less likely to become informed about American politics relative to legal permanent residents and U.S. citizens. This could have an effect on the quality of participatory signals. Others suggest, however, that attachments to political parties and political outreach, a sense of ethnic consciousness feeling that one is Hispanic or

23. The LINES codebook provides more details about the survey firms that carried out the interviews, sampling weights, and other technical information. Support for this study came from the Russell Sage Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Cornell University, the Purdue University Global Policy Research Institute, and the Office of the Vice President for Research at Purdue University.

24. In 2012, the ANES produced questionnaires in both English and Spanish, and an oversample of Latino citizens was conducted. The LINES questionnaire drew directly from the wordings in the ANES survey so that the two studies could be seamlessly integrated for analysis.

25. An estimated 60 percent of the unauthorized immigrant population in the United States today is Mexican origin. Approximately 80 percent of unauthorized immigrants emigrated from a Latin American country.

Latino, exposure to Spanish-language media, and transnational connections can help pull immigrants, both citizens and noncitizens, toward the political process. In the tradition of the ANES, the 2012 LINES dataset is available to all for fresh analyses on the publication of this issue. Given the novelty of incorporating noncitizen respondents into the framework of an election-year survey, much fresh ground is to be tilled. An appendix provides additional technical details about the study and information about downloading it for further analysis.

In closing, we should recognize that any assessment of how federal migration policies and administrative categories influence political participation and public opinion among the foreign born is inherently dynamic. Government regulations and enforcement norms change. It is possible that the day-to-day implications of being a citizen or noncitizen could vary over time. Political scientists investigating the interface between public policies and political behavior must be mindful of these dynamics.

As of this writing, government statutes concerning immigration and naturalization are in a state of flux. In November 2014, President Obama announced an executive order that would permit approximately half of all undocumented immigrants to remain in the country at least through the end of his term without fear of deportation. The legality of this action is currently being contested, and the U.S. Supreme Court is expected to rule on it in 2016. It is not clear whether this Obama administration order will stand, and perhaps be a harbinger of more wide-ranging immigration policy reform, or whether the Court will strike it down. The LINES survey provides a key snapshot of administrative status and democratic engagement in 2012. As new policies in this area are enacted and evolve, the study can serve as a springboard for future surveys to explore the changing contours of immigrant political engagement—and, most importantly, the potential for effective representation. Throughout the 2016 campaign season and beyond, issues concerning immigration and multiculturalism will undoubtedly continue to receive a great deal of attention, remaining very contentious. Simplistic and disparaging caricatures of the foreign born are now commonly

aired in many circles. At this pivotal juncture, social scientists have a professional and moral obligation to shed much needed light on the political orientations and aspirations of immigrants, citizens and noncitizens alike.

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