

Bonding and Bridging:Latinos and Social Captial

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between social capital and Latino political participation. I consider the likelihood that Latinos utilize social capital differently than the dominant political science literature has suggested. Using Robert Putnam's definition and stratification of social capital, I examine how Latinos employ social capital as they participate in Latino and mainstream political activities. Does social capital work differently for Latinos than it does for the white population? Using regression analysis, I find consistent evidence for two types of social capital. The data show social capital of the bridge variety has a stronger influence upon Latino participatory behaviors than bonded capital. This paper finds Latinos and whites share some similarities with their social capital outcomes.

Introduction

Social capital is a theoretical framework that is relatively new to political science. It argues that individual and social connectedness yield answers as to how and why people choose to participate in politics. Does social capital have the same explanatory power within the Latino population as it has demonstrated among the white population.¹ Up to this point, very little study has been conducted that would answer such a question. Two factors give rise to the importance of a study on the relationship between social capital and the Latino population. First, social capital has played a significant role in the broader social science literature and is gaining popularity in the realm of political science. Secondly, the Latino population now comprises the largest minority group in the United States and all demographic indicators project substantial, continued growth (US Census Bureau, 2001). Studies on social capital and Latinos will not only fill a gap in the American politics literature but also offer insight on a timely topic.

I examine the concept of social capital and its role in developing an active political community. While much of the extant literature has explored this concept in the context of the majority population, and essentially conventional political activities, less attention has been directed toward a fuller array of participatory modes much less exploring its explanatory potential for minority populations. More specifically, this paper does following: 1) operationalizes critical dimensions of social capital; 2) links social capital indicators to political activities among Latinos; and 3) assess its application for the political involvement of Latinos.

This paper focuses on the outcomes of accumulated social capital. Once an individual has accumulated a particular mix of social capital assets, how does it affect their political activity? I examine the five components of social capital, as opposed to an aggregate measure of

¹ Puntam, 2000, illustrates that high levels of social capital among whites are correlated with high levels of political participation.

social capital, in an attempt to offer a sharper view of the mechanisms within this resource that may have more influence than others.

Literature Review

There is evidence that greater numbers of Americans are less engaged and isolated from social groups and networks than ever before (Skocpol 1999, Putnam 2000) has been argued that a consequence of social disconnection is the decline of American political participation. Across disciplines the literature suggests that the by-products of vast social networks are skills and resources that, for the most part, positively manifest themselves into a variety of personal and public venues benefiting both the individual and society as a whole. Specific to political science, social capital attempts to identify and establish linkages among individuals whereby they become coupled to others and to the larger political community. As a result, the greater accumulation of social capital provides resources for political involvement and expression. Variations of social capital theory have been utilized to enhance our understanding of a number of social phenomena. Social capital as defined and popularized by sociologist Robert Coleman (1988) is a resource for action, within an individual's social structure. He identified three primary components: obligations and expectations; information channels; and social norms. It is argued that the key to social capital is its convertibility: it may be transformed into numerous forms of capital (Massey, 1999). Economists have examined the transformation of networks into financial capital, sociologists explored its manifestation in educational achievement, more recently political science has researched the role that social capital plays in shaping political behavior (Putnam, 2000), immigration scholars have also used the theory to advance our understanding that networks have on settlement patterns as well as the marginal costs and marginal benefits of migration (Massey and Espinoza, 1997).

The presence of social capital among individuals serves to create and maintain community. Broadening the application of social capital to the political world recognizes how social networks can transform skills, resources and connections into an active political life. Political participation levels are affected by the extent of social capital accumulated where higher levels of social capital are associated with higher levels of participation and a wide range of political activities. Information channels created through social capital provide a basis for action where social contacts decrease information costs to the individual. The social norms within these networks also constitute a powerful form of social capital that may encourage or discourage development of social networks beyond the individual's core community (Coleman, 1988; Fukuyama, 1999).

A central element of the social capital literature is the differentiation of two types of social capital—bridging and bonding. Two major contexts or arenas for the development of social capital involve bridging vs. bonding activities. Bridging activities serve to extend an individual outside of his/her environment, and broaden the individual's social networks and experiences. Bridging activities involve inclusive social connectedness across lines of class, ethnicity, gender, race, and broader lines of community building. Whereas bonding activities and its connections occurs within one's more "core community" which is manifested through organizations, religious institutions and practices, and residential enclaves. Bonding social capital activities are associations that are intended to reinforce exclusive identities (i.e. race, ethnicity, gender, class) and define the scope of societal interactions.

The distinction between bridging and bonding and the outcomes each is an important piece of the social capital debate. It has been argued that social capital, particularly the bonding strand, may be damaging to the economic, social and political well being of an individual. A

strongly bonded community's social norms, obligations and expectations may work to the detriment of an individual and the entire community (Portes and Landolt, 1996). If an individual's social networks discourage bridging activities and networks, then the individual and the greater community could quite possibly forego opportunities that could benefit him and the given community in a variety of means, economic well-being the most frequently cited (Portes and Landolt, 1996, Fukuyama, 1999). It is certainly conceivable that the political activities of an individual within an exceedingly bonded social structure would be less apt to participate in some forms of political action. It is also true that one may be hindered by the limits of their social network. Thus, there is some concern that a bonded based social capital (i.e. based on race, ethnicity, gender, etc.) may insulate persons from being involved in broader, significant political activities.²

Because these two categories are so different in nature, the independence and/or intersection of bridging and bonding activities may yield different political and participatory outcomes. Race and ethnicity can be powerful forces for social capital development to advance group interests and goals. At the same time, high levels of internal trust and dense social networks may generate mistrust to those members not part the core community (i.e. the non-ethnic/racial society) (Bates, Ruiz, et. al., 1998). Social capital accumulation can occur in both bonding and bridging activities, yet little examination has been conducted as to their political implications. The outcome may be that political involvement can be complementary, oppositional, and/or independent.

Putnam specifies five dimensions of social capital. They include: 1) organizational involvement, 2) engagement in public affairs, 3) community volunteerism, 4) informal

² Mexican immigrants, for example, are frequently relegated to specific occupations and geographic regions because they are so reliant upon their limited social network in the United States (Massey, 1999; Massey and Espinoza, 1997).

sociability and 5) social trust. All five of Putnam's social capital categories correspond to concepts and components in the civic engagement and mobilization literatures. There is abundant evidence that different forms of mobilization yield specific acts of participation. Among individuals, resources, attitudes and social involvement levels are traits that individually or combine to yield specific participatory responses. Resources that Hansen and Rosenstone identify are: education, experience, gender, race, language and political efficacy. Nie et.al., 1996 and Verba et.al., 1995 agree that education is a central component to mobilization and civic engagement. Research has found that education primes individuals for mobilization and increases individual resources by extending and creating social networks and also decreasing information and participation costs making mobilization and participation easier among highly educated groups (Putnam, 2000; Nie et.al, 1996 and Verba et.al). Educated individuals have benefited from social networks, organizational exposure, institutional rules, comprehending and perhaps appreciating the benefits of working through a bureaucracy, which are experiences that can be directly applied to many forms of participation.

Again there is much scholarly concurrence regarding the importance of social involvement in preparing and motivating individuals participate in politics. Verba et. al.'s civic resource model of participation and mobilization along with Putnam's social capital approach to participatory democracy both hold social networks and institutions at their core. Other scholars illustrate cases and conditions under which social involvement and the institution where the involvement takes places enhances individual political resources (Huckfelt et.al., 1999; Nie et.al, 1996; Skocpol et.al., 1999). In the least formal of settings, Huckfelt et.al, 1999 find that individuals utilize their casual acquaintances and relationships to transmit and discuss political preferences. This informal social flow of political information again, may depress information

costs for individuals when making the decision to participate in politics. In more formal contexts there is agreement regarding the importance of networks that are created in society's largest institutions. The workplace, churches and schools are vital sources of political skill and network building that prepares one for political participation (Nie et.al, 1996, Putnam, 2000; Coleman, 1988; Verba et.al.,1995). Additionally others have illustrated the importance of voluntary associations in not only developing one's skills, networks and political inclinations, but also of maintaining them at a level that will encourage long-term participation over one's lifetime (Putnam, 2000; Scope, 1999; Berry, 1999; Schlozman, 1999).

Like schools, other types of institutions and voluntary associations expose individuals to institutional arrangements where they may see the connection and the importance of their involvement to the greater more abstract cause or body of influence. Large voluntary associations characterized by multiple layers of organization at the national, state and local level increase opportunities for involvement and skill building. At the same time, these associations mimic government structures and prime individuals for participation by exposing them to the experience of multi-layered participation and reaping its rewards (Scope, 1999; Putnam, 2000). Participation in these institutions places individuals in a context where he or she may not only encounter opportunities to mobilize others and become mobilized but also develop skill building experiences (i.e. organize meetings, give speeches, develop plans of action).

The most compelling argument for study on Latinos and social capital may be found in the immigration literature. The research gives us concrete outcomes of the combination of social capital resources and unique Latino characteristics. An individual's social resources and connectedness becomes a valuable commodity in the complex effort to migrate from Mexico to the United States. It is posited that among those considering migration to the US, ties to current

or former migrants serves as a valuable asset to the migrant as these connections are utilized to acquire information regarding the migratory and settlement process. Social networks significantly decrease information costs and risks to the potential migrant. Information that comes via these social or familial ties may be gathered to not only assist in the movement across the border but also in finding a job and going undetected by the INS (Massey and Espinoza, 1997; Massey, 1986; Zahniser, 1999). Networks facilitate migration to the US by providing information and decreasing risks to the immigrant at multiple points in time that extend beyond the actual border crossing. Once in the US, Mexican immigrants are often tied to a community that can provide housing, employment and safety. Migrants who are aware of these opportunities within Mexican immigrant US based networks may find further motivation to migrate. The perceived chances of successful migration (i.e. avoiding deportation) once in the US are improved by the resources in the social networks available to the immigrant. If there were no networks, formal or informal, migration would be significantly lower (Weintraub, 1997; Massey and Espinoza, 1997).

For most Mexican immigrants their social ties to the US come in the form of family or Mexican community members who have already migrated to the US. These relationships are most often enduring and characterized by the norms of reciprocity that social capital theory describes. Once reconnected to a network in the US, the networks become the catalyst for settlement in the new homeland as connections to the US and its formal and informal institutions are developed (Zahniser, 1999). Over time migration becomes self-perpetuating because each act of migration creates additional social capital that promotes and sustains more migration. It is posited that the accumulation of social capital via expanded networks yields a feedback loop that is quite powerful (Massey and Espinoza, 1997; Massey, 1986; Zahniser, 1999)

There is much scholarly agreement on the concepts inherent in the five social capital categories. At the same time, there are other facets of social capital that are points of contention. A number of social capital critics point to the failures of social capital to yield more bridging than bonding. There is evidence (Portes, 1998; Portes and Landolt, 1996) that excessive bonding will produce unfavorable social outcomes. Exceedingly bonded groups can reinforce negative stereotypes and even violent ideals. Others have illustrated that capital concentrated in the bonding arena can severely limit one's socioeconomic opportunities to the point that poverty can become generational. Hero (2003) has suggested that aggregate measures of social capital among minorities (black and Latino) are low and yield poor political participation outcomes as well as poor policy outcomes as a result of such paucity of capital. He illustrates that the bridging aspect of social capital has been overstated and that perhaps there is a deep tension between diversity and civic connectedness. Plainly, social capital in homogenous states is higher because it is easier to be connected to community when differences among community members are few.

Hypotheses

Because there is very little known about the relationship between social capital and Latino political participation, this study embarks upon exploratory testing to field some initial outcomes. The social capital literature has not fully addressed variations in bridged and bonded capital among and between ethnic and racial groups. Are Latinos more likely to bond politically with co-ethnics? Are Latinos less likely to participate in non-Latino specific politics? I hypothesize the following 1) Latinos will employ bond social capital into Latino oriented political activities. 2) Among Latinos, bond social capital will not translate into increased levels

of bridged political activity. 3) Bridge social capital will have differing outcomes for Latino and Anglo participation in general political activity.

Data and Measures

The Latino National Political Survey is the data source used in this study. The LNPS includes 2,817 Latino respondents half of which are women. The three largest Latino national origin groups in the survey number 1546 Mexicans, 589 Puerto Ricans and 682 Cubans; 470 Anglos are also included in the study. In addition, the study contains a myriad of variables related to demographic, socioeconomic status and political attitudes and participation that are incorporated in this research (de la Garza et.al., 1992). Because I want to study bridging and bonding along ethnic and racial lines, I have classified each of the independent and dependent variables as either a ‘bond’ or ‘bridge’ variable. A noteworthy benefit of the LNPS specific to my research is the fact that several survey items are presented in the very context of bridging and bonding³. This format allows me to measure bonding and bridging among Latinos in several aspects of civic and political life. Unfortunately, questions regarding Latino specific activities and attitudes were not included in the white (non-Hispanic) questionnaire, limiting some of the inferential possibilities. Nonetheless, the data arms me with considerable amounts of information to proceed with the study on social capital and the finer points of bridging and bonding. Considering the insights from the mobilization, participation, social capital and Latino politics literatures, I chose variables from the LNPS that best describe the nature of the respective categories.

Independent Variables

³ For example, a respondent will be asked if he thinks people are helpful (bridge). Later in the survey the respondent will be asked if he thinks people of his national origin group are helpful (bond).

Organizational Involvement captures the individual's participation within several social contexts including work, educational and religious institutions. Consistent with the literature, the following variables were used to measure bridge organizational involvement: frequency of church service attendance, supervising others at work, and attending a PTA meeting⁴. The data limited my ability to measure a large cross-section of institutional involvements for Latinos. However, there are three survey items that deal with Latinos and organizations that are applicable to this social capital category. The bonding measures for organizational involvement are: ethnicity of organization members, membership in a Latino organization, and a belief that Latino organizations advocate Latino interests⁵.

Engagement in Public Affairs account for the individual's attention and actions with others regarding civic issues. These variables were selected as they are well supported in the literature. The following dichotomous variables (coded 0=no, 1=yes) operationalized bridge engagement in public affairs: following politics; discussing civic problems with others and discussing voter registration. The following variables operationalized bond engagement in public affairs: attention to Latino politics; discussing Latino problems with others; and awareness of an opportunity to vote for a Latino candidate.

Community Volunteerism was difficult to extrapolate from the available data. I did find on survey item that asks if the respondent has worked to solve community problems. This serves as the bridge volunteerism variables. The bond community volunteerism measure tell us if the individual has worked to resolve Latino specific problems in the community.⁶

⁴ Attending PTA meeting and supervising others at work are coded 0=no, 1=yes. Religious service attendance is coded on a three point scale: never, seldom and frequently.

⁵ Membership in organization and advocacy of Latino organizations are coded as 0=no, 1=yes. Ethnicity of membership is coded 1= mostly co-ethnics 2=mix of co-ethnics and others 3= mostly not co-ethnics.

⁶ Coded as 0=no, 1=yes.

Informal sociability is a variable that accounts for the respondent's social and daily contacts. It gives a sense of person's exposure and experience with co-ethnics and others. Ethnic residential density captures this dimension inasmuch as it tells us the ethnic context in which the respondent lives. Using this data we are able to make some inferences regarding the amount of social contact one may or may not have with people of different national origins. The LNPS provides three bridge variables that measure the ethnic density of the respondents residence.⁷ Measures of discrimination experience, ethnicity of friends and perception of a common Latino culture are the indicators of bond informal sociability.

Social Trust measures the individual's trust in government, other people and society-at-large. The bridge trust variables are perceptions of people's helpfulness and trustworthiness, as well as perceptions of government. Bond trust variables measure Latino specific attitudes. Respondents are asked whether co-ethnics are more helpful and whether they are better public servants. Latinos are also asked whether they feel an obligation to work toward the election of more Latino public officials.

Dependent Variables: Political Participation

The dependent variables for participatory activities are divided into the two categories of social capital: bridging and bonding. The dependent variable used to assess bridging political activities is a measure of general political involvement⁸. In order to meet OLS assumptions this variable was created by summing participation in seven dichotomous political activities which included: 1) wore a campaign button; 2) signed a petition; 3) volunteered for a campaign; 4) wrote a letter to the editor; 5) made a donation to a campaign ; 6) participated in political rallies; and 7) attending a public meeting.

⁷ Perceptions of discrimination and a common Latino culture are coded as 0=no, 1=yes. Ethnicity of friends is a five point scale that ranges from all co-ethnics to all of a different ethnic background.

⁸ Political activities are NOT limited to the respondent's ethnic group.

The dependent variable used to assess bonding political activities is also a measure of seven political activities specific to Latinos. Again, participation in these dichotomous variables was summed in order to satisfy OLS requirements. The activities considered in this variable are: 1) mobilized other Latinos to vote as a group, 2) signed a petition regarding Latino matters; 3) volunteered for a Latino campaign; 4) wrote letter to editor regarding Latino concerns; 5) donated money to Latino candidate(s) or campaign(s); 6) participated in a boycott regarding a Latino concern; and 7) participating in a demonstration regarding a Latino issue.

Large portions of the Latino population are faced with two major barriers to electoral participation: language barrier and citizenship status. Because many Latinos in the United States are not citizens and are not fluent in English, their turnout rates have been lower in several elections.⁹ The political science literature is filled with examples illustrating that this population votes at rates disproportionately lower than their white counterparts. This being the case, it is best to evaluate political participation using measures that do not require citizenship or strong English ability in order to participate. Thus, voting specific activities were omitted from these two dependent variables.¹⁰

Model 1: General Political Activity and Bridge Social Capital

The first model measures the effect of bridge social capital indicators, in five categories, on general political involvement.¹¹ In this model Latinos and their white counterparts are included in the data.¹² This evaluation is critical because we are able to observe differences in

⁹ There is increasing evidence of a positive change in this trend. However, The LNPS employs data from the 1988 election cycle which does indeed fall in line with the trend of low Latino voter turnout.

¹⁰ However, since voting is the standard political expression, it is useful to include an analysis of electoral activities associated with social capital variables. In a separate research paper I employ logistic regression to conduct a more thorough analysis of these relationships.

¹¹ That is to say that the political involvement included in this model is not limited to activities within the respondent's ethnic group.

¹² Limitations in the data made it impossible to further disaggregate the Latino population in this model.

how social capital may vary among these two groups. Variables used in the general political activity models include responses from both Latinos and whites. All of the items used in the general political model are categorized as bridging variables.

Model 2: Latino Political Activity and Bond Social Capital

The second model specified measures bonded social capital variables upon Latino political participation. The survey items employed in this Latino specific model are closely worded to the survey items in the previous models when it is appropriate.¹³ At the same time, there are also variables included in this model that are specific to the Latino respondent and are meant to distinguish the political and social uniqueness of the population in relation to social capital.

Models 3 and 4: General/ Latino Political Activity and Bond/Bridge Social Capital

Two additional regression models are produced. One model uses general/bridge political activity as the dependent variable and bond social capital indicators serve as the independent variables. The final OLS model has Latino specific/bond political activities as the dependent variable and bridge social capital indicators serve as the independent variables. The purpose of these models is to test functionality of both types of social capital in different political settings.

Findings: Social Capital and Participation Multivariate Analysis

Four OLS models were estimated to evaluate the relationship of bridge and bond social capital and bridging and bonding types of participation. F ratios are significant for all four models. The R square values for each model are also noteworthy; when independent variables are comprised of bridge social capital, the R square values are higher than the models where

¹³ For example: Question on community volunteerism in the bridged model asks whether the respondent has worked to solve community problems. Question in the bonded model asks whether the respondent has worked to solve Latino community problems.

bond social capital are the independent variables. Model I (bridge activity by bridge capital) has an $R^2 = .341$; Model II (bond activity by bond capital) an $R^2 = .351$; and Model III $R^2 = .238$ Model IV an $R^2 = .228$. Constant terms are statistically significant only in Models I and IV. These preliminary indicators point that bridge social capital measures may have more of an overall impact on political behavior than bond capital.

Results: Bridging Social Capital Indicators

Models I and IV deal with bridging social capital indicators. In the first model, general political activity (or bridging activity) is the dependent variable. Model IV has bond (or Latino specific) political activity as the dependent variable.

Organizational involvement variables are all positively and significantly related to bridge participation in the first regression analysis. Attending a PTA meeting and supervising others at work have a positive and equal impact ($b=.271$ for both) on participation in general political activities. Religious service attendance is slightly less influential ($b=.194$). When Latino political activity is the dependent variable, coefficients for church attendance and PTA attendance are again positive and significant. ($b=.189$ and $.203$ respectively). Supervising others has a rather small value (at $b=.063$) and is not significantly related to Latino exclusive participation. Organizational involvement variables are all positively and significantly related to bridge participation in the both models, with one exception: supervising others at work is not significantly correlated with Latino political involvement. Regardless of the type of participation (bond or bridge), religious service attendance and supervising others at work are social capital measures are positively associated with political participation.

Engagement in public affairs produced positive and significant coefficients for all three variables in the bridge political activity model. Of the three indicators, discussing community

problems with others had the strongest impact in both equations (Model I $b=.385$, Model II $b=.303$). Following current affairs had a positive influence on political activity ($b=.231$ and $b=.236$). Discussing voter registration is correlated to both forms of participation, but has a slightly stronger impact on bridging activities ($b=.185$ compared to $b=.147$ in Model II). Interestingly, the engagement in public affairs coefficient values correspond at similar levels in both regressions. These results illustrate the importance of this social capital dimension in relation to political participation.

Community Volunteerism includes a variable measuring whether or not the respondent has worked to resolve community problems. This variable is also positively and significantly related to both dependent variables. It is worth noting that community volunteerism produces the highest coefficient values in both models (Model I $b=1.558$, Model II $b=.986$). Of the two types of participation, working to resolve problems has a larger impact on bridge political activity than Latino political activity. Up to this point bridge social capital categories have consistently produced positive influences on both varieties of political participation.

Informal Sociability: Proximity to Mexican, Puerto Rican and/or Cuban origin communities was not significantly influential on either general or Latino political participation. Additionally, the substantive values for these three variables were the three lowest values in both regression models¹⁴. An additional consistency (though statistically insignificant) in the models is the small negative relationships between Cuban residential ethnic density and political participation ($b= -.029$ and $b= -.024$). The measures for this social capital category do not point to a relationship between informal sociability and bridge participation.

¹⁴ The coefficients range from a high of $b=.004$ (Mexican residential density and Latino/bond participation) to a low of $-.029$ (Cuban residential density and genera/bridge participation).

Social trust examines the respondent's attitudes toward government and people. Trust in others produced positive, significant results in general participation ($b=.229$). The same measure in the Latino participation model was nearly significant ($p=.09$), and the coefficient was substantively a bit weaker than Model I, where $b=.189$. Trust in government was negatively related to either type of participation, though the coefficients produced were not significant. Perceptions on people's helpfulness had opposite effects. Higher levels of trust are associated with decreased Latino participation, and increased levels of general activities. But these relationships were also statistically insignificant. This rubric of social capital has some merit, but the data do not support social trust as much as some of the other categories.

The *control variables* included in the two models varied slightly. Ethnicity¹⁵ is included in the first model that measures bridged/general political activity. It is excluded Model II which accounts for Latino political activity because the dependent variable in Model II includes only Latino responses. Gender and education are also employed as control variables. The regressions produced varied results for these control variables. Education was the only variable that had a positive and significant impact on general/bridge participation ($b=.159$). While gender and ethnicity were negatively related to bridge activities, both were statistically insignificant in this regression. I find this outcome interesting because it points out that social capital, as measured here, functions similarly for Latinos and their white counterparts. Model II produced no significant relationship between Latino political activity and education levels. However, there was a significant gender gap in the data. The coefficient showed that Latinas were less inclined to participate in Latino political activities ($b= -.145$). This may be indicative of gender gaps in social capital accumulation.¹⁶

¹⁵ Measured as 0=Anglo; 1=Latino

¹⁶ I examine levels of social capital accumulation among Latino subgroups in a related research project.

Constant values in both models were statistically significant. Surprisingly, both constants were in the negative direction (Model I $b = -1.55$, Model II $b = -1.064$). Given the positive coefficient values for most of the independent variables in the regressions, I surmise that some of the insignificant co-variants, particularly residential ethnic density, are skewing the constant term in this direction. This explanation seems plausible given that eight independent variables are statistically significant in the positive direction in Model I and six independent variables are significant in Model II.

Results: Bonding Social Capital Indicators

Models II and III incorporate bonding social capital indicators as the independent variables. In Model II, Latino political activity (or bonding activity) is the dependent variable. Model III has bridge (or general specific) political activity as the dependent variable. Only Latino respondents are included in these analyses.

Organizational involvement variables are somewhat related to Latino political participation in the first regression analysis. Perceptions that Latino organizations advocate Latino interest have a positive influence on Latino political participation ($b = .645$). Membership in Latino organizations also has a positive impact on participation in Latino politics, but is only marginally significant ($p = .09$). Model II also indicates that the ethnic composition of the organization to which one belongs does not have a significant relationship with participating in Latino oriented political events. When general/bridge participation¹⁷ is the dependent variable, the data show all three organizational involvement variables yield positive coefficients, but none of them is significant. Involvement with Latino organizations has a varied impact on political participation; some of the involvements accounted for may enhance Latino participation. On the

¹⁷ Not specific to Latino politics, as in Model II.

other hand, organizational activities do not have the same relationship with non-Latino political involvements.

Outcomes for *Engagement in public affairs* variables produce a mixed bag of results. In terms of the Bond dependent model, attention to Latino issues and awareness of a Latino candidate were both positively and significantly correlated to participation in Latino politics ($b = .588$; $b = .667$). Discussing Latino problems with others also had a positive impact, $b = .497$, and is close to the standard for significance at $p = .06$. All of these coefficients are strong relative to the rest of the Latino participation model. Generally speaking, these variables appear to be good measures of the relationship between Latino engagement in public affairs and Latino political participation. On the other hand, general participation is significantly correlated with only one of the engagement in public affairs variables: discussion of Latino community problems ($b = .606$). Attention to Latino issues and awareness of a Latino candidate are positively related to general participation, but demonstrate no statistical significance. Thus far the data show that bonding social capital has inconsistent influence on bonding and bridging forms of participation.

The *Community Volunteerism* indicator has a negative relationship with Latino participation ($b = -.116$), and positive on general participation ($b = .030$). This particular measure of community volunteerism is not significantly related to either dependent variable. These measures require some improvement.

The measures for *informal sociability* in the bonded context are meant to capture some of the uniqueness of the Latino social experience. Despite my expectations, none of these variables was significantly correlated with participating in Latino or non-Latino specific political activities. Having a diverse group of friends was negatively related to Latino participation. The

five other relationships were in the positive direction. Bonding informal sociability, as measured here, does not influence political participation in any form.

Social trust variables are directionally mixed and largely insignificant. Perceptions of Latinos as helpful to each other was positively and significantly related to Latino political activity ($b=.601$). And though in the positive direction, Latino helpfulness was not significantly correlated with general participation. Opinions on Latino public officials were negatively correlated with both Latino and non-Latino political activity, but insignificant. Feeling that Latinos should help elect other Latinos to public office had a positive impact on Latino participation, but was also statistically insignificant. This same variable was almost significant ($p=.08$) in the model where general political activity was the dependent variable. That is to say, beliefs that Latinos should work to elect co-ethnics had a positive influence on bridge participation. Overall, bond measures of social trust employed here are not strongly associated with political participation.

The *control variables* included gender, nativity,¹⁸ language¹⁹, and education. Not a single one of the control variables was statistically significant in when using bonding measures of social capital. Women and Spanish speakers are less inclination to participate in either Latino or non-Latino political activities. Foreign born respondents seem more inclined to participate in Latino activities, but the opposite is true for general political activities. Higher levels of education are positively associated with general political activity, but negatively correlated with Latino activity. Again, none of the aforementioned relationships meet significance test requirements. True as that may be, these outcomes are still of interest, as the standard control variables did not withstand the testing..

¹⁸ Dummy variable: 0= foreign born, 1= US born

¹⁹ Measured as mostly English, fully bilingual, or mostly Spanish

Constant values in both models were statistically insignificant. Given the overwhelming lack of statistically significant independent variables in either model (Model II had only four; Model IV had only one) I am not surprised at this particular result. It seems clear that the bonding forms of social capital are not related to participation in either realm. It could also be the case that I need to revisit some of the variables selected to operationalize bond social capital.

Conclusions and Implications

The outcomes of the analysis yield several useful findings. First, it appears that social capital does indeed have two distinct dimensions. The bifurcated analysis made the pronounced differences evident. The varied impact of bonding versus bridging social capital upon a range of political activities is clear. Contrary to the first and second hypothesis, bridging variables provided stronger explanatory power and relationships with both Latino and general political participation. Bonding capital indicators were frequently weaker and inconsistent indicators of either form of political activity.

Specific to Latinos, it appears that social capital does have similar patterns of outcomes. Meaning that higher levels of bridged capital yield higher levels of political participation; just as is the case with Anglos. Those who posit that increased bridged social capital yields increased political activity, regardless of its ethnic orientation, are supported with these findings. I was surprised to find that bond social capital does not have much of a positive effect upon Latino political activity (certainly not compared to the bridge capital measures) and even less impact upon bridged activities. It has been argued that a more insular orientation can depress any form of political involvement. Those hypotheses are supported by this data.

While a number of a questions have been addressed in this research, many steps can be taken to improve upon this study and related lines of inquiry. It would be worthwhile to seek out

complementary data sets that can broaden the measurement of several social capital categories. The LNPS presented me with a limited number of variables from which to operationalize all five of the social capital categories. Community volunteerism was particularly difficult to assess given the data limitations. Organizational involvement specific to Latinos was also hard to quantify. Of course adding better measures and subtracting weaker ones from the regression models will improve validity and reliability. It would be premature to dismiss any of the five social capital rubrics due to the early stages of this research.

One issue that I was not able to resolve in this study is the role of bonding and bridging among Anglos. In order to make comparisons between Latinos and Anglos, there is need to assess how bonded and bridged white respondents are within their own context. This data set did not make such analysis possible, other than residential ethnic density variables that ultimately had weak substantive values. It would be interesting to explore how these two ethnic populations experience bridge and bond social capital differently and the implications of those variations.

Hero and Putnam have illustrated that states where minorities are large portions of the population, aggregate social capital is low (Putnam, 2000; Hero, 2003). This begs the question, 'why?'. What is it within each category of the social capital rubric that is causing the uneven participatory output? Since social capital is low in highly diverse states, is one dimension driving down the aggregate measure in different regions? How does one best measure social capital in the aggregate? Is the power of specific kinds of capital varied by state? Is social capital anymore useful in explaining the political realities of other minority groups than prior research has provided? This study works with a number of research questions related to social

capital and political behavior, but there are still many more related issues that can be addressed in future studies.

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Table 1: Bridge Activity and Bridge Social Capital

Model Summary

R .584 R Square .341

Adj R Sq .331

SE 1.291 F=36.474

Sig F 0.00

Independent Variables	B	SE
<i>Organizational Involvement</i>		
Religious Service Attendance	** .194	0.066
Attend PTA Meeting	** .271	0.081
Supervise Others at Work	** .271	0.080
<i>Engagement in Public Affairs</i>		
Follow current affairs	** .231	0.060
Discuss voter registration	* .185	0.081
Discuss community problem	** .385	0.083
<i>Community Volunteerism</i>		
Work to resolve problem	** 1.558	0.098
<i>Informal Sociability</i>		
Residential Ethnic Density-Mexican	-0.009	0.016
Residential Ethnic Density-P.R.	0.041	0.029
Residential Ethnic Density-Cuban	-0.029	0.022
<i>Social Trust</i>		
Government Trust	-0.029	0.061
Trust People	* .229	0.111
Helpfulness of People	0.151	0.087
<i>Controls</i>		
Ethnicity	-0.024	0.113
Gender	-0.056	0.079
Education	** .159	0.047
(Constant)	** -1.55	0.356

** Significant at the .01 level

* Significant at the .05 level

Table 2: Bond Activity and Bond Social Capital

Model Summary

R .593 R Square .351

Adj R Sq .277

SE 1.558 F =4.746

Sig F 0.00

Independent Variables	B	SE
<i>Organizational Involvement</i>		
Ethnicity of organization members	0.007	0.261
Membership in Latino organization	0.998	0.585
Latino organizations advocate interests	*0.645	0.284
<i>Engagement in Public Affairs</i>		
Attention to Latino Issues	**0.588	0.171
Discuss Latino community problems	0.497	0.268
Opportunity to vote for a Latino	**0.667	0.267
<i>Community Volunteerism</i>		
Work to resolve Latino issue	-0.116	0.276
<i>Informal Sociability</i>		
Experience Discrimination	0.364	0.270
Ethnic group of friends	-0.051	0.166
Latino shared culture	0.382	0.305
<i>Social Trust</i>		
Helpfulness of Latinos	*0.601	0.261
Latinos should help elect Latinos	0.129	0.141
Latino officials help Latinos	-0.081	0.132
<i>Controls</i>		
gender	-0.304	0.268
nativity	0.171	0.339
language	-0.128	0.189
education	-0.109	0.154
(Constant)	-1.945	1.157

** Significant at the .01 level

* Significant at the .05 level

Table 3: Bridge Activity and Bond Social Capital

Model Summary

R .487 R Square .238

Adj R Sq .151

SE 1.824 F =2.731

Sig F 0.00

Independent Variables	B	SE
<i>Organizational Involvement</i>		
Ethnicity of organization members	0.381	0.305
Membership in Latino organization	0.274	0.687
Latino organizations advocate interests	0.195	0.332
<i>Engagement in Public Affairs</i>		
Attention to Latino Issues	0.178	0.200
Discuss Latino community problems	*0.606	0.313
Opportunity to vote for a Latino	0.040	0.313
<i>Community Volunteerism</i>		
Work to resolve Latino issue	0.030	0.322
<i>Informal Sociability</i>		
Experience Discrimination	0.492	0.316
Ethnic group of friends	0.077	0.194
Latino shared culture	0.090	0.357
<i>Social Trust</i>		
Helpfulness of Latinos	0.410	0.306
Latinos should help elect Latinos	0.287	0.164
Latino officials help Latinos	-0.240	0.154
<i>Controls</i>		
gender	-0.341	0.313
nativity	-0.519	0.397
language	-0.218	0.221
education	0.104	0.181
(Constant)	0.480	1.351

* Significant at the .05 level

Table 4: Bond Activity and Bridge Social Capital

Model Summary

R .478 R Square .228

Adj R Sq .216

SE 1.108 F=18.214

Sig F 0.00

Independent Variables	B	SE
<i>Organizational Involvement</i>		
Religious Service Attendance	** .189	0.062
Attend PTA Meeting	** .203	0.077
Supervise Others at Work	0.063	0.076
<i>Engagement in Public Affairs</i>		
Follow current affairs	** .236	0.055
Discuss voter registration	* 0.147	0.077
Discuss community problem	** .303	0.079
<i>Community Volunteerism</i>		
Work to resolve problem	** .986	0.097
<i>Informal Sociability</i>		
Residential Ethnic Density-Mexican	0.004	0.015
Residential Ethnic Density-P.R.	0.030	0.026
Residential Ethnic Density-Cuban	-0.024	0.019
<i>Social Trust</i>		
Government Trust	-0.065	0.057
Trust People	0.189	0.112
Helpfulness of People	-0.102	0.082
<i>Controls</i>		
Gender	* -0.145	0.074
Education	0.043	0.042
(Constant)	** -1.064	0.313

** Significant at the .01 level

* Significant at the .05 level