

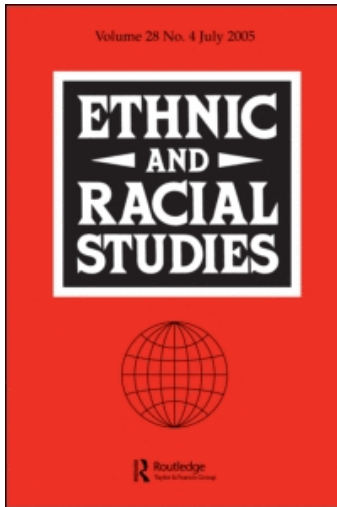
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Bridging the gap: transnational and ethnic organizations in the political incorporation of immigrants in the United States

Alejandro Portes, Cristina Escobar and Renelinda Arana

Abstract

This study was prompted by concerns about the ways in which immigrant organizations, especially those of a transnational character, may retard or prevent political integration among recent migrants to the United States. For this purpose, we constructed an inventory of all organizations created by Colombian, Dominican and Mexican immigrants in the United States, interviewed leaders of the twenty largest organizations from each group in person, and conducted a survey of 178 additional organizations by telephone or Internet. Results reveal a near-absence of perceived conflict between transnational activism and political incorporation. Almost without exception, leaders asserted that there was no contradiction between home-country loyalties and activities and US citizenship and voting. These results appear to reflect genuine conviction, rather than any social desirability syndrome. Objective indicators show that most organizations maintain close ties with US political authorities at various levels and engage in a number of US-focused civic and political activities. Determinants of such engagement are examined. Implications of the results for theory and public policy are discussed.

Keywords: Incorporation; organizations; transnationalism; human capital; Latin Americans; ethnocentrism.

The study of immigration in the social sciences has focused on two central problems: the determinants of migration out of the countries of origin and the adaptation of immigrants once they arrive in host societies. Concepts such as assimilation, acculturation and, more recently, incorporation have been extensively used in the sociological literature on immigration to provide conceptual guidance for the

analysis of the second topic (Alba and Nee 1997, 2003). A central concern of this literature has been the transformation of immigrants into citizens and the various ways in which they can affect the stability and direction of the American political system.

In recent years, a new concept, 'transnationalism', has introduced an alternative perspective on international migration studies. Instead of focusing on traditional concerns about the origins of immigrants and their adaptation to receiving societies, this emerging perspective concentrates on the continuing relations between immigrants and their places of origin and how this back-and-forth traffic builds complex social fields straddling national borders. In its contemporary usage, and as applied to immigrant populations, the term was introduced by social anthropologists who first noted the intense interaction between places of origin and destination and the impact that such activities had in communities at both ends of the migration stream (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994; Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999).

The emerging literature on immigrant transnationalism was characterized, until recently, by an empirical base consisting exclusively of case studies. These case studies provided a rich source of information on the phenomenon, but were incapable of quantifying its actual scope. A more recent quantitative study, to be described in greater detail below, found that immigrants involved in transnational economic, political, and socio-cultural activities represent a minority of their respective communities, but that they are usually their better-educated and more established members (Portes, Haller and Guarnizo 2002; Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003). Putting together traditional concerns with citizenship and assimilation and contemporary ones with immigrant transnationalism leads to a series of novel questions not elucidated so far in the immigration research literature: 1) What are the differences in internal structure, membership and influence of immigrant organizations oriented towards domestic ('ethnic') politics vs. those of a transnational character? 2) Are traditional organizations focused on US ethnic politics incompatible with those promoting enduring loyalty and ties with the homeland? 3) What is the bearing of these different organizational types on the short- and long-term political incorporation of different immigrant groups?

Organizations and political incorporation

Individual immigrants seldom enter American politics on their own account. Instead, they do so collectively in response to mobilizations organized by activists within their own communities or external ones seeking to address wrongs or achieve various goals (Glazer and Moynihan 1970; Castles 2004). For this reason, the specific organizational forms adopted by these mobilizations play a decisive role in the

process of political incorporation. While the politics of the first generations have always pivoted around homeland concerns, the realities of their new situations and the imperatives created by the settlement process gradually move them away from these concerns and into citizenship and participation in the politics of their new country (Greeley 1971; Hollifield 2004).

Ethnic political organization has been the requisite first step of incorporation, as immigrants and their offspring learned to become Americans by first being 'ethnics' (Dahl 1961; Rosenblum 1973). By defending their local interests in ward politics, they learned the ropes of the system, allowing their descendants to move up to larger and more ambitious endeavours (Portes and Rumbaut 1996, p. 139). On the other hand, the recent wave of transnational organizations and activism grounded in the 'shrinkage of space' brought about by technological innovation appears to be leading immigrant political activism in new directions (Levitt 2001; Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003). The actions of home-country governments interested in preserving the loyalty of their expatriates contribute heavily to this trend. Dual citizenship and dual nationality programmes have thus proliferated, allowing immigrants to preserve their legal standing in their home country while consolidating their economic and political position in the new (Castles 2004; Faist, Gerdes and Rieple 2004; Escobar 2007).

These developments have not been uncontroversial, as at least one school of thought has strongly argued that they undermine the political integrity of the host nation and blur loyalties that should be one and indivisible (Lamm and Imhoff 1985; Huntington 2004a). The oath of allegiance to the United States, taken by new citizens, includes an explicit renunciation of all past national loyalties. This is in line with the consensus in international law that all persons are entitled to citizenship in one nation, and *one nation only* (Freeman 1995; Faist, Gerdes and Rieple 2004). According to this school, transnational organizations, involving the unwelcome meddling of foreign governments, necessarily slow down the integration of immigrants into the host nation and compromise their successful political incorporation. At worst, they turn immigrants into a 'fifth column' of foreign advocates undermining the interests of the society that received them (Brimelow 1995; Huntington 2004b).

Another school of thought argues, however, that rising transnationalism is nothing but the natural response from below to an increasingly integrated global system and that it is not incompatible with successful integration and political participation in the host society. Authors working from this perspective believe that dual citizenship can actually facilitate incorporation by removing the stigma attached to renouncing old loyalties and that the experience

acquired through participation in transnational organizations can be usefully shifted to domestic political concerns, giving immigrants greater voices in their adopted country (Escobar 2004; Vertovec 2004). Thus, ethnic and transnational politics may not be incompatible but may reinforce each other, giving rise to positive synergies that promote incorporation.

These debates have taken place, however, in an informational vacuum where arguments for one or another position are backed mostly by rhetoric rather than empirical fact. So far, the controversy belongs more to the realm of political philosophy than social science. For example, no exhaustive inventory exists today of the number, types and characteristics of immigrant organizations nor is there any systematic comparative study of the differences between those primarily concerned with US domestic issues and those focused on issues and goals in home countries.¹ Several rich ethnographies on the transnational activities of various immigrant groups exist (Kyle 2000; Landolt 2001; Levitt 2001). However, no study has provided an authoritative typology of these activities or constructed an organizational 'map' of specific immigrant communities. Without this information, it is hard to gauge how different forms of political organization affect immigrant communities and promote or retard their incorporation.

As immigration continuously increases the absolute number of foreign-born persons in the United States and their relative proportion in the population, the question of how and when they will incorporate into the American body politic acquires more than academic importance. Will they, as followers of Huntington and other nativists contend, wreak havoc with American political institutions and culture as they bring in foreign ways and values? Or will they follow the more traditional assimilation route, with transnationalism paving the way and eventually yielding to full political integration?

Plan of study

This study focuses on Latin American immigrants for several reasons. First, they have been at the forefront of recent controversies, as opponents of immigration argue that they pose a particularly serious 'challenge' to the political integrity of the nation. Second, at over 40 million, Hispanics compose the largest ethnic group in the nation, a trend that has been fuelled by massive migration from Mexico and other Latin American countries. Third, Hispanics, including first-generation immigrants, have ceased to be a regional presence to become a truly national phenomenon. States like Georgia and the Carolinas that barely had members of this population in 1990 saw their number increase by over 1,000 per cent in the last intercensal

period (Massey, Durand and Malone 2002; Portes and Rumbaut 2006: ch. 2).

Colombian, Dominican and Mexican immigrants are the nationalities selected for this study. While these groups share a common language and culture, they are very different in contexts of exit and reception which may affect, in turn, their patterns of political incorporation. Colombians are a relatively recent inflow, now exceeding one million persons and concentrated in New York City and Miami.² Colombians tend to be urban in origin and to have higher levels of education than other Latin immigrants. Their departure has been motivated by deteriorating economic and political conditions in their country. Thus, while the majority of Colombians are legal immigrants, there is a growing number of undocumented migrants and political asylees among them (Guarnizo, Sanchez and Roach 1999; Escobar 2004).

Dominicans have been arriving in New York City and in smaller cities along the New York–Boston corridor since the 1960s. They now comprise over one million and represent the largest immigrant group in New York City (Itzigsohn *et al.* 1999).³ New York is second only to the capital city of Santo Domingo in the size of its Dominican population. This is mostly a working-class inflow, but with a sizeable component of middle-class professionals. Motivations for departure are mostly economic, since the country of origin is at peace and there is a dense traffic between the island and New York for family and political reasons. All major Dominican parties have representatives in New York and in cities along the New York–Boston corridor, especially in Providence (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Portes and Guarnizo 1991).

Mexicans are, by far, the largest immigrant group in the United States, numbering over 12 million persons and representing close to one-third of the foreign-born population of the United States. Historically and at present Mexico has effectively functioned as the principal manual labour reservoir for its northern neighbour. The end of the Bracero programme in 1964 led to the criminalization of this labour flow and to the rapid growth of the category of illegal or unauthorized immigrants among the US Mexican population. As is well known, Mexican immigration has traditionally been concentrated in the south west and in Los Angeles, San Diego, Houston, Dallas and Chicago. More recently, this flow has moved east in search of stable agricultural and urban employment. It is this massive displacement that primarily accounts for the phenomenal growth of the Hispanic population in the eastern seaboard area and for its transformation from a regional into a truly national presence (Massey, Durand and Malone 2002; Portes 2007).

Table 1 presents a summary of the characteristics of the three selected immigrant groups and their countries of origin. Their cultural similarities and systematic structural differences provide a suitable background for analysing the politics of immigrant incorporation today. We begin with a summary of the recent empirical literature bearing on this topic and the hypotheses derived from it that provide a suitable framework for the present project.

Past research and hypotheses

Two recent sets of studies are helpful in casting light on the political behaviour of recent Latin American immigrants. Studies of dual citizenship in Latin America have found that the passage of laws allowing it by Latin American sending countries has accelerated US citizenship acquisition by Latin American immigrants, opening the door to their political participation (Jones-Correa 2003; Escobar 2004; Mazzolari 2005). Dual citizenship allows immigrants to maintain one foot, as it were, in their home country while hastening their political incorporation into America (Guarnizo, Sanchez and Roach 1999).

The Comparative Immigrant Entrepreneurship Project [CIEP] is the only study so far that has attempted to quantify the extent and involvement of first-generation immigrants in transnational activities. The CIEP conducted a representative survey of over 1,200 immigrant family heads from Colombia, the Dominican Republic and El Salvador in four metropolitan areas: New York; Washington, DC; Los Angeles; and Providence, RI. The weighted sample was statistically representative of approximately 187,000 adult immigrants in these four areas (Itzigsohn and Saucido 2002; Portes 2003).

Results from the CIEP yielded three important conclusions: first, males and married adults are significantly more likely to take part in these activities; second, education leads to greater transnational involvement, with both a high school diploma and a college degree greatly increasing participation in such activities. Third, US citizenship acquisition has no effect on whether an immigrant engages in transnational politics or not, while years of residence in the US significantly *increase* the likelihood of such engagement. Each additional year of US residence raised the level of transnational participation in this sample by close to 5 per cent, with other variables controlled for (Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003).

These results indicate that transnational politics are not a feature of the most recent or poorer immigrants but rather, on the contrary, of settled adults – married, with a higher level of education and with more experience living in American society. These are precisely the individuals who are the best candidates for rapid political incorporation. The fact that US citizenship acquisition neither increases nor

Table 1. *Colombian, Dominican and Mexican immigration: characteristics of countries of origin and migrant communities*

Characteristics	Colombia	Dominican Republic	Mexico
<i>Country of origin</i>			
Population (in millions) ¹	46.80	9.20	107.50
Urban population (%) ¹	76.60	65.60	76.50
GDP per capita (\$) ¹	2,663	3,815	7,239
Gini Index of Inequality ¹	.58	.57	.53
Average years of education ²	8.60	8.20	8.60
Open unemployment (%) ¹	14.00	18.00	4.70
Informal employment (%) ²	46.30	44.00	44.10
Population below poverty line (%)	46.80	47.50	35.50
Capital city	Bogotá	Santo Domingo	Mexico DF
<i>Immigrants in the US</i>			
Number ³	470,684	764,945	9,177,487
Percentage of Hispanic population	1.30	2.10	58.50
Legal immigrants, 2006	43,151	38,069	173,753
Percentage of total legal immigration, 2006	3.40	3.00	13.70
Rank in total legal immigration	6	7	1
Professional specialty occupations (%)	24.00	15.30	8.10
College graduates (%)	21.60	9.40	4.30
Median household income (\$)	37,662	28,192	31,503
Poverty rate (%)	14.60	28.30	24.40

Table 1 (Continued)

Characteristics	Colombia	Dominican Republic	Mexico
Types of immigration	Mostly legal; increasing numbers of unauthorized immigrants and asylees	Legal and unauthorized	Mostly unauthorized, but sizeable number of legal immigrants
Principal cities of destination, 2006	Miami (16.3%) New York (10.7%)	New York (48.7%) Bergen-Passaic (5.1%)	Los Angeles (12.2%) Chicago (5.6%) Houston (5.3%)

Sources: Economic Commission for Latin American and Caribbean 2006 *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean*; Economic Commission for Latin American and Caribbean 2006 *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean*; World Bank 2003 *World Bank Indicators Database*; US Bureau of the Census 2003 *Public Use Microdata, 2000 Census*; US Bureau of the Census *Foreign-born Profiles: 2000 Census*; Office of Immigration Statistics, Department of Homeland Security 2006 *Annual Flow Report*; Office of Immigration Statistics, Department of Homeland Security 2005 *Profiles on Legal Permanent Resident*; United Nations 2002 *World Urbanization Prospects*, 2001 Revision, ST/ESA/SER/A.216, Table A-2.

Notes

¹c. 2005.

²Urban areas; economically active population (ages 25–59).

³US census figures. Estimates from sending country governments put resident Colombian and Dominican populations in the US at over 1 million and the Mexican population there at over 12 million.

decreases the chances of transnational participation adds to our doubts that transnational activism is incompatible with successful integration. Based on these earlier findings, it is possible to hypothesize that the organizational life of immigrant communities is not as segmented as it appears at first glance and that transnational organizations may actually serve as vehicles for successful political incorporation.

Finally, the very significant differences in transnational involvement among the three CIEP nationalities, despite a common language and culture, leads to the hypothesis that the level and modes of such activities for specific immigrant groups reflect directly the character of their contexts of exit and reception. The key missing part of the puzzle is the immigrant organizations themselves – reasons for their emergence, the character of their membership and their goals. So far, no study of contemporary immigrant politics has focused on this level of analysis. Since organizations are the main vehicle for political incorporation of immigrants, it is clear that the next step in advancing knowledge in this field must target them. Summarizing the previous discussion, the three questions raised in the introduction can be re-phrased as follows:

- What is the character and density of organizational life in different immigrant communities?
- What are the leaders' views about immigrant political incorporation and how do these differ between transnational and domestic ethnic organizations?
- What is the level and character of US-focused political activism by immigrant organizations and how does it differ by nationality and by organizational focus?

Research design

The study, labelled the Comparative Immigrant Organizations Project [CIOP] addresses these issues through three interrelated methods:

- Development of an inventory of all organizations created by immigrants of each target nationality in its principal areas of concentration.
- A face-to-face survey of leaders of the largest organizations focused on the history, characteristics, goals, activities, contacts and projects (abroad and in the US) of the organizations and on the leaders' own beliefs and histories.
- A supplementary survey of a larger sample of organizational leaders conducted via telephone and Internet on the basis of a shorter instrument.

The inventory of immigrant organizations was compiled through Internet searches after preliminary discussions with informants from each national group. This compilation was made possible by three factors:

- The existence of specialized programmes in each sending country (in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs in Colombia and Mexico) to promote ties with their immigrants and, in the case of Mexico, of specialized consular offices serving the expatriate population in its principal areas of concentration.
- The existence of local and regional confederations of migrant organizations that bring together a sizeable number of them.
- The fact that most established organizations have a website or, at least, an email address.

As a result of these various searches, CIOP was able to compile the first comprehensive and up-to-date inventory of Colombian, Dominican and Mexican organizations in the United States.⁴ From these inventories, we selected the twenty largest and better-established organizations from each group for personal interviews with their leaders. This was followed by identification of an additional sample of mid-size and smaller organizations per immigrant nationality whose leaders were administered abbreviated versions of the questionnaire by telephone or asked to respond via the Internet. Leaders of immigrant organizations are natural informants about characteristics of the latter as well as the persons best placed to gauge their orientations towards or against political integration and nationalism. The questionnaire used for these surveys included items to differentiate between transnational and domestically oriented organizations as well as questions to gauge attitudes towards the preservation of home-country roots and the best means of adaptation to American society. In agreement with the issues listed previously, information was elicited on the extent of civic/political activities in the United States, similar activities abroad and number and composition of the organization's membership. Table 2 presents frequency distributions of organizations inventoried by nationality and type.

Results

Descriptive characteristics

Table 3 presents frequency distributions of CIOP organizations by nationality, focus of activities, type and location of field interviews. Like individual immigrants, Mexican organizations far outnumber those created by the other two nationalities and this is reflected both in

Table 2. *Inventoried immigrant organizations by type*

Type	Nationality			Total %
	Colombian %	Dominican %	Mexican %	
Civic/cultural organizations	47.30	30.00	6.82	16.23
Other cultural organizations	10.16	15.29	0.54	3.66
Economic organizations	4.44	2.35	0.70	1.52
Home-town associations	1.90	3.53	63.80	47.04
Federations of home-town associations	0.00	0.00	4.26	3.10
State-of-origin associations	0.32	1.18	8.68	6.48
International philanthropic organizations (Lions, Rotaries, Kiwanis)	6.98	3.53	0.00	1.58
Home-country philanthropies	3.17	0.00	0.00	0.56
Political committees	7.93	10.00	0.46	2.70
Professional associations	8.89	14.12	0.70	3.44
Religious groups	1.59	1.18	0.23	0.56
Social service agencies	2.86	17.06	3.26	4.51
Sports groups	0.63	1.76	10.00	7.55
Student organizations	3.81	0.00	0.54	1.07
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
N	315	170	1,290	1,775

the inventory and in the composition of the sample. Slightly more than half of all organizations were dedicated to domestic/ethnic activities in the United States, with the rest having a transnational or mixed focus. When asked to identify the principal goals of the organization, respondents in the telephone/Internet survey gave a variety of responses among which 'civic/cultural', 'educational' and 'social service agency' were paramount. In face-to-face interviews, it became clear that civic/cultural organizations and social agencies invariably had an educational agenda, which thus proved a redundant category. While home-town associations have been created by all three nationalities, their absolute numbers and their membership in umbrella confederations are unique Mexican phenomena. Invariably, these confederations bring together local committees from a single Mexican state, although more than one such federation from a given state can exist in different US cities. The table also identifies the seven main metropolitan areas in which face-to-face interviews for the study were conducted.

Table 4 presents a breakdown of focus of activity of sampled organizations by nationality and illustrates each cell with specific examples. The table shows that the domestic/transnational distribution is not the same across nationalities: that is, while Mexican and Colombian organizations are about evenly divided, the domestic focus predominates among those created by Dominicans. This reflects the

Table 3. Descriptive characteristics of sampled organizations

	Face-to-face	Telephone/ Internet	Total	
			N	%
<i>Nationality</i> ¹				
Colombian	20	30	50	20.9
Dominican	22	34	56	23.4
Mexican	26	107	133	55.7
<i>Focus</i> ²				
Ethnic/domestic	32	108	140	57.1
Transnational/mixed	34	71	105	42.9
<i>Type</i> ³				
Civic/cultural	19	109	128	29.6
Educational		80	80	18.4
Social service agency/health services	8	70	78	17.9
Professional		28	28	6.6
Home-town committees and federations	24		24	5.5
Political	1	20	21	4.8
Sports	2	12	14	3.2
Economic	8		8	1.8
Religious	2	5	7	1.6
Other/multiple	4	42	46	10.6
<i>Location</i> ⁴				
New York/New Jersey	30			44.1
Los Angeles	13			19.2
Philadelphia	6			8.8
Miami	5			7.3
Chicago	4			5.9
Boston/Providence	4			5.9
Houston	3			4.4
Other	3			4.4
N	68	179	247	100.0

Notes

¹Nationality of eight organizations in telephone/Internet survey listed as 'mixed'.

²Two cases missing in face-to-face survey.

³Respondents in face-to-face interviews were asked to give a single answer to this question; respondents answering via telephone or Internet could give up to three. The total number of organizational activities mentioned by both types of respondents was 434.

⁴Location of face-to-face field interviews only.

significant number of social service agencies and health-care centres created in recent years to tend to the needs of the Dominican migrant population in New York City and along the New York–Boston corridor.

Table 4. *Examples of transnational and domestically-oriented organizations by nationality*

Nationality ¹	<i>Colombian</i>		<i>Dominican</i>		<i>Mexican</i>	
	Domestic 54.0	Transnational ² 46.0	Domestic 74.6	Transnational ² 25.4	Domestic 48.5	Transnational ² 51.5
<i>Examples</i>	1. Centro Civico Colombiano (CCC), New York	1. Fundación Corazón a Corazón (Heart-to-Heart Foundation), New York	1. Alianza Dominicana, New York	1. Fundación Cañafisteros de Bani, Boston	1. AMEXCAN, North Carolina	1. Zacatecan Federation of Los Angeles
	2. Colombian Association of Journalists, Houston	2. Montenegro Civico Internacional, New Jersey	2. Hermanas Mirabal Service Center, New York	2. Asociación de Barahoneros, Boston	2. Mexican Association of Perth Amboy, New Jersey	2. Casa Puebla of New York
	3. Colombian-American Service Association (CASA), Miami	3. Fundación del Divino Niño (Foundation of the Divine Child), New York	3. Casa Dominicana of Pennsylvania	3. Association of Dominican Provinces, New York	3. Mexican Business Council, Houston	3. Durango Unido Federation of Chicago
N		50		56		133

Notes

¹Nationality of eight organizations in telephone/Internet survey listed as 'mixed'.

²Includes organizations with a mixed domestic/transnational orientation and those involved exclusively in transnational activities.

In their own voices

The following narratives illustrate the tone and flavour of leaders' remarks and serve to clarify the meaning of statistical results presented next.

Maria de los Angeles Velasco, President of the Club Hijos de Ciudad Zapata, Michoacan, interviewed in Los Angeles, September 2005⁵

Q. What is the principal objective of your organization?

Productive projects that create jobs over there, although right now we are building bathrooms in a school named Arturo O. Sanchez. Ten bathrooms; there was only one for the entire school and there will be another phase with the construction of the auditorium in the Tajimaron Prep school.

Q. What activities does the organization do in the U.S.?

Give information and orientation to those who need legal aid. The [Mexican] Consulate has lawyers that provide this aid for free. We also help those who go to jail, orienting them not to sign their own deportation papers because there is always a lawyer that can defend them. This is important.

Q. Has the organization become involved in any civic or political activity in the U.S.?

Well, a long time ago, we supported the campaign of Mr Reagan, QED, when he came to the Santa Ines church and we also supported the campaign for the legislature of Gloria Molina. She won. She now has a fabulous job, and she supports us, Latinos.

Q. Should Mexican immigrants naturalize American?

But, of course.

Miguel A. Quevedo, President of Asociación Dominicana de Pennsylvania, interviewed in Philadelphia, July 2006

Q. What is the principal objective of your organization?

To promote Dominican culture, to promote the well-being of Dominicans in the U.S. But, this has an ideological basis underneath which is to promote contacts with our roots, that our children learn about their roots, and that other ethnic groups know about our culture so that they understand us better and learn to respect us.

Q. And the organization is active mostly here or in the Dominican Republic?

In both. For example, there was a recent natural disaster, a flood that destroyed the town of Jimani, and we here collected money, clothing, medicines. We took the shipment ourselves and handed it over to the townspeople over there.

Q. In your judgment, does your organization contribute to the integration of Dominicans to U.S. society?

When we arrived, there were few Dominicans and the general opinion was that Dominicans sold drugs. Then we had to demonstrate that this was not true, that there is a Dominican community that works, that studies, that moves ahead. Now there is greater acceptance of Dominicans by both other Latins and Americans. And greater acceptance helps to better integrate Dominicans here.

Q. Is it possible to be a good Dominican and, at the same time, be an American citizen?

But, of course, I am Dominican to the core and I am a good citizen here too.

Leaders' attitudes

The preceding statements suitably introduce the presentation of survey results, because they illustrate one of their main implications. Both surveys contain a battery of questions aimed at gauging leaders' evaluations of the bearing of their organizations on the political incorporation of immigrants into American society and their retention of concerns and loyalties to their countries of origin. In addition, the Internet/telephone survey inquired about actual participation of members in US politics and their level of interest in American political affairs and those of their home countries.

Leaders' statements should not naively be taken at face value: that is, as implying that their organizations actually do or accomplish what they say. Instead, the battery of attitudinal items aims at establishing their general orientation towards the countries that they left behind and the one that has adopted them. The research literature on ethnic mobilizations indicates that such attitudes can range from oppositional, hostile and even secessionary to non-conflictual and assimilative (Rosenblum 1973; Barrera 1980; Acuña 1981; Fitzpatrick 1987). In the present context, expectations about leaders' attitudes could go either way, depending on whether one adopts a Huntington-like sceptical or an integrative stance. Table 5 presents the results.

Leaders' attitudes are highly consistent in direction. They assert that: 1) the organization contributes to the successful incorporation of immigrants to American society; 2) they simultaneously help immigrants maintain linkages with their home country; 3) there is absolutely no contradiction between both goals. Most respondents 'could not see' that successful integration to America and continuing home-country interests could be zero sum; instead, they viewed them as complementary. Close to 90 per cent believed that their organizations help members integrate better into their new surroundings;

Table 5. Leaders' evaluations of organizational effects on immigrant political incorporation

Item	Colombian %	Dominican %	Mexican %	Totals ¹ % (N)
1. 'This organization contributes to the successful integration of its members to American society.'				
Agrees	78.00	83.93	90.23	86.64
Neutral/unsure	10.00	8.93	6.77	7.69
Disagrees	12.00	7.14	3.01	5.67
				100.00
2. 'This organization contributes to the successful integration of the [Colombian/Dominican/Mexican] immigrant community to American society.'				
Agrees	72.00	85.71	86.47	83.40
Neutral/unsure	6.00	8.93	6.02	6.48
Disagrees	22.00	5.36	7.52	10.12
				100.00
3. '[Colombian/Dominican/Mexican] immigrants should acquire U.S. citizenship as soon as possible.' ²				
Agrees	85.00	90.91	96.15	91.18
Neutral/unsure	10.00	9.09	3.85	7.35
Disagrees	5.00	0.00	0.00	1.47
				100.00
4. 'Participation in this organization helps its members maintain ties with their home country.'				
Agrees	96.00	83.93	82.71	84.21
Neutral/unsure	4.00	7.14	9.02	7.69
Disagrees	0.00	8.93	8.27	8.10
				100.00
5. 'This organization helps the [Colombian/Dominican/Mexican] community maintain ties with their country of origin.'				
Agrees	80.00	66.07	84.96	78.14
Neutral/unsure	6.00	12.50	6.77	8.10
Disagrees	14.00	21.43	8.27	13.77
				100.00
6. 'Participation in this organization helps its members secure employment, social connections, and personal assistance.'				
Agrees	62.00	80.36	71.43	72.06
Neutral/unsure	12.00	7.14	13.53	11.74
Disagree	26.00	12.50	15.04	16.20
				100.00
7. 'Participation in this organization retards the acquisition of U.S. citizenship.'				
Agrees	2.00	5.36	2.26	2.83
Neutral/unsure	20.00	8.93	18.80	16.60
Disagrees	78.00	85.71	78.95	80.57
				100.00

Table 5 (Continued)

Item	Colombian %	Dominican %	Mexican %	Totals ¹ % (N)
8. 'This organization contributes to more active participation of [Colombian/Dominican/ Mexican] immigrants in U.S. politics.'				
Agrees	38.00	75.00	66.17	61.94
Neutral/Unsure	18.00	8.93	17.29	15.38
Disagrees	44.00	16.07	15.54	22.67
				100.00
9. 'It is possible to acquire U.S. citizenship and continue being a good [Colombian/Dominican/Mexican].'				
Agrees	94.00	94.64	89.47	90.28
Neutral/unsure	6.00	5.36	8.27	8.50
Disagrees	0.00	0.00	2.26	1.22
				100.00
10. '[Colombian/Dominican/Mexican] immigrants place their obligations toward their home country above their integration to American society.'				
Agrees	22.00	28.57	13.53	18.62
Neutral/unsure	14.00	28.57	18.05	20.24
Disagree	62.00	42.86	68.42	61.14
				100.00
11. 'It is possible for immigrants to integrate to U.S. society and continue taking part in their home country politics.'				
Agrees	80.00	83.93	86.47	83.00
Neutral/unsure	6.00	16.07	7.52	10.93
Disagrees	14.00	0.00	6.02	6.07
				100.00
12. 'It is possible to remain loyal to [Colombia/Dominican Republic/Mexico] and, at the same time, be a good American citizen.'				
Agrees	98.00	92.86	95.49	94.74
Neutral/unsure	2.00	5.36	2.26	3.64
Disagrees	0.00	1.79	2.26	1.62
				100.00
Totals	50	56	133	239

Notes

¹Total percentages are based on the full sample, including organizations reporting a mixed membership among target nationalities.

²Based on face-to-face survey only.

almost 100 per cent endorsed naturalization 'as soon as possible'; and over 95 per cent asserted that it is entirely possible for an immigrant to become a US citizen and continue to maintain close ties with his/her home country. Colombian leaders were somewhat less sanguine in asserting that their organizations contribute to the effective incorporation of immigrants into US politics, but, with this

and other variations, the pattern of results is consistent across questions and nationalities.

These results could be objected to on the grounds that they represent a social desirability syndrome in which organizational leaders respond 'as they are expected'. However, even if this were the case, it would tell us something valuable about their collective willingness to accept such expectations for, in principle, it would have been entirely possible for them to adopt the opposite stance. The fact that they did not and that their independently elicited attitudes are near-unanimous in orientation tells us something significant about the general culture of Latin immigrant organizations in the US. From this perspective, the objection that these are 'socially desirable' responses is entirely *post factum*: that is, arising once it has become established that the general tenor of responses is strongly pro-integrative, rather than oppositional.

The battery of attitudinal items was subsequently factor analysed, utilizing a principal components routine with Varimax orthogonal rotation. The analysis revealed two main factors with eigenvalues superior to 2.00 – the standard criterion for a significant latent variable (Hayduk 1987; Bollen 1989). Items 1, 2, 3 and 8 in Table 5 loaded significantly and positively on the first factor and item 7 did so negatively. This first factor represents an orientation strongly favouring immigrant incorporation into American society and can thus be labelled 'Pro-US Integration'. Items 9 and 12 loaded significantly and positively on the second factor and item 10 did so negatively. This factor can be appropriately labelled 'Dual Loyalty'. Unit-weighted indices based on results from this analysis were constructed and will be used in multivariate analyses of determinants of organizational behaviour below.

Table 6 presents complementary results based on leaders' reports of the actual length of US residence, political activism and political interests of members of their respective organizations. Results show that solid majorities of members are: a) registered to vote in the United States; and b) voted in the last (2004) US presidential election. On the other hand, actual levels of concern with home-country politics are much lower, with less than 30 per cent reporting that a majority of members take part or are interested in home-country politics. These results point to a predominance of US-based political interests over those based in the home nations and accord with two earlier trends reported in the transnational research literature: 1) members of organizations are usually older and better established in the host society (i.e. able to acquire US citizenship, register and vote); 2) transnational activism in immigrant communities is exceptional, with only a minority of members being regularly involved (Itzigsohn *et al.* 1999; Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003).

Table 6. *Political characteristics of members of immigrant organizations*

Characteristic	Colombian %	Dominican %	Mexican %	Totals ¹ %
Length of US residence				
Less than 5 years	2.17	2.00	0.86	1.75
From 5 to 10 years	15.22	10.00	12.07	12.72
More than 10 years	76.09	84.00	73.28	75.44
All their lives	6.52	4.00	13.79	10.09
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
N	46	50	116	212
Members registered to vote in US elections²				
None	0.00	3.13	4.95	3.39
Less than 20%	21.43	3.13	16.83	14.69
Less than 50%	3.57	6.25	10.89	8.47
Fifty per cent or more	60.71	84.38	53.47	61.58
Unsure	14.29	3.13	13.86	11.86
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
N	28	32	101	161
Members who voted in last (2004) US election²				
None	0.00	6.24	4.85	2.90
Less than 20%	21.43	0.00	14.56	12.85
Less than 50%	7.14	3.13	5.83	5.59
Fifty per cent or more	50.00	87.50	48.54	54.75
Unsure	21.43	3.13	26.21	22.91
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
N	28	32	103	163
Percentage of members who are interested or participate in home country politics²				
None	14.29	9.38	25.49	20.79
Less than 20%	28.57	28.13	14.71	19.10
Less than 50%	7.14	21.88	12.75	12.36
Fifty per cent or more	39.29	34.38	26.47	28.09
Unsure	10.71	6.25	20.59	19.66
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
N	28	32	102	162

Notes

1 Total percentages are based on the full sample including organizations reporting a mixed membership among target nationalities.

2 Internet/telephone survey only.

Dominicans appear to be the most politically integrated groups, judging by their reported rates of electoral registration and voting in US elections. However, this does not prevent many of these immigrants from continuing to be concerned with politics at home. Least

interested in home political activities are Mexican immigrants. This pattern may reflect the late access of these immigrants to the electoral process in their country. While Dominicans abroad were granted the right to vote in their country's elections in 1997, Mexicans did not do so until 2006 (Escobar 2007). These differences attest to the significance of national contexts of exit, but, nevertheless, the overriding tendency is for members of all immigrant organizations to be involved in the American electoral system.

Organizational activism

The CIOP surveys also produced more objective indicators of organizational involvement in US political and civic activities. There are three such indicators: 1) the existence of organizational ties with US political authorities at the local, state and federal levels; 2) whether the organization has taken part in civic/political activities in the United States; 3) the nature and number of these activities. The first dimension was ascertained only in personal interviews with leaders of the largest organizations; the second and third were measured in both surveys. Tables 7 and 8 present results, broken down by nationality.

The data in Table 7 show that three-quarters of sampled immigrant organizations maintain regular ties with US political authorities and that two-thirds (65 per cent) have engaged in some form of civic or political activism in the United States. These include one or more of the following: a) supporting candidates to elective office;⁶ b) organizing political debates; c) providing civic/political information to members of the organization; d) providing civic/political information to the immigrant community as a whole; e) participating in civic and political campaigns; f) other/mixed. The table indicates that Dominican organizations are the most politically active in the United States, and Colombian ones the least. Only about half of Colombian organizations are politically active and two-fifths have no ties at all with US authorities.

Table 8 presents the distribution of the number of civic/political activities that sampled organizations initiate. The figures show again that Colombian groups are the least active in American politics and Dominican ones the most. Almost a quarter of Dominican organizations report carrying out four or more such activities, a far larger figure than among the other nationalities. The table also indicates that transnational organizations are almost as involved in US civic and political activities as those with an exclusively domestic focus. The only notable difference between both types is at the high end, with domestically oriented associations being more likely to conduct four or more such activities than transnational ones.

Table 7. *Political ties and civic/political activities of immigrant organizations in the US*

	Nationality			Totals %
	Colombian %	Dominican %	Mexican %	
Organization maintains regular ties with US political authorities at the local, state or federal levels. ¹				
No	40.00	22.73	15.38	25.00
Yes	60.00	77.27	84.62	75.00
N	20	22	26	68
Organization participates in civic/political activities in the United States. ²				
No	48.00	28.57	33.08	35.63
Yes	52.00	71.43	66.92	64.37
N	50	56	133	239

*Notes*¹Question included in face-to-face survey only.²Total percentages are based on the full sample including organizations reporting a mixed membership among target nationalities.

These results suggest that our original emphasis on organizational focuses, prompted by the past theoretical literature and the fear in some quarters that transnational activism would slow down or derail political incorporation, was misplaced. *Both* types of organizations, in fact, participate in US politics at about the same level. On the other

Table 8. *Count of civic/political activities in the United States by nationality of organization and ethnic vs. transnational focus*

Nationality	Count of US civic political activities					Totals %
	None %	One %	Two %	Three %	Four or more%	
Colombian	47.92	22.92	14.58	12.50	2.08	100.00
Dominican	29.63	9.26	22.2	14.82	24.07	100.00
Mexican	32.56	20.93	24.81	15.50	6.20	100.00
Mixed	60.00	0.00	20.00	6.67	13.33	100.00
N ¹	87	43	54	35	24	243
<i>Organizational focus</i>						
Ethnic/domestic	34.29	18.57	20.72	12.14	14.28	100.00
Transnational/mixed	40.19	15.89	23.36	16.82	3.74	100.00
Totals	36.84	17.41	21.86	14.17	9.72	100.00
N ¹	86	42	54	35	24	241

*Note*¹Missing data excluded.

hand, consistent national differences accord with the original hypothesis that distinct contexts of exit affect the organizational life and patterns of incorporation of immigrant groups. The reasons why Colombian associations are the least participatory and Dominican ones the most will be examined at greater length below. For the present, it suffices to note that, regardless of these differences and consistent with individual findings reported previously, the overall trend is for a majority of immigrant organizations to become involved in US politics, either by maintaining regular contact with public officials or by implementing informational campaigns, political debates and civic programmes.

Multivariate findings

Theory

Having established the general distributional patterns bearing on the conflicting theoretical positions at the start, it is also important to examine potential determinants both of leaders' attitudes and of organizational behaviour. The pioneering nature of the CIOP is reflected in the dearth of theoretical orientations for this analysis. Having established, for example, that leaders' attitudes are uniformly pro-integrative, we do not have much guidance as to what factors may account for variations in them. The fact that transnational involvement and political incorporation turn out to be mutually supportive rather than oppositional allows us to draw on the earlier CIEP survey on determinants of individual-level transnationalism for possible determinants of attitudes and organizational behaviour. As noted previously, earlier findings indicated that better-educated and higher-status immigrants and those with longer US residence are significantly more likely to take part in transnational activities. By extension, we may hypothesize that leaders with these characteristics will be more likely to endorse a pro-US integrative stance and that organizations composed of members with similar traits will be engaged in greater civic and political participation.

Two other factors may bear on both dependent variables: first, national contexts of exit which, as seen previously, lead to significant differences at the tabular level; second, the initial goals and orientation of organizations which, in turn, have two dimensions: a) their transnational vs. domestic focus; b) the main type of activities to which they are dedicated, as indicated by the frequency distributions in Tables 2 and 3. Both dimensions may be hypothesized to influence significantly the pattern and level of US-oriented organizational activism.

Leaders' opinions

The two indices derived from the factor analysis above may be used as measures of the first dimension of interest, leaders' attitudes. In practice, the Dual Loyalty Index is a near constant, since almost all respondents endorsed the compatibility of US citizenship and political participation with resilient home-country loyalties. This result has, of course, a direct bearing on the original theoretical positions, but renders the index useless for additional analysis.

The pro-US Integration Index is also a skewed variable, with leaders leaning heavily towards the pro-integration pole. For this reason, we performed two variants of the analyses, modelling the variable as a continuous measure and as a trichotomous one ('low', 'medium' and 'high' integration) using a multinomial logistic routine. Predictors include organizational characteristics – such as size of the membership, national origin, size of the budget, number of employees and transnational vs. domestic orientation plus characteristics of the membership, such as average human capital (constructed as the unit-weighted sum of average education, occupation and work experience) and average length of US residence. Appendix A presents a description of all variables employed in the analyses.

The two models, based on the full sample of organizations, are presented in Table 9. The same pattern emerges from both the OLS and logistic routines, indicating a dearth of significant effects. The only strong predictor of differences in US integration attitudes is national origin, with Colombian leaders being notably less inclined in this direction than Dominicans (the reference category). Notably, neither the character of the organization (civic/cultural vs. others) nor its focus affects leaders' attitudes. Substantively, this means that leaders of transnational organizations are as likely as those of domestically oriented ones to hold opinions favourable to integration. This absence of effects once again reinforces the conclusion about the non-existence of a sharp divide between both types.

The face-to-face leader sample, although smaller, contains a larger number of potential predictors, including formal/informal status of the organization and number of employees. We re-ran both models on this sample and present the results in Table 10. In this instance, the average human capital of members, the average monthly expenses of the organization and its character as a civic/cultural group all display positive effects. Put differently, the more educated members are, the wealthier the organization is and the more 'civic' its orientation, the more likely its leaders are to be pro-integration into American society and politics. These results correspond in general with theoretical expectations based on the earlier CIEP study.

Table 9. Pro-US integration attitudes of leaders of immigrant organizations and their determinants

Predictor	Multinomial logistic regression					
	Least squares regression		I ¹		II ²	
	b	t-score	b	z-score	b	z-score
National origin: ³						
Colombian	-1.44	-3.7***	-0.51	-0.9 n.s.	-1.71	-3.0***
Mexican	-0.13	-0.4 n.s. ⁴	0.10	0.2 n.s.	-0.44	-0.9 n.s.
Average human capital	-0.02	-0.2 n.s.	-0.03	-0.1 n.s.	-0.03	-0.2 n.s.
Average length of US residence	0.19	1.5 n.s.	0.09	0.5 n.s.	0.26	1.4 n.s.
Number of members	0.00	0.7 n.s.	0.00	1.2 n.s.	0.00	1.2 n.s.
Transnational organization ⁵	0.04	0.2 n.s.	0.07	0.2 n.s.	0.22	0.6 n.s.
Cultural/civic organization	0.20	0.8 n.s.	0.29	0.8 n.s.	0.52	1.3 n.s.
Constant	10.39	23.95***	0.34	0.5 n.s.	0.58	0.9 n.s.
R ²	0.09					
F (6, 222)	3.2***					
N ⁶	229					
Pseudo R ²				0.05		
Likelihood ratio chi square (20)				24.59*		
N ⁶				229		

Notes

- ¹Medium pro-US integration score.
- ²High pro-US integration score.
- ³Dominican is the reference category.
- ⁴Not significant.
- ⁵Domestic-oriented organizations are the reference category.
- ⁶Cases with missing data excluded.
- **p* < .05.
- ***p* < .01.
- ****p* < .001.

Colombian leaders interviewed in person are again significantly less inclined in this direction than Dominicans, in line with prior results. The focus of the organization – transnational vs. ethnic/domestic – plays no role in leaders’ orientations nor does its status as a legally registered entity.

Objective organizational activities

A more objective measure of political incorporation is the actual civic and political initiatives that organizations have implemented in the United States. For this analysis, they are added as a count variable ranging from 0 to 6, according to the number of political/civic

Table 10. *Pro-US integration attitudes of leaders of immigrant organizations interviewed face-to-face*

Predictor	Multinomial logistic regression					
	Least squares regression		I ¹		II ²	
	b	t-score	b	z-score	b	z-score
National origin: ³						
Colombian	-2.43	-2.8**	-7.76	-1.8 [†]	-13.3	-2.9**
Mexican	1.06	1.4n.s. ⁴	2.44	1.21 n.s.	-0.17	-0.1 n.s.
Average human capital	1.15	3.5**	4.29	2.4*	4.50	2.6*
Average length of US residence	-0.02	-0.0 n.s.	1.98	1.5 n.s.	2.02	1.6 n.s.
Number of members	0.00	-0.3 n.s.	0.00	0.1 n.s.	-0.01	2.3*
Monthly expenses	0.26	1.7 [†]	0.43	1.1 n.s.	0.93	2.5*
Legally registered	0.43	0.5 n.s.	1.92	1.1 n.s.	1.83	1.0 n.s.
Transnational organization ⁵	0.37	0.6 n.s.	1.99	1.1 n.s.	1.96	1.1 n.s.
Cultural/civic organization	1.29	1.8 [†]	2.37	1.1 n.s.	5.20	2.2*
Constant	10.65	6.6***	-11.20	-2.1*	-8.43	-1.6 n.s.
R ²	0.29					
F (9,58)	2.60*					
N	68					
Pseudo R ²				0.45		
Likelihood ratio chi square				55.35***		
N				68		

*Notes*¹Medium pro-US integration score.²High pro-US integration score.³Dominican leaders are the reference category.⁴Not significant.⁵Domestic-oriented organizations are the reference category.[†] $p < .10$.* $p < .05$.** $p < .01$.*** $p < .001$.

activities undertaken by each organization. Count variables can be modelled as a Poisson process, except that Poisson regression makes the commonly unrealistic assumption of equidispersion (the variance equals the mean). Negative binomial regression [NBRs] is more appropriate for our purposes since it does not require equidispersion and since the frequency distribution of our dependent variable is not skewed toward 0, which would require a zero-inflated regression routine (Long 1997, p. 233). NBR coefficients can be transformed into percentage changes corresponding to the net effect of each predictor, controlling for others. Unlike the coefficients themselves, which are dependent on the value of other predictors, the percentage transfor-

mation is independent from the rest of the equation. Table 11 presents percentage changes associated with significant effects in the full sample.

In this instance, both Colombian and Mexican organizations are less likely than Dominican ones to become engaged in US politics, a result that corresponds to those observed in the tabular analysis. In particular, the count of such activities for Colombian associations is 45 per cent lower than the reference category (Dominicans). Numerical size of the organization and average length of US residence of its members both increase political participation, although the substantive effect of additional members is quite small.

By and large, the strongest effect is associated with the character of the organizations, with civic/cultural groups exceeding all others by a net 75 per cent. Together with the absence of a significant effect of organizational focus, this result indicates that it is not the transnational or domestic programmatic orientation of the organization but

Table 11. *Number of US-oriented political activities by immigrant organizations and their determinants*

Predictor	Coefficient ¹	z-score	Percentage change ²
National origin: ³			
Colombian	-0.60	-3.0**	-45.00
Mexican	-0.28	-1.8†	-24.10
Average human capital	-0.03	-0.5 n.s. ⁴	-
Average length of US residence	0.12	1.9†	12.30
Number of members	0.00	1.9†	0.01
Transnational orientation ⁵	-0.04	-0.3 n.s.	-
Cultural/civic organization	0.57	4.2***	75.10
Constant	0.12	0.5 n.s.	
Pseudo R ²	0.05		
Likelihood ratio chi square	36.05***		
N ⁶	226		

Notes

¹Negative binomial regression coefficients.

²Net increase/decrease in the count of political activities per unit increase of each predictor. Computed for significant effects only.

³Dominican organizations are the reference category.

⁴Not significant.

⁵Domestic-oriented organizations are the reference category.

⁶Cases with missing data excluded.

† $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

the character of the activities to which it is dedicated that makes a difference. Civic and cultural groups, which almost invariably engage in educational programmes in their respective communities, are also the most likely to promote the incorporation of these communities into the American political system. This result clarifies theoretically what are the elements of organizational blueprints that actually count in terms of objective political initiatives.

The last dependent variable is the existence of regular ties with US political authorities at the local, state or federal levels. The question was included in the face-to-face survey and is coded as a dichotomy. We employ a binomial logistic regression routine to examine determinants of the existence of such ties. For convenience, we exponentiate logistic coefficients to indicate the net odds of having such ties associated with each significant predictor. Table 12 presents the results.

Colombian organizations are significantly less likely to maintain political ties in the US, while Mexican and Dominican organizations do not differ from each other. The odds are almost two-to-one in

Table 12. *Ties with US political authorities and their determinants*

Predictor	Logistic regression		
	Coefficient ¹	z-score	Exp B ²
National origin: ³			
Colombian	-4.32	-2.7**	0.01
Mexican	-0.24	0.3 n.s. ⁴	-
Human capital index	1.28	2.6**	3.60
Length of residence index	1.41	2.0*	4.11
Number of members	0.00	0.6 n.s.	-
Monthly expenses	0.94	2.9***	2.56
Legally registered	-1.96	-1.6 n.s.	-
Transnational orientation ⁵	0.10	0.1 n.s.	-
Cultural/civic organization	0.54	0.6 n.s.	-
Constant	-3.19	-1.3 n.s.	-
Pseudo R ²	0.41		
Likelihood ratio chi square (9)	30.99***		
N	68		

Notes

¹Binomial logistic regression coefficients.

²Net odds associated with significant predictors only.

³Dominican organizations are the reference category.

⁴Not significant.

⁵Domestic-oriented organizations are the reference category.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

favour of these groups relative to Colombian ones, which again emerge as the least politically active in the United States. Three other factors are strong predictors of the dependent variable: the higher the human capital of the membership, the longer it has resided in America and the wealthier the organization (as reflected in its monthly expenses), the higher the probability that it is politically connected.

The odds that an organization made up mostly of professionals and entrepreneurs has ties to American political authorities are 3.6 to 1 relative to those composed mostly of workers. Similarly, the odds favour organizations whose members are American citizens or long-time residents by a factor of more than four to one, relative to those formed by recent immigrants. These results strongly support theoretical expectations based on the individual-level transnationalism literature.

While the model does a good job in predicting the dependent variable, as indicated by a pseudo- R^2 of .41, neither the character of the organization nor its focus of activity emerges as a significant predictor. This lack of influence confirms what we have found all along, namely that transnationally oriented groups are as likely to connect to the American political system as those that define themselves as exclusively domestic.

Conclusion

The CIOP is the first study to produce an up-to-date inventory of organizations created by Latin American immigrants and to compare systematically their characteristics and activities. A sample of over 200 leaders of organizations from three different nationalities yields data that can authoritatively address conflicting theories about immigrant political incorporation. Results from this analysis can be summarized in five main conclusions:

- Transnational ties are strong and many immigrant organizations are fiercely dedicated to promoting the welfare of communities in the countries that they left behind. However, leaders of these organizations can see no contradiction between pursuing these goals and a process of successful integration into American society. This near-unanimous endorsement of dual loyalties and prompt integration into the US political system is neither necessary nor could have been anticipated *a priori*.
- The distinction between transnational and domestically oriented organizations with which the project started is overstated. Most organizations engage in a mix of activities and the original distinction is of no use in predicting leaders' beliefs or organizational involvement in US politics.

- On the contrary, the type of activities to which an organization is dedicated has a significant effect on incorporation, with civic/cultural associations initiating a much greater number of US-oriented civic and political activities.
- Factors identified by the empirical literature as predictors of individual-level transnationalism play a comparable role with respect to attitudes and activities of organizations. Those with a better-educated and better-established membership are significantly more likely to endorse a pro-integrative stance and to involve themselves in civic and political activities.
- Notable differences exist, however, between the three immigrant nationalities. Within the general tendencies noted, Colombian leaders are significantly less inclined to adopt a pro-integration stance and Colombian organizations are significantly less active in US politics and less well connected with elected officials. There are no major differences between Dominican and Mexican groups, whose leaders are both more pro-integration and better linked with US authorities.

The lower level of Colombian political activism in the United States may lead to the expectation that this group will be most closely involved in the politics of its own country. This is not the case. Data from the CIEP study, described previously, show that Colombian immigrants are significantly *less* likely to participate in home-country political activities than other Latin immigrant groups, when other predictors are controlled for (Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003). Some authors have argued that this generalized de-politicization reflects the traumatic conditions that Colombian migrants have left behind, as their country is the only one in the region still afflicted by a major civil war (Guarnizo and Diaz 1999).

Other authors attribute this issue to the general apathy of the Colombian population, disenchanted with their political party and electoral systems which they learn to distrust and avoid at home (Escobar 2004, 2007). While Colombian immigrants are the most educated among the groups studied and this feature should lead to higher political participation, this is not the case. Effects of higher human capital are trumped, at least for some, by the dramatic circumstances of departure and, for others, by the political apathy and the absence of established channels of participation as found among Dominican immigrants. These facts seem to encourage a number of Colombians to turn away from anything political, focusing their energies instead on cultural or philanthropic pursuits.

These differences in contexts of exit are important and deserve further investigation. However, they should not detract attention from the fact that they represent variations around a near-universal stance.

This common orientation runs contrary to predictions about the disintegrative consequences of immigration and, especially, of transnational organizations. There is a world of difference between the think tanks and academic halls where such pronouncements are made and the real life of immigrant communities. There, migrants and their organizations carry on their everyday activities along parallel tracks that do not appear to contradict, but actually support one another. Transnationalism and political incorporation proceed simultaneously, as local happenings interact seamlessly with those in the home countries.

Findings from the CIOP are backed by collateral evidence on the significant progress towards political incorporation by Latin American immigrants in the United States. This evidence includes, on the active side, the tens of thousands who have acquired US citizenship and registered to vote (Pierce and Hagstrom 1988; De la Garza and DeSipio 1992; Portes and Rumbaut 2006: ch. 5) and, on the passive side, the *absence* of any movement or confrontation challenging American political or cultural institutions. Contrary to Samuel Huntington, there is no 'Hispanic challenge', except that of progressing economically and educating the children so that they can move ahead and join the American mainstream. On the contrary, the weight of the evidence points towards the continuing success of the processes of political incorporation and cultural integration.

One final point deserving attention is that the results produced by this study refer to first-generation migrants and their organizations. Recent findings indicate that, at least in the United States, immigrant transnationalism is largely a first-generation phenomenon with the second generation being much less interested in these pursuits (Haller and Landolt 2005). Since first-generation transnational organizations are themselves not oppositional or contrary to rapid integration, the overall trend points firmly towards full political incorporation by the second generation. Children of immigrants are both more likely to identify themselves as American and simultaneously to retain foreign loyalties and commitments. This benign scenario is threatened at present only by the concerted anti-immigrant rhetoric of extreme nationalist groups and pundits. Their hostile mobilizations, based on the 'challenge' that immigrants represent, could bring about the very ethnic confrontations that they fear. So far this self-fulfilling prophecy has not materialized albeit these attacks have prompted a number of immigrant organizations to redouble their efforts at empowerment through citizenship acquisition and the ballot box. To the extent that these efforts are successful, they would simply accelerate the process of incorporation already under way.

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Notes

1. A partial exception is a compilation of hometown associations in Los Angeles and Chicago by Rivera-Salgado, Bada, and Escala-Rabádan (2005). The Institute of Mexicans Abroad (IME in its Spanish acronym) of the Mexican Foreign Relations Secretariat and the *Colombia Nos Une* programme of the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs also publish lists of their respective national associations. While valuable, these official lists seldom identify the type and purpose of the organization or differentiate those composed of first-generation immigrants from those representing a broader 'Hispanic' membership.

2. The US Census count for 2000 is less than half of this figure. Based on figures from the Colombian government and independent calculations from various specialists, we believe that this is a serious underestimate based on failure to count unauthorized immigrants and political asylees. We report the Census figure in Table 1.

3. The US Census puts the number of Dominicans at less than 800,000 in 2000. However, estimates from the Dominican government and specialized research centres indicate that the number of immigrants, including the unauthorized, easily exceeds the million mark. We report the Census figure in Table 1.

4. These inventories will be placed in the public domain shortly after publication of this article.

5. Names of persons and organizations are fictitious to protect informant anonymity. Dates and places of interviews are real.

6. Formal non-profit organizations are banned from direct involvement in electoral campaigns in the United States. While informal organizations can be involved, we asked a series of questions aimed at gauging different forms of involvement in both political and civic activities.

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Appendix A: Variables included in multivariate analyses*Part I: full sample (N = 247)*

Variable	Mean/percentage	SD	Range
<i>Dependent</i>			
Pro-US integration			
Continuous	10.49	1.99	0–12
Categorical	1.26	0.75	0–2 (High)
Number of US-oriented political activities	1.48	1.42	0–6
<i>Independent</i>			
Nationality			
Colombian	20.92	–	–
Dominican	23.43	–	–
Mexican	55.65	–	–
Human capital index	1.64	1.09	0–3 (High)
Length of US residence index	1.76	1.13	0–3 (Longer)
Membership (no.)	265.37	2068.32	0–29,000
Domestic vs. transnational orientation	0.43	0.50	0–1 (Transnational)
Civic cultural vs. other focus	0.51	0.50	0–1 (Civic cultural)

Part II: face-to-face sample (N = 68)

Variable	Mean/percentage	SD	Range
<i>Dependent</i>			
Pro-US integration			
Continuous	13.71	2.67	0–15
Categorical	1.49	0.74	0–2 (High)
Ties with US political authorities	.75	.44	0–1 (Yes)
<i>Independent</i>			
Nationality			
Colombian	29.41	–	–
Dominican	32.35	–	–
Mexican	38.24	–	–
Human capital index	1.60	1.02	0–3 (High)
Length of US residence index	2.43	0.76	0–3 (Longer)
Membership (no.)	228.18	1405.79	0–29,000
Monthly expenses (US\$)	1915.44	3239.11	0–\$10,000
Legally registered organization	0.84	0.37	0–1 (Yes)
Domestic vs. transnational orientation	0.53	0.50	0–1 (Transnational)
Civic cultural vs. other focus	0.26	0.44	0–1 (Civic cultural)