

Introduction

The first issue of 2020 is focused on immigration issues which our authors treat from a variety of perspectives. Five studies focus on immigrants themselves, exploring questions of what drives migration from Central America today, what explains the gap in political participation between citizens and immigrants, what are the likely political effects of Latino migration, how does diversity in immigration status and race influence the internal dynamics of the undocumented student movement, and how do social institutions, and specifically the Catholic Church, respond to the increased demand placed on them by the influx of migrants. These studies highlight the complexities associated both with the migration process and with the politics associated with immigrant populations within the United States. Two additional articles focus on white American responses to policy concerns related to migration, asking whether race or partisanship drives opinion on sanctuary cities and refugee resettlement.

We start our journey in Central America: Linda Alvarez discusses how neoliberal policy regimes instituted in the “northern Triangle,” contributed to the emergence of crime and violence in Central America. Economic competition from U.S. markets along with domestic market liberalization pressures led to increased unemployment. The result has been a cycle of migration into the United States as Central Americans search for physical safety and economic opportunity. However, violence follows migrants to the U.S.-Mexico border and beyond.

Next, Fanny Lauby, in “Diversity, Leadership and Authenticity in the Undocumented Youth Movement,” exposes the complex dynamics of the undocumented youth movement. Movement participants differ extensively in terms of race, ethnicity and immigration status, and this diversity presents challenges for the sustainability and effectiveness of the movement. Citizen allies provide resources and access but their gravitation towards the electoral connection presents threats to the authenticity of the movement.

In “Why Do Immigrants Participate in Politics Less Than Native-born Citizens? A Formative Years Explanation,” Ruoxi Li and Bradley Jones seek to explain why naturalized immigrants are less likely to participate in politics than citizens, even if they have reached similar socioeconomic

levels of achievement as native-born. The authors argue that the difference lies in the differences in experiences that the two groups had during their formative years. When people immigrate to the United States at a young age, they tend to participate in politics at similar levels as native-born citizens. However, if the older one is at the age of migration, the less likely she/he is to be politically active in the host country.

Immigrants may vote less because of formative experiences, but are they all destined to vote Democratic and change the future of partisan politics in America? In “Pack Your Politics! Assessing the Vote Choice of Latino Interstate Migrants,” Robert Preuhs takes on the folk assumption that demographics are destiny and an increase in the immigrant population from Latin American countries will inevitably lead to states becoming more liberal and dominated by the Democratic party. The study looks at the political behavior of Latinos who migrate across states. The results suggest that where these migrants originate has important consequences for the destination state. Latinos bring with them the ideological leaning of the originating state: if the state they leave behind is liberal, they are likely to bring liberal tendencies to their new home state and vice versa. This suggests that the effects of a growing Latino population may not be homogeneous and that social geography matters for the political behavior of this population.

Kiku Huckle focuses on a different dimension of Latino politics, investigating the challenges faced by the Catholic Church as it is asked to respond to the needs of a growing immigrant population. This topic has important implications for politics given extant research that shows a strong positive correlation between involvement in church activities and civic and political engagement. In “Latinos and American Catholicism: Examining Service Provision Amidst Demographic Change,” Huckle investigates the relationship between Latino population density, the presence of a Latino minister, and the likelihood a church would offer Spanish mass or any other service relevant to the Latino community. The study shows that such factors are important in driving institutional responsiveness.

In, “Partisan Learning or Racial Learning: Opinion Change on Sanctuary City Policy Preferences in California and Texas,” Loren Collingwood, Benjamin Gonzalez O’Brien and Joe Tafoya pit the partisan learning model against a racial learning model. With evidence from political narratives and public opinion related to sanctuary cities, they confirm the power of partisan learning: during the Trump years, negative

partisanship was a key contributor in the public's change in attitudes toward the sanctuary movement.

Rita Nassar, in a study entitled "Threat, Prejudice, and White Americans' Attitudes toward Immigration and Syrian Refugee Resettlement," shifts our attention to the pressing issue of how the American public responds to the plight of Syrian refugees. Refugees have received more positive media portrayals than other groups of people seeking to migrate into the United States, but this does not mean that refugees have been welcomed. This study explores whether cultural or material threats are more likely to influence white Americans' support for refugee resettlement. Analyses of two surveys show that prejudice is a far more potent driver of opposition to refugee settlement than is realistic threat.

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