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Latinization of Organized Labor and Democratic Immigration Positions

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Latinization of Organized Labor and Democratic Immigration Positions

Wenyan Deng and Zeyu Chris Peng

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Abstract

Why have Democrats become increasingly immigration-friendly even though organized labor, one of the largest Democratic constituencies, should theoretically benefit from less immigration? We argue that the answer to this puzzle may lie partly in the increasing incorporation of Latino workers in labor unions. Using Current Population Survey data, Congressional Roll-Call Data, as well as various text analysis algorithms applied to nearly 2,500 official AFL-CIO documents, this paper shows that the incorporation of more Latino members in organized labor altered labor elites' positions on the immigration issue. Facing an organized labor constituency increasingly united on immigration, Democratic elites who are less pro-immigrant are gradually replaced by those who are more pro-immigration.

Word count: 7,182

Introduction

Over the past several decades, the divergent trend between Democratic and Republican positions on immigration issues in the Senate and the House has become more pronounced. Congressional roll-call votes show that House party positions on immigration issues saw no difference in the 1960s, but this difference gradually widened. Between 1965 and 1990, Democratic elites' immigration positions became on average 1.3 percent more liberal per year, while Republicans moved in the opposite direction by 2 percent per year; by the 1990s, Democrats have become far more liberal than Republicans. After 1990, however, while Republican immigration positions stayed stable with no observable average yearly change, Democratic immigration positions have continued to become more liberal, at about the rate of 6 percent more liberal per year. This observation is puzzling, especially given that organized labor has long been an important constituency of the Democratic Party. Given that nearly two-thirds of American workers believe that immigrant workers reduce the wages of national unskilled workers (Fund 2007), we should expect Democratic elites to adopt positions that cater to an important constituency who should theoretically be hostile to immigration.

The answer to this puzzle, we argue, may lie partly in the incorporation of Latino workers in public and private labor unions, a process we call Latinization. Over at least the past three decades, the United States has seen a steady rise in the proportion of labor union members who are Hispanics from just over 6 percent in 1990 to almost 13 percent in 2018. Rosenfeld (2014) also finds that second and third-generation Hispanic immigrants are more likely than similar whites to belong to a union. The connections and experiences that many Latino and

Hispanic union members have with immigrant communities and the immigration process are likely to result in more liberal attitudes on immigration issues. Given these observations, to what extent can the continual liberalization trend among Democrats on immigration issues be attributed to the Latinization of organized labor?

In this paper, we hypothesize that increases since the 1990s in the share of Latino union members, who have more pro-immigration attitudes than their white counterparts and for whom the question of immigration strikes closer to home, are likely to both increase the salience of immigration in organized labor as well as move organized labor elites in a more liberal direction on this issue. Over time, the immigration position of Democratic elites became assimilated with the views of labor leaders, as less pro-immigrant Democrats are generationally replaced by more pro-immigrant ones.

We test this argument through several steps. In order to show that attitudinal changes on immigration issues are brought about by Latino union members, we first show that Latino members of organized labor are indeed more liberal than non-Latino members of organized labor. Next, we show that Senators from states and Representatives from districts with more Latino union members as a proportion of all union members are more likely to vote liberally on immigration issues. While these results provide evidence that the incorporation of more Latinos in labor unions are associated with more open voting patterns among Democratic elites on immigration issues, the influence of unions in society in general and on Democratic elites in particular is arguably weaker today than it was in the 1960s. The worsening of organized labor's structural position suggests that looking simply at the incorporation of Latinos in labor unions as the explanatory variable is not enough; we must show that increases in the number of Latino union members in society as a whole had a similar impact

on Democratic elites' voting patterns. This is precisely what we do in our second set of regression analyses — Senators from states and Representatives from districts with more Latino union members as a proportion of *total* state or district population are more likely to vote liberally on immigration issues. These results provide evidence that increases in the number of Latino union members in society are associated with a move toward more liberal immigration positions among Democratic elites.

At the aggregate level, these results demonstrate an association between our explanatory variable of Latino union members and the outcome variable of Democratic elites' immigration positions. However, they say little about the pathway via which party elite opinion changeoccurred. Is it possible that the more liberal immigration voting patterns among Democraticelites are due to the existence of more Latino voters rather than due to labor elite pressureon party elites? In order to test the mechanism of change in attitudes among labor elites, we demonstrate using dynamic text-analysis of 2,451 official documents by the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) that the issue ofimmigration has not only become increasingly salient over the past 25 years but also thattwo major content changes have occurred in the AFL-CIO's immigration discourse. First, the AFL-CIO's tone when discussing immigration issues became much more friendly overtime. In addition, while the AFL-CIO's pre-2010 discussions of immigration centered on(il)legal status of the workers, later discussions shifted away from the legal status of workers. Second, these tonal changes occurred alongside a greater frequency of Spanish documents among the AFL-CIO's official documents. The AFL-CIO's later official documents on immi-gration have a high prevalence of Spanish words compared to earlier ones, providing indirectevidence for our thesis that the increasing incorporation of Hispanic and Latino workers

in unions led to more representation of this group and their views in union organizations. Anecdotal sources often suggest that the AFL-CIO's immigration position increasingly became more liberal since 2000. We use sentiment analysis to show support for this anecdotal evidence. Finally, we show that liberalization in labor elites' pro-immigration attitudes are connected with changes in Democratic elites' immigration positions by showing that Democratic incumbents who are more pro-immigration received higher ratings from the AFL-CIO, and that there has been a generational replacement of Democratic representatives with low AFL-CIO ratings. In other words, rather than elite adaptation to labor demands, Democratic elites experienced a generational replacement of moderates by those who are more liberal on immigration policies.

This paper makes three contributions to the literature and beyond. First, we examine the oft-told tale that organized labor and the AFL-CIO in particular "did a 180 on immigration" (NPR, 2013) due to the increasing incorporation of Latinos in organized labor, which subsequently united Democratic elites on the immigration issue. Our findings challenge the argument that the AFL-CIO's official position change on immigration is as drastic as often claimed in the media; instead, changes in the AFL-CIO's discourse on immigration were far more subtle. Second, by combining past research on Latino mobilization and elite position change, we showcase a story in which these two sequences of events happen in tandem. Indoing so, we demonstrate the far-reaching consequences that demographic changes can have on elite politics. Finally, our story shows that organized labor is a core institution in the integration of immigrants and representation of their voices; the importance of organized la-bor as a Democratic constituency suggests that minorities' and immigrants' voices could be transmitted through unions to Democratic

elites. These findings are alarming in the context

of recent declines in organized labor's social and political influence — unions' decline could remove an important channel through which minorities and immigrants are integrated into society and heard in politics.

The rest of the paper proceeds as follows. The first section provides an overview of existing literature on the influence of social groups on elite position change as well as Latino political mobilization. Section 2 explains our argument and generates testable hypotheses. Section 3 outlines our data sources. Section 4 discusses results. Section 5 concludes.

1 Social Groups, Elite Position, and Latino Activism

The role of social groups in shaping elite positions has received substantial attention in the literature. In *Party Position Change in American Politics*, David Karol (2009) argues that changes in party coalitions and shifts in preferences among elements of such coalitions illuminates most party position change. In particular, elite opinion changes in issue areas in which social groups are prominent may occur because elected officials respond to new demands by groups that are already incorporated within officials' party coalitions. Similarly, Daniel Schlozman (2015) has shown the important roles organized labor and the Christian Right respectively played in shaping the priorities of the Democrats in the New Deal and the Republicans in the 1970s.

Of the many social groups in the United States, the labor union has received one of the most extensive treatments. Scholars have examined the effects of unionization on legislative voting in the U.S. Congress,¹ as well as economic policy, political equality, poverty, and

¹Box-Steffensmeier, Arnold, and Zorn (1997), Freeman and Medoff (1984), Kau and Rubin (1978), Seltzer (1995).

turnout.² A general consensus across these works is that higher number of union members in a locality leads to greater political influence of unions. Becher et al. (2018) build on this literature and argue that more dispersed horizontal distribution of union members across local units (as opposed to the concentration of union members in a few large local units) in a district leads to greater influence of unions on political representatives.

Becher et al.'s finding is congruent with a large body of literature suggesting that social incentives and group pressure are important determinants of political action.³ Unions act as a venue for socialization in the process of which opinions and actions consistent with group norms are awarded, while deviant ones are punished. This dynamic suggests that the socialization process that occurs among union members are likely to homogenize them in terms of political opinions and outlook.

Simultaneously, another strand of literature has focused on the rise of Latino activism in recent decades. Jones-Correa and Leal (2001) examined the claim by Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) that Protestants participate more in politics than Catholics and found that, among Latinos, participation rates among Protestants and Catholics do not differ substantially; rather than emphasizing skill learning, Jones-Correa and Leal emphasize contact and social networks. They show that the religious basis of contact-driven mobilization play an important role in inducing Latino political participation. An implication of this argument is that social networks and social groups are effective ways to mobilize political participation. In the context of this paper, this finding suggests that labor unions, as a social organization still with some importance, provide a means for Latino political mobilization and activism.

²Bartels (2008); Brady, Baker, and Finnigan (2013), Flavin (2016); Leighley and Nagler (2007); Radcliff and Davis (2000).

³Olson (1965), Ahlquist, Clayton, and Levi (2014), Kim and Margalit (2016), Abrams, Iversen, and Soskice (2011), Druckman and Green (2013).

The labor economics literature and sociology literature have examined the issue of Latino participation in organized labor in particular. Rosenfeld, for instance, argues that second-and third-generation Hispanic immigrants are more likely than whites to belong to a union. Similarly, Daniel Schneider (2015) finds that, in comparison to whites, native-born and established immigrant Hispanics — those with U.S. citizenship — are 24 percent more likely to be union members. While Milkman (2006) and Delgado (1993) find that legal status does not significantly influence immigrants' willingness to organize, Schneider finds that accounting for Hispanics who do not have citizenship reduces the effect size to 5 percent, suggesting that lack of citizenship may dampen the willingness of Hispanic and Latino workers to participate in organized labor.

This discussion on whether and how legal status influences immigrants' willingness to mobilize and participate in socio-political groups raises an important question — why should union members, who are mostly citizens or greencard-holders, be mobilized for issues like immigration policy, which mostly target non-citizens and undocumented workers? Ariel White (2015) provides an interesting answer. White finds that the implementation of tighter immigration enforcement led to an increase in county-level Latino voter turnout of 2 to 3 percentage points, which suggests policies that do not directly target Latino voters resulted in greater civil society activism that mobilized voter turnout. In the context of our research, this finding means that Latino union members, who may not be directly harmed by tighter immigration policy, are also likely to be politically mobilized.

2 Argument and Hypotheses

The literatures reviewed thus far suggest that labor unions provide both an arena for Latino political activism as well as a means of opinion transfers and communication within the organization; in addition, as Daniel Schlozman (2015) and David Karol (2009) have shown, the relative importance of organized labor as a Democratic constituency allows the labor movement to have an impact on the voting behavior of Democratic elites on certain issues. Based on these past findings, we argue that changes in organized labor's composition influenced organized labor elites' immigration policy positions, which subsequently altered Democratic elites' positions on immigration.

An important clarification of our argument is that we do not claim that the Latinization of labor unions is a fundamental cause of early divergences in partisan immigration positions. As Figure 1 shows, divergent trends in Congressional roll-call votes on immigration issues occurred clearly around the 92nd Congress in 1971. Many reasons contributed to this early polarization of partisan immigration positions, including increased number of roll-call votes related to immigration issues after the mid-1960s. Instead of explaining this early divergence, our argument focuses on explaining the increasing liberal immigration voting behavior among Democrats after the 1990s (around the 100th Congress).

In order to support our argument, we must first demonstrate (1) that organized labor's composition has indeed become more Latinized since the 1990s, when data first became available and (2) that Latino labor members have more pro-immigration attitude compared to their non-Latino counterparts. This generates our first set of hypotheses.

 H_{1a} : The proportion of union members who are Latino have increased over the last 30 years.

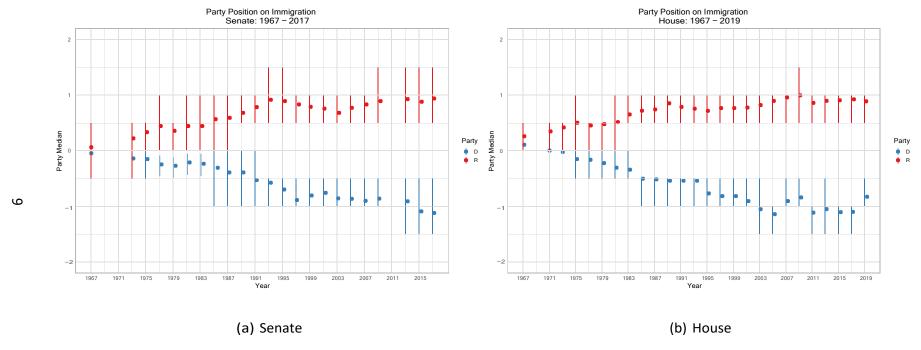


Figure 1: Party Positions on Immigration Issues in the Senate (90th-115th Congresses) and House (90th-116th Congresses). Values on x-axis indicate the first year of each Congress. *Source: Congressional Roll-Call Votes Database.*

 H_{1b} : Latino members of organized labor have more liberal immigration attitudes compared to non-Latino members of organized labor.

In the aggregate, our argument requires showing that states and districts with a greater proportion of Latino union members observe more liberal voting patterns on immigration issues by Democratic Senators and Representatives who belong to those states and districts, respectively. Specifically, this generates our second set of hypotheses.

 H_{2a} : Democratic Senators and Representatives from, respectively, states and districts with Latino union members as a greater proportion of *total union population* are more likely to vote liberally on immigration issues.

 H_{2b} : Democratic Senators and Representatives from, respectively, states and districts with Latino union members as a greater proportion of *total state or district population* are more likely to vote liberally on immigration issues.

Breaking down the argument's mechanism, however, involves two additional logical links, each of which must be tested. First, we must show that after Latino labor members have been incorporated, labor elites' immigration positions became more liberal, *ceteris paribus*. This builds into the following hypothesis.

 H_3 : Latino union members' pro-immigration attitudes were transmitted to organized labor elites and shifted labor elites' immigration positions toward liberalization.

Finally, we must show that liberalization in labor elites' immigration stance contributed to the trend of greater liberalization of Democratic elites' immigration positions. This generates the following hypothesis.

 H_4 : Those Democratic Party elites who are less pro-immigration were replaced by pro-immigration politicians who better represent Latinized organized labor.

3 Data

Quantitative data used for this project come from four sources. First, Current Population Survey (CPS) data provides information on proportion of union members who are Hispanics;

however, this data is only available after 1990. Second, the American Community Survey provides information on congressional district percentage of Latino population. Third, the information on the proportion of union members who are Hispanics comes from 2006-2012 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES). Although being one of the largest public opinion surveys in the United States, CCES only sampled 100 observations on average in one congressional district. To improve the precision of the estimates, we brought in information from ACS and CPS, using a Bayesian dynamic ecological inference model to reweight the CCES data.⁴ At the district-level, Hispanics take up 10.15% of the total union membership. This is fairly close to the national average, computed by using CPS alone. Fourth, Con- gressional Roll-Call Votes Database provides information on Democratic Party Senators' and Representatives' votes on immigration issues. Assuming that legislators' preferences for immigration policies can change throughout their tenure, we applied a dynamic Item- Response Model (IRT) to create an ideal point estimate for each legislator-year. The ideal point estimates for House Members and Senators both range from -5 to 5.

Qualitative data come from two sources. First, dynamic text analysis models are applied to six types of official AFL-CIO documents in order to examine over-time changes in the AFL-CIO's official immigration discourse:

convention resolutions

legislative testimonies

executive statements

press releases

legislative alerts

speeches

These documents number 2,451 in total and cover the time period from 1995 to 2022.

⁴Caughey and Wang (2019).

Second, AFL-CIO endorsement data provide information on labor elites' approval and endorsement of Democratic elites, which allowed us to track qualitatively whether Democratic incumbents who were not endorsed by the AFL-CIO suffered electoral consequences.

4 Results

4.1 Latino union member proportions and positions

In this section, we provide evidence for H_{1a} and H_{1b} , showing that over the past three decades, the proportions of union members who are Latino have continued to increase and that Latino union members have more liberal immigration positions than their non-Latino counterparts. Specifically, Figure 2 provides evidence for H_{1a} and shows an increasing trend in the proportion of union members who are Hispanics since the 1990s. This proportion increased steadily from just over 6 percent in 1990, when data first became available, to 12 percent today. This shows that Latinization of labor unions is indeed occurring.

Figure 3 provides evidence for H_{1b} . Non-Hispanic union members consistently host greater anti-immigration sentiments than Hispanic union members. There are two other takeaways from this figure. First, over-time trends suggest that while Hispanic union members' immigration attitudes are slightly more conservative in the 2010's than in the 2000's, non-Hispanic union members' anti-immigration sentiments consistently declined over the past few decades. Second, the differences between immigration attitudes of Hispanic union members and non-Hispanic union members across the three decades have decreased, suggesting some kind of socialization of opinions between the two groups.

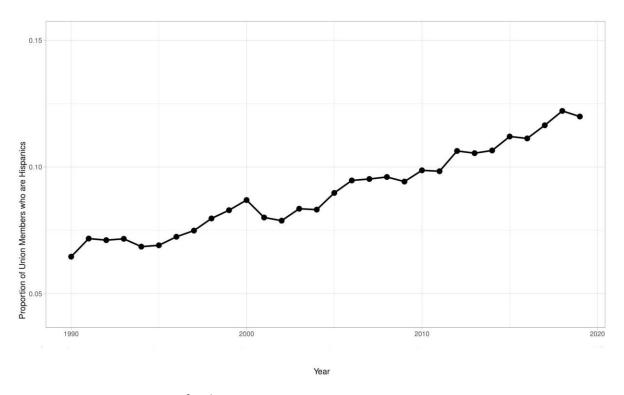


Figure 2: Latinization of Labor Unions. Source: Current Population Survey, 1990-2019.

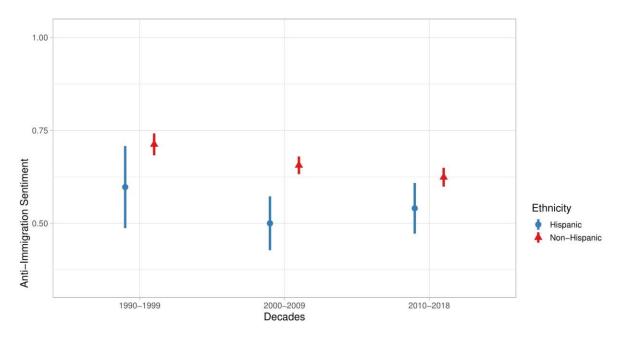


Figure 3: Anti-Immigration sentiments among Hispanic and non-Hispanic union members. Source: Current Population Survey, 1990-2019.

4.2 Aggregate trends of Democratic immigration voting

Having shown that Latinization of labor unions has been occurring and that Hispanic union members are indeed more pro-immigrant than non-Hispanic union members, we show in this section evidence that Democratic Senators and Representatives from states and districts with Latino union members as a higher proportion of (a) total union population and (b) total state or district population tend to vote more liberally on immigration issues.

The first column of Table 1 shows results from dynamic panel models regressing Democratic Senators' immigration issue votes on their respective states' Hispanic union population as a proportion of union population in the state, controlling for state fixed effects and border-state-congress fixed effects, as well as the legislators' past voting records; t indexes each congress. Lower values of the outcome variable indicates more liberal immigration voting behavior. When the explanatory variable of Hispanic union member proportion is lagged by one congress, the result is incorrectly signed (an increase in Hispanic union member proportion is associated with more anti-immigration voting). At t - 2, the effects are correctly signed, but also substantively small. At t - 3, the effects are correctly signed and substantively much more significant.

The second column of Table 1 shows results from regressing Democratic Representatives' immigration issue votes on their respective House districts' Hispanic union population as a proportion of union population in the district. Lagging the explanatory variable by one time period produced coefficients that are correctly signed and statistically significant at the 10%

⁵Dynamic panel models are linear fixed effects models with lagged dependent variables. We expect that legislators' past voting records are highly correlated with present issue positions. We also expect legislators who represent border states to behave differently than legislators from other states. To explore this, we added a border-state interaction term and created a unique border-state-congress identifier, making this variable a fixed-effect control. These fixed effects apply for all models.

level. The effect remains correctly signed but becomes insignificant at t-2 and t-3 with large cluster-robust standard errors, suggesting that the effects for Representatives disappear over longer horizons.

We speculate that these differences in the lagging effects between Senators and Representatives could be due to the time it takes for senators and representatives to respond to constituency demands. Senators' constituencies are larger than those of Representatives', and Senators face a six-year electoral cycle compared to the two-year electoral cycles Representatives face. Therefore, we observe that at t-3, Senators experience a greater magnitude of effect compared to at t-1, while Representatives experience a greater effect at t-1 because of their two-year electoral time horizons. While these values are not always statistically significant at conventional levels, their directions are in accordance with our theoretical expectations.

We have shown that the explanatory variable of Hispanic union population as a proportion of union population is associated with more liberal Democratic immigration voting, suggesting that Latinization of unions is associated with shifts in Democratic voting patterns. However, these results do not speak to the declining social and political influence of organized labor in the United States as a whole in recent years. We thus run another set of linear fixed effects models, this time using as the explanatory variable Hispanic union members as a proportion of total state or district population rather than union population. State-level results for Senators are presented in column 1 of Table 2. Again, lagging the explanatory variable by three time periods produced the most substantively significant and correctly signed results. Our district results for Representatives, shown in column 2, provide stronger evidence for our argument. At t-1 and t-2, results are both correctly signed and

Table 1: Dynamic Panel Models for Democratic Immigration Votes on Hispanic Union Members as a Proportion of Union Membership

	Democratic Immigration Issue Votes	
	State	District
	(1)	(2)
Hispanic Union $_{t-1}$	0.0223 (0.0408)	-0.0043 * (0.0026)
Hispanic Union _{t-2}	- 0.0029 (0.0543)	-0.0002 (0.0030)
Hispanic Union _{t-3}	-0.0427 (0.0442)	-0.0008 (0.0044)
Issue Votes _{t-1}	0.5917*** (0.0839)	0.5111*** (0.0331)
Issue Votes _{t-2}	0.2836*** (0.0920)	0.4498*** (0.0376)
Issue Votes _{t-3}	-0.1788 (0.1304)	0.3414*** (0.0481)
Hispanic Union $_{t-1}$ × border state	0.0107 (0.0421)	0.0075* (0.0043)
Hispanic Union $_{t-2} \times$ border state	0.0787 (0.0555)	-0.0005 (0.0054)
Hispanic Union $_{t-3}$ × border state	0.0003 (0.0475)	0.0006 (0.0088)
State fixed effects Border-state-congress fixed effects	Yes Yes	Yes Yes

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

statistically significant, while results for t-3 is correctly signed but statistically insignificant at conventional levels. Similar to the pattern observed in column 2 of Table 1, the effects for Representatives also decline over time, due to the two-year electoral cycles that Representatives face.

Table 2: Fixed-Effects Models for Democratic Immigration Votes on Union Members as a Proportion of Total Populations

	Restrictionism _t	
	Senate	House
% Union _(t-1)	-0.0265**	-0.0108*
, ,	(0.0120)	(0.0057)
% Hispanic _{t-1}	-0.0310	-0.0019
	(0.0223)	(0.0060)
% Unemployment _{t-1}	0.0109	-0.0007
	(0.0152)	(0.0065)
% College Degree _{t-1}	0.0160	-0.0064
	(0.0103)	(0.0061)
State FE?	YES	YES
Congress FE?	YES	YES
N	648	807

^{*}p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01

Thus, union Latinization seems to have had a positive effect on liberal immigration voting behaviors among Democratic Senators and Representatives. However, could this result be due simply to the existence of more Latino voters in the population rather than through the channel of organized labor elites? Our results in this section provide support for hypotheses H_{2a} and H_{2b} , but the variables linking union Latinization and Democratic elites' voting patterns are black-boxed in the process. In the next two subsections, we open this black box and examine the role that organized labor elites play in the story.

Table 3: Dynamic Panel Models for Democratic Immigration Votes on Hispanic Union Members as a Proportion of Total Populations

	Democratic Immigration Issue Votes	
	State	District
	(1)	(2)
Hispanic Union $_{t-1}$	-0.0352 (0.5546)	-0.0467 *** (0.0138)
Hispanic Union $_{t-2}$	0.4004 (0.4617)	-0.0370 ** (0.0189)
Hispanic Union _{t-3}	-0.0838 (0.6449)	- 0.0123 (0.0313)
Issue Votes _{t-1}	0.5859*** (0.0867)	0.5107*** (0.0331)
Issue Votes _{t-2}	0.2919*** (0.0905)	0.5107*** (0.0331)
Issue Votes _{t-3}	-0.1544 (0.1257)	0.3482*** (0.0484)
Hispanic Union $_{t-1}$ × border state	0.7546 (0.5666)	0.0944*** (0.0246)
Hispanic Union $_{t-2}$ × border state	0.0555 (0.4780)	0.0618** (0.0314)
Hispanic Union $_{t-3}$ × border state	0.0872 (0.6567)	0.0128 (0.0577)
State fixed effects Border-state-congress fixed effects	Yes Yes	Yes Yes

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

4.3 Changes in AFL-CIO Immigration Discourses

We start tackling this mechanism question by first looking at whether Latino members' proimmigration attitudes were transmitted to organized labor elites, as per H_3 . Text analysis of official AFL-CIO documents suggests three main conclusions. First, the issue of immigration has become more salient over time in AFL-CIO official discourse. Second, the AFL-CIO's position on the issue of immigration has moved in a more friendly direction. Finally, these changes occurred alongside an increase in Hispanic voices in the AFL-CIO.

On the question of issue salience, Figure 4 panel (a) shows that the proportion of official AFL-CIO documents containing the term "immigr" has increased dramatically from less than 10 percent in the late 1990s to around 20 percent today. Documents with only a single mention of "immigr" are included in the count, and these documents may not be focused on the issue of immigration in particular; however, increasing trends in these mentions still show that the issue of immigration is becoming more and more prominent in AFL-CIO leaders' minds, even if they may only be mentioning it concurrently with other issues.

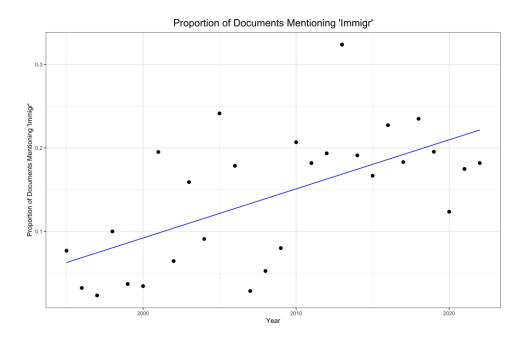
In order to address the concern that including documents with a single mention of "immigr" misrepresents the salience of immigration for AFL-CIO, we calculate the proportion of AFL-CIO documents that contain mentions of "immigr" in their titles. This ensures that the documents counted focus on immigration as at least one of their their primary topics. Figure 4 panel (b) shows again that immigration's salience has increased since 1995. The proportion of documents focused on immigration increased from less than 3 percent in the 1990s to around 6 percent around the 2016 presidential election, with a decline in more recent years. Interestingly, the presidential election year of 2000 seems to be an outlier in the

early period we examined, with almost 10 percent of documents focusing on immigration. Consequently, the increase in immigration-focused documents is much more mild compared to increases in single mentions of "immigr" in panel (a), but the overall trend line remains positive and increasing over time.

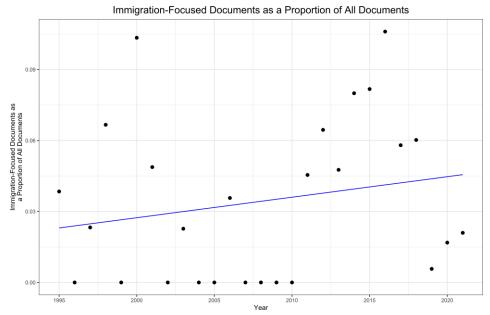
On the question of issue position change, we find that the AFL-CIO underwent an attitudinal change in a more friendly direction in their immigration position. We examine the proportion of documents that mention the issue of immigration that also mention the token "illeg*". We choose this analysis because the mention of illegal immigrant is one of the most clear manifestations of anti-immigrant attitudes. If the AFL-CIO has become more immigration-friendly in recent years, as H_3 suggests, we should expect a decline in the proportion of immigration-related documents that mention illegality in recent years. Figure 5 shows that the results largely correspond with this hypothesis. In the 1990s, the proportion of immigration-related documents mentioning "illeg*" was around 25 percent. Other than one outlier year in 2007, this proportion declined significantly to near-0 levels in the late 2010s and early 2020s.

Because simply examining the mention of "illeg*" could obscure other attitudinal changes, we also undertake a sentiment analysis of the immigration-related documents,⁶ Figure 6 shows that the proportion of negative to positive tokens fell from a 3-to-1 ratio in the late 1990s to nearly a 1-to-1 ratio in 2020. This suggests a shift in tone by the AFL-CIO when mentioning immigration issues.

⁶ The unsupervised learning algorithm analyze all mentions of 'immig*' and 'migra*', as well as a window of 50 words before and after each mention to preserve context. These words were grouped within the documents to which they originally belonged, which were then analyzed at the level of years. In results unreported here, the analysis parameters were set to a window of 10 words and 25 words; results do not change and show a downward trend in the negative-to-positive tokens ratio over time.



(a) Proportion of AFL-CIO official documents containing "immigr"



(b) Proportion of AFL-CIO official documents focused on Immigration

Figure 4: Increasing importance of immigration issues for the AFL-CIO. *Source: AFL-CIO convention resolutions, executive statements, legislative alerts, legislative testimonies, press releases, and speeches, 1995-2022.*

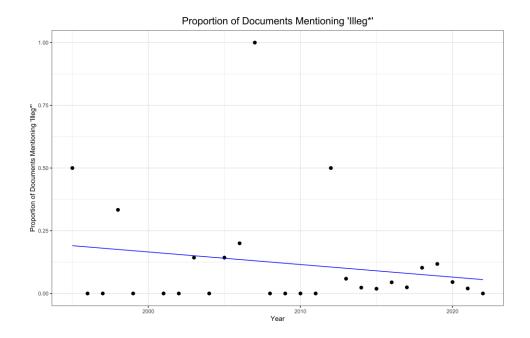


Figure 5: Proportion of immigration-related documents that also mentioned "illeg*". Source: AFL-CIO convention resolutions, executive statements, legislative alerts, legislative testimonies, press releases, and speeches, 1995-2022.

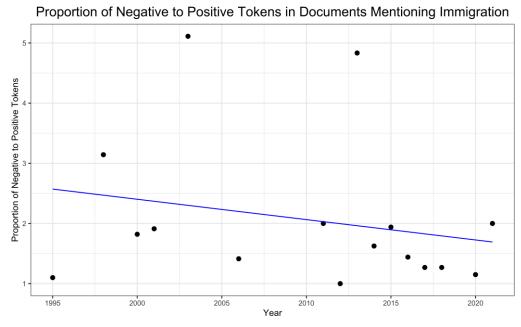


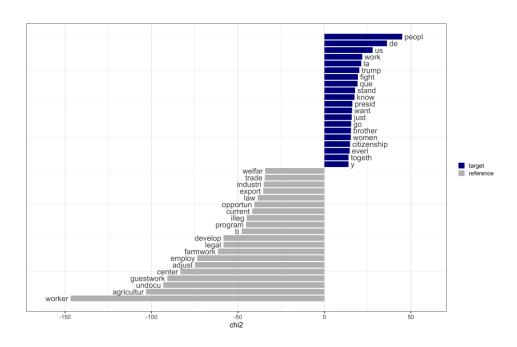
Figure 6: Proportion of negative to positive tokens among immigration-related documents across years. Source: AFL-CIO convention resolutions, executive statements, legislative alerts, legislative testimonies, press releases, and speeches, 1995-2022.

How do we know if these apparent attitude or salience changes are related to the Latinization of the AFL-CIO? We provide indirect evidence of this by showing that these changes occurred alongside an increase in Latino voices in the AFL-CIO. Figure 7 shows signed two-by-two association scores between frequent words in a set of reference documents and those in a set of target documents using R package Quanteda. Panel (a) shows that, using a 50-token window around every mention of "immigr*", post-2009 documents⁷ show a significant increase in the concentration of Spanish words compared to pre-2009 documents. As a robustness check, Figure 7 panel (b) shows the same pattern using all tokens from immigration-related documents, rather than only a 50-token window. In results unreported here, using 2005 as a cut-off year shows similar results.

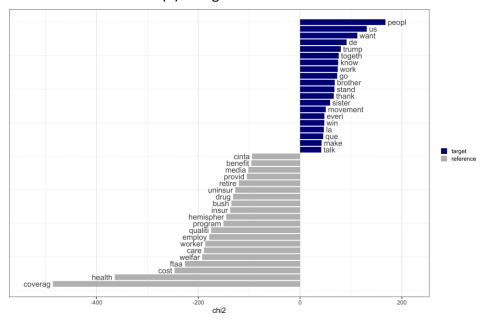
In addition, concurring with the declines in mention of "illeg*" over time, panel (a) also shows that in pre-2009 documents, the legal status of immigrants, as represented by the tokens "legal", "illeg*", "undocu*", was mentioned with much more frequency than in the post-2009 era. The amplification of Latino voices, therefore, seemed to have been significant after the mid- to late-2000s and occur alongside aforementioned increases in the salience of immigration issues and the AFL-CIO's friendlier position changes.

Amplification of Latino voices is also confirmed by a robustness check using Google language detection API. Analysis is conducted on the changes in the frequency of Spanish documents, and the results are shown in Figure 8. The proportion of Spanish-language documents increased from non-existent in the 1990s to between 2 to 5 percent of all documents. These results confirm the results shown in Figure 7 using Quanteda.

⁷These documents form the first half of the 1995 to 2022 period.



(a) Using a 50-token window



(b) Using the entire document

Figure 7: Frequent words in post-2009 documents (target) compared to frequent words in 2009 and earlier documents (reference) *Source: AFL-CIO convention resolutions, executive statements, legislative alerts, legislative testimonies, press releases, and speeches, 1995-2022.*

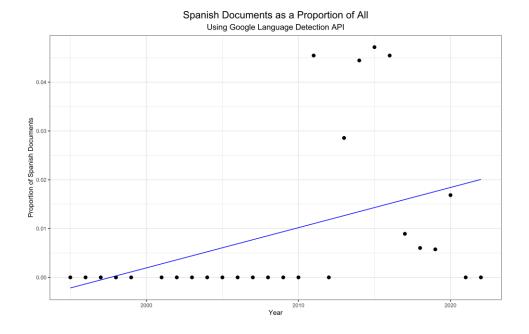


Figure 8: Proportion of negative to positive tokens among immigration-related documents across years. Source: AFL-CIO convention resolutions, executive statements, legislative alerts, legislative testimonies, press releases, and speeches, 1995-2022.

4.4 Changes in Democratic Elites' Voting Patterns

The last section presented evidence for H_3 , showing that the AFL-CIO underwent important changes in its immigration position, both in terms of salience and friendlier tone, with greater representation of Latino voices and less focus on the legal status of workers in more recent decades. In this section, we show that there has been a generational replacement of those legislators who received less approval from the AFL-CIO, as per H_4 .

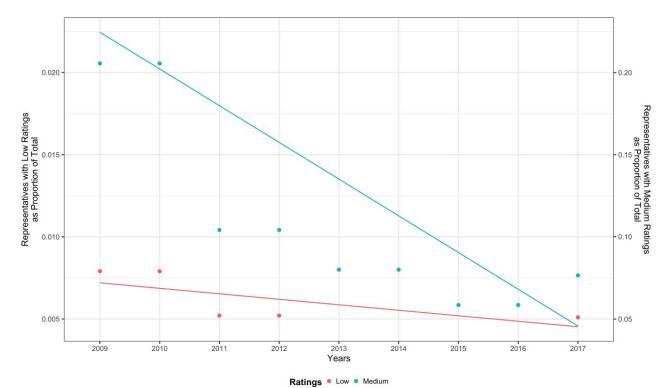
We conduct this analysis by using AFL-CIO legislative scorecard data to calculate the proportion of Democratic representatives with high AFL-CIO ratings (defined as ratings above 90 percent), medium ratings (defined as ratings below 90 percent but above 50 percent), and low ratings (defined as ratings below 50 percent) over time. Panel (a) of Figure 9 shows that, both those with medium and low AFL-CIO ratings have experienced a continual

decline in proportion since 2009, when data first became available. Panel (b) shows that, during the same period, the proportion of House Democrats with high AFL-CIO ratings has increased over time. Defining high approval as above 75 percent, medium approval as above 25 percent, and low approval as below 25 percent generated the same over-time trends as the ones shown here.

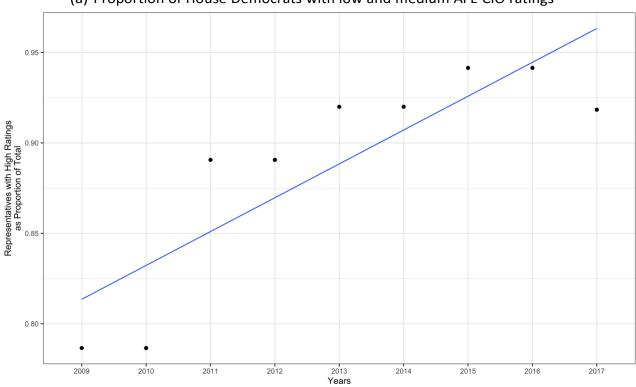
Observing that House Democrats with lower AFL-CIO ratings got replaced by those with higher ratings, however, does not show that changes have occurred in House Democrats' immigration positions. In other words, how important are Representatives immigration positions in the AFL-CIO's rating of House Representatives? If high-approval House Democrats do not vote differently compared to low-approval House Democrats on immigration issues, then our argument that the AFL-CIO's immigration position is transmitted to House Democrats would be seriously compromised.

We therefore analyze House Democrats' immigration issue votes, grouped by their approval ratings by organized labor. Figure 10 shows the results from this analysis, with two takeaways. First, from the start of the 111th Congress in 2009 to the end of the 113th Congress in 2015, House Democrats with high AFL-CIO approval consistently had more liberal immigration positions, represented by lower values on the y-axis, while those with low AFL-CIO approval consistently had less liberal immigration positions. Second, over time, both high- and low-approval House Democrats moved in a more liberal direction on immigration issues. This shows that high-approval House Democrats vote differently than low-approval ones on immigration issues.

We concede that liberalization in House Democrats' immigration positions may have occurred independently of pressures from AFL-CIO elites, and that high ratings of immigration-



(a) Proportion of House Democrats with low and medium AFL-CIO ratings



(b) Proportion of House Democrats with high AFL-CIO ratings

Figure 9: Proportion of House Democrats with certain AFL-CIO ratings. Low ratings are defined as ratings below 50 percent approval; medium ratings are defined as ratings above 50 percent but below 90 percent; high ratings are defined as ratings of 90 percent and above. Source: AFL-CIO Legislative Scorecard.

friendly Democrats simply shows that the AFL-CIO has liberal immigration positions. However, our analysis shows that there has been a gradual replacement of low-approval, less proimmigrant House Democrats by high-approval, more pro-immigrant ones. Despite its recent decline in importance, organized labor is still an important constituency of the Democratic Party. Our analysis, therefore, provides suggestive evidence that this gradual replacement may be associated with endorsement by the AFL-CIO.

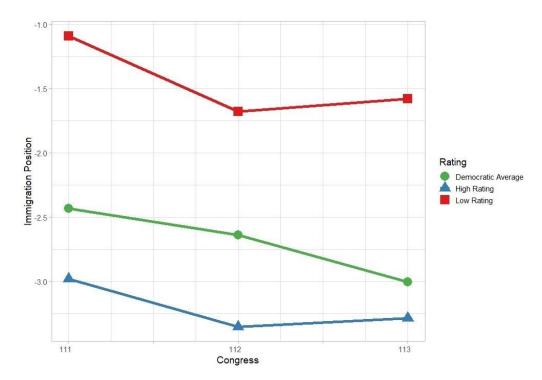


Figure 10: Immigration positions of House Democrats, by AFL-CIO ratings. Low ratings are defined as ratings below 25 percent approval; high ratings are defined as ratings of 75 percent and above. Lower values of immigration positions indicate more liberal voting behavior. Source: AFL-CIO Legislative Scorecard; Congressional Roll-Call Votes Database.

5 Conclusion

How political parties' positions evolve and how interest groups shape political elites' positions on contentious issues are two of the most important questions in the study of political devel-

opment. The past three decades have witnessed an increasing portion of Democratic elites who adopt pro-immigrant issue positions as well as growing Latino presence in the organized labor, a long-time staunch ally of the Democratic Party. The link between these two trends remain underexplored. Leveraging Congressional Roll-Call records, interest group ratings, census data, and public opinion survey data, we show that Democratic elites have adopted more pro-immigrant issue positions in response to the Latinization of organized labor. More specifically, catering to Latino members in unions, labor elites adjusted their issue positions and transmitted their opinion to Democratic elites by endorsing pro-immigrant candidates.

Our findings have theoretical as well as normative implications. First, we identified a crucial source of party position change — changes in the demographic composition of a social group that allies with a given party. We also challenged the commonly-held belief that organized labor is expected to be hostile to immigrants because new immigrants may compete down wages for union members. Normatively, the decline of union power may also threaten the political representation of racial and ethnic minorities. Racial and ethnic groups in organized labor play important roles in empowering minority voters.

We identify two areas for future research. First, we demonstrated that at the national level, immigration has gradually become a salient issue among labor elites. Another interesting test would be to see whether the AFL-CIO's state chapters have been responding to local Hispanic presences. Analyzing local labor leaders' behaviors is essential because the AFL-CIO's local chapters endorse political candidates during each election cycle. Second, generational replacement served as a key mechanism that shifted Democrats' issue positions on immigration. To rigorously test this, information on failed challengers' immigration positions is needed. Lastly, one might be interested in exploring the normative implication of

the "union decline" thesis, which calls for a better understanding of the relationship between interest groups and minority empowerment.

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