THE FOUNDATIONS OF LATINO VOTER PARTISANSHIP: EVIDENCE FROM THE 2000 ELECTION

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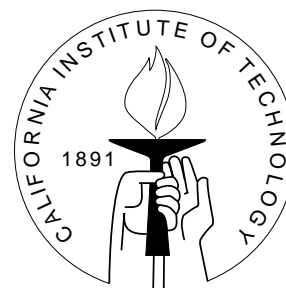
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Abstract

Traditionally, the Latino electorate has been considered to be Democratic in partisan affiliation. However, during the 2000 presidential election there were many efforts made by the Republican party to court Latino voters, suggesting that perhaps Latino voters may be becoming more Republican in orientation. Using a telephone survey of Latino likely voters conducted in the 2000 election, we examine three different sets of correlates of Latino voter partisanship: social and demographic, issue and ideological, and economic. We find that Latino voter partisanship is strongly structured by social and demographic, as well as issue and ideological, factors. We also find that while it is unlikely that changes in economic factors or abortion attitudes will significantly change which parties the different Latino nation-origin groups identify with, it is possible that changes in ideological positions regarding the role of government in providing social services could result in significant changes in Latino party identification.

Introduction: Latino Voters and the 2000 Election

The 2000 presidential election saw unprecedented attempts by both major party candidates – and by both political parties – to appeal to the Latino electorate. For possibly the first time in American history, both the Democratic and Republican nominees for president courted Latino voters, especially in California and Florida, with their own bilingual appeals. Both campaigns used Spanish-language advertisements, and both campaigns made special efforts to establish connections with Latino political and media elites. This is not surprising on the part of the Democrats since the Latino community has historically voted strongly Democratic (García and de la Garza, 1977; de la Garza, et. al., 1992; DeSipio, 1996). But, by making a direct effort to court the Latino vote, the Republicans in 2000 clearly believed they could make significant inroads into this segment of the electorate. Many Republicans, especially in states in the Southwest, continue to argue that Latino socioeconomic mobility and social conservatism make them ripe for Republican "conversion."

This belief on the part of Republican strategists raises a number of important research questions. First, has Democratic partisanship in the Latino electorate eroded to the point where a sizeable number of Latino votes can be won by Republican appeals? In other words, has Democratic partisanship declined significantly in the Latino electorate since the last round of important surveys of Latino partisanship in the late 1980s? Second, are Latino voter political identifications more malleable and potentially influenced by short-term political and economic factors than those of other groups? Much of the early work on partisan identifications in American political science has argued that partisanship is a long-term and stable political affiliation, not one that can be easily altered by political campaigns or direct issue appeals

(Campbell, et. al., 1960; Miller and Shanks, 1996). Is this true for the Latino electorate, or has their political experience been so different from the dominant Anglo experience to render moot any generalizations from earlier studies of Anglo political affiliations to the Latino electorate?

In fact, we argue that Latinos constitute an important demographic group, and the study of their partisan and other political attitudes provide critical tests of existing political theory (García Bedolla, 1999; Hero, 1992). The Latino population in the United States contains three basic groups: new immigrants who have not yet nationalized, new immigrants who have naturalized, and the native born descendents of immigrants. Most of the research on political attitudes in the United States has focused on Anglo Americans, who look most like the third group – the native born. But by focusing only on the descendents of naturalized, largely white, immigrants, we believe that previous research on the development of political attitudes may have been biased towards sociological explanations because Anglo respondents have tended to have longer socialization experiences in America. But what about newly naturalized American citizens? In some sense, these are individuals who enter American politics without necessarily having well-formed political attitudes learned through social mechanisms. Thus, it is possible that, initially, Latinos might learn their partisanship through more explicitly political means than Anglo-Americans. So, through an examination of Latino political attitudes, we can learn not just about this one increasingly important component of the electorate but also perhaps learn more about the process through which Americans acquire their political beliefs.

These important research questions form the basis for the research we report in this paper. Using a telephone survey of Latino likely voters conducted in the 2000 election, we examine the correlates of Latino voter partisanship in this most recent presidential election. In the next section of this paper we discuss the literature on partisanship and the underlying logic

for the model we test in this paper. Then we outline the dataset we use, and discuss the basic methodology of our hypothesis testing. Next we present our results, and conclude that indeed Latino voter partisanship is strongly influenced by both political and social factors. Thus, the 2000 Latino Voter Survey data provides a critical lens through which we can assess the current nature and status of Latino voter partisanship.

Party Identification and Latinos

The main debate regarding the nature of partisanship in American politics has centered on how stable people's partisan attachments are over the course of their lifetime. The origins of this argument is rooted in the findings of *The American Voter*, where Campell, et. al. (1960) posited a political socialization model of partisanship: party identification constitutes an affective attachment to a social group, in this case, a party. These attachments are learned early in life, often at a pre-political age, and remain fairly stable over time (Green and Palmquist, 1990; Miller, 1991; Abramson and Ostrom, 1991). In this model, change can happen as a result of great personal changes, like marriage, children, or of exceptional political changes, such as the Civil War or the Great Depression. Since these events do not happen often, they see political events as having little effect on the evolution of party identification in the individual.

Revisionists have argued that party identification is not nearly as stable as the traditional model has led us to believe and that respondents' reported party identification fluctuates more often than has been assumed (Markus and Converse, 1979; Fiorina, 1981; Franklin and Jackson, 1983; Franklin, 1984; McKuen, Erikson and Stimson, 1989). These scholars see party identification as a more dynamic process, driven by issues ranging from retrospective political and economic evaluations (Fiorina), past votes (Markus and Converse) and policy perspectives (Franklin and Jackson). While they may disagree on the agents driving change, their main

emphasis is that events in the larger political arena do affect the nature and strength of party identification, and that Americans can and sometimes do switch their party affiliation during their lifetimes.

Despite the fact that partisan identification has been found to be a key aspect of American political behavior, we know little about the nature and stability of Latino party identification. Studies of partisanship in the U.S. have generally relied on national data sets like the ANES and Gallup Polls that contain few Latino respondents. Most of the studies that have examined Latino political behavior have either had relatively small samples, or samples not representative of the national population of Latino voters, rendering any generalizations about the national Latino community problematic (Brischetto, 1987; Cain, Kiewiet and Uhlaner, 1991; Welch and Sigelman, 1993; Kosmin, 1995). While studies using the Latino National Political Survey (LNPS), a nationally representative sample, have provided important insights into Latino political participation generally, few scholars have used this data to look explicitly at issues of party identification (de la Garza, et. al., 1992; García, F., Falcón and de la Garza, 1996; DeSipio, 1996; Uhlaner, Gray and García, J., 2000; Uhlaner and García, J., 2001). Uhlaner and García (2000) find that policy positions affect Latino party identification more than ideology or demographic variables like education and income. Since the LNPS was conducted in 1989-90, the 2000 Latino Voter Survey provides an important basis from which we can assess the changes, if any, in Latino partisanship over the last decade and use this analysis as a bridge to the larger literature on partisanship generally.

As we saw above, studies of party identification have generally found three kinds of factors affecting the nature and stability of party identification: social issues and a person's socialization process; the nature of the political environment and resulting policy preferences;

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and economic well-being. To determine which is most salient for Latinos, we develop a fully-specified model that looks at the effects of social, political and economic factors have on Latino partisanship. In the next section we discuss how we operationalize and test our model for Latino voter partisanship.

Survey Methodology and Research Design

To test our model, we use the 2000 Latino Voter Study conducted by the Knight-Ridder News Organization, which interviewed 2721 likely Latino voters from May 26, 2000 through June 15, 2000.[1] Survey respondents were given the option of conducting the interview in English or Spanish, with the telephone interviewing being undertaken by International Communications Research (ICR) of Media, Pennsylvania. The sample of likely Latino voters contains 611 respondents from California, 600 from Texas, 608 from Florida, and 600 from New York – the four states that have the largest populations of Latino voters. Interviews were also conducted with 302 likely Latino votes from a handful of other states: New Jersey, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Connecticut. Overall, these twelve states contain approximately 90 percent of the national population of registered Latino voters, insuring that the coverage of this survey did span the national population of the Latino electorate. The national margin of error for this sample was 2%; the margin of error for the four main state samples of Latino voters was 4%. The 2000 Latino Voter survey restricted interviewing to likely Latino voters, thus limiting our hypothesis testing to only Latinos who are registered and likely to vote. This restricts our analysis, as we obviously cannot examine the partisan attitudes of non-registered and non-participatory Latinos with this dataset, an analysis

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[1] A collection of the major stories written using this survey dataset can be found at
http://www0.mercurycenter.com/local/center/lpoll0723.htm.

we will conduct with other datasets. For our present purposes, we will examine only likely Latino voters, as they are the ones being actively courted by both political parties.

The survey questionnaire covered a wide variety of national and state political elections and issues. All respondents were asked about their presidential vote preference and a series of questions about the issue positions and characteristics of the two major party presidential candidates. All respondents were also asked about their political beliefs, including partisanship and ideology, as well as a series of questions about their issue opinions and priorities. Questions about ethnic identity and other aspects of the Latino political experience were posed to all national respondents, as were a series of demographic questions. Last, there were short sub-questionnaires that were used in three of the major state samples, California, New York, and Texas.

The dependent variable in our analysis is the respondent's stated partisan affiliation. The 2000 Latino Voter Survey used a standard question to assess partisan affiliation: "Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an independent or something else?" This survey did not ask respondents about the strength of their partisan affiliations[2].

From this questionnaire, we then used three sets of questions to test our main hypothesis about Latino partisanship in the 2000 election: social and demographic questions, political and issue questions, and economic status questions. Our measurement of social factors is based on a series of binary variables taken from the 2000 Latino Voter Survey. First we include indicators for **ethnic origins**: a binary indicator variable for whether the voter was foreign born or not, and

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[2] Thus, our analysis examines only the **direction** of Latino voter partnership, and not the **strength**. While earlier studies have looked at strength of Latino voter partnership (e.g. Uhlaner and Garcia 2001), we restrict our focus here to direction as most of the important hypotheses we wish to test are about direction of partnership and not strength. We also see direction as a more politically relevant issue regarding Latino voter partnership. Last, by not studying strength we also sidestep the methodological debates over whether partisanship is a unidimensional or multidimensional type of attitude for Latino voters (for two perspectives on this methodological debate see Alvarez (1990) and Green (1988)).

three binary indicator variables for Cuban, Mexican, or Puerto Rican ancestry (Central American and other backgrounds were the excluded, comparison category). We include a variable measuring **maritial status**, whether the voter is married or not. Next, we include binary indicator variables for the **level of educational attainment**: completion of some high school, completion of high school, some college education, or a two-year college degree (four-year college education is the excluded comparison category). We include measures for the voter's **age**, with binary indicators for the 18-30 age group, 31-45, and 45-60, with those older than 60 the comparison category. We also include binary measures for **gender** (whether the voter is female)**, catholics**, and the voter's **primary language spoken at home** (primarily Spanish or Spanish-English, with English-only as the comparison category).

Next, to measure the impact of political issues, we begin by examining the impact of six different issues on Latino voter partisanship. These issues are **abortion, illegal immigration, affirmative action, school vouchers, government-sponsored health insurance and gun control.** To measure **abortion's** impact on partisanship, we created a scale where liberal beliefs on abortion were coded high, no changes in abortion policy were coded moderate, and the imposition of restrictions on abortion were coded low, drawn from a question asking whether the voter thought abortion should be made easier to obtain, stay the same, or be made more difficult to obtain. **Illegal immigration**, though, was measured based on a question that asked whether the voter whether they thought the U.S. government was doing too much, not enough, or the right amount – again, liberal beliefs were coded high, and conservative beliefs were coded low. Next, **affirmative action** beliefs were measured using a question that asked voters whether they though such programs should be continued, reduced or expanded, and again we coded this so that the liberal response (in favor of expansion) was coded high. **School vouchers** opinions were

measured using a binary measure, where opposition to vouchers was coded high and support was coded low. Voter opinions about **government-sponsored health insurance** programs were also measured by a binary measure, where support for such programs was coded high and opposition to them was coded low.

The last issue opinion measures were for **the use of the budget deficit** and **gun control**, and our measurement strategy here was somewhat different than for the previous issue opinions. The survey asked voters whether they favored a national concealed weapon ban, requiring handguns to have trigger locks, requiring licensing of handguns, and requiring handgun owners to attend a gun safety course. A principle components analysis of these four responses showed they were highly intercorrelated; thus, we created a factor scale measuring general opinion about **gun control**.[3] Regarding the **budget deficit**, the survey asked voters whether they favored using the budget surplus for a tax cut, to pay off the national debt more quickly, to stabilize Social Security, or to increase spending on domestic programs. We include binary indicator variables for whether the voter prioritized, cutting taxes, debt reduction, or increased domestic spending, making the stabilization of Social Security the baseline comparison category.

Two other political measures were included in our analyses of Latino voter partisanship. First, we examine binary indicator measures for **liberal** or **conservative** ideological affiliations – ideological moderation is the excluded category. Second, the survey also asked voters whether they had participated in the previous presidential election, so we include a variable for **new voters.**

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[3] The gun control questions began with the interviewer saying that "There are various proposals to regulate guns in this country. Do you favor or oppose:
> a nationwide ban on people carrying a concealed weapon?
> requiring trigger locks to be sold with all new handguns?
> requiring people to get a license in order to legally own a handgun?
> requiring all handgun owners to attend a course on gun safety?

We have two economic measures in our model of Latino voter partisanship. The first is a measure of **retrospective economic perceptions**: the survey question asked voters to assess their own economic situation in the last four years. The second measure in the economic model is the voter's family income, which we include as a linear, seven category measure.

Thus, our general model of Latino voter partisanship takes the following functional form:

PID = F(Social and Demographic Factors, Political Opinions and Behavior and Economic Perceptions and Income).

As our dependent measure for partisanship is a categorical variable, based on whether the voter identified as a Democrat, Republican or Independent, we used multinomial logit to estimate the effect of each independent measure on the relative probability that a voter would identify as an Independent or Democrat, or as a Republican or Democrat.[4] The multinomial logit estimates give us the ability to test the effects of each specific measure relative to other measures within the same basic explanatory model (for example, for the impact of affirmative action opinions relative to other political opinions) or across explanatory models (for example, looking at the impact of affirmative action opinions relative to social factors like age). Unfortunately, the

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The response options were randomly rotated to insure no response order problems. The principal components analysis of these four items provided factor loadings of .425, .584, .553, and .541, respectively.

[4] For detailed discussion of the multinomial logit model see Aldrich and Nelson (1984) or Greene (2000, Chapter 19). The basic idea behind the multinomial logit model is that we observe a series of discrete, but unordered, outcomes. We specify the probability that each individual in our sample picks from one of the set of outcomes as:

$$\Pr(y=1) = (\exp^{X\beta(1)}) / (\exp^{X\beta(1)} + \exp^{X\beta(2)} + \exp^{X\beta(3)})$$
$$\Pr(y=2) = (\exp^{X\beta(2)}) / (\exp^{X\beta(1)} + \exp^{X\beta(2)} + \exp^{X\beta(3)})$$
$$\Pr(y=3) = (\exp^{X\beta(3)}) / (\exp^{X\beta(1)} + \exp^{X\beta(2)} + \exp^{X\beta(3)})$$

Where we have the outcomes coded 1, 2 and 3 (say, for example, as corresponding to Democratic, Republican, or Independent identification). Unfortunately this model as specified above is not identified, so we need to "normalize" one of the parameter vectors (say for choice 1) to be equal to 1:

$$\Pr(y=1) = (1) / (1 + \exp^{X\beta(2)} + \exp^{X\beta(3)})$$
$$\Pr(y=2) = (\exp^{X\beta(2)}) / (1 + \exp^{X\beta(2)} + \exp^{X\beta(3)})$$
$$\Pr(y=3) = (\exp^{X\beta(3)}) / (1 + \exp^{X\beta(2)} + \exp^{X\beta(3)})$$

These probabilities are easily estimated by maximization of the following log-likelihood function:

$$\ln L = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \sum_{j=0}^{J} d_{ij} \ln \Pr(y_i = j)$$

multinomial logit model produces results that can be difficult to understand, as they are non-linear estimates (the impact of a particular variable depends on the values of the other variables in the model). Thus we transform the multinomial logit parameters into *relative risk ratios*; the relative risk ratio is simply a measure of the impact on the relative odds of one outcome being chosen relative to the baseline outcome, for a one-unit change in one of the right-hand side variables.[5] We also can use the multinomial logit estimates to study the impact of specific independent variables on the probability that an average Latino voter would be Democratic, Republican, or Independent in their affiliation. The multinomial logit model also gives us the opportunity to test for the joint explanatory power of the three explanatory models.[6] We discuss multinomial logit results in the next section of this paper.

Testing the Explanatory Models

We begin by examining the distribution of party identification in our Latino voter sample, as given in Table 1. In the entire sample of Latino voters, we see that 56.5% of the Latino voters reported Democratic affiliation, while less than half of that amount reported Republican

where j is the number of choices, i denotes an individual, and n is the number of individuals in the sample. Estimation produces the relative probabilities that an individual would pick outcome 2 relative to 1, and outcome 3 relative to 1, given their X values.

[5]Recall from above that the probabilities for choosing outcomes 1 or 2 are:

$$Pr(y=1) = (1) / (1 + exp^{X\beta(2)} + exp^{X\beta(3)})$$
$$Pr(y=2) = (exp^{X\beta(2)}) / (1 + exp^{X\beta(2)} + exp^{X\beta(3)})$$

Thus, the relative probability of choosing outcome 2 relative to the baseline category (1) is:

$$Pr(y=2)/Pr(y=1) = exp^{X\beta(2)}$$

This ratio is the relative risk. The relative risk ratio for a one unit change in one of the right hand side variables can easily be written from these expressions as the exponentiated value of the respective coefficient: $exp^{\beta(2)}$.

[6] This stems from a simple but important fact about maximum likelihood estimation of multinomial logit models. If we begin by estimation of the log-likelihood of a fully-specified model (that is, a model with all of the right-hand side variables included) we obtain the value of the log-likelihood function at convergence. We can re-specify the model to include only a subset of the right-hand side variables, which we call the constrained model; estimation of the constrained model yields a second log-likelihood value at convergence. The ratio of these two log-likelihoods has a convenient statistical distribution that lets us test for whether they are statistically distinct – in other words, does the addition of the variables not in the constrained model add to the explanatory power of the fully specified model? For details of the likelihood ratio test, see Greene (2000), pages 152-153.

affiliation (24.5%). Among Latino voters in 2000, 13.2% reported that they were Independents, while 5.7% said they were affiliated with no political party (4.6%) or some other third party (1.1%). In Table 1 we also provide the partisan distribution of the most recent American National Election Study in 1998 for comparison; in 1998, 51% of ANES respondents stated Democratic identification, 37% Republican identification, and 13% either Independent or apolitical. Thus, Latino voters in the 2000 election were somewhat more Democratic in identification than the most recent ANES sample (being about 7% more Democratic), but much less Republican (being about 8% less Republican in identification).

[Table 1 Goes Here]

In Table 2 we provide the breakdown of Latino voter identification by national origin, for Mexicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Central Americans and compare it to findings for registered voters from the LNPS. We find that Latino partisanship has not changed dramatically over the last decade. Mexican-origin partisanship has remained remarkably stable, with about 67% of respondents reporting Democratic affiliation and about 13% Republican affiliation in both surveys. Cuban origin Latino voters, on the other hand, have become somewhat more Republican, with moving from 66.7% in the LNPS to almost 70% of Cuban voters in this sample stating Republican identification. Puerto Ricans have also become slightly less Democratic, moving from 69.3% in the LNPS to 64.4% of the respondents in this sample. Central Americans, which were not part of the LNPS, are strongly Democratic in this sample with 57% of Central Americans stating Democratic identification. While the LNPS and 2000 Voter Survey are not exactly comparable in terms of their sampling methods and question wording, the comparison of findings from the two surveys suggests that, as has been found in macropartisanship studies generally, Latino partisanship within national origin groups has been

fairly stable over the last decade (Box-Steffensmeier and Smith, 1996; Green and Palmquist, 1990; Miller, 1991).

[Table 2 Goes Here]

In Table 3 we provide a different analysis of the partisanship data from the 2000 Latino voter poll, giving the partisan figures for voters who were either native or foreign born. Native-born Latino voters (who make up about 52% of the sample) were strongly Democratic in identification, with 60% saying they were Democratic. Only about 19% of the native born Latino voters are Republican, with 15% being independent.

[Table 3 Goes Here]

In contrast, among foreign born Latino voters in 2000 (who make up 48% of the sample), there was a lower rate of Democratic partisanship, as 52% stated they had Democratic affiliations. The foreign born Latino electorate is more Republican, with 31% Republican identification. The foreign born are also slightly less independent or non-partisan than the native born.

Now we turn to our model, which we use to test the impact of each of the independent variables, controlling for all other possible impacts, and we present these results in Table 4.

[Table 4 goes here]

Beginning with the results in Table 4 for the independence versus Democratic identification choice, we see first that two of the national origin variables are statistically significant: Mexican and Puerto Rican-origin Latino voters are less likely to be independent than Democratic. On the political side, school vouchers opponents, liberals, and not newly mobilized Latino voters are all more likely to be Democratic than independent. Consistent with the findings of other studies of Latino partisanship, none of the economic model variables are

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significant in the fully-specified model (Cain, Kiewiet and Uhlaner, 1991; Uhlaner and García, 2001; Nicholson and Segura, 2001).

Next, in the Republican versus Democratic identification results, we see both national origin and education effects continue to be statistically significant: Cubans are more likely to be Republican than Democratic, while Mexicans are more likely to be Democratic than Republican, controlling for all other social, economic and political factors. This is similar to Uhlaner and García's (2001) findings from the LNPS, and suggests that national origin has an important and independent effect on Latino party identification. Regarding education, we see that Latino voters at the lower rungs of the educational attainment ladder are more likely to be Democratic than Republican, all things constant.

However many of the political variables are significant in the fully specified model. Of the issues, abortion, affirmative action, school vouchers, and government funded health insurance all have statistically significant effects; each is negatively signed, meaning that Latino voters with more liberal opinions are more likely to be Democratic than Republican. We also see significant results for ideological beliefs, with liberals more likely to be Democratic but with conservatives more likely to be Republican.

Of the economic variables in our model, we find that economic perceptions do have a statistically significant impact on the choice between Democratic or Republican partisanship. More positive economic perceptions lead Latino voters to assume Democratic affiliations, while more negative perceptions lead them to Republican identities. It is difficult to determine the direction of causality here. Given this survey was done at the end of the Clinton administration, this could simply be a reflection of positive economic perceptions being related to positive feelings about the Democratic Clinton administration, and vice versa.

As far as the ranking of the relative magnitudes of different independent variables in the Latino partisanship model, we find that in the first equation (independent versus Democratic identification) the strongest predictive variable is that for the new voters, followed by the national origin and issue opinion variables. In the second equation (Republican versus Democratic identification), we find that by far the strongest predictive variable is Cuban origin. The second strongest significant predictive factor is conservative ideologies, followed by the other significant effects in this model.

Since the partisanship literature suggests social, political and economic factors may each have an independent effect on party identification, we also ran three different models – one with just the social variables, one with the political and one with the economic – and test the restriction that each set of variables (social, political, or economic) have no impact of partisanship. We present the results of these chi-square tests in Table 5.

[Table 5 goes here]

The basic conclusion that is clear from Table 5 is that the social and political models of Latino voter partisanship have strong predictive power. Both have strong and roughly similar chi-square values (173.83 for the social model and 162.25 for the political model), and the p-value for each test is 0.00 which is highly significant controlling for degrees of freedom (the number of parameters in each test restricted to 0). However, the chi-square value for the economic model is not strong (6.99) and is significant only at the p=0.14 level, which is greater than the conventional levels of statistical significance. Thus, we conclude the Latino voter partisanship can best be explained by social and political factors, not by economic factors.

But, this analysis does not shed much light on the "real world" political questions we discussed at the beginning of this article. If social and political factors are most important to

Latino partisanship, what social and political factors would have to change before we would begin to see wholesale "conversion" of Latinos from one political party to another? In order to address this question, we ran probability estimates in order to see what effect changes in particular economic and political characteristics could be expected to have on Latino partisanship. Table 6 provides a summary of these probability estimates.

[Table 6 goes here]

The "typical" or "hypothetical" Latino voter here is either of Cuban (first three columns of estimates) or of Mexican (fourth through sixth columns of estimates) national origin, is unmarried, has a high school education, is in the 18-30 age range, is male and Catholic, speaks only English at home, has status quo opinions on the issues (abortion, illegal immigration, affirmative action, school vouchers, government funded health insurance, and handgun control), does not believe that the budget surplus should be used for tax cuts, debt reduction, or increased social spending, identifies with a conservative ideology, is a newly mobilized voter, perceives his family's economic circumstances as unchanged in the past year, and is of moderate income.

Given either typical or hypothetical Latino voter, computing these probability estimates is a matter of simply using the multinomial logit model estimates from the full specification and the independent variable values implied by the assumed typical or hypothetical voter. Using this information, we compute the estimated probability that either the Cuban-origin or Mexican-origin voter would identify with the Democratic or Republican parties, or as an independent – this is the "baseline" probability estimate. We then change one of the independent variables to another value, and recompute the probability estimates. Thus, the difference between the

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baseline and the recomputed probability estimate gives the estimated impact of such a change in the independent variable for the typical or hypothetical voter[7].

Similar to what we found in our general model of Latino partisanship, these probability estimates suggest that income does not have a significant effect on Latino partisanship. For example, a movement from low income to high income for the hypothetical Mexican leads to a one percent *decrease* in likelihood of Republican identification and a one percent *increase* in likelihood of Democratic identification – exactly the opposite of what would be expected. Changes in income have almost no effect on Cuban partisanship either, with low income and high income Cubans having the almost the same probability of identifying with the Democratic and Republican parties. This indicates that increases in Latino incomes should have little effect on Latino party identification.

An issue that has been expected to move Latinos towards the Republican Party is attitudes towards abortion. This does not seem to be the case when looking at Mexican partisanship. A Mexican voter who decides they want to restrict abortion only becomes 3% less likely to be Democratic and 2% less likely to be Republican. Changes in attitudes towards abortion do have some effect on Cuban partisanship, with those for restriction becoming 8% more likely to identify as Republican and those for expansion becoming 7% more likely to identify as Democrat. Given that socially conservative Mexicans are generally understood to be the group most likely to move to the Republican Party because of their attitudes towards abortion, these findings suggest it is unlikely that will happen in the near future.

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[7] Technically, we simply substitute the estimated coefficients and fixed values into the probability expressions presented above in note 3. This substitution allows us to produce an estimate of each probability for the assumed voter type. Changing one of the fixed values of the independent variables, and recomputing the estimated probabilities, gives us an estimate for the impact of that independent variable, given the values of the other independent variables. This has been called the "first difference"methodology (King 1988).

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The one political issue that does seem to have an important effect on Latino partisanship is attitudes towards expansion or restriction of government health insurance. Mexicans who want to restrict government health insurance are more than twice as likely to identify as Republican and 12% less likely to identify as Democrats. Cubans, on the other hand, are 19% more likely to identify Democratic if they favor expansion of government health insurance and are 12% more likely to identify Republican if they are against it. This variable could be a reflection of respondents' larger ideological attitudes about the role of government in society. Government health insurance is an important social safety net, and the fact that changes in attitudes about it have such a strong impact on party identification could mean that baseline Latino partisanship is predicated on particular philosophical attitudes towards the role and purpose of government. It could be that the "baseline" Mexican and Cuban identify with Democrats and Republicans, respectively, because they agree with those parties' philosophies about the role of government in society. So, changes in those basic attitudes, as measured by this variable, result in greater changes in party identification.

In any case, this analysis of the probability effects provide us with a sense of how stable Latino party identification should be, in the face of economic and political changes in the community. While it seems unlikely that changes in income or attitudes towards abortion will significantly change which parties the different Latino national-origin groups identify with, it is possible that changes in ideological positions regarding the role of government in providing social services could result in significant changes in Latino party identification.

Discussion and Conclusions

Both the traditionalists and revisionists agree that the acquisition of partisanship is above all a socialization process – potential voters must learn what the parties stand for and whether or

not the party's beliefs coincide with their own. Some traditionalists argue this process may occur in childhood in response to parental cues and remain relatively stable throughout a person's lifetime. Niemi and Jennings (1991) argue that while issue preferences do matter, parental influence remains important throughout a person's lifetime. What is not clear is what happens in cases, like that in the Latino community, where the parents are noncitizen and/or apolitical. In Latino families, the children often become socialized into politics first and then socialize their parents. Does that change the nature of the socialization process?

Our findings provide some insights into the nature of that socialization process. Newer voters and younger Latinos seem to lean toward independence, while older Latinos have more established partisan attachments. This could be the result of the lack of availability of parental socialization in much of the community. While we do not have specific generational information for the new voters in this sample, the findings do suggest that Latino partisanship evolves over time in the U.S. As Latino voters become more socialized into the political system, they tend to move away from independence and towards the dominant party for their group – Democrats for Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans and Republicans for Cuban Americans (Uhlaner and García, 2001). The fact that this partisan identification is based on policy issue preferences suggests that, unless the parties fundamentally change their issue positions, these Latinos' identifications with those parties should remain fairly stable.

Yet, this raises the question of why national origin should matter so much in this model, especially being of Cuban origin. In this case national origin may be acting as a proxy for each group's political integration process. Cuban Americans have had an historically-unique migration and settlement experience. They have been incorporated into American politics within particular political, institutional, and ideological constraints that have moved them strongly

towards identification with the Republican Party (Moreno, 1997). Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans, on the other hand, have had particular historical experiences that have moved them towards the Democratic Party. This political experience could be what Latinos "learn" over time in the U.S. and could be replacing parental socialization as a way to transmit partisanship across generations. Of course, once the parent in socialized into a particular identification, it is reasonable to assume the intergenerational transmission of that attachment will then function much as it does in other communities, making Latino partisanship less variable over time and across generations.

One of the questions raised at the beginning of this article was the relative malleability of Latino party identification. Current party appeals to the Latino community reflect a general feeling that this group is "in play" politically. Given that over 40% of the Latino community is currently foreign born, and continued migration makes it likely that that proportion will remain fairly constant for the foreseeable future, our findings suggest that there will continue to be a large group of Latinos leaning toward independence or waiting to attach themselves to a political party. Yet, this is not to say that these Latinos are the equivalent of a political *tabula rasa* – our findings indicate that their eventual attachments will be influenced by their policy preferences and the historical political experiences of their national-origin groups.

Both the traditionalists and revisionists in the partisanship debate agree that there is a window of time within which party identification can change and that it tends to crystallize with age – they disagree about the size and timing of the window. It could be that the particular nature of the Latino community in terms of nativity means that immigrant and younger Latinos have a larger window than the native born. Or, it could be that the Latino community's unique generational make-up allows us to see process that already occurred among Anglos and white

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ethnic immigrants. At the very least, comparative longitudinal studies of Anglo and Latino partisanship would be especially useful in tracking the origin and evolution of party identification, not only among Latinos, but in U.S. politics more generally.

Thus, we conclude that Latinos are an important group to use in the study of political beliefs and attitudes. Latinos, as a group, have had different experiences with the American social and political world, which do lead to different dynamics in their acquisition of partisanship. Furthermore, there is considerable heterogeneity within the Latino community, across groups of different national origins and across generations. Considerable research remains to be done to track how Latinos learn about the American political world, and how this learning is translated from generation to generation.

Table 1		
	Latino Voter Sample	**1998 ANES**
Democratic	56.6 (1499)	51
Republican	24.5 (649)	37
Independent	13.2 (349)	11
Neither	4.6 (122)	2
Other	1.1 (30)	---

Table 2 (Column Percentages)								
	Latino Voter Survey				**LNPS**			
	Democrat	Republican	Independent	N	Democrat	Republican	Independent	N
Mexicans	67	12.6	13.3	1020	67.4	13	13.5	549
Cubans	16.2	69.9	10.7	365	21.3	66.7	11	251
Puerto Ricans	64.4	19.5	9.0	446	69.3	15.8	6.8	348
Central Americans	57.1	18.8	16.1	149	--	--	--	--
N	1423	626	327	2524	710	305	133	1148

Table 3 (Column Percentages)			
	Native Born	**Foreign Born**	**N**
Democrat	60.4	52.3	1484
Republican	18.8	30.7	645
Independent	14.8	11.5	347
Neither	4.4	4.9	122
Other	1.6	06	30
N	1355	1273	2628

	PR (Ind) v. PR (Dem)		PR (Rep) v. PR (Dem)	
Table 4: Latino PID Model				
	MNL	RRR	MNL	RRR
Foreign-Born	-.19	.82	.22	1.24
	.21	.18	.21	.26
Cuban	.63	1.87	2.48*	11.84*
	.35	.65	.28	3.26
Mexican	-.45*	.64*	-.43*	.65*
	.21	.13	.22	.14
PA	-.22*	.80*	-.06	.94
	.09	.07	.09	.08
Married	-.18	.83	.25	1.29
	.20	.17	.20	.25
Some HS	-.39	.68	-.89*	.41*
	.35	.23	.31	.13
High School	-.22	.80	-.52*	.60*
	.27	.21	.26	.15
2-Year College	-.10	.91	-.29	.75
	.27	.25	.27	.20
4-Year College	-.06	.94	-.06	.94
	.28	.26	.27	.25
18-30	.15	1.17	.48	1.62
	.33	.39	.33	.53
30-45	.14	1.15	.17	1.18
	.27	.32	.25	.30
45-60	.11	1.12	-.11	.90
	.28	.31	.25	.23
Women	-.29	.75	-.09	.91
	.18	.14	.17	.16
Catholic	-.01	.99	-.04	.96
	.12	.19	.18	.18
Spanish	-.46	.63	-.13	.88
	.26	.17	.24	.21
Spanish-English	-.12	.03	-.22	.80
	.22	.17	.22	.18

Table 4: Complete Model of PID (Cont'd.)				
	PR (Ind) v. PR (Dem)		PR (Rep) v. PR (Dem)	
	MNL	RRR	MNL	RRR
Abortion	-.11	.89	-.36*	.70*
	.12	.11	.12	.09
Illegal Immigration	-.02	.98	-.09	.91
	.12	.12	.12	.11
Affirmative Action	-.26	.77*	-.25*	.79*
	.10	.07	.09	-.07
School Vouchers	-.53*	.59*	-.69*	.50*
	.18	.11	.18	.09
Gov't Health Insurance	-.31	.73	-1.13*	.32*
	.30	.22	.26	.08
Gun Control	.10	1.10	-.15	.86
	.10	.11	.08	.07
Budget – Tax Cuts	.50	1.64	.45	1.57
	.35	.57	.31	.49
Budget – Debt Reduction	.43	1.53	-.10	.91
	.28	.43	.27	.25
Budget – Domestic Spending	-.18	.84	-.32	.72
	.21	.18	.20	.14
Liberal	-.66*	.52*	-.49*	.61*
	.21	.11	.24	.14
Conservative	-.27	.76	.88*	2.40*
	.21	.16	.20	.47
New Voter	.66*	1.82*	.10	1.10
	.25	.46	.27	.30
Economic Perceptions	-.15	.86	-.19*	.83*
	.09	.08	.08	.07
Income	.00	1.00	-.02	.98
	.07	.07	.07	.07
Constant	1.19		2.70*	
	.74		.67	

Table 5: Summary of MNL Results			
	Social	**Political**	**Economic**
Chi-Square	173.83	162.25	6.99
P-Value	0.00	0.00	0.14
Degrees of Freedom	32	24	4

Table 6: Probability Effects for Typical Latino Voters						
	Cuban Americans			Mexican Americans		
	Democratic	Independent	Republican	Democratic	Independent	Republican
Baseline	.33	.22	.45	.77	.17	.06
Low Income	.33	.22	.45	.77	.17	.06
High Income	.33	.21	.46	.78	.17	.05
Men	.33	.22	.45	.77	.17	.06
Women	.37	.18	.45	.81	.13	.05
Restrict Abortion	.27	.20	.53	.74	.18	.08
Expand Abortion	.40	.23	.37	.80	.16	.04
Restrict Gov't Health Insurance	.16	.15	.69	.65	.20	.15
Expand Gov't Health Insurance	.52	.25	.23	.84	.14	.02

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