

Bienvenidos: Are Political Parties Welcoming Latino Voters?

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ABSTRACT

In the 2000 and 2004 elections, Republicans and Democrats actively competed for Latino voters because of their rapidly growing numbers, heavy geographic concentration in battleground states, and the perception that their votes were "in play" due to weak partisan identification. Though conventional wisdom would expect this strategy to continue in 2008, early evidence from the presidential primaries suggests that this is not the case. Based on the work of de la Garza and DeSipio (2005), this paper develops a case study of partisan attempts to court Latino voters in the current election cycle, specifically focusing on changes in frequency, tone, and racialization of immigration rhetoric. I find that the GOP reversed direction on attempts to court Latino voters and that the focus on immigration in the campaign is causing Latino voters to be less likely to identify as Republican. I also find that the focus on immigration is not a party-wide strategy; national party leaders are less willing than local candidates to use anti-immigrant rhetoric in their campaigns because of their focus on appealing to more voters in the general election and concern for the long-term success of the party. Finally, I note that candidates who make immigration the key issue in their campaigns have had little success; surveys show that the issue is less likely to swing voters than the war in Iraq, the economy, or health care. Therefore, I conclude that while immigration was a major topic of the presidential primaries, Republican Party leaders will attempt to reduce discussion of it during the general election and return to President Bush's strategy. If this change in rhetoric does not occur, it is likely to damage the Republican Party's relationship with Latino voters for some time.

“Reaching out to Hispanics is critical to our future. The fastest-growing, and most conservative, segment of the population are natural Republicans. The question is whether we will reach out and welcome these new voters into our ranks.”

- Ken Mehlman, former chairman of the Republican National Committee, quoted in *The Politico* on May 1, 2007

Latinos¹ became the largest minority group in the United States in 2003 when the Census Bureau announced that the size of the Latino population had surpassed that of African Americans (Suro, 2005). Recent estimates show that the 44.3 million Latinos represent 14.8 percent of the U.S. population, and these numbers grow every year. Moreover, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Latinos continue to be the fastest growing minority group in the nation, with an annual growth rate of 3.4 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). Latinos accounted for almost half the total U.S. population growth since 2000. Although many Latinos are ineligible to vote because they are too young or are not citizens, they are still an important demographic group that is capable of deciding elections when and if they vote in a cohesive bloc. This is especially true in close races or in battleground states like Florida, Arizona, and Nevada, where Latinos constitute an increasingly large percentage of the population (de la Garza and DeSepio,

¹ The Latino population of the United States includes persons of “Spanish-origin” whose ancestors come from any of over twenty countries in Central or South America or the Spanish-speaking Caribbean islands. This paper will use the term “Latino” rather than “Hispanic” to describe this population for several reasons. First, the term “Hispanic” conveys a misleading sense of homogeneity in a population that actually consists of many diverse subgroups (Cafferty and Engstrom 2000 xiii, Garcia page 75). Second, “Hispanic” is somewhat controversial because it was created not by the community, but by the U.S. government and because it serves as a reminder of Spanish colonialism (Oquendo 1998). Many within the community prefer the term “Latino” because it is considered more culturally respectful and highlights their shared language (Oquendo 1998). Other authors use “Latino” and “Hispanic” interchangeably (Garcia, 1997; de la Garza and DeSepio, 1996). This is only an issue when speaking about the broad group; when speaking about a subgroup it is more appropriate to reference the country of origin, i.e. Cubans in Miami, Chicanos in Texas or Puerto Ricans in New York.

2005). News articles began trumpeting the potential electoral power of this Latino “sleeping giant” that could awaken during the 2000 elections, and the message continued through the 2004 election cycle (Suro, 2005).

Moreover, unlike the African American vote, which studies show identifies approximately 9 to 1 with the Democratic Party (Bositis, 2005), political party leaders think that the Latino vote is unpredictable and up for grabs by those who were willing to reach out to them (DeSipio, 1996). Though registered Latino voters identify approximately 2 to 1 in with the Democratic Party, their partisan allegiances are weak, and a large percentage of Latinos register as independents (DeSipio, 1996; Cain, Kiewiet, and Uhlaner, 1991). Although Latinos tend to support Democrats’ plans for issues like health care, education and ending discrimination, Republicans feel that they can woo these voters with traditional family and religious values, tax cuts, entrepreneurial support, and conservative social wedge issues like bans on abortion and gay marriage (DeSipio, 1996; Connaughton, 2005).

The parties competed vigorously for the Latino vote for the first time in 2000, with presidential candidates George W. Bush and Al Gore sprinkling their speeches with Spanish and the first major television advertising purchases on Spanish-language channels (de la Garza and DeSipio, 2005). The trend continued thereafter, and the Hispanic Voter Project at Johns Hopkins University found that a record number of candidates spent a record amount of money on Spanish-language television ads in 2002, and the 2004 elections shattered those numbers (Segal, 2004). In short, both parties were behaving as if the Latino constituency was an important demographic for electoral success by actively competing for Latino votes.

Given the continued growth of the Latino population, conventional wisdom would suggest that the Latino vote should continue to be “in play” in the 2008 elections. Yet, mounting evidence suggests that this is not the case. All the Republican presidential candidates except John McCain declined to participate in a debate focused on Latino issues sponsored by Univision (the debate was rescheduled with better participation rates). The only Republican to participate in the convention of the National Association of Latino Elected & Appointed Officials was Rep. Duncan Hunter, and none of the Republican candidates addressed the National Council of La Raza at its annual conference (Martinez, 2007). Moreover, the tone of the campaign appears to have changed, with a much greater focus on illegal immigration (Martinez, 2007 and other newspaper articles). This paper will examine both the rise and fall of party attention to the Latino vote; in addition, it will ask why the parties changed their strategies with respect to this population.

Examining the strategies of political parties with respect to their targeting of citizens is an important endeavor because political parties are the traditional means through which citizens have been mobilized. Furthermore, research has shown that people are most likely to participate in politics when they are asked to do so (Rosenstone and Hansen, 2003). Relatively recent changes in party activities suggest, however, that parties have changed the way they perform their mobilizing functions by narrowly targeting likely voters (Schier, 2000). A continued shift toward “activation” of these likely voters rather than a more broad mobilization of the entire population may undermine the ability of minority groups to find a voice in the political sphere. If they fail to achieve permanent incorporation by parties, they continue to be marginalized,

likely having little political influence both in terms of the political agenda or public policy decisions. They are also to less likely, without sustained attention by parties, to substantially increase their political participation. Furthermore, even if one of the parties does still pay attention to them, they still risk marginalization as they become very dependent on that party and lose their ability to influence its behavior and strategies save in very close elections.

In this paper I begin by describing the growth and political preferences of the Latino population and party strategies towards them in the 2000 and 2004 elections. In these elections, I show that partisan competition for Latino voters was evident. I then present evidence drawn from the current 2008 election campaign and the rhetoric of the immigration debate that suggests that the parties no longer seem to be competing for the Latino vote and explore Latino voters' reactions to this shift. Next, using data from the 2000 and 2004 elections as well as information from the emerging debate about immigration reform, I determine whether the changes observed are examples of a dominant, party-wide strategy. Finally, I examine possible explanations why the political parties changed their strategy towards the Latino population.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Growing Population, Growing Influence

Latinos are now the largest minority group in the United States, according to U.S. Census figures (Geron, 2005, 95). There are approximately 44.3 million Latinos in the U.S., slightly more than the 40.2 million African Americans (U.S. Census, 2007). With continued immigration, growing naturalization rates, and higher than average natality rates, Latinos are also the fastest-growing minority group in the United States (Navarro & Mejia, 2004, 7; Geron, 2005, 95). Moreover, the Latino share of the population is expected to grow by around 20 percent by 2020 and by nearly 30 percent by 2060, based on current growth rates (Geron, 2005, 95).

Geographically, Latinos are not distributed evenly across the country. Rather, Latinos are generally clustered in the ten states with the highest Latino populations, and almost 86 percent of the Latino population can be found there (Garcia, 2003, 37). California and Texas are home to almost one-half of all Latinos, nearly 21.5 million, and other states with significant Latino populations include New York, Florida, Illinois, New Mexico, and Arizona, followed by New Jersey, New Mexico, Colorado, and Nevada (U.S. Census, 2007). In New Mexico, Latinos constituted 44 percent of the state's population, the highest percentage of Latinos in any state (U.S. Census, 2007). These states account for a significant amount of available Electoral College votes for presidential elections and include a number of must-win "battleground" states, suggesting that if Latinos are effectively mobilized they have the potential to become an influential and decisive source of votes in key states.

Today, Latino voters represent 6.6 percent of all votes cast (Geron, 2005, 101).

Moreover, not only is the Latino population growing, but those numerical increases are actually translating into more Latino voters, through naturalization and high birth rates. The William C. Velazquez Institute (WCVI) estimates that there were 5.7 million Latino voters in 2000 and non-profit efforts have since increased those numbers by encouraging more Latinos to register to vote or by guiding Latino through the naturalization process (Geron, 2005, 101). Post-2000 election results confirm that more Latinos registered and voted in that election than ever before, which indicates the group has growing electoral awareness (Navarro & Mejia, 2004, 130).

Many scholars are extremely optimistic about what these numbers will mean for Latino political participation. Cafferty and Engstrom claim that “their very numbers... and their projected growth...make this population of great importance to American society as well as to policy makers” (2000, xii). F. Chris Garcia agrees, saying that “the increased growth, diversity and dispersion of Hispanics of many national origins into all areas of the United States will increasingly open the eyes and minds of many more Americans (1997, 435).”

However, John A. Garcia notes that population size and geographic location and concentration are not enough for political mobilization without larger outreach and organization efforts because “converting numbers of persons into an effective political base requires additional elements” (Garcia, 2003, 28). Thus, as Connaughton says, “the question for strategists in presidential Campaign 2000 was not *if* they should court Latinos but *how* they should do so” (Connaughton, 2005, 16).

Indeed, following the publication of the U.S. Census data highlighting these demographic changes, Latinos rocketed to political importance. Latino voters received

unprecedented candidate, partisan, and media attention during the 2000 U.S. presidential campaigns (de la Garza and DeSipio, 2005). Newspaper headlines repeatedly referred to the “sleeping giant” of the Latino vote that was “vital to electoral success,” offered advice on the best way to court them, and warned political parties to ignore the demographic trends of this voting population at their own peril (Connaughton, 2005, xiii; McCaffrey, 2007).

While the political parties’ recognition of Latinos as urgent, legitimate, and powerful stakeholders in campaigns is still relatively new, the trend has become more obvious and received more media coverage since the 2000 presidential elections (Connaughton, 2005, 25). By 2004, both parties were giving Latinos significant attention and devoting resources toward attempting to court them, often in Spanish, by highlighting the aspects of their identity that are most likely to resonate with Latino voters (Navarro & Mejia, 2004, 128).

Shopping for a Political Party

Unlike the black vote which is solidly Democratic, both political parties perceive that “the Latino vote” is up for grabs. In fact, several authors point out that even the use of the phrase “the Latino vote” is inappropriate, because Latinos are a complex and diverse group that does not usually vote en bloc (Connaughton, 2005, 4; Navarro and Mejia, 2004). Connaughton (2005) says that that Latinos have been portrayed as “shopping for a political party.” This portrayal was reinforced by studies demonstrating that Latinos’ party identification and voting preferences were unpredictable, and that

Latino voters are willing to split their ticket, especially for President (DeSipio, 1996; de la Garza and DeSipio, 2005).

Latinos offer a perplexing mix of “conservative” and “liberal” views that reinforce the perception that they are not firmly wedded to one political ideology. Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans, the three largest groups based on country of origin, differ dramatically from each other and respond to different messages (Gonzalez Baker, 467; Cain, Kiewiek, and Uhlaner, 19991). Most Latinos identify themselves as socially conservative but support a liberal social agenda (DeSipio, 1996, 50-55). Since Latinos tend to be more conservative on some social issues such as abortion and gay rights and more liberal on many economic issues like programs for the poor, immigrant rights, and support for education, it is possible that they could come to support either party, and therefore, both parties should court them accordingly (De la Garza and DeSipio, 2006; Navarro & Mejia, 2004, 47).

Furthermore, Latinos have demonstrated weak partisan identification, suggesting that both political parties might find targeting the Latino population to be a valuable use of resources. Although polling data from the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) found that Latinos register with the Democratic Party almost twice as often as the Republicans, the Pew Hispanic Center Poll analysis showed that this party preference is not a strong one (Navarro & Mejia, 2004, 47). Other research has found that young Latinos are especially likely to defect from the Democratic Party (de la Garza and DeSipio, 1999), and that one third of Republican Latinos used to be Democrats (Connaughton, 2005, 17).

Therefore, it should come as no surprise that both parties aggressively courted Latinos in the 2000 presidential campaigns (de la Garza and DeSipio, 2005). Both parties

offered websites, mailings, advertisements and other information in Spanish, and highlighted Latino elected officials at their national conferences (Segal, 2004; Connaughton 24). Republicans and Democrats broke records for spending on Spanish-language advertisements in 2000 and again in 2004 (Segal 2004, de la Garza and DeSipio, 2005). Republicans, especially, credit this focus on increasing the number of Latinos who are willing to vote for or who identify as Republican. Thus, conventional opinion would suggest that these trends will continue during the 2008 presidential campaign (de la Garza and DeSipio, 2006).

Partisan Identification

The basic conception of partisan identification is that of an attachment to a social group. Campbell et al. (1960) argue that this attachment is developed through political socialization, with individuals essentially learning partisan loyalties from their parents. Scholars have argued that, once established, party identification determines a person's policy positions, rather than the other way around (Campbell et al. 1960). More traditional models view these partisan attachments as stable and not likely to change without major personal changes or great political upheaval and realignment (Miller, 1991); however, studies have shown that party identification is susceptible to change in response to the political environment (Fiorina 1981; Franklin and Jackson 1983). Policy positions have been shown to affect Latino party identification more than ideology or demographic variables (Nicholson and Segura 2005). Also, Latinos may be open to greater partisan change than other ethnic groups since the basis of their partisanship is explicitly political (Alvarez and Garcia-Bedolla 2003, Uhlaner and Garcia 2005).

Connaughton (2005) explains three ways that parties can promote identification: (1) explicitly, (2) implicitly, (3) through antithesis and (4) through a “conversation of shared interest” (p. 12). Explicit identification occurs when politicians use common ground techniques to make the member feel they have shared values. Implicit identification occurs when politicians use the word “we” when speaking with groups or uses unifying symbols to make the member feel included. Identification through antithesis occurs when politicians seek to unite groups against a common enemy. A “conversation of shared interests” occurs when parties seek to show candidates interacting with members of the target group to demonstrate that the party is interested in the members, and by extension, the target group as a whole.

This partisan identity, consisting of values, candidates and image, is then marketed to the target groups. Party strategists hope to craft messages that will persuade voters to ascribe to the partisan identity, “like” and favor their candidate, and hopefully, vote for them (Connaughton, 2005). Each political party has demonstrated a different style, strategy, and message when attempting to recruit Latino voters.

The Republican Party has emphasized several characteristics of its ideology to Latinos. First, Republicans argue that immigrants fit perfectly with the GOP philosophy of the “American Dream” (de la Garza and DeSipio, 2005; Cain, Kiewiet, and Uhlaner, 1991; Connaughton, 2005, 31). They feel that the Latino (and actually, widespread immigrant values) of hard work, entrepreneurship, self-reliance and pride match their focus on them (Connaughton, 2005, 40). Also, Republicans point out that they share “traditional family values” with Latinos and there is the importance of religion to both groups (Cain, Kiewiet, and Uhlaner, 1991; Connaughton, 2005, 42). The Republican

Party argues that Latinos are actually “proto-Republicans” who just need to be made aware of their shared values to join the party (de la Garza and DeSipio, 2005). Thus, in their communication strategies, the GOP emphasizes that Latinos focus on where they and the Party are going together (Connaughton, 2005, 24).

The Democratic Party, however, also believes that it shares several key values with the Latino community (de la Garza and DeSipio, 2005; Cain, Kiewiet, and Uhlaner, 1991). Party leaders stress that the issues that Latinos care about, issues like more jobs, better wages, bilingual education, affirmative action, pro-immigrant policies, are focuses of the Democratic Party (Connaughton, 2005, 44). Also, the Democratic candidates have demonstrated that they are willing to try to frame the GOP as being anti-Latino, because they think that the community will respond to negative portrayals with increased voter turnout. Connaughton argues that this is because “in terms of occasional and swing voters, they are more likely to go to the polls on the basis of what the GOP would do *to them* as opposed to what the Democrats would do *for them*” (45). Unlike the Republican Party, the Democrats communication strategies seem to focus Latinos on their history with the Party (Connaughton, 2005, 25).

Thus far, it appears that the Democratic messages are resonating better with Latino voters: 40.9 percent identify with the Democrats and 25.5 percent identify with the Republicans (Geron, 2005, 104). Among likely voters, 41.8 percent identify with the Democrats and 31.1 percent identify with the Republicans (Geron, 2005, 104). Latinos from almost all countries of origin, with the exception of Cuba, show support for Democrats (Geron, 2005, 192). However, the Pew Hispanic Center poll found that party affiliation is significantly weaker among young Latinos less than 30 years of age: 34

percent identify themselves as Democrats, 21 percent identify as Republicans, and 26 percent indicated they were independents (Pew Hispanic Center). Such a large portion (more than one-third) of the Latino population is currently under 18 years of age that “this trend toward independence could change party affiliation and voting patterns in the coming years” (Geron, 2005, 105). Not only that, but since these voters are, for the most part, citizens, there will be fewer barriers to them voting, making Latino voters increasingly up for grabs to the parties who recruit them.

However, partisan identification trends among Latino elected officials are quite different. In 2007, there were 5,129 Latinos serving in elected office, however, most of these are at the municipal level or lower (NALEO, 2007, 1). In fact, over 73 percent of Latino elected officials serve in offices that are not elected on a partisan basis; however, of the 27 percent who do serve in partisan offices, 91 percent are Democrat and only 9 percent are Republican (NALEO, 2007, 3). Of the 23 Latino Representatives, 20 are Democrats and the remaining 3 members are all Cuban Representatives from the Florida delegation. There are only three Latinos in the U.S. Senate: Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Ken Salazar (D-CO) and Mel Martinez (R-FL). There is only one Latino Governor, Bill Richardson from New Mexico. While President Bush has made some high profile political appointments of Latino Republicans, including Hector Barreto as the head of the Small Business Administration and Alberto Gonzales as Attorney General, the vast majority of those seen as political leaders do identify as Democrats. Finally, the first and only Latino presidential candidate, New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, is a Democrat. These statistics are interesting because they are much more widely disparate than the voters’ identification patterns, showing that, at least for the time being, the

Democratic Party has done a better job of incorporating Latinos within their organization. Moreover, since Latinos are more inclined to vote for a Latino candidate, regardless of party, Latinos candidates and elected officials serve as an important mobilization and partisan identification tool (DeSipio, 1996).

FIGURE 1: LATINO ELECTED OFFICIALS BY PARTY AFFILIATION IN 2007

Furthermore, while Latino elected officials serve in 43 states, almost all (96 percent) serve in the nine states with the highest Latino populations: California, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, New Jersey, Illinois, and New York. Over 42 percent serve in Texas and nearly 23 percent serve in California. With the exception of Arizona, the states with the highest Latino populations as a share of the total state population (and the highest number of elected Latino officials) generally have the least punitive immigration laws.

FIGURE 2: LATINO ELECTED OFFICIALS BY STATE IN 2007

Political Parties and Mobilization

Moreover, partisan identification is only one factor involved in voter turnout than partisanship. While it increases political participation, partisan identification is often not enough to encourage voters to go to the polls. Many scholars argue that beyond individual motivation and issue salience, individuals need to be encouraged and asked to participate to actually do so (Garcia, 2003, 85; Rosenstone and Hansen, 2003).

Political parties are responsible for the majority of this necessary voter outreach and mobilization (Polsby, 1983; Connaughton, 2005, 10). Rosenstone and Hansen found that the two major political parties contact almost a quarter of the total population to speak about the election (2003, 162). They also found that the people contacted by the

parties are significantly more likely to participate in electoral politics than those who were not contacted (Rosenstone and Hansen, 2003, 170). They explain that,

By subsidizing information and by creating social connections, political campaigns lower the cost and increase the benefits of voting, persuading, volunteering and contributing... [parties generate] a powerful inducement to participation in electoral politics (177).

However, parties do not try to mobilize everyone; rather, due to limited resources, they choose instead to target their efforts on specific voters and groups (Rosenstone and Hansen, 2003, 30). Rosenstone and Hansen explain that parties are most likely to mobilize 1) people they already know, 2) people centrally positioned in social networks, 3) people whose actions are most effective at producing a desired outcome, and 4) people who are likely to participate (31). These mobilized voters are then most likely to participate when 1) salient issues top the agenda, 2) other concerns do not require their attention, 3) important issues are pending, 4) outcomes hang in the balance, and 5) issues come before legislatures (2003, 35-36).

Research also shows that the largest effects of party mobilization can be seen in demographic groups that are otherwise least likely to vote: minorities, the poor, and the uneducated (Rosenstone and Hansen, 2003, 173). Navarro and Mejia admit that “the bulk of Latino outreach is now handled by the parties” rather than by candidates’ campaign officials or Latino non-profit groups (41). However, as mentioned before, due to limited resources, the parties primarily focus on Latinos who are likely voters, and since Latino voting rates are so low, they essentially eliminate a majority of Latino potential voters (Navarro & Mejia, 2004, 148). Therefore, the larger amounts of money spent by the parties on outreach to Latinos do not necessarily guarantee that the parties are any more successful at mobilizing Latinos. In fact, data shows that most Latinos have

experienced little exposure to attempts to mobilize them, which explains the fact that Latino levels of electoral participation have not been rising more rapidly (Navarro & Mejia, 2004, 147).

Moreover, in recent years, scholars have argued that the political parties have shifted from a policy of mobilization to a policy of activation “by invitation only” (Schier, 2000). Schier explains that, “Activation... involves retailing a message to a carefully selected target audience. Parties in the past broadcast their messages throughout the nation in contrast to the frequent narrowcasting of activation strategies (Schier, 2000, 44). Facilitated by new technologies, activation is far more efficient than regular mobilization; however, it excludes millions of Americans from the parties’ recruitment efforts. By activating only this target audience, they actually decrease turnout by not widely asking people to participate (Schier, 2000, 45).

This target audience generally consists of those political elites with high socioeconomic status (including income and education levels), positive attitudes toward politics, personal feelings of political efficacy and available resources (including time and money) to participate (Rosenstone and Hansen 2003 and Garcia, 2003, 8). Those most likely to be targeted also have a solid knowledge of politics, a history of participating, and strong opinions about the desired outcome (Schier, 2000, 111).

Latinos as a Target Audience

Because such a high percentage of Latinos are not yet U.S. citizens, and because those who are citizens are frequently not registered or do not vote regularly, Latinos have not traditionally been targeted by campaigns. Moreover, most Latinos do not fit the

socioeconomic characteristics that parties look for in targeted voters. Therefore, before 2000, Latinos have received little, if any, attention or encouragement to vote and most reported that they had never been contacted by a political party, increasing the importance of any new mobilization effort (Geron, 2005, 99). However, Highton and Arthur Burris (2002) have demonstrated that, when socioeconomic status and years in the United States are controlled for, the differences in Latino voter turnout disappear, meaning that with sustained voter registration and mobilization efforts, it is possible that Latinos could vote at similar rates as the non-Hispanic white population (Navarro & Mejia, 2004, 39). This explains why political parties could begin outreach to Latino voters now, as part of a long term strategy to incorporate them into the political system.

This long term strategy was used to justify the focus on Latino voters when it was developed within the Republican Party during President George W. Bush's election in 2000; no prior campaign had spent as much time and money trying to attract Latino voters (de la Garza and DeSipio, 2005). The factors that accounted for his increased focus on Latinos included the size and growth rates of the community, but also the concentration of those voters in "battleground" states and, as de la Garza and DeSipio (2005) point out, a "growing recognition among some Republican leaders that any gain among white voters to be had from attacking Latinos is more than compensated for by the loss of Latino and moderate white voters to the Democrats."

Until the 2000 election cycle, the Republican Party alienated Latino voters by, for example, ignoring Latino voters; working to disenfranchise Chicanos; and including anti-immigrant candidates like Pat Buchanan and Pete Wilson within their ranks (de la Garza and DeSipio, 20). In the 2000 campaign, however, Bush specifically and systematically

avoided these practices, speaking Spanish throughout the campaign and signaling that he was tolerant of immigration and respectful of immigrant groups' cultural history (de la Garza and DeSipio, 21). His outreach plan was multifaceted: Latinos must be made to feel welcome; due to past Republican behavior, spending would have to be unprecedented to convince Latinos of his earnestness, and these advertisements would focus on issues important to Latino voters and on Bush the nominee, rather than the Republican Party (de la Garza and DeSipio, 67). Bush and his campaign staff considered this outreach to be important in the current election; however, they also viewed it as part of a long term initiative to bring this important and growing demographic into the Republican Party (de las Garza and DeSipio, 2005). Since Latino outreach was designed to be a long-term party strategy that would build over many years, it is strange that it would be so quickly abandoned by the Party.

Party Reputation: Issue Selection

The issues selected by an organization will represent prominent aspects of the organization's identity that they wish to communicate to voters (Cheney and Vibbert, 1987; Connaughton, 2005). As parties compete to build the most appealing identity for voters, they must also concern themselves with the public's aggregate perceptions of them, what is commonly referred to as "reputation" (Connaughton, 2005). Since parties are responsible for generating and influencing their own image and reputation, party leaders must carefully manage which issues they discuss and how they present and frame those issues for the public (Cheney, 1983; Connaughton, 2005, 2). Thus, scholars can be sure that the issues that parties choose to discuss in their public discourse have been

carefully selected to highlight the values that the organizations hold, or wish audiences to believe they hold. Since they have limited resources of time and money to present those messages, parties and politicians will focus on the issues most important to them.

If parties are competing to win over Latino voters, then that should be reflected in the issues they discuss in their public discourse, because it is in parties' best interests to make their identity attractive to intended audiences (Connaughton, 2005). Parties will seek to produce favorable messages that will generate positive responses from target groups, furthering their goal of increasing voter identification with the party (Connaughton, 2005). This strategy was seen in President Bush's campaigns in 2000 and 2004, when he explicitly welcomed Latino voters, used bilingualism in the campaign, and explicitly stated his support for issues that are important to Latino voters, including tolerance of current immigration levels and openness to developing immigration reform with a path to citizenship (de la Garza and DeSipio, 2005). However, this strategy is missing now, when the leading Republican candidates for president have declared increasingly tough stances in immigration. Less well known candidates, including Duncan Hunter and Tom Tancredo have articulated more stringent stances on immigration, from support for a border wall to mass deportation of illegal immigrants to denial of services. Such stances alienate Latino voters (Garcia 181).

Latino Reactions to the Immigration Issue

Political contexts where actual or perceived threats are present have been found to cause a variety of political responses, including voter mobilization as a means of defense (Giles and Hertz, 1994; Radcliff and Saiz, 1996) and increased identification with one's

own group (Connaughton, 2005; Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999). Moreover, it has been demonstrated that Latinos who naturalize within a politically charged context have been found to display higher rates of voter turnout than native-born Latinos and Latinos who naturalized in other contexts (Pantoja et al, 2001). Consistent with group conflict theory, increases in perceived minority percentage or perceived power may trigger an increase in discrimination. This is due to a sense of increased competition and a threat to the power of the status quo. Therefore, it is possible that the threat model can be used as a mobilizing force for Latinos. If so, it is to be expected that the perceived threat will increase political involvement through increased registration and voting rates, as well as other political activity like protests (Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999, 1047).

Similarly, current Republican immigration proposals may be an example of a change in strategy toward Latino voters. Latinos may view current Republican immigration proposals as “threatening.” Initiatives or referenda that are perceived to target Latinos unfairly may also serve to stimulate Latino mobilization, in terms of significantly increased naturalization, voter registration, actual voting, and general political participation rates (Pantoja, Ramirez and Segura, 2001). These effects were evident, for example, in the Latino community’s reaction to Proposition 187, a 1994 ballot initiative in California designed to deny illegal immigrants access to social services, health care, and public education (Gonzalez Baker, 1996, 467; Navarro & Mejia, 2004, 128; 2005 Geron, 101; Garcia). While it was approved by voters, it was later overturned by the federal court. However, the message that Latinos were under attack was used to generate responses not only locally, but nationally (Gonzalez Baker,

1996, 467). After all, when the political system has a direct impact on an individual, that individual will be more motivated to participate in the political system (Garcia 126).

Many Latinos assumed a defensive stance on Proposition 187, and their anger was directed at the Republican Party (Garcia 180). Segura, Falcon, and Pachon (1997) found that Proposition 187 resulted in greater defection from the Republican to the Democratic Party among Latinos in the state. In the 1996 elections, Latinos voted Democratic as a unified block by a majority of 70 percent (Geron, 2005, 86). Because of Proposition 187's presence on the ballot, first-generation immigrants in California were twice as likely to have voted as their counterparts in states that did not have a similar anti-immigrant measure on the ballot (Geron, 2005, 86). But this will also have longer term consequences. Naturalization rates skyrocketed for Latinos in the wake of Proposition 187, and between 1994 and 1997, citizenship applications to the INS grew from 540,000 to 1.4 million, the vast majority of which were Latinos (Geron, 2005, 86). Between 1990 and 1996, 876,000 Latinos naturalized. Pantoja, Ramirez and Segura found that Latinos who naturalize in a politically hostile climate have much higher registration and voting turnout rates than native-born Latinos (2001). They found that

Immigrant-bashing and other activities perceived to be anti-Latino potentially have huge negative political consequences for those political forces perceived to be the source of such attacks... Our findings suggest that those pushing political or policy positions perceived to be anti-Latino in other states should be cautious because there is nothing to say that the dynamic observed in California cannot replicate itself elsewhere (748).

Although Proposition 187 was important, that one bill was not enough to mobilize Latino voters. Rather, Bowler, Nicholson, and Segura (2006) show that partisan change among Latinos developed across a series of contentious ballot propositions that targeted immigrants. Furthermore, the alienating effects of these ballot initiatives were not

confined to Latinos, but also included partisan movement among non-Hispanic whites who were offended by the explicitly racial nature of the debate (Bowler, Nicholson, and Segura 2006). These findings stand in sharp contrast to the expectation that the GOP would benefit in the long run from raising the salience of issues like immigration.

Thus, the current immigration rhetoric used by the Republican candidates for president, and, it seems, the party as a whole, cannot be construed as part of any significant outreach to the Latino community. In fact, should the repeated emphasis on immigration cause Latino voters to feel threatened, which is likely, it is possible that this could mobilize Latino voters against the Republican Party. This perceived threat would not only increase Latino registration and voting rates, but it would also increase long term naturalization rates, while at the same time encouraging partisan identification with the Democratic Party. Despite the success of Republican Party outreach to Latino voters in 2000 and 2004 and these warnings about the possible consequences of a change in strategy to one that targets Latinos in hopes of mobilizing the base, the current Republican strategy toward Latino voters appears to be the exact opposite of that used by George W. Bush during the 2000 and 2004 campaigns.

Case Study: The Immigration Issue

The recent politics of immigration appears to reflect the Republican Party's abandonment of a strategy that attempts to attract Latinos to its fold. Immigration policy is highly salient to Latinos: according to Gonzalez Baker, "it is around the immigration issue... that Latino voters have rallied in recent years; and it is the immigration issue... that has sent Latino voters to the polls in record numbers (467)." There are obviously

differences within the Latino community about what the “ideal” U.S. immigration policy would entail, however, 85 percent of Latinos support legislation that would legalize undocumented immigrants (Garcia 181, Navarro & Mejia 48, Geron 106). Also, the Latino community is generally not supportive of policies that would restrict social service benefits for undocumented immigrants, eliminate bilingual education, or otherwise are perceived to “target” Latinos (Garcia 181, Navarro & Mejia 48, Geron 106).

A recent study by the Pew Hispanic Center found that two-thirds of all Latinos in the U.S. say the failure of Congress to enact immigration reform has made life more difficult for all Latinos and smaller numbers (ranging from one-in-eight to one-in-four) say the heightened attention to immigration issues has had a specific negative effect on them personally (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007). Even where views on immigration vary, Latinos consider the tone of the discussion to be a “proxy for what level of respect” an elected official has for the Latino community (de la Garza and DeSipio, 2006). Recent studies also show that the harsh anti-immigrant rhetoric of the debate is alienating Latino voters regardless of personal stance on immigration (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007).

Therefore, this paper will examine to what extent political parties continue to compete for Latino voters in the 2008 presidential primaries. I will then determine whether any changes observed are examples of a dominant, party-wide strategy. Next, using data from the 2000 and 2004 elections as well as from the current primary campaign, I will analyze Latino voters’ reactions to this shift. Finally, if there is evidence of a significant change, I will explore possible explanations why the political parties changed their strategy towards the Latino population and the long term implications this could have for the Republican Party.

METHODOLOGY

In this analysis, I ask three main questions: first, has there been a shift in the frequency and tone of immigration rhetoric; second, how have Latinos reacted to that shift; and third, what is the motivation for that shift? For the purposes of this inquiry, a case study model will be used to investigate the extent to which political parties continue to compete for Latino votes and analyze why their earlier strategies with respect to this population have shifted. A case study was chosen because it is considered the most appropriate method to comprehensively analyze detailed and complicated situations (Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg, 1991). The case study model is best applied when research seeks “to explain complex causal links in real-life interventions, to describe the real-life context in which the intervention has occurred, to describe the intervention itself, and to explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear set of outcomes” (Tellis, 1997).

Furthermore, there are three main conditions for the use of a case study in research (Yin, 1994). First, the research question must be exploratory and in the early stages of research, explanatory and seeking to demonstrate or discover a causal relationship, or descriptive and more theoretical in nature. Second, the researcher must have little to no control over actual events or choices made by the actors being researched. Third, the case study should focus on contemporary events that are occurring now and can be directly observed by the researcher (Yin, 1993).

My research analyzes the complex situation surrounding political parties’ competition for Latino voters. It explains the context in which this competition is occurring, describes the level and means of competition itself, and explores whether this

competition has led to specific effects in the 2008 presidential primary race. It also will draw some conclusions about whether these effects will lead to a specific outcome in the 2008 presidential elections.

This investigation into the extent to which political parties continue to compete for Latino votes and the accompanying analysis of why earlier campaign strategies with respect to the Latino population have shifted also meet the three conditions proposed by Yin. The research question itself is explanatory and seeks to determine a causal relationship, the researcher has no control over the events and actions studied, and the events and actions being studied are contemporary, although historical information and data from past elections will be used to establish a comparison. Thus, the use of a case study model for this investigation is appropriate.

The unit of analysis for the case study will be the immigration debate during the 2000, 2004, and 2008 election cycles and any accompanying legislation that was proposed or passed on both national and state levels. The immigration debate was chosen for its importance and saliency in the Latino community, as discussed in the literature review. Secondly, the case study will also explore the parties' use of political advertising specifically targeted at Latino voters during these campaigns. The main actors in question will be the two major political parties, the Republicans and the Democrats, because they develop the messages and rhetoric of the debate; however, the paper will also spotlight Latinos and their participatory role in the debate as well as their reactions to it.

I will analyze the saliency and tone of the immigration debate, number of "anti-immigrant" legislation proposed/passed, number of Latino candidates, political party

affiliation of Latino candidates, amount and overall tone of immigration coverage in major national newspapers/television shows, amount and overall tone of campaign coverage in Spanish language or Latino focused media, number of articles focusing on Latinos as an important voting group, number of advertisements targeting Latino voters, number of advertisements discussing immigration, PAC or non-profit lobbying activity, voter registration or naturalization drives, and other relevant issues as they present themselves to provide a comprehensive description of the Republican Party's shift in messaging and the effects that messaging has had on the Latino community.

Yin also recognizes six main types of evidence used in case studies: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts (1994). Tellis provides examples of the types of evidence that qualifies as each type of evidence: documents are "letters, memoranda, agendas, study reports, or any other items that could add to the data base," archival records are "service records, maps, charts, lists of names, survey data, and even personal records such as diaries," interviews can be in several formats such as "open-ended, focused, or structured," direct observation involves "a site visit to gather data," participant observation is when the researcher actually participates in the events being studied, and physical artifacts include "tools, art works, notebooks, computer output, and other such physical evidence (Tellis, 1997).

It is important to use many sources of data and multiple types of evidence to prevent dependence on one type and to provide for the variety of perspectives available in the case (Yin, 1994). For the purposes of my case study, I plan to use documents, archival records, and direct observation. Documents will include study reports, direct

mail fundraising letters, newspaper articles, and so forth. Archival records will include charts, maps, survey data, Census data and so forth. Direct observation will involve watching the candidates' public statements, viewing the debates, listening to political advertisements, and so forth. Additional sources of information and evidence will be used as necessary to develop an appropriately robust and cohesive case study. This will hopefully show that all relevant evidence was used and that opposing explanations were explored and refuted.

Yin also recommends the adoption of a general analytic strategy to guide all decisions regarding what will be analyzed and why (1994). He presented the three main strategic techniques: pattern-matching, explanation-building, and time-series analysis. Pattern-matching compares an observed pattern with a predicted one (Tellis, 1997). Explanation-building is a more developed type of pattern-matching that seeks to explain the reasons for the pattern, or lack thereof, observed in the case (Tellis, 1997). Time-series analysis will not be used to analyze this case study, due to its heavy reliance on quantitative statistics rather than qualitative data.

My case study will closely follow the methodology developed by de la Garza and DeSipio in their studies of the 1988 (*From Rhetoric to Reality*), 1992 (*Ethnic Ironies*), 1996 (*Awash in the Mainstream*) and 2000 (*Muted Voices*) presidential elections. In the interest of following their structure, this paper will also focus on the presidential campaign rather than various congressional campaigns. De la Garza and DeSipio investigate various aspects of the campaign, from the primaries to the conventions to the general election as well as Latino influence on the campaign message and the number and role of Latinos in the campaign. They also analyze what issues were focused on in

advertisements, and the amount of money spent on and number of those advertisements. In addition, they evaluate actions in specific “battleground” states where the national party might have taken a special interest. Finally, de la Garza and DeSipio evaluate how successful the strategies were as evidenced by Latino voting behavior and make recommendations about future strategies for both political parties.

I will only be able to complete that last point with regard to the presidential primary campaign, as the race is still ongoing. However, since the presidential primaries have been moved forward and are now earlier than ever before, I will be able to develop a firm picture of the primary and well as the general election campaigns of whichever candidates become their party’s nominees for president. Furthermore, I will use de la Garza and DeSipio’s work on the 2000 elections as a foundation with which to compare my research on the 2004 and 2008 election cycles.

If the political parties are continuing to compete over Latino voters, then I will find a continuation of the patterns observed in 2000 by de la Garza and DeSipio, including use of Spanish in campaign speeches, spending on Spanish-language advertisements, appearances with Latino organizations, targeting and mobilization of Latino voters, and discussion of issues that Latinos have been found to support. Conversely, if the political parties have ceased to compete over Latino voters, then I will find candidates solely campaigning in English, smaller expenditures on Spanish-language advertisements, avoiding appearances with Latino organizations, and few mobilization efforts on behalf of Latino voters. In this case, I also expect to see an increase in the frequency of discussion of the immigration issue and a change toward a more negative tone when speaking about the immigrants themselves. There is also the possibility that I

will find that the parties have no coherent strategy and have instead allowed candidates to make decisions based upon personal policy preferences.

Secondarily, I will seek to discover why the political parties have made this policy choice. If parties are continuing to compete for Latino voters, the reasoning seems rather clear: they view Latinos as a contested electorate that will contribute to future electoral success. On the other hand, if parties have ceased to compete for Latino voters, there may be several possible explanations. First, there may not be enough eligible and likely voters within the Latino population to make mobilizations efforts focused on them worthwhile. Second, party strategists may perceive greater benefits, or greater necessity, to shoring up their conservative base rather than expanding the party. Third, the shift may be due to personality and stylistic differences of the main candidates involved in the campaign. George W. Bush, as a Republican from the border state of Texas, had already developed a campaign strategy that included outreach to Latinos to win the governorship and he carried that strategy through to the national campaign. Fourth, the shift may be due to personal policy preferences of the candidates, rather than a cohesive party strategy. Finally, it could be any mixture of these factors.

ASSESSMENT

Latinos are a rapidly growing demographic group that is heavily concentrated in important electoral “battleground” states in the south and west. Campaign strategists have viewed this group as important not only because of their numbers, but also because they are perceived as being more open than other minority groups to appeals from both political parties. Recently, because of competitive efforts on the part of the Republican Party, Latinos have “spent the first part of this decade loosening their historic ties to the Democratic Party” (Taylor and Fry, 2007, 1). President Bush actively and successfully courted Latino voters in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, capturing 34 percent and 40 percent of Latino votes respectively (Pew Hispanic Center, 2006, 1). These each set the bar as the best share of the Latino vote ever recorded for a Republican presidential nominee (Suro and Escobar, 2006, 12). Perhaps even more importantly, exit polls from the 2004 election found that 27 percent of Latino voters identified as Republican, also the highest number on record in a presidential election year (Suro and Escobar, 2006, 12). In fact, many leaders within the Republican party have argued that Latinos can be viewed as “proto-republicans” because of their support for “conservative” economic and social issues (Connaughton, 2005; Pew Hispanic Center; Sanchez, 2007).

Again, because of the confluence of rapidly growing numbers, concentration in battleground states, weak partisan affiliation with the Democratic Party, and perceived support for “conservative” values, it is easy to understand President Bush’s and the Republican Party’s decision to aggressively court Latino voters in the 2000 and 2004 election cycles. There was a clear assessment that not only were Latino voters “up for grabs,” but also, that those votes were worth competing for. Since this strategy of

competition was quite successful for the Republican Party in the short term and has the obvious potential to be tremendously beneficial for the long term strength of the party, many scholars felt comfortable concluding that this strategy would continue in the 2008 presidential campaign. This section of the paper will examine to what extent that is actually the case by analyzing two factors: differences in frequency and tone of rhetoric surrounding the issue of illegal immigration and differences or reductions in presidential campaign tactics specifically focused on Latino voters. If a change in strategy is observed, the paper will also determine whether this change is a party-wide strategy, as well as describe the various reasons influencing that change and the effects it has had on Latino voters' support for the Republican Party.

CHANGES IN IMMIGRATION RHETORIC AND ACTION

National Immigration Legislation

There has been a significant increase in the 110th Congress in the amount of legislation introduced that deals with immigration. The number of bills introduced in the House dealing with immigration jumped from 107 in the 109th Congress to 132 so far in the 110th Congress, a 23.4 percent increase. The number of bills introduced in the Senate dealing with immigration also rose, from 27 in the 109th Congress to 58 so far in the 110th Congress, a shocking 115 percent increase. Only 50 (38 percent) of the bills introduced in the House and 20 (34.5 percent) of the bills introduced in the Senate had Democratic sponsors. The majority of the bills introduced by Republicans seek to restrict immigrants' access to benefits, increase enforcement of current immigration laws, and make legal immigration more difficult, whereas the majority of the bills introduced by Democrats seek to do the opposite. Perhaps most importantly, Congress tried but failed

to pass comprehensive legislation to address illegal immigration twice in the last two years (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007, 2). This has led to concern in the Latino community as well as the more nativist segments of the Republican Party that something must be done, rocketing the issue to the forefront of the 2008 presidential primary campaigns.

Some of the bills have particularly inflammatory titles or purposes. Ron Paul has introduced two such bills in the 110th Congress, HR 190: the Social Security for Americans Only Act of 2007 and HR 3217: the Terror Immigration Elimination Act of 2007. Tom Tancredo has introduced four bills, including HR 4192: the Overdue Immigration Reform Act of 2007. Duncan Hunter introduced HR 5124: the Reinstatement of the Secure Fence Act. McCain was active in the development and proposal of S 9: the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007, which was eventually introduced by Harry Reid, the Senate majority leader. Meanwhile, none of the Democratic candidates for president have introduced any legislation dealing with immigration, though Clinton and Obama have both introduced amendments to bills that facilitate family reunification.

Growth of the Immigration Reform Caucus

The Immigration Reform Caucus (IRC) was formed in May 1999 by Rep. Tom Tancredo (R-CO). According to the website, its stated mission is to “review current immigration policy, to initiate new immigration policy, and to create a much-needed forum in Congress to address both the positive and negative consequences of immigration.” As listed on the website, the IRC has 112 members, and is dominated by Republicans; only 8 members are Democrats (Heath Schuler and Mike McIntyre of North

Carolina, Bart Gordon and Lincoln Davis of Tennessee, Gene Taylor of Mississippi, Jason Altmire of Pennsylvania, Nancy Boyda of Kansas, Robert “Bud” Cramer of Alabama). There are no black or Latino members of the IRC. None of the candidates for president in 2004 were members; however, three 2008 Republican presidential candidates are members: Tancredo, Duncan Hunter, and Ron Paul.

Members of the IRC are responsible for most of the legislation targeting illegal immigrants, including recent legislation to nullify the Fourteenth Amendment’s “birthright” provisions. However, despite members’ focus on strict border control, punitive enforcement measures, and harsh anti-immigrant legislation, most members do not represent districts with a large Latino population, legal or otherwise. According to an analysis of the districts held by members of the IRC, the average percentage of Hispanic residents is only 7.4 percent, and the median Hispanic population is closer to 4 percent (Burghart, Ward and Zeskind, 2007, 8). Therefore, members of the IRC are those least likely to need Latinos’ votes to win reelection, as well as those least likely to suffer any consequences from decreasing Latino identification with the Republican Party. This may explain why they are willing to continue to fervently press the immigration issue despite the wishes of the national party leadership.

Immigration Scorecards

Many special interest groups develop annual scorecards to analyze and “grade” how Members of Congress are voting on a specific issue. These scorecards are an easy way to determine if there are major partisan differences on an issue. There are two main scorecards applied to the immigration issue.

The first is developed by Numbers USA and Americans for Better Immigration, two groups that actively oppose not only illegal immigration, but also most legal immigration. Americans for Better Immigration lobbies Congress for reductions in immigration numbers and argues that “Better” immigration is lower immigration. Numbers USA refers to itself as an “immigration-reduction organization” and cites their two main objectives as the elimination of “chain migration,” more commonly known as the sponsorship of family reunification visas, and the elimination of the visa lottery. Therefore, their scorecards give high marks to those who vote in favor of anti-immigration legislation. These scorecards are an easy way to summarize and analyze Members’ voting behavior surrounding a specific issue.

The Numbers USA and Americans for Better Immigration scorecard demonstrates significant partisan divide. There were 111 Members of Congress who received high grades, with 22 A+, 52 A and 37 A- on the scorecard. Of these, 104 (93.7 percent) were Republicans and only 7 (6.3 percent) were Democrats. Also, 70 (63.1 percent) were members of the Immigration Reform Caucus. Furthermore, all of the 22 people who received the highest grade of A+ were Republicans. On the other hand, 214 Members of Congress received failing grades, with 14 D+, 38 D, 45 D-, 94 F and 23 F- on the scorecard. Of these, 203 (94.8 percent) who received failing grades are Democrats, and only 11 (5.2 percent) are Republicans. Interestingly, four of the eleven Republicans who received failing grades from these organizations are the four Latino Republicans currently in office. Also, two of the 2008 presidential candidates, including the eventual Republican nominee, received failing grades: Brownback and McCain.

The second scorecard is developed by GrassFire.org, an organization whose website states that it believes “illegal immigration poses a dire national security crisis of the highest order and a long-term threat to the American way of life.” They support building a fence along the U.S.-Mexico border, English-only education, and aggressive deportation. They also oppose amnesty, birthright citizenship, and any benefits for illegal immigrants. This scorecard also demonstrates a significant partisan divide, with Republicans concentrated around extremely high scores and Democrats concentrated around extremely low scores. There were 165 members of Congress (30.8 percent) who received a score of 90 percent or higher. Of these, all but eight are Republican. On the other hand, there were 152 members of Congress (28.4 percent) who received a score of 10 percent or lower. Of these, all but four are Democrats. One of these is an independent. The other three are the only Republican Latinos from Florida in the House of Representatives.

The extreme partisan differences on these scorecards generate two main conclusions. First, while the high ratings given to Republicans may be viewed positively by some voters, they would also help to reinforce Latino voters’ perception that the Republican Party is responsible for most anti-immigrant legislation. However, the reverse is also true. The low ratings given to Democrats might actually make the party more appealing to Latino voters.

State Level Immigration Bills and Ballot Initiatives

In the absence of comprehensive federal reform to address the immigration issue, many state governments have begun to develop their own enforcement bills, regulations,

procedures and legislation. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), which tracks these bills, 1562 pieces of legislation related to immigrants and immigration were introduced in state legislatures in 2007 (Immigrant Policy Project, 2007, 1). That is almost three times more than the 570 bills that were introduced in 2006, which was also considered a significant jump from 2005 (Immigrant Policy Project, 2007, 1). The number of enacted legislation also nearly tripled, jumping from 84 enactments in 2006 to 240 enactments in 2007 (Immigrant Policy Project, 2007, 1). Moreover, these laws were not concentrated in one part of the country; rather they were enacted in 46 states in 2007, all except Wisconsin, New Jersey, New Hampshire, and Alaska, which is also up from the 32 states enacting new immigration-related legislation in 2006 (Immigrant Policy Project, 2007, 1). This trend continued into 2008, with at least 1,106 proposals related to immigration introduced in 44 state legislatures as of March 31, 2008 (Immigrant Policy Project, 2008, 1). Thus far, 44 laws and 38 resolutions have been enacted in 26 states; at this time last year, 57 laws had been enacted in 18 states (Immigrant Policy Project, 2008, 1). Ann Morse of the NCSL has argued that these bills, at least partly, are being used as a way to draw public attention to the issue during an especially contentious election cycle.

FIGURE 3: IMMIGRATION LEGISLATION IN THE 50 STATES

In 2007, laws were twice as likely to restrict illegal immigrants' rights or access to benefits as they were to expand them (Vock, 2007). The greatest number of bills introduced had to do with identification cards or driver's licenses for illegal immigrants (259 bills or 16.6 percent), followed by employment (244 bills or 15.6 percent), law enforcement (165 bills or 10.6 percent), public benefits (153 bills or 9.8 percent), and

health care (147 bills or 9.4 percent). These five issues alone account for 62 percent of proposed legislation, and the numbers remained similar in 2008. There have also been 162 proposed resolutions stating the “sense of the state” on the issue; though these resolutions are generally non-binding, they are a great way for politicians to mobilize electoral support without actually taking any specific action.

FIGURE 4: PROPOSED STATE IMMIGRATION LEGISLATION

Local Bills and Ballot Initiatives

There has also been a dramatic increase in the number of local bills and ballot initiatives regarding illegal immigration. This increase is similar to that seen in the amount of state level legislation. These bills are often the most aggressively punitive and are also frequently racialized in a way that specifically targets Latino immigrants. These types of bills affect the entire Latino community because they contribute to racial profiling and discrimination. A complete analysis of these bills and initiatives is beyond the scope of this paper because they are not a byproduct of the presidential campaign or party leadership. However, it is important to mention them, because these hostile communities occasionally receive national press coverage in a manner that forces the presidential candidates to comment on the situation. Perhaps the most famous is Mayor Lou Barletta of Hazleton, Pennsylvania. Under his leadership, the city approved the Illegal Immigration Relief Act in 2006, which sought to deny business permits to companies that employ illegal immigrants, fine landlords who rent to them, and require tenants to register and pay for a rental permit that certifies their legal status. A number of cities in various states have proposed or passed similar legislation.

Increased Enforcement

In the absence of new federal legislation, the federal government has significantly stepped up enforcement of existing laws against illegal immigration. The main enforcement mechanisms include deportations and work place raids, both of which have increased dramatically in the last decade. Deportations of illegal immigrants, euphemistically referred to as “removals” by the Department of Homeland Security, have been increasing since President Bush took office. According to data from the DHS, between 2002 and 2007, there was an 84 percent increase in removals from 162,855 to 300,500. About a third of these deportations occur on the Mexican border, immediately after an immigrant is caught attempting to illegally enter the country.

FIGURE 5: REMOVALS FROM THE UNITED STATES, 2001-2007

Still greater has been the increase in worksite raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This has led to a huge surge in the number of illegal immigrants being arrested for administrative violations at their place of employment, jumping from 485 in 2002 to 4077 in 2007 (ICE, 2007). According to Paul Taylor, acting director of the Pew Hispanic Center, the raids have also been especially high profile, meaning that these numbers likely underestimate the way these raids are perceived in the Latino community (Aizenman, 2008). Moreover, ICE has implemented a new strategy that targets employers of illegal immigrants with criminal violations. This change in enforcement strategy has caused the most dramatic rise, from only 25 criminal charges 2002 to 863 in 2007. Criminal charges against employers can include money laundering – a felony with a potential twenty year prison sentence, or knowingly hiring illegal

immigrants – a felony with a potential ten year prison sentence. Criminal charges of possession and/or distribution of fraudulent documents or re-entry after deportation can also be filed against illegal immigrants. These types of charges can serve as a fairly strong deterrent against employers hiring illegal immigrants.

FIGURE 6: WORKSITE ENFORCEMENT ARRESTS

There has also been a major shift from administrative fines against employers of illegal immigrants to criminal fines and forfeitures. ICE argued that the administrative fines were seen by the employers as merely “the cost of doing business,” and were often ignored or not paid. Therefore, ICE reported that administrative fines dropped from \$1,095,734 in 2001, to only \$6,500 in 2005 (ICE, 2007). However, in 2007 alone, ICE collected over \$30 million in criminal fines and restitutions (ICE, 2007).

Increased Border Patrol

At the same time, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has taken additional steps to secure the southern border. As of September 30, 2007, CBP had constructed 154.7 miles of fence along the Southern border, and the agency hopes to construct an additional 215 miles in 2008 (CBP, 2007). CBP has hired 2156 additional new officers, as well as increased the number of border patrol agents by 21 percent, from 12,349 in 2006 to 14,923 in 2007 (CBP, 2007). This is the largest single year increase in staffing at CBP in the history of the agency. CBP has also significantly enhanced technological surveillance of the border, with new camera, radar, satellite, and communications equipment (CBP, 2007).

Critics argue that this unfairly targets immigrants from Mexico and other parts of Central America. They also point out that at least 40 percent of illegal immigrants in the United States did not sneak across the border; rather, they overstayed their legal visas. Obviously a fence, surveillance, and additional border patrol agents will not help prevent these people's entry into the country.

CHANGES IN PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN TACTICS

Advertisements

One of the main ways that presidential campaigns communicate with the electorate is through paid political advertisements developed by the campaign. Using the campaign television advertisements from the 2004 and 2008 election cycles available from the Political Communication Lab at Stanford University, it was possible to accurately measure several interesting trends. A total of 602 ads were viewed; 227 from the Democratic primary and general election in 2004 and 375 for so far in the primary campaigns of 2008.

Many presidential candidates elected to advertise in Spanish in an effort to court Latino voters. Of the 65 ads run during the Democratic primary in 2004, 4 ads (6.15 percent) were in Spanish; 2 (of 15 total ads) by General Wesley Clark, 1 (of 18 total ads) by Governor Howard Dean, and 1 (of 7 total ads) by Senator John Kerry. During the 2004 general election, Kerry only ran 3 more ads in Spanish of a total of 94 ads. On the other hand, George W. Bush ran 10 ads in Spanish of a total of 68 ads, greatly outspending his Democratic opponent on Spanish language media as part of an aggressive effort by the Republican Party to try to woo Latino voters. Sensing this

disparity, the New Democrat Network actually ran additional Spanish-language advertisements supporting Kerry (Segal, 2004, 2).

This trend was reversed somewhat in the 2008 presidential primaries, when Democratic candidates produced more and spent more money on Spanish language advertisements than Republican candidates. Of the 216 Democratic Party primary advertisements, 13 were in Spanish (6 percent), as Senator Obama ran 8 ads and Senator Clinton ran 5. Meanwhile only 7 of the 159 (4.4 percent) Republican Party primary advertisements were in Spanish, including 1 from Senator McCain, 2 from Mayor Giuliani, and 4 from Governor Romney. The Hispanic Voter Project at Johns Hopkins University has released estimates that Democratic Presidential candidates spend more money on Spanish-language television advertising this cycle than total primary spending by both parties in 2004 and total spending by both parties in 2004 (Segal, 2008, 1).

FIGURE 7: SPANISH LANGUAGE ADS BY PARTY

However, the most significant differences came not in the amount of Spanish language advertising, but rather in the content of the ads. While issues like the war in Iraq, health care, education, the economy, and job creation were repeated in both election cycles, references to immigration skyrocketed. In 2004, there was not one reference to immigration made in any Democratic campaign advertisement.² During that same election cycle, only one Bush advertisement referenced the issue, where he called for “enhanced border and port security.” This is a non-racialized reference that also does not target Latin America because it includes port issues as well. There were no ads that exclusively focused on the immigration issue.

² Trigger words and phrases included: immigration, illegal immigrant(s), illegal alien(s), border security, fence, border, amnesty, national or official language, and English-only.

Moreover, another Bush ad in Spanish actually celebrated the opportunity immigrants come to America in search of. Bush's campaign paid \$450,000 to run the ad, entitled "Nuestro Pais, Nuestro Presidente," on Univision in five battleground states: Florida, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, and Colorado (Segal, 2004, 17). It featured a series of Latino faces alternated with exclusively Latin American flags, including those of Puerto Rico, Mexico, Columbia, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua. The voiceover says, "No importa de donde vinimos, o por que vinimos. En esta tierra encontramos oportunidad... Los Estados Unidos, nuestro país. George W. Bush, nuestro presidente." In English, this can be translated as: "It doesn't matter where we come from or why we came. We found opportunity in this country... the United States, our country. George W. Bush, our president." Though it does not explicitly use any of the trigger words used in this analysis, it appears to be the only ad to explicitly depict immigration, not just legal immigrants, in a positive way in either of the two election cycles.

In the 2008 election cycle, those numbers stayed constant for the Democratic Party, as their candidates largely remained silent about the issue. No Democratic primary advertisements focused exclusively on the immigration issue, and only one Democratic candidate for president, Barack Obama, ran an ad that referenced immigration. This advertisement was entitled "El Nos Entiende," which can be translated to English as "He Understands Us." It featured Luis Gutierrez, a Member of Congress from Chicago, speaking about Obama's connections to the Latino community and his understanding of the discrimination they face. It mentions that Obama has become a leader in the fight for immigration reform. This is especially interesting, because the Democrats ran more ads targeting black voters, 2, both also by Obama, than ads mentioning immigration.

For the Republican Party, however, those numbers had significantly changed. Of the 159 ads run by the GOP in the presidential primaries, nearly one-in-four or 39 ads (24.53 percent) included a trigger word about immigration.³ Every Republican candidate ran at least one ad that referenced the issue, and most ran several. McCain mentioned the issue the least, in only 1 of his 39 ads (2.56 percent). Huckabee followed with 2 of his 11 ads (18.2 percent), Giuliani was next with 5 of his 29 ads (17.24 percent), and Paul with 4 of his 15 ads (26.7 percent). The remaining three Republican candidates really made immigration one of their key issues. Romney mentioned trigger words in over a third of his ads, 21 of his 56 ads (37.5 percent) referenced some aspect of the immigration issue. Thompson used the issue in 4 of his 7 ads (58.14 percent). Tancredo, who basically centered his campaign on the immigration issue, mentioned it in both of his purchased television ads (100 percent).

FIGURE 8: TRIGGER WORDS IN ADS BY PARTY

Even more astonishing is the fact that 14 ads (8.8 percent) focused exclusively on the immigration issue, rather than including it as one of a laundry list of things the candidate cared about. Again, every Republican candidate ran at least one ad focusing exclusively on immigration (all of these ads were also included in the previous count of ads that used trigger words). These ads generally focused on the candidate's specific methodology to end illegal immigration. The vast majority of these ads advocated punitive methods to deal with the perceived problem of illegal immigration, and most characterized the immigration issue in racial ways that gave the impression that they were specifically concerned with Latino immigrants crossing the Mexican border. Valentino,

³ These numbers only include the advertisements featured on the Stanford University website, and do not include most web only advertisements or any advertisements run on behalf of a candidate from political action committees or special interest groups.

Hutchings, and White (2002) found that subtle racial cues in political advertising can prime racial attitudes, as opinions about certain policies and programs, in this case, immigration, become linked to attitudes about minority groups, in this case, Latinos. These implicit racial messages may heighten conflicts and increase Latinos' perception of being threatened, not only because these ads propagate negative stereotypes about racial minorities, but because they also reinforce their political relevance (Valentino, Hutchings, and White 2002).

McCain's lone ad to address the issue was entitled "Respect," and talks about the importance of a reasonable plan paired with more secure borders. Huckabee's only ad to focus on the issue was titled "Secure Borders," and called for no amnesty, the elimination of sanctuary cities, the construction of a border fence, and hiring additional border agents. Thompson's ad was entitled "No Amnesty," and focused on the idea that there should be no amnesty for illegal immigrants already in the country and that these immigrants should not be able to receive government benefits. Paul's one ad was entitled "Immigration" and was perhaps the most extreme policy proposal, demanding that the government physically secure the border with a fence, not grant amnesty, deny benefits to illegal aliens, and end birthright citizenship. Giuliani released two ads that focused on immigration, entitled "Will," where he argues that if the government builds a fence, trains and expands the border patrol, institutes technological border monitoring systems and a tamper proof id card and speaks English-only, it could end illegal immigration, and "Fence," where he called for the construction of a border fence as a means of securing the Southern border. Tancredo's two ads included the most extreme rhetoric, claiming that "Central American gangs are pushing drugs, raping kids, destroying lives... these are the

consequences of open borders” The second depicts a hooded man leaving a bomb in a shopping mall, and says that “there are consequences to open borders beyond the 20 million aliens who have come to take our jobs...the price we pay for spineless politicians who refuse to defend our borders against those who come to kill.”

Romney ran six ads focused solely on immigration. “Permanently,” released in December 2007, said that illegal immigrants should not be granted driver’s licenses, tuition breaks, or other benefits. “Take Charge,” released in November 2007, said that the country needs smart, tough solutions on immigration from a candidate who is willing to take charge. “Change Immigration,” also released in November 2007, calls on the government to oppose amnesty and secure the border with a fence. “Exceptional,” released in August 2007, advocated the elimination of sanctuary cities, the use of English only in the classroom, and strict state enforcement of federal laws. “Secure Borders,” released in July 2007, called for an employment verification system, a national identification card, and no amnesty for illegal immigrants already in the country. “Secure Our Borders,” released in May 2007, was the first ad released that focused on the issue of illegal immigration. It emphasized the need to secure the border with a fence and implement an employment verification system to determine which immigrant workers were legal. Romney was also the only candidate to run attack ads specifically criticizing other Republican candidates (McCain and Huckabee) as being weak on immigration.

Republicans were responsible for 97 percent of all ads mentioning any of the trigger words associated with the immigration issue, as well as all of the ads focused specifically on the issue. Of all ads referencing the issue either explicitly or in passing, 1 (3 percent) were by Democrats (specifically Obama), 1 (3 percent) were by McCain, 1 (3

percent) were by Huckabee, 2 (5 percent) were by Tancredo, 4 each (10 percent) by Thompson and Paul, 5 (13 percent) by Giuliani, and the majority, 21 (53 percent) of all ads run addressing immigration were paid for by the Romney campaign. There are two interesting conclusions to be noted from this data. First, Tancredo dropped out of the campaign in December, before he could run any more ads, and endorsed Romney. Clearly, Romney was the candidate most willing to echo his views on the issue. Second, neither of the Republican front runners (McCain and Huckabee) felt the need to address this issue as frequently or as harshly as the other candidates, perhaps because they anticipated having to reach out to Latino voters during the general election.

FIGURE 9: IMMIGRATION ADS BY CANDIDATE

Debates

According to transcripts of the debates obtained from The Commission on Presidential Debates, there were only two references to immigration in the 2004 presidential debates between George W. Bush and John F. Kerry. There was only direct question about the issue, and it wasn't asked until the third and final debate.⁴ The other time it was mentioned was in a brief reference by Bush to border security via increase border patrol agents during the first debate, but it was nestled within a larger question about preventing terrorism, and the President was careful not to racialize the response or

⁴ CBS News Anchor Bob Schieffer worded the question as follows: "I'm told that at least 8,000 people cross our borders illegally every day. Some people believe this is a security issue, as you know. Some believe it's an economic issue. Some see it as a human-rights issue. How do you see it? And what do we need to do about it?" Both candidates responded that we need to expand the guest worker program, and crack down on illegal hiring. Bush added that he was opposed to amnesty for illegal immigrants, while Kerry said that he supported developing an earned citizenship program for those illegal immigrants already here. They went on to debate exactly how much Bush had done as President to secure the borders to prevent terrorist from entering the country.

specifically target Mexico. Rather, he said, “We've got 1,000 extra border patrol [sic] on the southern border; want 1,000 on the northern border. We're modernizing our borders.” That comment illustrates a way that immigration and border security can be discussed without alienating Latino voters.

On the other hand, not only has the issue has been repeatedly mentioned in both the Republican and Democratic 2008 presidential primary debates but the responses have become significantly more racialized to deal specifically with Latino immigrants. Transcripts of the Iowa, New Hampshire, California, and Univision debates were obtained from CNN and analyzed to examine the frequency of mention of the issue during the primary campaigns. These first three debates were selected because they were early in the race and included the largest number of candidates, included both parties, and both partisan debates were scheduled within days of each other. The Univision debate was selected to examine any differences in both frequency of mention of the issue as well as the tone used by the candidates to discuss the issue.

Overall, through the state debates, Democratic candidates were asked a total of 60 questions, and 9 (15 percent) included references to immigration or other trigger words associated with the issue. Republican candidates were asked a total of 98 questions over the same three debates, and 25 (25.5 percent) included references to immigration or other trigger words associated with the issue. Moreover, Republican candidates were the only one who chose to make references to immigration even when the question did not specifically refer to the issue. Republicans mentioned immigration more frequently than Democrats in every debate except California, where it is possible that they felt the audience would be less receptive to rhetoric perceived as anti-immigrant. Also, by this

point, Tancredo and Hunter had both dropped out of the race, removing some of the immigration issue's most vocal and most extreme sponsors. Still, this is a tremendous increase in discussion of the issue since 2004.

FIGURE 10: IMMIGRATION REFERENCES IN THE 2008 PRIMARY DEBATES

There were dramatic differences between the state debates and the Univision debate, both in frequency of mention of the immigration and other trigger words as well as the tone used by the candidates to discuss the issue. In the Univision debates, significantly more of the questions dealt with immigration or other trigger words. In fact, 10 of the 18 questions (55.6 percent) asked the Democratic candidates referenced immigration and 10 of the 15 questions (66.7 percent) asked the Republican candidates mentioned the issue. That is more than double the number asked in the general debates. At one point, the moderator mentioned that 85 percent of the questions posted to the Univision website dealt with immigration, which demonstrates the importance of the issue within the Latino community.

Furthermore, the tone of the Republican candidates was very different in the state debates than at the Univision debate, which was originally scheduled for September and had to be moved because only Duncan Hunter agreed to participate. The focus in the Republican Univision debate was much more on border security in general rather than on specific enforcement measures, which were the focus of their state debates. Also, with the exception of John McCain, who has by and large used much less inflammatory rhetoric to speak about immigration than the other Republican candidates during the campaign, this was the only debate where the candidates felt the need to specifically state that they respected and valued the contributions of legal immigrants. They also

emphasized that Latino voters share conservative stances with the Republican Party on a variety economic and social issues, including tax cuts and the right to life.

Of course, this is with the exception of Tom Tancredo, who boycotted the debate because it was held in Spanish. He released a statement saying that the very idea of having the questions asked in and the answers translated into Spanish was “un-American” and adding that the candidates who participated in the Univision debate were simply “pandering” to Hispanic voters” (Cooper and Santora, 2008)

Meanwhile, Democratic candidates also shifted tone in the Univision debate. They more aggressively supported a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants, and took firm stances against work site raids and the separation of families, especially of illegal parents from their legal children who were born in the United States. Also, the Univision debate includes some of the strongest rhetoric accusing the Republican Party of specifically targeting and discriminating against Latino immigrants in their handling of the immigration issue. In one example, Senator Obama said he hopes that

rather than see the kind of divisive politics that we've been seeing lately coming out of the immigration debate and that we've been seeing in some of the Republican forums that have been taking place, that all of us recognize that we will be stronger as a nation when we include everybody, and particularly the Hispanic community, in the political conversation.

While Senator Clinton went still further, on one occasion adding that

We all know that this has become a contentious political issue. It is being demagogued, and I believe that it is being used to bash immigrants, and that must stop. The Republican candidates need to understand that they are doing a great disservice to our country.

This clearly demonstrates an effort by the Democratic Party to capitalize on Latino voters who feel alienated by current Republican rhetoric surrounding immigration.

Candidate Campaign Websites

Despite President George W. Bush's success with Latino voters, only one Republican had a section of his website available in Spanish. This is possibly due to the perception that it would alienate their base and be viewed as hypocritical since many Republican candidates also call for English to be made the official language of the United States. Regardless, Mitt Romney's website included a section called "Conozca a Mitt Romney" translated as "Get to know Mitt Romney." The section featured videos of Romney's son Craig speaking in Spanish and included significant issue coverage in Spanish, including his stance on immigration. Romney was publicly criticized by pundits and by other candidates at the debates for this section of his website, as well as his decision to advertise in Spanish. Additionally, only one Republican candidate has set up a specific campaign targeting Latino voters. Rudy Giuliani developed "Viva Rudy" to reach out to this demographic group, with Raul Romero as National Chairman, and U.S. Representative Luis Fortuño (Puerto Rico), former director of the SBA Hector Barreto and Raul Danny Vargas as National Co-Chairs.

On the other hand, every Democrat had a section of their website available in Spanish except Gravel and Kucinich. This even includes candidates that were only in the race a short while, like Tom Vilsack. However, the pages are executed with varying degrees of success. Vilsack's page is called "Viva Vilsack," and it is not very developed, probably because he wasn't in the campaign for very long. Biden's page is called "Bienvenidos a Biden" or "Welcome to Biden" and it is also not very developed; it only contains biographical information as well as descriptions of his stances on certain issues. Dodd's page is called "Chris Dodd Para Presidente" or "Chris Dodd for President" and it

is slightly better than average because it includes videos of him speaking in Spanish about his experiences in the Peace Corps. It also allows you to put the paragraphs on the issues in Spanish. Richardson's page is called "Richardson Para Presidente" or "Richardson for President" and this is by far the standout example of what a Spanish language website could be. It includes all the same features as the English site, including videos and a blog in Spanish as well as the ability to contribute, volunteer, and sign up for email alerts in Spanish. Edward's page is called "Latinos con Edwards: El Mañana Comienza Hoy" or "Latinos with Edwards: Tomorrow Begins Today" and it is only one page with no interactivity, making it somewhat unimpressive when compared to the other candidates, especially the front runners. The lack of effort to develop this website does, however, make sense given his campaign's focus on white working-class voters.

Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama obviously have the most developed websites as they have been in the race the longest and have the greatest resources. Both of the websites are impressive and robust, offering interactivity, links, photos and video, as well as the opportunity to contribute, volunteer, and sign up for email alerts in Spanish. Clinton's may be slightly better organized and easier to navigate, but only slightly. Clinton's page is called "America Con Hillary" and it is the first candidate website to be completely bilingual; it offers identical information in English and Spanish on the same page. Obama actually has several pages in Spanish, including "Bienvenido" or "Welcome," the newer, nicer version of the page, "Obama en Espanol" or "Obama in Spanish," his first attempt at reaching out to this group of voters, and "Latinos for Obama," which is entirely in English but specifically targets this group. Additionally, all of the videos on his website have closed captioning available in Spanish.

The focus on immigration in other aspects of their campaigns continued on the Republican websites. All of the Republican presidential candidates listed immigration as one of their major issues; however, they did so in different terminology. McCain only refers to it as “Border Security,” while Paul calls it “Border Security and Immigration Reform,” Romney lists it as “Ending Illegal Immigration,” Huckabee refers to it as the “Secure America Plan,” Giuliani only uses “Immigration,” etc. Furthermore, there are vast differences in the various plans to reform illegal immigration, though most of the Republican’s plans, with the obvious exception of John McCain, have been criticized by immigration groups as unnecessarily harsh.

Democrats, meanwhile, focused much less on the issue of illegal immigration on their websites. Three candidates (Edwards, Dodd, and Kucinich) do not even list it as one of their major issues. After some hunting through their websites, it is possible to find mentions of the issue; however, it often takes multiple clicks. On Edwards’ site, a visitor must click “issues,” then scroll to the bottom of the page and click “Latinos,” to be taken to his “opportunity agenda” which includes “Comprehensive Immigration Reform.” On Kucinich’s site, if a visitor clicks “more issues” they can find a brief of “immigrants’ rights.” Dodd makes no mention of it at all, rather focusing on “Labor and Economic Opportunity.” All the rest of the Democratic candidates refer to the issue as either only “Immigration” or “Immigration Reform” and no Democratic candidate uses the terms “illegal immigrant” or “alien” anywhere in the description, preferring to call them “undocumented workers.”

All of the Republican candidates include specifics about their plans to deal with the issue on their website. Some of these plans include extreme provisions, like calling

for an end to birthright citizenship as Paul, Hunter, and Tancredo do. All of the plans include building the fence and implementing a national employer verification system. Most plans include some requirement to speak English. All of the plans except McCain and Giuliani specifically state that they are against “amnesty” for illegal immigrants and will work to prevent it. Many call for the elimination of the visa lottery and a reduction in family reunification policies that lead to “chain migration.” Only Romney and Thompson call for streamlining the current immigration process. McCain’s plan is far and away the least punitive and includes helping to develop strong economies in Mexico and other Latin American countries and recognizing the importance of a flexible labor market for employers in the United States.

Those Democrats that include plans to reform immigration on their website support fundamentally different actions than the Republicans. While all explicitly recognize the importance of securing the borders before enacting reform, all the candidates also say that reform must include a path to citizenship for the immigrants already in the country. Most support some form of employer verification, but most also support family reunification as well, which many Republicans are opposed to. Obama and Richardson mention the importance of building a stronger Mexican economy, Kucinich and Richardson explicitly state their opposition to the construction of a wall along the Southern border, and Clinton cites her support for the DREAM Act. Clinton, Edwards, and Kucinich also reference other benefits that legal immigrants should have access to, including health care and bilingual education. A number of the lesser known candidates (Gravel, Dodd, Kucinich, and Vilsack) also state their opposition to NAFTA

because the effect it has had on lowering workers' wages within the immigration section of their website.

Therefore, from an analysis of their websites, I conclude that Democrats are more actively using this medium than Republicans to reach out to Latino voters. There are more Democratic candidates with Spanish-language resources on their websites, and those candidates have also developed their website more fully. Moreover, Republican websites continue the trend of talking about immigration in a manner that alienates Latinos and recommending hard-line immigration plans. Democrats, however, have shifted the terminology of the debate to less strident language and a focus on developing a path to citizenship for the undocumented workers already here, which is a more welcoming message to Latino voters.

GOTV efforts

In 2006, a study by NALEO found that about half of Latino voters overall heard ads or programs on radio or television urging them to vote or to get involved politically (NALEO, 2006). Most Latinos also reported being contacted about voting and the election, and Latinos who had identified members of one of the two major political parties were more likely to be contacted than were independent voters (de la Garza, Dunlap, Lee and Ryu, 2002, 4). However, at the time, research found that the political parties generally made little effort to mobilize large numbers of Latino voters, or voters in general (de la Garza, Dunlap, Lee and Ryu, 2002, 2). Rather, candidates attempted to focus on and "activate" voters who were likely to vote a certain way. There is very little data available on partisan and candidate GOTV efforts during the primary race, and more research must be done here to determine whether the extended fight between Obama and

Clinton for the Democratic nomination has led to more widespread voter mobilization Latino voters.

In conclusion, regardless of the medium, no issue has dominated the Republican presidential nomination fight the way illegal immigration has (Weisman, 2008). While the same cannot be said of the Democratic primary battle, which is more heavily dominated by health care and other issues, there has been some spillover as Democrats have been forced to respond. Along with that, there has been a marked decrease in Republican candidate advertising and outreach focused specifically on Latino voters. The next section of the paper will discuss the effects that change has had on Latino voters and on the primary race overall.

DISCUSSION

Latino voters are already an important part of the electorate because of their growing numbers, but this influence is amplified by their concentration in battle ground states. There were four states that President Bush carried by less than 5 percent in 2004 (Colorado, Florida, Nevada, and New Mexico), and Latinos have large populations in all of them (Martinez, 2008). Moreover, it is possible that Latinos will make traditional Republican stronghold states like Arizona more purple than blue. Latino influence on the election cycle was further magnified by the frontloading of presidential primaries this year, moving states with large Latino populations to the front of the pack and forcing presidential candidates to decide whether to campaign to them. Nearly 60 percent of all Latinos live in the 24 states that held primaries or caucuses on Super Tuesday, and 80 percent of all Latinos had the opportunity to vote early in the primary cycle, on or before February 5, 2008 (Preston, 2008). Six states participating in Super Tuesday (Arizona, California, Colorado, New Jersey, New Mexico, and New York) had Latino populations that constituted 10 percent or more of the potential electorate (Martinez, 2008). Latinos in these states have been aggressively courted by presidential candidates, and Janet Murguia, president of the National Council of La Raza, argues that the money spent on reaching out to Latinos “is reflective of the amount of influence that the Hispanic vote can have and the difference [Latinos] can make in close elections” (Martinez, 2008).

Latino Role in the 2008 Presidential Primaries

Latino voters have thus far taken advantage of the opportunity to make their voices heard, and turnout during the primaries has increased dramatically, especially

within the Democratic primaries and caucuses. The three states that demonstrated the largest growth in Latino participation were California, where the Latino vote grew to 30% of the turnout from 16% in 2004; Texas, where the Latino vote grew to 32% of the turnout from 24% in 2004; and Florida, where the Latino vote grew to 12 percent of the turnout from 9 percent in 2004 (Minushkin and Lopez, 2008, 1). The Latino share of Democratic primary and caucus voters also increased in Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia and Wisconsin (Minushkin and Lopez, 2008, 5). The only states where Latino participation in the Democratic primary decreased were New York (down to 10 percent from 11 percent in 2004) and Louisiana (down to 4 percent in 2008 from 5 percent in 2004) (Minushkin and Lopez, 2008, 5). It is expected that this increased Democratic mobilization of Latino voters will continue during the general election. Meanwhile, Latino participation in Republican primaries has been less impressive, staying constant in some states and declining in others.

FIGURE 11: HISPANIC SHARE OF VOTERS IN PRIMARY STATES, 2004 & 2008

Because of their geographic concentration in states that voted early in the primary cycle, Latinos have been able to influence the results of the primaries and the selection of the partisan standard bearers. First in Florida, then in other states with large Latino populations, Latino Republican voters overwhelmingly chose McCain over Romney. While white voters in Florida split 33 percent for McCain and 34 percent for Romney, Latinos favored McCain 54 percent to 14 percent (Preston, 2008). This was clearly enough to put McCain over the edge in that state and continue his early momentum. It

was a pattern that was repeated in other states, including New Jersey, New York, and California. Latino voters helped McCain win the Republican nomination for president.

That same influence was repeated in the Democratic primary race, where Latino voters have handed Clinton major wins in Texas and California, where they supported her almost two-to-one over Obama, that have encouraged her to continue the fight for the presidential nomination (Minushkin and Lopez, 2008, 2). The Pew Hispanic Center projects that Clinton would have lost both states without the strong support she received from Latino voters (Minushkin and Lopez, 2008, 2). Overall, Hispanics have voted for Clinton over Obama at a rate of 63 percent to 35 percent (Minushkin and Lopez, 2008, 2). This shows that Democrats are not only competing with Republicans for Latino votes, but there is also competition within the party for their support. This suggests that Democratic Party candidates will remain responsive to Latino voters' desires because Latino voters can affect a primary, even if the Republicans completely cease competition for them, which is unlikely to happen.

Latinos Feel Targeted and Under Attack

Despite the rise in their electoral importance, Latinos feel that they have been targeted and negatively affected by the immigration debate. "We don't feel safe as a community," said Silvia Benitez, who was born in Mexico but has been living in Arizona for more than a decade. "Some people judge you now because of how you appear, your skin color, your accent (Suro and Escobar, 2006, 1)." A Pew Hispanic Center survey found that more than half (54 percent) of Latinos believe that the immigration debate has increased discrimination (Suro and Escobar, 2006, 1). Nearly two-thirds (64 percent)

report that Congress' failure to enact comprehensive immigration reform has made life difficult for all Latinos, and as many as 25 percent say that it has had a negative effect on them personally. Small numbers (ranging from about one-in-eight to one-in-four) say the heightened attention to immigration issues has had a specific negative effect on them personally (Suro and Escobar, 2006, 1). When asked to choose the cause of the discrimination, nearly half (46 percent) said that language was the principal cause, showing a belief that Spanish-speaking immigrants, i.e. Latinos, were specifically being targeted and that anti-immigration sentiment did not cut equally across all races. Still more interesting, the same survey found that the native born are actually more likely than the foreign born to say that the immigration debate has increased discrimination against them (Suro and Escobar, 2006, 2). This discrimination was even the cause of a question at the Univision debate about what candidates would do to curb the anti-Latino sentiment triggered by the immigration debate. This could be a serious problem for those held responsible for the debate, because all of the native born are citizens who are eligible to vote. "What we have here is a portrait of a population that is feeling vulnerable in the current political and policy climate," said Paul Taylor, acting director of the Pew Hispanic Center (Aizenman, 2008).

This is at least partly due to the fact that Latinos are more likely to oppose immigration enforcement measures than the general population. Over half of all Latinos worry that they, a family member or a close friend could be deported (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007). Furthermore, 75 percent disapprove of workplace raids; 79 percent prefer that local police not take an active role in identifying illegal immigrants; and some 55 percent disapprove of states checking for immigration status before issuing driver's

licenses (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007). The opposition is somewhat stronger among foreign-born Latinos than native born, but the difference is only significant on the question of drivers' licenses, where only 39 percent of native born Latinos oppose checking immigration status before issuing a license (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007). Most Latinos (66 percent) oppose building the fence along the southern border, and 70 percent oppose sending the National Guard to police that border; however, only 51 percent is opposed to increasing the number of border patrol agents, and 55 percent overall support a database where employers could verify a worker's immigration status (Suro and Escobar, 2006, 17).

There are partisan differences in support for the various enforcement measures, and Republicans are generally more supportive of all enforcement measures. Among the full population (Latinos and non-Latinos), 51 percent of Republican approve of an active role for local police, compared with 35 percent of Democrats; 55 percent of Republicans approve of workplace raids, compared with 45 percent of Democrats; and 88 percent of Republicans approve of checking for immigration status before issuing a driver's license, compared with 76 percent of Democrats (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007). This reinforces the perception among Latinos that Republicans are the group initiating and supporting the push for these measures, making them more likely to also hold Republicans responsible for the negative consequences of the immigration debate that many Latinos are experiencing and less likely to identify with the party in the future.

Data reinforces the view that the Hispanic community is united in their opinions on how to deal with immigration reform. This makes sense; Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Mexicans and Latinos from other countries each face different levels of difficulty during

the immigration process (in fact, Puerto Ricans face almost none, as they are already citizens). However, experts agree that the community, regardless of country of origin, would coalesce if it saw itself under attack (de la Garza and DeSipio, 2006, 4). A study by Richard Nadler, President of conservative think tank America's Majority, found that "immigration policies that induce mass fear among illegal residents will induce mass anger among the legal residents who share their heritage" (Kondracke, 2007). Moreover, Latinos generally pay more attention to how the issue is discussed, and the tone of that discussion serves as "a kind of proxy for what level of respect" an office-holder has for the Latino community (de la Garza and DeSipio, 2006, 4). It has been widely noted that the most demonizing rhetoric is also the most mobilizing, because it creates a sense of urgency within the community; that sense of urgency has certainly been created within the Latino community by the immigration debate.

Moreover, if they were not intimidated by the threat of punitive policy proposals, Latinos actually feel threatened physically. According to recent FBI statistics, hate crimes against Latinos have increased by more than a third since 2006. The anti-immigrant and specifically anti-Spanish-speaking messages have led to increased violence against Latinos, and Latinos now constitute 62.8 percent of the victims of hate crimes, up from 35 percent in 2003 (MALDEF, 2008). Since that time, more than 300 anti-immigrant groups have been founded, with half labeled as "nativist extremist" by the FBI (MALDEF, 2008). This demonstrates that these anti-immigrant statements by politicians may actually have a physically threatening impact on people's lives, regardless of immigration status.

Latinos are holding the Republican Party responsible

Latino voters, regardless of country of birth or citizenship status, feel that they are being negatively affected by the immigration debate and the surrounding anti-immigrant rhetoric. They are, to some extent, holding the Republican Party responsible for these perceived consequences (Suro and Escobar, 2006, 1). Many Latinos are saying that the attacks have become so strident and the policy proposals so punitive that they have begun to harm not only illegal immigrants, but Spanish-speaking and non-native-born people specifically and all Latinos generally. “The hard-line rhetoric on immigration is turning off all Latinos,” said Lionel Sosa, a Republican advertising executive in San Antonio who handled Hispanic outreach in the presidential campaigns of Ronald Reagan and both President Bushes. “When people talk about building a wall and sending those Mexicans back, it comes off as anti-Latino. We say: ‘You’re talking about my family, and I don’t like it’” (Preston, 2008). Ruben Navarette, a columnist at the Washington Post, wrote in his December 17, 2007 column about his frustration that

You can be a third-generation Cuban-American living in Miami whose family came to this country legally, built businesses, and voted Republican. But because you converse in Spanish at family gatherings, you still have to put up with the insult of members of Congress questioning your loyalty by declaring English the national language, or a presidential candidate like Tancredo calling your city a “Third World country.” Or you can be a fourth-generation Mexican-American living in Tucson whose family never crossed a border, worked hard, sent children off to the military, and voted Democratic. But because you have relatives who live in Mexico and your culture is Mexican, you put up with the racism that is built into the immigration debate and the suspicion that you arrived here yesterday.

Even the Congressional Hispanic Caucus has issued statements about their concern over the rhetoric being used to attack their community and blame Republicans, saying on their website that Latinos “have been the subject of vicious and repeated attacks by

conservative commentators and anti-immigrant elected officials and their political operatives. These attacks tend to be misleading, misguided and are often factually inaccurate.” The website lists rebutting these attacks as one of the main priorities of the CHC’s Immigration Task Force.

Latino responses to the change in tone

Since the data demonstrates that there have been dramatic changes in the frequency and tone of the immigration debate and that Latinos feel targeted by anti-immigrant rhetoric, the next step is to determine how Latinos are reacting to those changes. As Browning, Marshall and Tabb (2003) have explained, newly mobilizing groups have two strategies for pursuing political objectives available to them: protest strategy and electoral strategy (12). Protest strategy includes marches, pickets, demonstrations, boycotts, and the like. It is most commonly used by groups who do not have access to the electoral system or who do not have the numbers to successfully influence elections. Electoral strategy, on the other hand, is focused on gaining representation in government in the hope of changing the debate from within. It is most commonly used by groups who constitute a significant percentage of the potential electorate. Latinos who feel targeted by immigration rhetoric are using both strategies simultaneously to respond to this perceived attack against the community.

In 2006, in the face of harsh immigration rhetoric that proposed making it a felony for illegal immigrants to live in the United States, immigrants’ rights activists organized some of the largest marches since the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s. More than 1 million people nationwide participated in these marches in 2006. They were

considered successful enough to be repeated in 2007 and 2008. Organizers stress that the demonstrations marked a new level of political participation and awareness within the Latino community that must be channeled into increased voter registration and mobilization (de la Garza and Desipio, 2006). “In 2006 we said: ‘Today we march. Tomorrow we vote,’” said Eliseo Medina, executive vice president of the Service Employees International Union. “This is tomorrow, she added” (Tareen, 2008)

Due to the large number of non-citizen Latinos, the electoral strategy must be split into two phases, as these Latinos must be naturalized and registered before they can be mobilized in an election. There are more than five million Latinos eligible for citizenship who have not yet naturalized (de la Garza and DeSipio, 2006, 4). First, immigrants’ rights groups and Spanish-language media launched a citizenship drive called “Ya es la hora, ciudadanía” or “It’s time, citizenship” to urge legal permanent residents to naturalize (Gorman, 2008). It was followed by a national campaign, called “Ya es Hora, Ve y Vota!” or “Now is the time, Come and Vote!” to encourage newly naturalized citizens and other Latinos to register to vote. The NALEO Educational Fund and the National Council of La Raza hoped to naturalize 1 million Latino immigrants in 2007 and register 5 million Latino citizens. Another campaign by the Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project, called “Su Voto es Su Voz” or “Your Vote is Your Voice,” also specifically targets Latino voters.

As a result of these campaigns and in response to the vitriol of the immigration debate, applications for citizenship have skyrocketed from 731,000 in 2006 to over 1.4 million in 2007 (Gorman, 2008). In July, August, and September of 2007, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service received 562,423 citizenship applications, while in

the same three months last year it only received 192,423 (Newsday, 2007). The service has been so overwhelmed by the jump in applications that it is telling applicants it might take up to 18 months to process their paperwork. Manuel Morales, a pastor who recently applied for citizenship, said that he wants his vote to speak for other Latinos, especially undocumented immigrants who are being attacked (Gorman, 2008). His story is a common one. “Every vote counts,” said Silvia Trinidad, who also became an American citizen last fall, “and I will be able to vote against the laws they are trying to make now against the immigrants” (Preston, 2008.) Ricardo Tavizon, another recently naturalized citizen, said he wanted to vote to challenge immigration enforcement and to represent other immigrants who are not citizens (Preston, 2008). In fact, the air surrounding the immigration issue is so tense that these delays have led some to believe that this is a last ditch effort by the Republican Party to disenfranchise voters who will likely be voting for Democrats (Gorman, 2008).

Meanwhile, the immigration debate has mobilized Latino voters. According to a poll by the National Council of La Raza and NALEO, half of all Latino voters say they are “more enthusiastic” about voting this year than in previous elections (NALEO, 2006). Over 75 percent of Latinos say the immigration debate will prompt more Latinos to vote in November (Suro and Escobar, 2006, 2). Another poll by the New Democratic Network shows that 54 percent of Latinos cite the immigration debate as a main reason they will head to the polls. These surveys found that Latinos, regardless of age, income, religion, education, language preference, national origin group, and whether they were native born or immigrants, overwhelmingly agree that the immigration debate will result in an increase in the number of Latinos voting (Suro and Escobar, 2006, 6). “Hispanics

regard voting this year as a strategy of self-defense,” said Sergio Bendixen, a pollster based in Miami who works for the Clinton campaign. Hispanics “feel they need to vote to show they are a group that cannot be abused or discriminated against,” said Mr. Bendixen (Preston, 2008).

Interestingly, despite the fact that surveys continue to find that education, the economy, and the war in Iraq are the top three issues for Latinos and that only 9 percent rank immigration as their top concern, a majority of Latinos (51 percent) report that immigration was the most important or one of the most important issues in actually deciding their vote (NALEO, 2006). “While immigration is not the Latino community’s greatest concern, the issue continues to be its greatest motivator,” said Janet Murgia, the President and CEO of the National Council of La Raza (NALEO, 2006). Arturo Vargas, the Executive Director of the NALEO Educational fund agreed, noting that candidates’ stances on immigration do not sway the majority of voters, but dramatically affect who Latinos will vote for (NALEO, 2006).

FIGURE 12: DEMOCRATIC LEAD AMONG LATINOS NARROWS, THEN WIDENS

Meanwhile, support for Republicans among Latino voters has dropped precipitously, and Latino partisanship has started to move strongly toward the Democratic Party. Since 1999 and President Bush’s first campaign for president, Republican strategists had already noted significant gains in support from Latino voters. They were effectively closing the gap in Latino support for Democrats and Republicans, reducing it from 33 points in 1999 to a record low of only a 21 point difference in 2006. However, this support began to erode rapidly in late 2006 and 2007, when Republican gains over the last decade disappeared and the gap grew to 34 points, greater than in 1999

(Taylor and Fry, 2008, 1). Early numbers from 2008 suggest that the gap in support has grown wider still, as Latinos continue to be alienated by rhetoric surrounding the immigration issue.

While various reasons for this shift have been discussed, the primary causes cited at a symposium on the topic hosted by the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute were “first, the strong opposition, primarily from Republican members of the House of Representatives, to comprehensive immigration reform, and, second and equally important, the terms of debate by Republicans in the House, which are perceived by many Latinos as punitive and mean-spirited (de la Garza and DeSipio, 2006, 1). Such terminology is often taken by Latinos as an attack not just on immigrants, but also on the Latino community.

Roberto Gonzalez, a restaurant worker in Iowa, summed up a common theme repeated among Latino voters, “Those who can vote will oppose the Republicans. To me, they look like they’re just about discrimination against Hispanics” (Davey, 2007)

FIGURE 13: PARTY AFFILIATION OF REGISTERED LATINO VOTERS

Perhaps still more damaging for the Republican Party is that most registered Latino voters also say the Democrats care more about Latinos than the GOP, by a margin of 44 percent to 8 percent (Taylor and Fry, 2008, 2). Young Latino registered voters are even more inclined to feel that way, with 64 percent of 18- to 29- year olds saying that the Democrats care more about Latino voters, while only 18 percent say the Republicans care more (Taylor and Fry, 2008, 1). Even Latinos who identify as Republicans don’t see their party as being more concerned about Latinos. Only 23 percent of Latino registered voters who are Republicans or lean Republican say the GOP is more concerned, while 12 percent say the Democrats are more concerned and over 60 percent say there is no

difference between the parties (Taylor and Fry, 2008, 4). This divide could have long term implications for the future ability of the GOP to attract Latinos to the Republican Party. Moreover, 41 percent of Latino registered voters say the Democrats are going a better job of dealing with illegal immigration, while only 14 percent say the Republicans are doing a better job of dealing with the issue and 26 percent say neither party is doing a good job (Taylor and Fry, 2008, 2).

Is this a dominant and party-wide strategy?

The issue of how to talk about immigration, and whether to talk about it at all, has caused a divide within the Republican Party. There are significant differences between the House and Senate legislative versions of immigration reform, and further differences between the legislative plans and President Bush's own position. There are four major reasons for the variation within the Republican Party: 1) geographic and demographic factors; 2) dissent between national and local politics; 3) whether the focus is on long-term or short-term strategy; and 4) dissent between the party strategists and individual candidate personality and goals.

Geographic and Demographic Factors:

Polls show large differences in the amount of attention that Latinos say political leaders in their communities are paying to the issue of illegal immigration; 34 percent say a lot, 41 percent say not too much, and 22 percent say none at all (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007, 3). This reflects the fact that immigration is a politically salient issue in some parts of the country but not others. This is due to a variety of geographic and demographic factors, including the number of Latinos in the district, the percent of the potential

electorate they comprise, how dramatic the change in immigration rates to the area have been and how recently the immigration occurred. There are a limited number of highly competitive districts that will determine control of the house; experts list 34 Democratic districts that will probably be targeted by Republicans this November, and only four of those districts have significant Latino populations while 19 have Latino populations of less than 3 percent (Dionne, 2007). Those are the races where Republican candidates are most likely to attempt to use illegal immigration as a wedge issue.⁵ One example of this is Bob Latta's campaign for Ohio's fifth district and his decision to use increasingly harsh rhetoric about Spanish-speaking immigrants. Latta is not worried about alienating Latino Republicans, because according to U.S. Census data, Latinos are only 3.8 percent of the population of his district.

National vs. Local Politics:

Those geographic and demographic factors play into the major rift in the party: the difference between national and local political strategies. For example, the Republican National Committee website does not include immigration as one of their key issues; reforming immigration is included under "jobs and economy" and states the importance of a flexible workforce for the strength of the American economy. The National Republican Congressional Committee, on the other hand, lists immigration under "border security," restates its support for the enforcement-only measures codified in the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act that was passed by the House in 2005, and directs voters to contact Speaker of the House Pelosi's

⁵ There is very little research on when and how this issue is used in local elections and to what extent it is used successfully. Therefore, current statements by pundits about the effectiveness of the issue at the district level are, at this point, merely speculative. The author hopes to explore variations in rhetoric at more local levels in future research.

office in support of the Save America Act.

These differences continue despite national polls showing strong support for President Bush's plan for comprehensive immigration reform. Most Republican representatives insist that the House's more punitive plan is a safer political stand in his or her district than the Senate compromise. Rep. Chris Chocoma (R-Ind.) said he told White House officials citing those same polls that "they must not be polling anyone in the 2nd District" (VandeHei and Goldfarb, 2006). Senators generally represent more diverse populations and only face reelection every six years, making it easier to ignore the political issue-du-jour. However, representatives face a more homogenous electorate that they must answer to every two years, making illegal immigration a more vital issue for them. There are still greater differences between the representatives and the partisan presidential candidate, who must appeal to Latinos in battleground states like Colorado, New Mexico, and Nevada. In the 2008 election, a Latino backlash against the Republicans could hurt McCain's chances to become president, even as a backlash against illegal immigration could help win victories for some Republican candidates trying to win or hold Congressional seats.

Long-term Strategy vs. Short-term Strategy:

Many prominent Republicans have warned that, though the issue may win the GOP a few seats this election, it will cost them Latino support in the long term, support that will become increasingly important as Latino numbers continue to grow. "There may be some short-term gain from this, but in the long term, it is disastrous for the Republican Party," said Linda Chavez, who served as the director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in the Reagan Administration and is now chairwoman of the

Center for Equal Opportunity, a conservative public policy group (Steinhauer, 2007). “The tone of the debate, and the way it was framed in sort of an ‘us against them’ way, has done great harm in wooing Hispanics to the party,” said Ms. Chavez (Steinhauer, 2007). Michael Gerson, a former speechwriter for President Bush, wrote in an opinion article in the Washington Post that the electoral math made it shortsighted for the Republicans to use immigration as a “weapon” because it could “make the national political map unwinnable” (Luo, 2007) Some of those involved in the current campaign agree. “The ratcheting up of the language to win the Iowa caucuses may seem like the thing to do, but we’ll pay a price,” said John Weaver, a Republican strategist with McCain’s campaign. “We cannot be a white male cul-de-sac party and survive,” he said (Luo, 2007). In sum, many Republicans worry that the real damage to the party will come not from voters upset about illegal immigration, but rather from Latinos who were alienated by the debate over the issue and feel unwelcome in the Republican Party.

Party Strategy vs. Individual Candidate Personality and Goals:

Regardless of the importance of an issue to the national party, there will always be maverick politicians who are willing to ignore their party’s desires because of personal beliefs or goals. There are several examples of these types of candidates as major players in this issue, including Senator McCain and Representative Tancredo, both of whom have been willing to disobey party wishes to pursue their preferred solution to the issue. Tancredo is a perfect example of how the policy goals of one candidate can affect the entire debate during a campaign. Though it was understood from the beginning that he was not likely to win the nomination, Tancredo has been able to move illegal immigration to the forefront of the presidential campaign, and his rhetoric has forced

nearly every Republican presidential candidate to commit themselves to an immigration plan that focuses on enforcement and opposes granting “amnesty” to immigrants that are already in the country by developing a path to citizenship for them.

Republican Justifications for Immigration Rhetoric

After the 2004 election demonstrated the tremendous inroads Republicans were making with Latino voters, many thought that the GOP could possibly gain half of the Latino vote in the 2008 election. Many agree that this possibility now appears unlikely. According to one Republican Party activist, the “Republican moment” in the Latino community has passed because whatever the president’s wishes, “every national figure opposing [immigration] reform is a Republican” (de la Garza and DeSipio, 2006, 5). For Republicans to be willing to sacrifice the support of a rapidly growing demographic group like Latinos, they must expect to gain something in return.

This may be a disastrous long term strategy for the Republican Party, but the Republican candidates using immigration as part of their campaign strategy are focused on today and getting reelected now. Though this focus seems remarkably short-sighted when viewed from a macro Party perspective, it makes perfect sense in the short term. These candidates have to find a way to mobilize the base. After all, the primary concern is not that these voters will cross party lines and vote for Democrats; rather, it is that enough of them will be disillusioned with other issues, including the War in Iraq and the economy, that they might sit out the election and not go to the polls at all.

After all, national polls have repeatedly found that most Republicans approve of President Bush’s plan for broader immigration reform that includes a guest-worker

program; however, these same polls have also found that approximately 20 percent of Republican voters are fervently against illegal immigrants (Zakaria, 2006). For those Republicans, “anything short of stripping all the immigrants naked and marching them back across the desert is amnesty,” said Republican pollster Ed Goeas (Moscoso, 2006). Still, that 20 percent of the Republican base is active in primary elections, amplifying their influence during the campaign season in general by their ability to help determine which candidates are selected in to represent the party in the first place. Moreover, though data show that this is only an important issue to about 20 percent of Republican voters, there is reason to believe that there might be more support than measured by that number. People don’t want to admit to holding negative attitudes about Latinos or about immigrants to a pollster, because the feeling that they are supposed to answer the questions a certain way creates a sense of “social discomfort” and compels them to lie (Bialik, 2005). These polls may, therefore, be skewing the number of people who actually care strongly about the immigration issue.

After all, even McCain credits his stance on immigration with hurting his campaign before he recommitted to securing the borders (Lizza, 2007). Tancredo argues that there is more support for his stance on immigration than the national party is willing to admit. “If you think for a moment that Romney, Giuliani, and Thompson haven’t pulled the heck out of this thing, you’re wrong, they have. And they are there now because the polls tell them this is where they should be,” said Tancredo (Lizza, 2007). Other presidential candidates have admitted that they were surprised at the intensity of the debate while they were campaigning. “It does appear to be the issue out here wherever we are,” Huckabee said. “Nobody’s asked about Iraq – doesn’t ever come up.

The first question out of the box, everywhere I go, is immigration. It's just red hot, and I don't fully understand it" (Lizza, 2007).

Still, many Republicans say that it is not the issue itself, but rather the way it is being discussed that is alienating Latino voters. Leading Republicans, including Ken Mehlman, Senator Mel Martinez of Florida, and Jeb Bush have warned about the harsh tone in their party (Luo, 2007). McCain has also criticized his opponents in the presidential primary for the tone they have used in discussing immigration. "I think some of the rhetoric that many Hispanics hear about illegal immigration makes some of them believe we are not in favor, or seeking the support of Hispanic citizens in this country," McCain said (Cooper and Santora, 2008). "My concern is that we're going to have an honest but overly emotional debate about immigration, and we'll say things for the moment, in the primary chase, that will make it very difficult for us to win in November," Senator Graham said when asked about the issue. "There's a fine line between being upset about violating the law and appearing to be upset about someone's last name," he added (Lizza, 2007).

Meanwhile, Democratic strategists seem certain that the Republican Party's decision to focus on illegal immigration will hurt them in the general election and with Latino voters. "Most immigrants realize that the immigration debate is not about immigration. It's about xenophobia at best and racism at worst," said Joe Garcia, former director of the Cuban American National Foundation and now director of the New Democrat Network's Hispanic Strategy Center (Whoriskey, 2008). Simon Rosenberg, a Democratic strategist, argues that the replacement of the Bush strategy with the Tancredo-Romney strategy of demonizing and scapegoating immigrants is a

“catastrophic event” for the Republican Party (Lizza, 2007). Some Democrats, like Andrea LaRue are practically giddy; she claims on Immigration2006.org that Republican mishandling of the immigration issue has alienated Latino voters and given Democrats an opportunity to redraw the nation’s electoral map for a generation. Whether the issue will actually have such a dramatic electoral impact will be discussed in the next section.

Success of Immigration when used as an Electoral Issue

Candidates who have attempted to use illegal immigration as a wedge issue during their campaign have achieved rather limited success. There were many examples of immigration hard-liners who lost in the 2006 election, including incumbent J.D. Hayworth and Minuteman Randy Graf in Arizona. Graf said in the Wall Street Journal at the time that “if this issue [immigration] can't be won in this district [by hard-liners], the argument can be made that it can't be won anywhere in the country,” and many partisan strategists and media pundits came to agree with him after he was defeated (WSJ, 2006, Sept. 7). Senators like Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Mel Martinez (R-FL) released statements blaming the immigration issue and the tone of the debate for the GOP’s losses in the 2006 mid-term elections. (Specter, 2006 and Washington Times, 2006).

This has been reinforced in the 2008 presidential primary campaign, where many thought that McCain’s support for comprehensive immigration reform would be a fatal liability. However, Republican Latinos overwhelmingly supported McCain, and it is reasonable to conclude that they helped propel him to victories in several large and important states like Florida, New York and California. Perhaps more importantly, as Tamar Jacoby pointed out in the Arizona Republic, the primary race so far has

demonstrated that immigration is not the wedge issue it is assumed to be, because it does not even swing most Republican white voters (2008, Feb 13).

Instead, immigration emerged as a major issue in the 2008 presidential campaign despite the fact that only 1 in 9 Americans tell pollsters it is their priority (Kronholz, 2007). National polls show that concern over immigration is far behind concern over other issues (Lizza, 2007). Other polls indicate that even among those who view illegal immigration as a key concern, only 15 percent consider it their most important issue, after the War in Iraq, the economy, protecting the country from terrorist attacks, and healthcare, in that order” (Hook, 2007).

FIGURE 14: ISSUE PRIORITY FOR THE LATINO COMMUNITY BY STATE

Immigration also has not been shown to cause Democrats to abandon their party and vote for Republicans. People who favor granting a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants already leaned mainly toward Democratic presidential candidates, and those who favor tough penalties for illegal immigrants mostly favor Republicans (Davey, 2007). The lack of actual outcomes of races hinging on immigration is indicative of its power as an issue. While it may change the course of a Republican primary (and has not even been shown to actually do that), the issue is not important enough with most voters to really sway general election results (Wilson, 2007).

Furthermore, support for the issue doesn’t actually translate into votes. Only 40 percent of the voters who say immigration is their most important issue voted for Romney, the candidate with the most punitively anti-immigrant platform, and 25 percent still voted for McCain, the candidate who favors comprehensive reform (Jacoby, 2008). This shows that not only are anti-immigration zealots the minority, but even they are not

a reliable voting bloc. This holds true in the general electorate as well. A new poll from Zogby International shows that when faced with a candidate with whom they agree on every other issue but disagree on immigration, 51% of likely voters said they would still support that candidate, while 32% said they would support a candidate with whom they agreed on immigration, a percentage equivalent to those who would switch their votes over health care policy (Wilson, 2007). “Immigration is not a vote-moving issue for most people, period,” said Americans for Tax Reform chief Grover Norquist (Wilson, 2007).

CONCLUSIONS

Research shows that there have been dramatic changes in the frequency and tone of Republicans' rhetoric about the immigration issue over only the last few years. Latinos have noticed this shift, and they feel not only that they are being attacked, but that the harshness of the rhetoric has caused negative consequences and increased discrimination against not only immigrants, but Spanish-speakers specifically and Latinos in general. As a result, Latinos have become more politically active, naturalizing, registering to vote, and voting at much higher rates than in previous elections. Latinos have also become less likely to identify as and vote for Republicans, who they perceive as anti-immigrant and disinterested in their community.

This is an important finding, not only for the 2008 presidential election cycle, but for the long-term future of the Republican Party. In fact, some national level Republicans, concerned that the rhetoric is alienating Latino voters, have urged other members of their Party to stop using immigration as a wedge issue; however, Congressional and local level Republicans insist that the issue is too important to their constituencies to ignore. This perception continues despite the fact that poll data show that most voters do not rank immigration as one of their most important issues and that few candidates have been able to ride a hard-line immigration stance to electoral success.

Democratic strategists thought that the Republican stance on this issue might cause a backlash among Latino voters in the South and West that could carry Democrats to victory. However, now that McCain has been selected as the Republican Party's nominee for president, it has significantly changed the electoral landscape, perhaps preventing the full scale alienation of Latino voters from the GOP. All three candidates

still in the race support comprehensive immigration reform, and an organizer for the McCain campaign told me that he expects discussion of the issue to cool significantly over the next several months, as the candidates focus on issues that are more likely to win them votes by highlighting the differences between them. Still, it is possible that the issue could come roaring back to the forefront of debate as Congressional campaigns ramp up over the summer. If it does become an issue, or if McCain is pressured into taking a harsher stance on immigration in the national campaign, this could continue the shift of Latino voters away from the Republican Party and harm the GOP's efforts to bring "proto-Republican" Latinos into their coalition.

However, there are many other issues in play in this election, and so far it is unclear whether this shift is actually a reaction to the immigration issue or if the issue is only being used as a proxy for a more general sense of disappointment with Republican leadership. Polls from the William C. Velazquez Institute found that dissatisfaction over the economy and job creation, the War in Iraq, access to and affordability of health insurance, and the Bush Administration's education policies were more important to Latino voters than immigration issues (Mittlestadt, 2006). Either way, there is a general sense within the Latino community that Republicans are no longer concerned with Latino voters, even among Latinos who identify as Republicans: "I don't think Latinos are interested in joining the Republicans," said Alfredo Maciel, a Republican Latino from Orange County, "and I don't think Republicans are interested in attracting them" (Steinhauer, 2007). This perception, regardless of whether it is true, will be extremely damaging for the future of the Republican Party as Latino numbers continue to grow and continue to identify with the Democratic Party.

Perhaps the most important finding of this work is that there needs to be more research on this issue. Most of the information is only available piecemeal, and the few organizations that are paying attention to the issue are either only looking at specific facets of the issue or are swathed in partisan bias. As a result, most current perceptions of the issue are based largely on the opinions of campaign strategists and media pundits, and the majority of the analysis has been done by journalists using data collected (and spun) by campaign operatives. As Professor Dotty Lynch pointed out in her keynote address at the 2008 Pi Sigma Alpha Political Honors Fraternity induction at American University, there needs to be a more sophisticated, serious and disciplined analysis of what affected voters' choices and what did not to determine what the true lessons of the 2008 elections really are. This is especially true if this increase in nativist rhetoric is the beginning or the cause of a long term partisan realignment for Latino voters.

APPENDIX

FIGURE 1: LATINO ELECTED OFFICIALS BY PARTY AFFILIATION IN 2007

Latino Elected Officials by Party Affiliation: 2007

<u>Party Affiliation</u>	<u>Number</u>
Non-partisan/Unaffiliated	3,751
Democrat	1,254
Republican	<u>124</u>
Total	<u>5,129</u>

Source: NALEO - A PROFILE OF LATINO ELECTED OFFICIALS IN THE UNITED STATES AND THEIR PROGRESS SINCE 1996

FIGURE 2: LATINO ELECTED OFFICIALS BY STATE IN 2007

Latino Elected Officials by State: 2007

<u>State</u>	<u>Number</u>
Texas	2,170
California	1,163
New Mexico	657
Arizona	354
Colorado	160
Florida	131
New Jersey	103
Illinois	97
New York	64
Other states	<u>230</u>
Total	<u>5,129</u>

Source: NALEO - A PROFILE OF LATINO ELECTED OFFICIALS IN THE UNITED STATES AND THEIR PROGRESS SINCE 1996

FIGURE 3: IMMIGRATION LEGISLATION IN THE 50 STATES IN 2007

Immigration Legislation in the 50 States, 2007				
Main Topics	Number of Bills Introduced	States	Enacted Laws	States
Education	131	34	20	17
Employment	244	45	31	20
Health	147	32	16	11
Human Trafficking	83	29	18	13
ID/Driver's or Other Licenses	259	47	42	31
Law Enforcement	165	37	17	10
Legal Services	20	12	3	3
Miscellaneous	116	34	14	11
Omnibus/Comprehensive Measures	29	8	1	1
Public Benefits	153	40	32	19
Voting	53	23	0	0
Resolutions	162	37	50	18
TOTAL	1562	50	244	46

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures, *2007 Enacted State Legislation Related to Immigrants and Immigration* November 29, 2007.

FIGURE 4: PROPOSED STATE IMMIGRATION LEGISLATION 2008

Main Topics	Number of Bills Introduced	States
Education	74	22
Employment	179	31
Health	63	22
Human Trafficking	24	14
ID/Driver's Licenses/Other Licenses	192	35
Law Enforcement	198	35
Legal Services	18	10
Miscellaneous	104	31
Omnibus/Multi-Issue Measures	41	16
Public Benefits	67	25
Voting	24	12
Resolutions	122	28
TOTAL	1106	44

Source: NCSL, Immigrant Policy Project, 2008

FIGURE 5: REMOVALS FROM THE UNITED STATES, 2001-2007

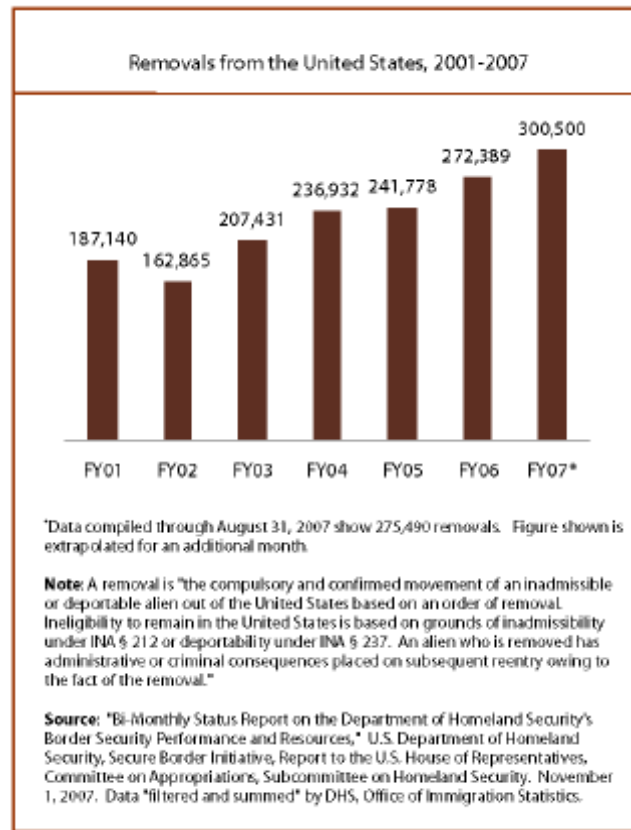


FIGURE 6: WORKSITE ENFORCEMENT ARRESTS

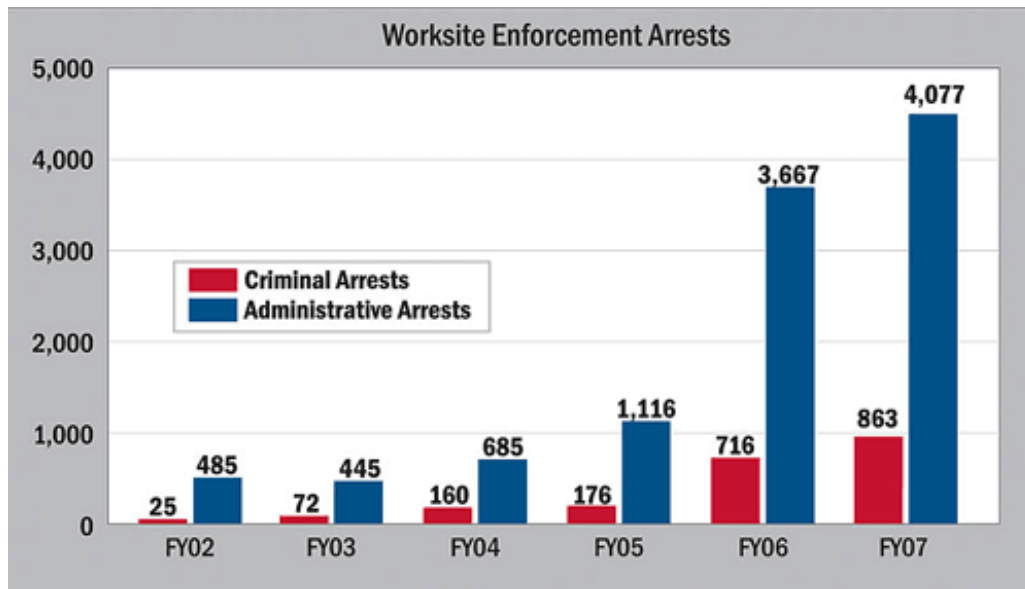


FIGURE 7: SPANISH LANGUAGE ADS BY PARTY

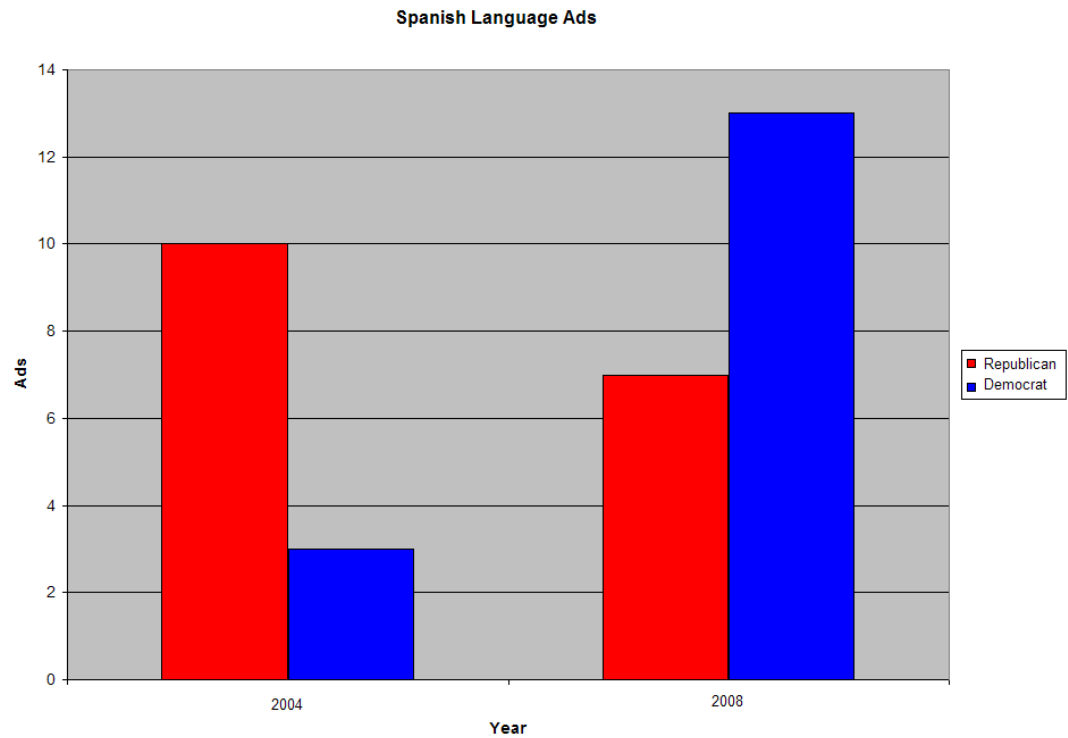


FIGURE 8: TRIGGER WORDS IN ADS BY PARTY

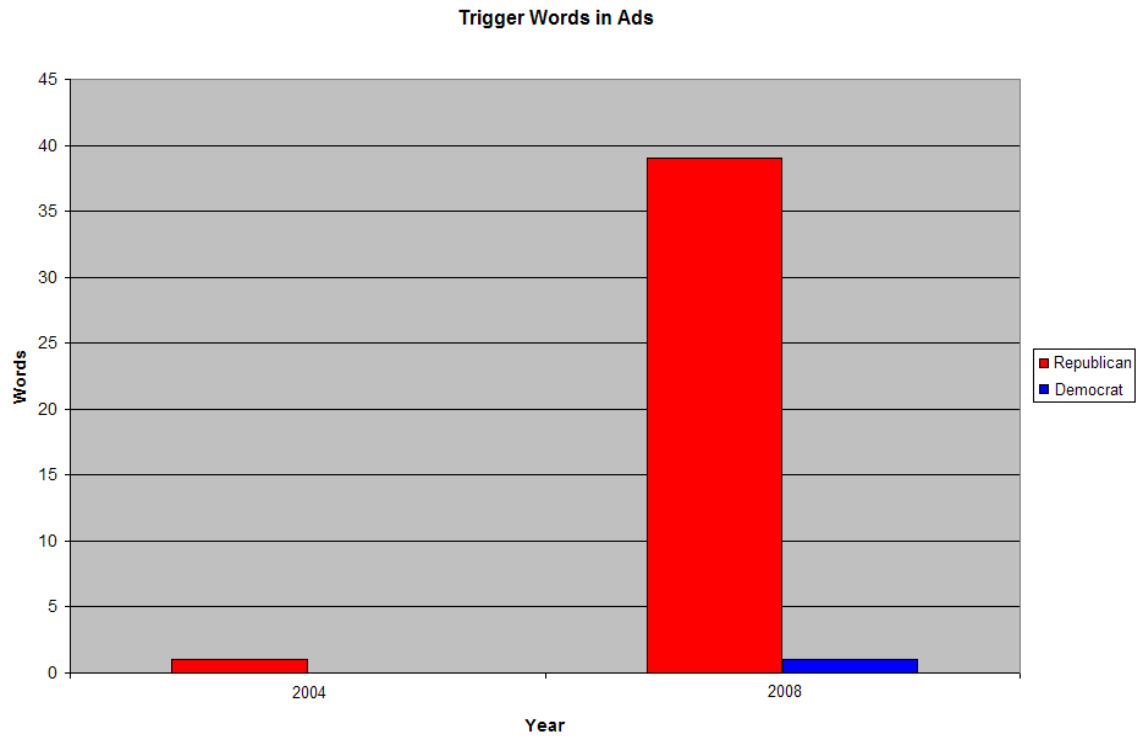


FIGURE 9: IMMIGRATION ADS BY CANDIDATE

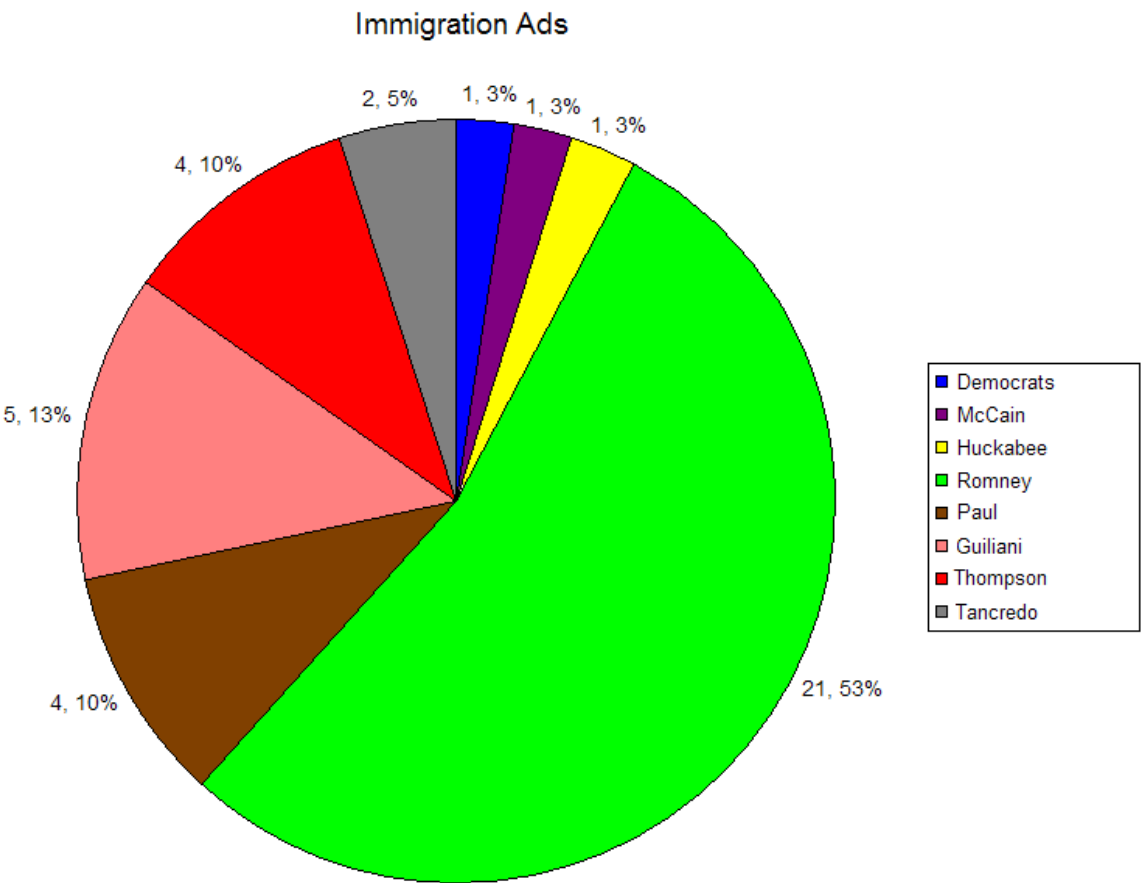


FIGURE 10: IMMIGRATION REFERENCES IN THE 2008 PRIMARY DEBATES

State	Part y	Total Questions	Mention Issue	%	Topics
NH	D	26	4	15.4	Amnesty, immigration reform, border patrol, fence, path to citizenship, English as official or national language
	R	52	14	26.9	immigration reform, English official language, English-only, national ID cards, path to citizenship, no amnesty, border fence, border patrol, border security, employee database, employer verification, large numbers of illegal immigrants, assimilation, family/chain migration
Iowa	D	15	0	0	
	R	20	4	20	NAFTA, border security, English-only, end illegal immigration, border patrol
CA	D	19	5	26.3	lost jobs/lower wages due to immigration, effects on black community, drivers' licenses, path to citizenship, immigration reform, Republican legislation is punitive, need to learn English
	R	26	4	15.4	border fence, border security, no amnesty, immigration reform, deportations, path to citizenship, English only
Univis ion	D	18	10	55.6	divisive politics, GOP legislation is punitive, GOP legislation targets Latinos, nation of immigrants, history, immigration reform, bilingualism, English only, Spanish as national language, health care, education, scholarships to college, no child left behind, achievement gap, border security, border fence, employer verification system, border patrol, database, importance of immigration for economy, NAFTA, DREAM Act, workers rights, labor unions, path to citizenship GOP is using immigrants as scapegoats for their failures,, GOP dehumanizes immigrants, workforce raids, GOP bashing immigrants
	R	15	10	66.7	immigration reform, worksite raids, border security, employee verification, border patrol, discrimination against immigrants, English only, bilingualism, ID card, no amnesty, speed up visa process, path to citizenship, family separation, chain migration, family reunification, racial profiling, immigrants' effect on economy
Total w/o Uni	D	60	9	15	
	R	98	25	25.5	
Total w/ Uni	D	78	19	24.4	
	R	113	35	31	

FIGURE 11: HISPANIC SHARE OF VOTERS IN DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY AND CAUCUS STATES, 2004 AND 2008

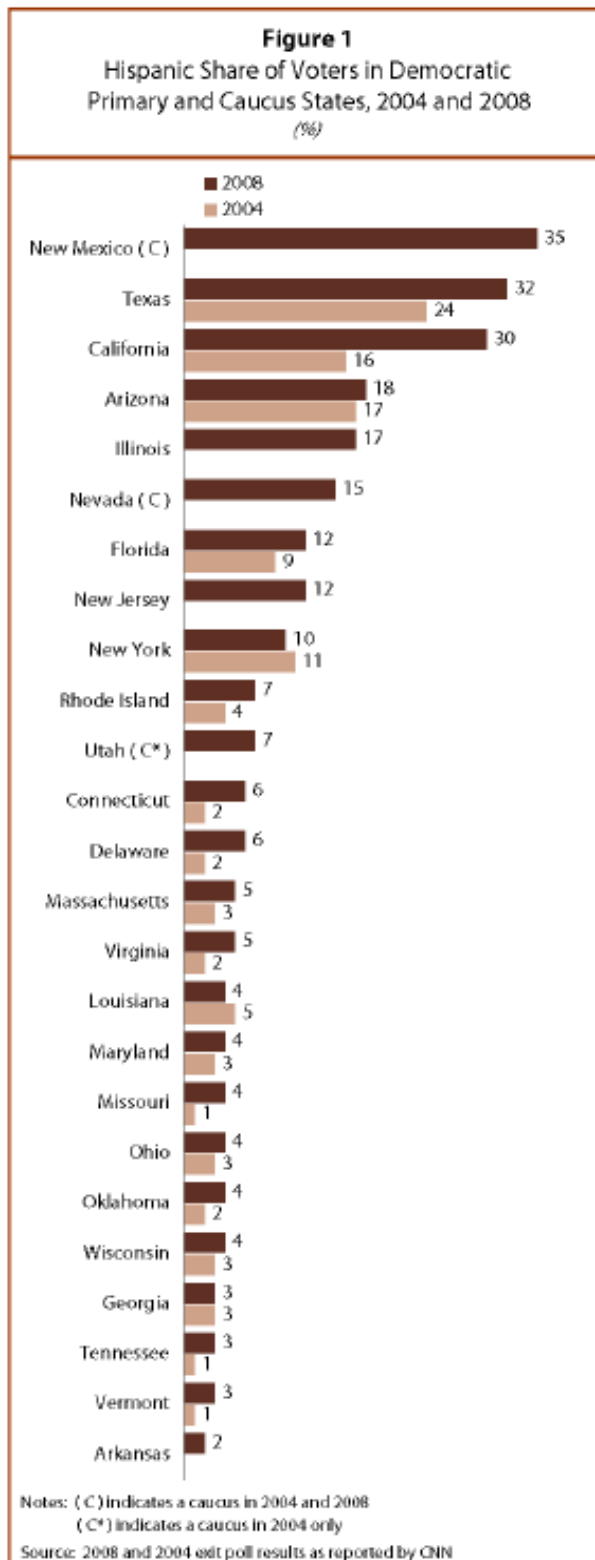


FIGURE 12: DEMOCRATIC LEAD AMONG LATINOS NARROWS, THEN WIDENS

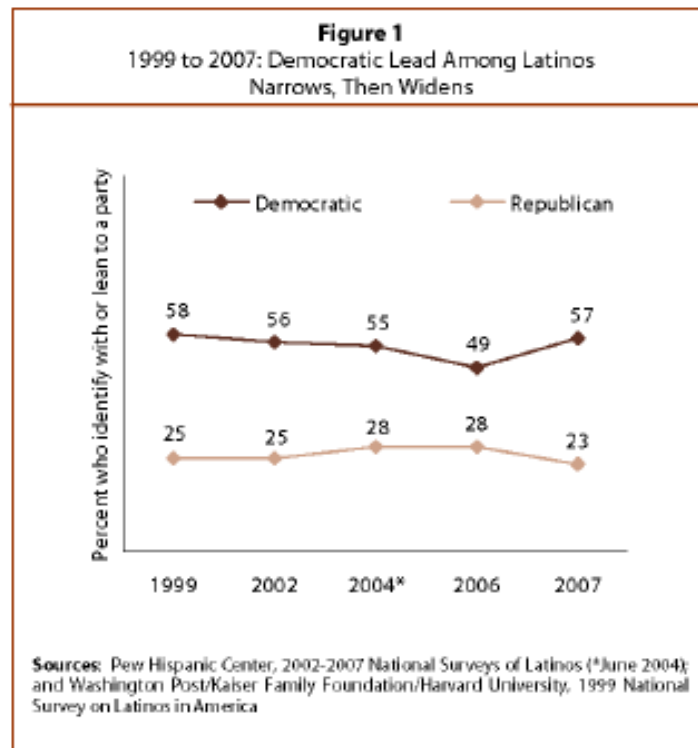


FIGURE 13: PARTY AFFILIATION OF REGISTERED LATINO VOTERS

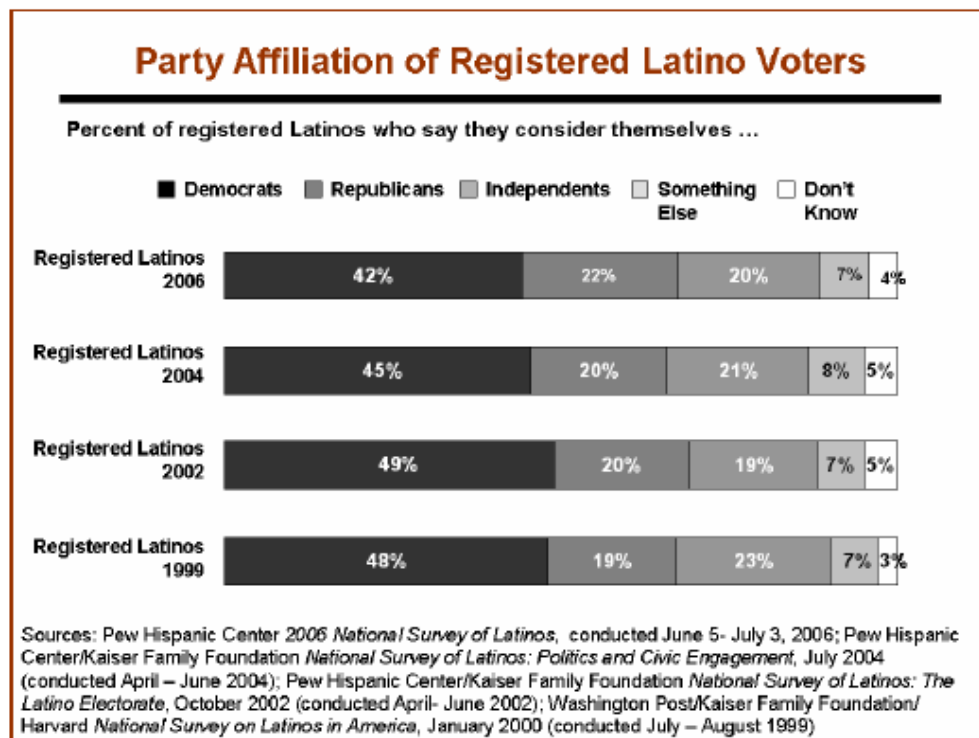


FIGURE 14: ISSUE PRIORITY FOR THE LATINO COMMUNITY BY STATE

#	Issue	California	Illinois	Texas	New York	Florida
1	Education/Schools	27.1%	19.5%	27.1%	20.7%	21.7%
2	Race Relations/Discrimination	10.8%	12.6%	8.2%	15.6%	14.1%
3	Unemployment/Jobs	8.6%	12.6%	15.8%	13.6%	9.5%
4	Economy	8.0%	7.8%	8.8%	6.3%	6.1%
5	Immigration	8.6%	5.7%	2.5%	5.4%	8.0%
6	Crime	7.2%	8.3%	5.1%	2.3%	4.0%
7	Drugs	3.0%	5.2%	3.7%	4.8%	2.4%
8	Family Values	1.4%	1.4%	2.8%	3.7%	2.4%
9	Health Care	1.4%	2.0%	1.7%	1.4%	1.5%
--	Something Else	17.7%	20.7%	19.5%	22.2%	22.3%

SOURCE: TOMAS RIVERA POLICY INSTITUTE

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