

Introduction

Dear friends, the wife of senator John Kennedy, candidate for the U.S. presidency, is talking to you. In these very dangerous times, when the world peace is threatened by communism, it is necessary to have in the White House a leader able to guide our destinies with a firm hand. My husband has always cared for the interests of all the portions of our society who need the protection of a humanitarian government. For the future of our children and to reach a world where true peace shall exist, vote for the Democratic Party on the eighth of November. Long live Kennedy!

—*Jacqueline Kennedy, in a speech from John Kennedy's 1960 presidential campaign*

We share a dream, that with hard work our family will succeed. If we are sick, we will have health insurance, and that our children will receive a good education, whether we are rich or poor. This is the American dream. I ask for your vote, not just for me and the Democrats, so that we can also keep the dream alive for you and your children.

—*Barack Obama, in a speech from his 2008 general election campaign*¹

WHILE MORE THAN forty-five years separate the broadcast of these two Spanish-language television advertisements, it is remarkable how both messages touch upon similar themes: the ideas of hope and the future, and the importance of having a candidate who understands the needs of the Spanish-speaking community. These advertisements provide a glimpse of how politicians have communicated with the Hispanic electorate, but they also raise a

¹Kennedy's speech is available at <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1960/mrs-jfk> (translated by the authors). The second quotation is from Barack Obama's Spanish-language ad, "Un Mensaje de Barack Obama" (A Message from Barack Obama). The ad may be viewed at <http://pcl.stanford.edu/campaigns/2008/index.html>.

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number of interesting questions.² Why have candidates' appeals to Hispanics remained so similar over such a long period of time? And on what basis do politicians believe that such messages are the ones Hispanic voters will respond to?

It remains an open question why, despite the technological advances in political campaigns from 1960 to 2008—including the introduction of focus groups, demographic targeting, and polling (Shea and Burton 2006)—candidates still appeal to Hispanics using messages nearly identical to that of Jacqueline Kennedy in 1960. This could mean that the Hispanic population has remained relatively unchanged over the past forty-eight years; it could also indicate that politicians have not really made an effort to understand the Hispanic community, which has led them to rely on general themes in their advertisements. We know that the first proposition is untrue, as Hispanics have now surpassed African Americans as the largest racial minority group in the United States (as of 2004, Hispanics made up 14.2 percent of the U.S. population) and the Hispanic population has diversified dramatically in recent decades. And by 2025, 20.1 percent of the U.S. population will be made up of Americans of Hispanic descent. Moreover, Hispanics are the largest racial or ethnic minority group in nineteen states.³ The rapid growth of the U.S. Hispanic population can be attributed to Hispanics' steady rates of immigration as well as their higher fertility rates when compared to the total U.S. population. Not only is the Hispanic population much larger today than it was in 1960, but also its composition has changed, shifting toward an increasingly large proportion of foreign-born Hispanics (approximately 40 percent).

²Throughout this book, we use the term "Hispanic," though we could just as easily have used the term "Latino" to describe individuals who identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino. We use the term "Anglo" to describe non-Hispanic Whites, "Asian" to describe non-Hispanic Asian Americans, and "Black" to describe non-Hispanic African Americans.

³U.S. Census Bureau, "U.S. Interim Projections by Age, Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin," <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/usinterimproj/natprojtab01a.pdf> (accessed July 2, 2008).

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WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT HISPANIC POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

Candidates' messages to Hispanics may have remained relatively similar because of the difficulty they have in understanding the political preferences and attitudes of this rapidly growing and heterogeneous community. The "American voter" that Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes wrote of forty years ago may not be the same as the American voter of today, as it is likely that this new voter is of Hispanic origin. But, it does not follow that either scholars or politicians have a clear understanding of what the new American voter believes. Moreover, the compositional shifts within the Hispanic electorate indicate that the Hispanics Kennedy campaigned to in 1960 and those Obama targeted in 2008 are likely to be quite different. As such, understanding Hispanic political behavior is a complex and constantly changing endeavor, so that the commonly held beliefs used to characterize the average Hispanic voter of the 1960s may no longer be applicable to today's Hispanic voter.

The primary goals of this book are twofold. First, we will demonstrate why the Hispanic electorate is such a diverse and complex group, particularly when compared to other ethnic and racial minority groups in the United States. Thus, some of the most well-understood theories on racial politics and political behavior may not always adequately explain Hispanic political behavior in American politics. For instance, despite the presumption that ethnic and racial minorities will naturally lend their support to racial/ethnic minorities running for office (Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984), in the 2008 Democratic presidential primaries, Hispanics overwhelmingly supported then U.S. senator Hillary Rodham Clinton. While we explore this phenomenon later in the book, this example highlights why we cannot assume that Hispanic political behavior will follow the same trajectory as that of other racial/ethnic groups (e.g., Blacks) in the United States. The second aim of this book is to dispel some of the pieces of conventional wisdom about the Hispanic electorate, many of which have affected the way in which campaigns, elected officials, the media, and even the average American voter, perceive this group. Perhaps the most contentious assertion that emerged from this past presidential campaign is that Hispanics are unwilling to

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support an African American candidate.⁴ To the extent that this observation is true has been the subject of much debate by both academics and the popular press. We therefore explore, in our chapter on intergroup relations, whether evidence exists to support this claim.

Most of the conventional wisdom on the Hispanic electorate can be traced to the popular press, political pundits, academics, and elected officials. The following section explores what we believe to be the most commonly regarded “facts” regarding Hispanic political behavior.

Conventional Wisdom #1: Hispanics are an ethnically, racially, and geographically diverse population, and their concentration in politically important states makes them attractive to politicians.

Indeed, great diversity exists in the Hispanic population, with salient differences between numerous subgroups based on ethnicity, culture, language use, national origin, religion, and historical experiences. In fact, there is no such thing as a “Hispanic,” in the sense that this is a pan-ethnic label created by the U.S. Census in 1970 (Garcia 2003).

Hispanics are concentrated in the key battleground states of Florida, Colorado, Nevada, and New Mexico; many also reside in states with a large number of Electoral College votes. According to 2004 U.S. Census estimates, approximately 80 percent of the Hispanic population resides in California (34.9 percent of the state population), Texas (34.9 percent), New York (16.1 percent), Florida (19.1 percent), Illinois (14 percent), Arizona (28.1 percent), New Jersey (15 percent), and Colorado (19.2 percent). The state with the largest Hispanic population is New Mexico, where Hispanics make up 43.4 percent of the population (U.S. Census 2007). In addition, states in which Hispanics have not traditionally settled, such as Georgia, North Carolina, Iowa, Arkansas, and Nebraska, have also witnessed an unprecedented increase in their Hispanic populations in recent years. Thus, the political landscape of these states may likely change in the next several decades.⁵

⁴This statement was made by longtime Hispanic pollster, Sergio Bendixen. See the postscript for a more in-depth discussion, as well as chapter 5 for the possible reasons behind this assertion.

⁵The Hispanic population’s concentration at the county and city levels is also staggering: 4.2 million reside in Los Angeles County, California; 1.3 million in

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The Hispanic population's rapid growth can be explained by several factors. High levels of migration from Latin America have contributed to the growth of the Hispanic population; as of 2000, 51 percent of the foreign-born population in the United States hails from Latin America (Lollock 2001). The Hispanic population is also younger, on average, than the rest of the U.S. population. The median age of the Hispanic population in 2005 was 26.9, while it was 40.1 for the non-Hispanic Anglo population (U.S. Census 2007). Hispanics in the United States also have higher fertility rates than do non-Hispanics. While the U.S. Hispanic population increased by 57.9 percent in the 1990s, from 22.4 million in 1990 to 35.3 million in 2000, the rest of the U.S. population increased by only 13.2 percent over the same period (Guzman and McConnell 2002). The Mexican American subgroup grew most rapidly in this decade, outpacing the population growth among Cubans and Puerto Ricans. According to del Pinal and Singer (1997), the high fertility rate among Hispanics has contributed most to their population growth. Hispanics' large numbers have translated into economic power: U.S. Hispanic purchasing power is estimated at \$700 billion, with estimates reaching \$1 trillion by 2010.⁶ This rate of increase is approximately three times that of the estimated overall national rate for the past ten years. There are an estimated 2 million Hispanic-owned businesses in the United States, with annual revenues of approximately \$300 million.⁷

Conventional Wisdom #2: Hispanics are assimilating into American political life in the same manner as previous immigrants to the United States.

Miami-Dade County, Florida; 1.1 million in Harris County, Texas; and 1.1 million in Cook County, Illinois. Hispanics make up almost half the residents of Los Angeles (46.5 percent), more than half the residents of San Antonio (58.7 percent), and more than two-thirds of the population of El Paso (76.6 percent). These numbers indicate that Hispanics can be, and increasingly are becoming, important political players at all levels of government.

⁶Estimates based on analysis from HispanTelligence, which uses data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, http://www.hispanicbusiness.com/news/2004/5/5/hispanic_purchasing_power_surges_to_700.htm.

⁷Jessica Seid, "Hispanic-Owned Businesses Thrive," http://money.cnn.com/2006/0913/smbusiness/hispanic_biz/index.htm.

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Casual scrutiny of contemporary American politics and culture might lead some to think that the only thing that distinguishes Hispanics from the rest of the population is their ethnicity. Why should that have any impact on their political behavior? And given the immigrant foundations of the United States, it seems reasonable to suppose that Hispanics will assimilate and integrate themselves into the American political system in the same manner as the Irish, Italian, and German immigrants of the early twentieth century.

However, the pattern of Hispanic immigration to the United States is markedly different from those of earlier immigrations. Hispanic political behavior is distinct from that of the rest of the American electorate because of the constant and steady rates of immigration, which make the classic political assimilation model used to understand the behavior of previous European immigrants insufficient to explain the political behavior of Hispanics. Many Hispanics now in the United States retain close connections to their countries of origin, remaining culturally, politically, and even economically linked to friends, families, and colleagues there. At home, many Hispanics strive to maintain their ethnic identities by, among other things, speaking Spanish with friends and family members. The retention of ethnic identity, the maintenance of connections to countries of origin, and the continued influx of new immigrants into existing Hispanic communities all imply that Hispanics today might not be assimilating in the same ways or to the same degree as previous waves of immigrants to the United States.

While Hispanic population growth is remarkable, the issue of Hispanic political preferences and ideologies would be of little interest to politicians if Hispanics were solidly aligned with one political party. This leads us to the next piece of conventional wisdom regarding Hispanic political behavior:

Conventional Wisdom #3: Hispanics are a monolithic voting bloc and overwhelmingly support the Democratic Party.

Hispanics are not a monolithic voting bloc, a theme that we constantly emphasize in this book. The reason why Hispanics have received such a great deal of attention from politicians and candidates is because their political alliances are still up for grabs. Hispanic support for George W. Bush in 2004 marked the first

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time that a Republican presidential candidate received at least 40 percent of the Hispanic vote (Abrajano, Alvarez, and Nagler 2008). This outcome signaled to Republicans that they had a real opportunity to win over Hispanic voters to the Republican Party. Moreover, larger numbers of Hispanics report being independent in their partisan affiliations than do non-Hispanics (Hajnal and Lee 2008). Our analysis in chapter 2 provides further evidence revealing how many Hispanics do not think of themselves as Democrats or Republicans. As a result, we have seen presidential, congressional, and gubernatorial candidates from both parties investing an increasingly larger share of their advertising budget in Spanish-language advertising (Segal 2002, 2006). Securing the Hispanic vote has clearly become a priority for both political parties, and this makes the study of Hispanic political preferences increasingly important.

Yet some of the most well-understood theories of political behavior may not be applicable to a group of individuals who do not undergo the same type of political socialization process as does the rest of the American population, who are socioeconomically worse off than the rest of the population, who have only recently been actively courted by political elites in meaningful and substantive ways, and whose population is being rapidly replenished with new immigrants. All of these factors suggest that the salience of a political identity based on Hispanic ethnicity may remain strong for years to come—and that analyzing the shape of that political identity is a matter of some practical urgency.

At the same time, however, significant socioeconomic discrepancies continue to separate Hispanics from the rest of the American population. This observation leads many pundits and others to our next nugget of conventional wisdom:

Conventional Wisdom #4: Hispanics participate in politics at lower rates than other racial and ethnic groups, and therefore continue to be the “Sleeping Giant” of American politics.

Despite the large concentration of Hispanics in many politically important (and electoral-vote-rich) states, socioeconomic discrepancies create numerous challenges for Hispanics’ becoming as politically involved and active as they might be. Estimates from

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the U.S. Census indicate that while just over half of Hispanics graduate from high school by age twenty-five, at least 80 percent or more of the Anglo, Black, and Asian U.S. population of the same age have completed high school. Thus, an educational achievement gap of 23 percent exists between Blacks and Hispanics and an even larger gap of 28 percent between Hispanics and Anglos. Hispanics also have a lower median household income (\$35,929) than do non-Hispanic Anglos (\$48,784), and a greater percentage of Hispanics live below the poverty line (22 percent) relative to non-Hispanic Anglos (9 percent) (U.S. Census 2007).

Research on political participation over the past thirty years has consistently confirmed that political participation is strongly influenced by voters' resources (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1978; Leighley and Nagler 1992). To participate in politics, an individual must have the proper resources (e.g., time or interest) to do so. Furthermore, recent work has focused on other ways of increasing turnout and participation, such as through personal contact: people are more likely to participate in politics if someone asks them to participate (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). This is particularly true of ethnic and racial minorities, as shown by recent work by Leighley (2001), Michelson (2003), and de la Garza, Abrajano, and Cortina (2008). These two strands of research, when paired together, point out why studying Hispanic political participation is so important: according to the resource model, many Hispanics are unlikely to have the necessary resources to participate fully in politics, while according to the contact model, it may be the case that candidates and parties are not asking Hispanics to participate—or perhaps not asking them in ways that are consistent with their ethnic identity and culture.

Despite the current size of the Hispanic population in the United States and impressive gains in Hispanic population growth in recent decades, many skeptics might argue that there is no such thing as “Hispanic” or “Latino” politics, and that we can expect Hispanic political behavior to mirror that of other Americans. However, the following sentiment is more often expressed, which we phrase as yet another piece of conventional wisdom (see Ramos 2004):

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Conventional Wisdom #5: Hispanics are primarily concerned with issues that are “Hispanic specific,” e.g., immigration, bilingual education, and, to a somewhat lesser extent, affirmative action.

Given the diversity of the Hispanic population, the presumption that all Hispanics are concerned with the same issues is somewhat problematic. For example, given that Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, their views on immigration differ from those of Cubans and Mexicans (Abrajano and Singh 2009).

In order for Hispanics to care about the same issues, a distinct Hispanic political identity would have to exist. According to Garcia (2003), Hispanics and other minority groups can draw on the notion of cultural politics as a source of pride and identity. Unfortunately, cultural politics have not been powerful enough to provide a clear political agenda for Hispanics, precisely because of their diversity. But, in light of the fact that the central component to cultural politics is language, it has become one of the central components, if not the central component, that defines the Hispanic population. The question of how language plays a role in Hispanic political behavior is one of the main themes of our book.

The notion of a Hispanic political identity is not only an individual construct but also an identity that has been shaped and will continue to be shaped by perceptions of shared histories and by political, social, and economic events. For example, California governor Pete Wilson used the issue of immigration in his 1994 reelection campaign to mobilize Anglo voters and to polarize the state’s electorate along racial and ethnic lines. Some observers of California politics have argued that such a tactic led to a surge in Hispanic participation in California elections after 1994 (Scott 2000); in particular, some research has found that Hispanics who naturalized during the early 1990s in California are much more likely to participate in politics than those who naturalized in other eras (Pantoja, Ramirez, and Segura 2001). Similarly, we might expect the resurgent interest in the immigration issue across the nation over the past several years, which crested in the spring of 2006 in demonstrations in many American cities, to further galvanize the evolution of a unique Hispanic identity. Though as our postscript discussing the 2008 presidential campaign reveals, when other pressing issues take center stage, which

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in this case was the economy, the issue of immigration can fall to the wayside.

A similar logic leads us to the final commonly held belief regarding Latino political behavior:

Conventional Wisdom #6: Having elected officials who are co-ethnic (that is, Hispanic) are important to Hispanic voters. It is also important for representative democracy.

The scholarly research on this subject provides a number of insights. One study examining self-reported survey responses finds that the majority of Hispanic survey respondents stated a candidate's race made little difference in their vote decision (Abrajano 2005). However, in an analysis of the Los Angeles mayoral election in 2005, Abrajano, Alvarez, and Nagler (2005) find that Hispanic voters in Los Angeles overwhelmingly supported the Hispanic candidate, Antonio Villaraigosa, even among those Hispanics whose political ideology differed from that of the candidate. While shared ethnicity was not the deciding factor for all Hispanic voters, in some instances, ethnicity did trump political ideology. Accounts by Vaca (2004) reveal a similar dynamic in the mayoral elections of Houston, Texas. Related research by Barreto (2007) and Barreto, Segura, and Wood (2004) finds that Hispanics living in areas represented by Hispanic officials are more likely to vote than those who live in areas with no Hispanic representatives. Thus, Hispanics may not openly admit that race matters in their vote decision, though in their voting patterns, this appears to be the case.

The study of political representation in academic political science has a deep normative and philosophical tradition, but more recently a quantitative study of political representation has emerged. There are many ways of trying to quantify the degree to which any group in society is represented, including, for example, descriptively (Are there many Hispanics who are able to capture and hold political office?) and substantively (Are there representatives in office who share and seek to implement the same concerns that are held by Hispanics?).

Studying the political representation of Hispanics in America is beyond the scope of this book, but we do provide some data herein on the descriptive representation of Hispanics to help motivate later research. Owing to our comparative focus, we first

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looked at the best available data on the number of African Americans and Hispanics who hold political office at the local, state, and federal levels.⁸ At the state and local level in 2001, there were 9,430 African Americans in office, as compared to 4,303 Hispanics. (We use 2001 data, since that is the most recent year that the U.S. Census Bureau has provided comparable statistics for the Hispanic and African American populations.) In the 109th Congress (2005), there were 42 African Americans in the House of Representatives and 1 African American senator. In the same Congress, there were 23 Hispanics in the House and 2 in the Senate. Keeping in mind that the African American and Hispanic populations are of roughly comparable size, by this particular metric of descriptive representation it can be argued that Hispanic representation lags behind that of African Americans.⁹

Another way to think about political representation is to examine how it changes over time in response to demographic changes. In the case of Hispanics in the United States, we know that in recent decades their population has increased dramatically—a fact we will continue to stress throughout this book. Thus, another question we can pose about Hispanic political representation is, to what extent is it responsive to the dramatic rise in the Hispanic population in the United States? To offer a preliminary answer to this question, we turn again to data provided by the U.S. Census. On the population side, we have Hispanic population estimates from the 1980 and 1990 census enumerations; we also have annual estimates of the Hispanic population from 1994 through 2006.¹⁰ For information on political representation at the

⁸These data come from the U.S. Census Bureau, “The 2008 Statistical Abstract,” http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/cats/elections/elected_public_officialscharacteristics.html. We use data from tables 394, 402, and 403. Table 394 provides data on members of Congress (House and Senate representatives). Table 402 gives data on the number of African Americans holding state and local office as of January 2001, while table 403 gives data on the number of Hispanics holding state and local office through 2005.

⁹Table 6 of the 2008 *Statistical Abstract* provides a variety of estimates of the African American and Hispanic populations. In 2006, for example, there were nearly 36 million African Americans and nearly 44 million Hispanics or Latinos. See <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/08s0006.pdf>.

¹⁰For the former, we obtained Hispanic population data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s population estimates, <http://www.census.gov/population/documentation/twps0056/tab01.pdf>. For the data from 1994 through 2006, we

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federal, state, and local levels, we use the data from the Census Bureau's *Statistical Abstract*, which provides information on Hispanic representation at the local and state levels for 1985, 1990, 1994, and 2000–2006, as well as data on the U.S. Congresses since 1991. We graph in figures 0.1 and 0.2 the Hispanic population and political representation; in each graph, we use linear interpolation to estimate missing data.

Both figures give on the left axis the Hispanic population from the U.S. Census, and the horizontal axis charts the years from 1980 through 2006. What differs between these two graphs is that figure 0.1 gives on the right axis the number of Hispanics holding state and local offices, while figure 0.2 gives on the right axis the number of Hispanics in the U.S. Congress (for each session of Congress). We see two important patterns in these graphs: In each case, we see that as the Hispanic population in the United States has grown in the past two decades, so has the representation of Hispanics in local, state, and federal government. We also see that the trend lines for the representation data generally track the population growth data, which indicates that as the Hispanic population grows, so does Hispanic political representation. Thus, our quick look at Hispanic political representation shows that, relative to African Americans, Hispanics lag behind in descriptive representation, but the number of Hispanic political representatives is increasing and is in line with overall Hispanic population growth. This leaves open many questions, including whether Hispanics are being well represented on an issue basis and what the underlying causes of their lagging numerical representation are. In our conclusion we will return to these questions and discuss our study in light of these questions as well as how future research might better study Hispanic political representation.

GOAL OF THE BOOK

As our discussion so far reveals, our study is motivated by the rapid demographic changes in the American population and the

turned to the U.S. Census Bureau's document, "Hispanic Population of the U.S.," <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hispanic/tables.html>.

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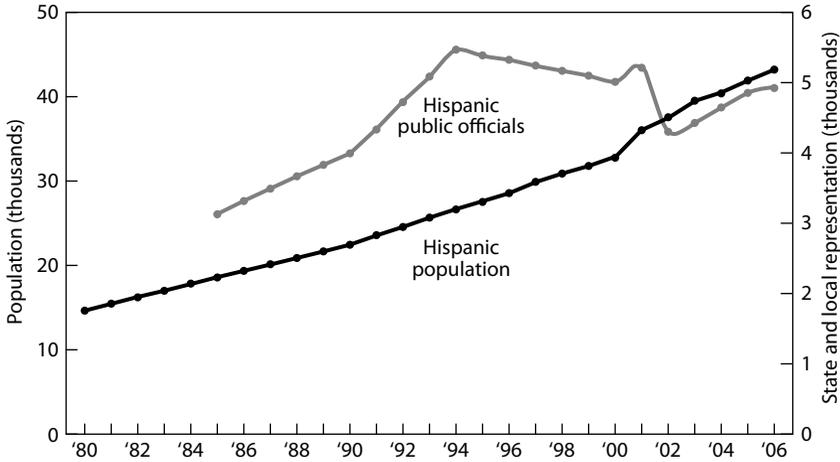


FIGURE 0.1: Hispanic population and state/local representation

amount of political attention that has been directed toward Hispanics in recent years. In our book, each chapter reveals an important piece of the puzzle to understanding the new Hispanic voter. We explore the relationship between ethnic identity and political behavior, the manner in which Hispanics get their information and political cues, the reasons behind their decision to participate (or not participate) in politics, which ethnic and racial groups they perceive as political allies, what issues they care about, as well as which parties they choose to affiliate with.

The research on Hispanic political behavior, without a doubt, has dramatically increased in the past two decades. And while this work has considerably advanced what we know about this group, more work still needs to be done. As highlighted in the previous section, some of the conventional wisdom on Hispanic political behavior is well supported by existing studies, but others require more careful investigation and comparison, particularly with respect to the political preferences of other Americans. Thus, our analyses and discussion of Hispanic political behavior are comparative in nature: that is, where possible we look at the political behavior of Hispanics relative to that of Anglos, Blacks, and Asian Americans. By taking this approach, we also bring together two areas of the political science literature: research on racial and ethnic politics as well as studies of political behavior.

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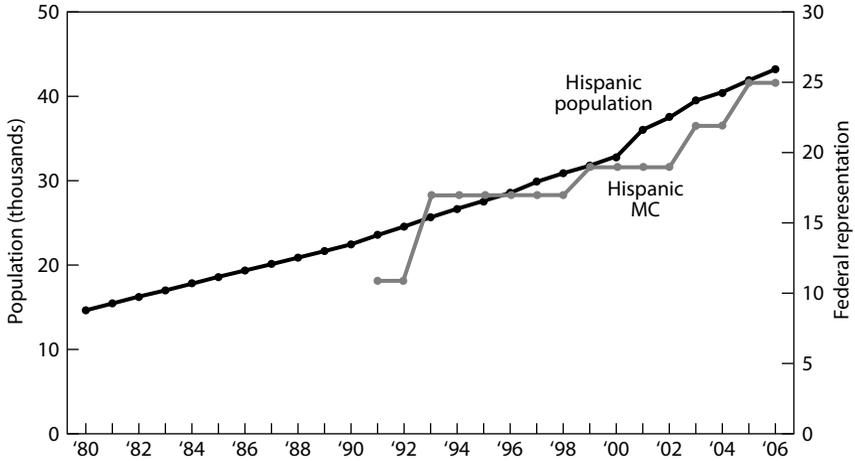


FIGURE 0.2: Hispanic population and federal representation

While the latter has typically examined the political experiences of racial and ethnic minorities in isolation from those of nonminorities, the former has focused mostly on the attitudes and opinions of Anglo Americans. Our aim is to combine these two research areas and draw on theoretical and empirical contributions from both of these subfields of the American politics literature. Thus, we study Hispanics from a comparative standpoint and analyze their behavior in light of well-understood theories about political participation, turnout, voting, and partisanship.

Recent research that we have conducted, new work being done by other scholars, and the research we present in this book all point out that the established theories of American political behavior, such as those pertaining to political participation, mobilization, political socialization, and information processing, as well as partisanship acquisition, need to be revisited when we think about the new politics of Hispanic political behavior. Because of the distinct characteristics of the Hispanic electorate, some of which we have discussed in the introduction (e.g., ethnic diversity, large foreign-born population, constant influx of new immigrants), many of these theories need to be reassessed to better explain Hispanic political behavior. For instance, how one learns about politics, especially with respect to party identification, has largely been attributed to parental socialization (Valentino and Sears 1998; Vaillancourt 1973). That is, children learn about poli-

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tics from their parents and typically adopt the same partisan preferences as their parents. Among foreign-born Hispanics, this socialization process is likely to differ, given that their parents were socialized into a political system outside of the United States. This raises a host of questions and implications for the future of American politics: From where and through what channels do these Hispanics learn about politics? Do the standard terms of liberal, conservative, Democrat, and Republican mean the same thing to foreign-born and recently naturalized Hispanics as they do for the rest of the American electorate? Implications such as these highlight the importance of studying current American politics from this perspective.

A ROAD MAP OF OUR BOOK

We organize our study into six chapters, a conclusion, and a short postscript on the 2008 presidential election. In an appendix we provide a discussion of the data sources we use in our research. In chapter 1, we discuss the concept of Hispanic political identity. Because ethnic identity has been found to influence the political behavior of racial and ethnic minority groups, it is important to know what constitutes Hispanic political identity. We review the work in this area from the political science, sociology, and Hispanic studies literatures. This discussion would be incomplete without discussing the major cleavages within the Hispanic population (including ethnic, generational, and language differences) and their impact on the formation of Hispanic political identity, so we also tackle that subject in the first chapter.

Chapter 2 examines Hispanic public opinion and partisanship. How do Hispanics' opinions on social and economic issues compare to those of non-Hispanics? We focus on major issues like the economy, health care, foreign policy, and education. We also look at policies that are directly linked to the Hispanic community (e.g., immigration and bilingual education), and we explore whether Hispanics' attitudes are homogeneous or whether variations emerge as a result of generational status and ethnicity. On a related matter, we study the acquisition of partisanship among Hispanics. Do traditional predictors of partisanship, such as ideology and demographics, influence their decision to identify with a party,

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or do other characteristics unique to Hispanics, such as ethnicity and generational status, play a role in this decision?

Chapter 3 focuses on the cornerstone of mass political behavior: turnout and participation. At the most basic level, we ask whether Hispanics turn out to vote at the same rate as non-Hispanics and whether Hispanics are registered to vote at the same rates as non-Hispanics. We also ask who in the eligible Hispanic electorate participates in presidential elections, why more Hispanics are not registering to vote, why Hispanics are not turning out to vote, and what reforms might increase Hispanic participation in presidential elections.

Chapter 4 examines the factors contributing to Hispanics' levels of political knowledge. Since little is known about how Hispanics acquire political knowledge and information, particularly because many are immigrants whose political socialization occurs largely outside the United States, it is unclear what resources Hispanics turn to in order to learn about politics. Moreover, some of the socioeconomic barriers that Hispanics face may also lead to variations in their knowledge about and interest in politics.

In chapter 5, we turn to the politically important issue of determining whom Hispanics vote for in federal elections. Of course, voting for a presidential or congressional candidate is only one of the choices that Hispanic voters are asked to make when they go to voting booths every two or four years. Hispanics also vote in statewide races and local contests. We choose here to focus on federal election voting because the offices of the president, U.S. House, and U.S. Senate are one of the most important positions Hispanics can vote for, because presidential and congressional election voting has long been a mainstay of academic research on voting behavior, and because they are subjects for which we have detailed and extensive polling data that includes relatively large samples of Hispanic voters. We use exit poll data from recent presidential and midterm elections to look at which candidates Hispanic voters support and to study in more detail the variety that exists in the Hispanic electorate when its voters cast ballots.

It does not make sense to study Hispanic politics today in isolation from the politics of the other major racial and ethnic groups in the United States. As such, chapter 6 examines the prospects for intergroup relations not only among racial and ethnic minorities but also between Anglos and Hispanics. We explore those

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issues on which Hispanics, Anglos, and Blacks could potentially coalesce, as well as perceptions of a linked fate or shared interests among these various groups. Moreover, we discuss whether the benefits derived from these coalitions might outweigh the costs associated with them, especially considering that the size of the Hispanic population is considerably larger than that of the other two racial/ethnic minority groups.

We summarize and review our findings in the conclusion. We also discuss how our research contributes to the race and politics literature, as well as the political behavior literature. This conclusion returns to the themes that we discussed in this introduction. In light of the growing diversity of the American electorate, the manner in which we think about American political life needs to be reassessed. While some of the well-understood theories of political behavior do an adequate job of explaining Hispanic and non-Hispanic behaviors and attitudes, others need to be reassessed to take account of the new voices of Hispanic voters in America.

Finally, we close our study with a short postscript that presents some early analysis of the 2008 presidential election, and ties that analysis into some of the larger themes of our work. There is no doubt that the landmark 2008 presidential election will generate substantial quantities of research, and in our postscript we discuss the significant role that Hispanics played in the 2008 election.