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SES	Socioeconomic Status
SHPE	Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers
SFS	Sanctuary for Salvadorans
SIG	Special Interest Group
SNS	Social Network Services
SSI	Supplementary Security Income
SVREP	Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project
SWCLR	Southwest Council of La Raza
TFNA	Task Force for New Americans
TPS	Temporary Protected Status
TUSD	Tucson Unified School District
UAC	Unaccompanied Alien Children
UnidosUS	formerly known as National Council of La Raza
UNITE	Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees
USCIS	United States Citizenship and Information Services
USHCC	US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
USMCA	United States Mexico Canada Agreement
VAP	Voting Age Population
VEP	Voting Eligible Population
VRA	Voting Rights Act

An Introduction to Latino Politics

Emprendimos una peregrinación y nos preguntamos ¿Dónde están nuestras raíces, los hilos de la historia y las experiencias en estas tierras las conocidas tanto como las nuevas? Al hacer el reconocimiento, percibimos perspectivas de todas las direcciones y siempre miramos hacia el futuro con esperanza y dignidad.

Undertaking a pilgrimage to find our community, we ask ourselves, where are our roots, those strands of history and experiences in lands both known and new? As we search, our reconnaissance takes in views from many sources, and we are always looking to the future with hope and dignity.

Gilroy and El Paso: Latinos in the Crosshairs

It was near the closing of the Gilroy Garlic Festival on July 28, 2019, when Santino William Legan cut through fencing at the rear of the festival grounds. Armed with an AASR-10 semi-automatic rifle, Legan disposed of thirty-nine rounds in his seventy-five-round drum magazine. In a span of minutes, three persons were killed and an additional seventeen people were wounded. The combination of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head and police firing eighteen rounds at Legan ended this mass shooting episode.

The Gilroy Garlic Festival draws 80,000 to 100,000 festival gatherers in Gilroy, California, each year. Gilroy has a long-established Latino population that constitutes almost three-fifths of the city. At Santino Legan's home, evidence was found of his "exploring violent ideologies" (Kennedy 2019) and of potential targets, including the Gilroy Garlic Festival, religious organizations, courthouses, federal buildings, and political institutions. One of his online posts complained about the Garlic Festival congesting the countryside with "horses of mestizos" (Scutti 2019).

Less than a week later, Patrick Crusius drove 650 miles from Allen, Texas, to the El Cielo Mall in El Paso. He was armed with a WASR-10 rifle and opened fire in the Walmart parking lot before moving inside the store. Crusius made clear that his targets were Latinos of Mexican origin; twenty-two people were killed and twenty-four were injured, including a young married couple gunned down while covering their infant with their bodies. The Cielo Mall is a commercial center for El Pasoans and residents of Juarez, Mexico, and amid the terrified scrambling for shelter, acts of heroism

were on display. It was noted, for example, that Gilbert Serna, a Walmart employee, ushered around 150 customers and employees through a fire exit.

Law enforcement officials arrived on scene in just six minutes, and Patrick Crusius surrendered outside the store. Of the murdered victims, nine were women and thirteen were men. Eight of those killed were Mexican citizens. After Crusius's arrest, investigators reported that he wanted to shoot as many Mexicans as he could. Crusius had posted a manifesto in which he detailed both white nationalist viewpoints and anti-immigrant rhetoric. A reading of his manifesto made direct references to a "Hispanic invasion" and endorsed the "great replacement" theory. Just before his cowardly and violent acts, he gave a clear political motivation for his actions by posting his desire to "remove the threat of the Hispanic voting bloc" and to stop the "invasion from taking control of local and state governments of my beloved Texas." There was also an indication that he did not expect to survive his attack but hoped it would inspire others to conduct like-minded assaults.

The El Paso mass shooting marked the 251st US mass shooting of 2019, which, unfortunately, could allow these events to be forgotten among the many others that took place across the country. However, the responses by public figures, activists, and members of the grassroots Latino communities made clear that these events were unique and had direct relevance to contemporary Latino politics. For example, the Mexican foreign minister acted to ensure the safety of Mexican nationals when they traveled north of their border. An interesting contrast in response to this mass shooting was evident between national leaders, Latino elected officials, and other Latinos. As reflected in the quotes below, many Latino leaders made a connection between the actions of these domestic terrorists and the underlying anti-Latino climate that has been perpetuated nationally since the last presidential election.

In response to the El Paso shooting, President Trump's comments focused upon the tragic nature of the mass shooting as an act of cowardice and condemned this hateful act, saying, "These barbaric slaughters are an assault upon our nation, and a crime against all humanity. We are a loving nation and our children are entitled to grow up in a just, peaceful, and loving society" (The White House 2019). Many other public officials also responded to these major mass shootings. For example, Texas governor Greg Abbott, Vice President Mike Pence, former vice president Joe Biden, Senator Corey Booker, and Senator Kamala Harris all expressed dismay, condolences to victims' families and the local community, and the need to end such violence and hatred. An examination of statements by Latino public officials and community activists throughout the nation focused more directly on the senseless taking of lives, roots of hatred, and the targeting of communities of color.

Julián Castro, an aspirant for the Democratic nomination for president, spoke of the government's need to protect American lives. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) was "deeply horrified by the hateful anti-Hispanic bigotry expressed by the shooter's 'manifesto'" (Ramirez 2019). Comments by other Latinos placed emphasis on a community under siege by the persons and organizations that exhibited anti-immigrant and anti-Hispanic views, as well as negative views about communities of color overall. The tone, rhetoric, and inciting characterizations by politicians (of which much criticism has been directed toward President Trump), media commentators, and organizations is seen as detrimental and harmful to the Latino community specifically. For example, the

Latino Policy Forum (Chicago) joined other leaders in Illinois and nationwide asserting the need to hold national leaders accountable for using divisive rhetoric.

Miguel Andrade, spokesperson for the Philadelphia activist group JUNTOS, placed emphasis on the effect of targeting Latinos in El Paso. "What happened in El Paso is a direct result of the racist language coming out of Trump's mouth . . . We should be outraged that it has gotten to this point, that the 'racist-in-chief' is perpetuating this kind of rhetoric and vitriol against marginalized communities" (Vourvoulias 2019). In Wisconsin, Christine Neumann-Ortiz noted the El Paso shootings resembled events in her own community, from hate crimes targeting immigrants to teachers from immigrant backgrounds being bullied at schools. As executive director of Voces de la Frontera (an immigrant advocacy organization), Neumann-Ortiz observed more fear from Latinos, who were expressing that their environment has been (or is being) overtaken with targeted hatred toward themselves and immigrants.

Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-TX) mirrored the previous comments about the rise of negative rhetoric toward Latinos and immigrants and the role President Trump has played in fostering fear and hatred. "This vile act of terrorism against Hispanic Americans was inspired by divisive racial and ethnic rhetoric and enabled by weapons of war," Castro said (Castro 2019). "Hispanic Americans and immigrants have been directly and violently attacked. This crime was intentional violence to strike fear in our communities, in our lives, and for our families." Similarly, Rep. Veronica Escobar (D-TX), in an NPR radio interview, commented, "Not only an epidemic of guns, but also an epidemic of hate and the residents of the city and county that are about 83 percent Latino all feel targeted" ("Weekend Edition" 2019).

These reactions were repeated throughout the United States via newspapers interviewing Latinos about the underlying factors of the shooters' motivation. Emphasis was placed on Patrick Crusius's remarks to investigators that he had wanted to shoot as many Mexicans as he could. While many Latinos expressed an atmosphere of fear and feeling targeted due to their ethnicity and/or immigrant background, their responses did not stop there. Voicing a sense of defiance, resolve, and coming together as Latinos for change and stronger voices, Perla Y. Lara (WHYY-PBS, August 15, 2019) presented her perspective on the recent chain of events. Perla, a social psychologist who specializes in intercultural dialogue and criminology, talked about her evolving understanding of hostility "against my people." She stated that it comes from ignorance, which "feeds insecurity and fears, which turns into intolerance and later violence." She indicated that Latinos "cannot afford to be indifferent or desensitized to these criminal and violent acts . . . Our humanity is at stake and so are our lives." Her response, echoed by other Latinos and non-Latinos alike, is to resist such rhetoric and actions and continue to repel the anti-immigrant policies in the face of escalating violence and hatred. Lara ended her PBS interview by saying, "We don't need to wait until we are personally impacted in order to take action. Everyone can contribute to the fight . . . vote, call your representative, protest, protect the ones who need your solidarity and privilege, volunteer."

A statewide survey of Latinos in Texas conducted in September of 2019 by Latino Decisions, a political opinion research firm, revealed that the Latino electorate had reactions to the violence that were similar to those of their leaders and spokespersons. For example, 69 percent of respondents from the poll felt that the language President

Trump used in his speeches and on Twitter was part of the problem. A similarly high percentage believed that the shooter was influenced by Trump.

While more detailed accounts of the shootings in Gilroy and El Paso are available, our description of these shootings serves as the contemporary context in which we discuss and analyze Latino politics. In this edition, we have underscored the themes of community, interest, and culture. At the same time, we recognize that the umbrella term of “Latinos” represents a multilayered congruence of communities bonded together by national origin, nativity and immigrant status, sexual orientation, gender, and other significant social groupings. A larger “pan-ethnic” community is an ongoing reality that is reflected in local and national organizations, their leadership, and their strategies, as well as media characterizations. Discussions of Latinos in America often center on the “**Latinization**” of their engagement and presence in nearly every facet of American life as well as their growing voices in public life and US institutions.

Latino Politics and Contemporary Dynamics

So, how are we using the Gilroy and El Paso shootings to provide a panorama of Latinos and their intersections with America’s public life? The level of public rhetoric has been such that communities of Latinos across the country feel targeted and under siege. This is reflected in the high percentage of Latinos across the country who already felt pessimistic and insecure about their place in the United States well before the attacks occurred. Indicative of the overall climate, a Latino Decisions poll conducted in April 2019 showed that 80 percent of Latino registered voters think racism against Latinos and immigrants is a problem, with 51 percent reporting it as a major problem.²

As indicated earlier, a visible response to this negative rhetoric is resistance, coming together to fight back, and increasing the avenues of social change and influence. In the last three years particularly, questions about Latinos’ loyalties to this country, their character and morality, and the extent of their contributions in all facets of America’s life have been portrayed negatively and with much hostility and distrust. This climate and the actual and real experiences of Latinos propagate self-reflection and reaching out to others with common backgrounds and experiences. Our exploration of these different layers of Latino communities helps us to see how political involvement occurs, through what mechanisms, and Latinos’ target for engagement.

Another aspect of these past shootings lies with the basis for specifically targeting Latinos as “foreigners,” not part of the real American fabric, and as contributing to the invasion on America’s values and its makeup. The raised issues regarding immigration (the undocumented, asylum seekers, and mixed-status households) have a direct bearing on the everyday lives of many Latino households and communities. The concept of “six degrees of separation” has noteworthy application for Latinos and their politics. Who are the real Americans? How do they protect against violation of human rights and criminalization of persons seeking refuge and opportunity? What are “legitimate” bases for deportation, access to due process and representation, and policies that have the impact of emphasizing deterrence and punitive actions in opposition to a more welcoming nation and processes that provide full and fair treatment and participation? How do issues of gun violence, environmental concerns, and reproductive rights play into the Latino policy agenda?

We will be discussing and analyzing the intricacies of community, of overlapping and salient interests, and the changing cultural manifestation of Latinos living in

the United States. In the midst of the 2020 election events, Latinos actively focused on voter registration and turnout, effective political knowledge, and efficacious attitudes, as well as expanding leadership with the organizational skills and infrastructure to have an even greater impact on socioeconomic and political life in America. As we move forward in this fourth edition, we are attempting to clarify our themes.

Our discussion of the Gilroy and El Paso mass shootings adds to the overall experiences of Latinos. Our earlier edition noted Latinos’ electoral import in the election of Barack Obama in 2008 and his reelection in 2012. This impetus continues to expand with Latinos’ participation in the 2018 midterm elections and the highly contentious election of 2020 (Latino Decisions 2019). The country’s heightened political polarization, primarily along partisan divisions and issues like reproductive rights, immigration, health care access and costs, gun control, and police-community relations, places Latinos in the fray of American politics.

BOX 1.1 Hostile Rhetoric, Hostile Climate, and the Latino Community

Our introductory narratives about the shootings in Gilroy and El Paso carried an underlying theme about the current climate that Latinos are experiencing with fear, threats, and negative rhetoric. Many Latino leaders following the mass shootings pointed toward harmful and hateful language heightened by President Trump and other political leaders. What have been the responses and effects on the Latino community? A study by Latino Decisions (2020) found 51 percent of Latinos thought racism against Latinos and immigrants was a major problem. In addition, Pew Hispanic Research Center (PHRC) (Lopez et al. 2018) discovered that nearly one-half of Latinos indicated that their situation had worsened, a 32 percent increase since the 2016 election. Latinos’ greater exposure to violent “metaphors can increase support for political violence among persons with aggressive personalities” (Kalmoe 2014). One consequence of such rhetoric is the dehumanization of the groups targeted and the portrayal of them as a threatening force.

Some aspects of this hostile climate can show their effects on a wide spectrum of Latino community members (i.e., class, gender, nativity, “legal” status, etc.). It can begin similar to the experience of Luis, an upper-class American Latino (Vallejo 2016). After working many hours restoring a classic Chevy truck (and therefore dressed in grease-stained clothes), he decided to test drive his truck in his affluent neighborhood. While parked to examine a mechanical problem, a police officer responded to a call from a neighbor. The neighbor reported that an “unauthorized” Mexican immigrant was casing the neighborhood. These stories have repeated themselves in other parts of the country where middle-class Latinos are perceived as criminals, likely to be illegal, and unassimilable.

A survey of patients (Carroll 2019) at three urban California emergency departments found one-half of Latino citizens and legal residents, as well as three-quarters of undocumented immigrants, feel unsafe because of comments made by members of the Trump administration. One-fourth of undocumented immigrants were so frightened they delayed going to the emergency room for

BOX 1.1 (continued)

days. Dr. Robert Rodriguez, professor of emergency medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, and a physician at San Francisco General Hospital, stated that “statements coming from the administration and the President really do have significant effects on Latino populations. Not only have they induced fear in undocumented immigrants, but they have also caused a substantial proportion of Latino citizens to have concerns about their safety” (Rodriguez et al. 2019). Similarly, Chavez et al. (2019) studied the effects of negative and positive rhetoric on Mexican American youth. Their overall conclusion was that negative emotional responses, in turn, were associated with participants’ higher perceived stress, lower subjective health, and lower subjective well-being. Altogether, these findings suggest that political rhetoric matters for the targets of that rhetoric.

The pattern of a hostile climate and rhetoric is further illustrated in the study by Barajas-Gonzalez et al. (2018) of the impact of immigration enforcement threats on Latino children. Stress and emotional discomfort were found to be prevalent among those who belonged to mixed-status families, which have at least one citizen or legal immigrant child and at least one undocumented parent. At the same time, this hostility was harmful for Latinos, regardless of their immigration status. “Mixed-status families may change their daily activities in attempts to protect themselves, consequently becoming more socially isolated. . . . For some children, the stigma associated with being from an immigrant family, experiences with discrimination and increased consciousness of legal status is marked by fear, hyperawareness and hypervigilance” (Barajas-Gonzalez, Ayón, and Torres 2018). This almost PTSD condition affects children’s ability to focus in school, making it difficult to succeed socially, academically, and emotionally. “Deportations and family separations at the border are incredibly disruptive and traumatic to youth and their families. The detrimental impacts of family separations on child development and family systems are serious and long-lasting. . . . Even for youth and families who are not directly threatened by these deportation or family separation policies, the policy climate is creating a more hostile and unsafe environment” (Wray-Lake et al. 2018).

A final example shows a hostile climate has a more direct political effect. In their analysis, Gabriel Sanchez and Barbara Gómez-Aguinaga (2017) demonstrate that Latinos outperformed expectations as a cohesive voting bloc against Trump in 2016. The literature on the racialization of the Latino population through hostile campaign rhetoric and punitive immigration policy platforms suggests that Trump should not have done well among this electorate. The Latino Decisions Election Eve Poll data bears this out, finding that the GOP nominee had the lowest level of Latino support ever recorded for a presidential candidate. Will Latino political behavior be longer-lasting with this pattern? The answer will hinge largely on whether President Trump attempts to repair a clearly damaged relationship with the Latino electorate during his first term in office. If the Trump administration and the GOP more broadly continue to alienate Latinos, this could mobilize more eligible Latinos to register and vote and continue to push them toward the Democratic Party. Racist political rhetoric hinders social acceptance, creates a climate of fear, and legitimizes discrimination.

In the last edition, the spring of 2006 was depicted as a tumultuous time in which more than three million people, primarily immigrants and many originally from Mexico and other Latin American countries, demonstrated by taking to the streets of Chicago, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Milwaukee, Detroit, Denver, Dallas, and dozens of other US cities. They marched to protest proposed legislation (the “Sensenbrenner Bill,” HR 4437) placing emphasis on more restrictive and punitive measures toward undocumented individuals. In effect, many components of the proposed law had the net impact of criminalizing (felony charges with harsher penalties) immigration-related infractions. As a counterpolicy response, Latino protestors advocated for comprehensive immigration reform legislation that would provide pathways for citizenship and normalizing their status (Bada, Fox, and Selee 2006; Cano 2004). The magnitude of the 2006 immigrant protest marches, with so many participants taking such a visible role in a national policy discussion, was unprecedented. Latino immigrants (along with immigrants from Asia and other parts of the globe) were voicing their displeasure with the hostile and negative anti-immigrant climate, the negative tenor of immigration reform in the area of border enforcement, and the heightened “criminalization” and negative stereotypes of **undocumented persons** and their family networks.

The Trump administration has pushed for policy initiatives like “Build That Wall,” further militarization of the border, greater restrictive and punitive immigration policies for asylum seekers and DACA and DAPA registrants, and reducing basic human rights for all immigrants, regardless of status. Louder and more frequent xenophobic rhetoric has been part of “everyday” America’s discourse, and Latinos continue to be the recipient of negative narratives concerning disloyalty, public charges, and impacting the economy adversely. As we begin preparations for the pivotal 2020 decennial census, Latinos, politics, and public policy are playing out in this arena as well.

**“Da Forma a tu Futuro. ¡Comienza Aquí!”
Shape Your Future**

The Spanish-language version of the 2020 US census “slogan” is one of more than forty versions in which the decennial census campaigns try to reach out to a more diversified United States. Generally, the information collected produces population tabulations with counts and detailed descriptions of all persons, including Latinos/Hispanics.³ So, how are people classified racially/ethnically, and what are the consequences and implications of the classification? In the summer of 2019, the Supreme Court overturned a Trump administration initiative to include a “citizenship question” in the 2020 decennial census. Such an initiative had serious implications for a full and open count and participation of Latinos and other marginalized communities. Latino organizations and leaders joined in the legal proceedings to overturn this action; however, the impact of speculation that the citizenship question would be included had a marked impact on Latinos’ trust in filling out the census form.⁴ We will discuss later how achieving a full and accurate count has consequences for reapportionment and redistricting plans and actions.

BOX 1.2 Citizenship Status on the 2020 US Census

Although the adjudication of the US census every ten years is never free from politics, the run-up to the 2020 census became much more contentious than usual with the prospect of adding a citizenship status question on the form. It was not until the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) blocked the Trump administration from including citizenship that the administration dropped its fight to include that item on the census form and began printing forms without the controversial item. The decision of SCOTUS was viewed as a victory for critics who argued that the inclusion of citizenship was part of a larger effort to skew the census results in favor of Republican candidates.

At the heart of the fight was the social science question of whether having citizenship on the census form would negatively impact Latino participation. Federal court cases in California and New York provided some insights on this question, as an expert witness report conducted by Professor Matt Barreto included a national survey of Latinos that focused specifically on the impact of the citizenship status question on Latino participation in the census. Dr. Barreto's report made clear that having the citizenship status question on the census form would yield a high undercount of Latino and immigrant members of the US population.¹ This was not a major surprise, as officials at the Census Bureau itself have said that including the question would lead to an undercount of noncitizens and minority residents. As a result, areas with more immigrants, which tend to vote Democratic, would have lost both representation and federal funding.

Although the SCOTUS decision was applauded by many Latino leaders and organizations, even though the citizenship status question would not be included, the contentious debate about this issue had serious implications for Latino engagement in the census. For example, a survey conducted by Latino Decisions in New Mexico right after the SCOTUS decision found that while a large segment of the Hispanic population in the nation's highest Latino population state said that the decision to leave off the citizenship status question increased their desire to participate in the census, a large percentage noted that they remained very fearful of participating, particularly Spanish-speaking and immigrant Hispanics. This put a lot of emphasis on the need for community organizations, such as those discussed in this chapter, to work hard to increase trust in their communities in the process of participating in the census. It had to include education on why it was so important to the provision of resources and ensuring that Latinos would be properly represented in the political system.

¹Barreto's report and associated tables are available at <http://matthbarreto.com/research/census2020.html>.

When the Trump administration, under Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross and Attorney General William Barr, attempted to include a citizenship question in the 2020 decennial, the stated rationale was to be able to get accurate counts of the citizen voting age population (CVAP) and to report the population counts to the states in time for redistricting. Information was desired at the block level, arguing

that such additional information would strengthen Voting Rights Act activities. Many state attorney generals (especially Xavier Becerra-CA) took the lead to challenge this initiative. This litigation finally went to the Supreme Court for a decision. Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr., in the majority opinion, stated that the explanation used by the Trump administration "appears to have been contrived" (Liptak 2019) and that the Trump administration would have the opportunity to submit another rationale, if they chose to do so. Judge Roberts went on to say that executive branch officials must "offer genuine justifications for important decisions, reasons that can be scrutinized by courts and the interested public." He added that "accepting contrived reasons would defeat the purpose of the enterprise. If judicial review is to be more than an empty ritual, it must demand something better than the explanation offered for the action taken in this case" (Epps 2019). Subsequently, the citizenship question remained off the census form, but the Trump administration, through Ross and Barr, ordered governmental agencies to extract from extant agency data sources information on citizenship status.

This controversy has a direct bearing on the political world of Latinos and other communities of color. Thomas Hofeller, a major Republican party consultant who died in 2019, had concluded in a 2015 unpublished study that adding a citizenship question to census forms would produce the detailed data needed to redraw state and local voting districts in a way that would be "advantageous to Republicans and non-Hispanic Whites." The shift to using CVAP, rather than total population counts, as the basis for redistricting would reduce the numbers of Latinos and other groups with significant foreign-born segments as well as noncitizens. A study by Baum et al. (2019) conducted a survey experiment in which the results indicated there would be a 12.03 percent reduction in Latino participation in the 2020 census. This was substantiated by an expert witness report conducted by Dr. Matt Barreto for the California lawsuit. Factors such as lack of trust in government, fear of confidentiality, and suspicion of motive for inclusion of the citizenship question would affect response rates, especially with reporting household members who are Hispanic.

Thinking about Race and Ethnicity: Separate but Related?

Questions about identity, socioeconomic status and mobility, population growth, and geographic distribution derived from the census can be interwoven to depict a political world of Latinos who are pursuing greater empowerment and equity. The Census Bureau, as in previous decennial censuses, explored the possibility of combining the race and Spanish-origin questions into a singular item. Latino leaders and organizations were, generally, not supportive of this change, concerned about the potential to undercount the Latino population. The Spanish-origin question was first included in the 1970 census as an ethnic self-identifier. The information elicited by this question has served as the basis for voting and civil rights legislation and policy implementation in a variety of service-delivery programs. In 1997, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) revised how racial and ethnic data were collected.² After lengthy public input and feedback from federal statistical agencies, the OMB revised the race question format for Census 2000 so that multiple responses to the racial categories were allowed. Other suggestions over the past two decennials included the addition of a separate multiracial category, and more recently, the inclusion of a Middle East/North African (MENA) category.

The inclusion of two separate questions regarding race and ethnicity has undergone scrutiny and debate. But in compliance with current OMB standards, the 2018 End-to-End Census Test and the 2020 census will continue to use the two separate questions for collecting data on race and ethnicity.⁶ Since the 1990 decennial census and subsequent decennials, the Census Bureau has researched combining the two questions with Hispanic/Latino added as a racial category. Some of these initiatives stemmed from the significant numbers of persons marking “some other race,” of which around 95 percent of these responses were Latinos (García 2016; Liebler et al. 2014). An interpretation of this pattern indicated that perhaps Latinos saw themselves as a distinct racial group.

Recognizing the sociopolitical construct of race, population counts do vary based upon the question content and format. For Latinos, a combined question, and whether multiracial responses are allowed, will result in different population counts and differing impacts on Latino national-origin-group members. That is, the numbers of Latinos identified can fluctuate depending on choices of racial categories and on a multiple-response option. In addition, the concept and meaning of race can be “driven” by a host of different factors (prevalent racial schema, national origin, language, indigeneity, etc.). Latino advocacy organizations have generally opposed a combined race/ethnicity question due to lost information and projected lower population counts (Fontenot 2018). Significant changes for 2020 census questions regarding race and ethnicity included: collecting identification of multiple Hispanic ethnicities, such as Mexican, Colombian, Puerto Rican; adding a write-in area with examples for the white and black racial categories; removing the term “Negro”; and adding examples for the American Indian or Alaska Native racial category. The Census Bureau did not use a combined-question format for collecting race and ethnicity or a separate “Middle Eastern or North African” category on the 2020 census form.

A person has the option of marking more than one racial category (White, Black, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American/Alaska Native, and other). In addition, the OMB separated Asians from native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders to create five racial categories. The ability to mark more than one option enables people of multiracial backgrounds to self-identify from all of the various stated racial categories. With the multiple-response option remaining for the 2020 census, one persistent issue lies with the way in which the population tabulation method(s) are conducted and reported. In previous censuses, each person fell into only one racial category. For Census 2000 and beyond, the tabulation was more complicated as people could indicate multiple responses. For example, indigenous populations from Mexico and Central and South America were included in the American Indian/Alaska Native category. Yet this racial category generally represents legally recognized tribes in the United States rather than indicating whether the respondent is of indigenous origin, regardless of national origin.

What happens to the individual who marks herself as African American and white and checks off Spanish origin on the ethnic-origin question? How is this person counted and in how many different ways? The classification method selected has a direct bearing on civil and voting rights and program-participation monitoring, as well as on how the government determines who Hispanics/Latinos are. To further complicate the classification is to potentially merge the Spanish-origin and race questions into one item. For example, if an individual marks that he is of Spanish and

non-Hispanic origin (i.e., of mixed Hispanic origin), how is that person counted? As the nation continues to be more diverse, the proper measurement of the population will become increasingly challenging.

The reverberation of the proposed addition of the citizenship question for Census 2020 will have additional political ramifications not only in 2020, but well beyond. We will amplify these links to census measurement approach in later chapters, especially talking about reapportionment. Our brief description of current governmental policy decisions and classification schemes is based on the concepts of race and ethnic origin, context needed to properly approach the important question, “Who are Latinos?”

While significant media attention has highlighted the continual growth of the Spanish-origin population, it is not always clear whom we are discussing, or why people whose ancestry is tied to Chile are associated with others whose ancestry is connected to Honduras. Our exploration of communities of interest and culture would suggest that the interconnecting ties across national origin and other ties (indigeneity, nativity, language, etc.) have relevance, at times, with pan-ethnic activities, while in other circumstance, national origin, sexual orientation, and/or gender play a more central role in political expressions and engagement.

Our perspective recognizes the dynamic and evolving nature of being Latino in America and how that is manifested both in terms of combinations and foci of political involvement. This book addresses the dialectics of diversity and similarity among people and communities of Spanish origin. In many ways, Latinos and their politics reflect a community that is being influenced by Latino elites and organizations, “mass” intergroup interactions, the mass media, and governmental policies and agencies. Regardless of the derivation of the Latino/Hispanic concept, the idea of a group of people tied together by language, cultural values and practices, similar histories in the United States, and public policies is clearly visible on the American landscape; its political ramifications are very dynamic.

Critical to our discussion of Latinos and the American political system is an examination of both the basis and construction of identity and its salience for group identification. This important dimension affects Latinos living in the United States and forms an important basis for community among a collection of people from twenty-plus national-origin groups. Most Latinos think of themselves in terms of their own national-origin group (Honduran, Cuban, Argentine, etc.), and this subgroup identification is an important component of the core definition of community (F. C. García 1997). At the same time, there is a sense of **pan-ethnicity**,⁷ or seeing oneself not only in national-origin terms but also as part of a larger community. The “Hispanic” or “Latino” label has been serving as an important identifier in the formation of a Latino community, yet it is the meaning and attachment beyond the use of the label that establishes a sense of a working community and ways to identify common concerns, interests, and situations. We will focus, as well, on these commonalities between race/ethnic lines, sexual orientation, and other important social groupings, including arguments made by some that a pan-ethnic identity is decreasing among Spanish-origin Americans, particularly among those of the millennial generation.

The concept of **ethnicity** (and, to a lesser degree, race) represents social boundaries in which group identity exists, is created, and is redefined. The **social construct of race** usually refers to a group of people who define themselves as distinct due to perceived common physical characteristics (Cornell and Hartman 1998). This group is socially

defined based on physical characteristics and fated by biological factors. Historical precedents and policies, such as the one-drop rule that was common in the South, constructed a racial category. The “one-drop rule” categorized a person with any African lineage as “Negro” or African American. In this case, the state defined anyone with one thirty-second Negro ancestry, or one drop of Negro blood, as being of black racial identity (Payne 1998). As a result, the Jim Crow laws in the region defined participation in social life based on one’s race (Payne 1998).

The work of Omi and Winant (1994) further extends the development of race as a social product of human actions and decisions. The concept can be changed over time by members of the racial group and/or through “external” social actions, issues, and public attitudes. With census plans to tabulate multiple responses on the Spanish-origin question, and with identity including more national-origin groupings, these layers of communities can be more delineated to see how and when these “subgroups” come together or operate as more distinct communities. For example, the honoring of one’s group could be manifested in annual parades and celebration of one’s ancestry, culture, and music. In the case of Latinos, members can be categorized into racial as well as ethnic groups and targeted for specific policies or governmental actions.

Ethnic groups deal with group attachments connected to descent. In reality, direct “blood” ties to ancestry are less important than belief in descent. This reinforces the socially constructed basis of ethnicity. The “strands” that cultivate this belief in common descent can include physical attributes, cultural practices, and a shared historical experience (Cornell and Hartman 1998, 16–17). What makes ethnicity distinctive is that this shared affinity serves as the basis for community formation. The work of R. A. Schermerhorn (1970) reinforces this view of ethnicity by defining it as a “collectivity within the larger society having a real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood.” Consistent with these definitions is the presence of self-consciousness among members of an ethnic group. Ethnicity lies within the core of one’s identity. At the same time, the self-identification that a person “takes on” may be influenced by external factors such as public policies that provide punitive costs or possible benefits for ethnic group membership, or direct experiences with others that categorize a person as an ethnic even though the person has not identified her/himself as such. Thus, ethnicity operates among persons who identify with others of their descent and are also influenced by individuals outside their group’s boundaries.

One way in which race and ethnicity can differ is that there may be more pervasive burdens and consequences on those carrying the racial and/or ethnic designation. Movement across racial boundaries is more restricted by social traditions and customs than across ethnic categories. For ethnic individuals, the demarcation by the larger society may be externally imposed; however, affiliation with the group is usually asserted by members of the ethnic group. Race becomes a way in which defining and assigning differential status is associated with power, control, inferiority, and majority-minority-group status and racial resentment.

A continual dilemma reflected in having a clear distinction between race and ethnicity can be seen with the decennial censuses. As previously stated, in the 2000 census, more than thirteen million Americans checked the “some other race” option, and Latinos/Hispanics constituted more than 95 percent of this category, showing that Latinos are checking off the ethnic question in the “Spanish origin item” as well as indicating a

different “racial option” than the established OMB designations. Do we interpret this response as meaning that many Latinos consider themselves a distinctive racial as well as ethnic group in America? Are Latinos using the notions of race and ethnicity interchangeably? Or are Latinos trying to state that they are a distinctive group in the racial/ethnic scheme of America? For the most part, there is evidence that all three scenarios resonate with segments of the Latino community. Research by the Census Bureau (Jacob and Marks 2020) and Telles (2018) looked at the fill-ins for “some other race” response. The three major fill-ins are Hispanic, Latino, and a national-origin designation. The overlap of race and ethnicity (Garcia 2019) reflects the fluid, dynamic, and multidimensional nature of these two concepts, which challenges researchers to add clarity to the role of race and ethnicity for Latinos.

The persistence of ethnicity also has an external group designation. Ethnicity includes the element of self-concept and identification that is also associated when members of an ethnic group start to define their ethnic category. They fill in their own content and meaning, casting their own histories and experiences, to determine what it means to be “an ethnic.” This process can be described as the social construction of ethnicity from within. At the same time, interactions with others and sociopolitical policies serve to influence how a person sees her/himself as well as how they’re seen by others. In many ways, our book is an examination of the social construction of *latinidad* in the United States as a viable community and how it manifests politically. Clearly, race and ethnicity overlap regarding a sense of group identity and the nature of **power relations** that position a group’s members in the larger society.

Our discussion understands that **ethnic identity** may be primarily a matter of individual choice or circumstance, but the development of such identities is influenced by sources external to the ethnic community, such as political institutions (the courts, political parties, policies, etc.) and agencies like the Equal Opportunity Commission, Civil Rights Commission, and Department of Justice, which deal with policies such as voting rights, civil rights protection, and entitlements specific to group categories like minorities, African Americans, Hispanics, and so forth. For example, the **Voting Rights Act of 1965** focused initially on institutional exclusionary voting practices directed toward African Americans in the South. The prohibitions against literacy tests, grandfather clauses,⁴ **limited voting** registration location(s), and so on were policy interventions intended to open up the electoral process. The subsequent Voting Rights Act amendments incorporated the concept of linguistic minorities and implemented bi- or multilingual voting materials and assistance. As we will discuss in the chapter on voting, techniques of voter suppression, photo-ID laws, corresponding perspectives, and **partisan gerrymandering** are contemporary challenges that Latinos confront in their effort to expand their political influence.

Legislation, official governmental data gathering, and mass media characterizations that aggregate Hispanics/Latinos as a “singular” pan-ethnic community can serve to simplify complicated issues by reducing a large and potentially diverse collection of people to a simpler grouping. For example, an issue confronting many Latino subcommunities is the extent to which Latino subgroups (Guatemalans, people of Mexican origin, Argentineans, etc.) are connected to one another and whether an inclusive appeal can work to collaborate on common causes effectively. The use of the labels “Hispanic” and “Latino” give to the broader society a much simpler picture of who persons of “Spanish origin” are and what they are about. Rather than examining and

assessing each national-origin group in terms of its own political needs and status, such labeling converts them from a diverse and complex mix of groups into a simplified and more manageable package as a new “ethnic group.” This helps policy makers understand more easily their changing political world and expanded demands made on it. Our challenge in this book is to improve the understanding of a complex set of dynamics that shape Latino politics and who the participants are. Included will be a brief discussion of the emergence of the term “**Latinx**” to describe the Latino or Hispanic population that is gender and sexual-orientation neutral, which, as we note in the book, is very popular among a small segment of the Latino community.

One result of **pan-ethnicity** is the creation of concrete benefits to which organizations and members of this broader group category can now respond to and participate in. For example, bilingual educational programs are based on the existence of students who have limited English proficiency as well as the perception that bilingualism is primarily a Latino issue. Consequently, a pan-ethnic grouping, with a much larger population base, can emphasize its need and use its sizable constituency to maintain and expand bilingual education programs. An in-depth understanding of Latinos and community building should integrate the role of public policies and social institutions (mass media, governmental agencies, decision-making bodies, etc.) affecting Latino subgroups’ activities and developments, as well as the links that connect the Latino subgroups, into collaborative efforts.

Another critical factor for examination of community building is the general climate and the broader public’s attitudes toward and awareness of Latinos. Public concerns about cultural and linguistic balkanization, immigration swells, multilingualism, and the like portray Latinos as problematic and possibly a threat to the “American way of life.” Sociopolitical issues carry an underlying theme in which segments of non-Latino communities see many Latinos as unwilling to Americanize and assimilate. Such concerns increase the possible costs of being Latino.

For example, the 1997 welfare reform legislation barred “permanent resident aliens” from participating in Social Security’s Supplementary Security Income (SSI) and other federal entitlement programs. Congress did not choose to differentiate between undocumented immigrants and permanent resident aliens. Similarly, initiatives in California regarding immigrant access to social services and discontinuing bilingual education programs targeted Latinos. For many people of Spanish origin, this has resulted in defensiveness, even sending them into “survival mode.” But the resultant Latino civic engagement can also increase in the form of protest activities, higher voter-registration and turnout levels, and greater political interest (Sierra et al. 2000; Hardy-Fanta et al. 2016). Throughout this book, we will place emphasis on the need to understand identity, its constructions and dynamic character, as well as its sources, in order to interpret and analyze Latino politics.

Context and the Development of Latino Politics

Latino politics can be found in many social contexts (García 1997; Bonilla and Morales 1998), including institutions such as schools and state and local city councils’ actions, referenda and initiatives, and other public policies, as well as public opinion and political representation at all levels. Yet scholars focusing on the Latino community have not thoroughly researched the many areas where important political actions

have direct impact on Latinos. For example, researchers have only recently begun to examine Latino community organizations and their political involvement with urban redevelopment, local school issues, and environmental “racism” (Pardo 1998; Pulido 1996). More research findings do exist for the Mexican-origin population than for Central and South Americans and Caribbean groups. Only in the past ten to fifteen years have researchers begun to examine the political domains and actions of Latinos in their own communities. At the same time, a limited number of national databases and subsequent analysis have become more readily available for the discussion of Latinos and their politics (Pew Hispanic Research Center, Latino Decisions).

Any examination of Latinos and their political spheres needs to start with an assessment of power relations among Latinos, Latino subgroups, and established power holders and institutions. This examination includes both historical and contemporary power relations and how Latinos have survived, adapted, and succeeded in terms of power-exchange terms. That is, have Latinos or Latino subgroups (Mexican Americans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Panamanians, etc.) successfully accessed political and economic institutions or placed key issues or concerns on the policy-making agenda?

Power relations focus on political resources, agenda setting, organizational development, leadership and **mobilization**, authority, influence, and legitimacy. Investigating governmental policies (at any governmental level) that have influenced Latino communities can lead to a greater understanding of the extent and use of power by all participants. In some respects, governmental initiatives and actions that classify persons by group terms or identities (i.e., race, ethnicity, and social class) can serve as indicators of political presence. Part of the political-empowerment process entails recognition of the group, even in symbolic ways. At the same time, the substance of such policies may have punitive, restrictive, and detrimental intent and implications.

Whether or not the political system is organized to be responsive to Latino communities, political institutions through their practices and/or benign neglect indicate that there is a clear need for Latinos to develop power bases to promote effective strategies. The 1980s were designated the “decade of the Hispanic.” Projections of extraordinary population growth, with Latinos becoming the nation’s largest minority group by 2003, heightened an expectation of Latinos basking in the “political sun.” At the same time, Latinos’ socioeconomic status (household income, families living below the poverty line, single-parent-headed households, and percentage of adults with a high school diploma, etc.) continued to lag even further behind that of whites. Recognition and responsiveness from governmental institutions was much slower than the rapid Latino growth rate. To a significant degree, Latinos were evolving in the US political system from a relatively obscure or invisible group into one that political institutions had some degree of political awareness about and familiarity with, especially at the national level.

In addition to the contextual elements that contribute to the basis and context of Latino politics, other important factors include sociodemographic status (such as occupational locations in the labor market), economic status, residential and regional concentrations, access to social institutions (their own or societal), and legal prohibitions (restricted immigrant rights and participation, reduced impact on **redistricting**, etc.). The sociodemographic maps identify the resource bases for Latinos as well as possible policy issues and concerns. Given the youthfulness of the overall Latino population and the significant proportion of Latinos who are foreign-born, issues

such as educational quality, persistence in staying and completing their education, immigration reform, and increased militarization of the border are all likely policy extensions of Latinos' sociodemographic profile. Also, the relatively low percentage of high school and college graduates among Latinos, as well as their concentration in service-sector industries, has implications for political mobilization and resources. Lower levels of educational attainment, lower job status, and lesser income levels reduce the conventional type of personal resources that individuals can convert for political purposes such as voting or running for office.

Political participation and mobilization (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993) are closely connected to an individual's socioeconomic status, positive political predispositions (or attitudes), and available time to engage in political activities. Chapter 3 develops a sociodemographic "map" of Latinos to assist in the construction of the extent of their political resources and the range of issues that will compose our discussion. Our book focuses on the creation, maintenance, and redefinition of community and the role that external stereotypes and perceptions about Latinos and/or Latino subgroups play in framing Latino politics. Culture and its expression within the Latino communities through both mass and Spanish-language media, traditions and practices, and Spanish-language maintenance can define and sustain a sense of community. In addition, individual membership in and attachment to the Latino community is reinforced through social networks, living in Latino residential areas, experiences with discrimination, and shared experiences in the workplace. These "arenas" are at the core of creating bridges for a Latino community at the grassroots level.

Ethnicity and identity reflect self-choice in how an individual places himself or herself within a group affiliation. Latinos who continue to speak Spanish and participate in cultural events and whose practices maintain ethnically "dense" social contacts with other Latinos are seen as living their Latino-ness. The whole spectrum of being Latino or Cubano or Dominicano lies in their daily routines. How one communicates, the composition and content of one's interactions, lifestyle preferences, and behaviors, and the extent of affinity toward persons of similar ancestry contribute to one's self-definition and its relevance to one's life (Sanchez 2006a). Immersion as a Latino, or more likely, a Cuban, Puerto Rican, or member of another Latino subgroup, is related to social contexts and the involvement with activists and organizations that link their daily experiences as Latinos, and this can direct social and political actions. Numerical growth helps Latino communities assert their identity and command necessary resources. Awareness of the key distinctions between citizens (native-born and naturalized), permanent resident aliens, undocumented persons, and political refugees is critical to understanding the range of similarities and diversities within this dynamic community. Similarly, class differentiation among Latinos serves to create close-knit communities or, perhaps, accentuate class bifurcation.

The examination of class variation, or class bifurcation, in the African American community regarding its impact on mobilization, organizational growth and development, and maintaining consensus on public policies is minimal (West 1994; Dawson 1994). It shows that the connectedness between the African American underclass and the upwardly mobile and successful middle class may create some different policy agendas and alliances, but there is an underlying strong racial identity across social classes. This sense of **linked fate** among African Americans has been found to

mobilize this community politically and lead to cohesive voting behavior and policy preferences (Dawson 1994). The existence or extent of class bifurcation among Latinos with possible cleavages between the foreign- and native-born has not been researched thoroughly. However, there has been a growth of research that demonstrates that Latinos maintain a meaningful sense of linked fate (Sanchez and Masuoka 2010) and that this form of identity has been partially driven by punitive immigration policies (Vargas, Sanchez, and Valdez 2017). Cultural maintenance and practices are critical for group identity and community building. At the same time, our theme of similarity and diversity suggests that the Latino community does not require unanimity or complete consensus in order for its members to engage as a political community. Like many political coalitions, Latino politics entails common bonds, experiences, conditions, and interests that can bridge Latino subgroups for collective action on various occasions.

So far, our introductory comments and ideas serve as an overview for an examination of Latino politics. The rest of our commentary in this introduction delineates specific dimensions of community building and politics for the more than fifty-six million Latinos in the United States. The basis for a Latino community will be shared interests, with culture serving as the vital connection. It is important to establish definitions of ethnicity, identity, and community, as well as to analyze how political institutions, processes, policies, and political actors help shape the nature and substance of Latino politics. An "inside and outside" set of processes and actions is at play. Latino activists, organizations (local and national), political parties, and national "events" (such as **English-only initiatives**, SB 1070, fatalities along the border, and restrictive and punitive immigration executive orders, etc.) weave a set of contributing factors that can bring people together for common purposes. One of the challenges for us lies in achieving enough breadth and depth in covering the many different Latino subgroups; in many cases, sparse literature is available.

Chapter 3 provides a demographic profile of Latinos in the United States by incorporating the characteristics of shared interests, social status, cultural indicators, geographic concentrations, and educational and economic status within the Latino subcommunities. The demographic profiles are then linked to community building and agenda setting. The themes of diversity and similarity are interwoven throughout this book. We will explore two particular bases for community: a **community of common or similar cultures** (García and Pedraza-Bailey 1990) and a **community of interests**. A community of common cultures exists when individuals are linked closely by their participation in a common system of meaning with concomitant patterns of customary interactions of culture. Shared cultural practices, celebrations, and traditions serve to bridge Latino subgroup boundaries and potentially provide common bases and resources for effective mobilization. Other writers (Espiritu 1992; Hayes-Bautista 1980) refer to these dynamics as elements of a pan-ethnicity in which several national-origin groups coalesce under a broader identity and community reference.

A community of interests represents the conditions, statuses, and experiences that Latinos share with members of other Latino subgroups. With the exception of Puerto Ricans, a significant proportion of each Latino subgroup consists of foreign-born persons and immigrants. At the same time, the commonwealth status of Puerto Rico and continual efforts of self-determination and full rights can parallel themes of foreignness and marginalization. The current national climate is filled with serious concerns

about immigration policies and perceived negative consequences of continued immigration. Latinos are seen as the dominant source of immigrants. Therefore, the immigration issue impacts many Latino communities and can serve as a contributing factor in developing a broader community of interests. Also, the concept of Latinization raises flags of nativism, who belongs, and whether Latinos should be falling under the “American umbrella.”

Chapter 4 attempts to provide a substantive understanding of the many Latino sub-communities and includes focused discussions of the subgroups and their historical and power relations in the United States. In addition, we present an overview of how communities may exist in relative isolation from other Latino communities and conversely be linked in various ways to other Latino subgroups. An interesting aspect of intergroup dynamics is discernible in the Census 2010 findings. Not only have Latinos increased in number during the past decade, but their migration patterns have become more regionally diverse, extending into areas less traditionally identified as Latino. For example, increases among Mexican-origin individuals have exceeded an 80 percent growth in southern states such as Arkansas, Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee, with major gains in both rural and urban communities. This migration of Mexican-origin persons to the Northeast and the South is substantial in terms of population and growing political activities. Central Americans have become geographically dispersed throughout America.

Since the mid-1980s, the number of Central Americans, especially asylees and refugees, has not only increased, but they have migrated in significant numbers to both traditional areas of Latino concentrations as well as newer areas of Latino influx. One result has been a reconfiguration of Latino issues, a more diverse organizational milieu, and some intergroup competition. An analysis of Latino politics must address the dynamic nature of the composition of the Latino communities and their evolving political networks. Analyzing power relations and particular public policies is one way to explore the nature and character of Latino subcommunity politics and their connections to broader collective Latino politics.

Ethnicity, group identity, and pan-ethnicity involve the social construction of identity, which occurs within the respective groups and is influenced externally. The contributing factors of culture, daily experiences, social contexts, and public policies are introduced to assess the extent and “permanence” of Latino subcommunities and the broader Latino national community. Pan-ethnicity is explored in terms of both its political utility for Latinos and the interplay of mass and elite “forces” involved in its social construction. Authors such as Peter Skerry (1993) have suggested that many Latino leaders perpetuate a sense of ethnicity or “Latino-ness” to maintain their power bases. In this vein, the social construction of ethnicity and resulting community is an artificial one or, at best, one contrived for the benefit of a limited number of activists. On the other hand, our basis for community indicates that Latino identity and affiliation must include dimensions of self-choice and conscious acceptance of belonging to a community defined as Latino or a specific Latino subgroup. Again, the basis for community will be related to the viability of pan-ethnicity.

We will discuss Latino political participation in a number of chapters that break down the contributing factors of participation into individual, organizational, social, attitudinal, and **structural factors** for Latino subgroup members. We attempt to differentiate between the crucial factors of being foreign-born versus native-born,

gender, class, and regional location in analyzing political participation while also incorporating the dimensions of time, money, and skills (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995). The participation chapters will focus on the many modes of participation: voting, electoral activities, organizational involvement, protest, individualized contact, and office holding. Using the extant research on specific Latino subgroups, we will portray the variations and similarities that exist across the Latino community as well as how the use of social media has influenced the ways in which Latinos engage in the political system.

Aspects of political mobilization in Latino politics are interwoven across multiple chapters. Queries as to when Latinos are asked to become politically involved, by whom (organizational leaders or neighbors), and who tends to get involved and who does not, will be discussed. Political involvement is not solely a function of an individual’s decision. People can be approached and asked in different ways to get involved and, as we discuss in this book, many Latinos are not approached at all by parties, candidates, or organizations. Very simply, this is a way to define political mobilization as the “outside” force that influences individual political involvement. Characterizing mobilization in this manner serves as a mechanism to introduce organizations and leadership into the Latino politics equation. Using specific Latino-focused organizations, we illustrate the range and scope of organizational goals, arenas of involvement, membership and resource bases, and their political impact in a variety of policy areas. We will examine the extent of involvement in Latino organizations and how those organizations are involved with the Latino community and its needs.

We will also address Latinos’ leadership styles, communication skills, and linkages with the “masses.” Leadership is studied in terms of the articulation of goals that are conveyed to Latinos and its coherency, which can influence specific political activities. Some have suggested that Latino political empowerment would be greatly enhanced if there were one or even two national Latino leaders who had followings in all of the Latino subcommunities. Others have argued that the core of Latino interests and needs resides in local communities where leadership activities and development are situated. They suggest that a singular leader, or even two or three, would be a difficult challenge for any community of size and diversity to achieve.

The role of Latino leadership serves to crystallize issues, strategies, and “targets.” The issue of gender bias, which is inherent in our discussion of leadership, is examined. Viable national leaders are more likely to be males, whereas leaders at the grass roots are often women. Characterizing leadership in this manner serves to introduce the concept of vertical and horizontal leadership. Again, we introduce specific examples to illustrate the issues and impact associated with various leaders. The work by Hardy-Fanta et al. (2016) enables us to know more about Latina elected officials, including their motivation to seek office and policy priorities.

Public Policies, Arenas, and Latinos

Many times, greater attention is focused at the national and state levels; however, Latino politics at the local level is a very active arena. It has been suggested that the intensity and soul of Latino politics deals with local struggles (location decisions regarding toxic waste sites, delivery of services, educational equity and quality, residential gentrification, etc.). Several locally focused community organizations have

arisen over the past two decades in many Latino subcommunities, and many cities have elected Latino mayors. Organizing principles, efforts, strategies, and outcomes are important dimensions of Latino politics. They are often overlooked and underanalyzed. Therefore, we have attempted to characterize and analyze local Latino politics in the context of Latino empowerment and political development.

An understanding of Latino politics involves a focus on the ongoing political dynamics occurring across the Latino communities, as well as external forces and actions in the larger society. In this context, legislative initiatives and policies such as the civil rights and voting rights acts have played an important role in generating electoral representation, equal opportunities, and fuller civic participation. In the latter chapters of this book, we examine the origin of voting and civil rights legislation and policies that have impacted Latinos. Other legislative changes (Titles VI, VII, and IX of the Higher Education Act, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act [EEOA], etc.), lobbying efforts, and major court decisions will be analyzed as part of the political assessment of Latinos and the political system. Such organizations as the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, and Unidos are key groups considered in these sections.

Our discussion of Latinos focuses on specific public policy areas to maintain consistency with the theme of community, shared interests, culture, and conditions that help shape why these are critical issue areas for Latinos. The politics of culture is connected with language, cultural distinctiveness, English-only initiatives, and xenophobic movements directed toward Latinos. First-generation immigrants and international migration bring immigration policies, border enforcement, immigrant and noncitizen rights, political integration, and avenues for participation into our discussion of Latino politics. To some extent, the immigration question is a test of political loyalty, with many Latinos forced to decide whether to risk discrimination and alienation by showing support for immigrants, including members of their own extended families.

Equality-of-opportunity issues deal with educational quality and resources, labor market participation (i.e., access to jobs and opportunities for advancement, preparation for employment with job mobility, protection from discrimination, and equal and competitive pay), economic participation and income mobility, access to higher education, and social service participation. Within this context, the debate over, and the impact of, affirmative action is important. To some extent, foreign policy concerns (Cuba and the Castro regime, the economic embargo of Cuba, Puerto Rican statehood/independence, the USMCA–U.S. Mexico and Canada Agreement, US economic investments in Latin America, drug interdiction, etc.) are aspects of the public policy discussions with particular relevance to Latinos. We have also seen greater evidence of Latinos' interest in environmental policy, including a growing concern for global warming. Integral to this section is attention to an understanding of the American policy-making process. An understanding of agenda setting, monitoring policy implementation, and reviewing policy consequences form an integral part of analyzing specific policy areas.

Finally, our analyses point to the future of Latino politics and revisit the concepts of community, shared interests, culture and organizations, and identity construction, as well as current and trending external factors and actions in the political system. Chapters 11 and 12 look at coalition formation within the Latino communities and with other minority communities. Our discussion of trends for the next decades will complete

our discourse, but the future of Latino politics remains dynamic and ever developing. Where will the Latino community be in the next twenty years? Will its identity be thinner and more externally assigned rather than heavier and more assertive? Given the changing demography of the Latino community (growing numbers of Latinos from Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, greater geographic dispersion and intermixing of Latino subcommunities, etc.), will the agenda and its leadership structure also undergo some major changes? We have developed four possible scenarios based on different directions of community building and their political outlooks.

Conclusion

In our introduction of this new edition, we have tried to lay out important concepts with which to describe and analyze Latino politics. The challenge is to discuss the politics of Latino subcommunities without necessarily assuming that Latino politics (in the pan-ethnic sense) is the pervasive form of identity relevant for this community. That is, we define politics at the national-origin community level (Cuban, Salvadoran, Mexican-origin, etc.) for both national and local arenas. At the same time, a Latino political force exists that, at times, more closely resembles a single group than a collection of multiple independent Latino subgroups. An important question regarding the position of Latinos in American society is the extent to which they impact political arenas and agendas as a pan-ethnic community as opposed to a loose consortium of semi-independent interests. The task has begun and the chapters that follow try to analyze Latino politics with the vitality and personality that constitute the Latino peoples.

Discussion Questions

1. What defines a Latino? Do Latinos comprise an ethnic group, a racial group, or some other differently characterized social grouping?
2. How well does the concept of ethnicity fit the Latino community in the United States?
3. Recently, the "label" of "Latinx" has been used in a variety of settings and promoted as a broader way to capture *latinidad* (sexual orientation, gender, race, and class). What are the benefits and areas of debate for greater incorporation of Latinx as a better descriptor?
4. This book tries to establish a sense of community among Latinos. How well does the framework of communities of common culture and interests help in understanding Latinos?
5. We introduce the concept of pan-ethnicity and suggest its utility for understanding Latino politics. Discuss this concept and how applicable it is to contemporary American politics.
6. Latino politics can be characterized as defensive politics, defending itself from "attacks" against fitting in and really belonging to American society. Is this a good way to look at Latino politics, or are there other more appropriate characterizations?
7. Ethnic and racial identity can share some things in common as well as have some differences. Discuss how that works for each of you as to how you see yourself and which groups you identify with.

8. Specifically, what community of interest situations and issues can bring together the Latino national-origin communities?
9. What would you identify as important policy issues for Latinos and why? Does it make a difference to think of issues in national versus state and local terms?

Notes

1. Castro, "Congressional Hispanic Caucus Statement on Shooting in El Paso."
2. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-share-of-latinos-who-say-its-gotten-worse-in-the-u-s-has-skyrocketed>.
3. The title of our book uses the descriptor "Latinos" to represent persons of Spanish/Indigenous heritage from the Americas and the Iberian Peninsula. Our selection of the identifier "Latino" as a general descriptor of persons of Hispanic origin/ancestry provides us a "vehicle" to explore the many facets of their lives in the United States. We recognize continual discussions of other descriptors, especially the newer term of "Latinx." While we acknowledge the use of multiple descriptors for this population, our use of "Latino" (and its feminine counterpart) affords us a recognized "label" without attaching necessarily ideological meanings.
4. A Latino Decisions poll conducted in New Mexico in the summer of 2019 found that 20 percent of Hispanics stated a lack of trust in the current administration as a reason why they did not plan to participate in the 2020 census.
5. OMB directive 15 contents.
6. The concepts of race and ethnicity warrant additional clarification. The census recognizes five racial categories: white, black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, and other. The last category, "other," represents persons who identify themselves racially in ways that differ from the other four categories. In the case of ethnicity, ancestry or country forms the basis on which origin is categorized. Persons who identify themselves as of Spanish origin are asked a follow-up question seeking their particular ancestral group (i.e., Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Central/South American, or other [to be specified]). In essence, ethnicity in the census is limited to "Spanish origin."
7. Pan-ethnicity refers to a sense of group affinity and identification that transcends one's own national-origin group. A pan-ethnic identity does not necessarily replace national-origin affinity, but it includes a broader configuration in defining the group. The labels "Latino" and "Hispanic" encompass several national origins.
8. The grandfather clause requires a potential registrant to show that his grandfather was a registered voter before he can register to vote. For African Americans, the grandfather clause harkened back to the period of slavery, when blacks had no rights, especially not voting rights.
9. By "mass interactions," we mean inter-Latino interactions at the grassroots level. What is the extent of contact between persons of a specific Latino subgroup origin with other Latinos? These interactions could be social, familial, employment based, or related to any one of a variety of social interactions within the local community.

Community Building in Latino America

Pintame un cuadro donde se representan imagenes de nuestra comunidad. El/la artista pinta de acuerdo su propio punto de vista. Todas las perspectivas, la abundancia de rostros y figuras forman el carácter de lo que significa ser parte de una comunidad que es evolucion.

Paint me a picture in which images of our community are represented. The artist paints according to his or her own point of view. With so many perspectives, a multitude of faces and personalities make up the character of our changing community.

OUR EXAMINATION SHOWS LATINO POLITICS in the United States to be the dynamic formulation of community incorporating all the diversities and similarities among its members. Our discussion of politics centers on power, influences, resources, and interest articulation. Thus, Latino politics represents an aggregation of persons whose origins and/or ancestry can be connected across more than twenty countries in Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula. While we explore the rich and important variations across the book, in this chapter we focus on the common or collective experiences that help define "Latino" politics. Our underlying perspective is the assumption that persons with a common ancestry and culture can come together to achieve common objectives and address common concerns through civic and political engagement. Our perspective is therefore in contrast to the assertion that Latinos of different national-origin groups cannot be expected to share a sense of commonality, given that they originate from different countries and have different immigration histories.

Our discussion of pan-ethnic identity in this chapter and in chapter 5 is organized largely around the research focused on linked fate among Latinos, a concept we noted in chapter 1, which has been found to mobilize African Americans politically and lead to cohesive voting behavior and policy preferences (Dawson 1994). Dawson's classic book, *Behind the Mule* (1994), on linked-fate acquisition among African Americans noted that this politicized sense of identity was driven largely by a common historical connection to slavery and shared experiences of racial discrimination. Dawson also found that linked fate among African Americans was not impacted by variation in socioeconomic status. We reference the research focused

on factors that drive linked fate among Latinos (Sanchez and Masuoka 2010; Sanchez, Masuoka, and Abrams 2019) to organize our discussion of pan-ethnic Latino identity. Sanchez and Masuoka's attempt to identify sources of this specific form of identity over two periods of time (2006 and 2016) provides a backdrop for a more comprehensive discussion of the foundation for Latino pan-ethnic community-building in this chapter.

The sources of Latino identity must include a review of the similar historical experiences, cultural values, nativity, and shared connection to the Spanish language that bind many Latinos (Gómez-Quirón 1990; Stavans 1996; Fox 1997). This discussion begins with a brief summary of the historical context of this community, which provides the backdrop for our discourse. We then move to the powerful role of language and nativity that has been well documented as a source of pan-ethnic identity across the Latino community but that has also been noted as a source of important internal variation that can, at times, set boundaries for a sense of collective identity that spans generational status and a connection to the immigration experience. Finally, we summarize the discrimination experiences and exposure to public policies that target or racialize Latinos that have been found to be a source of linked fate for Latinos, particularly in the current era of punitive immigration politics and policy (Vargas, Sanchez, and Valdez 2017; Sanchez, Masuoka, and Abrams 2019).

Similar Historical Context

A strong factor in the development of a pan-ethnic community is based in the Latino community's historical experiences with the US government. The combination of the swelling growth rates among Latino subgroups and the creation of "situational ethnicity" by Latino activists served as a key element in the promotion of a Latino community. The significant influx of Latinos into the United States began in the mid-1970s, with the fastest-growing elements within the Latino community being people from Central and South America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean.

While each group was growing faster than the national average, their respective size and regional concentration was limiting their national presence. Mexican Americans were seen as a regional minority, primarily concentrated in the Southwest and oriented toward regional issues. Puerto Ricans were a New York City metropolitan phenomenon, coping with a declining manufacturing economy and living on the mean streets of "El Barrio." Cubans, on the other hand, were seen as active entrepreneurs living in concentrated ethnic enclaves and promoting anticommunist policies in Congress. These oversimplifications summarize dominant perceptions of the situation relevance and policy domains of the three larger subgroups. The development of a pan-ethnic grouping and identity became a means to expand group size, scope, and national visibility. Thus, the outgrowth of "Hispanicity" or "Latino-ness" represented a strategic decision among activists to enlarge the community and, potentially, its political capital and resource base.

The changing internal Latino demography and the strategic development of an expanding Latino population base are not mutually exclusive evolutions. Some writers on Latino politics have characterized the political actions of Latino activists as perpetuating ethnicity or pan-ethnicity in order to ensure a political base and a following. Thus, these leaders may not reflect the assimilation and upward mobility that many Latinos are achieving. This perspective goes to the very heart of community and community building. The realities of daily living among Latino subgroup members include contact and awareness of not only fellow national-origin members but also other Latinos in their community and elsewhere. While we recognize some symbolic utility of using a pan-ethnic identity, our reference to community is based upon the reality of a daily life in which being Latino is relevant and ongoing.

Prior to the 1980s, Latinos were characterized as specific national-origin groups in particular regions of the United States, not as a pan-ethnic community or ethnic group. The Chicanos/Mexican Americans in the Southwest traced their ancestry to the sixteenth century, as did the newly arrived "Mexicanos" from Mexico's central plateau. Puerto Ricans lived predominately in the Northeast, especially in the New York City metropolitan area. There was a significant post-World War II out-migration from "La Isla" to the industrial centers of the Rust Belt as well as to the agricultural sectors in the Northeast and the South. After Fidel Castro came to power in 1959, several waves of Cuban political refugees and exiles descended on the southern United States. Even though Cuban refugees participated in refugee-placement programs that included resettlement throughout the United States, most Cubans preferred to reside in Florida. Subsequent waves of Cuban refugees in the 1980s and 1990s augmented an entrepreneurial and better-educated community in southern Florida.

Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans, then comprising the three largest Latino communities, became more established and visible to the larger American public. However, the significant influx of Latinos into the United States began in the mid-1970s, and the fastest-growing elements within the Latino community were persons from Central and South America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. Movement by Central American and Caribbean Latinos was initially followed by their migration to the Northeast and Midwest and then to California and Texas and the South. Chapter 3 provides more specific discussions of these demographic profiles over time. One result of greater Latino migration throughout the United States was a more diverse mix of Latino subgroups, a pattern that challenged the established Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and Cuban communities' dominance of Latino politics. The "big three" began to have more contact with individuals from Central and South America. Such a confluence of persons with linkages to the Spanish language, Spanish colonial histories, and US hegemony assisted with possible cultural and political connections. It also created some competition for housing, neighborhoods, and political recognition.

The liberation struggles in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala, together with high birthrates, political instability and violence, and inadequate economic growth and opportunity, have fueled out-migration of Central Americans into almost every region of the United States. For the most part, Central Americans have been designated as economic migrants rather than political refugees. Public policy distinctions between economic and political migrants reflect national foreign policy commitments rather than individuals' conditions or situations. Regardless of differences in motivation to

migrate to the United States, we contend that commonalities in experiences upon arrival have led to a collective sense of community.

The word “community” refers here to the connections between persons that formulate a sense of place, being, and membership in a larger whole. The origins of Hispanics or Latinos can be traced to various strands of US history and events. For example, federal legislation in the mid-1970s, initiated by Congressman Edward Roybal, required all federal agencies to maintain records and designations of persons of Spanish origin, generally defined as individuals from Spanish-speaking countries and the Iberian Peninsula. One challenge of implementing this policy entailed formulating a uniform “standard” for identifying persons of Spanish origin. The range of standards included Spanish surname, ancestry, birthplace, foreign-born parentage, self-identification, and language used when growing up.

The 1970 census also reflected a different method for identifying persons of Spanish origin. On both the short and long census forms,⁴ ancestry and self-identification determined Hispanicity. That is, an individual who deemed herself a person of Spanish origin would self-identify as such. There were no prescribed criteria, such as Spanish-language use or foreign-born status, to direct a person to declare himself or herself as being of Spanish origin. The self-identifier introduced in the 1970 census has been the consistent Hispanic “marker” ever since. Technically, it is referred to as the ethnicity item or Spanish-origin identifier. This distinction might be helpful to distinguish between race and ethnicity.

Much scholarly and popular literature has discussed race in terms of phenotype, skin color, biology, social structure, and ancestry. Public policies such as the one-drop rule have reinforced the concept of race as more directly connected to skin color and a defined racial categorization. On the other hand, ethnicity is commonly associated with ancestry or national origin. To be an ethnic is to be, for example, Irish American, Italian American, or Cuban American, with ties to cultural practices and traditions. Although we have discussed the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of race and ethnicity, the social and historical context of these terms is also an important dimension of politics, power, and influence in American society. For these purposes, we will operate on the notion that ethnicity and race are interrelated concepts that establish group boundaries, behaviors, and inter- and intragroup relations.

Following the census distinction between race and ethnicity, a Spanish-origin person can be of any race.⁵ While the American understanding of race is strongly related to skin color and other phenotypical attributes, these serve as an external influence on group identification. Ethnicity is viewed more as one’s national origin and ancestry and is influenced greatly by assimilation and acculturation processes. Therefore, an important factor that has contributed to the configuration of “Hispanic” or “Latino” as an umbrella term has been the formulation of public policy establishing the collection and operationalization protocol in categorizing Spanish-origin people.

Latino Pan-Ethnicity Motivated by Latino Elites and the Mass Media

Mass media is another important factor contributing to the development of the umbrella term “Latino/Hispanic.” The development of pan-ethnic grouping and identity becomes a means to expand group size, scope, and national visibility. Thus,

the outgrowth of “Hispanicity” or “Latino-ness” represents a strategic decision among activists to enlarge the community and, potentially, its political capital and resource base.

The changing internal Latino demography and the strategic development of an expanding Latino population base are not mutually exclusive evolutions. Some writers of Latino politics have characterized the political actions of Latino activists as perpetuating ethnicity or pan-ethnicity in order to ensure a political base and a following. Thus, these leaders may not reflect the assimilation and upward mobility that many Latinos are achieving. This perspective goes to the very heart of community and community-building. The realities of daily living among Latino subgroup members include contact and awareness of not only fellow national-origin members but also other Latinos in their community and elsewhere. While we recognize some symbolic utility of using a pan-ethnic identity, our reference to community is based upon the reality of a daily life in which being Latino is relevant and ongoing.

The mass media response to the changing demography of the United States evolved from reporting on specific national-origin Latino subgroups (Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Dominicans, etc.) to using the more pan-ethnic label of “Hispanic.” Toward the end of the 1970s, the media began reporting and discussing both established and recently arrived Latino national-origin groups as solely Latinos. Many major news magazines and newspapers started referring to the 1980s as the decade of the Hispanic. Sound bites like “Hispanics’ day in the sun,” “fastest-growing minority,” and “soon to be the largest minority group” became typical characterizations of this aggregation of people from twenty-two Spanish-speaking countries.

Ironically, descriptors such as “an awakening sleeping giant,” “the invisible minority,” and “bronze/brown power” were used in the early 1960s to depict Mexican Americans in the Southwest. One parallel theme for both periods was potentiality and promise. The focus on significant population growth and its continuation in the future projected Latinos as a “new” political and economic force in American society. Mass media centers in the eastern part of the United States conducted exploration and fact-finding projects on the relatively unknown Hispanics. There was utility in the media’s assigning one label and identity to varied national-origin group members. Such clustering of the many national-origin groups into one ethnic status⁶ simplified discussions of public policy and news regarding Latinos. This illustrates how factors outside the Latino community play an important role in shaping understanding and characterization of these communities. Clearly, some subgroup differentiation does take place, but the “Hispanic/Latino” descriptor is used more often.

Spanish Language Use and Nativity Are Key to Community Building

Language and nativity (country of birth) are critical cultural dimensions that help define the Latino community of common cultures. The coexistence of native-born and “immigrant” Latinos in the same or proximate neighborhoods, sharing familial social networks, common work environments, and business interactions provides a regular basis for cultural exchanges and experiences. These interactions can reinforce cultural expressions and values or, perhaps, create cultural tensions over assimilation, acculturation, or even cultural authenticity. Cultural dynamics would be less likely to exist

without the persistence of Spanish-language use and the steady influx of immigrants. In addition, the sizable percentage of foreign-born members in Latino communities helps bring forth the extended and complex set of issues and policies related to immigration rights, legal standing, and access to services. In fact, Sanchez and Masuoka (2010) found linked fate to be strongest among Spanish-language-dominant Latinos in their analysis utilizing the Latino National Survey, and they found foreign-born Latinos to have a greater sense of linked fate not only in 2006, but 2016 as well (Sanchez, Masuoka, and Abrams 2019).

Latino communities are composed largely of those born in Spanish-origin countries, making the large presence of foreign-born Latinos now living in the United States a bridge that brings the customs and traditions of the home country to those who are further removed from the immigrant experience. Most notable among these cultural factors is the Spanish language, which can be a strong foundation for a sense of pan-ethnic identity.

In many ways, Latinos' relationship to Spanish is complex. Latinos are a bilingual group, with a significant first-generation (or foreign-born) population who are predominately Spanish-speaking and a growing segment who are more English dominant and who have increasingly distant connections to their countries of origin. Many Latinos have been discriminated against for speaking Spanish, yet those in New Mexico have lived in a state that has recognized Spanish as an official language for multiple generations.

The Pew Hispanic Center has identified several important trends in Spanish-language use through analysis of US census data. First is the sheer size of the Spanish-speaking population in the United States, with roughly forty million people in the country indicating that they speak Spanish at home. This makes Spanish the second-most-spoken language in the United States. However, Pew noted there has been a reduction recently in the number of Latinos who speak Spanish and an increase, over the same time, of predominantly English-speaking Latinos.

The authors of this research believe that a decrease in parents who indicate they speak Spanish to their children, particularly among the second generation and beyond, as well as an increase of Latinos not married to another Latino, attributes to the increase in English-dominant Latinos (see Lopes et al. 2018 Pew Report in the "Link to Suggested Readings" section).

Even with the rise in Latinos who are not fluent in Spanish over time, the continued Spanish-language use among many Latinos lends a perception of loyalty or familiarity to Spanish, and the rise in English-only laws and other policies that attack Spanish-language use leads to a strong attachment among virtually all Latinos to the Spanish language. The strong relationship between Spanish and ethnic identity among Latinos has been at least partially driven by the growth of Spanish-speaking media, particularly networks Univision and Telemundo, who along with Spanish-language radio help to connect many Latinos not only to their language, but to Latino-focused news and political information that cues a sense of pan-ethnic community (Gómez-Aguñaga 2020; Kerevel 2011). The role and impact of Spanish-language media will be discussed in more detail in chapter 7, especially in relation to campaigns and elections.

Nativity goes hand in hand with Spanish language in helping to drive a sense of pan-ethnicity among Latinos. The composition of US immigration changed dramatically in the latter half of the twentieth century as Latin American and Asian immigrants came

to dominate the migration stream. There are almost twenty-eight million foreign-born people in the United States, of whom 41 percent are Hispanics. Furthermore, almost two-fifths of all Latinos residing in the United States are foreign-born. Overall, the percentage of foreign-born Latinos is 38 percent, compared to foreign-born non-Hispanics at 12.5 percent. While the percentage of American permanent resident aliens overall is slightly greater than 10 percent,⁴ the overall percentage for Latinos is 40 percent (6.1 percent for non-Hispanics).

The number of foreign-born Latinos and experience with immigration laws varies across the different Latino subgroups. More than 60 percent (60.8 percent) of Cubans are foreign-born, as are 77.5 percent of Central Americans and 69.5 percent of South Americans. The Cuban community's foreign-born members have refugee status with access to specific governmental assistance programs, while the rest of Latinos are viewed as economic migrants (there have been initiatives by Salvadorans and Guatemalans to obtain refugee status). Finally, the distinction of Puerto Ricans born in the United States or on the island is associated with their citizenship status. Puerto Rico is a commonwealth, and Puerto Ricans are US citizens. At the same time, their perspectives and experiences as Puerto Ricans may be affected by their place of birth.

Discrimination Faced by Latinos: A Strong Foundation for Ethnic Identity

Our delineation of Latinos or Hispanics has focused on notions of a group of people linked by a common language, interrelated cultural traditions and values, and similar experiences in the United States. Since the 1990s, social scientists have added that common experiences with discrimination and relegation to minority status in many facets of American life have motivated a strong sense of racial or ethnic identity among Latinos.

Latinos have been subject to a long history of brutal discrimination, such as having separate and unequal schools, restaurants, theaters, swimming pools, and even cemeteries (Kamasaki 1988; Massey 1989). Like African Americans, they have also been excluded from being able to vote and seeking public office through intimidation (Gutierrez et al. 1999; Smith 1990; García 1986a). Further, Latinos, particularly in the Southwest, were subjected to lynching and violence in response to their calls for political inclusion and overall empowerment (Nelson and Lavariega 2006). These state-sanctioned discriminatory policies worked together to keep Latinos largely concentrated in certain industries and occupational sectors and in residential enclaves (Denton and Massey 1988; Croucher 1997).

Although Latinos overall have clearly faced exclusion and discrimination throughout their history, they unfortunately continue to deal with discriminatory practices in the United States today. According to Latino Decisions Election Eve Survey, 10 percent of all Latino voters in 2016 reported that discrimination against Latinos or immigrants was the most important issue that the federal government should address. Roughly 93 percent of Latino respondents to the 2016 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS) reported that there is at least some discrimination directed at Latinos in society, with 40 percent noting that they face "a lot" of discrimination.

Scholars of Latino politics have found discrimination experiences and perceptions that Latinos face discrimination in society are major drivers of pan-ethnic identity

among Latinos. For example, Sanchez and Vargas (2016) found that discrimination experiences were the primary driver of both group consciousness and linked fate for Latinos. Similarly, Sanchez and Rodriguez Espinosa (2016) found that discrimination from outside groups yielded higher rates of linked fate among Latinos.

We contend that a sense of pan-ethnic identity can emerge from a reaction to threatening or racialized public policies. Numerous scholars observed heightened feelings of politicized group identity in response to anti-immigrant policies across various national-, state-, and local-level contexts (Zepeda-Millán 2017; Ramirez 2013; Barreto et al. 2008; Vargas, Sanchez, and Valdez 2017; Vargas, Sanchez, and Juárez 2017). These scholars note that exposure to punitive immigration policies generate an underlying sense of ethnic attachment, regardless of one's own nativity or immigration status.

In this section, we have identified several factors that motivate a sense of pan-ethnic identity by building a sense of community that moves beyond one's specific national-origin group. These are factors that we return to across each successive chapter, as they serve as informal organizing themes that construct our thoughts and theories regarding the state of Latino politics.

In the next section, we provide greater clarity and direction on the:

- common historical context in the United States that bonds Latinos' experiences,
- mass media and Latino politics elites who cue a sense of pan-ethnicity,
- attachments to the Spanish language and nativity that provide a bridge to cultural norms and practices,
- discrimination experiences and perceptions that Latinos, as a group, face in society, and
- laws and policies that are perceived as a threat to Latinos, their culture, and their overall well-being.

Is There a Latino Community, and What Does That Mean?

As discussed in the prior section, each Latino subgroup has a unique history in the United States, experiences of contact with, and migration to, this country, social class distribution, and legal status (political refugee, legal permanent resident alien, or undocumented migrant). The two bases of community are associated with the concepts of commonality of culture and commonality of interests (García and Pedraza-Bailey 1990; Cornell and Hartman 1998). Communities of common or similar cultures endure when persons are tied together naturally by their involvement in a "common system of purpose with accompanying patterns of traditional interactions and behaviors rooted in a common heritage" (Cornell 1985). This common heritage or tradition includes national ancestry, language, religion and religious customs, observance of holidays and festivals, and familial networks. For the Mexican-origin population, Keeffe and Padilla (1989) explore Chicano ethnicity and identify several dimensions of culture. When familial interactions are primary and serve as conduits of cultural transmission, the "products" are customs, folklore, linguistic loyalty, ethnic loyalty, and group identity. Thus, a person can be enveloped by a sense of ethnicity, usually within a national-origin context (Mexican American, Salvadoran, Dominican, etc.). However, this sense of ethnicity may not automatically lead to community actions.

The result of perceived and accepted common interests may lead to the development of a new or reinforced identity. For example, the "official usage" of pan-ethnic terms such as *Hispanic* may reorient a person to incorporate that label and strategically use that identity to maximize political effects. A Mexican American activist in Arizona might oppose a referendum effort to remove bilingual education programs because such programs do not ensure educational excellence and equity for all Hispanic children. The Latino subcommunity is the reality experienced by Mexican-origin children; yet, the broader identifier "Hispanic" is used to contextualize the issue nationally as well as locally.

The concept of a community of interests works to examine and construct new boundaries of group affiliation; it also aids analysis of comparable conditions among other social groups and understanding structural relations between the group and social and political institutions. As we emphasized in our discussion of drivers to linked fate, a central element within these analytical insights is the role played by discriminatory practices and prejudicial attitudes on the part of the larger society and manifested in public policies. For example, the Immigration and Naturalization Service may conduct sweeps only or primarily in Latino residential neighborhoods. If only individuals who appear Latino are detained to show proof of legal status, then that policy action has a disparate impact on Latino communities. In 2010, the state of Arizona passed a law enabling local and state law enforcement officers to detain persons until they provide proof of legal status. (We discuss this issue and resulting litigation battles in chapter 9.) For our purposes, **minority status** is a relational concept in which minority-group members have limited access, opportunity, power, and influence. Minority status is associated with differential treatment and power, being an identifiable group, and group awareness. For Latinos, language, customs, phenotype (to some extent), and social networks help promote that identifiability. In addition, stereotypes and prejudicial attitudes toward Latinos, as well as unfair treatment, serve to perpetuate this identifiability. The issues of empowerment, representation, equity, power, access, and participation become a major part of defining a community and its interests.

The dimension of commonality (community linkages, bonds, affinities, interactions, and individual affiliations) is important in our discussion of Latino community. This collectivity is a set of ties of various associations but, at the same time, does not require uniformity or complete consensus among all the Latino subcommunities. The theme of diversity and similarity emphasizes that conformity and unanimity are not realistic expectations for community membership and operations. While the analogy is not perfect, variations in character, lifestyle, personality, and so on can be found within most families and can challenge the maintenance of a family entity, but the family structure remains.

If Latino subcommunities can share commonalities of culture and interest, each can work interactively with the other. That is, cultural cues and symbols can encourage persons of Spanish origin to work toward specific goals and objectives. At the same time, cultural maintenance and practices can serve as the political content of a Latino political agenda. For example, the use of, or at least exposure to, the Spanish language while growing up serves as a common cultural experience. It also serves as a point of political conflict with respect to English as the official language of the United States, structuring and maintaining bilingual educational programs, and loyalty to and

assimilation into American society. The persistence of Latino culture fuels the politics of culture. In our broadest sense, commonality of culture and interests can be seen as perceptions and experiences among Latinos that reflect positive affinities and substantial interactions and awareness of Latinos in the various subcommunities.

Latino/Hispanic as a Viable Identity

In the past thirty years, a growing body of literature has developed the concept of pan-ethnicity (Espiritu 1992; Cornell and Hartman 1998). The work by Padilla (1986) explores this concept in the context of the Latino population in Chicago. Padilla espouses the idea of Latino consciousness, which includes both an ideological and a pragmatic sense of group identity. The ideological aspect conceives of the interrelatedness among persons of Spanish origin in terms of their communal cultural values and routines in addition to political, economic, and social conditions and consequences. The latter connection ties in structural biases and policies that disadvantage persons who are Mexican, Guatemalan, Colombian, and so on. Thus, there is a cost to being Latino, in terms of opportunities, equity, access, and rights that transcends any specific Latino subgroup.

The pragmatic dimension of Padilla's Latino consciousness contemplates the potential benefits of expanding community beyond national-origin boundaries. In this way, a group is significantly empowered through the notion of strength in numbers, so that rather than speaking of one million Cubans in the United States, a Cuban American leader can reference fifty million Latinos. The larger population base and greater national geographic dispersion serve to enhance greater political effectiveness and visibility. At the same time, larger numbers do not necessarily translate to guaranteed political power. In some ways, the pragmatic nature of creating a Latino community is a strategic move to expand the potential political resource base by accenting both commonalities of culture and interests.

The Pan-Ethnic Dimension, Racial Identity, and the "Latino-Hispanic" Label

Pan-ethnicity, as discussed so far, refers to the process of group formation due to common conditions and bases for community. The other critical component lies with the situational nature of pan-ethnicity (Lopez and Espiritu 1990). That is, individuals can consciously choose a group identity that serves a specific utility—political, for our purposes. Since Latinos can be viewed as covering more than twenty national-origin groups, we posit that there need not be a "natural" clustering based on that connection alone. We have suggested that practical and strategic purposes are served by using a pan-ethnic identity.

Group consciousness and social identity constitute significant forms of pan-ethnic community or identity. Group consciousness refers to the cognitive elements of group attachment; a person incorporates group identity(ies) as part of his or her social identity. In addition, group consciousness includes an evaluative assessment of the group's relative position in society. This identity represents an attachment and affinity to particular social groupings. For our purposes, people of Mexican, Dominican, and Colombian origin, for example, can include a sense of pan-ethnic group attachment

and affiliation, while, at the same time, maintaining their own national origin or ancestry. In addition, many other social identities (parental roles, work groups, etc.) can constitute a person's social identity constellation.

This idea captures the idea of multiple social identities that have relevance to each person (Barvosa 1999). Therefore, we can have coexisting multiple identities that reflect our daily lives and situations in which we find ourselves. For example, research scholars (Segura 1984; Cordova 1993) discuss and analyze what is referred to as "triple oppression," that is, the intersection of class, ethnicity/race, and gender compounding circumstances and experiences. For instance, the "stigma" of a female person of color occupying a lower socioeconomic class may have a cumulative negative effect on opportunities and ambitions. This example has a direct bearing on many Latinos' life chances; the intersection of these three identities can affect their daily lives. Add to the "triple oppression" identities the possibility that the individual may also be coming from a particular country of origin or region of the world, an immigrant, undocumented, or a non-English speaker, and you can imagine an entire Latino/a's "constellation" of social identities. So, in our political discussion of pan-ethnic identity, being a Latino/Hispanic person is real and relevant, but a singular identity for any individual would be rare.

The literature on social identity and group consciousness focuses on the individual dynamics of identity (Sanchez 2006b); clearly the social context can establish or reinforce the basis for group affiliation and affinity. Works by Padilla (1986), Espiritu (1992), Nagel (1996), and Nelson and Tienda (1985) have used, to varying degrees, the concepts of group identity and group consciousness to construct pan-ethnicity.

The "Latinization" of the United States (Fox 1997; Cuello 1996; Benitez 2007) over the last three decades has been accompanied by the transformation of immigrant and indigenous groups into minority groups (Wilson 1977). Miami is now recognized as a "Latino city" in which Cubans have important political and economic influence. Los Angeles, with its sizable Mexican-origin and growing Central American communities, rivals cities in Latin America in terms of population concentrations. More than one out of every five persons in Chicago is Latino, with a mix of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Central American origins. New York has not only a large Puerto Rican population, but also fast-growing Dominican, Colombian, and Peruvian communities. Three national Spanish-language television networks broadcast daily throughout the United States and Latin America. In sections of many US cities, most residents speak English infrequently, and streets are lined with Latino-based and Latino-oriented businesses. As Cuello (1996) points out, this nation has undergone dramatic cultural changes in a very Latino sort of way (Benitez 2007).

For our purposes, the Latinization of the United States has a direct impact on the US political system and processes. Our focus on pan-ethnicity reflects the cognitive and psychological dimensions of group identity and consciousness. Such group identity represents an affinity with, and sense of attachment to, a broader social category than national origin alone. Building on the concept of group consciousness (Verba and Nie 1972; Miller et al. 1981; García 1982; Sanchez 2006b), we focus on two key dimensions: an evaluation of one's group status politically in American society and a collective orientation toward social and political action.

For Latinos, individuals with a group consciousness have a positive affinity for being Latino; they assess their group as experiencing lower levels of socioeconomic

and political status and opportunities, and they are inclined to participate in some collective activity to change the situation. It is this desire to change one's social position through collective action as politicized identities that leads many to refer to group consciousness and the related concept of linked fate.

By exploring the extent of "Latino-ness" or "Hispanicity" in the context of community building and bridging the twenty-plus Latino national-origin groups, we can establish the basis for a political community. In addition, we examine the relevance and impact of such community formation on the larger political system. The latter point encompasses the identification of issues and public policy preferences, organizational and leadership development, political mobilization, electoral politics and representation, and policy implementation. While much attention has been directed toward the phenomenal population growth of Latinos over the past several decades, our perspective does not revolve around growth alone. Population size and geographic location and concentration do serve as a resource base, but converting numbers of people into an effective political base requires additional elements.

The process of constructing or developing a Latino identity and affinity can stem from situations and conditions within the Latino subcommunities as well as general societal developments. For example, work by Padilla (1986) in Chicago highlights the conscious efforts by leadership in the various Latino communities (Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, etc.) to promote a pan-ethnic identity. The use and social meaning of the word "Latino" to reflect a community of Spanish-speaking and culturally and politically similar groups was evident in the early 1970s. Now in contemporary America, the prevalence of the terms "Latino" or "Hispanic" is much less an issue of presence, but for some, a question of relevance (Beltrán 2010). That is, do familiarity and exposure to these terms result in actual internalizing of this identity in "everyday life"?

One of the focus groups conducted as part of the **Latino National Survey (LNS)** in 2005 was held in Chicago. A central area of exploration was identity and labeling. A group of fifteen to twenty Latinos (of varied national origins and ages) participated in a discussion of how each saw himself or herself. For the most part, each person included being Latino as part of his or her social identity. In fact, without any cues from the focus facilitator, the use of "Latino" and/or "Hispanic" was very commonplace in most everyone's conversation. In addition, participants' characterization of what the use of those terms meant reflected a sense of community among all persons of Latino background. For our purposes, self-description as Latino or Hispanic indicates the integral role of that identity without it being the only identity a person internalizes.

Are Latinos a Racial or an Ethnic Group?

An example from the 1989 **Latino National Political Survey (LNPS)** Chicago focus groups is the set of responses from one young adult Latina. Her parents were of "mixed" Latino background; one was Puerto Rican and the other Mexican. She had married an Italian and lived in a South Side Polish Catholic neighborhood. Her parents were divorced. She described a series of situations in which her four-year-old daughter was already attuned to her sense of identity. When visiting her grandmother, the granddaughter referred to her Mexican-ness, and when visiting her grandfather, she accented her Puerto Rican identity. At the same time, while living in her South Side neighborhood, the young girl placed greater emphasis on her father's Italian

ancestry. In school, the young girl was more likely to refer to her European or white ethnic background. When traveling on the bus from the far South Side to the Loop (downtown commercial area), she was quick to identify herself as a minority or person of color. Finally, with her mother and her uncle (mother's brother), she referred to herself as a Latina.

These two foundational bases for the creation and maintenance of the Latino community (i.e., culture and interest) are viewed as clusters of both perceptions and experiences that can produce positive affinities and meaningful interactions between activists in the various Latino subcommunities.

Given our discussion about group identity and affinity, an ongoing issue is whether to categorize Latinos as a racial group or an ethnic group. This discussion has been prevalent among federal statistical agencies, especially the US Census Bureau. With the inclusion of the Spanish-origin question in the short form of the census, Latinos/Hispanics were characterized in the ethnic question, and the race question was a separate item. It is fairly common to have a statistical presentation about Latinos to indicate that Latinos can be of any race. One outcome of this policy has been the concern about clarity among the citizenry, demographers, and other social and political scientists as to whether one can differentiate race from ethnicity.

In table 2.1, we present the results of the 2010 census and the race question. For Latinos, a majority place themselves in the white category (53 percent), but a significant percentage (36.7 percent) marked some other race. Latinos who respond as some other race have been the overwhelming majority (90 percent plus) over the past three censuses. In table 2.2, we can see the extent that different Latino national-origin groups respond to the race question. Except for the Cubans, all the other Latino subgroups respond at nearly 40 percent or greater, with the Central Americans in the mid-50 percent. One interpretation is that many Latinos do not see themselves "fitting into" the prevailing American racial categories.

In the 1995 Current Population Series study, persons were asked about race, ethnicity, national origin, and group label preference (Tucker and Kojetin 1996). Most people do not perceive a real difference between race, national origin, and ethnicity. In several instances, these terms were used interchangeably. Compounding the general ambiguity among the populace about race and ethnicity was the option to indicate "some other race" rather than one of the established racial categories.

TABLE 2.1 Latinos by Racial Selection in the 2010 Census

Census Racial Categories	Population	% of All Hispanics and Latinos
White	26,735,713	53.0
Some other race (Mestizo, Mulatto, etc.)	18,503,103	36.7
Two or more races	3,042,592	6.0
African American	1,243,471	2.5
American Indian and Alaska Native	685,150	1.4
Asian	209,128	0.4
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	58,437	0.1

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2010 Census.

TABLE 2.2 Race of Major Hispanic Ancestries

Latino Ancestry	Total	White	African American	American Indian/Alaskan Native	Asian	Other*
Mexican	31,798,258	16,794,111 (52.8%)	296,778 (.9%)	460,098 (1.5%)	101,654 (.3%)	14,145,617 (44.5%)
Puerto Rican	4,623,716	2,455,534 (53.1%)	403,372 (8.7%)	42,504 (.9%)	24,312 (.5%)	1,697,994 (36.7%)
Cuban	1,785,547	1,525,521 (85.4%)	82,398 (4.6%)	3,002 (.2%)	4,391 (.3%)	170,235 (9.5%)
Salvadoran	1,648,968	663,224 (40.2%)	16,150 (1.0%)	17,682 (1.1%)	4,737 (.3)	947,175 (57.4%)
Dominican	1,414,703	419,016 (29.6%)	182,005 (12.9%)	19,183 (1.4%)	4,056 (.3%)	790,443 (55.9%)
Guatemalan	1,044,209	401,763 (38.5%)	11,471 (1.1%)	31,197 (3.0%)	2,386 (.2%)	597,392 (57.2%)
All Others	4,087,476	2,018,397 (49.4%)	112,521 (2.8%)	75,796 (1.9%)	50,299 (1.2%)	1,830,463 (44.8%)
Totals	50,477,594	26,735,713 (53.0%)	1,243,471 (2.5%)	685,150 (1.4%)	209,128 (.4%)	21,604,132 (42.8%)

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2010 Census, Self-Identified Race, Hispanic or Latino Origin Population by Type, Table 1, <https://www.census.gov/prod/2010/briefs/c2010br-04.pdf>.

*"Other" indicates some other race, two or more races, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander.

With subsequent censuses, the number of persons marking "some other race" has increased to more than nineteen million. One way to interpret this number is that "some other race" would constitute the third-largest racial category in this country. At the same time, those who opt for this choice have a variety of reasons; their responses might include such alternatives as national origin, ancestry, or being part of the entire human race on the 2010 census.

This development has had relevance for Latinos. Of all the persons who marked "some other race," 96.8 percent were people who indicated they are of Hispanic background. Among Latinos, almost two out of five respondents marked "some other race," and another 12.2 percent gave a "no race" response. Since the 1990 census planning efforts, the bureau has investigated and researched alternative ways to gather information about racial groups, including combining the race and Spanish-origin question into one item (del Pinal et al. 2007; Humes, Jones, and Ramirez 2011). They have also tried to analyze the write-ins for those who marked "some other race" to understand what that other race would be. The four largest response categories for Latinos were Mexican origin (44.3 percent), Hispanic (22.7 percent), Latin American (10 percent), and Puerto Rican (3.7 percent). Should one interpret these Latino race responses to mean that Latinos see themselves as a distinctive racial group?

The Census Bureau, along with many of its advisory committees and researchers, has not reached a firm conclusion. The separate race and ethnicity continued in the 2000 and 2010 censuses, and the situation was still undergoing review as to what course to take for the 2020 census at the time of this writing. The challenges have been that the nature of race as a **social construct** does not lend itself to any uniform understanding or basis upon which persons could agree. A racial response is affected not only by people's own notions about themselves, but by their experiences and interactions with others and societal institutions.

What is clear is the development of the concept of "otherness." As we have discussed, people take on a variety of social identities, and these identities have meaning and consequences. By "otherness" we mean that people have a sense of who they are, and if they do not find acknowledgment of their existence, they feel like an "other."

For most of America's history, race has been viewed as a "binary system" represented by "black versus white" distinctions. Other than American Indians (Native Americans), no other social/ethnic groups were categorized into America's racial system. Since the latter half of the twentieth century—and more so during this millennium—American society has become even more diverse (racially and ethnically), especially with the growth of the foreign-born populations. As a result, notions about race and additional "racial categories" have moved us away from a "black-white" racial paradigm.

An additional consideration in this discussion is the racialization of Latinos, especially Latino immigrants. In sociology, racialization is a process of ascribing or assigning racial connotations to the activities of minority group members. This social process is one by which certain groups of people are singled out for distinct treatment based upon real or imagined physical and/or cultural characteristics. As we have said, Latino group status involves power relations and social status. Racialization is often born out of the interaction of a group with a group that it dominates and ascribes identity for the purpose of continued domination.

The changing breadth and understanding of what race is in America has Latinos in the middle of a societal transition. Our examination of Latinos and the American political system is predicated on the distinctiveness of Latinos as a racial/ethnic group (comprised of many cultural, linguistic, and phenotypical attributes) and the dynamics of attaining power, influence, and political representation and responsiveness. The nature of Latinos' political development and impact makes an "official" declaration of a separate racial group less necessary.

As we move into the various aspects of Latinos and the political system, let us briefly frame a concern about the appropriate pan-ethnic label—"Latino" or "Hispanic." In the popular media and governmental circles, the use of "Hispanic" is much more prevalent than "Latino." At the same time, there is slightly greater use of "Latino" among activists, academics, and some advocacy organizations. More importantly, "Hispanic" is the preferred pan-ethnic term among the population itself. The survey firm Latino Decisions begins each of its surveys with a question that directly asks respondents which term they prefer to be called, both as an indicator of preferred terminology as well as to reference this term throughout the rest of the survey, as a means of establishing cultural credibility with respondents. National samples in Latino Decisions's surveys consistently choose "Hispanic" over "Latino." This question has recently included the identification term "Latinx," a term that its proponents contend is neutral in regard to gender or sexual orientation (Juárez 2018). While not pervasive enough to rival "Latino" or "Hispanic" across the full Latino population, this term is gaining traction with Latino youth and may become more prominent over time.

While some works (Oboler 1995; Sanchez 2012) have placed emphasis on the political meaning and ideology associated with each label, an overriding fact is the presence and relevance of a pan-ethnic identity. We contend that this is a foundational basis for group formation, interactions, and collective actions. The proof is in the importance of political life for these communities and the American political system. The remainder of this book can validate, or at least give credence to, the realities of Latino politics. Labels provide some common reference and connections, and we would not diminish those functions. Essentially, we will use "Hispanic" and "Latino/a" interchangeably to connote a group of people who share a common culture and set of interests and experiences in the United States.

Conclusion

Our discussion of pan-ethnicity, linked fate, group consciousness, and an underlying sense of community is the product of the intersection of individual Latino/a lives and the society in which they live, which serves as the dynamic that will contextualize Latino politics. It also illustrates how within-group socialization and external cues influence the identification process. For our purposes, the development of a sense of being Latino can be a "product" of shared cultural values and practices (language, origins, traditions, etc.), intergroup interactions, and societal constructs (positive, but usually negative) of persons of Spanish origin. The latter is the result of stereotypes, prejudices, discriminatory behaviors, and punitive public policies. As we examine the development and existence of community among persons of Latino origin in the United States, our primary purpose is to explore the linkages of community to the

political realms of agenda setting, political mobilization, political resource development, and public policy outcomes and implementation.

The next chapter presents more demographic information that illustrates how socioeconomic status, immigration (nativity) status, age, and cultural practices can link Latino national-origin group members together under a pan-ethnic label that has meaning and political relevance. These aspects serve to indicate common experiences and policy concerns and priorities. Some data presented in the next chapter will include Spanish-language use among Latinos, age structure, household composition and income, nativity, educational attainment and occupational status, and religious affiliation and religiosity. As documented in this chapter, Spanish language has consistently been identified as one of the cultural glues for Latinos, being found as one of the strongest predictors of both group consciousness and linked fate. Another example of the impact of Spanish-language use that will be discussed in more detail later is the growth of Spanish-language media, especially on television (Telemundo, Galavision, and Univision), which confirms the existence of Spanish-language markets and mass media transmission of culture and Spanish language. The number-one radio station in the Los Angeles metropolitan area is KLVE, whose programming includes Latin pop, urban hip-hop, and traditional music.

Over the course of our analysis, the distinctions of language use, nativity, and generational status in the United States are key elements in assessing the cross-cutting connections among Latinos. Hopefully, the demographic characterization of Latinos, especially Latino subgroups, helps to paint a partial portrait of the connections among Latino/as that have political relevance to this community and the nation.

Discussion Questions

1. Communities of interests and common or similar cultures have been identified as building blocks for Latino communities. Given a significant foreign-born segment, how much do such persons' experiences connect with those of their native-born counterparts?
2. It is common for the media, individuals, and public officials to use the terms "Latino" and "Hispanic." What is in a label? That is, how are these terms used, and what difference does it make to use one descriptor or the other?
3. A significant part of this chapter examines socioeconomic characteristics among Latinos as a basis for identifying common interests. How else might you approach this connection and what indicators would you use?
4. This chapter introduced the concept of linked fate. What is this term and what are the main factors that help motivate a sense of linked fate among Latinos?
5. Latinos include persons from many different countries of origin living in different parts of the United States. How do these aspects affect the development of Latino common interests?
6. Over the past forty years, the term "Hispanic" has been used in a variety of settings and by different institutions and leaders. Some have posited that this pan-ethnic term is artificially created and has little meaning in the lives of persons of Latino origin. How does the concept of multiple identities and situational identity come into play in the discussion of use of labels?

7. Group consciousness is one of the dominant concepts introduced in this chapter. What is this form of group identity and what are the dimensions of group consciousness that are used to measure the concept by social scientists?
8. The long-standing pattern of Latinos being the predominant group that marks some other race on the census raises questions about how people see and understand race in the United States. What do you think are the factors and/or reasons that a sizable number of Latinos choose “some other race”?

Links to Suggested Readings

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/04/02/most-hispanic-parents-speak-spanish-to-their-children-but-this-is-less-the-case-in-later-immigrant-generations>

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21565503.2019.1638803>

Notes

1. The US decennial census is an attempt to enumerate all persons living in the United States on April 1 in the first year of each decade. The short form includes basic information such as number of persons in the household, as well as their ages, races, genders, and relationships to one another. The short form is distributed to all households. The long form is sent randomly to one in six households and asks for much more detail (labor market, migration, ancestry, language use, etc.).
2. Racial categories in the census include the following: white, black, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, and other. For the 2000 census, race included the same categories but separated Asian populations from the Pacific Islanders, making five racial categories. In addition, individuals were instructed to mark all applicable racial categories.
3. The depiction of cross-national groups as a more singular ethnic group happened not only for Latinos but also for Asian Americans, Arab Americans, and American Indians. The basis for group aggregation is perceived cultural similarities, which are usually couched in cultural, linguistic, and religious terms.
4. In 1997, the percentage of foreign-born persons in the US population reached a record high since the previous record levels of the early 1900s.