

Participation—Political Parties and Political Ideology

There are two major ways to increase the influence of individual Latinos on the decision makers of the political system. The first way is to organize. This can take the form of anything from social movements, such as protest movements and their various manifestations, to formal interest groups. The second way is to coalesce or ally with other groups, whether organized or unorganized. One particular and common way of coalescing or allying is to participate in what some political scientists have termed the "grand coalitions" of American politics—political parties (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1960; Soraf and Beck 1988). More so than in most other countries, particularly those having parliamentary systems with proportional representation and coalition governments, the major political parties in the United States are themselves huge coalitions of various and often quite diverse elements.

Throughout the history of the United States, the party system has been dominated by two major parties, with only a few periods of realignment in which there have been, for a brief period of time, more than two national parties. However, the system has always quickly reverted back to the domination of two parties. That is not to say that there are not political parties other than the Democrats, the Republicans, and their predecessors. Over the years, many parties have existed at both the local and the national levels. However, with regard to capturing the major offices within national government and even within state governments, those victories have by and large been won by one of the two political parties that now take the form of the Democrats and the Republicans.

Each party is a coalition in itself; that is, each is comprised of many distinctive elements with various demographic characteristics. It is probably true that for most of the twentieth century the Republican Party has been the somewhat more homogeneous party, and the Democratic Party has been made up of more diverse elements. But that is just a matter of degree. To become a major party in a society such as the United States, a party has to be comprised of a coalition of demographic groupings. Although homogeneous and much less diverse political parties are able to remain more uniform in their composition and purer in their ideology, the usual price they pay for this uniformity is to remain a minor party.

Remaining a minor party means that they do not capture many, if any, national or state offices and are usually confined to winning just a few local offices at best. Without the rewards of victory, these parties have a difficult time sustaining themselves. In addition, U.S. institutions and legal structures greatly favor the continuation of the two major parties (whose members are responsible for writing the political rules, including those concerning political parties and elections). As a result, it is challenging for minor or "third" parties to be successful in the United States.

LATINOS AND POLITICAL PARTIES

By becoming part of a majority party coalition, Latinos can maximize their chances for putting persons or candidates they favor into office and having the policies they favor become public policy (as they are adopted by one or the other of the major parties). So, Latinos must determine to which party they want to ally or align themselves. An alternative route is to become a separate political party; in fact, historically, this is the route that Latinos have taken on more than one occasion. It has not been uncommon for Mexican Americans to form their own political parties throughout history. However, the most well-known and certainly most successful of the independent political parties formed by Chicanos or Mexican Americans is that which was established during the Chicano movement with the initiation or inception of the Raza Unida Party (*El Partido de la Raza Unida*). This was a party that probably had its most successful early growth in south Texas, as José Ángel Gutiérrez and other students at the University of Texas who had been active in a college student organization, the Mexican American Youth Organization, decided that more than an interest group was needed. A political party that can run its own candidates for government offices would be the only way to break the domination of what they saw as Anglo-controlled major parties. Because they wanted to run candidates for themselves under their own banner, they decided to form their own political party. The idea spread quickly, and chapters soon sprang up throughout the Southwest, most noticeably among college youth. The development and growth, as well as the success and eventual demise, of the party have been documented in several books (Garcia 1989; Muñoz 1989; Santillan 1973).

The impetus behind the formation of the party was that Chicano activists believed that the two major political parties were not only unresponsive to Chicanos but also pretty much indistinguishable. They were viewed as one and the same, with little meaningful policy differences, and they were certainly not perceived as being responsive to the needs and interests of Chicanos. Moreover, both parties were "establishment oriented" and were controlled by middle and upper middle class Anglos.

The harshest critics called the major political parties "one two-headed monster feeding from the same trough." Moreover, these party founding activists knew that if they could, or even desired to, join a major political party, they would be just a small, relatively powerless part of a large coalition. The strong principles they held regarding Chicano pride, nationalism, self-determination, and community control would most likely not be acceptable to these establishment parties, and the compromises necessary to become part of the major political parties would be unacceptable to the activists. Moreover, Chicanos wanted institutions and organizations of their own. The Democrats and Republicans had had many decades to be responsive to the needs and interests of the Chicano community, and the activists believed that they had failed to do so. For these and other reasons, the separate, "third" political party, the Raza Unida Party, was formed and organized. The *partido* ran candidates in several elections throughout the Southwest, primarily in small towns throughout Texas and California. It had its greatest electoral successes in locales with large but previously excluded majorities, such as Crystal City, Texas, and Parker, California. Many Latino or Chicano candidates were elected to public office in towns that, although 80 or 90 percent Hispanic, seldom, if ever, had public officials from their group.

As the party continued to grow in the early 1970s, it became more diverse ideologically, and some major questions arose about the future of the party, such as the direction it should take, its organizational structure, and the scope of its activities. A major conference of *partido* members from across the United States convened in El Paso, Texas, in 1972. In this first national party convention, there was much discussion and debate about the party's approach, primarily regarding whether it should seek electoral victories in smaller communities or whether it should expand and run campaigns statewide. There were also some ideological differences between those who were more pragmatic and electorally oriented and those who were more radical and more ideologic in their approach. Several factions were evident, each with its own leader, including most noticeably Reyes López Tijerina from New Mexico, José Ángel Gutiérrez from Texas, and Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales from Colorado. These differences proved to be insurmountable at the convention, which probably marked the high point, but also the beginning of the decline, of the Raza Unida Party as a major Chicano political force. The Texas Raza Unida Party did run a statewide candidate in the early 1970s, when it nominated Ramsey Muritz, a former Baylor University football star and attorney, to be its candidate for the governorship. There were also candidates for statewide office on the ballots in New Mexico, California, and other states. However, the Muñiz campaign was by far the most visible. He garnered 6 percent of the statewide vote in Texas. To some, this was a symbolic victory, particularly in Texas—a state that had never elected any Chicanos to statewide office. To others, it

demonstrated that the strategy of a separate and independent ethnic-based political party was not a viable alternative at a level above the local one. Continued personal differences between leaders and among ideologies led to the continued deterioration of the party until, by the late 1970s, it was in existence more as an interest group than as a political party.

The experience of the Raza Unida Party and other third parties in the United States seems to indicate that it is a problematic strategy to pursue the path of a successful political party independent from one of the two major parties. At best, these parties have sometimes been able to wring concessions and compromises from the major parties, or have some of their policies taken into and incorporated by the major parties. These third parties have also been able to increase the leverage of their members by acting as swing bloc votes between the two major parties. However, given the domination of the two-party system in the United States, the successful electorally oriented, exclusively Latino party does not seem to be a viable strategy.

How then are Latinos best able to relate to what are arguably the most important political organizations in the U.S. political system—political parties? How can and should Latinos approach the two major parties? How do they become members? How do they exert influence in the parties? How have they affected each party, if at all? In the United States, it is extremely easy to become a "member" of a political party. A person can join simply by indicating a party affiliation when he or she registers to vote. Parties are not exclusive organizations. Once a person is a registered member, he or she never has to attend a single meeting, pay dues, participate in any of its activities, or even vote for its candidates. Perhaps the most important facet of being a member, albeit an inactive member of a major political party, is that a person is allowed to participate in the selection of that party's candidates when he or she resides in a state that has a "closed primary" system. In a closed primary or nominating election, only registered members of that party may participate in the voting. Beyond that, being a member of one or the other of these grand coalitions usually means being contacted during campaigns and on election day by candidates of that party as they run for office, and not too much more. As we have seen, Latinos, in general, with the notable exception of the Cubans, have been predominately Democratic for many years. More specifically, since the 1930s, Latinos have always voted in fairly large majorities for Democratic candidates, including Democratic candidates for the presidency. However, until the late twentieth century, Latinos' vote as a significant national voting bloc was not sought by national candidates for office, although in some state and local races the Latino vote had been very important prior to the 1980s.

Political scientists have determined that the most important factor influencing the way that most voters choose their candidates is based on the

partisanship of the voter (Bartels 2000; Campbell et al. 1960). It has been found that it is not the way the voter has been registered, but the psychological affiliation that the voter has with the party that is a strong determinant of the voter's preference of party candidates. Therefore, political scientists have made a considerable effort to determine the partisanship of various groups of voters in the United States, primarily by asking them to which party they are most closely attached or affiliated. The usual question asked in voter surveys goes something like this: "In general, in politics today do you feel closer to the Democratic Party or the Republican Party, or are you independent or something else?" The answers to this item, which is a measure of partisan self-identification, have been found to be closely correlated with party candidate preference in the voting booth. We have seen that Latinos vote primarily Democratic (again with the exception of the Cubans), so we would expect that their self-identified partisanship is very Democratic, and that indeed is the case. The Latino National Political Survey (LNPS) of 1990 produced results shown in Table 8.1 with regard to

Table 8.1
LATINO POLITICAL PARTY SELF-IDENTIFICATION, BY NATIONAL ORIGIN
1989-1990^a

	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Central/South American	Anglo
Democrat	67%	71%	26%	NA	53%
Independent	12%	12%	8%	NA	7%
Republican	22%	18%	48%	NA	4%
1999 ^b					
Democrat	37%	52%	29%	39%	23%
Independent	33%	17%	27%	35%	35%
Republican	16%	17%	34%	12%	31%
2004 ^c					
Democrat	47%	50%	17%	NA	NA
Independent	22%	15%	9%	NA	NA
Republican	18%	17%	52%	NA	NA
Other/Don't Know	12%	17%	15%	NA	NA

NA, not applicable.

^aLatino National Political Survey.

^bNIP/KEF/HU Project, National Survey on Latinos in America.

^cPew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation, National Survey on Latinos: Politics and Civic Engagement, July 2004, Registered Voters.

Latino partisanship. The results indicate that the partisanship of the Latino groups, with the exception of the Cubans, is very Democratic, more so than the Anglo Americans in the survey. The most Democratic group is the Puerto Ricans. They are followed closely by the Mexican Americans. The case is almost the reverse for Cubans, who are strongly Republican.

Subsequent surveys have shown little change in the general pattern uncovered nationwide by the LNPS. For example, the National Latino Voter Poll of 2000 (Knight Ridder News Organization 2000) revealed that 59 percent of Hispanic voters favored or identified with the Democratic Party, 28 percent considered themselves independent, and only 20 percent identified with the Republican Party.¹ The *Washington Post* (1999) National Survey provided some analysis by national origin groups in comparison with non-Latino blacks and whites. Although the numbers are different from the other results because of the different wording of the questions, the general pattern remains the same. The largest plurality of Latinos (37 percent) identified themselves with the Democratic Party, followed by 33 percent who considered themselves independent. The Republicans were only favored by 16 percent of Latinos.

This is a different pattern than that exhibited by non-Latino whites in 1999, as the largest group of whites considered themselves independent, followed by Republicans (31 percent), and the smallest group (23 percent) of non-Latino whites identified with the Democrats. Non-Latino blacks showed yet another pattern—a more strongly Democratic one—as 61 percent identified with the Democrats, 25 percent with independents, and only 4 percent with the Republicans (Table 8.2). Within the Republican Party, the differences along national origin lines in 1999 showed basically the same pattern as did the LNPS, with a new element—the inclusion of data on South Americans. The most Democratic group is the Puerto Rican group at 52 percent; the next most Democratic group is comprised of Central and South Americans (39 percent Democratic and 35 percent independent), followed closely by Mexican Americans, with the largest portion of them (37 percent) being independent, 33 percent Democratic, and 15 percent Republican. Again, the notable exception was the Cuban

Table 8.2
PARTY SELF-IDENTIFICATION BY ETHNICITY/RACE (%)

	Democrat	Republican	Independent	Other/Don't Know
Latinos	37	16	33	15
White's	23	31	35	11
Blacks	61	4	25	10

Source: Washington Post/Kaiser Family/ Harvard University Survey Project, National Survey on Latinos in America, 1999.

Americans, with the largest proportion of them (37 percent) favoring the Republican Party, followed by independents at 34 percent; they were the least Democratic-oriented Latinos at 29 percent. These statistics not only reinforce the general trends found in earlier survey data but also highlight the tendency of many Latinos, particularly the most recent residents, to be politically independent. There has been a growing interest in political independence and a movement away from partisanship among the general American electorate, as nearly 40 percent of Americans labeled themselves as independents in the 2000 American National Election Study (Hajnal 2004). This makes independents the largest political category in America, larger than self-identified Republicans or Democrats. This concern with the citizenry's lacking a strong tie to either political party is particularly salient among ethnic groups, with many scholars noting that a large segment of the Latino community does not identify with either the Republican Party or the Democratic Party (Alvarez and Garcia-Bedolla 2003; Hajnal 2004; Hero, Garcia, Garcia, and Pachon 2000; Pachon and Desipio 1994).

This trend is the result of several factors, including the lack of knowledge and experience with the Democratic or Republican parties among foreign-born Americans (Hajnal 2004). With nearly 40 percent of Latinos being born outside the United States, political socialization is critical to Latino party acquisition. This is evident by the fact that in addition to being more likely to choose independence, the foreign born and those who are politically unassimilated are more likely to refrain from choosing any partisanship option, including that of independent, on surveys (Alvarez and Brehm 2002). For example, 70 percent of nonnaturalized Mexican and Dominican immigrants, 40 percent of Cuban immigrants, and 55 percent of other Latino immigrants reported that they were not attached to either party (Pachon and Desipio 1994). However, Latinos who have made the decision to remain in the United States and become citizens exhibit stronger party attachments (Cain, Kiewiet, and Uhlaner 1991).

In the 2000 general election, the Republicans made a notable attempt to bring in what they consider to be a swing bloc vote—the Latinos (de la Garza and Desipio 2004; Leal et al. 2005). A *swing bloc* of voters is an identifiable and fairly cohesive group that is perceived as movable or switchable in its voting support—swinging from one party to another. The Republican Party spent some \$10 million in Latino outreach. Their rhetorical message was that Latinos were “natural Republicans” who had just not realized it yet. The Republicans rationalized this rhetoric by placing an emphasis on traditional social values, such as emphasis on the family, anti-abortion issues, and no special concern with gay rights, as well as emphasizing the hard work ethic of Latinos and claiming that the Republicans’ support of a tax cut would particularly help small businesses, in which Latinos are particularly concentrated. Their approach was very

much one of values as they claimed close affiliation in shared value positions. The Democrats, who for many years have been charged with taking the Latino vote for granted, also made a concerted outreach to solidify their Latino vote. Their message was that the Democrats have been longtime friends and supporters of the Latino community and that their record on policy positions is what mattered. They reminded Latinos that it was the Democratic Party that had been in the forefront of enacting civil rights and voting rights legislation that in general protected the rights and liberties of minority groups; that favored a more active, helpful government; and that provided the kinds of opportunities and services that Latinos needed, such as unemployment compensation, minimum wage legislation, provision of public health services, support for public housing and job training, and similar measures. So, if as some political scientists claim, voters make their decisions largely on what conclusions they come to when they keep a “running tally” over what the parties have done or not done for them, the Democrats would come out way ahead of the Republicans.²

In fact, another strong “push” factor for Latinos toward the Democratic Party is that the Republicans have taken positions on various public policies that the Latino community has seen as quite inimical to their interests. Such policies include supporting English-only or official English legislation, voting against funding of bilingual education, voting against many of the social welfare services that the Democrats had supported, taking a harder line against immigration, opposing affirmative action, and opposing the provision of services to immigrants and their children. This was most noticeable in California in the late 1990s, when Governor Pete Wilson and other members of the Republican Party took strong positions against these kinds of measures—that is, against the provision of education and health services to undocumented workers (the famous, or infamous, Proposition 187) and for the abolition of bilingual education in the public schools and anti-affirmative action in colleges and universities. To many Latinos in California and across the United States, it seemed that the Republican Party was hostile toward the Latino culture and interests. Even if Latinos outside California were not immediately affected, the elections in which these issues were major concerns drew a record number of Latinos to the ballot box, and Republican candidates and their proposed policy referenda were smashed. Republicans were forced to admit that they had probably made an egregious error and that they had probably set back their cause of winning over Latinos for many years. In fact, some Republicans claim that unless their party changed their position on several policy issues, they would probably lose the rapidly growing number of Latinos for an entire generation. In contrast, the Democrats were quite gleeful in their agreement that the Republicans were their own worst enemy and had probably made life much easier for Democrats for the

foreseeable future. In 2006 and 2007, it was the congressional Republicans who took the hardest line on immigration, a policy position that again antagonized much of the Latino community and that concerned Republican strategists who worried about the effect this was having on their long-term hope for increased rapport with the Hispanic electorate.

Despite this, Latino politicians and activists have tried to emphasize that they are not in the hip pocket of the Democratic Party. If Republicans will compete with the Democrats in seeing which party can best serve the interests of Latinos, Latinos will follow the winner. They are not permanently wedded to the Democratic Party, as was indicated by the movement in the 2004 presidential election. This kind of strategy is essential for maximum political influence. A major member of a coalition must always have the option of exiting that alliance and joining another if its interests are not served. They cannot be taken for granted. In the meantime, as increasing numbers of immigrants are naturalized and become citizens, they are registering as Democrats by a two- and three-to-one margin. Latino immigrants tend to take up residence in areas of heavy Latino density, so they are socialized to the values and affiliations of their neighbors, and this includes learning that the Democratic Party should be their party affiliation. Moreover, the off-year election of 2006 was a step back for the Republicans. The party lost majority control of both houses of Congress. The major national issue in this election was the war in Iraq, and Latinos were even more opposed to the war than was the general public (Pew 2003). In addition, six years of Republican control of both the executive and the legislative branches had revealed the party's proclivity to cut back on government and social service programs. As we have seen, both positions are antithetical to the general values and policy preferences of most Hispanics. So, if Republicans are to regain their ascendancy in national politics, in the state houses across the country, and in governorships among the states, they will eventually have to pay more attention to the material and tangible interests of Latinos and not just employ general rhetoric, however accurate, about the similarity of some values between Republicans and Latinos.

The Republicans' hopes seem to be based on the idea that as more Latinos remain in the United States and advance socioeconomically, they will move into the middle class and become more Republican in their economic and political orientations. They also hope that as more Latinos become business owners, they will be much more sympathetic with the political party that has been concerned with business interests over others. This might indeed be the case—over a long period of time, probably several generations.

Analysis conducted by political scientists to discover the roots of the party identification of Latinos has found a different pattern for them than is found for Anglos. That is, for Anglos, income is the socioeconomic

variable that is most highly and directly correlated with party identification. The higher the income, the greater will be the identification with the Republican Party. However, in contrast, income by itself is not significantly correlated with partisanship among Cubans and Mexicans, and is only slightly so for Puerto Ricans (Uhlauer and Garcia 1998). For Anglos, higher levels of education were also associated with greater Republican affiliation, but it is much less significant for all Latino groups. Actually, religious affiliation has been one of the variables with significant correlations with partisan attachment for all four groups. Non-Catholicism is associated with Republicanism for both Anglos and Mexicans, and most strongly for Puerto Ricans. The role of religion in partisanship for Latinos was highlighted in the 2004 election, as there appeared to be a religion gap in 2004 among Latino voters. According to the National Election Pool exit poll, Bush garnered higher support from Latino Protestants (59/40), born-again Christians (78/21), and churchgoers (61/39) (Leal et al. 2005). Age is an important demographic correlate, mainly for Mexican Americans. In fact, age is the single variable that is most highly correlated with attachment to the major parties, with the older Mexican Americans being strongly Democratic and the younger Mexican Americans being the least Democratic. So, again, income is not as strongly related to Latino partisanship, and with Mexican Americans, more education goes along with the greater likelihood of Democratic Party affiliation.

One of the most powerful demographic predictors of partisanship among all three Latino groups is their experience with U.S. politics. People of all three of the largest Latino national origins are more likely to identify as Democrats if they are older, if they were born in the United States, or if they have been in the United States longer as immigrants (Cain et al. 1991; Uhlauer and Garcia 2002). This ties in with the point made previously about knowledge of the parties and the positions they have taken on Latino interests. Apparently, Latinos learn about which party has best served their interests overall.

Recently, political scientists believe that they have discerned a new shift in voting patterns among the groups that have traditionally comprised the Republican and Democratic parties, respectively. At least among white voters, positions on moral values are having a greater effect, to some extent replacing the long-standing correlation between socioeconomic status or income and partisan voting patterns. For example, longtime working class white Democrats have been voting increasingly Republican since the 1970s, as issues such as busing and affirmative action have pushed these voters into the Republican camp (Teixeira and Rogers 2001).

Other cultural issues, such as abortion rights, have built Democratic allegiance among higher-income white professionals. Since the 1990s, this rate of change has seemed to accelerate. In the 2004 elections, moral values, including positions on same sex marriages, abortion, and stem cell

research, seemed to be the major issue in presidential voting preferences (Johnson 2004; Leal et al. 2005). This brought the more conservative Christians, including Catholics and evangelical Protestants, to the Republican side. The position of the Republicans on these issues was seen as being a significant factor in attracting Latinos to support George W. Bush in record proportions.

However, these changes have not produced a full-scale reversal of the two parties' traditional constituencies. In the lower half of the income levels, the Democratic Party remains strong among African Americans, Hispanics, and white union members. Republican support has grown among nonunion whites. In the top half of the income distribution, there has been a realignment of well-educated whites who have now become one of the most reliable Democratic voting constituencies, but Republican loyalties have strengthened among small businessmen, small business owners, managers, and corporate executives.

There are implications of this for the Hispanic voter because several studies have shown that Hispanic voters are typically closer to the Republican Party with regard to many of the "hot button" moral value positions, such as gay rights, abortion, capital punishment, patriotism, and school vouchers. This could mean that Hispanics may likely follow the white pattern of increasingly voting Republican, despite the fact that Hispanic voters largely remain in the lower levels of the socioeconomic scale. Whether the 2004 vote was an indication of this trend or just a one-time "blip" remains to be seen. In addition, as Hispanics become more middle class, buy homes, move into the suburbs, and establish and operate successful small businesses—all trends that have been occurring since the 1970s and 1980s—this would also seem to impel a move toward Republican support, at least if Hispanics follow the pattern exhibited by white voters since the 1970s.

The hot debate over immigration in 2006 and the roles played by politicians of the two major parties in this policy discussion brought a new element of Latino partisanship into consideration. The punitive and exclusionary position taken by House Republicans, as well as some Republican opposition in the senate to the Senate's more inclusive bills, elicited expressions of concern by Republican Party officials and politicians. They feared that the inroads made by the Republicans in the 2004 election could be lost by the Republican legislators' positions on immigration reform. (President Bush continued to speak out on behalf of the more moderate Senate bills.) Republican opposition nationally might cause the same kind of backlash and oppositional mobilization that occurred in California's immigration debates and referenda. Post-immigration debate survey evidence must have dashed the hopes of Republican Party stalwarts who had perceived some chance of Hispanics swinging toward self-identification with the Republicans. In early summer of 2006, the party affiliation of

Latinos looked much as it has for decades. Only 22 percent of registered Hispanics identified with the Republican Party; the affiliation of Latinos with Democrats was 42 percent, and 20 percent were "something else." Although one fourth of Latinos believed that neither party had "the best position on immigration issues," twice as many favored the Democrats' position (35 percent) over that of the Republicans (16 percent). Most dis-couraging to the Republican Party was that when asked which party had the most "concern for Hispanics/Latinos," registered Latinos favored the Democrats over the Republicans by 37 percent to 9 percent, respectively. Thirty-seven percent believed that there was no difference (Pew Hispanic Center 2006).

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

The political ideology of Americans is a much studied political factor, and yet one that in many ways still remains a mystery in the way it functions to affect political behavior and political participation. What is true about the role of political ideology for most Americans also seems to apply in most part to Latinos. Most Americans know political ideology as that which is laid out along a political spectrum from liberal or left wing to conservative or right wing. The terms "liberal" and "conservative" are commonly used in political discourse in the United States, and media commentators, politicians, public officials, and even the general public seem to have a feel for, or a common-sense understanding of, what these terms mean, enough so that they are used somewhat meaningfully in common political dialog. Yet, when political scientists look closely at this, it is difficult to determine what exactly political ideology stands for and whether the average person really understands what is meant by these terms. In fact, several studies show that the average person cannot clearly identify these political ideologies, and only a small, more activist, more elite group of people can use them correctly and meaningfully (Converse 1964; Jacoby 1991).

Moreover, there are few individuals who are pure ideologues—that is, that are 100 percent liberal or conservative in their views on all political issues. Most people are a mixture of conservative and liberal positions; in fact, many, if not most, are in-between at the so-called "moderate" or "middle of the road" position. When political scientists have attempted to analyze the political ideology of the public, or more particularly of Latinos, as many questions as answers have been produced. It is not clear how people's self-perceived and self-labeled ideologies actually affect the positions they take on candidates or policy issues. Much contradictory and often unclear thinking is evidenced in the relationship between such things as political ideology and political parties. Nevertheless, because

Table 8.3
POLITICAL IDEOLOGY OF LATINOS BY NATIONAL ORIGIN (SELF-LABELLED)

	1989-1990 ^a				
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Central/South American	Anglo
Liberal	29%	28%	23%	NA	26%
Moderate	36%	25%	23%	NA	35%
Conservative	35%	47%	55%	NA	39%

	1999 ^b				
	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	NA, not applicable	
Liberal	24%	52%	29%	39%	23%
Moderate	36%	31%	37%	49%	46%
Conservative	35%	37%	24%	30%	35%

NA, not applicable.

^aLatino National Political Survey.

^bWP/KFF/HU Project, National Survey on Latinos in America.

these terms are so common in political discourse and seemingly so well understood by the average person (if not by social scientists), and because little is known about political ideology over the past several years, attention has been turned to the political ideology of Latinos.

The first national reading obtained on the self-labeled political ideology of Latinos comes from the INPS. In 1990, when the INPS was completed, the self-proclaimed ideologies of the four ethnic groupings in the survey were as shown in Table 8.3. At that time, the largest proportion of Anglos considered themselves to be conservative (39 percent), followed by moderates (35 percent), and then self-proclaimed liberals (26 percent). Surprisingly to many, the political ideology of Mexican Americans was almost exactly the same as Anglo Americans, with 36 percent of Mexicans being conservative, 36 percent moderate, and 29 percent liberal. Cubans were distinctive by their more conservative ideology, with the majority (55 percent) seeing or labeling themselves as conservative, 23 percent as liberal, and 23 percent as moderate. Puerto Ricans' self-classification of ideology was puzzling: the largest plurality (47 percent) called themselves conservative, 28 percent liberal, and 25 percent moderate.

Again, it is not clear what these measures of mass ideology are measuring. They should relate to something else of interest, such as party identification or issue positions. Although there does seem to be a connection, it is weak and inconsistent. The ideology of Latinos appears to be an even weaker predictor of party preference than it is for Anglos (Uhlman and Garcia 2002). This is not to say that ideology does not matter for Latinos, as

Table 8.4
SELF-LABELLED POLITICAL IDEOLOGY BY RACE (%)

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Don't Know
Latinos	26	34	34	6
Whites	23	39	35	3
Blacks	23	45	30	2

Source: WP/Kaiser/Harvard Project, National Survey Latinos in America, 1999.

Latino conservatives are more likely to be Republican (Uhlman et al. 2000). It is true that in all cases liberals are more likely to be Democrats and conservatives are more likely to be Republicans, but compared to Anglos there have been more conservative Democrats among Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans and many more liberal Republicans among Cuban Americans. It seems that ideology operates somehow differently for Latinos than it does for Anglos. One possibility is that Latinos interpret ideology differently than Anglos, particularly in the case of Puerto Ricans. However, when we look at the correlation between Latino ideological positions and preferences on policies, they relate much the same way as they do for the rest of the public.

The 1999 National Survey of Latinos in America (*Washington Post* 1999) produced some interesting and relevant results on this topic (Table 8.4). Among non-Latino whites, the largest group was self-identified as moderate (39 percent), followed closely by conservative, and the smallest group (as in the INPS) was liberal. The Latino pattern was similar, with 34 percent of Latinos classifying themselves as conservative, 34 percent as moderate, and 26 percent as liberals. Non-Latino blacks were more prone to identify themselves as moderate (45 percent), followed by conservative (30 percent), and liberal (23 percent). The National Latino Voter Poll of 2000 (Knight Ridder News Organization 2000) of "likely Hispanic voters" again found that the conservative bloc was the largest among both Hispanics and all voters—Hispanics were 37 percent conservative, as were 39 percent of all voters. Moderates were the next largest group—31 percent of Latinos and 32 percent of all voters. Again, the smallest group was liberals, with 20 percent Hispanics and 26 percent of all voters claiming that ideology.

We can see that the political ideology of Latinos has not changed much since the 1990s and the patterns are consistent. This surprises many observers of Latino politics, who had inferred that Latinos would be much more liberal in their political ideology than Anglos. This was probably due to the positions taken by those Latinos having greatest access to the media, such as Latino politicians, leaders of advocacy groups, academics, and other "spokespersons," who tend to be more liberal than the people in

their philosophies and positions. However interesting it is that the self-classified political ideologies of Latinos are similar to those of Anglos, it is not clear what effect this has on Latinos' political behavior and political participation. Further investigation is required to understand this relationship, if indeed any relationship does exist.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The study of Latino public opinion is a relatively new endeavor. Large public opinion surveys of the Latino community have been a recent phenomenon. They have come about in response to population growth among Latinos and an increase in the number of scholars of Latino origin. This chapter provides a comprehensive discussion of the role that both partisanship and ideology have in American politics, as well as trends among Latinos in these two areas. It is clear that partisanship continues to have a huge impact on the way Americans decide who to vote for and which policy issues they support. Latinos, in particular, have had an interesting history with respect to partisanship. As a result of a lack of responsiveness from either dominant political party, leaders of the Chicano movement were motivated to create an alternative political party that had chapters throughout the Southwest. Currently, driven by significant increases in Latino population and concentration in key electoral states, both Democratic and Republican parties have exerted considerable effort to court the perceived swing bloc Latino population. In fact, due to a strategic effort by the Republican Party to use social issues and family values to mobilize Latino voters, and their more Latino-friendly presidential candidate, the Republican Party garnered a greater share of the Latino vote in the 2000 and 2004 elections. Despite this recent trend, there is little or no convincing evidence to support the claims that a close relationship between the Republican Party and the Latino community will continue to grow in the near future unless Republicans change their stances on several policy areas vital to Latinos.

Nonetheless, as long as Latino elites continue to emphasize that the Latino community is not a permanent component of the Democratic Party's coalition, attention from both parties should continue. This should provide positive outcomes for the Latino community, particularly the foreign-born population, which is more likely to be politically independent and to benefit tremendously from mobilization of the two dominant parties. Interestingly, the self-expressed ideology of the Hispanic general public is similar to the Anglo population; that is, it is already in the mainstream. However, it appears that political ideology may not have as much relevance for Latinos as it does for Anglos because ideology has a weak impact on Latino party preference and voter choice. Due to limited

analyses on the relationship of Latino ideology, further research is needed to determine whether Latinos interpret ideology the same way that Anglos do before we can conclude that Latinos are a non-ideological population regarding politics.

Notes

- 1 Percentages listed in this section are based on survey respondents who chose to answer partisanship questions. Because individuals may choose not to answer questions on surveys, the percentages listed in this section may not equal 100 percent.
- 2 For a discussion of the running tally theory of partisanship, see Fiorina (1981).