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*American Politics Research* 2007 35: 202

DOI: 10.1177/1532673X06294885

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# Are Latinos Republicans But Just Don't Know It?

## The Latino Vote in the 2000 and 2004 Presidential Elections

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Every 4 years, during election season, we witness continuously growing appeals from Democrats and Republicans to the Latino electorate with the purpose of gaining enough of their vote to tilt the election to their respective advantage. Although Latinos regularly vote Democratic, Republicans assume that because of their continuing upward mobility and long-standing social conservatism, Latinos are in fact Republicans but just don't know it yet. In this article, we test how likely Latinos were to abandon their historic attachment to the Democratic Party and identify with the Republican Party in 2000 and 2004. Our conclusion is that although Latinos may have increasingly voted for the Republican candidate in 2004 and over time may change their partisan preferences, the Hispanic electorate was far from abandoning its partisan attachment to the Democratic Party.

**Keywords:** *Latino politics; voting behavior; elections; party identification; partisan preference*

Every 4 years, during the election season, Latinos are rediscovered by political parties,<sup>1</sup> the media, and political pundits (DeSipio & de la Garza, 2002; Ramos, 2004). Every 4 years, Republicans and Democrats spend millions of dollars on Spanish-language advertisements to court Hispanics. Every 4 years, the Latino vote is depicted by the media and political analysts as having the potential to determine the outcome of the presidential election.

In the past two presidential elections, Republicans have made significant appeals for Latino votes. The major reason for this is that given the new demographics of the nation, Republicans saw the need to create inroads into

the Latino electorate to secure their political survival (Gimpel & Kaufmann, 2001). Thus, since 2000 (see Marbut, 2005) and continuing in 2004, Republicans have been *abriendo caminos* (forging new paths) into the Latino electorate and have been trying to persuade them that because of their social conservatism, work ethic, and entrepreneurial spirit, Latinos and Republicans “know each other” and are not far apart ideologically and politically (Bumiller, 2006). This unprecedented outreach has had the purpose of gaining enough of the Latino vote to tilt the election to their advantage.

The Republican strategy implicitly assumes that the Latino electorate will abandon its historic attachment to the Democratic Party and identify with the Republican Party instead. In this article, we test this assumption by investigating if Latino voters, as a group, have moved their partisan preferences from the Democratic to the Republican Party as manifested by three indicators: (a) their partisan affiliation, (b) if they report feeling closer to the Republican Party rather than to the Democratic Party, and (c) if they vote for the Republican candidate in presidential elections. Our conclusion is that although Latinos may change their partisan allegiances in a given election and over time, the Hispanic electorate is far from moving toward the Republican Party at the national level. Although Latino support for Republicans (see de la Garza, DeSipio, Garcia, Garcia, & Falcon, 1992; DeSipio, 1996; DeSipio, de la Garza, & Setzler, 1999; Garcia & de la Garza, 1977) has oscillated since 1980 when Ronald Reagan won the presidential election, rather than reflecting higher support for Republican candidates, variations in rates of support may reflect low turnout in heavily Democratic areas (Gimpel, 2003) and not an indication of an explicit partisan realignment.

The article attempts to determine the extent to which Latino partisanship is shifting. Specifically, it examines three aspects of Latino partisanship. The first is Latino feelings toward the two major political parties and their patterns of partisan affiliations. The second is the pattern of partisanship changes and the demographics of those who changed their views of the parties, moved closer to one versus the other major party, or changed partisan identification. The final and most significant aspect of partisanship shifts we examine is the likelihood of the Latino vote abandoning its historic electoral support for Democrats and supporting Republican candidates instead.

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**Authors' Note:** An earlier version of this article was presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., September 1 to 4, 2005. The authors would like to acknowledge the support received from The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute and from the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy (ISERP) at Columbia University. They also thank Robert Y. Shapiro and the anonymous referees for *American Politics Research* for insightful comments.

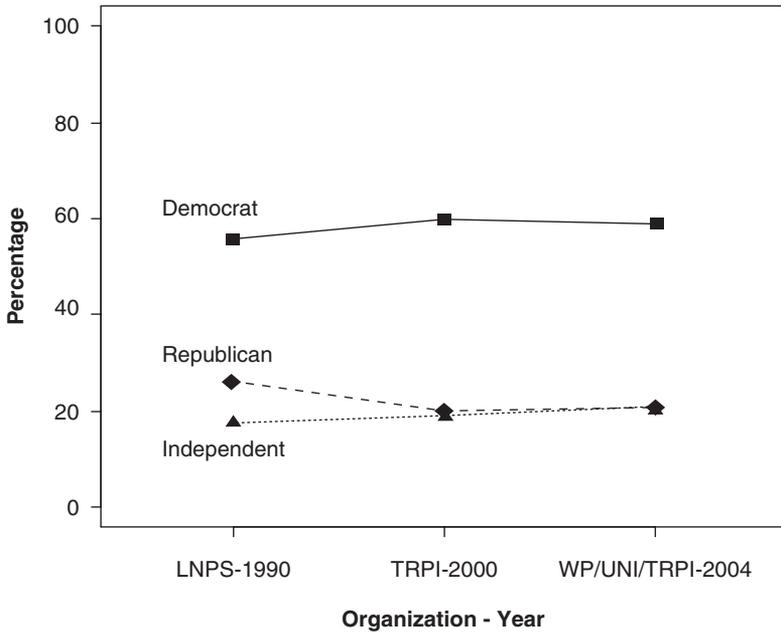
Our analysis is based on two unique data sources, the 2000 Tomás Rivera Policy Institute (TRPI) Pre-Election 5 State Survey (California, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Texas) of Latino registered voters, which interviewed 2,011 likely Latino voters in September 2000, and the 2004 Pre-Election Surveys conducted by the *Washington Post*, Univision, and the TRPI (WP/Univision/TRPI) in July and October 2004. The latter surveys interviewed 1,600 Latino registered voters in the 11 states containing more than 100,000 Latino registered voters, accounting for 88% of Latino registered voters nationwide. The sample was drawn from official registered voter lists using the U.S. Census Bureau's Spanish surname dictionary.

## Latino Partisanship Patterns

Latino voter partisan identification has remained stable since 1990. On average, for three categories of partisan responses (Democrat, Independent, Republican), 58% of Latino voters identified themselves as Democrats, whereas 22% identified as Republicans, and 19% as Independents. Moreover, between 1990 and 2004, Democratic partisan identification has only declined 3 percentage points, whereas Republican identification declined 6 percentage points, and those who self-identified as Independents increased by 3 percentage points (see Figure 1).

Overall, as Figure 1 illustrates, Latino voters have a long-standing attachment to Democrats. Latino partisanship, thus, is like Anglo partisanship (i.e., once established it is not easily changed by political campaigns; Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Green, Palmquist, & Schickler, 2004; Miller & Shanks, 1996). Nevertheless, we must recognize the possibility that many traditionally Democratic Latino voters increasingly vote Republican or change their partisan allegiance as their socioeconomic circumstances improve. These new socioeconomic circumstances may not only alter policy perspectives, but because they are often associated with living in more heterogeneous neighborhoods and working in more integrated environments, Latinos may increasingly deal with neighbors and colleagues who may have different political inclinations and attachments than did members of their former neighborhoods and professional networks (Brown, 1981; Gimpel, 1999). In 2000, 57% of the total Latino population lived in neighborhoods in which they were less than half of the population; on average, Latinos lived in census tracts where only 7% of the residents were Hispanics (Pew Hispanic Center, 2005).<sup>2</sup> Moreover, individuals with conservative attitudes on social welfare issues, including many Latinos (Coffin, 2003; de la Garza et al., 1992), are more likely than individuals with liberal views on those issues to

**Figure 1**  
**Latino Partisanship Evolution, 1990-2004**



move their party identification in the Republican direction (Layman & Carsey, 2002, p. 219). Thus, Latinos in more integrated environments are likely to interact with individuals who are probably more conservative than their Latino neighbors and coworkers were and, hence, may be more likely to change their party attachment in favor of Republicans than those Latinos who remain in more homogeneous and traditional Latino environments. In other words, there may be a substantial pool of Latinos who could relatively easily switch from the Democrats to the Republicans, and this is probably the group Republicans have in mind with their Hispanic outreach.

As polarization increases between Democrats and Republicans (Evans, 2003), some individuals may change their issue position rather than their party ties, but conversely, some individuals may change their party attachments rather than their issue preference (Layman & Carsey, 2002). This is especially relevant regarding the Latino electorate because their party identification is

“shaped by both political and social factors” (Alvarez & Bedolla, 2003, p. 31) rather than by income. The majority of Latinos, for instance, tend to “describe themselves as moderate to conservative in roughly the same ratios as non-Hispanic whites” (Coffin, 2003, p. 216) and on certain issues, such as those regarding homosexuality, divorce, and abortion, among others, are more likely to take a conservative stand than are non-Hispanic Whites (Coffin, 2003). Moreover, those who have more conservative stands on a particular issue, such as abortion, are going to be more likely to move toward the Republican Party than those with more liberal positions, who will be more likely to move toward the Democratic Party.

This movement is going to be more evident among those individuals for whom this is a salient issue and who, based on their policy preference, may have compelling reasons to change their party ties (Carmines & Stimson, 1989). The change rate, however, is going to vary between the politically sophisticated and unsophisticated. The former are more likely to align their preferences with political elites’ cues than are the latter (Converse, 1964; Sniderman, Brody, & Tetlock, 1991; Zaller, 1992). So the sophisticated would be less likely to change their partisan ties than the unsophisticated. To the extent that sophistication is positively associated with education, the large number of less educated Latinos suggests that the pool of potential Republican converts could be quite large.

Overall, the literature suggests that it is quite plausible for Latinos to change their partisan attachments given their upward mobility, their social conservatism, and the large pool of voters who, because of lower education and familiarity with the political system, may be susceptible to Republican appeals. Our analysis will test the extent to which this possibility is being realized by analyzing the shift of Latino Democratic commitments to Republicans in 2000 and 2004.

## **Changes in Partisanship and Feelings Toward the Political Parties**

As previously mentioned, Latino party identification during the past decades seems to be quite stable. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily imply that at the individual level, partisanship or feelings toward the political parties have remained static. Table 1 illustrates aggregate changes in party identification over time. In 1990, almost 74% of those Latino registered voters who self-identified as Republicans have always done so, compared to 65% in 2004. On the other hand, 26% of those who identified

**Table 1**  
**Latino Partisan Change, 1990-2004**

Change	LNPS 1990		WP/UNI/TRPI 2004	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Always considered myself a Republican	73.69	381	65.45*	180
Identified with the Democratic Party in the past	26.31	136	34.55	95
Always considered myself a Democrat	95.93	1,108	88.93*	755
Identified with the Republican Party in the past	4.07	47	11.07	94

Source: de la Garza, Falcon, Garcia, and Garcia (1989-1990) and Washington Post, Univision, and Tomás Rivera Policy Institute (2004).

Note: LNPS = Latino National Political Survey; WP/UNI/TRPI = Washington Post, Univision, and Tomás Rivera Policy Institute.

\*The differences are statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

themselves as Republican in 1990 formerly identified as Democrats, whereas in 2004, 35% of those who identified as Republicans formerly identified Democrats. In comparison, almost 96% of those who identified as Democrats in 1990 have always done so, compared to 89% in 2004.

What are the demographic characteristics of those who have changed parties? Those who previously identified as Democrats and now consider themselves Republicans are very similar to those who previously identified with the Republican Party and now consider themselves Democrats. Both on average are high school graduates, are around 54 years of age, and have an average household income between \$35,000 and \$49,999. Although the changes from one party to the other are not statistically significant, Table 1 indicates that Latino partisanship at the individual level is not static. Moreover, there is some movement toward both the Democratic and Republican parties.

Intimately related to those who changed parties are those who have changed their feelings toward a particular party. Table 2 shows how respondents' feelings about the parties have changed in recent years.<sup>3</sup> Overall, there was a 24 percentage point increase in those who felt closer to the Democrats between 2000 and 2004, an 18 percentage point decrease in those who did not change their feelings toward any of the parties, and a 19 percentage point increase in those who felt closer to the Republicans.

**Table 2**  
**Change in Feelings Toward the Political Parties, 2000-2004**

Feelings	TRPI (2000)		WP/UNI/TRPI (2004)		% Change
	%	n	%	n	
Feel closer to Democrats	28.15	538	35.04	528	24.48*
No change	54.89	1,049	44.86	676	-18.27*
Feel closer to Republicans	16.95	324	20.11	303	18.64*

Source: Tomás Rivera Policy Institute (2000) and Washington Post, Univision, and Tomás Rivera Policy Institute (2004).

Note: TRPI = Tomás Rivera Policy Institute; WP/UNI/TRPI = Washington Post, Univision, and Tomás Rivera Policy Institute.

\*The differences are statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

**Table 3**  
**Change in Feelings Toward the Political Parties**  
**By Party Identification, 2000-2004**

Party ID	Closer to Democrats				Neither				Closer to Republicans			
	2000		2004		2000		2004		2000		2004	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Republican	2.67	14	4.05	21	17.86	177	14.4	93	55.27	173	56.4	163
Independent	16.79	88	15.03	78	23.11	229	28.33	183	24.92	78	20.76	60
Democrat	80.53	422	80.92	420	59.03	585	57.28	370	19.81	62	22.84	66
Total	100.0	524	100.0	519	100.0	991	100.0	646	100.0	313	100.0	289

Source: Tomás Rivera Policy Institute (2000) and Washington Post, Univision, and Tomás Rivera Policy Institute (2004).

Note: The differences are not statistically significant.

In terms of socioeconomic characteristics, individuals who moved closer to either party were similar. Both were middle-aged registered voters (52 years old), with a high school education and a total household income between \$35,000 and \$49,999. However, when we cross-tabulate the change in feelings toward the political parties and respondents' partisan attachments, a different picture emerges (see Table 3). The proportion of self-identified Democrats who felt closer to the Republican Party in 2000 and 2004 outnumbers the proportion of self-identified Republicans who felt

closer to the Democrats. Although the size of these changes is not statistically significant, the pattern of Table 3, if it continues, may be indicative of the beginning of a gradual partisan shift toward the Republican Party.

So far, our data suggest that, proportionally speaking, more Latino registered voters have always considered themselves Democrats and that a few have changed their partisan identity one way or the other, but not in statistically significant proportions. When partisan identities are taken into account, the changes across parties and feelings toward them are not statistically significant. These patterns illustrate that partisanship once established is quite difficult to change, even though feelings about parties may change in statistically significant ways. This fluctuation may indicate that as voters assimilate new information about their political party's competence in handling current issues or about its policy positions, they may change their feelings toward the party with which they identify without necessarily changing their partisan identification.

Do the changes in feelings validate claims that Latinos will abandon their historic support for Democrats and support Republicans instead? To answer this question, we run two multinomial logistic models, one for 2000 and another for 2004. These models capture traditional socioeconomic characteristics and retrospective and economic evaluations of the president and the national and personal economic situation, respectively (e.g., Kinder & Kiewiet, 1981; Kramer, 1983). In both multinomial models, we test why some Latino registered voters felt closer to a particular party. The outcome variable for both models gauges how Latino registered feelings about the parties have changed in recent years, that is, if they felt much closer or somewhat closer to the Democrats or Republicans than they used to.

The predictor variables for the year 2000 weigh the effects of policy preferences, of perceptions about personal financial situations, of perceptions regarding whether the national economy had gotten worse, better, or remained the same, of feelings toward a particular candidate, of socioeconomic status, and of issue congruency as a proxy for political sophistication (see the appendix for a description of the variables), that is, if they support candidates whose policy positions match their policy preferences. For instance, respondents were asked if a particular issue (i.e., gun control, school vouchers, and abortion) was very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, or not at all important. Then, they were asked which presidential candidate (Bush or Gore) was closer to their opinion on that particular issue. If a respondent was able to identify a candidate who was closer to his or her opinion, then he or she would have congruent preferences. If those who felt closer to the Republican or Democratic Party did not hold policy views

congruent with a candidate's or his party's, we interpret that to mean that they are voting on personal rather than policy-based grounds. In this case, we suggest that there would be little reason to support or remain loyal to any particular party in a future election where a candidate's personal characteristics were not very salient.

We use multinomial regression to estimate the effect of the independent variables on feelings toward the respective parties. This technique loses less information than techniques such as running multiple logistic regressions for each pair of outcomes that necessarily changes the sample size of each analysis or collapsing the dependent variable response categories to two (feeling closer to the Democratic Party or feeling closer to the Republican Party). Given that the Latino electorate has had a historical Democratic commitment, we use those who have changed their feelings from being much closer to the Democratic Party as the base category. This means that the regression coefficients report the impact of each independent variable on the three categories of the dependent variable relative to the base category.

Our analysis indicates that the expected probability that the average Latino registered voter would feel much closer to the Republicans is 8%,<sup>4</sup> whereas the expected probability that a Latino registered voter would feel much closer to the Democrats is 42%, and 31% and 19% are expected to feel somewhat closer to the Democrats and Republicans, respectively. The analysis identified different statistically significant variables for each category of our dependent variable. The odds that a Latino registered voter felt much closer to the Republican Party rather than to the Democratic Party are 5 times ( $e^{1.62}$ ) greater among those who liked Bush. By contrast, the odds that a Latino voter felt much closer to the Republicans rather than to the Democrats were only 0.22 times greater among those who liked Gore (see Table 4).

Overall, these results suggest that in 2000, those who felt closer to the Republican Party did so because they liked the Republican candidate and not because of ideological or socioeconomic reasons (see Table 4). This explanation is consistent with the Republican strategy developed in 2000 that positioned Bush as "a different kind of Republican" (Marbut, 2005), one more sensitive and welcoming toward Latino issues. In other words, this movement seems to be toward Bush the individual candidate rather than Bush the Republican nominee. Moreover, our findings could be viewed as supportive of our hypothesis regarding the low likelihood that the politically sophisticated would change their feelings toward their political party.

The analysis of voter feelings toward the political parties in the 2004 presidential election, in addition to testing the effect of respondents' views on the economy, their personal financial situation, their approval of George W. Bush

**Table 4**  
**Multinomial Logistic Regression Analysis:**  
**Candidates, Issues, and Socioeconomic Variables on Feelings Toward the Political Parties, 2000**

Variable	Much Closer to Republicans			Somewhat Closer to Republicans			Somewhat Closer to Democrats		
	Coef.	Z	P >  Z	Coef.	Z	P >  Z	Coef.	Z	P >  Z
Like Bush	1.62**	8.63	0	0.84**	6.36	0	0.11	1.41	0.16
Like Gore	-1.5**	-9.39	0	-1.22**	-8.14	0	-0.27*	-1.97	0.05
Issue congruency	-0.11	-0.66	0.51	-0.29**	-2.01	0.04	-0.23**	-2.04	0.04
Ideology	0	-0.01	1	-0.11	-1.21	0.23	-0.15**	-2.03	0.04
National economy	-0.28	-1.08	0.28	-0.5**	-2.17	0.03	-0.01	-0.06	0.96
Personal finances	-0.35	-1.4	0.16	0.15	0.63	0.53	0.03	0.15	0.88
Income	0.09	1.02	0.31	0.08	1.01	0.32	0.18**	2.81	0.01
Education	0.04	0.28	0.78	0.13	1.09	0.28	-0.06	-0.69	0.49
Age	0.01	0.68	0.5	-0.02	-1.82	0.07	-0.02	-3.13	0
Constant	-1.37	-1.82	0.07	0.45	0.68	0.5	0.71	1.35	0.18

Note: Base category = much closer to the Democrats. Coefficients for the effect of each independent variable on each category of the dependent variable relative to the base category. N = 691; LR  $\chi^2(27) = 509.53$ ; Pr >  $\chi^2 = .0000$ ; pseudo  $R^2 = .2771$ ; log likelihood = -664.  
 \*Significant at 5%. \*\*Significant at 1%.

as president, if they particularly liked a candidate, and their socioeconomic characteristics, also included two variables related to the Iraq war, namely, if they thought that the war was worth fighting and if they thought the war contributed to the long-term security of the United States. Our results suggest that there were only two factors that were associated with the movement toward the Republican Party: Those who moved closer to the Republican Party rather than to the Democratic Party did so because they approved Bush's job as president and because their personal financial situation did not change or got better throughout 2003 (see Table 5). The former were 9 times ( $e^{2.23}$ ) more likely to feel much closer to the Republican Party rather than to the Democratic Party, whereas the latter were almost 2.5 times ( $e^{0.91}$ ) more likely to do so. According to our model, the expected probability that the typical Latino registered voter would move much closer to the Democratic Party is around 55%, whereas around 18% would be expected to move much closer to the Republican Party, and 16% and 11% would be expected to feel somewhat closer to the Democrats and Republicans, respectively.

The results presented in this part of the article suggest that those Latino registered voters who felt much closer to the Republicans in 2000 did so primarily because they liked the Republican candidate. In other words, the movement is triggered primarily by personal evaluations of the candidate rather than because of policy preferences or ideological differences *per se*. In 2004, those who felt much closer to the Republicans rather than to the Democrats did so because they approved Bush's job as president and because their personal financial situation did not change or got better throughout 2003.

Thus far, two of the three indicators used in this article (partisan ties and change in feelings toward any of the political parties) to test if the Latino electorate has abandoned its historic attachment to the Democratic Party and identifies with the Republican Party instead suggest that over time, more Latino registered voters have always considered themselves Democrats and feel much closer to the Democratic Party than to the Republican Party. Those who feel much closer to the Republican Party do so because of their evaluation of the candidate and not because of ideology. The issue that remains unanswered concerns the validity of Republican claims that given Latinos' social conservatism and upward mobility, they are ready for conversion to the Republican Party and, hence, ready to support its candidates during election times. In the next section of the article, we evaluate this claim by testing if Latino upward socioeconomic mobility and Latino social conservatism affected the likelihood of supporting the Republican candidate in the 2004 presidential election.

**Table 5**  
**Multinomial Logistic Regression Analysis:**  
**Candidates, Issues, and Socioeconomic Variables on Feelings Toward the Political Parties, 2004**

Variable	Much Closer to Republicans			Somewhat Closer to Republicans			Somewhat Closer to Democrats		
	Coef.	Z	P >  Z	Coef.	Z	P >  Z	Coef.	Z	P >  Z
Like Bush	0.38	0.78	0.44	0.27	0.51	0.61	-0.23	-0.73	0.47
Like Kerry	-2.16**	-4.39	0	-1.39**	-2.5	0.01	0.63	0.77	0.44
National economy	0.29	1.07	0.29	0.33	1.1	0.27	-0.1	-0.47	0.64
Personal finances	0.91**	3.22	0	0.47	1.52	0.13	0.23	1.03	0.3
Iraq worth	0.58	1.32	0.19	0.62	1.28	0.2	-0.17	-0.36	0.72
Iraq/national security	0.51	1.18	0.24	0.36	0.76	0.45	0.12	0.34	0.73
Approve Bush	2.23**	5.11	0	2.11**	4.32	0	0.46	1.01	0.31
Income	-0.06	-0.59	0.55	-0.08	-0.73	0.47	0.15	1.79	0.07
Education	0.23	1.66	0.1	0.16	1.02	0.31	0.04	0.33	0.74
Age	0	0.44	0.66	-0.03**	-2.42	0.02	-0.01	-0.96	0.34
Constant	-1.76	-1.63	0.1	-0.53	-0.47	0.64	-2.03	-1.88	0.06

Note: Base category = much closer to the Democrats. Coefficients for the effect of each independent variable on each category of the dependent variable relative to the base category.  $N = 455$ ; LR  $\chi^2(30) = 331.35$ ; Pr. >  $\chi^2 = .0000$ ; pseudo  $R^2 = .2972$ ; log likelihood = -391.85.  
 \*\*Significant at 1%.

## Latino Partisan Patterns in the 2004 Presidential Election

The geographic concentration of Latinos in electoral college-rich states and in some smaller battle ground states with substantial Latino populations such as Nevada, Colorado, and New Mexico, in combination with their socioeconomic mobility and social conservatism, made them a realistic target for Republican strategists who predicted that for President Bush to win reelection, he needed at least 40% of the Latino vote (Navarrette, 2004; Neal, 2004).

Depending on the exit poll one looks at,<sup>5</sup> Republicans got between 31.4% and 45.0% of the Latino vote in 2004. The Republican strategy was designed to mobilize its base and increase its percentages among nontraditional Republican voters such as Latinos (Kirk, 2005). Their Hispanic outreach focused on being sensitive and welcoming toward Latinos and their issues (Bumiller, 2006). In addition, they focused on positioning Bush as an individual and not as the Republican candidate.

Drawing on traditional and retrospective voting literature (e.g., Campbell et al., 1960; Nadeau & Lewis-Beck, 2001), we developed a model to estimate if Latino social conservatism and upward socioeconomic mobility explain Bush's Latino support. To do so, we run a logistic model in which the dependent variable is each respondent's vote intention for Bush or for Kerry. From the 2004 WP/Univision/TRPI survey, we will use a set of variables that measure sociodemographic, economic, religious, and political characteristics, which will permit us to test how likely Latino registered voters were to support the Republican presidential candidate. These variables are: respondent's approval-disapproval of the way George W. Bush was handling his job as president, respondent's partisan identification, respondent's age, respondent's total family income, respondent's education, respondent's religion, and if respondents were born-again or evangelical Christians. A description of the coding of the variables is located in the appendix. Table 6 shows the results of the logistic model. The model fits the data well, with a pseudo  $R^2 =$  of .72.<sup>6</sup>

Each coefficient describes the effect of each variable on the probability that Latino voters would have voted for Bush. For instance, going from being a high school graduate to having some college (see the appendix for the response categories) increases the probability of voting for Bush by no more than 6%.<sup>7</sup> In other words, each additional category of education multiplies the odds of voting for George W. Bush by 1.28 ( $e^{0.25}$ ). This pattern suggests that more-educated Latinos may increasingly vote Republican even if they do not

**Table 6**  
**Logistic Regression Analysis:**  
**Presidential Approval, Partisanship, Socioeconomic,**  
**and Religion on Vote Choice, Presidential Election 2004**

	Coef.	Z	P >  Z
Intercept	-1.40	-1.53	0.13
Approve Bush	2.53**	12.64	0.00
Party ID	-1.89**	-9.24	0.00
Age	0	-0.01	0.99
Income	-0.07	-0.82	0.41
Education	0.25*	2.00	0.05
Catholic	-0.1	-0.14	0.89
Protestant	0.14	0.13	0.90
Christian	0.44	0.34	0.73
Born again	1.24	1.08	0.28
Catholic × Born Again	-1.20	-0.98	0.33
Protestant × Born Again	-0.44	-0.28	0.78
Christian × Born Again	0.02	0.01	0.99

Note: Dependent variable: vote for Bush = 1, vote for Kerry = 0.  $N = 935$ ;  $K = 13$ ; residual deviance = 330.1; null deviance = 1,183.7 (difference = 853.6); pseudo  $R^2 = .7211$ .

\*Significant at 5%. \*\*Significant at 1%.

change their party identification, a trend that will benefit Republicans in the long term.

By contrast, income has an insignificant effect on the probability of voting for George W. Bush; that is, wealthier Latino voters are not more likely to vote for Bush. This pattern is consistent with prior research indicating that income does not have a statistically significant effect on Latino partisanship and on Latino voting behavior (Alvarez & Bedolla, 2003; Cain, Kiewiet, & Uhlaner, 1991).

According to Table 6, none of the religion variables proved to be statistically significant; however, being Catholic decreased the probability of voting for George W. Bush; whereas being Protestant and Christian increased the probability, but not to a statistically significant level. It is especially noteworthy that identifying as a Christian and as born again has no statistically significant impact on the probability of voting for Bush, although its sign is in the theoretical direction that Republican strategists speculated. That is, being Christian and born again is positively associated with the probability of voting for Bush, but the impact is not statistically significant.

These results contrast with exit polls findings that suggested that religion was positively associated with voter preferences (for a discussion, see Leal, Barreto, Lee, & de la Garza, 2005). Although we may never know the truth about the number of Latino voters who voted for Bush, it is obvious that this number increased from 2000. On one hand, as previously mentioned, exit polls suggest that Bush got between 31.4% and 45.0% of the Latino vote. On the other hand, our results suggest that it is very unlikely that partisans would vote against their party preferences because Latinos are committed Democrats. So the question here is, how can we explain this paradox?

There are two plausible explanations. One is that after the October survey something happened to the Latino vote that the WP/Univision/TRPI survey could not catch. For instance, it may be the case that religious groups and political action committees intensified their message and outreach in favor of the Republican candidate, and this translated into more votes for Bush. Another explanation that seems more reasonable because of historical patterns has to do with turnout. That is, those Latino voters who turned out to vote were the ones who were more likely to vote for Bush.

In summary, the results presented in this section only marginally suggest that Latino voters are ready for a partisan conversion. Upward mobility in terms of income did not have a statistically significant effect on increasing the odds of voting for George W. Bush. Also, social conservatism, defined in terms of religion and being born again, did not yield any statistically significant effect on the odds of voting for the Republican candidate. Nonetheless, the direction of the effect of being Christian and being born again was in the theoretical direction suggested by Republican strategists. More significantly, increased education increases the likelihood of voting Republican. Nonetheless, although more Latinos voted for Bush in 2004 than in 2000, this increase seems to have more to do with the characteristics of those who turned out to vote than with a partisan or ideological realignment of the Latino electorate.

## **Conclusion**

Latino registered voters who moved much closer to the Republicans in 2000 did so because they liked the Republican candidate. Our analysis suggests that it is a by-product of Bush's personal characteristics and experience in aggressively pursuing Hispanic voters as a governor, as a candidate, and as president. In 2000, those who moved much closer to the Republican

Party rather than to the Democratic Party did so because they liked Bush, whereas in 2004, those who moved much closer to the Republican Party did so because they approved of the way George W. Bush was handling his job as president and because of their perceptions regarding their personal financial situation. In other words, our findings suggest that voters' evaluations of individual candidates' characteristics are substantially independent from partisan ideologies. Latino voters may move closer to the Republican Party because they collect new information and temporarily change their views of Republican candidates or of the party itself without necessarily changing the partisan allegiances or vote intentions.

Republican claims that Latinos are ready for conversion because of their socioeconomic mobility and social conservatism are only marginally validated here. Upward mobility in terms of income does not have a statistically significant effect on increasing the odds of voting for George W. Bush. Education produced different results. Each additional category of schooling increased the odds of voting for the Republican candidate by 1.28 times, suggesting that the more politically sophisticated segments of the Latino electorate are more likely to vote for Republicans. This could be unwelcome news for Republicans, however, because it suggests that as the Latino electorate grows because of new young voters and naturalized immigrants, the pool of unsophisticated voters (i.e., the less educated) will expand much more rapidly than will the ranks of the higher educated. In addition, social conservatism defined in terms of religion and being born again did not yield any statistically significant effects on the odds of voting for the Republican candidate.

In conclusion, our analysis indicates that it is very unlikely that Latinos will abandon their historic attachment and support for the Democratic and start supporting the Republican Party in comparable terms. Although Latinos may change their partisan attachments over the course of their lifetime, currently their movements toward Republicans seem more motivated by personal evaluations of the candidates than by ideological realignments. We should also note that our conclusions may not account for the rise in Republican support in 2004. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the increase in Bush's support may be strongly candidate based, but it may also reflect strong policy positions (i.e., abortion and the war in Iraq). Nonetheless, as has been noted, the patterns immediately prior to the election do not suggest a major partisan realignment toward the Republican Party. Our conclusion is that, in the aggregate, Latinos are not Republicans and they know it.

## Appendix

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Dependent and Independent Variables Used in the Multinomial Regression Models Reported in Tables 4 and 5

Feelings: “Which of the following statements best describes how your feelings about the parties have changed in recent years?”

1 = I feel much closer to the Democrats than I used to.

2 = I feel somewhat closer to the Democrats than I used to.

3 = I feel somewhat closer to the Republicans than I used to.

4 = I feel much closer to the Republicans than I used to.

Like Bush: “Because of the kind of person George W. Bush is, how much do you like or dislike him? Would you say that you very much like, somewhat like, somewhat dislike, or very much dislike him?”

-2 = very much dislike him

-1 = somewhat dislike him

0 = no feelings

1 = somewhat like him

2 = very much like him

Like Gore/like Kerry: “Because of the kind of person Al Gore[John Kerry] is, how much do you like or dislike him? Would you say that you very much like, somewhat like, somewhat dislike, or very much dislike him?”

-2 = very much dislike him

-1 = somewhat dislike him

0 = no feelings

1 = somewhat like him

2 = very much like him

Issue congruency:

0 = very incongruent

1 = somewhat incongruent

2 = somewhat congruent

3 = very congruent

Ideology:

-3 = extremely liberal

-2 =

-1 =

0 = neutral/don't know

1 =

2 =

3 = extremely conservative

National Economy: “Now thinking about the economy in the country as a whole, would you say that over the past year the nation's economy has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?”

-1 = gotten worse

0 = about the same

1 = gotten better

Personal Finances: "What about your personal financial situation? Over the past year, has it gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?"

- 1 = gotten worse
- 0 = about the same
- 1 = gotten better

Income: "What was your total household income last year before taxes?"

- up to \$15,000
- \$15,000-\$24,999
- \$25,000-\$34,999
- \$35,000-\$49,999
- \$50,000-\$64,999
- \$65,000-\$79,999
- \$80,000-\$99,999
- \$100,000 and above

Education: "What is the last grade of school you completed?"

- grade school or less
- some high school
- high school graduate
- some college
- college graduate
- graduate

Age: "In what year were you born?"

- 18-97 years old

Iraq Worth: "Was Iraq worth fighting for?"

- 0 = No, it was not worth fighting for.
- 1 = Yes, it was worth fighting for.

Iraq/National Security: "Has the war with Iraq contributed to national security?"

- 0 = no, has not contributed
- 1 = yes, has contributed

Approve Bush: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president?"

- 0 = disapprove how George W. Bush is handling his job as president
- 1 = approve how George W. Bush is handling his job as president

Independent Variables Used in the Logistic Regression Model Reported in Table 6  
Vote:

- 1 = Bush
- 0 = Kerry

Approve Bush: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president?"

- 1 = approve how George W. Bush is handling his job as president
- 0 = neither approve nor disapprove
- 1 = disapprove how George W. Bush is handling his job as president

Party ID: "Do you generally consider yourself [ROTATE: a Democrat, a Republican] or an Independent?"

- 1 = Republican
- 0 = Independent
- 1 = Democrat

Age: Respondent's age

Income: "What was your total family income last year before taxes?"

- 1 = up to \$15,000
- 2 = \$15,000-\$24,999
- 3 = \$25,000-\$34,999
- 4 = \$35,000-\$49,999
- 5 = \$50,000-\$64,999
- 6 = \$65,000-\$79,999
- 7 = \$80,000-\$99,999
- 8 = \$100,000 and more

Education: "What is the last grade of school you completed?"

- 1 = grade school or less (no schooling or Grade 1 through 8)
- 2 = some high school (Grade 9 through 12)
- 3 = high school graduate
- 4 = some college/vocational (technical) school
- 5 = college graduate (BA, BS)
- 6 = graduate (MA, MS, MBA, MPA, MD, MDiv, MEd, JD, EdD, PhD, etc.)

Religion Indicator Variables: "Regardless of whether you now attend any religious services, do you consider yourself closest to Catholic, Protestant, or something else?"

Catholic:

- 1 = Catholic
- 0 = Other

Protestant:

- 1 = Protestant (JUST)
- 0 = Other

Christian:

- 1 = Christian
- 0 = Other

Other:

- 1 = Other religious tradition or denomination
- 0 = Other

Born again: "Would you consider yourself a born-again or evangelical Christian or not?"

- 0 = no
  - 1 = yes
-

## Notes

1. In this article, we use the terms *Latino* and *Hispanic* interchangeably to refer to persons in the United States who can trace their ancestry to the Spanish-speaking regions of Latin America and the Caribbean.

2. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, this pattern of residential dispersal holds to some extent for Latino immigrants and for low-income Latinos.

3. It should be emphasized that the change refers to aggregate differences between two independent samples and should not be seen as the results of a panel study measuring individual-level changes over time.

4. The expected probability is the probability that a particular outcome will occur for each unobserved future data point.

5. It is important to note that the correlation between pre-election poll results and exit poll results in 2004 was unusually low and gave rise to significant debates regarding the accuracy of the latter. There were three exit polls in 2004. The first was conducted by Edison/Mitofsky for the National Election Pool, the second was conducted by the *Los Angeles Times*, and the third was conducted by the Willie C. Velazquez Research Institute. See Leal, Barreto, Lee, and de la Garza (2005) for a detailed analysis of the 2004 exit poll controversy.

6. McFadden's  $R^2$  compares the likelihood for the intercept-only model to the likelihood for the model with the predictors.

7. This number is obtained by using the "divide by 4 rule" (Gelman & Hill, in press). This point is where the derivative of the logistic function is maximized and thus gives an upper bound of the difference given to a unit difference in the predictor.

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