

**The International Politics of a New Latino America:
The Foreign Policy Preferences of Latinos and the National Interest***

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Abstract:

As the culture and society of the United States is being transformed with an influx of Latino immigration and the entrenchment of traditional Latin American migration sources, we are left with many unanswered questions regarding the course of American Politics. Foremost among them, and neglected to this point, are the impacts of a greater Latino population on America's external foreign relations. Samuel Huntington (2004) holds that the proliferation of Latinos will degrade the traditional national interest of America and thus harm the state's national security. The realities of Latino preferences have been completely unexplored and we have been left with snap judgments about the complex preference formations among the Latino population. It is important that we understand Latino preferences as a whole; especially in light of the Bush Doctrine, which shapes American military commitments after 9/11. What preferences does the Latino population hold for U.S. combat operations? Do Latinos express the traditional foreign policy preferences of other American groups or is a new multicultural path emerging? The final important question regards what impact the Bush Doctrine will have on Latin American-U.S. relations. This article finds strong Latino support for typical U.S. foreign policies and high levels of patriotism exhibited by the population, suggesting that Latinos will support the national interest of the United States. There is nothing to fear because, as I argue, Latinos support the national security goals of the United States of America.

Keywords: Latinos, Citizenship, Voting preferences, U.S.-Latin America relations

Latinos are very thin regarding their involvement in US foreign policy and a plea was made that Latinos become more involved, indeed, that they cannot help but be more involved in the future. (Orozco and Wainer 2002.)

Introduction

Latino/Hispanic-Americans are the largest growing segment of the United States population.¹ Over the last 30 years, the Latino population has tripled.² Latino voter registration continues to increase with each national election, and there are still many more Latinos that have not bothered to begin the voter registration process. It is clear the Latino segment of the population is growing, and its impact on society needs to be understood empirically.

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As the culture and society of America is being transformed with an influx of Latino immigration and the entrenchment of traditional migration sources, we are left with many unanswered questions regarding the course of American Politics and public opinion. Foremost among them, and widely neglected to this point, is the impact of a greater Latino population on the United States' foreign relations.³ What preferences will this group have, especially when compared to the American public-at-large? Will they be traditional or diverge from American public opinion at large? Critics of the Latino group contend that the group's disloyalty will shift the focus away from important American foreign policy concerns and will eventually bring down the state. This paper attempts to sort out Latino interests by looking at their current preferences in comparison with Anglos. Furthermore, it calls for research that can best categorize what might be called a Latino foreign relations mindset.

The question of Latino external preferences is important due to suggestions of disloyalty by academics and pundits alike. Samuel Huntington holds that the proliferation of Latinos will degrade the traditional national character of America and thus harm the state's national security (Huntington 2004a; 2004b). To put it more starkly (not to suggest that Huntington is linked to this faction), the Arizona Minuteman Project expresses its concerns bluntly on its webpage: "Future generations will inherit a tangle of rancorous, unassimilated, squabbling cultures with no common bond to hold them together, and a certain guarantee of the death of this nation-state as a harmonious melting pot."⁴ Does an increase in the Latino population spell death for this nation-state?

The realities of Latino preferences are relatively unexplored and we have been presented with snap judgments about what in reality are complex preference formations among the Latino population. We must first begin to understand what the group thinks as a whole. In the future, we may seek to understand the diversity and complexity within the Latino ethnic group, for now it is important we understand the group as a collective and compare the group's preferences to the preferences of the rest of the American population. This comparison will take the form of a two-stage question. First, we must understand what the Latino group prescribes for foreign policy action and whether or not the goals they advocate differ from the general population. The second stage asks what response the Latino group displays when confronted with ongoing security operations. So we must ask, did Latinos view Iraq as a security threat like most of the American society prior to 2003 and do they support the War in Iraq once it began?

Most seem to assume that Latinos will look towards Latin America where foreign policy issues are concerned. The view is that Latinos are tied to their cultural homeland. Is this perception accurate? This research shows that Latino voters have similar opinions to the public, especially by those Latinos born in the United States. Is there a lack of support for American foreign policy preferences among the Latino community? In our appreciation, I contend, it would not be likely to find the disloyalty suggested by critics of Latino opinions.

This article will explore the complexities of Latino foreign policy preferences. First, we must ask if Latinos will express different foreign policy preferences than the rest of the United States general population. In doing so, I will ask if Latinos support current U.S. foreign policy

interests, including the War in Iraq and the Bush Doctrine. It is important to place Latino preferences in the context of the American national interest and the Bush Doctrine because future combat operations are framed in such a manner. Finally, I will come to some conclusions as to the status of Latino foreign policy preferences and suggest some future directions for research.

The National Interest and Latinos

The most important factor in foreign policy decision-making is the national or vital interest. Do state foreign policy choices reflect the best outcome for a rational self-interested actor (the state)? One suggested result, of an influx of Latino voters in the United States, is that the U.S. national interest might be diluted and therefore, could pose a threat to the integrity of the nation-state. "If multiculturalism prevails and if the consensus on liberal democracy disintegrates, the United States could join the Soviet Union on the ash heap of history." (Huntington 1997, 35) Accordingly, in Huntington's view, diversity brings about the destruction of the state. In this section, I will define my understanding of the terms national interest and assimilation. Thus, I will explain how Latinos might be seen as a threat to the national interest if one were to misinterpret those concepts.

The goal of this paper is to understand the relationship between Latinos and national interest in the aftermath of 9/11. First off, we must define what we understand for the term national interest. This is no easy task, because of the on-going debate among specialists, within the international relations field, as to what it is meant as national interest, as a concept, and what it is in practice. Generally, there is a tendency to equate the national interest with the national security of the state. Yet, the term has been used by many to support political perspectives felt significant to their own interests. In that respect, we must first settle for a consistent definition of the term. Doing this, will help refute the claims made by Huntington by pointing out what the national interest is and how cultural diversity cannot harm external vital interests.

Hans Morgenthau (1948), the exemplar of political realism, suggests that the national interest is a clearly defined concept connected to maintaining national survival. To him it was the irreducible minimum of foreign policy practices. "Thus all nations do what they cannot help but do, protect their physical, policy, and cultural identity against the encroachments of other nations." (Morgenthau 1952, 148) Therefore, one state cannot possibly ignore the national interest, since allowing the concept to wither away means that the state itself will wither away.

A clear statement of the national interest by Morgenthau is that it "encompasses the integrity of the nation's territory, of its political institutions, and of its culture." (Morgenthau 1952, 148) The national interest is clearly the survival of a nation-state in its pure form. The goal is to maintain one's territory, a state's way of life, and its cultural system. Here, it is important to point out that cultural systems are just as significant as the territorial integrity. If and when, the culture of a state is threatened, the state, as a whole, is, as well, susceptible. It is in this line of reasoning that some critics contend that multiculturalism and diversity imperils the existence of the state. Morgenthau also cautioned about the national interest. "The necessary elements of the national interest have a tendency to swallow up the variable elements so that in

the end all kinds of objectives, actual or potential, are justified in the terms of national survival.” (Morgenthau 1952, 149)

It must be asked if Latinos could threaten the American national interest. Are Latinos a danger to the territory, institutions, and culture of the U.S.? The national interest refers to the internally constructed preferences of who might be a threat to the state from the outside. It is difficult to argue that Latino culture and institutions could dilute the American culture and institutions, in general, because several aspects of Latino culture have shaped American culture. This is what assimilation is in its original form (Alba and Nee 2003). The term national interest refers, as stated above, to outside threats not inside ones. Secondly, it is hard to argue that Latinos would have in mind the destruction of the territorial integrity of the United States. The apprehension that Latinos “look to the South” only could mean that they are concerned with their family roots. It does not mean that Latinos would want to place first the interests of their countries of origin or erase territorial boundaries of the United States. Latinos, just as the early English settlers did, look to their home countries for news, fashion, and cultural events. The recent upsurge in Latino immigration is not significantly different from past immigration movements.

The remaining question is whether or not an increase of the Latino population can change what Americans conceive of as the national interest. Huntington (1997, 33) notes, “in the past, assimilation, American style, in Peter Salins’ phrase, involved an implicit contract in which immigrants were welcomed as equal members of the national community and urged to become citizens, provided they accepted English as the national language and committed themselves to the principles of the American Creed and the Protestant work ethic. In return, immigrants could be as ethnic as they wished in their homes and local communities.” The danger comes from those groups that are not Anglo and do express diversity in outward appearance and preferences, which may influence external preferences.

Huntington, I contend, could be seen as an example of scholars who lament the end of the Cold War. “Its end is likely to weaken or at least alter that identity.” (Huntington 1997, 31) Without an “other” to demonize, some scholars believe, multiculturalism will weaken American power; challenges to the empire will thus, now come from within.

In reference to the issue of assimilation or lack thereof, as argued by Huntington, why would this lead to the end of the nation-state? The term must first be compared to acculturation. Acculturation means the minority or new group adopts the practices of the dominant group (Alba and Nee 2003, 23). Assimilation, on the other hand, is a two-way process in which the sharing and blending of cultures produces a new dominant culture. Formally, it is defined as the decline of an ethnic distinction and its corollary of cultural and social differences (Alba and Nee 2003, 11). Consequently, the minority group has to be able to express an opinion and change the preferences of the dominant group, if assimilation is to be evident.

Before we proceed, we must ask who can affect foreign policy. Traditional realists hold that the state makes foreign policy, not the people. Very little research has been done on the question of ethnic groups and their influence on national interest. There is a paucity of empirical

research that could soundly demonstrate that any of these groups can act in detriment of the foreign policy goals set by the state. Existent research suggests that the Israeli or the Cuban lobby (Haney and Vanderbush 2005) have a profound influence on American foreign policy. Mearsheimer and Walt (2007) find that the Israeli lobby has influenced the United States to adopt policies in opposition to national interest demands. Yet these examples are based on a superficial reading of history and positive case selection. Ignored are the instances when foreign policy choices are made against the wishes of the lobby groups, which consistently occur. More work that is empirical needs to be done on this topic, but it is unlikely to be fruitful since foreign policy decision-making is more nuanced than most critics assume. It is unlikely to be found that an ethnic or lobby group can ‘control’ American foreign policy. Therefore, it is also doubtful that a powerful ethnic group, whether assimilated or not, could be able to challenge the nation-state from within and divert its national interests.

Huntington’s most recent work has been focused on the “Hispanic Challenge” as he calls it (Huntington 2004a). He (Huntington 2004a, 30) charges that, “unlike past immigrant groups, Mexicans and other Latinos have not assimilated into mainstream U.S. culture, forming instead their own political and linguistic enclaves from Los Angeles to Miami and rejecting the Anglo-Protestant values that built the American dream.” His concern is that the increase in Latino population figures will result in a split of America, which threatens our political integrity.⁵ “The single most immediate and most serious challenge to America’s traditional identity comes from the immense and continuing immigration from Latin America especially from Mexico, and the fertility rates of these immigrants compared to black and white American natives.” (Huntington 2004a, 32)

Given that the concept of the national interest is complex, it is challenging to debate the meaning of a term that is usually loosely applied. Despite the fact that the majority of Huntington’s critiques of Latino culture are questionable, they do require attention and engagement. We must attempt to find out if Latinos, as a group, prefer divergent foreign policy goals from the rest of the population. We could see evidence of divergent goals if the Latino public viewed other threats as more important than those expressed by the majority of the public did. If this is the case, then critics like Huntington could be right to point out that ethnic groups endanger the national interests of a state. This is an empirical question that must be tested with data, and not conjecture as to the desires of Latinos in America. Few researchers try to understand the preferences of a group, which is the first question that should be answered before suggesting that these preferences may be detrimental to a state. Is it accurate to state that Latinos could dilute the national interest? Alternatively, is this just another case of opponents of the “other” class using the national interest to justify traditional forms of exclusion? What do Latinos really want and does this differ from what the rest of the country wants? These are the key questions that will be answered in the following pages.

The Bush Doctrine and Latinos

In this section, I will describe my understanding of the Bush Doctrine and apply it to the

current national interests established by United States foreign policy. The Bush Doctrine guides contemporary state action and it is important to ask what preferences Latinos have in relation to such principles. Latinos can only 'harm' the national interest if their preferences were to diverge from the goals of the current national interest.

In a New York Times article, Donald Rumsfeld, former Secretary of Defense, outlined the reasons for the use of force by American troops. "If U.S. lives are going to be put at risk, whatever is proposed to be done must be in the U.S. national interest." (Rumsfeld 2002) It is first important that action only be undertaken if it is in the national interest of the United States. In the introduction of the National Security Strategy document, President Bush notes: "The events of September 11, 2001 taught us that weak states, like Afghanistan, can pose a great danger to our national interests as strong states." (NSS 2002) Any idea of conflict among equals is therefore abandoned. Through low level conflict and terrorism, it is understood that rogue nations can indeed threaten the national security of the United States.

The concept of the national interest is crucial to the Bush Doctrine. As the National Security Strategy notes, "The U.S. national security strategy will be based on distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests. The aim of this strategy is to help make the world not just a safer place but better." The goal of U.S. strategy is to prevent our enemies from threatening our allies, our friends, and us with weapons of mass destruction. Once the United States considers its national interest threatened, the doctrine of the United States is to act early. As Rumsfeld puts it, "if it is worth doing, U.S. leadership should make a judgment as to when diplomacy has failed and act forcefully, early, during the pre-crisis period, to try to alter the behavior of others and to prevent the conflict." (Rumsfeld 2002) Accordingly, it is now considered prudent to act before a crisis begins in order ensure the security of the state.

The National Security Strategy defines foreign policy objectives including, "defending the United States, the American people, and our interests at home and abroad by identifying and destroying the threat before it reaches our borders. While the United States will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community, we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively against such terrorists, to prevent them from doing harm against our people and our country." The current official strategy of the United States is to act preemptively against any state that is perceived as a threat to its national interest. The empirical question remaining is what preferences Latinos have regarding the Bush Doctrine of preemptive action. If it is in our national interest to act beforehand against terrorist threats, do Latinos support the Bush Doctrine?

Aside from the general support of interventionist policies, we must also consider the interaction effects between an expanding Latino population and problematic issues related to Latin America. According to the policy makers of the U.S. Administration, the war on drugs and the war on terror appear to be connected. "Recent comments by the administration have moved the drug war and the anti-terror campaign into the same cluster of concerns that could result in U.S. intervention." (Orozco and Wainer 2002, 2) If the war on terror and the war on drugs are

connected, Latin America could be a battleground for American interests. In addition, the new focus on homeland security has led to increased calls for border security. What impact will these policies have on the dynamics of the Latino community? Because a significant number of Latinos support immigration, will the suggested connection between terrorist inflows and cutting off border access lead to a divergence of opinion between the Latino community and the overall U.S. population?

It is noteworthy that the underlying emphasis of the Bush Doctrine is on democracy and freedom. While the U.S. military may not be able to launch new interventions in Middle Eastern and Asian states due to lack of resources (manpower), if complications arose with Western Hemispheric democracies it is likely that the United States might feel compelled to intervene under the banner of the Bush Doctrine. It is feasible that in the near future, this policy could hit home (literally) for Latino-Americans. The change in strategy from reactionary to preemptive could lead to interventions in the Western Hemisphere given the U.S. dissatisfaction with Venezuela, a change of leadership in Cuba, or alarm over the nationalization of domestic industries in Bolivia. It is important to look at Latino support for Iraq policies in that they will be indicative of future support for preemptive strategies. If Latinos fail to support preemptive strategies in the Middle East, it is evident that they will be even less likely to support interventions in Latin America.

Whether or not the public and specifically, Latinos agree with the Bush Doctrine is a normative question. The goal therefore is to understand the general support for the policies that reflect the national interest of the United States. If Latinos diverge from the public and prefer different goals, then we might see an internal conflict over the direction of U.S. foreign policy. If we were to see similar support for the foreign policy objectives by Latinos and the majority of the U.S. population, then there could be little evidence to assist the critics who suggest that Latinos might harm American national interests. The next section will review the state of knowledge regarding Latino foreign policy preferences.

Latino Preferences and Opinions

Reviewing the literature, there are several noteworthy facts about the Latino electorate and the Latino population. Mexicans and Puerto Ricans represent the majority of the Latino vote. Generally, the Latino population is young, less educated, and less politically active than Anglos (De la Garza and DeSipio 1996). Twenty-three percent of registered Latinos are of the ages 18-29; 15 percent of registered Anglos are of same age bracket.⁶ In this respect, the number of Latino voters would double if all adult Latinos in America were registered to vote.⁷

It is difficult to assert that the Latino population is not becoming integrated into the American mainstream society. As mentioned before, cultural assimilation implies that immigrant, assume the cultural values and norms of the dominant society (De la Garza, Falcon et al. 1996). Latinos usually recognize that assimilating into the American mainstream is an important step toward overall success in the U.S. A Chicago-Tribune article reported that a 2002 Pew Hispanic survey noted that 9 out of 10 Latinos believe proficiency in English is important to success in America.⁸

Generally, the children of second-generation immigrants learn English as a first, and in some cases such as my own, as the only language to use in their daily lives. Even those that do not successfully learn English are not avoiding learning the language. It is likely that they are prevented from its acquisition because of problems with the education system. Schmid (2001, 79) notes, “racial and ethnic segregation and poor and under funded urban schools rather than lack of desire to learn English are major factors in insufficient English communications skills and low education attainment.” Consequentially, one cannot assert, as Huntington (2004b, 221) does that “[...] developments occurred that if continued, could change America into a cultural bifurcated Anglo-Hispanic society with two national languages.” Latino immigrants generally strive to learn the language, their children, usually learn to speak English, and if any group does not, it is because of lack of education opportunities, a traditional responsibility of the state.

The cited Pew Hispanic survey noted that, “(Latino) English speakers and second-generation immigrants are much more likely to accept divorce, abortion and homosexuality.” (Dorning 2002) Barreto and Munoz (2005, 2) state that “Mexican Americans, and more generally Latinos, are being incorporated into American society successfully; and evidence of Hispanization is evidence of incorporation into the larger American culture, not resistance to it.” The Latino population clearly does not reject standard societal norms in America.

It is hard to gather a consistent view of all Latino groups’ policy preferences. The group tends to be difficult to consolidate into established American political categories. A Pew Hispanic report noted, “[...] though most Latinos identify with the Democratic Party, this party affiliation comes with a notable ambivalence, and on some social issues they express a conservatism that sets them apart from their white counterparts.”⁹ Almost exactly half of the Latino population (49%) considers itself Democrat, while 20 percent, Republican, and 19 percent, independent.¹⁰ Although a near majority of Latinos are Democrats, this party identification is not stable and consistent.

As far as electoral politics go, it was widely reported by the 2004 polls of the National Election, the New York Times, and the Los Angeles Times that George W. Bush received 44 percent of the Latino vote, a figure that confounded many analysts. The William Velasquez Institute reported that Bush had as little as 31 percent Latino support in the election.¹¹ Nevertheless, another William Velasquez center report on exit polling found that 32 percent of the Latino voters thought Bush was making a greater effort to support the Latino community and Kerry gathered 37 percent of this sample. According to these figures, it is apparent that the Latino population represents a divided electorate.¹²

Regardless of the exit poll debate, there seems to be substantial support for the fact that Latinos voted for Bush in 2004 by wider margins than they supported Bush in 2000 (he received around 35 percent of the Latino vote in that election). It is unclear if this represents general support for Bush’s policies, support for moral values as an important electoral issue, or increased

outreach to Latinos as seen by such efforts as the proposal for a guest worker immigration program. A CNN report suggested that moral values, the economy, and terrorism/Iraq were the most important issues under consideration during the 2004 election.¹³ Support for Bush would have to align with voter preferences on these issues statistically, so there is likely strong Latino support for the Administration's stances on the issues.

In 2004, the Latino vote accounted for 9 percent of the total electoral vote. This number continues to rise as immigrants register to vote in greater numbers. There is also an increase in Latino voters due to the increased birth rate in the Latino community. Because many Latinos are immigrants or descendants of immigrants, they offer strong support (85 percent) for giving undocumented Latino workers the chance to become American citizens.¹⁴

The main flaw with political/news writing on the Latino vote is that it is often assumed that it can be lumped into a simple set of preferences. The perception is that Latinos are concerned with immigration, welfare/social service issues, and are generally watchful of foreign interactions with Latin America to the detriment of the U.S. worldwide foreign policy. These assumptions are not based on empirical data and must be researched before claiming them as facts and hoisted as warnings of the Latino political behavior. The next section will attempt to look at the actual dynamics of Latino foreign policy preferences.

Foreign Policy Opinions and Prior Research on Latino Foreign Policy Preferences

There has been little work done on Latino Foreign Policy preferences.¹⁵ The research that exists shows that Latinos do not have different foreign policy preferences from the rest of the country. An exception is the work done by the Thomas Rivera Policy Institute and its publication of a series of conferences in a book titled *Latinos and U.S. Foreign Policy*. De la Garza noted that Latinos tend to focus on civil rights and economic issues, rather than international issues (De la Garza 2000). The study suggests that generally, "Latinos, like most Americans at some point, typically turned their backs to their countries of origin." (Dominguez 2000, 157)

According to the aforementioned study, Latino elites have a weaker commitment to U.S. defense initiatives and are more focused on Latin America rather than Europe or other competing regions (Pachon, De la Garza et al. 2000). This pattern is not shocking in that it is consistent with any new immigration group's tradition to look to the homeland for news. "Another three out of four Latino leaders also say that what happens to the Hispanic/Latino community in the United States is more important to me than the state of U.S. relations with Latin America." (Pachon, De la Garza et al. 2000, 23) So while elites may be interested in Latin American news, they do not place a high degree of salience on Latin American-U.S. interactions. This finding is the opposite of Huntington's (2004b, 10) contention that "if immigration is making the United States a more Hispanic nation, we should orient ourselves primarily toward Latin America." Even Latino elites do not believe this should be the case, the country should deal with threats and problem where they arise, not deal with issues that only occur in certain regions.

While Latino elites generally view U.S. domestic issues as more important than Latin American ones, they generally believe that engagement by the United States is an important

Goal for the region. "Hispanic leaders are convinced that greater U.S. activity will have positive consequences for Latin America. Seven in ten (71%) say that more U.S. activity in the region would be better for Latin America." (Pachon, De la Garza et al. 2000, 25) Latino elites also believe that isolationism is wrong and take an active view of world politics (Pachon, De la Garza et al. 2000). The obvious difference between Latino elites and the population in general is a lack of concern for illegal immigration or drug interdiction. "The general public seems to place a good deal of more importance on stopping both illegal immigration and drugs than do Hispanic leaders." (Pachon, De la Garza et al. 2000, 27)

Latino elites give greater support for unilateral responses to international developments than the rest of the population (Pachon, De la Garza et al. 2000). This would suggest preliminary support for the Bush Doctrine and its inherent unilateralist tendencies. It may be that the Latino population is more likely to support the use of force and a "goes it alone" strategy than the majority population. The reasons behind that sentiment need to be investigated. Likely causes are greater willingness to use combat because there is no recent historical memory of the destructive power of international warfare in the Latin American region (at least in terms of mass invasions and world wars). It may also be a cultural factor within the Latino population, such as a sense of machismo, which might lead to this empirical finding.

Huntington (1997) suggests that a migration group within the state will not support their adopted country. "Now, diasporas in the United States support their home (homeland) governments." (Huntington 1997, 39) Taking an alternative view of the relationship between Mexican-American and Mexican policies, de la Garza and DeSipio (1998, 401) find "that Mexican Americans have developed policy attitudes that diverge from those of Mexico." The authors make the assertion that the Mexican-American population seems similar to the Italian-American population. These populations will drop the deep ties to their home countries yet still exhibit intense pride in their racial identifications and culture. The examples of Cuban and Jewish-American deep ties to home or adopted countries are not exhibited by policy opinions of the Mexican-American population. We do not need to worry about Mexican-Americans being a "source of spies used to gather information for their homeland governments" as Huntington (1997, 39) puts it.

Prior research has shown that it is not true that Latinos are less patriotic than the rest of the American population. In fact, the novel finding is that Latinos are more patriotic than Anglos in general. "Mexican-Americans of every acculturation level express higher levels of patriotism than Anglos do, and these differences are statistically significant for two of the six acculturation categories. In other words, overall Anglos and Mexican-Americans do not differ in their patriotism because of ethnic characteristics, but when they do it is the Mexican-American who is more patriotic." (de la Garza, Falcon et al. 1996, 343-344) It is possible that Anglos might want to examine their own role on the American national interest in light of these findings. Latinos are generally more patriotic because they are appreciative of the role their adopted country has taken in improving their lives and do not want to be seen as any less American - thus open to racist attacks.

Furthermore, the idea of a strong Latino foreign policy lobby is strongly discredited by empirical evidence. For one, there is a profound lack of scholars and practitioners of Latino descent involved in academia or government service. According to Hakim and Rosales (2000, 133), "The Hispanic American community exerts almost no systematic influence on U.S.-Latin American relations or, for that matter, on U.S. foreign policy in general." Excluding the Cuban subgroup, in general the Latino group has limited access or motivation to influence U.S. foreign policy outcomes. Thus, it is difficult to allege that Latinos, at least elite Latinos, will dilute American national interest.

Latinos are not out of touch with the mainstream American public when it comes to foreign policy preferences, but what of recent events? The central contribution of this research effort is an evaluation of recent Latino foreign policy preferences in light of the Bush Doctrine and whether or not the group represents a non-mainstream faction exhibiting different foreign policy opinions when compared to the general public. The Bush Doctrine represents an active foreign policy agenda and one should empirically understand the dynamics of Latino support or disapproval of the general policies advocated from the Bush Doctrine before it could be suggested that Latinos are disloyal Americans. It is also important to understand the national interest as a concept and how Latinos who enter voter roles in the future may affect it in the future. Huntington (2004b, 222) suggests that Mexican immigration differs from that of the past in that this population will not support U.S. policies. Is this the case empirically?

Research Design and Hypotheses

This article has reviewed a few factors in relation to Latino foreign policy opinions and some general statements can be made about the dynamics of Latino foreign policy opinions. It is clear that Latinos pay attention to their homelands, but do not put a priority on Latin America in relation to America. Latinos to this point have supported U.S. policies strongly. They have even gone so far as to be more patriotic than the rest of the U.S. population. What is left is to explore recent foreign policy actions by the United States and the reaction of Latinos in the United States to these choices.¹⁶ With the data available, I can investigate responses to efficacy of war in Iraq, whether or not Iraq is a security threat, and look into levels of patriotism in relation to the war.

This research follows the issue-based perspective of international relations (Mansbach and Vasquez 1981). This perspective holds that issues are the most salient factors in preference formation of choices. As opposed to a rational choice perspective, an issue-based perspective holds that one would choose the importance of an issue over pure self-interest. One would expect that issues such as immigration and the status of the home nation would trump concerns over such issues as taxes or personal feelings on the war in Iraq, if the prior mentioned issues were more important to the respondents.

The Iraq War of 2003 provides an important test case for the perspective that Latinos do not support America and will dilute the national interest. We should see a wide divergence in support for the war if Latinos do not follow typical U.S. preferences for foreign policy options.

Hypotheses one and two outline these predictions.

H1: Latinos will express different foreign policy preferences than the rest of the United States general population.

H2: Latinos will demonstrate a lack of support for War in Iraq when compared to the entire U.S. population.

If hypothesis one were true, we would see a divergence in preferences as to what the foreign policy problems the United States should tackle. To operationalize assimilation, I look at the comparison in responses between the Latino population and the total population. Latinos would strongly diverge from the general population by a rate of 20 to 40 percent because this baseline would quadruple the margin of error typical of most polls. If hypothesis two were true, there would be a wide divergence between the Latino population and the American population in general regarding the Bush Doctrine and interventions. If the Bush Doctrine now represents American national interests, empirically we would only accept that the Latinos do not support the national interest if they do not support the Bush Doctrine.¹⁷

The next hypothesis predicts the outcome in relation to combat operations. If Latinos were less patriotic than the rest of the population, they would not show a willingness to die for this country. National security is a public good that all segments of a population must support. Lack of support for combat involvement would also demonstrate a divergence in views since a rejection of military service would also signal a rejection of the War in Iraq and the Bush Doctrine. While it should not be assumed that service in the armed forces is necessarily a demonstration of patriotism, it would be hard to argue that Latinos do not support American policies and the national interest if they are willing to die for our country.

H3: Latinos will serve in the armed forces and suffer combat losses at a decreased rate than other races if it is true that this group does not support U.S. foreign policy in general.

The majority of the data to test these hypotheses will be taken from Pew Hispanic public opinion polls of the Latino population. This is an especially helpful set of consistent surveys because they cover the lead up to the invasion (February 2003), post invasion euphoria (April 2003), the insurgency and also Saddam Hussein's capture (January 2004), and finally a survey after the Iraqi election and the U.S. national election (January 2005).¹⁸ Events in 2006 and 2007 will not be covered in this article because the entire U.S. population seems to reject combat operations in Iraq and the question of post-hoc combat involvement is moot for the purposes of determining Latino preferences prior to and during the initial war.

At this point, I should make it clear that I am analyzing the Latino population as a unified group. There is, of course, much variation and diversity within the Latino population, particularly among the Cuban versus the Mexican based population. Yet, the purpose of this article is to understand Latino preferences as a whole. Future work should aim to analyze in-depth the complex dynamics within the Latino population. The first step is clearly to take the group as a whole and understand its collective preferences. Another important reason for this is the inadequacy of current polls to deal with variations within the Latino population. Rarely

are the internal differences accounted for and the population is typically grouped as a whole. If this researcher were to run a poll, he would of course control for the within group differences, but this cannot be done at the time due to the absence of variation in reported polls and the low sample size within the polls making statistical controls impossible. As Rumsfeld might say, you write an article with the data you have, not the data you wish you had. It might also be interesting and important to explore the dynamics of Latino preferences when compared to other ethnic groups, yet this is a complex research question that is beyond the scope of this article. The point here is to simply deal with complaints from Conservative pundits that suggest Latinos will not support the national interest. Future work should deal with the preferences of all ethnic groups.

It should also be noticed that there is a wide difference between American Latino preferences and new immigrant Latino preferences. This degree of difference is important and relevant to study, yet is beyond the scope of this paper since the data at hand is inadequate to deal with this problem. Raw numbers within the polls were not accessible by this researcher. Another important consideration is the foreign-born population expressed opinions at a much lower rate than the U.S. born population, but I have no idea how much of the sample this group represents and if it is significant. It should be clear, by the end of the article, that while we can know a few facts about the Latino population and their foreign policy preferences, much more work needs to be done. This article appeals for more research, not the definitive final statement on Latino foreign policy preferences. We must first understand what Latinos as a group believe, before we can move to the complex question of what different types of Latinos prefer concerning U.S. foreign affairs.

Findings

Latino Public Opinion Support for the Bush Doctrine and U.S. Combat Operations

Data to this point suggests support for the hypotheses (one and two) that Latinos express different foreign policy preferences than the rest of the United States population. Table 1 presents results of Pew Hispanic polls. Table 2 presents results of another poll conducted by the Gallup/CNN organization over a similar time period. What we can notice from these tables is that there is a ten-point gap between Latino preferences and the general population during the early stages of the war. However, preferences tend to correlate strongly during the late phases of the conflict. It is the early polls that are important because they would suggest group preferences before the publication of negative combat results had an effect. The War in Iraq was not a mission accomplished, yet this fact was not clear until much later.

Latinos supported the war in Iraq by margins of 48 percent in February 2003 and 61 percent in April of 2003. The rest of the U.S. population supported the war with 63 percent in February 2003 and 70 percent in April of 2003. The April 2003 poll evidenced an increase in support for the war once it was ongoing. "This survey shows that support for the war is considerably higher among all Latinos as the U.S. troops take the fight to Baghdad than in a similar survey taken in mid-February." (Pew Hispanic Center 2003) Three quarters of the Latino

population supported the War in Iraq in April 2003. Backing for the war declined for both populations during late 2004 and 2005. The analysis was cut in early 2006 since support among all segments of the population declined precipitously.

It should also be noted that 47 percent of Latinos born in Mexico supported the war while a Mexican poll found that only 7 percent of Mexican nationals upheld the conflict (Pew Hispanic Center 2003). Once a Mexican immigrant is in America, it appears that they begin to advocate U.S. policies, despite the fact that a large majority of their co-nationals at home opposed the war. Future research will have to explore the sources and accuracy of this sentiment. Panel data of immigrants would be interesting and relevant to this question, yet it is still unavailable.

What is significant is that the April 2003 poll reported that 27 percent of the Latino population opposed the war and so did 27 percent of the U.S. population. While support for the war may show a divergence, there is a similar attitude about opposition to the war. In fact, if the undecided respondents were to choose to endorse or oppose the war, the Latino population would likely mirror the majority of the U.S. population. The difference that Huntington expected did not materialize.

More data needs to be collected on post-war preferences of the U.S. population. Actually, we know that Latinos generally held stable preferences as the war continued. In the January 2004 poll appears a slight difference after the capture of Saddam Hussein. After that, Latino support declined at a similar rate to that of the U.S. population. It should be noted that there is a divergence of opinion about the use of force in Iraq based on the U.S. born and foreign-born sub-sample, see Table 3. For instance, in December of 2003, 52 percent of U.S. born Latinos said the war was the right decision while only 40 percent of foreign-born Latinos said the war was the right decision. At this point, we can have little confidence in this internal disagreement within the Latino population since raw numbers are not provided. There are a large number of foreign-born respondents who did not express an opinion on this question. As mentioned previously, the differences within the Latino subgroup need to be investigated in the future.

Table 1

**Do you support or oppose the United States war with Iraq?
After December 2003: Do you think the US made the right decision or the wrong decision
in using military force against Iraq?**

Pew Hispanic Center	Feb 2003	April 2003	Dec 2003	Jan 2004	April 2004	Jan 2005
Support	48	61	45	54	39	37
Oppose	43	27	47	38	48	51

Table 2

Do you support or oppose the United States war with Iraq?

Gallup/CNN	Feb 2003	April 2003	Nov 2003	March 2005
Support	63	70	48	47
Oppose	34	27	46	47

Table 3

Foreign versus US Born Latinos

Do you support or oppose the United States war with Iraq? After December 2003: Do you think the US made the right decision or the wrong decision in using military force against Iraq?

Pew Hispanic Center	Dec 2003		Jan 2004		April 2004		Jan 2005	
	US Born	Foreign Born	US Born	Foreign Born	US Born	Foreign Born	US Born	Foreign Born
Support	52	40	62	48	50	32	48	28
Oppose	42	51	33	42	42	51	46	54

Table 4 looks at approval rating of George W. Bush after the war in Iraq. Bush has gained little direct Latino support for the war in Iraq. It must be remembered that these polls were taken during the election season and negative support of Bush may reflect positive support of John Kerry’s candidacy. It should also be noted that there is very little divergence between U.S. born Latino and foreign-born Latino viewpoints. For example, in December 2003, 32 percent of U.S. born Latinos approved of Bush and 33 percent of foreign-born Latinos approved of Bush.

Table 4

Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the situation in Iraq?

Pew Hispanic Center	Dec 2003	Jan 2004	April 2004	Jan 2005
Approve	32	47	32	33
Disapprove	57	41	58	55

Concerning the 2004 Presidential election, 33.5 percent of Latinos responding to a Washington Post poll favored Bush's ability to handle the war in Iraq.¹⁹ Kerry gathered 48.8 percent of the sample. Although this might suggest little support for the administration, we must remember that a majority of Latinos are registered Democrats.

Shifting towards threat perceptions, a Pew Hispanic poll prior to the war notes that 37 percent of the Latino population and 36 percent of the total U.S. population view Iraq as an immediate threat.²⁰ This correlation is almost direct. Both sides have similar negative impressions of Iraq as a threatening actor. Lack of support in general for the war might reflect Democratic preferences rather than opposition to the war. This data overall supports hypothesis one in that the Latino population and the U.S. population as a whole see Iraq as a foreign policy problem in similar ways.

The same poll also finds close support for an invasion with the full support of the United Nations. If the war was begun with UN support, 81 percent of the entire U.S. population supports the war. The Latino population shows 75 percent support if the war is begun with UN support. Both groups seem to support UN involvement in a possible war situation.

The Iraq War is deeply unpopular war for large segments of the U.S. population. As a Pew Hispanic poll (Pew Hispanic Center 2004, 1) reports, "Hispanics are "somewhat less supportive" of the war and of the Bush both as a President and reelection candidate." The key phrase here is 'somewhat less supportive' of the war. Latinos do not oppose the war by wide margins, nor are they "more likely less supportive." The divergence is a weak difference that comes close to not being statistically meaningful.²¹

The typical ten-point divergence between support of the war between Latinos and the entire U.S. population mirrors the traditional gap in polling support between men and women. Women usually support offensive measures at a rate of ten percent less than the male population. Latinos seem to exhibit a similar pattern.

Latinos in the Armed Forces

Besides the finding that Latinos do not diverge much from the general population on foreign policy questions, it is also interesting to note that Latinos do make up a significant and disproportionate amount of those in combat service, finding direct evidence to counter hypothesis three. Studies pinning down the number of Latino servicemen who serve on the front lines of combat and die for our country are inadequate because the military does not keep specific statistics based on race of their members (or at least does not make these numbers public). Gifford (2005, 207) notes; "Nor do reliable data on Hispanic casualties exist for past combat engagements." Researchers are generally forced to examine the names of the service men killed to determine the number of deaths in recent conflicts. This of course is an inadequate method since many Latinos do not have typical Latino sounding names.

From recruitment data, we do know that Latinos typically join the armed forces at an increased rate than other races even when controlling for education level. This rate would be

even higher if there were no entrance requirements in the U.S. military. Many Latinos do not have the basic education level required (connected to language abilities) to pass the Armed Forces Qualification Test.

Latinos in general are overrepresented among military service personnel that handle offensive weapons. They are more likely to be involved in combat and severely underrepresented in technical jobs. Latinos are disproportionately put at risk, but they end up in risky positions by choice or lack of other options. Gifford (2005, 208) suggests that Latinos are not put off by a combat lifestyle and “18 percent of all Hispanic military applicants attempted to enlist in the Marine Corps, a figure statistically higher than the proportions of any other racial group.” It is widely known the Marines are the most likely branch of the Armed Services to be sent into any combat operation, and it is clear that Latinos are ready and willing to serve this country, even volunteering to put themselves in the most perilous environments.

Gifford (2005) has completed the most recent study of casualty rates by race for the 2003 Iraq War. There is strong support for the hypothesis that Latinos suffer a disproportionate amount of casualties when compared to the total number of Latinos in the Armed Services. The strongest support for this finding is detected during the early combat phase of the war from March 19 to May 1, 2003. “By far, the most striking finding is that the casualty rate among Hispanics during the war is 49 percent higher than their representation in the ground combat forces would suggest, and 85 percent higher than Hispanics on active duty.” (Gifford 2005, 215) Table 5 presents these results. These findings are all statistically significant below the conventional 0.5 level.

Table 5

2003 Iraq Combat Deaths	% of Deaths	Active Duty Military	Army/Marine Combat personnel
White	60.9	65.2	68.4
Black	16.7	20.3	15.2
Hispanic	15.9	8.6	10.7
Other	6.5	5.9	5.7

Source: Gifford 2005, 215, Table 4

Assessment

I have found through a review of contemporary public opinion that Latinos do not express opinions that differ from the public-at-large in relation to the important security questions of the day. Generally, Latino support of the War in Iraq and Bush Doctrine shows a divergence from the general public-at-large in minor ways. Overall, we find modest support for hypothesis two in that the Latino population slightly diverges from the U.S. population as a whole on the issue of supporting the War in Iraq. Yet, rates of rejection regarding the war are parallel when compared to the Anglo public in total, so we cannot say that hypothesis one can be accepted at this point.

The question one should ask is how significant is this divergence? There is no wide divergence between the Latino population and the U.S. population in general as expected by critics and pundits. In fact, rejection of the Bush Doctrine and War in Iraq seem to be equal.

The Latino and total U.S. segment of the population pretty much disapprove of the War in Iraq at similar levels. Usually, Latinos mirror the female subset of the general U.S. population in that there seems to be both a gender gap and a minority gap regarding conflict situations. Another factor behind this finding is that Latinos are typically Democrats and Democrats did not support the war by any wide margin. If one were to consider this interaction, it is actually surprising such strong support for the war was exhibited among the Latino population. It might be interesting to compare these findings with the African-American population since they might have similar views. Future work must be done on comparative views of ethnic populations within the United States.

In summary, I find no support for hypothesis one in that Latinos typically show the same awareness of Iraq as a security threat (the opposite was expected). The only difference regards using force (as opposed to diplomacy) to deal with the issue. Therefore, there is slight support for hypothesis two in that there is less support among the Latino population for the War in Iraq and hence the Bush Doctrine by extension. This finding should be tempered by the facts that surveys of the Latino population tend to have a high margin of error, that the Latino population is largely Democratic, and that Latinos typically support unilateralist responses to foreign policy problems in other global regions.

The third hypothesis in this study suggests that the rate of Latino deaths in combat operations should be lower when compared to other races if it is true that Latinos do not serve the country in a patriotic manner and thus harm the national interest. This hypothesis is clearly false. It is found that Latinos account for 15.9 percent of total combat deaths in Iraq, while Latinos only make up 8.6 of the active duty military personnel. It is clear that Latinos are willing to serve and die for this country, challenging the idea that there is little support for U.S. foreign policy operations or that they would push the United States to look to the South.

In fact, it is widely reported in news sources that military recruitment efforts are now focused on minorities. "Senior Pentagon officials have identified Latinos as by far the most promising ethnic group for recruitment, because of their numbers are growing rapidly in the US and they include a plentiful supply of low-income men of military age with few other job or education prospects." (Gumbel 2003) In addition, it is widely known that non-legal immigrant Latinos serving in the military will have a faster route to citizenship.²² The New York Times notes that as of January 2005, there were about 41,000 permanent resident aliens serving in the Armed Forces and 3,639 of these were from Mexico.²³

This is not to say that Latinos are being exploited, only that they are willing to serve America and risk their lives for the American national interest. "So many Mexicans have migrated to the United States seeking jobs in recent years that they and their children are willing to fight and die for it, even if they are frequently motivated more by economic necessity than patriotism."²⁴

In general, we find support for the issue-based perspective of Latino foreign policy preferences. What is important to note is that the most important issues for Latinos are not those dealing with their former homeland, but real issues that concern the majority of the American population. Support for the United States and the advancement of democracy trump opposing concerns that some would expect from Latinos. Latinos are therefore not a threat to the United States in that they do not represent a faction that seeks to dilute the national interest.

Conclusion

The Thomas Rivera Institute's prior study on Latino foreign policy trends indicated two general outcomes. One, Latinos tend not to be actively involved in foreign policy. Two, there should not be an assumed relationship between immigrants and their countries of origin (De la Garza 2000, 15). These patterns tend to hold true today in the post 9/11 era. It should not be assumed that Latinos would divert the American national interests and combat operations. Latinos typically support American policies just as much as the general population.

There is no new path in foreign policy preferences emerging with an influx of a new Latino population within America. Latino responses tend to mirror the women subset of sample surveys. This might indicate a common outlook of excluded classes. In any case, just as no current author would assume to suggest that women are going to dilute the national interest, they should not assume that Latinos would harm U.S. national security by advocating policies that are not in the interests of America. In fact, they do not advocate policies that diverge from the interests of the United States and are more likely to die for the country when compared to service by other ethnic groups.

Even if Latino preferences deviate from the mainstream views of the entire American population, this does not mean that there is a problem with the Latino population. It is the population of a state, which can determine what is in a state's best interest by electing certain candidates for political office. Thus, the population gets to suggest what the national interest is, not critics of Latino involvement in the political process. There is no choice to be made as Huntington writes (2004b, 366). Immigration has changed and shaped American society and traditional Anglo elites need to deal with this fact, not try to prevent what has already occurred.

Latinos do not need to be "as ethnic as they wish in their homes and communities;" but should express their preferences at every opportunity and in the ballot box (Huntington 1997, 33). "Countering the cults of diversity and multiculturalism within the United States" is not the strategy one should suggest increasing the power of the state (Huntington 1997, 48). Governments should promote diversity so that policies may actually represent the wishes of the entire population, not just those who wish to demonize an "other" group. Without widespread societal support, the national interest cannot be served or protected. Latinos need to be included in the foreign policy process, not excluded. The cultural aspect of the national interest does not mean cultural stagnation and static viewpoints. Assimilation should be measured in terms of the degree to which groups are able to access the mainstream of society, not whether or not their opinions match those of the rest of society.

If the national interest shifts because of an increase in the Latino electorate, it is a more accurate reflection of what a state's national interest actually is, and this is not a problem for the state. As de la Garza (2000, 7) notes, "the policies designed to defend the national interest accurately reflect the priorities of the electorate, just as all policies should." The only way for Latino preferences to be a problem for the state and society would be if these views were rejected.

"Incorporation, or assimilation, is a two-way street. The immigrant has to make strides to 'fit in' and the institutions and majority culture in the host society have to be open to the immigrants 'fitting in.'" (Barreto and Munoz 2005, 3) If Latinos are not allowed to "fit in" to larger American society, there may be a national division, but only if legitimate foreign policy views are rejected by society in general. This article is a call for diversity within American foreign policy, not the need to emphasize traditional archaic viewpoints. Yet, these are all normative views and we must first counter anti-Latino viewpoints with empirical realities. In addition, this study shows that the Latino subgroup as a whole does not represent a divergent faction seeking to change the national security goals of the state.

Largely there is deep support for American policies from the Latino community. Future research should seek to uncover the dynamics of Latino preferences with different research methodologies. Extensive data should be made available to run controlled regressions to understand the opinions expressed. Data should also be extended to investigate the dynamics of the Latino subgroup. As currently composed, the data is not able to distinguish between Latino subgroups such as the Cuban, Mexican, and Guatemalan in a meaningful manner since the subsamples are too small. All these questions are left to future researchers who need to run their own polls to answer these questions. Existing data cannot deal with these issues. A formal sample of Latino external opinions should be commissioned. I feel it was important here to suggest that Latinos do not differ in a great way from the general population, but we still know little about the motivations and sources of Latino external public opinion preferences.

How might the influence of Latinos positively affect American foreign policy? The following New York Times quote from a Mexican-American is illustrative. "Many people from here (Mexico) migrate over there and they must have some sympathy for the United States to offer their lives. These things are important for us, especially liberty and democracy."²⁵ This gets to the crux of Latino support of the Bush Doctrine (and also support gathered throughout the world). Democracy, freedom, and liberty are considered universal rights by many. Many are willing to die for these beliefs if they feel they represent the true intentions of American foreign policy. There will be no dilution of the American national interest as long as it continues to emphasize the need to support and help those less fortunate rather than a preference of American special interests.

Next on the research agenda: Make operational the assimilation issues and ask what should be addressed with the current data?

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Endnotes

¹ In this paper, I will refer to Hispanics as Latinos, as most academics do.

² William C. Velásquez Institute (2004)

³ Certainly, the Latino population can be broken into subgroups, but for the purposes of this paper, we are interested in the aggregate results of the entire Latino population that includes those of Mexican, Latin American, South American, and Caribbean decent.

⁴ Minuteman Project (2005)

⁵ An implicit warning is that Mexican-Americans will seek to express territorial claims against the United States and seek break off the Southwest from the rest of the country. "Mexico is the only country that the United States has invaded, occupied its capital and then annexed half its territory. Mexicans do not forget these events. Quite understandably, they feel they have special rights in these territories." (Huntington 2004, 36) Latino American divorce settlement as the issue may be called.

⁶ Pew Hispanic Center (2002)

⁷ Pew Hispanic Center (2002)

⁸ Dorning (2002)

⁹ Pew Hispanic Center (2002)

¹⁰ Pew Hispanic Center (2002)

¹¹ National Council of La Raza (2004)

¹² William C. Velásquez Institute (2004)

¹³ CNN (2004)

¹⁴ Pew Hispanic Center (2002)

¹⁵ de la Garza (1980)

¹⁶ It might be interesting to explore Latino viewpoints according to country of origin. This was not done in this article because the research speaks to the collective views of Latinos versus other categories. Future research will tackle this question.

¹⁷ Whether or not the Bush Doctrine should represent the national interest is a normative question. At this point, we have to accept the fact that the Administration defines the cultural and institutional interests as an interest in projecting democracy aboard.

¹⁸ (Pew Hispanic Center 2003; Pew Hispanic Center 2003; Pew Hispanic Center 2004; Pew Hispanic Center 2005)

¹⁹ Washington Post (2004)

²⁰ Pew Hispanic Center (2003)

²¹ Most of polls of the Hispanic population have margins of errors from four to 7 percent. This is due the difficulty in locating Hispanic respondents, geographical, and language constraints.

²² The first casualty of the Iraq war was Jose Gutierrez, a Guatemalan non-U.S. citizen.

²³ McKinley (2005)

²⁴ McKinley (2005)

²⁵ McKinley (2005)