

AN ANALYSIS OF LATINO VOTING BEHAVIOR AND ITS INFLUENCE ON
REPUBLICAN PARTY PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES IN THE 21st CENTURY.

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Introduction

In today's political climate atmosphere many people vote for a particular candidate because of the letter next to the candidate's name, (R) or (D), even though they may philosophically disagree on a number of levels with the platform of the party the candidate is associated with. One may make the argument that family upbringing and the influence of friends or coworkers play a large role in why individuals vote the way that they do. One also may argue that the winner of the communication war waged by the Republican and Democrat Parties with voters ultimately determines how someone votes on Election Day (Cannon, 2014).

If one were to take a serious look at recent elections results, one would see that Republicans have a serious problem courting the Latino vote (Taylor, Lopez, Martinez, and Velasco, 2012). President Obama received 71% of the Latino vote in the 2012 presidential election. That number is fascinating considering a study performed by the Pew Research Center found that 32% of Latinos polled identified themselves as conservative, 31% as moderate, and 30% as liberal (Taylor, Lopez, Martinez, and Velasco, 2012). According to the Pew Research Center's study it would then be logical to assume that nearly all respondents who identified themselves as either moderate or liberal voted for President Obama in the 2012 presidential election. Republicans, if they wish to make inroads with the Latino community, must find a way to appeal to some of the 31% of moderate Latino voters. Identifying the issues of most importance to this group of Latino moderates and communicating with this constituency on such matters could help the Republican Party to become a viable alternative to the Democrat Party. Furthermore, the Pew Research Center found that the Latino "...electorate has grown in size and importance. Today, the number of Hispanics eligible to vote in the nation's elections has reached a record 23.7 million, up by more than 4 million since 2008. Overall Hispanics now account for

11% of the nation's 215 million eligible voters—a new high” (Lopez, & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2012). Republican candidates, whether it is at the local, state, or federal level, appear to have a problem obtaining the support of Latino voters, even though studies such as those performed by the Pew Research Center have shown that Latino Americans agree with the Republican Party platform on a range of different issues (Taylor, Lopez, Martinez, & Velasco, 2012).

This research aims to explore the attitudinal and communication issues affecting Republican Party's relationship with the Latino community. In addition, this creative project proposal will include the development of a public relations strategy to be utilized in Republican Party outreach to the Latino community.

One important component of this creative project is to determine the political views of Latino voters on a variety of issues and, furthermore, determine the influence for why Latinos vote the way that they do. This is important because, as the fastest growing minority in the United States, the Latino vote is playing a greater and greater role in the outcome of U.S. elections.

The researcher proposes a two-part strategy to successfully complete this project. The researcher first plans to survey Latino voters through quantitative research throughout the United States on a range of issues, including domestic and foreign policy issues. The researcher would like to gain a better grasp as to the reasons why Latinos vote the way that they do for either party, whether it be through the influence of family members, the media, religion, etc. Furthermore, the researcher would like to utilize the quantitative data obtained to build a public relations strategy using the Grunig Excellence Theory. This theory would serve as the blue print of a public relations strategy guide for the Republican Party in an effort for them to make inroads and ultimately alliances in the Latino community.

Public relations theory plays an important role in the way with which the Republican Party can communicate with Latino constituents and prospective voters. The researcher will seek to use the Grunig Excellence Theory to lay the groundwork for how public relations specialists within the political sphere should attempt to create, build, and grow relationships with Latino voters. One important component of Excellence Theory is that it places substantial value on the relationship between an organization and its key public. In this case, Excellence Theory should be applied to the way the Republican Party communicates with its key public, Latino voters. Grunig argues that Excellence Theory, when practiced, will result in the best possible outcome between an organization and its key public(s). According to Grunig, an organization, in this case the Republican Party must operate or behave in a manner that satisfies the goals and interests of its key stakeholders or publics. As the Republican Party seeks to enhance its relationship with the Latino community, it must understand what is important to that community if it is to provide a viable alternative to the Democrat Party.

Literature Review

Grunig's Excellence Theory is a well-respected theory in public relations circles and is summarized by the following ten broad variables or values as according to Heath and Coombs (2006):

- Value of communication as seen by top management in an organization
- Empowerment in the dominant coalition to contribute to strategic organizational functions
- An integrated public relations function
- Headed by a manager rather than a technician
- Model of public relations preferred by an organization
- Knowledge of the communications department to actually practice the ideal type of excellent public relations
- Activist pressure to force the organization to communicate with external publics
- Organizational culture, structure, and other employee related variables
- Embodying diversity
- Ethics and integrity

More specifically, the researcher contends that Grunig's two-way symmetrical model would be most an effective theory for this study. According to Heath and Coomb's review of Grunig's work, "With the two-way symmetrical model, practitioners use research and dialogue to bring about symbiotic changes in the ideas, attitudes, and behaviors of both their organizations and publics" (Heath and Coombs, 2006, p. 12). The researcher asserts that these symbiotic changes are necessary and also seeks to determine if the two-way asymmetrical model may also

be useful, as it will be important for this project to determine through research, how to improve communication between the Republican Party and the Latino community. Ultimately, the researcher is seeking to determine if the two-way symmetrical model and two-way asymmetrical model serve as a blue print for what the Republican Party needs to do if it is going to truly understand the Latino community and reform the party itself from within.

By combining both the two-way asymmetrical model with the two-way symmetrical model, the party might find itself in what Grunig calls the “Win-Win Zone,” where both the party and Latino voters both develop a relationship that is mutually beneficial to both entities. For too long, the Republican Party and its leadership have failed to acknowledge that they do in fact have a public relations problem with the Latino community or have failed in their attempt to communicate with it. In addition, the researcher asserts that there is enormous pressure from the Latino community for the Republican Party to adapt to the ever changing political demographics in the United States and commit to immigration reform. At the heart of Excellence Theory is the notion that an organization should place substantial value on the relationship between an organization, in this case the Republican party and its key public, Latino voters. If a relationship is to be successful, the Republican Party must find common ground with its party platform and the key interests of Latino voters. Excellence Theory, as espoused by Grunig, promulgates the notion that managers and senior executives value on a symmetrical level the input, concern, and interests of its key publics. Taking this position one step further would suggest that the Republican Party, on a national level, should come to understand and appreciate the views of Latino voters and act accordingly, without blatantly alienating its other publics.

Grunig’s Excellence Theory takes into account that other publics or demographics may not respond favorably to the key public’s views in question, but should however be taken into

account. Excellence Theory posits that in order for management, or in the political realm, senior leaders in the Republican Party, must be willing to balance the needs of both the party and its stakeholders. The researcher asserts that the Republican Party must find ways to compromise in the sense that they meet the needs and understand the constituency of the Latino voting bloc. Furthermore, Latino voters should not be viewed solely as a product, ready to purchase, through marketing or campaign ads, but must be a public that is courted through sincere outreach efforts that involve an open mind both ideologically and philosophically in addition to typical campaign techniques.

In the book *Political Public Relations: Principles and Applications*, edited by Jesper Stromback, and Spiro Kiouisis (2011), public relations is seen to play a pivotal role in campaigning and communication with the media, however there is no mention of how public relations can be used to build relationships with minority groups, or constituencies such as Latino voters. This paper has found little research that attempts to answer the important question of do the party platforms of the candidate Latino's vote for match their ideological views on substantive issues.

The Impact of the Media

Agenda-setting theory is generally defined as the ability of the news media to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda. In simplified terms, the theory posits that the media has the power to influence what individuals believe to be an important issue. According to Walgrave and Van Aelst, (2006), "Political agenda setting is contingent upon a number of conditions: the kind of media and issues under study and the political agenda and the time period under investigation" (p. 98). This suggests that mass media do have an agenda setting function, albeit under certain conditions. In different types of mass media, (e.g. newspapers, magazines,

cable news, etc.), the issues they focus on and the time period observed determine how much influence the media actually has in setting a particular agenda. Along those lines, the media may have the power to highlight particular hot button issues in election years of which the narrative could influence voter turnout and decision making.

Mata (2013) undertook a qualitative analysis of voter information seeking, political opinions, and intended voting behaviors. This particular dissertation is relevant as it focused on the effect of communication on the voting behaviors of the Latino community. As part of this research, the study is investigating the effect that media and inter-community communications have on Latino voting and political ideology. This piece of scholarly work takes into account the effect of agenda setting theory through the media and the two step flow of communication theory on such voting tendencies. Agenda setting theory throughout all populations and their subsets plays some role, small or large, in public opinion. Very few if any individuals are completely immune from the influence of the media.

Slothuus and De Vreese (2010) focused on the communications theory component of politics and political communication. It examines the effect that messaging by political parties and the media have on the average individual. Framed messages have proven to have an effect on the decisions people make, and this project plans to see what effect they have on political decision making. Their work follows that of Druckman (2004), who focused on political preference formation. Druckman insisted that the expertise of the messenger plays a role in the way a message is received and acted on.

This work, in conjunction with that of Slothuus and De Vreese, suggests that the media do play a role in the construction of ideological beliefs and voting preferences, which is why the media are included as a component of this study's research questions. While framing is well

understood as how a message is framed in a particular manner, Lecheler and De Vreese (2013) investigated the effects of repetitive frames over a particular time period. One of the goals of the project is to find out what kind of issues the Republican politicians should talk about to the news media, hoping those messages are relayed to the public. This phenomenon is played out in our daily lives by opening a newspaper or by trolling different media outlets. Based upon educated observations, this paper asserts that repetitive messaging appears to have an impact to some extent, whether it is on the Latino community or any other demographic.

The Impact of Family and Friends

Elected officials in the Latino community vote in their legislative capacity based on their socialization, upbringing, and personal attributes (Rocca, Sanchez, & Uscinski, 2008). If it is any indication, as representatives of their community, Latino elected officials vote in a way that reflects the views of their constituency. This would suggest that the media are not the only influencer in terms of making voting decisions. One's upbringing, and thus the influence of family and friends plays a role as well. Jeong (2012) researched four years later how pro-Latino policies have resulted in higher rates of political participation. Clearly, that seems to indicate there must be a key issue or issues that drive Latino voter turnout and, as such, serves as a launching pad for Latino elected officials to serve as elected officials.

One hot button issue plaguing the American political process today is that of immigration reform. While polling shows most Americans believe reform is needed, the controversy is in the details as to how to go about fixing the immigration system. Furthermore, this issue may offer some context as to if race or national origin truly plays a role in the voting behavior of its citizens. Political affiliations in the context of race, ancestry, and family tradition were found to play a significant role in crafting ones political preferences (Rocha et al., 2011). This is not to

suggest that race is the only factor or even the deciding one when it comes to political preference, but is rather a contributing one.

Stokes (2012) researched the effect of group think on political participation. Upon reviewing this study, it appears that individuals outside of the voter or individuals' mindset have a positively correlated effect on whether or not Latino individuals vote. According to this research, outside sources of opinion do matter and have an effect one's decision to vote for a particular political party.

The Impact of Knowledge and Education

Researchers found major discrepancies between so called "informed Latino voters" and "uninformed Latino voters" (Nicholson, Pantoja, & Segura, 2006). As it turns out, the research revealed that informed Latino voters were found to vote primarily due to their personal position on the issues, whereas uninformed Latino voters were found to vote a particular way based on tradition and longstanding standing partisan preferences. This information is imperative because it indicates that informed individuals tend to vote based on conscience and not strictly to hold the party line. This phenomenon is not limited to Latino voters. It is important to note that there are a great number of uninformed voters of all races and ethnicities who behave similarly to the pattern discussed above. On the other hand, if individuals are extremely concerned about a particular issue, such as abortion, it could cause individuals to switch parties simply because of the stance of a particular party on that issue. This behavior is known as party switching.

Killian and Wilcox (2008) researched the phenomena of party switching, which is the notion that individuals may switch parties based on changing ideology amongst other factors. Specifically, their research looked at party switching involving the controversial issue of abortion rights. Over the course of years, they studied whether or not pro-life Democrats were

likely to switch to the Republican Party, or whether pro-choice Republicans switched to the Democrat Party. Their findings were that pro-life Democrats were more likely to become Republicans than their pro-choice Republican counterparts to become Democrats. The vast majority of abortion proponents and opponents however did not change their party affiliation. It was also determined that party switching is rarely likely to occur, unless it was over an issue that was very controversial such as abortion rights. They did conclude and acknowledge that much more research should be performed into what role ideology plays in party switching.

Political Questions and Policy Issues

These days, there is an increased focus on an increasingly important component of the electorate, that being Latino voters, which has caused some researchers to posit the question of whether Latino voters are as Democrat leaning as one may think (De la Garza, 2011). Most Americans believe Latinos are staunchly Democrat, which could seem reasonable considering 71% supported President Obama in the 2012 Presidential Election. De la Garza (2011) raised some important questions as to the direction that Latinos in general are heading politically. The study investigated the notion that Latinos may actually be more Republican than one would assume. Results indicate that although Latinos are increasingly voting Republican, they still overwhelmingly vote for the Democrat party. This work is relevant for the purpose of this creative project in that it fits into what researchers are seeking to investigate further.

Kelly and Morgan (2008) investigated religious traditionalism and Latino politics in the United States. Even though many Latinos tend to identify themselves as religious and social conservatives, that ideology or personal belief set do not translate into what should be predictable voting results based on the Republican Party platform and overall party ideology. It

becomes clear, through their research, that religious affiliation is not the only factor that plays a role in the voting behavior of those in the Latino community.

Though religious beliefs may not be indicative of voting behavior, both religious beliefs and attitudes affected the way that Latinos viewed the controversial issue of abortion rights (Bartkowski, Ramos-Wada, Ellison & Acevedo, 2012). It will be especially interesting to see how opinions on this important topic vary according to religious affiliation. Another social issue which has recently dominated the headlines in the United States and around the globe is that of same-sex marriage. Religious beliefs often have an underlying influence on one's opinion of this issue regardless of race or ethnicity.

Ellison, Ecevedo, and Romas-Wada (2011) focused their research on the view of the Latino community and the effects that religion played on Latino opinions. Their research went much deeper than simply asking individuals about their views, but analyzed how religious affiliation had an effect on their opinions. Generally, the more religious Latino individuals were the more conservative they tended to be on issues of traditional marriage and abortion. In regards to foreign affairs, Perla (2011) researched public support in regards to the use of military force, through reference point framing and prospective decision making. The research determined that when the public perceived media framed foreign policy decisions as designed to prevent losses, public support for those policies increased. However, when the media framed foreign policy decisions as designed to seek gains, public support decreased.

As the 2014 mid-term elections approached, immigration reform became a controversial issue that divided members of the Republican and Democrat parties. Immigration issues and the controversy that surrounds reform have had a marked impact on the views of Latino voters (Rouse, Wilkinson & Garand, 2010). One of the many policy issues this study wishes to address

is that of immigration reform. Obviously, given the community, scholars are looking to further research immigration and potential reforms to immigration laws and policies. This paper found their work compelling in that it evaluated the opinions of the Latino community in great detail.

Springer (2009) argues that policy reforms were necessary for an ethical solution to the immigration issues the United States is facing, regardless of political agendas. This scholarly work gives this creative project the ability to look at immigration through an ethical frame and better enable it to establish sound and responsible research questions.

Although research does exist regarding the voting behaviors and patterns of Latino voters in 2010 (Jimeno 2010), this study aims to expound on his work even further in the coming years. Though this study is outdated in the context of politics, as the Latino population has increased since the time of his research and multiple elections have taken place since 2010. However, the work of Mr. Jimeno certainly provides an insightful framework with which to work from and his work will contribute greatly to this research.

As indicated earlier, political and opinion polling has demonstrated at great lengths the opinions of individuals on numerous policy issues. Additionally, individuals may agree on some aspects with a particular political party but may disagree on many others. However, what key issue or issues ultimately results in filling in a particular ballot bubble or pulling the lever for a particular party? A study conducted by The Pew Research Center explored the ideological views of Latinos in the United States (Taylor, Lopez, Martinez & Velasco, 2012). Their work, which this study hopes to build on, while thorough, does not determine if Latinos and their policy views correlate directly with whom they vote for at the ballot box. Essentially, does a Latino voter with primarily conservative views consistently vote for Democrats and vice versa?

Issue Voting

Americans, in general, have a multitude of reasons for voting the way that they do in U.S. elections. Some may vote based on gender, upbringing, educational achievement, or simply because of particular issues that they believe are most important to them. The findings of The Harris Poll of 2,300 adults surveyed online between April 16 and 21, 2014 revealed the following:

- Overall, the economy is among the most important issues for three in five Americans (61%)
- Two in five say healthcare (39%)
- Two in five say and jobs (39%) are important issues for them in deciding which candidate to vote for.
- Just over one-quarter of U.S. adults say social security (27%) is important
- Just over one-quarter of U.S. adults say taxes (27%) is the important issue
- Education was deemed important by 22% of respondents
- Fewer numbers say the environment (16%), immigration (15%), terrorism (13%), foreign policy (9%), gay rights (8%) and abortion (7%) are important issues when deciding for whom they will vote. (as cited in PR Newswire, 2014, p. 1)

As this poll shows, American voters indicated the economy was by far of greatest concern to them. As wages remain relatively stagnant, even as the U.S. Stock Market has been booming, the results may indicate that the average American is still not feeling the economic recovery in their personal finances. Immigration, a rather contentious issue, was only prioritized as the most important issue by only fifteen percent of the Americans polled.

When the poll is broken down by party identification, the issues of most importance become skewed, as evidenced by the following findings by The Harris Poll:

- Democrats are more likely than Republicans and Independents to say that healthcare (46% vs. 36% and 36%) and social security (32% vs. 21% and 26%) are among the most important issues to them when it comes to deciding between candidates.
- Republicans are more likely than both Democrats and Independents to say that taxes (36% vs. 19% and 26%) and terrorism (22% vs. 10% and 7%) are important issues for making voting decisions. (as cited in PR Newswire, 2014, p. 1)

Though the Harris Poll reveals issues of importance amongst all Americans polled together, this study aims to determine which political party different races support in tackling the issue of immigration reform. It is important to note that the Harris Poll does not address immigration or immigration reform. It has been determined that issue priorities may differ due to the race of the voter. Furthermore, what racial segment of the population believes that immigration is one of their most important issues that ultimately drive them to the polls on Election Day? A Gallup poll sought to answer the former as it conducted a major poll from June 13, 2013 through July 5, 2013 of 4,373 adults across the country including 2,149 whites, 1,010 non-Hispanic blacks, and 1,000 Hispanic voters. The question and results of the poll (as cited in Polling Report, n.d.) are below.

"Just your opinion, which political party's policies on immigration and immigration reform come closer to your own: the Democratic Party or the Republican Party?" Options rotated.

	Democratic Party	Republican Party	Both equally (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Unsure
	%	%	%	%	%
ALL	48	36	1	9	7
Non-Hispanic whites	41	42	1	9	6
Blacks	70	14	1	8	7
Hispanics	60	26	-	6	7
<p><i>Table 1.</i> Adapted from PR, N. (2014, May 1). Besides pocketbook Issues, what's important to Americans in making voting decisions. <i>PR Newswire US.</i></p>					

As the above results reveal, Hispanic voters by a wide margin of 61% to 26% support the Democrat Party's policies on immigration and immigration reform. African American voters supported the Democrat Party on this issue by an even wider margin of 70% to 14%. Only white Americans supported the Republican Party policies on immigration reform but by merely one percent. This research is thus seeking to know why Latinos tend to support the Democrat Party by wide margins on the issue of immigration reform.

Issue voting has been discussed in numerous scholarly journals, articles, and in everyday life. Some individuals may vote just because a candidate is pro-life or pro-choice, pro-same sex marriage or pro-traditional marriage. The researcher has spoken with individuals who considered themselves staunch Republicans, but because of Senator Portman's new found support of same sex marriage, they refuse to vote for him. Issue salience with the voter may play a key factor. Polling can also be used as an indicator whether issue voting is prevalent amongst an electorate. According to a poll on the eve of election night of the 2014 mid-term elections, by Latino Decisions (2014), Latino voters overwhelmingly cited immigration reform as the top issue they were concerned with as depicted below:

Q1. Thinking about the 2014 election, what are the most important issues facing the (Hispanic/Latino) community that our politicians should address?

Total	

Jobs / Economy	34%
Immigration reform	45%
Health care / Medicaid	17%
Education / schools	21%
Wars / Foreign policy	2%
<p><i>Table 2.</i> Adapted from Latino Decisions Election Eve Poll 2014. (2014, November 1). Retrieved November 21, 2015, from http://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/LD_2014_Election_Eve_1pm.pdf</p>	

In addition, the poll of 5,000 Latinos found that two-thirds of respondents indicated that the issue of immigration, the decision to vote and for whom to vote was the most important or one of the most important reasons for voting. The results of the Latino Decisions (2014) poll are below:

Q16. How important is the issue of immigration in your decision to vote, and who to vote for in this election?

Total	

The most important issue	33%
One of the important issues	34%
Somewhat important	19%
Not really important	9%
Don't know	5%
<i>Table 3.</i> Adapted from Latino Decisions Election Eve Poll 2014. (2014, November 1). Retrieved November 21, 2014	

This is a primary example of issue voting, as both questions determined that immigration and immigration reform were important to Latino voters and that it played a large role in their decision to vote and whom to vote for.

Springer (2010) found that political context played an important role in the way in which voters made their decisions during the presidential election. Of major interest to Springer (2010): ...was with the nature of issue voting and whether voters respond to issue contrast between the parties and their respective candidates. Contrary to the party centric view espoused in *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960), candidate contrast appears to drive the magnitude of issue voting with little direct responsiveness to party contrast evident in the results (p. 465).

This would seem to indicate that in presidential elections, the political views espoused by the party's figurehead were more important than whether the candidate was a Republican or a Democrat when it comes to issue voting. Campbell came to his conclusions using longitudinal data from three presidential elections (1948, 1952, and 1956). This dataset was collected through interviews he did with voters. That said, Springer (2010) found that in election cycles where media attention was lower and candidate information was less available, such as mid-term congressional elections, voters tended to vote more according to political party reputation and less on the individual views of candidates. Springer came to this conclusion because he believes that, in mid-term elections, candidate name recognition is less than in a presidential election year. Furthermore, mid-term elections do not get as much media attention and voter turnout as presidential elections do. Therefore voters in mid-term elections tend to vote based on party familiarity.

It is becoming clear that a political party's reputation on a particular issue or that of their figurehead such as in a presidential election play a role in the way individuals vote. Bafumi and Shapiro (2009) concluded that "An array of economic, racial, and new social and religious values issues have become aligned more visibly to partisanship and to liberal-conservative labels and cues, producing an increasingly issue-based and ideologically based partisan alignment" (p. 19). Furthermore they concluded, "Partisans in the first decade of the 21st century have ideological beliefs which are more heavily defined by issues beyond economic ones" (p. 19). They went on to elaborate that, "Economic issues remain very important, still most important for voters and partisans, based on some compelling analyses...but an ideologically based partisanship has been increasingly connected to racial issues, certain social values issues, and even foreign policy" (p. 19). This is consistent with polling that shows the economy as a top priority, while also revealing other issues, such as immigration, amongst a particular demographic are becoming more important as a single issue that may impact ones' vote.

Other researchers looked deeper into issue voting and party affiliation. Carsey and Layman (2006), "...argue that both party-based issue change and issue-based party change among individuals likely occurs, particularly on issues that clearly divide the parties. When party leaders, candidates, and platforms take distinct stands on these issues, it signals to citizens which views on these issues go with each party" (p. 467). As such, this phenomenon "...creates pressure for citizens to bring their party identification and views on these issues closer together" (p. 467). Their research may show why individuals vote for a particular party based upon an issue they find significantly important. Furthermore, through their analysis of issue voting, Carsey and Layman (2006) determined the following: "...individuals who are aware of party

differences on an issue and do find the issues to be salient are much more likely to change their party identifications based on their issue attitudes” (p. 474).

Highton (2010) studied how the political dynamic of context determines the magnitude of influence issue preferences and partisanship has on a voter in presidential elections. He went on to “...suggest that this variation may be explained by the behavior of political parties and their candidates. Levels of party mobilization, party polarization, and candidate polarization may all be significant” (p. 453). This is significant to this project, as we are seeking to determine how the Republican Party can best connect with Latino voters through the party’s platform, outreach, and candidates. Furthermore, through his empirical study, he concluded that “...candidate contrast appears to drive the magnitude of issue voting with little direct responsiveness to party contrast evident in the results” (p. 474). This indicates that, “Whether the parties were more or less divergent on policy issues was barely related to the effect of issue preferences on presidential vote choice” (p. 474). This suggests that the views or image of a presidential candidate may carry more weight than the (R) or (D) associated with the candidate’s affiliation.

In a later report, Highton and Kam (2011) concluded the following:

Elite party polarization may influence issue salience in the mass public, which in turn influences the relative centrality of issues and partisanship in ordinary citizens’ belief systems. It is also plausible that issue salience in the mass public is a cause of elite party polarization (p. 212).

This conclusion is important to the researcher as issue voting is a major theory which will be examined throughout this project. There appears to be agreement that issue voting is an actual key phenomena, however the question remains whether or not it influences partisanship or if partisanship influences issue voting.

An empirical study was conducted by Jacoby, Ciuk, and Pyle (2010), which focused on voter ideology and individual biases in the context of the 2008 Presidential Election. The study's participants placed each candidate, Sen. John McCain and current President Barack Obama, on an ideological spectrum taking into account a range of voter perceptions. They concluded in part that "citizen placements of candidates along the liberal-conservative continuum are much more a function of personal ideology and feelings about the candidates than they are derivations from the policy positions or ideological stances of the candidates themselves" (p. 22). This would seem to indicate that personal bias, ideology, and perceptions play a greater role in the opinion of a candidate than the actual policy positions of the candidate.

In a spatial voting model study, Jessee (2010) concluded the following:

In general, policy views exert a strong influence on citizens' voting decisions. The influence of partisanship, however, is also strong. Voters are pushed systematically toward selecting candidates from their own party above and beyond their ideological proximity to each candidate (p. 338).

His conclusions make sense, as a host of research reports indicate that policy views play an important role in voter decision making while at the same time, there is pressure to embrace the candidate of their party at the same time even amongst some disagreements on policy. Furthermore, he concluded "As levels of political information increase, voters rely more strongly on policy views in making their voting decisions" (p. 338). However, low information voters who show "relatively flat relationships between policy views and vote probabilities tend to vote mostly based on their party identification" (p. 338). This conclusion is consistent with the theory of issue voting, especially amongst more informed voters. If voters have an issue that is of primary concern to them, it may trump party affiliation.

Method

The researcher first plans to identify the political views of Latino voters on various issues and has established the following research questions, of which the researcher will base the survey questions. The survey questions will provide the researcher with empirical data that will assist in the development of a Latino voter strategy guide. It is proposed that:

Research shows that party preferences do not always match ideological viewpoints on many substantive policy issues. This is evidenced in part by issue voting amongst other factors. The researcher believes that this hypothesis is important to test. If discrepancies are found, it may be possible to make inroads to moderates in the Latino community in some ideological areas.

RQ1: Do Latino political party preferences, based on voter registration and voting history actually match Latino ideological views on many or all substantive policy issues?

RQ2: How much importance do Latino voters place on immigration policy and issues versus other issues such as the economy, immigration, education, and healthcare?

RQ3: Are there a variety of factors that contribute to why Latinos vote they way they do, e.g. family tradition, media, and personal preference or one overwhelming influence?

When the researcher begins the survey, the party platforms of both the Democrat and Republican parties will be used as the independent variables for this research. As widely known in the scholarly community, all research must be firmly grounded. This study will investigate key variables such as ideological beliefs and subsequent voting behavior against the political party platforms of each major party in the United States. As it is unrealistic to individually study behaviors within each district of each Member of Congress or each state represented by the United States Senate, this project will use Ohio for its research subjects. The party platforms

serve as the basis for this study's queries. It is important to note that just because an elected official is a Republican or a Democrat; it does not mean that he or she subscribe to the party's platform in its entirety. There are liberal Republicans and conservative Democrats, so this study tries to best use the party's establishment policy positions as points of reference.

The survey is designed to collect data through the utilization of an online survey created by the researcher using Qualtrics software. The survey will be limited to multiple choice questions and ranking questions and should take no longer than five to ten minutes to complete. Participants will be drawn from a registered Latino voter email list, provided by *Research Now*, a research firm with the goal of expanding knowledge in the field of social research. Individuals will be asked to participate in the survey but will be under no pressure to do so. In an effort to remain unbiased, only straightforward questions will be used in the email survey as to not skew opinion falsely one way or the other. The survey component of the project addresses social and foreign policy questions, fiscal policy questions, and ideological policy questions in terms of the size and role of government. Political affiliation will be a key question that will be compared with responses to the policy questions.

There will be no incentives directly provided by myself to encourage participation in the study with the exception of the potential benefits to society the study may provide. As individuals are contacted, a summary of the purpose of the study will be provided in the recruitment email. Individuals will then have the opportunity agree or decline to take the survey. Responses will be collected by *Research Now* panels and then translated into usable data through the statistics software, SPSS.

The unit of analysis for this research study is registered Latino-American voters who are legal U.S. residents. As only voters will be surveyed, respondents are all adults. The research

will be strictly quantitative in nature as responses to questions will be translated into corresponding numerals for comparison in SPSS. The researcher will then compile and analyze the quantitative data obtained from the survey. The researcher then plans to use this information to create a public relations strategy guide through the lens of Grunig's Excellence Theory.

Grunig's Excellence Theory will serve as the researcher's theoretical framework for how proper and effective public relations communications with this public will be implemented.

The sample population is 542 Latino American voters throughout the United States.

Strategically, the researcher believes that this will be the most effective way to obtain a large sample while maintaining a sound research model. The population for this research is Latino Americans, with the specific parameter being registered Latino voters. Those participants who indicated they met both parameters were permitted to go on to take the survey. In an effort to be as thorough as possible, I have compared the demographic breakdown of our participants with that of other research to determine similarities or differences that would affect the ability to generalize our results to that of the entire population. Of the study's respondents, 54% identified themselves as female while 46% of respondents identified as male. According to an analysis by the Pew Research Center, in 2012, "the Hispanic females voted at a higher rate than Hispanic males—49.8% versus 46.0%" (Lopez, & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2013). This indicates that female Latino voters exercise that right at a nearly 4% higher rate than Latino men. Similarly, the difference between male and female respondents in our study was 4% in favor of female voters. This would suggest that our study can be generalized to the voting Latino public at large in the context of gender as the results were nearly identical. In addition to gender, another demographic component of importance is age.

According to the Pew Research Center study in 2012, researchers sought to determine a voting breakdown amongst Latinos according to age both in Colorado and nationally. I have used it to compare it with the voting breakdown of this study for generalization purposes. The results of their study are as follows:

Eligible Voters in Colorado and the U.S., 2012	U.S.		Colorado	
	All	Hispanics	All	Hispanics
Total population (thousands)	313,914	52,932	5,188	1,088
Eligible voter populations (thousands)	220,111	23,632	3,680	524
Age:				
18-29	21.6	33.1	22.2	32.2
30-44	24.3	29.1	26.4	30.3
45-54	18.5	16.2	18.5	16.2
55-64	16.7	11.1	16.8	11.1
65 and older	18.9	10.5	16.2	10.2
<p><i>Table 4.</i> Adapted from Brown, A., & Patton, E. (2014, October 2). Characteristics of Eligible Voters in Colorado and the United States, 2012.</p>				

In this study, the age breakdown of respondents is as follows:

Age of Study Participants		
	Count	Percent
18-29	166	31.6
30-44	180	34.2
45-54	77	14.6
55-64	69	13.1
65+	34	6.5
Total	526	100.0
<i>Table 5.</i>		

According to Pewhispanic.org, the “on political party identification, 63% (of Latino’s in 2014) today say they identify with or lean toward the Democratic Party...and when asked which political party has more concern for Latinos, 50% say the Democrats. Meanwhile, About one-quarter (27%) of Latinos today say they identify with or lean toward the Republican Party”. (Lopez, Gonzalez-Barrera, & Krogstad, 2014) According to this research, respondents 53% of respondents indicated they either voted only Democrat or mostly Democrat. Seven-teen percent of respondents said they voted equally for Democrats and Republicans. In addition, when asked about party declaration in a primary election, 59% of respondents registered as Democrats while 30% of respondents registered as Republicans. This would seem to indicate that the breakdown is relatively consistent with the results of the research Pew Research has done and can be considered generalized to the voting Latino population.

When asked about political ideology, the majority of respondents reported as moderate (33%), with 29% of respondents reporting as very conservative or conservative. On the other hand, 28% of respondents identified as liberal or very liberal. It may be that Latinos are more moderate when it comes to political ideology as polls show than many people may think.

Results and Discussion

The overall results were very interesting. The findings of the survey will include the results as percentages as well as some discussion interpreting the results.

Social Issues

When it came to abortion, 38% of respondents indicated it should be legal under any circumstances, 42% indicated it should be legal under certain circumstances, while only 15% indicated it should be illegal in all circumstances. Support for gay marriage was very high with 68% of respondents in support and only 23% in opposition.

Tax Policy

On the issue of taxation and government services, 32% of respondents indicated they would be interested in paying more in taxes resulting in more government services. Within those results support for higher taxes was supported by 38% of Latino Democrats while 34% of Latino Democrats were opposed. Nine percent of Latino Republicans were not sure while 28% of Latino Democrats were not sure. This suggests that Republicans may have a much firmer opinion on their belief of the role of government, the services it provides, and the taxes that support its operation. However, in this study it appears that Latinos in this survey identify more with the smaller government and lower taxes, ideals more consistent with the Republican Party than with the Democrat Party belief in bigger government.

Education Policy

Continuing with the line of questions on domestic issues, respondents were asked the question of who should have most say in U.S. education policy and development, the federal government, state government, or local school districts and school boards. Overwhelmingly, respondents indicated that control should be in the hands of local school districts and school

boards (45%), while 28% selected state government, and 17% selected the federal government. 43% of Latino Democrats selected local school districts and school boards, a Republican ideal. Support for the Affordable Care Act was largely mixed with 49% of respondents in support of the 2010 law whereas 36% were opposed. Among Latino Democrats, only 64% supported the law which is lower than democratic support nationally.

Foreign Policy

When asked a question on the U.S. role in the world, diplomatically, militarily, both, or neither, respondents were neither overly hawkish or isolationist in their response. 42% of respondents selected both militarily and diplomatically, with 22% indicating support for only diplomatic action. A minute 8% of respondents indicated only militarily, while 15% indicated they believed that the U.S. has no role to play in international affairs.

Immigration Reform

Participants were also asked questions pertaining to issues on immigration policy. Fifty-eight percent of respondents indicated that they believed illegal immigration is a problem in the United States while 36% do not. Seventy-seven percent of Republican Latino's viewed it as a problem while 52% of their democratic counterparts viewed illegal immigration as a problem. Those who believed that illegal immigration is a problem were provided with two different ways of dealing with the issue: the first more of a Republican like plan, the second one predominantly supported by Democrats. The first question was as follows: "Secure the border and do not permit most illegal immigrants to have the opportunity to obtain legal U.S. citizenship". The second question was as follows: "Reform which includes a pathway to citizenship for most illegal immigrants while also securing the border". Thirty-four percent of respondents preferred the first approach, while 61% preferred the second option.

When breaking down the results according to party affiliation, some interesting storylines emerge. Republican Latinos slightly favored the Democrat plan known as the comprehensive plan that included a pathway to citizenship (49%) whereas 47% supported their own party's plan of securing the border first before negotiating on how to deal with current illegal immigrants. This is a fascinating split that reveals a great deal about how even Republican Latinos are split on this issue. On the other hand, 26% of Latino Democrats actually supported the Republican Plan while 69% supported their own party's advertised plan. I found it intriguing that 34% of respondents are not in favor in granting citizenship to illegal immigrants considering the demographic this study is observing.

Participants were asked how important it is to them that the president and Congress pass significant new immigration legislation this year. Thirty-four percent believed it to be extremely important, very important at 31%, and somewhat important at 28%. While I found it fascinating that interest in immigration action was so diverse, the political breakdown of the respondents and their choices was also interesting. Forty-three percent of Latino Republicans indicated they thought it was extremely important while only 34% of Latino Democrats thought that way. In the category of very important, results were close with 31% versus 33% respectively.

Continuing the line of immigration questions, participants were asked the following question: "On November 20, 2014, President Obama announced a series of executive actions to crack down on illegal immigration at the border, prioritize deporting felons not families, and require certain undocumented immigrants to pass a criminal background check and pay taxes in order to temporarily stay in the U.S. without fear of deportation. Do you agree with his decision?" Results were very much in favor of the President's action as 75% of respondents supportive and only 12% of respondents opposed. Sixty-three percent of Latino Republicans

were supportive of the President with only 24% opposed. It is clear that even Latino Republicans are passionate about this issue.

Part of this study included a series of questions about how Latino Americans felt about illegal immigrants. The table below reveals the attitudes and opinions of Latino voters in our study through such questions.

Detailed Immigrations Questions

#	Question	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses
5	The government should develop a plan that would allow illegal immigrants to become U.S. residents.	37	21	34	77	151	56	163	539
7	Illegal aliens should not be discriminated against.	40	31	33	69	129	37	197	536
1	Immigrants today strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents.	42	30	29	83	121	81	155	541
6	Illegal aliens have rights too.	45	39	43	80	104	74	152	537
8	There is enough room in this country for everyone.	55	36	58	84	95	51	159	538
10	Illegal aliens should be excluded from social welfare.	72	54	46	124	65	64	114	539
9	All illegal aliens deserve the same rights as U.S. citizens.	99	47	85	98	64	57	86	536
4	Granting undocumented immigrants legal status would take jobs from U.S. citizens.	141	64	88	83	64	38	61	539
2	The government should develop a plan to deport illegal immigrant that already here.	144	57	93	98	60	37	50	539
3	Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing and health care.	172	60	88	73	64	33	50	540

Table 6.

Issues of Importance

At this point in the survey, the researcher wanted to see how Latino voters would rank important policy issues. Participants were asked to rank issues on a scale of one to eight, with one being most important and eight being least important, essentially to help determine what issues were most important to Latino voters. The responses are in the corresponding chart below and are sorted according to the respondents' selection of one as being most important.

Issue Ranking Results

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total Responses
Tax reform	32	50	62	79	67	79	79	51	499
Social issues such as abortion and gay marriage	32	33	30	36	39	66	74	189	499
Immigration reform	43	38	56	50	83	89	82	58	499
National defense and military readiness	62	44	47	54	53	59	86	94	499
Education policy	64	87	79	86	61	44	56	22	499
Health care policy	73	73	94	81	62	59	38	19	499
Federal budget deficit	80	75	55	52	74	59	58	46	499
Economic growth	113	99	76	61	60	44	26	20	499
Total	499	499	499	499	499	499	499	499	499

Table 7.

The economy was seen as extremely important as evidenced by the tally in the first three columns in terms of importance. Issues, related to the health of our economy came in second with 80 respondents ranking it as their number one issue. Healthcare and education policy followed, which continues the focus that Latino voters placed on domestic issues. Interestingly, more respondents selected national defense and military readiness as more important than immigration reform which seems counter intuitive. Furthermore, a notable number of respondents ranked it 5-7, meaning it was less important to them. That is an interesting finding as earlier in the study, when asked whether or not the President and Congress pass significant new immigration legislation this year, those that thought it is extremely important registered at 34%, very important at 31%, and somewhat important at 28%. The results of this study seem to indicate that immigration policy and change is important to Latino voters, but in the grand scheme of issues it is not a top priority.

Influences on Voting

At this point in the study, the researcher wanted to see what Latino voters believed influenced their decision to vote for either Republican or Democrat candidates. The question was asked in the following way: “Which of the following best describes why you vote the way that you choose to do so?” The responses were interesting as the majority of the participants (41%) selected I’m not sure/other. The media’s depiction of either political party was 28% of respondents. Twenty percent of respondents indicated they voted based on the advice of family or friends. Only 11% of respondents indicated their religion had a role in their political views. When broken down by party identification, religion was the largest division in terms of influence with 21% of Latino Republicans indicated that religion influenced the way they voted, while only 5% Latino Democrats indicated religion had an influence on their vote.

Questions pertained to different cable news outlets, different types of media, as well as how often respondents read or watched the news. The three major cable news outlets were selected for analysis, that being CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC. Forty-two percent of Democrat respondents indicated that CNN was their news outlet of choice, followed by 29% of Republicans. Thirty-seven percent of Republicans indicated Fox News was their preferred news outlet along with 25% of Democrats. Only 18% of Republicans and 20% of Democrats selected MSNBC as their cable news network of choice. In terms of types of media consumed by respondents, results only varied slightly. Forty-four percent of Republicans preferred cable news compared to 39% of Democrats. News via the internet was favored by 23% of Republicans and 26% of Democrats. Only 13% of Republicans selected the newspaper along with 14% of Democrat respondents. Social media was preferred by Latino Democrats (16%) versus only 11% of Latino Republicans.

Rocca, Sanchez, and Uscinski (2008) researched the effect that friends and family have on one's political affiliation. The results of this research would seem to concur with their work in 2008. Slothuus and De Vreese (2010) focused on the communications theory component of politics and political communication. They found that framed messages repeated over time can influence the way one votes, which this research would also affirm.

Being an informed voter does not necessarily mean that your information must come from the news or the media. It could come from research, discussion, and other means. However, the researcher did include a question pertaining to the number of days a respondent watches the news on a weekly basis. Fifty-seven percent of Republicans indicated they watched or read the news 6-7 days a week, while 45% of Democrats did the same. Twenty-seven percent of

Democrats watched or read the news 4-5 days a week, while only 18% of Republicans indicated the same.

Party Consideration

In addition to asking at the beginning of the survey which party respondents identified, the researcher thought it would be important to ask about how they thought the party interacted with them and cared for them. When asked which party they believe has their best interest in mind, the Democrat Party was the favorite at 47%, followed by neither at 29%, and the Republican Party at 19%. Respondents were also asked which political party do you feel communicates with you most effectively and the results were identical to the previous question.

Issue voting, as discussed at length in the literature review, was also part of this survey. Respondents were asked if you were to find out that some of your political positions are in agreement with the political party that is not your own, would you consider voting for that party? Sixty-five percent of respondents indicated they would switch parties over political positions of importance to them, 13% said no, and 22% were not sure. Next, respondents were asked if there a particular policy issue that is so important to you that you would consider voting for an alternative political party if they supported your views on that issue. Fifty-six percent of respondents indicated that a single issue would be enough for one to consider voting for a different party, 16% said no, and 28% were not sure. Finally, I listed a number of common political issues and asked respondents, “Which policy issue is so important to you that would cause you to vote for an alternative political party if they supported your views on that issue?” The results are displayed below:

Issue Voting Results







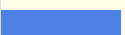
#	Answer		Response	%
3	Environment		29	5%
4	Foreign Policy		34	6%
5	Same Sex Marriage		51	10%
1	Abortion		66	12%
6	Illegal Immigration/ Immigration reform		100	19%
2	Education		112	21%
7	None of the above		143	27%
	Total		535	100%

Table . 8

Although many of the questions listed are common in U.S. politics, 27% of respondents indicated that none of the above issues would be worth them switching their party or the way they vote. It was interesting however to see that education was seen as most noteworthy, followed by immigration reform. Social issues made up the vast majority of the rest of the issues.

Conclusions

We have discussed the results of the survey with a brief narrative regarding some of the results. Some of the results were predictable (Latinos' overwhelmingly support Democrats at the ballot box); however there were some important differences that were found in regards to voters philosophical beliefs versus how they voted. On the one hand, Latino voters overwhelmingly identified with three Republican ideals, namely education policy, tax policy involving the role of government, and tackling the national debt. Republicans have long argued that education and curriculum decisions should be made at the local or state level, while Democrats have long argued for the need for federal oversight and control. Based on the results, it would seem that my first research question, "Do Latino political party preferences, based on voter registration and voting history actually match Latino ideological views on many or all substantive policy issues", has been answered quite clearly. The vast majority of Latino's vote for Democrat policies with some notable exceptions, that being education and tax policy issues involving the role of government.

Research question two, "How much importance do Latino voters place on immigration policy and issues versus other issues such as the economy, immigration, education, and healthcare" was answered by the ranking question (see table 4), which showed that economic growth was most important to Latino voters, followed by concern over the federal budget deficit, healthcare policy, education policy and national defense and military readiness. Immigration reform only was deemed more important than tax reform and social issues. In fact, a significant majority of respondents listed immigration reform as their fifth to eighth most important issue. That is the most of any issues that was listed (in terms of least importance).

Research question three, “Are there a variety of factors that contribute to why Latino’s vote the way they do, e.g. family tradition, media, and personal preference or one overwhelming influence?” was answered by the results as respondents indicated a variety of influences that effected their political views. It was disappointing however, that such a significant number of respondents selected that they did not know or were unsure. It was somewhat revealing in today’s media driven world, that more respondents (28%) indicated they were influenced by media, than the advice of family or friends (20%). It was not expected that only 11% of Latino respondents, traditionally thought to be very religious, particularly Catholic, believed that religion influenced the way they vote. This does however seem to coincide with the ranking question where social issues were deemed by most as lacking in terms of importance. In addition, when considering party switching over an issue, only 10-12% respondents indicated a party’s stance on social issues could influence them to change their party id.

When beginning this project, it was thought that abortion and social issues would be a place where the Republican Party could makes inroads with Latino voters. As it turns out, such issues are not a priority according to this study for most Latino voters and that the economy is most important to them as well as the national debt, education, the role of government, and healthcare.

With support amongst Democrat Latino’s for the Affordable Care Act at 64%, it really cannot be determined through this research if it is an issue that the Republican Party can use to attract Latino voters. In addition, the vast support of the President’s executive order would make this issue essentially a non-starter, however it is currently a moot point as the action is under review by the federal court system. When it comes to education, 23% of Democrats indicated it is such an important issue, they would continue voting Republican. Based on the immense

support for local and state control of education policy, it would appear that this could be a winning issue for Republicans. In addition, 63% of Democrat Latinos indicated that they would be willing to vote for a Republican if there was an issue that was so important to them and Republicans had the same view they do. When it comes to concern over the national debt, 36% of Democrat Latinos listed the national debt of one of their top three issues they deem to be important. While both parties have contributed to the national debt especially under both President Bush and President Obama, the Republican Party has been very serious in the past few years about taking on the national debt, cutting spending, and getting rid of duplicate programs much to the chagrin of most Democrats who are opposed to cutting most programs. In addition to education policy, the national debt may be an effective issue Republicans may be able use their advantage. When asked about tax policy and the role of government, 38% of Democrat Latinos say that they would be willing to pay higher taxes to obtain more government services. Thirty-four percent indicated they support lower taxes and less government services, a smaller government, Republican philosophy. Twenty-eight percent didn't know or were unsure. With a significant percentage of Latino Democrats supporting lower taxes and smaller government, it would seem that Republicans should communicate more effectively their position on this issue to Latinos.

While often thought to be the elephant in the room so to speak, only 30% of Democrat Latinos indicated that immigration reform was one of the top three issues that were important to them. In terms of policy however, a majority of Latinos prefer a balance of securing the border, while also providing a way for most illegal immigrants in the United States to obtain citizenship. While the Democrat Party has embraced this plan, the Republican Party has not. While the party's base may never support a Republican candidate who supports a pathway to citizenship,

there may be some middle ground that would show a “compassionate conservative” approach when dealing with the illegal immigration problem. In politics, perception is reality and if the Republican Party is perceived as being anti-immigrant or anti-Latino, the party will ultimately lose the support it has or the status quo remains.

As discussed throughout this study, the Republican Party has a communications problem with Latino Americans. This is further evidenced in this study as only 19% of respondents believed that Republicans had their best interest in mind, compared to Democrats (47%). Twenty-nine percent felt that neither party communicated with them well. Americans in general are growing weary of politics in general as seen in low approval numbers of Congress. However, those who are in Congress are there for a reason, that being that they won in their district or state. Part of communicating effectively is more than just Latino outreach with the same repetitive one size fits all message. As evidenced by this study’s results, Latino voters care more about some issues and less about others. The Republican Party, if it is going to win over some Latino moderates, must communicate an articulate message to Latino’s on the issues they care about. As the party is not going to change their position on everything to court the Latino vote, they must run on the issues where Latino voters agree with them philosophically, e.g. education policy, the national debt, tax policy and desire for smaller government.

Whether it is via mailers, emails, social media or simply remarks from the candidate, these issues must be brought to Latino voters. Grunig’s Excellence Theory espoused principles that should be practiced to be an effective communicator. Some of them are very important when courting the Latino electorate. First, per Grunig, top management in an organization, in this case the Republican Party, must place value on their communication and Latino outreach. It must be sincere and it must be consistent. It is important that the Republican Party realize that their base

is graying and must use a big tent mentality moving forward if they want to win national elections. By embodying diversity internally and externally, the Republican Party can grow stronger without changing its position on issues considered to be non-starters such as abortion and desire for smaller government. It would also make sense that the party must become willing to compromise in certain areas in order to expand its support base. However, at the same time, the researcher has identified some key areas where Republicans and most Latinos already agree, they just might not realize it.

The survey revealed quantitatively that issue voting does in fact occur and that it pertains to both political parties. It would be smart for the party to further research the numbers behind these results to see just how important these issues are to Latinos to identify which voters they may be able to bring into the party's fold.

Communication, as Grunig states, is effective when it is done in a manner where groups communicate back and forth. There are numerous strategies that the party could take to accomplish this two-way communication goal. As the Republican Party courts Latino's on key issues, it must also be willing to listen if the communication efforts are to be successful. As stated by Heath and Coomb's review of Grunig's work, "With the two-way symmetrical model, practitioners use research and dialogue to bring about symbiotic changes in the ideas, attitudes, and behaviors of both their organizations and publics" (Heath and Coombs, 2006, p. 12). The party should host events across the country where party leaders in that region could sit down with small groups of Latino voters to hear their concerns and express their plans for addressing them. This is not only good politics but the right thing to do. Furthermore, qualitative interviews could be conducted with Latino focus groups in an effort to learn more about this demographic. In addition, the party should use social media to communicate with this demographic through

creative public relations campaigns. Furthermore, bringing Latino community leaders to the table could help diversify the party and its leadership. If Republicans are going to obtain Latino support, relationships must be built and attitudes must be changed. This is not a relationship that can be built in a single day, week, or even year, but must be a sustained effort to communicate with the Latino community and be willing to listen accordingly if the party wants to be successful.

Limitations

As with any research study, there are limitations to the research and its findings. The researcher initially was seeking to send the survey to only Ohio residents and to 1,000 respondents in hopes of receiving. Unfortunately, due to cost constraints the researcher was able to obtain 542 respondents, which means that the sampling error is 4.5%. It is important to note that the respondents were registered voters and therefore U.S. citizens. Latinos who are U.S. citizens and illegal immigrants' opinions on various issues were not analyzed. If done, the results may have varied significantly. However, the researcher believed that it was important to study those who actually do vote, as they are the ones who ultimately wield the electoral power both parties are seeking. Some of the results in terms of policy responses were at odds with other research such as that done by the Pew Research Center. It would be helpful to repeat the survey to see if the results vary. While a majority of respondents did indicate they would prefer to pay less in taxes and receive less government services, I believe it would have been more insightful to have included more questions pertaining to the role of government in society. It would be important to replicate this study and others of Latino voters if President Obama or future Presidents were to provide a pathway to citizenship or citizenship to large numbers of illegal immigrants.

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Appendix A

Office of Research Integrity
Institutional Review Board (IRB)
2000 University Avenue
Muncie, IN 47306-0155
Phone: 765-285-5070

DATE: March 17, 2015

TO: David McCandless

FROM: Ball State University IRB

RE: IRB protocol # 630081-1
TITLE: Political Issues Study
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED
DECISION DATE: March 17, 2015
REVIEW TYPE: EXEMPT

The Institutional Review Board reviewed your protocol on March 17, 2015 and has determined the procedures you have proposed are appropriate for exemption under the federal regulations. As such, there will be no further review of your protocol, and you are cleared to proceed with the procedures outlined in your protocol. As an exempt study, there is no requirement for continuing review. Your protocol will remain on file with the IRB as a matter of record.

Exempt Categories:

Category 1: Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

Category 2: Research involving the use of educational test (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior

Category 3: Research involving the use of educational test (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under category 2, if: (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) Federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

Category 4: Research involving the collection of study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Category 5: Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of Department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate or otherwise examine: (i) public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under these programs.

Category 6: Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed which contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Editorial Notes:

1. Exempt

While your project does not require continuing review, it is the responsibility of the P.I. (and, if applicable, faculty supervisor) to inform the IRB if the procedures presented in this protocol are to be modified or if problems related to human research participants arise in connection with this project. Any procedural modifications must be evaluated by the IRB before being implemented, as some modifications may change the review status of this project. Please contact (ORI Staff) if you are unsure whether your proposed modification requires review or have any questions. Proposed modifications should be addressed in writing and submitted electronically to the IRB (<http://www.bsu.edu/irb>) for review. Please reference the above IRB protocol number in any communication to the IRB regarding this project. Reminder: Even though your study is exempt from the relevant federal regulations of the Common Rule (45 CFR 46, subpart A), you and your research team are not exempt from ethical research practices and should therefore employ all protections for your participants and their data which are appropriate to your project.

Bryan Byers, PhD/Chair
Institutional Review Board

Christopher Mangelli, JD, MS, MEd, CIP/Director
Office of Research Integrity

Appendix B

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is David McCandless and I am a graduate student from the Department of Journalism at Ball State University. I am writing to invite you to participate in my research study about political issues. You're eligible to be in this study because you identify as a Latino or Hispanic American. You also identify yourself as an adult registered voter. I obtained your contact information from Research Now.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will answer a series of questions relating to political issues. You will receive \$2.50 in E-Rewards from Research Now for your participation. Remember, this is completely voluntary. You can choose to be in the study or not. If you'd like to participate or have any questions about the study, please email me at DLMCCANDLESS@bsu.edu.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

David McCandless, Principal Investigator

DLMCCANDLESS@bsu.edu
Ball State University
340 Art & Journalism
Muncie, IN 47306

Robin Blom, PhD., Advisor

rblom@bsu.edu
Ball State University
340 Art & Journalism
Muncie, IN 47306

Appendix C

Q1



Political Issues Study

Thank you very much for participating in this research study.

Please read these instructions carefully:

I would like to know your opinions about U.S. politics and political ideology. You are invited to respond to questions about several important political and policy issues.

There are no right or wrong answers; we are seeking your opinion.

If you are under the age of 18 and/or not an U.S. citizen, you may not participate in this survey. Furthermore, if you are not a registered Latino or Hispanic voter, you may not participate in this study.

The questions should only take about 10-12 minutes to complete. Your responses are voluntary and are anonymous. Your names are not part of the data stored for this research project. You may choose not to participate at all, refuse to answer certain questions, or end the survey at any time. There are no known risks associated with participation in this study.

You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate in this research and have your answers included in the data set by completing and returning the attached survey.

You will receive a small financial incentive by Research Now for your participation.

If you have any concerns or questions about this research study, such as scientific issues, please feel free to contact the principal investigator:

David McCandless

DLMCCANDLESS@bsu.edu
Ball State University
340 Art & Journalism
Muncie, IN 47306
C: 440-590-5094

For one's rights as a research subject, you may contact the following: Office of Research Integrity, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, (765) 285-5070, irb@bsu.edu

Appendix D

Survey

Q1

I have read, understood, and printed a copy of, the above consent form and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

- a. Yes
- b. No

Q2

Are you a registered voter in your state of residence?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Q3

Do you identify yourself as Latino and/or Hispanic?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Q4

In this section, we would like you to answer some questions pertaining to your voting history and identity.

Which of the following political ideologies do you best identify with?

- a. Very Conservative
- b. Conservative
- c. Moderate
- d. Liberal

- e. Very Liberal
- f. I'm not sure/Other

Q5

Throughout your voting history, please indicate how you have voted according to political affiliation of the candidates.

- a. Always Democrat candidates
- b. More Democrat than Republican candidates
- c. Equally Democrat and Republican candidates
- d. More Republican than Democrat candidates
- e. Always Republican Candidates
- f. I have never voted/Other

Q6

If you have voted in a primary election what did you declare yourself to be?

- a. A Republican
- b. A Democrat
- c. I have not voted in a primary election in my state
- d. I don't know

Q7

In this section, we would like you to answer some policy related questions.

Do you believe that abortion should be legal under any circumstances, legal only under certain circumstances, or illegal in all circumstances?

- a. Legal under any circumstances
- b. Legal only under certain circumstances
- c. Illegal in all circumstances
- d. I'm not sure/Other

Q8

In general, do you believe that couples of the same gender should have the legal right to get married in the United States?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I'm not sure/Other

Q9

What of the following best describes your philosophy on taxation?

- a. I would rather be taxed more resulting in more government services
- b. I would rather be taxed less resulting in less government services
- c. I'm not sure/Other

Q10

Who do you believe should have the most say in U.S. education policy and curriculum development?

- a. Federal Government
- b. State Government
- c. Local school districts and school boards
- d. I'm not sure/Other

Q11

Do you generally approve or disapprove of the 2010 Affordable Care Act, signed into law by President Obama that restructured the U.S. health care system?

- a. Approve
- b. Disapprove
- c. I'm not sure/Other

Q12

In general, do you believe it is in the best interest of the United States to intervene in critical situations around the world militarily, diplomatically, both, or neither?

- a. Only Militarily
- b. Only Diplomatically
- c. Both military and diplomatically
- d. Neither militarily or diplomatically
- e. I don't know/Other

Q13

Do you believe that illegal immigration is currently a problem in the United States?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I'm not sure/Other

Q14

Display This Question:



If Do you believe that illegal immigration is currently a problem in the United States?
Yes Is Selected Edit

If you answered yes to the above question, what do you believe is the best solution to the issue?

- a. Secure the border and do not permit most illegal immigrants to have the opportunity to obtain legal U.S. citizenship
- b. Reform which includes a pathway to citizenship for most illegal immigrants while also securing the border
- c. I do not believe illegal immigration is a problem in the United States
- d. I'm not sure/Other

Q15

On a scale of one to seven, one being strongly disagree and seven being strongly agree, please respond to the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Immigrants today strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The government should develop a plan to deport illegal immigrant that already here.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing and health care.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Granting undocumented immigrants legal status would take jobs from U.S. citizens.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The government should develop a plan that would allow illegal immigrants to become U.S. residents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Illegal aliens have rights too.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Illegal aliens should not be discriminated against.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is enough room in this country for everyone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All illegal aliens deserve the same rights as U.S. citizens.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Illegal aliens should be excluded from social welfare.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



How important is it to you that the president and Congress pass significant new immigration legislation this year?

- a. Extremely important
- b. Very important
- c. Somewhat important
- d. Not too important
- e. Not important at all

Q17



On November 20, 2014, President Obama announced a series of executive actions to crack down on illegal immigration at the border, prioritize deporting felons not families, and require certain undocumented immigrants to pass a criminal background check and pay taxes in order to temporarily stay in the U.S. without fear of deportation. Do you agree with his decision?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I'm not sure/Other

Q18



Please rank the following issues in order of importance to you from 1-8, with 1 being most important and 8 being least important.

- a. 1 Economic growth
- b. 2 Immigration reform
- c. 3 Health care policy
- d. 4 Federal budget deficit
- e. 5 Education policy
- f. 6 Social issues such as abortion and gay marriage
- g. 7 National defense and military readiness
- h. 8 Tax reform

Q19



In this section, we would like you to answer some questions pertaining to outside influences on your voting behavior and political ideology.

Which of the following best describes why you vote the way that you choose to do so?

- a. The advice of family or friends
- b. The media's depiction of either political party
- c. My religion
- d. I'm not sure/Other

Q20

Display This Question:



If Which of the following best describes why you vote the way that you choose to do so? The media's depiction of either political party Is Selected Edit

If you selected "The media's depiction of either political party" in Question 19, which mainstream cable news media do you watch the most?

- a. CNN
- b. Fox News
- c. MSNBC
- d. × None of the above

Q21

Display This Question:



If Which of the following best describes why you vote the way that you choose to do so? The media's depiction of either political party Is Selected Edit

If you selected "The media's depiction of either political party" to the above question, which type of media do you read or watch the most?

- a. Cable news
- b. Online news organizations
- c. Newspaper
- d. Social media
- e. × None of the above

Q22



How many days in the past week have you watched or read the news, whether it be local, state, national, or international news?

- a. 6- 7 Days
- b. 4-5 Days
- c. 2-3 Days
- d. 1 Day
- e. I have not watched or read the news in the past week

Q23



Which political party do you believe has your best interest in mind?

- a. Democrat Party
- b. Republican Party
- c. Other
- d. Neither

Q24



Which political party do you feel communicates with you most effectively?

- a. Democrat Party
- b. Republican Party
- c. Other
- d. Neither

Q25



If you were to find out that some of your political positions are in agreement with the political party that is not your own, would you consider voting for that party?

- a. Yes
- b. No

- c. I'm not sure

Q26

Is there a particular policy issue that is so important to you that you would consider voting for an alternative political party if they supported your views on that issue?

- a. Yes
b. No
c. I'm not sure

Q27

Which policy issue is so important to you that would cause you to vote for an alternative political party if they supported your views on that issue?

- a. Abortion
b. Education
c. Environment
d. Foreign Policy
e. Same Sex Marriage
f. Illegal Immigration/Immigration reform
g. None of the above

Q28

What is your age?

Q29

Are you male or female?

- a. Male
b. Female

Q30



Looking ahead to the next several months, are you optimistic or pessimistic about how you and your family will do in 2015?

- a. Optimistic
- b. Pessimistic
- c. I don't know/I'm not sure

Appendix E

	Democratic	Republican	Both equally	Neither	
	Party	Party	(vol.)	(vol.)	Unsure
	%	%	%	%	%
ALL	48	36	1	9	7
Non-Hispanic whites	41	42	1	9	6
Blacks	70	14	1	8	7
Hispanics	60	26	-	6	7

PR, N. (2014, May 1). Besides pocketbook Issues, what's important to Americans in making voting decisions. *PR Newswire US*.

Appendix F

TABLE 2

Characteristics of Eligible Voters in Colorado and the United States, 2012

% of eligible voters (unless otherwise noted)

	U.S.		Colorado	
	All	Hispanics	All	Hispanics
Total population (thousands)	313,914	52,932	5,188	1,088
Eligible voter population (thousands)	220,111	23,632	3,680	524
Age				
18-29	21.6	33.1	22.2	32.2
30-44	24.3	29.1	26.4	30.3
45-54	18.5	16.2	18.5	16.2
55-64	16.7	11.1	16.8	11.1
65 and older	18.9	10.5	16.2	10.2

Brown, A., & Patton, E. (2014, October 2). Characteristics of Eligible Voters in Colorado and the United States, 2012. Retrieved May 6, 2015, from <http://www.pewhispanic.org/fact-sheets/2014-state-election-fact-sheets/latinos-in-the-2014-election-colorado/ph-2014-10-election-fact-sheet-co-02/>

Appendix G

Q1. Thinking about the 2014 election, what are the most important issues facing the (Hispanic/Latino) community that our politicians should address?

Total	AZ	CA	CO	FL	GA	IL	KS	NC	NV	TX	

Jobs / Economy	34%	33%	32%	40%	46%	31%	38%	31%	30%	33%	28%
Immigration reform	45%	48%	46%	45%	39%	57%	43%	53%	57%	48%	43%
Health care / Medicaid	17%	12%	17%	11%	19%	22%	16%	28%	18%	15%	17%
Education / schools	21%	26%	22%	16%	18%	23%	22%	23%	16%	20%	22%
Wars / Foreign policy	2%	1%	1%	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%
Housing	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Gas / energy prices	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	7%	1%	1%	1%
Race relations	4%	5%	3%	2%	3%	4%	3%	9%	7%	2%	7%
Taxes	2%	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%	4%	2%	1%	3%	3%
Environment	1%	1%	3%	1%	*%	1%	1%	1%	1%	*%	1%
Social issues	2%	3%	1%	5%	3%	1%	3%	1%	4%	1%	2%
Something else	9%	7%	11%	12%	8%	5%	8%	5%	7%	7%	11%
Don't know	9%	9%	10%	10%	8%	9%	8%	6%	6%	9%	7%

Latino Decisions Election Eve Poll 2014. (2014, November 1). Retrieved November 21, 2014, from http://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/LD_2014_Election_Eve_1pm.pdf

Appendix H

Q16. How important is the issue of immigration in your decision to vote, and who to vote for in this election?

Total	AZ	CA	CO	FL	GA	IL	KS	NC	NV	TX
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The most important issue	33%	36%	35%	30%	29%	36%	37%	46%	35%	30%	33%
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One of the important	34%	32%	36%	29%	34%	28%	34%	21%	31%	37%	36%
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Somewhat important	19%	21%	16%	26%	20%	21%	19%	20%	23%	23%	17%
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Not really important	9%	7%	9%	14%	9%	10%	7%	7%	9%	8%	10%
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Don't know	5%	4%	5%	2%	8%	4%	3%	6%	3%	2%	4%
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Latino Decisions Election Eve Poll 2014. (2014, November 1). Retrieved November 21, 2014, from http://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/LD_2014_Election_Eve_1pm.pdf

Appendix I

Age of Study Participants		
	Count	Percent
18-29	166	31.6
30-44	180	34.2
45-54	77	14.6
55-64	69	13.1
65+	34	6.5
Total	526	100.0
<i>Table 5.</i>		

Appendix J

Detailed Immigrations Questions

#	Question	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses
5	The government should develop a plan that would allow illegal immigrants to become U.S. residents.	37	21	34	77	151	56	163	539
7	Illegal aliens should not be discriminated against.	40	31	33	69	129	37	197	536
1	Immigrants today strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents.	42	30	29	83	121	81	155	541
6	Illegal aliens have rights too.	45	39	43	80	104	74	152	537
8	There is enough room in this country for everyone.	55	36	58	84	95	51	159	538
10	Illegal aliens should be excluded from social welfare.	72	54	46	124	65	64	114	539
9	All illegal aliens deserve the same rights as U.S. citizens.	99	47	85	98	64	57	86	536
4	Granting undocumented immigrants legal status would take jobs from U.S. citizens.	141	64	88	83	64	38	61	539
2	The government should develop a plan to deport illegal immigrant that already here.	144	57	93	98	60	37	50	539
3	Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing and health care.	172	60	88	73	64	33	50	540

Table 6.

Appendix K
Issue Ranking Results

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total Responses
Tax reform	32	50	62	79	67	79	79	51	499
Social issues such as abortion and gay marriage	32	33	30	36	39	66	74	189	499
Immigration reform	43	38	56	50	83	89	82	58	499
National defense and military readiness	62	44	47	54	53	59	86	94	499
Education policy	64	87	79	86	61	44	56	22	499
Health care policy	73	73	94	81	62	59	38	19	499
Federal budget deficit	80	75	55	52	74	59	58	46	499
Economic growth	113	99	76	61	60	44	26	20	499
Total	499	499	499	499	499	499	499	499	499

Table 7.

Appendix L
Issue Voting Results








#	Answer		Response	%
3	Environment		29	5%
4	Foreign Policy		34	6%
5	Same Sex Marriage		51	10%
1	Abortion		66	12%
6	Illegal Immigration/ Immigration reform		100	19%
2	Education		112	21%
7	None of the above		143	27%
	Total		535	100%

Table . 8

Appendix M

Reviewer 1

Dear Dr. Blom:

Here are answers to the Outside Evaluation questions:

I. Evaluator's Credentials

I am an active community leader in Warren County, Ohio. Including participation in multiple roles in local, regional, and national political efforts for the following individuals: Ohio Senator Shannon Jones; Warren Co. Commissioner Pat South; Warren Co. judicial candidate Ben Yoder; Warren Co. Treasurer candidate Bernard Wright, and U. S. Congressman Steve Chabot.

II. Relationship to Student and Subject Matter

Personal friend of student, David McCandless. Personal interest in quantitative methods and campaign strategy.

III. Evaluation of Topic as Appropriate for Creative Endeavor

Very appropriate for Republican Party strategy for 2016 national elections because of Latino influence on outcome and the broad, general importance of immigration policy. As the research reveals the media (i.e. public relations) has a large influence on both issue selection and perception of "key" influencers.

IV. Student's Approach

Strong, well documented, research in framing and design of survey. The value of this preparation is indicated by the high response rate. Survey data is presented in abundant detail. I would appreciate a more concise summary of results and perhaps more specific strategy recommendations.

V. Project Body

a) Quality

Research was presented in a clear, consistent manner and was extensive for this type of project. I am not knowledgeable enough about relevant publications to comment about the quality of the resources, but feel confident they were well-chosen.

Conclusions are logical and well supported by survey data.

b) Depth of Treatment

Research about specific issues was good. Perhaps stronger than the inquiry about party affiliation, which I took to be secondary.

c) Coverage

Based on a thorough reading of an early version and multiple discussions with the researcher and expectations for a Master's degree project, I certainly feel comfortable with the scope.

VI. Contribution To Field

A focused, actionable strategy guide based on this research will be of value for improving Republican influence and support from the Latino voting population. Many of the general principals revealed can also be applied to other voting segments.

Respectfully Submitted,

Larry L. Hollingshead

Appendix N

Reviewer 2

Outside Evaluation

by

Brian Griffith

Dear. Dr. Blom:

- I. Brief discussion of evaluator's credentials (e.g., knowledge and experience of the subject area)

I am the Communications Director for Congressman Steve Chabot, and have been involved in political campaigns and political communications since 1996. I am also a licensed attorney, and served on the University of Cincinnati Law Review for two years, including one year as a contributing editor.

- II. Relationship to the student and subject matter

I have worked with Mr. McCandless since 2010, first as a consultant on Congressman Chabot's campaign, and then on Congressman Chabot's personal staff.

As I mentioned above, I am Congressman Chabot's Communications Director, and I have handled media relations for Congressman Chabot at various times going back to the late 1990s. Additionally, I have consulted numerous campaigns regarding messaging and media strategy.

- III. Evaluation of the topic as appropriate for the creative endeavor

Obviously, as a professional who handles communications for a Republican member of Congress, reaching Latino constituents/voters is of great interest to me. Also, it has been, and continues to be, a topic of serious debate both within the Republican party structure and in the media, particularly since the 2012 presidential election. As such, I believe it is highly appropriate for this type of review and analysis.

- IV. Evaluation of the student's approach

Overall, I thought the project was well-researched, well-written, and I found it informative and, at times, surprising. I was particularly surprised to see how low many Latinos ranked immigration reform on their priorities list. Consequently, I think that, by asking that particular question, Mr. McCandless uncovered a nugget that defies conventional wisdom, as most in the

media assume that Republicans struggle with Latino voters due to their position on immigration reform. This has, in turn, led many to believe that the next Republican candidate for president needs to be in favor of immigration reform (i.e., Rubio or Bush). But these results tend to suggest the situation is a little more complicated, and that there are other issues Republicans can use to move Latino voters.

V. Evaluation of the body of the project a) Quality b) Depth of treatment c) Coverage

I found the literature review informative and enlightening, particularly since I have not read many of the cited articles. I was impressed by the survey questions, and greatly appreciated the presentation of the survey data. They provide a wealth of information to someone in my field. Further, I came away surprised by some of the results, which doesn't happen too often as people in my position can have a tendency to become jaded and convinced we know it and have seen it all. So, from that perspective, I think the project is highly successful.

VI. Evaluation of the student's work as contributing to the field (e.g., body of knowledge)

The most significant critique that I can offer regarding the project is the brevity with which the conclusion is handled. I think the analysis of the problem and the identification of the issues important to Latino voters is thorough and insightful. However, more could be said regarding how to use that information.

Mr. McCandless is quite successful pinpointing the perception issues that Republicans face with Latino voters. But, I wanted to hear more about how they can overcome those issues. How can they mix earned and unearned media with social media and other non-traditional approaches to disseminate their message to their targeted audience?

Also, Latino/Hispanic voters are a fairly diverse group, with national origins in a number of different countries and cultures. As such, there are specific issues which can be used to sway specific voting blocks. For example, Cuban Americans tend to be vehemently opposed to the Castro government, a position they share with many Republicans. In fact, many Cuban Americans feel so strongly about that issue that they side with Republicans despite ideological differences in numerous other areas. I assume similar scenarios exist for other nationalities as well. And while I don't think this paper was the appropriate vehicle to discuss those issues in depth, I think it could benefit from a reference to those types of specific issues and suggestions for how they may be further explored.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian Griffith

Appendix O

Footnote:

The Democrat Party platform is located at: <http://www.democrats.org/democratic-national-platform> and the Republican Party platform can be found at http://www.gop.com/2012-republican-platform_home/.