

IMMIGRANT POLITICS. ANALYZING U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS THROUGH IMMIGRATION AND HISPANICS

La política migratoria. Analizando las elecciones presidenciales de Estados Unidos a través de la migración y los hispanos

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Abstract

The United States is a democracy that every four years elects a President. During the presidential campaigns, the issue of immigration has grown to become one of the most debated in recent times. It has been used to attract voters and to develop the political platform of every candidate. By an empirical analysis of the last four presidential campaigns and the current one of 2016, regarding immigration positions of the candidates and politicians, this article looks to find the connection —if any— with this issue and the Hispanic vote. Thus, candidates focus on these issues in order to gain new constituencies. The declarations and policies about immigration of the 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2016 candidates will be analyzed in order to validate this premise.

Keywords: Immigration Reform; Democrats, Republicans, Hispanics, Presidential campaigns.

Resumen

Estados Unidos es una democracia que cada cuatro años elige a su presidente. Durante las campañas presidenciales, el tema de la migración ha crecido hasta convertirse en uno de los más debatidos en los últimos tiempos. Se ha utilizado para atraer a los votantes y para desarrollar las plataformas políticas de todos los candidatos. Mediante un análisis empírico de las cuatro últimas campañas presidenciales y la actual de 2016, respecto a las posiciones sobre migración de los candidatos y los políticos, este artículo busca encontrar la conexión —de existir— con este tema y los votos de la comunidad hispana. Por lo tanto, los candidatos se centran en estas cuestiones con el fin de ganar nuevos apoyos. Se analizarán las declaraciones y las políticas sobre migración de los candidatos en 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012 y 2016, a fin de validar esta premisa.

Palabras clave: Reforma migratoria; Demócratas; Republicanos; Hispanos; Campañas presidenciales.

INTRODUCTION

Ever since President Richard Nixon called to the White House Henry Ramirez and other notable Mexican-Americans, charging them with helping him fill the void of participation of Mexican-Americans (Hispanics today) in being considered for important ap-

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pointments and for greater participation in elections, this segment of the American population has grown in involvement as well as getting the attention from political candidates.

This action was followed by the creation of the Republican National Hispanic Assembly, and a similar group by the democrats. Since, Hispanic participation spans from voters, to elected officials in local, state and national offices. This group has been growing in involvement in the political system of the U.S., being with appointed officials or through elections, by casting their votes.

The United States Presidential election takes place every four years. With a rather complicated electoral process, American voters stay attentive to the different proposals on the issues that are significant to them, as well as to the candidates' rhetoric.

In 2016 the country is at the end of the two term administration of President Barack Obama, the first black Commander in Chief, who ran his 2008 campaign advocating—among other issues—the need of an immigration reform. The lack of achievement of a migratory solution is still heavily criticized.

In each campaign now, politicians tackle the immigration issue. Democrats in general lean towards an immigration bill that leads to a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants. Republicans in general favor a bill that combines border security, with provisions for legalization and work permits.

The focus of this paper is to find a connection—if any—in the preferences on candidates for the Hispanic community regarding the issue of immigration.

An empirical analysis will be developed first, by understanding the issue about politics and immigration. Then, the last four presidential campaigns, as well as the one of 2016 until the beginning of May, are analyzed in order to define if there is a connection of immigration and politics in the U.S. with the Hispanic vote. The rhetoric of candidates and politicians will provide for most of the analysis, but just as useful will be the data on the economy and demographics for each period.

It is believed that in every presidential election, a segment of the population will always vote democrat, and similarly, there are those who will always vote republican; but the balance on Election Day are centrists from both parties plus the large block of “independents”, who mostly will vote with their wallets. This is why it is important to understand the state of the economy and in the expectations set by each presidential candidate.

The relevance of demographics and proportional representation relies in the fact that the U.S. is a representative democracy, structured on the basis of the fifty states with equal rights as to their representation in Washington. As such, based on the Constitution were the states granted the central government certain functions and kept the rest for themselves, each state has the obligation, under their own system, to send two senators and a number of representatives to the lower house. These representatives are in proportion to the population of each state, ensuring that no state has a minimum, one representative. The proportional representation to the House of Representatives is set every ten years on the basis of the census. The same proportionality goes to the number of electoral votes that each state has in the presidential election. Since the census is conducted at the end of every decade and the information is released after the following year, a census af-

fects distribution of electoral votes for three periods of elections. For the case of the 2000 election, the distribution was set with the census of 1990; for the case of the 2004 and 2008 elections, the census of 2000 defined the distribution, the same way the census of 2010 drew the landscape for the 2012 and the 2016 elections. Thus, the information will be presented for each census. This information will shed light into the Hispanic vote, however it has to be noted that it may not be directly connected to the vote and immigration issues, but gives an idea of Hispanic participation in the electoral process.

POLITICS AND IMMIGRATION

Immigration has been present in the politics of the United States (U.S.) ever since its colonial origins and its birth as a Democratic nation. Minds like those of the Founding Fathers, such as Thomas Jefferson and George Washington —first president of the U.S.—, had faith in the exceptionality of those who came from foreign lands to change their fortunes and settle down in a nation built on immigrants.

In today's political discourse on immigration, old thoughts such as “[b]orn in other countries, yet believing you could be happy in this, our laws acknowledge, as they should do, your right to join us in society, conforming, as I doubt not you will do, to our established rules. That these rules shall be as equal as prudential considerations will admit will certainly be the aim of our legislatures, general and particular” (Jefferson, 1801), would be met with approval for being inclusive; if it weren't because now, those thoughts have insignificant impact, and in extreme cases, may be reason enough to generate popular discontent.

It is the politicians' task to discuss the concerns of their citizens; immigration has long been one of them. No U.S. politician can deny that immigration has been one of the most important topics to ever be discussed in Capitol Hill; yet, this phenomenon is not exclusive to the country of the Stars and Stripes. On the contrary, every country in the world has experienced immigration in one of its varying forms. So why is immigration so crucial and important to the people of the U.S.? The answer is quite simple and has everything to do with the ideal of the “American Dream”, the ability to arrive from other parts of the world and settle down in a country with political stability, full of opportunities and an inclusive economy that welcomes almost everyone, as long as they are willing to work hard and earn their pay while operating as a law abiding non-citizen. As former President Lyndon B. Johnson stated, “[f]or that is what America is all about. It is the uncrossed desert and the unclimbed ridge. It is the star that is not reached and the harvest that is sleeping in the unplowed ground” (Address by Lyndon..., 1965). The American Dream lies in the abundance of opportunities that nationals and foreigners can pursue when settling down in the U.S.

As more immigrants arrived to the U.S., more regulations had to be designed to help maintain the integrity of the justice system while managing to preserve the allure of the American Dream. As diverse as the nationalities of those who go to the U.S. to pursue their dream, so are the range of opinions within the country's legislators and politicians.

Both parties, Republicans and Democrats, have fought on many issues; but the subject of immigration has been particularly tough to play out, as the perceptions and ideas of each party collide. Trying to agree on certain issues on immigration, often results in a battle on Capitol Hill.

The past years' treatment of immigration actions, particularly by the Democrats, has enraged the Republicans, so much as to accuse President Barack Obama of taking unconstitutional actions by issuing Executive Orders such as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA), and the Dream Act. "Here the president is openly defying Congress, which refused to pass immigration reform, in a nonemergency situation. He's governing unilaterally outside the normal separation of powers" (Bernstein, 2014). In most cases, feuds can be temporarily put aside, and bipartisanship can work in favor of advancing difficult or delicate subjects in a more beneficial way for both parties. However, since Republicans took control of Congress, the bad relationship that Obama nurtured got worse, and the Republican leadership has refused to discuss non-essential initiatives coming from the White House, until President Obama leaves office.

It must be kept in mind, nevertheless, that while Democrats had control in the first years of Obama's presidency, he failed to keep his promises and never submitted any bill related to immigration. And a bill introduced by the so-called Gang of 8, that passed the Senate, was poisoned when Obama announced his support.

Although immigration reform has been, and still is, a very sensitive issue for Congress, few bills have been supported by both parties. Bipartisanship works because no matter how conservative, moderate or liberal the roots of a party are, there is still a diversity of thoughts and beliefs, of factions and groups, that exist within each of them. Thus, each faction has a proportion of members who believe and share different forms of the same ideology.

For instance, contrary to popular belief, immigration reform has always been a Republican issue, for some time now hijacked in some form by Democrats for political gain, while extreme right Republicans have turned it into an absurd discussion on Amnesty, especially during presidential campaigns, attempting to get the nativist vote. In the case of immigration, some Republicans have a more liberal stance that can find common ground with its Democrat counterparts, thus enabling a dual sponsorship and facilitating its process in the House and the Senate. Unfortunately, this bipartisanship can only be achieved when U.S. Congress members put their differences aside and work in favor of their nation.

In the case of 2014, some pundits said Congress was "more divided than ever before in American history" (Lowery, 2014), and that was the reason for the *impasse*. This notion has to be nuanced. U.S. Congress has always been polarized, since it was designed to be. Charts 1 and 2 present data from 1947 to 2014, showing the ideological positions of the House and the Senate, respectively. In recent years, the Republican Party has become more conservative and the Democratic Party has become more liberal. The average ideology of the House Republicans has similarly become more conservative. This in light of the

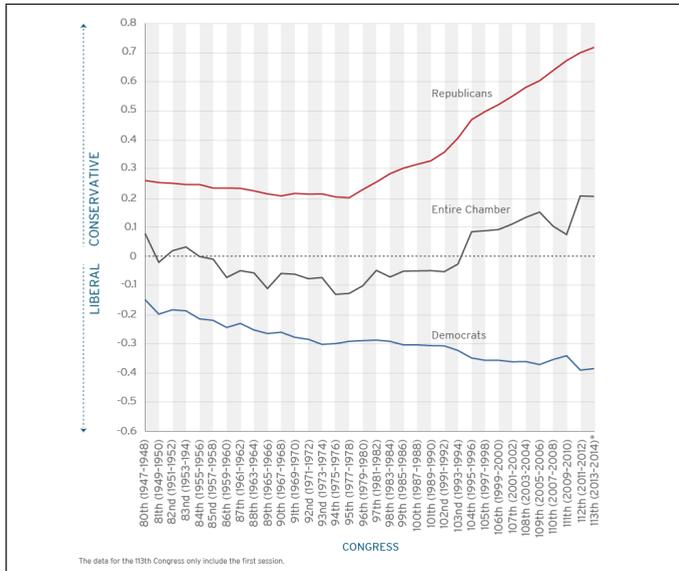


CHART I. AVERAGE IDEOLOGICAL POSITIONS OF HOUSE PARTY COALITIONS, 80TH - 113TH CONGRESSES, 1947-2014
 Source: Norman J. Ornstein *et al.*, 2013 (updated 2014).

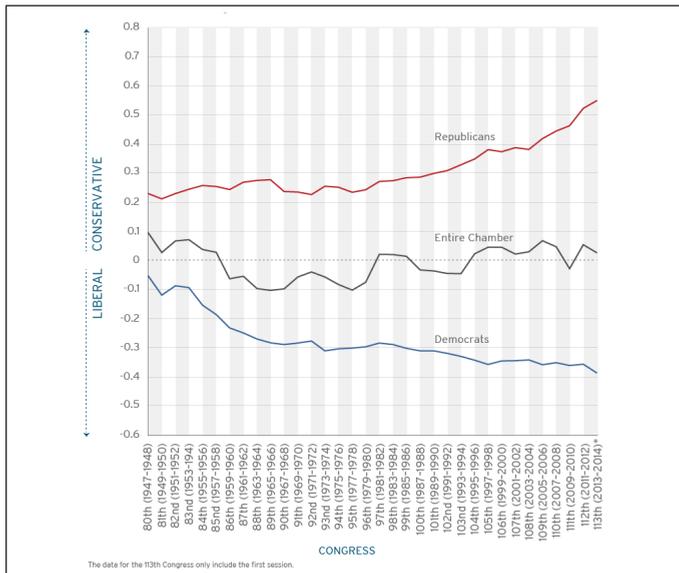


CHART 2. AVERAGE IDEOLOGICAL POSITIONS OF SENATE PARTY COALITIONS, 80TH - 113TH CONGRESSES, 1947-2014
 Source: Norman J. Ornstein *et al.*, 2013 (updated 2014).

economy/tax revolt of the so-called Tea Party group, many of whom are now members of Congress with their own agenda and caucus. The shift began during the 104th Congress.

Regardless of how divided Congress seems to be, precedents on a bipartisan immigration bill exist. The clear example is the Kennedy-McCain immigration bill or The Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act (S. 1033), which was drafted and sponsored by members of both parties and publicly endorsed by sitting president George W. Bush, who actively promoted an agreement on Work Permits and Temporary Workers with President Fox of Mexico and on his own during both periods as President.

While immigration has been an issue for most of a century, since 9/11 a group of radical and ignorant members of Congress and the Media began to focus on the U.S.-Mexico border as the only point of entry into the United States. Even if the idea of terrorists entering through Mexico was erroneous, the border tightened, leaving millions of immigrants, many of them of Mexican origin, trapped in the U.S., without any possibility to continue with what is a largely normal pattern for Mexican migrants, circular migration.

Thus, as the immigration debate heated up during post 9/11 election years, candidates believed that they needed to take a stance in order to lure Hispanics into their campaign promises and rhetoric. The main question that this article seeks to answer is if there is a connection between the elections and immigration, which rally Hispanics to make a difference when casting their ballots.

Taking a look at past elections, finding answers might not be so easy, but certainly will shed some light to reach useful and sustained conclusions.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS OF 2000

The economy

As the world began to wait for a new millennium, soon to be ex-President Clinton was about to hand over a country that had done rather well. Economic growth was very strong during his tenure. After being subject to a recession in the early 90s, which was a result of the 1987 stock market crash and the S&L crisis, but also the impact of the Gulf War (Walsh, 1993). Clinton sought to fix the American economy by leaning on the highest tax increases in U.S. history during peace time and on high income earners, cutting appropriations spending and a renewed framework of the previous Budget Enforcement Act of 1990 (University of California, 2014).

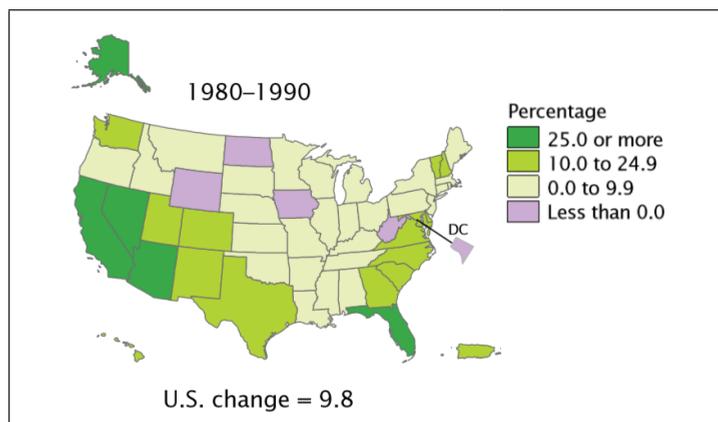
By the end of the decade and the turn of the new millennium, the economy under the Clinton Administration was booming, with an average of 3.8% growth in real GDP, a stable inflation standing at 2.6% and a steamroller of a financial industry. However, not all aspects of the economy had positive implications. The growth in median wages, went from \$661 per week to \$700, earnings varying depending of an individual's education level, with college graduates earning close to \$1000 a week while high school dropouts earning just slightly more than \$400 (Matthews, 2012).

Such an expansion was met with high acclaim from the general public. As it tends to happen with economic prosperity in the U.S, many foreign individuals looked for

an opportunity to get a share of the wealth, thus leading to an increase in population over the next couple years. Taking this into consideration, the next President of the U.S. would have to consider these demographic and economic changes in relation to the number of new citizens.

Demographic change and proportional representation

Map 1 shows the U.S. demography in the year 1990, which established the electoral votes of the 2000 presidential election.



MAP 1. PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN POPULATION BY STATE AND DECADE 1980-1990

Source: Mackun & Wilson, 2011.

Arizona, California, Florida, Texas and Washington were the states with the largest Hispanic population that gained electoral votes, while Illinois and New York lost votes (see Table 1 and Map 2).

The same census of 1990, gave the proportional reallocation of House seats, as shown in Table 2, based on the proportion of population in each state.

It allocated more congressional seats to Arizona, California, Florida, Texas and Washington, states with the largest Hispanic population, as shown in Map 2. Illinois, New Jersey and New York lost seats with this allocation (see Table 2).

By law, Congress funds the census in order to ensure the balance of population in proportion to the states and the correct proportionality of House seats and electoral votes. As such, the composition of Congress has no direct impact on the purpose of this study.

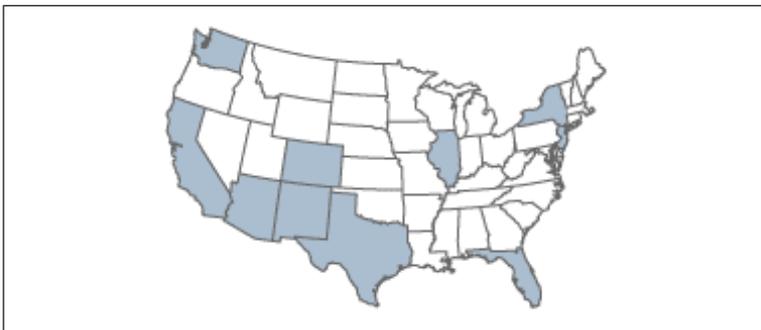
Migration issues and the election

The 2000 election introduced immigration with an unseen interest. Republican candidate and former Texas Governor, George W. Bush and his Democrat counterpart, former Vice President Al Gore, faced off in a political battle that saw the inclusion of new topics

TABLE I. DISTRIBUTION OF ELECTORAL VOTES 1990-1991-2000

State name	1981-1990	1991-2000	State name	1981-1990	1991-2000	State name	1981-1990	1991-2000
Alabama	9	9	Kentucky	9	8	N. Dakota	3	3
Alaska	3	3	Louisiana	10	9	Ohio	23	21
Arizona	7	8	Maine	4	4	Oklahoma	8	8
Arkansas	6	6	Maryland	10	10	Oregon	7	7
California	47	54	Massachusetts	13	12	Pennsylvania	25	23
Colorado	8	8	Michigan	20	18	Rhode Island	4	4
Connecticut	8	8	Minnesota	10	10	S. Carolina	8	8
Delaware	3	3	Mississippi	7	7	S. Dakota	3	3
D.C.	3	3	Missouri	11	11	Tennessee	11	11
Florida	21	25	Montana	4	3	Texas	29	32
Georgia	12	13	Nebraska	5	5	Utah	5	5
Hawaii	4	4	Nevada	4	4	Vermont	3	3
Idaho	4	4	N. Hampshire	4	4	Virginia	12	13
Illinois	24	22	New Jersey	16	15	Washington	10	11
Indiana	12	12	New Mexico	5	5	W. Virginia	6	5
Iowa	8	7	New York	36	33	Wisconsin	11	11
Kansas	7	6	N. Carolina	13	14	Wyoming	3	3

Source: FEC, 2003.



MAP 2. TEN STATES WITH THE LARGEST HISPANIC POPULATION 2000

Source: Saenz, 2004.

to the new millennium. Social Security, healthcare, education, and the economy, all of those topics had their turn on the national spotlight; immigration, the environment and the aftermath of the conflict in Kosovo and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) intervention during the Clinton Administration, were the new topics of interest.

President Bill Clinton announced on July 27, 1993 an immigration reform that included changes to the Immigration and Nationality Act and increased funding for border con-

TABLE 2. REALLOCATION OF HOUSE SEATS CENSUS 1990

State name	1990	State name	1990	State name	1990	State name	1990
Alabama	7	Indiana	10	Nebraska	3	Rhode Island	2
Alaska	1	Iowa	5	Nevada	2	South Carolina	6
Arizona	6	Kansas	4	New Hampshire	2	South Dakota	1
Arkansas	4	Kentucky	6	New Jersey	13	Tennessee	9
California	52	Louisiana	7	New Mexico	3	Texas	30
Colorado	6	Maine	2	New York	31	Utah	3
Connecticut	6	Maryland	8	North Carolina	12	Vermont	1
Delaware	1	Massachusetts	10	North Dakota	1	Virginia	11
Florida	23	Michigan	16	Ohio	19	Washington	9
Georgia	11	Minnesota	8	Oklahoma	6	West Virginia	3
Hawaii	2	Mississippi	5	Oregon	5	Wisconsin	9
Idaho	2	Missouri	9	Pennsylvania	21	Wyoming	1
Illinois	20	Montana	1				

Source: Mills, 2001.

trol operations. The initiative was also designed to restrict abuse of the asylum provisions of the law, smuggling of aliens into the United States and other illegal entry. The proposals were developed by a task force chaired by Vice President Al Gore (Martin, 1993).

While Vice President Gore tackled immigration from the White House, George W. Bush was about to see firsthand how immigration can change a state in a positive or negative way. The governor's views on the subject—at the time shared by most Republicans—was as a positive sign for the U.S. “Governor Bush believes that immigration is not a problem to be solved, but the sign of a successful nation. As Governor of a border state, he knows first-hand the benefits legal immigrants bring to America. While he is strongly opposed to illegal immigration, he believes more should be done to welcome legal immigrants” (4President.org, 2000).

Although both candidates saw immigration as a strategic topic for their campaigns, the way in which they used and promoted it was very different. Having dealt with the sponsoring of the immigration reform for almost two terms, Vice President Gore, chose to carry his efforts and make a final push and make it one of his strongest proposals. On the other side, Governor Bush opted for the announcement of a Comprehensive Immigration Reform that differed from the one drafted by Vice President Gore on the wider spectrum it would cover, from correcting the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS), to its restructuring by establishing a six month standard for processing immigrant applications: “We will bring to the INS a new standard of service and a culture of respect [...]. The new spending, to be doled out over five years will resonate with Latino voters. We've got an INS that is too bureaucratic, too stuck in the past” (4President.org, 2000).

By the time the election came to a close, both candidates had appealed to an estimated of 35,560,000 Hispanics living in the U.S., out of which only 13,940,000 were eligible

to vote —although only 5,934,000 actually voted (File, 2013). Of those, 35% casted their vote towards Governor Bush and the remaining 65% for Vice President Gore (Suro, Fry, & Passel, 2005). Although not impressive at first glance, the 35% of Hispanic vote that Governor Bush obtained was the highest of any Republican candidate since Ronald Reagan’s 35% and 37% back in the 1980s, as shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3. COMPARISON OF DEMOCRAT AND REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES, 1980-2012

Year	Democratic Candidate %	Republican Candidate %	Democratic Advantage
1980	Jimmy Carter, 56%	Ronald Reagan, 35%	+21
1984	Walter Mondale, 61%	Ronald Reagan, 37%	+24
1988	Michael Dukakis, 69%	George H. W. Bush, 30%	+39
1992	Bill Clinton, 61%	George H. W. Bush, 25%	+36
1996	Bill Clinton, 72%	Bob Dole, 21%	+51
2000	Al Gore, 62%	George W. Bush, 35%	+27
2004	John Kerry, 58%	George W. Bush, 40%	+18
2008	Barack Obama, 67%	John McCain, 31%	+36
2012	Barack Obama, 71%	Mitt Romney, 27%	+44

Source: Jones, 2013.

Understanding the importance of Hispanic vote can help candidates prepare their policies and proposals accordingly. While 35% doesn’t seem to be a reason to be thrilled about, it sure is one reason to be optimistic about the positive impact a stance on this segment of the population could have. What is still unclear, is the importance of immigration as a topic on the campaign, since the voters candidates appeal to, are legal citizens and share the same concerns as the rest of the voting population, thus they might not be as concerned with it.

Even so, what helped Governor Bush in the election was the rise in Hispanic votes. His stance and the announcement of a comprehensive immigration reform resonated within the Hispanic population, although it was current policy.

As in all presidential elections, candidates had to focus on winning the popular vote state by state, the real targets being the bigger ones, referring to the number of electoral votes. Why is this related to the subject of immigration? Perhaps more palpable topics such as healthcare or the economy would matter more to the big states due to their large populations, but those states also happen to have the highest number of Hispanics in the nation. States like California, New Mexico, Illinois, New York, Arizona, Florida and Texas have a high number of Hispanics. Focusing on immigration may help a candidate get an edge to win those electoral votes.

After defeating Al Gore in the 2000 presidential elections, winning the electorate vote 271-266 (U.S. Electoral College, 2012), George W. Bush became the first Repub-

lican president in over 20 years to reduce the gap between both parties in relation to Hispanic vote distribution. In electoral votes, Governor Bush won in states with large Hispanic population, beating Vice President Gore in Florida, Arizona, and his home state of Texas, while losing California and New Mexico (U.S. Election Atlas, 2012a).

On January 20th, George W. Bush became the 43rd president of the United States of America. During his inaugural speech, he made reference to democratic values and freedom, standards of American prosperity and social development, all while acknowledging that the United States was a nation of many backgrounds, and thus, unity was the key to its continuity and progress, including immigrants (Bush, 2001).

But then, as a result of the devastating attacks on September 11th 2001, immigration along with other affairs were put on hold, and issues related to national security followed by the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, the focus shifted from foreign affairs back to the handling of domestic affairs. By 2004, in the State of the Union, President Bush encouraged Congress to reform immigration for the first time since 1993, highlighting the economic benefits of granting temporary work permits to millions of workers, though restating that his administration opposed amnesty as such, but proposed regularization (John Kerry on..., 2004).

Unfortunately for many, immigration reform was not accomplished, as the handling of international affairs derived from terror attacks in U.S. soil consumed most of the efforts from President's Bush first term.

Attention to Hispanics

Both parties had a strategy for capturing the Hispanic vote. More the democrats than the republicans, this party understood that this ethnic group —along with all the others— needed attention showed in ways they could be appealed to, like in advertising in Spanish or by bringing to the media events family connections within the group. For instance, the Bush-Cheney campaign broadcasted major announcements in Spanish; according to the Republican National Committee, along with the Bush-Cheney campaign, various state parties spent \$14 million on the Hispanic effort (Democracy in Action, 2001).

Some studies suggested that there was not a clear pattern to win the vote of Hispanics, it varied depending on education, partisanship, economy, etc. but without mention of immigration (Nicholson, Pantoja, & Segura, 2006). Other polls suggested the election of the candidate on a party basis (Gallup, 2000) again, with no mention to immigration. This result is true for general voters, not only for Hispanics. Other sources state public education, health care and economic development as the most important issues for the Hispanic community (Janofsky, 2000).

Each of the major Hispanic organizations, like the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the League of United Latin American Citizens, the National Council of La Raza, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO), the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute (TRPI), and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, as examples, have a board of directors that reflect the diversity of the Hispan-

ic community and focuses their energies on issues that unites them, like community-based civic activities, electoral politics, agenda setting and influence, and representation, and not necessarily immigration (DeSipio, 2006).

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS OF 2004

State of the economy

Shortly after winning the 2000 Elections, President Bush was in charge of a very changed and very modern country. After almost a decade of prosperity and economic growth brought about by an economic boom, the American business machinery seemed to be unstoppable, however, as it tends to happen after long periods of economic expansion, the U.S. was projected to enter a small scale recession in 2001 (Kliesen, 2003).

During the first year of the Bush Administration, the labor market began to weaken, with downturn on manufacturing which consequentially spilled over to other sectors, causing unemployment to rise above the recent lows set by the period of economic expansion that occurred in the 90s (Langdon, Mcmenamin, & Krolik, 2002). Added to those economic difficulties, came the 9/11 terrorist attacks that also resulted in a major blow to the economy.

A month after the attacks, some industries implemented special financing incentives, taking a chance on the increased household wealth that had accumulated in the 90s and the short term interest rates that had fallen sharply on the onset of the recession (Kliesen, 2003). To counter the recession, the Federal Reserve cut interest rates aggressively, provided aggressive discounts lending to banks to ensure markets were working well, while keeping federal funds rates low, a key factor that later translates into the creation of asset bubbles (Hubbard, 2009).

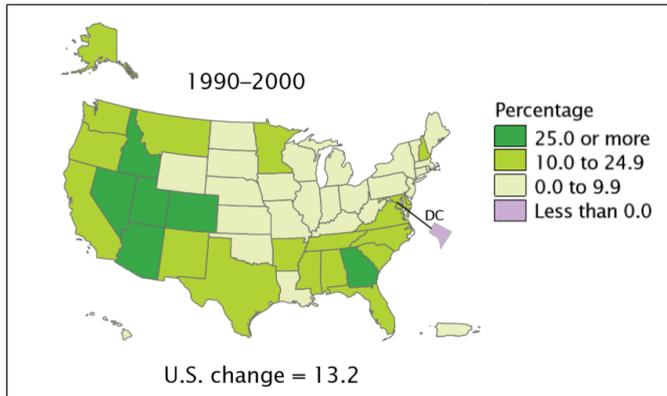
To deal with the large budget surpluses of the late 90s, President Bush sought to create a package of robust tax cuts, which would be signed under the “Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001”, and would include tax breaks to all Americans. Those cuts consisted of the reduction on income taxes, the end of the estate tax, which is a “tax on your right to transfer property at your death” (IRS, 2016), and an increase in the child tax credit, equivalent to at least \$1.4 trillion through 2011 (University of California, 2011).

Demographic change

Map 3 shows the U.S. demography in the year 2000. The census of this year affected electoral votes in the election of 2004 (as well as the 2008 elections). States that had a change of 25% or more in population were Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, Utah and Colorado.

Table 4 shows changes in the census of 2000, and the change in the Electoral College votes of Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Texas, which by the year 2004 were among the states with the largest Hispanic household population (see Figure 1). Illinois and New York lost votes.

It is noticeable that the Border States, other than Texas and California, have a minuscule Hispanic population, as shown by Figure 1.



MAP 3. PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN POPULATION
BY STATE AND DECADE 1990-2000

Source: Mackun & Wilson, 2011.

TABLE 4. DISTRIBUTION OF ELECTORAL VOTES 2000

State name	1991-2000 Census 1990	2001-2010 Census 2000	State name	1991-2000 Census 1990	2001-2010 Census 2000	State name	1991-2000 Census 1990	2001-2010 Census 2000
Alabama	9	9	Kentucky	8	8	N. Dakota	3	3
Alaska	3	3	Louisiana	9	9	Ohio	21	20
Arizona	8	10	Maine	4	4	Oklahoma	8	7
Arkansas	6	6	Maryland	10	10	Oregon	7	7
California	54	55	Massachusetts	12	12	Pennsylvania	23	21
Colorado	8	9	Michigan	18	17	Rhode Island	4	4
Connecticut	8	7	Minnesota	10	10	S. Carolina	8	8
Delaware	3	3	Mississippi	7	6	S. Dakota	3	3
D.C.	3	3	Missouri	11	11	Tennessee	11	11
Florida	25	27	Montana	3	3	Texas	32	34
Georgia	13	15	Nebraska	5	5	Utah	5	5
Hawaii	4	4	Nevada	4	5	Vermont	3	3
Idaho	4	4	N. Hampshire	4	4	Virginia	13	13
Illinois	22	21	New Jersey	15	15	Washington	11	11
Indiana	12	11	New Mexico	5	5	W. Virginia	5	5
Iowa	7	7	New York	33	31	Wisconsin	11	10
Kansas	6	6	N. Carolina	14	15	Wyoming	3	3

Source: FEC, 2003.

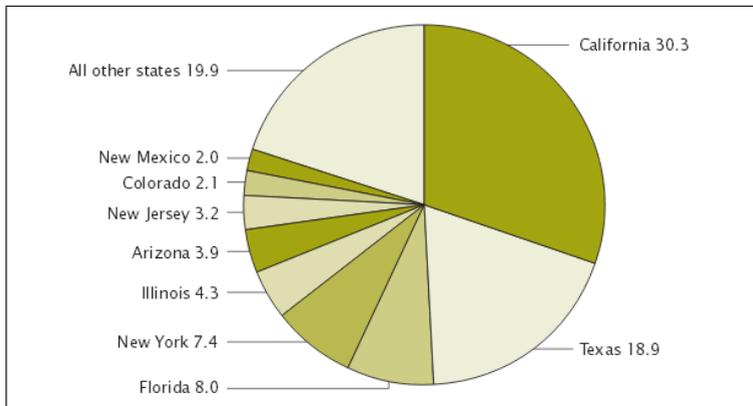


FIGURE 1. HISPANIC HOUSEHOLD POPULATION BY STATE: 2004
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007.

From 2001 to 2004, immigration growth had increased more than at any point in U.S. history. The Hispanic population had grown fast with these immigration flows, but a large number of them are illegal, meaning they didn't have the right to vote. The number of Hispanics who were both U.S. citizens and at least 18 years old grew only by 2.1 million, less than a quarter of the increase in the nation's electorate. Of the 5,740,000 population increase of Hispanics, 2,148,000 were registered as eligible voters, adding to the already existing 13,940,000 eligible to vote in the 2004 presidential elections (Suro, Fry, & Passel, 2005).

Reallocated seats of the House as a result of the 2000 are shown in Table 5. Of these, states which increased seats and had a large number of Hispanics were Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, and Texas; while Illinois and New York lost seats.

How were those figures translating in the migration issues and the election campaigns of 2004?

Migration issues and the election

By early 2004, President Bush had to focus his attention on campaigning, as the upcoming elections neared and he would run for reelection. Competing against him was the junior Democrat Senator from Massachusetts.

During his campaign, Senator John Kerry, proposed to tackle immigration by promising to sign a reform within his first 100 days in office if elected. During a speech in Arizona where he addressed the left leaning Hispanic organization of *La Raza*, Kerry remarked that then, "in the US senate there [was] a bill with 62 co-sponsors, [...] part of Cesar Chavez's vision of justice, vision of offering a peace of the American dream to the good people who labor day after day in the hot sun [...]. This president [hadn't] said if he [would] sign that bill, I will in a heartbeat, I will sign that bill" (Welna, 2004). It must be emphasized that Cesar Chavez's vision was from the side of the Unions, not on the side of immigrants, whom he opposed.

TABLE 5. REALLOCATION OF HOUSE SEATS CENSUS 2000

State name	2000	State name	2000	State name	2000	State name	2000
Alabama	7	Indiana	9	Nebraska	3	Rhode Island	2
Alaska	1	Iowa	5	Nevada	3	South Carolina	6
Arizona	8	Kansas	4	New Hampshire	2	South Dakota	1
Arkansas	4	Kentucky	6	New Jersey	13	Tennessee	9
California	53	Louisiana	7	New Mexico	3	Texas	32
Colorado	7	Maine	2	New York	29	Utah	3
Connecticut	5	Maryland	8	North Carolina	13	Vermont	1
Delaware	1	Massachusetts	10	North Dakota	1	Virginia	11
Florida	25	Michigan	15	Ohio	18	Washington	9
Georgia	13	Minnesota	8	Oklahoma	5	West Virginia	3
Hawaii	2	Mississippi	4	Oregon	5	Wisconsin	8
Idaho	2	Missouri	9	Pennsylvania	19	Wyoming	1
Illinois	19	Montana	1				

Source: Mills, 2001.

After a hard campaign between President Bush and Senator Kerry, immigration took center stage during the third presidential debate in Tempe, Arizona, where both candidates got into a heated exchange regarding immigration reform and the guest worker program previously mentioned during President Bush's administration. After being asked what to do regarding the daily flows of illegal immigrants entering the country on a regular basis, President Bush answered the following:

We're increasing the border security of the us. There ought to be a temporary worker card that allows a willing worker and a willing employer, so long as there's not an American willing to do that job, to join up. I don't believe we ought to have amnesty. I don't think we ought to reward illegal behavior. There are plenty of people standing in line to become a citizen. If they want to become a citizen, they can stand in line, too. And here is where my opponent and I differ [...]. I don't believe we ought to have amnesty. I don't think we ought to reward illegal behavior. There are plenty of people standing in line to become a citizen. And we ought not to crowd these people ahead of them in line. If they want to become a citizen, they can stand in line, too. Kerry supported amnesty for illegal aliens (John Kerry on..., 2004).

While Senator Kerry delivered the following message:

The borders are more leaking today than they were before 9/11. We haven't done what we need to do to toughen up our borders, and I will. We need a guest-worker program, but if it's all we have, it's not going to solve the problem. We need to crack down on illegal hiring. It's against the law in the US to hire people illegally, and we ought to be enforcing that law

properly. We need an earned-legalization program for people who have been here for a long time, stayed out of trouble, got a job, paid their taxes, and their kids are American. We got to start moving them toward full citizenship, out of the shadows (John Kerry on..., 2004).

By the time the polls closed and votes were counted, President Bush had won states with large Hispanic voting population once again. This time, he got four out of five, the difference being that Arizona (10), Florida (27), California (55) and Texas (34), all had an increase in their electoral votes. By getting 76 votes out of four states with significant Hispanic population, except California, President Bush secured a 35 electoral vote lead against his Democrat opponent. On November 2nd 2004, President George W. Bush became the 13th Commander in Chief to win reelection, beating Senator Kerry 286-251 in electoral votes (U.S. Election Atlas, 2012b).

During his second term, President Bush went on to propose a comprehensive immigration reform initiative to Congress in 2007, as his last attempt at tackling the subject, since his second term was coming to an end. The bill known as the “Secure Borders, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Reform Act of 2007” included provisions for temporary worker permits, regularization and legal resident option as well as border security and enforcement provisions, including provisions respecting (Congress.gov, 2007): 1) Personnel and asset increases and enhancements; 2) A National Strategy for Border Security; 3) Border security initiatives, including biometric data enhancements and a biometric entry-exit system, document integrity, and mandatory detention of aliens apprehended at or between ports of entry; 4) Central American gangs; 5) Cooperation with Mexico; 6) National Guard support on the southern border; and 7) Extension of the Western Hemisphere travel initiative.

The initiative faced an uphill battle in Congress. The vote in June 2007, fell 14 votes short of reaching a majority, thus failing to pass within the U.S. Senate and putting an end to immigration reform efforts from the Bush administration. “Legal immigration is one of the top concerns of the American people, and Congress’s failure to act on it is a disappointment. A lot of us worked hard to see if we couldn’t find common ground. It didn’t work” (Pear & Hulse, 2007).

Although immigration reform efforts stopped until the following presidential term, many senators, both Republican and Democrats, started pursuing and developing their own stance on immigration, in an effort to further consolidate good and solid plans for their run for office in the 2008 presidential elections. Two senators, who actively supported the comprehensive immigration reform in 2007, would go on to become rivals on the 2008 election.

Attention to Hispanics

Leal, Barreto, Lee & de la Garza (2005) argued that over the last decades, there have been two patterns involving Hispanics in the U.S.; the first, is that the media and the “punditocracy” discover this segment of the population time and again when elections

are coming, every four years. The phrasing of Jorge Ramos describes it accurately: “a phenomenon so predictable that [he has] dubbed it the ‘Christopher Columbus Syndrome’”. The second pattern is that early hopes for the political importance of Hispanics are dashed on Election Day.

Analysis after the election showed an increase from 5.9 million Hispanic votes in 2000 to at least 7 million in the 2004 election (Leal, Barreto, Lee & de la Garza, 2005).

Those figures show a marked increase of Hispanic participation in the electoral process, but not overall. Even when states where more Hispanic population can be identified, there is not an automatic relation with more participation and specific Hispanic related issues; and, even less a connection between the vote and migration.

Leal, Barreto, Lee & de la Garza (2005) analyzed the polls conducted on issue prior to the election. Among every part of the Hispanic electorate, educated or uneducated, poor or rich, young or old, foreign or native-born, Catholic or Protestant, the number one election issue was the economy. The war on terrorism rated second, followed by the situation in Iraq, education, health care, and immigration-related concerns. These findings were consistent with previous research that suggested economic, education and health issues were among the highest priorities for Hispanics —as to the majority of voters (Barreto *et al.*, 2002). Other polls showed education (28%) as the major concern, followed by the economy and jobs (25%), health care (22%), the war in Iraq (10%), and immigration (8%) (cited in Segel, 2004).

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 2008

State of the economy

Entering the last year of the Bush presidency, the U.S. made its way back to a good economic period, healthy finances and another short but noticeable expansion. It all seemed to be going in the right direction once again. However, linked to several decisions made in past presidencies, this regained confidence brought about by a stable growth in the U.S. economy, would soon collapse with another spectacular burst. The housing market in the U.S. grew alongside the stock bubble of the mid 90s, mortgages became available to a wider range of consumers with programs offered by Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and others, providing easy and risky money to a larger group of home buyers that would later default on payments. Interest rates remained in an affordable range from the mid-1990s to the 2000s. While the collapse didn't happen overnight, rumbling began as subprime mortgages —owned by people with less than perfect credit— became 20% of the market by 2006. Some financial institutions made subprime their entire business, and in early 2008 late payments and defaults accumulated in extreme high numbers. Having supported the housing market heavily and participated in it with subprime mortgages and lending, the financial sector began to fall. On September 15, 2008, the fourth largest investment bank from the U.S. went bankrupt (Wiggins, Piontek, & Metrick, 2014). As a result, numerous banks followed, leaving a loss of \$19.2

trillion of household wealth, while costing 8.8 million jobs. Also hitting a new low was GDP, during President's Bush eight years in office (see Chart 3), growth varied between 2% - 4%, but once the financial crisis hit, new lows were established (Matthews, 2013).

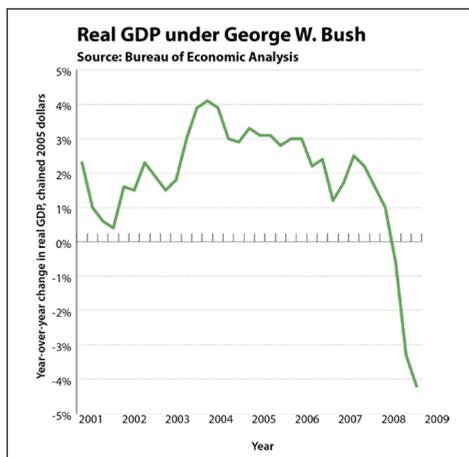


CHART 3. REAL GDP GROWTH 2001- 2008
Source: Matthews, 2013.

As the financial crisis swept the country, a plan was designed to prevent further economic meltdown. The “Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008”, signed by Sitting President George W. Bush, established the Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP), which was created to purchase troubled assets from banks and investment companies, authorizing the Treasury to spend up to \$700 billion in taxpayer funds to serve its functions and restore confidence in affected credit markets (Glass, 2013).

It became clear then, that the next president of the U.S. would see his first challenges as perhaps the most difficult one in more than a century, to try and get the country out of the worst financial crisis in recent memory. In political circles this was referred to as the traditionally expected “October surprise”, with republicans being in power, the electorate carried its anger at McCain, essentially tipping the election to Obama.

Demographic change and proportional representation

The census of 2000 (Map 3) and the electoral votes (Table 4) showed above, accounted for the 2008 election. In this case, the states with more Hispanic population are shown in Figure 2. California, Texas, Florida and New York still account for the states with the largest concentration of Hispanic population.

The following section discusses the issues of migration tied to the discourse for the 2008 elections, as well as the behavior of Hispanics regarding their votes for president.

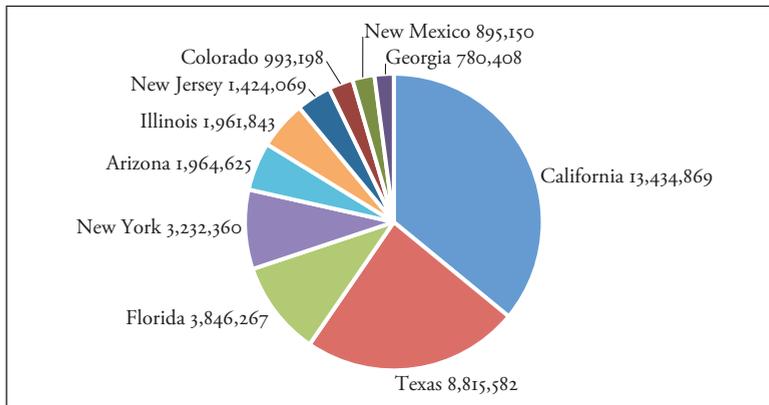


FIGURE 2. HISPANIC POPULATION BY STATE IN 2008 (LARGER STATES)
 Source: Author's elaboration with information from Pew Research Center, 2011a.

Migration issues and the election

The failure of the comprehensive immigration bill in 2007, left many wondering about what the future for immigration reform would look like, and as many others before, presidential candidates were more than eager to shed some light on how they would—if elected—manage this affair. Some differences must be noted. The Democrat side had always backed up immigration reform in terms of granting path to citizenship—not fully embraced by the labor unions, since Democrats had never favored temporary work permits—; their objective in the so-called “path to citizenship” is the creation of more Democrat leaning voters, under the (wrong) belief they could thus own the Hispanic vote, like they own the black one. It mustn't be forgotten that the “path to citizenship” begins with obtaining legal resident status.

During their 2008 campaigns, that stance remained the same. Candidates like Hillary R. Clinton from New York, repeat presidential candidate John Edwards from North Carolina, Connecticut representative Chris Dodd, and an upstart senator from Illinois named Barack Obama; all had supported immigration reform during their time in the senate as the latter did during a 2006 hearing: “I believe we can work together to pass immigration reform in a way that unites the people in this country, not in a way that divides us by playing on our worst instincts and fears” (Obamaspeeches.com, 2006).

On the Republican side, one name stood out among the rest when it came to immigration reform: Arizona Senator John McCain, co-sponsor of the Kennedy-McCain immigration bill or The Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act (S. 1033). He was considered to be the most fitted Republican candidate to win the nomination. The Kennedy-McCain Bill was one of the three foundations of the 2007 comprehensive immigration bill endorsed by President Bush.

While McCain didn't have much of a problem winning the Republican nomination, the Democratic party did find a fierce competition between New York Senator Hillary R. Clinton, and Illinois Senator Barack H. Obama, both very active in the issues con-

cerning immigration, having approved and endorsed previous immigration reform and had been advocates for new immigration policies.

Senator Clinton, who supported and voted for the Secure Fence Act back in 2006, had a strong opinion towards undocumented immigrant deportation during the Democratic Debate in Iowa, stating that “[deporting all illegal immigrants was] absolutely unrealistic, and it [was] not in keeping with American values” (npr, 2007), and as her immigration proposal included the introduction of a path to legalization within her first 100 days in office if she was elected president: “I, as president, would work with our neighbors to the south, to help them create more jobs for their own people. We need to bring the immigrants out of the shadows, give them the conditions that we expect them to meet, paying a fine for coming here illegally, trying to pay back taxes, over time, and learning English. If they had committed a crime, then they should be deported. But for everyone else, there must be a path to legalization” (Hillary Clinton on..., 2008). It is noteworthy to underline that “create more jobs for their own people” is an incorrect statement, since the reason there are Mexicans (or Hispanics) working in the U.S., is because the economy requires their labor. No Mexicans traveled to the us without having a job identified beforehand. Even during the 2008 crisis and U.S. unemployment, there were sectors of the U.S. economy that demanded temporary or seasonal workers. If they did not come from Mexico they had to come from other countries, or the employers would suffer loses.

Then former First Lady and 2008 Democrat candidate Clinton, was no stranger to McCain’s comprehensive immigration reform as she supported this bill in 2004 while a member of the U.S. Senate representing New York —second state known for receiving the most number of immigrants for the past 20 years behind California, with an increase of 2.3% in immigrant population growth in the last decade, as shown in Chart 4 (Krogstad & Keegan, 2014).

With Obama having won the Democrat nomination, both presidential candidates made their case in the race to the White House. The issue of immigration gained strength, as interest in the subject increased due to the failed attempts at immigration reform. Being an issue of domestic and international interest, it was regarded as one of the top tier problems and challenges that the U.S. had to face and subsequently address. As the Chart 4 indicates, ever since the 2006 reform was introduced in the Senate Floor until its collapse in 2007, one in six people considered immigration as the most important problem in the U.S. Even with a seven point drop in 2008, immigration had never been so highly recognized with such importance in an election year before (Saad, 2014).

With immigration taking center stage, both candidates addressed it in an effort to gain votes with the general population, as well as trying to win the vote of the 18,165,000 Hispanics who were eligible to vote in the 2008 elections, a number that represented an 0.7 % increase from the previous election of 2004 (see Table 6) (Taylor & Fry, 2007).

The U.S. Hispanic population as of September 2007, stood at 45,515,000, of which an estimated 11,915,000 were non-citizen adults and 15,436,000 were under age. Thus, 40% of the Hispanic population was eligible to vote to elect the next president of the U.S., as shown in Table 7 (Taylor & Fry, 2007).

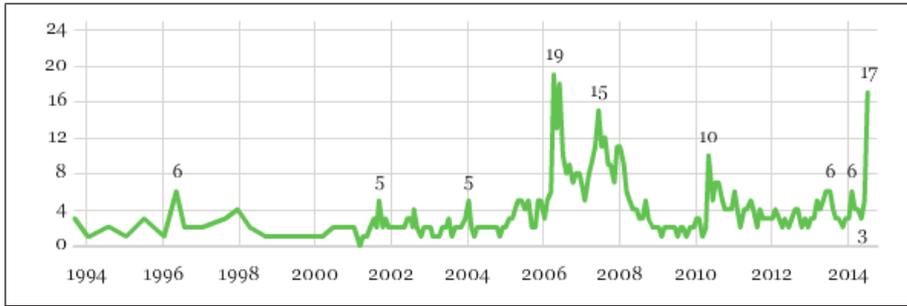


CHART 4. PERCENTAGE NAMING IMMIGRATION AS THE UNITED STATES' MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM (BASED ON U.S. ADULTS)

Source: Saad, 2014.

TABLE 6. ELIGIBLE VOTERS, 1996-2007 (U.S. CITIZENS AGES 18 AND ABOVE)

Year	Total	Hispanic	Hispanic share of total (in %)
September 2007	203,231,000	18,165,000	8.9
2004	197,005,000	16,088,000	8.2
2000	188,173,000	13,940,000	7.4
1996	179,935,000	11,209,000	6.2

Source: Taylor & Fry, 2007.

TABLE 7. ELIGIBLE VOTERS AND TOTAL POPULATION FOR MAJOR RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUPS, SEPTEMBER 2007

	Hispanic		Non-Hispanic White		Non-Hispanic Black		Non-Hispanic Asian	
	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%
Total population, regardless of age or citizenship status	45,515,000	100	195,957,000	100	36,092,000	100	13,165,000	100
Not eligible to vote - total								
Youth under 18 years of age	15,436,000	34	42,323,000	22	10,911,000	30	2,972,000	23
Adults without U.S. citizenship	11,915,000	26	3,177,000	2	1,234,000	3	3,535,000	27
Eligible voters - U.S. citizens age 18 and above	18,165,000	40	150,457,000	77	23,946,000	66	6,659,000	51

Source: Taylor & Fry, 2007.

Both presidential candidates reiterated their position on immigration, speaking in favor of their own version of immigration reform in multiple fora, as well as during guest appearances on TV and radio shows as part of their marketing and propaganda campaigns. During a speech to the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) in 2008, senator McCain addressed several issues concerning immigration reform, while reminding voters that twice, he had tried to get immigration bills to pass in the U.S. Senate, but failed:

I twice attempted to pass comprehensive immigration legislation to fix our broken borders; ensure respect for the laws of this country; recognize the important economic necessity of immigrant laborers; apprehend those who came here illegally to commit crimes; and deal practically and humanely with those who came here, as my distant ancestors did, to build a better, safer life for their families, without excusing the fact they came here illegally or granting them privileges before those who did. Many Americans, with good cause, did not believe us when we said we would secure our borders, and so we failed in our efforts. We must prove to them that we can and will secure our borders first, while respecting the dignity and rights of citizens and legal residents. But we must not make the mistake of thinking that our responsibility to meet this challenge will end with that accomplishment. We have economic and humanitarian responsibilities as well, and they require no less dedication from us in meeting them (Luo, 2008).

Like his Republican counterpart, Senator Obama addressed immigration several times during the campaign and within his innovative social media campaign, showing little difference between both candidates. Though after becoming president he failed to keep all his promises on immigration reform, his speech can be considered the basis for the Dream Act of 2009:

[We] have to recognize that we've got 12 million undocumented workers who are already here. Many of them living their lives alongside other Americans. Their kids are going to school. Many of the kids, in fact, were born in this country and are citizens. And so, it's absolutely vital that we bring those families out of the shadows and that we give them the opportunity to travel a pathway to citizenship. It's not automatic citizenship. It's not amnesty. They would have to pay a fine. They would have to not have engaged in any criminal activity. They would have to learn English. They would have to go to the back of the line so that they did not get citizenship before those persons who had come here legally (Carter, Ellis, Hossain, & Mclean, 2007).

On November 4th 2008, Senator Barack Obama was elected as the 44th President of the United States, becoming the first "African American" Commander in Chief in U.S. history. The "Yes we can" Senator from Illinois managed to collect 365 electoral votes against the 173 obtained by Senator McCain (U.S. Election Atlas, 2012c).

Chart 5 reflects the percentage of voters from different ethnicities and how they voted; black and Hispanic groups clearly favoring Obama by 95% and 67% respectively, while whites (meaning the rest of the electorate) seemed to favor McCain. The gap

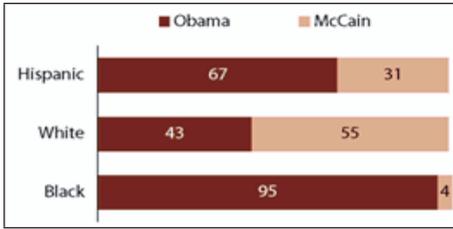


CHART 5. POPULAR VOTE IN 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, BY RACE AND ETHNICITY
Source: Pew Hispanic Center, 2008.

between both seems close in comparison with the lopsided Democrat preference within other groups (Lopez, 2008).

Chart 6 represents the share of Hispanic voters out of the total Hispanic population during the 2004 and 2008 elections, comparing voting turnout in main immigrant states and national. It is possible to see that voting turnout amongst Hispanics increased in few of the states, highlighting the considerable increase in states such as New Mexico with a 9 points, Colorado with a 5 point increase from 2004, Arizona with a 4 point increase in turnout in 2008, while Florida and New Jersey dropped 1 point each. Nonetheless, voting turnout in the U.S. increased one point in four years (Lopez, 2008).

Chart 7 shows the turnout regarding Hispanic vote for Democratic Candidate Barack Obama in big immigrant states and in the U.S. With more than half the percentage in every single state, as well as a +37 differential against McCain in the national election, Obama managed to obtain more than three quarters of the Hispanic vote in New Jersey, Nevada and California with 78%, 76% and 74% respectively, as well as 72% in his home

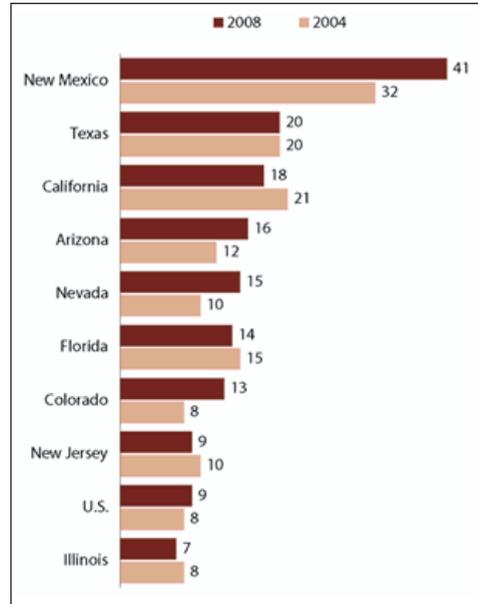


CHART 6. HISPANIC SHARE OF VOTERS IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, 2004 AND 2008 (%)
Source: Pew Hispanic Center, 2008.

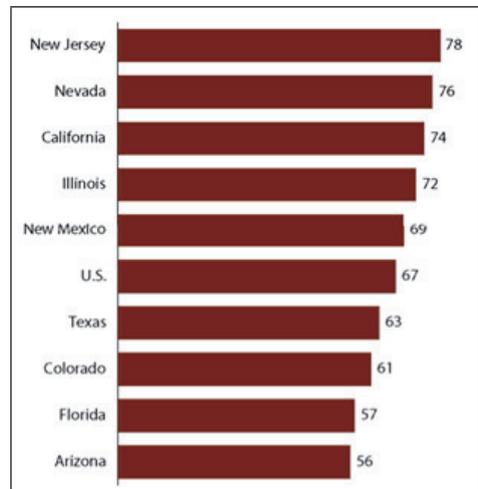


CHART 7. HISPANIC VOTE FOR BARACK OBAMA, BY STATE (%)
Source: Lopez, 2008.

state of Illinois. It is also worth noting that Senator Obama obtained just over half the Hispanic votes in his opponent's home State of Arizona with a 56% Hispanic vote turnout (Lopez, 2008).

During his first administration, President Obama, would seek to elaborate and introduce a comprehensive immigration reform in 2009, sponsored by Democratic Senator of New Jersey, Robert Menendez, which would prohibit the

adjustment of an alien in lawful prospective immigrant status to the status of an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence until specified border related enhancements in personnel and resources are established, funded, and operational [...]. Sets forth immigration-related worksite enforcement provisions, including provisions regarding: (1) unlawful employment of aliens; (2) document verification; (3) the employment verification system; and (4) responsibilities of the Social Security Administration (SSA) (Menendez, Leahy, & Specter, 2010).

While this bill was being debated and reviewed in congress, Arizona passed a law that would affect and change the immigration debate for years to come. State Senate bill 1070, introduced a state immigration law authorizing and encouraging law enforcement officials to "check the immigration status of anyone they suspect is in the country illegally" (Editorial Board, 2010), under the provision called "show me your papers". While immigration is a Federal responsibility and not a purview of the States, the bill was illegal. The Supreme Court upheld the provision of checking immigration status; thus, if the individual was detained for other reasons and there was reasonable suspicion of his/her status.

Nevertheless, such an aggressive law was subject to worldwide polemic, especially with countries such as Mexico, who responded with a statement delivered via their Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Patricia Espinoza: "The government of Mexico regrets that, despite the overtures made at all levels by Mexican federal and state officials, the legislators who passed this measure and the governor of Arizona have not taken into account the valuable contributions of migrants to the economy, society and culture of Arizona and the United States of America" (The Hill Staff, 2010).

A debate on Capitol Hill regarding its constitutionality started. As debate brewed quickly, President Obama took action and joined the controversy when addressing students and faculty during a speech at the American University School of International Service in Washington D. C.:

Immigration has become once more a source of fresh contention in our country, with the passage of a controversial law in Arizona and the heated reactions we've seen across America. Some have rallied behind this new policy. Others have protested and launched boycotts of the state. And everywhere, people have expressed frustration with a system that seems fundamentally broken. Of course, the tensions around immigration are not new. On the one hand, we've always defined ourselves as a nation of immigrants —a nation that welcomes those willing to embrace America's precepts. Indeed, it is this constant flow of immigrants that helped to make America what it is (The White House, 2010).

Still, any real effort toward immigration reform failed once again, this time due to the conflict of interests between Obama Care and the Dream Act, both of which were part of President Obama's campaign and both of which were set to be passed within the first year in office. In 2010, immigration reform lost the battle against Obama Care and was left aside for the remainder of his presidency: "We've started to talk to all the parties involved and both parties here in Washington about the prospects of taking legislative steps [...]. But obviously we've got a lot on our plate right now" (Barack Obama's Inaugural..., 2009).

In order to discredit President Obama, Governor Mitt Romney of Massachusetts, commented that it was the inefficiency towards immigration reform, which had prompted numerous Americans to take matters into their own hands, like the SB 1070 law in Arizona; he stated that there was no other remedy to solving illegal immigration, but to be more strict, forcing undocumented immigrants to self deport.

I believe people make their own choices as to whether they want to go home and that's what I mean by self-deportation. People decide if they want to go back to the country of their origin and get in line legally to be able to come to this country. Look, legal immigration is critical for America. I love legal immigration. But at the same time, to protect legal immigration we have to secure our borders and what I like about the Arizona law was the employment verification system...The reason there's an Arizona law is because the federal government, and specifically, Pres. Obama didn't solve immigration problem when he came into office. The right answer is ultimately to have a federal solution; [then] we don't have to have states trying to find solutions of their own (Mitt Romney on..., 2012).

Several studies account for the importance of the Hispanic vote on the 2008 elections. There is however a disagreement over how much the Hispanic vote made the difference. Even less evident is the connection between the Hispanic vote and the immigration issue.

Attention to Hispanics

Despite being the largest "statistically" defined minority group, Hispanics receive superficial attention from candidates and the media when it comes to presidential politics. It has been the Electoral College where a state winner-takes-all that has led to the interest in finding the Hispanic influence on the presidential elections' outcome. It was in the 2008 election, that mainstream media and campaigns —and not only advocacy groups—, started to describe its importance as a voting bloc. But other studies (de la Garza & DeSipio, 1992, 1996, 1999, 2005, cited in Barreto, Collingwood & Manzano, 2010) had suggested that the Hispanic vote is completely irrelevant and that the myth of its decisiveness came from Hispanic leaders wanting to convince politicians of such importance. As the information has shown, Hispanic voters are heavily concentrated in uncompetitive states, as California, Texas and New York, being too small in number to matter in contested states. Nevertheless, as argued by Barreto, Collingwood & Manzano (2010), Hispanics were influential in seven swing states: Florida, Nevada, New Mexico, Colorado, Virginia, North Carolina, and Indiana.

Findings suggest that in the 2008 campaign, there was an effort reach for voters in undecided states; campaigns spent \$13 million in television advertising in the state of Nevada, inundated with television and radio ads, candidate appearances and events, and voter outreach efforts, according to the New York Times/TNS Media (cited in Barreto, Collingwood & Manzano, 2010), though this is an account for the population in general, not specific for Hispanic voters.

Nonetheless, for this election, the one candidate using strategies specifically targeting Hispanic population was Obama, with his campaign Web site; which was not the same for McCain. Barreto, Collingwood & Manzano (2010) made a very consistent and reliable analysis of the strategies used by candidates —publicity, use of language, media, internet, etc.— without any reference to the issue of immigration. They concluded that Hispanic influence was not what made the difference, but that it could not be accounted as irrelevant either, as Hispanic influence is not absolute but rather tempered by a combination of factors and, their allegiances can vary.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 2012

State of the economy

Receiving a country in a deep financial crisis, President Obama tried to get the U.S. economy back on track, though his solutions were the creation of jobs via governmental posts, thus enlarging the government (Scher, 2014). Obama signed the failed “American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009” (ARRA), a \$787 billion bill which had the intended purpose to stimulate the economy by creating or saving 3.5 million jobs by 2011, provide nearly 40% of the stimulus package directly to working and middle class family relief, double renewable energy by 2012 as well as creating a Clean Energy Finance Authority and Renewable Tax Credits to leverage \$100 billion in private investment of renewables, protect health care and enact the expansion in tax cuts for low and moderate income earners (The White House, 2009).

The effects of the Great Recession were still being felt, however, after year one of President Obama’s Administration, the country began to see an increase in GDP, rising from 3.7% through the six quarters running from 2007-2009, to a 5.7% annualized increase over the last three months of 2010 (National Association of Manufacturers, 2010). While some indicators such as median household income and home pricing suggest a very slow economic recovery in President’s Obamas first term, others such as stock market growth and U.S. manufacturing show a positive outlook heading into 2012, however, an alarming trend emerged, in part due to the crisis and further efforts to revert it, from 2009 to 2012 the U.S. has had a deficit year, with an increase in each, from 52% to 70% (see Chart 8) (Long, 2016a).

Obama would campaign heavily on the subject of the economy and appealing to America’s youth, competing against the former Governor of Massachusetts.

Demographic change and proportional representation

In the year 2010 the census again modified the electoral landscape of the U.S. Map 4 shows the changes on percentages in population by state from the year 2000 to 2010. Only one state had a 25% or more in growth for this period: Nevada, and not with a majority of Hispanic population.

Table 8 shows the new distribution of the Electoral College votes of Arizona, Florida, and Texas, which by the year 2011 were among the states with the largest Hispanic household population (see Chart 9). Illinois and New York again, lost votes.

By the year 2011, the states that had the largest proportion of Hispanic population were consistent with the other periods analyzed previously: Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Texas (see Chart 9).

Allocated seats of the House as a result of the 2010 are shown in Table 9, also coinciding with the largest Hispanic population states with increased electoral votes allocation.

The importance of redistribution of seats relies with party in power in each state, as they will try to divide the districts in order to enhance their majority in election of their candidates. As it is known, the House represents the people and this is important for passing bills—including the immigration ones. What is less clear, is how interested is the Hispanic sector of the population in advancing those issues. Nevertheless, for the election of the Executive, Congress

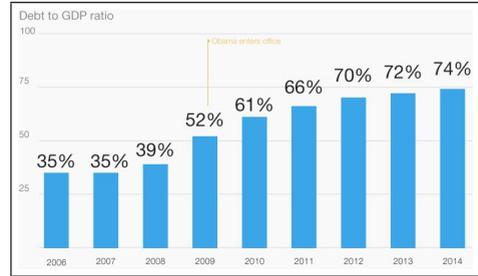
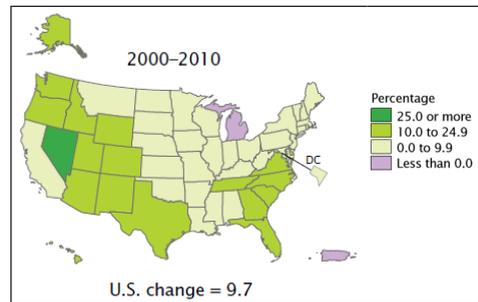


CHART 8. FEDERAL DEBT 2006 - 2014
Source: Long, 2016b.



MAP 4. PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN POPULATION BY STATE AND DECADE 2000-2010
Source: Mackun & Wilson, 2011.

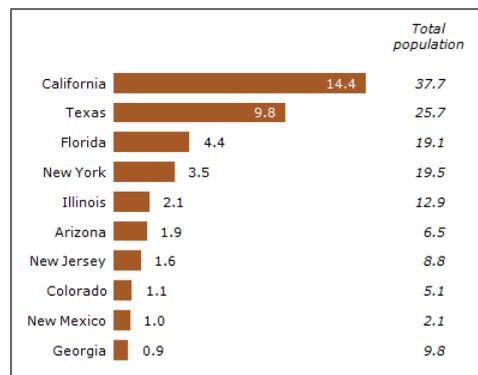


CHART 9. PERCENTAGE OF HISPANIC POPULATION PER STATE 2011
Source: Brown & Lopez, 2013.

TABLE 8. DISTRIBUTION OF ELECTORAL VOTES 2010

State name	2001-2010	2011-2020 Census 2010	State name	2001-2010	2011-2020 Census 2010	State name	2001-2010	2011-2020 Census 2010
Alabama	9	9	Kentucky	8	8	North Dakota	3	3
Alaska	3	3	Louisiana	9	8	Ohio	20	18
Arizona	10	11	Maine	4	4	Oklahoma	7	7
Arkansas	6	6	Maryland	10	10	Oregon	7	7
California	55	55	Massachusetts	12	11	Pennsylvania	21	20
Colorado	9	9	Michigan	17	16	Rhode Island	4	4
Connecticut	7	7	Minnesota	10	10	S. Carolina	8	9
Delaware	3	3	Mississippi	6	6	South Dakota	3	3
D.C.	3	3	Missouri	11	10	Tennessee	11	11
Florida	27	29	Montana	3	3	Texas	34	38
Georgia	15	16	Nebraska	5	5	Utah	5	6
Hawaii	4	4	Nevada	5	6	Vermont	3	3
Idaho	4	4	N. Hampshire	4	4	Virginia	13	13
Illinois	21	20	New Jersey	15	14	Washington	11	12
Indiana	11	11	New Mexico	5	5	W. Virginia	5	5
Iowa	7	6	New York	31	29	Wisconsin	10	10
Kansas	6	6	N. Carolina	15	15	Wyoming	3	3

Source: U.S. Electoral College, 2010.

TABLE 9. REALLOCATION OF HOUSE SEATS CENSUS 2010

State name	2010	State name	2010	State name	2010	State name	2010
Alabama	7	Indiana	9	Nebraska	3	Rhode Island	2
Alaska	1	Iowa	4	Nevada	4	South Carolina	7
Arizona	9	Kansas	4	New Hampshire	2	South Dakota	1
Arkansas	4	Kentucky	6	New Jersey	12	Tennessee	9
California	53	Louisiana	6	New Mexico	3	Texas	36
Colorado	7	Maine	2	New York	27	Utah	4
Connecticut	5	Maryland	8	North Carolina	13	Vermont	1
Delaware	1	Massachusetts	9	North Dakota	1	Virginia	11
Florida	27	Michigan	14	Ohio	16	Washington	10
Georgia	14	Minnesota	8	Oklahoma	5	West Virginia	3
Hawaii	2	Mississippi	4	Oregon	5	Wisconsin	8
Idaho	2	Missouri	8	Pennsylvania	18	Wyoming	1
Illinois	18	Montana	1				

Source: Burnett, 2011.

is important in the sense of distributing electoral votes and in the case of an Electoral College deadlock, of electing the president; Congress has the prerogative of doing it. Therefore, the importance of distribution of seats relies on the state and local politics. How did the federal election play on immigration discourse for this period?

Migration issues and the election

Hoping to build upon his 2008 campaign for the next presidential election, President Obama's main focus on immigration was towards comprehensive immigration reform once again, but this time complemented with the reintroduction of the 2001 Dream Act bill, in which he "would grant a path to citizenship to children of undocumented immigrants who attended college or went into the military" (cfr., 2012). While his efforts fell short during the first term, President Obama continued to campaign for mostly the same immigration policies as he did in 2008. Promising to create secure borders by supporting the addition of personnel, improvement of infrastructure and technology, crack down on employers who bring in undocumented immigrants while at the same time allowing those individuals to pay a fine, learn English and try to follow the correct path to an earned citizenship (The White House, 2010).

Those efforts proved insufficient. In a Debate at Town Hall interview hosted by Univision's Jorge Ramos, the President came under intense scrutiny as he was asked to acknowledge why he hadn't introduced an immigration bill when he had control of both chambers in Congress, to what his response was "What I confess I did not expect — and so I'm happy to take responsibility for being naive here— is that Republicans who had previously supported comprehensive immigration reform —my opponent in 2008, who had been a champion of it and who attended these meetings— suddenly would walk away. That's what I did not anticipate" (President Obama's Inaugural..., 2012).

To many supporters who endorsed President Obama on the subject of immigration reform, that kind of answer made it hard to support him again. Not only did he failed to deliver on immigration, his presidency had deported more people in four years than his predecessor, George W. Bush, did in eight. In light of those issues that arose during the campaign trail, the Obama administration looked to refocus immigration enforcement, where immigrants with criminal records would be found and deported instead of those who came in search of the American Dream (Foley, 2012).

In 2012, Mitt Romney became the Republican presidential nominee after Rick Santorum and Ron Paul dropped out due to poor performance in the Republican Primaries. During his acceptance speech, Governor Romney referenced the U.S. immigrant past:

We are a nation of immigrants. We are the children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the ones who wanted a better life, the driven ones, the ones who woke up at night hearing that voice telling them that life in that place called America could be better. They came not just in pursuit of the riches of this world but for the richness of this life...When every new wave of immigrants looked up and saw the Statue of Liberty, or knelt down and kissed the shores of freedom just ninety miles from Castro's tyranny, these new Americans surely had

many questions. But none doubted that here in America they could build a better life, that in America their children would be more blessed than they (Mitt Romney on..., 2012).

Unfortunately for Romney, Hispanics and immigrants alike did not think positively of his “self-deportation” ideal. He was not even capable of structuring a credible strategy to appeal to Hispanic voters, not even the Mexican origin voters, having not mentioned his Mexican born father until it was too late to make any difference.

Yet, his efforts were also thwarted by young voters. Young Americans, did not seem to appreciate Romney’s campaign promises, not that they were his main focus from the outset anyway, and proved crucial for President Obama’s reelection. According to the Pew Research Center (2011b), generational differences have been critical for Democrats vying for the Oval office, with younger voters supporting more liberal issues with a social agenda, while older voters (65+), who worry more about the state of the country, tend to cast their vote Republican.

The constant increase in immigrant population in the U.S. boosts the total of Hispanic population. According to ESRI’s “minority Population Growth” 2012 report, there were 35,311,263 Hispanics in the U.S. with a growth rate of 12.55% in the year 2000 in comparison with 2010 were the population had significantly increased, reaching 50,477,594 individuals with a growth rate of 16.35% with no signs of slowing down (ESRI, 2012).

With 51.9 million Hispanic making up for 16.7% of the U.S. population prior to the 2012 presidential elections, of which 23.7 million were eligible voters, this election was the one with the highest number of Hispanic voter eligibility. Voter eligibility has seen constant and significant increase every four years due to the increasing amount of immigrants arriving in the U.S. supported with the also increasing number of immigrants that are becoming citizens, but also points out how voter turnout from Hispanics has been somewhere between 40-50% going back as far as 1988 and has never really seen a majority of its registered voters actually exercise their acquired right (Lopez, Motel, & Patten, 2012).

By the time Election Day came to its conclusion, four states had given President Obama a decisive victory: Ohio, Florida, Virginia and Pennsylvania. Those states combined, amounted to 80 electoral votes, that had Romney fared better with youth vote, would have given him enough support to win the Presidential Elections (CIRCLE, 2012). And still, no connection between immigration rhetoric and the Hispanic vote.

On November 6th 2012, Barack Obama was reelected for a second term. Governor Romney performed poorly during the contest, obtaining 206 electoral votes against 332 by his rival (U.S. Election Atlas, 2012d). Immigration reform would stagnate for another presidential term, but it would stay relevant and present in the U.S. politic agenda.

Attention to Hispanics

Since Mitt Romney received the lowest portion of the Hispanic vote in 16 years at 27%, the Republican Party has worked on reverting that situation. Several lawmakers supported an immigration bill through the Senate, with the wish it would improve the GOP standing among Hispanics; also, republican members of Congress are appearing

on Spanish-language media more often, and independent political groups are helping to push the conservative platform in churches and community gatherings (Gomez, 2014). The Republican National Committee (RNC), which had a segment for Hispanic initiatives, accepted their efforts in order to reach this segment only started a few months before an election and ended election night; thus, republicans have made this a permanent effort (Barbour, Bradshaw, Fleischer, Fonalledas, & McCall, 2013). As one good example is Rep. Mick Mulvaney (R-S.C.), who got into office in the Tea Party wave of 2010. Even if there are very few Hispanics in his conservative district, in February of 2014 he hosted a talk with hundreds of Hispanics speaking to them in their language (Gomez, 2014). There is a popular belief that the Tea Party has hijacked the Republican Party, and has affected Hispanic vote. The Tea Party is a loose movement, involving associations in the Tea Party movement are the Tea Party Patriots, Tea Party Express, Americans for Prosperity, the National Tea Party Federation and Tea Party Nation; and was in its origin an economic movement pursuing a conservative fiscal policy and a smaller government.

Another strong popular belief, shared also by members of Congress, like Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), who stated that until an immigration reform is approved, republicans won't have the attention of the Hispanic community. Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), responded that passing that bill wouldn't automatically win over Hispanic voters, though it may get the party in a situation to compete for it. Nevertheless, the majority on the GOP knows that there is little connection between an immigration bill and improving the Hispanic vote count for Republicans. One good example was the election of Republican President Ronald Reagan who received 37% of the Hispanic vote in 1984. Later, in 1986 Congress passed an immigration bill, with a republican president and a Republican-controlled Senate, approving an amnesty for the 3 million undocumented immigrants. But, in the presidential election in 1988, after the GOP-backed amnesty was implemented, the percentage of the Hispanic vote that went to Republican George H. W. Bush dropped to 30% (Gomez, 2014).

An October 2014 poll conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center showed that immigration was not a deal-breaker issue for the majority of the Hispanic electorate; a majority of Hispanic registered voters, when it came to casting their votes, said education (92%), jobs and the economy (91%), as well as health care (86%) were extremely important or very important to them, over other issues (Lopez, 2015; Lopez, Gonzalez-Barrera, & Krogstad, 2014), just like for the majority of Americans.

OUTLOOK OF THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

State of the economy

By the end of the Obama Presidency and closer to Election Day, reviewing the economic situation would help understand economic proposals made during presidential campaigns. By 2014 some economic indicators, such as the unemployment rate (Chart 10), started to go up (Zillman, 2016).

The industries that benefited from President Obama's economic policies were the Professional Services and Education and Health, while the Construction, state and local government and manufacturing industries have been overlooked and have seen their payrolls reduced (see Chart 11) (Zumbrun & Nasaw, 2015).

Out of the three industries whose payroll has decreased during this Presidency, manufacturing is the most puzzling, as President Obama has publicly stated how this industry has added almost 800,000 new jobs, but, as of now, this sector hasn't really seen a significant increase as a share of the GDP or employment rates. On GDP, the country has seen an average growth of 2.1%, without accounting for 2009, but taking it into consideration leaves him at a meager 1.4% GDP growth over eight years (see Chart 12) (Long, 2016a).

Finally, the U.S. Government Debt saw two debt ceiling crisis that nearly managed to effectively shut down Congress for a period of time until a new arrangement was made regarding the limit of debt issued by the U.S. treasury. As mentioned in the Economic context of 2012, Federal Debt had increased overwhelmingly in Obama's first term, starting at 52% and reaching 70% by 2012 and later standing at 75% at the end of 2015 (Long, 2016a). Those are the most important figures to be dealt with in the 2016 presidential campaign.

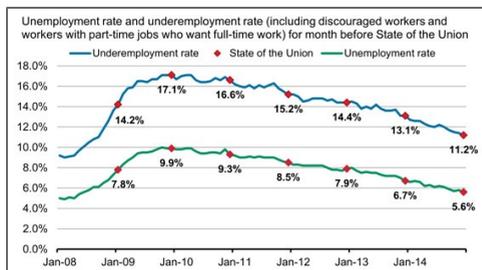


CHART 10. UNEMPLOYMENT 2008 - 2014
Source: Zumbrun & Nasaw, 2015.

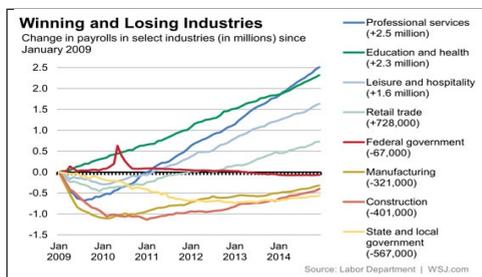


CHART 11. WINNING AND LOSING INDUSTRIES 2009 - 2014
Source: Zumbrun & Nasaw, 2015.

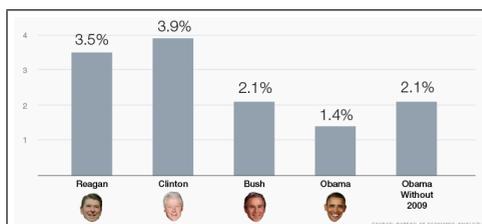


CHART 12. GROWTH BY PRESIDENCY 1981 - 2016 (AVERAGE GDP 5%)
Source: Long, 2016b.

Candidates until April 2016 and immigration

The campaign for the 2016 Presidential election is full of surprises. On the Republican side, at the beginning of the race there were two candidates of Hispanic origin, one surgeon-anti-establishment-African-American, one entrepreneur-woman, one businessman, and five former-and-actual-governors. Many of them dropped along the race; by May

2016 only one remains, the businessman. On the Democrat side, after three candidates dropped out, there are still two competing with alike platforms on many issues, still trying to gain voters and influence the Democratic Platform to be debated and approved at their National Convention. On a brief look of the primaries, the following developed.

The Republicans: Senator Ted Cruz

As of March 23rd 2015, Texas Senator Ted Cruz, announced his bid for the 2016 presidential elections during a rally at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, where he echoed sentiments of opportunity as he made allusion to American exceptionalism and the American Dream (The Washington Post, 2015). Regarding immigration, Senator Cruz has a strong opinion, being the representative of the state with the longest border with Mexico; he rejects amnesty, but at the same time wants to push for immigration reform, as he had declared: "I have said many times that I want to see common-sense immigration reform pass, I think most Americans want to see the problem fixed" (Aguilar & Root, 2013). Even if in 2013 when discussing the immigration bill at the Senate, he offered an amendment that would have exposed a proposal for a path to citizenship for those currently in the country illegally, later on in his campaign, said the purpose was to expose the real motivations of the bill supporters, who wanted to give citizenship to undocumented immigrants so they could become future voters (Farley, 2015). In fact, Senator Cruz opposes legalization.

The "called" republican: Donald Trump

The American businessman and television personality, Donald Trump, neither political nor pro government, decided to run for president in June 2015 as candidate for the Republican nomination. The son of a real estate tycoon, Donald Trump, has made quite the splash on the scene of politics over the last eight months. Not a stranger to running for president, since he ran once before in 2000 but decided to drop out, Mr. Trump has been the surprise contender for the Republican Party nomination. With an announcement that sounded more like a sports fan being upset for his team not winning one game in a season, he started his candidacy with references to two delicate subjects that resonated very hard within the hearts and minds of disgruntled voters, international trade and immigration:

Our country is in serious trouble. We don't have victories anymore. We used to have victories, but we don't have them. When was the last time anybody saw us beating, let's say, China in a trade deal? They kill us. I beat China all the time. All the time... When do we beat Mexico at the border? They're laughing at us, at our stupidity. And now they are beating us economically. They are not our friend, believe me. But they're killing us economically. The U.S. has become a dumping ground for everybody else's problems" (Time Staff, 2015).

Right off the bat, with blunt statements, and with a high self-esteem regarding his personal victories in every single front of business, Trump's announcement shook the whole Republican Party race for the nomination. His speech struck a chord with unhappy voters.

Infuriating many, not only in the U.S. but internationally, with his utterances on illegal immigration and the idea that Mexico was sending their worst individuals through the border, whilst proposing Mexico should pay for a wall built during his term.

Governor John Kasich

Sitting Governor of Ohio, he looked to hang on to the ride until the primary of Indiana, on May 5th. He expected to be “the last man standing” and the one “viable republican to defeat Hillary”. Governor Kasich support of an immigration overhaul that included the legalization of nonviolent illegal immigrants. About Trump’s stances on the subject, he considered “[t]he idea that we’re going to deport all these people is ludicrous, and everybody knows it” (Hensch, 2015). During the debates, in response to a question about illegal immigration, he declared: “I do not think we should be demonizing people who are law-abiding hard-working folks” (Thompson, 2015). But then, talking about undocumented immigrants arriving from Mexico, he stated that “[w]e can seal that border and anyone else who gets over, we send them back” (2015). At the end, in one of the last statements, he declared that “[w]e are not going to go around picking people out of their homes” (Messina, 2016). At the end, after the Indiana primary in May 5th, he dropped out of the race, after Ted Cruz did the same, leaving candidate Trump alone to contend for the nomination in July.

As to all, it was a real loss that Governor Jeb Bush was not able to continue in the race, since at least, his stances on many issues, including immigration, were thoughtful and smart.

The Democrat side: Hillary Rodham Clinton

On the Democrat side, no politician has made more noise than former first lady, Secretary of State, and New York Senator, Hillary R. Clinton, who is seeking the presidential nomination of her party for the second time after losing against now president Barack Obama back in 2008. Even after political scandals such as the attacks on Benghazi and the recent leak of private email use for official business as Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton’s image and presence within the Democrat ranks appeared unstoppable; but, is facing a strong challenge from Senator Bernie Sanders (independent and self-declared socialist) from Vermont. Republicans acknowledge that Clinton’s —or Sander’s— presidential run cannot be matched without a realistic comprehensive immigration reform; “If we don’t enact some kind of comprehensive immigration reform, I do not see a way for us to really win a general election” (John McCain: A..., 2014).

In what will be the most socially focused campaign since Obama’s 2008 “Change we can believe in” and the famous “yes we can”, Hillary Clinton, “will put women and children first, casting herself as a champion for low wage earners... Confronting a familiar sexism that is straight out of a Mad Men episode, she already seems to have adopted a new persona: grandmother-in-chief” (Yuhas, 2015).

Perhaps immigration will not be the most important issue to tackle this time around for Senator Clinton; nevertheless, the importance this subject has had on Capitol Hill for both

parties during the past two terms cannot be taken lightly. With Republicans campaigning for the nomination make their case for and against comprehensive immigration reform and “securing the border” as one of their loudest issues, Senator Clinton has to have something in place to compete against her Republican counterpart come Election Day 2016.

Her position towards the issue is comprehensive immigration reform with a path to full citizenship. And in case of Congressional inaction, she would go as far as to defend President Obama’s executive actions.

Although the Democrats hold key leadership positions in Congress and Government, no one was considered strong enough to take on the Clinton candidacy; only Vice President Joe Biden managed to create some expectations of a contest within the party, but his decision to not run, ultimately gave another longtime politician a chance at presidential aspirations.

Bernie Sanders

Self-declared Socialist, former Mayor of Burlington, longest serving independent member of Congress in American history, and current Senator for the state of Vermont, Bernie Sanders, remains (after the faltering efforts by former U.S. Senator Jim Webb and former governor of Maryland Martin O’Malley) as the only candidate opposite Hillary Clinton to fight for the Democrat nomination (Bernie Sanders. United..., 2015).

Senator Sanders, now 74 years old, has been a longtime advocate of issues opposed to Republicans talking about the big banks, attacking Wall Street, reversing climate change and global warming, universal healthcare, a big government, fair trade, etc.; during the first month of 2016, Sen. Sanders gained notoriety for his stances on two key issues: Race and immigration (Sen. Bernie Sanders, 2016).

What Sen. Sanders has proposed to correct the issues haunting immigration reform, are actions such as allowing illegal immigrants the right to purchase health coverage, all under the Affordable Care Act; border modernization in terms of proper surveillance and border community’s protection; enact some form of humanitarian parole to make sure immigrants who are deported unjustly, can return to their families; and dismantle deportation programs and private detention centers while sponsoring the notion that legalization and border security are two different issues. Sanders, son of an immigrant himself, believes in the American Dream, and when asked about immigration this has been his response:

We are a nation of immigrants. I am the son of an immigrant myself. Their story, my story, our story is a story of America: hard-working families coming to the United States to create a brighter future for their children. The story of immigrants is the story of America, a story rooted in family and fueled by hope. It continues today in families all across the United States (Issues. A Fair..., 2016).

Rooted into this issue, an erroneous and narrow perception of race plays a big part in the criminalization of illegal Immigrants. With social movements like “Black Lives Matters”, Sen. Sanders has raised his voice to stop race-based judgments, unfair and

inhumane treatments and most of all, justice for everyone who has been wronged by discrimination based actions (Issues. A Fair. . ., 2016).

As straight forward and thin in candidates as the Democrat race might seem, Sen. Sanders has taken the voters by storm and has decreased Hillary Clinton's lead in the polls, making it a very competitive race. This, in spite of the fact that the party machinery and the media are very much sold out to Clinton.

Attention to Hispanics

Campaigns continue as in the other periods, paying attention to different sectors of the population, including Hispanics. Advertisements in Spanish are still part of the equation, as are the funding from a part of the community, which would like to see more influence in the process (Confessore & Prestonmarch, 2016). Parties try to reach different sectors of the population based on their perception or history of support.

Additionally, there has been a stronger movement in order to register Hispanics to vote, as well as a concerted effort (to include the Mexican Consulates) to get Mexican legal residents to become U.S. citizens and register to vote. This effort started before the 2016 campaign, although now it seems more urgent than before, since there is considerable growth of the amount of people against Donald Trump, including Hispanics. The stake is to prevent him from winning the presidency.

It does not clearly define that Hispanics will favor a republican or a democrat candidate, although there are Hispanics enraged by Trump declarations, though not enough evidence to tie this to immigration as such, since declarations of the real estate mogul have attacked and insulted many sectors in general (cf. Llenas, 2016; Navarrete, 2016; Allen, 2012; for informative purposes). Having analyzed as many pieces of the electoral puzzle, there are now some clues as to answer the main question of this article.

CONCLUSIONS

The primaries are in process, as this article is written. They will probably be over by the time the article is published. Therefore, current reports and statistics may not be entirely accurate. The main objective that this article was set to achieve is to address the ties between immigration and the Hispanic vote, with an overview of past and current presidential elections.

Immigration is a tough issue for American politicians. Some favor comprehensive reform with a variety of options, from forceful expulsion (like Obama), to "self-deportation" (understood or not), to regularization. They all pay lip-service to a 'path to citizenship' as a simplistic process, but really failing to set a proper and realistic process.

The support politicians give to the different proposals for immigration reform may not reflect their ideologies, as there has been precedent of bipartisan efforts to bring together a comprehensive reform that would benefit all the parties involved. But Congress has been unwilling up to this day (May 2016) to pass a bill, based mostly on the bad relationship between President Obama and Congress. Since other matters are considered more

pressing than immigration, Obama finds it is simpler to govern by “Executive Orders”, which is considered unconstitutional when the intent is to bypass the will of Congress.

The study of the past elections presented in this work, shows how immigration was dragged about in the election’s agenda; and also how the perception of Hispanics —not necessarily on immigration— on the different candidates could give trends as of to how they would vote; which in turn may shed light on elections to come.

Throughout the article, several sources were researched, from changes on the financial contribution limits for Federal Elections for each period (which proved not to be relevant), through the analysis of the changing demographics, emphasizing the rise of immigration and the configuration of the state’s ethnography underlying the presence of Hispanics, the ten-year census and the implication on the Electoral College and reallocation of House seats. Therefore, this information does shed light on the patterns of the Hispanic vote, like the fact that Hispanic voters are disproportionately concentrated in noncompetitive states like Texas and California, with little or no connection between their selections of candidate regarding the difference stances on immigration. This is the reason most of this research was not included in this paper, lacking space and meriting the preparation of additional papers given the many ramifications of each issue.

The research validated that *there is not an automatic connection between immigration stances and Hispanic vote*, with information acquired from the different polls reported before and after the elections, showing that, as American voters, Hispanics care for the economy, for jobs, taxes, and health care, as a main concern, before caring for immigration; as well as the economic analysis besides the electoral results, which regardless of immigration options, didn’t always favor either democrat or republican candidates.

There is much of a myth over the assumption that immigration and the Hispanic vote go together. For the 2016 presidential election, anti-immigration has proven to be a very contentious issue —like many others. But even with an incendiary rhetoric like the one of Trump, the fact is that there is a segment of Hispanics that support those stances, the vast majority don’t. The reasons go beyond the scope of this work.

Thus, campaigning for a certain type of reform through positive or negative proposals won’t necessary mean support from Hispanics and how would they decide to vote. The main issue will not be immigration; but rather how candidates address that sector of the population.

The intended Hispanic vote reflected in the current Republican 2016 bid, which had two candidates of Hispanic ascendance directly touched or related to immigration issues, though gained recognition within the party, and have become important figures in representing diversity for the GOP, along with Ben Carson and Carly Fiorina (who dropped early February 2016), proved to not to be related to the issue. Consequently, treating the whole Hispanic community as monolithic is a mistake to be avoided.

Immigration is a continuum in the U.S. It alone can’t decide how the public responds to a candidate, but it is one of the issues that divide Americans for its inherent controversy. Thus, it is not an issue that will be resolved at the polls, nor Hispanics will always make the real difference.

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