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Who Evaluates a Presidential Candidate by Using Non-Policy Campaign Messages?

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This article tests the hypothesis that low-education voters are more likely to evaluate a candidate using personalistic or non-policy campaign messages than are more educated voters. The Latino electorate in the U.S. presents an ideal case study, given that both Presidential candidates in the 2000 election directed personalistic campaign messages toward them. Latinos with low-levels of education should be the most likely to evaluate a candidate using personalistic campaign cues since processing and understanding these messages require little in stored political information. Analysis of self-reported responses from the Latino Voter Survey of 2000 indicates that low-education Latinos are more likely than are high-education Latinos to use non-policy cues when evaluating a candidate. This finding implies that vote choice is structured differently for Latinos with varying levels of education. To test this implication and to confirm the finding from the self-reported responses, I estimate a model of Latino vote choice for the 2000 Presidential election. Probit analysis shows that high-education Latinos are indeed more likely to use factors that are informationally demanding, such as candidates' issue positions and ideology than are low-education Latinos.

The 2000 U.S. election saw both Presidential candidates, George W. Bush and Al Gore, actively courting the Latino vote. Both campaigns invested heavily in Spanish-language media and made frequent appearances in Spanish neighborhoods (Segal 2002; West 2000). Anecdotal evidence further suggests that both Presidential candidates inundated Latinos with personalistic campaign messages and activity.[1] Examples of such efforts included George W. Bush's touting of his half-Latino nephew, George P. Bush, and Gore proudly announcing that his grandson was born on Cinco de Mayo, which is the Mexican day of Independence. These campaign activities exemplify personalistic, or non-policy related, campaign efforts, since they do not reveal any information about the candidates' issue positions or policy stances. However, not all voters are equally affected by these campaign cues. As Zaller (1992: 123) notes, voters with low levels of political awareness have a higher probability of accepting a message, given that they receive the message, than do voters with greater levels of political awareness.[2]

Based on Zaller's research and candidates' campaign behavior toward Latinos in 2000, I pose the following question: Which Latinos are more likely to evaluate a Presidential candidate who uses these non-policy campaign cues? I contend that Latinos with lower levels of stored political knowledge are the ones who will evaluate a candidate from personalistic cues. To test this hypothesis, I use the Latino Voter Survey of 2000 and estimate a model that examines the determinants of using non-policy campaign cues in a respondent's evaluation of a candidate. Education, which serves as a proxy for political information, is expected to be the primary explanatory variable. If it is indeed the case that non-policy campaign cues influence low-education Latinos to a greater extent than more educated Latinos, it would suggest that voters with low-education levels are more susceptible to certain types of campaign messages than are voters with higher levels of education.

If this finding proves true, it would also imply that vote choice is structured differently for voters with varying levels of education. Thus, a second hypothesis asserts that high-education Latinos will be more likely to use issues and ideology in their vote choice than will low-education Latinos. High-education Latinos possess the necessary amounts of stored political information to vote according to the spatial model of voting (Downs 1957), whereas low-education Latinos may be less likely to vote in this way, given the high informational burden required from the spatial model (Campbell, et al. 1964).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The importance of political information in one's ability to make informed vote decisions has been an extensively researched topic, and it is widely acknowledged that much of the U.S. electorate is politically uninformed (Gerber and Greene 1998; Husted, Kenny, and Morton 1995; Lupia and McCubbins 1998; Niemi and Junn 1998; Smith 1989; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991) and that this distribution

[1] For media accounts, refer to Anderson 2000, Calvo 2000 and Fountain 2000.

[2] While Zaller notes that voters with mid-levels of political awareness possess the highest probability of attitude change, I am focusing on Zaller's point that low-education voters have the highest probability of accepting a message, even if it might not result in an attitude change. Since I am not interested in whether one's attitude changes, I merely want to show that voters with the lowest amount of political awareness are the most susceptible to campaign messages, to a greater extent than mid- and high-awareness voters.

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of political information systematically varies from individual to individual. Two factors help to alleviate this unfortunate reality. First, Popkin (1994) asserts that information shortcuts overcome this problem, and that such behaviors are grounded on the basis of "low-education rationality." His explanation rests on the assumption that "views the voter as an investor and the vote as a reasoned investment in collective goods, made with costly and imperfect information under conditions of uncertainty." Because information is difficult to attain and thus provides voters with little incentive to gather it, information shortcuts function as a mechanism that reduces these costs. Such heuristics can take the form of a reliance on campaign messages, experiences from daily lives or using information experts, such as political commentators, as sources of information (Lupia 1994; Popkin 1994). However, not all voters rely on the same type of heuristics. Popkin and Dimock (1999, 2000) demonstrate that the type of information shortcut voters' use is highly dependent on their stored levels of political knowledge. Popkin and Dimock's (2000) empirical research finds that the less knowledgeable an individual is, the more likely that individual is to perceive foreign policy issues as threatening. In addition, these low-information voters have greater difficulty placing foreign policy issues within the broader political context. In another work by Popkin and Dimock (1999), they find that voters who are less politically informed are more likely to evaluate a candidate based on their personal characteristics as opposed to their policy positions.

Information shortcuts are not the only way that voters may behave as if they were fully informed. Page and Shapiro (1995) contend that when voters' decisions are aggregated, the random errors of each voter cancels out. Thus, it may be the case that statistical aggregation overcomes individual shortcomings. This assertion is demonstrated by Page and Shapiro, who contend that on average individual behavior is consistent with their beliefs and therefore, collective decisions should also follow a similar pattern. Based on data using over 10,000 surveys, they conclude that individual opinions are stable over time, and the "capricious changes" that one might expect from an uninformed electorate are absent.

Despite the assertions made by Page and Shapiro (1995), Althaus (1998) examines the issue of political information from another perspective, by introducing the consequences associated with the type of decisions that voters make and the kind of policy representation they receive. His findings are most troublesome for low-education individuals, since he asserts that their beliefs may fail to be consistent with the decisions they provide in survey responses. Because these individuals are often the ones who provide either "do not know" or "no opinion" responses, their opinions are often under-represented in these surveys. Similar to the theory of mass beliefs espoused by Converse (1964), Althaus finds that the low levels and uneven social distribution of political knowledge in the mass public result in survey responses that are unrepresentative of society as a whole. Thus, the collective preferences of the more aware, usually the Anglos, are overrepresented; while the group preferences of those with less information, e.g., Latinos, are either underrepresented or altogether overlooked. Because surveys are biased toward the groups who give substantive responses, and low political information respondents like Latinos often provide either "no opinion" or "do not know" responses, their opinions are often underrepresented in the surveys. Moreover, for those respondents who are more informed, their beliefs will be consistent with the answers that they provide, but for those who either provide "don't know" responses or "no opinion" responses, beliefs may not be accurately reflected in their responses. Given that elected officials today give considerable weight to public opinion polls in the formation of policy decisions (Althaus 1998), minority policy interests, especially Latino concerns, may not be properly represented.

The literature on heuristics suggests that its content often focuses on policy, or if using an individual or political commentator, the voter is receiving policy-related information from that individual. However, what happens when such cues are absent of policy? Along with demographic features that make minority groups less likely to have high levels of political information, anecdotal evidence suggests that the content of minority-specific campaign messages differs from the mainstream campaign messages. Most notably, Presidential campaigns in the past decade, and especially in the 2000 election, devoted considerable time and energy in targeting Latino voters, a minority group that has increased in its share of the U.S. electorate. While efforts to woo these voters are not new, anecdotal evidence suggests that a consistent theme in these efforts focuses on symbolic and non-policy campaign cues.[3] For instance, Latinos have been exposed to campaign cues such as Ford's inability to eat a tamale (Popkin 1994), Bush and Gore's attempts to communicate in Spanish during the 2000 election, George W. Bush's touting of his half Latino nephew, and Gore proudly sharing to Mexican voters that his grandson was born on Cinco de Mayo (Fountain 2000). Such examples of symbolic, non-policy campaign cues is most troubling because awareness "enhances political resistance to political communication at the point of encountering and deciding whether or not to accept them" (Zaller 1982), and as such, Latino voters with low-levels of information are especially privy to accepting these types of campaign messages.

Another problem with the non-policy heuristics and the information that flows from them is their potential to actually perpetuate low-levels of information for minority voters, given that a great number are already considered to hold low-levels of information because of their educational attainment and income levels. Moreover, if it is true that minority voters receive different types of information than mainstream voters, it may affect the candidate in two ways: (1) it may be detrimental to the candidate, given that the voter may make a misinformed decision or may misunderstand the candidate's issue position; (2) it may be strategic

[3] For symbolic behavior toward Latinos that has been reported in the media, refer to Calvo (2000), Fountain (2000) and Anderson (2000).

behavior on the part of the candidate, in order to maximize support (Alvarez 1997; Conover and Feldman 1989). The ability to do so would be significantly hampered had a voter received the policy related information. Thus, if we observe campaigns employing such tactics, it would also suggest that minority voters are perceived as less politically sophisticated than Anglos. This is the case because a candidate who uses these types of campaign messages, e.g., emphasizing immigrant sentiments, inclusiveness, and opportunity, assumes that Latinos will be more receptive to these types of messages, as opposed to messages that pertain to the policy stances of the candidates.[4] Candidates may also perceive that this type of strategy is more advantageous than one that reveals their issue platforms, so as not to alienate voters who are not aligned with them. However, such a strategy is only beneficial if it is indeed the case that voters will evaluate a candidate based on these non-policy campaign messages.

Another potential area where these non-policy cues may have an impact is in the vote behavior of Latinos. As demonstrated by Marcus, Neuman, and Mackuen (2000), voters with varying levels of political information rely on different cues in their support of a candidate. In a complacent environment, high-information voters rely on partisanship cues in their vote choice, whereas lowinformation voters rely on a candidate's personal qualities in their vote decision. But when voters become anxious, they abandon partisanship and analyze candidates based on their policy positions and personal qualities. These findings may lend support to the hypothesis that low-information voters are more likely to evaluate a candidate based on non-policy messages than those voters with more information. If this hypothesis is supported, then low-information voters may have great difficulty voting according to the spatial model.

The use of non-policy campaign messages, which can be defined as heuristics containing personal or symbolic rhetoric, has serious consequences on the ability of Latinos to behave as active participants in the political system. Because their levels of stored political information remain low as a result of these non-policy messages, they will have great difficulty in participating in other forms of political activity. Due to the continued growth of the Latino electorate in the United States, it is critical to examine the relationship between political information and the degree to which it influences the use of non-policy campaign cues for Latino voters. In the following sections, these claims will be tested.

HYPOTHESIS, DATA, AND RESEARCH DESIGN

From a review of the relevant literature, two hypotheses are presented with respect to the relationship between political information and non-policy campaign cues. Most research measures political information as respondents' knowledge of political facts, or the frequency with which they read the newspapers or watche the nightly news (Althaus 1998; Bartels 1996).[5] However, it is also the case that political information is concentrated among those who are politically and socially advantaged (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Neuman 1986; Sigelman and Yanarella 1986). Such a finding also makes it appropriate to use an individual's level of education as a proxy for political knowledge, and this is how political information is measured in this analysis.

The first hypothesis contends that Latinos with low-levels of education are more likely to be influenced by candidates using non-policy campaign cues, than more educated Latinos. If this finding proves true, it also suggests that vote choice is structured differently for voters with varying levels of education. Thus, the second hypothesis contends that high-education Latinos will behave according to the spatial model of voting to a greater extent than Latinos with low education. So, the vote choice for high-education Latinos depends on the proximity of their own issue positions with that of the candidate's policy stance (Downs 1957). In contrast, low-education Latinos will be less influenced by issues and ideology in their vote decision, given that the high informational burden required from the spatial model (Campbell, et al. 1964) prevents them from behaving in this way.

The Latino electorate in the United States presents an ideal case in which to test these hypotheses. Not only is there a large amount of socioeconomic heterogeneity, and thus varying information levels, within the Latino population (Alvarez and Garcia Bedolla 2003; de la Garza and DeSipio 1992), but the campaign cues that are targeted toward Latinos are also readily discernible, e.g., a candidate speaking Spanish, a candidate using Spanish-language media. The data used for this research is from the Latino Voter Survey of 2000, conducted by the Knight Ridder News Organization. This was a nationwide telephone survey conducted in both English and Spanish and sampled approximately 2721 Latinos nationwide. The bulk of the sample is taken from four states that capture the size and ethnic diversity of the Latino population: California, Florida, Texas, and New York. Approximately 600 respondents were interviewed from each of these states. The remaining respondents were interviewed in Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania. Altogether the Latino population from these states represents about 90 percent of all registered Latino voters in the United States.[6] And more than 70 percent of the respondents were from the three largest Latino ethnic groups in the United States. Mexicans were 38 percent of the sample followed by Puerto Ricans, 17 percent; and Cubans, 14 percent. The remaining respondents reported their ethnic origin as Spanish, 5 percent; Central American, 3 percent; South American, 3 percent; and "other" Latino category, 10 percent.

[4] For media reports of ads in the 2000 Presidential election using these types of the messages, refer to *USA Today* 4/5/00.

[5] Unfortunately, this survey does not ask either one of these questions.

[6] The survey was conducted by Internal Communication Research, Media, Pennsylvania. The margin of error for the sample was 2 percent.

The survey focused on a series of questions dealing with the 2000 Presidential election, respondent opinions on a variety of issues such as gun control, abortion, illegal immigration, education, and the economy. Moreover, standard survey questions pertaining to respondent demographics were also included. Specific questions relating to the 2000 Senate elections as well as state-specific issues or ballot initiatives were included for the four states of California, Florida, New York, and Texas. The use of this data set is especially advantageous for the research question posed in this research, i.e., the role that information plays in determining whether or not an individual would be more likely to vote for a candidate who uses non-policy cues. Unlike other national surveys conducted on Latino voters in the United States (de la Garza and DeSipio 1992; Tomas Rivera Policy Institute 1996, 2000), these surveys are the only ones that ask respondents for opinions on the impact of several non-policy campaign cues on their probability of supporting a candidate. The following question captures the non-policy campaign cues:

> "In choosing a candidate for office, how much more or less likely would you be to vote for that candidate if he or she [ITEM]:"
> 1) Speaks Spanish or uses Spanish while campaigning.
> 2) Uses Spanish-language advertisements.
> 3) Promises to appoint Hispanics to high level government positions.
> 4) Is of Hispanic descent.
> 5) Campaigns in Hispanic neighborhoods or at Hispanic events.

The possible responses for the use of these cues were based on a five-point scale. A 5 indicated that a respondent was much more likely to support a candidate based on this campaign strategy, a 4 indicated that the respondent was a little more likely, a 3 indicated that the strategy made no difference, a 2 represented that the respondent was a little less likely, and a 1 meant that a respondent was a lot less likely to provide support for the candidate using such a campaign cue. The first and second strategies both focus on using the cultural cue of language, while the fourth campaign strategy is purely based on another cultural trait, shared ethnic identity. The fifth category, campaigning in Hispanic neighborhoods or Hispanic events, also focuses on the voter's culture. Of these strategies, it is the third campaign strategy, promising to appoint Hispanics to high level government positions, that may be interpreted as a policy-related cue. However, it can also be perceived as another form of descriptive representation. And even if a Hispanic is appointed to a government position, there is no guarantee that he/she will promote policies that benefit the Latino electorate. Based on the question wording from the survey, this campaign promise should be considered as an actual statement that a candidate would make, and not a message that could be inferred by the voter.

Because the first hypothesis examines the determinants of the use of non-policy campaign cues, the extent to which a respondent evaluates a candidate based on a non-policy campaign cue is the dependent variable. Education, along with other demographic and political controls, serves as the explanatory variables. Because of the ordinal nature of the dependent variable, a respondent's support of a candidate based on a non-policy campaign cue, ordered probit analysis is used. And because there are five different types of campaign cues, each one is estimated separately.

If the hypothesis is supported, then higher levels of political education should have a negative impact on the likelihood of evaluating a candidate based on these cues. On the other hand, low-education voters should be the most likely to be influenced positively by a candidate who uses these campaign cues. Again, this difference can be accounted for by level of education, since an individual who possess larger amounts of education will be more resistant to cues that are non-policy oriented than low-education voters.

Turning to the independent variables, the primary explanatory variable of interest is education, since it serves as the proxy for political information. The education variable consists of five categories: 1 indicating less than a high school degree, 2 representing those with a high school degree, 3 representing respondents with some college, 4 indicating those with a 2-year college degree, 5 representing those with a 4-year college degree, and a 6 representing those with a post-graduate degree. I created four dichotomous variables to measure education: (1) less than a high school degree; (2) high school degree and/or some college education; (3) 2-year college degree and/or 4-year college degree; and (4) some post-college education.

Other demographic factors and political variables are also considered, given that certain characteristics may explain which voters are influenced by non-policy cues in their support of a candidate. First, there may be gender differences in understanding which respondents are more likely to evaluate a candidate based on a non-policy campaign cue. However, there are no prior expectations as to whether women or men are more likely to use these cues. But to control for this possibility, a dummy variable is created for gender, and a 1 indicates women, a 0 represents men. Another potential explanation is age, and it is operationalized as a continuous variable, from younger to older. It is expected that the older the respondent is, the less likely they are to use these campaign cues in their evaluation of a candidate. Since older Latinos may also be the ones who have lived in the U.S. for the longest period of time, these symbolic cues may play less of a role in their assessment of a candidate, relative to younger Latinos. The final demographic factor that is controlled for is the respondent's marital status, but there are no priors as to whether or not being married increases or decreases the likelihood of evaluating a candidate based on a non-policy campaign cue. This demographic characteristic is created as a dummy variable, with a 1 indicating that the respondent is married, and 0 otherwise.

Generational status was also considered a possible explanatory variable. It is operationalized as two variables, first generation and second generation, with foreign born as

the omitted category.[7] How long a Latino has lived in the United States may also be an important indicator of their level of political information, given that foreign-born Latinos are considered to be less politically assimilated than first and second generation Latinos (de la Garza and DeSipio1992; Nicholson, Pantoja, and Segura 2002). Because of this lack of political assimilation and thus low-level of stored political knowledge, a foreign-born Latino may be swayed by campaign promises that are absent of policy but full of symbolic and cultural appeals, to a larger extent than U.S. born Latinos. In turn, it should be second generation Latinos who are the most resistant to this type of cues, since they should be the ones with the highest amounts of political knowledge.

We also control for political factors, specifically partisanship and ideology. However, these variables should have a negative impact on the likelihood of being influenced by a non-policy campaign cue, since respondents who either identify themselves as a partisan or posses an ideological stance should be more resistant to using a non-policy campaign cue. Presumably, if a respondent identifies with a party and/or holds an ideological position, then the chances of being influenced to vote for a candidate because of a non-policy campaign cue would be low. Two partisanship dummy variables are included, Democrat and Republican, with respondents who consider themselves as Independents being the omitted category. Similar to respondents who identify with a political party, those with an ideological position should also be less likely to use a non-policy campaign cue, given that ideology should guide their vote choice. Thus, ideology should have a negative impact on the use of a non-policy cue. Because the question on a respondent's ideological position was based on a five-point scale, with 1 being extremely liberal and 5 extremely conservative, it is treated as a continuous variable.

The final indicator that could explain who would be influenced by non-policy cues in their evaluation of a candidate is one's news source. Two variables were created, one for those respondents relying solely on Spanish-language media, and another for those who use Spanish and English media equally. The omitted category consists of those respondents who only use English media. It is important to control for news source in light of findings by Nicholson, Pantoja, and Segura (2002), in which a greater reliance on Spanish media indicates that the individual is less politically and culturally assimilated into U.S. society. If this is indeed the case, respondents who only use Spanish-language media and those who use both Spanish and English language media should be more likely to support a candidate who uses non-policy campaign cues, relative to those who only use English-language news sources.

The assertion that high-education voters are the ones who are least likely to be influenced by a candidate who uses non-policy campaign cues, and low-education voters are the most susceptible results in a number of implications regarding their vote decision. Most importantly, it suggests that a voter's level of education structures what types of factors they use in casting their vote. So, the second hypothesis asserts that Latinos with high amounts of education will use issues and ideology in their vote choice, given that they have enough stored knowledge to behave according to the spatial model of voting. This implies that high-education Latinos support the candidate whose issue positions are closest to their own. On the other hand, the degree to which low-education Latinos are influenced by issues and ideology in their vote choice will be lower, and this explanation rests on the idea that issue voting requires the voter to possess a large amount of information (Campbell, et al. 1964). Given their low-levels of stored knowledge, it would be a challenge for low-education voters to behave in this way.

To test this hypothesis, a model of vote choice for the 2000 Presidential election is estimated. The sample of voters is disaggregated based on their information levels, either low or high. Low-education respondents are categorized as those with less than a high-school education, and a respondent with a high-school degree or above is considered to be a high-education voter. The low education category are those respondents without a high-school diploma given that the Current Population Survey of March 2002 reports that 42.8 percent of all Latinos in the United States posses some high school education. Thus, it makes sense to consider this educational category as the cutoff point between low-education and high-education.[8] This method of disaggregating is employed in order to test the claim that issues and ideology have a greater effect on the vote decision of high-education respondents than those possessing low-education levels.

Because the second hypothesis sets out to test whether high-education Latinos use a different set of vote predictors than their low-education counterparts, the dependent variable is the probability of voting for Gore. The dichotomous nature of this variable requires the use of probit analysis. While the explanatory variables that will be considered include a host of demographic and political factors, the primary variables of interest are respondents' ideological and issue positions. If it is indeed the case that high-education Latinos behave differently than low-education Latinos, so that those with high-education use issues and ideology in their vote choice whereas low-education Latinos do not, then the issue and ideology variables should influence the vote choice of high-education Latinos to a larger extent than low-education Latinos.

To capture the role that issues played in the 2000 Presidential election, a respondent's issue positions are evaluated based on the following three policies: abortion, school vouchers, and federally sponsored health insurance. These three issues were selected because of their importance in the

[7] First generation Latinos are those whose were born in the U.S., but their parents were born abroad. Second generation are Latinos who were born in the U.S. and whose parents were also born in the U.S.

[8] For more information on Latinos' education levels, refer to http://www.census.gov/population/sociodemo/education/ ppl-169/tab01a.pdf.

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENT POLITICAL INFORMATION LEVELS

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low Education Respondents		
Less than a High School Degree	560	22
High Education Respondents		
High School Degree	633	25
Some College	451	17
2-Year College	344	13
4-Year College	383	15
Some Post Graduate	209	8
Total for High Education	2,020	78
Overall Total	1,040	100

Source: Latino Voter Survey, 2000

2000 presidential election, as well as the distinct positions that the two candidates adopted with respect to these three issues (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2002). It is expected that the issue variables will be more salient to high-education voters than their low-education counterparts, given that more educated voters may behave according to the spatial model of voting to a greater degree than less educated Latinos. The first issue, that of abortion, is treated as a dummy variable, with a 1 indicating respondents who are pro-choice; and a 0 indicating respondents who are pro-life. It is expected that this coefficient should be positive, given that Gore is pro-choice. The next variable, school vouchers, is also coded as a dummy variable. A 1 represents respondents who supports the use of school vouchers, and a 0 denotes respondents against school vouchers. The pro-voucher variable should have a negative impact on the probability of voting for Gore, since Gore was against the use of vouchers. The final issue variable concerns respondent opinions on federally sponsored health insurance. This variable was also coded as a dichotomous variable, with a 1 indicating respondents who supported federally-sponsored health insurance and 0 otherwise. Because Gore was in favor of a health-insurance program sponsored by the federal government, this variable should have a positive effect on the likelihood of voting for Gore. In addition to the importance that issues should play on the vote choice of high-education voters, it is also hypothesized that ideology will play an equally significant role. Ideology is treated as a continuous variable, with a 1 denoting those respondents who are very liberal, and a 5 being those respondents who are very conservative. Thus, it is expected that the ideology coefficient will be negative, since the dependent variable is the probability of voting for Gore. Moreover, because high-education voters are expected to behave according to the spatial model of voting more so than Latinos possessing low-education levels, ideology should have a larger impact for the high-education voters.

The other explanatory variables control for the possibility that political and demographic characteristics may influence an individual's vote decision. It is necessary to take into account partisan identification, given the critical role partisanship plays in vote choice (Campbell, et al. 1964). As such, two partisanship dummy variables are created, one for Democrats and another for Republicans. For the Democrat variable, 1 indicates respondents who identify as Democrats, 0 otherwise. The Republican variable was coded in the same manner, with 1 indicating that a respondent identifies with the Republican party, and 0 otherwise. The omitted category consists of respondents who consider themselves to be Independents. In addition to these political factors, the standard demographic controls of vote choices are included: age, gender, and marital status. These demographic variables were all coded in the same fashion as those from the ordered probit analysis. Another standard predictor of vote choice is income, and this variable was ordered on a seven-point scale: 1 indicating respondents who made less than $15,000; 7 representing those with an income over $100,000. This ordering made it appropriate to treat income as a continuous variable. To control for the possibility that generational status may influence vote choice, a first generation variable as well as a second generation variable are included, with foreign-born being the omitted category. Again, these two variables are coded like those from the ordered probit analysis. There are no prior expectations, however, as to whether generational status increases or decreases the likelihood of supporting Gore.

The following section first presents a number of descriptive statistics for the main variables of interest, non-policy campaign cues and respondents' education levels. Then, a discussion on the estimates from the ordered probit models testing the impact of education on a voter's use of non-policy campaign cues follow. The final section goes over the probit estimates on voter decisionmaking in the 2000 Presidential election, paying special attention to the effects of varying education levels on the factors that an individual uses in their vote decision.

FINDINGS

First, to describe the distribution of respondent education in the sample, Table 1 presents a frequency distribution of the education variable. The modal category for education is "high-school degree," with 25 percent of respondents having a high-school diploma. However, 22 percent of the respondents possess less than a high-school degree, and differs from the modal category by only 3 percent. These two categories together comprise almost a majority, 47 percent, of the respondents. This distribution also indicates that Latinos' educational levels are concentrated in the lower categories; only 15 percent of Latinos in the sample possess a 4-year college degree, relative to 25 percent of Anglos holding this same degree.[9]

An initial way to test the claim that low-education voters are more susceptible to non-policy campaign cues is presented

[9] For the reference on Anglos, refer to: http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/education/ppl-169/ tab01a.pdf.

TABLE 2
RESPONDENT'S USE OF CAMPAIGN CUES, BY EDUCATION LEVEL

Likelihood of Supporting a Candidate Who	Less than a High School Degree	High School Degree	Some College	2-Year College	4-Year College	Some Post College Education
Speaks Spanish						
A lot less likely	1	1	2	1	2	1
A little less likely	3	1	2	1	1	0
It makes no difference	38	51	50	54	54	50
A little more likely	16	17	22	22	24	21
A lot more likely	39	28	22	22	19	27
Campaigns in Spanish Neighborhoods						
A lot less likely	2	1	1	1	1	2
A little less likely	3	1	2	1	1	0
It makes no difference	37	51	50	54	54	50
A little more likely	16	17	22	22	24	21
A lot more likely	39	28	22	22	19	27
Promises to Make Latino Appointments						
A lot less likely	2	3	3	3	2	2
A little less likely	2	3	2	2	3	1
It makes no difference	36	46	54	55	57	53
A little more likely	15	15	19	18	19	22
A lot more likely	41	31	21	21	18	21
Candidate is Latino						
A lot less likely	2	1	1	1	2	1
A little less likely	1	2	2	2	1	2
It makes no difference	44	58	66	63	68	65
A little more likely	12	13	11	13	15	14
A lot more likely	37	24	19	19	14	16
Uses Spanish-Language Advertisements						
A lot less likely	3	2	2	2	2	3
A little less likely	3	3	3	1	1	2
It makes no difference	41	60	62	66	66	65
A little more likely	13	10	15	15	17	15
A lot more likely	37	24	16	15	12	16

Cell entries are percentages and represent the proportion of each individual likely to use the campaign cue, for the given educational category.
χ^2 Test Statistic: Speaks Spanish (92.25), Campaigns in Spanish Neighborhoods (106.01), Promises Latino Appointments (96.55), Candidate is Latino (112.86), Uses Spanish Media (140.59). All are significant at the p = .01 level.

in Table 2. This table provides a bivariate distribution of a respondents' levels of education, for each of the five non-policy campaign cues. The main finding of these frequency distributions provide initial support for the first hypothesis; only the respondents in the lowest education category, less than a high-school degree, have a modal response category of "a lot more likely" than respondents in the other four educational categories. In contrast, the modal response category for all other levels of education is that a candidate who uses such cues "makes no difference" in their support of a candidate. A closer examination of one of the campaign cues, promising to make Latino appointments, reveals that 41 percent of the respondents with less than a high degree stated that they were a lot more likely to support a candidate who promises to make Latino appointments. And only 36 percent from this same educational category responded that this cue "makes no difference" in their assessment of a candidate. However, when examining those respondents with a four-year college degree, the percentage who said that they would be a lot more likely to support a candidate who promises to make Latino appointments drops by 23 percent, to 18 percent and the majority of respondents, 57 percent, stated that using non-policy cues "makes no difference" in their evaluation of a candidate.

Thus, as expected, the higher the level of education, the lower the likelihood of evaluating a candidate based on non-policy cues. This is consistent with the finding that the modal category for the respondents in the four highest educational levels is that the use of non-policy cues "makes no difference" in their evaluation of a candidate. Again, these

TABLE 3
DEPENDENT VARIABLE IS AN ORDINAL RESPONSE INDICATING A GREATER LIKELIHOOD FOR SUPPORTING A CANDIDATE WHO . . .

	Speaks Spanish		Uses Spanish Media		Is of Latino Descent		Campaigns in Spanish Areas		Promises to Make Latino Appointments	
	Est. Coeff.	Std. Error	Est. Coeff.	Std. Error	Est. Coeff.	Std. Error	Est. Coeff.	Std. Error	Est. Coeff.	Std. Error
Education[a]										
High School Diploma/ Some College	–.20**	.07	–.20**	.07	–.24**	.07	–.17*	.07	–.26**	.07
2-yr/4 yr-College Degree	–.19*	.07	–.18*	.08	–.25*	.08	–.15*	.07	–.28**	.08
Graduate School	–.13	.11	–.08	.11	–.27	.11	.04	.10	–.19*	.10
Partisanship and Ideology										
Republican	–.03	.07	–.16*	.07	–.17**	.07	–.22*	.07	–.19*	.07
Democrat	.22**	.06	.17**	.06	.22*	.06	.17*	.06	.22**	.06
Conservative	.01	.02	.01	.02	–.01	.02	–.03	.02	–.02	.02
Demographics										
Age	–.01**	.00	–.01**	.00	–.01**	.00	–.01**	.00	–.01**	.00
High Income	–.00	.01	–.13	.04	–.00	.01	–.01	.04	–.01	.01
Married	–.03	.05	–.02	.05	–.08	.05	–.00	.05	–.04	.05
First Generation[b]	–.02	.07	.03	.07	–.15*	.07	–.04	.07	–.10*	.07
Second Generation[b]	–.01	.06	–.06	.06	–.13*	.06	–.03	.06	–.11**	.06
Women	.08*	.05	.14**	.05	.04	.05	.14••	.05	.05	.05
News Source										
Only Spanish[c]	.84**	.08	.90**	.08	.50**	.09	.60**	.08	.55**	.05
Both Spanish and English[c]	.39**	.06	.45**	.06	.29**	.06	.33**	.05	.35**	.05
N	2384		2376		2363		2366		2364	
Log-Likelihood	–2415.94		–2415.94		–2340.18		–2605.64		–2700.66	
Cut point 1	–2.29		–2.18		–2.61		–2.66		–2.35	
Cut point 2	–1.96		–1.85		–2.33		–2.3		–2.06	
Cut point 3	.33		.34		.01		.30		.19	
Cut point 4	.81		.79		.41		.27		.29	

Each column refers to a specific non-policy campaign cue.
*Indicates an estimate significant at p = .10 level.
**Indicates an estimate significant at p = .01 level
[a]The omitted category is a respondent with less than a high school degree.
[b]The omitted category is a respondent who is foreign born.
[c]The omitted category is a respondent who only uses English language media.

findings provide support for the claim that individuals with low-levels of education are the ones most likely to use such cues in their support of a candidate. Moreover, the χ^2 test statistic is statistically significant for each of these bivariate distributions at the .01 level, therefore rejecting the null hypothesis that there is no association between these two variables. The findings from these bivariate distributions provide initial evidence toward the claim that political information influences the degree to which non-policy cues influence one's vote decision.

Now turning to the ordered probit results, the causal relationship between respondents' education and their use of non-policy campaign cues are confirmed. Table 3 presents these estimates. The two education coefficients, high-school diploma and some college education, and two-year or four-year college degrees, is negative and statistically significant at the .01-.10 level for all five estimations. These two education coefficients are also in the expected direction, since the omitted category are respondents with less than a high-school degree. So, a voter with a high-school degree or some college is less likely to be influenced by non-policy campaign cues in their support of a candidate than is a voter with no high-school degree. Likewise, a voter who holds a two-year/four-year college degree reduces the likelihood of evaluating a candidate based on a non-policy cue when compared to a voter who has not completed high school. And while only one of the coefficients for some post-college education reached statistical

TABLE 4
FIRST CIFFERENCE ESTIMATES
Change in probability of a voter responding to be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate using a specific non-policy cue, when the voter's education shifts from "less than a high school degree" to a "2-yr or 4-yr college degree"

Question: In choosing a candidate for office, how much more or less likely would you be to vote for that candidate if he or she	Response Categories				
	"A Lot Less Likely"	"A Little Less Likely"	"Makes No Difference"	"A Little More Likely"	"A Lot More More Likely"
Speaks Spanish	.003	.004	.07	–.01	–.07
	(.001)	(.002)	(.03)	(.005)	(.03)
Uses Spanish-language Media	.003	.0004	.06	–.007	–.06
	(.002)	(.002)	(.03)	(.004)	(.03)
Promises to Appoint Latinos	.01	.01	.09	.000	–.11
	(.002)	(.002)	(.03)	(.003)	(.03)
Is of Latino Descent	.004	.003	.09	–.01	–.09
	(.001)	(.001)	(.03)	(.004)	(.03)
Campaigns in Latino Neighborhoods	.002	.002	.05	.000	–.06
	(.001)	(.001)	(.03)	(.002)	(.03)

Cell entries report the difference in the probability of a voter providing a column response to each row entry, when the voter's education shifts from having no college degree to a 2-year or 4-year college degree. The exact question wording is: "In choosing a candidate for office, how much more or less likely would you be to vote for that candidate if he or she: a) speaks Spanish or uses Spanish while campaigning, b) uses Spanish-language advertisements, c) promises to appoint Hispanics to high-level government positions, d) is of Hispanic descent, e) campaigns in Hispanic neighborhoods or at Hispanic events." Numbers in parentheses indicate standard errors of first difference estimates. Predicted probabilities are based on the estimates from Table 3.

significance, this is primarily due to the small number of respondents in this education category (observation ranges from N = 38 to N = 64, depending on the dependent variable). Nonetheless, these findings support the contention that more educated Latinos are less likely to use campaign cues in evaluating a candidate.

In addition to this primary finding, a respondents' age and the type of news that they use also help to explain who is more likely to use non-policy campaign cues in their assessment of a candidate. The age coefficient is negative and statistically significant for all five estimations. This suggests that older voters are less likely to evaluate a candidate based on these non-policy cues. The type of news that a respondent uses also determines whether or not they are influenced by a non-policy campaign cue. The coefficient for respondents who use only Spanish news sources and the coefficient for respondents using both Spanish and English news sources are positively signed and statistically significant in all five estimations. Thus, Latinos who only use Spanish language media as their main news source are more likely to support a candidate promising to use a cultural campaign cue than are respondents who use only English media. Likewise, a respondent who relies on both Spanish-language and English media at equal rates is more likely to evaluate a candidate based on cultural campaign cues, when compared to respondents who only use English media. The importance of respondents' news source are consistent with the analysis presented by Nicholson, Pantoja, and Segura (2002) in finding that Latinos who use Spanish media are also the ones who are less assimilated. So, it makes sense that less assimilated Latinos would be supportive of a candidate who promises to use symbolic and cultural cues, since it functions as an easy and appealing heuristic for those with low levels of stored political knowledge. This finding nicely aligns with the other explanatory variables that reached statistical significance for all of the models: education, the proxy for political information, and age. Since a reliance on Spanish news media can be thought of as another indicator of assimilation rate, it is consistent with the finding that older Latinos are more resistant to cultural campaign cues. Likewise, more educated Latinos are less likely to support a candidate who uses cultural campaign cues, when compared to Latinos with the least amounts of education.

To gain a better understanding of education's impact on the likelihood of evaluating a candidate based on non-policy cues, I calculate first differences of a hypothetical voter who shifts from less than a high-school degree to a two-year or four-year college degree, while all other independent variables are held at their mean or mode. Table 4 presents these estimates. The hypothetical voter possesses the following demographics: female, 48-years-old, married, earning somewhere between $15,000 and $25,000, relies on Spanish media as the primary news source, and is foreign-born. She is also a Democrat and ideologically moderate. As expected, the first difference estimates demonstrate that a shift toward more education reduces the probability that a respondent will be "a little more likely" or "a lot more likely" to support a candidate using non-policy cues. For instance, the probability that a more educated respondent

TABLE 5
PROBIT ESTIMATES: PROBABILITY OF SUPPORTING GORE; HIGH- VS. LOW-EDUCATION VOTERS

	Low Education			High Education		
	Est. Coeff.	Std. Error	Est. Change Pr. Vote[a]	Est. Coeff.	Std. Error	Est. Change Pr. Vote[a]
Constant	–1.06*	.44	—	–1.21**	.40	—
Partisanship and Ideology						
Conservative	–.04	.05	–.02	–.16**	.03	–.06
Democrat	1.04**	.16	.39	1.14**	.09	.42
Republican	–1.03**	.25	–.36	-.59**	.12	–.21
Demographics						
Age	.01*	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Income	–.04	.02	–.01	–.01	.02	–.00
Married	–.04	.14	–.02	.07	.08	.03
First Generation[b]	.03	.13	.01	.09	.10	.03
Second Generation[b]	–.01	.13	–.02	–.00	.08	–.00
Women	.09	.13	.04	–.07	.07	.00
Issues						
Pro-Choice	.20	.14	.08	.35**	.07	.13
Pro-Vouchers	.02	.14	.01	–.17*	.08	–.07
Pro-Federal Health Insurance	.29	.23	.11	.36**	.11	.13
N	489			1743		
Log-Likelihood	–257.62			–862.01		
Baseline	52.9%			50.7%		
Percent Correctly Predicted	67.4%			70.7%		

**Indicates an estimate significant at p = .01 level
*Indicates an estimate significant at p = .10 level
[a]Reports the change in the probability for an infinitesimal change in each independent, continuous variable and, the discrete change in the probability for dummy variables.
[b]The omitted category is a respondent who is foreign born.

will be "a lot more likely" to support a candidate that speaks Spanish decreases by .07, whereas the probability that she responds to a candidate who speaks Spanish "makes no difference" in her probability of supporting that candidate increases by .07.

The ordered probit estimates imply that education determines how susceptible a voter is to using non-policy campaign messages in their evaluation of a candidate. Such findings therefore have considerable implications on the way a voter structures their decisionmaking process. Because high levels of education reduce the likelihood that Latino voters use non-policy cues in their support of a candidate, this implies that their decisionmaking process differs from Latinos with low-education. So, in examining the voting behavior between low- and high-education Latinos, it is expected that more educated Latinos are influenced by issues and ideology in their vote choice to a larger degree than are less educated Latinos. This claim is tested by estimating a model of vote choice that disaggregates respondents based on their level of education. Again, respondents with some high school education constituted low-education voters, and those possessing a high-school degree and/or beyond were categorized as high-education voters. These estimates, presented in Table 5, indicate that one's level of education provides clear distinctions in the types of factors that influence a respondent's probability of voting for Gore. The most powerful finding, and one that supports the analysis and estimates thus far, is that high-education Latinos behave according to the spatial model of voting, whereas less-educated Latinos do not. This means that the ideology and all three issue variables are strong and statistically significant predictors of vote choices for Latinos in the high-education category, whereas these factors play a very minor role in the vote decision of low-education Latinos.

As Table 5 shows, ideology only affects the vote choice of a high-education voter, and plays no role in the vote decision of low-education voters. The ideology coefficient (–.16) is statistically significant for high-education voters, and this coefficient estimate is four times as great as the ideology coefficient for low-education Latinos (–.04). In fact, the ideology coefficient fails to reach statistical significance for low-education Latinos. The difference between these two ideology coefficients (–.12) is statistically significant, which indicates that more educated voters are more likely to use ideology in

their vote choice than voters with less education.[10] Moreover, while all three issues reached statistical significance for high-education voters, none of the issue coefficients are statistically significant for low-education voters. The respondents' issue position on abortion was influential for high-education voters, and voters who are pro-choice increase their probability of voting for Gore by .13, when compared to pro-life voters. Moreover, voters who support federally sponsored health insurance, versus those who are against it, also increase their likelihood of voting for Gore by .13. In the same manner, high-education votes who favors vouchers decreases their likelihood of voting for Gore by .07, relative to voters against vouchers. Not only are all three issue coefficients statistically significant for high-education voters, but the issue positions of these respondents also increase their probability of supporting the candidate who advocated the same policy stance. In direct contrast, none of the coefficients for the issues variables reached statistical significance for low-education voters.

What these probit estimates reveal is that a respondent's ideology and issue positions play a critical role in the vote decision for high-education voters, but not for those with low levels of stored knowledge. To gain a greater understanding of just how strong issues and ideology impact the vote choice of these two groups of voters, first difference estimates are calculated. Table 6 presents first difference estimates for respondents' ideology as well as their issue positions on abortion, federally sponsored health insurance and school vouchers. The first difference estimates were calculated by examining a hypothetical voter who has mean or modal characteristics for all other independent variables. The hypothetical voter possesses the following demographics: female, 46 years old, married, earning somewhere between $15,000 and $25,000, relies on Spanish media as her main news source, and is a second generation Latina. In terms of political characteristics and issue positions, she is a Democrat, against vouchers, pro-federal health insurance, and pro-life. As Table 6 presents, the expectation that ideology and issues have a greater impact on high-education voters, relative to low-education voters, is once again supported. The role of ideology is almost three times as great for high-education voters, when compared to their low-education counterparts. So, the hypothetical high-education voter who moves from liberal to conservative decreases her probability of supporting Gore by 20 percent. The low-education hypothetical voter who moves from a liberal to conservative ideology reduces her probability of supporting Gore by only 7 percent.

TABLE 6
FIRST DIFFERENCE ESTIMATES ON IDEOLOGY AND ISSUES
PROBABILITY OF VOTING FOR GORE,
LOW- VS. HIGH-EDUCATION VOTERS

Variable	Low-Education Voter	High-Education Voter
Ideology		
From Liberal to Conservative	–.07 (.07)	–.20 (.04)
Issues		
From Pro-Life to Pro-Choice	.09 (.07)	.16 (.02)
From Anti- to Pro-Vouchers	–.02 (.05)	–.07 (.03)
From Anti- to Pro-Federal Health Insurance	.07 (.08)	.13 (.04)

Cell entries report the difference in the probability of voting for Gore. Numbers in parenthesis indicate standard errors of estimates.

The first difference estimates on a respondent's issue positions also reveal a similar pattern, so that a high-education Latina is more heavily influenced by issues in her vote choice, relative to her low-education counterpart. When a high-education Latina shifts from a pro-life to a pro-choice position, her probability of supporting Gore increases by 16 percent, but for a low-education Latina, this probability is slightly less than half, at 9 percent. Likewise, the high-education Latina who moves from a position of being against federally sponsored health insurance to pro-federal health insurance increases her probability of supporting Gore by 13 percent, whereas this shift only causes a 7 percent increase in the low-education Latina's support of Gore. Finally, while a high-education Latina decreases her likelihood of supporting Gore by 7 percent when she shifts from an anti- to pro-voucher issue position, such a shift has almost no bearing for the low-education Latina (.02 percent). Clearly, the more educated Latina is greatly influenced by issues in her decision to support a candidate, whereas issues play a significantly reduced role in the vote decision of a less educated Latina. These first difference estimates are not only consistent with the probit estimates of vote choice, but they also provide even more evidence for the claim that one's level of education structures the type of factors used in their decision-making process.

What these findings on vote choice reveal is that variations exist in the levels of political sophistication amongst the Latino electorate. And these differences may best be understood by the amount of political information, in this case measured with the respondent's education that a Latino voter possesses. By using education as an indicator of political knowledge, the results suggest that voters with greater levels of education, and thus higher amounts of stored political knowledge, are influenced by issues and ideology in their decision to vote. This finding indicates that Latinos with

[10] The difference in the ideology coefficients was computed using the following equation:

$\hat{\beta}$ (High Education Ideology) – $\hat{\beta}$ (Low Education Ideology).

Next, I computed the standard error for this coefficient:

$$\sqrt{\sigma(\hat{\beta}_{higheducideol})^2 + \sigma(\hat{\beta}_{loweducideol})^2 - 2\ cov(\hat{\beta}_{higheducideol}\ \hat{\beta}_{loweducideol})}$$

This results in the following: $\sqrt{(05)^2 + (03)^2 - 0} = 058$. And then to calculate the z-score: = (–.12/.058) = –2.06.

high-education levels behave according to the spatial model, whereas Latinos with low-levels of stored knowledge do not.

IMPLICATIONS

This research reveals that political information plays a critical role in determining two factors: (1) which Latinos evaluate a candidate based on non-policy campaign cues, and (2) how they vote. Latinos presented an ideal case study given that campaigns targeting Latinos adopt strategies that are clearly based on their culture and the socioeconomic heterogeneity within the Latino electorate results in varying amounts of political information within this population. Moreover, the Latino Voter Survey provided the necessary questions to test the impact that these culturally based campaign cues had on supporting a candidate. The Latino electorate also provided a unique opportunity to examine how education structures vote choice. Since a considerable number of Latinos possess low-levels of political information, based on their level of educational attainment, this made it possible to test whether high-education and low-education Latinos vote in the same manner. As the findings from this work indicate, this is clearly not the case. High-education voters are influenced by ideology and issues in their vote choice, whereas Latinos with low-levels of political information cannot be characterized in this way. The primary reason for this dichotomy lies in the individudal's level of political information. Since the spatial model of voting requires a large amount of information on the part of the voter, low-education voters are faced with considerable challenges if they wish to behave in this way.

These findings also suggest that non-policy campaign cues are highly effective for a specific set of voters, namely those who are the least educated. Due to their low-levels of stored knowledge, symbolic cues that are easily understood, such as a shared ethnic identity and common language, can sway these voters to support a candidate who promises to use such cues. And based on Zaller's (1996) findings that political awareness is a much stronger predictor of candidate support than education, the findings from this research may be understated. More importantly, these results imply that low-education Latinos may not be given an opportunity to become full and active participants in the political process (e.g., letter writing, lobbying), if the anecdotal evidence reported by the media (e.g., Anderson 2000; Calvo 2000; Fountain 2000), suggesting that the campaign cues provided to Latinos include little policy, is true. So, while such cues are not detrimental to more educated Latinos, given that they already possess the knowledge required to behave according to the spatial model of voting, they are most problematic for low-education Latinos. Not only would such cues prevent them from acquiring the necessary information to use issues and ideology in their vote choice, but it also prevents them from becoming completely engaged in other forms of political and civic activity.

More broadly, if political strategists believe that these types of campaign cues are effective for all Latinos, they are highly mistaken. Latinos who are politically knowledgeable are sophisticated voters, going beyond a candidate's symbolic actions and instead voting in the same manner as the literature describes Anglo Americans who possess equal amounts of information. To assume that all Latinos evaluate a candidate based on these overly cultural and symbolic messages imply that a candidate's issue positions and a Latino's own ideological and issue positions have no bearing on their decisionmaking process. Such an assumption incorrectly depicts Latinos as a cohesive and homogenous political group, but as this research and previous research on Latino political behavior has found (Alvarez and Garcia Bedolla 2003; de la Garza and DeSipio 1992), this ethnic group is highly heterogenous in its political preferences and behavior. As such, strategists are not incorrect by creating campaign messages that are culturally and symbolically based, since low education Latinos are highly responsive to them. But keeping in mind the diversity of the Latino population, strategists also need to appeal to the more educated sectors of the Latino electorate. Not only would strategists be better able to appeal to the entire Latino population, but they would also avoid alienating the group of Latinos who are politically sophisticated, by only focusing on campaign messages that are devoid of policy.

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