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“Latinos and U.S. Foreign Policy”

by
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Abstract

U.S. Latinos—Puerto Ricans and Cuban-Americans excepted in specific instances—have had limited impact on U.S. policy toward Latin America because they lack the interest and the resources to do so, and the capacity to act in concert for foreign policy purposes. Moreover, Latinos as a category do not have a shared Latin American foreign policy agenda. To the extent that they engage at all in the foreign policy arena, they typically do so in relation to their countries of origin. In many cases, however, they dislike the government of their homeland. In those relatively rare cases when U.S. Latino elites have sought to influence U.S. foreign policy, they have characteristically followed the lead of the U.S. government instead of seeking to change the main features of U.S. policy toward Latin America. This paper considers several case studies: the Puerto Rican influence on the Alliance for Progress; the Cuban-American influence on U.S. policy toward Cuba; the Mexican-American behavior relative to the enactment of NAFTA and U.S.-Mexican migration negotiations in 2001; and the Central American impact on U.S. immigration policies in the mid-1990s.

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Introduction

In June and July 1798, the U.S. Congress panicked. Traitorous aliens threatened the young Republic. Foreshadowing similar future panics in centuries to come, the Congress enacted the alien, sedition, and naturalization acts. The act regarding aliens authorized the President of the United States in wartime to order all alien males age 14 and older to “be apprehended, restrained, secured and removed.” Their deportation was authorized even if they were found “not to be chargeable with actual hostility or other crime against the public safety.”¹ The naturalization act extended the residency requirement prior to qualifying for citizenship from five to fourteen years.² The act regarding sedition ordered the arrest of “any persons who shall unlawfully combine or conspire together, with intent to oppose any measure or measures of the government of the United States ... or impede the operation of any law of the United States...” It repressed all efforts “to aid, encourage or abet any hostile designs of any foreign nation against the United States.”³

These U.S. statutes identified a first normative standard to assess the range of lawful and politically tolerable acts available to persons in the United States who define some significant segment of their interests in terms of their national origin, immigration status, religion, political allegiance, or ethnic affinity. Such persons should not: act in opposition to the laws of the United States; nor act in support of the interests of a government enemy of the United States.

¹ U.S. Laws and Statutes, *Acts Passed at the Second Session of the Fifth Congress* (1798), Chapter 83, Section I. The Alien Act was enacted on 6 July, 1798.

² *Ibid.*, Chapter 71, Section I. The Naturalization Act was enacted on 18 June, 1798.

³ *Ibid.*, Chapter 91, Sections I and II. The Sedition Act was enacted on 14 July, 1798.

This first normative standard made it clear that the U.S. government might act against aliens lawfully resident in the United States even if these persons had broken no law or engaged in acts of hostility toward the United States; this foreshadowed the internment of many Japanese-Americans during World War II. They could come under suspicion if they were to act in support of the interests of a foreign government, even if the latter were not an enemy of the United States. This first standard also hinted at a broader constraint on the rights of citizens and other U.S. residents.

Two centuries later, Samuel Huntington explored this last issue with great clarity. He worried about the “displacement of national interests” by ethnic group interests in the United States. He argued that “ethnic interests are generally transnational or non-national” and that “ethnic groups promote the interests of people and identities outside the United States.” Huntington worried about three specific issues concerning diaspora populations present in the United States:

1. They “can be a source of spies used to gather information for their homeland governments,” even if the latter are U.S. allies;
2. They “can influence the actions and policies of [the United States] and coopt its resources and influence to serve the interests of their homeland;”
3. They are more problematic if they are “state-based diasporas, that is, trans-state cultural communities that control at least one state.”⁴

Huntington’s categories focus on politically significant non-criminal behavior, beyond espionage. Huntington shows that many U.S. citizens seek to influence U.S. foreign policy along the lines that worry him. He wrote as he did because he believed that

⁴ Samuel Huntington, “The Erosion of American National Interests,” *Foreign Affairs* 76, no.5 (September-October 1997): 28-49. Quotations are from pages 38-40.

this behavior had become so commonplace and legitimate that U.S. national interests, as he put it, were being displaced in favor of a “foreign policy of particularism.”⁵

Huntington mentioned his specific concerns about U.S. ethnic lobbying serving the interests of the governments of Armenia, Croatia, Greece, Ireland, and Israel. He might have also cited the behavior of some German-Americans before World War I and some Italian-Americans before World War II.

Yet, none of Huntington’s examples applies well to U.S. Latinos. Huntington mentions the Cuban-Americans but their case fits his schema only in part. Many Cuban-Americans have sought to influence and coopt U.S. policy and resources toward Cuba but in order to oppose the Cuban government. The Cuban diaspora rejects the state that controls the ancestral homeland. Cuban-American lobbying has supported the main lines of U.S. policy toward Cuba for the past near half-century—a policy set well before Cuban-American lobbies became active, though whose endurance owes much to these lobbies. Huntington might have mentioned the Central American and Dominican diasporas. In 1997, they benefited from the enactment into law of significant exceptions to U.S. immigration procedures, but these diasporas did not cause the adoption of this new law; rather, they were the passive beneficiaries of a law whose enactment for the most part they did not influence. Why, then, do U.S. Latinos differ from other ethnic groups in the United States that have sought to influence and coopt U.S. policy?

Advocates of diaspora influence on U.S. foreign policy start from different normative standards, the first being the U.S. government’s response to immigration,

⁵ *Ibid.*, 48.

including lawful residents, if seen as a threat to national security and interests.⁶ A second normative standard is “liberal.” It emphasizes arguments common in a liberal democratic polity. U.S. Latinos claim a right to influence U.S. foreign policy because, as all U.S. citizens, they are entitled to voice their preferences and to participate as citizens through freely formed associations to advance those preferences and interests. U.S. Latinos seek also representation in ways honored in the Republic’s history, that is, representation that is not merely expressively but also demographically a match—not just through someone who speaks on behalf of the public interest but also through “someone who is like me.” Yossi Shain has put the case succinctly: “Ethnic involvement in U.S. foreign affairs may be seen as an important vehicle through which disenfranchised groups may win an entry ticket into American society and politics.”⁷ The foreign policy role of ethnic groups serves the values of democracy and pluralism at home and abroad. The liberal advocacy normative standard is; therefore, voice, participation, and demographic representation.

A third normative standard might be called “multiculturalist.” It assumes but claims more than the liberal standard. Multiculturalists claim that people with “distinctive life experiences” possess uniquely insightful perspectives and interests, which entitle them to special consideration in the formulation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy toward their ancestral homeland. Members of a specific national-origin or national-descent community, moreover, may be a “bridge” community between the

⁶ For this segment, I draw from Tony Smith’s thoughtful analysis in *Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), Chapter 1. Smith is close to the liberal but not to the multicultural standard; he states both positions fairly.

⁷ Yossi Shain, *Marketing the American Creed Abroad: Diasporas in the U.S. and Their Homelands* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

United States and their ancestral homeland. The multiculturalist normative standard is privileged ethnic group knowledge, interest, and skill.

Consider, finally, a different more analytical schema to study ethnic group influence on U.S. foreign policy. The first two propositions below characterize ethnic group influence on foreign policy, namely, transnational identification and significant resources. The others emphasize variation in ethnic group attitudes and behavior regarding U.S. foreign policy even if those first two propositions are sustained; namely, varying group capacity, attitudes toward the homeland, and its relationship to U.S. policy. An ethnic population is more likely to seek to affect U.S. policy toward its ancestral homeland if it:

1. Considers itself part of a political community with the people of the homeland;
2. Possesses human or financial resources to act across boundaries.

The ethnic population's behavior varies depending on its:

1. Associational capacity to act in concert;
2. Attitudes toward the government of the homeland;
3. Convergence of views with U.S. policy toward the ethnic homeland, as defined by factors other than its own ethnic lobbying.

In this paper I argue that U.S. Latinos—Puerto Ricans and Cuban-Americans excepted in specific instances—have had limited impact on U.S. policy toward Latin America because they lack the interest and the resources to do so, and the capacity to act in concert for foreign policy purposes. Moreover, Latinos as a category do not have a shared Latin American foreign policy agenda. To the extent that they engage at all in the

foreign policy arena, they typically do so in relation to their countries of origin. In many cases, however, they dislike the government of their homeland. In those relatively rare cases when U.S. Latino elites have sought to influence U.S. foreign policy, they characteristically followed the lead of the U.S. government instead of seeking to change the main features of U.S. policy toward Latin America. My focus in this essay is on influencing *U.S. foreign policy*, leaving to others—except as noted below—to explore transnational ties of interest to individuals, families, and small communities.

The term “U.S. Latino” in this chapter is used expansively to include all peoples of Latin American ancestry living under the flag of the United States, both those who themselves or their ancestors voluntarily migrated to the United States and those whose ancestors lived in lands conquered by the United States, predating the common usage of the term “U.S. Latino.” For the sake of simplicity and consistency, I use the expression “U.S. Latinos,” not U.S. Hispanics unless I quote a source that refers specifically to Hispanics, conscious that for some these are synonyms while for others only one of these terms is acceptable.⁸ This approach to the study of U.S. Latino influence maximizes variation on the topic to be explained, facilitates comparison between a larger number of groups, and compels author and reader to “think big” in formulating arguments and assessments about U.S. Latino influence, or the lack thereof, on U.S. foreign policy.

⁸ People in Puerto Rico call themselves Puerto Ricans; they indeed have a different history from that of migration-originated mainland U.S. Latinos. Cuban-Americans often eschew the term U.S. Latino though some at times accept the label “Hispanic.” In New Mexico, descendants of Spaniards who settled in those lands before the U.S. conquest in 1848, prefer to be called Hispanics.

U.S. Latinos as Objects of U.S. Foreign Policy

Along with Native Americans and African-Americans, U.S. Latinos constitute a category of persons many of whose ancestors became unwilling subjects of the United States. U.S. Latinos have been implicated in U.S. policy from the very moment that the U.S. government conquered the land of their ancestors. In the nineteenth century, the first U.S. Latinos were invented when the United States acquired the Floridas from Spain during the century's first quarter and conquered the northern half of Mexico during the century's second quarter. The acquisition of would-be U.S. Latinos expanded in 1898 with the conquest and subsequent annexation of Puerto Rico. These persons became a part of the United States not through their individual decisions to migrate but through acts of U.S. policy: the boundary migrated.

The deliberate U.S. acquisition of U.S. Latinos-in-the-making continued, albeit more indirectly, during World War II. U.S. policy became Latino-attracting in a novel way. In 1942, the U.S. government asked the Mexican government to formalize the longstanding informal practice of Mexican migrant workers coming to work temporarily in the United States, which had first been authorized under the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1917. This was the formal origin of the so-called *bracero* program. The U.S. secretary of state instructed the U.S. ambassador to Mexico while expressing the ambivalence that would be better understood decades later after millions of Mexicans had trekked north: "You should mention that this Government is reluctant to make such a request and state that it does so only because of the absolute need as a war measure."⁹ Mexican migrant workers were entering the United States thanks to an intergovernmental

⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1942*, 6 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office), 538.

accord. They automatically became an instrument to implement U.S. policy because they freed U.S. citizens to fight in World War II. The August 1942 migration-promoting bilateral agreement accorded the Mexican government special rights over its citizens laboring in the United States, specifically the right to monitor U.S. diplomatic obligations over contract compliance regarding wages, unemployment compensation, two-way free transportation, housing conditions, safety, and nondiscriminatory treatment of Mexican —guarantees that the U.S. government did not yet accord to its own citizens. In varying forms, the *bracero* program continued until 1964.¹⁰

The U.S. government also welcomed immigration from Cuba between 1961 and 1980 to show how Cubans “voted with their feet” in rejecting their government and to “weaponize” them to overthrow Fidel Castro’s government. These U.S. accorded Cuban-Americans played an important role in the implementation, albeit not the formulation, of U.S. policy toward their homeland. Such policy was clearly stated during that time by multiple U.S. administrations:

“I want you to make concrete my concern and sympathy for those who have been forced from their homes in Cuba,” President John F. Kennedy instructed the U.S. secretary for health, education, and welfare, within a week of his inauguration in 1961, to authorize a vast program to help Cubans newly arrived in the United States.¹¹

“I declare this afternoon to the people of Cuba that those who seek refuge here in America will find it,” declared President Lyndon B. Johnson on 3 October, 1965.¹²

¹⁰ Richard B. Craig, *The Bracero Program: Interest Groups and Foreign Policy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971).

¹¹ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, 1961* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962): 17.

¹² *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965*, 1039-1040.

“We’ll continue to provide an open heart and open arms to refugees seeking freedom from Communist domination and from economic deprivation, brought about primarily by Fidel Castro and his government,” confirmed President Jimmy Carter on 5 May, 1980.¹³

Thus it should not shock if Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban-Americans believe that they have a distinctive experience that bears upon their homeland and U.S. policy toward it.¹⁴ The links between these Latino groups and U.S. policy were not made by Latinos but by the U.S. government, which at foundational moments and for decades to follow turned these lands and their peoples into objects of U.S. policy and at times as instruments of its policies.

Only after 1980 did the intention of U.S. policy toward Latin American migrants turned comprehensively restrictionist. In 1984, the Reagan administration signed an agreement with the Cuban government to repatriate Cubans who had arrived in the United States in violation of U.S. law. Subsequent U.S. administrations deepened this policy. In the 1980s, Reagan administration did not treat the Nicaraguan opposition as the Cuban contingent had been treated during the previous two decades. Nicaraguan exiles, too, were hailed as voting with their feet against Nicaragua’s Sandinista government; the U.S. government weaponized these exiles, too, creating, training, and arming the so-called *contra* force, which it called the Nicaraguan Resistance—all provided that these expatriate Nicaraguans remain in Central America without migrating to the United

¹³ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Jimmy Carter, 1980*, 2:834.

¹⁴ Outside the Americas, Filipinos can make a similar argument.

States.¹⁵ Since 1980, U.S. policy has sought to contain all Latin American immigration within the “normal” confines of general U.S. immigration law.

Preferences and Capacities of U.S. Latinos Regarding Foreign Policy

U.S. Latinos have had relatively modest impact on the foreign policy of the United States. One reason is that few are interested in influencing such policy. The first large and comprehensive study of U.S. Latino national political views was carried out in 1989-1990. The survey focused on the three largest Latino groups, namely, Mexican-Americans, Cuban-Americans, and Puerto Ricans in mainland United States. When U.S. citizens were asked whether they were more concerned with U.S. or homeland politics, nine-tenths of the Mexican-Americans, three-quarters of the Cuban-Americans, and a majority of Puerto Ricans indicated that U.S. politics mattered more to them. Moreover, among non-citizens resident in the United States, only one-fifth of Mexicans and one-seventh of Cubans said that their exclusive interest was homeland politics. Asked about the causes of problems in Mexico, 85 percent of the Mexican-Americans identified “Mexican corruption.” Two-thirds of Cuban-Americans and three-quarters of Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans agreed with the statement that there were already “too many immigrants” in the United States. Over sixty percent of each group disagreed with the statement that U.S. immigration policy should give “preference” to Latin American

¹⁵ Lars Schoultz, “Central America and the Politicization of U.S. Immigration Policy,” in *Western Hemisphere Immigration and United States Foreign Policy*, ed. Christopher Mitchell (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992).

immigrants.¹⁶ In 2003, *Poder* magazine sampled the views of U.S. Latinos; 58 percent favored tougher immigration provisions in the light of security concerns.¹⁷

In this book, Alejandro Portes reports in his chapter the results of a study to map the extent of transnational political and cultural activities of the most recently arrived major Latin American immigrant groups (Colombians, Dominicans, and Salvadorans) in their principal cities of destination (greater New York, Los Angeles, and Washington, DC). Many respondents were citizens of their country of origin, not yet U.S. citizens; that is, people who most likely retain ties to their homelands. Portes found that never more than a fifth of sampled Colombians, Dominicans, or Salvadorans were members of a home country political party or made contributions in time and money to electoral campaigns there. Within that limited political involvement, Dominicans were the most likely and Salvadorans the least likely to remain engaged with homeland politics. All three groups, but especially the Salvadorans, were more engaged in civic than in political organizations. Portes reports that as many as 40 percent of Salvadorans said that they belonged to a charity association in El Salvador. In short, most recent immigrant arrivals, overwhelmingly still non-citizens, do not behave as if they belong to the same political community as those still in their homeland of origin because they lack political, civic, and charitable transnational ties, even if a substantial minority sustains such ties.

The Mexican-Americans are the largest single group of U.S. Latinos. The political values of Mexican-Americans differ significantly from those of Mexicans in Mexico. In

¹⁶ Rodolfo de la Garza, Louis DeSipio, F. Chris Garcia, and Angelo Falcon, *Latino Voices: Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban Perspectives on American Politics* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 100-104. See also Rodolfo de la Garza, Jerome Hernandez, Angelo Falcon, F. Chris Garcia, and John Garcia, "Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban Foreign Policy Perspectives: A Test of Competing Explanations." In *Pursuing Power: Latinos and the Political System* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 401-425.

¹⁷ *Poder* (December-January 2004): 16.

September 2000, Mexicans and Mexican-Americans were asked their views about the meaning of democracy. Twenty-five percent of Mexicans but 42 percent of Mexican-Americans identified democracy with liberty.¹⁸ Moreover, Mexican-Americans were much more likely than Mexicans to participate in the life of their communities.

Approximately twice as many Mexican-Americans as Mexicans were involved in religious or political organizations, and by an even larger margin, in neighborhood and parent-teacher associations.¹⁹

U.S. Latinos have also had a problematic relationship with the government of their homeland. In recent decades, the number of exiles, refugees, or asylum seekers from Mexico has been very small but there was little love lost between Mexican-Americans and the longstanding Mexican political regime ruled by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). In the fair and free 2000 Mexican presidential elections, 37 percent of Mexicans voted for PRI presidential candidate Francisco Labastida. Asked for their views of Mexican presidential candidates, in contrast, only one percent of Mexican-Americans and a tenth of the Mexicans residing in the United States preferred Labastida.²⁰

Other U.S. Latinos had worse experiences with their homeland governments. Cuban-Americans have had mixed motives to emigrate but characteristically few Cuban-origin persons in the United States express favorable attitudes toward the government of their homeland and, at most, have some have favorable views of specific policies (health care, education). Salvadorans and Guatemalans, too, harbored adverse attitudes toward

¹⁸ Roderic Ai Camp, "Learning Democracy in Mexico and the United States," *Mexican Studies* 19, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 13.

¹⁹ Joseph L. Klesner, "Political Attitudes, Social Capital, and Political Participation: The United States and Mexico Compared," *Mexican Studies* 19, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 47.

²⁰ Chappell Lawson, "Voting Preference and Political Socialization among Mexican Americans and Mexicans Living in the United States," *Mexican Studies* 19, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 69.

the governments that ruled their homelands and whose policies forced them to emigrate. Although many Salvadoran and Guatemalan immigrants did not actively oppose their homeland governments, most felt victimized by the policies of those governments. By the same token, in the 1980s the governments of El Salvador and Guatemala were suspicious, if not hostile, toward their diasporas in the United States. Relations between homeland governments and Central American diasporas improved only in the mid-1990s.

In other cases, relations between U.S. Latino migrants and the governments of their homeland were simply indifferent. Joaquín Balaguer, President of the Dominican Republic from 1966 to 1996 (except 1978-86), did not pursue a policy of engagement with the Dominican diaspora in the United States, nor was he hostile to it. The Dominican government's relations with the diaspora improved only in and since the late 1990s. The Colombian government and the Colombian diaspora in the United States were also indifferent toward each other. Not until the late 1990s did the Colombian government behave as if better relations with its diaspora might serve its interests.²¹

Moreover, U.S. Latinos lack the resources to influence U.S. policy. At the end of the twentieth century, the U.S. Latino median household income was only 62 percent from that of non-Hispanic whites, and barely changed in the 1980s and 1990s. However, relative to non-Hispanic white income, U.S. Latino income was nearly at 70 percent while Cuban-American income was at 84 percent. Relative to third-generation white men between the ages of 25 and 64, the hourly wages of U.S.-born Mexican-Americans were

²¹ Fernando Cepeda Ulloa, "The Exceptionality of Colombians," in *Latinos and U.S. Foreign Policy: Representing the Homeland?*, edited by Rodolfo de la Garza and Harry Pachon (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 105-111.

one-quarter lower, that of mainland-born Puerto Ricans one-sixth lower, and that of U.S.-born Cuban-Americans were merely seven percent higher.²²

This indicates that U.S.-born Cuban-Americans are the most likely to succeed in influencing U.S. policy, while on average, U.S.-born Latinos are much more capable than immigrants to have the resources for such an effort. And yet, as already shown, U.S.-born Latinos are less interested than recently-arrived immigrants in the affairs of the land of their ancestors. Thus, interest and resources do not build on each other. Moreover, the willingness of the Cuban-Americans to deploy their personal resources to shape the politics of their homeland, present mostly among some elites, has limited and probably declining support within the wider Cuban-American population. In 2003, for example, 62 percent of Cuban-Americans living in Miami-Dade county said that spending time and money improving their quality of life in the United States was more important than working to remove President Fidel Castro's government. Among Cuban-Americans aged 45 or younger, that statistic rose to 72 percent.²³ A majority of the most economically resourceful U.S. Latinos prefer not to invest time or money in the affairs of the homeland.

In short, U.S. Latinos may not form a political community with the people of their homeland and have limited political interest in their homelands. They often think badly of those who govern the countries they emigrated from. They hold different political values from the people in the homeland and do not even favor easier immigration rules for Latin Americans seeking to enter the United States. They also typically lack the resources to influence U.S. foreign policy.

²² Frank Bean, Stephen Trejo, and Michael Tyler, *The Latino Middle Class: Myth, Reality, and Potential* (Claremont, CA: The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, 2001), 6, 35.

²³ "Poll: Cuban's Focus is Local." *The Miami Herald*, 10 July 2003.

U.S. Latinos are not good examples of the behavior that worries those who fear undue ethnic group influence on U.S. foreign policy. U.S. Latinos also fall short of the hopes of multiculturalists. U.S. Latinos worry about concerns closest to them: food, shelter, jobs, prosperity, and the “pursuit of happiness.” They resemble most others who reside in the United States—the country that U.S. Latino immigrants or their descendants call “home” by choice. As many U.S. citizens, U.S. Latinos also fail to exercise sufficiently their rights to public voice, participation, and representation. Nevertheless, at key junctures, some U.S. Latino communities have exercised significant impact on U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America. The remainder of this chapter explores several such instances, even though the preceding pages present the main findings regarding the negligible U.S. Latino impact on U.S. foreign policy.

The Puerto Rican Moment

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, Puerto Rico appeared seldom in discussions about U.S. foreign policy.²⁴ Puerto Rico had a complex and difficult experience in those years which, along with its status as a commonwealth freely associated with the United States, curtailed its government’s capacity to act on its own in Latin America or to serve as a possible exemplar for U.S.-Latin American relations.

Yet, in the 1950s Puerto Rican leaders saw themselves as actors on a continental stage and as possessors of privileged knowledge and skill to serve U.S. policy toward Latin America and improve U.S.-Latin American relations. Puerto Rican leaders never

²⁴ One approximation is the dispute over the U.S. Navy live-ammunition target practice in and around the island of Vieques, Puerto Rico. That dispute had military policy implications, to be sure, but it was mainly about Puerto Rican assertion of control over their homeland.

acted as agents of an alien homeland; Puerto Rico itself was both homeland and part of the United States. Puerto Rican leaders eagerly took up the role as leaders in the U.S. who could act most effectively in U.S. policy towards Latin America thanks to Puerto Rico's cultural and linguistic affinities with the southern continent.

In the 1950s, island Puerto Rican leaders clearly thought of themselves just as such, instead of belonging to a broader category called "U.S. Latino" or "U.S. Hispanics" since these categories had yet to be invented. And yet, the behavior of the Government of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in the 1950s, sheds light *exactly* on issues at the heart of the contemporary normative and analytical debates regarding Latino influence over U.S. foreign policy. Puerto Rican government officials were the first Spanish-speaking U.S. citizen political leaders to make privileged multiculturalist claims regarding influence over U.S. policy toward Latin America.

Puerto Ricans had a right to be proud. From the 1930s to the 1960s, they re-made their own history. The island's economy boomed and the society changed dramatically—the only Spanish-speaking people capable of such self-transformation to that point in world history. Working closely with the administrations of Presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman, Puerto Rican politicians and their government designed "Operation Bootstrap," employing federal and island government policies to provide incentives to markets and private actors. Tax breaks for investors cohabited with state enterprises. The economy grew very rapidly, poverty levels dropped, and income inequalities narrowed. Puerto Rico's New Deal and the Fair Deal were the only long-term successful social-

democratic policy experiment thereby created under the flag of the United States.²⁵

Many Puerto Ricans also migrated to mainland United States, contributing to a decline in unemployment but also gathering and remitting funds and skills back home. In 1952, Puerto Ricans stopped being a U.S. colony and freely chose “commonwealth” status—self-governing while freely associated with the United States.²⁶

Puerto Rico’s Undersecretary of State, Arturo Morales Carrión, expressed eloquently the Puerto Rican claim to be on the vanguard of U.S. policy toward Latin America. “We have learned not to be foreigners in the United States, but neither are we foreigners in Latin America. This is the unique, psychological fact about Puerto Rico — it is a place where people from the North and people from the South do not feel as strangers.” Thus, Puerto Rico had become “a town meeting of the Western world.”²⁷

Morales Carrión similarly argued before the U.S. Congress. “Latin America would discover in our island this spirit of self-reliance, this creative energy to do a job well and fast enough in the face of hard odds, this conviction that only in freedom can the goal be achieved.” Moreover, “Puerto Rico was an acid test of U.S. attitudes regarding colonialism and economic imperialism. If the United States succeeded in Puerto Rico, and the fact was known to all, the U.S. image would shine brighter in the Caribbean and Latin America.” As a practical matter, he concluded, “it is Operation Bootstrap that is

²⁵ Operation Bootstrap is quite controversial in scholarship about Puerto Rico, among other reasons for its association with massive emigration. Yet in the late 1950s, Puerto Ricans—and certainly those in the Governor’s office—felt that they were being successful and believed that they had much to teach others.

²⁶ For a general discussion see Henry Wells, *The Modernization of Puerto Rico: A Political Study of Changing Values and Institutions* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969).

²⁷ Arturo Morales Carrión, “Puerto Rico’s Role in Inter-American Relations,” typescript address to the Sixth Regional Conference of the Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies, Albuquerque, NM, April 17, 1959.

appealing to [the Latin American] imagination... demonstrating the unique relationship in freedom that we have established [with the United States].”²⁸

Puerto Rican leaders had been doing, not just talking foreign policy. In the 1940s and 1950s, Puerto Rico became a place of refuge with a sympathetic government for Latin America’s democratic Left. Puerto Rican Governor Luis Muñoz Marín (1940-1964) and the ruling Popular Democratic Party made common cause with many Latin Americans who struggled for democracy, against dictatorships, and sought for their own social democratic reforms emulating Puerto Rico’s. The Muñoz Marín government gave asylum to Rómulo Betancourt, leader of Venezuela’s Acción Democrática Party. Betancourt, a future Venezuelan president, got round-the-clock Puerto Rican police protection against assassination attempts. Muñoz Marín’s relationship with Betancourt put him at odds with the U.S. Department of State during the Eisenhower administration. The Puerto Rican government also gave asylum to Cuba’s President Carlos Prío after his overthrow by Fulgencio Batista in 1952.²⁹

The Puerto Rican government’s aspiration to lead U.S. policy toward Latin America savored a moment of triumph at the start of the Kennedy administration because key Puerto Rican leaders played a decisive role in the original design of the Alliance for Progress. Immediately after the 1960 election, President Kennedy set up a four-member task force on policy toward Latin America, including Adolph Berle as chair and Teodoro

²⁸ Statement by Arturo Morales Carrión, Undersecretary of State of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, before the U.S. House Committee on Interior and Consular Affairs, San Juan, Puerto Rico, December 3, 1959.

²⁹ See Charles D. Ameringer, *The Democratic Left in Exile: The Antidictatorial Struggle in the Caribbean, 1945-1959* (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1974): 42, 176-177, 191, 225, 292.

Moscoso, as head of Puerto Rico's development agency under Operation Bootstrap.³⁰

Berle also worked directly with Governor Muñoz Marín. "Together they developed," writes Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., a historian for the Kennedy White House, "a network of unofficial relationships with the *partidos populares* of Latin America. Kennedy, whose friendship with Muñoz began with the Puerto Rican trip of 1958, fell heir to these ideas and relationships... The Puerto Rican experience, indeed, was an important source of the ideas behind the Alliance. Puerto Rico had been the last triumph of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal... [and Muñoz Marín] was a statesman of ability and vision who in 1940 led a peaceful democratic revolution in Puerto Rico."³¹

Berle admired Muñoz Marín and what he and his associates had accomplished in Puerto Rico. In advising Kennedy about staffing the Alliance for Progress, Berle believed that a "particularly large reservoir of effective men exists in Puerto Rico, graduates of Governor Muñoz Marín's intensive school of political and social reconstruction."³² Therefore, Moscoso became the U.S. Coordinator for the Alliance for Progress, the lead post to launch the new U.S. policy toward Latin America. Morales Carrión became Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. Muñoz Marín's long-standing friendship with then-President Rómulo Betancourt of Venezuela facilitated U.S.-Venezuelan relations at difficult moments. Muñoz Marín, Moscoso, and Morales Carrión also helped to fashion U.S. policy toward the Dominican Republic after the assassination of long-time dictator Rafael Trujillo in May 1961. In November 1961,

³⁰ Richard N. Goodwin, *Remembering America: A Voice from the Sixties* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), 134.

³¹ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 191, 764-765.

³² Adolph A. Berle, *Latin America: Diplomacy and Reality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 115.

Kennedy honored Muñoz Marín at a White House dinner while Pablo Casals, a democratic exile from Franco's Spain long resident in Puerto Rico, played the cello.³³

The Alliance for Progress, however, ended with both bangs and a whimper. The bangs were the bullets that killed Kennedy and the coups that killed constitutional democracies in most of Latin America. The whimper was Washington's inattention as the focus in the mid-1960s shifted to the Vietnam War. Puerto Rico changed as well. Economic growth slowed down; deep social problems became apparent. Political contentiousness deepened. In April 1977, the newly elected pro-statehood governor, New Progressive Party leader Carlos Romero Barceló, proclaimed that the existing Commonwealth arrangement was indefensible because of its "colonial vestiges."³⁴ Henceforth, Puerto Ricans and their island government focused mainly on their domestic circumstances and their relationship with the United States.³⁵

Puerto Rico retained its own state department to strengthen the international relations of the island's government "to promote its active and productive participation in international organizations, and to facilitate cultural relations with the United States and other countries." As a consequence, the Government of Puerto Rico sent missions to Chile, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama, and Spain. It is also full member of a number of international organizations that, for the most part, have a nongovernmental or quasi-governmental interstate character (sports, culture, science, television, etc.). It is an associate member of various international organizations within the United Nations system

³³ Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days* (Mariner Books, 2002): 764, 766, 770.

³⁴ Jorge Heine and Juan M. García Passalacqua, *The Puerto Rican Question*, Headline Series no. 266 (New York: The Foreign Policy Association, 1983), 53.

³⁵ For discussion see Juan M. García Passalacqua, "The Role of the Puerto Rican People in the Caribbean," in *Democracy in the Caribbean: Political, Economic, and Social Perspectives*, edited by Jorge I. Domínguez, Robert A. Pastor, and R. Delisle Worrell (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 180-182.

(the World Health Organization, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, etc.) and an observer at other inter-governmental organizations (the Caribbean Community, the Central American Parliament).³⁶

Puerto Rico's most popular "sovereign-like" international activities are legacies of the 1950s. It participates in symbolically salient international events under its own flag. In 1952, Puerto Rico became not only a constitutional Commonwealth, but it was also admitted as a full member of the Miss Universe Pageant, founded that same year. Puerto Rico has been a full member of the Olympics since 1948, the Pan American Games since 1955, and the Miss World Pageant since 1959. But Puerto Rico's influence on the direction, design, and implementation of U.S. foreign policy vanished.

The Puerto Rican movement was marked by none of the features that might activate fears about improper ethnic group influence on U.S. foreign policy. Puerto Rican leaders did not oppose the laws of the United States nor supported the interests of a government enemy of the United States. They did not coopt U.S. resources for the interests of a homeland other than the United States, nor did they control another independent state. Instead, at its moment of triumph, the Puerto Rican team around Governor Muñoz Marín exemplified the multiculturalist normative standard well. As both U.S. citizens and Latin Americans, Puerto Ricans claimed privileged knowledge, interest, and skills pertinent to U.S.-Latin American relations. They belonged to these two political communities and possessed the resources to act across the boundaries within the Americas. As U.S. citizens, they also relished the liberal normative standard, claiming

³⁶ For Puerto Rico's State Department, particularly, see <http://www.gobierno.pr>.

their right to voice, participation, and representation in the highest councils of the U.S. government that decided on U.S. policy toward Latin America.

The Cuban-American Moment

In the 1960s, exiled Cubans willingly became instruments of U.S. policy toward their homeland. Many volunteered to join the invasion force that eventually landed at Playa Girón, the Bay of Pigs, to be defeated by the Cuban government within seventy-two hours. Some worked as eager soldiers in a secret violent sabotage campaign aimed at the Cuban government—what today would be called U.S. “state terrorism.”³⁷ In the 1960s and most of the 1970s, these political actors remained plain “Cubans.” They were slow to naturalize as U.S. citizens. They thought of themselves as exiles, not immigrants.

In the late 1970s, the Cuba policies of President Jimmy Carter’s administration and the transformation of the Republican Party under Ronald Reagan’s leadership decisively shifted the behavior of Cuban-origin people in the United States. To Cuban exiles, Carter seemed too ready to negotiate with Castro’s government. Reagan Republicans promised to reinvigorate the anti-communist purposes of U.S. policies. To become a U.S. citizen and to participate in U.S. elections thus came to be seen as the instrument to liberate the homeland. These trends coincided with the self-realization of many Cuban-origin business executives that they had become wealthy and could use their money to further the political cause that still beat their hearts.

One vehicle for this change—from exile to citizen—was the Cuban-American National Foundation (CANF), founded in 1981 by Jorge Mas Canosa at the White

³⁷ On Cuban exile participation in many US-sponsored clandestine operations, see James G. Blight and Peter Kornbluh, *Politics of Illusion: The Bay of Pigs Invasion Reexamined* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998).

House's urging. With offices in Washington and Miami, the CANF became one of the most successful diaspora-based U.S. political organizations ever founded until the mid-1990s.³⁸ Its focus was Cuba, but it also combated the Cuban government's allies, in particular Nicaragua's Sandinista government in the 1980s. The CANF actively supported the Nicaraguan "contras," officially known in Washington as the Nicaraguan Resistance.³⁹ Scholars have favorably compared the CANF in its apogee to entities that have long supported Israel successfully through political activity in the United States.⁴⁰ The CANF has, indeed, had some noteworthy impact on U.S. policy toward Cuba but its influence was exaggerated even during its now-past peak of influence.

Cuban-Americans, and the CANF in particular, influenced U.S. policy toward Cuba in various ways. On 20 May 1985, the U.S.-funded radio program Voice of America broadcasted via Radio Martí began regular transmissions to Cuba. Fidel Castro had been in power since 1959, but the U.S. government was late in creating a radio broadcast following the precedents of Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe. The creation of Radio Martí became an early high lobbying priority for CANF, and its launch in 1985 should be credited to its efficacy in influencing Congress. The subsequent creation and continuation of TV Martí is even more striking evidence of CANF's clout. TV Martí has been quite an expensive operation of little significance, due to the fact that the Cuban

³⁸ Guillermo J. Grenier and Lisandro Pérez, *The Legacy of Exile: Cubans in the United States* (New York: Allyn and Bacon, 2003), 90-91.

³⁹ For discussion of various aspects of Cuban-American politics, see Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick, *City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

⁴⁰ See Smith, *Foreign Attachments*; Shain, *Marketing the American Creed Abroad*. Cuban-Americans are the only U.S. Latino group that caught Huntington's attention for their influence on U.S. policy. See his "The Erosion of American National Interests."

government has been successful in blocking its reception in Cuba.⁴¹ Jorge Mas Canosa chaired the board that supervised the Martí programs until his death.

Cuban-American politicians, and CANF in particular, were also key players in the enactment of the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, often known as the Torricelli Act after its official sponsor, then U.S. Representative Robert Torricelli. Torricelli saw an opportunity to shape 1992 election politics in the battleground state of Florida and make a name for himself. Meanwhile, Mas Canosa, a Republican, had been unhappy that the administration of President George H.W. Bush had not taken advantage of the collapse of European communist governments and the Soviet Union to help topple Castro's government. Mas Canosa teamed up with Torricelli to get Democratic Party candidate Bill Clinton to endorse Torricelli's draft bill, which the Bush administration had opposed in Congressional hearings. In the end, both Bush—not wishing to be outflanked on the right among Cuban-American voters—and Clinton in turn endorsed Torricelli's bill, approved in Congress by a large majority in September 1992.⁴²

On the other hand, since the 1980's Cuban-American politicians have not succeeded in shaping U.S. policy toward Cuban immigration. In 1984, the Reagan administration negotiated the first U.S.-Cuban migration agreement, which featured Cuba's willingness to take back 2,746 persons whom the United States had found "excludable." It dealt with the Cuban government as an equal, denying these Cubans recognition as refugees. This agreement committed the U.S. government to argue in U.S. courts that Cuba would respect the human rights of the returnees and that the Cuban

⁴¹ The only place in Cuba where TV Martí can be regularly seen is at the U.S. embassy.

⁴² M. D. Kaplowitz with D. R. Kaplowitz, "Cuba and the United States: Opportunities Lost and Future Potential," in *Cuba's Ties to a Changing World*, edited by Donna Rich Kaplowitz (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1993), 234-236.

political system did not automatically convert every Cuban immigrant into a refugee, eligible for U.S. support.⁴³

Between 1994-95, the two governments reached new migration agreements over the opposition, indeed the fury, of most Cuban-American politicians, including the CANF. The current administration of President George W. Bush has continued to apply these same migration policies.⁴⁴ In essence, the United States agreed to admit at least 20,000 Cubans per year through the normal visa process and to interdict on the high seas and return to Cuba any Cuban seeking to enter the United States without documentation. Cuba agreed to accept future unauthorized emigrants so interdicted. Most future Cuban immigrants would not be presumed to be refugees but would have to prove their claim. Since then, the two governments have remained effective allies against illegal migration.

The enactment and implementation of the Helms-Burton Act (the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996) shows not CANF's clout but its limits. The bill's sponsors were the respective Senate and House chairmen of the foreign relations committees. At the time, the Republican Party controlled both chambers of Congress, and the CANF and other Cuban-American organizations lobbied hard for Helms-Burton's enactment. Yet, in October 1995, Senator Helms was outmaneuvered and had to agree to delete the property claims litigation procedures (Title III) at the heart of his bill. The Senate approved only a much weaker bill that would have had, at most, modest effects on U.S. policy toward Cuba. Helms-Burton was enacted in March 1996 only after the Cuban

⁴³ Jorge I. Domínguez, "Cooperating with the Enemy? U.S. Immigration Policies Toward Cuba," in *Western Hemisphere Immigration and United States Foreign Policy*, edited by Christopher Mitchell (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992).

⁴⁴ On Cuban-American anger about Bush II administration policies toward migration from Cuba, see Peter Katel, "A Relationship Gone Adrift," *Poder* (September 2003): 52-56; *The Economist*, 23 August 2003.

Air Force shot down two unarmed civilian aircrafts over international waters. The Cuban government, not the CANF, made possible the enactment of Helms-Burton as the United States searched for non-military means to retaliate against Cuba.⁴⁵

Helms-Burton had a symbolic significance in U.S. relations with Cuba and Latin American countries, but in practice, Helms-Burton has had little effect. Both President Clinton and Bush waived its most important section, Title III, every six months. Title IV, on visas for executives whose firms invest in Cuba, has been applied only to about three-dozen cases. Clinton and Bush asserted the executive's autonomy to make foreign policy in response to strong opposition, led by the European Union, to the extraterritorial impact of Helms-Burton's Titles III and IV. Much commentary on the CANF is, therefore, inaccurate: it presents Helms-Burton as the sign of the CANF's triumph when the manner of its enactment and its non-implementation both signal the limits of its clout.

Moreover, although the CANF and similar Cuban-American organizations long opposed Cuban-American or any other travel and remittances to Cuba, Cuban-Americans residing in Miami began to change their views. In the early 1990s, a plurality opposed allowing the sale of medicines to Cuba, a majority opposed unrestricted travel to Cuba, and a strong majority opposed allowing the sale of food to Cuba. By 2000, a strong majority favored allowing the sale of medicine and majorities favored both unrestricted travel and allowing food sales.⁴⁶ By 2003, Miami Cuban-Americans supported Cuban exile remittances to their relatives in Cuba by two-to-one, and they split in half on the

⁴⁵ For discussion see Jorge I. Domínguez, "U.S.-Cuban Relations: From the Cold War to the Colder War," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 39, no. 3 (1997): 61-65.

⁴⁶ Institute for Public Opinion Research, Florida International University.
<http://www.fiu.edu/orgs/ipor/cuba2000/years.htm>

wider question of unrestricted travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens.⁴⁷ These Cuban-American preferences had become more “liberal” than prevailing U.S. policy toward Cuba.

Cuban-Americans have aspired but failed to fill the post of U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. At the start of the Clinton administration, the president nominated Cuban-American Mario Baeza for that post. Most Cuban-American organizations, including the CANF, opposed his confirmation fearing that Baeza might shift U.S. policy toward Cuba, citing his visit to relatives in Cuba. The Clinton White House withdrew the Baeza nomination. The first nominee for the assistant secretary post under the Bush senior administration was Cuban-American. The president appointed Otto Reich between sessions of Congress, but in the end he had to rescind the nomination because Reich failed to obtain confirmation in the then Republican-controlled Senate. Reich was seen as obsessed about Cuba and too extreme. These two failed nominations exemplify ineffective Cuban-American political clout.

In short, the Cuban-American moment of maximum influence on U.S. policy lasted from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s. Whereas Puerto Rican leaders had sought to influence U.S. policy toward Latin America, Cuban-American leaders sought to influence U.S. policy by lobbying on other topics mainly as indirect means to affect policy toward Cuba. Cuban-Americans will continue to seek to influence U.S. policy toward their homeland but the peak of their power has passed. The executive branch under both the Clinton and Bush administrations set key priorities in Cuba policy (gut Helms-Burton, block illegal migration) despite organized Cuban-American opposition in response to their overreach to control Cuba policy in the mid-1990s. To be sure, this does

⁴⁷ Valeria Escobari and José Fernández López, “A New Approach,” *Poder* (October 2003): 30.

not mean that Cuban-American groups lack political influence. Organizations like CANF and Cuban-American members of Congress continue to prevent or slow down U.S. policy changes toward Cuba and to perpetuate the U.S. trade embargo policy toward Cuba, even though support for some of its features has waned in Congress. Thus echoes of the Cuban-American moment endure.

The Cuban-American organizations active since the 1980s—in contrast to terrorist Cuban exile organizations of earlier years—do not act in opposition to U.S. laws and certainly not in support of Cuban government policy. They hunt down Cuban government spies. They have, however, influenced the actions and policies of the United States, in Huntington’s formulation, “to serve the interests of their homeland” as they understand them while at the same time, contrary to Huntington’s worry, virulently opposed the government of their homeland.

Cuban-Americans and their organizations have made both liberal and multiculturalist normative claims to influence U.S. policy toward Cuba. They express their voice, participate actively in politics, and have sought representation in the executive and legislative branches at all levels of the government. They claim privileged ethnic group knowledge, interest, and skills with regard to their homeland and U.S. policies toward Cuba. They consider themselves part of a political community with Cubans in Cuba and possess considerable human and financial resources to act politically and even transnationally. This capacity, and the substantial coincidence of their views with the main outlines of U.S. policy toward Cuba, made them highly influential over that policy. Whenever their views have not converged with mainline U.S. policy, such immigration policy or the implementation of the Helms-Burton Act, Cuban-American

organizations have *not* prevailed. The only example when Cuban-American organizations overrode the preferences of the White House in formulating U.S. policy toward Cuba was in the enactment of the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act.

The Mexican-American Moment?

“Thirty-three million people in our country claim to be of Latin descent, and nearly two-thirds of those come from Mexico. I am proud to be part of that legacy.”⁴⁸ So spoke Roger Noriega, the first U.S. Latino and the first Mexican-American ever to have been confirmed as U.S. assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs. Noriega was addressing an audience at one of Mexico’s premier institutions of higher education, El Colegio de México. The current Bush administration nominated Noriega, and the Senate confirmed him in July 2003. Noriega’s remarks highlighted, however, how ineffective Mexican-Americans have been in shaping U.S. policy toward Latin America generally or Mexico specifically. Only three other U.S. citizens of Mexican descent have served as U.S. ambassadors to Mexico: Joseph Jova (1974-77), Julian Nava (1980-81), and Antonio Garza (2002-present). None served during a period of significant progress in U.S.-Mexican relations.

Mexican-American organizations played a minor role in the ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Mexican President Carlos Salinas took the initiative with regard to NAFTA and his approach to the Mexican-American community. He reached out to U.S. Mexican-American organizations to seek their support for NAFTA, as detailed in his memoirs. The Mexican Foreign Ministry created a

⁴⁸ Roger F. Noriega, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, at El Colegio de México, October 27, 2003, courtesy of the U.S. embassy to Mexico, 8. Translated from Spanish.

new General Directorate to foster relations with Mexican-Americans and re-directed some work of Mexican Consulates in the United States toward that end. The Program for Mexican Communities Living in Foreign Countries, founded in 1990, sought to coordinate Mexican federal, state, and nongovernmental actors in order to expand and regularize relations with Mexican-origin peoples in the United States. The Salinas presidency gave its highest state honors to several leading Mexican-American political and community figures.⁴⁹ The Mexican Trade and Industrial Development Ministry recruited individual Mexican-Americans prominent in U.S. politics and lobbied Mexican-American organizations to support NAFTA. These efforts bore fruit. The National Council of La Raza and the League of United Latin American Citizens lobbied on behalf of NAFTA as did Mexican-American business associations.⁵⁰

On the other hand, the impact of this lobbying activity on NAFTA's enactment or other general aspects of U.S. policy toward Mexico was modest at best.⁵¹ All but one Mexican-American members of Congress voted for NAFTA, but they did so in support of their political party and only after the side agreements were modified to establish the North American Development Bank to fund community development and environmental projects along the border. They represented the domestic policy interests of their districts and their party above all—a classic approach by U.S. members of Congress.

⁴⁹ Carlos Salinas de Gortari, *México: Un paso difícil a la modernidad* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés Editores, 2000), 101-103.

⁵⁰ George W. Grayson, *The North American Free Trade Agreement* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1995), 162-164.

⁵¹ See discussion in Rodolfo O. de la Garza, "Foreign Policy Comes Home: The Domestic Consequences of the program for Mexican Communities Living in Foreign Countries," in *Bridging the Border: Transforming Mexico-U.S. Relations*, ed. Rodolfo O. de la Garza and Jesús Velasco (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), 78-85.

At the start of the George W. Bush administration, President Vicente Fox and Foreign Minister Jorge Castañeda launched a major initiative to alter U.S.-Mexican migration relations. President Bush was sympathetic. Yet, as the Bush administration examined the practical possibilities for legislative change, it concluded that change along the lines of the Mexican government's proposals was unfeasible. U.S.-Mexican migration negotiations reached an impasse well before the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, but the direct and indirect effects of those events killed all bilateral migration negotiations. Castañeda resigned as Foreign Minister in part for this reason in December 2002. In January 2004, President Bush announced a new unilateral initiative regarding international migration, which, if eventually enacted into law, would have substantial benefits for Mexican migrants. There is no evidence that either the Mexican government or most Mexican-American political leaders even knew about this initiative until just before President Bush announced it. In any event, all of these matters have been governmental initiatives, not examples of Mexican-American influence on U.S. policy.

Nor have Mexican-Americans rallied to support Mexican government policies. The Mexican government favors increased legal emigration to the United States. Yet, as noted earlier, a majority of Mexican-Americans believe that there are already "too many immigrants" in the United States and disagree that U.S. immigration policy should give "preference" to Latin American immigrants. Mexican-American influence on U.S. policy toward Mexico is, in short, very limited. Note, however, that Mexican-American preferences are in accord with the main outline of U.S. policy regarding NAFTA and immigration policies toward Mexico.

Since 1990, however, relations have indeed improved between the Mexican government and Mexican-origin peoples in the United States. The programs that President Salinas first enacted were continued and expanded by Presidents Ernesto Zedillo and Vicente Fox, improving the quantity and quality of services that Mexican officials provide to their citizens in the United States. They have built cultural bridges with Mexican-American communities.⁵² The Mexican government at last recognized dignity and respect for Mexican immigrants who have become U.S. citizens and their descendants—an honor that they have always deserved and should have gotten all along.

In conclusion, the Mexican-Americans, the largest Latin American-origin community in the United States, have yet to influence U.S. policy significantly. They do not act in opposition to the laws of the United States or in support of enemy governments, in fact, they act too little on most issues of any sort. They neither harbor spies nor have the capacity or predisposition to coopt U.S. policy to serve Mexican interests. Yes, they are part of a transtate cultural community, but very little about their behavior or the Mexican-American value set suggests that they back the Mexican state. Most Mexican-American activist organizations do not claim privileged knowledge, interest, and skill with regard to U.S. policy toward Mexico—certainly not as compared to Cuban-American organizations across the political spectrum. Most Mexican-Americans have hardly raised their voices, nor have they participated much in the political arena. The only liberal right that their organizations have articulated is for representation, often for simple patronage in exchange for political support.

⁵² See Carlos González Gutiérrez, “Decentralized Diplomacy: The Role of Consular Offices in Mexico’s Relations with its Diaspora,” in *Latinos and U.S. Foreign Policy: Representing the Homeland?*, edited by Rodolfo O. de la Garza and Harry P. Pachon (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

The reasons for such little influence are not difficult to discern. Although some Mexican-origin peoples in the United States may consider themselves part of a political community with Mexicans, in fact their values and policy preferences differ from those of Mexicans. Mexican-Americans are very critical of the Mexican government and most Mexican-origin peoples in the United States show little interest in Mexican politics. Mexican-origin peoples in the United States are well below the U.S. median income and educational levels. Their capacities to influence policies or act across national boundaries are limited. Their associational life, though stronger than in Mexico, has yet to create sufficiently powerful national lobbies to advance their foreign policy interests. Mexican-Americans are, however, favorably positioned to support U.S. policy toward Mexico since their preferences regarding U.S. policy toward Mexico coincide with the status quo of the U.S. government.

The Moment of the Least Powerful Latinos

Most Latin Americans immigrants to the United States have earned the greeting of the Statue of Liberty even if their entry was not New York City. Many immigrants from Central America in the 1980s were certainly the “poor, the wretched of the earth.” They escaped revolution, civil war, and widespread criminal violence in their homelands. They sought to escape poverty, and most entered the United States illegally. Even so, they managed to find work and, while remaining among the lowest income-receivers in the United States, regularly sent money to their relatives in their country of origin.

At the start of the twenty-first century, per year remittances amounted to about \$10 billion from the United States to Mexico, and \$2 billion each from the U.S. to El

Salvador, the Dominican Republic, and Colombia. Remittances were equal to about 40 percent of Salvadoran exports and just under 20 percent of Dominican and Guatemalan exports. About 60 percent of immigrants from Mexico, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic, and approximately 70 percent of immigrants from Guatemala and El Salvador, remit money to their homelands.⁵³ Remittances permit community development in rural areas and poor urban neighborhoods. Remittances are often the only social safety net for the poor. As U.S. foreign aid plummeted in the 1990s, the poor immigrants in the United States became the statesmen of transnational charity.

These newest U.S. Latinos are too poor, too disorganized, and too busy to be able to influence U.S. policy toward their homelands. But in the mid-1990s the U.S. government's threat of repression toward their communities activated homeland governments to defend the interests of their diasporas. In addition, the League of United Latin American Citizens and the National Council of La Raza, each over different issues, worked hard to defend the interests of Central Americans at risk. In this way, these anonymous heroes of inter-American cooperation indirectly influenced the policies of the United States and those governments of the countries they left behind.

The 1996, Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (the eerie IIRIRA) and other associated laws, were enacted when the immigration-restrictionist wing of the Republican party held sway in both houses of Congress. They sought to restrict immigration and foster deportations of those who had entered the United States illegally, even if they had developed strong social and family ties in the

⁵³ B. Lindsay Lowell and Rodolfo de la Garza, *The Developmental Role of Remittances in U.S. Latino Communities and in Latin American Countries* (Inter-American Dialogue and Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, 2000): 5-6, 17-18; Inter-American Development Bank data in *Poder* (March 2004): 40-41.

United States. At risk of deportation were some 3.8 million unauthorized migrants from the Western Hemisphere, but the most immediate burden fell on those who had fled civil wars in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala in the 1980s. Central American governments organized joint diplomatic protests and visits, raising the issue at the highest levels of the U.S. government, even directly with President Clinton at various summit meetings. The government of the Dominican Republic was comparably active. The Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act of 1997 can be explained only as a function of this effective, coordinated, and widespread lobbying effort on behalf of poor and voiceless philanthropist migrants.⁵⁴

In terms of the arguments under assessment in this work, however, this episode is the most problematic.⁵⁵ Foreign governments got the U.S. government to change its policies for the sake of the interests of those governments and their diasporas. Central American and Dominican immigrants were at the center of this drama, although Latin American governments and national U.S. Latino associations carried out the principal lobbying on their behalf. This is not a case of diaspora-as-subject. This diaspora did not coopt U.S. policies or assist enemy governments, but it is *precisely* what Huntington worried about when he wrote about “transtate cultural communities that control at least one state.” Of all the cases under study, it was the powerless from Central America and the Dominican Republic who have had the most influence, albeit indirect, on U.S. policy toward their ancestral homelands.

⁵⁴ Christopher Mitchell, “The Future of Migration as an Issue in Inter-American Relations,” and Rafael Fernández de Castro and Carlos A. Rosales, “Migration Issues: Raising the Stakes in U.S.-Latin American Relations,” in *The Future of Inter-American Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

⁵⁵ I opposed IIRIRA and welcomed the 1997 corrective legislation but my personal preference should not get in the way of this analysis.

The Washington Perspective

“The Hispanic American community exerts almost no systematic influence on U.S.-Latin American relations or, for that matter, on U.S. foreign policy in general,” Cuban-Americans excepted. Peter Hakim and Carlos Rosales go on to dissect the lack of such influence on arguably major policy issues by U.S. Latinos in general or specific national Latino diasporas: NAFTA’s enactment, the 1995 Mexican financial bailout, the 1994 election fraud in the Dominican Republic, the decertification of Colombia in 1996 and 1997 (for lack of cooperation in anti-drug trafficking efforts), or the 1998 and subsequent humanitarian response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch in Central America. The Hispanic Caucus in Congress has played a limited foreign policy role, too; it and the major Latino organizations focus on migration and U.S. domestic concerns to the detriment of foreign policy issues.⁵⁶

Beyond the reasons already discussed, U.S. Latino leaders themselves place far higher priority on U.S. domestic than international concerns. In their shared foreign policy preferences, moreover, U.S. Latino leaders mirror well the preferences of the U.S. foreign policy elite, albeit with some differences in emphasis (for example, U.S. Latino leaders worry less about military issues or the security of U.S. allies and more about

⁵⁶ Peter Hakim and Carlos A. Rosales. “The Latino Foreign Policy Lobby,” in *Latinos and U.S. Foreign Policy: Representing the Homeland?*, edited by Rodolfo O. de la Garza and Harry P. Pachon (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 133.

combating hunger).⁵⁷ When U.S. Latino organizations express their views on major U.S. foreign policy issues, they characteristically do so to support the president's policies.⁵⁸

One consequence of this relative disinterest in most foreign policy debates is the considerable lag in appointing U.S. Latinos to high posts in the U.S. foreign policy establishment, even to posts concerned with Latin America. U.S. Latinos are poorly represented in U.S. foreign policy posts. The proportion of Hispanics in the Foreign Service rose from 1 percent in 1976 to 4.2 percent in 1996; the comparable proportions in the U.S. Agency for International Development were 2.1 percent and 4 percent.⁵⁹ During the first half of the 1990s, the proportion of Hispanic Americans held steady at about 4 percent in the Career Foreign Service and, in senior posts in the U.S. Department of State, it crept up to a high of 2 percent in 1995.⁶⁰ As already noted, in 2003 Roger Noriega was the first Latino confirmed as U.S. assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs. Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush, respectively, appointed Peter Romero and Otto Reich to that post during Congressional recesses but the Senate confirmed neither. Similarly, of the nine Coordinators of the Alliance for Progress in power from the early 1960s to the late 1970s, only the first, Teodoro Moscoso, was a U.S. Latino.

⁵⁷ Harry P. Pachon and Rodolfo O. de la Garza with Adrián D. Pantoja, "'Foreign Policy Perspectives of Hispanic Elites,'" in *Latinos and U.S. Foreign Policy: Representing the Homeland?*, edited by Rodolfo O. de la Garza and Harry P. Pachon (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

⁵⁸ See thoughtful observations by Peter F. Romero, "*Bienvenidos: Latinos and Hemispheric Policy*," in *Latinos and U.S. Foreign Policy: Representing the Homeland?*, edited by Rodolfo O. de la Garza and Harry P. Pachon (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

⁵⁹ Allan E. Goodman, paper prepared for panel workshop, "Getting to Diversity: Obstacles Opportunities and Experiences," at the In the National Interest: Does Diversity Make a Difference? conference, Council on Foreign Relations, May 1997.

⁶⁰ Ernest J. Wilson III, "Minority Participation in the Senior Ranks of Internationally-oriented Professions," paper prepared for In the National Interest: Does Diversity Make a Difference? conference, Council on Foreign Relations, May 1997.

Consider a key elite set, namely, U.S. ambassadors to the eighteen Spanish-American countries since 1960, except Cuba, as well as those who have served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. (Latino ambassadors are rarely assigned to non-Latin American countries.) As is evident in Table 1, appointments of U.S. Latinos to the post of Deputy Assistant Secretary were rare before the Bush senior administration. Kennedy's appointment of Morales Carrión and Carter's two appointees were unusual. However, such appointments have become routine since the first Bush administration. The appointment of U.S. Latinos as ambassadors to Latin American countries date from the Kennedy administration and have been fairly routine for every president, but there is no clear trend. There was peak during the Carter and Reagan administrations and a much lower frequency of appointment since the Bush senior administration. Latino ambassadors or appointees to other senior diplomatic posts may hold views no different on major issues than other U.S. senior officials, but the relative rarity of Latino appointees makes it difficult to test that proposition. This pattern fails the test of the liberal normative standard for voice, participation, and representation.

Table 1. U.S. Latino Ambassadors to Latin America and Deputy Assistant Secretaries of State for Inter-American Affairs, 1960-2002

Administration	Latino U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretaries	Year of ambassadorial count	Latino ambassadors to Latin America
Eisenhower	0	1960	0
Kennedy	1	1962	1
Johnson	0	1965	2
Nixon	0	1970	0
Ford	0	1975	2
Carter	2	1980	6
Reagan	0	1985	5
Bush I	1	1990	1
Clinton	3	1995	2
Bush II	1	2002	3

Source: *United States Government Organization Manual*, 1960-2003; *Federal Staff Directory*, 1984-2003; *United States Foreign Service List*, 1960-1975.

Note: The count of ambassadors during the Clinton presidency is the same in 2000. The count of ambassadors during the Bush II administration drops to 1 in 2003.

In short, from a Washington perspective, U.S. Latinos hardly threaten the Republic. They lack influence because they lack voice, participation, and representation. Whether they make the multiculturalist claims is irrelevant given their absence, no matter how it is assessed, from the high councils of foreign policy decision-making.

The U.S.-Mexican Border

Far from Washington and the capital cities of Latin American countries, the most intense, salient, and quotidian relations between U.S. Latinos and U.S. foreign policy occur at the U.S.-Mexican border. At the border, ordinary people set the agenda for U.S.-Mexican bilateral relations: they travel and trade, lawfully and unlawfully. The illegal movement of peoples, drugs, and other goods co-occur at this border along with some of the most impressive and praiseworthy accomplishments between two countries anywhere. The United States and Mexico have been at peace for decades. Their governments collaborate in many ways. They welcome each other's citizens, the United States doing so in very large numbers. Their trade and investment relations have boomed since 1985, being U.S. Latinos participants in all facets of the U.S.-Mexican relationship.⁶¹

Conflict occurs at the border mainly because of the illegal activities. Mexican criminal organizations are sizeable; they collaborate with their counterparts on the U.S. side, some of whom are U.S. Latinos. U.S. and Mexican government agencies also cooperate, often staffed on the U.S. side by Mexican-American U.S. officials. And yet, the pertinent scholarship is striking in one respect: it is devoid of reference to the U.S. Latino influence on U.S. policies at the border. The U.S. government hires many Mexican-Americans as employees at the border but Mexican-American voices and participation—distinctly marked and identified as such—seem not to matter in decision-

⁶¹ For general analysis, see Jorge I. Domínguez and Rafael Fernández de Castro, *The United States and Mexico: Between Partnership and Conflict* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

making regarding U.S. policy at the border.⁶² Mexican-American U.S. officials at the border rarely fashion their decisions in their capacity as Mexican-Americans.

There is another reality at the border, however. Many U.S. officials of Mexican ancestry have risen to positions of professional responsibility and, at times, have lead municipal governments. The inter-governmental relations of such municipalities as Laredo and Nuevo Laredo are an example of U.S. Latino intense, salient, and daily participation in shaping one dimension of U.S. foreign policy toward Mexico: the mayor and many officials of the City of Laredo are U.S. Latinos. Thanks to NAFTA, Laredo is now the biggest U.S. land port. Both Laredo and Nuevo Laredo have had to cope with their new significance in bilateral relations with little help or recognition from the respective national governments. Their city officials had to find a myriad ways to collaborate through their police, fire, health and other departments, both formally and informally. Perhaps the greatest impact of border-region policy by U.S. Latinos is that, as citizens, they found themselves managing significant aspects of U.S.-Mexican relations, ranging from trade and transportation to crime control, disease prevention, tourism, and cultural changes. In this way U.S. Latinos have far greater impact than through occasional demographic representation in Washington.⁶³

⁶² See two excellent books, John Bailey and Roy Godson, eds., *Organized Crime and Democratic Governability: Mexico and the U.S.-Mexican Borderlands* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001), Chapters 7-9; and John Bailey and Jorge Chabat, *Transnational Crime and Public Security: Challenges to Mexico and the United States* (La Jolla, Calif.: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California-San Diego, 2002), Chapters 8, 10, 12-16.

⁶³ Interviews conducted by Rachel Gonzalez, Laredo, August 2003.

Conclusions

Since the birth of the Republic, the question of alien or ethnic group influence on U.S. foreign policy has been a topic of analysis, concern, and, on occasion, panic. Over the centuries, at various times U.S. citizens of French, German, Italian, Japanese, and other ancestries have been the focus of worry. U.S. Latinos now receive attention in this regard for two main reasons: their large numbers, especially in the states that border on Mexico, and the successful lobbying of various Cuban-American groups regarding U.S. policy toward Cuba.

Some U.S. Latinos act in opposition to the laws of the United States by assisting immigrants who enter the United States without proper documentation. This differs from immigration to the United States before the 1920s because the United States had not yet hitherto required such documents. With regard to foreign policy, the only instance of actions in opposition to U.S. laws was the support from some in the Cuban exile community against terrorist attacks on Cuba, Cubans, and Cuban-Americans that lingered well past the 1960s, that is, past the time when it had been the policy of the U.S. government to organize, finance, and sponsor state terrorism against Cuba. While since 1959 some Cuban government spies have operated within Cuban-American communities, they have done so only by hiding their true purposes; the Cuban-American community does not support such spying. No U.S. Latino community has ever supported a government that is an enemy of the United States.

Over time, only Cuban-Americans have made multiculturalist claims with regard to U.S. policy toward their homeland. Across the political spectrum their organizations claim privileged knowledge, interest, and skill pertinent to U.S. policy toward Cuba and

insist that they be consulted when making such policy. Mexican-American organizations are much less likely to make such claims regarding U.S. policy toward Mexico.

Puerto Rican government leaders in the 1950s and early 1960s also claimed privileged knowledge, interest, and skill pertinent to U.S. policy toward Latin America. The team of Puerto Ricans clustered around Governor Muñoz Marín saw themselves as U.S. citizens working to advance the U.S. national interest. They believed that Puerto Ricans would benefit in their condition as U.S. citizens. In contrast, Cuban-Americans believed that their advocacy served the United States, but they also believed that all Cuban-origin peoples would gain disproportionately from the policies that they lobbied for within the U.S. government. The Puerto Rican leaders hoped that Puerto Ricans would gain from improved U.S.-Latin American relations, but they never acted on behalf of the interest of, or hopes for, a foreign country.

Rarely have U.S. Latino groups influenced U.S. policy toward their ancestral homeland. Cuban-Americans since the early 1980s are the key example of such influence. Only once did some Cuban-American groups succeeded in changing a U.S. policy contrary to the President's preferences: the enactment of the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act. Even at the apogee of Cuban-American power, moreover, their impact on U.S. immigration policy toward Cubans was modest. And the gutted implementation of the Helms-Burton act under both the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations testifies to the limits of Cuban-American clout in Washington.

The only other example of a change in U.S. policy adopted to benefit diasporas in the United States and the countries of their ancestry was the enactment of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act of 1997, which reversed some previous

U.S. policies toward Central Americans. It resulted from intense Central American government lobbying, supported by national U.S. Latino organizations. Paradoxically, the main beneficiaries of the change in law and policy—diaspora members—were too poor, inactive, and disenfranchised themselves to act on their own behalf. In this instance, U.S. policy changed thanks to intergovernmental, transnational, and domestic ethnic lobbying to benefit a transtate cultural community that controls at least one state.

The principal story of U.S. Latino impact on U.S. foreign policy is, however, one of lack of voice, participation, and representation. This happens for various reasons, among them, the absence of a shared Latin American foreign policy agenda among U.S. Latinos and the priority that they and U.S. Latino leaders had of domestic over international issues. Apart from the Cuban-Americans, most U.S. Latinos and the organizations that claim to represent them neither exercise nor benefit from their rights as U.S. citizens as these pertain to influencing U.S. foreign policy. This is striking with regard to the largest of all the U.S. Latino communities, Mexican-Americans. There is little U.S. Latino elite representation and engagement in making U.S. policy toward Latin America or toward Mexico in particular. Few U.S. Latinos serve in the U.S. foreign service and even fewer have held top diplomatic posts.

Most U.S. Latinos do not act to advance the interests of their ancestral homeland because they do not consider themselves part of the same political community and they lack the resources to act across national boundaries. They have limited political interest in their homelands and are critical of those who govern their countries of origin. They hold different political values from the people in their homeland and do not wish to advance the interests of governments or peoples in those homelands, often opposing increased

immigration to the United States. U.S. Latinos tend also to support the main features of prevailing U.S. policies.

The most effective U.S. Latino engagement in shaping U.S. policy actually occurs at the U.S.-Mexican border where U.S. citizens of Mexican origin regularly interact with their Mexican counterparts as municipal government officials to make a better life for people on both sides of the border. The most impressive U.S. Latino behavior pertinent to U.S. policy is the billions of dollars remitted from the United States to various Latin American countries—a generous and effective transnational philanthropic network across borders.

Could the future be different? The number of U.S. Latinos, their income, and education are likely to increase substantially in the decades ahead. The growing ease of international transportation and communications may increase the numbers of Latino transnationalists—now only a minority. Various Latin American governments, certainly those of Mexico, the Central American and Caribbean countries, are likely to want to mobilize their diasporas to advance hoped-for common goals.⁶⁴ Diaspora efforts to influence U.S. policy could thus increase along the lines favored by the newly friendly governments of their ancestral homelands (assuming also that a future Cuban government will become friendlier toward its diaspora). That outcome could be the fear of the intellectual and political descendants of the Alien, Sedition, and Naturalization Acts, and the hope of the multiculturalists and several Latin American governments.

⁶⁴ For thoughtful arguments, see Carlos González Gutiérrez's, "Los latinos y la política exterior de Estados Unidos," *Foreign Affairs en español* 2:3 (Fall-Winter 2002): 113-122; and also his "Las relaciones de México con su diáspora: En busca de una política de Estado," in *En la frontera del imperio*, edited by Rafael Fernández de Castro (México, D.F.: Ariel, 2003), 165-175.

Such scenarios remain unconvincing, however. U.S. Latinos have not for the most part (Cuban-Americans excepted) focused on influencing U.S. foreign policy even when Latin American governments have sought their support. The trade-off between interests and capacities also endures. U.S.-born Latinos are likely to become more capable of influencing U.S. policy toward their ancestral homelands but they are also less likely to be interested in doing so. The shift in social and political values, long evident in the descendants of Latino immigrants to the U.S. who come to reflect the values of their neighbors and schoolmates, is also likely to distance such Latinos from the homeland. Moreover, the priority that U.S. Latinos have accorded to improving their circumstances in the United States, rather than seeking to influence U.S. foreign policy, is rational. U.S. Latinos and the organizations that represent them are understandably more concerned with jobs, education, and health care—foreign policy interests are a luxury by comparison. These considerations are not likely to disappear and undercut the prospects of future diaspora focus on U.S. foreign policy.

In terms of future U.S. national interests, therefore, the challenge is much simpler but no less important: to empower U.S. Latinos as citizens. U.S. citizens may quarrel over multicultural claims for privileged impact on foreign policy but they should assert and defend the rights of all U.S. citizens—including U.S. Latinos—to voice, participation, and representation regarding foreign policy.