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# Mexican American Values in the American Southwest

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**Center for Regional Studies #106**

**Fall 1995**

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IN THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST**

**By**

**F. Chris García, Ph.D.**

**The University of New Mexico**



**Southwest  
Hispanic  
Research  
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# **MEXICAN AMERICAN VALUES IN THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST**

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## MEXICAN AMERICAN VALUES IN THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST

### I. Introduction: Mexican American Cultural Values-- Testing for Reality

Over the years there have been many writings, scholarly and otherwise, which have attributed a variety of cultural<sup>2</sup> values to Mexican Americans. Typically these have been ascribed as being generic "Hispanic" values, with little or no attempt to differentiate these among the various national origin subcultures or even to delimit them by variation in time or locale or historical situation. From the earliest years of Anglo American contact with Mexico, and before that even with Spain, distinctive and usually derogatory images of the Hispanic or Mexican culture have emerged. Typically the Mexicans were seen by Anglos as having an inferior culture--a culture which seemed dominated by values such as passivity, indolence, fatalism, patriarchal familism, etc. [For a compilation of many of these alleged traits, see Appendix A]. Much of the writing describing Mexican and Mexican American culture has been controversial. The debate has been grounded in two points--one methodological and the other normative.

First, most of the early writings, largely done by anthropologists, not only were based on very restricted and unrepresentative samples, but also were usually otherwise flawed in methodology. Some were observations of small towns (Madsen 1964; Rubel 1966) or villages in rural areas (Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck 1961); others scrutinized only high-density areas of impoverished residents, and often only a single barrio or colonia. Instead of limiting their findings to those persons, areas and specific subcultures which were studied, over-generalization to all Mexicans or Mexican Americans was common. Virtually none of the social science researchers used techniques which would produce a representative sample, which could be replicated or which was more objective than subjective. A major exception to this was the landmark survey study by Moore and Guzman (1970), but even this study was limited to the cities of San Antonio, Texas and Los Angeles, California. These areas feature major concentrations of urban Mexican Americans but likely do not represent the totality of the great regional variations in the Mexican American experience.

Second, and at least as problematic, was that, not only did these writers produce questionable findings, but often they also attributed negative connotations to the values they discovered. The cultural values were often described as "dysfunctional" or "unfortunate" or in other pejorative terms. (See for example Edmondson 1957; Hernandez 1970; Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck 1961; Madsen 1964; Rubel 1960, 1966). In fact it may be that the roots of the controversy over Mexican values are due as much to their denigration as to whether or not any particular values exist. Values imply valence or directionality. They are positive or

negative, accepted or rejected, good or bad. Mexican and Mexican American values (typically no distinction is made between the two) almost inevitably have been judged as negative or dysfunctional in the United States society; seldom have they been characterized as positive. Social science researchers usually find these values to be in contradiction to those desired in "exemplary" U.S. society.

For example, the value of fatalism is presented as dysfunctional because it precludes the Mexican American from striving to achieve rather than its being a source of contentment and knowing one's place in the grand scheme of things. Machismo is chauvinistic and repressive rather than a source of responsibility and protectiveness. The emphasis on familism is seen as dampening the individual's entrepreneurial drive to succeed instead of a source of group comfort, concern and belonging.

The negative stereotyping has been a continual theme throughout U.S. history. It is of interest to note that a review of the negative cultural traits contained in the studies by social scientists in the 1950s and 1960s found essentially the same negative stereotypes held by Anglos at least a century earlier, in the mid- to late 1800s (Romano-V. 1968).

Until quite recently, purveyors of the popular culture such as advertising agencies, writers of fiction, movies, radio and television continued to pass along the negative attributes; they have portrayed Mexicans and Mexican Americans (seldom are distinctions made) as lazy, dirty, cowardly and treacherous "greasers" or "bandidos." The stereotypical male is "macho"--jealous, domineering, hot-headed; the female is subordinate, coyly hot-blooded, religious and repressed. Both sexes are fatalistically content with life as it is, lacking ambition to better themselves through initiative and hard work. In short, they are simple, both in their satisfactions and in their intellect (Pettit 1980).

Perhaps if the values reportedly found by social scientists had themselves been valued instead of being negatively portrayed, much of the critical debate would be diminished and the focus of research would shift to a more objective and neutral empiricism.

These studies, conducted primarily from the 1930s through the 1960s, and the popular stereotypes that evolved from them, evoked a number of counter-studies, mainly by Hispanics, after W.W.II, most particularly during the Chicano movement era (1963-1973). These responses tended to be either rhetorical writings criticizing the earlier findings on a normative basis, or empirical studies which often came up with results contradictory to the earlier negative findings. (As recounted in Rosaldo 1985; See for example, Hernandez 1970; Paredes 1978; Spicer 1972, 1975; Van Ness 1976).

In spite of these several studies, and continued debate about the topic, there is still little definitive, comprehensive or conclusive work in the area of Mexican American cultural values. Perhaps, since culture is such a broad concept and its measurements subject to a great deal of variation and



creativity, it is not surprising that there is both a hesitation to embark on such studies and a continuing controversy over the values that Mexican Americans hold.

A recent empirical survey, The Latino National Political Survey<sup>3</sup> has provided an excellent opportunity to empirically examine at least some of the hypothesized values of Mexican Americans in a scientific and nationally representative manner. In the LNPS, the investigators included several questions to measure general attitudes and values which, it was surmised, could possibly be related to Latino political culture.<sup>4</sup> Since this was a study conducted by political scientists focusing on politics, these particular questions on cultural values, which are somewhat generic, were included because of their hypothesized relatedness to the more explicitly political values and hence to the political culture of U. S. Latinos, which was the major focus of the study.

Regrettably, due to the limitations on time and the related expense, LNPS was not able to pose many of these questions to the non-Latinos in this sample, as well as to the Latinos. Therefore, direct, controlled comparisons cannot always readily be made. Nevertheless, the data is not only valuable for what it tells us about several aspects of the Latino political culture, or more particularly, the Mexican American political culture, but also because there have been few if any studies on Latino culture in general which have had the advantages of a representative national sample.

For this report, we define the Southwest region out of the national survey sample and report these regional results here. The Southwestern region in this report includes the LNPS primary sampling areas in the five states of Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico and Texas. There are 485 American citizens of Mexican origin and 100 Anglo American citizens in this regional subsample. [For the methodological details of the Latino National Political Survey, please see Appendix A].

This report is descriptive rather than analytical. Given the dearth of comprehensive and representative survey evidence bearing on Mexican American cultural values, the first order of research is to establish the "what" of those values with some confidence; later, attempts can be made to explain the "why." If the data reported here only enables us to establish what a large and significant group of Mexican Americans think and believe about a limited number of value-related topics in an objective and scientific manner, our objectives will have been achieved.

Before we further discuss Mexican American values--general and political--and present our survey findings on cultural values beginning in Section III, we will offer a description of the Mexican American people in our sample, including some major demographic and psychographic characteristics.



## II. Characteristics of Our Sample

The sample used in this project is a regional sub-sample of the national sample utilized in the Latino National Political Survey. The Latino National Political Survey is the first nationally representative sample of the three largest Latino groups in the United States. It was conducted in late 1989 and early 1990. In addition to nationally representative samples of Mexican Americans, Cuban Americans, and Puerto Ricans, a control cohort sample of non-Hispanics was interviewed at the same time in order to have a basis of comparison. (For details of the methodology of the Latino National Political Survey, please see Appendix A at the end of this monograph). The non-Hispanic sample of the Latino National Political Survey was not designed to be in and of itself representative of non-Hispanics in the United States. Instead, it is representative of those non-Hispanics residing in the areas in which the LNPS Latinos were interviewed. Thus, this sample of non-Hispanics is in a significant way an ideal comparison with the Hispanic sample, since overall area of residence is controlled.

The non-Hispanic sample was further filtered for purposes of analysis. All non-White, non-European respondents were excluded from the Non-Hispanic sub-sample. This leaves only those respondents who are White-European in origin. In this monograph we will refer to this group interchangeably as European Americans, Euro-Americans, Whites, Anglos, or Anglo Americans. Since the non-Hispanic sample of the Latino National Political Survey is relatively small, the regional Anglo sample used in this report is correspondingly small and consists of about one hundred respondents.

The LNPS sampled the most populous Latino groups in the United States and included 1,541 Americans of Mexican ancestry, 589 Puerto Ricans, and 681 Cuban Americans. This report focuses only on the values and attitudes of those Americans of Mexican ancestry. This was determined by asking respondents early on in the interview whether they had at least one parent or at least two grandparents who came from Mexico. (For the special case of New Mexicans, the filter question was changed so that if the respondent admitted that any of their ancestors came from Mexico, or if they were of "Hispano" ancestry, they were included in the survey). Moreover, although the LNPS includes all residents, citizens and non-citizens, only U.S. citizens are included in this report.

The number of LNPS respondents who are American citizens of Mexican ancestry in the southwestern region number 445. This size sample provides a random sampling error of about +/- 5% at the 95% level of confidence.

The Southwest region in which respondents in the study reside includes the states of Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico and Texas. Approximately half of all Mexican Americans in the nation live in these five states. There are fourteen "primary sampling units" (in this case, standard metropolitan statistical areas) included for these five states. All the major metropolitan regions in the states with at least 10%

Latino population are included, as well as a few smaller rural counties included in the random selection phase of the national sample.

### Socio-Economic Characteristics

The socio-economic characteristics of our Anglo and Mexican samples in the Southwest are not as similar as one might expect of persons residing in the same locales.

**Age:** In general, the Mexican American population is younger than the Anglo population in the United States, and this is also true of our samples. Even though the LNPS sample and our regional subsample consists only of persons 18 years of age or older, significant differences are evident. For example, 63.6% of the Anglo population is 50 years of age or less, compared with 71.9% of the Mexican American population. 15% of the Anglos and 9% of the Mexicans are more than 65 years old.

**Education:** Anglos are substantially more well-educated. Sixty-six per cent have achieved either a high school diploma or a General Education Degree (GED) equivalent, while this is true of only 44% of the Mexicans. Some post-high school education has been experienced by 17% of the Anglos and by only 6% of the Mexicans. Nearly half of the Mexican population has less than a high school degree, while this is true of only 18% of the Anglos.

**Income and Employment:** As with education, there is also an income disparity between the Anglos and Mexicans in the Southwest. A majority, 52%, of the Mexican households have a combined income of less than \$20,000. Only 28% of the Anglo households are at this level. Anglo households with a combined income of \$40,000 or more annually are 28% of that group's total; \$40,000+ incomes are possessed by only 14% of the Mexicans. There is a substantial income differential between the two groups, yet the employment rate of both groups is virtually the same with 31% of the respondents of each group reporting unemployment. There is a slightly higher proportion of Mexicans in the temporary labor force (12%) than Anglos (4%).

**Religious affiliation:** The reported religious affiliation of each group is significantly different. A little more than 70% of Mexicans in the Southwest claim to be affiliated with the Catholic religion, compared to 20% of the Anglos. A majority of Anglos (55%) claim affiliation with one of the Protestant denominations, as does 18% of Mexicans. Affiliating with other religions, or claiming agnosticism, atheism or no religious preference, were one-quarter of the Anglos and 10% of the Mexicans.

**Marital status:** The marriage rates of the two were comparable, as 62% of the Anglos and 60% of the Mexicans reported being married.

**Household size:** As is the case nationally, Mexican households in the southwest are substantially larger than those of Anglos. Single-resident households existed in only 6% of our Mexican population, while this was the case for 15% of the Anglos. Two-person households were reported by 38% of the Anglos and 18% of the Mexicans. A majority of Mexicans (55%) lived in households containing four or more persons, while four-or-more-person households were the homes for only 29% of the Anglos. Thirty-four per cent of Mexican respondents reported five or more in their household.

**Gender:** There was a slightly lower proportion of females in our Anglo sub-sample than in our Mexican sub-sample. Forty-seven per cent of the Anglo respondents are female compared to 54% of the Mexican respondents.

**Generation:** Generation is likely an important variable in understanding Mexican American values. In general, with each succeeding generation, the values of the motherland are diminished and the values of the host country prevail. Our Mexican American sample of citizens in the southwest demonstrated a range of generations, but is predominantly comprised of third generation U.S.-born. The majority (53%) of the Mexican respondents had at least two grandparents born in the United States; 22% had one or two parents born in this country; 16% of the respondents were first generation U.S.-born; and 9% were foreign born.

Thus, these two ethnic groups, Mexicans and Anglos, while residing roughly in the same general geographic area, still vary considerably along various socio-economic dimensions. Mexicans tend to be younger, live in larger households, have less education and lower incomes, and be much more Catholic than their Anglo compatriots.

### Socio-cultural Self-Perceptions

**Labels: What's in a Name?** One of the "problems" that people have when researching, or just in general relating with the Mexican American population, is "what to call them." Many names have been used to designate this group in the Southwest. Some of the more common and courteous names include "Mexican, Mexican American, Spanish, Spanish American, Spanish origin, Spanish surname, Spanish speaking, Latin, Latin American, Latino, Hispanic, Hispano, Indo-Hispano, Chicano, and Raza." Of course, the particular term that is used depends almost entirely upon the situation in which it is used. Identity is dynamic, both shifting and situational, and the names which are closely related to identity are likewise transitory and variable. (See Keefe and Padilla 1987). In Texas, which is included in our southwestern area, during the early twentieth century, "Latin" and "Latin American" were the most polite terms that were used, while "Mexican" was usually used in a derisive manner. In New

Mexico, "Spanish American" and "Spanish" were often used as the most polite and neutral forms of address. Sometimes, "Hispano" and "Indo-Hispano" were used. "Mexican American" was seldom used. In Arizona, "Mexican American" was a much more common name. During the 1960's and 1970's, "Chicano" became a very much used and broadly accepted term for this group of people in most geographic areas of the country.

The primary name usage not only shifts from situation to situation and place to place but also from time to time. Over the past few years, in the 1980's and 1990's, there has been an increasing use of generic pan-ethnic or trans-ethnic terms, such as Hispanic and Latino. These terms would encompass not only Americans of Mexican ancestry but also Americans whose ancestors came from other nations strongly affected by "Spanish culture" or whose history has been intertwined with Spain. The Spanish language is probably the most prominent and universal manifestation of the Hispanic and Latino peoples.

The designers of the tentatively named Latino National Political Survey decided to use a novel approach in labeling our participants and ask the people themselves what names they accepted and preferred. The LNPS first asked our respondents to select any and all names used to describe persons of Spanish heritage. (See Table 1.) Then they were asked what their preferred "label" was (Table 2). The results were fascinating and quite complex. Americans of Mexican ancestry are versatile in varying the terminology which they prefer, depending upon the situation and reflecting their own past experiences. It was found that very few Mexican Americans accept only one term. Much more common is that a multitude of terms or labels are accepted, and it is not uncommon that one or two are preferred, but perhaps not strongly.

The LNPS respondents were handed a card which listed several commonly used ethnic labels and asked: "Here is a list of names that are used to describe persons of Spanish heritage. Please tell me all of those, if any, you call yourself. (PROBE: What else?)"

The results are contained in Table 1.

---

TABLE 1  
Applicable Identity Labels, Self-Selected, By Percent of  
Responses and Percent of Cases (Respondents)

<u>LABEL</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>% RESPONSES</u>	<u>% CASES</u>
Mexican	109	9.3	24.5
Mexicano	98	8.4	22.0
Mexican American	236	20.2	53.0
Chicano	72	6.2	16.2
Puerto Rican	1	0.1	0.2
Niuyorcan	2	0.2	0.4
Hispanic	207	17.7	46.5
Latino	31	2.7	7.0
Spanish	91	7.8	20.4
Spanish American	103	8.8	23.1
Raza	36	3.1	8.1
American	127	10.9	28.5
Hispano	44	3.8	9.9
Other*	10	0.9	2.2
TOTAL	1,167		

\*"Other" included: Yes (3), Hispanic/Latin American (3), Mexican-Texan (2), Indian (1), White (1).

---

A majority of the Mexican Americans in the Southwestern United States refer to themselves by that label. This is closely followed by the label "Hispanic," which is a term of self-reference for 46.5% of this population. These two terms are by far the most commonly applied to themselves; following these are, in order, "American" (28.5%), "Mexican" (24.5%), "Spanish American" (23.1%), "Mexicano" (22.0%), "Spanish" (20.1%) and "Chicano" (16.2%).

A notable feature of these findings of the LNPS regarding labeling is the inclusiveness of the respondents in accepting a variety of names. Typically more than one label is acceptable, and often it is the situation of the individual that determines which particular name is most acceptable or preferable.

Having determined which terms are acceptable, we then sought out the preferred identification, by asking: "Which one do you prefer?" The results are presented in Table 2.

---

TABLE 2  
Preferred Identifications of Mexican American Citizens  
in the Southwest

<u>TABLE</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
Mexican	6.4
Mexicano(a)	10.8
Mexican American	34.5
Chicano(a)	3.1
Hispanic	20.8
Latino(a)	0.8
Spanish	3.9
Spanish American	8.9
Raza	0.3
American	9.0
Hispano	1.3
TOTAL	100.0

---

The pattern of preferred identification is similar to that of accepted labels. The most popular ethnic label is "Mexican American" which is preferred by 34.5% of this group. The second most preferred is "Hispanic" (20.8%).

One of the purposes of the Latino Survey was to explore the parameters of the trans-national origin communities of "Hispanics" or "Latinos." These are the two most common "umbrella" names applied to persons of Spanish ancestry in the United States, regardless of their country of origin. The results reported above indicated a great deal of variation in self-labeling. Consequently, we then divided the many labels which were selected by respondents into three groups: (1) those names which referred to national origin, Mexico in this case, such as Mexican, Mexican American and Mexicano, and (2) pan-ethnic terms--those names which transcend national origin but which relate to Spanish ethnicity, such as Spanish, Spanish American, raza, Hispanic, Hispano or Latino; and (3) terms referring only to a United States identity, i.e. "American."

Mexicans in the Southwest are evenly divided in their preference for two of these three categories of name identification labels. Forty-five percent prefer those labels which refer to their national origin, and 47% prefer pan-ethnic terms emphasizing general Spanish culture origin. Only nine percent prefer "American," although a large proportion use it as a primary term of self-identification even in a study framework which directs respondents towards "Spanish heritage" labels.

## Language

One of the most important manifestations of a culture is its language. The LNPS asked our respondents to judge their own language usage and also their own language abilities with regard to English and Spanish. From the responses to these two items, a "total language self evaluation" variable was created which combined both self-reported ability and usage. The resulting various categories signifying the degrees of ability in and usage of each language were combined into three -- (1) only or primarily English, (2) bilingual, and (3) Spanish or primarily Spanish.

The results were as follows: The largest group (46%) of Mexican Americans in the Southwest claimed to be basically bilingual, that is they use Spanish and English with relatively equal ease and fluency. The next largest group is the English-dominant group at 42%, and the smallest group is that which is basically monolingual Spanish, at 12%.

**The Value of Spanish.** Even though 88% of Mexican Americans in the Southwest are comfortable with English, it is also significant that a majority (57%) speak Spanish. This bilingualism has been a subject of much controversy and discussion in the United States. Opinions on the language question have ranged from those contending that the use of Spanish is "un-American," foreign, disloyal and a threat to the integrity of the United States to those who advocate that public funds should be used to maintain and preserve what they consider to be the most important manifestation of the Mexican culture. In the 1980s this became a salient issue of public policy as debates over bilingual education and the use of Spanish in government and the workplace occurred. Several states passed laws disallowing the use of any language other than English. Organizations such as U.S. English and English First lobbied governments for these and other restrictions on the use of Spanish.

We inquired of our Southwesterners as to their agreement or disagreement with the positions taken by organizations which contend that "laws should be passed making English the official language of this country." As one might expect, sixty percent of the Mexican Americans disagreed or strongly disagreed that English should become the official language of this country. In marked contrast, 78% of Anglos in the Southwest strongly agreed or agreed with official English. Perhaps most surprising about positions on this issue is that 40% of the Mexican population in the Southwest also favored making English the official language.

However, it is not clear what "official English" means, that is, how it would be put into effect and how it would be manifested in everyday life. Some of the respondents may simply think that it would be the primary language; others may think it would be used in government documents only. Indeed, often it is generally not clear what exactly is meant by the participants in this entire public policy debate.



Our Southwesterners were also asked whether "government agencies should provide services in Spanish and other languages to non-English speaking clients." One would infer this would not be allowed if English were the official language of this country. In any case, big majorities of both Mexicans and Anglos support the provision of governmental services in Spanish--90 percent of the Mexican Americans and 66% of the Anglo Americans agree or strongly agree that this should be the case.

Our Southwesterners also were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that "businesses have the right to require that employees speak only English during working hours." A substantial majority of Anglos in the Southwest (59%) agree that this should be a right retained by businesses or their employers, while only 26% of Mexican Americans agreed with this position, meaning that, conversely, about three fourths of Mexicans in the Southwest are opposed to this type of business regulation.

Our southwestern respondents were next asked whether "all citizens and residents of the United States should learn English." Eighty-seven percent of Mexican Americans in the Southwest believe that this should be the case. Although this question and others were asked only of Mexicans and not of Anglos, the responses to this and several other items demonstrate that Mexican Americans in the Southwest appreciate the need to learn English and do want to learn English.

However, they also strongly support, at least in principle, the idea of maintaining the Spanish language. Eighty-three percent of southwestern Mexican Americans support or strongly support bilingual education, and 72% of them would be willing to pay more taxes to expand bilingual education programs. When asked about what they meant by bilingual education, the overwhelming response, by 75% of Mexicans in the Southwest, referred to learning both English and Spanish. A small proportion felt that the primary purpose of bilingual education was to learn English (11%), and a similarly small proportion felt that the primary purpose was to maintain the Mexican culture (8%).

In summation, the Spanish language is an extremely important, highly valued component of the Mexican American culture in the Southwest. Mexican Americans in this region are largely bilingual to some degree and perhaps even more importantly defend its use vehemently. Spanish may be the single most important symbol of the Hispanic or Latino culture, for even those who are not fluent in it, think it is important to preserve it. Mexican Americans strongly support the use of Spanish in the provision of government services in Spanish, defend using Spanish in the workplace and overwhelmingly favor bilingual education. They also reject attempts to restrict its use through legislation. Yet it is important to note that Mexican Americans also are fully cognizant that English is the primary language in the United States. Almost nine out of ten believe that "permanent" Mexicans should learn English and four of ten would support English as the "official" language of this nation.

## Social Networks

An important characteristic of a group of people is its pattern of social relationships. The associational or affiliational pattern of a distinctive ethnic group is particularly significant, since it provides clues as to a major influence on that group's attitude formation. If one chooses to associate only with members of one's own ethnic group, that certainly indicates a low level of integration with another cultural group and also restricts those social interactions which would broaden and otherwise change one's cultural perspectives. At the minimum, one's cultural values would surely be affected by one's associations. Assuming some degree of distinctiveness, Mexican American values would be more likely to be reinforced and preserved the greater the social interaction with other Mexican Americans.

The Latino National Political Survey inquired briefly into the social environment of Mexican Americans in the Southwest. In order to get an idea of the inter-ethnic social relationships of the Mexican American population, the question was asked: "When you go to social gatherings or parties, are the people there all Mexican Americans, more Mexican Americans than Anglos, about half and half, more Anglos than Mexican Americans, or all Anglos?" The results indicate that Mexican Americans in the Southwest gather in social settings which almost always include other Mexican Americans--but only 11% are exclusively so. In 35% of the social situations there is a greater proportion of Mexican Americans than Anglos; in 40% there are roughly equal numbers of the two ethnic groups; in only 12% are there more Anglos than Mexican Americans; and in only 2% are all the other people typically Anglos.

## Cultural Maintenance Activism

While it seems that Mexican Americans are concerned about not losing their culture to the American core culture, particularly the Spanish language, how actively do they pursue public activities directed at maintaining that culture? The LNPS inquired as to how active Mexican Americans were in working on "projects that help maintain or promote Mexican American's culture, history or art?" This item was included in a list of activities that Mexican Americans may "do together to increase their influence or to get something done within the United States... during the past twelve months." Only 12% of southwestern Mexican Americans report they have been active in promoting their culture, while 89% stated that they had not worked on such projects.

## Education in History and Culture

The public schools are extremely significant in their role as transmitters of culture. Throughout most of American history, schools have been major proponents of the American melting-pot. The degree to which they have taught about the

non-core, immigrant or ethnic cultures, including their histories, has varied from era to era and place to place, but across the nation and across history, it has been minimal. In the 1980s and 1990s great debates raged across campuses with regard to the institution of multi-cultural curriculum, including how much U.S. and western European culture ought to be taught compared to the history and culture of any particular ethnic or racial group.

Mexican Americans in the Southwest were asked what the balance should be between the history and culture of the ethnic groups' "mother country" versus that of the United States, as taught to children in U.S. schools. Only a very small proportion, less than 1%, thought that only the history of Mexico ought to be taught in U.S. schools. Only 8% of Mexican Americans thought that only the United States' history and culture should be taught in U.S. schools. The rest, the vast majority, more than 90%, felt that both the history and culture of both Mexico and the United States should be taught in the schools. These "biculturals" were divided into two groups of roughly the same size--46% who felt that while both ought to be taught, the largest emphasis ought to be on United States history and culture, and 45% who thought that equal time ought to be given to the history and culture of both the United States and Mexico. Only 1% preferred an emphasis on Mexico.

Among Mexican citizens in the American Southwest, there is a strong sentiment favoring multi-cultural curriculum in U.S. schools for Mexican American children, not one that displaces United States history and culture, but one which gives at least equal time to that as well as to the history and culture of Mexican Americans and Mexico.

Thus on several broad indicators of Mexican American culture, we find the existence of a vital and distinctive ethnic culture--one in which preference is shown for in-group national-origin labeling; a distinctive language, Spanish, is strongly cherished and defended as a symbol of the culture and is also widely if sometimes minimally utilized; most social associations include other members of the ethnic group; and the history and culture of the people are perceived as integral parts of public education. Yet, the picture is not one of exclusivity or of a culture with hard and impermeable boundaries. The manifestations of Mexican culture are substantially modified by the American core culture. Mexican Americans in the Southwest do not reject being known as Americans as well as Mexicans; a great proportion of them speak English, and they believe that English must be learned by residents in the United States; and almost all of their social gatherings include non-Mexicans. Both the Mexican and American cultures are broadly manifested in these bicultural citizens of the Southwest.

### III. Mexican American Cultural Values

In this section, we turn our attention to some of those reputed "cultural values" of Mexican Americans which have been the subject of discussion, debate and controversy throughout the history of contact between American Anglos and Mexicans. One of the alleged "cultural shortcomings" often attributed to Mexican Americans--one which is sometimes used to explain their relative lack of success, political, economic and educational--is that their cultural values are reputed to be dysfunctional in the American system. Critics who use this approach "blame the victim," that is, place the onus of being disadvantaged or excluded from the opportunities of this country entirely on the group itself. This position holds that the "failures" are inherent to the culture, thus having the effect of exculpating the larger society itself from accepting any responsibility for its documented history of discrimination and the consequent disadvantaged status of Mexican Americans.

#### Noncooperation and Mutual Support

**Envidia.** One such reputed negative cultural trait is envidia or envy. Mexicans are supposed to be intensely envious of one another, which results in the group's not allowing any individuals to emerge from that group to become an individual success. Purportedly, Mexicans will denigrate, hinder and attack the progress of any individual Mexican who succeeds on his or her own merits without additionally bringing along or assisting the general Mexican American community. Many are familiar with the story of the Mexican American "crabs" which exemplifies this value. A bucket of crabs can be left uncovered and unintended without any of them escaping because they are "Mexican crabs." This means that if any one of them tries to climb up and out of the bucket the others will reach up and pull that one down. Interestingly, the same story has been told not only by and about Mexicans but also by other Latinos as well as other disadvantaged racial and ethnic minorities in the United States, such as, for example, Native Americans. Obviously this "cultural norm" would have great import for success in business, education, politics and other areas particularly designed for individual entrepreneurial achievement, very typical in the United States. It has strong implications for politics, particularly with regard to the possibilities of leadership emerging from the Mexican American community and for the role of the community versus the individual as political actors.

In an attempt to tap this value, the LNPS posed the following question: "some Mexican Americans say that Mexican Americans usually try to help each other get ahead. Other Mexican Americans say that, instead of helping each other, Mexican Americans usually pull each other down so that no one gets ahead. What do you think? Do Mexican Americans help each other, or pull each other down?"

Surprisingly, in light of the conventional wisdom, in our Southwest sample 100% of the Mexican American respondents

answered that Mexican Americans "help each other." Not a single one gave the "crabby" response that Mexican Americans would pull each other down so that no one would get ahead.

This cooperative, rather than the alleged noncooperative, attitude was further investigated. Another question was posed. The southwestern Mexicans were asked to agree or disagree with the statement "as things get better for Mexican Americans in general, things also get better for me." On this measure a full 69% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, with only 28% disagreeing. Only 1% strongly disagreed while 19% strongly agreed that improvement for Mexican Americans in general meant improvement for the individual as well.

This idea of mutual support was also tested in a more specifically political context as respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement "Mexican Americans have an obligation to work with other Mexican Americans to increase the number of Mexican American elected and appointed officials." More than three-fourths (76%) agreed or strongly agreed that this was the case; 22% disagreed.

**Candidate Choice.** Another measure of support for co-ethnics was posed in a more specifically political context. The LNPS evidenced that Mexican Americans in the Southwest reported that they were more likely to vote when there was a Mexican American candidate running for office. Additionally, would Mexican Americans be particularly likely to vote for a co-ethnic who is on an election ballot for public office? Those Mexican Americans who actually had had the opportunity to vote for a Mexican American in an election in the United States were asked: "Think about the most recent election you voted in when a [Mexican American] ran against an Anglo. Did you vote for the Mexican American, for the Anglo (White American) or for another candidate? Eighty percent of Mexican American voters in such an election voted for the Mexican American candidate; 10% voted for the Anglo and 11% voted for "another."

A similar question was posed to the Anglo subsample in the Southwest. Anglos were asked not whether they had an opportunity to vote for an Anglo, because all most certainly did, but rather if they had the opportunity to vote for an "Hispanic" in an election, did they vote for the Hispanic, for the Anglo or for another. A majority, 57%, said they had voted for the Anglo candidate; 37% said they had voted for the Hispanic candidate and 6% said they had voted for another.

Thus, both groups show majority support for candidates from their own ethnic group. The solidarity is higher among the Mexican American voters (80%) than among the Anglo Americans.

Is this collective support for selected "elite" individuals reciprocated by those individuals elevated by the community? We asked again in a specifically political context whether "Mexican American elected and appointed officials help Mexican Americans more than Anglo officials do." Mexican Americans in the Southwest were very divided on this issue of greater assistance coming from Mexican American public officials. Fifty percent

agreed or very strongly agreed and 46% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

On every measure of mutual support and cooperation--general and political--Mexican Americans evidence attitudes contrary to those values of nonsupport usually attributed to them. At least one can say that there seems to be a feeling of commonality and mutuality.

### Trust in Others

Another characteristic that is often attributed negatively to Mexican Americans is that the group is generally distrustful in nature and suspicious of each other as well as of non-members of the group. Of course, such a cynical and distrustful view of society would mitigate against any kind of cooperative endeavor, including political mobilization. As with envy, distrustful attitudes towards others would make unity difficult, if not impossible. It also would certainly impact negatively the possibilities of any kind of constructive relationships between those leaders in positions of public authority and the community.

We asked southwestern Mexican Americans whether they thought that "generally speaking ... most people can be trusted or that you must be very careful in dealing with people." Overwhelmingly, Mexican Americans--87%-- felt that most people could be trusted. Only 13% felt otherwise. Using this question we also inquired of the European, white "Anglos" about their trust of people in general. These southwestern Anglos, while also more trustful than distrustful, are actually less trustful than their Mexican American counterparts. Sixty-five percent of southwestern Anglos stated that most people could be trusted, and 35% thought that one must be very careful when dealing with people.

### Helpfulness

We continued to examine some general social values which have political implications by inquiring specifically about the helpfulness of people. The question was posed, "Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful, or that they are mostly looking out for themselves." Again on this item, we have answers from both Anglo Americans and Mexican Americans in the Southwest and again, Mexican Americans were the most positive about people in general. Sixty-one percent felt that most of the time people were helpful. This compared to only a minority of the Anglos (44%) who felt that positive. A majority (56%) of Anglos in the Southwest thought that people were mostly looking out for themselves.

### Fatalism

Another cultural value that has been typically attributed to Mexican Americans and again which has negative manifestations, particularly in politics, is that relating to

the source of control in life. Mexican Americans have been characterized as very fatalistic--accepting their fate as pre-determined and not inclined to even attempt to take actions to control their own destinies. In politics, as in other endeavors, this attitude would promote a passivity which would predispose against organization and mobilization. A fatalistic attitude would likely result in a "subject" orientation (Almond and Verba 1965, 17-18; Scott 1965), as being helplessly subject to the power and authority of government and others who have power, and doing nothing about it. The subject culture would likely embody fatalism and similar values in contrast to a "participant" orientation, featuring a take-charge approach which would help control or shape one's situation.

Our Mexican American respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the following statement "Success in life is pretty much determined by forces outside our control." A majority (53%) of the Mexican Americans disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement while 47% agreed. This provides at least some evidence against Mexican Americans in general thinking of themselves as being helpless victims of their fates.

### Conclusion

Thus, on the basis of our admittedly limited number of items, but grounded in a scientifically valid inquiry, we find very little data which supports those findings imputing negative and dysfunctional societal values such as envy or fatalism to the Mexican American culture. On the contrary, Mexican Americans in the Southwest disagree with the concept of envidia and are less cynical than are Anglos. The level of fatalism is certainly not as high as has been previously assigned. More specifically political orientations, such as support for co-ethnic candidates, also evidence positive values.



#### IV. Patriotism and National Pride

Throughout the history of Mexicans being citizens of the United States of America, that is, since the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848 made previous Mexican residents citizens of the U.S., Americans of Mexican ancestry have been suspected of harboring "foreign" values. Regardless of their professed loyalty and supportive congruent behavior, such as distinguished battle conduct in every war and no cases of group treason by Mexican Americans, their patriotism to the United States remains suspect. For example, throughout history Congress had been reluctant to accept the petitions of new states with a large Mexican American population, such as New Mexico, to become members of the United States of America because key national officials suspected and feared "foreign" ways of thinking. Moreover, throughout history, particularly when economic times have been difficult, such as the 1930s, Mexicans and Mexican Americans have been "repatriated" back to Mexico on the pretense of being some kind of a foreign threat to the United States.

As recently as the time the Latino National Political Survey was being conducted, that is, in 1990, a major study of group stereotypes in the United States by the National Opinion Research Corporation indicated that an overwhelming number of mainstream Americans still harbor a negative stereotype of Hispanics as being unpatriotic to the United States (Smith 1990). The debate over immigration policy in the late 1980s and early 1990s once again evoked criticisms by various political leaders and spokespersons that Mexican immigrants and, often by implication, Mexican Americans, continue to be a "foreign" element which is of substantial danger to the national security, or at least the integrity and well-being, of the United States.

#### Love of Country and Nationalistic Pride

Several social scientific studies of Mexican American attitudes have shown that Mexicans are patriotic in a very similar manner as are their Anglo American compatriots. In fact, studies of Mexican American children indicate that young Chicano children are at least as patriotic, and perhaps even more patriotic, than young Anglo children (Garcia 1972). Yet in spite of behavior and social scientific studies to the contrary, suspicion about the patriotism of Mexican Americans continues. It is hoped that this analysis of border area data from the Latino National Political Survey will add to the evidence employed in dispelling the myth of the "un-Americanism" of Americans of Mexican ancestry.

As measures of positive feelings toward the United States, two questions were asked in the Latino survey. One was, "How strong is your love for the United States? Is it extremely strong, very strong, somewhat strong, or not very strong?" The second question was, "How proud are you to be an American? Are

you extremely proud, very proud, somewhat proud, or not very proud?"

The results show that the levels of professed patriotism of Mexicans and Anglos is very similar. [See Table 3]. This is particularly striking when one realizes that Mexican Americans have experienced a history of discrimination and second-class treatment while white European Americans have been most favored in the United States.

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TABLE 3  
Two Measures of Patriotism of Mexican Americans  
and Anglo Americans

	<u>PRIDE IN BEING AMERICAN</u>		<u>LOVE FOR UNITED STATES</u>	
	<u>MEXICAN</u>	<u>ANGLO</u>	<u>MEXICAN</u>	<u>ANGLO</u>
Extreme*	46.7%	63.9%	40.1%	56.2%
Very	46.7%	30.6%	44.9%	36.3%
Somewhat	6.2%	5.4%	12.9%	7.0%
Not very	0.4%	0.1%	2.1%	0.5%

\*Response choices were: PRIDE--extremely proud, very proud, somewhat proud, or not very proud; LOVE FOR U.S.--extremely strong, very strong, somewhat strong, or not very strong.

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These two groups' feelings of love and pride for the United States of America are remarkably similar. Eighty-five percent of Mexican Americans in the Southwest professed very or extremely strong love for the United States; only 2% said it was not very strong. This was remarkably comparable to the 92% of Anglos who likewise professed the highest levels of affection for America.

With regard to having pride in the United States, both Southwestern Anglos and Mexicans evidence virtually the same levels of pride, with no statistically significant difference between the two groups. Ninety-four percent of Mexicans and 95% of Anglos in the Southwest profess to be very or extremely proud of the United States of America.

So on these two measures of U.S. patriotism, Mexican Americans score highly.

#### Feelings Towards the Home Country

Part of the questioning of Mexican American loyalty to the United States is based on suspicions that they have attachments to another country, namely Mexico. The LNPS looked into this matter. An item measured southwestern Mexican Americans' attitudes towards Mexico and compared them to Anglo views. Both

Anglos and Mexicans were asked to rate on a thermometer their own feelings of favorability and warmth toward several nations. The thermometer graphic on the card handed the respondent was marked with a scale of zero to one hundred, with one hundred being the warmest and most favorable affection towards a country and zero being the coldest and least favorable feelings towards a nation. Fifty degrees was presented as a mid-point or neutral position, neither hot nor cold. Attitudes towards Mexico among Anglos and Mexicans of the Southwest were measured using this thermometer rating method.

With regard to Mexico, 33% of Anglos and 31% of Mexicans took the neutral mid-point position. However, that is where the similarity ended. A majority (59%) of Mexican Americans felt favorably or warmly, that is, selected a temperature from 51 to 100 degrees, towards Mexico, compared to 44% of Anglos. Only 10% of Mexican Americans felt coolly towards Mexico, compared to 23% of Anglos in the Southwest.

Overall then, pluralities of both Anglos and Mexican Americans viewed Mexico more favorably than they did unfavorably. However, a significantly larger proportion of Mexican Americans felt this way. And at the highest (warmest) level of rating, 76 to 100 degrees, 30% of Mexicans rated Mexico at this level, compared to only 5% of the Anglo Americans.

However, while there no doubt exists some affinity for Mexico among Mexican Americans, they can also be quite critical in their view of Mexico. For example, they were asked about Mexico's economic instability and its potential causes. Two alternative explanations for Mexico's economic crisis offered to the respondents were that this situation was either (1) a result of [Mexican] governmental corruption and inefficiency, or (2) U.S. policies towards Mexico were a major cause. Mexican Americans of the Southwest overwhelmingly believe (88%) that it is the corruption and inefficiency in the Mexican government which is the major problem. This compares very closely to the 94% of Anglos in the Southwest who share that opinion.

### Feelings Towards the United States

Our thermometer rating scale was applied to the United States of America by the Mexican American and Anglo Americans in our southwest sample. Again, the patriotism of Mexican Americans and their great affection for the United States comes through, as 93% have the warmest feelings toward the United States of America, that is, "temperatures" within the 76-100 range. This is the same rating given by the Anglos in the Southwest. Another 5% of each ethnic group gives the next highest level of warm feelings toward the United States--51-75 degrees. Only one individual Mexican American and one Anglo American felt "cool" towards the United States.

### Conclusion

Certainly, then, at the level of expressed attitudes, there should be no doubt that, in contrast to the stereotype and the

perceptions by non-Hispanics, Mexican Americans in the Southwest are very patriotic to the United States. They feel as warmly affectionate towards the U.S. as do their Anglo compatriots. They express very high levels of pride in this country. Notably, however, they also have a warm feeling toward the home of their ancestors, albeit not an uncritical view.

Based on these findings, one can safely conclude that Mexican Americans both love the nation of which they are citizens and have a special affection for their closeby ancestral homeland. This "dual patriotism" has been noted in some previous attitudinal studies (Garcia 1972, 48-49).

## V. Democratic Values

We have seen that there are similar and comparable levels of affective attachment to the United States of America. It is one thing to love this country, and another thing to love the institutions and the people who govern it. In fact, particularly since the 1960's, the general U.S. public has experienced a tremendous decline in support for the institutions and people of government. (This has been tracked over the years by, among others, the biennial University of Michigan National Election Studies and the University of Chicago General Social Surveys). The American public in the 1990's is very disaffected and cynical about government. For example the 1994 survey by the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press reported "one of the most significant changes" in American political attitudes over several years has been "the sharp increase in alienation, cynicism and general discontent with the political system" (Times Mirror 1994, 22). This disaffection has been continually noted by political commentators who use it not only to explain the non-participatory behavior of Americans, but also worry about the more generalized effects of such negative attitudes on the American democracy. Certainly, negative and non-supportive attitudes towards a government which is supposed to be representative of the people is not a healthy indicator for the American democracy.

Survey after survey indicates that "the American people" are unhappy with the American government. However, seldom, if ever, is an Hispanic sub-sample broken out of the survey data, due to insufficient numbers. The Latino National Political Survey allows us to measure Mexican Americans' attitudes towards government and compare them with the low levels of support evidenced in the attitudes of mainstream Americans. These measures also add to our knowledge about the political cultural values of Mexican Americans.

### Political Cynicism and Trust

Our respondents were asked, "How much of the time do you think you can trust government officials to do what is right?" A similar 11% of the Anglos and 10% of the Mexicans were pessimistic enough to respond that government officials "almost never" do what is right. The two groups were also very alike in stating that "some of the time" government does what is right--47% of the Anglos and 44% of the Mexicans. When one gets into the positive realm of believing that government can be trusted to do what is right "most of the time" or "just about always," we find that Mexican Americans are slightly more positive than the European Americans--46% of the former, compared to 42% of the latter, expressed these judgments.

Another question was asked which measured feelings towards government. This is another standard question that is typically used in measuring cynicism or disaffection towards government. Our respondents were asked, "Would you say that the government generally is run by a few people looking out for their own

interests, or run for the benefit of all?" Obviously, those people who believe that government has the common good uppermost in mind are more supportive of that democratic norm, however unrealistic, than those who believe that government is the tool of a self-interested few. As with the earlier measure, we find that Mexican Americans in the Southwest are less cynical and more trusting in American government. A majority, 52%, of Mexicans feel that government generally is run for the benefit of all, compared to the majority of southwestern Anglo Americans, 54%, who believe that government is run by a few self-interested people.

Thereby, at least on the basis of these two questions, we can conclude that Mexicans in the Southwest are more idealistically positive about American government than are their Anglo counterparts. Although the differences are not large between the two groups, they are striking, since it is consistent across the two items. Moreover, as we shall see later on, Mexican Americans in the Southwest are also more favorably disposed towards government, as they perceive governments as instruments for positive action and the resolution of their major public problems.

#### The Liberty Value: Tolerance

One of the major democratic values, perhaps the pre-eminent one, is liberty or freedom. A major tenet of democracy is that the individual has inalienable rights, such as freedom of speech and expression, which are to be protected by government. Individuals, and by extension numerical minority groups, are afforded constitutional protections which keep the majority from infringing on these sometimes unpopular minorities' rights to exist, to gather in assembly, to meet, to organize, to associate with one another and to present their views to the public. Political tolerance implies that people will respect the rights of others to express their view, regardless of who they are or what the content of those view are. The First Amendment of the U. S. Constitution, as well as other Constitutional provisions, provide the legal basis for the protection of and toleration of these groups.

The United States has a history of the majority's attempting to suppress the Constitutional rights of unpopular individuals and minorities. It has often been necessary for the nation's courts to safeguard these groups' freedoms through their decisions invoking constitutional safeguards. It would be preferable if a high level of acceptance and tolerance of all individuals were imbued in the American populace. If the freedom of all individuals and groups to exercise the same rights as the majority were respected, less turmoil and conflict would have occurred and these unpopular elements would be less likely to have to resort to court arbitration for their protection. Yet, the level of tolerance among majority Americans is surprisingly low, although it apparently has been increasing over the past three decades (Mueller 1988). We asked Mexicans and Anglos in the Southwest some questions measuring

their tolerance towards unpopular groups. The technique used was that devised by Sullivan et.al. (1979), in which he first asks the respondents to designate groups which they do not like very much, and then uses those self-selected, most disliked groups in posing situations in which their rights are put in jeopardy.

In the Latino National Political Survey, Anglos and Mexicans in the Southwest were asked to select a group which they disliked the most. From a list of controversial groups, the one most disliked by Mexicans was the Ku Klux Klan (36%), which was far and away the most disliked group. Further down the list were three closely bunched disliked groups: Communists (18%), gay and lesbian groups (17%), and Nazis (17%). Anglo Southwesterners' most disliked group was also the Ku Klux Klan (30%), but it was followed very closely by the Nazi party, at 28%, the Communist party, at 20%, and in fourth place were atheists (13%).

Our Southwesterners were then asked whether members of the group which they identified as being most disliked should be (a) allowed to teach in public schools, and (b) allowed to hold public rallies in "our city." These two were combined into an index of tolerance ranging from "low" to "high," a seven-point scale.

Perhaps not surprisingly, in light of other similar research, the southwestern Americans, as Americans nationwide, do not express very tolerant attitudes towards their most disliked minority's teaching in schools and holding rallies. At the low tolerance end of the scale, (scale scores 1, 2 and 3) 72% of the Anglo Americans' cluster, compared to 86% of the Mexican Americans. At the tolerant end of the scale, (scores 5, 6 and 7) are only 13% of the Anglos and 6% of the Mexican Americans.

It seems that, in line with other studies, both of these groups are less tolerant than would be ideal in a democracy. Assuredly, this is a difficult test, asking people to allow their most hated or most disliked groups to exercise freedom of speech and assembly, especially in a relatively sensitive area such as the public schools. Notably on this measure, Mexicans are even less tolerant than are Anglos towards the exercise of these particular civil liberties.

### The Equality Value

One of the major values of the American democracy is equality. Although its meaning under the law has changed throughout American history and debate continues as to how much, and what type of, equality should exist in society, the essence of it is clear. Democratic philosophy holds that people are at least equal before the law, that is, there should be no invidious discrimination by government against certain groups and in favor of others. One class of individuals should not be treated one way by government and the law, and another class of people treated differently. All persons should enjoy the same constitutional guarantees and protections. Certainly no class



of people should be offered fewer protections, nor put at a disadvantage through discriminatory practices.

According to scores of surveys, the value of equality before the law is strongly supported by virtually all mainstream Americans. (For a concise review see Corbett 1991, 171-175). Equality of opportunity, that is, that each individual should have the opportunity, within his or her individual capacity, to succeed in the system is also a belief widely held by most of the American public. This belief in equality does not generally extend to equality of achievement or equality of attainment. In other words, Americans believe that all individuals should have opportunity, free of discriminatory obstacles, but that their achievements should be based upon individual effort and merit. Moreover, equality in socio-economic status is not supported. It may exist as an ideal for some, but few Americans believe that government should force egalitarianism on a free society. Whether individuals succeed or fail in a system of relatively equal opportunity is then a consequence of that individual's abilities and efforts, and that is the way it should be, as far as most Americans are concerned.

To get a baseline measure of the equality value among Mexican Americans, the LNPS asked our southwestern sample how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statement: "Our society should do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed."

A strong bias towards societal egalitarianism in opportunity was evidenced, as an overwhelming majority--96%--of the Mexican Americans agreed.

A second measure more closely tested the egalitarianism impulse as it more directly embodied the concept of a "level playing field": "How about: It is OK if some people have more of a chance in life than others?"

On this tougher test, Mexican Americans in the Southwest were more ambivalent about this, as 51% agreed and 49% disagreed.

**Discrimination.** Regardless of Americans' strong support of the equality value at the abstract level, American history is replete with unequal treatment of various groups and classes of individuals, even to the point of the laws of the land enforcing differential treatment through segregation. By the 1990's, virtually all vestiges of de jure, or legal, discrimination had been abolished. There still remained discrimination which was much more subtle, such as "institutional discrimination" or "institutional racism." Certain groups of people, such as racial minorities and women, still seem to be discriminated against and treated differentially in a negative manner as a matter of course, even though the laws do not support such discrimination.

**Discrimination Against Mexican Americans.** The LNPS inquired as to southwestern Mexican Americans' views of discrimination, and most particularly whether they felt that their ethnic group had been discriminated against. More than three fourths (78%) of Mexican Americans in the Southwest felt

that Mexican Americans as a group were subject to either "some" or "a lot of" discrimination. Twenty-two percent felt that there was only "a little" or "no" discrimination against their ethnic group. These results were not very different from the perceptions of Anglos in the Southwest, 71% of whom felt that there was substantial discrimination against Mexican Americans. Only 29% felt that this was not the case.

As an interesting comparison, in a related vein, the perceptions of Anglos and Mexican Americans towards discrimination against American Blacks was identical, with 83% of Mexicans and 84% of Anglos stating that Blacks suffered "some" or "a lot of" discrimination in this society.

Interestingly, while a large proportion of Mexican Americans felt that there is some significant discrimination against their group, their perception of discrimination against themselves as individuals was substantially lower. They were presented with this item: "Because you are a Mexican American, have you ever been turned down as a renter or buyer of a home, or been treated rudely in a restaurant, or been denied a job, or experienced other important types of discrimination?" A substantial majority, 60%, answered negatively to this item. A minority--forty percent-- felt that they had been subject to discrimination.

**Discrimination Against Women: The "Machismo Value?"**  
Another class of Americans that has been discriminated against through history as a class is women. Not only were they late in being granted legal and political equality, but social and economic equality continues to evade them in American society. It is alleged that Mexican Americans are much less concerned about equality between the sexes than Anglos, and in fact even feel that women are, and should be, less equal than men. This is popularly expressed as Mexican men possessing a degenerate form of "machismo." Even the early social scientists considered the cultural value of "machismo" to be somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, women were subordinated to men, especially in affairs outside the home. On the other hand, the man of the family was obligated to be a strong, protective and solely responsible head of household. In recent times, the positive connotation has been discarded, and the term is used almost exclusively to refer to a general, pathological male chauvinism, including all forms of discrimination against women as well as every form of undesirable behavior by men.

We asked Mexican Americans in the Southwest as to whether women as a group are discriminated against in the United States. The majority of them, 56%, felt that this was the situation. These results are similar to those of the Anglos in the sample, 62% of whom agreed that women are discriminated against. A larger proportion of Mexican Americans, 23%, felt that there was a high level of discrimination against women than did Anglos (12%).

Another question related to comparative Mexican and Anglo perceptions of women's roles was presented. Respondents were asked to take a position on a five-point position scale ranging from the statement that "In general, women will be better off if

they stay home and raised families," to the other extreme, "In general, women will be better off if they have careers and jobs just like men."

Although one might expect that given the alleged "machismo" value of Mexicans there would be a great distinction between the positions taken on this issue by Mexicans vis a vis Anglos, their positions are quite similar, and the slight difference is in a surprising direction. Fifty per cent of the Mexican Americans in the Southwest took the "liberal" position that women would be better off if they had careers and jobs just like men, while this position was also taken by 44% of the Anglo respondents. Twenty-one per cent of the Mexicans and 16% of the Anglos took the more conservative position of women being better off if they stayed home and raised families. The mid-point position was taken by 30% of the Mexican Americans and 40% of the Anglos.

That Mexican Americans, coming from a culture alleged to be strongly patriarchal and male-dominated and featuring a traditional domestic role for women, enunciated this opinion is quite surprising. This is particularly so when the proportion taking the liberal/feminist perspective is even higher than that of members of the Anglo core culture. Why this very striking pattern emerges is open to speculation. Perhaps the phrasing of the question is such that some respondents answered through an economic perceptive framework. That is, the phrase "better off" was interpreted by the Mexican Americans in particular in an economic manner, meaning that the family would have more financial resources and be better off economically if the woman worked rather than stayed at home and raised a family. In any case, the results were somewhat surprising and once again certainly do not confirm the alleged "machismo" of the Mexican American culture.

### Affirmative Action

Several public policies have embodied the concept of, and the debate over, various manifestations of the equality value. The Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Constitutional Amendments are the most fundamental and primary legal statements in this regard, granting citizenship to a major, previously excluded segment of our population and promising equality of treatment before national laws. States themselves passed similar laws and went beyond these national standards, implementing equality before the law in their own statutes. Political equality evolved as the Supreme Court struck down discriminatory provisions in state statutes regarding the franchise, particularly in the areas of poll taxes, literacy tests, white primaries, and reapportionment.

While these and other related measures led to some diminution of the gap between racial minorities and whites in the United States, some of the disparities, particularly in socio-economic indicators such as income, education, housing, occupation and health, continued. Solutions to these have been attempted by various governments at various times. One

embodiment of these attempts to promote equality of results or status was the policy of affirmative action. Such policies often set goals, if not quotas, for previously-excluded ethnic and racial minorities, such as African Americans, Hispanics and women.

Our Southwesterners were asked to take a position on the government's establishing "quotas in college admissions and job hiring to insure [Mexican American] representation," on the one hand, and on the other hand "college admission and job hiring should be based strictly on merit." The Anglos came out strongly on the side of strict merit. Three quarters (75%) took positions on that side of the spectrum, 20% were in the center, and only 5% per cent favored government's setting quotas. The Mexican Americans, on the other hand, were divided on this dichotomy, with 37% supporting merit as a basis for representation and 32% supporting governmental quotas. Thirty-one per cent took the intermediate position.

### The Value of Life

The most fundamental right enumerated in the Declaration of Independence and protected in the Constitution is that of life itself. This has been one of the values implicit, if not explicit, in the debate over the policy of capital punishment. Do any crimes against society warrant the state or the government's taking the life of an individual? The debate on capital punishment has been an enduring one in American politics. The "life" value can be applied both for and against the argument, particularly when the convicted person has been guilty of himself taking other person's lives.

What are the values of Mexican Americans in the Southwest on capital punishment? Although this item was not asked of the Anglos in the Latino National Political Survey, it is clear from many surveys that mainstream Americans have strongly supported the death penalty for capital crimes over at least two decades. Roughly between sixty to seventy percent have favored the death penalty for persons convicted of murder. Mexican Americans in the Southwest hold similar views: 59% were outright in favor of capital punishment while 20% said it depends on the specific circumstances. Only 21% were flatly opposed to the death penalty.

### Conclusion

When the empirical evidence from the southwestern portion of the LNPS is scrutinized, it is obvious that many, if not all, of the countercultural foreign values attributed to Mexican Americans are erroneous. If they did exist, it was in the past, or in very limited circumstances, or in incorrect conclusions based on haphazard observation or speculation. At the least, these alleged values are again strongly challenged. The LNPS found that many of the basic political cultural values expressed by Mexican Americans are strikingly similar to those of Anglo Americans.

Mexican Americans are strong supporters of the democratic ethos. On almost every measure, they are as firm in their beliefs in liberty and equality--the two most fundamental democratic values--as are Anglos. Moreover, with regard to the underlying trust so essential to democratic government, Mexican Americans are less cynical than Anglos.

We can conclude that whatever the origins and circumstances, Mexican Americans are fully incorporated attitudinally into the most basic values of the American democracy.

## VI. Political Values

Up until the completion of the Latino National Political Survey, very little was known about the political values of Hispanics as a national ethnic group. Very few, if any, national surveys contained sub-samples of Hispanics large enough to base valid conclusions on. There have been a few opinion research studies of Latinos. Most have surveyed "Hispanics" or "Latinos" undifferentiated by national origin. Others have focused on one Spanish-origin group but have been restricted to some of the large metropolitan areas in which Latinos are concentrated. Additionally, there have been some very focused surveys of more circumscribed geographic areas, such as south Texas, Miami/Dade County, and several smaller cities.

Recently, there have been a few larger-scale studies by political scientists of the political attitudes and behaviors of undifferentiated "Hispanics." One used exit poll data aggregated over several years (Welch and Sigelman, 1993). However, there have been no representative studies focusing on the specifically political orientations of one Latino national origin group, such as Mexican Americans, throughout the region defined as the American Southwest. The Latino National Political Survey is the first which gives us the ability to look at the comparative political values and behaviors of Mexican and Anglo Americans residing in the same area of the American Southwest.

### Political Ideology

One of the major political values is ideology. In fact it probably is an "archvalue" which encompasses in a shorthand way value-perspectives on a variety of matters. Although there is a great deal of controversy over the extent of ideology among Americans, and many arguments have been mustered against the use of the conventional liberal/conservative spectrum when discussing ideology, these concepts continue to be major and popular elements of political discourse in the United States.

Particularly with regard to Mexican Americans, there has been considerable speculative dialogue as to whether their ideologies are conservative or liberal. The primary expression of this has been the debate between the two major political parties, each claiming that Mexican Americans' values are closer to their own respective core ideologies, that is, Republicans claiming Mexican Americans are conservative and Democrats claiming Mexican Americans are liberal. The conventional wisdom would probably hold that Mexican Americans, like other "distinctive ethnic minorities" are liberal in their political philosophies, although this might be tempered somewhat by the generally conservative religious tenets of their dominant Catholicism. The national data on ideological identification for the three largest Latino groups has already been reported (Garcia, et. al. 1991). Here we examine the self-categorized political ideologies of Mexican and Anglo Americans in the Southwest. Our respondents were asked, "We hear a lot of talk

these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged, from very liberal to very conservative." The respondents were handed a card containing the ideology scale options, and were asked, "Where would you place yourself on this scale?" The complete responses are reported in Table 4.

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TABLE 4  
Political Ideology (Self-Labeled) of Southwestern  
Mexican and Anglo American Citizens

<u>IDEOLOGY</u>	<u>MEXICAN</u>	<u>ANGLO</u>
Very liberal	4.1%	2.1%
Liberal	11.4%	9.2%
Slightly liberal	11.1%	14.4%
Moderate	31.7%	29.3%
Slightly conservative	16.1%	21.5%
Conservative	17.4%	20.0%
Very conservative	8.3%	3.5%

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The plurality of each group describes itself as "conservative"; 45% of the Anglos and 42% of the Mexicans label themselves as conservative. The collapsed or combined liberal responses are virtually identical for both the Mexican Americans and the Anglos. Those of each ethnic group describing themselves as "moderate" are also in very similar proportions, about 30%. Thus we can conclude that, as far as ideological self-identification goes, Mexican Americans in the Southwest are virtually identical to Anglo Americans along the conventional liberal-conservative spectrum.

**Ideology in Practice.** Our data tells us that the self-professed ideology of Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans in the Southwest are virtually identical. About a quarter self-identifies as liberal, thirty per cent moderate, and the remaining and largest group is self-labeled "conservative." In this section we report a few more specific indicators of ideology. Rather than self-labeling, we will examine some opinions and attitudes involving value judgments by Mexican and Anglo respondents to see whether their specific values are in accord with their self-labeled categorizations. In general, the literature reports that Americans overall are ideologically or abstractly moderate to conservative, but that in practice, with regard to many if not most specific issues, they tend to be "operationally liberal." As more specific instances are presented, Americans tend to take more liberal positions (Corbett 1991, 138). We expect that this also will be the case among our Anglos in the Southwest. The major question is: Will Mexicans in the Southwest who label themselves ideologically



similarly to their Anglos in the area, also take similar positions on specific policies and issues which correlate with an ideology?

Government as the Problem Solver. One major component of American political ideology is the willingness to use government as a problem-solving agent. The conservative tradition, with some exceptions, tends to favor a private-sector approach to the problems of society, and generally opposes government's intervention in social problems, or at least sees this as a last resort.

The LNPS asked its respondents which was the "most important problem facing people in this country today." Then, taking those responses, we asked "Which of the following two statements best describes your views about this problem?" The first alternative was the conservative approach, i.e., "A lot of progress can be made on this problem without involving the government." The polar opposite choice was the liberal approach, i.e., "In order to make substantial progress on this problem, the government will have to get involved."

Both Mexicans and Anglos largely favor government responsibility toward the solution of major important national problems, that is are "liberal" at this level. Mexicans are slightly more in favor of government's taking responsibility (92%) than are Anglos (87%).

This approach was tested concerning local problems. Respondents were asked what they considered the most important problem facing the people in their city or county. Then they were offered the same two approaches on best dealing with the problem--that is, government's involvement on the one extreme, or a laissez-faire approach, without government, on the other. In dealing with problems at the local level, the pattern repeats itself. Both Anglos and Mexicans in the Southwest believe government has a major responsibility for making progress on their major local problems. Again Mexicans are very slightly more in favor of government involvement, that is, a little more liberal than are "operationally liberal" Anglos. Eighty-four percent of Mexicans in the Southwest and 82% of the Anglos favor government responsibility in helping resolve their major problems at the local level.

As a further test of this approach, LNPS inquired of the two groups as to their inclination towards either more government or more individual responsibility in three major areas of public policy. Three items were devised, one dealing with employment, one with housing, and one with income. On each issue, the respondents were asked to indicate on a five-point scale their position between two polar opposites. One end of the scale was government responsibility, and on the other end of the scale was the individual responsibility position.

Provision of Jobs. First, the respondents were asked whether on the one hand "The government should provide jobs for everyone who wants a job" and at the other end of the five-point spectrum to agree or disagree with "It's up to each person to get his own job." The largest proportion of both Mexicans and

Anglos tended toward individual responsibility for the provision of jobs. However, the Mexicans in the Southwest were much more divided in their positions than were Anglos. A majority (56%) of Anglos took positions closest to the individual extreme on this item, and only 12% of the Anglos took positions closest to the governmental provision of employment. Among Mexicans in the Southwest, 42% favored individuals securing their own job, compared to a substantial one third (33%) who leaned towards public job provision. Thus, once again, Mexicans in the Southwest were a little more liberal than their Anglo counterparts, at least with regard to this issue of employment provision. However, perhaps more significantly, their overall position was more conservative than liberal.

The Provision of Housing. The item on individual versus government provision of housing revealed much more dramatic differences, with Mexican Americans taking a much more liberal (that is, governmental involvement) position. A plurality of Mexicans (44%) favored the position that "The government should provide housing to anyone who needs it," and only 29% took the two positions closest to the response "Individuals should provide their own housing." These responses were virtually the mirror opposite of those of Anglos. Forty per cent of the Anglo Americans favored the individual side of the spectrum, compared with 25% who tended towards government provision of housing. So on the issue involving housing, Mexican Americans of the Southwest were considerably more liberal than their Anglo neighbors in the relative sense, yet they are not overwhelmingly liberal, even in the area of housing policy.

The Provision of Minimum Income. The third public policy area testing the relative involvement of government versus individual responsibility was that of providing minimum income. At one end of the spectrum was the statement "The government should guarantee every person or family a minimum income, even if no one in the family can work." The other end of the spectrum contained the statement "People should work and earn their own income." On the income question, we find significant differences between Mexican Americans and Anglos in the Southwest. However, the differences are not as great as on the housing item and are quite similar to the pattern on the employment item. A plurality of both Anglos and Mexicans believe that it is the individual's responsibility to provide for his/her own income (the conservative response). A majority (53%) of the Anglos place the responsibility on the individual, and a plurality (47%) of the Mexicans likewise attribute responsibility to the individual, the conservative position. Only 19% of the Anglos and 29% of the Mexicans favor government's guaranteeing a minimum income for every person. Thus, on this item again, Mexican Americans of the Southwest are a little more liberal than Anglos. However, this is only relatively so, as both groups are quite conservative in their position on this issue.

So the largest proportion of Mexicans are conservative in the areas of jobs and income provision, but relatively more liberal in the housing-policy area. Overall, this is somewhat

in accord with their ideological self-identification. However, the essential point evident through these items is that Mexican Americans are generally and relatively more liberal than their Anglo counterparts in the Southwest, all within, however, an overall moderate-conservative approach self-identified by both groups.

Government Spending on Programs. Another test of the role of government in addressing social problems was embodied in an item which asked Southwestern Anglos and Mexican Americans whether "programs to help Mexican Americans" should be "increased even if it meant paying more taxes," or decreased, or left the same. This item is very specific and also involves direct self-interest. A full three-quarters of the Mexican Americans in the Southwest said that programs to help Mexican Americans ought to be increased, even if it meant paying more taxes; only 21% of Anglos took this position. A majority of the Anglos, 55%, felt that the level of spending on Mexican Americans ought to be left the same. One quarter of the Mexican Americans agreed. One-fourth of the Anglos in the Southwest felt that such programs and government spending ought to be decreased.

#### Party Identification

Party identification, that is, a psychological affiliation with a political party, in the United States is an extremely significant political variable. A great multitude of studies have been done on party identification, its sources, its causes, and most particularly its effects on voting behavior. The Latino National Political Survey was the first to study this phenomenon not only among Mexican Americans, but also among Cubans and Puerto Ricans in the United States (Garcia, F.C. et.al. 1992). In the context of this particular research monograph focusing on the comparative values of Anglos and Mexican Americans in the Southwestern United States, we wish only to report these affiliations for citizens of this region of the country and to explicate their possible relationship to values, including political ideology, governmental activism and concern for civil rights.

Although generalization is fraught with danger, and simplification may lead to stereotyping, it is not unreasonable to state that the Democratic party is more liberal in general than is the Republican party along several dimensions. Certainly, Democrats tend to favor government involvement in social problems more so than do Republicans, who in turn usually look to the private sector or to voluntary action. Moreover, the Democrats have been more liberal in the sense that they have, at the national level, usually been the strongest proponents of civil rights, that is, have tended to be stronger advocates than the Republicans for disadvantaged and excluded groups such as ethnic and racial minorities. Most of the national civil rights legislation has been proposed by

Democrats, either Democratic administrations or the Democrats in Congress, and promoted and adopted primarily because of Democratic support for the measures.

From the preceding in this monograph we would expect that the value differences examined heretofore would emerge in the party identification of Mexican Americans and Anglos in the Southwest. Admittedly, values and perceptions of the parties' relationships to these values are only a partial basis for partisan identification. There are many others such as, for example, socialization by family and critical experiences during critical eras and events. However, if the values revealed in the previously expressed opinions and attitudes of Mexican Americans were to be clearly in opposition to those generally espoused by the Democratic party, this would be most surprising. One would at least expect some consistency between the major value positions taken by the Democrats and most, if not all, of the values of their constituent party identifiers.

Our data confirms the very strong attachment of the Mexican American citizenry in the Southwest to the Democratic party. To measure this psychological party attachment, the University of Michigan's National Election Study's series of questions which results in a seven-point scale of party identification was used. This series of questions minimizes the proportion of "independents" by asking those who initially respond that they are independent whether they are generally "closer" to the Democrats or closer to the Republicans. In addition to those who are "closer" to one party or another, the scale includes positions for "strong" partisans and "not very strong" partisans. (See Table 5.)

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TABLE 5  
Intensity of Party Identification (Self-Identified) of  
Mexican American and Anglo American Citizens in the Southwest

<u>PARTY IDENTIFICATION</u>	<u>MEXICAN</u>	<u>ANGLO</u>
Strong Democrat	32.6%	16.4%
Not strong Democrat	24.7%	24.1%
Closer to Democrat	7.6%	10.4%
Independent/Other	10.3%	6.4%
Closer to Republican	5.5%	9.6%
Not strong Republican	14.1%	19.4%
Strong Republican	5.1%	13.8%

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A very slight majority of Anglo citizens in the Southwest identify with the Democratic party, however weakly -- 51%; 43% of them have a closer psychological attachment to the Republican party. Among Mexican Americans in the Southwest, 65% identify with the Democrats and 25% with the Republicans. Even more in contrast is the percentage claiming to be strong Democrats, 33% of the Mexican Americans compared to only 16% of the Anglos.

Thus the slightly more liberal positions taken by the national Democrats over the past six decades in the area of government intervention in social problems is reflected in Mexican Americans' party identification. Moreover, the stronger support of civil rights and equality by the national Democrats is also reflected in the positions of Mexican Americans presented earlier on affirmative action issues as well as Mexican Americans' greater perception of their people being subject to discrimination.

The one glaring discrepancy between expressed values and party affiliation is that of ideology. Mexican Americans professed to be "conservative-to-moderate" in their political ideology, so one might expect greater affiliation with the Republican party. However, to the extent that party identification is based in liberal and conservative values, it seems to be the more specific, issue-oriented values that dominate this correlation, rather than the abstract, self-labeled ideology value. This is supported by the survey evidence which indicates that even among all self-identified Democrats, the self-labeled "liberals" are fewer than the moderates and conservatives.

### Electoral Participation

Participation in the franchise, assuredly one of the most important democratic norms, is one type of participation in public affairs, and the minimal level of participation expected of citizens is participation in voting. Voting is seen as the most elemental and common method of the citizenry's participating in politics. Such participation is certainly valued in democracies, including the American democracy.

Unfortunately, we do not have direct and conclusive data which can isolate the extent to which voting is valued by Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans. We do know in general that Mexican Americans in the Southwest have registered and voted at a lower rate than Anglos. We also know that many of the reasons for this have to do with a legacy of the exclusion, or at least discouragement, of Mexican Americans by the core culture power holders in this society. Mexican Americans have, for example, been subject to discrimination in some areas of the Southwest through the white primaries as well as poll taxes and English literacy tests. Some have been discouraged by employers and even threatened at the possibility of their exercising the franchise. The history of intentional attempts to discourage Mexican Americans from voting has certainly been a major factor, if not the major factor, for non-participation.

We would expect to find lower rates of registration and voting even among those Mexican Americans who are of age and are citizens of the United States than among their Anglo counterparts, and this is what our LNPS data reveal: 79% of Mexican Americans in the Southwest reported being registered to vote at one time or another, compared to 87% of the Anglo Southwesterners; 65% of Mexican Americans claimed that they

were currently registered in late 1989 and early 1990, compared to 73% of the Southwestern Anglos.

It is of particular interest to note that even though Mexican Americans offer a great target of opportunity for political parties and candidates to recruit new members through registration drives and get out the vote drives, this opportunity has often been missed. (See de la Garza, et. al. 1994.) Most of the efforts to register Mexican Americans in the last few decades have been by Mexican American based political advocacy groups such as, most notably, the Southwest Voter Research and Education Project and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund. Even with these extraordinary attempts by Mexican groups to register Mexican Americans in the Southwest, only one-third reported that anyone had talked to them about registering to vote in the election year of 1988. Two-thirds of these eligible citizens were not contacted. In surprising contrast, 40% of Southwestern Anglos said that they had been contacted about registering to vote, and 60% had not. When Mexican Americans were asked who these contacts were, they tended to name friends, acquaintances and relatives, as well as school personnel and some political party representatives and government officials.

#### Interest in Politics and Public Affairs

Another political norm that is highly valued in a democracy is the citizenry's interest in public affairs. The ideal democratic populace is one that follows the activities of government and politics in order that informed and knowledgeable participation may result. At the least, democratic citizens must keep watch on the goings-on of the governments which represent them.

After a series of questions on media usage in following public affairs, Mexicans and Anglos in the Southwest were asked how often they followed "what's going on in politics and public affairs." Mexican Americans followed politics and public affairs less than did their Anglo counterparts: 35% of Mexican Americans answered never, hardly at all or only now and then, compared to 24% of the Anglos. Twenty-eight percent of Mexican Americans said they followed what's going on in politics and public affairs most of the time, compared to 41% of the Anglos of the Southwest.

Although the LNPS did not inquire into the reasons for the relatively lower interest in public affairs, many of the same factors that contribute to lower levels of participation may be involved. This lower level of participation most likely has several causes. We have found little evidence that it is based in cultural values. Probably more influential is the history of neglect, discrimination and exclusion from the system making governmental affairs less relevant.

### Most Important Problem

Mexican Americans of the Southwest were asked what they thought was "the one most important problem facing Mexican Americans." A tremendous variety of responses were offered. These were categorized into several large clusters of problems. Two types of problems were the most mentioned. The first were those which were ethnic specific, that is which dealt with such issues as discrimination, lack of opportunity, prejudice, differential treatment, civil rights, etc. This type of problem was seen as the most important by 36% of Mexican Americans in the Southwest. A close second, indicating the importance that Mexican Americans place in this area, was education (35%). Most such responses referred to poor quality of education, the lack of educational achievement, the necessity for more and better education, etc. Trailing considerably behind these top two concerns were economic problems (16%), social problems (10%), immigration (2%), moral problems (1%), health (.5%), political (.4%), environment (.2%), plus a variety of others too diverse to categorize.

### Immigration

Of course the United States is a "nation of immigrants," and throughout history there have been debates over the relationship among immigrant groups, the policies governing immigration to this country, and the treatment of the newest of immigrants. In the 1980's, the immigration debate flared anew with the consideration by Congress of the Immigration Reform and Control Act.

Immigration as a major policy issue seems to surface periodically, primarily in times of economic tension in the United States, and this heightened concern is often also aggravated by high rates of immigration. The 1970s and 1980s witnessed almost unprecedented numbers of immigrants, in some ways approaching the previous peak of immigration after World War I, into the United States. Many of the immigrants of the past two decades were non-European, primarily from Asia and Latin America. The country of the largest source of immigrants was Mexico, with literally millions of Mexicans coming to the United States over the past two decades. Of course it is extremely easy for Mexicans to migrate to the United States due to the large common border and the history of an uncertain and fluctuating policy over immigration, both legal and illegal. This has caused much concern in certain quarters, especially in the states bordering Mexico, which are included in this report. Californians are not included in our Southwestern sample. It is in California where concerns about immigration have loomed the largest. In November of 1994, the voters of the state passed a stringent anti-immigration referendum, Proposition 187, which both reflected and exacerbated the ethnic tensions in that area.

In the unstructured listing of their most important problem reported above, immigration was well down on the list of policy issues, offered by only 2%. Yet it is an issue that sooner or

later, directly or indirectly, will affect Mexican Americans. Its impact is particularly strong on those living in the areas directly and immediately impacted by immigrants from Mexico. Many of those interfaces will take place in the southwestern United States, especially in the border states of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona as well as California.

What do Mexican American citizens in the American Southwest think about immigration, particularly in comparison to the attitudes of their regional Anglo counterparts? Our respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement "There are too many immigrants coming to this country." Surprisingly to many, the position of Mexican American and Anglo American citizens in the Southwest on this issue is similar, in fact virtually identical, given the range of sampling error. Seventy-two per cent of Mexican Americans and 70% of Anglo Americans agree or strongly agree that there are too many immigrants coming to the United States. Anglos are more likely to strongly agree with that position, but the differences are not large.

The respondents were then asked "If a citizen and an immigrant apply for the same job, should the citizen be hired?" Here there is some disagreement, as 56% of the Mexican American citizens agree that the citizen should be hired over the immigrant. Conversely, 56% of the Anglos disagree that the citizen should be given preference. This more than likely reflects the fact of economic competition between immigrants and Mexicans in the Southwest. This has been cited as perhaps the major reason for Mexican opposition to immigration, i.e. competition over these jobs which Mexican Americans are most likely to occupy. One advantage citizen Mexican Americans have in their competition with Mexican immigrants is their legal citizenship status. On the other hand, Anglo Americans by and large are less affected by the competition for jobs with immigrants and can respond to this issue at a more idealistic, rather than practical, level.

Finally, although Anglos were not asked this question, Mexicans in the Southwest did not express a preference for Latin Americans over people from other countries who want to emigrate to the United States. Sixty-three per cent of Mexican American citizens in the Southwest disagreed that there should be a preference given to potential immigrants from Latin America over people from other countries who want to emigrate to the United States.



## VII. A Common Culture?

One of the overarching objectives of the LNPS was to determine the existence of a distinctive "Latino" culture. More importantly we hoped to map out some of the specific dimensions of Latino political cultures in the United States, particularly those of Mexican, Cuban and Puerto Rican origin. This report is focussing on Mexican American cultural values. In this context, we are interested in whether southwestern Mexicans perceive that their culture (whatever the specific values that comprise it) is one variation of a generic "Latino" culture. More specifically, is the Mexican American culture similar to that of other Hispanics in the United States, such as that of Puerto Ricans and Cubans?

Mexican Americans in the Southwest were asked: "Some Mexican Americans say all Hispanics or Latinos in the U.S. have a great deal in common culturally. Others say that there are many cultural differences among Hispanics. Do you think that Mexican Americans and other Hispanics are culturally very similar, somewhat similar, or not very similar?" The results are reported in Table 6.

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TABLE 6  
Degree of Cultural Similarities Among Latinos  
As Perceived By Mexican Americans in the Southwest

<u>LATINOS ARE</u> <u>CULTURALLY...</u>	<u>% OF</u> <u>SOUTHWEST</u> <u>MEXICANS</u>
Very similar	17.7%
Somewhat similar	59.7%
Not very similar	22.6
TOTAL	100%

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A majority of Mexican Americans in the Southwest (60%) felt that Mexicans were somewhat similar, culturally, to other Hispanics. Twenty-three percent thought that they were not very similar, and 18% said they were very similar. So Mexican Americans in the Southwest feel that their culture is in some general way considerably like the culture of other Hispanics. Regrettably, there were no follow-up questions asking respondents to specify in what ways their culture was similar and different from the others.

When the question was phrased to focus both on political concerns and on another specific Latino group, the response pattern changed significantly. (See Table 7.)

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TABLE 7  
Levels of Common Political Concerns With Puerto  
Ricans and With Cubans, By Mexican Americans in the Southwest

<u>COMMON POLITICAL CONCERNS</u>	<u>WITH PUERTO RICANS</u>	<u>WITH CUBANS</u>
Very similar	12.3%	6.5%
Somewhat similar	47.0%	42.9%
Not very similar	40.7%	50.6%

---

When asked about the similarity of the underlying political concerns of Mexican origin people and Puerto Ricans, 38% of Mexicans in the Southwest thought that their political concerns were somewhat similar, with fully one-third (33%) feeling they were not very similar, and only 10% saying that Mexican and Puerto Rican political concerns were very similar.

When southwestern Mexican American views were solicited on the similarity of political concerns among Mexican Americans and Cubans in the U.S., the level of perceived similarity diminished further. Forty-one percent felt their political concerns were not very similar; 35% felt they were somewhat similar; and only 5% said that Cuban and Mexican American political concerns were very similar.

Therefore from the viewpoint of Mexican American citizens in the Southwest, their culture is one variation of a generic Latino or Hispanic culture, similar in some respects to other Latino national origin subcultures. However, when referring to common political concerns with two other major Latino national origin groups, considerably less similarity is noted. In fact, a significant level of dissimilarities is perceived.

### VIII. Summary and Observations

The objective of this report is to explore some of the values of Mexican American culture. This is a sensitive subject which through the years has generated much heat and considerably less light. Our hope was that by using some survey data available from an empirical social scientific study, the reality of Mexican American cultural values could be somewhat more solidly established. Perhaps the LNPS could enhance the reality and diminish the myths surrounding Mexican American values.

This solid empirical evidence provided by the Latino National Political Survey does not in most ways support the assertions of those who contend that the contemporary Mexican American culture embodies values such as envy, distrust, cynicism, fatalism and other elements which have been characterized as dysfunctional. Too often, the disadvantaged status of Mexican Americans have been too easily explained and justified by attributing it to the negative values and attitudes of those people themselves.

We found that Mexican Americans are proud of their cultural heritage, but also proudly patriotic Americans. Mexicans want to maintain their ancestral language, at least symbolically, but also realize the desirability of learning and using English. There is a fondness for Mexico, but also a great love and affection for the United States.

With regard to some of those alleged core cultural values which have become part of the conventional wisdom, such as envy, distrust, fatalism and machismo, Mexican American's values are actually very similar to those of Anglo Americans. Indeed, on some of the items measuring these, the Mexican Americans are more positive and supportive than are the Anglos. The former are less cynical, for example. Moreover, strongly contrary evidence was found regarding alleged values of non-support and male dominance. Mexican Americans expressed feelings of helpfulness, a common fate, and electoral support for co-ethnics.

In addition to sharing these similar social values with Anglos, Mexican Americans are also attitudinally incorporated into the United States democratic value system. Overall, their value positions are not substantially different from those of Anglos. In fact, Mexican Americans are more likely than Anglos to believe that their government is more altruistic and competent. They are strong supporters of the equality value, recognizing that substantial discrimination exists against Mexicans, Blacks and women, and feeling that government should play an active role in promoting equality. Expressed attitudinal support for non-traditional and equal roles for women contradicts the machismo value.

An examination of more explicitly political values revealed a little more variation from the political attitudes of Anglos in some areas, while similarity was found in others. On the "metavalue" of political ideology, Mexican Americans label themselves mainly as moderates and conservatives, just as Anglos do. However, Mexicans' noticeably greater support for an active

government and for publicly funded social service programs indicates that they are even more "operationally liberal" on this dimension of ideology than are Anglos. Even though generally more liberal than Anglos in the governmental spending areas, Mexicans are a shade more conservative than usual in their attitudes toward the individual's basic responsibilities in securing jobs and the provision of minimum income.

Mexican Americans' partisan identification compared to Anglos is much more Democratic than one might think, given their mixture of both liberal and conservative values. Much of this might be explained by party identification being the result of much more than general ideology and selected issue positions, including the varying importance of some particular policies, such as civil rights (which Mexican Americans evoke as the single most important problem facing their group), the historical performance of the parties and the passing along of partisan identification from generation to generation.

Another area of differing political attitudes is that of political participation. Mexican American citizens expressed a lower level of interest in public affairs and evidenced a lower level of participation in elections.

In politics the subordinated status of Mexican Americans has been attributed by some largely to their allegedly dysfunctional cultural values, in contrast to that of Anglo Americans. If such values were a significant part of the Mexican American culture, they would also affect, and be part of, the political culture. Such a political culture would indeed be largely counter productive in the United States political system, since it would militate against political organization and mobilization, the support of and communication with political leadership, the exercise of and initiative in problem solving, and other essential elements of American politics.

Finally, we briefly examined Mexican Americans' perceptions of their culture's similarity to other Hispanic national origin cultures and of their political similarities to them. Mexican Americans in the Southwest do feel they share a common culture with other Hispanic groups. However, they are not aware of many political commonalities.

Although we did not have directly comparable data on all these items for both Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans, on many measures for which we did have comparable data, Mexican Americans had values which were as supportive of the United States political culture than did the Anglo Americans. The measurement of other value variables, for which we did not have comparable Anglo data, at least demonstrated that earlier studies (which were not comparative) do not seem to correspond with the findings of the Latino National Political Survey. Minimally, this should cast significant doubt on the validity of earlier studies which have, on a much more limited and less systematic basis, produced results which are contrary to these.

It is clear that much more objective, scientific study is needed before the multiple and complex values of the Mexican American culture can be delineated. Even then, there will be much room for debate since the topic is itself value-laden.

Moreover, it must be noted that this study has been primarily descriptive; even on this data, there is a need for much analysis. The variation within the Mexican American culture is tremendous, and those subcultural variations must be recognized, described and analyzed. Certainly, the variable effects of factors such as region of residence, socioeconomic status (including education, income and occupation), religion and generation in the U.S. are extremely relevant and must be considered in any in-depth analysis about Mexican American values.

Moreover, culture is not only extremely complex, it is dynamic not static. As people and their cultures interact, changes in those cultures occurs, and in the United States that is a continual process. There are changes in all the cultures involved in this interactive process. A snapshot cannot do justice to this moving drama, and viewing the changes in only one culture fails to capture the changes in other cultures, which may be just as significant.

At the least, this descriptive study may contribute to destroying some myths and fortifying the reality of contemporary Mexican Americans in the United States--a reality that is much more similar to the culture of other Americans than to that stereotypical and outdated, traditional "Mexican" culture that has been conventionally portrayed.

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## APPENDIX A

### HISPANIC POLITICAL CULTURAL TRAITS (Hypothesized and Selective)

The following, in no particular order, are some "Hispanic cultural traits" that have been attributed to Hispanics over the years by various researchers, observers and writers. These have been compiled by the author through the years from various sources, written and unwritten (including conversations and observations), scholarly and popular, documented and undocumented. Some of these purported values are contradictory and even seemingly mutually incompatible. Some may be considered negative; others positive. Their inclusion here should not be construed as an endorsement of them or even as an affirmation of their authenticity.

A. Collectivism/Communalism/Allocentrism--an emphasis on the needs, objectives and points of view of the ingroup; in contrast to being individualistic in terms of personal achievements, attitudes and values. The individual gains recognition from his/her contributions to the group not through self aggrandizement and personal material gain. There is a willingness to sacrifice individual gains in order to assist the group. Also includes high personal interdependence, field sensitivity, conformity, readiness to be influenced by others, mutual empathy, and greater trust of the members of the ingroup.

B. Familialism, familism, familismo--strong identification with and attachment to their nuclear and **extended** families, and strong feelings of loyalty, reciprocity and solidarity among members of the same family. Includes compadrazgo--the strong bonds and responsibilities of godparentage. The importance of the family over other groups is paramount.

C. Dignidad--behaving with dignity and respect towards others. Act honorably and treat others with the honor they deserve. Devalue aggressive and assertive behavior. Politeness.

D. Simpatia--the need for behaviors that promote smooth and pleasant social relationships, show a level of conformity and empathy for the feelings of other people. Avoidance of interpersonal **conflict** and **confrontation**. Don't "make waves." Stress congeniality.

E. High Power Distance, Hierarchical--a measure of interpersonal power or influence that exists between two individuals. High power distance cultures value conformity and obedience, and support autocratic or authoritarian attitudes from those in charge instead of disagreeing with those in power.



F. Respeto--the maintenance of personal respect in interpersonal relations; acknowledgement of personal power; proper deference to persons, especially older persons and people in positions of authority; face-saving.

G. Closer Personal Space--preference for a smaller amount of physical space considered appropriate between people when they are interacting.

H. Present Time Orientation--in contrast to future orientation; unable or unwilling to delay gratification or plan for the future; inefficient; not punctual. A greater value is attached to quality of time than on quantity. May be related to fatalism.

I. Strict Gender Roles--Roles are clearly differentiated and delineated between the sexes. Includes machismo--male dominance and patriarchal family structures. Hispanic women are submissive and lacking in power and influence, especially in matters outside the home.

J. Envidia--envy of others, particularly of other members of Hispanic groups succeeding or accomplishing something while others do not or cannot succeed. Non-achievers will criticize, undercut or attempt to pull down individuals who distinguish themselves.

K. Personalismo--attachment to other individuals on a personal, individual basis. Loyalty is to individual leaders rather than to organizations or institutions.

L. Loyalty. A high level of allegiance. Loyal to certain individuals, leaders or members of family. Loyal to (Hispanic) country of origin rather than to the United States.

M. Docility, reticence, passivity, non-aggressiveness, patience.

N. Hospitality, generosity and honesty/honor in interpersonal relations.

O. Fatalism--acceptance of one's fate rather as the natural order of things rather than attempting to alter one's course or situation. Inevitability is the rule. One must accommodate and adjust, or else withdraw. Submission.

P. Anti-organizational bias. Dislike of formally structured institutions. Less able or willing to organize effectively and efficiently. Difficulties with complex organizations, including bureaucratic ways.

Q. Liderismo. Tendency to follow the strong leader, the caudillo or the patron.

R. Racismo. Distinctions are made between "races," especially based on caste, social class and/or skin color.

S. Malinchismo. Things foreign are always superior. Sell out one's own cultural ways to be accepted by the "superior" culture.

T. Religiosity. Religion is the basis of society and the moral order. Ritual is important. The sacred is supreme.

U. Espanol--Spanish language background--Spanish speaking or understanding. Attachment to, pride in, support of, the Spanish language, even if only at the symbolic level

V. Verguenza--shame; modesty.

W. Mysticism or Spiritualism. An acceptance of the importance of otherworldliness and the role it plays in human affairs. A notable belief in the supernatural.

## APPENDIX B

### METHODOLOGY OF THE LATINO NATIONAL POLITICAL SURVEY

The Latino National Political Survey (LNPS) is a national opinion sample survey of the three largest groups of Hispanics in the United States. It is a multistage, stratified, clustered probability sample. A total of 40 primary sampling units (PSUs) were designated for the sample. These include the 28 metropolitan areas having at least a ten percent Latino population. The other 12 were randomly selected from all other PSUs based on geography and concentration of Latinos. These were stratified by state, metropolitan/nonmetropolitan status, income levels and residential density. A total of 12,187 households were screened, and 4,390 persons were eligible for the survey. After households were randomly selected, interviews were conducted with eligible persons 18 years of age and older. This generated completed interviews of 1,546 Mexican, 589 Puerto Rican and 682 Cuban origin respondents. Each of these samples represent 91%, 90.2%, and 91.5%, respectively, of each of these populations in this nation. For purposes of this study, a respondent is a member of one of these populations if he/she has at least one parent, or two grandparents who were solely of Mexican, Puerto Rican or Cuban ancestry. The sample was specifically designed to include Latinos from across the social spectrum. Thus, one-fourth of the Latino respondents came from low density areas (areas in which Latino households of all national origins comprise between 5% and 20% of the population), one-fourth from areas with 20% to 49% Latino household density; and half reside in majority Latino population areas. The only non-represented populations include those residing in states (including Washington, DC) with combined Latino populations of less than a combined total of 5% of the three groups, and those within states who reside in areas with less than a combined minimum percentage (usually 3% but sometimes 5%) of these groups. The sample also includes 456 Anglos who are representative of Anglos residing in the areas from which the Mexican, Puerto Rican and Cuban origin respondents were drawn.

Also, the LNPS Anglo population's characteristics closely match those calculated from the 1987-88 National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), a national probability sample of 9,417 self-identified Anglos who represent the non-institutional United States white population age 19 and older.

Over 97% of all LNPS interviews were completed between August 1989 and February 1990. The respondents had the choice of being interviewed in English or Spanish, and 60% chose Spanish. The English language interviews averaged 83 minutes, while those in Spanish ran 91 minutes. Anglo interviews used a shortened interview schedule and averaged 59 minutes. The overall response rate was 74% for the Latino groups and 56% for the Anglos.

## NOTES

1. This analysis of a subset of regional data from the Latino National Political Survey was funded by a SHRI Faculty Development Grant from the Center for Regional Studies at the University of New Mexico. Special appreciation goes to Dr. Tobias Duran, CRS Director, for his support of this project.

2. The concept of "culture" is one of the broadest and most complex of society's features. A multitude of definitions are available. Culture can be defined as the entire "way of life" of a particular people, including all the ways in which that mode of living is manifested--tangible and intangible. In addition to such physical products as food, music, architecture and clothing, culture is also manifested in particular symbols, perhaps the most important being language. It also includes processes, such as the way institutions operate and people behave. Underlying all of these is the way people think and feel--their values, beliefs and attitudes. It is this latter indicator of culture--orientations expressed verbally--that is utilized in this study.

3. The Latino National Political Survey (LNPS) is the first nationally representative study of the three largest Latino groups in the United States--Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans and Cuban Americans. The study was funded by the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Spencer Foundation and the Tinker Foundation. Principal co-investigators are Rudy de la Garza, University of Texas at Austin; Angelo Falcon, Institute for Puerto Rican Policy; F. Chris Garcia, University of New Mexico and John A. Garcia, University of Arizona. The sampling and field work was conducted by the Institute for Survey Research, Temple University, under the supervision of Dr. Robert Santos.

4. Political culture is that aspect of the more general attitudes, beliefs and values of a community of people which is relevant to those people's political institutions and processes and their relationships with those.