LATINOS' RACIAL IDENTITY AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR POLITICAL ATTITUDES

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is a Ph.D Candidate in Political Science at UCLA, with concentrations in Race, Ethnicity, and Politics, American Politics, and Methodology. Their research analyzes how Latinos' racial identification influences their political attitudes, behavior, and pathways to incorporation. Castro analyzes survey data and design experiments to study questions about ideology, party identification, candidate support, and racial discrimination. Their dissertation applies this approach to study how institutions influence racial heterogeneity among Latinos in the United States and its implications for political attitudes and behaviors.

According to federal policy, Latinos constitute an ethnicity: officially, individuals can be ethnically Latino and racially of any race. Therefore, the U.S. Census requires Latinos to self-classify into racial categories, even if they do not necessarily feel identified with them. This paper examines how racial self-classifications among Latinos are associated with political attitudes and behaviors. I argue that Latinos tend to exhibit political attitudes that align with the racial group they identify with: Latino whites lean more conservative, Latino Blacks lean more liberal, and Latinos who do not select a racial category fall in between. For some Latinos, identifying as white reflects an aspirational association with whiteness and its privileges, while self-classifying as Black may reflect experiences of being perceived as Black in American society. Using data from the 2020 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey, Analysis 1 shows that racial self-classification influences Latino political views. Analysis 2 further demonstrates that among Latino whites, prioritizing white linked fate over Latino linked fate predicts more conservative and racialized political attitudes. This study offers new insight into how racial identification among Latinos shapes their political attitudes and behaviors.

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