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## Ideological Positions of Hispanic College Students in the Rio Grande Valley: Using a Two-Dimensional Model to Account for Domestic Policy Preference

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Ideological Positions of Hispanic College Students in the Rio Grande Valley  
*Using a Two-Dimensional Model to Account for Domestic Policy Preference*

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*Presented at the National Association of Hispanic and Latino Studies  
International Research Forum  
South Padre Island, Texas  
October 24, 2016*

*While a good amount of research has been conducted regarding the voting behavior of Hispanics in the United States, there is a dearth of analysis of the underlying ideologies of members of this ethnic group, especially in contrast to their partisan self-identifications. This is especially true of one particular sub-category: Hispanics along the Rio Grande Valley of south Texas, of whom a majority consistently vote Democrat, but whose personal values would seem to make them a natural constituency for issue positions associated with the Republican Party (Garrett, 2010). The goal of this study is to analyze the ideological positions of a subset of Hispanics in the Rio Grande Valley who tend to vote overwhelmingly Democrat: Hispanic college students.*

*Building on Feldman and Johnston's (2014) work (see also Gerber et al. [2010]), where they argue that a unidimensional model of ideology provides an incomplete basis for the study of political ideology, we employ two dimensions — economic and social ideology — as the minimum needed to account for domestic policy preference. The core of the study is a taxonomic analysis of an initial survey of approximately 150 students taking Government courses at South Texas College, a public community college in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) region of south Texas, with a student population that is over 90% Hispanic. Based on survey results, students are placed on a quadrant-based ideological chart, including Left/Liberal, Right/Conservative, Libertarian, and Communitarian/Statist (along with Centrist, which overlaps portions of all four ideological categories). In addition, using recent American National Election Studies (ANES) datasets, we compare how our samples (RGV college students) are different from the general U.S. population, employing a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to locate each respondent on the quadratic space (social & economic positions).*

*The impetus for this study was anecdotal evidence in the authors' classes; we had assumed that, since voters in the Rio Grande Valley tend to heavily favor Democrats, student ideologies would tend towards Liberal/Center-Left. However, we observed that in informal in-class ideological surveys (such as the four-quadrant "Nolan Quiz" published by the Advocates for Self-Government), a surprising number of students tended towards the Libertarian and Left-Libertarian ideologies, along with a significant number in the Center-Right and Conservative quadrants. Our goal was to see if this held true when using a more robust survey and larger samples. It was hypothesized, and the results verified, that Hispanic college students tend to take policy positions that place them more in the Center/Left and Center/Libertarian quadrants.*

Since the 1960s, there have been a number of studies published which analyze the voting behavior and partisan identification of Hispanics in the United States (e.g., Brischetto and de la Garza 1983, Cain and Kiewiet 1984, Gonzalez-Barrera and Motel 2011, Taylor, Lopez, et al. 2012, Mangum 2013, Cisneros 2016). In general, these studies show that Hispanics tend to self-identify with, and vote overwhelmingly for, Democrats (although their voter turnout numbers are lower than many other ethnic groups). However, there is a dearth of analysis of the underlying

ideologies of the members of this ethnic group, especially in contrast to their partisan self-identifications. The goal of the present study is to analyze the ideological positions of a particular subset of Hispanics: college students. To accomplish this, the authors conducted a survey of college students in the Rio Grande Valley, a region where the population is over 95% Hispanic.<sup>1</sup>

As posited by Becerra and Zambrana (1985), a combination of survey and ethnographic research methodology is well suited to conducting research among Hispanics (see Garcia, et al., 11). Close observation and personal interviews (e.g., Collins 2014) can be helpful for individual in-depth analysis, but surveys are often better suited for broad analysis of current trends and patterns over time. The present work is centered on a taxonomic analysis of a survey of college students taking Government courses in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) region of south Texas, where the student population is over 90% Hispanic. Based on survey results, students are placed on a multidimensional quadrant-based ideological chart, including Left/Liberal, Right/Conservative, Libertarian, and Communitarian/Statist (along with Centrist, which overlaps portions of all four ideological categories). In addition, using recent American National Election Studies (ANES) datasets, we compare how our samples (RGV college students) are different from the general U.S. population, employing a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to locate each respondent on the quadratic space (i.e., using the two dimensions of social & economic positions).

There are a number of special considerations that must be taken into account for studies of this nature: in particular, there are issues with “labeling” categories, such as ethnicity and ideology. Regarding ethnicity, as Hayes-Bautista (1980) noted, simply by virtue of different preferences for certain descriptors, significant differences are implied between Hispanic

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<sup>1</sup> As this ongoing study expands and the number of subjects increases, the authors intend to focus more specifically on a subset of this group: namely, Mexican American college students.

populations such as “Chicano, *Boricua*, Mexican American, Latino, Puerto Rican, Spanish American, *raza*, Latin American, Hispanic, Spanish-origin, and white person of Spanish surname.” For example, when García and Maldonado (1982) investigated the associations between a theoretical population and empirical indicators that identify it – that is, the Mexican-descent population in the United States and the Spanish-heritage indicators commonly used to identify the group – they took issue with the widespread practice of using the global indicator (“Hispanic”) as a surrogate for “Mexican American”.<sup>2</sup> When comparisons of selected characteristics demonstrate considerable variation among Hispanics, García and Maldonado concluded that any research based on the common practice of not disaggregating “Mexican-origin” from other Hispanics is likely to have serious shortcomings.<sup>3</sup>

To compensate for this possible inadequacy, this study’s survey included a choice between two “ethnic background” self-descriptors: “Mexican-American” and “Hispanic (Not Mexican-American)” (along with “White/Anglo,” “African-American,” “Asian,” “Native American,” and “Other”). This approach does have its drawbacks; asking for self-descriptions can sometimes lead to mislabeling, as studies by the Pew Research Center (Lopez 2013) have shown that more than half of Hispanics say they most often use the name of their ancestors’ Hispanic origin (for example, Mexican, Dominican, Salvadoran or Cuban). Nearly one fourth say they describe themselves most often as simply “American,” and fully one fifth say they usually use the “pan-ethnic” terms of “Hispanic” or “Latino” to describe their identity (although a majority have no preference between these two terms, which are most commonly used to

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<sup>2</sup> Gómez-Cano went so far as to claim (265-266) that “the sub-labels *Chicano* and Hispanic represent political microcultures within the broader Mexican-American population... the microcultures represented by the sub-labels should be considered cultural variants within the broader Mexican-American student culture.” Most, however, would say that “Mexican-American” is a “cultural variant” of the Hispanic population, not the other way around.

<sup>3</sup> See also Garcia, et al., p. 39, 46.

describe the Hispanic community). However, the present study was done in Texas, where Lopez notes that “Hispanic” is preferred to “Latino” among those with a preference “by about 6-to-1 – 46% versus 8%. In addition, Texas is the only one of the largest Hispanic states where just as many prefer the term ‘Hispanic’ (46%) as say they have no preference for either term (44%).”<sup>4</sup> In short, even though some (including the United States federal government) have “developed a formal definition of Hispanicity, in practice the U.S. Census Bureau and others rely on self-reports to determine ethnicity – someone is Hispanic or Latino if they self-identify as Hispanic or Latino” (Passel and Taylor).<sup>5</sup>

Secondarily, there are also issues with precisely measuring and “labeling” ideological categories. In their study on the Mexican American electorate, for example, Brischetto and de la Garza (1983) state that their measure of ideology is “the label that respondents identify with on a spectrum ranging from radical to conservative” (3) – that is, it “refers to the radical-liberal-moderate-conservative orientation of the respondents” (5). This would correspond to the standard “left-to-right scale” of “extreme left-left/liberal-moderate/centrist-right/conservative-extreme right” categories used in typical unidimensional studies of ideological orientations. However, even Brischetto and de la Garza (5) conclude that, while “American politics seems to be ultimately an ideological battle between ‘liberals’ and ‘conservatives,’” the “philosophical principles that divide the two camps are not always clear... In general, liberals would favor regulating big business, supporting social welfare programs, and reducing defense spending.

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<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, a recent study (Armstrong 2014) of a broader population of students at South Texas College, where this survey was initially conducted, found that respondents selected “Mexican American” over 95% of the time when asked to self-identify their ethnicity; in the current study, respondents chose that label only 46% of the time, and chose “Hispanic (Not Mexican-American)” 41% of the time.

<sup>5</sup> As Taylor, Lopez, et al. note, outside of the United States, these terms are not widely used, and often have different meanings.

Presumably, conservatives would favor opposing positions on these issues – government should avoid regulating private business, reduce its domestic welfare programs and increase defense spending.” (5-6)

The authors of the current study would postulate that divisions between “liberal” and “conservative” are unclear because a unidimensional approach lacks a sufficient number of categories to properly define the full spectrum of ideological positions. While the more common “left-to-right” scale may be helpful in simplifying self-identifying survey responses, it often clouds the issue due to the fact that individuals’ own definitions of such terms as “liberal” and “conservative” vary widely.<sup>6</sup> As Feldman and Johnston discuss, “People may use the liberal-conservative dimension to guide their political behavior, but they can differ in the way they understand that dimension in terms of substantive policy content. While some citizens may see liberalism and conservatism as primarily about social issues, others may understand the dimension in terms of economics, while others may see both domains as relevant to ideological categorizations” (340-341). For this reason, the authors have followed Feldman and Johnston’s lead in employing a *two-dimensional quadratic scale* to label four main ideologies: as discussed in more detail below, in addition to the traditional “liberal” and “conservative” labels, we include both “libertarian” and “statist” (or “communitarian”) labels as well.<sup>7</sup>

This leads to another salient point: very few studies to date have focused on Hispanic ideology; most have concentrated instead on Hispanic party identification and voting behavior,

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<sup>6</sup> “In other words, citizens *do rely* on the left-right continuum to understand politics, but they differ with respect to their understandings of these labels in terms of substantive policy content.” (Feldman and Johnston, 338)

<sup>7</sup> There are, of course, good reasons for doing so, not the least of which is the tendency for many Hispanics (as well as others) to mislabel themselves when asked about their ideology; as Brischetto and de la Garza (33) note regarding their study of Mexican American political beliefs, “Ideologically, it is also clear that the respondents identify as neither ‘conservative’ nor ‘liberal’ as a group. However, in their policy orientations, they articulate ‘liberal’ preferences on all issues examined except abortion.”

rather than the underlying (sometimes seemingly disconnected) policy positions of respondents. This is understandable: partisan self-identification, or “the psychological affinity for one party over another” (Mangum, 1223), is directly connected to partisan voting patterns. In other words, a major reason why self-identification of party preference is important is that “it usually affects how people vote. Democrats tend to vote for Democrats and Republicans for Republicans” (Brischetto and de la Garza, 5).

This is especially relevant to Hispanic partisan self-identification. In 2013, Mangum (1237) found that “racial consciousness rarely comes into play when determining party identification. There are only two instances when racial consciousness held a relationship with party identification. White consciousness and Hispanic consciousness are inversely related to identification as Republicans.” One early study of the political behavior of Mexican Americans in Texas went so far as to show that the Republican Party “almost draws a blank so far as the two minorities are concerned, for the ‘Strong’ and ‘Weak’ Republican categories combined account for only 2 percent of the blacks and 3 percent of the Mexican Americans” (McCleskey and Merrill, 791). The study confirmed the attachment to the Democratic party of Mexican Americans living in South Texas, “for no less than 86 percent identify themselves as ‘Democratic’ to some greater or lesser degree.”<sup>8</sup>

This attachment has continued over the years; a decade later, Brischetto and de la Garza (5) reported that two thirds of respondents “identified themselves as Democrats and only 6 percent classified themselves as Republicans. In fact the percent of Republicans was less than the

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<sup>8</sup> “That identification with the Democratic party began in the mid-nineteenth century when the South Texas political system was first given shape. It was reinforced by the development of the one-party system in Texas, and further cemented by the class, ethnic, and religious appeals of the national Democratic party from Franklin Roosevelt to the present” (McCleskey and Merrill, 789).



proportion of those who identified themselves as independents.”<sup>9</sup> Whites are also more likely to vote “split tickets” to a greater extent, with 49% of them reporting doing so, compared with only 27% of the Mexican Americans (McCleskey and Merrill, 791). In fact, the Democratic hold on Hispanic voters has not dropped below 25% since 1972 (Collins, 5). However, that consistent identification with the Democratic party has, in recent years, been more and more associated with the older generation; retirees are more likely to identify as Democrats, perhaps because many Hispanics, especially Mexican Americans, have *traditionally* identified with the Democratic party (Brischetto and de la Garza, 19). Students, on the other hand, were found to self-identify as Democrat only 47% of the time, while self-identifying as Republicans and Independents 13% and 27% of the time, respectively (21).<sup>10</sup>

These more recent developments point to two important facts relevant to the present study: first, that the Hispanic vote has turned out to be, and continues to become, more and more important. Some go so far as to say that “the presidential dance of today is not complete without full attention being paid to Latinos... whether you are a Democrat or a Republican, you had better learn to dance to the rhythms of salsa, rancheras, cumbias, tangos... or ballroom... or hip hop. Perhaps what is most important is that you be dancing with Latinos, for a considerable period of time, to music that they prefer” (Barreto et al., 760). Secondly, however, is the fact that the support of Mexican American voters – even for Mexican American candidates, and even

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<sup>9</sup> The underlying reasons for this attachment are beyond the scope of this study, but Cisneros (2016) argues that “social identities” are at the center of Hispanic partisanship because, “Latino pan-ethnic identity emerges as one of multiple identities available to Latinos in America. These multiple, diverse, and overlapping identities are the force behind Latino partisanship. Latino ethnic identity trumps the impact of religious identities in making Latinos more Democratic.”

<sup>10</sup> However, see Armstrong (2014), where fifty-seven percent of Mexican American college students in south Texas self-identified as Democrat (specifically, they said they would most likely be voting for the Democratic candidate for president); twelve percent were Republican, and only five percent were independent. (Twenty-six percent said they would not be voting.)

if they are of the same party as themselves – is by no means automatic: “‘bloc voting’ is hardly inevitable” (Cain and Kiewiet, 317). This is likely due to an over-emphasis on political party identification, to the detriment of the necessary added element of political ideology.

All of this is not to say that there has been *no* research on Hispanic ideology. To the contrary, there have been such studies over the years, though they have been comparatively fewer in number, and they have almost all utilized a unidimensional approach to ideology (the traditional “left/liberal-to-right/conservative” scale). For example, in the early 1970s, McCleskey and Merrill conducted surveys where respondents were asked to place themselves “along a conservative-liberal continuum”. In their study, 29% of the Mexican Americans identify themselves as liberal (compared to 18% of Whites, or “Anglos”); similarly, 23% of the Mexican Americans described themselves as conservative, compared to 40% of the Anglos (793) – certainly a contrast with the earlier statistics on party identification, if one associates “liberal” with “Democrat” and “conservative” with “Republican.” In fact, McCleskey and Merrill admitted that their data “shed no light on whether voters in any of these three ethnic groups do in fact make decisions by weighing liberal and conservative considerations. Conceivably, they may be aware of the ideological dimension but do not act upon it.”<sup>11</sup>

Recent studies point to similar conclusions, especially in relation to the common belief that Hispanics, and in particular Mexican Americans, hold fairly conservative political beliefs (especially in social issues), and therefore ought to be voting Republican more often than they currently do. While this may be true on some specific issues (such as abortion), studies by the Pew Research Center (Taylor, Lopez, et al.) suggest that Hispanics are no more or less likely

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<sup>11</sup> Wals (762) suggests it may be that “ideology in the country of origin is imported and serves as an anchor for the ideological range from which the individual will choose to adjust (if at all) one’s self-placement following migration... as immigrants cross our nation’s borders, their ideological predispositions do as well.” However, this would seemingly only offer an explanation for immigrants, and not further generations.

than the general public to describe their political views as conservative. “Some 32% of Hispanics and 34% of all U.S. adults say their political views are ‘very conservative’ or ‘conservative.’” However, Latinos are more likely than the general public to describe their views as liberal. Overall, 30% of Latino adults say this, while just 21% of all U.S. adults say the same” (Taylor, Lopez, et al., “V”). In Texas, though, there is somewhat more alignment of Hispanics’ self-identified ideology with their more conservative beliefs on specific issues; a 2010 poll shows only 18% of Texas Hispanics say they’re liberal or progressive while 54% call themselves “conservative”, “moderate conservative,” or “religiously conservative” (Garrett). Despite that fact, in the 2011 “Texas Hispanic Electorate Report” (Board of Hispanic Caucus Chairs), the partisan affiliations of Hispanic registered voters remained at 63% Democrat and 26% Republican.

There is, then, a seeming “disconnect” between Hispanics’ ideological self-identification and their partisan affiliations and voting patterns, which could be explained by their actual positions on political issues and governmental policies. Brischetto and de la Garza (7) had already noticed that Mexican Americans were more liberal than the general population on domestic issues (with the notable exception of abortion). According to their research, Mexican Americans felt the government was “spending too little on domestic social programs and too much on foreign aid, defense and space exploration.” They were also “strong in their support of civil rights and women’s rights proposals.” The Texas Hispanic Electorate Report (4) reported similar findings: for example, 60% of Hispanics in Texas agree strongly that the government should help ensure affordable healthcare for every American; 63% believe reform would lower the high costs of medical care; and 75% believe a government run health care system would

create more affordable options for those without insurance – all policy positions which are understood to be conservative in ideology.<sup>12</sup>

All of this would suggest an even greater “disconnect” between ideological self-identification and actual political ideology based on positions taken on issues and policies. In fact, while “liberal” and “conservative” *labels* may be adopted by Hispanic Americans in their ideological self-concepts, it is clear from the research (Brischetto and de la Garza, 7) that these concepts are not very clear to many Mexican Americans.<sup>13</sup> This is not a “new discovery” – Free and Cantril reported in 1968 that, while they found the liberal-conservative dimension “meaningful for ideological and for operational purposes,” they concluded that “self-identification was not a very helpful indicator” (McCleskey and Merrill, 793). More recently, Lydia Camarillo, vice president of the nonpartisan Southwest Voter Registration Education Project, said that many Hispanics who self-identify as conservative aren't talking about “less taxes, less government,” the way more traditional conservatives (especially White/Anglo conservatives) would conceptualize the term. “When a Latino says that he or she is conservative, they're thinking about how they are raising the kids and... the family,” she said. “It's more about work ethic, and that when you give your word, you give your word. Those kinds of things are

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<sup>12</sup> There is some evidence that this may be related to level of education: “When asked to identify with a particular ideological label, the more highly educated respondents were more apt to choose both *liberal* and *moderate* to describe their political beliefs... However, a majority of persons with less than a high school education said they do not think in those terms... Apparently, the more formal education a person receives, the more likely he or she is to develop a sense of political identity or a distinct ideology. Moreover, that political identity is more likely to be moderate to liberal than conservative.” (Brischetto and de la Garza, 17-18) Regarding ethnicity and ideology, Mangum (1222) suggests that Americans of many ethnicities “rely on racial categorization and identification when identifying themselves with a political party, but not a political ideology. However, the findings suggest that Americans rely on racial and moral issues when adopting a political ideology, but not party identification.”

<sup>13</sup> “When asked to identify themselves ideologically, the most common response in both cities [San Antonio and East Los Angeles] was ‘I do not think in those terms.’ The next most frequent response was ‘moderate,’ followed by ‘liberal’ and ‘conservative’... The researchers may only conclude that the ideological labels, without further specification, have little meaning to a large number of the respondents.”

what they're thinking of. It's a different frame of mind, and pollsters have yet to define it.”

(Garrett, 2010)

It is that very issue – the issue of *why* “pollsters have yet to define” the disconnect between Hispanic self-identified ideologies and their personal and policy positions, along with partisan voting patterns – that defines the “heart” of the current study. The authors believe that a main cause of this “disconnect” is the overwhelmingly common usage of that unidimensional ideological scale – “left/liberal , right/conservative” – rather than a two-dimensional quadratic ideological scale, based on the intersection of *both* economic and social issues. We agree with Feldman and Johnston’s assessment:

“Another common approach is to measure ideology through self-identification or the evaluation of ideological labels (liberal and conservative). These measures are often good predictors of political outcomes. However, the latent class analysis suggests that self-identification may mean different things to different people. This suggests that while people may have some understanding of a liberal-conservative dimension, the meaning of that dimension may vary.” (Feldman and Johnston, 352)

Like most instructors in political science courses, the authors of the present study have utilized the standard “left-to-right” scale in the past when teaching ideological concepts to students. However, we have come to realize that this simple approach fails more often than not: it fails to explain why the “extreme” statist/communitarian ideologies of left and right (socialism/Marxism/communism, fascism/Nazism) exhibit more similarities than dissimilarities, especially when given the opportunity for governance; and it fails to include at least one major contemporary ideology – libertarianism/classical liberalism – anywhere at all on its scale. In attempting to utilize simplicity to achieve clarity, it ultimately fails in both categories: “While simplicity is appealing, it must not come at the expense of conceptual clarity... Many of these recent studies have relied upon unidimensional operationalizations of ideology only to extrapolate their findings backwards to explain the effects of prepolitical orientations on multiple

dimensions of ideology and thus on ideological constraint. In our view, this puts the proverbial cart before the horse. While such theories are both reasonable and well-grounded, they must hold up to closer empirical scrutiny” (Feldman and Johnston, 341). As further explained:

“Another common approach is to measure ideology through self-identification or the evaluation of ideological labels (liberal and conservative). These measures are often good predictors of political outcomes. However, the latent class analysis suggests that self-identification may mean different things to different people. This suggests that while people may have some understanding of a liberal-conservative dimension, the meaning of that dimension may vary.” (Feldman and Johnston, 352)

Like Gerber et al. (115), we find the relative lack of attention to multidimensional policy domains – especially economic and social policy – to be remarkable; after all, “attitudes are not obviously related across issue domains” and “the sources of beliefs in these domains are themselves important. In addition, because overall ideology likely builds on one's beliefs about both economic and social policy (with a relative weighting of these dimensions that may vary across individuals), our understanding of overall ideological orientation must build on knowledge of what under girds opinions in particular domains.” This is especially true in studies of American ideological positions, where it has become clear that “only a minority of the American public have political beliefs that appear to fit a unidimensional model of ideology” (Feldman and Johnston, 353).

While we have found this to be anecdotally true in our own classroom experiences,<sup>14</sup> there is also strong theoretical support for the “multidimensionality of political ideology.” Duckitt’s (2001) dual-process model of ideology and prejudice suggests that “social and

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<sup>14</sup> Both authors have employed an informal ten-question policy quiz in our classes to help students determine their own ideology. We assumed that, since voters in the Rio Grande Valley tend to heavily favor Democrats, student ideologies would tend towards Liberal/Center-Left (which held true). However, we also observed that in these surveys (such as the four-quadrant “Nolan Quiz” published by the Advocates for Self-Government), a surprising number of students tended towards the Libertarian and Left-Libertarian ideologies, along with a significant number in the Center-Right, Conservative, and (interestingly) Statist/Communitarian quadrants.

economic dimensions of ideology” (Duckitt, Wagner, du Plessis, & Birum, 2002) are “rooted in distinct worldviews.” Despite the simplistic appeal of a unidimensional conceptualization, much research suggests that “a single continuum is insufficient” to describe the mass public’s full range of political ideology. Empirical research, in both political science and psychology, suggests that “citizen attitudes across ideological domains, while often correlated, remain statistically independent” (Feldman and Johnston, 339). Because of this, we chose to use a quadratic scale in our analysis of Hispanic college students, with a focus on economic and social issues for determination of ideological positions; this is “consistent with a great deal of research in political science and psychology that suggests that they are the two fundamental dimensions of political ideology” (Feldman and Johnston, 342).

We also had a strong rationale for choosing a scale that includes libertarian/classical liberal ideology, in addition to the standard inclusion of left/liberal and right/conservative ideologies: the recent sharp growth in adherents to this ideology, in studies of both self-identification and placement based on issue and policy positions. In 2011, 11% of Americans described themselves as libertarian (and knew what the term meant), according to the Pew Research Center’s political typology and polarization survey, in conjunction with a survey of a subset of those respondents via the Pew Research Center’s “American Trends Panel” (Kiley). By 2015, that number had grown – from a low of 15% of Americans in a YouGov poll (Moore), to a high of 20% in a Reuters/Ipsos poll (Becker). Finally, by the end of that year, the Gallup Poll had a new estimate of the number of libertarians in the American electorate: in their 2015 Governance survey they found that 27% of respondents “can be characterized as libertarians, the highest number it has ever found. The latest results also make libertarians the largest group in the

electorate, as compared to 26 percent conservative, 23 percent liberal, and 15 percent populist” (Boaz).<sup>15</sup>

As the numbers of self-identifying libertarians have increased overall, so have their numbers among Hispanics (a demographic which itself is already growing quickly) – especially younger “Millennial” Hispanics. The 2014 Pew Research “American Trends Panel” (Kiley) found that the percentage of people saying that “libertarian” describes them well – and who know the term’s meaning – was the same for Hispanics (11%) as it was for the overall population as a whole (and approximately the same as 18-29-year-olds, at 12%). As one libertarian-leaning Hispanic remarked, libertarianism “appeals to issues that matter deeply to Hispanic Millennials and young people in general: a greater emphasis on civil liberties. Hispanic Millennials overwhelmingly support gay marriage. They want to legalize marijuana. And of course, they show greater support for relaxing laws on unauthorized immigration, a libertarian cornerstone” (Burger).<sup>16</sup> Another writer, who was herself not a “fan” of libertarianism (apparently because she misapprehended libertarianism to be a form of right-wing ideology), stated that, “one would think more Hispanics would embrace that offshoot of conservative thought known as libertarianism. This philosophy, which holds that the individual is the basic unit of society and must be subject to as little governmental influence as possible, should really resonate with people who have roots in lands where the government crushes all free thought. It

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<sup>15</sup> Not surprisingly, defining “libertarianism” can be just as difficult for researchers as it is for respondents who are asked to self-identify their ideology (Feldman and Johnston, 340-341; Gerber, 112, 149). For purposes of this study, we accept several sources’ definitions, but especially that of the Advocates for Self-Government: that libertarians “advocate both personal and economic liberty” (“Libertarianism 101”).

<sup>16</sup> Of course, it may simply be that Hispanic Millennials trend libertarian because younger Americans in general are much more likely to do so (Moore). A recent Reuters poll reported that younger adults are the most likely to adopt the “libertarian” label. “Among adults aged 18 to 29, 32 percent consider themselves libertarian. Just 12 percent of Americans age 60 or older consider themselves libertarian.” (Becker)



should also appeal to people who often have to pull themselves up from their bootstraps (to use a favorite conservative cliché) and start over in a new country” (Cubias).

The selection of Hispanic college students in the Rio Grande Valley as the subjects of this study was not simply a matter of convenience for the authors. To begin with, we chose to focus on Hispanics for several specific reasons: first and foremost, the rapid growth of their overall ethnic demographic in Texas and the United States. In 2005, the Census Bureau reported that Texas became the fourth state to have a non-white majority population – “a trend driven by a surging number of Hispanics moving to the state.” Steve Murdock, a demographer at the University of Texas at San Antonio, declared that the entire nation should be majority-minority by 2050: “If you look in the 1990s, in every one of the 50 states, non-Anglo Hispanic populations grew faster than Anglo populations. It’s a very pervasive pattern” (Associated Press). Six years later, there were five states with non-white majorities, according to demographic data released by the U.S. Census Bureau. Of particular geographic significance for our study, areas in the Rio Grande Valley had inordinately high percentages of Hispanic populations; “Starr County, which lies along the border with Mexico, had the highest percent of Hispanics [in the U.S.] at 95.7 percent,” while the ratio of Hispanic to non-Hispanic whites in next-door Hidalgo County stood at a remarkable 28.09 to 1 (Bolender).<sup>17</sup>

Second, that growth trend for Hispanics shows no sign of abating at any time in the near future, which portends well for their future political participation:

“While many variables can impact the outcome of an election the hard numbers in this analysis make it abundantly clear that in election cycles to come the Hispanic vote will play an increasingly decisive role in the electoral outcomes of gubernatorial and presidential candidates... The geographic concentration of the Hispanic vote, coupled with its growing size certainly makes for a more compact community of voters that can yield great impact. Should the trends in Hispanic

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<sup>17</sup> The present study was conducted among students at South Texas College, which has campuses in Starr and Hidalgo Counties.

political participation continue over the next decade, the political map of Texas will certainly have adjusting to do.” (Board, *Texas Hispanic Voter Profile*, 8)

Third, a great deal of research shows that another category of this study’s subjects – that is, college students – are more likely to engage in greater political participation in the future, once they hit well-established target demographics that tend to participate more in general (older, college-educated, higher income, etc.). For example, while they may *currently* belong to a group which has been shown to consistently have lower voter turnout rates relative to their eligibility, they will (obviously) be *older* in the future, and older Americans have long been more inclined to vote at higher rates than their share of the eligible population (Fine, 7). Studies of political participation by Hispanics – and especially by Mexican Americans – tend to closely match results found in studies of the general American electorate: “registering and voting increases with age and reaches a peak in the forties and fifties, then levels off. However, the ‘twilight decline’ in voting observed during the retirement years in many national studies is not found among our surveys of the Mexican American electorate” (Brischetto and de la Garza, 8). The growth in absolute numbers of Hispanics also increases the importance of the Hispanic vote to leaders of the major parties, due to “the increasing number of Hispanics who will be in the voting-age population in the years ahead, as the current ‘bulge’ of Hispanics under the age of 18 reaches adulthood” (Newport & Wilke).

Our subjects will also be more likely to engage in political participation in the future due to their status as “college educated,” and due to the fact that they will likely be earning a higher income than their non-college-educated contemporaries. In recent elections, “the 67 percent participation rate among college graduates ages 18–24 was 29 percentage points higher than the 38 percent participation rate for high school graduates in that age group” (Baum & Ma, 27), and 80% of adults from families earning at least \$100,000 a year voted, “while only 52% of adults

from families earning \$20,000 or less cast a vote, according to data from the Census Bureau” (Censky). Political participation has been found to be directly related to educational attainment, and this holds true for Mexican Americans and other Hispanics – that is, the greater the amount of schooling, the greater the likelihood that they will be politically active. “The largest differences are found between those who have some college education and those who have none... while age did not seem to make a difference for these more active forms of political participation, educational attainment – particularly whether one went to college – certainly did matter” (Brischetto and de la Garza, 14-15).

## **RESULTS**

In this study, we built on Feldman and Johnston’s (2014) work, where they argue that a unidimensional model of ideology provides an incomplete basis for the study of political ideology. Like they did, we employed two dimensions — economic and social ideology — as the minimum needed to account for domestic policy preference. While the goal of their study was to show that “a unidimensional model fails to adequately describe political ideology,” our work “picked up” from there and accepted the need for two policy dimensions as axiomatic. And, like they did, “in order to keep this task manageable,” we selected a relatively small set of questions intended to measure the same two key components of ideology: economic and social ideology (342).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> We also included ten additional policy statements in our survey, taken verbatim from what is frequently referred to as the “Nolan Quiz” (named after David Nolan, the developer of the most common quadratic ideological scale, the “Nolan Chart”). This quiz (and its concomitant chart) “is based on the idea that virtually all political issues can be divided into two broad categories: Economic and Personal. The Personal category includes what you do in relationships, in self-expression and in general what you do with your own body and mind... The Economic category includes what you do as a producer and consumer – what you can buy, sell, produce... Since most government activity occurs in these two major areas, political positions can be defined and compared by determining how much government control a person favors in these two areas.”

## **Data and Methods**

We examined the attitudes of Hispanic college students toward an array of issues that constitute a political ideology, using a unique survey dataset we built. The data comes from an online survey which was sent to approximately 3,000 students taking Government courses in Fall Semester 2016 at South Texas College (STC), a public community college in the Rio Grande Valley region of south Texas with a student population over 91% Hispanic (*Excelencia in Education*, 1) – an area where the general population is also over 95% Hispanic (South Texas College, 2). Initiated in October 2016, the survey data includes 129 respondents so far. Using this unique dataset, we gauged the attitudes of this unique subset of the U.S. population – Hispanic college students – on core political issues, so as to determine their political ideology.

In order to examine this group's ideological differences and similarities in comparison to the ideological stances in the general U.S. public, we compared the findings from this dataset to those from the American National Election Studies (ANES), which consists of nationally representative survey data. Given that our STC survey was begun in 2016, we used the 2012 ANES, which is most recent ANES Time Series study, to increase the comparability of the results from these two different datasets. The 2012 ANES has 5,916 respondents surveyed through a dual-mode design: combining the traditional ANES face-to-face interviewing with a separate sample interviewed on the internet. We conducted Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to statistically test how our subject of interest – Hispanic college students – is different from the general public in terms of attitudes toward major political issues, and thus ideological positions.

## Findings and Analysis

We began our analysis by examining the attitude structure of STC students from our survey data. Table 1 summarizes their attitudes on the core economic and social issues. Generally, the results suggest that Hispanic college students in the Rio Grande Valley tend to lean more toward the liberal side than the conservative on both economic and social issues. For instance, 64.3% of the respondents believed that the government should provide more services in areas such as health and education even if it leads to increased government spending, while 35.7% thought that government-provided services should be curtailed. This liberal attitude is more pronounced on the health insurance issue. About 72.1% of the respondents believed there should be a government insurance plan that covers all medical expenses for everyone, whereas less than 28% favored the idea that private insurance plans should be responsible for covering these costs. Respondents held a more conservative view regarding federal aid to the poor, however. Only 42.6% thought the federal aid to the poor should be increased; 34.9% believed the aid should remain the same as the current level, and 22.5% believed it should be decreased.

**Table 1: Economic & Social Issue Preferences of Hispanic College Students**

Economic Issues		Social Issues	
<b>Government Spending</b>		<b>Abortion</b>	
Liberal	64.3%	Always legal	36.4%
Conservative	35.7%	Only need	22.5%
<b>Health Insurance</b>		Only conditions	27.1%
Liberal	72.1%	Always illegal	14.0%
Conservative	27.9%		
<b>Jobs/Standard of Living</b>		<b>Gay Adoption</b>	
Liberal	61.2%	Favor	79.8%
Conservative	38.8%	Oppose	20.2%
<b>Assistance to Poor</b>		<b>Women's Role</b>	
Liberal	42.6%	Liberal	96.1%
Moderate	34.9%	Conservative	3.9%
Conservative	22.5%		

We found a similar pattern on social issues. Concerning abortion, the response with the highest level of support was to “allow abortion always” (although the responses were evenly spread across all other opinions). Approximately 80% of the respondents agreed that gay couples should be allowed to adopt children, and almost unanimous support was given to the view that women should have an equal role with men in running business and government.

**Table 2: Libertarian Issue Preferences of Hispanic College Students**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Libertarian</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Pro-Gov't Involvement</b>	<b>Total</b>
Government censoring speech, press, media, or internet	67.4%	21.7%	10.9%	100.0%
Military should be voluntary (no draft)	66.7%	23.3%	10.0%	100.0%
Laws regarding sex for consenting adults	43.4%	25.6%	31.0%	100.0%
Possession and use of drugs	27.9%	28.7%	43.4%	100.0%
Ownership and use of weapons	28.7%	21.7%	49.6%	100.0%
Gov't handout to business	41.9%	29.4%	28.7%	100.0%
Gov't barriers to free trade	31.0%	38.8%	30.2%	100.0%
Privatizing social security	44.2%	22.5%	33.3%	100.0%
Replacing gov't welfare with private charity	24.0%	31.0%	45.0%	100.0%
Cutting taxes and spending by 50% or more	44.2%	31.8%	24.0%	100.0%

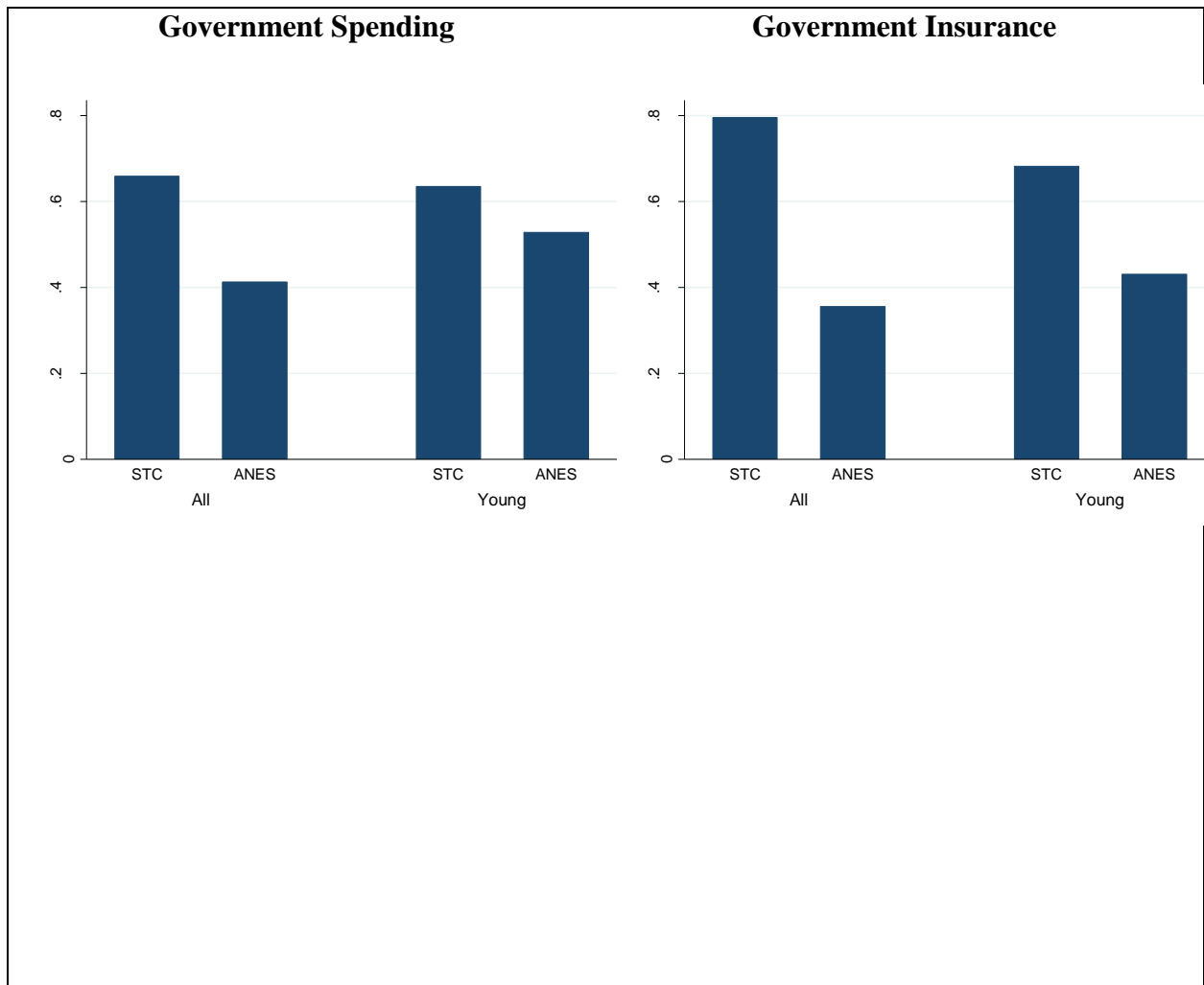
Our survey also includes an array of questions designed to gauge individuals' attitudes on the Libertarian/Pro-Government scale. Table 2 shows that the degree of libertarianism varies greatly depending on issue types. First, our respondents display the highest level of libertarianism on the issues of government censorship and the draft. However, they support a larger role for government in areas that are more proximate to their everyday life and well-being, such as social security and welfare programs. Furthermore, on moral/ethical issues – including laws regarding sex for consenting adults, drugs, and weapons – the respondents show high levels of support for government regulations. Regarding issues that are more distant from individuals' everyday life and well-being than welfare and moral/ethical issues, the respondents hold more libertarian stances, as seen in the results from questions regarding business, free trade, and government budget issues.

**Table 3: Egalitarian Issue Preferences of Hispanic College Students**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Agree Strongly</b>	<b>Agree Somewhat</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree Somewhat</b>	<b>Disagree Strongly</b>	<b>Total</b>
Everyone should have an equal opportunity to succeed	66.7%	21.7%	7.8%	3.1%	0.7%	100.0%
We've gone too far in pushing equal rights	10.1%	17.8%	26.4%	16.3%	29.4%	100.0%
We don't give everyone an equal chance	42.6%	27.9%	10.1%	12.4%	7.0%	100.0%
We'd be better off if worried less about how equal people are	11.6%	15.5%	23.2%	20.2%	29.5%	100.0%
Unequal chance among people is not a big problem	5.4%	12.4%	28.7%	18.6%	34.9%	100.0%

The question, then, is how do these results differ from the general U.S. public? First, regarding economic issues, Figure 1 shows that across the core economic issues, Hispanic college students tend to hold more liberal views than the general population, supporting redistribution of wealth and an active government role in the market. The same pattern is found in all samples, as well as in the younger samples (defined as the 18-34 age group). In short, Figure 1 suggests that Hispanic college students are more liberal on the major economic issues than the general U.S. population.

**Figure 1: Economic Issue Preferences of Hispanic College Students and the General U.S. Population**





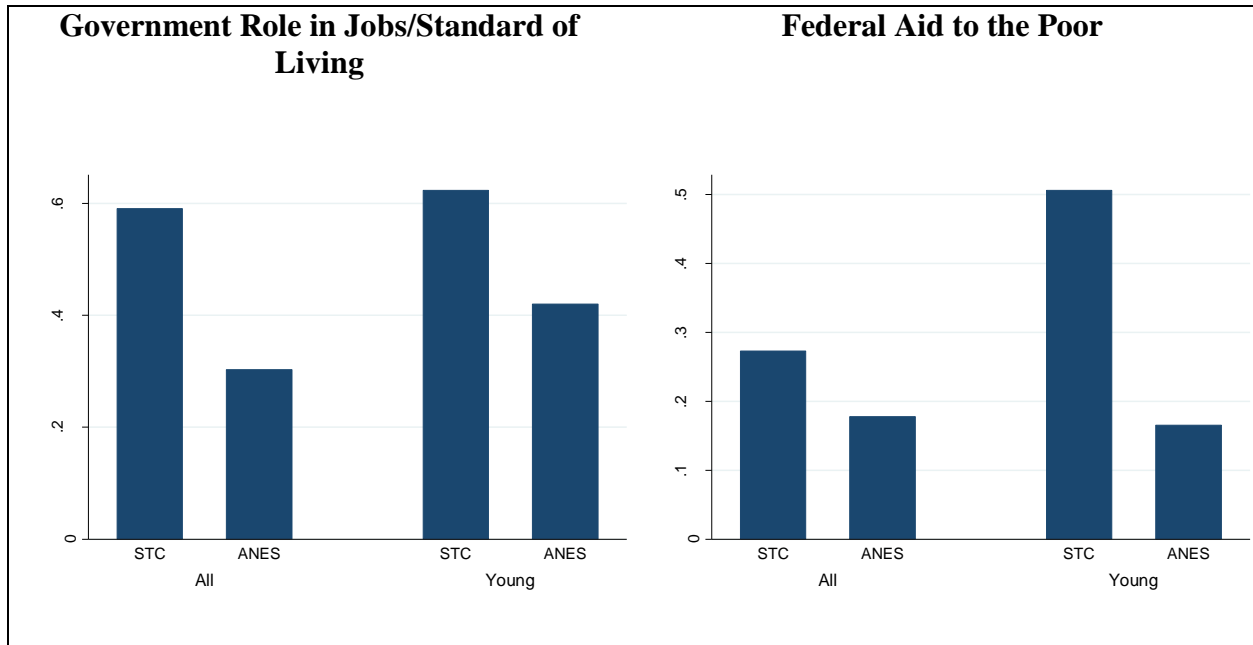
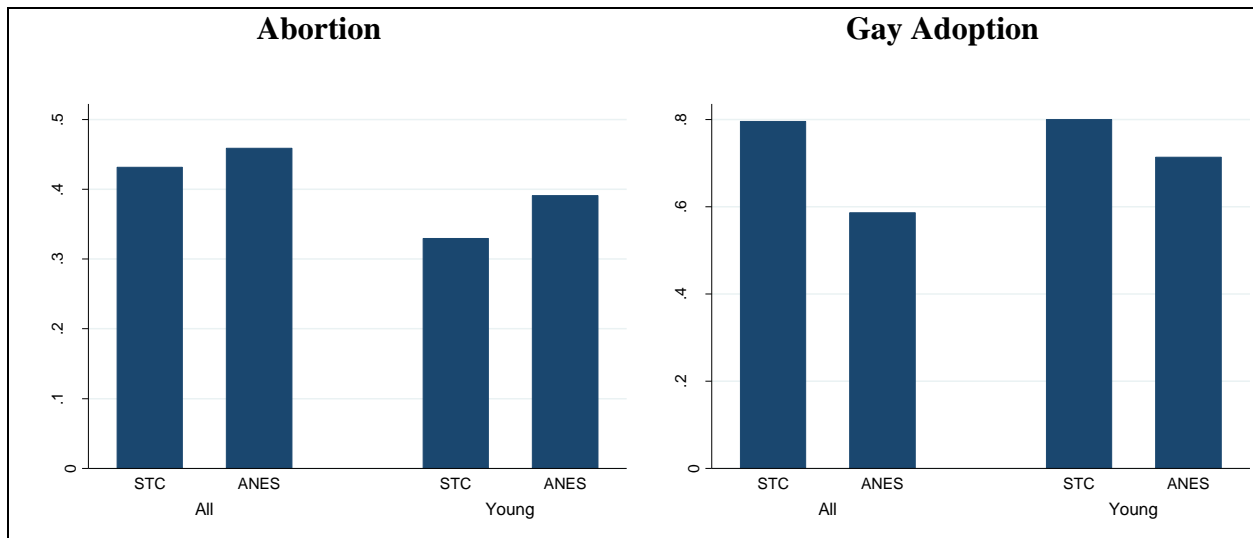


Figure 2 displays the differences between STC and ANES data on social issues. It provides us with mixed results: the STC respondents are more conservative on abortion than the ANES respondents, while the former are more liberal on gay couples' adoption of children than the latter. In short, the results of our analysis indicate that Hispanic college students in the Rio Grande Valley hold liberal views in the economic dimension, but such is not the case in the social dimension. Their attitude structure is more ambivalent and conflicting in the social dimension. In fact, this finding supports Feldman and Johnston's argument that economic and social dimensions of political ideology are separate and distinct – which should incentivize researchers to analyze both dimensions in order to have a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of individuals' political ideology.

**Figure 2 Social Issue Preferences of Hispanic College Students and the U.S. General Population**

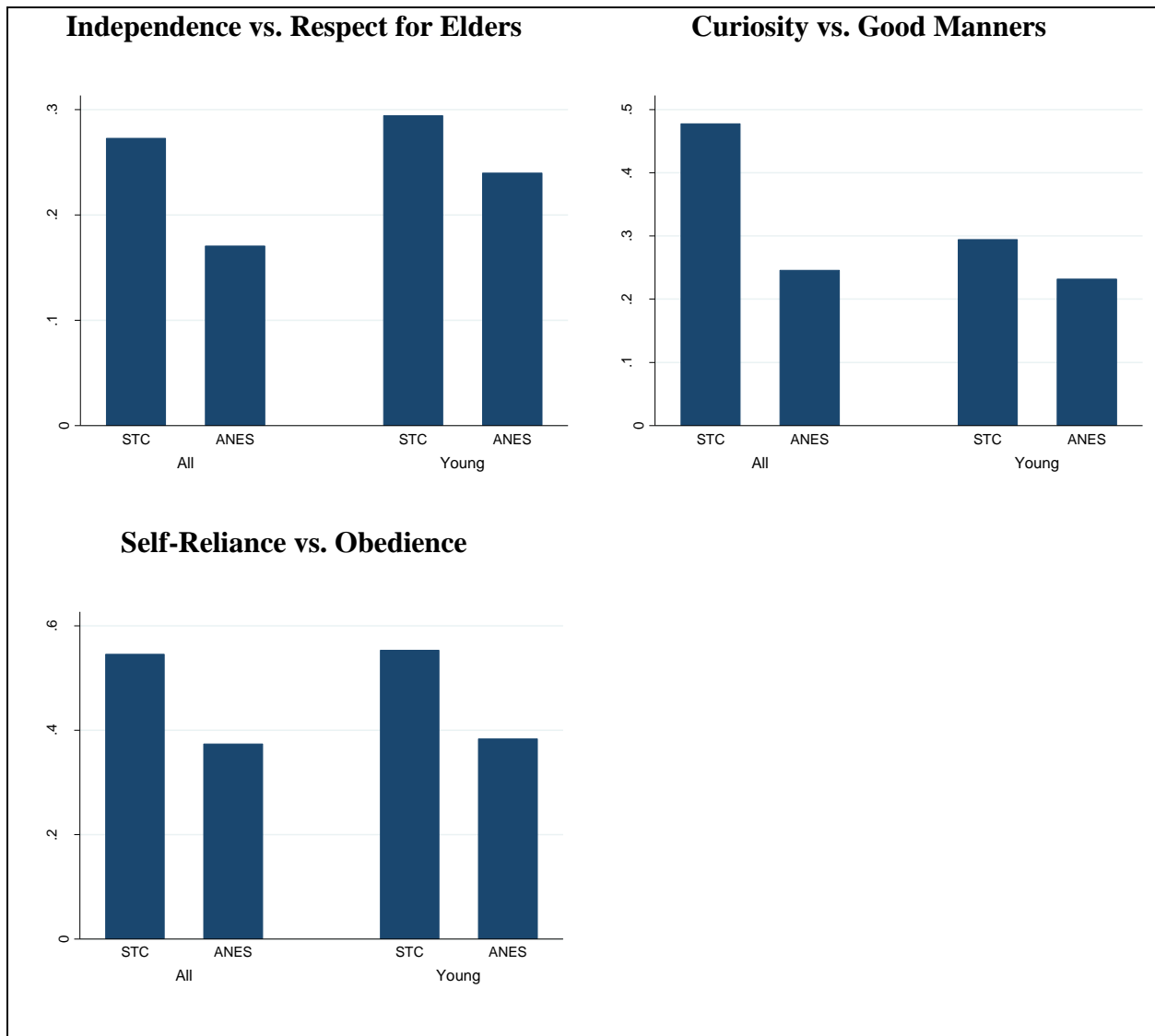


To examine other dimensions of political attitudes in depth, we compared the STC and the ANES results in the areas of egalitarian issues and authoritarian issues. Figure 3 shows that our STC respondents are more egalitarian than the general U.S. public, conforming to the implications suggested by Figure 1 – that is, higher levels of support for liberal social policies. Across the different variables for measuring egalitarian attitudes, the STC students display higher levels of egalitarianism than the general public. Figure 4, however, suggests that high levels of egalitarianism and liberal economic preferences among Hispanic college students do not mean that they are more communalistic than individualistic. The three indices of authoritarianism explain that the Hispanic youth population is more individualistic than the general U.S. population.

**Figure 3 Egalitarian Attitudes of Hispanic College Students and the U.S. General Population**



**Figure 4 Authoritarian Attitudes of Hispanic College Students and the U.S. General Population**



Lastly, Figure 5 summarizes the results of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) on the STC and the ANES data, focusing on the core economic and social issue questions. We conducted PCA that allowed us to examine the latent effect among the variables that are closely related to each other, in order to gauge the ideological positions of our STC respondents more rigorously. PCA allows us to place our samples on the quadratic ideological scale using the

economic and social issue preferences and compare these samples to the ANES results. The major finds are quite revealing.

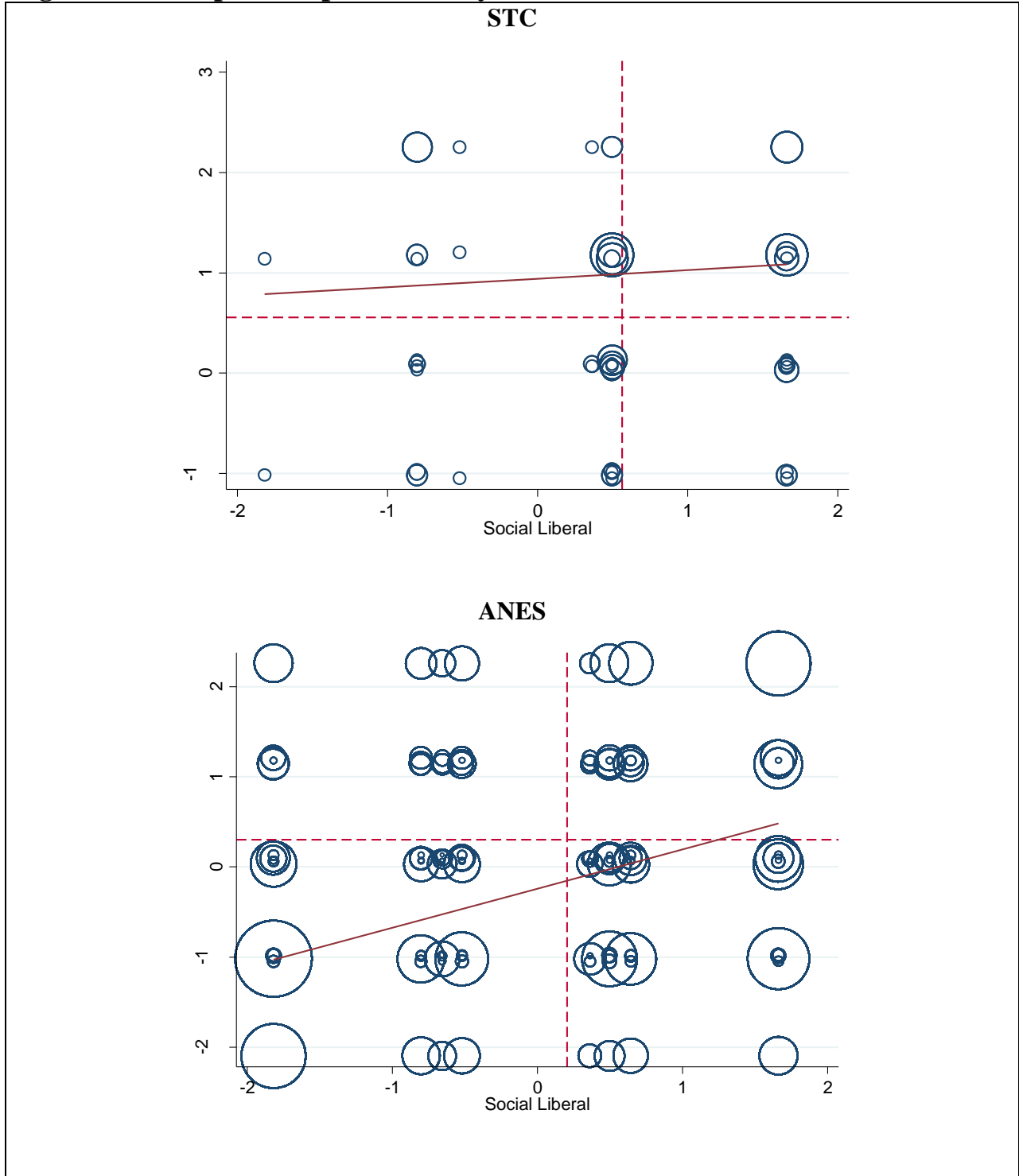
First, the STC dataset suggests that Hispanic college students are generally centrist in terms of political ideology. A majority of respondents are placed around the mid-points along both the social (x-axis) and economic (y-axis) dimensions. Compared to STC respondents, the ANES respondents are slightly more unevenly distributed; particularly, we find big clusters of the individuals located in the right (conservative) ideological spectrum – both socially and economically conservative – and in the libertarian spectrum – that is, socially liberal but economically conservative.

Secondly, there is a clear indication that in general, Hispanic college students are liberal on economic issues, supporting an active government role in the redistribution of wealth. However, on social issues they do not have clear ideological tendencies, but display a more even distribution of opinions. It leads to a slightly higher density of respondents in the Statist dimension who support social conservatism and economic liberalism, as well as in the left (Liberal) dimension supporting social and economic liberalism.

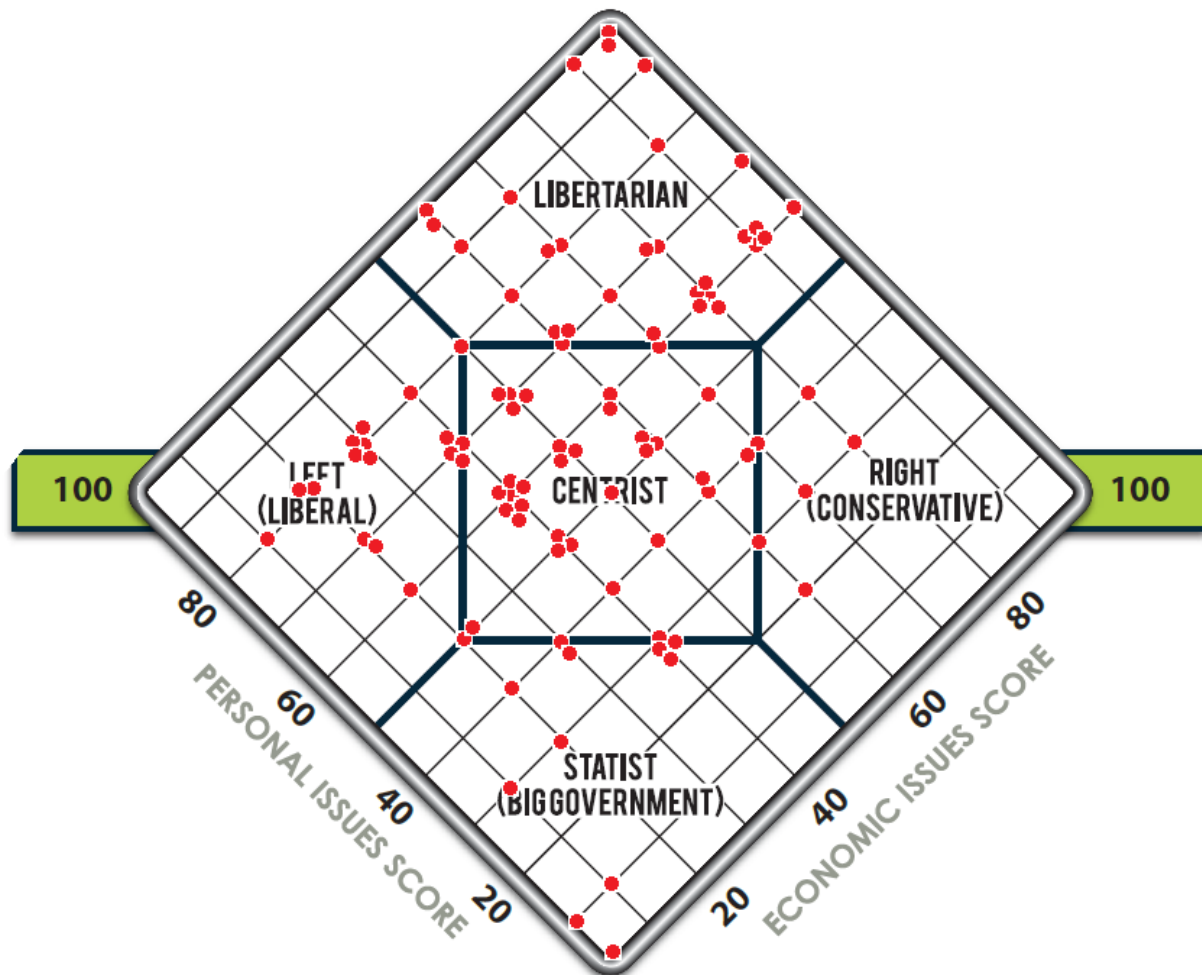
Thirdly, it is interesting to find there is also a sizable cluster of individuals who are located in the libertarian ideological dimension among the STC respondents. It is largely this group that lowers the correlation between the social and economic ideological factors in this dataset compared to the ANES results which show a higher level of correlation between the two ideological dimensions. Furthermore, Figure 5 suggests that we cannot blindly assume Hispanics are liberal, but instead need to recognize the likelihood that this group of the population could hold more libertarian or statist ideological positions than conventionally believed. As this project

is ongoing, our expectations are that we will find further evidence regarding these libertarian individuals in particular, once we have more respondents and thus obtain more reliable data.

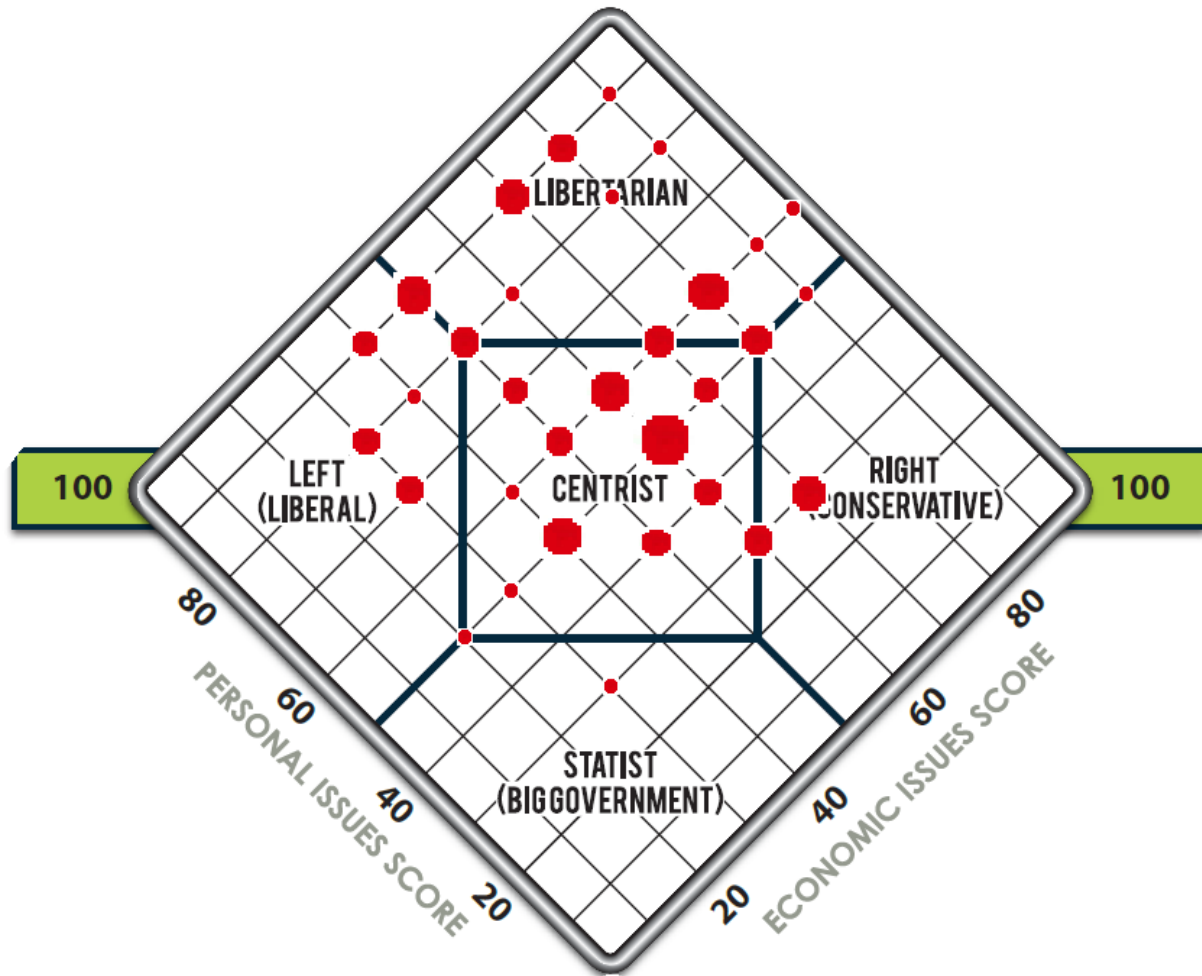
**Figure 5: Principal Component Analysis Results for the STC and ANES 2012**



Since we also employed statements/questions from the “Nolan Quiz,” we plotted initial results on the “Nolan Chart” as well. As noted, there are strong tendencies among respondents towards liberalism (especially center/left), but there are also surprisingly strong numbers who placed in the libertarian quadrant.



These results are similar to earlier informal administrations of the Nolan Quiz in the authors' classrooms which provided the impetus for conducting this study. However, in the classroom results, students tended to skew a little more towards the center/right quadrant than in the more formal and robust surveys conducted online.



## IMPLICATIONS

There are a number of inferences we can pull from this study of the ideology of Hispanic – and more specifically Mexican American – college students in the Rio Grande Valley. In terms of implications for politics and policymaking in the future, we see three general likelihoods. One possibility is that their apparent “bent to conservatism and family” makes Hispanics a “promising pool of votes for Republicans.” Recent polls show that more than half (54%) of Texas Hispanics self-identify as “conservative” (that is, “conservative, moderate conservative or religiously conservative”), while only 18% of Hispanics across Texas classify themselves as



“liberal or progressive” (Garrett).<sup>19</sup> Younger Hispanics, especially, are already more likely to identify with or lean toward the Republican Party, compared with older Hispanics (Newport & Wilke). This could signal a possible future realignment of Hispanics with the Republican party. Even as early as 1983, Brischetto and de la Garza (33) noted that “younger more educated respondents are less likely to identify as Democrats than are older, less educated respondents. This suggests that the Democratic party should not assume that it may continue to count on unquestioned support from future generations of politically active Mexican Americans. This might also indicate that this group of Mexican Americans might respond to a well orchestrated Republican overture.”

Of course, even with high numbers of “conservative” self-identification, fully 63% still said they identify most with the Democratic party. This, then, is the second possible implication for the political future of Hispanics in Texas: as these libertarian and libertarian-leaning Millennials age and become more politically active, they could move the Democratic party itself in a more “libertarian” direction. The real question is whether the Democratic party will be as welcoming of those with less “Democratic” policy views (though many views will certainly line up well).<sup>20</sup>

Finally, a third possibility is that younger Hispanics may increase their proclivity for independence from the two major parties, and move even further in that direction (or even into a third party). Presently, there is little difference between members of either of the two major

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<sup>19</sup> A contemporaneous Pew national survey, however, revealed that among Hispanic registered voters, only thirty-five percent self-describe their political views as “very conservative” or “conservative,” while thirty-two percent describe their political views as “moderate,” and twenty-eight percent describe their political views as “very liberal” or “liberal” (Lopez, Gonzalez-Barrera and Motel).

<sup>20</sup> “Hispanics have more conservative views than all Americans when it comes to abortion, but Hispanics are just as likely as the general public to say homosexuality should be accepted by society. When it comes to interracial and interethnic marriage, Hispanics overwhelmingly say they are comfortable with a child of theirs marrying someone who is of a different heritage.” (Taylor, Lopez, et al., “V”)

parties when it comes to self-identification with libertarian ideology: “Republicans (13%) are essentially no more likely than Democrats (12%) to identify as libertarian, while 19% of independents describe themselves as libertarian” (Moore). In general, “Hispanic Millennials have been largely ignored by both main political parties and are looking for alternatives to the status quo... Both parties and their ideologies fail to address [their] concerns and Hispanic Millennials are looking for answers” (Burger). Needless to say, those “answers” could come in the form of the third largest and fastest growing political party in the United States: the Libertarian party, which continues to grow its numbers of registered voters (and its number of votes), even while the registration total for all other nationally-organized parties, in the 30 states (plus D.C.) that have registration by party, has declined. Meanwhile, “the number of voters who are independent or who are registered in miscellaneous parties increased .7% during that period” (Winger).

Finally, this study leads to one more obvious implication for the future: the need for further research on ideological placements (as opposed to self-identification) utilizing a quadratic multidimensional approach, rather than the common current practice of unidimensional approaches and placements on simplistic “left-to-right” ideological scales. As Feldman and Johnston (338) demonstrate, “political attitudes cannot be reduced to a single dimension, even for sophisticated citizens. The existence of distinct ideological domains implies difficulties with understanding ideology simply in terms of ‘liberals’ and ‘conservatives.’” On the contrary, “while there may be some virtue of mapping political attitudes onto a simple dimension of political competition (particularly in a two-party political system), there is considerable evidence that this does not do justice to the ways in which people actually organize their political beliefs.” While a preference for simplicity in research methodology is a desirable goal in science, “this must be balanced against the need for an accurate description of social phenomena” (353).



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## Ideology Survey

### **Electronic Survey Informed Consent**

**This project has been approved through the STC-IRB expedited review process. The purpose of this research is to assess the ideological positions of college students in the Rio Grande Valley. We are asking students in Government courses at South Texas College to complete this electronic survey. More specifically, you will be asked to give your opinions on a number of governmental policies and political & economic issues, along with some basic information about yourself.**

**The potential benefits of this study are increased knowledge of the ideological positions of STC students. There are no known potential risks of participating in this survey. It will take about 15 minutes to complete the survey. Please answer every survey question. Your responses are anonymous; they will be automatically compiled in a spreadsheet and cannot be linked to you. All data will be stored in a password protected electronic format. The results of the study will be used for scholarly purposes only.**

**By taking this survey you acknowledge that you have read this information and agree to participate in this research. You are free to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.**

**If you have any questions, feel free to contact the Principal Investigator at [wgreene@southtexascollege.edu](mailto:wgreene@southtexascollege.edu).**

1. If you could vote TODAY for U.S. President, who would you vote for?

- Hillary Clinton (Democrat)
- Donald Trump (Republican)
- Gary Johnson (Libertarian)
- Jill Stein (Green)

Other (please specify)

2. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: Government should not censor speech, press, media, or internet.

- Agree
- Disagree
- Maybe / Sometimes / Don't Know

3. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: Military service should be voluntary; there should be no draft.

- Agree
- Disagree
- Maybe / Sometimes / Don't Know

4. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: There should be no laws regarding sex for consenting adults.

- Agree
- Disagree
- Maybe / Sometimes / Don't Know

5. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: Repeal laws prohibiting adult possession and use of drugs.

- Agree
- Disagree
- Maybe / Sometimes / Don't Know

6. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: There should be no laws prohibiting or regulating the personal ownership or use of weapons by adults

- Agree
- Disagree
- Maybe / Sometimes / Don't Know

7. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: End "corporate welfare." No government handouts to business.

- Agree
- Disagree
- Maybe / Sometimes / Don't Know

8. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: End government barriers to international free trade.

- Agree
- Disagree
- Maybe / Sometimes / Don't Know

9. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: Let people control their own retirement; privatize Social Security.

- Agree
- Disagree
- Maybe / Sometimes / Don't Know

10. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: Replace government welfare with private charity.

- Agree
- Disagree
- Maybe / Sometimes / Don't Know

11. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: Cut taxes and government spending by 50% or more.

- Agree
- Disagree
- Maybe / Sometimes / Don't Know

12. Some people think the government should provide fewer services, even in areas such as health and education, in order to reduce spending. Other people feel it is important for the government to provide many more services even if it means an increase in spending. Which do you believe?

- The government should provide fewer services, in order to reduce spending
- The government should provide many more services, even if it means an increase in spending.

13. There is much concern about the rapid rise in medical and hospital costs. Some people feel there should be a government insurance plan which would cover all medical and hospital expenses for everyone. Others feel that all medical expenses should be paid by individuals through private insurance plans like Blue Cross or other company paid plans. Which do you believe?

- There should be a government insurance plan which would cover all medical and hospital expenses for everyone.
- All medical expenses should be paid by individuals through private insurance plans like Blue Cross or other company paid plans.

14. Some people feel the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Others think the government should just let each person get ahead on their own. Which do you believe?

- The government should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living.
- The government should just let each person get ahead on their own.

15. What about aid to poor people? Should federal spending on aid to poor people be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?

- Federal spending on aid to poor people should be increased.
- Federal spending on aid to poor people should be decreased.
- Federal spending on aid to poor people should be kept about the same.

16. There has been some discussion about abortion during recent years. Of the opinions listed, please note which one of the opinions best agrees with your view?

- By law, abortion should never be permitted.
- The law should permit abortion only in case of rape, incest, or when the woman's life is in danger.
- The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape, incest, or danger to the woman's life, but only after the need for the abortion has been clearly established.
- By law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice.

17. Do you think gay or lesbian couples, in other words, homosexual couples, should be legally permitted to adopt children?

- Yes, homosexual couples should be legally permitted to adopt children.
- No, homosexual couples should not be legally permitted to adopt children.

18. Recently there has been a lot of talk about women's rights. Some people feel that women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry, and government. Others feel that a woman's place is in the home. Which do you believe?

- Women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry, and government.
- A woman's place is in the home.

19. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: Our society should do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly

20. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: We have gone too far in pushing equal rights in this country.

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly

21. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: One of the big problems in this country is that we don't give everyone an equal chance.

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly

22. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: This country would be better off if we worried less about how equal people are.

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly

23. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: It is not really that big a problem if some people have more of a chance in life than others.

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly

24. Although there are a number of qualities that people feel that children should have, every person thinks that some are more important than others. Please choose which qualities are more important from the following pairs of desirable qualities:

Independence or respect for  
elders.

Obedience or self-  
reliance.

Curiosity or good  
manners.

Being considerate or well  
behaved.

Please choose  
which qualities are  
more important for  
each one:

25. Would you say your religion provides some guidance in your day-to-day living, quite a bit of guidance, or a great deal of guidance in your day-to-day life?

- My religion provides some guidance in my day-to-day living.
- My religion provides quite a bit of guidance in my day-to-day living.
- My religion provides a great deal of guidance in my day-to-day living.
- None of the above.

26. People practice their religion in different ways. Outside of attending religious services, do you pray several times a day, once a day, a few times a week, once a week or less or never?

- Several times a day
- Once a day
- A few times a week
- Once a week or less
- Never

27. Outside of attending religious services, do you read the Bible several times a day, once a day, a few times a week, once a week or less or never?

- Several times a day
- Once a day
- A few times a week
- Once a week or less
- Never

28. Some people like to have responsibility for handling situations that require a lot of thinking, and other people don't like to have responsibility for situations like that. What about you? Do you like having responsibility for handling situations that require a lot of thinking, do you dislike it, or do you neither like it nor dislike it?

- I like having responsibility for handling situations that require a lot of thinking.
- I dislike having responsibility for handling situations that require a lot of thinking.
- I neither like nor dislike having responsibility for handling situations that require a lot of thinking.

29. Some people prefer to solve simple problems instead of complex ones, whereas other people prefer to solve more complex problems. Which type of problem do you prefer to solve: simple or complex?

- I prefer to solve simple problems.
- I prefer to solve complex problems.

30. Do you like unpredictable situations, dislike them, or neither like nor dislike them?

- Like a Great Deal
- Like a Good Amount
- Like
- Like Somewhat
- Neither Like nor Dislike
- Dislike Somewhat
- Dislike
- Dislike a Good Amount
- Dislike a Great Deal

31. When you don't understand the reason why something happens in your life, how uncomfortable does that make you feel?

- Extremely uncomfortable
- Very uncomfortable
- Moderately uncomfortable
- Slightly uncomfortable
- Not uncomfortable at all



32. Of the situations when you see two people disagreeing with one another, in how many of them can you see how both people could be right?

- All of them
- Most of them
- About half of them
- A few of them
- None of them

33. Now we have a set of questions concerning various public figures. We want to see how much information about them gets out to the public from television, newspapers and the like. Please don't Google them!

The first name is MITCH MCCONNELL. What job or political office does he NOW hold?

34. What job or political office does JOHN ROBERTS now hold?

35. What job or political office does LORETTA LYNCH now hold?

36. What U.S. state does George W. Bush live in now?

37. What U.S. state is Barack Obama from originally?

38. What U.S. state does Donald Trump live in now?

39. What ideology would you most identify with?

- Liberal
- Conservative
- Libertarian
- Statist
- Centrist/Moderate
- Socialist
- Fascist
- Other / Unsure

40. What political party would you usually vote for?

- Democrat
- Republican
- Libertarian
- Green
- None
- Other / Unsure

41. What is your ethnic background?

- White / Anglo
- Mexican-American
- Hispanic (Not Mexican-American)
- African-American
- Asian
- Native American
- Other

42. What gender do you identify with?

- Male
- Female

43. What age range do you fall under?

- Under 18
- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55-64 years old
- 65-74 years old
- 75 years or older