



“Shaping What Texas Becomes: Race, Ethnicity and our Civic Future”

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Laura:

When we talk about the future of Texas we have to talk about the numbers (demography).

Latino population is increasing, White population is decreasing, African American population is stable, Asian population is low.

If you have a growing population that is not educated (Latinos/Hispanics), what are the implications in Texas?

Participants Discussion:

- In terms of talking about the problem of engagement... voting is at the top of the list. You can't vote unless you are registered. There is a challenge in how people get registered in Texas. I have not heard of same-day registration. I'd like talk about solutions to registration.
 - You can't vote unless you have a proper ID. You need paperwork.
In Texas you need 30 days from registration until you can vote
- Laura: There are cultural barriers in getting id. Some people are born at home. They need identification.

- Midwives are required by law to file the paperwork. Sometimes the midwife has so many births that she goes at one time and registers them (the babies she has delivered in the past X days) all on same day and they all have same birthday.
- Laura: what are other barriers that are keeping Latinos from achieving political power?
 - Gerrymandering. Districts may have Latino majority but it is a majority that is unlikely to vote.
- Double-edge sword. Representation is so low, We don't have accountability. Same-day registration would be beneficial, but we have such a conservative government, same-day registration is light years away. In some districts it is impossible for Latino voices to be heard.

Involvement

- We are involved in churches, soccer games, families...
 - Latinos lead in Facebook.
- Part of the problems is language and cultural differences that nobody picks up on. For us, family is everything. We need to get Hispanics to see that this is beneficial to the family not just individuals
- How do we as a society do a better job of asking these families to vote? Create events where people will come. It seems like there is a way to do this
 - Food brings people
- Turnout has been low for years. Discrimination is perpetuated in society. There needs to be more communication. Less us and them.

Getting youth involved

- M.O.V.E (this is a San Antonio organization where two participants work)- We do tabling and campaigning on college campuses (Trick or Vote). As organizers the slack is left for us to pick up. Let's demand that everyone has access to a voter id. Go out to the valley. There is a stereotype that college students don't want to vote or be involved but no one comes to college kids to give them the *opportunity* to get involved.
- Laura: There is a practice of going to the parents to teach them about fitness and civic responsibility with the hope that they will teach this

- to their kids. In Latino community it is the opposite. Teach the kids and they teach the parents.
- Latinos are learning the American way very fast and losing the Hispanic way
 - There is no place in Texas where we as Hispanics can go learn about our history. Kids don't know about the civil rights movement for Hispanics.
 - On page 13 in TX CHI (graph), this graph shows race but not age. I'm wondering if age was included if participation rates would improve?
 - Millennial generation is incredibly empowered and engaged. People get myopic about creating a campaign rather than a culture. The system is antiquated. There are issues of access to knowledge. Data is terrible. As a state we are starting at a level that is ignored.
 - Laura-Conundrum: the pie. Do we make the pie bigger or do we just go for a piece?
 - It's not about voting it's about issues that appeal to Latinos. Many of the pieces of minority voices have been under attack. Unless you are a Latino student who has a professor that teaches your history you are not going to get it.
 - Politicians on their own aren't going to do anything about it. It's definitely on us to change this and make inclusion happen. The white representation in the Texas congress is so out of touch with the national-minority Texas-majority of Hispanics. Textbook debate, there are totally arbitrary arguments like politicians that want to remove rap music and instead put in country music.
 - Do you think an Anglo is not able to represent minorities?
 - No I don't think that. But if it is not the culture that you come from it may be difficult to represent that culture
 - I come from a community in Dallas with a lot of Hispanics but a white out-of-touch man won and says Latinos should learn the American way. We thought for sure a Hispanic would win but this guy is representing us (I didn't really capture this point very well)

Important issues

- Education
- Immigration. Mexican was a dirty word when I was growing up.

- Laura: Attack on bilingual education. Lack of media representation
- Latinos showed up to immigration rallies because it affected their families. Finding out what Latinos do care about is key
- The Hispanic community in the valley doesn't want immigration reform. They want illegals gone and don't want them to take the jobs. They say they need to go back and do it the right way because that is what we did (or we have been here a lot longer)
 - That is the traditional American way. I'm in, everybody out.
- Laura: Ultimately as Latinos we are not a monolithic group.
- We have a great tradition in US of voting against our best interests (all races and ages and SES). Why would we be different?
- None of this matters if organizers won't go far enough to make things happen. What this does is let people know that there is some value in voting/civic engagement. Talking to Latinos differently creates a divide. Catering to communities of color I think is counterproductive. It furthers the idea that there are differences between one another. Dialogue needs to be inclusive. I don't care what you look like, I'm getting you to a polls
 - I'm picturing a PSA where somebody rich and famous stands next to someone poor. Whatever the differences are, this vote equals this vote.
- I think that is how we transform the issue. Universal humanism. (example) in the 1900s, there was this wealthy Hispanic gambler. At this time there was an anti-Jim crow movement. The rich gambler used his money to drive African Americans in a limo to the voting booths. I think this is the level of commitment that we need
- Laura- Question directed to the woman from HEB: Don't you approach the Latino market differently in advertising? If it is done in corporate America why should it not be done in government?
 - We are careful to step away from common stereotypes. Latino families are the ones that push us to be fresher and have better produce. They are picky shoppers. We market to that. Common things that people stereotype aren't necessarily true
 - There is a huge Hispanic marketing market. This is clearly an issue. Maybe the message does need to be different. People

look at issues differently, not that one is right or one is wrong. I am a marketer. There was a target ad where Latino music was playing very quietly in the background. People went crazy (in a positive way), Latinos thought it must have meant something.

- Demographics matter. Latinos are going to be affecting military, businesses, political institutions, religious institutions...
- I think it is interesting to point out that Latinos tend to vote democrat over republican but on issues they “should” vote republican (like abortion). Is it the way the republicans come across to them? Is there a disconnect?
 - Republicans (Romney campaign) argued that Hispanics and women care about everything that everyone else cares about (jobs) so they weren’t going to talk to them differently. I think the way we talk about things needs to progress.
- Laura: How do we get them to listen? How do you get Latinos to enter into this conversation? What are the strategies/solutions?
 - PreK for SA initiative (?) “Thinking Fast and Slow” said that if polling sites are at schools, then people are more likely to vote for things that affect their families. We looked into getting polling sites to places (like schools) that are more convenient. No one wants to change this (in Bexar county).
 - County decides where the polling sites go
 - I’m from Michigan, Its weird to hear how scattered polling sites are
 - There has been local innovation. Here, you can vote anywhere (not just your designated polling site).
- Question: this conversation has been geared to Latinos. Could these same problems and solutions could be used for African Americans?
 - I think we should use African Americans as an example and do what they have done as far as civic participation goes.
 - There is a misconception that Latinos and African Americans don’t get along
 - Numbers don’t equal power.
 - I think we can do both (focus on Hispanics and African Americans)

- I'm also from Michigan. What we've seen is across states it's the same issue. Voters not connecting issues to the intentional choices of their representative.
- How do we make a cultural shift of civic engagement? Strategies are slow and messy. It is important to document the success of engagement initiatives. We have to demonstrate that the issues we do tackle make change.

Health

- Laura: health issues can replace people. Latinos are among the most uninsured.
 - I think we need to connect the dots for people. Bond election for school example: people got voter registration cards that were handed out and the bond issue was explained but they were met with confused looks. People needed to have it broken down. We need to give people a little push
- I firmly believe that the more education we get, the more candidates we will get to run.