



Latinos Are Shaping the Future of the United States

How the United States and Mexico Are Growing Together

By the Center for American Progress and Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas
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Introduction and summary

The Latino community is becoming increasingly important to the economy, culture, and politics of the United States. Today, more than 55 million people—almost one-fifth of the U.S. population—are Hispanic, two-thirds of whom are of Mexican origin.¹ Latinos in the United States are reaching new heights in educational attainment, making significant economic gains, and dramatically changing the political landscape. Within the next two decades, these developments will have profound implications for the United States, Mexico, and the rest of the Americas.

As the nature of the Latino diaspora populations has changed, so have the perspectives in their countries of origin. For instance, Mexicans and their diaspora in the United States have largely taken each other for granted. Although the two populations have ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural roots in common, prejudice and stereotypes have long prevailed in what has amounted to an “us” and “them” relationship.

The historic tensions and internal politics of the Latino diaspora are increasingly significant given the rising political influence of Latinos in the United States: More than 11 million Latinos voted in 2012, and 40 million are expected to be eligible to vote by 2030.² As Latinos assume greater political power within the United States, the U.S. relationship with the rest of the Americas will become an increasingly important issue in U.S. domestic politics.

Likewise, the expanding role of Hispanic-owned businesses and Latino consumers in the world’s largest economy will create enormous opportunities to foster deeper economic integration between the United States and Mexico and to create jobs in both countries.³ As the U.S. Hispanic population continues to increase and its influence grows—both electorally and economically—other nations in the Western Hemisphere will have to adjust their policies to accommodate the demographic shift. Given the cultural, economic, and political ties between Mexico and the United States, it is particularly important for Mexico to recognize the economic and political rise of Latinos—particularly Mexican Americans—within the United States.

In October 2014, the Center for American Progress and the *Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas*, or CIDE, co-hosted a day-long event in Mexico City that brought together leading thinkers and policymakers to address the chasm between U.S. Latinos and Mexicans. The event illustrated the need for a deeper understanding of how the increasing demographic weight of Latinos in the United States has changed the politics, economics, and cultures of both Mexico and the United States and of the implications of these shifts for the U.S.-Mexico relationship. This paper represents a first step in that process.

Our Mission

The Center for American Progress is an independent, nonpartisan policy institute that is dedicated to improving the lives of all Americans, through bold, progressive ideas, as well as strong leadership and concerted action. Our aim is not just to change the conversation, but to change the country.

Our Values

As progressives, we believe America should be a land of boundless opportunity, where people can climb the ladder of economic mobility. We believe we owe it to future generations to protect the planet and promote peace and shared global prosperity.

And we believe an effective government can earn the trust of the American people, champion the common good over narrow self-interest, and harness the strength of our diversity.

Our Approach

We develop new policy ideas, challenge the media to cover the issues that truly matter, and shape the national debate. With policy teams in major issue areas, American Progress can think creatively at the cross-section of traditional boundaries to develop ideas for policymakers that lead to real change. By employing an extensive communications and outreach effort that we adapt to a rapidly changing media landscape, we move our ideas aggressively in the national policy debate.

