1 Campaigning to a Changing American Electorate

Hispanics are different to communicate to . . . the Hispanic community is not homogenous. . . . They are complex in their own and unique ways, less partisan, more independent. . . . I don't pretend to understand . . . but I do know enough to hire people who do.[1]

—Bill Knapp, 2000 Gore campaign media strategist

IN THE SPRING OF 2000, the leaders of the Democratic Party faced a crisis that would have serious repercussions for the upcoming presidential election. The issue involved a boy by the name of Elian Gonzalez who had illegally crossed the Florida straits along with his mother and others from Cuba. Elian's mother died in the crossing, and the U.S. government was faced with a decision—send Elian back to his father in Cuba or grant him permanent residency in the U.S. so he could reside with his relatives in Florida. Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore split with the administration and supported a congressional bill that would provide the boy with permanent residency. Gore adopted this position with the hope of securing the support of Florida's crucial voting bloc of Latinos, composed mostly of Cuban Americans but also of Central and South Americans. The Clinton administration, however, decided to go in the opposite direction. On April 13, 2000, the Department of Justice sent eight fully armed agents from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to forcibly remove Gonzalez from his great-uncle's house and return him to his father in Cuba. The handling of the Elian Gonzalez case proved to be disastrous for Gore's support among Florida Latinos.[2] It infuriated the Cuban community and, as scholars Kevin Hill and Dario Moreno (2005) note, Cuban voters used the 2000 presidential election as a referendum on the Clinton-Gore administration's handling of the affair. In light of the fallout from this incident, the Gore campaign surrendered any hope of winning the Latino vote in Miami and minimized its Spanish-language outreach efforts. This was hailed as a crucial mistake, as noted by Paulo Izquierdo, one of the consultants in charge of Gore's Spanish-

language campaign: "With a true 20-20 hindsight, I'm sure it would have made a big difference . . . We think that if we had been stronger in Miami we would have won Florida. We could have picked up those thousand votes very easily" (Oberfield and Segal 2008, 297).[3]

Undoubtedly, as this sequence of events reveals, the Latino electorate and Latino outreach efforts play a critical role in the electoral success of any presidential hopeful. Bill Knapp's sentiments, however, illustrate that *what* to say to the Latinos and *how* to say it can be a challenge, particularly in the high-stakes game of presidential campaigns. The Latino population, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, encompasses an ethnically and culturally diverse group of individuals from Mexico and Latin America.[4] People of Latino origin also vary tremendously in their histories and backgrounds. Whereas much of the southwestern portion of the U.S. once belonged to Mexico, many Cubans immigrated to Florida seeking political asylum from the Castro regime; Puerto Ricans, meanwhile, are a unique case because, as American citizens, they can come and go as they please.[5] Individuals of Latino origin can be fifth- or sixth-generation Americans, recent immigrants, or somewhere in between. Although these are just a few of the features that contribute to the heterogeneity of the Latino population, they exemplify some of the difficulties that politicians face in courting this group of voters.

Latinos' rising prominence in American politics can primarily be attributed to their rapid demographic growth over the past three decades. Consider, for instance, the following realities—Latinos in 2009 make up 15 percent (44.3 million) of the total U.S. population, but by 2050, the U.S. Census projects that Latinos will constitute a quarter of the population. From 1990 to 2000, the Latino population increased by 57.9 percent, from 22.4 million to 35.3 million, while the rest of the U.S. population grew by only 13.2 percent during this same period (Guzman 2001). The rapid growth of the U.S. Latino population can be attributed to two factors: demographics and immigration trends. With a median age of 26.9, the Latino population is younger, on average, than the rest of the U.S. population, which has a median age of 40.1 (U.S. Census Bureau 2007). Because they tend to be younger, Latinos also tend to have higher fertility rates than the population as a whole. A steady stream of immigrants from Mexico and Central and South America over the past four decades has also contributed to the Latino boom. In 1970, only 19.9 percent of the U.S. Latino population was foreign born; by 2000, almost half of the Latino population (45.5 percent) was born outside of the U.S. (Campbell and Lennon 1999).

These demographic changes have important implications for the current and future state of American politics. First, Latinos are still politically "up for grabs"—they have yet to exhibit stable political and partisan preferences to the same degree as African Americans (Frymer 1999).[6] Although estimates of the Latino electorate's support for the Democratic presidential candidate have generally hovered around 60 percent for the past thirty years (Schmal 2004), many more Latinos than Anglos report being independents or uncertain about their partisan preferences (Hajnal and Lee 2008). Forty-seven percent of Latino respondents in the 1993–94 Multi-City Survey of Urban Inequality refused to answer the party identification question, responded that they "didn't know" which party they supported, or indicated that they had no preference for either of the two main political parties. The 2006 Latino National Survey similarly found that 16.6 percent of Latinos report being independent, 16.3 percent "don't care" about their party identification, and 20.1 percent don't know or do not consider themselves to be affiliated with a political party (Abrajano and Alvarez, forthcoming).

Recent elections have also revealed Latinos' lack of partisan rootedness. In the 1998 midterm elections, Republican candidates were able to secure more than one-third (36.3 percent) of the Latino electorate. And in the 2004 presidential election, the National Election Pool estimates that 53.3 percent of Latinos supported the Democratic candidate, John Kerry, while 44 percent cast their ballots for the Republican incumbent, George W. Bush. This marked the first time that Republicans captured 40 percent or more of the Latino vote in a presidential or midterm election.[7] Republicans interpreted this level of support as a sign that Latinos' political preferences are changing, whereas the result convinced Democrats that they cannot assume Latinos will automatically support their candidates.

Much of the Latino population is also geographically concentrated in battleground states and those with a large number of electoral college votes. In each of the five states of California, Texas, Florida, Illinois, and New York, Latinos constitute between 20 and 35 percent of the statewide population; these five states alone account for 168 total electoral college votes, which is more than half of the votes needed for victory in a presidential election. Latinos similarly make up a sizable segment of the statewide population in battleground states such as Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, and New Mexico. And in the politically important southern region of the United States, the Latino population is growing faster than in any other region of the country (Kochhar et al. 2005). For instance, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, which

includes the city of Charlotte, experienced a 500 percent increase in the size of its Latino population from 1990 to 2000 (Kochhar et al. 2005). Latinos are important political players, then, not only in the states in which they have traditionally settled (primarily in the southwestern United States) but also in nontraditional settlement areas across the nation. The geographic concentration of Latinos in key states, along with the instability of their political orientation, heightens their attractiveness to candidates and political parties. For these reasons, the Latino electorate has been considered *the* critical swing group and the "sleeping giant" of American politics.

But as Bill Knapp's chapter-opening quote suggests, the Latino population, when considered as a pool of potential voters, is substantially different from the national population as a whole. Primarily because forty percent of the Latino population is born outside the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau 2007), their familiarity with American politics is not the same as it is for the native-born population. How these immigrants conceptualize basic political terms, such as *liberal* and *conservative* or *Democrats* and *Republicans*, is likely to vary from native-born Americans, given that these terms are unique to the U.S. political system. This unfamiliarity is reflected in survey responses from the 2006 Latino National Survey (Fraga et al. 2006), in which nearly one-third (31.6 percent) of Latinos did not consider themselves liberal, moderate, or conservative. In addition, the concept of multiparty politics is relatively new to some Latinos (Kasinitz et al. 2008). Take, for example, the case of Latinos of Mexican heritage: a one-party system led by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) ruled the country from 1929 to 2000 (Cothran 1994). The children of immigrants are also affected by this lack of familiarity because children learn about politics and acquire partisanship mainly through their parents (Vaillancourt 1973). The Latino population also differs from the rest of the U.S. population on indicators pertaining to socioeconomic well being. According to U.S. Census estimates, Latinos' median household income is lower than that of Anglos, Asians, and African Americans, and only about 60 percent of Latinos graduate from high school—the lowest graduation rate of any racial or ethnic group in the country (U.S. Census Bureau 2007). Approximately one out of five Latinos lives in poverty, and almost one out of three (32.7 percent) lack health insurance (U.S. Census Bureau 2007).

In light of the fact that socioeconomics and familiarity with politics are strong predictors of political participation (Verba et al. 1995), Latinos have yet to reach their full political potential. While their total share of the U.S.

population stands at 15 percent (U.S. Census Bureau 2007), Latinos make up 6 percent of the total American electorate. In 2004, about 9.3 million Latinos—less than a quarter of the total U.S. Latino population—registered to vote, with 7.6 million having reported voting. As a point of comparison, almost 16 million African Americans were registered in 2004, and 14 million reported voting (Abrajano and Alvarez, forthcoming). Thus, although Latinos constitute a larger share of the total U.S. population than do African Americans, they make up a smaller percentage of voters. This difference is partly because a significant number of Latinos face another hurdle before registering to vote—that of obtaining citizenship. The Current Population Survey estimates that only 63 percent of Latinos of voting age are citizens (U.S. Census Bureau 2009).[8]

Still, the growing size and influence of the Latino electorate presents a compelling opportunity for politicians to win over new voters and, ideally, lock in the allegiance of this group in the hope of future returns. Yet the particular demographic and political characteristics of the Latino electorate offer challenges to politicians as well, because it is not yet clear which strategies of campaigning are likely to win these voters over, and it is unclear whether Latino voters will behave like other, well-understood segments of the electorate. Conventional wisdom holds that candidates will advertise differently to ethnic and racial groups than they will to Anglos, because candidates are targeting a specific group of voters who presumably share something in common (Erie 1990; Popkin 1994; DeFrancesco Soto and Merolla 2008; Shea and Burton 2006). Among Latinos, that commonality is based on a shared language and, in some cases, a common cultural heritage. One can conceive of a group in much the same way that Bishin's work on subconstituency politics does, as "a constellation of people, either organized or not, who share a social identity owing to a common experience that leads to shared concerns and preferences" (2009, 5). Appealing to individuals based on culture is a powerful and relatively easy way to show voters that candidates understand and can relate to them (Popkin 1994). Indeed, politicians used ethnic campaigns on European immigrants who arrived in the U.S. in the late 1800s (Erie 1990; McNickle 1993). Presumably, then, these campaigns work, because politicians have been using them for decades. So we should expect nothing less of aspiring politicians today; when campaigning to our nation's largest immigrant group, they too should adopt a distinct ethnic political campaign.

The aim of this book is twofold. My first goal is to determine whether ethnic political campaigns are successful at winning ethnic minority votes. I

challenge the conventional wisdom that all minorities will react to these campaign appeals in a positive way. The responsiveness of a given ethnic minority group to these political messages will vary based on the extent to which they have incorporated into American political life. My second goal is to examine the consequences, if any, that ethnic political campaigns have on the political health and well being of a segment of the ethnic group being targeted.

In addressing these issues, this book focuses specifically on the Spanish- and English-language televised political ads created for the 2000–2004 election cycles and examines the effects of the ads on Latino political behavior. Does exposure to these political ads influence who they vote for, whether or not they vote, and their knowledge of the candidates? Indeed, variations are likely to exist in the content of Spanish- and English-language ads, so that ads produced in Spanish may emphasize personal and non-policy-based appeals to a greater extent than do English-language ads. The reason for these distinctions, which serves as the basis for the theory of information based–advertising, is due to candidates' perceptions of Latinos' orientation to politics and to candidates' beliefs about the importance of ethnic identity as a factor in Latinos' political decision making. In general, because a large portion of the Latino population is relatively new to American political life, the campaign messages used to target this group of voters is fairly simple and symbolic in nature, focusing more on cultural cues and references than on candidates' policies and issue positions. The effectiveness of these campaign messages varies based on a Latino's familiarity with and knowledge of American politics and on the salience of ethnic identity in one's political behavior.

The research endeavor undertaken for this book is important for the well being of our nation's latest newcomers. First, if candidates are indeed advertising in the manner just described, it raises the possibility that the parties and candidates are acting in ways that systematically disadvantage some segments of the population in becoming informed participants in the political process. Because televised political ads aid in citizen learning by increasing one's knowledge of politics (Jackman and Vavreck 2009; Geer 2006; Patterson and McClure 1976; Brians and Wattenberg 1996), ads that mostly emphasize personal or cultural appeals make it difficult for individuals to learn anything about the candidates' policy positions. Adopting this type of advertising strategy also weakens the ability of certain communities to participate in politics the same way that others do, and, in turn, to have their voices heard. Finally, a bias in advertising could serve to undermine a basic principle of de-

mocracy—that all people are treated equally under the government. Several of these consequences are investigated in this book.

The Power of Televised Political Advertising

In attempting to communicate with and win over voters, politicians have innumerable tools at their disposal, including campaign appearances, direct mailings, websites, televised debates and speeches, and door-to-door canvassing, to name just a few. But in the era of "new style" campaigning (Agranoff 1972), televised political advertisements have become the primary means by which candidates communicate with voters. This is clearly reflected in the way candidates allocate campaign funds. In the 2000 election cycle, approximately 85 percent of candidates' advertising budgets went to broadcast "spot" television advertisements (Segal 2002). The amount of money spent on advertising is staggering: in 2000, presidential candidate George W. Bush spent $75.3 million on televised campaign ads, while his opponent, Al Gore, allocated $77.1 million.

It is also by means of televised advertisements that candidates have most notably adjusted their behavior to take advantage of the growing influence of Latino voters. In the 2000 election cycle, both George W. Bush and Al Gore devoted approximately $4 million to Spanish-language television commercials. This spending marked the largest amount ever allocated by presidential candidates to Spanish-language advertising, and the millions of dollars devoted to appeals in Spanish has steadily increased since (Segal 2002).

That candidates spend such vast sums on television commercials is an acknowledgment of these advertisements' power to influence voters. The advent of televised political advertising in the presidential election of 1948 initially raised great concern about this power among scholars, the media, and the general public. This fear led to popular claims that political ads were deceitful and overly personalistic and lacked substantive material (West 2001, 44, 46). Scholars and the general public believed that, in advertisements, "the candidate's personality, image, and symbolic appeals [take] precedence over specific issue positions" (Atkin et al. 1973, 210). Berelson and colleagues (1954) alleviated some of these concerns; their research concluded that short-term effects, such as campaigns, had a minimal influence on voter decision making. Berelson and his colleagues argued that political campaigns did not provide new information to voters but instead triggered voters' previous beliefs and opinions. These findings led many scholars to support the "minimal ef-

fects hypothesis," which contends that campaigns have little or no impact on a voter's decision-making process.

Decades of research following Berelson's seminal work, along with technological advancements in measuring advertising exposure, leave little doubt that television ads influence voters' opinions and attitudes in presidential elections and nonpresidential elections alike (Brader 2006; Geer 2006; West 2001; Mendelberg 2001; Just et al. 1996; Herrnson and Patterson 2000; Kahn and Kenney 1999). As one might expect, more frequent advertising positively affects a candidate's vote share (Clinton and Lapinski 2004; Freedman and Goldstein 1999; Nagler and Leighley 1992; Shaw 1999). Using aggregate state-level data on voting from the 1988–1996 presidential elections, Shaw (1999) found a positive correlation between the amount of advertising candidates purchased and the share of the vote they won. Nagler and Leighley (1992) uncovered a similar relationship, finding that an increase in campaign advertising spending positively correlated with a candidate's share of the vote.

A televised political ad contains several distinct elements, all of which can affect the way voters assess candidates. One element of an ad is the tone, which refers to the way the message is crafted and is generally categorized as positive, negative, or comparative (Jamieson 1992; Shea and Burton 2006). The tone of political ads has received considerable attention from political scientists (Brader 2006; Geer 2006; Clinton and Lapinski 2004; Freedman and Goldstein 1999; Lau and Sigelman 2000; Kahn and Kenney 1999; Ansolabehere et al. 1994; Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995). For example, whereas the extensive studies conducted by Ansolabahere and Iyengar find that attack advertising depresses turnout, Geer (2006) argues that negative ads tend to be more informative and substantive in their content than do positive ads.

In addition to the overall tone of an advertisement, how its message is presented—what political scientists call "framing"—can influence individuals' opinions and attitudes toward the particular issue under discussion (Nir and Druckman 2008; Winter 2008; Druckman 2004; Jacoby 2000; Iyengar 1991; Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Nelson et al. 1997; Entman 1993). A frame can be thought of as the point of view that a message takes (Popkin 1994; Tversky and Kahneman 1981). Framing is important because point of view determines which types of information and which considerations the message brings to mind for voters. As such, the standards by which an individual evaluates a campaign message may change depending on the frame being used in the advertisement. One way that issues can be framed is from a "group-centric"

perspective. This approach is advantageous when an issue, such as crime, immigration, or welfare, specifically deals with or is identified with a particular group. Nelson and Kinder (1996) found that frames that focus on the groups associated with an issue (for example, African Americans and affirmative action), lead individuals to think about their attitudes toward the particular group rather than about the actual policy being addressed. Candidates may therefore be motivated to frame certain issues in a group-centric manner, either positively or negatively, to appeal to particular voters; a candidate might frame a commercial about immigration reform in a way that evokes Latino voters' positive feelings about economic opportunity in the United States or, alternatively, in a way that amplifies Anglo voters' negative feelings about Latino immigrants. In a related work, Winter (2008) offers evidence demonstrating how the discourse on welfare reform and Social Security over the past twenty years has been framed largely along racial lines. Thus, Anglo Americans' opinions on these issues have been shaped, to some degree, by racial bias.

Advertisements also attempt to prime voters to respond in particular ways. Priming is a concept drawn from the psychology literature on decision making (Kahneman et al. 1979). It refers to the idea that individuals will use the information that is most readily available and accessible to them when making decisions. Thus, a person's decision-making process is influenced to some extent by circumstance: the topics and themes of political ads viewed in the days leading up to the election are likely to affect how that person votes. Although priming does not overtly alter individuals' opinions and beliefs, it has the potential to influence the issues voters consider to be most important (Iyengar and Kinder 1987). Priming has also been found to be effective at activating voters' racial biases. When political advertisements contain subtle racial cues or negative stereotypes about racial and ethnic minorities, they can cause an individual's racial attitudes to also become more negative (Mendelberg 2001; Valentino et al. 2002).

The experimental work conducted by Mendelberg (2001) and Valentino and his colleagues (2002) found, however, that activating an individual's racial attitudes is effective only when the racial message is both visually and verbally implicit. Take, for example, the infamous Willie Horton ad, which criticized Democratic nominee Michael Dukakis for supporting weekend furlough programs in Massachusetts. Horton, an African American convict serving a life sentence for murder, committed armed robbery and rape

while on furlough from prison. The effectiveness of this ad was attributed to the fact that, although it contained visual images of Horton, no mention was made of "racial nouns or adjectives to endorse white prerogatives, express anti-black sentiment, represent racial stereotypes, or portray a threat from African-Americans" (Mendelberg 2001, 8). The Willie Horton ad was framed in a way that encouraged voters to associate negative feelings about race with Dukakis's presidential bid or with the weekend furlough program, and it did so without explicitly mentioning race. The frames used in such political ads can prime voters' evaluations of the candidates featured in the ads and the policies that they discuss (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Iyengar 1991), just as the Horton ad primed voters to carry prejudicial feelings with them to their polling places.

Finally, agenda-setting refers to the order in which political messages are discussed in an advertisement. If, for example, a candidate consistently emphasized education as his most important campaign issue, voters might perceive education as the issue most salient in their decision about which candidate to vote for. Extensive work by Iyengar and Kinder (1987) in this area finds that "those problems that receive prominent attention on the national news become the problems the viewing public regards as the nation's most important" (16). Both experimental work and survey data provide strong support for the argument that the issues a political ad emphasizes can influence which issues and policies individuals consider important (Herrnson and Patterson 2000).

All of these means of influencing voters help to make televised political advertising more effective than other tools at the candidates' disposal. Moreover, the content of political advertising is valuable in voter education. Political advertising can serve to reduce voters' misperceptions and uncertainty (Lupia and McCubbins 1998; Popkin 1994; Lupia 1994; Bartels 1993; Conover and Feldman 1989) as well as to provide cues that assist voters in their decision making (Lau and Redlawsk 2006; Popkin 1994; Lupia 1994). Information is costly to attain and thus provides voters with little incentive to gather it, but information shortcuts, or heuristics, can help reduce these costs (Kahneman et al. 1982). Such heuristics can take the form of reliance on campaign messages, on experiences from individuals' daily lives, or on using information experts, such as political commentators, as sources of knowledge (Lupia 1994; Popkin 1994). Some of the most readily available cues for voters are provided by the messages in the increasing number of televised political ads. But

the type of information shortcut voters use depends on their stored levels of political knowledge; those who are less politically informed are more likely to evaluate a candidate based on the candidate's personal characteristics as opposed to his or her policy positions (Popkin and Dimock 1999). Thus, information shortcuts can be incredibly helpful to voters, but how they use them and the extent to which they help voters make decisions that are consistent with their own beliefs is also contingent on their familiarity with and knowledge of politics.

The authors of numerous studies have performed content analysis to determine what sorts of messages are being advertised in presidential and congressional campaigns (Spilliotes and Vavreck 2002; West 2001; Jamieson 1996; Joslyn 1980; Hofstetter and Zukin 1979; Patterson and McClure 1976). For instance, Jamieson (1996) finds that, with the exception of 1960 and 1976, domestic-related issues (for example, the economy, social issues, and taxes) are more prevalent in political ads than are messages relating to a candidate's personal qualities (for example, leadership, trustworthiness, and compassion).[9] And during the 2000 election, Jamieson notes that 60 percent of all commercials contained messages pertaining to policy matters, while only 31 percent mentioned a candidate's personal qualities. Moreover, regarding the 1998 election cycle, Spilliotes and Vavreck (2002) examined 1,000 advertisements by 290 candidates; they found that 92 percent of the ads contained some issue content. Although these studies reveal that many of the political ads produced over the past forty years include policy-related appeals, and, to a lesser extent, personality and trait appeals, it is unclear whether voters are persuaded more by policy or nonpolicy messages in their vote choice as well as in their likelihood of voting.

Targeted Advertising Efforts

With the help of political consultants who draw on telephone surveys, focus groups, and myriad other resources, candidates make strategic decisions about what messages to advertise and to which voters. Scholars have offered a number of important insights into how these decisions are made. Candidates may be motivated to advertise more simple policy and character statements to Latinos than to Anglos depending on the candidates' ideological distance from the median voter of their district. The more ideologically distant a candidate is from the median voter in his or her district, the less likely that candidate will be to reveal his or her policy positions and, therefore, to advertise

policy. Or it may be that candidates advertise policy messages only when they are in a highly competitive election (Kahn and Kenney 1999).[10] Although the existing research considers how the electoral context shapes candidates' advertising strategies, scholars have generally failed to account for one critical aspect of these strategies: the target audience. When deciding what campaign messages to use, today's candidates are more prone than ever before to consider who constitutes their potential group of supporters (Bradshaw 2004; Jamieson 1992) and how likely these voters are to respond to their campaign appeals.

In designing political ads with particular racial groups in mind, strategists assume that membership in a racial demographic carries with it shared concerns, interests, and experiences (Shea and Burton 2006). With advances in communication and technology, especially database technology, demographic targeting "has become a routine part of campaign operations" (56). Political consultants encourage candidates to develop an ethnic targeting program that "identifies what ethnic group an individual or family belongs to primarily by looking at and analyzing the last name." Once this has been done, "ethnic-based mailings can be sent on the basis of each ethnic group's presumed interests" (55).[11] But using an individual's last name to develop an ethnic marketing campaign is not a foolproof strategy. Given the increasing rates of intermarriage in the U.S., the surname Garcia or Rodriguez could refer to someone who is not of Latino descent.[12] Moreover, individuals with these surnames can have vastly different backgrounds—some may have immigrated to the U.S. within the past year, whereas others may have great-grandparents who were born in the U.S. Thus, assuming that all Latinos have similar concerns is problematic, as generational status and ethnic group background are just two categories in which we see differences among Latinos' political attitudes and behaviors (Abrajano and Alvarez, forthcoming; Branton 2007; Hood et al. 1997; de la Garza and DeSipio 1992).

Candidates can move away from a reliance on Spanish surname lists by targeting a significant number of Latinos in a medium that caters specifically to them and one that other individuals are not privy to. That is, politicians can communicate to a large segment of the Latino population *in* Spanish and *on* Spanish-language television. By doing so, candidates are guaranteed that most of their intended audience is being exposed to their campaign messages. Although not all Latinos rely on Spanish-language television, there are 28.1 million Spanish speakers in the U.S., 28.5 percent of whom do not

speak English well or at all (Shin and Bruno 2003).[13] This means that candidates who advertise in Spanish are directly reaching out to a sizeable number of Spanish-dominant Latinos and potentially reaching out to an even larger number of bilingual Latinos. The estimates just cited from Shin and Bruno also offer insight about the Latino population. Because language acquisition has long been used as a proxy to measure a newcomer's rate of assimilation and level of incorporation of the values, beliefs, and behaviors of the host society (Portes and Rumbaut 1992; Bloemraad 2006; de la Garza et al. 1995), we can infer that Spanish-dominant Latinos are likely to be less incorporated into American society than are English-speaking Latinos. As such, Latinos who rely on Spanish are probably less politically active in, less interested in, and less knowledgeable about American politics than are English-dominant and bilingual Latinos. Overall, although advertising in Spanish does not ensure that candidates are reaching out to the entire Latino population, it is certainly more precise than relying on ethnic surname lists alone. Especially for those competing in national elections, broadcasting televised political ads in Spanish offers the most efficient way to reach out to the greatest number of individuals, because candidates can potentially communicate to millions of Latinos through the creation of just a handful of advertisements.

I now turn to some of the ads created in the 2000 presidential race. Gore's most frequently aired Spanish-language advertisement was titled "National Anthem." This ad begins with a visual image of a Latina stating, "They have arrived from far [away] but are looking to do things in which they are trained."[14] Next, another Latina states, "I have needs, I want more opportunities." In the final image of the political spot, an elderly Latina states, "For these and other reasons, this is why I am voting for Gore."

As a point of comparison, the political spot Gore used with the greatest frequency to target his English-speaking audience is called "Veteran." The commercial begins with images of students graduating from high school, with the narrator discussing Gore's plans for "$500 billion in targeted tax cuts," a "$10,000-a-year tax deduction for college tuition," and "welfare reform with time limits and work requirements."[15] The image then shifts to one of police officers, with the corresponding voice-over referencing a proposal for a "crime victims' bill of rights" as well as efforts to "fight violence and pornography on the Internet."

It seems clear that Gore targeted his Spanish-speaking and English-speaking populations with distinct campaign messages. Gore's Spanish-language

ad makes absolutely no explicit references to his policy positions, proposals, or ideological beliefs. Instead, it focuses on Latinos' immigrant backgrounds, apparently with the goal of priming voters to think that voting for Gore will make them more likely to succeed in the United States. In stark contrast, Gore's English-language commercial is filled with more-detailed information about his proposed tax initiatives, welfare reforms, and crime legislation.

The Argument

The variation in the content of these two Gore ads can be explained with the theory of information-based advertising: candidates will tailor their advertising messages on the basis of their perceptions of the ability of their target audience to respond to these messages. Candidates may wish to avoid broadcasting ads that contain overly complicated and detailed messages regarding their issue positions or policies to a group of voters that is fairly new to the political process. As this targeted group also shares a common cultural heritage, candidates may also find it advantageous to incorporate ethnic specific appeals in their ads. Research by political communication scholars (see Connaughton 2005; Connaughton and Jarvis 2004; Benoit 2000) explains this phenomenon through identification theory—candidates attempt to connect to voters by associating themselves, either through symbols, individuals, or personal experiences, with the particular group of voters being targeted.

As the findings from this book will demonstrate, the decision to target Latinos in this manner produces different effects among this group of voters. Spanish-language ads and other ads that specifically target Latinos who have yet to fully incorporate into U.S. political life (using, for example, an ad that features a Latino) influence their political behavior positively. Such ads make them more likely to vote and more likely to support the candidate who uses these ads. Yet politically incorporated Latinos will be less influenced by these ethnic-based appeals; instead, policy-based ads have a larger impact on their voting behavior. As these Latinos have become integrated and incorporated into American politics, their political behavior has mirrored that of the American electorate, so that a candidate's policies and positions affects who they vote for. (Alvarez and Nagler 1995; Page 1978; Downs 1957).

The normative implications from these different campaign strategies are twofold. First, I offer evidence demonstrating that the knowledge levels of the candidates' policies among Spanish-dominant Latinos were lower than for English-dominant Latinos, African Americans, and Anglos. I will also show

how Spanish-dominant Latinos are less likely to behave as issue voters when compared with English-dominant Latinos. Again, these differences arise because the content of Spanish-language ads is less informative than is the content of English-language ads.

Organization of the Book

In Chapter 2, the specific framework of the central arguments is presented. I first provide an in-depth discussion of one primary aspect of the political acculturation process—the factors that contribute to an individual's knowledge of politics. This discussion is critical given that my theory of information-based advertising is grounded in the assumption that candidates use this indicator in deciding which messages to include in their Spanish- and English-language advertisements. The testable predictions from this theory are also presented in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 discusses the historical and current-day campaign efforts used by candidates to appeal to Latinos in the U.S. Although advertising to such groups is not a recent phenomenon, the emergence of Spanish-language commercials makes it possible to systematically analyze how candidates target ethnic minorities, given that these efforts are clearly intended for a specific audience. Chapter 3 also provides readers with the campaign context and Spanish-language advertising efforts for the presidential, Senate, House, and gubernatorial elections that occurred from 2000 to 2004.

Chapter 4 begins with empirical tests of the theory of information-based advertising. I first examine the content of campaign advertisements used in the 2000, 2002, and 2004 election cycles. I take advantage of a unique data source that contains television ads reaching out to more than 80 percent of the U.S. population for these election periods. This data allows for an important advancement in our understanding of the campaign process, because it has been a challenge to gather data of such depth and magnitude in the past.[16] For each Spanish- and English-language advertisement, I compare the amount and types of policy and nonpolicy messages. Next, I examine which television shows these commercials aired on. Support for the theory of information-based advertising predicts that ads containing complex policy statements will be aired on shows with viewers most likely to understand them (for example, on local or network news), whereas the less-demanding policy messages will be aired on entertainment programs. Finally, I conduct an in-depth analysis of the congressional candidates' use of advertising to determine whether their

district's level of education (used as a proxy for political knowledge), level of competition, or political ideology, or some combination of all three, best explains their decision to include policy in their commercials.

Chapter 5 turns to the impact of Spanish-language ads on Latino turnout and vote choice in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections. In particular, the analysis examines whether Spanish-dominant, and thus less politically incorporated, Latinos were affected by Spanish-language ads in their voting behavior. I conducted this analysis using the National Annenberg Election Surveys (NAES) from 2000 and 2004, both of which contain a sizeable number of Latino respondents. The effect of both Spanish- and English-language political ads on the voting behavior of Latinos is also analyzed, based on their level of political incorporation.

Chapter 6 focuses on the implications of adapting an information-based advertising strategy for the civic and political health of the Latino electorate. Using the 2000 and 2004 NAES allows for an analysis of the campaign messages that most contributed to Latinos' knowledge of the two major presidential candidates. Which political ads did Latinos learn from, and did their learning depend on their level of political incorporation? Latinos' rates of political knowledge are then compared with the rates of political knowledge of non-Latinos. If the Spanish-language ads contained less policy content than the English-language ads, then we may see lower rates of learning for less politically incorporated Latinos than for more-incorporated Latinos, Anglos, and African Americans. Another implication of this campaign strategy pertains to the ability of all Latinos to behave as issue voters. Given the importance that issues play in one's vote decision, the lack of substantive policy messages that less politically incorporated Latinos are targeted with may make it more difficult for them than for acculturated Latinos to use their policy preferences in guiding their vote choice.

Chapter 7 summarizes the major findings from this research and discusses its theoretical contributions to the larger work on campaigns, political advertising, and political behavior. The implications of an information-based advertising strategy on the overall well being of the Latino electorate and for democracy in general are also discussed. Finally, Chapter 8 is a brief discussion of the 2008 presidential campaign efforts targeted to Latinos. Given the strategies used in the 2000–2004 campaigns, it is important to know whether candidates conducting subsequent campaigns have learned from previous experiences and the extent to which they have altered their strategies toward one of the most coveted voting blocs in American politics.