

Latino 'Guerillas' and the GOP

There is a picture in our family of my great-grandfather holding a Model 94 lever-action .30-30 carbine—"Treinta Treinta," as it was affectionately called—with a cartridge belt strapped across his body. He fought in the Mexican Revolution with an American-made Winchester rifle.

This little piece of family history pops into my mind now and then. Not sure why; maybe I just like the idea of having guerilla blood. I thought of it again upon hearing that Republicans in Texas scored two mayoral upsets within Democratic counties.

In Fort Worth, Republican Mattie Parker defeated Deborah Peoples, a former Tarrant County Democratic Party chairwoman with [endorsements](#) from Robert Francis "Beto" O'Rourke and Julián Castro. Home to nearly 900,000 Texans, Fort Worth swung into Biden's column last year after decades of supporting Republican presidential candidates. It's also [35.5 percent](#) Latino.

Five hundred miles south of Fort Worth is the border city of McAllen. It is home to 143,000 residents, 85 percent of whom are Latino. Here Javier Villalobos, a former chairman of the local Republican Party, defeated a candidate backed by local Democrats.

Victory for Republicans so close to the border comes as a surprise to some. Voting Republican would seem to conflict with the ethnic interests of Latinos, who grow their electoral power through immigration. Trump's immigration rhetoric was supposed to be anathema to their sensibilities. Yet under Trump, the GOP enjoyed a performance with Latinos in 2020 [comparable](#) to Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush. The

surprise at that, and the GOP's victory in McAllen, is in no small part because the left feels practically entitled to the "bronze vote."

It's the Democratic Party's hard-left turn on cultural issues seems to be driving more Latinos away. Latinos are [not a monolith](#), and it is ironic that the heralds of diversity and inclusion tend to see them as such. Behind the progressive term "Latinx" is a project to homogenize these different ethnic groups into a consumerist framework: transgenderism and tacos. At any rate, it's not surprising at all that [Tejanos](#) would gravitate toward the GOP, especially after what happened on the border last year.

In September, , the [Gulf Cartel](#) littered the roads about 15 miles south of McAllen with burning tires and spike traps, while completely sealing off some streets in the Mexican city of Reynosa with blockades of trucks and buses. Cities like McAllen bear the brunt of narco-violence, human trafficking, and immigration policy failures. They can see the black smoke rising from the streets of Reynosa from our side of the border. Therefore it's not a surprise that Latinos would trend toward the party that is at least posturing against porous borders.

The Democratic Party appears to be slowly realizing that it's no longer wise to peddle open-borders rhetoric. Vice President Kamala Harris notably changed her tune in a press conference alongside Guatemalan President Alejandro Giammattei. "Do not come. Do not come," she [warned](#). "The United States will continue to enforce our laws and secure our borders." The likelihood that change in rhetoric will manifest in a policy change, however, is slim.

Another issue that has likely driven some Latinos away from the Democratic Party is Black Lives Matter. There are historic tensions between the black and Latino communities that played out last year.

Amid the riots, polling [found 54 percent of Latino Democrats](#) supported sending in the military to quell rioting in June, while 60 percent of all Latinos [supported](#) some form of military presence. In July, a Gallup survey showed [83 percent](#) of Latinos wanted police to spend the same amount of time or more in their area. That summer, a [video](#) went viral showing a Latino man pulling a chainsaw out of his work truck to scare off Black Lives Matter agitators. That was a Tejano in McAllen.

Notably, there was very little, if any, looting in [Latino communities](#) last year. In different parts of southern California, Latinos militated against Black Lives Matter demonstrators, greeting them with signs reading “Keep it moving” and “Not here.” When September rolled around, the [Pew Research Center reported](#) that the “recent decline in support for the Black Lives Matter movement is particularly notable among White and Hispanic adults.”

Yet while the Democratic Party is driving Latinos away, the GOP seems intent on squandering the opportunity to bring these voters into their fold. Instead, the party appears eager to use the surge in Latino support to justify an agenda it already had in mind, one that will likely include expanded avenues for legal immigration and amnesty. It’s also happy to emphasize its Latino support in a futile and patently stupid effort to “prove” the party isn’t “racist,” thus ignoring at its own peril its single-largest constituency: white, non-college-educated voters.

The irony is that many of the same issues that attract Latinos to national populism also appeal to these white voters. The GOP lacks conviction and is just too afraid of its own shadow to capitalize on this. Much of this is justified on the claim that immigrants—thus Latinos—are uniquely patriotic, and thus better than their native counterparts. But as political journalist [Ryan Girdusky notes](#), “as a whole, they share many of the same opinions as white progressives.”

If Latinos are “unique” in any relevant sense, it is that they do not suffer from and are resisting the Zeitgeist of white guilt. In South Florida, one journalist [complains](#), “non-Black Latinos often have a blind spot when it comes to recognizing themselves as a minority in the United States.” Integral to the “Latinx” project is homogenizing different ethnic groups into a single, anti-white bloc. In part, this requires shaming some “white-adjacent” Latinos for being insufficiently woke—something many of them don’t care for and, unlike white progressives, have no qualms rejecting outright. In other words, the hard left turn of the Democratic Party appears to be leaving some Latinos behind.

However, apart from its embrace of prison and police reform, the GOP is attempting to out-left the left. In the same week that Republican National Committee chairwoman Ronna McDaniel [celebrated](#) “Pride Month,” she [praised](#) the Tejano swing for the GOP in McAllen. There is an obvious tension here, and it illustrates that the Republican Party does not know or care why people turn to them.

A strange set of circumstances, timing, and Democratic Party lunacy present Republicans with a unique opportunity to wage guerilla warfare on the incumbent regime. It is their opportunity to win, or to lose.

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