

# Latino Opinion Leaders on the Presidential Election and the Media: September 2016



## *A NiLP iReport*

By Angelo Falcón

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September 2016

**NiLP**  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR  
LATINO POLICY

National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey

# Latino Opinion Leaders on the Presidential Election and Media

By Angelo Falcón

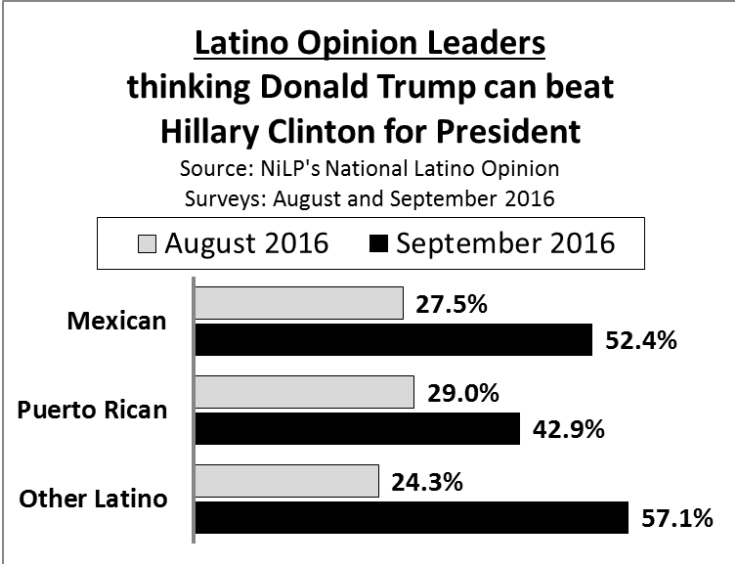
The NiLP Report (September 22, 2016)

**T**he volatility of opinion is perhaps one of the most important characteristics of this year's Presidential race. For Latinos, the issue does not appear to be how they will be voting as a bloc, but [whether they will be turning out in large enough numbers](#). With the Presidential debates only a week away, this survey reports on a disturbing development: the apparent loss of confidence by the Latino opinion leaders in the ability of their preferred candidate, Hillary Clinton, to beat Donald Trump in November. This survey also explores the Latino opinion leaders' media usage and their assessment of the effectiveness of the national Latino political commentators representing the community's views in the news media.

This online survey was conducted by the National Institute for Latino Policy (NiLP) during September 13-20, 2016. A total of 156 Latino opinion leaders participated from 24 states, Washington, DC, Puerto Rico and the North Mariana Islands. While this may be the closest thing to an ongoing survey of national Latino leadership in existence today, it is not based on a scientific sample, making our findings only suggestive of broader trends and attitudes. The intent of the NiLP survey is to stimulate discussion and debate on critical issues facing the Latino community by providing some insights into the thinking of a broad range of engaged Latino leaders.

## The Presidential Election

**T**he most striking finding of this survey is the sharp drop by all three groups of Latino opinion leaders in their confidence that Clinton could beat Trump in the Presidential race. In the span of only one month, between August and September, there was a dramatic change from majorities of all three groups feeling Clinton could beat Trump in August, to majorities of all three groups feeling Trump could win. This is no doubt their reaction to Clinton's loss of momentum after the Democratic Convention as criticisms of her handling of State Department emails, the continuing pay-for-play allegations about her role with the Clinton Foundation, and questions about her health were in the news. This has resulted in the tightening of the race, according to the polls.



Do you think Donald Trump can beat Hillary Clinton for President?				
		Latino Opinion Leader Ethnicity		
		Other Latino	Puerto Rican	Mexican
Yes	September 2016	57.1%	42.9%	52.4%
	August 2016	24.3%	29.0%	27.5%
No	September 2016	25.0%	36.4%	31.0%
	August 2016	47.1%	51.6%	56.0%
Don't know. Not sure	September 2016	14.3%	20.8%	16.6%
	August 2016	28.6%	19.4%	16.5%

Despite this reassessment of Clinton’s chances of being elected, majorities of all three groups of Latino opinion leaders indicated that they plan to vote for her in November (71 percent of Puerto Ricans, 69 percent of the Mexicans and 56 percent of the Other Latinos). Only single digit percentages of all three groups indicated they plan to vote for Trump, with Stein coming in a far second with all three (ranging from 8 to 11 percent).

Latino Opinion Leaders			
For whom do you plan to vote for US President in November?			
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Hillary Clinton (Democratic Party)	69.0%	71.1%	55.6%
Donald J. Trump (Republican Party)	2.4%	5.3%	3.7%
Jill Stein (Green Party)	9.5%	7.9%	11.1%
Gary Johnson (Libertarian Party)	7.1%	*	3.7%
I will be writing-in my choice for President	7.1%	1.3%	3.7%
Undecided	2.4%	9.2%	11.1%
I will be voting only for Congress	2.4%	1.3%	3.7%
Don't know	*	*	7.4%
Not sure	*	3.9%	*
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Consistent with [a recent Gallup Poll result](#), among the Latino opinion leaders, the foreign-born are more supportive of a Clinton Presidency than the U.S.-born.

<b>Latino Opinion Leaders</b>		
<b>For whom do you plan to vote for US President in November?</b>		
	US-born	Foreign-born
Hillary Clinton (Democratic Party)	67.7%	71.4%
Jill Stein (Green Party)	9.4%	7.1%
Gary Johnson (Libertarian Party)	1.0%	5.4%
Donald J., Trump (Republican Party)	6.3%	*
Undecided	6.3%	8.9%
I will be writing-in my choice for President	4.2%	1.8%
I will be voting for only for Congress	2.1%	1.8%
Don't know	1.0%	1.8%
Not sure	2.1%	1.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

We also asked the Latino opinion leaders to rate each campaign's outreach to the Latino community. Clinton received by far the best ratings in this regard, 38 to 47 percent grading her efforts as "Good" to "Excellent." However, majorities of all three groups thought the Clinton Latino outreach efforts were only "fair" or "poor." The three other campaigns --- Trump, Stein, and Johnson --- were given worse failing grades, with large majorities rating them as "poor" or "nonexistent." Trump had the worse Latino outreach ratings ranging from 89 to 94 percent as "poor" and "nonexistent." Despite the importance given to the Latino vote in the media, the Latino opinion leaders clearly feel that the outreach of all four campaigns to the community has been inadequate.

<b>Latino Opinion Leaders</b>			
<b>How would you rate the Clinton campaign's outreach to the Latino community?</b>			
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Excellent	11.9%	13.0%	3.6%
Good	26.2%	29.9%	42.9%
Fair	38.1%	27.3%	32.1%
Poor	21.4%	23.4%	17.9%
Nonexistent	2.4%	3.9%	3.6%
Don't know	*	2.6%	*
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

<b>Latino Opinion Leaders</b>			
<b>How would you rate the Trump campaign's outreach to the Latino community?</b>			
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Excellent	2.4%	*	*
Good	2.4%	*	*
Fair	*	5.2%	3.6%
Poor	50.0%	40.3%	53.6%
Nonexistent	42.9%	53.2%	35.7%
Don't know	2.4%	1.3%	7.1%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

<b>Latino Opinion Leaders</b>			
<b>How would you rate the Stein campaign's outreach to the Latino community?</b>			
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Excellent	2.4%	*	*
Good	*	2.6%	3.7%
Fair	9.5%	5.3%	3.7%
Poor	21.4%	25.0%	18.5%
Nonexistent	42.9%	39.5%	44.4%
Don't know	23.8%	27.6%	29.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

<b>Latino Opinion Leaders</b>			
<b>How would you rate the Johnson campaign's outreach to the Latino community?</b>			
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Good	2.4%	*	3.7%
Fair	2.4%	*	*
Poor	26.8%	19.5%	22.2%
Nonexistent	48.8%	53.2%	48.1%
Don't know	19.5%	27.3%	25.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

## The Media

The role of the media in the Presidential election this year has been more ubiquitous and important than ever. One reason for much discussion on this topic among Latino leadership circles is the part being played by [the limited number of national Latino political commentators](#) in presenting Latino views in the media. Studies have documented the underrepresentation of Latinos in this role, but no assessment of the adequacy of those relative few acting as Latino pundits has been conducted to date.

**The National Latino Political Commentators.** To address this issue, the Latino opinion leaders were asked to identify which Latino national commentator they felt is the most influential today. They were also asked to rate the performance of each one on the list provided by Latino national commentators in presenting Latino views. Some Latino opinion leaders contacted to participate in the survey indicated that they were not familiar with most of the commentators listed and, as a result, declined to participate. This list of commentators was developed in consultation with some Latino media professionals. It should be noted that recognition of these commentators in this survey would be determined by some factors, including the geographic scope and type of their media outlet, ethnic orientation, political ideology, the length of career, and so on. We also added Jose Antonio Vargas to the list to see if the respondents would note that he is Filipino, not Latino, but very few did so.

Asked to identify who they think is the most influential national Latino political commentator, three stood out as most influential. They are:

- **Juan Gonzalez**, former *New York Daily News* columnist and current co-host of Democracy Now!
- **Maria Hinojosa**, host and producer of NPR's Latino USA
- **Maria Carmona**, CNN/CNNE political commentator

Among the Mexican opinion leaders, a higher percentage (23 percent) felt that *none of the commentators listed* were influential, compared to 7 percent of the Puerto Ricans and 15 percent of the Other Latinos.

For the Mexican opinion leaders, the top influential commentators are Maria Hinojosa and Maria Cardona; for the Puerto Ricans and the Other Latinos, it is Juan Gonzalez.

<b>Latino Opinion Leaders</b>			
<b>Of the following, which one do you feel is the most influential national Latino political commentator? (select only one)</b>			
Source: NiLP's National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey: September 2016			
	Latino Opinion Leader Ethnicity		
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
1. Juan Gonzalez (Democracy Now!)	7.5%	24.7%	22.2%
2. Maria Hinojosa (Latino USA/NPR))	17.5%	15.6%	11.1%
3. Maria Cardona (CNN)	17.5%	1.3%	14.8%
4. Ana Navarro (CNN)	5.0%	7.8%	7.4%
5. Maria Teresa Kumar (MSNBC)	7.5%	5.2%	3.7%
6. Geraldo Rivera (Fox)	2.5%	6.5%	3.7%
7. Ray Suarez (NPR)	2.5%	7.8%	*
8. Gerson Borrero (HITN)	*	5.2%	3.7%
9. Julio Ricardo Varela (Latino USA/NPR)	2.5%	1.3%	3.7%
10. Alex Castellano (CNN)	*	*	3.7%
All Others	5.0%	5.1%	3.8%
None of those on list	22.5%	6.5%	14.8%
Don't know	7.5%	7.8%	
Not sure	2.5%	5.2%	7.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In the table that follows, the Latino opinion leaders rate the performance of each of the commentators listed. This includes the percentage of “good” to “very good” ratings given, and the average of the score they received in a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good).

<b>Latino Opinion Leaders</b>						
<b>National Latino Political Commentators' Ratings</b>						
<b>Percent Rating Good/Very Good and</b>						
<b>Average Score on 1 (Very Poor) to 5 (Very Good) Rating</b>						
Source: NiLP's National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey: September 2016						
	Latino Opinion Leader Ethnicity					
	Mexican		Puerto Rican		Other Latino	
	Good/ Very Good	Average Score	Good/ Very Good	Average Score	Good/ Very Good	Average Score
Gustavo Arellano (OC Weekly)	27.0%	4.1	16.7%	2.5	25.0%	2.8
Cristina Beltran (MSNBC)	50.0%	2.9	41.6%	2.6	62.5%	2.0
Gerson Borrero (HITN)	28.6%	2.7	62.5%	3.1	51.6%	3.5
Maria Cardona (CNN)	42.3%	2.8	44.7%	2.6	55.6%	3.3
Alex Castellano (CNN)	20.0%	2.2	22.5%	1.9	27.8%	2.0
Esther Cepeda (Latino Magazine)	31.3%	3.3	25.0%	2.7	50.0%	3.7
Linda Chavez (Townhall)	10.0%	1.8	9.1%	2.0	25.0%	1.5
Victoria DeFrancesco Soto (MSNBC)	52.7%	2.5	32.0%	2.6	72.8%	3.5
Alfredo Estrada (Latino Magazine)	22.2%	2.8	5.6%	2.5	16.7%	2.5
Daniel Garza (Fox)	6.3%	2.0	14.8%	2.1	22.2%	2.3
Antonio Gonzalez (KPFK)	17.3%	2.0	11.8%	2.3	60.0%	3.5
Juan Gonzalez (Democracy Now!)	76.0%	3.9	84.2%	4.2	90.0%	4.8
Maria Hinojosa (Latino USA/NPR))	78.8%	4.0	80.3%	4.2	90.9%	4.3
Maria Teresa Kumar (MSNBC)	57.7%	3.3	60.0%	2.9	80.0%	4.0
Pilar Marrero (CNN)	31.3%	2.7	38.1%	2.5	72.8%	3.3
Myriam Marquez (Miami Herald)	11.1%	2.4	20.0%	2.4	60.0%	2.0
Alicia Menendez (Fusion)	18.2%	2.7	42.9%	2.9	88.9%	3.3
Regina Montoya (Dallas Morning News)	18.2%	2.5	7.7%	2.2	50.0%	2.5
Ed Morales (WBAI)	33.3%	3.0	68.6%	3.2	77.8%	3.0
Ruben Navarrete (Fox)	17.3%	2.4	19.5%	2.1	23.1%	2.8
Ana Navarro (CNN)	40.7%	3.1	40.5%	2.1	57.9%	2.8
Stephen Nuño (NBC Latino)	53.3%	3.3	44.5%	3.2	50.0%	3.0
Miguel Perez (Univision)	41.6%	2.7	50.0%	2.9	50.0%	2.0
Raul Reyes (MSNBC)	41.6%	2.5	34.7%	2.9	55.5%	3.7
Geraldo Rivera (Fox)	12.2%	2.3	12.3%	1.9	11.1%	2.0
Leslie Sanchez (CNN)	29.4%	2.8	23.1%	2.3	72.8%	3.5
Ray Suarez (NPR)	77.8%	4.1	73.7%	3.6	88.9%	3.8
Julio Ricardo Varela (Latino USA/NPR)	53.3%	3.3	62.1%	3.4	71.8%	4.0
Jose Antonio Vargas (CNN)	42.9%	3.4	41.3%	2.7	69.3%	3.5

In the table that follows, the percentage of Latino opinion leaders who were able to provide them with a rating is presented for each commentator (100 percent minus percentage of “don’t know” responses). The commentators receiving the highest recognition scores are: Maria Hinojosa (83 to 92 percent), Geraldo Rivera (75 to 93 percent), Ray Suarez (73 to 80 percent), Juan Gonzalez (64 to 88 percent), Alex Castellano (58 to 75 percent), Ana Navarro (57 to 79 percent), Maria Teresa Kumar (59 to 65 percent), and Ruben Navarrete (55 to 66 percent).



<b>Latino Opinion Leaders</b>			
<b>National Latino Political Commentators'</b>			
<b>Recognition Scores</b>			
(Percentage Providing a Rating for Commentator)			
Source: NiLP's National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey: September 2016			
	Latino Opinion Leader Ethnicity		
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Gustavo Arellano (OC Weekly)	40.5%	26.1%	16.7%
Cristina Beltran (MSNBC)	32.4%	35.8%	33.3%
Gerson Borrero (HITN)	20.0%	58.8%	52.0%
Maria Cardona (CNN)	70.3%	55.9%	78.3%
Alex Castellano (CNN)	67.6%	58.8%	75.0%
Esther Cepeda (Latino Magazine)	42.1%	29.9%	26.1%
Linda Chavez (Townhall)	52.6%	62.9%	52.2%
Victoria DeFrancesco Soto (MSNBC)	50.0%	36.8%	47.8%
Alfredo Estrada (Latino Magazine)	24.3%	27.3%	26.1%
Daniel Garza (Fox)	41.0%	40.9%	39.1%
Antonio Gonzalez (KPFK)	29.7%	27.9%	22.7%
Juan Gonzalez (Democracy Now!)	64.1%	87.5%	80.0%
Maria Hinojosa (Latino USA/NPR))	82.5%	91.7%	91.7%
Maria Teresa Kumar (MSNBC)	65.0%	58.8%	65.2%
Pilar Marrero (CNN)	41.0%	32.3%	52.4%
Myriam Marquez (Miami Herald)	23.1%	22.7%	21.7%
Alicia Menendez (Fusion)	29.7%	31.8%	39.1%
Regina Montoya (Dallas Morning News)	28.9%	19.7%	17.4%
Ed Morales (WBAI)	24.3%	50.7%	39.1%
Ruben Navarrete (Fox)	65.7%	54.5%	56.5%
Ana Navarro (CNN)	73.0%	56.9%	79.2%
Stephen Nuño (NBC Latino)	39.5%	28.1%	26.1%
Miguel Perez (Univision)	31.6%	47.1%	50.0%
Raul Reyes (MSNBC)	31.6%	34.8%	39.1%
Geraldo Rivera (Fox)	84.6%	92.9%	75.0%
Leslie Sanchez (CNN)	47.2%	41.9%	50.0%
Ray Suarez (NPR)	73.0%	80.3%	78.3%
Julio Ricardo Varela (Latino USA/NPR)	38.5%	43.9%	45.8%
Jose Antonio Vargas (CNN)	53.8%	42.6%	54.2%

**Media Usage.** Which are the media sources most relied upon by the Latino opinion leaders to get their news about Latino politics? The survey asked them to identify the most important news source they consulted. All three groups of Latino opinion leaders pointed to “online newspapers” as the most important, followed for the Mexicans and Puerto Ricans by “cable television news.” The second most important to the Other Latinos are “network television news.” The Other Latino

opinion leaders also thought social media (Facebook and Twitter) was more important to them as a news source than for the Mexicans and Puerto Ricans.

<b>Latino Opinion Leaders</b>			
<b>Of the following, which is the most important news source of information for you on Latino politics?</b>			
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Online newspaper	34.1%	48.1%	29.6%
Cable Television News	22.0%	14.3%	18.5%
Network Television News	7.3%	7.8%	22.2%
Facebook	12.2%	5.2%	14.8%
Print newspaper	17.1%	7.8%	*
Twitter	2.4%	7.8%	11.1%
Radio	4.9%	9.1%	3.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The survey also asked the Latino opinion leaders to identify the media outlet that does the best job covering Latino issues. By far, Univision was considered the best by 36-37 percent of the Latino opinion leaders. This was followed by Telemundo as a distant second and MSNBC as the third. The broadcast television networks (ABC, CBS, FOX and NBC) were barely mentioned as a group.

<b>Latino Opinion Leaders</b>			
<b>As far as you're concerned, which national television or cable outlet does the best job of covering Latino issues? (select only one)</b>			
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Univision	35.7%	37.2%	35.7%
Telemundo	7.1%	10.3%	3.6%
MSNBC	9.5%	5.1%	3.6%
CNN	2.4%	1.3%	3.6%
ABC	*	*	3.6%
FOX	2.4%	*	*
NBC	*	*	*
Other (vol.)	4.8%	5.1%	7.1%
None of the above	28.6%	23.1%	32.1%
Don't know	9.6%	12.8%	10.7%
Other	4.8%	5.1%	7.1%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%