

The Politics of Perception: An Investigation of the Presence and Sources of Perceptions of Internal Discrimination Among Latinos*

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Objective. This study investigates the presence of perceptions of internal discrimination among Latinos, and whether three factors impact views of internal discrimination within the Latino population: social integration and discrimination experiences, national origin, and racial identity. *Methods.* Utilizing data from the 2002 Kaiser/Pew Latino National Survey of Latinos, we explore the presence and motivating factors of perceptions of internal discrimination within the Latino population in the United States through descriptive statistics and multivariate regression analysis. *Results.* We find that 84 percent of Latinos in the survey sample believe that Latino internal discrimination is problematic, and also find support for our theories that perceptions of internal discrimination are greater for those who are less integrated into U.S. society, as well as for Latinos who self-identify as black. *Conclusion.* Findings from this research contribute to our understanding of Latino group identity and will have tremendous implications for the measurement and application of perceived discrimination in future studies.

It is generally accepted that racial and ethnic discrimination is a common experience for many members of minority groups in the United States. Political activists and scholars have been examining discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity in the United States for some time. Most agree that the subjective meaning and consequences of perceived discrimination depends on one's position as well as the position of one's group in the social, economic, and political structures of our society. Most studies focus on the majority population, Anglos,¹ as the source of perceived discrimination to-

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¹Anglos are defined as non-Hispanic whites.

ward people of color, including Latinos and African Americans. We contend that this assumption requires further examination, as there is evidence from previous research and survey data that show the diversity within pan-ethnic communities, like the Latino population, with its assortment of nation-of-origin groups, can lead to discrimination of community members by co-ethnics. This phenomenon is known as internal discrimination.

Previous research suggests that perceived discrimination is an out-group phenomenon that (1) fosters group consciousness among racial and ethnic groups (Uhlener, 1991; Padilla, 1985; Bernal and Martinelli, 1993; Rosales, 1993), (2) motivates individuals to participate in politics (Wong, 2003; Stokes, 2003; de la Garza and Vaughn, 1984; Marable, 1985), (3) encourages support for policies or candidates that are perceived to be good for the racial/ethnic group (Uhlener, 1991; Tate, 1993; Dawson, 1994), and (4) provides the foundation for coalitions among minority groups (Kaufmann, 2003; García, 2000; Uhlener, 1991). However, we contend that earlier research has made a critical assumption that the source of discrimination is solely an out-group.

This assumption has tremendous implications regarding the role of perceived discrimination in Latino political behavior. This research seeks to fill this gap by extending research about perceived discrimination through an investigation of perceived *internal* discrimination among Latinos in the United States. In short, we will explore the presence and contributing factors of perceived discrimination as an internal phenomenon within Latino populations. Specifically, we test the impact of three factors that may impact views of internal discrimination among Latinos: social integration and discrimination experiences, national origin, and racial identity.

The Role of Discrimination in the Lives of Latinos in the United States

During the 1970s, Latinos comprised only 4 percent of the total U.S. population but by 2002, there were 37.4 million Latinos in the civilian noninstitutional population; at that time more than one in eight people in the United States were of Latino origin (Ramirez and de la Cruz, 2003). Between 1980 and 2000, the rate of growth among Latinos was nearly four times higher than that of the general population (García and Sanchez, 2008). Not only has the population increased in size over time, but its internal composition has also shifted. While the Latino population has grown as a whole, certain segments, such as Puerto Ricans and Cuban Americans, are now relatively smaller, while others, such as Mexican-, Central American-, and Dominican-origin populations, have grown substantially (Lavariega Monforti, 2006). Further, newer immigrants from diverse countries of origin have settled in areas previously dominated by established Latino populations while these more established groups have maintained their presence in these areas as well as moved into new regions (Lavariega

Monforti, 2006; García and Sanchez, 2008).² Although the recent demographic trends associated with Latinos have generated more interest in this population, there is a lack of research that focuses on discrimination as it is related to these evolving Latino populations, particularly whether the various national-origin communities perceive discrimination in the same ways.

Latinos have been subject to a long history of discriminatory practices by out-groups, such as having separate and unequal facilities like schools, restaurants, theaters, swimming pools, and even cemeteries (Kamasaki, 1988; Massey, 1989). They have been directed to separate drinking fountains, restrooms, and seating areas in public facilities. They have been excluded from exercising the franchise and seeking public office through intimidation and directed away from college preparatory and professional tracks in schools (Gutiérrez, 1999). Further, Latinos, particularly in the Southwest, were subjected to lynching and violence in response to their calls for political inclusion and empowerment (Nelson and Lavariega Monforti, 2006). This suppression has occurred to keep Latinos on the lower rungs of U.S. society. They have endured economic exploitation, particularly for their labor, and social exclusion from many U.S. societal organizations. Although Latinos overall have clearly faced exclusion and discrimination throughout their history, and continue to deal with discriminatory practices in the United States, we think that it is possible that Latinos may perceive discrimination from their co-ethnics due to the variation across several key dimensions such as national origin and race.

Latinos comprise a very diverse population, and scholars have found that this diversity can serve as an obstacle for political empowerment and incorporation (de la Garza et al., 1992; Pachon and DeSipio, 1994; Portes and Rumbaut, 1996). Differences are based on myriad factors, including: nativity, citizenship status, country of origin, length of time spent in the United States, English-language proficiency, and race. Each factor presents barriers to group cohesion and a sense of pan-ethnic group consciousness (Uhlener, Cain, and Kiewiet, 1991). In this research, we are interested in whether these factors motivate perceptions of internal discrimination among Latinos. Therefore, this research is centered on the assessment of three specific factors that may impact views of internal discrimination, as detailed in the following literature review: social integration and discrimination experiences, national origin, and racial identity.

Social Integration and Internal Discrimination

In the recent past, there have been several examples of tension or conflict within Latino communities based on differences in nativity. For example, as

²It is generally accepted that Latinos are concentrated in the following states: Florida, New York, New Jersey, Texas, California, New Mexico, Arizona, Illinois, and Colorado. However, there are emerging Latino populations in the U.S. South and Midwest.

part of a series on Latino immigration, the *Albuquerque Journal* highlighted a high school melee between New Mexico natives and Mexican immigrants (Guzman, 2005). This event was interpreted by school district officials as an example of long-brewing tensions between “Hispanics,” or New Mexican natives, and “Mexican” immigrants. This is just one illustration of conflict that has developed between Latino newcomers and more assimilated, long-term residents of the United States in cities across the country. Another example comes from Florida. In the spring of 2006, immigration marches were taking place across the country. In Miami, 60 percent of the population is foreign born and 75 percent speak Spanish. Yet, it had some of the smallest pro-immigration rallies in the country to support what was perceived to be political action for a “Latino issue.” A *New York Times* report estimated that only 7,000 people attended the immigration rally in Miami, in comparison to 500,000 in Dallas, and 4,000 each in Birmingham, Alabama and Boise, Idaho, which both have significantly smaller Latino populations than Miami (McFadden, 2006). The lack of Cuban Americans and Puerto Ricans at the protest was apparent. When asked why these Latino populations did not show their support for immigration reform at the march, one Cuban-American respondent said: “Immigration reform is not our issue; that is for the Mexicans and Central Americans to worry about.” Marleine Bastien, Executive Director of Haitian Women of Miami, said differing interests have kept immigrant communities separate. “Over the years we have erected imaginary walls among immigrant communities,” Bastien said. “Everybody is fighting for their own agendas and interests. . . . It’s not about Haitians or Nicaraguans or Hondurans. It’s about passing a comprehensive immigration law that will resolve our problems once and for all.” These comments clearly demonstrate a difference in perception by national-origin group (Chardy, 2006). In this same article, Chardy writes:

While Miami is a city of immigrants, vast numbers don’t yet seem ready to take to the streets to demonstrate about the ongoing congressional debate on immigration. Reasons vary. Immigrant rights advocates, including organizers of several recent local protests, cite four main reasons why large marches have not taken place here. Chief among them: the diversity of ethnic backgrounds that tend to diffuse interests in South Florida, while in cities where massive marches occurred Mexicans predominate.

Chardy goes on to talk about the composition of the Hispanic community in the region. For example, while Mexicans are the majority of legal and undocumented immigrants in the United States, they make up only 4 percent of the Hispanics in Miami-Dade County, 8 percent in Broward, and 18 percent in Palm Beach County (2004 Census). Cubans are the largest Hispanic group in Miami-Dade and they tend to focus on the wet-foot, dry-foot policy, while Haitians focus on securing temporary residence and work permits. At the same time, Central Americans focus on not losing those permits. A major factor is that Cubans have a different immigration status

than the other groups we mentioned because those who arrive are allowed to stay under the Cuban Adjustment Act, which enables them to apply for a Green Card after more than a year in the country.

The relationship between nativity and tension among Latinos has been noted in the extant literature. For example, Gutiérrez states: "Despite the cultural affinities Mexican Americans may have felt toward immigrants of Mexico, as their numbers grew, many Mexican Americans began to worry that the recent arrivals were depressing wages, competing with them for scarce jobs and housing, and undercutting their efforts to achieve better working conditions" (1995:59). This was reinforced by the work of Rodríguez and Nuñez (1986), whose survey indicated that Chicanos often viewed Mexican immigrants as rate busters who would take harder, more dangerous, and dirtier jobs than Chicanos, and who also perceived that Mexican immigrants received preferential treatment in consideration of social services. It is critical to note, however, that the authors indicate that these negative views are expressions of working-class Chicanos, who are more likely to be in direct competition with immigrants.

More recently, results from a 2005 Pew Hispanic Center survey of Latinos indicate that U.S.-born Latinos are more likely (34 percent vs. 15 percent) than foreign-born Latinos to believe that undocumented immigrants hurt the economy by driving wages down (Suro, 2005). Similarly, the same report indicates that 28 percent of the native born think that immigrants are a burden on the country rather than strengthening it, compared to only 5 percent of foreign-born Latinos. Therefore, it is clear from previous studies as well as contemporary survey data that nativity impacts intragroup relations and attitudes toward policies among Latinos.

Scholars have also noted the ability of other aspects of social integration to motivate internal discrimination among Latinos (Ochoa, 2000, 2004). Language has consistently been the dominant common denominator among Latinos and has often been the basis for discussions of pan-ethnicity or group consciousness formation (García, 2003; Hero, 1992; Acuña, 1999). However, can language also be a source of tension and division among Latino populations? Previous work has found that language is a critical factor that can serve as a symbolic bond between Latinos, or a source of tension, as some Mexican Americans expressed resentment when Mexican immigrants do not speak English (Ochoa, 2000, 2004; Rodríguez and Nuñez, 1986). This sense of tension may work both ways, as Latinos who are not able to communicate in Spanish may be discriminated against by other Latinos who are Spanish dominant (García Bedolla, 2005). This is exemplified by the respondents of both Ochoa's (2004) and García Bedolla's (2005) studies, who indicated that Latinos who are monolingual English speakers are shunned or ridiculed by Mexican immigrants due to their lack of fluency in Spanish and, in turn, some of these respondents expressed a desire for Mexican immigrants to assimilate and speak English rather than Spanish in the United States. Finally, differences in Spanish terminology,

dialect, or slang can cause communication problems between the various foreign-born populations and those Latinos born in the United States that can lead to discrimination and hostility (Rodriguez and Nuñez, 1986).

There also appears to be a relationship between external and internal discrimination, as scholars have argued that external discrimination from Anglos has helped reinforce a schism based on nativity and language usage among Latinos (García Bedolla, 2005). As a result of the tendency of the dominant society to make generalizations about Latinos regardless of nativity or country of origin, many U.S.-born Latinos may fear that the behavior of immigrants may reflect poorly on them. In this way, more assimilated Latinos distance themselves from negative stereotypes and develop a more positive collective identification for themselves (García Bedolla, 2005:99). Research has found that some Mexican Americans express a sense of embarrassment regarding Mexican immigrants that has motivated them to try to separate themselves from the Mexican immigrant population (Menchaca, 1995; Ochoa, 2004; Gutiérrez, 1995; de la Garza, 1985). This behavior is the result of Mexican Americans (who may experience discrimination based on their ethnicity) being concerned that a large influx of poor, uneducated, and Spanish-dominant Mexican immigrants would reinforce or heighten the negative stereotypes of Latinos held by the dominant society (Gutiérrez, 1995). These perceived cultural differences have an affect on intergroup interactions, as U.S.-born Latinos may maintain social distance from immigrants by conducting business in other areas of town or declining social invitations from Latino immigrants (Ochoa, 2000).

This desire to create social distance from native-born Mexicans may also motivate Mexican Americans to adopt policy positions similar to Anglos, and discriminate against other Latinos. For example, Mexican-American organizations, including the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and the American G.I. Forum, not only opposed the Bracero Program (which afforded licensed entry of agricultural labor from Mexico) but also supported efforts to repatriate Mexican immigrants on the grounds that these immigrants were detrimental to Mexican-American progress (de la Garza, 1985:96). This apparent relationship between social integration and discrimination among Latinos leads us to believe that measures of social integration will be correlated with perceptions of Latino internal discrimination.

The Role of Race in the Latino Community

Although somewhat understudied by scholars of Latino politics, race is emerging as an important dimension to consider when investigating diverse Latino populations. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 1.7 million of the 38.8 million Hispanics identified themselves as both Latino/Hispanic and also of African descent. Among Latin Americans, Do-

minicans have the highest percentage of people who self-identify as black (12.7 percent or 103,361), followed by Puerto Ricans (8.2 percent or 277,765) (Nicholson, Pantoja, and Segura, 2005). Further, while the number of Afro Latinos has increased over time, the percentage of this population relative to Latinos overall has remained rather constant (Nicholson, Pantoja, and Segura, 2005). Although very little work has explored the impact of race on intragroup relations among Latinos in the United States, racial prejudice and racial hierarchies have been well documented in Latin America (Wade, 1997; Andrews, 2004; Peña, Sidanius, and Sawyer, 2004; Dulitzky, 2005). Although limited, an emerging literature focused on racial dynamics within the Latino community has found that the Afro-Latino population may face discrimination from other Latinos based on their race.

For example, a recent study conducted by the Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research found that racial identity is indeed salient in the Latino community, with race significantly influencing the life chances of Afro Latinos (Logan, 2003; see also Gomez, 2000). Latinos who also self-identify as black in the 2000 Census have lower incomes, higher rates of poverty, lower levels of educational attainment, lower rates of homeownership, and higher levels of racial segregation compared to those who identify as Hispanic, Latino, white, or some other race (Logan, 2003; Nicholson, Pantoja, and Segura, 2005). In addition to sharing socioeconomic conditions with African Americans, it appears as though outgroups perceive that Afro Latinos are black (Waters, 1994). This propensity to be defined in racial terms has tremendous implications regarding the likelihood that Afro Latinos are discriminated against by co-ethnics given Latino racial attitudes toward African Americans.³

Scholars interested in coalition formation between Latinos and African Americans have noted that negative attitudes toward African Americans are unfortunately present among some Latinos (Bobo and Hutchings, 1996; Johnson, Farrell, and Gurrin, 1997; Oliver and Johnson, 1984; Johnson and Oliver, 1989). For example, Bobo and Hutchings (1996) find that Latinos are surpassed only by African Americans in their propensity to view other racial/ethnic groups as competitors. In addition to perceptions of competition, scholarship in this area has also suggested that Latinos tend to harbor negative stereotypes of African Americans. For instance, Johnson, Farrell, and Guinn (1997) find that a large percentage of Latinos view African Americans as less intelligent and more welfare dependent than their own group. Similarly, a more recent McClain et al. (2006) study of Latinos in North Carolina found that the stereotypes of blacks by Latinos are more negative than those of whites. Specifically, nearly 57 percent of Latinos in this study felt that few or almost no blacks could be trusted, and nearly 59 percent believed that few or almost no blacks are hard working (McClain

³However, it is necessary to point out that Latinos backed Obama by a two to one margin on Election Day 2008.

et al., 2006:578). We posit that these attitudes, based on race among the Latino populations, may motivate higher rates of perceived internal discrimination among the Afro-Latino population—particularly as it relates to Dominican and Puerto Rican communities.

Internal Discrimination Across Latino National-Origin Groups

Latinos are a very diverse community, with approximately 22 different national-origin groups included in the pan-ethnic terms of Latino or Hispanic. While Latino population is undergoing significant demographic evolution, the Mexican-origin population continues to comprise the majority of Latinos in the United States, and this segment of the population continues to grow (Lavariega Monforti, 2006). In addition to natural increases in the population, there continues to be a steady stream of Mexican immigrants entering the United States (García, 2003). However, immigrant communities from the Dominican Republic and South and Central America are growing at a fast rate and becoming more geographically important (García, 2003). The trend of greater dispersion of Latino populations beyond the Southwest, New York, New Jersey, Illinois, and Florida may place members of these groups in direct competition with one another for access to limited resources (Betancur and Gills, 2000).

Based on prior research findings, we expect to find that internal discrimination is perceived to be a problem for some Latinos more than others. More specifically, because of the cultural and historical differences, as well as differing immigration and settlement experiences, across Latino country-of-origin groups, we expect that perceptions of discrimination may vary by national origin. For example, the Cuban-origin population is largely an exile community that has a distinct advantage over other groups in terms of becoming legal residents and U.S. citizens via the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966,⁴ Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens by birth but since 1950 Puerto Rico has been held as a territorial possession of the U.S. government,⁵ the Mex-

⁴The Cuban Adjustment Act (CAA), Public Law 89-732, was enacted on November 2, 1966. The law applies to any native or citizen of Cuba who has been inspected and admitted or paroled into the United States after January 1, 1959 and has been physically present for at least one year; and is admissible to the United States for permanent residence. The “wet foot, dry foot policy” is the name given to this policy as a consequence of the 1995 revision of the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966 that states, essentially, that anyone who fled Cuba and reached the United States would be allowed to pursue residency a year later.

⁵Puerto Rico is subject to the judicial and legal system of the United States, and U.S. federal agencies implement federal laws and programs in Puerto Rico. Despite their U.S. citizenship, Puerto Ricans still have an anomalous legal status—neither fully independent nor fully a part of the United States. For example, Puerto Ricans on the island cannot vote for the president of the United States, but Puerto Ricans residing in the U.S. mainland can. Puerto Ricans on the island are exempt from federal taxes, but have a system of local taxes very similar to that of the U.S. mainland. A nonvoting “resident commissioner” represents Puerto Rico in the U.S. House of Representatives.

ican-origin population includes economic immigrants, and the Dominican and Central/South American populations include both economic and political immigrants, along with refugees and those seeking asylum (García Bedolla, Lavariega Monforti, and Pantoja, 2006). As a result of these differences, some Latino groups have had relatively more negative experiences with discrimination than others, and we theorize that perceptions of internal discrimination will be impacted by these variations.

Further, previous research has demonstrated that making distinctions between Latino country-of-origin groups is essential to our understanding of public opinion and political behavior. Research by García Bedolla, Lavariega Monforti, and Pantoja (2006) examines the Latina/o gender gap through the use of the 1999 Harvard Kennedy School/Kaiser Family Foundation/Washington Post Latino Survey. In their study, the authors find that the size and significance of the gender gap varies across Mexican-, Puerto Rican-, and Cuban-origin respondents (García Bedolla, Lavariega Monforti, and Pantoja, 2006; also see Montoya, 1996). Similarly, it is well noted that there are differences in both ideology and partisanship across Latino subgroups, with Puerto Ricans exhibiting more liberal positions on policy issues (García and Sanchez, 2008) and Cuban Americans being more likely to identify as Republican relative to other Latinos (Uhlener and García, 1998; Hero et al., 2000).

Although the existing literature has identified social integration, national origin, and race as potential sources of discrimination, these are concepts that scholars are just beginning to explore. In an attempt to advance this discussion within the literature, we provide a comprehensive analysis of the presence of and motivating factors for perceptions of Latino internal discrimination. Although we must acknowledge that our data, unfortunately, do not provide the opportunity to explore internal discrimination experiences directly, we think that analyzing perceptions of internal discrimination is a critical first step toward achieving a deeper understanding of how discrimination, both experienced and perceived, impacts Latino political behavior and group identity.

Theory and Hypotheses

Our discussion of how perceptions of discrimination impact the lives of Latinos in the United States suggests that discrimination among Latinos is a salient issue, with many factors identified in previous literature serving as potential sources of discord. This discussion motivates some specific hypotheses that drive our analysis. The social integration theory to be tested here is that less integrated Latino immigrants who are more likely to be undocumented, less proficient in English, and who have lower socioeconomic standing are discriminated against by more assimilated Latinos due to the perception that this population suppresses wages for more assimilated Latinos and motivates a general, external discrimination against all Latinos regardless

of integration level. This provides the context for the *Social Integration Discrimination Hypothesis*, which posits that perceptions of internal discrimination will be higher among Latinos who are foreign born, Spanish dominant, and who have not lived in the United States for a long period of time.

Further, we contend that Afro Latinos will be more likely to perceive that internal discrimination among Latinos is problematic. Arguably the largest source of discrimination in the United States is race, with African Americans having the highest levels of perceived discrimination among all racial and ethnic groups (McClain and Stewart, 2006). Extant literature has suggested that Latinos also hold attitudes marked with competition and stereotypes based on race. As a result, it is likely that Latinos who also self-identify as black will be more likely to face discrimination from other Latinos and, consequently, will have greater levels of perceived internal discrimination. The *Racial Identity Hypothesis* therefore states that Latinos who identify as black racially will be significantly more likely to believe that internal discrimination is a problem among Latinos.

Finally, Latinos comprise a very diverse community; thus we contend that given the significant differences across these various subgroups regarding many of the potential sources of internal discrimination, perceptions of internal discrimination will vary by national origin. This theory motivates the *National-Origin Hypothesis*, which theorizes that perceptions of internal discrimination will vary significantly by national origin, and that the national-origin-specific models will indicate that the sources of internal discrimination will vary by national origin as well.

Data, Methods, and Findings

The quantitative data utilized in this analysis are taken from the 2002 Kaiser/Pew Latino National Survey. This survey has a nationally representative sample of 4,213 adults 18 years and older, including 2,929 Latinos. The Latino population was oversampled to achieve a representative number of Latinos across several national-origin groups. As a result, interviews were conducted with 1,047 Mexicans, 317 Puerto Ricans, 343 Cubans, 204 Salvadorans, 235 Dominicans, and 214 Colombians.⁶ The inclusion of Latinos from several different segments of the community provides valuable variation and allows this study to investigate internal discrimination across national-origin groups. International Communications Research (ICR) conducted the interviews, and all respondents were given the opportunity to conduct the interview in English or Spanish.⁷ The overall response rate for this survey was 56.6 percent.

⁶In all, 341 Central Americans and 394 South Americans were interviewed.

⁷Interviews were conducted using the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. The CATI system ensured that questions followed logical skip patterns and that the listed attributes automatically rotated, eliminating "question position" bias.

The dependent variable utilized in this analysis, perceptions of internal discrimination, is categorical and ordered with the following values and frequencies: (0) not a problem (21.5 percent), (1) minor problem (38.9 percent), and (2) major problem (39.6 percent). This variable is constructed from the following survey question: *Do you think (HISPANICS/LATINOS) discriminating against other (HISPANICS/LATINOS) is a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem?* To investigate the potential sources of internal discrimination among Latinos, we include several explanatory variables in a series of multivariate analyses. These variables include demographic and SES factors (gender,⁸ black racial identification,⁹ household income,¹⁰ education,¹¹ recently laid off,¹² cultural factors (language use, nativity, time in the United States, perceptions of external discrimination),¹³ and a series of national-origin variables.¹⁴

In addition to a base model that regresses all the explanatory variables on perceptions of internal discrimination for all national-origin groups, we also isolate each of the national-origin groups with separate models to determine if motivating factors of internal discrimination perceptions vary by national

⁸Coded: (1) male, (2) female.

⁹Black Racial Identification—*What race do you consider yourself to be? White, Black or African-American, Asian, or some other race?* The values of this variable are (0) nonblack, (1) black.

¹⁰Household Income—*What is your total annual household income from all sources, and before taxes?* The values of this variable range from (1) less than \$5,000 to (15) over \$200,000.

¹¹Education—*What is the last grade or class that you completed in school?* The values of this variable are (1) none, or grade 1–8, (2) high school incomplete, (3) high school grad or GED, (4) business, technical, or vocational school after high school, (5) some college, (6) college graduate, (7) postgraduate training/professional schooling.

¹²Recently Laid Off—*During the past year have you or someone in your immediate family been laid off?* The values of this variable are (0) no, (1) yes.

¹³Cultural Factors: Language Use—*Would you say you can carry on a conversation in Spanish, both understanding and speaking, very well, pretty well, just a little, or not at all? Would you say you can read a newspaper or book in Spanish very well, pretty well, just a little, or not at all? Would you say you can carry on a conversation in English, both understanding and speaking, very well, pretty well, just a little, or not at all? Would you say you can read a newspaper or book in English very well, pretty well, just a little, or not at all?* The values of this variable are (1) Spanish dominant, (2) bilingual, (3) English dominant.

Nativity—*Were you born in the United States, the island of Puerto Rico or in another country?* The values of this variable are (0) foreign born, (1) native born.

Time in the United States—*How many years have you lived in the United States?* The values of this variable are (1) 0–1 year in the United States, (2) 1 year in the United States, (3) 2–5 years in the United States, (4) 6–10 years in the United States, (5) 11–20 years in the United States, (6) >20 years in the United States.

External Discrimination—*In general, do you think discrimination against (HISPANICS/LATINOS) is a major problem, minor problem, or not a problem?* The values of this variable are (0) not a problem, (1) problem, but not a big problem, (2) big problem.

¹⁴To account for national origin, dummy variables are constructed for several Latino populations: Cuban, Central/South Americans, Puerto Rican, Mexican, and Dominican. All variables were coded based on the following set of survey questions: *Earlier you said you were Hispanic or Latino, what country did your family of ancestors come from? Which country do you identify with more?* Each variable utilizes the same coding strategy, (0) non-Central/South American, (1) Central/South American; (0) non-Cuban, (1) Cuban; (0) non-Puerto Rican, (1) Puerto Rican; (0) non-Dominican, (1) Dominican; (0) non-Mexican, (1) Mexican.

origin. In the final segment, we utilize postestimation analysis to analyze the substantive impact of the primary explanatory variables of interest, as well as the potential combined impact of the social integration variables.

Analysis and Results

What is the Degree of Latino Internal Discrimination, and What are the Consequences?

We intend to shed light on the propensity and impact of perceived internal discrimination by utilizing perceived internal discrimination as a dependent variable. This allows for a discussion of how pervasive internal perceived discrimination is among Latinos, and whether it varies across several important factors, including national origin. The 2002 Kaiser/Pew Latino National Survey asks respondents to answer the following question: *Do you think (HISPANICS/LATINOS) discriminating against other (HISPANICS/LATINOS) is a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem?* Interestingly, the majority of respondents either indicated that Latino internal discrimination is a problem (37.5 percent), or a big problem (46.8 percent). Combined, 84.4 percent of Latino respondents perceive internal discrimination as problematic.

Consistent with the *National-Origin Hypothesis*, cross-tabulations by national origin reveal that perceptions of internal discrimination do vary across Latino subgroups. As reflected in Table 1, Central and South Americans have the smallest frequency of respondents who indicate Latinos discriminating against other Latinos is not a problem (11.9 percent), with the highest percentage in the “big problem” category associated with Dominican respondents (60.7 percent) and, consequently, the highest mean (2.60). Latinos of Central/South American origins have the second highest rate of internal discrimination, with a mean of (2.40), and just over 52 percent in the “big problem” category. Puerto Ricans, however, are the population with the lowest level of perceived internal discrimination, with a mean of 2.18, and the greatest segment of their group in the “not a problem”

TABLE 1
Perceptions of Internal Discrimination by National Origin

Discrimination Level	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Dominican	Central/South American
Not at problem	15.5%	17.6%	17.1%	12.2%	11.9%
Problem	36.3%	46.2%	38.9%	27.1%	35.5%
Big problem	48.2%	36.2%	44%	60.7%	52.6%
Mean	2.32	2.18	2.26	2.60	2.40
N	1,033	312	332	232	722

category (17.6 percent). It is worth noting here that the two national-origin groups with the lowest levels of perceptions of internal discrimination have higher rates of citizenship and U.S. nativity (measures of social integration) than the two contrasting populations of Central and South Americans and Dominicans, who have greater perceptions of internal discrimination. Although our measure of perceived discrimination does not directly assess internal discrimination among Latinos, we think that this high perception level strongly suggests that internal discrimination is present in the Latino community.¹⁵

The first stage of this analysis reveals that perceptions of internal discrimination among Latinos are rather pervasive, and that this attitude varies by national origin. However, it is not clear what drives this perception among Latinos, and if this variation by national origin holds after controlling for other relevant factors. We intend to shed light on this question by utilizing our internal discrimination measure as a dependent variable in a multivariate analysis model. Our results are depicted in Table 2.¹⁶

The results of Table 2 suggest that there is also strong support for the *Social Integration Hypothesis*, as two of three measures of social integration (language use and time in the United States) are significantly correlated with perceptions of internal discrimination. Specifically, perceptions of Latino internal discrimination are greatest among Latinos who are Spanish dominant and who have not been in the United States for a long period of time. Our results are consistent with the extant literature that implies Latinos who are less integrated in U.S. society perceive that they are discriminated against by third- and fourth-generation Latinos who are English dominant. Our results also indicate that the strongest predictor of perceptions of internal discrimination is perceptions of external discrimination, as those who believe that discrimination against Latinos by out-groups is a problem are more likely to believe that internal discrimination is a problem. It may be the case that Latinos who are most likely to be discriminated against by non-Latinos, such as the foreign born and Spanish dominant, are also more likely to be discriminated against by co-ethnics. However, it is also plausible that some Latinos are simply more likely to believe discrimination is a problem, regardless of the source or whether they are subject to discrimination themselves. We think that this relationship should be explored in future research, ideally with data that allow for an investigation of the source (internal vs. external) of actual experiences with discrimination.

¹⁵A comparison of means test indicated that the means for Dominican, Central-South American, and Puerto Rican were all significantly different from other Latinos at the 0.05 level.

¹⁶Although included in the multivariate model, results for the Dominican-only model were not included here due to page limitations. In that model, language use and perceptions of external discrimination are significantly correlated with perceptions of internal discrimination for Dominicans, with the Spanish dominant and those with greater perceptions of external discrimination being more likely to believe internal discrimination is a major problem for Latinos.

TABLE 2

OLS Regression Analysis of Contributing Factors to Perceptions of Internal Discrimination Among Latinos

Explanatory Variables	Coefficient	S.E.	Odds Ratio
<i>Demographics/SES/Racial ID</i>			
Gender	0.051	0.093	1.05
Black racial identification	0.557**	0.283	1.74
Household income	-0.002	0.001	0.997
Education	-0.010	0.023	0.989
<i>Recently Laid Off</i>	0.286**	0.104	1.33
<i>Social Integration/Discrimination</i>			
Language use	-0.426***	0.088	0.652
Nativity	-0.060	0.139	0.941
<i>Time in the U.S.</i>	-0.148**	0.053	0.862
<i>External Discrimination</i>	0.881***	0.155	2.41
<i>National Origin</i>			
Cuban	-0.022	0.142	0.977
Central/South American	-0.174	0.170	0.839
Dominican	0.022	0.167	1.02
Puerto Rican	-0.045	0.140	0.955
R^2	0.42		
N	1,862		

* $p < 0.10$ level; ** $p < 0.05$ level; *** $p < 0.01$ level.

We also find support for the *Racial Identity Hypothesis*, as the racial identity variable is significant and positive. The large coefficient and odds ratio indicates that Afro Latinos are more likely than other Latinos to perceive that internal discrimination is a problem. As we noted earlier, there is an emerging interest in the Afro-Latino population among social scientists. Our results regarding Afro Latinos' perceptions of internal discrimination should be of interest to those attempting to understand how this segment of the population fits within the larger Latino community. Interestingly, neither education nor income is significantly correlated with perceptions of internal discrimination. This implies that any real or perceived internal discrimination among Latinos is not driven by traditional socioeconomic factors. However, Latinos who have recently been laid off from their jobs are more likely to believe that internal discrimination is a problem for Latinos.

Finally, despite the variation in perceptions of internal discrimination across national-origin groups apparent in Table 1, multivariate analysis reveals that these differences are not statistically significant when other relevant factors are controlled for. None of the national-origin group variables are statistically significant when compared to the Mexican-origin population, the baseline group utilized in the model. Although this suggests that perceptions of internal discrimination do not vary across national origin for

Latinos when other factors are accounted for, it remains possible that factors motivating these attitudes are not constant across Latino subgroups. We investigate this by estimating separate models for each national-origin group.

As shown in Table 3, perception of external discrimination is a highly relevant factor, as external discrimination is significantly correlated with perceptions of internal discrimination across all Latino subgroups, and language usage was significant for all groups except Cuban Americans. Consistent with the full model, Spanish-dominant Latinos (for all but Cubans) and those who perceive that external discrimination toward Latinos is a problem have higher levels of perceived internal discrimination. Being recently laid off is also meaningful across multiple groups, as this segment of both the Mexican and Central/South American population has higher levels of perceived internal discrimination. There is also some evidence that contributing factors to internal discrimination are uniquely tied to specific national-origin groups. For example, education is negatively correlated with perceptions of internal discrimination for Puerto Ricans, as is time in the United States for Cubans and nativity for Mexican Americans. However, our results collectively suggest that different factors motivate perceptions of internal discrimination across groups. Research that fails to include this type of analysis could draw inaccurate conclusions about perceptions of discrimination.

The final stage of our analysis utilizes postestimation analysis to investigate the substantive impact of some of the factors that have been shown to influence perceptions of internal discrimination in the multivariate analysis, as well as the combined impact of the social integration measures. By allowing the variable of interest to run its full range of predicted values while holding all other factors to their respective mean or mode, we can analyze their substantive effect on our dependent variable; this helps illustrate the strength of relationship for some of the more interesting explanatory variables. Afro Latinos are approximately two points more likely to believe that Latinos discriminating against Latinos is a big problem in the United States when all other variables are held constant. This further supports our theory regarding the role of race in the Latino population and its relevance to internal discrimination.

A similar pattern emerges when analyzing the substantive relationship between language use and internal discrimination, as Spanish-dominant Latinos have a one point greater likelihood of believing that Latino internal discrimination is a big problem than do bilingual Latinos, and just over two points higher likelihood than the English dominant. Although our data do not allow for a direct test of whether Spanish-dominant Latinos are discriminated against by other co-ethnics, the findings are in line with our theory of social integration; our analysis clearly suggests that such a relationship exists between these two variables.

Finally, length of time in the United States and language preference, the two measures of social integration, have a meaningful relationship on per-

TABLE 3
OLS Regression Analysis of Contributing Factors to Perceptions of Internal Discrimination by National-Origin Group

Explanatory Variables	Cuban		Mexican*		Central/South American		Puerto Rican	
	Coefficient (S.E.)	Odds Ratio	Coefficient (S.E.)	Odds Ratio	Coefficient (S.E.)	Odds Ratio	Coefficient (S.E.)	Odds Ratio
<i>Demographics/SES</i>								
Gender	0.219 (0.237)	1.24	-0.018 (0.134)	0.982	0.053 (0.166)	1.05	0.013 (0.242)	1.01
Black racial ID	0.831 (0.21)	3.36	1.11 (0.710)	3.04	0.001 (0.349)	1.00	0.044 (0.538)	1.04
Household income	-0.002 (0.004)	0.997	-0.001 (0.002)	0.998	0.001 (0.003)	1.00	0.000 (0.005)	1.00
Education	-0.006 (0.055)	0.993	0.037 (0.036)	1.03	0.024 (0.039)	1.02	-0.105* (0.057)	0.899
Recently Laid Off	0.221 (0.263)	1.24	0.394** (0.154)	1.48	0.320* (0.177)	1.37	-0.192 (0.270)	0.822
<i>Cultural Factors</i>								
Language use	-0.322 (0.219)	0.724	-0.373*** (0.130)	0.688	-0.591*** (0.161)	0.553	-0.497** (0.204)	0.607
Nativity	-0.141 (0.329)	0.867	-0.478** (0.231)	0.619	-0.009 (0.303)	0.990	0.177 (0.282)	1.19
Time in the U.S.	-0.258** (0.110)	0.772	-0.039 (0.081)	0.961	-0.006 (0.075)	0.993	-0.002 (0.009)	0.997
External discrim.	0.819*** (0.159)	2.27	0.994*** (0.095)	2.70	0.889*** (0.111)	2.43	0.748*** (0.162)	2.11
R ²	0.19		0.28		0.25		0.21	
N	286		915		622		284	

*p < 0.10 level; **p < 0.05 level; ***p < 0.01 level.

ceptions of internal discrimination.¹⁷ The predicted probabilities illustrate the combined substantive impact of social integration, as the likelihood of perceiving that Latinos discriminating against other Latinos is a big problem steadily increases with fewer years lived in the United States and Spanish-language dominance. For example, the highest value of these scenarios (0.782) is among Latinos with the lowest level of social integration, those who have lived in the United States for less than a year, and those who are Spanish dominant. In contrast, the polar opposite, Latinos who are English dominant and who have lived in the United States for more than 20 years, have the lowest predicted value (0.421). We believe that this final stage in the analysis provides strong support for our theory of social integration, and supports the findings of previous literature regarding tension among the Latino population based on language and levels of assimilation (García Bedolla, 2005; Ochoa, 2004; Rodríguez and Nuñez, 1986; Gutiérrez, 1995).

Conclusions and Discussion

Racial and ethnic discrimination is a common experience for many people of color in the United States, and is a fundamental component of minority-group status. As a result, political activists and scholars have been examining discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity in the United States for some time. The purpose of this analysis was to examine a critical assumption embedded in most of the research utilizing measures for perceived discrimination—that discrimination faced by members of minority communities comes solely from members of an outside group. We provide evidence that this assumption does not hold when applied to the Latino population in the United States.

Through the use of the 2002 Pew National Survey of Latinos, we provide strong evidence that perceptions of internal discrimination are prevalent within the Latino community. Furthermore, we find that perceptions of internal discrimination are greatest among Latinos who are less integrated and/or assimilated into U.S. society as measured by language use and years lived in the United States. This trend, we argue, is very interesting, given that most extant work in this area has suggested that these factors are potential sources of tension and, in some cases, conflict among Latinos. Our analysis also suggests that race is a significant source of perceptions of internal discrimination among Latinos. Scholars of racial and ethnic politics have recently turned their attention to the Afro-Latino population (Logan,

¹⁷Tests for multicollinearity indicated that these two factors are correlated with each other at the 0.05 level. Given the relatively high level of collinearity, we created an interaction variable to determine whether there is a multiplicative impact between these two measures of social integration. However, neither this variable nor similar variables between these two factors and nativity were statistically significant.

2003; Nicholson, Pantoja, and Segura, 2005; Waters, 1994; Baretto and Sanchez, 2008), and this work has questioned how race impacts the political attitudes of those Latinos who self-identify as black. We contribute to this discussion by providing evidence that this segment of the Latino population has elevated levels of perceived internal discrimination. Although it is necessary to clarify that our data do not allow for a direct test of whether these factors are sources of discrimination from co-ethnics, our results do have meaningful implications for the measurement and application of the concept of perceived discrimination. We hope that our study will motivate the collection of data that will allow for a direct investigation of internal discrimination among Latinos to determine the potential sources of this important phenomenon among an increasingly important subpopulation of the United States.

Discrimination continues to be a shared experience for racial and ethnic groups in the United States. It is essential to note that our analyses does not indicate or suggest that communities of color no longer struggle with issues of external discrimination. However, our work here does suggest that this experience may be more complex than once theorized, as we show here that there are multiple dimensions to perceived discrimination among Latinos. Given that it is likely that this phenomenon exists among other diverse and pan-ethnic communities, these trends should be taken into consideration as we continue to explore how experiences with and perceptions of discrimination impact political behavior and group identity for minority populations.

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