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**Unequal treatment: An exploration of immigrant-related factors and likelihood of
discrimination in the United States.**

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors Studies
in Criminology and Sociology

By

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The University of Arkansas

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UNEQUAL TREATMENT: AN EXPLORATION OF IMMIGRANT-RELATED FACTORS AND LIKELIHOOD OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE UNITED STATES

From 2010 to 2020, the Latino population in the United States (U.S.) has increased 23%, now comprising 18.7% of the total population (U.S. Census Bureau 2021). Despite this considerable growth, anti-immigrant sentiments have dominated the American public opinion for decades. The pervasive rhetoric surrounding immigrants and immigration has been damaging for those that came to the U.S. with hopes of achieving the American Dream. This has impacted a vast number of ethnic groups but none more than the Latino immigrant population due to their rapid growth and expansion (Pryce 2018; McCann and Boateng 2020).

The dominating xenophobic sentiments influenced the enactment of public policies, creating a type of legal violence (Menjívar and Abrego 2012), which have shown to increase immigrant experiences of discrimination, psychological distress, social isolation, and fear of law enforcement agencies (Torres 2010; Ayon and Beccera 2013; Ayon 2015; Quiroga, Medina, and Glick 2015; Theodore and Habans 2016; Kwon and Han 2019; Negi et al. 2019). Further, this nativist sentiment has guided a widespread false narrative of immigration being associated with increasing levels of crime (Reid et al. 2005). Contrary to popular belief, the evidence has shown that immigration rather serves as a protective factor to crime, resulting in lower rates of crime in communities with large concentrations of immigrants among populations of both immigrants and non-immigrants (Desmond and Kubrin 2009; Martinez, Stowell, and Lee 2010; Boateng, Pryce, and Chenane 2021).

With Latinos being a consistently growing ethnic group in the U.S. and existing policies heightening levels of discrimination, it is important to explore and determine

which immigrant-related factors influence the likelihood of discrimination. This knowledge is useful as the consequences of discrimination have been damaging. Thus, knowing which Latino subgroups are at a higher risk for discrimination can help guide future policies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Latino Growth and Public Policy

For more than a century, the public rhetoric has been overwhelmed with anti-immigrant sentiments and false narratives surrounding immigrants in the United States. Understanding the public narrative is important as it exhibits a great influence on public policy (Burstein 2003). Throughout the years, the public nativist sentiments have been guided by the ethnic and racial make-up and the country of origin of the immigrant population, leading to many shifts in the exclusionary policies set forth by the U.S. government.

Immigration policy in the United States saw its first major turning point in 1882 with the Chinese Exclusion Act, demonstrating a shift towards a negative view of immigrants in the United States. The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act barred the entrance of Chinese laborers into the United States, acting as one of the first attempts to control immigration by the federal government. It was the first act passed to forbid the entrance of an entire ethnicity (Calavita 2000). The passing of this act by Congress paved the way to the subsequent immigration policies set in place to control Latino immigration. Accordingly, growth in the Latino populations immigrating to the United States has happened for a variety of reasons, ranging from political, to economic, to social motivations. Motivations vary depending on heritage and country of origin, all of which

have been continuously controlled by the standing immigration policies favoring different ethnic groups at different times (Durand, Telles and Flashman 2006).

Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1917 to grant U.S. citizenship to Puerto Ricans, to encourage Mexican immigrants to come work in the states, and to require literacy of all immigrants entering the U.S. (Tienda and Sanchez 2013). However, this inviting attitude shifted in 1921 with the first implementation of 24 quota acts limiting the number of immigrants allowed to enter the U.S. Soon thereafter in 1925, the U.S. Border Patrol was created, followed by an estimated 300,000-500,000 Mexican deportations (PBS 2013). In 1930, the “Mexican” race was added to the U.S. Census, though the Mexican government and other lobbyists had it successfully removed quickly after (Demby 2014).

The 1951 Bracero Program brought, on average, 350,000 Mexican laborers to the United States annually until its end in 1964, resulting in a drastic increase to the estimated 4 million Latinos in 1950 (PBS 2013; Rumbaut 2006). In 1965, reforms to the Immigration and Nationality Act retracted the national quotas and set a numerical limit- 170,000- on the number of visas to be given to those immigrating from Eastern Hemisphere countries (Durand et. al. 2006). The act promoted family reunification as a reason for admission, prompting whole families to immigrate to the United States in hopes of building a better life for their children (Tienda and Sanchez 2013). In 1968, a numerical total of 120,000 was set for visas granted to the Western Hemisphere countries, creating an inequality favoring visas granted to Latino immigrants from Latin American countries and limiting visas granted to Latino immigrants from Mexico, and thus jumpstarting the growth of unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. (Durand et. al.

2006). The 1970 Census added the first Spanish-origin category, widening the parameters for Latino inclusion in the total U.S. population count, providing estimates of more than 12 million (Rumbaut 2006).

As Cubans began fleeing their country in search of asylum in the U.S., the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act granted permanent residency to Cubans having lived in the U.S. for more than a year, and the 1980 Refugee Act separated refugees from inclusion in the established quotas (Tienda and Sanchez 2013). Accordingly, the population continued to grow to an estimated 14.6 million Hispanics¹ in 1980 (Pew Research Center 2022). As of 1986, overall immigration to the U.S. began to slow. Despite this trend, the Latino population was still growing rapidly although the country of origin began to shift, favoring those from Central American countries (Tienda and Sanchez 2013).

The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act granted amnesty to nearly 3 million immigrants, mostly Mexican as many Central Americans did not meet the residency requirements, who had entered the U.S. illegally. However, the act also strengthened border enforcement and put sanctions in place to require employers to monitor and report the legal status of their employees (PBS 2013). By 1990, Latinos became the largest immigrant population in the U.S., at 22.6 million, when the U.S.

¹ Following the guidance of the Pew Research Center, the terms Hispanic and Latino will be used interchangeably for the purpose of this paper to represent anyone who self-identifies as having Hispanic or Latino heritage, as preferences for ethnic identity terms have changed throughout the years of the U.S. Census data collection (Pew Research Center 2021).

Census expanded the categories for countries of origin included in the total Hispanic population count (Rumbaut 2006; U.S. Census Bureau 2021). The 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act was passed limiting benefits for all immigrants and loosening the grounds for border patrol deportation. The conjunction of these acts moved immigration trends further away from Mexico and specifically towards Cuban migration (Tienda and Sanchez 2013).

Between 1997 and 2001, a variety of acts were passed to provide temporary legal status to Salvadorans, Hondurans, Nicaraguans, and to those from countries experiencing disaster or conflict (Tienda and Sanchez 2013). The 2000 Census introduced the term Latino as an ethnicity in concurrence with Hispanic and by 2003, the Latino population became the largest minority group in the U.S. at 40 million, surpassing African Americans (Rumbaut 2006; PBS 2013; U.S. Census Bureau 2021).

As demonstrated by the aforementioned policy changes, the country of origin dominating the Latino population in the U.S. has varied dramatically since the considerable onset of immigration in the early 20th century. However, due to the fluctuation in racial and ethnic categories listed in the U.S. Census, the most reliable data on Latino growth comes from the 21st century. The 2010 and 2020 Census' mirror that of 2000 with Hispanic and Latino listed as ethnic counterparts (U.S. Census Bureau 2021). Up from 35.7 million in 2000, 50.8 million Latinos resided in the U.S. in 2010 (Pew Research Center 2017). Reaching 62.1 million in 2020, Latinos now account for nearly 20% of the U.S. population (Pew Research Center 2021).

Research on Immigrant Characteristics and Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as unequal treatment of people and groups based on characteristics: race, gender, sexual preference, and age (American Psychological Association 2019). Discrimination on the basis of race can present itself in a variety of forms, as Kessler and Mickelson (1999) note nine types of discrimination categories: inferior treatment, treatment as if you are not smart, fear from others, non-courteous treatment, disrespectful treatment, poor service in stores, treatment like you are not honest, name calling or insults, and threats or harassment. For most Latinos, discrimination is a daily experience persisting throughout the lifetime (Kessler and Mickelson 1999; Morales et al. 2015; Almeida et al. 2016; Pew Research Center 2021). Regardless of the type of discrimination that appears in the lives of Latino immigrants, those that experience discrimination report higher levels of depression and anxiety, isolation from the U.S. mainstream resources and populations, and substance use disorders (Kessler and Mickelson 1999; Flores et al. 2008; Torres 2010; Verrissimo et al. 2014; Ayon 2015; Negi et al. 2019). Due to the broad issue of Latino immigrant discrimination, a number of studies have examined the characteristics that influence the likelihood of discrimination among Latino immigrants in the U.S., though results have significantly varied.

For instance, some studies have found that male Latino immigrants are more likely to experience higher levels of discrimination than their female counterparts (Kessler and Mickelson 1999; Perez, Fortuna, and Alegria 2008; Morales et al. 2015). While it may be true that male Latinos are exposed to more instances of discrimination, Crosby (1984) hypothesizes that female Latinos experience higher levels of discrimination, but are more likely to deny being discriminated. This hypothesis is in line

with recent findings from Sheppard et al. (2014), demonstrating that Latina women are 71% less likely to report discrimination to care providers, though a large portion of the sample reported discrimination to the researchers. Thus, findings have varied with many reporting higher levels of discrimination among female Latino immigrants (Finch et al. 2000). With the variety of findings concerning discrimination and gender, the real numbers may be unknown. On the other hand, consistent findings have indicated higher levels of discrimination among younger Latino immigrants (Perez et al. 2008; Nadal, Mazzula, Rivera, and Fujii-Doe 2014). Younger Latino immigrants may be more likely than their older counterparts to assimilate into the mainstream, and thus interact with a wider variety of people exposing them to discrimination in society. Unmarried Latino immigrants have consistently been found to report higher levels of discrimination (Perez et al. 2008; Wheeler et al. 2010).

The literature surrounding the effect of ethnic identity, defined as someone's social identity within the context of ethnic group membership (American Psychological Association N.d.), has shown mixed results. For example, Torres (2010) found that ethnic identity acts as a buffer for discrimination. When Latino immigrants experience discrimination, strong ethnic identity speeds the recovery from the event and lowers the intensity of its impact, whereas those with low ethnic identity, or those exploring a new ethnic identity, experience slower recovery times and the discriminatory event has a higher impact. However, Perez et al. (2008) found that strong ethnic identity lead to higher levels of reported discrimination, as they are less assimilated into the mainstream culture.

The existing research regarding assimilation, defined as the process of adopting a new culture's norms and practices (American Psychology Association N.d.), as a predictor of discrimination has also been mixed. It has been found that with higher levels of assimilation into the U.S. mainstream comes higher levels of discrimination (Perez et al. 2008; Morales et al. 2015). However, other reports have shown a positive relationship between low levels of assimilation and low levels of discrimination (Finch et al. 2000). This variation in results may be explained by spatial assimilation theory. The theory states that as immigrants move upwards socioeconomically, they move out of ethnic enclaves- areas with high concentrations of an ethnic group (Ellis, Wright, and Parks 2013). Thus, low assimilation may act as a protective factor from discrimination, and high assimilation, exposing Latino immigrants to more interactions with people of other ethnicities, may lead to more exposure to discrimination. A related predictor of discrimination is the number years lived in the United States. Treated similarly, as assimilation typically comes as a result of more time spent in the U.S., those that recently immigrated report higher levels of discrimination (Kercher and Kuo 2008; Wheeler et al. 2010).

English proficiency and education level are likely to have similar influences on discrimination, as higher education among Latino immigrants often leads to higher levels of English proficiency. Nonetheless, research has varied, with some showing that Latinos with lower levels of education experience more instances of discrimination than their counterparts (Kercher and Kuo 2008), and others finding that Latinos with higher levels of education are more likely to report discrimination (Perez et al. 2008; Flippen and Parrado 2015). Interestingly, Finch et al. (2000) noted that Latinos with high levels are

English proficiency experience higher levels of discrimination. They hypothesize this to be a result of an increased ability to understand the discrimination occurring towards them as a result of their increased English proficiency. Additionally, this may be due to the tendency to move away from ethnic neighborhoods and into the mainstream, thus increasing exposure to those likely to discriminate against them. However, some findings noted hesitance in reporting discrimination from those with limited English proficiency (Kercher and Kuo 2008; Fussel 2011).

Citizenship status and fear of deportation are often interrelated. Immigrants in the U.S. fall victim to anti-immigrant policies, as mentioned in the previous section, and discrimination increases as a result (Almeida et al. 2016). Not only are these policies discriminatory in content, they are used as a basis for creating a fear of deportation among Latino immigrants without legal status. Though fear of deportation is higher among those without legal status, Latino immigrants with status may experience the same fear for their family members or their friends.

Discrimination by country of origin has also transcended into the political rhetoric. The previous section outlines how policies have changed over the years, favoring some countries of origin over others, resulting in a high number of undocumented persons of Mexican origin (Durand et al. 2016). As such, discrimination has been found to be higher among Latino immigrants of Mexican origin when compared to their counterparts (Finch et al. 2000; Chavez 2008). Other factors may contribute to lower levels of discrimination among their counterpart groups. For example, immigrants from Puerto Rico are naturally U.S. citizens, and therefore cannot be deported (Tienda and Sanchez 2013).

While studies on financial situation have shown different results due to varying definitions of the variable, the literature has consistently shown an inverse relationship between income and discrimination (Kercher and Kuo 2008; Wheeler et al. 2010). Similarly, Negi et al. (2020) studied Latino day laborers, finding that they are more likely to experience discrimination, which may hint to several understandings as applied to low paying employment. This demonstration was supported by similar findings by Fussel (2011) when surveying Latinos workers in New Orleans.

Theoretical Frameworks

Many theories exist that may contribute to the understanding of Latino discrimination in the U.S. First, Critical Race Theory may be used as a lens to understand how legal violence has perpetuated the anti-immigrant sentiments of the public. Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, Critical Race Theory is the understanding of “how the social construction of race and institutionalized racism perpetuate a racial caste system that relegates people of color to the bottom tier” (George 2021). Though the theory was initially set to explain the systemic racism experienced by African Americans in the U.S., Richard Delgado (as cited in Reyes 2021), one of the original contributors to Critical Race Theory, explains that it extends to explain how the enacted public policies throughout history have created racial disparities affecting Latinos, as described in the opening section. Furthering this idea, Ayon (2017) identified several consequences that anti-immigrant state-level policies had on Latino immigrant families. Such policies have increased fear of deportation and fear of detainment. Further, the policies increased inequalities for Latinos in the workplace and in experiences with law enforcement, such

as traffic stops, showing how these xenophobic policies extend into other dominant institutions (Ayon 2017).

Landale, Oropesa and Noah (2017) applied two conflicting perspectives to understanding the roles of assimilation and ethnic identity in the process of Latino discrimination. As Latinos increase time spent in the United States, they become more assimilated into the mainstream American culture, as explained by the classic assimilation perspective. As this happens, the host society becomes more accepting, and thus, discrimination experiences become less likely (Portes, Parker and Cobas 1980; Landale et al. 2017). On the other hand, assimilation into the American culture may increase Latino immigrants' ability to interpret events in terms of discrimination. This is the basis for the ethnic resilience perspective that describes the process by which immigrants accumulate the ability to understand their relative disadvantaged position in society, thus understanding the role of discrimination in negative life events (Landale et al. 2017; Andrade, Ford and Alvarez 2020).

On the surface, Karl Marx's conflict perspective, a theoretical framework proposing that conflict in society will inevitably occur due to a competition between values and goals of different groups (Bell 2013), may begin to explain why Latinos are discriminated against. For example, dominating public opinion has suggested that immigrants are taking American jobs and lowering the minimum wage. However, research has shown that this belief is overall false (Sumption and Somerville 2009). This is an example of how the competing interest in high paying jobs has created conflict between immigrants and their U.S. born counterparts. Extending from conflict theory, and perhaps acting as a more grounded explanation, Hubert Blalock's (1967) racial threat

hypothesis suggests that as ethnic minority groups increase in size, the majority group becomes increasingly threatened. With the Latino population now comprising nearly 20% of the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau 2021), the majority white population now feels threatened by their increasing presence (Craig and Richeson 2014). The loss of economic and political power has resulted in the taking of action against the Latino population in the forms of discrimination.

The Effects of Discrimination

Discrimination has been found to have consequential effects on Latino immigrant mental health. Finch et al. (2000) found that regardless of citizenship status, Latino adults of Mexican origin experienced high levels of depression as a result of legal status stressors, such as fear of deportation, fear of immigration officials, and fear of the legal system. High levels of depressive symptoms have been continuously identified as a result of discrimination across various studies (Kessler and Mickleson 1999; Torres 2010; Negi et al. 2019). Not only does discrimination serve as a risk factor for depressive disorders, Kwon and Han (2019) discovered that discrimination on a daily basis is a risk factor for suicidal ideation among Latino adults. It has also been found that discrimination leads to higher reported levels of anxiety disorders (Flores et al. 2008; Berg et al. 2011). Kessler and Mickleson (1999) found this psychological distress to be comparable to that of losing a loved one, job loss, and divorce.

Several studies have identified a correlation between discrimination and social isolation within ethnic enclaves. This isolation on its own heightens the psychological impacts already experienced as a result of discrimination (Ayon 2015; Negi et al. 2019). The fear of facing discrimination prevents many Latino immigrants from leaving their

ethnic enclaves, cutting them off from support systems, health care resources, and institutions that exist within the mainstream society (Ayon 2015). These findings are in contrast to the Latino threat narrative that accuses Latinos of being incapable or unwilling to assimilate into U.S. society (Wei and Lin 2016). Out of fear of discrimination, Latinos socially isolate themselves into ethnic enclaves, which acts as a significant barrier to assimilation.

As a result of the mental health disorders and isolation experienced as a result of discrimination, many have turned to substance use, impacting the physical health of Latino adults. The existing literature suggests that discrimination against Latino adults in the U.S. is significantly correlated with increased problem drinking and problem drug use (Verrissimo et al. 2014; Negi et al. 2019).

Finally, discrimination against Latino adults has negatively impacted trust of law enforcement. For example, Theodore and Habans (2016) found that among a sample of Latino adults, a significant portion report that they would not contact the authorities in the case of crime victimization out of fear of the police using this information as grounds to investigate their legal status, or the status of their friends and family. This is in line with a vast number of prior studies documenting the Latino fear of using public law enforcement services (Zaykowski 2010; Quiroga et al. 2014; Adelman et al. 2018).

The Present Study

Based on the current literature examined, there are a variety of factors that influence the likelihood of discrimination among Latino immigrants in the U.S., though findings have varied significantly. Despite the mixed findings, the literature has consistently confirmed the consequences discrimination has on the mental health, social

inclusion, and physical health of immigrants (Kessler and Mickleson 1999; Finch et al. 2000; Flores et al. 2008; Torres 2010; Berg et al. 2011; Verrissimo et al. 2014; Ayon 2015; Kwon and Han 2019; Negi et al. 2019).

The present study aims to expand the dialogue concerning Latino immigrant discrimination and to contribute to the existing research focusing on Latino-specific characteristics that influence the likelihood of discrimination drawing on data from the Pew Research Center. In order to address these issues, this study aims to answer the following research question: What factors associated with Latino immigrants influence the likelihood of discrimination in the United States?

DATA AND METHODS

Sample

This study uses data from the 58th wave of the American Trends Panel (ATP), a panel ranging nation-wide of online adults living in households, conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs as a representative of the Pew Research Center. The target population was Hispanic adults, ages 18 and older, living in the United States. The survey was administered online to a random sample of ATP and Knowledge Panel Hispanic adults living in the United States, ages 18 and older. Data collection was done between December 3 and December 22, 2019.

Knowledge Panel uses probability sampling techniques to recruit members, making it the largest online representative sampling frame. Recruiting for ATP began in 2014 and consisted of five cycles, ending in 2019. For Wave 58, ATP panelists with a known residential address received a postcard invitation to join. Those ATP members with an email address received an invitation via email and five follow-up reminders to

complete the survey. All respondents were given the option to complete the online survey in English or in Spanish.

After adjusting for missing data, the final sample included in Wave 58 consists of 3,030 participants. Descriptive statistics for the total sample, including minimums, maximums, means and standard deviations are presented in Table 1. All of the participants in this data are Hispanic, with over 50% being immigrants. Of those participants, 46.5% were female and 53.5% were male. Ages consisted of those 18+, with the mean age group being those aged 30-49. Years living in the U.S. ranged from zero to 71, with a mean of 24 years. Over half (52.3%) of the sample was married. The ethnic identity and assimilation scales indicate that the majority of the participants had low ethnic identity and low assimilation, though the standard deviations indicate results were highly varied. The average participant was proficient in the English language, with 80.5% of the sample reporting proficiency in both literary and conversational English. Most of the sample had a high school degree (86.6%), and very few had completed a postgraduate degree (13.6%). In regards to residency, 18.8% were non-U.S. citizens, and 35.6% were of Mexican origin. Results for fear of deportation and financial situation were highly varied, with 39.7% reporting having feared deportation and less than half (40.7%) reporting a “good” financial situation. Finally, 37.4% of respondents had experienced at least one form of discrimination, again with high variance in the responses.

Table 1. Total Sample Descriptive Statistics (N=3,030)

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Control Variables				
Sex	.00	1.00	.535	.499

Age	1.00	4.00	2.38	.952
Years in the U.S.	.00	73	24.23	16.44
Marital Status	.00	1.00	.523	.450
Independent Variables				
Ethnic Identity	.00	3.00	.577	.894
Assimilation	.00	2.00	.377	.666
English Proficiency	.00	2.00	1.67	.701
Fear of Deportation	.00	1.00	.397	.489
Education Level	1.00	6.00	3.43	1.66
Citizenship Status	.00	1.00	.812	.391
Mexican Origin	.00	1.00	.356	.479
Financial Situation	.00	1.00	.407	.491
Dependent Variable				
Discrimination	.00	4.00	.846	1.31

After excluding all non-immigrants, 1,783 immigrants remained in the sample on which the analyses were performed for the purpose of this study. Descriptive statistics, including minimums, maximums, means and standard deviations, for the sample of immigrants are presented in Table 2. Of those immigrants, 48.5% were male and 51.1% were female, with about 59% being married. The mean age group was those aged 30-49. The average length of residency in the U.S. was 24 years. The immigrant sample showed higher levels than the overall sample of both ethnic identity and assimilation, though variance was also high. English proficiency was slightly lower than the total sample, with

about 70% reporting proficiency in both conversational and literary English, though most of the sample still indicated high levels of proficiency. The average respondent had completed some college and more than half reported a “bad” financial situation. The immigrant sample differed greatly from the total sample in that 31.4% were non-citizens, and only 25% were of Mexican origin. Finally, the mean indicates that the average immigrant respondent had experienced at least one instance of discrimination in the past year and about half of the immigrant respondents (43.7%) reported fear of deportation.

Table 2. Immigrant Sample Descriptive Statistics (N=1,783)

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Control Variables				
Sex	.00	1.00	.511	.500
Age	1.00	4.00	2.6	.904
Years in the U.S.	.00	73	24.23	16.44
Marital Status	.00	1.00	.587	.492
Independent Variables				
Ethnic Identity	.00	3.00	.600	.910
Assimilation	.00	2.00	.431	.693
English Proficiency	.00	2.00	1.48	.824
Fear of Deportation	.00	1.00	.437	.496
Education Level	1.00	6.00	3.45	1.72
Citizenship Status	.00	1.00	.686	.464
Mexican Origin	.00	1.00	.250	.433

Financial Situation	.00	1.00	.394	.489
Dependent Variable				
Discrimination	.00	4.00	.792	1.29

Measures

Independent Variables of Interest

Fear of deportation. Respondents were asked: “Regardless of your own immigration or citizenship status, how much, if at all, do you worry that you, a family member, or a close friend could be deported?” (Pew Research Center 2019). For the purpose of this study, the variable was dichotomized with a score of “1” indicating “Yes worried”, which included the Likert scale options of “a lot” and “some”, and a score of “0” indicating “No, not worried”, which included responses “not much” and “not at all”.

Ethnic identity. To measure ethnic identity, a 3-item scale was made using responses from a 6-item survey question asking respondents: “Compared with 5 years ago, how often would you say you do each of the following?” (Pew Research Center 2019). To create the scale, a score of “1” was given for those respondents indicating they engaged in the following “more often” compared with five years ago: “talk about your pride in being Hispanic”, “wear clothing or apparel that outwardly expresses your Hispanic origin or heritage” and “speak Spanish in public” (Pew Research Center 2019). These items were chosen for this scale to demonstrate those who show an increasing importance in preserving their identity versus those who have abandoned parts of their identity as they have assimilated. The Cronbach’s Alpha for this scale was .652.

Assimilation. To measure assimilation, a 2-item scale similar to that of ethnic identity was created using two other response options from the aforementioned 6-item questions. A score of “1” was given for each time a respondent indicated they engaged in the following “more often” compared with 5 years ago: “wear clothing or apparel that outwardly expresses your U.S. pride” and “talk about your pride in being American” (Pew Research Center 2019). These items were included in this scale to differentiate those that have adopted more aspects of the American mainstream versus those that have not assimilated compared with five years ago. The Cronbach’s Alpha for this scale is .643.

English proficiency. To measure English proficiency, a two-item scale was created based on responses from two survey questions: “How well, if at all, would you say you can carry on a conversation in English, both understanding and speaking?” and “How well, if at all, would you say you can read a newspaper or book in English?” (Pew Research Center 2019). A score of “1” was given for each response indicating they could speak or read “well”. The Cronbach’s Alpha for this scale was .882.

Mexican origin. Respondents were asked: “Thinking about your family’s heritage, are you Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Salvadoran, Spanish, Other Central American, Other South American?” (Pew Research Center 2019). For the purpose of this study, as Mexicans are the dominant country of origin (62%) for Hispanic immigrants in the United States (Noe-Bustamante 2019), the variable is dichotomous with 1 indicating Mexican origin and 0 indicating another country of origin.

Financial situation. Survey respondents were asked: “How would you rate your own personal financial situation?” (Pew Research Center 2019). Likert scale responses

ranged from excellent shape to poor shape. For the purpose of this study, the variable was dichotomized with a score of “1” indicating a “Good financial situation” and a score of “0” indicating a “Poor financial situation”.

Citizenship status. Respondents were asked to indicate their citizenship status: “Are you a citizen of the United States, or not?” (Pew Research Center 2019). The variable was dichotomized with a score of “1” indicating U.S. citizens and a score of “0” indicating non-U.S. citizens.

Education level. Education level was self-reported prior to the administration of the survey. Responses included 6 items: 1=less than high school, 2=high school degree, 3=some college, 4=associate’s degree, 5=some post graduate education and 6= post graduate degree.

Dependent Variable

In accordance with the Pew Research data set, discrimination will be used as a primary measure for the purpose of this study. To measure discrimination, a 4-item scale was made using responses from the Pew Research Center data. To create the scale, a score of “1” was given for each time the respondent reported experiencing each of the following items: “been called offensive names because you are Hispanic”, “been criticized for speaking Spanish in public”, “someone made a remark that you should go back to your home country”, and “personally experienced any other kind of discrimination or been treated unfairly because of your Hispanic background”(Pew Research Center 2019) in the past 12 months. Factor analysis indicated that these items were unidimensional. The Cronbach’s Alpha for this scale was .821.

Analysis

To conduct the analyses necessary for this study, data from the Pew Research Center Wave 58 was imported into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 26). To begin, descriptive statistics were performed on the total sample included in Wave 58 and again after limiting the data to immigrants only (see Table 1 and Table 2). For the purpose of exploring the relationship between immigrant characteristics and discrimination, all further analyses were performed only on the limited immigrant sample.

To identify any possible relationships between variables, Pearson's R correlation matrix was conducted. Pearson's R demonstrates the strength of the relationship between two variables. The value ranges from -1 to 1, with -1 indicating a negative relationship, 0 indicating no relationship, and 1 indicating a positive relationship. Further, an additional correlation matrix was conducted to identify any possible relationships between the dependent variable (discrimination) and all variables of interest (see appendix).

Finally, to see if these relationships were still significant after controlling for other variables, a multivariate Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis was conducted. All control variables (age, sex, marital status and years in the U.S.) and independent variables (education level, citizenship status, ethnic identity, assimilation, English proficiency, Mexican origin, fear of deportation and financial situation) were imputed as predictor variables for the dependent variable of discrimination.

RESULTS

The results from the OLS regression model predicting discrimination were presented in Table 3. The overall model was statistically significant at the .01 level. The

R^2 was equal to .357, showing that the independent variables explained 35.7% of the variance in discrimination rates. Age, ethnic identity, English proficiency, Mexican origin, fear of deportation and financial situation had statistically significant effects on discrimination at the .01 level.

Younger immigrants reported higher levels of discrimination ($b=-.147$, $SE=.045$, $p<.01$). Discrimination levels were higher for immigrants with high levels of ethnic identity ($b=.134$, $SE=.037$, $p<.01$). As English proficiency rose, so did levels of discrimination ($b=.211$, $SE=.046$, $p<.01$). Immigrants from Mexico reported higher levels of discrimination ($b=.282$, $SE=.081$, $p<.01$). Fear of deportation had a significant positive effect on levels of discrimination ($b=.603$, $SE=.067$, $p<.01$). Finally, poor financial situation was associated with higher levels of discrimination ($b=-.204$, $SE=.067$, $p<.01$). Fear of deportation had the strongest positive relationship with discrimination, while financial situation had the strongest negative association with discrimination.

Table 3. Results from OLS Regression for Discrimination

	<i>b</i>	SE	β
Constant	.540	.163	
Sex	-.047	.064	-.018
Age Category	-.147*	.045	-.103
Marital Status	-.137	.065	-.052
Years in the U.S.	.003	.003	.037
Education Level	.025	.020	.033
Citizenship Status	-.063	.081	-.023
Ethnic Identity	.134*	.037	.094
Assimilation	-.050	.047	-.027

English Proficiency	.211*	.046	.134
Mexican Origin	.282*	.081	.094
Fear of Deportation	.603*	.067	.231
Financial Situation	-.204*	.067	-.077
R^2		.357	

* $p \leq .01$

DISCUSSION

The results indicated that age is inversely correlated with discrimination levels. This is consistent with prior research, noting that younger Latino immigrants are more likely to experience discrimination (Perez et al. 2008; Nadal et al. 2014). With the majority of the sample having spent about 25 years in the U.S., this finding may be explained by the classic assimilation theory, suggesting that as immigrants spend more time in a host country, they will be increasingly accepted by the host population and become more assimilated (Portes, Parker and Cobas 1980; Landale et al. 2017; Despres 2017). Younger Latino immigrants from this sample may have come to the U.S. at a young age and spent the greater part of their lives here, and thus have higher expectations for assimilation. This increased expectation may better explain the higher levels of reported discrimination.

Additionally, ethnic identity had a direct relationship with discrimination, consistent with the findings from Perez et al. (2008) showing that strong ethnic identity is associated with lower levels of assimilation, ultimately leading to higher levels of discrimination. The variable of ethnic identity used for the purpose of this study asked respondents how often they outwardly displayed aspects of their ethnicity. This outward

expression of their Latino ethnicity may explain this finding, as those likely to discriminate are able to visualize their identity. This finding is also in line with the ethnic resilience perspective (Landale et al. 2017; Andrade, Ford and Alvarez 2020). However, this finding is inconsistent with that of Torres (2010), showing that ethnic identity was a buffer for discrimination.

English proficiency and discrimination were positively correlated. This is consistent with the findings from Finch et al. (2000). They explained this correlation as the result of the ability to understand the discriminatory words said to them and around them. This may be the case for this sample as well. These results are inconsistent with findings indicating higher discrimination among with lower levels of English proficiency (Kercher and Kuo 2008; Fussel 2011).

Those of Mexican origin in this sample were more likely to experience discrimination in this sample. This is consistent with previous findings (Finch et al. 2000; Chavez 2008). Fear of deportation was also positively associated with discrimination, consistent with the documented literature (Almeida et al. 2016). As mentioned previously, current immigration policies are discriminatory towards those of Mexican origin. Additionally, the rhetoric surrounding immigration from Mexico in 2019, the time of data collection, was increasingly negative during Donald Trump's presidential administration (Arce 2019). These contextual characteristics may further explain these findings.

Finally, financial situation showed an inverse relationship with discrimination. This is not surprising, as many have documented lower financial status as a predictor for discrimination (Kercher and Kuo 2008; Wheeler et al. 2010; Fussel 2011; Negi et al.

2020). Poor financial situation is related to low socioeconomic standing, which has been known to lead to higher victimization and discrimination rates across all population groups. This, coupled with other factors, explains the higher discrimination rates among this Latino immigrant sample.

Limitations

While these findings make an important contribution to the existing literature, several limitations to this study must be acknowledged. First, the data from the American Trends Panel used for the purpose of this study is cross-sectional. Thus, it is not possible to conclude a certain cause and effect relationship between the independent variables and the level of discrimination. Second, the scale for discrimination was constructed based on data availability. The questions posed regarding discrimination in the survey could have been more specific. Third, the ATP consists of a sample of non-institutionalized adults living in households in the U.S. This specific wave was sent to those with known residential addresses. Latinos have been shown to have higher levels of residential turnover (Boggess and Hipp 2010). The high levels of residential instability and lack of institutionalized persons included in this sample may lower its representativeness. Finally, the Pew Research Center (2019) notes the importance in considering the sources of error associated with random sampling, question wording and reporting inaccuracy. Random sampling cannot guarantee that the sample is entirely representative of the population as a whole. Additionally, the interpretation of the posed questions may vary by person. As the questionnaire was administered online, the sample included in this study is limited to those with access to the Internet.

CONCLUSION

While there is more work to be done to address the root causes of Latino immigrant discrimination in the United States, this study addressed the question: What factors associated with Latino immigrants influence the likelihood of discrimination in the United States? Findings of this study indicate that there are subgroups of Latino immigrants that are more likely to report experiencing discrimination in the U.S. By testing the relationships between a variety of factors and discrimination, this study established that younger immigrants, immigrants with high levels of ethnic identity, those more proficient in English, those of Mexican origin, those that report fear of deportation and immigrants with poor financial situations reported higher levels of discrimination. These findings should not be taken lightly, and should be used to direct future policy in order to prevent Latino immigrants from experiencing further discrimination and to protect them from its consequences.

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Appendix. Correlation Matrix for Discrimination and Variables of Interest

Variables		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Citizenship	1	1								
Financial Situation	2	.101**	1							
Fear of Deportation	3	-.177**	-.163**	1						
Mexican Origin	4	-.224**	-.048*	.207**	1					
English Proficiency	5	.293**	-.246**	-.129**	-.135**	1				
Assimilation	6	.091**	.060*	-.082**	-.156**	.031	1			
Ethnic Identity	7	-.150**	-.067**	.194**	.024	-.159**	.232**	1		
Education	8	-.155**	.185**	-.128**	-.311**	.306**	.035	-.087**	1	
Discrimination	9	-.080**	-.087**	.269**	.139**	.077**	-.057*	.134**	-.024	1

Associations in this table were based on Pearson's r.

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).