Experiencing Inequality but Not Seeing Class

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An Examination of Latino Political Attitudes

Michael Jones-Correa, *University of Pennsylvania*
Sophia Jordán Wallace, *University of Washington*

Since the 1970s, inequality in the United States has increased dramatically, with income and wealth gaps widening and reaching their highest levels since the Great Depression (Atkinson, Picketty, and Saez 2011; Congressional Budget Office 2011; Kopczuk and Saez 2004; Picketty and Saez 2003; Pierson 2016). The findings in this research clearly indicate significant disparities among racial and ethnic groups. Furthermore, within given racial and ethnic groups, there can be substantial differences in inequality, for example, among Asian Americans (Junn and Lee 2016). This chapter focuses on Latinos in the United States, who at 17% of the national population comprise the largest racial and ethnic minority group (US Census 2015). As this population continues to grow, Latinos are already or soon will be the majority ethnic group in some states. Levels of inequality between Latinos and other groups, particularly whites, are considerable, with Latinos the racial or ethnic group most negatively affected by the Great Recession of 2008 (Pew Research Center 2014). Thus, while the widening gap in wealth and income is apparent across all groups, since 2007 has increased disproportionately between Latinos and other Americans. Given this group's relative size, the potential consequences of this continued inequality for broader US society are substantial.

While Latinos and inequality has not gone unstudied, it has received little attention in political science. Studies exist examining Latinos' unequal access to health care and its consequences (Sanchez and Medeiros 2012; Sanchez, Medeiros, and Sanchez-Youngmann 2012) and their uneven political representation (Casellas 2010; Hero and Preuhs 2014; Rouse 2013; Wallace 2014) but there are remarkably few about the effects of economic inequality and its political consequences for Latinos. We argue that it is critical to more comprehensively examine Latino inequality given its depth and breadth across many dimensions of social, political, and economic life for this group, including wealth and class, health, the criminal justice system, education, and political representation.

This chapter begins by mapping out the multiple dimensions of inequality for Latinos. It then turns its focus on economic measures of inequality, analyzing survey data from the 2006 Latino National Survey (LNS) and the 2008 and 2012 American National Election Survey (ANES), both of which oversampled Latino respondents. This analysis has two foci: first, it seeks to tease apart the conceptual difference between class and class-consciousness and to investigate the relationship between respondents' self-reported income levels, their perceptions of their own social class (or the absence of any self-identified class status), and the income gap. In particular, we assess the degree to which there is disjuncture between respondents' class as measured by income and their self-perception of their class. Second, we explore changes over time, in particular the role of temporal events such as the economic recession of 2008 and the disparate impact on Latinos and their political attitudes during and after the recession. The next section focuses on the degree to which class-consciousness (or its absence) plays a significant role in Latino public attitudes and its salience as a major cleavage. We also investigate how income and perceptions of class influence Latinos' attitudes about the economy more generally. We argue that self-perceived class shapes policy attitudes and that the absence of class identification among underrepresented minorities, such as Latinos and African Americans, may help explain the lack of traction of group-based economic arguments among these actors. Finally, we suggest possible avenues of future research on Latino inequality.

MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS OF LATINO INEQUALITY

Measuring inequality is complicated in part because of different approaches to its definition and measurement.

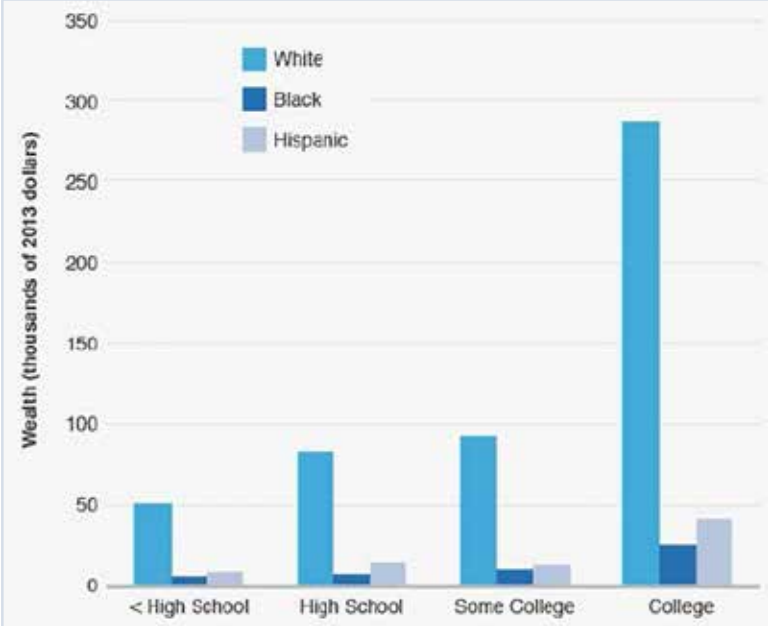
When defining inequality, scholars most often emphasize forms of economic inequality or class, commonly conceptualized as income. However, income is, at best, an incomplete measure of class inequality and may be a particularly poor measurement of class for marginalized racial and ethnic groups because it does not capture the full dimension of inequality in the historical context of structural racism. Economic inequality may also include, for example, measures not only of household income and relative income but also indicators of homeownership, home value, wealth, and savings. Broader interpretations of inequality may also include measures of political access and representation, health outcomes and access to health care, and the differential treatment in the criminal justice system. Latinos suffer from inequality across all of these dimensions.

On the purely economic dimension, a variety of measures indicate that Latinos have significantly lower wages, household income, wealth, and homeownership compared to whites. According to a Working Poor Families Project (WPFP) report, which draws on 2013 US Census Bureau data, the disparities between whites and racial and ethnic minorities are significant and paint a grim picture of inequality across groups. Povich, Roberts, and Mather (2015) found that 10.6 million of 32.6 million US working families have incomes under 200% of the official poverty level. Among Latino and black families, over a third fell into this bracket, earning less than $32,000 a year. WPFP estimates that of "the 24 million children that live in poverty, 3 out of 4 or 14 million are children of color" (Povich, Roberts, and Mather 2015). Moreover, Povich, Roberts, and Mather found that over 50% of Latino low-income working families have a parent without a high school degree or GED, compared with 16% of whites. The gap in poverty between racial and ethnic minorities and whites measured in this study was 25 percentage points, a measure that increased substantially in the aftermath of the 2007–2009 recession.

Indicators such as homeownership, income, education, and inheritance more broadly capture gaps in wealth (Shapiro, Machede, and Osoro 2013). Recent data from the Pew Research Center indicates that whites have 18 times the wealth of Latinos, independent of their educational attainment (Kochlar, Fry, and Taylor et al. 2011). It is particularly striking that education plays a minimal role in Latino wealth accumulation. A comparison of median household wealth across demographic groups indicates that the median household wealth of college-educated Latinos is *still* less than that of whites who have *less* than a high school education (see figure 1). This means that Latinos with the highest level of education have less wealth than whites with the very lowest level of education. Figure 1 also demonstrates this wealth gap is also present for college-educated black households compared to whites who have less than a high school education. These data indicate that the wealth gap between whites and racial and ethnic minorities is not only significant but also that education alone cannot explain economic inequality for people of color.

Data from the Pew Hispanic Center indicate that Latinos suffered from the most severe economic effects compared to other racial and ethnic groups after the economic crash began in 2007 and the subsequent recession. The estimated median net worth of Latino households dropped 66% from 2005 to 2009. This drop came in addition to the already lower baseline levels of Latino household net worth amounting to $6,325, compared to $113,149 for white households (Kochlar, Fry, and Taylor 2011). The factors, which led to declining overall net worth for Latinos over this period, included losses on the value of houses and dramatic increases in unemployment rates. For example, after 2007, 33% of Latinos owed more on their mortgage than their homes were worth, compared to 15% of blacks and 13% of whites. Latinos were also disproportionally affected by foreclosures: 8% of Latino homeowners lost their home between 2007 and 2009, and another 21.4%

Figure 1: Median Wealth by Race and Education (2013)



Source: Bruenig 2014, using Federal Reserve Data

were at imminent risk of foreclosure (Kochlar, Fry, and Taylor 2011). Unemployment among Latinos increased dramatically after 2007, from 5.9% to 12.6% in 2009. Overall, reflected across a variety of economic measures, Latinos continue to struggle economically in absolute terms in addition to substantial relative disparities between Latinos and other racial and ethnic groups.

Broader measures of inequality beyond economics paint a similarly dismal picture. As scholars examining political representation have often demonstrated, Latinos are significantly underrepresented in legislatures (Casellas 2010; Hero and Tollbert 1995; Rouse 2013; Wallace 2014), and legislators are not as responsive to Latinos compared to whites (Butler 2014; Gonzalez Juenke and Preuhs 2012). In the arena of health care, prior to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act of 2010, Latinos suffered from a larger proportion of uninsured or underinsured compared to any other racial or ethnic group (Medeiros 2012). According to the Office of Minority Health (2012), in 2010, 30.7% of the Latino population lacked health insurance coverage, compared to 11.7% of the US white population. Turning towards the criminal justice system, Latinos are incarcerated at a rate twice that of whites (Sentencing Project Report 2003). Although Latinos constituted 13% of the US population in 2004, they comprised 31% of the prison population (Walker et al. 2004). Morín (2008) demonstrates that not only are Latinos incarcerated at a higher rate than whites, the Latino prison population is also increasing dramatically. Studies examining the role of prosecutorial and judicial discretion also have shown that Latinos and African Americans are more likely to be sentenced harshly for their crimes (Walker, Delone, and Spohn 2007). In short, across the dimensions of political representation, health, and criminal justice, in addition to economics, Latinos face unequal access and poorer outcomes relative to whites and in some categories other racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States.

LATINO ECONOMIC ATTITUDES AND PUBLIC-OPINION DATA

The starting presumption in much of the discussion about income inequality and class is that objective measures of inequality—the unequal access and outcomes highlighted previously—should translate into how people feel about class. That is, if individuals experience higher poverty rates, lower rates of wealth accumulation, or inequality across similar measures, then this should be reflected in their class identities. We examine public attitudes about economic inequality to probe how groups may feel differently about class, the economy, and class-consciousness.

We utilize three surveys: the 2006 LNS and the 2008 and 2012 ANES. The LNS was fielded in 2005 and 2006 and had 8,634 Latino respondents. The ANES is fielded immediately before and after every November presidential election since 1952. This analysis uses both the 2008 and the 2012 ANES. The studies had 2,322 and 2,054 pre-election respondents, respectively, in the face-to-face format. We use these three surveys because of the relatively large samples of Latino respondents and, in the case of the ANES, a sample that allows for comparison across racial and ethnic groups. Whereas the LNS is composed of only Latino respondents, the ANES in 2008 and 2012 has non-Hispanic white samples and oversamples of Latino and black respondents. The LNS asks a few questions about income and perceptions of the state of the economy. The ANES contains several batteries of questions addressing finances, wealth, and perceptions of class and inequality. Together, these instruments offer a variety of questions that directly tap into class and economic inequality.

We use the LNS data as a baseline for Latino attitudes before the economic crash and recession began in 2008, since it was fielded in 2006. As noted previously, Latinos were disparately impacted by the crash beginning in late 2007, thus we anticipate significant effects on political attitudes and perceptions of inequality and class. We utilize the 2008 ANES similarly, that is, the survey was fielded in October and November as the recession was underway. During this early period of the economic downturn, the recession's impact may not have yet been fully apparent to respondents. However, its effects were already substantial given the large numbers of people who were unemployed, in a lower paying job than before the crash, and/or had lost their home. By 2012, the economic recession had largely subsided and the worst effects were declining. The 2012 ANES provides a sense of attitudes about class, income gap, and inequality as the recession came to a close. Accordingly, we contend that drawing on a combination of surveys rather than a single snapshot is necessary for a complete picture of how economic events influence Latino attitudes about class and the economy.

On the 2006 LNS, there are a limited number of questions that ask respondents about their views on the economy in general as well as their personal financial situation. Even in 2006, Latino respondents' attitudes about the economy were already pessimistic. When asked if the economy of the country as a whole has gotten worse, stayed the same, or gotten better, the largest share of respondents (i.e., fully 48%) expressed that it had gotten worse; only 17.3% believed that it had stayed the same. If we disaggregate this question by national origin group, 47% of Mexican respondents and 52% of Puerto Ricans said the economy was getting worse, but only 36.3% of Cuban

respondents answered this way. By party, Republican respondents were evenly split across the three choices, whereas Democrats were more likely to state that the economy had gotten worse. It is worth noting that one potential explanation for this result may be that at the time, there was a Republican president, George W. Bush, and this may have positively biased Republican respondents' evaluations, while Democrats may have in turn responded more negatively than they would otherwise. When reflecting on their own financial situation that year compared to the previous year, approximately 50% of the respondents indicated that it had remained about the same, 25% indicated worse, and 25% indicated better. Answers were fairly consistent across national-origin groups and Democrats. Republican respondents were more likely to indicate that their financial status had improved.

Overall, the LNS data indicate a considerable number of Latinos perceived in 2006 that the general state of economic affairs was worse than before. The 2008 and 2012 ANES allow a direct comparison of the same questions and a wider scope of questions. For example, the ANES includes a host of questions that ask whether respondents think unemployment is worse, compared to the prior year, in addition to a series of income- and wealth-related questions. We turn now to an examination of the ANES data with a specific emphasis on class identification and perceptions of inequality.

LATINOS AND CONCEPTUALIZING CLASS

If there has been a persistent puzzle to thinking about Latinos and class, and about class in the United States more generally, it is why, when the objective measures of inequality point to persistent class differences, these differences are not reflected in political choices of ideology, party, or policy (Devine 1997; Jackman and Jackman 1983; Lipset and Marks 2001). The experience of class inequality is not the same as identification with a class. When exploring class, we argue it is critical to distinguish between raw measures of class (e.g., income) and how individuals actually think about being part of a class (i.e., class-consciousness). In essence, the difference between class and class-consciousness is not only theoretically important but also methodologically distinguishable.

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Class-consciousness, thinking of oneself as a member of a class, is a kind of social group identity such as race and ethnicity. Like race or ethnicity it is one that can be or become highly political. Individuals who identify strongly with a class have attachments to their class and view their life outcomes as connected to their class as well as to others sharing the same class position. This kind of class-consciousness would operate in a similar fashion to the notion of linked fate within racial groups described by Dawson (1993). We posit that class-consciousness may be more likely to influence public attitudes and participation than simple raw economic metrics of class, if it is a salient identity. Historically however, in the US context, class-consciousness has been considerably weaker than in other countries (Lipset and Marks 2001).

For the objective indicators of class to translate into attitudes and ideology, then, people have to choose class as a social identity. It remains unclear, however, whether Latinos make this choice, and how salient class is for Latinos. Although there is considerable data on Latino inequality, there is remarkably little research on Latino class-consciousness. In particular, unlike Dawson's 1993 seminal work assessing the relationship between class and African American identity, no comparable work examines the intersectionality of class and ethnicities among Latinos. Our approach to begin to do so in a more systematic manner here is to utilize the small amount of existing survey work —specifically, the ANES—that has both sufficiently large numbers of Latino and other respondents and includes items specifically about class and class-consciousness.

The ANES includes a standard question asking whether people think of themselves as members of a class, and then follow-up questions asking people to place themselves into specific class groupings. The existing analysis of class focuses on these follow-up questions, which sort people into, for example, as working, lower, middle and upper class segments. However, examining responses to the ANES item that asks respondents whether they think of themselves in class terms reveals that a significant number of Latino and other respondents, in fact, do not. In the 2008 and 2012 ANES, respectively, 37% and 34% of Latino respondents did not think of themselves as belonging to a class at all.

Why do some people self-identify by class and others do not? The ANES data allow us to examine what might shape class identification. We use the same question that asks individuals in the 2008 and 2012 ANES whether

they think of themselves as belonging to a class as the dependent variable, thereby creating a dichotomous variable with those answering "yes" and "no" coded as 0 and 1, respectively. In our models, we control for race and ethnicity of respondents with dummy variables for black and Latino respondents. We also include income as measured on a 7-point scale, with lower values indicating lower incomes, and education recoded on a 5-point scale, with lower values indicating lower levels. The model incorporates a dummy variable for those who identify as either a Democrat or an independent and Republicans represent the baseline excluded group. The logit models with results for the 2008 and 2012 ANES analyzed separately are reported in table 1.

The models for both the 2008 and 2012 ANES data have similar results. As one might expect, both income and education are positively and significantly correlated with class identification: the higher one's income and education, the more likely one is to think of oneself in class terms. This finding implies, however, that class has an upward bias—that is, those with lower incomes and less education are less likely to identify in class terms and so are less likely to identify with working or lower class identities. Race and ethnicity have effects separate from income and education: blacks and Latinos are significantly less likely to identify in class terms, in both the 2008 and 2012 ANES. Finally,

Table 1: Identification with Class, Logit Analysis

	(1) 2008 ANES	(2) 2012 ANES
BLACK	-0.592** (0.125)	-0.524** (0.0855)
LATINO	-0.212+ (0.126)	-0.205* (0.0829)
EDUCATION	0.117* (0.0505)	0.258** (0.0297)
INCOME	0.0972** (0.0354)	0.148** (0.0192)
INDEPENDENT	-0.548** (0.165)	-0.417** (0.0952)
DEMOCRAT	0.0901 (0.124)	0.132+ (0.0740)
CONSTANT	0.502** (0.176)	-0.199+ (0.104)
OBSERVATIONS	2084	5523
PSEUDO R-SQUARE	0.0308	0.0518
LOG-LIKELIHOOD	-1240.2	-3219.1
CHI-SQUARE	78.77	351.4

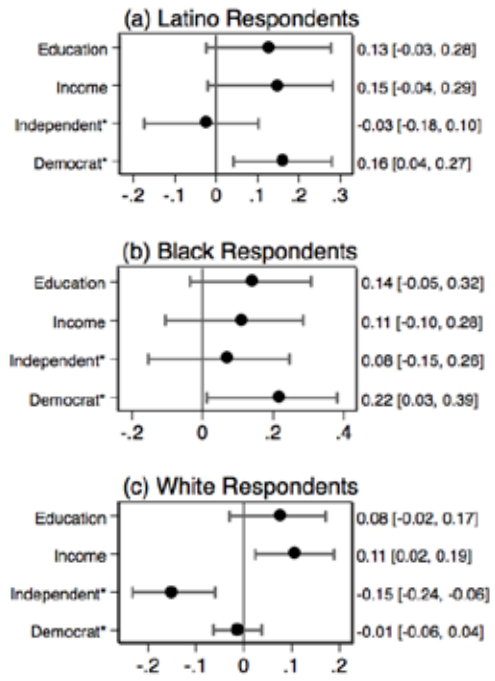
Notes: Standard errors in parentheses.
+ p<0.10; * p<0.05; ** p<0.01.
Republican represents the excluded party category.

political independents are also less likely to identify with a class. Together, these results suggest that class does not play a key role as a group identifier in the United States, echoing a large body of existing research. The results are particularly salient for those least likely to identify strongly with partisan politics—(i.e., political independents)—and for those for whom other social group identifiers are available (i.e., blacks and Latinos). For the latter, the triumph of racial and ethnic identifiers over class identification may have important implications for the kinds of issues that become politicized for these groups and the kinds of political coalitions that might be available to mobilize them.

The significance of the variables presented in the results is distinct from their substantive effects. Given the difficulties in interpreting coefficients in logit models (Long 1997), figures 2a–2c and 3a–3c provide a better sense of the substantive significance of each variable on class identification. The substantive effects of these variables were calculated for each racial group of respondents. Figures 2a, 2b, and 2c display the results using 2008 and 2012 ANES data and figures 3a, 3b, and 3c display the results using the 2012 ANES. The values represent first differences for the effect of each variable on the probability that a respondent will answer the highest value on a survey item if the value of a given variable is changed from its minimum to its maximum value. Dichotomous variables are set to zero and continuous variables are set to their median values. For continuous variables, the estimate shows the first difference as a result of moving from the minimum to maximum value for each variable. For dichotomous variables, the first difference represents a change from 0 to 1. Ninety-five percent confidence intervals are indicated by the lines and in brackets.[1] The substantive effects of the variables on the predicted probability of identifying with a class are reported in figures 2a, 2b, and 2c.

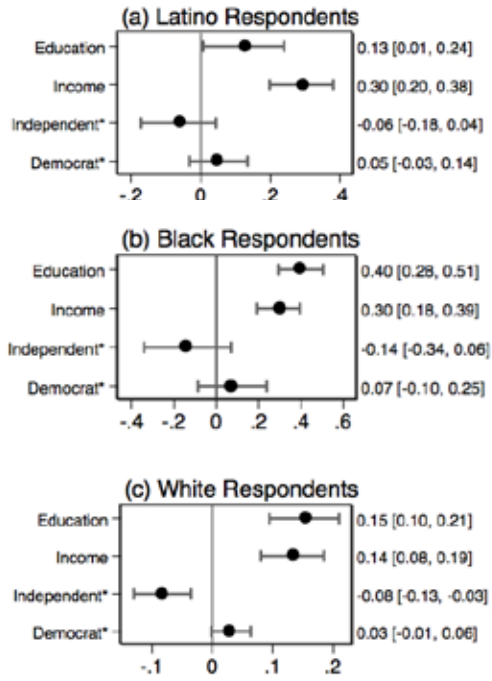
The substantive effects figures demonstrate that some factors play a considerable role in influencing class identification and the strength of those factors varies over time. For example, in 2008, being a Democrat has a significant and strong effect on Latino and black respondents, resulting in a 16-point and a 22-point change in the likelihood of identifying with a class. However, in 2012, these effects were not observed for Latino and black respondents. In 2012 the dominant factors on shaping Latino and black respondent's attachment to class are education and income. For Latinos, the moving from the lowest to the highest education level is associated with a 13-point change in the likelihood of identifying with a class. This effect is considerably stronger for black respondents, resulting in a 40-point change. Moving from the lowest income group to the highest group results in a 30-point

Figures 2a–2c: Substantive Effects on Class Identification by Race (ANES 2008)



Notes: Results based on Model 1 from Table 1. Values represent first differences for the effect of each variable on the probability of identifying with a class, while setting Democrat to 1, and all other variables to their median values. Continuous variables are changed from their minimum to maximum values, while binary variables (indicated by a *) change from 0 to 1.

Figure 3a–3c: Substantive Effects on Class Identification by Race (ANES 2012)



Notes: Results based on Model 2 from Table 1. Values represent first differences for the effect of each variable on the probability of identifying with a class, while setting Democrat to 1, and all other variables to their median values. Continuous variables are changed from their minimum to maximum values, while binary variables (indicated by a *) change from 0 to 1.

change for both Latino and black respondents. For people of color, education, income, and Democratic partisanship are important factors in forming political attitudes.

Turning towards white respondents, a consistent and strong effect on class identification is income. White respondents with higher incomes levels are considerably more likely to identify with class; and this effect holds across 2008 and 2012, resulting in 11- and 14-point changes, respectively. In 2012, the effect of moving from the lowest level of education to the highest education level results in a 15-point increase in the likelihood of identifying with a class. For white respondents, being an independent in terms of political party identification is also associated with a decrease in the likelihood of identifying with a class. In 2008, it decreased the likelihood of identifying with a class by 15 points and in 2008 was associated with an 8-point decrease. The results reveal that higher levels of education and income substantially increase class identification, whereas racial and ethnic identities and lack of political party identification are associated with decreases in class identification.

In addition to the models that calculate the substantive effects for each racial and ethnic group separately, we also calculated the first differences on the entire model presented in table 1 to calculate the effects of being Latino or black on an individual's likelihood of class identification. The effects of race and ethnicity are also key in shaping class identification. Black and Latino respondents are less likely to identify with class compared to whites. The effect of being black ranges from an 11-point decrease in class identification in 2008 and a 9-point decrease in 2012. The effect of being Latino is constant on both the 2008 and 2012 ANES surveys, resulting in a more modest 4-point decrease in the probability of identifying with a class.

When examining respondents who did identify as belonging to a class and were asked to situate themselves in a particular class, approximately 35% of Latinos identified as working class and between 27% and 30% identified as middle class. Interestingly, self-identified class does not necessarily correlate closely with actual income. Very few respondents, for instance, chose the lower class or poor options, with less than 1% of the Latino sample on each

survey identifying themselves as lower class or poor. To help put these self-reported class memberships in perspective, on the 2008 ANES, 22.4% of Latino respondents indicated their household income was less than $20,000. Similarly, on the 2012 ANES, 26.5% of Latinos reported household incomes below this same earnings level. The threshold for 100% of the federal poverty level in 2014 for households with two people was $15,730 and for three people, it was $19,790. Thus, a significant number of Latino respondents do not self-identify themselves as poor or lower class despite the fact that their reported income level would indicate this is the most accurate classification of their class.

The fact is that while many Latinos are objectively members of a class, particularly of what we might call the "working" or "lower" classes, a third or more opt out of identifying in class terms entirely. Individuals identifying as Latino or black are significantly less likely to identify in class terms. Why would this be the case? As suggested above, it may well be that with race and ethnic categories made politically and socially salient in the United States, identification in class terms is eclipsed by race. In the American discourse, class does not exhibit a comparable salience to that of race.

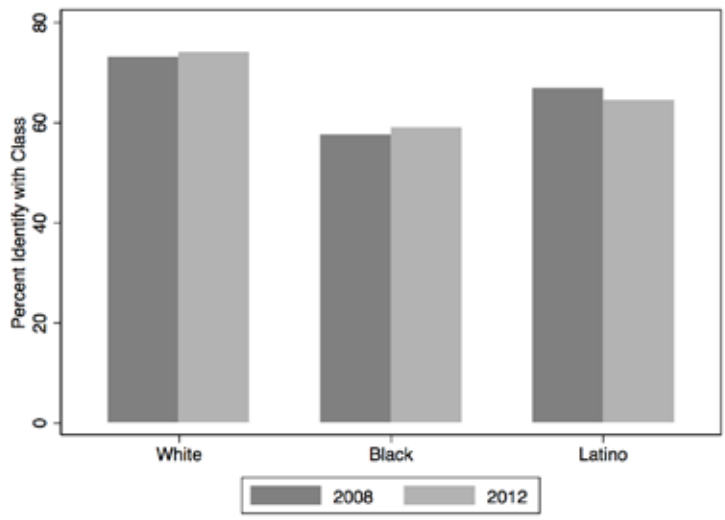
TEMPORAL COMPARISONS

We explicitly analyze the role of temporality in questions that examine the overall state of the economy and unemployment in the following section. One reason to engage survey data from the different periods of 2006, 2008, and 2012, is due to the economic downturn that began in 2007. It is worth examining potential temporal differences in responses due to the disparate impact of the recession on Latinos and variation in- group perceptions over time. While we are unable to directly compare all of the questions across the instruments, there is some continuity in questions in the ANES, particularly the class identification question for 2008 and 2012. Figure 4 displays the difference in the percentage of respondents identifying with a class by race. This data is also presented with side-by-side bars for each racial group to show data from the 2008 and 2012 ANES. Overall, the data indicates that whites have the strongest attachment to class identification, with over 75% of the group identify with a class. Black and Latino respondents demonstrate lower levels of attachment, with 40% and 35% expressing no class identification. Temporally, there are small shifts between 2008 and 2012, where white and black identification with class slightly increase and Latino identification slightly decreases. The key point to take away from this figure is that a sizeable portion of minority respondents does not identify with a class and this non-class identifier component of each group is relatively consistent over time.

We are also able to compare Latino perceptions of the economy and their own financial situations in 2006, 2008, and 2012. Overall across the periods examined, Latinos seem relatively negative about the state of the economy. For example, in the 2008 ANES, 68.4% of Latinos reported that the economy had gotten much worse in the last year, and an additional 19% indicated it had gotten somewhat worse. This is a marked increase over the 2006 LNS data where 48% of respondents said the economy had gotten worse. In contrast, in the 2012 ANES, Latino respondents expressed more neutral and less negative positions. Combining responses for "much worse" and "somewhat worse," only 28.1% of Latinos felt the economy was worse than a year ago. When examining whites and black respondents over the same periods, there is also a significant increase in the amount of positive feelings expressed in 2012 compared to 2008. However, among these three racial groups, blacks and Latinos are the most optimistic in economic terms by 2012 compared to whites, more than a third still evaluate the economy as worse than before.

In the 2006 LNS, approximately 25% of respondents indicated that their financial situation was worse, however, on the 2008 ANES, 45.8% of Latino respondents indicated it was worse. This is once again a considerable increase in the negative economic outlook that likely reflects the effects of the recession among Latinos. By 2012, Latino

Figure 4: Class Identification by Racial Group (ANES)



respondents were feeling more positive about their financial situation and only 38.3% reported a worse personal financial situation than the year before. Similar to the prior question, black respondents also expressed significantly more optimism about their finances in 2012 compared to 2008. Whites also become more positive, however, over 50% still evaluate their financial situation as worse than the year before. In both the economy and financial situation questions, it is worth noting that people of color are considerably more optimistic about the general economic climate, as well as their own personal financial situation, compared to whites. These results are perplexing in part because of documented inequalities between whites and people of color, in particular the economic inequality that minority communities face.

Blacks and Latinos are more likely to perceive worsening inequality over time, even though both groups also are less likely to identify in class terms.

Perceptions of inequality likely have a temporal dimension to them—how people respond reflects their economic situation and their evaluation of the overall economy. However, the 2012 data indicate that controlling for partisan affiliation, blacks and Latinos are more likely to perceive worsening inequality over time, even though both groups also are less likely to identify in class terms.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Economic inequality and class identification is a fundamentally important area of research in the study of race, ethnicity, and politics. Currently, there is a dearth of literature in Latino politics that examines this topic. Building on the empirical results presented in this chapter, here we outline a few broad areas that deserve further exploration, along with some methodological concerns and a plea for better data.

Our initial findings suggest that self-identification in class terms varies across racial and ethnic groups, with groups, such as Latinos, that have some of lowest median incomes also including surprisingly large percentages of individuals who do not report any identification with class labels. What explains variation in class identification across groups? Under what conditions is class salient? Would an increased salience of class identification among blacks and Latinos influence the types of issues highlighted and coalitions developed amongst these and other groups? Does racial framing enable or limit the types of coalitions that can be formed amongst disadvantaged segments of society? In short, we need further research on the salience of class identity among Latinos and other racial and ethnic groups in the United States.

None of this is to suggest that race and ethnicity are somehow irrelevant, obscuring the "real" issues of class. Framing issues around class might offer coalitions greater breadth by including people from more diverse groups, but there remain issues specific to people of color that are independent of class. Issues around racism and discrimination cannot simply be subsumed under class issues. In the United States race taps into individuals' group identities in ways that class has generally not done, and may not be able to do, in the US context. Perhaps as a result, the findings presented above suggest that for many blacks and Latinos, class terms carry little meaning or have scant resonance for them. For better and for worse, the language of race that has developed over time in the United States is not translatable into the language of class. For all intents and purposes, this means that Latino inequality will likely continue to be addressed through racial and ethnic identities rather than ones centered on class.

Research has demonstrated that ethnic identities can become heightened and more salient in response to mobilizing events (Massey and Sanchez 2010; Ramírez 2013; Zepeda-Millán 2011), as well as in response to racialized language surrounding immigration and related contentious issues (Jiménez 2011; Pérez 2015). In addition, racialized identity among Latinos can also be heightened through mass protests (Zepeda-Millán and Wallace 2013). Given these effects on the racial and ethnic identities among Latinos, under what circumstances could we imagine mobilizing events having a similar impact on class identification, attachment, and consciousness?

When Latino inequality has been studied, the analyses often compare Latinos to other racial and ethnic groups, particularly whites. This is important, but we argue that it also serves to obscure differences among Latinos (the preliminary findings we have presented here are guilty of this too). This approach is in large part a response to existing data that often has insufficiently large Latino samples, much less one sufficiently varied enough to meaningfully examine differences across different Latino sub-groups. When studies do examine in-group variation, they primarily focus on differences between national origin groups, gender, legal status, and immigrant generations. There is evidence, however, that greater attention should be paid

to both class identification and inequality among Latinos, and between Latinos and other groups. The data suggest that both experiences and measures of inequality vary among Latinos. For example, while wealth increases across successive generations among certain Latino immigrants, some national origin groups tend to have greater levels of education, income, and wealth. Additionally, survey work that includes questions about inequality and class often does not include corresponding measures of attachment to class or the extent of class-consciousness. In order to obtain a more complete picture of Latino inequality and the role of class-consciousness in Latino public opinion and identity, researchers must strive to collect and incorporate a varied and sizeable Latino sample, with a broad range of questions examining inequality, in addition to gathering data at different time points. ▪

NOTES

1. All simulations were performed using Clarify software (King et al. 2000).

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