The Resurgence of Race in Europe: Perceptions of Discrimination Among Immigrants in Spain

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How will immigrants be received?
Will race be relevant?
Questioning race

• “Scholarly imposition” of the “American worldview” as the “universal point of view” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1999).
Questioning race

• “Scholarly imposition” of the “American worldview” as the “universal point of view” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1999).

• While race or phenotype constitutes a “bright boundary” in the U.S., particularly for immigrants with darker skin, religion plays this role in Western Europe (Alba 2005).
Research Questions

Questions

1. What reasons do immigrants report to explain their discrimination experiences in Spain?
   - Nationality, Religion, or Race?

2. How do these reports change with acculturation?
Roadmap

a) Literature Review:
   - discrimination perceptions
   - race vs. culture debate
   - immigrant adaptation
b) My findings
c) 1\textsuperscript{st} Data set on 1.5 and 2\textsuperscript{nd} generation immigrant youth
d) 2\textsuperscript{nd} Data set on 1\textsuperscript{st} generation adult job seekers
e) Discussion and conclusions
Perceptions of Discrimination

- Widely used in sociology and social psychology (Brub 2008; Safi 2010)
- Not necessarily experiences but understandings of groups’ experiences (Dion and Kawakami 1996; Taylor, Wright, and Porter 1994)
- Perceived social boundaries (Alba 2005); school performance (Tracey and Sedlacek, 1987); life satisfaction (Safi 2010); political mobilization (Okamoto 2003)
Race, nationality and religion

- **Ethnicity**: subjective feelings of belonging based on the belief in shared culture and common ancestry (Wimmer 2008).
  - Race: Social significance given to perceived physical features (Goldberg 2002; Telles 2004).
  - Culture: learned behavior (Sewell 1999); configuration of symbols, codes, and ritual practices that provide strategies of action (Swidler 1986).
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The impact of the American acculturation process has been overwhelming (Gordon 1964). Immigrants are incapable or unwilling to assimilate (Bisin, Patacchini, & Zenou 2008; Klausen 2005). Muslims immigrants are threatening the "secular ideals of western society" (Peach & Glebe 1995).
Race-Culture Debate

U.S.  

Dominant social cleavage  
(Glassman 2004; Rumbaut & Portes 2001)

Europe

Culture
Race-Culture Debate

U.S.  Europe

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"Anathema to official thinking" (Thomson and Crul 2007)

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## Race-Culture Debate

### U.S. vs. Europe

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Discrimination and Immigrant Acculturation
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• Classic assimilation
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• Conflict theory
Discrimination and Immigrant Acculturation

- Classic assimilation
- Conflict theory
- Segmented assimilation
Why Spain?

- Cradle of western preoccupation with ancestry and blood purity (Fredrickson 2002); caste systems in L.A.
- Elites reject “race”, embrace civic model (Díez Medrano 2005; Molina 1994)
- Race rejected due to biological connotations; State forbids collection of racial data (Flecha 2001)
- With increasing migration, will race become relevant again?
The case of **Spain**

- Highly diverse flows; religious differences thought to drive native opposition to immigrants (Aparicio 2007; Rodríguez Álvarez 2009).
- Limited empirical data (Díez Nicolás and Lafita 2001; Safi 2010)
- Race and culture important for Spaniards (Bail 2008)
- Wearing headscarves, dark skin (Agudelo-Suárez et al 2009)
Findings: Sneak Peak

1. Religious discrimination is rare
2. Cultural discrimination declines with acculturation
3. Racial discrimination increases with acculturation for visible minorities
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Acculturation and Perception of Cultural and Racial Discrimination

![Graph showing the relationship between acculturation and discrimination perception for different categories: Invisible, Visible, and Visible/Invisible. The graph illustrates how acculturation affects the perception of discrimination, with different lines representing each category.](image-url)
Data set I

- Longitudinal Study of the 2nd Generation (ILSEG) directed by Alejandro Portes (Princeton University and Instituto Ortega y Gasset)
- Representative sample of immigrant-origin secondary school students in Madrid and Barcelona
- Mean age: 13.9 years
- 5966 1.5 generation, 909 2nd generation
- Multiple national origin groups
For what reason have you been rejected or not treated the same as others?

- I haven’t been rejected or treated differently than others
- Due to my nationality
- Due to my race
- Due to my religion
Discrimination Reports

Source: ILSEG (1.5 generation).
Discrimination Reports (DV) = Acculturation (IV) + Control Variables

- Nationality
- Religion
- Race
- Time in Spain
- Language Skills
- Generation
- Sex
- Age
- City
- School type
- Mother's education
- National origin
Discrimination Reports

Source: ILSEG (1.5 generation).
Discrimination Reports, by Time in Spain (1.5 generation)

Source: ILSEG (1.5 generation).
Nationality Discrimination, by Time in Spain

Source: ILSEG (1.5 generation).
Religious Discrimination, by Time in Spain

Source: ILSEG (1.5 generation).
Racial Discrimination, by Time in Spain

Source: ILSEG (1.5 generation).
Discrimination Reports, by Time in Spain & Generation

Source: ILSEG (1.5 & 2nd generations).
Discrimination Reports, by Time in Spain & Generation

Source: ILSEG (1.5 & 2nd generations).
1.5 vs. 2\textsuperscript{nd} generation:
Nationality Discrimination, by National
1.5 vs. 2nd generation: Religious Discrimination, by National Origin Group

Source: ILSEG (1.5 & 2nd generations).
1.5 vs. 2nd generation: Racial Discrimination, by National Origin

Source: ILSEG (1.5 & 2nd generations).
Further questions
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- Could these results be driven by the young age of respondents?
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• Question format bias (closed-ended)?
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• Question format bias (closed-ended)?
• Do these patterns hold beyond the classroom?
Data set II

- “Voz de los Inmigrantes” (VDI), 2000 and 2004, Juan Díez Nicolás and María José Ramírez Lafita
- 3048 1st gen adult immigrants
- Catalonia, Madrid, Canary Islands, Andalucia, and Valencia
- Multiple national origins
- Open-ended question on job search problems
Question

What do you think is the main **reason** why you have had difficulties finding a job when you have searched for one?

(1\textsuperscript{st} mention was recorded)
Discrimination Reports

- Nationality
- Religion
- Race

ILSEG
1st Data set

- Nationality
- Religion
- Race

VDI
2nd Data set

Feels discriminated
Discrimination and Immigrant Acculturation: Revisited
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# Discrimination and Immigrant Acculturation: Revisited

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Predictive Probabilities of Reporting Religious Discrimination by ESS Wave (2002-2012)

Estimates are adjusted for age, gender, education, community size, and generation.
Predictive Probabilities of Reporting Racial Discrimination by ESS Wave (2002-2012)

- Estimates are adjusted for age, gender, education, community size, and generation.
Conclusions

1. Religion, not a big concern for immigrants
2. Nationality and race more important
3. Acculturation matters
4. Visibility matters
5. Race: useful concept in Europe; U.S. not exceptional
6. Theories of immigrant adaptation not mutually exclusive
7. Racial ideas and meanings can diffuse up
Implications

1. Public policy: Important to collect discrimination and race data in Spain
2. Political consequences of emergence of racial discourse?
3. Changing ethnic logic of Spain and Europe?
Thank you

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