Latinx – African American Relations: Understanding the Perceptions of Faculty, Administrators and Students in two College Campuses

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between Latinxs and African Americans in two mid-size colleges located in the southwestern region of the United States. An empirical study was conducted including students, faculty, and administrators using a survey as the main methodological technique. Guided by the group position model advocated by Herber Blumer, this study found evidence for the prevalence of intra-group associations and group competition for access to resources. In this regard, the study documents the existing perception that African Americans have better access to resources in the two college campuses which supports the zero-sum hypothesis favoring members of this group. Furthermore, the study documents high levels of social distance between the two groups which highlights the historical relationships between African Americans and Latinxs lending credence to the racial formation theory. Social distance seems pronounced when issues of interracial marriage are addressed.

Key words: Latinx-African American relations, higher education, race/ethnic competition, United States, and ethnic conflict/cooperation.

In 2010, the United States Congress considered a piece of legislation known as the Dream Act that would provide a temporary protected status for young people who were minors when they entered the United States and lacked proper documentation to remain in the country. To support these efforts, Latinx leaders mobilized their base and asked for support from civil rights organizations, religious institutions, labor unions, education institutions and the civil society. Although some African American leaders voiced their support for the Dream Act, the larger population in communities and neighborhoods did not openly join Latinxs on the streets. This lack of support confirmed previous studies indicating that African Americans oppose liberal immigration policy when they sense competition for jobs with Latinxs (Rocha 2007). Alternatively, during the 2008

democratic primaries when candidate Obama was seeking the nomination, Latinxs lent their

support to candidate Hilary Clinton almost at a rate of two to one (Lopez and Minushkin 2008).

These two examples about immigration and political participation represent a certain degree of

separation that exists between Latinxs and African Americans in a general context.

Underlying the distance between African Americans and Latinxs is a demographic reality

indicating that Latinxs represent a higher proportion in the general population. Several studies

have already documented the demographic changes in the Latinx population, and they have also

hypothesized whether these changes cause a division between African Americans and Latinxs

(Kauffman 2003; Rocha 2007; Boyas and Sharpe 2010). The hypothesis is critical because Latinxs

are likely to share neighborhoods with African Americans and/or reside in communities adjacent

to those of African Americans. Existing evidence indicates that communities experiencing

demographic transition as a result of immigration often experience labor market changes,

increased demand for social services, expansion of school programs and many others (Kandell and

Parrado 2012). The tensions between members of both groups have been amply documented in

neighborhoods of central cities like those of Dallas and Houston (Gurwitt 1993; Harris 1995).

Although many studies have been conducted on issues of conflict and cooperation among

Latinxs and African Americans at the community level, the literature has not been extended to

consider similar issues in institutional settings like higher education. Regarding issues of

community interaction, some scholars have indicated that the relationship between these two

groups is characterized by hostility (Bobo and Hutchins 1996; Gay 2006; Sonenshein and Drayse

2006; Rocha 2007; Plant et al. 2008). Others, including Claudia Sandoval (2010), have argued that

the relationship between African Americans and Latinxs, given their proximity and shared

concerns, should 'benefit from becoming allies and not enemies' (see also Kauffman 2003;

Rodney and Preuhs 2010).

The relative absence of sociologically oriented empirical work assessing the perceived competition between Latinxs and African Americans over resources in institutions of higher education is a void we seek to fill with this paper. We use data from a survey documenting the perceptions between members of both groups about their interactions and access to institutional resources in two midsize universities in the southwestern region of the United States. Two well-known theories of race relations, Herbert Blumer's group position model and Omi and Winant's (1994) racial formations theory, provide a much-needed analytical framework. Three broad questions lead the present research: First, how do students, faculty and administrators perceive the level of association between African Americans and Latinxs in campus? Second, what are the perceptions held by Latinxs and African Americans concerning preferential treatment for one or the other? And, third, how do students, faculty and administrators perceive the social distance between the two groups?

LITERATURE REVIEW

An extended body of literature about Latinx-African American relations has centered on the use of two existing interpretive traditions. One set of studies examine the extent to which the relationship leads to intergroup hostility (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Oliver and Wong 2003; and Gay, 2006) while a second set of studies center on intergroup cooperation (Fairlie 2002; Plant, Butz, and Tartakovsky 2008; Feliciano, Lee and Robnett 2011). Those who interpret the relationship from the view of intergroup hostility usually emphasize competition, conflict and a sense of threat among racial/ethnic groups (Tam Cho and Baer 2011). Intergroup contact and cooperation are usually associated with prospective coalition building, cross-group friendships, and cooperative

arrangements in integrated communities (Rocha 2007; Fischer 2008; Hero and Preuhs 2010).

African American-Latinx interaction takes place in the context of rural and urban communities and in segregated and integrated neighborhoods. Nevertheless, existing research has centered mostly on metropolitan areas and, more specifically, in central city areas. Tam Cho and Baer (2011) warn urban researchers that the commonly used strategy to address census tracts as units of analysis in the study of Latinxs and African American relations may be misleading. In a study of black attitudes toward Latinxs, Tam Cho and Baer (2011) demonstrated how the use of census tracts in social area analysis tends to decontextualize the social environment in which the interaction between members of these two groups takes place. Tam Cho and Baer (2011) explain that the spatial identity of Latinxs takes place in the context of the neighborhood and introduced a more effective empirical measure consisting of the 'neighboring Latinos SES context' which considers the socioeconomic status of Latinxs in nearest neighborhoods or census tracts.

Research that centers on the neighborhood and the community levels has generated a wealth of information about the social context in which racial interaction occurs. Boyas and Sarpe (2010) used the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey to examine issues related to ethnic trust. They found that age, racial status and length of residence explain the levels of ethnic trust. That is, members of the communities that are older, African American, Latinxs and with lengthier residence show lower levels of ethnic trust. These results lend support for the position that the bonding occurring in homogeneous or segregated communities can contribute to the formation of in-group and the out-group mindsets.

The process by which out-group and in-group mentality forms is of interest in a study seeking to understand group competition and conflict in the context of neighborhoods, communities and other environments. For example, African Americans seem especially

concerned about the effects of immigration on the size of the Latinx population and, therefore, on the distribution of resources in their urban neighborhoods. As Gay indicates 'African Americans fear displacement … and [perceive] that Latinos are "taking food from black children"' (2006: 938). Nevertheless, Daniel Hopkins (2011) examined whether racial/ethnic diversity affects spending in cities across the country and found that it only influences criminal justice spending. In other words, diversity is not linked to greater spending in housing and other social services. Other studies have considered whether the socioeconomic environment of the community enhances the sense of threat that Latinxs represent for African Americans. Oliver and Wong (2003) concluded that African Americans residing in communities with lower socioeconomic status are more likely to consider Latinxs as competitors for political and socioeconomic resources. In addition, Gay (2006) found that African Americans residing in integrated neighborhoods tend to harbor negative stereotypes about Latinxs regardless of whether they feel better or worse off. Gay (2006) concludes that the material condition of group life is a better predictor of black negative attitudes about Latinxs than the size of the group or the material conditions of the neighborhood.

The documented conflict between African Americans and Latinxs does not change the reality that the most important historical analysis about race and ethnicity in the United States involves the relationship between the whites and the minority population (Bonilla-Silva 2012; Gans 2012, Lipsitz 2012; Blumer 2012). The documentation of hostility and conflict among groups in the subordinate category raises concerns about the possibilities for these groups to form coalitions that can effectively challenge the effects of the structures of domination. Therefore, several studies were designed to document the extent to which members of the subordinate groups perceive commonality and shared fate as conditions leading to the formation of political coalitions (Kaufman 2003; Sonenshein and Drayse 2006; Rocha 2007; Hero and Preuhs 2010).

The sense of shared experiences has a greater tendency to unify African Americans than the Latinx population because Latinx identity tends to vary along lines of immigrant status, national origin, racial and socioeconomic background. Nevertheless, Kaufman (2003) examined whether Latinxs who see themselves as minorities have a greater likelihood to participate in political coalitions led by a sense of shared minority status. Kaufman (2003) found that Latinxs who were more acculturated and felt close to one another had greater potential to form coalitions with African Americans.

Despite sharing a position of disadvantage vis-à-vis the dominant group, empirical studies have not yet found solid evidence of coalition building among African Americans and Latinxs. Rocha (2007) examined whether the election of school board members reflect the formation of inter-minority coalitions in mixed Latinx and African American communities. The study argued that group size positively influences school board representation which means that a greater presence of Latinxs and African Americans in the population leads to a greater representation of these groups in school boards. Cooperation, Rocha concluded, only occurs in situations associated with partisan elections but seems to be absent in non-partisan systems. Similarly, Hero and Preuhs (2010) found that partisan affiliation explains the cooperation among Latinx and African American members of Congress. That is, Latinx and African American organizations tend to rate Latinx and African American representatives who are Democrats higher than representatives of these same groups that are Republicans. This same study also found that representatives who are from urban districts also seem to have greater support for issues advocated by Latinx and African American organizations (Hero and Preuhs 2010). Sonenshein and Drayse (2006) examined the opportunities for coalition building in Los Angeles during the mayoral primary, and non-partisan, elections of 2001 and 2005. In 2001, Villaraigosa ran unsuccessfully with the support of a coalition formed by

Latinx and white liberals while his opponent formed a coalition between African American and white conservatives. Villarraigosa won in 2005 with the support of the Latinx-white liberal coalition only after the coalition of his opponent disintegrated.

Perhaps the lack of strong bonds among minorities rest on how African Americans understand their history as a marginalized people (Johnson 2008) and how recent immigration from Latin America continue to influence and sustain a Latinx racial and ethnic identity with a greater affinity for whites than blacks (Feliciano, Lee and Robnett 2011). Portes and Zhow (1992) described the struggle between Latinxs and African Americans and the development of a 'zero sum game' explaining that 'if one group gains access to resources then the other group loses and vice versa' (Griffin 1992: 935). In 1992, Griffin documented that many Blacks in leadership positions viewed Latinxs as 'free riders' because they were benefitting from achievements obtained through the civil rights marches organized and led by blacks. In a study that extends the zero sum analysis to the neighborhood level, Gay (2006) hypothesized and found that where African Americans have an economic disadvantage and where Latinxs are at an economic advantage, African Americans are more reluctant to extend to Latinxs the benefits afforded by Affirmative Action policies (See also Tam Cho and Baer 2011).

Likewise, recent immigration from Latin America seems to sustain and strengthen the Latinx and the tendency for a greater affinity with whites than with African Americans. In a quasi-experimental study, Jimeno-Ingrum et al. (2009) found a greater tendency among Latinx participants to rate white participants higher in competency and warmth than other Latinxs. Feliciano et. al. (2011) studied dating preferences and concluded that the Latinx-white boundary is less rigid than the Latinx-black boundary since, as they found, Latinxs are more likely to prefer to date whites than blacks. Similarly, Garcia et al. (2012) found that Latinx college students tend to

rate Latina-black couples less positively than the Latina-white couples. Finally, Fairlie et al. (2002) found that Latinx students do not feel comfortable in schools that have a greater proportion of African American students. They found that increases in the proportion of African Americans in schools tend to produce a net transfer of Latinx students into private schools.

THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

Many theories have been used over the years to explain race relations, but they almost always emphasize the dynamics in the relationship between dominant and subordinate groups. Because theoretical work explaining the association between two subordinate groups is scarce, this study adopts two existing theories that come close in the examination of the dynamics in the relationships between African Americans and Latinxs. Indeed, we seek to contribute to the group position model that Herbert Blumer (2012) proposed by examining how members of two subordinate groups assign meanings to their immediate situations and define their collective sense in opposition to each other. The current study extends the work of Bobo and Hutchins who used the group position model to explain how 'Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans view one another as locked in competitive social relations' (1996:952) and the social psychological factors that explain it. Our study, however, assesses the perception of African Americans and Latinxs about one another and about differential access to resources in the context of two institutions of higher education. We also believe that the racial formation theory of Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994) complements these efforts by placing the meanings assigned to group distinctions in historical perspective.

The Group Position Model

In his analysis to explain racial prejudice, Herbert Blumer (2012) indicated that a group develops

a 'sense of group position' through a 'collective process' and this level of cohesiveness allows its members to 'define and redefine' themselves in opposition to another racial group (Blumer 2012; 1958). From this perspective, individuals develop a sense of group identity and they use the resulting collective images to separate them from others. Blumer (2012) clarifies, however, that the formation of images occurs from a collective set of experiences over time. The work of Mary Waters (2012) illustrates quite clearly the importance of group identity and the changes that occur over time. In her study with generations of immigrants from Caribbean countries, Waters found a tendency for older generations to eventually adopt the African American identity even though the members of more recent generations rejected it. Rather than keeping an immigrant identity, the subsequent generations assimilate because they realize that their skin color carries certain meaning in a society with rhetorical dichotomy of blackness and whiteness.

From the perspective of the group position model race prejudice involves a set of feelings associated with groups that have been defined as different. In the relationship between a dominant and subordinate group, these feelings involve:

> 1) a feeling of superiority; 2) a feeling that the subordinate race is intrinsically different and alien; 3) a feeling of propriety claim to certain areas of privilege and advantage; and 4) fear and suspicion that the subordinate race harbors designs on the prerogatives of the dominant race (Blumer 2012).

Among subordinate groups, the status positions of superiority and inferiority may rest on competing claims about the most deserving status based on citizenship, participation in struggles, historical treatment, degree of marginalization, population size and others.

According to the group position model, the four basic feelings of race prejudice refer to oppositional arrangement of racial groups. This opposition can be found in the relationship between Latinxs and African Americans and some of the feelings can be revealed by examining the

ways that they see each other. The feeling of superiority and assignment of inferior status may be manifested in the perception that members of these groups have of each other regarding industriousness, intelligence, reliability and other traits (Plant et al. 2008; Boyas and Sharpe 2010). In addition, there is an understanding within the groups that the other is distinctive by race, language, nationality, and others (Sonenshein and Drayse 2006). The third feeling of a propriety claim can also be found as members of both groups develop a sense of entitlement to access basic societal resources. The fourth feeling may be manifested in the mutual suspicion that the out-group threatens the group position or that it is 'getting out of place' (Gay 2006). In sum, the group position approach would indicate that the levels of prejudice between African Americans and Latinxs may be found at the intersection of all these dimensions of feelings (Blumer 2012).

A body of literature about African American and Latinx relations already demonstrates support for the group position view especially in the Post-Civil Rights period. Kevin Johnson (2008) argues that the competition for resources between African Americans and Latinxs impedes the formation of a political coalition. In fact, Johnson argues that the groups have developed a zero-sum mentality or the idea that one group's gain is the other group's loss. This type of mentality creates competition between groups and prevents the creation of a solid block in defense of common causes. This sense of competition tends to reproduce the in-group and out-group mentality leading to the formation of identity among members in opposition to each other. This way of finding a sense of the collective through opposition was documented by Pyong Gap Min (2000) in her studies of the relationship between Koreans and African Americans in Los Angeles. Pyong Gap Min (2000) found that within group solidarity is strengthened when there is a perceived or real threat from the actions of another group leading to the formation of an 'us' versus 'them' kind of mentality.

The notion that group distinctions are defined collectively obtained empirical support in the work of Harris (1995) who found that the language barriers between Latinxs and African Americans tended to increase the tensions between the groups. In addition, studies measuring social distance between the groups have documented the mutual distrust and have highlighted a greater distance between recent Latinx immigrants and African Americans (Martinez 2007). Furthermore, demographic projections indicate that the growth of the Latinx population is expected to influence the black-white dichotomy that is often used to discuss race relations (Suro 2009). Finally, a study by Griffin (1992) found evidence for the zero-sum hypothesis when he examined the situation of a hospital in the Los Angeles area that shifted the population it served from African Americans to Latinxs. The consequence of this shift was an increase in the tensions between the two groups.

The Theory of Racial Formations

The theory of racial formations was first used to understand the socially constructed process leading to the formation of racial categories. According to Omi and Winant (1994:55), racial formation refers to 'the sociohistorical process, by which racial categories are created, inhibited, transformed, and destroyed' (1994:56). Omi and Winant argue that groups fall into the racial categories based on the definition of the situation and the level of competition that the group represents for the dominant population. From this perspective, an examination of "historical situated projects in which society is organized and ruled" (1994:56) can be a useful tool to examine race relations in general and that of African Americans and Latinxs in particular.

The implications of the racial formation theory for assessing the relationship between Latinxs and African Americans are far reaching, especially in the wake of ethnic pride, the economic position of minorities, demographic shifts, political participation and representation,

legal definitions of race and ethnicity, and affirmative action. For example, the growth of the Latinx population represents a direct challenge for the dichotomy of black-white relations that has been historically used. For African Americans, this can be considered as a kind of 'transgression' and a direct challenge to their position in society and access to important societal resources.

From this perspective, the increasing participation of Latinxs in politics and education can also alter the dynamics of its association with African Americans. The growing trend of the Latinx population has led the two major political parties to openly seek to attract the Latinx vote. The belief that Latinxs could use this political leverage to obtain a better position vis-à-vis the dominant group can be viewed as a threat by African Americans and, thus, can influence the relationship between the two groups. In addition, increased enrollment of Latinxs in elementary school, high-school, and college will also have an impact on the perception of historically most deserving status in the access of these resources. From the perspective of racial formations, this renegotiation of Latinxs has the potential to influence colleges and universities which are eager to attract this population to increase their stock of students. Multicultural programming, hiring decisions, financial aid, recruitment, and others can lead to the redefinition of the place of Latinxs in higher education and the relationship with other groups, particularly African Americans.

In sum, the racial formation theory can assist in showing the impact that politics, cultural ideologies, economics, and diversity movements have on the formation of minority cultural identity and minority relations (Feagin and Feagin 1993: 44). Empirical support for the racial formation theory is found in historically oriented research. It is important to notice that the status position of Latinxs and African Americans emerged through their contact with European Americans. According to this research, stereotypes that emerged during the conquest of the southwest were used to stigmatize Mexican Americans and served to justify the marginalized

position of this population (DeAnda 2004). Many of these stereotypes were merely transferred to

subsequent generations, immigrants and others who are perceived as Latinxs. Similarly, the

subordinate position of African Americans was sustained and advanced during the period of

slavery, and continued during segregation, and then to our current situation. Stereotypes that

emerged through these periods continue to be used today to stigmatize the population and are often

reinforced in the media (Feagin 2008). It is expected that the association between African

Americans and Latinxs include mutual prejudice deeply rooted in historical circumstances.

Characteristics of the Relationship between African Americans and Latinxs

The main objective of this article is to explain how the group position model and the racial

formation theory complement each other to help assess the complexities in the relationship

between African Americans and Latinxs. This study seeks to test Blumer's theoretical proposition

known as the group position model and to expand the existing empirical support represented in the

work of Bobo and Hutchins (1996). Three analytical tools of these two theories are tested in this

study through the use of a survey of African American and Latinx participants in two midsize

university campuses in the southwestern part of the country. The analytical tool of the *collective*

group sense advocated by the group position model was tested by asking students, faculty and

administrators about how they perceived the level of interaction between African Americans and

Latinxs in their respective campuses. In addition, the *feeling of propriety claim* to access a position

of advantage in securing resources is often expressed as a zero sum game. In this study, the

zero-sum hypothesis was tested by asking participants about which group they think receives

preferential treatment in hiring decisions in their campuses. Third, the position of the racial

formation theory that *competition over scarce resources* tends to add distance between the groups

is examined by asking participants to rate the levels of social distance between African Americans

and Latinxs in their respective campuses.

METHODS

This cross-sectional study is based on a survey conducted by the leading author in two mid-size colleges located in the same city in the southwestern region of the country during the academic year 1998-1999. The study obtained the participation of faculty and administrators from these groups which amounted to 3-to-6 percent in both settings. The proportions of African Americans and Latinxs in both colleges ranged between seven and thirteen percent. To obtain the sample, a systematic sampling technique was used to obtain a target of 200 African American students, 200 Latinx students, 84 faculty members and 54 administrative staff from each college.

Procedure and Study Participants

After selecting a listing of the potential study participants and the mailing addresses had been compiled, an original mailing of a self-administered questionnaire was sent in the spring of 1999. The package included a questionnaire, an informed consent form, a self-addressed stamped envelope and a cover letter with instructions about the study and the return of the documentation. Two weeks after the original mailing was made, a follow up was conducted consisting of a new copy of the questionnaire for students and a follow up call with faculty and administrators. Despite this laborious process only 28 percent of faculty and administrators and 11 percent of students returned the questionnaires severely impacting the trustworthiness of the results.

Despite the shortcomings, it is possible to still draw an exploratory study with the intent to learn about how African Americans and Latinxs see each other in these two campuses. Consequently, the participants for this exploratory study consisted of 38 faculty and administrators and 95 students which totaled 133 participants. Among students, 52 percent of the participants were African American, and 43 percent were Latinx. The race/ethnic distribution among faculty

and administrators consisted of 55.3 percent African American and 44.7 percent Latinx. It is clear from these distributions that there is a higher representation of African Americans (54.8%) than Latinxs (45.1%) in the study. The gender distribution among participants is also worth noting. Among students, the distribution shows that 86.3 percent were women and 13.7 percent were men. The gender distribution among faculty and administrators show that 73.7 percent were women and 26.3 percent were males. Overall, the distribution by gender shows a higher proportion of women (82.7%) than men (17.3%).

Measures and Analytical Strategy

The main instrument for the data collection consisted of questionnaires created in two versions with some slight differences in the types of questions asked. The first two measures described below pertain to the theoretical analysis corresponding to the group position models and a third one pertains to the racial formation theory. First, the concept of '*collective group sense'* is measured using the question 'At your school, when you see African American students 'hang out' do you see them more with their own race or more with Hispanic students or white?' The responses of interests ranged from 'More with friends of their own race' to 'About the same.' Second, the perception on preferential treatment was measured through an indicator of the zero-sum hypothesis. Students, faculty and administrators were asked 'generally speaking, who would most likely be hired for a faculty or administrative job at your school?' The responses were recorded using a scale that rated each group from 'most likely' to 'about equal.'

Finally, a measure of the perception of social distance among students used the question 'In general, how would you rate your relationship with African Americans? A separate question was used for participants to rate their relationship with Latinxs. Both questions were rated on a scale from 'very close' to 'very distant.' A second question was also used asking about the degree of

rejection of intergroup marriage. In faculty and administrators social distance was measured by asking them to rate their perceptions of how close they thought the relationship between African Americans and Latinxs was in campus. Social distance was measured by asking the question: 'how would it make you feel if a close relative of yours were planning to marry a Hispanic?' The responses were rated using a scale from 'very uneasy' to 'somewhat uneasy.' The analytical strategy used to assess the relationship between the variables included contingency tables calculated through the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, SPSS. In addition, the strength and statistical significance between the variables were calculated using chi-square procedures.

RESULTS

Table 1 below measures the 'collective sense' of the groups by examining the perceptions students have about the degree of interaction between African Americans and Hispanics. These results indicate that an overwhelming proportion of participants (91.6%) perceived that African Americans tend to get together with other African Americans whereas a smaller proportion (62.1%) perceived that Latinx students tend to associate with other members of the same group in their college campuses. In addition, 16.8 percent of the students believed that Latinx students also get together with whites but a smaller proportion (1.1%) agree that Latinx students associate with African Americans in their campuses. Among faculty and administrators, a lower proportion of participants (31.6%) see African Americans mingling among themselves although a greater proportion (44.7%) perceives that they associate about the same with other African Americans and Hispanics. In addition, a greater proportion of the respondents perceived that Latinx faculty and administrators (52.6%) mingle 'about the same' with other Latinxs and African Americans while

a smaller proportion (23.7%) believed that Latinx faculty and administrators associated exclusively with members of their group.

Table 1. Perceived Association among Students, Faculty and Administrators

Students	African Americans	Latinx	White
African Americans	91.6% (87)	1.1% (1)	1.1% (1)
Latinxs	1.1% (1)	62.1% (59)	16.8% (16)
Faculty/Administrators			Equally
African Americans	31.6% (12)		44.7% (17)
Latinxs		23.7% (9)	52.6% (20)

These results seem to indicate that there is a general belief of an existing tendency among African Americans and Latinxs in their campuses to mingle among themselves although the tendency is greater among students than faculty and administrators. The perception of an existing *within group* association supports the notion that a *collective group sense* may develop in an environment that is more exclusive and, therefore, homogeneous (Boyas and Sarpe 2010). The perception that there is a presence of *within group* mingling may also be apparent to a casual observer on campus who notices a pattern of 'self-segregation' among members of these groups in student organizations, cafeterias and other public spaces across college campuses. For the purpose of our analysis, however, this finding reveals the environments in which the formation of oppositional ideologies of 'us' versus 'them' can be created, sustained, and perpetuated.

The perception that there is a tendency for *within group* interaction among African American and Latinx students is an indication of the formation of a collective group sense. This *within group* association provides the context through which boundary lines are drawn and the sense of economic group competition may develop (Felinciano et al. 2011; Blumer 2012). Since African Americans and Latinxs compete for the same kind of resources in institutions of higher education, this assumption makes the zero-sum mentality, or the belief that one group's gain is the

other group's loss, more apparent. Although the survey measured competition over resources in a number of ways including cultural programming, treatment by administration and hiring decisions, this paper will only include exploratory results related to the perception of the participants on hiring decisions since it is a more direct economic indicator for a test of the zero-sum hypothesis. Table 2 below provides the results of student and faculty/administrators perceptions about preferential treatment in hiring decisions.

Table 2. Measures of Perceived Preferential Treatment between African Americans and Latinxs

	African Americans	Latinxs
Perceived likelihood of being hired as faculty and Administrator (*students only*)		
Most likely	17.9 % (17)	12.6% (12)
Likely	27.4% (26)	30.5% (29)
Less likely	18.9% (18)	20.0% (19)
Unlikely	3.2% (3)	3.2% (3)
About equal	21.2 (20)	21.2 (20)
Whether African Americans are more likely than Hispanics to be hired for faculty and Administrator jobs (*Faculty and Administrators only*)*		
Most likely	4.8 % (1)	41.2% (7)
Likely	9.5% (2)	5.9% (1)
Less likely	23.8% (5)	--
About equal	47.6% (10)	29.4 % (4)
Distribution of Faculty and Administrators in both colleges (*1998 figures*)		
College A		
Faculty	4.0 % (19)	3.6 % (13)
Administrators	5.9 % (13)	4.6 % (10)
College B		
Faculty	4.0% (27)	3.0% (22)
Administrators	6.0% (23)	3.0% (11)
* Chi-square= 15.04, d.f.=5, p=.010 Lambda=.04		

According to the results shown in Table 2, 45.3% of the students indicated that African Americans are 'likely' or 'most likely' to be hired for faculty and administrator jobs. An additional 21.2% of students responded that African Americans had about an 'equal' chance of being hired for such positions. These figures indicate that over two thirds of students are optimistic about the prospects

for the hiring of African Americans in their campuses. The table also shows a slightly lower proportion of respondents (43.1%) indicating that Latinxs are likely or most likely to be hired for faculty/administrator jobs and an additional 21.2% agreed that Latinxs have about an equal chance to be hired. In sum, these results indicate a higher proportion of students who believe that African Americans have as much or higher likelihood for being hired than the proportion of students who believe that Latinxs have as much or a better chance of being hired into faculty and administrative positions.

Faculty and administrators were asked the same question and the results were tabulated by race/ethnicity. The exploratory results show that 47% of Hispanics but only 14% of African Americans perceived that African Americans are likely or most likely than Hispanics to be hired for faculty and administrative jobs. Nevertheless, although the tests produced statistically significant findings the associations seem to be weak or non-existent. Interestingly, a consideration of the actual distribution of positions among faculty and administrators during the year that the survey was taken confirms the perception that Latinx participants have in both college campuses. That is, there are more African American faculty and administrators than there are Latinx faculty and administrators.

The results shown above have important implications for the application of the zero-sum hypothesis in the relationships between African Americans and Latinxs. The results indicate that Latinxs and African Americans may have different perceptions about realistic or perceived access to job opportunities and this fuel the competition between members of both groups. Given the geographic location (the Southwestern U.S.), history and demographic characteristics of the populations where the two college campuses are located, we would expect that Latinx students, faculty and administrators might hold a greater sense of entitlement to the resources. Similarly,

African Americans might feel entitled to a greater share of the resources especially those associated with affirmative action as the product of the civil rights struggles (Griffin 1992).

The zero-sum hypothesis assumes that there is a 'belief' among group members that the gains of one group means the loss of the other and this might add social distance between the groups. Understanding social distance is important because it helps reveal the levels of prejudice that one group has against the other. The survey of students and faculty and administrators, on which this paper is based, included several questions drawn from the social distance scale that was originally proposed by Emory Bogardus (1952).

Table 3. Students Perception of Social Distance between African Americans and Latinxs

	African Americans	Latinxs
*Your relationship with Latinos is:**		
Very close	11.5% (6)	32.6% (14)
Close	40.4% (21)	46.5% (20)
Distant	30.8% (16)	16.3% (7)
Very distant	7.7% (4)	2.3% (1)
Not sure	9.6% (5)	2.3% (1)
Are you against African American and Hispanic Intermarriage?		
Yes	15.8% (15)	
No	72.6% (69)	
Not Sure	11.6% (11)	
* Chi-square = 10.454, d.f.=4, p=.032 Lambda=069		

According to the results provided in table 3, there is a statistically significant, albeit weak, difference by race and ethnicity on the way that students define their relationship with Latinxs. Although a little over half of African American respondents (52%) said that they had a close or very close relationship with Latinxs, about 38.5 percent said that their relationship with Latinxs was distant or very distant. As expected, the relationship among Latinxs seems to be strong, but about 19 percent of Latinx respondents also said that their relationship with other Latinxs is distant

or very distant. A second indicator of social distance obtained from the survey consisted of a measure of the degree of rejection of intermarriage between the groups which appears to be statistically significant. Although the great majority (72.6%) responded that they are not against intermarriage, 15.8% of students answered that they opposed intermarriage between the groups. Together, these results indicate that there exists a certain level of distance between Latinxs and African Americans and sometimes *within* the groups (Latinxs) and that intermarriage is not universally accepted among African American and Latinx student respondents.

Table 4. Faculty and Administrators' Perception of Social Distance between African Americans and Latinxs

	African Americans	Latinxs
*How close are African American and Hispanic Relations?**		
Very close	4.5% (1)	5.9% (1)
Close	43% (9)	17.3% (3)
Somewhat distant	48% (10)	29.4% (5)
Very distant	--	17.6% (3)
Not sure	4.5% (1)	29.4% (5)
*If a close relative of yours were planning to marry an African American***		
Somewhat uneasy	--------------	23.5% (4)
Not uneasy at all	66.7% (14)	70.6% (12)
Not applicable	28.6% (6)	5.9% (1)
No response	4.8% (1)	---------
* Chi-square = 12.506, d.f.=4, p=.04; **Chi-square = 8.397, df=3, p=.038		

An assessment of social distance among faculty and administrators was obtained from responses to a question that measured their perceptions on the state of the relationship between African Americans and Latinxs in their respective campuses. The comparative relationship shown in table 4 appears to be weak but it is statistically significant. Table 4 shows an equal split among African Americans between those who said that the relationship was close or very close (47.5) and those who answered that the relationship was somewhat distant (48%). Among Latinx respondents 47% indicated that the relationship between the groups was distant or somewhat distant and a smaller

proportion 23% was optimistic about the relationship being close or very close. It should also be

pointed out that almost one third of Latinxs (29.4%) are 'not sure' in their evaluation of the state

of the relationship between the groups. A second measure of social distance assessed how

participants would react to a close relative planning to marry an African American. The

association between the components of the table seems to be weak but statistically significant. The

results, table 4, indicate that almost a quarter of Latinx faculty and administrators answered that

they would be 'somewhat uneasy' about a close relative planning to marry an African American

and 70% indicated that they would be 'Not uneasy at all.' In sum, the perception among faculty and

administrators about the state of race relations seems to confirm the minimal social distance

observed among students. In regard to intermarriage the rejection among Latinxs seems to be

consistent among students and faculty/administrators.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

On the question about whether there may be opportunities for the development of a *collective*

group sense in campus, the evidence is clear: An overwhelming number of study participants

perceived a tendency for intra-group mingling. One outcome worth noting, however, is that a

greater number of participants believed that Latinxs associate with whites than the number of

participants who see Latinxs associating with African Americans. This finding is not surprising

since a cursory walk in many college campuses across the country would elicit an observed pattern

of 'self-segregation' in public spaces as well as student-oriented organizations and off-campus

gathering places.

This reality that we captured in our research is also reflected in an in-depth analysis of the

2006 Latino National Survey (LNS) by Fraga et al. (2012). The LNS is an extensive collection of

information about many general issues concerning opinion, behavior and policy preference facing Latinxs (Fraga et al. 2012). The survey asked Latinx participants to describe their friends and found that 'fewer than 6 percent indicated their friends are either "mostly black" or "mixed Latino or black."' Fraga et al. 2012: 1-2). The findings also indicate that although the assimilation pattern of Latinxs help diversify the network of friends, these are more likely to be whites than blacks. Furthermore, their analysis revealed that Latinxs are socially distant from blacks even in the workplace. Latinxs either work with 'mostly whites' or 'mixed Latino/white' (Fraga et al. 2012:94-98). Finally, Massey (2012) extends the analysis to the neighborhood where he says African Americans experience hypersegragation. Many Latinxs live, go to schools and work in employment sectors with majority white residents.

Although our results and those of others provide evidence that minority groups develop a 'collective sense,' we have not yet measured the 'feelings' that group members experience when determining the in-group and out-group mentality. Additional research is needed to consider the development of the group sense by asking students, faculty and administrators about their everyday interaction with members of their own groups and the meanings they assign to the presence of others in campus. An inductive qualitative research process might help shed a light on the documentation of the feelings members develop about themselves and others.

The evidence on the perception of preferential treatment in campus is also supported in our research. Over two thirds of students perceived that African Americans have a good chance of being hired for available positions in the two campuses. African American faculty and administrators tended to downplay the increased chances for African Americans to obtain jobs even though the reported figures from the two colleges showed that the opposite was true. Among others, these results imply a higher tendency for competition rather than cooperation between

African Americans and Latinxs. Fraga and colleagues have stated that both Jesse Jackson and President Obama reached out to the Latinx community and encouraged the building of a coalition based on 'common issues and interest' (2012:148). They also cited the work of Uhlaner (1991), who stated that the relationship between African Americans and Latinxs were not based on common issues and interest, rather it is anchored 'on the level of perceived discrimination' but it does not translate into coalition. Uhlaner states that the relationship often boils down to 'greater competitiveness and antagonism' (1991:148).

Fraga and colleagues (2012) were able to look at two potential variables, work and political representation, to understand Latinxs feelings about competition with African Americans. They concluded that about 65% of the first-generation respondents to the Latino National Survey (LNS) either stated that there is a weak or no competition between the two groups. Another 67% of the second-generation respondents similarly stated that there is weak or no competition between the groups when it comes to jobs. Similar sentiments were also expressed when the authors examined access to education and political representation. The authors suggest that there is a '…. bifurcated view in the Latinx community on the degree …. of competition.' (2012:181). We endorse a general call that these authors made for further research that focuses on communities and environments with greater number of Latinxs and the consequences for the relationships between Latinxs and African Americans.

Finally, our study documented that participants from both groups perceived some level of social distance. Over one third of African American respondents said that their relationship with Latinxs was distant or very distant. Nevertheless, nearly one in five Latinx respondents also said that their relationship with other Latinxs was distant or very distant and some studies have even documented discrimination among Latinxs (Jimeno-Ingram et al. 2009; Fraga et al. 2012).

Alternatively, this study found evidence that intergroup marriage is not yet universally accepted. In sum, the documented levels of social distance are supported by the perception of intergroup mingling and the competition to access institutional resources among African Americans and Latinxs.

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