

# Alien Citizens and the Canonical Immigrant: Do Stigmatized Attributes Affect Latina/o Judgment about Discrimination?



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**Abstract:** *Negative elite and news media attention to Latino-relevant issues, particularly undocumented immigration, has dramatically increased in recent years, potentially stigmatizing attributes of Latinos such as immigration status and language use. Concomitantly, immigration policy changes were leading to widespread arrests and deportation of many Latinos. Herein, we ask two questions: First, to what extent do Latinos perceive and experience discrimination? Second, to what extent do immigration status, generational status, and language use moderate beliefs about discrimination? Using Pew National Survey of Latinos data, we find that Latino beliefs about the problem of discrimination is a decreasing function of “proximity” to the “canonical immigrant”—defined here as first-generation immigrants who are Spanish-language dominant. Further, we demonstrate that reported rates of victimization due to discrimination exhibit no clear pattern and are flat over time. We conclude by demonstrating that discrimination beliefs have significant implications for systemic trust, anxiety, and policy preferences.*

**Replication Materials:** The data and materials required to verify the computational reproducibility of the results, procedures and analyses in this article are available on the *American Journal of Political Science* Dataverse within the Harvard Dataverse Network, at: <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/MTQEE1>.

The “bright line” between Latino citizen and immigrant has been historically blurred, leading Ngai (2014) to consider the “alien citizen,” the notion citizens are inextricably connected to negative stereotypes of immigrants. Taking this further, Chavez (2013) postulated the “latino threat narrative,” suggesting popular representations of Latinos have stigmatized the group, connecting them to negative stereotypes. Added to this, Sampaio (2015) argues draconian changes to immigration policy in the 2000s “terrorized” immigrants and further marginalized Latino citizens, castigating them as threats. In this sense, Latinos have characteristics of what social psychologists call “stigmatized outgroups.” Applying the concepts of stigmatization and the “alien citizen” leads to two questions: First, to what extent do Latinos perceive and experience discrimination? Second, to what extent do Latino citizenship and other relevant attributes moderate beliefs about discrimination? Using Pew Latino

National Surveys, we find Latino beliefs about the problem of discrimination are a decreasing function of “proximity” to the “canonical immigrant”; however, we demonstrate reported rates of victimization due to discrimination exhibit no clear pattern. Finally, we show discrimination beliefs are related to numerous political outcomes.

## Stigmatized Outgroups and Discrimination

Herein, we think of discrimination in two ways. *Experienced discrimination* implies an individual reports being a victim of discrimination. In contrast, *beliefs about group discrimination* can exist even if an individual does not report victimization. Either experiencing discrimination or believing it is a groupwise problem can induce deleterious outcomes. Experiences of

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discrimination can impede socioeconomic status because of job/wage discrimination or the inability to secure a domicile (Hanson and Santas 2014). At the extreme, experiences of discrimination can result in living in fear, removal from the country, or loss of life (cf. Molina 2013; Sampaio 2015). Historically persistent discrimination can institutionalize illegitimate status hierarchies, perpetually impeding mobility (Telles and Ortiz 2008).

However, simply *believing* discrimination toward one's group is prevalent also has serious consequences, a result found in stigmatized outgroups research. Stigmatization occurs when an individual possesses "some attribute" conveying "a social identity that is devalued in a particular context" (Crocker et al. 1998, 505). Further, stigma is context-dependent, as "it does not reside in the person but in social context" (Major and O'Brien 2005, 395). When characteristics of a stigmatized group are made salient—for example, low English proficiency (LEP), immigrant status, or phenotype variation—outgroup discrimination might amplify; when these same characteristics are not salient or are concealed, discriminatory behavior may not occur. In turn, beliefs about discrimination are connected to beliefs about one's social identity and how this identity is judged in context. Therefore, "seeing" discrimination is an attributional process whereby judgment toward one's group is believed to be "based on group membership," and judgment is believed to be "unjust or undeserved" (Major and Sawyer 2009, 90).

Moreover, belief that group discrimination is prevalent even in the absence of having directly *experienced* discrimination has been shown to have profound negative psychological implications. As Crocker and Major (1989) note, if a stigmatized outgroup member can unambiguously identify the source (or cause) of discrimination, the negative consequences of experienced discrimination can be partially counteracted because one can directly attribute discriminatory outcomes to a specific cause (621), making attributions of blame far easier. However, when negative outcomes occur *but* the individual cannot unambiguously attribute these outcomes as discriminatory, the negative effects on psychological outcomes may be very high (Branscombe, Schmitt, and Harvey 1999; Sellers and Shelton 2003). In such a context, an individual may "sense" discrimination is "in the air" without ever reporting victimization.

Further, research on "stereotype threat" demonstrates negative consequences can be realized if an individual believes negative stereotypes are prevalent. According to Steele (1997), individuals experiencing stereotype threat commonly disidentify from threatened domains in order to avoid internalizing negative stereotypes. For ex-

ample, if a stigmatized outgroup member believes interacting with a nonstigmatized group member will result in possible discrimination, the outgroup member may simply choose to avoid any contact, thus disassociating from the threatened domain (i.e., social interaction). Relatedly, Crocker et al. (1991) found stigmatized group members who believe negative stereotyping is prevalent may experience "attributional ambiguity." This occurs when targeted group members have difficulty interpreting positive or negative feedback from nontargeted group members. Such ambiguity is stressful, leading stigmatized outgroup members to avoid domains in which they cannot make clear attributions.

Additionally, the ability to see negative outcomes as discriminatory may be *highly* variable *within* stigmatized outgroups (Major and Sawyer 2009). Latina/o citizens, particularly later-generation citizens, likely cope with discriminatory environments differently than early-generation citizens or immigrants. For example, LEP is less likely to be an attribute of a third-generation Latina/o compared to a first-generation Latina/o. As such, the negative associations of LEP or other stigmatized attributes may be concealable (or even nonexistent). Thus, paradoxically, those Latina/os who are *more* likely to be vigilant in seeing and reporting discrimination may also be *less* likely to believe discrimination is a major problem because they may not possess the same constellation of attributes that are, in context, negatively valued. In contrast, Latina/os who ostensibly are *most* at risk of discrimination, such as LEP immigrants, may be *less* likely to report negative outcomes as being discriminatory because they are less vigilant in "seeing" negative outcomes as discriminatory, or are more likely to attribute negative outcomes to other causes, a process called "minimization" (Crocker and Major 1989). Indeed, a persistent finding in social psychology is beliefs about discrimination against one's group are often largely independent of any personal experience of discrimination, a finding known as "personal/group discrimination discrepancy" (Taylor et al. 1990).

Finally, awareness of negative stereotypes can become internalized even if one is not directly victimized. Activation of *metastereotypes*—the beliefs individuals have about the stereotypes others have of their group—can have negative implications. Believing others harbor negative stereotypes can lead individuals to overtly try to display characteristics inconsistent with the stereotype or may induce expectancy confirmation processes whereby individuals exhibit behavior consistent with the metastereotype (Jussim et al. 2000). Still in other more overtly *political* contexts, beliefs one's group is being derogated may lead to collective action or heightened political participation in response to believed discrimination

(cf. Pantoja et al. 2014; White 2016). Also, beliefs about discrimination can have negative effects on political efficacy and institutional trust. Rocha, Knott, and Wrinkle (2015) found significant degradation in trust among Latina/os who resided in high-deportation Secure Communities contexts compared to those who did not, implying when possible discrimination was in the air (by way of policing), systemic trust declined *even among those not directly impacted* by policing. Finally, recent work on “dehumanization” of minority groups has found that if outgroup members *believe* they are dehumanized, this can lead to hostile, antagonistic attitudes/behavior toward the ingroup. In the 2016 U.S. presidential election, Kteily and Bruneau (2017) found Latina/os who believed they had been subject to dehumanization were more likely to support punitive action hurting the Republican Party and President Donald Trump. In other words, beliefs, even in the absence of experienced discrimination, were sufficient to trigger hostility.

But how do stereotypes get “in the air”? One mechanism shown to induce stereotyping/stigmatization is framing by elites and the news media, and undocumented immigration has been among the most prominent Latino-relevant issues covered in recent years. The framing of the undocumented issue typically focuses on the negative externalities of immigration, for example, threats to national security, cultural values, and economic well-being (cf. Chavez 2013). Given the tethering of this issue to Latinos, attributes associated with the “canonical immigrant”—low status and Spanish speaking—are attributes connected to Latinos generally (Chavez 2013). Framing using negative stereotypes has become so pervasive that Chavez (2013) labeled this phenomenon the “Latino threat narrative,” arguing Latinos have become a socially constructed, monolithic group, one posing a cultural and security threat to the United States. Further, Sampaio (2015) argues changes in U.S. immigration policy have increased scrutiny of immigrants. Given the prevalence of news media coverage of the security issue during the 2000s, Latinos have been squarely connected to fear and anxiety associated with national security, especially border security. Increased attention to the undocumented immigration issue, then, may activate negative appraisals of Latinos more generally. Even if one believes their derision to be aimed at “illegal immigrants,” individuals tethered to “illegal immigrants” may be similarly judged poorly.

On this point, Lee and Fiske (2006) tested the Stereotype Content Model, in which outgroup judgment is expected to be derisive when outgroup members are perceived as low in competence and high in competition with ingroup members. In assessing placement of groups on

these dimensions, they found the “undocumented” were unfavorably rated and clustered with ratings of “farm worker,” “poor people,” “Mexican,” “Latino,” and “South American.” That is, “undocumented” was attached to race/ethnicity (“Latino”) as well as nationality/region (“Mexican/South American”), implying negative assessment was attached in similar ways to Latinos. They speculate “media framing” may be responsible for negative assessment of the group (Lee and Fiske 2006, 764). Indeed, immigration frames invoking Latino ethnicity can induce negative trait assessments of Hispanics generally (Valentino, Brader, and Jardina 2013), increase support for restrictionist policies (cf. Brader, Valentino, and Suhay 2008), increase levels of outgroup anxiety (Brader et al. 2008), and induce negative outgroup judgment toward Latinos (Valentino, Brader, and Jardina 2013). If Latino citizens are closely connected to Latino immigrants by way of news media framing, then negative assessments of immigrants may indirectly affect judgments of citizens. Yet whereas considerable work has been done on the mechanisms leading *non-Latinos* to engage in stereotyping, far less work has been done on the question of how Latinos perceive and report discrimination (but see Lavariega-Montforti and Sanchez 2010). Given the historical marginalization of Latinos in the United States, assessing how experiences with and beliefs about discrimination vary is an important but largely unexplored question.

## Hypotheses

Latina/o citizenship has been historically contested so much that Ngai (2014) proposed the notion of the “alien citizen,” a concept suggesting the individual is perpetually viewed as an outsider, tethered to her immigrant past, one who possesses formal citizenship “but who remain(s) alien in the eyes of the nation” (8). Rocco (2014) also articulates a similar idea in his theory of “exclusionary inclusion.” Exclusionary inclusion of Latino citizens has made them “perpetual foreigners,” their citizenship devalued and contested. Sampaio (2015) further argues in the post-9/11 era, immigration policy cast Latinos “under suspicion,” and, invariant to immigration status, Latinos “could fall prey to investigation, arrest, detention, or deportation” (78). Thus, in both historical and recent contexts, Latinos have been marginalized and subjected to persistent discrimination. The concepts of the “alien citizen” and the “perpetual foreigner” suggest beliefs about/experiences with discrimination will be indistinguishable for immigrants and citizens, implying the following hypothesis (the language used in the hypotheses references discrimination generally; in the next

section, we operationalize our measures and provide an assessment of both):

*H1:* Reports of discrimination will be no different for Latino immigrants and Latino citizens.

While consistent with the “alien citizen” idea, this hypothesis does account for variation in groupwise attributes, such as immigration status, generational location, and language use. With respect to generational status, the mixture of first, second, and third-plus generations is about evenly distributed. Consequently, the prevalence of “mixed households”—those containing both immigrants and citizens—is extensive (Suro 1999). And generational status is important in terms of assimilation markers. A substantial number of first-generation Latinos are Spanish dominant, whereas most third-plus-generation Latinos are English dominant. Given the association between language and perceptions of assimilation, the degree to which Latinos experience stigmatization may be conditional on variation in attributes, a supposition consistent with Crocker and Major (1989).

Hypothesis 1 assumes no “bright line” between citizens and immigrants; however, if Latinos have become tethered to the illegal immigration issue, then those Latinos most proximal to the “canonical immigrant” will be most likely to possess attributes that are judged unfavorably: non-English dominant, immigrant, low socioeconomic status. In the context of immigrant status, generational location, and language ability, this would suggest first-generation, noncitizen, Spanish-dominant Latinos would be most likely to report some form of discrimination because they are most likely to possess attributes that, in context, are stigmatized. For Latinos less proximal to the canonical immigrant, the relevance of stigmatized attributes may lessen, and their tendency to “see” or experience discrimination would decrease. This gives rise to the second hypothesis:

*H2:* Latinos most proximal to the canonical immigrant will report discrimination to be a greater problem than Latinos least proximal to the canonical immigrant.

Thus, Hypothesis 2 is a proximity hypothesis. The farther one is from the canonical immigrant, the less likely discrimination is reported as a problem. Implicit in Hypothesis 2 is the assumption there is variation among Latino *citizens* in reporting discrimination: Later-generation Latinos will respond differently to stigmatization than early-generation Latinos, and this assumption is supported by a large literature in sociology. Segmented assimilation theory (Portes and Rumbaut 2001) suggests there will be a close connection between the first and

second generation due to economic inequalities and historical marginalization. For some immigrant groups, the initial conditions for upward mobility are so poor that second-generation members exhibit a *decline* in mobility, a pattern Portes and Rumbaut (2001) suggest is prevalent among Latinos. A second basis for Hypothesis 2 lies in the work of Sampaio (2015), who argues changes in immigration policy post 9/11 have resulted in draconian scrutiny of Latino immigrants. If it is the first-generation citizens who are most likely affected by these policies, it is reasonable to think second-generation citizens will more readily “see” unfair treatment of immigrants, given the close connection of these generations through segmented assimilation and mixed households.

In contrast to Hypothesis 2, other research on stigmatized groups has found susceptibility to “seeing” discrimination may vary differently. Major et al. (2007) examined meritocratic belief systems of perceptions of discrimination. For those high in meritocratic beliefs, negative outcomes may be attributable to a lack of hard work rather than to discrimination. As such, even low-status group members who have high meritocratic beliefs are more likely to view the status hierarchy as legitimate: “their place in society” is a function of ability, not discrimination. Those low in meritocratic beliefs are less likely to see the status hierarchy as legitimate and more likely to attribute negative outcomes to discrimination. One factor associated with meritocratic beliefs is exposure to the status hierarchy. Recent research suggests *immigrants* rather than native-born *citizens* are more likely to ascribe to meritocratic views: If they work hard enough, they can overcome barriers (Wiley, Deaux, and Hagelskamp 2012). Native citizens were less likely to adopt meritocratic views because they had lifelong exposure to the status hierarchy. With prolonged exposure, members of stigmatized groups come to see and interpret outcomes as persistently unfair and discriminatory (Michelson 2003) and are therefore more likely to report discrimination at a higher rate. From this perspective, a hypothesis can be proposed countering Hypothesis 2:

*H3:* Latinos least proximal to the canonical immigrant will report discrimination to be a greater problem than Latinos most proximal to the canonical immigrant.

## Design

Hypotheses 1—3 require estimating citizen/noncitizen differences in discrimination. We view immigrant

status as akin to a “treatment”, with the basic idea being that if immigrant status amplifies beliefs about discrimination, the difference in citizen/noncitizen assessments of discrimination is the treatment effect. Experimentally, we cannot manipulate citizenship status. Nonetheless, analytical leverage is garnered by the “alien citizen” concept. If non-Latinos erroneously judge one’s immigration status based on stereotypes, individuals may *treat* citizens differently because they *believe* them to have stigmatized attributes. The *counterfactual* argument that citizens are perceived as immigrants makes it plausible to think of the presence or absence of this attribute as a “treatment.” Our line of reasoning is consistent with Angrist and Pischke (2009), who note the causal effects of race may be unidentifiable because they escape manipulability; however, discriminatory behavior, “the issue economists care most about . . . turns on whether someone treats you differently because they *believe* you to be black or white” (5).

Data used herein are the Pew Hispanic Center’s National Survey of Latinos (NSL) conducted in 2002 (n = 2,929), 2004 (n = 2,288), 2006 (n = 2,000), 2007 (n = 2,000), and 2010 (n = 1,375). In each survey, two questions were asked about discrimination, the first dealing with generalized feelings about the problem of discrimination and the second about direct experience with discrimination. The wording of the first item is as follows: “In general, do you think discrimination against (HISPANICS/LATINOS) is a major problem, minor problem, or not a problem in preventing (HISPANICS/LATINOS) in general from succeeding in America?” This question explicitly references the idea of barriers to mobility associated with group affiliation. The wording of the second item is as follows: “During the last 5 years, have you, a family member, or close friend experienced discrimination because of your racial or ethnic background, or not?” This item taps experiences with discrimination by making explicit reference to attributes. Each NSL was done in language: Respondents could choose Spanish or English.<sup>1</sup>

Response patterns on the two discrimination items are *very* different; further, the two items are not highly correlated ( $D = .20$ ). This is not surprising. Research in social psychology (cf. Taylor et al. 1990) has shown that reports of personal experiences with discrimination are only weakly correlated with reports of groupwise discrimination. Further, it is consistently the case that reports of groupwise discrimination are “higher” than reports of

experienced discrimination. This low correlation makes sense given the wide variability in the degree to which stigmatized outgroup members even report experiencing discrimination (cf. Major and O’Brien 2005): Some members are vigilant in seeing and reporting discrimination, whereas others minimize experiences with discrimination, attributing negative outcomes to causes other than overt discrimination. In contrast, individuals may see inequitable outcomes associated with group status or simply be aware “bad things” are happening to fellow group members, thus increasing reports about the problem of groupwise discrimination. And importantly, from the stigmatized outgroups/stereotyping literature, merely believing discrimination to be a problem has profound implications on psychological well-being (Crocker and Major 1989) as well as on political attitudes (Rocha, Knott, and Wrinkle 2015).

To estimate the effect of citizenship/generational status, we apply Hainmueller’s (2012) entropy-balancing (EB) method (see also Hainmueller and Xu 2013). The basic idea is straightforward. Imagine two respondents: one citizen, one not. We “match” the citizen respondent with the noncitizen respondent using information on numerous covariates. Identifying the citizenship “effect” entails finding good matches on these covariates for citizens and noncitizens. In this context, a “good” match means there is equivalency in potential confounding covariates and what remains is the citizenship “effect.” The EB algorithm therefore searches for “treatment” cases that are close matches to “controls.” Controls exhibiting a good match receive greater weight in any subsequent analysis, and controls not exhibiting a good match are given lesser weight in the outcome analysis. After processing the data, we iteratively reestimated the weights, trimming them to minimize the impact of extremely large weights, as outlined in Hainmueller (2012). We then used the weighted data to estimate the treatment effects. In the figures below, the quantity of interest reported is the probability of an individual saying “discrimination is a major problem” or the probability the respondent reports victimization.

The EB weights were constructed using the following covariates: gender, marital status, whether the respondent had children, whether the respondent was employed, the respondent’s partisan affiliation, whether the respondent had completed high school (or its equivalent), the region/or country of birth (for first-generation Latinos), and the region/country of origin (for native citizens). These countries/regions are Cuba, Mexico, the Caribbean, South America, and Central America. Additionally, we balanced on features of the Pew sampling strategy: the sampling frame, the geographical region of the country the respondent lives in, and the sampling strata. Finally,

<sup>1</sup>In the NSL, we do not have fine-grained measures of geographical residency or information on phenotype assessment, which is unfortunate in light of work by Mondak, Hayes, and Seligson (2014); however, our identification strategy balances on region/country of origin. To the extent variability in phenotype differences is associated with region, our design leverages this information.

we included several two-way interactions of these variables as a part of the balancing procedure. Given the covariates used in the balancing procedure, we “control” for factors relevant to the issue of discrimination. We did *not* include language use as a balancing covariate: Language is highly dependent upon citizenship status as well as generational status. How this issue is handled is discussed below.

## Analysis

We first estimate within-group and between-period estimates for the two discrimination items using the unadjusted Pew data (we turn to the EB-adjusted estimates shortly). For each of the plots, the y-axis corresponds to the probability a respondent indicated discrimination was a “major problem in preventing Latinos/Hispanics from succeeding in America” (estimated as a proportional odds model) or the probability a respondent reports direct experience with discrimination (estimated as a logit model). First, there is *clear* variation between citizens and noncitizens in beliefs about discrimination posing a major problem. The upper left panel shows a wide gap in these probabilities associated with immigration status: Noncitizens believe discrimination to be a major problem at a greater rate than citizens. However, the *opposite* conclusion holds for experienced discrimination. Compared with beliefs about discrimination, both citizens and noncitizens report comparatively lower rates of experiencing discrimination. However, citizens demonstrate a higher average probability of reporting victimization compared to noncitizens.

Figure 1 displays the “moving parts” of our argument. Discriminatory perceptions not only vary by one’s immigration status, but also with assimilation markers. Further, perceptions are sensitive to periods in which news media/elite attentiveness to the immigration issue was high (as shown below). However, it is clear the two forms of discrimination perceptions “move” differently, conditional on Latino attributes. What Figure 1 does not address, however, is the relative mixture of these attributes among Latinos. The upper right panel of Figure 1 reports the estimated probabilities for the two discrimination perceptions, controlling for generational variation. The labels “1, 1.5, . . . 3” correspond to the generation.<sup>2</sup> With respect to beliefs about discrimi-

<sup>2</sup>The label “3” implies the respondent is *at least* a third-generation Latino. A 1.5-generation Latino is a migrant who immigrated to the United States before adolescence; a 2.5-generation Latino is a citizen who had one parent born in the United States. In the analysis below, we combine second- and 2.5- generation respondents; no significant differences between them are found.

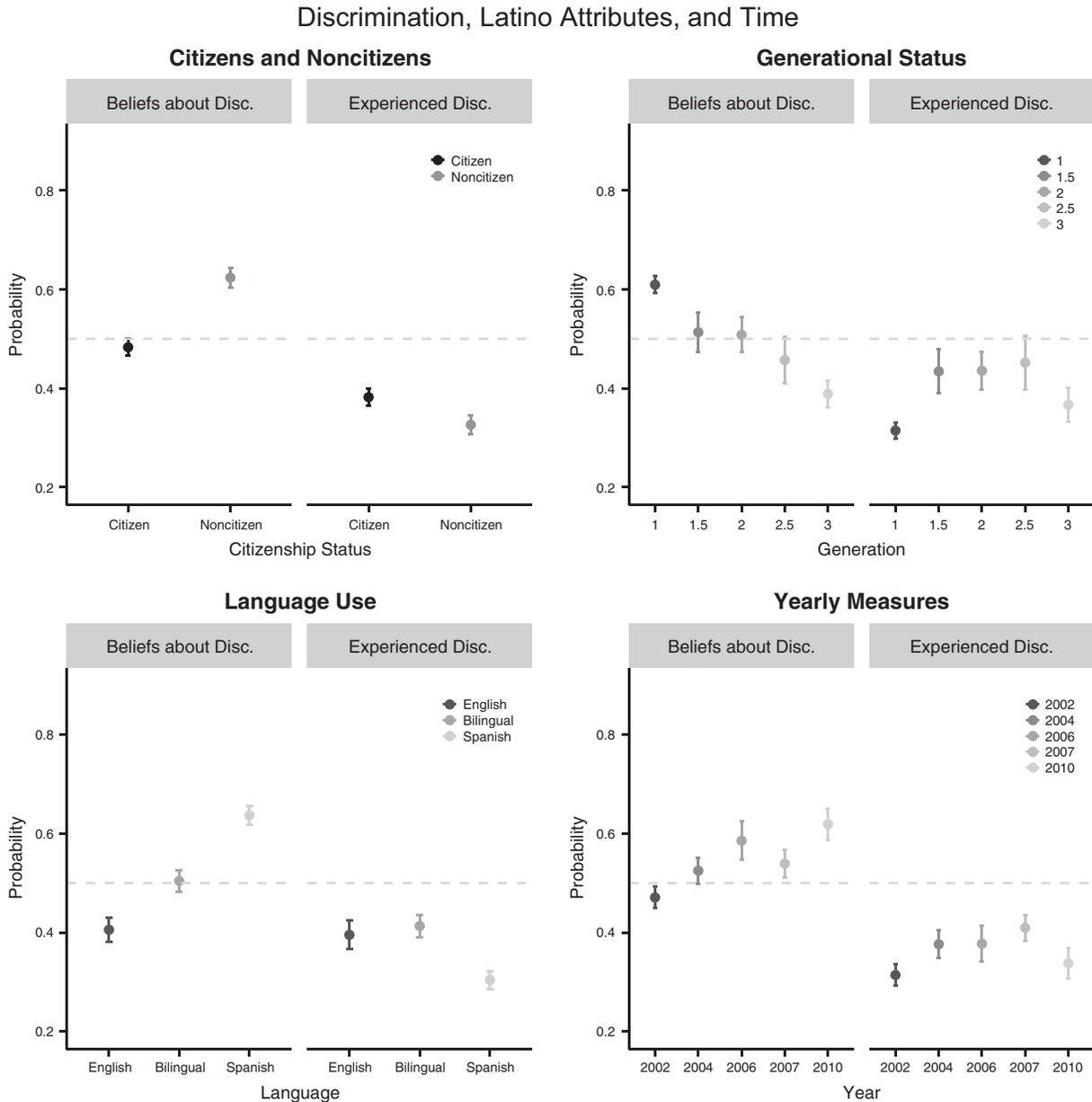
nation, we find first-generation Latinos view discrimination as a major problem at a significantly greater rate than each subsequent generation, a result consistent with Hypothesis 2. Similarly, third-plus-generation Latinos consistently rate discrimination as a major problem *least* highly. The gap between the first and third generation is large, about 20 points on the probability scale. For intermediate generations, the relative gap in beliefs about discrimination is small (or nonexistent, as in the case of the comparison between first- and second-generation Latinos). However, with respect to experienced discrimination, the intermediate generations tend to report victimization at rates significantly higher than either first- or third-generation Latinos.

The lower left panel of Figure 1 gives the probabilities on the discrimination items accounting for language use: Spanish dominant, bilingual, and English dominant.<sup>3</sup> With respect to beliefs about discrimination, there is an strong association between language use and the perceived problem of discrimination. Spanish-dominant Latinos are more likely to say discrimination is a major problem compared to bilingual Latinos, who, in turn, are significantly more likely to see discrimination as a major problem when compared to English-dominant Latinos, again, a result consistent with Hypothesis 2. However, English dominance or bilingual language use is associated with significantly higher rates of direct experience with discrimination. Lastly, the lower right panel gives the probability estimates for all respondents in each NSL. With respect to beliefs about discrimination, the probability of reporting discrimination to be a major problem significantly increases after 2002. In each subsequent year, the average probability exceeds .50. Moreover, for the 2006 and 2010 NSLs, these probabilities significantly exceed every other period, noteworthy because these two periods were extraordinarily high-salience periods for the undocumented immigration issue nationally. For experienced discrimination, however, this is *not* the case. Rates of reported victimization are more or less flat with respect to time (interestingly, this “flat” pattern is consistent with U.S. Justice Department statistics on Latino-victim hate crimes over the same period; Wilson 2014).

Given variation in language use and generational and citizenship status, simple comparisons in response probabilities are misleading. To facilitate comparison, we implement the entropy-balancing procedure. Two factors are unaccounted for in the balancing procedure: language use and generational differences. To explain, naively comparing, say, a third-plus-generation Latino

<sup>3</sup>The coding for this is done by Pew and is based on measures of self-reported speaking and reading skills in Spanish and English.

**FIGURE 1 Plots Give the Probability (and 95% Confidence Intervals) a Latino Respondent will Say Discrimination is a “Major Problem” and Whether or not the Respondent Reports Having Experienced Discrimination**



Source: Pew NSL.

to a first-generation immigrant may lead to incorrect conclusions: Most immigrants in the first-generation are Spanish-language dominant; most third-plus-generation Latinos are English-language dominant. If attitudes about discrimination vary by language, then this comparison is confounded by language. In experimental designs, such confounders may lead to a blocking design—analysis is done in “blocks” based on levels of the confounder. Here, the “block” is defined by language attributes

(Spanish-dominant, bilingual, English-dominant), generation (first, second, or third-plus), and immigrant status (noncitizen, naturalized citizen, and native citizen).

Doing this leads to six subgroups, or “contrasts,” shown in Table 1. A contrast means we compare “Group 1” respondents to “Group 2” respondents using the balancing algorithm and then estimate the between-group differences associated with citizenship and/or

**TABLE 1 Latino Subgroups Used in Analysis**

Contrast	Language	Group 1	Group 2	<i>N</i>	<i>n<sub>G1</sub></i>	<i>n<sub>G2</sub></i>
1	Spanish	1G Noncitizen	1G Naturalized	4591	3227	1364
2	Bilingual	1G Noncitizen	1G Naturalized	1562	632	930
3	Bilingual	1/1.5* Noncitizen	1/1.5G Naturalized	2188	832	1356
4	Bilingual	1/1.5G Noncitizen	2 G <sup>†</sup> Native	1817	832	985
5	Bilingual	1/1.5G Naturalized	2 G Native	2341	1356	985
6	English	2/2.5 Native	3G Native	1808	813	995

Notes: \* denotes 1st and 1.5 generation Latinos are combined; † denotes 2nd and 2.5 generation Latinos are combined.

Source: Pew NSL.

generational status.<sup>4</sup> Consider Contrast 1. Our aim is to identify a first-generation respondent who is a naturalized citizen (i.e., a “control”) and “match” her to a respondent who is a first-generation noncitizen (i.e., a “treated” case). “Matching” implies finding two individuals who have a comparable profile on a number of covariates. For controls matching strongly to a treated case, these observations receive greater weight in the analysis. For controls poorly matched to a treated case, these observations receive lesser weight. What remains is a “balanced” subset of data permitting “apples-to-apples” comparison and therefore garnering leverage on the citizenship effect (or generational effect, as in Contrasts 4–6). In taking this approach, we explicitly “control” for language and generational differences.<sup>5</sup> We should note that one issue we cannot directly address has to do with legal status, which is not recorded in the NSL. In the supporting information, we provide analyses examining whether having a green card was related to the discrimination measures. We demonstrate differences between Latinos with and without a green card *do not matter*. So while we cannot measure documented status, the closest we can come to doing so does not influence our results.

Turning to analysis of these contrasts, we give the estimated response probabilities for the two discrimination items in Figures 2 and 3. In each, probability estimates are reported along with the 95% confidence interval. Consider Figure 2 first, which reports estimates for the “beliefs about discrimination” item. The top panel gives the contrasts for the pooled analysis (i.e., combining the five NSL), and the bottom panel gives the between-period estimates of these probabilities for each

survey year.<sup>6</sup> First, across all comparison groups except one, there is no strong evidence of a *within-block* citizenship “gap”/generational “gap.” That is, when we contrast *comparable* citizens and noncitizens or comparable citizens from different generations, the two groups elicit statistically indistinguishable response probabilities of saying discrimination is a “major problem.” The only exception is the last contrast (6), where second-generation English-dominant Latinos are significantly more likely to report discrimination as a problem when compared to third-generation Latinos. The absence of strong citizen/generational differences shown here is not consistent with the naive analysis of Figure 1; however, we think it underscores the utility of the approach taken here. Simple between-group differences’ failing to account for either language variation coupled with generational variation lead to *much* different conclusions.

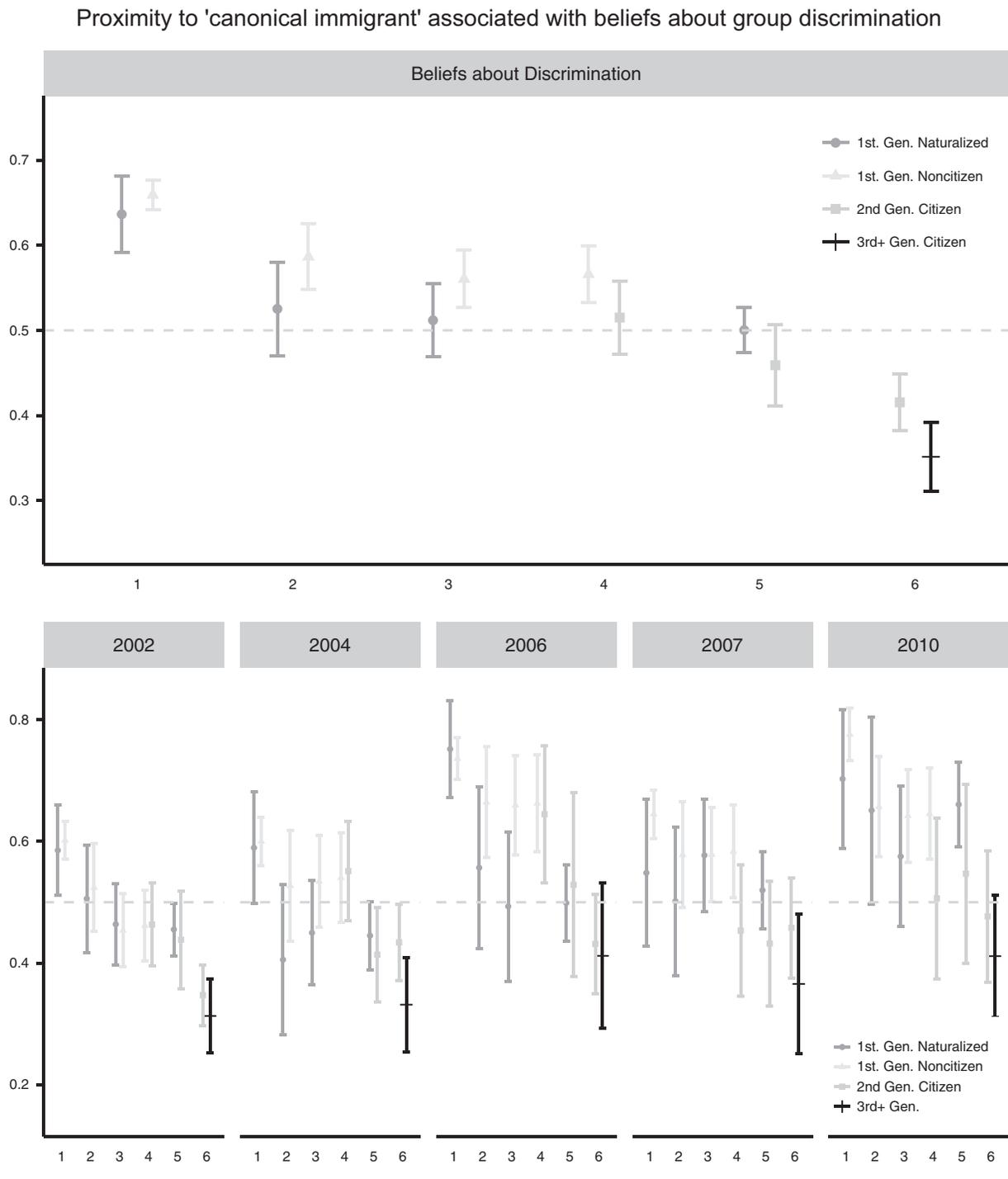
Importantly, despite the absence of strong within-block differences, we see strong evidence of between-block differences in the degree to which Latinos see discrimination as a major problem. Spanish-dominant respondents from the “true” first generation (Contrast 1), invariant to immigrant status, report discrimination as posing a major problem at rates much higher than any other comparison group. Most strikingly, the relative difference in beliefs about discrimination’s posing a major problem for this group sharply differs from Latinos who are English-language dominant (Contrast 6). Language use matters as it pertains to believing discrimination is a major problem. Looking across the six blocks, the farther away a Latino is from the canonical immigrant (Spanish-dominant, noncitizen), the rate at which discrimination is believed to be a major problem decreases. This result is consistent with Hypothesis 2 and clearly inconsistent with Hypothesis 3.

<sup>4</sup>In the supporting information, all confidence intervals in the subsequent analysis are given.

<sup>5</sup>Separate analysis of 1.5-generation Latinos is infeasible; sample sizes are too small. Other possible contrasts were impossible to make because of insufficient sample sizes.

<sup>6</sup>The x-axis labels of “1, 2, . . . , 6” reference the six contrasts listed in Table 1.

**FIGURE 2 Plots Give the Probability (and 95% Confidence Intervals) a Latino Respondent will Say Discrimination is a “Major Problem”**

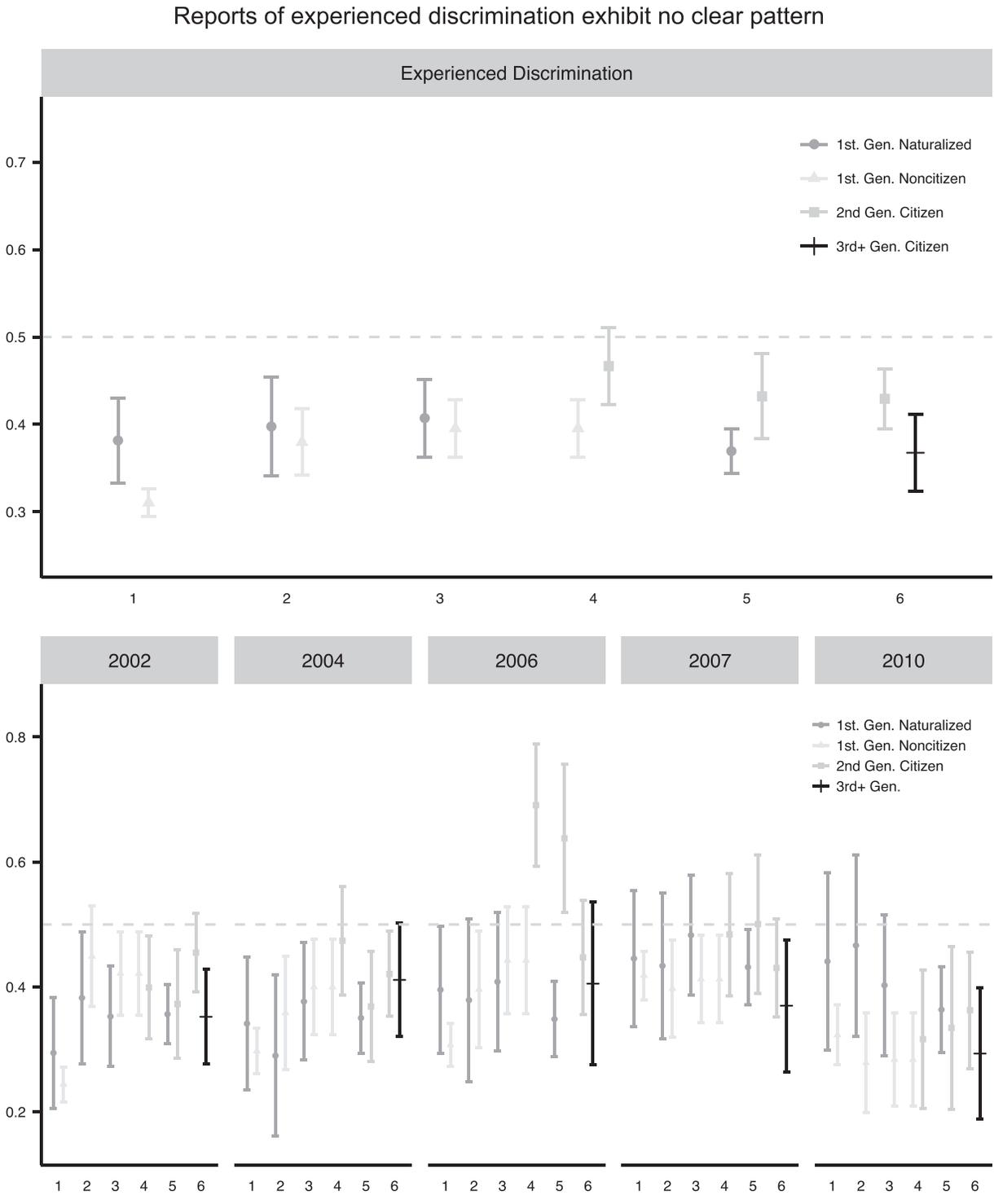


Source: Pew NSL.

Another takeaway point from this analysis is seen among bilingual, second-generation respondents (which are given in Contrasts 4 and 5). When we balance comparable first-generation noncitizens to comparable second-

generation native citizens (Contrast 4), we arrive at two conclusions: First, the degree to which both groups see groupwise discrimination as a major problem is relatively high, with point probability estimates exceeding .50 for

**FIGURE 3 Plots Give the Probability (and 95% Confidence Intervals) a Latino Respondent will Report Experienced Discrimination**



Source: Pew NSL.

the pooled data and second, there are no significant differences between these two groups. This result is consistent with the claims made by Portes and Rumbaut (2001). When it comes to beliefs about discrimination's posing a major problem, *comparable* second-generation Latinos look no different than comparable first-generation Latinos, conditional on language. These findings also seem consistent with Sampaio's (2015) argument about the effects of post-9/11 immigration policy. We discuss this thoroughly below.

Turning to the yearly estimates, consider the bottom panel of Figure 2. Our design period encompasses a volatile time for Latinos, particularly with respect to the undocumented immigration issue, making it natural to consider how sensitive the estimates are to context (which we discuss in depth shortly). We highlight two points: First, the general pattern found in the pooled data generally holds across each NSL. Latinos "closer" to the canonical immigrant convey discrimination to be a "major problem" at a higher rate than Latinos farther away (i.e., English-language dominant). Second, on average, the degree to which *all* Latinos see discrimination as posing a major problem impeding Latino success is higher in the later NSLs (2006, 2007, 2010) compared to the earlier periods. This is most pronounced in the 2006 and 2010 results. In other words, beliefs about discrimination are temporally dependent, a result taken up in the discussion section.

But what about experienced discrimination? These estimates are given in Figure 3. The upper panel gives the pooled probability estimates for respondents indicating they had been, or know a close friend or family member who had been, a victim of discrimination in the last 5 years. Two points emerge. First, Spanish-language-dominant noncitizens are significantly *less* likely to report victimization compared to any other subgroup in the analysis. This result is displayed in the first contrast. The probability of reporting experience with discrimination is around .30. Thus, the group reporting the highest rate of discrimination as posing a "major problem" is also the group least likely to report experiences with discrimination. We return to this result shortly.

The second point is that rates of reported experiences with discrimination are similar across all remaining Latino subgroups. Whereas second-generation respondents (bilingual or English) elicit higher point probability estimates, in general, all Latino subgroups except for first-generation, Spanish-dominant immigrants report similar rates of experiences with discrimination. Further, these reported rates are relatively low when compared to reported beliefs about groupwise discrimination, reproducing a prevalent finding in social psychological research

(see Taylor et al. 1990). This is not surprising: One need not be a victim of discrimination to see groupwise discrimination as posing as an impediment to success. Also, *low* is a relative term. That, on average, nearly 4 out of 10 NSL respondents report experiences with discrimination is disturbing. Nonetheless, response patterns over the two items vary in different ways. For the beliefs-about-discrimination item, a pattern consistent with Hypothesis 2 seems to hold; for the direct discrimination item, there is no pattern consistent with any of the proposed hypotheses.

The bottom panel gives the across-time estimates for the experiential discrimination item. Here, there are three results to note. First, consider the contrast between first-generation Latino immigrants to first-generation naturalized citizens (Contrast 1). In the early periods (2002, 2004), these respondents exhibit the lowest probability of reporting victimization; however, by the end of the design period, this group looks *no different* from all other Latino subgroups. Second, reported rates of victimization are, for most Latino subgroups, flat with respect to time (the point estimates and confidence intervals exhibit considerable overlap across time). For 2010 NSL noncitizen respondents, rates of reported victimization decline from the relatively high rates reported in the 2006/2007 NSL. Third, and most notably, second-generation bilingual Latinos report victimization at extraordinarily high rates in 2006. This result, we think, is due to two related factors. News media attentiveness to the immigration issue was prevalent during this period, in large part driven by events prompting the widespread 2006 immigration rallies. Second, by 2006, rates of immigrant detention, deportation, monitoring, and, importantly, workplace raids had substantially increased from levels in 2004 and earlier (Sampaio 2015). We suspect for many of these second-generation Latinos, the high rates of reported victimization are likely attributable to their having a relative or close friend who had been subjected to detention, deportation, or workplace raids.

## Discussion

How Latinos see and report discrimination is highly variable. Beliefs about the problems posed by discrimination seem consistent with Hypothesis 2—that is, proximity to the canonical immigrant—whereas rates of reported experiential discrimination seem more or less flat. As discussed earlier, there is no *ex ante* reason to expect these two measures to "track" in similar ways; as such, these results seem consistent with the personal/group discrimination discrepancy findings in the psychology literature

(cf. Taylor et al. 1990). Victimization may be a function of many idiosyncratic factors: workplace behavior, housing discrimination, and even internal discrimination (Lavariega-Montforti and Sanchez 2010). So why are there such differences in the two measures?

We think the answer is twofold. First, the context of this study is a period of high visibility of Latino-relevant issues, particularly undocumented immigration. Second, this period saw a dramatic increase in the extent to which immigrants were subjected to scrutiny, workplace raids, and deportation. In context, many Latinos were living in a high state of anxiety (Sampaio 2015), and further, this existential threat was largely aimed at Latina/os with attributes closest to the canonical immigrant. Thus, immigrants may have more readily seen discrimination as a problem because they (a) possess hard-to-conceal attributes such as LEP or immigrant status; (b) understand these attributes in the context of the immigration issue have been negatively valued; and (c) are more closely connected to negative outcomes associated with immigration policy. In other words, one need not be directly victimized in such a context to vividly understand discrimination is a major groupwise problem. Further, our findings regarding the second-generation make sense in this context. Given the close connection of the second generation to the first, the linkage to the “canonical immigrant” may induce second-generation Latina/os to not only see discrimination as a major groupwise problem, but also to be even more vigilant in seeing and reporting experienced discrimination *because* of the close connection to those most impacted by the immigration debate, a result emerging in the 2006 NSL, the period during which anti-immigrant rhetoric and policy prominently is in the air.

To motivate this, consider Figure 4, which plots news media attention and immigration enforcement statistics. The top two panels report counts of news media stories (from *Newsbank*) making any reference to the undocumented immigration issue in the United States (top left), as well as counts recording the number of stories referencing “Latinos,” “Hispanics,” or “Mexican Americans” (solid line) and counts recording the number of stories referencing “Asian,” “Asian American,” “Chinese,” “African,” or “Middle Eastern” (dashed line). Two points are clear: Attention to undocumented immigration substantially increased during our study, *and*, of the groups associated with undocumented immigration, Latinos were far more likely to be referenced.<sup>7</sup> Further, attentiveness to the issue is extraordinarily high during

<sup>7</sup>The supporting information provides more information about these plots.

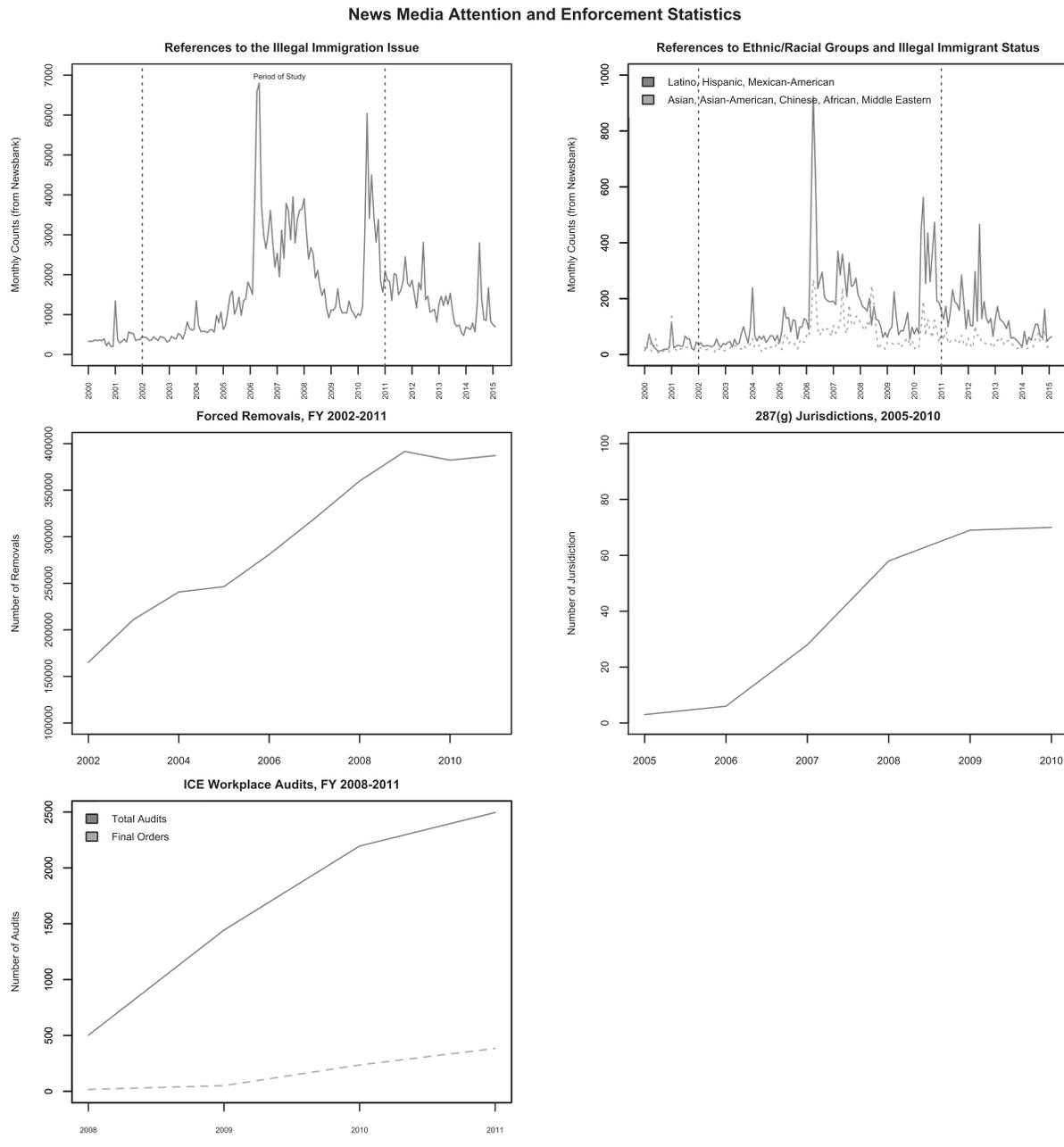
the latter part of our study, spiking in 2006 and 2010. Of course, 2006 is noteworthy because of the spring immigration rallies; however, during the entirety of the year, attention is high, coverage dominated by events leading to the rallies.<sup>8</sup> Further, the increase and dispersion of the Latino population to regions unaccustomed to large numbers of Hispanics were emergent issues by the mid-2000s (Hopkins 2010), a period seeing states/local governments proposing anti-immigrant policies.

Also during this period, immigration enforcement was ramped up. We plot data for three enforcement policies pursued by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) during the period: forced removals, 287(g) jurisdictions (i.e., Memoranda of Agreement [MOA]), and workplace audits. The middle-left plot gives the annualized forced removal data. During the study period, the frequency of deportation increased dramatically. And since deportation disproportionately affects Latinos, the probability of a Latino knowing or being aware of someone who was deported likely would have increased during the period. The middle-right plot gives the yearly counts of the number of law enforcement jurisdictions entering into 287(g) agreements with ICE. MOA partnerships empowered local law enforcement officials to serve as *de facto* immigration officers. By the end of the decade, use of MOAs was ubiquitous. At the peak, 25 states had local MOA jurisdictions affecting hundreds of thousands of people. Additionally, the Secure Communities program was implemented in 2008 by the Department of Homeland Security. As of 2010, 44 states had jurisdictions participating in the program. Both the 287(g) and Secure Communities program disproportionately affected the lives of Latinos, particularly immigrant Latinos, enough to raise claims of racial profiling (Rocha, Knott, and Wrinkle 2015).

Lastly, the bottom-left plot shows the increased frequency of ICE workplace audits, a policy tool widely used during the time frame of this study. Workplace audits, sometimes called “silent raids,” replaced previous ICE practices of workplace raids. Workplace raids, which became commonplace by 2004, also disproportionately affected Latino lives and was a policy Sampaio (2015) points to as pivotal in the “terrorization” of Latina/os. Workplace audits were equally disruptive to Latino immigrants and their families because out-of-compliance employers would typically terminate *all* undocumented workers, not just those “rounded up” in a physical raid. During our study period, raids and audits were

<sup>8</sup>The Pew data do not contain any consistent measures of news media consumption that would allow us to evaluate the potential moderating effects of reported exposure, and even if there were such measures, the effects of this information’s being prevalent in the environment could be indirect.

**FIGURE 4 Plots Give Counts of News Media Coverage of the Immigration Issue and Plots of Enforcement Indicators**



ubiquitous, leading to loss of livelihood and possible detention and deportation.

The political climate of the study period was replete with negative stereotypes of Latinos and ripe with political conditions around immigration enforcement that posed a material, possibly existential threat to Latinos. In context, attributes associated with the canonical immigrant became even more stigmatized, leading those most connected to the canonical immigrant to report discrimination to be a major problem, even if they had

not been personally victimized. However, one criticism of our results, particularly the beliefs-about-discrimination item, is respondents are “merely reporting the news”: One could assert “discrimination is a problem” without any implications for anything else. Although we strongly disagree with this claim—social psychological findings on stigmatization have clearly shown simply believing that one may face discrimination has serious psychological implications—it is a criticism worth addressing.

To be sure, if news media attention is high, as was the case during the period of this study, one might argue it is natural for reported problems about discrimination to increase. Without discounting that these perceptions and beliefs are still psychologically consequential for the individual reporting them, there are three additional responses. First, if possible stereotype-affirming information is “in the air,” then reports about the problem of discrimination *should* predictably increase. Second, if Latinos are merely “reporting” on what they see in the news media, there is no reason to expect systematic variation in reports associated with language and generational status. Latinos most proximal to the canonical immigrant report the problem consistently higher than those least proximal. If respondents were simply recounting highly salient news, it is not obvious why such clear (and theoretically predictable) variation is found. Third, due to media consumption patterns and language, those Latinos most proximal to the canonical immigrant are also those least likely to be directly exposed to the kind of news media reporting implicated here (cf. Suro 2004), meaning the effects of this news media coverage would primarily be expected to be indirect (i.e., “in the air”).

Further, beliefs about discrimination as well as experienced discrimination do have measurable implications for political attitudes and preferences. In order to establish this, we identified several NSL questions measuring Latino attitudes about systemic trust, political efficacy, self-identification and political affiliation, as well as policy-related attitudes (the supporting information provides details). To assess how beliefs or experienced discrimination “matter” for these outcomes, we estimated a set of regression models of the following form:

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Beliefs} + \beta_2 \text{Experience} + \beta_i \text{Controls} \\ + \beta_j \text{Generation} + \beta_k \text{Citizenship} \\ + \beta_l \text{Language}, \quad (1)$$

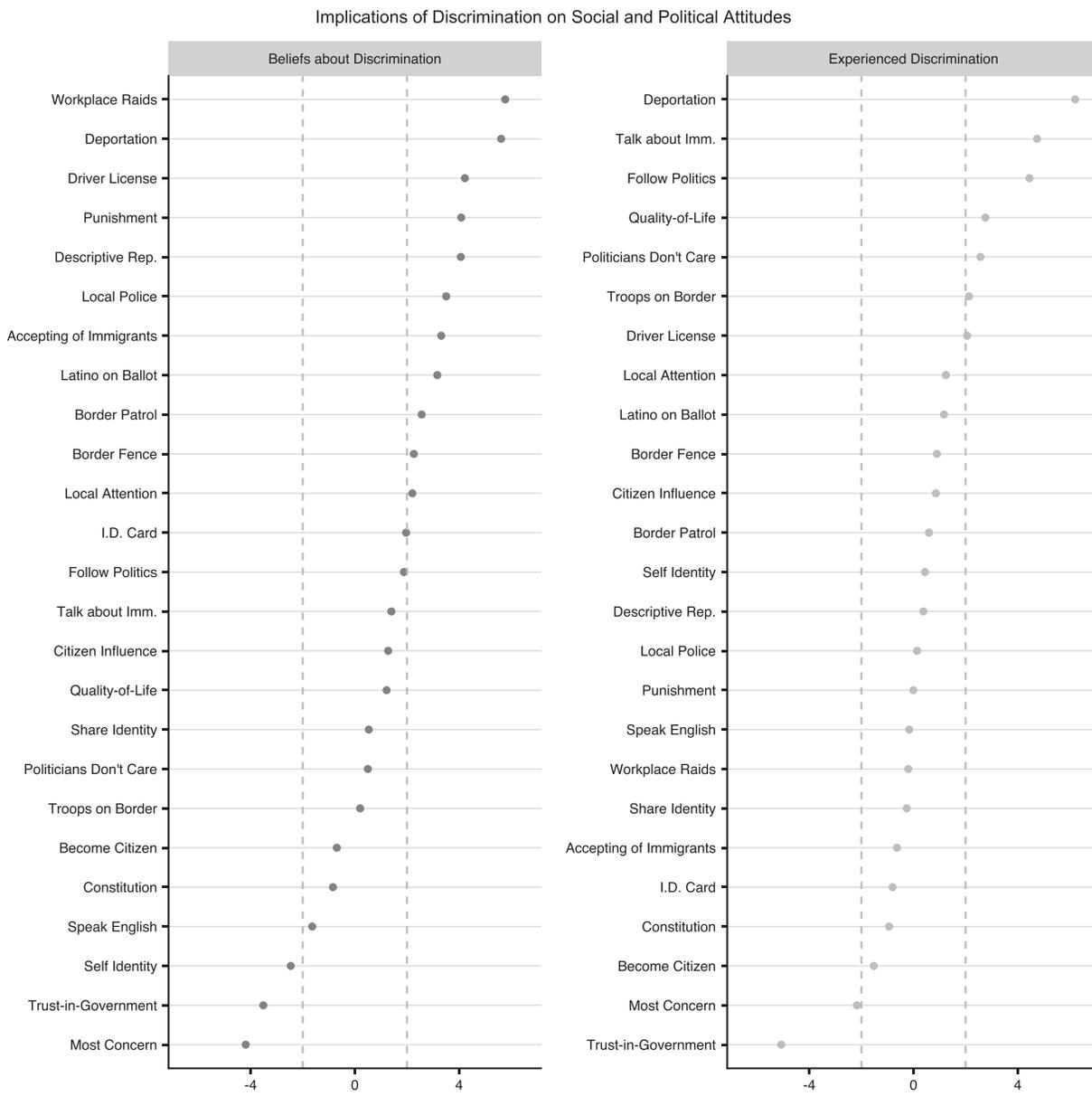
where  $y$  corresponds to the outcome measure,  $\beta_1$  is the coefficient for the beliefs-about-discrimination item, and  $\beta_2$  is the coefficient for the experiential discrimination item. Contained in  $\beta_i$  are partisan affiliation, gender, income, education and age. The last three factors—generation, citizenship status, and language use—allow us to control for Latino attributes (there is no evidence beliefs about and experiences with discrimination are “interactive”). Consequently, if beliefs “matter,” then we should see a tight confidence interval around  $\beta_1$  that is significantly different from 0. Similar remarks apply to the experiential discrimination item. We estimated Equation (1) using either a proportional odds or logit model, depending on the nature of  $y$ . Figure 5 gives a summary of the coefficient

estimates for the two discrimination items (the supporting information provides all the subgroup estimates of these coefficients). For clarity, Figure 5 reports  $z$ -ratios for  $\beta_1$  (left column) and  $\beta_2$  (right column). Large (absolute) values of  $z$  imply the confidence interval is small. In Figure 5, dashed lines at values  $-2$  and  $2$  denote a 95% confidence interval. If the  $z$ -ratio exceeds 2 (or is below  $-2$ ), the coefficient indicates a significant association at  $p < .05$ .

A wide range of attitudinal and policy preference items is significantly predicted by beliefs about discrimination, and, to a lesser extent, experiences of discrimination. With respect to immigration policy and beliefs, Latinos who believe discrimination to be a “major problem” are significantly more likely to disapprove of workplace raids, oppose policies requiring an immigration check prior to receiving a driver’s license, oppose the use of local police to act as immigration agents, disapprove of increases to the size of the Border Patrol, and oppose the extension of a border fence between the United States and Mexico. Moreover, strong beliefs about the problem of discrimination are associated with concerns about deportation. Notably, this result holds for *all* Latino subgroups, whether one is first generation or third-plus generation. This is an unexpected result if beliefs about discrimination are simply reporting of salient news; yet for all Latino subgroups, the anxiety about deportation—even among those ostensibly protected from deportation—is strongly tethered to discrimination beliefs. Moreover, Latinos who believe groupwise discrimination to be a major problem also tend to say undocumented immigrants should *not* be punished and, further, that the nation has become *less* accepting of immigrants.

There are also political implications for beliefs about discrimination. Latinos who see discrimination as a major problem are significantly *less* likely to trust the U.S. government. We think this result is important: First, it is widely understood that trust in government is an important precursor to participation and civic engagement (Hetherington and Husser 2012); second, this finding is consistent with the Rocha, Knott, and Wrinkle (2015) result discussed earlier. Here, we find a strong connection between trust and beliefs. With respect to partisan politics and voting, Latinos who see discrimination as a major problem are also significantly less likely to say the Republican Party has the most concern for Latinos (compared to no party or the Democratic Party) and are more likely to say they would turn out to vote if there were a Latino on the ballot and more likely to vote for a Hispanic if one were on the ballot. In other words, beliefs about discrimination seem connected to attitudes about political behavior, especially descriptive representation.

**FIGURE 5 Plots Give z-Ratios for the Two Discrimination Items. Data from Pew**



Finally, with respect to self-identification, Latinos who see discrimination as a major problem are significantly *less* likely to identify as “American.” In sum, Figure 4 demonstrates beliefs matter—they have implications for political behavior, immigration policy, self-identity, anxiety, and systemic trust. However, not every outcome measure in Figure 4 is related to beliefs about discrimination. There seems to be no association with beliefs on assimilation markers (believing in the Constitution, need to become a citizen, or learning English), on shared (or group) identity, on efficacy (citizen influence and politicians’ caring), or on a general quality-of-life measure.

Experienced discrimination is also associated with some of the attitudinal outcome measures, though to a much lesser degree than the beliefs indicator. However, experienced discrimination is related to worries about deportation and trust in government. Unlike the beliefs measure, experienced discrimination is related to reported lower quality-of-life assessments, the belief politicians do not care about Latinos, higher rates of following immigration politics, and an increased likelihood of talking with family or friends about immigration. In other words, experiences with discrimination do relate to important factors pertinent to systemic trust, engagement,

and efficacy. The point of this exercise primarily is to demonstrate both beliefs about and experiences with discrimination seem to “matter” with respect to numerous outcome measures. In this context, when Latinos see discrimination as being “in the air,” reporting its existence has real political and psychological implications. Moreover, if beliefs about group discrimination were nothing more than retrospective reports, it is not obvious merely reporting the news would necessarily be related (in a predictable direction) to so many outcome variables (even after controlling for a number of other factors).

Lastly, our theoretical perspective lies in the literature on stigmatized outgroups, suggesting stigmatized attributes can heighten awareness of discrimination. However, do Latinos themselves actually think about the same attributes we do when asked about the causes of discrimination? In the 2007/2010 Pew NSL, Latinos were asked a similarly worded question about what factors led to discrimination (income, skin color, language skill, immigration status). *All* Latino subgroups ranked language use as the most proximal cause of discrimination, followed next by immigration status. Phenotype variation was generally the least reported cause. Thus, the very attributes we account for in our theory and design are the same attributes Latinos point to as the source of discrimination, therefore providing some external validity to the theory and design.

## Conclusion

To conclude, this article has made three contributions. First, we demonstrate how variation in measurable Latina/o attributes are systematically related to beliefs about discrimination in a way theoretically motivated by stigmatized outgroups research. Latina/os most proximal to the canonical immigrant are also those who are most likely to report group-based discrimination as a major problem. Second, we demonstrate clear differences in *beliefs* about discrimination versus *experiential* discrimination. Beliefs exhibit both sensitivity to attributes as well as context, one that was overtly politically driven via the immigration issue. Reports of experiential discrimination, on the other hand, are essentially flat with respect to time. While this result may seem counterintuitive, it actually reproduces findings in social psychology (cf. Taylor et al. 1990) showing the disjuncture between beliefs and experiences. We stress that this is not to discount reported experiential discrimination; instead, it suggests the mechanisms leading to beliefs versus experiences may be different but that both forms are consequential. Indeed, we demonstrate a strong association between beliefs about discrimination and a variety of politically rel-

evant outcome measures: Beliefs about group-based discrimination are not mere retrospective reports without consequence. Third, we demonstrate second-generation Latina/os, particularly those who are bilingual, are (a) most similar to the first generation in terms of beliefs about discrimination; and (b) the only group to report high rates of experienced discrimination (in 2006). Again, we contend this result is driven by the close proximity of this group to the first generation, the group that, in context, has attributes most negatively judged.

Finally, given the context of our study, we think our results provide an empirical assessment of Sampaio (2015). Sampaio contends post-9/11 U.S. immigration policy further marginalized Latino immigrants as well as Latino citizens. Our results speak to Sampaio’s contentions. That we see first- and second-generation Latinos (who have Spanish-language ability) reporting the strongest beliefs that discrimination is a problem is not surprising. In context, it was these individuals who were most susceptible and the *potential* threat associated with the political climate around the immigration issue. And since mixed-generation households are commonplace, our finding showing the close connections between the second generation and the first generation with respect to beliefs about discrimination is consistent with Sampaio’s narrative. Moreover, given elite and media framing of the immigration issue, highlighting security and cultural threats posed by Latinos, the political climate was ripe for negative Latino stereotypes to be prevalent, to be “in the air.” Latinos possessing attributes most proximal to the canonical immigrant viewed discrimination to be a major problem in a strong and vivid way.

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## **Supporting Information**

Additional supporting information may be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of the article.

- Confidence Intervals for All Estimates
- Green Card Analysis
- Media Context
- Outcome Measures
- Subgroup Estimates of Outcome Models