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Ethnic Identity as a Potential Buffer Against the Negative Effects of Discrimination on Stress for
Afro-Latinos: Findings from the Hispanic Community Health Study/Study of Latinos
(HCHS/SOL) Sociocultural Ancillary Study

THESIS

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in Social Ecology

by

Kallie Brown

Thesis Committee:
Associate Professor Belinda Campos, Chair
Associate Professor Jessica L. Borelli
Assistant Professor Amy L. Dent

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Ethnic Identity as a Potential Buffer Against the Negative Effects of Discrimination on Stress for Afro-Latinos: Findings from the Hispanic Community Health Study/Study of Latinos (HCHS/SOL) Sociocultural Ancillary Study

By

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Master of Arts in Social Ecology

University of California, Irvine, 2020

Associate Professor Belinda Campos, Chair

For individuals identifying with a marginalized group, having a high ethnic identity can be protective against the negative effects of discrimination. It is not yet clear, however, whether this protection extends to members of groups with multiple marginalized identities. This study used data from the Hispanic Community Health Study/Study of Latinos (HCHS/SOL) Sociocultural Ancillary Study ($N = 183$) to test whether ethnic identity buffered the adverse effects of discrimination on three types of perceived stress for Afro-Latinos living in the U.S. Hierarchical regression analyses indicated that ethnic identity did not moderate the association of discrimination with general perceived stress nor extrafamilial stress for this sample. However, a moderation effect was observed for the association of discrimination with intrafamilial stress [$b = -0.63$; $t(182) = -2.09$, $CI_b (-1.22, -0.03)$, $p = .038$]. Specifically, when relatively low or average levels of ethnic identity were endorsed, discrimination positively predicted intrafamilial stress; when ethnic identity was high, discrimination did not significantly predict intrafamilial stress. These results indicate that a high ethnic identity can be protective for Afro-Latinos living in the U.S. and highlight the importance of better understanding how individuals with multiple marginalized identities can develop a high ethnic identity in the face of discrimination.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of race has historically played a major role in the lives of people who have been subjected to unique forms of race-based discrimination and oppression. In the U.S., race and identity has historically been treated in binary black and white terms that leave little room for the possibility of other intersectional identities. While some research reveals that identifying with multiple identities may be either beneficial or detrimental for psychological well-being (Binning et al, 2009; Campbell & Eggerling-Boeck, 2005; Cauce et al., 1992; Shih & Sanchez, 2005), there is still little known about individuals who identify with more than one *marginalized* identity, like Afro-Latinos. The goal of this study was to analyze whether a high ethnic identity can potentially buffer against the negative effects of discrimination on stress for Afro-Latinos.

What is Ethnic/Racial Identity?

Ethnic/racial identity is considered to be a fundamental aspect of one's sense of self (Phinney & Alipuria, 1996). It is defined as a multidimensional concept that comprises of the beliefs and attitudes an individual has about their ethnic/racial group membership and the ways in which these beliefs and attitudes develop over time (Rivas-Drake, Umaña-Taylor, Schaefer, & Medina, 2017). One's ethnic/racial identity has the potential to provide an individual with a sense of belonging and commitment to a particular ethnic group.

One way racial identity is conceptualized and measured is through the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI). This model, developed to be specifically applicable to African-Americans, is comprised of four interrelated dimensions: salience, centrality, regard and ideology (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). This model and its measure are captured in the following ways: the extent to which one's race is a relevant part of one's self-concept in a particular situation (salience), the extent to which race is central to one's identity

(centrality), feelings about one's ethnic group (regard), and beliefs, feelings, and attitudes about one's ethnic group (ideology). With this model, African-American racial identity can be measured through a series of questions that fall under one of the respective categories.

Scholars taking a more cross-cultural approach to the study and measurement of ethnic identity have developed conceptualizations and measures intended to apply to individuals belonging to any ethnic group. The Malcarne et al., (2006) Scale of Ethnic Experiences (SEE) is one such measure. These researchers created an Ethnic Identity subscale as part of their measure of ethnic experiences that may occur in individuals of any ethnic/racial background. The items in the subscale address ethnic pride and participation in cultural activities, which individuals of any ethnic group can experience. According to the SEE, racial identity can be analyzed through getting a glimpse at things like participating in holiday traditions, learning the history of one's ethnic group, and learning cultural values from parents and relatives.

Overall, ethnic/racial identity development is understood to involve an exploration of the meaning of their ethnicity/race, as well as contending with the psychological feelings of connectedness and commitment that a person has to their race/ethnic group (Phinney, 1992; Yip, 2018). It is a universal process that occurs across many different diverse groups (e.g., Hispanic/Latinos, American Indians, African-Americans) (Yip, 2018) but it has seldom been studied in the context of multiple marginalized race/ethnic identities.

High Ethnic/Racial Identity in the Context of Discrimination

Like the development of ethnic/racial identity, the experience of discrimination is something many individuals come across, especially if belonging to a minority group. Discrimination is a distinct means through which oppression can be manifested. Studies have shown that identifying with at least one marginalized identity is linked with experiencing the

negative outcomes of discrimination (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). Specifically, experiences of discrimination are correlated with lower self-esteem, higher stress, more depressive symptoms, and worse overall mental health (Araújo & Borrell, 2006; Flores et al, 2008; Mossakowski, 2003; Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007).

While the experience of discrimination is associated with a number of adverse outcomes, having a high ethnic identity can be protective against discrimination's negative effect on well-being (Binning et al, 2009; Mossakowski, 2003; Sellers, Caldwell, Schmeelk-Cone, & Zimmerman, 2003; Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007). For example, Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff (2007) found that, for non-Black Hispanic/Latino adolescents, a high ethnic identity and self-concept minimized the negative effects associated with perceived discrimination and were positively associated with adolescents' mental health. In addition, Mossakowski (2003) found that for Filipino Americans, having a high ethnic/racial identity may have mental health benefits, regardless of experiences of discrimination. Similarly, research by Sellers, Caldwell, Schmeelk-Cone, & Zimmerman (2003) also found that African-Americans who experienced discrimination but described race as central to their identity were more likely to report lower levels of psychological distress. To date, however, the links between a high ethnic identity and well-being have only been studied in individuals with a single marginalized identity although it is now clear that an individual can have more than one marginalized race/ethnic identity (e.g., Black and Hispanic/Latino; American Indian and Filipino).

Multiple Marginalized Identities

The research is clear that it is challenging enough to manage one marginalized identity, but little is understood about individuals who identify with multiple marginalized identities. Does having a high ethnic identity in the context of multiple marginalized identities relate to

well-being? Is it possible for ethnic identity to be protective against negative psychological outcomes for individuals with multiple marginalized identities?

Multiple Identities. W.E.B. DuBois (1903) was the first scholar to observe that African-Americans experience “double consciousness,” which he defined as the perception that one’s identity is divided into two parts: American and African-American. Double consciousness forces African-Americans to view themselves from their own unique perspective, and simultaneously view themselves as they might be perceived by the outside world. However, Dayal (1996) defined double consciousness as not about having two separate identities, but more about African-Americans realizing their monoracial identity is neither just African nor just American. According to this view, for African-Americans there remains an internal conflict between what it means to be “Black” and what it means to be “American”. Moreover, since they identify as both, there is a double consciousness occurring for identifying with two identities simultaneously where one is marginalized in society. Although the idea of double consciousness was proposed some time ago, it is still one of the first to contemplate individuals having to contend with an identity that is complex and can cause conflict.

Multiple ethnic/racial identities can involve someone identifying as both Hispanic/Latino and white or both Black and white. Research on individuals who identify with more than one ethnic/racial group suggests that having multiple identities can have mixed results for psychological well-being (Binning et al, 2009; Kiang, Yip, & Fuligni, 2008; Purdie-Vaughns, & Eibach, 2008; Shih & Sanchez, 2005, 2009; Shih et al, 2007). Some studies have found that individuals with multiple identities are more likely to be exposed to hardships like neighborhood exclusion, depression, and behavioral problems than individuals with only one ethnic/racial identity (Binning et al, 2009; Kiang, Yip, & Fuligni, 2008; Purdie-Vaughns, & Eibach, 2008;

Shih & Sanchez, 2005, 2009; Shih et al, 2007). Other research has concluded that individuals with multiple identities have lower stress levels and more belongingness across many domains (e.g., social engagement, psychological well-being) compared to their single-identity counterparts (Binning et al, 2009; Shih & Sanchez, 2009). These patterns could be explained by the possibility that individuals who identify with multiple groups are better able to navigate both racially homogenous and heterogeneous environments than individuals who primarily identify with one ethnic/racial group (Binning et al, 2009). However, it is also possible that because having more identities is associated with greater role conflict and role overload, this conflict and overload leads to worse well-being (Brook, Garcia, & Fleming, 2008).

Multiple Marginalized Identities. A theory relating to multiple identity pertains to the experience of multiple jeopardy, or the multiplicative risks faced by people who have multiple marginalized identities. The theory of multiple jeopardy (King, 1988), originally proposed to explain the experiences of Black women, asserts that the disadvantages for individuals by race, class, and gender are interactive effects that reflect the interdependence of each of these systems. It was once believed that multiple systems of social stratification were additive, as if each system had a direct and independent effect on a person (King, 1988). This, as King argues, is not true as oppression is about the quality, not the quantity, of one's experiences. For this reason, multiple jeopardy can best be thought of as capturing the cumulative disadvantage that can accrue for people with multiple subordinate-group identities. For example, in this view, African-American women are "worse off" than African-American men because they contend with both racial AND gender subordination. The oppressions of multiple subordinate identities interact to produce a complex social disadvantage that has unique consequences for the quality of one's life. For example, Afro-Latinos, who identify as both Black and Hispanic/Latino, contend with both

subordinate identities which may put them at more of a disadvantage than an individual with one non-marginalized identity (e.g., non-Hispanic/Latino White) or one marginalized identity (non-Black Hispanic/Latino).

Similar to the notion of multiple jeopardy, there is a specific term for the experience of having multiple identities based on one's social categories (e.g., age, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, immigrant status, race, sexual orientation, social class, and spirituality). According to the theory of intersectionality, social categories are inter-linked and mutually constituted. From this perspective, identity categories are related to and defined through each other, continuously being reconfigured across social contexts (Boryczka & Disney, 2015). These separate identities intersect to compound oppression and cannot be disentangled into one phenomenon for an individual. For example, one could not expect a Black woman to decide which part of her identity (i.e., being Black or being a woman) is more salient to who she is and influences the type of oppression she experiences as both identities are defined through each other. This theoretical framework of intersectionality could help shed new light on the mixed pattern of findings regarding whether identifying with multiple marginalized identities pose more of a risk than a protection.

Stress and Identity

As stated previously, prior research has shown mixed results on whether ethnic identity acts as a moderator on well-being. Therefore, for the current study, I have chosen to analyze well-being outcomes through studying stress. Namely, general perceived stress and acculturative stress will be investigated. Perceived stress is the outcome to study as much research argues that viewing discrimination within a stress and coping framework is a productive way to understand how experiencing ethnic/racial discrimination may impact well-being (Sellers, Caldwell,

Schmeelk-Cone, & Zimmerman, 2003). Still, it is important to understand this correlation in individuals with multiple marginalized identities.

The construct of acculturative stress consists of two separate concepts— extrafamilial stress and intrafamilial stress. Extrafamilial stress can be defined as stress that occurs from outside the family context (e.g., economic or immigration challenges) whereas intrafamilial stress is stress that arises from within a family context (e.g., parental, familial and marital challenges) (Cavazos-Rehg, Zayas, & Spitznagel, 2007). Recent findings indicate that, for some Hispanic/Latino individuals, psychosocial distress is clearly conceptualized into two distinctive domains that are within and outside of familial roles (Cavazos-Rehg, Zayas, Walker, & Fisher, 2006). Thus, it is important to differentiate between extrafamilial and intrafamilial stress to understand how discrimination is associated with stress relating to family and relationships versus external factors like occupation or immigration. These constructs may be particularly relevant for Afro-Latinos as Afro-Latinos may experience stress and discrimination related to their identity from outside sources (extrafamilial stress) but may also experience familial stress stemming from colorism and discrimination within the family context.

Although acculturative stress has been linked to symptoms of depression in Hispanic/Latino populations, exploratory investigations of the psychological impact of acculturative stress rarely include Black populations (Walker, Wingate, Obasi, & Joiner Jr, 2008) and even less Afro-Latinos. Thus, extrafamilial and intrafamilial stress are important variables for understanding forms of stress that may shed novel insight on sources of perceived stress. Moreover, all three forms of stress have been shown to significantly relate to identity and discrimination. For example, research has shown that having a high ethnic/racial identity can be a coping response that reduces the overall costs of experiences of discrimination (extrafamilial

stress) on well-being (Giamo, Schmitt, & Outten, 2012). In addition, research also reveals that individuals living among family members who are unsupportive of their ethnic background feel more insecure about their ethnic identity than individuals living among family members who are supportive of their ethnic background (Jourdan, 2006). Therefore, this unsupportive family environment (intrafamilial stress) relates to ethnic identity. Still, it is not clear if these patterns are evident for Afro-Latinos. It is possible that intrafamilial stress may be particularly fraught in the Afro-Latino context because the racial phenotypical variation among family members can vary widely.

Afro-Latinos Within the United States

Nearly 25% of Hispanic/Latinos living within the U.S. identify as Afro-Latino (Pew Research Center, 2016). U.S. Afro-Latinos grapple with balancing a tripartite Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, African racial identification, national identity, along with other potential identifiers relating to class, gender, or other identity markers. Moreover, there is reason to believe this group is likely to experience discrimination stemming from the multiplicative relationships among their identities, putting them in multiple jeopardy (King, 1988; Ribando, 2007). For example, Romo (2011) interviewed Afro-Mexicans, or “Blaxicans,” and found that they often describe experiences of not being “Black enough” among other Black individuals as well as not being “Latino enough” to non-Black Hispanic/Latinos. Knowing this, it is important to understand the potential role of a high ethnic identity on well-being outcomes for this unique group.

THE PRESENT STUDY

I propose to advance the study of intersectionality and identity by examining whether a group with multiple marginalized identities, Afro-Latinos, can be buffered against the negative effects of discrimination on stress. Afro-Latinos are an increasingly recognized yet understudied group that presents a particularly timely case for the study of identity, discrimination, and well-being. The overarching question I ask is: “Does a high ethnic identity moderate discrimination’s adverse effects on stress for Afro-Latinos?” I expected to see that: the higher ethnic identity individuals report, the less negative effects discrimination will have on general perceived stress and acculturative stress (extrafamilial stress and intrafamilial stress) for Afro-Latinos.

Method

Data from the Hispanic Community Health Study/Study of Latinos (HCHS/SOL) was used for the current study. This national cohort study aimed to examine risk factors for major chronic diseases among 16,415 Hispanics/Latinos. The HCHS/SOL study recruited participants from a randomly selected sample of households in San Diego, CA, Chicago, IL, Miami, FL and Bronx, NY during 2008-2011. These four locations, termed field centers, each recruited more than 4,000 participants from diverse Hispanic/Latino backgrounds. A baseline assessment was first administered to obtain demographic measures. Ethnic identity, discrimination, perceived stress, and acculturation stress were obtained from a separate assessment administered for the HCHS/SOL Sociocultural Ancillary Study where one third of the original cohort who were able to attend a separate visit within nine months of the parent study participated (n=5,313). Individuals participating in this representative sub-sample were administered measures through face-to-face interviews, and received compensation for their time.

For this current study, only participants who completed the HCHS/SOL Ancillary Study and reported their race as Black during the baseline assessment were included in the analysis as Afro-Latino. That group consisted of 183 participants who constitute the current sample of Afro-Latinos.

Measures

Demographics. Demographic information collected included self-reported age, sex, Hispanic/Latino background (i.e., Dominican, Mexican, Central American, etc.), race, language preferred, marital status, employment status, income, number of years living in the U.S., and highest level of education. Unweighted sample characteristics on sociodemographic variables are reported in Table 1.1 ($N = 183$) (see Appendix A). The mean age of the overall sample was 46.8 years (55.7% were between 18-49 years). There were more women than men (58.5% women), and the majority of participants were born outside of the U. S. (80.2%). The largest percentage of this Afro-Latino sample was of Cuban (32.2%), Dominican (30.1%), and Puerto Rican (26.8%) background. Consistent with U.S. demographics, a large proportion of the sample reported an annual income less than \$30,000 (78.1%). The education level of the entire sample ranged from "less than high school completed" to "more than high school completed". In addition, 41.5% of the Afro-Latino Ancillary Study sample had greater than a high school (or GED) education.

Ethnic Identity. The HCHS/SOL Ancillary Study dataset contains the full Malcarne et al., (2006) Scale of Ethnic Experiences (SEE). This scale measures multiple domains of ethnic experience in individuals across ethnic groups. The full scale has four subscales which measure (1) ethnic identity, (2) social affiliation/intimacy, (3) mainstream comfort, and (4) perceived discrimination. However, only the ethnic identity subscale was used in the current study. Sample items from the ethnic identity subscale include, "*I have a strong sense of myself as a member of*

my ethnic group,” “Being a member of my ethnic group is an important part of who I am,” and “I believe that it is important to take part in holidays that celebrate my ethnic group.” Response options for each item ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The reported Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the ethnic identity subscale was 0.87, and the full scale also had strong criterion and construct validity (Malcarne et al, 2006). For the purpose of this study, the mean score of the Ethnic Identity subscale was used to assess level of ethnic identity and test its hypothesized moderation of the association between discrimination and stress. Higher scores indicated higher ethnic identity.

Discrimination. The HCHS/SOL Sociocultural Ancillary Study measures discrimination using the Brandolo et al. (2005) Perceived Ethnic Discrimination Questionnaire-Community Version (PEDQ-CV). The PEDQ-CV measures everyday perceived ethnic/racial discrimination that adults may experience. It includes subscales that assess the exclusion, stigma, experienced discrimination, and threat/aggression aspects of discrimination experience. Under this scale are four subscales: social exclusion, stigmatization, discrimination, and threat/aggression. The original overall scale had strong construct validity and the reported Cronbach’s alpha coefficient in the original questionnaire was 0.87 (Brondolo et al, 2005).

For the purpose of the current study, only the discrimination subscale was used in analyses. Questions were on a scale that ranged from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). Sample items include *“Have you been treated unfairly by teachers, principals, or other staff at school?”* and *“Have others thought you couldn't do things or handle a job?”*. The mean scores of the discrimination subscale were used to assess discrimination, examine its association with stress, and test whether ethnic identity moderates the expected association of discrimination with stress.

General Perceived Stress. The HCHS/SOL Sociocultural Ancillary Study dataset contains the perceived stress section of the Life, Chronic, and Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, Kamarck, & Memelstein, 1983). The 10 items on this subscale assess the degree to which people perceive their lives as stressful. Items (e.g., “*In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and ‘stressed’?*” or “*In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?*”) were rated on a scale that ranged from 0 (never) to 4 (very often). The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was 0.84 in the original scale (Cohen, Kamarck, & Memelstein, 1983). Higher scores on the Perceived Stress scale indicated higher perceived stress.

Acculturation Stress. The HCHS/SOL Sociocultural Ancillary Study dataset contains the Cervantes et al. (1991) Hispanic Stress Inventory (HSI) which assesses whether a particular stressor occurred in the past for a person and the worry/tenseness experienced relating to the process of adapting to a non-native culture. Broadly, acculturative stress refers to the psychological impact of adapting to a dominant culture that is not one’s own. For Afro-Latinos in the current study, the scale analyzed experiences that accompany prolonged intercultural contact, particularly contact with the dominant group, as a measure of acculturative stress.

The form contained two subscales each pertaining to different constructs [*extrafamilial* stress (occupational/economic and immigration stress) and *intrafamilial* stress (parental, marital, and familial/cultural stress)]. Participants reported if they experienced a specific incident recently (yes/no) and rated their worry about this occurrence on a scale ranging from 1 (not at all worried/tense) to 5 (extremely worried/tense). Examples of the 17 questions on acculturative stress include “*Because I am Latino I have had difficulty finding the type of work I want*” (*extrafamilial* stress) and “*There have been conflicts among members of my family*” (*intrafamilial* stress). The authors of the original scale reported a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.90 for U.S.

born participants but also included Cronbach's alpha coefficients for immigrants ($\alpha = 0.91$) (Cervantes et al, 1991). Cronbach's alpha for the two subscales in this study were 0.87 for extrafamilial stress and 0.86 for intrafamilial stress (Cavazos-Rehg, Zayas, & Spitznagel, 2007). The total scores for extrafamilial stress and intrafamilial stress were used as two of the three outcome variables in analyses testing whether ethnic identity moderates the expected association of discrimination with stress.

Analytic Plan

A series of hierarchical regression analyses were conducted using SPSS to test whether ethnic identity moderated the association of discrimination with perceived and acculturative stress. The hierarchical regression model included three sets of predictors. The first set (Set A) consisted of age, gender, and income. These three variables were covariates intended to enable testing of the interaction between ethnic identity and discrimination (predictor variables) independent of age, gender, and income. Age, for example, is negatively associated with ethnic/racial identity (Thomas, 1994). Gender and income are also significantly related to ethnic identity, stress, and discrimination experiences (Thomas, 1994; Santiago, Wadsworth, & Stump, 2011; Watson et al, 2002). These factors increase risk for discrimination experiences and relate to the likelihood of endorsing a high ethnic/racial identity. Therefore, these variables were statistically treated as covariates during hypothesis testing analyses.

The second set of predictors (Set B) consisted of ethnic identity and discrimination. They were included in the second set to assess the independent relation of ethnic identity and discrimination on stress. Finally, the predictor in the third set (Set C) was the interaction of ethnic identity and discrimination. The interaction was included in the third set so that its

independent contribution, after partialling out the predictors in Sets A and B could be understood.

Before conducting the analyses, continuous predictors were mean centered to address unnecessary collinearity. Therefore, ethnic identity and discrimination were centered at their sample means by subtracting the mean from each score of the predictors. If the interaction was significant, two other conditional values of ethnic identity were chosen to probe the interaction: one standard deviation above the sample average and one standard deviation below the sample average. Finally, the mean centered interaction terms for both conditional values were calculated. These steps were necessary to test and probe the main interaction of the hypotheses.

RESULTS

Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 report means, standard deviations, and percentage of responses missing for hypothesized study variables of ethnic identity, discrimination, acculturative stress, and perceived stress by gender (Table 2.1) as well as zero-order correlations among hypothesized study variables of ethnic identity, discrimination, acculturative stress (extrafamilial stress and intrafamilial stress), and perceived stress (Table 2.2). The full analyses results are displayed in Table 3.1, Table 3.2, and Table 3.3 (see Appendix A).

Perceived Stress. The statistical model that contained all of the predictors accounted for 10% of the variation in perceived stress [$AdjR^2=.100$; $F(6,182)=4.37$, $p<.01$]. In this model, the main effect of discrimination on perceived stress was significant, [$b=0.49$; $t(182)=4.01$, $CI_b(0.25, 0.74)$, $p<.01$]. For every additional experience with discrimination, there was a 0.49-unit increase in frequency of experienced perceived stress. In addition, the main effect of ethnic identity was not significant [$b=-1.90$; $t(182)=-1.76$, $CI_b(-4.03, 0.23)$, $p=.08$]. Results indicated

that the interaction of ethnic identity and discrimination on perceived stress was not significant, [$b = -0.51$; $t(182) = -1.55$, $CI_b (-1.16, 0.14)$, $p = .12$].

Extrafamilial Stress. The model that included all of the predictors accounted for 11% of the variation in extrafamilial stress [$AdjR^2 = .112$; $F(6, 182) = 4.84$, $p < .01$]. The main effect of discrimination on extrafamilial stress was significant, [$b = 0.83$; $t(182) = 4.39$, $CI_b (0.46, 1.20)$, $p < .01$]. For every additional experience with discrimination, there was a 0.83-unit increase in severity of experienced extrafamilial stress. In addition, the main effect of ethnic identity was not significant [$b = -1.28$; $t(182) = -0.78$, $CI_b (-4.55, 1.97)$, $p = .44$]. Results suggested that the interaction between ethnic identity and discrimination on extrafamilial stress was not significant, [$b = -0.04$; $t(182) = -0.08$, $CI_b (-1.04, 0.96)$, $p = 0.94$].

Intrafamilial Stress. The model that included all of the predictors accounted for 20% of the variation in intrafamilial stress [$AdjR^2 = .201$; $F(6, 182) = 8.63$, $p < .01$]. The main effect of discrimination on intrafamilial stress was significant [$b = 0.61$; $t(182) = 5.46$, $CI_b (0.39, 0.83)$, $p < .01$]. For every additional experience with discrimination, there was a 0.61-unit increase in severity of experienced intrafamilial stress. In addition, the main effect of ethnic identity was not significant [$b = -0.82$; $t(182) = -0.83$, $CI_b (-2.75, 1.12)$, $p = .41$]. Results indicated that the interaction of ethnic identity and discrimination on intrafamilial stress was significant, [$b = -0.63$; $t(182) = -2.09$, $CI_b (-1.22, -0.03)$, $p = .04$]. This significant interaction was then probed at one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the sample average. The above reported slope from the overall regression model is now the simple slope for individuals who endorse an average ethnic identity (sample average).

For individuals with a relatively high ethnic identity (i.e., one SD above the sample mean), the simple slope was not significant [$b = -1.72$; $t(182) = -1.51$, $CI_b (-3.96, 0.52)$, $p = .13$].

For those who reported a low ethnic identity (i.e., one SD below the sample mean), the simple slope was significant [$b = 2.94$; $t(182) = 2.66$, $CI_b (0.75, 5.12)$, $p < .01$]. For every additional experience with discrimination for individuals with low ethnic identity, there was a predicted 2.94-unit increase in severity of experienced intrafamilial stress. Figure 1.1 offers a graph to display this interaction (see Appendix A).

DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to contribute to the understanding of individuals with multiple marginalized identities by testing whether a high ethnic identity could potentially buffer against the negative effects of discrimination on stress for Afro-Latinos. The results from the current study indicate that, for Afro-Latinos living in the U.S., ethnic identity does not significantly moderate the relation between discrimination and general perceived stress nor extrafamilial stress. However, ethnic identity did moderate the relation between discrimination and intrafamilial stress. The findings of this study make two contributions to the emerging research literature on multiple marginalized identities broadly and Afro-Latinos specifically. Broadly, these results advance understanding of the role ethnic identity plays in the relation between discrimination and stress for individuals with multiple marginalized identities. Specifically, it reveals the importance of ethnic identity as it relates to intrafamilial stress for Afro-Latinos. For Afro-Latinos who endorsed a low or average ethnic identity, discrimination predicted intrafamilial stress. However, when a high ethnic identity was endorsed, discrimination did not significantly predict intrafamilial stress. In other words, as self-reported experiences of discrimination increased, so too did severity of intrafamilial stress.

The only significant interaction observed was for intrafamilial stress. This finding can be interpreted in two ways. First, ethnic identity typically develops within a family context, and for

this reason, it may also be most salient in this context. If a high ethnic identity is known to be formed in the course of social interaction with family members (Jourdan, 2006; Umaña-Taylor, Bhanot, & Shin, 2006), it follows that a supportive family environment that exposes its members to the positive values and behaviors of their ethnic culture is what contributes to a high ethnic identity forming. Furthermore, results indicating that when an individual endorsed a low or average ethnic identity, discrimination did predict intrafamilial stress may be due to a low ethnic identity forming in an environment where there has been high familial stress. This is in line with research that suggests the family environment plays an important role on an individual's ability to develop a high ethnic identity. Specifically, it has been found that multiethnic individuals living among family members who are unsupportive of their ethnic background feel more insecure about their ethnic identity than individuals living among family members who are supportive of their ethnic background (Jourdan, 2006). This unsupportive family environment may relate to higher intrafamilial stress for individuals with a low ethnic identity. For Afro-Latinos, it is possible that intrafamilial stress is particularly fraught in their context because the heterogeneity of racial phenotypical features among family members can vary so widely. A future study that carefully addresses this is needed to understand the ways in which family ethnic/racial socialization occurs in Afro-Latinos.

Another possible interpretation of the intrafamilial stress findings is that Afro-Latino identity may invoke greater variation as opposed to the binary approach to group membership. To explain, phenotypical features may play a large role in one's endorsement of a high Afro-Latino identity. With a continuous approach, the more African features one has (e.g., darker skin, kinkier hair type, etc.), the more some members of the family may look down on them. Thus, a more continuous approach may inadvertently create a context of higher levels of intrafamilial

stress and could affect one's endorsement of a high ethnic identity. Future work will be needed to clearly understand this.

Regarding the null findings on the other measures of stress, there are many possible reasons, statistically and substantively, for these results. Substantively, it is possible that ethnic identity may not be protective against perceived stress and extrafamilial stress. In this case, due to the compound effects of having multiple marginalized identities, perceived and extrafamilial stress may be exacerbated. Additionally, it is also possible that because the extrafamilial stress and the perceived stress scales asked questions pertaining only to participants' Hispanic/Latino ethnicity (e.g., "*Because I am Latino, it has been hard to get promotions or salary raises*"), participants may not have associated items to their specific Afro-Latino identity. The stress that was reported on these measures would relate more to their Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, and may not have captured the distinct sources of racial identity stress that Afro-Latinos experience.

A key strength of this study is its use of a sample of Afro-Latinos of different backgrounds, geographical locations, and ages. Furthermore, to our knowledge, this is the first study focusing on acculturative stress in Hispanic/Latinos who specifically identify as Afro-Latino. Still, I recognize that this study does have some limitations. First, a post hoc test of statistical power indicated that the marginally significant interaction effect for perceived stress was dramatically underpowered. As a result, it might be valuable to interpret this marginally significant interaction effect, which may reveal that the effect of discrimination on perceived stress is different depending on endorsement of a low or high ethnic identity. Replication research with a larger sample size would be needed to strengthen confidence in the conclusion about the nature of this potential interaction. Despite these considerations, this study provides promising preliminary results, and a unique opportunity to better understand the context of

multiple marginalized identity. Second, it is notable that most of the sample identified as having Puerto Rican, Dominican, or Cuban heritage. While a large portion of Afro-Latinos come from these areas, Afro-Latinos are significantly present in over 15 other countries (e.g., Colombia, Honduras, and Venezuela). Therefore, a full understanding of Afro-Latinidad would require greater inclusion of Afro-Latinos across the diaspora.

Future Directions

The present study suggests many rich directions for future research. First, future studies should assess the impact immigration status and the amount of years lived in the U.S. may have on identity. Previous research has shown that, as opposed to Hispanic/Latinos living in mainland U.S., Hispanic/Latinos living outside of the U.S. have a stronger sense of national identity that supersedes the need to have a high ethnic/racial identity, (Nubia-Feliciano, 2016). In other words, having a high national identity is more important than ethnic/racial identity for non-U.S. Hispanic/Latinos. For example, a Cuban native who may have significant African racial ancestry would identify as just Cuban as opposed to identifying as Afro-Cuban. Knowing this, the amount of years lived in the U.S. is important to understand what stage of developing and adapting to U.S. ways of conceptualizing ethnic/racial identity participants may be in. It is likely that one's identity is impacted by adaptation to the U.S.'s ideology of race and ethnicity as most important. Having to adapt and reconfigure which identity is most salient to oneself may affect positive or negative identity development for Afro-Latinos. In addition, it is possible that having a national identity can be protective in its own way. For example, individuals recently moving to the U.S. who have not assimilated to the U.S.'s binary ways of thinking about race may fare better on stress outcomes than individuals who have assimilated.

A context that is understudied will require methodological sophistication that bridges qualitative to the quantitative. Mixed methods approaches involving qualitative interviews as well as surveys can provide a more comprehensive understanding of Afro-Latinos, their perceptions of their identity, and the ways in which it develops in a family context. Theories describing ethnic identity development for minorities emphasize how there is a period of exploration into the meaning of one's ethnicity in order for ethnic identity to develop (Phinney, 1989). Indeed, a better understanding of the ways in which a high Afro-Latino ethnic identity is formed, sustained, and intergenerationally transmitted is needed and could reveal novel insights about ethnic identity and the meaning it carries.

Conclusion

Afro-Latinos have a unique position within U.S. society, grappling with multiple identities. Focusing on this specialized population is in tune with U.S. demographic changes, as the Hispanic/Latino population continues to grow as the largest non-white group in the U.S. (Núñez, 2014). Obtaining a deeper understanding of identity in the Afro-Latino context may elucidate the link between discrimination experiences and psychological outcomes and contribute to the better understanding of discrimination more generally.

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APPENDIX A

Table 1.1

HCHS/SOL Afro-Latino Sample Sociodemographic Characteristics

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age		
18-29	28	15.3
30-39	24	13.1
40-49	50	27.3
50-59	51	27.9
60-69	23	12.6
71-74+	7	3.8
Gender		
Male	76	41.5
Female	107	58.5
Income		
30,000 or Less	143	78.1
30,000 or More	27	14.8
N/A	13	7.1
Hispanic/Latino Background		
Dominican heritage	55	30.1
Central American heritage	9	4.9
Cuban heritage	59	32.2
Mexican heritage	4	2.2
Puerto Rican heritage	49	26.8
South American heritage	3	1.6
More than one/Other heritage	4	2.2

Table 2.1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentage of Responses Missing for Study Variables by Gender

	HCHS/SOL SCAS Afro-Latino Sample Size N = 183		
	Male Size n=76	Female Size n=107	%missing
	M(SD)	M(SD)	
1. Ethnic Identity	3.71(0.40)	3.73(0.48)	0
2. Racism/Discrimination	8.24(3.36)	8.08(4.23)	0
3. Perceived Stress	14.72(6.14)	16.13(6.96)	0
4. Acculturative Stress			
a. Extrafamilial Stress	9.39(9.09)	10.73(10.99)	0
b. Intrafamilial Stress	2.65(4.46)	5.43(7.29)	0

Note. Parameters: Ethnic Identity- (1-5); Racism/Discrimination- (5-25); Perceived Stress- (0-40); Extrafamilial Stress- (0-45); Intrafamilial Stress- (0-39).

Table 2.2.

Zero-Order Correlations Among Study Variables

<i>Variables</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Ethnic Identity	1				
2. Racism/Discrimination	-0.04	1			
3. Perceived Stress	-0.10	0.29**	1		
4. Extrafamilial Stress	-0.08	0.33**	0.22*	1	
5. Intrafamilial Stress	-0.04	0.37**	0.23*	0.37**	1

Note. Correlations marked with * or ** are significant at the .05 or .01 alpha level, respectively.

Table 3.1.

Summary of Regression Analyses for Variables Predicting Perceived Stress

Variable	Perceived Stress								
	Model A			Model B			Model C		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i> <i>B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i> <i>B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i> <i>B</i>	β
Model A:									
Age	-0.01	0.04	-0.02	-0.02	0.03	-0.03	-0.02	0.03	-0.03
Gender	-1.34	1.01	-0.10	-1.41	0.96	-0.10	-1.31	0.96	-0.10
Income	0.82	0.83	0.07	1.33	0.80	0.12	1.42	0.80	0.13
Model B:									
Ethnic Identity				-1.48	1.05	-0.10	-1.90	1.08	-0.13
Discrimination				0.52	0.12	0.30***	0.49	0.12	0.29***
Model C:									
Ethnic Identity x Discrimination							-0.51	0.33	-0.11
Adj. R ²		0.00			0.09			0.10	
F		1.02			4.73			4.37	
ΔR^2		0.02			0.10***			0.01	

Note. *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

Table 3.2.

Summary of Regression Analyses for Variables Predicting Extrafamilial Stress

Variable	Extrafamilial Stress								
	Model A			Model B			Model C		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i> <i>B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i> <i>B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i> <i>B</i>	β
Model A:									
Age	0.09	0.05	0.12	0.08	0.05	0.11	0.08	0.05	0.11
Gender	-1.75	1.53	-0.09	-1.85	1.45	-0.09	-1.85	1.46	-0.09
Income	-2.62	1.27	-0.15*	-1.81	1.22	-0.11	-1.81	1.23	-0.10
Model B:									
Ethnic Identity				-1.26	1.60	-0.06	-1.29	1.65	-0.06
Discrimination				0.83	0.19	0.31***	0.83	0.19	0.31***
Model C:									
Ethnic Identity x Discrimination							-0.04	0.51	-0.01
Adj. R ²		0.03			0.12			0.11	
F		2.58			5.84			4.84	
ΔR^2		0.04			0.10***			0.00	

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 3.3.

Summary of Regression Analyses for Variables Predicting Intrafamilial Stress

Variable	Intrafamilial Stress								
	Model A			Model B			Model C		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i> <i>B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i> <i>B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i> <i>B</i>	β
Model A:									
Age	0.05	0.03	0.10	0.05	0.03	0.10	0.04	0.03	0.10
Gender	-2.90	0.95	-0.22**	-2.97	0.87	-0.23**	-2.85	0.87	-0.22**
Income	0.70	0.78	0.07	1.32	0.73	0.12	1.42	0.73	0.13
Model B:									
Ethnic Identity				-0.31	0.96	-0.02	-0.82	0.98	-0.06
Discrimination				0.64	0.11	0.39***	0.61	0.11	0.37**
Model C:									
Ethnic Identity x Discrimination							-0.63	0.30	-0.15*
Adj. R ²		0.05			0.19			0.20	
F		3.83			9.31			8.63	
ΔR^2		0.60*			0.15***			0.02*	

Note. *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

Figure 1.1.

Interaction of Ethnic Identity and Discrimination on Intrafamilial Stress

