Representative "Identity": The Case of Latino Populations in a Representative Bureaucracy

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Introduction

U.S. Latino populations are an area of study that requires further research in the field of public administration. The growing population of Latinos in the United States cannot and should not be overlooked by the field of public administration. Latinos represent over thirteen percent of the U.S. population and over thirty percent in many of the U.S.'s largest cities. This should serve as a clear indication that the field of public administration must continually study the impact and implications of the growing U.S. Latino populations. Discussions of U.S. Latinos have typically been grouped within issues of diversity, affirmative action, or representative bureaucracy. It is the latter that this paper looks to highlight, raising an important question for consideration in the study of representative bureaucracies. Public administrators run the risk of overlooking the diversity among Latino populations by focusing solely on representative figures (under the umbrella terms of Latino/Hispanic). Is the study of Latino representation inherently flawed in application, given the cultural, political, and historical diversity of Latino populations? An analysis of literature on U.S. Latinos and public administration, as well as a review of a case of New York City Latinos, demonstrates the need to address the diversity among Latinos. Latino populations present a unique challenge and require an unorthodox vision of what an individual's identity represents.

Representative Bureaucracy

The study of representative bureaucracy, amid the growing diversity of U.S. communities, allows for an area of continual research. Scholarly research of representative bureaucracy has long been a part of public administration literature, however, a normative basis for such research and its ultimate adoption into practice are often left in question. As Meier and Nigro (1976) define, the theory of representative bureaucracy proposes that "if the attitudes of administrators are similar to the attitudes held by the general public, the decisions administrators

make will in general be responsive to the desires of the public" (458). Yet, Meier and Nigro (1976) argue that such a normative theory is inadequate given the application of empirical analysis which is "weakened by unsupported empirical assertions, untenable assumptions, vague definitions, and poorly defined units of analysis" (467). Krislov (1974), in one of the earliest studies, viewed representative bureaucracy as a notion that "broad social groups should have spokesmen and officeholders in administrative as well as in political positions" (7). However, the method of measuring such representation varies (Subramaniam, 1967; Nachmias and Rosenbloom, 1973; Sigelman, 1976; Guajardo, 1996; and Riccucci and Saidel, 1997). The challenges to theory are compounded by the lack of buy-in of a representative bureaucracy (Naff, 1998).

Kingsley (1944), in coining the term representative bureaucracy, studied the British civil service and role of educational opportunity and economic status. Soon thereafter, Lipset (1950) argued that the social values of bureaucrats influence their governmental decisions. A reflection, which Mosher (1968) would identify as active representation, as opposed to the *passive* representation that Kingsley first studied. Passive representation asserts that a bureaucracy is representative when the demographic statistics are similarly reflected in society and in the administration. Active representation, on the other hand, purports that favorable decisions should be expected by administrators representing a sector of society with similar views and demographics. Taking Krislov's perspective one-step further, Thomspon (1976) suggested looking at the actual behavior of officials and whether "they act for or on behalf of their racial communities."

The impact that passive representation has on active representation has emerged more recently as an area of study within representative bureaucracy (Meier and Stewart, 1992; Kesier et al., 2002; Riccucci and Meyers, 2004). Moreover, affirmative action policies have led to question the impact on majority groups (Meier, Wrinkle, and Polinard, 1999) and the ultimate benefits of representative bureaucracy (Selden 1997). Representative bureaucracy will continue to be an area of research, especially when considering the changing demographics of our society.

Latino, Hispanic or Other?

When studying U.S. Latinos and representative bureaucracy, a clear problem surfaces in that Latinos are not a homogenous population as a single label makes them out to be (Table 1). Neither Hispanic nor Latino captures the diversity among such named populations. Two particular areas of Latino diversity are further explored below. The first is Latino self-identification, rather than government and research identities often utilized such as Latino/Hispanic. The second aspect of Latino diversity explored is historical generations of individuals. Both identification and generation combine to further understand Latino identity.

Table 1. Hispanic/Latino U.S. Population: 2000[1]

Country of Origin	2000 Population
Mexican	20,900,102
Puerto Rican	3,403,510
Cuban	1,249,820
Dominican	799,768
Salvadoran	708,741
Colombian	496,748
Guatemalan	407,127
Ecuadorian	273,013
Honduran	237,431
Peruvian	247,601
Nicaraguan	194,493
Panamanian	98,475
Argentinean	107,275
Venezuelan	96,091
Costa Rican	72,175
Chilean	73,951
Bolivian	45,188
Uruguayan	20,242
Paraguayan	8,929

The first issue for consideration is *the identification of the population being researched*. U.S. Latinos constitute people from (or with heritage from) nearly twenty Latin American countries. At a base level, individuals may be identified or much rather choose to identify with a specific country (e.g., Bolivian, Costa Rican, Colombian, etc.). At a second level, self-identification expands to include both a Latin American country and the United States (e.g. Cuban American, Mexican American). At the third and most blurred level, identification includes numerous countries (e.g. Central American, Caribbean, Chicano, etc.). For example, Caribbean can refer to individuals from, or with family from, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, or Puerto Rico. Moreover, Chicano was a label originally rooted in referring to Americans of Mexican decent, but has since expanded in definition to include people from additional Latin American countries. The fourth level expands to identify all people with Latin American decent (e.g. Hispanic, Latino, and Spanish-Speaking). These four levels of identification are far from concrete and are extremely fluid, especially at an individual basis.[2] In the study of U.S. Latino populations and public administration (especially representative bureaucracy) it is imperative that research attempt

Table 2. U.S. Latino Identification

Respondents Descriptive	Identification
Bolivian, Costa Rican, Colombian, etc.	Level 1
Cuban American, Mexican-American, etc.	Level 2
Central American, Caribbean, South American, etc.	Level 3
Hispanic, Latino, Spanish-Speaking, etc.	Level 4
Minorities, People of Color, Diverse Populations[3]	Level 5

to collect and analyze data at the most base level (1) before concluding findings at a level of Hispanic or Latino. As Table 2 (U.S. Latino Identification) outlines, levels 1 and 2 represent classifications and identifications that data should, when at all possible, be collected and utilized to truly interpret and report findings of U.S. populations.

Labels such as Hispanic and Latino attempt to capture a group of people with so much diversity that it becomes nearly impossible to do so. *Hispanic* was introduced as an ethnic label by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in 1978 as an attempt to identify "a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race" (Marin and Marin, 1991). The last two decades of the twentieth century witnessed the emergence of the label *Latino*. Latino identifies individuals born in, or who trace their background to, countries of Latin America. One of the problems with the application of Latino is that Latin America also refers to countries such as Brazil and Belize. This contradicts the OMB's definition of Hispanic, which specifically refers to those of "Spanish culture or origin." There is no one absolute label, and although Latino is increasingly becoming the popular term in academia, government entities continue to use Hispanic.

U.S. Latinos through the Generations

Labels are only one part of the issue associated with the diversity of Latino populations. Generational history is a characteristic that can also factor into U.S. Latino research. Chiswick and Hurst (2000) point out that the "different circumstances that immigrants experience in the United States compared to persons born in this country require that a study of Hispanics… consider differences by nativity" (175). First generation Latinos may feel differently about government than do second-generation Latinos. Table 3, (Classifying Generational History of Surveyed Respondents), is adapted from Morin and Morin (1991), who suggest that, although generational history is not often utilized, "it may prove useful for the proper understanding of characteristics of Hispanic respondents" (35).

Table 3. Classifying Generational History of Surveyed Respondents

Respondents Descriptive	Respondents Classification
Respondents born in Latin America or the Caribbean	First-generation Latinos
Respondents born in the United States with both parents born in Latin America or the Caribbean	Second-generation Latinos
Respondents born in the United States with one parent born in Latin America or the Caribbean	Mixed second-generation Latinos
Respondents born in the United States with at least three grandparents born in Latin America or the Caribbean	Third-generation Latinos
Respondents born in the United States with two grandparents born in the United States	Century-generation Latinos[4]

Latinos and Public Administration

As suggested in the previous section, generational gaps vary enough to warrant their consideration in best understanding Latino representation. However, neither generational nor identification differences have been taken into consideration by public administration-representation studies. The following review of literature exemplifies research which has studied U.S. Latino populations, while underscoring the need for continued research. Research which studied state and local employment used Level 2 of identification, with Mexican American populations as the primary group of study. Research at the federal level of government tends to use Level 4 identifications such as Hispanic/Latino. Moreover, federal government-based studies include Latinos as part of a bigger discussion: minority representation in government. Latinos in government literature emerged in the 1970s, but some discussions are dated much earlier. Williams (1947) reviewed the Office of Price Administration, focusing on minority representation in the rationing and price programs throughout the nation:

> The Washington staff was never completely successful in convincing some of its field officials of the need to recruit representative board members. For example, one official in a large Spanish-speaking community said, "After they (speaking of the Spanish Americans) argued and argued with us, we finally took some of them in" (128).

Williams concludes:

> The quality of the work done by representatives of minority groups seems on the whole to have been of a high order…The Washington staff found that it had learned something of the bigness of America, a good deal about the richness and variety of its people, and a sizable "know how" as to what might be the people's part in the administrative processes of government (128).

Latino representation in the bureaucracy has been marginal at all levels of government. Even amid a "period of proaction" for equal employment beginning in 1961, Latinos were well underrepresented in the federal government (Hellriegel and Short, 1972). For 1966, only 1.3% of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare Labor was made up of "Spanish surnamed Americans;" the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Justice each comprised of 1.6%; while employment at the Department of Labor was made up of less than 1% Latino (Hernandez, 1970).

The continued disproportionate employment of Latinos in the federal government led Diaz de Krofcheck and Jackson (1974) to suggest that Latinos[5] were experiencing "nativism." They define nativism as a "fear of non-Anglo foreigners;" distinct from the doctrine of racism, where there is an assertion of the superiority of one race (535). Macias (1975), in reference to the above argument, suggests that "nativism, by definition, nurtures racism and cultural prejudice." Nonetheless, the argument for Latino discrimination in federal employment had emerged alongside discussions of representation. Taylor and Shields (1984) suggested a concentration of Latinos in defense agencies, education disparities, and gender discrimination as possible explanations as to why Latinos "lag behind Anglos on almost every indicator of organizational success in the federal government" (382). The underrepresentation of Latinos in government would continue over the next two decades.

Sisneros' (1993) *Hispanics in the Public Service in the Late Twentieth Century* reinforced earlier findings of the lack of Latino representation in government. Sisneros points out that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission reported, "Hispanics in 1988 continued to be the only minority group with a 'manifest imbalance' in the federal work force when compared to the civilian labor force" (2). Most recently, a report required by Executive Order 13171, Hispanic Employment in the Federal Government (2001), highlighted that Hispanics remain the most underrepresented minority group in the federal workforce with limited progress.

Research of Latino representation at state and local levels has produced similar findings to that at the federal level. A review of state and local bureaucracy during the years 1973 through 1975 by Cayer and Sigelman (1980) found that "Spanish-surnamed [administrators]… continued to be badly underrepresented." A 1977 study of city employment found that Latinos only represented 1.4% of administrative jobs (Dye and Renick, 1981). Latino under-repre-

sentation also extended to city councils (Taebel, 1978). Moreover, Latino populations have been found to be a key predictor to representation (Welch, Karing, and Eribes, 1983) as well as to municipal appointments (Polinard, Wrinkle, and Longoria, 1991). This finding is critical to the changing demographics of the United States. With the increasing number of Latinos in U.S. municipalities, the expectation for increased representation in the bureaucracy should follow. Whether this is the case for Latinos in government is still left to be determined. Finally, Latino representation literature suggested that Latino bureaucrats could make "important differences for their ethnic group as far as policy outcomes of city government are concerned" (Finke, 1980, 67). These differences represent active representation, which was discussed earlier. Active representation could be of great significance in contemporary policy decision making. Immigration policy at the federal level has significant implications for Latino populations throughout the country. Locally, municipalities are debating policies which allow for varying types of identifications and driver licenses which also directly affect Latino populations (Hakim, 2007). Given all the early literature and research of Latinos there remains underrepresentation and understanding of the degree to which active representation is present and effective. Clearly, representative bureaucracies and Latinos still require further study.

The Latino Administrator

An additional area of consideration when examining a representative bureaucracy and U.S Latino populations is the role of the administrator. Herbert (1974) set forth seven dilemmas that minority administrators must overcome. In particular, dilemma six states, "minority communities sometimes expect much more of the minority administrator than he/she can provide" (Herbert, 1974). Although not Latino specific, the dilemma is applicable, but requires further analysis, especially in identifying any expectation differences within Latino communities. Furthermore, Martinez (1991) suggests inherent problems with Latino administrators, given the growing number of minority administrators and their potential to contribute positively in a representative government. Based on the above premise, Martinez (1991) states:

The difficulties encountered by Hispanics operating in governmental bureaucracies may have negative consequences for public polices and administration, if they are not effectively resolved through their responses and those of the institution (47).

An area of research that has not been addressed is the perception Latino communities have of their Latino public administrators. To some degree, studies of Latino populations' perceptions of government in general have found differences among the various Latino groups. De la Garza et al. (1992) found that there are differences among Mexican, Puerto Rican and Cuban populations. Cubans were found to have the highest degree of trust in government. Just over 50% of U.S. Mexicans and Puerto Ricans felt that government is run "by the few in their interest" (81). Barger (1976) found differences in Mexican American, African American and

Anglo students' images of government. Comer (1978) raises the possibility that Latino relationships with "street–level" bureaucrats in the Southwest may be different than those in other parts of the United States. It is clear that Latino diversity as well as generational differences among Latino populations needs to be considered in future research of representative bureaucracies.

The Case of New York City

The following discussion exemplifies the potential for misrepresentation when using a traditional conceptualization of Latinos. The case of New York City is an ideal example as it has one of the largest municipal public sectors in the U.S. Outlined below (Table 4), are the largest groups among Latinos, as a percentage of the total U.S. Latino population. Latinos of Mexican origin represent nearly sixty percent of the U.S. population; with those of Puerto Rican decent representing a distant second just under ten percent. These figures represent cumulative data from across the country, but when looking at particular municipalities, statistical representation can tell a vastly different story.

Table 4. Hispanic/Latino U.S. Population by Percentage: 2000[6]

Country/Latin America Regions	2000 Percentage of Hispanic Population
Mexican	59.30%
Puerto Rican	9.70%
Central American	5.10%
South American	4.00%
Cuban	3.50%
Dominican	2.30%

New York City is home to eight million residents, with over two million of the residents being Latino as of the 2000 U.S. Census (Latino Data Project, 2007). However, unlike the percentage breakdown of Latinos in the U.S., Latinos in New York City reflect a significantly different landscape. Latinos of Puerto Rican decent are the largest group at 37% of the area Latino population, with those of Dominican decent representing nearly 25%. Given the arguments made earlier, different groups among Latinos have their own unique cultures, histories and ideologies. In efforts to achieve a representative bureaucracy, a comprehensive and more in-depth look at Latinos should be obtained. In the case of New York City, census data highlights how national data does not match up and as a result, there is a risk of misrepresentation.

**Table 5. Hispanic/Latino New York Metropolitan Area
Population by Percentage: 2000[7]**

Country/Latin America Regions	2000 Percentage of Hispanic Population
Puerto Rican	37.60%
Dominican	24.70%
South American	12.80%
Mexican	8.60%
Central American	4.20%
Cuban	2.10%

Conclusions

Government administrators and researches looking to study Latino populations should be familiar with issues that affect them (Rosenfeld 1985; Becerra and Zambrana 1985). As the paper has outlined, there are various areas for further research. There is a breadth of literature that can lend to the topic; however, there still needs to be a reevaluation of methods for research when studying U.S. Latino populations, especially in the area of representative bureaucracy. The study of Latino representation requires further in-depth studies to avoid potential flaws in application, given the cultural, political, and historical diversity of U.S. Latino populations. Given this argument, I have provided two means for better understanding the complexities of a representative bureaucracy: U.S. Latino populations as set forth in Table 2 (U.S. Latino Identification) and Table 3 (Classifying Generational History of Surveyed Respondents). Previous work of Latinos and representative bureaucracy, regardless of methods employed, are critical to the field of public administration.

What is meant by a "representative" U.S. Latino identity? It is difficult to operationalize representation of Latinos with nearly twenty countries, each with its own unique culture and historical relationship with the United States. However, as I have suggested, to truly study representation, identity should go beyond the terms Latino and Hispanic. A Latino identity should begin at the *country of origin and generation in the United States*. For purposes of public administration policy formulation and implementation, these two levels would be more appropriate for representing a Latino identity. It is clear that further research is necessary and the issues raised here highlight opportunities for deriving as much information as possible from such studies.

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Endnotes

[1] Data derived from Census 2000 (Cresce, Schmidley and Ramirez 2007, Table 2).

[2] One person can choose to identify with numerous labels. In addition some labels not included in this discussion are area specific such as Tejano and Nuyorican. Additional terms that Davis (2000) identifies are Philaricans and Domincanyork.

[3] Although this level of labels was not discussed and goes beyond the scope of this paper, much of the existing literature of Latinos and public administration is found within articles at the Level 5.

[4] This generation of Latinos encompasses those who lineage to a Latin American or Caribbean country goes beyond grandparents. The use of the term "century" refers to that the respondent's family covering the majority of residency in the United States.

[5] Diaz de Krofcheck and Jackson use the term Chicano, however there statistical data from the U.S. Civil Service Reports refers to Spanish-surnamed Americans, not Chicanos.

[6] Data derived from Census 2000 (Cresce, Schmidley and Ramirez 2007, Table 2).

[7] Data derived from Census 2000 (Latino Data Project 2007, Table 1). Not all countries were presented in the data report and in order to match the associated Table 4 of the U.S. Latino population, the data was constructed to reflect similar countries and regions. An additional category of Other Latinos, not captured in the five categories presented represent 9.9% of Latinos in the New York Metropolitan area.

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