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Social and Political Consequences of Stereotypes Related to Racial Phenotypes in Mexico

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Abstract

In this paper I study the social and political consequences of Mexicans' different racial appearances. Common wisdom in Mexico claims that discrimination among Mexicans occurs along socioeconomic lines but that people's racial appearance does not matter. In this paper I take issue with this position by designing two laboratory experiments that test the effect of people's different phenotypes on how others evaluate them or decide to vote for them in elections. I differentiate between European-looking, Indigenous-looking and Mixed-looking Mexicans. The pictures used in the study are created using a morphing software package so I could combine both skin tone and features of European and Indigenous-looking individuals. The findings in this paper show that phenotypic appearance among Mexicans matter. Mexicans tend to socially evaluate more positively European-looking Mexicans and they also tend to vote more for a European-looking candidate over a Mixed or Indigenous-looking ones. The results also show that people are cognizant of more negative traits attached to indigenous-looking individuals than to mestizo or European-looking persons, while attaching more positive traits to the latter. This research shows the social and political consequences, as well as existence, of stereotypes associated to phenotypes among Mexicans.

Resumen

En este documento analizo las consecuencias políticas y sociales de la apariencia racial de los mexicanos. En México se acepta la existencia de discriminación basada en clase social, pero no en la apariencia fenotípica o racial. En este estudio diseño dos experimentos de laboratorio para explorar el efecto de los fenotipos en cómo las personas son evaluadas o votadas en elecciones por otros. Diferencio entre mexicanos con apariencia europea, indígena y mezclada. Para crear las fotografías utilizo un programa de computación que mezcla tanto los rasgos faciales como el color de piel de las personas de apariencia europea e indígena. Los resultados del estudio demuestran que la apariencia fenotípica es relevante en el contexto mexicano. Los mexicanos tienden a dar evaluaciones sociales más positivas a individuos de apariencia europea que a individuos de apariencia indígena o mezclada. Los resultados también demuestran la existencia de más características negativas asociadas a personas de apariencia indígena, que a personas de apariencia mezclada o europea. Mientas tanto, se asocian características más positivas a estos últimos. Este estudio demuestra la existencia de estereotipos y los efectos que éstos tienen en la vida social y política de los mexicanos de acuerdo a su apariencia racial o fenotípica.

Introduction

The study of racial politics has been mostly centered in the U.S., and to a lesser extent, in countries with large black populations. Some authors have considered Mexico, along with the rest of Latin America, to be a case of the racial democracy thesis at work as they argue its society is not divided by race, but by social class (Degler, 1971; Freyre, 1946; Pierson, 1942; Tannenbaum, 1947). Other authors argue that discrimination still exists and affects indigenous and black populations in these countries (Bonfil Batalla, 2000; Gall, 2004; Knight, 1990; Machuca, 1998; Sawyer, 2006; Sidanius *et al.,* 2001; Telles, 2004; Telles and Sue, 2009; Urías Horcasitas, 2007). This paper adds to the latter position by developing a theory and showing evidence of mestizo Mexicans differentiating among themselves according to their racial appearance, and attaching different stereotypical traits to people according to that appearance, even though they are considered members of the same racial group. I show that these stereotypes translate into prejudicial behavior, which, in turn, affects the way Mexicans behave politically. The empirical evidence supporting this argument comes from two experiments: the stereotype and candidate experiments. The stereotype experiment measures the existence of socially-held stereotypes associated with people's racial characteristics; while the candidate experiment tests for the effect of electoral candidates' racial appearance on voters' evaluation and decision to vote for such a candidate.

The paper consists of three different sections. The first section outlines the theoretical argument that motivated this research. The second section discusses the experiments conducted as well as the results obtained. Finally, the last section discusses the implications of these findings.

A Theory of Phenotypic Prejudice

Race as a concept is a product of European expansion in the 15th century (Stevens, 1999: 186). As Europeans conquered new lands in Africa and the Americas, they developed a hierarchical system linking perceived biological and behavioral differences with diverse racial labels that would allow them to maintain power as a superior race (Anderson and E. Fienberg, 1999: 174). The idea of race as a meaningful genetic or biological term has lost its previous support. As early as 1944, when studying the U.S., Myrdal wrote that "the definition of the 'Negro race' is thus a social and conventional, not a biological concept" and this social concept "determines the status of an individual and his place in interracial relations" (115). Further research demonstrated and sustained that race is a subjective and social construct (Lewontin, 1995). In spite of these findings, social psychologists and political

scientists show that people continue to rely on negative/positive stereotypes associated with racial appearance in their daily lives (Devine, 1989; Kinder and Sanders, 1996; Mendelberg, 2001; Sears and Kinder, 1985; Sears and Henry, 2005; Sigelman *et al.,* 1995; Sniderman and Piazza, 1993; Valentino *et al.,* 2002, among others).

Researchers studying race in Mexico have focused on relations between indigenous and non-indigenous groups (Bonfil Batalla, 1980; Stavenhagen, 1992). In the field of political science specifically, scholars have primarily looked at indigenous social movements (Trejo, 2004). The purpose of this study is to broaden the scope of the research on social and political consequences of discrimination related to racial markers or phenotypes in contexts where such conflict seems to be absent. Phenotypes are the observable characteristics of a person produced by the interaction of the person's genotype with the environment. Thus, researchers use relevant phenotypic characteristics as racial markers (skin color, height, facial features, etc.) when differentiating among racial groups. As it does not make sense to talk about racism among members of the same racial group (mestizo) the term phenotypic prejudice is proposed as it refers to prejudice based on people's phenotypes. In order to understand the sources of phenotypic stereotypes among mestizo Mexicans, it is useful to discuss Mexico's racial ideology.

Mexico's Racial Ideology

Mexico's current racial ideology groups the majority of Mexicans under the same racial group: mestizo. This racial ideology has been on the making since Mexico gained its independence from Spain. Race became a relevant factor in Mexico's society and politics after the European conquest.[1] The Spanish elites established a caste system to differentiate among people according to their ancestry.[2] After Mexico's independence in 1821, the new Mexican political elites abolished slavery and the caste system, promoting the construction of a national identity that overlapped with a racial identity (Mexicans would generally belong to the mestizo racial group). By creating this broad racial group that includes most people in the society, Mexico gave the impression of overcoming the problem of racism. The implication was that if everybody belongs to the same racial group, no one can be a racist.

According to mestizo ideology, indigenous value resides in the past. That is, indigenous people are valued for the greatness of their historic civilizations but devalued for maintaining the purity of their indigenous race and culture rather than assimilating into the rest of Mexican society (Gall, 2004). The

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[1] Indigenous people differentiated among themselves as they belonged to different tribes, but those differences were related more to culture and religion than racial variation.

[2] For a list of those categories, look at Appendix 2, Table A2.1.

mestizo race, in contrast, was seen as superior because it took the best from the native and European cultures and races.[3]

The mestizaje (intermixing), more than a biological process, is a social and cultural process. One becomes mestizo by adapting to society and leaving behind one's ancestral traditions. From the mestizo perspective, it is better to be mestizo than indigenous, and it is better to be more European-looking than indigenous-looking.[4] Far from eradicating racism in Mexico, the mestizo ideology exchanged the European vs. indigenous dichotomy for the mestizo vs. indigenous dichotomy (Machuca, 1998: 47). This conflict between mestizos and indigenous people affects relationships among mestizos as well, for mestizos will discriminate against other mestizos who are more indigenous-looking than they.

After the Mexican Revolution (1920), "being a Mexican became synonymous with being a Mestizo" (Massey and Denton, 1992: 238). Since then, the Mexican state has sought the construction of a homogeneous society, a mestizo society (Bonfil Batalla, 2000: 91). After the revolution, social mobility created an optical illusion in Mexico (Knight, 1990). As in other Latin American countries, people believed that indigenous and African people could become mestizos through education, by leaving their communities, educating themselves, and adopting Western habits of dress (Knight, 1990). Therefore, "upwardly mobile individuals were whitened," but they will never be completely White.

More than a racial category, being mestizo is a social fact, an ascribed and achieved status (Knight, 1990: 73). As Knight argues, independent Mexico did not eliminate race in favor of socioeconomic cleavages; rather, both coexist together. Hayes-Bautista argues that income and phenotypic appearance are highly correlated in Mexico as "Indians [are] at the lower end of the [income] scale, [and] Europeans at the top" (1983: 275). Currently, Mexicans "take account of social class as well as appearance in determining degrees of whiteness" (National Research Council, 2004: 29).

Mexicans also continue to hold dearly to negative stereotypes of indigenous people. Spanish in Mexico is rife with pejorative nouns related to race. For example, a documented definition of the concept of *indio* in Mexico is "Indian, often implying a dim-witted, surly type" (Stephens, 1989: 126). Another slang word, commonly used among non-indigenous Mexicans as an insult, is *naco*, which means a "stupid, indigenous person with innate inferior

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[3] José Vasconcelos, a Mexican intellectual and minister of Education in the early 20th century, developed the theoretical framework to support the idea of the superiority of the mestizo race that, in his words, would dominate the world. His most important work in relation to this topic is La Raza Cósmica: Misión de la Raza Iberamericana; Argentina y Brasil (1925).

[4] For purposes of brevity, I omit the "looking" word when referring to different appearances. For example, I use interchangeably the words, European and European-looking, doing the same for the other two categories, mestizo and indigenous. Every time I talk about these categories, I refer to the way people think about the way they and others look, or are perceived. I never assume any genetic or essential differences among them.

qualities, ignorant indigenous person" (Stephens, 1989: 175). As such, a well educated, upper-class indigenous-looking individual faces discrimination because of her appearance that a European-looking person with the same characteristics (social class and education) does not face. As Knight puts it, this discrimination opposes the state's ideology: "[A] whole range of prejudices and discriminations therefore exists, but exists in defiance of official ideology. Indian languages are officially endorsed, while unofficially frowned upon" (Knight, 1990: 100).

One of the main arguments in this research is that discrimination according to one's phenotype is not only present between indigenous and non-indigenous people, but also among that broad group of people who identify as mestizo, and between European-looking persons and mestizos as well. In a sense, official ideology has failed to eradicate racism from Mexico's society; rather, it has simply made it more difficult to measure. A review of the relationship between stereotypes and race follows to clarify the mechanisms underlying the study of discrimination among Mexicans.

Phenotypes and Stereotypes

According to social psychology research, people group the things and living beings that surround them into categories. Therefore, "categorizing individuals on the basis of salient, observable characteristics such as race, gender, age (…) is inevitable, occurs automatically, and activates biases associated with these characteristics" (National Research Council, 2004: 23).

If people are composed of abstract and perceptual features, it can be said that other people generally have secondary knowledge about the relationship between the person's abstract and perceptual features. People organize these relationships in schemata, understood as structures in which people automatically organize their ideas in their memory (Monroe *et al.,* 2000). Schemata are particularly interesting because recalling one element of a schema can bring to mind all the concepts included in that schema. For example, if Mexicans possess a schema related to indigenous people, one look at an indigenous person will trigger all the ideas that are part of that schema. This research argues that by showing Mexicans pictures of people with specific phenotypes, a whole range of ideas associated with European, mestizo, and indigenous people is stimulated. As Hilton and von Hippel (1996) explain, stereotypes are beliefs people have about the behavior, characteristics, and attributes of members of different groups. Stereotypes also explain the relationships between these attributes and characteristics in both positive and negative fashions. When people rely on stereotypes, they run the risk of ignoring individual differences of the members of the evaluated group. While stereotypes can be based on actual perceived differences among groups, it is more often the case that stereotypes are erroneous generalizations about

groups that lack empirical evidence. Finally, stereotypes provide a rationalization for prejudiced behavior against people whom one perceives as "different".

In the specific case of Mexico, at the time of the Spanish conquest and after Mexico's independence, indigenous people were mainly working in the rural sector, and when living in cities they were concentrated in manual labor. Throughout Mexico's economic development, the poor and excluded sectors of society have been mainly indigenous people. Therefore, according to Campbell and LeVine (1972), there are some stereotypes that should overlap with the ethnic cleavage in Mexico:

A. Rural groups are seen as: country-bumpkin, unsophisticated, confused, guileless and ill (156).

B. Manual workers are seen as: strong, stupid, pleasure-loving and improvident (157).

As the relations between indigenous and non-indigenous people became more institutionalized, the social stereotypes attached to indigenous people acquired certain "social validity" (1972: 159). Indigenous people did not have access to the same resources (education, technology, basic needs, job training, etc.); therefore, the stereotypes became a sort of "self-fulfilling prophecy."

This work assumes that there is always a tension between indigenous and European heritages for mestizos, who have a bias towards European heritage. The Mexican intellectual and political elites developed a sort of assimilating racism through which indigenous people were assimilated as long as they mixed with Europeans, a process of progressive whiteness (Gall, 2004).

In terms of racial phenotypes, the persistence and expression of stereotypes and prejudice depends on whether the person discriminated against bears phenotypical traits that clearly identify him or her as a member of the undesirable group (Maddox, 2004). These stereotypes affect people's political behavior. As an example, Terkildsen (1993) shows that non-Hispanic White voters are less prejudiced towards, and tend to vote more for, an African American candidate who depicts more European than African phenotypes. Hochschild and her colleagues (2004) also show that non-Hispanic White voters would rather vote for minority candidates who look more European.

The hypotheses I test in this paper are the following:

- Stereotype hypothesis: Mexicans are generally cognizant that more negative stereotypes are attached to indigenous phenotypes than to European phenotypes.
- Social class hypothesis: Mexicans, based solely on people's phenotypic appearance, will tend to identify indigenous people as poor while identifying European individuals as wealthy.
- Candidate hypothesis: All participants will tend to favor an electoral candidate with certain racial phenotypes (i.e. European) over an electoral candidate with other phenotypes (i.e. indigenous).
- Ideology hypothesis: Subjects will tend to locate the European candidate to the right of the indigenous candidate, who in turn will be located to the left of the mestizo one. As European phenotypes are associated with wealthy people, voters will think that a candidate with such appearance would prefer more market-oriented policies. As indigenous phenotypes are associated with low-income individuals, a candidate with such appearance will tend prefer to prefer more redistributive policies in voters' eyes.

A good methodological approach to test this theory of phenotypic prejudice is through experiments in controlled environments. Through experiments, the researcher is able to isolate the factors influencing participants' reactions, so they have strong internal validity (McGraw *et al.,* 2003). The existence of phenotypic prejudice has not been tested among Mexicans, so it is important to guarantee that participants' answers in the research are produced by the phenotypic stimuli.

In the following section, I discuss the experiments designed to test these hypotheses, the analysis of the data, and the main findings.

Research Design and Results

Stereotype Experiment

The experiment consisted of three different sections. The first section of the experiment mapped how Mexicans group other Mexicans solely based on their phenotypic appearance. Subjects looked at a set of pictures and were asked to group them. If phenotypes do not matter for Mexicans' interactions, then subjects should not categorize others according to the phenotypic appearance. The second section was designed to test whether subjects' evaluation of an individual varies depending on: *a)* the subject's own phenotypic appearance, and *b)* the individual's phenotypic appearance, by priming phenotypic stereotypes. The purpose of the third section was to

explore the content of socially known stereotypes associated with different phenotypes among Mexicans. In this last section, which is the section I discuss in this paper, subjects are made aware of the person's phenotypic appearance so they can consciously list traits socially associated with that person's phenotypic characteristics.[5]

In the third section of the experiment, subjects looked at a picture attached to a sheet of paper of a male individual with European, mestizo, or indigenous phenotypes. The pictures used were selected from nine pictures. Of the nine pictures, three depict European individuals, another three depict mestizos, and the last set of three depicts indigenous individuals. All the pictures are of fictitious people made from hybridized photographs of real models to appear as European, mestizo, or indigenous.[6] On the sheet of paper, subjects were asked to write all the traits they could think other Mexicans would attribute to that person. Subjects were told that the researcher was not interested in their personal beliefs or whether they approve of what other people would think. By using this strategy, the researcher was forcing subjects to be conscious of stereotypes associated with people's phenotypic appearance. The instructions in this section are:

"In this part, I just want to ask you to think about the way people, in general, think about other individuals depending on the way they look. I am not interested in your personal beliefs.

Please, look at the picture of this person and write down the way other people in Mexican society would think about him before talking to him:

What are his qualities, flaws, and characteristics? Please list any number of characteristics you could think of that other people would think about when looking at this person regardless of whether you agree or not with their opinions."

Data collection

Data were collected at three universities in Mexico City between February and March of 2007. A total of 136 undergraduate students participated. The students were mostly enrolled in social science majors (e.g. political science, international relations, economics, sociology, etc.) One of the universities is private, and the other two are public. Access to the students was granted with prior approval of their professors, who told the students that their

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[5] As I will only discuss the findings from the third section of this experiment, I have omitted the experiment's chronology from the main paper. This information is available from the author at the reader's request.
[6] Most of the pictures used to create the stimuli are from the project "La Cara del Mexicano" (The Mexican Face), whose authors collected pictures of 2890 Mexican people from different parts of the country. None of the originals were used as the stimuli consist of only hybridized pictures. For information related to the project, please look at: (Serrano *et al.,* 1997). I am grateful to Dr. Serrano and Dr. Villanueva for making available a subset of the pictures.

participation was necessary for the researcher to complete her graduate degree.

Of the 136 students, 48% were male and 52% were female, with an average age of 21. Most came from families with a monthly average income between 16,001 and 20,000 Mexican pesos (1,178-1,472 U.S. dollars).

Results

There were three missing cases in which participants expressed their disagreement with the task, arguing that someone could not know someone else just by looking at him. Of the 133 remaining cases, forty-seven subjects saw the picture of a European person, forty-two of a mestizo individual, and forty-four looked at an indigenous individual. The individuals in these conditions were completely indistinguishable from each other in all socio-demographic factors (income, age, gender and appearance).[7]

Coding

The open-ended data were coded by writing down all the words used to describe the person in the picture. Following the stereotype literature, and after looking at the data, twenty-five different categories were created (Carver and Ganellen, 1983; Devine, 1989; Spencer-Rodgers, 2001; Hilton and Von Hippel, 1996). Subjects' responses were grouped under these categories.[8] Multiple words relating to the same category were coded once. Only those categories that received ten percent or more mentions were considered for the analysis as relevant traits.[9] Those traits were used to create three different composites. The first composite includes traits describing stereotypic characteristics related to a person's skills.[10] The second composite contains traits related to a person's bad or good personality.[11] The third composite includes information on social class.[12] Finally, twenty-eight subjects referred to the person's phenotypes when describing him (e.g. "They would think that he is poor because he is dark-skinned", "He is a typical Mexican because of the color of his skin", etc.). A variable was used to

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[7] The results of the One-way ANOVA are in Appendix 1, Table A1.1

[8] Of course, there were responses that did not fit these categories, such as: he likes to vacation, he is young, etc. These responses were not coded as part of stereotypic traits.

[9] The final composites' descriptive statistics are in Appendix 1, Table A1.2.

[10] For example: capable/incapable; enterprising/unenterprising; good student/bad student; good job opportunities/unskilled job; advanced studies/low education; college/technical education, etc.

[11] For example: good/bad person; pleasant/unpleasant; good influence on others/bad influence on others, etc.

[12] The categories used are: Lower Social Class: Low social class; low-wage job; kid from the streets; public school; lower class people would relate to him; low economic chances; etc. Middle Social Class: Middle class; office job; economically stable; middle-income job; not upper class; not lower class. Upper Social Class: upper social class; high social status; wealthy.

identify those cases in which subjects made a direct reference to the person's phenotypes.

Analysis

I present the results of the analysis in two different tables: one includes traits and composites related to personal characteristics, and the second data is on perception of social class membership. As the tables show, there are some interesting patterns in the categories between the experimental conditions.

TABLE 1. AVERAGE SCORE OF EACH TRAIT OR COMPOSITE PER EXPERIMENTAL CONDITION

VARIABLE	EUROPEAN	MESTIZO	INDIGENOUS
SKILLS COMPOSITE	0.085	0.095	0.030
PERSONALITY COMPOSITE	0.133	0.143	0.082
RACE	0.170	0.095	0.364
TRADITIONAL	0.149	0.071	0.205
TYPICAL MEXICAN	0.043	0.071	0.273
N	47	42	44

TABLE 2. AVERAGE SCORE ON PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL CLASS
PER EXPERIMENTAL CONDITION

VARIABLE	EUROPEAN	MESTIZO	INDIGENOUS
SOCIAL CLASS (COMPOSITE)	0.610	0.520	0.183
UPPER CLASS	0.212	0.095	0.000
MIDDLE CLASS	0.340	0.190	0.227
LOWER CLASS	0.043	0.095	0.386
N	47	42	44

In order to inquire into these relationships, an analysis of variance was conducted for each trait or composite. The analysis of variance is a method for analyzing the effect of one factor (in this case the experimental condition) on the mean of a response variable (e.g. social class, skills scale, etc.) An advantage of the analysis of variance over linear regression analysis is that one can get coefficients for all the possible contrasts between the experimental and control conditions clearly showing the effect of each condition. (Young, 2005: C-11)

TABLE 3. DIFFERENCES IN TRAITS ASSOCIATED TO PEOPLE'S PHENOTYPIC APPEARANCE: ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

VARIABLE	EUROPEAN–MESTIZO	EUROPEAN–INDIGENOUS	MESTIZO-INDIGENOUS
SKILLS COMPOSITE	-0.010	0.055*	0.065**
PERSONALITY COMPOSITE	-0.010	0.051$^+$	0.060*
RACE	0.075	-0.194**	-0.269***
TRADITIONAL	0.078	-0.056	-0.134*
TYPICAL MEXICAN	-0.028	-0.230***	-0.202***

TABLE 4. DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL CLASS ASSOCIATED TO PEOPLE'S PHENOTYPIC APPEARANCE: ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

VARIABLE	EUROPEAN–MESTIZO	EUROPEAN–INDIGENOUS	MESTIZO-INDIGENOUS
SOCIAL CLASS (COMPOSITE)	0.090	0.427***	0.337***
UPPER CLASS	0.117*	0.212***	0.095$^+$
MIDDLE CLASS	0.150^{++}	0.113	-0.037
LOWER CLASS	0.052	-0.343***	-0.291***

***p-value ≤ 0.01; **0.01< p-value ≤ 0.05; *0.05< p-value ≤ 0.10
++0.01< p-value ≤ 0.05; +0.05< p-value ≤ 0.10 (one-tail)

Overall, participants gave a more positive assessment to the European and mestizo persons compared to the indigenous one. Subjects evaluated both the European and mestizo persons as individuals with higher skills, better personality, and not as "typical Mexicans" as the indigenous person. It is important to underscore that even if some differences are not large; some of them are highly significant, showing their relevance. In the case of the mention of terms related to racial phenotypes, the analysis shows subjects' propensity to use these terms more often when referring to an indigenous-looking individual. Participants also thought that the indigenous individual would be perceived as more traditional than his mestizo counterpart. Finally, indigenous individuals are always located below the European and mestizo counterparts in the social class hierarchy. Looking at disaggregated social classes, the European people are also located above the mestizo people.

These findings show support for the stereotype hypothesis. Indigenous people are seen as traditional, less skilled, and as members of a lower class. European individuals are seen as more skilled and as members of middle and upper social classes. It is also worth noting that participants in the indigenous conditions mentioned at least one phenotypic characteristic of the individual

significantly more often compared to the individuals in the European and mestizo conditions. If phenotypic appearance did not matter in Mexican society, one would expect that subjects would not have mentioned individuals' phenotypic appearance at all.

The evidence supports this study's argument in that there are stereotypes associated with different phenotypes, and that they are socially transmitted. Finally, these findings speak directly to the type of discrimination that people in Mexico accept as common in their society, supporting the social class hypothesis. Some Mexicans argue that racism does not exist in their society because almost everyone is a member of the same racial group. However, most Mexicans accept that, if discrimination occurs, it is found along the lines of social class. Thus, one could argue that there is no racism in Mexico; there is classism. These findings suggest that Mexicans categorize people in different social classes according to their phenotypic appearance. If someone belongs to a lower class (i.e. an indigenous person), he would also be an unskilled worker, unpleasant, and a less sophisticated person than a member of an upper social class who happens to look European. This evidence suggests that what Mexicans label as "classism" could be masking discrimination based on phenotypes.

The next study explores the effect of phenotypic prejudice on Mexican voters' evaluation of electoral candidates. The research will examine whether voters think that candidates are more/less capable, intelligent, etc. based on candidates' phenotypes, as the findings in this experiment suggest.

Candidate Experiment

Data collection

Data were collected in Mexico during two trips to Mexico City in 2007. Each participant was approached and asked to participate in an academic survey examining the way voters evaluate independent candidates. Subjects received monetary compensation ($50 Mexican pesos) for their participation.

The sample in Mexico City consists of 250 Mexicans. Participants were recruited at shopping malls, coffee shops, downtown plazas, and office buildings. The characteristics of the sample were as follows: men comprised a slight majority of subjects (55%); the average annual income was in the middle of the scale, 0.49 ($72,000-$96,000 Mexican pesos); the participants' average educational level was high school completion; and the average age was 34 years. In spite of conducting a random assignment of the subjects to each experimental condition, there are some statistical significant differences on subjects' income ($F_{3,\ 246}$=2.79, p-value=0.04) and gender ($F_{3,\ 246}$=2.36, p-value=0.07) across conditions. Therefore, the analysis of the data includes the

usual socio-demographic variables to control for any effect that they might have on the variable of interest.

Instructions

After the participants read and signed a consent form, they were given a questionnaire and a sheet of paper that included the information about three male candidates who were supposedly running for governor independently in the state of Yucatan.

After finishing the questionnaire, subjects were debriefed and learned the true purpose of the research.

Information exposure

The participants read the candidate information on a sheet of paper that included a picture of each candidate; the control condition omitted candidates' pictures. The information in the handout included personal information about the candidates (birth place, college attended, professional career, names of wives and children), as well as their political positions on four less-controversial issues at that time: health insurance, the environment, social spending, and state-federal relations. The candidates' positions varied slightly so that the first candidate could be placed at the center-left of the ideological spectrum, the second candidate at the center, and the third candidate at the center-right of the spectrum.

The pictures were manipulated using the same morphing software that had been employed for the stereotype experiment. The picture of the candidate ideologically positioned in the center depicts the target candidate whose appearance varies in each condition. All pictures morphed two pictures of "real" people. For example, for the European condition, two European individuals were morphed to create the target candidate. The same procedure was followed for the target candidate in the indigenous condition. The mestizo candidate was created by morphing the pictures of the European and indigenous candidates. The candidates located to the left and right of the target candidate, whose pictures do not vary, were created using three pictures of European individuals. The purpose of using three pictures was to maintain some physical similarity between these images, as each of them shares one picture. There were two sets of experimental pictures.

Evaluation of the candidate and willingness to vote for him

The first set of questions in the questionnaire dealt with participants' voting choice and their evaluation of the three candidates on nine different traits. The voting question read: "If you lived in Yucatan and these were all the

candidates competing for the election, for whom would you vote?"[13] Participants evaluated each candidate on nine different traits: intelligence; competence; industriousness; trustworthiness; empathy; likeability; honesty; capacity to keep campaign promises if elected; and good leadership. They also located the candidate on an ideological scale from left to right.

Measures

Dependent variables

- <u>Individual evaluative traits</u>: All the traits were measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 0-1, where 0 means "Disagree Strongly" and 1 means "Agree Strongly".
- <u>Evaluative scale</u>: Participants' evaluations of the traits of the target candidate were averaged to create an evaluative scale. The scale had a mean of 0.580 and a Cronbach α of 0.901.[14]
- <u>Vote intention</u>: This variable took the value of 1 when participants opted to vote for the target candidate and a value of 0 otherwise.
- <u>Ideology</u>: This is a 7-point scale coded from 0 to 1, where 0 means extremely to the left and 1 extremely to the right of the political spectrum.

Independent variables

- <u>Experimental conditions</u>: There were three experimental conditions: European candidate, mestizo candidate, and indigenous candidate, as well as the control group. Three dummy variables were created for the experimental conditions. The control group was the excluded category in the model.
- <u>Control variables</u>: Participant's phenotypes,[15] age, education, gender, and income were included as control variables. Education is a 10-point scale coded from 0 (no education) to 1 (graduate degree); gender takes the value of 0 (male) and 1 (female); income is an 8-point scale coded from 0-1; and age is a continuous variable. Subjects' ideology was introduced when looking at candidate's ideological positioning.[16]

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[13] The question in Spanish reads: "Si usted viviera en Yucatán y éstos fueran todos los candidatos para gobernador, ¿por cuál de los tres votaría usted?"

[14] The traits statistics are in Appendix 1, Table A1.4.

[15] A Mexican national and the researcher independently judged the participants' phenotypic appearances. Their eyes, nose, mouth, skin color, and hair were evaluated on a 5-point scale from 0-1, where 0 indicated White and 1 indicated indigenous. The final phenotypic measure was calculated by averaging both judges' final scores. The graph with the distribution of the phenotypic measure is located in Appendix 1, Graph A1.1.

[16] There was not a statistically significant difference in subjects' ideological positioning across conditions. Therefore, this variable was only used in the analysis of voters' evaluation of the candidate's ideological positioning.

- ▪ <u>Influence of Phenotypes on Subjects Voting Behavior</u>. In general, the candidate hypothesis predicts that all participants will tend to vote for an electoral candidate with certain racial phenotypes over an electoral candidate with other phenotypes. Following the Mestizo ideology and the findings from the stereotype study, the expectation is that participants will prefer to vote for the European candidate over the indigenous candidate.

TABLE 5. VOTE FOR TARGET CANDIDATE

| VARIABLE	COEFF.	STD. ERROR
EUROPEAN CONDITION	0.959[**]	0.390
MESTIZO CONDITION	-0.791	0.625
INDIGENOUS CONDITION	-0.199	0.456
PHENOTYPES	-1.899[*]	1.117
AGE	1.830[***]	0.693
GENDER	-0.282	0.348
INCOME	0.840	0.752
EDUCATION	-1.016	0.953
CONSTANT	-0.529	0.940
COX & SNELL- R^2		0.10
NAGELKERKE R^2		0.15
N		229

[***]p-value ≤ 0.01; [**]0.01< p-value ≤ 0.05; [*]0.05< p-value ≤ 0.10

As one can see, the logistic regression supports the candidate hypothesis. The model shows a clear positive effect for the European candidate over the Control condition, regardless of participants' phenotypes (p-value=0.01). The European condition has a positive and statistically significant effect over the mestizo (z=8.49; p-value=0.00), and the indigenous (z=6.60; p-value=0.01) conditions.

Finally, participants' phenotypic appearance has a slightly significant and negative effect on the probability of voting for the target candidate (p-value=0.09).

The predicted probabilities of voting for the candidates show the large and positive effect of European phenotypes in Mexico City

GRAPH 1.[17] PREDICTED VOTING PREFERENCES FOR THE TARGET CANDIDATE
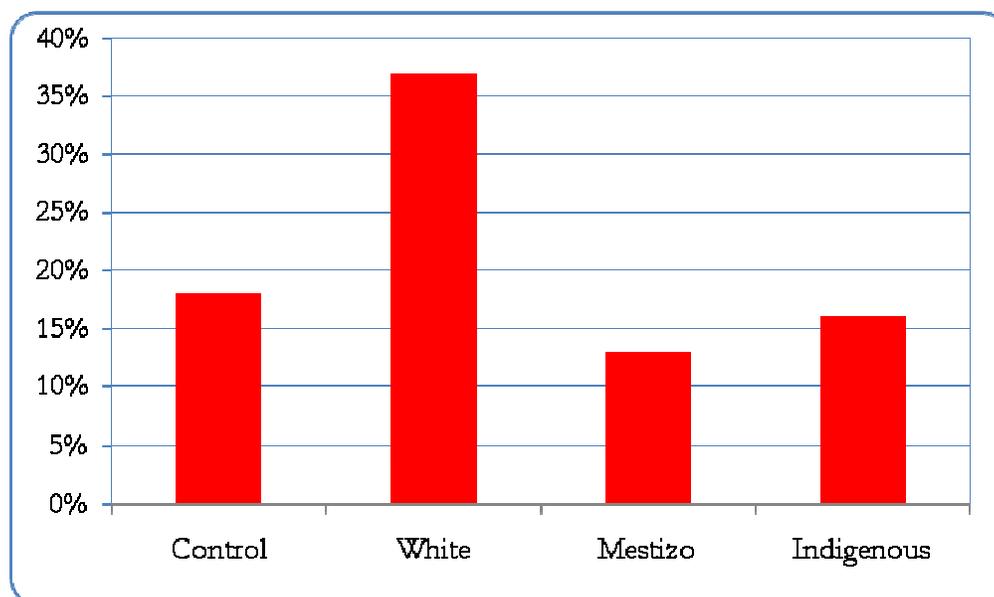
Influence of Phenotypes on Subjects' Candidate Evaluation

The influence of stereotypes on subjects' candidate evaluation was analyzed by looking at their effect on each evaluative trait, and on an overall evaluative scale built from all the individual traits. The findings show a weak effect of phenotypes on people's overall evaluation of the candidate, with a stronger effect on people's perception of the candidate's leadership abilities.

As in the case of the voting variables, the main hypothesis predicts that all participants, regardless of their phenotypes, will tend to evaluate more positively an electoral candidate with certain racial phenotypes over an electoral candidate with other phenotypes. The expectation is that participants will evaluate more positively the European candidate, followed by the mestizo candidate, coming in last place the indigenous candidate.

The effect of the target candidate's phenotypes on subjects' evaluation of his abilities was assessed by conducting an analysis of variance that allowed contrasting the effect that phenotypes had on every trait. There were significant results in two variables: the overall evaluative scale and the stronger effects for the leadership trait.

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[17] The control variables are set to their average when calculating the predicted values. These values are: income, 0.493; education, 0.626; age, 34; phenotypes, 0.554.

TABLE 6. DIFFERENCES ON OVERALL EVALUATION AND LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT OF THE TARGET CANDIDATE BY EXPERIMENTAL CONDITION: ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE[18]

VARIABLE	CONTROL-EUROPEAN	CONTROL-MESTIZO	CONTROL-INDIGENOUS	EUROPEAN-MESTIZO	EUROPEAN-INDIGENOUS	MESTIZO-INDIGENOUS
EVALUATION	-0.200	0.021	0.017	0.041$^+$	0.037$^+$	-0.005
LEADERSHIP	-0.066*	0.005	0.013	0.071**	0.079**	0.008

***p-value ≤ 0.01; *0.01< p-value ≤ 0.05; *0.05< p-value ≤ 0.10
$^{++}$0.01< p-value ≤ 0.05; $^+$0.05< p-value ≤ 0.10 (one-tail)

These results show that overall, the European candidate receives a more favorable evaluation than the mestizo and indigenous candidates under a one-tail test. The candidates' phenotypes matter more for people's assessment of his leadership abilities. In this trait, as expected, the European candidate is significantly perceived as a better leader than the other three conditions, including the control condition.

Influence of Phenotypes on Candidate's Ideological Positioning

Even though the target candidate was located in the middle of the political spectrum, subjects assessed his ideological leaning. They answered the question:

"We hear a lot of talk these days about left and right. Here is a 7-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from "extremely left" to "extremely right".

IN THIS SCALE, WHERE WOULD YOU LOCATE PEDRO SEGURA?

EXTREMELY LEFT	LEFT	CENTER-LEFT	CENTER	CENTER-RIGHT	RIGHT	EXTREMELY RIGHT"

An analysis of variance was conducted to check whether phenotypes affected where subjects located the ideological positioning of the candidate.

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[18] This model includes income, age, education, phenotypes, and ideology as covariates.

TABLE 7. DIFFERENCES ON TARGET CANDIDATE'S IDEOLOGICAL POSITIONING BY EXPERIMENTAL CONDITION: ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE[19]

VARIABLE	CONTROL-EUROPEAN	CONTROL-MESTIZO	CONTROL-INDIGENOUS	EUROPEAN-MESTIZO	EUROPEAN-INDIGENOUS	MESTIZO-INDIGENOUS
IDEOLOGY	-0.104**	0.035	-0.001	0.139***	0.103**	-0.036

*** p-value ≤ 0.01; ** 0.01< p-value ≤ 0.05; * 0.05< p-value ≤ 0.10

The results show partial support for the ideology hypothesis as subjects tend to locate the European candidate to the right of the political spectrum of all the other candidates. There are not significant differences on the ideological positioning of the mestizo and indigenous candidates when compared to each other or to the control condition.

Discussion

This paper theorized, based on the study of the mestizo ideology, that people of Mexican origin would assign positive stereotypical traits to European individuals, and negative ones to indigenous individuals. The stereotype experiment tested this hypothesis. In a free-response task, subjects listed all the traits that other people would ascribe to an individual whose picture was included in the task. The results of this study show that people are cognizant of more negative traits attached to indigenous-looking individuals than to mestizo or European-looking persons.

In general, participants gave higher scores to the European person on the level of skills mastered and economic status when compared to the indigenous person. The mestizo individual also scored higher than the indigenous person on the level of skills mastered, as well as on the quality of his character. Participants characterized the indigenous individual as poor, with low skills and an unpleasant personality, who represented the "typical Mexican individual" and who was more conservative or traditional in terms of beliefs and lifestyle. In contrast to the participants in the European and mestizo conditions, participants in the indigenous one tended to mention a racial characteristic of the person when describing other people's reactions towards him. The sole mention of phenotypic characteristics shows their relevance among Mexicans' evaluation of others.

These findings support the stereotype hypothesis as subjects listed significantly more negative traits when evaluating the indigenous person than when evaluating the others. These results speak directly to the idea that discrimination in Mexico occurs only along the lines of social class (Degler,

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[19] This model includes income, age, education, phenotypes, and ideology as covariates.

1971; Freyre, 1946; Pierson, 1942; Tannenbaum, 1947). Participants' responses demonstrate that when Mexicans think of a poor individual, they picture an indigenous-looking individual; when they think of a wealthy person, they picture a European-looking individual. As Mexico's racial discourse does not employ the formal language often used to talk about different groups, social class might cover that gap by providing people with a language with which they can differentiate "us" from "them".

As this experiment showed more negative socially-held stereotypes associated to indigenous-looking people, it could be expected that when people evaluate a candidate and the only thing that varies among candidates is their racial appearance, indigenous-looking candidates will do poorly when compared to European-looking candidates. The findings from the candidate experiment show just that. Subjects tend to vote more for a European candidate, who they consider to be a better leader, leaning more towards the right of the political spectrum than an indigenous candidate.

One of the possible criticisms to this research is that the stereotype experiment relies on a convenient sample composed of undergraduate students that, independently of being a diverse sample of them, is limited by their social standing, age, etc. The fact that the findings from this experiment are in agreement with the findings from the candidate experiment which sample is more diverse, should assure the reader about the results obtained. Finally, undergraduate students tend to be more educated than the average citizen so the expression of prejudice on their part might underestimate, not overestimate, the mean value of such prejudice among the population at large.

Finally, this research shows the political consequences of phenotypic prejudice among mestizo Mexicans, but one would be mistaken to think that these stereotypes affect only people's political behavior. This research should motivate more studies that look at the economic, social, and cultural consequences of such stereotypes, as well as at people's identity. If we are aware that such discrimination occurs, we can start educating people to overcome such stereotypes in their daily lives.

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