

Racial Disenchantment? Understanding the Relationship between Race, Skin Tone, and Perceptions of Corruption in the U.S.*

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This study analyzes how a person's racial identity and skin tone influence their perception of corruption. Building on existing knowledge about corruption, identity, and racial position, we argue that exposure to prejudice in the United States influences racially minoritized individuals to perceive greater corruption among political leaders and institutions (relative to otherwise similar but non-minoritized people). We call this proposal *Racial Disenchantment Theory*. Our analysis of panel survey data reveals limited support for this theory. Relative to Whites, Blacks are more likely to perceive corruption among political leaders and in government when Republicans lead the executive branch of government, but *less* likely to perceive corruption under Democratic administrations. Latinos' and Asian Americans' perceptions of corruption usually do not differ significantly from those of Whites, although at times they were less likely to perceive corruption than their White counterparts. Finally, we find contradictory relationships between a respondent's skin tone and their perception of corruption. Our overall conclusion is that different groups appear to perceive the same government as more or less corrupt based on their collective experiences and political leanings.

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When a democratic government unfairly favors some groups of people over others, it could be considered a form of political corruption. Corruption is conventionally defined as the abuse of public office for private gain,¹ and harming some groups for the benefit of others is a plausible abuse of public office if done without an earnest and authentic justification linking the action to collective welfare (Warren 2004, 2006). These actions might be particularly emblematic of corruption if they duplicitously exclude some people from having a proportional influence on democratic decision-making. But this kind of corruption may only be perceived by those at the sharp end of unequal treatment; the people who benefit may be oblivious to the inequality or not categorize it as an abuse of public office. In the United States, race is a major locus of unjustifiably unequal treatment. Therefore, we suspect that perception of corruption among Americans may be systematically different by racial and ethnic identity.

A relationship between race and perception of corruption is plausible because existing work already suggests that other facets of identity can shape the perception of corruption. For example, a growing body of research finds that gender is related to individuals' conceptualization and perception of corruption (Bauhr and Charron, 2020; Melgar et al. 2010). Indeed, twenty years of research have firmly established that, at least in some contexts, women are less tolerant of corruption and less willing to engage in it (Wängnerud 2015) although the mechanism by which this relationship operates is a matter of continuing and intensive study.

Building on the racial position model (Zou and Cheryan 2017; Greene et al. 2020; Rivera-Burgos 2023; Perez et al. 2023), we develop a *Racial Disenchantment Theory* arguing that those from racially minoritized backgrounds (Blacks,² Latinos,³ and Asian Americans⁴)

and dark-skinned people will perceive more corruption in government compared to Whites and light-skinned people. People in minoritized groups are regularly exposed to political, social, and cultural reminders of their low standing in the U.S. racial hierarchy. Political parties' platforms and mobilization tactics can also signal to individuals whether they are regarded as full members of society (see Tate 1994; Abrajano 2010; Garcia Bedolla and Michelson 2012). In general, we argue that unequal treatment experienced by racially minoritized groups and dark-skinned individuals promotes a sense of disenchantment manifesting itself in perceptions of corruption distinct from that of Whites, light-skinned persons.

In this study we ask new questions inspired by previous work. How much does race influence the perception of corruption in America? To what extent do individuals from racially minoritized groups—Blacks, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and those with dark skin tone—perceive more corruption than their White and light-skinned counterparts? Our answers come from a statistical analysis of time-series cross-sectional data from the General Social Survey (GSS) and the American National Election Study (ANES).

Our study makes multiple empirical and theoretical contributions. First, our study is among the first to measure the effect of racial and ethnic identity and skin tone on perceived prevalence of corruption in the United States over time using large and representative panel data sets. Second, our findings contribute to a sizable body of research on shared identity, skin tone and contact with the criminal justice system by explaining how visible identity characteristics impact a person's perception of themselves and their government. Third, our theory bridges three literatures that are seldom linked: corruption, identity, and racial position. Finally, we raise important questions about the measurement of corruption,

already recognized as a challenging concept to measure (e.g., Sampford et al. 2006; Heywood 2015). Because corrupt activities are typically secret by nature, it is difficult to directly observe them; it is therefore common to measure the *perception* of corruption in a country using expert or mass survey instruments (Galtung 2006; Heywood, 2015). But if people from different groups perceive distinct levels of corruption in a government, this measurement strategy requires reconsideration and adjustment.

Individual Characteristics, Inequality and Corruption

There is a growing body of research that examines the relationship between individual characteristics and corruption and finds a strong link between the two. Demographic attributes that are associated with a marginalized status—like being a woman, divorced, unemployed or uneducated—are positively related to discerning corruption in cross-national survey data (Melgar et al. 2010). A study of the perception of corruption in road-building projects throughout Indonesia (Olken 2009, 959) reinforces these findings:

Individual-level biases in reported perceptions appear quite significant...better educated respondents and male respondents tend to report more corruption; those who participate in the types of social activity where the project was likely to be discussed, those who live near the project, and (naturally) those who are related to the head of the project all tend to report less corruption. Taken together, these individual-level biases are highly significant... [and] large in magnitude as well.

As another example, Bauhr and Charron's (2020) analysis of data from the third wave of the European Quality of Government Index Survey (Charron et al. 2019) finds that women

and men in the European Union perceive corruption differently. Men perceive more greed corruption (i.e., corruption to gain unfair advantages, benefit one's financial standing) and women perceive more need corruption (i.e., corruption to gain access to essential public services). This pattern of findings suggests that both the perception of corruption and what counts as corruption may be influenced by aspects of a person's identity that affect their treatment by society and the government.

Inequality is also associated with higher perceived corruption. Although inequality is not an individual identity characteristic, greater income inequality in a country can cause reduced trust in institutions and each other by the residents of that country. It also "adversely affects social norms about corruption and people's beliefs about the legitimacy of rules and institutions" (Jong-sung and Khagram 2005, 136). These individual-level beliefs can in turn result in more perceived—and actual—corruption (Morris and Klesner 2010; Uslaner 2008; Rothstein and Uslaner 2005).⁵ As a result, those who perceive greater (racial) inequality in the United States may also perceive greater corruption in its government and reduced confidence in its legitimacy.

The Effects of Racial, Ethnic Identity

While existing research has made some headway in uncovering how identity and socioeconomic status can shape perceptions of corruption, one significant aspect of identity that has been overlooked by most corruption studies is race and ethnicity. The experiences that come with being a racial minority and minoritized (e.g., African American, Latino, Asian American) can play a significant role in shaping one's views toward government. Recent research has recognized that racial hierarchy in the United States should not be regarded

along a single White-Black dimension given the increasing number of individuals identifying as multiracial and the emerging number of immigrants arriving to the US from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asian countries (Hochschild et al. 2012). Instead, the racial order consists of at least two dimensions since racial minoritized groups do not experience the same types of prejudice and discrimination (see Zou and Cheryan 2017; Corral 2020; Rivera-Burgos 2023; Perez et al. 2023). The Racial Position Model developed by Zou and Cheryan argues for a two-dimensional racial position model centering on individuals' perceptions of how they are judged and how they regard others with a focus on inferiority prejudice and cultural foreigner prejudice (Zou and Cheryan 2017, 697). On the inferiority-superiority spectrum, Blacks are positioned as inferior to Whites, and Asian Americans as superior to Latinos. On the foreigner-American spectrum, Hispanics are positioned as more foreign than African Americans and Whites as more American than Asian Americans. In general, Whites perceive themselves as superior to and more American than the other racial and ethnic groups. Still, intra-group differences yield insightful information of racial, ethnic group experiences. For instance, nearly one third of US-born Latinos experienced cultural foreigner prejudice, suggesting the limitations of nativity and the power that Latinos' phenotype and skin tone can have on how they are treated (Zou and Cheryan 2017).

Research on support for the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement sheds light on the effects of racial ordering and individuals' dissatisfaction with government institutions. The BLM movement's driving impetus is to remove white supremacy and bring about policy change in response to racial injustices committed against Blacks by punitive actors and institutions. Blacks exhibit the greatest affinity towards it, while Whites' support trails that of other groups (Riley et al. 2020). Recognizing that discrimination perpetuates racial

inequalities is positively associated with Latino support for the BLM movement, while being foreign-born can also affect Latino outlook on Black social justice campaigns. While foreign-born Latinos are less knowledgeable of the BLM movement than their native-born counterparts, their support for it and recognition of its effectiveness is greater than that of U.S.-born Hispanics once they become aware of its mission and presence. This attitudinal discrepancy between native and foreign-born Latinos might be because those born abroad are less engaged with social or political institutions and hesitant to engage with law enforcement relative to their native US counterparts. Further, being Afro-Latino is positively related to commitment to the BLM movement: Afro-Latinos are more aware, supportive, and cognizant of the BLM movement's effectiveness than other Latinos (Corral 2020). These results suggest that identifying with Blacks and being an immigrant can create opportunities for Latinos to develop coalitions with African Americans.

Research on identification with other minoritized groups can also expand our understanding of the ways in which identity can be tied to individuals' perception of their status in society. Though Hispanics adopt greater identification with the term "People of Color" than Asian Americans, exposure to discourse highlighting marginalization of another minoritized group heightens Latinos' and Asian Americans' identification with the term "People of Color." Additionally, identifying as a "person of color" results in greater support for policies that benefit racial outgroups (Perez et al. 2023). "Women of Color" is another critical identity that transcends race and one in which Blacks and Latinas are familiar with and with which they identify. Given the intra-group differences that exist among the Latino population, Latinas born in the US and Afro Latinas are significantly more likely to identify with and value the term "Women of Color" than their counterparts. Additionally, Black and

Latinas who identify as women of color are more likely to believe that Women of Color candidates are important (Matos et al. 2023). Thus, shared marginalization has the ability to unify racial minorities not only by identity but also by their political attitudes and behavior.

Studies on individuals' predisposition to identify as American also shape our understanding of the extent that race is related to views toward belonging and nationalism. Whites adopt greater allegiance to their country than Latinos, Blacks and Asians, respectively. Whites have the strongest sense of belonging in the US relative to Asians, African Americans, and Hispanics. Experiences with racial discrimination decreases the extent to which racially minoritized groups regard themselves as American (Greene et al. 2020). Thus, the racial order (and the experiences that come with it) are related to the extent that individuals feel that they belong and feel allegiance to one's country (see Masuoka and Junn, 2013; Wilkinson 2015; Greene et al. 2020).

Indirect and direct contact with punitive institutions and actors can sustain a racial order in the US and affect public opinion and political behavior. Racial minorities and the poor have disproportionate involuntary contact with police and prisons (Baumgartner et al. 2018; Walker 2020). Contact with the criminal justice system in the form of incarceration and police encounters has numerous deleterious effects. Not only does it depress nonwhites' trust in government and likelihood to turn out to vote, but it also augments their sense of injustice and perceived discrimination against their specific racial or ethnic group (Lerman and Weaver 2014; Walker 2014; Walker 2020). Repeated encounters with law enforcement can also influence racial minorities' views of citizenship and their place in society (Epp et al. 2014). These encounters can result in negative views toward the police which can manifest

themselves as cynicism about the prospects of being treated fairly and equitably (Peffley and Hurwitz 2010; Lerman and Weaver 2014; Walker et al. 2020). The negative effects of involuntary contact with law enforcement can even extend to those with proximal contact with law enforcement, such as loved ones who witness the system in action (Walker 2014).

Contact with immigration law enforcement also influences political perspectives and behavior. While Hispanics encounter more interactions with immigration law enforcement than other racial and ethnic groups, the effects of proximal contact with immigration law enforcement can affect everyone. Individuals whose loved ones have had involuntary contact with immigration police are more likely to adopt a sense of injustice, a belief that law enforcement is biased and discriminatory, and to participate in political protests (Walker et al. 2020). Residing in a high deportation environment also matters. Exposure to deportation hinders the positive effects of acculturation and rebuffs White political norms: compared to their unacculturated counterparts (noncitizen, Spanish-speaking immigrants), acculturated Latinos (third generation, English-speaking US citizens) do not adopt restrictive immigration preferences (a White political norm) when residing in an area with a high deportation threat (Roman 2023). Increased exposure to immigrant policing is negatively related to Latinos' trust in the health information that they receive from government agencies, irrespective of native status (Cruz Nichols et al. 2018). Thus, residing in a hostile immigration environment or learning about a loved one's experiences with immigration police can affect individuals' views toward government and society and their place in it.

Theoretical Expectations

We build on existing research studying support for the Black Lives Matter movement, shared identity, and contact with punitive institutions and extend it to individuals' perceptions of corruption to construct a *Racial Disenchantment Theory*. This theory posits that being a member of a racially minoritized group (Black, Latino, Asian Americans, dark-skinned) prompts individuals to adopt a specific worldview that heightens their perception of corruption. Experiencing racial discrimination creates a sense of disenchantment with government that manifests itself in the perception that government institutions and their respective leaders are unethical and deviant.

Many racially minoritized groups have shared political attitudes and experiences. Blacks' and Latinos' encounters with the criminal justice system are quite distinct from those of Whites. Relative to Whites, Latinos, and African Americans are more likely to be discriminated against in the workplace and racially profiled, ticketed, arrested and subject to unproductive searches by law enforcement (Verdugo & Verdugo, 1984; Epp et al. 2014; Baumgartner et al. 2018). Both groups are more likely to have little or no access to quality housing and education, before or after contact with the criminal justice system (Alexander 2010). Asian Americans also have a long history of experiencing racial discrimination with the Covid-19 pandemic being the latest incident. Since the pandemic began, nearly half of Asian Americans noted that they experienced an incident of discrimination based on their race and more noted being subjected to racial slurs or jokes than any other racial group (Ruiz et al. 2021). Further, Hispanics and Asian Americans experience cultural foreigner prejudice and adopt the term "People of Color" (Zou and Cheryan 2017; Perez et al. 2023). These racial inequalities translate to unique perspectives. When it comes to the sense of injustice created

by law enforcement and support for the BLM movement, differences exist across various racial and ethnic groups and particularly when comparing Whites to minoritized groups (Blacks, Latinos, Asian Americans). Whites express the lowest sense of injustice and support for the movement, and Blacks express the highest sense of injustice and approval of BLM (see Walker et al. 2020; Riley et al. 2020; Menace Horowitz 2021). Critical differences also exist between racially minoritized groups and Whites when it comes feelings of belonging and allegiance to the U.S. (Greene et al. 2020). The same results hold when it comes to solutions to address racial injustices. More than half of racially minoritized groups believe that increased public attention to the history of racism and slavery in the US is good for society while less than half of Whites agree (Pew Research Center 2021).

Skin tone is another form of visible identity that can affect daily experiences and perspectives. Dark-skinned Blacks, Asian Americans, and Latinos are more likely to experience and perceive discrimination than their light-skinned counterparts (Hill 2000; Hunter 2002; Tran et al. 2017; Gonzalez-Barrera 2019; Walker et al. 2020; Noe-Bustamente et al. 2021). Skin color also affects racially minoritized groups' class and social standing with those who are light-skinned holding a higher socioeconomic status than those with a darker skin color (Hunter 2002; Hochschild & Weaver, 2007; Ryabov 2016). The inequality that individuals experience because of their skin tone can affect how they regard other racial groups (Edwards 1973; Wilkinson and Earle 2013) and their perception of their opportunities to progress (Noe-Bustamente et al. 2021). Many Latinos believe that skin tone affects their ability to get ahead in the US: more than half believe that having a light skin color improves their chances of advancing in society. These perspectives were comparable between US-born and foreign-born Latinos (Noe-Bustamente et al. 2021). Skin tone can also

be related to Whites' and Latinos' political attitudes (Yadon and Ostfeld 2020; Ostfeld and Yadon 2022; Matos et al. 2023).

In this study, we deduce from this previous work that a person's race, ethnicity, and/or skin tone can influence their perception of corruption in government. Repeated experience of discrimination against them by politicians, civil servants, and institutions—including law enforcement officers, the courts, bureaucratic agencies, campaigning politicians, and others—might undermine that person's belief that they are an integral and valued member of society or make them cynical about being treated fairly (Peffley and Hurwitz 2010; Rothstein and Uslaner 2010; Epp et al. 2014; Lerman and Weaver 2014; Cruz et al. 2018; Walker et al. 2020). It may lead minoritized people to feel that the United States *says* that treats all its citizens equally, but it *actually* helps already-privileged groups at the expense of others for no reason other than racial or ethnic identity. Inasmuch that corruption in a democracy is duplicitous, unjustifiable exclusion from equal treatment (Warren 2004, 335), we would therefore expect members of minoritized groups to experience (and perceive) more corruption in the U.S. government. We predict that members of these groups will believe that there is more widespread abuse of public office for private gain because they are acutely aware when the government violates the norm of equal treatment under law to favor some groups above others. Those who experience cultural foreigner prejudice and inferior prejudice are more likely to adopt a disenchanting mindset toward government institutions and officials which manifests itself in believing that government is not ethical nor trustworthy. Based on these predictions, we develop the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: Individuals from minoritized backgrounds (i.e., Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans) are more likely to perceive corruption in the United States government than their White counterparts.

Hypothesis 2: Dark-skinned individuals are more likely to perceive corruption in the United States government than those who are light skinned.

Data & Methods

To test our hypotheses, we employ data from the American National Election Study (ANES) and the General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS data come from surveys conducted in 2000, 2004, 2006, 2014 and 2016. ANES data come from biennial surveys between 1984 and 2016. There are many issues associated with conceptualizing and measuring corruption thus it is critical that we rely upon multiple measures of corruption to study it comprehensively over time (see Sampford et al. 2006; Heywood et al. 2015; Sundstrom et al. 2016; Dalton and Esarey 2023).

GSS Measures

The variables we use from the General Social Survey are shown in Table 1. Our key dependent variables are measures of perceived corruption, all on a 1-5 scale (where 5 indicates the most corruption). The variables are responses to the following questions:

1. To get all the way to the top in America today, you have to be corrupt.
2. How widespread do you think corruption is in the public service in America?

3. In your opinion, about how many politicians in America are involved in corruption?
4. And in your opinion, about how many government administrators in America are involved in corruption?

These questions resemble similar batteries of corruption perception questions those found in the 2017-2022 World Values Survey (Haerpfer et al. 2022) and in the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) as well those used in individual corruption survey research projects (Melgar et al. 2010; Ma et al. 2022). Because not every question is asked in every year, our analyses indicate the years for which data is available at the top of the results column.

Table 1: Summary Statistics for the GSS Dataset

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Median	Max
Corruption: Get to the Top	1,193	2.393	1.103	1	2	5
Corruption: Public Service	2,612	3.132	0.931	1	3	5
Corruption: Politicians	2,826	3.309	0.978	1	3	5
Corruption: Government administrators	2,802	3.130	0.965	1	3	5
Age	6,617	47.384	17.167	18	46	89
Party ID (7-point scale, D to R)	6,492	2.755	1.975	0	3	6
Race: White	6,616	0.769	0.421	0	1	1
Race: Black	6,616	0.149	0.356	0	0	1
Race: Hispanic	6,616	0.036	0.185	0	0	1
Race: Asian	6,616	0.027	0.162	0	0	1
Race: Other	6,616	0.019	0.135	0	0	1
Born Outside the USA	5,155	0.106	0.309	0	0	1
Sex: Female	6,641	0.556	0.497	0	1	1
Years of Education	6,630	13.552	2.949	0	13	20
Income (in 10k USD, inflation-adjusted)	5,944	5.055	4.283	0.036	3.970	17.827
Interviewer-Assessed Skin Tone (1 = lightest)	2,271	2.325	1.806	1	2	10
Region: Northeast	6,641	0.167	0.373	0	0	1
Region: North Central	6,641	0.239	0.426	0	0	1
Region: South	6,641	0.373	0.484	0	0	1
Region: West	6,641	0.221	0.415	0	0	1
Year: 2000	6,641	0.180	0.384	0	0	1
Year: 2004	6,641	0.216	0.411	0	0	1
Year: 2006	6,641	0.223	0.416	0	0	1
Year: 2014	6,641	0.178	0.382	0	0	1
Year: 2016	6,641	0.204	0.403	0	0	1

Our key independent variables are racial self-identification and skin tone. Respondent skin color was gauged with one item: “Interviewer: please record the color from the color card that most closely corresponds to the respondent’s facial coloring” on a 1-10 scale, 1 being the lightest coloration. Participants were also asked “What is your race? Indicate one or more races that you consider yourself to be.” This variable allowed respondents to identify as Hispanic. Using the data obtained from that variable, we created individual dummy (0-1) variables for respondents who identified as Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander,⁶ and Other (including Native Americans). Our multivariate analyses control for demographic characteristics including age, education, partisan identification, income, gender, and region.

ANES Measures

Our ANES data come from the ANES cumulative data set and includes surveys fielded between 1982 and 2018. Table 2 shows the number of observations corresponding to each year in the data.

Table 2: Observations per Year in the ANES Cumulative Data Set

year	1982	1984	1986	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2008	2012	2016
N	1,379	1,896	1,062	1,760	1,947	2,243	1,759	1,529	1,274	1,549	1,344	1,063	2,091	5,891	4,213

Table 3 shows summary statistics for the key variables taken from the ANES. Three corruption-related variables make up an index that we use to measure each respondent’s view of corruption in America. The variables are responses to these three questions:

1. “Do you think that quite a few of the people running the government are crooked, not very many are, or do you think hardly any of them are crooked?” 1 = hardly any of them are crooked, 2 = not very many are crooked, and 3 = quite a few are crooked.
2. “Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all the people?” 1 = “few big interests or 2 = “benefit of all”.
3. “How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, only some of the time or none of the time?” Responses were coded on that four-point scale.

We recoded all three measures so that higher numbers for the response indicated greater perception of corruption. Each of these questions is facially related to the respondent’s perception of corruption but may also overlap with other concepts; for example, those who ideologically disagree with the current administration may not “trust the government in Washington to do what is right” even if they do not believe that administration is corrupt. For this reason, we created a composite corruption measure from these three variables using probabilistic principal components analysis (PPCA) to extract a common factor (Stacklies et al. 2007). PPCA allows imputation of missing values for the constituents of the index when at least one of the three measures is available (Roweis 1997). As indicated in Table 4, all three variables loaded positively on the first principal component (PC1) which explains more than 60% of the variation in these variables; we believe this common factor is perception of corruption. There is a consistent positive (but noisy) relationship among the three measures of corruption, which we would expect because each of these measures does capture corruption perception but is also likely influenced by some

other factors. We carried out Spearman correlation analyses with the measures and the results (see Table A3 in the online appendix) provide us confidence in the strength of composite measure. These questions are similar to corruption perception questions previously used by Uslaner (2008) and Sundstrom et al. (2016).

We label the first principal component extracted from our three ANES variables as “Corruption PCA Score” in Table 3. Higher values of this score indicate a higher perception of corruption by the respondent.

Table 3: Summary Statistics for the ANES Cumulative Data Set

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Median	Max
Corruption PCA Score	31000	0.000	1.143	-3.725	0.405	2.183
Crooked	23518	2.384	0.650	1	2	3
Benefit of a Few	28851	0.728	0.445	0	1	1
What is Right	22752	2.635	0.577	1	3	4
Age	30751	47.285	17.430	17	46	96
Party ID (7-point scale, D to R)	30765	3.695	2.092	1	3	7
Race: White	30810	0.721	0.449	0	1	1
Race: Black	30810	0.131	0.338	0	0	1
Race: Hispanic	30810	0.107	0.309	0	0	1
Race: Other	30810	0.041	0.199	0	0	1
Sex: Male	30952	0.457	0.498	0	0	1
Sex: Female	30952	0.543	0.498	0	1	1
Education: Grade School or less	30700	0.048	0.215	0	0	1
Education: High School	30700	0.385	0.486	0	0	1
Education: Some College	30700	0.291	0.454	0	0	1
Education: College or More	30700	0.276	0.447	0	0	1
Income (5 ordered categories)	27642	2.857	1.143	1	3	5
Region: Northeast	31000	0.167	0.373	0	0	1
Region: North Central	31000	0.248	0.432	0	0	1
Region: South	31000	0.372	0.483	0	0	1
Region: West	31000	0.213	0.409	0	0	1

The two main independent variables in our analyses are racial self-identification and skin tone. Self-identified race is coded into four categories: White non-Hispanic, Black non-Hispanic, Hispanic, and Other or multiple races non-Hispanic.⁷ Perceptions of skin tone were not available in the ANES cumulative data file but were available in the 2012 and 2016 individual time series files; summary statistics for these individual files are available in Tables A1 and A2 in the online appendix.⁸ This variable is comparable to the Yadon-Ostfeld skin color scale (Ostfeld and Yadon 2022), where part of the scale includes a self-assessment of individuals' skin tone ranging from 1 to 10, with 1 being the lightest skin tone.⁹ Our multivariate analyses control for the effects of demographic characteristics including age, education, partisan identification, income, gender, and region.

Table 4: PPCA Factor Loadings for Corruption

Variable Name	PC1	PC2
Crooked	0.514	-0.820
Benefit of a Few	0.662	0.565
What is Right	0.546	0.087
PC R squared	0.607	0.211

Our analyses are based on linear regression modeling. In every case, these regressions are calculated using the observation weights included in the ANES and GSS data sets. Analyses of individual year ANES data files in 2012 and 2016 use design-based weights in a regression model estimated by maximum likelihood using the `svyglm` function in the `survey` library for R (Lumley 2020; 2004).

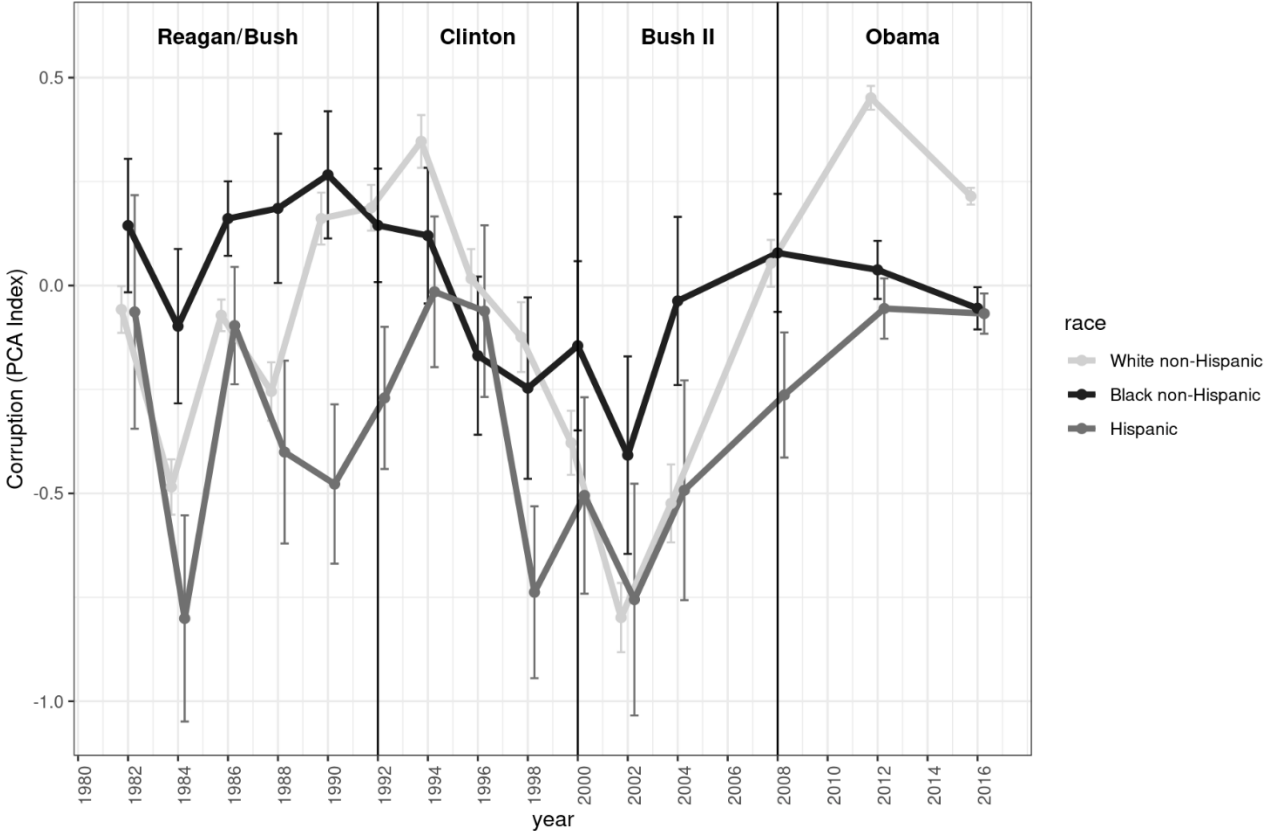
We recognize that racially minoritized groups, particularly Latinos, differ significantly by country of origin, time spent in the US, English language acquisition and

documented status among other factors. Unfortunately, the ANES and GSS time-series data limitations and small sample sizes prevent us from accounting for the various ways in which racially minoritized groups differ. However, this study accounts for the ways in which groups differ by skin tone and native status (whether born in the US or not) and we discuss the relevant results in the forthcoming pages.

Results

We begin our analyses by surveying respondents' assessment of corruption over the twenty-eight years spanned by the ANES. This assessment is shown in Figure 1. Figure 1 shows yearly average corruption scores for three racial/ethnic groups (White non-Hispanic, Black non-Hispanic, and Hispanic) calculated via OLS regressions run separately for each year of the ANES in the cumulative data file to track the evolution of racial differences over time.¹⁰ This figure reveals that perception of corruption is not stagnant over time for any racial or ethnic group. Perception of corruption also appears to be systematically related to the partisanship of the presidential administration. When Republicans are in office, Black non-Hispanics tend to perceive more corruption in government relative to Whites; when Democrats are in office, the opposite is true. Latinos typically have a perception of corruption equal to or lower than either of the other two groups.

Figure 1: Corruption Perception by Race, Ethnicity and Time Period



Source: Authors' analyses of 1982-2016 ANES Data

Inferential Statistics

Table 5 presents the results of OLS regression analyses of Corruption PCA score in the ANES cumulative data set. We also present analyses of data separated by the partisanship of the administration in office in light the apparent relationship we saw in Figure 1. Because the analyses by administration type are exploratory (rather than confirmatory), we do not develop specific predictions regarding the effects of race on support for certain types of administrations. The results presented in Tables 5 and 6 determine whether we find support for H1 and those presented in Tables 7 and 8 lead us to conclude whether H2 is substantiated. The results in Models 1, 2 and 3 present mixed support for H1. Being Black is positively related to perceiving corruption (relative to an otherwise comparable White respondent), but only when Republicans control the White House. When a Democrat is president, Black respondents perceive *less* corruption compared to Whites. Interestingly, being Latino or from another race is negatively related or not related (respectively) to perceiving corruption regardless of who is in power. A possible reason for these findings is that the demographic and political diversity that exist among Hispanics and non-Black non-Hispanics (particularly Asian Americans) affects their behavior and opinions. First-generation Latinos and those with a robust affinity with other Latinos and the Spanish language adopt more positive attitudes about immigration than second and third generation Latinos and those with a strong ethnic and linguistic identity. Pro-government Latinos adopt less restrictive immigration stances than their counterparts (Rouse et al. 2011). Further, Afro-Latinos and Latino immigrants are more aware of and committed to the Black Lives Matter movement than their counterparts (Corral 2020; Matos et al. 2023). As to Asian Americans, first generation and Chinese Asian Americans are more likely to vote for Republican candidates

than other generations and non-Chinese (Masouka et al. 2018). Asian immigrants who have recently arrived to the US are less likely to adopt pro-immigration stances than those who have spent an extended amount of time in the country (Park 2021). Further, racial group consciousness and party loyalty may matter: as a group, Blacks have a more developed racial group consciousness and loyalty to the Democratic party (see Tate 1994; Avery 2006; White and Laird 2020) compared to other racial and ethnic groups. This group consciousness in turn may influence their views toward political institutions.

Table 5: Results from OLS Regression Analyses on the ANES Cumulative Data File

	Dependent variable: Corruption PCA Score		
	All Administrations 1981-2016 (1)	Republican Administrations 1981-1992 and 2001-2008 (2)	Democratic Administrations 1993-2000 and 2009-2016 (3)
Black	-0.052** (0.023)	0.107*** (0.036)	-0.176*** (0.028)
Hispanic	-0.348*** (0.024)	-0.343*** (0.042)	-0.332*** (0.028)
Other race	-0.011 (0.034)	0.065 (0.065)	-0.047 (0.037)
Age	0.001** (0.0004)	0.002*** (0.001)	-0.0002 (0.0005)
Female	-0.004 (0.013)	-0.020 (0.022)	0.007 (0.016)
Education: High School	0.057* (0.034)	0.068 (0.046)	0.140*** (0.051)
Education: Some College	0.087** (0.035)	0.103** (0.051)	0.168*** (0.052)
Education: College or More	-0.025 (0.036)	0.002 (0.052)	0.047 (0.053)
Party ID (1 = Strong Democrat)	-0.006* (0.003)	-0.068*** (0.005)	0.041*** (0.004)
Income (5 percentile categories)	0.004 (0.007)	-0.012 (0.011)	0.020** (0.008)
Northeast Region	-0.107* (0.055)	0.099 (0.077)	-0.035 (0.069)
North Central Region	-0.095* (0.054)	0.087 (0.076)	-0.003 (0.067)

South Region	-0.090* (0.053)	0.072 (0.073)	-0.004 (0.067)
West Region	-0.099* (0.055)	0.105 (0.078)	-0.030 (0.068)
Observations	26,937	12,000	14,937
R ²	0.060	0.062	0.089

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: The omitted racial category is White. “Other race” includes Asian Americans, Native Americans and those who identified as “Other race” when completing the survey.

Our results of GSS data analyses presented in Table 6 largely confirm our findings from the ANES.¹¹ While being Black is positively related to increased perceptions of corruption relative to Whites (in accordance with H1), African Americans’ perception of corruption is (on average) related to the party in control of the White House. During the George W. Bush administration (2004 and 2006) or the year of his election (2000), Blacks perceive higher corruption than Whites for two of our dependent variables. As before, being Latino or Asian is typically unrelated to perception of corruption.

Table 6: Results from OLS Regression Analysis of the General Social Survey

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>						
	Get to the Top 2000	Widespread 2004 and 2014		Politicians 2006 and 2016		Administrators 2006 and 2016	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Black	0.205*	0.122**	0.302***	0.121**	0.253***	0.104*	0.187**
	(0.111)	(0.059)	(0.079)	(0.061)	(0.085)	(0.061)	(0.084)
Hispanic	-0.060	0.121	0.191	-0.378***	-0.368**	-0.173	-0.085
	(0.197)	(0.105)	(0.162)	(0.106)	(0.145)	(0.105)	(0.143)
Asian	0.069	-0.258**	-0.115	-0.179	-0.187	-0.112	-0.010
	(0.195)	(0.103)	(0.132)	(0.120)	(0.187)	(0.121)	(0.194)
Other race	0.391*	-0.078	0.220	-0.001	0.007	0.152	0.411**
	(0.213)	(0.153)	(0.238)	(0.134)	(0.211)	(0.132)	(0.209)
Black x D Admin			-0.376***		-0.260**		-0.163
			(0.110)		(0.114)		(0.114)
Hispanic x D Admin			-0.133		-0.023		-0.189
			(0.207)		(0.208)		(0.207)
Asian x D Admin			-0.352*		0.007		-0.171
			(0.206)		(0.242)		(0.246)
Other race x D Admin			-0.522*		-0.023		-0.439
			(0.309)		(0.273)		(0.270)
Age	-0.006***	0.0003	0.0003	-0.001	-0.001	-0.002**	-0.002**
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Female	-0.041	0.128***	0.131***	0.050	0.046	0.058	0.058
	(0.066)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.039)	(0.039)
Party ID	-0.023	0.004	0.004	-0.016	-0.015	-0.014	-0.014
	(0.018)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Years of Education	-0.056***	-0.036***	-0.034***	-0.003	-0.003	-0.012	-0.012*
	(0.013)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Income (x 10k)	-0.021***	-0.018***	-0.018***	-0.014***	-0.014***	-0.013***	-0.013***
	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Democratic Admin		0.176***	0.253***	0.015	0.054	0.076*	0.120***
		(0.038)	(0.043)	(0.040)	(0.045)	(0.039)	(0.045)
Northeast	3.729***	3.620***	3.563***	3.454***	3.438***	3.392***	3.373***
	(0.229)	(0.129)	(0.130)	(0.130)	(0.130)	(0.128)	(0.129)
North Central	3.592***	3.484***	3.437***	3.467***	3.451***	3.413***	3.396***
	(0.222)	(0.125)	(0.125)	(0.124)	(0.124)	(0.123)	(0.123)
South	3.463***	3.514***	3.460***	3.468***	3.454***	3.430***	3.410***
	(0.219)	(0.124)	(0.124)	(0.121)	(0.122)	(0.120)	(0.121)
West	3.677***	3.461***	3.409***	3.436***	3.423***	3.341***	3.323***
	(0.229)	(0.127)	(0.128)	(0.125)	(0.125)	(0.124)	(0.124)
Observations	1,041	2,308	2,308	2,428	2,428	2,417	2,417
R ²	0.840	0.923	0.924	0.920	0.920	0.913	0.913

Note: The omitted racial category is White. “Other race” includes Native Americans and those who noted “Other race” when completing the survey.

To test the effects of being dark-skinned on perceptions of corruption (H2), we turn to our results presented in Tables 7 and 8. All data in these analyses, both for the ANES (Table 7) and the GSS (Table 8), was collected during the Obama administration. Our analysis of the relationship between skin tone and corruption yields contradictory results. As shown in Tables 7 and 8, some results support Hypothesis 2. For the 2016 ANES, the model¹² indicates that darker-skinned respondents perceive *less* corruption than otherwise similar lighter-skinned counterparts; the model of data from 2012 shows no statistically significant relationship. But for the GSS, three of six models indicate that darker-skinned respondents perceive *more* corruption than similar light-skinned respondents. Although we cannot be certain, it is possible that these inconsistent results are a product of relatively small sample sizes collected for a relatively small number of years relative to our analyses without the skin tone rating. Alternatively, because the GSS uses the *interviewer’s* assessment of skin tone while the ANES uses the respondent’s own *self-assessment*, it may be the case that in the ANES those people more willing to self-identify as darker-skinned are also more trusting that they would not be discriminated against based on their skin tone.

Table 7. Results from Linear GLM/MLE of 2012 and 2016 ANES Data

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Corruption PCA Score			
	year 2012		year 2016	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Self-Assessed Skin Tone (1 = lightest)	-0.020 (0.023)	0.016 (0.037)	-0.066*** (0.021)	-0.048* (0.025)
Black		-0.303 (0.226)		-0.102 (0.155)
Hispanic		-0.377** (0.148)		-0.410*** (0.096)
Other race		0.254 (0.176)		0.035 (0.105)
Age	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.004** (0.002)	-0.004** (0.002)
Female	0.038 (0.088)	0.040 (0.088)	0.077 (0.063)	0.075 (0.062)
Education: High School	-0.141 (0.115)	-0.149 (0.113)	0.159 (0.137)	0.116 (0.136)
Education: Some College	-0.157 (0.118)	-0.159 (0.116)	0.278** (0.134)	0.224* (0.132)
Education: College or More	-0.400*** (0.136)	-0.416*** (0.132)	-0.079 (0.141)	-0.153 (0.138)
Party ID (1 = Strong Democrat)	0.085*** (0.021)	0.076*** (0.022)	0.140*** (0.013)	0.131*** (0.013)
Income (30 ordered categories)	-0.009 (0.006)	-0.011* (0.006)	-0.0002 (0.003)	-0.0003 (0.003)
Northeast Region	0.130 (0.240)	0.171 (0.242)	-0.324* (0.175)	-0.197 (0.173)
North Central Region	0.030 (0.243)	0.045 (0.250)	-0.261 (0.163)	-0.163 (0.161)
South Region	0.149 (0.214)	0.218 (0.209)	-0.307* (0.176)	-0.180 (0.175)
West Region	0.016 (0.218)	0.092 (0.235)	-0.385** (0.182)	-0.227 (0.180)

Observations	1,808	1,802	3,342	3,335
Log Likelihood	-3,432.734	-3,411.665	-5,949.221	-5,920.638
Akaike Inf. Crit.	6,889.467	6,853.330	11,922.440	11,871.270

*p**p***p<0.01

Note: The omitted racial category is White. "Other race" includes Native Americans, Asian Americans and those who identified as "Other race" when completing the survey.

Table 8: Results from OLS Regression of Selected GSS Data

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Widespread 2014		Politicians 2016		Administrators 2016	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Interviewer-Assessed Skin Tone (1 = lightest)	0.001 (0.019)	-0.004 (0.026)	0.025 (0.017)	0.046* (0.024)	0.035** (0.017)	0.047* (0.024)
Black, D Admin		0.054 (0.125)		-0.131 (0.125)		-0.079 (0.124)
Hispanic, D Admin		0.003 (0.150)		-0.400** (0.162)		-0.270* (0.162)
Asian, D Admin		-0.558*** (0.182)		-0.172 (0.164)		-0.138 (0.162)
Other race, D Admin		-0.283 (0.204)		-0.026 (0.182)		-0.029 (0.179)
Age	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.004** (0.002)	-0.004** (0.002)
Female	0.085 (0.061)	0.071 (0.061)	0.168*** (0.060)	0.182*** (0.060)	0.176*** (0.059)	0.191*** (0.059)
Party ID	0.054*** (0.017)	0.051*** (0.017)	0.032** (0.016)	0.024 (0.016)	0.033** (0.015)	0.026 (0.016)
Years of Education	-0.032*** (0.012)	-0.026** (0.012)	0.004 (0.011)	0.001 (0.012)	-0.021* (0.011)	-0.021* (0.012)
Income (x 10k)	-0.014** (0.007)	-0.015** (0.007)	-0.010 (0.008)	-0.010 (0.008)	-0.008 (0.008)	-0.008 (0.008)
Northeast	3.718*** (0.211)	3.713*** (0.214)	3.217*** (0.203)	3.267*** (0.208)	3.418*** (0.201)	3.429*** (0.205)
North Central	3.480*** (0.208)	3.432*** (0.212)	3.118*** (0.195)	3.156*** (0.200)	3.382*** (0.192)	3.381*** (0.197)
South	3.575*** (0.208)	3.529*** (0.211)	3.176*** (0.197)	3.224*** (0.200)	3.355*** (0.194)	3.362*** (0.198)
West	3.586*** (0.202)	3.546*** (0.209)	3.116*** (0.197)	3.167*** (0.204)	3.302*** (0.194)	3.299*** (0.201)
Observations	908	904	1,111	1,102	1,108	1,100
R ²	0.928	0.930	0.919	0.920	0.915	0.915

*p**p***p<0.01

Note: The omitted racial category is White. "Other race" includes Native Americans and those who identified as "Other race" when completing the survey.

Our final analysis considers a possible explanation for why Latino respondents' perception of corruption were not consistent with Hypothesis 1. It could be that Hispanics born outside the United States (and therefore less familiar with American government and more likely to perceive the U.S. as better-governed than their home country) will not be more likely to perceive corruption relative to Whites, but that Latinos born inside the United States (and therefore exposed to continuous reminders of the US racial order that we discussed in our theory) will perceive more corruption compared to Whites (see Abrajano and Alvarez 2010; Michelson 2003). We therefore added a binary variable for whether the respondent was born in the United States to our GSS analysis and interacted it with the Latino self-identification variable. The results are shown in Table 9. Adding the birthplace variable and interaction to the model in Table 9 (relative to the similar models without those variables in Table 6) reduces the sample size due to limited overlap of availability among the variables in the analysis.

Table 9: Results from OLS Regression Analyses of GSS Data with US Born Interaction

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>				
	Get to the Top	Widespread		Politicians	Administrators
	2000 (1)	2004 (2)	2014 (3)	2016 (4)	2016 (5)
Black	0.208* (0.111)	0.237*** (0.081)	0.046 (0.086)	0.048 (0.087)	0.093 (0.087)
Hispanic	0.196 (0.263)	-0.056 (0.211)	0.305 (0.195)	-0.127 (0.211)	-0.219 (0.209)
Hispanic X Born in the US	-0.493 (0.408)	0.636* (0.334)	-0.337 (0.273)	-0.350 (0.312)	0.166 (0.313)
Asian	0.135 (0.231)	-0.026 (0.147)	-0.437** (0.177)	-0.084 (0.165)	0.032 (0.163)
Other race	0.416* (0.218)	0.211 (0.241)	-0.208 (0.198)	0.046 (0.177)	0.047 (0.175)
Born in the US	-0.078 (0.146)	-0.136 (0.096)	-0.046 (0.096)	-0.171* (0.099)	-0.364*** (0.097)
Age	-0.006*** (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.003* (0.002)	-0.004** (0.002)
Female	-0.046 (0.066)	0.208*** (0.051)	0.034 (0.056)	0.120** (0.058)	0.150*** (0.057)
Party ID	-0.022 (0.018)	-0.030** (0.013)	0.057*** (0.016)	0.023 (0.016)	0.026* (0.015)
Years of Education	-0.057*** (0.013)	-0.035*** (0.010)	-0.032*** (0.011)	-0.002 (0.011)	-0.023** (0.011)
Income (x 10k)	-0.020** (0.008)	-0.024*** (0.006)	-0.015** (0.007)	-0.014* (0.008)	-0.012 (0.007)
Northeast	3.747*** (0.229)	3.559*** (0.175)	3.793*** (0.192)	3.459*** (0.195)	3.633*** (0.193)
North Central	3.597*** (0.222)	3.539*** (0.168)	3.497*** (0.186)	3.354*** (0.187)	3.570*** (0.185)
South	3.474*** (0.219)	3.522*** (0.168)	3.580*** (0.183)	3.424*** (0.187)	3.577*** (0.185)
West	3.689*** (0.229)	3.484*** (0.174)	3.538*** (0.186)	3.396*** (0.190)	3.534*** (0.189)
Observations	1,040	1,260	1,048	1,185	1,180
R ²	0.840	0.921	0.930	0.920	0.915

Note: The omitted racial category is White.

*p<0.10**p<0.05***p<0.01

In the majority of the models of Table 9, there is no statistical support for adding an interaction between being US born and Hispanic self-identification. In only one model is this interaction statistically significant, and in that case it indicates that Latinos born outside the United States perceive *more* corruption relative to their native-born counterparts. Other analyses (see Figure A1 in the online appendix) examining the relationship between native status perceptions of corruption reveal that there are meaningful differences between those born outside of the US and those born in the US with the US born adopting greater perceptions of corruption among politicians, those in public service, and government administrators (see Abrajano and Alvarez 2010). In general, other factors predict Latinos' perceptions of corruption and Latinos' increasing disenchantment does not manifest itself in increasing perceptions of government corruption.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study examines the effect of racial identity and skin tone on perception of corruption in the United States. We develop and test a *Racial Disenchantment Theory* and find limited support for it in panel survey data from the past forty years. Disenchantment among members of a racially minoritized group (e.g., Black, Latino, Asian American) and being dark-skinned does not consistently manifest itself in viewing government actors and institutions as corrupt. While on average African Americans are significantly more likely to regard political institutions and leaders as corrupt than Whites, this is only true during Republican administrations; under Democratic administrations, Blacks actually perceive *less* corruption in government.

We know from prior research that the adversities of slavery and racism fomented bonds among Blacks that resulted in firm, long-term support for the Democratic party and its leaders (White and Laird 2020) and limited approval for others. This finding appears to be borne out in our study as well. Meanwhile, being Asian American, Latino, or dark-skinned is not consistently associated with greater perceived government corruption. While cultural foreigner prejudice and contact with punitive institutions may make people view government more negatively, these perspectives do not seem to translate to heightened perceptions of government corruption.

This study makes several notable contributions. First, it is one of the first studies to examine how racial/ethnic identity and skin tone are related to individuals' perceptions of corruption in the U.S. during recent history. Most extant research on perceptions of corruption centers on the effects of gender and class identity, largely neglecting race. Second, this study broadens the scope of research on inferiority and cultural prejudice by introducing a new dependent variable: perceptions of government and political leaders' corruption. Third, this study makes significant headway in developing our knowledge of the empirical relationships among racial identity, skin tone, and perception of corruption. Finally, this study's results suggest that Blacks and Whites may disagree on the meaning of "abuse of public office for private gain" based on their collective experiences and/or political commitments, raising questions about the how adequate our current conceptualization of corruption is and whether common measures of perception of corruption map onto that conceptualization cleanly. Most importantly, this study finds that the effect of racial and ethnic identity on perception of corruption is not context-free or universally consistent.

Rather, race and ethnicity can change the effect of other filters (such as partisanship) through we which perceive corruption.

Thus, not only does this study break new ground in our understanding of the intersection of racial, ethnic identity, partisanship, and perceptions of corruption, but it also paves the way for the development of new research trajectories. New studies should more closely study the reasons why some groups perceive different levels of corruption in the same government. It is critical to examine the extent that immigrant status and ethnic identity are related to Asian Americans' and Latinos' trust in government and perceptions of corruption. Additionally, the increasing number of strong Black Democratic candidate losses to White or light-skinned extremist Republican men as in the 2022 midterm elections (Quarshie 2022) raises a critical and (to our knowledge) unexplored research question: does increased racial and political polarization lead to greater polarization in perception of government corruption (and, consequently, the legitimacy of that government)? Our study paves the way for future studies to study perceptions of corruption and disentangle the relationship among racial power, immigrant status, partisan identity, political behavior, trust in government and perception of government.

Notes

1. For example, this definition is used by Transparency International (<https://www.transparency.org/en/what-is-corruption>) and the World Bank (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/factsheet/2020/02/19/anticorruption-fact-sheet>).
2. In accordance with existing research, we use the terms “African American” and “Black” interchangeably.
3. In accordance with existing research, we use the terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” interchangeably and as gender neutral terms.
4. The term “Asian American” refers to individuals of Asian descent who reside in the US, including Pacific Islanders.
5. Greater corruption in turn results in heightened inequality because those who benefit from a corrupt system adopt practices and policies that disadvantage others in order to maintain their status. This mutually reinforcing cycle constitutes what Uslaner (2008) deems the “inequality trap.”
6. The “Asian” category encompasses responses 4-14 in the coding for the RACECEN1 variable.
7. This is variable VCF0105b in the ANES cumulative data file. The relatively heterogeneous “Other or multiple races” category exists because further differentiation produces very small samples for each subcategory.
8. The Corruption PCA score is constructed slightly differently in the two individual year data files due to the (un)availability of some variables. In 2012, the PCA score includes the three variables from the cumulative data file and an additional variable

asking respondents “How many of the people running the government are corrupt?” on a 5-point scale. In 2016, the PCA score includes the “Benefit of a Few” and “What is Right” questions from the cumulative data file, the 2012 corruption question about the proportion of people running the government who are corrupt, and another question asking “How widespread do you think corruption such as bribe taking is among politicians in the United States?” with responses on a four-point scale.

9. This is variable V162368 in the ANES cumulative data file.
10. Asian Americans and those in the “Other” category were excluded from this graph due to a small N.
11. The R^2 value for models of GSS data is much higher than for ANES data, but this is an artifact of how the R^2 is computed when a grand intercept is omitted in favor of a full set of region dummies. In this case, our model is compared to a model where the DV is predicted to = 0 for every observation (i.e., an empty model on the right-hand side). For the Corruption PCA score in the ANES data, the comparison (empty) model is an excellent model because this score by construction has a mean of zero. For the dependent variables in the GSS data, the empty model is a poor fit because none of the variables has a mean of zero (and thus the apparent R^2 for our model is higher).
12. Recall that the Corruption PCA score is created somewhat differently for these two individual ANES years; the income variable was also coded differently (with more ordinal categories) in these data sets. See note 8 and Tables A1 and A2 in the online appendix for more details.

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ONLINE APPENDIX

Table A1: Summary Statistics from the ANES 2012 Individual Data File

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Median	Max
Corruption PCA Score	5900	0.000	1.256	-4.781	0.128	2.568
Age	5839	49.448	16.806	18	51	90
Party ID (7-point scale, D to R)	5876	3.524	2.112	1	3	7
Race: White	5873	0.597	0.491	0	1	1
Race: Black	5873	0.173	0.379	0	0	1
Race: Hispanic	5873	0.171	0.376	0	0	1
Race: Other	5873	0.059	0.235	0	0	1
Perceived Skin Tone (1 = lightest)	1986	3.465	2.303	1	3	10
Sex: Male	5900	0.481	0.500	0	0	1
Sex: Female	5900	0.519	0.500	0	1	1
Education: Grade School or less	5850	0.106	0.308	0	0	1
Education: High School	5850	0.246	0.431	0	0	1
Education: Some College	5850	0.336	0.472	0	0	1
Education: College or More	5850	0.312	0.463	0	0	1
Income (30 ordered categories)	5707	13.348	8.213	1	13	28
Northeast Region	5900	0.163	0.369	0	0	1
North Central Region	5900	0.212	0.409	0	0	1
South Region	5900	0.386	0.487	0	0	1
West Region	5900	0.239	0.426	0	0	1

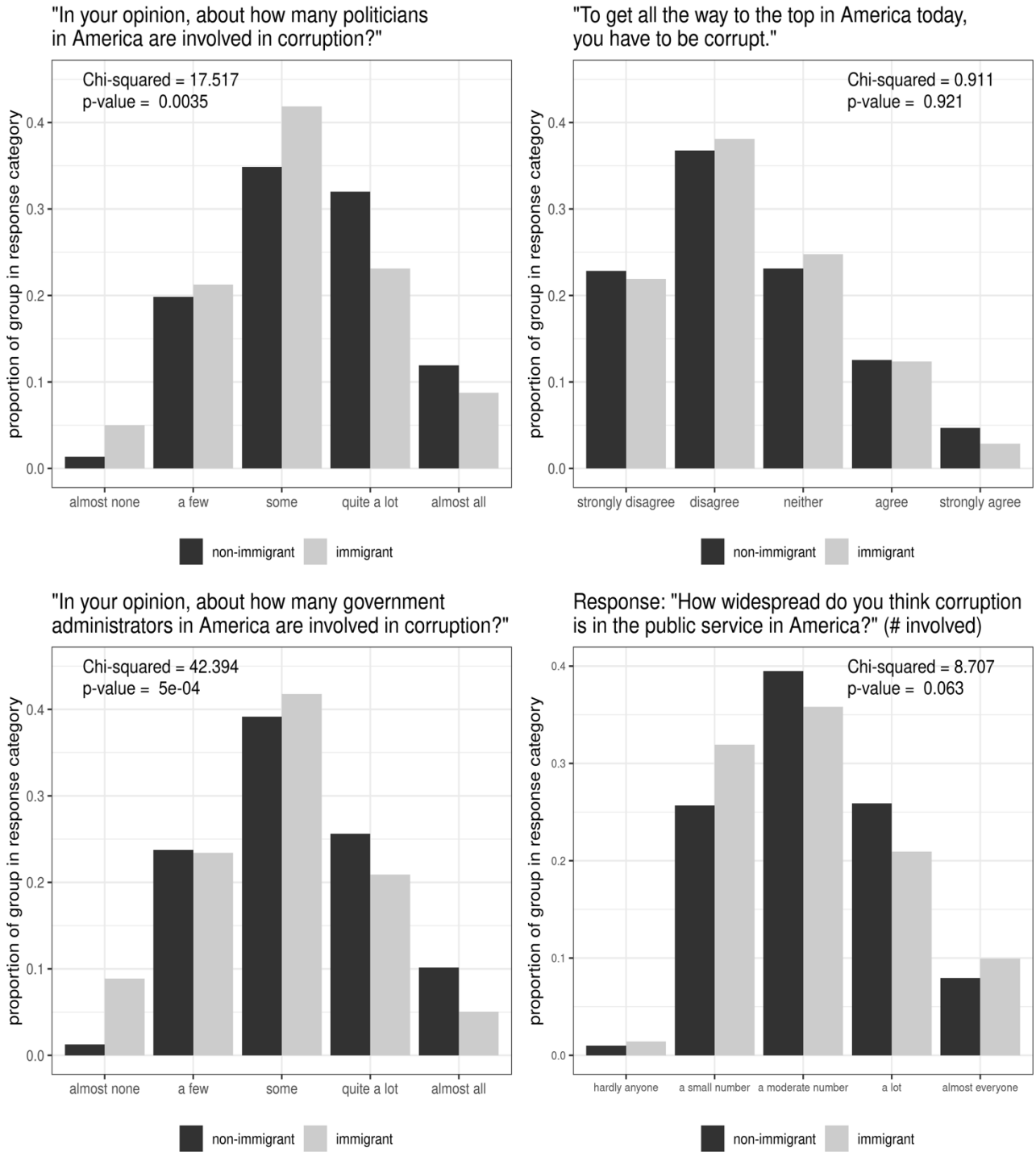
Table A2: Summary Statistics from the ANES 2016 Individual Data File

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Median	Max
Corruption PCA Score	4262	0.000	1.352	-4.338	-0.078	2.833
Age	4146	49.587	17.580	18	50	90
Party ID (7-point scale, D to R)	4242	3.858	2.153	1	4	7
Race: White	4232	0.717	0.450	0	1	1
Race: Black	4232	0.094	0.292	0	0	1
Race: Hispanic	4232	0.106	0.308	0	0	1
Race: Other	4232	0.083	0.276	0	0	1
Perceived Skin Tone (1 = lightest)	3575	2.452	1.647	1	2	10
Sex: Male	4212	0.472	0.499	0	0	1
Sex: Female	4212	0.528	0.499	0	1	1
Education: Grade School or less	4221	0.067	0.249	0	0	1
Education: High School	4221	0.191	0.393	0	0	1
Education: Some College	4221	0.355	0.479	0	0	1
Education: College or More	4221	0.387	0.487	0	0	1
Income (5 ordered categories)	4064	15.399	8.076	1	16	28
Northeast Region	4262	0.164	0.370	0	0	1
North Central Region	4262	0.235	0.424	0	0	1
South Region	4262	0.382	0.486	0	0	1
West Region	4262	0.220	0.414	0	0	1

Table A3. Spearman Correlation Coefficients for ANES Corruption Measures

	Crooked	Benefit of a Few	What is Right
Crooked	1	0.447	0.365
Benefit of a Few	0.447	1	0.367
What is Right	0.365	0.367	1

Figure A1: Perceptions of Corruption by Native Status



Source: GSS data, years: 2000, 2004, 2014, and 2016 (see Table 9 for years available for each dependent variable).