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## JUSTICE, POLITICS, AND PREJUDICE REGARDING IMMIGRATION ATTITUDES

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### ABSTRACT

*Based on political candidates' social stereotypes of Mexican immigrants, semantic differential scales were administered to participants (N = 242) in one of four scenarios describing an illegal or legal alien of Mexican or English-Canadian descent. Consistent with notions of justice, participants indicated the greatest agreement with the pejorative nature of the themes when the immigrant described is of illegal status irrespective of national-ethnic background. Consistent with contemporary theories of prejudice, the legal Mexican immigrant was evaluated more harshly than the legal English-Canadian immigrant. The social, psychological and public policy implications of immigration as a political phenomenon are discussed.*

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Over the past decade in the United States, a societal debate regarding public policies and social phenomena including immigration, bilingual education, and affirmative action has become increasingly polarized (Bobocel, Hing, Davey, Stanley & Zanna, 1998). It is not surprising that immigration, particularly along the southern U.S. border, would be a focal point for such heated debate. Immigration as a social phenomenon is both revered and hated across ideological and political lines. For instance, one can find pro-business, political conservatives in favor of immigration as a means for cheap labor, while other conservatives are against it as a threat to national sovereignty. Political liberals can be found as pro-immigration as a means of social justice, whereas other traditionally liberal groups (e.g. Sierra Club) voice opposition for

environmental reasons. The agency responsible for administering immigration issues, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), has competing and often conflicting missions where at once they are responsible for providing a litany of services to immigrants, including, but not limited to, processing illegal aliens, while also enforcing immigration law [1]. As a result, accusations of prejudice charged against those opposed to loosening immigration quotas and, in response, justifications of anti-immigration attitudes based on appeals for justice are common. Such inherent contradictions and competing views make it a ripe issue within which to investigate how justice-based appeals and prejudice mix together to create attitudes toward social policy.

Social psychology's foray into justice literature has been primarily confined to conceptualizations of procedural and distributive justice (c.f., Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994). Whereas procedural justice refers to perceptions of fairness regarding the manner by which a distributive allocation norm is implemented, distributive justice refers to the perceived fairness of resource allocation, (i.e., how the resources are distributed; Adams, 1965; Homans, 1961; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). This body of research has produced interesting results leading to predictable attitudes toward, say, affirmative action policies depending on what combination of justice is violated. Typically, the more preferential the treatment implied by the program being evaluated, the more likely respondents perceive the program as unfair. For instance, when a beneficiary of the program is described as reaping a benefit over an equally qualified other because of a certain social identity (e.g., race), respondents voice opposition to the program, presumably because the description violates an egalitarian principle of justice. If, however, the respondents are primed with information highlighting sociological inequities that the program is designed to redress, preference of one candidate over an equally qualified other, irrespective of social identity, is perceived as fair (e.g., Bobocel, et al., 1998; Crosby & Clayton, 1990; Kravitz, 1995).

A number of scholars have raised the question of whether opposition to public policies are a result of genuine opposition motivated by violations of perceived justice or are simply a matter of rationalized prejudice (e.g., Bobocel, et al., 1998). Those arguing for the role of prejudice suggest that when racial and ethnic categories become intertwined with political initiatives and public policies, favor for or against the political initiatives can become opportunities to discriminate against particular populations without being socially reprimanded and accused of bigotry (cf., Dovidio & Gaertner, 1996; Sears, 1988). One can hide ones' true attitudes about racial groups by championing political initiatives that appeal to universal abstract principles such as justice, egalitarianism, and equity.

These contemporary perspectives of psychological racism (cf., Dovidio & Gaertner, 1996; McConahay, 1986; Sears, 1988) apply seamlessly to immigration phenomena. For example, if a Latino of Mexican nationality has come to the United States illegally, by definition, that person has engaged in criminal behavior. Such a label psychologically makes it easier to discriminate against members of this ethnic group as one can do so under the guiding principle of being anti-crime, as opposed to anti-Mexican or anti-Latino. Consider the following story published in the Arizona Republic:

Joshua Ramirez . . . [is] a fourth-generation American of Mexican descent. His family did not immigrate, illegally or otherwise. Yet people assume that's how he got here. I get the wetback

comments, . . . I'm asked to produce proof of citizenship when I apply for a job—and I don't even speak Spanish. . . . Ramirez remembers the night he was kicked and punched by a gang of boys who swore at him and told him they don't like illegal aliens. . . . I was leaving a restaurant . . . It was closing time and I was walking to my car at the far end of the parking lot. They jumped me. I never called police. I just thought it would be too much of a hassle (Amparo, 1999).

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Recent immigration research supports the role of prejudice, regarding immigration attitudes (c.f., Short & Magana, 2002). From an aversive racism perspective this research found that respondents voiced the harshest immigration attitudes when provided with a non-race based opportunity to express such attitudes. As such, respondents indicated that they were more likely to deport the immigrant, perceive the person as criminal, as a threat to national sovereignty and as an economic drain when the immigrant described was of Mexican descent and had accumulated several parking tickets. There was no difference in respondent attitudes when the immigrant described was of Mexican or English-Canadian descent and had not accumulated parking tickets, or was English-Canadian and had accumulated parking tickets. Had prejudice not been a factor, respondent attitudes should have been equivalent between the illegal English-Canadian and Mexican immigrant scenarios with accumulated parking infractions. Theoretically, the parking tickets served as a non-race based rationale with which to express prejudiced attitudes without threatening ones' non-discriminatory self-concept.

It is important to note that one cannot determine racial attitudes simply by ones' vote for or against certain political initiatives or political affiliation. Also, the attitudes uncovered within the aversive framework might also be fueled by perceptions of justice; that is, the illegal status of the immigrants described may have fueled the attitudes expressed. Indeed, those arguing for justice point out that justice-based opposition may be a rationale in its own right. Kleinpenning and Hagendoorn (1993), for instance, found that Dutch students scores on racism were correlated more highly with their opposition to a question about equal opportunity in society than to a question about preferential treatment in job hiring. In another study investigating racial affect, self- and group-interest and perceptions of program fairness, Nosworthy, Lea, and Lindsey (1995) found that racism contributed most strongly and accounted for more variance over and above perceptions of fairness in the program that least likely violated perceptions of fairness. These works taken together indicate that justice can be a genuine cause of opposition toward social policy (Bobocel, et al. 1998).

Research investigating procedural and distributive notions of justice have been confined to specific public policies, such as Affirmative Action. There is relatively scant literature investigating justice and prejudice as relates to immigration attitudes. Intuitively, however, as with affirmative action programs, immigration phenomena can be conceptualized in terms of procedural and distributive justice. For instance, much of the political rhetoric regarding Mexican immigration in mainstream U.S. media raises issues of justice in terms of legal and illegal immigration, adroitly differentiating between the two extolling the virtues of legal, hard-working immigrants and bemoaning the influence and presence of illegal immigrants (Magaña & Short, 2002). These findings fit conceptually with the justice literatures. That is, legal aliens did not violate a principle of justice. They conformed to the proper procedural norm as determined

by the dominant majority; they did not violate national law to immigrate. As a result, they deserve equitable distribution of resources such as legal status and access to Federally protected social services. In contrast, however, illegal aliens have violated the proper procedural norm of how immigrants should immigrate. By default, this labels illegal aliens as criminal and justifies denying access to the distribution of resources. From a strict justice perspective, there is a right way, and a wrong way to immigrate; legal immigration is good, illegal immigration is bad and, as a result, one would expect predictable immigration attitudes based on such justice principles.

Consistent with previous research, however, it is naïve to think justice would be the only factor in determining immigration attitudes. As noted, prejudice can also play a significant role. To date, however, measures of psychological justice have not been accounted for in understanding immigration attitudes. It may be true that aversive prejudice is less of a factor in predicting immigration attitudes than psychological perceptions of justice, especially in a southern U.S. border state. The current investigation is designed to address these two constructs as relates to immigration attitudes.

To the extent that there are meaningful psychological differences among various immigration scenarios that violate justice principles (i.e., legality), then individual differences in justice beliefs should predict harsher immigration attitudes when the immigration scenario violates justice principles and not when the scenario upholds those principles, irrespective of ethnic/national background. As a consequence, prejudice should predict harsh immigration attitudes less strongly for an illegal alien scenario relative to a legal alien scenario, irrespective of ethnic/national background. If, in contrast, the concern for justice is not a true determinant of immigration attitudes but instead a rationalization of prejudice, then respondents' scores on prejudice should predict harsher attitudes regardless of whether the alien scenario violates or upholds justice principles. Moreover, consistent with the nature of aversive prejudice, participants should exhibit in-group bias more than out-group derogation by equally voicing prejudiced attitudes regarding illegal immigrants, but voicing harsher attitudes for the legal out-group immigrant than the legal in-group immigrant. In this way, the participants' self-concept of being non-prejudiced and non-bigoted remains intact.

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Specifically, the hypotheses are as follows:

**Justice Hypothesis:** Participants will voice stronger anti-immigration attitudes toward an illegal immigrant than a legal immigrant irrespective of national/ethnic background.

**Aversive Prejudice Hypothesis:** Participants will voice stronger anti-immigration attitudes toward a legal out-group immigrant than a legal in-group immigrant.

For this study, intergroup boundaries were defined in a manner consistent with the ethnic composition of the research participants and that of the society at large; that is, the dominant, in-group alien ethnicity as Anglo (national origin: English-Canadian) and the minority, out-group alien ethnicity as Latino (national origin: Mexican). Justice violations were manipulated by

describing an alien who has come to the United States either legally (non-justice-violating) or illegally (justice-violating). Consistent with the logic presented above, the justice and aversive hypotheses were tested using a randomized, between-subjects, 3 (respondent race) x 2 (target race) x 2 (legality) factorial survey design. Regression analyses using a measure of individual prejudice and psychological perceptions of justice were also investigated.

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

Participants from a large, southwestern university were recruited from introductory psychology courses as part of their research requirement. Per university admissions policy, all respondents are either American citizens or possess legal immigration status. A total of 242 people participated including 155 females and 86 males with one not indicating sex. Of these there were 185 Whites, 2 Blacks, 11 Asians, 28 Latinos and 15 indicating other and one not indicating ethnicity. This ethnic breakdown mirrors the institutional ethnic composition of the university as a whole. The median age of the participants was 20 years with a range from 18 to 50. The median estimated annual family income was reported as \$70-80K. A median estimate of political conservatism was 5.00 on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is Very Liberal and 10 is Very Conservative.

### **Measures**

In order to generate response items and an appropriate dependent variable relevant to immigration attitudes, newspaper accounts of political candidates' characterizations of Mexican immigration between January 1, 1993 and June 30, 1998 were analyzed (see Appendix A for a listing of newspapers). The criterion of using political candidate characterizations of immigration phenomena as opposed to non-politicians was set under the assumption that they have a pulse on constituent concerns regarding immigration issues. The source of data came from Lexis-Nexis, an archived database of full-text newspaper articles. The purpose for this qualitative approach was to find a source of themes concerning immigration phenomena generated by politicians that could then be turned into semantic differential response items for research participants.

The final sample of articles containing political candidate comments and statements regarding Mexican immigration numbered 553. As a means to generate thematic content, an independent researcher unfamiliar with the hypotheses was instructed to select every tenth article from the sample, read the article, and note the predominant topics the political candidate was addressing with respect to Mexican immigration. Consistent with related research, this approach yielded three topics of interest: (1) Issues of legality; (2) Economic implications; and (3) Issues of nativism (e.g., Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001). The entire sample of articles was then searched for references to those three themes using the key words legal/illegal, economic influence and national sovereignty (see Table 1).

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Such a procedure is not without limitations. Most importantly, there were no inter-rater reliability strategies employed to verify that the identified themes are those most prevalent. As such, any replication of this work requires efforts to control for possible researcher bias in theme generation. Without such inter-rater estimates, one cannot assume that these three broadly framed themes are the only possible, relevant immigration topics voiced by political candidates. In addition, in using this data base, the researcher approaches it with key terms in mind for a specific period in history, thereby further increasing the probability of researcher bias influencing the data. A second concern regards the electronic data base used. There are no known reliability estimates regarding the use of Lexis-Nexis for research purposes. Finally, an improvement on this method would be to subject the entire sample to analysis, not a random sample of it. Using a random sample may have unwittingly limited the source with which to generate the relevant themes potentially leaving out other, perhaps more important areas of investigation.

**Table 1. Political Candidate Portrayals of Mexican Immigrants by Theme**

Themes raised by candidates	Frequency of newspaper articles	
	N	Percent
Legality	349	63%
Economics	179	32%
Nativism	166	30%

Note: N = 553; Sum of themes is greater than 553 as one article may contain more than one theme.

These themes were used to develop a six-item, 10-point semantic differential scale measuring immigration attitudes as the dependent variable (see Appendix A). Included in this scale was one question asking respondents to indicate to what degree they perceive the person described in the vignette as a criminal. This question was used as a manipulation check to insure that the vignettes differentiating legality were perceived differently. In addition to scale internal reliability estimates using Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha = .87$ ), a principal components factor analysis using Varimax rotation confirm that the scale represented one factor with an eigen value of 3.72 accounting for 62.01% of the variance. As discussed theoretically, it is possible that ones' attitudes toward immigration may function as a result of individual prejudice and/or individual attitudes regarding justice. For this reason, respondents also responded respectively to McConahay's (1986) Modern Racism Scale modified to refer to the immigrant populations ( $\alpha = .76$ ), and Lipkus' (1991) Personal Justice Scale ( $\alpha = .63$ ).

The independent variables embedded in the developed scenarios described an immigrant of either Mexican or English-Canadian national origin/ethnicity (race) who either immigrated legally or illegally. Finally, included were various demographic questions of Age, Sex, Year in School, Race, self-perceptions of political conservatism (1 = Very Liberal to 10 = Very

Conservative), and how typical the scenario was perceived to be (1 = This scenario is NOT typical at all; to 10 = This scenario is VERY typical).

## Procedure

Vignettes were randomly distributed to participants on an individual basis. Upon entering the office for research participation, respondents were handed a survey packet, told that all data collected were anonymous, and to fill out the packet alone outside the office. After completing the packet, the respondent was then debriefed regarding the theoretical and social implications of the study.

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## RESULTS

### Data Screening and Evaluation of Measures

As a manipulation check to insure that participants did not respond equally to the legal and illegal scenarios, an independent samples t-test was used to investigate participant responses to the question, "To what degree do you feel this person is a criminal?" As expected, respondents interpreted the illegal scenarios as possessing greater criminality than the legal scenarios ( $M = 3.66$  and  $M = 1.81$ , respectively,  $t(240) = 6.40$ ,  $p < .001$ ). A one-way ANOVA on typicality by condition revealed that each scenario was not perceived equally typical ( $F(3, 241) = 6.25$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The mean values are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Mean Typicality of Scenario by Condition**

Condition	Mean of Typicality	sd
Illegal Mexican	8.65	1.41
Legal Mexican	7.53	2.40
Illegal English-Canadian	7.84	1.81
Legal English-Canadian	7.03	2.12

Note. The higher the value, the more typical on a scale of 1 to 10.  $N = 240$  (2 missing).

Post-hoc Least Significant Differences tests comparing the mean difference between conditions revealed that the Illegal Mexican scenario was perceived to be more typical than the Legal Mexican, Illegal Canadian and Legal Canadian scenarios (Mean difference = 1.12, .81, and 1.62 respectively,  $N = 240$ ; all pairwise comparisons between the mean for the illegal Mexican and

other conditions were significant at  $\alpha = .05$ ). In addition, the more typical the scenario is perceived, the harsher the attitudes expressed but only for the Legal Mexican and the Illegal Canadian scenarios ( $r = .25$ , and  $r = .30$ ,  $p < .05$ , respectively). It should be noted that while there is a statistical difference in perceived typicality, such a difference may not be meaningful considering that all of the typicality ratings are quite high with relatively small standard deviations. These data suggest that all scenarios are possible and indeed probable but statistically, the vignette that better reflects popular understandings of US immigration phenomena, albeit slight, is the illegal Mexican vignette. While these differences are small, nonetheless they warrant control for perceived typicality throughout the analyses as a covariate.

A one-way ANOVA on age, sex and political conservatism by scenario revealed no significant differences ( $F(3, 239) = .80$ ,  $F(3, 240) = 1.08$ ,  $F(3, 239) = 1.28$ ,  $p > .05$ , respectively). Age did not correlate significantly with immigration attitudes ( $r = -.02$ ,  $p > .05$ , respectively,  $N = 238$ ). Sex, however, did correlate with immigration attitudes such that women expressed less harsh attitudes than men ( $r = .11$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $N = 239$ ). In addition, political conservatism significantly correlated with immigration attitudes suggesting that the more conservative ones' political views, the more harsh are the attitudes toward immigration expressed ( $r = .18$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $N = 238$ ). This finding is consistent with previous research investigating party affiliation and attitudes toward immigrant populations (Magaña & Short, 2002). To control for this effect, political conservatism is included as a covariate in the analyses.

Finally, participant race is included as a factor in the analyses as a means to investigate its role in influencing immigration attitudes. In addition, it is important to note that ethnicity is controlled for while being cognizant that the identity of being an American university student participating in a university sponsored research project may be a more salient identity issue than that represented by the singular demographic box checked on the back of the form (c.f., Espenshade & Belanger, 1998).

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### Test of the Justice Hypothesis for All Participants

The number of cases for this test is 236 with 2 missing cases each for political conservatism, typicality and immigration attitudes. The harshest immigration attitudes were reserved for the immigrants of illegal status (See Table 3).

**Table 3. Mean Immigration Attitudes by Ethnicity/Nationality and Legality**

Source	Legality	RespondentRace	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Mexican Immigrant	Legal	White	20.91	10.68	46
		Latino	8.14	2.54	7



		Other	24.63	8.99	8
		Total	19.93	10.75	61
	Illegal	White	31.51	12.41	43
		Latino	21.00	12.00	5
		Other	26.60	11.03	10
		Total	29.76	12.39	58
Canadian					
Immigrant					
	Legal	White	15.60	7.50	45
		Latino	14.50	6.52	8
		Other	16.57	7.28	7
		Total	15.57	7.25	60
	Illegal	White	31.62	10.37	47
		Latino	16.14	14.23	7
		Other	31.33	22.28	3
		Total	29.70	12.41	57
Total					
	Legal	White	18.28	9.57	91
		Latino	11.53	5.90	15
		Other	20.87	8.97	15
		Total	17.76	9.41	121
	Illegal	White	31.57	11.33	90
		Latino	18.17	13.00	12
		Other	27.69	13.35	13
		Total	29.73	12.35	115
Overall	Total	White	24.89	12.40	181
Total		Latino	14.48	10.07	27
		Other	24.04	11.53	28
		Total	23.60	12.45	236

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Table 4 illustrates the confirmation of mean differences using a 3 X 2 X 2 ANCOVA revealing a significant between-subjects main effect for Legality ( $F(1, 236) = 18.56, p < .001$ ) and Race ( $F(2, 236) = 11.37, p < .001$ ) (see Appendix B for correlation matrix). As expected, the strongest effect among the conditions was reserved for the Illegal immigrants however, statistically there were no meaningful interactions for Nationality by Legality ( $F(1, 236) = .88, n.s.$ ), Nationality

by Race ( $F(2, 236) = .64, n.s.$ ) or Nationality by Legality by Race ( $F(2, 236) = 2.66, n.s.$ ). These analyses support the hypothesis that justice (immigrating legally or illegally) is important in shaping immigration attitudes. In addition, it is important to note that the magnitude of these scores hover around the midpoint of the scale and below (the scale ranges from 6.00 to 60.00). These findings are consistent with previous research suggesting that among traditional university populations, attitudes regarding important, potentially divisive public policies such as affirmative action (e.g., Crosby & Clayton, 1990), politics and authoritarianism (e.g., Altemeyer, 1988), race (e.g., McConahay, 1986, Sears, 1988), and now, immigration are likely to fall in the center to center-left of the political continuum. In short, the responses comport to self-reported estimates of political conservatism (5.00 on a scale of 1 to 10) and statistically reflect attitudes forged through perceptions of justice over that of ethnic nationality.

**Table 4. ANCOVA for Immigration Attitudes by Nationality, Legality, and Respondent Race, with Political Conservatism and Typicality as Covariates**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	14073.81	13	10.75	.000**
Intercept	1119.81	1	11.12	.001**
Typicality	798.24	1	7.93	.005**
Political Conservatism	788.39	1	7.83	.006**
Nationality	5.88	1	.06	.809
Legality	1869.54	1	18.56	.000**
Respondent Race	2289.53	2	11.37	.000**
Nationality X Legality	88.73	1	.88	.35
Nationality X Respondent Race	129.01	2	.64	.53
Legality X Respondent Race	275.14	2	1.37	.26
Nationality X Legality X				

Respondent	535.94	2	2.66	.07
Race				
	22356.97	222		
Error				
Total	167845.00	236		
Corrected	36430.76	235		
Total				

Note: N = 236, missing cases = 2 for Typicality, 2 for Political Conservatism and 2 for Immigration Attitudes. \*\* significant at p. < .01

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As a means to explore the role respondent race may play in influencing immigration attitudes, Table 5 presents the descriptive data for self-reported White respondents. The ANCOVA presented following the descriptive data in Table 6 is presented as a test of the aversive prejudice hypothesis.

**Table 5. Mean Immigration Attitudes by Ethnicity/Nationality and Legality (Whites only, N = 181).**

Source	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Mexican			
Legal	20.91	10.68	46
Illegal	31.51	12.41	43
Canadian			
Legal	15.60	7.50	45
Illegal	31.62	10.37	47
Total			
Legal	18.29	9.57	91
Illegal	31.57	11.33	90
Overall			
Total	24.89	12.39	181

Table 6 presents results of a 2X2 ANCOVA revealing a significant between-subjects main effect for legality ( $F(1, 181) = 58.65, p < .001$ ) and a statistically significant interaction for Nationality X Legality ( $F(1, 181) = 4.26, p < .05$ ). The strongest effect of perceptions of justice on immigration attitudes was found when only data from White respondents was included in the analyses. However, prejudice against an immigrant out-group is also evident. That is, issues of

legality did not affect respondent attitudes equally across all conditions. Indeed, the simple effect is most pronounced between Mexican and Canadian legal immigrants ( $M = 20.91$  vs.  $M = 15.60$ , respectively). These findings are consistent with an aversive prejudice interpretation; that is, respondents are less likely to voice out-group prejudice that threatens their egalitarian self-concept as much as they are likely to voice in-group bias (e.g., Dovidio & Gaertner, 1996).

**Table 6. ANCOVA for Immigration Attitudes by Nationality and Legality, with Political Conservatism and Typicality as Covariates**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	10520.75	5	21.50	.000**
Intercept	1208.95	1	12.35	.001**
Typicality	1190.07	1	12.15	.001**
Political Conservatism	546.93	1	5.59	.019*
Nationality	123.14	1	1.26	.264
Legality	5740.62	1	58.65	.000**
Nationality X Legality	416.47	1	4.26	.04*
Error	17129.05	175		
Total	139777.00	181		
Corrected Total	27649.79	180		

Note: White participants only ( $N = 181$ ).

\* significant at  $p < .05$ , \*\* significant at  $p < .01$ .

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Linear regression analysis was run to investigate the role individual difference variables on prejudice and perceptions of justice play in predicting immigration attitudes (see Table 7).

**Table 7. Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Immigration Attitudes ( $N = 225$  valid cases, missing values = 11 personal justice, 3 modern racism, 1 sex, and 2 age).**

Variable	Beta	SE	Standardized Beta
Modern Racism	1.19	.46	.46**
Sex	-2.33	1.53	.12
Age	-.036	.208	.86
Ethnicity	-.64	.56	.25
Personal Justice	.05	.07	.04

Note.  $R^2 = .25$   
 \*\* $p < .001$ .

Modern racism is the strongest predictor of immigration attitudes in this analysis. Respondent perceptions of personal justice did not play a significant role in determining immigration attitudes. These findings are further bolstered by the finding that participants' racial attitudes correlate positively with immigration attitudes ( $r = .49$ ,  $N = 242$ ,  $p < .01$ ) whereas individual perceptions of personal justice did not ( $r = .06$ ,  $N = 229$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ).

## DISCUSSION

This study empirically explored the roles racial prejudice and perceptions of justice play in shaping immigration attitudes, thereby addressing an important gap in this literature as identified by previous researchers (e.g., Bobocel, Hing, Davey, Stanley, & Zanna, 1998). Consistent with previous research, evidence was presented showing that both issues of justice and prejudice influence attitudes toward immigration. However, the specific roles each of these constructs play is not so clear. Clearly, procedural justice defined in terms of having immigrated legally or illegally indicate that individuals are more likely to voice anti-immigration sentiments when that principle is violated (e.g., illegal immigration). Recall, however, that contemporary theories of prejudice espouse that people are reluctant to voice prejudicial attitudes unless they can do so in ways that cannot be attributed to race, thereby maintaining their self-concept in tact as being fair, egalitarian and non-prejudiced (cf., Dovidio & Gaertner, 1996; McConahay, 1986; Sears, 1988).

In analyzing responses from the entire sample including all ethnicities, it appears that the legal-illegal procedural distinction in these data does not serve as a non-race based opportunity to voice such sentiments as the respondents did so irrespective of ethnic/national background. However, when analyzing responses of self-reported White participants, the differences suggest that legality may be used as a rationale for voicing stronger immigration attitudes. In addition, these data indicate that the more prejudiced the individual, the more harsh are the immigration attitudes expressed. So, how are these competing constructs to be reconciled theoretically in shaping immigration attitudes?

In previous research, the roles of procedural justice were clearly defined in terms of a specific, concrete public policy context, (i.e., Affirmative Action; Bobocel et al., 1998; Crosby & Clayton, 1990). In contrast, I propose that the use of procedural justice in terms of an illegal-legal distinction is relatively more abstract, or with more universal appeal. That is, another way of conceptualizing how justice and prejudice may be intertwined in this work is to suggest that abstract forms of justice do not lend themselves to convenient social categorizations which can clearly lead to in-group biasing and out-group derogation (cf., Tajfel, 1981). Appeals to abstract (or universal) principles of justice are assumed to be equally relevant to all social groups; there is no work or sense-making necessary to understand the phenomenon with which to selectively voice prejudiced attitudes. In contrast, concrete justice appeals such as those presented in the context of a specific public policy proposal, or of having engaged in socially undesirable behavior, are borne of immediacy, a relevance to the social context and, therefore, are subject to our universal tendencies to stereotype and categorize as a means to make sense of the social world. Perceptions of abstract principles of justice are more likely to be attributionally ambiguous, whereas concrete principles of justice are more likely to be attributionally defined (cf., Semin & Fiedler [1991] for a psycholinguistic interpretation of abstract versus concrete social sense-making). In short, one may harbor prejudiced attitudes toward certain immigrant populations, but such attitudes do not override the weight of perceived procedural justice violations when referring to a general, abstract social phenomenon such as immigration.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

While the psychometric properties of the dependent measure of immigration attitudes comport to conventional statistical scaling criteria, there remain important areas of further development regarding its validity. As previously mentioned, the themes generated with which to create the scale were not subject to important inter-rater reliability assessments. As a result, I can not rule out the potential threat of researcher bias in its construction. Future research must control for this threat to internal validity while also examining the scales' behavior with respect to related theoretical constructs to establish sound content validity. In short, the findings presented above and their interpretation should be cautioned given the remaining work needed to be done regarding the dependent measures' validity.

Given that these data are based on a convenience sample, namely, university undergraduates, it is possible that the findings do not generalize to the population. In addition, immigration phenomena are complex, multi-faceted that do not lend themselves to easy, convenient interpretations. For instance, attitudes toward immigration are not necessarily specific to any particular social group, status, political affiliation, race or gender (Espenshade & Belanger, 1998). Therefore, to assume our sample, albeit from a large public university, is a sufficient snapshot into the general population should be interpreted with caution. As a means to address this limitation, we suggest future investigations be replicated with more non-traditional populations. Such a direction would have important applied and theoretical interests.

One avenue of future research these data suggest would be to assess immigration attitudes among first-generation immigrants: How do they see legality as relates to immigration phenomena?

According to social identity theory (c.f., Tajfel, 1981), might newly arrived immigrants express harsher immigration attitudes than members of the dominant majority as a means to differentiate oneself from a stigmatized media group (i.e., illegal aliens)? Or does a shared component of social identity as being an immigrant predict more favorable attitudes toward immigration? Investigating non-traditional populations would address these empirical questions.

Finally, these results have applied research implications, especially with respect to racial profiling. Do individuals differentiate between those of the stigmatized group (illegals) and those who are not? Psychologically, it is not likely that we process social information in such a convenient fashion. That is, our perception of individuals is colored by numerous factors including, but not limited to, social stereotypes, attributes, and the like. The danger of negative social constructions in the mainstream press by the politically powerful may influence a tendency to associate immigrant populations with socially undesirable characteristics. As a result, arguably, immigrant groups are more susceptible to prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behaviors that can impede their successful transition to a new society. Clearly we rely on convenient heuristics to guide our behavior, even if that behavior has important civil rights implications including, but not limited to, rounding up potential illegal immigrants, justifying internment camps, soliciting identification, and racial profiling in traffic stops.

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## **APPENDIX A. Scale Questions Generated from Political Candidate Portrayals regarding Mexican Immigration**

Theme	Question
Legality	To what degree do you feel the person described should be deported?  1 (No, definitely should NOT be deported) to 10 (Yes, definitely should be deported);  To what degree do you feel this person is a criminal?  1 (No, this person definitely is NOT a criminal) to 10 (Yes, this person definitely IS a criminal);
Economics	To what degree do you feel this person is a drain on the American economy?  1 (No, this person definitely is NOT a drain on the economy) to 10 (Yes, this person definitely IS a drain on the economy);
Nativism	To what degree does this scenario represent a cultural invasion?  1 (No, this scenario definitely is NOT representative of a cultural invasion) to 10 (Yes, this scenario definitely IS representative of a cultural invasion)  To what degree does this scenario represent a threat to national sovereignty?  1 (No, this scenario does NOT represent a threat to national sovereignty) to 10 (Yes, this scenario represents a threat to national sovereignty)  To what degree does this scenario represent an inability for the U.S. to control its borders?

1 (No, this scenario does NOT represent an inability on the part of the U.S. to control its borders) to 10 (Yes, this scenario DOES represent an inability on the part of the U.S. to control its borders).

Note. Cronbachs reliability analysis for the six-item scale: alpha = .84

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## **APPENDIX B. Sample Items from McConahays (1986) Modern Racism Scale (Mexican Immigrant Version)**

Item

(Scale items range from +2 Strongly Agree to -2 Strongly Disagree)

1. I favor strong open housing laws that permit Mexican immigrants to rent or purchase housing even when the owner does not wish to rent or sell.
2. It is easy to understand the anger of Mexican immigrants in America.
3. Discrimination against Mexican immigrants is not a problem in the United States.
4. Mexican immigrants have more influence on what is taught in school than they ought to have.
5. It is a bad idea for Mexican immigrants and existing citizens to marry one another.
6. Mexican immigrants should not push themselves where they are not wanted.
7. If a Mexican immigrant family with about the same income and education as I have moved next door, I would mind it a great deal.

Note: Cronbach's alpha = .76.

**APPENDIX C. Sample Items from Lipkus' (1991) Personal Justice Scale**

	Strong Disagreement	Strong Agreement
1. I think that I deserve the reputation I have among the people who know me.	1-----2-----3-----4-----5-- -----6	
2. When I get lucky breaks it is usually because I have earned them	1-----2-----3-----4-----5-- -----6	
3. When I take examinations I rarely seem to get the grade I deserve	1-----2-----3-----4-----5-- -----6	
4. As a child I was often punished for things that I had not done	1-----2-----3-----4-----5-- -----6	
5. I am less likely to get hurt in traffic accidents if I drive with caution	1-----2-----3-----4-----5-- -----6	
6. I have found that people who work the hardest at their jobs are not always the ones who get promoted	1-----2-----3-----4-----5-- -----6	
7. If I watch what I eat, I will live longer	1-----2-----3-----4-----5-- -----6	

Note: Alpha = .63

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**APPENDIX D. Descriptive Statistics for all Variables and All Participants used in ANOVA and Regression Analyses**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	N	Missing Cases
Political conservatism	5.09	2.29	1.00	10.00	240	2
Racial attitudes	-3.09	4.80	-14.00	14.00	239	3

Immigration attitudes	3.74	2.08	1.00	10.00	240	2
Age	20.78	3.43	18.00	50.00	240	2
Personal justice	113.88	11.00	45.00	139.00	231	11

Note: The higher the number, the stronger the attitudes in the direction of political conservatism, racist attitudes, anti-immigration attitudes, and sense of personal justice.

**APPENDIX E. Correlation Matrix for All Variables Used in ANOVA and Regression Analyses**

		Political Conservatism	Age	Racial Attitudes	Immigration Attitudes	Personal Justice
Political Conservatism	Pearson correlation	1.00	.007	.287**	.200**	-.022
	Significance	.	.455	.000	.001	.371
	N	240	239	237	238	229
Age	Pearson correlation	.007	1.00	-.015	-.014	-.070
	Significance	.455	.	.409	.414	.145
	N	239	240	237	238	229
Racial Attitudes	Pearson correlation	.287**	-.015	1.00	.488**	.018
	Significance	.000	.409	.	.000	.392
	N	237	237	239	237	229
Immigration Attitudes	Pearson correlation	.200**	-.014	.488**	1.00	.059
	Significance	.001	.414	.000	.	.187
	N	238	238	237	240	229

Personal Justice	Pearson correlation	-.022	- .070	.018	.059	1.00
	Significance	.371	.145	.392	.187	.
	N	229	229	229	229	231

Note: \*\* p < .001.

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## ENDNOTES

[1] While some readers may have preferences for the use of terms such as undocumented or documented in place of illegal and legal, or person in place of alien, for ease of readability and consistency, I will use the terminology used by the Department of Homeland Security, housing the former Federal Immigration and Naturalization Service, throughout this document.

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