

THE CRIMINALIZATION OF LATINO IMMIGRANTS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES
IN THE CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN IMMIGRATION NARRATIVE

by

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DEDICATION

To all whom suffer at the hands of injustice.

A todos quienes sufren a manos de la injusticia.

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ABSTRACT

Latino immigration is an issue on the forefront of the American sociopolitical landscape. Recent immigration laws, such as Arizona's SB 1070 passed in 2010, are examples of the current efforts by state governments to curb immigrant populations in the United States. One of the more prominent arguments made to support such measures is the idea that increases in immigrant populations leads to an increase and proliferation of crime. Criminologists who have studied this phenomenon have not found a consistent, reliable link between foreign-born populations and crime, yet this perception seems to persist. Moving the discussion forward in this area, this thesis examined the direct effect of the "criminalization" of Latino immigrants on respondents' immigration attitudes and their ideas on controlling immigrant populations. The findings suggest that the "Latino immigrant as criminal" narrative has differential effects on these two concepts tied to immigrants; attitudes and support for immigration laws. In order to more fully explain the contemporary immigration narrative in the United States, it may be necessary to reconceptualize current critical race theories and sociology of law paradigms in future research.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

On April 24, 2010 Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed into law a controversial new immigration statute, the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act, more commonly known as SB 1070 (Hussain 2011). Arizona police forces are now allowed to ask for proof of the citizenship status of any person in Arizona during the course of any interaction with a law enforcement officer if the police agent feels suspicious about the person's immigration status. Much of the debate surrounding the passage of this bill was played out in two arenas – politics and media. Governor Jan Brewer referenced the proliferation of beheaded bodies turning up in the Arizonan desert as a result of Mexican violence crossing over the border (which she later recanted after the bill's passage) (CBS News 2010). Competing media outlets, such as Fox News and MSNBC, espoused opposing viewpoints, challenging their viewers to either accept or reject the threat of undocumented immigrant crime, purported to support new anti-immigrant laws. The idea of American nationality, bolstered after 9/11, had only grown within the sociopolitical landscape as “birthers” continued to cascade doubts upon the citizenship of recently elected President Barack Obama (Lyons and Miller 2012). All of these factors combined to form the *mélange* of variables that are now present in the current anti-immigration debate

Critics of the law immediately decried the new law as biased, since they believed the law would disproportionately affect those who were deemed as non-American based upon superficial judgments, such as one's racial/ethnic identity. Despite the addendum of a clause to the bill passed less than a week after the original law, which stated that racial

profiling would not be tolerated within the confines of enforcement of the new law, controversy still surrounded the new legislation in regards to its perception as leading to possible discriminatory actions by Arizona law enforcement agencies. Unfortunately, these fears were supported when on May 10, 2012 the United States Department of Justice filed a federal civil lawsuit against the Maricopa County Sherriff's Department alleging malfeasance via unjustified stops and disproportionate arrests of Latinos, based upon their racial/ethnic identity (Justice News 2012). In other words, the Department of Justice believed that Latinos were being singled out by Arizona law enforcement agencies under the guise of enforcement of anti-immigrant statutes.

(A caveat must be made regarding my use of the term, Latino. While most census data and a considerable amount of research in race/ethnicity studies, especially those tied to immigration research, use the term Hispanic, I prefer using Latino. I do this to show consistency with the native origins of this population in the United States. So, please know that when I use the term, Latino, it may actually have been worded as Hispanic in the source from which it was culled.)

The Latino link to crime and recent anti-immigration sentiment and is not unique to Arizona and has been the subject of a recent research. Laws passed in Oklahoma, Virginia, and Pennsylvania have been studied in order highlight the incongruent experiences of Latino populations compared other racial/ethnic groups under the enforcement of anti-immigration laws. Pedroza (2012) wrote about the change in living habits and public lives of Latinos in Oklahoma in response to HB 1804 passed in 2007. Many Latinos were shown to "hide" and live out of the public eye in reaction to the anti-immigration sentiment they felt as a result of the passage of this law. Using

immigration enforcement ordinances enacted in Prince William County Virginia in 2007-2008 as a reference, Koper, Guterbock, Woods, Taylor, and Carter (2013) also showed that Hispanics tended to live more sheltered lives in response to anti-immigration laws being put into effect. This is troublesome when considering the same study showed that, with the exception of one specific type of crime (aggravated assault), criminal activity did not change as a result of enforcing immigration laws. A more direct link between Latinos and anti-immigration laws and sentiment can be seen in the passage of the Illegal Immigration and Relief Act (IIRA) in 2006 in Hazelton, Pennsylvania. Longazel (2012) analyzed newspaper articles and public speeches by local politicians to show the direct connection made between Latinos and crime as the impetus for the enactment of the IIRA. This behavior and belief of immigrants as criminals becomes problematic when it is shown to disproportionately affect one group, Latinos. This is especially troublesome as it moves from informal social control in the form of a culture's norms and values and becomes formalized by the passage of laws that criminalize one based upon their membership in an outsider group, non-American, and the ascribed characteristics that go along with this labeling.

Anti-immigration supporters have ascribed negative characteristics to juvenile immigrants as well. US News and World Report (Caldwell 2014) reported that the number of unaccompanied children who have entered the United States - mostly from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala - has topped 65000 from October of 2013 until the summer of 2014. While there were some who extended a humanitarian effort to these recent émigrés, the anti-immigrant rhetoric garnered most of the attention in the media. The Latino minors were labeled as disease-ridden (Pearson 2014), dehumanizing them

and setting them as distinct from American society as a whole, somehow less deserving of sympathy than our own children [This is especially interesting when considering the current outbreak of domestic outbreak of measles, almost previously eradicated in modern America, attributed to American “anti-vaccine” parents (Nagourney and Goodnough 2015.)]. More important to our realm of research, these Latino children were seen as criminals, with some politicians even calling for background checks on the recently arrived refugees (CBS-DC 2014).

The current arguments of those who espouse the dangers of undocumented immigrants become even more paradoxical when looking at current migration data. The unauthorized immigrant population peaked at an estimated 12.2 million people in 2007, with 2013 estimates of this cohort 7.3% under the 2007 acme (Passel, Cohn, Krogstad, Gonzalez-Barrera 2014). Latinos, particularly those from Mexico, make up a bulk of the undocumented population in the United States (State Demographics Data 2014), which may direct Americans to see unauthorized immigration as a “Latino problem.” However, recent data shows that all but one state that borders Mexico, Texas, have experienced a decrease in unauthorized immigrants over the last few years (Passel and Cohn 2014).

This thesis will deconstruct the purported link of Latino immigrants to criminal behavior and show how belief in this relationship affects opinions on immigrants and how they should be treated in American society. Based upon the aforementioned examples, this thesis will first aim to further debunk the purported link between immigrants, especially those of Latino descent, and criminal behavior. I will conduct an analysis of all 50 states (including the United States as a whole and Washington DC), covering 2005-2013, to see if there is a correlation between (Latino) immigrants and

crime. This will be followed by two logistic regression analyses that will show the effects of the immigrant-crime link on immigrant attitudes and the immigrant population amount with which the respondents feel is appropriate. Lastly, the results of these statistical tests will be interpreted in relation to previous research in this area and point to new directions that further research in this area would best be served.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Immigrants as Criminals

It makes sense that painting others in an unfavorable light might lead to discriminatory actions and negative attitudes toward the marginalized population. This is seen when immigrants are ascribed as criminals, deserving of criminal prosecution and the scorn of the native populace. Namba (2011) notes that crimes committed by foreigners in Japan are designated separately from the general population. This shines a direct spotlight on the marginalized émigrés and makes it easier for Japanese natives to identify the immigrants as distinct in behavior from society at large. The justification of anti-immigrant views supported by the criminalization of immigrants is further enhanced when law enforcement states that the distinct categorization of immigrants as their own criminal class leads to a safer society (Namba 2011). As seen in examples from the first chapter, this issue becomes more problematic when immigrants are further divided based upon the race/ethnicity of certain cohorts, Latino immigrants in our case.

When Latino immigrants are pointed to as different from not only Americans, but even incongruent with other immigrant groups, it can be said that the criminalization of immigrants has become racialized. This process occurs when negative characteristics are placed upon marginalized population by the dominant hegemony (Omi and Winant 1999). Thus, it might be said that the negativity assigned to immigrant issues in the United States has been racialized as a Latino “problem.”

Perhaps the strongest example of the Latino “immigrant as criminal” perception is the use of language, in particular the word, *illegal*. The word alone designates Latino migrants as existing outside of the law-abiding sphere of the American population. The power and assumptions inherent in this term are exemplified below in the words of a Utah state legislator in a statement directed at a first-generation Mexican-American who questioned his support of anti-immigrant legislation:

I'm sorry your mother broke the law crossing the border illegally, and now you have to pay for her mistakes, for her criminal behavior. This is a country of rules and laws. (Cahill 2010)

Thus, before even considering the racial/ethnic makeup, or any other characteristic of the Latina woman whom he was referring to in his response, she was a criminal.

The gravitas tied to the term *illegal* carries over into conclusions made about Latino immigrants and their proposed criminal traits. Readers of a Virginia newspaper tended to conflate serious crimes, such as rape and murder, with entering the United States without proper documentation (Sohoni and Sohoni 2014). Hence, just entering the United States in an improper manner allowed for Latino immigrants to be seen as violent criminals. Even more troubling were the connections made between the entrance of Latino immigrants and the horrible events of 9/11. In Utah, a local citizen showed pictures of the 9/11 attacks at a public hearing to debate new immigration statutes (Cahill 2010). So, even with knowledge that terrorist groups have accepted responsibility for the attacks on 9/11, any imagery associated with non-native persons violating American norms is sometimes used to justify negative attitudes against those who are not native, but immigrants, to the United States (Sohoni and Sohoni 2014).

When looking at the racialization of Latino immigrants as criminals, it is necessary to look to research that has examined the relationship between this population and crime rates. There have been a plethora of studies that have looked at this issue and could fill volumes by summarizing their results. When studies have shown a statistically significant association, it has tended to be negative (for example, Wright and Rodriguez 2014). As an example, when examining the correlation between foreign-born populations and rates of violent crime in San Diego neighborhoods, a drop in these types of crime was observed as the immigrant populations rose (Martinez, Stowell, and Lee 2010).

When Latino immigrants are painted as criminals because of their cultural identity, it is interesting to contrast this presupposition seen in studies of juvenile delinquency and nativity. A common thread that pops up in these studies is the salience of a generational effect influence in juvenile (immigrant) delinquent behavior. DiPietro and McGloin (2012) studied rates of juvenile delinquency in Chicago and found that as immigrant populations aged, from first generation (foreign born) to third generation (born to American parents in the United States), rates of criminal behavior increased by 50%. Second generation (born to non-native immigrants) committed crime at a 24% lower rate than the third generation as well. Likewise, first generation immigrant juveniles have also been shown to be less likely to engage in criminal behavior and to have long-lasting criminal careers than subsequent generations. Hence, it might be interpreted that not only are (juvenile) immigrants *less* likely to be criminals, but it is influence of American culture and society which impels them to criminal acts the longer they live in the United States.

Spheres of Influence

The media plays a key role in establishing the idea that Latino immigrants are linked to crime. It is not uncommon for a Latino immigrant's residency status to be displayed alongside their criminal offense in media reports. Because of the linking of these two issues, Latino immigrants and (un)documented status; it can lead to viewers combing the two concepts into their singular ideal of Latino immigrants (Stewart, Barton, Messner, and Raffalovich 2011). This can lead to Latino immigrants being viewed as responsible for a crime wave. For example, when a White citizen was murdered by undocumented Latino immigrants in Hazelton, Pennsylvania, local media paired the reporting of this crime with the prevalence of drug-related crime in the area (Longazel 2013).

This is especially troubling when one very specific group, such as Mexicans, is shown more exclusively, and frequently, in stories about crime (Velazquez and Kempf-Leonard 2010). Hence, when crime is tied to one group, Latino immigrants, and the type of crime shown to media consumers is slanted towards sensational incidents of deviance, like murder, public audiences might be cued to formulate the idea that Latino immigrants are responsible for a surge of criminal activity. This results in a reciprocal relationship between media outlets and their audience, in which the ideology of the audience drives the network programming. Gil de Zuniga et al. (2012) found that both Fox News and CNN alter their content to meet the demands of their viewership.

As stated above, the material to which media consumers are exposed can heavily influence the link between Latino immigrants and crime. Sohoni and Sohoni (2014) have

found that media outlets sometimes tend to focus upon the delinquent behavior of immigrants, compared to native populations. Gil de Zuniga, Correa, and Valenzuela (2012) conducted a study to examine the effects of cable news channels on viewers' opinions on immigration. An interesting result was seen when comparing the pre and post measurement of immigration attitudes of those who stated they normally watched CNN and had liberal views on immigration matters. After switching from watching CNN to watching Fox News, these respondents tended to support more restrictive views on immigration and negative attitudes about Mexican immigrants (Gil de Zuniga et al. 2012). This shows that it not only the content, but the specific outlet from which people receive their news, as variables in the formation of their attitudes about Latino immigrants.

When one enters the United States undocumented, without permission, it is federal laws they are breaking. Thus, immigration can be perceived as a federal, or national, issue. When stories about migrant populations, especially tied to crime, are offered in media (i.e. newspapers, national news broadcasts, cable news channels), they can paint immigration as a national issue. Mohan, Twigg, and Taylor (2011) used the terms *egotropic* and *sociotropic* to define the scope people apply to environmental stimuli, media stories in our case. When media consumers perceive an issue to be most directly related to their immediate, local setting, they are exercising an *egotropic* perspective. If applying the implications of certain ideas and actions to society at large, such as from a national perspective, they are applying a *sociotropic* lens.

When immigration issues are viewed from a national perspective, another trend has also shown to be salient, the frequency of the immigration narrative in the United

States. Hopkins (2011) found that stories about immigration, or those that pointed to the need to address matters tied to undocumented populations, blossom in election years. He found that stories about immigration spiked in 1994 and 2006, years in which federal elections took place (While neither of these years included a presidential vote, they both included quorums to determine Congressional representatives, for both the House and Senate.). In their aforementioned study of cable news' influence on immigration attitudes, Gil de Zuniga et al. (2012) also found a relationship between stories about migrant populations and politics, which magnified during election years. This issue draws attention to the cooperation of media and politics in influencing attitudes in the contemporary immigration debate in America.

Recent studies have spoken to the significant effect of political influence as a driver of immigrant attitudes and how migrant populations should be handled. Lyons and Miller (2012) have even gone so far to say that it is impossible to separate politics from the modern immigration debate. They stated that politicians often employ a strategy of demonizing populations, those which exist outside of the dominant hegemony, as scapegoats for the ills of society. Demonization can quickly turn to dehumanization when speaking to an "invasion" of immigrants, especially those of Mexican descent, across our national borders (Longazel 2013). Thus, Latino immigrants are not human, but rather invaders, best exemplified by the term "illegal alien."

For the purposes of this thesis, this becomes relevant when applying this concept to the "immigrant as criminal" narrative, widely disputed by previous research in this area. Despite evidence contrary to a direct relationship between immigrants and crime, politicians in Virginia in 2006-2007 have nonetheless purported this relationship for

personal gain (Sohoni and Sohoni 2014), as represented by their election into office. Hussain (2011) spoke to the utility of blaming immigrants for social problems in one's electoral area as a viable strategy. He stated that politicians use this to deflect from issues they might rather avoid, or are ill-equipped, to address. Again, immigrants can become unwilling scapegoats for opportunistic politicians.

This focus on immigrants as troublemakers was also seen when examining the disparate attention they are paid by law enforcement. This idea was seen in research by Chacon (2012), who noted the incongruent rate of Latino traffic stops by police. Her findings are even more troubling when it she posited that the stops of Latinos were done with the intention of rooting out undocumented immigrants, whose status cannot be verified until they come into contact with law officers. This is exemplified in the actions allowed by Arizona law enforcement, as stipulated by 2010's SB1070. This state law permits state police to stop/pull over anyone who they felt may not be a legal citizen, even absent of violating any other laws (Immigration Policy 2012). Thus, the very characteristic of being/appearing to be an immigrant can be criminal in itself.

However, this type of utilitarian practice, in that it does not affect the most numerous, dominant hegemony, is not exclusive to American law enforcement. British officials have been shown to disproportionately prosecute immigrants, as compared to non-immigrant offenders, in their control. They chose to charge the immigrants rather the higher ups in their criminal networks, possibly native Britons, because there was a greater likelihood they would be successful in their prosecution. In this manner, they were seen as doing something about crime (Aliverti 2012). In other words, it is easier to jail or deport a criminal than to fully investigate a criminal network and keep up a good

appearance as fighting crime to the public. Japanese officials, politicians and law enforcement alike, promote a “War on Illegal Immigrants” as a tenet of handling immigration issues. Part of this program allows police officers to question the citizenship status of whomever they choose, regardless of suspicion of criminal activity, and is sometimes based upon nothing more than the language spoken by the potential arrestee. Again, one’s mere identity as foreign-born can subject immigrants to disparate treatment by law enforcement.

The Narrative Becoming Formalized in Law

The preceding pages show the various types of language, rhetoric, and ascribed characteristics applied to Latinos in the contemporary immigration debate in the United States. The end result of this narrative is realized in the passage of anti-immigrant legislation. States have begun to enact their own immigration laws based upon the thought that the federal government has become negligent in handling this issue. Despite an exponential growth in federal agencies that handle matters of immigration enforcement, such as the U.S. border Patrol and the Department of Homeland Security, this trend has continued (Chacon 2012). However, this is not completely out of line with existing federal law, it is included within the language of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1957. Clause 287(g) allows for states to work in concert with the federal government in matters of immigration enforcement (Akins 2013). Instead, some scholars have interpreted the recent slew of state-sponsored immigration laws and enforcement as a politically-based response to the election of President Barack Obama, exacerbated by more conservative factions of Republican-led state governments and the emerging influence of the Tea Party (Hussain 2011). This is a prime example of the

postulation set forth by Lyons and Miller (2012) when they stated that politics cannot be discounted when deconstructing the modern immigration debate in the United States.

Unfortunately, it is Latino immigrants who tend to disparately suffer negative ramifications as a result of the passage and enforcement of recent immigration laws. For example, Pedroza (2012) found that Latinos living in Oklahoma, regardless of their residency status, have altered their lifestyles as a consequence of the passage of HB 1804, a law that denies some social services to undocumented immigrants and harsher penalties for those who employ them. Additionally, Latino-Americans and Latino populations in general are sometimes included within discussion about undocumented immigrants (Sohoni and Sohoni 2014) and must make concerted efforts in order to negate the unfavorable ramifications of this association (Stewart et al. 2011). Thus, just being of Latino heritage can become problematic in itself, whether one is born in the United States or not.

Yet, despite the immigration laws passed at the state level, they are still subject to the scrutiny of the American legal system, spearheaded by the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS), and concordance with the U.S. Constitution. The 14th Amendment guarantees equal protection under the law; people cannot be treated differently based upon their race/ethnicity (<http://constitution.laws.com/14th-amendment>). However, the legal precedents established to show an unconstitutional violation of this right is difficult to meet, largely based upon rulings handed down by the SCOTUS.

A petitioner must show violation of their 14th Amendment rights on three different levels – that they belong to a cognizable group (as based upon their race/ethnicity or gender), that the constitutional violation occurred happens is systemic (happens repeatedly and over a considerable amount of time), and that those whom transgressed their constitutional rights did so while acting in a non-neutral, discriminatory manner (Rose and Casarez N.d.). Most litigants fall short of a successful 14th Amendment claim when trying to prove the last of the three forenamed tenets. The SCOTUS has shown reluctance to grant favorable rulings in equal protection claims. Two examples of this are seen in *United States v. Brignoni-Ponce* and *Alexander v. Sandoval*. In the *United States v. Brignoni-Ponce*, the majority opinion supported the idea that the petitioner’s mere appearance as Mexican, and of those with him at the time of his arrest, met the legal standard for assuming that he might be of questionable residency status (Alexander 2012). *Alexander v. Sandoval* also sets obstacles for petitioner’s to successfully meet the legal requirements to prove a 14th Amendment violation. The ruling from this case denies private citizens the right to sue government agencies for racial discrimination. This sets up an almost impossible likelihood for success for future claims that allege racial/ethnic discrimination by the state (Alexander 2012).

However, a shift in rulings which are weighed against the rights of immigrants and Latinos which are sometimes lumped with them has shown that change might be near. In reaction to the actions of the Maricopa Sheriff’s Department in Arizona and the enforcement of SB 1070, the U.S. Department of Justice took action, based upon allegations of racism. As a result of the federal lawsuit against this arm of Arizona’s law

enforcement, sanctions were placed upon the sheriff's department. The federal courts decided they were engaging in racially/ethnically incongruent practices in the biased targeting of Latino (Mexican) populations under the guise of enforcing SB 1070 (Justice News 2012).

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory

In current sociology, there has been a shift in the types theories used to frame current racial phenomena. These concepts have been termed “new racism” theory (Ditonto, Lau, and Sears 2013), postulated in order to explain the different application of racism in modern society; seen as less overt and blatant than in the past, such as in seen in post-Civil War era Jim Crow laws and practices. There are variants within this new school of critical race theorems, like Bonilla-Silva's *silent racism* (2014) and *symbolic racism*. In Bonilla-Silva's (2014) conceptualization of silent racism, he puts forth that modern racists do not consciously recognize they are racists; rather they are hindered by identifying as color-blind. However, this idea is insufficient to explain the overt, conscious language seen in some of the previous examples of immigration attitudes given in this chapter. While the forenamed doctrines share commonality in their postulation that racism does not always occur with conscious, overt awareness of the oppressor(s) (Bonilla-Silva 2014; Tarman and Sears 2005), symbolic racism is distinct in a few key ways.

Symbolic racism was formed to explain the modern racist attitudes and behaviors of the dominant White hegemony in contemporary America. Tarman and Sears (2005)

set forth the clearest, and most cited, definition of this school of thought. Symbolic racism theory is based upon the notion that the dominant stratum is not directly culpable for the experience of discriminatory acts by those outside of the dominant group. Practitioners of this type of racism explain the experiences of oppression by a marginalized population as based upon characteristics inherent in those who perceive they are experiencing the negative ramifications of prejudice. In this way, the dominant class also discredits the perception of racism by those whom are disadvantaged; it is their fault and may not exist if not for their own actions and behavior. Also, when justifying behavior perceived as racist, Whites often cite economic threat or fear of criminal victimization, as this is seen as the nature of the marginalized group(s), as the basis for actions, such as support for anti-Latino immigrant laws, judged as based in racism. However, Berg (2013) has found that this narrative is frequently used despite the lack of tangible evidence or empirical data to support their claims. This is perhaps the most important aspect of symbolic racism we need to keep in mind when examining the anti-Latino immigrant sentiment in the forthcoming study; the grand narrative inherent in symbolic racism used to justify the behavior of the dominant, White hegemony, expressed through the “immigrant as criminal” rhetoric in the contemporary immigration discourse in the United States.

Aspects of capitalism have also been used to explain prejudicial behavior and categorization of immigrants. Preston and Perez (2006) applied Marxist theology to describe the creation of immigrants as the “other”, different from the dominant stratum, citizens, in American society. They postulated that the binary categorization inherent in Marx’s idea of capitalism is seen in the creation of immigrants as a viable source of labor

for those in the dominant class who control the means of production. When this group poses a threat to the capitalist structure, immigration laws may be used to curb and control the immigrant population. This aspect of criminalization was previously referenced when examining the nature of the immigrant as being a criminal just by being an immigrant in the enactment of certain laws and government policies (Lilley and Boba 2009; Namba 2011; Stacey, Carbone-Lopez, and Rosenfeld 2011). However, this theoretical interpretation becomes dubious when the Latino migrant population is disparately addressed, separate from the immigrant population as a whole, in the current American immigration narrative. The dichotomous categorization in Marxist theory is violated. Thus, new theoretical explanations must be sought.

The Latino “immigrant as criminal” narrative fits well within ideas in symbolic racism theory. A key aspect of this framework is that racist attitudes and prejudice are often held contrary to empirical evidence (Berg 2013). In a study of Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring data, Kposowa, Adams, and Tsunokai (2010) found that non-citizens were 21% less likely to commit drug offenses and had lower numbers than natives in weapons violations. When law enforcement agencies in suburban Washington DC enforced more stringent immigration laws, crime rates were not significantly reduced, with the exception of aggravated assault (Koper et al. 2013). In other words, despite more immigrants being arrested and incarcerated, crime rates did not change; showing that immigrants were not disproportionately contributing to the crime rate in the area.

Political Criminality

However, critical race theory, specifically symbolic racism, might not be comprehensive enough to explain the anti-Latino immigrant narrative. As seen above, studies have shown that there can be a racial divide in perceptions about immigrant characteristics. In a study which compared the message surrounding the passage of Proposition 187 in California to the message surrounding the enactment of SB1070 in Arizona in 2010, Brown (2013) saw a shift in tactics. Whereas the California debate was presented in a legality frame, delineating legal immigrants from illegal immigrants, the Arizona issue was conducted with a racial framework, presenting Mexicans/Latinos as a problem which affected White America. This shift to a racial framework is noteworthy. Tarman and Sears (2005) influential work which supported the symbolic racism framework was done from the perspective of White/Black dialectic. In other words, it sought to explain racial attitudes based upon the relationship of these two groups. Hence, for the purposes of this research, it is necessary to look elsewhere for theoretical support to explain anti-immigrant attitudes and reasons for restricting immigrant acceptance into the United States, as the debate appears to single out Latinos, whom have not garnered the same amount of research as other marginalized groups.

When examining how attitudes affect a more structural component, such as support for ideas/laws which will limit immigration, an offshoot of conflict theory might be the best candidate for this job. Turk's (1982) work on the concept of political criminality provides a basis for this perspective. Inherent in this theoretical framework is the idea that political power, exercised through actual politics and ideological norms, is used by the dominant hegemony in order to achieve their desired outcome(s). Thus,

when the “Latino immigrant as criminal” narrative is used, members of the social stratum in power delineate immigrants as different from society at large, as they are in violation of social norms and laws. Lyons and Miller (2012) espoused the power of political criminality when studying the “immigrant as criminal” narrative, despite a plethora of research which disputes this alleged relationship. As they stated, when based in a fallacy, law can be seen as having “symbolic life”, existing only to purport a particular ideological view. When particular groups (Latinos) are named and separated from others, such as in the SB1070 debate, new social norms and value systems are forged. Thus, the power of ideology and politics cannot be ignored when looking at anti-immigrant sentiment and support for laws which mitigate their rights.

Methodological Framework

Herbert Gans (2012) stated that sociologists often engage research from one of two perspectives: cultural (attitudinal) or structural. This often results in the detriment of one over the other and may limit the conclusions and scope of the research at hand. The preceding pages show that the Latino immigrant narrative in the United States can be divided by Gans’ (2012) idea of an attitudinal measure, such as immigrant ascribed negative characteristics, and structural, via the formalization of immigration laws and their enforcement by government officials and the American legal system.

To further expound upon this bifurcated view of the contemporary Latino immigration discussion, the idea of racial and legal framing (Brown 2013) seems apropos. Racial framing refers to when (Latino) immigrants are designated as distinct from American citizens, through their racial and cultural differences. These differences

are defined and formed by the dominant hegemony (Brown 2013) and often are negative and derogatory in nature. When the distinction between immigrants and citizens is strictly based upon one's adherence to laws of entering the United States in concordance with the law, the legality frame is being employed (Brown 2013). The following paragraphs will show how both of these perspectives have been represented in research on immigration.

One persistent finding in studies that measure immigration attitudes is that some foreign-born populations do not have the characteristics inherent to become American. This idea has been magnified in recent research that has focused on historically non-traditional destinations for Latino migrants. Differences in language led to support for "English only" ordinances in South Carolina, which resulted in Latino émigrés being denied many social resources (Lacy 2011). Language was again a prescient issue in the aftermath of an alternative version of the national anthem being released in 2006. Skeptics of the Spanish version of our national anthem led to accusations of un-American ideals and harkened back to the unyielding assimilationist expectations placed upon immigrants by United States' citizens in the past (Speicher 2010)

Racial framing was also seen in research that examined the relationship between time and space immigrant attitudes. An ethnography conducted in a small Minnesota town revealed that locals were reticent to accept Latino migrants in the area because they did not have a history in the region (Leitner 2012). They were seen as not sufficiently contributing, especially economically, in order to gain acceptance in the local environment. These same respondents also cited the Latinos' phenotype and cultural differences as reasons for their misfit in the community (Leitner 2012). Loud music and

the type of animals, chickens in this instance, kept in Latinos' yards were examples given by native Virginia residents to define the new migrant population as out of place. They also were shown to engage in hyper-vigilant watchdog practices in their monitoring of the new populace (Cleaveland 2013). This last example is interesting because rather than hold the people responsible for introducing the Latino immigrants into their neighborhoods, such as realtors and the lawmakers who supported the possession of small livestock, they chose to demonize the foreign-born, Mexican population (Cleaveland 2013).

Perhaps the clearest example of a racially/culturally-based perspective on immigrants was seen in a study conducted with elementary school children. The children ranged from 5-11 years old and were asked to rank who is most American, based upon their racial/ethnic identity. Compared to Whites, Asians, and African-Americans, Latinos were seen as the least American, based upon their physical and cultural differences (Brown 2011). This is especially troubling because it is highly likely that these children had not yet experienced many direct interactions with a large enough swath of society from which to draw these comparisons. Rather, their ideas are likely formed as a result of (popular) media and the teachings of adults around them. Harro (2000) explains this as part of the "cycle of socialization" in which our ideas about racial/cultural identity are first birthed from those in or immediate environments, such as family and friends.

The legality frame is best represented by revisiting a variable in anti-immigrant sentiment previously mentioned, the use of the word *illegal*. This is dehumanizing, especially when linked with the word *alien*, and sets forth a basis for considering (Latino) immigrants as deserving of their own distinct class, separate from Americans (Longazel

2013; Martinez and Slack 2013). This can lead to racial degradation ceremonies (Longazel 2013), such as when Latinos are subjected to incongruent scrutiny via traffic stops or as a result of the enforcement of anti-immigrant laws. In a content analysis of editorial sections in a 2006-2007 study of Virginia newspapers, Sohoni and Sohoni (2014) found that people who wrote letter to the paper often conflated the terms *immigrant*, *illegal*, *Hispanic*, and *Mexican*, using these labels interchangeably. This is dangerous because it not only designates Mexicans as criminals, but immigrants as a whole. It would not be too presumptuous to think that these people would also support legislation to curb immigrant populations and promote measures which do so.

Thus, in tying back to Gans' (2012) idea of the bifurcated foci of sociological research, the racial frame might be used to explain cultural (attitudinal) factors that contribute to the modern immigration debate whereas the legality frame can be used to examine the manner in which this population is/should be treated.

Research Questions

1. Is there a link between immigrant, especially those of Latino descent, populations and crime?

Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant inverse relationship between (Latino) immigrants and crime rates. In other words, as (Latino) immigrant populations increase, crime will decrease.

2. Does belief that immigrants contribute to an increase in crime influence negative attitudes about the worth of immigrants?

Hypothesis 2: The odds that respondents' hold a negative view of immigrants will significantly increase if they think that immigrants are a source of an increase in crime rates.

Hypothesis 2a: This relationship will be mediated when considering the influence and movement of the respondents within certain social structures - political party, attendance at religious services, and education – and the belief that immigrants take jobs away from American citizens.

3. Does belief that immigrants contribute to an increase in crime influence the opinion that immigrant populations should be limited?

Hypothesis 3: The odds that respondents' believe that the inflow of immigrants should be more strictly regulated will increase if they think that immigrants are a source of an increase in crime rates.

Hypothesis 3a: This relationship will be mediated when considering the influence and movement of the respondents within certain social structures - political parties, attendance at religious services, and education – and the belief that immigrants take jobs away from American citizens.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Data

The analyses to be conducted for this thesis will require the use of three different data sets – U.S. Census data, crime rates pulled from the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s (FBI) annual Uniform Crime Report (UCR) (<http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/crimestats>), and survey information gleaned from the 2004 General Social Survey (GSS) (<http://www3.norc.org/GSS+Website/Download/SPSS+Format/>). The first two resources will provide information from which to analyze the relationship between (Latino) immigrants and crime. GSS data will be used to examine the effect of the “immigrant as criminal” narrative, along with salient mediating and control variables, on respondents’ attitudes about immigrants and how they should be represented in the American population.

Data from the first two sources, U.S. Census and UCR, will be pulled for the years 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, and 2013. The U.S. Census data came from the American Community Survey (ACS) section of their website (<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>); the three-year estimates of immigrant and Latino immigrant populations in each state, including Washington DC and the United States as a whole, for the years 2005 (no estimate stated on the site), 2007, 2009, 2011, and 2013 (the last four time points being the ACS three-year estimates). These years will be chosen in order to remain proximal enough to be relevant while still providing enough information to examine the contemporary relationship between immigrant populations and crime rates. The U.S.

Census did not begin doing projected estimates (one, three or five year) until 2007. However, 2007 only included three year estimates; therefore, this data qualification was used in order to remain consistent with data that could be ascertained from the subsequent years of measure. Per a conversation with a representative of the U.S. Census (US Census Representative 2014), the 2005 data did not include any projected estimates, as is available for the years after 2005.

UCR data on violent and property crimes in each of the 52 categories (50 states, plus Washington DC and the United States) will be used for the corresponding years to match the time points for the ACS data. The FBI crime data will be used in order to remain uniform across all states. For example, some states, such as the Arizona (Arizona Department of Public Safety 2013), exhibit their crime data via the number of people arrest rates. The FBI uses clearance rates, the criminal offenses known to law enforcement agencies, not the number of those arrested (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2014). Thus, in order to make sure the analysis used was the same data for each state, the UCR data will be used.

The 2004 GSS data will be used to examine the effect of “immigrant as criminal” narrative, along with salient control and mediating variables, on participants’ views on immigrants and their acceptance into the United States. The GSS suits this purpose well as it is a national, randomized survey that is commonly accepted as sound by academic researchers. Also, the 2004 survey is the only of the annual GSS surveys which directly asked the respondents about the link between immigration and crime, key to this study. The total number of respondents in the 2004 GSS data set numbered 2812, although the

following descriptive table will speak to the valid cases per each of the variables used in this thesis.

Variables

The variables to test the first hypotheses will be drawn from the ACS and UCR reports. Immigrant populations, as a whole and then as specified by Latino immigrants only, were culled from ACS tables for the years 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, and 2013. The two types of immigrant populations will account for both naturalized and non-citizen members of each of these categories. A distinction will not be made between those who are currently non-citizens and those whom eventually become naturalized citizens; considering respondents who identified as foreign-born born. This was done for two reasons. First, the verbiage in the GSS variables used in this study only referred to “immigrants”. Second, all foreign-born respondents in the ACS data were indeed immigrants at one time or another. Since only variables which used the term “immigrant” in the question will be used in this research, this same consistency will be maintained in defining the immigrant populations from the ACS data.

The UCR crime data for each level of measurement, all fifty states plus Washington DC and the United States as a whole, will be broken into two categories: violent and property crime. The FBI data for violent crime includes aggravated assault, forcible rape, murder and non-negligent manslaughter, and robbery. Property crime refers to motor vehicle theft, larceny, theft, and burglary. The aforementioned political and media focus on violent criminal behavior by immigrants (Velazquez and Kempf-Leonard 2010) led to the separate consideration of violent crime as its own category.

Also, since property crimes have been shown to account for the greatest number of crimes committed by both immigrants and American citizens (Hagan and Palloni 1999) it seemed apropos to analyze these two larger categories of criminal behavior separately.

The dependent variables from the GSS data will be broken into two distinct variables: one which refers to a measurement of the respondents' assessment of worth to immigrants (attitudinal) and another that points to opinions and the proper number of immigrants which should be allowed in the United States (structural). The former dependent variable, the attitudinal measure, was formed using a factor analysis of two questions on the 2004 GSS, whether immigrants are good for America and whether or not they improve American society. When combining these two survey questions, via a factor analysis, into a singular variable, the Cronbach's alpha measured at .656. This variable will be broken down into binary categorizations, as either pro (value of 0) or anti-immigrant (value of 1). The second dependent variable, which spoke to the appropriate amount of immigrants that should live in the United States, will be used as a proxy to ascertain if respondents would be likely to support anti-immigration legislation. This dependent variable will be referred to as the structural dependent variable. Likewise, this variable will be also split into two categories: a pro (increase the number of immigrants, value of 0) and anti (keep or reduce immigrant population levels, value of 1) immigrant categorization. It is not far-fetched to assume that if a respondent believes that there are already enough, let alone too many, immigrants presently in the United States, they would probably be likely to support laws which restrict the migration of non-citizens into America. Thus, the support for anti-immigration laws speaks to the formalization of anti-immigrant sentiment into the structure of the American legal

system. Referring back to the problem of studies that too often focusing on either attitudinal (cultural) or structural measures to the detriment of the ignored measure in studies (Gans 2012), this research will attempt to look at both of these conceptual frameworks.

There will be several independent variables used in the regression analyses for this study. The first, and most important, is the main independent variable, to be categorized dichotomously, which refers to whether the respondents believe that immigrants do (value of 1), or do not (value of 0), increase crime rates. Likewise, marital status, married (value of 1) or not (value of 0), will be formed into a two-condition variable. A dummy variable will be created for the reported sex of each participant (0-female, 1-male). The respondents' race/ethnicity with which they primarily self-identify will be accounted for in this research. Because it was a five-category (White, African-American, Asian, Latino, Other) variable, this variable will be formed as reference variable, with White acting as the point of reference. (A quick caveat on the formation of the race/ethnicity variables, due to the skewing of the sample population, the "Asian" category included those who self-identified as Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, or Other Asian while the "Other" category included American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, or Some Other Race.) Thus, all interpretations of the racial-ethnic variables in this study are always in comparison to Whites. Also, the respondents' age and income will be used as control variables as well.

Mediating variables will be used which referenced the respondents self-identification as Republican (assigned a value of 1) or Non-Republican (given a value of 0), level of education, frequency of attending religious services, and whether (value of 1)

or not (value of 0) they believed immigrants take jobs away from Americans (referred to as “group threat” from this point forward). Political ideology has shown to influence views on immigration (Ilias, Fennelly, and Federico 2008; Timberlake and Williams 2012). Despite initial testing which eliminated the possibility of using (low response rate) of a variable in which the participants’ self-identified as liberal or conservative, any lay person would not be hard-pressed to identify which of the two major parties in American politics is conservative and which is liberal. Anti-immigrant attitudes have been shown to be mitigated by higher levels of education in respondents (Dunaway et al. 2011; Ilias et al. 2008; Timberlake and Williams 2012); thus, it will be included. Nodding to the proposed application of moral ideology in political criminality (Turk 1982), I will include a measure of attendance at religious services. However, I will not include a breakdown by specific religion (although it was asked in the 2004 GSS) because it was heavily skewed toward a Protestant population and to avoid the quagmire of engaging in a comparative religion argument. Lastly, the measure of the respondent’s belief of whether immigrants take jobs away from Americans will be included in order to address the relationship between anti-immigration measures/actions and levels of unemployment (King, Massoglia, and Uggen 2012) and as a proxy for previous studies that used group threat theory to explain anti-immigrant attitudes. In particular, that it is the perception of future economic woes, such as made possible by a loss of jobs, which drives feelings of group threat (Chiricos, Stupi, Stults, and Gertz 2014; Filindra and Pearson-Merkowitz 2013).

Statistical Measures

There will be two separate sets of statistical analyses done in this study: one using the ACS and UCR data, the other with the GSS data. All of the forthcoming statistical tests will be conducted using the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Version 20). The former two data sets will be used to conduct 208 distinct measures of correlation – 52 (all 50 states plus Washington DC and the United States as a whole) studying the relationship between total immigrant population and violent crime, 52 comparing Latino immigrant population and violent crime, 52 examining total immigrant population and property crime, and 52 looking Latino immigrant population and property crime. These tests for correlation will be carried out in order to deconstruct the idea that there is a link between immigrants and crime (Wright and Rodriguez 2014). Yes, it is a simple statistical test and does not account for the multitude of confounds which might affect this relationship. However, this will be done with the intention of keeping in line with the aforementioned examples of simple conclusion being made in popular media about the “link” between immigrants and criminals and criminals and to be congruent with the wording of the “immigrant and crime rate” question in the 2004 GSS. It would be presumptuous to assume that the respondents’ considered socioeconomic and other environmental factors when they answered whether or not they thought immigrants increase crime rates.

The second set of statistical analyses will be done with the 2004 GSS data. First, the direct relationship between each of the dependent variables, the attitudinal and the structural, and the main and mediating independent variables will be tested using bivariate analysis. Since both dependent variables are binary and, thus, nominal in

nature, chi square tests will be done when studying their relationship to the main independent variable, whether or not immigrants increase crime, respondents' political self-identification, and group threat. Since they were continuous variables, independent t-tests will be conducted when looking at the relationship between the education level and frequency of religious service attendance and both dependent variables.

Finally, two distinct logistic regression analyses, one with each dependent variable, will be carried out. The first model will examine the direct effect of the main independent variable (whether or not immigrants contribute to an increase in crime), with the addition of control variables (marital status, sex, race, age, income) in the second model. Each subsequent model, for a total of six overall, will add each mediating variable (political self-identification, level of education, religious service attendance, group threat) one at a time in order to study the specific effect of each of these variables.

Sample

The total sample size for the 2004 GSS was 2812 respondents. Of course, not every respondent provided viable answers for every question; hence, the number of valid cases for each of the variables used in this study varied, as noted in Table 1. For the attitudinal dependent variable, 834 respondents held a positive attitude about immigrants (pro), 338 a negative one (anti). The breakdown for the structural dependent variable was 198 for allowing more immigrants (pro) and 1781 stating immigrant levels should be maintained or decreased (anti). For the main independent variable, 875 thought immigrants do not increase crime, while 306 believed the opposite.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the 2004 GSS

Variable	N	Mean	Standard deviation
Attitudinal dependent variable	1172		
Pro-immigrant	834		
Anti-immigrant	338		
Structural dependent variable	1979		
Pro-immigrant	198		
Anti-immigrant	1781		
Main independent variable	1181		
Immigrants do not increase crime	875		
Immigrants increase crime	306		
Marital Status	2812		
Not married	1110		
Married	1702		
Sex	2812		
Female	1511		
Male	1301		
Race/ethnicity	2809		
White	2222		
African-American	338		
Asian	119		
Latino	86		
Other	44		
Age	2801	44.73	16.43
Income	2453	17.09	5.34
Political Identification	2800		
Non-Republican	1963		
Republican	837		
Level of Education	2811	13.75	2.82
Religious attendance	2801	3.88	2.69

Table 1. – Continued Descriptive Statistics for the 2004 GSS

Variable	N	Mean	Standard deviation
Group Threat	1198		
Immigrants do not take jobs away	677		
Immigrants take jobs away	521		

The control variables included in this study included measurements of marital status, sex, race/ethnicity, age, and income. In this sample, 1702 respondents were married, while 1110 were not married at the time of the survey. There were 1511 females and 1301 males in this group with a mean age 44.73 years (ranging from 18 to 89+). The racial/ethnic breakdown of the 2004 GSS was as follows: 2222 Whites, 338 African-Americans, 119 Asians, 86 Hispanics, and 44 Others. The income variable was continuous, with 23 levels of income measurement, and the average income for this population was 17.09, placing the average for the group earning about \$40000 a year.

Lastly, the mediating variables consisted of measurements of political self-identification, level of education, frequency of religious service attendance, and a measure of group threat. In the 2004 GSS, 837 respondents' self-identified as Republican, while 1963 did not. The mean number of years of education obtained was 13.75 and the average frequency for attending religious services was between once and several times a year, closer to the latter than the former. Finally, 677 of the participants felt that immigrants do not take jobs away from Americans whereas 521 felt that immigrants do pose a threat to gainful employment in the United States.

CHAPTER IV

Results

ACS and UCR Analysis

The correlation results of this study prove interesting and require address. As stated in the previous chapter, there were 208 distinct correlations tested, of which 61 achieved acceptable statistical significance ($p < 0.05$), as seen in Table 2. The models in this analysis are broken down as follows: Model 1 – total immigrant population and violent crime, Model 2 – total immigrants and property crime, Model 3 – Latino immigrants and violent crime, and Model 4 – Latino immigrants and property crime. This amount was raised slightly when considering those tests which approached statistical significance ($p < 0.10$) to 92. Of these 92 tests, they were heavily skewed towards those which were negative correlations. In other words, there was an inverse relationship between (Latino) immigrant populations and crime rates.

The total immigrant population tests resulted in 34 statistically significant tests, 54 when including those which met an alpha level of 0.10 or below. Most important of these are the two results seen from the tests using the United States immigrant population, -0.939 ($p < .05$) for violent crimes and -0.982 ($p < 0.01$) for property crimes. Likewise, the results for the national tests which considered the Latino immigrant population also were significantly negative, -0.926 ($p < .05$) for violent crimes and -0.969 ($p < 0.01$) for property crimes. This is very important because immigration is a federal issue. Despite the trend in recent years for states to assert their rights in enforcing matters of immigration

Table 2. Correlation Results from ACS and UCR data

Territory	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
United States	-.939*	-.982**	-.926*	-.969**
Alabama	.278	-.726	.195	-.764
Alaska	.835^	-.746	.654	-.595
Arkansas	.456	-.861^	.520	-.828^
Arizona	-.178	-.205	.384	.448
California	-.912*	-.820^	-.463	-.760
Colorado	-.971**	-.859^	-.034	-.384
Connecticut	.098	-.969**	.034	-.959**
Delaware	-.793	.529	-.736	.600
Florida	-.925^	-.844^	-.933*	-.844^
Georgia	.672	.917*	-.578	-.702
Hawaii	.697	-.892*	.416	-.788
Idaho	-.746	-.875^	-.883*	-.712
Illinois	-.372	-.904*	-.297	-.433
Indiana	.856^	-.781	.762	-.704
Iowa	-.634	-.808^	-.757	-.873^
Kansas	-.611	-.898*	-.634	-.920*
Kentucky	-.728	.400	-.682	.467
Louisiana	-.710	-.379	-.703	-.373
Maine	.949*	-.023	.641	-.237
Maryland	-.987**	-.999***	-.982**	-.992***

Significance level

^ = 0.10, * = 0.05, ** = 0.01, *** = 0.001

Table 2. – Continued Correlation Results from ACS and UCR Data

Territory	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Massachusetts	-.502	-.852 [^]	-.397	-.850 [^]
Michigan	.288	.639	.767	.665
Minnesota	-.862 [^]	-.923*	-.893*	-.897*
Mississippi	-.298	-.809 [^]	-.348	-.766
Missouri	-.970**	-.974**	-.877 [^]	-.976**
Montana	-.149	-.832 [^]	-.417	-.736
Nebraska	-.701	-.755	-.724	-.762
Nevada	.209	-.924*	.398	-.869 [^]
New Hampshire	.196	-.359	.846 [^]	.745
New Jersey	-.837 [^]	-.755	-.849 [^]	-.752
New Mexico	-.842 [^]	-.509	-.857 [^]	-.529
New York	-.762	-.990***	-.645	-.935*
North Carolina	-.937*	-.802	-.928*	-.730
North Dakota	.976**	.831 [^]	.432	.789
Ohio	-.949*	-.843 [^]	-.925*	-.753
Oklahoma	-.763	-.816 [^]	-.779	-.776
Oregon	-.618	-.696	-.444	-.616
Pennsylvania	-.990***	-.730	-.986**	-.708
Rhode Island	.110	-.849 [^]	.556	-.671
South Carolina	-.915*	-.708	-.913*	-.633
South Dakota	.969**	.954*	.916*	.877 [^]

Significance level

[^] = 0.10, * = 0.05, ** = 0.01, *** = 0.001

Table 2. – Continued Correlation Results from ACS and UCR Data

Territory	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Tennessee	-.941*	-.929*	-.932*	-.863^
Texas	-.855^	-.902*	-.831^	-.873^
Utah	-.106	-.883*	-.184	-.914*
Vermont	.167	-.538	.020	-.539
Virginia	-.935*	-.963**	-.944*	-.935*
Washington	-.886*	-.573	-.874^	-.662
Washington DC	.156	.947*	.370	.918*
West Virginia	.654	-.932*	.638	-.888*
Wisconsin	.269	-.760	.121	-.755
Wyoming	.243	-.971**	.329	-.970**

Significance level

^ = 0.10, * = 0.05, ** = 0.01, *** = 0.001

(Chacon 2012), violations of immigration status are handled in federal courts, such as decisions when an undocumented immigrant is deported to their native country.

Currently, there are not any laws which allow states to deport people from their state into another (Maddali 2011).

A similar trend was seen in the results of the total immigrant population and crime rate tests at the state (including Washington DC) level as well. Significantly positive correlations numbered at 5 (3 at $p < 0.05$, 2 at $p < 0.01$), whereas salient negative correlations totaled 27 (17 at $p < 0.05$, 7 at $p < 0.01$, and 3 at $p < 0.001$). Thus, of the

relevant results, 84% at the state level showed there is not a direct relationship between immigrant populations and crime rates.

The results were similar when examining the Latino immigrant population effects at the state level. These tests broke down as follows: 25 statistically significant (30 when including those which approached relevance at $p < 0.10$), with 2 positive correlations ($p < 0.05$) and 14 negative relationships (14 at $p < 0.05$, 5 at $p < 0.01$, and 1 $p < 0.001$). Again, the trend seen is that the direct relationship between immigrant populations, in this case specific to those of Latino origin, is negative, with 92% of the statistically significant correlations confirming this postulation.

The first hypotheses of this thesis, that there will be a significant negative relationship between (Latino) immigrant populations and crime rates, can be seen as moderately supported by the aforementioned analysis. While the amount of statistically significant results in the 208 distinct correlations performed is not completely overwhelming, 61/204 (30%), it cannot be ignored that roughly 84% of those tests showed an inverse relationship between (Latino) immigrant populations and crime. Despite the simplicity of this analysis, it does confirm results in previous research which has shown that there is an inverse relationship between immigrant populations and crime (Wright and Rodriguez 2014). By no means should this analysis be used to resoundingly refute the relationship between immigrant populations and crime. However, it was done for two reasons in this thesis. First, it will be used in conjunction with the forthcoming statistical analyses to interpret the results of the regression equations. Second, which will be expounded upon further in Chapter V of this thesis, it leads to methodology and

approaches to advance discourse about the criminalization of immigrants among academic and lay audiences alike.

2004 GSS Analysis

Before conducting the two logistic regression analyses, one for each dependent variable, using the 2004 GSS data, bivariate analyses were done to establish baseline relationships between the dependent variables and key independent variable, along with the mediating variables. Table 3 shows the results of the chi square analysis conducted between the main independent variable, whether the respondents believe that immigrants increase crime rates, and the attitudinal dependent variable.

Table 3. Chi Square Analysis of the Attitudinal Dependent Variable and Main Independent Variable (percentages in parentheses)

	Immigrants decrease crime	Immigrants increase crime	Total
Pro-immigrant	708 (61.3)	116(10.0)	824 (71.3)
Anti-Immigrant	147 (12.7)	184 (15.9)	331 (28.7)
Total	855 (74.0)	300 (26.0)	1155 (100)
$\chi^2 = 211.634$ $p < 0.001$			

The results of this test show to be strongly significant ($\chi^2 = 211.634, p < 0.001$), showing that there is a significant difference in the beliefs of the respondents' as far as immigrants' influence on criminal behavior crime when considering their evaluation of the worth of immigrants. Likewise, Table 4 exhibits the significant difference in numbers in those who believe immigrants increase crime rates as paired with their opinion on whether or not the number of immigrants should be restricted ($\chi^2 = 3.905, p <$

Table 4. Chi Square Analysis of the Structural Dependent Variable and Main Independent Variable (percentages in parentheses)

	Immigrants decrease crime	Immigrants increase crime	Total
Allow immigrants	92 (8.5)	23 (2.1)	115 (10.7)
Restrict immigrants	687 (63.7)	277 (25.7)	964 (89.3)
Total	779 (72.2)	300 (27.8)	1079 (100)
$\chi^2 = 3.905$ $p < 0.05$			

0.05). Thus, it can be seen that there is a direct significant relationship between the main independent variable and both dependent variables that will be further explained in the upcoming regression analyses.

Some of the mediating variables also show statistical significance when looking at their direct relationship with the dependent variables. While not having a significant relationship with the attitudinal dependent variable ($\chi^2 = .032$, $p = 0.857$, not shown here), the number of those whom support restriction on immigrant population levels in the United States significantly varies dependent on one's self-identification as Republican ($\chi^2 = 20.549$, $p < 0.001$) (Table 5).

Table 5. Chi Square Analysis of the Structural Dependent Variable and Political Self-Identification (percentages in parentheses)

	Non-Republican	Republican	Total
Allow immigrants	165 (8.4)	34 (1.7)	199 (10.1)
Restrict immigrants	1191 (60.4)	581 (29.5)	1772 (89.9)
Total	1356 (68.8)	615 (31.2)	1971 (100)
$\chi^2 = 20.549$ $p < 0.001$			

The percentage of those who hold pro (71.1%) versus anti (28.9%) immigrant attitudes significantly varies based upon one's view of immigrants threat on employment opportunities ($\chi^2 = 215.889$, $p < 0.001$) (Table 6). Similarly, Table 7 shows there is also a significant change in the amount of respondents' opinions on immigrant population levels based upon this same perception of job threat ($\chi^2 = 25.033$, $p < 0.001$). The latter two tests are interesting, not only because of the high significance of the tests, but also because it points to the salience of a direct effect of group threat theory when

Table 6. Chi Square Analysis of the Attitudinal Dependent Variable and Group Threat (percentages in parentheses)

	Do not take jobs	Take jobs	Total
Pro-immigrant	586 (50.2)	244 (20.9)	830 (71.1)
Anti-Immigrant	80 (6.8)	258 (22.1)	338 (28.9)
Total	666 (57.0)	502 (43.0)	1168 (100)
$\chi^2 = 215.89$ $p < 0.001$			

Table 7. Chi Square Analysis of the Structural Dependent Variable and Group Threat (percentages in parentheses)

	Do not take jobs	Take jobs	Total
Allow immigrants	88 (8.1)	27 (2.5)	115 (10.6)
Restrict immigrants	505 (46.5)	467 (43.0)	972 (89.4)
Total	593 (54.6)	494 (45.4)	1087 (100)
$\chi^2 = 25.033$ $p < 0.001$			

considering the participants' feelings of a direct consequence of immigrant residence in the United States. Lastly, while the mean number of religious services attended was not significantly related to either dependent variable, the differences in the mean levels of

education obtained significantly affected the pro or anti-immigrant attitudes and proposed handling of immigrants (Table 8). For the attitudinal dependent variable the mean of 14.25 for the pro-immigrant group was significantly different from the mean level of 13.21 years for the anti-immigrant cohort (6.119, $p < 0.001$). Likewise, the means years of education received for pro (14.28) and anti (13.76) immigrant participants was significantly different as well (2.521, $p < 0.05$).

Table 8. Independent t-test Scores for Dependent Variables and Levels of Education and Religious Service Attendance

Variable	Attitudinal dependent variable	Structural dependent variable
Level of education	6.119***	2.521*
Frequency of religious service attendance	.288	.132

Significance levels

$\wedge = 0.10$, * = 0.05, ** = 0.01, *** = 0.001

The first regression analysis looked at the effects the independent, control, and mediating variables on the attitudinal dependent variable, whether or not respondents believe that immigrants are good and contribute to American society (Table 9). Our first model shows that the main independent variable, the belief that immigrants are responsible for an increase in criminal behavior, is strongly related to the attitudinal dependent measure ($p < 0.001$). When respondents' attribute a rise in crime rates to immigrants, they are 6.68 times more likely to also hold anti-immigrant sentiments. *Thus, there is very strong support for Hypotheses 2, that the opinion that immigrants are responsible for an increase in crime strongly affects the chances that they will also hold a negative view of non-natives as well.*

Table 9. Odds Ratios for Logistic Regression Analysis of the Attitudinal Dependent Variable (N=1049)

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Immigrants as criminals	7.683***	8.559***	8.579***	8.122***	8.132***	5.411***
Marital status		1.161	1.166	1.136	1.150	1.118
Sex		.740^	.743^	.742^	.736^	.776
Race						
African-American		1.677*	1.661*	1.572^	1.599^	1.389
Asian		.074*	.074*	.080*	.079*	.099*
Latino		.431	.427	.396	.396	.555
Other		.622	.613	.542	.544	.569
Age		.987*	.987*	.986**	.986**	.987*
Income		.985	.985	1.002	1.003	1.003
Political identification			.956	1.003	1.015	.975
Education				.895***	.895***	.929*
Religious service attendance					.988	.989
Group threat						4.271***
Nagelkerke r ²	.225	.265	.265	.279	.279	.361

Significance level

^ = 0.10, * = 0.05, ** = 0.01, *** = 0.001

Next, we will look at the influence of the control variables on the attitudinal dependent variable, and their effect on the sway of the main independent variable (Table 9, Model 2). When accounting for the control variables – marital status, sex, race/ethnicity, age, and income - the odds that the “immigrant as criminal” narrative leads

to a 7.56 fold ($p < 0.001$) increase of anti-immigrant attitudes. It should also be noted that certain control variables also affect the respondents' anti-immigrant attitudes on their own in this model. Compared to Whites, African Americans are 67.7% more likely to have negative attitudes about immigrants ($p < 0.05$) whereas Asians are 26% less likely to have anti-immigrant views ($p < 0.05$). Lastly, the older the participant, the 13% less of a chance it is that they possess anti-immigrant attitudes ($p < 0.05$).

Finally, Models 3 through 6 include each of the mediating variables, self-identification as Republican, level of education, attendance at religious services, and group threat, added one at a time in order to magnify their effects. While one's identity as a Republican does not directly influence the odds of holding anti-immigrant views, it does slightly heighten the effect of the main independent variable on the attitudinal measure (7.58 times, $p < 0.001$). It was also shown that higher levels of education have a significant direct effect on decreasing the odds of holding anti-immigrant viewpoints (-10.5%, $p < 0.001$), while lowering the strength of the "immigrant as criminal" effect (7.12 times, $p < 0.001$). Frequency of attending religious services did not significantly relate to this dependent variable, nor mediate a substantive change in the relationship between the main independent variable and immigrant attitudes (a 1% difference). However, the same cannot be said for the group threat measure. Model 6 shows that strong significance ($p < 0.001$) of the group threat factor, as holding the opinion that immigrants take jobs away from Americans makes it 3.27 times more likely that one holds anti-immigrant attitudes. Additionally, this variable also accounts for a salient decrease in the power of the effect of the main independent variable (4.41 times, $p < 0.001$) and also eradicated the statistical relevance of the participants' self-identification

as African-American on their evaluations of immigrants. *Due to the statistical significance of the education and group threat variables, as mediators and as directly affecting the attitudinal dependent variable, there is mixed support for Hypothesis 2a.*

While the statistically significant odds ratios for the main independent variable were not as large or lasting as in the previous logistic regression analysis, the direct effect of this factor on the structural dependent variable, a proxy for support of anti-immigrant laws, is noteworthy nonetheless. Table 10 shows the results of the second regression equation calculated in this study. The direct effect of the “immigrant as criminal” narrative is significant in influencing the odds that respondents’ hold an anti-immigrant viewpoint on how they should be handled. When believing that immigrants cause an increase in crime, they are also 79% more likely to believe that the number of immigrants in the United States should be held steady or lessened ($p < 0.05$). *Hence, Hypotheses 3 was supported in this direct test of the relationship between the structural dependent variable and the “immigrant as criminal” narrative.*

The second model in the structural regression equation shows results quite different from its predecessor. When considering the control variables, the effect of the main independent variable was mitigated, dropping to a significance level that can best be described as a strong trend ($p < 0.10$). However, several control variables showed direct relationships with the dependent variable that require address. When respondents were married, they were 74.8% more likely to support anti-immigrant measures ($p < 0.05$). Three different racial/ethnic groups- African-Americans, Asians, and Latinos- were less inclined to support restrictions on immigrant populations [-51.9 % ($p < 0.01$), -61.1% (p

Table 10. Odds Ratios for Logistic Regression Analysis of the Structural Dependent Variable (N=980)

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Immigrants as criminals	1.790*	1.697^	1.613^	1.495	1.507	1.108
Marital status		1.748*	1.166*	1.591^	1.777*	1.753*
Sex		.831	.785	.783	.746	.806
Race						
African-American		.481**	.572*	.537*	.625	.570^
Asian		.389*	.440^	.462	.462	.499
Latino		.195***	.228**	.203***	.191***	.208**
Other		3.431	4.355	3.648	3.704	4.299
Age		1.002	1.001	1.001	1.002	1.003
Income		1.020	1.017	1.027	1.028	1.029
Political identification			2.973***	3.029***	3.296***	3.225***
Education				.926^	.933	.953
Religious service attendance					.908*	.913*
Group threat						2.368***
Nagelkerke r ²	.011	.076	.103	.110	.119	.142

Significance level

^ = 0.10, * = 0.05, ** = 0.01, *** = 0.001

< 0.05), and -80.5% (p < 0.001), respectively] than Whites. It should be noted that

Latinos were the only racial/ethnic group that was significantly less likely than Whites to

support anti-immigrant measures throughout the models in this logistic regression, regardless of the influence of any of the control or mediating variables.

It must be noted that the mediating variables, political self-identification, level of education, religious attendance, and feelings of group threat (the factors considered in Models 3-6), did not significantly change the relationship between the “immigrant as criminal” narrative and structural dependent variable. As when accounting for the control variables, the influence of the “immigrant as criminal” narrative never approached an alpha level of 0.05 once the other factors in this analysis were considered. Nonetheless, the inclusion of the mediating variables showed to have direct effects on the structural dependent variable. Unlike the first equation, self-identification as a Republican led to a 1.97 fold increase in the odds of participants’ probable support for anti-immigrant laws ($p < 0.001$). Religious attendance was also salient in this regression analysis, as increases in the frequency of participating in religious services made it 9.2% less likely to stump for reductions of immigrant populations ($p < 0.05$). As with the previous regression calculation, the group threat variable showed to be highly significant ($p < 0.001$) in leading to an increase in the likelihood of supporting a measure deemed anti-immigrant (1.37 times). *Hypothesis 3b is supported by this logistic regression analysis.*

Logistic regression analyses of the 2004 GSS data produced results which supported the hypotheses set forth in this thesis, with the aforementioned caveat in relation to the subset hypothesis of the second postulation. This contingency will be addressed in the forthcoming discussion on the results of this study, along with the theoretical and practical applications that can be drawn from this research.

CHAPTER V

Discussion and Conclusion

This thesis showed results which support the contention that if sociologists only examine social phenomena from either attitudinal (cultural) or structural perspectives, salient factors to explain human behavior may be overlooked. The significant factors that affected the respondents' attitudes about (Latino) immigrants proved to be incongruent with those that guided their opinions on the structural (legal) handling of the same population. The following section will discuss each of these perspectives, attitudinal and structural, further, along with areas in each of them that can be addressed by future research. First, the results of the correlation analysis will be discussed along with the reasoning for its inclusion in this study and implications it has for future research in this area. Then the regression analyses will be examined, along with the theoretical implications induced from their results. Finally, a new theoretical paradigm will be provided that encapsulates the results of this thesis when considering previous work in this area as well.

The correlation analysis showed mixed results, as the majority of the tests did not exhibit statistical significance. However, of those that were relevant, a clear majority, 83.6% (87.0% when considering those that met an alpha threshold of 0.10), showed an inverse relationship. These results support previous research (Wright and Rodriguez 2014) that examined the relationship between immigrant populations and crime rates. Nonetheless, these results are by no means a thorough examination of this relationship, as no other confounding variables were considered in this equation. For example, age has

been shown to significantly affect the likelihood that one will be categorized as a criminal. When comparing the differences between American citizens and Mexican immigrants being labeled as a criminal, as determined by incarceration and criminal conviction, interesting comparisons did not appear until the age of the offenders was factored. The initial ratio before considering the age of the offenders was about two to one, but dropped 47.25% to 1.046, almost an equal one to one ratio, when this variable was included in the analysis (Hagan and Palloni 1999). Thus, the correlation tests in this study served to support the theoretical scrutiny applied to the logistic regression analyses, in order to flush out the effects of symbolic racism, and to set forth possible research agendas and methodology for future work in immigration sociological studies.

At this point, I will address the reasons for the inclusion of the correlation tests performed to examine the relationship between (Latino) immigrant populations and crime rates. Despite the plethora of research that shows there is not a relationship between immigrants and crime (Wright and Rodriguez 2014), there is still a need to continue to include analysis like this in research on the criminalization of immigrants. The ramifications of this phenomena extends beyond the walls of academia in that there are every day, real-life consequences tied to the belief in this fallacious relationship. People are being thrown in prison (Georgopoulos 2005) or deported due to the explosion of immigration laws over the last few years (Hussain 2011). Hence, any research which questions or refutes this false narrative is necessary in order to combat fallacies believed by large portions of American society.

Perhaps the most important reason for conducting simple statistical analysis is to prepare sociological research for a non-academic lay audience. Again, it is in the public

realm where people who spread this incorrect belief and who vote and support politicians who enact laws exist. This is an instance where the need for public sociology becomes apparent. When conducting public sociology, it is important to keep in mind that it should be digestible for a non-academic audience; this is the focus of public sociology (Burawoy 2004). It is this population that will determine the salience and worth of research in the public arena (Chancer and McLaughlin 2007; Gans 2010; Powell 2012; Turner 2013). I would posit that in this area of sociological research there is a moral and ethical obligation for us to make our work available to the public, especially as people suffer negative consequences based upon disproven ideas and links. Would you not question the morality and ethical standards of a doctor who found a cure for cancer yet neglected to share it to those who might benefit from it, rather keeping it for themselves?

However, venturing into public sociology in this area of research does not diminish the academic importance of this work, or the professionalism of scholars who engage in it. Before engaging a lay audience, sound and ethical academic research would need to be conducted under the same rigorous standards and scrutiny as it is now. So, before research in this area could be presented to a public audience, it would be subject to the stringent review processes in place I peer and publication reviews. This is vitally important in order to ensure the reliability and validity of the research, especially as it is not highly unlikely that studies in such a controversial subject matter might be questioned by skeptics in a lay audience. Thus, the professional standard as of academic research would serve as the cornerstone from which to begin this endeavor.

The strength of the influence on the “immigrant as criminal” narrative seen in the attitudinal regression analysis strongly supports tenets of symbolic racism theory.

Regardless of the addition of control and mediating variables, the belief that immigrants contribute to a rise in criminal activity maintained statistical significance, raising the odds of holding anti-immigrant attitudes many fold. This is part of the grand narrative aspect of symbolic racism, which Tarman and Sears (2005) highlight as one of the four tent poles of this form of critical race theory. However, the fact that a rudimentary statistical test mitigated the link between (Latino) immigrants and crime strongly supports a previously studied characteristic of symbolic racism theory. Berg (2013) contends that the grand narrative inherent in this theory is often based upon false information. At this point a question must be asked, why would people believe something which has shown in study over study (Wright and Rodriguez 2014) to not only be false, but is often an inverse relationship when empirically tested?

To begin to answer this question, it would be fruitful to draw from findings in the world of psychology. The most obvious answer may be found when looking through the lens of cognitive dissonance theory. Cognitive dissonance appears when there is a disagreement between two cognitive functions (Myers 2007), such as one's schematic formation about something and information which counteracts the encoded perceptions about that concept.

But, there must be a link from dealing with cognitive dissonance and mitigating, or even justifying, this uncomfortable mental state. Festinger (1957) posits that "motivations and desired outcomes (13)" are at play when combating incongruencies between one's environment and their internal mental processes. In our example, this might be accomplished by only interacting with like-minded individuals, such as delineated by political identification. Despite evidence which may point to the non-

existence of a link between immigrants and crime, participants may choose to hold on to this belief in order to stay in line with a group with whom they desire membership. Group pressures may play out by encouraging that members in a cohort decrease the amount of interaction and information receipt from outsiders (Festinger 1954). Hence, Festinger (1954, 1957) has presented ways in which social actors mitigate cognitive dissonance by purposive actions and behavior.

However, it is not the mere presence of cognitive dissonance which that impels people to holding particular attitudes. An example of this would be when we change the channel showing a Weight Watchers commercial while eating a fast-food hamburger. Hence, rather than challenge an expected belief, as ingrained by social cues and messaging, about characteristics of immigrants, it becomes easier to keep one's beliefs and act upon a false narrative. Psychologists refer to this as the anchoring effect, the idea that people hold on to beliefs they may actually know to be untrue in order to avoid consciously experiencing cognitive dissonance by continuing to believe their initial assumptions on a matter (Tversky and Kahneman 1974). Epley and Gilovich (2006) found that the reluctance to alter an anchored idea may be tied to the incentive and effort required for one to do so. In other words, if people do not perceive a reason to change an idea about something, they may not. This fits in with the respondents in this study who hold the opinion that immigrants increase crime rates. If they, I mean citizens, do not suffer the negative consequences of a false narrative, why should they change?

Two findings from the attitudinal analysis provide results which also require further address. The lowering of odds of holding anti-immigrant attitudes as the subjects attended more years of school is very much in agreement with previous research

(Dunaway, Goidel, Kirzinger, and Wilkinson 2011; Ilias et al. 2008; Timberlake and Williams 2012). Thus, future research on immigration attitudes would be well served to deconstruct the structure and content of the education received by its participants in order to more accurately pinpoint the salient factors within this concept. While it did not surpass the substantive effect of the “immigrant as criminal” narrative on the participants’ opinions on foreign-born populations, the group threat variable proved interesting in the strong significance ($p < 0.001$) and substantive influence, a 3.28 fold increase, in the odds of exhibiting anti-immigrant attitudes. Thus, a comprehensive and academically sound explanation of immigration attitudes may lay outside of existing theory and require an amalgamation of current “new racism” (Ditonto et al. 2013) and older, more studied perspectives to explain the differential attitudes toward peoples of different race/ethnicity.

The findings from the structural variable regression analysis were quite different, especially in the significant expression of structural (institutional) concepts and the differential effect of the participants’ self-identified race/ethnicity. The significant effect on the odds of expressing a restriction on (Latino) immigrant populations when married, upwards of a 75% increase when controlling for all variables in the regression equation, was surprising. It was also interesting that, despite not showing a significant relationship via initial bivariate analysis, the odds of supporting immigrant restrictions decreased by a small, but significant ($p < 0.05$), percentage, 7%, when controlling for all variables in the analysis. However, this may not be that surprising, especially considering the examples of Catholic churches which aided in the sheltering and legal processing of the recent influx of unaccompanied Latino minors in 2014 (Barragan 2014; Martinez, Yan, and

Shoichet 2014). However, as mentioned in Chapter III, the religious identification of the 2004 GSS was skewed and using one's denomination might lead to a comparative religion argument, which is not a focus of the present study.

The political self-identification of the respondents, as a Republican or non-Republican (a combination of those whom self-identified as Democrat or Independent), was very salient when swaying the likelihood of them supporting immigrant population restrictions. From its introduction in Model 3 of this analysis through Model 6, when controlling for all of the variables in the analysis, one's self-identification as a Republican strongly influenced ($p < 0.001$ throughout) the odds that they would support measures to limit immigration. This effect was not only significant, but substantive as well, ranging from a 1.97 to 2.30 fold increase in these odds. When comparing to the non-effect of political self-identification in the attitudinal analysis, two explanations become plausible. First, the groundbreaking theory of the techniques of neutralization (Sykes and Matza 1957) can shed light on this finding. In particular, the ideas of diffusion of responsibility and appeal to higher loyalties come into play. While the conservative respondents may have been unwilling to outwardly state that they held disdain for immigrants, as expressed in the first regression analysis, when able to mask their attitudes within the structure and ideology of their chosen political party, it was shown that they were more likely to suppress the inflow of immigrants into the United States. Also, their loyalty to acting in agreement with the tenets of their chosen political faction may also explain the differential results seen from political self-identification in each regression equation. (It may not be too out of line to consider this reasoning for the significance of marital status in this equation as well.) In other words, if people can pass

on responsibility for their actions to others, in this case their chosen political party, and show loyalty to certain group memberships over others, than the differential effect of political self-identification in this study becomes more tenable.

The cohesiveness of the respondents' support for anti-immigrant measures as determined by their political party membership also harkens of groupthink. Groupthink is a social psychology phenomenon in which the members of a particular group strive for agreement on certain issues and interpretation of the social world, especially when isolated from other populations that might introduce confounds to their cognitive schemas (Myers 2007). Thus, it may be one's self-identification with a particular political party as more salient to them than then exercising of their own independent thoughts and cognitions.

The group threat variable was also strongly influential in directly increasing the odds of believing that immigrant populations should be stifled. The effect was both significant ($p < 0.001$) and substantive (1.37 times) in its effect. This is in line with previous socio-historical research conducted which examined the relationship between immigration law enforcement and rates of employment. King et al. (2012) found that as employment became scarce, mediated by cues about an immigration and employment link, the numbers of criminal deportations increased. Our system of government is based upon the premise that we elect those with whom we agree with on salient political issues. Thus, if the participants in this study truly believe that immigrants take jobs away from Americans, it makes sense that they would also support measures to curb this population as well.

However, the most interesting of the results from the structural dependent variable analysis is the effect of the respondents' race/ethnicity on the odds of them supporting anti-immigrant measures. While African-Americans and Asians sporadically showed sporadic relevance in significantly decreasing the odds of encouraging immigrant population suppression when compared to Whites, it was only Latinos that maintained a significant decrease in the likelihood of supporting anti-immigrant laws. The strength of this effect was strong, never climbing above an alpha level of 0.01, and ranged from a 77.2% to 80.9% decrease in these odds. Hence, it may be inferred that Latinos in this study may recognize a targeting of particular subsets of immigrant populations, themselves. Additionally, social and familial ties may influence their responses as those closer to them in culture and ethnic identity may be disproportionately affected by anti-immigrant laws. The latter has garnered support in previous research, as Latino immigrants are often the focus of anti-immigrant legislation (Longazel 2012) and suffer differentially from other populations as a result of anti-immigrant statutes (Pedroza 2012). I would be remiss if I neglected to mention the possibility of the effect of group positioning. Blumer (1957) theorized that different social strata, in this case delineated by racial/ethnic identity, act in accordance with ensuring that there is always at least one other group that resides in a lower social strata than them. This may also explain why not all of the different racial/ethnic groups showed congruent results in either analysis, as each different cohort has their own cultural and structural barriers that influence their attitudes.

The theoretical conclusions that can be drawn from this research require the consideration of multiple sociological paradigms. Symbolic racism theory is adequate in

explaining the power of the “immigrant as criminal” narrative in influencing the attitudinal measures of the respondents in regards to (Latino) immigrants. However, it is group threat theory which points to the saliency of not only believing that immigrants are a danger as likely criminals, but, more importantly, the direct fear of job loss associated with immigrants as prescribed by Americans in this sample. Also, classic sociological theories, such as the techniques of neutralization (Sykes and Matza 1957) and group positioning theory (Blumer 1957), must be considered in concert with psychological concepts, like cognitive dissonance, groupthink (Myers 2007), and the anchoring effect (Tversky and Kahneman 1974). Thus, current sociologists, like Eduardo Bonilla-Silva as outlined in his theory of color blind racism (Bonilla-Silva 2014), can be seen as on the right track in disputing the proclamation that we live in a post-racial society. But, this should not exclude the consideration of older theoretical frameworks, such as those mentioned above and Turk’s concept of political criminality (Turk 1985), as passé. It is from this perspective that I propose the formation of *pragmatic racism theory*.

Pragmatic racism is a paradigm which accounts for all of the forenamed theories while also considering evidence from contemporary American society. The general concept of pragmatism, that our actions are driven and conducted in order to achieve a desired outcome, is almost common knowledge amongst any American population. In his writings on the notion of truth in pragmatism, William James (1981) states that “truth happens to an idea” (92) and that “verity is an event” (92), a “process namely of verifying itself” (92). Hence, pragmatists may exert overt control on what is deemed to be true and what is not, all in relation to achieving a specific goal. It is from this perspective that the “immigrant as criminal” narrative derives its strength and its usefulness.

Concepts of racism emerge when we see the racialization (Omi and Winant 1999) of Latino immigrants as harmful to the American way of life (for example, CBS News 2010; Sohoni and Sohoni 2014; Stowell et al. 2013). This is best exemplified in the strong effect of the “immigrant as criminal” narrative seen in the attitudinal regression analysis. Racial differences, or possibly the recognition of incongruent treatment across racial groups, can be gleaned by the results seen in the structural regression equation when Latinos, the largest cohort of the current immigrant population (State Demographics Data 2014) and often associated with immigration problems (Longazel 2013), were significantly less likely than Whites to increase the odds of supporting a proxy for anti-immigration legislation.

However, it is the merging of the results from the two regression analyses that lead to the gelling of pragmatic racism (Figure 1). The concept set forth by Gans (2012), that culture (attitudes) are often nested within structure, is apropos to describe the results seen in this study. With the “immigrant as criminal” narrative and perception of job loss increasing the likelihood of exhibiting anti-immigrant sentiment from the first statistical test are used to draw a link to the results seen in the second test, this conclusion becomes clearer. It is in this first bubble where factions of symbolic racism and group threat are salient. Next, aspects of the techniques of neutralization (Sykes and Matza 1957) and cognitive dissonance are used to transition to the next balloon. When actions to determine the fate of immigrants is at hand, the membership in a social

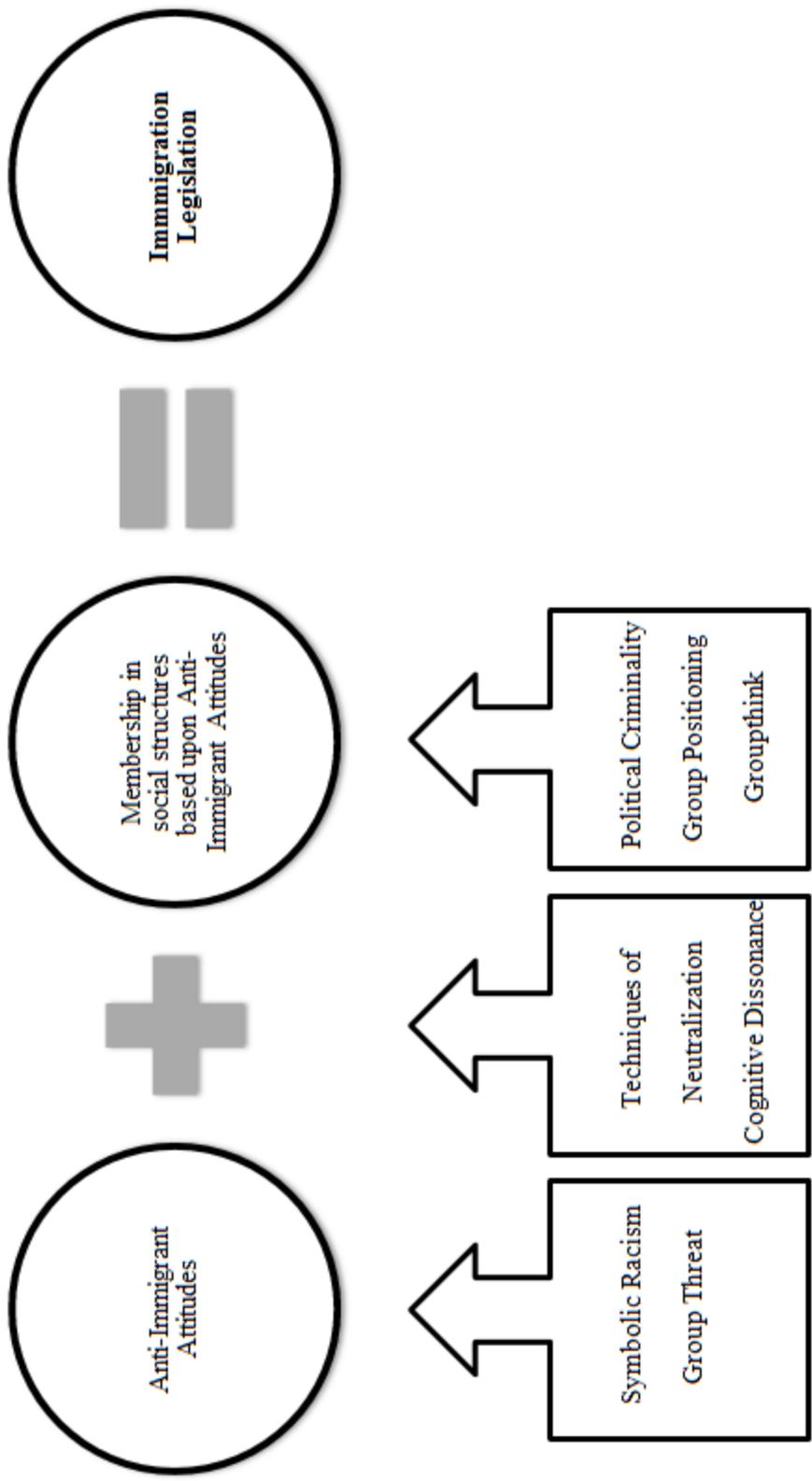


Figure 1. Pragmatic Racism in Anti-Immigration Attitudes and Laws

structure (institution), especially one's political party, is more explanatory in contributing to the suppression of immigrants. It is now that characteristics of groupthink and political criminality come into play in the second bubble in this equation. It might be inferred that the goal of those who contribute to the immigration narrative is to encourage more immigration legislation. This is done by first disseminating the "immigrant as criminal" narrative in order to establish, and encourage the support of, anti-immigrant sentiment in social structures (i.e. American politics and legal system) which have social support and power to enforce immigration legislation. Put simply, the means in this equation – first, attitudinal and then nested within social institutions – are crucial in achieving the goal, the focus of pragmatists, immigration legislation.

Of course, this also requires the backing of the legal system and popular government. Rulings handed down by the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS), such as *United States v. Brignoni-Ponce*, provide this support. The SCOTUS ruled that the petitioner's appearance as Mexican was sufficient enough for law enforcement agencies to assume reasonable suspicion of criminal activity (Alexander 2012). Rulings from the body that ultimately decides the constitutionality of legal actions in the United States can be seen as fueling anti-immigrant laws, such as Arizona's SB 1070. Decisions like *Brignoni-Price*, in conjunction with the high legal standard for meeting the 14th Amendment (the constitutional right to equal protection under the law) (Rose and Casarez N.d.), can be seen as reiterating the support that anti-immigrant laws may receive in our system of criminal justice. It goes without saying that this theoretical line requires much more research, and is something I plan to follow up upon in future studies.

Limitations of this Research

There are a few limitations with the data in this study that require address. First and foremost, the GSS used was from 2004. While this was just about ten years old at the inception of this project, it might seem out of date with such a current, fluid issue. However, this was the only GSS year that contained direct questions on immigration and asked the respondents whether or not they believed immigrants increased crime rates. The “immigrant as criminal” narrative is a key focus of this study; therefore, this data set was used. It also bears mentioning that the year of the data set does not make it completely out of touch with the current immigration debate. In fact, an argument can be made that this data set provides a unique feature that would be missed from a later survey. The results obtained from the 2004 GSS allow us as to see how the attitudes and data found within the sample set may have affected the plethora of immigration laws and which drive the current debate about how to handle undocumented populations in this country.

Several issues related to salient variables that could have proved beneficial in their inclusion in this study arose due to deficiencies in the data set. As seen in Chapter II, the prominent role of the media in guiding and contributing to immigration discourse in this country is undeniable. However, each of the variables related to media, such as frequency of reading a newspaper or hours spent watching television, had very low response rates. The same can be said for two specific variables that might have been used to proxy for the effects of media, confidence in press and confidence in television.

None of these four variables reached a response rate of 900 respondents (the total sample size for the 2004 GSS was 2812). Whenever an attempt was made to include these variables in the analysis, SPSS could not perform the necessary statistical analysis required for this study.

A similar situation with numbers also emerged when trying to form moderating variables for the logistic regression analyses conducted in this thesis. Once certain variables deemed salient via the literature review for this research were combined with the main independent variable, whether or not immigrants increase crime, the number of viable cases again proved insufficient to carry out a regression analysis. Three things were done to combat this perceived limitation. First, the variables originally considered for moderation were used in bivariate analyses in order to see if there was a direct, independent effect on the dependent variables in this study, providing a source of comparison for when they included in the logistic equations. Second, these variables - political self-identification, education, religious service attendance, and a proxy for group threat - were inserted as mediating variables in the regression analyses in this study. Lastly, each of the mediating variables was added one at a time in separate models in order to magnify their effect and see how influential they were in the regression equations. However, each of the variable problems outlined here can be remedied in future data collection that is focused on the operationalizing of concepts salient to studies of immigration attitudes, such as those shown in this thesis, in a manner that does not mitigate response rates to the degree as seen in the 2004 GSS.

The last of the issues necessitating attention is the insertion of the parenthesized “Latino” that appears throughout this work. The premise of this paper is to consider

research directly related to Latino immigrants and that which speaks to overall immigration topics. However, the assertion I make is that the immigration discourse, and subsequent issues within it that require deconstruction in sociological research, is a Latino issue. This is driven by the examples of previous studies, especially those that focus on media, politics, and public attitudes, that highlight the focus on Latinos as the source of immigration problems in the United States. Also, it bears repeating that the majority of the immigrant population in this country is Latino (State Demographic Data 2014). Thus, it is not out of line to say that any issues related to immigrants and immigration discourse in the contemporary United States is Latino-based in its focus.

Conclusion

The research done in this study contributes to existing studies on Latino immigration and provides interesting results that can point to new directions for future work in this area, both theoretically and methodologically. There is a plethora of research on the “link” between immigration and crime. The conclusions drawn from this thesis can be used as a springboard to consider and reevaluate existing theories of criminology, sociology of law, and critical race perspectives. As was seen, it may require a conglomeration of multiple perspectives in order to accomplish this task in a more holistic manner.

This research also bridges the connection between previous research on the criminalization of immigrants and how this supposed relationship affects attitudes about immigration and immigration measures. While showing continued statistical significance after controlling for all of the variables in this study in affecting the respondents’ attitudes

regarding the worth of immigrants, bivariate analysis showed the “immigrant as criminal” narrative to have a significant direct effect on both the attitudinal and structural dependent variables. Even with rudimentary correlation analysis, this veracity of this narrative is brought into question.

Future research in this area is also necessary in addressing Latino immigrants as worthy of study on their own. Contemporary research on Latino immigration has begun to focus on this population’s settlement in non-traditional destinations, such as the South and Midwest (Lacy 2011; Leitner 2012). When conducting the literature review for this thesis, it seemed that a lot of critical race research and theoretical frameworks that guided this research were based upon looking at race issues from the historical Black/White dichotomy. However, we see instances in which conscious, overt racist language (Sohoni and Sohoni 2014) and the ascribing of negative characteristics (Leitner 2012) are placed directly upon Latino immigrants. Thus, there is a need to conduct research from a Latino-centric perspective, possibly incorporating older, classic race theories to more holistically explain issues related to attitudes and the subsequent treatment of Latino immigrants.

There is a mix of negative and positive signs that point to the necessity of future research on Latino immigration for the foreseeable future. The current acrimony in Washington DC between Republicans and Democrats has recently stalled efforts to enact immigration reform set forth by President Barack Obama (Nakamura and O’Keefe 2014). Recent statements by potential Republican presidential candidate, Ben Carson, have served to further the racialization of immigrants as disease-ridden (Sullivan 2014). However, not all of the news is negative. In *Padilla v. Kentucky*, the SCOTUS inferred

that deportation is indeed a criminal punishment, making it subject to scrutiny under the 8th Amendment as “cruel and unusual” punishment (Maddali 2011). Thus, it may be possible that alternative treatment of undocumented immigrants may be considered and eventually enacted.

As seen in the cited research in this thesis, Latinos are the cognizable group often blamed for America’s immigration woes. The Latino population in the U.S., documented and undocumented, has grown 103% from the years 1990-2008, with Mexicans accounting for more than 50% of that populace (Lacy 2011). U.S. Census projections for 2050 state that minorities will outnumber Whites for the first time in history, with Latinos making up the majority (29%) of the minority cohort (Passel and Cohn 2008). Therefore, careful attention should be paid to the attitudes about, and subsequent treatment of, this population. After all, if the growth of the Latino population is matched by a zest for political involvement, control of the discourse on immigration and how it should be handled in America might one day be in their grasp.

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