

“Reasonable Suspicion” About Tough Immigration Legislation: Enforcing Laws or Ethnocentric Exclusion?

Sahana Mukherjee, Ludwin E. Molina, and Glenn Adams
University of Kansas

We examined whether support for tough immigration legislation reflects identity-neutral enforcement of law or identity-relevant defense of privilege. Participants read a fabricated news story in which law-enforcement personnel detained a person due to “reasonable suspicion” that he was an undocumented immigrant. We manipulated descriptions of the detainee so that he was either (a) an undocumented immigrant (both studies), (b) a documented immigrant (Study 1), or (c) a U.S. citizen (Study 2) of either Mexican or Canadian origin. Participants in both studies endorsed tougher punishment of an undocumented detainee and rated tough treatment as more fair when the detainee was of Mexican than Canadian origin (regardless of documentation status). Across both studies, the patterns of ethnocentric exclusion—harsher treatment toward Mexican immigrants than Canadian immigrants—were particularly pronounced among participants who defined American identity in terms of assimilation to Anglocentric cultural values (e.g., being able to speak English). Overall, results suggest that people may support tough measures to restrict immigration to defend against symbolic threats—especially threats that cultural “others” pose to Anglocentric understandings of American identity.

Keywords: national identity, immigration, privilege, racism, ethnocentrism

This law is not about race. It’s about what is illegal.—Russell Pearce,
Arizona state senator.

Many governments are considering tough measures against undocumented immigrants. In the U.S. State of Arizona, Senate Bill (SB) 1070 (2010) requires police officers to determine a person’s immigration status when “reasonable suspicion exists that the person is an alien who is unlawfully present in the United States.” Police officers can make arrests without a warrant if they have “probable cause to believe” that an individual is an undocumented immigrant. Although Arizona SB 1070 is one of the more controversial measures, legislatures in other U.S. states (e.g., Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Utah) have also considered similar legislation (Na, 2010).

Because immigration status is not something that one can visibly observe, it is important to know what criteria might inform the suspicion that a person is an undocumented immigrant. To answer the question of what constitutes reasonable suspicion (and probable cause for arrest without warrant), proponents of the Arizona law cite not only features associated with poverty and disempowerment (e.g., vehicles or rented housing with too many occupants, failure to make

eye contact with law-enforcement officers), but also more clearly racialized criteria such as “grooming” or presence in a neighborhood where there is a history of immigrant residence (Moran & Mauldin, 2010; Nier, Gaertner, Nier, & Dovidio, 2011). Given the highly interpretative character of judgments about reasonable suspicion and the legitimization of racial cues as a basis for such judgments, observers have expressed concerns that tough legislation will primarily target people from Latin American ethnic backgrounds, regardless of citizenship or documentation status (Rodriguez, 2010).¹

Anticipating such concerns, proponents of tough measures against undocumented immigrants argue that such measures reflect neutral concern for enforcing laws without any trace of racism or motivation for ethnocentric exclusion (Brewer, 2010; Ziegler, 2011; Pearce, 2010a, 2010b). Indeed, many proponents explicitly

¹ The United States Supreme Court (2012) has ruled against some provisions of Arizona’s SB 1070, stating that law-enforcement officers can only ask for immigration documents “during the course of an authorized, lawful detention or after a detainee has been released” (p. 23). In other words, law-enforcement officers can only check the immigration status of people whom they lawfully detain for some other offense. However, this ruling has done little to allay concerns about racialized enforcement of tough immigration legislation. A large body of research in the social sciences has revealed the role of racialized identity criteria in determining who attracts scrutiny for potential detention (Correll, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2002; Correll et al., 2007; Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997; Peffley & Hurwitz, 2002). For example, traffic police and highway patrol officers are more likely to stop people from racialized ethnic minority groups (e.g., people of Mexican, Hispanic, or African American descent) than they are to stop people from more racially privileged groups (e.g., White Americans; Rozeck, Rosenfield, & Decker, 2012). So, even with qualifications that court rulings impose, the concern is that tough immigration legislation will still serve as tools for ethnocentric exclusion that unduly target people of Mexican or Latino origin and unduly afford undocumented White immigrants the privilege of escaping punishment.

Sahana Mukherjee, Ludwin E. Molina, and Glenn Adams, Department of Psychology, University of Kansas.

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Sahana Mukherjee, Department of Psychology, University of Kansas, 1415 Jayhawk Boulevard, Lawrence, KS 66045. E-mail: sahana@ku.edu

disavow the idea that race or national origin should inform enforcement of such measures. For example, a week after the announcement of Arizona SB 1070, Arizona House Bill (HB) 2162 clarified that officials “may not consider race, color or national origin in implementing the requirements of this subsection except to the extent permitted by the United States or Arizona Constitution” (2010). Despite assertions that tough measures against undocumented immigrants reflect identity-neutral concern for enforcement of law, there are several reasons to suspect that the motivation for tough measures has more to do with racism and enforcement of ethnocentric exclusion (see Short & Magaña, 2002; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Discriminatory Enforcement

One reason to suspect racism and desire for ethnocentric exclusion is variation in support for enforcement of tough measures as a function of immigrants’ national origin. Although immigrants come from all over the world, discussions about immigration reform in the U.S. have focused almost exclusively on undocumented migration from Mexico (Chavez, 2008; De Genova, 2005). This emphasis suggests that proponents may support tough measures primarily for use against certain racial “others” (e.g., Mexican and other Latin American countries) and may be less enthusiastic about its application to nonracialized targets (e.g., Europe or European settler societies)—perhaps even regardless of documentation or citizenship status.

Associated with the racialization of enforcement are two sets of undesirable consequences. Opponents of tough enforcement typically emphasize that racialized enforcement will unduly target law-abiding immigrants and U.S. citizens of Mexican or Latino origin who attract “reasonable suspicion” of violating immigration law merely on the basis of racial/ethnic identity criteria. For example, legal residents and U.S. citizens of Mexican or Latino descent may arouse suspicion of violating immigration law merely by speaking Spanish or by failing to produce identification documents (which current laws do not require U.S. citizens to carry). As a result, they may face indefinite detention without due process (in violation of their rights under the U.S. Constitution), even though they have committed no offense. This focus on surveillance and harassment of racialized residents and citizens resonates with conventional constructions of discrimination as hostile treatment directed toward racial others (see Adams, Biernat, Branscombe, Crandall, & Wrightsman, 2008).

However, understandings of discrimination that exclusively focus on hostile treatment toward racialized others are incomplete to the extent that they neglect systems of racial privilege that unduly benefit dominant racial groups (McIntosh, 1988, 2012; Mills, 2007). This suggests another negative consequence of racialized enforcement. Besides directing misplaced attention toward law-abiding targets of Mexican and broader Latino origin, racialized enforcement also directs attention away from law-breaking immigrants whose national origins match dominant constructions of national identity. In other words, the focus on undocumented Latino immigrants affords law-breaking immigrants with Anglo or European origins the privilege of escaping notice and punishment. Thus, racialized implementation of tough measures can ironically undermine enforcement of immigration laws.

Identity Defense

Another reason to suspect racism concerns the extent to which support for tough laws has a basis in a desire for exclusion of cultural others whom Americans perceive as a threat to racialized constructions of national identity. Here we find it useful to distinguish between realistic and symbolic varieties of threat.

An influential program of research has documented that a primary source of anti-immigrant prejudice is a perception of *realistic* threat to citizens’ welfare based in perception of competition for scarce economic resources (Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001; Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998; Stephan, Renfro, Esses, Stephan, & Martin, 2005; Stephan, Ybarra, & Bachman, 1999). This perspective is evident in claims that immigrants “are taking away our jobs” or “are a burden on our social services” (Pew Center for the People & Press, 2006, p. 5). In this view, people have anti-immigrant sentiments because they believe that immigrants threaten their economic well-being. Consistent with this framework, research suggests that perception of realistic threat is higher when U.S. citizens focus on their similarities with Mexican migrants on work-related (vs. personal) issues (Zárate, García, Garza, & Hitlan, 2004).

Without denying that perception of realistic threat is a source of immigration opposition, the present study considers an additional possibility: namely, the perception that some immigrants pose a *symbolic* threat to the Anglocentric identity and cultural values of mainstream American society (Kinder & Sears, 1981; Sears, Hensler, & Speer, 1979; Zárate et al., 2004). Theory and research reveal a conflation of U.S. national identity with White racial identity (Devos & Banaji, 2005; Sidanius & Petrocik, 2001). Moreover, many Americans perceive Latin Americans as less “American” and question the legality of their presence in the nation (Dovidio, Gluszek, John, Dittmann, & Lagunes, 2010; Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999; Wenzel, Mummendey, & Waldzus, 2007). Accordingly, White Americans may support tough measures to restrict movement of racial and cultural others—perhaps even regardless of documentation or citizenship status—to protect against symbolic threats to dominant, Anglocentric constructs of American identity (Pehrson & Green, 2010; Staerklé, Sidanius, Green, & Molina, 2005). At the same time, White Americans may be less tolerant of strict enforcement if it restricts movement of people—perhaps even undocumented immigrants—who do not threaten dominant constructs of American identity as White.

Evidence for the role of symbolic threat in support of tough measures against immigration comes from research that examined the identity correlates of ethnocentric bias in immigration law enforcement (Mukherjee, Molina, & Adams, 2012). Participants in this research who supported Arizona-type legislation expressed eagerness to punish law-breaking immigrants, but did not express much eagerness to punish law-breaking U.S. employers who hire undocumented immigrants (and presumably, contribute to the “realistic” threat to economic livelihood). Analyses indicated that this “ethnocentric enforcement bias” was pronounced among people who endorsed a construct of U.S. national identity in terms of assimilation to Anglocentric values (e.g., knowledge of English; Mukherjee et al., 2012). Rather than neutral concern for law, this pattern provides evidence that support for Arizona’s SB-1070 type policies may reflect ethnocentric bias rooted in *symbolic* threats to Eurocentric understandings of U.S. national identity.

The Present Research

The ethnocentric enforcement bias that we observed in previous work raises suspicion that support of tough measures against undocumented immigrants reflects an interest in ethnocentric exclusion rather than respect for laws. To investigate this issue, we conducted two studies in which we asked participants to consider a fabricated news story describing the detention of a person whom a police officer suspected to be unlawfully present in the U.S. In Study 1, we varied the description of the detainee so that he was either a documented or undocumented immigrant from either Canada or Mexico. In Study 2, we varied the description of the detainee so that he was either an undocumented immigrant or a U.S. citizen from either Canada or Mexico. We then considered the influence of these factors on participants' judgments of the detainee and the treatment he received from law-enforcement institutions.

To the extent that tough immigration measures are about enforcement of ethnocentric exclusion rather than enforcement of law, one can hypothesize that participants will advocate stronger punishment and will judge tough institutional treatment more appropriate when the detainee is of Mexican versus Canadian origin. A matter of secondary, exploratory interest was whether this effect of national origin extended to any target (i.e., main effect) or was limited to the case of undocumented immigrants (i.e., interaction with documentation status). To the extent that support for tough immigration measures is a response to symbolic threat, one can hypothesize that the influence of national origin—whether as a main effect or in interaction with documentation status—will be most pronounced among people who endorse an Anglocentric construction of U.S. national identity.

Study 1

Method

Participants. Participants were 98 undergraduates (46 women; $M = 19.81$ years old, $SD = 2.30$) at the University of Kansas who indicated White/Caucasian race/ethnicity. Participants received partial course credit.

Materials and procedure. After reading about the purpose of the online study and providing informed consent (by proceeding to begin the study), participants read a passage ostensibly from a local newspaper, that the authors created for this study. The passage reported an incident in which a law-enforcement officer observed a man standing outside an automated cash machine, determined the man's behavior to be suspicious, asked the man to produce identification documents (to verify immigration status in accordance with tough, Arizona-type laws), and then forcibly detained him when he did not produce documentation. To manipulate documentation status, we described the man as either a documented or undocumented immigrant. To manipulate national origin, we described the man as either Joseph from Canada or José from Mexico. We randomly assigned participants to one of the four conditions associated with the intersection of these treatment manipulations. After reading the passage, participants completed the following set of measures on 7-point Likert scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*, unless otherwise noted).

Reactions to detainee. We developed eight items that focused on participants' reactions toward the detainee. Seven of these items

specifically focused on support for punishing the detainee and ranged in severity from "giving the detainee a warning" (*no punishment*) to "deporting the detainee to his country of origin" (*severe punishment*). The eighth item assessed participants' support for assigning blame to the detainee. Participants indicated agreement with this statement, ostensibly from an anonymous reader of the newspaper: "José/Joseph should have had his identification with him. He should have known better than to walk around without an ID." We computed the mean of all eight items to form a composite measure of participants' overall reactions toward the detainee ($\alpha = .77$).

Reactions to institutional treatment. We created one item to assess perceptions of the officer's behavior. Participants indicated agreement with a statement, again ostensibly from an anonymous reader of the newspaper, that derogated the officer for overstepping authority and infringing on the detainee's rights ("By finding José/Joseph's behavior suspicious, the police officer was being a jerk. After all, he was just talking outside an ATM!"). We also developed a four-item measure to assess perceptions of fairness (e.g., "How fair was it for the officer to find José/Joseph's behavior suspicious?"; $\alpha = .70$). Participants used a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all fair*, 7 = *very fair*) to indicate whether they thought each item was fair.

Constructions of national identity. The present work emphasizes people's endorsement of different constructs of national identity—what nationhood means, whom it includes or excludes—and implications of different constructs for immigration-policy support (Pakulski & Tranter, 2000; Pehrson & Green, 2010; Smith, 2001). The particular focus was what previous researchers have referred to as cultural constructions of national identity (Pehrson & Green, 2010), which emphasize assimilation to dominant cultural ways of being (e.g., knowledge of English language in the U.S. context). Such constructions are exclusionary to the extent that they deny "true American" status to cultural or racial "others" who do not assimilate to dominant, Anglocentric understandings of national identity. Cultural constructions of identity therefore serve as a defense against symbolic threat (vs. realistic threat) and exclude not only immigrants, but also racialized citizens who do not assimilate to dominant understandings of national culture.

To measure constructions of national identity, we adapted items from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) 2003 module on national identity. Participants rated agreement with statements about the meaning of being American. In accordance with previous work (Mukherjee et al., 2012; Pehrson & Green, 2010), we formed an index of cultural constructions of identity (CCI) by calculating the mean of two items (i.e., "be able to speak English" and "have U.S. citizenship"; $\alpha = .71$).²

Political ideology. We included a single-item measure of political ideology. Participants responded on a 7-point scale (1 =

² More details on the International Social Survey Program can be found on the ISSP website (<http://www.issp.org>). The ISSP also includes indices of primordial constructions of identity, which define American identity in terms of birth (e.g., "born in America" and "lived long in America") and civic constructions of identity, which define American identity in terms of duties and responsibilities (e.g., "know American history" and "feel American"). Consistent with our prior research (Mukherjee et al., 2012), these constructions of identity did not moderate effects of national origin on participants' responses, so we do not discuss them further. Details of these measures and analyses are available from the authors.

very liberal to 7 = very conservative) to the question, “How would you describe your political attitudes?” We use this indicator as a covariate in our analysis, both to control for preexisting individual differences in political ideology in analyses of covariance (ANCOVA), and to isolate its relationship with CCI and accordingly test for the unique effects of CCI in regression analysis. Although the patterns of results remained the same with and without the covariate, the results were less statistically significant with the inclusion of political ideology as a covariate.

Results and Discussion

To examine the ethnocentric exclusion hypothesis, we first performed two-way ANCOVAs that examined the effect of national origin (Canadian vs. Mexican) and documentation status (undocumented vs. documented) on outcome measures. Cell means and standard deviations for this analysis appear in Table 1. We then conducted hierarchical multiple regression analyses to examine whether CCI moderated effects of the experimental treatments.

Reactions to detainee. A 2 (national origin: Canadian vs. Mexican) × 2 (documentation status: undocumented vs. documented) ANCOVA for reactions to the detainee revealed main effects of documentation status and national origin. Consistent with an interest in punishment of law-breaking behavior, participants advocated more punishment when the detainee was undocumented ($M = 3.75, SD = 1.26$) than documented ($M = 2.92, SD = 1.13$), $F(1, 93) = 23.24, p < .001, \eta = .18$. Consistent with the ethnocentric exclusion hypothesis, participants advocated more punishment when the detainee was Mexican ($M = 3.71, SD = 1.32$) than Canadian ($M = 2.86, SD = 1.03$), $F(1, 93) = 16.06, p < .001, \eta = .15$. The interaction was not significant, $p = .34$.

Reactions to institutional treatment. A 2 (national origin: Canadian vs. Mexican) × 2 (documentation status: undocumented vs. documented) ANCOVA for the two indicators of institutional treatment revealed only main effects of national origin. There was no influence of documentation status, either as a main effect or in interaction with national origin, $F_s(1, 87) < 1.34, p_s > .25$. Regardless of documentation status, participants indicated greater derogation of the officer for infringement of detainee rights when the detainee was Canadian ($M = 5.40, SD = 1.15$) than when the detainee was Mexican ($M = 4.48, SD = 1.89$), $F(1, 87) = 7.99, p = .006, \eta = .08$. Likewise, regardless of documentation status, participants rated tough treatment to be more fair when the detainee was Mexican ($M = 3.72, SD = 1.25$) versus Canadian ($M = 3.17, SD = 1.16$), $F(1, 93) = 5.55, p = .04, \eta = .05$. In sum, results provide strong evidence that participants regarded tough treatment to be more appropriate for a detainee of Mexican origin

than Canadian origin, even when the Mexican immigrant was lawfully present in the U.S. Alternatively stated, participants appeared to grant greater privilege of human rights protection when the detainee was of Canadian origin than of Mexican origin, even when the Canadian migrant was unlawfully present in the U.S.

Moderating effects of identity constructions. ANCOVA results provided strong evidence for the ethnocentric exclusion hypothesis in the form of differential responses to an immigrant-detention scenario as a function of national origin. The ethnocentric exclusion hypothesis further proposed that these differential responses would have a foundation in the perception of symbolic threat to White or Anglocentric constructions of American identity. This implies a moderation effect, such that differential responses as a function of national origin would be greater for participants who endorse CCI. To examine this possibility, we conducted hierarchical multiple regression analyses in which we entered three predictors (documentation status: undocumented = 0, documented = 1; national origin: Canadian = 0, Mexican = 1; mean-centered CCI) and political ideology (as a covariate) in the first block, two-way interactions involving the three predictors in the second block, and the three-way interaction in the third block (see Aiken & West, 1991). Consistent with our interest in moderation effects, we report only significant interactions involving CCI that qualified results of the ANCOVAs that we presented in the previous section. We used an online tool (Preacher, Curran, & Bauer, 2006) to probe and plot these interaction effects.

Regarding reactions to the detainee, analyses revealed a National Origin × CCI interaction, ($\beta = .12, p = .002$). Consistent with the symbolic threat hypothesis, the pattern of ethnocentric enforcement that emerged in ANCOVA—that is, greater support for punishment and blame toward the Mexican than the Canadian detainee—was limited to participants who scored high on CCI (see Figure 1). The three-way interaction of Documentation Status × National Origin × CCI was not significant, $p = .09$.

Regarding assessments of institutional treatment, analyses of reactions to the officer revealed no evidence of moderating or main effects of CCI. In contrast, analyses for fairness ratings did reveal a three-way interaction of National Origin × Documentation Status × CCI, ($\beta = -.18, p = .011$). To interpret this interaction, we regressed fairness ratings on national origin, CCI, and the National Origin × CCI interaction term separately for documented and undocumented conditions. These analyses revealed no significant effects when the detainee was a documented immigrant ($\beta_s < .17, p_s > .13$). Analyses for the undocumented condition revealed a significant National Origin × CCI interaction ($\beta = .14, p = .013$; see Figure 2). Consistent with the symbolic threat hypothesis, the ethnocentric exclusion pattern—specifically, rating fairness of

Table 1
Effects of National Origin and Documentation Status on Study 1 Outcomes

| Effect | Mexican origin | | Canadian origin | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | Documented | Undocumented | Documented | Undocumented |
| Reactions to detainee | 3.39 (1.15) | 4.16 (1.44) | 2.35 (0.81) | 3.39 (0.98) |
| Evaluations of officer (blame) | 4.76 (1.77) | 4.10 (2.02) | 5.22 (1.43) | 5.54 (0.88) |
| Perceptions of fairness | 3.72 (1.05) | 3.71 (1.52) | 3.28 (1.14) | 3.06 (1.19) |

Note. Cell entries refer to mean scores (and standard deviations) for each condition.

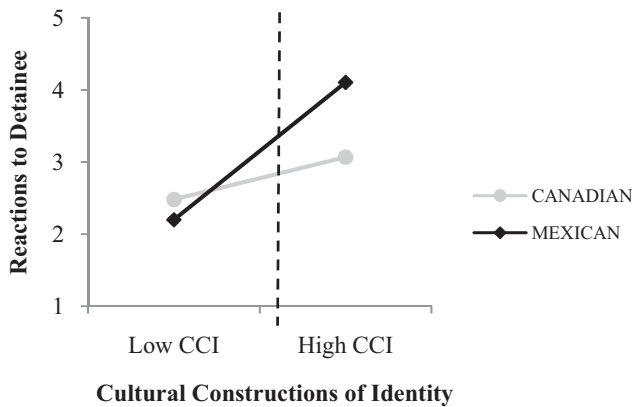


Figure 1. Results for detainee reactions. Regions of significance analysis indicates that the effect of national origin on reactions toward detainee is significant among participants with CCI scores > 6.0 (i.e., right of the vertical line, corresponding to ~57% of participants).

tough treatment to be greater in the case of an undocumented detainee of Mexican (vs. Canadian) origin—was limited to participants who scored high on CCI.

Summary. Results of Study 1 provided support for the ethnocentric exclusion hypothesis. Rather than equal concern for punishing law-breaking immigrants, participants endorsed tough punishment and tolerated intrusive enforcement when the detainee was Mexican, but excused illegal behavior and objected to intrusive enforcement when the detainee was Canadian. Indeed, results in Table 1 suggest greater concern about protecting human rights—rating tough treatment as less fair and endorsing derogation of the arresting officer—of a *law-breaking* Canadian immigrant than a *law-abiding* Mexican immigrant. These patterns suggest that support for tough immigration legislation and tolerance for intrusive measures have a basis in something beyond interest in enforcement of laws, as this interest should not differ as a function of immigrant national origin.

Rather than interest in enforcing laws, we hypothesize that support for tough immigration measures reflects an interest in enforcement of ethnocentric exclusion, which in turn has a basis in

perception of symbolic threat to dominant, Anglocentric cultural values and identity. Consistent with this hypothesis and previous research (Mukherjee et al., 2012), results indicate that differential support for tough measures as a function of immigrant origin was primarily evident among participants who endorsed cultural constructions of national identity (i.e., assimilation to dominant Anglocentric values). People who endorsed cultural constructions of American identity endorsed tough punishment and tolerated intrusive enforcement when the detainee was Mexican, but excused illegal behavior and objected to intrusive enforcement when the target was Canadian. These patterns validate concerns that tough immigration measures constitute an institutionalized form of racism that “dehumanizes and criminalizes people of color” (Hing, 2009), regardless of documentation and citizenship status, and privileges individuals that map onto White or Anglocentric identity conceptions (e.g., Canadian).

Study 2

Part of the concern about tough immigration legislation is that determinants of “reasonable suspicion” about immigration status will lead law-enforcement personnel to mistakenly target not only documented immigrants, but also U.S. citizens of Mexican or Latino origin (Pew Center for People and the Press, 2010). Racial profiling of citizens is especially likely if they deviate from Anglocentric constructions of national identity (e.g., speaking Spanish or residing in a Latino neighborhood). Indeed, the racialized basis of judgments about reasonable suspicion means that law-breaking immigrants who conform to cultural constructions of identity—for example, undocumented immigrants of Canadian origin—may actually suffer less embarrassment and inconvenience from tough immigration measures than do Latino citizens. To investigate this issue in Study 2, we compared reactions to the same newspaper story as in Study 1, this time describing detainment of either an undocumented immigrant or a U.S. citizen of either Mexican or Canadian origin.

Method

Participants. Participants were 172 undergraduates (77 women; $M = 19.25$ years old, $SD = 1.63$) at the University of Kansas

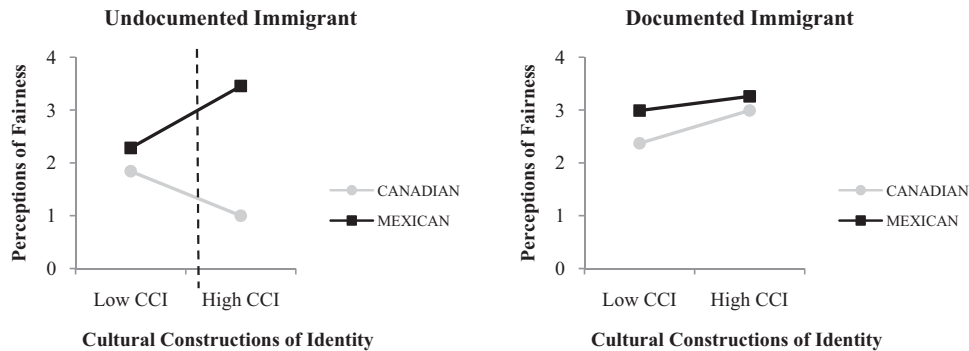


Figure 2. Results for fairness ratings. Regions of significance analysis indicates that the effect of national origin on ratings of fairness of institutional treatment for the undocumented immigrant is significant among participants with cultural constructions of identity scores > 6.1 (i.e., right of the vertical line (corresponding to ~54% of participants).

who indicated White/Caucasian race/ethnicity. Participants received partial course credit.

Materials and procedure. After reading about the purpose of the online study and providing informed consent, participants read the same news story as in Study 1 with one difference; specifically, we manipulated documentation status by describing the detainee as either an undocumented immigrant or a U.S. citizen. As in Study 1, we manipulated national origin by describing the detainee as either Joseph from Canada or José from Mexico. We randomly assigned participants to one of the four conditions associated with the intersection of these treatment manipulations. After reading the passage, participants completed the following set of measures on 7-point Likert scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*, unless otherwise noted).

Reactions to detainee. We measured participants' reactions to the detainee with five items. Two items from Study 1, for example, "José/Joseph should be fined for not carrying his identification documents, assessed participants' support for *punishing* the detainee. One item (also from Study 1) assessed participants' support for assigning *blame* to the detainee. Two new items assessed participants' support for the detainee's *rights* (e.g., José/Joseph has the right to legal counsel when he is taken into custody by the officer). We reverse coded these items and computed the average of all five items (punishment, blame, and rights) to assess participants' overall reaction to the detainee ($\alpha = .75$). Higher scores on this measure indicate participants support for punishment and blame, and less support for rights.

Reactions to institutional treatment. We used the same four-item measure as in Study 1 to assess *perceptions of fairness* ($\alpha = .78$). In addition, we developed a five-item measure to assess participants' reactions toward the officer. Three of the five items assessed participants' support for *punishing the officer* (e.g., "José/Joseph has grounds to sue the law-enforcement officer for questioning and detaining him." The fourth item assessed participants' support for *praising the officer* ("The officer should be praised for doing his duty and upholding immigration law and detaining José/Joseph"). The fifth item was the same officer-blame item as in Study 1. We computed the mean of these five items (reverse coded when appropriate) to form a composite measure of participants' *reactions to the officer* ($\alpha = .78$). Higher scores on this index indicated participants' support for punishing and blaming the officer, and less support for praising the officer for upholding immigration law.

Constructions of national identity. Participants completed the same measure of cultural construction of national identity as in Study 1, $\alpha = .59$.

Political ideology. We used the same-item measure of political ideology as in Study 1. We use this indicator as a covariate in

our analysis both to control for preexisting individual differences in political ideology (in ANCOVA analysis) and to isolate its relationship with CCI (in regression analysis).

Results and Discussion

We performed the same set of analyses as in the Study 1, including the use of political ideology as a covariate. Cell means and standard deviations for this analysis appear in Table 2.

Reactions to detainee. A 2 (national origin: Canadian vs. Mexican) \times 2 (documentation status: undocumented vs. citizen) ANCOVA for reactions to the detainee revealed main effects of documentation status and national origin. Whether reflecting an interest in punishment of law-breaking behavior or general anti-immigrant sentiment, participants expressed more negative reactions toward the detainee when he was an undocumented immigrant ($M = 2.73, SD = 1.14$) than when he a U.S. citizen ($M = 2.24, SD = .91$), $F(1, 169) = 11.45, p = .001, \eta = .06$. Consistent with the ethnocentric exclusion hypothesis, participants expressed more negative reactions toward the detainee when he was of Mexican ($M = 2.70, SD = 1.11$) than when he was of Canadian origin ($M = 2.32, SD = 1.01$), $F(1, 169) = 5.52, p = .02, \eta = .03$.

Unlike Study 1, a two-way interaction qualified these main effects, $F(1, 169) = 3.97, p = .048, \eta = .02$. To interpret this interaction we examined the simple effects of national origin on reactions to detainee for undocumented and citizen conditions. Results indicate that the ethnocentric exclusion pattern was limited to the undocumented immigrant condition. Participants expressed more negative reactions toward the undocumented detainee when he was of Mexican ($M = 3.09, SD = 1.21$) than Canadian origin ($M = 2.43, SD = .99$), $F(1, 92) = 8.83, p = .004, \eta = .09$. Also unlike Study 1, in which the absence of an interaction implied that effects of national origin extended to documented immigrant detainees, there was no effect of national origin in Study 2 when the detainee was a U.S. citizen, $p = .78$.

Reactions to institutional treatment. A 2 (national origin: Canadian vs. Mexican) \times 2 (documentation status: undocumented vs. citizen) ANCOVA for reactions to the officer revealed only a main effect of documentation status, $F(1, 169) = 12.56, p = .001, \eta = .07$, such that participants expressed more negative reactions toward the officer when the detainee was a U.S. citizen ($M = 4.73, SD = 1.13$) than when he was an undocumented immigrant ($M = 4.13, SD = 1.18$). This pattern may reflect a general anti-immigrant sentiment, whereby participants are in favor of invasive police behavior toward undocumented immigrants, but object when law-enforcement personnel apply the same measures to U.S. citizens. Alternatively, this pattern may reflect a sort of hindsight bias whereby people object to intrusive procedures that subse-

Table 2
Effects of National Origin and Documentation Status on Study 2 Outcomes

| Effect | Mexican origin | | Canadian origin | |
|-------------------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | U.S. citizen | Undocumented | U.S. citizen | Undocumented |
| Reactions to detainee | 2.29 (0.83) | 3.09 (1.22) | 2.19 (1.01) | 2.43 (1.00) |
| Reactions to officer | 4.59 (1.09) | 4.04 (1.41) | 4.88 (1.17) | 4.21 (0.96) |
| Perceptions of fairness | 3.28 (1.08) | 3.63 (1.51) | 2.98 (1.12) | 3.17 (1.73) |

Note. Cell entries refer to mean scores (and standard deviations) for each condition.

quently result in detainment of a person who has not committed a crime, but excuse the same “unfair” procedures if they result in detainment of someone who has committed a crime. Although mean reactions toward the officer were more negative (in a descriptive sense) when the detainee was Canadian ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 1.10$) than Mexican ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 1.29$), neither this pattern nor the two-way interaction approached conventional standards for inferring statistical significance, $F_s(1,169) < 1.38$, $ps > .24$.

In contrast to results for reactions to the officer, a 2 (national origin: Canadian vs. Mexican) \times 2 (documentation status: undocumented vs. citizen) ANCOVA for perceptions of fairness revealed only main effects of national origin, $F(1, 169) = 5.29$, $p = .058$, $\eta = .02$. There was no influence of documentation status, either as a main effect or in interaction with national origin, $F_s(1, 88) < .33$, $ps > .57$. Consistent with the ethnocentric exclusion hypothesis, participants rated tough treatment to be more fair when the detainee was of Mexican ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.32$) than Canadian origin ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.14$). Alternatively stated, concern for fair treatment and protection of human rights appeared to be greater when the detainee was of Canadian origin than Mexican origin.

Moderating effects of identity constructions. As in Study 1, ANCOVA results provide evidence for the ethnocentric exclusion hypothesis; specifically, responses to the undocumented detainee and perceptions of fairness varied as a function of national origin. Again, the ethnocentric exclusion hypothesis proposes that these differential responses have a foundation in the perception of symbolic threat to White or Anglocentric constructions of American identity. To test the moderating effect of cultural constructions of American identity, we conducted hierarchical multiple regression analyses as in Study 1. We report only analyses that qualify conclusions of ANCOVA.

Analyses for reactions to the detainee revealed no moderating effects of CCI ($ps > .3$). Instead, there was a main effect of CCI such that participants who scored higher in CCI expressed more negative reactions toward the detainee ($\beta = .12$, $p < .001$).

Analyses for reactions to the officer revealed a three-way interaction of National Origin \times Documentation Status \times CCI, ($\beta = -.09$, $p = .014$). To interpret this interaction, we regressed reactions to the officer on national origin and CCI separately for undocumented immigrant and citizen conditions. Results for the undocumented immigrant condition revealed the hypothesized National Origin \times CCI interaction ($\beta = -.24$, $p = .057$; see Figure 3). Consistent with the ethnocentric exclusion hypothesis, participants expressed greater objection to behavior of the law-

enforcement officer when the undocumented detainee was Canadian (vs. Mexican). However, consistent with the symbolic threat hypothesis, this tendency was limited to participants who scored high in CCI. There was no influence of national origin and citizenship status, either as main effects or an interaction, when the detainee was a U.S. citizen ($\beta_s < .21$, $ps > .11$).

Analyses of fairness ratings revealed a similar, three-way interaction of National Origin \times Documentation Status \times CCI, ($\beta = .10$, $p = .034$). To interpret this interaction, we again regressed fairness ratings on national origin and CCI separately for undocumented immigrant and citizen conditions. Results for the undocumented immigrant condition revealed the hypothesized National Origin \times CCI interaction ($\beta = .28$, $p = .014$; see Figure 4). Consistent with the symbolic threat hypothesis, the ethnocentric exclusion pattern—specifically, rating fairness of tough treatment to be greater in the case of an undocumented Mexican than in the case of an undocumented Canadian detainee—was limited to participants who scored high on CCI. There was no interaction when the detainee was a U.S. citizen ($\beta = -.09$, $p = .49$).

Here again, the three-way interaction pattern informs interpretation of evidence regarding ethnocentric exclusion. Contrary to conventional understandings of discrimination as hostile treatment, high-CCI participants showed no tendency to perceive the fairness or appropriateness of tough enforcement measures to be greater when applied to the U.S. citizens of Mexican origin than the U.S. citizens of Canadian origin. Instead, the interaction pattern reflected a tendency for high-CCI participants to perceive tough enforcement measures to be just as unfair and inappropriate for the undocumented immigrants of Canadian origin—but not unfair or inappropriate for undocumented immigrants of Mexican origin—as for U.S. citizens (regardless of national origin). Rather than conventional understandings of discrimination as undue hostile treatment toward racial others, this pattern suggests an alternative understanding of discrimination as undue racial privilege (Adams et al., 2008; Sue, 2003). High-CCI participants appear to extend to undocumented immigrants of Canadian origin—but not to undocumented immigrants of Mexican origin—the same privileges and protections that they grant to U.S. citizens.

Summary

Results of Study 2 again provided support for the ethnocentric exclusion hypothesis. Participants endorsed more negative responses toward an undocumented detainee and regarded tough

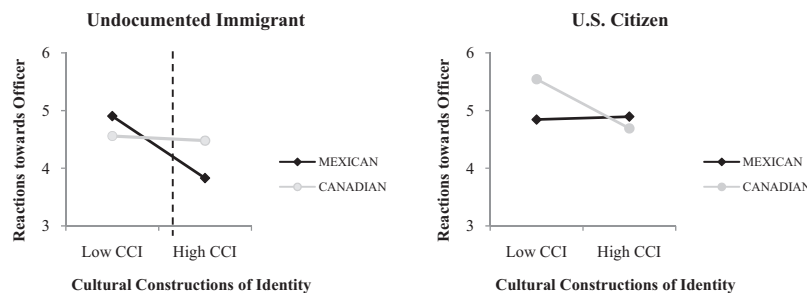


Figure 3. Results for reactions toward officer. Regions of significance analysis indicates that the effect of national origin on punishment of the undocumented immigrant is significant among participants with cultural constructions of identity scores > 5.7 (i.e., right of the vertical line).

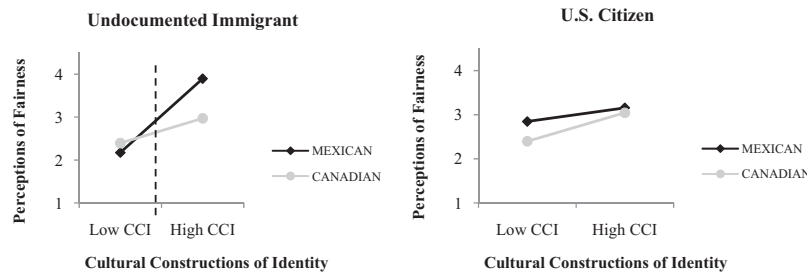


Figure 4. Results for perceptions of fairness. Regions of significance analysis indicates that the effect of national origin on punishment of the undocumented immigrant is significant among participants with cultural constructions of identity scores > 4.9 (i.e., right of the vertical line).

institutional treatment to be fair when the detainee was Mexican, but excused law-breaking behavior of an undocumented detainee and considered intrusive enforcement to be unfair when the detainee was Canadian. Indeed, results in Table 2 again suggest greater doubts about the fairness of tough treatment in the case of a *law-breaking immigrant* of Canadian origin than a *law-abiding citizen* of Mexican origin. Rather than an interest in enforcement of laws or general anti-immigrant sentiment, these patterns suggest that support for tough immigration measures reflects an interest in enforcement of racial or ethnocentric exclusion directed against Mexican (but not Canadian) targets.

In turn, we hypothesized that the interest in ethnocentric exclusion has a basis in Anglocentric cultural values and identity. Results of Study 2 again provided some support for this hypothesis. In particular, results indicate differential concern about institutional treatment of undocumented immigrants that was primarily for participants who endorsed constructions of national identity in terms of assimilation to dominant Anglocentric values. People who endorsed CCI tolerated intrusive enforcement when the undocumented immigrant was Mexican, but objected to intrusive enforcement when the undocumented immigrant was Canadian.

General Discussion

Results of two studies suggest that support for tough immigration legislation reflects ethnocentric exclusion rather than identity-neutral law enforcement. Evidence for this conclusion comes in two forms.

Discriminatory Enforcement: Ethnocentric Exclusion and Racial Privilege

The first form of evidence is discrimination as a function of detainee identity. Across the two studies, ANCOVA results indicated effects involving national origin (reflecting ethnocentric exclusion) on five out of six outcome measures. In all of these cases, participants endorsed more negative treatment and expressed less concern about fairness when the detainee was of Mexican than Canadian origin.

By way of comparison, ANCOVA results indicated effects involving documentation status on only three of six outcome measures. We observed two of these effects of documentation status on reactions to the detainee; that is, participants had more

negative reactions to law-breaking immigrants than to law-abiding immigrants or U.S. citizens.

We observed effects of documentation status on only one of four measures of reactions to institutional treatment (reactions to the officer in Study 2). On one hand, this pattern affords a relatively optimistic interpretation that concern for human rights (and even the presumption of innocence), led participants to prescribe the same standards of procedural fairness, regardless of information about a detainee's documentation status. On the other hand, this pattern provides a stark contrast to results for national origin, which suggest that participants were more likely to extend this concern about human rights to detainees of Canadian origin than Mexican origin. Indeed, the pattern of mean responses across both studies suggests that participants had greater doubts about fairness of tough treatment—perhaps reflecting greater concern for human rights—when the detainee was a law-breaking Canadian than when he was a law-abiding detainee of Mexican origin.

To the extent that support for tough policy reflects neutral concern for law, one should expect equal punishment of illegal behavior and equal protection of human rights, regardless of national origin. The fact that support for tough policy varied with detainee identity suggests that it instead reflects concern for ethnocentric exclusion. This pattern is consistent with concerns of U.S. citizens of Mexican descent who see themselves as potential targets of racial profiling and discrimination under Arizona-type legislation (Pew Center for People & Press, 2010). This pattern is also consistent with an understanding of discrimination as racial privilege (Adams et al., 2008; Fine, Weiss, Powell, & Wong, 1997; Sue, 2003). Participants appeared to extend to detainees of Canadian origin—but not to detainees of Mexican origin—similar standards of procedural fairness and respect for human rights to those they would demand for U.S. citizens.

Constructions of National Identity

The second form of evidence is the moderating influence of Anglocentric constructions of American identity. Across the two studies, multiple regression analyses revealed moderating effects of CCI on four out of six outcome variables. In three of these four cases, observed CCI moderation effects took the form of a three-way interaction, such that CCI-moderated effects of national origin on reactions to institutional treatment were particular to cases involving undocumented immigrants. With CCI in the model, we

did not observe effects of national origin on reactions to institutional treatment of documented immigrants or U.S. citizens. Despite this important qualification involving the exploratory dimension of documentation status, the more general pattern was that tendencies of ethnocentric exclusion were particularly pronounced among participants who defined American identity in terms of assimilation to Anglocentric cultural values (e.g., being able to speak English). Endorsement of this definition of American identity was associated not only with greater support for tough treatment of Mexican detainees in general (i.e., regardless of whether or not they were legally present in the U.S.; Study 1), but also with greater sense of unfairness when officers applied the same tough treatment to undocumented Canadian detainees as to undocumented Mexican detainees (both studies).

Beyond this broad similarity, the specific character of CCI moderation effects varied across outcomes, both between and within studies. For example, results indicate that CCI moderated effects of national origin on reactions toward detainees in Study 1, but not in Study 2. Moreover, in Study 1, CCI moderated effects of national origin on reactions to all detainees, both documented and undocumented. However, as we noted in the preceding paragraph, CCI-moderated effects of national origin on judgments about fairness (as opposed to reactions to detainees) were limited to law-enforcement actions against undocumented immigrants, not documented immigrants (Study 1) or U.S. citizens (Study 2). So, although results provide evidence for the hypothesized impact of CCI as a moderator of national origin effects on perceptions of immigration law-enforcement, a more precise account of variation in these effects across different variables and scenarios awaits future research.

Limitations

Besides variation in specific patterns of results, another limitation in this work is the exclusive focus on White American participants. The focus on people who occupy positions of social dominance makes sense given the cultural force that accompanies these people's reactions. Results suggest how these interested observers apply a "neutral" concern for law in ethnocentric fashion, in part to defend and reinforce Anglocentric constructions of U.S. identity. It is unclear whether observed patterns would extend to participants from ethnic minority communities, and this remains an important question for future research.

One question that the inclusion of a more diverse sample might answer concerns the distinction between racial exclusion and in-group bias. Our manipulation of national origin described the detainee in terms of national out groups without mention of racial identity, so that the objective bases for in-group solidarity were no greater for detainees of Canadian origin than detainees of Mexican origin. Yet, participants showed evidence of in-group bias in favor of Canadian detainees relative to Mexican detainees, and we propose that they did so because they imaginatively constructed an experience of in-group solidarity based on assumed racial or cultural characteristics associated with different national categories. A more detailed exploration of this possibility awaits future research.

Theoretical Implications: Varieties of Threat

We have proposed that people support tough measures to restrict immigration partly as a means to defend against symbolic threats—in particular, threats that cultural others pose to Anglocentric understandings of national identity that reflect and promote White privilege. The emphasis on symbolic threat contrasts with previous research, which has emphasized the extent to which prejudice against immigrants reflects beliefs that they pose a threat to economic well-being (Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001; Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998). Without denying that perception of economic threat might function as a source of support for tough measures against undocumented immigrants in general (see Diaz, Saenz, & Kwan, 2011), it is less clear how this source explains observed variation in support for tough measures as a function of an immigrant's national origin. Indeed, if support for tough measures to restrict (undocumented) immigration is a function of identity-neutral economic threat, then one would expect support to vary more with documentation status than with national origin. Instead, the discriminatory effect of detainee national origin on participants' reactions to the scenario, suggests a more identity-relevant source: namely, beliefs about—and perhaps motivations to defend—dominant constructions of national identity (associated with White American privilege).

Consistent with this discussion, we know of no work that examines realistic threat to economic livelihood as an explanation for ethnocentric or racist bias in application of tough measures to restrict immigration (rather than identity-neutral prejudice against immigrants in general). Still, we acknowledge that differential content of ethnic or racial stereotypes might inform differential experience of realistic threat. For example, people may imagine that an immigrant of Mexican origin would pose a greater threat to their job prospects or greater drain on public goods than would an immigrant of Canadian origin. However, we emphasize the role of subjective imagination in this process. Contrary to the implications of the "realistic" label, it is not empirically self-evident that any objective threat to economic livelihood would be greater from an immigrant of Mexican origin than an immigrant of Canadian origin. Instead, this shifting imaginative basis of "realistic threat" suggests that it is a collectively constructed source of—or perhaps even a "post hoc" justification (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003) for—a racially motivated desire for ethnocentric exclusion.

Against this background of competing interpretations, we investigated moderating effects of CCI on patterns of ethnocentric bias in support for restrictive immigration laws. Consistent with the hypothesis that support for tough laws reflects motivation to defend against symbolic threats to the meaning of national identity, we observed that ethnocentric bias in support of enforcement was particularly evident among participants who defined American identity in Anglocentric terms. Accordingly, the work provides initial evidence that support for tough immigration laws—and particularly ethnocentric bias in support for tough enforcement—has its basis not only in realistic threat (i.e., harm to economic livelihood), but also symbolic threat (i.e., harm to White privilege in the construction of American identity). Conclusive evidence for the role of symbolic threat awaits future research. Particularly useful for this purpose would be experimental methods in which researchers manipulate different forms of threat—symbolic or realistic—and observe whether this manipulation moderates ef-

fects of national origin or other forms of ethnocentric exclusion. In the absence of such procedures, one should interpret evidence for the moderating role of symbolic threat in the present research with appropriate caution.

By investigating dynamics of symbolic threat, the present research helps to illuminate otherwise obscure links between support for tough immigration measures and other identity-defensive policy developments, including proposals to adopt English as an “official” language (Texas House Bill 81, 2009), proposals to restrict non-White perspectives in American history education (Mississippi House Bill 1384, 2012), and proposals to ban state funding of ethnic studies programs (Arizona HB 2281, 2010). Like ethnocentric immigration legislation, these policies reproduce White cultural privilege via an assimilation model that requires cultural others to conform to Anglocentric and Eurocentric standards (see Dovidio et al., 2010; Zárate & Shaw, 2010; Zárate & Quezada, 2011). The present research resonates with work on the construction of Whiteness and “possessive investment in Whiteness” (Lipsitz, 2006) and illuminates how public policy can reproduce systems of power that protect the privileges of Anglo- or Eurocentric groups.

Practical Implications: Affording Privilege to Escape Enforcement

Results of the present research suggest implications for thinking about law-enforcement in the context of immigration reform. Proponents cite respect for law as a primary motivation for support of tough immigration measures like Arizona SB 1070. Results of the present research—specifically, evidence that support for application of these measures is greater against some targets (i.e., of Mexican origin) than others (i.e., of Canadian origin)—suggests at least two ways in which support for these measures is at odds with the goal of law enforcement.

First, results validate concerns of opponents of tough laws like Arizona SB 1070, who argue that such measures encourage racial profiling in determination of who is “reasonably suspicious.” Such racial profiling is at odds with respect for law to the extent that it illegally subjects not only undocumented immigrants, but also law-abiding immigrants and citizens of Latino heritage to police scrutiny and violation of human rights. One can interpret results of the present research as validation of these concerns about racial profiling.

The concern about undue harassment of Mexican or Latino targets is consistent with conventional understandings of discrimination as undue hostile treatment. However, an exclusive focus on discrimination as undue hostile treatment toward racial others obscures the ways in which systems of racism award undue privilege to people in dominant racial and ethnic groups. In the present case, defense of White or Anglo privilege is evident, not only as a possible source of ethnocentric exclusion, but also in the observed tendency for participants to soften their demands for tough punishment—and even oppose tough enforcement—for law-breaking Canadian immigrants. The consequence is insufficient scrutiny of law-breaking immigrants who match dominant cultural constructions of identity, allowing them to pass unnoticed and escape due punishment. To the extent that the legal framework reproduces this system of White, Anglocentric privilege, legal scholarship about race and

ethnicity becomes an important source for the construction of power. Recognizing and revealing the constructed nature of the legal framework is the first step toward dismantling the system of racial privilege (Adams & Salter, 2011; Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Telles & Ortiz, 2009; Vasquez, 2011).

The focus on racial privilege also helps to illuminate the somewhat ironic opposition of many law-enforcement officials to tough enforcement measures like SB 1070. Discussions of such opposition have rightly emphasized how fear of deportation may prevent people in immigrant communities from reporting crime or otherwise cooperating with law enforcement (National Immigration Law Center, 2010). The present work suggests another factor in opposition; tough legislation poses a difficult dilemma for law-enforcement officers. On one hand, if officers use racial profiling and disproportionately apply tough measures against Latino targets, then they not only engage in illegal discrimination, but also allow undocumented White immigrants to escape scrutiny. On the other hand, if officers enforce the law equally without regard to racial identity—that is, if they request documentation of people whom one might reasonably suspect as being Canadian immigrants (i.e., most White Americans) and detain people without such documentation—then they risk incurring the wrath of the very same constituents who urge tough enforcement. Indeed, consistent application of the tough measures that proponents demand for Latino targets to White targets is likely to provoke strong indignation about violation of human rights. Such likely indignation about consistent application is another indication that support for tough measures is a reflection of interest in enforcing ethnocentric exclusion rather than enforcing laws.

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