Implicit Nativist Attitudes, Social Desirability, and Immigration Policy Preferences

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Abstract. While previous research on immigration attitudes among the American public has focused on factors such as economic threat, social context, and racial prejudice, fewer studies have examined the psychological determinants of immigration policy preferences. This study analyzes the results of an implicit association test (IAT) procedure which measures automatic nativist preferences for traditional American culture versus Latino-American culture (i.e. implicit nativist attitudes). In brief, this study demonstrates that implicit nativist attitudes are fairly common, that they are an independent predictor of immigration policy attitudes, and that they affect those who are not explicitly nativist but who still hold restrictionist policy views.

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Introduction

The origin of contemporary immigration policy preferences among the American public has been the subject of a great deal of scholarship among political scientists over the past two decades. It is especially relevant in today’s political environment where some have referred to the perennial immigration policy issue as the new “third rail” of American politics (Schaper 2011) and where Latinos are becoming an increasingly important and influential minority group in the political environment. Accordingly, a variety of potential determinants of immigration attitudes have been uncovered, including gender (Hughes and Tuch 2003), age (Wilson 1996), education (Espenshade and Calhoun 1993; Hoskin and Mishler 1983), religion (Knoll 2009; McDaniel, Nooruddin, and Shortle 2011), partisanship (Neiman, Johnson, and Bowler 2006), economic competition (Hood III, Morris, and Shirkey 1997; Citrin et al. 1997), racism (Ayers et al. 2009), social context (Hood and Morris 1998; Hopkins 2010; Tolbert and Hero 1996), and even media cues (Brader, Valentino, and Suhay 2008).

The focus of this particular study, however, is the more basic attitude of nativism – the opinion that the American culture and way of life needs to be protected against foreign influence (Higham 1955; Perea 1997). This is the “cultural threat” hypothesis identified by Hofstadter (1955) and Hays (1995). Although related, nativism is distinct from racial/ethnic prejudice or restrictive immigration policy preferences (Fry 2006, 31; Higham 1955, 151; Roberts 1997). (Knobel 1996; Bennett 1988) As would be expected, nativism as an individual-level attitude has previously been shown to have a significant effect on modern immigration-related policy preferences in the United States (Citrin 1990; Citrin et al. 1994; Citrin and Sides 2008).

Collectively, these studies have provided evidence that immigration attitudes are driven by a variety of factors. It has been shown that there are those who oppose pro-immigrant policies for (normatively-speaking) less legitimate motives like racism and nativism, and also that there are those who oppose pro-immigrant policies for more legitimate motives like concerns about the effect of immigration on the economy, national security, welfare spending, etc. (the latter two
These previous findings now lead to the important question of whether or not those who oppose pro-immigrant political policies but claim to eschew nativism are truly motivated solely by principled philosophical objections (Sniderman and Piazza 1995). In other words, are these “principled objectors” simply trying to avoid giving socially unacceptable answers when reporting their levels of nativist preferences in an attempt to “save face” to the interviewer (Berinsky 1999; Berinsky 2002)?

This type of question has been investigated and debated at length in regards to the effect of anti-black prejudice on racially-charged policy preferences such as affirmative action, school busing, and welfare spending (Hughes 1997; Kuklinski et al. 1997; Sears and Kinder 1985; Sniderman, Brody, and Kuklinski 1991). It is not clear, however, how this effect is manifested in regards to attitudes toward immigrant-specific policy preferences such as immigration restriction, English-only laws, guest-worker programs, etc. where nativist opinions regarding the nature and status of American culture have been shown to play a prominent and unique role. Furthermore, nativism and conservative immigration policy preferences are often erroneously understood as interchangeable attitudes by researchers (Alvarez and Butterfield 2000; Branton et al. 2007; Fetzer 1998; Simcox 1997; Tatalovich 1995). As nativism is an attitude distinct from its policy manifestations (i.e. one can support restrictive immigration policies for reasons other than nativism), it is important to further assess the degree to which nativism drives immigration policy preferences in comparison with other factors that have been identified in previous research.

This study seeks, among other things, to investigate and offer a possible answer to the “principled objector” question regarding immigration-related policy preferences. As it is not often considered socially acceptable to oppose liberal immigration policies based on anxieties related to cultural threat (i.e. nativism), it is important to investigate the extent to which nativist attitudes affect immigration policy preferences in the United States. This analysis will extend previous research by measuring and examining individual nativist attitudes that are not accessible through standard telephone survey interviews. Through the use of an implicit
association test (IAT), it is possible to measure automatic preferences or “implicit attitudes” toward nativism, i.e. biases in favor of a particular version of American culture over a version of American culture blended with influence from foreign cultures. This measure will allow us to assess whether those who take the principled objector stand on immigration policy opinions are accurately representing themselves or if they possess more deep-seated nativist biases of which they themselves might not even be aware.

The origin of conservative racial policy attitudes: symbolic racism or principled objections?

This study addresses the existing political science literature investigating the determinants of black racial public policy attitudes in the United States (i.e. individual-level support for affirmative action, school busing, welfare spending, etc.). One prominent approach has been to look at the nature and effects of anti-black racism in explaining opposition to pro-racial policies. While this may seem like an obvious explanation, there has been a great deal of debate in the literature over exactly how racism might interact with attitudes toward public policies that affect racial minorities.

On one hand, the “symbolic racism” argument (Kinder and Sears 1981; Sears et al. 1997; Sears, Sidanius, and Bobo 2000; Henry and Sears 2002; Sears and Henry 2003; Tarman and Sears 2005) posits that even though old-fashioned biological racism may not be as prevalent in American society as it was several decades ago, anti-black prejudice in the form of symbolic racism still exerts a large effect on public policy preferences that benefit racial minorities. Those who are symbolically racist are not those who think that blacks are biologically inferior, but rather that they fail to live up to American traditional values of productivity, self-control, and the Protestant work ethic. They would agree, for example, with the phrase: “if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.”

On the other hand, scholars such as Sniderman and Piazza (1995) disagree with this perspective. They argue that attitudes on racial public policies are largely a function of ideology and education, not anti-black racism. They claim that people can be opposed to racial policy
preferences, such as welfare or school busing, because of an ideological opposition to
government intervention in certain social matters. In terms of welfare, for example, they argue
that principled conservatives simply believe that it is not the government’s job to provide
monetary welfare to anyone, regardless of race or ethnicity (Sniderman, Brody, and Kuklinski
1991)(Sniderman and Carmines 1999) For the purposes of this study, I will refer to this theory as
the “principled objector” argument (C. Federico and Sidanius 2002).

While there has been no definite resolution to this debate, most scholars currently take
the position that opinions on racial public policies are ultimately a result of both political
conservatism as well as symbolic racism. The disagreement now is over which of the factors is
more influential and in what situations (Sears 1994; Sears, Sidanius, and Bobo 2000). For
example, Sniderman et al. (1991) argue that individual-level education is a key moderator. They
present evidence to support the argument that low-educated individuals are opposed to racial
public policies largely due to racism and high-educated people who oppose racial public policies
do so because of principled political conservatism. Federico and Sidanius (2002), however, argue
that increased levels of education have “paradoxical effects” in that more highly-educated
individuals have lower levels of racism, but are more likely to oppose racial policies like
affirmative action for race-based reasons. This is because those with more education have higher
levels of constraint between their various political and social attitudes (Converse 1964). (C. M.

As explained in the introduction, previous research in the area of immigration attitudes
suggests that opposition to government policies that benefit immigrants, especially Latino
immigrants, are motivated by a variety of factors, including racial or cultural concerns, as well as
principled political conservatism. Applying the theories of black racial policy preferences to help
explain the origins of Latino policy preferences, these previous findings would suggest that some
Americans who possess anti-immigrant prejudices or anti-immigration policy preferences do so
because of an aversion to Hispanics as a group or out of a concern about the effect of
immigration on a “traditional” American culture and way of life. These findings also suggest that
there are others, the “principled objectors”, who would be motivated for reasons other than racism or nativism, including ideology and economic concerns.

Of course, an objection could be raised as to whether these principled objectors genuinely oppose pro-immigrant policies on lofty philosophical grounds, or if they are simply masking their true motivations with those that are more socially acceptable. People rarely care to admit that they have racist, prejudiced, or bigoted opinions to surveyors (Berinsky 1999; Berinsky 2002; Gilens, Sniderman, and Kuklinski 1998; Kuklinski et al. 1997; Kuklinski, Cobb, and Gilens 1997; Sniderman, Crosby, and Howell 2000). This often creates a “social desirability” problem, where individuals may be more likely to give an answer that is seen as socially acceptable or politically correct, rather than an answer which reflects their true attitudes.

The current objective of this study, then, is to further investigate this important question as to whether or not some individuals do indeed oppose pro-immigrant public policies for non-nativist or non-ethnic reasons. This will be attempted by moving beyond an analysis of stated opinions expressed to surveyors over the telephone, and instead examining implicit nativist attitudes, i.e. implicit biases in favor of an American culture free from foreign influence. As will be explained in the following section, these implicit biases may affect immigration policy attitudes without awareness on the part of the individual.

Implicit attitudes and the IAT

Most analyses of public opinion survey data rely on self-reported answers given by respondents to interviewers, either over the phone, in person, through the mail, or on the Internet. These answers represent (theoretically) opinions that are consciously and deliberately accessible by the respondents and are (hopefully) honest and accurate reflections of their true thoughts and feelings. Because the answers to survey questions are clearly communicated by the respondents, they are referred to as “explicit” preferences, opinions, or attitudes.

“Implicit” attitudes, on the other hand, are “the introspectively unidentified (or inaccurately identified) trace of past experience that mediates R’ where R refers to the category
of responses that are assumed to be influenced by that construct (Greenwald and Banaji 1995, 5)“ (Nosek, Greenwald, and Banaji 2007, 266). In simpler language, implicit attitudes are “mental associations that are so well-established as to operate without awareness, or without intention, or without control” (IAT Corporation). That is to say, individuals possess attitudes, based on previous life experiences (and often formed at an early age), of which they may not even be consciously aware of, but that can still “rub off” on their attitudes and behaviors toward other objects. For example, an individual with an implicit bias against African-Americans may be more likely to vote against a black political candidate, even though he or she is not aware of their implicit anti-black bias. This effect remains even when controlling for other factors such as partisanship and self-reported explicit racial attitudes (Greenwald, Smith, et al. 2009).

As can be imagined, measuring an individual’s implicit biases may prove to be extremely helpful in explaining their political preferences or behaviors. Capturing an implicit bias would also significantly improve the quality of survey analyses. Nosek, Greenwald, and Banaji (2007) explain that measuring implicit cognition “could reveal associative information that people were either unwilling or unable to report. In other words, implicit cognition could reveal traces of past experiences that people might actually reject because it conflicts with values or beliefs, or might avoid revealing because the expression could have negative social consequences” (266). They go on to explain that “even more likely, implicit cognition can reveal information that is not available to introspective access even if people were motivated to retrieve and express it” (266).

Thus, an instrument that is able to measure implicit biases and preferences would be able to reveal implicit attitudes that individuals possess, but that 1) they consciously reject because of disagreement, embarrassment, or shame, 2) they consciously accept but deliberately hide so as not to appear prejudiced, or 3) they are simply unaware that they possess. Regardless of the motive, however, incorporating an individual’s implicit attitude into a theoretical model has the potential to significantly improve the predictive power of the model in explaining certain societal attitudes or behaviors.
The implicit association test (IAT) is one method of measuring these implicit attitudes. The IAT was first introduced by Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz (1995) and has since been used to measure implicit attitudes in a variety of different fields, including psychology, neuroscience, and market research (Nosek, Greenwald, and Banaji 2007). In the field of political science, IATs have been used to help predict attitudes toward political candidates (Karpinski, Steinman, and Hilton 2005) and voting preferences (Friese, Bluemke, and Wänke 2007; Arcuri et al. 2008). IATs have also been used extensively to measure implicit racial biases and their relationships with racial policy preferences (Phelps et al. 2000; Rudman and Lee 2002; Vanman et al. 2004; Cunningham et al. 2004; Amodio and Devine 2006; Green et al. 2007; Glaser and Knowles 2008; Greenwald, Smith, et al. 2009). In terms of immigration preferences, the IAT method has previously demonstrated that implicit anti-Hispanic immigrant biases are associated with more conservative immigration policy preferences, independent of a host of other traditional factors including ideology and authoritarianism (Pérez 2010). Until now, however, the IAT has not been used to identify or measure implicit American nativist preferences. This is theoretically important because, as explained in the introduction, nativism is an individual-level attitude distinct from simple anti-Hispanic prejudice and contributes independently to immigration policy attitudes.

To briefly explain how the IAT works: using a personal computer, respondents are presented with images or words representing two distinct concepts or objects, as well as words representing “good” (“marvelous”, “pleasure”, “beautiful”, etc.) and “bad” (“horrible”, “agony”, “terrible”, etc.). Respondents are required to press certain keys to associate the “good” and “bad” words with each of the two objects. The basic idea is that if an individual is able to more rapidly associate the “good” words with the images representing Object A than he or she can associate “good” with Object B, it shows an implicit, automatic bias or preference in favor of Object A over Object B.¹ (Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz 1998; Nosek, Greenwald, and Banaji 2007)

It is important to know that many people mistakenly believe the IAT to be a “lie-detector, revealing associations that are more ‘real’, ‘true’, or accurate than self-report[ed measures]”
Research conducted with the IAT has revealed that explicit and implicit preferences are certainly related, but very distinct, attitudes (Cunningham, Preacher, and Banaji 2001). Each is a “true” attitude in the sense that each has predictive validity independent of the other. A recent meta-analysis of 122 IAT studies revealed that the average correlation between implicit and explicit attitudes toward the same object is $r=0.21$, with the highest correlations between political preferences, $r=0.54$, and lowest between racial preferences, specifically black-white, $r=0.12$ (Greenwald, Poehlman, et al. 2009, 24). In sum, it would be incorrect to assert that the IAT measures are somehow “better” or “more accurate” than self-reported explicit measures. “Each is a real assessment – one is intended to measure products of introspection [attitudes that an individual is consciously aware of], the other is not” (Nosek, Greenwald, and Banaji 2007, 283).

Using the IAT method, then, two key questions can be addressed in this study. First, what is the nature and prevalence of implicit nativist attitudes and how do they compare and contrast with explicit nativism, especially in predicting immigration policy attitudes? Second, do those who are the immigration principled objectors (i.e. conservative on immigration policy preferences but explicitly non-nativist) have higher levels of implicit nativist attitudes than those who are liberal in their policy views and non-nativist? In other words, are these principled objectors who oppose pro-immigrant policies (but claim to be non-nativist) possibly being affected by higher levels of implicit nativist attitudes? Because of the nature of these implicit attitudes, principled objectors would likely not even be aware of the implicit origin of their restrictive immigration preferences.

Data and methods

In order to examine these questions, this study will analyze data from the “2009 Personality and Immigration Attitudes Survey” conducted by the author. This survey contained an IAT instrument measuring implicit nativist attitudes (as will be explained shortly) as well as several questions measuring explicit levels of nativism, policy preferences, demographics, and
other independent variables featured in previous studies of immigration policy attitudes (see Appendix A for complete question wording). This survey was in the field from October 12 through December 11, 2009, and sampled undergraduate, graduate, and professional students at a large Midwestern university. Respondents were recruited for this survey via a mass-distribution email that was sent to all students at the institution. Incentive to participate was provided in the form of the option to be entered into a random drawing for a $50 prize upon completion of the survey. A follow-up reminder was sent three weeks after the initial recruitment email was distributed. A total of 834 individuals completed the survey. Finally, this analysis will restrict its cases to non-Hispanic white U.S. citizens (the primary theoretical population of interest when analyzing nativist attitudes), which reduces the usable N to 625.

Because this survey was distributed only among students a particular Midwestern university, it is important to note that the sample is somewhat unrepresentative of the American population at large in some respects. On the whole, this sample disproportionally represents females, younger individuals, and less frequent church attendees. Respondents are also slightly more politically liberal than the nation at large, although the distribution of political partisanship is roughly equal to the national distribution. Survey respondents are also, on average, less nativist than at the national level, explicitly speaking, as only about a quarter of respondents indicated agreement with the standard nativism measure as opposed to about a half of respondents in a nation-wide survey with the same survey question (Pew Hispanic Center 2006). They are also more liberal on immigration policy preferences, with about one-half of respondents saying that immigration into the United States should increase, nearly 30% higher than the national average. A summary of the descriptive statistics of the key variables can be found in Table 1.2

[ Table 1 about here ]

In order to measure implicit nativist attitudes, this IAT was designed in such a way as to measure a preference for a particular “traditional” version of American culture over a version of American culture mingled with foreign influence. Recall that this particular IAT measures
associations of “good” and “bad” with two objects. In this case, the first set of objects included a series of eight images of symbols representing “American culture,” specifically designed to represent traditional American values and stereotypes. They included images of the Statue of Liberty, Uncle Sam, apple pie, baseball, and the Constitution. The second set of objects included an equal number of images representing “Latino-American culture.” These images included a U.S. flag together with the Mexican flag, a bilingual voter registration sign, a Hispanic grocery store in a downtown American urban area, and a walking taco saluting the American flag while wearing a sombrero. (Figures 1 and 2 display the images used for each object).

[ Figures 1 and 2 about here ]

It is important to note that these images are not designed to measure implicit preferences on United States vs. Mexico, Anglos vs. Hispanics, English vs. Spanish, or even American citizens vs. immigrants. Instead, these images were specifically designed to measure implicit nativist preferences. Recall that, for the purposes of this study, nativism is defined as when an individual 1) identifies something as being as distinctly “American” (specifically, a traditional American culture and “way of life”) which, 2) needs to be protected against something distinctly “foreign.”

The first set of images displayed in Figure 1 was specifically chosen to represent the first part of the nativism definition: commonly accepted symbols of distinctly traditional American customs, values, and way of life. The second set of images displayed in Figure 2 was specifically chosen to represent contemporary American culture being mixed or “compromised” with influence from a foreign culture, specifically Latino culture. Each image contains a symbol of traditional American culture (U.S. flag, voting, etc.) juxtaposed with symbols of Latino culture (Mexican flag, Spanish language, Latino food, etc.). These images are similar to those utilized in a number of studies measuring similar implicit attitudes on Harvard’s “Project Implicit” website (http://implicit.harvard.edu/), as well as previous IAT studies measuring attitudes toward American culture (Devos and Banaji 2005).
Thus, the extent to which an individual reveals an implicit preference for the images in Figure 1 over Figure 2 (as measured by the difference in response sorting times in the IAT procedure), it can be interpreted as an implicit preference for a “traditional” American culture over an American culture being blended with foreign influence, i.e. nativism as it is defined above. (See Appendix B for a detailed description of this particular nativism IAT procedure.)

Analysis: implicit vs. explicit nativist attitudes and immigration policy preferences

Before turning to how measures of implicit nativist attitudes can help answer the “principled objector” and “social desirability” questions, it would first be profitable to briefly examine the distribution of implicit nativist attitudes among survey respondents and how it compares with the distribution of explicit nativist attitudes. Figure 3 displays a histogram distribution of the measure of implicit nativist attitudes among survey respondents.

[Figure 3 about here]

Respondents in the survey revealed implicit scores ranging from -0.94 to 1.51. The mean score was 0.53 with a standard deviation of 0.42 (N=596). As can be seen in Figure 3, these scores were distributed in more or less a standard bell-shaped normal curve, with the mean and modal values in the 0.5-0.6 range. This indicates a moderate-to-strong average level of implicit nativist attitudes among survey respondents. Taking the cut-off point of 0.15 as a “weak” level of implicit nativist preferences (see Footnote 1), nearly 80% of all respondents displayed some level of these implicit attitudes, with nearly 30% of all respondents in the “moderate” range and more than 40% in the “high” range. It is interesting to note that 9% of respondents (again, among non-Hispanic white U.S. citizens) revealed implicit preferences in favor of Latino-American culture over American culture. It is also interesting to note that this implicit distribution is strikingly similar to the distribution of anti-Hispanic implicit bias observed by Pérez (2010) in both student laboratory and general population internet samples, in that the clear majority of subjects displayed at least a small degree of implicit bias, although the mean strength of the implicit nativist attitude in this sample is somewhat higher than the anti-Hispanic implicit bias found in
the samples collected by Pérez (2010). Regardless, this observed distribution is important because it shows that although most individuals in the sample displayed some degree of implicit nativist attitudes, the variation in attitudes is considerable from subject to subject.

To contrast this measure of implicit nativism with a measure of explicit nativism, Table 2 displays a frequency distribution of responses to the following question: “Some people say that our American way of life needs to be protected against foreign influence. Do you strongly agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or strongly disagree?” Table 2 displays a very different distribution than that of the previous implicit measure from Figure 3. Here, only about 23% of respondents indicated agreement with the explicit nativism measure. On a 1-4 scale, the mean was 1.81 with a standard deviation of 0.89 (N=607).

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The measures of implicit and explicit nativism are positively correlated at r=0.23, p<0.0001. This level of correlation is nearly identical to the average implicit-explicit correlation of r=0.21 reported in the meta-analysis of 122 different IAT studies, as discussed previously (Greenwald et al. 2009). This correlation is also higher than the average correlation for implicit-explicit racial attitudes but lower than implicit-explicit political preferences. Finally, a Somer’s D statistic between the two measures is significant at 0.26, meaning that knowing one’s implicit nativist attitude score increases the likelihood of correctly predicting a person’s level of explicit nativism by 26%.

**Predictive Validity.** While it appears that these two measures of nativism are certainly related, the association is weak enough to suggest that either or both attitudes might independently exert an effect on explicit immigration policy preferences. To examine this possibility, Table 3 reports the results of a concise OLS regression model of immigration policy preferences among survey respondents, with the addition of the implicit nativist attitudes IAT measure (see Appendix A for complete question wording and coding). The coefficients and standard errors are reported, as well as the predicted probability change in the dependent variable as the independent variable moves from its minimum to maximum value, holding all other
variables in the model constant at their mean. The dependent variable in the model is an additive index of eight different immigration policy attitudes (e.g. immigrant worker policies, birthright citizenship, bilingual education, etc.) recoded on a 0-1 scale, with higher values indicating more conservative preferences (detailed information available in Appendix A).

[ Table 3 about here ]

Observe in Table 3 that the coefficient for implicit nativist attitudes is significant and positive. This indicates that that those possessing stronger implicit, automatic preferences for American culture over Latino-American culture, even controlling for explicit nativism and the other key variables, have more conservative immigration policy preferences. It is also noteworthy that the substantive effects of the implicit and explicit nativist attitudes are almost exactly the same. Holding all other variables constant at their mean, strong explicit nativists have policy scores 18.7% higher than strong explicit non-nativists. Those with the highest levels of implicit nativist attitudes have policy scores 18.4% higher than those with the lowest levels of these attitudes. (Compare the effect of 14.9% for anti-Hispanic affect, 12.7% for economic threat, and 24.4% for political ideology.)

Apparently, immigration policy preferences are affected just as much by implicit as explicit nativist attitudes, and (in this model, at least) each exerts an effect second only to political ideology in driving immigration policy preferences. This offers support that one can indeed be a “principled objector” and oppose liberal immigration policies for ideological reasons, as the variable remains significant even when implicit nativist attitudes are included in the model.

In sum, this analysis revealed a few key points. Generally-speaking, survey respondents revealed remarkably low levels of explicit nativism and moderately high levels of implicit nativist preferences. Further, two different bivariate measures (correlation and Somer’s D) revealed a significant and positive relationship between these two variables, in that those who have higher levels of implicit nativist attitudes are also more likely to have higher levels of explicit nativism, although the strength of this association is moderate at best. It was also shown
that both variables are significant predictors of immigration policy preferences, and that each
exerts an effect nearly identical in magnitude. Finally, even when controlling for implicit nativist
biases, political ideology remains independently significant in the model, suggesting the
existence of actual principled objectors in the survey sample.

Analysis: implicit nativist attitudes and “principled objectors”

It was discussed earlier that previous studies have shown that conservative immigration
policy preferences are driven just as much by anti-Hispanic affect and political philosophical
conservatism as by levels of explicit nativism. This led to the consideration of the possibility that
people were simply misrepresenting their nativist preferences to interviewers out of a desire to
appear socially appropriate or “politically correct” (Berinsky 1999; Berinsky 2002; Kuklinski,
Cobb, and Gilens 1997; Sniderman, Crosby, and Howell 2000). This implicit nativism IAT can
now help determine whether or not those who hold conservative immigration preferences, but
profess to be non-nativists, were actually “closet-nativists” who were simply hiding their private
attitudes. In the section above we have observed preliminary evidence that this might not be the
case. Factors such as political ideology and economic concerns remain significant even when
levels of implicit nativist attitudes are included in a predictive model of policy preferences.

This section will further investigate this issue. The “2009 Personality and Immigration
Attitudes Survey” contains a ten-item battery of questions designed to measure an individual’s
level of social desirability. For example, respondents are asked whether they agree or disagree
with statements like: “I’m always willing to admit it when I make a mistake,” “I have never
deliberately said something that hurt someone’s feelings,” “I like to gossip at times,” or “there
have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.” Each item is designed in such a way as
to describe infractions that, with very few exceptions, every normal person is guilty of at least
once at some point in their lives (complete question wording available in Appendix A). To the
extent that respondents disagree with those statements, it is interpreted as a desire to give
“socially desirable” answers to survey questions.
The ten-question social desirability battery used in this study is the same recommended by Fischer and Fick (1993) as a concise alternative to the 33-question battery originally proposed by Crowne and Marlowe (1980). Theoretically, those who are not willing to admit that they “sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget” will also likely not be willing to admit other potentially socially undesirable attitudes, like anti-immigrant nativism.

Each survey respondent therefore has a measure of social desirability associated with their survey answers. Together with the implicit nativist attitude measure, we can investigate the degree to which the principled objectors possess implicit nativist attitudes and also whether or not they are more likely to worry about social desirability. In other words, we can examine whether or not conservative principled objectors have a higher tendency to hide socially undesirable attitudes and behaviors.

To assess the first question, a simple t-test was conducted on the difference in levels of implicit nativist attitudes between those with liberal and conservative immigration policy preferences, limiting the sample to only those who profess low levels of explicit nativism and favorable views of Hispanics, which would theoretically eliminate both the racism and explicit nativist motivations (see Appendix A for details on variable coding for purposes of conducting the t-test). Those with the conservative preference would therefore be the principled objectors because they explicitly report non-nativism and non-racism, but still have restrictive immigration policy attitudes.

The results of the t-test indicate that the principled objectors have, on average, a statistically significant implicit nativist attitude score (M=0.68, SD=0.05) nearly 0.24 higher than those who have liberal immigration policy preferences (M=0.44, SD=0.02); t(408)=-3.73, p=0.0002. This is not an overwhelming magnitude, but sufficient to make a difference between the conventionally accepted standards of weak, moderate, and strong implicit nativist biases. (Approached from another statistical angle, the immigration policy and implicit nativist attitude scale index scores among principled objectors are also correlated at r=0.291, p<0.00001.)
To further test these results, we can analyze this same relationship from a multivariate perspective. Table 4 presents the results of an OLS analysis of the same model as presented in Table 3, but with the inclusion of an interaction term of the implicit and explicit nativist attitude measures. The regression coefficients for both implicit and explicit nativist attitudes are significant and in the expected direction (positive). This confirms that both variables independently contribute to more restrictive immigration policy attitudes even in the complete absence of the other. Further, a calculation of the predicted probabilities reveals that when explicit nativism is absent (set to “0” in the model), the immigration policy attitudes dependent variable increases by 17.8% in the conservative direction as the implicit nativist attitudes score increases from its minimum to maximum value – a significant amount.

Nosek, Greenwald, and Banaji (2007) explain that there are three reasons why an IAT score and an explicit measure may differ for individuals. They either 1) are not aware of their implicit attitude, 2) are aware but actively reject their implicit attitude because they do not believe it to be representative of their true beliefs, or 3) are aware of their implicit attitude and believe that it accurately represents their true beliefs, but choose instead to give what they perceive to be a socially acceptable response (282). Because we have access to a measure of an individual’s desire to appear socially acceptable, we are able to investigate whether or not the principled objectors, who have higher levels of implicit nativist attitudes, fall into categories 1 and 2 (unaware of their attitudes or aware and disagree) or category 3 (aware and agree, but hide), as described above. Another t-test was thus conducted between levels of social desirability among the principled objectors who have weak-to-strong levels of implicit nativist attitudes.

The t-test revealed no significant difference in levels of social desirability between those who have liberal (M=0.43, SD=0.01) and conservative (M=0.47, SD=0.04) immigration policy preferences among those who also have low levels of explicit nativism and racism but higher levels of implicit nativist attitudes; t(319)=-1.03, p=0.31. (Correlation between immigration policy and social desirability scale index variables r=0.061, p=0.278).
In sum, higher levels of implicit nativist attitudes are present among principled immigration objectors who report low levels of nativism and racism but maintain conservative policy preferences. These individuals also are no more likely to feel motivated to give the socially desirable answer to survey questions than those who possess liberal immigration policy views. In essence, this evidence suggests that the principled objectors are not misrepresenting their views to appear socially acceptable. Rather, they have implicit nativist attitudes of which they are either not even aware or actively reject as not conforming to their actual belief system.9

Discussion

This analysis offers further evidence to support the argument that principled objectors exist when it comes to immigration policy preferences. The collective view of previous research on immigration attitudes has shown that conservative immigration policy preferences are driven by a variety of factors, including negative affect toward Hispanics, economic concerns, and others. It was argued that this supports Sniderman and Piazza’s (1995) principled objector argument that individuals can support anti-minority policies for reasons other than racism. The evidence presented in this study adds further support to this conclusion, showing that principled immigration objectors are likely not simply misrepresenting their views for socially acceptable reasons. Instead, it is likely that they are being influenced by implicit nativist attitudes that they may not even be aware that they possess.

Thus, when it comes to Latino public policies (or more specifically, immigrant-related public policies), these findings provide evidence in favor of both the symbolic racism and principled objector perspectives. The symbolic racism argument is that personal aversion to blacks is no longer based on opinions of biological inferiority, but rather that on the belief that blacks do not conform to traditional American values of the Protestant work ethic and self-discipline. In a way, the nativism argument is similar – some may hold negative opinions of Latino immigrants because they do not conform to traditional American customs or values like speaking English, belonging to a Protestant religious denomination, or participating in one’s
democracy. This study has provided evidence that nativism (both implicit and explicit), as well as old-fashioned anti-Hispanic racism, do indeed drive opposition to pro-immigrant public polices in the United States.

In contrast, this study has also provided evidence that some individuals support more restrictive immigration policies for principled philosophical concerns. In Table 3, political ideology remains a significant predictor of immigration policy attitudes, even after accounting for implicit nativist biases and the social desirability factor. Thus, these results support the argument that Americans oppose pro-immigrant policies for a variety of reasons, most principally nativism, racism, and principled political conservatism. All three must be accounted for in any comprehensive explanation of support for Latino public policy preferences.

Summary and conclusion

This study has introduced a novel method of measuring nativist attitudes among survey respondents. Moving beyond standard explicit survey response measures, this analysis introduced an implicit nativist attitude, as measured by an automatic preference for symbols representing a traditional American culture over a version of American culture blended with foreign influence (specifically, Latino cultural influence).

This analysis revealed several important findings. First, it was shown that implicit nativist attitudes are fairly common, with nearly 80% of survey respondents displaying at least a slight preference for a traditional version American culture. Levels of implicit nativist attitudes are positively correlated with levels of explicit nativism (albeit only weakly), and both attitudes exert an independent effect on immigration policy preferences among survey respondents. While previous research (Pérez 2010) has shown that implicit anti-Hispanic biases affect immigration policy attitudes independent of other demographic or psychological characteristics (authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, etc.), the current study complements this finding and advances this line of research by showing that implicit nativist attitudes also independently contribute to American immigration policy attitudes. Any comprehensive model predicting immigration
policy attitudes must account for the important role of nativist attitudes, both implicit as well as explicit. This is especially important considering that implicit attitudes are more strongly associated with non-verbal or subtle behaviors as opposed to explicit policy preferences (Dovidio, Kawakami, and Gaertner 2002; Rydell and McConnell 2006).

Second, this study demonstrated that the principled immigration objectors (the explicit non-nativists who have conservative policy preferences) do indeed possess higher levels of implicit nativism. However, they are likely not deliberately misrepresenting their nativist attitudes on surveys, but rather are most likely unaware that they possess such implicit nativist attitudes. As was explained previously, this important finding suggests a middle-way between the contentious symbolic racism and principled objector arguments in the scholarly literature on the origin of racial public policy preferences.

Finally, it is worth briefly considering the implications for these results within the wider immigration environment in the United States. While this study focused on respondents in a localized geographical area, there is a great deal of heterogeneity in the cultural and demographic contexts throughout the country that might affect the interaction of implicit attitudes and immigration policy preferences. Recall that implicit attitudes are “mental associations that are so well-established as to operate without awareness” (IAT Corporation) and are often dependent upon the cultural and social contexts in which an individual develops and resides. In this case, it may be the case the implicit nativist attitudes are more prevalent in areas where Latino cultural markers are commonplace or in areas where these influences are rarer but growing quickly (Hopkins 2010). When people are regularly exposed to cultural markers of immigrant influences (like the corner Latino markets or “VOTE AQUÍ” signs displayed in the IAT test, see Figure 2) in their day-to-day lives, they may be more likely to form more intense implicit nativist attitudes. This would suggest that the relationships demonstrated in this study may be even more pronounced in metropolitan areas on the east coast or the south-west of the United States where the Latino immigrant population is currently concentrated. Of course, future research would be necessary to confirm whether this is indeed the case.
Ultimately, this analysis has shown that while implicit preferences for a traditional version of one’s own culture are important to understand, they are not the end of the story in explaining attitudes toward immigration policy in the United States. Indeed, a Somer’s D statistic calculation reveals that knowing one’s level of implicit nativist attitudes reduces the error in predicting their immigration policy preferences only by 22%. Thus, nearly four-fifths of the variation in policy preferences is attributable to reasons other than implicit nativist preferences. As was argued previously, there are a variety of reasons why people would hold restrictive immigration policy preferences, and all must be recognized and incorporated in order to accurately understand why individuals think the way they do on this timely and important issue.
Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Survey Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>25.16</td>
<td>7.68</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family income</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church attendance</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat and leaners</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican and leaners</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political ideology (conservative +)</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit nativism</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit IAT nativism</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>-0.94</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent variable: index of immigration policy preferences (conservative +)</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2009 Personality and Immigration Attitudes Survey

Note: Limited to non-Hispanic white native-born U.S. citizen respondents.

Table 2. Distribution of Explicit Nativism Measure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Some people say that our American way of life needs to be protected against foreign influence. Do you completely agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or completely disagree?&quot;</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completely disagree</td>
<td>46.62%</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>30.81%</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>17.96%</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completely agree</td>
<td>4.61%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>607</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2009 Personality and Immigration Attitudes Survey

Note: Limited to non-Hispanic white U.S. citizens only
Table 3. OLS Regression Predicting Conservative Immigration Policy Attitudes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>B (SE)</th>
<th>Predicted probability</th>
<th>Min → Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicit nativism</td>
<td>0.062 (0.015)***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit IAT nativism</td>
<td>0.077 (0.024)**</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic threat</td>
<td>0.128 (0.029)***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Hispanic affect</td>
<td>0.050 (0.018)**</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Foreign-born Latin American</td>
<td>0.080 (0.288)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology (conservative +)</td>
<td>0.061 (0.013)***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>0.105 (0.034)**</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>0.040 (0.043)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-0.036 (0.020)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.000 (0.001)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.002 (0.009)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.002 (0.004)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church attendance</td>
<td>-0.006 (0.007)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.027 (0.067)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>353</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted-R2</td>
<td>0.525</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p ≤ 0.05, ** p ≤ 0.01, *** p ≤ 0.001.

Dependent variable is an additive index of immigration policy preferences with greater values corresponding to more conservative preferences (see Appendix A for more details).

Limited to non-Hispanic white U.S. citizens only.

Mean Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) score = 1.42.

Table 4. Interactive Effect of Implicit and Explicit Nativist Attitudes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>B (SE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicit nativism</td>
<td>0.060 (0.024)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit IAT nativism</td>
<td>0.075 (0.030)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit × Implicit IAT nativism</td>
<td>0.004 (0.030)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic threat</td>
<td>0.128 (0.029)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Hispanic affect</td>
<td>0.049 (0.018)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Foreign-born Latin American</td>
<td>0.078 (0.289)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology (conservative +)</td>
<td>0.061 (0.013)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>0.104 (0.034)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>0.040 (0.043)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-0.036 (0.020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.000 (0.001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.002 (0.009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.002 (0.004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church attendance</td>
<td>-0.006 (0.007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.037 (0.065)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted-R2</td>
<td>0.524</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p ≤ 0.05, ** p ≤ 0.01, *** p ≤ 0.001.

Dependent variable is an additive index of immigration policy preferences with greater values corresponding to more conservative preferences (see Appendix A for more details).

For the purposes of this model, the explicit nativism variable was recoded to a 0-3 ordinal scale so that the “zero” value could be substantively interpreted with the inclusion of the interaction term. Relevant interaction and constituent terms presented in bold.

Limited to non-Hispanic white U.S. citizens only.

Mean Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) score = 1.93.

Figure 1. IAT Images Representing Traditional American Culture

Figure 2. IAT Images Representing Traditional American Culture Blended with Latino-American Culture
Figure 3. Distribution of Implicit Nativist Attitude Scores

Note: N = 596, mean=0.53, SD=0.42, limited to non-Hispanic white U.S. citizens only

APPENDIX A: VARIABLE CODING

Data sources

The analysis in this study analyzed data collected from the “2009 Personality and Immigration Attitudes Survey” conducted by the author. This survey was conducted from October 12 through December 11, 2009, and sampled undergraduate, graduate, and professional students at a large Midwestern university. Respondents were recruited for this survey via a mass-distribution email that was sent to all students at the institution. Incentive to participate was provided in the form of the option to be entered into a random drawing for a $50 prize upon completion of the survey. A follow-up reminder was sent three weeks after the initial recruitment email was distributed. A total of 834 individuals completed the survey.

Question wording: 2009 Personality and Immigration Attitudes Survey

Immigration policy preference index: This is an additive index constructed from responses to the following questions: “Should LEGAL immigration into the United States be kept at its present level, increased or decreased?”, “Which comes closest to your view about what government policy should be regarding ILLEGAL immigrants currently residing in the United States? Should the government: 1) deport all undocumented immigrants 2) allow undocumented immigrants to remain in the U.S. as guest workers for a limited time 3) allow undocumented immigrants to become citizens if they meet criteria like learning English and paying their back taxes 4) allow undocumented immigrants to become permanent residents with no requirements?”, “Should illegal immigrants who are in the U.S. be eligible for social services provided by state and local governments, or should they not be eligible?”, “Should the children of illegal immigrants who are in the U.S. be permitted to attend public schools, or don’t you think so?”, “Would you favor changing the Constitution so that the parents must be legal residents of the U.S. in order for their newborn child to be a citizen, or should the Constitution be left as it is?”, “Would you favor or oppose building a fence along 700 miles of the border with
Mexico?”, “Do you favor or oppose bilingual education programs in public schools?”, and “Would you favor or oppose making English the official language of the United States?” Each question was recoded to a 0-1 scale (higher values corresponding with more conservative preferences) and averaged over the number of questions that respondents gave answers to. When this variable was used in the t-tests, it was split into a dichotomous variable at the 0.5 mark (71% liberal preferences and 29% conservative preferences). The Cronbach’s alpha statistic for these eight items is 0.79.

**Social desirability index:** This is an additive index constructed from responses to the following questions: “Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is true or false as it pertains to you personally. 1) I like to gossip at times. 2) There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone. 3) I’m always willing to admit it when I make a mistake. 4) I always try to practice what I preach. 5) I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget. 6) At times I have really insisted on having things my own way. 7) There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things. 8) I never resent being asked to return a favor. 9) I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own. 10) I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone’s feelings.” Each question was recoded so that higher values corresponding with agreement to the socially acceptable answer in each case, then added and averaged over the number of questions to which respondents gave answers, creating an index on a 0-1 scale. When this variable was used in the t-tests, it was split into a dichotomous variable at the 0.5 mark (54.7% not afraid to express socially undesirable views, 45.3% afraid to do so). The Cronbach’s alpha statistic for these ten items is 0.65.

**Explicit nativism:** “Some people say that our American way of life needs to be protected against foreign influence. Would you say you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with this?” This is a 4-point ordinal variable, with higher values corresponding to higher levels of nativism. When this variable was used in the t-tests, it was split into a dichotomous variable (completely/somewhat agree vs. completely/somewhat disagree).
Economic threat: “Do you think the immigrants coming to this country today mostly take jobs away from American citizens, or do they mostly take jobs Americans don’t want?” (Higher values = take American jobs.)

Anti-Hispanic affect: “Would you say your overall opinion of Hispanics is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable?” (Higher values = more unfavorable.) When this variable was used in the t-tests, it was split into a dichotomous variable (very/mostly favorable vs. very/mostly unfavorable).

Percent Foreign-born Latino: This is the percent foreign-born from Latin America (both citizens and non-citizens) in the zip code where the respondent indicated that they had “lived the longest”, as per the 2006 American Community Survey. This variable was chosen instead of their current location because the transient students in the sample are more likely to have been affected by the social context of their home areas as opposed to their recent and temporary educational location. Also, the vast majority of respondents lived in the same zip code, creating little variation in the variable measures for the contextual data of their current location.

Ideology: “In general, would you describe your political views as… very conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal, or very liberal?” (Higher values = more conservative.)

Partisanship: “In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a… strong Republican, weak Republican, Independent, but lean Republican, Independent, Independent, but lean Democrat, weak Democrat, strong Democrat, no preference, or some other party?” From these responses, dummy variables were created for Republican (strong, weak, and Independent lean Republican) and Independent (pure Independents).

Gender: “Are you male, female,” or don’t know/refused?

Age: “What is your age?” (open-ended)

Education: “What is the last grade or class that you completed in school? 1) High school graduate (Grade 12 or GED certificate) 2) Technical, trade, or vocational school AFTER high school 3) Some college, no 4-year degree (including associate degree) 4) College graduate (B.S.,
B.A., or other 4-year degree) 5) Post-graduate training or professional schooling after college (e.g., toward a master’s Degree or Ph.D.; law or medical school)” (Higher values = more education.)

**Church attendance:** “Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services... more than once a week, once a week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, seldom, or never?” (Higher values = attend more often.)
APPENDIX B: IMPLICIT NATIVIST ATTITUDE IAT PROCEDURE

The implicit nativist attitude test procedure employed in this analysis was designed using the basic flower-insect IAT template included with the computer program “Inquisit version 3.0.3.2” distributed by Millisecond Software (http://www.millisecond.com). Two separate Inquisit scripts were used in the survey, one containing the IAT procedure and the other containing the survey questions. The scripts were hosted on Millisecond Software’s servers and data was collected online rather than through laboratory computers. Although this resulted in a self-selection effect in the respondents who participated, it also facilitated the completion of over 800 surveys in a relatively short time-frame.

After viewing the consent language at the beginning of the survey, respondents were presented with the following instructions:

Put your middle or index fingers on the E and I keys of your keyboard. Pictures or words representing ‘American culture’ and ‘Latino-American culture’ will appear one-by-one in the middle of the screen. When the item belongs to a category on the left, press the E key; when the item belongs to a category on the right, press the I key. Items belong to only one category. For example, a picture of the American flag corresponds with ‘American culture’ while a picture of the American and Mexican flags together represents ‘Latino-American culture.’ If you make an error in matching the words with the images, an X will appear - fix the error by hitting the other key. This is a timed sorting task. GO AS FAST AS YOU CAN while making as few mistakes as possible. Going too slow or making too many errors will result in an uninterpretable score. This task will take about 5 minutes to complete.

Respondents were then required to press either the “E” or “I” keys to sort the images (as shown in Figures 1 and 2) into the categories of either American culture or Latino-American culture. After this “block” of sorting trials, the categories were replaced with “Good” and “Bad” and respondents were required to sort the following words into each category: “Marvelous”, “Superb”, “Pleasure”, “Beautiful”, “Joyful”, “Glorious”, “Lovely”, “Wonderful”, “Tragic”, “Horrible”, “Agony”, “Painful”, “Terrible”, “Awful”, “Humiliate”, and “Nasty”. If the subject commits and error in the sorting process they are required to correct the error before proceeding.
In all, respondents completed seven separate “blocks” of sorting trials, with each block containing a different set of category combinations. The seven blocks proceeded as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Number of trials</th>
<th>Items assigned to the left-key response</th>
<th>Items assigned to the right-key response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>American culture</td>
<td>Latino-American culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Pleasant words</td>
<td>Unpleasant words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>American culture + pleasant words</td>
<td>Latino-American culture + unpleasant words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>American culture + pleasant words</td>
<td>Latino-American culture + unpleasant words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Latino-American culture</td>
<td>American culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Latino-American culture + pleasant words</td>
<td>American culture + unpleasant words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Latino-American culture + pleasant words</td>
<td>American culture + unpleasant words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After survey respondents completed the IAT procedure, they were shown the debriefing language, as well as their IAT score. They were then asked to complete a series of explicit survey measurements on their opinions toward immigration policy, explicit nativism, attitudes toward Hispanics, various demographic characteristics, and others. Respondents were asked to provide their email address if (and only if) they desired to be entered into a drawing for a $50 cash prize for completing the survey.

After the two-month data collection period had ended, the author downloaded the survey data from the Millisecond Software website. The IAT implicit nativist attitude score was constructed according to the “D_biep” format as described in Greenwald, Banaji, and Nosek (2003). This D_biep score is computed by dividing the response time scores from the various practice and key trial blocks by their associated standard deviations and then averaging the resulting figures. The scores are divided by their standard deviations because IAT subjects vary considerably in their baseline response times, and thus dividing by the standard deviation accounts for individual-level differences in response time scores. A more detailed description of
the calculation of the D_beip score, as well as the SPSS script used to construct the D_biep measure, is available from Dr. Greenwald’s website at:

One potential concern is that because of the way the procedure is designed, respondents tend to demonstrate a bias toward the combination first presented to them (in the case above, “American culture” + “Good”). Nosek et al. (2005), however, demonstrate that completing 40 trials in Block 5 tends to compensate reasonably well for this effect. Furthermore, in this particular procedure, respondents were randomly sorted into two different groups. The first group received the procedure with the blocks ordered as displayed above. The second group switched Blocks 1 and 5 and Blocks 3-4 and 6-7. Additionally, there was only a 0.06 difference in IAT scores between the two groups (t-test significant at p=0.08). This, combined with the fact that nearly 80% of respondents (including those who received the “Latino-American culture” + “Good” combination first) received a pro-American culture IAT score, provides evidence that the order of combined tasks does not represent much of a concern for this study.

Another potential concern arises due to the order of the implicit vs. explicit measurements. On one hand, completing the IAT procedure first and receiving a score that one does not like or agree with may potentially produce biased explicit measures as the individual attempts to compensate for their undesired IAT score. On the other hand, completing the self-report measures first may prime individuals toward certain opinions and mental conditions which may bias their IAT score. In this particular survey, all respondents received the IAT score first, followed by the self-report survey questionnaire. Based on extensive testing of the issue, Nosek, Greenwald, and Banaji (2007) argue and cite studies which demonstrate that the effects of such ordering concerns are minimal. (Albertson 2011) Furthermore, the fact that nearly 25% of survey respondents reported explicit nativist attitudes (among a sample that is disproportionately young and better educated), even after receiving an implicit nativist score, suggests that deliberate compensation for undesired IAT scores on the part of the subjects might not be much of a concern in this instance.
For a comprehensive treatment of the design and procedure of the IAT, please consult Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz (1998) and Nosek, Greenwald, and Banaji (2007). To get a better idea of how IATs operate, please also consider taking an IAT for yourself: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/takeatest.html.


ENDNOTES

1 At the end of a series of repeated attempts, the respondent is then given a score indicating their level of implicit bias for Object A over Object B, generally ranging from -1.5 to 1.5, with positive values indicating the preference for Object A and negative values for Object B. A score of 0 indicates no implicit preference for one over the other. While there are no specific cut-points, a score of 0.15-0.35 conventionally indicates a weak automatic preference for Object A, while 0.35-0.65 indicates a moderate preference, and a score higher than 0.65 indicates a strong automatic preference (Nosek, Greenwald, and Banaji 2005).

2 While the representativeness of this sample may present a concern in terms of its wider generalizability, Pérez (2010) demonstrates that IAT measures among student samples are not significantly different from those in the wider population, and Druckman and Kam (2011) provide strong evidence that while student populations may differ from the wider population in terms of their descriptive demographics, they are not so different in terms of how their attitudes and behaviors interact with each other to produce meaningful behavioral outcomes. They conclude that student samples are thus much more generalizable when studying human behavior than is often thought to be the case.

3 These images are similar to those used to represent the concept of “American” in a previous IAT study by Devos and Banaji (2005). Their study used images such as “U.S. flag, Capitol building, $1 bill, bald eagle, 25-cent coin, Mt. Rushmore, and U.S. map in blue or red” (451).

4 There are, of course, other cultures that are “foreign” to American culture, thus warranting inclusion in this set of images. It has been shown previously, however, that individual-level proximity to Latinos is associated with more negative attitudes toward immigration, while the presence of Asians is associated with more positive immigration attitudes (Ha 2010). It has also been shown that framing discussions of immigration to focus on the Latino ethnicity of the immigrants rather than the economic effects of immigration produces more conservative policy preferences (Brader, Valentino, and Suhay 2008). Furthermore, Huntington (2005) argues that
Mexican immigrants specifically are the chief threat to American culture in contemporary American society. It is thus argued that contemporary nativism, whether explicit or implicit, is very likely almost exclusively targeting Latino immigrants, and most Latino immigrants in the United States today are of Mexican nationality (Pew Hispanic Center 2011). Mexico, therefore, is likely perceived by nativists to exert the most contemporary threat to the “traditional” version of American culture. For this reason the images chosen to represent implicit nativist attitudes in the IAT experiment were restricted to those representing a blend of Mexican and American culture in some way.

5 A Somer’s D statistic is a bivariate measure of association that indicates the extent to which knowing of the value of an independent variable increases the likelihood of correctly predicting the value of an associated dependent variable.

6 The other independent variables in this model are commonly included in quantitative analyses of immigration policy attitudes. These include economic threat (Citrin et al. 1997), anti-Hispanic affect, social context (Tolbert and Grummel 2003), political ideology, partisanship, and socio-economic controls such as gender, age, education, income, and religiosity. Because ideology and partisanship are related, but distinct, concepts, the model in Tables 3 was re-estimated excluding ideology as an independent variable. In the re-estimated model, Independent partisanship and female gender become statistically significant, but the key independent variables remain substantively unchanged.

7 A separate t-test reveals no significant difference in IAT implicit nativist attitude scores between those with liberal (M=0.68, SD=0.07) or conservative (M=0.71, SD=0.05) immigration policy preferences among who are low on anti-Hispanic prejudice but high on explicit nativism; t(73)=-0.324, p=0.7469. In fact, the principled objectors have implicit nativist attitude scores approximately the same as both of these groups who claim some degree of explicit nativism.
This same effect remains when repeating the analysis while limiting the sample only to those who have favorable views of Hispanics (results not presented), as done previously, to eliminate the possible motivation of racial animus.

On a related note, Nosek (2005) reports that social desirability (i.e. “self-presentation”) can serve to moderate the extent to which implicit and explicit measures are correlated with one another. He finds that a greater concern for social desirability is associated with lower correlation between implicit and explicit measures toward a particular object. Such is the case in this study, as the implicit-explicit nativism correlation is \( r=0.18 \) among those with higher levels of social desirability and \( r=0.37 \) among those with lower levels.