

**Immigration Enforcement and Political Orientations Among
Foreign and Native-born Latinos**

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“What’s happening is, we’re losing the trust of the immigrant community in Boston.” – Boston Mayor Thomas Menino, 2011.

INTRODUCTION

In 2008, the Bush Administration commenced an immigration enforcement initiative known as the Secure Communities program. This program was subsequently retained and expanded by the Obama Administration in 2009. Under this new initiative, when an offender is booked into a U.S. prison his or her fingerprints are automatically cross-referenced via the FBI with an immigration database operated by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE). If the fingerprints are found to belong to an unauthorized immigrant, the individual is “flagged” and ICE makes an immigration enforcement decision based on both the immigration and criminal background of the individual. Those who have committed more serious crimes or who are repeat immigration violators are prioritized for processing by ICE and often subject to deportation (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement 2013). From its inception in 2008 through August 31, 2012, ICE had received nearly 20 million set of fingerprints and removed more than 220,000 individuals from the United States through the Secure Communities program. More than 75% of these were “convicted criminals,” including approximately a quarter of whom were convicted for serious crimes such as homicide, robbery, kidnapping, etc. (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement 2012).

Of course the Secure Communities program has not been without controversy, including issues surrounding the mistaken arrest and deportation of various American citizens (Esquivel 2011; Kohli, Markowitz, and Chavez 2011; Lopez 2012) and the as-of-yet unsuccessful efforts of state and local governments to opt out of the program (Preston 2011c).

Perhaps most relevant for our current purposes has been the charge that Secure Communities has “led to deportations of many immigrants who were not dangerous offenders and eroded trust between the communities and local police” and that the program disproportionately targeted Latinos (Preston 2011b). Indeed, a 2011 report by a Task Force on Secure Communities concluded that “the program [has] eroded public trust by leading to the detention of many immigrants who had not committed serious crimes, after officials said its aim was to remove ‘the worst of the worst’ immigrant criminals from the United States” (Homeland Security Advisory Council 2011; Preston 2011a). (See also: Preston 2011c; Semple 2011.)

This sentiment has been shared not only by citizens, but also by spokespersons of prominent Latino and immigrant interest groups. Several public statements by such organizations have expressed profound surprise and disappointment that the Obama Administration had pursued such an aggressive and punitive immigrant deportation program in the first few years of its first presidential term, especially after committing to several pro-immigrant priorities during the 2008 presidential campaign (see Dade 2012; Foley 2011; Jiménez-Montoya 2012, e.g.).

Despite these objections, the Obama Administration decided to aggressively continue the Secure Communities program. It should be noted, though, that in 2012 ICE implemented changes aimed to decrease the amount of deportations resulting from being arrests due to routine traffic violations (Preston 2012a, 2012b). Neither of these decisions appeared to exert much influence over the “Latino vote” during the 2012 presidential campaign, however. Indeed, exit polls indicated that nearly three-quarters of Latino voters cast their ballot for President Obama (Rodriguez 2012). This substantial and lopsided pro-Obama vote on the part of the Latino community has widely been identified as one of the key reasons that comprehensive immigration reform moved back on the national legislative agenda at the beginning of 2013, as many

Republican leaders feared additional alienation of their Latino constituencies which are continuing to grow at an impressive rate (Ball 2012; C. B. Brown, Sherman, and Raju 2012; Welna 2013).

These realities motivate the key questions examined in this paper: how did the immigration enforcement policies of the Obama administration, specifically those embodied by the “Secure Communities Program,” affect attitudes of Latinos toward the U.S. government, specifically their trust in government and in the judicial system? Also, were there any spillover effects into the Anglo community that can be identified? This paper will proceed by discussing what scholars already know concerning Latino attitudes toward the American political system and how immigration policy enforcement can affect those attitudes. Data from a survey of Texas residents, including both foreign-born and native Latinos as well as Anglos, will be examined, which show that varying levels of immigration enforcement on the part of the federal government did indeed affect political orientations within these constituencies. The discussion and conclusion sections examine the important implications these findings have for both scholars and policy-makers.

TRUST IN GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF POLICY DESIGN

THEORY

Determinants of political trust have been extensively examined by political scholars over the last several decades. A voluminous amount of research has demonstrated that there are a number of factors that exert an independent influence on trust in government, which include governmental performance (Citrin and Green 1986; Keele 2007; Williams 1985), assessments of incumbents (Citrin 1974), and the prevalence of political scandals and crime (Bowler and Karp

2004; Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn 2000). Other research has also demonstrated the effect of individual-level factors such as social capital (Keele 2007), economic inequality (Uslaner and Brown 2005), having voted for a political “winner” (Anderson and LoTempio 2002), and even digital literacy (E. W. Welch, Hinnant, and Moon 2005).

Research has also specifically examined attitudes toward the American legal system. Determinants of trust in the judicial branch of government tend to fall into one of two broad categories: 1) personal experience with law enforcement or other government agencies (e.g. Tyler, Casper, and Fisher 1989) and 2) racial attitudes (e.g. Hurwitz and Peffley 2005). Extant research has also demonstrated that views of the legal system on the part of racial minorities is affected by personal experience with various forms of bias on the part of law enforcement officials (racial profiling, differential treatment, etc.) (e.g. Weitzer and Tuch 2005).

Scholars of identity politics have further examined orientations toward government specifically on the part of Latinos. Hero and Tolbert (2004), for instance, established that racial/ethnic minorities, including Latinos, have lower levels of trust in government in a manner independent of racial or institutional context. Michelson (2003, 2007), Wenzel (2006), and Abrajano and Alvarez (2010) all have found that Latino trust in government is affected by one’s degree of American acculturation: the longer immigrants have been in the United States the less trusting they are of the political system. Correia (2010) also has found that Latino immigrant attitudes toward local law enforcement are affected by religiosity, residential stability, and extent of “civic behavior” which is defined as membership in various kinds of community-based groups.

While it is obvious that much is already known about factors associated with evaluative orientations toward the government, the current question centers on whether these orientations

can also be affected by the nature and degree of certain types of public policy enforcement in communities where individuals reside. The “*social construction of policy design theory*” (Schneider and Ingram 1993) provides a strong theoretical basis for predicting that trust in government may very well be associated with levels of policy enforcement.

In brief, the social construction of policy design theory (hereafter SCPDT) states that different groups in society are socially constructed to be associated with either positive or negative evaluations. Each group also has a different level of power and/or access in the political system. Setting these two axes as cross-ways, it produces a quadrant classification system of the “advantaged,” “contenders,” “dependents,” and “deviants” depending on their degree of power and socially constructed positive/negative evaluation.

SCPDT also makes a number of predictions based on the social constructions and levels of power afforded to the various groups in society. For example, SCPDT predicts that groups with positively constructed evaluations will receive more government benefits than those with negative evaluations. This is because in a politician’s effort to secure re-election, he or she will wish to be seen publicly rewarding groups that society views in a positive light. We thus see politicians regularly and visibly advocating for policies such as veteran’s benefits, small business tax cuts, and government-mandated accommodations for the disabled and elderly.

In addition to affecting behavior of political elites, SCPDT further predicts that these varying social constructions will also affect basic political orientations and attitudes of members of particular societal groups. Specifically, those with positive social constructions will internalize these implicit and explicit constructions which will lead them to acquire higher levels of political self-efficacy, trust in government, and more positive general attitudes toward politics and society in general. Conversely, members of groups with negative social constructions will also

internalize these societal cues and consequently exhibit lower levels of political trust and engagement. SCPDT specifically predicts that those in the “deviant” category (those with a negative social construction and low political power) will be the *most likely* to display lower levels of political participation and engagement, along with more pessimistic views toward the political system. (This argument is explained in detail in Schneider and Ingram 1993, pg. 342.)

Building off this theoretical foundation, many empirical studies have demonstrated that groups with positive/negative social constructions have correspondingly positive/negative levels and types of policy enforcement by government officials. For example, Maynard-Moody and Musheno (2003) provide evidence that bureaucratic officials of local government agencies respond to the social constructions of clients when determining which government services to grant. A similar effect is documented in the realms of prison policy (Hogan 1997) and health care (Davies, Washington, and Bindman 2002). This effect also apparently extends beyond humans, as Czech, et al. (1998) found that animal species with more positive social constructions received more favorable protection by environmental policy.

In contrast, our current analysis is interested in the effect that varying levels of policy enforcement can have on orientations toward the political system. In doing so, this study assumes that positive or negative social constructions of various social groups can be inferred from levels of policy enforcement *toward* these groups. This assumption is widespread among SCPDT scholars and has received extensive support. For example, extensive evidence has been marshaled that levels and types of governmental policy enforcement affects political and other social attitudes among senior citizens (Campbell 2003), war veterans (L. S. Jensen 1996, 2005; L. Jensen 2003; Mettler and E. Welch 2004; Mettler 2002), the sick (Frantz 2002), the disabled

(Schur, Shields, and Schriener 2003), the poor (Kumlin and Rothstein 2005; Kumlin 2004; Soss 1999, 2002, 2004), and students (Stein 2004).

To the extent of our knowledge, however, no existing empirical study has sought to apply SCPDT to examine the effect of immigration policy enforcement on relevant societal groups. For reasons explained below, we argue that SCPDT predicts that Latino political attitudes would almost certainly be affected by the nature of immigration enforcement, as more punitive enforcement practices would mark the target group (immigrants) as social “deviants,” thus sending implicit and explicit societal cues which would dampen their views toward government and the legal system.

MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

As stated in the introduction, the chief question to be examined in this analysis is how the Secure Communities program affected (and likely continues to affect) political attitudes toward foreign-born and native Latinos, as well as Anglos. Specifically, we seek to examine the extent to which varying levels of Secure Communities enforcement affected general trust in government as well as corresponding trust in the legal system.

Foreign-born Latinos. Our first prediction is that foreign-born Latino immigrants who live in communities with higher levels of Secure Communities immigration enforcement will have more negative views of the legal system and lower levels of trust in government. This is because immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants, would be considered “deviants” in SCPDT’s social construction classification quadrant, and more intense levels of immigration enforcement in a community serves to reinforce and strengthen the social construction of immigrants as “deviants” in the eyes of community members. For the theoretical reasons

explained previously, this increased salience of “deviant” identification on the part of foreign-born Latinos would lead them to adopt more cynical views of government and the legal system. It should be noted that this is the very phenomenon identified by both prominent journalists (Preston 2011a, 2011c) as well as the 2011 Task Force on Secure Communities (Homeland Security Advisory Council 2011). This can be expressed more formally in our first hypothesis:

H1: Foreign-born Latinos who live in communities with higher levels of immigration enforcement will have more negative orientations toward the American political system.

Native Latinos. While by definition native Latinos are not immigrants, we argue that the same social constructions which lead to more cynical political orientations among foreign-born Latinos will also produce similar negative views among native Latinos. This is due to the unique theoretical mechanism of *linked fate* (also sometimes referred to as *group consciousness*). As explained by Dawson (1995), “linked fate” describes the attitude and perception amongst a particular social group that one’s fate and self-interest are strongly connected to the fate, success, and interests of one’s wider group. According to the 2006 Latino National Survey, nearly three-quarters of native Latinos in the United States report that their “doing well” depends at least “a little” on other Latinos doing well (with 56% reporting “some” or “a lot”). (See Fraga et al. 2006.)

We argue that when increased immigration enforcement strengthens the “deviant” construction of the immigrant community, it strengthens the existing in-group identification that many Latino-American perceive with co-ethnic Latino immigrants, as predicted by social identity theory (see Tajfel and Turner 1986). A related effect has been demonstrated by Knoll

(2012) who provides evidence that higher levels of “linked fate” are associated with lower levels of anti-immigrant sentiments among native Latino-Americans.

In this case, “linked fate” (felt to some extent by approximately three-quarters of the native Latino population) would increase the likelihood that increased immigration enforcement would be perceived by native Latinos as discriminatory on the part of the government toward *all* Latinos, including themselves, not just undocumented immigrants. When native Latinos perceive themselves as being socially constructed as “deviants” by society (due to increased immigration policy enforcement on the part of the government), they will then exhibit more cynical views toward the government and less trust in the legal system.

While we expect that levels of immigration enforcement will affect attitudes of native-born Latinos in the same manner as foreign-born Latinos, we expect that the effect will be weaker for native Latinos. This is because the social networks of native-born immigrants are less likely to be directly affected by levels of immigration enforcement, making perceptions of enforcement less closely aligned with actual removal rates, which would produce a weaker effect than among foreign-born Latino immigrants. This leads us to our second formal hypothesis:

H2: Native Latinos who live in communities with higher levels of immigration enforcement will have more negative orientations toward the political system, although this effect will be weaker than is the case for foreign-born Latinos.

Anglo-Americans. For non-Hispanic white Americans (Anglos), we expect the effect of increased Secure Communities immigration enforcement to be the *opposite* of that predicted for both foreign-born and native Latinos. Specifically, we predict that it will produce more *positive* orientations toward the political system. This is because, theoretically, the increased salience of the “deviant” social construction for Latino immigrants that accompanies increased immigration

enforcement concurrently serves to emphasize the “in-group” identification status of Anglos as the dominant societal group with a positive social construction. This conforms with social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1986) which postulates that increased salience of an out-group strengthens in-group identification. When in-group identification increases, so does its corresponding classification as “advantaged” members of society, which SCPDT predicts will be associated with more positive evaluations of government (see Schneider and Ingram 1993, pg 341-342). This leads us to our third and final hypothesis:

H3: Anglos who live in communities with higher levels of immigration enforcement will have more positive orientations toward the political system.

In sum, Table X presents a summary of our three hypotheses, based on the predictions of SCPDT discussed in this section:

Hypothesis	Subject	Levels of Secure Communities enforcement	Orientations toward political system
1	Foreign-born Latinos	Higher	Negative
2	Native Latinos	Higher	Negative (less than H1)
3	Anglos	Higher	Positive

DATA AND METHODS

We test our hypotheses using data from a public opinion survey conducted by the Center for Survey Research at the University of Texas – Pan American. This survey was in the field during the summer of 2012 and sampled respondents living in Texas. Similar forms of the questionnaire were administered to a statewide random sample (random digit dialing) of Latinos and Anglos. Spanish translations of the instrument were available and those conducted in Spanish were done by native Spanish speakers. Latinos comprised 31% of our final sample,

while Anglos comprised 69% of all respondents. The total number of respondents was 469. Unfortunately, only a trivial number of non-Latinos or non-Anglos were sampled (27 blacks, 4 Asian-Americans, and 4 American Indians). Due to this small sample size, these groups are excluded from the analysis.

Although our data are collected exclusively from residents of Texas, we argue that our sample is ideal for testing hypotheses about the effect of varying levels of immigration enforcement on political orientations among both Latino and Anglo populations. This is because Texas has the third largest immigrant population in the United States, ranking only behind New York and California, as well as its status as a prominent border state. Furthermore, statistics from ICE indicate that through the end of August 2012, the Secure Communities Program has been more active in Texas than in all but two other states – California and Florida (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement 2012).

Our dependent variable seeks to measure political orientations among survey respondents. We operationalize these orientations with answers to questions regarding attitudes towards different levels of government and the criminal justice system. Specifically, these questions capture different elements of trust in government by focusing on local government, federal government, and the criminal justice system. These questions are:

- 1) How often can you trust local government to do what is right? (Never, Some of the Time, Most of the Time, Always)
- 2) How often can you trust government in Washington to do what is right? (Never, Some of the Time, Most of the Time, Always)
- 3) Justice is Blind (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)

As to our independent variable (levels of immigration enforcement), this original survey of Anglos and Latinos residing in Texas is supplemented with contextual data gathered from Immigrant and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This includes county-level data on the enforcement efforts conducted as part of the Secure Communities Program. As explained previously, Secure Communities creates partnerships between ICE and local law enforcement agencies. Local law enforcement officers verify the citizenship and immigration status of individuals they arrest regardless of the offense. Individuals believed to be residing in the United States without authorization are flagged and their information is forwarded to ICE. ICE may choose to ignore the submission or take the suspected violator into custody. Once in ICE custody, ICE may begin deportation proceedings. A Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request was submitted which yielded county-level data on the number of individuals arrested and deported through the Secure Communities program. This data also contains information on the number of deportees who had criminal convictions prior to be taken into custody by ICE.

Given that the pool of potential deportees varies across the state, we adjust these numbers by accounting for the total number of foreign-born individuals within each county. The result is a county-level measure of the deportation rate, which we specify as the number of removals per 1,000 foreign-born residents. The number of removals per 1,000 foreign-born residents varies from 0 to 17, with a mean of 4.8. When including only non-criminal deportees, the rate varies from 0 to 6, with a mean of 1.4. Criminal removals range from 0 to 15, with a mean of 3.4.

There are currently no county-level estimates of the size of the unauthorized immigrant population in the U.S., which forces us to assume that the distribution of authorized and unauthorized immigrants is constant across counties. We also include additional control variables measuring individual-level characteristics that have been shown to shape trust in government, as

derived from the literature review. These include standard controls such as years of schooling, sex, and education (Binder, Polinard, and Wrinkle 1997). In addition, we control for individual partisan affiliation (dummy variables for Democratic and Independent partisans) and past civic engagement, which we account for by asking if the respondent voted in the 2008 presidential election.

Lastly, we expect that non-criminal deportations to have a greater effect on political orientations than criminal deportations. When local and federal officers partner to deport unauthorized immigrants who have never committed a criminal offense, Latinos may be less likely to believe that government “can be trusted to do what is right.” The removal of immigrants who have been convicted of a criminal offense in the U.S. might be perceived as a legitimate government action and therefore less likely to produce cynicism among Latinos.

ANALYSIS

Before presenting our full models which directly test our hypotheses, we attempted to determine whether Anglos and Latinos held distinct levels of trust without accounting for policy environments. Our analysis (results not shown but available from the authors) shows that Anglos are generally less trusting in local and federal government. They are also less likely to believe that “justice is blind.” Aside from ethnicity, only Democratic partisanship and sex consistently predicted trust across our three indicators, with women expressing higher degrees of trust. While both native- and foreign-born Latinos are more trusting than Anglos, there are clear differences between the two groups. Foreign-born Latinos are the most trusting, a result consistent with previous work on acculturation and political orientations (Abrajano and Alvarez 2010; Michelson 2003, 2007; Wenzel 2006).

Table 1 presents the findings for a series of models which attempt to predict trust in local government.¹ Each of these models was estimated using an ordinal logistic estimation method which is appropriate given the ordinal nature of the dependent variable. For each of these models, standard errors are clustered by county.² In this analysis, we test to see whether the overall rate of deportations administrated through the Secure Communities program affects trust, as well as looking for the separate effect of deportation rates for non-criminals and criminals. Many of the individual-level variables fail to predict feelings toward local government, with sex and Democratic partisanship again reaching statistical significance.

¹ While we argue that there is a theoretical reason to believe that the inclusion of an interaction term between ethnicity and levels of immigration enforcement will improve the model we also test to see if the inclusion of the interaction improves the predictive capacity of the model. To do this we conducted a joint F-test of the interactive term to determine if they were jointly significant. The resulting F-statistic was significant at the .05 level for each of models we present, indicating that the interactive variables belong in the model.

² Relying on a series of logit and ordered logit models can result in inefficient estimation, incorrect standard errors, and an increased probability of committing a Type I error due to the multilevel nature of our data. Our models contain over 400 respondents spread over 32 counties. We replicated our models using HLM 6. Our use of HGLM models presented an additional series of complications as only 14 of the 32 counties have sufficient data for computation. Moreover, an examination of the variance components in each of our models indicates that HLM is offering little leverage. In line with that one would expect given the series of non-significant variance components, our results do not change when relying on HGLM models (this is true even though the HGLM analysis eliminates over 50% of our level 2 units).

[Table 1 About Here]

Table 1 offers evidence for our key expectation that immigration enforcement at least partially determines trust in government. As predicted in Hypotheses 1 and 2, native- and foreign-born Latinos are less trusting of local government in communities where there have been higher rates of immigrant removals by the Secure Communities Program. Interestingly, Anglos are also affected by policy environments; however, they are less trusting of local government in communities with *lower* rates of enforcement, as predicted by Hypothesis 3. These results produce two important conclusions: 1) immigration enforcement affects all groups, not just those directly connected to immigrant populations and 2) these effects are redistributive. In addition to possibly changing migration habits on the part of immigrants, patterns of enforcement make Latinos less trusting and Anglos more trusting in local government. Trust is an important psychological resource which shapes citizen-government interactions. High rates of immigration enforcement thus take these intangible political resources away from Latinos and provide resources to Anglos. The result is a feedback effect where the voice of Anglos will be magnified relative to Latinos, making large numbers of deportations more likely in the future. As Lowi (1964) famously remarked: “policy causes politics.”

In order to illustrate the substantive impact of immigration enforcement, Figure 1 presents a series of predicted probabilities based upon the results of the first column of Table 1. We see that the probability of an Anglo respondent strongly disagreeing with the idea that local government can be trusted to do what is right is relatively high (.26) if they live in an area where few unauthorized immigrants are being deported through Secure Communities (1 removal per 1,000 foreign-born residents). An Anglo residing in a high enforcement area (10 removals per 1,000 foreign-born residents) is much less likely to hold this belief (predicted probability = .12).

The opposite is true for foreign-born Latinos. Foreign-born Latinos residing in areas where enforcement is low are *less* likely to hold cynical attitudes towards local government than those who live in high enforcement contexts. Note that foreign-born Latinos living in low enforcement counties are actually less likely than Anglos to strongly disagree with the idea that local government can be trusted. Despite the observation that base levels of trust are much higher among foreign-born Latinos than among Anglos, the two groups are statistically indistinguishable once the enforcement rate hits 5 removals per 1,000 foreign-born residents (the mean level of total enforcement is 4.8).

[Figure 1 About Here]

The second and third columns show that the results are consistent in terms of direction and significance when broken down into non-criminal and criminal deportation rates. However, the substantive impact is slightly greater for when examining non-criminal rates. Latinos, both native- and foreign-born, are much more sensitive to non-criminal enforcement rates. So are Anglos. Anglo trust increases in contexts of higher enforcement generally, but especially when non-criminal deportation rates are high. Perhaps Latinos feel that deporting criminals is a legitimate governmental action, whereas deporting non-criminals is provokes a stronger sense of injustice. Anglos may be less sensitive to this distinction, viewing all unauthorized immigrants as legitimate targets for deportation and reacting favorably to campaigns targeting all immigrants rather than just criminals.

Table 2 replicates our analysis on our second dependent variable, which examines trust in the federal government. Since Secure Communities represents a series of local-federal partnerships, we have little reason to suspect that our result will substantively differ. It is possible that any effects will be stronger for local government, since cities and counties may be

viewed as voluntary participators in enforcement. Alternatively, effects may be strong for trust in federal government if it is more closely associated with enforcement efforts.

[Table 2 About Here]

The results are largely consistent with those presented in Table 1. Native-born Latinos are not distinguishable from Anglos in areas where enforcement is low, but foreign-born Latinos are more likely to trust the federal government in such contexts. Latinos become less trusting as enforcement increases and Anglos, once again, become more trusting. Figure 2 illustrates this relationship. Almost one-third of Anglos strongly disagree with the idea that “government in Washington can be trusted to do what is right” in counties where the deportation rate is set to 1 removal per 1,000 foreign-born residents. Around five percent of foreign-born Latinos express the same sentiment. The groups are again statistically indistinguishable in counties until the removal rates hits 5-per-thousand and foreign-born Latinos are actually estimated to be *more* cynical than Anglos once the removal rate reaches 9-per-thousand, although this last difference is not statistically significant. The relationships hold for both non-criminal and criminal deportation rates. As was true when examining local government, non-criminal deportation rates have a larger substantive impact on trust in the federal government than do criminal or overall removal rates.

[Figure 2 About Here]

Table 3 examines the effect of immigration enforcement on trust in the criminal justice system generally. Unfortunately, our dependent variable does not distinguish between federal and local courts. It does, however, tap beliefs about the fundamental fairness of the criminal justice system generally. We believe Latinos, especially those who are foreign-born, will be more likely to view the criminal justice system as being unfair if they live in high-enforcement

areas. In this case, the removal of non-criminal immigrants is also theoretically predicted to have a larger effect on political orientations. Our findings support both expectations. Latinos and Anglos hold similar attitudes toward the criminal justice system which does not vary in high and low enforcement contexts. Figure 3 plots the predicted probability of strong disagreement with the idea that justice is blind for foreign-born Latinos and Anglos. Although Anglos are generally more cynical in counties where removal rates are low and less cynical where removals rates are high, this difference is never statistically significant.

The results in the third column mirror those of the first. Anglos and Latinos do not react to criminal deportation rates and this effect is constant regardless of ethnicity and nativity. However, the removal of non-criminals produces different feelings. Native- and foreign-born Latinos are less likely to believe that “justice is blind,” and this effect is much more pronounced for foreign-born Latinos. The overall effect again appears to be redistributive. Anglos are actually more positive towards the criminal justice system when non-criminal deportation rates are high, whereas Latinos are pushed in the opposite direction.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This paper originally set out to examine the question of how immigration enforcement policies on the part of the Obama Administration is affecting orientations toward the political system on the part of Latinos, Latino immigrants, and Anglos in the United States. We theorized that these two phenomena are linked due the *social construction of policy design theory* which states that target populations can be either positively or negatively socially constructed based on how beneficially or punitively they are treated by various public policies.

In this case, we specifically theorized that increased levels of immigration enforcement, especially toward non-criminal offenders, would result in a more negative social construction of the Latino community, implicitly categorizing them as “deviants” in Schneider and Ingram’s (1993) social construction framework. They would thus internalize this negative social construction and manifest more negative political orientations as a result. We further theorized that the effect would be similar, although potentially not as strong, among non-immigrant Latinos, and that it would produce an *opposite* effect amongst Anglos due to relevant in-group/out-group dynamics as predicted by social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1986).

We tested our expectations using the results from a public opinion survey of Texas residents in 2012, after the Secure Communities Program had been in active operation for more than three years. Our expectations were largely confirmed by our analysis. Higher levels of immigration enforcement, as measured by immigrant removals by the Secure Communities Program, are associated with more negative political orientations among both native Latinos and Latino immigrants. This effect is especially pronounced when it comes to levels of non-criminal removals, and it results in lower levels of trust in government at both the local and federal levels. We also see that faith in the judicial system, as expressed by agreement with the statement that “justice is blind,” is lower in locations where there are more non-criminal removals (but not criminal removals). In Tables 1-3 we consistently see that these effects are stronger for foreign-born Latinos than native-born Latinos, as predicted by Hypothesis 2. We also see that higher levels of immigration enforcement result in higher levels of trust in government and faith in the judicial system among Anglo residents, as predicted by Hypothesis 3.

Collectively, this set of evidence adds further support to the social construction of policy design theory which already enjoys a good deal of scholarly empirical support (Ingram,

Schneider, and deLeon 2007). The design of public policy definitely matters in terms of affecting the political behavior of relevant social actors and communities. In this case, the government's decision to increase immigration enforcement through the Secure Communities Program serves to further socially marginalize the immigrant community and reinforce the dominant in-group position of the Anglo community in affected locales. For scholars, this argues that the design of immigration policy and its degree of enforcement are necessary components for any comprehensive understanding of how minority and immigrant communities acquire trust in the political systems in which they find themselves.

For policy-makers, these results add empirical support to the conventional political wisdom that policy decisions can have political consequences among important electoral constituencies. If the goal of policy-makers is to seek to encourage loyalty, trust, and identification on the part of the Latino and immigrant communities toward the U.S. government, "ramping up" enforcement of punitive immigration policies like the Secure Communities Program will likely not produce the desired results.

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Table 1.
Immigration Enforcement and Trust in Local Government

Dependent Variable = “How often can you trust local government to do what is right?”

(1-4 Never-Always; higher values = more trusting)

Ordered Logit Results, Standard Errors Clustered by Country

Secure Communities Removals (All)	.106* (.042)		
Secure Communities Removal (Non-Criminal)		.716** (.251)	
Secure Communities Removals (Criminal)			.092* (.045)
Native-born Latino	1.554** (.451)	1.962** (.550)	.760 (.424)
Foreign-born	2.656** (.947)	2.838** (.966)	2.117* (.880)
All Removals * Native-born Latino	-.219** (.054)		
All Removals * Foreign-born Latino	-.268* (.114)		
Non-Criminal Removals * Native-born Latino		-1.146** (.329)	
Non-Criminal Removals * Foreign-born		-1.333* (.601)	
Criminal Removals * Native-born Latino			-.217** (.062)
Criminal Removals * Foreign-born			-.266* (.131)
Education	-.024 (.049)	-.028 (.035)	-.027 (.051)
Democrat	.785** (.290)	.543* (.236)	.848** (.313)
Independent	.032 (.307)	-.012 (.306)	.060 (.316)
Voted in 2008	-.093 (.202)	-.001 (.209)	-.110 (.214)
Female	.683** (.186)	.633** (.188)	.693** (.184)
Cut point 1	-.728	-.295	-.987
Cut point 2	.920	1.413	.634
Cut point 3	2.482	3.010	2.174
Cut point 4	3.245	3.779	2.925
N	469	469	469
Pseudo R ²	.07	.08	.06

*p<.05 **p<.01 Standard errors are in parentheses

Table 2.
Immigration Enforcement and Trust in Federal Government

Dependent Variable = “How often can you trust government in Washington to do what is right?”
(1-5 Never-Always; higher values = more trusting)

Ordered Logit Results, Standard Errors Clustered by Country

Secure Communities Removals (All)	.093* (.036)		
Secure Communities Removal (Non-Criminal)		.677** (.232)	
Secure Communities Removals (Criminal)			.080* (.037)
Native-born Latino	.521 (.571)	.751 (.563)	.290 (.548)
Foreign-born	2.621** (.891)	3.601** (.768)	1.942* (.839)
All Removals * Native-born Latino	-.137* (.054)		
All Removals * Foreign-born Latino	-.324* (.133)		
Non-Criminal Removals * Native-born Latino		-.704* (.284)	
Non-Criminal Removals * Foreign-born		-2.135** (.542)	
Criminal Removals * Native-born Latino			-.139** (.059)
Criminal Removals * Foreign-born			-.302* (.152)
Education	-.039 (.039)	-.041 (.032)	-.042 (.040)
Democrat	.966** (.299)	.648* (.259)	1.307** (.323)
Independent	-.022 (.299)	-.101 (.290)	.008 (.308)
Voted in 2008	-.139 (.214)	-.054 (.217)	-.158 (.225)
Female	.853** (.217)	.802** (.215)	.859** (.215)
Cut point 1	-.653	-.256	-.908
Cut point 2	.930	1.424	.645
Cut point 3	2.449	2.996	2.135
Cut point 4	3.337	3.910	2.999
N	470	470	470
Pseudo R ²	.08	.11	.07

*p<.05 **p<.01 Standard errors are in parentheses

Table 3.
Immigration Enforcement and Trust in the Criminal Justice System

Dependent Variable = “Justice is Blind”
(1-5 Strongly Disagree-Strongly Agree; higher values = more trust)
Ordered Logit Results, Standard Errors Clustered by Country

Secure Communities Removals (All)	.047* (.021)		
Secure Communities Removal (Non-Criminal)		.677** (.232)	
Secure Communities Removals (Criminal)			.035 (.021)
Native-born Latino	.324 (.595)	.744 (.582)	.076 (.562)
Foreign-born	1.141 (.724)	2.011** (.768)	.740 (.739)
All Removals * Native-born Latino	-.120 (.071)		
All Removals * Foreign-born Latino	-.133 (.088)		
Non-Criminal Removals * Native-born Latino		-.753** (.170)	
Non-Criminal Removals * Foreign-born		-2.011** (.587)	
Criminal Removals * Native-born Latino			-.114 (.081)
Criminal Removals * Foreign-born			-.103 (.105)
Education	.059 (.043)	.069 (.043)	.053 (.044)
Democrat	.890** (.249)	.676* (.269)	.947** (.257)
Independent	.268 (.190)	.232 (.205)	.280 (.189)
Voted in 2008	-.055 (.146)	.027 (.150)	-.078 (.152)
Female	.743** (.168)	.708** (.146)	.753** (.171)
Cut point 1	-.841	-.380	-1.033
Cut point 2	.715	1.208	.517
Cut point 3	2.695	3.252	2.478
Cut point 4	3.611	4.193	3.383
N	442	442	442
Pseudo R ²	.05	.06	.04

*p<.05 **p<.01 Standard errors are in parentheses

Figure 1.
Marginal Effect of Deportation Rates in Trust in Local Government

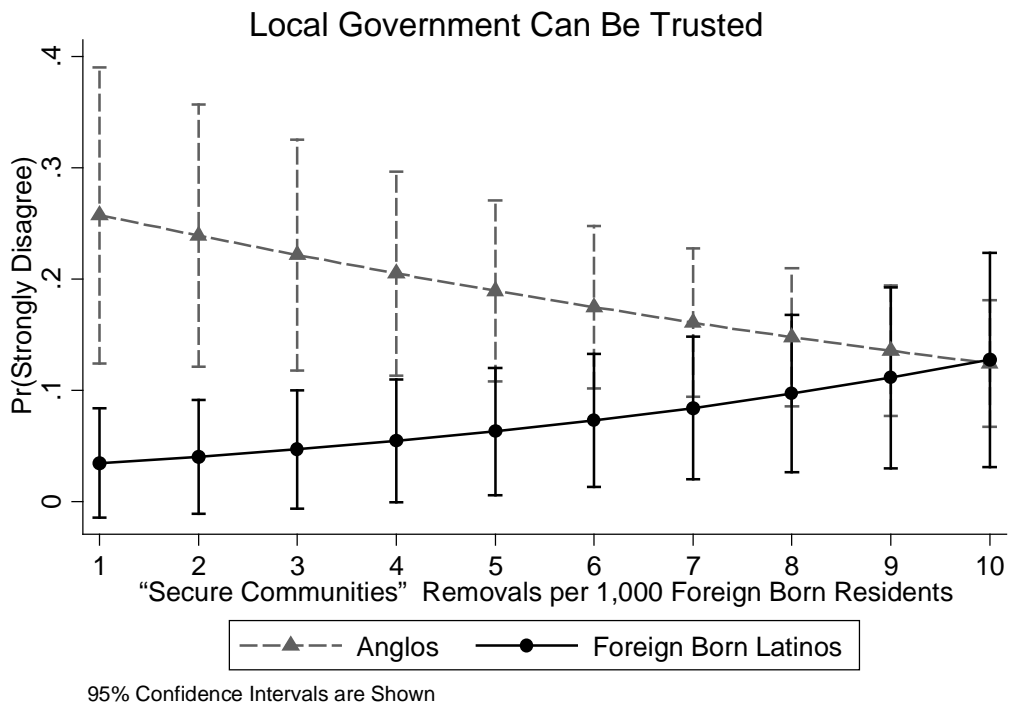


Figure 2.
Marginal Effect of Deportation Rates in Trust in Federal Government

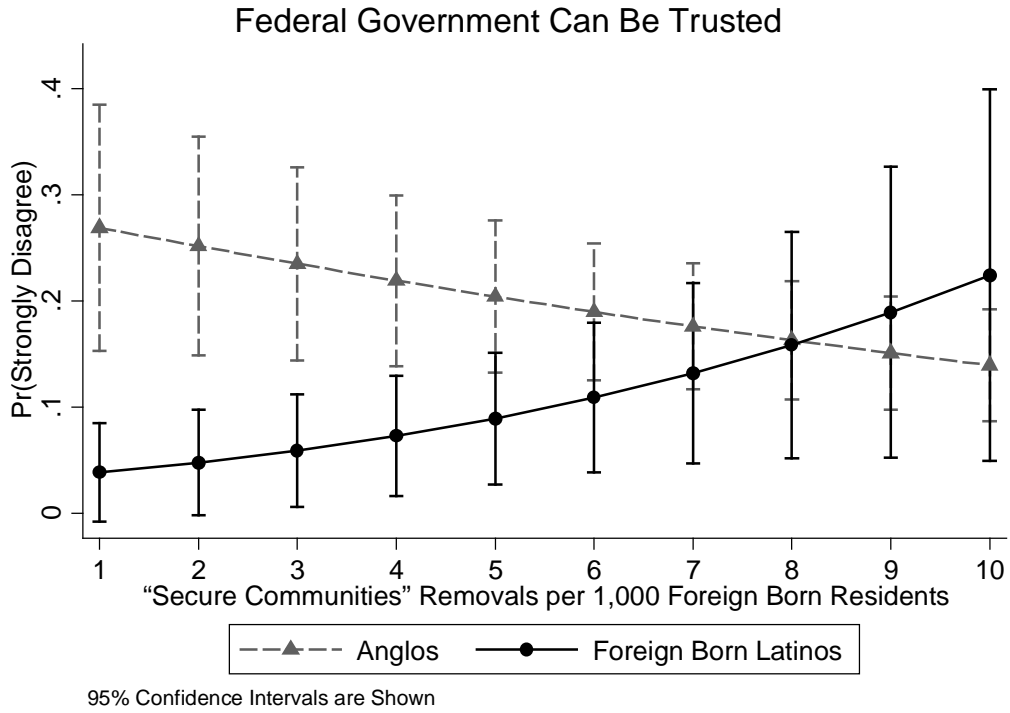


Figure 3.
Marginal Effect of Deportation Rates in Trust in the Criminal Justice System

