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**A Publication of the
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The Chicano/Latino Policy Project is an affiliate of the
Institute for the Study of Social Change at the University of California at Berkeley.

The views expressed in this report are those of the author(s)
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The Institute for the Study of Social Change,
or the Regents of the University of California



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The Chicano/Latino Policy Project is an affiliated research program of the Institute for the Study of Social Change at the University of California at Berkeley. The Policy Project coordinates and develops research on public policy issues related to Latinos in the United States and serves as a component unit of a multi-campus Latino policy studies program of the University of California system. The Policy Project's current priority research areas are immigration, education, health care, political participation and labor mobility with an emphasis on the impact of urban and working poverty.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The United States, a self-styled nation of immigrants, is debating its outlook toward newcomers once again. The policies of increased immigration and expanded legal and political rights for immigrants ushered in by the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (Lemay 1987; Schuck and Smith 1985) are under attack. Today, the political landscape is littered with proposals to reduce immigration, seal the border with Mexico, and reduce government expenditures by limiting the access of both legal and illegal immigrants to government services and benefits. As the policy conflict intensifies, politicians and interest groups on both sides of the issue are striving to shape mass opinion with arguments about the value and cost of immigration (Clad 1994; Passell and Fix 1994).

The resurgence of a "restrictionist" movement (Glazer 1993) is the stimulus for this search for the underpinnings of current American opinion about immigration (Hoskin 1991; Citrin, Reingold, and Green 1990; Espenshade and Calhoun 1993). Identifying the sources of policy preferences can help explain why and when some reforms and proposals are likely to resonate in the electorate. Clearly, the relationships between public opinion and political outcomes are variable and complex (Key 1961; Page and Shapiro 1983; Jacobs 1993). For example, the shifting intellectual convictions of policy experts and the ideological commitments of party leaders were more important than the views of mass publics in initiating major reforms in American immigration policy in the past (Tichenor 1994). Nevertheless, public opinion is likely to have important direct and indirect effects on the future direction of legislation.

In some institutional contexts, public opinion can be translated into public policy through the exercise of direct democracy. For example, the passage of Proposition 187 in California is bound, once the dust of litigation settles, to have some consequences for state spending on illegal immigrants. Moreover, when electoral outcomes, such as the passage of Proposition 187, are taken to reveal public preferences on an issue, they tend to reverberate as politicians in both parties scramble to position themselves near the popular majority.

At a minimum, public opinion should constrain the course of immigration reform by placing limits on the choices officials sensitive to the demands of organized constituencies can safely contemplate. And when immigration becomes a highly salient issue arousing substantial citizen interest, electoral realities may dictate official actions, whatever the private beliefs of elites. In the 1870s, for example, widespread anti-Chinese sentiment in the Western states led the national Republican party to retreat from its egalitarian commitments and to support exclusionary legislation aimed at Asian

immigration (Hutchinson 1981; Tichenor 1994). In 1994, too, immigration was an important issue in several state and national elections (Doyle 1994).

This paper thus focuses on the foundations of public support for restrictionist demands. In this context, our principal concern is the precise role of economic motives in determining policy preferences.

This analytic question has obvious political relevance. The large-scale influx of people striving to improve their lot necessarily influences the economy of the receiving country. Today, as in the past, advocates of restricting immigration contend that newcomers displace native workers in the labor market and create a fiscal drain by costing the government more in services than they pay in taxes. Accordingly, the extent to which opinions about immigration originate in economic concerns should indicate how voters are likely to respond to the heated argument over these claims (Huddle 1993; Passell 1994; Borjas 1990; Simon 1989; Vedder and Galloway 1994).

Whatever the economic impacts of immigration, it is also a process that brings ethnic "strangers" into "our" midst. From a theoretical perspective, immigration policy therefore constitutes another excellent case for studying the effects of the interplay between the strategic calculation of personal costs and benefits on the one hand, and commitments to enduring values on the other, on preference formation on policy questions (Citrin and Green 1990; Sears and Funk 1990; Green 1992; Stoker 1992). After testing hypotheses about economic motivations, we thus briefly consider how a symbolic politics model emphasizing the role of cultural attitudes can be extended to the immigration issue.

II. SPECIFIC HYPOTHESES

Historically, anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States has surged following sharp economic downturns, partly in response to the tendency of political and labor union leaders to blame foreign workers for unemployment and pressure on wages (Higham 1985; Foner 1964; Olzak 1992). For example, demands to restrict Chinese immigration were sparked by the end of the California gold rush and the completion of the transcontinental railroad. The Asian Exclusion Act of 1882 was passed in the aftermath of a severe recession and defended as necessary "to protect labor" (Hutchinson 1981).

Olzak (1992) argues that ethnic competition for jobs was the root cause of anti-immigrant collective action between 1870-1914. She concludes that high immigration flows, economic contraction (as manifested in declining real wages and business failures), and high levels of interaction among competing ethnic groups increased the rates of attacks against immigrants, presumably because these factors contributed to a shrinking job market for native workers.

These propositions seem germane to an analysis of the sources of restrictionist sentiment during the early 1990s, another period of high immigration (Passell and Fix 1994) and intense public concern about unemployment and economic decline (Pomper 1993). While the annual number of immigrants to the United States has been rising steadily since 1980 (INS 1993), Table 1 shows that the aggregate level of support for immigration has moved concomitantly with trends in national economic conditions. During the recession of 1980-82, almost two-thirds of the public told Gallup they favored decreasing the level of immigration. In 1990, following eight years of economic growth, only 48 per cent felt this way, but the figure increased to 65 per cent in the aftermath of a new economic slump.

	1965	1977	1981	1982	1986	1988	1990	1993
Decrease Level of Immigration ¹	33%	42	65	66	49	53	48	65
Unemployment for Previous Year ²	5.0	7.6	7.0	7.5	7.1	6.1	5.2	7.3
Consumer Price Index Increase for Previous Year ³	1.3	5.8	13.5	10.3	3.6	3.6	4.8	3.0
Annual Increase in Gross Domestic Product ⁴	5.5	4.5	1.8	-2.2	2.9	3.9	1.2	3.0

¹ Source: R. Simon and S. Alexander, 1993, *The Ambivalent Welcome: Print Media, Public Opinion, and Immigration* (Westport, CT: Praeger) 41. The percentage reported is for responses to decrease the current level of immigration.

² Source: *Economic Report of the President, transmitted to the Congress January 1993 together with the annual report of the Council of Economic Advisors* (Washington: Government Printing Office): 382.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics, 1993, *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (Washington: Government Printing Office): 482.

⁴ Source: "Summary National Income and Product Series, 1929-92," 1993, *Survey of Current Business* 73(9): 50.

Polls conducted during this period also revealed negative public evaluations of the economic consequences of immigration. For example, 50 per cent of the respondents of the 1992 NES survey analyzed below said that it was "extremely" or "very" likely that the growing number of Hispanic and Asian immigrants would "take jobs away from people already here." In a July 1993 Newsweek survey, 62 per cent of a national sample agreed that immigrants "take the jobs of U.S. workers" and 59 per cent believed that many immigrants "end up on welfare and raise taxes" (Morganthau 1993).

What are the psychological processes that forge the observed connection between aggregate economic conditions and public opinion about immigration policy? Both Olzak's model of ethnic competition and the insights of relative deprivation theory (Runciman 1966; Gurr 1970) yield the general prediction that at the individual level, economic threat, whether real or imagined, engenders opposition to immigration.¹

The structural factors stimulating a heightened sense of economic vulnerability may, of course, vary. One may be, or feel, insecure in relation to the labor market, the housing market, or the continued supply of government benefits (Hernes and Knudsen 1992). There is also a range of potential political responses to economic adversity or anxiety. In this vein, studies of ethnic conflict (Levine and Campbell 1972) and collective behavior (Rule 1988) suggest that the tendency for personal economic discontents to be channeled into resentment of immigrants may be modified by the visibility of newcomers, by their similarity to the native population, by media coverage of immigration issues, and by the mobilizing efforts of political organizations and leaders.

Prior research furnishes mixed support for the postulated relationship between economic vulnerability and hostility to immigration. Hoskin (1991) reported a statistically significant, bivariate relationship between employment status and general attitudes toward immigrants in a 1985 American national sample. The unemployed and those worried about unemployment were more hostile toward immigrants. However, Citrin, Reingold, and Green (1990) conducted a multivariate analysis and found that income did not predict beliefs about the economic costs and benefits of Hispanic and Asian immigration in a 1988 sample of California residents.

Espenshade and Calhoun (1993) studied public opinion toward illegal rather than legal immigration. In their 1983 sample of Southern California residents, standard indicators of economic disadvantage such as income and occupational status failed, in a multivariate model, to predict opinions about the seriousness of the illegal immigration problem and its impact on the state. On the other hand, believing that illegal immigration added to the state's fiscal burden and to welfare and crime problems did have the expected negative effects.

The present paper goes beyond the existing literature in several ways. First, we address public opinion on specific policies toward legal immigration rather than more generalized attitudes toward specific categories of immigrants. Second, we are able to conduct a multivariate analysis of the impact

¹ This distilled statement of the hypothesis sets aside differences among its proponents concerning the specific indicators of economic threat and whether this concept should be defined in objective or subjective and absolute or relative terms. For present purposes, whether the threat is real or imagined is not a significant issue.

of economic factors on public opinion using national data. Third, and most importantly, the available data make it possible to formulate a broadened set of conceptualizations of economic competition and insecurity. We employ a variety of indicators to test for the influence of the individual's financial resources, perceived economic prospects, labor market situation, and fiscal concerns.

Resources. According to a "resources" hypothesis, people who lack economic resources or are experiencing financial stress will be more likely than the well-off to fear the implications of immigration. Insecure about their own futures, the economically disadvantaged should be more likely to be hostile toward (or to scapegoat) immigrants and to support restrictionist policy proposals.

Pessimism. A "pessimism" hypothesis stresses the influence of the individual's perceptions of economic change. The prediction here is that, regardless of one's current level of financial resources, the belief that one is on a downward economic trajectory increases the tendency to view immigration as resulting in tangible costs to oneself and enhances restrictionist sentiment. As in the analysis of "pocketbook" voting, the test of this hypothesis entails distinguishing between retrospective judgments and expectations about the future, and between the individual's assessments of his own as opposed to the nation's economic prospects (Kiewiet and Rivers 1985).

Labor Market Competition. A persistent complaint about immigrants is that they take jobs away from native workers and depress wages in selected occupations (Harwood 1983; Espenshade and Calhoun 1993). According to the "job threat" hypothesis, a vulnerable labor market situation, as indexed by factors such as occupation, unemployment or anxiety about one's job security, is the crucial source of opposition to immigration. The threat of economic competition from today's immigrants is presumably greater in the low-skill, low-wage occupations (Borjas and Freeman 1992). In addition, union members might be expected to be more sensitive to the potential impact of immigration on their wages and jobs.

Tax Burden. The leading argument against today's immigration is that it imposes an increasingly heavy fiscal burden on states and localities (Passell and Fix 1994).² The governors of several states have sued the federal government for the costs of providing services to refugees and illegal immigrants (Brinkley 1994), and it has been suggested that mass immigration poses a challenge to the country's capacity to sustain the flow of benefits provided by the modern welfare state (Skerry 1993; Schuck 1994). According to a "tax burden" hypothesis, then, negative assessments of the impact of immigration on the cost or availability of government benefits will engender support for reducing immigration. Thus, resentment or anxiety about the level of taxes one pays and residence in states with

² One reason for this belief is the perception that a disproportionate number of immigrants tend to be either young or elderly and hence members of groups that are relatively heavy consumers of public services.

resentment or anxiety about the level of taxes one pays and residence in states with relatively high taxes or large concentrations of immigrants should predict anti-immigration policy preferences.

Clearly, the above propositions presume the existence of cognitive linkages that connect personal economic experiences to evaluations of immigration (Feldman 1982; Weatherford 1983; Mutz 1992). The strength of the relationship between economic motives and negative views of immigration may thus depend on the mediation of individual and contextual factors such as the intensity of economic discontent, the visibility of immigrants, or the legitimization of anti-immigrant sentiment by political campaigns.

For example, we can consider whether material concerns were a more potent influence on the opinions of those who regarded the nation's economic problems as especially pressing. Similarly, several observers maintain that blacks are especially threatened by economic and political displacement by new immigrants (Miles 1992; Schuck 1995). If this is true, then the ethnic competition model would predict that, other things being equal, blacks are more opposed to immigration than whites and that economic anxieties have a stronger influence on the immigration attitudes of blacks than of whites.

Recent immigration to the United States is heavily concentrated in just a few states (Passell and Fix 1994). About three-quarters of immigrants entering the United States in the 1980s went to metropolitan areas in California, Florida, New York, Texas, Illinois, and New Jersey. Olzak (1992) maintains that the presence of numerous immigrants in a region intensifies economic competition between native residents and newcomers, making the latter group a more potent and visible threat. In other words, a cognitive connection between economic distress and immigration is more readily made when there is a large and identifiable alien population. Applying Olzak's historical analysis to current public opinion data yields the prediction that restrictionist sentiment will be more widespread in states or residential environments with greater concentrations of immigrants. By extension, one also would expect the influence of material concerns on opinion to be greater in such areas than in communities where the immigrant populations are small.

Clearly, determining the role of economic motives is just one facet of developing a complete explanation of attitudes toward immigration. For example, other concerns that have been mentioned as reasons for opposing immigration include anxieties about population growth and protecting the environment (Bouvier 1994). More fundamentally, "cultural" factors such as ethnic solidarity, conceptions of national identity, and xenophobia or racial prejudice (Citrin, Reingold, and Green 1990; Espenshade and Calhoun 1993; Glazer 1993; Sears, Citrin, Vidanage, and Valentino 1994) comprise another major category of motives that we shall address in subsequent analyses.

III. DATA AND MEASURES

The public opinion data we analyze come from the 1992 National Election Study (NES).³ A subset of respondents were part of the three-wave (1990-1991-1992) panel embedded in the study's design, and we utilize their answers to the questions about immigration asked in the 1991 Pilot Survey as well. We also employ the county-level data from the 1990 United States Census to create contextual variables describing the social composition of the respondent's residential environment.

Our dependent variables refer to policy preferences rather than to broad images of immigrants as a group. To get at the issue at the heart of the restrictionist agenda, the 1992 NES Survey asked respondents whether "the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are permitted to come to the United States to live should be increased, left the same, or decreased." This question wording clearly identifies legal immigrants as the attitude "object;" it is the item commonly used by pollsters to monitor trends in public opinion about immigration.⁴

Table 2 presents the cross-tabulation of answers to this NES "Level of Immigration" item by panel respondents in 1991 and 1992. The individual-level continuity coefficient of .45 is comparable in size to those reported by Converse and Markus (1979) for specific policy questions in the 1972-74-76 NES panel. And the 10 per cent increase between 1991 and 1992 in the proportion of the panel advocating reduced immigration is consistent with the idea that restrictionist sentiment rises during periods of economic recession.

While current law entitles legal immigrants' access to most government services on the same basis as citizens, budgetary stress has stimulated proposals for the imposition of a residency requirement.⁵ To assess public sentiment on this issue, the 1992 NES survey asked whether immigrants should be immediately eligible for "government services such as Medicaid, food stamps, and welfare" or have to wait "a year or more" for these benefits.

³ These data were provided through the InterUniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research and the archive at UC DATA, Survey Research Center, University of California, Berkeley. Our analysis is based on the white, black, and Hispanic respondents in the sample (n = 2425).

⁴ The time-series data presented in Table 1 is drawn from Gallup and Roper polls. The 1991 Pilot Survey was the first time that the NES had asked about immigration, a fact that may indicate the lack of political salience of this issue until recently. The marginal distribution of responses in the 1992 NES survey is included in Table 2.

⁵ Notably, both the Clinton administration and Congressional Republicans have floated the idea of imposing a residency requirement for immigrants to receive benefits as a device for obtaining the funds to finance welfare reform. Current law requires no wait before legal immigrants can receive most government benefits. This fact was not pointed out to respondents in the 1992 NES survey before they were asked the question. The 1992 NES survey also did not ask about government services for illegal immigrants, the target of California's recently passed Proposition 187.

This survey also probed beliefs about the consequences of immigration. Respondents were asked specifically to assess restrictionist claims that the "growing number of Hispanics and Asians coming to the United States" would "take jobs away from people already here" and "cause higher taxes due to more demands for public services."⁶

Prior research has conceptualized these estimates of the tangible costs and benefits of immigration as subjective indicators of economic interest (Espenshade and Calhoun 1993). The present analysis models the respondents' assessments of "impact" as cognitive links in the hypothesized chain between actual economic circumstances and opinions about immigration policy. Still, one must be cautious in interpreting these responses as valid measures of the tangible impact of immigration, or even of its impact on perceptions. The wording of the items does not focus explicitly on the personal as opposed to the collective consequences of Hispanic and Asian immigration. In addition, while the questions call on respondents to make a factual judgment, affective reactions cued by the particular ethnic groups named undoubtedly influence, possibly strongly, the estimates given.⁷

TABLE 2
STABILITY IN OPINIONS ABOUT THE LEVEL OF IMMIGRATION

Question wording:

"Do you think the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are permitted to come to the United States to live should be increased (a lot or a little), decreased (a lot or a little), or left the same as it is now?"¹

		1992					
		Increase a Lot	Increase a Little	Same	Decrease a Little	Decrease a Lot	Total
1991							
Increase	(n=13)	8%	23	54	15	0	4
Keep Same	(n=165)	2	6	57	23	12	56
Decrease	(n=127)	2	0	20	32	46	40
Total		3	5	43	26	23	

Pearson's R: .45

¹ Source: 1991 and 1992 National Election Studies. The response options in 1991 were "increase," "decrease," or "keep the same." In 1992, the response options were expanded to "increase a lot," "increase a little," "keep the same," "decrease a little," and "decrease a lot."

⁶ Respondents were asked about each group and each possible impact separately. The 1991 Pilot survey asked only about Hispanics. The continuity coefficient (1991-1992) for the Take Jobs item was only .29, with a substantial shift (15.2%) of the distribution toward the position that it was "extremely" or "very likely" that Hispanic immigration would cause job losses. The continuity coefficient for the Raise Taxes item, by contrast, was .42, with no net shift in aggregate outlook.

⁷ There is also the endemic difficulty of distinguishing reasons from rationalizations in cross-sectional data, a problem magnified in this case because the "impact" questions were asked after the "Level of Immigration" item.

IV. DEMOGRAPHIC CORRELATES

Table 3 presents the relationships among a number of standard demographic and political characteristics and public attitudes toward immigration, omitting for the moment consideration of manifestly economic factors such as income, occupation, or employment status. The figures in the table refer to the anti-immigrant responses to the "Level of Immigration" and "Delay Benefits" policy items. Where relevant, we report the value of tau-beta, a coefficient of association for variables at the ordinal level of measurement.

Restrictionist sentiment among the respondents in this 1992 national sample was pervasive and group differences in opinion tended to be small. As noted above, support for reducing the level of legal immigration was the modal point of view. Moreover, fully 80 per cent of the sample favored a residency requirement of at least a year before immigrants would be eligible for many government benefits. On this question at least, there is very little variation for either "economic" or "cultural" causes to explain.

A notable feature of the 1992 NES survey is the degree of agreement among white, black and Hispanic respondents. A number of observers have argued (Schuck 1994; Miles 1994; Skerry 1995) that economic and political competition between blacks and Hispanics has intensified, particularly in large cities, and that this is likely to result in the rise of anti-immigrant feelings among blacks. Nevertheless, in the 1992 NES survey, black respondents were slightly less likely than either whites or Hispanics to advocate reducing the level of legal immigration and more likely than whites to oppose delaying immigrants' access to government services.⁸

Given that opposition to restriction and defense of "immigrant rights" has become a virtual litmus test of ethnic loyalty among Mexican-American activists and political organizations (Gutierrez 1991; Skerry 1993), the fact that Hispanic respondents were not distinctively pro-immigrant is surprising.⁹ An earlier California survey found that immigration attitudes among Hispanics varied with generation and citizenship status (Uhlener 1991), so one reason for the current finding may be the background of the Hispanic respondents in the 1992 NES sample.

Another reason for the lack of group differences in our data may be the low salience of immigration policy in the 1992 presidential election. In the California election of 1994, by contrast,

⁸ It is possible that this result reflects the tendency of some black respondents to reject the idea of cutting government benefits, however that idea is presented in a survey item, rather than more positive feelings about immigrants as a group.

⁹ It should be noted that more than 80 per cent of Hispanic respondents in the 1992 NES survey were of Mexican origin. With respect to ethnic differences in opinions about immigration, the results of other studies vary. Among recent studies with findings similar to those reported here are the Latino National Political Survey conducted in 1989 (De la Garza, Desipio, F. C. Garcia, J. Garcia, Falcon 1992) and the June 1988 California Poll analyzed by Citrin, Reingold, and Green (1990). However, 1993 and 1994 California Polls with more Hispanic respondents did find significant differences in ethnic outlook (The Field Institute 1994).

illegal immigration was one of the dominant issues, and ethnic differences in voting were pronounced. Exit polls indicate that only 27% of Hispanic voters supported Proposition 187, compared to 64% of the non-Hispanic whites and 52% of the black voters.¹⁰ This suggests that if the national debate over immigration becomes electorally salient, the tendency to frame that debate in terms that engage feelings of ethnic solidarity will result in a similar polarization of mass opinion.

As noted above, "economic" models of attitudes toward immigration (Olzak 1992) take the presence of numerous immigrants in a community as an index of ethnic competition and thus as a stimulus for restrictionist sentiment among the native-born. Table 3 fails to support this hypothesis. Respondents living in states or counties with a heavy concentration of foreign-born residents were no more likely to advocate a lower level of immigration than were those from areas with very few immigrants.¹¹ In addition, they were less rather than more likely to believe that new immigrants would have a negative impact on the job prospects of native workers or the level of taxes paid.

Immigration reform in the 1980s was a divisive issue for political leaders in both major political parties (Tichenor 1994). Among the Republicans, for example, a free market ideology led some to regard immigration as an untrammelled source of needed labor for employers. Other conservative supporters emphasized that immigration provided an infusion of entrepreneurship and self-reliance, traditional American virtues in danger of extinction. On the other hand, fiscal conservatism led some Republicans to worry that increased immigration would require additional taxes, while cultural conservatism fueled anxiety about the erosion of a common language and customs. Among the Democrats, union leaders favored stronger border controls and other measures to protect native-born workers from job competition. By contrast, Hispanic and other minority groups favored expanding immigration, defended family reunification preferences, and advocated a relaxed attitude toward illegal aliens (Tichenor 1994).

¹⁰ The Field Institute, "Voting in the 1994 General Election," San Francisco, January 1995, p. 5

¹¹ The contextual variable employed is the 1990 Census figure for the proportion of foreign-born in a state or county. The same result is obtained if one categorized respondents according to the proportion of Hispanic and Asian immigrants in their state or county.

TABLE 3

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CORRELATES OF OPINION ABOUT IMMIGRATION¹

	Less Immigration ²	Delay Benefits
TOTAL (n 2425)	49%	80
ETHNICITY		
White (1907)	51%	81
Black (310)	41	72
Hispanic(208)	47	74
GENDER		
Male (1153)	49%	79
Female (1272)	49	80
AGE		
17 to 29 (530)	52%	79
30 to 39 (635)	50	78
40 to 49 (433)	44	75
50 to 59 (286)	50	79
60+ (541)	50	86
tau-b	-.00	.03*
EDUCATION		
Some H.S. (420)	50%	80
H.S. Grad (818)	55	83
Some College (568)	48	81
College Grad (382)	43	78
Post Grad (176)	31	63
tau-b	-.09**	-.06**
IMMIGRANT STATUS³		
3rd+ generation (2000)	51	79
1st/2nd generation (412)	43%	82
tau-b	-.04*	.02
IMMIGRANT CONTEXT (BY COUNTY)⁴		
< 4% foreign-born (1310)	51	80
5 to 9% (530)	49	81
10% + (571)	47	77
tau-b	-.04**	-.03
IMMIGRANT CONTEXT (BY STATE)		
High Immigration (967)	47%	80
Low Immigration (1458)	51	80
tau-b	.03	-.00

TABLE 3 CONTINUED

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CORRELATES OF OPINION ABOUT IMMIGRATION¹

PARTY ID	Less Immigration²	Delay Benefits
Strong Dem (417)	42%	75
Weak Dem (441)	50	81
Indep-Dem (336)	49	75
Indep (280)	53	83
Indep- Rep (296)	47	83
Weak Rep (352)	54	82
Strong Rep (268)	52	79
tau-b	.04**	.04*
IDEOLOGY		
Extremely Lib (49)	49%	73
Liberal (208)	38	75
Slightly Lib (233)	43	78
Moderate (561)	53	81
Slightly Con (369)	54	79
Conservative (306)	47	80
Extremely Con (68)	58	83
tau-b	.07**	.03

* p<.05 and ** p<.01 (one-tailed tests).

¹ Source: 1992 National Election Study. The sample for this analysis includes Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics only.

² "Less Immigration" refers to responses of both "Decrease a Lot" and "Decrease a Little" to the item concerning the number of immigrants permitted to enter the U.S. While the response categories were collapsed for a number of variables in order to report the correlates of opinions about immigration, the full distributions were used to calculate the tau-b statistics.

³ "Delay Benefits" is an item which asks whether immigrants who enter this country should wait a year or more for benefits, or whether they should be eligible immediately. The percentage reported is for responses to delay benefits for a year.

⁴ 1st generation refers to respondents who were foreign-born, and 2nd generation refers to respondents who had at least one parent who was foreign-born. 3rd+ generation refers to those respondents whose parents were both born in the United States.

⁵ Immigrant context by county refers to the percentage of foreign-born residents in the county where the respondent lives. High immigration states are CA, IL, MA, NJ, NY, and TX.

Against this background of factional disagreement, the lack of strong or consistent relationships between political affiliation and opinions about immigration policy is not unexpected. In the 1992 NES survey, strong Republicans and self-identified conservatives were somewhat more likely to favor reducing the current level of immigration and delaying their access to benefits than strong Democrats

and self-identified liberals.¹² Ideological reasoning about the consequences of immigration was, however, more nuanced. For example, liberals were as likely as conservatives to say that immigrants take jobs away from native workers, but less likely to say that Hispanic and Asian immigration was likely to result in higher taxes.¹³ More generally, the high level of restrictionist sentiment among Democrats in the general public suggests that immigration is another issue on which Democratic party leaders will find it difficult to formulate a unifying position (Edsall and Edsall 1992).

V. EDUCATION

Confirming the results of previous studies (Hoskin 1991; Day 1990; Citrin, Reingold and Green 1990), Table 3 reports that negative attitudes toward immigration decrease as the respondent's level of formal education rises. For example, 55 per cent of respondents with just a high school education called for reducing the current level of legal immigration, compared to only 31 per cent with a post-graduate degree. In addition, the tendency of formal education to lead to a more positive view of immigration was substantially stronger when respondents were posed questions focusing specifically on Hispanics or Asians rather than on immigrants in general.¹⁴

There are several possible interpretations of these links between education and attitudes toward immigration. Because education is an increasingly important asset in a modern economy, it might be argued that education is an indicator of a protected labor market situation and that people with a high level of education are more confident about their future prospects, even in an uncertain economy (Hernes and Knudsen 1992). According to this reasoning, the educated are less hostile toward immigrants because they are less economically threatened by them and know it.

An alternative perspective is that education fosters a more tolerant outlook toward "out-groups," including foreigners and ethnic minorities (McClosky and Brill 1983; Schuman, Bobo, and Stech 1985). Education instills an acceptance, if not necessarily an appetite, for difference, as well as a more sophisticated outlook that shies away from stereotypical thinking. Moreover, education facilitates the

¹² The indicator of ideological orientation employed is the respondent's self-placement on the familiar NES 7-point scale. "Strong" conservatives and "strong" liberals refer to those locating themselves at the extreme points along this continuum.

¹³ The full set of cross-tabulations is not reported in order to conserve space.

¹⁴ For example, the tendency for those with more formal education to be more sanguine about the likely impact of Hispanic immigration on the job prospects of native workers is indicated by the correlation of -0.21 (tau-beta). Similarly, the better-educated were less likely to perceive the impact of Asian immigration on tax levels as negative (tau-beta = -0.20). The response options for the questions concerning the likely impact of Hispanic or Asian immigrants were "not at all likely," "somewhat likely," "very likely," and "extremely likely." The negative signs of the tau-betas reported in this note reflect the numerical coding procedure that gave the "extremely likely" response the highest score.

learning of dominant norms, which in the United States arguably include tolerance for minorities and a positive image of the role of immigration in the nation's history.

In sum, there are strong reasons for hypothesizing that differences in cognitive style and cultural outlook rather than in economic vulnerability account for the contrasting attitudes toward immigration of various educational strata. This issue will be addressed below in multivariate analyses that include both education and specific measures of economic circumstances as predictors.

VI. ECONOMIC FACTORS

As a first step in assessing the influence of economic motives on opinions about immigration issues, Table 4 presents the bivariate relationships among various indicators of respondents' financial resources, perceived economic circumstances, labor market situation, and tax burden on the one hand and their answers to the Level of Immigration and Delay Benefits items on the other.

This array of data reveals just a few fragments of support for the theory that economic adversity, defined in either objective or subjective terms, is a potent source of anti-immigrant sentiment. For example, what we have termed the "resources" hypothesis fails. As Table 4(a) shows, neither income nor an index of short-run financial strain, as measured by whether one had to dip into savings, put off needed health care, borrow money, and so forth, were significantly related to opinions about restricting the level of immigration. Moreover, the least well-off respondents and those who had experienced severe fiscal stress were, if anything, less rather than more likely to support delaying government benefits for immigrants, their putative rivals for the entitlement dollar.

To test the "pessimism" hypothesis, Table 4(b) focuses on the role of the respondent's retrospective and prospective economic judgments. Here, the individual-level results provide one piece of support for the notion that a declining economy stimulates anti-immigrant sentiment. Respondents with negative beliefs about the course of the economy over the past year, (as indexed by answers to questions about whether inflation, unemployment, and the economy as a whole was better or worse) were more likely than those with a rosy view to favor reducing the level of immigration. Paralleling the results of studies of economic voting (Kiewiet 1983), however, neither an unfavorable shift in one's personal financial situation nor pessimism about the economic future were generally associated with a restrictionist outlook on immigration issues. The single exception was the tendency of respondents who anticipated a decline in their own financial circumstances in the coming year to be more likely than those who were more optimistic to favor delaying the access of immigrants to government benefits.

As noted above, a leading "economic" hypothesis is that competition in the labor market fosters anti-immigrant sentiment. In other words, those who face the specter of the loss of jobs, earnings, and promotions as a result of the influx of immigrant workers should be motivated by self-interest to favor restrictionist policies. The more immediate and clear the threat posed, the stronger should be the connection between one's labor market position and one's opinions about the proper level of immigration.

Contrary to these expectations, Table 4(c) reports that the unemployed were no more likely to say that the current level of immigration should be reduced than respondents with steady jobs. In addition, the small minority of respondents who said they worried about losing their jobs in the future were only marginally more likely to advocate restriction than those who felt secure about their employment status. Of course, neither employment status nor anxiety about one's future employment speaks directly to the issue of whether immigrants were perceived as a significant threat.

TABLE 4
ECONOMIC FACTORS AND OPINION ABOUT IMMIGRATION

	<u>Less Immigration</u>	<u>Delay Benefits</u>
TOTAL (n= 2425)	49%	80
A. RESOURCES		
<u>INCOME</u>		
<\$10k (276)	46%	75
\$10-19.9k (383)	51	80
\$20-29.9k (363)	51	79
\$30-39.9k (315)	56	83
\$40-49.9k (273)	43	80
\$50-59.9k (399)	48	79
\$60k- (224)	48	79
tau-b	-.00	.02
<u>FINANCIAL STRAIN¹</u>		
0 instance (309)	48%	82
1 (294)	46	81
2 (313)	47	84
3 (290)	45	80
4 (297)	53	77
5 (267)	52	75
6 (206)	48	78
7-8 (210)	58	75
tau-b	.03	-.05**
B. ECONOMIC PESSIMISM		
<u>PERSONAL RETROSPECTIVE²</u>		
Much Better 1 (272)	49%	85
2 (363)	47	79
3 (580)	46	82
4 (427)	49	79
5 (359)	49	80
Much Worse 6 (391)	56	77
tau-b	.03	-.01

¹ Financial Strain is a composite index of eight different items concerning economic stress. Respondents were asked if they had been unable to buy things that they needed, if they had put off medical or dental treatment, if they had to borrow money or dip into savings, if they were unable to save any money, if they had to take on another job or work longer hours, if they had fallen behind on rent or house payments, and if they could not afford health insurance. Each affirmative answer was coded as 1, so the Strain index ranges from 0 to 8.

² Personal Retrospective is an additive index of two items, personal financial situation and income over the last year, the three most positive categories were collapsed, as were the two most negative response categories.

TABLE 4 CONTINUED
ECONOMIC FACTORS AND OPINION ABOUT IMMIGRATION

	<u>Less Immigration</u>	<u>Delay Benefits</u>
<u>PERSONAL PROSPECTIVE</u>		
Much better (228)	47%	74
Somewhat better (593)	52	76
Same (1297)	48	81
Somewhat worse (163)	52	87
Much worse (64)	56	79
tau-b	-.00	.08**
<u>NATIONAL RETROSPECTIVE¹</u>		
Much Better 1 (311)	44%	77
2 (256)	46	76
3 (370)	46	78
4 (366)	50	80
5 (389)	47	81
6 (269)	53	82
Much Worse 7 (402)	57	81
tau-b	.07**	.04*
<u>NATIONAL PROSPECTIVE</u>		
Get better (743)	49%	79
Stay same (1129)	48	81
Get worse (429)	55	78
tau-b	.04*	-.01
C. LABOR MARKET COMPETITION		
<u>OCCUPATION</u>		
Total Employed (1542)	50%	80
Total Unemployed (154)	45	78
White Collar (526)	45	75
Pink Collar (396)	48	81
Lo-threat Blue Col. (312)	53	84
Hi-threat Blue Col. (368)	60	79
Retired (325)	45	85
Homemaker (246)	54	77
Student (73)	52	66
<u>JOB INSECURITY</u>		
Worry a Lot		
about losing job (170)	53	78
Worry Some (387)	54	78
Don't Worry (910)	48	80
tau-b	-.04*	.02

¹ National Retrospective is an additive index of three items, the state of the economy, unemployment, and inflation over the last year; the seven most positive categories were collapsed.

TABLE 4 CONTINUED
ECONOMIC FACTORS AND OPINION ABOUT IMMIGRATION

	<u>Less Immigration</u>	<u>Delay Benefits</u>
<u>UNION MEMBERSHIP</u>		
Non-member (1725)	49	80
Member or Family (376)	53	80
tau-b	.04*	-.00
D. TAX BURDEN		
<u>SALIENCE OF TAXES</u>		
Did not mention Taxes (1763)	49	79
Taxes named as Most Important Problem (345)	53%	85
tau-b	.02	.06**
<u>EXPECTATION OF FEDERAL INCOME TAXES</u>		
Will Increase a Lot Next Year (250)	60	81
Will Increase a Little (795)	50	81
Stay the Same/Decrease (798)	46	77
tau-b	-.07**	-.04*
<u>STATE PER CAPITA TAX BURDEN</u>		
Low (<\$1.9K) (684)	48	81
Medium (1.9-2.2K) (758)	50	79
High (>\$2.2K) (666)	50	79
tau-b	.01	-.02

To obtain a more precise assessment of the degree of labor market competition, therefore, we focused on the occupation of respondents in our sample. Current research on the question of job displacement of native workers by immigrants now focuses on identifying specific occupations, industries, and locales where labor market competition is intense (Muller 1993; Borjas 1990; DeFreitas 1991; Passell 1994). These studies confirm that the strongest level of labor market competition is concentrated in low-skill, low-wage jobs in specific occupations and geographic settings.

Our approach is to classify employed respondents into four broad groups: white collar occupations, including professionals and managers; pink collar occupations, such as clerical workers and salespeople; and both "low" threat and "high" threat blue collar occupations. The latter distinction was developed as follows. We employed data for the occupational distributions for both the recent immigrant working population (defined as working adults who immigrated to the United States between 1982 and 1989) and native-born working population first reported by Meisenheimer (1992). On the basis of this

information, we define a "high" threat occupation as one in which the number of immigrant workers as a proportion of all immigrant workers is greater than the equivalent figure for native workers. Applying this definition to the 1992 NES data and using 1990 Census data to obtain the occupational distributions of immigrant and native-born workers results in the classification of 368 respondents, 15.2% of the total sample, as "high" threat blue collar workers.¹⁵

While the differences in restrictionist sentiment across occupational groups were not consistently large, their pattern does suggest the influence of labor market competition. As Table 4(c) shows, white collar respondents, presumably the least exposed to job competition from recent migrants, were less likely than those with blue collar occupations to support reducing the level of immigration. And the vulnerability of jobs in the working class sector further influenced opinion formation: 60 percent of respondents in the "high" threat blue collar occupations favored curtailing immigration compared to 53 per cent of those facing a lower level of threat.

This divergence of outlook was wider when respondents were asked directly about how immigration was likely to influence the job market. Fully 61 per cent of the "high" threat blue collar respondents but only 36 per cent of the "white collar" respondents believed that the increase in Hispanic immigration was "extremely" or "very" likely to take jobs away from native workers.

Additional support for the labor market competition hypothesis is the finding that beliefs about consequences of immigration for jobs are related to support for restricting future immigration and for delaying the access of immigrants to government benefits. Scores on a Job Impact Index created by combining answers to separate questions about the consequences of Hispanic and Asian immigration have statistically significant associations (tau-beta) of .29 and .12 with the Level of Immigration and Delay Benefits items respectively.¹⁶

Many of the recent complaints about immigration have centered on the fiscal costs incurred by state and local governments in financing a generous welfare state. What we have termed the "tax burden" hypothesis holds that at the individual level high current tax rates and anxiety about rising taxes in the future are significant sources of anti-immigration opinions.

Once again, the evidence for the influence of economic motivation is uneven and relatively weak. When respondents are grouped according to the per capita tax burden in their state, there were no differences in opinion concerning reducing immigration or delaying the payment of benefits to

¹⁵ This is a relatively high number which obviously would diminish with a more stringent definition of job threat.

¹⁶ To repeat, the response options for these items were "extremely," "very," "somewhat," and "not at all likely." The coding procedure used meant that the scores on the Job Impact Index ranged from 8 (Most Negative) to 2 (Least Negative)

newcomers.¹⁷ On the other hand, there is a slight tendency for respondents who mentioned taxes as the most important problem facing the nation to favor restrictionist positions. Those who expected federal income taxes to increase "a lot" were more likely than those who believed there would be no increase to favor reducing the current level of immigration. Finally, a Tax Impact Index tapping beliefs about the likely consequences of Hispanic and Asian immigration for future levels of taxation had statistically significant associations with responses to both the Level of Immigration ($\tau\text{-beta} = .28$) and Delay Benefits ($\tau\text{-beta} = .09$).¹⁸

The initial examination of hypotheses about the economic correlates of public opinion about immigration policy thus suggests that one's personal circumstances do not play a significant causal role. We employed a variety of indicators of economic adversity, threat, and competition in Table 4 and consistently found that the poor, the unemployed, those anxious about losing their jobs, and those reporting that their financial circumstances had worsened were no more hostile to immigration than the better-off and economically secure. The noteworthy exception to this litany of negative findings is that blue collar respondents more likely to compete with immigrants for jobs were more likely to prefer reducing the current level of immigration than people less exposed to such competition in the labor market.

On the other hand, we do find that pessimism about national economic conditions and fears about rising taxes were related to a restrictionist outlook. Given that the survey questions tapping feelings about the economy were highly general and made no reference to immigrants, we need to turn to multivariate analyses to explore the basis of these connections and to determine whether or not the relationships observed above are spurious.

VII. MORE COMPLETE MODELS

In developing more elaborate models to test hypotheses concerning the economic sources of anti-immigration opinions, our strategy is to include several distinct categories of explanatory variables as predictors and to introduce them sequentially in successive equations. First, we estimate a model (I) that includes only economic factors and demographic variables as controls. We next incorporate our

¹⁷ To classify respondents in this way, we employed the 1990 comparative state data compiled by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (1992). States were divided into low (less than \$1900 per capita), middle (\$1900-\$2200), and high (more than \$2200) groups. Using alternative indicators of tax burden such as the tax per \$1000 of personal income or tax per capita of the working population does not alter the results reported in Table 4(d).

¹⁸ The Tax Impact Index was constructed in identical fashion to the Job Impact Index described above, with scores ranging from 8 (the most likely negative impact) to 2 (least likely).

measures of party identification and liberalism-conservatism (Model II). Model III includes the measures assessing respondents' beliefs about the economic impacts of Hispanic and Asian immigrants. Two additional equations explore the substantive meaning of these perceptions of the consequences of immigration. Model IV substitutes an index assessing the cultural rather than the economic costs of immigration for the Job Impact and Tax Impact variables. The final equation (Model V) incorporates a measure based on feeling thermometer ratings¹⁹ of Hispanics and Asians to try and distinguish between the influence of affect toward these groups and more cognitively-based judgments of the costs and benefits of immigration.

We employ the same set of specifications for the two dependent variables, the Level of Immigration and Delay Benefits survey questions. For both dependent variables, more unfavorable attitudes are coded with higher numerical values and cases for which "don't know" or "no answer" was the response are omitted from the analysis. Our estimation procedures are based on probit analysis techniques and unless otherwise noted all predictors have been recoded with values ranging from 0 to 1. In the case of the Level of Immigration variable, we use an ordered-probit model (McKelvey and Zavoina 1975) which is an extension of the binary model employed here in the Delay Benefits estimates. The coefficients estimated in the ordered-probit model represent the impact of a one-unit change in each predictor on the mean of the ordinal variable representing preferences for restricting immigration.

Table 5(a) reports the results for the Level of Immigration item, with coefficients that are statistically significant at the .05 and .01 levels by a one-tailed test designated with asterisks. In these equations, ethnicity and occupational status are coded as dummy variables with white and white collar respondents treated as the excluded categories.

The results of Model I, the "basic" equation including only demographic variables and economic factors as predictors, reveal that the apparent effects in the bivariate analysis of labor market competition, pessimism about the state of the economy, and anxiety about rising taxes on opinions about immigration revealed by the bivariate analyses survive the imposition of controls for background characteristics. Thus, the tendency of respondents in "high threat" blue collar jobs to be more likely than those in white collar occupations to favor a lower level of immigration is not a function of differences in

¹⁹ We refer here to the familiar NES instrument that asks respondents how warmly on a scale of 0 to 100 they feel about a particular group. Given the possibility that some respondents systematically judged every group "warmly" or "coldly," our measure was constructed by computing the difference between an individual's ratings of Asians and Hispanics and his or her ratings of whites.

TABLE 5A
ORDERED-PROBIT ANALYSIS OF LEVEL OF IMMIGRATION ITEM

	MODEL I	MODEL II	MODEL III	MODEL IV	MODEL V
Probit (standard estimate error)					
DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES¹					
Age (0=17 years, 1=91 years)	-.107 (.211)	-.200 (.212)	-.024 (.218)	-.030 (.215)	-.095 (.219)
Education (0=1 year, 1=17+ years)	-.597* (.280)	-.537* (.285)	.102 (.295)	-.287 (.279)	.229 (.299)
Sex (0=male, 1=female)	.024 (.074)	.037 (.075)	-.014 (.077)	.006 (.075)	-.020 (.077)
Hispanic (0=non-Hispanic, 1=Hispanic)	.083 (.150)	.052 (.152)	.097 (.151)	.194 (.153)	.157 (.155)
Black (0=non-Black, 1=Black)	-.199* (.110)	-.147 (.122)	-.202* (.112)	-.082 (.115)	-.136 (.114)
Immigrant Status (1=1st or 2nd Generation)	-.168* (.099)	-.151 (.100)	-.158 (.099)	-.162 (.100)	-.147 (.101)
Percent Foreign Born in County (0-100%)	-.010* (.005)	-.009* (.005)	-.004 (.005)	-.006 (.005)	-.003 (.005)
ECONOMIC FACTORS					
Occupation (dummy variables):					
Pink Collar	.104 (.105)	.075 (.106)	.088 (.102)	.050 (.106)	.073 (.108)
Low Threat Blue Collar	.183 (.128)	.178 (.128)	.126 (.134)	.144 (.129)	.111 (.134)
High Threat Blue Collar	.301** (.125)	.273* (.125)	.199 (.129)	.260* (.125)	.174 (.130)
Retired	.158 (.146)	.141 (.146)	.014 (.146)	.062 (.147)	-.009 (.146)
Homemaker	-.030 (.158)	-.060 (.158)	-.091 (.156)	-.041 (.163)	-.068 (.156)
Student	.394 (.324)	.384 (.312)	.392 (.327)	.356 (.310)	.410 (.334)
Unemployed	.132 (.183)	.130 (.184)	.018 (.188)	.128 (.182)	.019 (.190)
Union Member (1=Self or Family Member)	-.129 (.099)	-.125 (.100)	-.114 (.100)	-.118 (.100)	-.107 (.100)
Income (0=low, 1=high)	.246 (.164)	.208 (.161)	.127 (.166)	.155 (.162)	.132 (.167)
Personal Retrospective Evaluations (0=Positive, 1=Negative)	-.009 (.156)	.020 (.156)	-.014 (.161)	.067 (.155)	.037 (.162)

TABLE 5A CONTINUED
ORDERED-PROBIT ANALYSES OF LEVEL OF IMMIGRATION ITEM¹

	<u>MODEL I</u>	<u>MODEL II</u>	<u>MODEL III</u>	<u>MODEL IV</u>	<u>MODEL V</u>
Probit (standard estimate error)					
National Retrospective Evaluations (0=Positive, 1=Negative)	.592** (.229)	.851** (.238)	.529* (.238)	.769** (.236)	.487* (.239)
Expect Income Tax Increase (0=Don't Expect, 1=Expect Increase)	.166* (.097)	.097 (.098)	.019 (.099)	.116 (.098)	.018 (.100)
<u>POLITICAL ORIENTATIONS</u>					
Party Identification					
(0=Strong Democrat, 1=Strong Republican)		.168 (.124)	.149 (.120)	.148 (.124)	.140 (.121)
Ideological Identification					
(0=Extreme Liberal, 1=Extreme Conservative)		.588** (.159)	.470** (.172)	.474** (.169)	.448** (.173)
<u>IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION</u>					
Job Impact Index (0=no likely impact, 1=high negative impact)					
			1.095** (.141)		1.040** (.143)
Tax Impact Index (0=no likely impact, 1=high negative impact)					
			.688** (.154)		.637** (.157)
Cultural Impact Index (0=high positive impact, 1=no impact)					
			1.349** (.153)		
<u>GROUP AFFECT</u>					
Normed Hispanic + Asian Feeling Thermometer Index (0=intense liking, 1=intense dislike)					
					1.493** (.379)
<u>Measures of Fit:</u>					
-2 Log-Likelihood (full model):	2773.5920	2751.2792	2604.0502	2680.4388	2589.4696
-2 Log-Likelihood (restricted model):	2819.6486	2819.6486	2819.6486	2819.6486	2819.6486
Percent Correctly Predicted:	42.3077	42.0263	49.4371	45.6848	48.6867

* = significant at .05 level (one-tailed test)

** = significant at .01 level (one-tailed test)

¹ Coding of predictor variables in Probit equations is explained in Appendix A.

their level of education. By the same token, Model I indicates that the tendency of blacks to be less opposed to immigration than whites is not a spurious outcome of group differences in economic circumstances or education. Nor do differences in economic resources or outlook account for the tendency of pro-immigrant opinions to increase with one's level of formal education.

These results are generally unaffected by the inclusion of the effects of party identification and ideological orientation in Model II. Because conservatives tend to worry more than do liberals about the prospect of rising taxes, controlling for ideological self-designation lowered the coefficient for the Expect Tax Increase item below a statistically significant level. On the other hand, Model II's adjustment for the tendency of Republicans and conservative respondents in the 1992 NES survey to be more optimistic about the state of the national economy than were their Democratic and liberal counterparts actually strengthened the observed impact of our measure of economic pessimism (the National Retrospective Index) on support for restricting immigration.

Model III clearly reveals the strong effects of beliefs about the likely impact of Hispanic and Asian immigrants on the jobs and taxes of "people already here" on support for restricting future immigration into the United States. This equation underscores the robustness of the independent statistical effect of the National Retrospective Index tapping pessimism about the overall state of the economy on anti-immigrant sentiment. The mediating effects of the Job Impact and Tax Impact Indices on the association between the High Threat Blue Collar and Level of Immigration variables also provide some support for the idea that subjective calculations of self-interest are a source of restrictionist sentiment (Espenshade and Calhoun 1993).

Beliefs about the economic impacts of immigration also function as intervening variables that account for the strong statistical association between respondents' level of formal education and their opinion about reducing immigration shown in Models I and II. The "economic" explanation of this result is that the more favorable attitude toward immigrants of the better-educated is founded on their relative invulnerability to competition from Hispanic and Asian immigrants.

As we have cautioned above, however, it may be misleading to interpret the meaning of the survey questions about the impact of immigration in this utilitarian way. The wording of the items employed in this research does not refer explicitly to the personal impact of immigration. Moreover, responses to these items may be significantly colored by broader attitudes toward Hispanics and Asians as groups or by a more global ethnocentrism. To the extent that this is the case, the mediating role of the Job Impact and Tax Impact Indices in Model III may primarily reflect the reluctance of the better-educated respondents to attribute negative traits to any minority group.

The 1992 NES survey asked respondents about the likelihood that "the growing numbers of Hispanics and Asians coming to the United States would improve our culture with new ideas and customs?" When a Cultural Impact Index replaced the Job Impact and Tax Impact variables in the predictive equation (Model IV), the coefficient for Education remained statistically insignificant.²⁰ The coefficient for the High Threat Blue Collar category of respondents does achieve statistical significance, bolstering the argument that the Job Impact and Tax Impact variables embody an amalgam of subjective estimates of tangible costs and benefits and more purely affective evaluations of specific groups.

Model V clearly points to the influence of these generalized ethnic attitudes. This equation contains both of the economic impact indices and a measure combining the familiar NES feeling thermometer ratings of Hispanics and Asians as predictors of responses to the Level of Immigration item. "Cooler" feelings toward these minority groups, which make up the majority of recent immigrants, were strongly related to a preference for restricting immigration, and the inclusion of this measure of group affect reduces somewhat the magnitude of the coefficients for the Job and Tax Impact indices. In this elaborate model, there are no demographic variables or measures of personal economic resources with statistically significant coefficients. However, negative perceptions of the trend in the state of the national economy over the past year remain a significant source of support for curtailing legal immigration into the United States.

There are some differences between these results and the probit analyses of responses to the Delay Benefits item which are reported in Table 5(b). In Model I, respondents with lower incomes were more likely to oppose delaying benefits for immigrants, and this "resources" effect remained statistically significant in Models II and III.²¹ On the other hand, labor market competition, as indexed by occupation,

²⁰ This two-item measure was constructed by summing responses to the questions about the likelihood that increasing Hispanic and Asian immigration would improve "our culture" as was done with the Job and Tax Impact indices described above. In this case, scores range from 2 (positive impact on culture extremely likely) to 8 (positive impact not at all likely) and are then recoded to range from 0 to 1.

Green and Citrin (1994) have shown that this "positive" item about cultural impact and the questions concerning the negative labor market and fiscal impacts of Hispanic immigration identify a single latent affective orientation toward this minority group. The results of Model IV reinforce this conclusion.

²¹ Indeed, the effect for Income was significant at the $p < .10$ level in the most fully elaborated Model V for the Delay Benefits item.

TABLE 5B
PROBIT ANALYSES OF DELAY BENEFITS ITEM

	MODEL I	MODEL II	MODEL III	MODEL IV	MODEL V
	Probit (Standard estimate error)				
DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES¹					
Age (0=17 years, 1=91 years)	.298 (.270)	.334 (.274)	.417 (.277)	.442 (.278)	.371 (.280)
Education (0=1 year, 1=17+)	-.985** (.386)	-1.035** (.389)	-.719* (.400)	-.901* (.394)	-.636 (.402)
Sex (0=male, 1=female)	.056 (.097)	.058 (.097)	.035 (.098)	.034 (.098)	.034 (.099)
Hispanic (0=non-Hispanic, 1=Hispanic)	-.270 (.187)	-.287 (.188)	-.273 (.190)	-.195 (.191)	-.232 (.192)
Black (0=non-Black, 1=Black)	-.222 (.157)	-.144 (.161)	-.178 (.163)	-.091 (.163)	-.129 (.165)
Immigrant Status (1=1st or 2nd Generation)	.005 (.128)	0.13 (.128)	.001 (.129)	-.002 (.129)	.014 (.130)
Percent Foreign Born in County (0-100%)	-.008 (.006)	-.007 (.006)	-.006 (.006)	-.006 (.006)	-.005 (.006)
ECONOMIC FACTORS					
Occupation (dummy variables):					
Pink Collar	.133 (.136)	.120 (.136)	.130 (.138)	.097 (.137)	.118 (.138)
Low Threat Blue Collar	.091 (.167)	.056 (.168)	.080 (.170)	.009 (.169)	-.004 (.171)
High Threat Blue Collar	-.067 (.157)	-.096 (.158)	-.157 (.160)	-.123 (.159)	-.179 (.161)
Retired	.027 (.203)	-.005 (.205)	-.058 (.208)	-.047 (.207)	-.080 (.209)
Homemaker	-.151 (.191)	-.179 (.192)	-.209 (.194)	-.156 (.194)	-.199 (.194)
Student	.089 (.326)	.065 (.327)	.044 (.332)	-.007 (.329)	.054 (.332)
Unemployed	-.053 (.229)	-.079 (.230)	-.125 (.232)	-.097 (.232)	-.139 (.233)
Union Member (1=Self or Family Member)	-.114 (.116)	-.079 (.118)	-.070 (.119)	-.074 (.119)	-.067 (.120)
Income (0=low, 1=high)	.414* (.211)	.379* (.212)	.343 (.214)	.356* (.214)	.339 (.214)
Personal Retrospective Evaluations (0=Positive, 1=Negative)	.056 (.205)	.078 (.206)	.097 (.208)	.125 (.208)	.128 (.210)
National Retrospective Evaluations (0=Positive, 1=Negative)	.561* (.281)	.749** (.295)	.548* (.301)	.688* (.298)	.502* (.304)
Expect Income Tax Increase (0= Don't Expect, 1=Expect Increase)	.155 (.130)	.098 (.133)	.040 (.135)	.103 (.134)	.045 (.136)

TABLE 5B CONTINUED
 PROBIT ANALYSES OF DELAY BENEFITS ITEM

	MODEL I Probit (Standard estimate error)	MODEL II (.157)	MODEL III (.160)	MODEL IV (.159)	MODEL V (.160)
POLITICAL ORIENTATIONS					
Partisan Identification (0=Strong Democrat, 1=Strong Republican)		.370**	.355*	.359*	.346**
Ideological Ident. (0=Extreme Liberal, 1=Extreme Conservative)		-.085	-.162	-.198	-.195
IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION					
Job Impact Index (0=no likely impact, 1=high negative impact)			-.480**		-.445**
Tax Impact Index (0=no impact, 1=high negative impact)			.407*		.366*
Cultural Impact Index (0=high positive impact, 1=no impact)			.896**		
GROUP EFFECT					
Normed Hispanic + Asian Feeling Thermometer Index (0=intense liking, 1=intense dislike)					1.201**

* = significant at .05 level (one-tailed test)
 ** = significant at .01 level (one-tailed test)
 † Coding of predictor variables in Probit equations is explained in Appendix A

influenced opinions about the level of immigration but not responses to this item referring to immigrants' access to government benefits. In Models II-V, party identification rather than liberal-conservatism is a statistically significant predictor, suggesting that the Delay Benefits item engages the pervasive conflict between Democrats and Republicans over social spending. This issue aside, the results for the two policy questions are consistent: in the full equation (Model V), pessimism about the national economy, beliefs about the negative consequences of immigration for jobs and taxes, and relatively "cool" feelings toward Hispanics and Asians are the statistically significant predictors of support for reducing the level of immigration and delaying benefits for those who are admitted.

VIII. OVERVIEW

How do the results reported in Tables 5(a) and 5(b) relate to our specific hypotheses concerning the economic bases of restrictionist sentiment? Our data provide very little support for the proposition that personal economic circumstances, whether defined in objective or subjective terms, influence opinion formation on immigration issues. Contrary to the "resources" hypothesis, income, short-term financial stress, and self-reported deterioration in one's financial circumstances were unrelated to opinions about the level of immigration or the access of immigrants to government benefits.²² In addition, the pro-immigrant attitudes of the college educated is better explained by their level of political and racial tolerance rather than their insulation from material anxieties.

The labor market competition hypothesis receives only weak support from our data. We do find that workers with the most to fear from job competition with new immigrants were more likely to adopt restrictionist opinions. On the other hand, employment status, anxiety about losing one's job, and union membership were unrelated to the desire to reduce immigration into the United States or to a preference for delaying immigrants' access to benefits.

The consistent relationship between negative retrospective perceptions of the state of the national economy and restrictionist policy preferences supports the "pessimism" hypothesis. But it is important to note that this seeming object of concern is not one's own situation; respondents' anxieties about the trajectory of their personal financial situation were unrelated to attitudes about immigration.

²² We remind the reader of the slight difference in the role of income as a predictor in the case of the Delay Benefits item. In another analysis not reported here, we found no relationship between whether or not one was receiving benefits from the government and responses to the question about delaying the access of immigrants to entitlement programs.

TABLE 6

ECONOMIC FACTORS AND RESTRICTING IMMIGRATION BY RACE, ISSUE SALIENCE, AND STATE

	RACE			ISSUES OF SALIENCE			STATE	
	White	Black	Hispanic	Economy as MIP	Other Issue	Low Immigration	High Immigration	
Level of Immigration and:								
Income	-.01	.00	.02	-.01	.03	-.01	.02	
Financial Strain Index	.04*	.07	-.05	.01	.04	.04*	.01	
Personal Retrospective	.03	.12**	-.08	.03	-.01	.03	.02	
National Retrospective	.07**	.14**	.08	.06**	.08**	.07**	.08**	
Job Impact Index	.30**	.30**	.21**	.31**	.26**	.31**	.26**	
Tax Impact Index	.29**	.26**	.28**	.30**	.25**	.25**	.33**	

NOTE:

The entries reported are the tau-beta statistics.

* p < .05 and ** p < .01 (one-tailed tests)

The Level of Immigration item is coded in the direction of "Decrease immigration." Income is coded from poor to rich, and Strain is coded from no strain to much strain.

The Personal and National Retrospective indices are coded in the direction of "things getting worse." The Impact Indices are coded with the expectations of negative impacts as high.

Beliefs about the negative consequences of immigration for jobs and taxes were strong predictors of restrictionist sentiment in our data. While this outcome seems consistent with the labor market competition and tax burden hypotheses, responses to the impact items can not be treated unambiguously as calculations of the personal costs and benefits stemming from immigration.

In sum, economic motives apparently play a limited role in shaping opinions about immigration in the general public as a whole. Nevertheless, there may exist sub-groups among whom anxieties about one's material well-being are a more potent source of opposition to immigration. Table 6 addresses this issue by comparing the relationships between various economic factors and the Level of Immigration and Delay Benefits items across groups of respondents categorized by race, level of concern about economic problems, and immigration levels in one's state of residence.

The results point to a strong similarity in opinion formation on immigration issues across these diverse groups. A lack of financial resources is no more significant in influencing attitudes about immigration among blacks than among whites.²³ Pessimism about the national economy is not more strongly related to restrictionist sentiment among those who named economic issues as the most important problem facing the country in 1992. Negative beliefs about the impact of Hispanic and Asian immigration on taxes had approximately the same relationship to opinion about the level of immigration in the states with high and low concentrations of immigrants respectively. In short, while the salience of the immigration issue may vary depending on one's locale, ethnicity or position in the labor market, the nature of the values, attitudes and information shaping preferences on national policies seem quite uniform throughout the public.

XI. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper is to explore the underpinnings of public opinion on issues raised by the current national debate on immigration reform. Since advocates of restriction generally rest their case on claims about the negative economic and fiscal consequences of immigration, our principal focus was to determine the strength of economic motives in shaping the policy preferences of ordinary citizens. For this reason, our empirical analysis was designed as a systematic test of the hypothesis that, at the individual level, unfavorable economic circumstances increase hostility to immigration, rather than to assess competing explanations and develop a comprehensive model of preference formation in this domain.

²³ The stronger relationship between retrospective assessments of one's financial situation and the Level of Immigration item among blacks disappears when the Model 1 equation is estimated separately for each racial group.

The dominant result of our analysis was the virtual absence of strong, statistically significant relationships between indicators of personal economic well-being and opinions about immigration. While some of our indicators admittedly are crude, their diversity and the consistency of negative findings support the conclusions of previous research concerning the limited impact of economic self-interest, defined in terms of the calculation of personal material gains and losses, on preference formation on public policy issues (Citrin and Green 1990; Sears and Funk 1990).

One reason for the limited role of economic motives may be that people do not attribute responsibility for their plight to immigrants. Scholars on opposite sides of the debate about the economic consequences of immigration generally agree that the short-run effects, whether beneficial or harmful, are neither large nor pervasive. This may help explain our somewhat unexpected finding that respondents living in states and counties with greater concentrations of recent immigrants were no more likely than their counterparts in the rest of the country to express restrictionist opinions. The economic threat posed by immigrants may only be felt in specific locales and job categories that are not adequately sampled in a national survey.

Yet we did find that a significant relationship exists between anti-immigrant attitudes and pessimism about the current state of the national economy. Beliefs that immigration would have harmful effects on employment opportunities and taxes were also associated with support for restriction. While people seem to respond to national economic problems more than to personal economic problems, these findings are subject to ambiguous interpretations from the perspective of a self-interest model of opinion formation. For example, one might argue that people often are unable to see the personal implications of remote policies and events and therefore use information about the state of the nation as evidence of their own present or future circumstances (Lane 1986). In a world of uncertainties, what has happened to others may affect the probabilities that the self will be similarly affected. Hence, if an influx of immigrants threatens to raise taxes in California, it may mean that one's own taxes will also go up.

Still, it is not obvious why discontent about the state of the national economy should be directed at immigrants. One explanation is the psychodynamic theory of scapegoating, which holds that economic adversity acts as a trigger for the displacement of anxiety and anger onto minority groups. Rational fear of economic competition in the future provides another interpretation. A third possibility is that people's sociotropic impulses stop at the nation's borders. That is, when times are bad and there is less to go around, people resist adding those who are not full-fledged members of the political community to the list of claimants for jobs or governmental assistance. Thus, one important area for future research is to identify the cognitive processes that may underlie the fusion of economic uncertainty and ethnic tensions, including opposition to immigrants.

Our data confirm the important influences of long-standing predispositions such as ideology and group identifications on opinion formation in immigration policy. Preferences on specific issues regarding immigrants in general are conditioned by emotional responses to Asians and Hispanics, the groups comprising the majority of current migrants. Future research should explore whether the public would be more receptive toward immigrants if they more closely resembled the native population in appearance and culture (Hoskin 1991; Citrin, Reingold, and Green 1990).

It also is important to disentangle the meanings of beliefs about the impact of immigrants on economic and social life. Our data revealed that believing that immigration would raise taxes and cause unemployment significantly boosted restrictionist sentiment. But we cannot tell whether these responses represented utilitarian calculations based on personal experience or factual knowledge, casual reactions to cues in the national news, or expressions of cultural affinity or bias. Nor, given the available data, were we able to construct a model incorporating the possible effects of beliefs about the impact of immigration on crime, education, urban congestion, or other problems.

Whatever their conceptual status, beliefs about the economic consequences of immigration have political ramifications when they serve as legitimating arguments for restrictionist policies in a culture that discourages nativist or xenophobic appeals. In the same vein, the significant role of economic factors in immigration politics may be to mobilize the restricted segment of the electorate who are directly affected rather than to influence the opinions of the entire public. Those for whom the personal implications of immigration are minimal may subsequently use news reports about the economic effects on others to frame their own thinking about the issue.

Our data revealed no relationship between the number of immigrants in a state or county and the opinions of its residents on immigration issues. Clearly, though, the salience of these issues and, consequently, the likelihood that they stimulate political action should vary with the presence of immigrants and the nature of their local impacts. Just as protests against school busing occur when plans for forced integration are implemented and attract the participation of affected parents, it seems obvious that legislation and other actions directed at immigrants would be proposed where immigrants are numerous, not scarce. Proposition 187, the initiative aimed at eliminating benefits for illegal immigrants, was advanced in California, and now is being considered in Florida, Texas, and Arizona, but not in South Dakota or Oregon.

The 1992 NES data were collected during a period of recession and pervasive public pessimism about the state of the economy. Since then, national economic conditions have greatly improved, but the 1994 General Social Survey conducted in mid-year by the National Opinion Research Center indicates that the proportion of the public favoring a lower level of immigration increased from 49 to 65 per cent.

This paradoxical result underscores the influence of non-economic determinants of public opinion and suggests that the behavior of political elites and activists and increased media coverage not only has raised public consciousness of immigration issues, but has also framed the debate in terms that engage cultural identities and fundamental values as much as individual economic interests.



APPENDIX A

CODING OF PREDICTOR VARIABLES IN PROBIT ANALYSES

All predictor variables, except where noted, were coded to range from 0 to 1.

Demographic Variables

Age: actual age in years recoded with 0 = 17 years, 1 = 91 years (maximum).

Education: number of years completed, recoded with 0=1 year, 1=17+ years.

0 = least ed., 1 = most ed., in number of yrs.

Sex: 0 = male, 1 = female.

Hispanic: dummy variable, 0 = non-Hispanic, 1 = Hispanic.

Black: dummy variable, 0 = non-Black, 1 = Black.

Immigrant Status: 0 = 3rd generation or more, 1 = 1st or 2nd generation immigrant.

Percent Foreign Born in County: percentage of county residents born outside U.S. in 1990 Census, ranges from 0 to 100.

Economic Factors

Occupation: all variables listed are dummy variables, with White Collar occupations comprising the excluded category.

Union Member: 0 = non-member, 1 = Self or Family member belongs to labor union.

Income: recoded from 24-categories, with 0 = low income, 1 = high income.

Personal Retrospective Evaluations: recoded from two-item index, 0 = positive evaluation, 1 = negative (see footnote 2, Table 4b).

National Retrospective Evaluations: recoded from three-item index, 0 = positive evaluation, 1 = negative (see footnote 3, Table 4b).

Expect Income Tax Increase: recorded from 3-category variable, with 0 = Don't expect increase, 1 = expect increase.

Political Orientations

Party Identification: recoded from 7-point variable, with 0 = strong Democrat, 1 = strong Republican.

Ideological Identification: recoded from 7-point scale, with 0 = extreme liberal, 1 = extreme conservative.

Impact of Immigration

Job Impact Index: summed index of two Hispanic and Asian Job Impact items, with 0 = no likely impact, 1 = high negative impact.

Tax Impact Index: summed index of two Hispanic and Asian Tax Impact items, with 0 = no likely impact, 1 = high negative impact.

Culture Impact Index: summed index of two Hispanic and Asian Culture items, with 0 = high positive impact, 1 = no likely impact.

Group Affect

Normed Hispanic and Asian Feeling Thermometers: responses on 100-point Hispanic and Asian feeling thermometers were normed by subtracting respondent's score on White Feeling Thermometer. These two normed thermometers were then summed and recoded so that 0 = intense liking of Hispanics and Asians, and 1 = intense dislike.



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