

Immigrant Resentment: When the Work Ethic Backfires

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Abstract: This paper develops the concept of immigrant resentment and explores where it comes from and how it shapes policy preferences. Immigrant resentment involves seeing recent immigrants as not being concerned enough with the public good, as placing too much of an emphasis on particularistic ethnic concerns, and as rejecting the civic duty of assimilation. This analysis uses original and theoretically-driven measures to form an immigrant resentment scale, compares immigrant resentment to racial resentment, and examines the social, contextual, and attitudinal factors that shape both kinds of resentment. It also compares these resentments with anti-immigrant attitudes that stem from more “old fashioned” ascriptivist understandings of American national identity. The findings show that immigrant resentment, racial resentment, and old fashioned anti-immigrant racism all exist yet that all are distinct concepts with both distinct and shared roots. Each one, for example, is exacerbated by the belief that whites have been discriminated against due to their race or ethnicity. At the same time, each one is rooted in particular understandings about the meaning of American national identity. With measures of these distinct types of resentment of immigrants in place, and with an understanding of where they come from, I then examine their influence over public opinion about immigration policy.

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Even though many non-white Americans, immigrant and native-born alike, define the normative content of American identity the same as whites do (Schildkraut 2007), think of themselves as American, and differ minimally from whites in their sense of obligation, patriotism, and trust – with differences diminishing across each immigrant generation (Schildkraut 2006), media coverage of immigration issues suggests that many white native-born Americans think otherwise. One is left with the impression that native-born whites believe that today’s immigrants and their descendants reject American norms, a belief that generates a kind of resentment that I call “immigrant resentment.” The purpose of this paper is to examine such resentment.

The constitutive norms that define the meaning of one’s national identity provide stereotypes that help people derive expectations about the behavior of their fellow citizens. Negative feelings toward particular subgroups in society often stem from perceptions that members of such groups violate particular national norms, and thus threaten the meaning of one’s own identity. For instance, the perception that African Americans violate cherished liberal American norms such as individualism or the work ethic has been shown to be relatively widespread and enduring, and it has proved to be a potent force driving preferences on race-targeted policies such as affirmative action (Kinder and Sanders 1996). This particular perception of norm violation has multiple terms in the literature, including symbolic racism, modern racism, and racial resentment (Henry and Sears 2002). The view that blacks threaten a central element of the national value system holds up as a powerful predictor of attitudes even when more tangible threats are included in models of opinion-formation.

When it comes to immigrants, perceptions of norm violation abound and have existed for some time. We hear that immigrants, like blacks, violate American liberalism by coming to the United States to take advantage of generous social welfare policies; we hear that immigrants violate civic republicanism by not wanting to think of themselves as American or by sending the money they earn back to their home countries rather than investing in their new communities; and we hear that immigrants violate incorporationist norms by insisting that public institutions help them maintain their own cultural traditions at the expense of American traditions, such as learning English (Aijan 2007, Izumi 2001, Schlafly 2008). To date, the study of norm violation in the United States has tended to focus on racial resentment directed toward blacks or on whether immigrants, mainly Latinos and Asians, are likewise the target of such racial resentment versus whether more “realistic” concerns, such as sociotropic or pocketbook economic assessments, shape preferences. In this paper, I argue that the framework developed by scholars of racial resentment provides a useful model for studying attitudes toward immigrants and immigration-related public policies, and I extend that model in appropriate ways in order to capitalize on its contributions.

Immigrant resentment, like racial resentment, combines an adherence to traditional norms and values associated with American national identity with the belief that minority groups fail to live up to them. But the specific values in question are derived from civic republican and incorporationist notions of national identity, not liberal ones. Whereas racial resentment involves viewing minorities as violating the liberal norms of self-reliance and hard work, immigrant resentment involves viewing Latinos, Asians, and recent immigrants as not being concerned enough with the public good, as placing too much of an emphasis on particularistic ethnic concerns, and as rejecting the civic duty of assimilation. The idea that immigrant resentment

exists as a distinct concept first occurred to me when I analyzed focus group discussions about American identity in earlier research (Schildkraut 2005). I expected to find people harboring resentment toward immigrants, but I had expected it to be a form of racial resentment grounded in liberalism. I expected, in other words, that people would feel that immigrants violate traditional liberal norms such as the work ethic. The image of immigrants as lazy freeloaders featured prominently in national debates about Proposition 187 in California and about national welfare reform just a few years earlier, fostering a climate that I thought would still be salient to focus group participants.

Though some focus group participants did indeed argue that immigrants are lazy and take advantage of American generosity, I found that a different kind of resentment appeared more regularly, one that focused on a different set of American norms. For example, a complaint that appeared in several focus groups was that immigrants use the United States to get a job, make money, and send that money to family members in the home country. Unlike racial resentment, which maintains that non-whites do not work hard enough, this manifestation of resentment holds that immigrants indeed work very hard and quite possibly work *too* hard. The norms being violated in this complaint are not liberal. Rather, they appeal to an alternative set of constitutive norms about American identity. In this example, immigrant resentment involves disparaging immigrants for taking advantage of economic opportunities in the United States while shirking the responsibilities of citizenship, a clear violation of civic republican principles. Other resentments stemmed from the concern that immigrants today have no interest in thinking of themselves as American or becoming a part of the community in which they now reside. Instead, they keep their attention focused on their own culture and on the happenings in their country of origin. Such focus, discussants claimed, transformed too easily into unfair desires and demands

for local and national government to accommodate their distinct lifestyle.¹ These complaints led me to wonder: Do similar resentments exist among Americans more generally? Are these resentments indeed distinct from the kind of norm violation public opinion scholars have been studying? How can we measure these resentments in a more generalizable fashion? And to what extent does immigrant resentment drive policy preferences? These questions motivate the research presented here. To date, we know little about the factors that determine the extent of immigrant resentment or about the role it plays in opinion-formation on ethnicity-related policies because survey-based analyses of it have not existed.

I use the term *immigrant resentment* to underscore that this set of attitudes is a unique set of resentments directed toward today's immigrants and that like racial resentment, it is rooted in entrenched values that people associate with the very idea of America itself. The term also aids the juxtaposition with the racial resentment that is more familiar to students of public opinion in the United States. Likewise, I use the term "racial resentment" throughout my analysis when I refer to the perception that *immigrants* violate *liberal* American norms (i.e. I replace "black" with "immigrant" in racial resentment measures). Both resentments center on the violation of traditional national norms, yet the particular norms in question differ between the two concepts.

Below, I discuss racial resentment in more detail and explain how it contributes to the study of attitudes about immigrants. Next I summarize the history of stereotypes about, and resentment of, immigrants in the United States. Then I develop measures of immigrant resentment and test their adequacy. I compare immigrant resentment to racial resentment and examine the social, contextual, and attitudinal factors that shape both sets of attitudes. I also compare them with anti-immigrant attitudes that stem from more "old-fashioned" ascriptivist

¹ See Paxton and Mughan (2006) for additional focus group analysis where immigrants are chastised for their "self-imposed segregation."

understandings of American national identity, which I call “ethnocultural resentment.” I show that immigrant resentment, racial resentment, and ethnocultural resentment all exist yet that all are distinct concepts with both distinct and shared roots. Each one, for example, is exacerbated by the belief that whites are discriminated against due to their race or ethnicity. At the same time, each one is rooted in particular understandings about the meaning of American national identity. Finally, I show how each of these forms of resentment shape attitudes toward immigration-related policies, such as whether immigrants should be eligible for government services.

Resentment: behavior, not biology

Racial resentment is a phenomenon long recognized as an important factor shaping race-targeted policy preferences. It is the combination of believing in the traditional liberal values of individualism and the work ethic and feeling that African Americans violate these entrenched American norms (Kinder and Sanders 1996). People who harbor such resentment feel that structural barriers to equality in the U.S. have been removed, and that gaps between blacks and whites in achieving “the good life” must therefore be the fault of blacks themselves (Henry and Sears 2002). Racial resentment is prevalent in American society and influences whites’ opinions on a range of race-targeted policies even when views on whether one is personally threatened are controlled. As Mendelberg shows, racial resentment emerged from the unique history of race relations in the United States (Mendelberg 2001). It has deep roots in justifications for slavery, which in part relied on portraying blacks as lazy. Their laziness, along with violent tendencies and sexual aggression, was viewed as an inherent trait. Viewing these negative traits as products of biology – and the resulting social acceptability of justifying inequality – persisted through the Jim Crow years and the era of eugenics and Social Darwinism.

Throughout the struggle for civil rights, a new egalitarian norm eventually replaced beliefs about – and hence explicit support for – inequality. This new norm became increasingly accepted among Americans of all backgrounds and at all levels of political power. The earlier justifications for slavery, and later, segregation, were increasingly discredited. Now, Mendelberg notes, “most whites know that they should treat blacks equally, and they are inclined to chastise those who do not” (2001 p. 114). Despite the rejection of inequality and the removal of formal barriers to equality, gaps between whites and blacks have persisted with regard to material measures of success. Such gaps, along with the rise of inner city pathologies, have led to frustration and ambivalence, which Mendelberg notes paves the way for resentment to become mobilized for political gain. The history she recounts (and related analyses, e.g., Kinder and Sanders 1996, Sears et al. 1997) provides a compelling rebuke of the critique that racial resentment is not really any different from “old-fashioned” racism. The change in norms is real; and the new egalitarian norms are deeply held.

People adhere to norms because they think it is the right thing to do as well as because they fear the social sanctions that violation might bring. As Gilens and colleagues argue, some people are reluctant to express their opposition to affirmative action not only because they fear how others will interpret it, but also because they themselves are uncomfortable with their own attitude (Gilens, Sniderman, and Kuklinski 1998). They are torn between their adherence to egalitarianism on the one hand and their discomfort with certain race-based policies on the other. In short, norms that people believe in are powerful and violation can have psychological consequences. These consequences are wrought by friends, neighbors, employers, the media, and by our own inner selves; it is not merely a case of avoiding legal sanction. Fazio and Hilden show that priming racial stereotypes among people who claim to reject such stereotypes

produces shame, embarrassment, and guilt (Fazio and Hilden 2001). Experiencing one's own hypocrisy or ambivalence is distressing. As Mendelberg observes, "several strands of literature agree that [ambivalence about race] is widespread among whites," (2001 p. 117n).

Reconciling one's desire to adhere to egalitarian norms with one's attempts to understand continuing racial disparities fuels ambivalence and generates resentment. As Kinder and Sanders (1996) put it, "the core of this new resentment [is] not whether blacks possessed the inborn ability to succeed, but whether they would try" (p. 105). Being seen as rejecting the work ethic, the bedrock of how many Americans define their national identity, has led to blacks remaining a target of hostility. I argue that the ambivalence that has characterized attitudes about racial policy exists with attitudes related to immigration as well. The internalized egalitarian norm conflicts with attributions for observations of concrete realities. The concrete reality in the case of immigration involves the extent to which native-born Americans encounter ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity in comparison to the recent past. As Paxton and Mughan note, "assimilation is not automatic" (Paxton and Mughan 2006, p. 550). The high immigration rates of the past few decades have increased the frequency with which people encounter difference. These frequent encounters generate the perception that assimilation to traditional American norms is not happening, despite social science evidence to the contrary. In the age of egalitarianism, the reason attributed to this failure to "become American" comes down to behavioral choices.

Several features of the racial resentment scholarship are useful when thinking about attitude-formation toward immigrants and the growing non-white segments of American society that immigration yields. First, the way it distinguishes between symbolic threats on the one hand and tangible or "real" ones on the other is a useful way to think about attitudes toward immigrants because political debate often centers on the economic consequences of immigration.

Concerns about the impact of immigration on American workers, for instance, have been a part of debates about immigration for well over a century. Determining the extent to which immigration-related attitudes derive from attachments to national norms and values on the one hand and more tangible concerns about economic well-being on the other is an important task.

Second, its focus on resentment rather than on “old-fashioned” biologically based hostility is also useful because doing so more accurately captures the symbolic and normative roots of contemporary attitudes. Yes, there are still people who harbor beliefs about racial superiority. But there are also many people who genuinely reject those views but who still possess negative stereotypes about how members of immigrant outgroups behave. The source of those stereotypes is beliefs about how people *choose* to act, not how they are biologically determined to act. Feeling that immigrants *could* become “good” Americans if they wanted to but that they simply don’t want to is different from feeling that immigrants are inherently “non-assimilable,” as FDR once wrote about the Japanese (Robinson 2001).

Third, the particular resentment involved in racial resentment – violation of the work ethic – provides some, but by no means all, of the fodder for contemporary immigrant resentment. The view that other non-white minority groups seek unfair advantages does indeed exist. Yet the unique role immigration has played in American history and the resulting value placed on assimilation and active citizenship mean that attitudes about immigrants and immigration are more varied and complex than a simple importation of black/white models allows. Just as the history of race relations holds the key to racial resentment, the history of immigration holds the key to immigrant resentment. To be sure, there are important common roots, the most important being the development over the course of the 20th century of the new norm that rejects arguments about biological hierarchies among different racial and ethnic

groups. The genuine adherence to egalitarianism directs resentment to focus on behavior instead of biology. Hence, seemingly voluntary norm violation becomes the locus of attention.

Attitudes about immigrants over time

Contradictory stereotypes about immigrants have co-existed in the United States for some time. Immigrants are lazy, and they are hardworking. They seek new opportunities in the United States, and they take unfair advantage of those opportunities. They are the “new Americans,” and they don’t want to become Americans. As with racial attitudes, attitudes about immigrants in the United States have undergone some transformations while also retaining certain similarities over time. Yet the unique role of immigration in American history means that the set of behaviors in question is different from the behaviors that dominate opinion-formation about African Americans and race-targeted policies. This section briefly summarizes the norms that immigrants have been said to violate and notes how attributions for those violations have changed over time. It focuses on discourse from the late 1800s – the era in which the federal immigration bureaucracy began to solidify – to today, and it is admittedly sweeping; more detailed accounts can be found elsewhere (Higham 1963, King 2000, King 2005, Tichenor 2002).

Among the many stereotypes about immigrants that have evolved since the industrial age is the view that immigrants are a drain on society because of laziness and because of biological limitations. As King (2000 p.175) explains, restrictionists at the turn of the 20th century argued that these limitations would lead immigrants to “degenerate” and to “require institutional care.” Far from being voiced just among a fringe element, President Rutherford B. Hayes described Chinese immigrants as belonging to a “weaker race” when advocating their exclusion (King 2005, p. 50). Biological deficiencies were attributed to immigrants from Asia, but also to

immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. The eugenics movement was influential in lending credibility to such charges (Gould 1996).

Yet in addition to being seen as “intellectually inferior” (King 2000, p. 61), immigrants were also criticized for being concentrated in ethnic enclaves and for primarily being employed in unskilled jobs, a set of factors that was said to hinder assimilation. As immigrants were portrayed as a drain on national resources, they were simultaneously portrayed as too hardworking. They were especially resented by labor unions in this regard. Chinese immigrants in California, for example, were disparaged for accepting lower wages and poor working conditions, thus hurting the economic fortunes of American laborers. In these complaints, being hardworking was not a virtue despite the centrality of hard work to the American ideal. Their alleged ability and desire to work, like their alleged laziness, was invoked to support claims about the unlikelihood of assimilation.²

This stereotype of the excessively hardworking immigrant was not limited to Asians. Immigrants from southern and eastern Europe were also disparaged for flooding unskilled labor markets and for accepting working conditions that threatened American livelihoods. The Dillingham Commission, a congressional commission that produced recommendations on immigration policy in 1911, was particularly worried about “single, unskilled males immigrating from southern and eastern Europe, whom [it] judged both uninterested in assimilation and mostly unsuitable for naturalization” (King, 2000, p. 76). Members of the commission relied heavily on eugenics studies to support their concerns. Thus, in addition to being unfit for a life of hard work and self-sufficiency, it was argued that immigrants were both unwilling and unable to become Americans in their hearts and minds, which therefore made them unworthy of being welcomed

² Unions also charged that Chinese immigration was essentially involuntary and that it was a threat to free labor (Tichenor, ch. 4).

into the American political community (also see Johnson 1997).

During the turn of the century, immigrants were placed in an untenable position. They were criticized for working too hard while also being criticized for lacking the ability to be self-sustaining. They were chastised for isolating themselves in ethnic enclaves that prevented assimilation while also being viewed as inherently unable to assimilate. Critiques of “hyphenated” Americans, as famously expressed by Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, were emblematic of the widespread view that immigrants shunned full immersion (Higham 1963). Yet becoming American was an opportunity that Asian immigrants in particular did not even have due to laws restricting naturalization to whites only. Being too concentrated in their own communities, being uninterested in assimilation, and unable even if they wanted to, were concerns intimately connected to the phenomenon of immigration itself. They all stemmed from fears about whether people from faraway lands with foreign customs could adopt the American way of life. The consequences for failure were frightening, and that fear was powerful. Anti-immigrant forces had their greatest success in 1924 with the passage of the National Origins Act, which significantly reduced the number of immigrants allowed to enter the country and which ensured that nearly all of those immigrants would be from northern and western Europe (Roberts 1997). These limits were in place until 1965.³

There were some voices at the time that offered a more charitable view of immigrants. The early 1900s saw the rise of exclusion but also of arguments that immigrants can indeed assimilate. The metaphor of the melting pot emerged in the early 20th century and came to signify the ability – as well as the desire – of immigrants to become Americans. This metaphor, with help from Emma Lazarus’s poem “The New Colossus,” gave rise to the archetypal

³ Other prominent strains of anti-immigrant discourse at this time included anti-Catholicism and fear of anarchists (Higham 1963).

“huddled masses” optimistically eyeing the Statue of Liberty as their boat reached American shores. But these views went against a more popular norm. The sympathetic voices achieved some success with the creation of Americanization programs (Miller 1998) but the victorious voices of the day maintained that Americanization efforts could only produce superficial changes; the only way to have immigrants become American was to make sure that only people of the “right” backgrounds were allowed to immigrate in the first place (Tichenor, p.140). The idea that assimilation by people from all backgrounds was possible did not become more widely accepted until decades later.

The virtual moratorium on immigration led the issue largely to fade from national discourse. When immigration numbers began to rise again starting in the late 1960s, they did so under dramatically different domestic conditions. As he signed the bill that repealed the quotas, President Lyndon Johnson called the exclusionary regime “un-American,” (King 2005, p. 129), a complete reversal of the justifications for earlier presidential support for quotas. Echoes of concerns from decades earlier eventually returned, but they had changed in the process due to the rejection of eugenics and to the newly ascendant norm of egalitarianism. Today, we still hear concerns that immigrants violate a wide range of American norms: they reject the work ethic, they work too hard, they focus on their own ethnic communities at the expense of their broader surroundings, and they do not want to become American. The key difference is that just as stereotypes about blacks changed from thinking they could not achieve success to thinking that they choose to act in ways that prohibit success, stereotypes about immigrants changed from thinking they could not become American to thinking that they choose to avoid becoming American. Take, for example, Senator James Vardaman (D-Miss), who stated during floor debate of the Immigration Act of 1917:

The natives of [Africa and Asia] should be excluded. I do not think the inhabitants of either are fit for citizenship in this Republic. And I say this not in the spirit of hostility to the black man, or the yellow man, but for the preservation of the purity of the white race in America and the conservation of the white man's civilization. (*Cong. Rec.* 1916, 157).

Senator James Reed (D-Mo) concurred, saying, "I think the time has come when we ought to keep our country from being filled up with people who are not capable of becoming first-class citizens of the United States" (*Cong. Rec.* 1916, 157). Statements such as these were in no way unique at the time.

Even the most casual observer of contemporary American society would agree that such outright ascriptivism would hardly be accepted on the floor of the Senate today. Not only would such discourse not be accepted, but it is unlikely that such sentiments are even believed. Today, one is more likely to hear the charge that immigrants *can* assimilate, that they *can* become Americans, but that they do not. Politicians themselves are understandably reluctant to point the finger at immigrants. Instead, they tend to blame government itself. It is not uncommon to hear arguments such as those put forward by Representative Joe Knollenberg (R- Mich), who in 1996 argued in favor of making English the official language by stating:

For more than 200 years our Nation has been a melting pot of cultures and nationalities united by one common bond—our English language. When our ancestors came to America, they came to this country knowing they had to learn English to survive. Today, our melting pot has become a patchwork quilt of cultures, isolated because they cannot speak English. They aren't assimilating into our society like our ancestors did. Our current bilingual policies are shredding the common bond that has made our Nation great (*Cong. Rec.*, 1996, 9760).

Scholars and political commentators have also sounded alarms along these lines (Miller 1998, Huntington 2004, Schlesinger 1998). Such critics say American society now errs too much on the side of diversity and on preserving difference rather than on seeking common ground. It is argued that we have become too accepting of difference, and worse, too accommodating, which only serves to encourage and enable the violation of civic republican and incorporationist norms (also see Shuck 1998). Critics lament that the welfare state and the liberal elite teach new arrivals that they are victims and that they should not feel compelled to change in any way once they arrive. The result is a generation of immigrants who do not assimilate and who do not want to.

Just like one hundred years ago, Americans find themselves encountering an impressive amount of cultural diversity, and many Americans have seen their communities change quite dramatically in a relatively short time frame. So much difference emerging in such a short period of time creates the impression that assimilation does not happen. Since most of us now accept that biology does not prevent cultural change, the seeming stagnation must be a product of choice. John Miller, discussing activists at a political rally in California to protest Proposition 187 who waved the Mexican flag, wrote, “Their confrontational rally represented the emblematic rejection of American national identity. It signaled a profound violation of the assimilation ethic that has allowed the United States to become a nation of immigrants... [seeing Mexican flags at a political rally] forced a troubling conclusion into the minds of many Californians: The immigrants of today aren’t like the immigrants of yesterday. *They don’t want to be Americans*” (1998, 4-5, emphasis added). Similar concerns were voiced during marches for immigrant rights in the spring of 2006 when Mexican flags flew alongside American flags. As one observer warned the demonstrators, “When Latinos embrace their ancestral flag, it suggests...that maybe all they are interested in are the dollars they can send back to Mexico” (Badie 2006. Also see

Gorman 2006, Soto 2006).

John Higham notes that nativism is concerned with neutralizing perceived threats to the American way of life, threats uniquely attributed to foreign elements (Higham 1963). Concerns that immigrants threaten the American way of life are nothing new. What has changed is whether those threats are seen as stemming from biology or behavior. In this section, I have sought to underscore that the racial resentment model is an appropriate one to adopt and to demonstrate how it needs to be expanded to account for the norms that are uniquely implicated in the phenomenon of immigration. Those norms include coming to see oneself as a member of the national community, being invested in the community, being an active and informed member of the community, and not simply using the United States as a place to make money while retaining an untransformed “old world” lifestyle.

Applying norm violation to immigrants

Survey-based research on attitudes toward immigrants has generally taken one of two approaches. In the first approach, studies focus on the causes and consequences of the perceived impact that increased numbers of Latinos and Asians will have on the local and national community, often pitting such concerns against more tangible or economic factors such as a person’s income or whether respondents have children who attend public school. A classic article by Citrin and colleagues provides an excellent example of this approach (Citrin, Reingold, and Green 1990). The authors combine perceptions of tangible economic effects – such as the fear that immigrants will cause an increase in the unemployment and crime rates – with symbolic effects – such as the view that immigrants will enrich our culture – to form a scale they call the Hispanic/Asian Impact Index. People with high scores on the authors’ “Americanism” scale were

more likely than people with low scores to think increased immigration from these groups would have a negative impact on California. The impact indices, in turn, affected immigration-related policy preferences. The authors write, “A major source of opposition to cultural minorities among the majority ethnic group in America is the perception that they fail to conform to cherished notions of Americanism” (p. 1142). Here we see early evidence that attitudes toward immigrants are indeed driven by perceptions of norm violation. Yet as I have argued elsewhere (Schildkraut 2007, Schildkraut 2005), more detailed measures of Americanism are needed.

Other research in this vein likewise find that individual-level economic indicators such as household income are not significant predictors of hostility aimed at immigrants, Latinos, or Asians (Fetzer 2000, Hood and Morris 1997). Hood and Morris do, however, find that having a pessimistic outlook regarding the national economy (a.k.a. sociotropic concerns) leads to more anti-minority affect, whereas neither Fetzer nor Citrin find sociotropic effects.

More recently, Sniderman and colleagues have found that cultural concerns drive immigration-related attitudes in the Netherlands more so than economic concerns (Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004). Concerns about whether immigrants “fit in” culturally were more powerful than concerns about whether they fit in economically. Though Sniderman’s study did not examine how people define “what it means to be Dutch,” it provides clear evidence that preserving “Dutchness” is a priority as well as further support for the notion that violating constitutive norms shapes immigration-related attitudes.

In the second approach, studies do hone in on specific types of norm violation by taking traditional racial resentment measures and changing the target group from “black” to “immigrant” or “Hispanic” (Huddy and Sears 1995, Vidanage and Sears 1995). Huddy and Sears examine if opinions about bilingual education funding are affected by respondents’ perceptions

that Latinos fail to work hard and whether respondents attribute the economic hardship of Latinos to Latinos themselves (“internal attributions”) or to external factors such as the lack of good jobs. They find that internal attributions do indeed help to explain opposition to bilingual education. They also find that a general belief in the value of hard work makes such internal attributions more likely (whereas the respondent’s income has no impact). In other words, adhering to the norm of hard work results in a person being more likely to think that Hispanics violate that norm (Huddy and Sears 1995).

Vidanage and Sears show that Hispanic and Asian resentment, measured by asking respondents if Hispanics and Asians are too demanding of government, are too demanding in pushing for equal rights, and should work their way up like other minority groups, is a strong predictor of support for a variety of restrictive preferences (Vidanage and Sears 1995).

Paxton and Mughan, using a small undergraduate sample, provide the only analysis to date that delves more fully into the roots of resentment toward immigrants in the U.S. by tapping into norms that are uniquely related to immigration debates, such as language use and naturalization (Paxton and Mughan 2006). Using focus groups to guide their survey design, they develop measures that ask people if immigrants violate the American norms of citizenship, language, and productivity. They posit that a perceived failure to assimilate drives immigration attitudes and show the utility of measures tailored to these specific aspects of American culture.

In light of these valuable findings, my aim is not to argue that the studies described here are wrong, but rather to show that they only tell part of the story and to provide the tools needed to take the story further. While the stereotype of immigrants or Mexicans as lazy certainly exists, there is also another prevalent and contradictory stereotype: that immigrants work *too* hard and that they do so at the expense of becoming “good” Americans.

Measuring immigrant resentment

The data for this analysis come from the 21st Century Americanism Survey (21-CAS), a national random-digit-dial (RDD) telephone survey of adults, supplemented with oversamples of blacks, Latinos, and Asians.⁴ Data collection was funded by the Russell Sage Foundation, and was conducted from July 12 – October 8, 2004 by the Social and Economic Sciences and Research Center (SESRC) at Washington State University (WSU). The final sample has 2800 respondents (1,633 white, non-Hispanic; 300 black; 441 Latino; 299 Asian).⁵

In one portion of the survey, respondents were asked the extent to which they feel that particular characteristics should be important in determining whether someone is a “true” American. These questions evoke the normative content of American identity and were designed to tap into four clusters of norms: liberalism, ethnoculturalism, civic republicanism, and incorporationism. Briefly, the *liberal* tradition defines America as a land of freedom and opportunity, the *civic republican* tradition defines America as a participatory democracy with vibrant communities and dutiful citizens, the *ethnocultural* tradition defines America as a nation of white Protestants, and the *incorporationist* tradition defines America as a diverse “nation of immigrants” (Glazer 1997, Hackney 1997, Higham 1993, Hollinger 1995, Schildkraut 2005, Smith 1997).⁶ The norms associated with these four concepts are, to varying degrees, widely endorsed among Americans of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Together, they prescribe a set

⁴ Any resident of the U.S. over 18 years old and living in a household with a telephone was eligible for selection in the sample. Participants were selected through RDD. Counties with higher percentages of black, Latino, and Asian residents were targeted more heavily with RDD in order to create the oversamples. Such targeting is a common technique for including larger numbers of people from groups that are traditionally underrepresented when RDD is used alone. The average interview length was 26 minutes.

⁵ The remaining respondents either identified as mixed, Native American, or answered the race question in a way that could not be incorporated into this breakdown (e.g., “human.”). The cooperation rate was 31.2%. A Spanish version of the survey was available and was used by 137 respondents.

⁶ See Schildkraut (2005, chapter 3) for detailed descriptions of these concepts and (2007) for diagnostic tests of the survey questions used to measure them.

of norms regarding how group members are expected to look, sound, and act. For the present purposes, the relevant norms are the liberal demand to work hard and be self-sustaining, the civic republican demand to be an informed and active member of the community who values and prioritizes one's community membership, the incorporationist demand to try and find the right balance between cultural assimilation and maintenance, and the ethnocultural demand to be a white Protestant. These "true American" questions will serve as independent variables later in the analysis. Liberalism and incorporationism are measured by single survey questions while civic republicanism and ethnoculturalism are measured by scales created from multiple questions (see appendix for survey item wording and scale construction).

The 21-CAS also asked respondents the extent to which they agree or disagree with certain statements about immigrants in the United States. These statements were designed to gauge the three kinds of resentment that people might feel toward immigrants: immigrant resentment, racial resentment, and ethnocultural resentment. Immigrant resentment combines civic republican and incorporationist norms. Though civic republicanism and incorporationism are distinct elements of American national identity, focus group participants consistently linked the two when voicing concerns about norm violation. Distinct political principles are often blended in practice at the elite level (Smith 1997, Smith 1988); it should not be surprising to see that ordinary citizens likewise combine complimentary elements of each when expressing their political preferences. In this case, the civic republican demand for the centrality of community membership blends easily with the incorporationist demand for people to find the right balance between their immigrant history and their new membership in the American political community. The five questions used to measure immigrant resentment were designed to capture this blend by asking if immigrants are too focused on pursuing jobs and opportunity at the

expense of assimilation and of meeting the demands that good citizenship in the U.S. requires. They were derived directly from themes that emerged in focus group discussions and, in some cases, adopt the exact words used by discussants themselves. The wording of these items and the percentage of white respondents that agreed strongly or somewhat are presented in the top third of table 1.⁷ Percentages omit “don’t know” responses (which constituted roughly 3% in each case). The distribution of white opinions shows that there is a fair amount of agreement that immigrants today violate such norms. Respondents were especially likely to think that immigrants do not want to be informed about “what’s going on in the United States” and that they do not try hard enough to “fit in.”

[Table 1 About Here]

The second kind of resentment explored here is racial resentment. Many questions have been asked over the years to measure this kind of resentment; the four questions used in the 21-CAS were adopted from the Symbolic Racism 2000 scale (Henry and Sears 2002). I simply changed the target group in these racial resentment questions from “blacks” to “immigrants.” The wording and distribution of responses appears in the middle third of table 1. The results show that the perception of liberal norm violation is clearly not restricted to how whites feel about blacks. Many respondents agree that immigrants need to try hard if they want to “work their way up” and be “just as well off” as the native born. The American Dream is alive and well; formal barriers to success do not exist, and immigrants can have their piece of the pie, it is believed, if only they work hard enough.

Finally, ethnocultural resentment is explored as well. This kind of resentment explicitly laments the non-white and non-Christian backgrounds of many of today’s immigrants. That such

⁷ The analyses here examine the views of whites only due to the historically powerful role of whites in dictating national sentiment and policy regarding immigrants.

views are widely understood to be “politically incorrect” speaks to the true change in norms that we have seen over the course of the 20th century. But such change does not mean that the views have disappeared or are without relevance. The 1990s nativist surge certainly included some ethnoculturalist voices, such as Pat Buchanan and Peter Brimelow. Brimelow, for example, warned, in his 1995 best-seller *Alien Nation*, that current immigration trends are dangerous because “the American nation has always had a specific ethnic core. And that core has been white” (Brimelow 1995, p. 10). I call this type of resentment “ethnocultural resentment” because it stems from concerns that immigrants no longer meet the restrictive demands that ethnoculturalism places on membership in the American community. Though I heard very little resentment of this nature among focus group participants, it was expressed among a small segment. Moreover, the sense among pro-immigrant groups and observers is that such “old-fashioned” anti-immigrant sentiment is still widespread (Gonzalez 2001, Perea 1997), especially after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Yet surveys have generally not explored such ascriptive beliefs explicitly. The wording and distribution of responses of the ethnocultural resentment items appear in the bottom third of table 1. As we would expect, few respondents express the view that immigrants who are Muslim, Asian, or Latino are problematic, yet enough respondents agreed with these items to justify analyzing ethnocultural resentment further.

Testing the measures

Before moving on to examining the causes of the attitudes expressed in table 1, it is first useful to examine whether scales for the three concepts of immigrant resentment, racial resentment, and ethnocultural resentment can reasonably be constructed from these items. A combination of analytic tools, including Chronbach’s α and factor analysis, were used (for white

respondents only) to assess the quality of the three resentment scales. The results (not shown) led me to create an immigrant resentment scale that has 3 of the 5 immigrant resentment questions from table 1. The two reverse-coded measures – whether immigrants come to think of themselves as Americans and whether immigrants do a good job of finding the balance between assimilation and maintaining difference – were dropped, resulting in a scale that asks if people agree that immigrants take advantage of jobs and opportunities without doing enough to give back to the community, if immigrants don't want to be bothered to know what's going on in the United States, and if immigrants don't try hard enough to fit into mainstream American life ($\alpha = 0.73$). The results also led to the creation of a racial resentment scale that consists of all four racial resentment questions ($\alpha = 0.65$). Likewise, I created an ethnocultural resentment scale that consists of all three measures listed on the bottom of table 1 ($\alpha = 0.62$).⁸ Running the factor analysis after the two reverse-coded symbolic nativism measures were dropped produced a scree plot that supports the retention of the three scales described here. The average inter-item correlations for each scale do not exceed 0.15, as is recommended (Clark and Watson 1995), but bivariate correlations among all items show that items correlate within scales more than across them, suggesting construct validity (Paxton and Mughan 2006). Moreover, across the three scales, item-rest correlations range from 0.34 to 0.58.

Each scale was created by adding together responses to each item and then dividing by

⁸ The highest α for immigrant resentment (and the best fit according to the factor analysis) would have entailed adding the racial resentment item about whether immigrants could be just as well off as the native born if only they tried harder ($\alpha = 0.76$). But since the analysis here is a test of the theoretical concept as much as it is an exploration of which items cohere best, I chose to keep each of the items with their most appropriate theoretical construct. As DeVellis notes, in addition to looking at factor loadings and α coefficients when constructing scales, one must also consider whether the items make theoretical and logical sense (DeVellis 2003). Given the lineage of the “trying hard” item in racial resentment scholarship, I chose to keep that item with the other racial resentment measures. The α scores presented here compare well to scores from studies of distinct forms of racism (see Sears, et al., 1997). Note that all remaining analyses were also run with the “trying hard” item included in the immigrant resentment scale. Doing so failed to change any of the substantive conclusions. Paxton and Mughan (2006) suggest that people might view economic productivity as a necessary precursor to cultural assimilation. Additionally, the “trying hard” item might have multiple interpretations; respondents may think that immigrants should try hard to fit in, and not just to achieve economic success.

the total number of questions on the scale that the respondent answered. Then I constrained each scale to run from 0 to 1, where 1 means the respondent gave the most resentful response to all items on the scale and 0 means the respondent gave the least resentful response to all items. The means (and standard deviations) for whites for each scale are: immigrant resentment = 0.53 (s.d. = 0.28); racial resentment = 0.61 (s.d. = 0.24); ethnocultural resentment = 0.21 (s.d. = 0.22). Immigrant resentment is correlated with racial resentment ($r = 0.48$) and with ethnocultural resentment ($r = 0.42$).⁹ That these resentments are correlated underscores that many Americans individually hold ambivalent and even contradictory assessments of today's immigrants.

Predicting resentment

The next step in understanding the nature of these resentments is to examine their antecedents. Which factors make a person likely to think that immigrants violate civic republican or liberal norms? Are the determinants of one kind of resentment the same determinants of other kinds of resentment? To what extent does the way in which a person defines what being American means determine whether he or she perceives particular kinds of norm violation? Or is resentment driven by feeling one's own family is losing ground?

For the analysis that follows, I examine each kind of resentment in turn. I used ordinary least squares to examine the impact of three sets of independent variables on each kind of resentment. The first set of independent variables includes standard demographic and political measures: age, education, partisan identification, ideological orientation, household income, assessment of the national economy (getting worse, staying the same, or getting better), and the percentage of people living in the respondent's zip code that are Hispanic or Asian (as

⁹ Racial resentment and ethnocultural resentment have a correlation of 0.27. These correlations parallel correlations among related yet distinct forms of racism (Sears et al. 1997).

determined by the 2000 Census). The first of these (from age to ideology) have long been understood to shape attitudes on an array of political and social matters.¹⁰ Household income and the perception of the national economy are included to capture individual-level material interest and sociotropic concerns, respectively (see the appendix for question wording not described in text).¹¹ Finally, I include zip code level measures in order to test the relationship between context and attitudes.¹²

The second set of independent variables contains measures that capture the extent to which the respondent defines the content of American identity in ethnocultural, liberal, civic republican, or incorporationist terms. Here again I am using studies of racial resentment as a guide. Such studies have found that people who value hard work or individualism in general are more likely to think that blacks violate this cherished American norm. Likewise, people who value hard work are also more likely to think that Latinos do not work hard enough (Huddy and Sears 1995). It is generally assumed that people's most deeply held values tend to be salient to them and thus shape how they interpret their surroundings. As Sears and colleagues write, abstract values are influential "because [they] reflect [people's] moral codes about how society should be organized" (Sears et al. 1997, p.22). Norms, in other words, should shape the form that resentment will take. In practical terms for the analysis at hand, this means, for example, that respondents who score highly on civic republican measures should exhibit more immigrant resentment than other respondents.

¹⁰ Other potentially relevant individual characteristics, such as citizenship status, nativity, and language spoken at home were not included because nearly all whites in the sample are U.S. citizens, were born in the United States, and speak only English at home.

¹¹ Including household income in the models leads the overall N to drop by about 150 cases, since many respondents refused to answer that question. Omitting income increases the N but does not change the main substantive results reported in this section.

¹² Respondents were also asked if they think their neighborhood is "mostly white, mostly black, mostly Latino, mostly Asian, or multi-ethnic." Two dummy variables were included in earlier tests to account for respondents who think their neighborhood is mostly Latino or mostly Asian, but these measures never achieved statistical significance and were thus dropped from the analysis.

The third and final set of independent variables contains measures that capture whether the respondent thinks that whites as a group have been discriminated against in American society and whether the respondent thinks he or she has been discriminated against due to his or her race or ethnicity. These variables are included to control for another set of quasi-realistic threats. Perceptions of group standing have been shown to affect candidate evaluation (Mutz and Mondak 1997), and perceptions of group position can be an important influence over race-related policy attitudes in addition to ideological conservatism and racial resentment (Bobo 2000). Moreover, public discourse about immigration is replete with anecdotes about whites losing jobs to their newer, often bilingual, neighbors. The 21-CAS offers a rare opportunity to examine whether perceptions of mistreatment among whites fuel resentment.

All independent and dependent variables are coded from 0 to 1, which means that all coefficients can be interpreted as the change in the relevant resentment scale when the independent variable goes from its lowest to its highest value. The results appear in table 2.

[Table 2 About Here]

Immigrant resentment

The results show that Republicans, people with lower household incomes, and people with lower levels of education are more likely to harbor immigrant resentment than their counterparts with higher incomes and educational levels or who are Democrats. Sociotropic economic concerns are insignificant, as is the percentage of Asian residents in the respondent's zip code. As the percentage of Hispanic residents increases, so does immigrant resentment. White respondents with more Hispanics in their communities are more likely to think that immigrants today reject assimilation and concentrate on work at the expense of becoming integrated into their new communities. This finding fits well with the notion that immigrant

resentment is driven in part by the increasing encounters whites have with ethnic and linguistic diversity and their attempts to attribute causes for the apparent lack of “Americanization” such encounters render salient. Overall, however, demographic variables have weak effects; none has a significant coefficient that exceeds +/-0.1.

Action-oriented civic republicanism fails to affect levels of immigrant resentment. Contrary to expectations, valuing active citizenship does not lead to heightened sensitivity to this norm when it comes to evaluating immigrants. In other words, thinking that active citizenship is a hallmark of being a good American does not make a person more likely to think that immigrants fail to do their part. However, placing a priority on *thinking of oneself* as part of the community *does* make a person more likely to perceive norm violation in this regard on the part of immigrants. Going from 0 to 1 on identity-oriented civic republicanism moves a person up the immigrant resentment scale by an impressive 0.29 points.

Incorporationist norms are an important component of immigrant resentment and like identity-oriented civic republicanism, measures of incorporationism influence respondents’ scores on the immigrant resentment scale. Americans who place a priority on assimilation are more likely to exhibit such resentment while Americans who place a priority on cultural preservation are less likely. It is important to note, however, that both incorporationist measures are weak relative to identity-oriented civic republicanism.

Ethnoculturalism rivals identity-oriented civic republicanism in driving immigrant resentment, with a coefficient of 0.30. Old-fashioned ascriptivism still characterizes how a non-trivial segment of the population defines American identity, and it makes people more likely to think that immigrants violate civic republican and incorporationist norms. It is not just a heightened sensitivity to civic republican and incorporationist norms that drives the perception

that such norms are violated. Defining American identity in narrowly ascriptive terms also drives such perceptions.¹³ Yet it is important to note that civic republicanism is much more widely endorsed as a central component of American identity than ethnoculturalism. Among whites, the mean civic republicanism “identity” score is 0.87 while the mean ethnoculturalism score is 0.27. Thus, in terms of real-world magnitude, the civic republican demand for seeing one’s identity and well-being as intricately tied to the identity and well-being of the community has a greater societal impact on the prevalence of immigrant resentment.

Finally, it is important to note that perceptions of group-level mistreatment are powerful predictors of immigrant resentment as well. Thinking that discrimination against whites in American society is a problem increases one’s immigrant resentment score by 0.24 points. Perceptions of individual-level mistreatment, on the other hand, seem to make such resentment less likely, though the size of the coefficient is small.

Racial resentment

Turning next to racial resentment, we again see that Republican respondents and respondents with lower levels of education are more likely to exhibit racial resentment than their Democratic counterparts and people with higher levels of education. Here we also see that age and ideology matter, with older and more conservative respondents more likely to think that immigrants violate the liberal norm of hard work than younger and politically liberal respondents. Neither measure of community context predicts this kind of resentment, nor does household income. Assessment of the national economy is barely significant, and not in the direction that intuition would dictate. And as with immigrant resentment, these demographic variables generally have weak effects, with no significant coefficient exceeding +/-0.1.

¹³ Note that Sears, van Laar, Carrillo, and Kosterman (1997) find that old-fashioned racism likewise plays a role in explaining levels of racial resentment.

In terms of conceptions of American identity, ethnoculturalism is insignificant, a stark contrast from its powerful role in immigrant resentment. In addition, valuing active citizenship makes a person *less* likely to exhibit racial resentment. People who define American identity through an informed and involved citizenry are less likely to think that immigrants are lazy.

In line with years of research on racial resentment directed toward blacks, valuing the role of the work ethic in American society is a relatively strong predictor of racial resentment aimed at immigrants. Its magnitude outweighs that of any of the significant demographic measures. The strongest predictor of racial resentment, however, is whether the respondent defines being American in terms of the identity demands of civic republicanism.

With respect to incorporationism, Americans who place a priority on assimilation are more likely to think that today's immigrants violate the work ethic while Americans who place a priority on cultural preservation are less likely to exhibit such resentment, though both incorporationist measures are weak relative to the civic republican and liberal assessments of the meaning of American identity.

And as with immigrant resentment, the perception that whites as a group have suffered from discrimination in the United States makes racial resentment more likely while the perception of personal discrimination has no impact.

Ethnocultural resentment

Turning finally to ethnocultural resentment, table 2 shows that older respondents are more likely than their younger counterparts to resent immigrants for being non-white and non-Christian. The coefficient on age is the only demographic coefficient in the entire table to exceed +/-0.1, providing evidence to support the claim that a generational shift on ascriptivism has occurred. Education, partisanship, and ideology are all insignificant, as is the percentage of

Asians living in the zip code. A higher household income generates more ethnocultural resentment, though the coefficient is small and of marginal significance. A higher percentage of Hispanics in one's zip code leads respondents to harbor less ethnocultural resentment, the opposite direction of how such context affects immigrant resentment. It seems that people who encounter Hispanics more frequently avoid blaming ancestry for their concerns and instead blame behavior.

The ethnoculturalism scale is a potent predictor of ethnocultural resentment, with the largest coefficient in all of table 2. Moving from 0 to 1 on that scale moves respondents up the ethnocultural resentment scale by 0.40. The impacts of all other determinants pale in comparison. Civic republican concerns about whether people see themselves as American, which was a powerful determinant of both immigrant resentment and racial resentment has no impact whatsoever on whether people harbor ethnocultural resentment. People who define America in terms of cultural diversity do not harbor ethnocultural resentment. Likewise, defining America in terms of assimilation has no impact, in contrast to its role in the previous models. Assimilationist and identity-oriented civic republican views affect the extent to which people think immigrants *choose* to shun assimilation and their new American communities; they do not make them old-fashioned nativists. These differences across the models underscore that while immigrant resentment and ethnocultural resentment are related, they represent distinct sentiments about the relationship between the meaning of American identity and how immigrants are evaluated.

Finally, the perception that whites are mistreated in American society makes ethnocultural resentment more likely, though its impact is not as strong as its impact on immigrant resentment.

Discussion

There are important differences between attitudes toward immigrants and attitudes toward blacks that are overlooked when we focus primarily on the violation of the work ethic. The unique history of immigration in the U.S. and the evolution of attitudes toward immigrants make it important to focus on additional national norms and cherished values. These norms are not liberal in nature but rather derive from our civic republican and incorporationist traditions. In addition to perceiving that immigrants violate the work ethic, people also perceive that immigrants violate norms and behaviors associated with these other cherished components of American society. The analysis thus far tell us about where such perceptions of norm violation come from. First, partisan, ideological, and demographic divides matter. Republicans and conservatives were more likely to harbor immigrant and racial resentment than Democrats and liberals. Older respondents and those with lower levels of education also tended to be more resentful than younger respondents and those with higher levels of education. As with previous studies, economic self-interest and national economic conditions yield inconsistent and unimpressive results. Likewise, the diversity of one's zip code barely registers as a factor shaping resentment.

What we have gained with this analysis is a more detailed account of what it is exactly that people resent about immigrants and which specific aspects of American culture drive their resentment. Instead of concluding that general ideas of Americanism dominate general anti-immigrant affect, we can say that of the many American traditions people value, the civic republican call to be a proud member of the community whose identity is only complete when it is connected to the nation is especially relevant when people assess immigrants and that it increases the likelihood that people will disparage immigrants for seeming to shun this norm. People do not just view immigrants as lazy. They also recognize that many immigrants work

quite hard; but rather than celebrate such effort, many Americans see it as another kind of threat.

The resentments explored here are related but they constitute distinct feelings that merit separate investigations. One says immigrants are lazy, another says they work hard at the expense of other demands, and still another says they should be white, Christian, and European. That the resentments are correlated and that they share certain demographic roots suggest that ambivalence and contradiction exist within individuals and not just at a societal level. Indeed, this ambivalence may lead some readers to question whether immigrant resentment is simply a more politically correct way to express concerns about the racial and religious backgrounds of today's immigrants. Could it be that many Americans really do wish that today's immigrants were white Christians, but that they succumb to social norms that prohibit the expression of such views and instead opt to say that immigrants today simply don't work hard enough to become a part of their new communities? It is clear that societal norms have indeed changed. It is no longer acceptable to claim that certain backgrounds are superior to others. Those norms do not come from nowhere. People in society have to subscribe to them in order for them to take root and develop such power (Mendelberg 2001). It is also clear that many people are torn between their adherence to new norms of egalitarianism and lingering discomfort with immigrants. People become emotionally disturbed when they find themselves acting in ways that go against norms of racial egalitarianism not only because they fear how other people might react, but because they themselves are upset by their ambivalence. As Gilens and colleagues write with respect to affirmative action, "presentational pressures exist to disguise not only those attitudes that would be deemed deplorable by wider society, but those that would present respondents in a light that *they themselves* would find unflattering (Gilens, Sniderman, and Kuklinski 1998, 159-183) p. 179, emphasis in original). As discussed earlier, people then look to behavior as a source of their

resentment to help relieve their internal conflicts. In short, immigrant resentment exists *because* of the rejection of ethnocultural sentiments.

Even if some respondents are inclined to agree with the ethnocultural resentment items but feel uncomfortable with their agreement, the important point for my purposes is that egalitarianism has created such a predicament for them in the first place. They genuinely subscribe to egalitarian norms, yet find themselves uncomfortable with today's immigrants. How might one reconcile this conflict? By turning to thoughts about the freely chosen behaviors of immigrants. "If only they behaved more in line with particular American values," such a person thinks, "then I would be totally fine with them, even if they are Mexican/Muslim/Asian/etc." The important theoretical and analytical contribution of this analysis is to document how the behaviors in question that ambivalent Americans rely on in such reconciliation are often intimately connected to the immigration experience and thus derive from the nation's civic republican and incorporationist traditions in addition to its liberal tradition.

Finally, it is important to note the real possibility that the ethnocultural resentment items are not as "politically incorrect" as questions about old-fashioned anti-black attitudes are. Especially after the terrorist attacks on 9/11, the social sanctions for claiming a preference for white Christian immigrants are undoubtedly weaker than the social sanctions for saying that whites should be able to keep blacks out of their neighborhoods. To the extent that this is true, the concern that immigrant resentment is a cover for ethnocultural resentment is further diffused.

Immigrant resentment and immigration policy

The goals of the analyses in this paper thus far were to develop measures that account for immigrant resentment, to see how widespread it is, to examine its relationship to other forms of

resentment, and to confirm that it is driven by how the content American identity is defined. Having accomplished these tasks, I can now investigate the extent to which these resentments shape preferences toward immigration policy. The expectation is that immigrant resentment will lead people to prefer more restrictive policies, though this portion of the analysis is admittedly more exploratory, especially with regard to whether immigrant resentment will be more influential than the other forms of resentment. The dependent variables are whether overall levels of legal immigration should be decreased and whether legal and/or illegal immigrants should be eligible for social services.

To gauge attitudes toward overall levels of immigration, respondents were asked, “Do you think the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are permitted to come to the United States to live should be increased, decreased or left the same as it is now?” Thirty-nine percent of whites thought immigration levels should be decreased, 50% thought they should be kept the same, and 11% thought they should be increased.

To measure attitudes about immigrant eligibility for benefits, respondents were asked, “Do you think that people who immigrated legally should be allowed to benefit from government assistance programs like Medicaid and food stamps?” Then they were asked, “What about people who immigrated illegally?” They could answer with “yes,” or “no,” and they could volunteer, “it depends.” The survey asked about legal and illegal immigrants separately in order to remove ambiguity about the referents. Estimates at the time of the 21-CAS suggested that illegal immigrants constituted 26% of all foreign-born residents in the United States (Passel, Capps, and Fix 2004,). Despite this fact, most Americans think that most immigrants are illegal, as indicated in a 2007 survey by CBS news and *The New York Times* where 75% thought that, “most of the

people who have moved to the United States in the last few years are here illegally.”¹⁴ It is quite likely, therefore, that respondents will think of illegal immigrants if asked whether “immigrants” should be eligible for benefits. Asking about legal and illegal immigrants separately ensures a more accurate recording of preferences. Here, 75% of whites thought that legal immigrants *should* be allowed to benefit from government assistance programs, 14% thought they should not, and 11% volunteered “it depends.” In strong contrast, 81% of white respondents thought illegal immigrants *should not* be allowed to benefit from government assistance programs, 10% thought they should, and 9% volunteered “it depends.” When given a chance, people clearly distinguish between legal and illegal immigrants.

Analysis

Still using studies of racial resentment as a guide, I use the immigrant resentment scale as an independent variable to compare the power of immigrant resentment to the power of more traditional influences, including racial resentment, ethnocultural resentment, and measures of economic self-interest in predicting attitudes on the policy questions described above. Racial resentment has been shown to influence attitudes toward affirmative action, school desegregation programs, the confederate flag, the death penalty, and welfare (to name a few), even when controlling for more tangible factors such as having a child involved in a busing program (Kinder and Sanders 1996, Henry and Sears 2002, Mendelberg 2001, Jacobson 1985, McConahay 1982, Orey 2004, Virtanen and Huddy 1998). Other than the research cited earlier, there is little work that looks at how resentment shapes immigration policy preferences, though studies found that racial resentment toward blacks makes whites more likely to favor reduced levels of immigration (Kinder and Sanders 1996) and to favor denying benefits to immigrants (Citrin et al. 2001). The expectation here is that immigrant resentment will be a powerful

¹⁴ Survey information available at Polling the Nations, accessed on 5/27/08.

predictor over attitudes not only after controlling for tangible factors but also after controlling for racial resentment and ethnocultural resentment.

All three dependent variables are coded from 0 to 1, where 1 means that immigration should be decreased or that immigrants should not be eligible for benefits (“it depends” is coded as 0.5 for the benefits analyses). I used ordered probit models to estimate the impact of resentment on the three dependent variables described above. In addition to the resentment scales, the other independent variables are age, education, partisan identification, political ideology, perceptions of the national economy, and the percentage of people living in the respondent’s zip code that are Hispanic or Asian. As before, all independent variables are coded to range from 0 to 1.¹⁵

The results appear in table 3. They show that immigrant resentment is in fact a consistent and powerful predictor of restrictive immigration preferences, even after controlling for other forms of resentment. Indeed, it appears to be more powerful than “old-fashioned” ethnocultural resentment in two of the three models. Racial resentment is likewise significant in all three models, and ethnocultural resentment is significant in two (overall level of immigration and benefits for legal immigrants). The impact of immigrant resentment outweighs the impact of other variables in the models, notably perceptions of the national economy. Having more education consistently reduces the likelihood of restrictionist views, and being politically conservative increases the likelihood of such views. Context matters somewhat, and it does so in an immigrant-friendly way: living in a zip code with a higher percentage of Hispanic residents reduces opposition to giving benefits to illegal immigrants, and living in a zip code with a higher percentage of Asian residents reduces opposition to giving benefits to legal immigrants.

¹⁵ All three models were run with respondent’s income included as a dependent variable. Including income resulted in a loss of approximately 150 observations in each case, and income itself was insignificant in every model.

[Table 3 About Here]

To assess the actual magnitude of the impact of immigrant resentment and to compare it to other forms of resentment, it is useful to examine predicted probabilities in addition to probit coefficients. Figures 1, 2, and 3 display the predicted probabilities of saying that immigration should be decreased and that legal or illegal immigrants should be eligible for social services, as each level of resentment varies across its range and as all other independent variables are held constant at their means. Figure 1 shows that immigrant resentment and ethnocultural resentment each produce an impressive 42 percentage point increase in the likelihood of saying that immigration levels should decrease. A person who scores a 0 on the immigrant resentment scale has only a 15 percent chance of saying “decrease,” while a person who scores a 1 has a 57 percent chance. While racial resentment also has an impact, it never leads the probability of saying “decrease” to cross the 50% mark. In other words, both immigrant resentment and ethnocultural resentment change the average respondent’s predicted outcome as they move from 0 to 1 while racial resentment does not.

[Figures 1, 2, and 3 About Here]

Figure 2 shows that immigrant resentment and racial resentment have a nearly identical influence over whether people think that legal immigrants should be eligible for benefits. Both increase the predicted probability of opposing such eligibility by about 15 percentage points. Ethnocultural resentment, on the other hand, increases it by 23 percentage points. It should be noted, however, that even a person with a high degree of this more old-fashioned resentment still only has a 30% chance of opposing having legal immigrants be eligible for benefits.

Figure 3, on the other hand, shows that even the least resentful people are uncomfortable with the idea of providing benefits to illegal immigrants. That said, both immigrant resentment

and racial resentment increase opposition substantially. A person who scores a 0 on the immigrant resentment scale has 69 percent chance of opposing eligibility while a person who scores a 1 has a 95 percent chance, an increase of 26 percentage points. A person who scores a 0 on the racial resentment scale has a 63 percent chance of opposing eligibility while a person who scores a 1 has a 95 percent chance, an increase of 32 percentage points. The impact of ethnocultural resentment is statistically insignificant.

All three forms of resentment are clearly important to immigration policy attitudes. Perhaps it is not surprising that racial resentment would dominate when discussing benefits for illegal immigrants. After all, such resentment is grounded in beliefs about self-reliance and hard work. But more important for my purposes is that this analysis has added evidence that racial resentment and old-fashioned nativism are not the only types of anti-immigrant sentiment that shape policy views. Feeling that today's immigrants choose to violate civic republican and incorporationist norms is not only prevalent in American society, but it is also consequential. In two of the three models, it increases restrictionist sentiment by substantively significant margins. Its influence in the third model (benefits for legal immigrants) is weaker, but still notable. And in all three models, it is more important than many other traditional explanatory variables.

Conclusion

Racial resentment scholars are quick to acknowledge that the change in national norms that led to the demise of biological racism should be celebrated. But their mission is to point out that we still need to acknowledge the emergence of resentment, that resentment is based on inaccurate stereotypes, and that it possesses an enduring and powerful hold over white racial attitudes and policy preferences. The same can be said of immigrant resentment. While it is

important to celebrate the progress of egalitarianism, it is equally important to recognize and understand continuing aversions. Immigrant resentment is a modern set of beliefs that has evolved as national norms have evolved. It is based on inaccurate assessments of norm violation on the part of immigrants. And it has a powerful hold over white attitudes toward immigrants and immigration. Although many people genuinely believe that immigrants can assimilate and that they can become “good” Americans, they also believe that today’s immigrants choose not to. And in doing so, immigrants are seen to threaten the very idea of American identity itself. We may have come a long way since the days of the National Origins Act, but negative views of immigrants continue to be a source of tension and conflict. My goal, therefore, has not been to absolve Americans of nativist views, but rather to show that what it means to be nativist today is more complex than what it meant to be nativist before the current “egalitarian era.” Immigrant resentment is a modern anti-immigrant sentiment that exists alongside the view that immigrants violate the work ethic and alongside the enduring belief that the United States would simply be better off if most immigrants were white European Christians. These views have similar effects on immigration policy preferences, but they are not the same.

When Americans think about what being American means, they draw upon a broad range of norms and values. Some are liberal in nature, but others are more civic republican and incorporationist. They think that Americans should see themselves as American and should be informed about and involved in public life. Moreover, they recognize that most American families came from somewhere else, and they define America as a place where people can form a core identity while still maintaining the immigration-related diversity that makes the United States so unique among nations. Yet people sense that today’s immigrants violate these civic republican and incorporationist principles, and they resent them for it. This resentment exists to

the extent that people do in fact draw upon such principles to arrive at a particular understanding of what being American means. The irony, however, is that this resentment can *cause* the rejection of American society on the part of immigrants and minorities, which then gives it even more fuel.

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Appendix: Item wording and coding

Defining the content of American identity

I'm going to read a list of things that some people say are important in making someone a true American. The first one is _____. Would you say that it should be very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, or very unimportant in making someone a true American? (1 = very unimportant, 4 = very important; all items recoded to run from 0 to 1; See Schildkraut (2007) for empirical justifications for scale construction)

Civic republicanism "identity" scale:

Feeling American; Thinking of oneself as American; Having American citizenship

Civic republicanism "action" scale:

Doing volunteer work in one's community; Being informed about local and national politics; Being involved in local and national politics

Ethnoculturalism scale:

Being born in America; Being a Christian; Having European ancestors; Being white

Liberal work ethic:

Pursuing economic success through hard work

Incorporationism ("assimilation"):

Blending into the larger society

Incorporationism ("maintaining difference"):

Carrying on the cultural traditions of one's ancestors, such as the language and food

Level of education

What is the highest grade of school or year of college you have completed? (recoded to run from 0 – 1)

- 1 = less than high school diploma
- 2 = high school graduate
- 3 = trade/vocational school
- 4 = some college
- 5 = BA or BS
- 6 = some graduate school
- 7 = graduate level degree

Partisan identification

Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a Republican, an independent, a Democrat, or something else? (if R or D) Would you call yourself a strong Republican/Democrat or a not very strong Republican/Democrat? (if something else) Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party? (recoded to run from 0 – 1).

- 1 = strong Democrat
- 2 = Democrat
- 3 = leans Democrat
- 4 = Independent
- 5 = leans Republican
- 6 = Republican
- 7 = strong Republican

Ideological orientation

Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as conservative, moderate, or liberal?

0 = liberal; 0.5 = moderate; 1 = conservative

Household income (recoded to run from 0 – 1)

1 = <\$10,000; 2 = \$10-15,000; 3 = \$15-20,000; 4 = \$20-25,000; 5 = \$25-30,000; 6 = \$30-35,000;
7 = \$35-40,000; 8 = \$40-45,000; 9 = \$45-50,000; 10 = \$50-60,000; 11 = \$60-75,000; 12 = \$75-
100,000; 13 = \$100-125,000; 14 = \$125-150,000; 15 = \$150-200,000; 16 = over \$200,000

National economy

Would you say that in the past year the national economy has gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse?

0 = better; 0.5 = stayed the same; 1 = gotten worse

Group level discrimination

0 – 1 scale formed by asking respondents:

In general, do you think discrimination against whites is a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem in schools? What about in the workplace? What about in preventing whites in general from succeeding in America

Individual level discrimination

0 – 1 scale formed by asking respondents:

Do you think you have ever been denied a job or a promotion because of your racial or ethnic background? Do you think you generally receive worse service than other people at restaurants or stores because of your racial or ethnic background? Do you think your racial or ethnic background has made it difficult for you to succeed in America?

Table 1: Immigrant resentment, racial resentment, and ethnocultural resentment

	% strongly agree	% somewhat agree	N
<i>Immigrant resentment</i>			
Immigrants today take advantage of jobs and opportunities here without doing enough to give back to the community	17	27	1525
Immigrants today come to think of themselves as Americans just as much as immigrants from earlier eras did*	9	21	1519
Immigrants should really know what's going on in the United States if they want to stay here, but a lot of them just don't want to be bothered	33	29	1525
Blending into the larger society while maintaining cultural traditions is difficult, but a lot of immigrants today seem to do a good job of it*	3	10	1570
If immigrants only tried harder to fit in, then more Americans would accept their cultural differences	20	33	1573
<i>Racial resentment</i>			
Irish, Italians, and Jews overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Today's immigrants should do the same.	49	31	1554
Years of discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for immigrants to work their way out of the lower class*	27	26	1601
If immigrants would only try harder, they could be just as well off as people born in America	22	27	1587
Over the last few years, immigrants have gotten less than they deserve*	37	36	1480
<i>Ethnocultural resentment</i>			
The country would be better off if more of our immigrants were from Europe instead of from Asia and Latin America	3	8	1551
Immigrants who are Muslim just won't ever seem American to me	7	13	1547
The idea of an America where most people are not white bothers me	5	11	1604

Note : Whites only, "don't know" excluded.

* = reverse coded (strongly disagree and somewhat presented in cells)

Source : 21st Century Americanism Survey, 2004.

Table 2: Determinants of immigrant resentment, racial resentment, and ethnocultural resentment

<i>Independent variable</i>	<i>Immigrant Resentment</i>	<i>Racial Resentment</i>	<i>Ethnocultural Resentment</i>
Age	0.05 (0.03)	0.07** (0.03)	0.13*** (0.03)
Education	-0.08*** (0.03)	-0.09*** (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Republican	0.08*** (0.02)	0.09*** (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)
Conservative	-0.01 (0.02)	0.05** (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)
Household income	-0.05* (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	0.04* (0.02)
National economy getting worse	0.03 (0.02)	-0.03* (0.02)	-0.01 (0.01)
% Hispanic in zip code	0.09*** (0.04)	0.05 (0.04)	-0.07** (0.03)
% Asian in zip code	0.13 (0.08)	0.10 (0.08)	0.01 (0.07)
Ethnoculturalism	0.30*** (0.04)	-0.01 (0.03)	0.40*** (0.03)
Civic republicanism ("action")	0.02 (0.04)	-0.06* (0.03)	-0.08** (0.03)
Civic republicanism ("identity")	0.29*** (0.04)	0.34*** (0.42)	0.04 (0.04)
True American should pursue economic success through hard work	0.05 (0.03)	0.12*** (0.03)	0.04* (0.02)
True Americans should blend into the larger society	0.07*** (0.02)	0.08*** (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
True Americans should carry on the cultural traditions of their ancestors	-0.07*** (0.02)	-0.08*** (0.02)	-0.06*** (0.02)
Perceives group level discrimination	0.24*** (0.03)	0.13*** (0.02)	0.10*** (0.02)
Perceives individual level discrimination	-0.08** (0.04)	-0.0004 (0.03)	0.04 (0.04)
Constant	0.04	0.14	-0.002
N	1123	1128	1126
R-squared	0.38	0.34	0.32
F	48.05	44.81	33.34

Note : *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; robust standard errors in parentheses.

Dependent variables range from 0 to 1, where 1 = highest level of resentment; whites only.

Source : 21st Century Americanism Survey, 2004.

Table 3: Determinants of immigration policy preferences

<i>Independent variable</i>	<i>Overall level of immigration</i>	<i>Benefits for legal immigrants</i>	<i>Benefits for illegal immigrants</i>
Immigrant resentment	1.23** (0.16)	0.78** (0.19)	1.19** (0.20)
Racial resentment	0.72** (0.18)	0.98** (0.23)	1.31** (0.23)
Ethnocultural resentment	1.14** (0.18)	0.97** (0.19)	0.38 (0.26)
Age	-0.29* (0.16)	0.08 (0.18)	-0.18 (0.23)
Education	-0.51** (0.12)	-0.44** (0.14)	-0.40** (0.16)
Republican	0.03 (0.12)	0.18 (0.14)	0.40** (0.15)
Conservative	0.23** (0.12)	0.003 (0.13)	0.42** (0.15)
National economy getting worse	0.10 (0.10)	0.17 (0.11)	-0.20* (0.12)
% Hispanic in zip code	-0.07 (0.22)	0.02 (0.28)	-0.46* (0.28)
% Asian in zip code	-0.20 (0.43)	-1.06* (0.55)	0.78 (0.53)
Cutpoint 1	-0.39 (0.18)	1.94 (0.22)	-0.13 (0.21)
Cutpoint 2	1.49 (0.19)	2.41 (0.23)	0.42 (0.21)
Chi-square	283.75	174.95	248.00
N	1230	1316	1312

Note : *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; robust standard errors in parentheses.

Dependent variables range from 0 to 1, where 1 = highest level of resentment; whites only.

Cell entries are ordered probit coefficients

Source : 21st Century Americanism Survey, 2004.

Figure 1: The probability of saying immigration should be decreased, as resentment varies

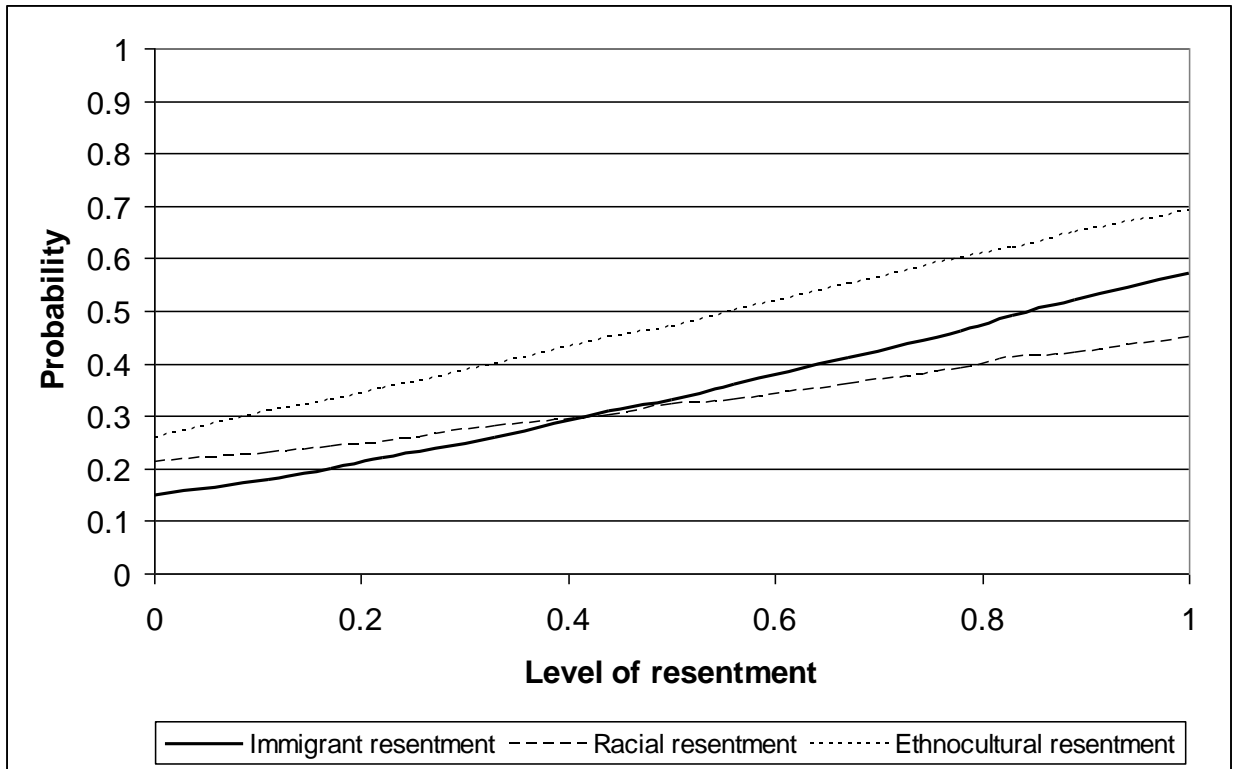


Figure 2: The probability of saying legal immigrants should not receive benefits, as resentment varies

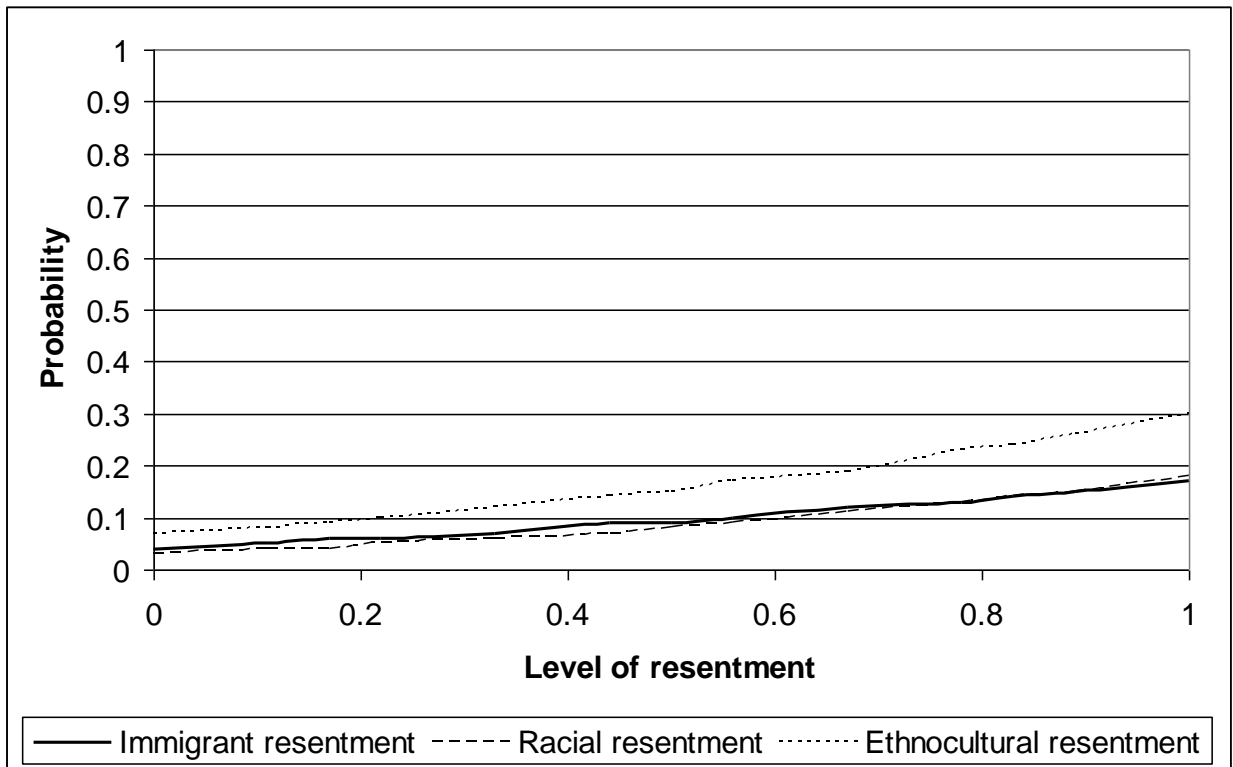
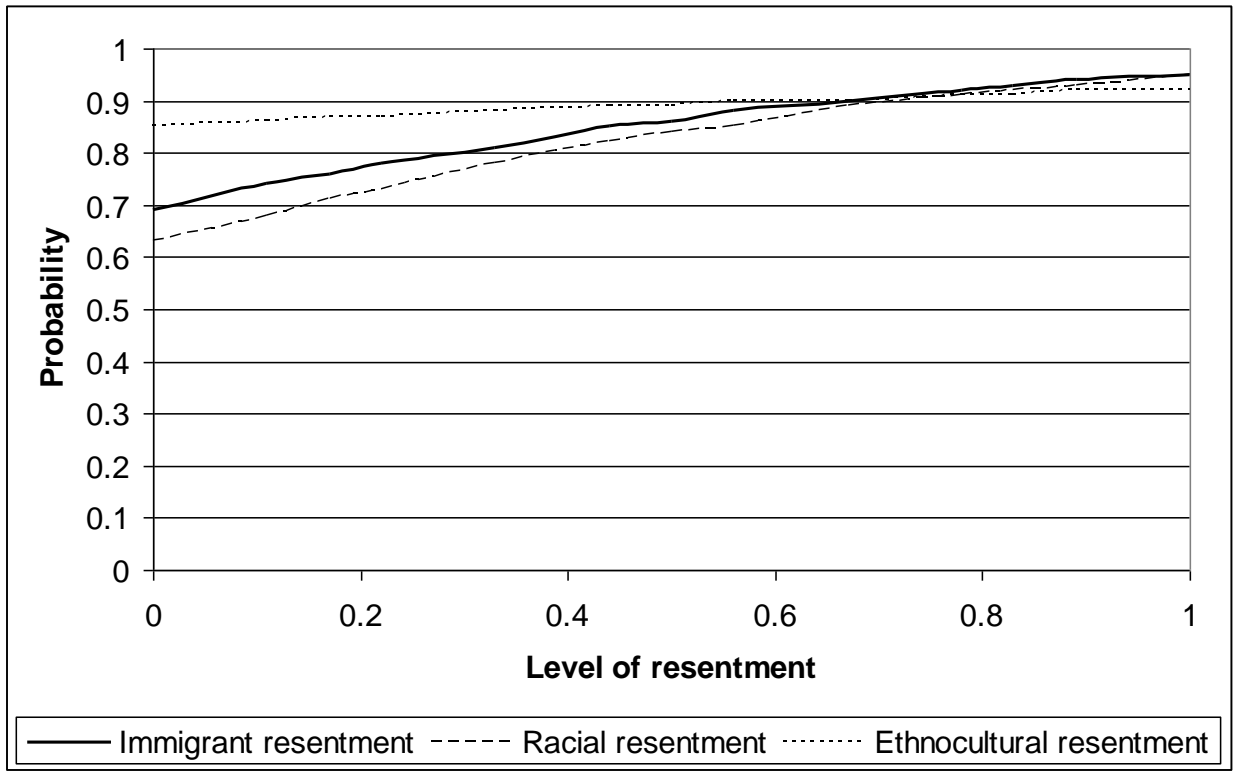


Figure 3: The probability of saying illegal immigrants should not receive benefits, as resentment varies



Source: 21st Century Americanism Survey, 2004