

2007

# A nation divided : an exploration of national identity and immigration through analysis of naturalized Mexican and non-Hispanic white citizen's attitudes toward undocumented immigration in the United States

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Mekhala M. Koshy  
A nation divided: An exploration of  
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### ABSTRACT

This study sought to understand the intersection of citizenship status and national identity as factors impacting perceptions of undocumented immigration in the U.S. Increased national identity is proposed to coincide with low levels of support and more negative associations with undocumented immigration. An additional hypothesis asserts immigrants and non-immigrants alike will illustrate parallel attitudes, though the naturalized group will retain more positive attitudes towards the impact and future of U.S. immigration. The current research was undertaken to illustrate how immigrants are compelled towards native-cultural distancing to gain access to privileges afforded to adherents to Anglo practices deemed as 'American' culture.

Naturalized Mexican citizens and non-Hispanic White citizens of the United States represented two major citizen groups in this study. Research materials were distributed and achieved a total of 105 participants, including 26 naturalized Mexican citizens and 79 non-Hispanic White citizens. Participants completed a 45-questionnaire that targeted the following topics: national identity, language, immigrant acculturation,

policy and practice, group size perceptions, as well as independent questions addressing the influence of undocumented immigration within the U.S.

Significance was determined in certain content areas illustrating that the naturalized group asserts higher levels of support and positive affiliation towards U.S. immigration. Still, results indicated only slight group variability to support the expectation that the citizen groups share equivalent attitudes. Furthermore, findings support the hypothesis that increased national identity coincides with negative attitudes regarding immigration. Research implications suggest current immigration practices are in place to promote the interests of a perceived homogenous American identity advocated by an Anglo-American belief system.

A NATION DIVIDED: AN EXPLORATION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AND  
IMMIGRATION THROUGH ANALYSIS OF NATURALIZED MEXICAN AND  
NON-HISPANIC WHITE CITIZENS' ATTITUDES TOWARD UNDOCUMENTED  
IMMIGRATION IN THE UNITED STATES

A project based upon an independent investigation,  
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Social Work.

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2007

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis could not have been completed without the love and support of many significant people for whom I am immensely grateful.

I wish to thank Barbara Lui for her time and patience throughout the arduous learning process I engaged in this research; Stewart Steffey and Nidia Ponce for their invaluable feedback and help on the survey translation; Marjorie Postal without whose expertise in statistics I would have been a jumble of numbers; David Fentin for his ability to sit with me through my frustrations and through my triumphs such that I sustained the passion for pursuing my research; to all the friends, colleagues and family who helped me recruit participants; thank you to the Smith College School for Social Work Alumni Association whose grant helped me complete the research and provided validation to continue to pursue this important topic; to Susan and Gary Fentin who made their home my refuge and work sanctuary; and most importantly, to each individual who took the time and sometimes a risk to consider immigration at a personal level by participating in the study, to you I am indebted.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Immigration has been a significant source of national debate in the United States for hundreds of years. As an evolving country of migrants representing myriad nations and cultures, immigration policy and media renderings of immigrants creates a framework through which the American public develops both positive and negative attitudes towards movement across national borders.

Throughout centuries of building America's story, immigration reform and practice preserve a perceived national identity. During Spring 2006 and 2007 immigrants and supporters flooded streets across the country to challenge current and future immigration reform. In the weeks that followed people from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds engaged dialogue regarding rights for and against immigrant populations. Policy and practice are polarizing agents to the immigration debate and the disparate public perspectives offer information about the divisiveness of immigration reform. The multiplicity of perspectives can also be a tool with which to construct a more unified national identity reflecting the changing needs of an evolving country of immigrants.

Current literature and research on immigration illustrate the factors creating diverse attitudes towards immigration. Most recently, literature focuses on the economic impact of immigration in the United States with particular consideration for the American economy, the job market and job security, and immigrants' access to services. There is



limited literature comparing white American citizens to immigrant citizens of color in their views regarding the impact of immigration on an American cultural identity.

This study addresses if there are differences between naturalized Mexican and non-Hispanic white citizens' attitudes towards undocumented immigration in the United States. Specifically, the study will determine whether race is a factor influencing similar or different views towards immigration. Patriotism and national identity affiliation, group size perception, expectations regarding immigrant assimilation, and perceived commonalities with non-dominant groups are identified variables impacting attitudes. Further still, the study considers whether local and national immigration legislation dictates and influences public opinion. Understanding attitudes towards undocumented immigration in the U.S. provides information for how ethnically and racially diverse "members" of American society can develop affiliation for "non-members" in return.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### *Background*

The United States is a country built on the work and desire of diverse immigrant groups. The story of immigration in the U.S. is one of repeated race-based immigration practices and exclusions. Throughout decades of resettlement into the U.S., immigration policy and practice instituted a cycle that sustains power within the hands of the white governing classes. From the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act to the Bracero Program of 1942 to the 1965 Immigration and Nationalization Act, reform shapes immigration to the United States into a culture of “us” against “them” (Gonzales-Berry, 2005; Ma, 2000; Thomson, 2004).

Being “American” holds various meanings for people living in and outside of the current U.S. population. As de la Garza et. al (1994) explain:

... to be American indicates membership in a self-consciously created political community whose cultural identity continuously evolves...Immigrants become Americans (i.e., naturalize, through publicly pledging allegiance to the creed)—after taking English and civics classes designed to socialize them into the creed. (p. 228)

According to de la Garza, the American identity is a constructed political entity with an evolving cultural component. Under these terms, the U.S. socializes immigrants into the existing belief system by requiring immigrants to declare their loyalty to America. Doing

so grants an immigrant closer access to the civil liberties and political circles constructing the national culture. As a result, immigrants oftentimes turn away from native ancestral traditions for the sake of an *acquired* identity.

Immigrants from the first period of resettlement to the U.S. initially defined the American national identity as it currently exists. The naturalization law of 1790 limiting citizenship to immigrants who were “free white persons” illustrates how race became a determining factor for nationalism in the early part of U.S. immigration (Alba & Nee, 2003). While immigration to the U.S. continues, many Americans and representing political entities continually declare an immigrant “out group”. These immigrant outsiders are targeted as a threat to the perceived unified American collective. This was the case with the Irish, Italian, and German immigrants who at one time struggled against the British elite and each other as a means of acceptance. As Samuel P. Huntington (2004) asserts, these immigrant groups “were in various ways compelled, induced, and persuaded to adhere to the central elements of the Anglo-Protestant culture,” (p. 61). Given the influx of ethnic immigrants the initial groups of Irish, Italian and German migrants defied native cultural traditions in order to be accepted into the dominant regime of the time. Such longstanding practice persists in contemporary immigration discussions, precluding a need to transform the established “American national identity” to more accurately reflect the changing needs of the country’s people.

The following literature has been compiled to illustrate a timeline of immigration practice and policy in the United States. Immigration reform, historically created by the dominant white classes, has established a centuries-old framework for the American public to develop attitudes about undocumented immigration in the U.S. As migration to

the U.S. continues, ethnic and racial immigration heighten public consciousness for securing American nationalism according to antiquated definitions. The literature will indicate how race-based immigration legislation follows a continuum that divides the nation and prevents the public from redefining a national American identity.

### *Constructing a Nation*

“Nationhood” has emerged over time as a fixed entity largely determined by the dominant classes of a given time period. Identifying with the proposed national identity indicates allegiance to a single nation and has emerged as the measure by which an individual is deemed “American.” Li & Brewer (2004) define nationalism as a sense of one’s own country as superior to others, thereby declaring it as the dominant entity. Li & Brewer (2004) expand by identifying “patriotism” congruent to nationalism, conceived of as positive love for one’s own country characterized by secure in-group identification. According to this definition, Americans illustrates love for the United States by identifying the country and the dominant group as superior. A patriotic American is distinguished by membership in the existing dominant group.

White, Anglo traditions determined membership in broader society and established the model by which the U.S. indoctrinates immigrants into the dominant cultural ideology. Takacs (1999) explains, “nation as an entity unaffected by ideology...It is limited by geographic borders that are tangible and stable, and its people are united by ties of blood, language and culture” (p. 593). Takacs’ rationalized that shared blood and common language signifies membership in the nation at large. Furthermore, Phinney (2003) argues national identity among ethnically diverse groups is marked by integration into the society at large (p. 74). The intersection between nationalism and

patriotism and group membership is the foreground from which initial conceptualizations developed around immigration to the United States.

Federal and state legislation became primary mechanisms propelling nationalism and patriotism into American public discourse around immigration. White, British, and Protestant immigrants from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century constructed a membership hierarchy to enforce their supremacy. Through the Naturalization Act of 1790 free, white persons established the legislation that granted and determined citizenship status (Alba & Nee, 2003; Takacs, 1999). Doing so not only secured their power, it also served to define “nationhood.” Caucasian mores and religious traditions, their blood and their language were staged against present and future immigrant groups of color. Takacs (1999) writes “control over immigration became the means of reasserting control over national identity” (p. 598). Over time legislation became a primary guide for the American public to construct relationships to various ethnic immigrant groups.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century increasing numbers of Chinese people immigrated to the U.S. west. By 1882 congress drafted the Chinese Exclusion Act in response to a perceived cultural threat presented by Chinese immigrants (Alba & Nee, 2003; Ma, 2000). The legislation effectively declared an end to open immigration and shifted the lens through which the public considered immigrants’ impact on the country. Diverse ethnic immigrant groups were no longer linked by a mutual appreciation for individual industriousness and economic striving. Instead, the white majority’s increasing sense of threat from the Chinese compelled the public to embrace concepts such as ‘invader’ and ‘alien’ into the immigration discourse.

Racial categorizations assigned to immigrants in the U.S. by white members of society positioned migrants of color as the primary threat to the American family. “Orientals” customs and practices challenged white, Anglo-protestant traditions in place. Takacs (1999) explains, “The Chinese embodied the threat of miscegenation and contamination, and this compelled their exclusion from the version of national identity...” established at the time (p. 598). In order for national identity to remain within the hands of the dominant classes, there could be no shared blood, no shared customs. Chinese customs regarding food, clothing, and hair style threatened the dominant, white classes. Unfamiliar racial and ethnic immigrant rituals introduced fears that the white majority conceptualized as infractions on the cultural nationhood they were determined to institute. The Chinese Exclusion Act represents a turning point in immigration legislation. White, Protestant America identified reform not only as their tool to establish national identity; reform also served to prevent what they perceived as a racially-driven cultural invasion on American nationalism.

In the years following the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, legislative bodies achieved continued success combating what they understood as the immigrants’ cultural assault on American nationalism. With increasing immigration from various European countries, the white, Protestant, British elite identified another threat emerging. To combat Eastern and Southern Europeans’ influence in the American sphere, the Immigration Act of 1924 favored Nordic-based European immigrants (Ngai, 1999). Similar to Chinese immigration, the racially dominant classes designated Eastern and Southern Europeans as the dark, non-Protestant, culturally inferior foreigners. Legislation continued to wield its power. White America denigrated non-western

European immigration in an effort to bolster controls over the cultural and racial impact of immigration in the U.S.

### *American Culture Defined*

Simultaneously as arriving immigrant groups of color were deemed cultural invaders to white members of society, the public, social theorists and anthropologists developed additional foci related to immigration. *Acculturation* burgeoned as a new directive focus in immigration debates. According to the western European ruling classes in the U.S., immigrants need to illustrate their willingness to assume the dominant culture. Contemporary immigration literature most often refers back to early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century definitions for acculturation. One characterization proposed the following:

Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936, p. 149)

An alternate understanding defined acculturation as follows:

...the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems. Acculturative change may be the consequence of direct cultural transmission; it may be derived from non-cultural causes, such as ecological or demographic modification induced by an impinging culture; it may be delayed, as with internal adjustments following upon the acceptance of alien traits and patterns; or it may be a reactive adaptation of traditional modes of life (Social Science Research Council, 1954, p. 974)

These two commonly referenced definitions of acculturation conclude the following: 1) two independent cultures come into contact with one another; 2) change results in either one or both of the interacting entities; 3) delayed, adaptive or reactive responses emerge and are based on an acceptance or rejection of the non-familiar traits and practices.

Upon arrival on U.S. land, immigrants' emotional, political and cultural identity begins to change. Transformation occurs in both immigrants and the existing culture when the host country accepts and/or rejects particular practices introduced by various immigrant groups. The potential for exchange between the receiving country and the incoming immigrants is a critical piece for understanding immigration in the U.S. Historically, legislative and public practices indicate that American culture and identity are reflective rather than reciprocal. The dominant culture does not change. Instead, immigrants must mold to the belief system already in place. Acculturation in the U.S. assumes immigrants cannot wholly identify as "American" and simultaneously preserve ethnic identity. Such an existence is incongruent with national American identity because it rejects the dominant, white ideology. The U.S. requires immigrants to reject native culture in order to be accepted by the dominant culture.

*Assimilation* more directly reflects the process through which an individual rejects the old/native culture and assumes the existing cultural framework. Acculturation and assimilation have the following relationship: assimilation is the psychological process immigrants undergo in order to acculturate into the U.S. One definition of assimilation is as follows:

Assimilation is a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life (Park & Burgess, 1921, p.735).

According to this description, assimilation is merging with a fixed, homogeneous identity. Assimilation is an ongoing process created by blending ideas and memories; this is analogous to the "melting pot" theory commonly referred to in discussions on



immigration. Many Americans may hold the belief that immigrants must assume the host country's culture in order to be accepted. For the purposes of the current study, the terms *acculturation* and *assimilation* will be used interchangeably to reflect the multi-layered adaptive processes immigrants engage upon moving to the U.S.

Assimilation differs dramatically from a *multicultural* society that places a positive emphasis on sustaining cultural diversity among the multitudes (George & Yancey, 2004). Ronald Steel's (1998) commentary suggests multiculturalism creates a society of subcultures in which individuals are encouraged to embrace group loyalty and reject a larger national identity (p. 13). Steel's view illustrates a common perception that ethnic identity and American nationalism are mutually exclusive entities. Still, we do not fully understand whether American citizens differentiate between acculturation, assimilation, and the possibility of a multicultural society. The literature lacks a comprehensive analysis of public attitudes toward immigrants' cultural preservation and the consequent positive influence this has on American nationalism.

Public opinions regarding acculturation, assimilation and nationalism drive and are driven by the reciprocal relationship shared with immigration policy. In fact, race-based immigration reform weaves a tale throughout U.S. history. Mexico specifically, as the southern border country with virtually unlimited access to the United States, has been classified as a particular threat to the nation's cultural story.

#### *Mexico and the United States: A Story Unfolded*

In the early part of the twentieth century before World War I, Mexicans were considered an integral part of the American agricultural and labor force. Free movement between the U.S. and Mexico permitted Mexicans to profit economically while still

helping to set tracks for the railroads, clear ranch land for farming, and dig irrigation canals to increase the developing national marketplace of the United States (Martinez, 1976; Ngai, 1999). Here we first note the national trend of employing immigrant labor in an effort to sustain continued economic success.

During the post-WW I period of agricultural expansion, the Mexican population in the United States grew to more than 1.4 million, largely concentrated in the U.S. southwest region (Miller & Miller, 1996; Ngai, 2004). Despite ever-increasing need for labor, the growing Mexican population posed a threat to the cultural economy European immigrants had secured in the U.S. The Mexican labor forces' free movement across borders established an equal playing field between employers and employees. Migrants had leverage for negotiating wages and working conditions such that immigrant rights became an increasing threat to U.S. employers. The U.S. government deemed it necessary to impose greater immigration restrictions and consequently introduced tighter border controls along the Mexico-U.S. border.

Shortly thereafter, government officials enacted the 1921 Quota Act. The quota system limited yearly immigration to 3 percent of the foreign-born population, determined by national origin from the 1910 census (Miller & Miller, 1996). Quota-based immigration regulation had a twofold effect: 1) the legislation restricted free movement and growth between the U.S. border-states and Mexico; 2) the 1910 census favored European immigration over immigration by groups of color, thereby shaping the future face of U.S. immigration. Despite opposing indicators many members of White America believed there was diminishing need for foreign labor. Stated simply, migrants symbolized job and wage competition in a market to which the dominant white classes

believed they were entitled. The quota created a social consciousness that further legitimized segregation between Mexican migrants and their European counterparts in the United States. Migration controls along the south not only halted the growth of the ethnic Mexican population in the U.S., it also stifled Mexican migrants from achieving relative economic success in the United States.

The 1942 Bracero Program introduced race-based immigration reform specifically geared toward immigration from Mexico. Specifically, the Bracero program created the contract-labor system, thereby eliminating the laborers' rights to negotiate for increased wages and better working conditions (Ngai, 2004). Instead, laborers were subject to conditions created by employers who oftentimes sought the cheapest labor willing to subsist in meager living situations. Eventually employers seeking individual profit destabilized the Bracero program by creating a market for accessing the cheapest labor willing to live outside the government's watchful eye (Ngai, 2004). U.S. employers' repeated tendency to undercut the Bracero Program encouraged undocumented immigration. Southern migrants continued to cross borders to access available wages and opportunity. As a result, the American public began to perceive Mexican migrants as rule breakers who continued to flood the United States. Unfortunately, migrants bore the brunt of negative associations over their employers who were members of the dominant, White, governing bodies.

#### *Designating an Outcast*

Mexican migrants assumed the negative public images imposed by early immigration reform and exclusions, a role that proceeded into the late part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Figure estimates of both documented and undocumented immigrants are one

mode by which media reports skew public perceptions on immigration. U.S.

Immigration and Naturalization Service (2002) report the annual number of permanent immigrants admitted in 2000 was about 850,000 (Hill & Wong, 2005). At the same time in 2000, Hispanics made up 12 percent of the total U.S. population (Huntington, 2004) with numbers continually growing. Numeric estimates present the public with information how immigration appears across the country.

Still, many statisticians argue it is difficult to attain accurate estimates of immigrants in the U.S. because of documented versus undocumented status. According to Miller & Miller (1996) estimates on the number of undocumented Mexicans in the U.S. in the 1990's ranged between 3 million to 8 million persons. This denotes an enormous gap in U.S. estimates of undocumented migrants that continues into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. By using census data from both the U.S. and Mexico, Hill & Wong (2005) estimated the annual level of net emigration from Mexico to the United States during 1990-2000 of individuals aged 10-80 years fell between 324,000-440,000. Hill & Wong's 2005 findings compare to INS reports and reveal the propensity in the U.S. to overestimate net immigration from Mexico. Such findings discount assertions that U.S. census data accurately reflects the number of undocumented workers in the U.S.; furthermore, miscalculating the undocumented Mexican population serves to heighten public fears concerning the impact of immigration on the U.S. economy and culture.

Mexican migrants are one of many groups continually moving into the United States, making up the second largest minority group in the country (Miller & Miller, 1996). Source country earnings and distance from the U.S. influence migration patterns from Mexico (Bratsberg, 1995; Larson, 2004). The 1965 Immigration and Naturalization

Act established a 20,000-person/year visa cap across all international immigration. Mexicans are proportionally larger compared to other immigrant groups in the U.S. Proportionally lower legal visa allowances relative to distance from the U.S. compared with other countries, ease of access to the U.S., and wage-earning gap offer possible explanations for this tendency (Espenshade cited in Bratsberg, 1995; Thomson, 2004). In fact, findings show from 1980-1981 the volume of undocumented immigration increased with the number of restricted visas provided to the source country (Bratsberg, 1995). Subsequently, Mexicans have become the visibly dominant immigrant group (Larson, 2004; Miller & Miller 1996).

Mexican immigrants' increased visibility by native-born citizens potentially impacts the formation and sustainability of negative attitudes towards Mexican immigrants. In fact, group-size perception has been found to weigh heavily on what majority-group members think about immigration and racial minorities (Alba, Rumbaut, & Marotz, 2205). Furthermore, recent research by mainstream media sources reveal that the American public views immigrants as both intrusive and law-breaking members of society (TIME, Barlett, D.L., Steele, J.B., Karmatz, L., & Levinstein, J, 2004; USA Today, 2005). When paired with notions that immigrants are increasing in number in the U.S., the public responds by seeking a stop to continued immigrant influx.

#### *Exercising Immigration: Practice and Policy*

Escalating fears associated with Mexican immigration compel the public to make governmental appeals to boost border controls and employer sanctions (Fragomen, 1997; Joppke, 1998). While the public seeks amplified immigration controls, gaps between documentation restrictions and policy enforcement secure the public's negative

associations with Mexican immigrants. Despite existing hiring requirements for U.S. employers to secure documents from potential employees (Fragomen, 1997) laws may not be properly enforced as was the case with the Bracero program (Ngai, 2000).

President Bill Clinton's 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Illegal Immigrant Responsibility Act further perpetuated issues regarding hiring practices. The Bill essentially absolved employers from their legal responsibilities when they hire undocumented immigrants. As is clearly indicated by the title, Clinton's legislation sanctioned protective measures for employers by placing the onus upon migrants; the legislation fostered negative public perceptions by assigning the greatest responsibility for undocumented immigration in the U.S. to immigrants. Legislative maneuvering such as this displaces the necessity for a comprehensive, long-term response to undocumented immigration; in addition, similar legislation perpetuates conceptions of immigrants as "illegal," "irresponsible," and requiring "reform."

The Temporary Guestworker program offered in 2004 and again in 2006 is another contemporary reflection on reform that assigns immigrants with a specific role within American economy and culture. Similar to the extinguished Bracero program from the 1940's, President George W. Bush's program exemplifies government-sanctioned bypass on issues concerning illegal hiring practices and employers' exploitation of cheap, migrant labor (Mayer, 2005). Like the 1942 Bracero reform, Bush's program is a façade, suggesting the measure benefits immigrants and employers alike; however, at a closer glance one can easily decipher how the 2006 Guestworker proposal mirrors the contract-labor system previously setting the tone for immigrant relations. By confining employees to a specified job-type, the Guestworker program

secures bargaining power within the hands of employers. The unequal playing field presented to guestworkers prevents them from competing in the host country's comprehensive labor market (Mayer, 2005). Bush's 2006 program highlights a contract worker system that is the antithesis of a free labor society conceived in the original makings of a democratic America (Ngai, 2004). The reform provides room for the government to deny equal access and rights to workers based on their contractual status.

Further still as the title suggests, immigrants granted "temporary guestworker status" are in the U.S. on a conditional basis. Translation: Mexican immigrants are U.S. guests whose exclusive role is to provide low-cost labor to American farmers and industry after which point they must return to their native country (Campo, 2004; Gonzales-Berry, 2005). Legislation that overtly assigns Mexican immigrants the title of "guests" in the U.S. fosters the *us* against *them* mentality. Bush's program limits Mexican immigrants' relevance to the U.S. to laboring, suggesting they contribute little else to American identity and culture.

Advocates for Bush's 2006 Temporary Guestworker Program justify the contractual system of immigration legislation, citing the impact on domestic labor and employment (Fullerton & Sprinkle, 2004). According to Fullerton & Sprinkle (2004) Mexico's "labor code rigidities" (p. 70) produce limited opportunities for the country's lower-skilled workers. The claim suggests Mexicans will continue to move north of the border so long as labor shortages persist in the U.S. paired with complementary employment shortages in Mexico. Additionally, Fullerton and Sprinkle (2004) imply that increased wages for migrant workers in the United States subsequently destroy lower operating costs that U.S. companies appreciate by using international production

facilities. Here is an explicit example in which civil rights are submerged to corporate profit. Such shortsighted analysis highlights the limited value placed on providing equal access to fair wages and civil liberties. These refrains are transferred to the public domain and become a basis for immigration rhetoric.

The Bracero Program, Illegal Immigration Reform, and Temporary Guestworker Program are examples of legislation that provide a context by which the public understands immigration in the U.S. Despite assertions that current immigration reform equally benefits the American economy and migrant populations, immigration's past and present story require alternate interpretations. The post September 11th cultural landscape heightened attention to immigration policy and practice. Here we refer back to public expectancies related to immigrant acculturation and assimilation into the U.S. as symbols of loyalty to a European-based American national identity.

Current legislation reflects the unreasonable expectations between on relations between Mexico and the U.S. Majority group members employ multiple avenues to identify Mexican immigrants as an out-group from the perceived homogeneous society. Groups identify uncommon language and cultural customs as a divide between one another; outward differences impact the degree to which individuals find empathy for the experiences and pressures placed on immigrants as they attempt to merge with a host country. Mexican migrants thereby become an identified target of more generalized negative public opinions regarding the impact of immigration in the U.S. Certainly, increased traffic along the southern border may shift attitudes about the ways in which Mexican immigration is perceived to impact a national American identity. The literature



leaves room to investigate the intersection between national affiliation to the U.S., exposure to identified out-groups, and subsequent associations with acculturation.

*Current Affairs: The State of Mexican-U.S. Immigration in the United States*

Dominant cultural concerns over official state languages, access to social services, and education reveal additional sources sparking the immigration debate across the United States. These same issues become particularly stringent as the public reflects on rights for undocumented immigrants; many American citizens may consider these migrants to be illegal. Regardless of the story that identifies an immigrant as undocumented in the U.S., divisions are already in place to separate the majority from the minority.

California has become one political hotbed where bi-lingual education and official state languages are consistently debated between the Mexican and non-Hispanic white populations. Both Hispanic and non-Hispanics contested language issues in California's Proposition 187. Regardless, proponents across the nation argue that bi-lingual education in the public schools promotes cultural preservation. Opponents suggest bi-lingual education encourages separation between different ethnic and racial groups. Unfortunately, the debate pits Spanish against English and compels voters to see their two choices as mutually exclusive. As Ruben Navarrette Jr. (2006) commented, "...if the only issue is that people enter the country legally, what difference does it make what language they speak once they arrive?" The bilingual language debate polarizes the public and prevents a deeper level of cross-cultural tolerance based on people's longstanding fears about illegal immigration from Mexico in particular.

As was previously discussed group size perceptions is important information that informs the public about how to understand the impact of immigration. Almost half of Americans believe whites are a minority, a belief predominantly held by male, authoritarian figures (Alba, Rumbaut, & Marotz, 2005; Ommundsen & Larson, 1997). The National Opinion Research Center conducted a General Social Survey using a Multi-Ethnic United States test on non-institutionalized, English-speaking respondents regarding estimated group size. Using open-ended questions findings indicated that attitudes about immigration become increasingly unfavorable as perceptions of group size move away from a white-majority (Alba, Rumbaut, & Marotz, 2005). People of color were found to make the greatest margin of error in size perception of their own and other minority groups. Furthermore, ballot initiatives in California from 1986 show 41 percent of Hispanics vote in favor of designating English as the state's official language, which was supported at 58 percent two years later (Skerry, 1993, 285). Distorted group size perception and debates over official language are cues for considering how naturalized immigrants' sense of U.S. nationalism influences internalizations of other and/or same racial and ethnic groups.

Despite immigration to the U.S. from numerous countries, immigration reform gives particular focus to migration along the Mexican border. Thus explains the target of English-only language programs, increased taxes to fund southern border controls, worker documentation restrictions, and measures such as Bush's Temporary Guestworker Program. Racial profiling illustrated through immigration policy and practice tells an important story to the American public, a story that influences public associations with Mexican migrants. As the largest immigrant-majority in the U.S. (Larson, 2004),

Mexicans and Latin Americans may have to assume the greatest responsibility for undocumented immigration and its perceived economic and social impact.

The constant shift in responsibility from employers and lawmakers to undocumented workers and immigrants illustrates how Mexican migrants are consistently scapegoated into the role of illegal aliens in the public domain (TIME, Barlett, D.L., Steele, J.B., Karmatz, L., & Levinstein, J, 2004; USA Today, 2005). Subsequently, migrants are forced to compete with the negative associations affixed to their immigrant status. The dominant ruling classes possess the greatest influence in the economic marketplace over foreign employees; simultaneously, the majority group has the power to define and shape public perceptions about Mexican immigrants' impact on culture.

*Immigration and Culture: The Psychological Intersection*

The commonly applied negative associations of Mexican immigrants may have a bearing on naturalized Mexican citizens' experiences in the U.S. Notably, the public most commonly associates Mexican immigrants with abusing social services, being drug smugglers and/or undocumented, and other associated negative expectancies (Aguirre Jr., 2004). Still, Mexican citizens experience relatively equal stress levels compared to Mexican-Americans and non-Hispanic Whites (Bratter & Eschbach, 2005). Perhaps the most germane link to such outcomes is the equally relevant finding that Mexican citizens employ denial, religion, and positive reframing as coping styles (Farley, 1995), perhaps to combat the negative representations assigned by the dominant classes.

Additional research on Mexican immigrants' mental health show interesting results. Stress levels are further reduced by social supports available, and contrastingly increased according to feelings of marginalization, dangerous border crossing, restricted

mobility, and exploitability (Bratter & Eschbach, 2005; Farley, 1995; Rodriguez & DeWolfe, 1990; Sullivan & Rehm, 2005). Acculturative and psychological stress associated with feelings of marginality and exploitability may influence the Mexican immigrant population's perceptions about undocumented immigration. Additional exploration is required to consider how the naturalized Mexican population's negative versus positive experiences of acceptance by the dominant culture affect attitudes towards undocumented immigrants.

While there is research illustrating the coping mechanisms employed by immigrants, the pejorative traits commonly associated with Mexican immigrants suggest their increased vulnerability to psychological health issues compared to non-Hispanic whites. In fact, migrant farm workers have been found to be particularly susceptible to psychological risk due to acculturative stress (Hovey & Magana, 2002). Greatest risk is associated with language barriers, fear of deportation/immigration status, lower socioeconomic status, and discrimination (Cervantes, Padilla & Salgado de Synder, 1991; Hovey, 2000; Smart, 1995). In another study, Hovey (2000) found 59 percent of a sample of Mexican migrants experience equally high levels of both depression and acculturative stress. Immigrants' low levels of perceived social support also predicts depression and suicidal ideation (Hovey, 2000). Given the link between depression and acculturative stress, a cross-comparison of naturalized Mexicans with non-Hispanic whites on related issues in mental health may yield interesting results.

Arguments continue to circulate suggesting that immigration's most tangible threat remains in the marketplace; however, depression and stress associated with discrimination indicate otherwise. Less than 10 percent of Mexican Americans cite

economic competition as a source of conflict with Mexican immigrants (Ochoa, 2000). The literature does not make related comparisons to non-Hispanic Whites' attitudes and is grounds for further exploration. Non-Hispanic Whites may hold similar views to those reflected by documented and/or native-born Mexicans in the U.S. If in fact non-Hispanic Whites retain dissimilar cultural values from undocumented Mexican immigrants it may indicate the unreasonable expectations put forth in intergroup conflict theory.

Generational differences among Mexicans provide another perspective on opinions about undocumented immigration. Second and third generation Mexican-Americans increasingly believe undocumented immigration is a problem respective to their generational status (Miller, Polinard, & Wrinkle, 1984; Ochoa, 2000). Second generation Mexican Americans do not cite economic competition as a primary source of conflict; instead, second and third generation Mexican-Americans disapprove of Mexican immigrants' determination to retain language, values, and cultural practices from their country of origin (Ochoa, 2000). The variability between first generation and subsequent generations' attitudes towards undocumented immigration compels two conclusions: 1) the groups hold dissimilar views about degree of acculturation expected for immigrants; 2) earlier generations may share more common economic and social experiences with undocumented workers, therefore influencing higher levels of empathy for the undocumented immigrants' plight. Miller, Pollinard & Wrinkle (1984) suggest third generation Mexicans in the U.S. have adopted more ideas from the host country and share fewer common experiences, therefore reducing their empathy for undocumented migrants. This assertion is supported by data from 2000 (Ochoa) in which Mexican American respondents indicated the belief that immigrants should acculturate and learn

English as quickly as possible. Such findings support a need to explore how naturalized Mexican citizenship status and time as a U.S. citizen influence attitudes about undocumented immigration.

Certain theoretical and political circles emphasize the notion that increasing Mexican immigration to the United States will divide America into a culture of two identities based in two distinct languages. “There is no ‘Americano dream.’ There is only the American dream created by an Anglo-Protestant society,” (Huntington, 2001, p. 35). In his commentary *The Hispanic Challenge*, Samuel P. Huntington, a prominent Harvard University political scientist, suggests equal and/or increased rights for the Hispanic population encourages a national divide in a homogenous society. Stated simply, Huntington asserts that Mexican migration is a threat to the white, Anglo, Protestant majority who rightfully declared a national identity from centuries past. According to Huntington the era of ethnic and racial divisiveness ended when the Civil Rights Movement began in the 1960’s. Given Huntington’s influence in political and education arenas, it is assumed his and similar views are transferred to both the public including such groups as the Minutemen, a volunteer group of individuals who patrol the Mexico-U.S. border to inform authorities about undocumented border crossings (Economist, 2006). Yet we are uncertain as to how many people and for whom such views are representative. Huntington asserts in order for the racial and ethnic divide to thrive, the white majority must continue to emphasize there is a unified national identity.

Huntington’s perspective represents one side of a complicated tale. Following the spring 2006 immigration rallies, USA Today tracked public perceptions across the country in response to undocumented immigration. Several legal immigrants from

Pennsylvania to Oregon expressed a range of negative attitudes towards undocumented immigrants. Public perceptions included the following sentiments regarding illegal immigrants: they should be sent back to their country of origin, they should not be granted legal status, they are getting too much attention, they should have to pay appropriate fees, and they should go through the same rigors legal immigrants endure to access legal immigrant status (USA Today, 2006). It is apparent many legal immigrants in the U.S. and other groups of color feel they suffer consequences from backlash against undocumented immigrants (USA Today, 2006). The backlash creates an atmosphere in which citizens of color are thrust into a defensive mode, which in turn propels negative associations with Mexican immigration.

Though sometimes distancing, national disapproval of immigration to the U.S. can also unify immigrant groups with other groups of color. Findings indicate desire for increased immigration restrictions primarily against Latin Americans, followed by Asians, followed by Europeans (Alba, Rumbaut & Marotz, 2005; Ochoa, 2000). This is particularly interesting in light of research that indicates Mexican Americans are increasingly supportive of Mexican immigrants and convey increased concern for racism, discrimination, and immigration as European-Americans express increased disapproval over the growing number of Spanish-speakers in the U.S (Michelson, 2001; Ochoa, 2000). Drawing attention to racial bias in immigration restriction and immigrant rights can serve to increase dialogue that may bridge perceived gaps between naturalized Mexican, native-born U.S. citizens, and undocumented immigrants. Perceived divisions between groups have the potential to spark community support around immigrants' rights.

In additional arenas, action has been taken to counter public rhetoric forcing immigrants' rights to the mercy of the dominant, white classes. In an exploration of the emergence of the "Immigrant rights are human rights" movement, Lynn Fujiwara (2005) argues immigrant rights gained attention by directly challenging the negative assumptions of immigrants as welfare abusers. Social action agencies drew attention to the desperate reality immigrants faced as their access to services rapidly declined. The collaborative work performed by agencies serving the identified immigrant populations legitimated the need for services in order to prevent "massive suffering and loss of life" (Fujiwara, 2005, p. 82). Suddenly the U.S. government was being forced to face the moral consequences of the policies limiting immigrants' access to healthy, productive lives.

#### *Group Conflict in America*

The literature illustrates a history of race-based exclusions and unjust immigration policy in the United States. Such practice frames the issue as good versus bad immigrants enacted as a public belief system. Esses, Jackson, and Armstrong (1998) suggest intergroup conflict arises when individual goals are incompatible with group goals. Based on the literature, such is evidently the case within the Mexican immigrant population and through the eyes of the dominant, non-Hispanic White community in the U.S. If cultural commonalities are established between immigrants and citizens, there is potential to garner support for undocumented workers whose voices are oftentimes submerged.

Esses, Jackson and Armstrong (1998) suggest that unreasonable expectations of one group placed onto the "other" group create *intergroup conflict*. When groups interact, as is accomplished through increased exposure, the distinct groups may learn to



identify shared customs and beliefs. Research supports intergroup conflict theory showing that increased exposure to ethnically diverse populations positively influences expectations around the contributions those groups make to society (Hood & Morris, 1997). As a result, the unreasonable demands placed on the out group may be reduced and/or eliminated. Public exposure to interethnic dialogue may positively influence the American public's beliefs about immigrant acculturation in the U.S.

Immigration is a considerable threat to national identity as defined by the white-majority. This sentiment is shared across many racial and ethnic communities. The threat of miscegenation and the subsequent American cultural demise blurs the lines between the dominant white classes and the racial and ethnic minority. What Huntington identified as a set national identity in truth requires continued restructuring to incorporate the diverse value systems.

Immigration policy both past and future creates a foundation from which American citizens are urged to formulate their perceptions of immigration to the United States. In particular factors such as illegal/undocumented versus legal/documented status, as well as the country from which an individual emigrates can impact public regard towards specific immigrant populations.

### *The Study*

This study attempts to reveal existing differences and parallels between naturalized Mexican and non-Hispanic white citizens' attitudes toward undocumented immigration in the United States. Using inductive methodology, I hypothesize the following factors will influence attitudes about Mexican immigration to the United States: sense of U.S. nationalism and patriotism, perceived impact of immigration on

U.S. culture and economy, minority group-size perception, and degree of association with diverse groups.

Using intergroup conflict theory offered by Esses, Jackson and Armstrong (1998) Hypothesis I asserts Naturalized Mexican citizens and non-Hispanic White citizens of the U.S. will share similar attitudes referencing undocumented immigrants. The “in” group is identified as U.S. citizens who are permitted greater access to political arenas and human rights discussions while undocumented migrants are identified as the ‘out’ group, perhaps striving to achieve equal rights and treatment.

Hypothesis II states there will be attitudinal differences between the two subject groups based on perceived commonalities with undocumented immigrants as is suggested by Hood & Morris (1997) regarding increased exposure to diverse groups positively influencing associations with the groups.

Hypothesis III purports a positive relationship between length of time as a naturalized citizen of the U.S. and subsequent negative associations with undocumented immigrants and perceived threat of increased immigration to the U.S. Hypothesis III is directed towards determining how national identity develops over time.

Hypothesis IV asserts that increased sense of national identity negatively impacts attitudes towards undocumented immigration and the perceived impact on American culture and customs. It is suggested the decreased sense of personal threat to national identity may be the cross-section at which American citizens find support for immigrant groups.

CHAPTER III  
METHODOLOGY

*Sample*

The nonprobability, snowball sample of convenience was limited to self-identified naturalized Mexican and non-Hispanic White citizens of the United States. The two groups were selected to consider how affiliation for national identity influences members of the racially dominant U.S. population compared to individuals from Mexico who must acquire citizenship status regarding attitudes towards undocumented immigration.

All subjects were required to be current residents of the United States. Age was limited to 24+ so as to elicit a range of attitudes among an adult population. Participants from the naturalized citizenship pool was limited to Mexican-born immigrants born who acquired citizenship status in the U.S. through the naturalization process. Non-Hispanic White participants were limited to native-born U.S. citizens. There were no exclusions regarding gender, socioeconomic status, education level, marital status or language required for participation.

The study design involved a questionnaire addressing the following topics: 1) Are citizen's attitudes towards undocumented Mexican immigration to the United States influenced by minority versus dominant group-member status? 2) Do the following factors influence attitudes towards undocumented immigrants as positive or negative members of American society: primary language spoken, individual ethnic affiliation, expectations regarding immigrant acculturation, and access to services? 3) Does

increased exposure to diverse ethnic groups impact attitudes towards groups commonly identified as being outside the dominant culture? 4) Does level of within-group association, defined as affiliation for American patriotism and national identity, impact level of out-group association?

Participants were pooled from several sources with major efforts focused in the Seattle metropolitan area. The snowball sample was initiated by contact with individuals and public agencies providing community, education and resources to both Hispanic and non-Hispanic citizens including counselors, teachers, lawyers, community colleges and social service agencies. Identified counselors, coordinators and service providers provided initial information about eligible participants and appropriate settings for survey distribution. Surveys were passed out at cultural awareness gatherings, ESL classes, continuing education classes, professional trainings, and in local neighborhoods. Volunteer participants were asked to complete the survey and informed consent. Total sample size ended at 105 participants, including 79 native-born Non-Hispanic White subjects and 26 Naturalized U.S. citizens from Mexico.

#### *Data Collection*

Given time and financial constraints of the project, a cross-sectional questionnaire format was employed. Survey questions represented a broad range of issues identified within three major content areas which included: personal and cultural affiliation to country, attitudes towards immigration policy and practice, degree of commonality and association with groups of color. The self-administered, anonymous survey method was identified as the least-intrusive research technique aimed to decrease response bias among participants given the sensitive nature of the topic.

Survey participation was voluntary and kept anonymous. Individual subjects read and signed an informed consent form prior to survey submission. The informed consent form detailed the purpose of the study, information about the researcher, requirements for participation, potential benefits and risks, approximate length of time involved in participation, rights to refuse participation and/or refuse to answer questions, methods for maintaining anonymity including basic information about the numeric coding system and protection of data as secured files, and resources for additional information on the topic. The informed consent form was immediately removed from the survey after submission to increase participant anonymity in regard to individual responses.

The inductive quantitative study employed a fixed method, self-administered questionnaire consisting of 45 items available in both English and Spanish languages. Participants self-selected the language of the survey materials. In order to increase participation and decrease amount of time required to participate, the final version of 45-item questionnaire was reduced from the original version that had 57 questions. Questionnaires were collected over a two month period to access sufficient data to conduct the analysis.

The questionnaire was developed using close-ended Likert scale questions and multiple choice answer options. The following themes were identified from current and past research on the topic and became a guide for composing survey questions: immigrant acculturation, attitudes regarding 'illegal immigration' in the United States, attitudes towards undocumented immigration as well as documented immigration, patriotism, nationalism, tolerance, and group size perception (Barker & Giles, 2004; Cervantes, Salgado de Snyder & Padilla, 1991; Hood & Morris, 1997; Miller, Polinard, &

Wrinkle, 1984; Ochoa, 2000; Ommundsen & Larsen, 1997; Rodriquez & DeWolfe, 1997; Short & Magnana, 2002). The questions were of an exploratory nature to decipher attitudinal differences about undocumented immigration between participant groups. Questions also attempted to uncover common identifiers between participants and undocumented migrants such as primary language spoken, socioeconomic status, and exposure to diverse racial and ethnic groups.

The three focus areas to explore regarding immigration in the U.S. were further delineated among seven domains used to define participant “attitudes.” Survey domains included: degree of attachment to American nationalism and patriotism, spoken language association as a description for culture and identity, attitudes regarding immigrant acculturation, degree of exposure to diverse racial/ethnic communities, tolerance and racial bias, immigration legislation and practice, and group size perception.

Survey questions included multiple choice demographic questions and close-ended Likert-scale responses. Demographic questions included age, gender, marital status, and income and educational levels. Likert-scale questions included characteristics unique to the two subject groups as well as factors that potentially act as common denominators. Questions considering national identity and affiliation included, “I am proud to be an American”, “My American citizenship is an important part of who I am”, and “I feel respected by American society”. Questions addressing immigration policy and practice included, “I believe bilingual education should be available in public schools”, “Immigration legislation is an important political issue”, and “Employers of undocumented workers should be penalized”. Finally, questions directed towards exposure and association with groups of color included, “Mexican immigrants are the

fastest growing immigrant group in the United States”, “I live in a neighborhood that is predominantly white”, and “I socialize with people from different ethnic and/or racial groups”. Response options on the 4-point Likert-scale included “strongly agree”, “somewhat agree”, “somewhat disagree”, and “strongly disagree”. The “undecided” or “unknown” option was eliminated to elicit a response that more accurately reflected a subject’s leaning on a particular issue.

The purpose of the following study was to better appreciate positive and negative factors that influence attitudes concerning undocumented immigration to the United States among naturalized Mexican citizens and non-Hispanic Whites. I was specifically concerned with the way in which citizenship as a birthright versus an acquired status influences associations with immigration in the U.S. The cross-comparison between subject groups was chosen as a means to consider whether attitudes toward undocumented immigration in the U.S. is contingent upon race and/or variables such as income, education level, gender, and number of years in the U.S. For a comprehensive examination I will conduct between group analyses as well as within group analysis.

#### *Data Analysis*

Collected data was coded using a numeric coding system for both demographic variables and those measured on the Likert scale. Data was considered using univariate, bivariate and multivariate analysis of descriptive and inferential statistics.

Independent variables included race, age, gender, number of years as a U.S. citizen, citizenship status (naturalized versus native-born), annual income, educational level, and marital status. Dependent variables included criminalization of employers and employees, access to services, language, and acculturative expectations. Dependent

variables also included potential bridging denominators with Mexican immigrants including perception of immigrants as positive contributors to American culture and exposure to diverse ethnic and racial groups.

Initial frequencies were determined among individual questions. To expand further, cross tabulations were performed on demographic variables to determine how the participant groups collapsed more specifically in regards to income and education levels.

Individual questions were grouped according to content area. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each question group to determine the reliability of the scaled measurements. Reliability was determined at (.600). Questions that did not fit particular content areas remained independent.

Two-tailed t-tests for Equality of Means were performed to determine group differences among the stand alone variables as well as among the scales. Significance was determined at  $p < .05$ . Descriptive statistics included all three measures of central tendency as well as standard deviations representing the use of Likert scales.

Pearson's Correlation (2-tailed) were conducted to determine level of association between NATIDEN scale and the scaled dependent variables addressing topics such as criminalization of employers and employees, access to services, language, acculturative expectations perception of immigrants as positive contributors to American culture and exposure to diverse ethnic and racial groups. Correlations were significant at the 0.01 level. Correlations were used to determine how national identity and patriotism either positively or negatively associate with scaled variables.



## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

This study considered the following research questions: Does citizenship status influence individual national identity and sense of patriotism? Do distinct citizen groups share similar attitudes towards issues of language representation within the United States? Are there parallels between citizen groups as it concerns acculturative expectations for immigrants? Is immigration policy and practice held in the same regard between citizen groups? How does citizenship status impact group size perceptions? Is national identity a variable influencing general perceptions of language diversity, undocumented immigration, immigrant assimilation, and policy within the United States?

To answer the preceding questions, the following scales were created: NATIDEN targeted individual national identity and sense of patriotism for the U.S. The LANG scale addressed questions on bilingual education, language in the workplace, and personal language identification. ASSIMIL scale measured attitudes about immigrant acculturation into the U.S. and beliefs about the cultural impact of immigration. The POLICY scale focused on issues of border policies and legal practice. Finally, the GRPSIZE scale addressed group size perceptions of various immigrant groups and relative size perception of non-Hispanic Whites.

In addition to scaled measures, the analysis included independent questions that specifically targeted participants' perceptions of undocumented immigrants. Independent questions were stated as follows: "undocumented immigration is a problem in the United

States” (UIproblem); “undocumented immigrants are hard workers” (UIhardworkers); “undocumented immigrants are generally peaceful” (UIpeaceful); “undocumented immigrants can achieve success” (UISuccess ); “undocumented immigrants have a good work ethic” (Uiworkethic).

*Demographics of Participants*

Participants in the study represented two subject pools, Naturalized Mexican citizens of the United States and native born non-Hispanic White citizens. Sample size totaled 105 participants, with 26 naturalized citizens and 79 native-born citizens. Of the naturalized citizens, 61.5% were U.S. citizens for 1-5 years and 38.5% were citizens for 6 or more years. All percent values are presented with missing responses removed.

In regards to language spoken, 23 participants (21.9%) reported Spanish as their primary spoken language while 82 participants (78.1%) reported English as the primary language spoken in the home. Surveys were available in both Spanish and English languages for which all participants self-selected preferred language. Of 105 subjects, 92 participants (87.6%) selected English and 13 (12.4%) preferred Spanish. Additional demographics are represented in Table 1 and Table 2.

**Table 1.**

Selected Demographics of Participants

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Frequency<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
<b>Female</b>	65	61.9
<b>Male</b>	40	38.1
<i>Income</i>	<i>Frequency<sup>b</sup></i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
<b>0-\$23999</b>	24	23.3
<b>\$24000-44999</b>	26	25.2
<b>\$45000-60999</b>	9	8.7
<b>\$61000+</b>	44	41.5

<i>Education</i>	<i>Frequency<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
<b>&lt;High school, vocational</b>	22.0	21.0
<b>College/university</b>	54	51.4
<b>≥Master's level or higher</b>	29	27.6
<i>Age</i>	<i>Frequency<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
<b>24-29</b>	41	39.0
<b>30-40</b>	34	32.4
<b>41+</b>	30	28.6
<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Frequency<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
<b>Married</b>	58	55.2
<b>Single/Never married</b>	32	30.5
<b>Unmarried household, Divorced, widowed, Other</b>	15	14.3

<sup>a</sup> n=105

<sup>b</sup> n=103

As illustrated in Table 2 below participant groups showed demographic variability. Among the factors used to identify participants most notable variance occurred in the categories of income and education levels. Naturalized Mexican participants indicated a lower income bracket with 13.0% more participants in the \$0-\$23999 income group contrasted to the non-Hispanic White group. Additionally, among the naturalized participant group more than half (57.6%) of total participants reported an education level at or below high school level, including vocational training.

**Table 2.**

Selected Participant Demographic Percentages by Citizenship Group

<i>Income</i>	<i>Naturalized Citizens<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Non-Hispanic White Citizens<sup>b</sup></i>
<b>0-\$23999</b>	33.3	20.3
<b>\$24000-44999</b>	25.0	25.3
<b>\$45000-60999</b>	41.6	54.5
<b>\$61000+</b>	33.3	45.6

<i>Education</i>	<i>Naturalized Citizen<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Non-Hispanic White Citizens<sup>b</sup></i>
<b>≤High school, vocational</b>	57.6	8.9
<b>College/university</b>	26.9	59.5
<b>≥Master’s level or higher</b>	15.4	31.6

<sup>a</sup> n=26

<sup>b</sup> n=79

Participants were also asked to respond to questions that addressed level of exposure to diverse communities. Among the responses, 68 participants (64.8%) reported ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat agree’ to living in a neighborhood that is predominantly white (NEIGHBORHOOD). Additionally, 96 participants (91.4%) were in the same response range in regards to having daily exposure to people from diverse ethnic and/or racial backgrounds (DAILYEXPOSURE). Table 3 presents the responses to the questions.

**Table 3.**

Participant Exposure to Diverse Ethnic/Racial Groups

<i>NEIGHBORHOOD</i>	<i>Frequency<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	43	41.0
<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	25	23.8
<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	22	21.0
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	15	14.3
<i>DAILYEXPOSURE</i>	<i>Frequency<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	66	62.9
<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	30	28.6
<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	7	6.7
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	2	1.9

In order to determine internal reliability Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were computed for individual scales as detailed above. Measures were based on five content groups including: nationality and patriotism (Questions 11-13), language (Questions 14-

19, 21), immigrant acculturation (Questions 20, 22-24, 28, 31), immigration policy (Questions 32-39), and group size perception (Questions 40, 42). Mean alpha coefficients for the five scales fell above an adequate level at (.647) internal reliability. NATIDEN achieved an alpha of (.633). LANG held an internal reliability score of (.617). ASSIMIL retained an alpha level of (.650). POLICY scored a moderate alpha of (.747). GRPSIZE achieved an internal reliability score of (.587).

T-tests for Equality of Means were performed to determine significance across all scales and on individual questions based on citizenship status. Results for scaled measures and stand alone questions by citizenship group are listed in Table 7.

T-tests indicated significance in the ASSIMIL scale ( $t(103)=2.970$ ,  $p=.004$ , two-tailed). Refer to Table 4 for group statistics on ASSIMIL scale of significance.

**Table 4.**

Group Statistics for ASSIMIL scale based on citizenship status

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
<b>Native-born</b>	79	3.0377	.46224
<b>Naturalized</b>	26	3.3703	.43920
<b>Total</b>	105		

The naturalized group had a higher mean score (3.37) than the native born group (3.07). Findings from the current study indicate that naturalized citizens believe immigrants should blend into American society by adopting the Anglo norms, values and practices. Significance was not reached for other measures. Refer to Table 5 for t-tests results.

T-tests indicated significance in the GRPSIZE scale ( $t(97)=2.970$ ,  $p=.004$ , two-tailed). See Table 5 below for group statistics on GRPSIZE scale.

**Table 5.**

Group Statistics for GRPSIZE scale based on citizenship status

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
<b>Native-born</b>	74	2.25	.648
<b>Naturalized</b>	25	1.80	.677
<b>Total</b>	99		

T-tests results indicated significance across citizenship status when specifically concerned with the statement “undocumented immigrants are hard workers.” Table 6 indicates group statistics for the independent question UIhardworkers.

**Table 6.**

Group Statistics for UIhardworkers based on citizenship status

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
<b>Native-born</b>	72	1.76	.760
<b>Naturalized</b>	26	1.15	.368
<b>Total</b>	98		

There was a highly significant difference between the two groups ( $t(87.89)=5.305$ ,  $p=.000$ , two tailed) with the native born citizen group holding a higher mean response to the question (1.76) than the naturalized citizen group (1.15). This finding suggests naturalized citizens hold more positive associations to the concept of undocumented immigrants being hard workers. Table 7 outlines details of the t-test.

**Table 7.**

T-tests for scales and independent questions based on citizenship status  
T-test for Equality of Means

	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.(2-tailed)</b>
<b>NATIDEN</b>			
E.V.A.	-1.515	103	.133
E.V.N.A.	-1.676	51.553	51.553
<b>LANG</b>			
E.V.A.	-1.141	103	.257
E.V.N.A.	-1.399	65.326	.167
<b>ASSIMIL</b>			
E.V.A.	2.970	103	.004
E.V.N.A.	2.970	42.684	.005
<b>POLICY</b>			
E.V.A.	-1.659	103	.100
E.V.N.A.	-1.934	57.905	.058
<b>GRPSIZE</b>			
E.V.A.	2.970	97	.004
E.V.N.A.	2.905	39.884	.006
<b>UIproblem</b>			
E.V.A.	-1.369	100	.174
E.V.N.A.	-1.281	36.795	.208
<b>UIhardworkers</b>			
E.V.A.	3.922	96	.000
E.V.N.A.	5.305	87.889	.000
<b>UIpeaceful</b>			
E.V.A.	.551	95	.583
E.V.N.A.	.564	46.571	.576
<b>UIsuccess</b>			
E.V.A.	1.887	99	.062
E.V.N.A.	1.820	40.982	.076
<b>UIwork ethic</b>			
E.V.A.	.865	96	.406
E.V.N.A.	.888	50.102	.379

E.V.A.=Equal Variances Assumed

E.V.N.A.=Equal Variances Not Assumed

T-tests were also conducted between all measures based on primary language spoken in the home (see Table 8). The ASSIMIL scale retained significance again

( $t(103)=3.174$ ,  $p=.002$ . two-tailed). Refer to Table 8 for group statistics based on primary language reported.

**Table 8.**

Group Statistics for ASSIMIL Scale based on Primary Language Spoken

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
<b>Spanish</b>	23	3.0377	.46224
<b>English</b>	82	3.3703	.43920
<b>Total</b>	105		

In this particular case, the Spanish speaking group had a higher mean (3.370) than the English speaking group (3.038). The indicated results illustrate participants who reported Spanish as their primary language also believe immigrants should assimilate into the customs of the dominant culture of the U.S. Refer to Table 11 below for details on T-tests performed on primary language indicators.

Paired t-tests results were significant for POLICY ( $t(51.58)=2.545$ ,  $p=.014$ , two-tailed). See Table 9 for group statistics.

**Table 9.**

Group Statistics for POLICY scale based on primary language spoken

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
<b>Spanish</b>	23	2.8199	.38788
<b>English</b>	82	2.5590	.57000
<b>Total</b>	105		

The Spanish speaking group had a higher mean (2.820) than the English speaking group (2.559). Findings from the current study show that participants who report English as their primary language spoken had a higher incidence of reporting a



strong belief for the importance of immigration policy in the political arena as well an increased desire for southern border controls and legal repercussions for undocumented workers and employers. See Table 8 for additional information.

Additionally, t-tests showed significance on GRPSIZE scale ( $t(97)=-2.751$ ,  $p=.007$ , two-tailed). The English speaking group held a higher mean (2.234) compared to Spanish speaking participants (1.795). Refer to Table 10 for group statistics and Table 8 for t-test results.

**Table 10.**

Group Statistics for GRPSIZE scale based on primary language spoken

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
<b>Spanish</b>	22	1.7955	.71812
<b>English</b>	77	2.2338	.64167
<b>Total</b>	99		

These findings indicate participants reporting Spanish as their primary language also believe Mexican immigrants are a rapidly increasing immigrant group with larger numbers compared to other immigrant groups of color in the United States.

**Table 11.**

T-tests for scales based on primary language spoken  
T-test for Equality  
of Means

	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>t</b>
<b>NATIDEN</b>			
E.V.A.	1.608	103	.111
E.V.N.A.	1.744	39.998	.089
<b>LANG</b>			
E.V.A.	1.191	103	.236
E.V.N.A.	1.438	49.058	.157
<b>ASSIMIL</b>			
E.V.A.	-3.174	103	.002
E.V.N.A.	-3.083	33.961	.004
<b>POLICY</b>			
E.V.A	2.062	103	.042
E.V.N.A.	2.545	51.583	.014
<b>GRPSIZE</b>			
E.V.A	-2.751	97	.007
E.V.N.A	-2.583	31.225	.015

E.V.A.=Equal Variances Assumed

E.V.N.A.=Equal Variances Not Assumed

T-tests among the scales and independent questions resulted in non-significant differences in most cases between the two citizen groups thereby supporting the null hypothesis (no difference between the two groups) put forth in the present study. Still, cross tabulations were conducted to note group tendencies among individual Likert-scale response options and to determine possible focus areas in which the two participant groups maintain positive associations with undocumented immigrants in the U.S.

When asked to respond to the following statement, “undocumented immigration is a problem in the United States,” 32.5% of the native born citizen group responded ‘strongly agree’ compared to 20.0% of the naturalized population. In contrast, 24.0% of

the naturalized group responded ‘strongly disagree’ as compared to 9.1% of the non-Hispanic White group on the same question. Such findings indicate non-Hispanic Whites express stronger negative opinions towards undocumented immigration in the U.S. as compared to the naturalized population who generally fell on the opposite end of the spectrum. Details are shown in Table 12.

**Table 12.**

Crosstabulation UIproblem based on citizenship status

<i>Response</i>	<i>Citizen Group</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Native born<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Naturalized<sup>b</sup></i>	
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	32.5%	20.0%	29.4%
<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	39.0%	48.0%	41.2%
<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	19.5%	8.0%	16.7%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	9.1%	24.0%	12.7%

<sup>a</sup> n=77

<sup>b</sup> n=25

On the statement “undocumented immigrants are hard workers,” a marked difference appeared between the subject groups in regards to the range of responses along the Likert scale. Specifically, the naturalized population had 0.0% response within the ‘somewhat disagree’ to ‘strongly disagree’ range on the question. In fact, 84.6% of the naturalized citizen population responded with ‘strongly agree’ compared with 38.9% of the native born group. Again, the findings support the tendency of the naturalized population to retain more positive associations and stronger opinions in regards to undocumented immigrants in the U.S. Specific information is provided in Table 13.

**Table 13.**

Crosstabulation UIhardworkers based on citizenship status

<i>Response</i>	<i>Citizen Group</i>		
	<i>Native born<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Naturalized<sup>b</sup></i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	38.9%	84.6%	51.0%
<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	50.0%	15.4%	40.8%
<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	6.9%	.0%	5.1%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	4.2%	.0%	3.1%

<sup>a</sup> n=72<sup>b</sup> n=26

Participants were asked to respond to the following question, “undocumented immigrants can achieve success”. Answers between the two groups generally fell towards ‘strongly agree’ and ‘somewhat agree’ with 83 participants (82.2%). Still, the naturalized group indicated almost double (65.4%) the response rate at ‘strongly agree’ to the native-born group (34.7%) on the question. Table 14 outlines response details.

**Table 14.**

Crosstabulation UIsuccess based on citizenship status

<i>Response</i>	<i>Citizen Group</i>		
	<i>Native born<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Naturalized<sup>b</sup></i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	34.7%	65.4%	42.6%
<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	45.3%	23.1%	39.6%
<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	14.7%	3.8%	11.9%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	5.3%	7.7%	5.9%

<sup>a</sup> n=75<sup>b</sup> n=26

As was prescribed in the research hypotheses put forth in the present study, significant correlations were found across all scales using Pearson’s Correlation. All

scales retained a positive relationship with the exception of GRPSIZE scale. Positive correlations indicate that as individual national identity increases among participants in the current study, negative associations with immigrants' native language retention, increased expectation for immigrant acculturation into Anglo traditions, and regard for undocumented immigrants as requiring increased barriers to U.S. entry and prosecution. The negative correlation found between NATIDEN scale and GRPSIZE scale indicate as individual national identity increases participants had the tendency to believe Mexican immigrants are a small immigrant group relative to other immigrant groups of color. Refer to Table 15 for details.

**Table 15.**

Pearson's Two-Tailed Correlation with NATIDEN scale

<i>Scale</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
<b>LANG</b>	.512	.000
<b>ASSIMIL</b>	.376	.000
<b>POLICY</b>	.510	.000
<b>GRPSIZE</b>	-.249	.013

The research conducted used identified variables both independently and in measures of significance that are thought to impact attitudes towards immigration in the U.S. Variables included targeted impact areas including national identity, language acquisition and retention, assimilation, policy, and size perceptions of ethnically and racially diverse groups. By and large the findings of the current research support the null hypothesis put forth in this study, that naturalized U.S. citizens of Mexican descent and native born non-Hispanic White citizens of the United States illustrate parallel attitudes

regarding undocumented immigration and associated impact on national identity. The hypotheses presented earlier in the study were based on an assumption that naturalization required by the U.S. to become a citizen impresses immigrants with the need to deny native culture and customs in order to be accepted into the dominant cultural and political practices of the U.S.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present research was to determine whether racially and/or ethnically diverse groups in the United States hold similar or different views towards undocumented immigration in the country. Specifically, the research sought to determine if individual national identity and sense of patriotism influences positive or negative associations with a marginalized group identified as existing outside a majority.

U.S. citizens are a group most often noted as individuals inside a majority context. Citizenship in the U.S. is attained in multiple formats and has become a decisive label that grants access to political arenas and service sectors otherwise unavailable. Participants in the present study were selected as two representative groups, one in which citizenship and associated privileges are a birthright contrasted with a group who secures the rights of a citizen through the naturalization process. For the current research, non-Hispanic White citizens simultaneously represent a racially advantaged group and the group with citizenship rights through birth. Naturalized Mexican citizens hold a similar designation; however, the naturalized group achieves citizenship status through a process requiring the individual to pledge allegiance to the U.S. and learn the story of a country dominated by European traditions and belief systems.

A central assumption in the current study is that immigrants granted U.S. citizenship are compelled to reject indigenous culture and traditions as a mechanism to enhance acceptance into the dominant, White culture of the United States. The ongoing

process begins as immigrants deny and/or subjugate positive associations with native culture by acculturating to Anglo practices, speaking only English, and adapting traditional roles and beliefs to those put forth in the U.S. Naturalization is a fundamental component in a continuous American identity development process.

Naturalization in the United States is a two-fold progression. The first step requires the individual to embrace U.S. history and beliefs. The second piece involves a slow denigration of native traditions to gain more complete access to privileges designated to U.S. citizens and members of American society who blend in with the dominant culture. Such processes reflect a continuum in which the dominant paradigm is reinforced as immigrants and other individuals of color are pushed to the borders. This is evidently the case with migration along the Mexican borders and reflects the tendency instituted through the nationalization process.

Previous research lends support to the age-old saying “out with the old, in with the new.” Such has become the tradition with centuries of migration to the U.S. in which most recent migrants are scapegoats to traditions supported as the dominant and representative practices. To combat the stresses associated with acculturation immigrants may strive to merge into the dominant culture. Studies indicate greatest risk of psychological stress and depression among Mexican migrants to be associated with issues related to language barriers, fear of deportation/immigration status, lower socioeconomic status, and discrimination, and acculturative stresses (Cervantes, Padilla & Salgado de Synder, 1991; Hovey, 2000; Smart, 1951). These findings indicate that immigrants’ tendency to move away from native culture has not only become an expectation, it has also become a survival mechanism.



To be recognized as equal contributors to the U.S. economy and valued participants in an evolving American culture, immigrants may suppress old practices in favor of new customs. Aguirre Jr. (2004) found Mexican migrants to be most commonly characterized in the U.S. as abusing social services, being drug smugglers and/or undocumented. As immigrants continually attempt to combat myriad negative expectancies they become compelled by a desire to have equal access to rights limited to citizens. This process, which begins as soon as an immigrant enters the U.S., continues throughout the lifespan.

### *The Results*

Using intergroup conflict theory, Hypothesis I asserts that naturalized Mexican citizens and non-Hispanic White citizens of the U.S. share similar attitudes regarding undocumented immigrants. The “in” group, identified as U.S. citizens granted greater access to political arenas and human rights discussions, contrast to undocumented migrants identified as the ‘out’ group who strive to attain equal rights and treatment. Study findings generally support Hypothesis I. Specifically, that the native born group more often support the belief that immigrants should acculturate into Anglo norms is equally relevant to the Spanish-speakers’ preference that immigrants should assimilate into the customs of the dominant culture. Such results indicate that regardless of citizenship status, individuals believe immigrants should blend into the non-native culture. This promotes the practice of subjugating myriad cultural identities to a fixed and perceived homogenous existence.

Hypothesis I was further supported by findings regarding immigration policy and practice. Despite significance noted between subject groups based on primary language

reported the means for the Spanish-speaking group compared to the English-speaking group indicated comparable responses of ‘somewhat agree’ and ‘somewhat disagree’ on the POLICY scale. POLICY scale referenced related practices to southern border controls and sanctions towards employed undocumented migrants in the U.S. As William Schneider (2006) stated recently in the National Journal, “This year’s elections is likely to be the first in which illegal immigration is a national issue...One thing is clear: Critics of illegal immigration are energized and motivated throughout the country, even in states far from the Mexican border,” (p. 84). Study findings indicate that both groups identify immigration issues as important political concerns and are important considerations for future electoral politics.

Hypothesis II referenced attitudinal differences between the two subject groups based on perceived commonalities with undocumented immigrants. Specifically, the naturalized group was expected to reflect *slightly* more positive affiliation with immigrants and related expectancies around the impact of immigration on U.S. culture based on the shared experience as immigrants. As Hood & Morris (1997) determined, increased exposure to diverse groups positively influences associations with groups identified outside oneself. Given the finding that naturalized citizens more often characterized undocumented immigrants as hard workers, Hypothesis II is supported. The finding lends value to increasing awareness around non-ethnocentric dialogue and exposure such that diverse racial and ethnic groups are encouraged to identify with one another.

Additionally, cross-tabulations indicated wider gaps in response percentages between the two citizen groups on statements such as: “undocumented immigration is a

problem in the United States” and “undocumented immigrants can achieve success.” As previously described such findings support Hypothesis II by indicating how the naturalized group had stronger positive opinions towards immigrants. Regardless of documented versus undocumented status the naturalized Mexican participant group share more similarities with undocumented migrants than the native-born group given the shared immigrant status as well as language, cultural traditions, and customs. When given an opportunity to draw links between groups seen as similar to oneself, it is apparent that more positive associations result.

Hypothesis III suggested increased length of time as a citizen would have a converse relationship with expectations for immigrants to acculturate, language, and policy. This is based in naturalized immigrants’ sense of threat affiliated with the determination among more recent immigrants to retain cultural practices. Findings from the study indicate naturalized citizens have a stronger belief that immigrants should blend into American society by adopting the Anglo norms, values and practices and should refrain from holding onto the culture from their native country; however the findings were not related to length of time as a citizen. Results support the hypothesis inasmuch as immigrants are primed to deny native culture by expecting immigrants to “blend in” to the dominant culture rather than retaining cultural norms and values. Here we see how dominant ideology influences public perceptions.

Hypothesis IV asserts that increased sense of American nationalism negatively impacts positive attitudes towards undocumented immigration and the perceived impact on U.S. culture and customs. As was indicated by correlations, U.S. citizens with greater national identity and patriotism generally indicate increased disapproval towards

undocumented immigrants and the contributions of immigrant to the national culture. Results support the withstanding practice of sustaining national identity as a fixed, homogenous entity reflecting the traditions of few rather than propelling U.S. nationalism to more accurately reflect the needs of a changing society.

### *Informal Responses*

Given the decision to employ paper surveys rather than on-line applications, recruitment processes allowed for interaction with participants. Several participants expressed opinions directly to the researcher. In particular, individuals from the naturalized population expressed resentment with question wording (e.g. “undocumented immigrants are criminals”). Such responses were anticipated given the nature of the topic and the intentional hyper-expressiveness of several survey statements to which participants were asked to respond.

Among the native-born group, one respondent expressed displeasure with the response options. The individual referenced the Likert scale’s inability to capture nuances of individual responses that extend beyond the targeted areas presented in the survey. Additionally, the same respondent felt questions were “an attempt to confirm preconceived notions” that are “echoed by the rank and file who carry the task of carrying out the policies.” Such concern expressed by participants were certainly validated and noted as a critical piece of the data gathering process.

Still, in many cases individuals from both citizen groups continued discussions amongst one another after completing survey materials. That participants self-selected to engage the dialogue reflects the diversity of opinions and experience people have with immigration in the U.S. Notably, informal responses included an overall appreciation

among both citizen groups for pursuing an issue they identified as requiring additional consideration. Participants' passion and dynamic emotional responses further informed the researcher's need to pursue the topic and present findings with dignity and respect such that individual voices become useful in the broader political context.

### *Research Limitations*

A previously identified limitation in the current research concerned the primary location for participant recruitment. Given the research was largely conducted in the Seattle metropolitan area, it became immediately apparent and relevant that the participant demographic was narrowed. Research indicates there is a social basis for positive attitudes towards immigrants associated with cosmopolitanism (Haubert & Fussell, 2006). More densely populated areas tend to become concentrated with young, oftentimes highly educated people of privileged socioeconomic backgrounds whose ideas and political leanings more closely mirror the practices and beliefs of a democratic society. As the demographics indicate, almost 52% of study participants had a college or university degree. Additionally, 55% of participants are married. As a whole, the study demographics represent characteristics common to individuals living in a major metropolitan area of the United States and may reflect attitudes of a particular segment of the American population.

The study had an additional limitation given the disparity in group size between designated participant groups. Despite efforts to increase the naturalized Mexican citizen participant group through myriad recruitment avenues including area immigrant rights' agencies, ESL classrooms, and mental health providers specializing in services to the Hispanic population, final group size did not match that of the native-born participants.

Several sources exist to explain the limited participation among the naturalized population. For example, there has been a recent rise in immigration raids across the U.S. with particular attention in southern California and other areas along the Pacific coast. Specifically, Seattle news has recently given added attention to immigrant deportation among the Cambodian community. Regardless of the ethnic identities associated with these raids and with the deportations, these potentially impacting sources may inform a need among immigrant groups to retreat from public scrutiny and/or attention.

#### *Future Research*

Undocumented immigration in the U.S. ignites both anger and compassion among different people. Perceived cultural and economic affects associated with immigration bear on individual sense of national identity. Some people appreciate continued immigration to the U.S. as a cultural expansion while others characterize it as a threat to nationhood. Such diversity in attitudes is the basis by which the American public generates an understanding of immigration policy and practice. Such has been the pattern established by decades of population growth, diversification, and movement across country borders.

In a study conducted by Esses et. Al. (2001) identified the “immigration dilemma” (p. 397). Specifically, the 2001 study determined that while immigrants receiving social services are negatively perceived by members of society, immigrants who are economically successful are simultaneously viewed negatively given the perceived competition (Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001). How then can we improve attitudes towards immigrants? The same study (2001) determined that when

people perceive immigrants as economic and cultural competition attitudes are improved by presenting the view that a national U.S. identity reflects the common *ethnic* identity as a country of immigrants. Perhaps this is the next point of reference from which we need to build a new American national identity.

Recent reactions to immigrant rights' rallies cross class boundaries throughout the nation and underscore the public's sensitivity to immigration issues. This posits immigration as a multilayered issue concerning economy, culture, and identity. Further research is required to determine how sense of upward mobility and naturalization versus native-born citizenship status differ between naturalized Mexican citizens and non-Hispanic White citizens. Though public health, welfare, and the economy draw particular attention as it relates to immigration from Mexico, the real issues may be grounded in concerns about an American cultural identity.

Immigrants to the U.S. are inculcated by the expectations of the Anglo traditions and gain access to citizenship through a declared allegiance to the country. Simultaneously, other members of society are gifted with their American identity upon birth. Citizenship as a process versus as a legacy shapes the way in which individuals ally themselves to the dominant ethos understood through a projected homogenous national identity. Moreover, the citizenship process in the United States secures the cultural hierarchy established from centuries of European resettlement in the U.S.

Future research can tackle immigration from a strengths perspective. The current research perpetuated a desire to identify the behaviors Americans embody to connect to the cultural stories of their ancestors, whether they are recent immigrants or several generations removed from a native country. This may encourage all Americans to

consider traditions left behind, traditions continued, and how to reinstitute them into contemporary cultural practice. There can also be greater emphasis on education and exposure as mediums by which the public becomes educated about the reality of immigrant rights as well as emphasis on a less ethnocentric conceptualization of national identity.

### *Conclusions*

Blending into a largely white society is made more difficult when your native language, cultural traditions, and language is being rejected in favor of practices predetermined within the dominant society. Such tendency can be illustrated by generational distancing from native cultural traditions among immigrant groups to be embraced by cultural desire for a homogenized 'American identity'. Perhaps if generations of immigrants had been urged and supported in their efforts to sustain native cultural practices and beliefs there would be space for current immigrants to not only adopt Anglo practices but also retain their own value system.

So long as immigration to the U.S. continues, so will debates around citizenship rights, immigrants' rights, and the scope of a sense of unified nationhood that has become the crossroads on this issue. The notion of a monolingual melting pot perpetuated across the U.S. dominates enclaves such that multiplicity in language, cultural values, spiritual affiliations, and customs possible across the country are strategically relinquished. The U.S. has become a country confined by the antiquated mores brought to the country centuries ago. To move forward we must first acknowledge the diverse stories that have come together to create the country. From there we can begin to retell, restructure, and recreate the identity of a country that truly reflects the people it encompasses.



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APPENDIX A

HSR APPROVAL LETTER

January 27, 2007

Mekhala Koshy  
1315 N. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Seattle, WA 98103

Dear Mekhala,

Your final revisions have been reviewed and all is now in order. We are glad to give final approval to your project.

*Please note the following requirements:*

**Consent Forms:** All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form.

**Maintaining Data:** You must retain signed consent documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.

*In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:*

**Amendments:** If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.

**Renewal:** You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.

**Completion:** You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished). This requirement is met by completion of the thesis project during the Third Summer.

Good luck with your study. It is exploring a very interesting and important topic and I hope people will feel free to come forward and participate.

Sincerely,

Ann Hartman, D.S.W.  
Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Barbara Lui, Research Advisor

## APPENDIX B

### CONSENT FORM

My name is Mekhala Koshy. I am a graduate student at the Smith College School for Social Work. I am in the process of studying how undocumented immigration affects non-Hispanic White citizens in the United States. This thesis is conducted in partial fulfillment of the Master's of Social Work (MSW) degree at Smith College School for Social Work, and is written for possible presentation and publication.

You are being asked to participate because you are at least 24 years or older and a non-Hispanic White citizen of the United States. If you choose to participate in the study I will ask you to complete a questionnaire that will last 10-15 minutes. The survey is made up of questions designed to get your opinion about immigration in the United States. In addition, the questionnaire will ask you to give basic information such as gender, marital status, and educational level.

Your participation in the study will be kept confidential using a coding system with numbers. I will be the primary handler of the survey materials, though my Research Advisor will also look at the data to make sure I perform the research carefully. All survey materials will be stored in locked files and will be disguised in any publications to protect your identity and privacy.

Your participation in the survey is voluntary. There are potential benefits to participation such as thinking about your personal opinions about the positive and negative effects of undocumented immigration in the United States. The survey will provide you with an opportunity to share those views anonymously. In addition, your participation may contribute to current information about immigration. Your opinions are important and valuable to advance research and help social workers in the field of immigration.

There are also potential risks of participating in the study. Some survey questions relate to your personal opinions and/or experiences regarding immigration and may bring up strong emotions. A list of resources will be attached to your copy of the informed consent form, which requires your signature before you give me the completed survey. If you feel uncomfortable with the questions you can withdraw participation by not handing me the completed questionnaire. After the survey is returned to me I will separate the signed consent form from the survey and I will no longer be able identify which survey belongs to you. This process increases your anonymous participation. If at any point in the survey you do not want to answer a question, you have the right to refuse to answer.

**YOUR SIGNATURE BELOW INDICATES YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE INFORMATION. YOUR SIGNATURE ALSO SHOWS YOU HAD A**



CHANCE TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, YOUR ROLE, AND YOUR RIGHTS, AND YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DESCRIBED STUDY.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

IF YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS OR WISH TO WITHDRAW YOUR CONSENT, PLEASE CONTACT:

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APPENDIX C

SPANISH SURVEY

**Para preguntas 1-9 escogen por favor la caja más apropiada que describe usted.**

1.) Marque la categoría de edad que le pertenece.

24-29 años

30-40 años

41-50 años

50+ años

2.) Marque su género

Mujer

Hombre

No especificado

3.) Estado civil

Casado

Divorciado

Soltero(a)/nunca casado

En una relación

Viuda

Otro: por favor, especificar: \_\_\_\_\_

4.) ¿Qué nivel de educación ha superado Ud.?

Ninguno

La primaria

La secundaria

Universidad

Maestría

Orientación profesional Por favor, especificar: \_\_\_\_\_

5.) ¿Qué idioma se habla más dentro de su casa?

Español

Inglés

Otro Por favor, especificar: \_\_\_\_\_

6.) Marque los idiomas que Ud. domina

Español

Inglés

Español/Inglés/bilingüe

Otro Por favor, Especificar: \_\_\_\_\_.

7.) Marque a la categoría de ingreso que le pertenece (incluya ingreso de: seguridad social, trabajo, las apuestas) Por favor, solo marque 1 categoría

\$0-\$9,999

\$10,000-\$23,999

\$24,001-\$44,999

\$45,000-\$60,999

\$61,000+

7b.) ¿Cuántas personas benefician de su ingreso?

1 persona (yo)

2 personas

3 personas

4+ people

8.) ¿Qué es su estatus de ciudadanía?

Ciudadano(a) nacido en los EE.UU. (vaya al número 11)

Ciudadano(a) de EE.UU. naturalizado (vaya al número 10)

9.) ¿Hace cuánto tiempo que Ud. ha sido ciudadano(a) estadounidense?

1-5 años

6-10 años

10+ años

**Por favor, RODEE por favor una respuesta a las preguntas siguientes, utilizando las cuatro opciones dadas.**

11.) Estoy orgulloso de ser americano.

Concuerde totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

12.) La ciudadanía americana es una parte importante de mi identidad.

Concuerde totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

13.) Tengo sentía marginado por la sociedad Americana.

Concuerde totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

14.) Creo que el idioma inglés debe ser el idioma nacional de los Estados Unidos.

Concuerde totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

15.) Creo que todos tiene el derecho de utilizar su idioma en tiempo.

Concuerde totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

16.) Mi lengua materna es una reflejo importante de que soy.

Concuerde totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

17.) Creo que esa educación bilingüe debe estar disponible en escuelas públicas.

Concuerde totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

18.) Las personas deben hablar sólo inglés en el trabajo.

Concuerde totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

19.) Creo que inglés no será el idioma dominante en los Estados Unidos en 20 años.

Concuerde totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

20.) Es preferible para Americanos si diferente racial y las etnias adaptan y mezclan en la sociedad Americana.

Concuerde totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

21.) Los inmigrantes deben hacer inglés su idioma primario después de inmigrar.

Concuerde totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

22.) Los inmigrantes deben aculturarse a Anglas normas, a los valores, y a las prácticas.

Concuerde totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

23.) Los inmigrantes deben tener en/mantiene la cultura de su país de origen.

Concuerde totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

24.) Los americanos deben estar aceptando de personas que escogen vivir según sus propias culturas, incluso si sea diferente de su propia cultura.

Concuerde totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

- 25.) La inmigración sin documentar es un problema en los Estados Unidos.  
 Concuerde totalmente    Concuerta Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente
- 26.) Los inmigrantes sin documentar son trabajadores duros.  
 Concuerde totalmente    Concuerta Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente
- 27.) Los inmigrantes sin documentar son generalmente pacíficos.  
 Concuerde totalmente    Concuerta Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente
- 28.) La inmigración sin documentar es una imposición cultural.  
 Concuerde totalmente    Concuerta Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente
- 29.) Los inmigrantes sin documentar pueden lograr éxito.  
 Concuerde totalmente    Concuerta Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente
- 30.) Los inmigrantes sin documentar tienen una ética del trabajo buena.  
 Concuerde totalmente    Concuerta Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente
- 31.) Los inmigrantes mejoran nuestra cultura con nuevas ideas y la aduana.  
 Concuerde totalmente    Concuerta Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente
- 32.) La legislación de la inmigración es un cuestión política importante.  
 Concuerde totalmente    Concuerta Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente
- 33.) El número de inmigrantes les otorgó la residencia permanente cada año debe ser  
 aumentado en los Estados Unidos.  
 Concuerde totalmente    Concuerta Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente
- 34.) Los requisitos de la documentación para inmigrantes deben ser impuestos  
 estrictamente.  
 Concuerde totalmente    Concuerta Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente
- 35.) Los inmigrantes sin documentar deben ser deportados.  
 Concuerde totalmente    Concuerta Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente
- 36.) Los inmigrantes sin documentar son los criminales.  
 Concuerde totalmente    Concuerta Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente
- 37.) El gobierno de Estados Unidos debe aumentar los controles contiguos meridionales.  
 Concuerde totalmente    Concuerta Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente
- 38.) Los empleadores de trabajadores sin documentar deben ser penalizados.  
 Concuerde totalmente    Concuerta Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente
- 39.) Los empleadores de inmigrantes sin documentar son los criminales.

Concuere totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

40.) Los inmigrantes mexicanos son el grupo rápidamente creciente de inmigrante en los Estados Unidos.

Concuere totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

41.) Vestido blanco/Caucásicos son sobrepasados por otros grupos étnicos y/o raciales en los Estados Unidos.

Concuere totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

42.) Los inmigrantes mexicanos son actualmente el grupo minoritario más grande en los Estados Unidos (comparó a Africanos, Asiáticos, Europeos y Latina).

Concuere totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

43.) Vivo en un vecindario que es predominantemente blanco.

Concuere totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

44.) Tengo la exposición diaria a personas de diferente racial y/o la etnia(s).

Concuere totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

45.) Socializo con personas de grupos étnicos y/o raciales diferentes.

Concuere totalmente    Concuerda Algo    no Conviene Algo    no Conviene Totalmente

APPENDIX D

ENGLISH SURVEY

**For questions 1-9 please select the most appropriate box that describes you.**

1.) Check the age bracket that you belong to?

24-29 years

30-40 years

41-50 years

50+ years

2.) With which gender do you most identify?

Female

Male

Non-specified

3.) Current marital status

Married

Divorced

Single/Never married

Unmarried household

Widowed

Other Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_



4.) What is your highest level of school completed?

- none
- Primary
- Middle School/Junior High School
- Secondary/High School
- College/University
- Master's level or higher
- Vocational Please specify:\_\_\_\_\_

5.) What is the primary language spoken in your home?

- Spanish
- English
- Other Please specify:\_\_\_\_\_

6.) Check the languages you speak fluently.

- Spanish
- English
- Spanish & English/Bi-lingual

Other Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

7.) Check your appropriate income bracket (Include Social Security Income, Employment Compensation, and Gambling Earnings). Please check one.

\$0-\$9,999

\$10,000-\$23,999

\$24,001-\$44,999

\$45,000-\$60,999

\$61,000+

8.) How many contribute to your household income?

1 person (myself)

2 people

3 people

4+ people

9.) What is your citizenship status?

Native-born United States citizen (Please skip to Question #11)

Naturalized United States citizen (Please continue to Question #10)

10.) How long have you been a naturalized citizen of the United States?

1-5 years

6-10 years

10+ years

**For the following questions, please CIRCLE an answer from the four options provided.**

- 11.) I am proud to be an American.  
Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 12.) My American citizenship is an important part of who I am.  
Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 13.) I feel respected by American society.  
Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 14.) I believe the English language should be the national language of the United States.  
Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 15.) I believe everyone has the right to speak his or her language at any time.  
Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 16.) My first language is an important reflection of who I am.  
Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 17.) I believe that bilingual education should be available in public schools.  
Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 18.) People should speak only English at work.  
Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 19.) I believe English will **NOT** be the dominant language in the United States in 20 years.  
Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 20.) It is better for Americans if different racial and ethnic groups adapt and blend into American society.  
Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 21.) Immigrants should make English their primary language after immigrating.  
Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree

- 22.) Immigrants should acculturate to Anglo norms, values, and practices.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 23.) Immigrants should hold onto/maintain the culture from their country of origin.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 24.) Americans should be accepting of people who choose to live according to their own cultures, even if it is different from their own culture.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 25.) Undocumented immigration is a problem in the United States.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 26.) Undocumented immigrants are hard workers.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 27.) Undocumented immigrants are generally peaceful.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 28.) Undocumented immigration is a cultural imposition.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 29.) Undocumented immigrants can achieve success.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 30.) Undocumented immigrants have a good work ethic.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 31.) Immigrants improve our culture with new ideas and customs.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 32.) Immigration legislation is an important political issue.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 33.) The number of immigrants granted permanent residency each year should be increased in the United States.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 34.) Documentation requirements for immigrants should be strictly enforced.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 35.) Undocumented immigrants should be deported.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 36.) Undocumented immigrants are criminals.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree

- 37.) The United States government should increase southern border controls.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 38.) Employers of undocumented workers should be penalized.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 39.) Employers of undocumented immigrants are criminals.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 40.) Mexican immigrants are the fastest growing immigrant group in the United States.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 41.) Whites/Caucasians are outnumbered by other ethnic and/or racial groups in the United States.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 42.) Mexican immigrants are currently the largest minority group in the United States (compared to Africans, Asians, Europeans and Latinos).  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 43.) I live in a neighborhood that is predominantly white.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 44.) I have daily exposure to people from different racial and/or ethnic background(s).  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree
- 45.) I socialize with people from different ethnic and/or racial groups.  
 Strongly Agree      Somewhat Agree      Somewhat Disagree      Strongly Disagree