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Fast track report

When does dual identity predict protest? The moderating roles of anti-immigrant policies and opinion-based group identity

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Abstract

Dual identities are defined as immigrants' identification with their ethnic ingroup as well as the national community in their country of residence. Dual identities have been argued to increase protest, because they make immigrants feel entitled to advocate for their disadvantaged ethnic group as part of a larger national community. In a study of Latino immigrants to the United States, however, we found that dual identities no longer predict protest when immigrants learn that other members of the national community have passed laws or enacted policies that would exclude immigrants or restrict their rights, through deportation and detention. Further, we found that immigrants who identify with those fighting to change such anti-immigrant policies support protest regardless of the level of their dual identity and regardless of policy salience. We argue that these results point to the importance of dual identity recognition for research on immigrant protest. Copyright © 2014 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Social psychological research on collective action demonstrates that people are more likely to protest a perceived injustice when they more strongly identify with the group that faces it (e.g., van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). In the United States, protest plays an important role in the political behavior of immigrants, many of whom are not citizens and thus cannot participate in formal political activities, such as voting (Bloemraad & Trost, 2008).

Research among Turkish and Russian immigrants in Germany has shown that immigrants are more likely to protest if they have dual identities; that is, if they identify with their ethnic group as well as the larger national community in their country of residence (Simon & Grabow, 2010; Simon & Ruhs, 2008). Similarly, research among Turkish and Moroccan immigrants in the Netherlands and Turkish immigrants in the United States has shown that dual identities predict protest, at least when immigrants feel personally aggrieved by their government (Klandermans, van der Toorn, & van Stekelenburg, 2008). Dual identities mobilize immigrants toward peaceful, lawful forms of protest, so long as they see their two group memberships as compatible (Simon, Reichert, & Grabow, 2013).

Simon and Klandermans' (2001) model of politicized collective identity offers a reason why dual identities predict protest. They argue that people are more likely to protest when they see themselves as part of a societal struggle for power on behalf of a specific social group. This involves, first, identifying with an aggrieved group (e.g., Latinos) and, second, identifying with a larger national community that entitles people to have their group's grievances addressed (e.g., Americans). From this perspective, dual identities increase protest because they are politicized collective identities (Simon, 2011; Simon & Grabow, 2010; Simon & Ruhs, 2008).

In some cases, however, immigrants may perceive that others do not recognize their membership in the national community. Latino immigrants in the United States, for example, may perceive that other Americans will never accept them as Americans because they are Latinos (Wiley, 2013). This may be because immigrants believe that others define the national community in terms of a prototypical racial group to which they do not belong, such as Whites in the United States (Devos & Banaji, 2005; Sidanius, Feshbach, Levin, & Pratto, 1997). It may also be because immigrants are aware that the national community has passed laws or enforced policies that would exclude immigrants or restrict their rights, through deportation and detention.

This latter situation exists for Latino immigrants in the United States, who represented an estimated 6% of the U.S. population as of 2011 (Motel & Patten, 2013). Deportations have risen approximately 30% under the Obama administration compared with Bush's second term (Lopez, Gonzalez-Barrera, & Motel, 2011). Ninety-seven percent of those deported were Latino, a disproportionately large share (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2011). Further, several states—including Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Indiana, South Carolina, and Utah—have passed laws that require local police to check the immigration status of people who are detained when the police suspect that detainees lack legal authorization to be in the United States (American Civil Liberties Union, 2013). When faced with these anti-Latino immigration policies that would exclude them from the national community or restrict their rights, Latino immigrants are likely to perceive that their membership in the national community is not recognized.

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For immigrants who see themselves as both Latino and American, anti-Latino immigration policies that imply that others do not recognize their membership in the national community represent a threat to identity (Barreto & Ellemers, 2003; Hopkins & Greenwood, 2013). It may be difficult for immigrants with dual identities to act politically on behalf of their ethnic group as part of a larger national community if others are unwilling to recognize their membership. Indeed, in interviews with British Muslims, Hopkins and Blackwood (2011) found that participants' knowledge that other Britons did not recognize their national identity undermined their perceived ability to advocate for British Muslims in the public sphere. Thus, Latino immigrants with dual identities are less likely to be inclined to participate in protest when they are made aware of anti-Latino immigration policies that would exclude them from the national community or restrict their rights. Under these conditions, dual identity should not predict protest.

The extent to which the salience of anti-Latino immigration policies is a threat to immigrants' dual identities likely depends on whether such information comes as news to them. Some immigrants are well aware of anti-Latino policies and identify with those who believe that U.S. immigration policies that target the group need to be changed. For these immigrants, the salience of anti-Latino immigration policies only confirms what they already know and is thus unlikely to influence protest. The salience of anti-Latino immigration policies is only likely to be identity threatening for immigrants with dual identities who do not already identify with those who believe that U.S. immigration policy needs changing. These immigrants may be less aware of the policies, and thus the policies may have a greater effect on their willingness to protest.

Further, for some immigrants, the belief that U.S. immigration policies that target Latinos need to be changed may be the foundation for an opinion-based group identity, in which a shared position on a social issue is the basis for group membership (McGarty, Bliuc, Thomas, & Bongiorno, 2009). Similar to activist identities, opinion-based group identities have been found to be stronger predictors of protest than social category identities (e.g., Latino-American identity), because they include clear norms about how a group member should feel about a given issue and what they should do about it (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Stürmer & Simon, 2004; McGarty et al., 2009; van Zomeren et al., 2008). Thus, immigrants who already identify with those who are fighting to change U.S. immigration policy are likely to protest whether or not they have a dual identity.

To examine these ideas, we conducted an experiment with a convenience sample of Latino immigrants in Trenton, New Jersey. We randomly assigned immigrants to read or not read about recent anti-Latino immigration policies in the United States and then asked them to report on the fairness of these policies, their identities, and their willingness to engage in peaceful protest regarding U.S. immigration policy. Latino immigrants make up nearly 19% of the population in Trenton (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011a). Half of that population is from Guatemala, with the remainder primarily from Mexico, Honduras, and Costa Rica (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010).

We hypothesized that immigrants who identified with people working to change U.S. immigration policy would report high intentions to protest existing policies, regardless of whether they reported dual identities or whether anti-Latino immigration policies were salient. For immigrants who did not identify with people working to change U.S. immigration policy, however, we expected that policy salience would moderate the relationship between dual identity and protest intentions. Specifically, we hypothesized that dual identity would positively predict protest intentions when such policies were not salient, as has been observed among Russian and Turkish migrants in Germany (Simon & Grabow, 2010; Simon & Ruhs, 2008). When the policies were salient, however, we hypothesized that dual identity would not predict protest intentions. Thus, we expected a three-way interaction between dual identity, policy salience, and identification with people fighting to change U.S. immigration policy.

The present study has the potential to make two primary contributions to the study of immigrant protest. First, it would replicate existing research on dual identity and protest, which has been conducted with Russian and Turkish migrants in Germany (Simon & Grabow, 2010; Simon & Ruhs, 2008), and extend it to a new group and context: Latinos in the United States. Second, the research could identify two boundary conditions on the relationship between dual identity and protest: (i) the salience of anti-immigrant policies that would exclude immigrants from the national community or restrict their rights and (ii) identification with people who are fighting to change U.S. immigration policy.

METHOD

Participants

Ninety self-identified first-generation Latino immigrants were recruited from English-as-a-second-language (ESL) classes in Trenton, New Jersey. We dropped six participants from analyses because they declined to answer more than a quarter of the questionnaire. The remaining 84 participants (53 women, one declined to report gender) ranged in age from 19 to 78 years ($M = 36.87$, $SD = 13.02$). Their average age of arrival to the United States was 24.25 years ($SD = 8.75$; five participants declined to answer this question). Nearly half of immigrants were born in Guatemala ($n = 40$); others were born in Costa Rica ($n = 9$), Colombia ($n = 8$), Mexico ($n = 7$), Ecuador ($n = 6$), El Salvador ($n = 5$), and a variety of other Latin American countries. Twenty-one participants reported not completing high school, 42 had a high school diploma, 10 had completed 2 years of college, five had a 4-year college degree, and five had completed some postgraduate work. One participant declined to report her level of education.

Procedure

Two bilingual research assistants arrived at the end of ESL classes to recruit participants to participate in a study entitled "Immigrants' feelings about U.S. immigration policy" in exchange for $10 compensation. Following informed consent and an introductory page with instructions and example items, participants were randomly assigned either to an experimental

condition, in which they read a short paragraph presenting recent state and federal immigration policies and practices as anti-Latino (see Appendix) before continuing on to the questionnaire; or to a control condition, in which they proceeded directly to the questionnaire without reading about immigration policies first. Participants then proceeded to complete measures of their perceptions of the fairness of U.S. immigration policy, several different identities (opinion-based group, dual, American, and Latino; counterbalanced), their intentions to protest U.S. immigration policy, and demographics.

Measures

All materials were translated and back-translated by two different bilingual translators. Unless otherwise noted, all items were assessed on 9-point scales, 1 = *not at all agree* and 9 = *very much agree*, with higher scores indicating higher levels of the variable measured. Reported scores were obtained by averaging item ratings on a particular scale. Means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and intercorrelations for the primary study variables can be found in Table 1.

Fairness of U.S. Immigration Policy toward Latinos

We assessed participants' perceptions of the fairness of U.S. immigration policy toward Latinos with four items. Participants were asked to rate the degree that "U.S. immigration policy towards Latinos is [fair/just/appropriate/legitimate]" ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 2.08$, $\alpha = .87$). Overall, participants' ratings of the fairness of immigration policy toward Latinos was significantly below the midpoint of the scale, $t(83) = -7.02$, $p < .001$, $d = -0.77$.

Dual Identification

We assessed dual identification with three items. We adapted one item from Simon and Ruhs (2008)—"I feel I am both Latino and American"—and two additional items from the cultural distance subscale of the Bicultural Identity Integration Scale version 1 (BIIS-1; Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005)—"I feel Latino American" and "I feel part of a combined culture." Responses to these same three items had acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .81$) in a previous study of Latino immigrants in the northeastern United States and loaded on a separate factor from American (dis)identification and ethnic identification (Wiley, 2013).

We also adapted an additional item from Simon and Ruhs (2008)—"Sometimes I feel more Latino and sometimes I feel more American—it depends on the situation." However, although the three items listed earlier all loaded on a single factor (.79 to .83) in an initial principal component analysis (with varimax rotation), this additional item cross-loaded on a second factor (.65) on which the other three items had negative loadings (from −.37 to −.18). Thus, we did not include the additional item in the scale.

Opinion-based Group Identification

We adapted the three-item solidarity subscale of the Leach et al. (2008) hierarchical multicomponent model of ingroup identification to measure identification with people working to change U.S. immigration policy: "I feel a [bond with/solidarity with/committed to] people who are working to change immigration policy in the United States." The subscale had proven reliable and valid across a range of target groups and samples (Leach et al., 2008); including ethnic and American identifications among Latino immigrants in the northeastern United States (Wiley, Lawrence, Figueroa, & Percontino, 2013). Further, although the scale has not been used to assess solidarity with people working to change U.S. immigration policy, all three items have been used to measure identification with a different opinion-based group—feminists (Wiley, Srinivasan, Finke, Firnhaber, & Shilinsky, 2013).

Protest Intentions

To assess protest intentions regarding immigration reform, participants were asked "How likely would you be to engage in each of the following activities to support immigration reform that would benefit Latino immigrants in the United States?" Responses were assessed on a 9-point scale from 1 = *I would never do this* to 9 = *I would do this for sure*. Three items were adapted from Tausch et al. (2011; Study 3): "Sign a petition," "Participate in a peaceful demonstration," and "Work with others to lobby the government about immigration reform." Similar measures have been reliable in other studies of collective action conducted in a variety of contexts (e.g., van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2012). Further, collective action intentions are associated with actual participation (van Zomeren et al., 2008).

Additional Measures

We also included separate measures of participants' identification with Americans and their identification with Latinos (from the solidarity subscale of the Leach et al., 2008, measure; see Table 1 for means and correlations with other study variables), as well as demographic items. Because the results are

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, scale reliabilities, and intercorrelations among primary study variables

	M	*SD*	α	1	2	3	4	5
1. Opinion-based group ID	7.21	1.75	.78	—				
2. Dual ID	7.30	2.03	.77	.31**	—			
3. Protest intentions	7.87	1.58	.82	.64***	.43***	—		
4. American ID	5.89	1.92	.75	.21†	.33**	.18	—	
5. Latino ID	8.08	1.29	.76	.56***	.21†	.50***	.16	—

Note: $N = 84$.
ID, identification.
$^{\dagger}p < .1$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

Table 2. Opinion-based group identity, dual identity, salience of anti-Latino immigration policy, and interactions predicting protest intentions

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	b	*SE*	*t*	*b*	*SE*	*t*	*b*	*SE*	*t*
Opinion-based group ID	0.50	0.08	6.58***	0.44	0.10	4.50***	0.39	0.09	4.17***
Dual ID	0.19	0.07	2.82**	0.30	0.09	3.37**	0.25	0.08	2.97**
Anti-Latino immigration policy (Policy)	0.41	0.26	1.59	0.37	0.24	1.56	0.22	0.23	0.94
Opinion-based group ID × Dual ID				−0.06	0.03	−1.96†	0.11	0.03	−3.29**
Opinion-based group ID × Policy				−0.03	0.15	−0.20	0.09	0.14	0.63
Dual ID × Policy				−0.33	0.13	−2.52*	−0.32	0.12	−2.53*
Opinion-based group ID × Dual ID × Policy							0.22	0.07	3.10**
ΔF	24.86***			5.17**			9.60**		
Δdf	3, 80			3, 77			1, 76		
ΔR^2	.48			.09			.05		

Note: $N = 84$. Unstandardized *b*s are presented. Anti-Latino immigration policy is coded so that 0 = *not salient* and 1 = *salient*.
ID, identification.
†$p < .1$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

substantively the same whether we include American and Latino identification, as well as their interaction, in our models, we do not discuss these measures further.[1]

RESULTS

First, we compared Latino immigrants' perceptions of the fairness of U.S. immigration policy toward Latinos across conditions. Latino immigrants who read about anti-Latino immigration policies perceived U.S. immigration policy to be less fair ($M = 2.54$, $SD = 1.76$) than those who read nothing at all ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 2.02$), $t(82) = -4.21$, $p < .001$, $d = -0.93$. We also examined whether the manipulation had any effect on the identification variables; it did not, $ps > .23$.

Next, we conducted a moderation analysis in multiple regression (Aiken & West, 1991) to test for our hypothesized three-way interaction between opinion-based group identification, dual identification, and salience of anti-Latino immigration policies toward Latinos on protest intentions. After mean centering the two identification variables, and dummy coding the experimental condition (*control* = 0, *salience* = 1), we entered the three main effects in the first model, the three two-way interactions in the second model, and the three-way interaction in the third model. The results of these analyses can be found in Table 2.

The three-way interaction was significant. Decomposing the interaction, we found that, for Latino immigrants who reported lower levels of identification with people working to change U.S. immigration policy (i.e., 1 *SD* below the mean), the salience of anti-Latino immigration policies toward Latinos moderated the effect of dual identity on protest intentions, $b = -0.70$, $SE = 0.17$, $t = -4.06$, $p < .001$. Among Latino immigrants who reported higher levels of identification with people working to change U.S. immigration policy, there was no such interaction, $b = 0.07$, $SE = 0.18$, $t = 0.42$, $p = .68$, because protest intentions were near the ceiling regardless of the other variables.

In Figure 1, we plot the interaction between dual identity and anti-Latino immigration policies on protest intentions for Latino immigrants lower in identification with people working to change U.S. immigration policy. As hypothesized, Latino immigrants who reported higher levels of dual identification had significantly stronger intentions to protest U.S. immigration policy when anti-Latino immigration policies were not salient, $b = 0.45$, $SE = 0.08$, $t = 5.33$, $p < .001$. When anti-Latino immigration policies were salient, however, there was no reliable association between dual identity and protest intentions. In fact, under these conditions, Latino immigrants who reported higher levels of dual identification had marginally weaker intentions to protest U.S. immigration policy, $b = -0.25$, $SE = 0.15$, $t = -1.68$, $p = .097$.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined the conditions under which dual identity predicts protest, among a sample of Latino immigrants in Trenton, New Jersey. Drawing on Simon and Klandermans' (2001) model of politicized collective identity, we argued that dual identities predict protest because they make immigrants feel entitled to advocate for their disadvantaged ethnic group as part of a larger national community. When immigrants learn

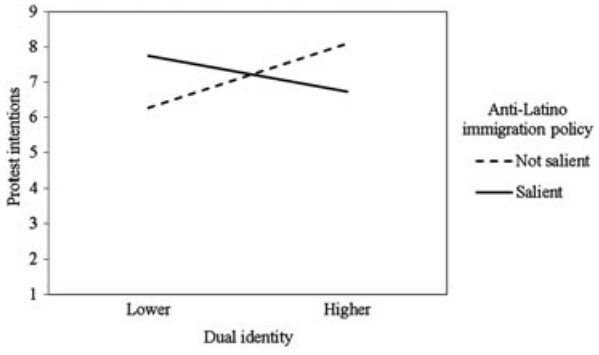

Figure 1. The interactive effect of dual identity and anti-Latino immigration policy on protest intentions for Latino immigrants with lower levels of opinion-based group identification

[1]Some researchers have conceptualized dual identities as the interaction between two separate group memberships (e.g., Klandermans et al., 2008). When assessed independently from their component parts, however, dual identities predict protest above and beyond the interaction between independent measures of ethnic and national identity (Simon & Grabow, 2010; Simon & Ruhs, 2008).

that others in the national community do not recognize that membership, however—such as when others support policies that would exclude immigrants or restrict their rights, through deportation and detainment—we argued that dual identity would not predict protest.

We also reasoned that the salience of anti-Latino immigration policies would only moderate the relationship between dual identity and protest for immigrants who did not already identify with people fighting to change existing U.S. immigration policies, which target Latinos. For these immigrants, the existence of anti-Latino immigration policies was likely to come as an unpleasant—and identity-threatening—surprise. For immigrants who identified with people fighting to change existing U.S. immigration policies, in contrast, the salience of anti-Latino immigration policies was only likely to confirm what they already believed.

Our results supported these claims. Among Latino immigrants who did not identify with people fighting to change U.S. immigration policy, the salience of anti-Latino immigration policies moderated the effect of dual identity on protest. When such policies were not salient, Latino immigrants with dual identities were more willing to protest U.S. immigration policies. When such policies were salient, Latino immigrants with dual identities were marginally less willing to protest U.S. immigration policy. Immigrants who identified with people fighting to change U.S. immigration policy were very willing to protest, regardless of the salience of anti-Latino immigration policies and regardless of their level of dual identity.

Our results make several contributions to the literature on dual identity and protest. First, they extend existing findings to a new group and context: Latinos in the United States. Second, they point to the importance of policies that would exclude immigrants or restrict their rights, through deportation and detainment, for the association between dual identity and protest. Such policies imply that others do not recognize immigrants' membership in the larger national community. Several scholars have recently emphasized the importance of recognition in the expression of dual identities (e.g., Hopkins & Blackwood, 2011; Hopkins & Greenwood, 2013; Wiley & Deaux, 2010), noting that dual identities do reflect not only how immigrants see themselves but also how they perceive that others see them. We believe the results of our study lend support to this claim, suggesting that it is difficult for immigrants to speak up on behalf of their ethnic group as members of a national community if they perceive that others would exclude them or fail to recognize their membership. Third, the fact that immigrants who identified with people fighting to change U.S. immigration policy were willing to protest regardless of the salience of anti-Latino policies and regardless of their level of dual identity bolsters the case that such opinion-based group identities are more robust predictors of protest than social category identities, such as dual identities (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Stürmer & Simon, 2004; McGarty et al., 2009; van Zomeren et al., 2008).

The present study raises several promising directions for future research. First, whereas we have explained our results in terms of Simon and Klandermans' (2001) model of politicized collective identity, our results can also be understood from the perspective of identity performance (Hopkins, 2011; Klein, Spears, & Reicher, 2007; Wiley & Deaux, 2010). From an identity performance perspective, protest may be a way for immigrants to gain recognition for their dual identities from other members of the national community. Immigrants can affirm their membership in their ethnic group by pursuing its interests, and they can affirm their membership in the national community by participating in its civic life (Hopkins, 2011). When other members of the national community support policies that would exclude immigrants or restrict their rights, however—and would refuse to include immigrants in the national group—immigrants cannot gain recognition for their dual identities through protest. Rather, under these conditions protest is more likely to lead other members of the national community to categorize immigrants exclusively in terms of their ethnic group and in opposition to the nation to which immigrants with dual identities see themselves as belonging. Such miscategorization is aversive (Barreto & Ellemers, 2003), and immigrants are likely to distance themselves from protest in order to avoid it. Future studies should compare the politicized collective identity and identity performance explanations for the relationship between dual identity and protest.

A second promising direction for future research is to examine what kinds of dual identities predict protest. Immigrants can represent their dual identities in multiple ways. They can be compartmentalized, as is the case for immigrants who see themselves in terms of their ethnic identity when they are at home with family, but in terms of their national identity when they are at work with colleagues (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997); or they can be mutually constitutive, as is the case for immigrants who see themselves as Latino-American across situations, and for whom each identity draws meaning from the other (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Hopkins, 2011; Hopkins & Greenwood, 2013; Wiley & Deaux, 2010). The items in the current study likely captured the latter representation. In fact, the only item that implied a compartmentalized model of dual identity loaded on a distinct factor from the remaining items. This may have important implications for our results. For immigrants with mutually constitutive dual identities, a threat to the recognition of one component of the identity may be a threat to the whole (Hopkins & Greenwood, 2013), thus decreasing protest. For immigrants with compartmentalized dual identities, in contrast, lack of recognition may lead them to abandon their national identity altogether.

It is important to note several limitations of the present study. First, the study was conducted with a small convenience sample of Latino immigrants in Trenton, New Jersey. The study is not representative of Latino immigrants in Trenton, or immigrants elsewhere, nor was it intended to be. The purpose of the study was to provide an empirical test of a theorized relationship. It remains to be seen whether these results would hold in other contexts. Second, we examined immigrants' intentions to engage in protest, not their actual behavior. Previous research, however, has demonstrated an association between protest intentions and actual protest (van Zomeren et al., 2008), including among immigrants (e.g., Simon & Ruhs, 2008). Third, although we have argued that our manipulation of the salience of anti-Latino immigration policies made immigrants perceive that others were unlikely to recognize their membership in the national community, we did not assess this construct directly. Thus, whereas the present study offers evidence that the salience of policies that

would exclude immigrants from the national community or restrict their rights moderates the relationship between dual identity and protest, the precise mechanisms remain unclear. Future research should examine mediators for this relationship, including perceived recognition. Finally, we would note a distinct advantage of the present study—we employed an experimental design.

Conclusion

Immigrants represent nearly 13% of the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011b); approximately 53% of immigrants come from countries in Latin America (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011c). Recently, Latino immigrants in the United States have been targeted by policies that would exclude them from the national community or restrict their rights, through detention and deportation. The results of the present study suggest that such policies make immigrants who see themselves as both Latino *and* American—and who are not already committed to immigration reform—less willing to participate in protest, one of the few political activities available to them in the United States.

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APPENDIX

Text of Anti-Latino Immigration Policy Paragraph

Experts agree that federal and state immigration policies hurt Latinos more than any other immigrant group. For example, almost 400,000 people were deported by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in 2011; 97% were Latinos. In addition, states like Arizona, Georgia, and South Carolina have recently passed laws that allow police to ask anyone to show their papers if they suspect that person is undocumented. Immigrant advocates argue that this law will hurt Latinos more than other groups because police assume that Latinos are undocumented based on their race. Thus, U.S. immigration policies unfairly target Latinos. A major reason for the policies is prejudice against the group.