



Education, Racial Identity, and Perceptions of Immigration and Law Enforcement in the United States

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the relationship between education, racial identity, political ideology, and socioeconomic factors in shaping American immigrants' attitudes toward immigration policies and perceptions of law enforcement. Analyzing data from the 2020 American National Election Studies (ANES) survey through multiple linear regression models, the study reveals significant influences of perceived police brutality and racial bias on public trust in law enforcement, with political ideology being a notable determinant in forming opinions on both immigration and policing. The findings emphasize the adverse impact of aggressive policing and racial profiling on immigrants' trust in law enforcement, highlighting the linkage between education and race in modulating perceptions of immigration policies. The results illustrate several ways sociodemographic factors influence views on these pivotal issues and underscore the critical need for policy approaches that are mindful of the diversity of experiences and attitudes within immigrant communities. By unraveling the layered influences on immigrants' perceptions of immigration and policing, this research contributes valuable insights towards developing more informed, inclusive, and empathetic policy frameworks, reflecting the complex nature of immigration and law enforcement issues in a multifaceted societal context.

INTRODUCTION

The link between immigration and law enforcement in the United States forms a critical aspect of the immigrant experience, as law enforcement agencies are central in enforcing immigration policies and routinely interact with immigrant communities. This dynamic is pivotal in shaping immigrants' trust in law enforcement, mainly when local police collaborate with federal agencies like ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) and CBP (Customs and Border Protection) in conducting legal status checks and deportation processes. The relationship between these entities influences the immigrants' sense of security and belonging and affects public safety and community policing efforts.

Education emerges as a key factor in this context. Its transformative role extends beyond academic achievement, affecting immigrants' perceptions of societal structures, including law enforcement. Educational environments often reflect broader societal dynamics, influencing immigrants' views on law enforcement and their integration into American society (Jongyeon & Gándara, 2020; Turner & Mangual Figueroa, 2019). These settings can either reinforce or challenge their perceptions, playing a crucial role in how immigrants perceive and interact with law enforcement authorities. In comparison, there is alignment in research regarding the influence of race and ethnic identity on immigration attitudes. Divergences exist, particularly in the role of education and the focus on law enforcement. Differences in contexts between the U.S. and Belgium and the distinct groups studied (American immigrants vs. Belgian ethnic minorities) suggest variations in how these factors shape attitudes toward immigration and law enforcement perceptions (Meeusen et al., 2019).

Racial identity further complicates these interactions. The intersection of race and immigration status presents unique challenges for immigrants, impacting their interactions with societal institutions, especially law enforcement (Samuels-Wortley, 2021). Racialized experiences, whether in educational settings or through law enforcement encounters, profoundly affect immigrants' perceptions of fairness and inclusivity in American society (R. E. M. Johnson, 2022). Practices such as racial profiling and discrimination by law enforcement lead to disproportionate targeting of certain immigrant groups, intensifying mistrust and fear within these communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The broader socio-political narratives surrounding immigration also play a significant role. The overall Immigrants' perceptions are shaped by their experiences of discrimination, the prevailing political and social climate, and the prevalent narratives about immigration (Daniels et al., 2021; Mayda et al., 2022a). These attitudes are integral to understanding how immigrants navigate their lives within the context of American societal structures and law enforcement. The impact of information and framing on shaping immigrants' attitudes must be considered. Research





suggests how information about immigration and law enforcement is presented, whether through educational channels or media, significantly influences immigrants' perceptions and attitudes (Grigorieff et al., 2020; Voelkel et al., 2022). This aspect underlines the importance of context and narrative in shaping immigrants' experiences.

This research explores the relationship between education and racial identity and their effects on attitudes toward immigration and law enforcement among immigrants. This research seeks to answer questions such as: How do sociodemographic factors and personal attributes influence immigrants' attitudes towards preferred immigration levels in the United States? How does racial identity impact immigrants' perceptions and experiences with immigration and law enforcement in the U.S.? How does the intersection of race and socioeconomic class affect individuals' perceptions of police, considering other factors? How do educational attainment and racial identity jointly influence individual preferences regarding immigration levels, considering the interplay of other factors?

Through this exploration, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of immigrants' challenges and realities, particularly in their interactions with law enforcement and the broader societal structures in the United States. The findings provide valuable insights for developing policies and practices that respect the rights and dignity of all community members, including immigrants, and enhance trust between these communities and law enforcement agencies.

Dynamics of Racial Identity and Perceptions of Immigration Policies

The demographic landscape of the United States has been significantly reshaped by immigration from diverse regions such as Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean, leading to notable increases in immigrant populations. This shift, as explored by Foner et al. (2018)), has profound implications on the nation's racial and ethnic composition, necessitating a better understanding of how these changes influence immigrants' perceptions and interactions with U.S. immigration policies. Integrating these diverse groups into the American societal fabric is not just a matter of demographic change but also involves navigating complex policy frameworks shaped by historical and current racial attitudes.

Esses (2021) has illustrated the significant impact of societal attitudes and historical contexts; Johnson et al. (2020) highlight the considerable impact of societal attitudes and historical contexts, such as the legacy of the Chinese Exclusion Act, on shaping contemporary immigration policies. As Misra et al. (2021) and Perreira & Pedroza (2019) point out, these policies have far-reaching effects on immigrants' access to essential resources and socioeconomic integration, revealing the interplay between policy, race, and immigrant welfare. This intersection is further complicated by the concept of 'crimmigration', as discussed by Jiang & Erez (2018), which demonstrates the overlapping domains of criminal and immigration law, disproportionately impacting racial and ethnic minorities, particularly Latinos.

Turner and Mangual Figueroa (2019) examine how immigration policies influence education. They argue that educational settings often reflect broader societal dynamics influenced by immigration policies, affecting public perceptions and the engagement of immigrant families with schools. This observation is crucial in understanding how educational experiences shape immigrant youths' perceptions and attitudes toward immigration and law enforcement.

Focusing on specific immigrant populations, Manalo-Pedro & Sudhinaraset (2022) examines the mental health challenges faced by undocumented API students, highlighting the relationship between immigration status, racial identity, and mental health. Similarly, Rodriguez (2020) addresses the societal and legal challenges faced by Latinx undocumented youths, drawing parallels to insights provided by Meeusen et al. (2019) on the formation of attitudes towards immigrants among racial and ethnic minorities in Belgium, indicating a global relevance of these dynamics. The experiences of racism and discrimination, as discussed by Barajas-Gonzalez et al. (2021) and Wray-Lake et al. (2018), are significant in shaping Latinx youths' perceptions of immigration in the U.S. Del Real (2019) further elaborate this; Pinedo et al., (2022), who highlight the unique stressors and social challenges faced by U.S.-born Latinos and undocumented Mexican immigrants, respectively, highlighting how immigration policies relate to racial identity to create complex layers of stigma and discrimination.

Research by Asad & Rosen (2018), Brown et al. (2022), and Casellas & Wallace, 2020 Corral, 2020) collectively shed light on the complex relationship between race, political ideology, and legal status. Their studies reveal how these factors collectively shape societal attitudes towards immigration and law enforcement and influence residential choices, especially among undocumented Latin American families, underscoring the need for policies that address these multifaceted challenges faced by immigrant communities in the U.S., such as the Black Lives Matter movement.

Racial Dynamics and Law Enforcement Perceptions in Immigrant Communities

The relationship between race and trust in law enforcement exhibits significant disparities in the United States, particularly among Black and Latinx individuals compared to their White counterparts. Researchers like Fine et al. (2019) have noted a substantial variation in perceptions of law enforcement based on race and political orientation. Their research indicates that White Republicans generally hold the most favorable views of law enforcement, while Black and Latinx youth, regardless of political affiliation, tend to have less favorable perceptions. This variation is





rooted in historical experiences of racial bias from police, which have shaped the collective consciousness of these communities. Also, Barajas-Gonzalez et al. (2021) and Chavez-Dueñas et al. (2019) further discuss the strained relationship between law enforcement and Latinx communities. Their studies highlight how aggressive policing tactics, including ICE raids, have fostered pervasive fear and mistrust of police among Latinx youth. This situation is exacerbated by experiences of racial profiling and discrimination, leading to a significant erosion of trust in law enforcement within these communities.

The role of the media in shaping public attitudes towards law enforcement is also worth discussing. According to Mullinix et al. (2021), exposure to news stories or videos about controversial police use of force can provoke strong emotional reactions, such as anger, anxiety, and upset. This media exposure contributes to public concern about the frequency of excessive force and questions the adequacy of police training, fueling a critical discourse around policing in the U.S., especially in terms of its impact on minority citizens. This is taken further by Asad & Rosen (2018) and Morey (2018), who explore the link between race, policy, and societal stigma, particularly among minority groups and undocumented families. Their research shows that fear of law enforcement in white-majority neighborhoods affects the residential decisions of these families, pointing to a profound lack of trust and perceived safety in these areas.

Researchers like Campbell & Valera (2020) specifically examine how racial identity influences students' perceptions of law enforcement. Their findings reveal that racially underrepresented students, particularly Black students, express significant fear, anger, and distrust towards the police, a sentiment that reflects historical systemic racism and police brutality. A deep understanding of this fear is discussed by (Franklin et al., 2019; Menjívar et al., 2018), who investigate the real-life consequences of the racialization of illegality for immigrants. They find that personal and family experiences with police victimization significantly lower confidence in law enforcement. For Latinos specifically, Menjívar (2021) also examines the impact of immigration enforcement on their experiences with law enforcement, highlighting how racial identity increasingly shapes these interactions.

Other researchers like Jiang & Erez (2018) and Martínez-Schuldt & Martínez (2021) on the concept of 'cimmigration' and its impact on immigrant communities find that Latinos are more likely to report violent crime victimization in areas with sanctuary policies, suggesting that these policies can foster institutional trust among immigrant communities and shape their help-seeking experiences. On the role of belief systems, Perry et al. (2019) address the influence of Christian nationalism on perceptions of racial discrimination in policing. This belief system intertwines American national identity with Christian heritage. It significantly impacts racial perceptions, often leading to the denial of police discrimination against Black Americans and attributing police shootings to the supposed violent tendencies of Blacks. This also necessitates the research by Todak & Gaub (2020) on the role of Body-Worn Cameras (BWCs) in police culture, noting that officers view BWCs as protection against workplace stressors like public scrutiny and disciplinary uncertainty. This technological perspective can be analogous to the potential role of education in shaping protective attitudes or perceptions towards societal issues like law enforcement. The decline in trust among undocumented immigrants in local law enforcement when these agencies collaborate with ICE is explored by Wong et al. (2021)). This decline extends to beliefs about law enforcement's protection of the rights of all individuals, including undocumented immigrants, and their protection from abuse or discrimination. The relationship between these factors illustrates the complex nature of law enforcement perceptions within immigrant communities in the United States.

Education, Socioeconomic Status, and Law Enforcement Perceptions among Immigrant Communities

Education serves as a critical moderating factor in shaping minority groups' and immigrants' perceptions of immigration and law enforcement in America. State-level educational policies impacting undocumented students, as studied by Philbin et al. (2018) and Pinedo et al. (2022)), reveal significant health implications for Latino communities. These policies highlight the influence of education on shaping attitudes towards immigration and law enforcement. Researchers like Drescher et al. (2022) further highlight how in rural areas, where socioeconomic status less significantly impacts educational outcomes, there tends to be a shift in attitudes towards social mobility and immigration policies. This suggests that educational settings can substantially alter perspectives, with higher levels of education often correlating with more progressive views on immigration. As Casellas & Wallace (2020) note, indicating a moderation of traditionally conservative perspectives associated with lower education levels.

Integrating immigrant-origin children into educational systems highlights the significant role of education in moderating their experiences. According to Flippen & Farrell-Bryan (2021)), variability in educational resources and levels of segregation across different U.S. regions creates diverse experiences for immigrant students, affecting their perceptions of society and law enforcement. As discussed by Cerezo et al. (2020), Hackl (2022), and Suárez-Orozco et al. (2018)), assimilationist approaches in schools can isolate immigrant youth, thereby shaping their attitudes toward broader societal issues. Others like Jongyeon & Gándara (2020) emphasize that aggressive immigration enforcement policies in educational settings can profoundly impact students' emotional and academic wellbeing, influencing their perceptions of immigration.

The interaction of educational attainment and socioeconomic status is pivotal in shaping attitudes towards law enforcement, particularly in the context of immigration enforcement, as noted by Cerezo et al. (2020), Schmidt-Catran





& Czymara (2023), who observe that more educated individuals generally exhibit more openness and less support for strict law enforcement collaboration. This illustrates how education can influence views on law enforcement practices and moderate perceptions of immigration among students, as noted by Mayda et al. (2022) and Turner & Mangual Figueroa (2019)), who further demonstrate how education levels influence voting behaviors and attitudes toward immigration, highlighting the importance of education in mediating the complexities faced by immigrant communities in America. Research has shown that socioeconomic status significantly shapes immigrant attitudes toward authorities, including law enforcement. This can be seen in Meeusen et al. (2019), indicating that in Belgium, the socioeconomic status of ethnic minorities influences their views on immigration, a pattern also evident in the U.S. A study by Philbin et al. (2018) shows that state-level policies affecting employment and labor impact Latino health, highlighting the role of socioeconomic factors in shaping perceptions of immigration. Furthermore, Barajas-Gonzalez et al. (2021) suggest that socioeconomic deprivation, including limited resource access and food insecurity, affects children in immigrant families, potentially increasing apprehension and fear toward authorities.

In rural areas, the influence of socioeconomic status on educational outcomes is less pronounced compared to urban or suburban settings, leading to differing perspectives towards social structures and policies, including those related to law enforcement and immigration (Drescher et al. 2022). Educational experiences, influenced by socioeconomic factors, can mold individuals' worldviews, possibly fostering empathy or understanding towards immigrants and reducing fear of authorities. Socioeconomic factors, with immigration policies, contribute to a climate of fear and distrust in law enforcement among immigrant families, as anti-immigrant policies exacerbate health disparities and reflect underlying socioeconomic challenges (Morey, 2018). The experiences of undocumented Mexicans, as discussed by Del Real (2019), highlight how socioeconomic background combined with legal status affects interactions with societal institutions. Also, refugees' integration challenges, often influenced by socioeconomic inequalities, lead to varied experiences with law enforcement and immigration authorities (Hackl, 2022). Language ability, linked to socioeconomic status, also plays a role in the willingness of immigrants to engage with law enforcement (Menjívar et al., 2018). Education plays a pivotal role in moderating perceptions of immigration and law enforcement among minority groups and immigrants in America. It influences attitudes toward social policies and integration and significantly impacts responses to law enforcement, emphasizing its key role in navigating the complexities immigrant communities encounter.

Political Ideologies, Racial Identity, and Perceptions of Law Enforcement

The relationship between political ideologies and racial identity plays a significant role in shaping perceptions and attitudes, particularly among White Americans and minority groups. This can be seen in Brown et al. (2022; Fine et al. (2019), who documented how White youth and conservative White individuals often exhibit a heightened sense of group status threat and resistance to demographic changes. In contrast, minority groups, particularly Black and Latinx communities, process these changes through the lens of their discrimination and marginalization experiences. Researchers like Borinca et al. (2022) observe that conservative ideologies among White Americans are frequently associated with higher levels of immigrant dehumanization, while minority groups tend to view demographic changes and immigration policies based on their experiences.

The relationship between racial identity and political ideology is particularly pronounced in minority groups, significantly influencing their attitudes toward societal changes, including immigration and law enforcement. Other researchers like Barajas-Gonzalez et al. (2021; Chavez-Dueñas et al. (2019), and Fine et al. (2019) highlight that Black and Latinx individuals, often facing negative experiences with law enforcement and societal discrimination, are inclined to have different perspectives on these issues compared to their White counterparts. Corral (2020) gives an example in the Latino community, where racial identity and acculturation dynamics markedly influence opinions on social movements like Black Lives Matter (BLM), with Afro-Latinos and immigrant Latinos showing varied levels of support. Education also significantly impacts political ideologies among both immigrant and minority communities in the United States, as seen in Cerezo et al., (2020) and Schmidt-Catran & Czymara, (2023), who note that higher educational attainment often correlates with more progressive views on immigration, suggesting a divergence from conservative ideologies common among less educated individuals. Educational experiences contribute to developing political ideologies among minority and immigrant youth by integrating various identity aspects. Samuels-Wortley (2021) notes how education, ethnicity, and community experiences shape Black and Indigenous youths' attitudes toward law enforcement.

These observations reveal that minority groups and immigrants in the USA possess distinct political ideologies, like White Americans, yet different experiences and perspectives shape these ideologies. The combination of racial identity, educational background, and experiences of discrimination significantly influences the political ideologies of these groups. This leads to diverse viewpoints on societal issues, including law enforcement and immigration policies. The linkage of these factors highlights the complexity of understanding and addressing the perspectives of minority groups and immigrants in the context of law enforcement and immigration.





This research makes a significant contribution to the existing body of literature by employing an integrated and intersectional approach to explore the relationship between education, racial identity, political ideology, social class, and media engagement in shaping immigrants' attitudes toward immigration and their perceptions of law enforcement in the United States. Unlike previous studies that have typically examined these elements in isolation or limited combinations, this study comprehensively analyzes how these diverse dimensions converge. It explores how educational experiences and racial backgrounds inform and influence immigrants' viewpoints on critical societal issues such as immigration policies and law enforcement.

By integrating media engagement into its analysis, the study highlights the significant impact of media narratives and representations on immigrants' attitudes and beliefs. This holistic approach enriches academic discourse and offers practical insights for policymakers and practitioners in immigration and law enforcement. By combining various individual characteristics and socio-political factors, the research provides a detailed and interconnected view of the immigrant experience in the U.S., contributing substantially to the discourse on immigration, law enforcement interaction, and social integration.

METHOD

Theoretical Framework

This study's theoretical framework is grounded in intersectionality, as Crenshaw (1998) articulated. This approach is adequate for analyzing data from the 2020 American National Election Studies (ANES) survey, which offers rich insights into various social identities and attitudes. Intersectionality enables a balanced examination of how multiple identities, including race, immigrant status, education, and socioeconomic status, influence individuals' perspectives on immigration and law enforcement in the United States. This framework acknowledges the multifaceted nature of these experiences, providing a comprehensive lens to interpret the complex dynamics captured in the ANES data.

Within this framework, the role of racial identity is particularly emphasized, relating to factors such as educational background and immigrant status. It examines how racial and ethnic minorities, especially within immigrant communities, navigate their identities in various social contexts, such as encounters with law enforcement and perceptions of immigration policies. This analysis is guided by Hypothesis 1A, which posits that racial identity significantly influences American immigrants' perceptions of and attitudes toward immigration policies. Hypothesis 1B extends this, suggesting that racial identity plays a pivotal role in shaping immigrants' perceptions of law enforcement in the United States, with immigrants from different racial or ethnic backgrounds expected to exhibit varying levels of trust and perceptions of police behavior, influenced by their experiences and socio-cultural contexts.

The framework also underscores the importance of socioeconomic status, revealing how it combines race and education to contribute to diverse experiences and attitudes among American immigrants. This understanding is critical in analyzing the survey responses, reflecting varied experiences of privilege and marginalization across different communities. Hypothesis 2A predicts that socioeconomic status, alongside racial identity, significantly affects immigrants' fear and perceptions of authorities, including law enforcement and immigration officers. Lower socioeconomic status is expected to correlate with increased fear and negative perceptions of these authorities. The framework also considers the role of education in shaping attitudes towards immigration laws and law enforcement. In this context, education is hypothesized as a mediator, as articulated in Hypothesis 2B, which asserts that higher educational attainment correlates with more balanced and informed views on these subjects.

Lastly, the influence of political ideology is integrated into the framework, with Hypothesis 2C positing that political ideology significantly influences the attitudes of American minorities and immigrants towards immigration policies and law enforcement. It suggests that different political ideologies, from liberal to conservative, yield distinct perceptions and attitudes in these areas. In applying intersectionality to the ANES survey data, the study moves beyond analyses that treat social identities as isolated variables. Instead, it highlights the interconnected nature of these identities, offering insights into how they collectively influence attitudes toward immigration and law enforcement. This comprehensive analysis enriches academic discourse and informs policy development, aiming for more inclusive and equitable approaches in immigration and law enforcement practices.

Variables and their descriptions

Variables like political ideology, immigration level preference, party preference in handling immigration, and job impacts of immigration are central to understanding public sentiments on immigration. Political ideology (measured on a liberal-conservative scale) offers insights into how political leanings influence opinions on immigration policies. Immigration level preference indicates direct attitudes towards the scale of immigration, reflecting broader societal and economic concerns. Party preference in handling immigration and budget spending on border security highlights the intersection of political affiliation and policy preferences, indicating how party-based perspectives shape views on immigration control and resource allocation. Similarly, perceptions of the job impact of immigration probe into economic dimensions, reflecting concerns about employment competition. In terms of law enforcement perception,





variables like police perception, attitudes towards police brutality, and perceived police racial bias are integral. They capture public trust and views on the fairness and effectiveness of law enforcement, which are crucial in understanding societal attitudes towards police and broader issues of justice and equality, as seen in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Variables

Variable Code	Variable Description & Question Asked	Levels and Their Meanings
Immigration level pref	Immigration Levels Preference (V202232): "What should immigration levels be?"	1: Increased a lot, 2: Increased a little, 3: Left the same as it is now, 4: Decreased a little, 5: Decreased a lot
Party Immigration Handling	Party Better at Handling Immigration (V201241): "Which party do you think would do a better job of handling immigration?"	1: Democrats much better, 2: Democrats somewhat better, 3: Not much difference, 4: Republicans somewhat better, 5: Republicans much better
Immigration job impact	Likelihood Immigration Will Take Away Jobs (V202233): "How likely is it that recent immigration levels will take jobs away from people already here?"	1: Extremely likely, 2: Very likely, 3: Somewhat likely, 4: Not at all likely
political_ideology	Political Ideology Scale (V201200): "Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?"	1: Extremely liberal, 2: Liberal, 3: Slightly liberal, 4: Moderate, 5: Slightly conservative, 6: Conservative, 7: Extremely conservative
police_brutality	Perception of Police Use of Force (V202351): "How often do you think police officers use more force than is necessary?"	1: Never, 2: Rarely, 3: About half the time, 4: Most of the time, 5: All the time
police_racial_bias	Comparative Treatment of Blacks and Whites by Police (V202491 & V202493x): "In general, do the police treat whites better than blacks, treat them both the same, or treat blacks better than whites?"	1: Treat whites better, 2: Treat both the same, 3: Treat blacks better
police_perception	Feeling Thermometer: Police (V202171): "How would you rate: Police?"	Scale 0-100 (Rating of feelings towards police)
partyid	Party Identification (V201228): "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an independent, or what?"	0: No preference, 1: Democrat, 2: Republican, 3: Independent, 5: Other party
news_fol	How Closely Follow Politics in Media (V202407): "How closely do you follow politics on T.V., radio, newspapers, or the Internet?"	1: Very closely, 2: Fairly closely, 3: Not very closely, 4: Not at all
mar_status	Marital Status (V201508): "Are you now married, widowed, divorced, separated, or never married?"	1: Married (spouse present), 2: Married (spouse absent), 3: Widowed, 4: Divorced, 5: Separated, 6: Never married
soc_class	Social Class (V202352): "How would you describe your social class?"	1: Lower class, 2: Working class, 3: Middle class, 4: Upper class
male	Gender (V201600): "What is your sex?"	1: Male, 2: Female
race	Race (V201549x): "What is your race?"	Various racial categories (1, 2, 3, etc.)
age	Age Group (V201507x): Recoded into age groups	1: 18-34, 2: 35-50, 3: 51-64, 4: 65+
education	Education Level (V201510): "What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?"	1: Less than high school, 2: High school graduate, 3: Some college, etc.
rel_attendance	Religious Attendance (V201453): "Do you go to religious services every week, almost every week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, or never?"	1: Every week, 2: Almost every week, etc.





Demographic variables such as social class, race, age, income, and education level are included to explore how different societal segments perceive immigration and law enforcement. Social class and income provide a socioeconomic perspective, indicating how financial status might influence views on these topics. Race and education level are particularly significant, given their roles in shaping experiences and perceptions of immigration and policing. Age captures generational differences in attitudes, reflecting changing social norms and values. Also, variables like religious attendance, geographic location, and frequency of following political news offer contextual depth. Religious attendance can correlate with moral and ethical viewpoints, geographic location can signify regional variations in attitudes, and news following patterns may reflect or shape opinions on these complex issues. These variables provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing the complex and varied perspectives on immigration and law enforcement in contemporary American society.

Table 2: Summary Statistics

Variable	Min	Median	Mean	Max	SD
Police Racial Bias	1.000	2.000	2.449	7.000	2.967
Police Perception	0.00	70.00	70.57	100.0	33.62
Political Ideology	1.000	4.000	4.091	7.000	33.48
Immigration Level Preference	1.000	3.000	2.992	5.000	3.128
Party Immigration Handling	1.000	3.000	2.918	5.000	1.760
Police Brutality	1.000	3.000	2.821	5.000	2.972
Immigration Job Impact	1.000	3.000	3.036	4.000	2.986
Socioeconomic Class	1.000	3.000	2.563	4.000	2.802
Gender	1.000	2.000	1.542	2.000	1.067
Race	1.000	1.000	1.629	6.000	1.698
Age Group	1.000	3.000	2.605	4.000	1.103
Education	1.000	5.000	4.528	8.000	9.988
Religious Attendance	1.000	2.000	2.462	5.000	1.990
Party ID	0.000	2.000	2.055	5.000	1.282
News Following	1.000	2.000	2.178	4.000	2.691
Marital Status	1.00	1.00	2.85	6.00	2.313

The summary statistics in Table 2 above offer a comprehensive overview of various variables related to public perception and socio-political attitudes. The data on 'Police Racial Bias' and 'Police Perception' suggest significant variability in public views on law enforcement, with a notable range in responses. The median and mean values indicate a general tendency towards moderate perceptions, but the widespread data, as shown by the standard deviation, reflects diverse opinions. The 'Political Ideology' variable slightly leans towards moderate to conservative views among respondents. For 'Immigration Level Preference,' the mean value is close to the median, suggesting a balanced distribution of opinions about immigration levels. 'Party Immigration Handling' and 'Police Brutality' reveal divided perspectives, which is expected given the nature of these topics. Variables like 'Socioeconomic Class,' 'Gender,' 'Race,' and 'Age Group' provide insights into demographic distributions, with 'Education' and 'Religious Attendance' showing a wide range of responses. 'Party ID' and 'News Following' highlight political and media engagement, whereas 'Marital Status' offers a demographic perspective.

RESULT

Results and Analyses

Table 3: Results Summary

Variable	Immigration Perceptions	Immigration Perceptions (Interaction)	Law Enforcement	Law Enforcement (Interaction)
Intercept	2.486013***	2.467797***	70.3938***	71.3089***
education	-0.023332*	-0.019737		
race	-0.001862	0.008939	-0.3983*	-0.9528
PartyImmigrationHandling	0.202583***	0.202948***		
immigrationjobimpact	-0.353139***	-0.353349***		
political_ideology	0.077001***	0.076854***	3.7718***	3.7734***
soc_class	-0.001814	-0.001670	-0.3623	-0.7311
news_fol	0.124288***	0.124223***	0.3253	0.3240
rel_attendance	0.063147***	0.063224***		
age1	0.083642***	0.083793***	3.2149***	3.2246***
male	0.085257*	0.085262*	-0.3888**	-0.3858**



education:race		-0.002239		
police_brutality			-9.7723***	-9.7723***
police_racial_bias			2.6914***	2.6854***
partyid			-1.9118***	-1.9118***
mar_status			-0.9382***	-0.9391***
race:soc_class				0.2210
Adjusted R-squared	0.3577	0.3575	0.4675	0.4675
F-statistic	159.9	145.3	468.8	429.7

(*** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05)

In the first column of Table 3, the negative coefficient for education implies that individuals with lower educational attainment, especially those with less than a high school degree, tend to favor higher immigration levels. From Figure 1 below, the trend shows a downward slope, indicating that as education level increases, the predicted probability of preferring stricter immigration decreases. This suggests that individuals with higher education may be more open to immigration, possibly due to greater exposure to diverse perspectives or a better understanding of the global context. This finding aligns with literature suggesting that lower educational levels might be associated with different labor market perceptions, influencing attitudes towards immigration (Mayda et al., 2022). It highlights the crucial role of education in shaping views on immigration policies. The non-significant coefficient for race suggests that Blacks do not have a marked influence on preferences for immigration levels. From Figure 1 below, the plot does not provide a clear trend, which suggests that race alone does not have a straightforward or predictive solid effect on immigration preferences. This aligns with studies that argue the complexity of racial dynamics concerning immigration perceptions, emphasizing that mere racial categorization might not capture the profound experiences of different racial groups (Foner et al., 2018).

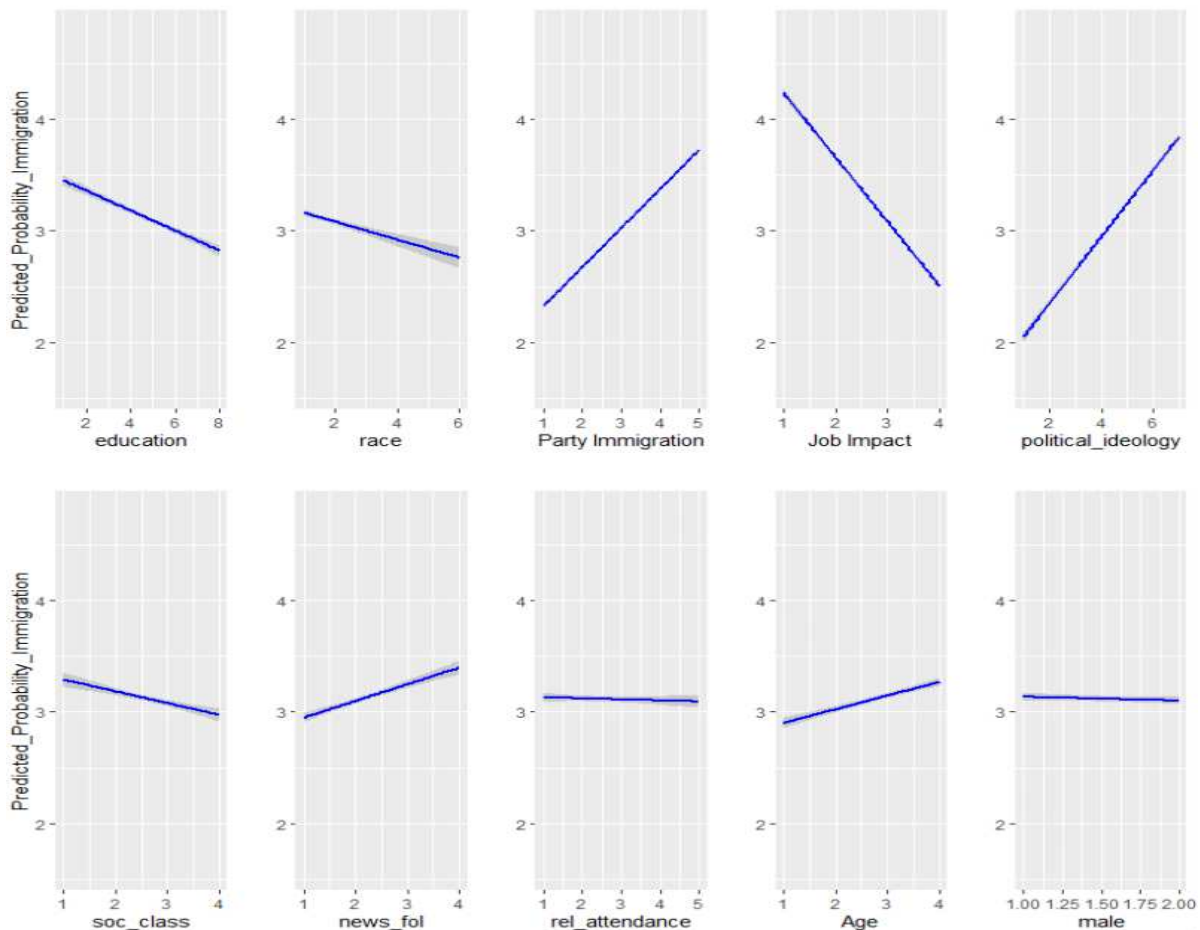


Figure 1: Predicted Probabilities for immigration Policies Perceptions



The positive coefficient for “party that better handles immigration” indicates a strong link between believing Democrats handle immigration much better and a preference for increased immigration levels. From Figure 1 above, the upward trend indicates that as preference for Republican handling of immigration increases (moving from left, "Democrats much better," to right, "Republicans much better"), the predicted probability of preferring stricter immigration also increases. This result mirrors political affiliations' significant role in shaping public opinion on immigration, reflecting the polarized nature of political ideologies in the United States (Esses, 2021) (Esses 2021). The significant negative coefficient for whether immigration will take away jobs from citizens shows that individuals who believe immigration is extremely likely to take away jobs prefer lower immigration levels. From Figure 1 above, There is a downward trend, showing that as the belief that immigration will take away jobs increases, the predicted probability of preferring increased immigration decreases. This aligns with economic concerns being a significant factor in shaping immigration attitudes, where perceptions of job competition from immigrants influence preferences (Morey, 2018).

The positive and significant coefficient for political ideology indicates that those with extremely liberal ideologies favor higher immigration levels. From Figure 1 above, the upward trend suggests that as individuals' political views shift rightward towards conservatism, the predicted probability of preferring stricter immigration increases. This is consistent with the broader trend of liberal political ideologies being associated with more open immigration policies, reflecting a divergence in how different political spectrums view immigration (Borinca et al., 2022). The non-significant coefficient for socioeconomic class implies that class does not significantly influence immigration-level preferences, especially at the lower end of the economic spectrum. The slight upward trend in Figure 1 above indicates that as individuals identify with a higher social class, there will be a marginally increased probability of preferring stricter immigration policies. However, this trend is relatively steep, suggesting that attitudes toward immigration may be influenced more by other factors, such as political beliefs or media narratives, than socioeconomic status alone (Misra et al., 2021). The positive coefficient for following the news suggests that those who follow political news very closely are more inclined towards higher immigration levels. This trend in Figure 1 above is relatively flat, suggesting that how closely individuals follow political news may not strongly impact their immigration preferences. This supports the view that media engagement, particularly in political news, shapes public attitudes toward immigration, possibly through framing and exposure to various narratives (Grigorieff et al., 2020).

The positive coefficient for religious attendance indicates that individuals attending religious services tend to support higher immigration levels. The trend in Figure 1 above is nearly flat, implying that the frequency of religious service attendance does not significantly affect predicted immigration preferences. This may reflect the influence of religious teachings and community values on attitudes toward immigrants, emphasizing compassion and support for newcomers (Voelkel et al., 2022). The positive coefficient for the younger age group suggests that individuals aged 18-34 are more likely to support higher immigration levels. A slight upward trend in Figure 1 indicates that older age groups have a slightly higher probability of preferring stricter immigration policies. This finding aligns with generational differences in views on immigration, where younger individuals often exhibit more progressive stances, possibly influenced by broader exposure to diverse cultures and global perspectives (Turner & Mangual Figueroa, 2019). The positive coefficient for the male gender suggests a slight tendency among men to favor higher immigration levels. The flat trend in Figure 1 indicates no significant difference in immigration preferences based on gender. This introduces a gender dimension in understanding immigration preferences, hinting at the different ways men and women might perceive and interact with the topic of immigration.

In the second column of Table 3, the interaction between education and race (education: race) showed a non-significant influence on immigrants' preferences for immigration levels. The coefficient for this interaction term was minor and statistically insignificant, indicating that the combined effect of educational attainment and racial identity on immigration preferences is not pronounced. This suggests that while education and race contribute to shaping attitudes toward immigration, their intersection does not significantly alter this relationship. It implies that the effect of education on immigration attitudes is relatively consistent across different racial groups, not markedly varying as racial identity changes.

In the third column of Table 3, the negative coefficient for race indicates that racial minorities, specifically Blacks, perceive the police less favorably. The downward trend for race in Figure 2 below shows that as one moves across the racial categories, there is a decrease in the predicted favorable views of law enforcement. This finding aligns with studies showing that non-white groups, particularly Black and Latinx communities, often report negative experiences with law enforcement, influenced by historical and ongoing racial biases (Barajas-Gonzalez et al., 2021; Chavez-Dueñas et al., 2019). The non-significant coefficient for socioeconomic class suggests that class distinction alone does not considerably impact perceptions of the police. The trend in Figure 2 below is relatively flat, indicating that socioeconomic class does not significantly influence the predicted favorable views toward law enforcement. This could be due to the complexity of class dynamics and its relationship with other factors like race and education in shaping law enforcement perceptions (Misra et al., 2021).



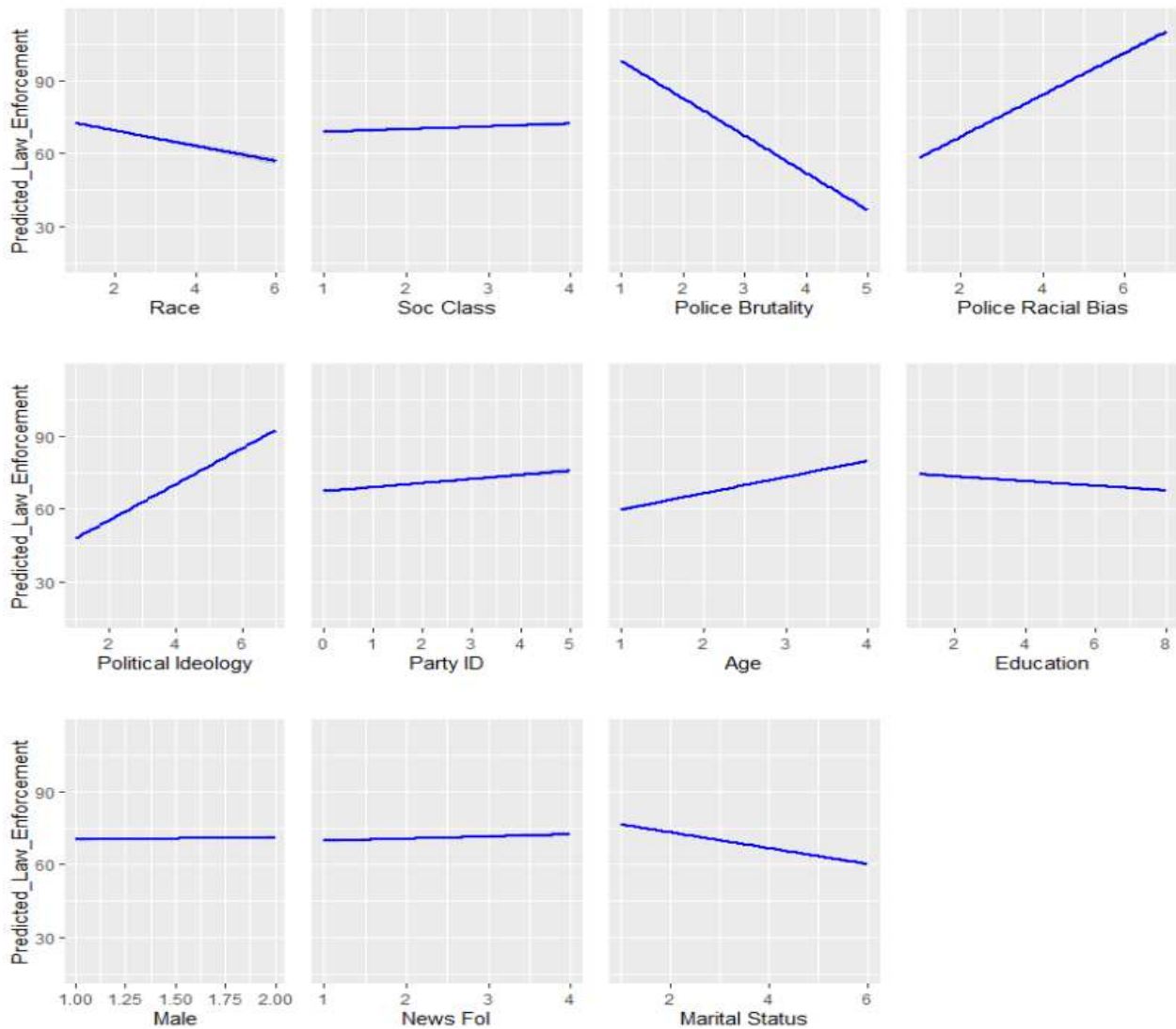


Figure 2: Predicted Probabilities for Law Enforcement Perceptions

DISCUSSION

The strong negative coefficient for police brutality reflects the significant impact of perceptions of police brutality on overall views of law enforcement. Individuals who believe that “police never use more force than necessary” have more favorable perceptions of police, confirming the crucial role that public perceptions of police behavior play in shaping attitudes. A clear downward trend in Figure 2 above indicates that as perceptions of police brutality increase, the predicted favorable views of law enforcement decrease. (Mullinix et al., 2021). The positive coefficient for police bias indicates that perceptions of racial bias in policing, specifically the belief that “police treat whites better,” correlate with more favorable views of law enforcement. The upward trend in Figure 2 above suggests that as perceptions of racial bias by the police towards one group over another increase, so does the predicted level of trust or favorable views towards law enforcement by those who believe that police treat Whites better. This reflects complex social and racial dynamics in perceptions of policing (Fine et al., 2019). The positive coefficient for political ideology suggests that those with more conservative views tend to have more favorable perceptions of the police. The upward trend in Figure 2 above shows that as individuals identify with a more conservative ideology, their predicted favorable views of law enforcement increase. This finding aligns with the literature indicating that conservative ideologies often correlate with higher trust in law enforcement institutions (Brown et al., 2022).

The negative coefficient for party identification, particularly for Democrats, suggests that Democratic affiliation is associated with less favorable views of the police. The upward trend in Figure 2 above indicates that as individuals' identification with the Republican Party increases, so does their predicted favorable view of law enforcement. This is influenced by political narratives and the party's stance on law enforcement issues (Esses, 2021). The positive coefficient for younger age groups indicates that older individuals tend to view the police more favorably. The upward



trend in Figure 2 above suggests that older age groups have a higher predicted level of favorable views toward law enforcement. This aligns with generational differences in perceptions of law enforcement, potentially influenced by differing experiences and historical contexts. The negative coefficient for education suggests that higher educational attainment correlates with less favorable views of the police. The downward trend in Figure 2 above indicates that as education levels increase, the predicted favorable views towards law enforcement decrease, possibly reflecting more critical perspectives on law enforcement practices that come with higher education. This is due to increased awareness and critical understanding of social issues among more educated individuals (Mayda et al., 2022).

The positive coefficient for the male gender indicates that men tend to have a more favorable perception of the police compared to women. This finding reflects gendered differences in experiences and perceptions of safety and law enforcement (Samuels-Wortley, 2021). The coefficient for closely following news suggests a modest association between media consumption and perceptions of the police. The relatively flat trend in Figure 2 above indicates that the frequency of following political news does not have a strong predictive effect on favorable views toward law enforcement. Those who follow the news closely might have more biased views of law enforcement, influenced by media portrayals (Grigorieff et al., 2020). The negative coefficient for marital status, particularly for non-married individuals, indicates that married individuals tend to view the police more favorably. The downward trend in Figure 2 above suggests that individuals who have never been married have a lower predicted level of favorable views toward law enforcement than those who are married. This can be related to varying life experiences and perceptions of safety and security between married and unmarried individuals.

In the last column of Table 3, the coefficient for this interaction is positive but not statistically significant, suggesting that the combined effect of race and socioeconomic status on police perception needs to be distinct and influential enough to be considered a determining factor. This result implies that while race and socioeconomic class influence perceptions of law enforcement, their intersection does not substantially alter this perception. In simpler terms, an individual's racial identity coupled with their socioeconomic class does not uniquely influence their view of the police compared to the separate effects of race or socioeconomic status.

CONCLUSION

This research has shed light on the complex ways in which public perceptions of law enforcement and immigration are shaped, revealing that perceived police brutality and racial bias are decisive factors. Incidents of excessive force and racial discrimination appear to undermine public trust in law enforcement severely. This finding is particularly salient against the backdrop of historical and ongoing racial tensions, confirming that policing is a focal point of societal concern and debate. Political ideology is also a prominent predictor of attitudes toward immigration and policing. The stark divergence in views based on political leanings underscores the polarized state of American public opinion on these critical issues. The influence of political affiliation and gender highlights the complexity of public sentiment.

The analysis shows that education, political ideology, and racial identity significantly affect policymaking and public discourse. For instance, the inverse relationship between education level and the preference for more restrictive immigration policies suggests that educational initiatives can foster broader understanding and acceptance. Meanwhile, the notable impact of political ideology on these perceptions indicates that policy debates and community relations strategies must navigate a highly polarized landscape.

This study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing public trust and policy preferences in immigration and law enforcement. It underscores policymakers' need to consider the multifaceted nature of public opinion, shaped by various sociodemographic factors. Effective policy development and community engagement strategies must, therefore, acknowledge and address the diverse viewpoints within the American population, aiming to foster trust and equity in the implementation of law enforcement and immigration policies.

Law enforcement agencies must enhance community engagement strategies to rebuild trust, especially in communities of color. Initiatives such as community policing, transparency in actions, and regular open dialogues between police and community members can effectively mend the relationship between law enforcement and the public. The findings suggest the need for ongoing education and training for law enforcement officers on issues of racial bias and the use of force. This training should include cultural competency modules to ensure officers interact with diverse communities respectfully and effectively.

Policymakers should comprehensively review current immigration and law enforcement policies to address the concerns highlighted by these findings. Policies that inadvertently foster perceptions of bias or injustice should be revised or replaced with more equitable alternatives that promote public safety and trust without compromising the rights and dignity of individuals or groups. It is essential to foster a more informed and less polarized public discourse on immigration and law enforcement. Political leaders and stakeholders should encourage dialogue transcending partisan lines, focusing on evidence-based policies and the shared values of justice and community wellbeing.





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