



# Proposition 187 Reexamined: Attitudes Toward Immigration Among California Voters

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The purposes of this study were to examine socio-demographic predictors of attitudes toward immigration in a community-based sample ( $N = 494$ ) from the Los Angeles area; and to explore the relationship between attitudes toward immigration and the providing of educational and health services to the children of undocumented immigrants. Not providing services to the children of undocumented immigrants was a key element of California's Proposition 187. Attitudes toward immigration were measured with the Attitudes Toward Immigration Scale (ATIS). The providing of services was measured through the participants' evaluations of a school scenario and a health care scenario. Results indicated that participants who were middle-aged or older, less educated, identified as Republican, and were third generation or greater were more likely to hold negative attitudes toward immigration. Furthermore, participants holding negative attitudes toward immigration were less likely to provide education and health care services to the children of undocumented immigrants.

California is a state that houses a large number of immigrants. In the November 1994 California State election, Proposition 187 was passed. For all undocumented immigrants and their children, Proposition 187 banned enrollment in public schools and colleges, denied non-emergency public health care, including prenatal and postnatal services, and cut off social welfare services that are directed toward troubled youths, the elderly, the blind, and others with special needs. This proposition—approved by 59 percent of the voters—also created new state felonies and stiffer penalties for the use of fraudulent documents showing legal residency, and required law enforcement agencies, school officials, medical personnel, and other state and local agencies to report suspected undocumented immigrants to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (California Secretary of State's Office, 1994c).

Much debate occurred around Proposition 187. Supporters of Proposition 187 ar-

gued that undocumented immigrants hurt the state economy and that undocumented immigrants are drawn to California by the "magnet" of the welfare state (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1996; Johnson, 1996). For example, the individuals who drafted the initiative argued that undocumented immigrants were costing taxpayers in excess of 5 billion dollars a year (California Secretary of State's Office, 1994b, p. 1).

In addition to the economic argument, advocates of Proposition 187 argued that undocumented immigrants were responsible for crowded classrooms and were thus responsible for lowering the quality of public education (California Secretary of State's Office, 1994b; Suárez-Orozco, 1996). Some individuals, such as Brimelow (1995), claimed that present undocumented immigrants have not assimilated into mainstream society as successfully as the previous European immigrants. According to Brimelow, the new immigrants hold cultural values and attitudes that are not compatible with mainstream values and institutions. These differing value systems inevitably lead to school failure and social problems among the new immigrants such as a disproportionate contribution to crime (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995).

Proposition 187 came under heavy criticism. Critics who opposed the proposition believed that Proposition 187 scapegoated and blamed undocumented immigrants for the economic problems in California. For example, Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco (1995) stated that Proposition 187 is indicative of society's anti-immigrant sentiments, and was a symptom for anxieties over diminishing economic expectations, crowded schools, a "broken" justice system, and rapid demographic changes (political minorities are slowly becoming the political majority). Several authors (e.g., Calavita, 1996; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1996; Mehan, 1997; Rubin, 1994; Suárez-Orozco, 1996; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995) pointed out that, historically, anti-immigration campaigns have come during economic downturns when workers worry about having to compete for jobs with people whose standards of living are beneath their own. This, in turn, contributes to resistance to immigration. Suárez-Orozco (1996) argued that immigrants generate *positive* economic activity through taxes, by providing inexpensive labor (e.g., farm workers), and by opening immigrant businesses. Such businesses are critical in reinvigorating urban areas. Similarly, other critics (e.g., California Secretary of State's Office, 1994a; Johnson, 1996; Passel, 1994) argued that rather than costing taxpayers money, immigrants contribute a net surplus to the economy.

Finally, critics of Proposition 187 called it sanctioned discrimination against Latino/as since immigration status is not easily identifiable (California Secretary of State's Office, 1994a; Johnson, 1996). As noted, Proposition 187 required law enforcement, social, and health agencies to report *suspected* undocumented immigrants to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). However, Proposition 187 did not define the basis for such suspicion. This opened the door to base suspicion on the way an individual speaks, the sound of someone's last name, or the shade of a person's skin. Those suspected would include citizens and individuals with legal immigration status.

Only one published study has examined predictors of Proposition 187 support. Quinton, Cowan, & Watson (1996) explored right-wing authoritarianism, positive and negative stereotypes about illegal immigration, and collective self-esteem (individual attitudes toward his or her own in-group) as predictors of Proposition 187 support

among college students in the Los Angeles area. They found that Anglos ( $n = 79$ ) were significantly more in favor of Proposition 187 than were Latino/as ( $n = 92$ ). Among both Latino/as and Anglos, right-wing authoritarianism and negative stereotypes about undocumented immigrants were significantly related to Proposition 187 support. Among Latino/as, low collective self-esteem and high levels of acculturation were significantly related to Proposition 187 support. In contrast, among Anglos, high collective self-esteem was significantly related to Proposition 187 support. Quinton *et al.* concluded that among both Latino/as and Anglos, three forms of prejudice were associated with Proposition 187 support: personality, cognitive, and group perspectives. Their results suggested that individuals who supported Proposition 187 were characterized by one or more of the following: political conservatism with outwardly rigid, prejudiced attitudes toward outside groups; less direct prejudice in the form of negative stereotypes; and feelings of being threatened by an outside group.

### GOALS AND HYPOTHESES OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Proposition 187 has been interpreted as unconstitutional by the California state court. As noted, however, 59 percent of the voters in California supported the proposition. Given this large percentage, further exploration of the factors underlying people's attitudes toward immigration appears necessary. The present study examined attitudes toward immigration in a community-based sample from the Los Angeles area. The goals and hypotheses of the study included the following:

1. The study explored the relationships among socio-demographic variables and attitudes toward immigration. The demographic variables explored included gender, age, ethnicity, generation level, education, income, job type, citizenship status, and voting behavior.
2. The study explored whether negative attitudes toward immigration predict how individuals behave in reaction to two situations outlined in Proposition 187. It was expected that those individuals with negative attitudes toward immigration would be less in favor of providing education and health care to the children of undocumented immigrants.
3. In reaction to the questions of whether schools and health clinics should provide education and health care to the children of undocumented immigrants, it was expected that the participants would rate Mexican immigrants less favorably than Canadian immigrants.
4. In reaction to the questions of whether schools and health clinics should provide education and health care to the children of undocumented immigrants, it was expected that participants would be more favorable to providing health care services than school services.

## METHOD

### *Participants*

Participants were 494 individuals who were recruited from public locations throughout the Los Angeles area. Participants who were not old enough to vote were specifically excluded, although actual voting behavior was not a requirement for participation in the study. Fifty-three percent of the sample were female; 47 percent were male. Age of the sample ranged from 18 to 80 ( $M = 36.23$ ;  $SD = 13.67$ ).

### *Measures*

A demographics questionnaire gathered information regarding age; gender; ethnicity; country of birth of participant, participant's parents, and participant's grandparents; level of education and income; occupation; citizenship status; and political affiliation. Participants were also asked whether they voted in the last election.

*Scenario evaluation.* Each participant was asked to read both a school scenario and a health care scenario. After each scenario, the participant rated three statements pertaining to the scenario. The country of origin of the immigrant in each scenario was either Mexico or Canada. The order of the presentation of scenarios and the country of origin of the immigrant were counterbalanced.

The script of the school scenario read as follows:

A Mexican (or Canadian) immigrant wants to enroll his or her child in a public school. The family has immigrated but they do not have the official documents to be in the United States legally.

The three statements were: (1) the school should enroll the child; (2) the child should receive schooling some place other than the public school system; and (3) the school should inform the immigration authorities about the family's illegal immigration status. For each statement, the possible responses ranged from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 9 = "strongly agree."

The script of the health care scenario read as follows:

A Mexican (or Canadian) immigrant goes to a County Clinic that provides low cost medical care to make an appointment for his or her child. The family has immigrated but they do not have the official documents to be in the United States legally.

The three statements were: (1) the clinic should provide medical care to the child; (2) the child should receive medical care some place other than the public health system; and (3) the clinic should inform the immigration authorities about the family's illegal immigration status. For each statement, the possible responses ranged from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 9 = "strongly agree."

*Attitudes Toward Immigration Scale (ATIS)*. To assess potential underlying motivating beliefs for participants' evaluations of the scenarios, the ATIS was developed by Kain et al. (1995) (see Appendix). The scale measures attitudes toward immigration, and consists of ten questions presented in a 9-point Likert-type format ("strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"). Five items are positively weighted toward immigrants (e.g., "Immigrants have contributed greatly to the United States") and five items are negatively weighted toward immigrants (e.g., "Immigrants drain the United States of its valuable resources"). The items that are negatively weighted toward immigrants are reverse scored. Possible scores range from 10 to 90. Higher scores indicate more favorable attitudes towards immigration. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the present study was .77, thus indicating adequate internal consistency reliability.

### ***Procedures***

The participants were recruited from public locations throughout the Los Angeles area. Potential participants were approached by research assistants, blind to the study's purposes, and were asked if they would volunteer for an opinion survey. Those who volunteered to participate then completed the questionnaire packet, which included, in order, the scenarios, the ATIS, and the demographics form. The questionnaire packet took 5 to 10 minutes to complete. Any questions that participants asked concerning the study were directed to the primary investigators.

### ***Data Analyses***

The data analyses are presented in six steps. Descriptive statistics are first presented. The bivariate relationships among the socio-demographic variables and the ATIS are then presented. In specific, correlation coefficients were used to assess the relationships among the continuous socio-demographic variables (education, income) and the ATIS; and analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were used to assess the effects of the categorical socio-demographic variables (gender; age groups; ethnicity; job type; generation level; citizenship status; voting behavior) on the ATIS. Third, correlation coefficients were used to assess the relationships among the ATIS and the scenario evaluations. Fourth, six stepwise multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine the individual attitudes that best predict the scenario evaluations. For each stepwise multiple regression analysis, the criteria for entering the equation was set at  $\leq .10$ . Fifth, *t* tests were conducted to examine whether participants were more favorable to providing health care and school services to Canadian immigrants than to Mexican immigrants. Finally, three paired samples *t* tests were conducted to examine whether participants were more favorable to providing health care services than school services.

## RESULTS

*Descriptive Statistics*

*Age, Ethnicity, and Generational Status.* Table 1 shows the frequency distributions for age, ethnicity, and generational status. Generational status was determined by asking about the participants' and their parents' and grandparents' places of birth. About three fourths of the sample were third generation or greater.

*Education, Income, and Job Type.* Table 1 also lists the distributions for education, income, and job type. As shown, most of the sample had at least a high school education. Income was equally distributed.

*Citizenship Status, Political Affiliation, and Voting Behavior.* Table 1 gives the distributions for citizenship status, political affiliation, and voting behavior. As seen, a great majority of the sample reported being a United States citizen. Most individuals indicated that they had voted in the November 1994 election.

*Evaluations of Scenarios.* In regards to the school scenario, the mean score for "provide schooling" was 4.70 ( $SD = 3.18$ ); the mean score for "school other" was 5.03 ( $SD = 3.15$ ); and the mean score for "report to authorities" was 4.86 ( $SD = 3.35$ ). In

TABLE 1  
Sample Distributions for Socio-Demographic Variables

Variable	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
18 years - 24 years	22.6	22.6
25 years - 32 years	26.1	48.7
33 years - 45 years	26.7	75.4
45 years and older	24.6	100.0
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Anglo American	57.2	57.2
Latino/a-American	12.9	70.1
African American	10.6	80.7
Asian American	10.6	91.3
Native American	2.6	93.9
Bi-Racial	4.7	98.6
Other	1.4	100.0
<b>Generational Status</b>		
First (immigrant status)	17.5	17.5
Second	9.5	27.0
Third	32.7	59.7
Fourth or greater	40.3	100.0
<b>Highest Level of Education</b>		
No formal schooling	2.1	2.1
Some schooling, did not graduate from high school	5.6	7.7
High school graduate	25.9	33.6
Some college, did not graduate from college	25.7	59.3
College graduate	18.1	77.4
Some graduate or professional school	7.6	85.0
Completed graduate or professional school	15.0	100.0
<b>Annual Income</b>		
\$10,000 or below	18.3	18.3
Over \$10,000 to \$20,000	17.9	36.2
Over \$20,000 to \$30,000	22.8	59.0

TABLE 1 (cont.)  
Sample Distributions for Socio-Demographic Variables

Variable	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Over \$30,000 to \$50,000	20.0	79.0
Over \$50,000 to \$70,000	10.6	89.6
Over \$70,000 to \$90,000	4.0	93.6
Over \$90,000	6.4	100.0
<b>Job Description</b>		
Managerial or professional	36.8	36.8
Technical, sales, or administrative support	21.7	58.5
Service	14.5	73.0
Farming, forestry, or fishing	0.6	73.6
Precision production, craft, and repair	4.8	78.4
Operator, fabricator, or laborer	3.5	81.9
Student	9.5	91.4
Have not been employed in the last 5 years	4.1	95.5
Other	4.5	100.0
<b>Citizenship Status</b>		
United States citizen	93.2	93.2
Permanent resident (green card)	6.0	99.2
Working visa	0.4	99.6
Other	0.4	100.0
<b>Political Affiliation</b>		
Democrat	40.6	40.6
Republican	22.5	63.1
Independent	8.8	71.9
Peace and Freedom	2.8	74.7
Green Party	0.4	75.1
Other party	1.5	76.6
No political party	23.4	100.0
<b>Voting Behavior</b>		
Voted in November, 1994 election	58.6	58.6
Did not vote in November, 1994 election	41.4	100.0

regards to the health care scenario, the mean score for "provide health" was 5.94 ( $SD = 2.97$ ); the mean score for "health other" was 4.54 ( $SD = 3.11$ ); and the mean score for "report to authorities" was 4.79 ( $SD = 3.27$ ).

*Attitudes toward Immigration.* The mean score for the ATIS was 56.14 ( $SD = 15.39$ ).

### ***Relationships among Socio-Demographic Variables and the ATIS***

Spearman coefficients revealed that high levels of education were significantly correlated to favorable ATIS scores ( $r = .32, p < .0001$ ), and that income was not related to the ATIS ( $r = -.07$ ).

One-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were used to study the effects of gender, age (18–24; 25–32; 33–45; 45 and older), ethnicity, job type, generation level (first and second; third and greater), citizenship (U.S. citizen; non-citizen), and voting behavior on the ATIS. The analyses revealed significant main effects for age ( $F [3,462] = 2.79, p < .05$ ), ethnicity ( $F [4,472] = 6.87, p < .0005$ ), job type ( $F [8,473] = 3.06, p < .003$ ), generation level ( $F [1,482] = 58.89, p < .0005$ ), and citizenship ( $F [1,480] =$



TABLE 2  
Correlation among ATIS and Scenario Response

	ATIS
<b>School Scenario Responses</b>	
Provide Schooling	.40*
School Other	-.19*
Report to Authorities (school)	-.32*
<b>Health Care Scenario Responses</b>	
Provide Health Care	.38*
Health Other	-.20*
Report to Authorities (health)	-.34*

Note: Pearson correlation coefficients. Significance levels are based on one-tailed tests.

\*  $p < .0005$ .

ATIS = Attitudes Toward Immigration Scale; Provide Schooling = The school should enroll the child; School Other = The child should receive schooling some place other than the public school system; Report to Authorities (school) = The school should inform the immigration authorities about the family's illegal immigration status; Provide Health Care = The clinic should provide medical care to the child; Health Other = The child should receive medical care some place other than the public health system; Report to Authorities (health) = The clinic should inform the immigration authorities about the family's illegal immigration status.

15.63,  $p < .0005$ ). Further ANOVAs revealed no significant main effects for gender and voting behavior. A  $t$ -test revealed that Democrats reported more favorable attitudes toward immigration than did Republicans ( $t [290] = 2.19$ ,  $p = .01$ ).

Follow-up  $t$ -tests were conducted to determine the location of significant group differences for age, ethnicity, and job type. Those aged 18–24 reported more favorable attitudes toward immigration than those aged 25–32 and 33–45. Latino/a-Americans and Asian Americans reported more favorable attitudes toward immigration than did Anglos and African Americans. Students and those working in a managerial or professional position reported more favorable attitudes than those working in other jobs and those who were unemployed.

### *Relationships among the ATIS and Scenario Evaluations*

*School Scenario.* Table 2 shows the Pearson correlations among the ATIS and the school scenario. As seen, the ATIS was significantly correlated to each of the three school scenario evaluations. As expected, those individuals with negative attitudes toward immigration were less in favor of providing education to children of undocumented immigrants.

*Health Care Scenario.* Table 2 also shows the Pearson correlations among the ATIS and the health care scenario. The ATIS was significantly correlated to each of the three

**TABLE 3**  
**Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis of School Scenario Responses**

Dependent and Predictor Variables	<i>F</i>	( <i>df</i> )	<i>p</i>	Total % Variance Accounted For
<b>Provide Schooling</b>				
ATIS 9	81.29	(1,459)	.0001	15.0
ATIS 9, ATIS 2	53.81	(2,458)	.0001	19.0
ATIS 9, ATIS 2, ATIS 6	40.34	(3,457)	.0001	20.9
ATIS 9, ATIS 2, ATIS 6, ATIS 7	31.74	(4,456)	.0001	21.8
ATIS 9, ATIS 2, ATIS 6, ATIS 7, ATIS 3	26.22	(5,455)	.0001	22.4
<b>School Other</b>				
ATIS 9	24.39	(1,458)	.0001	5.1
ATIS 9, ATIS 1	19.27	(2,457)	.0001	7.8
ATIS 9, ATIS 1, ATIS 6	17.02	(3,456)	.0001	10.1
ATIS 9, ATIS 1, ATIS 6, ATIS 2	13.96	(4,455)	.0001	10.9
<b>Report to Authorities</b>				
ATIS 5	49.69	(1,460)	.0001	9.7
ATIS 5, ATIS 3	34.00	(2,459)	.0001	12.9
ATIS 5, ATIS 3, ATIS 6	25.89	(3,458)	.0001	14.5
ATIS 5, ATIS 3, ATIS 6, ATIS 2	20.98	(2,457)	.0001	15.5

*Note:* Criteria for entering equation was set at  $\leq .10$ .

Provide Schooling = The school should enroll the child; School Other = The child should receive schooling some place other than the public school system; Report to Authorities = The school should inform the immigration authorities about the family's illegal immigration status; ATIS 1 = One of the good things about America is that it can be the land of opportunity for many people; ATIS 2 = America should take care of Americans first; ATIS 3 = Everyone in the United States should speak English; ATIS 5 = Immigrants take jobs from those who need them; ATIS 6 = United States Citizenship should be difficult to obtain; ATIS 7 = Immigrants have contributed greatly to the United States; ATIS 9 = Immigrants drain the United States of its valuable resources.

health care scenario evaluations. As expected, those individuals with negative attitudes toward immigration were less in favor of providing health care to children of undocumented immigrants.

### ***Multiple Regression Analyses of Scenario Evaluations***

*School Scenario.* Table 3 shows three stepwise multiple regression analyses that were conducted to determine the individual attitudes that best predict the evaluations of the school scenario. In the first analysis, ATIS 9 ( $t = -9.01, p < .0005$ ), ATIS 2 ( $t = -4.75, p < .0005$ ), ATIS 6 ( $t = -3.32, p < .002$ ), and ATIS 7 ( $t = 2.25, p < .03$ ) were each a significant independent predictor of "provide schooling." The overall equation accounted for 22 percent of the variance in "provide schooling."

In the second analysis, ATIS 9 ( $t = 5.27, p < .0005$ ), ATIS 1 ( $t = 3.67, p < .0005$ ), ATIS 6 ( $t = 3.41, p < .002$ ), and ATIS 2 ( $t = 2.09, p < .04$ ) were each a significant independent predictor of "school other," and together accounted for 11 percent of the variance in "school other."

In the third analysis, ATIS 5 ( $t = 7.05, p < .0001$ ), ATIS 3 ( $t = 4.08, p < .0005$ ), ATIS 6 ( $t = 2.92, p < .005$ ), and ATIS 2 ( $t = 2.35, p < .02$ ) were each a significant

TABLE 4  
Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis of Health Scenario Responses

Dependent and Predictor Variables	F	(df)	p	Total % Variance Accounted For
<b>Provide Health Care</b>				
ATIS 9	55.06	(1,457)	.0001	10.8
ATIS 9, ATIS 6	37.05	(2,456)	.0001	14.0
ATIS 9, ATIS 6, ATIS 3	27.23	(3,455)	.0001	15.2
ATIS 9, ATIS 6, ATIS 3, ATIS 7	21.58	(4,454)	.0001	16.0
<b>Health Other</b>				
ATIS 6	33.65	(1,456)	.0001	6.9
ATIS 6, ATIS 9	20.59	(2,455)	.0001	8.3
ATIS 6, ATIS 9, ATIS 10	15.41	(3,454)	.0001	9.2
<b>Report to Authorities</b>				
ATIS 5	65.07	(1,457)	.0001	12.5
ATIS 5, ATIS 2	41.82	(2,456)	.0001	15.5
ATIS 5, ATIS 2, ATIS 6	30.85	(3,455)	.0001	16.9
ATIS 5, ATIS 2, ATIS 6 ATIS 9	23.96	(4,454)	.0001	17.4

Note: Criteria for entering equation was set at  $\leq .10$ .

Provide Health Care = The clinic should provide medical care to the child; Health Other = The child should receive medical care some place other than the public health system; Report to Authorities = The clinic should inform the immigration authorities about the family's illegal immigration status; ATIS 2 = America should take care of Americans first; ATIS 3 = Everyone in the United States should speak English; ATIS 5 = Immigrants take jobs from those who need them; ATIS 6 = United States citizenship should be difficult to obtain; ATIS 7 = Immigrants have contributed greatly to the United States; ATIS 9 = Immigrants drain the United States of its valuable resources; ATIS 10 = Immigrants make good citizens.

independent predictor of "report to authorities," and together accounted for 16 percent of the variance in "report to authorities."

*Health Care Scenario.* Table 4 shows three stepwise multiple regression analyses that were conducted to determine the individual attitudes that best predict the evaluations of the health care scenario. In the first analysis, ATIS 9 ( $t = -7.42, p < .0005$ ), ATIS 6 ( $t = -4.14, p < .0005$ ), ATIS 3 ( $t = -2.58, p < .02$ ), and ATIS 7 ( $t = 2.02, p < .05$ ) were each a significant independent predictor of "provide health," and together accounted for 16 percent of the variance in "provide health."

In the second analysis, ATIS 6 ( $t = 5.80, p < .0005$ ), ATIS 9 ( $t = 2.66, p < .01$ ), and ATIS 10 ( $t = 2.17, p < .04$ ) were each a significant predictor of "health other," and together accounted for 9 percent of the variance in "health other."

In the third analysis, ATIS 5 ( $t = 8.07, p < .0005$ ), ATIS 2 ( $t = 4.05, p < .0005$ ), and ATIS 6 ( $t = 2.77, p < .007$ ) were each a significant predictor of "report to authorities." The overall equation accounted for 17 percent of the variance in "report to authorities."

### *Relationships among Ethnicity of Immigrant and Providing Services*

Three  $t$  tests were conducted to examine whether participants were more favorable to providing school services to Canadian immigrants than to Mexican immigrants. The analyses revealed no significant differences between the groups on "provide school-

ing" ( $t [489] = -.29, ns$ ), "school other" ( $t [486] = .79, ns$ ), and "school reporting to authorities" ( $t [489] = .11, ns$ ).

Three  $t$  tests were conducted to examine whether participants were more favorable to providing health care services to Canadian immigrants than to Mexican immigrants. The analyses revealed no significant differences between the groups on "provide health care" ( $t [486] = -.59, ns$ ), "health other" ( $t [483] = -.59, ns$ ), and "health service reporting to authorities" ( $t [485] = 1.11, ns$ ).

### ***Relationship between Providing School Services and Health Care Services***

Paired sample  $t$  tests were conducted to examine whether participants were more favorable to providing health care services than school services. Participants reported that the child should receive more medical care than schooling ( $t [486] = 9.53, p < .0005$ ). In comparing "school other" and "health other," participants more strongly agreed that the child should receive schooling somewhere else ( $t [483] = 3.71, p < .0005$ ). In comparing "school reporting to authorities" and "health service reporting to authorities," the analysis was not significant ( $t [486] = 0.87, ns$ ).

## **DISCUSSION**

As noted in the introduction, Proposition 187 has been interpreted as unconstitutional by the California court system. We can begin, however, to obtain a sense of what life might look like in California if Proposition 187 was put into effect. Wood (1994, p. 2) cited instances of discrimination against Latino/a citizens that occurred a few days after Proposition 187 was passed. In Los Angeles, an Anglo customer threatened a Latino cook with citizen's arrest unless he produced a green card. In Palm Springs, a pharmacist refused to fill the "prescription of a regular customer because he could not produce on-the-spot evidence of citizenship." Several authors (Fenton et al., 1996; Fenton et al., 1997; Marx et al., 1996) explored the effect of Proposition 187 on the use of health and mental health services among Latino/as in California. These studies revealed that the utilization rates of both health and mental health clinics decreased after the passage of Proposition 187. The utilization rates returned to baseline after the implementation of Proposition 187 was stayed by the judicial system.

Although the present study focused on immigration in the context of the state of California, it is important to note that this study has national implications. First of all, statistics indicate that the immigrant population has increased dramatically in the last two decades not only in California, but nationally. Almost half of the immigrant population in the United States (about 30 million) has entered the country since 1980 (Passel and Edmonston, 1992). Over 700,000 documented immigrants and 300,000 unauthorized immigrants arrive each year in the United States (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995). About 250,000 immigrants arrive each year in California (Stewart, 1993). According to the 1990 census figures (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1993), Latino/as in California number more than 7.5 million. Forty-five percent of these individuals are immigrants.

Secondly, since Proposition 187, heightened *national* attention has been paid to anti-diversity sentiments, both in the media and in the political arena. For example, we have heard the media outline how universities in Michigan, Texas, and California should not allow Affirmative Action as part of their admissions procedures. In fact, in 1996, the voters in the state of California passed Proposition 209, another anti-diversity proposition. Proposition 209, approved by 54 percent of the voters, eliminated Affirmative Action in public education and state and local governments (California Secretary of State's Office, 1996). According to de la Torre (1996) and Rosenbaum (1997), anti-immigration policy will surface as an issue in Congress and in states with new immigrant populations. This will ensure that immigration will remain a major issue in upcoming political campaigns. The present study thus appears, at this point in time, particularly topical.

### ***Socio-Demographic Predictors of Attitudes toward Immigration***

The findings of the present study highlight some of the socio-demographic indicators that may serve as important determinants of attitudes toward immigration. Those individuals who were middle-aged or older, less educated, and identified as Republican were more likely to hold negative attitudes toward immigration. Furthermore, students and those individuals working in managerial or professional positions reported more favorable attitudes than those working in other jobs and those who were unemployed. Professional and student status may be proxy indicators of higher levels of education. Further education may increase individuals' awareness of the complexities of the immigration issue, and may produce a greater realization, for example, that many factors contribute to the success (or lack thereof) of the economy.

Generational status also appears to be an important determinant of attitudes toward immigration. Those individuals who had immigrated to the United States or whose parents had immigrated to the United States revealed more favorable attitudes than those individuals with a less recent family history of immigration. Individuals without a family history of immigration may hold more negative attitudes toward immigration because they do not identify with being a member of an immigrant group. This finding is consistent with Quinton et al. (1996) who found that individuals with a high collective self-esteem (individual's attitude toward his or her in-group, which may contribute to his or her sense of self) were unlikely to identify with the out-group (immigrants), and thus were likely to protect their collective identity by supporting Proposition 187.

### ***Relationships among Attitudes toward Immigration and Scenario Responses***

It was interesting that no main effects were found for the country of origin of the immigrant presented in the scenarios. This may be the result of intensely held attitudes of the participants concerning the issue of illegal immigration, per se. In other words, the intensity of the attitudes—both negative and positive—toward illegal immigration

may have left little room for moderate reactions. Participants seemed to strongly respond to the *issue* of illegal immigration, rather than to whether the illegal immigrant was from Mexico or Canada. It was found, however, that participants were generally more favorable to providing health care services to the illegal immigrant than school services. This may have been due to a belief, among participants, that the children of undocumented immigrants contribute to crowded classrooms and are thus responsible for lowering the quality of public education.

The individual attitudes that were negatively weighted toward immigrants were much better predictors of the evaluations of the illegal immigration scenarios than were the attitudes that were positively weighted. This is not surprising. The negatively weighted attitudes that were predictive (“immigrants take jobs from those who need them”; “immigrants drain the United States of its valuable resources”; “everyone in the United States should speak English”; “America should take care of Americans first”; “United States citizenship should be difficult to obtain”) corroborate sociological observations. For example, in addressing the anti-immigration movement, Rubin (1994) believed that people speak angrily about the influx of immigrants because they perceive that their jobs and their way of life are threatened. Rubin further noted that increased resistance to immigration comes during economic downturns when workers worry about having to compete for jobs with people whose standard of living is beneath their own. Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco (1995) argued that negative attitudes toward immigration and issues of diversity are societal symptoms that emerge from fear over diminished economic resources and opportunities, lower quality of education and health care, rapid demographic changes, and diminished political influence.

### *Negative Attitudes toward Immigration*

How do individuals obtain their negative attitudes toward immigrants, especially given the likelihood that many individuals with negative attitudes have had little contact with immigrants? First, as alluded to earlier, mass media may contribute to negative perceptions of immigrants and particular ethnic groups. Gutierrez (1980) found that newspapers tended to focus on Latino/as as “problem people” (causing or beset by problems). As a specific example of a negative newspaper portrayal, three months before the passage of Proposition 187, the *Los Angeles Times* quoted Ron Prince—one of the persons who drafted the initiative—in a cover story. In advocating the passage of Proposition 187, Prince summoned disturbing imagery from the old west: “You (the voter) are the posse . . . and Proposition 187 is the rope” (McDonnell, 1994, p. A1). Harris (1994) examined portrayals of several minority groups in television and movies and found that Latino/as were rarely portrayed (1.5% of all characters). When Latino/as were portrayed, they were usually shown in stereotypical roles such as drunks, crooks (robbers, drug dealers), gang members, gardeners, or farmhands (see also Greenberg et al., 1983).

Jackson (1995) noted that sources other than the mass media may reinforce negative

perceptions of Latino/as, either explicitly or implicitly. These include families, communities, and educational institutions. However, as noted by Jackson, research has yet to explore these avenues of perceptions.

The literature on the self-fulfilling prophecy suggests important implications for the present study. Jussim (1986) and Miller & Turnbull (1986), for example, noted that the perceptions of others may affect individual self-perception and behavior. In specific, negative attitudes toward immigrants may create self-fulfilling prophecies in which the negative attitudes become internalized in the self-concepts of immigrants. Thus the immigrant may come to perceive himself or herself more negatively.

### ***Research Limitations and Directions for Future Research***

The present study was designed in an analogous fashion so as to ascertain how an individual might behave in situations such as those described in the scenarios. However, because of the analogue nature of the design, it is difficult to assess just how accurately participants' reactions reflect the way they would behave in such situations. Because the sample of the present study was drawn from a geographically specific area, caution must be used in generalizing the results. Although the present study used a convenient sample, the sample was community-based, which differs from the previous study of predictors of Proposition 187 support.

Further research should concentrate on increasing the present study's generalizability by exploring attitudes toward immigration in other regions in the country. In addition, research should further explore the potential sources of negative perceptions of immigrants and ethnic groups. These include the media, families, communities, and educational institutions. Finally, research should examine predictors of anti-diversity sentiments and stereotypes in other areas (e.g., Affirmative Action in education and employment).

### **NOTES**

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**APPENDIX**  
**ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRATION SCALE (ATIS)**

1. One of the good things about America is that it can be the land of opportunity for many people.
2. America should take care of Americans first.
3. Everyone in the United States should speak English.
4. There is no such thing as a typical American.
5. Immigrants take jobs from those who need them.
6. United States citizenship should be difficult to obtain.
7. Immigrants have contributed greatly to the United States.
8. The United States is strengthened by its diversity.
9. Immigrants drain the United States of its valuable resources.
10. Immigrants make good citizens.