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The Wages of *Latinidad*: How Immigration Enforcement Mitigates Anti-Black Assimilation

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Abstract

Historic accounts posit immigrant ethnic groups adopt the anti-Black attitudes of their Anglo counterparts as they acculturate in the U.S. However, contemporary evidence suggests acculturated immigrant co-ethnics may not be more likely to possess anti-Black appraisals and oppositive attitudes toward Black socio-political interests vis-a-vis their less acculturated counterparts. Drawing from *reactive ethnicity* and *segmented assimilation* theory, we posit the threatening contemporary immigration enforcement context may undercut assimilation to Anglo anti-Black attitudes among Latinxs. Using two large nationally representative Latinx surveys, we demonstrate, relative to less acculturated Latinxs, acculturated Latinxs threatened by immigration enforcement adopt attitudes concerning Black people and Black political interests akin to Black people while acculturated unthreatened Latinxs adopt or maintain attitudes closer to their Anglo counterparts. These findings suggest the extent of anti-Black assimilation among contemporary acculturated immigrant co-ethnics is conditional on the receptivity of the host society.

Keywords Latino politics · Immigration · Anti-Blackness · Assimilation · Intergroup relations · Public · Opinion

Introduction

Are non-Black Latinxs adopting the anti-Black beliefs of their Anglo counterparts as they acculturate? Historic accounts suggest previously racialized immigrant origin groups access psychic and material benefits of whiteness via acculturation by intensifying their derogation of Black Americans and adopting dominant group attitudes toward Black people (Ignatiev, 2012; Warren & Twine, 1997). However,

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contemporary evidence suggests members of the largest immigrant ethnic groups (Latinxs, Asians), are not more inclined to adopt anti-Black beliefs as they acculturate despite incentives to derogate Black Americans and exposure to anti-Black sending country ideologies (McClain et al., 2006; Tokeshi, 2021).

We explain why some Latinxs are not adopting anti-Black beliefs while acculturating. We posit the contemporary threatening immigration enforcement context not only affects undocumented immigrants, but even well-acculturated Latinxs (e.g. third-generation, citizen, English-dominant). Consequently, borrowing from *reactive ethnicity* and *segmented assimilation* theory, we theorize acculturated non-Black Latinx co-ethnics threatened by immigration enforcement may feel excluded from the host society despite their integrative expectations, motivating rebuff against dominant group attitudes on Black people. Conversely, non-Black Latinx co-ethnics unconcerned with immigration enforcement may be increasingly inclined to adopt or maintain anti-Black attitudes via acculturation.

Our evidence from two representative Latinx surveys suggests perceptibly threatening immigration enforcement contexts undercut the adoption or maintenance of anti-Black appraisals and relative opposition to Black political interests as non-Black Latinxs acculturate. Conversely, non-Black Latinxs unthreatened by immigration enforcement adopt or maintain attitudes toward Black people and their political interests similar to Anglo whites as they acculturate. In sum, acculturated non-Black Latinxs react to perceptibly threatening immigration enforcement contexts by refusing to adopt quintessential dominant group attitudinal norms. But this process is segmented, since some Latinxs who do not feel host society rebuff continue to adopt dominant group attitudes concerning Black people via acculturation.

We provide nuance on how non-Black U.S. immigrants and their co-ethnics negotiate their standing vis-a-vis Black people. Compared to historic white ethnic immigrant groups, non-Black Latinxs are potentially subject to a threatening interior immigration context. Consequently, we show anti-Black assimilation may not be guaranteed if non-Black Latinxs experience host society rebuff via immigration enforcement. These conclusions are important considering increased discussions of anti-Blackness within the Latinx community in response to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement along with open questions over whether ethnoracial demographic shifts will change overall beliefs toward Black people among the non-Black public (Corral, 2020; Beltr´an, 2021).[1]

Anti-Black Assimilation

Straight-line assimilation theory posits acculturated immigrant group co-ethnics increasingly adopt dominant group attributes due to cultural exposure and motivations to attain socioeconomic status while minimizing discrimination (Alba & Nee, 2009; Gordon, 1964). Indeed, prior research shows acculturated immigrant co-ethnics (e.g. citizens, later-generation, English-dominant) adopt the dominant group's

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[1] See Section A for evidence the salience of Anti-Blackness among Latinxs is increasing.

policy preferences (Branton, 2007), identity (Citrin & Sears, 2014), and immigration attitudes (Pedraza, 2014).

Likewise, relative to the less acculturated, acculturated non-Black U.S. immigrant coethnics may increasingly adopt or maintain anti-Black beliefs due to heightened host society exposure. Acculturated co-ethnics may increasingly interact with dominant group members with strong(er) anti-Black beliefs (Hjerm et al., 2018), integrate in relatively anti-Black dominant group social networks as they advance socioeconomically (Lee & Bean, 2007), be exposed to anti-Black media (Entman, 1990), and experience perceptibly negative interactions with Black Americans (Goldenberg & Saxe, 1996).

Moreover, acculturated non-Black co-ethnics may possess stronger anti-Black beliefs than less acculturated co-ethnics due to status-seeking. Psychologically, immigrant group members may derive self-esteem and group status by dissociating from and derogating Black Americans in an anti-Black society (Rochmes & Griffin, 2007; Tajfel et al., 1979). Materially, dissociation from Blackness may provide access to whiteness' benefits and protection from the byproducts of anti-Blackness (e.g. integration in dominant group networks, less employment discrimination, protection from gratuitous policing) (Lee & Bean, 2007). Acculturated co-ethnics may be more likely to perceive themselves as rightful members of the national polity relative to the less acculturated. Thus, they may be particularly steadfast in adopting dominant anti-Black norms to credibly demonstrate they should be afforded a higher host society socio-political status (Ignatiev, 2012; Lee & Bean, 2007; Pedraza, 2014; Roediger et al., 1999; Warren & Twine, 1997).

History is replete with acculturated immigrant co-ethnics exhibiting anti-Black attitudes and behaviors to bolster social standing. During the Age of Mass Migration (1850–1914), Irish, Italian, and Eastern European immigrant co-ethnics faced racialization and concomitant discrimination (Lee & Bean, 2007). However, their acculturated co-ethnics reconfigured their standing as "white" by adopting Anglo norms, shifting political alliances, socially distancing themselves from Black people, and partaking in anti-Black discrimination (Ignatiev, 2012; Lee & Bean, 2007; Roediger et al., 1999; Warren & Twine, 1997).

Anti-Black assimilation is not isolated to European groups. Acculturated Chinese, Arab, and Mexican-Americans during the early-to-mid 20th Century sought to redefine themselves as "white" in part by avoiding political alliances with Black people to ameliorate exposure to discrimination (Han, 2006; Qutami, 2020; Rochmes & Griffin, 2007). Felix Tijerina, president of the assimilationist League of United Latin American Citizens (1956–1960), infamously responded to pressure to cooperate with Black Americans in the struggle for civil rights by saying "Let the Negro fight his own battles (Behnken, 2011)." Likewise, contemporary survey evidence suggests attributes encouraging acculturation (e.g. US-born status) among Latinxs are associated with reduced support for BLM (Corral, 2020). Qualitative interviews also suggest Latinx immigrants experienced with living in the U.S. increasingly adopt hegemonic anti-Black beliefs and transmit them to new immigrants (Zamora, 2016).

Immigrants are not blank slates concerning anti-Black appraisals. Specifically, Latinxs originate from anti-Black societies. Latin American countries espouse *mestizaje*, the notion racial mixture will shed the negative attributes of "undesirable

races" (e.g. Black and indigenous) and decrease the salience of racial difference (Flores, 2021). *Mestizaje* informs institutional and social norms. Latin American governments implemented policies discriminating against people without or with little European ancestry (Hooker, 2005). They also pursued policies encouraging European immigration to "whiten" the population (*Blanquemiento*) (Flores, 2021). Moreover, there is significant societal derogation of Black and indigenous Latin Americans in tandem with the propagation of color-blind beliefs (Patrinos, 2000). Societal and institutional marginalization has secondary consequences. Black and indigenous Latin Americans have worse life chances along multiple dimensions net of socio-economic status (Telles, 2014). Given Latinx immigrants and their acculturated co-ethnics originate from anti-Black societies, they may be predisposed to hold or adopt anti-Black beliefs via acculturation in the U.S.

A Reactive Ethnicity Against Anti-Blackness

Although some evidence suggests acculturation is associated with anti-Black beliefs and opposition to Black political interests, other evidence complicates expectations. While acculturated contemporary immigrant group members might increase their social proximity to Anglo whites relative to less acculturated co-ethnics (e.g. intermarriage, white neighborhood selection) (Yancey et al., 2003), they may not be more likely to adopt anti-Black appraisals (McClain et al., 2006; Tokeshi, 2021). Moreover, prior evidence finds acculturated co-ethnics may not increasingly oppose Black political interests. For instance, relative to the less acculturated, acculturated Latinxs are *more likely* to support Black-targeted affirmative action and government aid (Krupnikov & Piston, 2016; Sears & Savalei, 2006). The competing evidence raises a puzzle. Why are some Latinxs, specifically non-Black Latinxs, not adopting anti-Black appraisals or attitudes opposing Black political interests as they acculturate? We answer the question with sociological insights.

Segmented assimilation theory posits socio-economic advancement among acculturated immigrant group co-ethnics is, in part, conditional on host country reception (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Prior evidence suggests acculturated immigrant co-ethnics subject to unfavorable reception contexts tend to stagnate socio-economically (Haller et al., 2011). *Reactive ethnicity theory* posits anti-immigrant environments may motivate acculturated co-ethnics to develop a politicized group consciousness that protects the in-group and dissociates from the dominant group's political commitments (Rumbaut, 2008). Host society rebuff via discrimination shatters integrative expectations and undercuts the adoption of anti-immigrant beliefs akin to Anglos among acculturated Latinxs (Pedraza, 2014; Telles & Ortiz, 2008). Immigration enforcement is a *salient* and *negative* aspect of the host society for Latinxs. Latinxs are 67% first or second-generation.[2] Thus, most Latinxs have direct connections to immigrants. 40% of Latinxs know an undocumented friend or family

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[2] https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/09/24/the-ways-hispanics-describe-their-identity-vary-across-immigrant-generations/.

member. 30% of third-generation+Latinxs, arguably acculturated, know an undocumented friend or family member (Fig. B2, Panel A). Concomitantly, the undocumented population has grown from 3 to 12 million between 1993 and 2016 (Fig. B2, Panel B). Over 70% of the undocumented are Latinx and they are highly integrated in Latinx communities.[3] 66% have lived in the U.S. over 10 years (Fig. B2, Panel C). Immigration enforcement has also become increasingly draconian. Interior deportations increased 1400% since the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) (Fig. C3). 90%+ of the deported are Latinx (Asad & Clair, 2018). IIRIRA also increased deportation risk for documented immigrants by increasing the conditions for nullifying permanent residency (Morawetz, 2000). At the same time, the racialization of Latinxs as "illegal" by political elites and Anglo whites has meant even acculturated Latinxs are subject to immigration enforcement (Massey & Pren, 2012). Notably, ICE wrongfully detained 3,500 Texas *citizens* between 2006 and 2017, 462 Rhode Island citizens over 10 years, and 420 Florida citizens between 2017 and 2019.[4]

The restrictive context has deleterious consequences on Latinxs. Immigration enforcement undermines health, child development, wages, social service uptake, education, and government trust. These consequences are not isolated to the undocumented, but even well-acculturated, later-generation, Latinxs given they are embedded in immigrant and/or mixed-status social networks (Amuedo-Dorantes, 2022).

Considering an unreceptive host society driven by an expansive immigration enforcement apparatus, we posit a sense of immigration enforcement threat may explain why acculturation is inconsistently associated with adopting anti-Black appraisals and relative opposition to Black political interests among non-Black Latinxs. A restrictive immigration context may be perceived by non-Black Latinxs as a referendum on the host society's willingness to incorporate their ethnic group. The constraints immigration enforcement threat imposes on movement and socioeconomic mobility may encourage non-Black Latinxs and their acculturated co-ethnics to "no longer believe in the promise of upward mobility through a prism of achievable whiteness" (Jones, 2012). Qualitative accounts suggest threatening immigration policies may motivate non-Black Latinxs to abandon the "American Dream" and perceive the U.S. as a xenophobic, racist, country (Jones, 2012; Zamora, 2018). Likewise, non-Black Latinxs threatened by immigration enforcement may question the valorization of whiteness since they may perceive Anglo whites facilitate policies that undercut immigrant rights (Jones, 2012). These feelings may be buttressed by anti-immigrant beliefs among Anglo whites (Pedraza, 2014), resulting in a rejection of dominant group norms.

Moreover, given immigration enforcement negatively affects Latinxs, perceptions of immigration enforcement threat may motivate a shared experience of marginalization with Black people. Consistent with the *Common In-Group Identity Model* (Gaertner et al., 1993), shared experiences of marginalization can encourage

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[3] See: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/deault/files/publications/mpi-unauthorized-immigrants-stable numbers-changingorigins_final.pdf.

[4] https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/12/opinion/iceraids.html.

cross-group support and political solidarity (Craig & Richeson, 2012), which may be buttressed by pro-immigrant attitudes among Black Americans (Carter et al., 2021).

Immigration enforcement threat may play an outsized role in undercutting the adoption of anti-Black appraisals and oppositive beliefs concerning Black socio-political interests among acculturated non-Black Latinxs (e.g. later-generation, citizen, English-dominant). Relative to unacculturated non-Black Latinxs, acculturated non-Black Latinxs may be hard-pressed to increasingly adopt anti-Black dominant group norms to demonstrate their integration in the host society (Yancey et al., 2003). However, acculturated non-Black Latinxs may be sensitive to threats that implicate their group since they possess expectations the host society would integrate them in light of their acculturated status (Pedraza, 2014). Immigration enforcement threat may shatter integrative expectations and motivate acculturated non-Black Latinxs to refuse the heightened adoption of anti-Black attitudes relative to unacculturated non-Black Latinxs as a means of assimilation. Conversely, unacculturated non-Black Latinxs (e.g. Spanish-dominant non-citizen immigrants) may not adopt pro-Black beliefs in response to immigration enforcement since their understanding of the U.S. as a "land of opportunity" relative to the home country may be positive even in light of anti-Black norms and a restrictive immigration context (Krupenkin, 2021). Another possibility is that unacculturated non-Black Latinxs may support Black Americans more than the acculturated regardless of immigration enforcement threat due to their shared sense of marginalization outside immigration enforcement policy (e.g. anti-immigrant rhetoric) (Corral, 2020).

In sum, consistent with *reactive ethnicity* and *segmented assimilation* theory, immigration enforcement threat may undercut the adoption of anti-Black dominant group norms as nonBlack Latinxs acculturate. However, rebuff against anti-Black norms may be segmented. Non-Black Latinxs unconcerned with immigration enforcement may increasingly adopt or maintain anti-Black attitudes as they acculturate. Thus, H1: Non-Black Latinxs *un-threatened /threatened* by immigration enforcement will be *more/less likely* to adopt or maintain relatively anti-Black attitudes as they acculturate.

Data and Empirical Strategy

We test our hypothesis with two nationally representative Latinx surveys: the 2016 and 2020 Collaborative Multi-Racial Post-Election Survey (fielded 12/03/2016–02/15/2017 and 04/02/2021–08/25/2021). Both surveys are online, bilingual, and weighted to adult Latinx characteristics in the 2015 and 2019 1-year ACS for age, gender, education, nativity, and ancestry. Given non-Black Latinxs may be most likely to engage in anti-Black assimilation,[5] we exclude Black Latinxs from

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[5] Only 1.2% of Latinxs self-identify as Black in the 2020 Census. However, our definition of "Black Latinx" is wider, since it allows for an "Afro-Latinx" identification.

our analyses for a final *N* of 2538 and 3614.[6] When possible, we use Black Latinx (CMPS'16 *N* = 471, CMPS'20 *N* = 402), white (CMPS'16 *N* = 1213, CMPS'20 *N* = 3002), and Black non-Latinx (CMPS'16 *N* = 3102, CMPS'20 *N* = 4005) samples to produce outcome benchmark values to compare with non-Black Latinxs along acculturation levels and exposure to immigration enforcement threat. We use two surveys to demonstrate our findings are replicable and not intrinsic to a particular temporal context, at least between 2016 and 2020.

The CMPS is the best available data to test the hypothesis. Large independent Latinx surveys with sufficient statistical power to assess heterogeneity along acculturation levels are rare. Major social science surveys do not include items on anti-Black attitudes, immigration enforcement threat, and acculturation simultaneously. Moreover, the CMPS surveys also ask the same outcome items of whites and Black non-Latinxs, allowing us to demonstrate immigration enforcement threat motivates attitudes similar to whites or Black people as non-Black Latinxs acculturate.

Outcomes

We use two sets of outcomes. First, anti-Black appraisals from the CMPS'20. *Racial resentment* is an index of 4 5-point items between "agree strongly" to "disagree strongly." These items ask if the respondent agrees Blacks should work without special favors, should try harder to be as well off as whites, disagrees discrimination makes upward mobility difficult for Blacks, and disagrees Blacks have gotten less than they deserve. *Resentment* was developed to measure anti-Black racism under norms against explicit prejudice, where whites may instead express anti-Blackness by derogating Black people's claims to government assistance (Kinder & Sears, 1981). Some posit *resentment* reflects conservative individualist principles (Carmines et al., 2011), but prior evidence shows the measure uniquely motivates policy preferences helping Black people and not other marginalized groups (Kam & Burge, 2019; Kinder & Mendelberg, 2000). Additionally, other research demonstrates correcting for measurement differences between ideologues based on political principles does not undercut *resentment's* explanatory power concerning pro-Black policy preferences (Enders, 2021). Moreover, individualist tenets might be how whites cloak anti-Black prejudice. Indeed, Enders (2021) finds white ideological self-identification is associated with *resentment* but not ideological principles (e.g. government spending preferences). Thus, resentful respondents may be concerned not with adherence to individualist tenets writ large, but Black adherence to individualist tenets (Simmons & Bobo, 2018).

Anti-Black stereotype is the difference between whether a respondent believes Blacks relative to whites are violent instead of peaceful on a 7-point scale. This item is used as a component of explicit anti-Black prejudice scales, which measure

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[6] Black Latinxs 1) choose "Black" as one of their ethno-racial categories and/or 2) self-identify as "AfroLatino/a" when asked if they are Afro-Latinx. We validate this measure by demonstrating it is associated with self-reported skin darkness and Black "street race" (Figure D4).

antipathy from faulty, inflexible generalizations. This measure is associated with policy preferences negatively affecting Black people (Huddy & Feldman, 2009).

Black threat is the difference in two measures. The first asks respondents if Black people "support or threaten" their "vision of American society" on a 7-point scale from strongly "supports" to "threatens." The second replaces Black with white people. The perception Black people threaten the nation may be concomitant with negative appraisals of Black people along with increased support for maintaining white political dominance (Giles & Evans, 1985). Indeed, *Black threat*, but not perceived threat from Jews or Asians, is associated with *resentment* and *stereotype* (Table S13).

White residential preference is the difference between white and Black neighborhoods on a 1–6 ranking asking respondents to rate what majority-group neighborhood they prefer to live in.[7] Conjoint experiments show white neighborhood preferences are driven by antipathy toward Black people, not ethnocentrism, neighborhood quality, crime, and/or home values (Emerson et al., 2001).

The second outcome set measures opposition to Black political interests. Consistent with prior literature (Baker & Cook, 2005), we define "opposition to Black interests" as opposing social movements or policies that disparately benefit Black Americans materially, politically, socially, or otherwise. Often, Black people support these interests more than whites (Sears & Savalei, 2006). Thus, we assess non-Black Latinx opposition to the most prominent contemporary pro-Black movement (BLM).

We focus on BLM opposition for several reasons. BLM opposition may be associated with opposition to a "bundle" of pro-Black interests. The Movement for Black Lives, an umbrella organization connected to BLM, presented a detailed policy platform that "demands investments in the education, health, and safety of Black people, instead of investments in the criminalizing, caging, and harming of Black people." Indeed, although the CMPS does not ask Latinxs about pro-Black policies, BLM support is associated with support for policies facilitating Black welfare (Boudreau et al., 2022). Likewise, warmth toward BLM is associated with non-Black support for Black-targeted affirmative action and government aid (ANES, Fig. S15).

Oppose BLM measures if respondents oppose BLM on a 5-point scale between "strongly support" and "strongly oppose" in the CMPS'16. In the CMPS'20, *Oppose BLM* is an additive index of two items. The first asks respondents if they "strongly oppose" BLM relative to "strongly support" on a 5-point scale. The second asks respondents if they "strongly disagree" relative to "strongly agree" on a 5-point scale that Latinos have a responsibility to support BLM. *BLM ineffective* measures if respondents believe BLM is ineffective at achieving its goals. In the CMPS'16/'20, it is a 5-point scale from "not at all effective/very ineffective" to "very effective." Although ineffectiveness perceptions are distinct from opposition, they are strongly

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[7] The 6 choices were "white, non-Hispanic," "Hispanic/Latino," "Black/African-American," "Asian-American or Pacific Islander," "Native American," "Middle Eastern or North African.".

correlated and perceived BLM effectiveness is politically motivated (Corral, 2020).[8] *Anti-BLM FT* is a reverse coded 0–100 BLM feeling thermometer (CMPS'20). *No BLM Protest* is a binary indicator of self-reported non-participation in the 2020 BLM protests (CMPS'20). *No BLM protest* allows us to measure behavioral (non) commitments to BLM instead of expressive preferences. Although self-reported outcomes mean respondents may lie, protest participation is much lower than BLM support, suggesting protest non-participation is less driven by expressive preferences. *No BLM Support* is a binary indicator of self-reported non-support via social media (CMPS'20). For outcome wording, see Section O.

Outcomes are scaled between 0–1 except *Black threat* and *residential preference*, between 1 and 1 since they are difference measures. All outcomes are racially polarized. Black people hold weaker anti-Black appraisals and BLM opposition relative to whites. Non-Black Latinxs are in the middle (Fig. E5). Even if our measures do not perfectly capture anti-Black attitudes, we can demonstrate immigration enforcement threat undercuts the adoption/maintenance of racialized attitudes akin to Anglos via acculturation while motivating attitudes akin to Black people.

Measuring Acculturation

Acculturation is typically conceptualized as the adoption of dominant group attributes among immigrant group members.[9] Acculturation can occur across multiple dimensions, including political attitudes, cultural norms, socio-economic status, and social networks (Cuellar et al., 1995). Acculturation is also heterogenous within groups. Individual immigrant co-ethnics will acculturate at different paces and will adopt dominant norms along certain dimensions over others (Cruz et al., 2008). Some argue acculturative dimensions should be directly measured in surveys (Cabassa, 2003). This approach has shortcomings. First, acculturation scales concerning cultural norms, intermarriage, co-ethnic networks, socio-economic status, and political beliefs are time-intensive and not often available across multiple immigrant surveys (Cruz et al., 2008). Second, researchers may prefer an acculturation measure that does not directly capture specific assimilation dimensions since such dimensions may be an outcome of interest (e.g. anti-Black attitudes). Instead, researchers may seek acculturation measures that *encourage* assimilation yet allow for the absence of assimilation along specific dimensions among acculturated co-ethnics.

Consequently, we measure *acculturation* as an additive index of generational status (0 = 1st, 1 = 2nd, 2 = 3rd + -generation), English language-of-interview (0 = Spanish, 1 = English), and citizenship (0 = non-citizen, 1 = citizen). Thus, the index is from 0–4 (non-citizen Spanish-speaking immigrant to third-generation + English-speaking citizen). The index is left-skewed. However, 478 and 888

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[8] Pearson's ρ between *opposition* and *ineffective* in the '16/'20 CMPS is 0.7/0.5, a moderate-to-strong correlation.

[9] However, acculturation may occur vis-a-vis non-dominant groups [e.g. Black Americans, see Portes and Zhou (1993)].

Latinxs constitute the lower two levels of the index, sufficient for assessing *acculturation*'s influence along immigration enforcement threat levels (Fig. F6). This proxy acculturation scale is advantageous since it measures factors that typically encourage adopting dominant group attitudes *yet do not guarantee adoption among all acculturated individuals.* Prior research demonstrates proxy acculturation scales indexing language-of-interview and generational status are reliably associated with specific assimilative dimensions such as language proficiency, cultural attachments, geographic integration, and ethnic identification (Cruz et al., 2008). Similar scales have been used in prior political science studies on Latinxs (Branton, 2007; Pedraza, 2014). Additionally, citizenship is a prerequisite to acculturation and is positively associated with civic integration, education, dominant language skills, and inter-ethnic contact (Liang, 1994; Yang, 1994).

We validate the index by demonstrating it is associated with multiple assimilation dimensions among non-Black Latinxs (Fig. I8). Consistent with Gordon (1964), who characterizes 7 assimilation dimensions in their seminal text, the index is associated with a heightened/reduced sense of American/Latinx identity (Panels A-D, identification assimilation), reduced perceived/experienced discrimination (Panels E–H, reception assimilation), higher income/education, (Panels K-N, structural assimilation), living in neighborhoods with less Latinxs, Black people, and immigrants (Panels Q-X, structural assimilation) and marrying whites (Panels I-J, marital assimilation). Therefore, *acculturation* reliably measures assimilation to dominant group attributes. These associations imply acculturated non-Black Latinxs may have high expectations the host society would incorporate them. Moreover, *acculturation* is not consistently associated with anti-Black beliefs, suggesting the possibility for heterogenous adoption of anti-Black beliefs as Latinxs acculturate (Fig. H7). *Acculturation* is re-scaled between 0–1.

Measuring Immigration Enforcement Threat

Conceptually, the threat from immigration enforcement among the Latinx population emanates from *both* contextual and dispositional sources. Latinxs across the acculturative spectrum, many with social ties with undocumented immigrants (Fig. B2, Panel A), have reason to be concerned about immigration enforcement given the contemporary context has been characterized by a 1400% increase in deportations over the past three decades (Fig. C3). However, concerns over immigration enforcement may be dispositional in that they often develop prior to political socialization for many segments of the Latinx community.

For immigrants, feelings of threat may develop immediately after the migratory experience prior to engagement with American politics (Massey & Pren, 2012). For acculturated Latinx co-ethnics, feeling threatened may be a function of social and community ties (e.g. friends, family) during pre-adult socialization (Dreby, 2015).

Immigration enforcement threat is measured from items asking respondents about perceived *deportation threat*. The CMPS'16 asks "how worried are you that people you know might be detained or deported for immigration reasons?" from "not at all worried" to "extremely worried" on a 5-point scale. The CMPS'20 asks the same

on a 4-point scale from "not at all" to "a lot." These items do not measure personal immigration enforcement exposure, but exposure via social ties. Given acculturated Latinxs are not necessarily directly exposed to immigration enforcement, this is an appropriate *deportation threat* measure. We rescale *threat* between 0 and 1 with 1 representing highest worry.

The measure captures the concept (Fig. J9). Non-Black Latinxs who perceive *deportation threat* live in areas with more county-level Secure Communities deportations (Panels A-B), know undocumented friends or family (Panels C-D), know deportees (Panel E), and live in immigrant zip codes (Panels F-I).

The *threat* measure possesses characteristics consistent with a stable predisposition. Repeated cross-section Pew Latino survey data shows *threat* is highly stable across three presidencies with different immigration policies (2007–2018, Fig. N10, Panels A-B), with only one period being statistically different than the first period *threat* was recorded. Additionally, Latino Immigrant National Survey panel data also demonstrates *threat* does not shift substantially between two time periods when Trump implemented anti-immigrant executive orders (banning sanctuary cities, the Muslim ban, rolling back DAPA, see Fig. N10, Panel C). Test–retest reliability of *threat* is also like other predispositions often developed during pre-adult socialization, such as ideology (Fig. N10, Panel D) (Jennings, 1984).

Given we are interested in assessing the heterogeneous influence of *acculturation* on anti-Black attitudes conditional on *deportation threat* levels, we demonstrate *threat* and *acculturation* are distinct. In the'16/'20 CMPS, *acculturation* is negatively correlated with *threat*, but the Pearson's ρ correlation is moderate-to-weak ($-0.4/-0.17$). In the CMPS'16/'20, 32%/24% of the most acculturated non-Black Latinxs are at least "somewhat" worried about people they know being detained or deported. Conversely, 30%/54% of the least acculturated non-Black Latinxs are worried "not much" or "not at all." In sum, sizable proportions of unacculturated/acculturated Latinxs do not/do experience *deportation threat.*

Controls

In addition to using our understanding of the literature, we use a principled Google Scholar search criteria to find articles on Latinx attitudes toward Black people or their interests to identify controls for inclusion in our models. For more information on how we conducted this search, see Section K. We explicate this process for future researchers to replicate and build on our model. Given the literature is relatively small, this search helped us identify a relatively large list of covariates that explain anti-Black beliefs or oppositive attitudes toward Black interests among Latinxs (See Table L2 for a literature catalog).

To this end, we adjust for several covariates in addition to census area fixed effects that could jointly explain anti-Black attitudes, *threat*, and *acculturation*. Demographic covariates include: gender, skin color, age, marital status, Catholicism, national origin, Black spouse, perceived neighborhood % Black, perceived church % Black. Socio-economic covariates include: income, education, unemployment, homeownership, retrospective economic evaluations, personal economic

evaluations, socio-tropic economic evaluations, Latinx economic evaluations. Political covariates include: experienced discrimination, perceived discrimination against Latinxs and Black people, partisanship, ideology, perceived political competition vis-a-vis Black people,[10] Latino identity centrality, American identity centrality, political interest, Latinx linked fate, and belief in an immigrant work ethic. Geographic covariates include the logged population (zip, county), % Latino (zip, county), % Black (zip, county), % foreign-born (zip, county), % unemployed (zip, county), logged median household income (zip, county), and objective economic competition measures between Black people and Latinxs (zip).[11] We also adjust for *deportation threat* selection by controlling for knowing undocumented friends/family, knowing a deportee, the logged county-level Secure Communities deportations, and the county-level Secure Communities deportation rate (deportations/1,000 foreign-born). See Table M3 for control covariate availability by survey.

For brevity, we do not discuss all controls. But we want to note we adjust for every, or at least a proxy of each, explanation for pro-Black beliefs among Latinxs specifically on Table L2. We want to highlight key controls that serve as prominent alternative explanations for anti/pro-Black Latinx beliefs. First, adjusting for perceived Latinx discrimination is critical since a prominent alternative explanation for pro-Black Latinx beliefs is that anti-Latinx marginalization generates commonality and cross-group support (Craig & Richeson, 2012). Second, we adjust for Latinx linked fate which prior literature establishes as an antecedent to pro-Black support (McClain et al., 2006). Third, we adjust for skin color, often associated with pro-Black Latinx beliefs (Wilkinson & Earle, 2013). Fourth, we condition on contextual measures capturing poor economic conditions (% unemployed, household income, at zip and county-level), which could serve as a basis for perceived economic competition with Black Americans and motivate anti-Black beliefs (Wilkinson, 2014).

Estimation

We use a linear model to test **H1**:

$$Y_i = \gamma_g + \beta_1\left(acculturation_i \times threat_i\right) + \beta_2 acculturation_i + \beta_3 threat_i + \Sigma_{k=1}^{k}\beta_{k+3}^{k}X_{icz}^{k} + \varepsilon_i$$

Y_i is an outcome of interest for respondent i, γ_g are census area (g) fixed effects, *acculturation* is the *acculturation* index, *threat* is the *deportation threat* scale, and $\sum_{k=1}^{k}\beta_{k+3}^{k}X_{icz}^{k}$ are k control covariates at the respondent (i), county (c), and zip code (z) level. We run models with and without controls to demonstrate no suppression effects.

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[10] This is measured by the difference in the extent to which Latinxs perceive Hispanic men or women congressional candidates will represent their interests minus perceptions Black men or women congressional candidates will represent their interests.

[11] Our measure of objective economic competition follows Gay (2006). We interact the proportion of a respondent's zipcode population that is Black with the difference in poverty and education rates between Black people and Latinxs.

Since all covariates are rescaled between 0–1, β_1 is a *second difference*. β_1 characterizes the difference in the difference of going from the minimum to the maximum of *acculturation* among non-Black Latinxs with the *highest threat level* and the difference of going from the minimum to the maximum of *acculturation* among non-Black Latinxs with the *lowest threat level*. If **H1** is true, β_1 will be negative, suggesting *threat* is more strongly associated with reduced anti-Black attitudes among more acculturated non-Black Latinxs.

Our model-based design is ideal to test the hypothesis. Experimental designs pose several challenges. First, external validity and weak effects. *Threat* may be difficult to manipulate among Latinxs in short-term experimental settings since, as mentioned before, it may be the result of predispositional pre-adult experiences rooted in strong social relationships with undocumented immigrants or national immigration policy (Fig. J9, Panels A, C-E), both of which cannot be randomized. Consistent with the notion *threat* is dispositional, our own attempt to experimentally trigger *threat* among acculturated Latinxs in a survey failed (Section P). Second, ethics, experiments sufficiently powerful to generate *threat* may veer on unethical given the risk of traumatizing undocumented Latinxs, who occupy a marginalized societal position (Lahman et al., 2011). Third, feasibility. Our quantity of interest is an interaction with *acculturation*, a bundle of ascriptive characteristics that cannot be randomized. Even if we could cue *threat* experimentally, we would still be interested in a heterogenous effect subject to selection bias like a model-based design.

Additionally, evaluating variation in threatening/permissive immigration policies across geographic space using available surveys may be ineffective [see White (2016)]. Repeated cross-section and/or panel data over time with large Latinx samples across acculturation levels and small geographies with consistently asked measures of anti-Black attitudes do not exist given survey research prioritizes nationally representative samples.

Consequently, we opt for a model-based approach that engages in a principled attempt to catalogue and adjust for preexisting explanations of Latinx pro-Black attitudes, rules out alternative explanations by adjusting for multiple interactions between acculturation and theoretically relevant explanations for Latinx pro-Black attitudes, and acknowledges our coefficient of interest cannot possess a definitively causal interpretation.

Results

We find evidence supporting **H1** on anti-Black appraisals. The second difference of *threat* conditional on *acculturation* after covariate adjustment is negative and significant for the *racial resentment* ($\beta_1 = -0.05$), *anti-Black stereotype* (0.13), *Black threat* (-0.11), and *white residential preference* outcomes (-0.28), equivalent to 21%-53% of the outcome standard deviations (see Table 1, see Table Q5 for results without controls).

Figure 1 characterizes these second differences with predicted values. For non-Black Latinxs at the lowest *threat* level, anti-Black appraisals either remain

Table 1 Deportation threat undercuts the maintenance of anti-Black appraisals via acculturation

	Resentment	Stereotype	Black Threat	White Residential Pref
Acculturation × Threat	$-0.05^{\dagger}$	-0.13^{**}	-0.11^{**}	-0.28^{***}
Acculturation	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.08)
	-0.01	$-0.05^{\dagger}$	-0.02	-0.09^{*}
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.04)
Threat	-0.01	0.02	0.01	0.03
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.05)
Survey	CMPS'20	CMPS'20	CMPS'20	CMPS'20
$_R2$	0.46	0.20	0.23	0.18
N	3614	3614	3614	3614
Demographic controls	Y	Y	Y	Y
Socio-economic controls	Y	Y	Y	Y
Political controls	Y	Y	Y	Y
County/zip controls	Y	Y	Y	Y
Census area FE	Y	Y	Y	Y

HC2 robust standard errors in parentheses

$^{***}p<0.001$, $^{**}p<0.01$, $^{*}p<0.05$, $^{\dagger}p<0.1$

constant or decrease slightly as *acculturation* increases. However, for non-Black Latinxs at the highest *threat* level, *acculturation* is consistently and more strongly associated with lower anti-Black appraisals. We find evidence for **H1** for outcomes on opposition to Black political interests. The second difference of *threat* conditional on acculturation is negative and significant for the *oppose BLM* (CMPS'16: -0.17, CMPS'20: -0.15), *BLM ineffective* (CMPS'16: -0.17, CMPS'20: -0.15), *anti-BLM FT* (-0.12), *BLM no protest* (-0.17), and *BLM no support* outcomes (-0.20), equivalent to 32%-59% of the outcome standard deviations (see Table 2, see Table Q6 for results without controls) (Fig. 1).

Figure 2 displays predicted values characterizing opposition to Black political interests along *threat* and *acculturation*. Unthreatened non-Black Latinxs increasingly oppose BLM and adopt attitudes more similar to Anglos as they acculturate. Conversely, threatened non-Black Latinxs increasingly support BLM as they acculturate and adopt attitudes more similar to Black people (Panel A, C). Unthreatened non-Black Latinxs increasingly believe BLM is ineffective and move attitudinally closer to Anglos as they acculturate. Threatened non-Black Latinxs instead maintain beliefs that BLM is effective similar to Black people as they acculturate (Panels B, D).

The *anti-BLM FT*, *no BLM protest*, and *no BLM support* outcomes follow a similar pattern (Panels E–G). Unthreatened non-Black Latinxs maintain relative coldness toward BLM, lower BLM protest participation, and lower social media support for BLM akin to Anglos as they acculturate. Conversely, threatened non-Black Latinxs are increasingly warm toward BLM, participatory in BLM protests,

Table 2 Deportation threat undercuts opposition to Black political interests via acculturation

	Oppose BLM	BLM Ineffective	Anti-BLM FT	Oppose BLM	BLM Ineffective	BLM No Protest	BLM No Support
Acculturation × Threat	−0.17**	−0.17*	−0.12*	−0.10**	−0.11**	−0.09*	−0.12*
	(0.05)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.07)
Acculturation	0.08*	0.16***	−0.01	0.04†	0.11***	−0.01	−0.10***
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Threat	0.03	−0.00	0.03	−0.02	−0.02	−0.05†	−0.02
	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Survey	CMPS'16	CMPS'16	CMPS'20	CMPS'20	CMPS'20	CMPS'20	CMPS'20
R^2	0.31	0.28	0.30	0.43	0.23	0.20	0.25
N	2538	2171	3614	3614	3614	3614	3614
Demographic controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Socio-economic controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Political controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
County/zip controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Census area FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$, †$p < 0.1$
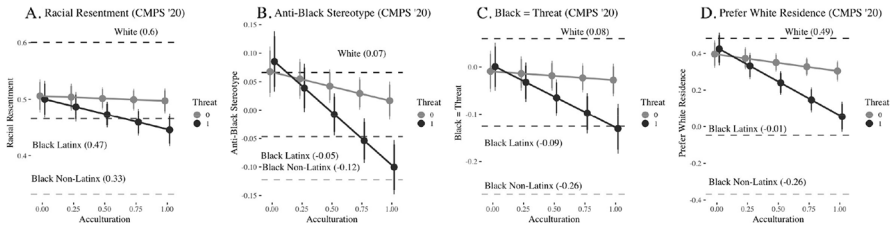
HC2 robust standard errors in parentheses

Fig. 1 Predicted Values of Anti-Black Appraisals (y-axis) by Deportation Threat (min/max, denoted by color) and Acculturation (x-axis). Panels A-D characterize predicted values for the *resentment*, *stereotype*, *Black threat*, and *residential preference* outcomes. Dashed lines denote ethno-racial group means (Black=white, dark grey=Black Latinx, light grey=non-Latinx Black. 95% CIs from HC2 robust SEs displayed
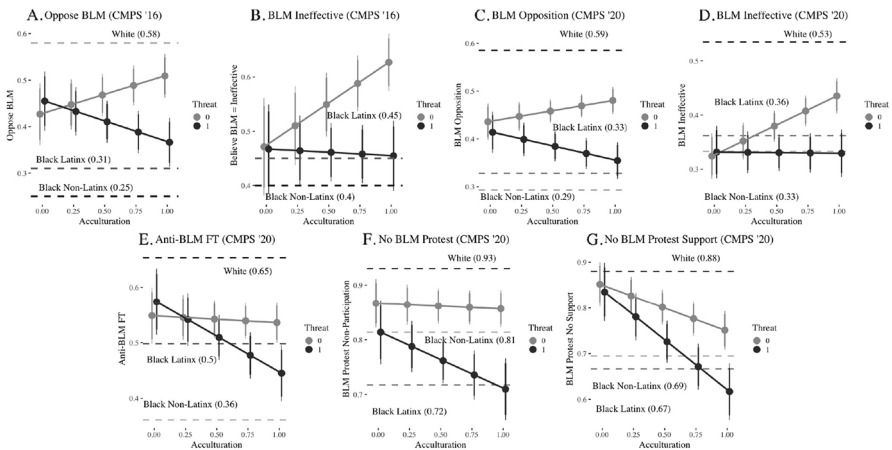

Fig. 2 Predicted Values of Black Interest Opposition by Deportation Threat and Acculturation. Panels A, C are predicted values for the *oppose BLM* outcome. Panels B, D are the same for the *BLM ineffective* outcome. Panels E–G do the same for the *antiBLM FT*, *no BLM protest*, and *BLM no support* outcomes. Dashed lines denote ethno-racial group means (Black=white, dark grey=Black Latinx, light grey=Black. 95% CIs from HC2 robust SEs displayed

and supportive of BLM at levels more akin to Black Latinxs and Black non-Latinxs as they acculturate.

In sum, consistent with **H1**, non-Black Latinxs unthreatened by immigration enforcement either adopt or maintain anti-Black attitudes proximate to Anglos as they acculturate. Yet, non-Black Latinxs threatened by immigration enforcement adopt attitudes toward Black people and their interests become similar to their Black counterparts as they acculturate.

Alternative Explanations

We rule out several alternative explanations for why non-Black Latinxs adopt pro-Black attitudes via acculturation. (1) Impression management via acculturation. Acculturated Latinxs may be more knowledgeable on U.S. liberal racial norms and therefore more likely to support Black people (Goldenberg & Saxe, 1996). Prior research implies more educated acculturated Latinxs should be more likely to adopt pro-Black attitudes given they are more capable of impression management (Sears & Savalei, 2006). (2) Discrimination, perceived discrimination motivates pro-Black beliefs and cross-group empathy due to shared marginalization experiences (Richeson & Craig, 2011; Sirin et al., 2016). (3) Linked Fate, Latinx linked fate is associated with positive Black appraisals (McClain et al., 2006; Wilkinson, 2014). (4) Skin Color, darker-skinned Latinxs may feel socially proximate to Black people (Wilkinson & Earle, 2013). (5) Intergroup Competition, acculturated non-Black Latinxs may increasingly adopt anti-Black attitudes if they feel they perceive economic/political competition with Black people (Bobo & Hutchings, 1996; Wilkinson, 2014). To account for these alternative explanations, we adjust for interactions between measures approximating these alternative explanations and *acculturation*. Adjusting for interactions between *acculturation* and (1) education, (2) perceived and experienced discrimination, (3) linked fate, (4) skin color, and (5) intergroup competition does not change our conclusions. The interaction between *threat* and *acculturation* is still negative and significant at least at $p < 0.10$ for 43/45 of the outcome/mechanism tests (Section R).

We also interact other alternative explanations with *acculturation*, an extreme test since it adjusts for differences among Latinxs along all possible alternative mechanisms *within* each *acculturation* level. In addition to the 5 aforementioned alternative mechanisms, we adjust for interactions between *acculturation* and measures of (1) intergroup contact (McClain et al., 2006), (2) political interest (to further rule out social desirability), (3) objective *threat* measures (e.g. knowing someone undocumented, exposure to Secure Communities deportations), (4) living in immigrant contexts, (5) American/Latinx identity (Gomez-Aguinaga et al., 2021), (6) partisanship, and (7) belief in immigrant work ethic (Wilkinson, 2014). Except for *resentment* and *no BLM support* outcome, the *threat /acculturation* interaction is still significant and negative (Section R.2).

Robustness Checks

Results do not change including Black Latinxs (Section S.4), or excluding Puerto Ricans, citizens ostensibly protected from deportation (Section S.5).

Our findings are not due to secular conservative principles, but anti-Blackness. We conduct a falsification test by assessing the association between *threat* and the interaction between *threat* and *acculturation* with an ideology scale (Table S18, Columns 5–6), liberal policy preferences irrelevant to Black interests (Table S18,

Columns 1–4), and both immigrant and protestant work ethic beliefs (Table S19). The associations are null.

Our findings could be due to generalized affinity toward marginalized groups. Thus, we assess the association between *threat*, and the *threat/acculturation* interaction, with outcomes characterizing negative attitudes toward women, Muslims, and LGBTQ+ adjusting for controls (Table S20). With one exception, we find statistically null associations. The null association between our independent variables and LGBTQ+ activism opposition suggests our BLM opposition findings are not due to opposition to anti-systemic social movements, but *Black* social movements.

Given *acculturation* is a categorical index, there may be non-linear influences of *acculturation* conditional on *threat*. Re-estimating results using a factorized *acculturation* scale demonstrates non-Black Latinxs from "higher" acculturation categories are more likely to hold pro-Black beliefs conditional on *threat*, suggesting limited non-linear *acculturation* influence (Tables S21, S22).

Our estimates are not sensitive to *acculturation* measurement choice. We re-estimate our results interacting the index components with *threat* (i.e. generational status, English interview language, citizenship). We also re-estimate our results using an index excluding the citizenship indicator. Coefficients characterizing these interactions are consistently negative and statistically significant (Table S23).

Self-reported BLM protest (non)participation may be motivated by social desirability instead of actual participation. We cannot fully rule out social desirability, but self-reported participation is associated with objective protest participation intensity within a respondent's county, increasing confidence respondents actually participated (Fig. S16).

Conclusion

Historic accounts and straight-line assimilation theory suggest immigrant group members increasingly derogate Black people and oppose their interests as they acculturate. However, other research finds acculturation is not associated with the adoption or maintenance of anti-Black beliefs. Our findings explain the puzzle of relatively pro-Black beliefs among acculturated Latinxs. We show threatening reception contexts, in the form of a uniquely expansive immigration enforcement apparatus, undercut the prospect of anti-Black assimilation.

Our findings are important in light of the growing Latinx population in addition to increased attention to anti-Blackness within the Latinx community. Prior research posits demographic shifts that reduce the relative position of Anglo whites do not necessarily mean the non-Black public will increasingly support Black people. Some raise concerns acculturation may result in social distancing from Black people along with sustained opposition to Black political interests among Latinxs, with long term ramifications for undercutting anti-Black racism (Alba, 2020; Yancey et al., 2003). These concerns are valid, but insights from *reactive ethnicity* and *segmented assimilation* theory suggest Latinxs may possess different assimilative trajectories on anti-Black beliefs. A key contribution inherent to this paper is that we demonstrate some

otherwise acculturated Latinxs will not follow the path of historic immigrant group members considering exposure to host society rebuff.

This paper has some limitations. First, pro-Black attitudes may not reflect behavioral commitments. Although the protest (non)participation outcome slightly mitigates this concern, respondents could still lie about participation. Future research should evaluate the association between *acculturation*, *threat*, and more externally valid anti-Black behavior.

Second, generalizability. Although Latinxs are the largest U.S. immigrant group, Asian and Black (Latinx or non-Latinx) immigrant groups are growing. We focus on Latinxs to ensure theoretical precision given immigrant group differences and because Latinxs are disparately exposed to immigration enforcement. However, our theory can travel to other groups. Future research should assess if rebuff intrinsic to other non-white groups undercuts the adoption of attitudes toward Black people similar to Anglos. For example, does anti-Black discrimination undercut holding or adopting anti-Black attitudes among acculturated Black immigrant populations? This question is particularly relevant given Black immigrant populations hold relatively anti-Black beliefs vis-a-vis their non-Latinx Black American counterparts (Capers & Watts Smith, 2016).

Third, this paper cannot further disaggregate Latinxs beyond the third + -generation. Perhaps *threat* matters for third-generation Latinxs, but not fourth-generation Latinxs or beyond. Future research should develop more precise *acculturation* measures in addition to re-testing the theory as the immigrant Latinx population proportion declines.[12]

Fourth, this paper does not evaluate other political outcomes that should be evaluated in future research, such as cross-group Latinx support for Black political candidates or specific pro-Black policies (Benjamin, 2017). Future work might also consider the implications of *threat* and *acculturation* for electoral participation such as vote choice. To this end, we assess if *threat* undercuts: (1) opposition to "defunding the police," a policy relatively supported by Black people; (2) voting for Trump in 2016 and 2020, a candidate who engaged in anti-Black rhetoric. We find hypothesis-consistent evidence that *threat* undercuts opposition to defunding the police and support for Trump among acculturated non-Black Latinxs, suggesting our theory and evidence may travel to other outcomes characterizing pro-Black beliefs and behaviors (Sections S.12 and S.13).

Finally, we are not optimistic about the implications of our findings for solidarity between non-Black Latinxs and Black people. Even if *threat* is weakly-to-moderately negatively correlated with *acculturation*, it still decreases as a function of *acculturation*. Thus, *in the long-run*, and especially as the Latinx population becomes increasingly acculturated (Funk & Lopez, 2022), the most acculturated Latinxs will be less implicated by immigration enforcement. Additionally, our findings rest on a sustained restrictive immigration context. If immigration policy becomes open, commitments to Black people and their interests among acculturated non-Black Latinxs

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[12] See: https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2015/09/15/the-impact-of-slowing-immigration-foreign-born-#diverse-origins.

may become weaker. However, it is possible, in the absence of immigration threats, issues that commonly affect non-Black Latinxs and Black people such as policing, educational disinvestment, or gentrification may motivate or maintain crossgroup support. We leave assessment of how these mechanisms of common marginalization may motivate cross-group support for future research.

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