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A "Criminal Immigrant" Mindset and Punitiveness: The Canadian Case

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Abstract

Unnever and Cullen (2010) argue that there is a "culturally universal" relationship between racial/ethnic/immigrant animus and general punitiveness. Because this thesis seems ill-fitting to Canada's multicultural society, we re-examine the connection in Canada between punitiveness and intolerance associated with new immigrants. We do this by expanding their multivariate analyses of the Canadian case to consider additional data sources spanning the first decade of this century, and by testing directly their thesis that the relationship is mediated by citizens imputing criminal activity to negatively-viewed outgroups. We show that the relationship between immigrant intolerance and punitiveness reported in their original research for the year 2000 remains strong in 2004, 2008 and 2011 and resists explanation in terms of potentially relevant third variables. Our supplementary study examining the capacity of a criminal immigrant mindset variable to mediate this association shows that mediation is partial only. We conclude (1) that outgroup animus and general punitiveness are indeed related in the Canadian case, (2) that there is modest support for the Unnever/Cullen account of that relationship, but (3) that most of the original relationship remains unexplained.

Introduction

Recently published research by Unnever and Cullen (2010) makes the case that racial animus and ethnic intolerance are causally associated with the holding of punitive sentiments in the treatment of criminal offenders. They maintain this association holds not only in the US where many if not most public policies have been racialized (see, for example Chiricos, Welch and Gertz 2004; Peffley & Hurwitz 2002), but in all western countries where race and/or ethnic relations are strained. Clearly this finding has implications for understanding public opinion about crime-control policy, but it is particularly interesting today as western societies adapt to growing diversity in their communities from immigration and refugee migration.

The argument Unnever and Cullen advance to explain the intolerance-punitiveness relationship draws on group-based conflict theories. In societies where there is intergroup competition for power and status, members of the dominant ethnic or racial group tend to resent the demands and perceived advantages of minorities, view them as threats to the normative order, and hence advocate a strong punitive response to preserve that order. Important to their argument is the public's association of criminality with these racial or ethnic minorities. This association with criminality serves to legitimize

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the animus they feel towards such groups, but it also creates a criminal "other" with which they feel little empathy when considering appropriate responses to criminal acts in general.

Canada is among the countries Unnever and his colleague examine in documenting their claim. From an analysis of the 2000 Canadian Election Study (CES), they report that "racial-ethnic intolerance" is the strongest of 13 predictors of Canadians' attitudes toward capital punishment and a significant predictor of more general punitiveness in dealing with criminal offenders. This finding is intriguing because the instrument Unnever and his colleague use to measure racial-ethnic intolerance in their Canadian application is based on items assessing intolerance toward new immigrants (see below). Anti-immigrant sentiments are not foreign to the Canadian experience, but they are not normally described as a significant "strain" in the society, nor have they been previously identified as a salient factor in explaining some Canadians' support for "tough on crime" policies. This leads us to ask whether the Unnever/Cullen account of the connection between punitiveness and racial/ethnic/immigrant intolerance adequately describes the Canadian case. In this article, we address the question in two ways. First, to eliminate the possibility that the Unnever/Cullen association for Canada was an artifact of a particular period or study, we replicate their analysis using survey data from three additional periods spanning the subsequent decade. Second, we report a study designed to test directly the Unnever/Cullen thesis that the association between anti-immigrant sentiment and general punitiveness is mediated by perceptions of out-group criminality.

The Racial/Ethnic Intolerance and Punitiveness Connection

The thesis that racial or ethnic intolerance and punitiveness are empirically related has been well-documented in studies for over half a century. For the most part, theorizing about this relationship has treated both sentiments as discrete expressions of an underlying common factor, such as an authoritarian world view (Adorno et al. 1950; Allport 1954; Altemeyer 1988; Rokeach 1960), feelings of economic insecurity (Costelloe, Chericos and Gertz 2009; Garland 2001; Sidel 1996), or a perception that outgroups threaten the normative order (Blalock 1967; Feldman 2003; Hogan, Chiricos and Gertz 2005; Liska 1992; Stenner 2005).

Unnever and Cullen acknowledge these processes in developing their argument, but go beyond them with the suggestion that racial/ethnic intolerance and punitiveness may share more than a common causal root; these variables may themselves be causally associated with the former fueling the latter. In developing this connection, they draw heavily on group-based conflict theories (Sidanius & Pratto 2004). Such theories hold that public opinion is shaped, at least in part, by reactions to perceived socio-economic or political threats arising from competition between dominant and minority groups in society. Dominant groups tend to see their status and privileges as threatened by minority demands for change and accommodation, while minorities tend to view the established order as posing a threat to their advancement. Building on this foundation, Unnever and Cullen posit that associating criminality with those who pose such threats to the normative order is one means by which the dominant group attempts to buttress its cultural hegemony. The conflation of criminality with racial or ethnic minorities is effected through numerous social channels. For example, it is enabled by media coverage of issues such as minority accommodations, adjustment stresses and instances of outgroup crime, and it is promoted by political opportunists to attract the electoral support of dominant group members. The association affects the public's punitiveness in a number of ways. On the one hand, it essentializes the "otherness" of typical criminal offenders with the result that dominant group members may feel less inclined to empathize with those who break society's laws (Chiricos et al. 2004; Unnever & Cullen 2009). As well, the conflation serves to legitimize and reinforce resentment, animus or intolerance toward "undeserving" minorities, allowing dominant group members to say they are not prejudiced against the outgroup in question, rather they are prejudiced against criminals.

The thesis laid out by Unnever and Cullen draws heavily on the US experience for its template. In the US case, the public's conflation of crime with race has been well documented (Barlow 1998; Entman 1992), and the impact on punitiveness of making that association has also been persuasively demonstrated (Peffley & Hurwitz 2002; Chiricos et al. 2004).[1] The novel contribution of their work is the claim that public opinion dynamics they identify in the US case apply to other jurisdictions in the western world where there are significant strains between dominant and minority racial or ethnic groups. Here again, they draw on an extensive body of European research to fashion a case for their hypothesis. There is little doubt that tensions between native-born and immigrant populations have become a salient political issue in most west European countries in recent decades (Pager 2008; Watts and Feldman 2001). There is also anecdotal evidence that an "criminal immigrant" mindset has taken hold in many European jurisdictions (Albrecht 2002). In short, for their US and European cases, Unnever and Cullen (2010) develop a plausible case for treating the relationship they demonstrate between minority outgroup animus and general punitiveness as a causal one rather than a case of spurious association. Inclusion of the Canadian case in their analysis is surprising and intriguing: surprising because, on the surface at least, there would seem to be weaker grounds for expecting in Canada a conflation of immigrants and criminality – a salient "criminal immigrant" mindset; intriguing because the Canadian data they report are nevertheless consistent with such a construction.

Evidence of a Canadian "Criminal Immigrant" Mindset

Certainly, some of the ingredients for their account are present in the Canadian case. Public concern about crime has declined considerably since the late 1990's, but it remains a pressing concern for many Canadians. Indeed, a 2011 survey of the adult population found that about four in ten Canadians wanted more federal and provincial funds allocated to crime and justice issues (Canadian Election Study 2011). As well, although there are stark differences in sentencing policy between Canada and the US, research suggests that the two *publics* do not differ much in their sentencing preferences or in their levels of punitiveness (Kugler et al. 2013; Lambert, Tucker & Baker 2008). Third, Canada has admitted high numbers of new immigrants over the past several decades with the result that some government resources are strained and the social fabric has had to adjust to a much higher level of diversity. These fiscal and social strains are such that substantial proportions of the electorate continue to advocate scaling back Canada's annual intake of new entrants. Finally, as in most other developed nations in recent years, there is a consistently strong zero-order correlation between the Canadian public's level of punitiveness and its level of anti-immigrant sentiment.

If the ingredients are present for the Unnever/Cullen account of punitiveness, is there evidence for the central tenet of that account: namely, that a racial, ethnic or immigrant typification of crime contributes significantly to our understanding of why some Canadians are more punitive than others. Two arguments lend support to their contention. First, there is evidence from polls for the first stage of their argument that many Canadians see a linkage between immigrants and crime (Palmer 1996; Roberts and Doob 1997; Simon and Sikich 2007). Second, Unnever and Cullen themselves (2010) demonstrate with their CES data that the relationship between anti-immigrant sentiments and punitiveness remains potent even controlling for third variables such as authoritarianism, perceived crime rate, egalitarianism and socio-demographic attributes. Assuming they have identified the relevant third variables, then, this analysis strengthens the claim that the linkage is not spurious, but an indirect causal one.

Despite this body of evidence, there remains cause for skepticism on a number of grounds. First, the available evidence reviewed above is indirect and is less than conclusive in potentially important respects. For example, available poll data on the linkage between crime and immigration actually tell two different stories, depending on the kind of question posed. When closed-ended questions are asked , substantial minorities ranging from a fifth to as much as a half of the sample tend to affirm the link, at least to some extent. However, when an open-ended question about the major causes of crime is posed without prompts or cues, immigration or ethno-cultural terms are volunteered by fewer than three per cent

of the national sample, even when given multiple opportunities to cite additional "causes" (Environics EFC054, 2005; EFC081, 2008). This suggests that the linkage is not a salient top-of-mind consideration for the vast majority of Canadian respondents, but requires an explicit cue before surfacing. And given that there are sizeable minorities in the country that have negative perceptions of immigrants for a number of reasons, it is plausible such people would be open to suggestions about negative immigrant attributes that were not otherwise a salient part of their mindset about crime. As well, the multivariate analysis of Canadian data presented by Unnever and Cullen is consistent with their hypothesis, but is suspect in one key respect. It is not clear how the researchers measured authoritarianism in their analysis. To our knowledge, there is no conventionally-accepted measure of this concept in the 2000 CES and, in email correspondence, the authors were not able to provide the operational definition employed. Since authoritarianism is the most plausible alternate explanation for the association between punitiveness and anti-immigrant feelings – indeed it is the one traditionally cited in the literature – its measurement is an important consideration.

Second, the "criminal immigrant" mindset thesis is predicated on a society that views immigrants or racial minorities as posing a serious threat to the dominant culture. As noted, the thesis fits well with the US and recent western European experience. However, on the surface at least, it seems ill-fitting to Canada. Indeed, the prevailing Canadian narrative suggests just the opposite – a story of Canadian exceptionalism when it comes to tolerating and accommodating the diversity accompanying significant immigration (Adams 2008; Bloemraad 2012; Reitz 2011). The case for Canadian exceptionalism draws on evidence from a number of different sources. In cross-national comparisons of citizen perspectives on immigration, Canadian samples tend by a wide margin to be the most positive in their assessments of immigrants (Simon and Sikich 2007). Indeed Bloemraad argues "Canada has reinvented its national identity . . . to one that embraces immigration, diversity, and tolerance" (Bloemraad 2012: 14). A 2010 Environics poll of Canadians supports this view: when asked to assess the importance of various national features to the country's identity, 86 per cent of its sample cited multiculturalism as one of those features (Reitz 2011). The character of political discourse in Canada also supports the case for exceptionalism in that crime and immigration are seldom connected in political debate. As Mudde (2012) has observed, unlike the current political environment in Europe, there is virtually no nativist political force active at the national level.

Much of the foregoing argument addresses the plausibility that a salient "criminal immigrant" mindset might contribute importantly to an explanation of punitive sentiments in the Canadian context. However, because that argument draws largely on evidence from the past decade, the possibility exists that Unnever and Cullen identified a dynamic in Canadian public opinion that was peculiar to the period of their research. Conditions in the late 1990s *were* distinctive in some potentially relevant respects. While crime rates in Canada peaked in the early 1990s, concern about crime remained relatively high for the rest of the decade through to the time the 2000 CES data were collected (Blais et al. 2002). As well, Canada in the late 1990s was in the first decade of a revamped immigration program which saw admissions grow from about 90,000 in 1985 to an annual average of over 200,000 through the 1990s. As Bilodeau, Turgeon & Karakoc (2012) document for that time, there was evidence of social strain from this program with fully half the native-born "white" population wanting fewer immigrants admitted to the country. Perhaps not unrelated to this strain was the emergence of the Reform Party as a major political force over that decade.[2] The Reform Party was distinctive on the Canadian political landscape because, whether fairly or not, it was associated with strong negative views on current immigration policy, multiculturalism and what many believed was a soft criminal justice system. Because all of these conditions – concern about crime, desire for fewer immigrant admissions, and a populist political rhetoric – have abated considerably since the turn of the century, it would be useful to establish as an initial step whether the Unnever/Cullen findings are robust across time.

Research Strategy

Unnever and Cullen have marshalled an interesting argument for a "criminal immigrant" explanation of punitiveness in the Canadian context, but their evidence at this point is less than conclusive. As a consequence, we propose to bring additional data to bear on the thesis. Our analysis is organized around two objectives. First, we replicate their multivariate analysis for the subsequent years of 2004, 2008 and 2011. This will allow us to deal with the possibility that the relationship they have documented was peculiar to the 1990s or to that particular survey. Second, we examine the "criminal immigrant" mindset phenomenon more directly using data collected from a student convenience sample. That is, we assess the degree to which such a mindset is related to punitiveness and, assuming it is related, the degree to which it mediates the relationship between anti-immigrant sentiments and punitiveness.

Replicating the Unnever/Cullen Model

Our initial objective in this analysis is to test whether the relationship between intolerance and punitiveness in other years besides 2000. Thus we replicate their analysis as closely as possible and then provide out-of-sample tests of their model. For this task, we use the 2000 CES data used by Unnever and Cullen, as well as data from the CES surveys of 2004, 2008 and 2011.[3] Each study involved national samples of adults interviewed in three waves: pre- and post-election telephone interviews, and a mailback questionnaire.

The task of replicating the Unnever/Cullen analysis is complicated by two factors. First, we are unsure of some of the operational definitions they used in their analysis; and second, even if we were certain of those decisions, differences in questionnaires employed in the subsequent years would prevent us from replicating their model in all its particulars. Our initial strategy is to develop a regression model that is common to the four years we want to compare, and that approximates the model upon which Unnever and Cullen based their conclusions.

Dependent Measures. Unnever and Cullen used two different measures of punitiveness to test the Canadian case – support for capital punishment and support for more punitiveness in the treatment of criminals. The former was based on the question "Do you favour or oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?" As with their original analysis, we created a binary variable with respondents answering "oppose" or "depends" coded "0" and those answering "favour" coded "1". Unnever and Cullen do not specify how they measured the more general punitive sentiment, but the 2000 CES questionnaire contained only two items that reflect the sentiment they describe: 1) "which is the best way to deal with young offenders who commit violent crime: give them tougher sentences, or, spend more on rehabilitating them?"; and a Likert item 2) "we must crack down on crime, even if that means that criminals lose their rights". In the analysis that follows we use these two items as the basis for our measure of general punitiveness. Because they have different metrics, responses to the two items were rescaled to a common 0-1 range and averaged to yield a punitiveness score for each respondent; Cronbach's alphas for this 2-item index were .34 (2000), .46 (2004), .49 (2008) and .53 (2011).

Immigrant Intolerance Measure. To measure intolerance, Unnever and Cullen summed responses for the following five items: 1) "We should look after Canadians born in this country first and others second." 2) "Immigrants make an important contribution to this country." (scoring reversed) 3) "Canadian unity is weakened by Canadians of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds sticking to their old ways." 4) "Do you think Canada should admit more immigrants, fewer immigrants, or about the same as now?" 5) "Too many recent immigrants just don't want to fit into Canadian society". Because the "Canadian unity" item was not repeated in subsequent studies, we have based our measure only on the four items common to all data sets. Responses to the four items were rescaled to a common 0-1 range, and averaged to form our measure of immigrant intolerance. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the 4-item measure are .76 (2000), .73 (2004), .72 (2008) and .74 (2011).

Covariate Predictors. A set of twelve covariates were specified in the regression model employed by Unnever and Cullen; we have developed a parallel set that is both comparable in substance and, for the most part, common to all four of our study years. The common variables included socio-demographic measures for respondent age (age in years), gender (binary with male =1), education (binary with "some university" or more =1), marital status (binary with "married" =1), employment status (binary with "unemployed" =1), family income (binary with "$60K or more" = 1), conservative partisan affiliation (binary with "Alliance" or "Conservative" =1), Catholic religious affiliation (binary with "Catholic" =1), and religiosity. Religiosity was measured for each survey year with the question "in your life, would you say religion is very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not important at all?" Responses for this item were rescaled so the variable ranges between 0 and 1.

Unnever and Cullen also included in their model a measure of "egalitarianism" – a concept reflecting one's understanding of why there is inequality in society. It is potentially relevant here because strong egalitarians, as contrasted with individualists, are thought to ascribe importance to structural causes of behaviour leading them to assign less responsibility to individuals for aberrant behaviour (Kornhauser 2015; Unnever, Cullen & Jones 2008). We developed a measure of this egalitarianism dimension based on responses to the following seven items: 1) "We have gone too far in pushing equal rights in this country"; 2) "If people really want to work, they can find a job"; 3)"Minority groups need special rights"; 4) "The government should see to it that everyone has a decent standard of living OR leave people to get ahead on their own"; 5) "The welfare state makes people less willing to look after themselves"; 6) "People who don't get ahead should blame themselves, not the system"; 7) "Which comes closer to your view: if aboriginals tried harder, they could be as well off as other Canadians OR social and economic conditions make it almost impossible to succeed". The response options for these seven items were reversed where required, rescaled to a common metric ranging between 0 and 1, and averaged to provide an egalitarianism score for each respondent (with a higher score reflecting greater egalitarianism). Apha reliability coefficients for this measure are .66 (2000), .65 (2004), .70 (2008) and .71 (2011).

As noted, Unnever and Cullen included a measure of authoritarianism as a covariate in their 2000 CES regression model, but did not provide the item composition for that variable. Because the 2000 CES did not include a conventional measure of this concept, we developed a measure reflecting moral traditionalism – a conceptual dimension common to most treatments of authoritarianism (Adorno et al. 1950; Altemeyer 1988; Feldman 2003). Our measure was based on responses to the following three questions: 1) "Newer lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of society"; 2) "Promoting traditional family values . . . to you personally, in this Federal election, is it very important, somewhat important, or not very important?"; 3) "Society would be better off if more women stayed home with their children". We rescaled each of these items to a 0-1 range and averaged the three responses. The reliability coefficients for the scale are acceptable (.56 for 2000, .67 for 2004, .69 for 2008 and .67 for 2011), but moral traditionalism does not capture all of the dimensions traditionally associated with the concept.[4]

Finally, Unnever and Cullen included perceptions of the crime rate in their 2000 model, using the question: "Do you think that crime in Canada has gone up, gone down, or stayed about the same in the last few years?" An identical question was asked in 2004, but not in 2008 or 2011. For these latter two years, we assume that the crime rate question was used to reflect the respondent's concern about crime seriousness in society; hence, for 2008, we employ a single-item measure based on how important "fighting crime" was to the respondent "personally". In 2011, we employ a two-item index based on whether the respondent wanted the federal and provincial governments to spend more, less or about the same on "fighting crime". For each year, the relevant items were rescaled to range between 0 and 1. Table 1 reports descriptive statistics for the variables described above.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Variables Used in the Replication and Supplementary Analyses.

Variables[a]	2000			2004			2008			2011		
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N
Dependent Variables												
Support for Capital Pununishment (binary)	.46	.50	3357	.44	.50	3963	.44	.50	2314	.42	.49	1779
General Punitiveness Index	.59	.41	3483	.59	.43	4160	.53	.42	2421	.59	.34	818
Predictor Variables												
Anti-Immigrant Index	.56	.31	3559	.53	.31	4176	.50	.28	2370	.54	.29	1836
Egalitarianism Index	.60	.26	2822	.43	.27	3047	.44	.27	2386	.45	.27	1826
Authoritarianism (Moral Traditionalism Index)	.56	.30	3636	.46	.35	4190	.45	.33	2408	.35	.31	1846
Crime Concern	.66	.38	3573	.75	.34	4199	.77	.33	3232	.66	.30	2431
Age	44.9	16.4	3618	46.5	16.6	4278	48.3	17.0	3197	51.3	16.7	2412
Male (binary)	.51	.50	3648	.48	.50	4325	.47	.50	3259	.45	.50	2465
Educated (binary)	.31	.46	3619	.34	.47	4285	.39	.49	3221	.40	.49	2449
Married (binary)	.55	.50	3648	.55	.50	4325	.46	.50	3259	.45	.50	2465
Unemployed inary)	.04	.20	3648	.04	.20	4325	.03	.18	3259	.04	.19	2465
Income (binary)	.52	.50	2417	.43	.50	3705	.60	.49	2402	.59	.49	2105
Conservative (binary)	.18	.39	3648	.21	.40	3053	.28	.45	2359	.34	.47	1804
Catholic (binary)	.43	.50	3648	.40	.49	4325	.39	.49	3259	.36	.48	2465
Religious salience	.64	.32	3593	.71	.28	3359	.70	.29	2431	.69	.30	1849

Notes:

a. All entries are based on weighted data for the year it was collected.

Results

The first two columns of Table 2 compare our binary logistic regression model regarding support for capital punishment in 2000 with the model reported in the original Unnever/Cullen article. The dependent variable and the key predictor – immigrant intolerance – are measured in the same way in both models, but our measures of the covariates are clearly different as the coefficients in the two models (and the Ns) differ in significant ways. That said, most of the central findings of their analysis apply to ours as well: in particular, immigrant intolerance emerges as a highly significant predictor of support for capital punishment even with controls for potentially relevant dispositional and socio-demographic variables.

Unnever and Cullen indicated that intolerance in Canada was also a robust predictor of more general punitiveness in the treatment of offenders (Unnever & Cullen, 2010, 848-849); however they did not present the data upon which that conclusion is based. Column 6 of Table 2 represents our attempt to replicate this finding. We employ here the same predictors as the capital punishment model, but use Ordinary Least Squares regression. It can be seen from the table that, as with the capital punishment analysis, immigrant intolerance is significantly related to punitiveness even with controls for potentially relevant covariates. Indeed, while egalitarianism is the strongest predictor in the model, the coefficient for immigrant intolerance is next largest in magnitude.

We would contend, then, that our model provides a reasonable approximation of the one upon which Unnever and Cullen based their findings. Are those findings unique to the year 2000 or do they describe a more general Canadian pattern? The other columns of Table 2 address this question by presenting comparable analyses for each dependent variable for the years 2004, 2008 and 2011. These analyses demonstrate clearly that the 2000 results were not at all unique to that year. In modelling support for capital punishment and support for greater general punitiveness, immigrant intolerance is not only highly significant in all eight analyses, it remains one of the strongest predictors in each equation.

Table 2. Predicting Support for Capital Punishment and Support for Greater Punitiveness: Comparing the Unnever/Cullen Model with our 2000 Replication, and Extending the Analysis to Canadian Samples of 2004, 2008 & 2011.[a]

Dependent Variable & Year / Predictors[b]	Support for Capital Punishment						Support for Greater Punitiveness			
	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9
	2000 Unnever/ Cullen Analysis[1]	2000 Replicated Analysis	2004	2008	2011		2000 Replicated Analysis	2004	2008	2011
Immigrant Intolerance	.376***	1.401***	1.420***	1.790***	1.261***		.199***	.209***	.189***	.289***
Age	-.030	.001	.001	-.015***	-.004		-.001*	.001	-.001	-.001
Male	.233***	.539***	.497***	.188	.226		.089***	.002	.016	.017
Educated	-.017	-.353**	-.596***	-.135	-.384**		-.064***	-.059**	-.051*	-.019
Married	.086	.051	.044	.162	-.029		.061***	.066***	.079***	.023
Unemployed	-.097	-.358	.096	-.287	-.615		-.025	-.003	.016	-.071
Income	-.010	.001	-.153	.045	.036		.001	.007	-.043*	-.016
Conservative	.035	.341**	.323*	.294*	.516***		.063**	.080***	.071**	.038
Catholic	-.123*	-.145	-.199	-.040	-.119		-.032	-.034	-.008	.014
Religious salience	-.014	-.243	-.596**	-.626**	-.065		.044	-.055	-.011	.001
Egalitarianism	-.294***	-1.476***	- .370**	-1.247***	- 1.194***		-.278***	-.168***	-.253***	-.525***

Authoritarianism (Moral Traditionalism)	-.026	1.076***	.175	.860***	.419		.109***	.073*	.139***	.140*
Crime Concern	.106	.419**	.649***	1.201***	.843***		.091***	.212***	.200***	.208***
Constant	(Not Reported)	-1.278***	-1.378***	-2.302***	-2.216***		.441***	.217***	.107	.023
Nagelkerke R^2 / Adjusted R^2	.322***	.199***	.152***	.227***	.160***		.142***	.134***	.173***	.338***
N	507	1798	1808	1229	1056		1835	1888	1282	517

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Notes:

a. The Unnever/Cullen Analysis is taken from Table 1 in Unnever & Cullen (2010: 844).
b. In these analyses, all Dependent and Predictor variables have a 0-1 range, with the exception of the Age variable. The variables Male, Educated (1 = at least some University), Income (1 = >$60K), Married, Unemployed, Conservative and Catholic are binary in format.

Testing the Criminal Immigrant Mindset More Directly

The analysis thus far strengthens Unnever's and Cullen's claim that the relationship in Canada between immigrant intolerance and punitiveness is causal rather than noncausal covariation. It does so by eliminating several plausible alternate explanations for that relationship. However neither our analysis nor theirs provide direct evidence for their main thesis that people who harbour animus toward racial/ethnic/immigrant minorities are more likely to associate criminality with those minorities and are (thus) more likely to support punitive crime-control policies. To investigate this linkage more directly, we developed a survey instrument that included measures for immigrant negativity, the association of immigrants with criminality, and punitiveness. The survey was administered to a sample of 1st year university students. In what follows, we describe the data collected in the study, the methods and measures employed, and the results of our analysis.

Data. The data for this supplementary analysis were collected through a paper-and-pencil instrument administered to 297 students in a first-year introductory political science class. The survey took about 10-15 minutes to complete and was administered in class time. The student sample was evenly split between males (49.8 per cent) and females (50.2 per cent), had a mean age of 19.7 years (sd = 1.3), and was overwhelmingly native-born (91.2 per cent); that said, over a third (36 per cent) of such students had parents who were not born in Canada. The class was told that the survey was designed to ascertain student views concerning two policy areas that are currently on the Canadian government's agenda: immigration and crime control. The questionnaire was presented in four sections: one dealing with views on immigration, another with views on crime and crime control, a section tapping more general political orientations, and a brief socio-demographic section at the end. To lessen the possibility that students would suspect our interest in the linkages between the two policy areas, these sections were separated in the questionnaire by the general political orientation section. As a check for order effects in the presentation of these policy sections, half of the participants answered the immigration battery first while the other half answered the crime control battery first.

Punitiveness Measure. The dependent variable of punitiveness is based on student responses to a battery of survey items introduced as follows: "People have suggested different ways to address crime in society. For each of the measures below, check the interval that best reflects how much you support or oppose each measure". For each of seven measures, students were presented with a 10-interval scale anchored at the ends by "strongly oppose" and "strongly support". The seven measures were: impose harsher sentences for all crimes; use the death penalty for some murderers; put more money into prison rehab programs; take away prisoners' TV and recreation privileges; send repeat juvenile offenders to adult court; use more mandatory minimum sentencing; fund more community crime prevention programs. After reversing the "rehab" and "crime prevention" item scores and converting all items to a 0-1 range, the student's punitiveness score was computed as his or her mean response across the seven items. Cronbach's alpha for this index is .71.

Immigrant Negativity Measure. To measure students' feelings about immigrants and immigration, we developed two batteries of items, one reflecting arguments for increasing the number of immigrants admitted to the country and the other reflecting arguments for admitting fewer immigrants. The batteries were introduced as follows: "In the debate over immigration policy in Canada, proponents/critics offer a number of reasons why Canada should increase the number of/admit fewer immigrants to the country next year. Some of those reasons are listed below. For each argument, please check the interval that best reflects how valid you think that reason is". Using 10-interval scales anchored at one end by "not at all valid" and at the other by "extremely valid", students indicated their reactions to the following reasons for increasing the number of immigrants: allows Canada to fill gaps in our workforce; enriches our culture by introducing diversity; contributes new ideas for solving problems; allows families to be reunited; allows Canada to address an aging workforce; addresses our moral obligation to the globe. Similarly, they indicated their reactions to the following reasons for admitting fewer immigrants: puts too much pressure on provincial social services; too many immigrants don't want to fit into Canadian society; increases the unemployment rate; undermines traditional Canadian values;

takes jobs away from Canadians; weakens Canadian cultural identity. After reversing the six "pro-immigration" items and converting all items to a 0-1 range, we computed an immigrant negativity measure based on the student's mean score across the twelve items. Cronbach's alpha for this index is .87.

Criminal Immigrant mindset Measure. Two items in the survey tap the degree to which the student sees a linkage between immigration and crime. The first is an item included in the "anti-immigrant" battery described above but not used in the construction of that immigrant negativity index. It asked students to indicate on a 10-interval scale how valid was the argument against immigration that it "increases the crime rate in the country". The second was an item included in a separate battery asking students to assess on 10-interval scales the importance of various factors in "explaining the problem of crime in our society". Seven factors were suggested, among which was "too many immigrants". Responses to these two items were converted to a 0-1 range, and averaged to measure the degree to which students link crime with immigrants and immigration. This two-item index has a Cronbach's alpha of .64.

Authoritarianism Measure. Included in the survey is a four-item version of a "child-rearing" authoritarianism index that has been widely used in survey research (see endnote #4). Wording for the question was as follows: Here are some qualities that children can be encouraged to learn. For each pair of qualities below, circle the one that you think is more important to learn – independence or respect for authority; obedience or self-reliance; curiosity or good manners; well-behaved or considerate. From these, the number of designated "authoritarian" preferences (respect for authority, obedience, good manners, well-behaved) were summed and rescaled to form a variable with a 0-1 range. Cronbach's alpha for this index was .54.

Results. Table 4 presents means, standard deviations and zero-order correlations for the four measures used in this analysis. Of note is the mean rating for the Criminal-Immigrant linkage variable. We have argued above that the linkage of criminality with immigrants may not be as common in Canada as it seems to be in other countries. The mean rating of .31 (on a 0-1 scale where "1" is the strongest perception of linkage) suggests that it is not very prevalent at all in this student sample; that said, the table also indicates that such an association is much more likely among those who tend to be negative about immigration (Pearson's r= .59). This is consistent with the Unnever/Cullen argument that those hostile to immigrants are more likely to impute criminality to them. All intercorrelations among these four variables are significant with the exception of that between authoritarianism and criminal-immigrant linkage.

Table 4. Means, Standard Deviations and Zero-Order Correlations for Student Study Variables.

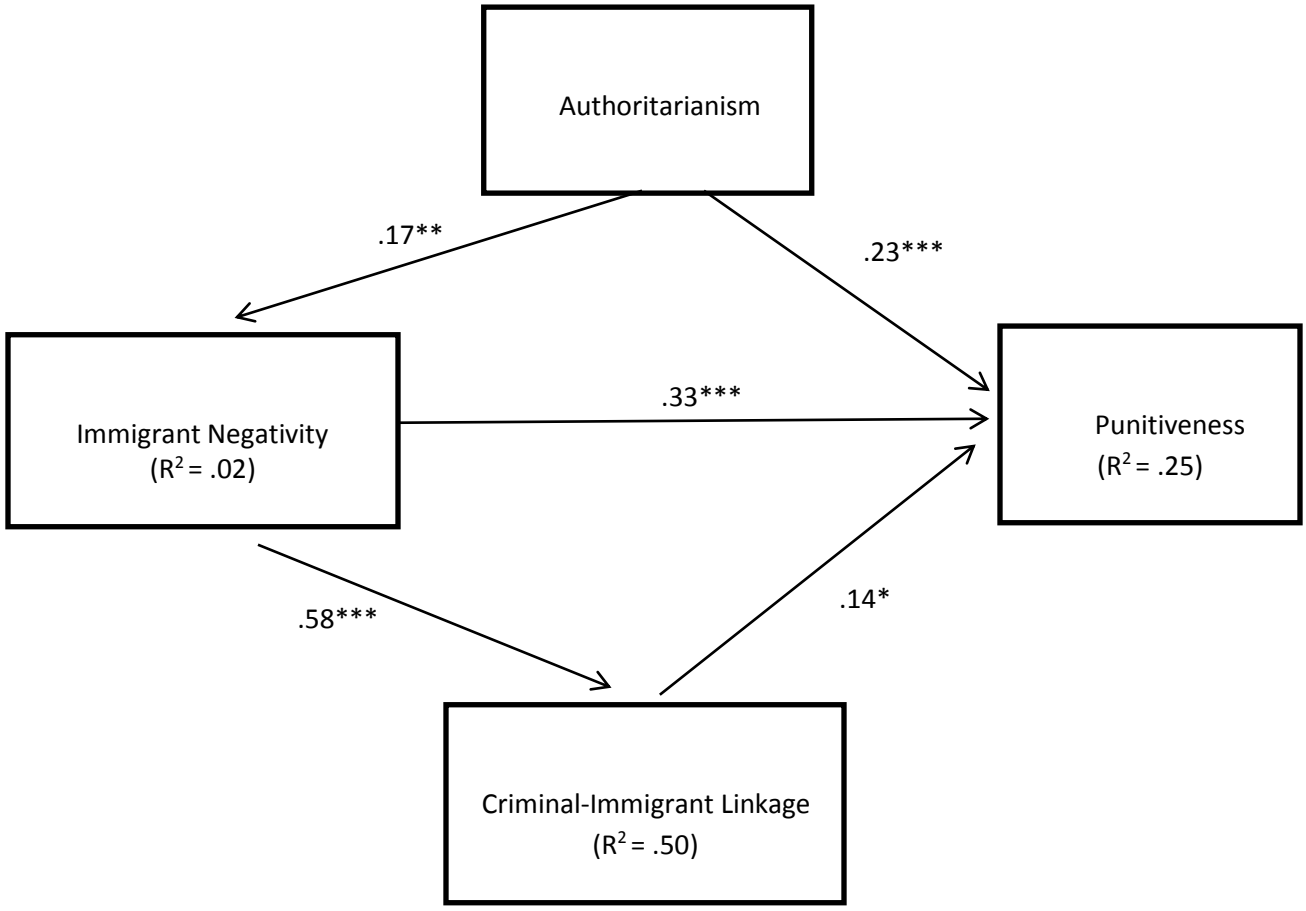
Variable	Mean	SD	Authoritarianism	Immigrant Negativity Index	Criminal Immigrant Linkage
Punitive index	.41	.17	.30***	.45***	.36***
Authoritarianism	.34	.30	1.0	.17**	.11
Immigrant Intolerance	.45	.19		1.0	.58***
Criminal Immigrant Linkage Index	.31	.23			1.0

* p < .05;** p < .01; *** p < .001

Note: N=294 with missing values imputed; all variables have a 0-1 range.

Path analysis is used to test Unnever's and Cullen's thesis. Figure 1 depicts the path analysis model together with resultant path coefficients.[5] For our purposes, the key finding in this model is the strong and highly significant coefficient (+.33) for the direct path between Immigrant Negativity and Punitiveness. It bears on two features of the Unnever/Cullen thesis. On the one hand, it supports their contention that the relationship between negativity and punitiveness is not spurious, at least with respect to authoritarianism. On the other hand, it throws into question their claim that the negativity-punitiveness relationship can best be understood in terms of an Immigrant-Criminal linkage. Figure 1 indicates that such a linkage does play a mediating role in the process, but it is very modest role and leaves most of the original relationship unexplained.

Figure 1. Path Analysis Diagram Depicting Path Coefficients for Predictors of Punitiveness (Standardized Regression Coefficients). (N=294)



Discussion and Conclusion

Unnever and Cullen (2010) have made an intriguing and, we would argue, surprising case that anti-immigrant sentiments in Canada are a significant predictor of support for capital punishment and relative punitiveness in the treatment of criminal offenders; moreover that these associations arise because those harbouring such sentiments tend to associate immigrants with criminality. In this article, we have subjected these claims to closer scrutiny. Our investigation indicates that the immigrant hostility-punitiveness relationship they found using 2000 CES data is not peculiar to that period; rather it is robust across time, evident and prominent in each of three subsequent Canadian studies spanning the years 2004-2011.

The explanation Unnever and Cullen proposed for this relationship finds less support here. They suggested that the relationship reflects a tendency for citizens with animus towards outgroups to associate criminality with those groups, leading them to support more punitive measures when dealing with criminal offenders. We first tested this thesis indirectly by specifying third variables that might plausibly explain away the relationship, rendering it spurious. However, in our multivariate models that included these third variables, immigrant intolerance remained a potent predictor of both capital punishment support and general punitiveness. We then tested their thesis more directly using a student convenience sample. This analysis yielded mixed results. On the one hand, as predicted by Unnever and Cullen, those more negative about immigrants and immigration were more likely to associate immigrants with crime and exhibited greater punitiveness than those more positive about immigrants and immigration. Also as predicted, a part of this effect on punitiveness was channeled indirectly through one's tendency to associate immigrants with criminality. On the other hand, the mediating effect of the criminal-immigrant association was partial at best.[6] Indeed, the direct effect of immigrant negativity on punitiveness remained very strong and significant in our path analysis model. Given that a measure of authoritarianism was also included in the equation as a test of spuriousness, this suggests that most of the relationship between immigrant hostility and punitiveness remains unexplained.

Where does this leave us? We have established that Canada is not an outlier regarding Unnever and Cullen's basic hostility-punitiveness relationship, but our conclusion about their explanation of that relationship – that it is partial at best – raises new questions. First, since this last finding was based on data collected from a student convenience sample, can it be replicated with a sample more representative of the country's population? Second, assuming national data confirm our student-based findings, is Canada a special case in this regard or is the criminal immigrant linkage generally limited in its explanatory power? To our knowledge, this has not been tested directly in the US or European contexts. Finally, assuming again that the criminal immigrant mindset remains only a partial explanation for the association, the most pressing question becomes: what is it that best accounts for this hostility-punitiveness relationship?

Endnotes

[1] Although the bulk of US research on this issue focuses on African Americans as the outgroup in question, recent research suggests that a similar criminalization process may describe public reactions to undocumented Latino immigrants (Chiricos et al. 2014; Stewart et al. 2015; Stupi, Chiricos & Gertz 2014). To date, however, this body of research has focused on the tendency of those with animus towards such immigrants to exhibit greater punitiveness in dealing with that outgroup specifically, rather than with the general population of offenders.

[2] This development is potentially relevant for our discussion because we have long known that elite discourse largely defines the parameters of legitimate debate in western societies (Zaller, 1992). For example, Cochrane and Nevitte (2014) have shown that the emergence of anti-immigrant parties in Europe has been instrumental both for validating the public's latent animus towards immigrants and for effectively bundling the immigrant "problem" with other social ills such as unemployment and crime.

[3] The Canadian Election Study (CES) series is a collection of national surveys funded in part by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRCC). The studies are based on stratified multistage cross-section samples of voting age citizens living in private residences. For each election study, telephone interviews were conducted before and after the election in question; as well, respondents were invited to complete a post-election mailed questionnaire. Although there is a panel component to the 2004, 2008 and 2011 surveys, only the new representative cross-sectional sample for each of these years was used in this analysis.

[4] A more widely used measure of authoritarianism based on responses to questions about child-rearing preferences was included in the 2008 and 2011 CES studies (see, for example Feldman 2003; Sears et al. 1997; Unnever, Cullen & Jones 2008). However inclusion of this measure in our regression analyses did not alter our conclusions in any material way, so for consistency we limited our analysis to the variable complement available for all four stuies.

[5] The path analysis was performed using AMOS, which reported statistics suggesting there was an acceptable fit between model and data (χ^2=.053, df=1, p<.818; RMSEA = .0001).

[6] We say "at best" because the causal arrow here may be reversed – that is, immigrant negativity may be caused by the perception of immigrant criminality. In either case, our conclusion is the same: the relationship between immigrant negativity and punitiveness remains largely independent of the immigrant criminality linkage.

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