SHOW ME YOUR PAPERS:
A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF BARRIERS OF ANTI-IMMIGRATION LEGISLATION IN THE UNITED STATES

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Research Question

- How has the implementation and creation of anti-immigration laws created barriers for immigrants?
Thesis

There is a progression in the amount of restrictions and barriers placed upon immigrant individuals in the United States with the development of each new piece anti-immigration legislation.
Literature Review

- SB 1070 And Copycat Legislation
- Trends, Barriers And Reduction Of Equal Opportunities
- Mexican Immigration to the United States: A Case Study
Work together to discourage and deter the unlawful entry and presence of aliens and economic activity by persons unlawfully present in the United States (SB 1070, 2000)

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas (Lacayo, 2011)

June 9th, 2011 House Bill 56 was signed into law in Alabama (HB 56, 2011)
Environment of racial profiling, encouraged state-sanctioned discrimination and discrimination in schools based off of perceived ethnicity has arisen and attendance has decreased (NILC, 2012)

Making or attempting to make business transactions with Alabama government officials a felony and also includes a school enrollment provision and a contract provision that makes contracts void if the other party is undocumented; three provisions not required in the earlier SB 1070 (NILC, 2012)
Estimated six million of Mexican immigrants were undocumented, representing around fifty six percent of the ten million undocumented immigrants in the United States at that time (Hanson, 2006).

“In the process of rediscovering the Mexico-diaspora affinity, observers have often overstated the political significance and intensity of the transborder connection and at times even romanticized the strength of the cultural bond” (Shain, 2000)
Scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power (Delgado, 2006)

An immigrant’s race and social class plays a role in influencing anti-immigrant laws and policy-making due to popular misconceptions about immigrant individuals and specific racial groups.

Questions claims of the current legal system and argues claims are a camouflage for the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups in U.S. society (Solórzano, 1997)

Policy recommendations generated from the focus on assimilation [to] maintain the status quo, ignore White privilege, and set the agenda to disadvantage racialized groups further (Romero, 2008)
Methodology

- Content Analysis
- Manifest and Latent coding

Sample
- SB 1070 and SB 1070 style legislation
- Visited each state’s government website to obtain copy of bills
- Arranged chronologically and randomly selected 7 of 15 bills

Coding
- Opening coding
Findings

- Immigrant Identity
  - Frequency of negative descriptions

- Immigration Status
  - Acceptable vs. unacceptable immigration

- Basis For Profiling
  - Race, color, national origin and the extent allowed

- Creation Of Barriers
  - Education, employment verification, healthcare services and public benefits
Immigrant Identity

- Legal, illegal, unauthorized and unlawful used to depict a negative or positive identity
- Use of word illegal – 51 times in HB 56 of 66 total appearances
- Use of word legal – 1 time in HB 87 of 12 total appearances
- The more frequently that the word alien was used, the more frequently negative descriptions were also used – also the case in Arizona’s SB 1070, Oklahoma’s SB 908, Florida’s HB 7809 and South Carolina’s S 20
- The way the identity of immigrants was described shaped overall kind of terminology used within the bills
Immigration Status

- Acceptable vs. unacceptable immigration
  - Acceptable - US citizen, foreign national, permanent resident or resident alien
    - Reference to United States government authorization
  - Unacceptable - illegal alien, unauthorized alien, unlawful alien, illegal persons, etc
    - Use of words and terms to describe and define unwanted immigration and/or persons
Use of race, color, religion or national origin as a means for identifying undocumented immigrants

Appeared in 7 of 8 bills analyzed and 4 of 4 passed bills

HB 738 (2/17/2011) was mentioned 1 out of 11 times and accounted for 4% of total references to race, color, religion or national origin where as HB 56 (6/9/2011) was mentioned 8 out of 14 times and accounted for 33% of total appearances
Creation Of Barriers

- Education, employment verification, healthcare services and public benefits
- Only HB 56 (6/9/2011) passed restrictions in all four areas
- 7 of 8 laws expressed need for employment verification
- Creation of barriers for US citizens
Discussion

- Societal patterns
- Use of labels to characterize individuals – often to evoke emotions and compel action
- Labels frequently used to portray minority individuals in a negative light
- Role appearance plays in determining facts about individuals
- Profiling is allowed but only within specified extent
- Weaknesses/Strength
- Future for immigrants/immigration