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Documenting the Undocumented:

A Review of the United States' First Municipal ID Program

by Paul F. Lagunes, Brian M. Levin, and Ruth K. Dittmann

ABSTRACT

The City of New Haven, CT, sought to promote the assimilation of its immigrants by becoming the first American city to provide a government-backed ID, the Elm City Resident Card, to all residents. This article tests the policy's effectiveness in commerce. We find that Hispanics/Latinos are asked to present an ID more than Whites/Anglos, showing that the former are in greater need of documentation, regardless of their citizenship status. When a Hispanic/Latino presented the Elm City Resident Card to a cashier, it fared only as well as an unofficial ID. Thus, we conclude that the card has negligible utility as a form of documentation.

In May 2007, the bipartisan McCain-Kennedy Comprehensive Immigration Reform bill failed to garner the necessary votes to pass in Congress. The bill would have bolstered border security, placed the country's undocumented immigrants—most of whom are Hispanic/Latino—on a pathway to citizenship, and changed the visa allocation criteria. As *The Economist* (2007) cited, some cities took the immigration issue on themselves: “As the federal government . . . proved itself incapable of formulating an immigration policy, local governments are stepping in as they did on health care and the environment.”

In this context, some cities enacted policies cracking down on undocumented immigrants. For instance, Farmers Branch, TX, Escondido, CA, Hazleton, PA, Riverside, NJ, and Pahrump, NV, passed laws banning undocumented immigrants from renting apartments or houses and punishing landlords who defied these policies (CNN 2008). In contrast, the City of New Haven, CT, received national and international attention for its unique, immigrant-friendly response.

New Haven passed a policy to solve an issue articulated by Jorge G. Castañeda, Mexico's former Secretary of Foreign Affairs. In an interview, Castañeda said, “Undocumented immigrants in the United States desperately need a form of identification” (Castañeda 2009). Elsewhere, Castañeda (2007) notes that these undocumented people “have nothing: no identification from either [their home or host] country, no photo ID, no name, no number, no address; they live in a legal limbo, without registry in a registered world.”

In light of this and other problems, New Haven created the Elm City Resident Card, the first municipal identification card in the United States for all city residents regardless of immigration status. Since then, similar programs have been created in San Francisco and Oakland in California and in Trenton, Princeton, and Mercer County in New Jersey. However, before other cities consider adopting a similar policy, we suggest a thorough analysis of the relevant issues. We aim to assist such analysis with our careful review of New Haven's initiative. Specifically, we test whether the Elm City Resident Card helps undocumented immigrants participate in day-to-day activities.

This article begins by providing a context for the analysis, informed by considerable research and in-depth interviews with key actors involved in the most recent immigration debates (e.g., former Mexican President Vicente Fox) and in the implementation of the Elm City Resident Card policy (e.g., Mayor of New Haven John DeStefano). This section offers a historical overview of Hispanic immigration to the United States and New Haven. It then traces the events that led to the creation of New Haven's municipal ID and records the issues that surrounded the enactment of this controversial policy.

Next, the policy analysis section contains our data-driven evaluation of New Haven's ID program and is guided by the following two questions:

1. Is it true that Hispanics living in the United States, as compared to their White/Anglo counterparts, are in greater need of identification, regardless of their citizenship status?

2. To what extent is New Haven's municipal ID perceived as a legitimate form of identification in the context of regular interactions?

To address these questions, we ran a field experiment following the example of existing audit studies on bias (Ayres 1991; Hebl et al. 2002; Pager 2003; King et al. 2006; Fried et al. 2010).

In response to the first query, we randomly assigned Hispanic and White actors to make check payments in a total of 217 retail stores and measured the number of times the members of each ethnic group were asked to present identification. Our decision to run the study in this context was simple. Social integration involves being able to partake fully in day-to-day activities, such as shopping. Thus, we aimed to compare the ease with which Hispanics and Whites can partake in basic, local commerce. Furthermore, because checks are akin to promissory notes, check payments place cashiers in a position of discretion: to trust or not to trust. This created an ideal situation for testing whether store employees make different assumptions about people depending on their ethnicity.

In response to the second query, we randomly assigned our Hispanic actors to present either the Elm City Resident Card or a corresponding nongovernment-backed ID when asked to support their check payments with identification. As a means for gauging the cards' perceived legitimacy, we tallied the number of purchases that went through based on which ID was shown.

In the end, we found that cashiers asked Hispanic actors more frequently for identification than White actors (85 percent versus 74 percent). This shows

that Hispanics, regardless of their citizenship status, are in greater need of documentation. It also provides empirical backing to the argument that Hispanics have long faced a number of barriers in the United States (Fraga and Segura 2006; Smith 2011). We also found that New Haven's municipal card was merely accepted at the same rate as one of its unofficial equivalents. Thus, as noted in our discussion and conclusion sections, the Elm City Resident Card may have served to signal the New Haven government's pro-immigrant stance at a time when numerous cities and states were adopting anti-immigrant policies, but the card's marginal utility as a form of documentation is negligible. A subsequent study we conducted and also discuss here gauging the perceived legitimacy of the Elm City Resident Card and other comparable identification cards sheds light on this last finding. Indeed, it appears that the design of the Elm City Resident Card is responsible for its rate of rejection.

CONTEXT

On the morning of Tuesday, 24 July 2007, the City of New Haven launched the Elm City Resident Card program. The program was largely intended to increase public safety by improving Hispanic community members' relationship with the police. Indeed, the hope was to encourage more crime reporting and cooperation with police investigations (DeStefano 2007b). The card was also intended to integrate Hispanics, regardless of immigration status, into New Haven's civic life. As New Haven Mayor John DeStefano Jr. explained, "The card's most important function . . . is to recognize all of the people who live in New Haven" (DeStefano 2007b). Thus, given the policy's link to the topic of

immigration, this section provides a brief historical review of the flow of Hispanics to the United States and New Haven. This section also traces the events that led to the card's creation while setting the stage for our program evaluation/audit study.

Hispanic Immigration to the United States

There has long been a great dissonance between immigration policy and the realities of immigration in the United States. There are an estimated 11.2 million undocumented immigrants in the country (Passel and Cohn 2011). The majority of these undocumented immigrants come from Mexico, where jobs in the formal market are scarce, where wages are low, and where the decision to go to "El Norte" is often a very last resort (Preston 2010). These immigrants, mostly male, and many of whom leave families behind, undertake a treacherous and expensive journey across the border, where they expect a market for cheap, unskilled labor in industries overwhelmingly dominated by immigrants like themselves.

The trend of Mexicans working in the United States began in the 1870s during the construction of American railroads. American contractors went to Mexico to recruit, or even enslave, Mexican laborers to work on the railroads and perform other difficult tasks. As the railroad system expanded and a close relationship was forged between corporate America and President Porfirio Díaz's government in Mexico, the number of Mexican workers in the United States grew.

In many cases, a Mexican *enganchador* working for American contractors would pay the Mexican military or police to "arrest" potential workers who would then be tied up with rope and placed on a

train to the United States (Castañeda 2007, 27-28). While this first wave of Mexican immigrants through 1929 was considered “legal,” the following influx of immigrants from 1942 to 1964 consisted primarily of seasonal migratory workers. Since 1965, due to restrictive immigration policies and the relative ease of border crossing, most immigrants have been undocumented (Massey et al. in Castañeda 2007, 36). Roberto Suro (1998, 6) writes, “No other democracy has ever experienced an uninterrupted wave of migration that has lasted as long and that has involved as many people as the recent movement of Spanish-speaking people to the United States.”

While undocumented immigrants make a significant contribution to the American economy (Greenspan 2009), they face hurdles in navigating daily life. Without Social Security numbers and the ability to obtain government-issued IDs, undocumented workers are unable to engage in the most basic of activities. For example, most cannot open checking accounts, obtain debit or credit cards, drive legally, or purchase insurance. Undocumented workers are prone to abuse and exploitation since they risk being reported to immigration authorities if they complain about working conditions or pay (Meyerson 2011). They are the constant victims of crime (AFP 2008). Social mobility—the essence of the American dream—is difficult given that undocumented immigrants are ineligible for federal loans, making it more difficult to afford higher education (Kantrowitz 2012).

Despite widespread recognition of the problems plaguing the American immigration system, there has been no significant federal reform since the Immigration Reform and Control Act of

1986 (Mitnik et al. 2008). This lack of legal amendments led Jeffrey Davidow, former U.S. ambassador to Mexico, to argue that, “The United States needs a comprehensive immigration reform. The current system is not working. Whether we’re talking about the safety of those immigrating, our ability to control the number of immigrants entering the country, or the legalization of existing immigrants—none of it is working. Change is necessary” (Davidow 2009).

On a similar note, when we interviewed Vicente Fox, the former Mexican president, he said:

I invited President [George W.] Bush here. During our first meeting as presidents, virtually the only issue we discussed was immigration, and the only commitment we made revolved around immigration. Unfortunately, he did not keep his part of the agreement; he stalled and then proceeded to give me a number of poor excuses for why he couldn’t move forward with reform. . . . He never kept his word. There was always an election coming up. He’d say: “Fox, I can’t do it right now. I have to wait. I have to wait a few months, and then we’ll take a look at immigration reform.” Time passed and then September 11 came and destroyed the whole issue of immigration in the United States. It became a low-ranking priority. The first priority was security . . . the priority was terrorism . . . the priority was [everything but immigration]. I tried to rescue the issue but failed. (Authors’ translation from personal communication, Fox 2010.)

In 2007, Congress proved unable to agree on an immigration overhaul, leaving states and municipalities to address the problem on their own (Varsanyi 2010).

Some states and localities have passed laws designed to target undocumented immigrants and those who aid and abet them (Carpenter 2007). Others have sought to integrate undocumented immigrants and encourage them to become civically engaged. New Haven chose the latter strategy, placing it in the minority. During the year before the Elm City Resident Card was created, all forty-eight state bills concerning immigration sought to restrict undocumented immigration, as did 100 out of 130 local and municipal bills, which were categorized as “anti-immigrant” (Carpenter 2007).

Immigration to New Haven

While Hispanic immigration to New Haven is a relatively recent phenomenon, immigration has ebbed and flowed throughout the city’s history. In the mid-1880s, Irish and German immigrants began arriving in New Haven, followed by a large wave of Italians and Eastern Europeans, many of whom were Jewish (Rae 2003, 9, 15). By 1870, more than a quarter of the city’s population was foreign-born and, by 1910, this figure had risen to 33 percent (Dahl 2005, 32). New Haven is greatly influenced by these immigrant groups. This can be seen, for example, in the culturally Italian neighborhoods like Wooster Square.

In the past, Hispanic immigrants generally settled in a few states. However, this pattern changed dramatically between the 1990s and today. During this time, undocumented immigrants began taking up residence in new locations around the country (Passel and Cohn 2011, i-ii). Connecticut, in many ways, epitomizes this trend. The immigrant population in the state increased by 69 percent from 1990 to 2006. In New Haven, the percent-

age of immigrants has increased by 40 percent in the six intervening years between 2000 and 2006. By 2006, immigrants made up 17 percent of the city (see Figure 1; Steinberg 2008, 5). New Haven is about 25 percent Hispanic (Allan and Bazelon 2009), and estimates suggest that 10,000 to 15,000 of the city’s 125,000 residents are undocumented (Matos 2008).

New Haven’s Response to Undocumented Immigration

In 2004, New Haven Mayor John DeStefano and Police Chief Francisco Ortiz organized an open meeting at the Fair Haven branch of the New Haven Public Library to discuss issues of concern to the undocumented community (from personal communication, DeStefano 2010). As a result of this and subsequent meetings, the community-based organizations Junta for Progressive Action (subsequently “Junta”) and Unidad Latina en Acción, together with the Yale Law School’s Community Clinic, published a report that outlined the main concerns confronting the undocumented community (2005). For instance, the report recorded undocumented residents’ complaints about high levels of theft against them. Since they could not open bank accounts, they were widely believed to be carrying cash on their person and stockpiling it at home. The problem of theft became so common that the undocumented immigrants came to be known as “walking ATMs” by people sympathetic to their vulnerable situation and by some journalists.

Despite being victims of crime and witnesses to criminal activity, the undocumented were wary of talking to the police given their lack of identification and fear of how police would respond to

Figure 1 — Population changes (New Haven, CT). Chart obtained from Rae 2003, 259.

Chart obtained from Rae 2003, 259.

their immigration status. In a similar vein, immigrants reported being underpaid and in some cases not being paid wages owed by employers aware of their helplessness. To address these problems, the report suggested, among other things, that the city create a municipal identification card.

The DeStefano administration had become keenly aware that the discrepancy between federal law and reality posed threats to undocumented workers and to the community at large. As DeStefano, himself the grandson of Italian immigrants, shared during our interview, “The only reason we’re having to deal with [immigration] locally is because the federal government has failed so miserably to deal with it.” By the end of 2006, the city had followed through on two of the report’s policy recommendations. Though a new office of immigrant affairs was not established, DeStefano appointed Kica Matos, who had been the executive director of Junta for five years and was a driving force behind the Junta and Unidad Latina en Acción report, to be the city’s community service administrator.

The Elm City Resident Card

The pathway toward creating New Haven’s municipal identification card was neither easy nor straightforward. Initially, activists proposed changing Connecticut state law to allow immigrants to obtain driver’s licenses. According to an interview with Matos, “One of the things that surfaced during those conversations was also the need for immigrants to have ID cards per se” (Matos 2011). During a meeting with immigration activists, DeStefano said that while New Haven’s state representatives would probably support the driver’s license proposal, it was improbable that it would attain majority support. One of the attendees raised the point that even if allowing undocumented immigrants access to driver’s licenses was not viable, the community would still deeply benefit from IDs. The mayor responded favorably, and at an October 2005 press conference about the “Hablamos Español” initiative, under which important city documents would be translated into Spanish, the mayor announced he was thinking about creating an ID card for

all residents, including immigrants (Bass 2005a).

The following day, a local paper published the headline, “City to Offer ID for Illegal Aliens” (Gladstone 2005). CNN dispatched reporters to New Haven, and the Associated Press reported on the story. This generated tremendous criticism around the state while DeStefano was in the midst of his campaign for the 2006 Connecticut gubernatorial election. During our interview with DeStefano, he revealed, “My calculus was off about . . . whatever [sic] political reaction I’d get . . . and I actually heard quite a lot about it around the state” (DeStefano 2010). Thus, perhaps it is unsurprising that New Haven City Hall’s communication team and the DeStefano campaign communication team released conflicting information. While the former said that the mayor was considering the ID card program, the gubernatorial team denied that the mayor proposed the plan and denied that it was a possibility (Matos 2011). The initiative was promptly put on hold.

However, on 20 December 2006, just over a month after his defeat in the 2006 election, DeStefano renewed his commitment to the Elm City Resident Card program. Less than two months earlier, Manuel Santiago, a 36-year-old Mexican employee of a local bakery, had been stabbed to death by a robber in the Fair Haven neighborhood after cashing his paycheck (Bass 2006). According to Matos

(2011), Santiago’s death was “The tipping point for New Haven. Up until then there had been increasing incidents of hostility and aggression directed towards immigrants . . . including robberies and assaults, and the thing about Manuel Santiago’s murder was that he was such a symbol of who some of the immigrants are in New Haven.” Santiago’s murder was emblematic of the broader abuses immigrants confronted in New Haven. This outrage turned into more aggressive action, not only among activists, but also among the community at large.

A large portion of New Haven’s citizenry rallied around the immigrant population, a group that, given the city’s small size, many regularly encountered. According to Matos (2011), “Many of us had neighbors who were immigrants . . . people went to church, worshipped with immigrants . . . their kids went to school with immigrants.” At a public hearing in support of the Elm City Resident Card, the aldermanic chambers were filled to capacity and more than forty people from a representative cross section of the New Haven community testified in support of the card (Bailey 2007). The community showed various signs of support for the creation of a municipal identification card that would help put an end to immigrants being thought of as walking ATMs and making them vulnerable targets.

On June 4th, 2007, New Haven aldermen overwhelmingly approved the Elm City

❖ One of the attendees raised the point that even if allowing undocumented immigrants access to driver’s licenses was not viable, the community would still deeply benefit from IDs.

Resident Card program in a 25-to-1 vote (Bailey 2007). Once again, the aldermanic chambers were overflowing with residents from every conceivable background. Rather than strictly being a card for the undocumented, the card was purposely designed to “have broad-based appeal and be of utility to all of the city’s residents” (DeStefano 2010). Therefore, in addition to serving as an identification card with two holograms, the card serves as a debit card for use in local stores and on parking meters and also serves as a library card. In addition, it allows access to city facilities (Asmougha n.d.). The cards cost \$11 for adults and \$5 for children under 17. City officials underwent extensive preparations to ensure that the card would be tamper-proof and even met with the US attorney assigned to Connecticut (DeStefano 2010). Yale Law School Community Lawyering Clinic, Junta staff, and the Community Service Administration found that the plan was legal under federal and state laws (Bass 2005b).

The mayor actively declared that the Elm City Resident Card was “not an undocumented card,” saying, “it’s for city services for all kinds of folks” (DeStefano 2010). However, the card was clearly intended to serve the undocumented community and promote civic engagement and public safety amongst this demographic, which until then had been left in limbo as a result of federal policy or, rather, the lack thereof. At the aldermanic finance committee meeting on 17 May 2007, the mayor spoke passionately:

Living among us today—silently, almost invisibly—are some 12 million men, women, and children. They do not dream different things for themselves and their families. They do not hope for futures less full of possibility for their children. They do not worship

a different god. The sweat of their work is no different from yours or mine. And they would not be here but for the complicit permission of the national government. Like the rest of us, they are not here by accident. So tonight we have a chance to end the silent complicity in our nation by taking action, together, here in New Haven. . . . We can do that by way of a fundamental acknowledgement of an individual’s worth and dignity, by giving a name to those among us. Not to name them by a stereotype or by an ignorance or by a prejudice. Rather to call our neighbor by their own name. Now many of those names are Hispanic. But this is not a Hispanic issue. This is not an immigrant issue. This is an issue of justice and human rights. And as was the case with the *Amistad*, if we in New Haven do not stand up, who will? This is a New Haven issue. (DeStefano 2007a).

Just two days after the vote, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement began raiding the Fair Haven neighborhood and ultimately detained thirty-two undocumented immigrants (Zapana 2008). While federal authorities denied any connection between the raids and the vote, Matos says, “[The] Yale Law School did some FOIA [Freedom of Information Act] requests, and I looked at materials that the DHS [Department of Homeland Security] turned over, and there was regular communication about the ID card between the US Attorney’s office, the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, and the Justice Department.” She adds that it seemed as if the federal government was actively punishing the city for its policy (Matos 2011).

In general, members of the New Haven community seemed to welcome the card’s

arrival. Some residents posted signs outside their homes in support of the policy. Moreover, a small, local survey run by Yale's Institution for Social and Policy Studies in collaboration with the Stanford Center for Deliberative Democracy in October 2007 found that most residents held a somewhat favorable position toward New Haven's municipal ID initiative (Bui et al. n.d.). Nevertheless, this sense of approval surrounding the Elm City Resident Card did not prevent the emergence of a vocal opposition.

The Yankee Patriot Association, a New England regional anti-illegal immigration organization, prepared a protest in front of city hall on 1 July 2007 in which members waved flags and wore hard hats. According to member Bill Farrel, "The city is selling out legal Americans. . . . The illegals are taking jobs from guys that wear these kinds of hats" (Carpenter 2007). North Carolina-based Americans for Legal Immigration PAC attacked the program by distributing pamphlets in forty states, in both Spanish and English, telling undocumented immigrants to go to New Haven and giving them directions on how to get there. In an interview with Bill O'Reilly (2007), who devoted a segment of his TV show to the Elm City Resident Card, the group's president, William Gheen, said, "Well, we figure if they get another 5,000 or 10,000 illegal aliens in New Haven, they'll be closing hospitals, begging for school bonds, and begging for federal aid to fight the gangs in their street like much of the disaster areas being created across America." Sentiments like these spurred other groups such as the Southern Connecticut Citizens for Immigration Reform and the Community Watchdog Project to join the opposition to the card. Some of the opposition even turned virulent. A few of

the policy's antagonists made angry phone calls and sent negatively charged e-mails to the city. Matos received a death threat, and DeStefano endured harassment at press conferences (Matos 2011).

In spite of the opposition, on Tuesday, 24 July 2007, the Elm City Resident Card program was launched with great fanfare. Lines wrapped around the block for several days after the program was launched, with people queuing up at city hall as early as 4 a.m. (Steinberg 2008, 6). Among those in line were Juana Mendieta and Fidel Cuapio who waited for 10 hours in order to apply. They had been held up at gunpoint and robbed of their earnings twice and said they intended to use the card to open a bank account (Shufro 2007).

By 9 August 2007, more than 2,500 people had signed up and the city exceeded its goal of issuing 5,000 cards in its first year in just five months (Steinberg 2008, 7). As of September 2009, more than 8,000 cards had been issued at city hall, in mobile units, and in recruitment drives (Office of Senator José M. Serrano 2009). DeStefano (2010) speculated that "an overwhelming number" of the cardholders are undocumented immigrants from Latin America.

Based on the aforementioned anecdotal evidence, such as the intense demand for cards, it appears that the municipal ID responded to a concrete need. However, we wonder whether systematic evidence can be gathered on this matter. Indeed, how often are Hispanics, documented or undocumented, required to present identification? Are Hispanics carded more frequently than Whites? Lastly, when Hispanics are asked for identification, to what extent is the Elm City Resident Card accepted? Essentially, we are asking

Figure 2 — Diagram of the field experiment's standard procedure.

whether or not New Haven's ID is actually an effective form of identification.

POLICY ANALYSIS

With the knowledge that undocumented immigrants use the Elm City Resident Card to support their check payments at local stores (Zapana 2008), we designed an experiment that would help us gauge the need for identification amongst Hispanics as well as the acceptance of the Elm City Resident Card (for a detailed description of the design and results of this experiment see also Ditlmann and Lagunes 2011). We ran our field study in the summer of 2008 in the greater New Haven area. This city was the ideal location for the study in part because, as Robert Dahl (2005, iii) explains, "New Haven is in many respects typical of other cities in the United States."

After interviewing more than forty applicants, we recruited three Hispanic and three White male actors who looked stereotypical for their ethnicities, had stereotypically sounding names for their ethnicities, and were matched on four key characteristics (i.e., age, weight, attractiveness, and extroversion). We verified the success of our matching efforts by asking 107 college students to rate our study's six actors. The survey results are discussed at length in Appendix I.

We then conducted a nine-day extensive training that involved memorizing and practicing the script through role-play in the lab. During this period, we also

standardized the actors' appearance and behavior. At the end of the training, we conducted separate trials with each actor in actual stores. We kept actors unaware of our discrimination hypothesis by making sure members of the Hispanic and White groups never met.

Throughout a period of four weeks, we randomly assigned actors to seven to ten stores per trial and provided them with a list of stores to visit on any given day. Actors individually entered a store and asked to purchase a \$10 gift certificate. Each store was visited only once. When prompted for payment, the actors asked, "Do you accept checks?" The actors took note if the cashier asked for identification in response (see Figure 2).

Before the Hispanic actors entered a store they drew one of two ID cards, an official or government-supported ID (i.e., the Elm City Resident Card) or the unofficial ID (i.e., the Ameracard), from a shuffling bag so as to randomly assign themselves to one of the conditions. They did so while remaining unaware of the type of ID they were going to present. The Elm City Resident Card is clearly labeled and presents the holder's personal information. The Ameracard is also labeled with the card name and "Connecticut" in bold on the front. An inscription on the back states: "Not an official identification card" (see Figure 3). If the ID card was declined, actors left the store. If it was accepted, they completed the purchase transaction. After leaving the store, they immediately

Figure 3 — The Elm City Resident Card (pictured left) and the Ameracard (right).

filled out a report sheet that included information on the store and our outcome variables.

Our two main outcome measures were whether identification was requested and whether the card was accepted to complete a sale. Our actors visited a total of 217 stores in downtown New Haven and in three nearby malls: Milford Mall, Meriden Mall, and Trumbull Mall. Hispanic actors visited 111 stores, and White actors visited 106. A test confirmed that our random assignment procedure reduced the risk of bias by successfully balancing variables, such as store location, store type, and cashier ethnicity, across the two experimental groups (see Table 1). Also as a result of random assignment, Hispanic actors presented the official ID (Elm City Resident Card) in forty-one stores and the unofficial ID (Ameracard) in fifty-three stores (seventeen stores did not request identification).

The experiment found that 85 percent of store cashiers asked the study's Hispanic actors to produce identification while only 74 percent of store cashiers asked

this of the White actors (see Figure 4). This 11.09 percentage point difference is statistically significant ($\chi^2[1, N=217]=4.06, p<.04$) and shows that, whether they are undocumented or not, Hispanics are in greater need of identification. One possible interpretation of this finding is that cashiers trusted White customers more than Hispanic customers, especially considering that the form of payment was a kind of promissory note.

In terms of the Elm City Resident Card's acceptance rate, the news is not very encouraging for the program's supporters. Store cashiers approved the Elm City Resident Card 68 percent of the time when presented by a Hispanic actor, but approved the Ameracard 76 percent of the time (see Figure 5). This difference of 8.82 percentage points is not statistically significant ($\chi^2[1, N=94]=.59, p>.4$), which shows that the unofficial ID was as useful to the Hispanic actors as the municipal identification card. This result is troubling if we consider that the Elm City Resident Card is an official, government-issued identification card that is only accessible to people who can provide

Table 1 — Randomization Check

Stores	N	Latino		White/Ango		% Point Diff.	P-Value*
		Count	%	Count	%		
Visited (full sample)	217	111	51.15	106	48.85		
... in Meriden Mall	62	33	53.23	29	46.77	6.45	0.48
... in Milford Mall	55	29	52.73	26	47.27	5.45	0.57
... in Trumbull Mall	32	17	53.13	15	46.88	6.25	0.62
... in New Haven	68	32	47.06	36	52.94	5.88	0.5
... is part of a corporate chain	163	86	52.76	77	47.24	5.52	0.32
... sells high-end jewelry	18	7	38.89	11	61.11	22.22	0.19
... had a White cashier	142	69	48.59	73	51.41	2.82	0.64
... had a female cashier	146	78	53.42	68	46.58	6.85	0.24

*The p-value was calculated by running a two-tailed independent means comparison test.

Figure 4 — Probability of being carded by ethnicity.

two forms of photo identification as well as two documents to prove New Haven residency. The Ameracard, however, can be purchased by anyone without verification of identity.

DISCUSSION

Our field experiment shows that Hispanics are treated differently than Whites in the context of day-to-day, commercial interactions. On average, the study's Hispanic actors were required to support their check payments with a form of identification more often than their White counterparts. This finding, which

Figure 5 — Probability of acceptance by card.

points to differential treatment, is consistent with other studies that look at the disadvantages associated with appearing Hispanic (Cross et al. 1990; Espino and Franz 2002).

Our study also shows that New Haven's municipal ID is not always accepted in the context of commercial interactions. Moreover, it is perceived as being no more legitimate than a nongovernment-issued ID. This may help explain why only three of the seven local banks we contacted accepted the Elm City Resident Card as a valid form of ID for opening a checking account. Thus, all things considered, New Haven's ID initiative may be seen as a relatively weak tool for documenting the undocumented.

After having been told of our study's results, Castañeda observed, "What these findings are saying is that the Elm City Resident Card is not worthwhile" (Castañeda 2009). This conclusion, however, may be extreme. For one, the Elm City Resident Card sent a clear signal that the city of New Haven stood in favor of the undocumented in its midst. It is

also true that the card offers concrete benefits (e.g., the ID also serves as a library card), while costing a lot less than its nongovernmental alternatives. Finally, as we discuss below, there seems to exist a solution for increasing the card's perceived legitimacy.

Our research suggests that the Elm City Resident Card does not constitute a policy failure; rather, the design of the Elm City Resident Card is to blame for its comparatively weaker rate of acceptance vis-à-vis the nongovernment-issued ID.

We conducted a follow-up online survey with 150 participants, one-third of whom had experience working as cashiers in retail stores, to find out how official the card appears based on how it looks and how it compares to other cards.

Specifically, we chose to compare it to three other IDs. We compared the Elm City Resident Card to the San Francisco municipal ID because, as of this writing, it was the only other municipal identification card in the nation (see Appendix II for a brief review of other municipalities' efforts to launch an ID program). We also

compared it to the Ameracard and to the Vermont state ID (see Table 2). Including the latter helps us gauge reactions to an uncommon state-issued ID card.

On a scale from one (“not official at all”) to seven (“very official”), survey participants rated the Elm City Resident Card with a 4.21 (standard error, $SE=.15$). Using Bonferroni correction to account for multiple comparisons, we found in a series of paired sample t-tests that this rating was significantly lower than the rating of the Ameracard ($M=5.01$, $SE=.16$), $t(148)=-3.77$, $p<.016$ (1 missing data point); the Vermont card ($M=6.35$, $SE=.09$), $t(149)=-13.59$, $p<.016$; and the San Francisco card ($M=4.62$, $SE=.14$), $t(148)=-3.03$, $p<.016$ (1 missing data point). In layman’s terms, compared to the three other cards, the Elm City Resident Card received the lowest score, which is to say it was perceived as least legitimate.

In light of various factors, we understand why respondents were not fully convinced by New Haven’s municipal card. For example, it is called the “Elm City Resident Card” instead of the more official sounding “New Haven Identification Card.” Interestingly, the name choice resulted from the fact that city officials thought that calling the card the “New Haven Resident Card” was “a little dull” (Matos 2011).

In contrast, the unofficial Ameracard, which participants rated with a 5.01 ($SE=0.16$) on the scale, resembles a driver’s license or official state identification card in that it is cleanly designed, shares the state’s official colors, and displays “Connecticut” in large letters at the top. A cashier looking at the front of the Ameracard would likely assume it is legitimate and might not even turn the

card over to read that the card itself is unofficial.

In our study we also asked participants to evaluate the San Francisco municipal ID card. This card was rated as a 4.62 ($SE=.14$), which is a 9.74 percentage point increase over the Elm City Resident Card’s score. We attribute this difference to the San Francisco card’s simple, crisp, and minimalist design. It clearly says the city’s name in large letters at the top and incorporates a complex hologram resembling a U.S. passport. In addition, the only text on the card is the card’s title, the cardholder’s identification number, name and address, and the date of issuance and expiration. Thus, we conclude that the survey results point to the fact that the Elm City Resident Card is poorly designed and that this design has a negative bearing on its utility to the city’s community, especially the undocumented.

Given that Vermont’s non-driver’s state identification card was rated with an impressive 6.35 ($SE=.09$), it would appear as if identification cards issued by or, in the case of the Ameracard, appearing to be issued by states are perceived to be more official than cards issued by municipalities. However, as DeStefano advised New Haven’s immigration activists, it would be much more difficult to establish a state identification card available to undocumented immigrants.

CONCLUSION

There are more than 11 million people in the United States, most of whom are Hispanic, living in a legal limbo in the absence of federal immigration reform. Therefore, cities across the country have been left to figure out different ways to cope with the numerous undocumented immigrants living in their midst. Some

Table 2 — Ratings for the Different Cards from the Online Survey

	No. of Respondents	Min. Score	Max. Score	Mean	Standard Error
How official does the Elm City Resident Card look?	150	1	7	4.21	.15
How official does the Ameracard look?	149	1	7	5.01	.16
How official does the San Francisco Municipal ID look?	149	1	7	4.62	.14
How official does Vermont's State ID look?	150	1	7	6.35	.09

cities (e.g., Hazleton, PA) have enacted policies that complicate the lives of people who have entered the country illegally (CNN 2008). Other entities have embraced immigration and have sought ways to integrate the undocumented into their communities. The City of New Haven stands out among these for issuing municipal resident cards to all residents regardless of their immigration status. In our study we sought to test whether a policy designed to help immigrants actually has achieved its objective.

In a field experiment focused on shopping—a common yet crucial aspect of life—we obtained systematic evidence that Hispanics, documented or not, are subject to differential treatment and thus in particular need of identification. In light of this finding, New Haven's ID clearly satisfies an important demand. To our surprise, however, we also discovered that the Elm City Resident Card was often viewed as an illegitimate form of identification and had an acceptance rate on par with a nongovernment-issued ID known as the Ameracard. With regard to this finding, a subsequent survey revealed two things. First, state-issued ID cards appear to carry greater weight than city-issued ID cards. However, given restrictions set on state governments by the REAL ID Act of 2005, pro-immigrant groups that wish

to help document the undocumented in their midst should continue focusing their lobbying efforts on local-level governments so that they start issuing municipal IDs. Second, the card's design seems to be responsible for its perceived lack of legitimacy. Thus, moving forward, the City of New Haven and other immigrant-friendly governments should place paramount consideration on their identification card's appearance. San Francisco's simple design is an excellent example, given its perceived legitimacy in our follow-up survey study.

Whether New Haven will heed our recommendations remains to be seen. In speaking with the city's mayor and the director of a Hispanic, community-based, nonprofit organization in New Haven, it was evident that the Elm City Resident Card program is no longer a priority. Demand for the card has decreased substantially as immigration to New Haven has subsided given the inauspicious economic conditions resulting from the 2008 recession.

As a final note, it is important to remember that our experiment tested how the Elm City Resident Card fared in one aspect of daily life. Thus, from the standpoint of Mayor DeStefano's administration, the Elm City Resident Card has sent a positive message of inclusion to the

city's undocumented community. This sense of inclusion has yielded tangible benefits according to the card's proponents, such as an increase in police reports from this demographic (DeStefano 2007b).

APPENDIX I

It is impossible to recruit actors for an audit study who are identical in everything except for the one factor or variable of interest. Nonetheless, we endeavored to find six ideal participants for our experiment, which is why we interviewed more than forty applicants.

Once we had chosen the best candidates, we practiced uncommon diligence and hired more than one-hundred external raters to help gauge whether our White and Hispanic actors differed on perceivable factors that could compete with ethnicity in explaining our experiment's results. Specifically, we asked 107 undergraduate students at a private university in the Northeast of the United States to observe video recordings of our six actors partaking in a one-minute, mock, customer-cashier interaction. We then asked the students to rate each actor on the four characteristics that, according to Devah Pager (2007), deserve most attention: nonverbal communication style, physical attractiveness, ease of personal interaction, and articulateness. Answers were measured using a seven-point Likert-type scale anchored at one (disagree strongly) and seven (agree strongly).

Regarding our actors' nonverbal behavior, an important concern was that our White actors could have been perceived as being more polite. If this were true, their perceived politeness could explain why they were treated better (i.e., carded less frequently). However, as noted in

Appendix Table 1, it is actually the case that our Hispanic actors were perceived as behaving more courteously. Thus, given that we see no reason why being polite could systematically evoke a negative reaction from others, we trust that this apparent difference between our Hispanic and White actors does not bring to question our experiment's validity.

We also used the ratings to see whether the two groups could have been perceived as presenting different levels of articulateness, for this too could have influenced the outcomes of store-cashier interactions. However, as noted in Appendix Table 1, we find an apparent equality between the two groups. Stated differently, articulateness does not seem to influence the differential treatment found in the experiment.

Another concern was that the study's White actors could have been perceived as more physically attractive or as carrying themselves with greater confidence. An inequality on either of these two factors could explain the preferential treatment that the White actors experienced. As shown in Appendix Table 1, the data gathered through the ratings may sustain these two possibilities. However, with regard to physical attractiveness, the difference found is arguably the result of dominant perceptions of beauty embedded in the country's culture, which favor lighter skin tones (Hall 1995; Wolf 1991; Swami et al. 2008). Thus, given the existing standards of what is thought of as attractive, we maintain that hiring different Hispanic or White actors would have still resulted in a perceived difference across the two groups.

To conclude, the only variable that merits a measure of concern is that of perceived anxiety. The fact that our Hispanic actors

Appendix Table 1 — Means and Standard Deviations of Actors on Key Factors

	Latino	White/Anglo
Is Polite	5.32	4.71
	(1.04)	(1.42)
Is Articulate	4.54	4.71
	(1.18)	(1.39)
Is Attractive	2.98	3.72
	(1.09)	(1.21)
Is Anxious	3.39	3.10
	(1.7)	(1.54)

were perceived as carrying themselves with less confidence than their White counterparts could play a role in explaining why they were carded more frequently. After all, the Hispanic actors' modest level of perceived anxiety could have triggered somewhat higher rates of cashier distrust. Nonetheless, we want to point out that our main results on differential treatment are robust across all actors. As Appendix Figure 1 shows, all three Hispanic actors were carded more frequently than any of the three White actors. Thus, this experiment brings to bear evidence on differential treatment toward Hispanics as an ethnic group.

APPENDIX II

It has been interesting to see how other cities have followed New Haven's lead in providing municipal identification cards to all of their residents. Oakland, CA, found that it would cost at least \$662,000 initially and \$48,000 annually to manufacture and administer its municipal identification program in-house. In order to recoup its costs, Oakland would have had to charge \$40 to \$60 per card, which

would have limited the card's adoption. Thus, Oakland entertained bids from the private sector and ultimately gave the contract to S.F. Mexico Services. The company had the know-how to adhere to all security standards and offered to establish in-take centers inside community organizations and administer the program independently. Best of all for the city, the company is not charging the city and is setting the price per card at an affordable \$15 for adults and \$10 for seniors and students (City of Oakland 2010). It is able to offset the costs of the program by incorporating an optional debit card feature that generates revenue (SFGate 2011).

The municipal identification programs in New Jersey were not created by any government agency. Rather, the Latin American Legal Defense & Education Fund created the cards, which bear endorsements from local law enforcement officials at the bottom. The cards are, however, similar in price point to the others, costing \$10 for adults and \$5 for minors (LALDEF n.d.; Township of Princeton n.d.).

Appendix Figure 1 — Graphed results of percentage of times cashiers asked for ID by actor.

When asked for her thoughts on the nongovernment-issued cards, Kica Matos (2011) said, “To me this is one of the more interesting things about how the program has developed, and in each instance it seems to have a local imprint which I think is great.”

In each area, it might not be possible or even realistic for governments to issue cards, particularly if the localities are smaller cities or suburbs. Thus, several similar-looking ID cards issued by a nonprofit, but endorsed by government officials, would probably be more recognizable and thus perceived as more legitimate than a card issued by a small town.

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