If there was ever a social realm where deliberation seems to matter, politics is one of them. From the electoral selection of lawmakers, to the evaluation of public policies, politics demands from its citizens at least a modicum of attention and reflection to decide between alternatives.

But political deliberation is costly (e.g., Downs 1957). It requires mental energy (e.g., Gailliot et al. 2007). And, the propensity to exert such effort is not uniformly distributed across the polity (cf. Althaus 1998; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Zaller 1992). Certain citizens are simply more motivated than others to engage in the mental effort that deliberation demands (e.g., Sniderman et al. 1991). The end result is that when the public decides, some of this decision is underwritten by people who have meticulously considered their opinions, while some of it is driven by people who have thought less about their views. Seen from this perspective, deliberation is a matter of degree, and this variation among fellow citizens affects the quality of the public’s decision making.

Might these differences in people’s inclination to deliberate also shape citizens’ reliance on implicit attitudes for political judgment?

It is certainly plausible. As I discussed earlier in Chapters 2 and 3, several social psychologists have argued that the connection between implicit attitude and individual judgment is not an all or nothing proposition (e.g., Gawronski and Bodenhausen 2011; Olson and Fazio 2009; Strack and Deutsch 2004; see also Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Chapter 7). Instead, these scholars maintain, the influence of implicit attitude depends on how motivated people are to avoid impulsive judgments, and whether they have enough opportunity to act on this motivation. The study of implicit racial attitudes captures the spirit of this view (e.g., Fazio and Dunton 1997; Fazio et al. 1995; see also Devine 1989). Scholars have shown that although these implicit attitudes can be spontaneously triggered, not all individuals act on this initial impulse. Some people are more sensitive to the prospect of appearing racially biased. Hence, when
time or attention is in abundant supply, these individuals can follow through on their drive to remain unbiased by defusing the influence of their implicit attitude.

Whether intended or not, the normative appeal of this approach is easy to appreciate. Sure, implicit attitudes might be spontaneously activated. And yes, these attitudes might be beyond most people’s awareness, even if for a brief moment. Yet the same question that I raised about these insights in earlier chapters still remains: how, exactly, do they translate to political judgments?

In this chapter, I examine the extent to which motivation and opportunity shape the relationship between implicit attitudes, explicit attitudes, and political decision making by examining the roles played by individual differences in education and the presence of unambiguous political cues. My focus on education is intentional. Individuals with more education are among the most politically involved within the mass public (e.g., Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). They are known to engage in more effortful, deliberative-type thinking (e.g., Converse 1964; Zaller 1992), and they are also acutely sensitive to the expression of racial intolerance (e.g., Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Sniderman et al. 1991). Yet they are also inclined to vigorously defend their attitudes by discounting contradictory political information and more readily accepting material that affirms their predispositions (e.g., Taber and Lodge 2006). Moreover, they are especially adept at connecting their attitudes to relevant political evaluations (e.g., Federico 2004).

Weaving these insights together, I propose and test a pair of contrasting hypotheses about how people’s propensity to deliberate affects who is more influenced by implicit and explicit attitudes in the realm of politics, and when. The first of these predictions anticipates that highly educated citizens can override their implicit and explicit attitudes. This is especially likely if the political information these individuals encounter allows them to act on their inclination to engage in more effortful and reflective thinking; for example, through informational cues that make plain the irrelevance of attitudes toward a specific political object. In the face of such unambiguous cues, highly educated citizens should be able to shake off the influence of their implicit and explicit attitude toward said object.

In contrast, my second prediction – what I dubbed the dueling effects hypothesis in Chapter 3 – suggests the effects of implicit attitude become stronger among the highly educated, even as the influence of explicit attitude attenuates among these individuals. By this account, citizens with more years of schooling are predisposed toward more reflective thought. But people’s deliberative efforts often enable them to better defend their attitudes in the face of contradictory information (e.g., Taber and Lodge 2006; see also Lodge and Taber 2000), while strengthening their ability to connect these attitudes to actual policy judgments (e.g., Federico 2004; Sniderman et al. 1991). These tensions, I contend, manifest themselves in dueling effects for implicit and explicit attitudes. One distinguishing quality of implicit attitudes, I have argued, is that
relative to explicit attitudes, people are generally unaware that they possess the implicit variety (cf. Gawronski et al. 2006; Wilson et al. 2000). This implies that citizens cannot edit, manipulate, or suppress attitudes they fail to recognize.

But is this actually right? Are people generally unable to minimize or eliminate their biases if they closely scrutinize their actions? Patricia Devine (1989), for one, long ago taught us that even people who are low in self-reported prejudice are as knowledgeable about racial stereotypes as their peers who are highly prejudiced. Yet unlike highly prejudiced individuals, those who are low in prejudice invest more personal effort in inhibiting these stereotypes and their possible influence when consciously alerted about it. This suggests that even if implicit attitudes are spontaneously evoked, people are aware of them, just like they are aware of the explicit variety. Hence, those with more education should be better able to inhibit their explicit and implicit attitudes – a prediction that is more plausible when we consider that these attitudes are often correlated (see Chapter 5).

That explanation makes sense, but it is not mine. I propose instead that explicit attitudes are more responsive than implicit attitudes to incongruent political information. True, both attitudes are often modestly correlated, which augurs for the view that if people can edit one they should be able to edit the other. Yet Chapter 2 taught us that explicit–implicit attitudes are governed by different mental systems, with a more deliberative/conscious mode following a spontaneous/subconscious one. This means explicit attitudes arise downstream from implicit attitudes, placing the former (but not the latter) within introspection (cf. Erisen et al. 2014; Lodge and Taber 2013). It also means a modest correlation arises between explicit and implicit attitudes, not because they are mentally juxtaposed, but because forces like social desirability can intervene between the mental systems regulating each attitude (Gawronski et al. 2014b). Given that people with more education are not only more sensitive to norms about race, but also more skilled at (dis-)connecting their attitudes to political judgments, they should be better able to counteract the effects of racial attitudes entering their ken of awareness. This suggests that broaching the immigration issue by cueing a non-Latino group should enable the more educated to censor their explicit attitude. But if implicit attitudes are beyond introspection and relatively immune to social desirability concerns, then the more educated will bolster the connection between this attitude and their opposition to immigration (just like they would if their attitude is within awareness but relatively immune to social desirability).

To test these theoretical propositions, I revisit Chapter 6’s Legal Immigration Experiment. The substantive focus of this experiment on legal, rather than illegal, immigration optimizes the opportunity individuals have to override their implicit attitude by asking for their evaluations of immigration policy in a domain where Latinos are a weak focus of public discourse (Chapter 4). This opportunity is further enhanced by the experimental manipulation involved, namely, a direct focus on a clear non-Latino group: legal Chinese
immigrants. In these ways, the Legal Immigration Experiment positions me to assess whether and to what degree highly educated individuals are able to counteract their implicit attitudes toward Latinos when the focus of attention is non-Latinos.

My analysis reveals evidence that is consistent with the *dueling effects* hypothesis. Specifically, when people’s attention is directed toward legal Chinese immigrants, individuals with more education are able to minimize the link between their explicit (i.e., self-reported) attitude toward Latinos and their opposition to legal immigration. Yet the same is not true of their implicit attitude toward this group. Even when citizens’ attention is drawn to Chinese immigrants, implicit attitudes toward Latinos continue to affect the immigration policy preferences of the most educated segments of the US polity. This pattern serves to underscore the fact that many people are often unaware that they possess an implicit attitude. For if highly educated individuals had knowledge of this evaluation, they would have suppressed it the way they censored their self-reported evaluation of this group.

Taken as a whole, the evidence in this chapter suggests the grip of implicit attitudes is stronger among those citizens who are most inclined toward the political arena. Implicit attitudes, these findings suggest, do not fall under the strict purview of individuals some might consider boorish or uncouth. Rather than being confined to the margins of the polity, the current of implicit attitudes runs most strongly through its core, among the most politically engaged citizenry. For this reason, implicit attitude is more than a psychological curiosity. It is a phenomenon with palpable political consequences.

**Education and Political Deliberation: One Coin, Two Sides**

For political scientists, education holds a special place in the study of mass politics. Across the years, scholarship has taught us that greater years of schooling increases the likelihood that one will vote, heightens one’s awareness about political figures and events, and improves one’s chances of becoming involved in political causes and campaigns, among other things (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Sniderman et al. 1991; Verba et al. 1995; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). In these ways, educated individuals are thought to embody the temperament of the idealized democratic citizen: thoughtful, attentive, and incredibly engaged.

And not only does education enhance those qualities many of us admire about the idealized democratic citizen. It also appears to diminish some of those qualities many consider normatively undesirable, if not socially repugnant. Most relevant for our purposes is intolerance toward racial and ethnic minorities. In this regard, research has found that more years of education – especially a college education – encourages people to develop a more tolerant outlook toward racial and ethnic groups (e.g., Bobo and Licari 1989; Lipset 1960; McClosky and Zaller 1984; Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Sniderman et al.
By directly and intensely exposing people to social norms that frown on negative racial attitudes, higher education leads people to acquire an acute sensitivity to expressing these types of attitudes. The highly educated person therefore learns that society generally disapproves of negative racial attitudes, endorses this position as his own, and does everything in his power to adhere to this norm (e.g., Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Sniderman et al. 1991). In these ways, education is believed to blunt the force of negative racial attitudes in society.

At the same time, however, greater levels of education impart another, often overlooked, quality to individuals: an improved ability to make a connection between their attitudes and their support for public policies (e.g., Federico 2004; Sniderman et al. 1991). The educated individual, always more attentive to the happenings of the political world, is more skilled at putting “two and two” together when forming their political opinions (e.g., Converse 1964; Zaller 1992). Immersed in the discourse about political issues, the highly educated individual is just better at connecting their attitudes to the policies he is considering – and often in the ways suggested by political debate (e.g., Gilens 1999). In fact, research on motivated skepticism suggests that individuals with greater cognitive sophistication are more inclined to process political information in a way that affirms their preexisting attitudes (Taber and Lodge 2006). Specifically, they are more likely to disregard contradictory political information, while more readily accepting facts that support their prior views.

In the realm of racial attitudes, Federico (2004) has established that this improved ability among the highly educated to link one’s attitudes to relevant policy judgments can have paradoxical effects. To this end, he demonstrates that although education leads individuals to report lower levels of racial animus, these same individuals are more effective at applying such attitudes toward specific policy judgments (see also Federico and Sidanius 2002). This occurs, not only because highly educated people are more cognitively adept at connecting their attitudes to their evaluations of public policies, but also because political discourse links specific policies to certain racial groups (e.g., Gilens 1999; Valentino et al. 2013). Indeed, as Federico’s (2004) experimental analysis illustrates, highly educated people are more likely to join their attitude toward African Americans to judgments of welfare proposals only when people are primed to think of black Americans as a beneficiary of such policies.

Putting Education in Context

It is obvious from the previous discussion that education can propel citizens to engage in more effortful and reflective political thought. But it is also clear that the consequences of those deliberations also depend, in part, on the characteristics of one’s decision-making environment. Indeed, as Federico’s (2004) work suggests, it might hinge on the quality of political information one has access to.
In this regard, social psychology has plenty to say about how differences in individuals and the evaluative contexts they face affect the relationship between deliberation and judgment (e.g., Devine 1989; Fazio and Dunton 1997; Fazio and Towles-Schwen 1999; Fazio et al. 1995; Olson and Fazio 2009; see also Gawronski and Bodenhausen 2011; Strack and Deutsch 2004). This perspective has been most forcefully and parsimoniously put forth by Russell Fazio and his collaborators. In their view, human behavior is underpinned by automatic (impulsive) and controlled (deliberative) mental processes, what I have labeled implicit and explicit reasoning, respectively. According to Fazio and his associates, the balance between automatic and controlled processes in shaping individual behavior is tipped in favor of the latter when two conditions are met: (1) people are motivated to engage in more effortful and controlled thought; and (2) people have the opportunity to follow through on this motivation. Across several studies, focused primarily on implicit racial attitudes, Fazio and his colleagues have shown that people placed in these circumstances display behaviors characterized by greater mental effort and reflection – in a word, by deliberation.

Despite the decidedly non-political focus of the studies yielding these insights, the lessons themselves are laden with implications for how we might think about the association between implicit attitudes and citizens’ political decision making. Perhaps the most obvious one of these is that the influence of implicit attitude in the political arena depends not only on some citizens’ penchant for deliberation (i.e., motivation), but also, on the clarity of information that forms the basis of people’s deliberations (i.e., opportunity). Indeed, this potential interplay between motivation and opportunity suggests that implicit attitudes seep into political evaluations, not because – as the previous chapter suggested – they operate without people’s awareness, but because certain people have not been made enough aware about the contradiction between their implicit attitudes and the political decision at hand.

**Reprise: The Subconscious Nature of Implicit Attitudes**

The preceding discussion rekindles the issue of awareness as it pertains to implicit attitudes. In the last chapter, we learned that citizens are unaware of their implicit attitudes insofar as they have no knowledge about how these leave an imprint on their political judgments. Specifically, we saw that citizens’ implicit attitudes affected their judgments of immigration policy, even when the political cues they received were incongruent with the target of their implicit attitudes (i.e., Latinos). Yet nothing in this pattern of evidence suggests that people are unaware that they possess this implicit attitude (Gawronski et al. 2006). Indeed, people can know that they have this attitude, and yet still remain in the dark about how it affects the mental processes that give rise to their political judgments. In the case at hand, people can be aware that they negatively
esteem Latinos without having knowledge about how this evaluation affects their views of immigration policy.

Not surprisingly, evidence demonstrating that people have no knowledge of their implicit attitude has proven difficult for researchers to produce. And, what evidence has been marshaled in favor of this claim has been deemed unpersuasive by skeptics (e.g., Gawronski 2009; Gawronski et al. 2006). For instance, scholars have noted that implicit and explicit attitudes toward the same object often display weak to modest correlations; a sign, they claim, that people are unaware of the former. Critics have countered, however, that these correlations sometimes strengthen when individuals are encouraged to reflect further on their attitudes (e.g., Akrami and Ekehammar 2005; Hofmann et al. 2005). Thus, although further reflection might increase mean values of explicit attitudes, critics maintain that it is hard to imagine how the same efforts also increase the correlation between explicit attitudes (which people are aware about) and implicit attitudes (which people are presumably unaware about) (e.g., Gawronski 2009).

This is difficult to imagine, but not impossible. For example, one plausible explanation for this pattern of strengthened correlations between implicit–explicit attitudes is that further reflection attenuates the volume of measurement error in self-reports, thus increasing the correlation between explicit and implicit attitudes (e.g., Brown 2006). However, in suggesting this counter explanation, it is important not to miss the larger point of this line of criticism. Namely, that a strong claim – that people do not know that they possess implicit attitude – requires strong evidence; stronger, at any rate, than what has been on offer. Let us see if we can improve on this front.

Laying Out the Alternatives

Our discussion so far can be distilled into four separate points. First, citizens differ in their propensity to deliberate in the political realm, as indexed by their level of education (i.e., motivation). Second, citizens face varied opportunities to act on this inclination, as in the clarity of political information they receive (i.e., opportunity). Third, this interplay between individual differences in education (i.e., motivation) and clarity of cues (i.e., opportunity) should structure the ability of citizens to override their implicit attitudes. But, fourth, the success of minimizing the political influence of implicit attitude will depend on whether citizens are actually aware that they possess this evaluation.

Is there a way to unify these insights into a set of coherent and testable hypotheses? I think there is. And it involves pulling the theoretical levers of individual motivation and opportunity to see how people’s political decision making is shaped by both implicit and explicit attitudes toward the same object.

Let’s begin with explicit attitude. By most accounts, explicit attitudes are fully within a person’s awareness (Tourangeau et al. 2000). Accordingly, people
can control, manipulate, and edit these attitudes. Citizens should therefore be able to censor the influence of their explicit attitude toward a target to the extent that they are motivated and have the opportunity to do so. Applied to the case of immigration politics, this means citizens with greater levels of education will be motivated to defuse the influence of their explicit attitude toward Latinos. After all, highly educated individuals are acutely sensitive to norms governing the expression of such racialized attitudes (Federico 2004; Sniderman et al. 1991). And, they will be more likely to do so when the political information they have access to calls into question the relevance of this explicit attitude for their evaluation of immigration policies.

Of course, this is not to say that more educated people do not possess racial attitudes. Such individuals are sensitive to norms governing the expression of racial attitudes, not their acquisition. As Federico (2004) shows, people with lower and higher levels of education both hold racial attitudes; the latter simply express them less than the former. Indeed, “it is clear that education by no means eliminates intolerance altogether, even though it does reduce the overall proportion of people who endorse intolerant ideas” (376). These insights align with the view that people with more education are among the most politically aware segments of the polity (e.g., Converse 1964; Zaller 1992), which means they should be more aware of the connection between Latinos and negative information about them. Yet such persons should also show more restraint in expressing a negative view of this group because highly educated persons are more likely to internalize social norms and, given their enhanced cognitive skill, more likely to “recognize the logical implications of the norms they internalize and act in accordance with them” (Federico 2004: 375).

But what happens to implicit attitude in these same circumstances? The answer will depend on whether people are, in fact, aware of their implicit attitude (Gawronski 2009; Gawronski et al. 2006; Hahn and Gawronksi 2014). Insofar as citizens have knowledge of their implicit attitude, those who are predisposed toward more reflective thinking, and who have the chance to recognize the inapplicability or undesirability of this attitude, should be able to lessen its impact on political judgment. Indeed, such a pattern of decision making would provide clear evidence that people are in fact aware of implicit attitudes because they are able to avoid its influence under propitious circumstances.

But, if citizens are truly unaware that they possess an implicit attitude toward Latinos, its effect on judgments of immigration policy will persist, even among those who can stave off the influence of explicit racial bias, thereby producing *dueling effects* for implicit/explicit attitudes. In fact, the influence of implicit attitude might even become stronger, as highly educated people, you may recall, have a more acute ability to join their attitude to relevant policy judgments (e.g., Federico 2004; Taber and Lodge 2006).

Figures 7.1a through 7.1c capture the essence of these three propositions. There we see illustrated the anticipated relationship between explicit (implicit)
In Deliberation’s Shadow

Figure 7.1. (a) Hypothetical effect of explicit attitude (Latinos) on opposition to immigration when non-Latinos are cued. (b) Hypothetical effect of implicit attitude (Latinos) on opposition to immigration when non-Latinos are cued. (c) Hypothetical effect of implicit attitude (Latinos) on opposition to immigration when non-Latinos are cued.

Notes: The top panel shows that when non-Latinos are cued, explicit attitude toward Latinos is unrelated to opposition to immigration across all education levels. The middle panel shows that when non-Latinos are cued, more educated individuals minimize the impact of implicit attitude toward Latinos on their opposition to immigration, which implies awareness of implicit attitude. The bottom panel suggests that when non-Latinos are cued, the link between implicit attitudes toward Latinos and opposition to immigration grows among the more educated, who can better connect their attitudes to political judgments. This pattern implies a lack of awareness of implicit attitude.
Unspoken Politics

attitude toward Latinos and opposition to immigration by levels of education when people are focused on a non-Latino group of immigrants. In each of these hypothetical scenarios, the x-axis runs from low to high levels of education and the y-axis runs from weak to strong opposition to immigration.

Figure 7.1a depicts the relationship between self-reported attitude toward Latinos and opposition to immigration when the focus of people’s attention is a non-Latino group. There we see a virtual flat line. This is meant to suggest that explicit attitude toward Latinos should be essentially unrelated to one’s opposition to immigration in this key circumstance because there is a clear mismatch between one’s explicit attitude and the immigrant cues one is exposed to. And, because people have knowledge of their self-reported attitude, they are able to seize on this mismatch to keep at bay the influence of their self-reported attitude toward Latinos.

In contrast, Figure 7.1b depicts a downward-sloping line in the same circumstance (i.e., non-Latino cue). This is meant to suggest that although implicit attitudes are spontaneously triggered, people are nonetheless aware of this attitude, for its influence noticeably declines among people who are more predisposed toward reflective thinking. Thus, as people’s level of education increases, so does their ability to arrest and minimize the political effects of their implicit attitude.

Finally, Figure 7.1c depicts the relationship just discussed, but it relaxes the assumption that people are aware of their implicit attitude. Actually, it makes the assumption that people have no knowledge that they possess an implicit attitude toward Latinos. In the absence of this knowledge, cues directing attention on a non-Latino group fail to counteract the effects of implicit attitude toward Latinos. In fact, as the figure shows, the influence of implicit attitude strengthens across levels of education, a pattern that simply reflects the greater ability of educated individuals to link their attitudes to policy evaluations (e.g., Federico 2004; Sniderman et al. 1991).

On paper, all three of these propositions seem viable. But which of these perspectives actually captures the gist of who is influenced by implicit attitudes and when within the US polity? For an answer, let us turn once again to the Legal Immigration Experiment in the National Study.

Empirically Assessing the Possibilities

If you recall, the Legal Immigration Experiment from Chapter 6 revealed that relative to a control condition with no immigrant cues, focusing attention on legal Mexican immigrants had no effect on opposition to legal immigration, while directing attention toward legal Chinese did. Based on this finding, the experiment reduces to two conditions: (1) a Latino condition that collapses respondents from the control and legal Mexicans conditions; and (2) the Chinese condition that focuses attention on legal Chinese immigrants. Hence, the key test for our purposes will involve how levels of education condition the
effect of implicit attitude toward Latinos in that second condition, when people’s attention is trained on non-Latino immigrants.

But before we get to that critical test, it is important to ascertain whether levels of education actually perform in any of the ways we have discussed in the previous pages. Indeed, if this key individual difference does not operate in a way that is consistent with prior work, it makes little sense to engage in a more elaborate modeling strategy that takes fuller advantage of the Legal Immigration Experiment. In particular, it is important to answer here two related questions. First, does education mitigate or amplify the influence of explicit attitude toward Latinos? Second, does education similarly affect the influence of implicit attitude?

To answer these questions, I estimate the following statistical model:

\[
\text{Opposition (Immigration)} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Explicit} + \beta_2 \text{Implicit} + \beta_3 \text{Legal Chinese} \\
+ \beta_4 \text{Education} + \beta_5 \text{Explicit} \times \text{Education} \\
+ \beta_6 \text{Implicit} \times \text{Education} \\
+ \beta_7 \text{Legal Chinese} \times \text{Education (7.1)}
\]

In this model, we are particularly interested in \(\beta_5\) and \(\beta_6\), which will give us a sense of whether and how education affects the connection between people’s opposition to legal immigration and their levels of explicit attitude and implicit attitude. In other words, how does the influence of explicit and implicit attitude change – if at all – as one’s level of education increases? To facilitate the interpretation of these and subsequent results, opposition to legal immigration runs on a 0–1 interval. In contrast, explicit and implicit attitude are transformed to have standard deviation units, while levels of education is left in its raw metric.\(^1\) In this way, the coefficients from this initial model will reveal the percentage increase in opposition to legal immigration that is produced by a standard deviation shift in explicit (implicit) attitude as we move across increased levels of education.

The raw results of this analysis are reported in Table A7.1 in the appendix. Based on these results, I then depict the relevant effects in graphical form. What, if anything, do we learn from this initial analysis of the data? Figure 7.2 displays the influence of explicit attitude toward Latinos on public opposition to legal immigration across people’s level of education. There we can appreciate two interrelated patterns suggesting that education enables people to reduce any connection between their explicit attitude toward Latinos and their opposition to legal immigration. First, notice that among those individuals with the lowest level of education – that is, those without a high school diploma – explicit attitude has a positive and strong effect. These are the individuals who embody some of the conventional wisdom on racial intolerance – parochial and hostile.

\(^1\) Specifically, education ranges from 1–no high school to 6–postgraduate education.
to minorities, in this case, Latinos. And embody it they do. Among these individuals, a standard deviation shift in explicit attitude toward Latinos actually increases opposition to legal immigration by about .09. But notice what happens as we move from left to right across higher levels of education. As people’s level of education increases, they begin to behave more in line with the view of education as a corrective to racial intolerance. Simply put, having more education chips away at the effect of explicit attitude toward Latinos on people’s opposition to legal immigration. In fact, at the highest level of education, the effect of this explicit attitude is essentially zero, because the confidence interval surrounding this estimate straddles the zero value.

But what about implicit attitude toward Latinos? How does education affect its influence, if at all? A critic could argue that implicit attitude toward Latinos is really nothing more than explicit attitude measured in a fancy way. Hence, education should also diminish its influence. To convince this skeptic, then, we would have to show that the force of implicit attitude pierces through a person’s political thinking even as the effects of explicit attitude are contained. Figure 7.3 displays the effect of implicit attitude on public opposition to legal immigration across levels of education. There we see evidence that, rather than minimizing the effect of implicit attitude, higher levels of education actually heighten its effect. In other words, the more educated one is, the stronger the effect of implicit attitude on one’s opposition to legal immigration. In fact, the effects of implicit attitude are strongest and most reliably estimated for the highest levels of education. Among those with a postgraduate education, for example, a standard deviation shift in implicit attitude increases opposition to legal immigration by about .09. Ironic as this may be, it is nevertheless consistent with the view that people with higher education have stronger attitudes that they are better at connecting to their policy stances. It is also consistent
with the claim that people are unaware of their implicit attitude, as education fails to dampen its influence the way it was able to minimize explicit attitude toward the same group.

Taken as a whole, this evidence suggests that greater levels of education can lead citizens to engage in more deliberative thought. In turn, this further reflection appears to enable these individuals to correct those attitudes they wish to avoid – but only if they are aware of these evaluations. Translated to the realm of immigration policy, this implies that people at the center of politics – the more educated – are substantially more tolerant than their counterparts on the periphery of politics – the less educated. At an implicit level, however, the more educated display some signs of the very intolerance they work so vigorously to avoid.

Making the Most of Deliberation: The Role of Opportunity

The evidence so far suggests people are unaware of their implicit attitude, and this attitude is more likely to influence the political judgments of the most – not the least – educated segments of the polity. Deliberation, it seems, can only help people correct attitudes they have knowledge about.

Or does it? In one crucial respect, the pattern of evidence presented thus far can be said to be incomplete. I have shown that people with more education can suppress their attitude toward Latinos if they are aware of it. But, what I have not examined is whether and how this pattern changes when we clarify the information people have about immigrants. One could reasonably argue, for example, that the preceding analysis makes it hard – too hard, actually – for educated people to correct their implicit attitude because they don’t have the opportunity to do so (e.g., Fazio and Towles-Schwen 1999; Olson and Fazio 2009). Simply put, there is an inherent ambiguity as to who the immigrants in question are when people are asked to judge policies toward legal immigration.
People therefore default to assuming Latinos are the group in question. But perhaps if we direct people to focus on a non-Latino group, highly educated individuals can override the impulse behind their implicit attitude toward Latinos. With their attention plainly trained on non-Latinos, the more educated should be more likely to appreciate the mismatch between the information they have just received and the object of their implicit attitude. Thus, implicit attitude toward Latinos should fall by the wayside among educated individuals in this crucial circumstance.

To wrestle with this possibility, I modify the statistical model from the previous section in one crucial way. Whereas the previous model allowed us to see how explicit and implicit attitude toward Latinos operates among people with higher and lower levels of education, this modified model allows us to see this same pattern when people are focused on either Latino or non-Latino immigrants. This added layer will put us in a better position to determine whether the deliberative effect of education itself hinges on the opportunity to act on people’s more reflective thoughts. Table A7.2 in the appendix reports the raw results of this model. But once again, I visually depict these findings in order to facilitate their interpretation.

I begin with the influence of explicit attitude across levels of education when people’s attention is trained on Latinos. How does this information affect the connection between explicit attitude and levels of education? Consider Figure 7.4. Because people in this condition are directed to focus on Latinos, we should expect explicit attitude to have some effect. And it does. But notice that as levels of education increase, this influence wanes. Among those individuals with the highest levels of education, explicit attitude against Latinos has no hold whatsoever on their opposition to legal immigration. So, even in the most obvious of cases – when people are considering Latino immigrants – people with more education are still less likely to rely on their explicit attitude toward this
group. The inclination toward more reflective thinking, it appears, enables more highly educated to lessen the impact of negative racial attitude on their political judgment.

This pattern is even more compelling in the case where people are focused on non-Latinos, that is to say, legal Chinese immigrants (Figure 7.5). There we see explicit attitude striking a flat note across all levels of education. In other words, explicit attitude toward Latinos fails to affect people’s opposition to immigration in this condition regardless of people’s level of education. Thus, any connection between the latter and people’s opposition to legal immigration is completely minimized.

Now let us turn to implicit attitude and its influence across levels of education under both of the experimental conditions we just saw. What do we find then? In the Latino condition (Figure 7.6) we see evidence that implicit
attitude toward Latinos gets stronger – not weaker – with greater levels of education. In other words, in the case where people are directed to focus on Latinos, it is the more educated who are most influenced by their implicit attitude toward this group as they form their opposition to immigration. This is consistent with the view that highly educated people are more effective at connecting their attitudes to policy support. It also aligns with the stronger claim that highly educated people can only correct those undesirable attitudes they know about.

You might have noticed, however, that those with the lowest levels of education failed to reliably connect their implicit attitude to their immigration policy judgment. Is this surprising? Not when viewed against the backdrop of research on cognitive sophistication and public opinion (Althaus 1998; Bartels 1996; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Zaller 1992). In his now classic chapter, Converse (1964) taught us that much of mass opinion is awash in a sea of noise, as many people do not possess coherent opinions on most matters, answering survey questions haphazardly. These are precisely the kind of people who possess lower education levels and, by extension, less cognitive sophistication. Consequently, they often have difficulty in consistently linking their attitudes to judgments or evaluations, and the patterns we just observed mesh with this insight.

But what happens when we turn to the more critical condition, where people are focused on non-Latinos – more specifically, legal Chinese immigrants. Do highly educated people behave any differently then? Figure 7.7 suggests they do not. In fact, what it suggests is that they behave identically as before. Although their attention is trained on legal Chinese immigrants, the more educated are still more likely to rely on their implicit attitude against Latinos to form their opposition to legal immigration (with the least educated once again displaying

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**Figure 7.7.** Implicit attitude and opposition to legal immigration by level of education – Chinese condition (90% confidence intervals). *Note:* The figure displays the change in opposition to legal immigration across education levels, given a standard deviation shift in implicit attitude toward Latinos when Chinese immigrants are cued.
an unreliable pattern). This bears repeating, for it is the case that the same people who correct their explicit attitude toward Latinos are the same ones who are most likely to succumb to their implicit attitude toward this group in the same exact circumstance. Perhaps without meaning to, a highly educated person forges a stronger link between an implicit attitude toward Latinos and his or her opposition to immigration, even when concentrating on an obviously non-Latino group of immigrants.

Conclusions

We began this chapter with a simple question: do individual differences in the propensity to deliberate affect how people’s political views are shaped by implicit and explicit attitudes? The evidence in this chapter suggests “yes,” through a process that we might describe as dueling effects.

Education, I explained, often performs as a palliative in the realm of public opinion, especially when citizens’ racial attitudes are concerned. Predisposed toward more reflective thought and acutely sensitive to the expression of racially intolerant views, a highly educated person is sometimes presented as a potential bulwark against racial bias, especially when placed in the right circumstances – for example, by highlighting the irrelevance or undesirability of racial attitudes in political judgment. And we learned that there is, in fact, some merit to this claim. When induced to focus on non-Latino immigrants, the highly educated respondents in the Legal Immigration Experiment were able to soften the blow of their explicit attitudes toward Latinos on their opposition to immigration.

In sharp contrast, however, the highly educated were unable to arrest the influence of implicit attitude toward Latinos on their judgments of legal immigration. Two reasons were proffered ex ante for this pattern of evidence. First, although education does promote more deliberative thought, it also imparts an improved ability to connect one’s attitudes to political evaluations. Second, implicit attitude not only operates without one’s awareness; it also potentially exists in one’s mind without one’s knowledge. When synthesized, these insights suggest, even if paradoxically, that people with greater levels of education will more effectively connect their implicit attitude to their political judgments – even if one encounters direct information to the contrary.

Taken as a whole, these findings provide yet another reason for why political scientists should care about implicit attitude, its presence in the mass public, and the extent of its political reach. As the results make plain, implicit attitudes are not confined to the margins of the polity. Instead, their influence reverberates most strongly among those citizens who are most likely to determine the course of politics.

At this point, some might be tempted to conclude from this chapter that implicit attitudes reflect the “true” nature of people – what they really think
about political objects, such as racial groups. Indeed, how else can somebody explicitly feel one way, but implicitly in another? But the deeper lesson is that what people declare about political objects and what they leave unstated are both unique evaluations, with one being more relevant than the other among some individuals, some of the time. To be sure, it is no doubt disquieting to discover that some forms of attitude can affect individuals who we least suspect. Yet it is perhaps even more disquieting to insist that this cannot be the case when, in fact, the evidence suggests otherwise.

### Table A7.1. Opposition to Legal Immigration by Explicit Attitude, Implicit Attitude, and Levels of Education – Pairwise Interactive Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opponent to Legal Immigration</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Attitude – Latinos</td>
<td>.10*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit Attitude – Latinos</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Condition – Legal Chinese</td>
<td>.18*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.02*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Attitude × Education</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit Attitude × Education</td>
<td>.02*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Chinese × Education</td>
<td>-.04*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.62*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** OLS coefficients, with robust standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable runs on a 0–1 interval. Explicit and implicit attitude have been transformed to have standard deviation units.

* $p < .05$, one-tailed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Opposition to Legal Immigration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Attitude – Latinos</td>
<td>.14* (0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit Attitude – Latinos</td>
<td>0.00 (0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>−.02* (0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Condition – Legal Chinese</td>
<td>.20* (0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit × Education</td>
<td>−.02* (0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit × Legal Chinese</td>
<td>−.10 (0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education × Legal Chinese</td>
<td>−.04* (0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit × Education × Legal Chinese</td>
<td>0.02 (0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit × Education</td>
<td>0.01 (0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit × Legal Chinese</td>
<td>−.12* (0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit × Education × Legal Chinese</td>
<td>.04* (0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.62* (0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OLS coefficients, with robust standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable runs on a 0–1 interval. Explicit and implicit attitude have been transformed to have standard deviation units.

* $p < .05$, one-tailed.