

HISPANIC GROWTH IN RURAL AMERICA:  
PUBLIC POLICY AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS

By

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## **Abstract**

Immigration has historically been a federal issue; recently however, localities, counties, and states have passed their own laws aimed at immigrants. The majority of these ordinances have occurred at the local-level, and in particular, in small rural towns. This research examines what makes rural towns different from urban areas and why some rural towns have decided to pass immigrant ordinances in their community. Previous studies suggest that ideology and partisanship drive attitudes towards immigrants and policy, however, their data does not account for geographic location. Geographic location is an important element that needs to be included when investigating the local immigrant policy support. Because of the dynamics in a small town, the limited resources available, rural residents are more psychologically anxious and threatened by recent immigrants than urban residents. The increases in Latino population throughout rural America are heightened by the fact that there are few areas of education, worship, and recreation in small towns. These demographic changes make rural residents feel like they are losing important political and economic power due to immigrants. The perception of loss by rural residents leads them to be more likely to support local immigrant ordinances in their community as a way to diminish the Latino presence and discourage further immigration into their town. With this research, I am adding another dimension into scholarly knowledge on the factors that shape immigrant policy attitudes. By including geographic location and psychological factors, I move past the “who” supports immigrant ordinances and a clearer picture emerges of *why* some people support these local laws.

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## Introduction

Each election year, especially presidential election years, the media touts the growing Hispanic electorate. The growing size of the Hispanic electorate signifies the overall growth of the Latino population in the United States. The most recent U.S. Census (2010) confirmed what most demographers had estimated; an immense growth of the Latino population. The census showed that Hispanics now make up over 16% of the total U.S. population, over 50 million residents. These findings represent a 43% increase in the number of Latinos since the 2000 U.S. census. In fact, Latinos accounted for over half of the nation-wide growth. Perhaps most interesting, for the first time in American history, minority births outnumbered non-Hispanic white births.

The 2010 U.S. census put Latinos front and center. The Latino growth led to national media coverage on the economic and political power of Latinos. In a 2012 study, the Latino buying power was estimated at 1.2 trillion dollars, which was larger than all but 13 countries in the world (Waldman 2012). Politically, Latinos accounted for 10% of the total votes cast in the 2012 presidential election (Lopez & Taylor 2012). President Obama's Latino vote share was the second highest in history with 71% of all Latinos voting to reelect the president. President Obama beat Mitt Romney for the Latino vote by a whopping 44 points. The power of the Latino vote was most felt in swing states like Florida, Nevada, and Colorado where Latinos voted to reelect the President in margins of 60% to 39%, 70% to 25% and 75% to 23%, respectively (ibid).

Latinos' increasing share of economic and political power has also brought increased backlash on Latinos. State and local immigration policies aimed at Latino immigrants have increased dramatically since 2000. States like Arizona, Alabama, and Georgia have passed these

laws claiming that immigrants are a burden to their state. At the local level, towns like Fremont, NE pass anti-immigrant ordinances arguing that immigrants are a threat to their quality of life. For supporters of these laws, Latino immigrants<sup>1</sup> have become a threat to their livelihood and well-being.

Studies on White backlash against ethnic and racial minorities have been analyzed at the national (Brader et. al 2008; Citrin et al. 1997; Hood III and Morris 1997; Ha 2010), state (Ramakrishnan and Lewis 2005; Schildkraut 2001; Nicolson-Crotty and Nicolson-Crotty 2011), and local level (Hopkins 2010; Ramakrishnan and Wong 2010; Jones-Correa 2004; Ramakrishnan and Lewis 2005; Varsanyi 2008; Esbenshade 2007).

These studies illustrate that when whites feel racially threatened they tend to support policies that reduce social and economic benefits that affect minorities. More recently, studies that focus on white backlash towards immigrants have typically focused on the passing of state (Schildkraut 2001) and local laws (Ramakrishnan and Lewis 2005) that can be interpreted to be anti-immigrant or anti-Hispanic. After the eruption of immigration protests across the country in 2006, the federal government did little to address immigration at the national level, yet, as we have seen recently state and local governments have decided to address the “immigration problem” on their own. States and localities have used local ordinances as ways to diminish their current Latino population and preemptively strike down the growing immigrant population in hopes of discouraging further immigration (Cornwell 2010). These laws and ordinances have drawn strong support and opposition across the country. In some cases, they have gained national

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this dissertation, I use the term immigrants to reference Latino immigrants and populations. This can mean individuals whose nation of origin may include Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the rest of Central and South America. I make this clear because attitudes towards immigrants can differ depending on country of origin. Anglo-Americans are much more likely to oppose immigration when the immigrant is of a Latin American background than when they are European (Brader et. al. 2008).



attention for states like Arizona, Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina and localities like Hazelton, PA, Farmers Branch, TX, and Fremont, NE.

The main research questions that I intend to address in this dissertation include: Are small towns significantly different from larger urban areas in their support for laws that could be viewed as anti-immigrant? Why have some rural towns across the United States, in recent years, decided to pass local immigration policies? What factors influence citizens who live in these types of small towns to support or oppose anti-immigration ordinances in their town?

While many definitions of rural may come to mind, throughout this dissertation I use the United States' Department of Agriculture's (USDA 2008) definition of rural town which includes any locality with a population below 50,000 residents. Most studies examining immigration policy attitudes attribute their findings to ideological and partisan leanings, while I agree with these theories; I argue that attitudes are based on psychological feelings towards immigrants. I suggest that feelings of anxiety and threat felt by white residents who live in rural areas significantly contribute to whether or not they support anti-immigrant ordinances. As threat theory suggests, the in-groups' anxiety will increase when there are feelings of loss due to a growing threat. I argue rural residents are more likely to view immigrants as a threat to their general well-being and livelihood than urban residents. In turn, these feelings of threat make rural residents more likely than urban residents to support anti-immigrant policies. Further, I illustrate that white residents who live in small towns will be more likely to support anti-immigrant policies when they exhibit individual feelings of threat. Finally, using rural town-level data, I will demonstrate the types of towns that are most likely to pass local anti-immigrant ordinances.

Testing theories of threat and anxiety, I argue, are best when used to analyze smaller populations. When in-group and out-group members are forced into a small melting pot, how does the in-group react when they feel their livelihood is at stake because of the increased perception of competition and threat?

Large cities across the U.S. still exhibit various degrees of residential segregation due to past governmental policies (Lipsitz 1998). In urban areas, residential neighborhoods include all the amenities that each racial and ethnic group might need to live their everyday lives. These neighborhoods may include schools, places of worship, shopping, grocery stores, places of employment, and entertainment. City neighborhoods provide each respected group the necessities for their livelihood, with little need to roam past an individual's neighborhood. Therefore, I question how much exposure the in-group actually has to the out-groups in a city environment. In rural towns, the options for everyday life are limited, thus, one must come into contact with members from other groups regardless of one's culture, race, class, or neighborhood. Rural areas are limited in their resources available to individuals such as political power, jobs, education, shopping, places of worship, and places of entertainment. I believe this is a better context to measure threat, which is why I focus my analysis on rural towns.

### **Threat and Anxiety**

I argue that partisanship and ideology are not the only factors driving policy attitudes towards immigrants. I add to relevant literature by suggesting that attitudes are based on the perception of threat and the anxiety that immigrants trigger to the white rural population. The threat theory's origins are rooted in studies done by Key (1949) and Blalock (1967). The central premise suggests that as the presence of an out-group increases, hostility by the in-group will

follow due to the competition for scarce resources. Most studies on threat theory focus on the scarcity of resources that include political and economic power (Ha 2010).

These are the most mentioned resources because of their importance especially at the local level. The ability to control political power usually means that one group has an advantage over others in the voting booth. If a group is largely in control of the voting in a locale, then we can assume that they are more likely to vote for members of their own group. This means that the in-group will benefit from their political officials. Political benefits can come in a variety of forms such as role models for children, tax breaks or incentives for the wealthy, business opportunities for close social networks, or substantive representation in their community. Economic power typically means the amount of jobs and housing that are available in a given community. A common argument by advocates for immigration control is that immigrants are taking American jobs. This illustrates how the perception of immigrants being a threat to the well-being of rural whites can affect how they might feel towards policies that can be viewed as anti-immigrant.

Some studies argue that racial difference is a component of threat. Scholars of the racial threat hypothesis posit that there is an ongoing competition between races and individuals of different racial and ethnic backgrounds (Taylor 1998). For example, Branton and Jones (2005) suggest when the diversity of a city increases individuals with low socio-economic status are more likely to exhibit anti-minority attitudes. By diversity the authors suggest that as more minorities come into the city, policy attitudes are changed. Therefore, the attitudes towards policy are a function of how many minorities may be in a certain locality. Thus, this finding would suggest that in a smaller locale, such as a rural town in Nebraska, as the minority

population increases so too should the backlash against Latinos. Moreover, the backlash may be heightened because of the dynamics of a small town.

Competition between minorities is also possible. Because minorities tend to compete against each other for many of the same types of jobs, African Americans may feel threatened due to the presence of a large Latino group. Gay's (2006) findings support this form of racial threat. In her study, she finds that the competition for jobs between Blacks and Latinos influenced policy preferences among African Americans. As presence of Latinos increased, Black residents began to feel that their well-being and livelihood was being threatened because of the increased competition for economic and political power. These threats led to blacks exhibiting higher levels of negative stereotypes of Latinos and expressing less commonality between groups in terms of political power and policy preferences.

Public opinion on immigration is largely based on the feelings of threat felt by whites who may believe they are losing economic and political power (Hood III & Morris 1997; Brader et. al. 2008; Branton & Jones 2005). As the presence of threat increases due to the growing Latino population, whites tend to hold more negative preferences on immigration policy.

I expand on the previous studies' limited use of sampling data by focusing my attention on rural areas. Each of the studies mentioned above use national data that typically oversamples urban areas. I expand on these studies and suggest that threat is more likely to occur in small towns where the resources available to all residents are limited and where changing demographics would be more readily seen and felt by whites.

## **Overview**

In this dissertation, I illustrate several different, but related points on rural immigration attitudes. First, I show how geography differs between residents who live in urban and rural

areas. I argue that rural residents are significantly different from urban residents in their immigration attitudes. I analyze data from three nationally representative samples. In this analysis, I illustrate that rural residents are more likely to support restrictive immigration policies at the state and local level. I use state and local levels because they are home to the most recent immigration policies passed, due to the inaction of the federal government.

Second, I go beyond the previous arguments of partisanship and ideology by contending that support for and opposition against immigration ordinances is shaped by psychological perceptions of contact and threat. I show rural residents are more likely to believe they come into a lot of contact with immigrants. This contact makes them feel uneasy and uncomfortable. Further, I illustrate that rural residents are more likely to have negative perceptions of immigrants. I argue that the policy decision-making processes of rural residents are influenced by these negative perceptions.

Third, I look at a Midwestern case study of residents in four rural communities. I illustrate that rural residents who feel their livelihood is threatened by immigrants are most likely to support anti-immigrant ordinances in their town.

Finally, I illustrate the types of rural towns that are more likely to pass local immigration ordinances and discuss why. By using a city-level dataset comprised entirely of rural towns, I am able to demonstrate how Hispanic growth significantly increases the likelihood of passing a local immigrant ordinance.

This dissertation serves to expand our knowledge in multiple avenues of research that have previously gone untapped, including: urban vs. rural political psychology, individual-level determinants of support for local immigration laws, and rural city-level immigration policy. It will engage scholarly research to think about how geographic location is related to feelings of

threat. It will also serve as a focal point in illustrating public opinion on immigration in rural areas which has yet to be investigated even though rural areas are experiencing the greatest growth of the Hispanic population (U.S. Census 2010). Finally, it will engage practitioners, politicians, and scholars to think about how negative feelings about immigrants might be overcome.

## Chapter 1: Rural America

The politics of “place” in America has received very little scholarly attention from political scientists in recent decades. Sociologists have long been concerned with this divide and entire journals are devoted to the study of rural sociology. However, a number of works suggest that we cannot continue to neglect the urban-rural divide in America and its effect on politics and policy attitudes. The fact that some Americans choose to live in urban areas while others choose to live in rural areas is not a coincidence. Scholarly work suggests that Americans “self-sort” into clusters of like-minded communities increasing the “cultural distance” between Americans (Bishop 2008). Rural residents may want to be further way from other cultures and they have chosen to live in rural areas to be with people with like-minded views of the world, but perhaps more importantly, further away from individuals who are not like them. Whites who may not like people of other races and religion may choose to live in rural areas because of the traditional world views of their like-minded neighbors. I argue, traditional world views, or views of what American identity and culture *should* be, are strongly held view-points in rural America, and change is slow.

Self-sorting does influence how Americans feel about public policy. Isolation leads to fear and anxiety of the unknown. According to Fennelly and Federico (2008) rural residents tend to have more negative feelings towards outsiders because they are isolated from typical immigrant communities. Since they are isolated, when immigrants do come into their community, they become more likely to favor restrictive immigrant policies because of their feelings of anxiety (ibid).

It is not just demographics and socioeconomic indicators that separate the rural from the urban; the divide is also leading to important impacts on our political system. In 2004, the

majority of every city over 500,000 voted for democrats and John Kerry (Raban 2010). Broken down more specifically, towns with a population under 25,000 had a democratic voting rate of 36%, compared to 52% for cities over 300,000 (Gimple and Karnes 2006). Mckee (2008) argues that the difference between blue states and red states are how rural communities vote. In his analysis of presidential elections, he illustrates that swing or “purple” states include rural communities that vote closely with the urban population (Mckee 2008). But as the numbers illustrate, few rural areas are likely to vote like urban communities, and the disparity is quite large.

Rural areas not only display differences during presidential elections, but also differences in their preference of candidates. Female candidates are less likely to win election in rural areas than their urban counterparts (Stiles and Schwab 2009). This may occur, in part, because of the traditionalist views held by rural residents. The status quo holds that men are thought of as more likely to have the knowledge and ambition to run for political office (Elder 2004).

There are certainly differences between rural and urban residents when analyzing their voting behavior. What drives these differences? In viewing the voting rates for republicans in rural communities, commentators rightly ask why conservatives seem to have such a stronghold in these areas (Frank 2004). One popular line of thinking is that social issues and the culture war drive rural voters to conservatism and the Republican Party. The increasing electoral power of the Christian right, especially in rural areas, was the direct outcome of politicians like Barry Goldwater and Ronald Regan coming to national prominence (Green and Guth 1988). Still, others contend that economic concerns like private property and limited government are crucial in understanding rural ideology (Gimple and Karnes 2006); this might be especially true for small farmers who tend to disagree with many federal policies (Knoke and Henry 1977). Low



levels of education among rural communities are also found to be long tied to conservative voting patterns and rural areas have continuously experienced severe disadvantages when it comes to educational equality (Roscigno et al 2006). Regardless of the source of the divide, it is an important factor that requires more serious study by political scientists.

It is widely known that Latinos, especially Mexican Americans (60 percent of Latinos in the U.S.), are situated along the urban areas of the Southwest (Durand et. al. 2005). However, international legislation and economic factors have contributed to the recent growth of Latinos in new areas of the country. The passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1986 allowed many undocumented immigrants to begin looking for work legally (Durand et. al., 1999) in locales other than urban areas. The economic downturn in the late 1980's and early 1990's in the United States left many newly naturalized citizens with difficulty finding work in highly populated Latino areas such as Texas and California (ibid). Moreover, the 1994 peso crisis in Mexico following the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement increased the immigration of Mexicans looking for work in the United States (Shultz 2008). Increased competition over jobs in places like Texas and California, with a weak economy, led many new immigrants to find work in new areas of the country (Schultz 2008). However, many of the areas with available work were unaccustomed to immigrant populations.

### **Hispanic Growth in Rural Areas**

In 1980, Iowa Beef Processors, Inc., now known as Tyson Fresh Meats, opened up the world's largest beef processing plant near Garden City, KS. Just three years later a competing plant opened up just a few miles away (Broadway and Stull, 2005). The combined workforce of the two plants was over 4000, which made jobs easily assessable in this area of Southwestern Kansas (ibid). Almost overnight Finney County (home to Garden City) became a biracial

community due to the influx of Latinos (native and foreign born) to the area (ibid). This phenomenon was not limited to Garden City, KS, nor to the Midwest, but to many different parts of the country including Dodge City, KS, Storm Lake, IA, Hamlet, NC, Greely, CO, Buena Vista, GA, and Indianola, MS among others (Stull et. al. 1995). The growth of these large-scale meat-packing plants represents the movement of these companies from urban communities to the rural areas. The costs associated with keeping plants in urban areas: higher taxes, the terrible odor, and toxin complaints all contributed to the growth of meat-packing plants in rural America.

My research for this dissertation largely took place in four rural communities that have seen dramatic growth in their Hispanic population due to meat-packing plants. With funding from the University Of Kansas Department Of Political Science, my colleagues and I traveled to Dodge City and Garden City in Kansas and Grand Island and Fremont in Nebraska. We were able to survey over 300 respondents and interview nearly 30 political and business elites. In my research, local leaders expressed their commitment to offering cheap land and tax incentives to these large companies to lure them into their community. Large scale employment opportunities are not readily available in rural areas as much as they are in the city. So the ability of a small town to lure one or more of these companies into their area is viewed as a boon to the economy. Indeed, all four communities we visited-Dodge City (4.8%), Garden City (5.1%), Fremont (4%), and Grand Island (3.3%)-are well under the national unemployment rate of 6.7%,

Since the beginning, the dilemma for the towns and companies building these meat plants has been the population. Most small towns do not have the population & workforce to support large scale production plants. The smaller populations that live in rural towns, for the most part, already have their jobs. The only way a large scale meat-packing plant can remain profitable is it is continually producing. When a plant is built, at its inception, most small towns do not have the

workforce needed operate the plant on a daily basis. Talking to local officials, several mentioned to us the recruiting that goes on within these large companies. Immigrants living in urban areas hear about good paying jobs available in small towns from family members or friends. This in turn creates a pipeline of word-of-mouth recruiting. Friends and family members already in the United States and those living outside the U.S. share the information regarding job openings with high starting pay where most jobs start at around 14.00 or 15.00/hour. Therefore, while the companies do not actively recruit in other countries, they certainly do not discourage their employees from expressing their excitement about job opportunities to their friends and family members. Changing demographics in small towns is, no doubt, a function of the employment opportunities available to those willing to migrate.

The Latino experience in these rural communities has been less than overtly positive. In his study on Latino immigrants in rural Central Kentucky, Shultz (2008) observes that Latino men often viewed their community as “*tranquilo*”, meaning calm, peaceful, and safe; however, most of his interviewees attribute low interaction between Anglos and Latinos due to language barriers (ibid). Research suggests there is widespread perception among Anglos that a meat processing plant will bring increased crime, poverty, language issues, along with heavier prices for schools, healthcare, and low income housing (Artz, et. al. 2010; Broadway, Stull, and Podraza 1994; Broadway & Stull 2005; Grey 1997a, b). Yet, according to Artz et. al. (2010), communities find the benefits outweigh the costs related to bringing in large employers to their towns.

In these examples, we see the dilemma facing local politicians. First, rural residents believe that these industries bring in new residents, largely immigrants, and therefore crime increases and their well-being is threatened with burdens on schools and social services.

However, the residents have to weigh the economic benefits and town revitalization that these industries bring to the rural town with the costs of growing immigrant populations. It is this conundrum that rural residents face on a daily basis. On the one hand, small towns are least susceptible to change, on the other if they want the economic advantages offered by meat plants they must adjust their expectations of what they think their community should look like. I argue that some rural residents deal with their anxiety over immigrants by choosing to support local policies aimed specifically at deterring immigrants.

While my research examines immigration policy attitudes, there are examples of mistreatment of immigrants and racism in rural towns. There have been reports, in the Midwest, of Latino high-school students being victims of violence due to their nationality and being told by their Anglo schoolmates to “Go back to Mexico” (Millard et. al. 2004). In Central Iowa, for example, over 33 percent of Latinos confirmed that they had been mistreated at least once (Millard and Chapa 2004). This includes being turned down for social services, even when they were eligible, and discriminated against at the workplace, in schools, and places of worship.

A survey study in Grand Island, Nebraska discovered that 60 percent of new immigrants felt they had been denied acceptable healthcare due to racism (Carranza 2004). This was a town my colleagues and I visited during our field work. In Grand Island, we received the most prejudice attitudes towards our study of Latinos and immigrants. One day, as we were picking up our survey at a home, which we had dropped off the day before, the resident handed us the pamphlet and simply said, “I’m not gonna lie, I hate Mexicans”. Indeed Latinos in rural areas often experience discrimination at work (Jefferds and Millard 2004), at school (Crane 2001), and in church (Crane and Millard 2004).

I argue that rural residents are more likely than urban residents to feel anxious about recent immigrants. The visible change, due to immigrants, in a small rural community makes them uneasy, especially for a population who favors the status quo.

Previous studies that look at immigration policy preferences tend to focus on the characteristics of those who might support restrictive immigration policies. However, most do not include a measure of geographic location. This is an important characteristic to consider because of the different policy attitudes of rural and urban residents. I hypothesize that:

H1: Rural residents will be more likely than urban residents to support restrictive state and local immigration policies.

This is not unlike previous work that has examined the characteristics of individuals that support these types of policies. However, rather than focusing on socio-economic, partisan, or ideological differences in people, I focus on how geographic location can influence policy decisions. The traditional world-views of rural residents make them more likely to support restrictive immigration laws because they do not like change.

### **Data and Methods**

I use data from two national polls conducted by professional polling firms. The two datasets were chosen specifically because of the questions included and the timing of the survey. I use the CBS/New York Times April 2010 and July 2010 Polls. Most importantly, the two surveys allow for consistency with the questions and controls I use in the analysis. The surveys include the respondent's geographic location: rural, suburb, medium-size city, and large-size city. Also, imperative to this study is that they both use a city's population of under 50,000 residents to signify that the respondent lives in a rural area. To accurately examine whether rural residents are significantly different than urban residents in their immigration policy preferences it was important that all the public opinion data I use be consistent with this rule. Furthermore,

additional controls that account for competing theories of why some individuals tend to support anti-immigration policies are also available in each survey and are measured consistently.

First, I use the CBS News/New York Times April 2010 poll to suggest that rural residents are more likely to support state-wide anti-immigration legislation such as the controversial SB1070 law that was passed and signed in Arizona. The first of the two polls was conducted during the period from April 28, 2010-May 2, 2010. The respondents are all over 18 and were randomly selected by the use of random-digit dialing that included standard land lines and cell phone users. This methodology yielded a total sample of 1125 respondents.

### **APRIL 2010 POLL**

The survey questions do not simply ask whether the respondent supports or does not support the law; instead it measures their attitude toward the implementation of the law. The dependent variable asks the respondent,

*“As you may know, the state of Arizona recently passed a law that gives the police the power to question anyone they suspect is in the country illegally, requires people to produce documents verifying their status if asked, and allows officers to arrest anyone who cannot do so. Do you think this law goes too far in dealing with the issue of illegal immigration, doesn't go far enough, or is it about right?”*

Even though this dissertation is about the likelihood of rural residents supporting local immigration ordinances in their community, I think this question is appropriate because it mentions several policies that would be employed by local police. First, it addresses whether local authorities should be allowed to question anyone they believe is in the country illegally. This part of the law has been one of the most contentious because of the racial component of suspicion. Latino advocacy groups argue that this will essentially allow local Arizona police to question Latinos and members of other ethnic and racial groups because of their skin color.

The second local policy component of this question is whether police should be able to ask for an individuals' documentation and detain them if they are not in their possession. This part of the law essentially makes local law enforcement an arm of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency. This ordinance would rest on the decision by the local officer to ask and detain someone without proper documentation and would presumably be made because of an individual's accent or appearance.

I coded the dependent variable as all those who responded that the law did not go far enough or was about right as 1, and individuals who thought the law went too far as 0. I included those who thought the law was about right and those who did not think it went far enough, because there is agreement between those two types of individuals that the policy should have been passed. Also, it clearly illustrates support for trying to change the immigration status quo by giving power to local authorities. I also use this question because I am confident this issue was in the minds of the respondents. Governor Jan Brewer of Arizona signed SB1070 on April 23, 2010, 5 days before this poll began. Therefore, I believe that most respondents had heard about this controversial law as the polling was taking place. This is substantiated by the fact that only 63 respondents or 5.6% of the sample stated they did not know how they felt about the law.

### **JULY 2010 POLL**

The second poll by CBS News/New York Times was conducted from July 5-July 8, 2010. Like the previous April poll described above, the July 2010 poll also uses a random dialing system that contacts individuals that are over 18 via land lines and cell phone lines, this yielded a total sample of 1167.

I use this poll to analyze whether rural residents are significantly more likely than urban residents to support a specific local immigration ordinance. This poll fits well for analyzing

support for local immigration ordinances because it questions whether or not respondents would favor or oppose local legislation in their town. The question states,

*“A Nebraska town recently passed an ordinance requiring businesses and landlords to verify that their employees and renters are in the United States legally in order to prevent illegal immigrants from finding jobs or places to live. Would you favor or oppose your own community adopting this policy?”*

This polling question also works well for this study because it was asked in July 2010 and the local ordinance that it addresses was passed in Fremont, Nebraska on June 21, 2010.

Therefore, like the first dependent variable, the question is addressing an issue that was most salient for the time the poll was taken and should have been fresh in the minds of many respondents. This assertion stems from only 87 respondents or 7.5% of the total sample having no opinion on this question. Another advantage of using this question to address support for local laws is that the town in question, Fremont, is a rural town with a population under 50,000 residents. In fact, it is a town that I visited for my field work that will be further discussed in later chapters. The wording of the question is interesting to me as well, since it states “A Nebraska town”. Perhaps the authors were trying to get their respondents to think of their own small town and how the demographics and culture of their town may be changing because of immigration.

### **Independent Variables**

I analyze for geographic location with an independent variable, which is whether or not the respondent lives in a rural or suburban area. All respondents who live in medium or large cities are held as the baseline for comparison. Therefore, if a respondent lives in a rural area he/she was coded as 1 and all other respondents were coded as 0; the same was done for suburban residents. I included suburban residents in the analysis because some suburban cities with their own local government are under 50,000, but they are not located in rural areas, which are my focus, and I wanted to account for these differences.



The rest of the independent variables included in the analysis address socio-economic and political leanings, which are consistently found to influence attitudes towards immigration policy. The first control included addresses the race of the respondent. I use dichotomous measures of race for “whites” and “blacks”, with Latino excluded from the analysis to use as the comparison group. I expect white respondents to be more likely than Latinos to support anti-immigrant measures, which they may help alleviate the “immigrant problem”. There is some evidence to support that blacks may be hostile to Latinos when there is competition between the groups (Gay 2006). Yet, blacks may feel like they are also the target of some of the racial components of these policies, in particular Arizona’s SB1070 policy, and therefore not be any more or less likely than Latinos to support such measures.

I also include a control for gender where Females are coded as 1 and all men are coded as 0. I expect women to be less supportive of anti-immigrant policies than men because of ideological and issue based gender gaps that have been increasing over time that suggest women to be more supportive of minorities and liberal issues (Norrander and Wilcox 2008).

I next control for Age, Education, Income, and Marital Status. Age is an interval level variable that runs from 18 to 99. I expect that as age increases support for anti-immigrant policies will also increase. This would be consistent with previous immigration policy research (Fennelly and Federico 2008; Schildkraut 2011).

Education, as we know, plays a significant role in how individuals react to policies and attitudes towards individuals. In my analysis, Education is measured on a 5-point scale. In this Likert scale, the lowest education level, no high school degree is equal to 1, and the highest education level, respondents with a professional/graduate degree are coded as 6. Fennelly and Federico (2008) point out that low levels of education are prevalent in rural areas, which might

help explain why some rural residents support immigration restrictions. I expect higher levels of education to be associated with lower levels of anti-immigrant policy support.

I also account for Income because support for restrictive immigration policies may be a reflection of economic competition. Branton and Jones (2005) suggest that when there is a downturn in the economy, white backlash against minorities tends to increase. Since 2006, the national unemployment rate has fluctuated between 4-10% (U.S. Department of Labor 2012) depending on the state, city, and region. Since the United States has had less than exceptional economic numbers, I expect lower income respondents to be more likely to support anti-immigrant policies because blue-collar workers may feel like they are in constant competition for jobs in this economy. To be consistent throughout the surveys, Income is coded as 1 for all respondents making more than \$75,000 a year and 0 for those making under \$75,000. I also use this coding scheme to maximize my sample population since over 100 respondents refused to provide their income status.

Marital status is included in the analyses where respondents who are married were coded as 1 and those who are unmarried are coded as 0. This variable is added to account for the political influence a spouse can have on his/her significant other's political leanings (Stoker & Jennings 2005).

Finally, I include measures of partisanship and ideological leanings of the respondent. Partisanship and ideology are consistently strong predictors of whether or not an individual will be more likely to support or oppose immigrant policies. In a variety of studies, Republicans and Conservatives are found to be much more likely to support anti-immigrant legislation (Cirtin et. al. 1997; Hood III & Morris 1997; Brader et. al. 2008; Branton & Jones 2005; Fennelly and Federico 2008; Ramakrishnan and Wong 2010). I suspect this to be the case in this study as well.

Republican Partisanship is coded 1 for all respondents who identified as a Republican and 0 for all others who did not identify as a Republican. The control for Conservative ideology, like partisanship, is coded 1 for all respondents who identified as a Conservative and 0 for all others who did not identify as a conservative. In both cases, for Republicans and Conservatives, I expect that they will both be significant and positive in their support for restrictive immigration policies.

### **Findings**

There are previous studies that look at immigration policy; yet, few take into account the differences in the rural and urban divide on immigration policy preferences. In the following analysis, I add to scholarly knowledge about the characteristics of those who are more likely to support local immigration ordinances. Further, what makes the models in this analysis particularly interesting to the study of immigration policy is that these are laws that have passed. Most studies that examine immigration preferences ask questions about federal immigration policy, yet, with the inaction of the federal government on immigration those studies only go so far as being hypotheticals. Looking at state and local laws that have passed through democratic processes provides a clearer picture of attitudes towards immigration policy than provided by a respondent's preference of a hypothetical federal immigration law. Below are the logistic regression models that analyze support for local immigration policy.

Table 1.

## State &amp; Local Immigration Policy Preferences

	(1) Arizona Law Support=1	(1a) Probability Change Min → Max	(2) Fremont Housing Ordinance Support=1	(2a) Probability Change Min → Max
Rural	0.362* (0.205)	.07	0.539* (0.250)	.09
Suburb	0.177 (0.169)		0.286 (0.227)	
White	0.583* (0.294)	.13	0.712* (0.333)	.12
Black	0.550 (0.406)		0.0854 (0.414)	
Female	-0.403* (0.154)	-.08	0.0697 (0.194)	
Age	0.0163* (0.00440)	.26	0.00733 (0.00565)	
Education	-0.333* (0.0686)	-.26	-0.249* (0.0841)	-.18
Income	-0.165 (0.177)		-0.207 (0.295)	
Married	0.385* (0.158)	.08	0.681* (0.203)	.12
Republican	0.887* (0.199)	.17	0.624* (0.272)	.10
Conservative	1.571* (0.186)	.30	0.891* (0.245)	.16
_cons	-0.447 (0.420)		-0.310 (0.522)	
<i>N</i>	1031		1043	
adj. <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.1833		0.1269	

Standard errors in parentheses

+  $p < 0.10$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ 

Source: 1: CBS/NYT April 2010 Poll One-tailed test

Source 2: CBS/NYT July 2010 Poll

In column 1, the rural variable illustrates that residents who live in rural areas are more likely than urban residents to say that they think the Arizona immigration law was about right or did not go far enough. This finding is statistically significant at the 0.05 level on a one-tailed test.

This means that I can be 95% sure that my models are not producing the coefficients by chance. Rural residents appear to be more willing to give local law enforcement the authority to question and detain individuals who they think may be illegal. Of course, this policy has major racial profiling implications. Officers are going to be much more likely to question the citizenship status of someone with brown skin and a Spanish accent than an individual with blonde hair and blue eyes. Since the passage of this law, the federal government has stepped in and the Supreme Court recently ruled that much of this law is unconstitutional. However, the fact that rural residents support these types of laws gives evidence to suggest that rural residents are tired of federal inaction on the issue of immigration and are willing to allow local police the power to enforce immigration laws.

Logistic regression models allow us to determine whether or not a variable is associated with the dependent variable. Yet, they do little to allow us to draw conclusions on the strength of that independent variable on the dependent variable. To overcome this, I have included the predicted probabilities for the statistically significant variables in the model. Predicted probabilities tell us the average change in the dependent variable by the independent variable while holding all other factors constant. The predicted probabilities for Model 1 are listed in the column to the right under 1a.

Keeping all other variables at their means, rural residents are, on average, 7% more likely than urban residents to support Arizona's SB 1070 law. While this may not seem like a lot it is important to remember that predicted probabilities are measured on a 0-1 scale. Also, the controls included are variables that have been included in previous studies. The rural and urban divide is usually not included. Therefore, previous scholarly work has been missing an intricate piece to immigration policy studies due to geographic location.

Many of the controls included in Model 1 behaved as expected as well. Whites were more likely to support the Arizona law than Latinos. On average, whites support the Arizona law by 13% more than Latinos. Because of the racial component in this law, it makes sense that whites would be more favorable to it than Latinos. The ability for local law enforcement to be able to stop anyone they perceive to be illegal will largely fall on skin color. Indeed, Latinos would have to deal with this issue at a higher rate than whites which would lead them to dislike the law much more.

According to the model, men are more likely to support the law than women. I expected this to occur due to the gender gap on policies. Females are typically more nurturing and sympathetic to the less fortunate individuals and we may be seeing evidence of this in their immigration policy positions as well.

Age and Education are both associated with support for the Arizona law. As expected, older individuals are more likely to favor the law. This may be because older respondents fear the changing demographics of the country. Younger generations are less supportive of the law, they may have friends or family members that are Latinos and may sympathize with them on racial profiling.

Likewise, highly educated respondents may have more knowledge about the consequences of racial profiling and are therefore less supportive of the law. Looking at the predicted probabilities, the intensity of education on one's decision making is clear: there is a 26% decrease in probability of supporting Arizona's SB1070 moving from the lowest educated respondents to the highest educated.

The most strongly associated variables with support for immigration policies are partisanship and ideology. On average, Republicans and Conservatives are 17% and 30% more

likely than other partisans and ideologues to support the Arizona law, respectively. This should not be surprising since Republicans and conservatives consistently show more support for policies that limit immigration. Further, the Arizona law was written by conservative Republicans in Arizona and subsequently signed by conservative Republican Governor Jan Brewer. Therefore, showing support for this law is not simply an indictment on immigration, but demonstrates support for fellow partisans and ideologues.

Looking at Model 2, the results are similar in many ways. The results suggest rural residents are significantly more likely to favor restrictions on local housing to undocumented immigrants than residents in urban areas. This finding is positive, in the expected direction, and statistically significant at the .05 level. As I previously mentioned, there have been number of rural towns that have passed local immigrant ordinances, but very few medium or large cities have passed these types of laws. Why is this?

Brooks and Cheng (2001) suggest that when citizens feel like the federal government is not helping them with an issue that is important to them; they will have less trust in the federal government and attempt to address the issue with state and local government. I suggest this is what is occurring with the rural residents in my analysis. They believe there is a problem and the inability of the federal government to address this issue triggers an anxiety that drives them to try to address this issue with state and local policies. On average, rural residents are 9% more likely than urban residents to support local immigrant housing ordinances. This finding is especially notable because it is the first national public opinion analysis that examines attitudes towards a local immigration ordinance that has been passed. This ordinance has since been halted by federal court injunction, but it is important to recognize that the citizens of this town voted for this measure. This is what the citizens of this community wanted. Likewise, when a city council

passes an immigrant ordinance, this is democracy at work. This dissertation does not focus on what happened to the ordinance after subsequent passage, many of which have been subjected to court rulings. Instead, I am interested in the characteristics of individuals that support these types of laws and why.

The control variables are in expected direction and several are significantly related to support for immigration housing ordinances. Whites, again, are more likely than Latinos to support local housing ordinances. Latinos are going to be more likely to know someone who may be undocumented so they may feel sympathetic to their cause. Conversely, white Americans are unaffected by these housing ordinances and thus supporting these types of ordinances is a way they can stop further migration into their town.

Education is also associated with attitudes towards local immigration ordinances. The surveys do not have a measure for political knowledge; however, we can assume that higher educated individuals are more aware of the challenges presented when localities try to deal with federal law. The understanding of the political system and laws may be expressed through educated views on local immigration policies.

Married respondents were more likely to support anti-immigrant ordinances in both models. I attribute this some men and women feeling threatened by immigrants and supporting the laws, in their mind, is protecting their family.

At the local ordinance level, like the state level, Republican and conservative support is strong. Republicans are 10% more likely to support local housing ordinances than Democrats and Independents. Likewise, conservatives are 16% more likely than liberals or moderates to support this particular local immigration ordinance. Each of the variables in the model is being tested independently and the predicted probabilities display the average change in the dependent



variable while all other factors are held at their means. Yet, the impact of the variables cannot be understated. Republicans, conservatives, and rural residents are all highly correlated. Meaning rural residents are going to be highly likely to support local immigrant ordinances because they are likely to be republican and conservative.

At the beginning of this chapter my aim was to build on previous studies on immigration policy by further examining the “who question”. By including location into immigration policy analysis, I am able to further studies on the characteristics of who might be more likely to support anti-immigrant policies. Overall, the models support my hypothesis and suggest that rural residents are significantly more likely to support state-wide laws like those enacted in Arizona and local ordinances that were passed in Fremont, NE.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I examined policy differences between rural and urban residents. Most studies that look at the types of people that support certain policies do not account for differences in geography. This is important due to the significant differences between rural and urban residents in many types of policy preferences. Rural residents tend to hold traditional world-views that are different from urban residents. The “self-sort” that rural residents make is a calculated decision that makes them want to be further away from people who are not like them. Rural and urban differences in world-views translate into immigration policy preferences as well.

I show that rural residents are more likely than urban residents to favor restrictive state and local immigration policies. This finding adds to scholarly knowledge of the characteristics of who are more likely to favor immigration restrictions. By adding geographic location, scholars are able to further examine why rural and urban differences are so prevalent across the U.S. Moreover, previous studies that analyze urban and rural immigration policy preferences rely on

support for federal immigration policies. It is clear that the gridlock in congress is stopping any type of comprehensive immigration reform. This study is an improved measure of the rural vs. urban divide on immigration because it analyzes immigration policies that have been passed recently. This allows scholars to make further generalizations about proponents and opponents of immigration legislation without using hypothetical situations such as federal laws.

This study gives scholars a deeper breadth of the information about the types of individuals more likely to support restrictive immigration policies. Still, this study does not answer the “Why” question. Why are rural residents more likely than urban residents to support restrictive immigration policies? This is a question that many studies that look at demographic, socio-economic, partisan, and ideology tend to bypass. What are the mechanisms at work that are making rural residents significantly more supportive of restrictive immigration policy than urban residents? Using literature and theories from political psychology, in the next chapter I argue that rural residents are more likely than urban residents to exhibit feelings of anxiety, negative perceptions, and economic threat from immigrants. Taken together, these psychological feelings make rural residents feel uneasy and uncomfortable about immigrants and their growing population. Therefore, their decision to support anti-immigrant policies is based on sustaining their livelihood and quality of life.

## **Chapter 2: Rural & Urban Differences in Perception and Threat**

When analyzing certain policies it is important to include the context into which these policies are supported or opposed. I believe that immigration policy is a case where geographic and cultural context presents an interesting dynamic. Previous research demonstrates the impact of the rural-urban divide in American politics (Frank 2004; Gimple and Karnes 2006; Bishop 2008; McKee 2008). These studies have generally come to the conclusion that rural towns and urban areas are significantly different because of the differences in social policy choices. Individuals in rural towns typically identify as white, conservative, and Republican whereas individuals in urban areas tend to be more liberal and diverse.

These studies that analyze the rural-urban divide provide us with plenty of historically relevant information in regards to which individuals and towns decide to pass certain types of policies. Yet, much of this research has yet to investigate the psychological reasons as to why there is a rural and urban divide on individual issues. Analyzing immigration policy by location is important because the overwhelming majority of localities that have passed anti-immigrant ordinances are in small towns. This study brings a unique perspective into why individuals in rural towns are more likely to support conservative policies, in particular, immigration policy. I agree with Gimple & Karnes (2006) that ideological conservatism dominates rural culture, however, when it comes to immigration policy in rural areas ideological conservatism does not answer the “why” question.

In this study, the “why question” is interesting because most rural towns across the country are typically conservative and Republican strongholds (ibid; Fennelly & Federico 2008). If ideology was the primary driving force on city-level decision making of whether or not to support anti-immigrant ordinances, then most rural towns across the country would pass these

types of laws. Yet, only 47 rural towns across the country have passed an immigrant ordinance. Therefore conservative ideology is not the only driving force that influences why some individuals and towns are more likely to pass local immigration ordinances while others do not.

Previous studies focus on attitudes towards federal laws and immigration reform. However, due to the inaction of the federal government on immigration there are many states and localities that have taken it upon themselves to pass local ordinances. Rather than focus on partisanship and ideology like most other studies, I argue that a where a person lives matters. Still, like most studies on immigration policy, I have simply illustrated the “Who” and not the “Why”. The “Who” question relates to the characteristics of whom might be more likely to support local immigration ordinances. “Why” rural residents more likely to support local immigration ordinances is an entirely different question altogether.

I argue that rural residents are more likely to support local immigration ordinances because they are more likely to feel anxious and threatened by recent immigrants. Because of the dynamic of the small town (with few resources, jobs, and schools), rural residents are more likely than urban residents to feel like immigrants are everywhere and they feel bothered by the changes they see in their community. As anxiety increases, so too does the psychological feelings of threat by rural residents. They feel like their livelihood is threatened by immigrants because they perceive them to be abusers of the welfare system and criminals. I next examine these perceptions and sense of threat.

## **Literature**

Anxiety and perception are the focal points of my argument throughout this dissertation. I argue that proximity in rural towns drives anxiety and negative perceptions of immigrants. My assumptions are based on the fact that rural towns are smaller locales and therefore more contact

and threat is occurring than in large urban areas. Not only is there more contact in rural areas, but the perception is negative and threatening to rural whites. I base part of my assumptions on the findings by Martinez and Valenzuela (2006). They find, for whites, proximity to immigrants leads to perceptions of immigrants as criminals. White respondents in their study feel that large populations or growing populations of immigrants near their homes increase levels of criminalization. Whether the crime rate of those towns actually increases are questionable, however, whites' perception is that immigrants are the cause of the crime in their town. The perception of immigrants as criminals increases their feelings of threat. In this case, crime is a threat to the livelihood and well-being of the respondents and their families. In light of their study, I argue that feelings of threat due to immigrants shape their decision making processes on immigrant policies. Further, their study illustrates that proximity enhances their criminal perception of immigrants. In small towns, the geographic proximity to one's neighbors is clearly enhanced due to the limited resources. Latino immigrants are typically associated with financial burdens when they are the subject of news stories. The negative coverage of Latino immigrants, as opposed to White European immigrants, adds to a perception of criminality. This increases feelings of anxiety and threat among Anglo-Americans (Brader et. al. 2008).

Perception plays an intricate role in how an individual views his/her community. If they believe there are a lot of immigrants, if they believe they are criminals, and if they view them as a threat to their well-being then they will take action to try and curtail their immigrant problem. I argue that rural residents are more likely to have these perceptions than urban residents and this drives their support for anti-immigrant policies.

The feelings of anxiety are central to my argument. Hartley & Phelps (2012, p. 113) argue, "anxiety may be experienced in the absence of a direct physical threat and typically

persists over a longer period of time. However, anxiety is commonly conceptualized as a state of sustained fear”. In other words, anxiety occurs when an individual feels threatened, which does not have to be physically. When an individual is anxious they are living in a constant state of fear. I argue this is occurring in small rural towns across the country. They are witnessing quick changes in their community and it has them anxious about their well-being. I argue, rural residents are more likely to feel anxious about immigrants and therefore more likely to feel that their political power and economic well-being is threatened.

Schildkraut (2011) also examines factors that might make whites anxious and uneasy about immigration. In a national survey, she finds that whites who exhibit ethno-cultural tendencies are more likely to favor strict immigration policies (ibid p.190). By ethno-cultural she refers to whites who resent “immigrants for being non-white and non-Christian” (ibid p.182). Schildkraut argues that ethno-cultural resentment occurs because some whites feel like their American identity and culture is being threatened. This is a good example of how non-physical threats may influence policy attitudes. In her example, whites are anxious because they feel like their American identity and culture is being threatened by an outside foreign influence. This anxiety shapes their policy decision-making process in how they view immigration policy.

I agree with the premise of Schildkraut’s study and argue that we can take it further by analyzing rural residents. Schildkraut does not look into whether her respondent’s location shapes their attitudes towards immigrants. I think this is an important and understudied area of policy studies. Demographic and social changes in rural towns will be more noticeable to the naked eye than demographic and social changes in large cities, therefore I argue that, rural residents will feel more anxious about their American identity and culture than urban residents and therefore be more likely to support anti-immigrant ordinances.

## Anxiety about Immigrants

### Data & Methods: Anxiety

In order to illustrate that rural residents are more anxious about immigrants than urban residents, I needed to find a national survey that includes variables that control for location and questions regarding immigrants. I found this in the 2006 Pew Hispanic Immigration Survey. The data was collected by telephone by the Pew Hispanic Center from February 8-March 7, 2006. The survey is a nation-wide sample of 2,000 adults over the age of 18. This survey is unique in the fact that it oversamples the urban areas of Chicago, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Raleigh-Durham, and Washington D.C. This survey is also very useful because it was conducted around the time of the 2006 immigration debate. During this time, President George W. Bush attempted to gain support for comprehensive immigration reform, however, his attempts were attacked by his own party. The Republicans claimed immigration reform meant citizenship for law breakers. To counter this point, pro-immigration movements sprouted across the country culminating in a series of protests in support of comprehensive immigration reform (Barreto et. al., 2009). By using this particular dataset, I am able to assume that a wide audience had been informed or at least aware of immigration stories and headlines.

To demonstrate feelings of anxiety, I must first review whether or not rural residents perceive immigrants to be in their community. Perception is key in my analysis. To feel anxious and threatened, individuals must perceive that immigrants are drastically changing their community. Just by sheer numbers, we know that there are more immigrants in urban areas, yet, if rural residents perceive more immigrants in their community than urban residents do, this perception (being over-run with newcomers and fear of the unknown) will increase anxiety. Therefore I hypothesize:

H2: Respondents who live in rural towns will be more likely than urban respondents to perceive that there are many immigrants in their town

For my dependent variables, I use two questions that measure perception of immigrants in the respondent's community. The first question asks,

*"How many recent immigrants would you say live in your area...Many (4), Some (3), Only A Few (2), or None (1)"*

This question specifically asks the respondent to think about how many immigrants live in their area. This is important because in psychology a person's perception does not have to accurately represent reality. In a small town, I expect rural residents' perception of immigrants to be higher than in urban areas because small towns limit the number of places one can go to buy groceries, eat, worship, ect...Therefore, if there is a perception amongst rural residents that there are "many" immigrants in their area these feelings will increase anxiety.

The second question I include analyzes perceived contact with immigrants. This focuses on the respondent's perception of contact with immigrants who speak little or no English,

*"How often do you personally come in contact with immigrants who speak little or no English...Often (4), Sometimes (3), Rarely (2), or Never (1)."*

It is impossible to quantify exactly how many non-English speakers there are in a given city, however, this question is focused on what the respondent believes. I hypothesize that:

H3: Rural residents will be more likely than urban residents to believe they come into contact more often with immigrants who speak little or no English.

What a person believes to be true is of course associated with feelings of anxiety. People become anxious for numerous reasons: spiders are scary, stage-fright, test-taking, or simply fear of the unknown (Hembree 1988). Anxiety comes from fear of the unexpected and unknown, rural residents are more likely than urban residents to exhibit these feelings about immigrants.



The numbers inside the parentheses represent how each answer was coded for my analysis, therefore, the higher the number the higher the perception of immigrants in the respondent's community or the perception of contact.

### **Independent Variables**

My key independent variable in this analysis is the location where the respondent currently resides. In this dataset, they include a measure for residents who live in an urban, a suburban, or a rural location. I am confident that their measurements are accurate because the dataset also includes the respondent's zip code. After reviewing many zip codes, it was apparent that the zip code appropriately matched the respondent's location area. Since location is a nominal variable, I include Rural and Suburban in the analysis while keeping Urban as the baseline. This means that the analysis in the table will be comparing attitudes of rural residents to attitudes of urban residents. This Pew's location variable works well with my analysis because throughout my research I quantify "Rural<sup>2</sup>" as a town that is not near a big city and has a total population of less than 50,000. In this dataset, like the CBS/NYT polls used above, the measurement for "Rural" is someone who lives in a town below a population of 50,000. Therefore, the measurements I use throughout this dissertation are consistent.

The rest of the variables included in the analysis address race, gender, socio-economic and political leanings since these controls are consistently found to influence attitudes towards immigration policy.

Age is an interval level variable that runs from 18 to 99. Age is an interesting variable for this analysis because older citizens might be more likely to believe that the demographics of the country has changed quickly and therefore perceive lots of immigrants in their area and contact with them.

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<sup>2</sup> All rural variables throughout the this dissertation are located in towns with a total population under 50,000.

Education, as we know, plays a significant role in how individuals react to policies, opinions, and attitudes towards individuals. In the analysis Education is coded from 0-6 where respondents who have an education level between 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade or below are coded as 0 and respondents who have a post graduate degree are coded as 6.

Income is an important control to include because economic competition may be a reason why respondents feel there are too many immigrants in their area. A common problem when including income in a public opinion survey is the amount of respondents who choose not to disclose this information to the interviewer. To overcome this problem, I have coded all respondents who reported to make over \$75,000/year as 1 and all others as 0, doing this will allow me to include as much of the sample population as possible. Another economic indicator, Employment Status is also included in this analysis. Those individuals who report having a full-time job are coded as 1 and all others are coded as 0.

Marital status is included in all three analyses where respondents who are married were coded as 1 and those who are unmarried are coded as 0. This is included because having a family may indirectly affect what you think of your community and neighborhood's residents.

Finally, I include two measures of partisanship and ideological leanings of the respondent. Partisanship is coded 1 for all respondents who identified as a Republican and 0 for all others who did not identify as a Republican. The control for ideology, like partisanship, is coded 1 for all respondents who identified as a conservative and 0 for all others who did not identify as a conservative. For Republicans and Conservatives, I expect that they will both be significantly more likely in their support for restrictive immigration policies because of previous voting patterns.

## **Findings**

Since the dependent variable runs on a four-point scale, I analyze the two questions using an ordinal logistic regression model. Table 2 includes four columns. Column 1 represents the coefficients of the independent variables and control variables on the dependent variable, which is the respondent's perception of how many recent immigrants are in his/her community. The next column, which I have labeled 1a, represents the predicted probability of the statistically significant variables in column 1. I only include variables where we see significant changes in the dependent variables because otherwise the variable change from its minimum to its maximum is not statistically different from zero. The second model in the table, labeled 2, illustrates the coefficients for the independent and control variables for the dependent variable, in which respondents answered their perceived contact with limited English speakers. The final column to the right, labeled 2a, demonstrates the actual changes in the dependent variable given the change of the statistically significant independent variables and controls.

Table 2. National Public Opinion on Immigrant Perceptions

	(1) Recent immigrants in your area?	(1a) Probability Change  Min→Max	(2) Contact with non-English speakers?	(2a) Probability Change  Min → Max
Rural	0.467* (0.199)	.06	0.678** (0.210)	.08
Suburb	-0.135 (0.0939)		-0.169 (0.102)	
White	-0.285 (0.149)		-0.288 (0.162)	
Black	0.119 (0.184)		-0.203 (0.204)	
Female	-0.0141 (0.0900)		0.000477 (0.0986)	
Age	0.00508 (0.00311)		0.0115*** (0.00335)	.11
Education	-0.0854** (0.0301)	.06	0.0339 (0.0329)	
Income	0.0966 (0.107)		0.0640 (0.116)	
Employed	0.0558 (0.108)		-0.109 (0.116)	
Marital Status	0.132 (0.0950)		0.0440 (0.104)	
Republican	0.0305 (0.107)		0.144 (0.114)	
Conservative	-0.0674 (0.0994)		-0.00925 (0.107)	
_cut1	-0.171 (0.258)		1.090*** (0.287)	
_cut2	1.018*** (0.259)		2.479*** (0.293)	
_cut3	2.842*** (0.277)		4.327*** (0.327)	
<i>N</i>	1862		1860	
Pseudo <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.0084		.0117	

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , Source: 2006 Pew Hispanic Imm. Survey

The models in Table 2 support my hypothesis. Rural residents are more likely than urban residents to perceive that they are coming into contact with immigrants more often. In Model 1, the question addressed how many recent immigrants the respondent believed to live in their area. Empirical studies illustrate that immigrants are much more likely to live in large urban/metro areas (Bartel 1989), yet, I hypothesized that rural residents would believe their area has become home to more recent immigrants than urban residents. The model indicates that my hypothesis is correct and statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This means that I can be 95% confident that I am not calculating these results by chance. Rural residents are statistically different than urban residents. Respondents in rural areas, on average, believe that there are more recent immigrants in their area than urban respondents. Realistically, we know there are more immigrants in urban areas than in rural areas. Yet, because of the small town dynamic, there is a perception of their town being home to “many” immigrants. I argue this drives why rural residents may be more likely to support anti-immigrant policies. While immigrants tend to move to urban areas, rural residents perceive there to be more immigrants in their area because of the size of their town. As I stated above, small towns are limited in their resources: schools, places of worship & entertainment, and grocery stores. These limited resources enhance the perception that “many” or “some” recent immigrants have come into the rural resident’s community.

It is worth noting that none of the other control variables included in Model 1 are statistically significant except education. This variable suggests that respondents are less likely to believe that many recent immigrants are in their area when education levels rise. This might occur because college graduates and respondents with professional degrees are less threatened by immigrants. Individuals with professional degrees would be less likely to compete with immigrants for scarce resources, like jobs, than respondents of lower education backgrounds.

The limitation of the models used in Table 1 is that the coefficients do not tell us the substantive effects of the variables. In an ordinal logistic model, the coefficients mean little to the naked eye in terms of the marginal effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable. To overcome this issue, I have included the predicted probabilities for the statistically significant variables in column 1a. I only included the predicted probabilities for significant variables because they illustrate a statistically substantive effect on the dependent variable. The predicted probabilities are interpreted from zero to one because of the logistic function used in for the model. Finally, the number in column 1a is the predicted probability when the variable changes from its minimum variable to its maximum value. For example, in both models, rural is equal to one and urban resident is the baseline variable that is equal to zero. Therefore a change from the minimum to the maximum in my independent variable would be from zero to one.

The predicted probabilities in column 1a suggest that, on average, rural residents are 0.06 or 6% more likely than urban residents to believe that there are many or some recent immigrants in their area. This change in probability between rural and urban residents is taken when all other factors in the model are held at their means. Education also yields a minimum to maximum change of 6% on the dependent variable, all else equal. Looking closer into both variables<sup>3</sup>, geographic location is the strongest predictor in this model. This is because the minimum value of education 1 ranges to the maximum value of 7. Therefore, the effect of a change in one education level is not as strong as the change in rural to urban. For example, the minimum to maximum coefficient suggests that a respondent who has little to no education would have to graduate with a professional degree to equal the substantive effect of the rural/urban independent variable. Looking at probabilities as they compare to each other illustrates the strength of my key independent variable. Living in a rural area rather than an urban

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<sup>3</sup> The appendix includes figures with the marginal effects of significant variables.

area provides the most significant change on the dependent variable, the perception of recent immigrants in the respondent's community.

The second model included in Table 2, depicted under column 2, examines how frequently the respondent feels he/she comes into contact with limited English speakers. The models include the same independent variables as model 1. While this question does not ask about whether or not the immigrant is Spanish dominant, Spanish is the most likely form of "other language" in the United States. According to a 2013 study by the United States census, there were over 60 million people who indicated that they speak a language other than English at home. Over 62% or approximately 37 million of these individuals stated that Spanish was the language other than English spoken at home. Therefore, while it is impossible to say for certain that contact with the limited English speaker was because the individual was Spanish dominant, it is highly likely. Again, we would expect more people with limited English skills to live in urban areas since most immigrants live in cities. However, if there is a perception among rural residents that they come into to contact with limited English speakers often. I argue this contributes to their rural support for anti-immigrant policies.

My hypothesis is substantiated by the findings in model 2. The rural variable suggests that respondents who live in rural areas are significantly more likely than urban respondents to believe they come into contact with limited English speakers more frequently. Like the findings in model 1, I attribute much of this perceived contact due to the limited areas available in a small rural town. Urban areas are still highly segregated by residential neighborhoods (Lipsitz 1998). There are more opportunities for residents to live, work, and play in the comfort of their urban neighborhoods and districts. There are fewer opportunities in small towns. I lived in a small town for over a year. This community had a total population of fewer than 40,000. In this town there

was one Wal-Mart and one Dillon's Supermarket. These were the only two options available to the thousands that lived there to buy groceries. There was one high school and one middle school, a movie theater with 6 screens, one city-owned recreation park, one small clinic, ect... Therefore, in a small community the contact with limited English speakers, especially in a meat-packing town like this one, is going to be higher than urban areas. Whether or not that is true in all small towns is unknown, however, because of the small fishbowl rural residents live in they perceive that they are coming into contact with limited English speakers at higher rates than urban residents. This finding is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Like model 1, there is only one other variable that is significant in model 2, however, this time it is not education, but age. As age increases, older respondents believe they come into contact with limited English speakers at higher rates than younger respondents. I would guess this occurs because younger respondents are more likely to hang around friends their age who have been taught English in school or acquired English language skills at an early age. Conversely, older immigrants are less likely to have English fluency because they lack the schooling needed to develop language acquisition (LNS 2006). Therefore, nationally, older respondents are more likely to come into contact with other older residents because of their jobs, religion, and common interests that differ from younger generations.

Model 2 is also an ordinal logistic model and the reported coefficients are difficult to examine the substantive impact of the variables on the dependent variable. To alleviate this problem, I again included the predicted probabilities for both statistically significant variables. The rural variable moving from its minimum of zero (urban resident) to its maximum of one (rural resident) exhibits an 8% change in the probability. This means on average, rural residents



are 8% more likely than urban residents to think that they into contact more often with limited English speakers.

Column 2a also demonstrates that age significantly effects a large change in the dependent variable. A change in age from its minimum of 18 to its maximum of 97 yields an overall change in the dependent variable of 11%. This might seem large, but the large range of years in the survey illustrates that very small changes in the dependent variable are made moving from one year to the next. Therefore, the marginal effects are quite small. The strongest predictor in whether or not the respondent believes he/she comes into frequent contact with a limited English speaker is geographic location.

Obviously, not all contact is bad. There are many people around the country who will gladly help out a fellow resident struggling with our native tongue. However, many people might feel bothered or annoyed when they come into contact with someone that has limited English skills. I think many of us can remember an instance where a cashier, a waitress, or other service jobs where there has been an interaction between an English speaker and a limited or non-English speaker. Have you ever wondered what the person speaking fluent English was thinking throughout the episode? Some may be helpful and try to explain a menu or type of prescription drug, but others may be annoyed and bothered by such an occasion. Some individuals may come into contact with residents of limited English skills frequently and they may be bothered by it every time. If this sequence occurs regularly, I argue, anxiety builds inside the individual that sees foreigners as a nuisance. I test this theory using a follow-up question given in the 2006 Pew Hispanic survey. In the survey, the interviewer asks the respondent how frequently he/she believes they come into contact with an immigrant with little or no English

skills, this was illustrated above. However, after the respondent answers this question the interviewer follows up on the question and asks:

*“When that happens, does it bother you, or not bother you?”*

This question taps directly into whether or not the respondent is annoyed at the contact with a limited English speaker or not. Feelings of “being-bothered” are important in this question and in studies of causes of psychological anxiety. Research suggests that when individuals are bothered by life experiences, they become worried about situations around them and therefore they are more likely to exhibit symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) (Wells 2005). I illustrated above that rural residents are more likely than urban residents to believe that they come into contact more often with immigrants of little to no English skills. If rural residents are also feeling more bothered by this interaction with limited English speakers than urban residents, then this allows me to further generalize that rural residents are exhibiting more feelings of anxiety about immigrants than urban residents and thus contributing to their local anti-immigrant policy choices. I hypothesize:

H4: Rural residents will be more likely than urban residents to feel bothered when they come into contact with a limited English speaker.

Using the same 2006 Pew Hispanic Immigration Survey, I examine a model illustrating what types of individuals are more likely to feel bothered about coming into contact with immigrants with little to no English skills. Because the question asks whether the respondent feels bothered or not, I use a logistic model to examine my dependent variable where “Being Bothered=1” and “Not Being Bothered=0”. Included in the model are all the same independent variables used in Table 2.

Table 3. Respondent anxiety when they come in contact with a limited English speaker

	(1) How does contact make you feel? Bothered=1	(1a) Probability Change Min → Max
Rural	0.525* (0.254)	.13
Suburb	0.360*** (0.107)	.09
White	0.586*** (0.178)	.15
Black	0.396 (0.219)	
Female	0.216* (0.104)	.05
Age	0.00422 (0.00354)	
Education	-0.0271 (0.0347)	
Income	-0.154 (0.122)	
Employed	-0.109 (0.123)	
Marital Status	-0.106 (0.109)	
Republican	0.340** (0.122)	.08
Conservative	0.310** (0.113)	.07
_cons	-0.908** (0.299)	
<i>N</i>	1622	
Pseudo <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.317	

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Source: 2006 Pew Hispanic Imm. Survey

As far as the number of variables that are statistically significant, Table 3 is much more active than the models in Table 2. The key independent variable is, again, statistically significant in this model. This illustrates that, on average, rural residents are more likely than urban

residents to feel bothered when they come into contact with a limited English speaker. This finding is intriguing because this is the first instance where we see various statistically significant controls, many of which are known to affect attitudes towards immigrants, yet, “Rural” remains a strong predictor of anxiety towards immigrants. The rural variable, throughout the three models has remained the single constant predictor of immigrant perception and anxiety. This gives me confidence in the robustness of my findings in all three models.

Looking at the controls, there is plenty of noteworthy findings. First, it appears that rural residents are not the only respondents in a geographic location that seem bothered by immigrants with little or no English speaking skills. The model illustrates that respondents who live in suburban areas are also more likely than urban residents to feel bothered by limited English speaking immigrants. Historically, white flight from the cities to the suburbs has occurred because it gave white residents the option to move away from minorities who were predominately located in the city (Lipsitz 1998). Therefore, suburban residents who chose to move out of the city and into the suburbs may be bothered by limited English speaking immigrants because they purposefully moved away from the city so they would not be put into that situation. Conversely, those living in urban areas may not be as bothered as rural residents and suburbanites when they come into contact with an immigrant with limited speaking skills because of the diversity in large cities and it may not be something new to them.

Race is also a predictor of who might be more likely to feel bothered by an immigrant with limited speaking skills. The model illustrates that whites are more likely to be bothered by this type of contact than Hispanics. This would traditionally make sense since Hispanics would seem to be more sympathetic to those who struggle with the English language because they may deal with it themselves or have a close friend or relative who struggles with the language. There

was no statistically significant difference between Hispanics and blacks. This may be because blacks who also tend to live in the city and may not be surprised when they come into contact with an immigrant with little English skills because it is not a new phenomenon to them.

The model illustrates a gender difference in who might be more likely to feel bothered by limited English immigrants. Females, on average, are more likely to be bothered by this type of contact. Unfortunately, the survey does not ask characteristics of the immigrant that the respondent typically comes into contact with, i.e. male or female, or where the contact may have occurred, social places or places of employment. Above, I tried to paint the picture of an instance where you may have witnessed a service worker trying to communicate with a limited English speaker. Most of the industries I mentioned are customer based face-to-face jobs. Women are more likely to have these types of customer-service based jobs because companies feel a woman's voice and persona is more inviting to customers (Bradley et. al. 2000). Therefore, females may be more bothered by immigrants who speak little to no English because they experience it more often than men.

Partisanship and ideology are also statistical predictors on attitudes towards limited English language speakers. The model suggests that Republicans and Conservatives, on average, are more likely to be bothered by having contact with immigrants who have little or no English speaking skills than Democrats & Independents and Liberals & Moderates. This finding is consistent with most research on attitudes towards immigrants. However, most research looks at attitudes dealing with stereotypes and policy; this adds a new dimension to scholarly research by addressing the feelings held by respondents when they come into contact with immigrants.

This is an area of research on immigrants that tends to get overlooked. Previous studies certainly address the "who" question. "Who" is more likely to exhibit anti-immigrant attitudes?

But they deal little with the “why”. This model adds to their work and suggests that some individuals, because of their location, race, gender, partisanship, or ideology are more likely to harbor anti-immigrant attitudes *because* they feel bothered and anxious about them.

Looking at the predicted probabilities column in Table 3, two variables stick out. Holding all other variables constant, rural residents are 13% more likely than urban residents to feel bothered when they come into contact with a limited English speaker. This is a significant impact on the dependent variable. Most studies on immigrant attitudes do not include variables that control for a respondent’s location; they are missing a large segment in their analysis of “who” are the types of people that harbor anti-immigrant sentiments. The race variable that compared whites and Hispanic was the only other variable in the model that had a stronger overall impact on the dependent variable. We would expect there to be a large difference between these two groups because of familiarity and sympathy for those who struggle with the English language illustrated by Hispanics. Interesting to note, in the survey, 88% of the rural respondents are white. Therefore, while the race variable may be a stronger predictor on the dependent variable, rural whites would seem to be the most bothered by having contact with immigrants to speak little or no English.

### **Perception & Threat of Immigrants**

In tables 2 and 3, I have tried to demonstrate that there is an active perception among rural residents that they believe immigrants are sprawling in their area, more so than urban residents. Those rural residents not only believe that there are a lot of recent immigrants in their area, but they also perceive themselves to come into contact with immigrants to speak little to no English more frequently than urban residents.

People do not live in rural towns for progressive change and ideas. They believe in the status quo. They live there because of their family ties, customs, and culture. Therefore, when it is perceived that their culture is changing they become bothered by it. It makes them feel uneasy and therefore anxious. Feelings of anxiety are typically caused because of the unknown. People are generally afraid of what they are not accustomed to (Hartley & Phelps 2012). They become fearful because they feel that their livelihood is threatened by immigrants who they believe increase crime, take jobs away from white Americans, and change American culture.

Evidence of threat felt by whites is well documented by Schildkraut's (2011) Twenty-First-Century Americanism Survey and subsequent book, *Americanism in the Twenty-First Century: Public Opinion in the Age of Immigration*. She details why whites are more likely to support anti-immigrant policies and express negative stereotypes about immigrants. She suggests this occurs because whites are threatened they are losing their American culture. I agree with her findings, however, she does not look into whether the sense of threat exhibited by respondents is equal to respondents in all geographic locations. She does use a geographic indicator that measures the % Hispanic and % Asian in the respondent's zip code, but I believe this differs from the perception that some rural whites have that "many" or "a lot" of recent immigrants are in their town.

Using a respondent's zip code as a measurement of Hispanics and Asians does accurately reflect census reality, but it does not reflect what the individual believes to be true. This is why I argue taking a respondent's perception of what *they believe* to be occurring in their town is more interesting when looking at anti-immigrant sentiment and threat. Further, while she does include the respondent's zip code, she does not subdivide her respondents by geographic location.

Looking at geographic location for respondents is relevant because there are historical differences-mentioned above-between rural and urban residents in their political choices.

### **Data & Methods: Perception & Threat**

The 2006 Pew Immigration survey includes three questions that I use to examine feelings of threat and loss. I look at feelings of threat using questions that analyze how immigrants have impacted the respondent's job opportunities, quality of life, and perception of crime. These are not unlike previous studies on immigrant threat (Hood III & Morris 1997; Brader et. al. 2008; Branton & Jones 2005; Gay 2006), but I add the respondent's geographic location. This characteristic plays a significant role in threat feelings. Urban residents may be used to seeing immigrants in their community and therefore not as threatened by them. Conversely, rural residents may view immigrants as a relatively new phenomenon and weary of the changes they bring to their community. Therefore, I hypothesize

H5: Rural residents will be more likely than urban residents to feel like immigrants are threatening their job opportunities, quality of life, and their family's well-being.

The questions posed by the interviewers, I feel, accurately capture beliefs by the respondent in how they feel immigrants have changed their community. Again, perception plays an intricate role in why I argue rural residents are more likely to support anti-immigrant policies and ordinances. Whether or not the perception matches the reality is inconsequential to the respondent, if they believe immigrants are threatening their livelihood, they will make their policy preferences with their well-being in mind. The first question analyzing whether the respondent feels threatened by immigrants in their job opportunities asks,

*“Do you believe that you or a family member has ever lost a job or not gotten a job because an employer hired immigrant workers instead, or don't you think so?”*



The common argument used by opponents of immigration reform is that immigrants are taking jobs from Americans. Of course, it is impossible to know for sure whether or not the respondent or his/her family member lost the job because of an immigrant, yet, this question is asking the respondent who they *believe* is to blame. This is a question that measures the respondent's perception of who took his/her job. This question is measured with a logistic model where "Yes=1", the respondent believes he/she or a family member lost a job or did not get a job because of an immigrant, and "No=0" the respondent does not believe an immigrant is to blame.

The next question measures the respondent's view of their local government services since the arrival of newer immigrants. The question states,

*"Thinking about all of the immigrants who have moved into your community in recent years: What effect, if any, do you think these recent immigrants are having on the quality of your local government services? Are they making things better, making things worse or not making much difference either way?"*

This is an interesting question because it can be interpreted in many ways depending on how the respondent reads it and depending on what is important in the respondent's life. First of all, I think it is important that the question makes the respondent think about "immigrants who have moved into [their] community in recent years". I believe the authors of the survey do this to eliminate any thoughts by the respondent that "immigrant" could mean immigrants from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century i.e. Germans, Polish, and Jews. The second part of the question is up to the respondent to think about what local government services are important to him/her and whether the quality of those services has gotten better or worse due to recent immigrants. Local government services can have a lot of variability: police, health services, schools, local government construction, social services, bus services, and the fire department just to name a few. We do not know what is important to the respondent, but I think by grouping all these local government services together, we can get an idea of whether or not the individual believes their

local quality of life has gotten better or worse. There is variability associated with this question by giving the respondent the option to choose “not making much difference either way”, so I have decided to drop this option from my analysis. I do this so I can have my respondents make a clear cut choice. I code the respondent’s choices as their local quality of services has gotten Worse=1 or Better=0 since the arrival of recent immigrants.

Finally, I examine what types of individuals view immigrants as a cause of crime. This is a frequent component in the immigration debate. Many opponents argue that immigration reform would be bad for the country because immigrants increase crime. Almost daily, people are inundated with news and media stories detailing drug cartels in Mexico and Central America. These images portray individuals from these nations of origin in a negative light, assuming that all immigrants are violent, drug abusers, and drug-traffickers. The question in the survey that addresses this issue asks,

*“Please tell me whether each of the following characteristics do or do not apply to immigrants from Latin American countries... Significantly increase crime.”*

This question is a little bit different than the others used in this dissertation thus far. There were several characteristics that were asked to the respondent by the interviewer. Each characteristic was randomized so not all respondents answered this particular question. For this project, I am only interested in which types of respondents believe that immigrants from Latin American countries significantly increase crime. While all other questions used up until now have asked about immigrants in general, this is the first that specifies immigration from Latin America. This is very helpful for this type of question because of the negative media attention that is typically associated with Latin American drug cartels and crime. The increase in crime is a threat to the overall well-being of the respondent and his/her family. If the individual believes that Latin American immigrants significantly increase crime, then it would not be difficult to

imagine that such a person would also support anti-immigrant policies too, which in their perception would decrease crime. I also use a logistic model for this question and I quantify all the respondents who believe that the characteristic of Latin American immigrants significantly increases crime Applies=1 and those who believe it Does Not Apply=0.

### **Findings**

The models for all three dependent variables mentioned above and the predicted probabilities for each model are found in Table 4. All three of the models are analyzed using logistic regression and I have coded each so that negative beliefs about immigrants equal positive coefficients.

Table 4. National Public Opinion on Immigrant Threat

	(1) Lost a job to immigrant? Yes=+	(1a) Probability Change Min → Max	(2) Immigrant effect on quality of local services Worse=+	(2a) Probability Change Min → Max	(3) Lat. Am. Immigrant Characteristic: increase crime Applies=+	(3a) Probability Change Min → Max
Rural	0.499* (0.240)	.10	0.946* (0.391)	.10	0.642+ (0.358)	.15
Suburb	0.212+ (0.120)	.04	0.104 (0.130)		0.244 (0.151)	
White	0.240 (0.192)		1.145* (0.175)	.19	0.217 (0.235)	
Black	0.730* (0.224)	.15	1.220* (0.230)	.12	0.508+ (0.296)	.12
Female	0.123 (0.113)		0.191 (0.128)		-0.259+ (0.147)	-.06
Age	-0.0117* (0.00379)	-.16	0.0281* (0.00444)	.27	0.00982+ (0.00509)	.19
Education	-0.138* (0.0366)	-.15	0.0496 (0.0413)		-0.0966* (0.0476)	-.14
Income	-0.626* (0.146)	-.10	0.142 (0.153)		-0.137 (0.171)	
Employed	-0.234+ (0.131)	-.04	-0.0588 (0.154)		-0.549* (0.175)	-.13
Marital Status	-0.281* (0.116)	-.05	0.301* (0.132)	.04	-0.174 (0.155)	
Republican	-0.286* (0.138)	-.05	0.479* (0.162)	.06	0.553* (0.170)	.14
Conservative	0.0619 (0.123)		0.356* (0.145)	.04	0.215 (0.156)	
_cons	0.136 (0.308)		-1.688* (0.328)		0.0935 (0.411)	
<i>N</i>	1862		1862		849	
Pseudo <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.0606		.1035		.0552	

Standard errors in parentheses

+  $p < 0.10$ , \*  $p < 0.05$

Source: 2006 Pew Hispanic Imm. Survey

## Threat of Job Loss

Model 1 illustrates that respondents who live in rural areas are significantly more likely to believe they or a family member has lost a job or not gotten a job because of an immigrant. Geographic location is rarely addressed when looking at threat theory and attitudes towards immigrants. This is an important finding because it allows researchers to further our inquiry of *why* some individuals tend to support anti-immigrant policies. We know that economic competition leads to anti-immigrant policy support (Branton & Jones 2005), however, we know little about the economic competition that occurs in small towns. With the demographic changes occurring so quickly throughout the U.S. it becomes increasingly competitive to find jobs even in small towns. While one would think that job competition might be more difficult in cities because of the large population, it might actually be the case that the job market is just as difficult in small towns because of the limited number of jobs available.

On average, rural residents are 10% more likely than urban residents to believe that they or a family member has lost a job or did not get a job because of an immigrant. This is quite a large number considering the context. Rural areas are much more likely to have lower paying jobs and fewer residents with college degrees. Therefore, in the context of a labor-force that is lower educated and lower paying, I suspect rural residents feel constant threat by immigrants not just because of their location, but because of the types of employment available.

Economic competition, like anywhere else, is a huge threat to one's livelihood, but perhaps more so in small towns. Rural towns do not have the political clout and sheer number of interest groups as large cities. What ends up occurring, in many cases, is that individuals of affluent backgrounds have an enormous amount of political power. For example, in one of the small towns my colleagues and I visited, we met a private sector attorney who was also a council member, the county attorney, and a school board member. He was able to do this because of the

lack of competition for these political positions and because of the economic resources allotted to him. In small towns, well-paying jobs do not necessarily mean college educated corporate-level jobs. In many instances, a good living can be made in home construction, food-processing plants, and agriculture. Because many jobs like this do not need much formal education, these are, of course, the types of jobs that immigrants will try to seek out as well. Therefore, it should not be taken lightly how important job competition is in rural America and why this might significantly influence attitudes towards immigrants.

The race variables are also important to note in model 1. The model suggests that there is no statistically significant difference between whites and Hispanics who feel like they have lost a job to an immigrant. However, blacks seem to think that they or a family member has lost a job because of an immigrant. This is consistent with previous work examining attitudes towards immigrants when economic competition is occurring between blacks and Latinos (Gay 2006). The comparison variable between blacks and Latinos is a very strong predictor of threat. On average, blacks are 15% more likely to believe they lost a job to an immigrant than Hispanics, all else equal. We would expect this to be the case because Latinos might be more sympathetic to immigrants and might not think they lost a job because they might be an immigrant themselves. The competition that blacks face because of immigrants is obviously a threat to their well-being because of the similar occupations both labor-forces undertake. Because my findings are consistent with other scholarly work, I am confident in the results provided by the models. It is important to acknowledge the economic competition that occurs between minority groups. Blacks have historically been a strong workforce in labor-intensive work. Now, however, Latinos are starting to move into areas previously or still concentrated by blacks and becoming

an economic labor force. For example, much was made in the news about Latinos moving into New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina forced thousands of African Americans to relocate.

Looking at the statistically significant socio-economic variables and their predicted probabilities, Age has the overall strongest impact when the variable changes from its minimum to its maximum. Yet, the effect is quite minimal when we look at a yearly progression. Still, the variable suggests that younger generations feel more threatened by immigrants in their job opportunities. Labor-intensive jobs are usually obtained by a younger workforce who can deal with the heat, exhaustion, and lower education needed to qualify for such jobs. Therefore, it should be no surprise that age is associated with feelings of job threat due to immigrants.

Education, Income, and Employment Status are all individual economic indicators that are associated with the respondent believing that they may have lost a job because of an immigrant. Each is important because the variable can be interpreted two ways. For example, the education variable leads us to believe that as education increases respondents are less likely to believe they have lost a job to an immigrant. The interpretation of that variable is correct, but it can also be interpreted as, the lower the respondent's education, the more likely they are to believe that an immigrant took their job. Likewise, respondents whose income is above \$75,000 per year are significantly less likely to believe they lost a job because of an immigrant. However, respondents whose income is below \$75,000 per year are more likely to think they lost a job to an immigrant. I point these two variables out because they clearly illustrate competition between blue-collar workers and immigrants, but not white-collar workers and immigrants. The variables suggest that immigrants are not threatening college graduates and professionals, but individuals who have lower levels of education who depend on jobs like construction, food plants, and agriculture for their livelihood. These are the types of jobs that immigrants also compete for

because of the little formal education needed for these types of jobs. The income variable supports my assumption. Respondents of higher economic status do not feel like they are being threatened by immigrants because their livelihood is safe. However, individuals from lower economic status feel more threatened by immigrants because they tend to compete for the same types of jobs.

Employment Status compliments the economic indicators as well. The model suggests that respondents who have a full-time job are less likely to believe they lost a job to an immigrant. Of course this also means that respondents who are not fully employed are more likely to believe they lost a job to an immigrant. I highlight this point because it is impossible to know for sure why a person did not get a job, but if an individual believes that they do not have a full-time job because of an immigrant then this is a personal threat on his/her livelihood. The perception of losing a job to an immigrant is like the perception of the respondent believing they have lots of immigrant contact. While the reality may not reflect that situation, the respondent's beliefs may overtake reality and therefore influence their decision-making process.

### **Threat on Quality of Life**

Looking at perception on whether individuals believe that their local government services has gotten better or worse due to immigrants is important. As I mentioned above, when the respondent hears this question it could trigger feelings towards a variety of local government services. Overall, however, it puts into the mind of the respondent that immigrants could make visits to the hospital more time-consuming and congested or that immigrants may have contributed to more efficient construction on busy streets. In Model 2, higher positive coefficients suggest respondents believe their local government services have gotten "worse" due to recent immigrants. The results indicate that, on average, rural residents are more likely than



urban residents to think that their local government services have gotten worse because of recent immigrants.

Looking at the predicted probabilities, rural residents are about 10% more likely than urban residents to believe that their local government services have gotten worse since the arrival of recent immigrants, all else equal. This is a large impact on the dependent variable because we are only considering whether or not the respondent lives in a rural area or an urban area. There are many factors that could influence why an individual would blame immigrants on the worsening of their services. Many of which are socio-economic factors, which are controlled for in this analysis. But simply taking geographic location into consideration allows scholars to view rural and urban differences in ways we have not previously examined them. There is not a study on the rural and urban divide and perceptions of services at the local-level. Looking at who threatens the livelihood of individuals at the local-level is becoming increasingly important due to the changing demographics in rural towns across the U.S. By understanding why immigrants are a threat to rural residents, scholars can begin to look at ways in which individuals can overcome feelings of threat by recent immigrants.

When we are looking at what threatens individuals it is important to look at multiple aspects of their lives. This question, I feel, takes into account many different aspects of the respondent's life. By illustrating that rural residents-more than urban residents-feel like their services have gotten worse, it becomes clear that the threat caused by immigrants plays an intricate role in the respondents' policy attitudes. Perhaps in urban areas, people expect traffic congestion and longer waiting time for meals, construction, and health care. This is not typically the case in rural areas where the population is so small that waiting times are usually minimal. Yet, as I argue, because changes in small towns are so visible, rural residents may feel like their

waiting times at a hospital or their tax money going into bilingual education has made their overall local services worse due to recent immigrants.

Race is also associated with attitudes towards local government services due to recent immigrants. Whites and blacks are both more likely than Hispanics to believe that their local government services has gotten worse because of recent immigrants. On average, whites and African Americans are 19% and 12% more likely than Latinos to believe their services have gotten worse due to recent immigrants, respectively. Latinos seem to be more sympathetic to recent immigrants because perhaps they, a family member, or a friend is a recent immigrant and they believe that recent immigrants have made their community better. Remember, this question is unique in that it allows the respondent to think about what local government services are important to them. Perhaps Latinos feel like local government services have gotten better because of recent immigrants because they are able to find Spanish language assistance in government services. Since there is a new population of Spanish speakers, localities may have needed to hire bilingual education teachers, bilingual police officers, attorneys, and medical assistants. In this case, for Latinos, their services have gotten better due to recent immigrants because there are more social services workers that can address issues that are important to them.

Negative attitudes by whites and blacks towards immigrants may be a function of placing the blame on Latinos for tough economic times. Historically, during bad economic times immigrants receive the bulk of the blame in state and local politics (Hutchison 1981; Cornelius 1982). I believe this is occurring in rural towns throughout the United States. Rather than talk about the role of the government in bad economic times or placing the blame on policies, political elites tend to focus on how immigrants are making their community worse. This is illustrated by the names of some state and local policies that have passed across the country. In

2006, only a few months after this survey was taken, the city council of Hazelton, PA, passed the Illegal Immigration Relief Act. The name of the ordinance suggests that the town has been consumed by immigrants and thus is in need of relief. In 2007, in Manassas, VA, supporters of anti-immigrant ordinances began a grassroots movement called “Help Save Manassas”. This group was visible in the media, in city-council meetings, and through the internet where hundreds of anonymous posts fed the growing perception that immigrants were to blame for the worsening conditions. Perhaps the most notable state law passed, Arizona’s SB1070 was called the “Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act”. On paper who could disagree with not supporting law enforcement and wanting safe neighborhoods? This law with its basis in racial profiling targeted Latinos as the problem. The name of the law suggests that recent immigrants, and in Arizona with its proximity to Mexico means Latinos, are causing problems for the police. Moreover, they are threatening the well-being of your family’s neighborhood and thus their livelihood. Therefore, the race variable seems like a likely candidate to be related to attitudes on government services due to recent immigrants. Because much of the news media focuses negatively on Latinos and the names of laws and ordinances across the country builds the perception that Latinos are to blame for the deteriorating services.

Age and marital status are two socio-economic factors that are also associated with thinking that recent immigrants make local government services worse. The Age probability from minimum to maximum illustrated an overall 27% change in the dependent variable. This demonstrates, on average, vast differences between respondents who are 18 and those who are 97. Younger respondents may actually feel like recent immigrants have made their local services better because they have become friends with newer generations of Latinos. Older generations, more than younger generations, seem to think that recent immigrants have made local

government services in their town worse. Older individuals perhaps think about only a decade or two ago when their community looked much different in terms of demographics. Because the Latino population is booming across the U.S. this may influence older generations to think that Latinos are the cause of local government services not being as efficient as “they used to be”.

Married respondents are significantly more likely than single respondents to think that local services have gotten worse. I attribute this finding also to news media and the names of immigration laws across the country. For married couples many of whom have children, their family is the most important thing to him/her. If they feel their child is not getting the best education possible due to some tax money going to bilingual education, then this can be seen as a threat to the individual’s livelihood. Also, if hospital visits take longer because of the changing demographics in a town this could lead married couples to believe that their local government services have gotten worse due to recent immigrants.

Finally, Republicans and Conservatives are also more likely to think that their local government services have gotten worse due to recent immigrants. This finding should not be surprising since anti-immigrant laws and ordinances that have sprouted up across the country have been led by Republicans and conservatives. They use the narrative that immigrants have become a drain on social services, education, and police. The state laws and local ordinances, and their names, are drafted with the intentions of placing blame on recent immigrants for the worsening conditions in their community.

Each of the statistically significant variables in Model 2 demonstrates that respondents perceive recent immigrants make their local government services worse. In bad economic times, as was the case in 2006 when this survey was taken, immigrants are typically used as a scapegoat by politicians and local elites. By using the media and internet to further these perceptions, elites

are able to place the blame on immigrants and thus pursue their political agenda, such as passing local immigrant ordinances. The negative coverage of Latinos in the media enhances the respondent's perception that recent immigrants are a drain on the community.

### **Threat of Crime**

The final model in Table 4 examine whether or not respondents believe immigrants from Latin American countries increase crime. This is the only dependent variable that specifically looks at immigrants from Spanish speaking countries so we are certain the respondent is thinking about Latinos. Further, because of the negative media coverage of Latinos, this question does a good job of examining perceptions of crime due to Latinos.

Model 3 supports my hypothesis and shows that, on average, rural residents are more likely than urban residents to believe that Latin American immigrants increase crime. The comparison between rural and urban residents is statistically significant at the 0.10 level and a 0.05 level on a one-tailed test. I mention this because all other rural variables on the other models are significant at a 0.05 level on a two-tailed test. Still, even on a two-tailed test and being 90% confident that my results are not by chance, the importance of the rural and urban divide for this variable is strong when you consider the predicted probabilities. When using logistic regression it is important to keep in mind the actual effects on the dependent

On average, rural residents are 15% more likely than urban residents to characterize Latin American immigrants as criminals. This is quite shocking considering urban areas have more immigrants and more crime than rural areas. The fact that rural residents perceive Latinos as criminals is very important in understanding why rural populations are more likely to support local immigrant ordinances. Psychologically, they view Latinos as a threat to their family's well-being. This again illustrates the difference between the perception of the respondent and the

reality. Realistically speaking, we do not know whether or not Latinos have increased crime in the respondent's city or town. Regardless of what has caused (or not caused) an increase in crime, the rural respondents are more likely to believe it is because of Latinos. When it comes to their decision-making process, for rural residents, supporting anti-immigrant ordinances leads them to believe that they are doing what is best for their community and their family. In this case, they are ridding themselves of threatening criminals.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I demonstrate why rural residents are more likely than urban residents to support anti-immigrant policies. While most studies focus on "who" supports anti-immigrant policies, little research examines the "why". As my models illustrate, socio-economic, partisan, and ideological factors do play a role in attitudes towards immigrants, however, I believe that support for these anti-immigrant policies is rooted in psychological feelings towards immigrants.

The models depicted in Tables 2-4 illustrate "why" rural residents are more likely to exhibit negative attitudes towards immigrants. In their view, immigrants are to blame for the problems in their town. My argument comes down to the respondent's view of reality versus perception. Realistically, we know that more immigrants live in urban areas. Yet, the perception remains among rural residents that there are "many" immigrants in their area. The perception by rural residents that there are "many" new immigrants in their area leads them to believe that any negative changes to their town must be the product of immigrants.

The changes in their community are not sitting well with rural residents either. Just by sheer numbers, we know that there are more limited English speakers in urban areas. Why then do rural residents feel like they come into contact more with limited English speakers than urban residents? And why are they more bothered by the contact? The dynamic of a small rural town

keeps rural residents insulated from people of different cultures and nationalities. Therefore, even when coming into contact with a limited English speaker once a week might seem negligible to an urban resident, to rural residents it feels like a lot because of their isolation from people that are unlike them. Further, they feel bothered by this contact because rural residents are supporters of the status quo. An urban resident may not feel as bothered by having contact with a limited English speaker because they know many live in urban areas so there is not much of an element of surprise. Contrast this to living in a rural area where immigrants and Spanish speakers are historically atypical and the feelings of anxiety and unease begin to increase.

When looking at threat and loss, can we determine with concrete evidence that an immigrant took a job from another worker? Whether immigrants are deteriorating the local quality of life? Or whether they are the single cause of increases in crime? The reality is we cannot determine any of these questions for their validity. Still, among rural residents the blame on jobs lost, worsening government services, and increases in crime falls solely on immigrants. Why is this? I argue that rural residents are more likely to perceive contact, threat, and loss due to immigrants because of the smaller fishbowl-like livelihood that occurs in a rural town.

Urban residents may not perceive threat at the heights of rural residents because a many more factors can influence their situation. Urban areas each have their residential neighborhood so individuals living in an affluent part of town may not believe that an immigrant took their job because a college or professional degree is needed. Likewise, residents of a large city should already be expecting 5 o'clock traffic jams and restaurant waiting lines so they may not place the blame on immigrants as much as rural residents. Finally, population changes in urban areas are not felt to as great of a degree as they are in smaller communities. Because of the smaller geographic area, visible changes to a community are heightened. Since rural residents believe

there are “many” new immigrants in their community, they may place the blame on them for any increases in crime. Overall, the limited resources and expectations of living in a small town make the threat of immigrants amplify the contact, threat, and losses.

Still, the question remains, how are these psychological feelings of threat and loss related to immigration policy attitudes? I have stated that these feelings are related to immigration policy preferences, but have not provided any evidence. At this point it is still an assumption. In the next chapter I bring these two ideas together. I look solely at rural white residents using a face-to-face survey conducted in four rural Midwestern towns. I illustrate that feelings of political and economic loss drive rural white support for local immigrant ordinances.



### **Chapter 3: Midwestern Case Study on Rural America**

Many studies that analyze immigration policy are now outdated, most of which examine attitudes towards federal immigration laws. The few that look at local immigration policy use data that was taken after the large majority of local ordinances passed. Out of the 47 rural localities that have passed immigrant ordinances all but one occurred within the last ten years and most in the latter half of the decade. I believe analyzing anxiety and threat with the 2006 Pew Immigration Survey is great to use in this study. I feel like at that point in time, immigration hostilities and feelings of threat were at a boiling point. The demographic and visible changes in a given town were more apparent at the backend of the 2010s. Further, in 2007, the inaction of the federal government and President Bush's attempt at immigration reform had stalled and policy changes at the federal level were dead. It is soon thereafter that we began to see state and local governments take immigration into their own hands. This is why I use two nationally representative polls from 2010 to analyze actual policy changes. That being said, because the 2010 CBS/NYT are weekly polls they only ask a few relevant questions of respondents each week and they only include measures of socio-economic status, partisanship, and ideology as controls. They do not compliment their survey with the broad breath of questions that the 2006 Pew Immigration Survey does. Therefore, while I can make conclusions about why rural residents are more likely to support local immigrant ordinances, I cannot be confident in my assertions. To overcome this problem I include a survey of rural residents taken in the summer of 2011.

In February 2006, at the urging of my cousin, I moved to Dodge City, Kansas. He and his partner specialize in immigration, criminal, and worker's compensation cases at their law firm. At the time I was thinking about attending law school myself and he offered to let me work

under his tutelage to see if it was something I would be interested in doing. While practicing law wasn't exactly for me, living in Dodge City for those two years gave me insight into my future research.

Living in Southwestern Kansas, I was able to see first-hand the demographic changes that had occurred in rural areas like this all across the country. Dodge City, for example, had become 50% Hispanic due to the labor needs of meat packing plants. As a witness to these changes, I began to wonder how rural whites felt about the numerous Mexican restaurants, bars, and overall Mexican culture that had encompassed their small town. I assumed that rural whites knew that their town could not have had the economic success it did without immigrants and the labor force they provided. However, I wondered if rural white felt like their traditional way of life felt threatened because of the booming immigrant population. This life experience led me to begin to ponder research questions that I was able to further investigate in graduate school and eventually led to the 2011 Rural Community Survey.

### **2011 Rural Community Survey**

The 2011 Rural Community Survey is the product of collaboration between me, Brian Hanson, and Thomas Ringenberg. The idea for the project came in our first year at the University of Kansas while we were taking a research design class. We were bumping ideas off each other and talking about our particular research interests. We were talking about survey data, our own experiences in small towns, and immigration reform. I had once lived in a small town in Kansas, Brian was originally from a rural town in Nebraska, and Thomas was from Southwestern Missouri. Each of us was aware of the changing demographics in the towns we were familiar with and we agreed that agriculture and meat-packing plants sprouting up across the Midwest had played an important role in these changes. As we were talking about these topics, it became

more apparent to us that if anyone ever wanted to use public opinion to study rural populations the data was usually poor. Nationally representative surveys like the one used in chapter 2 typically only have around 100 rural respondents. We began to discuss ways we could develop our own rural survey and with the blessing of our professor the seeds for this project were planted.

We submitted a proposal to the University Of Kansas Department Of Political Science’s Thompson Summer Grant. We argued that with the limited amount of rural public opinion, our project would benefit scholars of rural politics, Latino politics, and immigration politics. We also suggested that the study would benefit the University of Kansas because it would appear that the university has a vested interest in the rural populations of Southwestern Kansas.

We had grandiose ideas of visiting eight rural communities around the Midwest, however, as many scholars can tell you, once the amount of grant money is allotted it does not go as far as you’d think. Therefore, we became very selective in the cities we wanted to visit. We settled on four communities, two in Kansas and two in Nebraska. The communities we visited from June 2011-July 2011 are Garden City and Dodge City, Kansas and Grand Island and Fremont, Nebraska. We picked these four localities for a number of reasons.

Table 5. Rural Community Survey Towns

	2000 Population	2010 Population	2000 Latino Population	2010 Latino Population	Latino Pop. Change
Dodge City, KS	25,176	27,340	42.9%	57.5%	+14.6%
Garden City, KS	28,451	26,658	43.9%	48.5%	+4.6%
Grand Island, NE	42,940	48,520	15.9%	26.7%	+10.8%
Fremont, NE	25,174	26,397	4.3%	11.9%	+7.6%

First, they fit into our definition of “rural”. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, these four towns fit our definition: Garden City (26,658), Dodge City (27,340), Grand Island (48,520), and

Freemont (26,397). Second, the size and growth of the Latino population is very diverse. The Latino population growth ranged from 4.6% in Garden City, KS to 14.6% in Dodge City, KS. Third, each was driving distance from the University of Kansas. We were on the road for 4 weeks and we needed to come back to Lawrence to restock on supplies. Finally, it was cost efficient for us. We knew friends and family in Dodge City, Garden City, and Fremont, NE so we only needed to pay for a hotel in Grand Island.

Looking at the towns individually, each came with its own focal point that intrigued us. Dodge City, KS a western town made famous by Wyatt Earp, cowboys, and outlaws in the 1800s is now majority Latino. The Latino population has brought this small western town back to life. They have weekly gun fight shows on their main street, Wyatt Earp Blvd. And they recently opened up a casino to try to attract more tourism into their community. Destinations like Dodge City are atypical immigrant destinations. The Latino population is diverse in Dodge City as well. During our field work, we met immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Argentina, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico, and even some non-Latino immigrants from Haiti and Somalia. In conversing with some of the immigrants we met in Dodge City, it became clear that they came because of the jobs available in their town. The overall size of the Latino population in this town illustrates the growth and demographic change in the town due to meat-packing plants.

Garden City, Kansas is unique in its own ways as well. This town had the lowest percent change in the Latino population over the last ten years. However, this town has been home to many different types of immigrants since the 1800s because of the railroad expansion to the west.

After the first settlers arrived Garden City in 1878, a post office was quickly established in the town. The town's cofounders James and William Fulton soon took the lead in pressuring the Santa Fe Railroad to build a station in Garden City. In May 1879, the railroad station's first telegraph was sent indicating, "Office O.K. at Garden City" (Blanchard 1931). Once the railroad station was fully operational, the city's first immigrants were white settlers who displaced American Indians in the region. Also, many Mexican families in Garden City can trace their roots to this time. The addition of the railroad brought new and expanding economic opportunities. Many Mexican immigrants found work in a sugar beet plant in Garden City and many more came looking for other types of agricultural work (Klepper 2010). The addition of the railroad paved the way for some of Kansas' first Mexican immigrants to settle in this town and, therefore, its unique history adds to this study.

The smallest town in our survey is Fremont, Nebraska. As we talked about potential towns to visit, this town was always very important to us. We wanted to look at Fremont because of the relatively small size of the Latino population. Unlike the other three cities in our sample, Fremont's Latino population falls below the 16.3% national average (Passel et. al. 2011). Fremont is interesting because its population change got it close to the national average in a short amount of time. The town's Latino population grew from 4.3% to 11.9% in 10 years. Perhaps most important to this study is that Fremont, Nebraska is the only town we were able to visit that had passed an anti-immigrant ordinance. This is the "Small Nebraska town" that was addressed in the local housing ordinance in Chapter 2 (Table 1). With 57% of the vote, on June 21, 2010 the citizens of Fremont, Nebraska passed ordinance No. 5165 by ballot initiative. On the ballot initiative given to voters, the following was written:

WHEREAS, The presence of illegal aliens places a fiscal burden on the City, increasing the demand for, and cost of, public benefits and services, and;

WHEREAS, Crimes committed by illegal aliens in the City harm the health, safety and welfare of U.S. citizens and aliens lawfully present in the United States, and;  
WHEREAS, The employment of unauthorized aliens in the City displaces authorized United States workers and adversely affects their wages.

This ordinance “prohibit[ed] the harboring of illegal aliens or hiring of unauthorized aliens”. Since this ordinance has passed it has been stopped by federal court-order.

The federal government, through the Department of Justice, sued this small town and argued that immigration is a federal issue and this town surpassed their legal jurisdiction. Many critics and political leaders hoped the issue would die in federal court. However, on July 2, 2013, nearly two years after its original passage, the 8<sup>th</sup> U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the law to this dismay of business & political leaders and immigrant rights advocates. What subsequently followed this ruling is truly remarkable. The economic losses due to the immigrants leaving, and thus leaving a meat-packing plant undermanned, was quickly felt business & political leaders in the town. Political leaders claimed the law made Fremont look racist and business leaders pressured lawmakers to take another vote on the law. Therefore, on February 11, 2014 a revote was taken on Ordinance 5165, this time it passed with 60% of the vote, an increase from the previous ballot initiative. This best illustrates the dilemma facing rural whites: like any other town or city, they welcome economic expansion and opportunities, but at what cost? For rural whites in Fremont, the cost of having a perceived significant immigrant population in their town supersedes the economic opportunities that they may provide.

Grand Island, Nebraska is by far the biggest town in our analysis. Grand Island received its name from French traders who called it La Grande Isle because it was looked like an island due to the crossing Wood and Platt Rivers. In 1865, Union Pacific Railroad built a station just off the island and called it Grand Island Station. The railroad station brought growth to a community that was known for hotels and merchants. It was a destination for gold prospectors and sellers

since it was on the way to Pike's Peak Colorado, an area booming due to the rare mineral. During the late 1880s, Grand Island saw its agricultural & mechanical infrastructure greatly increase. The building and expansion of cigar factories, flour mills, sugar beet processing factories, and other domestic products sprang from Grand Island at this time (Grand-Island.com 2014).

More recently, Grand Island has seen its Latino population grow since the 1980s. The expansion of the sugar beet industry, along with a large scale meat-packing plant owned by Swift & Co. contributed to the Latino growth. This town differs from the others in its history with the federal government and dealing with immigrants. On December 12, 2006 a concerted effort by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency called "Operation Wagon Trail" raided six meat-packing plants in six different states, Swift & Co.'s Grand Island plant was one of these plants. The raid was part of an ongoing investigation of social security fraud; all in all, over 250 undocumented immigrants were bused to Iowa by ICE officials to await their deportation hearings. Seven years later, Yolanda Nuncio still describes the incident as if it was yesterday, "I don't think you'll ever get over that feeling in this community that day because you could see the helicopters, you were hearing stories, you saw the law enforcement, and by then people know what was going on and people were fearful" (Brocius 2013). The immediate impacts were heavily felt by the Grand Island community as a whole as well, Nuncio states, "Businesses were suffering because they had no one coming in to buy things. People were afraid. And then the rumors were flying around—the *migra's* here, they're coming, they're going to go to your houses and the restaurants. So people stayed home, where they felt they were a little safer" (ibid). Perhaps most difficult for the community as a whole was to address children of those taken of why their mother or father had been taken. It is important to note that local officials were

asked by ICE to assist and participate in the raids; Grand Island Police Chief Steve Lamken refused to cooperate. This is a clear distinction between some rural towns who want their local law enforcement to act as immigration officials and other rural towns who do not.

We visited each of the towns dressed with professional University of Kansas polo shirts. We wanted people to take our survey seriously and if we happened to randomly select an undocumented immigrant we wanted to make it clear that we were not working for a government agency nor would we provide any sensitive information to such agencies. We made these stipulations clear during our institutional review board (IRB) application. We spent between 3-5 days in each community and we solicited volunteers to participate in our survey in a variety of ways. Upon arriving into a town we would go to their public records book keeper and ask for a voting precinct map. With this map we would randomly pick out a neighborhood that we would spend the next few hours canvassing. When we arrived at the neighborhood each of us was assigned a street or two and we decided to knock on every third door.

We also visited each town's community college. Before we visited a town we would email community college professors and instructors and tell them that we were graduate student researchers from KU and tell them about our project. We would ask if they would be willing for us to ask their classes if they would like to fill out our survey. We ended up surveying 10 different community college classes total. Those who did not let us speak to their class insisted that their class would not be interested in the survey because of the subject matter of the course, the lack of time allotted to them over the summer term, or they simply did not return our emails. Finally, we visited local businesses, non-profits, and public offices and asked if we could leave a few our survey pamphlets in their office. We did not want to bother them during business hours



so we would drop them off and pick-up-any completed surveys the next day. Combined, these three survey methods yielded a total of 341 respondents.

When we asked volunteers if they wanted to participate in the survey, we made sure to tell them how important it was for their town. We explained that most nationally representative surveys take very small samples of rural populations and that this survey was an avenue to give people like them a voice. Many of them appreciated our effort and told us that it was about time someone wanted to know what they thought because they felt like their politicians at the state capital and Washington, D.C. did not care about them.

We were not without our problems during this project. As you can imagine, racial tensions over immigration is a very passionate issue for many people. In one example, while we were in one of the towns we had dropped off several surveys on the same street hoping to pick them up completed the next day. When we went by the next day, the first house told us they had changed their minds and were not interested in our project. We knocked on the second house and the person told us that he did not like our survey and subsequently ripped it apart in front of us. Finally, on the third house on the same street, the resident told us flat out “I hate Mexicans and I don’t want to do your survey”. In Fremont, NE many of the town’s residents were not interested in our survey because they were angry that the federal government had halted their immigration ordinance. They simply wanted the Obama administration to drop their lawsuit to allow their city government to enforce their laws. The residents did not like all of the negative national attention the ordinance had brought to their town. In their minds, they just wanted their laws to be enforced. Their ordinance and national coverage of the town was still fresh in the minds of its residents when we visited, it just so happened we were in Fremont during the one-year anniversary of the passage of the ordinance.

## **Data & Methods**

The survey itself was comprised of 73 multi-part questions for Latinos and 53 questions for non-Latinos. There are more questions for Latinos because I wanted to examine political behavior of rural Latinos in future research. The survey was administered face-to-face, in a classroom setting, or for available for later pick-up. The respondent was able to choose their language preference, English or Spanish. Our survey utilizes questions used on previous national surveys, such as the General Social Survey, the American National Election Studies surveys, the Harris Poll, Gallup, and the 2006 Latino National Survey. The use of these questions provides us with increased confidence in the validity of our results, as the questions have been previously tested numerous times.

With this survey, I am able to expand on the analysis from chapter 2 and bring my previous hypotheses together. I suggest that,

H6: Rural residents who exhibit higher degrees of threat from Hispanic immigrants are more likely to support local anti-immigrant policies.

This hypothesis stems from the findings in chapter 2. Rural residents are more likely than urban residents to illustrate feelings of threat and anxiety about Latinos and immigrants. Therefore, I suggest that, for rural residents, when these psychological feelings of threat are present then they are going to be more likely to support anti-Latino policies.

## **Dependent Variables**

I measure this hypothesis with two questions that analyze attitudes towards a local city ordinance and another that measures a broader spectrum of anti-minority policy. The first question is my survey asks,

*“Should an English only law be passed and enforced in your town? Yes or No”*

I include this question because my previous research on rural immigrant ordinances demonstrated that English-only laws were the most frequently passed. When English-only laws

are passed, the wording is usually vague in what it actually sets out to accomplish. Typically, it means that all official government business must be conducted in English, English-only ballots, or workplace etiquette. English-only policies are a way to demean the Spanish language. It infers that Spanish is a secondary language and is not welcome in a given city or state. For Latino children, when they feel like their culture and heritage is under attack, such as through the use of English-only policies, they exhibit lower self-esteem and their grades suffer (Padilla et. al. 1991). Padilla et. al. (1991) suggest that the secondary status placed on Spanish due to English-only laws appeal to nativist sentiments and are inherently racist. Therefore, looking at whether or not the respondent believes there should be an English-only law passed in their town demonstrates how rural residents try to use this ordinance as a way to deter further immigration. I test this variable using a logistic regression model where all respondents who stated that there should be an English-only law in there town are coded as 1 and those who disagreed are coded as 0.

Next, I use a broader measure of attitudes towards local ordinances as my second dependent variable. In this question, I look specifically at racial profiling and, the question states,

*“Some people say that law enforcement should be able to stop or detain people of certain racial backgrounds if these groups are thought to be more likely to commit crimes. This is called racial profiling. Others think racial profiling should not be done because it harasses many innocent people on account of their race. Which of these opinions do you agree with most? Allow Racial Profiling or Oppose Racial Profiling?”*

I use this question for a couple of important reasons. Racial profiling is certainly more of a broad policy question that affects many different minorities not just Latinos. However, in each of the four towns we visited, the total black population was between 2.8% in Garden City and 0.07% in Fremont, NE. Further, Table 5 illustrates Latinos are by far the dominate minority group in each community. Second, this questions whether respondents who perceive people they believe to

commit more crimes should be subject to racial profiling. I previously illustrated that rural residents are more likely than urban residents to believe that Latin American immigrants commit more crimes. Hence, this policy question directly taps into those fears. Finally, Arizona's SB107 law largely hinged on whether or not local law enforcement should have the power to stop and detain anyone they deemed suspicious. This policy question addresses this issue as well. Racial profiling is a policy that is enforced at the local-level because it is local law enforcement that is given the power to enact this law. Thus, using this question should illicit responses from rural residents who are thinking of Latinos because of their size in the community and whether they believe local law enforcement should have the power to stop suspicious looking Latinos. I also use a logistic regression model to analyze this variable. I code all respondents who answered that racial profiling would be allowed as 1 and all those who opposed the policy as 0.

### **Independent Variables**

My primary independent variable is Hispanic Threat. This variable is an additive variable that is comprised of two questions that measures the perception of the respondent's losses due to Hispanics. As I mentioned in chapter 2, the perception of threat by rural residents is going to lead them to be more hostile to Latinos. If rural whites feel like their livelihood is being taken from them because of Hispanics then they are going to be more likely to support policies that punish Latinos. I use two questions that measure the feelings of economic and political loss. The first question tapping 'political loss' asks:

*"The more influence that Hispanics have in politics the less influence people like me will have in politics. Strongly Disagree (0), Somewhat Disagree (1), Somewhat Agree (2), or Strongly Agree (3)"*

If rural residents perceive that they are losing political power to Hispanics then this might shape their policy decision making on local ordinances. The few resources available to rural

communities heighten the importance for political power in areas of influence such as: county boards, city councils, and school boards. The ability to control power in these areas of politics allow individuals to designate where the city should allocate funds to improve roads, decide which types of businesses should get local tax breaks, and how much money schools should allocate for bilingual education. In rural towns, where there is a much lower concentration of outside interest groups influencing politics, the citizens in power are very important.

The second question addresses the perceived economic losses due to Hispanics. It states:

*“More good jobs for Hispanics mean fewer good jobs for people like me. Strongly Disagree (0), Somewhat Disagree (1), Somewhat Agree (2), or Strongly Agree (3)”*

The common argument used by opponents of immigration reform is that it will flood the market with a new labor force and therefore hurt job prospects for Americans. Immigration reform has not yet passed, however-some rural residents may still perceive that Hispanics will increase competition for good jobs and therefore hurt their own job opportunities. The threat of losing out on good paying jobs due to immigrants is a direct attack on their pocketbook and their family’s livelihood.

It is important to remember that both of these questions hinge on the respondent’s perception of what will happen because of Hispanics. Realistically, neither we nor the respondent absolutely knows whether or not he/she will lose political and economic power because of Hispanics. The respondent may have other issues that hinder them from achieving their economic or political goals like lower education, drug use or criminal backgrounds, or work ethic. Yet, they may not take those issues into consideration because they are able to place the blame on Hispanics for their current situation. It is much like how political elites have historically blamed immigrants for economic downturns, but at the individual-level. The total score of the respondent’s answers to these questions is added up and quantified as “Hispanic

Threat". This variable runs from 0-6 where the least threatened respondents are equal to 0 and the most threatened rural residents are equal to 6. For instance, if the respondent answered that they strongly disagreed with both statements, that they do not feel at all like Hispanics are taking political and economic opportunities away from them, then their total score is a zero because of the two zero scores in parenthesis in the question above. If a respondent strongly agrees on both questions that Hispanics are taking their economic and political power then that respondent is given a total score of 6. Having an additive variable like this allows me to access how policy support changes as Hispanic threat changes at varying degrees.

For likeness with Chapter 2, I include all the same control variables found in Tables 2-4. Gender, socio-economic status, partisanship, and ideology are all included in the analysis. The few changes should be noted. In the national opinion dataset, income is as a dichotomous variable with \$75,000 per year as the cut off. In this analysis, the income variable is again dichotomous but the cut off is \$55,000. I do this because the highest income marker in our survey was over \$65,000 and I wanted to get a fair amount of respondents in each group as a cut off. Also, rural areas are typically poorer so making over 55,000 dollars a year is very much on the higher end of the income scale.

The main change between this study and the national study is that I am only including whites in this analysis. I do this because the object of this study is to illustrate what types of rural residents are more likely to support anti-immigrant policies. The national datasets illustrate that Latinos are not anxious or threatened by other immigrants or Latinos, therefore there is no need to include them in this study as a comparison group. As for blacks, there were so few in the communities (average of 1.87% of the population) that we only surveyed 9 blacks or 2.64% of

our sample. Therefore, including blacks would not add to this analysis. Including only whites in this analysis yielded a total of 213 respondents.

### **Findings**

In Table 6 you will see 4 columns. The first column on the far left (1) represents the coefficients for the logistic regression model that examines support for a local English-only ordinance in the respondent's town. The column to the right (1a) demonstrates the probability change in the dependent variable for the statistically significant variables in column 1. Column 2 illustrates the coefficients for the logistic model that analyzes rural white support for racial profiling. The final column demonstrates the change in probability in support for racial profiling as the statistically significant variables in column 2 move from their minimum value to their maximum value. The coefficients are followed by their standard errors beneath them.

Table 6. Rural White Support for Local Anti-Immigrant Policies

	(1) Support Local English-only Ordinance	(1a) Probability Change Min→Max	(2) Support for Racial Profiling	(1a) Probability Change Min→Max
Perceived Hispanic Threat	0.542*** (0.103)	.66	0.469*** (0.125)	.41
Female	-0.213 (0.363)		-0.126 (0.419)	
Age	0.0313** (0.0111)	.48	0.0103 (0.0132)	
Education	-0.146 (0.156)		0.185 (0.204)	
Income	-0.463 (0.481)		0.165 (0.536)	
Marital Status	0.357 (0.395)		0.960* (0.482)	.10
Employed	0.342 (0.403)		-0.936* (0.467)	-.11
Republican	1.012** (0.391)	.22	1.213* (0.477)	.14
Conservative	-0.272 (0.391)		0.506 (0.448)	
_cons	-2.976** (1.019)		-4.911*** (1.353)	
<i>N</i>	213		213	
adj. <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.2272		.2198	

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Source: 2011 Rural Community Survey

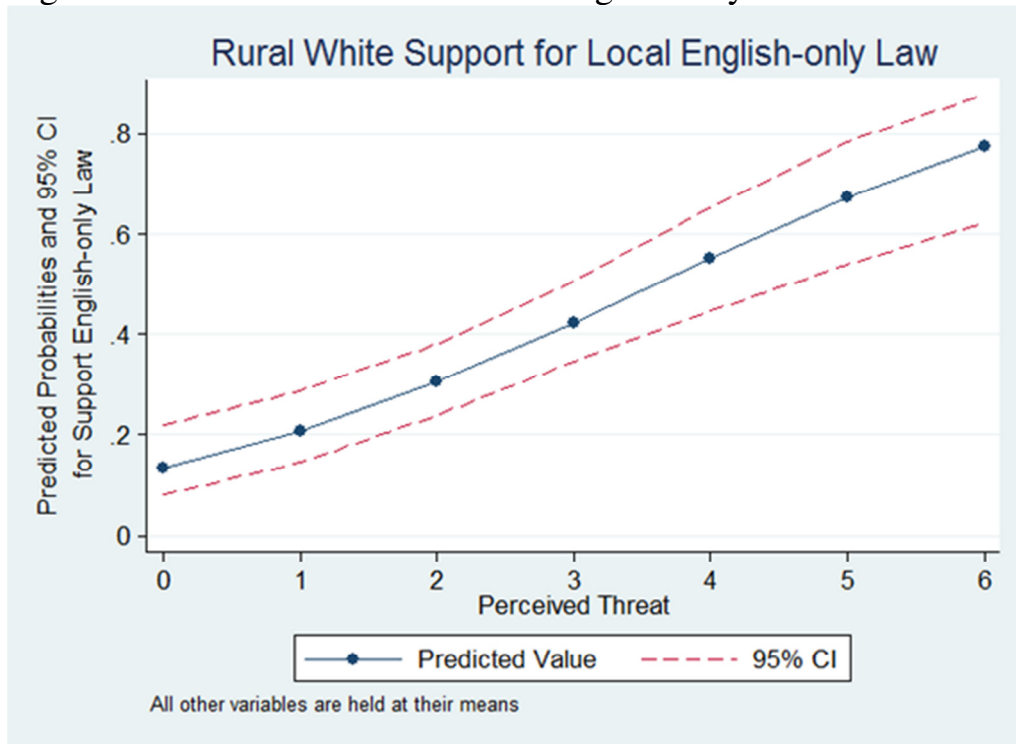
Model 1 examines the variables associated with support for an English-only law in the respondent's community. The amount of threat felt by the rural white respondent in this survey is strongly related to support for an English-only ordinance. The model's findings are statistically significant at below the 0.001 level. This means there is less than a 1/1000<sup>th</sup> percent chance that these results are occurring by accident.

The results suggest that as the amount of threat felt by the respondent increases, their support for local English-only laws also increases. Conversely, respondents who feel little or no



threat by Hispanics are less likely to support local English-only laws. The strength of the results is illustrated in the predicted probabilities. When the Hispanic Threat variable changes from its minimum of 0, those who feel no threat, to its maximum of 6, those who feel the most threat, there is a 66% change in the probability of supporting local English-only laws. Figure 1 illustrates the difference in support for local English laws as threat increases.

Figure 1. Predicted Probabilities for English-only Ordinance



The blue dots connected by the blue line signify the average probability for a respondent with that degree of threat listed on the X-axis. The two red dashed lines represent the 95% confidence intervals as threat increases. The figure demonstrates how each additional degree of threat increases the likelihood of a rural white support for a local English-only law. Respondents who feel no economic or political threat due to Hispanics are, on average, about 12% more likely to support an English-only law. This finding suggests that respondents who are not threatened by Hispanics see no need to institute an ordinance that discriminates against the Spanish language

and culture. There is a stark difference between unthreatened respondents and the most threatened respondents. In this analysis, on average, those who feel most economically and politically threatened by Hispanics have nearly an 80% likelihood of supporting an English-only law in their town. This is where the change in predicated probability stems, the movement from its minimum to its maximum. This finding suggests that respondents who feel most threatened by Hispanics feel they need to do something about the “immigrant problem”.

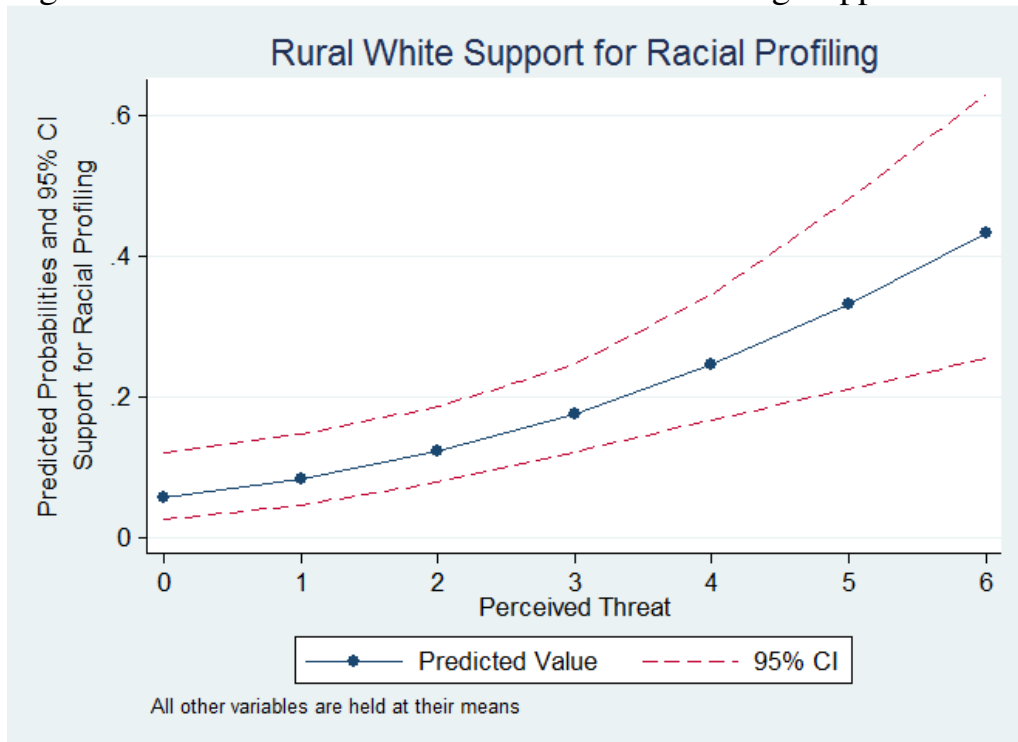
In their perception, Hispanics are a hindrance on their economic and political goals. By supporting local policies like English-only laws they hope that the environment will be hostile enough to persuade Hispanics in their town to leave and dissuade further immigration. This belief is essentially the mindset behind Arizona’s SB1070 law. The belief is that if you make the immigrant’s living situation so bad they will leave your community or not come at all. In effect, support for a local ordinance like English-only does this because it downgrades one’s identity and culture. It makes Latinos feel like second-class citizens. My hypothesis is strongly supported with the findings in Table 6, where threatened rural whites are significantly more likely to support anti-immigrant policies.

The data in Model 2 suggest that an increase in threat due to Hispanics and felt by rural whites is significantly related to support for racial profiling. Likewise, respondents with little or no threat are less likely to support racial profiling. Like the threat variable in Model 1, these results are also statistically significant at the 0.001 level. The very small chance that these results are by accident gives me high confidence that threats of loss due to Hispanics plays an intricate role in immigrant policy support. I argue that in small towns, like the four included in this survey, racial profiling is a policy that disproportionately affects Latinos. The black population in rural towns is negligible and the Latino population is present and growing. Further, the data

shows that supporters of the English-only laws and supporters of racial profiling are correlated. Therefore, I am confident that when rural white respondents are answering this question and thinking about “groups [who] are thought to be more likely to commit crimes”, they are thinking about Hispanics.

The change in probability from those least threatened to those most threatened is also large. On average, there is a 41% difference in supporting racial profiling between the respondents who are least threatened and respondents who are most threatened. Figure 2 below illustrates how varying degrees of threat influence support for racial profiling.

Figure 2. Predicted Probabilities for Racial Profiling Support



Looking at someone with a threat degree of 0 on the X-axis, we can see that on average, there is less than a 10% probability of that type of respondent supporting racial profiling. The figure suggests that someone with 0 threats does not perceive Hispanics as a threat to their economic or political power and therefore would not agree with racial groups being harassed by local law

enforcement. Conversely, someone with a perceived threat-level of 6 views Latinos in their community as a group more likely to commit crimes and therefore are more willing to let local police question and detain members of these groups. This illustrates the power that Arizona's state politicians were willing to give to local law enforcement. Local law enforcement in Arizona, for example, were making the lives of Latinos hard by being able to question and detain anyone they deemed to be suspicious. This led to many Latinos fleeing the state and persuaded others not go there. This is the impact of racial profiling in communities with a significant Latino population. That is why rural whites who are most threatened are the most likely to support racial profiling.

The control variables in both models are in the expected direction and some are statistically significant and noteworthy. In Model 1, age and partisanship are both related to support for English-only laws. Older respondents are more likely than younger respondents to support English-only laws in their town. This might occur because younger respondents may have grown up in school with Latinos and be more sympathetic to Spanish speakers. Older rural whites may be more likely to defend the status quo and less likely to appreciate the changes occurring in their community, perhaps they feel a local English-only law would reverse the changing demographics.

The models both suggest that identifying as a republican is related to support for a local immigrant ordinances. Most studies on attitudes towards immigrant policies suggest that republicans are more likely to support policies that limit immigration. Further, most English-only laws that have passed at the state-level have passed with overwhelming republican majorities. One of the foremost advocates of a national English-only law is Former Senator Samuel Ichiye Hayakawa, a Republican from California. He has been promoting English as the official

language of the United States since 1984. Because of historical republican support of English-only laws this finding is not a surprise. The predicted probabilities suggest that republicans, on average, are 22% more likely than democrats or independents to support a local English-only law. The effect of this variable on the dependent variable is very strong. While holding all other variables at their means, partisanship still determines approximately 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the decision making process on support for local English-only laws. Also, at the state-level, Republican support of laws like racial profiling is evident in laws like Arizona's SB1070. It was passed by a strong republican majority in order to dissuade further immigration to Arizona. Republicans in this sample may believe it would have the same effect at the local-level and therefore keep unwanted Latinos from their community.

Model 2 also includes statistically significant controls that inform us a great deal about the types of rural white residents that would support a racial profiling law. The model suggests that married residents are more likely than singles to support racial profiling. This is in the expected direction. Illustrated earlier, national public opinion suggests that married respondents are more likely to exhibit negative attitudes towards immigrants. The threat to their family is no doubt an influencing factor in their decision making process. Since rural residents believe Latinos increase crime, their decision to support racial profiling stems from trying to keep their family safe. They believe a racial profiling law would decrease crime because it would target Latinos and therefore keep their family safe. Again, much of their reasoning is based on perception and not subject to evidence of reality.

Employment is also related to racial profiling. This variable, however, is statistically significant and negative. This means that respondents who have a full-time job are less likely than unemployed respondents to support racial profiling. I would attribute this to the competition

for jobs felt by the unemployed. They may feel like a racial profiling law would alleviate some of the competition for jobs between Latinos and themselves. The perception is that a law like this would incarcerate, remove, or dissuade further Latinos from coming into their town and flooding the labor market. On average, full-employment residents are 11% less likely than unemployed residents to support a racial profiling law. They already have gainful employment and therefore may not feel that a law like this would affect them very much.

## **Conclusion**

In Chapter 2, I show that rural residents are more likely to have negative perceptions of immigrant, in particular, those of Latin American descent. The perception that Latin American immigrants take jobs, worsen quality of life, and increase crime leads rural whites to believe their livelihood is at risk. The findings illustrated in this chapter depict how threatened rural whites would likely react if local policies were taken for a vote in their town. For the exception of Fremont, NE, no other town in this sample had passed an immigrant ordinance. Still, in addition analysis, when I included a dichotomous variable to control for differences between towns, this factor had no significant effects. This means that in Fremont, there was enough perceived threat by rural residents to call on political leaders to allow them to take a vote on a the ballot initiative. Thus far, in Dodge City, Garden City, and Grand Island there has not been as much threat felt throughout the city. This does not mean there has not been any threat, quite the contrary. Because there were no differences between the towns, this means that if given the opportunity threatened rural whites in Dodge City, Garden City, and Grand Island would vote like rural threatened whites in Fremont.

For rural whites who perceive threat from Hispanics, supporting policies like English-only and racial profiling is a way that they can remove the psychological threat they are being

exposed to. English-only laws, because they seek to demean Spanish speakers by making them feel like second-class citizens, sends a message that unfamiliar languages and those who speak them are unwanted.

Further, because rural residents perceive Latin American immigrants to increase crime, in their view, if there was a law that targets groups more likely to commit crimes, which to them means Latinos, crime would go down. There is no evidence of this to be true; however, this was what the respondent perceives to be true. In a small town, like most cities, there is a heightened attention towards drug busts, but little attention paid to the many driving while under the influence (DUI) cases in every town. The constant media images of Mexican or Latino drug traffickers and drug cartel violence are seeped into the minds of Americans, especially in rural America.

This chapter aimed to illustrate the degree to which Hispanic threat influenced local immigrant policy decision-making. Overall, the relationship between Hispanic threat and anti-immigrant policy support is very strong. At the individual-level, rural whites who feel they are threatened by Hispanics, in politics and economics, are more likely to favor restrictive immigrant ordinances in their town. These findings help scholars understand why rural residents favor more restrictive immigration policies. Moreover, the small towns across the country that have decided to pass their own immigrant policies give us an idea of how some citizens are dealing with “the immigrant problem”.

If there are threatened rural whites across the Midwest and the country as I argue, what is it about towns like Fremont, NE that makes them more likely than Dodge City, Garden City, or Grand Island to pursue and pass a local immigrant ordinance? Until this study, partisanship has been the focal point of these towns, but as I have shown, it is much more about feelings of loss

and a competition for the limited resources available in small towns. Adding to the overall piece of the puzzle, I next examine the types of rural towns that are more likely to pass anti-immigrant ordinances. After all, not all rural towns are alike or else we would see many more local immigrant ordinances than we currently have. I address the differences between rural towns with and without local ordinances in the next chapter.



#### **Chapter 4: Rural City-Level Policy Analysis**

The perceived Hispanic threat in some communities has ignited a firestorm of questions about public policy and what role local, state, and the federal government should play in immigration. Because of the inaction of the federal government on legislation regarding immigration, small towns, counties, and states have decided to pass immigration laws they feel would diminish their “immigration problem”. The types of laws and ordinances vary greatly at the state and local level.

In Arizona, for example, the state passed SB1070 which, among other things, allowed state and local police officers to check the immigration status of anyone who looked to be illegal (Lacayo, 2011). While the state has argued that it would not racially profile individuals, it is unlikely that local officers would be able to determine who is documented and undocumented by simply looking at an individual. There is no doubt that skin color and accents would play a role in dictating who might be questioned by Arizona law enforcement. This is a prime example of why some Hispanics feel these policies are aimed at all people of color rather than only immigrants.

At the local level, in 2006 the Hazelton, PA city council passed the “Illegal Immigration Relief Act”. This ordinance sought to punish local landlords who knowingly rented to undocumented immigrants and also fined employers who would hire undocumented immigrants. By taking away an immigrant’s livelihood and access to a place of residence, towns like Hazelton, PA hoped that undocumented immigrants would leave their community, and that the policy would also stop future immigration.

I examine small towns because I am interested in what makes them different from larger urban areas with greater populations of immigrants. Previous studies have analyzed why some

cities decide to pass anti-immigrant ordinances by including all cities regardless of population size (Ramakrishnan & Wong, 2010). They argue and find that Latino population change and the percent of the population that identifies as Republican significantly increase the chances of immigration policy adoption. While I agree with their findings, I believe their study can be improved upon by looking solely at rural towns, which seem to be driving their analysis, and using contemporary data. There are obviously stark differences between urban and rural towns which I have illustrated in earlier chapters.

Using contemporary data and examining only rural towns gives scholars a greater depth of knowledge about the types of rural towns that might be more likely to pass an immigrant ordinance. Why are some small rural towns more likely to pass anti-immigrant ordinances while other rural small towns are not? Analyzing immigrant ordinances through this unique prism engages scholars to try and assess which towns might be more likely to pass immigrant laws in the future and allows for future research to examine how business elites and politicians play a role in influencing public opinion on immigration.

## **Literature**

It is important to examine the types of rural towns that are more likely to pass local anti-immigrant ordinances because it allows scholars to make generalizations, assumptions, and question how rural towns, that are atypical immigrant destinations, are dealing with their significant Latino growth. Many of the local immigration ordinances in these towns have been stopped by federal injunction and subsequent court rulings. However, it is important to know the characteristics of towns that would be more likely to react harshly to immigrants and why.

While competition for resources occurs at all levels of politics, we should expect it to be maximized at the local-level, in particular in small locales. As the geography or context expands,

we can assume that the number of jobs, places to live, and over-all livelihood to be greater as well. This is why historically we see migration from rural areas to urban areas, because of the expanded opportunities and greater number of resources available in larger locales. Hopkins argues, “the effect [of threat] should be a function of local population shares and vary over time only to the extent that population shares do” (2010 p. 41). In other words, the competition between groups will vary as population changes between in-groups and out-groups increase and decrease. This should be more evident in smaller locations where a population changes more dramatically.

In light of Hopkins’ statement, I argue that testing the influence of threat, such as passage of local immigration policy preferences, is best achieved at smaller geographic locales, which has yet to be studied. Threat theory is typically tested in urban areas or using in nation-wide polls (Taylor, 1998; Branton & Jones, 2005; Ha, 2010). These studies of course give us great information about who feels threatened and why, however, as I have shown already, rural and urban towns are very different in their feelings of threat because of Latinos.

The dynamic of urban and rural towns are different. Because of present-day residential segregation (Lipset 1998), large cities typically include their own unique ethnic and racial neighborhoods in their city councils (Lyons & Jewell 1988). These neighborhoods provide a livelihood for the groups living in these areas. They may provide housing, jobs, places of entertainment, and schools. As I illustrated in earlier chapters, urban residents are not as bothered by immigrants as rural residents. I argue this occurs because they have made a decision to live in an urban center and they probably expect to see many people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, the lack of perceived contact with other groups members might make

large cities less likely to pass immigration ordinances since threat levels may be lower in urban areas than they are in rural areas.

Conversely, minority representation in small town city councils typically lags far behind the political power of whites. Hence, if there is a significant percent of the population that feels threatened by the Latino growth in their town, they yield an immense amount of political power. In Hazelton, PA, local officials used immigration as a wedge issue to gain local and state notoriety. Lou Barletta used this platform to gain favor within his town, and towns around Hazelton, and was elected to congress in 2010. In Fremont, NE citizen pressure hit a boiling point to which the city council had no choice but to put the ordinance up for a vote. Still, there are many towns like these two cases across the country, I am curious as to what makes the rural towns that pass an ordinance different from those that do not.

Ramakrishnan & Wong's (2010) research on local immigrant ordinance passage is the first study to look at this problem using city-level data. In their study, they illustrate that Latino population growth and partisanship drive city-level immigration ordinances. While I agree with their study, I believe there is room for improvement. First, since 2000, 57 localities total have passed an anti-immigrant ordinance, 47 of these localities have been in small rural communities. My critique here is that rural towns seem to be driving their analysis; yet, they make generalizations about all cities regardless of size. This seems problematic especially when you consider the national public opinion results illustrated in chapter 2. There are significant differences in the feelings of threat and anxiety held by rural and urban residents. These feelings directly influence attitudes on local immigrant ordinances. These differences should be examined separately, especially since most of the immigrant ordinances have been occurring in rural

towns. The rural towns are driving their analysis and I intend to delve deeper into the probability of ordinance passage.

Second, they argue that the Latino population growth from 1990-2000 is statistically related to local immigrant ordinance passage. I agree with their assessment and actually argue similar hypothesis, however, out of the 47 rural towns that passed a local ordinance only one was passed before 2000. The city-level movement of passing local immigrant ordinances mainly occurred between 2000-2010. I argue that the change in Latino population from 2000-2010 is the main reason rural towns have decided to take on immigration policy. Therefore, to accurately examine rural local immigration ordinances, the Latino population change between the periods of policy activity must be included. The Latino population changed dramatically within this 10 year time period.

Figure 3.

Percent Change in Hispanic or Latino Population by County: 2000 to 2010

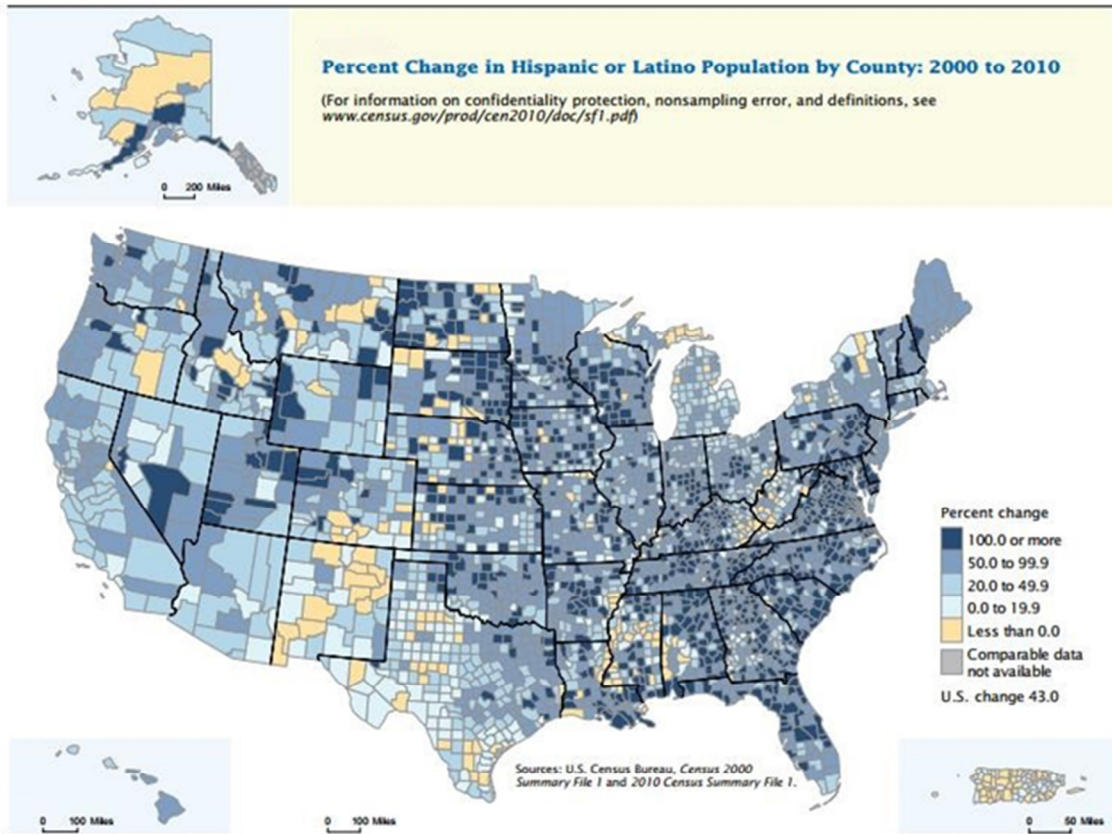


Figure 3, distributed by the United States Census, illustrates county-level Latino population change from 2000-2010. If you look closely at the map, the change in population is not occurring in destinations where Latinos have typically lived like the Southwest. The change is occurring in atypical destinations like the Deep South and areas in the rural Northwest. These are areas where agriculture and meat-plants have taken up residency because of the local tax credits afforded to them. Much of the Latino population change in these rural areas is substantial. The darker shades of blue indicate higher percentages of Latino population growth in these 10 years. It is clear that many parts of rural America have witnessed upwards of 100% increase in their Latino population. In Fremont, Nebraska for example, their Latino population went from 4.3% to 11.9% this is an increase of approximately 177%! I argue that the dramatic growth of the

Latino population in rural America in a short period of time drives city-level immigrant policy adoption. I hypothesize that,

H7: As the Latino population change increases rural towns become more likely to pass an anti-immigrant ordinance.

I argue this occurs because it is not unlike the perception of threat. At the individual-level, threatened respondents are more likely to support anti-immigrant policies because it is a way to rid them of the “immigrant problem”. At the city-level, passing these types of ordinances is used as a deterrent to discourage further immigration. At the same time, it is used to create a second-class citizenry where Latinos already in these rural towns feel unwelcomed and unwanted.

There are various forms of local ordinances aimed at immigrants and Hispanics. These include, but are not limited to: housing, employment, police ordinances, along with the establishment of English as the city’s official language (Ramakrishnan and Wong 2010). Housing ordinances typically try to compel landlords to verify the immigrant status of tenants or limit the number of tenants in a household. If they do not comply with this local ordinance they are typically subject to fines. Employment ordinances usually come in the form of denying business licenses or city contracts to businesses who knowingly hire undocumented immigrants. Along with denying potential contracts, employers are also typically fined for hiring undocumented workers. The housing and employment ordinances were the basis of the ordinance passed in Fremont, NE.

Police ordinances can subject officers to become make-shift Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers. Local police are given the task of stopping and questioning those they believe to be in the U.S. illegally. This is racial profiling because of the amount of power it

gives to local law enforcement to stop groups they believe are committing crimes, in this case, but not limited to, being in the U.S. illegally.

English-only laws have also been passed at the local-level. Enforcing English-only laws typically means providing government services like: police enforcement, school, and social services information in English-only. It inherently demeans Spanish and therefore the Latino culture.

All these local ordinances are designed to make immigrants and Latinos in these communities feel unwelcome. The idea is to deter further immigration and make Latinos already living there rethink their living situation. Many of the 47 rural towns that passed anti-immigrant ordinances passed a combination of the four listed above to try and make the living situation unbearable. Again, the argument made by proponents of Arizona's SB1070 law was that if the environment became so bad for immigrants they would eventually want to move to another state. The same can be said about each of these individual ordinances.

### **Data & Methods**

To test my hypothesis, I use a dataset consisting entirely of rural towns. I use information gathered from the United States Census and City-data.com. The dataset is a nationally representative sample of 100 rural towns representing 42 different states. According to the 2010 census, the minimum population in the dataset is 769 and a maximum of 48,520 with a mean of 16,539.

To find out which towns have passed an anti-immigrant ordinance I use data compiled by the Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM). FIRM is an interest group that advocates for more restrictive immigration policies. Their data includes all towns, cities, and counties that have



passed and/or proposed an anti-immigrant ordinance, along with those that have passed a pro-immigrant ordinance since 2007.

For this study, I am only interested in rural towns whose citizens have passed an anti-immigrant ordinance. The passage could have been done by ballot initiative like in the case of Fremont, NE or through their local public officials. I take the FIRM data since 2007 and also include towns that I researched that have also passed an ordinance since then, this yields an N=47 towns representing 19 different states. Another 53 rural communities are also included in the analysis as a control. Therefore, I create a quasi-experiment. Like most scientific experiments there must be two groups each having the same chance of receiving the treatment. In this case, my population samples are rural towns under 50,000. All of them had an equal chance of passing an immigrant ordinance. The 47 towns that did pass an ordinance, in this case, received the treatment. The 53 rural towns used as controls are used as a baseline to compare differences between towns that passed an ordinance and those that did not. The dependent variable is analyzed using a logistic regression model where a rural town passing an anti-immigrant ordinance equals 1 and towns that do not pass an immigrant ordinance are equal to 0.

Data on each town was collected using information provided by the 2000 and 2010 United States Census along with specific information on each town available through city-data.com. The data from the U.S. census allowed me to accurately assess the current population of the towns by race and ethnicity in 2010. I use data taken from the 2000 U.S. census to make casual inferences about the change in Hispanic population over 10 years.

City-data.com is a website that has been featured on CNN, USA Today, and many other news outlets across the country. The website has compiled data over 74,000 cities across the U.S.

and offers statistics on a variety of socio-economic, demographic, economic, and political indicators specific to each city.

### **Independent Variables**

Latino population change and other control variables are included in the model. The controls highlight some previous theories that may be associated to local-level immigration ordinance passage. The independent variable is the Latino population change in the town that has occurred from 2000-2010. The difference between these two census periods allows me to examine how large or small the Latino population has grown in each town. Sizeable growth of the Latino population is heightened because of the limited size and resources of small towns. All the rural towns that have passed a law saw significant growth in their Latino population over this period of time. On average, the Latino population in these rural towns grew from 8% in 2000 to 14% of the total population in 2010. This is an average increase of 75% in rural communities that are historically unaccustomed to minority populations in their towns. Such dramatic changes in communities that are rural, older, and typically conservative (McKee 2008) incites anxiety among residents. The appearance of Mexican restaurants, Spanish language media, social services available in Spanish, and changing school demographics are all highly visible indicators that makes rural residents in these towns perceive that the Latino presence is overwhelming and something must be done to take care of the “immigrant problem”.

For controls, I include a variety of economic and demographic indicators to evaluate other factors that may influence anti-immigrant ordinance passage. I include a measure of the percentage of the Hispanic population in 2010 relative to the total local population. I suggest that the greater the Hispanic population the more likely that there has been a Hispanic presence in the city for an extended period of time. In other words, in contrast to dramatic Hispanic population

*change*, the larger the Hispanic community the more likely it is they have established themselves as part of the community which inhibits more tolerance (Gimpel and Lay 2008). The contribution by Hispanics in these towns in the areas of services, economics, and politics have already been witnessed by the established Anglo majority over time and therefore has led to decreased feelings of anxiety, the trigger that stimulates feelings of White opposition (Brader et. al. 2008).

Nicolson-Crotty and Nicolson-Cotty (2011) in their state-level study on immigrant policies found that industries that employ vast numbers of immigrants can significantly influence state leaders to adopt fewer anti-immigrant policies. In light of this finding, I include a variable that measures the % *Food Jobs* there are in a city relative to the total job percentage. In this measure, food jobs consist of jobs like meat-packing, food-processing plants, and agriculture. While I acknowledge the fact that immigrants work in a variety of service positions as well, I argue this variable captures the industry that has most significantly changed the rural landscape for Latino occupations (Jeffards & Millard 2004; Gouveia and Stull 1997; Broadway and Stull 1991; Stull et. al. 1995).

The next set of variables measure various socio-economic factors within rural towns that may contribute to passing anti-immigrant ordinances. Using census data, I measure Median Age and percent African American as controls. As I have shown with the public opinion data, older rural residents are more likely to favor restrictive immigration policies. Therefore, I expect the higher proportion of older residents in a town the more likely it will be to pass an anti-immigrant ordinance. Conversely, communities with younger populations have a higher probability of growing up and possibly attending schools with Hispanics and have friends or coworkers who may be Hispanic.

The percentage of African Americans in a community may also influence the likelihood of passing an anti-immigrant ordinance. As Gay notes, when African Americans feel a competition for resources from Latinos they react more harshly in their attitudes towards Latinos (2006). I also illustrated this example in Table 3. Therefore, I expect that as the *% African Americans* increases, support for an immigrant ordinance will also increase.

The city-data website provided several factors that might also influence the passage of anti-immigrant ordinances. Education, in the form of percent of the population with a bachelor's degree, would be more likely to decrease the likelihood of passage of an anti-immigrant ordinance because residents with lower levels of education may feel competition from Latinos for similar jobs. I also include a county level measure of the percentage of 2008 McCain voters to control for republican partisanship. Ramakrishnan and Wong (2010) find that the percent republican in a city significantly increases their likelihood of proposing or passing an ordinance. I suggest this variable is interesting to include because most rural towns are republican strongholds (McKee 2008). However, I expect this variable to be unrelated to anti-immigrant ordinance passage because most rural towns are republican therefore there should not be any significant differences.

Median income is also included in the analysis. I expect that as the median income in a town increases, the town will be more likely to pass an anti-immigrant ordinance because higher income residents will view immigrants as a burden on their quality of life. Communities with higher income levels will be more likely to care about property value and the wealth of the real estate around them which they might feel immigrants will decrease.

Economic indicators are also included in the analysis to control for alternative hypotheses that suggest negative attitudes towards Latinos and immigrants are driven by the competition for

jobs. The 2011 Unemployment Rate measures the town's unemployment rate as of March 2011. I expect the unemployment rate to exhibit a positive influence on adoption of an anti-immigrant ordinance because of the negative perceptions of Hispanics taking American jobs.

Finally, I include a dichotomous variable that compares rural towns in the South=1 to rural towns not in the South=0. I include this measure because of the common perception that the rural South is generally more favorable to restrictive immigrant policies.

### **Findings**

Looking at city-level data allows us to generalize on the types of rural towns that are more likely to support anti-immigrant ordinances. It is important to learn the types of towns and types of individuals who live in rural towns that might be more likely to support immigrant ordinances, which helps scholars understand why rural towns are significantly different from urban areas. Much of the previous research suggests it is just a function of partisanship, but as I show in Table 7 changing demographics influence policy change. Table 7 illustrates (Column 1) the logistic regression coefficients that predict the factors that are related to a rural town passing an immigrant ordinance. Looking at column 1a demonstrates the change in probability of the dependent variable as the statistically significant variables are moved from their minimum to their maximum.

Table 7. Local-Level Analysis of Immigrant Ordinance Passage

	(1) Local Immigrant Ordinance Passed	(1a) Probability Change Min→Max
Hispanic Pop. Change 2000-2010	0.0761* (0.0442)	.59
2000 Hispanic Pop.	0.0485 (2.2858)	
South	0.0433 (0.5613)	
Total Pop.	3.392* (1.8039)	.42
Education	-7.128* (3.2057)	-.71
Unemployment Rate	-7.341 (10.0687)	
% African Am.	0.327 (1.6851)	
Median Income	4.367* (1.9683)	.71
Median Age	0.0993* (0.0443)	.66
% Repub.	3.096 (2.1641)	
% Food Jobs	-5.359 (6.3825)	
_cons	-6.357* (2.7879)	
<i>N</i>	100	
<i>Pseudo R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.1172	

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$

Note: One-Tailed Test

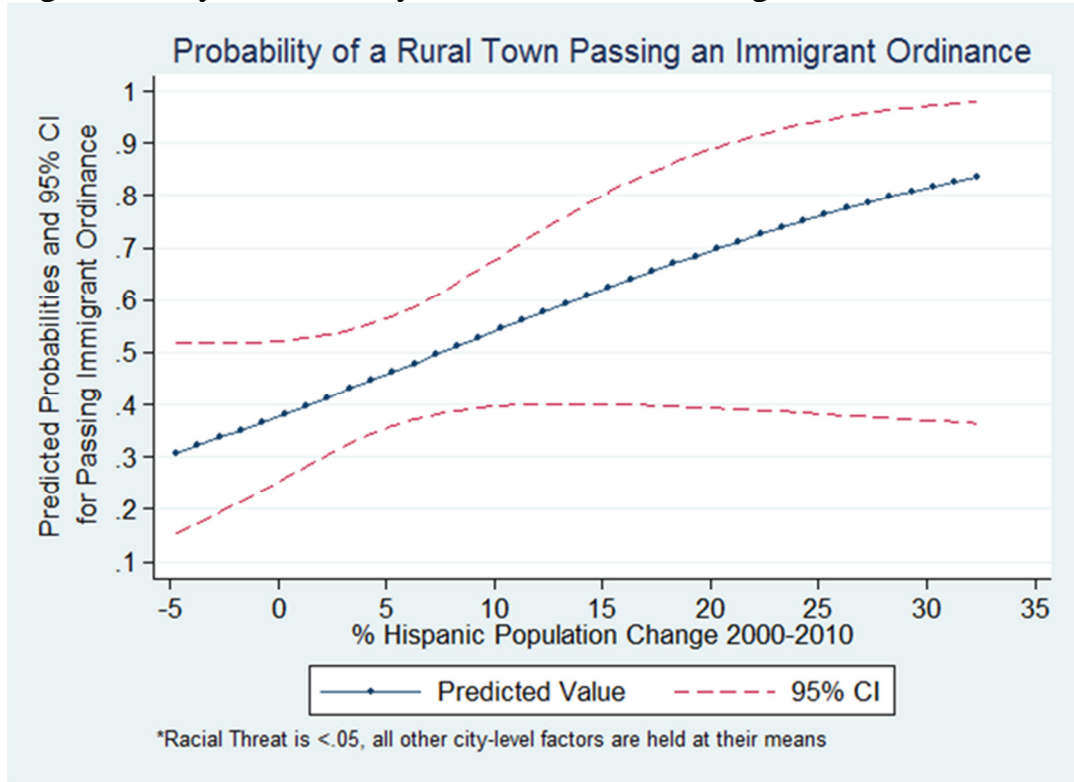
Model 1 illustrates that the bigger the change in Latino population the more likely a rural town is to pass an anti-immigrant ordinance. This finding is complimentary and adds to previous work that analyzes local immigration policy. By using more contemporary data and singling out rural towns, scholars can look more closely at the factors that drive city-level immigrant ordinance passage. I look only at rural towns because they are the large majorities of localities that are passing immigrant ordinances. Therefore, rather than examine all cities, I suggest it is best to focus on the towns that are driving local immigrant ordinance passage across the country.

Also, the majority of immigrant ordinance passage has occurred between 2000-2010, therefore, using the most recent census data provides a better illustration of how Hispanic population change is associated with the passage of a rural immigrant ordinance. As I explained in chapter 2, the debate over whether the federal congress should pass comprehensive immigration reform hit a boiling point in 2006, resulting in protests and demonstrations across the country. It hit a boiling point at this time because the Latino population grew immensely during this decade. Supporters of immigration reform wanted an updated immigration policy for undocumented workers while opponents wanted stricter border controls. Looking at data that occurred during the height of this issue, which I have done throughout this dissertation, gives scholars better insights into a constantly fluid issue.

The shift in demographics in rural towns is more visible than in urban areas. As I have already illustrated in earlier chapters, rural residents perceive that their community has become a destination for criminals and economic and political threats. The larger the shifts in Latino population change in their town, the more evident these perceptions become.

The strength of this variable is illustrated in the predicted probabilities in Table 7 and in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. City-Level Analysis of Ordinance Passage



The predicted probabilities in Table 7 demonstrate that, all else equal, the minimum to maximum change in probability yields a 59% change in the dependent variable. The impact of this variable is demonstrated in the figure. Figure 4 illustrates that a town with a negative growth in their Latino population, meaning their Latino population from 2000-2010 actually got smaller, has about a 30% probability of passing a local immigrant ordinance. Towns with negative Latino growth or small Latino growth have a low probability of passing local immigrant laws. This occurs because their town has not changed much. Regardless of how big the Hispanic population in their town is, the important factor is that the change did not occur quickly (within the 10 year period). This is in stark contrast to rural towns that did experience a large change in their Latino population from 2000-2010. Rural towns that saw their Latino populations increase anywhere from 20-30% are approximately 70-80% more likely to pass a local ordinance. This is where the 50+% predicted probability change is illustrated in the figure. On average, rural towns that have



passed an immigrant ordinance exhibited a Latino population change over 6%. Comparatively, rural towns in this analysis that had not passed an ordinance saw an average Latino population change of about 4%. While these two averages may not seem like a lot, Figure 4 illustrates that the difference between a 4 and 6% change in Latino population yields a greater or less than 50% probability of policy adoption. These statistics are holding all other variables at their means. Therefore simply viewing the average Latino population change illustrates how this variable can carry considerable influence on policy adoption.

Like the public opinion analysis in previous chapters-education, income, and age are all statistically related to anti-immigrant policy support. Rural towns with lower percentages of residents with a bachelor's degree are more likely to pass anti-immigrant ordinances. I believe this may occur because residents with lower education feel an increased competition because of Latinos. Many of the jobs that Latinos often compete for in rural areas are jobs that need little to no formal education, hence, towns with larger populations of lower educated residents are most likely to feel like their job opportunities are threatened.

Towns with higher median incomes are more likely to pass anti-immigrant laws as well. I attribute this to higher populations of wealthier individuals feeling like their community loses value due to immigrants. They perceive that their overall quality of life is down-graded because of immigrants who they perceive to be more likely to commit crimes.

As expected, populations with higher percentages of older residents are more likely to pass local immigrant ordinances. Older populations are more likely to remember when there was little demographic change in their town. They may feel like the quick population changes are contributing to them losing their American culture and identity. This generalization is supported with the previous public opinion results in the dissertation.

### **Conclusion: Future Implications**

Throughout this dissertation I illustrated why I argue rural residents are more likely to support local anti-immigrant ordinances. However, unlike previous studies I go beyond claiming that partisanship and ideology drive immigrant attitudes. Instead, I base my argument on psychological feelings of anxiety and threat.

Examining psychological feelings and how they are related to immigration policy preferences is unique because it measures what the individual thinks is going on around him/her. Rather than focusing on labels like Republican, Democrat, Liberal, or Conservative, measuring perception gives scholars insight into the human mind. By definition, most people know what it means to be a Republican or a Democrat, however, only an individual can know how he/she feels about the world around them. Using nationally representative public opinion data, I was able to show that rural residents were more likely than urban residents to believe that there are “many” recent immigrants in their community. Further, they also felt more uneasy than urban residents about contact with limited English speakers. Of course, the reality is there are many more immigrants in urban areas, yet, the perception among rural residents leads them to believe otherwise. This occurs because of the limited areas available in a small town.

In rural communities, there is usually one high school, one primary grocery store, few places of entertainment, and a few churches for worship. Therefore, the constant contact that a rural resident is forced to have (whether they feel comfortable with it or not) occurs on a daily basis. This differs from urban neighborhoods where residents can theoretically eat, live, and play in the same area without coming into contact with people unlike themselves. Still, even when contact with a limited English speaker is made by urban and rural residents, rural residents feel more bothered by this contact. Studies that examine social contact theory suggest that constant

contact over time will digress negative attitudes (Oliver & Wong 2003), but this is not happening in rural America. Oliver & Wong's (ibid) study analyzes data taken from four large urban areas. I believe they get their results because even though their population is separated by neighborhood, their test subjects expect to come into contact with people of other racial or ethnic backgrounds because they live in a city.

Contrast this to the lives of residents in rural America. They have separated themselves from large urban areas to be away from people that are unlike them. The rural American way of life: politically, economically, and culturally is vested in the status quo. Therefore, when quick changes occur in their community or they view something unknown or foreign to them, they become bothered by this occurrence. Hence, the reason rural residents feel more anxious about contact with immigrants; they do not expect it because of the area they live in. To rural residents, coming into contact with an immigrant or someone that has limited English skills should happen in the city at a Mexican restaurant, not in their all-American small town. The fact that immigrants are migrating into their town makes rural residents worry about their livelihood. And because of the dynamics of a small town, the perception is that immigrants are growing exponentially.

With the growing immigrant population in rural American, comes problems because of the changing demographics and therefore alteration of the status quo. I illustrated that rural residents were more likely than urban residents to believe that immigrants took their jobs, made their local services worse, and increased crime. There are a multitude of reasons why someone might lose a job, have bad government services, or believe that crime has increased, but the perception amongst rural residents is that immigrants are to blame. I suggest this occurs because the changes in demographics occurring in their town, the only change they believe in the status

quo, drives them to perceive immigrants are the cause of these problems. It is not unlike historical trends where during bad economic periods immigrants are blamed. The growing immigrant population, to rural residents, is a threat to their livelihood. They perceive them to be the cause of their personal job loss (economic threat), their deteriorating services (political threat), and the increased crime (family threat) in their town. None of this may actually be true in reality, but in *their* reality-in the mind of the rural resident-it is what is occurring, and it drives local immigration ordinance support.

The constant state of threat that rural residents perceive they are living in makes them more likely to support policy measures they feel would relieve themselves of this threat. In this study, I have shown that the tools in which rural residents use to dispose themselves of their perceived threat from immigrants comes in the form of local policy decision-making. My field work in the rural Midwest illustrated that there are rural whites living in towns that have not passed an ordinance who, if given the opportunity, would support English-only and racial profiling laws in their community. These policies are designed to make Latinos feel like second-class citizens. English-only laws diminish the importance of the Spanish language, reducing Latino's overall self-esteem. Racial profiling makes minorities, which in rural areas are mostly Latino, feel like they are being constantly targeted by law enforcement. This law uses stereotypes to arrest suspicious individuals without cause. Supporters of this law may feel like the police harassment attached to racial profiling might make immigrants want to leave their community. This is what these laws are designed to do and they work.

As we saw in states like Arizona, Georgia, and Alabama, and localities like Fremont, NE, the laws do drive immigrants to leave and decreases further immigration. Yet, politicians caught up on placing the blame on immigrants do not see the economic consequences of losing such a

large labor force. As I mentioned earlier, in Fremont, NE, the chamber of commerce and business leaders pressured city officials to take a revote to no avail. The loss of labor due to the Ordinance No. 5165 led elites to try and rescind the vote even after the courts had upheld the law. The problem in Fremont, and with city officials in towns like Fremont who do not want a law like this, is that they did not do enough to educate the public on the economic benefits of immigrants early-on. Public officials and business leaders can have an important role in how their residents view immigration. They can influence public opinion by showcasing positive economic gains because of immigrants. For example, in Dodge City, KS, the city attorney we spoke to told us that without the immigrant labor force, Dodge City would not have the tourism attractions they currently own (the casino and boot jack hill). Therefore, being able to examine and determine which types of towns are might be likely to pass these ordinances in the near future might allow elites time to explain to their constituents the positives that are attached to immigration. When a town hits a critical-mass near a 10% Latino population change then elites can begin to exchange ideas on how to address immigrants to their public.

For scholars of immigration policy, determining which towns are more likely to pass local ordinances allows us to study the different ways that political elites might use immigrants for their own political gain. For example, city officials in Dodge City publicly support immigrants and celebrate Mexican holidays with public events. They do this because Dodge City is now over 50% Latino so they are being strategic for their political gain. Likewise, former mayor of Hazleton, PA (38% Hispanic), Lou Barletta, used his anti-immigrant platform to win a congressional seat that represents Hazleton and several small towns around it. The main difference between these two cases is the size of the Latino population; still, how policy entrepreneurs use immigration to their advantage is an untapped area of research. Furthermore,

this dissertation not only serves elites and scholars to know which towns are more likely to pass ordinances, but why. In this dissertation, I lay out a map that illustrates why rural Americans are angry and threatened by immigrants. Elites would be well served to read this dissertation and examine ways to talk to their community about jobs, how immigrants are making government services better, and that they are not increasing crime.

Finally, the future of the immigration policy debate is far from over. With the current congress withholding a vote on the senate's "Gang of Eight" plan, more rural towns may feel like the federal government will not do anything about the "immigration problem". Consequently we may see more rural towns pass local immigrant ordinances. Most of these ordinances, during President Obama's administration, will be subject to suit by the Department of Justice. However, these laws and the people that support them base their decision-making on perception. As was the case in Fremont, immigrants left after the passage of the law, regardless of what happened in court. Therefore, rural residents may feel like simply taking a stand on immigration and passing immigrant ordinances will be a symbolic stand, that their town does not want immigrants. However, while rural residents may not want immigrants, their town might need them, here is the hypocrisy, here is the reality versus the perception.

## Appendix

Marginal Effects for Table 1

Model 1

Model 2

### Rural

Avg|Chg|  
0->1 .05802414

Avg|Chg|  
.08142902

### Suburb

Avg|Chg|  
0->1 .01687002

Avg|Chg|  
.01910897

### White

Avg|Chg|  
0->1 .03559711

Avg|Chg|  
.03309583

### Black

Avg|Chg|  
0->1 .01479712

Avg|Chg|  
.02227152

### Female

Avg|Chg|  
0->1 .00175972

Avg|Chg|  
.00005367

### Age

Avg|Chg|  
Min->Max .05117536  
MargEfct .00063253

Avg|Chg|  
.10625246  
.00128909

### Education

Avg|Chg|  
Min->Max .06366233  
MargEfct .01063647

Avg|Chg|  
.02265501  
.00381105

### Income

Avg|Chg|  
0->1 .01203713  
Employed

Avg|Chg|  
.00722238

Avg|Chg|  
0->1 .00694844

Avg|Chg|  
.01230872

### Married

Avg|Chg|  
0->1 .0164373

Avg|Chg|  
.0049425

### Republican

Avg|Chg|  
0->1 .00379915

Avg|Chg|  
.01636565

### Conservative

Avg|Chg|  
0->1 .00839534

Avg|Chg|  
.00104044

Table 7. City-level Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable

# of cities passed ordinance	42
# of cities with no passage of ordinance	58

Type of Ordinance	English Only	Housing	Employment	Police	Combination
	18	5	8	1	10

Table 7 Independent Variables Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
% Hispanic Pop. Change	.05389	.03700	.063005	-.015	.332
% 2010 Hispanic Pop.	.15590	.08600	.180044	.002	.912
2010 Total Pop.	16,943	13,800	12,430	769	48,520
% Bachelors Degree	.20290	.17600	.123218	.035	.723
2011 Unemployment Rate	.08736	.08700	.026581	.036	.184
% African American	.08733	.03000	.146802	0	.773
Median Income	\$47,353	\$43,300	\$16,781	\$20,700	\$100,800
Median Age	38.565	36.500	6.2935	22	54.2
% Republican	.5466	.5500	.12980	.23	.85
% Food Jobs	.02956	.00800	.057429	0	.374

South = 38, Non-South=62



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