

Do Perceptions Match Reality? Comparing Latinos' Perceived Views of State Immigration Policy Environments with Enacted Policies

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This paper explores assumptions made and measurement approaches in the nuanced pathway between enacted state immigration policies and the outcomes they affect in Latino immigrant communities. Scholars across a variety of fields have found that contemporary state immigrant policymaking is associated with outcomes in immigrant communities including political engagement, mental and physical health, access to education, and labor opportunities. In this paper, we explore questions of how state immigration policies produce these and other outcomes. Much of this literature relies on the assumption that members of the immigrant communities are aware of the state policies being enacted, yet few quantitative studies of the effects of state immigration policy contain measures of both policy and of perception. We seek to determine the extent to which Latino immigrants are aware of state immigrant policymaking to help determine whether state immigration policies are a valid approach to measure perceptions of the immigration policy environment in Latino immigrant communities. Additionally, we explore alternative measures of immigration policy. Our findings are particularly relevant to policymakers and immigration scholars as the contemporary political environment has helped to fuel anti-immigrant sentiments and rhetoric contributing to Latinos' perceptions of the state immigrant policy environment.

KEY WORDS: immigration, state immigration policy, Latino policy knowledge

从制定州移民政策到该政策在拉丁裔移民社区中带来影响需要一个过程，不同情况下的这一过程有细微差别，本文对一过程的假设与测量方法进行了探讨。各个领域的学者都发现，现代州移民政策的制定与其在移民社区内带来的影响有关，这些影响包括政治参与、身心健康、以及获得教育和劳动的机会。在本文中，我们探讨了州移民政策如何产生上述影响亦或其他结果。关于州移民政策的影响，大多数文献都假设移民社区成员知晓他们的州所制定的移民政策，而很少有定量研究会同时测量政策的影响以及个体对政策的感知。我们试图测定拉丁裔移民对州移民政策制定的感知程度，以帮助确定州移民政策是否可以有效测量拉丁裔移民社区对他们所处的移民政策环境的感知。此外，我们还探讨了针对移民政策的其他替代测量方法。我们的研究结果与政策制定者和研究移民的学者特别相关，因为在当代的政治环境下，反移民情绪和言论会更易影响到拉美裔对州移民政策环境的感知。

Introduction

The period between 2005 and 2014 saw an unprecedented wave of immigrant laws introduced and enacted at the state level. In 2005, there were 300 proposed immigrant bills with only 39 becoming law. In 2009, these numbers dramatically increased with over 1,500 proposed bills of which over 200 became law (Meyer, Segreto, Carter, & Morse, 2011). Although not all of these laws were restrictive or punitive toward immigrants, this period produced what may well have been the most active period for state laws related to immigrants and immigration in the contemporary period (National Immigration Law Center, 2015).

Among these are Arizona's Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act (S.B. 1070), Alabama's Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayers' and Citizen Protection Act (H.B. 56), and Georgia's Security and Immigration Compliance Act (S.B. 529) (Nill, 2011; Sabia, 2010; Southern Poverty Law Center, 2012). These laws barred undocumented immigrants from accessing state social services and required police to investigate the immigration status of those who they stopped. Alabama's H.B. 56 also includes clauses that require parents provide immigration status before enrolling their children in public schools and criminalizes those who transport undocumented immigrants (Brooks, 2012).

Scholars across a variety of fields have found that contemporary state immigration policymaking is impacting a variety of outcomes in immigrant communities. For example, political scientists have found a correlation between anti-immigrant legislation and naturalization of Latino immigrants as well as increased political participation, specifically in the context of Prop 187 in California (Segura, Pantoja, & Ramirez, 2001). Similarly, research has documented the emergence of a social movement with massive protests in response to the 2006 Sensenbrenner bill in Congress (Barreto & Woods, 2005; Barreto, Manzano, Ramírez, & Rim, 2009). In addition to political outcomes, public health and health policy researchers have found a correlation between immigration policy, the sociopolitical climate regarding immigration/immigrants, and health outcomes of immigrants (Anderson & Finch, 2014; Cavazos-Rehg, Zayas, & Spitznagel, 2007; Gonzales, Suarez-Orozco, & Dedios-Sanguinetti, 2013; Salas, Ayon, & Gurrola, 2013). Finally, more recent research has found a relationship between immigration laws and the group identity of Latinos overall, not just Latino immigrants (Vargas, Sanchez, & Juárez, 2017).

Across these and similar studies, the pathway suggested that leads from state policy to outcomes have in common the assumption that members of immigrant communities are aware of the policies being enacted or that the anti- or pro-immigrant social environment produced as a result of such policies is somehow otherwise impacting their lived experience. However, few quantitative studies include both objective measures of state immigration policy and perceptions of policy.

This article contributes to this special issue by filling a need for a nuanced quantitative exploration of the extent to which enacted state policies may serve as an appropriate measure of perceptions of state immigration policy. This examination fits squarely within the goal of this special issue by helping migration scholars interested in exploring the impact of state immigration policies in immigrant and

Latino communities refine their measurement approach. Our analysis makes use of a new and innovative dataset that merges state policies coded by our research team with a national survey of Latino adults to assess whether Latinos' perceptions of state immigration policies match legislative reality. Though somewhat narrow in approach, our ability to determine the correlation between perceptions of laws and actual policies complements the other studies in this volume nicely.

In keeping with the theme of this special issue, focused on advancing both theory and measurement within immigration research, our paper seeks to challenge how scholars conceptualize immigration policy in the U.S. states as constituted in the lives of immigrants and those who may live in close proximity to immigrants. Our measures address specific concerns put forth by multiple authors in this special issue, providing readers with a comprehensive discussion of both theoretical concerns and potential measurement solutions. For example, Goodman (2018) argues that indices of state-level policies often lack differentiation between immigration and integration policy domains. Cognizant of this, as well as understanding that omnibus legislation can include both punitive and beneficial elements covering multiple domains, we broke up these types of laws and coded each policy separately. This also touches on Reich's (2018) observation that researchers often use highly aggregated measures of policies that can limit our understanding of policy-specific effects. Additionally, we include alternative measures that analyze only beneficial and only punitive policies, in line with Monogan's (in press) suggestion for researchers to provide alternative units of analysis and specifications when modeling state-level policies.

Moreover, our findings also mirror similar results to studies in this special issue. Rocha (in press) finds that citizen Latinos' linked fate increased as immigration enforcement is heightened in their areas. Phan, Tafoya, and Leal's (in press) study reveals how changes in state-level immigration policies affect the calculations immigrants engage in when deciding on changing their legal status. Both of these studies' findings complement our results on Latinos being in tune with policy contexts.

Effects of Anti-Immigrant State Laws

Literature examining the effects of anti-immigrant state laws is growing rapidly. Researchers have used a constellation of methods to attempt to capture the relationship between these laws and various outcomes for Latinos including health status, health behavior, and fear. A review of the literature reveals an important pattern related to our central question: quantitative studies within this body of work across states making use of objective measures of state immigration policy tend to assume that residents have knowledge of anti-immigrant policies and/or perceive a policy environment hostile to immigrants. This may be understandable given that data on actual enacted laws and policies are more readily available at the state level than are measures of perceptions. On the other hand, the nature of qualitative studies within states has allowed researchers to inquire about their participants' knowledge of state policies and/or perceptions of the policy environment, as well

as garner direct testimony as to how these policies have affected the individuals in their studies.

For example, Anderson and Finch's (2014) study of S.B. 1070 in Arizona, focused on the self-rated health of Latinos in that state, makes assumptions about respondent's political/policy knowledge without actually testing such knowledge. Utilizing BRFSS data, they find that Latinos in Arizona who were administered the BRFSS in Spanish reported lower rates of excellent or very good health after the passage of S.B. 1070, and higher reporting poor or fair health. They utilize stress process theory to contend that hostile environments can "get under the skin" to affect health outcomes. Yet, there is no measure of knowledge of S.B. 1070 from respondents. This study is limited to analyzing decontextualized BRFSS data for the period before and after the passage of S.B. 1070. Similarly, Toomey et al. (2014) focus on S.B. 1070's effects on the health-seeking behaviors of adolescents in Arizona. They also encounter the same issue, comparing pre- and post-implementation periods of S.B. 1070 without including measures of respondent's knowledge or perceptions of the policy environment.

Amuedo-Dorantes and Puttitanun (2013) find that immigrants in states with statewide implementation of E-verify report increased fear of deportation, reduction of the interstate mobility of voluntary returnees, and differences in intent to return for those that had been deported. Their study, however, does not directly assess the respondent's knowledge of E-verify in any manner or if they are aware of its implementation in their state of residence.

Qualitative studies have been more successful in capturing actual knowledge of the policy context in order to link these policies' effects to a variety of outcomes. For example, Hardy et al.'s (2012) qualitative study of Latinos in Flagstaff, Arizona captured the effects of S.B. 1070 as the law was debated and implemented. Their interviews recorded how participants directly linked their increased levels of stress and fear to the anti-immigrant policy. One respondent stated, "If they separate the families, where do the kids go? If they take me and the kids stay with social services, they give those kids to adoption and that's not right" (p. 1251). The study found that S.B. 1070 had increased the fear of deportation, decreased the mobility of immigrants and their families, and also decreased trust in authorities.

White, Yeager, Menachemi, and Scarinci's (2014) study of Alabama's omnibus H.B. 56 directly asked interviewees about their knowledge of H.B. 56, changes they have experienced in their communities since its implementation, and experiences accessing health-care services before and after H.B. 56 implementation. The study found that perceived discrimination increased, while the availability of health care decreased and its costs increased. Similarly, Salas and colleagues (2013) asked their focus group participants in Phoenix, Arizona, "what laws they were aware of that affected immigrant families, how these laws have changed what they do or how they feel, how these laws have affected their children, and how they deal with these laws" (p. 1009). These qualitative studies directly link perceptions of punitive laws and/or a hostile policy environment to behavior and outcomes, relationships that most quantitative studies can only assume.

Additionally, quantitative scholars across the study of state immigration policy are using a variety of measures of state immigration policy to test outcomes. For example, in examining the determinants of state immigration laws some scholars construct and test separate measures for beneficial and punitive policies (Boushey & Luedtke, 2011; Chavez & Provine, 2009; Marquez & Schraufnagel, 2013), while others make use of a measure that combines beneficial and punitive policies into a single measure or index (Monogan, 2013; Nicholson-Crotty & Nicholson-Crotty, 2011; Ybarra, Sanchez, & Sanchez, 2016). Still other scholars in this literature operationalize state immigration policies in terms of specific types of immigration policies, including large omnibus and immigration enforcement laws (Zingher, 2014), or the adoption of E-Verify by states (Newman, Strickland, & Citrin, 2012). While clearly the question being asked and the outcome of interest should inform the choice of measures, we contend that making the choice among the variety of theoretically appropriate alternative measures more visible may contribute to our larger understanding of how these policies are working to produce their results.

Given this context, this paper provides an important contribution to the quantitative study of immigrant policies both in terms of their relationship to outcomes in the Latino immigrant community and in terms of operationalizing state immigration policies in quantitative research.

Theoretical Considerations

In considering the mechanisms at work between enacted state policy and perception of the policy environment, both positive and negative, we look primarily to theories of social construction and policy feedback. Additionally, we acknowledge additional theoretical explanations that suggest that negative or punitive policies may hold greater salience.

Social construction and policy feedback theories describe public policy as a powerful authoritative source of symbolic language that structures and restructures social interactions that in turn influence the lives of those who are its targets. Social construction theory conceptualizes public policy as an active social structure capable of transmitting material and interpretive benefits and burdens to target populations. These benefits and burdens are allocated based on the social constructions of the target population as either deserving or undeserving embedded in public policy by policymakers (Schneider & Ingram, 1997). Such constructions are translated into public policy in this way because "Policymakers, especially elected politicians, respond to, perpetuate, and help create social constructions of target groups in anticipation of public approval or approbation" (Ingram, Schneider, & deLeon, 2007, p. 106).

Scholars have long recognized the interpretive use of symbolic language in meaning-making, the power of symbolic language to mobilize and demobilize groups (Edelman, 1964), and the capacity of political language and rhetoric to create and transmit social constructions of groups as powerful or power-less. Bourdieu (1977) theorized that "linguistic exchange," communication between sender and receiver, transmits symbols of authority and that groups are constructed as more or

less powerful through linguistic exchanges. As one set of privileged social actors, political elites seek to impose their representation of the social world through their use of authoritative language, they “undertake to transform the social world in accordance with their interests—by producing, reproducing and destroying the representation that make groups visible for themselves and for others” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 127).

Policy feedback theory similarly recognizes the active role that symbolic language contained in political rhetoric of elites plays in transmitting information and meaning; this may be viewed as “the impact of policies on the cognitive processes of social actors” (Pierson, 1993, p. 610). The creation and transmission of meaning via public policies may be especially powerful as it concerns negatively constructed target groups with little political power (Nicholson-Crotty & Meier, 2005).

Other theories in the political psychology tradition suggest that the political allocation of burdens via public policy may hold greater salience for those targeted than policies that allocate benefits. For example, the theory of affective intelligence posits that the general public relies largely on emotions to “help manage their attention to the political world” (Marcus, MacKuen, & Neuman, 2011, p. 324). Human neurological systems are responsive to circumstances of reward and punishment, thus emotions such as anxiety and fear trigger attention and learning. In the political environment anxiety and fear may be triggered by threatening policies, candidates, or rhetoric. Scholars of political knowledge have found that the American public broadly reacts to perceived policy threats and anxiety by becoming more informed about politics and policy (Brader, Valentino, & Suhay, 2008; Valentino, Hutchings, Banks, & Davis, 2008). Psychology research strongly suggests that immigration policy is an issue area that has generated anxiety and threat among the public (Albertson & Gadarian, 2013).

Given the connection between anxiety and political knowledge, as well as the disproportionate impact of immigration policy on Latinos, it is not surprising that immigration policy has been found to be associated with Latino political behavior more broadly. For example, numerous studies find that the anti-immigrant policy environment in 1990s California produced increased political learning, naturalization, mobilization, and voting among California Latinos. In 1994, Republican lawmakers from California introduced Proposition 187, also known as the “Save Our State” (SOS) initiative, which, in addition to depriving unauthorized immigrants from welfare benefits, education, and medical care, aimed to facilitate the deportation of noncitizens (Alvarez & Butterfield, 2000; Michelson, 2007). This environment resulted in increased political knowledge and sophistication among Latino citizens in California, especially among naturalized citizens (Pantoja & Segura, 2003). It also resulted in substantial shifts in political attitudes toward political parties among Latinos (Segura, Falcon, & Pachon, 1997). The threat associated with this legislation motivated Latino immigrants to naturalize to not only protect their rights but also participate in future elections (Barreto et al., 2009; Pantoja, Ramirez, & Segura, 2001; Varsanyi, 2008).

This extant research clarifies that immigrants and Latinos have high knowledge levels of anti-immigration policy and that punitive immigration policy motivates

Latino political behavior including issue salience. Taken together, this previous literature on anxiety and political knowledge among Latinos would lead us to expect that Latinos in states with punitive immigration policies would have high levels of knowledge about such policies and that this will ultimately lead to perceptions of the policy environments in which they reside.

Based on the conceptualization of public policy as active and authoritative social structures transmitting information and meaning to target populations, as well as the increased salience and political knowledge produced by threatening policies, we theorize that state policies targeting immigrants, and noncitizens in particular, are sufficiently powerful to produce outcomes observed in the literature. We further theorize that the mechanisms mediating between the enactment of state policies and the outcomes observed derive from both the material benefits and burdens allocated by the policies as well as the interpretive messages embedded in policies by political elites. Such messages are received by the target population as they are intended; at once communicating belongingness and deservedness as well as inclusion in or exclusion from society. This leads us to theorize that while the impact of both positive and punitive immigration laws may be felt among all Latinos, the substantive impact of these benefits and burdens should be more pronounced among noncitizens.

Data and Methods

In this study, we examine the association between the outcome of perceptions of state immigration policy environment in early 2015 and an objective measure of state immigration policies enacted 2005–2014. We take advantage of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Center for Health Policy at the University of New Mexico's 2015 Latino National Health and Immigration Survey (LNHIS), a unique survey designed for the specific purpose of examining the relationship between immigrant policy and Latino health and well-being. Latino Decisions implemented the survey and worked in conjunction with the scholars at the RWJF Center for Health Policy at UNM to design the survey instrument. This is therefore an ideal dataset for our research question. The Latino National Health and Immigration Survey (total $N = 1,493$) relies on a sample provided by a mix of cell phone and landline households along with web surveys. This mixed-mode approach improves our ability to capture a wide segment of the Hispanic population in the sample by providing a mechanism to poll the growing segment of the Hispanic population that lacks a landline telephone as well as those who prefer to engage surveys online. This approach is sensitive to some of the major shifts in survey methodology driven by changes in the communication behavior of the population. More specifically, the increasing number of Americans who have decided to use a cell phone for telephone communication while doing away with their landline telephone motivates our expansion of sample beyond landline households.

The survey was administered by Pacific Market Research in Renton, Washington. The survey has an overall margin of error of ± 2.5 percent with an AAPOR response rate of 18 percent for the telephone sample. Latino Decisions selected the 44 states

with the highest number of Latino residents for the sampling design, states that collectively account for 91 percent of the overall Latino adult population. Respondents across all modes of data collection could choose to be interviewed in either English or Spanish. All interviewers were fully bilingual. A mix of cell phone (35 percent) only and landline (65 percent) households were included in the sample, and the full dataset including both phone and web interviews are weighted to match the 2013 Current Population Survey universe estimate of Latino adults with respect to age, place of birth, gender, and state. The survey was approximately 28 minutes long and was fielded from January 29, 2015 to March 12, 2015.

The primary benefit of this survey dataset, beyond the large and diverse sample of Latino adults, is the question that asks respondents to directly assess the nature of their state's immigration policy environment as either favorable or unfavorable. We treat this question as the dependent variable in our analysis, as our model intends to assess the extent to which the perceptions of the immigrant policy environment in their state is influenced by an objective assessment of immigration policies enacted in the state. We code the dependent variable as "*unfavorable*" = 0 and "*favorable*" = 1.¹ Question wording, in English and Spanish, along with distribution of responses by reported citizenship status and least favorable/most favorable policy environment states are detailed in Appendix A in supporting information.

We combine data from the actual laws coded by our team with the individual survey data discussed above to essentially allow for a direct comparison of perceptions and reality across immigration legislation at the state level. More specifically, we construct a standardized state immigration policy variable from a count of total beneficial and punitive immigration policies enacted by each state in each year from 2005–2014. Data for this key explanatory variable were obtained from the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) Immigrant Policy Project database. We coded each piece of legislation in the NCSL dataset as to direction—neutral, beneficial, or punitive—based on their substantive impact on immigrants,² and we use those policies coded as punitive and beneficial to immigrants for this study. This variable is limited to enacted policies, so excludes bills introduced and not passed and policy action taken independently by the executive or judicial branch. We also exclude resolutions due to their primarily symbolic purpose and lack of substantive impact. While those other forms of policy may be important, we focus in this study on enacted legislative policy with substantive impact. Each of the 50 states during this period of time enacted at least one punitive policy during the period included in this study.

Since our interest is in discrete policy enacted rather than laws, we split omnibus legislation into multiple policies based on unique subtopic/direction combinations. We chose to count such omnibus law as multiple policies and to operationalize our primary predictor variable as policies rather than laws for two reasons. First, the separate policies contained in omnibus legislation concern different subtopics under immigration such as housing, employment, law enforcement, education, identification, etc. In many cases, these larger pieces of legislation contain subtopic clauses of different direction (punitive, beneficial, and neutral). Thus, from a practical coding

subtracting the number of punitive policies enacted from the number of beneficial policies in each state, allowing us to assign a number to each state based on the resulting unstandardized scores ranging from -27 to 75 . A negative state score indicates a greater number of punitive policies were enacted, and a positive state score indicates a greater number of beneficial policies were enacted. The same summation of all policies enacted in just 2014 range from -6 to 17 . To construct the indices of beneficial and punitive measures, we convert these simple summed measures to z-scores to standardize the variable across all states with the resulting distribution of index scores across states having a mean of zero, a standard deviation of 1.0. For 2004–2014 the range is range of -1.798 to 4.692 , and for 2014 alone the range is -2.325 to 5.102 . Using the initial summations, we also construct four additional measures—just beneficial policies, both cumulative for 2005–2014 and only 2014, and just punitive policies, both cumulative for 2005–2014 and only 2014. Descriptive measures of variation and distribution for these alternative measures are detailed in Table 1.

We expect that in general more positive immigration policies at the state level will be associated with perceptions of favorable immigration policy environments, and more negative immigration policies will be associated with perceptions of unfavorable immigration policy environments.

Our unit of analysis is individual survey respondents to the 2015 LNHIS, with an index of state immigration policy as the primary predictor and a vector of control variables from the survey instrument including citizenship status (yes = 1; no = 0), gender (female = 1; male = 0), education level (ten categories⁴), income (eight categories⁵), age (in years). We explored inclusion of additional co-variates such as foreign-born and Spanish-language, and found that their high correlation to citizenship status would have resulted in collinearity among the independent variables. We retained the one co-variate among these three that represented the best fit with the data—citizenship status. After accounting for missing data on variables of interest, we are left with a total $N = 1,302$ for analysis. Our analytic dataset includes respondents from each of the 44 states⁶ of the LNHIS ranging from a single respondent in states such as Alaska and Wyoming⁷ to 95 respondents from New York, 101 respondents from New Mexico, 133 respondents from Florida, 231 respondents from Texas, and 363 respondents from California.

Table 1. Alternative Measures of State Immigration Policy, 2005–2014

	Cumulative 2005–2014			Single year 2014		
	Index (z-score)	Beneficial	Punitive	Index (z-score)	Beneficial	Punitive
Mean	0	15.42	14.16	0	2.02	0.82
Min	-1.798	2.0	1.0	-2.325	0	0
Max	4.692	94.0	45.0	5.102	19	7
SD	1.0	15.152	11.862	1.0	3.094	1.320
# states < mean	29	32	31	35	35	28
# states > mean	21	18	19	15	15	22

We first test which policy index will be most appropriate for our analysis. We then conduct logit regressions on the dichotomous outcome variable (state immigration policy environment perceived as favorable or unfavorable) using Stata 14.2. The dataset used for the main analysis is multi-level in nature; we choose a single-level logit regression with clustering on states as the most parsimonious model specification and the most appropriate to answer our research question. This method allows for clustering of respondents within states, accounting for unobserved differences between states, and produces robust standard errors. Because of the complex nature of immigrant policy during this time, with activity both at the federal and state levels, we acknowledge that there may be other immigrant policy-related activity occurring in states that we have not otherwise accounted for. We also tested the data using a multi-level logit allowing for random intercepts by state and find substantially the same results in the final model. The alternative multi-level results are contained in Appendix C in supporting information.

Findings

For multivariate modeling, we first explore measures of model fit using the six alternative measures of state policies, to determine which will be most appropriate for our analyses. Using a parsimonious model regressing perceptions of state policy among foreign-born respondents on our alternative measures, controlling for education and gender, we find that the two measures that combine positive and negative policies both represent a better model fit with these data than do the measures that include only beneficial or only punitive policies, using AIC and BIC model fit measures. In addition, in all cases the cumulative measures including policies from 2005–2014 demonstrate better model fit than their counterparts including just a single year 2014. Thus, the cumulative policy index including both beneficial and punitive policies from 2005 to 2014 is the measure we choose for this analysis.

For the main analysis, we conduct two logit regression analyses—both without and with an interaction term interacting the policy index with citizenship status. Results from the two regression analyses are reported in terms of odds ratios, interpreted as associated with either an increase (odds ratio over 1.0) or a decrease (odds ratio under 1.0) in the likelihood of respondent perceiving a favorable state immigration policy environment. The first regression analysis presented in Table 2 reveals that our standardized cumulative index of state immigration policies enacted between 2005 and 2014 is positively associated with perceptions of favorable state immigration policy environments. For every standard deviation increase in the standardized cumulative state immigration policy index (toward more beneficial policy), the likelihood of the respondent perceiving a favorable policy environment (vs. unfavorable) increases by 13.5 percent. The only covariate in Model 1 significantly associated with perceptions of state policy is income, with each step up in household income category the likelihood of perceiving a favorable policy environment increases by 11.5 percent.

Table 2. Perception of State Immigration Policies as Favorable

	Model 1	Model 2
Policy Index 2005–2014	1.135* ¹ (0.0639)	1.104 (0.0612)
Noncitizen	0.971 (0.4342)	0.799 (0.2482)
Female	0.827 (0.1185)	0.931 (0.1282)
Policy Index × Noncitizen	–	1.377*** ³ (0.0604)
Income	1.115** ² (0.0468)	1.114** ² (0.0479)
Education	0.991 (0.0440)	0.989 (0.0441)
Age	1.003 (0.0046)	1.004 (0.0046)
Constant	1.026 (0.4514)	1.002 (0.4561)
Clusters	43	43
N	1,302	1,302

Odds ratios and robust standard errors.

Model 2 alternative specification (melogit) policyindex × noncitizen OR = 1.363*** (.052); income OR = 1.088* (.044).

* $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$.

The second model confirms that the influence of the state policy index is largely conditioned on citizenship status. With the introduction of an interaction term, interacting the standardized cumulative state policy index and citizenship status, we find that the interaction term is significant. For every standard deviation increase in the standardized cumulative state immigration policy index (toward more beneficial policy), the likelihood of the noncitizen respondent perceiving a favorable policy environment (vs. unfavorable) increases by 37.7 percent. The remaining policy index variable, which now represents the impact of policy index only among noncitizens on the outcome, becomes nonsignificant.

In post-estimation, we compare the differences in the predicted probability of reporting a favorable state policy environment among Latino citizens and noncitizens, and males and females, in the states with the lowest quartile⁸ (least favorable) state policy indices and those with the highest quartile⁹ (most favorable) indices. As illustrated in Figure 2, respondents in all subgroups residing in states with the highest quartile of state policy indices are more likely to report favorable state immigration policy environment than are those residing in states with the lowest quartile of state policy indices. This difference is most pronounced among noncitizen Latinos, where we see that males living in states with the most punitive policies have a predicted probability of 0.56 of reporting favorable state immigration policy environments, compared to a predicted probability of 0.68 among those living in states with the most beneficial policy environment. Similarly, the predicted probability of noncitizen females living in states with the most punitive policies reporting a favorable immigration policy environment is 0.49, compared with 0.62 among those living in the states with the most beneficial policy.

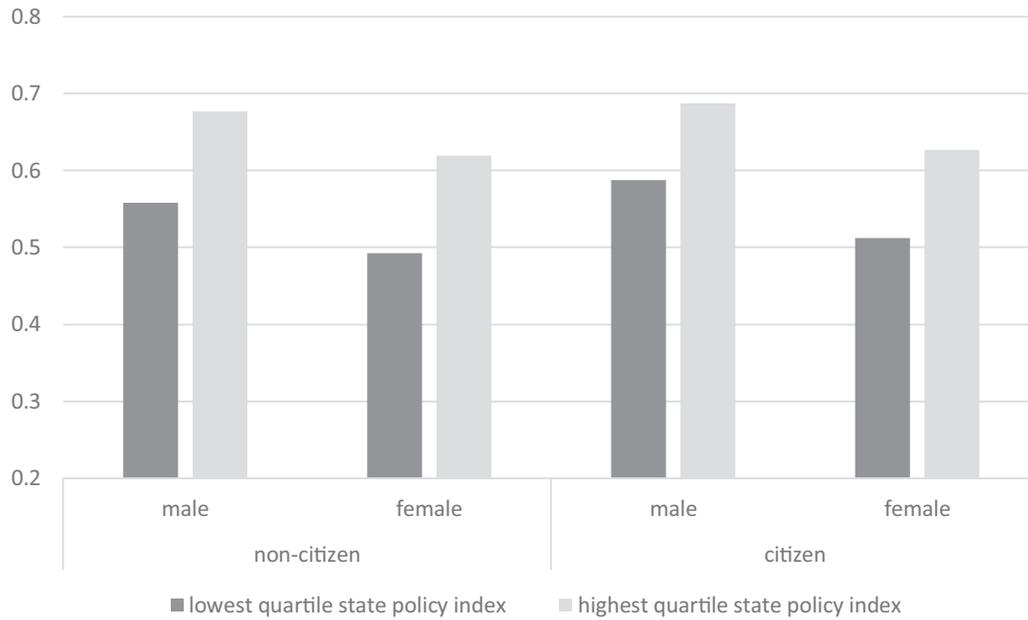


Figure 2. Predicted Probability of Latinos Reporting Favorable State Immigration Policy Environment. *Notes:* Least favorable policy environment states = lowest quartile state policy index. Most favorable policy environment states = highest quartile state policy index.

Conclusion/Discussion

The American states have become much more involved in immigrant policy over the past two decades, as is reflected in the high number of policies enacted each year that we reference in this study. While scholars across a variety of fields have found that state immigrant policymaking is associated with several outcomes among immigrant communities, research has yet to closely examine a major assumption in this area of work: that targets of immigrant policy are either knowledgeable of the policies being passed or aware of the anti- or pro-immigrant social environment produced as a result of state policies. We create a unique research design based on the compilation of survey data and state immigration data to test this important yet often-overlooked research question and find that living in a state that has enacted more beneficial immigration laws leads to more positive perceptions of state laws among noncitizen Latino respondents. This is consistent with our theory and strongly suggests that noncitizen Latino immigrants, the target of these state laws, are knowledgeable of the general policy context in which they live.

Further, additional published research using this same survey data confirms that perceptions of a state’s immigration policy environment are significantly predictive of Latino health outcomes. For example, Vargas and Ybarra (2017) find that Latino parents who perceive their state’s immigrant policies as unfavorable are less likely to report optimal child health status, and that perceptions of unfavorable state immigrant policy environment predicts wider health disparities between Latino U.S. citizen families and mixed-status undocumented families. Using the same survey data, Vargas, Sanchez, and Juarez (2016) find that Latinos who view the state

policy environment as anti-immigrant are significantly more likely to report mental health problems.

Given that the immigration policy index is not statistically associated with perceptions of the immigrant policy environment for citizen Latinos, our findings here suggest that the effect of these policies on the perceptions of Latinos is strongest among those most directly impacted by the policies themselves, noncitizen Latino immigrants. One possible explanation for our nonfinding for citizen Latinos could be related to language and media consumption. According to the Pew Research Center, 89 percent of U.S.-born Latinos ages 5 and older speak only English at home while only 39 percent of foreign-born Latinos speak English “very well” (Pew Research Center, 2015). Predominantly Spanish-speaking homes view 78 percent of their television time in Spanish, compared to solely English-speaking homes that view only 3 percent (Pardo & Dreas, 2011). This is important given that Spanish-language outlets have been found to provide more coverage of immigration compared to English-language media (Branton & Dunaway, 2008). This potential explanation deserves attention in future studies where data allow for a more focused assessment of the language of media consumption across the Latino population, not something this dataset is designed to accomplish.

Somewhat unexpected is that even noncitizen Latino respondents living in states with the most punitive immigration policy have more than a 40 percent predicted probability of reporting a favorable immigration policy environment. This finding suggests that the link between objective measures of state immigration policy and perceptions may be simply inaccurate for large numbers of Latinos, or it may be mediated by other factors not included in our study. In this study, we did not account for the national immigration policy environment or the substate environment, both of which may be exerting additional influence on perceptions. For example, in this volume Rocha (in press) finds that Latino ethnic identity is stronger when federal immigration enforcement is high. Ultimately, it is perceptions of the social environment that are believed to influence social and behavioral outcomes. Thus it would appear caution should be taken linking structural measures of state immigration policy with social and behavioral outcomes in the absence of measures of perception.

Previous research suggests that anti-immigration policy environments are capable of triggering increased knowledge and political behavior among Latinos (Pantoja & Segura, 2003; Zepeda-Millán, 2014). Our findings on model fit demonstrate that in addition to punitive immigration policy, inclusion of positive policy environment is an important predictor of policy knowledge. We suspect the theory of affective intelligence is inadequate to explain this finding in that it proposes that in a nonthreatening political environment political attention will be based on political habit. We doubt the majority of noncitizen Latino immigrants in nonthreatening environments are relying on political habits, given that most are noncitizens and have little political history in the United States. Thus, we speculate that in a policy environment beneficial to immigrants the perceptions of policy may perhaps be mediated by an inclusive social environment, as suggested by research on the relationship between social capital and civic engagement (Brehm & Rahn, 1997). Beneficial immigration policy environments may well generate environments of

generally greater social trust for immigrants, which could well impact general perceptions of the policy environment for immigrants even in the absence of increased attention to specific politics and policy. This is an area we will explore further in future studies.

Finally, we advance the collective goal of this special issue to improve measurement approaches for immigration policy research by comparing alternative measures of state policies and find that the cumulative measure of state immigration policies enacted in the decade prior are impacting perceptions among foreign-born Latinos more than a single-year measure, thus elucidating the cumulative effect of enacted state policies on perceptions of the policy environment. We find the exercise of comparing model fit between alternative measures of state immigration policy useful and suggest that making such comparisons explicit may be useful in future quantitative studies of state immigration policy. While clearly the research question, theory, and outcome of interest should all be considered in such choices, explicitly examining model fit indicators among multiple available measures of state immigration policy may help elucidate relevant differences such as those we found here—in this case cumulative over many years rather than single year, and combined beneficial and punitive rather than only beneficial or punitive. As recommended by Filindra (2018), we provide evidence of robustness of our results across alternative model specifications, and we test alternative policy specifications with both punitive and beneficial policies. Similar to Reich (2018), our findings confirm that specification of state immigration policy should be closely linked with theoretical expectations.

In closing, we hope that our discussion will lead to better measurement, and ultimately to a more clear understanding of the consequences associated with increased state policy action on the populations residing in those jurisdictions. Our results should be of high relevance to scholars interested in whether the targets of policy are knowledgeable of the policy climate in which they live, something we often assume when conducting research associated with policy impact on outcomes. Furthermore, our work suggests that among Latino immigrants, the relationship between policies such as immigration and social outcomes such as political engagement and health may be mediated by perceptions of the policy environment. This is something we suggest scholars pursue in future work. And finally, given that immigration continues to be highly salient well after the recent 2016 presidential race where it was a central theme, there is no reason to believe that immigration will wane in salience for the Latino population, and particularly Mexican immigrants who are targets of the anti-immigrant rhetoric and enforcement actions under the current administration. Our research will therefore remain highly important and timely.

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Notes

1. We exclude 6.8 percent of respondents indicating “don’t know,” and 0.7 percent who refused.
2. “Punitive immigration policies are those that are unfavorable to or adversely affect the immigrant population residing in a state. We deem policies ‘unfavorable’ when they put forth limitations, exclusions, restrictions, and/or prohibitions on immigrant communities. In addition, policies which seek to detail, deport, or lay bare the legal status of a state’s residents are also considered unfavorable to immigrant communities.... Conversely, beneficial immigration policies are those that are favorable or advantageous to a states’ immigrant population. We deem policies ‘favorable’ when they enlarge qualifications for access to government goods and services, establish supportive mechanisms for immigrant populations, or espouse legal ‘blindness’ to immigration status.” Excerpted from Appendix A, Ybarra, Sanchez, and Sanchez (2016).
3. Note that we code AB HB56 as 17 separate policies based on unique subtopic/direction combinations, 12 of which we code as punitive.
4. Categories for highest level of education completed: 1 = no formal schooling; 2 = grades 1–8; 3 = some high school without diploma or GED; 4 = GED; 5 = high school graduate; 6 = some college/technical school; 7 = two-year college graduate (AA/AS); 8 = four-year college graduate (BA/BS); 9 = master’s degree; 10 = MD or PhD.
5. Categories for total combined household income in 2013 before taxes. Note, in an attempt to retain cases, missing data on income is coded and retained: 0 = missing; 1 = <\$20K; 2 = \$20K to <\$40K; 3 = \$40K to <\$60K; 4 = \$60K to <\$80K; 5 = \$80K to <\$100K; 6 = \$100K to <\$150K; 7 = more than \$150K.
6. Angrist and Pischke (2009) note that 43 clusters are generally sufficient to avoid bias from too few clusters.
7. We considered excluding states with respondents <10, but found these models produced substantively similar results.
8. Lowest Quartile states have a standardized cumulative policy index of <-0.4620.
9. Highest Quartile states have a standardized cumulative policy index of >0.3175.

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