

The Electoral Effects of Local Immigration Enforcement

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Abstract:

Significant attention has been paid to the ways in which public opinion shapes patterns of immigration enforcement in the United States. Little has been done, however, to determine what effect, if any, enforcement has on public opinion toward immigrants. To explore this relationship, I employ a difference-in-differences design to determine the effect of detainment facility-use by immigration enforcement agencies on the rate at which residents of a county vote for the Republican candidate for president between 1980 and 2016. In order to track the geographical presence of immigration enforcement agencies, I use a list of all facilities Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and its predecessor agency, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), have used since 1980, obtained through a Freedom of Information Act Request by the National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC). I conclude that contrary to my expectation that the recent rise of anti-immigrant rhetoric and policy would prime voters to support punitive immigration policy when the issue becomes localized, ICE or the INS initiating use of a facility in a county will decrease Republican vote-share when controlling for demographic traits which tend to influence party support. Additionally, each subsequent facility in a county has a significant, though smaller, negative effect on Republican vote-share. Potential socio-cultural explanations for this result are then explored to investigate the link between the presence of immigration enforcement and decreased support for the Republican Party.

1 Introduction

1.1 Immigration Policy in the United States

From as early as 1790, federal immigration legislation was passed by Congress to dictate the laws governing individuals who arrived in the United States (Migration Policy Institute 2013), but the underlying purpose and motivation for such policy has changed over time, adapting to the concerns, needs, and prejudices of its era. While it was broadly a time of large-scale immigration into the country, the 18th and 19th centuries saw significant action by immigration restrictionists who questioned not only the economic and cultural benefits of porous borders, but fundamentally, whether or not the Constitution truly established that American democracy was—or should be—accessible to all (Lindsay 2018). Following World War II, immigration policy changed substantially, typified by the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, which first removed race as a criterion of denial into the United States, and in 1965, was amended to remove existing quotas which limited immigration on the basis of country of origin (Johnson and Frombgen 2009). This period of relative openness would not last however, as when America entered the late-1970s, public opinion, and eventually federal policy, shifted to becoming aggressively more anti-immigrant and anti-immigration (Ibid).

The political climate of the 1990s deepened the anti-immigration sentiment which developed in the preceding decades, defined by new rhetoric and policy which explicitly linked immigrants with crime, a phenomenon sometimes referred to as *Crimmigration*. While media outlets contributed to this shift as well, reporting on major crimes perpetrated by (primarily illegal) immigrants and tying their actions to a failure of immigration enforcement (Lofgren 2005), this period is perhaps most known for legislation on both the federal and state levels which made American immigration policy more punitive. Perhaps the most significant of such bills being the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA), the primary reforms of which, unlike similar bills passed before it, dealt explicitly with the relationship between immigrants and crime (Grablet 1987). Section 287(g), one of the most significant measures included in the IIRIRA, created a partnership program wherein immigration enforcement duties which would typically be the responsibility of a federal authority would be delegated to state and local law enforcement agencies (Immigration and Customs Enforcement 2018). In addition to section 287(g), the IIRIRA also expanded the scope and intensity of immigration enforcement by enabling the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to both conduct expedited deportations of individuals and prosecute individuals who attempt to return after removal (Grablet 1987). Under the

IIRIRA, those who were subject to expedited deportation procedures were not given the right to have their case reviewed either judicially or administratively (Ibid).

While there was a degree of bipartisan consensus during this period for stricter and more punitive policies, Republican politicians made efforts to own immigration as a political issue, typified by Representative Dana Rohrbacher's declaration, "Let us make this Congress act, unlike when the Democrats controlled Congress and refused to stop illegal immigration. We Republicans will do the job" (Lofgren 2005 p. 350). On the presidential level too, Republicans attempted to portray itself as the toughest on immigration; in 1996 for example, "[Bob] Dole tried to win votes in California by accusing the Clinton administration of failing to control illegal immigration" (Migration News 1996). Yet, it would be inaccurate to describe immigration as a purely Republican issue in the mid-1990s. Prior to the passage of the IIRIRA, both then-Representative Chuck Schumer and Senator Dianne Feinstein introduced immigration legislation in 1993 which sought to address immigration as a criminal issue by establishing more punitive guidelines for deportation (Macías-Rojas 2018).

This era also produced more aggressive immigration enforcement policy existed on the state level. In California for example, Republican governor Pete Wilson endorsed Proposition 187, otherwise known as the Save Our State Initiative, during his 1994 re-election campaign (Macías-Rojas 2018). While the vast majority of its provisions would later be struck down, Proposition 187 would have barred undocumented immigrants from being able to use government-run benefits and institutions, such as public schools, public health services, and public social services (Ibid). While the Save Our State Initiative was written and passed in an era typified by the rise of 'Crimmigration' rhetoric, the primary talking points of the campaign were still rooted in the financial toll which immigrants were taking on California's finances (Monogan and Doctor 2017).

California was not, however, the only state to attempt such legislation during the period examined in this paper. Among the most notable examples came in 2010 when Arizona's legislature passed SB 1070, a package of reforms which significantly deepened the connection between immigration and criminal enforcement in the state. It included numerous provisions aimed at establishing a stricter enforcement regime, including a prohibition on state laws from interfering with federal enforcement action and policy; requiring all law enforcement officers to "reasonably attempt to determine the immigration status of a person involved in a lawful stop, detention or arrest in the enforcement of any other local or state law or ordinance where reasonable suspicion exists that the person is an alien and is unlawfully present;" and that the immigration status must be checked for any individual who is arrested (Morse

2011). Though the rule requiring officers to determine the immigration status of all individuals would later be struck down in courts (Duara 2018), SB 1070 would continue to serve as a template for state and local-level punitive reforms.

1.2 Interior Enforcement and the Rise of ICE

Prior to 2003, all responsibilities related to border security and immigration enforcement were under the purview of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Following the large-scale restructuring of many federal agencies which occurred in 2003, the INS was dissolved and replaced by three agencies which were tasked with enforcing and managing the areas previously covered by the INS: Customs and Border Security (CBP), the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS), and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) (Kang 2018). ICE, building upon the more extensive and punitive enforcement policies prescribed in the IIRIRA, was established to conduct interior enforcement, specifically, “to arrest, detain, and remove immigrants from the United States” (Leyro 2016). In 2008, ICE implemented an extension of previous federal-local partnerships such as 287(g) from the IIRIRA, with the introduction of its Secure Communities program (Immigration and Customs Enforcement 2018). Secure Communities, unlike 287(g), does not delegate enforcement responsibility to local agencies, but instead acts as an information sharing agreement in which “participating jails submit arrestees’ fingerprints not only to criminal databases, but to immigration databases as well, allowing Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) access to information on individuals held in jails” (American Immigration Council 2011). In response to partnerships such as Secure Communities and 287(g), many areas began adopting sanctuary status, broadly defined as “jurisdictions that have policies in place designed to limit cooperation with or involvement in federal immigration enforcement actions” (Kopan 2018). While the practice has grown increasingly controversial among those that support more restrictive and punitive immigration policy, in 2015, more than 200 jurisdictions had adopted sanctuary status, including the entire state of California (Ibid).

Aside from Secure Communities and 287(g), perhaps the most significant mechanism for federal/local partnership is the Intergovernmental Service Agreements (IGSAs): contracts in which government agencies such as ICE or the INS before them leases local, county, and or state law enforcement resources, often due to budgetary and facility constraints of federal immigration agencies (Jaeger 2016, p. 367; Office of the Inspector General 2001). IGSAs not only relieve federal authorities of a financial and logistical burden, but also facilitate greater cooperation from local governments and law enforcement

authorities by providing financial incentives to aid in the immigration enforcement effort (Jaeger 2016, p. 368). Though these agreements existed decades prior to its creation (Office of the Inspector General 2001), the capacity needs of ICE, particularly under the Obama administration as the deportation rate reached its historical high, became a necessary tool to manage the volume of individuals processed for deportation (Ibid., p. 364). Through both the increased federalization of immigration enforcement under policies such as 287(g) and Secure Communities, as well as the dramatic deficiency in government resources to manage its immigration detainment population,¹ the importance of the federal/local partnership in enforcement has continued to increase.

1.3 Immigration Politics Today

On June 16th, 2015, Donald Trump announced his candidacy for the 2016 United States presidential election. In his speech that day, he promised that if elected, “[He] will build a great, great wall on our southern border. And [he] will have Mexico pay for that wall,” which would become arguably his signature policy proposal (Time Magazine 2015). Though immigration has been a significant and divisive issue in American politics for decades, Trump’s ascendance through the Republican Party primaries and the subsequent activity of his administration have placed it at or near the top of the national agenda, as evidenced by a Gallup poll released in July of 2018 which reported that 22% of Americans viewed immigration as the biggest issue facing the United States, the highest percentage since they began polling this question (Gallup 2018). And while the precise ways in which one would view immigration as an issue would vary substantially depending on one’s ideology and or party allegiance, the urgency which voters feel toward immigration policy reform is undeniable. The role of ICE specifically has become a point of contention, with some politicians and activists calling for its abolition (Lind 2018). In such a climate, understanding its relationship with voters and their beliefs and opinions is crucial to recognizing the development of contemporary American immigration politics to its current form today.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Drivers of Support for Punitive Immigration Policy

Prior research that examines how ICE activity may be affecting attitudes toward immigration includes work produced by Jiang and Erez (2018), who studied how the perception of immigrants as a dangerous

¹In 2015, ICE processed 400,000 individuals for immigration hearings, but only owned and managed detainment facilities with a total capacity of 8,000(Jaeger 2016, p. 364)

force facilitates support for xenophobic and punitive immigration policy. Employing Bourdieu's Field Theory, a framework which outlines the ways in which individuals in a society influence and are influenced, the authors describe the ways in which immigration in the United States was transformed into an issue of criminality and sought to understand its effects on voter sentiment. Though they conclude that the cause of anti-immigrant sentiment has many sources— including economic and cultural factors, which play very significant roles in how one perceives an influx of a foreign population—they assert that the focus on criminal enforcement against immigrants has shifted the discourse to more explicitly center on the criminal or mortal threat immigrants pose as opposed to merely a destructive force culturally or economically. Pickett (2016) further studying the themes present within the theoretical framework described by Jiang and Erez (2018), examines the effects of immigrant fear on support for immigration policy. Using a nationally representative telephone survey, Pickett concludes that there is a significant relationship between the perception of Latinx immigrants as a political, economic, or security threat and one's support for strict immigration enforcement. Additionally, Baker, Cañarte, and Day (2018), addressing how racist and xenophobic tendencies affected support for punitive immigration policy, note that, "Punitiveness is intimately linked to fear and sense of security. Xenophobia is a uniquely important dimension of fear in relation to punitiveness because it is fundamentally a fear about both outsiders and the social order." From their analysis of the result of the 2014 Chapman Survey of American Fears, the authors conclude not only that one's perceived safety in society is negatively correlated with one's level of xenophobic beliefs, but further, that xenophobia is a significant predictor of support for punitive immigration policy. In line with the conclusion of Jiang and Erez (2017) and Pickett (2015), the results of Baker, Cañarte, and Day (2018) indicate that fear is among the strongest driving forces behind the implementation of punitive immigration policy.

Additional social, economic, and cultural factors which contribute to xenophobic beliefs are critical to developing a theoretical connection between exposure to immigration enforcement and support of conservative politics. Among the largest bodies of work concerning the formation of opinions on immigrants addresses the social and cultural factors which contribute to one's support or opposition to immigration. One of the most prominent theories on opinion formation is contact theory, initially suggested by Gordon Allport (1954) in his book *The Nature of Prejudice*, which broadly suggests that those that come in contact with members of another socio-cultural group will have less prejudiced views of that group.

There are however, a number of complicating factors in attempting to apply the conclusions of

Allport's Contact Theory or similar scholarly works in this context. Perhaps most significant is Group Threat Theory, which posits that a significant presence of racial and ethnic minorities in a community will appear to be a threat to the White majority with which they cohabit (Blalock 1967). Alba, Nee, and Nee (2005), studied the variations in perception of demographic changes in the United States. Using a nationally representative sample of 1,398 respondents to the General Society Survey (GSS), the authors measured the difference of how individuals perceived the racial demographics of the United States were compared to their true proportions. Their results demonstrate both a systematic overestimation of the size of non-White groups and a corresponding increase in anti-immigrant sentiment for those who believe the White majority is being threatened. Contextualized within the Group Threat Theory framework posed by Blalock (1967), this suggests that contrary to the conclusions of the Social Contact Theory, an influx of Latinx immigrants to a community could result in an increase in xenophobic and anti-immigrant sentiment among the White population.

Further complications were developed as a result of the study conducted by Person-Merkowitz, Filindra, and Dyck (2016), who analyze the mediating effects of partisan identity on inter-group contact. The authors conclude that due to the differences in each party's ideology concerning immigration, the ways in which partisans interpret social interactions with Latinx people in their community may also differ. Consequently, those who more strongly identify as Democrats tend to have more substantial increases in support for immigrants as a result of inter-group contact. Republicans, in contrast, who identify with a party with a less inclusive immigration policy, have either no change or significantly diminished changes in sentiment as a result of social contact.

Ybarra, Sanchez, and Sanchez (2016) also examine the influence of demographic shifts on anti-immigrant sentiment with an additional economic dimension. To determine the ways in which economic hardships in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis exacerbated anti-immigrant sentiment, the authors sought to determine what factors influenced the passage of punitive immigration reforms on a state level. They conclude, in line with the expectations of Blalock's (1967) Group Threat Theory, that an increase in the proportion of Hispanic residents and a decrease in the proportion of White residents in a given state is significantly correlated with the passage of punitive policies. Furthermore, using a broad measure of state economic health produced by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, they conclude that while poor economic conditions in a state are somewhat predictive of future punitive immigration legislation, it is less significant than demographic factors, and does not produce an additional effect when interacted on those demographic factors.

2.2 The Effects of Public Opinion on Immigration Policy

Analysis of state-level politics suggests partisan and ideological connections with xenophobic beliefs and support for anti-immigrant policy. In their examination of California's 1994 Ballot Measure Proposition 187 for example, Monogan and Doctor (2017) argue that while the proposition's provisions primarily addressed the economic consequences of immigration into the state, the campaign messaging which drew an explicit link drawn between electing Republicans and the passage of Proposition 187 was done with the intention of activating a sense of racial threat among California's White population. As Arrocha (2010) similarly notes in his analysis of state-level immigration policy:

The discourse that [Proposition 187] created in characterizing the undocumented workers as "invaders" became the new way to relate to the Mexican migrant...Migration in general, and particularly the "illegal" migration, would become part of the National Security discourse and policy of both the federal and state governments. This shift in dealing with a socioeconomic phenomenon, in a climate of fear and economic uncertainty, was to revive the debates and policies of exclusion at both the federal and state levels.

In addition to the patterns of state-level enforcement and their relationship to partisan or ideological makeup, local levels of enforcement are a highly politicized dimension of the immigration debate. As Farris and Holman (2017) observe in their analysis of the role of sheriffs in localized immigration procedures, significant variations in the intensity of enforcement can be attributed to a sheriff's beliefs about immigrants and immigration. They argue from their analysis of a survey of 2,838 individuals in 2012 that the more xenophobic and distrusting of immigrants one is, the more frequently they would check an individual's immigration status in response to a committed crime. This result is particularly notable as while the presence of local laws which regulate immigration enforcement by constraining the behavior of law enforcement officers is intimately tied to the political make-up of a community, the absence of such regulations allows for the personal beliefs of the sheriff alone to significantly influence the nature of enforcement. As such, while much scholarship has highlighted the role ideology and partisan identity on a mass-scale in the formation of immigration policy, if those preferences are not codified into law, they are not necessarily reflected in the field.

Work published by Chand and Schreckhise (2014), which examined variations in immigration enforcement on a county level as a result of Secure Communities further complicates this phenomenon, as they concluded that, "Areas with less crime are more likely to have more deportations". This trend, placed in conjunction with their further findings that, "The more support Republican presidential candidates received, and the more the state supported Arizona's SB 1070, the larger the number of

deportations occurred,” suggests that the prevalence of enforcement activity may still be a reflection of mass political opinion if it conforms to a more punitive vision for immigration policy. While their work framed sentiment as the independent variable, the disconnect between the intensity of ICE action committed through a criminal enforcement agreement such as Secure Communities and the concentration of crimes committed by immigrants, suggests that the patterns of immigration enforcement are not necessarily determined by need. In conjunction with the effect of the ideological make-up of communities on patterns of enforcement, these results lay out the possibility that politics is highly influential on both the individual and collective levels, particularly given the significance of xenophobic beliefs about immigrants in forming support for punitive immigration policy.

2.3 The Effects of Immigration Policy on Public Opinion

A framework for understanding how policy outcomes can influence issue voting is critical for examining the link between patterns of immigration enforcement and voting behavior. Relevant specifically to the local dimension of this paper is the work of Kriner and Reeves (2012), who examined the effect of federal fund disbursement on voting behavior. Through their analysis of federal grant spending in each county from 1988 to 2008, the authors conclude that increases in federal funds to a county corresponds to a positive shift in vote-share in favor of the incumbent president. Furthermore, there is a significant partisan effect on the degree to which spending changes vote-share; conservative counties respond with a significantly smaller increase in support than moderate or liberal counties. On an individual level however, this result disappears, as the results of their study of federal fund disbursement to counties on the 2008 election, voters across the ideological spectrum were more likely to vote for John McCain if they received funds than if they did not.

Further analysis of this phenomenon was conducted by Einstein, Trump, and Williamson (2016), who tested the relationship between support for the governing party and the disbursement of local funds through an analysis of the distribution of funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and support for the Democratic Party. Using a difference-in-differences design, the authors measure the change in the rate at which counties who received ARRA funds voted for both their house candidate as well as Barack Obama in 2008 compared to the rate in 2012, versus those counties that did not receive funds. They conclude that in highly partisan counties, those with higher proportions of Republican voters had significant negative changes in their vote-share for Obama and those with higher proportions of Democratic voters had significant positive changes in vote-share for Obama. The effect

on house races is smaller and only significant among counties that are overwhelmingly partisan (either more than 78% Republican or 83% Democratic). While this study examines the effect of the local-level implementation of an economic policy its conclusions may nonetheless be significant to understanding the effect of ICE or the INS activity on a county level, as it outlines both the ways in which partisan identity can influence perception of local perceptions of federal policy, and how federal policy can influence voting behavior on a county level.

Ciuk and Yost (2016) examine the attitudinal effects of policies depending on their level of salience. Using survey data gathered on the implementation of new fracking and storm-water management policies, the authors sought to determine what effect a policy itself had on public sentiment depending on the issue's salience. They conclude that while for low-salience policies (such as storm-water management), voters rely more heavily on party cues to form opinions, for high-salience issues, voters integrate policy information to re-evaluate their stance. If one views the first use of detention facilities by ICE and the INS in a county as an introduction of immigration as a localized issue to the county residents, this phenomenon described by Ciuk and Yost may be significant to understanding shifts in sentiment and voting behavior. In cases where enforcement activity begins to occur within one's community, one would be confronted with the issue of immigration through a personal lens—perhaps for the first time—which both increases its salience and consequently increases one's likelihood to break with their existing partisan alignment.

Abou-Chadi and Helbling (2018) analyze the effect of open or restrictive immigration policy reforms on voting behavior in the Netherlands, Denmark, and Germany from 1994 to 2011. Using post-election surveys which ask voters to rank themselves and the contending parties on an ideological scale of immigration policy, the authors studied how reforms influenced issue salience, whether that salience was dependent on which party was in government, and whether variations in salience are ideologically dependent. They conclude that the implementation of immigration policy reforms increases the issue's salience in the subsequent election, however, those effects are not significantly different whether a party is in or out of government, or whether the policy they implement is inclusive or restrictive. Furthermore, their findings demonstrate that while inclusive policy reforms tend to increase salience disproportionately for centrist and left-of-center parties, restrictive policy reforms do not create a correspondingly-sized effect among right-of-center parties.

3 Causal Model

From an examination of the existing literature, a number of key conclusions emerge which may illuminate the underlying mechanisms driving the electoral effects of local immigration enforcement:

1. The rise of *Crimmigration* rhetoric beginning in the 1980s and 1990s reframed immigration as an issue of security and criminality.
2. A belief in one's safety is inversely correlated with their level of xenophobic sentiment.
3. Xenophobia increases support for punitive immigration policy.
4. Punitiveness is a significant indicator of support for Republican candidates.

Taken together, these conclusions indicate that over the previous three decades, American politics has given rise to a climate where voters may be primed to view immigration in a manner deepens the support for punitive immigration policies and the politicians who support them.

Applying these conclusions to the work of Lahav and Courtemanche (2012), who examine the effects of issue framing on immigration, is critical for establishing a causal mechanism linking facility use by immigration enforcement agencies to shifts in vote behavior. The authors exposed a sample of students from the State University of New York to a randomly selected article on immigration, varying only slightly to reframe it along different vectors of threat. They conclude that framing immigration as an issue of personal safety and security results not only in inducing the greatest increase in issue salience, but also is most likely to persuade an individual to support restrictive immigration policies. If one viewed the initial use of a facility by ICE or the INS, a sign of a broader law enforcement presence in an area, as a trigger for shifting the frame of immigration to a question of security and physical safety, it may alter voting behavior as individuals living around the facility begin to reassess their position on immigration and shift their party support.

One possible threat to causal inference is the pattern of ICE or the INS facility use. A significant corpus of research has been published outlining the relationship between immigration enforcement and demographic trends (see: Chand and Schreckhise (2015)). If ICE and or INS used presidential vote-share to determine facility use patterns, then I could not use initial facility use as a determinant for voting patterns because they were already inversely related. Furthermore, it would render any attempt at establishing causality more difficult as it would render initial facility use an endogenous result of vote behavior as opposed to an independent treatment.

4 Hypothesis

The relationship between Republican Party vote-share in presidential elections and shifts in sentiment towards immigrants is based in a significant body of work which demonstrates the connection between conservative political ideology and support for punitive immigration policy. As numerous studies (Stupi, Chiricos, and Gertz (2016); Hawley (2011); Wong (2012)) demonstrate, those with conservative political beliefs are significantly more likely to view immigrants as a threat than the rest of the population. Furthermore, as the results of Lahav and Courtemanche (2011) demonstrate, the effects of reframing immigration as an issue of security and personal are exclusive to liberals. As such, viewing the use of a facility by ICE or the INS as a trigger to re-shift the framing of immigration to one of security, I predict that a portion of liberal voters will vote for the Republican candidate for president, while conservative voters will continue to support restrictive and punitive immigration policies after exposure:

- *H1: Republicans will receive a greater percent of the vote in presidential election in counties where ICE or the INS initiated use of a detention facility than in those counties in which they did not.*

As Ciuk and Yost (2016) conclude, the more salient an issue is to a voter, the more likely it is that they integrate information and form opinions outside of the constraints of party cues. Anticipating that a larger presence of immigration enforcement authorities in a given county would raise the salience of the issue among its residents, I expect that as the number of facilities ICE or the INS use in a county increases, the greater the change in Republican presidential vote-share would be:

- *H2: Counties where ICE or the INS use more than one facility will have a correspondingly larger increase in Republican vote-share than to counties which have one or fewer facilities being used.*

5 Data and Methods

To evaluate these hypotheses, I use a difference-in-differences design whose treatment is the first use of a facility in a county by ICE or the INS, and/or the number of facilities in each county in each election year, and the outcome is the county-level vote-share for the Republican candidate for president. Using a list of all detention facilities ICE and INS have used since 1980, I estimate the effect on the vote-share for Republican presidential candidates in each county of the first time ICE or the INS uses a detention facility in that given county. I conducted my analysis using a fixed-effects regression, controlling for both geographic (county) and time (year) fixed-effects. I additionally use a clustered robust error measurement grouped by county. The list of facilities being used by ICE was obtained

by the National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) in a Freedom of Information Act request to the Department of Homeland Security which details the “more than 1,000 federal facilities that detain immigrants, including county jails, Bureau of Prisons facilities, Office of Refugee Resettlement centers, hospitals, and hotels” (Cullen 2018). I am not only using a binary treatment variable to measure the difference in Republican presidential vote-share following a county’s first ICE or the INS facility, but additionally, a variable which measures the total number of facilities in each county in each inter-election period. The inclusion of both metrics is important to measuring the full effect of facility use on voting behavior as the first facility which opens in a county does not always remain in use for the full period of study.

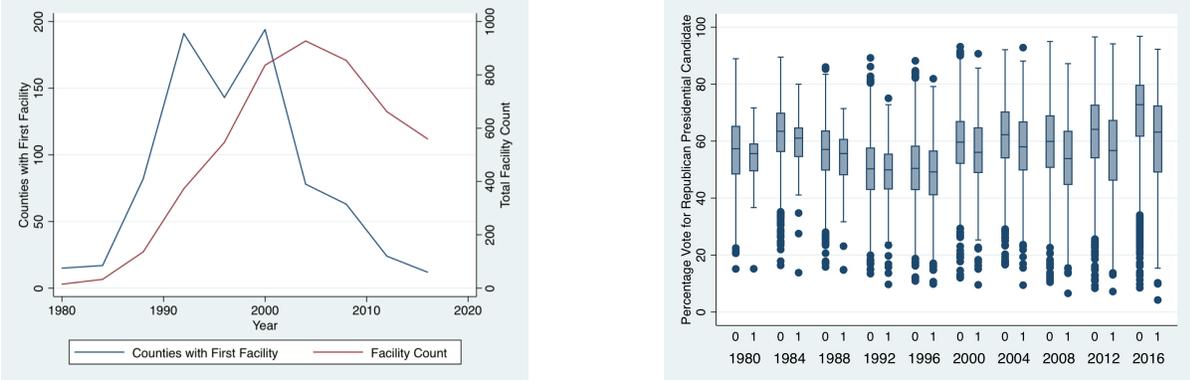


Figure 1: **Left:** Yearly Facility Use and Distribution; **Right:** Yearly Republican vote-share by County Facility Use (1 = Has had a facility, 0 = Has never had a facility)

I include fixed-effect variables for both geography (county) and time (year) to control for invariant characteristics in the units of study. I will additionally include controls which account for the social, cultural, geographic, and economic dimensions which may induce shifts in voting behavior unrelated to immigration enforcement facility use. To control for the socio-cultural dimension to immigration opinion formation discussed by Allport (1957); Blalock (1967); Alba, Rumbaut, and Marotz (2005); and Person-Merkowitz, Filindra, and Dyck (2016) which could result in shifts in voting behavior, I include the proportion of each county’s population who identify as White, as well as the proportion of each county’s population who identifies as an evangelical . To control for the economic dimension to immigration opinion formation discussed by Ybarra, Sanchez, and Sanchez (2016) which could result in shifts in voting behavior, I include the *per-capita* personal income of each county. Finally, to account for any variations in effect that could result from higher or lower proximity to a facility, I include a measure of

population density for each county in each election year.

I merged two sources of data to create a full panel of election results from 1980 to 2016. The data from the presidential elections between 1980 and 2008 came from a repository of county-level data compiled by the United States Census Bureau using data collected by CQ Press.² The data from the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections were collected by Kevin Yaroch who compiled data collected from *The Guardian* (Yaroch 2017). Results of the 2012 and 2016 US presidential elections, by county. I have omitted a number of geographic units due to inconsistent election results reporting, including all boroughs in Alaska;³ Kalawao County, Hawaii; Yellowstone National Park, Montana; Broomfield County, Colorado;⁴ and all of the independent cities in Virginia.⁵ Though they did not exist in 1980, I kept La Paz County, Arizona and Cibola County, New Mexico as they existed for enough of my study’s timeframe to be significant.

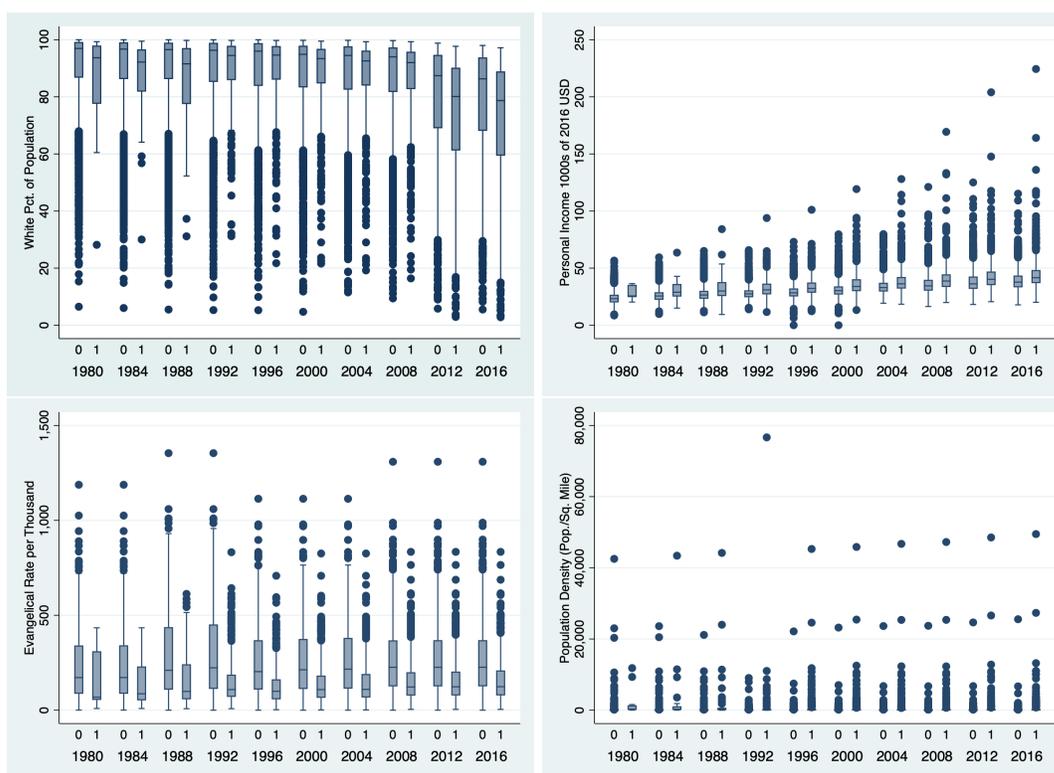


Figure 2: Control Variable Distributions by Year and County Facility-Use (1 = Has had a facility, 0 = Has never had a facility)

²United States Census Bureau. USA Counties Data File Downloads.

³Alaskan election data is not collected by borough (county equivalent) and therefore is not reliably reported at the same level of study as the rest of the country.

⁴Kalawao County, Hawaii; Yellowstone National Park, Montana; and Broomfield County, Colorado do not report their own election results every year in my data set, and therefore were excluded.

⁵Due to the unavailability of control data for Virginia’s independent cities, I excluded them from my analysis.

The source of the proportion of each county’s population that identifies as White and each county’s per-capita personal income is the U.S. Census’ Population Estimates Program. As the Census’ county-level data repository only reported per-capita personal income through 2000, I appended the data for the years 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016 with data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, a division of the Department of Commerce. I obtained the county-level proportion of evangelical through SAGE Stats, who aggregated decennial census data from the Religious Congregation and Membership Study. Because the proportion of evangelicals is only measured every ten years, many of the years included in my analysis are not included in the data set. As such, I approximated the election year value by assigning it the value from the closest decennial census year. Finally, I obtained county-level population density data through SAGE Stats which compiled census data on county population and area each year.

I employ five variations of a model which includes different combinations of these variable. The first model, an ordinary least squares regression, only examines the relationship between the binary facility-use variable and Republican vote-share. The second model includes the binary facility- variable but additionally includes both geographic and temporal fixed-effects. The third model includes all the variables from the second model with additional demographic controls. The fourth model includes all the control variables from Model 3, but uses the per-facility metric for change instead of the binary switch which activates when the first facility in a county is used. The final model includes both measures of facility use as well as all of the controls present in models 3 and 4.

5.1 Model 1

$$\Delta y_{ct} = \alpha + \beta_1 X_{ct} + \epsilon_{ct}$$

5.2 Model 2

$$\Delta y_{ct} = \alpha + \beta_1 X_{ct} + \gamma_c(U_c) + \sigma_t(P_t) + \epsilon_{ct}$$

5.3 Model 3

$$\Delta y_{ct} = \alpha + \beta_1 X_{ct} + \beta_2(White_{ct}) + \beta_3(Evangelical_{ct}) + \beta_5(Density_{ct}) + \gamma_c(U_c) + \sigma_t(P_t) + \epsilon_{ct}$$

5.4 Model 4

$$\Delta y_{ct} = \alpha + \beta_1 N_{ct} + \beta_2(White_{ct}) + \beta_4(Income_{ct}) + \beta_3(Evangelical_{ct}) + \beta_5(Density_{ct}) + \gamma_c(U_c) + \sigma_t(P_t) + \epsilon_{ct}$$

5.5 Model 5

$$\Delta y_{ct} = \alpha + \beta_1 X_{ct} + \beta_2 N_{ct} + \beta_3(White_{ct}) + \beta_5(Income_{ct}) + \beta_4(Evangelical_{ct}) + \beta_6(Density_{ct}) + \gamma_c(U_c) + \sigma_t(P_t) + \epsilon_{ct}$$

Where:

y : The two-party Republican vote-share in each county in each election year.

X : Whether ICE or the INS has used a facility in each county before (0 = no facility has been used, 1 = a facility has been used; variable equals 1 for full period of study after the first facility is used).

N : The total number of facilities in use by ICE or the INS in each county in each election year.

White: The proportion of White residents in each county in each election year.

Evangelical: The number of residents who identify as evangelicals per 1,000 individuals in each county in each election year.

Income: The per capita personal income of each county in each election year (1,000s of 2016 USD).

Density: The population density of each county in each election year.

U : Dummy variable for geographic fixed-effect

P : Dummy variable for temporal fixed-effect

6 Results

The results of the five regressions employing these models is reported below, including each variables coefficient, its t-score, and its level of significance (* = significant at 0.10; ** = significant at 0.05; *** = significant at 0.01).

	Model 1 (OLS)	Model 2 (FE)	Model 3 (FE)	Model 4 (FE)	Model 5 (FE)
	Coef./(t)	Coef./(t)	Coef./(t)	Coef./(t)	Coef./(t)
First Facility	-1.9226*** (-2.0613)	-4.6170*** (-14.4934)	-3.6355*** (-12.0098)		-2.8317*** (-7.6241)
Per Facility				-1.8646*** (-11.5700)	-0.8957*** (-4.3299)
White Pct.			0.2354*** (16.7034)	0.2376*** (16.7900)	0.2319*** (16.5403)
Income			-0.1897*** (-9.4567)	-0.1928*** (-9.4100)	-0.1886*** (-9.3843)
Pop. Density			-0.0004 (-1.4121)	-0.0004 (-1.4300)	-0.0004 (-1.4042)
Evangelical Rate			-0.0026* (-1.7780)	-0.0029** (-1.9600)	-0.0027* (-1.8155)
Constant	23.7000*** (1164.4300)	56.8210*** (345.1643)	40.7426*** (29.3808)	40.8075*** (29.1800)	41.1112*** (29.6951)
Geographic FE		✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE		✓	✓	✓	✓
R2	0.1778	0.3935	0.4303	0.4273	0.4313
N	30457	30457	30457	30457	30457

While a significant number of previous studies on this subject have outlined possible effects of both the criminalization and localization of immigration as a political issue on voter attitudes, the results of the five models listed above demonstrate an alternate result. Contrary to the predictions made in H1 and H2, the first use of detention facilities in a county by ICE or the INS correspond to a decrease in Republican vote-share. Though the inclusion of controls and a per-facility measure diminish the effect of the treatment variable, it remains significant in all variations of the model tested. Additionally, while the direction of the prediction in H2 was incorrect, the results of the regression also suggest that additional facility use in a county amplifies the effect of the initial facility use by ICE or the INS by roughly 0.90% when combined with the binary treatment variable.

The percentage of each county's population that identifies as White and the mean personal income in county are consistently significant at the 0.01 level, where an increase in the White population corresponds to an increase in Republican vote-share and an increase in mean personal income corresponds to a decrease in Republican vote-share. Additionally, the rate of evangelical observance per 1,000 residents is significant in models 3, 4, and 5, though to varying levels. Population density however, is not a significant determinant of Republican vote-share in any model it appears in, suggesting that the number of people who would theoretically live in proximity to a given facility does not substantially change the significance of its use.

In each model, regardless of controls, the variable indicating the presence and proliferation of immigration enforcement facilities is significant and constant in its direction. Noting in particular the results of models 3-5 which feature a full panel of controls, a consistently negative effect appears when the binary 'First Facility' variable is active in each county, when a per-facility measure is used, and when both are examined in tandem. To quantify the calculated impact of these facilities, the 2.83% decrease in Republican vote-share shown in Model 5 is larger than the margin of victory for almost 1 in 10 counties which were won by the Republican candidate in the 10 elections between 1980 and 2016, and if sustained in each county in the national, would have flipped the results of the 2000, 2004, and 2016 presidential elections in favor of the Democratic party.

7 Discussion

Though political scientific research has broadly suggested a link between xenophobia and support for punitive immigration policy with demographic change, *Crimmigration* rhetoric, and other cultural and political phenomena, the results of this study may be suggesting a different reaction. Previous studies

concerning opinion formation on immigration whose conclusions echo the results of this paper suggest increased support for immigration typically necessitates inter-group contact and includes a mediating factor, be it partisan identity, personality trait, or location. As Homola and Tavits (2018) note for example in their analysis of political ideology’s effect on sentiment towards immigrants in Germany and the United States, contact reduced xenophobia solely among left-leaning voters. Similar work which highlights the effects of political knowledge (Danckert, Dinesen, and Sønderskov 2017), geographic context (Walker 2014), and social network traits (Berg 2009), additionally point to various aspects of identity and disposition that may facilitate increased openness following contact with an outside group. Though the presence of these mechanisms in the units of observation of this study was not determined, these social effects may help to explain the cause of the voting behavior shifts seen in the results.

Two considerations which may limit one’s ability to make causal claims regarding this study relate to the used measure of immigration enforcement itself. The first being that, as many previous studies have shown, the distribution of immigration enforcement throughout the United States is not random. Though the work of Chand and Schreckhise (2014) suggests that there may be disconnect between the intensity of enforcement and concentration of crimes committed by immigrants, the distribution of immigration detainment facilities may yet be connected to the number of immigrants residing in a community. As Wong (2012) notes in his analysis of 287(g) agreement adoptions, while continued immigration into a community which has had a long standing foreign-born population has no effect on a local government’s likelihood of increasing cooperation with federal immigration authorities, areas with growing Latinx populations and do not have existing immigrant communities were more likely to enter into a 287(g) agreement. This pattern may show that the decrease in Republican vote-share following the initial use of a facility by ICE or the INS may be driven more by demographic shifts than by changes in opinion on immigration. Specifically within the context of the substantial per-facility change in vote-share, differentiating between these two effects may be very difficult, as it may be a result of the greater visibility of immigration enforcement that having a larger presence may bring, or it may be a result of the relationship between the number of facilities being used and the size of the Latinx and or immigrant population. Though this effect may be moderated by the inability of many immigrants to vote in elections, demographic change may still at least partially drive the effect witnessed in this study.

Another unexplored, yet potentially crucial questions regarding this result is to what degree residents of a county are aware of the presence of an ICE/INS detainment facility. As the vast majority of facilities used were existing structures that ICE/INS leased space in via IGSA’s, it may not be clear

to residents of a county that immigration enforcement agencies even have a local presence. Though there are articles from both local and national sources which chronicle local ICE facility-use,⁶ they primarily cover the construction of new, purpose-built facilities for ICE, rather than the use of existing facilities leased through IGSA's. As the vast majority of the units included in the NIJC's data set belong to the latter category, it is unclear whether a similar response from voters would be seen for the facilities studied in this paper. This engagement with local immigration politics may yet indicate a broad awareness of the presence of immigration enforcement agencies in communities, whether or not there is an awareness of the facilities themselves. One could therefore consider the use of a facility by ICE or the INS as a proxy for a broader agency presence in a given community, which would imply a higher degree of visibility than the mere leased space of a prison. Under that framework, the causal link between the initiation of facility use and a shift in county-wide voting behavior would be more compelling, albeit with a continued degree of uncertainty about public knowledge. In further studies of the impact of immigration enforcement on public opinion, other metrics of ICE/INS activity such as deportations conducted through the Secure Communities program, or other, possibly more visible aspects of enforcement could be employed.

⁶See: Hoffman (2014), Heffernan (2011), or Linthicum (2014)

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