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THE STATE OF IMMIGRATION: AN ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMMIGRATION POLICIES, ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

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**THE STATE OF IMMIGRATION:
AN ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMMIGRATION
POLICIES, ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND POLITICAL
IDEOLOGY**

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Social Work

in

The School of Social Work

by
Heather Leanne Kuntz
B.A., Truman State University, 2017
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my host families and loved ones in Venezuela who taught me to see the world through someone else's eyes and struggles.

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ABSTRACT

Division of attitudes towards immigration policy is more polarized than ever (Public Religion Research Institute, 2018). Historically, restrictive attitudes towards immigration policies have been highest in times of rising nationalist ideals and economic vulnerability (Jaret, 1999; Ngai, 2004). Primarily a federal responsibility, immigration enforcement was decentralized and that power shared with individual states (Pantoja, 2006), leading to policy disparities among states (Butz & Kehrberg, 2019; Gulasekaram et al., 2015; Johnson, 2019). Studies focusing on the relationship between state economic context and immigration policies, found that states that are more economically vulnerable had higher numbers of restrictive immigration policies (Ybarra et al., 2016). While some point to economic factors, others have found that political ideology and political party alignment are more influential (Brooks et al., 2016; Natter et al., 2020).

This study explored the relationship between economic context and attitudes towards immigration policies. I found a significant difference in attitudes towards immigration policies by political party identification. Democrat had the lowest median score (12.583) meaning they held more welcoming attitudes, Independent had the next lowest (16.2732), and Republican had the highest score (21.3464) However, I found no significant relationship (-0.032; $p=0.05$) between state-level economic context and individual attitudes towards immigration policies or state-level economic context and state average attitudes towards immigration policies (-0.003; $p=0.05$), or individual income levels ($p=0.963$) and employment levels ($p=0.095$).

The evidence of a significant relationship between attitudes towards immigration policy political party affiliation has implications for policy, namely the need for bipartisan support and highlighting ways that immigration reform benefits all parties. For social work practice

implications of this study point toward need for education and transparency about benefits of immigration to clients and combatting misinformation that exists surrounding the subject.

Exploring how political party affiliation and economic factors interact to shape attitudes towards immigration policies, and how this in turn affect the development of policy legislation will help to understand the overall relationship.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The American middle class, once comprising a clear majority of the population, is shrinking along with its share of the nation's aggregate income (Horowitz, Igielnik, & Kochhar, 2018). While the individual income rate of the upper-class is steadily growing with 64% increase of total income since 1970, that of the middle class has only increased 49% and that of the lower income only experiencing a 43% gain (Horowitz et al., 2018). This data reflects an era of ever widening economic divide that helps the upper-class cement their financial status, while the middle and lower-income tiers struggle to adapt to inflation and basic living expenses. Though the economic stagnation of 2018 was experienced differently along economic statuses, the entire nation has been in a period of slow growth in comparison to the years before the Great Recession and slowed from 1.2% to 0.3%, resulting in a median loss of \$12,400 for the average American household income (Horowitz et al., 2018). As economic inequality has widened and the economy stagnated, the ideological divide has deepened, one area in particular is with immigration and attitudes towards immigration policies (Public Religion Research Institute, 2018). According to a recent study though, attitudes about immigration are near equally divided between those that support welcoming policies and those that support restrictive policies, more individuals fall at the extreme ends of the spectrum, and there are far fewer moderates than ever (Public Religion Research Institute, 2018).

This divide is reflected in Congress, which has been deadlocked in regard to immigration reform for years (Ybarra, 2016). These realities are reflected in the policies that are currently being debated include building a wall along the U.S. Mexican border, the amount of asylee and refugee visas being given, detainment and family separation, as well as local law enforcement cooperation with federal immigration enforcement. This has real consequences for the immigrant

population already living in the country, as well as those seeking residency status. Immigrant detention has now led to 214 deaths since 2003 due to severe medical neglect, as well as children who have been separated from their families to never be reunited again (Detention Watch Network, 2019).

Beyond detention, there are those that are left in limbo at the borders, sometimes having traveled hundreds of miles away from their home countries to flee dangerous circumstances, only to find themselves in other dangerous situations on their journey and while waiting at the border (American Immigration Council, 2019). Policies including “metering,” or limiting the number of individuals who are permitted to access the asylum process each day at ports of entry on the Mexican border, and Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), which require asylum seekers to remain in Mexico while they await their court date, leave asylum seekers vulnerable to trafficking, unsafe living conditions, and even death (American Immigration Council, 2019).

Individual attitudes inform our decisions on who we choose to represent us in state and federal government as we elect those that reflect our views. Through influencing voters’ attitudes concerning immigration, we can influence who is in Congress creating those policies that affect the lives of immigrants in the U.S. and those seeking immigration status. Perhaps economic factors are at the heart of this change.

As states have become more involved in regulating immigration, understanding how state level economic context affects individual attitudes can help us to better understand their relationship. Research on attitudes towards immigration and economics primarily focused on national attitudes (Jaret, 1999; Pantoja, 2006) or on how the economy impacts immigration legislation (Ybarra, 2016). Where it is lacking is on the state economic front. This gap could be filled through exploring the growing divide in immigration attitudes may prove to be key in

understanding the overall relationship. Furthermore, exploring other factors in economic context and influences on attitude formation like individual income, employment status and political ideology. Do states with a lower level of state economic wellbeing have a statistically significant relationship with restrictive attitudes towards immigration policies and vice versa? Do individual economic factors like income and employment status have an influence on what immigration policies one supports? What is the relationship between sanctuary policy support and individual income and employment? Or is political ideology at the core of immigration attitude formation?

In Chapter 2, I will discuss the history of immigration policy as well as the current era of decentralization of immigration enforcement. I then describe the existing research on the relationship between state and individual economic factors and on attitudes towards immigration policies. Chapter 3 details my process in choosing methods and defining the variables of my study. In Chapter 4, I display my results using correlation and ANOVA analyses. I explore the questions of which factors have the most impact on immigration attitudes on a regional, state and individual level. Chapter 5 explores and discusses these results as well as how they fit into the previous literature, followed by Chapter 6 in which I will discuss conclusions made from this research and implications for social work practice, police and research.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Attitudes towards immigration policies have evolved throughout U.S. history, fluctuating between periods of restrictive and welcoming attitudes (Jaret, 1999; Pantoja, 2006; Ybarra et al., 2016). These changes in attitudes have direct impacts on policy implementations (Nafziger, 2009; Pantoja, 2006). As immigration enforcement has become increasingly decentralized, there is now more variation in policy by state (Butz & Kehrberg, 2019). I first discuss trends in immigration attitudes throughout U.S. history and the modern era of immigration enforcement decentralization as well as the specific policy disparities among states. I then describe the effects of the economy on a state, regional and individual level including income and employment on those policies. Finally, I identify gaps in the research surrounding state-level economic implications.

History of Immigration Policy and Attitudes

Restrictive immigration attitudes have been found to be highest during times of economic downturn and when the country is experiencing greater numbers of immigrants from countries outside of Western Europe (Jaret, 1999). From his research he found that this is due to the drive of individuals to protect their own financial wellbeing and worry over loss of national identity or heterogenization (Jaret, 1999). Early in the history of our country and throughout much of the 18th and 19th centuries, immigration was relatively free and open reflecting a laissez-faire attitude towards mobility that dated back to the colonial period (Ngai, 2004). The migration of the first European settlers from England to the United States is an example of that previous freedom of movement that was allowed before immigration restriction began (Ngai, 2004). In the 19th century immigration in the United States was encouraged and unfettered, driven by the capitalist need for more workers from around the world to support the labor needs of the industrial

revolution (Ngai, 2004). Immigration attitudes at this time were welcoming due to the positive impact it had on the economy and the cheap labor the immigrants brought (Ngai, 2004). Even before the enactment of the first immigration law, economic factors still surrounded and influenced immigration attitudes.

In the earliest policies regarding immigration restriction, we can see the impact of both nationalist ideals and economic factors. Because immigrant labor helped to sustain the economic boon and development of the United States, attitudes at this time were overwhelmingly positive and immigration was encouraged to sustain the growth of a new nation (Ngai, 2004).

In the mid 1800's, Chinese workers began migrating to the United States primarily to work in the gold mines, but also to work in agriculture, factories and on the railroad (Ngai, 2004). Anti-Chinese immigrant sentiments began to grow at this time as Chinese laborers worked for lower wages than American workers, often beating out American workers for labor (Ngai, 2004). This combined with the stark ethnic contrast in comparison to dominantly Anglo-Saxon immigrants of the past, clashed with the dominant American view of national identity and had an impact on the enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, the first U.S. immigration policy to place regulations of immigrants from an entire country (Ngai, 2004).

World War I spurred a global trend of tightening and better defining national borders and the creation of passports and visas, ending the laissez-faire mentality surrounding migration (Ngai, 2004). In line with this trend, the U.S. passed the Johnson Reed Immigration Act of 1924, which established the passport and visa requirement, as well as the quota system that placed numerical limits on immigration based on nationality and race (Ngai, 2004). The restrictions of this immigration policy were influenced by both the rise in nationalism after the Great War and a decrease in need for manual labor in manufacturing industries as more implemented

technological advances and mass production (Ngai, 2004). This new job scarcity was paired with warnings of large quantities of impoverished immigrants fleeing countries devastated by the war to the United States which fanned anti-immigrant sentiments (Ngai, 2004).

Not only was the creation of the quota system effected by these factors, but also the implementation as the number of immigrants allowed entry from each country was connected to the economic and political relationship with their country of nationality (Ngai, 2004). The turn of the 20th century was highlighted as a period of both economic struggle due to unfair working conditions and compensation before many modern labor and health regulation and general xenophobia, as immigrants from Eastern Europe were increasing in immigration numbers in comparison to Western Europe (Jaret, 1999). While the earlier half of the century saw a majority of immigrants coming from European countries, the 1960's began an increase of immigration from Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, who were viewed as more "other" than Western European immigrants (Jaret, 1999). During this time anti-immigration sentiment rose again due to attitudes created by fear of losing a national identity and heterogenization (Jaret, 1999). These attitudes have the ability to create a lasting impact on policy and the realities faced by immigrants in the U.S. (Reyna, Dobria & Wetherell, 2013).

Decentralization of Immigration Policy

Two policies enacted in 1996, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA), and the Personal Responsibility and Work Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), had lasting impact on immigration (Pantoja, 2006). U.S. immigration enforcement was historically handled at a national level until IIRIRA was enacted, which allowed states to share in burden of the enforcement of immigration law through decentralization (Pantoja, 2006).

IIRIRA devolved immigration enforcement to the individual states, creating disparities in enforcement and access to social services (Pantoja, 2006).

Attitudes towards immigrants in the 1990's centered on fear of creating a dependent state and immigrants being public charges of the welfare system (Pantoja, 2006). The enactment of PRWORA in 1996 stripped the security net from under immigrants, through a policy that prohibits them from accessing federal support during their first five years in the United States (Pantoja, 2006). The exclusionary attitudes towards immigration of the 1990s changed to xenophobia and distrust in the 2000s after the events of September 11, 2001 (Nafziger, 2009). The policies again reflected attitudes and misplaced fear that Americans were feeling with the passing of the Homeland Security Act in 2002 and the subsequent creation of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE (Nafziger, 2009). The formation of ICE has turned the issue of immigration enforcement into a criminal issue instead of the civil issue that it is (Douglas & Sáenz, 2013). This combined with private prisons contracting out beds to ICE, immigrants, asylees, and refugees can find themselves in prison facilities. (Douglas & Sáenz, 2013).

Now, more than a decade after the events of September 11, 2001, Public Religion Research Institute asserts that attitudes are trending more positively towards immigrants of all backgrounds, yet immigrants find themselves in an ever-hostile environment (2018). The most people in the history of the PRRI survey support reducing immigration levels and a majority agree that immigrants strengthen the country, are hard-working, don't want to be supported by welfare and have strong family values (Public Religion Research Institute, 2018). This is at odds with the current policies immigrants are facing. Detention numbers in 2019 reached an average daily population of 50,165 and an annual total of 510,854 (Detention Watch Network, 2019). This is a staggering statistic given reports of inhumane conditions within the detention centers,

accusations of forced sterilizations (Hamilton, 2011) and family separations (Aranda & Vaquera, 2018) on an ever-growing number of detainee deaths (Detention Watch Network, 2019).

Though immigration attitudes are trending positively, they are more divided than ever with the minority not only somewhat supporting, but strongly supporting these punitive policies (Public Religion Research Institute, 2018). This divisiveness can create a gridlock in Congress concerning immigration reform and has led to disparities in state immigration policies (Butz & Kehrberg, 2019). While federal legislation still governs overarching immigration policy, states have the ability to pass laws that support a more welcoming or restrictive environment for immigrants through state-level policies concerning employment restrictions, law enforcement policies, education opportunity, access to public services and welfare, and even those as simple as obtaining a driver's license (Gulasekaram et al., 2015). Particularly the discussion of law enforcement policies and cooperation with ICE interventions has been in the forefront of current debates, much due to the disparities between states with or without sanctuary policies (Johnson, 2019). The state of California was the first to adopt a sanctuary policy, a law that prohibits law enforcement officials from inquiring about an individual's immigration status or holding them without a criminal warrant (Johnson, 2019). Colorado, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Oregon, and Vermont have adopted similar policies (Johnson, 2019). Sanctuary policies do help to mitigate the negative impact of federal immigration enforcement, but in other states the policies can be vastly different.

In contrast to the sanctuary policies of other states, states like Arizona penned new legislation in 2010 requiring law enforcement to explicitly question every person arrested about their immigration status (National Immigration Law Center, 2011). Five other states, Utah, Indiana, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina followed suit and passed similar laws. Other

states including Iowa, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina and Tennessee have enacted policies to discourage sanctuary cities by blocking funding (Gulasekaram et al., 2019). Texas, a state with one of the highest populations of immigrants in the country, signed SB 4 to discourage Austin from continuing with its sanctuary policies by blocking state funding to the city. (Gulasekaram et al., 2019).

Beyond sanctuary policy, there are other welcoming policies that states are enacting. Ten states and the District of Columbia allow unauthorized immigrants to obtain driver's licenses, a major barrier to everyday life in the US (National Immigration Law Center, 2020). Twenty-four states supported President Obama's executive actions to grant work permits to nearly four million unauthorized immigrants already living in the country and to protect them from deportation (National Immigration Law Center, 2020).

The other twenty-six states not only opposed the executive action, but filed a lawsuit challenging it (National Immigration Law Center, 2020), favoring more restrictive immigration policies. Florida, which is home to more immigrants than any other state, was one of those twenty-six. The expansion of a program called Secure Communities (SCOMM) sparked the extreme criminalization of immigration enforcement that we recognize today (Nowrasteh, 2017). The expansion of this policy made it mandatory for local law enforcement to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement (Sktrentny & Lopez, 2013). One purpose cited for this was to remove "dangerous criminals" and "undeserving immigrants" (Sktrentny & Lopez, 2013). Again, attitudes revolving around fear of danger and financial strain are at the core of the decisions. In 2008, the country maintained less than 100 beds in prisons for immigration detention, but by the end of 2014 that number had risen to more than 3,000 (Collingwood, Morin & El-Khatib, 2018). Many of the ICE detention contracts went to private prison corporations like

CCA and The GEO Group, both of which earned over 3 billion dollars in 2016 (Collingwood et al., 2018). Federal cooperation with the private prison industry, which has a high stake in keeping their beds occupied and strong lobbying power, doesn't lead to accommodating policies being embraced. In 2015 Obama replaced SCOMM with the Priority Enforcement Program that was more targeted at serious offenders and did not mandate local law enforcement to cooperate in immigration enforcement (Nowrasteh, 2017). This change in policy reflected the attitudes towards immigrants steadily becoming more positive during the latter part of the 2010's (Public Religion Research Institute, 2018).

Economic Context and Attitudes toward Immigration

Given the patterns observed in the close fluctuations of the trends in both economies and changes in immigration policy, it's essential to understand how those patterns differ in varying economic contexts. One study analyzed the effects of the economy on democratic societies and found that when the economy is perceived as "bad" voters are less likely to support expansionist policies like welfare funding or immigration reform, in other words, when voters are more concerned about their well-being, their attitudes towards issues concerning immigration become more conservative, even over political ideology (Kim & Fording, 2001). While Kim and Fording (2001) examined the effects of the economy on 13 Western democracies as a whole, the overall picture of the economic landscape is missing for countries, like the U.S., in which state economy varies greatly to the national economy.

The Great Recession of 2007-2009 showed us that while we may experience a nation-wide economic downturn, the effects at the state-level can vary, with some experiencing worse decline than the nation's average, and others experiencing a boom (Ybarra et al., 2016). The same was observed in 2018 and continuing into the current time as once booming manufacturing

and agricultural businesses have been steadily declining, while tech and service industries are increasing (Whiton & Muro, 2019). States in the upper Midwest like Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin which rely heavily on manufacturing revenue have therefore suffered greater economically than states with thriving tech industries like Massachusetts, California, Delaware, and the District of Columbia (Atkinson & Nager, 2014).

In the 2016 elections, many voters voted outside of their party and the economy was a major swaying factor in states where the economy was weaker (Kolko, 2016). In fact, the manufacturing industry, which was once starkly blue, has reversed to majority red-leaning (Whiton & Muro, 2019). By 2013, it was found that support for accommodating immigration policies declines as confidence in the economy deteriorates. Rhetoric was used which reflected sentiments from the 1990's surrounding immigrants being harmful for the economy and "taking" jobs from the American worker (Esposito & Finley, 2019).

In another study, Wilson found that when Americans feel that their employment status is in jeopardy that they will hold more restrictive immigration views in order to protect their own self-interests, even though immigrants have been proven to be a net benefit to the economy (2001). He further went on to find that these attitudes have significant influence on their policy preferences and implications for which candidates they prefer (Wilson, 2001). While Wilson studied the attitudes towards immigrants as a whole, a different study from 2017 expanded upon these findings to say that economic self-interest has a disproportionately greater effect when it comes to attitudes towards low-skilled immigration (Gerber et al., 2017). These studies show that employment and fear of losing employment is a factor in immigration attitude formation.

State Economic Context and Immigration Policy

Moving from a national economic context to a state-level context becomes more important as immigration enforcement has become more decentralized. Because of this decentralization and subsequent responsibility, states are now enacting their own legislation on immigration enforcement and therefore studying the effect of state economic context on those decisions has become increasingly important. There have been a few previous studies that have highlighted the importance of the state economy to immigration attitudes (Dancygier & Donnelly, 2013; Ybarra et al., 2016). Ybarra explored how state economies during the Great Recession of 2007 affected immigration legislation and found that a record number of states enacted restrictive immigration policies between 2005 and 2012 (2016). The study found that this period was marked by fear of financial collapse (Ybarra et al., 2016). This fear negatively influenced attitudes towards immigrants at the time who were again characterized as becoming dependent off of social support and state welfare (Ybarra et al., 2016). This harkens back to similar sentiments held during the 1990s, another period marked by overwhelmingly restrictive immigration policies. Ybarra took the previous research of economic wellbeing on immigration policy and studied it by state and finding that states experienced the Great Recession differently, with some even experiencing boons, and that immigration policy enactment could be better understood on a state level (Ybarra et al., 2016). They found that the economic strain felt by the Great Recession had a different impact depending on the state, and that those with higher levels of strain, had higher numbers of restrictive policies enacted, even while controlling for political ideology (Ybarra et al., 2016).

Other studies further corroborate these findings showing that attitudes are more tied to a state's industry's success versus the overall success of the nation's economy (Dancygier &

Donnelly, 2013). Dancygier and Donnelly found that individuals employed in sectors that were growing were more likely to support accommodating immigration policies in comparison to those whose employment was at risk in sectors that were shrinking (2013). Because states have differing industries, this could have an effect on the immigration policy disparity that we are seeing amongst states.

Political Ideology and Immigration Attitudes

Political ideology, a set of certain ethical ideals, principles and doctrines of a set group that provides a blueprint for how society should function, is influential in the formation of attitudes towards immigration policies (Brooks, Manza & Cohen, 2016). In respect to immigration, attitudes range from restrictive to welcoming in regard to political ideology. Research shows that self-identified Conservatives are more likely to show greater distrust and hostility towards “out-groups,” or those not part of the majority culture, than their self-identified Liberal counterparts, who are typically more tolerant of ambiguity and differences in culture, lifestyle and identity (Brooks, Manza & Cohen, 2016). Expanding on this, the study also found that Conservatives were more likely to hold negative attitudes regarding immigrants who don’t closely resemble the dominant group and which they perceive to pose economic threats (Brooks et al., 2016).

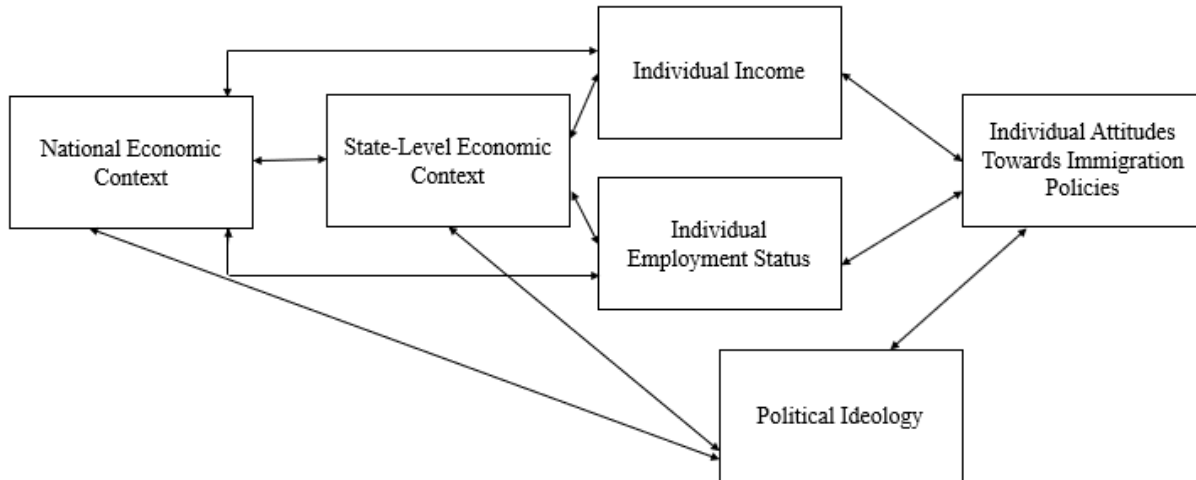
In another study which surveyed 21 Western democracies between 1970 and 2012 found that political ideology had an even greater effect on attitude formation when in regard to asylum seekers and undocumented immigrants (Natter, Czaika, & Haas, 2020). Asylum seekers and undocumented immigrants are some of the most vulnerable immigrant populations as they are at risk of being deported in the case of undocumented immigrants and trafficked or left in dangerous situations in the case of asylum seekers (Natter et al., 2020). They also happen to be

the most vilified in the political rhetoric (Natter et al., 2020). When comparing attitude formations within the Conservative ideology, it has been found that rural conservatives hold more restrictive views than even their suburban or urban counterparts (Fennelly & Federico, 2008). The study does not explore the reasoning for this be it less interaction with immigrant populations or failing economies in rural areas.

Conceptual Model

The conceptual model below displays the breakdown of impact from national economic context to individual attitudes towards immigration policies. National economic context has an impact on state-level economic context, political ideology formation, individual income and employment status. These factors in turn have a reciprocating impact back onto national economic context. State-level economic context has an impact on political ideology, individual income and employment status and national economic context, which all have a reciprocating impact back on state-level economic context. Individual income and employment status both have an impact on formation of individual attitudes towards immigration policies, national economic context and state-level economic context, which all have a reciprocating impact back on individual income and employment status. Political ideology has an impact on individual attitudes towards immigration policies, state-level economic context and national economic context, which all three have reciprocating impact on political ideology. Individual attitudes towards immigration has reciprocating impact on all the preceding factors.

Conceptual Model



Summary of Relevant Literature

Studies on the economic effects on immigration attitudes have found that in times of economic struggle, restrictive immigration attitudes peak (Jaret, 1999), and that economic fluctuations have an impact not only on individual attitudes toward immigration, but also a lasting effect on policy implementation (Kim & Fording, 2001; Ybarra et al., 2016). Due to the decentralization of immigration enforcement, a disparity in immigration policy implementation is being experienced (Butz & Kehrberg, 2019; Sáenz, 2013). Research examining the relationship between attitudes towards immigration and economic wellbeing have tend to focus on the national economy's relationship to individual attitudes, or state economies' relationship to policy enactment. Yet states are a key player in immigration integration, as shown in their implementations of both restrictive and accommodating immigration policies. Looking at the

effect of economic context on immigration attitudes, this study aims to fill the gaps by looking at the relationship between state-level economic context and individual attitudes towards immigration policies. Yet further questions remain unanswered and so my research tests if economic vulnerability due to income and employment status correlates with restrictive attitudes towards immigration policies. The study further analyzes the effect of political ideology on attitudes towards immigration policies and if that holds more sway than does economic context.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

To answer these questions, I examined the relationship between state-level economic context and immigration attitudes using data from the 2018 American Values Survey (AVS) conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) and the State Economic Coefficient Index (SECI), produced by the Philadelphia Federal Reserve. How does state-level economic wellbeing affect relate to individual attitudes towards immigration policies? Specifically, does living in a state with lower levels of state economic wellbeing predict support for restrictive immigration policies? Or the reverse, do higher levels of state-level economic wellbeing predict support for welcoming policies like sanctuary? Do individual factors like income and employment status impact the relationship? How does political ideology affect this relationship?

Data

I used data from the American Values Survey (AVS) to quantify attitudes toward immigration policy and from the FED Reserve Board to measure state-level economic wellbeing. The AVS is conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI), a nonprofit and nonpartisan research organization dedicated to exploring the changing political, cultural, and social landscape of the United States (Public Religion Research Institute, 2018). PRRI surveys a representative panel of the U.S. population using random sampling through mail solicitation and phone surveys. Each respondent is then assigned a weight in order to ensure the sample closely matches U.S. demographic makeup factors of gender, age, education, race and Hispanic ethnicity, and division (Public Religion Research Institute, 2018), housing type, and telephone usage to match U.S. Census parameters (Public Religion Research Institute, 2018). All surveys are provided in both Spanish and English (Public Religion Research Institute, 2018). The AVS is collected yearly and raw data files become public access after one year for researchers to use as

secondary data and to inform the public on changing attitudes and opinions (Public Religion Research Institute, 2018). The margin of error for the survey is +/- 2.8 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. The 2018 survey has a sample size of 2,509 and representation from each state, allowing for state level disaggregation.

I used the Philadelphia Federal Reserve's State Economic Coefficient Index (SECI) to examine state level economic wellbeing. The SECI combines the four state level factors of nonfarm payroll employment, average hours worked in manufacturing by production workers, the unemployment rate, and wage and salary disbursements plus proprietors' income deflated by the consumer price index to define state economic wellbeing (Ybarra et al., 2016). The SECI reports monthly, making it a great choice to focus in on the specific time period of the 2018 AVS, and helping to eliminate threats to validity. Data for nonfarm payroll employment, the unemployment rate, average hours worked in manufacturing, and the consumer price index was obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and wages and salary disbursement data by state was obtained from the Bureau of Economic Analysis by the Philadelphia Federal Reserve in order to calculate the SECI (Philadelphia Federal Reserve, 2020).

Measures

In order to operationalize the variables of attitudes towards immigration policies, political ideology, individual income and employment status, I used data from the 2018 AVS. To operationalize economic context data on a state level, I used the Philadelphia Federal Reserve SECI score.

Individual Attitudes towards Immigration Policies

I measured attitudes towards immigration policies using six different questions that ask respondents to state how much they agree or disagree on a Likert scale with a specific type of policy, given in Table 1 below. Types of immigration policies fell into two broad categories according to whether they would restrict or welcome immigration. Four questions, those regarding building a border wall, imposing stricter immigration limits, prohibiting refugees from entering the country, and separating families at the border were coded as restrictive. Responses to these restrictive policy questions of strongly favor were coded as 5, favor as 4, don't know as 3, oppose as 2 and strongly oppose as 1. Two questions, those regarding granting a pathway to citizenship to unauthorized immigration brought to the U.S. as children and limiting local cooperation with federal immigration enforcement, were coded as welcoming. Responses to these welcoming policies were reverse coded with strongly favor coded as 1, favor as 2, oppose as 3 don't know, 4 as oppose and strongly oppose as 5. A composite score was then calculated by summing the scores from the six questions. Possible score range from 6-30. This numerical value represents attitudes towards immigration policies and lower scores show support for more welcoming policies and higher scores show support for more restrictive policies.

Table 1. Policy Coding

Variable	Question	Restrictive/ Welcoming	Coding
	Do you strongly favor, favor, oppose or strongly oppose the following immigration policies		
limit	imposing stricter limits of the number of legal immigrants entering the country	Restrictive	5- strongly favor 4- favor 3- don't know 2- oppose 1- strongly oppose
wall	building a border wall along the US/Mexico border	Restrictive	5- strongly favor 4- favor 3- don't know 2- oppose 1- strongly oppose

(table continued)

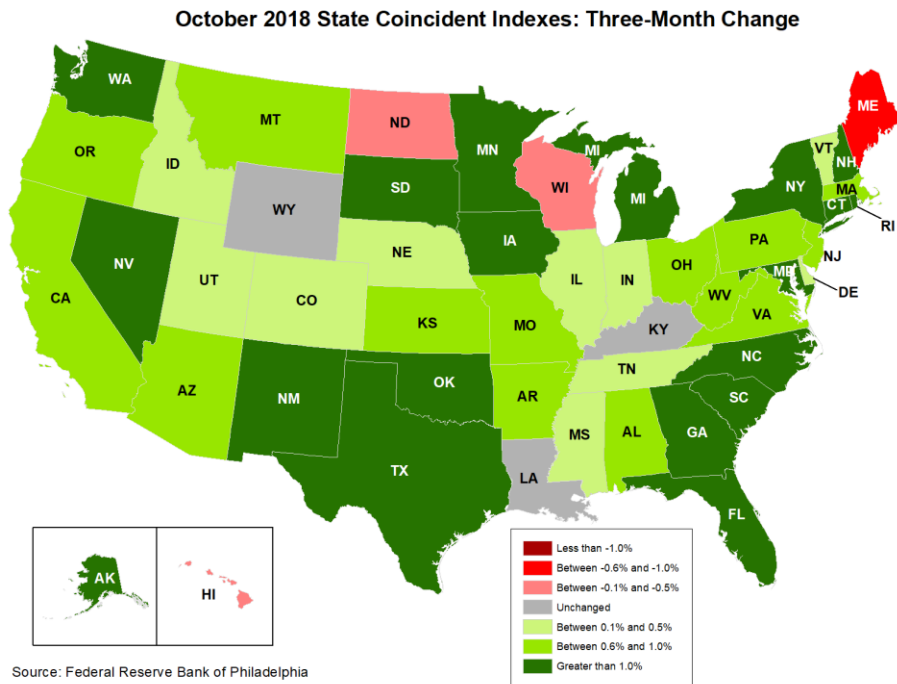
Variable	Question	Restrictive/ Welcoming	Coding
	Do you strongly favor, favor, oppose or strongly oppose the following immigration policies		
stoprefugee	building a border wall along the US/Mexico border	Restrictive	5- strongly favor 4- favor 3- don't know 2- oppose 1- strongly oppose
separation	passing a law prohibiting refugees from entering the US,	Restrictive	5- strongly favor 4- favor 3- don't know 2- oppose 1- strongly oppose
pathway	support for an immigration border policy that separates children from their parents and charges parents as criminals	Restrictive	5- strongly favor 4- favor 3- don't know 2- oppose 1- strongly oppose
sanctuary	support for policies allowing immigrants brought illegally into the US as children to gain legal resident status	Welcoming	1- strongly favor 2- favor 3- don't know 4- oppose 5- strongly oppose
overall	support for allowing cities to limit cooperation with the national government's efforts to enforce immigration laws	Welcoming	1- strongly favor 2- favor 3- don't know 4- oppose 5- strongly oppose
		Composite	Range 6 – 30

State Average Attitudes Towards Immigration Policies

In order to analyze the data on a state-level basis as well, I operationalized state average attitudes towards immigration policies using the same score determination as for individual attitudes. These scores were then used to find a state-average variable by compiling all scores from residents in that state and finding the mean score. This number also falls in a range from 6-30 with lower scores reflecting more welcoming attitudes and higher scores reflecting more restrictive attitudes.

State Economic Wellbeing

I measured state economic wellbeing using the Philadelphia Federal Reserve's State Economic Coefficient Index (SECI). The SECI combines state level factors of nonfarm payroll employment, average hours worked in manufacturing by production workers, the unemployment rate, and wage and salary disbursements plus proprietors' income deflated by the consumer price index (Ybarra et al., 2016). The SECI reports monthly, making it a great choice to focus in on the specific time period of the 2018 AVS, and helping to eliminate threats to validity. The monthly SECI score is compared against the previous month's score to derive a net increase or decrease in state wellbeing. (Philadelphia Federal Reserve, 2020). The greater the net change in score, the better the state economic wellbeing. A lower, or even negative, score shows lower levels of state economic wellbeing. Using the October 2018 SECI data produced scores with a range of -0.14 to 0.72 in net changes. Scores from October 2018 SECI are represented in the map below.



Political Ideology

To operationalize political ideology, I will use political party affiliation as a proxy for political ideology. I used the question from the 2018 AVS that specifically asked if the respondent considered themselves a Republican, Democrat or Independent. I only used responses that fell into one of these categories and respondents were coded as one of the options based on their survey response.

Individual Income

Data from the demographic question section in the 2018 AVS asking respondents to identify which category they fall into. The categories range from less than \$5,000 a year to over \$200,000 dollars a year.

Individual Employment

Individual employment status was operationalized using data from the 2018 AVS from the question asking respondents to define their employment status. The possible response categories were working as a paid employee; working, self-employed; not working, on temporary layoff from a job; not working, looking for work; not working, retired; not working, disabled; or not working, other.

Analytical Strategy

I hypothesized that SECI will have a negative relationship with support for restrictive immigration attitudes such as a support for border wall construction, placing stricter limits on number of legal immigrants, preventing refugees from entering the country, and family separation at the border while states. In other words, individuals living in states experiencing

higher economic vulnerability will hold more restrictive immigration attitudes. Conversely, I hypothesized that those living in less economically vulnerable states will hold less restrictive attitudes and more supportive of welcoming policies like sanctuary policies and allowing undocumented children brought to the country a pathway to legal resident status.

Similarly, I hypothesized that after combining state score for attitudes, there will be a similar relationship between that and SECI. I hypothesize that a negative relationship will exist between state attitudes and SECI, meaning that more restrictive attitudes will exist in states that are more economically vulnerable. Again, I used Pearson's r coefficient analysis to study this relationship.

I examined the relationship between state average attitudes towards immigration policies and SECI, individual income level and attitudes towards immigration policies, using a test of correlation and Pearson's r coefficient. This allows me to study the relationship between the two continuous variables. A correlation test measures the extent to which the variables are related and how well one variable can predict another. Using this strategy I can determine if state-level economic wellbeing can predict individual immigration attitudes. Pearson's r will be used as the correlation coefficient and will determine the slope of the line that best fits the scatterplot. The sign, either negative or positive, denotes the direction of the relationship, and the numerical value, between -1 and 1, demonstrates the strength of the relationship. Negative one would be a perfect negative relationship and positive one would be a perfect positive relationship.

When looking at the question from an individual level, I hypothesized that individual attitude scores will have a negative relationship with both income levels and employment status. This would mean that higher levels of both income and employment status have a correlation with lower attitude scores and favoring more accommodating immigration policies. I hypothesize

when analyzing the relationship between income levels and attitudes towards the support for allowing cities to limit cooperation with the national government's efforts to enforce immigration laws, better known as sanctuary policies, a positive relationship will exist. In other words, higher levels of personal income would correlate with support for sanctuary policies. Similarly, when looking specifically at the question of support for sanctuary policies, I hypothesize that individual income level and employment status will both have a significant positive relationship with support for sanctuary policy. This would mean that higher levels of income and employment would correlate with higher support for sanctuary policies.

Furthermore, I hypothesize that when analyzing the difference in immigration attitudes amongst the political ideologies of Democratic, Republican and Independent, that Republican will hold higher scores, Independent more moderate scores, and Democratic will hold the lowest scores of all three. This would mean that Republican ideologies hold more restrictive views, Independent as more moderate, and Democratic as more accommodating in their immigration policy attitudes.

ANOVA analysis was used to analyze the differences in attitudes between the categorical variables of income, employment, and political party affiliation in proxy for political ideology in relation to attitude scores and support for sanctuary policies. ANOVA analysis will allow me to determine if there is a statistically significant difference in scores amongst the groups and Tukey's post hoc will further demonstrate the average scores of each of those groups.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

I analyzed data from the 2018 AVS to explore the relationship between attitudes towards immigration policies, economic context and political party affiliation. Specifically, I examined the relationship between a composite attitude score and SECI at the state level, as well as individual income and employment. I examine the difference in support for sanctuary policy among individual income and employment levels. Additionally, I examine the relationship between attitudes and individual political ideologies.

Participant Demographics

Table 1 presents the demographics of respondents (n=2,509). The majority (65.9%) of respondents identified as White, non-Hispanic, lower than the U.S. Census Bureau's population estimates from 2019 showing a 76.3% makeup. 10.9% identified as Black, non-Hispanic, again slightly lower than the Census estimate of 13.4%. 15.5% of respondents identified as Hispanic, slightly lower than the 18.5% Census estimate, and 3% identified as Asian, non-Hispanic, also slightly lower than the Census estimate of 5.9% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). The remaining 4.7% is made up of other, non-specified races and those identifying as two or more races. The gender distribution of the sample shows that a slight majority (52.3%) of the respondents identified as female, matching what is estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau (2019). The majority (30.3%) of the sample were between 30 and 44 years old, with the 60+ age range constituting 29.1% of respondents. 14.8% were between the ages of 18 and 29 and 25.8% were between the ages of 45 and 59. The political breakdown of the data found that those identifying as Republican were 22.9%, Democrat as 36.6%, Independent as 35.1% and other as 4.4%. The largest portion (10.6%) of respondents fell into the income category of \$60,000 to \$74,999

category. 2.2% of respondents fell into the lowest income category of less than \$5,000 while 2.9% fell into the highest of over \$200,000 per year.

Table 1. Demographics (n=2,509)

Characteristic	%	n
Demographic:		
Race/Ethnicity		
White, non-Hispanic	65.9	1653
Black, non-Hispanic	10.9	273
Other, non-Hispanic	1.6	39
Hispanic	15.5	388
2+, non-Hispanic	3.2	81
Asian, non-Hispanic	3	75
Gender		
Male	47.7	1196
Female	52.3	1313
Age		
18-29	14.8	372
30-44	30.3	760
45-59	25.8	647
60+	29.1	730
Political party		
Republican	22.9	575
Democrat	36.6	918
Independent	35.1	880
Other	4.4	110
Income		
Less than \$5,000	2.2	56
\$5,000 to \$9,999	2.6	66
\$10,000 to \$14,999	4.4	110
\$15,000 to \$19,999	4.5	112
\$20,000 to \$24,999	6.2	155
\$25,000 to \$29,999	5.9	149
\$30,000 to \$34,999	6.3	158
\$35,000 to \$39,999	4.5	113
\$40,000 to \$49,999	8.2	206
\$50,000 to \$59,999	9.1	228
\$60,000 to \$74,999	10.6	266

\$75,000 to \$84,999	4.9	124
\$85,000 to \$99,999	9.4	235
\$100,000 to \$124,999	8.9	223
\$125,000 to \$149,999	4.9	123
\$150,000 to \$174,999	2.7	67
\$175,000 to \$199,999	1.8	45
\$200,000 or more	2.9	73

Employment

Working - as a paid employee	52.1	1308
Working - self-employed	9.8	245
Not working - on temporary layoff from a job	0.6	15
Not working - looking for work	5.3	132
Not working - retired	18.4	462
Not working - disabled	7	176
Not working - other	6.8	171

Immigration Attitudes

Nearly half (46%) of respondents fell into the welcoming category, followed by moderate immigration policy attitudes (36%), and then the lowest percent (18%) falling into the restrictive category. Table 2 (n=1,184) describes the breakdown of attitude by which category of welcoming, moderate, or restrictive they fall into. Welcoming attitudes includes responses between 6 and 14, moderate includes those between 15 and 22, and restrictive includes those between 23 and 30.

Table 2. Attitudes Towards Immigration (n=1,184)

Attitude	n	%
Welcoming	545	46%
Moderate	427	36%
Restrictive	212	18%
Total	1184	100%

On average, attitude scores for the United States was 16.0969, with a standard deviation of 6.57455, meaning the average scores deviated from the mean score nearly 6 points. Those with lower scores reflected an overall more accommodating immigration attitudes and with higher scores reflecting more restrictive attitudes. Scores ranged from the low of 7 to a high of 25.6667 on the possible scale from 6 to 30. The mean and standard deviation of average immigration attitude score by state is represented in Table 3.

Table 3. State Average Immigration Attitudes

State	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Alabama	17.7368	19	5.33169
Arkansas	15.5	8	5.04268
Arizona	16.0938	32	6.70272
California	15.5952	126	5.8763
Colorado	15.973	37	7.38424
Connecticut	17.2	10	5.84618
District of Columbia	18	1	.
Delaware	15.2857	7	6.23737
Florida	16.633	109	6.7846
Georgia	15.5882	34	6.2237
Hawaii	16.3333	3	2.08167
Iowa	17.9474	19	5.44134
Idaho	16.7222	18	6.51519
Illinois	16.8667	60	6.7785
Indiana	14.3	30	6.45488
Kansas	15.5	12	7.40393
Kentucky	14.7273	11	5.76352
Louisiana	14.2353	17	7.72601
Massachusetts	15.8696	23	7.08587
Maryland	12.6154	13	4.9923
Maine	14.1429	7	3.89138
Michigan	15.3243	37	6.59568
Minnesota	14.5789	19	6.40586
Missouri	15.9677	31	6.40044
Mississippi	19.75	4	4.78714
Montana	20	5	8.21584

North Carolina	13.2927	41	5.88746
North Dakota	17	1	.
Nebraska	17.4091	22	6.10744
New Hampshire	25.6667	3	2.08167
New Jersey	16.9688	32	6.93046
New Mexico	15.6667	6	6.91857
Nevada	15.4444	9	5.31769
New York	15.5417	48	6.57189
Ohio	17.4182	55	6.95139
Oklahoma	19.5	14	7.11175
Oregon	13.5455	11	7.75066
Pennsylvania	17	31	6.733
Rhode Island	21.5	2	7.77817
South Carolina	15.4286	7	6.55381
South Dakota	14	8	7.85584
Tennessee	17.931	29	6.32981
Texas	16.0506	79	6.36275
Utah	15.8	10	7.26942
Virginia	17.3333	18	8.77161
Vermont	10.5	2	6.36396
Washington	13.0476	21	5.51794
Wisconsin	17.1702	47	7.28405
West Virginia	18.375	8	6.54517
Wyoming	7	1	.
Total	16.0969	1197	6.57455

Attitudes Towards Immigration and Economic Context

I examined both individual level attitudes towards immigration policies and state average attitudes in relation to SECI and found no significant relationship for either. Table 4 (n=1,197) displays the correlation between individual attitudes towards immigration policies and SECI of the state the resident resides in. A weak (-0.032) inverse relationship was found between the two variables, showing that no significant relationship exists between lower SECI and more restrictive individual attitudes towards immigration policies.

Table 4. Relationship Between Individual Attitudes and SECI (n=1,197)

Variables	Correlation	SECI	Ind. attitudes
SECI	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.032
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.273
	N	2509	1197
Ind. attitudes	Pearson Correlation	-0.032	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.273	
	N	1197	1197

As shown in Table 4 (n=50), I found a weak inverse relationship between state average attitudes towards immigration attitudes and SECI (-0.003). This shows that there is no significant relationship showing that states with lower SECI correlate with higher attitude scores, or more restrictive attitudes towards immigration policies.

Table 4. Relationship Between State Average Immigration Attitudes and SECI (n=50)

Variables	Correlation	SECI	AvgStateAttitude
SECI	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.003
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.982
AvgStateAttitude	Pearson Correlation	-0.003	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.982	

Individual Immigration Attitudes and Individual Economic Context

There was no significant difference in attitudes when comparing against different individual incomes of respondents or employment status. Examining the relationship between

individual income and attitudes resulted in a p of 0.963, meaning that no statistically significant difference amongst the income categories was found (Table 5). This shows that lower income categories have no significant difference in immigration attitudes than those with higher income levels.

Additionally, no significant difference among the employment responses (p=0.963) was found between the variables showing that levels of employment don't vary significantly from each other when it comes to attitudes towards immigration policies (Table 5).

Table 5. Individual Immigration Attitudes and Income and Employment (n=1,196)

Attitudes	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Income Levels	355.07	17	20.886	0.48	0.963
Within Income Levels	51341.689	1179	43.547		
Between Employment Levels	465.806	6	77.634	1.803	0.095
Within Employment Levels	51230.952	1190	43.051		
Total	51696.759	1196			

Support for Sanctuary Policy and Individual Economic Context

Using one-way ANOVA to analyze if responses to the question of supporting policies allowing cities to limit cooperation with federal immigration enforcement, better known as sanctuary policies, differed based on income level found no statistically significant (p=0.754) difference (Table 6). This determines that income levels did not vary significantly in support for sanctuary policies.

Similar results were found when analyzing the difference in sanctuary policy support among employment status categories. No statistically significant difference (p=0.4) between employment categories when it came to support for sanctuary policies (Table 7).

Table 6. Income and Support for Sanctuary Policies (n=1,211)

Sanctuary Support	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	26.985	17	1.587	0.75	0.754
Within Groups	2534.012	1194	2.122		
Total	2560.997	1211			

Table 7. Employment Status and Support for Sanctuary Policies (n=1,211)

Sanctuary Support	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	13.139	6	2.19	1.04	0.4
Within Groups	2547.858	1205	2.114		
Total	2560.997	1211			

Immigration Attitudes and Political Party

The ANOVA analysis exploring the difference in attitude scores amongst political ideologies produced a p value less than the significance level of 0.05 ($p=0$), determining that there is a statistically significant difference in means between Republican, Democrats and Independents (Table 8). Republicans scored on average 8.7631 points higher than Democrats and 5.07326 than Independents, reflecting an average attitude that is more restrictive in comparison to their political counterparts. Table 9 (n=1,192) further describes the difference in attitudes by revealing the mean scores of each group with Democratic reporting the lowest score (12.5833), reflecting the most welcoming attitudes towards immigration policies; Independent with the second lowest (16.2732), reflecting a more moderate attitudes; and Republicans reporting the highest (21.3464), reflecting more restrictive attitudes. Table 9 also reflect the mean difference between groups and shows that Republicans on average scored 8.76310 points higher than

Democrats and 5.07326 points higher than Independents. Democrats scored on average 3.68984 points lower than Independents.

Table 8. Immigration Attitudes and Political Party (n=1,192)

Attitudes	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	13213.547	3	4404.516	136.23	0
Within Groups	38441.938	1189	32.331		
Total	51655.485	1192			

Table 9. Tukey's Post Hoc

I	J	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
A Republican	A Democrat	8.76310*	0.43392	0	7.6468	9.8794
	An independent	5.07326*	0.44082	0	3.9392	6.2074
A Democrat	A Republican	-8.76310*	0.43392	0	-9.8794	-7.6468
	An independent	-3.68984*	0.38945	0	-4.6918	-2.6879
An independent	A Republican	-5.07326*	0.44082	0	-6.2074	-3.9392
	A Democrat	3.68984*	0.38945	0	2.6879	4.6918

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Group	N	Mean
Democrat	444	12.5833
Republican	280	21.3464
Independent	410	16.2732

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

Discussion

I found significant differences in attitudes towards immigration policies across the political ideologies of Democratic, Republican and Independent ideologies, consistent with research finding that conservative ideologies often hold more restrictive views towards immigration policies and vice versa (Brooks et al., 2016; Fennelly & Federico, 2008; Natter et al., 2020). I found no significant relationship between state-level economic context and state average attitudes towards immigration policies, nor was any relationship found on an individual level. No significant differences in attitudes towards immigration policies were found among varying levels of individual income or employment status. These findings are contrary to research showing that when individuals are economically vulnerable, that economic context, not political ideology had more impact on attitudes towards immigration policies (Kim & Fording, 2001).

I found no significant correlation between state economic context and individual attitudes towards immigration policies (-0.032), nor between state economic context and state average attitudes towards immigration policies (-0.003). This is inconsistent from what I hypothesized based on the Ybarra (2016) study which found a significant relationship between state economic health and passing restrictive immigration legislation. I had hypothesized that the passing of immigration legislation would have similar results to attitudes towards immigration policies, but my research does not back up this claim. Further research into how attitude formations inform legislation is needed in this area.

Research identified in the literature review by Kim and Fording (2001) as well as Esposito and Finley (2019) pointed toward perception of and rhetoric surrounding the economy

having a stronger relationship with attitudes towards immigration policies, than the individual economic context itself. My research corroborates this research in finding no significant relationship between individual income and immigration attitudes ($p=0.963$). Nor was any significant relationship found between employment status and immigration attitudes ($p=0.095$). The same was found when analyzing relationship between individual income and support for sanctuary policies (0.754) and employment status and support for sanctuary policies (0.4), producing no significant result. This is consistent with research showing that individual economic contexts have less impact on immigration attitudes than does the perception of nationwide economic contexts do (Kim & Fording, 2001; Esposito & Finley, 2019). Perhaps the issue is more nuanced due to interaction factors in the economy combining multiple factors of SECI, income and employment to understand the full story of attitude formation. Deeper studies into the combination effects of these variables could reveal a more significant relationship.

Although economic context was not significant, I did find a significant difference ($p=0$) when comparing attitudes towards immigration policies across political ideologies. Republicans had the highest average score (21.3464), reflecting the most restrictive attitudes towards immigration policies among the three political ideologies analyzed. Democrats held the lowest score (12.5833), reflecting the most welcoming attitudes among the groups. These findings are consistent with previous research from Brooks, Manza and Cohen (2016), which found that conservative ideologies tend to show greater distrust and hostility to non-majority groups, while liberal ideologies are typically more tolerant to differences. Independents held moderate attitudes towards immigration policies (16.2732), which adds to the research that I found in the literature.

Limitations

While the findings from this research help the social work community to narrow down which social determinants effect attitudes towards immigration policies, results should be considered in the context of certain limitations. Firstly, the data, while nationally representative, was not representative at the state level. States with smaller population sizes including Alaska, Montana or District of Columbia had less than 10 respondents, creating a limitation in the overall data. Understanding this constraint, future researchers can structure their data collection to provide a more representative sample from each state.

The sample from the 2018 AVS was weighted to closely reflected the demographic makeup of the U.S. at the time (Public Religion Research Institute, 2018), but my analysis of immigration attitudes may have been skewed by the 52% of respondents who were thrown out due to missing data. There may also exist a bias in who skips these questions and skewing the overall data. Not knowing why respondents skipped this question, be it that they had no opinion or wished not to share their opinion, could lead to underrepresentation of certain demographics. Because of this there could be a limitation in overall representation of U.S. demographic makeup and wouldn't be widely applicable.

Another possible limitation stems from the overall breadth of the of the survey itself. The AVS is created each year to track the attitudes of American's on a wide variety of social issues that the U.S. is facing (Public Religion Research Institute, 2018). Because of this, only a small portion of the survey is in regard to immigration, which could dilute the responses due to the fatigue of taking the 110-question long survey. Creating a survey specifically tailored to immigration attitudes without the other social attitude question could help to get a more precise view into the desired variables.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

In this study I found a significant difference in attitudes towards immigration policies across political party affiliations. Respondents who identified as Democrat, on average, held the most welcoming attitudes towards immigration policies. Respondents who identified as Republican, on average, held the more restrictive attitudes towards immigration policies. Economic context, including SECI, individual income, and employment, were found to have no significant relationship with individual or state-average attitudes towards immigration policies. Similarly, individual income and employment had no significant relationship with support for sanctuary policies. Understanding the relationship between these factors have, or don't have, on attitudes towards immigration attitudes can help to inform social work practice, policy, and future research.

Implications for Policy

Finding a significant relationship between political ideology, or political party affiliation, and attitudes towards immigration raises the issue of political divisiveness in relation to comprehensive immigration reform. It highlights the issue originally found by the 2018 AVS, that attitudes towards immigration policies are more divided than ever (Public Religion Research Institute, 2018). These findings highlight that political party identification and affiliation is difficult to change, especially when so tied to values and ideals (Carsey & Layman, 2006).

Recognizing which immigration policies have bipartisan support can help to bridge the political divide and choose those policies to focus on first in immigration reform. According to a survey conducted by Pew Research Center, around three-quarters of Americans, regardless of political party, supported a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers (2020). A policy that is currently

debated and could pass with this bipartisan support would be the American Dream and Promise act, which would grant permanent legal status to undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. as children.

Another piece of legislation that could garner bipartisan support is the Farm Workforce Modernization Act, which would create a pathway to citizenship to undocumented farm workers, as well as reform the existing temporary agricultural work visa program. The reason this policy could find bipartisan support is due to the population it targets: agricultural workers.

Undocumented farmworkers make up 70% of the agricultural workforce and contribute \$9 billion annually to the fruit and vegetable industry, not including other farm industries (Danilo, 2020). Due to rural and agricultural voters often identifying as Republican (McDermott, 2009), in order to support their constituents, Republican legislators may support this policy.

Recognizing which policies can be achieved without bipartisan support is also important for policy advocates after understanding the political divide in attitudes towards immigration policies. Executive Orders can be enacted without bipartisan support, and there are policies that can potentially be reformed through this process. Increasing visa quotas is one change that can be advocated for that would have a wide impact on immigration. Allowing more visas each year would decrease the processing and wait times to receive those visas, which on average take between 5 and 6 years (Bier, 2019).

Using the knowledge that political party affiliation has the greatest impact on attitudes towards immigration policies in comparison to the other study factors, highlights the importance of using windows of opportunity in which Democrats control the House, Senate, and Presidency. These periods of opportunity should fully be taken advantage of and in these moments political instigators can focus energies on bringing immigration reform to the forefront of the agenda.

On average, Independents scored only 3.68984 points higher than Democrats in attitudes towards immigration policies, showing that they hold more moderate attitudes in comparison to Republicans. This highlights them as potential allies in immigration reform endeavors. Coupling the forces of Democratic and Independent powers could help to bring more support for welcoming immigration policies.

Implications for Practice

The relationship between attitudes towards immigration policies and political party affiliation may create a difficult situation for social workers hoping to impact immigration reform through practice. Political party affiliation, and specifically the beliefs and values tied to it, is difficult to influence due to its inherent ties to those personal beliefs and values (Carsey & Layman, 2006). Direct practice social workers must work to influence those beliefs and values if we are to see change through education about benefits of immigration as well as combatting misinformation surrounding immigration discussions and policies could help to challenge those beliefs and values that are tied to political party affiliation. Additionally, education and transparency concerning immigration policies in order to help Americans better understand how those policies will benefit them could sway their attitudes towards immigration policies. Education is an important factor of influence because it seeks not to criticize already held beliefs, but to add to them and clarify.

Implications for Future Research

Finding the relationship between political party affiliation and attitudes towards immigration policies, not economic context and attitudes towards immigration policies, was more significant, pushes future research to focus on finding those policies that have bipartisan

support, as well as researching why that is so. Additionally, further research into what has the most impact on political party affiliation, and which factors have the potential to change that affiliation.

Though my study found no significant relationship between economic context and individual immigration attitudes, future research into how economic factors like individual income, employment status, and economic context interact to influence individual attitudes towards immigration policies could be beneficial to better explore the influence of economic context. Another path for future research could be to fill in the gaps in Ybarra's research (2016), to better understand the process between attitude formation and immigration policy legislation. Additionally, better understanding the interrelationship between economic context and political ideology (Kim & Fording, 2001) on immigration attitudes would be beneficial as well. Finally, research into how political ideology and economic context interact to influence individual attitudes towards immigration policies could help to paint a clearer picture.

APPENDIX. IRB APPROVAL FORM



TO: Scott, Jennifer L
LSUAM | Col of HSE | Social Work

FROM: Alex Cohen
Chair, Institutional Review Board

DATE: 17-Nov-2020

RE: IRBAM-20-0530

TITLE: Relationship Between State Economic Wellbeing
and Attitudes Towards Restrictive Immigration
Attitudes

SUBMISSION TYPE: Initial Application

Review Type: Exempt

Risk Factor: Minimal

Review Date: 17-Nov-2020

Status: Approved

Approval Date: 17-Nov-2020

Approval Expiration Date: 16-Nov-2023

Re-review frequency: Three Years

Number of subjects approved: 0

LSU Proposal Number:

By: Alex Cohen, Chairman

Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.

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VITA

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