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State Immigration Policy and the Economy: Western United States

Netanya R. Buban

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, buban@unlv.nevada.edu

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Introduction

Federal immigration enforcement has expanded to include the interior enforcement by increasing the number of immigration crimes, administrative programs, and establishing programs that involve local law enforcement agencies (LEAs) (Armenta and Alvarez 2017). States therefore have become involved in the process of immigration enforcement. States have attempted to address the immigration issue either through restrictions or expansions to the access to health care, driver’s licenses, and public benefits, and the penalization of those who employ or assist undocumented immigrants. States have also created their own laws that may require or prohibit the enforcement of federal immigrations laws by LEAs (Lacayo 2011, 1). States have asserted their right to legislate immigration policy under the 10th Amendment.

States have been influenced by a variety of factors to pursue immigration policies. Literature has shown that these factors include partisanship, demographics—causing anti-immigrant anxieties, state ideologies, and state wealth (Wallace 2014, 263; Wallace and Figueroa 2012; Ybarra et al 2013, 319). I want to expand the understanding of state immigration policies by investigating the adoption of immigration policies at the state level. I will be investigating what causes certain states to pursue pro-immigrant policies by looking at the economic factors of the state. Pro-immigrant policies are multi-cultural policies that provide for undocumented immigrants’ ability to obtain driver’s licenses, professional licenses, and to qualify for in-state tuition. These policies also expand English Proficiency programs, have a certification for bilingual teachers, and certification for English as a second language.

This paper will explore the following research question: what economic factors influence states to introduce pro-immigrant policies? The paper will present findings on whether economic factors influence states to introduce pro-immigrant policies. I will be focusing on states in the
western United States. The western states that I will be observing are Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, and Utah. These states have higher levels of immigrant populations in comparison to the rest of the US, and therefore, I can assume the effects of immigration may be greater for these states.

Within these states, I will be looking at specific factors linked to the economy of the state: labor union participation, unauthorized immigrants, the employment increases, the percentage of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, and state tax revenue. I will be studying these factors linked to the economy and their relationship to pro-immigrant state policies from 2016 to 2017. These years represent the most recently compiled data available on immigrants. Throughout 2016 and 2017, the amount of state immigration legislation passed was drastically increasing. Additionally, this period reflects a stable economy in the US and therefore extreme economic conditions, such as a recession, will not have an effect in this study.

This paper will begin with a discussion of the literature pertaining to state passage of immigration policies and explain why state immigration legislation has increased. I will demonstrate the different factors that previous literature has focused on when observing the passage of pro-immigration and anti-immigration legislation and of state policies. I will then explain the methods I have chosen for this study and further discuss the reason for the time period. In addition, I will explain the variables that I have chosen, which include unionization rates, the percentage of distribution of unauthorized immigrants in each state, and employment increase percentage change in each state.

Then I will show my investigation on the pro-immigrant policies that have passed during this time period in the eight states that I chose, show the amount of legislation, and the trends throughout the US of various immigration policies that these states followed. I will use these
factors to find and understand the correlation with pro-immigrant policies. I will conduct a bivariate correlation matrix to look at the significance of the correlations between the factors and the states immigration policy enactment. Logit regression and linear regression is key to understanding how each factor is correlated to pro-immigrant enactments. Moreover, I will discuss the analysis of logit regression and linear regression. I will disclose shortcomings of my research. Lastly, I will discuss the implications of how state immigration policy will change.

**Literature Review**

States and local governments are pressured to address the immigration issues because of the lack of comprehensive immigration reform from the federal government with the growing unauthorized immigrant population. Since the early 2000s, many immigration policies have been proposed by the federal government, but none have been able to pass both Chambers of Congress.

Only two major proposals were given enough support to gain national attention. In 2005, the H.R. 4437, also known as the Sensenbrenner bill, focused on criminalizing immigration and was aimed at immigration detentions, aid, and enforcement (Wallace 2014, 263). It would have criminalized undocumented immigration status as a felony, criminalized those that aid undocumented immigrants, and would have granted authority to state and local agencies to enforce immigration law. The Sensenbrenner bill was ultimately terminated after it was not acted upon in the Senate. In 2001, the DREAM Act was proposed, and the bill created a pathway to citizenship for those who were minors when they were brought to the US. The DREAM Act was the least controversial bill that was proposed as it dealt with minors who did not break the law themselves but faced the negative consequences of being an undocumented immigrant (263).
The opposition toward this bill revealed that the chances for the passage of a federal immigration bill are slim. The US Legislature has faced substantial troubles in attempts to pass immigration bills because of the increased polarization of the parties. Thus, states have created their own bills to address the immigration problems that they face.

Literature has found that many factors influence states to incorporate anti-immigrant policies. These policies are restrictive to the lives and opportunities of the unauthorized immigrants. These factors include partisanship, economy, changing demographics—anti-immigrant anxieties, perception of immigrant crime, and LEAs attitudes.

Partisanship and the economy are factors that influence states to be more involved in immigration policy and enforcement, and specifically, those factors are shown to have a significant impact on whether states choose to introduce copy-cat bills of SB 10(70), which is an anti-immigrant bill. Since 2011, six states have introduced SB 10(70)-like bills. Studies have claimed that the strongest factors that influence states’ decisions to introduce SB 10(70) type legislation are Republican Party Control and the unemployment rate in the state, while Latino legislatures and Spanish-speaking populations hold less influence (Wallace 2014, 282-284). States with Republican Party dominated legislature are more likely to introduce anti-immigrant policies amid high unemployment.

Studies have investigated the economic factors that lead to the introduction and passage of anti-immigrant legislation from 2005 to 2012. Researchers have investigated how the economy influences state legislation during recession (Wallace and Figueroa 2012). From 2008 to 2009, the Great Recession had an extensive negative impact to each individual state. All 50 states in the US experienced general fund tax revenue decreases showing more than $67.2 billion
in overall losses (Ybarra et al 2016, 317). This research has reflected the anti-immigrant sentiment.

With the presence of economic pressures, the growth of racialized Hispanic population with the dynamics of non-Hispanic white population is demonstrated throughout immigration policy on the state level. Anti-immigrant anxieties are driven by economic insecurities but only expressed in the presence of large or growing proportion of racialized immigrants. Anti-immigrant anxieties stem from racialized nativism—which views immigrants as “other-ness” and as threat of American culture and values (Ybarra et al 2013, 319). Findings suggest that anti-immigrant sentiments are coded expressions of anti-Hispanic prejudice (316). The decrease of white population and increase in Hispanic populations in turn push anti-immigrant policies. Hispanics are the population that politicians and voters connect to immigrant stereotypes than Asians are.

Another study focused on the passage of Arizona’s SB 10(70) bill and passage of copycat bills of it in other states and found that states with Republican Party dominated legislature are more likely to introduce anti-immigrant policies during periods of high unemployment (Wallace 2014, 284). The perception that immigrants are the cause of the tough economic conditions is what pushes Republican lawmakers to pass anti-immigrant legislation on the state level.

Recent literature has focused on anti-immigrant sentiment and its effects on state policy. Research has shown that anti-immigrant anxieties are founded on economic crisis although little evidence shows that immigrants have any effect to the crisis (Chavez and Provine 2009). Anti-immigrant sentiment rises when a nationwide recession occurs, and thus anti-immigrant anxieties increase in racial majorities (Ybarra et al 2013, 319). Anti-immigrant anxieties are defined as an expression of fear concerning “the diversion of public resources to support undeserving

In contrast with previous literature that has investigated the effects of a failing economy, I will be focusing instead on how stable economic conditions influence pro-immigrant policies on the state level. From the beginning of 2016 and the end of 2017, the economy was stable. Tax revenue in most states have recovered from the economic recession of 2008 in 2017, and state personal income have been raised higher than the pre-recession levels (Fleming et al 2017). Additionally, I will be focusing on pro-immigrant state legislation rather than anti-immigrant state legislation in contrast to previous literature.

Hypothesis

I hypothesize that as the factors I have chosen—employment increases, state revenue, unauthorized populations, DACA recipients, and unionization— increase from the beginning of 2016 to the end of 2017, states will implement pro-immigrant policies. These factors are signal that the economy is growing and stable and therefore encourage states to adopt pro-immigrant policies. DACA recipients and the percentage of the number of unauthorized immigrants in the population demonstrate an attraction of immigrants to states because of their growing economies that create more opportunities for immigrants.

Data and Methods Explanation

To focus on a period of stable economic conditions, I will be focusing on the years from 2016 to 2017. The factors of the state linked to economy that I will be observing are labor
unions, unauthorized immigrants, DACA recipients, state revenue, and the employment increases. These economic factors are the independent variables, while the dependent variable is the passage or no passage of pro-immigrant bills. The unit of analysis is each individual state, which includes Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. I will have 16 separate observations as I will be looking at policies from 2016 and 2017. These states are the appropriate unit of analysis because I am comparing legislative behavior between these states in the western region of the US amongst economic factors.

To be included as a pro-immigrant bill, the bill must expand access to obtaining drivers licenses for unauthorized immigrants, the bill must expand access of both authorized and unauthorized immigrants to obtain a professional license (for example, nursing licenses), allows immigrants to receive in-state tuition in public colleges, expands English Proficiency programs, have a certification for bilingual teachers, and certification for English as a second language. The analysis does not account for the level of economic or educational impact of the bill. It only reflects the type of bill and whether a state passed that type of pro-immigrant bill. I will use a bi-variate correlation matrix to identify significance levels in correlations between my variables and the number of laws and the state law enactment. However, I will also be using linear regression to test the amount of laws that each state implemented in the years selected to test and understand significance Because the dependent variable, whether states will pass pro-immigrant bill, is dichotomous, I will use logistic regression to measure the likelihood of the passage.

The economic variables will be tested for significance in state laws. State laws is the dependent variable (the amount of laws enacted and whether states enacted laws). To count the immigration laws that have been enacted in separate states I used the data provided in the National Conference of State Legislatures. I did not count state resolutions toward state policies
and laws. The laws represent the following ten separate categories: budget, education, employment, health, human trafficking, ID and license, law enforcement, public benefits, voting, and miscellaneous. Miscellaneous includes immigration-related issues that do not fit in other fields and are addressed frequently (such as memberships on task forces and commissions, and funding studies).

The quantitative methods best answer my research question because it is an observation of the effects of the economic variables on the dependent variables, which are the number of laws and whether pro-immigrant policy was enacted. I operationalize the factors quantitatively separated by state to understand the impact of those factors toward the amount of laws and policy enactment. I am measuring the likelihood of policy enactment and how the economic factors affect policy enactment.

Explanation of Variables

To examine how unionization affects a state decision to pass pro-immigrant bills I will look at the percentage of the workforce involved in unions. Unions have historically affected the labor force and economy through litigations, worker strikes, and lobbying for specifically laws (Knoke and Kaufman 1993). For example, unions in Nevada are active toward immigration rights and laws that support the unauthorized populations (Gray and DeFilippis 2014). Unions also support certain candidates for local and state offices, and those candidates have direct effect on the policies and law’s enactment over immigration. I used the data compiled by the U.S. Department of Labor through the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Unionization plays an active role on policies and is connected to the state economies. I will observe how state immigration policies are impacted by unions.
Another factor that I will be observing is the distribution of DACA recipients among the states. Specifically, the percentage of all DACA recipients in each state. DACA was introduced by the Obama administration. Although it does not provide permanent lawful status for its applicants, it helps certain unauthorized immigrants. The two main factors that DACA applicants receive are a temporary suspension of deportation and the authorization to work in the United States (Svajlenka and Singer 2013). To qualify for DACA applicants must have been in the US before the age of 16, have continuously resided in the US without legal status since June 15, 2007, be under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2007 and at least age 15 at application, be currently enrolled in school, have graduated high school or received a GED, or be an honorably discharged veteran, have not been convicted of a felony or multiple or serious misdemeanors and not pose a threat to national security or public safety (Svajlenka and Singer 2013). DACA recipients are seemingly “perfect” immigrants; they have not broken any laws and they are educated.

The enrollment into DACA has enabled unauthorized students to work, to enroll in higher education, and therefore obtain financial gains. Since 2012, approximately 800,000 undocumented young people have been enrolled into the program DACA (Svajlenka and Singer 2013). DACA recipients are temporarily protected from deportation and provides for a work authorization. DACA recipients have made significant contributions to the economy because DACA has enabled them to earn higher wages (Wong 2012). Higher wages result in increased tax revenue and economic growth for Americans. According to a survey in 2017, DACA recipients were buying cars, purchasing their first homes, and creating businesses because of DACA. Literature has shown that DACA influences state economies. DACA positively impacts the US economy and society. Studies have shown that DACA recipients will contribute to $430.3 billion to the US gross domestic product over the next decade (Svajlenka et al 2017). Because of
the economic affect of DACA, I have chosen the percentage of DACA recipients as factor in understanding state enactment of pro-immigrant policies.

I obtained the data of DACA recipients from the US Citizenship and Immigration Services website (USCIS.gov). The government organization publishes annually and quarterly data on the numbers of DACA recipients in the US. It includes those renewed, approved, and the total of those enrolled in the program. For the year 2017 the data gathered by the US Citizenship and Immigration services was explicit in the percentage of DACA recipients distributed across the states. For 2016, I divided the number of recipients in each state by the total in the US DACA recipient population to turn my factors into percentages of DACA students from each state to the total DACA recipient population.

Unauthorized immigrant populations also have economic impact. The western states that are focused on in this paper have higher levels of unauthorized populations residing and working and therefore, unauthorized immigrant populations have a greater effect on the economy (Nicholson-Crotty 2011). I used the Migration Policy Institute data on unauthorized populations that estimate unauthorized immigrant population by state using data from the US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS). The Western States have higher than average percentage of unauthorized immigrants in the labor force. For example, the US average percentage of unauthorized immigrants share of the labor force is 4.8 percent, while in Nevada, 10.6 percent of the labor force are unauthorized immigrants (Pew Research Center 2019). However, these unauthorized populations are estimates. The data sets were accumulated using the US Census Bureau from 2012 to 2016. I also used a summary of the data from the Pew Research Center based on US Census Bureau data.
Another economic factor that I use in my statistical models are employment increases. The data are demonstrated through percentage change of employment increases. I use the percentage point changes from the years 2015 to 2016 and then 2016 to 2017. The increases in jobs in the states show economic improvement. It also represents job attraction for workers causing them to move to a specific state. I will use the data from the US Department of Labor through the publication of the Bureau of Labor Statistics to measure the average of employment increases from 2015 to 2017. The numbers that are represented in the data in this paper are the percentage change per year.

In addition to state employment increases, I observe the state tax revenue. State tax revenue can be used to represent the economic conditions of the state (Newman and Rosewicz 2017a and 2017b). The state tax revenue I use is percentage change from the recession in 2008 to 2016 and 2017. I use Pew Charitable Trust that incorporates data from the US Census Bureau quarterly tax revenue.

*Time Period of State Policy Enactment*

The research is limited to the years 2016 and 2017 as previously discussed above because of the period of stable economy and because it is the most recent complied data available regarding unauthorized immigrant estimates. However, I also chose this time period because of the increasing number of immigration legislation that states were passing.

In the years 2016 and 2017, enactment of immigration legislation drastically increased. I chose this time period because of the increase in immigration legislation in state policy across the United States. The amount of immigration policies enacted by states allow for the study to focus on the research question on what factors influenced certain policies to be enacted and what factors changed that caused these state immigration policies to rise. In 2016, states increased
immigration policy enactment by 55 percent. In addition, 43 states enacted 98 immigration laws. In 2017, enactment of legislation increased by 110 percent throughout the states (Morse et al 2018). Legislatures enacted 206 laws and 263 resolutions related to immigration. It resulted in a total of 469. 15 bills were vetoed by governors. Alaska was the only state that did not enact any laws related to immigration.

To understand more about the policy climate and laws that are being passed in the western United States and used in the study, I will discuss the ongoing trends of immigration policies across states from 2016 to 2017.

States enacted policy concerning immigrants’ access to services such as health care and education to expand access to both legal and unauthorized immigrants. Arizona established a State Seal of Biliteracy for student who graduate with a high level of proficiency in more than one language. California Health Benefit Exchange allowed for a waiver to be applied to unauthorized immigrants (Morse et al 2016).

One trend of state laws for anti-immigrant legislation was E-Verify. E-Verify is a program that requires all employees to submit documents of identification to verify they have lawful status (Kagan 2018, 391). Although these programs have affected those immigrant that do have lawful status from errors and misuse, states required employers to use it.

One trend of state laws for pro-immigrant legislation observed in 2017 were sanctuary policies (Morse et al 2016). These policies include making state and local services accessible to immigrants, using local and state resources to provide for direct legal defense to immigrants who are targeted for deportation, and policies for establishing community trust to police by restricting how local authorities cooperate with ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) (Kagan 2018, 391).
Additionally, in 2017, about 25 percent of all laws are budget and appropriations laws (Morse et al 2018). These authorized funds for purposes of immigration enforcement, immigrant integration, English Language and citizenship classes, and migrant and refugee programs.

Although immigration policies that were trends across states in 2016 and 2017 included many pro-immigrant and anti-immigrant legislation, this study focuses on pro-immigrant legislation and what influenced these policies. The study does not account for the different pro-immigrant laws each state enacts as discussed above in the different trends. These different trends just demonstrate the various forms of pro-immigration legislation involved in the research.

*Limitations on Data*

Shortcomings do exist in the methods I have employed and the selection of the variables. I cannot control for all economic factors that may have effect on the enactment of pro-immigration policies. I am only looking at certain factors that are linked to the economy, directly and indirectly. Thus, the factors that I use to measure how economy is used is inferential and not inclusive to other factors.

Moreover, I have encountered difficulty in accumulating data because the data from the unauthorized immigrant population are estimates that are not kept current nor entirely accurate, and thus the data created on these estimates of the unauthorized immigrant populations may be overrepresented or diluted.

In addition to these shortcomings, I translated some data myself and organized the data I gathered thus subjecting the data to human error. It was difficult finding and accumulating specific data and summaries of the previous research, so I had to summarize some data. I had to
gather DACA data that was not summarized in 2016 and summarize them to operationalize it by translating data into percentages by each state.

The data are also all numbers, percentages and estimates. The numbers do not account the intensity and the outcomes of the factors linked to immigration and the economy that is tested for in the tables and graphs. It also does not differentiate the pro-immigrant laws used in the data. The pro-immigrant policies are not accounted for how effective they are toward immigrants. Pro-immigrant policies are expansive in the opportunities to immigrants, but the numbers do not disclose the extents of the laws counted in the topic. This paper does not evaluate the effectiveness of the pro-immigrant laws observed.

Data and Methods Performed

I ran a bivariate correlation, which is demonstrated in table 1. I executed correlations for number of laws enacted (LAWS), whether laws were enacted (ENACTMENT), the percentage of the workforce in unions (UNION), the number of unauthorized immigrants (UNAUTH), the employment percentage change (EMPLOY), the percentage of DACA recipients (DACA), and the percentage change in state revenue (STATE_REV).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LAWS</th>
<th>ENACTMENT</th>
<th>UNION</th>
<th>UNAUTH</th>
<th>EMPLOY</th>
<th>DACA</th>
<th>STATE_REV</th>
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<td>.758**</td>
<td>-.144</td>
<td>.684**</td>
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**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1: Bivariate Correlation of Pro-immigrant laws 2016-2017
Table 2: Linear Regression of Laws from 2016 to 2017

To further understand the correlations, I ran a linear regression. The dependent variable is the number of laws from the 16 observations. The dependent variable was tested for relationship of the number of laws enacted, whether laws were enacted, the percentage of the workforce in unions, the number of unauthorized immigrants, the employment percentage change, the percentage of DACA recipients, and the percentage change in state revenue.

\[ \text{ANOVA}^{a} \]

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a. Dependent Variable: LAWS
b. Predictors: (Constant), STATE_REV, DACA, EMPLOY, UNION, UNAUTH

\[ \text{Coefficients}^{a} \]

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a. Dependent Variable: LAWS

Table 2: Linear Regression of Laws from 2016 to 2017

To further understand the correlations, I ran a linear regression. The dependent variable is the number of laws from the 16 observations. The dependent variable was tested for relationship of the number of laws enacted, whether laws were enacted, the percentage of the workforce in unions, the number of unauthorized immigrants, the employment percentage change, the percentage of DACA recipients, and the percentage change in state revenue.
Logit Regression Analysis: Enactment of pro-immigrant state laws 2016-2017

Table 3: Logit Regression of State Enactment. *Dependent variable: whether pro-immigrant laws were enacted.*

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Step 0</th>
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<td>1.185</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of DACA recipients in each state</td>
<td>.807</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employment increase</td>
<td>4.824</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unauthorized population in thousands</td>
<td>.746</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall Statistics</td>
<td>11.601</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because the dependent variable is dichotomous, I ran a logit regression to understand correlations of the chosen economic variables. Percentage of labor force in unions (unionization), State revenue percentage change from recession (State revenue), percentage change in employment (employment increase), and the amount of unauthorized immigrant populations per state (Unauthorized population in thousands).
Discussion and Analysis

The factors that were statistically significant to the number of laws were the percentage of DACA recipients and the number of unauthorized immigrants living in a state. Unauthorized immigrants and foreign-born populations are much higher in Western American states, so I was able to test significance.

The West embrace high levels of unauthorized immigrants. California and Nevada foreign-born populations are more than twice than the national average. In 2016, research has shown that coastal and border states have the highest shares of unauthorized population in the labor force, including California and Arizona. Nevada had the highest share of unauthorized population in the workforce by 16 percent (Cohn and Passel 2016). The Western states have also been more open to Sanctuary policies, helping unauthorized immigrants’ access to health care and legal resources. In Oregon, state legislatures assure that access to health care is not limited by a person’s immigration status in House bill 4017 (National Conference of State Legislature 2016).

In table 1, bivariate correlation demonstrated significant levels for certain factors linked to the economy. The factors, employment increases and unionization percentage, are correlated to whether states enacted laws at a 0.05 level. I also found that the number of laws is correlated to the percentage of DACA recipients and the number of unauthorized immigrants in a state at a 0.01 significance level. These correlations allow the data to be translated through linear regression analysis.

In table 2, linear regression model, the relationship between the number of laws and the percentage of DACA recipients is significant. The graph shows that the greater percentage of DACA recipients reside in a state, the greater the number of laws enacted. Additionally, the more
Unauthorized immigrant populations live in a state, the greater number of pro-immigrant laws are enacted. DACA has been shown to positively affect the economy and thus may be a reason for the high correlation between DACA recipients and the number of laws. However, DACA recipients represent a different type of immigrant because of the rigorous criteria they must meet to obtain temporary relief from deportation. They must be enrolled in school or have a degree to apply for DACA. They cannot have committed any crimes. They must be brought here as a minor, meaning that they are not at fault for violating the federal immigration laws. DACA recipients fit the persona of a perfect immigrant, and therefore, the DACA perception to voters in their states is that immigrants are not a threat, they are here to work and be educated and therefore, help strengthen the economy. The public opinion on the perceptions of DACA recipients are overall positive as more people support the legal status of these immigrations (Tyson 2018).

I conducted a logit regression analysis to predict the likelihood of state pro-immigrant policy enactment using the five variables linked to the state economy. Table 3 shows that unionization and employment increases are significant. The significance level for unionization in .03 that passes the threshold of .05. Stronger in significant is the employment increases percentage change at .028. This shows that the greater levels of unionization in a state lead to the enactment of pro-immigration policies. It also shows that the greater increases in employment is significantly correlated to the whether states enact pro-immigrant policies.

Some explanations for the significant correlations found in the logit regression analysis are explained by the role of unions in the economy and the role that employment increases have on pro-immigrant policies. As the percentage of unionization increase, the state will enact more pro-immigrant laws. Unions have tended to be pro-immigrant and support pro-immigrant
policies and candidates for state legislature. Unions tend to support laborers and a large portion of the laborers in the West are immigrants. Research has found that employers that employ immigrants are less likely to support, financially and publicly, candidates who pursue anti-immigrant rhetoric and restrictive immigration policies (Nicholson-Crotty 2011). Because state lawmakers are supported by employers who work with immigrants, lawmakers create policies that in turn establish an attractive state for immigrants to relocate and settle. Like employers, unions support candidates that support their immigrant base. Unions represent its members and its purpose is to serve its members.

As the percentage of employment increases rises, the more pro-immigrant laws a state will enact. This may be the case because additional employment to the state may attract immigrants to new positions of employment and because the economy of the state is stable. Immigrants may be interacting with new employers and people, which has shown in to eliminate the job threat perception and anti-immigrant attitudes (Hood and Shirkey 1997). Evidence has supported that the more contextualization and acculturation with immigrants helps eliminate negative immigrant perceptions (Hood and Shirkey 1997). The more people interact with immigrants, such as those that are slowly filling the new employment positions in the state, the less likely they will support anti-immigrant policy in the state.

Significant correlations were not found when observing state revenue. State revenue represents the progress in the economy of the state. A stable economy alone is not enough for a state to incorporate pro-immigrant policies. As found in the opposite scenario when looking at restrictive immigrant policies, economic indicators, crime rates, and demographic changes do not have statistically significant effect on state restrictive policies (Chavez and Provine 2009). Studies found that perceptions of these threats influence anti-immigrant attitudes rather than
current facts. For example, the perception that immigrants are the cause of the tough economic conditions is what pushes Republican lawmakers to pass anti-immigrant legislation on the state level. The perception of immigrants as numerous and harmful are used in the rhetoric of political elites (Wallace 2014, 284). The state economy itself has little influence with immigrant laws in general despite the increased economic implications that immigrants bring to the state and country. The enactment of pro-immigrant policies therefore is not correlated to the economy in general. Pro-immigrant policies are a result of various factors, not solely the state of the economy.

The results of my data address what I hypothesized on four of the five factors that I observe have significant correlations. I hypothesized that as the factors, including employment increases, state revenue, unauthorized populations, DACA recipients, and unionization, of the economy increase from the beginning of 2016 to the end of 2017, states will implement pro-immigrant policies. However, not all the variables have significant correlation. Only four of the five factors I have chosen to have shown to have significant correlation, including employment increases, unauthorized populations, DACA recipients, and unionization.

Conclusion

The following is the research question focus on in the paper: what economic factors influence states to introduce pro-immigrant policies? The paper observes states in the West including Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah and Washington from the years 2016 to 2017. The independent variables are the economic factors I expected to be links to pro-immigration policy enactment. I found that not all the economic factors chosen to influence pro-immigration policies in each state, and that economic factors influences change
when observing the dependent variable differently. The dependent variable of whether states implement pro-immigrant laws and the amount of pro-immigrant laws enacted are separate observations to how they each are influenced by the independent variables (the economic factors). The dependent variables are influenced differently in both the linear and logit regression analysis.

I found that specific factors, including unionization, unauthorized immigrant population, DACA recipients, and employment, increases, influence whether states pursue pro-immigrant policies and influence how many policies a state will enact. I can infer that these variables are signals that the economy is growing and stable and therefore encourage state to adopt pro-immigrant policies.

Using quantitate methods I found that the number of pro-immigrant laws are influenced by number of unauthorized immigrants and the percentage of DACA recipients in the state. The number of laws is not influenced by unionization, employment increases, and state revenue. This can be explained by theories that undocumented immigrants have an influence on the citizens they neighbor, and therefore, influence different attitudes of immigration in the state. Another explanation is that the labor force and state economy have less influence because once a state devotes time to implement laws, their concern is not based on economic conditions but of the people they are influencing.

Whether states enact pro-immigrant laws is influenced by unionization and employment increases. On the other hand, undocumented populations in the state and state revenue has less influence. Unions play active roles in changing policies. Employment increases diminish the threat that immigrants have on American jobs.
State revenue surprisingly did not have significance to whether laws were passed or how many pro-immigrant laws were passed. State tax revenue signals whether an economy is stable and growing. Although not a factor linked directly to immigration, state and citizen ideology may be more significant when it comes to immigration policies. Economic indicators, crime rates, and demographic changes do not have statistically significant effect on state restrictive policies; instead, state restrictive policies are a result of conservative citizen ideology (Chavez and Provine 2009). State revenue may have more impact to immigration policy during a recession when state revenue reaches extraordinary lows. State revenue does not have influence on immigration policies because it is the perceptions that lawmakers and citizens of the state have on immigration.

If citizens can visualize employment increases, familiarize with growing immigrant communities, then they will support pro-immigrant policies. such as through participation in society and politics. They can do this actively through voting for candidates that are pro-immigrant and indirectly by staying in or joining a union.

One strength in the research is that the findings had a specific time period in a stable economy. I limited time and the laws included. I was able to find data that accurately measures unionization, employment increases, and DACA. However, a weakness is that because the economy is stable, not rapidly growing or going through a recession, the economic factors I chose is limited. More significant correlation in the factors I chose may be found during growing economics and recessions.

My research does not address the theories of the impacts to Americans who live by undocumented populations. The theory suggests that the greater exposure a citizen has with undocumented population increase the likelihood that they will support policies that are pro-
immigrant (Hood and Morris 1998, 637). However, my research finds that DACA recipients and the percentage of the number of unauthorized immigrants influence a state to incorporate pro-immigrant laws. The theory in literature would assume this relationship because Americans create a direct relationship to the undocumented community and familiarity that would increase policies that benefit those populations.

One deficiency is that time was limited. I attempted to find the most recent data on unauthorized immigrants and DACA programs, because the data was limited. Immigrant data are estimates, and it is hard to account the accuracy of the measurement. Additionally, the time period I studied only consisted of variables over two years. More data is available past the two years, but different factors influence immigration factors at different periods therefore I limited the time of immigration laws to two years.

My time period did not account for the changes in the US presidency. The shift in ideology and focus of the presidency on the federal level should be more focused on when looking at immigration policy on the state level. The research observes laws in 2016 and 2017 during the end of President Barack Obama’s term and the beginning of the Donald Trump administration. In 2016, President Donald Trump took office and the following year immigration state laws spiked. He asserted anti-immigrant rhetoric and would criticize states that were immigrant friendly (Pedroza 2018). The disagreement and removal of many states from the national narrative may have pushed state and local policies to address migration. I did not consider all the important factors to immigration such as the President’s role and ideology. I was considering only factors that are indirectly and directly involved in the economy because I expected that the economy would play a larger role in affecting state immigration laws.
State legislatures are pressured by a variety of factors and by their constituents. The effects of current immigration policies are felt not only by immigrants but by minority populations (Steil and Vasi 2014). I expect to see more factors that affect state policy (including attitudes and movements of immigrants and citizens) to be focused on research on state immigration policies. Studies of the impact of federal policies to local populations should also be conducted to understand how states react to federal immigration policies and priorities.

Because of the varying degrees and priorities of immigration in each state, I expect the Federal government to introduce comprehensive immigration reform. I expect to see the Dream Act introduced again considering how DACA has affected the economy and state policy.

I also expect to see more research that focuses on DACA and immigrants influence on state and federal immigration policy. In the research I conducted I found correlation between DACA and state policies. I would like to see studies on causations of this and the extent that it has on state policy.
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