

The Stranger Across the Kill Floor or The Friend You Choose: Social Contact Effects on
Immigration Related Policies In Rural America

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Abstract

This paper seeks to reconcile the effects of the racial threat hypothesis and social contact theory. While seemingly contradictory and competing, this paper demonstrates that the influence of each may vary by context. The social contact theory posits that increased social contact with different ethnic and/or racial groups tends to lead to more tolerant opinions of those groups. The racial threat hypothesis argues the opposite in that increased contact and proximity may lead to increased competition and hostility between groups that can be economically or culturally-based. The results of this research show that the effects of the two theories are not mutually exclusive. Non-Hispanic whites who sense a threat from Hispanics to one's economic well-being, and political resources and power are significantly more likely to oppose policies that lend aid to immigrant students. This effect may be increased among these individuals by workplace contact with groups they perceive as being a threat. While the social contact of friendship with Latinos is shown to significantly reduce perceptions of racial threat among rural whites, the forced contact of the workplace tends to influence their attitudes in the opposite and negative direction. This research also found that a difference in how social contact interacts with ideology. Workplace contact with Latinos does little to change perceptions of racial threat or support for English-only laws among those who are more conservative, and already more likely to feel threatened and be supportive of such laws. However, workplace contact is shown to increase such perceptions and support among those who identify as more liberal. When it comes to the effects of social contact, context matters.

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Introduction

Over the past few decades, meatpacking and other food-processing industries have increasingly moved out of the cities and into sparsely populated rural areas in right-to-work states. This was done to avoid the collective bargaining power of unions and the environmental regulations found more often in more densely populated areas, as well as to move “closer to the raw materials – the cattle” (Golash-Boza, 2012, p. 12). When doing so, these industries moved from areas of high unemployment to areas of relatively low unemployment, which according to a supply and demand perspective would lead one to believe they would have to increase wages to attract workers. However, these industries sought a different and more manipulable source of labor that would allow them to keep labor costs and likelihood of labor organization low: undocumented immigrants (ibid).

[Figure 1 about here]

During this timeframe, Latino immigration increased dramatically in rural areas of the country that had been homogeneously white for the previous century. Figure 1 above displays how the Latino population has expanded out of the traditional areas of the Southwest into the rural areas of the Plains states, upper Midwest, Carolinas, and even the Deep South (United States Census Bureau, 2011). Demographer Kenneth Johnson finds that the population is shrinking in many rural areas and 1 in 3 U.S. counties are “dying,” and that immigrants are helping to avert the losses. Using U.S. Census data, Johnson finds that where there is growth in rural areas, minorities account for 83 percent, and that the Hispanic population in nonmetropolitan areas grew at the fastest rate of any racial or ethnic group during the 1990s and post-2000 time period (K. M. Johnson 2006; 2012). “The young people leave and the older adults stay in place and age. Unless something dramatic changes - for instance, new

development such as a meatpacking plant to attract young Hispanics – these areas are likely to have more and more natural decrease” (Johnson K. M., 2012). This research seeks to explore how these changes in rural communities affect how the more established white residents see the newcomers, and what influence this has on their policy preferences for issues dealing with students who are the children of these immigrants, who may be undocumented, permanent residents, or citizens themselves.

Two competing theories have sought to explain what happens when different racial or ethnic groups live in the same area and must share economic and political resources. Social contact theory posits that increased social contact with different ethnic and/or racial groups leads to more tolerant opinions of those groups. The racial threat hypothesis argues quite the opposite in that increased contact and proximity can lead in turn to increased economically or culturally-based competition and hostility between groups. Previous literature has left the conflict between the theories unresolved. This research seeks to explore the contexts in which social contact and racial threat influence whites’ individual attitudes about their new neighbors within the context of changing rural municipalities, and if one theory lends more insight in this context than the other.

Racial Threat and Social Contact

Residential racial and ethnic context plays a significant role in shaping whites’ individual attitudes and policy preferences towards minorities and immigration (Rocha et al, 2011; Rocha & Espino, 2009; Gimpel & Lay, 2008; Tolbert, 2003; Welch, Sigelman, Bledsoe, & Combs, 2001). Both the racial threat hypothesis and social contact theory attempt to explain the influence of individuals’ neighbors and their surrounding neighborhood on their political attitudes and behaviors, as well as feelings towards minority groups. However, they often take divergent

paths in theorizing whether increased diversity in one's social contacts and neighborhood lead to increased tolerance or to increased conflict. While they are not entirely at odds, the findings of research based in these theories provide evidence that seems contradictory unless context is taken into consideration.

Social identity theory provides some insights into the roots of racial threat, as it explores the impact of one's own group identity and the desire for positive comparisons to other groups on individuals' behavior (Cottam, Dietz-Uhler, Mastors, & Preston, 2010). According to this theory, people differentiate between in-groups, which they belong to, and out-groups, which they do not (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Discrimination between groups can occur as a result of an individual's motivation to evaluate one's own group more positively than other out-groups. (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In other words, people tend to categorize the social world into "us" vs. "them." This paradigm leads to intergroup competition over resources, both real and perceived. The social identity theory perspective also provides insight into how scapegoating of out-groups occurs during times of trouble, such as an economic recession. Its proponents argue that scapegoating is a result of social causality assessments (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). Individuals find out-groups to blame for the troubles of their own in-group. This relates to the common stereotype that immigrants take the jobs of native-born Americans.

The racial threat hypothesis suggests that whites identify as a group and feel threatened when minorities are able to compete with them for economic or political power and resources (Hajnal, 2001). Whites Americans have long held the upper hand in both the political and social realms, and may feel threatened when they perceive that this preferred position is threatened in the presence of growing minority groups. This occurs not only when a person from a minority group wins elected office, but also in the neighborhood context with intergroup competition over

jobs and other resources (Hajnal, 2001). It is within this context that we focus, as our data was collected from rural communities in which all residents must share, or compete for, the same limited economic resources and jobs. Citrin et al found attitudes toward immigration to be strongly tied to one's perception of economic vulnerability (1997). Within the sampled communities, and most of rural America, whites have long held a preferred position in regards to economic and political power, but the ethnic and racial makeup of rural America is changing with large numbers of immigrants from Latin America moving to these areas to fill meatpacking and agricultural jobs over the past few decades (United States Census Bureau, 2011) (Johnson K. M., 2012).

A perception of racial threat can be expressed in different ways, such as partisan identification, support for extremist candidates, and support for the death penalty. Stephan, Ybarra, and Bachman find subjective perceptions of threat from Latino immigrants to in-group political and economic resources among whites, to be a significant predictor of racial prejudice (1999). The Democratic Party's support for the Civil Rights Act of 1964 has over the past four decades turned the once solidly Democratic south over to the more racially conservative Republican Party (Carmines & Stimson, 1989). Other research has found, when whites feel that they, or their group, are being threatened politically or economically by black advances, they oppose policies intended to help blacks, such as busing, or they support racist candidates, such as David Duke or George Wallace (Bobo, 1983; Bobo, 1988). In rural Louisiana, research found that for the higher proportions of African-Americans in a parish were associated with declines in the percentage of white voters who were registered as Democrats, and an increase in white voters registered as Republicans (Giles & Hertz, 1994). Proximity to a larger proportion of blacks can

also lead to increased support for the death penalty among whites that hold prejudice views (Soss, Langbein, & Metelko, 2003).

The social contact theory, as originally outlined by Gordon Allport in the mid-1950s, assumes that increased interracial contact “promotes positive racial attitudes” and lack of such contact leads to ignorance and hostility (Allport, 1954). Much of the social contact literature since has focused on changes in individuals’ attitudes based on the racial composition of communities in which they reside with mixed results in regards to the effect of increased contact. Using national survey data, Sigelman and Welch find that both interracial friendships and neighborhood contacts increase whites' desire for racial integration with blacks (1993). Similar results come from Hood and Morris, with whites residing in areas with large Latino and Asian populations tended to favor less restrictive immigration policies (1997). Other research posits that increased neighborhood integration to correspond with lower levels of intergroup prejudice and competition, but intergroup hostility increased in cities with larger minority populations (Oliver & Wong, 2003). A study of rural communities with growing Latino immigrant populations found that tolerance for diversity was contextually conditioned by the number of immigrants that had settled into the neighborhood (Gimpel & Lay, 2008). Tolbert conducted a census-tract-level analysis of white support for California’s Proposition 209, an initiative aimed at ending Affirmative Action in the state. Her results suggest that white support for the initiative was higher in tracts with larger Latino, African-American, or Asian-American populations, even after controlling for other factors (Tolbert, 2003).

Other authors have sought to rectify the differences between the theories (Rocha & Espino, 2009). Rocha and Espino found that both the size of Latino population and level of residential segregation in a neighborhood have an effect on the influences of racial threat and

contact on whites' attitudes (ibid). In other words, they argue that racial threat and social contact are not necessarily directly competing forces that determine whites' attitudes toward minorities, and their influence varies depending on the racial context. The level of residential segregation was an "intervening factor that makes the conditions for either racial threat or social contact more likely", which in turn affects whites' attitudes towards Latinos (ibid). Also, of specific interest to this paper, white's attitudes toward English-only and immigration policies were "significantly related to changes in size of Latino population conditional on levels of residential segregation" becoming much less supportive of such policies in integrated neighborhoods with larger Latino populations (ibid).

Beyond the immediate threat to their own community, whites may also feel resentment towards the government over policies that are targeted towards aiding minority students. Policies that provide aid to minority groups are a good example of policies that may be viewed as asking for the sacrifice of some but not others. There is tendency among some whites to perceive efforts to aid minority groups as an effort to directly disadvantage white Americans (Lipsitz, 2006). A large majority of white Americans claim to be in support of racial equality, but they differ in their support of these policies, such as Affirmative Action or educational quotas, that are designed to ensure it (Hetherington & Globetti, 2002). Past research on opposition to bilingual education programs found both racial prejudice and a perception of threat to whites' economic interests, because these policies redistribute educational resources to Latinos (Huddy & Sears, 1995). Schildkraut also finds that holding the predominant ethnocultural view of an "American as a white, English-speaking person of Anglo-Saxon descent" to "have the clearest and most consistent influence" on an individual's language policy preferences, such as English-only laws and bilingual education (2005, 131; 163-164). It is estimated that 50,000-

65,000 undocumented high school students graduate each year in the United States (Reich & Jay, 2010). Since 2001, 12 states have enacted legislation that allows undocumented high school graduates to attend the states' public post-secondary schools at in-state tuition rates, while six states have barred such benefits (Morse & Birnbach, 2012). Combined with the local threat of a growing minority population within their own community, that they view as stressing local resources, government implemented policies intended to aid minority groups may increase white Americans' sense of racial threat.

Research Questions:

- *How does social contact with Latinos affect the policy preferences of whites' in rural communities on issues dealing with immigrant students?*
- *How are the anticipated benefits of social contact affected by perceptions of racial threat, or that Latinos are taking whites' political and economic resources?*

Arguments/Hypotheses:

Past research has primarily focused on residential context to test these competing theories, and has found that proximity does not always necessarily lead to tolerance nor perceptions of threat. I hypothesize that other factors such as type of social contact, consensual friendships or the forced proximity of the workplace, may provide new ways in which to test the theories, and that social contact in the workplace may trigger perceptions of racial threat. The racial threat hypothesis has been tested in many regions across the country, at the state level (Tolbert & Hero, 1996), and metropolitan areas (Welch, Sigelman, Bledsoe, & Combs, 2001). Testing it in the rural community context can provide valuable insights, as rapid demographic change is happening in many parts of the rural U.S. With the white population stagnant or declining in many rural areas of the country (United States Census Bureau, 2011), continuing

significant growth in the Latino population could result in significant shifts in political power in the not so distant future, in parts of the country where whites have long held onto the majority of political and economic power. In these changing rural communities intergroup contact is inevitable. Whites and Latinos must share the more limited resources that rural municipalities have to offer. Not only are there fewer options for employment, but there are often only a few elementary schools, one high school, one or two grocery stores, and one Wal-Mart.

Social contact alone will not create more tolerant stances towards Latinos and immigrants, as well as policies that benefit them. The context of that contact matters. The forced contact of the work place is different than the consensual contact of friendship. Whites with Latino coworkers in these smaller communities with fewer economic opportunities may see the newcomers as a threat to their economic well-being. Meanwhile, having Latino friends will also decrease perceptions of racial threat, or that Latinos are taking whites' economic and political resources.

Hypothesis 1: Whites in rural areas who report having friends who are Latino will be more likely to prefer policies that aid immigrant students.

Hypothesis 2: Whites in rural areas who report having friends who are Latino will be less likely to express perceptions of racial threat.

Hypothesis 3: Whites who report having Latino coworkers will be less likely to support measures that benefit immigrant students

Hypothesis 4: Whites who report having Latino coworkers will be more likely to express a perceptions of racial threat.

Hypothesis 5: Perceptions of racial threat will significantly decrease support for policies aiding immigrant students, and increase support for policies that would restrict their rights.

Hypothesis 6: Whites who report having Latino coworkers and more conservative ideology will be even more likely to express a perceptions of racial threat.

Data and Methods

Nationwide, the growth of the Latino population in rural areas is increasing 3 percent annually compared to 1 percent annually for white non-Hispanics since 2000 (Economic Research Service- USDA, 2008). Nationally, the Latino population grew 43 percent between 2000 and 2010, much of that in rural areas (United States Census Bureau, 2011). The United States Department of Agriculture defines rural in the 2008 Farm Bill, as “a rural area or municipality excludes cities of 50,000 or more and any urbanized area that is contiguous, or adjacent to a city of 50,000 or more” (United States Dept. of Agriculture, 2008). Using these criteria, four municipalities were selected, two in Kansas (Dodge City and Garden City), and two in Nebraska (Fremont and Grand Island) in which to conduct face-to-face surveys. These four municipalities were chosen for both their changing demographics and, due to budget and time constraints, their proximity to the University of Kansas in Lawrence.

The data used in this research was collected during the summers of 2011 and 2012. Respondents were administered a 73 multi-part question survey, in both English and Spanish. This survey utilizes questions used on previous national surveys, such as the General Social Survey, the American National Election Studies surveys, the Harris Poll, Gallup, and the 2006 Latino National Survey. The use of these questions provides us with increased confidence in the validity of our results, as the questions have been previously tested numerous times.

The surveys were administered using three different methods. The first was face-to-face, which were administered door-to-door rural community neighborhoods. The primary investigators randomly chose voting precincts within each city and then attempted to survey the occupant of every third house or business. For the second method, the principal investigators contacted local community college instructors in each community to obtain permission to

conduct the survey during class time to willing participants. The third method was an internet based survey. The internet survey was advertised on local message boards, community business and organization Facebook pages, and by contacting instructors of community college classes. The cities chosen for the internet survey were randomly drawn from a list of all nonmetropolitan cities under 50,000 residents. This mixed method improves the chance that all residents of the selected municipalities have an equal chance of being selected to participate in the survey, reducing the likelihood of selection bias. The survey yielded a sample that was representative of these communities on age, income, and educational attainment. This paper will only focus on the responses of white non-Hispanic residents, which included 285 respondents.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables for this project will be respondents' preferences for various policies that affect immigrant students and the education of immigrant students. These include respondents' support for a policy that grants in-state tuition rates for undocumented students, multi-year bilingual education programs, the granting of citizenship to children of undocumented immigrants born in the U.S., and English-only laws.

In-State Tuition

Support to in-state tuition is measured by responses to the question below. Those that indicated "Strongly Oppose" or "Oppose" were coded as 1, while all other responses are coded as 0.

- "How do you feel about the following statement: Undocumented immigrants attending college should be charged a higher tuition rate at state colleges and universities, even if they grew up and graduated high school in the state."

Multi-Year English as a Second Language Classes

The dependent variable for support for multi-year bilingual education is created from the following question, with those “Strongly Oppose” or “Support” are coded as 1, with all other as 0.

- “Do you think schools should replace multi-year bilingual instruction with English instruction after one year?”

Changing Citizenship Clause of 14th Amendment

Responses indicating a preference of changing the citizenship clause of the 14th Amendment of the Constitution are coded as 1. Responses indicating support for keeping the citizenship clause as it is are coded as a 0.

- “Do you think we should continue to grant citizenship to all children born in the U.S., or do you think the Constitution should be changed so children of illegal immigrants are not automatically granted citizenship?”

English-Only Law

For the following question inquiring about respondents support for an English-only law, answers to the affirmative were coded as 1. Answers of “No” or “Don’t Know” are coded as a 0.

- “Should an English-only law be passed and enforced in your town?”

Primary Independent Variables

Included are independent variables that are intended to measure the effects of social contact and racial threat. These variables are drawn from questions about the racial or ethnic makeup of their friends and coworkers, as well as whether they have any close friends, relatives or colleagues who are immigrants. Also included are variables for respondents’ perceptions of immigrants’ willingness to assimilate, whether they see immigrants as criminals, and whether

they consider immigrants as a burden on society. To measure for respondents' more general attitudes towards newcomers in their communities, I have included variables that are measures of respondents' views of Latinos in general, and a measure of respondents' perceptions of shared commonality with Latinos. Also, included is a measure of respondents' perception of alienation from society, as those who feel alienated may perceive greater threat from immigrants. A description of the coding of the primary independent variables can be found below.

Racial Threat

To test for racial threat, I created an additive variable that runs from 0-6 from the following questions that asks whether respondents feel that Hispanics threaten their economic well-being and political influence. Respondents were asked how strongly they agree with the statements below. Those that answered "Strongly Agree" are coded as 3, "Somewhat Agree" as 2, "Somewhat Disagree" as 1, while those that responded "Strongly Disagree," or "Don't Know," are coded as 0. This racial threat variable was also used as an independent variable in the other models using the same coding.

- "The more influence that Hispanics have in politics the less influence people like me will have in politics."
- "More good jobs for Hispanics mean fewer good jobs for people like me."

Social Contact Variables

The variables seeking to test social contact theory are meant to discover the different types of social contact respondents have with Latinos and immigrants. I made dichotomous variable for each of these. The respondents were asked the following questions below. After each question respondents were read the following list of options: "Mostly Latino/Hispanic, Mostly White, Mixed Latino/Hispanic and White, Mostly Black, Mixed Latino and Black, Other,

or Mix of all of the above.” Those that responded “Mostly Latino/Hispanic”, “Mixed Latino/Hispanic and White”, “Mixed Latino/Hispanic and Black”, or “Mix of all of the above,” were coded as 1 for each of the above questions.

- “How would you describe your friends?”
- “How would you describe your coworkers?”

Commonality

An additive variable, running from 0-6, was created to measure respondents’ perceived solidarity with Latinos in the U.S. using their answers to the two questions below: “A lot, Some, Little, Nothing, Don’t Know.”

- “Thinking about issues like job opportunities, educational attainment, and poverty, how much do people of your racial or ethnic groups and Hispanics have in common in the United States today?”
- “Now, I’d like you think about the political situation of people of your racial or ethnic groups and immigrants in society. Thinking about things like government services and employment, political power, participation, and representation, how much do people of your racial or ethnic group and Hispanics have in common?”

Prejudice towards Latinos Variable

To measure respondents’ negative feelings about Latinos/Hispanics in general they were asked to respond to the battery below. An additive variable was created from these responses ranging from 0-3. Responses of “Lazy,” “Unintelligent,” and “Untrustworthy” were coded as 1 for each. Responses of “Hardworking,” “Intelligent,” “Trustworthy,” and “Neutral” were coded as 0.

- “Do you think Hispanics are generally:
 1. Lazy, Hardworking, or Neutral
 2. Unintelligent, Intelligent, or Neutral
 3. Untrustworthy, Trustworthy, Neutral”

Alienation

Hetherington and Globetti find that sense of alienation from the political system and low levels of trust in government to undermine non-Hispanic whites' support for educational policies that benefit minority students, due to a perception that government is asking the sacrifice of some for the exclusive benefit of others (2002). An additive variable was created using respondents' level of agreement (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree Nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) with the statements below. The additive sum of their answers was used to test alienation and ranges from 0-25.

- “The people running the country don't really care what happens to you.”
- “Most people with power try to take advantage of people like yourself.”
- "You're left out of things going on around you.”
- “The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.”
- “What you think doesn't count very much anymore.”

Demographic Variables

Past research has also found that that negatives attitudes towards immigrants to be correlated with demographic factors, such as income, education, age, and party identification (Schildkraut, 2011). Schildkraut found that Republicans, people with lower household incomes, and those with lower levels of education are more likely to harbor racial or immigrant resentment than those with higher incomes and education levels or who identify as Democrats (2011, p. 182).

Based on these past findings, I include the key demographic variables of education, income, ideology, gender, age, political knowledge, and employment status. Education is a numerical variable running from 0-7(None through Graduate or Professional Degree). A dichotomous variable was made for employment status and was coded as 1 for those who are

employed. The same was done for gender with male coded as 1. Age is a continuous variable ranging from 18-87. Income is an ordinal variable running from 0-6 “Below \$15,000” to “Above \$65,000.”

Due to multicollinearity issues and to the overwhelmingly conservative Republican nature of the rural towns sampled, I include a measure of ideology and not a measure for party. The unidimensional liberal-conservative scale in American politics is closely tied to racial attitudes (Carmines and Stimson 1989, Sniderman and Carmines 1997). Therefore, one of the principal variables I want to control for in assessing attitudes towards Latinos is an individual's ideological self-placement on the 7-point liberal-conservative scale.

Analysis/Results

The subsequent analysis examines rural whites' preferences on policies that could benefit Latino immigrant children in their communities. The four models, found on Tables 1 and 2 below, test the influence of social contact, both the consensual contact of friendship and the forced proximity of the workplace, perceptions of racial threat, prejudice towards Latinos and other demographic variables. To test the dynamic of social contact and the workplace, interaction terms for ideology and Latino coworkers are included in the models. An analysis of influences on perceptions of racial threat are also conducted (Table 3) to test the influence of social contact on such perceptions.

Probit regression was used to evaluate the dichotomous dependent variables for the four models testing rural whites' policy preferences on Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 presents the probit regression of support for in-state tuition for undocumented students who graduated from state high schools and of support for multi-year bilingual instruction programs in schools. Table 2 includes analyses of respondents' support for an English-only law in their own community, as

well as support for changing the natural- born citizenship clause of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution to not include children born to non-citizen parents. The tables include the probit coefficients and standard errors reported for each model, which are described below.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

In-State Tuition

Context matters when it comes to the effect of increased social contact. People can freely choose their friends, but they often cannot choose those they work with and compete with for such economic resources. In rural communities, having Latino coworkers is found to be a significant influence (see Table 1 below) on whites' support for in-state tuition for undocumented students who graduated from their state's high schools. This findings run counter to some of the previous research built on the social contact theory, but they are supported by the racial threat hypothesis. Public colleges and universities are a shared resource funded by the taxpayers. Whites' who perceive that their economic and political power is threatened by Latinos in general, are shown to be unsupportive of measures that would grant access to this shared resource to undocumented students, whom they may see as being undeserving and a part of that threat. These results also support my third and fourth hypotheses, as these individuals in rural communities may see their Latino coworkers and other recent immigrants in their community as a threat to their economic well-being, a near perfect definition of part of the racial threat hypothesis.

However, two variables were found to significantly influence support for this policy in a positive direction. An increased level of education tends to increase individuals' support for granting in-state tuition to these students, as those who have attained increasingly levels of education may support the expansion of educational opportunities for all groups. Indicating a

sense of commonality of the economic and political situations between non-Hispanic whites and Latinos was also a significantly positive influence on support for this policy.

Multi-Year ESL Classes

Neither the social contact variables nor the racial threat variable were significant factors in the model testing support for multi-year bilingual education programs. Much like the results of in-state tuition, participants' increased level of education significantly increased their support for multi-year bilingual education programs. Those who have achieved increasing levels of education, tend to prefer to expand such opportunities for others. On the other hand, increasingly conservative ideology and feelings of alienation from the government are found to significantly decrease support for expanding the educational opportunities for immigrant children.

English-Only Law Support Model

[Insert Table 2 about here]

The results demonstrate that the social contact of having Latino friends has no effect on whites' attitudes towards English-only laws and bilingual education. However, having Latino coworkers tends increase support for English-only policies. This is consistent with past research. Rocha and Espino find whites' attitudes toward "language policies to be unrelated to the presence of English-speaking Latinos, while whites do react to the presence of Spanish-speaking Latinos" (Rocha & Espino, 2009). Racial threat is also found to significantly influence support for English-only laws. In the these rural communities, whites who have English-speaking Latino friends may be less likely to perceive a need for an English-only law, but those with Spanish-speaking Latino coworkers, who they also may perceive to be a threat to their economic and political resources, are more likely to support such a law. This finding supports the third

hypothesis, as many English-only laws would prohibit bilingual education programs within the communities that adopt them.

Other factors were found to significantly influence support for English-only-laws, such as age, sense of alienation, and ideology. Increased age and conservatism are both found to increase support for an official language within rural municipalities. These findings are supported by previous research such as Schildkraut (2011, pg. 182). The interactive term included in this model is significant and in the direction predicted by much of the social contact literature. Increased conservatism is found to be a significantly positive influence on support for English-only policies, but for conservatives with Latino coworkers the effect is slightly mitigated.

Figure 2 below includes a plot of the marginal effects of ideology and of respondents having Latino coworkers on support for an English-only law. The solid black line indicates the marginal effect of respondents working with Latinos and their range of ideology, running from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. The figure displays that the marginal effect of the interaction, represented by the solid black line, has a statistically significant effect on probability of support for an English-only law when both the upper and lower bounds of the 95 percent confidence interval, represented by the shaded area, are above or below the zero line. If the marginal effect line is above the zero line it indicates a positive effect, while being below the zero line indicates a negative effect. In Figure 2, differences in the effect of having Latino coworkers emerge moving from left to right on the ideological spectrum. If a respondent has Latino coworkers, it is likely to increase the probability of his/her support for an English-only law if he/she is liberal to moderate ideologically. However, there is likely no difference in the probability of support among those who lean conservative. The more conservative respondents

are more likely to support such measures regardless of the racial/ethnic identity of their friends or coworkers.

[Insert Figure 2 about here]

Change 14th Amendment

The social contact variables are not shown to be significant influences on the dependent variable in this model. However, the racial threat variable was shown to be a positive and significant influence on support for amending the U.S. Constitution to prohibit the granting of citizenship to children born in the U.S. to non-citizens parents. This finding supports the fifth hypothesis that perceptions of racial threat will significantly and positively influence policies that restrict the rights of immigrant children. Increased conservatism was also shown to increase support for changing the 14th amendment.

Racial Threat Models

[Insert Table 3 about here]

The models in Table 3 above assumes that intergroup contact affects perceptions of racial threat and not the reverse. The causal relationship could also run in exactly the opposite direction with Anglos who are more positively disposed to Latinos actively seeking them out as friends. However, this would run counter to past literature. It also would not explain the observed relationship between rural whites' increased perception of racial threat and their having Latino coworkers, as people often have little choice in the ascriptive characteristics of their coworkers.

The results lead to the logical conclusion that white residents of rural communities who feel threatened by the growing presence of minorities, and their perceived impact on whites'

political and economic resources, will be significantly more likely to support anti-immigrant policies

[Insert Figures 3 and 4 about here]

Table 3 displays the results of the two models testing racial threat as the dependent variable, one in which ideology is interacted with Latino coworkers, and one in which ideology is interacted with Latino friends. Ordered probit models were chosen because the racial threat variable running from zero to six provides a cruder measure than would a truly continuous variable, which would be preferable to for a linear model. Proportional-odds models are generally preferred for an ordered response variable on “grounds of parsimony” (Fox, 2008; 369).

For whites in the sample, having Latino coworkers was found to increase perceptions of racial threat, but it is also contingent upon individuals’ ideology. Figure 3 above, is a conditional marginal effects plot that includes 95 percent confidence intervals. When the 95 percent confidence interval for the difference does not include zero, the difference can be considered to be statistically significant. Figure 3 shows that the difference in the probability of perceptions of racial threat is not statistically significant, between those who have Latino coworkers and those that do not among those who identify ideologically as conservatives. This indicates that rural whites who identify as conservative tend to have increased perceptions of racial threat, regardless of whether or not they work with Latinos. These findings are consistent with some previous literature (Schildkraut, 2011) (Carmines & Stimson, 1989) (Giles & Hertz, 1994). A more interesting finding is that having Latino coworkers increases the probability of perceptions of racial threat by up to 25 percent among those who identify as more liberal when compared to those of same ideology with no Latino coworkers. This findings support my fourth hypothesis

that rural whites who have Latino coworkers may see themselves as being in economic competition with Latinos and will then in turn be more likely to express a perception of racial threat.

While social contact in the workplace leads to a greater likelihood of rural whites having a perception of racial threat, the context of consensual friendship tends to have the opposite effect. This effect is displayed in Figure 4 above. The more liberal one is, the greater the probability that his/her perception of racial threat will be zero, if an individual has Latino friends. This finding supports the social contact theory's thesis of increased tolerance between groups with increase social contact, as well as the second hypothesis of this paper. However, the figure with 95 percent confidence intervals indicates that there is likely no statistically significant difference between the perceptions of racial threat of conservatives who do and do not have Latino friends.

One of the more interesting findings is that holding negative feelings towards Hispanics was not found to be a significant influence on any of the dependent variables except for racial threat. Meanwhile, racial threat was found to be a significant influence on support for in-state tuition and English-only laws, indicating feelings of racial animosity. This may be explained by research from social psychology. It has become socially unacceptable to be overtly racist, yet racist sentiments still linger within the public. This "new" kind of racism is called "symbolic racism" and that today's "racial resentment ... manifests itself in opposition to race-targeted policies" (Kinder & Sanders, 1996) (Kinder & Sears, 1981). According to this theory, individuals express their bias towards minorities in the guise of "commitment to the American values of individualism and self-reliance" (Hetherington & Globetti, 2002). This argument is similar to those made in support of recent state and local policies that restricting the rights of

undocumented immigrants, exhorting a commitment to law and order or a “principled appeal to traditional conservative values (Sniderman & Piazza, *The Scar of Race*, 1993).”

The symbolic racism argument is not without its critics. The “principled politics” argument counters symbolic racism and argues that opposition to racial policies may reflect a principled objection to the policies, rather than biases towards their beneficiaries (Sniderman and Piazza 1993). Supporters of this view argue that principled objections to policies that are beneficial to minorities will manifest themselves in terms of the individual attitudes such as partisanship and conservatism (Sniderman & Carmines, 1997). However, Rocha et al find that whites’ support for more restrictive immigration policies in areas with large Latino populations is not a product of the size of the foreign-born Latino population, but rather the size of the native-born Latino population (2011). Therefore, the authors conclude that “racial- or ethnic-based concerns may trump worries about legal procedures or national security when it come to the formation of immigration policy attitudes (ibid). It is not within the scope of this paper to address these differences. However, both ideology and racial/ethnic bias were significant in influencing the perceptions of racial threat among the rural whites in the sample.

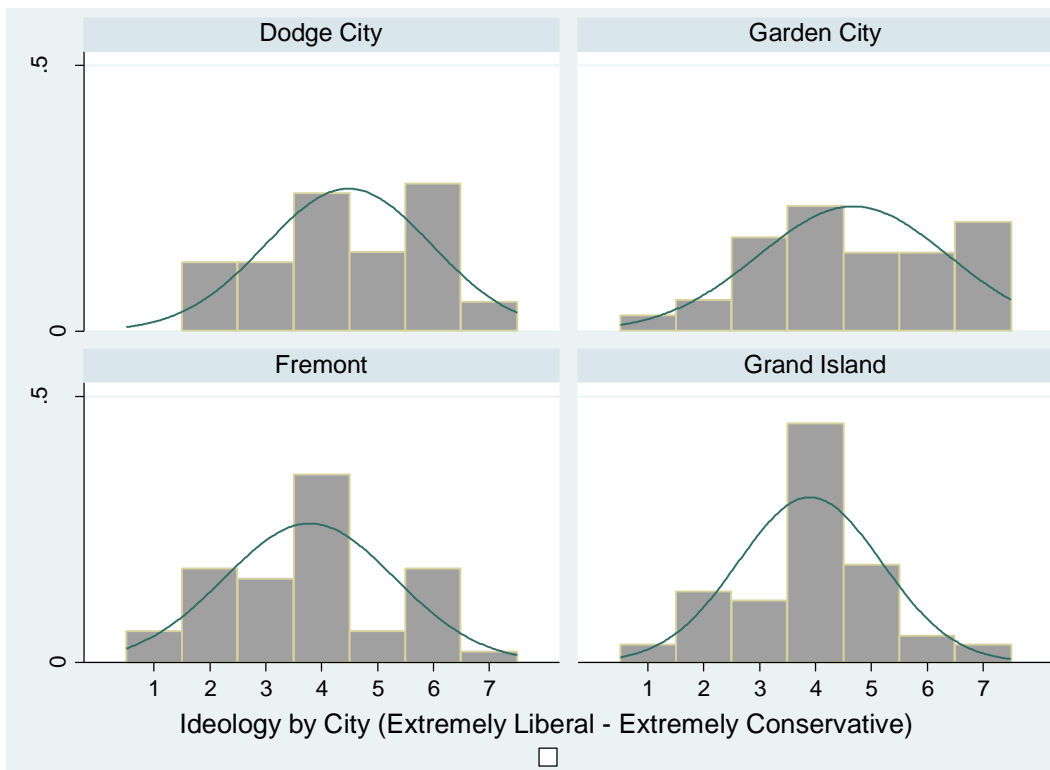
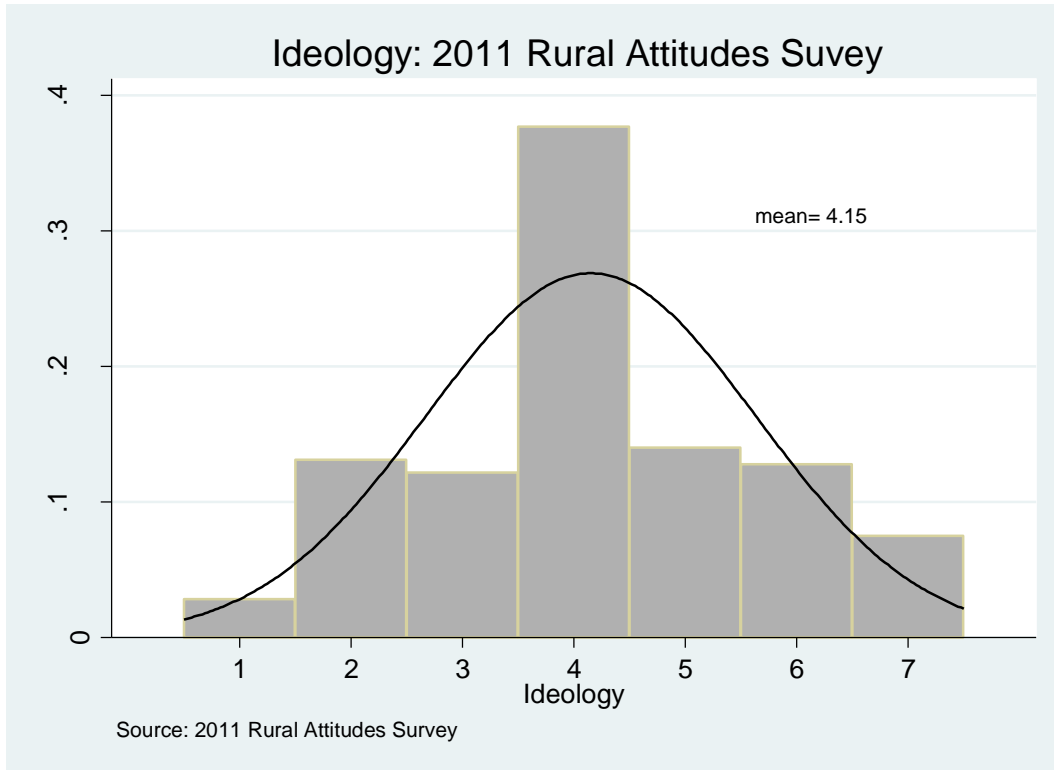
Conclusion

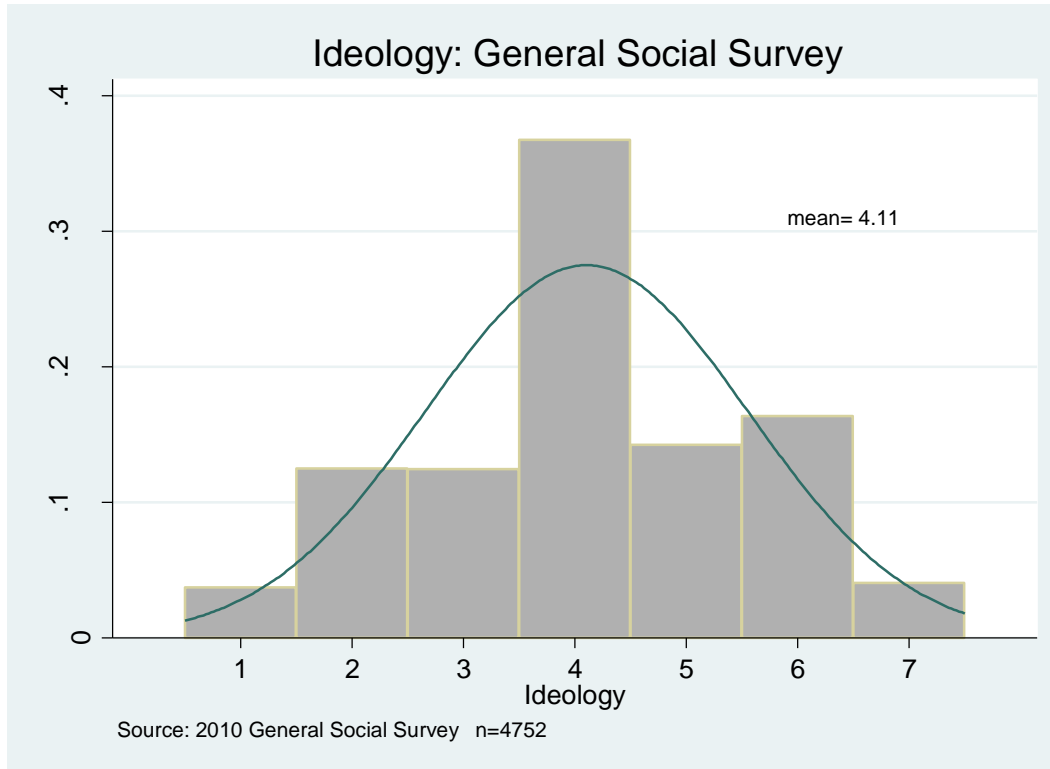
This research finds that social contact, whether with friends or in the workplace, has little to no effect on non-Hispanic whites who identify as conservative. It also finds that those whites who lean conservative are more likely to perceive Latinos to be a threat to their economic and political resources, and social contact has likely has no statistically significant influence upon these perceptions. Much of the past literature on the effects of social contact has been conducted in urban neighborhoods, finding mixed results as to whether or not increased contact in these neighborhoods leads to more intergroup tolerance (Hood III & Morris, 1997; Oliver &

Wong, 2003; Sigelman & Welch, 1993). This research demonstrates that there can be significantly different results when examining attitudes in rural communities. One has to look no farther than a map of Congressional representation to see the dominance of more conservative ideology in most rural areas in the U.S. This research indicates that increased social contact with Latinos, the fastest growing population in rural areas, may do little to nothing to increase the tolerance of the conservative population (which is among the portion of the electorate that dominates congressional elections in the rural United States).

The overall population of the rural U.S. is stagnant or shrinking, but where the population is growing, it is experiencing some growing pains. However, the finding that increasing age contributes to increased perceptions of racial threat and more restrictive policies indicates that there may be some generational differences that will possibly alleviate this clash between ideology and a growing rural immigrant population over time. The electoral map may change as more of the Latino students, and non-Hispanic whites they befriended in school, come of age and join the electorate.

Appendix: Descriptive Statistics of Dataset





	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	
Age	217	39.49	17.83	18	87	
Education	223	5.25	1.11	1	7	5= "Some college"
Household Income	223	4.04	2.60	1	7	4= "\$35,000-44,999"

	Latino Population (percentage) source: 2010 Census
Dodge City, KS	57.5
Fremont, NE	11.9
Garden City, KS	48.6
Grand Island, NE	26.7

Crosstab of Latino Friends and Latino Coworkers (as percentage)

Latino Coworkers	Latino Friends		Total
	No	Yes	
No	78.57	47.87	65.45
Yes	21.43	52.13	34.55
Total	100	100	100

Table 1: Rural Whites' Support for In-State Tuition and ESL Classes

	In-State Tuition	Multi-Year ESL Classes
(Intercept)	-0.359 (0.853)	0.581 (0.930)
Age	0.005 (0.007)	-0.009 (0.008)
Male	-0.230 (0.211)	-0.204 (0.234)
Education	0.324** (0.122)	0.284* (0.137)
Political Knowledge	-0.027 (0.100)	-0.106 (0.105)
Employed	-0.356 (0.234)	-0.035 (0.250)
Income	-0.098+ (0.058)	0.000 (0.061)
Latino Friends	-0.182 (0.217)	0.034 (0.228)
Latino Coworkers	-0.992* (0.507)	-0.679 (0.553)
Alienation	-0.025 (0.025)	-0.079** (0.028)
Ideology	-0.122 (0.078)	-0.176* (0.082)
Prejudice	-0.142 (0.183)	-0.156 (0.212)
Racial Threat	-0.207** (0.065)	-0.073 (0.072)
Commonality	0.162* (0.069)	-0.029 (0.074)
Latino Coworkers \times Ideology	0.214 (0.141)	0.119 (0.160)
McFadden R-sq.	0.185	0.147
N	272	271

Reported p -values are based on two-tailed hypothesis tests, *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, + $p < .1$.
 Source: 2011-12 Rural Attitudes Survey

Table 2: Rural Whites' Support for English-Only Laws and Changing 14th Amendment

	Support English-Only Law	Change 14th Amendment
(Intercept)	-1.932*	-1.884*
	(0.860)	(0.858)
Age	0.016*	0.006
	(0.007)	(0.007)
Male	0.051	-0.028
	(0.213)	(0.214)
Education	-0.185	-0.168
	(0.116)	(0.115)
Political Knowledge	0.069	0.053
	(0.102)	(0.102)
Employed	0.223	0.283
	(0.245)	(0.245)
Income	-0.018	0.046
	(0.057)	(0.057)
Latino Friends	-0.209	0.172
	(0.230)	(0.224)
Latino Coworkers	1.411**	0.179
	(0.536)	(0.535)
Alienation	0.055*	0.047 ⁺
	(0.027)	(0.027)
Ideology	0.166*	0.178*
	(0.083)	(0.081)
Prejudice	0.095	0.163
	(0.170)	(0.174)
Racial Threat	0.166**	0.263***
	(0.064)	(0.065)
Commonality	-0.095	-0.068
	(0.071)	(0.070)
Latino Coworkers × Ideology	-0.239 ⁺	-0.136
	(0.145)	(0.146)
McFadden R-sq.	0.191	0.202
N	270	272

Reported *p*-values are based on two-tailed hypothesis tests, *** *p*<.001, ** *p*<.01, * *p*<.05, + *p*<.1

Source: 2011-12 Rural Attitudes Survey

Table 3: Ordinal Regression of Rural Whites' Perceptions of Racial Threat with Interactions

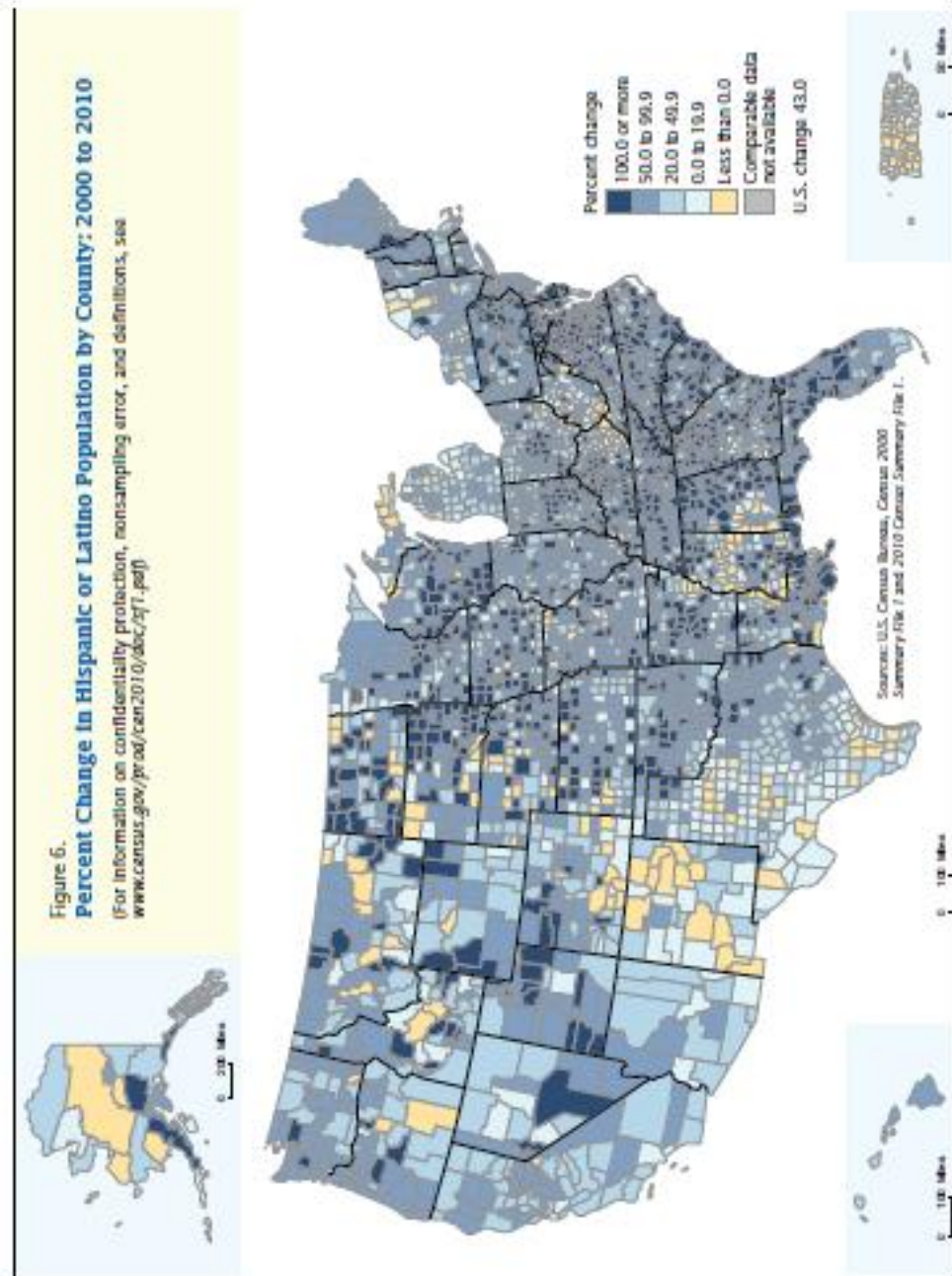
	Latino Coworkers × Ideology	Latino Friends × Ideology
Age	0.0128* (2.56)	0.0126* (2.53)
Male	0.241 (1.52)	0.214 (1.35)
Education	-0.209* (-2.53)	-0.231** (-2.82)
Political Knowledge	-0.101 (-1.35)	-0.0859 (-1.16)
Employed	0.223 (1.24)	0.225 (1.25)
Income	-0.0382 (-0.89)	-0.0246 (-0.58)
Ideology	0.148* (2.47)	0.0799 (1.31)
Latino Friends	-0.574*** (-3.48)	-0.605+ (-1.70)
Latino Coworkers	1.218* (2.51)	0.301+ (1.82)
Alienation	0.0623** (3.21)	0.0624** (3.22)
Prejudice	0.598*** (4.86)	0.581*** (4.72)
Latino Coworker × Ideology	-0.216* (-2.01)	
Latino Friends × Ideology		0.000437 (0.00)
Observations	263	263
Pseudo R^2	0.291	0.287

t statistics in parentheses

+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Source: 2011-12 Rural Attitudes Survey

Figure 1: Percent Change in Hispanic or Latino Population by County: 2000-2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011

Figure 2: English-Only Law Support and Latino Coworkers

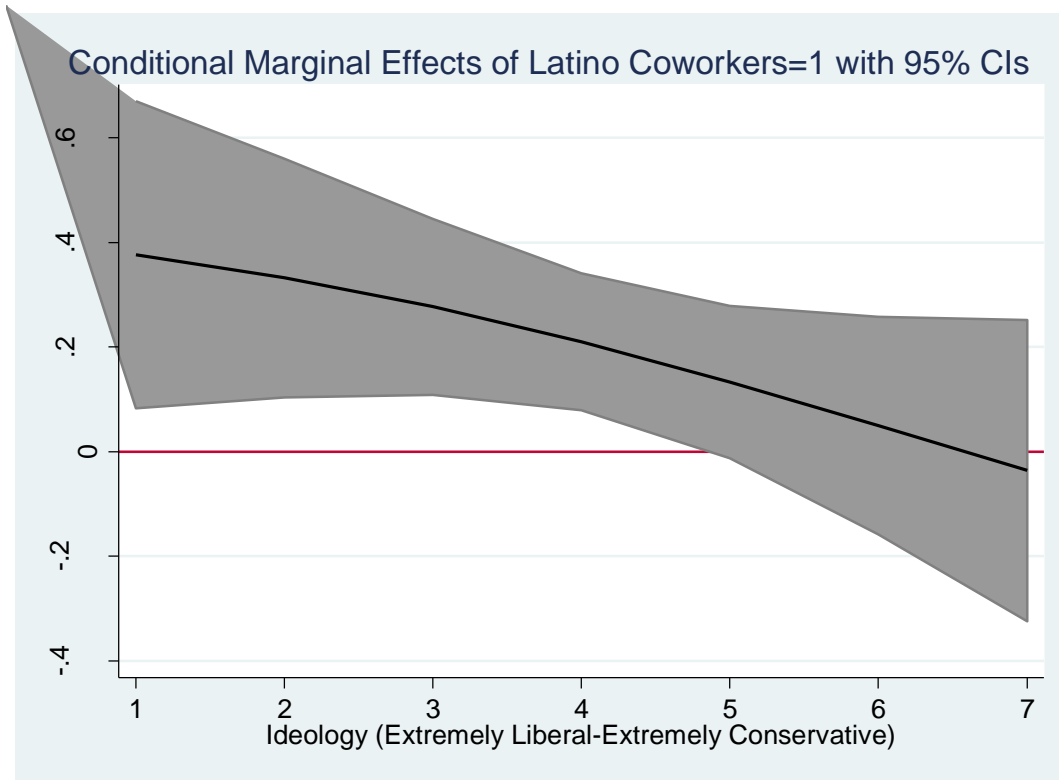
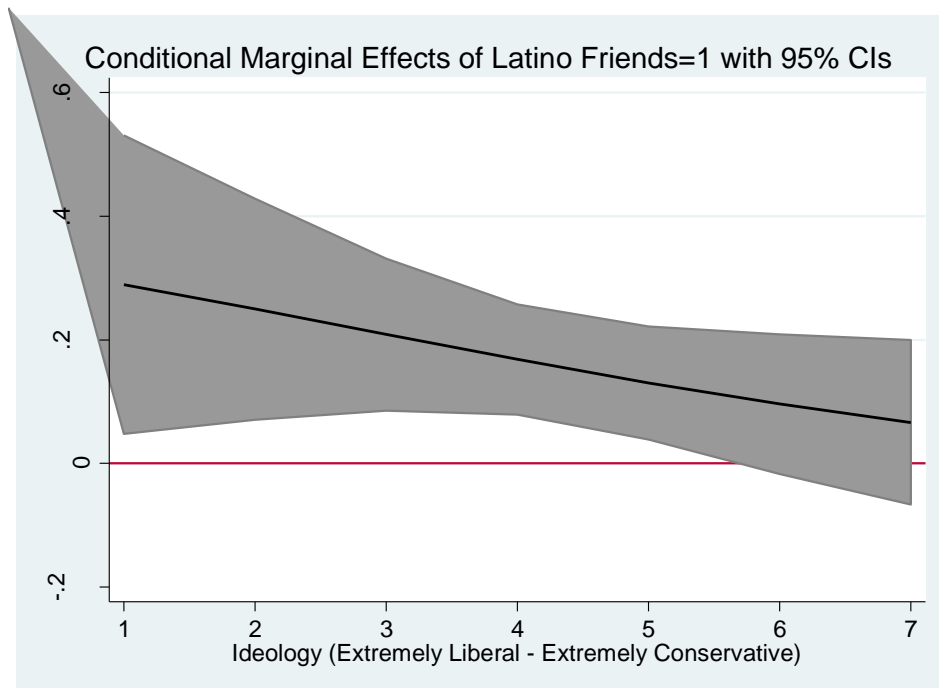
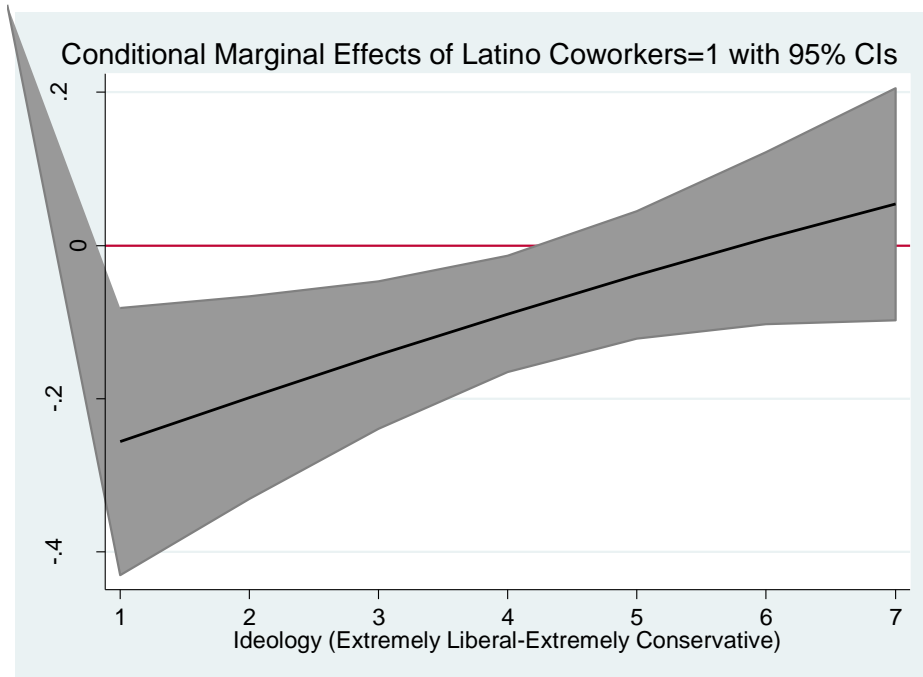


Figure 3 and 4: Conditional Marginal Effects of Social Contact and Ideology on Perceptions of Racial Threat



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