

The Impact of Immigration-related Challenges and Deportation Worries on the Well-being of Latinos in the U.S.

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ABSTRACT

Increased public awareness of immigration issues creates challenges for Latinos and the deportation of undocumented immigrants in record numbers is a source of worry in the Latino community in the U.S. Very few studies have examined how the preceding factors impact the lives and outlook of Latinos—specifically their quality of life, their confidence in the future, and their situation in the U.S. Using large nationally representative data, it was found that the challenges posed by increased public awareness of immigration issues and the worries associated with immigration indeed negatively affected the lives and outlook of Latinos. It was found that challenges and worries had independent and additive effects on the dependent variables. Further, deportation worries affected quality of life and/or situation in the U.S. for Latinos who were citizens and non-citizens.

Keywords: Immigration Debate, Immigration Challenges, Situation of Latinos, Immigration, Anti-Immigration, Immigration Worries, Quality of Life, Future Outlook, Citizenship.

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RESUMEN

La deportación de inmigrantes indocumentados en cantidades récord es una fuente de preocupación en la comunidad Latina en los Estados Unidos. Además, el aumento de la concienciación de los ciudadanos sobre las cuestiones de inmigración crea retos para los latinos. Muy pocos estudios han examinado cómo estos factores afectan las vidas y perspectivas de los latinos, concretamente su calidad de vida, su confianza en el futuro y su situación en los Estados Unidos. El análisis de la Encuesta Nacional de Latinos 2007 realizada por el Pew Hispanic Center indicó que los desafíos resultantes de una mayor conciencia pública sobre las cuestiones de inmigración y las preocupaciones asociadas de la inmigración en realidad afectó negativamente a las vidas y perspectivas de los latinos. El análisis demostró que los retos y preocupaciones tenían efectos independientes y aditivos sobre las variables dependientes. Además, la preocupación sobre la deportación afecta a la calidad de vida y a la situación de los latinos ciudadanos y no ciudadanos de los Estados Unidos.

Palabras clave: Debate sobre la Inmigración, Desafíos de la Inmigración, Situación de los Latinos, Latinos en los Estados Unidos, Inmigración, Contra-inmigración, Preocupaciones de la Inmigración, Calidad de Vida, Perspectivas de Futuro, Ciudadanía.

1. INTRODUCTION

Immigration is a major issue in the Latino community primarily because they have been impacted by the national debate centering on illegal immigration. A large number of undocumented immigrants are from Latin America - primarily Mexico (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement 2012). A climate of fear and instability in the Latino community has been cultivated because of the increased vulnerability of immigrants -especially the undocumented. This increased sense of vulnerability has been fostered by policies such as the Anti-Terrorism Policy; The Immigration Reform Act of 1996, and the rise of the nativist anti-immigrant organizations, for example, the Minuteman Project and the Minutemen Civil Defense Corps (Saenz, Murgia and Murga; Navarro). Moreover, the American public has been paying substantial attention to immigration issues post 9/11, and more recently because of substantial media coverage of controversial immigration related state legislations, such as Arizona's Senate Bill 1070 and Alabama's House Bill 56 (Jones). These developments have become a powerful catalyst for generating anti-immigrant sentiments that has created challenges for Latinos,

and have affected important aspects of life such as employment, housing, and legal rights. Further, there has also been a spate of raids to round up and deport undocumented persons in the recent years (Thornburgh). From 2002 to 2009, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement worksite raids increased eight fold (Saenz, Murgia and Murga). Increased levels of deportation may cause apprehension and anxiety among Latinos for two reasons. First, because the Latino communities are closely bonded, the effect of quick removal of substantial number of individuals would be pronouncedly felt. Second, because many Latino families have mixed immigration statuses and run the risk of being separated or broken apart because of detention or deportation (Kohli, Markowitz and Chavez; Saenz, Murgia and Murga; Capps, Fix, Ost, Reardon-Anderson and Passel; Brabeck and Xu). Thus, heightened public attention to immigration and the worries associated with possible deportation may affect the well-being of Latinos in the U.S. Very few studies have examined this and hardly any study has examined this in the context of current immigration debate and climate using recent nationally representative data. In this study we examine how the well-being of Latinos have been impacted by the immigration debate using data collected in 2007 by the PEW Hispanic Center. We examine two broad questions: 1) Do challenges created by heightened public awareness of the immigration debate affect the well-being of Latinos as reflected in these areas: quality of life, confidence in the future, and general situation relative to past year, and 2) Do deportation worries affect the well-being of Latinos as reflected in these areas: quality of life, confidence in the future, and general situation relative to past year?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Immigration-related Challenges Due to Heightened Awareness

Americans are paying substantial attention to immigration issues. During the presidential campaign of 2004, the Democrats and Republicans debated over immigration issues, including the need for a comprehensive immigration reform (Brader, Valentino and Suhay). In fact, data from the Pew Research Center indicated that Americans felt immigration to be the most important problem in the country in 2006—at levels not observed in the past 20 years (Brader, Valentino and Suhay). In 2006, there was also a surge in the attention paid by the national media to immigration issues including the need for a comprehensive immigration reform (Dunaway, Branton and Abrajano). In the same year, there were protests and demonstrations by immigrants demanding immigration reform. Following this, the public concern for immigration increased to levels typically seen in the border states. By late 2007, immigration became a major issue among Americans (Jones), and roughly 4 in 10 Americans agreed that

controlling the flow of illegal immigrants to the U.S. was extremely important. Additionally, over a majority of Americans, sixty four percent expressed illegal immigration at the borders as “extremely serious.” (Saad 2010).

As discussed above, clearly, immigration is in the forefront for a significant number of Americans. Latinos are also featured extensively in the media. Between 1995 and 2005, over 80% of immigration news in leading papers referred to specific groups, with twice the news on Latinos compared to East Asians, which was the next most mentioned ethnic group. In these times of increased awareness of immigration issues and increased media coverage of Latinos, conversations and attitudes on immigration often take a “group-centric” characteristic resulting in friction between groups (Nelson and Kinder; King). Thus, inter-group conflicts can emerge leading to the formation of stereotypes of non-English speakers, and/or non-whites. If negative stereotypes are associated with a particular immigrant group, then there will be likely opposition towards that group. For example, if Latinos are associated with crime and resistant to assimilation, then they might not be viewed as a favorable immigrant group (Brader, Valentino and Suhay 2008). Studies have found that anti-immigrant rhetoric is associated with stigmatized groups such as Latinos as opposed to so-called “good” immigrant groups such as those from Poland, Ireland, or Canada (Huntington; King).

From the preceding discussion, it can be inferred that the heightened public awareness of immigration issues, combined with negative stereotypes might create impediments for Latinos living in the U.S. Despite the fact that Latinos represent the largest racial and ethnic group in the U.S., they continue to face anti-immigrant prejudice because a large segment of the Latino population is immigrant. To this, when one factors in the emphasis of the public discourse placed on costs associated with immigration, rather than benefits (Simon and Alexander), one might expect the undesired ramifications for the Latino community in the form of various impediments to living. These impediments which could encompass a broad number of areas from finding housing to gaining employment might cause stresses, increase a sense of alienation and anxiety, and ultimately have a negative impact on their lives (Berry). The impact of the current immigration debate of Latinos in the U.S. is still being understood because of its recent and evolving nature. These are new developments and these relationships have not been examined in recent studies.

2.2. Deportation Worries

The number of deportations per year has gone up dramatically within the last decade. Between 1999 and 2009, deportations from the U.S. have increased by 115 per

cent to 393,289 individuals per year (Table 36, U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2010). In 2010 alone, 517,000 foreign nationals were apprehended with Mexicans comprising 87 percent, and in the same year 387,000 foreign nationals were deported of which 92 percent were of Latino origin (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2011). These high numbers reflect the increase in enforcement of immigration laws. Most individuals being deported are undocumented immigrants from Latin American nations who moved to the U.S. to seek better lives similar to the historic waves of immigrants that moved to the Americas from Europe (Massey). Many are forced to cut ties with their families and communities that they have been part of in their country of origin, while they become parts of new communities and develop new ties in the U.S. After making sacrifices to come to the U.S., the threat of deportation increases the vulnerability of undocumented individuals and is expected to impact their lives negatively. The effect of deportation worries on the Latino population has not been studied extensively. Some studies in the U.S. and Canada have indicated that undocumented status was associated with stress and anxiety and that fear of deportation hindered seeking assistance for employment and health purposes (Simich; Sullivan and Rehm; Hagan, Rodriguez, Capps and Kabiri). Thus, fear of deportation pushes undocumented immigrants further into seclusion. Another study found that stresses, both extrafamilial and intrafamilial, were directly related to deportation worries (Arbona et al.).

The deportation of one individual has a ripple effect. Mixed-immigration status families, comprising of members that are legal and not legal, get affected because when a family member is removed, a community is affected as it loses a member, and a fear takes hold in the community that it could happen to another undocumented person. This fear of deportation has been evident in Alabama from where undocumented immigrants have fled after strict immigration legislations were passed (Reeves; Robertson). Although this law has been passed recently and its legality is now being challenged by the U.S. Justice Department, its full impact on immigration will not be known for some time. However, this goes on to show that the fear of deportation can generate reactions to the point that individuals are willing to uproot their lives and take it to another place. Hence, these studies indicate that deportation worries affect lives of undocumented immigrants.

Undocumented immigrants have always been susceptible to deportation if apprehended; but only within the past five to seven years have a systematic increase in deportation been observed (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2010). Hence, it is imperative to understand the impact deportation will have on the Latino population in

the U.S. However, only a small number of studies have examined this within the context of the recent escalation of deportation, e.g., Arbona et al.; Cavazos-Rehg, Zayas and Spitznagel. Yet, these studies use non-representative convenient samples and so their results cannot be generalized.

2.3. Effect on Life and Outlook

Challenges to living due to increased public awareness of immigration and worries related to deportation is expected to have an effect on the well-being of Latinos. In mid 2000s, soon after the immigration policy debate began to manifest, Latinos reported feeling more discriminated against. A national survey indicated that fifty four per cent of Latinos felt that the immigration policy debate had made discrimination against them more of a problem (Suro and Escobar). Deportation is also a major concern, because record number of undocumented Latinos are being deported. However, only a few recent studies have investigated the effect that the current immigration context has had on the Latino population (Arbona et al.; Cavazos-Rehg, Zayas and Spitznagel). These studies have revealed that immigration challenges and deportation worries have a negative impact on Latinos. Arbona et al. found that immigration challenges increased stress among Latinos. Cavazos-Rehg, Zayas and Spitznagel and Takeuchi et al. indicated that fear of deportation causes negative emotions such as anger and stress among Latinos.

Although these studies reveal the impact increased public awareness and increased enforcement of immigration laws have had on the Latino population in terms of stresses and negative emotions, they have not examined the impact these factors have on the well-being of Latinos in terms of quality of life and outlook. We do not know yet whether immigration challenges affects the quality of life of Latinos? We also do not know whether the challenges dent their sense of optimism, nor do we know if these challenges have made their situation in the U.S. worse? Similarly, questions can be posed for deportation worries. Do deportation worries impact the well-being of Latinos, such as their quality of life? Further, past studies use local data or small samples, and thus the validity of their results can be questioned. For example, Arbona et al.'s data were from two urban centers in Texas, and Cavazos-Rehg et al.'s data were drawn from churches. It is important to assess these relationships using nationally representative data so that we are able to draw conclusions for the Latino population in the U.S. and not be limited to regions or localities where the data are from.

3. PRESENT STUDY

A review of the past literature revealed a lack of research that examined how the well-being of Latinos in the U.S. is affected in an environment with heightened

awareness of immigration and where immigration issues are debated passionately in the media and in political forums. In the literature review, we also discussed that the issue of immigration ranks high among public concerns (Carroll; Saad 2011). Right now, the American public is paying considerable attention to immigration issues. We have argued that with increased awareness, Latinos will face more immigration-related challenges in their lives. These challenges could be having to establish their legal status in the U.S. more frequently, for example, for employment or housing. We also indicated that, annually, undocumented migrants are being deported in record numbers (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2010). Because of this, more than ever, Latinos are feeling the threat of members of family and community being deported. With individual states are passing strict immigration laws where coming in contact with law enforcement for even minor infractions could potentially mean detention and deportation for undocumented immigrants. We predict that these challenges induced by increased public awareness of immigration and worries related to deportation would affect the Latino population. Although there are ample studies on immigration and Latinos, there is a lack of research on how the current immigration environment affects their well-being in the U.S. using nationally representative data. Specifically, this study examines how the immigration debate affects the quality of life, confidence in the future, and the situation of Latinos.

4. DATA AND METHODS

Data from the 2007 National Survey of Latinos from the Pew Hispanic Center¹ was used in this research. This nationally representative and randomly selected data were collected from telephone interviews from 2,000 adult Hispanic individuals before listwise deletion. This data set was chosen for a number of reasons. First, the data are nationally representative and randomly selected. Second, the data contained information on Latinos' perception of their lives in the U.S. in areas such as: quality of life, confidence in the future, and their situation relative to past year. Third, the data contained information on challenges Latinos face due to heightened public attention to immigration, and the extent of their worries regarding deportation matters. No other nationally representative data covered all of these important immigration related information.

4.1. Measures

The two key independent variables are perceived immigration-related challenges due to increased public attention to immigration issues, and deportation

worries for self, family, and/or friends. We refer to the former variable interchangeably as immigration-related challenges or simply challenges. Immigration-related challenges were created from three items asking irrespective of immigration status, *due to increased public attention to immigration issues*, if it was “more trouble keeping a job;” if someone “was asked for documents to prove immigration status more often than in the past;” and if someone “had more difficulty finding or keeping housing.” The valid responses were “more” and “about the same.” The responses were added and then reverse coded by subtracting from seven to yield a range from one through four, with high values reflecting an increase in the level of challenges. The Cronbach’s alpha for this variable is an acceptable 0.644. The mean was 1.6, indicating a somewhat moderate level of increase in the perceived challenges. It should be noted that a low level of *increase* in the level of challenges is not indicative of low level of challenges because the items assume a prior existence of challenges. The variable capturing worries associated with deportation was measured from a single question that asked the extent to which the respondents, irrespective of their immigration status, worried that they, a family member, or that a close friend could be deported. The responses were “not at all (four)” to “a lot (one).” This variable was reverse coded so that higher values indicated higher levels of deportation worry. The sample indicated moderately high levels of deportation worries at a mean of 2.58.

The three dependent variables, that reflect the well-being of Latinos, are self-assessed quality of life, confidence about the future, and situation of Latinos. Respondents were asked to assess if their quality of life was “excellent (one),” “good (two),” “only fair (three),” and “poor (four).” The values of one and two were combined to reflect a *good* quality of life, and three and four were combined to reflect a *not good* quality of life. Almost thirty per cent indicated their quality of life as not good (Table 1). Respondent’s confidence about the future was assessed from how they felt that “children growing up in the U.S. will have better jobs and make more money” than them. The responses were “very confident (one),” “somewhat confident (two),” “not too confident (three),” and “not at all confident (four).” The values of one and two were combined to reflect those who were *confident* about the future, and three and four were combined to reflect who were *not confident* about the future. Around twenty per cent did not feel confident about the future. Finally, the respondents were also asked to assess whether “the situation of Latinos in this country is better, worse, or about the same” compared to a year back. The responses were “better off (one),” “worse (two),” and “the same (three).” The value of two was left as is, and the values one and three were combined to reflect *worse* situation and a *not-worse* situation of Latinos relative to the past year.

This variable will be referred to as relative situation as needed. About 34.5% of the sample perceived that their relative situation to past year had become worse.

Several sociodemographic variables are also used in this study. They are citizenship, language spoken, age, sex, marital status, education, income, and employment status². The mean age of the sample was about forty years with forty seven per cent female and fifty three per cent male. Another, fifty eight percent was currently married or partnered and the rest single. Thirty six percent of the sample was bilingual, forty five per cent spoke predominantly Spanish, and another nineteen per cent spoke predominantly English. About fifty eight per cent of the sample were citizens of the US. Thirty four percent indicated having less than high school education, twenty seven per cent at high school, twenty per cent at some college, and fifteen per cent having at least college level. About fifty two per cent had full time employment, thirteen per cent part time, and thirty one per cent were not in the labor force. Income was expressed as an ordinal variable with values ranging from one through sixteen, with a lowest range of less than \$5,000 and highest range of \$150,000 to \$200,000. Information on income was missing for about twenty per cent of the sample. Because this is a substantial part of the sample, the missing income information was replaced by the sample mean. In order to ascertain that information substitution did not have any effect, all regression analyses were run with a dummy variable indicating missing income data. The effect of this variable was not significant ($p < 0.05$), and the results presented do not include this dummy variable. The mean level of income was about \$30,000.

Table 1. Summary of Dependent and Independent Variables

<i>Quality of Life</i>		<i>Sex</i>	
Not Good	29.40%	Female	47.40%
Good	70.60%	Male	52.70%
<i>Confidence</i>		<i>Marital Status</i>	
Not Confident	19.70%	Single	40.10%
Confident	80.30%	Married/Partner	59.90%
<i>Situation</i>		Education (1-4)	2.16 (1.08)
Better/Same	64.40%	<i>Employment</i>	
Worse	35.60%	Full-Time	52.40%
<i>Aspects of Immigration Crackdown</i>		Part-Time	13.40%
Impediments (1-4)	1.6 (.91)	Not in Labor Force	31.10%
Deportation Worries (1-4)	2.58 (1.26)	Income (1-3)	6.62 (3.40)
<i>Citizenship</i>		N=2,000	
Citizen	57.90%		
Non-Citizen	42.20%		
<i>Language</i>			
Primary English	19.40%		
Bilingual	35.90%		
Primary Spanish	44.80%		
<i>Age</i>	39.73 (14.92)		

5. FINDINGS

5.1. *Effects of Immigration-related Challenges on Immigration*

Our first model is a baseline model in which quality of life is predicted by immigration-related challenges (Table 2). We then add the sociodemographic controls, in our second model, to assess the unique effects of immigration induced challenges on quality of life. In the same vein, we then estimate a series of models for the remaining two dependent variables: confidence in the future, and relative situation of Latinos. Logistic regression analysis is used because the dependent variables are dichotomous.

Table 2. *Effects of Challenges on Dependent Variables*

	Quality of Life				Confidence			Situation				
	Slope	SE	Slope	SE	Slope	SE	Slope	SE	Slope	SE		
Challenges	0.444***	0.06	0.311***	0.066	0.202**	0.068	0.234**	0.075	0.432***	0.06	0.329***	0.064
<i>Citizenship (citizen)</i>												
Non-Citizen			0.545***	0.15		0.064	0.171			0.600***	0.14	
<i>Language (English)</i>												
Bilingual			-0.03	0.213		-0.307	0.204			0.910***	0.212	
Spanish			0.139	0.223		-0.243	0.23			1.144***	0.229	
Age			0.015**	0.005		0.009^	0.005			0.007	0.005	
<i>Sex (male)</i>												
Female			-0.527***	0.132		-0.313*	0.146			0.178	0.124	
<i>Marital Status (single)</i>												
Married/partnered			-0.264*	0.132		-0.287*	0.146			-0.061	0.124	
<i>Education (high school)</i>												
Less Than High School			0.347*	0.156		0.157	0.184			-0.056	0.153	
Some College			-0.387*	0.192		-0.033	0.205			-0.093	0.175	
College			-0.603*	0.247		-0.086	0.233			0.152	0.202	
<i>Labor Force (full time)</i>												
Part-Time			0.283	0.183		0.500*	0.196			0.052	0.177	
Not in Labor Force			-0.004	0.157		-0.089	0.181			0.096	0.147	
Income			-0.111***	0.023		-0.051*	0.024			0.012	0.021	
Constant	-1.528***	0.116	-1.229***	0.312	-1.746***	0.134	-2.148***	0.342	-1.256***	0.113	-2.692***	0.325

N=2,000; *** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$ ^ $p < .10$

The findings from the first model indicate that as Latinos find challenges due to enhanced public attention to immigration increase, the odds of perceiving their quality of life as not good as opposed to good increases significantly by about fifty six per cent³. This effect reduces but persists significantly after controlling for the sociodemographic variables. As challenges increases, the odds of not being confident about the future, relative to not being confident, increases significantly by about twenty two per cent. This effect remains stable after adding the sociodemographic controls. Finally, as level of challenges increases, Latinos significantly perceive that their relative situation has gotten worse, as opposed to being better or same, compared to last year by over fifty per cent.

This effect also persists after the inclusion of the control variables, although somewhat diminished. These findings are in line with our expectations.

5.2. *Effects of Deportation Worries*

Similar to immigration induced challenges, we first estimate a baseline model where quality of life was predicted by deportation worries. To this model we then add the sociodemographic variables to assess the unique effects of the independent variable. Along these lines, we estimated models where confidence in future and relative situation are predicted by deportation worries. We continued to use logistic regression because the dependent variables are dichotomous.

The results from the baseline model indicates that the likelihood of not perceiving a good quality of life was increased by thirty six per cent with the increase in deportation worries (Table 3). This effect remained significant after sociodemographic variables were added. However, the chances of not being confident about the future are not significantly related to deportation worries. Finally, as deportation worries increases, Latinos are significantly more likely to perceive their relative situation getting worse. The likelihood of perceiving their situation got worse increased by twenty two per cent as deportation worries increased. This effect persists after controlling for socioeconomic variables.

Table 3. *Effects of Deportation Worries on Dependent Variables*

	<i>Effects of Deportation Worries on Dependent Variables</i>											
	Quality of Life				Confidence				Situation			
	Slope	SE	Slope	SE	Slope	SE	Slope	SE	Slope	SE	Slope	SE
Deportation Worries	0.304***	0.041	0.138**	0.049	0.006	0.046	0.008	0.054	0.329***	0.039	0.196***	0.046
<i>Citizenship (citizen)</i>												
Non-Citizen			0.360**	0.134			0.167	0.153			0.516***	0.126
<i>Language (English)</i>												
Bilingual			0.032	0.181			-0.218	0.175			0.568**	0.17
Spanish			0.320^	0.194			-0.009	0.202			0.909***	0.188
Age			0.009*	0.004			0.010*	0.004			0.008*	0.004
<i>Sex (male)</i>												
Female			0.471***	0.116			-0.234^	0.126			0.144	0.108
<i>Marital Status (single)</i>												
Married/partnered			-0.14	0.115			-0.284*	0.126			-0.113	0.109
<i>Education (high school)</i>												
Less Than High School			0.266*	0.136			0.066	0.16			0.004	0.134
Some College			-0.492*	0.169			-0.001	0.177			-0.085	0.152
College			-0.571^	0.212			-0.065	0.199			0.252	0.173
<i>Labor Force (full time)</i>												
Part-Time			0.335*	0.165			0.401*	0.181			0.049	0.161
Not in Labor Force			0.13	0.134			0.105	0.15			0.158	0.125
Income			0.120***	0.021			0.038^	0.021			0.005	0.018
Constant	1.697***	0.125	-0.962**	0.278	1.419***	0.132	1.953***	0.306	1.462***	0.118	2.414***	0.28

N=2,000; ***p<.001 **p<.01 *p<.05

5.3. *Additive Effects of Immigration Induced Challenges and Deportation Worries*

In order to assess the unique and additive effects of each key independent variable on the dependent variables net of the other, we performed a series of difference in chi-square tests (results available upon request). We compared the -2 log likelihood statistic between models with one key independent variable and two key independent variables. A significant difference in chi-square test would not only indicate significant contribution of the additional variable, but would also indicate unique and additive contribution of the additional variable.

Our results indicate that, net of deportation worries, the immigration-related challenges exert an independent and additive effect on the quality of life ($AA_2=463.597$, $Adf=1$, $p<0.001$), confidence in the future ($AA_2=430.55$, $Adf=1$, $p<0.001$), and situation of Latinos ($AA_2=539.103$, $Adf=1$, $p<0.001$). Our results further indicate that, net of challenges, deportation worries independently and additively affects quality of life ($AA_2=7.263$, $Adf=1$, $p<0.010$), and relative situation ($AA_2=18.473$, $Adf=1$, $p<0.001$), but not confidence in the future.

5.4. *Effects for Citizens and Non-citizens*

The multivariate results indicate that citizenship significantly affected the quality of life and relative situation of Latinos. It is not unreasonable to expect that challenges and deportation worries may work differently for those who are citizens and non-citizens. In fact, Arbona et al. found that undocumented individuals reported higher levels of stress than documented counterparts. Thus, it is possible that the effect of challenges and deportation worries on the quality of life and situation of Latinos could vary for citizens and non-citizens. Statistical tests determined that the analysis could be separated for citizens and non-citizens when predicted only by deportation worries but not immigration-related challenges⁴.

For noncitizens, increase in deportation worries significantly increased the odds of perceiving their relative situation has become worse by sixteen per cent. For Latino citizens, odds of quality of life being not good and a perception that they are worse off than last year increased as deportation fears increased significantly by sixteen and twenty six per cent respectively.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Immigration, specifically illegal immigration, has become a very controversial and a highly debated issue in the U.S. Although both Democrats and Republicans admit

to the necessity of an immigration reform, no legislation has been drafted for ratification. This study examined the effects that challenges arising out of increased awareness of immigration issues among the American public had on three important aspects that reflects the well-being of Latinos: quality of life, confidence in the future, and perception of their situation in the U.S. This study also examined the effect worries associated with the possibility of getting deported had on the well-being of Latinos as well. Very few studies in the past have empirically investigated how Latinos have been affected by the challenges ensuing from the recent immigration debate. Heightened public awareness of immigration issues makes it more difficult for Latinos, both documented and undocumented, to obtain employment, apply for housing, or access medical care. Immigration raids at employment may also make employers reluctant to hire Latinos. Because of record levels of deportation, there is expected to be increased anxiety in the Latino population because many families have mixed-immigration status (Saenz, Murgia and Murga; Pumariega and Rothe).

In line with findings from other recent studies on this topic, (Arbona et al.; Cavazos-Rehg, Zayas and Spitznagel; Simich; Hagan, Rodriguez, Capps and Kabiri; Chavez), our research indicates that the immigration-related challenges Latinos face and deportation worries indeed affect their well-being in a negative manner. Yet, our study specifically examined the well-being of Latinos in the context of the contemporary immigration debate using nationally representative data, focusing on self-assessed quality of life, confidence in the future, and their perception of their situation in the U.S. unlike past studies in this area. We found that the challenges Latinos encountered due to increased public attention to immigration issues decreased their quality of life, made them less confident about the future, and led to the perception of a gradual deterioration of their situation compared to the past year. Worrying about deportation was associated with significant declines in quality of life and deterioration of their situation. Our study also indicates that challenges from increased awareness of immigration exerted independent and additive effects on all three dependent variables. Deportation worries had a similar impact on the dependent variables except for confidence in the future. This indicates the individual importance of each key independent variable. We also analyzed the data by breaking down the sample by citizenship after statistically justifying this step. Our reasoning was immigration challenges and deportation worries would work differently for Latinos who are citizens versus non-citizens. Only deportation worries had significant effects on some dependent variables. For non-citizen Latinos, higher levels of deportation worries increased the chances of feeling that their situation had become worse than

in the past year. Latinos who are citizens, felt that their quality of life suffered and that their relative situation had also worsened with increased deportation worries. At least from this it appears that deportation fears are an important consideration for Latinos who are both citizens and non-citizens.

It makes sense that, for both citizens and non-citizens, deportation worries worsened the perception of their relative situation because of unprecedented levels of deportation (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2011). However, it affects citizens to a greater extent, as indicated by the results, than non-citizens. Additionally, quality of life got worse with deportation worries only for citizens. These findings were somewhat counterintuitive in that it appears that the ramifications for citizens are worse than for non-citizens. This could be explained by the presence of mixed-immigration families where some members are documented and some are not (Kohli, Markowitz and Chavez; Saenz and Murga). Almost forty per cent of those detained through an immigration enforcement program had at least one child or a spouse who is a U.S. citizen. In such families, the undocumented immigrants' prospect of deportation could possibly affect the quality of life of every member of the family. Further, there have been cases where Latino U.S. citizens have been wrongfully detained and/or deported by immigration agencies (Kohli, Markowitz and Chavez). Thus, even being documented does not necessarily make one's situation better and one could still face the threat of apprehension and deportation.

Thus, immigration issues and the current environment with respect to immigration in the U.S. generally have had a negative effect on Latinos. Unfortunately, this study indicated that challenges stemming from the immigration debate and deportation worries affect quality of life, confidence in the future, and situation of the Latino population in a detrimental way. It is very important to consider these findings because we are dealing with a large, young, and growing segment of a population in our country. This research indicates that the threat of deportation and a vitriolic debate aimed at a specific population impact lives. Although this study for the first time demonstrates how Latinos' well-being is being affected by immigration related issues using national data, it is not without shortcomings. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the data, causal relationships could not be drawn. Deportation worries were measured from a single item. Due to the lack of health variables, the effect of immigration related challenges on one's health could not be assessed. Future studies could look at how the immigration debate and the precarious immigration status of undocumented Latinos affect their health, specifically mental health.

7. IMPLICATIONS

Several implications can be drawn from the presented data. The results of our study using a large representative sample indicate that the well-being of Latinos in the US are affected because of the challenges they encounter due to increased public awareness of immigration issues. Quality of life, confidence in the future, and relative situation of Latinos have all been negatively affected because of immigration-related impediments. This is an important finding and the scale of this issue needs to be realized and understood because Latinos form the largest minority group in the U.S. with population over fifty million. When public awareness of immigration creates significant challenges for such a large community, a closer examination of the ramifications is warranted. If Latinos perceive that they are scrutinized when looking for employment or housing, it creates unnecessary impediments in their lives could potentially increase stress and anxiety. If undocumented Latinos do not seek medical care for the fear of having to show immigration papers, that could put their health at risk.

As per our results, the current immigration environment in the U.S. is having a negative impact on the well-being of Latinos. It might take educating the public not to stereotype or act as gatekeepers. Immigration enforcement should be left to the federal authorities and actions by concerned citizens should be highly discouraged because they do not have the skills to enforce federal immigration laws and that they mostly resort to racial/ethnic stereotypes when making judgments, which ultimately harm those affected by mistreatment.

Our study indicates that deportation worries impacts well-being. Undocumented Latino immigrants are now being deported in record numbers and the results of this analysis indicate that for Latinos deportation worries had negative effects on the three aspects of life considered in this study. Further, our study revealed that for non-citizens deportation worries deteriorated their general situation within a year, but for citizens deportation worries also degraded their quality of life. Because many Latino families have mixed immigration status, meaning some family members might be citizens and some might not be, the scenario becomes more complicated with the threat of deportation of family members as it might mean disruption of the family. With an estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. who are potentially deportable, these findings have important implications because not only do these individuals find themselves in a vulnerable position, so do their families and their communities. There is a growing consensus among Americans about the need for an immigration overhaul; however, till date no comprehensive proposals have gained any political traction (Levasseur, Sawyer and Kopacz).

In fact, to deal with immigration issues, different states are crafting their own laws because the situation has changed since the last immigration laws were enacted in 1994/95 (Gomberg-Munoz and Nussbaum-Barberena). For example, Arizona, in 2010, proposed SB1070 as a way to deal with its immigration issues in the absence of a federal reform. States like Texas, Alabama, and Georgia have pondered about proposing state immigration laws similar to that of Arizona. In fact, in September of 2011 Alabama approved strict immigration rules that not only gave law enforcement power to verify immigration status of individuals they came in contact, but it also had a provision of verifying immigration status of children during school enrollment (Dugan; Johnson). Further, Alabama would deny individuals driver's and business licenses if legal immigration status was not established. As with Arizona, Alabama's immigration legislation has been challenged and parts of it have been blocked (Caesar; Reeves). Thus, there is a movement to shift immigration legislations from the federal to the state and local levels. As controversial as these proposals are, immigration issues are becoming a part of the state and local agenda, and consequently more attention is paid to it by the public. Because the data were collected circa 2007 before any of these state laws were passed, our analyses possibly underestimates the negative effect of public awareness and deportation worries.

On the other hand, some cities have taken initiatives to reduce immigration-related challenges by welcoming immigrants. For example, the city of Dayton, OH just passed a plan called "Welcome Dayton," which encourages immigrants, mostly Latino, to live and work in Dayton (Sewell 2011). This is an example of an urban area that has recognized the role that Latino immigrants have played in its revitalization. There is a growing need to educate the public about the rights and contributions of Latinos, together with the acknowledgment of the impact that Latinos have had and will continue to have in shaping the American society. Forward-thinking steps will have a beneficial effect on the lives of Latinos in the U.S. and on the American society as a whole.

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NOTES

¹ The Pew Global Attitudes Project bears no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations of the data presented here. The data is provided “as is” without any warranty of any kind, either express or implied, arising by law or otherwise, including but not limited to warranties of completeness, non-infringement, accuracy, merchantability, or fitness for a particular purpose. The user assumes all risk associated with use of the data and agrees that in no event shall the center be liable to you or any third party for any indirect, special, incidental, punitive or consequential damages including, but not limited to, damages for the inability to use equipment or access data, loss of business, loss of revenue or profits, business interruptions, loss of information or data, or other financial loss, arising out of the use of, or inability to use, the data based on any theory of liability including, but not limited to, breach of contract, breach of warranty, tort (including negligence), or otherwise, even if user has been advised of the possibility of such damages.

² We included a variable in the regression models indicating Mexican heritage, because of their large representation in the Latino population. However, this variable was not significant in any model and we decided to leave it out of the analysis.

³ The percentages are computed from: $100 * [\exp(\text{slope}) - 1]$ (DeMaris 1992).

⁴ All independent variables, i.e, key independent variables and sociodemographic controls, were interacted with the non-citizen/citizen variable (results available upon request). A series of difference in chi-square tests were performed taking one dependent variable, one key independent variable, and the set of controls at a time. The purpose was to evaluate whether the addition of the interaction terms added significantly to the explanation of the dependent variable. For example, when quality of life was predicted by deportation worries, the difference in the -2 log likelihoods equaled 156.628 with a difference of twelve in the degrees of freedom, indicating an addition to the fit of the model at $p < 0.001$.