

**Compañero o Adversario:  
Texas State Students' Attitudes toward Immigration**

by

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## **Abstract**

*Purpose:* The purpose of this research study is to explore the most prominent factors impacting students' attitudes toward immigration. Previous research has linked economic status, perception of the economy, race, age, and political ideology as factors that influence immigration attitudes.

*Methodology:* To test the strength of the relationships existent between each of the independent variables (economic status, perception of the economy, race, age, and political ideology) and the dependent variable of immigration attitudes, an online questionnaire with close-ended questions was sent to a sample of students across various majors at Texas State University.

*Results:* The bivariate analysis, descriptive statistics and chi square tests demonstrated that that most students have slightly more liberal attitudes. It demonstrated that there is an association between the independent variables and attitudes toward immigration.

## **About the Author**

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# Chapter 1

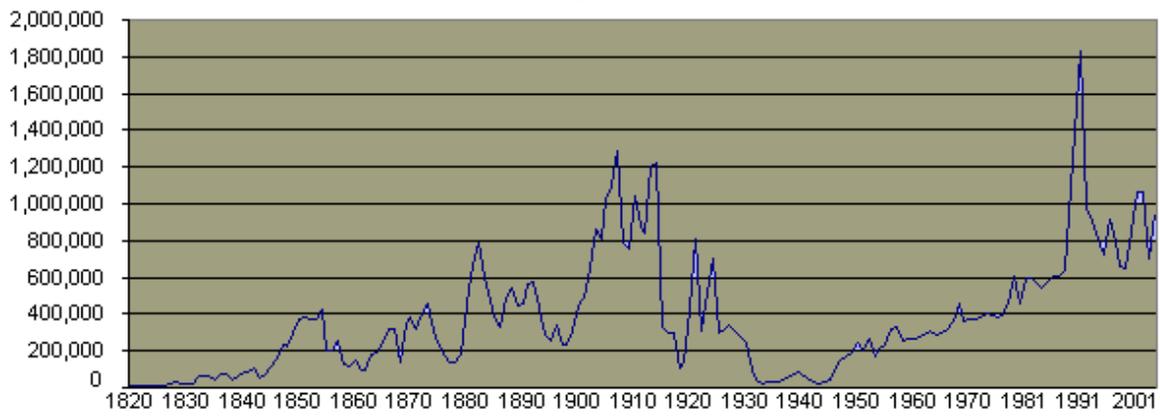
## Introduction

Few governmental policies have such a profound effect upon a nation as immigration. An increase in immigrant population can shape the economics of a region and the electorate of a city, a state, and a nation. As a result, immigration's effect on host countries is one of the most exhaustively debated topics for those living in developed Western countries. There are "cottage industries" on both sides of the issue to analyze the effects immigrants have on the host countries that receive them. Immigrants and their descendants have a "significant impact on the cultural, political, and economic situation in their new country" (Camarota 1999, 1). New immigration can cause a change in labor force, a change in social services, a change in goods and services, a change in the electorate and a change in culture. Countries attempt to limit the consequences of new immigration through policies that try to restrict immigration to those immigrants who are most economically productive (Passel et al. 2011). The United States is a country of immigrants and with every new immigrant group, the United States morphs; this can sometimes make natives weary of the new changes. Exploring natives' attitudes toward is crucial in the study of immigration.

Throughout its history, the United States has been a destination for immigrants from around the world. Over the last 30 years, socio-economic conditions in the developing world and the United States' immigration policy have compelled 20 million people to leave their homelands and legally immigrate to the United States (Camarota 1999). Figure 1.1 illustrates immigration patterns in the United States in the last 30 years (U.S Citizenship and Immigration Services). Immigration spikes in the past were from

Europe and recent immigration spikes are due to immigration from Latin America and Asia (Camarota 2007). The nation's Hispanic and Asian populations have grown sharply over the past decade, especially in many Southeastern states (Passel et al. 2011). In 2010, the United States Census counted 50.5 million Hispanics in the United States, making up 16.3 percent of the total population.

**Figure 1.1**  
**Total U.S. Immigration 1820-2004**



Source: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

The new wave Hispanic immigration and the increase in Asian immigration are projected to significantly change the ethnic composition of America. By 2050, non-Hispanic Whites are estimated will slip to 47 percent of the total US population (Passel et al. 2011). Given the importance of immigration and the pace of demographic change, it is not surprising that immigration elicits strong emotional reactions within the United States. Public opinion toward immigration often influences immigration legislation and the enforcement of existing laws (Espenshade 1995). Thus, exploring Americans' attitudes toward immigration is essential to understanding future immigration policies.

## **Immigration Attitudes in America: A Brief History**

The United States is a nation of immigrants. However, since the founding of the colonies there have been persistent attempts by former immigrants to keep out newcomers. Former immigrants have been unwelcoming to new immigrants; the New England Puritans and pilgrims had “keep out” sentiments toward Quakers, Episcopalians, and Catholics (Simon 1985). The English exhibited anti-immigrant sentiments toward the Irish and Germans, and then Germans and Irish felt the same way about Italians, Jews, and Russians (Simon 1985). Economic tensions have been at the core of restrictionist views due to demand for immigrant labor.

Historically, the United States created restrictions on immigrants from certain countries of origin, particularly Asian countries because of public pressure and economic tension. In the late 1840s there was an extensive demand for low-wage labor that was filled initially by Chinese male immigrants, but Irish labor unions managed to convince Congress that Chinese immigrants were taking jobs away from native-born Whites and they passed “The Chinese Exclusion Act” in 1882 (Espenshade and Hempstead 1996). Subsequently, there was an anti-Japanese sentiment in the late 1800s that led to the 1907 “Gentlemen’s Agreement” with Japan, which effectively terminated their immigrant flow for the next fifty years (Bonacich 1972). Asian immigrants were excluded in varying degrees over much of American history, but today they comprise a significant portion of total United States immigrant population, second only to Latin Americans.

Public support for Hispanic immigration has at times been contradictory and controversial. In the 1950s public opinion toward Hispanic immigrants was negative and the United States government devised “Operation Wetback” in 1954 to intensify border

enforcement (Espenshade 1995 and Berg 2009). It was common practice for local police to disperse through Mexican American neighborhoods or ‘barrios’, flock illegal immigrants and deport them along with their American-born children (Berg 2009). After public outrage the operation was ceased. Public opposition toward immigration increased in the 1970s and the 1980s. In the late 1980s, registered voters in Texas and California believed that the United States was admitting too many legal immigrants and that a cap should be set for immigrants (Tarrance and Associates 1989).

These restrictionist attitudes led to the Immigrant Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1986, which introduced sanctions and fines on employers who hired illegal immigrants. However, this policy also granted amnesty to 3 million undocumented residents (Espenshade and Hempstead 1996). The 1996 Illegal Immigration and Immigrant Responsibility Act, and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act are considered modern America’s most restrictive laws (Berg 2009). These acts tightened restrictions on green cards, introduced minimum income requirements for those sponsoring immigrants, strengthened border controls, and instituted limits on public benefits to non-citizens (Berg 2009). These policies were brought on by increased pressure from Border States to minimize immigration and immigrants’ access to social resources (Berg 2009). All of these policies mentioned above were created as a result of increase public demand for immigration restriction (Berg 2009).

### **Contemporary Immigration Attitudes**

Anti-immigration sentiment typically increases when there is an increase in immigration. Today the foreign-born population of the United States is currently at its

highest level since before World War II (Camarota 2007). Roughly 20 percent of all immigrants entered the United States in just the past five years (Camarota 2007).

Exploring immigration attitudes will provide insight as to how current natives are dealing with increased immigration. Most national polls find that views toward immigration are running heavily toward opposition, with most residents preferring to reduce the number of immigrants or keeping it constant (Berg 2009). A recent study on immigration opinions found that “Americans hold a neutral position toward immigrants with a slight tilt toward negative views” (Klinkner 2011, 2). This increase in opposition toward immigration demonstrates that friction toward immigration increases with an increase in immigrant population.

As presented by the immigration history section in this chapter, the current wave of restrictionist views has “deep roots in U.S. history” (Espenshade and Hempstead 1996, 537). A quote from 1920 illustrates how immigrant populations are welcome by natives, “If the United States is the melting pot, something is wrong with the heating system, for an inconveniently large portion of the new immigration floats around in unsightly indigestible lumps” (Kennedy Roberts 1920, quoted in Simon 1985,83; and in Espenshade and Hempstead 1996, 537). Although Americans tend to have primarily restrictionist views on immigration, how restrictionist they are varies depending on the immigration topic (Klinkner 2011). For example, when the focus is the topic of illegal immigration, most Americans are in support of deportation instead of integration of illegal immigrants (Klinkner 2011). On the other hand, when the focus is on the topic of voting rights, “a large majority of Americans (60 percent) support allowing legal immigrants to vote in local elections” (Klinkner 2011, 5).

Overall, some past researchers' usage of random digit dialing and mail surveys to gather respondents has caused older people to be overrepresented in their findings (Chandler and Tsai 2001). There is limited research exploring only young people's attitudes toward immigration, consequently making it difficult to assess what college students' attitudes will be and what factors influence those attitudes. While the history of immigration attitudes and the contemporary history are informative, they may not be indicative of the future of student's attitudes because they have not been the primary subject of study.

The current generation has experience a history of immigration that is unique in the context of globalization making them more welcoming to diversity (Klinkner 2011). Currently, young people are more likely to believe that the government continually spends too many resources on trying to stop illegal immigration and that we should focus more on assimilation (Klinkner 2011; Becchetti et al. 2009). These distinctions are important and identifying what factors affect these distinctions is a part of the focus of exploration. By focusing the research on college students, different results may be gathered because previous research has focused on the national population. Additionally, past findings indicated that persons who attain higher levels of education are more likely to express immigrant-friendly attitudes therefore the student population is inherently unique (Espenshade 1995; and Burns and Gimpel 2000).

### **Research Purpose**

Today's students are the next generation's leaders who will guide many local communities and future Texas State voters. The public's opinion on immigration issues

has influenced governmental decisions that limit immigrants' access to public resources and has affected enforcement of regulations on illegal immigration (Espenshade and Hempstead 1996). Exploring Texas State students' attitudes on immigration can lead to a better understanding about public opinion on immigration in Texas. The research purpose of this study is to explore the impact that social factors have on Texas State students' attitudes toward immigration by using working hypotheses.

### **Chapter Summaries**

To achieve the research purpose, this study is divided into five chapters. The following chapter, Chapter 2, evaluates the scholarly literature that identifies and explains the factors influencing individuals' immigration attitudes. The Literature Review helps to build the conceptual framework that guides this study. Five working hypothesis are developed in this chapter. Chapter 3 introduces the methodology used to test the working hypotheses and includes a discussion of data collection. It also defines the term "immigrant" as it connects to the dependent variable and describes the independent variables and statistics used. Chapter 4 exhibits the results of the statistical tests and presents an analysis of data. Chapter 5 offers conclusions with a discussion of the findings and suggestions for further research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Chapter Purpose**

The purpose of this literature review is to examine attitudes toward immigration and examine the factors that influence those attitudes. This chapter reviews the scholarly literature to present current findings relevant to the research purpose. Economic status, perception of national economy, racial background, age group, and political ideology are the five factors selected for exploration because these are the most commonly studied factors that have been shown to influence individuals' attitudes toward immigration. These five factors are explained and the conceptual framework is presented. The conceptual framework proposes a series of working hypotheses derived from the literature review.

#### **Conceptual Framework**

Student attitudes are not the primary focus of many studies; therefore this conceptual framework is based upon other populations, usually local, state, or national random samples. The literature on public opinion toward immigration points to several explanations based upon individual-level characteristics, such as economic status, age, gender, race, education, partisanship, and ideology (Burns and Gimpel 2000, Hood and Morris 1998, and Sanchez 2006). Additionally, the literature often demonstrates that attitudes toward immigration are related to labor-market concerns and expectations about

the economic impact of new immigrants (Burns and Gimpel 2000). Security, ethnic and racial identity, and cultural considerations are also important factors (Mayda 2004).

Immigration attitudes depend upon numerous considerations and it is necessary to narrow these factors down for the purpose of the study. Several studies have shown that more educated respondents tend to exhibit higher levels of ethnic and racial tolerance and stronger preferences for cultural diversity meaning that the process of education may have a liberalizing effect on recipients (Chandler and Tsai 2001; Citrin et al. 1997; Dustmann and Preston 2007; Hood and Morris 1998; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007). Educated individuals have access to more reliable information about the advantages and disadvantages of immigration and are more economically knowledgeable, which can lead them to favor immigration more than their less educated counterparts (Burns and Gimpel 2000; Dustmann and Preston 2007; Citrin et al. 1997; Becchetti et al. 2009). Additionally, educated individuals may be less likely to experience economic competition from immigrants (Burns and Gimpel 2000; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996). A higher level of educational attainment predicts greater sympathy toward immigrants. Since the population being studied is college students, education will not be a factor included in the analysis due to the fact that they are in the process of acquiring their college or graduate degrees.

One of the aims of this study is to note the differences in attitudes among college students because it has been pointed out in past research that higher education correlates with positive attitudes toward immigration and immigrants. Thus, the factors selected for this study include a student's economic status, a student's perception of the national economy, a student's racial background, a student's age group, and a student's political ideology. These factors were selected from the literature because they were consistently

mentioned as shaping people's attitudes on immigration. All explorative research must be tested by working hypotheses (Shields 1998). Additionally, a series of sub hypotheses within the broad category was develop to help "connect to the data or evidence" (Shields and Tajalli 2006, 320).

The conceptual framework provides a connection between the factors supported by the literature and the working hypotheses. The working hypotheses for this study are summarized in the Conceptual Framework Table; Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1: Conceptual Framework**

<b><u>Working Hypothesis</u></b>	<b><u>Supporting Literature</u></b>
<b>WH1:</b> Students' economic status influences their attitudes toward immigration.	Burns and Gimpel 2000; Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Mayda 2004; and Berg 2010; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996
<b>WH1a:</b> Students within the lower household income distribution are more likely to have anti-immigration attitudes.	Burns and Gimpel 2000; Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Mayda 2004; Dustmann and Preston 2007; Berg 2010 Espenshade Hempstead 1996
WH2: Students' perception of the national economy influences their attitudes toward immigration.	Citrin et al.1997; Burns and Gimpel 2000; Dustmann and Preston 2007; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010; Mayda 2004; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996; Berry and Tischler 1978; Neal and Bohon 2003
<b>WH2a:</b> Students who are less optimistic about the current and future economic state of the U.S are more likely to have negative attitudes toward immigration.	Citrin et al.1997; Burns and Gimpel 2000; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996; Dustmann and Preston 2007, Neal and Bohon 2003;
<b>WH3:</b> A student's racial background influences their attitudes toward immigration.	Bonacich 1972; Ilias et al. 2009; Hood and Morris 1998; Berg 2009; Mayda 2004; Diamond 1998; Chandler and Tsai 2001; Pantoja 2006
<b>WH3a:</b> Latino students are more likely to support liberal immigration policies.	Citrin et al. 1997; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996; Pantoja 2006; Ilias et. al 2009; De la Garza 1998
<b>WH3b:</b> Black students are more likely to support liberal immigration policies.	Diamond 1998; Chandler and Tsai 2001; Pantoja 2006
<b>WH3c:</b> White students are more likely to support restrictive immigration policies.	Berg 2009; Chandler and Tsai 2001; Mayda 2004; Hood and Morris 1998; McLaren 2003
WH4: Students' age group influences their attitudes toward immigration.	Burns and Gimbel, 2000; 9et al. 2008, Dustmann and Preston 2007; Berg 2009; Klinkner 2011; Smith 1985.
<b>WH4a:</b> Older students are more likely to have restrictive attitudes on immigration.	Becchetti et al. 2009, Dustmann and Preston 2007; Berg 2009; Klinkner 2011
<b>WH5:</b> Students' political ideology influences their attitudes toward immigration.	Chandler and Tsai 2001; Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Garcia 2006; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996; Pantoja 2006; Knoll 2009
<b>WH5a:</b> The more conservative a student is, the more likely he or she is to have restrictive attitudes toward immigration.	Garcia 2006; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996; Pantoja 2006; Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Garcia 2006; Knoll 2009

## **Economic Status**

One of the most common theories of immigration politics is that people's views are shaped by their personal economic status (Burns and Gimpel 2000; Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Mayda 2004; and Berg 2010; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996). This theory is based on the labor market competition model, which predicts that natives will be most opposed to immigrants who have skill levels similar to their own because they will be in competition for jobs (Burns and Gimpel 2000; Mayda 2004; and Berg 2010; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996). People with more economic security are far less likely to perceive labor market competitions (Scheve and Slaughter 2001). Therefore, an individual's self-financial evaluations are thought to influence one's opinions of immigration and immigration control (Burns and Gimpel 2000, and Hood and Morris 1997). Individuals at a higher economic status may have a positive self-financial evaluation and feel more economically secure.

Higher income, highly skilled respondents are at the top of the labor market while less skilled respondents are at the bottom with immigrants. These job holders at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder are assumed to be most vulnerable to labor market competition, because low-skill and low-income native workers have similar occupational skills to those of immigrants (Simon 1987; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996; Burns and Gimpel 2000; and Berg 2010). Immigrants are unlikely to have much impact on the labor market position of people with higher economic status therefore; it is assumed that they are to be more economically secure (Mayda 2004; Burns and Gimpel 2000; and Berg 2010). These higher income respondents may harbor warmer attitudes toward immigrants. On the other hand, people of a lower economic status may perceive competition in the labor

market (Burns and Gimpel 2000; Espenshade Hempstead 1996). Among economic considerations, people in a lower economic status may anticipate the effect of immigration on wages and develop restrictive attitudes toward immigration (Scheve and Slaughter 2001). Therefore, people in a lower economic status may be more likely to support more restrictive policies toward immigration because they are less economically secure (Mayda 2004; Dustmann and Preston 2007; Berg 2010; Espenshade Hempstead 1996).

The prominent labor market competition model theory guides these views. Although widely accepted, the labor market competition model's applicability with regard to immigration has been put into question by a recent study that suggests that a respondent's economic status has minimal bearing on their feelings about immigration (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2010). It was found in the study that both highly skilled, high income respondents and low-skilled, low income respondents strongly prefer highly skilled immigrants over low-skilled immigrants (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2010). Additionally, one applied research study found the opposite when studying opinions of agricultural growers; most people here feel that immigrants do not depress wages of Americans and that immigrants take jobs Americans do not want (Shepherd 2007). The imaginative cartoon below pokes fun at the sentiment that immigrants take jobs that no American wants, Figure 2.1. Although both of these studies bring great insight into immigration attitudes by natives, the drawbacks are that they either divided immigrants' skill groups or were centered on agricultural groups (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2010, and Shepherd 2007).



Figure 2.1. Immigration Cartoon

<http://www.breakingtheglassceilings.com/2010/05/children-of-illegal-immigrants-should.html>

Therefore, based upon the literature discussion, the labor market competition theory, which predicts that persons at the bottom end of the income distribution are more likely to oppose immigration, still holds true thus, is the basis for one the hypotheses. An individual's economic status is one of the major determinants for their attitudes about immigration. Household income and employment status are indicators of an individual's economic status (Scheve and Slaughter 2001). For the purpose of this study, a respondent's household income will be the basic indicator of a student's economic status.

**WH1a: Students within the lower household income distribution are more likely to have anti-immigration attitudes**

## **Perception of the Economy**

One premise about immigration politics is that people's attitudes are influenced by the health of the economy (Citrin et al. 1997; Burns and Gimpel 2000; Dustmann and Preston 2007; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010; Mayda 2004; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996). This premise was brought into light by a 1978 study that found that the intensity of feelings toward immigrants is closely linked to the conditions of the economy (Berry and Tischler 1978). In times of economic depression Americans develop restrictionist feelings (Mayda 2004 and Espenshade and Hempstead 1996). Therefore, a person's perception of the economy influences their attitudes toward immigration.

The rise in restrictionism in the United States is assumed to be caused by concerns with the condition of the macro economy (Espenshade and Hempstead 1996). One study found that there is a very strong, significant relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and pessimism about the current state of the national economy (Citrin et al. 1997). Therefore, when natives perceive the nation is facing economic downturn they develop more restrictive views on immigration (Citrin et al. 1997; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996; Dustmann and Preston 2007, Neal and Bohon 2003). Alternatively, when the prospects for continued economic growth are bright, their attitudes toward immigration will be more positive (Citrin et al. 1997; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996; Dustmann and Preston 2007; Mayda 2004). Different perspectives suggest that the perception of the economy influences people's attitudes on immigration whether they are of a lower or higher economic status (Espenshade and Hempstead 1996; Dustmann and Preston 2007; Mayda 2004).

Lower income individuals are particularly likely to develop negative attitudes toward undocumented immigrants during a period of economic stagnation or recession due to fear of losing employment opportunities (Berg 2010; Neal and Bohon 2003). Negative perception of the national economy increases the anti-immigrant sentiment of persons in a lower economic status because they have concerns about access, to or overcrowding of, public services (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010). On the other hand, people in the high economic status may fear that immigrants place a higher tax burden during times of economic stagnation because they perceive that there would be a higher utilization of public assistance programs (Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Dustmann and Preston 2007; Mayda 2004). A national study using NES survey data found that wealthier individuals are less likely to support immigration in states that are highly exposed to fiscal costs as a result of immigration (Scheve and Slaughter 2001). Additionally, a different study found that wealthier natives are opposed to low-skilled immigrants because they anticipate a heavier tax burden associated with the provision of public services (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010). Nevertheless, this study specifically divides respondents by income, whereas the focus of the hypothesis being proposed is to explore whether attitudes toward immigration from respondents are influenced by their perception of the economy regardless of income.

The American public has very little tolerance for giving handouts; therefore, if they view welfare usage on the rise because of the conditions of the economy they will develop more restrictionist views toward immigrants (Burns and Gimbel 2000). The bottom line is that when higher public assistance dependency occurs, the government will meet these costs by cutting other public expenditures, or by raising taxes. In principle, the cost from public assistance programs can fall on the rich or poor, but if the increase is in

the most progressive aspects of the tax system, then it will be those of high incomes who will carry most of the tax burden (Dustmann and Preston 2007, Mayda 2004). Therefore, if a person perceives that the economy is bad and usage of public assistance programs is on the rise then they will develop more restrictive attitudes toward immigration out of fear of higher tax burden.

Therefore, whether a student belongs to a lower economic status or a higher economic status, their perception of the economy highly influences his or her preferences regarding immigration issues and policies concerning the immigrant population. Essentially, if a student perceives that the nation is facing economic downturn then the student will favor more restrictive economic policies (Scheve and Slaughter 2001; and Mayda 2004). For the purpose of my research a respondent's perception of the nation's economic system will serve as the indicator.

Based on the literature, I expect that respondents who have the most optimistic assessments of the current and future state of the U.S. economy will be the most receptive to immigration and respondents who have the most negative assessments of the current and future state of the U.S. economy will be least receptive to immigration.

**WH2a: Students who are less optimistic about the current and future economic state of the U.S are more likely to have negative attitudes toward immigration.**

### **Racial Background**

Race and ethnicity are important variables in the explanation of public opinion toward immigration because the new wave of immigrants from Latin American countries

affects the racial composition of the United States (Camarota, 2007). Additionally, race still remains a crucial aspect of American society with policy implications throughout our governmental systems, despite over three decades of a concerted effort to rectify past racial injustices (Berg 2010). Race influences the attitudes about immigration and immigrants and often news coverage and politics plays on these fears to attract attention. This is illustrated by slanted news coverage which often disproportionately links Hispanic immigrants' stories to negative and sensational topics to draw more audiences (Branton and Dunaway 2009). From 1995 to 2005, twice as many stories spotlighted Hispanic immigrants than immigrants from all other regions combined (Brader et al. 2008). Therefore, in order to fully understand the racial issue towards immigrants, it is important to explore the views that different racial groups, as well as Latinos, have toward immigration.

There are three different theories that have been consistently mentioned in the literature that are thought to shape race relations: Intergroup Dynamics Theory, Contact Theory, and Inter-minority Conflict Theory (Bonacich 1972; Ilias et al. 2009; Hood and Morris 1998; Berg 2009; Mayda 2004). Intergroup Dynamics Theory, also called Ethnic Antagonism, basically explains that group identities have an impact on a person's relationship; individuals who share characteristics develop an aversion to individuals who do not share those same characteristics or identity (immigrants from other races) (Bonacich 1972; Berg 2009; Hood and Morris 1998). Contact Theory suggest that the more opportunity a person has to interact with a foreign individual then the more likely they are to develop warmer feelings toward immigrants (Ilias et. al 2009; Mayda 2004; De la Garza 1998). Inter-minority Conflict Theory, also called Displacement Theory, predicts that

other minorities will show decreased support for new immigration because of perceived competition over resources with new immigrants (Ilias et. al 2009; Diamond 1998).

Race plays a role in anti-immigrant sentiments; different studies found that blacks and Asians have more restrictionist views toward immigrants because they associate rising costs and displacement of jobs with immigration (Diamond 1998; Ilias et. al 2009). Another study found Whites and Blacks to have the same level of high anti-immigration sentiments (Chandler and Tsai 2001). Despite the belief that immigrants are particularly threatening to African Americans' socio-economic well-being, and the fact that a substantial number of Blacks favor restricting immigration, it was found that the African-American community as a whole, however, should not be characterized as restrictionist, especially in comparison with Whites, because most studies have low numbers of Black respondents and these sentiments may not be widely shared by Blacks (Diamond 1998; Chandler and Tsai 2001; Pantoja 2006).

On the other hand, contact theory suggests that U. S. Blacks, Latinos, and Asians have more opportunities to interact with foreign-born individuals, and consequently, are more likely than Whites to hold favorable attitudes toward immigration (Ilias et. al 2009). This is consistent with the cultural affinity hypotheses, which suggest that groups with cultural and ethnic ties to fellow immigrants will support policies favorable to them (Espenshade and Hempstead 1996). One study found when dividing groups by specific race, Hispanics and Asians have lower anti-immigration sentiments than any other racial group (Chandler and Tsai 2001).

Overall, comparative ethnic/racial studies suggest that Latinos generally tend to hold more pro-immigrant attitudes than non-Latinos (Citrin et al. 1997; Espenshade and

Hempstead 1996; Pantoja 2006; Ilias et. al 2009). This is more evident in the Mexican American population who tend to largely favor more liberal immigration policies than White or Black Americans (Sanchez 2006; Berg 2010; Espenshade 1995)

Some studies suggest that White public opinion on immigration has prominent racial and ethnic components (Hood and Morris 1998; Mayda 2004). It is speculated that intolerance on the basis of ethnicity may be the driving force behind Whites' immigration preferences (Mayda 2004). Ethnic Antagonism or nativism from Whites, either explicit or implicit creates concerns that revolve around identity, language, loyalty, and patriotism (Berg 2009; Bonacich 1972; Higham 1955). These types of concerns may just be a consequence of the fear that Whites have against new immigrants not assimilating to American culture (Bonacich 1972; Hood and Morris 1998; De la Garza 1998). Whatever the reason, Whites in the United States are more likely to express negative attitudes toward immigration (Berg 2009; Chandler and Tsai 2001; Mayda 2004; Hood and Morris 1998; McLaren 2003).

We theorize that race and ethnicity will play a great role in shaping attitudes toward immigration. Therefore, for the purpose of this research, a respondent's race will be the basic indicator of a student's ethnic background.

**WH3a: Latino respondents will be more likely to support liberal immigration policies**

**WH3b: Black students are more likely to support liberal immigration policies**

**WH3c: White students are more likely to support restrictive immigration policies.**

## **Age Group**

A person's age is likely to affect his or her personal attitudes because age is a direct measure of life experience and it marks the position of the individual in his or her economic cycle (Dustmann and Preston 2007). Additionally, it is theorized that racial stereotypes are the product of pre-adult socialization, thus the historic era in which respondents come of age is likely to have a strong impact on their attitudes on a multitude of subjects, meaning that there is a significant generational differences on a variety of political and policy attitudes (Berg 2009; Burns and Gimpel 2000). Young Americans who came of age in the post-civil rights era would have more favorable feelings toward the rights of other racial groups compared to those who grew up in earlier times (Smith 1985; Klinkner 2011). These generational changes suggest a new divide in American politics in which "on one side is an older generation of Americans, largely Anglo and White, increasingly concerned about America's cultural and demographic changes. On the other side, the "younger generation is more comfortable with this new and more diverse America" (Klinkner 2011, 1).

Another theory behind age differences is that a person simply becomes more and more conservative as he or she ages (Berg 2009). Overall, the literature demonstrates that older individuals often express restrictionist attitudes toward undocumented immigration (Berg 2009; Espenshade and Calhoun 1996; Klinkner 2011). Almost 70 percent of older respondents in a recent study feel that the country should do more to enforce laws against illegal immigration, while almost 50 percent of young people feel the country should focus more on integrating illegal immigrants into American society (Klinkner 2011).

One international study found that college age students hold more positive attitudes toward immigration than retired people (Becchetti et al. 2009). Overall, while their

opinions vary, young Americans display more tolerance for America's changing racial and ethnic character than do older generations of Americans. However, it was found in one recent study that most Americans, even those under 30, support the new Arizona anti-illegal immigration law that includes a provision that requires people to provide legal documentation of their status to police officers (Klinkner 2011). We seek to explore if there are differences in opinion in the college student population when controlling for age.

Nonetheless, most of the literature expresses a correlation between age and attitudes toward immigration (Becchetti et al. 2009, Dustmann and Preston 2007; Berg 2009; Klinkner 2011).

**WH4a: Older students are more likely to have restrictive attitudes on immigration.**

**Political Ideology**

Political ideology is another factor likely to influence attitudes toward immigration (Chandler and Tsai 2001; Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Garcia 2006; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996; Pantoja 2006; Knoll 2009). The terms "liberal" and "conservative" act as notions that define favorable or unfavorable judgments about public policy alternatives (Garcia 2006). If ideology is an expression of peoples' feelings and not a reflection of an elaborate political knowledge structure, then Americans would identify themselves as liberals or conservatives even more than identifying themselves with a specific political party (Garcia 2006). One study establishes that political ideology may have the greatest impact on immigration attitudes than any other factor (Chandler and Tsai 2001).

Numerous studies suggest that people with a more socially and politically conservative ideology will prefer lower levels of immigration than participants with a more global outlook (Mayda 2004; Chandler and Tsai 2001; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996; Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Pantoja 2006). It was found that conservative political ideology negatively associated with a pro-immigrant response (Pantoja 2006; Mayda 2004). Immigration topics are pushed into the public's eyes by sensational media coverage or by some political agenda (Branton and Dunaway 2009). One noted example is the national ads against President Clinton in 1996 where he was accused of lavishing welfare, food stamps, and social services on illegal immigrants (quoted in Burns and Gimbel 2000). Various political appeals such as this one have the effect of raising public awareness of the issues at stake and sparking ideological responses.

Consequently, ideology's impact on attitudes toward an issue such as immigration will come from either negative or positive feelings on immigration (Garcia 2006). For example, if someone identifies themselves as a political conservative then it is not surprising that they will support stricter border enforcement programs (Pantoja 2006). In the case of students, students' attitudes toward certain issues are highly consistent with their ideological identification. As a result, if they consider themselves liberal they will support liberal ideas and if they consider themselves conservative they will support more conservative ideas.

**WH5a: The more conservative a student is, the more likely he or she is to have restrictive attitudes toward immigration.**

## **Chapter Summary**

Immigration plays a vital role within the nation and how the public feels about immigration plays a vital role in shaping immigration policies. Americans have expressed different attitudes concerning immigration due to their own perceptions. The scholarly literature represents five factors that influence attitudes toward immigration: economic status, perception of national economy, racial background, age group, and political ideology as the main factors. These five factors have been formed into independent variables in the working hypotheses represented in the conceptual framework. These five independent variables will be tested to determine if similar relationships exist when compared to Texas State University's student population. The next chapter discusses the methodology used to measure the working hypotheses.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

#### **Chapter Purpose**

This chapter operationalizes the hypotheses through factors proposed in Chapter 2 to influence students' attitudes toward immigration. The chapter discusses in detail the research method used to perform an analysis of the hypotheses, the sample selection, and the human subject protection process used for this study. Additionally, this chapter discusses the dependent variable for this study, which is Texas State University students' attitudes toward immigration, and presents in detail the independent variables. The independent variables are the student's economic status, the student's perception of national economy, the student's racial background, the student's age group, and the student's political ideology. Finally, this chapter illustrates the operationalization table and demonstrates the questionnaire used to determine if the independent variables influenced these attitudes.

#### **Research Method**

Because this study is exploring attitudes, a survey is the best method of data collection (Babbie 2010, 115, 254). The working hypotheses "help establish a connection between the research question and the type of evidence used to test the hypotheses" (Shields and Tajalli 2006, 320). Therefore, the survey method is the ideal method because it allows for a comprehensive analysis and an accurate test of each working hypothesis, as well as allowing for the researcher to collect original data via phone, person interviews,

self-administered online questionnaire, or mail out questionnaire when there is no prior data readily available (Babbie 2010 254, 255). Surveys can either be “qualitative or quantitative, meaning that it can be conducted using either open-ended questions or closed-ended questions” (Babbie 2010, 254). There are two ways to conduct a survey, either by self-administered questionnaire given to respondents or questions that are asked by an interviewer to respondents (Babbie 2010, 255). This study conducts a survey using an online questionnaire and closed ended questions because it is easier to transfer to a computer format, provides greater uniformity, is easier to analyze data, and is overall easier to administer to the student population (Babbie 2010, 256, 257). The major limitation of the survey method is that it relies on a self-report method of data collection, which means that intentional deception, poor memory, or misunderstanding of the question can all contribute to inaccuracies in the data (Babbie 2010).

## **Sample**

Because the unit of analysis of this study is college students and the focus is their attitudes on immigration, students at Texas State University were selected as the appropriate population. As described in the research purpose, students are the next generation’s leaders and students from Texas are in a unique position because the state hosts a large immigrant population, therefore, these respondents’ attitudes on immigration issues are important. Texas State University is an excellent context for this study because it is centrally located, and it is one of the largest universities in Texas with 32,572 students enrolled in Spring 2011 in undergraduate and graduate classes (Texas State University). Texas State University’s main campus is located in San Marcos combined with the Round

Rock Education center in Round Rock, makes Texas State University an excellent school for sample selection because some of the student population commutes from Austin, Round Rock, San Antonio as well as other smaller surrounding cities (Texas State University site). This means that different perspectives may be gathered in this survey that can provide an indication of attitudes in the overall state.

Additionally, Texas State University is a diverse university with students from different ethnic backgrounds, age groups and different areas of study. The racial composition of Texas State University in previous years is illustrated in Table 3.1. Furthermore, Texas State University has a diverse undergraduate and graduate programs allowing for the sample to be derived from students in different age groups, majors and socio economic backgrounds.

**Table 3.1 - Census Day Enrollment Count**

	Year					Spring
<b>Ethnicity</b>	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.2%	2.3%	2.2%	2.3%	2.6%	2.8%
Black, non-Hispanic	4.7%	5.0%	5.1%	5.4%	5.7%	6.3%
Hispanic	19.9%	20.6%	21.4%	22.6%	23.5%	24.3%
White, non-Hispanic	70.3%	69.3%	68.5%	67.0%	65.7%	63.6%
Non-Resident International	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.4%	1.0%	0.8%
Unknown	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.8%	1.5%
Total Sum of Headcount	27,129	27,485	28,121	29,105	30,803	32,572
Total % of Headcount	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Institutional Research Department at Texas State University. Census Day Enrollment Report

A “student” is defined as any individual who is 18 years of age and older, who is enrolled in the fall semester of 2011 in any classes (which includes part time and full time classes) in either the undergraduate or graduate level. The students were selected by convenience sample from graduate and undergraduate classes because of the mere feasibility of the study (Babbie 2010, 192). There was an email sent to random

undergraduate and graduate professors teaching fall 2011 courses asking them if they would email a cover letter containing a link to the survey to their students so they may take the questionnaire. This email can be viewed in Appendix B. This method was chosen because it will allow for diversity of majors, student classification and programs and it was the easiest method for initial analysis.

Thirteen undergraduate and graduate professors who teach introductory classes were selected at random and emailed to ensure that the survey be viewed by larger amounts of students. Also the masters in public administration department and undergraduate political science department sent a mass email to students in their programs with the link to the survey so they could participate. Then a follow-up email was sent to the different professors two weeks later after the first email to ensure that they received the information. Although this sample is not representative of the entire student population of Texas State University, it is the most practical method to use given the time constraints. The hope is that this survey will serve as an initial exploration of students' attitudes toward immigration.

### **Human Subject Protection**

Potential concerns for this type of research study are ensuring confidentiality and avoiding any potential harm to the respondents. In order to ensure that this study was in compliance with accepted ethics regarding human subject research, a copy of the research proposal including the questionnaire and the consent form were submitted to the Institutional Review Board at Texas State University. The Institutional Review Board at

Texas State University reviewed these documents containing the procedure and exempted the research survey because of the minimal risk to the respondents. Participation in the survey does not entail any risk or harm to the respondents and at any time any respondent can simply close the screen or skip a question if they feel uncomfortable or do not understand.

The consent form was drafted to ease the minds of the potential respondents and for them to understand their rights before they could begin to answer the survey questions. The consent form stated the overall benefit of the research and that there were no known risk of the research. It declared that the survey was completely voluntary and confidential, stated basic information about the survey, and stated my contact information and my supervising professor's information as well as IRB contact information. Additionally, the survey stated information on how the data will be handled and, finally, how each respondent can gain access to the summary of the survey's results. My survey research was exempted due to the minimal risk and the consent form can be viewed in Appendix B.

### **Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable in this study is attitudes toward immigration. One difficulty of measuring attitudes toward immigration is due to the influence that words have in shaping responses; therefore, prior to developing the questions about measuring the dependent variable we must define the concept of 'immigrant'. There are many ways to refer to immigrants that are considered publicly acceptable including: "illegal", "legal", "alien", "documented" or "undocumented". These various terms use to represent

“immigrant” have different meanings in people’s hearts and invoke different reactions (Brader et al. 2008). Moreover, when asked about immigration, it seems in today’s society that the phrase “illegal immigrant is just radioactive” (Wolf 2008, 1), therefore it must be made clear in the survey that we are measuring attitudes on immigration overall.

The words used to describe an immigrant have an impact on views toward immigration thus the definition of the term ‘immigrant’ is derived from the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, (INA) because it is the continuously used definition.

The Immigration and Nationality Act defines the term immigrant below

(<http://definitions.uslegal.com/i/immigration/>):

1. *Immigrant* is a person who is not native to the United States, has entered and plans to settle in the United States permanently and ultimately to apply for citizenship. The two types of immigrants are documented immigrant and undocumented immigrant.
  - a. *Documented immigrant* is an immigrant that entered the United States through a process of either an immigrant or non-immigrant visa, but has continued to settle in the United States by legal means by either a visa extension, change in visa, or is acquiring a green card through a family member, marriage or work.
  - b. *Undocumented immigrant* is an immigrant that entered the United States without proper documentation or visa, or entered the United States legally but overstayed their allowed time.

The terms “illegal” and “legal” will not be utilized as ways to describe immigrants’ status. Instead, any question about immigrants in the survey will state “undocumented immigrants” or “documented immigrants”. First, the term “undocumented” clearly defines the offense in question: an undocumented immigrant is someone who resides in a country without proper or any documentation. The relative illegality of this act may vary from country to country, but the nature of the offense is made clear (Head 2009). Secondly, the term “illegal” will not be applied to an immigrant because there is some scholarly debate about its appropriateness. Some scholars believe that when the Fourteenth Amendment affirms that no government may "deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws" (U.S. Const. am. XIV), it means that although an undocumented immigrant has violated immigration requirements, they are still a legal person under the law because they are under the jurisdiction of the United States (Head 2009).

Once the term ‘immigrant’ was defined, then questions about attitudes toward immigration and immigrants were formulated. There were three subtopics created that deal with different aspects of immigration; attitudes about the general impact immigration has on the United States, attitudes towards the undocumented immigrant population, and attitudes toward the documented immigrant population. The survey questions drafted to represent the dependent variable of attitudes toward immigration were based from previous research (Mayda 2004, Berg 2010 and Klinkner 2011).

There were three questions that dealt with attitudes about the general impact immigration have on the United States. One of the question focuses on immigration and crime, one focuses on immigrants and jobs, and the last one focuses on the number immigrants entering the United States. There were three questions that dealt with attitudes

towards the undocumented immigrant population. One of the question focuses on undocumented immigrants and deportation, one question focuses on undocumented immigrants and citizenship, and the last one focuses on undocumented immigrants and integration. Finally, there is only one question on documented immigration which focuses on voting rights. I chose to only do one question on documented immigration because it is much harder to phrase questions about documented immigration. Additionally, I did not want to introduce new bias by challenging the rights and services documented immigrants have. These seven questions allow for me to analyze a range of attitudes about different immigration topics. The dependent variable questions formulation and structure will be explained in the questionnaire section of this chapter. Overall these questions deal with different issues at the forefront of the immigration debate. The dependent variable questions can be viewed below in the Operationalization table, table 3.1

### **Independent Variables**

Based on the literature, this study developed five working hypotheses. It is hypothesized that students' economic status influences their attitudes toward immigration (WH1), that a students' perception of the national economy influences their attitudes toward immigration (WH2), a students' racial background influences their attitudes toward immigration (WH3), a students' age group influences their attitudes toward immigration (WH4), and that a students' political ideology influences their attitudes toward immigration (WH5).

The economic status of a student will be derived by the basic indicator of household income because this is the most feasible measure of economic status (Mayda 2004; Berg 2010). It is difficult to measure overall wealth therefore, by focusing on just income; we can measure how income may relate to attitudes toward immigration. Perception of the economy is measured by whether a student has optimism about today's economy. Since the United States is facing a time of economic downturn, most people believe our economy is not in good condition thus, the question must ask if the respondent believes if the economy is improving versus not improving. A student's racial background has the basic indicator of race which is very easily indefinable. The next independent variable is a student's age group and that is very straightforward. Finally, a student's political ideology will be measured by a range of conservatism to liberalism. The independent questions formulation and structure will be explained in the questionnaire section of this chapter. The independent variable questions can be viewed below in table 3.2.

### The Questionnaire

The variables used in this study are operationalized in Table 3.2. This table was translated into the questionnaire.

<b>Table 3.2: Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework</b>		
<b>Variables</b>	<b>Working Hypothesis</b>	<b>Measurement/ Survey Questions</b>
<b>Dependent</b>		
<b>Immigration Attitudes</b>		<b>How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?</b> 1. Undocumented Immigrants should be

		<p>automatically deported to their home country</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Immigration increases the crime rate</li> <li>3. Immigrants take jobs away from Americans</li> <li>4. Undocumented immigrants should not be allowed to become citizens</li> <li>5. Documented Immigrants should be allowed to vote in local elections, such as such as for city council, mayor, or school boards</li> <li>6. We should help undocumented Immigrants Integrate into American Society <i>Questions above will be answered with</i> 1. Strongly agree, 2. Agree, 3. neutral, 4. disagree, 5.strongly disagree</li> <li>7. Do you think the number of immigrants coming to America should be: 1. Increased a lot, 2. increased a little, 3. Remain the same, 4. reduced a little, 5. Reduced a lot.</li> </ol>
<b>Independent</b>	<b>Working Hypothesis</b>	
<b>Economic Status</b>	<b>WH1a:</b> Students within the lower household income distribution are more likely to have anti-immigration attitudes.	<p>What is your family’s annual income?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. \$0 to \$20,000</li> <li>2. \$20,001 to \$35,000.</li> <li>3. \$35,001 to \$70,000</li> <li>4. \$70,001 to \$100,000</li> <li>5. \$100,001 to more.</li> </ol>
<b>Perception of National Economy</b>	<b>WH2a:</b> Students who are less optimistic about the current and future economic state of the U.S are more likely to have negative attitudes toward immigration.	<p>Do you agree with this statement “The U.S economy is improving”?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strongly Agree</li> <li>2. Agree</li> <li>3. Neutral</li> <li>4. Disagree</li> <li>5. Strongly Disagree</li> </ol>
<b>Racial Background</b>	<p><b>WH3a:</b> Latino students are more likely to support liberal immigration policies.</p> <p><b>WH3b:</b> Black students are more likely to support restrictive immigration policies.</p> <p><b>WH3c:</b> White students are more likely to support restrictive immigration policies.</p>	<p>What is your race? Please select answer that best fits</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Asian/Pacific Islander</li> <li>2. Black (Non-Hispanic)</li> <li>3. Hispanic/Latino</li> <li>4. White (Non-Hispanic/Non-African American)</li> </ol>

<b>Age</b>	<b>WH4a:</b> Older students are more likely to have restrictive attitudes on immigration.	Please select your age group 1. 18-21 2. 21-25 3. 26-35 4. 36-50 5. 50 and Above
<b>Political Ideology</b>	<b>WH5a:</b> The more conservative a student is then the more likely to have restrictive attitudes toward immigration.	What political ideology do you consider yourself? 1. Very conservative 2. Conservative 3. Moderate 4. Liberal 5. Very Liberal

All the questions are in check box format. The structured of the survey begins with the online consent form in the first page. The independent variables questions are on the second page of my questionnaire, and the last two pages contain questions about the dependent variable. The questionnaire is structured this way to ease the process of answering the questions. This was my second questionnaire, I gave the first questionnaire to five people and they gave me feedback about the questionnaire structure and question formulation, which led to the questionnaire to be changed to this order.

Since the independent variable questions are based on personal characteristic they should be easier than the dependent variable questions. They make up the first set of questions because the respondents should go through the first set of questions rapidly making the survey easier to complete. The independent variable questions were arranged in order beginning with the question of race and ending with students' positivism toward the economy. The questions were arranged in this order because starting with students' income or political ideology maybe more difficult for a student to answer and I wanted the student to begin with easy questions and continue to more difficult questions to ensure that

most respondents complete the questionnaire. First is the question identifying the student's race, which is 'What is your race? Please select the answer that best fits' and the respondent can choose from "Asian/Pacific Islander", "Black (Non-Hispanic)", "Hispanic/Latino", and "White (Non-Hispanic/Non-African American)". I decided to not include a choice of "other" because I was afraid that many respondents will select this response and I would not get variation in my responses. Next is the question identifying the student's age group, which is "Please select your age group" and the respondent can choose from "18-21", "22-26", "27-35", "36-49", and "50 and Above".

Next is the question identifying the students' economic status, which is "What is your family's annual gross income?" and the respondent can choose from "\$0 to \$25,000", "\$25,001 to \$40,000", "\$40,001 to \$70,000", "\$70,001 to \$100,000" and "\$100,001 to more". This question contains just a basic income distribution. Next the question identifies the student's political ideology, which is "What is your political ideology?" and the respondent can choose from "very conservative", "Conservative", "Moderate", "Liberal", and "Very Liberal. Finally, the question identifying the student's perception of the economy is "Do you agree with this statement 'The U.S economy is improving?'" and the respondents can choose from "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neutral", "Disagree", and "Strongly Disagree". These questions were developed to be able to compare the factors to the dependent variable.

The dependent variable questions are structured and measured using a five point scale with a neutral middle category. Seven out of the eight questions relating to the dependent variable were included in a matrix question format; "how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?" then the statements followed. For each of

these questions the respondents can choose from “Strongly Agree”, “Agree”, “Neutral”, “Disagree”, “Strongly Disagree”. The first statement to measure attitudes is “Undocumented immigrants should be automatically deported to their home country”. This statement deals with attitudes toward undocumented immigrants in America. The next statement to measure attitudes is “Immigrants increase the crime rate” (Berg 2010). This statement deals with attitudes toward the immigrant population. The third statement is “Immigrants take jobs away from Americans” (Berg 2010), which deals with attitudes toward immigration’s impact on the economy. The fourth statement is “Undocumented immigrants should not be allowed to become citizens”, which deals with attitudes toward undocumented immigrants. The fifth statement is “Documented immigrants should be allowed to vote in local elections, such as for city council, mayor, or school boards”, which deals with attitudes toward documented immigrants. The sixth statement is “We should help undocumented immigrants integrate into American society” (Klinkner 2011), which deals with attitudes toward undocumented immigrants. The last statement helps create a good contrast between the first statement about deportation. The last question representing the dependent variable is “Do you think the number of immigrants coming to America should be:” and respondents can choose between “Increased a lot, “Increased a little”, “Remain the same”, “Reduced a little”, “Reduced a lot” (Berg 2010) . This statement is included because it explores attitudes toward immigration levels. The questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix A.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed the methodology used for this study. The population and sample were detailed as well as the rationalization for the use of this sample. The safety

measures taken to establish protections of human participants were outlined. The dependent variable and independent variable were explained in connection to the methodology. Additionally, the questionnaire structure and formulation were described in detail. The findings of the data analysis from the questionnaire results are discussed in the subsequent chapter.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Findings**

#### **Chapter Purpose**

This chapter discusses the results of the online survey administered to Texas State University students. Descriptive statistics and bivariate associations between the independent variables and the dependent variables are presented in this chapter. Additionally, chi-square tests results are demonstrated for different variables. As noted above, immigration attitudes are examined as a function of economic status, economic perception, race, age group, and political ideology.

#### **Descriptive Statistics**

The survey was emailed to 13 professors who then emailed the questionnaire to their students; out of the 177 respondents who attempted the survey, 155 completed it. The results obtained are based on these 155 respondents and indicated that the data set included enough variation and distribution for analysis. The independent variables were economic status of a student, racial background of a student, age group of a student, political ideology of a student, and their perception of the economy.

As described in the previous chapter, economic status was determined by the respondent's family's annual gross income. The income composition of my sample was evenly distributed with 14.8 percent of the total respondent sample belonging in the "\$0 to \$25,000" group, 21.9 percent belonging in the "\$25,001 to \$40,000" group, 23.9 percent

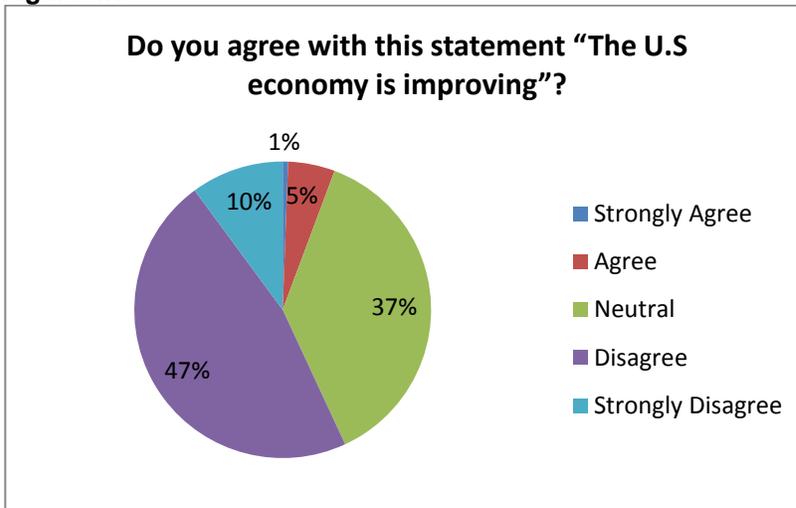
belonging in the “\$40,001 to \$70,000” group, 20.0 percent belonging in the “\$70,001 to \$100,000” group and 19.4 percent belonging in the “\$100,001 to more” group.

The racial composition of my sample was not evenly distributed, however it was close to matching the racial composition at Texas State University of 3.3 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander, 6.3 of Blacks, 24.3 percent of Hispanics and 63.6 percent of Whites. The racial composition of my respondents was Asian/Pacific Islander making up 3.2 percent of the total sample, Blacks making up 9.0 percent of the total sample, Hispanic/Latino making up 27.7 percent of the total sample, and Whites making up 60.0 percent of the total sample. Age was the most uneven distribution of all my variables with almost 70 percent of the respondents belonging to the “18-21” age group, followed by “22-26” age group with almost 13 percent, then “27-35” age group with 11.0 percent, then the “36-49” age group with almost 4 percent, and “50 and Above” group with 2 percent.

Political ideology was determined by the level of conservatism or liberalism the respondent chose. Most of the respondents self-reported that there were “Moderates” with almost half selecting this response, 2.0 percent declared themselves “Very Conservative”, 23 percent declared themselves “Conservative”, 21 percent declared themselves “Liberal” and almost 7 percent declared themselves “Very Liberal”.

Perception to the economy was determined by whether respondent believes the economy is improving. The results indicated that most respondents believe that the economy is not improving, with 57 percent of the respondents strongly disagreeing or disagreeing. Only 6 percent were strongly agreeing or agreeing, and 37 percent being neutral on this question as shown below in Figure 4.1

**Figure 4.1**



The dependent variable is the attitudes a student has toward immigration and this was determined by the eight questions described in the previous chapter. The response to the statement; "Undocumented Immigrants should be automatically deported to their home country" was evenly distributed with a majority in the disagreeing or strongly disagreeing side (45 percent) over the agreeing or strongly agreeing side (39 percent). The statement "Immigration increases the crime rate" generated a slightly different result, with 46 percent of the respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement versus 35 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement, leaving 19 percent of the respondents as neutral.

**Figure 4.2**

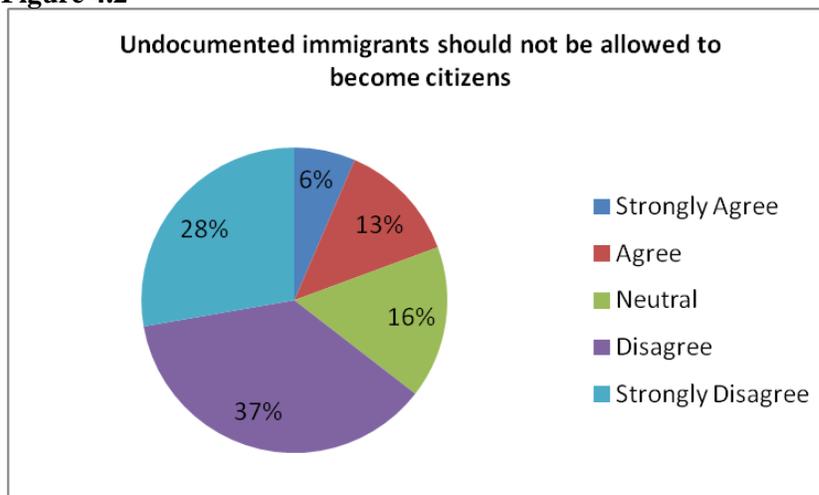


Figure 4.2 demonstrates the results for the statement; “Undocumented immigrants should not be allowed to become citizens”. It shows that over half of the respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed with this statement (65 percent) and only 19 percent agree or strongly agreed with this statement. One can only deduce that most respondents that disagreed with this statement may feel that being an undocumented immigrant should not prevent people from becoming citizens in the future. The topic of documented immigration and voting rights had over 60 percent of the respondents’ support with 25 percent strongly agreeing that “documented Immigrants should be allowed to vote in local elections, 38 percent agreeing, 9 percent being neutral, 16 percent disagreeing, and 12 percent strongly disagreeing.

When taking a glance at the attitudes toward immigrants’ impact on the economy, specifically the job market, the results demonstrated that 50 percent of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement, “Immigrants take jobs away from Americans”. About 29 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement and 21 percent remain neutral over the issue. Additionally, we find the respondents are more welcoming to the idea of integration versus deportation of undocumented immigrants. The statement, “We should help undocumented immigrants integrate into American society” resulted in 51 percent of respondents in favor of integration versus 29 percent of respondents not in favor and 20 percent being neutral. In the deportation statement, the results demonstrated that 45 percent disagree or strongly disagree with deporting undocumented immigrants, thus we have an increase of positivism toward immigration when it comes to integration because 51 percent agree or strongly agree with integration. Finally, in the last dependent variable question, the statement resulted in only 10 percent of

the respondents wanting to increase a lot or a little of the future immigrant population, 31 percent wanting the population to remain the same, 49.4 percent wanting the future immigrant population reduced a little/reduced a lot.

## **Economic Status**

As described in the literature review, economic status shapes a person's political views (Burns and Gimpel 2000; Dustmann and Preston 2007; Mayda 2004; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996). The theory describes that natives will be more opposed to immigration when they are competing for jobs. The labor market competition model predicts that people with more economic security are far less likely to perceive labor market competitions (Scheve and Slaughter 2001). Therefore people within a lower economic status are predicted to have less economic security and will express more anti-immigrant views. The working hypothesis:

**WH1a: Students within the lower household income distribution are more likely to have anti-immigration attitudes.**

Only 26 percent of students within the "0-25,000" income level strongly agree or agree with automatically deporting undocumented immigrants and almost 12 percent of students within "25,001- 40,000" level strongly agree or agree with this statement. On the other hand, students within the higher income levels are notably more pro deportation. Almost 40 percent of students within the "40,001-70,000" income level strongly agree or agree with automatically deporting undocumented immigrants. In the "70,001- 100,000" income level that number goes up to 55 percent of students and in the "100,000 or more"

income level it goes up to 60 percent. Furthermore, when dividing income levels low (0-40,000), middle (40,001- 70,000) and high (70,001 and more) we can conclude that there is an association between higher income levels and pro-deportation sentiment in the case of students, as demonstrated by the Pearson Chi-Square: 17.161 and Sig: .001

Students whose families had higher gross income are more likely to agree that immigration increases the crime rate. Almost 48 percent of students in the “70,001-100,000” income level strongly agree or agree that immigration increases crime and 53 percent of students in the “100,001 or more” income level believe the same. Conversely, only 13 percent of respondents in the “0-25,000” income level strongly agree or agree with the statement that immigration increasing the crime rate and about 21 percent of students within the “25,001-40,000” income level believe the same. The chi square analysis demonstrated a value of 13.242 and sig: .010, which means that there is an association between the dependent variable of attitudes toward immigration and the independent variable of economic status. Furthermore, in the case of students, we can see that there is a positive association between higher income and believing immigration raise the crime rate.

Students within the “40,001-70,000” income level are split with 33 percent disagreeing with the statement and 48 percent agreeing. Furthermore, when analyzing income with the statement “immigrants take away jobs”, the results demonstrate that students in higher income levels, specifically in the top two income levels agree with this statement. Exactly 50 percent of students in the income level “100,001 or more” believe immigrants take jobs from Americans and 45 percent of students in the income level “70,001-100,000” believe the same. Conversely, compared with students in lower income levels, the results demonstrate that only 13 percent of students in the “0-25,000” believe

this and only 12 percent of students in the “25,001-40,000” believe that immigrants take jobs from Americans. There is an association with higher income levels and believing immigrants take away American jobs in the case of students as illustrated in table 4.1.

<b>Table 4.1- Chi- Square Tests for Income association on statement: “Immigrants take away jobs from Americans”</b>	
	Asymp Sig
Pearson Chi- Square	0.001

Overall, when analyzing what students’ attitudes were toward immigration levels, most students leaned to reducing the number of future immigrants or leaving the current numbers. Students in lower economic levels felt that the number should remain the same, leaning towards reduction, whereas students in higher income levels were increasingly supportive of reducing the number of future immigrants either by a lot or a little as demonstrated in table 4.2.

<b>Table 4.2 Economic Status cross-tabulation with statement: “Do you think the number of immigrants coming to America should be:”</b>					
	Reduced a lot	Reduced a little	Remain the same	Increase a Little	Increase a lot
0 - 25,000	0%	34.8%	52.2%	8.7%	4.3%
25,001 - 40,000	5.9%	35.3%	41.2%	14.7%	2.9%
40,001 – 70,000	16.2%	48.6%	21.3%	10.9%	0%
70,001 – 100,000	41.9%	41.9%	12.9%	3.2%	0%
100,000 to more	33.3%	30.0%	30.0%	6.7%	0%

However, when analyzing the association between economic status and the statements “undocumented immigrants should not be allowed to become citizens”, “Documented Immigrants should be allowed to vote in local elections”, and “We should help undocumented immigrants integrate into American Society” we see that, overall, all students are more positive toward immigration. Additionally, most students disagree with

not allowing undocumented immigrants to become citizens, over 50 percent of students in each income level, which is demonstrated in table 4.3.

<b>Table 4.3 Economic Status cross-tabulation with statement: “Undocumented immigrants should not be allowed to become citizens”</b>					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
0 - 25,000	47.8%	21.7%	4.3%	26.1%	0%
25,001 - 40,000	29.4%	47.1%	5.9%	11.8%	5.9%
40,001 – 70,000	24.3%	43.2%	21.6%	5.4%	5.4%
70,001 – 100,000	22.6%	32.3%	29.0%	6.5%	9.7%
100,000 to more	20.0%	33.3%	16.7%	20.0%	10.0%

Almost 61 percent of students in the “0-25,000” income level agree or strongly agree with allowing documented immigrants voting rights in local elections, 74 percent of students in the “25,001-40,000” income level feel the same, 62 percent of students in the “40,001-70,000” income level feel the same, 52 percent of students in the “70,001-100,000” income level feel the same and 57 percent of the students in the “100,001 or more” income level feel this way as well. We see the same positive attitude toward the integration of immigrants regardless of income level, with 50 percent or more of students in each level wanting to integrate undocumented immigrants.

**Perception of the Economy**

There was no distribution in the data within the independent variable of economic perception. The data only demonstrates results for students within three columns ranging from neutral, to disagree and strongly disagree that the economy is improving. This made it difficult to crosstab this independent variable with the dependent variable statements.

Consequently, no conclusion can be made as to whether any relationship exists or does not exist. The hypothesis cannot be explored because there is not enough data for analysis.

### **Racial Background**

As explained in the literature review, race plays a factor in developing our attitudes toward immigrants and immigration. Whether it is based on Intergroup Dynamics Theory, Contact Theory, and Inter-minority Conflict Theory (Bonacich 1972; Ilias et al. 2009; Hood and Morris 1998; Berg 2009; Mayda 2004), race is consistently mentioned in the literature as a factor that shapes race relations. The working hypotheses were:

**WH3a: Latino students are more likely to support liberal immigration policies.**

**WH3b: Black students are more likely to support restrictive immigration policies.**

**WH3c: White students are more likely to support restrictive immigration policies.**

However, since there were only a small percentage of Black respondents, the second hypothesis was not examined due to lack of data distribution. Therefore, the analysis will only be of Hispanic and White respondents leaving a total of 136 respondents. Race was one of the most influential factors in this study. White students in this study had more restrictive attitudes toward immigration than Hispanics. Over half of White students (53 percent) believed that immigration increases the crime rate whereas only 12 percent of Hispanic students strongly agree or agree with this statement. Also, we see in table 4.4 below that 81 percent of Hispanics believe that Immigrants are not taking away jobs from

Americans (strongly disagree or disagree) compared to 34 percent of Whites who believe the same (strongly disagree or disagree). White students increasingly believe that future immigration population should be reduced with 72 percent (reduced a lot or little), in contrast to 46 percent of Hispanic students, wanting a reduction in future immigrant population.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
White	11.8%	22.6%	26.9%	26.9%	11.8%
Hispanic	30.2%	51.2%	7.0%	9.3%	2.3%

	Asymp. Sig (2 Sided)
Pearson Chi- Square (Race association on statement: “Immigrants increase Crime rate”)	.001
Pearson Chi- Square (Race influence association on statement: “Immigrant take away Jobs”)	.000
Pearson Chi- Square (Race association on statement: “Do you think number of Immigrants coming to America should be:”)	.010

Additionally, in table 4.5 above, the chi-square analysis demonstrates that there is a strong association between the dependent variable and race. In the case of this study, the results demonstrate that White students are more likely to have restrictionist views about immigration over Hispanics students. Although both White and Hispanic students demonstrated an opposition toward not allowing undocumented immigrants to become citizens, the results show that the numbers of White students opposing were less than Hispanics with 57 percent, and Hispanics 72 percent. While both White and Hispanic students are supportive of documented immigrants having voting rights in local elections, Hispanics had a higher level of support, with almost 68 percent of students strongly

agreeing/agreeing were as Whites had 57 percent of students supporting it. The results demonstrated the same level of support toward integration of undocumented immigrants, with almost half of White students wanting integration (46.2 strongly agree or agree) and with 60.5 percent of Hispanic students (strongly agree or agree) as illustrated below in table 4.6.

<b>Table 4.6 Race cross- tabulation with statement: “We should help undocumented immigrants integrate into American society”</b>					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
White	17.2%	24.7%	11.8%	38.7%	7.5%
Hispanic	0%	14.0%	25.6%	41.9%	18.6%

### **Age Group**

A student’s age is likely to affect their personal attitudes. As described in the literature a person’s age shapes their attitudes because age is a direct measure of life experience (Berg 2009). Older respondents may have come to adulthood in a time of racial tensions, which is different from their younger counterparts, which can lead to more restrictive attitudes (Berg 2009).

**WH4a: The older a student becomes the more likely to have restrictive attitudes on immigration.**

Age groups were composed of “18-21”, “22-26”, “27-35”, “36-49” and “50 and above”, however, over almost 70 percent of the respondents belong to the “18-21” age group. Hence, “22-26”, “27-35”, “36-49” and “50 and above” age groups were combined to form a “22 and above” group to be able to better analyze the data. Surprisingly, older

students have less restrictive attitudes than younger students in the context of this study. Over 60 percent of students in age group “22 and above” oppose automatically deporting undocumented immigrants and most students in this age group oppose not allowing undocumented immigrants to become citizens with 80 percent of them strongly disagreeing or disagreeing. When compared to the younger age group, the results demonstrate that only 37 percent of younger students strongly disagree or disagree with automatically deporting undocumented immigrants. We can see that younger students are more anti-deportation than older students in the context of this study and that age group of student does has an association with immigration attitudes of deportation with a chi square: 10.565 and Sig: .005. Although 60 percent of younger students (“18-21” age group) and 70 percent of older students are in opposition with not allowing undocumented immigrants, the results of the chi square tests state that there is not statistically significance between the age of student and whether they oppose denying undocumented immigrants citizenship with Pearson Chi-Square: 3.747 and Sig: 0.154.

**Table 4.7 Age cross- tabulation with statement: “Immigration increase the Crime rate”**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
18 – 21	8.3%	28.7%	21.3%	30.6%	11.1%
22 and above	17.0%	48.9%	4.3%	17.0%	2.1%

Table 4.7 above illustrates this trend when 37 percent of younger students in age group “18 to 21” strongly disagree or disagree that immigration increases the crime rate versus 66 percent of the older students feeling the same way. This trend in the results also continues when relating age and the statement of “immigrants taking away jobs”, with only 40 percent of students in age group “18-21” strongly disagreeing or disagreeing that immigrants take jobs from Americas compared to 73 percent of students in age group “22

and above” believing the same. Overall, the results demonstrate that younger students have more of a restrictive attitude toward immigration and immigrants than the older students. It is demonstrated that there is an association between the independent variable of age and the dependent variable of immigration attitudes as it is illustrated in the chi-square analysis below in table 4.8

<b>Table 4.8: Chi- Square Tests for Age group</b>	
	Asymp. Sig. (2- sided)
Pearson Chi- Square (Age group association on statement “Immigration increases the crime rate”)	0.003
Pearson Chi- Square (Age group association on statement; “Immigrants take away jobs from Americans”)	0.005

### **Political Ideology**

The literature describes that political ideology maybe the main factor likely to influence attitudes toward immigration. When a student has liberal or conservative ideologies, then they will have favorable or unfavorable judgments, respectively, about public policy issues like immigration.

#### **WH5b: Conservative students are more likely to have restrictive attitudes toward immigration.**

Almost 50 percent of the respondents considered themselves moderate, therefore in order to better analyze the data very conservative and conservative were combined and very liberal and liberal where combined to form two larger groups. Most conservative students favored deportation with 76 percent of them supporting this statement in contrast to liberal students, where only 14 percent are in support of deportation of undocumented

immigrants and 39 percent of moderate students. Conservatives believe more than any other independent variable category that immigration increases the crime rate with 66 percent of conservative students agreeing with the statement. On the other hand, only 21 percent of liberals and 27 percent of moderates believe immigration increases crime. Below in table 4.8, the chi-square tests analysis demonstrates an association between political ideology and immigration attitudes toward immigration.

<b>Table 4.8- Chi- Square Tests for Political Ideology</b>	
	Asymp. Sig. (2- sided)
Pearson Chi- Square (Political ideology association on statement: "Immigration increases the crime rate"	0.000
Pearson Chi- Square (Political Ideology association on statement "Undocumented Immigrants should be automatically deported to their home country")	0.001
Pearson Chi- Square (Political Ideology association on statement: "We should help undocumented Immigrants integrate into American Society")	0.001

In addition, in Table 4.8 above, we can see that conservatism has a positive association with anti-immigrant integration. The conservative attitudes toward integrating undocumented immigrants affirm that most conservatives are restrictive toward immigration with only 20 percent of conservatives in support of integration. Moderate students are 56 percent supportive of integrating immigrants into American society and 67 percent of liberals are supportive as well. Additionally, 73 percent of conservative students want the immigrant population to reduce by a lot or a little, with only 3 percent of conservatives wanting an increase in immigration. Moderates were a little more supportive of increasing immigration numbers, with 8 percent in support, and liberals were by far the most supportive with 18 percent in support. However, 46 percent of liberals were in support of reducing the future immigration population and 58 percent of moderates as well.

The chi- square demonstrated that conservatives had less than 5 people wanting to increase immigration, which meant that it was not significant even with 0.031 value.

The results demonstrated that the attitudes toward immigrant impact on the labor market were more distinct within this variable. Only 18 percent of liberal students agreed or strongly agreed that immigrants take jobs away from Americans, where as 26 percent of moderates believed the same and almost half of conservatives (47 percent) agreed. Conservatives were split on the statement about allowing documented immigrants to vote in local elections, exactly 42 percent of conservatives strongly agreed or agreed with the statement and exactly 42 percent of conservatives strongly disagreed or disagreed. Over 70 percent of moderate students were in support of allowing documented immigrants vote in local elections as were more than the 65 percent of liberals. Overall, liberals, conservatives and moderates were in opposition of not allowing undocumented immigrants become citizens. The number in opposition to this statement increases as the level of liberalism increases with almost half of conservatives (45 percent) strongly disagree or agree with this statement, then 68 percent of moderates and 72 percent of liberals.

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented both a summary of the responses as well as the results of the simple percentage and bivariate analyses conducted to determine the impact each independent variable has upon attitudes toward immigration.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusions**

#### **Chapter Purpose**

This chapter discusses the implications of the study by analyzing the conclusions drawn from each working hypothesis that was tested. Additionally, this chapter suggests directions for future research and describes the strengths and limitations of this study.

#### **Discussion of Working Hypothesis and data Implications**

The purpose of this research study was to explore Texas State students' attitudes toward immigration by attempting to explore students' attitudes on immigration, which can lead to better understanding about future immigration policy in Texas. The current generation of students is more globalized than past residents because this era is more ethnically diverse due to prior immigration from other cultures (Klinkner 2011). In national polls, there has been a consistent view that young college educated students exhibit higher levels of ethnic and racial tolerance and stronger preferences for cultural diversity, meaning that they are overall more open to immigration than other generations (Chandler and Tsai 2001; Citrin et al. 1997; Dustmann and Preston 2007; Hood and Morris 1998; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007). Therefore, this study attempts to explore the differences between students' attitudes toward immigration to better discern future implications from this younger population by using each of the independent variables previously mentioned.

Taken as a whole, the data demonstrates that most students have slightly more liberal views toward immigration in the context of this study. The majority of students were in disagreement with deporting undocumented immigrants, in disagreement that immigration increases crime, in disagreement that immigrants take jobs away from Americans, and in disagreement that undocumented immigrants should not be allowed to become citizens. Additionally, the majority of students felt that documented immigrants should be allowed to vote in local elections and were more pro-integration of undocumented immigrants. This study finds that most students have slightly more liberal views toward immigration; therefore, we can only assume that we will have less restrictionist policies on immigration issues because public opinion influences governmental decisions on documented and undocumented immigration (Espenshade and Hempstead 1996). However, the analysis of the data informs us that differences in attitudes depend on the factor and the immigration topic. The nature of the relationships between each independent variable and dependent variable expressed in the literature review are posited in table 5.1. The table 5.1 portrays each hypothesis along with the conclusion reached. From the findings we can only speculate some assumptions as to why some hypotheses were supported and others rejected.

**Table 5.1: Summary of Support for Working Hypotheses**

<b>WH1a:</b> Students within the lower household income distribution are more likely to have anti-immigration attitudes.	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>WH2a:</b> Students who are less optimistic about the current and future economic state of the U.S are more likely to have negative attitudes toward immigration.	<b>N/A</b>
<b>WH3a:</b> Latino students are more likely to support liberal immigration policies.	<b>Supported</b>
<b>WH3b:</b> White students are more likely to support restrictive immigration policies.	<b>Supported</b>
<b>WH4a:</b> The older a student becomes the more likely to have restrictive attitudes on immigration.	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>WH5a:</b> The more conservative a student is then the more likely to have restrictive attitudes toward immigration.	<b>Partially Supported</b>

The results of WH1a demonstrated that students in higher income levels had more restrictive views toward immigration in almost every question. There were two questions in which students in higher income brackets demonstrated positive attitudes toward immigrants, but even in those questions students in lower income brackets had higher percentages. Immigrants have often faced opposition from natives at the lower end of the economic spectrum, but this is not the case in this study. Thus, this working hypothesis was rejected. There are many assumptions that can be drawn from this data. One assumption we can draw is that maybe students in higher economic brackets have more restrictionist views because they fear a higher tax burden because of immigrants' use of social services, such as welfare and other public assistance programs (Berg 2010).

Additionally, we can speculate that students in lower economic brackets may experience less economic competition in the labor market because upon graduation they would have developed more skills than some immigrants (Burns and Gimpel 2000; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996). Another speculation is derived from contact theory, in which it can be speculated that students in lower economic status may empathize with immigrants because they are more likely to interact with immigrants due to their similar economic struggles. Overall, students within lower household income distributions are more likely to have supportive immigration attitudes.

The students who are less optimistic about the economy are more likely to have negative attitudes toward immigration cannot be supported or rejected because there was no sufficient data available for analysis. The *WH3a* that Latino/Hispanic students are more likely to support liberal immigration policies is supported by the data analysis because in every question more Latino/Hispanic students supported liberal immigration statements. On the other hand, White students had less support for liberal immigration statements, which supported the *WH3b* that “White students are more likely to support restrictive immigration policies”. In every statement that was positive toward immigrants or immigration, there was always a higher percentage of support for restrictive immigration by White students and lower by Hispanic students. Additionally, every statement that was negative toward immigration or immigrants, gained higher percentage of support by White students than by Hispanic students. We can speculate by the data that the more diverse the United States grows, the less restrictionist will immigration policies become. We can assume this because contact theory suggests that the more racial groups have more opportunities to interact with foreign-born individuals then the less restrictionist their

views about immigration become (Ilias et. al 2009). Additionally, this study found race to be the most influential factor out of all the factors selected for study.

The *WH4a*, which states that “The older a student becomes the more likely to have restrictive attitudes on immigration” was not supported by the data analysis. Since three age groups were combined due to lack of respondents in older age groups, the data analysis was affected and until a larger study sample of students at Texas State University is gathered, we will not know for sure if this hypothesis can truly be rejected. However, for the purpose of this research it was rejected because students belonging in the age group “22 and above” had less restrictive attitudes toward immigration than their younger schoolmates. Another speculation is that some students beginning their college education have not fully developed their political views or views on immigration because they have not yet been exposed to different ideas, which could be a reason why respondents in age group “18-21” are more restrictionist.

The *WH5a* that “The more conservative a student is then the more likely to have restrictive attitudes toward immigration” was partially supported by the data analysis. In every statement conservatives were more likely to select responses demonstrating restrictive attitudes toward immigration. Additionally, liberal students were demonstrated by a large margin to be more pro-immigration than their conservative counterparts. However, because most students considered themselves to be moderate in their political ideology, the chi-square tests were not statistically significant in the dependent variable statements about jobs and immigration numbers. Nevertheless, moderate students demonstrated to have less restrictive attitudes toward immigration than conservatives with most of their responses leaning toward support for immigration. This study suggests that

political ideology is not as influential a factor amongst the factors studied because most students associate themselves as moderates.

### **Limitations and Strengths of Study**

As with most research, this study has several limitations. There are a large number of students at Texas State University and it may be too large a number to reliably capture the attitudes of the student population with small number of students sampled. Another shortcoming of the study is that the sample chosen is nonrepresentational of the student body, which means that predictions or assumptions over the entire Texas State University student population cannot be made. This study used survey data provided by the Texas State University students. A potential weakness associated with these data is human error that is not understanding or misinterpreting the question. Additionally, since closed-ended questions were used and no comment section was left for the respondent, then we cannot discern precisely what factors influenced each student's responses. Furthermore, because of data limitations other racial groups besides Whites and Hispanics were not included in the race factor analysis.

The strength of the study is that the data was obtained using an online survey program that allowed the data to be downloaded in Excel making it easy transfer to SPSS by use of a code book therefore eliminating errors in data entry. Another strength in the

data is that is first hand data obtained directly from the student population, which allows for a better understanding of student attitudes toward immigration.

### **Future Research**

Future research can include all racial groups. Future research may also seek to use a different concept or a combination of concepts to represent class. Lastly, the number and type of questions used to reflect immigration attitudes could be expanded to incorporate more of the vast range of issues involving immigrants, from welfare use to immigration penalties and more questions relating to the possibility that immigrants maybe place a higher tax burden on the public. If these views are shared by large numbers of the public then such concerns may be an important component of aversion towards further immigration.

This would also help identify whether certain immigration issues are more relevant in forming immigration attitudes rather than assuming, as in this study, that all issues have equal weight in attitude formation. This study finds evidence that individual-level characteristics interact with each other and doing a multivariate analysis would be beneficial in any future research. A larger and more in-depth study is needed to truly understand the differences in attitudes within student populations and what are the factors influencing those attitudes.

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter concludes the research study by discussing the implication of the study results, the limitation of the research and giving ideas for future research. This study speculates that overall students' attitudes toward immigration are more liberal and individual level characteristics influence how liberal each student's attitudes are toward different immigration topics.

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## Appendix A- Questionnaire

Page 1:

### Students' Attitudes toward Immigration

#### Overview

You are being invited to participate in a research survey exploring the impact different factors have on attitudes toward immigration. This survey is being conducted by Patricia Perdomo with supervision from Dr. Thomas Longoria from the Political Science department at Texas State University. This study is being conducted as part of graduate research project for the Masters in Public Administration degree and it was approved and exempted by the University's Institutional Review Board.

You were selected as a possible participant in this survey because you are a current student at Texas State University. There are no known risks if you decide to participate in this research survey. The questionnaire will take about 5 to 10 minutes to complete. The information collected may not benefit you directly, but the information learned in this study may provide more general benefits.

This survey is anonymous and no one will be able to identify you or your answers. A summary of the findings can be provided to you upon completion of the study, if requested. You may also view a summary of the findings in the completed paper at <http://ecommons.txstate.edu/arp/> after December.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study at any time.

I will collect the data and maintain the data with supervision from my faculty advisor. If you have any questions about the study, please contact me at [pp1110@txstate.edu](mailto:pp1110@txstate.edu) and/or Dr. Thomas Longoria at [tl28@txstate.edu](mailto:tl28@txstate.edu).

Please print this consent for your records. If you have any concerns about your rights in this study, please contact the IRB chair, Dr. Jon Lasser at 512-245-3413 – [lasser@txstate.edu](mailto:lasser@txstate.edu), (or Ms. Becky Northcut, Compliance Specialist (512-245-2102).

**1. Please indicate that you fully understand the consent form before participating in the survey**

- Yes, I understand.
- I do not understand

Page 2:

**2. What is your race? Please select the answer that best fits**

- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Black (Non-Hispanic)
- Hispanic/Latino
- White (Non-Hispanic/Non-African American)

**3. Please select your age group**

- 18-21
- 22-26
- 27-35
- 36-50
- 50 and Above

**4. What is your family's annual gross income? (Gross: means income before taxes)**

- \$0 to \$25,000
- \$25,001 to \$40,000.
- \$40,001 to \$70,000
- \$70,001 to \$100,000
- \$100,001 to more.

**5. What is your political ideology?**

- Very conservative
- Conservative
- Moderate
- Liberal
- Very Liberal

**6. Do you agree with this statement "The U.S economy is improving"?**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

**How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
Undocumented Immigrants should be automatically deported to their home country	<input type="radio"/>				
Immigration increases the crime rate	<input type="radio"/>				
Undocumented immigrants should not be allowed to become citizens	<input type="radio"/>				
Documented Immigrants should be allowed to vote in local elections, such as for city council, mayor, or school boards	<input type="radio"/>				
Immigrants take jobs away from Americans	<input type="radio"/>				
We should help undocumented immigrants integrate into American society	<input type="radio"/>				

**Do you think the number of immigrants coming to America should be?**

Increased a lot    Increased a little,    Remain the same    Reduced a little    Reduced a lot.

## Appendix B- Consent Form

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Patricia Perdomo, and I am a graduate student in the Masters in Public Administration program at Texas State University. At the present time I am seeking to complete my Applied Research Project exploring Texas State Students' Attitudes toward Immigration and I am conducting a survey that was approved and exempted by the University's Institutional Review Board. I am writing to you in the hopes that you can pass on my online survey to your students. The survey is designed to be completed in 5- 10 minutes.

The survey is completely anonymous and voluntary. A summary of the findings will be provided to participants upon completion of the study, if requested. Or they may also view a summary of the findings and the complete paper at <http://ecommons.txstate.edu/arp/> after December. If you have any question or concerns please free to contact me at [pp1110@txstate.edu](mailto:pp1110@txstate.edu) or contact my faculty advisor Dr. Thomas Longoria at [tl28@txstate.edu](mailto:tl28@txstate.edu).

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Patricia Perdomo