Ethnic Identity and Anti-Immigrant Sentiment: Evidence from Proposition 187

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Motivation

- In recent years, many elections have centered on stoking racial and ethnic divisions
- How might individuals' racial and/or ethnic identities respond to the increasingly tense political climate?
  - Individuals from ethnic or racial minorities might be **less** likely to identify with their minority groups if they fear there may be negative consequences for them
  - Individuals from ethnic or racial minorities might be **more** likely to identify if the heightened saliency of race/ethnicity has raised their consciousness
- Examine evidence from passage of California's Prop 187 as a pivotal case study for Hispanic/Latino identity
- What can we learn more broadly about racial/ethnic identity from this experience?

Background

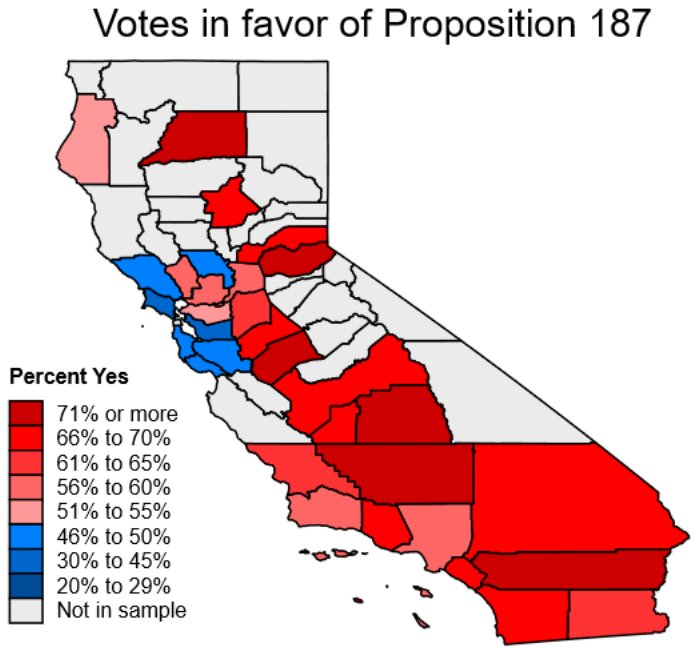
- Proposition 187, also known as the “Save our State” initiative called for denying public social, health, and education services to unauthorized immigrants.
  - One of the first and most well-known ballot measures widely seen to be anti-immigrant
- State and local officials were called on to investigate and report anyone suspected of being in the US in violation of immigration laws
  - Public school districts would be required to verify the legal status of students and their parents/guardians
- Widely seen to plausibly discriminate against the Latino community in California, regardless of legal status.
- Were individuals of Latino/Hispanic ancestry less likely to identify as Hispanic/Latino as a result?

Background

- Prop 187 sometimes credited for changing the political trajectory of California
  - In the days leading up to the election, many protests were held, including student walk-outs and school boycotts, which included many newly-organized Latino students.
- The measure passed by a wide margin in November 1994, but faced significant court challenges and was ultimately found to be unconstitutional.
  - Nevertheless, its impact on Hispanic/Latino political participation and mobilization has been widely speculated
- Were individuals of Hispanic/Latino ancestry more likely to identify as Hispanic/Latino as a result?

Votes in Favor of Proposition 187

- Variation in vote share across California



Related Literature—Ethnic Attrition

- Most studies use Hispanic origin question to identify Hispanic population and thus miss "ethnic attritors": individuals who do not identify as Hispanic, but who have Hispanic ancestry
- Duncan and Trejo (2011) document a pattern of selective ethnic attrition whereby better-educated descendants of Mexican immigrants are less likely to identify as Mexican, which biases conventional estimates of educational disparities
- Antman, Duncan, and Trejo (2016, 2020) find that ethnic attrition is selective on health with ethnic attritors in better health than non-attritors, biasing conventional health estimates, making higher-order immigrant generations look less healthy than they actually are

Related Literature—Endogenous Race and Ethnic Identity

- Antman and Duncan (2015) find that individuals with Asian ancestry are more likely to identify as Asian/Asian American after states ban affirmative action
  - Results consistent with a decrease in perceived penalty to racial identification for them
- Antman and Duncan (2023) find that when American Indian tribes are allowed to open casinos
  - **Increase** in probability that individuals with American Indian ancestry will self-identify as Native American and
  - **Decrease** in the probability that individuals with no (documented) American Indian ancestry will self-identify as Native American
  - Results consistent with racial self-identification responding to economic motivations as well as social stigma

Research Questions and Contribution

- Did anti-immigrant sentiment, as measured by local support for Prop 187, change patterns of ethnic identification for Hispanic/Latinos in California?
  - Use vote share for Prop 187 at the county level as a proxy for anti-immigrant sentiment
  - Look at changes over time in Hispanic/Latino identification for people based on their Hispanic/Latino ancestry
- Thus far, no studies have connected changes in Hispanic/Latino identity with changes in incentives to identify as Hispanic/Latino
- To our knowledge, this paper would be the first to connect political discourse with racial/ethnic identification

Results

- Results suggest anti-immigrant sentiment, as measured by county-level vote share for Prop 187, affected ethnic identification patterns
- Reduced willingness to identify as Mexican origin for
  - Individuals with Mexican ancestry (Census)
  - Individuals with stronger, more observable, ties to Mexican identity (CPS)
- Increased willingness to identify as Mexican origin for
  - Individuals with no Mexican ancestry listed, but who may have vague sense of Mexican ancestry (Census)
  - Individuals with weaker latent ties to Mexican identity (CPS)
- Consistent with distinct motivations to identify for individuals based on ties to Mexican identity and potentially observable characteristics (e.g. name)

Data—Census

- We use the 1990 and 2000 Census 5% sample microdata drawn from IPUMS USA (Ruggles et al. 2023) to examine **long-run impacts**
- The sample is limited to **U.S.-born individuals** living in California in 1990 and 2000.
- Individuals with allocated Hispanic origin have been dropped from the sample.
- Leverage information on
  - Hispanic/Mexican identification from Hispanic Origin Question
  - Hispanic/Mexican ancestry from Ancestry Question
  - Separate from Race Question

Data—Current Population Survey (CPS)

- We use the 1994 and 1995 CPS sample microdata drawn from IPUMS CPS (Flood et al. 2023) to examine **short-run impacts**
- The sample is limited to individuals living in California
- Smaller sample, but can leverage information on parent's place of birth (added in 1994) to obtain more objective measure of ancestry and identify impacts on immigrant generations
  - 1st generation (born in Mexico)
  - 2nd generation (US-born with at least 1 parent born in Mexico)
  - 3rd generation (US-born children with 2 US-born parents and at least 1 grandparent born in Mexico)

Hispanic/Latino Identification from Hispanic Origin Question

5. Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino? *Mark* [X] *the* ***"No"*** *box if* ***not*** *Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.*

[] **No**, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino
[] Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
[] Yes, Puerto Rican
[] Yes, Cuban
[] Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino - *Print group.*
[ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]
[ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]

Focus on Mexican origin group, largest single-country of origin group in US, and most relevant for California

Also leverage Data from Ancestry Question on US Census

10. What is this person's ancestry or ethnic origin?

[ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]

[ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ]

(For example: Italian, Jamaican, African Am., Cambodian, Cape Verdean, Norwegian, Dominican, French Canadian, Haitian, Korean, Lebanese, Polish, Nigerian, Mexican, Taiwanese, Ukrainian, and so on.)

Focus on Mexican ancestry listed in response to Ancestry question

Self-reported Hispanic Origin of Children in California in the 1990 and 2000 Census, by Mexican Ancestry

Panel A: Children	No Mexican Ancestry	Multi-Ancestry Mexican	Only Mexican Ancestry
1990 Census			
Hispanic	11.32	80.99	98.55
Mexican	5.90	75.86	97.89
2000 Census			
Hispanic	17.98	86.68	98.76
Mexican	9.43	67.79	93.93
1990 Sample size	233,767	9,712	69,320
2000 Sample size	262,140	13,607	100,940

Multi-Ancestry Mexican indicates Mexican ancestry is listed along with other non-Mexican ancestry in response to Ancestry Question

Self-reported Hispanic Origin of Adults in California in the 1990 and 2000 Census, by Mexican Ancestry

Panel B: Adults	No Mexican Ancestry	Multi-Ancestry Mexican	Only Mexican Ancestry
1990 Census			
Hispanic	3.81	80.97	98.32
Mexican	1.77	77.77	97.76
2000 Census			
Hispanic	5.60	84.97	98.63
Mexican	2.77	72.88	93.65
1990 Sample size	654,325	6,343	57,746
2000 Sample size	655,601	8,914	75,521

Multi-Ancestry Mexican indicates Mexican ancestry is listed along with other non-Mexican ancestry in response to Ancestry Question

Sources of Identification

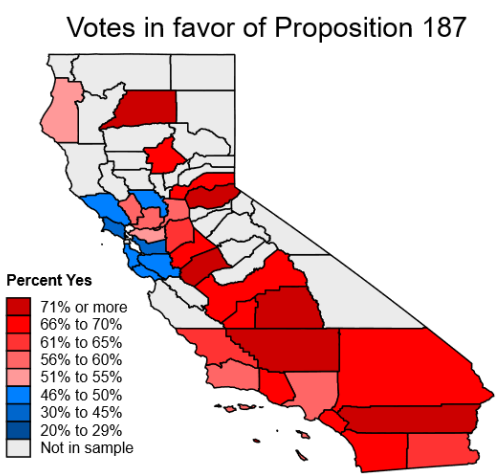
- Time and geographic variation in anti-immigrant sentiment
- Are people more or less likely to identify as Hispanic/Mexican in areas with higher anti-immigrant sentiment after the passage of Prop 187?
- How does Hispanic/Mexican identification vary by Hispanic/Mexican ancestry in areas with higher anti-immigrant sentiment after the passage of Prop 187?

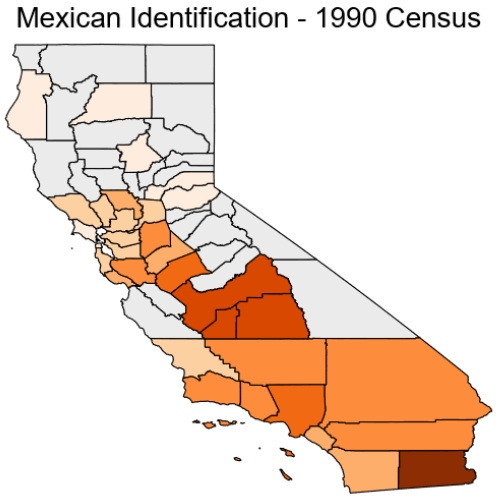
Estimating the Impact of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment on Ethnic Identity

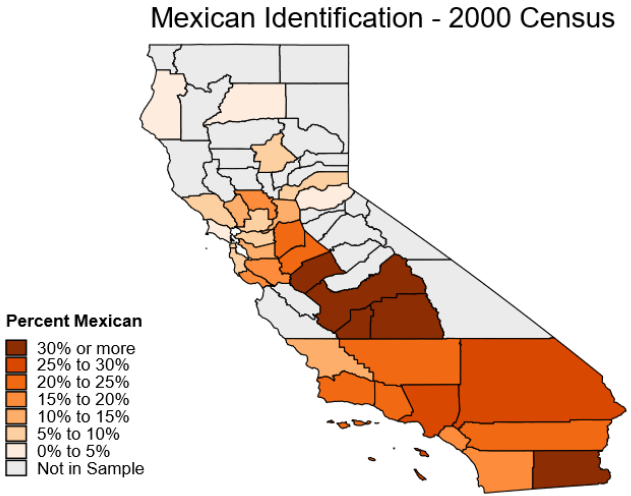
$$Mexican_{icy} = \alpha + \beta(1_{\{y=post\}} \times Yes187_c) + \delta 1_{\{y=post\}} + \lambda_c + \mathbf{X_{icy}}\boldsymbol{\pi} + \epsilon_{icy} \quad (1)$$

- $Mexican_{icy}$ is an indicator variable equal to one if person *i* in county *c*, in year *y*, identifies as Mexican on the Hispanic origin question.
- $Yes187_c$ is the percentage of votes in favor of Proposition 187 in county c. This vote share is interacted with an indicator variable equal to one if the person is observed after Prop 187 (i.e., in the year 2000 in Census data or in 1995 in CPS).
- The coefficient of interest, β, is the estimated **effect of one percentage-point increase in the percentage of votes in favor of Proposition 187** in that county on the probability that a person in that county will identify as Mexican.
- All regressions include individual level controls ($\mathbf{X_{icy}}$) for age, age squared, gender, a year indicator (2000 in Census and1995 in CPS), and county fixed effects (λ_c).

Votes in Favor of Proposition 187 and Self-reported Mexican Origin in California in the 1990 and 2000 Census







Higher shares of people identify as Mexican in areas with higher support for Prop 187 after it passed

Hispanic Identification and Prop 187

- Estimates from Eq (1) show higher shares of Hispanic/Latino identification in counties that approved of Prop 187, after it passed
  - As measured by Hispanic origin question

Table 2: Relationship between Votes in Favor of Proposition 187 in County and Hispanic Identification

Dependent Variable: Identified as Hispanic	Children	Adults
Percent Yes on 187 × 1{year = 2000}	.00218***	.00086***
	(.00052)	(.00030)
Mean of the dependent variable	.3745	.1399
Dependent Variable: Identified as Mexican		
Percent Yes on 187 × 1{year = 2000}	.00192***	.00056***
	(.00059)	(.00019)
Mean of the dependent variable	.3113	.1145
Sample size	689,486	1,458,450

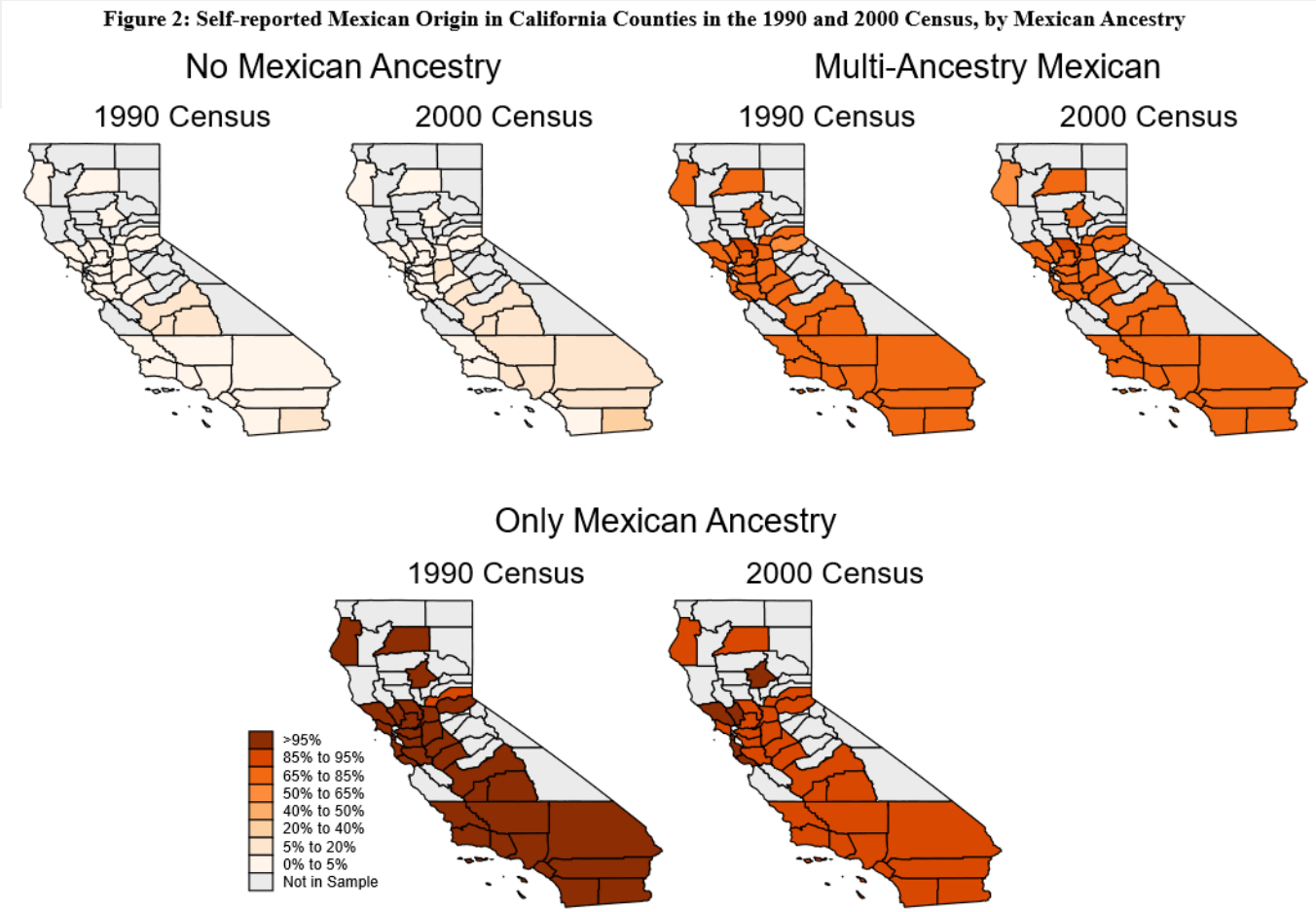
Estimating the Impact of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment on Ethnic Identity

$$Mexican_{icy} = \alpha + \beta(1_{\{y=2000\}} \times Yes187_c) + \delta 1_{\{y=2000\}} + \lambda_c + \mathbf{X_{icy}}\boldsymbol{\pi} + \epsilon_{icy} \quad (1)$$

- US Census analysis of Eq. (1) is also estimated separately for individuals with:
  - (*i*) Any Mexican ancestry,
  - (*ii*) No Mexican ancestry,
  - (*iii*) Multi-Ancestry Mexican, i.e., Mexican and non-Mexican ancestry, and
  - (i*v*) Only Mexican ancestry, respectively.
  - Categories (*ii*) through (i*v*) are mutually exclusive and exhaustive.

Self-reported Mexican Origin in California Counties in the 1990 and 2000 Census, by Mexican Ancestry

Those with No Mexican Ancestry look like they are more likely to identify as Mexican while those with only Mexican ancestry look less likely to identify



Results

Support for Prop 187 and Mexican Identification by Mexican Ancestry

Table 3: Relationship between Votes in Favor of Proposition 187 in County and Hispanic Identification, by Mexican Ancestry

	Any Mexican Ancestry		No Mexican Ancestry		Multi-Ancestry Mexican		Only Mexican Ancestry	
	Children	Adults	Children	Adults	Children	Adults	Children	Adults
Dep. Var.: Identified as Mexican								
Percent Yes on 187 × 1{year = 2000}	.00037	-.00067**	.00117***	.00040***	.00304*	-.00002	-.00030	-.00095***
	(.00042)	(.00026)	(.00022)	(.00011)	(.00155)	(.00094)	(.00030)	(.00022)
Mean of the dependent variable	.9257	.9329	.0776	.0227	.7118	.7494	.9556	.9545

*Statistically significant at 10% level; **at 5% level; ***at 1% level.
Source: 1990 and 2000 Census Data.
Notes: Robust standard errors clustered at the county level are shown in parentheses. Sampling weights were used in the calculations. The sample includes U.S.-born children (ages 0-17) and adults (ages 18 and older) living in California in 1990 and 2000. Individuals with allocated Hispanic origin are excluded. Other Hispanic is other than Mexican, Puerto Rican or Cuban. All regressions include controls for age, age squared, gender, a year 2000 indicator, and county fixed effects. Percent Yes on 187 is the percentage of yes votes on Proposition 187 in the county.

- Individuals with Only Mexican Ancestry are less likely to identify as Mexican
- Individuals who list No Mexican Ancestry are more likely to identify as Mexican

Support for Prop 187 and Hispanic Identification by Mexican Ancestry

Table 3: Relationship between Votes in Favor of Proposition 187 in County and Hispanic Identification, by Mexican Ancestry

	Any Mexican Ancestry		No Mexican Ancestry		Multi-Ancestry Mexican		Only Mexican Ancestry	
	Children	Adults	Children	Adults	Children	Adults	Children	Adults
Dep. Var.: Identified as Hispanic								
Percent Yes on 187 × 1{year = 2000}	.00013	-.00019	.00145**	.00062***	.00058	-.00077	.00004	-.00013
	(.00032)	(.00020)	(.00056)	(.00018)	(.00119)	(.00089)	(.00016)	(.00014)
Mean of the dependent variable	.9691	.9689	.1483	.0470	.8428	.8328	.9867	.9850

- If use indicator for broader Hispanic identity as dependent variable instead of Mexican indicator, see statistically significant results show up for those with no Mexican ancestry, with higher magnitudes

Why Two Disparate Effects by Ancestry?

- Those who list only Mexican ancestry arguably have the strongest tie to Mexican identity and may be those who are most likely to be identified by others as Mexican
  - Less likely to identify in places with higher support for Prop 187 after it was passed where the threat of discrimination is highest
- Those who do not list any Mexican ancestry may have a vague sense of Mexican identity, but may be less observably Mexican to others
  - More likely to identify as Mexican in places with higher support for Prop 187 after it was passed because their ethnic identity has become more salient
  - Consistent with consciousness raising of Hispanic/Latinos with relatively weaker ties to Hispanic heritage

CPS Descriptive Statistics for Adults

Table 1: Self-reported Hispanic Origin of Adults in California by Mexican Generation

	Hispanic	Mexican
First-generation Mexican	99.12	98.35
	95.38	93.20
Second-generation Mexican		
Both parents born in Mexico	99.11	97.94
One parent born in Mexico	90.78	87.34
Only mother born in Mexico	88.03	84.82
Only father born in Mexico	93.10	89.47

Source: 1994-1995 Current Population Survey (CPS) 4th outgoing rotation group data.
Notes: The samples include first- and second-generation Mexican Americans 18 and older who reside in a California county that can be identified in the CPS data. First-generation Mexican Americans are individuals who were born in Mexico. Second-generation Mexican Americans are U.S.-born individuals who have at least one parent born in Mexico. The sample sizes are 2,540 for the first generation and 833 for the second generation. Sampling weights were used in the calculations.

CPS Descriptive Statistics for Children

Rates of identification fall precipitously at third generation

Table 2: Self-reported Hispanic Origin of Children in California by Mexican Generation

	Hispanic	Mexican
First-generation Mexican	98.15	97.79
Second-generation Mexican	96.68	94.31
Both parents born in Mexico	99.50	99.07
One parent born in Mexico	89.22	81.73
Only mother born in Mexico	86.04	83.16
Only father born in Mexico	92.82	80.11
Third-generation Mexican	72.79	68.19
Grandparent born in Mexico on:		
Mexican Both Sides	100.00	89.97
Mexican One Side	65.22	62.13
Mexico only on mother side	67.97	67.97
Mexico only on father side	62.67	56.73

Source: 1994-1995 Current Population Survey (CPS) 4th outgoing rotation group data.
The sample sizes are 275 for the first generation, 1,321 for the second generation, and 196 for the third generation. Sampling weights were used in the calculations.

Effect of a One Percentage Point Increase in Yes Votes on Proposition 187 in County on the Mexican Identification of Adults by Mexican Generation

	Mexican	
	1st-Generation	2nd-Generation
Percent Yes on 187 × 1{year=1995}	.0008	-.0072***
	(.0007)	(.0021)
Mean of Dependent Variable	.9835	.932
Sample size	2,540	833

Second-generation Mexican:	Both parents Mexican	One parent Mexican	Only mom Mexican	Only dad Mexican
Percent Yes on 187 × 1{year=1995}	-.0024	-.0137***	-.0131*	-.0173**
	(.0023)	(.0042)	(.0066)	(.0082)
Mean of Dependent Variable	.9794	.8734	.8482	.8947
Sample size	460	373	174	199

- 2nd generation Mexican Americans are less likely to identify as Mexican origin in counties with higher support for Prop 187 after its passage

Effect of a One Percentage Point Increase in Yes Votes on Proposition 187 in County on the Mexican Identification of Children by Mexican Generation

Responses of 3rd generation Mexican Americans to local support for Prop 187 are mediated by their ties to Mexican ancestry.
Stronger ties→ Less likely to identify
Weaker ties→ More likely to identify

	Mexican			Not Mexican
	1st-Gen.	2nd-Gen.	3rd-Gen.	3rd+-Gen.
Percent Yes on 187 × 1{year=1995}	.0004	-.0018	.0206**	.0007
	(.0013)	(.0024)	(.0095)	(.0012)
Mean of Dependent Variable	.9779	.9431	.6819	.08004
Sample size	275	1,321	196	2,354
Second-generation Mexican:	Both parents Mexican	One parent Mexican	Only mom Mexican	Only dad Mexican
Percent Yes on 187 × 1{year=1995}	.0010	-.0123	.0097	-.0347**
	(.0011)	(.0114)	(.0129)	(.0148)
Mean of Dependent Variable	.9907	.8173	.8316	.8011
Sample size	967	354	196	158
Third-generation Mexican:	Mexican on both sides	Mexican on one side	Mexican only on mom side	Mexican only on dad side
Percent Yes on 187 × 1{year=1995}	-.0563***	.0269**	.0906***	-.0130**
	(.0109)	(.0106)	(.0112)	(.0051)
Mean of Dependent Variable	.8997	.6213	.6797	.5673
Sample size	41	155	74	81

Results

- Results suggest anti-immigrant sentiment, as measured by county-level vote share for Prop 187, affected ethnic identification patterns
- Reduced willingness to identify as Mexican origin for
  - Individuals with Mexican ancestry (Census)
  - Individuals with stronger, more observable, ties to Mexican identity (CPS)
- Increased willingness to identify as Mexican origin for
  - Individuals with no Mexican ancestry listed, but who may have vague sense of Mexican ancestry (Census)
  - Individuals with weaker latent ties to Mexican identity (CPS)
- To our knowledge, this is the first paper to connect changes in Hispanic/Latino identity with changes in incentives to identify and first to connect ethnic identity choices with political discourse

Thank you!

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