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

Francisca M. Antman and Brian Duncan

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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

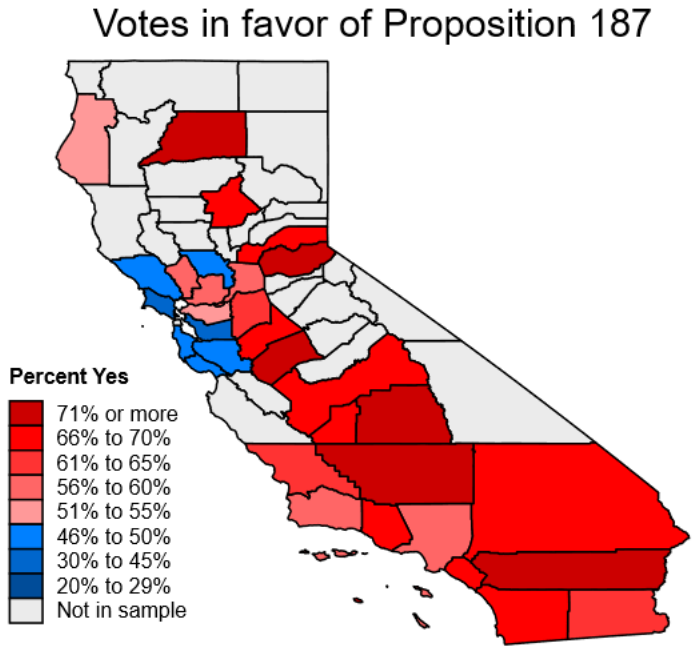
- Proposition 187, also known as the “Save our State” initiative called for denying public social, health, and education services to unauthorized immigrants.
  - One of the first and most well-known ballot measures widely seen to be anti-immigrant
- State and local officials were called on to investigate 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

Preliminary Results

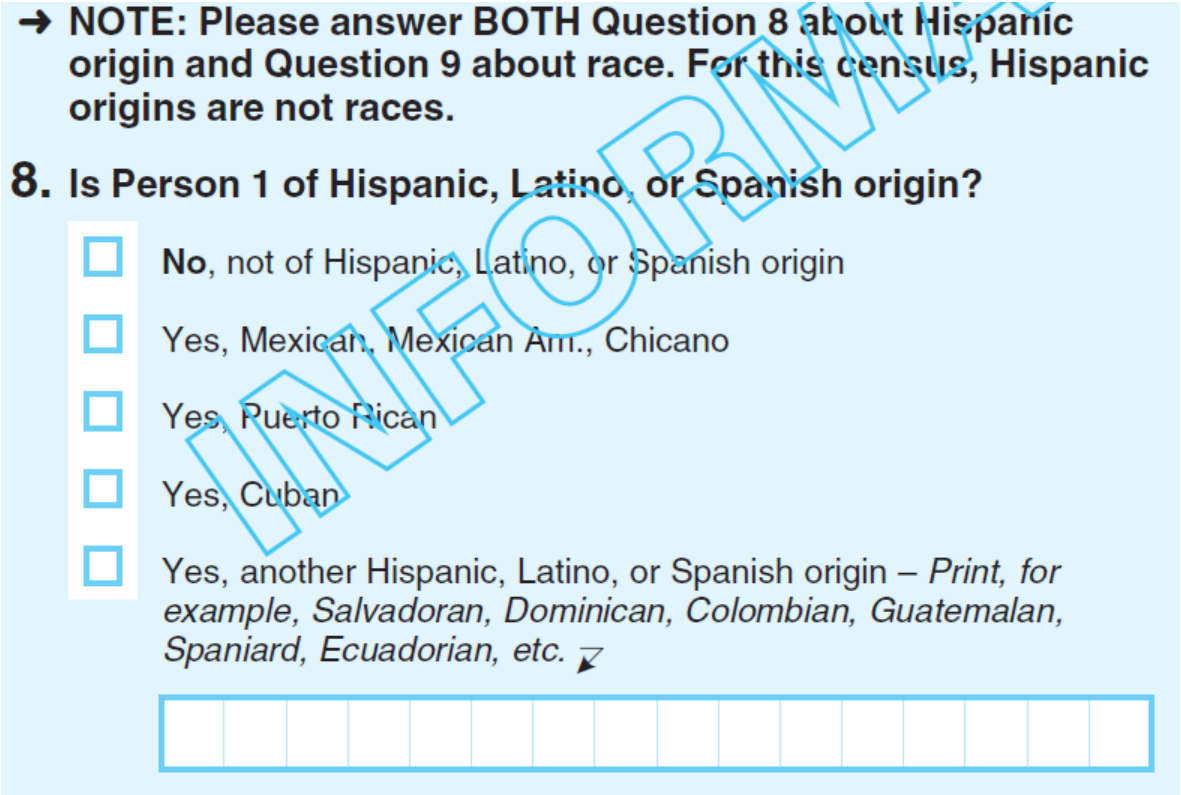
- Preliminary Results suggest anti-immigrant sentiment, as measured by county-level vote share for Prop 187, affected ethnic identification patterns
- Reduced willingness to identify as Mexican origin for individuals with Mexican ancestry
- Increased willingness to identify as Mexican origin for individuals with no Mexican ancestry listed, but who may have vague sense of Mexican ancestry
- Consistent with distinct motivations to identify for individuals based on ancestry

Data

- The sample is from the 1990 and 2000 Census 5% microdata drawn from IPUMS USA (Ruggles et al. 2022).
- 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

Hispanic/Latino Identification from Hispanic Origin Question on US Census

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



➜ **NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 8 about Hispanic origin and Question 9 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races.**

8. Is Person 1 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- ☐ **No**, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- ☐ Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
- ☐ Yes, Puerto Rican
- ☐ Yes, Cuban
- ☐ Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin – *Print, for example, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, Guatemalan, Spaniard, Ecuadorian, etc.*

INFORMW

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

Table 1: Self-reported Hispanic Origin of Children and Adults in California in the 1990 and 2000 Census, by Mexican Ancestry

Panel A: Children	No Mexican Ancestry	Other 1st Mexican 2nd	Mexican 1st Other 2nd	Only Mexican Ancestry
1990 Census				
Hispanic	11.32	73.27	87.31	98.55
Mexican	5.90	66.18	83.80	97.89
Other Hispanic	4.48	4.79	2.52	0.55
2000 Census				
Hispanic	10.33	68.73	87.77	98.18
Mexican	6.86	51.40	68.96	82.67
Other Hispanic	3.20	12.94	14.00	14.59
1990 Sample size	233,767	4,376	5,336	69,320
2000 Sample size	262,140	4,787	8,820	100,940

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

Panel B: Adults	No Mexican Ancestry	Other 1st Mexican 2nd	Mexican 1st Other 2nd	Only Mexican Ancestry
1990 Census				
Hispanic	3.81	71.96	87.69	98.32
Mexican	1.77	68.31	84.83	97.76
Other Hispanic	1.61	2.59	2.16	0.50
2000 Census				
Hispanic	3.59	67.85	88.37	98.17
Mexican	2.03	48.88	70.57	85.12
Other Hispanic	1.44	12.61	12.42	10.45
1990 Sample size	654,325	2,729	3,614	57,746
2000 Sample size	655,601	2,906	6,008	75,521

Source: 1990 and 2000 Census Data. The samples include U.S.-born individuals living in identifiable counties in California in 1990 and 2000 with the indicated ancestry. Individuals with allocated Hispanic origin are excluded.
Notes: All numbers are percentages. Sampling weights were used in the calculations. Other Hispanic is other than Mexican, Puerto Rican or Cuban.

Sources of Identification

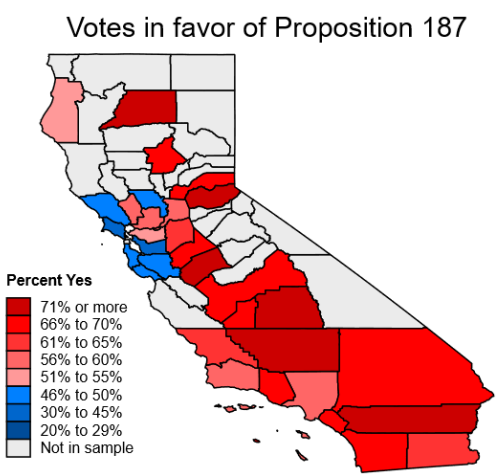
- Time and geographic variation in anti-immigrant sentiment
- Are people more or less likely to identify as Latino/Hispanic in areas with higher anti-immigrant sentiment after the passage of Prop 187?
- How does Hispanic identification vary by Hispanic ancestry in areas with higher anti-immigrant sentiment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

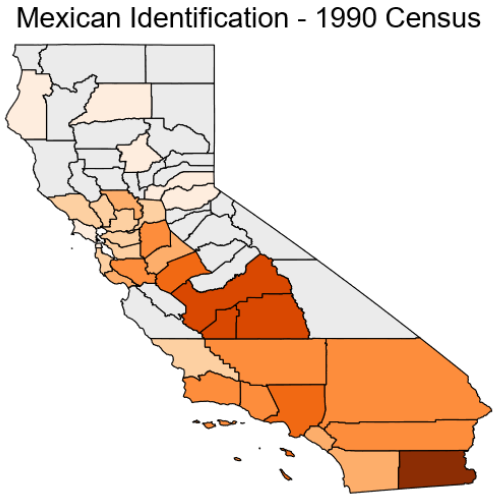
Estimating the Impact of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment on Ethnic Identity

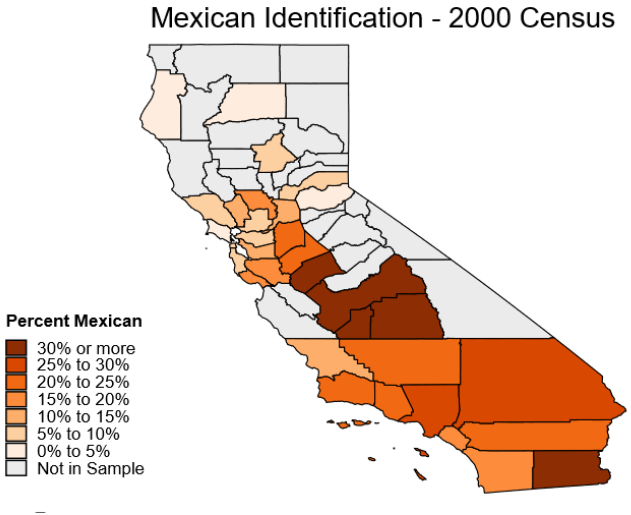
$$Mexican_{icy} = \alpha + \beta(1_{\{y=2000\}} \times Yes187_c) + \delta 1_{\{y=2000\}} + \lambda_c + \mathbf{X_{icy}}\boldsymbol{\pi} + \epsilon_{icy} \quad (1)$$

- $Mexican_{icy}$ 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 fraction 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 in the year 2000 (i.e., after Prop 187).
- The coefficient of interest, β, is the estimated effect of going from zero to 100% county vote share in favor of Proposition 187 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 2000 indicator ($1_{\{y=2000\}}$), 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

Dependent Variable: Identified as Hispanic	Children	Adults
Fraction Yes on 187 × 1{year = 2000}	.2176***	.0861***
	(.0524)	(.0297)
Mean of the dependent variable	.3745	.1399
Dependent Variable: Identified as Mexican		
Fraction Yes on 187 × 1{year = 2000}	.1924***	.0561***
	(.0593)	(.0194)
Mean of the dependent variable	.3113	.1145
Dependent Variable: Identified as Other Hispanic		
Fraction Yes on 187 × 1{year = 2000}	.0131	.0302**
	(.0441)	(.0115)
Mean of the dependent variable	.05611	.02105
Sample size	689,486	1,458,450

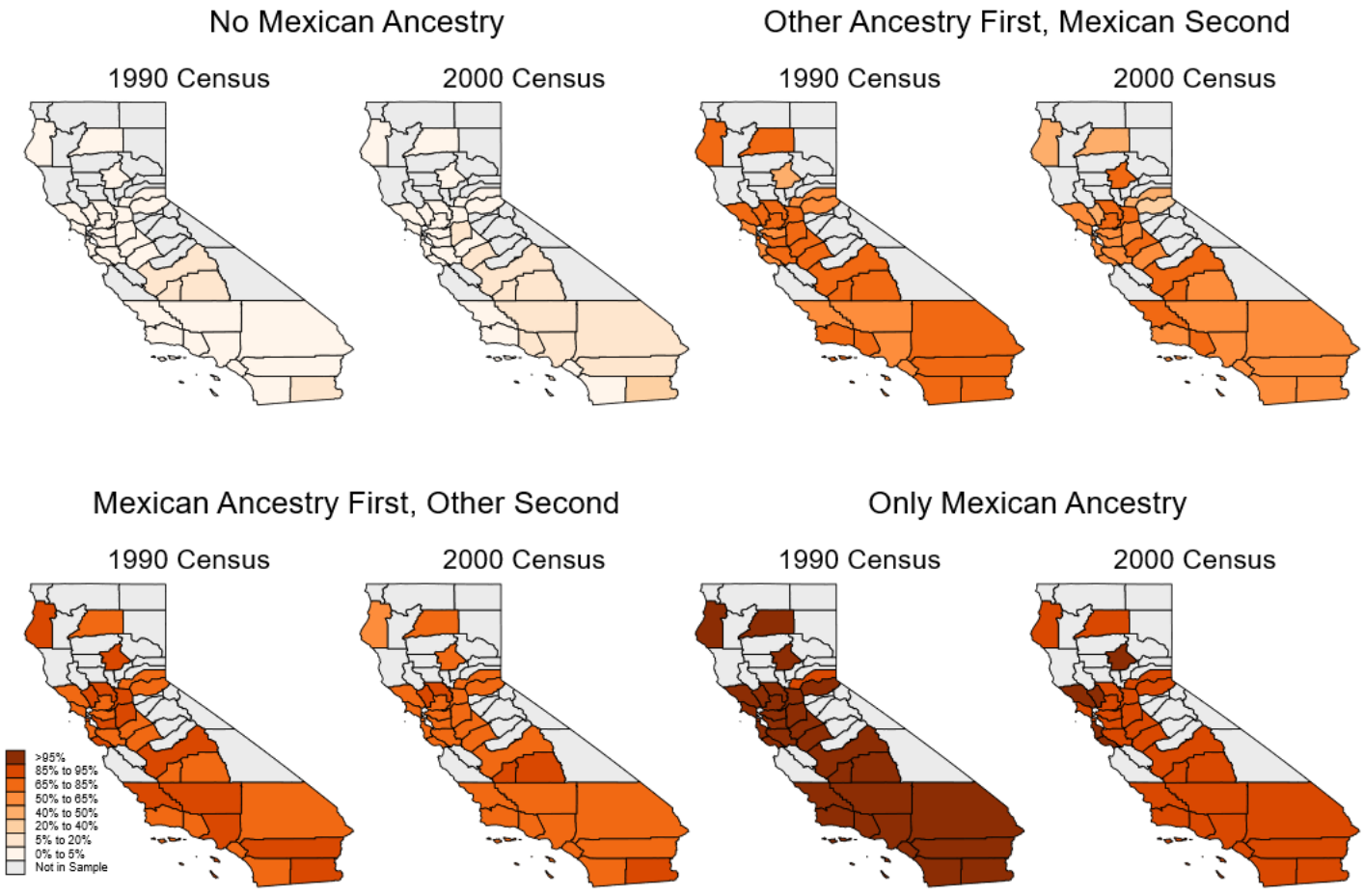
Estimating the Impact of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment on Ethnic Identity

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

- Eq. (1) is also estimated separately for individuals with:
  - (*i*) Any Mexican ancestry,
  - (*ii*) no Mexican ancestry,
  - (*iii*) other (non-Mexican) ancestry listed first and Mexican ancestry listed second,
  - (*iv*) Mexican ancestry listed first and other (non-Mexican) ancestry listed second, and
  - (*v*) only Mexican ancestry, respectively.
  - Categories (*ii*) through (*v*) and 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



Source: 1990 and 2000 Census Data. The samples include U.S.-born individuals living in identifiable counties in California in 1990 and 2000.

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		Other 1st Mexican 2nd		Mexican 1st Other 2nd		Only Mexican Ancestry	
	Children	Adults	Children	Adults	Children	Adults	Children	Adults	Children	Adults
Dep. Var.: Identified as Mexican										
Fraction Yes on 187 × 1{year = 2000}	.0372	-.0673**	.1167***	.0395***	.0898	-.1248	.4436***	.0780	-.0302	-.0947***
	(.0423)	(.0260)	(.0224)	(.0113)	(.1921)	(.1618)	(.1563)	(.0927)	(.0300)	(.0224)
Mean of the dependent variable	.9257	.9329	.0776	.0227	.6174	.6428	.773	.8112	.9556	.9545
Sample size	193,579	148,524	495,907	1,309,926	9,163	5,635	14,156	9,622	170,260	133,267

- 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

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	Any Mexican Ancestry		No Mexican Ancestry		Other 1st Mexican 2nd		Mexican 1st Other 2nd		Only Mexican Ancestry	
	Children	Adults	Children	Adults	Children	Adults	Children	Adults	Children	Adults
Dep. Var.: Identified as Hispanic										
Fraction Yes on 187 × 1{year = 2000}	.0134	-.0186	.1455**	.0617***	-.0320	-.1591	.1130	-.0287	.0042	-.0126
	(.0318)	(.0203)	(.0564)	(.0181)	(.1710)	(.1499)	(.0841)	(.0632)	(.0159)	(.0141)
Mean of the dependent variable	.9691	.9689	.1483	.047	.7504	.7207	.9027	.8977	.9867	.985

- If use indicator for broader Hispanic identity as dependent variable instead of Mexican indicator, only see statistically significant results show up for those with no Mexican ancestry
- Consistent with a more vague sense of Hispanic ancestry for this group

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

Preliminary Results

- Preliminary 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
- Increased willingness to identify as Mexican origin for individuals with no Mexican ancestry listed, but who may have vague sense of Mexican ancestry
- To our knowledge, this is the first paper to connect changes in Hispanic/Latino identity with changes in incentives to identify as Hispanic/Latino and first to connect ethnic identity choices with political discourse

Continuing Work

- Examine Current Population Survey to perform similar analysis and extensions
  - Focus on closer time frame around 1994 election
  - Explore using parental place of birth to identify individuals with Mexican ancestry
- Connect with voter engagement outcomes for Hispanic/Latinos and Hispanic/Latino representation

Thank you!

francisca.antman@colorado.edu