

Acculturating Contexts and Anglo Opposition to Immigration in the United States

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This article explores the impact of novel change in the ethnic composition of Americans' local context on their attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policy preferences. Adapting the "defended-neighborhoods hypothesis" regarding residential integration and black-white interracial relations to the context of immigration and intercultural relations, this article advances the acculturating-contexts hypothesis. This hypothesis argues that a large influx of an immigrant group will activate threat among white citizens when it occurs in local areas where the immigrant group had largely been absent. This theoretical argument is explored within the context of Hispanic immigration and tested using national survey and census data. This article demonstrates that over-time growth in local Hispanic populations triggers threat and opposition to immigration among whites residing in contexts with few initial Hispanics but reduces threat and opposition to immigration among whites residing in contexts with large preexisting Hispanic populations.

Conflict over immigration and vocal attempts by national political leaders to "reform" or "overhaul" federal immigration laws come in and out of the national political scene and the public mind nearly every few years in the United States. The recurrence and intensification of political conflict over immigration in the United States is undoubtedly tied to ongoing and accelerating immigration-driven demographic changes in the nation. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau reveal that the nation's foreign-born population is nearing 37 million, or 12% of the total population. The Hispanic population, which is the largest and arguably most salient immigrant group in the United States, grew 46% from 2000 to 2010 and accounted for nearly 56% of the nation's total population growth over this period. In addition, the nation's unauthorized immigrant population has also steadily risen over the past decade, growing from 8.4 million in 2000 up to 11.2 million in 2010.¹ At the state level, state immigrant populations grew on average by 150% between 1990 and 2006.² In short, few Americans in the twenty-first century live in towns, states, or regions unaffected by immigration.

Historically, with immigration comes the prejudice, hostility, and resentment of longtime citizens toward immigrant groups (Bennet 1988; Higham 2002; Schrag 2010). A popular object of inquiry in the social sciences is the exploration of the causes of these negative reactions to immigration, yielding a corpus of public opinion research assessing the sources of anti-immigrant sentiment and policy support among the American public. At present, two main developments stand out in this research. First, cultural threat, characterized by the perception that immigrants threaten the American identity and culture, stands as a predominant explanation for, and prepotent predictor of, opposition to immigration. Second, the literature has experienced a resurgence of interest in the impact of context on opinion, with the emergence of more nuanced theories hypothesizing conditional links between ethnic context and attitudes toward immigration. The main goal of the present research is to build upon these two key developments by bringing them together in the form of theorizing and empirically assessing the conditional effects of citizens' local ethnic context on their cultural threat perceptions.

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¹Population figures obtained from publicly available reports posted online at the Pew Hispanic Center.

²Estimate from the U.S. Census Bureau's 1990 Decennial Census and 2006 American Community Survey.

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This article advances the *acculturating-contexts hypothesis*, which argues that residing in local contexts undergoing substantial and unprecedented ethnic change constitutes a concrete and previously overlooked contextual dimension of the cultural threat of immigration. This hypothesis contends that a large influx of immigrants will be most culturally threatening for citizens residing in contexts with minimal preexisting immigrant populations and least culturally threatening for those residing in contexts with larger extant immigrant populations. Tested within the context of Hispanic immigration, this article uses census and national survey data to demonstrate that the impact of county-level growth in the Hispanic population from 1990 to 2000 upon white residents' attitudes toward immigrants is conditional upon the 1990 size of the Hispanic population within the county. In high Hispanic-growth counties with low initial Hispanic populations (i.e., acculturating counties), higher levels of perceived cultural threat are reported among residents, which in turn enhance support for restrictive immigration policy. Large growth in the Hispanic population in already diverse county contexts with larger extant Hispanic populations (i.e., acculturated counties), however, produces effects in line with the predictions of intergroup contact theory, where growth is associated with a decrease in perceived cultural threat and an increase in support for permissive immigration policy.

In total, this research makes an important contribution to furthering our understanding of the sources of opinion on immigration in two principal ways. First, it extends the current conceptualization of cultural threat beyond the symbolic into the realm of the realistic by emphasizing the objective process of acculturation and the impact of residing in an acculturating context. The results of the analyses demonstrate that a certain portion of the cognitive process of perceiving threats to the American culture from immigrants stems from real and novel changes in one's surrounding sociocultural environment. Second, by theorizing and empirically demonstrating the conditions under which growth in local immigrant populations leads to threat, this research addresses important inconsistencies in past findings within the contextual research, advances our present understanding of the effects of context on opinion, and contributes to the reconciliation of intergroup threat and contact theories in the immigration literature.

The Cultural Threat of Immigration

The predominant framework in the opinion research for explaining public opposition to immigration centers

upon the threats posed by immigrants to native-born Anglo citizens. This framework often involves a comparison between those threats conceptualized as realistic, materially based, and economic on the one hand, and those conceived as symbolic, identity oriented, and cultural on the other (Citrin, Reingold, and Green 1990; Hood and Morris 1997; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004; Stephan, Ybarra, and Bachman 1999). A key result emerging from the research is that measures of perceived cultural threat largely outperform measures of material and economic threat. Measures of cultural threat have been found to dwarf the effects of economic threat measures in the U.S. context (Citrin, Reingold, and Green 1990; Citrin et al. 1990; Citrin et al. 1997; Espenshade and Calhoun 1993; Ha 2010; Hood and Morris 1997), in the Dutch context (Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004), and across 20 European countries (Sides and Citrin 2007). In addition, leading experimental research found that inducing cultural threat produced a stronger anti-immigrant response than an induction of economic threat (Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004).

Despite its status as a prepotent source of support for anti-immigrant policies, cultural threat is presently an undertheorized and underanalyzed concept in the literature, largely because it is conceptualized almost exclusively in symbolic terms, with little to no effort aimed at linking it to citizens' ethnic context. The prevailing conceptualization of cultural threat in the political science literature is derived from social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel and Turner 1979) and symbolic politics theory (SPT; Sears 1993) and emphasizes the perception that immigrants threaten one's national identity and "way of life" (Citrin et al. 1990; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004). Within the existing literature, cultural threat is conceptualized as symbolic in nature because it is theorized to revolve around concern over putatively intangible objects, such as identity, and the values and beliefs which serve as potent symbols of identity (Citrin et al. 1990; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004; Stephan, Ybarra, and Bachman 1999). Concern over these intangible objects is contrasted in the literature to concern over more concrete material resources situated at the center of theories of realistic group conflict (Taylor and Moghaddam 1994), such as jobs, income, political office, and public safety.

Beyond pertaining to threats to immaterial objects, the symbolic conceptualization of cultural threat extends to its theorized sources; while material and economic threats are believed to stem from real intergroup processes, zero-sum competition, or one's objective economic vulnerability, cultural threat perceptions have largely been traced to factors operating *within* the individual. For example, existing research demonstrates that

cultural threat perceptions stem from personality factors, such as self-esteem (Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004) and authoritarianism (Hetherington and Weiler 2009), as well as individuals' deeply ingrained symbolic orientations, such as religious affiliation (Fetzer 2000) or ideology and national identity (Citrin, Reingold, and Green 1990). According to this symbolic framework, the perception that immigrants pose a threat to the American culture originates from within the individual and need not have any actual correspondence to real, objective factors, such as the size or characteristics of local immigrant populations. This feature of cultural threat is consistent with SIT and SPT, which view intergroup conflict as springing not from zero-sum competition but from internalized identities and ingrained orientations learned through political socialization.

By referring to concern over immaterial objects and ostensibly emerging from factors operating primarily within the individual, cultural threat has largely been relegated to the realm of the unrealistic, with little intellectual effort invested in exploring dimensions of cultural threat that are tangible and distinct from concerns over the status or maintenance of national identities. What is particularly lacking is the absence of an attempt to theoretically and empirically link concerns over the cultural impacts of immigration to citizens' ethnic context. Interestingly, despite being a central concept and key predictor of immigration policy preferences, no existing research specifically addresses whether cultural threat perceptions are influenced by the characteristics of immigrant populations residing near or around citizens. In other words, while cultural threat is about immigration, the existing research has yet to reveal whether it has any systematic relationship to immigration. An important contribution to the opinion research can be made by determining whether concrete intercultural processes operative within citizens' residential contexts—such as increasing ethnic diversity driven by growth in immigrant minorities—influence the perception that immigrants are culturally threatening. Establishing the effect of such tangible contextual factors as distinct from those of identity, prejudice, or other key symbolic orientations would support the claim that cultural threat, as a theoretical construct, should be conceptualized as having important symbolic *and* realistic components.

Context, Threat, and Opinion on Immigration

The development of a contextual theory of cultural threat requires contending with the corpus of contextual re-

search within the intergroup relations and public opinion literature. In building such a theory, it is important to heed the lessons learned from this research and devise a theory that addresses key shortcomings in past work and builds upon recent advances. Within the literature, scholarship has long been drawn to the power-threat hypothesis (Blalock 1967; Key 1949), which, when applied to immigration, argues that the size of local immigrant groups should be linked to the degree of real economic and political competition between immigrant minorities and native-born residents. Given the theorized linkages between immigrant group size, real competition, and the perception of threat, the power-threat hypothesis predicts that hostility toward immigrants and support for anti-immigrant policies will be greater among citizens residing in immigrant-heavy local areas (Hopkins 2010; Quillian 1995; Taylor 1998). Despite the intuitive logic of this hypothesis, research on power threat has produced one of the central puzzles in the contextual research—the notoriously inconsistent findings for group-size-based measures of ethnic context on citizens' attitudes and policy preferences. At present, limited evidence exists in support of the power-threat hypothesis (Campbell, Wong, and Citrin 2006; Tolbert and Grummel 2003); some studies find that residing near immigrant minorities *reduces* anti-immigrant sentiment (Fetzer 2000; Fox 2004; Hood and Morris 1997), and the bulk of the research finds that the size of local immigrant populations exerts no effect on citizens' immigration policy preferences (Cain, Citrin, and Wong 2000; Citrin et al. 1997; Citrin, Reingold, and Green 1990; Dixon and Rosenbaum 2004; Fennelly and Federico 2008; Frandreis and Tatolovitch 1997; Taylor 1998).

At least three plausible explanations exist to account for these inconsistent results.³ The first and predominant explanation is the countervailing predictions of intergroup threat and contact theory (Allport 1954) with respect to ethnic context. These opposing predictions have led scholars to link the inconsistent results in the research to the possibility that larger group size in some instances accompanies the types of irregular and superficial contact leading to threat, in other instances captures the types of consistent and intimate contact described in contact theory to reduce threat, and in many other instances soaks up some blend of the two, which

³In addition, scholars have also identified the measurement of context at varying geographic levels (state, county, zip code, city, census tract, etc.) as an additional source of variation in the results of research on ethnic context and opinion (e.g., Oliver and Mendelberg 2000).

counteract each other and produce null effects on opinion. Second, the predictive value of the power-threat hypothesis in the case of white opinion on immigration has come into question largely out of concern that relations between whites and immigrant minorities—such as Hispanics or Asians—may operate differently than past relations between whites and blacks (Hopkins 2010; Oliver and Wong 2003). A third explanation that has received little attention pertains to operationalization, with many theories stipulating the perception of threat as an intermediary between context and policy preferences, but in most cases failing to actually specify mediated effects in their analyses. For example, the principal mechanism linking minority-group size to white racial hostility in theories of racial or power threat is the perception of threat associated with the group in question (Key 1949; Quillian 1995). According to these perspectives, in order for the competitive group processes presumed by minority-group size to activate hostility among whites toward minorities, these competitive relations have to be perceived and translated into the belief that these groups pose a threat. Despite the rather explicit suggestion that context will generate support for restrictive immigration policies through the perception of threat, the overwhelming majority of studies analyze models testing the direct, rather than indirect, effects of context on policy preferences (e.g., Campbell, Wong, and Citrin 2006; Hood and Morris 1997).

In response to the poor empirical performance of the power-threat hypothesis, the literature has seen the emergence of a new wave of contextual research possessing a sharper focus on stipulating the conditions under which group-size-based measures of racial and ethnic context lead to amity or enmity between groups (Branton and Jones 2005; Oliver and Mendelberg 2000; Oliver and Wong 2003). The clear goals of theorizing the conditional effects of context within this research are to push extant theories beyond their current borders and reconcile the countervailing predictions of intergroup threat and contact theories. The renewed interest in context found its way into the immigration literature through work exploring the effect of contextual measures of local immigrant populations conditional on the degree of personal contact (Hood and Morris 2000; Stein, Post, and Rinden 2000), the policy under consideration (Campbell, Wong, and Citrin 2006), the immigrant group in question (Ha 2010), the legal status of the immigrants (Hood and Morris 1998), the degree of residential segregation of the immigrant population (Rocha and Espino 2009), and the salience of immigration in the national news (Hopkins 2010). In addition, concerns regarding the applicability of the power-threat hypothesis to the case of immigration

have resulted in a shift in recent leading research toward a theoretical and empirical focus on the over-time growth in, rather than the size of, immigrant populations as the key characteristic arousing public attention and driving threat (Hopkins 2010).

These recent works have taken significant steps in moving scholarship beyond the power-threat hypothesis and demonstrating important nuanced relationships between context and opinion. At present, however, a critical omission in this line of contextual research is the failure of scholars to apply a standing alternative to the power-threat hypothesis, which itself is a conditional theory of threat, to the case of immigration. Introduced in the work on white-black interracial relations, the “defended neighborhoods” hypothesis (DNH; Green, Strolovitch, and Wong 1998) focuses on the effect of growing racial diversity within an area over a particular period of time *conditional* upon the area’s prior degree of racial homogeneity. The hypothesis argues that growing minority populations are most likely to translate into racial hostility in white-dominated, as compared to multiracial, communities. The DNH has been found to provide a powerful account of interethnic violence in New York City (Green et al. 1998) and xenophobic voting behavior in post-Soviet Russia (Alexseev 2006). Despite its theoretical and empirical exploits, it has failed to see much application in the intergroup literature writ large.

One primary concern in applying the DNH to the case of immigration is the applicability of a theory developed within the context of white-black interracial relations to the domain of intercultural relations. There are several features of the hypothesis worthy of noting that support its status as a prospect for application to this context. First, the DNH emphasizes the growth in, rather than the size of, a residentially proximate out-group population. Second, this perspective advances a conditional framework, yielding divergent predictions for the effect of growth on threat depending upon the prior degree of racial homogeneity within a local context, thus offering a theoretical resolution of the conflicting predictions of intergroup threat and contact theory. In sum, the DNH’s emphasis on the conditional effects of change allays several vital concerns associated with the power-threat hypothesis and its applicability to opinion on immigration. Beyond these initial exploits of the DNH, its translation to the context of immigration is more strongly guided by a body of theory and research explicitly pertaining to intercultural relations. This work, introduced in the following section, will serve as the principal theoretical basis for the issuance of the main predictions of the acculturating-contexts hypothesis.

Acculturating Contexts

The work on acculturation and adaptation (Castro 2003) within cross-cultural psychology provides a strong theoretical basis for (1) the identification of concrete dimensions of the cultural impacts and threat of immigration and (2) the translation of the defended-neighborhoods hypothesis to the domain of intercultural relations and the case of opinion on immigration. Of primary concern to this research is the individual's adaptation and adjustment to residing in an environment undergoing acculturation, defined as large-scale sociocultural change due to novel contact between culturally distinct groups. Within this literature, adaptation is conceptualized as an individual's degree of adjustment to the prevailing conditions within his or her environment and is characterized by the level of "fit" between the individual and his or her surrounding sociocultural context (Berry 1970, 1997; Castro 2003). The concept of "fit" within this body of work pertains to psychological and sociocultural adaptation to one's environment (Ward and Kennedy 1993), with the former involving feelings of belonging to one's community, social trust, and satisfaction with life (Berry 1970, 1997; LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton 1993) and the latter involving the ability to effectively interact and communicate with cultural out-groups (i.e., sociocultural competence; Castro 2003; La Fromboise, Coleman, and Gerton 1993; Ward and Rana-Deuba 1999). The acculturation literature contends that individuals are susceptible to experiencing "culture shock" (Furnham and Bochner 1986; Oberg 1960) or "acculturative stress" (Berry 1970, 1997), characterized as the stress to individuals resulting from the diminution of psychological and sociocultural adaptation, when the environments they reside in undergo drastic and unprecedented cultural change. According to this work, the experience of shock or stress is linked to the degree in which the presence of individuals possessing unfamiliar language and culture serves to displace one's preexisting and familiar sociocultural environment and require adaptation and adjustment to a more unfamiliar and culturally diverse social landscape.

Paralleling the defended-neighborhoods hypothesis, the acculturation and adaptation framework suggests that the experience of culture shock or stress is more likely to be linked to a change from ethnic homogeneity to moderate diversity than it is to a change from moderate to more ethnic diversity within one's local context. In the former case (i.e., acculturating contexts), residents are argued to experience a jarring displacement of their habituated homogeneous sociocultural environment due to the novel emergence of unfamiliar immigrant groups and foreign

culture. In the latter case (i.e., acculturated contexts), growth in the size of cultural minority groups should presumably produce less shock or stress to long-term residents because the disruption of cultural homogeneity has previously occurred, and individuals residing in these already diverse contexts are likely to be more exposed and acclimated to higher levels of cultural diversity. In short, the literature on acculturation and adaptation provides a strong theoretical basis for identifying the conditions under which a growing immigrant population within Americans' local contexts should threaten residents' psychological and sociocultural adaptation and thus lead to the experience of culture shock or acculturative stress.

The acculturation framework offers a conceptualization of cultural threat that can be theoretically distinguished from the current symbolic conceptualization in terms of the level of threat, the object being threatened, and the sources of the threat. Within the acculturation framework, the threats triggered by residing within an acculturating environment pertain to self-based versus group-based outcomes, where threats to one's sociocultural adaptation and the experience of acculturative stress are personal and distinct from concern over group identity, which leading research argues "inherently is a collective-level threat" (Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004, 37). Second, the objects being threatened within the acculturation framework are pragmatic rather than symbolic, pertaining to practical results, such as effectively interacting with out-groups and feeling comfortable in one's surrounding environment, rather than abstract results, such as maintaining the status and distinctiveness of group identity. Last, the sources of threat within the acculturation framework are linked to the objective contextual process of acculturation, rather than to processes operating within the individual, which need not have any linkage to real context-bound intergroup processes. These distinguishable features of a conceptualization of cultural threat rooted in the contextual process of acculturation push the concept well beyond its current constitution in the opinion literature as a symbolic threat.

Drawing upon the work on acculturation and adaptation, and extending it to an explicit theory of the contextual bases of cultural threat and prediction regarding the impact of ethnic context on Americans' attitudes toward immigration, this article offers the *acculturating-contexts hypothesis*. This hypothesis offers the following predictions:

- H1:* A large over-time growth in an immigrant population should lead to augmented perceptions of cultural threat in contexts with a very small initial size of the immigrant group. As the preexisting size

of an immigrant group increases, the over-time growth in this population should lead to reduced threat.

H2: Residing in an acculturating context should increase support for restrictive immigration policy through heightening the perception of cultural threat.

The first prediction connects residing in an acculturating context, and the presumed experience of shock or stress in response to novel cultural change, to the perception that immigrants are culturally threatening. The second prediction argues that residing in an acculturating context will bolster support for anti-immigration policy by enhancing cultural threat perceptions.⁴ As noted above, extant contextual theories, such as the power-threat hypothesis, suggest that larger local immigrant populations will be translated into anti-immigrant policy support via the perception of threat from immigrants. While the acculturating-contexts hypothesis departs from extant-threat hypotheses, the expectation of a mediated link between ethnic context and policy attitudes is analytically consistent with these theories and supported by recent work demonstrating that threat perceptions mediate the effect of threatening intercultural experiences on immigration-policies preferences (Newman, Hartman, and Taber 2012). In sum, the acculturating-contexts hypothesis pushes the concept of cultural threat beyond its current symbolic conceptualization by emphasizing residing in an acculturating context as a tangible, contextual source of threat perception. Additionally, the hypothesis pushes beyond existing contextual theories of opinion on immigration by focusing on over-time growth in immigrant populations *in conjunction* with their initial size and stipulating an *indirect effect* for context on policy attitudes through its impact on cultural threat perceptions.

One key theoretical concern with the acculturating-contexts hypothesis that needs to be addressed is that the threatened response it predicts in high-growth/low initial immigration contexts (i.e., acculturating contexts) could be a function of the activation of general threat or prejudice in response to the first appearance of immigrants rather than culture shock, acculturative stress, or any other type of negative experience explicitly and uniquely linked to culture. Residing in high-growth/low initial contexts may produce an undifferentiated prejudice toward immigrants among longtime residents (Hopkins

2010; Taylor 1998). This undifferentiated prejudice could lead to general negative appraisals of the impacts of immigrants, which would manifest as higher levels of agreement with claims that immigrants take jobs, stress public coffers, increase crime, *and* threaten the culture. In moving from contexts lacking immigrants to those with established and continually growing cultural minority populations, threatened responses may diminish for reasons unrelated to the theorized reduction of culture shock and residents' acclimation to cultural diversity. Rather, the prejudice activated in response to the initial appearance of immigrants may lessen as the prolonged presence of immigrants enables the type of repeated and intimate contact argued by contact theory to attenuate prejudice. Additionally, prejudice in conjunction with residential self-selection may result in more prejudiced residents moving out of areas with large immigrant populations and more nonprejudiced and multicultural residents selecting into or remaining in diverse contexts.

One way of engaging these concerns would be to compare the conditional marginal effects of growth in an immigrant population upon cultural threat and *other types* of perceived threats of immigration. The perception of cultural threat, according to the acculturating-contexts hypothesis, is driven by culturally oriented shock and stress, which is theorized to be most operative in acculturating contexts and least operative in acculturated contexts. If the theory underlying the acculturating-contexts hypothesis holds, then the interactive dynamics of the hypothesis should map onto cultural threat perceptions but not onto noncultural threats, such as those pertaining to the economy or crime. The perception of these latter types of threat, because they do not pertain to the "cultural" realm, should not have any unique tracking with the process of acculturation and adaptation. Rather, such threat perceptions should either have no relation to ethnic context, as suggested by extant research, or should be linked to immigrant growth regardless of prior levels of ethnic homogeneity, suggesting a resilient association between economic competition, crime, and increasing immigration in the minds of citizens. The final prediction of the acculturating-contexts hypothesis, then, is:

H3: The diminishing marginal effect of immigrant growth (when moving from low to high initial immigrant-population contexts) hypothesized for cultural threat perceptions should *not* hold for noncultural threat perceptions. Noncultural threat perceptions, such as those pertaining to the economy or crime, should either have no relationship to ethnic context or should be unconditionally enhanced by immigrant growth.

⁴Otherwise known as a "mediated moderated effect" (Baron and Kenny 1986), where the effect of immigrant growth (the treatment) on policy attitudes (the outcome variable) is moderated by initial immigrant group size, and the moderated effect of growth on attitudes is mediated by cultural threat perceptions.

Finding this hypothesized divergence in the conditional marginal effects of immigrant growth on different threat measures would have several important theoretical implications. First, it would support the underlying assumption that qualitatively distinct types of concerns over immigration exist in the minds of citizens. Second, it would counterargue initial prejudice and over-time contact and prejudice reduction as an alternative to acculturation and acclimation in explaining the pattern of marginal effects for immigrant growth on cultural threat perceptions predicted by the acculturating-contexts hypothesis. And third, it would suggest against prejudice in conjunction with residential self-selection as an additional theoretically plausible alternative explanation. If less prejudiced whites choose over time to move into or remain in more culturally diverse contexts, and items tapping distinct threat perceptions are nothing more than measures of blanket prejudice, then all types of perceived threat should be lower among the presumably nonprejudiced whites residing in high-growth/high initial immigration contexts. Finding some types of threat and not others among whites residing in these contexts would not only undermine the notion of a singular latent prejudice uniformly motivating presumably different threat perceptions but would also ameliorate the concern that this latent prejudice is shaping in which contexts citizens are choosing to live.

Data and Methods

The 2005 Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy Study (CID), conducted by the Center for Democracy and Civil Society at Georgetown University (Howard, Gibson, and Stolle 2005), serves as the national opinion data used to test the main predictions of the acculturating-contexts hypothesis. This survey is comprised of 1,001 face-to-face interviews of adult Americans throughout the contiguous United States. The survey was conducted between May 16 and July 19, 2005, and employed a cluster-sample design, achieving an overall response rate of 40%. Of the 1,001 survey respondents, 725 identified their race as non-Hispanic white. In keeping with prior opinion research on immigration aimed at assessing the dynamics of opinion among the Anglo majority toward immigrant minorities (Brader, Valentino, and Suhay 2008; Campbell, Wong, and Citrin 2006; Citrin, Reingold, and Green 1990; Hood and Morris 1997, 1998, 2000; Rocha and Espino 2009; Stein, Post, and Rinden 2000; Tolbert and Grummel 2003), the present analysis restricts its focus to these white respondents. In addition to analyzing opinion among whites only, the acculturating-contexts hypothesis will be

tested within the context of Hispanic immigration, where over-time growth and initial sizes in Hispanic populations will serve as the main measures of respondents' ethnic context.⁵

To measure acculturating contexts, data from the 1990 and 2000 Decennial Censuses conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau were utilized to obtain information about the size and growth of local Hispanic populations. The CID contains information about the county and state of residence for each survey respondent; given this, county was selected as the measure of local ethnic context, which is in line with and defended by leading opinion research on immigration (Campbell, Wong, and Citrin 2006; Citrin et al. 1997; Citrin, Reingold, and Green 1990; Hood and Morris 1997; Hopkins 2010).⁶ Overall, white respondents from 104 different counties dispersed across 36 states are included in the analysis. *Hispanic 1990* is the measure of the percent Hispanic in each respondent's county of residence in 1990 ($M = 5.92\%$, $SD = 9.65\%$, $Min = .25\%$, $Max = 49.47\%$). Using the 2000 Census to obtain the percent Hispanic in each respondent's county in 2000, a difference variable, labeled *Hispanic Growth*, was created by subtracting the percent Hispanic in 1990 from the 2000 values in each county ($M = 3.17\%$, $SD = 3.14\%$, $Min = -.43\%$, $Max = 12.8\%$).⁷ Growth in the Hispanic population within the counties in this sample ranges from three counties whose Hispanic populations declined by less than half a percentage point (Kings County, NY; Orleans Parish, LA; and Santa Fe County, NM) to Dallas County, TX, whose Hispanic population grew by 12.8 percentage points.

⁵For a full justification for using the Hispanic population to test theory pertaining to immigrants, see the online supplemental Appendix A.

⁶As noted by past research in the field, the choice of appropriate geographic unit of measurement is a perennial question, typically informed by both theoretical and practical concerns. While I use county in my analyses, Census data is available for smaller units, such as zip code or tract. However, in contrast to analyses that employ these smaller units of analysis (e.g., Oliver and Mendelberg 2000; Oliver and Wong 2003), my analysis is concerned with measuring changes in, rather than the contemporaneous size of, minority populations. At present, little to no research exists that analyzes the effects of over-time change with units below the county level, and this is primarily due to the fact that zip codes, and to a lesser extent, census tracts, change frequently and often dramatically between Census surveys. Within my data, there are many respondents reporting residence in zip codes that were not classified the same or did not exist in 1990. In the end, county is the smallest and best geographic unit available for my analysis due to limitations in the consistency and availability of data for subcounty units.

⁷Leading studies on ethnic change in political science and sociology measure change over time spans roughly comparable in length to the one selected in this analysis (see Alexseev 2006; Citrin et al. 1990; Green, Strolovitch, and Wong 1998).

Hispanic Growth and Hispanic 1990 are correlated at .56, indicating the general tendency for larger growth to occur in counties with larger preexisting populations, which is likely due to a combination of chain migration and high birth rates.

Consistent with the DNH, the acculturating-contexts hypothesis is operationalized with an interaction between Hispanic Growth and Hispanic 1990. Moderated regression analysis is employed to analyze the marginal effect of Hispanic Growth across the range of values for Hispanic 1990. Substantively, this operationalization allows for the assessment of the effect of growth in the Hispanic population from 1990 to 2000 in counties with minimal preexisting Hispanic populations (i.e., acculturating contexts), in counties with moderate levels of Hispanics in 1990, and in those with the highest number of Hispanics in 1990. For ease of interpretation, Hispanic 1990 and Hispanic Growth were recoded to range from 0 to 1, and the multiplicative term was created from these recoded variables.

To measure perceptions of cultural threat, the analysis relied upon an item in the CID tapping whether respondents believe that "America's cultural life is undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries." This item is comparable to measures of cultural threat in leading opinion research (e.g., Citrin et al. 1997; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004). This item has 11 response options, ranging from 0 ("cultural life undermined") to 10 ("cultural life enriched"). This item was recoded to range from 0 to 1 (1 = cultural life undermined). To test Hypothesis 3, I use two additional items in the data that will serve as measures of noncultural types of immigration-related threat. The first of these items will serve as a measure of economic threat; this item asked respondents: "Most people who come to live in the U.S. work, pay taxes, and use health and social services. Do you think people who come here to live take out more than they put in or put in more than they take out?" The 11 response options for this threat item ranged from 0 ("Generally take out more") to 10 ("Generally put in more"). This item was recoded to range from 0 to 1 (1 = take out more). The second item tapped perceptions of the threat posed by immigration in terms of crime; respondents were asked: "Do you think America's crime problems are made worse or better by people coming here to live from other countries?" Similar to the two other threat items, this item had 11 response options and was recoded to range from 0 to 1, with high values indicating higher threat perception (1 = crime problems made worse).

To measure immigration policy preferences, this analysis relied upon a standard item in the opinion research tapping preferences over the amount of legal

immigration allowed by government into the country. Respondents in the survey were asked the question: "Should the number of immigrants from foreign countries permitted to come to the United States to live be increased a lot, increased a little, left the same as it is now, decreased a little, or decreased a lot?" Consistent with prior research asking this question, the modal response to this question was to leave things as they are now, with a skew in the data in favor of decreasing the amount of immigration. This five-category item was coded to range from permissive to restrictive policy preferences (5 = immigration decreased a lot).

Several theoretically relevant contextual- and individual-level controls were included in the analysis. First, prior research suggests that the economic and political environment surrounding citizens may both exert distinct influences on their attitudes toward immigration (Campbell, Wong, and Citrin 2006). Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics were utilized to create a measure of the unemployment rate in each respondent's county in 2005. The resulting variable is coded to range from low to high county unemployment. The second contextual variable captures the political climate surrounding respondents by measuring the percent of registered voters in a respondent's county voting for Bush in the 2004 presidential election.⁸ Turning to individual-level controls, all analyses included standard measures of education, income, gender (1 = Male), age, citizenship status (dichotomous; 1 = born in the United States), employment status (1 = Unemployed), pocketbook economic evaluations (1 = experiencing financial distress), party identification (standard 7-point scale; 7 = strong Republican), and ideological self-identification (11-point scale; 11 = very Conservative).

Beyond these standard controls, several additional individual-level factors have been identified in the literature for shaping general attitudes toward immigrants. Of these, prejudice (Citrin et al. 1997; Huddy and Sears 1995) and the strength of national identity (Sides and Citrin 2007; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004) stand out as likely predictors of both immigration threat perceptions and policy preferences. All analyses include an 11-category measure of general negative affect toward Hispanics, *Hispanic Affect*, with high values indicating strong dislike for Hispanics. Given the present critique of cultural threat and the argument that residing in an acculturating context should serve as a tangible source of cultural threat that is separate from identity-oriented

⁸These data were retrieved from the CNN 2004 Election Results cite listing vote results by county and state. For information, see <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/>.

concerns, controlling for national identity is essential. A measure of the strength of *National Identity* was included in all analyses (1 = strong national identity). In addition to prejudice and national identity, research has demonstrated that personality traits, such as authoritarianism, can influence threat perceptions and opinion on immigration (Hetherington and Weiler 2009); all models include a control for *Right-Wing Authoritarianism*. Last, intergroup contact theory suggests that having friends who are immigrants may reduce threat perceptions and increase support for permissive policy positions. To control for this possibility, all analyses included a dichotomous measure of whether or not respondents report having any close friends who are recent immigrants (1 = has immigrant friends). For ease of interpretation, all contextual- and individual-level independent variables were recoded to range from 0 to 1.⁹

Analytic Strategy

The first and third predictions of the acculturating-contexts hypothesis pertain to the impact of context on individual threat perceptions. To test Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 3, moderated regression analyses were conducted to assess the impact of Hispanic growth conditional upon varying levels of the 1990 county Hispanic population.¹⁰ Due to the hierarchical structure of the data, where individual respondents are embedded within counties and county-level variables are being used to predict individual threat perceptions, random intercept models were used to conduct the moderated regression analyses. To test the second prediction of the acculturating-contexts hypothesis, structural equation modeling was used to estimate the indirect effect of Hispanic Growth on whites' preferred amount of immigration. The structural equation model (SEM) for this analysis simultaneously estimated the regression of (1) cultural threat on all county- and individual-level predictors and (2) the preferred amount of immigration on cultural threat and all county- and individual-level predictors. In addition to enabling the estimation of the indirect effect of Hispanic Growth on

preferred amounts of immigration via its impact on cultural threat perceptions, SEMs can allow for the specification of categorical variables (e.g., see Iacobucci 2008) and the use of multilevel regression models (Preacher, Zyphur, and Zhang 2010) to provide more accurate statistical tests for mediation. To account for the ordinal nature of the immigration policy variable and the multilevel nature of the data, I used an ordered logit link function for the policy model and estimated a random intercept multilevel mediational SEM in the software package Mplus[®] (Muthén and Muthén 2007).

Results

Table 1 lists the results for the threat perception models; the results provide strong support for the acculturating-contexts hypothesis.¹¹ The results in the first column reveal that a large growth in the county Hispanic population from 1990 to 2000 leads to significantly higher cultural threat perceptions among whites residing in counties with minimal Hispanic presence in 1990. In addition to being highly statistically significant, this effect is substantively large. To get a sense of the full size of this effect, the predicted value of cultural threat with minimum Hispanic growth is .34 when the 1990 Hispanic population is at its minimum and holding all other variables at their means. At maximum Hispanic growth, however, when the 1990 Hispanic population is similarly at its minimum and all other variables are held constant, the predicted value of cultural threat is .62. Thus, moving from the minimum to the maximum value of Hispanic growth among the least Hispanic counties in 1990 resulted in a .28 increase in cultural threat perceptions among whites, or a change of 28 percentage points on the 0 to 1 scale of the dependent variable.

The results in the second row reveal that when Hispanic growth is at its minimum, an increase in the 1990 Hispanic population has no effect on threat perception among whites. The interaction term, listed in the third row of the results, however, is negative and statistically significant, indicating that the marginal effect of Hispanic growth on cultural threat perceptions

⁹For more information about variable measurement and question wording, please see the online supplemental Appendix B.

¹⁰Given that my hypothesis predicts that the expected value of Cultural Threat associated with a unit change in Hispanic Growth will vary according to the value of another independent variable in my equation—Hispanic 1990—the specification of an interactive model is necessary given that a noninteractive model would not only prevent me from exploring this hypothesis, but would also, according to my theoretical expectations, violate the additivity assumption implicit in the basic regression model (Berry and Feldman 1985).

¹¹This analysis utilized multilevel random intercept models over a “completely pooled” approach to control for unobserved heterogeneity between the counties. This decision is justified given the significant LR test indicating that level-2 variance is not zero and that there is statistically significant unobserved heterogeneity at the county level. However, the size of the rho estimates indicate that a small amount of total error is being accounted for by level-2 variation in each model, and regression analysis of each threat model using OLS produced extremely similar inferences to the multilevel model estimates.

TABLE 1 Acculturating Contexts and Threat Perceptions among Whites (2005 U.S. Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy Survey)

	Cultural Threat		Economic Threat		Crime Threat	
<i>County Level</i>						
Hispanic Growth	.282***	(.071)	.179*	(.076)	.156*	(.067)
Hispanic 1990	.080	(.088)	-.039	(.094)	.051	(.083)
(Growth) x (1990)	-.582**	(.208)	-.305	(.221)	-.173	(.194)
Bush Vote 2004	.129*	(.053)	.102	(.057)	.100*	(.050)
Unemployment Rate	.118	(.093)	.176	(.099)	.141	(.086)
<i>Individual Level</i>						
Education	-.112***	(.031)	-.013	(.033)	-.033	(.028)
Income	.070	(.041)	.037	(.043)	-.012	(.037)
Age	.015	(.034)	.006	(.036)	-.004	(.031)
Male	.013	(.015)	.000	(.016)	.008	(.014)
Unemployed	-.015	(.032)	-.001	(.034)	-.027	(.029)
Born in United States	.073	(.050)	.098	(.053)	.000	(.045)
Party ID	.017	(.025)	-.016	(.026)	-.014	(.022)
Ideology	.086*	(.040)	.099*	(.042)	.047	(.036)
Pocketbook Evaluations	.127***	(.033)	.090*	(.035)	.011	(.030)
Hispanic Affect	.135**	(.043)	.177***	(.046)	.202***	(.039)
National Identity	.023	(.050)	.112*	(.053)	.104*	(.045)
Right-Wing Authoritarianism	.414***	(.057)	.306***	(.060)	.289***	(.051)
Immigrant Friends	.010	(.025)	.038	(.026)	.010	(.022)
Level-2 (County) Error Variance	.003	(.001)	.004	(.001)	.003	(.001)
Level-1 (Individual) Error Variance	.038	(.002)	.042	(.002)	.030	(.002)
Rho	.082		.083		.098	
Likelihood Ratio Test	10.23***		11.88***		16.392***	
# of Individuals (Level-1 Units)	725		725		725	
# of Counties (Level-2 Units)	104		104		104	

Note: Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients from random-intercept regression models estimated using restricted maximum likelihood. Threat dependent variables were recoded to range from 0 to 1. Likelihood ratio test compares the random intercept model to a “completely pooled” model, testing against the null hypothesis that level-2 error variance is equal to zero. *significant at .05, **significant at .01, ***significant at .001. Reported significance is based upon two-tailed hypothesis tests.

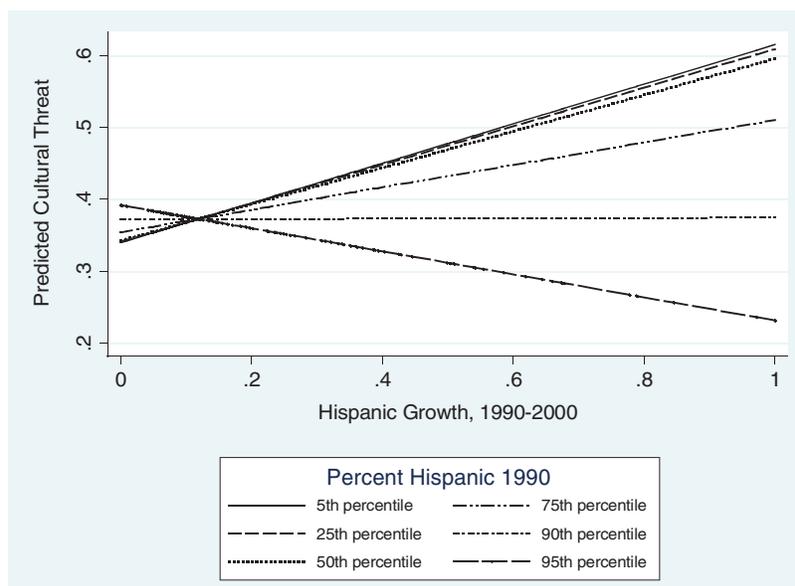
decreases to zero and reverses in sign among whites residing in counties with ever higher preexisting Hispanic populations.¹² To get a rough sense of this interaction, recall that the predicted value of cultural threat among

whites residing in counties with maximum Hispanic growth and minimum 1990 Hispanic populations is .62. Compare this to the predicted value of .11 for whites residing in counties with maximum Hispanic growth and maximum 1990 Hispanic populations—again, holding all controls at the means. The difference in the marginal effect of Hispanic growth on cultural threat perceptions between the most homogenous and heterogeneous counties (as measured by Hispanic population) is .51, which represents a decrease of just over half of the entire range of the 0 to 1 scale of the dependent variable. At first glance, these significant and substantively large effects provide

¹²An anonymous reviewer suggested the possibility that several qualities of Hispanic populations that may vary with group size, such as the degree of cultural assimilation or diversity (i.e., national origins), may be responsible for driving the effects and thus serve as the true moderators rather than mere 1990 Hispanic population size. For further discussion of these possibilities and to view results from additional analysis that suggests against these possibilities in favor of the acculturating-contexts hypothesis, see the online supplemental Appendix C. The results presented in this appendix reveal that there are no significant interactions between Hispanic Growth and (1) the county-level percent of the Spanish-speaking population that speak little to no English and (2) a Herfindahl Index measure of the county-level diversity of the Hispanic population. Most important, the interaction between Hispanic Growth and

Hispanic 1990 holds up when included in a multilevel moderated regression model containing these additional interactions.

FIGURE 1 Effect of Hispanic Growth on Cultural Threat at Varying Percentiles of Percent Hispanic 1990



strong support for an acculturation-based conceptualization of cultural threat.¹³

To get a better sense of these substantive effects, Figure 1 displays the marginal effects of Hispanic growth on cultural threat perception across a range of percentile values for 1990 county Hispanic population figures. The y-axis in Figure 1 is the predicted value of cultural threat, and the x-axis is Hispanic growth. The different plot lines correspond to the 5th, 25th, 50th, 75th, 90th, and 95th percentile values of 1990 county Hispanic population size. The slopes for Hispanic growth at the 5th and 25th percentile values of Hispanic 1990 clearly illustrate the difference in cultural threat for low and high levels of growth among counties with relatively small 1990 Hispanic populations. The drastic vertical decline in cultural threat between high-growth counties with 5th and 95th percentile values of Hispanic baseline graphically illustrates the magnitude of the interaction between Hispanic growth and baseline 1990 levels.

¹³One potential concern with these results pertains to whether or not respondents actually experienced the effect of Hispanic Growth (i.e., “the treatment”) by residing in the same county between 1990 and 2005. The CID includes a question asking respondents about their length of residence in years at their current location. When the analysis was rerun among respondents reporting living at their current residence for 15 years or more, the results for the Cultural Threat model remain intact, while the results for the Economic and Crime Threat models worsen, such that Hispanic Growth registers no significant effects, and no significant interactions are detected.

The following illustrative example provides some geographic identity to these results. Scott County, MS (major population center is Forest), whose 1990 and 2000 Hispanic population figures are about .58 and 6%, is placed above the 75th percentile value of growth and below the 25th percentile value of 1990 population sizes. Placing all other county-level variables at their true values and holding all individual-level variables at their means, the predicted value of cultural threat among whites residing in Scott County is .49. Compare this to Yuma County, AZ (major population center is city of Yuma), whose respective Hispanic population sizes in 1990 and 2000 were about 40.5 and 50.5%. This roughly 10 percentage point decade growth also places Yuma above the 75th percentile in growth; however, its large 1990 Hispanic population situates it above the 75th percentile of 1990 county Hispanic population sizes as well. Compared to Scott County, the predicted value of cultural threat among whites in Yuma County is .25 (again, setting all other county-level variables at their true values and all individual-level controls at their means). Scott and Yuma counties both experienced relatively high levels of growth in their Hispanic populations, yet the different initial ethnic compositions of these counties result in substantially different amounts of perceived cultural threat over immigration among their white residents.

Turning to the controls, the results in column 1 reveal that residing in a more right-leaning political

context increases the perception of cultural threat among whites, while county unemployment had no effect on cultural threat perceptions. Of the individual-level controls in the model, having higher levels of education decreased cultural threat perceptions, while earning a higher income, experiencing personal financial distress, being ideologically conservative, possessing strong negative affect for Hispanics, and registering higher in authoritarianism were each associated with a significant increase in the perception that immigrants pose a cultural threat. Interestingly, the strength of American identity among whites had no effect on their perception that immigrants threaten the American culture. This finding is contrary to what would be expected based upon the symbolic and identity-oriented conceptualization of cultural threat, which would suggest that concerns over the maintenance of cultural identity would be associated with the strength of this identity. The important point to make, however, is that residing in an acculturating context serves as a distinct and significant source of cultural threat, and this effect holds up after controlling for identity and a slew of other contextual- and individual-level factors.

The Mediated Effect of Context on Policy Attitude

Turning to the analysis of the indirect effect of context on immigration policy preferences, the results from the structural equation model are depicted in Panel A of Figure 2. The results from the SEM reveal that residing in an acculturating context (i.e., moving from the minimum to the maximum of Hispanic Growth when percent Hispanic 1990 is at its minimum) exerts a significant direct effect on cultural threat perceptions and a significant indirect effect on the preferred amount of immigration via its impact on cultural threat. The path along the bottom of the figure indicates that context did not exert any significant effect on policy attitudes. In sum, the path analysis reveals that, by triggering the perception that immigrants pose a threat to the American culture, residing in a county with high Hispanic growth and a minimal 1990 Hispanic population indirectly augments support among whites for a government policy of decreasing the amount of immigration into the nation. These results provide support for Hypothesis 2 and demonstrate a more nuanced relationship between ethnic context and immigration policy preferences than previously explored within the opinion research. As noted above, the causal chain underlying immigration policy attitudes stipulated in the bulk of the opinion research begins with subjective threat perceptions and uses these perceptions to predict

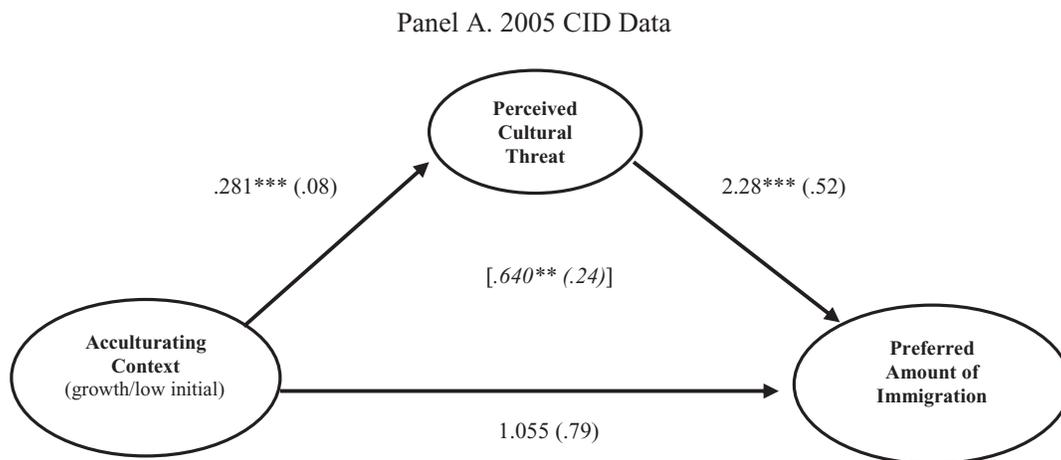
policy preferences—little room in such analyses is given to assessing the sources of threat perception. In comparison, the present analysis begins further “back” in the causal chain by exploring how objective contextual factors influence threat perceptions and how these in turn shape immigration policy preferences.

Context and Different Types of Threat

Last, the analysis turns to the comparative effects of ethnic context on the perception of cultural and non-cultural threats. The second and third columns in Table 1 display the results for the economic and crime threat models. As can be seen, the interaction argued by the acculturating-contexts hypothesis holds for cultural threat but not for these two types of non-cultural, immigration-related threats. The results for these two models reveal that growth in the Hispanic population triggers concerns associated with the economy and crime, but the insignificant interaction terms indicate that this effect is not conditional upon whether growth represents a “first appearance” of Hispanics or the extension of a sizable extant Hispanic population. Simply stated, the activation of concern among whites that immigrants take jobs, raise taxes, or increase crime appears to be linked to observing an expanding Hispanic population in the local community, and these concerns are not dampened by long-term residential proximity to, and thus presumed contact with, Hispanics. The acculturation framework would suggest that while concern over culture subsides as whites acclimate to residing around larger Hispanic populations, they nonetheless retain in the face of Hispanic growth their concern over immigrant competition for economic resources or engagement in criminal behavior.

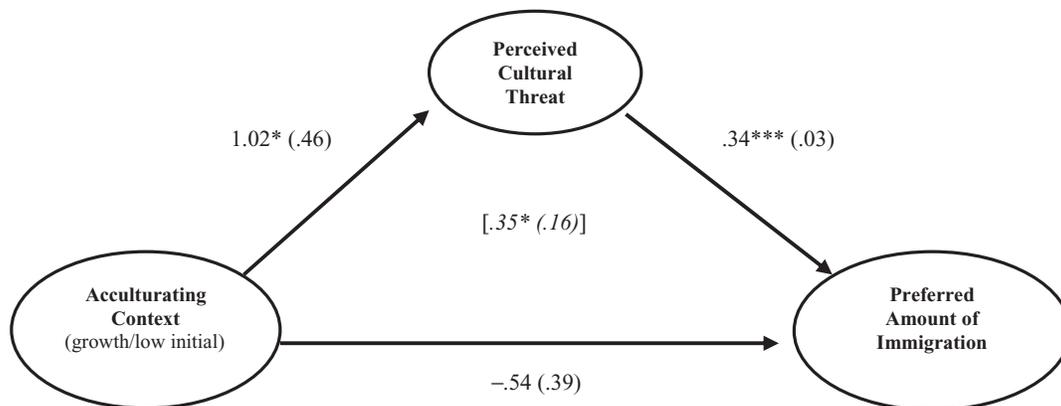
In addition to lending support for Hypothesis 3, the results of the three threat models provide a basis for countering prejudice and residential self-selection as an alternative to the acculturating-contexts hypothesis in explaining the results for cultural threat. First, the results of the cultural threat model alone provide some grounds for arguing against residential self-selection. The residential self-selection position would argue that the decline in threat perception among whites in extremely heterogeneous counties with growing and large preexisting Hispanic populations is a function of prejudiced whites moving out and unprejudiced whites remaining or moving in. Figure 1, however, reveals that among whites residing in low Hispanic growth counties, perceived threat was nearly the same for the presumably prejudiced whites in low initial counties and the presumably unprejudiced whites in counties that were heavily Hispanic in 1990. If ethnic prejudice was an operative factor in shaping the

FIGURE 2 Path Analysis of Ethnic Context, Cultural Threat, and Policy Preference



Note: Results are from a multilevel mediational structural equation model estimated in Mplus (v.5.21). Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients. The Cultural Threat and Amount Immigration Models each contained controls for county political context, county unemployment, education, income, age, gender, employment status, place of birth, party ID, ideology, pocketbook evaluations, Hispanic affect, national identity, right-wing authoritarianism, and intimate social contact with immigrants. All coefficients and standard errors located along arrowed path lines are direct effects; italicized coefficient and standard error in brackets is the indirect effect of Acculturating Context on Preferred Amount of Immigration through Perceived Cultural Threat. **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Panel B. 2006 Pew Research Center Poll on Immigration



Note: Results are from a mediational structural equation model estimated in Mplus (v.5.21). Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients. The Cultural Threat and Amount Immigration Models each contained controls for education; income; age; gender; employment status; place of birth; party ID; ideology; sociotropic, pocketbook, and local job market evaluations; Hispanic affect; and intimate social contact with immigrants. All coefficients and standard errors located along arrowed path lines are direct effects; italicized coefficient and standard error in brackets is the indirect effect of Acculturating Context on Preferred Amount of Immigration through Perceived Cultural Threat. **p < .01, ***p < .001.

ethnic context where one resides, and measures of cultural threat are nothing more than indicators of latent general prejudice toward immigrants and ethnic minorities, then we should expect whites in low-growth/low initial immigration counties to be much more threatened than whites

residing in low-growth/high initial immigration counties. This pattern is simply not borne out in the data.

A further argument against prejudice and residential self-selection is found in the comparative results for context and the different types of threat. The prejudice

**TABLE 2 Acculturating Contexts and Threat Perceptions among Whites
(2006 Pew Research Center Poll on Immigration)**

	Cultural Threat		Economic Threat		Crime Threat	
<i>Contextual Variables</i>						
Hispanic Growth	1.657*	(.745)	2.33**	(.897)	2.47***	(.755)
Hispanic 1990	3.429	(2.32)	2.39	(2.99)	1.93	(2.42)
(Growth) x (1990)	-10.99*	(5.48)	-9.59	(6.89)	-4.77	(5.62)
<i>Individual Variables</i>						
Education	-1.14***	(.215)	-1.29***	(.256)	-.720***	(.222)
Income	-.151	(.239)	-.155	(.291)	-.139	(.250)
Age	1.03***	(.250)	-.555†	(.30)	1.23***	(.259)
Male	.070	(.099)	.080	(.122)	.330***	(.104)
Unemployed	.086	(.368)	-.225	(.392)	.535	(.362)
Born in United States	.415	(.237)	.597	(.341)	-.029	(.242)
Party ID	.468**	(.140)	.053	(.167)	.463***	(.145)
Ideology	1.59***	(.265)	.822**	(.317)	1.43***	(.276)
Sociotropic Evaluations	.660**	(.212)	1.04***	(.259)	.254	(.219)
Pocketbook Evaluations	.138	(.226)	.707**	(.269)	.213	(.234)
Local Job Market Evaluations	.417**	(.121)	.543***	(.143)	.247*	(.126)
Hispanic Affect	2.48***	(.250)	1.88***	(.258)	2.67***	(.250)
Immigrant Friends & Family	.027	(.117)	-.111	(.154)	.013	(.124)
Constant	-3.28***	(.504)	-4.04***	(.633)	-4.12***	(.526)
Pseudo R ²	.138		.128		.134	
Percent Correctly Predicted	66.09		81.11		70.15	
Proportional Reduction in Error	25.8		2.26		13.59	
N	2,070		2,070		2,070	

Note: Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients from logistic regression models. “Completely pooled” basic logistic regression models were used instead of random intercept logistic regression models because in the Cultural and Economic Threat models, likelihood ratio tests confirmed the null hypothesis that level-2 error variance is equal to zero. In the case of Crime Threat, while the LR test provided evidence against the null hypothesis, the size of p was .02, suggesting a negligible difference between a multilevel approach to estimating model parameters and a “completely pooled,” basic logistic regression approach. Threat dependent variables were recoded to range from 0 to 1. *significant at .05, **significant at .01, ***significant at .001. Reported significance is based upon two-tailed hypothesis tests.

and self-selection argument would suggest that all kinds of threat would be lower among whites residing in ethnically diverse contexts because they are presumably less prejudiced, and threat perception items, by their common reference to immigrants, simply tap whites’ underlying prejudice toward immigrant minorities. This, however, is also not found in the data; rather, the results reveal that while cultural threat decreases as Hispanic growth occurs in counties with higher prior levels of ethnic diversity, and threats concerning the economy and crime do not. This finding lends support to the contention that acculturation and culture shock serve as unique concrete bases for cultural threat, but not for threats unrelated to culture. In already diverse contexts where growth is theorized to produce less cultural shock or stress, the perception of cultural threat is much lower. In similar contexts, however, economic and crime threat are not lower, suggesting that these items genuinely tap distinct concerns pertaining to

immigration and that mechanisms other than acculturation and shock are at work in shaping the pattern of results for these noncultural types of threat.

Replication of Results

To test the robustness of these results, replication analyses were performed using the 2006 Pew Research Center Poll on Immigration.¹⁴ While not entirely comparable to the 2005 CID data, this national survey does provide

¹⁴This national survey contained a total of $N = 6,003$ adult respondents, relied upon telephone interviews conducted between February 8 and March 7, 2006, and contains oversamples of adults from Chicago, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Washington, DC, and Raleigh-Durham, NC. Of the 6,003 respondents, 4,142 identified themselves as non-Hispanic white. Further, this survey contained two questionnaire forms randomly assigned to survey respondents. Unfortunately, key control variables, such as Hispanic Affect, were only available for measurement through questions asked on Form

the county of residence for each respondent, as well as contain measures of cultural, economic, and crime threat and preferences over the amount of immigration. The key variables included in analyses performed on CID data that are not available in the Pew survey are the strength of national identity and right-wing authoritarianism; this shortcoming aside, the Pew survey does contain enough data to provide an opportunity to replicate the results from the CID. The results from the replication analysis are presented in Table 2; for more information about measurement and question wording, see the online supplemental Appendix D. The results presented in Table 2 strongly reinforce those from the CID: (1) growth in the county-level Hispanic population between 1990 to 2000 was associated with a significant increase in cultural threat perceptions among whites residing in counties whose 1990 Hispanic populations were of minimal size; (2) a significant interaction was found between Hispanic Growth and Hispanic 1990, such that the effect of Hispanic Growth is significantly attenuated and then reversed as the 1990 Hispanic population size in a county increases; and (3) the significant interaction found for cultural threat perceptions did not hold for measures of economic and crime threat. As was found in the CID data, these latter types of threat are unconditionally enhanced by Hispanic Growth. Turning to the indirect effect of context on policy preferences, the results from a SEM analysis corroborate those from the CID (Panel B, Figure 2); namely, that Hispanic Growth in contexts with minimal 1990 Hispanic populations exerted a significant direct effect on cultural threat perceptions ($b = 1.02$, $se = .46$, $p < .05$), that an increase in the perception of cultural threat directly increased the probability of preferring decreased immigration ($b = .34$, $se = .03$, $p < .000$), that Hispanic Growth exerted an insignificant direct effect on policy attitudes ($b = -.54$, $se = .39$, *n.s.*), and that Hispanic Growth (when Hispanic 1990 is at its minimum) exerted a significant indirect effect on support for decreased immigration ($b = .35$, $se = .16$, $p < .05$).

Conclusion

While immigration continues to come in and out of the political limelight in the United States, and Hispanics approach the majority in many local areas throughout the nation, nearly two decades of opinion research have fallen short in issuing a definitive statement about the

1 of the survey. Thus, the replication analyses were conducted upon the $N = 2,070$ non-Hispanic white respondents administered questionnaire Form 1.

effect of citizens' ethnic context on their immigration attitudes. Interestingly, while the pejorative phrase "the browning of America" is commonly used to describe an increase in the mixing of racial and ethnic groups in the United States, opinion scholars within political science have failed to apply this phrase from the popular lexicon into developed theory and hypotheses regarding public opposition to immigration. Within the extant models of residential integration and intergroup relations, the defended-neighborhoods hypothesis stands out as a primary academic translation of the "browning" concept into an account of intergroup conflict.

The acculturating-contexts hypothesis extends the defended neighborhoods perspective into the domain of immigration by identifying residing in contexts undergoing drastic and unprecedented ethnic change as a tangible source of cultural threat. The results from the analyses demonstrate that the effect of increasing ethnic diversity—as indicated by growth in local Hispanic populations—is conditional upon how diverse an area is to begin with. Existing work argues that growing local immigrant populations is a necessary but not sufficient condition for activating threat (Hopkins 2010). The results from the present analysis demonstrate that changes in local immigrant populations do influence opinion as long as change is analyzed in conjunction with baseline population sizes. These results represent an important contribution to the opinion literature on immigration, while also making a more general contribution to the study of opinion and political behavior by demonstrating the interplay of environment and cognition in shaping policy preferences.

A worthy direction for future research would be to corroborate the mechanisms underlying the acculturating-contexts hypothesis, as well as to further differentiate the sources of different types of threat perceptions. Future research could also determine whether the effects found among whites in the present study hold for nonwhite native-born groups, specifically African Americans, whose opinions and reactions to acculturation may operate differently than the Anglo majority. For scholars interested in the environmental, contextual, or political sources of opinion, an interesting direction for future research would be to explore how elite communication and media messages may serve as additional environmental factors potentially altering or disrupting the seemingly natural process of diversity acclimation and threat reduction observed in the present analysis. Alternately, it would be interesting to gain a more firm understanding of whether various types of local policies and programs, such as multicultural education and arts programming, as well as cultural competence training in public and

private sector professional occupations, serve to attenuate the negative effects of acculturation and facilitate Americans' acclimation and adjustment to increasing cultural diversity. For scholars interested in the role of personality in politics, exploring the role of individual differences in the possession of specific personality traits in shaping reactions to ethnic change would indeed make for an interesting direction for future research.

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Supporting Information

Additional Supporting Information may be found in the online version of this article:

Appendix A: The Use of the Hispanic Population for the Analysis

Appendix B: Question Wording from 2005 Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy Survey

Appendix C: Discussion and Analysis of Alternative Moderating Variables

Appendix D: Question Wording from 2006 Pew Research Center Poll on Immigration

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