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Patrol Checkpoints in the State of Texas

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# The Influence of Seclusion: Immigration and Border Security Attitudes of Registered Voters Living Behind the Interior Border Patrol Checkpoints in the State of Texas<sup>1</sup>

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*This research uses a 2013 survey of 2400 registered voters to examine the political impact of living behind the United States interior border checkpoints in the state of Texas. The research shows that, unlike their fellow Texans to the north, residents bounded inside the checkpoints are more likely to think that immigration or border security is the most important problem the United States faces. They are also more likely to favor comprehensive immigration reform and, controlling for demographic factors, religious affiliation, and partisan sentiments, to have a favorable opinion of anti-amnesty maverick United States Senator Ted Cruz. Evidence presented indicates that a good portion of this likability for Cruz comes from residents who consider immigration or border security the most important problem in the country.*

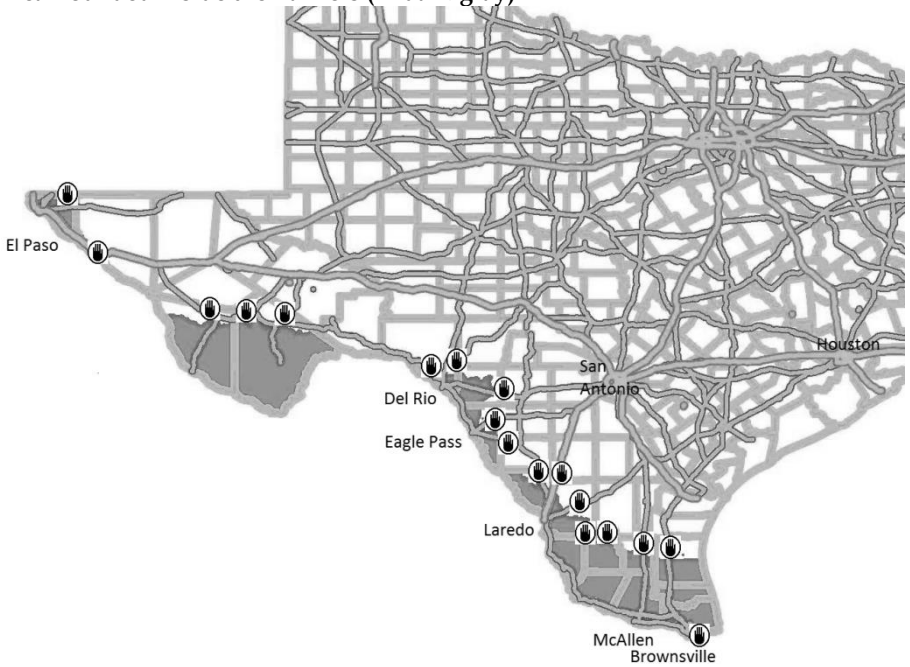
## Introduction

A car ride from McAllen, Texas up Highway 281 to Houston or Dallas will inevitably be interrupted with a forced stop by Federal Department of Homeland Security Customs and Border Patrol Agents. The interior border checkpoint located 20 miles south of Falfurrias, Texas is one of 18 permanent interior checkpoints in Texas located 25-75 miles north of the Mexican border. Upon entering the checkpoint drivers and passengers are subject to questioning, canine searches, and possible detainment. These checkpoints are part of a “layered approach” to monitor and enforce law on the Mexican border. The checkpoints on the border focus on those entering the country from Mexico by crossing the Rio Grande River. The second layer of checkpoints 25 to 75 miles inside the state maximize detection of contraband and illegal aliens (General Accounting Office 2009). The checkpoints create a bounded zone, displayed in Figure 1, which isolates a large portion of Texas and allows federal law enforcement officers to monitor traffic and commerce being transported from the area to other parts of the state and country.

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank the Texas Tribune Newspaper and the University of Texas for providing the data for this project. I would also like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their help on this project.

**Figure 1: Texas' 18 Permanent United States Interior Border Checkpoints and the Area Bounded inside the Barriers (in dark gray)**



The value of the federal checkpoint system is very high to those Texas residents who live to the north. The isolated highways and the vast rural space make it very difficult to move from south to north without detection. Successful drug smuggling and human trafficking requires sophistication and imagination, and the high number of arrests and drug confiscations show that the system not only acts as a deterrent but as a genuine illegal commerce killer (Kane 2008). In fiscal year 2013 the two major Texas sectors, the Laredo and the Rio Grande Valley sectors, combined to confiscate nearly one million pounds of marijuana, over 2,500 pounds of cocaine, and make over 200,000 apprehensions (United States Customs and Border Protection 2014).

However, the benefits realized by the residents north of the checkpoints come at a cost to the Texas residents who live south of the checkpoints. The area between the security layers, a region isolated from the rest of the state, creates a band that covers the northern banks of the Rio Grande River for a stretch of over 600 miles. This band of isolation and the situation it creates

has wide-ranging effects on the people living inside. Leaving the zone requires going through the checkpoints which can have negative consequences. Minute level time delays from the long lines at the checkpoints mount into hours and days for those who regularly travel through. The checkpoints can also be a perpetual nuisance, especially for residents who constantly have to provide proof of citizenship or documentation of legal presence in the post 9/11 era.

Procedures at both permanent and tactical checkpoints involve slowing or stopping traffic as vehicles proceed through the checkpoint. As traffic slows, Border Patrol agents use visual cues and canines trained to locate drugs and hidden persons to determine whether to wave the vehicle through, or stop the vehicle, question the occupant(s), and determine whether a more thorough secondary inspection is required. (United States Government Accounting Office 2005, 16)

In addition, 4<sup>th</sup> amendment standards of search and seizure are relaxed at the checkpoints. In *United States v. Martinez-Fuerte* (1976) the United States Supreme Court ruled that it was permissible for the government to make vehicle searches at these interior location checkpoints without probable cause or reasonable suspicion because such restrictions, due to the heavy traffic flow through the checkpoints, are too cumbersome for effective law enforcement. The need to liberalize such searches is easily justified. There is simply not enough time to give in-depth study to each vehicle. In such cases well-disguised operations, which can easily fool a quick study of vehicles, can result in successful drug transportation and illegal immigrant smuggling operations. However, the loss of privacy and 4<sup>th</sup> amendment protections creates vulnerability for residents and travelers to the region. Travelers must stay aware that going through the checkpoints can bring embarrassing situations. Suspicion of wrongdoing, even when innocent, can cause delays, discomfort, and further loss of privacy.

Despite the rigid standards at the checkpoints the federal government does not try to lure people into a trap. Checkpoints are well advertised and easily averted as long as one stays in the bounded area. An example of this is the checkpoint just south of Falfurrias. When approaching the checkpoint highly visible signs tell drivers that an inspection station is forthcoming and a U-turn allows drivers to avoid the checkpoint if they wish. Despite this the Falfurrias checkpoint has had great success in the seizure of illegal cargo and illegal aliens (Kane 2008).

## Impact of Border Checkpoints on Quality of Life

For the vast majority of Texas residents and other United States citizens the layered approach to drug and immigration enforcement brings high utility. The extended enforcement reduces the ability to transport illegal drugs throughout the country. It also makes it more difficult for illegal immigrants to enter the interior portion of the country and most assuredly reduces human trafficking which can result in illegal prostitution and exploitation of minors. However, while the purpose of the layered defense contributes to a safer and healthier state there is evidence that life for those who live inside the second layer of checkpoints is less than ideal. This includes problems with the economy, additional crime, and civil rights violations.

When it comes to the economy the state has thrived. The unemployment rate for the state of Texas, as of August 2014, was 5.3% ranking it as the 16<sup>th</sup> lowest in the nation. This was easily the best rate among the five largest states. Among those states Florida ranked 26<sup>th</sup> at 6.3%, with New York, California, and Illinois ranking further down the list (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014b). Every major Texas metropolitan area outside the border region has had excellent unemployment figures. As of July 2014, of the 372 metropolitan areas in the country, all of the areas with a Texas population of over one million people ranked in the top 100 in unemployment. Those included Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos who ranked 48<sup>th</sup>, San Antonio-New Braunfels who ranked 77<sup>th</sup>, Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown who ranked 99<sup>th</sup>, and Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington who also ranked 99<sup>th</sup> (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014a). However, things were not so lucrative below the checkpoints. July 2014 unemployment figures show that the Brownsville-Harlingen region ranked 337<sup>th</sup>, and the McAllen-Edinburg-Mission region ranked 357<sup>th</sup> (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014a).

The area bounded by the checkpoints has a long history of economic problems mainly due to high unemployment (Betts et al. 1994; United States Census Bureau 2011). Pisani (2003) describes the unemployment as structural or perpetual because of the circumstances the region continuously endures. The education levels in the region are low with college degree attainment well below the state average. Infrastructure is also a problem with inadequate health care, water, and housing problems plaguing the region. Lastly, the mixed economy with Mexico, with the illegitimate passing of goods across the border, makes it difficult to set up legitimate businesses in the region. Pisani and Richardson (2012) estimate that about 20% of the

economic activity in the area is informal, with no records of transactions and with goods transported illegally from Mexico. They also estimate that informal transactions combined with the underground market make up about 30% of the region's economy. The lack of integrity from such actions make legitimate business transactions difficult and uncompetitive. Combine this with the North America Free Trade Agreement which has displaced many workers in the region (Richardson and Resendiz with Verti 2006) and the result is an area with severe economic distress. In fact, Pisani and Richardson reference 1998 statistics that show that if south Texas were its own state, it would be the poorest state in America.

Yet, despite the seriousness of the unemployment situation economic troubles are often not seen as the highest priority by the residents bounded inside the interior checkpoints. In a 2012 poll, area residents were far less likely than the rest of the nation, 39% to 63%, to rank the economy and jobs as the most important issue facing the nation. Instead, border security, drug trafficking, and education were far more often considered the most important issues (University of Texas-Pan American Center for Survey Research 2012).

The perceptions of civil rights violations also distress the region. While it is difficult to directly link the border patrol to such problems it is clear that erecting border structures can have an adverse impact on perceptions of social and environmental justice (Wilson et al. 2010). In a survey conducted with over 300 families in Arizona border communities, the Border Action Network found that most residents felt that border patrol agents stopped people for simply having brown skin. (Border Network for Human Rights, the Border Action Network, and the U.S.-Mexico Border and Immigration Task Force 2008). Another study found that over 60% of the residents in the Lower Rio Grande Valley felt that immigration agents did not treat the residents well. In fact, more than 20% categorized them as "abusive" or "very abusive" (Richardson and Resendiz with De Juana 2006). In 2007 over half of the cases of reported human rights violations were by residents inside the checkpoints during routine traffic stops. Military patrol presence also places border residents in jeopardy. Soldiers train for combat, not to assess immigration violations or to monitor compliance with human rights norms, and they are particularly not trained to handle human rights norms unique to border regions. Persons living below the checkpoints, within the boundaries of the U.S., must deal with military-style stops, man-made barriers, and other infringements.

There is also good reason to believe that border patrol procedures actually contribute to the crime in the area. Smuggling operations involving human trafficking, drugs, and illegal aliens that make it past the initial layer by crossing the river and entering the United States must then maneuver past the second layer. Having to clear this barrier can cause criminals to spend excessive time in the area south of the checkpoints, creating plans to get contraband through the checkpoints or to settle into a permanent illegal residence. Such an environment can increase drug presence, unemployment and money laundering operations. In addition, the illegal aliens crossing the border without the help of smugglers are particularly vulnerable. Border bandits prey on these people often robbing and raping them because of their susceptible condition (Richardson and Resendiz with De Juana 2006). Nevertheless, drug smuggler presence in the region is an ever-present reality. Maril's (2004) description of the border patrol includes the constant interaction of ordinary families and drug smugglers in the community, with smugglers often using the same public facilities for drug transactions as families use for gatherings. The result is a unique law enforcement situation with difficult circumstances for all parties involved. Rosalva Resendiz, co-author of *On the Edge of Law: Culture, Labor, and Deviance on the South Texas Border* talks about the drug smuggling atmosphere in the border region.

I grew up in the Valley, surrounded by the drug trafficking culture. Growing up along the border unavoidably exposed us to certain circles of criminality. Contact with drug smugglers and traffickers was unavoidable. It would happen through friends, classmates, relatives, legitimate businesses, and in social settings such as nightclubs. And although the drug business is looked down upon by greater society, on the border it is a social fact— one that is generally tolerated, if not embraced. It touches almost every aspect of life here. Sometimes it is conscious and deliberate, and sometimes you are not even aware that it is going on around you. This influence can be felt despite traditional family values, religion, and a good education. (Richardson and Resendiz with Trevinó 2006, 164).

These behavioral complaints along with quality of life violations like 24 hour stadium style lighting have led to an agenda for reform by advocates for those living in between the layers. These advocates call for policy change that will address these issues more productively so that residents can live better lives.



Border enforcement operations, technology, and infrastructure should be guided by criteria that actively minimize their impacts on border residents. Concerns over the quality of life and noise, air, and light pollution; over endangered species and habitats; and over the preservation of the environment should be included in all considerations of existing and expanded border operations. (Border Network for Human Rights, the Border Action Network, and the U.S.-Mexico Border and Immigration Task Force 2008, 24).

In such an environment, with policy and policy implementation creating such nuisance, it is reasonable to hypothesize that resident perceptions of what the problems are, how important they are, and how to solve those problems are different from other areas throughout the state. This research will consider these possibilities.

### **Political Life Below the Checkpoints**

Having clarified the situation for residents living below the Texas checkpoints this analysis will look closely at the impact that living under the checkpoints has on political problem priorities and policy opinion about immigration and border security for registered voters. The first hypothesis will deal with the impact that the living conditions under the checkpoints have on problem priorities within the state. If living under the checkpoints heightens a political problem it is important that the attitudes be understood. When an issue is the “most important problem” a voter’s evaluation of a candidate’s opinion doubles (Rabinowitz, Prothro, and Jacoby 1982). Such issues have a large effect on the decision in the booth, far greater than issues that are less consequential (Krosnick 1990).

Individuals who feel threatened by a political problem are also more likely to want policies that will provide relief for that problem. This is especially true when it comes to issues like security (Huddy et al. 2005). Therefore, the perception that immigration or border security is a problem should bring the desire for comprehensive policy to solve the problem. Hence, a second hypothesis is posited. Residents who live in the midst of border security issues will have a stronger desire than those in the rest of the state to change policy concerning immigration and border security. Here the question focuses on a desire to change policy, not the details of that change. Demographic variables will be included as controls. However, because this question starts the progression into policy itself a further test will be done.

Several articles have shown that changes in security issues change the issue preference of political party members (Murray 2005; Ortiz, Hendricks, and Sugie 2007; Huddy, Feldman, and Weber 2007) and that religious affiliation can impact immigration attitudes (Knoll 2009). Therefore, as a second examination of this hypothesis, a model that looks at desire to change immigration policy, controlling for partisanship and religious affiliation, will be tested as well.

To take the analysis a step further it is interesting to look at what influence living under the checkpoints has on policy preferences. This is particularly interesting considering the electoral impact it has. When problem issues have an increased relevance they become more important in the voting booth (Abramowitz 1995; Jacobson 2003; Bozzoli and Muller 2011). In addition, lawmakers who take the lead in introducing legislation on important issues are highly rewarded (Weissert 1991). Failure to act can mean bad approval ratings or severe electoral consequences (Epstein and Segal 2000). Unfortunately, questions on specific immigration and border security issues were not a part of the Texas Tribune-University of Texas survey of Texas registered voters. As a result a third hypothesis on issue preferences cannot be tested directly. This was, no doubt, due to the lack of immigration policy proposals being considered at the national level. However, the survey did ask respondents about their assessment of United States Senator Ted Cruz. Using attitudes about a politician as a proxy for policy preference can be a stretch and are never as accurate as a forthright response on the issue itself. Nevertheless, there are reasons why preference for Cruz may be an exception. First, when an issue is particularly salient to a certain region a politician's attitude on that issue is enhanced, especially when the politician is very well-known. For instance, attitudes about a politician who is a strong advocate for or against nuclear power should be a good indicator of policy preferences for those who live around nuclear facilities. Politicians have a wide variety of opinions on issues but in this case, with immigration and border security being such an important issue in the state, especially below the checkpoints, a politician with strong opinions on the issue can serve as an indicator of respondents' policy preferences. Second, a politician who is constantly in the spotlight and feeds information to voters forces respondents to form opinions about him, positive or negative. Cruz, who assumed office in January of 2013, was steadfastly in the spotlight on the issue of immigration during a heated Senate battle with fellow Republican David Dewhurst, denying support for any pathway to citizenship for illegal aliens. In 2014 he received a 100% rating from the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), the highest rating of

any federal representative from Texas. FAIR's platform is to end illegal immigration, secure the border, and control legal immigration levels to stay in line with the best interests of the United States (Federation for American Immigration Reform 2014). At the time the survey for this analysis was taken Cruz was in the national forefront on the issue of immigration. His verbal sparring match with fellow Cuban descendent and first term Senator Marco Rubio on the issue gave many voters a clear vision of the debate (Raju 2013). Cruz's viewpoint of intolerance for those immigrants who were in the country illegally was in contrast to fellow Republican Rubio who advocated a "pathway to citizenship" for illegal immigrants. In addition, Cruz also advocated tripling the U.S. border patrol (Batheja 2012). This being the case, a positive evaluation of Cruz by a respondent could be a good indication that the respondent is for a more secure border, against illegal immigration, and for controlling immigration numbers so that the best interests of the region and the nation are adhered to.

## **Methodology**

To assess the effect that living under the United States border checkpoints has on political life a multivariate analysis is conducted using survey data of 2,400 Texans provided by the Texas Tribune newspaper and the University of Texas.<sup>2</sup> The survey was taken over two waves in the first half of 2013. The survey uses techniques employed by YouGov, an international marketing firm, to rectify the problems with random sampling in the modern cell phone era. To create a representative sample a large and diverse group of people across the state are invited to create a pool of respondents. To enhance sample accuracy an onus to gaining commitments from members of "hard to reach" populations is employed (YouGov 2014). Random selection and stratification technics using data from the American Community Survey are then used to select a random sample of Texas voters from all regions of the state. They are then demographically matched to the respondents on the basis of place of residence, gender, age, race, education, party identification, ideology, and political interest. The respondents, once selected, take the survey on the internet (The University of Texas at Austin 2013). While the YouGov techniques can be criticized for a possible increase in random sample error due to the matching process the results indicate that the enhanced accuracy created by elevated response rate from all populations produces accurate results. In an analysis of 28 public polling organizations Fordham University's Center for Electoral Politics and

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<sup>2</sup> Listwise deletion is used in each model to deal with missing responses.

Democracy ranked YouGov as the seventh most accurate pre-election predictor of election results in the 2012 presidential election (Panagopoulos 2013). In the case of the Texas Tribune-University of Texas survey of registered voters, the survey distribution is also very much like the population. The population inside the checkpoints in the 2010 census was approximately 1.4 million people, about 5.8% of the total Texas population. The survey of registered voters has 144 of the 2400 respondents living inside the checkpoints, 6% of the respondents in the survey.

Three separate hypotheses are tested.<sup>3</sup> The developed models look at dependent variables in a stepwise fashion first looking at general political attitudes and moving on to more specific attitudes dealing with policy. The first hypothesis focuses on the perception of immigration and border security as a problem in the state. Here the model looks to see if the constant presence of federal agents and infrastructure designed to stop illegal activity intensifies the perception that the issue is an extreme problem.

*H1: Living below the checkpoints will increase the likelihood that the respondent will think that immigration or border security is the most important problem in the United States.*

Here the dependent variable is a categorical variable coded one if the respondent said that border security or immigration was the biggest problem facing the state of Texas, and zero if the respondent answered something else. Probit estimations will be an appropriate way to test the first hypothesis (Greene 2000).

A second model will test the respondents' desire to have federal level policy reform on immigration.

*H2: Living below the checkpoints will increase the likelihood that a respondent will want comprehensive immigration reform.*

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<sup>3</sup> The Texas Tribune-University of Texas survey provided zip codes for each respondent. To code those residents living south of the second layer of checkpoints zip codes were identified and a categorical variable was created. In the vast majority of cases the coding was quite easy with respondents living in zip codes entirely inside the checkpoints. The one uncertain case in the coding was the zip code 77840. In this zip code there was an overlap with a checkpoint that made precision impossible. In that case, because over 90% of the residents in the zip code live south of the checkpoints, the three respondents living in 77840 were coded as living south of the checkpoints.

Here the question does not focus on what the reform will be. Instead it only asks if extensive immigration reform is something desired. In being asked this question each respondent had five options and each response was coded in order of preference. The responses were "strongly support" coded five, "somewhat support" coded four, "don't know" coded three, "somewhat oppose" coded two and "strongly oppose" coded one.

While it is important to see how issue priorities and political interest change because of the checkpoints it is also important to look at policy preferences. As was explained in the previous section, the survey did not ask specific questions concerning policy positions on immigration and border security. However, an indirect way to look at public attitudes on immigration is to look at their feelings of political leaders that are vocal on the issue. Texas' United States Senator Ted Cruz provides a good figure for this type of analysis. His vocal anti-illegal immigration stance along with his extensive visibility makes him an excellent figure for such an analysis. Support or lack of support for Cruz, indicates support for his stance against amnesty for illegal immigrants and stricter enforcement of immigration law.

*H3: Living below the checkpoints will affect the respondents' likability of United States Senator Ted Cruz.*

Here the variable is coded five if Cruz is seen as "very favorable", four if the respondent's viewpoint is "somewhat favorable", three if the respondent's feelings are "neither favorable or unfavorable" or "don't know", two if the viewpoint is "somewhat unfavorable" and one if the viewpoint is "very unfavorable". With the last two hypotheses having dependent variables with ordinal level data ordered probit estimates will be used to conduct the analysis.<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, because the models are testing for environmental effects on political life each model will include demographic variables to control for additional life effects that may change attitudes on the dependent variables. Such controls are often used to account for outside influences on immigration attitudes (Arikan and Ben-Nun Bloom 2012; Branton 2007; Ilias, Fennelly, and Federico 2008; Massey and Riosmena 2010; Perez 2010). As a

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<sup>4</sup>The statistical analysis was performed in Stata using probit and oprobit commands.

result, control variables for education level, race, ethnicity, gender, age, income, and having children will also be included in the models.<sup>5</sup>

Religious affiliation and partisanship have been found to influence immigration opinions (Knoll 2009). Because the last two hypotheses deal directly with policy it should be interesting to see the effects that religious affiliation and partisanship have on border security and immigration attitudes, and to see if living below the checkpoints produces an independent impact on the dependent variables when these factors are controlled for. Two categorical variables will be included in these models to account for partisanship. Those who identify themselves as Democrats will be identified with the categorical variable *Democrat*. The same procedure will be true for Republicans (*Republican*). A variable for those not identifying with one party or the other will not be included to prevent perfect multicollinearity. Three variables will be included to show religious faith. Categorical variables are included for *Protestant* and *Catholic*. A third variable, *Evangelical*, will also be included to identify those who give highest authority to Biblical scriptures by identifying themselves as “evangelical”. This variable will often overlap with both Protestant and Catholic as members of both religions do identify themselves as evangelical.

Previous studies have shown that demographic factors help develop party identification (Cain, Kiewiet, and Uhlaner 1991; Lim, Barry-Goodman, and Branham 2006; Wong 2000) and religious affiliation (Perrin 1989) in the United States. Therefore, the addition of control variables indicating party identification (Democrat, Republican) and religious affiliation (Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical) in the same model with the demographic variables is improper. In such a case, party identification and religious affiliation would be endogenous variables whose value is determined by other variables in the model. As a result the independent variables would be correlated and their effect would be diluted in the model. Therefore, the models that look at the impact of party identification and religious status in hypotheses two and three will be in separate analyses from those that look at demographic factors.

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<sup>5</sup> The variable for age is named Yearborn and is simply the year the respondent was born. All of the rest of the demographic independent variables are categorical in nature.

**Results**

The survey results show distributions that line up with the hypotheses expressed in the previous section. Table 1 shows a direct breakdown of support for the various immigration attitudes by residence status. In each case, there are clear differences between those Texans that live below the checkpoints and those who do not. Residents living below the checkpoints are more than twice as likely to say that immigration or border security is the most important problem facing the United States. Support for a comprehensive immigration overhaul is also more likely among residents living south of the checkpoints than those living to the north. Nearly two-thirds of those surveyed who live inside the checkpoints are in favor of such an overhaul. Less than half of the remaining Texans support such legislation. The third variable, favorability of Senator Ted Cruz, is also slightly higher among those who live south of the checkpoints.

**Table 1: Texas Tribune-University of Texas Poll Respondents Opinions by Residential Status (percentage)**

|  | <b>Live Inside Checkpoints</b> | <b>Live Outside Checkpoints</b> |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Immigration/Border Security Most Important Problem in the US | 9.7                            | 4.1                             |
| Support Comprehensive Immigration Overhaul                   | 65.3                           | 49.2                            |
| Favorable Opinion of US Senator Ted Cruz                     | 42.4                           | 38.8                            |

A look at the multivariate analysis provides further evidence that being bounded by the border patrol checkpoints influences conclusions that immigration or border security is the top priority in the nation. Table 2 reveals the results. Those residents living beneath the checkpoints are significantly more likely (at the .01 level, one-tailed test) to say that border security or immigration is the biggest problem facing the state of Texas. The lack of significance among the control variables is also interesting. Not one of the demographic variables attained statistical significance. The results indicate that demographic status has little to do with whether or not respondents consider immigration as an important a problem for registered voters throughout the state. Residing behind the checkpoints is a strong indicator of making border security and immigration a priority regardless of demographic status.

The second hypothesis which focuses on attitudes concerning the need for comprehensive immigration reform also produced noteworthy results.

**Table 2: Model Predictors of Attitudes for Texas Registered Voters**

|                                  | Immigration/Border Security<br>Country's #1 Problem |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Live Below Border Checkpoints    | .557 (.181)**                                       |
| Income over \$100K               | -.132 (.158)  |
| Income under \$30K               | -.076 (.119)  |
| Not High School Graduate         | .037 (.276)   |
| College Degree                   | -.195 (.127)  |
| Female                           | .085 (.104)   |
| Year Born                        | .001 (.003)   |
| Latino                           | -.199 (.139)  |
| African American                 | -.197 (.164)  |
| Asian                            | -.008 (.468)  |
| Have Children                    | .125 (.108)   |
| McFadden's Pseudo R <sup>2</sup> | .02   |
| N                                | 2063  |

Note: The dependent variable is listed above the column. Cell entries are probit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses for coefficients in both models. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$  using a one-tailed test.

Model 1 in Table 3, which uses demographic variables as controls, indicates that residents who live below the checkpoints are more likely to support comprehensive immigration reform than those who live to the north. The second model, which controls for partisanship and religious status, also indicates that being bounded inside the checkpoints increases the desire for reform. The evidence supports the notion that being bounded by the checkpoints increases one's desire to support comprehensive immigration policy. Demographic effects displayed in the first model show that among Texas' registered voters those that are younger and more educated are more likely to favor comprehensive immigration reform. The same is true for racial and ethnic minorities. However, those who have children are less likely to support immigration reform. The second model confirms that Republicans are far less likely to support comprehensive immigration reform than Democrats. It also confirms that Protestants, Catholics and evangelicals are far less likely to support reform than their counterparts.

The final hypothesis, looks at Senator Ted Cruz's popularity. Table 4 displays the two models. The hypothesized variable, living below the checkpoints, showed significant coefficients at the .01 level for Cruz in both models. Registered voters bounded by the border checkpoints are clearly more supportive of Cruz, the anti-amnesty gladiator, than other registered Texans, other things equal. Not surprisingly, Latino and African-American



**Table 3: Model Predictors of Attitudes for Texas Registered Voters**

|                                  | Pro Comprehensive Immigration Reform |                |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
|                                  | Model 1                              | Model 2        |
| Live Below Checkpoints           | .211 (.109)*                         | .284 (.098)**  |
| Democrat                         |                                      | .792 (.055)**  |
| Republican                       |                                      | -.281 (.056)** |
| Protestant                       |                                      | -.369 (.066)** |
| Catholic                         |                                      | -.256 (.070)** |
| Evangelical                      |                                      | -.161 (.058)** |
| Income over \$100K               | .077 (.070)                          |                |
| Income under \$30K               | .082 (.056)                          |                |
| Not High School Graduate         | -.032 (.136)                         |                |
| College Degree                   | .410 (.057)**                        |                |
| Female                           | .038 (.049)                          |                |
| Year Born                        | .005 (.002)**                        |                |
| Latino                           | .648 (.063)**                        |                |
| African American                 | .612 (.071)**                        |                |
| Asian                            | .313 (.224)                          |                |
| Have Children                    | -.158 (.051)**                       |                |
| Cut Point #1                     | 9.07 (3.11)                          | -.784 (.054)   |
| Cut Point #2                     | 9.46 (3.11)                          | -.380 (.053)   |
| Cut Point #3                     | 9.68 (3.11)                          | -.147 (.053)   |
| Cut Point #4                     | 10.45 (3.11)                         | .683 (.054)    |
| McFadden's Pseudo R <sup>2</sup> | .04                                  | .07            |
| N                                | 2061                                 | 2398           |

Note: The dependent variable is listed above the columns. Cell entries are ordered probit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses for coefficients in both models. \*p < .05. \*\*p < .01 using a one-tailed test.<sup>6</sup>

registered voters are significantly less likely to approve of Cruz than registered voters from other groups. The same is true for younger voters and for those registered voters with college degrees. Older respondents and those with children are significantly more likely to support Cruz than other registered voters in the state. Also in line with expected outcomes are the variables for partisanship and religion. Republicans are tremendously more likely to express support for Cruz than Democrats. Protestants, Catholics,

<sup>6</sup> While, as previously explained, I believe it is theoretically improper to include attitudinal variables such as party identification and religious affiliation along with demographic variables in the same model it has been a practice done by other authors when looking at immigration attitudes (Ilias, Fennelly, and Federico 2008; Sanchez 2006). As a result I ran the first model adding the partisanship and religious variables. The result was a .221 coefficient for Living Below the Checkpoints. The coefficient was significant at the .05 level, one tailed test, just as was the case in Model 1.

and evangelicals are also much more likely to support Cruz than those with another religious status.

**Table 4: Model Predictors of Attitudes for Texas Registered Voters**

|                                  | Like US Senator Ted Cruz |                |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
|                                  | Model 1                  | Model 2        |
| Live Below Checkpoints           | .293 (.106)**            | .325 (.097)**  |
| Democrat                         |                          | -.979 (.056)** |
| Republican                       |                          | .492 (.056)**  |
| Protestant                       |                          | .482 (.066)**  |
| Catholic                         |                          | .464 (.071)**  |
| Evangelical                      |                          | .233 (.058)**  |
| Income over \$100K               | .059 (.070)              |                |
| Income under \$30K               | -.074 (.056)             |                |
| Not High School Graduate         | .010 (.136)              |                |
| College Degree                   | -.227 (.057)**           |                |
| Female                           | -.153 (.049)**           |                |
| Year Born                        | -.008 (.002)**           |                |
| Latino                           | -.401 (.062)**           |                |
| African American                 | -.573 (.071)**           |                |
| Asian                            | -.352 (.217)             |                |
| Have Children                    | .236 (.051)**            |                |
| Cut Point #1                     | -16.57 (3.10)            | -.632 (.054)   |
| Cut Point #2                     | -16.34 (3.10)            | -.362 (.053)   |
| Cut Point #3                     | -15.46 (3.09)            | .657 (.054)    |
| Cut Point #4                     | -15.01 (3.09)            | 1.15 (.056)    |
| McFadden's Pseudo R <sup>2</sup> | .03                      | .09            |
| N                                | 2056                     | 2300           |

Note: The dependent variable is listed above the columns. Cell entries are ordered probit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses for coefficients in both models. \*p < .05. \*\*p < .01 using a two-tailed test.<sup>7</sup>

## Cruz as a Proxy for Immigration and Border Security Policy Desires

The final hypothesis presented made the case that Senator Ted Cruz could serve as a good proxy for immigration policy. The results show that when controlling for demographic factors, partisanship, and religious status Cruz is very popular among residents living below the border patrol checkpoints. This popularity is significantly above Cruz's popularity in the

<sup>7</sup> For the same reasons explained in the footnote for Table 3 I ran the first model in Table 4 adding the religious affiliation and partisanship variables to the analysis. The result was a coefficient of .361 for Living Below the Checkpoints. The coefficient was significant at the .01 level just as was the case in Model 1.

rest of Texas, *ceteris paribus*. The justification that Cruz can serve as a proxy is made because at the time of the survey there were no comprehensive immigration proposals being touted and Cruz was one of the few national level politicians willing to outwardly express his immigration and border security opinions. However, while the analysis shows that Cruz is popular beyond normal prediction in the area south of the checkpoints it does not determine why he is so popular. The assumption that his popularity is due to his immigration and border security platform is because the issue is so important in the region in comparison to the rest of the state. But this is only an assumption.

One way to test the assumption indirectly is by looking at Cruz's popularity among those who live below the checkpoints and categorizing them by whether or not the respondents believe that border security or immigration is the most important issue in the country. If Cruz's popularity is due to these particular issues he should be more popular among residents who believe these issues are important. To do this the models in Table 4 are repeated with an adjustment made in the variable indicating residence below the checkpoints. Instead of indicating residence in the area with a single categorical variable the residents below the checkpoints are divided according to whether or not they think immigration or border security is the most important problem in the U.S. Table 5 reveals the results.

The models indicate that Cruz has significant support from both groups in the region. Residents who live below the checkpoints are more likely to support Cruz than other residents in the state regardless of whether or not they feel that immigration or border security is the nation's most important problem. However, the coefficients indicate that, among those bounded inside the checkpoints, Cruz is more popular among those who think immigration or border security is the most important problem in the U.S. than those residents who do not.

What conclusions can be drawn about the residents living below the checkpoints from the models in Table 5? First, the coefficients provide evidence that Cruz is more popular among those who prioritize immigration or border security as a problem than those who do not. A portion of Cruz's popularity in the region is a result of his immigration policy stances. Second, it is difficult to ascertain why the other residents, who do not believe that immigration or border security is the most important problem in the U.S., like Cruz as well. It could be his immigration stance, or it could be some other issue, or both. Regardless, the evidence is overwhelming that,

**Table 5: Model Predictors of Attitudes for Texas Registered Voters**

|  | Like US Senator Ted Cruz |                |
|--|--------------------------|----------------|
|  | Model 1                  | Model 2        |
| Below Checkpoints and Immigration #1     | .563 (.313)*             | .630 (.295)*   |
| Below Checkpoints and Immigration not #1 | .263 (.111)**            | .292 (.099)**  |
| Democrat                                 |                          | -.981 (.056)** |
| Republican                               |                          | .490 (.056)**  |
| Protestant                               |                          | .483 (.066)**  |
| Catholic                                 |                          | .463 (.071)**  |
| Evangelical                              |                          | .233 (.058)**  |
| Income over \$100K                       | .059 (.070)              |                |
| Income under \$30K                       | -.074 (.056)             |                |
| Not High School Graduate                 | -.007 (.136)             |                |
| College Degree                           | -.227 (.057)**           |                |
| Female                                   | -.153 (.048)**           |                |
| Year Born                                | -.008 (.002)**           |                |
| Latino                                   | -.399 (.062)**           |                |
| African American                         | -.573 (.071)**           |                |
| Asian                                    | -.349 (.216)             |                |
| Have Children                            | .234 (.051)**            |                |
| Cut Point #1                             | -16.59 (3.10)            | -.740 (.054)   |
| Cut Point #2                             | -16.37 (3.10)            | -.467 (.053)   |
| Cut Point #3                             | -15.48 (3.09)            | .551 (.054)    |
| Cut Point #4                             | -15.03 (3.09)            | 1.04 (.056)    |
| McFadden's Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>         | .03                      | .09            |
| N  | 2056                     | 2300           |

Note: The dependent variable is listed above the columns. Cell entries are ordered probit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses for coefficients in both models. \*p < .05. \*\*p < .01 using a one-tailed test.<sup>8</sup>

controlling for demographics, religious status, and partisanship Cruz is significantly more popular in the area south of the checkpoints than in the rest of the state, and that a significant portion of that popularity is due to his immigration views.

## Conclusion

The research conducted in this paper gives a comprehensive picture of registered voters who live beneath the interior border checkpoints in the

<sup>8</sup> For the same reasons as were explained in the footnote for Table 4 I ran the first model adding the religious affiliation and partisanship variables in Table 5. The result was a coefficient of .637 for Living Below the Checkpoints and Immigration Being the #1 Problem. It was significant at the .05 level. The coefficient for Living Below the Checkpoints and Immigration Not Being the #1 Problem was .354. It was significant at the .01 level.

state of Texas. The findings lead to several conclusions. The evidence here does confirm that the living situation has an impact on the political thinking of the electorate. Registered voters who live below the checkpoints are more likely to think that immigration or border security is the most important problem that the United States faces. They are also more likely to want comprehensive immigration reform than their state peers. The evidence indicates that Texas residents who live day-to-day confronting the issues of border protection and immigration clearly have different priorities than those who do not. Politicians who wish to represent these constituents should keep this in mind. Pushing these issues to the back of the agenda would probably not be very popular to the voters who live south of the border checkpoints.

Perhaps the most interesting finding in this research is the support for Senator Ted Cruz. The life that these registered voters live is far different from what others in the state face. They see social injustice in how policy is implemented in the area. They believe their civil rights are compromised. Immigration checkpoints have stolen their time and privacy. Their safety has also been placed in jeopardy as drug dealers and transporters settle into their neighborhood so they can devise a plan to get past the checkpoints. When this perspective is taken into account perhaps it isn't surprising that they are more likely to back a politician, regardless of partisanship, who wants a more secure border, takes a tough stand against illegal aliens and immigration, and does not hesitate to criticize a "pathway to citizenship" through illegal activities.

The residents who live to the south of the checkpoints live in a unique policy atmosphere that few residents to the north can relate to. While the vast majority of the state benefits from the extended enforcement of the border patrol those that live within the enforcement zone face difficulties. It is important that policymakers throughout the state and the country understand these difficulties. It is also important that they understand the attitudes that these citizens have about these policy problems. This research shows that the problems are different and perhaps more intense than what is generally thought. It also shows that the solutions that these residents want offered may be different from what is traditionally believed.

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