The Effect of Interior Immigration Enforcement on Food Bank Utilization: The Secure Communities Program

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1 Introduction

The Latino population in the United States is two times more likely to experience food insecurity than their white neighbors. Of the 44 million people in the United States experiencing food insecurity, nearly 13 million are Latino (Feeding America, 2024a). The prevalence of food insecurity is of great concern to policymakers and program administrators, as there is much concern over its many demonstrated negative health consequences. Food banks play an essential role in alleviating food insecurity through distribution of food and nutritional assistance.

The Latino population is also particularly vulnerable to immigration policies, as about three quarters of undocumented immigrants are Latino (Millet and Pavilon, 2022). In order to avoid detection by immigration enforcement, immigrant communities may reduce their contact with public institutions to protect themselves, family, or friends. Prior research has found that increases in immigration enforcement decrease the engagement of the Hispanic population with social services and other public institutions even among populations that are not undocumented, raising concerns that this vulnerable population is not receiving the services they need (Alsan and Yang, 2022; Hagan, Castro, and Rodriguez, 2009; Vargas, 2015; Vargas and Pirog, 2016; Watson, 2014; Toomey et al., 2014).

In this paper, I study the impact of a federal immigration enforcement policy, Secure Communities (SC), on food bank utilization. The SC program began in 2008 and it was designed to identify immigrants in U.S. jails who are deportable under immigration law. Under SC, an arrestee's fingerprints

are sent to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for a background check and then are automatically sent to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) to determine whether the person was in violation of any immigration laws. If ICE determines that an individual is potentially deportable, the agency can request the local law enforcement agency to hold the individual for up to 48 hours to then transfer the individual to the custody of ICE for the initiation of deportation proceedings. The program was rolled out on a county-by-county basis until 2013, but it was then suspended in late 2014. Over the time the program was active, SC led to 46 million fingerprint submissions to ICE, 2.3 million arrests, and 440,000 deportations (Ali, Brown, and Herbst, 2024).

Local immigration enforcement may influence household food insecurity in many ways. Directly, local immigration enforcement may disrupt a household's composition. Many immigrants live in mixed-status households, where one or more members of the family are documented while others in the family are not. Thus, deportations may lead to a separation within a household and increase the economic disadvantages of family members left behind (Dreby, 2012). The family left behind is left with an increase in expenses due to a loss in income, lawyer fees, and reunification costs. Consequentially, the remaining household may struggle to provide basic necessities for their children, including food. Even without a deportation, households may reduce their labor supply out of fear of being detected themselves or to protect their networks. Individuals who work may reduce their work hours or even switch to a job with lower wages if the individual feels safer and less detectable (e.g. choosing a job that is closer to home so they do not have to drive as much). This may reduce the households' income which in turn may increase food insecurity and the demand for food banks.

Local immigration enforcement may also influence household food security through a reluctance to use community and government social services. As a result of an increase in immigration enforcement, immigrants become more fearful and distrustful of public agencies (Dreby, 2012; Rhodes et al., 2015; Capps et al., 2011). Thus, even in mixed-status households where U.S. citizen children are eligible for programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), households refrain from applying due to confusion on eligibility and fear of being identified by ICE. These observed "chilling effects," reductions in program participation due to an icy policy climate, from an increase in immigration enforcement may spillover into utilization of food banks. While food banks are run by non-profit organizations and do not require applications or have eligibility conditions, immigrant communities (undocumented or documented) may reduce their usage of banks due to fear of bringing at-

tention to the citizenship status of themselves or friends and families. On the other hand, there may be a crowding out effect, where individuals reduce their participation with social services and as a result may need to substitute to relying more on private services including food banks to meet their nutritional needs.

Additionally, local immigration enforcement may influence household food security through changes in household behaviors. Fears of deportation and family separation increase social isolation and emotional distress, which have implications for food insecurity (Hacker et al., 2012; Hardy et al., 2012). In order to avoid detection by law enforcement, immigrants may avoid driving, which can shift their food purchasing habits toward more expensive, easily accessible food options (Capps et al., 2011; Hardy et al., 2012). Other public places which can provide food support, such as churches and schools, may be avoided as well. This constant social isolation and deportation worry exacerbates parental depression and anxiety, which are factors known to be linked to food insecurity (Cook and Frank, 2008; Gundersen, Kreider, and Pepper, 2011). These changes in household behaviors may have ambiguous effects on the demand of food banks. On one hand, immigration enforcement may exacerbate food insecurity in immigrant communities, leading to an increase in demand for food assistance and thus, increase in demand for food banks. Alternatively, communities may establish their own resources and immigrants may lean on each other more for support, as social networks are crucial in vulnerable communities (Benavides et al., 2021).

To isolate the causal effect of the Secure Communities program on food bank utilization, I use a staggered difference-in-differences strategy in which I compare pounds of food distributed at the county level before and after activation of the SC program. In an attempt to further isolate the effects on immigrant communities, I perform a heterogeneity analysis to look at counties with larger Hispanic populations.

I find that SC activation is associated with an increase in the pounds of food distributed in a county. Additionally, SC differentially impacts counties with higher Hispanic shares. Counties with higher Hispanic shares experience a smaller increase in food bank utilization. For a county that has an average Hispanic share (8.4%), SC significantly increases the pounds of food distributed by 5.3%.

This paper contributes to a growing literature on immigration enforcement and service utilization (Alsan and Yang, 2022; Hagan, Castro, and Rodriguez, 2009; Vargas, 2015; Vargas and Pirog, 2016; Watson, 2014; Toomey et al., 2014). Toomey et al., 2014 finds that an increase in immigration enforcement is associated with a decrease in public assistance use and routine medical care

use amongst Mexican-origin families. Vargas, 2015 and Watson, 2014 both find that heightened federal immigration enforcement reduces Medicaid participation amongst mixed-status families and children of noncitizens, respectively. Additionally, Vargas and Pirog, 2016 find a decrease in the uptake of WIC amongst mixed-status families. Alsan and Yang, 2022 finds that Hispanic-headed citizen households reduce their participation in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) in response to the Secure Communities program. My paper most closely follows Alsan and Yang, 2022 in studying the Secure Communities Program as a measure of immigration enforcement.

I contribute to the literature in two ways. First, I study the impact of immigration enforcement on the take-up of a private service. In contrast, the literature has mostly focused on the effect of immigration enforcement on the utilization of social services. However, immigration enforcement policies may impact utilization of services beyond the ones directly provided by the government. The spillover effects should be studied to better understand the overall impacts of enforcement policies. Secondly, this paper explores the possibility of substitution between public and private services in icy policy climates. The results from this analysis highlight the need for policymakers to consider the indirect effects of immigration enforcement policies on vulnerable populations and their unintended health implications.

The rest of the paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 outlines the background information on the Secure Communities program and the Feeding America food banks. Section 3 describes the data, Section 4 describes the empirical approach, Section 5 presents results, Section 6 provides a discussion, and Section 7 concludes the paper.

2 Background

2.1 Secure Communities Program

Secure Communities (SC) was a federal immigration enforcement program administered from 2008 to 2014, it was then reactivated in 2017, and ultimately revoked in 2021. The central goal of the program was enhanced information sharing between federal immigration databases and local law enforcement. The SC program empowered Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to verify the immigration status of anyone arrested by local law enforcement through fingerprint analysis. The program was aimed at helping ICE arrest and remove individuals who were in violation of federal immigration laws. SC

had three main objectives: (1) identify non-citizens charged with or convicted of serious criminal offenses who were subject to removal; (2) to prioritize enforcement action to ensure apprehension and removal of non-citizens convicted of serious criminal offenses; and (3) to transform enforcement processes and systems to achieve lasting results (Alsan and Yang, 2022). SC accomplished these goals through the extensive collaboration between local law enforcement agencies, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Typically, when an individual is arrested and booked by local police, fingerprints are taken and submitted to the FBI for a determination of criminal history. The FBI runs the fingerprints to conduct a criminal background check, which is then forwarded to the state or local authorities. Before SC, immigrant arrestees were identified primarily through individual inmate interviews in local jails and prisons. These interviews were conducted by federal officials under the Criminal Alien Program (CAP) as well as by local law enforcement officials that were authorized under 287(g) agreements (Miles and Cox, 2014). These interviews were labor intensive, and the authorized officials screened in less than 15 percent of local jails and prisons, and in only about two percent of all U.S. counties (Cox and Miles, 2013).

SC improved upon identifying the status of immigrants. Under SC, fingerprints sent to the FBI were automatically routed to DHS for analysis in its Automated Biometric Identification System (IDENT), a database of every fingerprinted foreign-born person in the US. If there was a fingerprint match, ICE agents reviewed the arrested person's immigration status to determine whether he/she was in violation of immigration law. If such determination was made, ICE agents would then issue what is called a "detainer" on the person, which allowed agents to request that local law enforcement hold the individual for up to 48 hours beyond the scheduled release, to allow ICE to transfer him/her to federal custody for the initiation of removal proceedings. Issuing a detainer thus allowed the federal government to apprehend and begin deportation proceedings for a non-citizen who would otherwise have been released by the local criminal justice system. As Cox and Miles (2014) explain, SC substantially increased the likelihood that a non-citizen would be apprehended and then deported from the country, conditional on being arrested.

The SC program began in October 2008 and was activated on a county-by-county basis. Launching the program at all locations nationwide simultaneously was not possible due to various technological constraints (for example, many jurisdictions did not have live scan fingerprint devices). New activations were fairly slow in 2008 and 2009; however, most counties adopted SC by mid-2012 and it was fully activated across the country by the end of January 2013.

Figure 1 shows the timing of SC activation across counties.

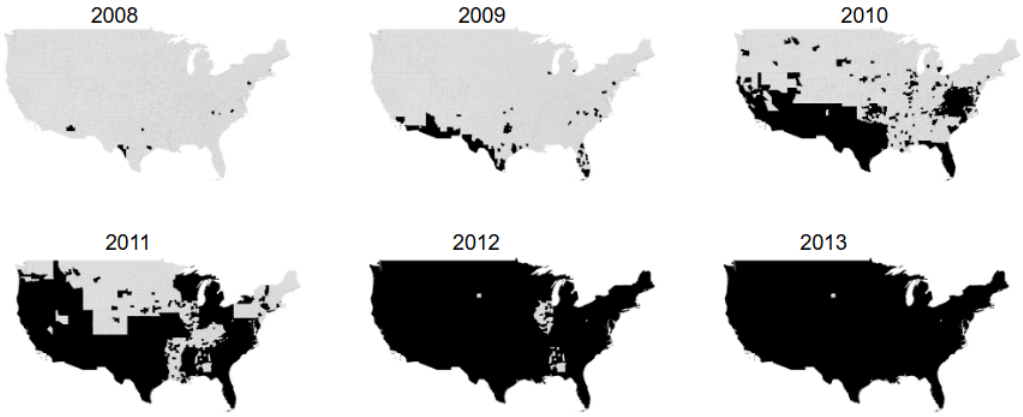

Figure 1: Secure Communities Activation

SC is particularly attractive for studying the impact of immigration enforcement policy, since the roll-out was not decided at the state or local level, but rather the federal government level. An additional advantage to studying the program is that participation in SC was mandatory and counties could not opt out, although initially some jurisdictions began to disobey detainer requests from ICE (Alsan and Yang, 2022). However, once SC is activated in a county, there is no way for local authorities to share the fingerprints of arrestees with the FBI but not with DHS; this occurred automatically. Cox and Miles (2013) show that the timing of activation across early adopting counties is most strongly correlated with the Hispanic population, proximity to the Mexican border, and whether a county had a 287(g) agreement with ICE. As Figure 1 shows, border counties were the earliest places to activate the program. This nonrandom timing may introduce a bias to the staggered difference-in-differences design. To reduce the selection bias that might be generated, I exclude counties that adopted the program early, thus I drop counties that activate the program in 2008 or 2009, the first two years of the program. I return to this exclusion in the results section.

SC was suspended in November 2014 and was replaced with a new program called the "Priority Enforcement Program" (PEP). Under PEP, ICE continued to rely on fingerprints submitted by local law enforcement; however, ICE was instructed to only transfer individuals convicted of high priority offenses, individuals involved in criminal gang activity, or individuals deemed to pose a danger to national security. SC was then reactivated in January 2017 through an executive order by President Trump, and it was then revoked in January

2021 by President Biden. The period between late 2014 and early 2021 may complicate empirical analysis as it is somewhat unclear whether this period should be deemed a "treatment" period or not. However, with the difference-in-differences analysis I use only variation through 2013, when all counties become treated with the original iteration of SC. My study period is 2008 through 2014. Since the inception of SC in 2008 through 2014 and since its re-activation in 2017 to 2021, the program has led to the removal of over 400,000 immigrants in the US.

2.2 Feeding America Food Banks

Feeding America (FA) is the largest organization dedicated to hunger relief in the U.S., operating through a nationwide network of over 200 food banks. These food banks source food and grocery products from various partners, including food retailers, manufacturers, local farmers, corporations, and individual donors. To address shortages, they also purchase food directly from suppliers. This food is distributed to people in need via more than 60,000 partner organizations, such as food pantries, churches, shelters, soup kitchens, and programs specifically supporting youth and seniors. Covering nearly all U.S. counties, FA food banks serve both urban and rural populations. In 2023 alone, the network distributed 5.3 billion meals, reaching over 40 million people in need (America, 2024c). Although FA food assistance programs do not require income qualifications, most clients tend to be low-income. In 2014, the majority of households with children seeking assistance reported earnings below $15,000 annually and faced difficulties affording food, housing, and medical care. Additionally, a study from 2010 found that more than four million Hispanic children and their family, which equates to one out of every three, received services from Feeding America every year (America, 2024b). Since FA provides groceries at no cost, it plays a crucial role in helping families manage food insecurity and financial challenges, regardless of their participation in government food assistance programs.

3 Data

3.1 Immigration Enforcement

The data used for this analysis comes from two sources. The data on the staggered roll-out of Secure Communities comes from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (Immigration and Enforcement, 2014). This publication

includes the activation dates of the SC program in each county. While I have the exact date of activation, my dependent variable is at the quarter level therefore I only use the month and year to aggregate to the quarter level. Additionally, the roll-out of Secure Communities may be endogenous to other immigration enforcement policies through the time of analysis. Because of this, I also control for the 287(g) program that allowed local law enforcement to enter into agreements with ICE to further enforce immigration laws. This data was made available by Stephanie Potochnick and Juan Pedroza (used in Potochnick, Chen, and Perreira, 2017; Rugh and Hall, 2016; Dee and Murphy, 2020). The full set of historical and active 287(g) agreements was released by ICE via the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The data spans from 2002-2017 and contains the year of implementation for each county. A majority of the agreements were made by county sheriff's offices, although there are several that were with municipalities within counties. In total, there are 83 agreements that were implemented.

3.2 Feeding America Food Bank Utilization

I examine food bank utilization, which is defined as the pounds of food distributed by each food bank in each county. The data includes quarterly information for 198 FA banks covering most of the nationwide food banks through the years 2008 to 2014.

Table 1: Summary Statistics

	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Pounds of food (quarterly)	259,584.771	868,961.901	5.000	60,264,968.000
White share	0.793	0.195	0.026	0.998
Black share	0.093	0.145	0.000	0.866
Hispanic share	0.084	0.131	0.001	0.961
Unemployment rate	0.078	0.020	0.000	0.294
Observations	83,461			

Notes: Summary statistics for counties that activate Secure Communities (SC). The sample covers U.S. counties from 2008 to 2014 at the quarter level and is restricted to the contiguous United States. Counties that implement SC in 2008 and 2009 are dropped due to possible selection bias. Racial variables are shares of the population. The SC data comes from Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the food bank data comes from Feeding America.

Table 1 shows the summary statistics for my sample. There are 83,461

observations. As can be seen, the pounds of food distributed per county per quarter ranges from five pounds to sixty million pounds. Additionally, there is substantial variation in the race shares. For example, Hispanic share ranges from 0.1% to 96% across U.S. counties. I will further disentangle the variation in Hispanic shares across counties in my empirical specification.

4 Empirical Specification

To study the impact of SC on the utilization of food banks, I exploit the staggered adoption of the program across U.S. counties from 2008 to 2013. The two-way fixed effects specification is as follows:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha + \beta SC_{it} + \delta \mathbf{X}_{it} + \gamma_i + \rho_t + \varepsilon_{it} \tag{1}$$

Y_{it} represents the outcome of interest, which is the natural log of pounds of food distributed in county i in quarter t. $\mathbf{X}_{it}$ is a vector of county characteristics that vary by year, including the county unemployment rate and the share of Hispanic population. I also control for if a county enters into a 287(g) agreement with ICE. SC_{it} is an indicator variable that equals 1 when index county i is actively implementing SC in quarter t. γ_i and ρ_t are county and quarter-by-year fixed effects, respectively. Standard error are clustered by county. β is our coefficient of interest, which identifies the average treatment effects on the treated (ATT).

Additionally, I run the specification with SC interacted with the Hispanic share in a county to account for differential impacts of the program. The specification is as follows:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 SC_{it} + \beta_2 SC_{it} * Hispanic_{it} + \beta_3 Hispanic_{it} + \delta \mathbf{X}_{it} + \gamma_i + \rho_t + \varepsilon_{it} \tag{2}$$

In Equation 2, $\mathbf{X}_{it}$ continues to be vector of county characteristics that vary by year, including the county unemployment rate and whether a county entered into a 287(g) agreement. The parameter of interest is β_2, and it reflects the differential impact of SC on a county that is 100% Hispanic as opposed to 0% Hispanic.

The specifications above rely on the assumption that in the absence of treatment, the treated and control groups would have followed similar trends over time. In addition, there should be no anticipation effects, meaning, counties are not affected by the treatment before they actually receive it. I can gather

evidence on whether the assumption of parallel trends holds by examining event studies, which visually compare differences between treatment and control groups before and after treatment. If there is compelling evidence that the assumption holds, we can gain confidence that the effects are not being driven by confounders. I present event studies in the main results section.

5 Main Results

5.1 The Effect of SC on Food Bank Utilization

The results for the effect of SC on food bank utilization are shown in Table 2. Column 1 shows that SC activation is associated with a 3.5% average increase in the pounds of food distributed across treated counties, and this effect is significant at the 10% level. Once I include controls in column 2, this effect becomes a 2.9% increase, however it is not statistically significant. Additionally, in the absence of SC, totally Hispanic counties have 201.7% lower food distribution than totally non-Hispanic counties.
One may consider, however, that a county that has a higher share of Hispanics may be differentially impacted by the SC program, as this is the population most vulnerable to the policy. Column 3 shows the coefficient for the interacted term between SC and Hispanic share. The differential impact of SC on a county with 100% Hispanic share is a decrease of 47.4% pounds of food distributed, and this effect is significant at the 1% level. Given the average county Hispanic share in this dataset is 8.4%, SC activation is associated with a 5.3% increase in the pounds of food distributed for counties with average Hispanic shares. Furthermore, when SC was introduced, it increased food distribution by 9.3% in entirely non-Hispanic counties and decreased food distribution by 38% in entirely Hispanic counties. Columns 2 and 3 also show that the 287(g) program increases the pounds of food distributed, and the effects are significant at the 5% level. This provides further evidence that immigration policy during this time was directly affecting communities across the country.

The results in Table 2 show that activation of SC is associated with an increase in the pounds of food distributed in treated counties. Additionally, I show how county estimates vary over the distribution of Hispanic shares. These results provide evidence that SC differentially impacts counties with higher shares of Hispanics, leading to a lower increase in pounds distributed. As a robustness check, I exclude years 2008 and 2009 from the study and find

Table 2: Effect of SC on Food Bank Utilization

	ln(Pounds of Food Distributed)		
SC	.035*	.029	.093***
	(.018)	(.019)	(.035)
Hispanic Share		-6.181***	-2.017
		(2.049)	(2.626)
Unemployment		-.340	.176
		(.657)	(.658)
287(g)		.141**	.147**
		(.061)	(.066)
SC X Hispanic Share			-.474***
			(.156)
R-Squared	.953	.975	.953
Observation	81,705	81,697	81,697
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Quarter by Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: The sample covers U.S. counties from 2008 to 2014 at the quarter level and is restricted to the contiguous United States. Counties that implement SC in 2008 and 2009 are dropped due to possible selection bias. The SC data comes from Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the dependent variable data comes from Feeding America. The independent variable, Secure Communities (SC), is an indicator that equals 1 if a county activates SC and equals 0 otherwise. Values in parentheses are robust standard errors clustered by county, with *** if p<0.01, ** if p<0.05, and * if p<0.10.

that results are consistent across specifications.[1]

[1]There may be concerns to my identification strategy if the recession of 2008 may be endogenous to food bank usage. For example, if this overwhelming event affects households in ways that cannot be controlled for, there may be bias in the results. Additionally, as mentioned in the background section, early adopting counties may have a selection issue. Because of this, I drop years 2008 and 2009 from the study. These results are in the Appendix, Table A1.

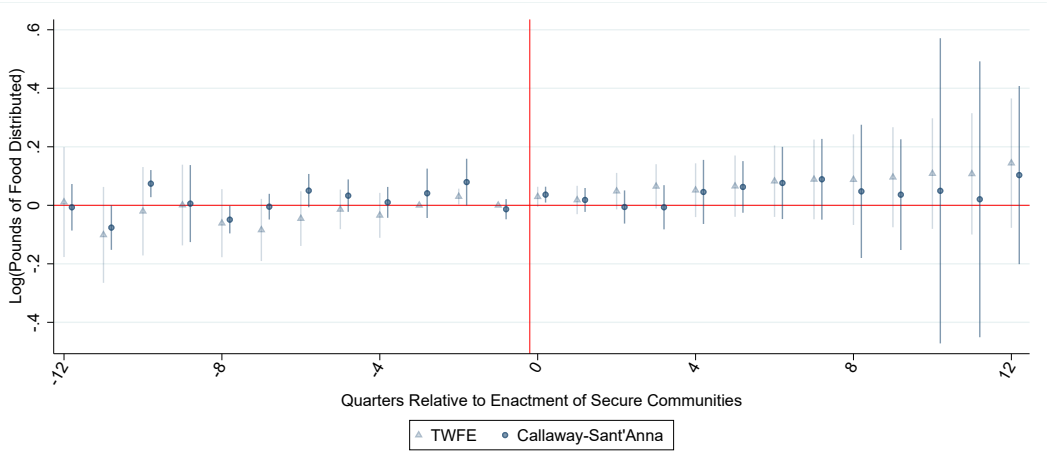

Figure 2: Effect of SC on Food Bank Utilization

These results may be biased, however, if in the absence of treatment, the treatment and control groups do not trend parallel to one another. Event studies that show an absence of pre-trends can support that the results are robust. Additionally, I run event studies using Callaway and Sant'Anna (2021) to account for the staggered adoption of SC and the potential bias that may arise. Figure 2 shows the event study for the two-way fixed effects and Callaway and Sant'Anna coefficients. The event study shows that the two-way fixed effects and Callaway and Sant'Anna estimates support the parallel trends assumption as the estimates are visually similar and pre-treatment coefficients tend to hover around zero.

5.2 Heterogeneity by Hispanic Shares

In attempt to further disentangle the negative coefficient on the interaction term of SC and Hispanic share, I perform several more Callaway and Sant'Anna event studies with different Hispanic shares. Although Callaway and Sant'Anna (2021) is the preferred methodology for studying this policy with staggered adoption, it cannot handle interaction terms in the empirical specification. Therefore, I present event studies to be able to visually observe heterogeneity effects using the preferred estimation technique.

Figure 3 shows the Callaway and Sant'Anna event study for counties that are above the median Hispanic share, which is 3.4% in my study. Figure 4 further stratifies Hispanic share by quartiles. The main results in Table 2 showed that counties that have higher Hispanic shares experience a lower

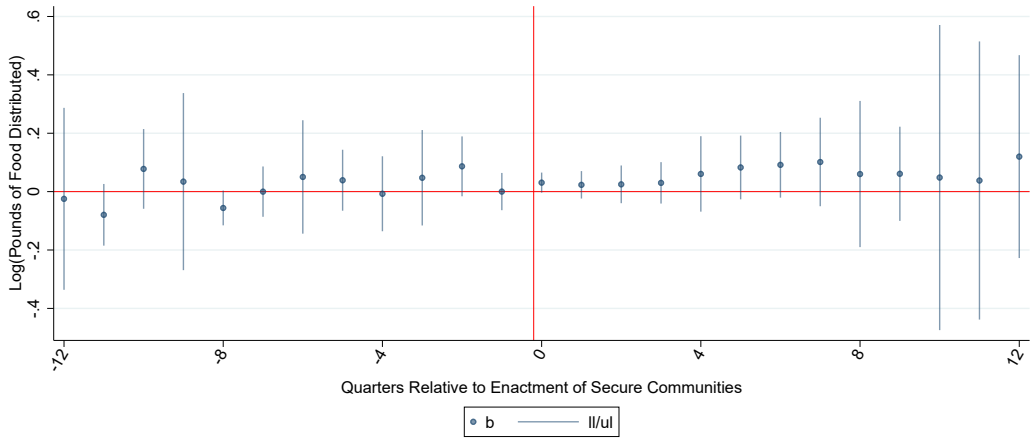

Figure 3: Effect of SC on Food Bank Utilization(Above Median Hispanic Share)

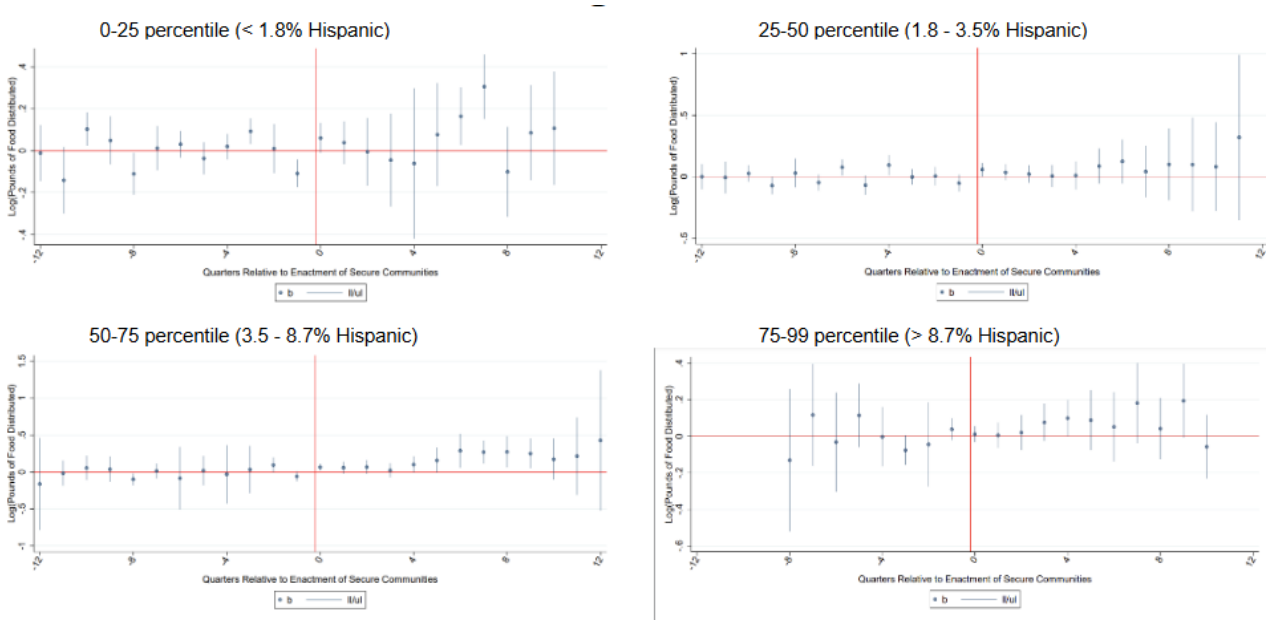

Figure 4: Effect of SC on Food Bank Utilization by Hispanic Share

increase in the utilization of food banks, when SC is activated. One should then expect to see in these event studies that as we get into the higher Hispanic share percentiles, there should be a lower increase in the pounds of food distributed. However, the post-periods in the event studies show mixed results. While the pre-treatment estimates tend to hover around zero, as is needed for the parallel trends assumption, I do not observe a lower increase in the utilization of food banks as the share of Hispanics in a county gets larger. In the study of the 0-25 percentile, there appears to be an overall larger increase in the pounds of food distributed, which follows the results of Table 2 that show counties with very low Hispanic shares experience the largest increases. However, in the event studies with larger Hispanic shares, confidence intervals get larger and standard error are less precise, therefore, effects are not visually clear.
These event studies show that the impact of SC is an overall increase in the pounds of food distributed; however, the heterogeneous effects are less visually observable.[2] Additionally, visually the impacts of SC may not be immediate, as some event studies do not show positive estimates until a year after adoption. This is plausible as many immigrant communities may not be immediately aware of the policy being activated in their county.

6 Discussion

In this paper, I find that activation of SC is associated with an increase in the pounds of food distributed among treated counties. This suggests that during a time of increased immigration enforcement, individuals in a county increase their reliance on community assistance. One potential mechanism may be that individuals are substituting away from government social services to community resources. Previous literature finds that an increase in immigration enforcement is associated with a decrease in the uptake of social services (Alsan and Yang, 2022; Hagan, Castro, and Rodriguez, 2009; Vargas, 2015; Vargas and Pirog, 2016; Watson, 2014; Toomey et al., 2014). These chilling effects mean these individuals must now find other ways to receive what they now no longer have, including nutritional assistance. Thus, individuals may seek nutritional support from community food banks as a result of an increase in demand. Additionally, I find the greatest impacts of the program in counties that have smaller Hispanic shares. A potential mechanism is that individuals that are most vulnerable in these counties may now find it harder to blend into their communities, as there are relatively fewer of them. Because these

[2]These event studies are robust to the event studies dropping years 2008 and 2009 from the study. These figures are in the Appendix, Figure A1-A6

counties are dominated by a population largely unaffected by immigration enforcement, immigrant communities may be more fearful of being detected by immigration authorities. Individuals may reduce their work hours or have more difficulty finding a job in which they feel safe in. This disruption in the labor market could lead to a decrease in a household's income, leading to an increase in household food insecurity and thus, an increase in the demand for food banks.

I also find suggestive evidence that counties with higher shares of Hispanics experience a lower increase in the pounds of food demanded, when SC is activated. A potential mechanism for this result may be because of social networks in communities. Counties with high Hispanic shares may potentially have stronger and more established communities for vulnerable populations that rely more on one another during times of hardship. For example, in a county with high Hispanic share, individuals may have other community organizations and groups that provide increased assistance during times of heightened immigration enforcement. Delgado and Humm-Delgado (1982) propose that Latino networks comprise four components: (a) extended family, (b) folk healers, (c) religious institutions, and (d) merchants and social clubs (Delgado and Humm-Delgado, 1982). These different networks can facilitate social contact and access to resources among Latinos within a geographic community. Community based networks are a major source of support for this vulnerable population and heightened immigration enforcement has increased their need to rely on each other for support (Ayón and Naddy, 2013). This may potentially be the reason why we observe smaller increase in the pounds of food distributed for counties with higher shares of Hispanics, as there may be other sources of support beyond Feeding America food banks.

Overall, these results suggest that food banks play an essential role in providing nutritional assistance to families that may be vulnerable to immigration enforcement. Further research should analyze other community services that may be pivotal in understanding how vulnerable communities behave under an icy policy climate.

7 Conclusion

This paper examines the relationship between increased immigration enforcement under the Secure Communities (SC) program and food bank utilization. Given that Latinos are disproportionately affected by immigration enforcement policies and food insecurity, this research is of great importance to understanding some disparities in this population. Many Latino families, including those

in mixed-status households, face unique vulnerabilities that exacerbate their need for support while simultaneously deterring them from accessing government programs due to fear of detection and deportation.

I implement a staggered difference-in-differences methodology to isolate the causal relationship of interest. Data are used from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) as well as from Feeding America for my analysis. The findings indicate that SC activation leads to a significant increase in the pounds of food distributed by food banks, suggesting that increased immigration enforcement increases reliance on community-based nutritional assistance. This could be attributed to the "chilling effects" on government social programs that may lead to a substitution toward nongovernmental services. However, heterogeneity analysis suggests that counties with higher Hispanic shares experience a smaller increase in food bank demand, possibly due to stronger informal support networks within these communities.

These results underscore the critical role food banks play in mitigating food insecurity under restrictive immigration policies. They also highlight the need for policy makers to consider the unintended consequences of enforcement programs on vulnerable populations. Future research should explore other community services and the long-term implications of such policies on social safety nets and public health outcomes.

8 Appendix

Appendix A: Additional Results

Table A1: Effect of SC on Food Bank Utilization

	ln(Pounds of Food Distributed)		
SC	.032	.022	.065**
	(.026)	(.025)	(.029)
Hispanic Share		-.970	.962
		(2.710)	(2.785)
Unemployment		1.567*	1.679**
		(.884)	(.881)
287(g)		.060	.060
		(.063)	(.063)
SC X Hispanic Share			-.393***
			(.124)
R-Squared	.975	.975	.975
Observation	59,737	59,729	59,729
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Quarter by Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: The sample covers U.S. counties from 2010 to 2014 at the quarter level and is restricted to the contiguous United States. The SC data comes from Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the dependent variable data comes from Feeding America. The independent variable, Secure Communities (SC), is an indicator that equals 1 if a county activates SC and equals 0 otherwise. Values in parentheses are robust standard errors clustered by county, with *** if $p<0.01$, ** if $p<0.05$, and * if $p<0.10$.

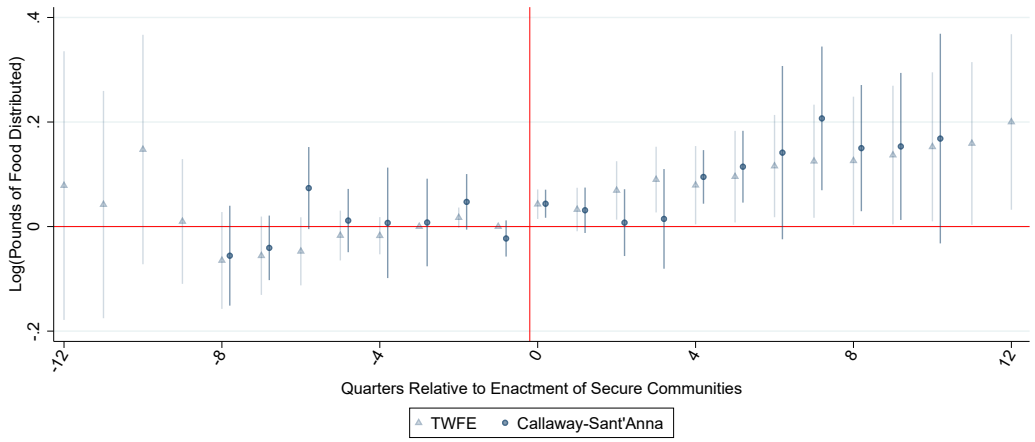

Figure A1: Effect of SC on Food Bank Utilization

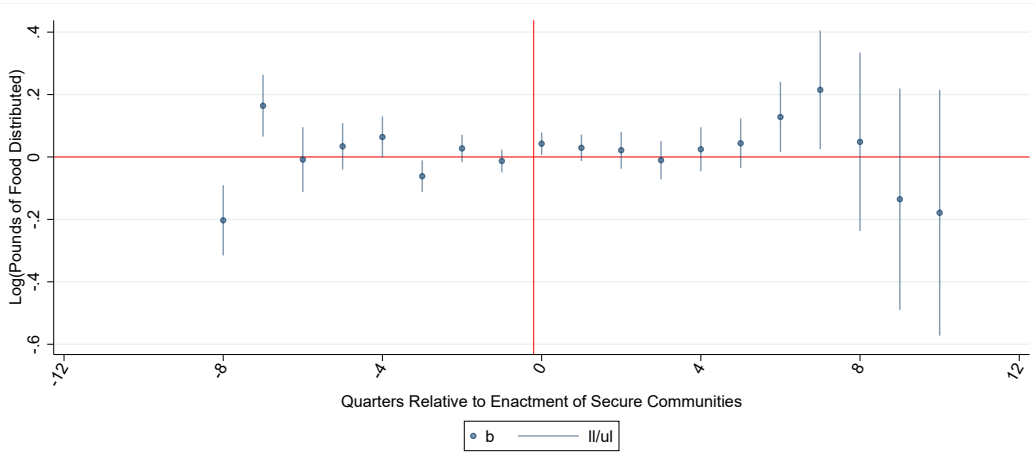

Figure A2: CSA Effect of SC on Food Bank Utilization(Above Median Hispanic Share)

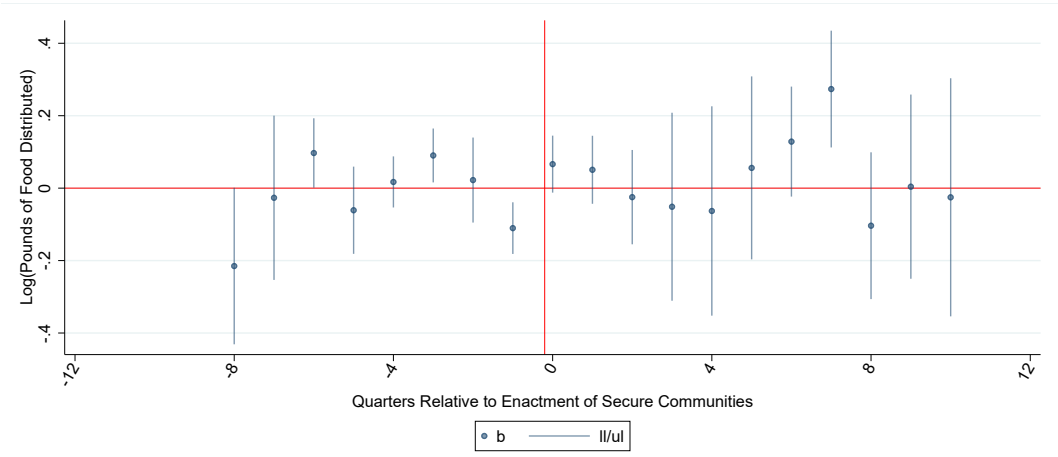

Figure A3: CSA Effect of SC on Food Bank Utilization(0-25 percentile)

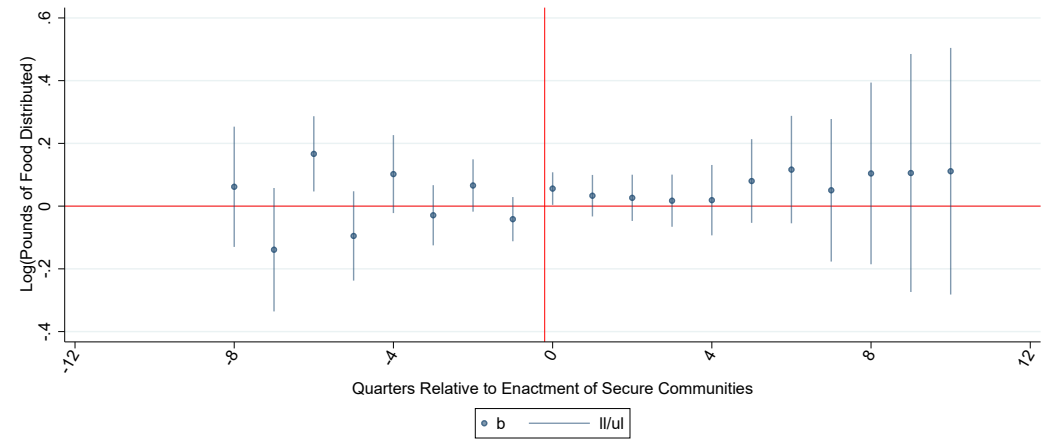

Figure A4: CSA Effect of SC on Food Bank Utilization(25-50 percentile)

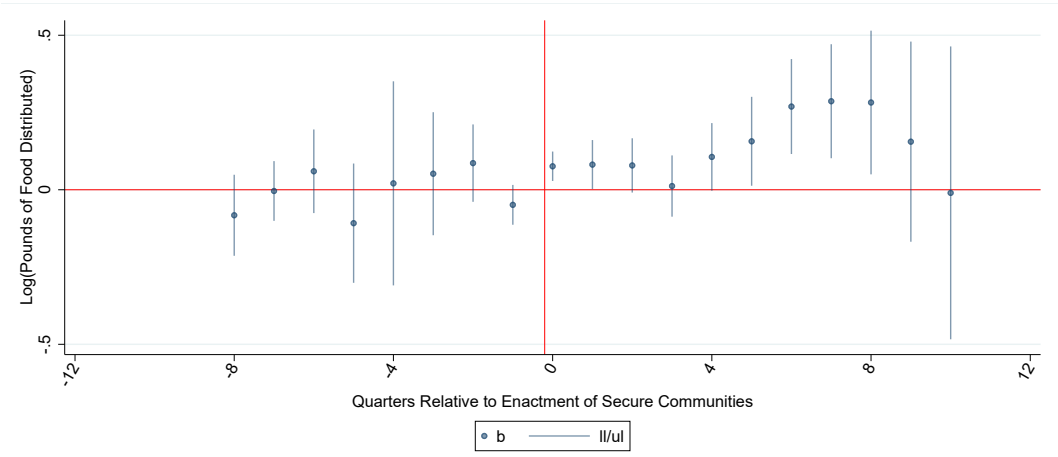

Figure A5: CSA Effect of SC on Food Bank Utilization(50-75 percentile)

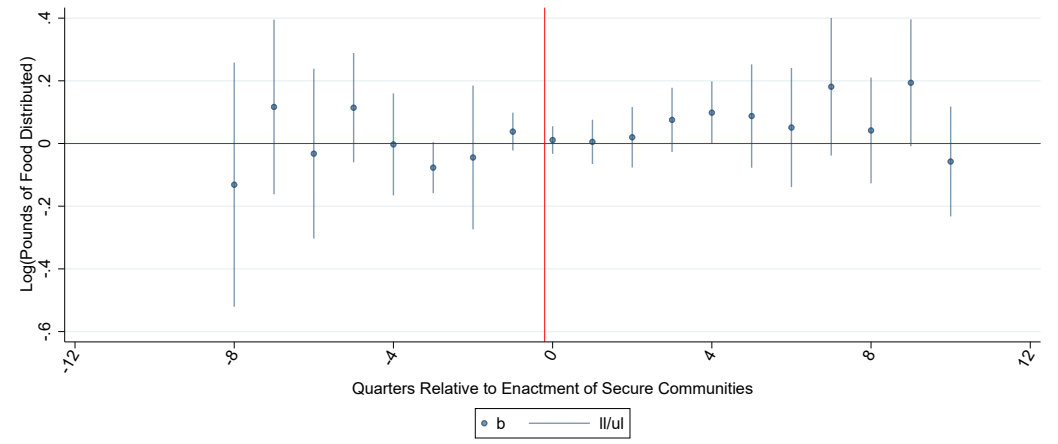

Figure A6: CSA Effect of SC on Food Bank Utilization(75-99 percentile)

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