From *Dreamers* to *Family Separation:*
The Content and Consequences of U.S. Media Coverage of Immigrant Children

by

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Dedication

For my papi, Juan, who taught me to question everything,

for my mami, Lidia, who taught me to place love above all,

and for every immigrant child.

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You all made it possible for this scholar from the Inland Empire to become a doctor.

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Abstract

News stories about the DREAM Act, migrant caravan, unaccompanied minors, anchor babies, children in cages, assaults in detentions, and family separation have placed children at the forefront of the current political moment. To what extent is the news that includes representations of children and immigrant youth substantively different from overall immigration news? What are the consequences of these representations on political attitudes and behaviors? This dissertation investigates these questions and connects findings back to the theories of engagement and disengagement of threat in U.S. portrayals of immigrants.

Chapter 2 of my dissertation explores the characteristic of age-at-arrival in Dreamer immigration news stories. In 2019, I ran a 2-wave survey experiment in which respondents read a news story about an undocumented immigrant that either migrated at eleven or twenty-one years old. Respondents in the lower age-at-arrival condition report more support for the immigrant; and this effect is most pronounced amongst those who were more opposed to immigration in general. A second 2-wave survey conducted in 2021 explored two possible mechanisms behind the impact of age-at-arrival: attitudes towards (a) assimilation and (b) attribution of responsibility. This study 2 replicates the results of Study 1 and finds that treatment effects are most impactful amongst respondents who hold stronger general attitudes about assimilation and responsibility. Taken together, these experiments suggest that age-at-arrival does indeed impact Americans' attitudes towards young immigrants, and that this effect is partially explained by general attitudes about immigration, assimilation, and responsibility.

Chapter 3 asks: now that I have established that young immigrants do elicit higher levels of support, to what extent is the news that includes representations of immigrant children and youth different from overall immigration news? This study examines 17 national newspapers and their coverage of immigration from 1990 to 2020. Using dictionary-based and structured topic modeling content analytic approaches, I find that newspaper coverage of immigration that includes mentions of children: (a) tends to be more positive in net sentiment, (b) tends not to focus on topics of politics and violence, and (c) tends to correlate with topics about family, education, religion, and community. Threat is found to be a regular feature of this news coverage; however, threat language does not vary systematically with the language of childhood or race. These findings signal a potential influence of (positive) language about community in coverage about immigrant children over the last few decades.

Finally, Chapter 4 tests the impact of language about community (i.e., family, religion, and the arts) found in the content analysis. This chapter asks: how do cues of community integration and arriving with children impact support for an undocumented immigrant adult? In 2022, I ran a five-treatment web-based survey experiment in which White respondents read a news story about an undocumented adult that migrated to the U.S. with two characteristics manipulated: (a) arriving with a child or not and (b) being an integrated member of the community or not. Results suggest that community integration of the migrant leads to higher levels of support, while arriving with a child does not seem to impact support.

In sum, my dissertation points to how age-at-arrival, assimilation, attribution of responsibility, and community integration in the representations of children and childhood in contemporary U.S. media work to disengage notions of threat often found in regular immigration news coverage.

Chapter 1 Introduction

"'Prison-like' migrant youth shelter is unequipped for Trump's zero tolerance policy" —*LA Times*, 2018

"Stop expelling and separating immigrant children and parents during COVID"—*The Hill,* 2020

"Texas governor ready to challenge schooling of migrant children"—*New York Times*, 2022

Over the past few years, newspapers have been filled with headlines like these. The DREAM Act, migrant caravan, unaccompanied minors, children in cages, assault in detentions, and Trump's zero-tolerance family separation policy demonstrate that this is a political moment marked by children at the forefront of the public conversation about immigration. My work begins with the acknowledgement that immigrants are often children, and that children have always been a constant feature of the public discussion about immigration.

Recent estimates suggest about 10 million adults and 675,000 children were undocumented immigrants in the United States in 2018 (Passel & Cohn, 2018). From 1994 to 2017, the percentage of immigrant children who were either first or second generation increased by 51 percent (Child Trends, 2018). In terms of education, about 725,000 students enrolled in K-12 public education are immigrant children (Passel & Cohn, 2016). In addition, various reports find that immigrant children are less likely to have adequate medical care, more likely to live below the federal poverty level, and more likely to have a parent who faces the threat of deportation than nonimmigrant children (Child Trends, 2018; Chilton et al., 2013). Immigrant youth are a considerable percentage of the migrants, and of the whole population, living in the United States.

In the field of political communication, researchers have established that information about immigration in the U.S. can increase perceptions of various forms of threat, arouse angry or

anxious emotions, and increase overall anti-immigrant attitudes (e.g., Collingwood & O'Brien Gonzalez, 2019; Mastro et al., 2014; Valentino et al., 2013). Of equal importance is the considerable body of work showing that news coverage of immigration in the U.S. regularly reflects these forms of threat (e.g., Chavez, 2001; Cisneros, 2008; Santa Ana, 2002).

Children are a regular feature of news coverage of immigration, as well. This has been especially true in recent years. Yet, scholarship on the impact of including children in these immigration stories is limited. In studies about children in news (not necessarily in the topic of immigration), cues of childhood are generally found to disengage threat, highlight innocence, and evoke sympathy (Moeller, 2002; Sherr, 1999; Wallace & Wallace, 2020). However, the portrayal of *immigrant children* may be more complicated. These children appear to be caught in the contrast of innocence versus threat. I, therefore, dedicate my dissertation to understanding the content and consequences of immigrant youth representation in news media.

My dissertation begins with the following questions: (a) To what extent is the news that includes representations of immigrant children and youth substantively different from overall immigration news in the last few decades? (b) What are the consequences of these representations on political attitudes and behaviors? In this introductory section, I breakdown the most relevant theories into two emergent themes: (1) engaging threat and (2) disengaging threat. I consider each theme below, focusing first in relation to public opinion research, and then in relation to news media research.

1.1 Engaging Immigrant Threat

There is a growing body of work in communication, political science, and political psychology that links different conceptualizations of "threat" to evaluations of immigrant groups. In the good versus bad immigrant dichotomy, the "bad" immigrants are those that are perceived as threatening. Evidence in political science also suggests that American citizens' beliefs and attitudes towards immigration are impacted by this type of categorization (i.e., Schwiertz, 2016; Sirriyeh, 2019; Sirriyeh, 2020).

Exposure to immigrants who predominantly speak Spanish (like Latinos) are found to heighten feelings of cultural and racial threat (Newman, 2015; Newman et al., 2012). Scholars have put forth the *immigration threat hypothesis* as a threat posed by Latino/a/x population growth within the United States (i.e., Collingwood & O'Brien Gonzalez, 2019). This is also true for perceived demographic shifts, in the direction of more Latinos migrating to the country. Increasing levels of immigration and immigrant diversity are often viewed as threats to Americans perceived national identity (Citrin & Wright, 2009; Citrin et al., 1990; Wright, 2011).

Group status threat, as tested by the salience of racial demographic shifts, is shown in psychological research to motivate politically unaffiliated White Americans to lean more toward the Republican Party, express greater political conservatism (Craig & Richeson, 2014; Craig et al., 2018), and to increase their support for anti-immigration policies (Major et al., 2018). Living in areas with high Latino population growth is also predictive of support for the Trump presidency, resentment towards immigrants, and dissatisfaction with immigration policies (Jardina, 2020; Newman et al, 2018; Velez, 2018). I will be using the term "Latinos" in this paper to refer to members of this racial and ethnic group.

Furthermore, a powerful way to engage immigration threat is through the legal and social construction of "illegality." Some of the aforementioned studies touch on the consequences of explicitly stating the documentation status of immigrants. A common finding is that undocumented, unauthorized, and/or illegal status heavily outweighs other immigrant characteristics in respondents' evaluations of policy attitudes or favorability towards immigrants (España-Nájera & Vera, 2020; Figueroa-Caballero & Mastro, 2019; Murray & Marx, 2013). Notions of illegality are, undoubtedly, connected to cues of threat. Illegal action or, in this case, persons, imply criminality, law breaking, and possibly, violence. The construction of the "illegal" migrant is found to be shaped by national origin, social class, and criminal background (Flores & Schachter, 2018; Merolla et al., 2013). And, with the increased coverage of immigration in the last few decades, so increases the negative representations, threatening "illegal" cues, and stereotypes of Latinos more broadly.

Relatedly, failure to assimilate can also trigger threat for American-born citizens. This *assimilationist threat* is when citizens develop resentful perceptions of immigrants who fail to adopt U.S. cultural norms (Paxton & Mughan, 2006). Studies outside of the U.S. context suggest that, overall, immigrants are already seen by citizens as less committed to their new nations (Harell et al., 2021). Within the U.S. context, studies find that when an immigrant is portrayed as Hispanic (as opposed to White) and is portrayed as rejecting symbols of American identity, American-born citizens are far less supportive of said immigrant (Hartman et al., 2014). This work highlights the importance of American-centered values for which citizens judge non-citizens.

Racism, perceptions of demographic shifts, constructions of illegality, and fears of non-assimilation all work to construct immigrants as threatening groups in American public opinion.

Engagement of threat is also found in the literatures that explore how migrants are portrayed in American news media.

1.1.1 News Coverage and Immigrant Threat

Content analyses of U.S.-based news media find that immigrants tend to be overrepresented as law-breaking criminals, drug traffickers, invaders, animals, and dangers to American society (Brown et al, 2018; Chavez, 2001; Chavez, 2013; Chavez et al., 2010; Mohamed & Farris, 2020; Ono & Sloop, 2002; Santa Ana, 1999; Santa Ana, 2002; Waldman et al., 2008). Consumers of this media are thus exposed to negative portrayals of immigrants, (Branton & Dunaway, 2008; Branton & Dunaway, 2009; Mastro et al., 2014), alarmist anti-immigrant sentiments (Kinefuchi & Cruz, 2015; Waldman et al., 2008), and a sense that a national crisis is caused by these immigrants (Chavez, 2001). This work highlights the frequency with which threat and negative sentiment are features of immigration reporting, even as criminality is inconsistent with actual immigrant crime demographics (Farris & Mohamed, 2018).

Studies of news images suggest similar biases. American news magazines and newspapers tend to select images about immigration that emphasize the Mexico-U.S. border, the involvement of immigration enforcement, an immigrant's undocumented/illegal status, and implied criminal behavior on behalf of the immigrants (i.e., arrests; Chavez, 2001; Farris & Mohamed, 2018). Madrigal and Soroka (2021) find that news images of large groups of immigrants decrease support for immigration for a subset of threat-sensitive Americans; however, personalized images of individual immigrants are found to reverse the negative effect for these same respondents. This work on news images highlights the potential impact of editorial choices regarding the portrayal of immigrants, especially within stories that may (or needn't) cue threat.

News media also engage in racialized forms of immigration threat. Immigration is typically represented as a "Latino issue," and especially focused on Mexicans (Dixon & Williams, 2015; Reny, et al., 2020; Seate & Mastro, 2017; Valentino et al., 2013). As aforementioned, in national American news media, Latinos are consistently overrepresented as immigrants living in the U.S. without legal documentation status (Branton & Dunaway, 2009; Brown et al, 2018; Dixon & Williams, 2015; Mohamed & Farris, 2020). Repeatedly, newspapers represent the "illegal immigrant" as a cue for immigrants in the Latino racial group, specifically (Stewart et al., 2011). On this vein, Valentino et al. (2013) find that mentions of Latinos in news coverage of immigration outpace mentions of other minority groups beginning in 1994, when immigration reform was a major issue in the nation.

The consequences of the racialization of immigration in U.S. news media is that exposure to news articles about immigration tends to result in more unfavorable attitudes towards Latinos (Mastro et al., 2014; Stewart et al., 2011). The impact of "illegality" further characterizes Latinos as perpetually undocumented immigrants, not American residents or citizens. And, with the increased coverage of immigration in the last few decades, so increases the negative representations, threatening "illegal" cues, and stereotypes of Latinos more broadly.

Media coverage of immigration cues threat in a variety of other ways as well, including the representation of immigrants as threats to economic resources, spatial resources, and health resources. Immigrants are portrayed as hordes of people overwhelming the economy and welfare state, as well as carriers of infectious diseases that contaminate communities and the environment (Cisneros, 2008; Ono & Sloop, 2002; Santa Ana, 2002). News media also tend to emphasize the increasing flow of migrants in reporting on immigration (Branton & Dunaway, 2008; Cisneros, 2008; Madrigal & Soroka, 2021; McLaren, 2003; McLaren & Johnson, 2007; Outten et al., 2012).

This perceived increase is often represented in metaphorical language of immigrants as dangerous "floods" and "hordes" that pose a threat to American society (Cisneros, 2008; Santa Ana, 2002).

The literature in political communication makes it clear that news stories about immigration often highlight negative sentiment and link to various perceptions of threat.

1.2 Disengaging Immigrant Threat

The previous section establishes that threat, in its various forms, is a central feature of immigration attitudes and media coverage of immigration. But just as engaging threat can increase anti-immigrant attitudes, disengaging threat can decrease them. And in spite of the prevalence of threat-infused attitudes and media coverage, there is an accumulated literature speaking to factors that disengage threat. Note that I view disengaging threat not simply as reducing threat-invoking information processes, but as the provision of different information that actively disengages threat. I focus below on perceptions of assimilation, community, attribution of responsibility, and innocence as cues that might disengage threat in immigration attitudes.

Decades of work in the field of political communication argues that the "good immigrants' in the dichotomy are those that are assimilated into the larger American society. As aforementioned, assimilation is the process by which individual migrants or groups of migrants are integrated into the dominant culture of a receiving nation. In the U.S., notions of assimilation set the criteria by which anyone can become American, such as being hard-working, law-abiding, and worthy of national acceptance (Andrews, 2018; Bloemraad, 2022; Levy & Wright, 2020). American-born citizens prefer immigrants to arrive legally, gain employment in the U.S., and speak English (Levy & Wright, 2020). Perceived "worthy" immigrants are often those who assimilate into racially White, middle-class, and capitalist American society; whereas unworthy immigrants are those who do not assimilate at all (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Yoo, 2008; Yukich, 2010).

Immigrants and immigrant families themselves engage in certain behaviors, such as following laws and gaining stable employment, to claim this worthiness (Bloemraad, 2022). Perceptions of assimilation can evoke feelings of solidarity and loyalty to these migrants (Levy & Wright, 2020), and in these ways, immigration integration and assimilation create one American community.

Notions of assimilation matter in disengaging threat, as well as notions of attribution of responsibility. Where does responsibility lie when a child emigrates without legal documentation? Children are often not "blamed" for migrating to the United States—in fact, their caretakers and parents are often criminalized instead. The condition of being "brought" to the U.S. implies that these young immigrants had no choice but to come, and are, thus, blameless for the violation of immigration law by their caretakers (Abrego & Negrón-Gonzales, 2020; Keyes, 2012; Negrón-Gonzales et al., 2015; Nicholls, 2013; Schwab, 2013). They did not "choose" to cross the border and therefore cannot be held accountable for breaking the law. In these ways, children may not be grouped into the "illegal" act of migrating to the U.S. and might disengage notions of threat.

Finally, notions of community integration might also impact how children are seen as disengaging threat. Children are found to play an active role in the integration process for their family as a whole (Monzo & Rueda, 2006; Orellana, 2001; Stevens, 2015). Migrant children, by growing up in the U.S., may more easily assimilate into the larger American society, especially as they matriculate through K-12 education. Santa Ana (2002) finds that immigrant children in public education tend to adopt an American value system. They become, he argues, "normal", monolingual, English-speaking, middle-class children. In these ways, child migrants might overcome the assimilationist threat. The literature in political communication points to notions of assimilation and integration as being key in how American-born citizens, especially White citizens, evaluate migrant families and communities.

Because studies on immigrant children are very limited in the fields of political communication and political psychology, it is difficult to assess how conceptions of childhood fit into notions of cultural assimilation, worthiness, attribution of responsibility, and community integration. Children might be perceived as more deserving, more likely to assimilate, and less responsible for their act of immigrating to the U.S. Indeed, the literature on children in media coverage (reviewed in the section that follows) already points in this direction.

1.2.1 News Coverage and Children

It is certainly possible that news coverage of children actively disengage threat by focusing on assimilation and deservingness. As a whole, the symbolic use of children in American political rhetoric and political culture is well documented. The "baby-kissing politician" cliché spans from President Theodore Roosevelt (1901) to President Biden (2022) and demonstrates how children are used as political props to indicate innocence, morality, and need of protection. In contemporary cultural politics, there is a growing consciousness of American children at risk and in need of saving (Goff et al., 2014; Stephens, 1995). For example, a study focused on the symbolic use of children imagery in presidential campaign advertising finds that both Democrats and Republicans use images of children in ads that focus on the issues of economic insecurity, poverty, crime, war, and hope for the future (Sherr, 1999). Within these issues, politicians communicate to citizens that voting for their opponent will put children at risk. In these ways, politicians who are perceived to be the protectors of children make the argument that they deserve political support, as opposed to their opponents. These studies suggest that there is a consistent tendency in politics to refer to children as symbols that indicate innocence and hope.

The news media are a significant vehicle for these political constructions and rhetorics of childhood. Although children are generally underrepresented in news media (Kunkel & Smith, 1999), they are usually represented as moral referents of victimhood and innocence (Altheide, 2002; Berggreen et al, 2009; Kaziaj, 2016; Moeller, 2002; Ponte, 2007). In an analysis of newspapers, Moeller (2002) finds that children represent a nation's political well-being and future. And, when children are represented in news, these types of stories tend to elicit strong emotions for the audience (Chermak, 1995). For example, news stories about crimes against children are found to be high in emotion because these crimes are seen as especially terrible (Pritchard & Hughes, 1997).

Media depictions of childhood innocence are complicated, however, since children are sometimes vilified. Ponte (2007) argues that if the innocent and dependent child is present in news media stories, then there is also the "black sheep" child that does not correspond to the romantic ideal of childhood. This finding is echoed in Altheide's (2002) news analysis, where he states that, "children play a dual role in terms of innocence and brutality, protection, and control. We can justify excess in protecting children, and increasingly, we can excuse excess in punishing them, particularly, and paradoxically, if extreme sanctions will protect the innocence of children" (pg. 230). This points to the competing dichotomies of children depicted as both victims and threats.

Moreover, when media narratives of immigration cue empathy, respondents tend to increase their support for policies aimed at protecting immigrants (Moore-Berg et al., 2022; Newman et al., 2015; Wojcieszak & Kim, 2016). For example, Kinefuchi and Cruz (2015) find that news articles humanize Mexican immigrants by focusing on family and children—a universal theme with which readers can empathize, as opposed to framing them in the discourses of illegality

or crime. Similarly, Bloemraad et al. (2016) find that when immigrants' rights are framed about family unity, conservatives change their opinions in more pro-immigrant directions. This study suggests that the reason for this change might be attributed to appeals to family values as a core political and moral touchstone of conservatism. Research also finds that when communities of immigrants are shown as assimilated in news, support for these migrants increase (Ostfeld, 2017; Ostfeld & Mutz, 2014). In these ways, cueing family in compelling and empathetic frames in the news can increase support for immigrants.

Taken together, research on representation of immigrant children in news media contains mixed findings. Some work finds that mentions of family and/or children in media increases empathetic and sympathetic portrayals of immigrants (Kinefuchi & Cruz, 2015). That said, other studies indicate that immigrant children in the U.S. can be represented as threats. For example, Berggreen et al. (2009) theorize that in news media, undocumented children occupy the space of being both victims and "illegal" threats to their own immigrant community. In an analysis of the *Los Angeles Times* and the *New York Times*, Strom and Alcock (2017) find that immigrant children are overwhelmingly represented as a problem to American-born citizens, rather than a population that needs assistance or aid. Their findings echo research suggesting that both children and adult immigrants are represented in dehumanizing language in news, such as in metaphors of floods, hordes, and surges of people who pose a threat to the country (Chavez, 2001; Cisneros, 2008; Santa Ana, 2002). It is in line with the notion that immigrants, even young child migrants, are dangerous and should be deported.

Immigration coverage is found to cue various forms of threat (e.g., racial, illegal, disease-based, and economic); and, although children in media are conceptualized as cueing innocence

and morality, the portrayal of *immigrant children* is more complicated. These children appear to be caught in the contrast of innocence versus deviance.

In the following chapters, I focus on variables of pro- and anti- immigrant attitudes to measure the levels of support for hypothetical immigrants. I view these levels of support as outcomes and indications for potential engagement/disengagement of threat in attitudes about those immigrants. Albeit, although threat is not directly measured in some of the following studies, I view immigrant attitudes as an important aspect in the attitude formation about threat (specifically, cultural threat). Moreover, although there are many types of media in which we can examine the content and consequences of representations of immigrant children, this dissertation focuses specifically on news media as a vehicle for information about immigration.

1.3 Dissertation Structure

Chapter 2 of my dissertation explores the characteristic of age-at-arrival in immigration news stories. Are young immigrants seen more favorably because they are characterized as children who were "brought against their will," which places the criminalization of illegal immigration on their adult caretakers? Is it because they have lived in the U.S. long enough that citizens believe they are assimilated into American society? Results of this paper are discussed as they relate to the relationships between age-at-arrival of an immigrant and notions of assimilation and attribution of responsibility.

Chapter 3 asks: now that I have established that young immigrants do, indeed, elicit higher levels of support than for adult immigrants, to what extent is the news that includes representations of immigrant children different from overall immigration news? What might these differences in news representation tell us about coverage of (and attitudes about) immigration more broadly?

These results are discussed as they relate to portrayals of community, criminality, race, threat, and politics in immigration coverage.

Finally, Chapter 4 explores the impact of (positive) language about community found in the results of the content analyses. According to Chapter 3, community can be cued in several ways—such as in using language about family, education, the arts, or church and religion. This last survey experiment explores how cues of community integration and arriving with children impact support for an undocumented immigrant adult.

In sum, my dissertation points to how age-at-arrival, assimilation, attribution of responsibility, and community integration in the representations of childhood in U.S. immigration news work to disengage notions of threat and increase support for immigration.

Chapter 2 The American Dreamers: The Effects of Media Coverage of Immigrants' Age-at-arrival

The Dreamers have become a driving force of policy and politics in the last two decades. Public opinion polls suggest that most Americans hold favorable attitudes towards Dreamers – more favorable than their attitudes about immigrants more broadly. This study suggests that age-at-arrival is a significant driving characteristic of this support. In 2019, I ran a 2-wave survey experiment in which respondents read a news story about an undocumented immigrant that either migrated at eleven or twenty-one years old. Respondents in the lower age-at-arrival condition reported more support for the immigrant; and this effect was most pronounced amongst those who were more opposed to immigration in general. A second 2-wave survey conducted in 2021 explored two possible mechanisms behind the impact of age-at-arrival: attitudes towards (a) assimilation and (b) attribution of responsibility. Results are considered as they relate to ongoing debates about Dreamers, media coverage, and attitudes about immigration.

Keywords: Media Effects, Political Communication, Dreamers, Immigration, Age-At-Arrival

"Today, there are hundreds of thousands of students excelling in our schools who are not American citizens. Some are the children of undocumented workers, *who had nothing to do with the actions of their parents…"*

- President Barack Obama, 2011 State of the Union Address

In 2001, the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act (Senate Bill 1291) was introduced as a bipartisan bill that would provide undocumented youth in the United States a path toward citizenship. This legislation was the origin of the "Dreamers," the targeted recipients of the policy, and the subject of Obama's State of the Union comment above. No version of the DREAM Act has passed on a national level. However, the Dreamers, as a political group, have become a driving force of immigration policy and politics over the past two decades.

The ongoing debates about DREAM Act policies began with *Plyler v. Doe* (1982), a federal ruling granting undocumented children the right to attend public school regardless of their immigration status. What happens to undocumented youth who, after public school education, want to attend college, join the military, or work legally? This has been a highly debated question in immigration policy for many years. Political leaders have, however, been divided in their support, both for the original DREAM Act and the Obama administration's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program (which provides temporary work permits, opportunities in college or the military, and protections from deportation, ostensibly until a national DREAM Act is passed).

Republican 2012 presidential candidate Mitt Romney equated the Obama legislation with amnesty for all undocumented immigrants, arguing that legalizing Dreamers would be a "magnet" luring even more "illegal" immigrants to the United States. "I think we have to follow the law and

insist those who come illegally, ultimately return home, apply and get in line with everyone else" (Romney, 2012). The Trump administration then attempted to end DACA; although the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Dreamers in 2020.

This ongoing policy debate has real-world consequences. Over 11 million people are living with undocumented immigrant status in the United States, and roughly 800,000 of them are "Dreamers." These young people live in perpetual limbo, waiting for the United States to either accept them as fully fledged citizens or deport them. These immigrants have some rights, some schooling, some protections from deportation, but no nationalized path towards citizenship.

State-level differences further muddy the waters. Despite the absence of a national-level DREAM Act, 14 states have passed acts with similar objectives (including giving undocumented high school graduates the ability to access in-state college tuition; Chavez, 2013; Schwab, 2013). It is likely that the slow, partial progress of this legislation, as well as DACA, is at least partly a product of widespread public support for these immigrants.

Recent polls suggest that a majority of Americans want Dreamers to stay and receive legal status, support Congress passing a law granting permanent legal status to Dreamers, and support citizenship for Dreamers (Global Strategy Group, 2019; Krogstad, 2020; Kumar, 2020). Support and protection from deportation for Dreamers exceeds support and protection for immigrants generally (Montanaro, 2018; Narea, 2021; Nicholls, 2013; Olivas & Richardson, 2020). Indeed, on many issues there is a majority support for Dreamers amongst both Democrats *and* Republicans (FWD, 2021; Krogstad, 2020). Research suggests, in sum, that Dreamers have captured the attention and sympathy of a large swath of the U.S. public.

Why do Americans hold more positive attitudes about immigrants who arrive at a young age than other comparable undocumented immigrants? Are Dreamers seen more favorably because

they are characterized as children who were "brought against their will"—which places the criminalization of illegal immigration on their adult caretakers? Is it because they have lived in the U.S. long enough that citizens believe they are assimilated into American society? What effects might media coverage of young immigrants have on Americans' attitudes towards immigration?

These are the questions that motivate the current chapter of this dissertation. In Study 1, I use a survey experiment to examine the impact of news about age-at-arrival on support for a hypothetical immigrant. Results confirm that this news has a small but significant positive impact on support for the immigrant, and that the effect is greatest amongst those who are more opposed to immigration in general. In Study 2, a follow-up experiment is used to (a) replicate Study 1's findings, and (b) explore two possible mechanisms behind the impact of age-at-arrival: attitudes about assimilation, and attitudes about responsibility. Results suggest that attitudes about assimilation and responsibility are strongly associated with support for immigration; and that both attitudes are affected by news containing information about age-at-arrival. In a concluding section, I consider these results in light of ongoing legislative and public debates about Dreamers, and immigrants more generally.

2.1 Background

There is a considerable body of work highlighting the tendency for different types of immigrants to be characterized as either "good" or "bad." This categorization has been illustrated in studies on perceptions of police treatment and criminality (Andrews, 2018), for instance. It is also evident in research on logistics and penalties in legal immigration proceedings, and decisions to deport or allow certain immigrants to stay (Keyes, 2012). This categorization is an element of news coverage as well, where Dreamers are portrayed as "good," in contrast with other immigrants

(McDonnell et al., 2021; Sati, 2017). Evidence in political science also suggests that American citizens' emotions, beliefs, and attitudes towards immigration and certain types of immigrants are impacted by this type of categorization (i.e., Schwiertz, 2016; Sirriyeh, 2019; Sirriyeh, 2020).

Quite possibly the most obvious requirement of the DREAM Act and DACA is the focus on the age-at-arrival of these immigrants (they must enter the U.S. while under 16 years old). This chapter considers age-at-arrival as one variable through which immigrants may be categorized as "good" or "bad." Age-at-arrival, i.e., the age at which an immigrant arrives in the U.S., may impact assessments of "good" and "bad" in several ways. One possibility is that young immigrants are viewed as innocent; but scholars find that the notions of innocence that are commonly associated with White children in U.S. society have often been denied to immigrant Latinos and other children of color (Negrón-Gonzales et al., 2015). There are nevertheless other characteristics that may be associated with age-at-arrival. Here, I focus on notions of assimilation, responsibility, and agency in migrating. I explore the possibility that age-at-arrival is a driving force behind the widespread support for Dreamers amongst the American public. As in, this support may be driven by attitudes about assimilation and attribution of responsibility. In the sections that follow, I review the literatures on assimilation to American society and responsibility attributed to the act of illegally immigrating to the United States.

2.1.1 Age-at-arrival as a Cue for Assimilation

Assimilation is the process by which individuals or groups of differing racial and ethnic heritage are absorbed into the dominant culture of a society. Categorization as a "good" immigrant may depend in part on views about assimilation. Assimilation has been associated with worth and deservingness. Studies suggest that "good" immigrants are often those who assimilate into White,

middle-class, capitalist American society; whereas "bad" immigrants are those who do not assimilate or acculturate at all (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Yoo, 2008; Yukich, 2010). Assimilation has been associated with notions of being hard-working, law-abiding, and worthy (Andrews, 2018). Indeed, the consequences of not assimilating into the host country have been dubbed "assimilationist threat" (Paxton & Mughan, 2006), whereby non-immigrant citizens develop a resentful perception of immigrants that fail to adopt American cultural norms.

How is age-at-arrival related to perceptions of assimilation? Immigrant children, simply by growing up in America, may assimilate into the host society, especially as they matriculate through K-12 education (as granted in the *Plyler v. Doe* ruling). Santa Ana (2002) finds immigrant children in public education tend to adopt an American value system. They become, he argues, "normal", monolingual, English-speaking, middle-class children. In this way, assimilating Dreamers may not be perceived as a threat to American society. In sum: age-of-arrival may serve as a cue about the likely assimilation of (young) immigrants.

2.1.2 Age-at-arrival as a Cue for Responsibility

Where does responsibility lie when a child illegally emigrates to the United States? In political debates and public discourse, Dreamers are often represented as children who were "brought here against their will" at a young age—placing the criminalization of illegal immigration on their parents, guardians, or caretakers. The condition of being *brought* to the U.S. implies that these immigrants had no choice to come. This signals a distance from their "illegality" (Nicholls, 2013). In fact, activists and supporters have emphasized this point, and have sought to absolve Dreamers from the guilt of having broken the law (Keyes, 2012; Nicholls, 2013). There is a perception that undocumented children are blameless for the violation of immigration law by their

parents (Abrego & Negrón-Gonzales, 2020; Keyes, 2012; Negrón-Gonzales et al., 2015; Nicholls, 2013; Schwab, 2013). They did not "choose" to cross the border and therefore cannot be held accountable for breaking the law. The parent acted criminally by bringing the child. In this way, Dreamers did not commit the "crime" of illegally crossing the border.

Decisions of determining responsibility of individuals often involve the psychological processes of locus of control. Rotter (1966) initially developed the concept of locus of control as a predisposition to view one's personal situation as either (1) under one's own control (internal) or (2) beyond one's control (external). The concept has been extended to include the extent to which citizens view themselves, their society, and others as responsible for their own circumstances (Harell et al., 2017). In all, perceptions of control can be placed in a dichotomy of internal versus external sources. Harell et al. (2017) explore locus of control in the context of immigration and find that respondents who feel in control (personally or as a society) are less hostile towards immigrants. They also find that respondents who attribute negative outcomes to immigrants' predispositions are also more hostile towards the immigrants.

The concept of attribution of responsibility works in a similar way to locus of control, except that it shifts the focus from individual (respondent) control to perceived control of an immigrant's actions. Iyengar (1989) conceptualizes attribution of responsibility as how much blame an individual places on an immigrant for illegally migrating, as opposed to blaming larger societal structures or political actors. Additionally, characteristics that make young immigrants more appealing as a group (here, assimilation and responsibility) should matter most for those who tend to hold more anti-immigrant policy attitudes. Respondents who are already hold pro-immigrant attitudes will not likely be as affected by representations of young child immigrants than older adult immigrants.

In sum, support for Dreamers may be driven by attitudes about assimilation and attribution of responsibility. Scholars have pointed out that there is limited research in relation to undocumented childhood arrivals (Schmid, 2013). This study is one of the first to experimentally test the characteristics of age-at-arrival in news stories.

2.2 Study 1 - Hypotheses and Research Design

This research project is split into two studies. In Study 1, an online experiment manipulates age in a fabricated news story and captures levels of immigrant policy support across two conditions: low (11 years) versus high (21 years) age of arrival. Survey questions capture attitudes including general support for immigration, which I consider as a control and moderator of the experimental conditions. Study 1 hypotheses are as follows:

H1: Lower age-at-arrival is associated with ***higher*** policy support for a hypothetical immigrant.

H2: Lower age-at arrival is associated with ***higher*** policy support for a hypothetical immigrant, especially for respondents who (prior to the experiment) express lower pro-immigration attitudes.

This 2-wave panel survey experiment was fielded in November 2019 in the United States. The survey was programmed in Qualtrics, pre-tested with 100 respondents on Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), and then fielded in 2 waves with a sample of 738 panel respondents supplied by Dynata. The pre-test sample is not included in the analyses below. In wave 1, I collected respondents' overall immigration attitudes, prior to the experiment. In wave 2, two weeks later, respondents were exposed to the experimental manipulation. The retention rate from Wave 1 to Wave 2 is 63% (or 738 out of 1,154 respondents). The entire survey instrument is in the Appendix, Figure A. Participants in the second wave were 47% male, 66% White, 85% born in the U.S., 38%

Democrat, 36% Republican, 29% ideologically liberal, and 32% ideologically conservative. The full survey descriptives are included in the Appendix, Table B.

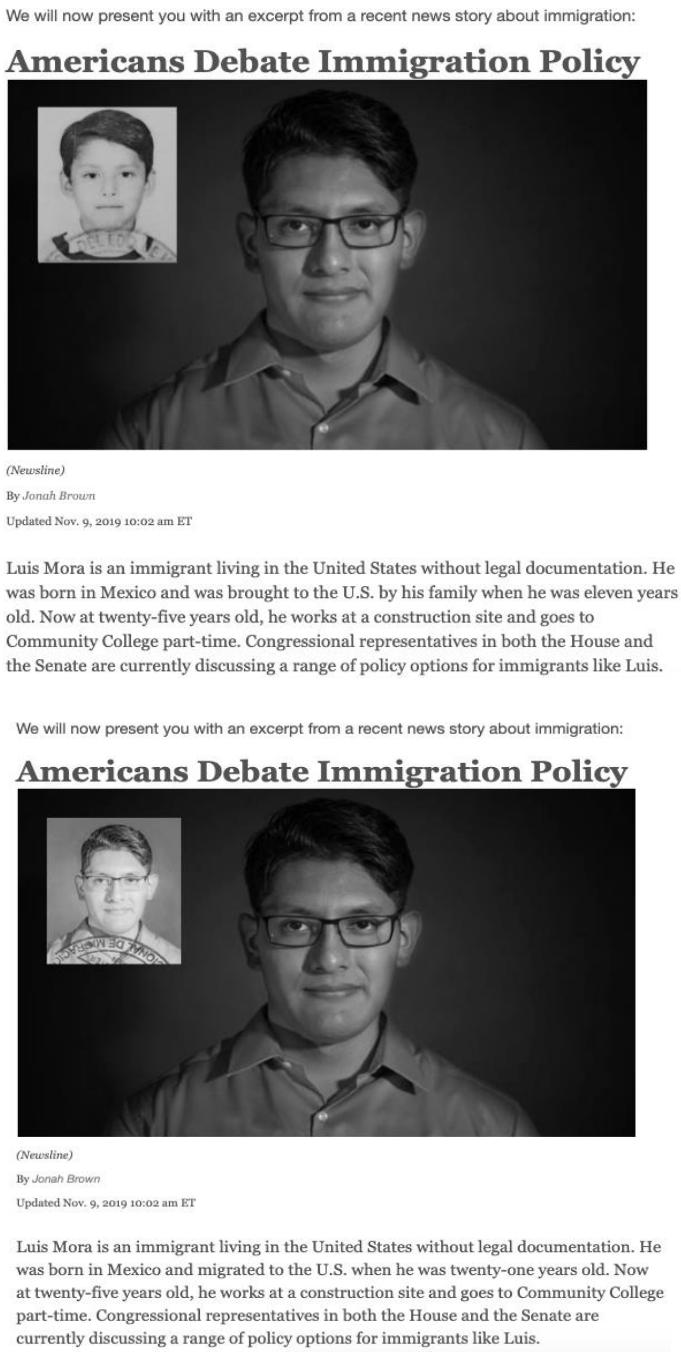
2.2.1 Measures and Results

In the survey experiment, respondents read a news story vignette about an undocumented immigrant that was either: (1) brought to the U.S. by his family at eleven years old (lower age-at-arrival condition) or (2) migrated to the U.S. by himself when he was twenty-one years old (higher age-at-arrival condition). In both conditions, the immigrant is now an adult, at age twenty-five. The experiment primes age using both text and photos. This approach is externally valid – in news media, stories about Dreamers regularly include pictures of the immigrant in childhood (as seen in the lower age-at-arrival condition). In this case, I superimposed one picture over another in both conditions. Figure 1 shows the conditions in their entirety. It should be noted that nowhere in the experimental stimuli are the words "Dream," "Dreamers," or "DACA" cued. In this way, the results of the experiment cannot be attributed to the positive connotations of the label "Dreamers;" instead, the results are attributed to cues about childhood, which is the focus of this dissertation.

After exposure to the news vignette, respondents were asked the following questions: (1) Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the government agency responsible for deporting immigrants. Should people like Luis be a priority for deportation? (reverse coded) (2) Congress is considering a policy that would protect some immigrants from deportation for five years. Should people like Luis be protected from deportation? and (3) Congress is considering a policy that would give some immigrants a legal path towards American citizenship. Should people like Luis be considered for a legal path toward American citizenship? Responses are given on a 4-point scale. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the re-coded (0 to 1) immigrant support scale, which has an

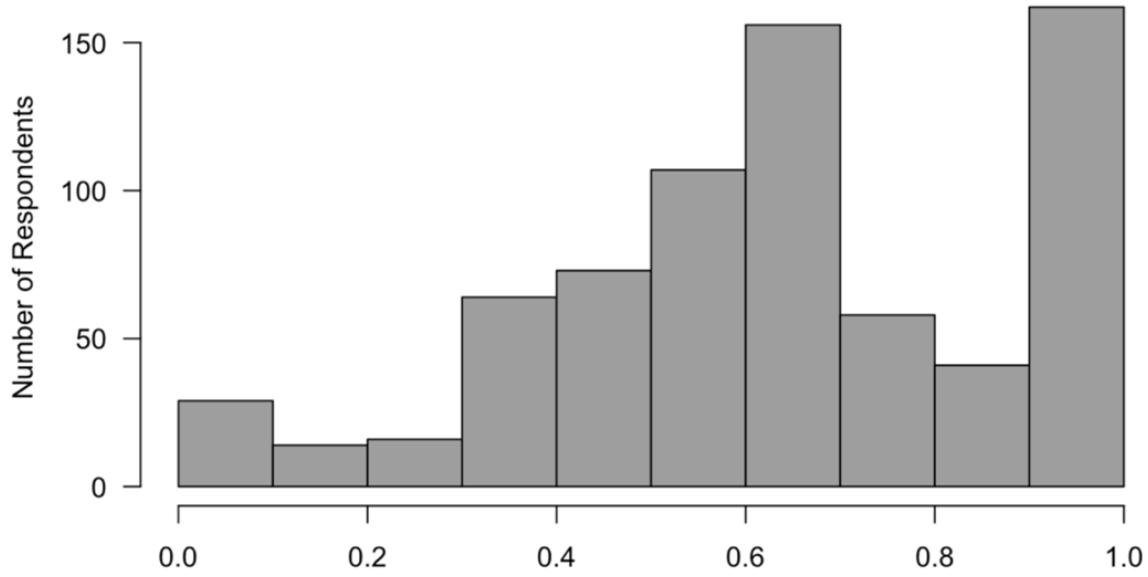
alpha of 0.81, a mean of 0.64, and a standard deviation of 0.27. Zero represents low support and 1 represents high support.[1]

Figure 1 Experimental Treatments



[1] A treatment check at the end of the survey asks respondents if they remember whether Luis moved to the U.S. as a child or an adult. About 68% of the respondents passed this treatment check (489 out of 720 respondents). A regression model that excludes those who failed this check produce similar results. This model is included in the Appendix, Table C.

Figure 2 Distribution of Immigrant Support



H1 is tested using relatively simple OLS regression models, shown in Table 1. Model 1 focuses on the combined measure of immigrant support; as a diagnostic test, Models 2, 3, and 4 examine question-specific results. Coefficients for the *Lower age-at-arrival* variable capture the impact of this treatment (vs. the higher age-at-arrival treatment), with the lower age-at-arrival dependent variable mean of 0.68 and the higher age at arrival mean of 0.61. The coefficient is statistically significant and in the expected direction in every case. Respondents in the lower age-at-arrival condition express significantly higher support for the immigrant than do respondents in the higher age-at-arrival condition–0.08 points higher on a 0-1 scale, roughly 20% of a standard deviation in the immigrant support variable (SD = 0.27). It should be noted that the r-squared is notably small (0.02), which is understandable given the single manipulation in this design. Although the explanatory power of the treatment on the dependent variable is low, the coefficient

does confirm differences in the treatment. This study consequently rejects the null hypotheses for H1.[2]

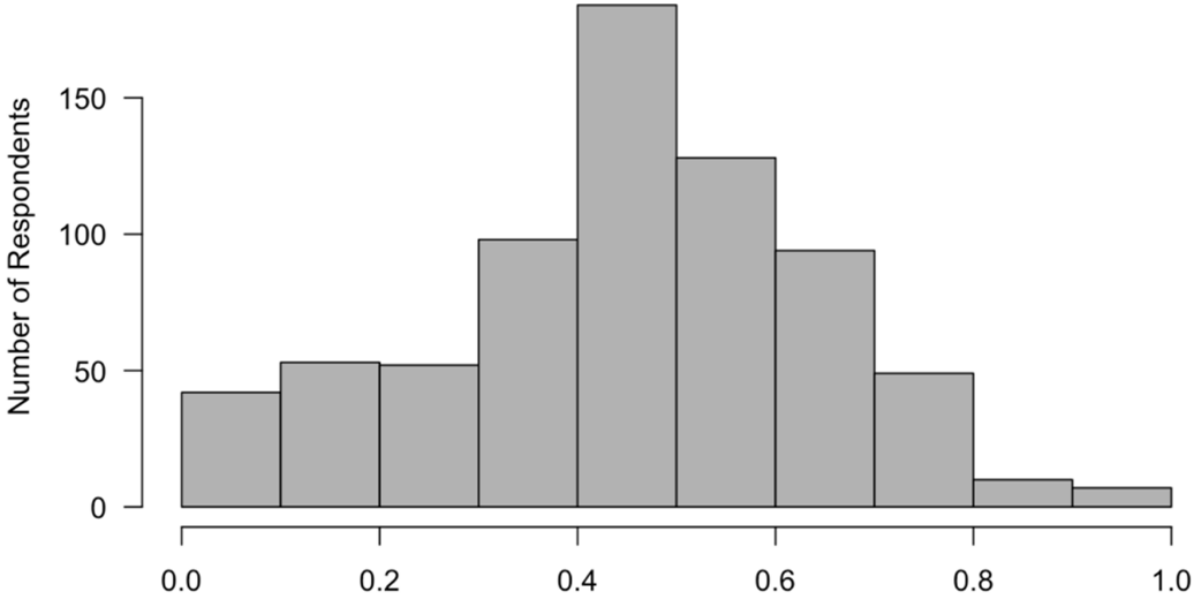
Table 1 The Impact of Treatment on Immigrant Support

	Pro-Immigrant Support			
	Model 1 (All DVs)	Model 2 (Deportation)	Model 3 (Protection)	Model 4 (Citizenship)
Lower age-at-arrival treatment	0.076*** (0.020)	0.079*** (0.024)	0.086*** (0.024)	0.062*** (0.023)
Constant	0.605*** (0.014)	0.575*** (0.017)	0.588*** (0.017)	0.653*** (0.017)
Observations	720	720	720	720
R2	0.019	0.015	0.018	0.010

Cells contain OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

[2] An OLS model of this basic finding including demographic controls and independent variables is included in the Appendix, Table D.

Figure 3 Distribution of Immigration Attitudes



Do results in Table 1 change when we account for prior immigration attitudes? H2 is focused on this possibility; namely, the possibility that treatment effects are strongest for those who are generally unsupportive of immigration. Recall that immigration attitudes are captured in wave 1, two weeks before the experiment. The scale is based on 5 items used in prior surveys. One is drawn from the American National Election Study (2016, 2020): In general, do you think the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are permitted to come to the United States should be… [Decreased a lot, Decreased a little, Left the same as it is now, Increased a little, Increased a lot]**.** Four are slightly modified versions of questions used in Iyengar et al. (2013): (1) Do you think immigration decreases or increases the crime rate in the U.S.? (2) How important do you think it is to accept immigrants from different cultures? (3) Do immigrants have a positive or negative impact on the U.S. economy? (4) What impact do you think immigrants have on the number of jobs for Americans?[3] Figure 3 shows the distribution of the immigration attitudes scale,

[3] The only modification, in this instance, is to replace binary agree/disagree responses with a five-point scale.

which has an alpha of 0.75, a mean of 0.48, and a standard deviation of 0.20. Zero represents low pro-immigration attitudes and 1 represents strong pro-immigration attitudes.

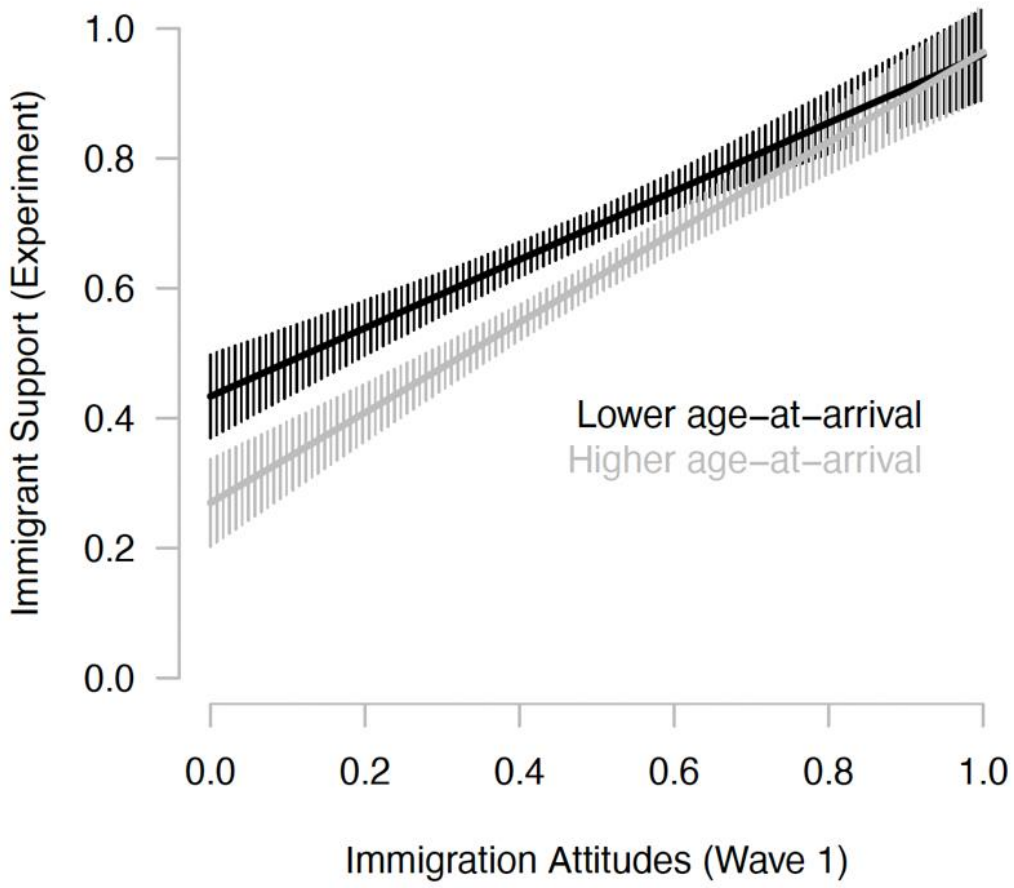
Table 2 shows results from OLS models that include immigration attitudes as a control (Model 1), and as a moderator of the experimental treatment (Model 2). The estimated treatment effect in Model 1 is no different from what was presented in Table 1. There is a clear, positive impact of pro-immigration attitudes on support for Luis, but this does not shift the estimated impact of the treatment. In Model 2, the impact of the low age at arrival treatment doubles. The interaction with immigration attitudes means that this coefficient now captures treatment effects when immigration attitudes are equal to zero. That is, this coefficient captures the impact of the treatment for those who hold strong general anti-immigration attitudes. It is this group that is *most* affected by the low age at arrival treatment. As the negative coefficient on the interaction term indicates, this impact is reduced as respondents score higher on the pro-immigration scale.

Table 2 Heterogeneity in the Impact of Treatments on Immigrant Support

	Pro-Immigrant Support	
	Model 1	Model 2
Lower age-at-arrival treatment	0.084***	0.164***
	(0.018)	(0.047)
Prior Immigrant Attitudes	0.607***	0.694***
	(0.046)	(0.066)
Prior * Lower age-at-arrival treatment		-0.168*
		(0.092)
Constant	0.312***	0.270***
	(0.026)	(0.034)
Observations	702	702
R2	0.218	0.221

Cells contain OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

Figure 4 Visualizing Heterogeneity in the Impact of Treatments on Immigrant Support



These results are illustrated more clearly in Figure 4, which presents estimated levels of immigrant support across the two treatments, and across the range of the immigration support variable. The light gray line (and associated 95% confidence intervals) shows estimated values for those in the high age at arrival treatment; the black line shows the same for those in the low age at arrival treatment. It is at the lowest end of immigration support that these predicted values differ significantly. Amongst those who strongly support immigration, age of arrival has no discernable impact; amongst those who do not strongly support immigration, age of arrival matters.

2.3 Study 2 – Hypotheses and Research Design

Study 1 suggests that age of arrival does matter for immigrant support. However, it tells us very little about the mechanisms behind that impact. Exploring two possible mechanisms is the focus of Study 2. In this study, an online experiment both (a) replicates Study 1's findings and (b) explores attitudes about assimilation and attitudes about locus of responsibility as two possible mechanisms behind the positive impact of age at arrival. I explore these attitudes in two ways: first, as dependent variables that are affected by the experimental treatment, and second, as variables that moderate the effects of the treatment. The second set of hypotheses is, accordingly, as follows:

H3: Lower age-at-arrival is associated with ***higher*** levels of perceptions about expectations of assimilation.

H4: Lower age-at-arrival is associated with ***lower*** levels of attribution of responsibility.

H5: The impact of age of arrival on immigrant support is moderated by prior beliefs about assimilation, in which respondents higher in assimilation attitudes will be most affected by the treatment.

H6: The impact of age of arrival on immigrant support is moderated by prior beliefs about the locus of responsibility, in which respondents higher in responsibility attitudes will be most affected by the treatment.

This 2-wave panel survey experiment was fielded in September and October 2021 in the United States. The survey was programmed in Qualtrics and then fielded in 2-waves with a broad sample of 927 panel respondents supplied by Dynata. In wave 1, I collected respondents' prior attitudes about (1) immigration overall, (2) attribution of responsibility, and (3) assimilation. As in Study 1, I capture these items prior to the survey experiment to record respondents' attitudes

before they were exposed to the experimental manipulation. In wave 2, one week later, respondents were exposed to the experimental manipulation. The retention rate from Wave 1 to Wave 2 is 67% (or, 927 out of 1384 respondents). The entire survey instrument is in the Appendix, Figure A. Participants were 58% male, 87% White, 93% born in the U.S., 44% Democrat, 41% Republican, and 15% Independent/Other. The descriptives of this Survey 2 is in the Appendix, Table E.

2.3.1 Measures and Results

In the Study 2 survey experiment, Study 1 conditions were expanded into a 2 by 2 factorial design. Respondents were assigned to read one of four vignette news stories about an undocumented immigrant that was either: (1) brought to the U.S. by his family at eleven years old, (2) migrated to the U.S. by himself when he was twenty-one years old, (3) brought to the U.S. by his family at twenty-one years old, or (4) migrated to the U.S. by himself when he was eleven years old. This design was intended to isolate the impact of age and agency, instead of assuming that they work in tandem. Results nevertheless indicated no independent impact of agency on the dependent variables.[4] I accordingly group together the two younger age-at-arrival treatments and the two older age-at arrival treatments below.

Study 2 relies on the same measures of immigrant support as were used in Study 1. Analyses similar to Study 1 replicate those findings (with means for lower age-at-arrival as 0.73 and higher age at arrival as 0.64).[5] These analyses are included in the Appendix, Tables F and G. I also include the impact of the treatment controlling for all demographic variables, and they are

[4] This appears to be the case in these experimental treatments, at least. As results below indicate, perceptions of agency *do* matter. They may just not have been cued sufficiently in this experimental design.

[5] As in Study 1, I added a treatment check at the end of the survey experiment to check if the respondents accurately remember the condition they were assigned to. An OLS model with the recall check did not change the results of the experiment (only strengthened them), and these models are in the Appendix, Table H.

in the Appendix Table I. Here, I focus on the unique contribution of Study 2, namely, analyses of assimilation and attribution of responsibility.

Testing H3 and H4 require measures of perceived assimilation and responsibility of the hypothetical immigrant Luis. Assimilation was captured using five variables following the experimental treatment: Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following statements: (1) Luis is probably well assimilated into American society, (2) Luis should be better educated than his parents, (3) Luis should be educated about American culture and customs, (4) Luis should speak English adequately, (5) Luis should renounce his citizenship from Mexico. [Response options: Strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, strongly agree]. Figure 5 shows the distribution of the combined assimilation scale, which has an alpha score of 0.65, with a mean of 0.71 and a standard deviation of 0.17. Zero represents weaker perceived assimilation attitudes and 1 represents stronger perceived assimilation attitudes.

Figure 5 Distribution of Perceptions of Expectation of Assimilation

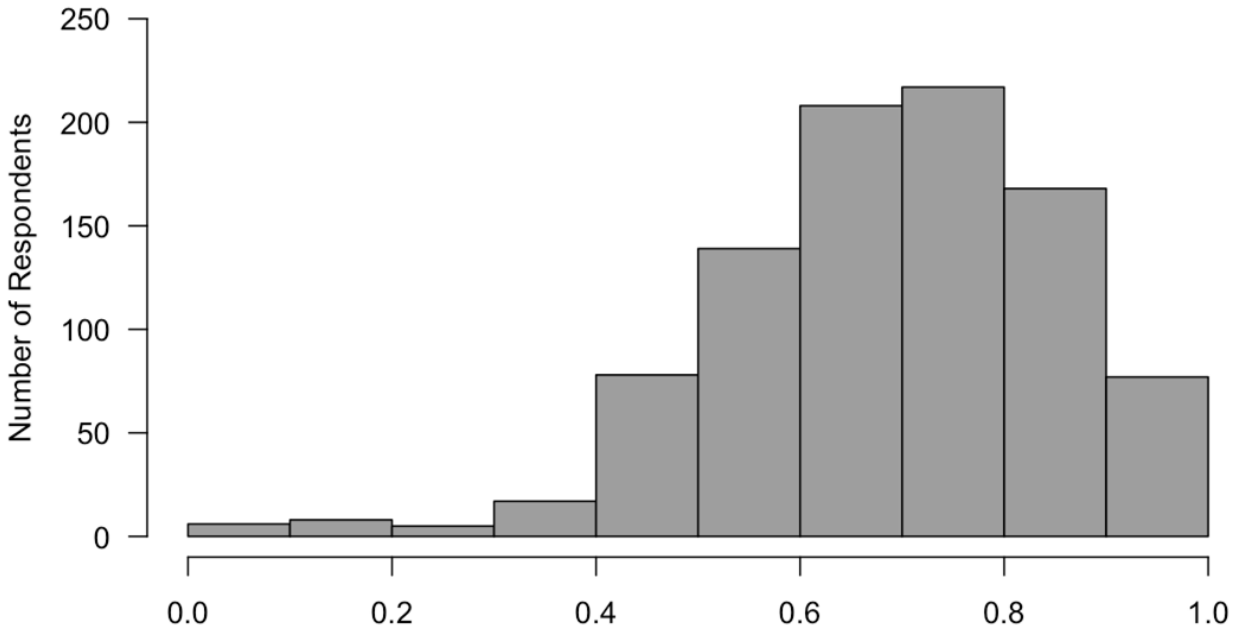
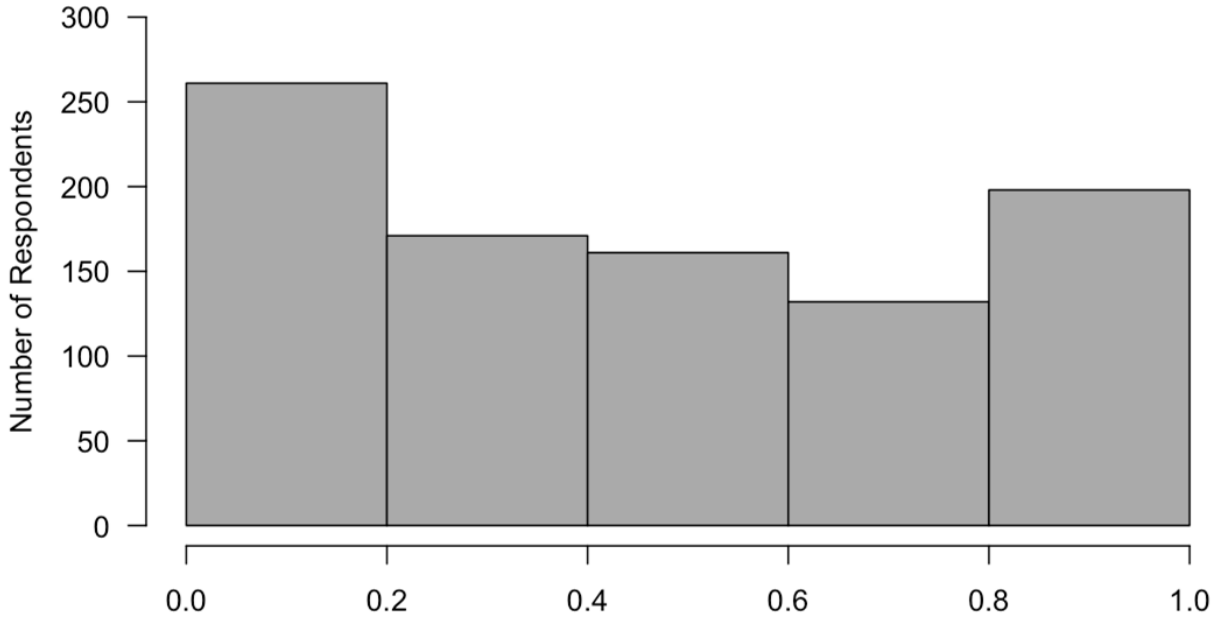


Figure 6 Distribution of Perceptions of Attribution of Responsibility



Perceived attribution of responsibility was captured using a single question following the experiment: Do you think Luis is responsible for illegally immigrating to the United States? Responses were on a three-point scale. About 36% of respondents chose that he was responsible, 47% of respondents chose that he was not responsible, and 17% of respondents chose might or might not be responsible**.** Figure 6 shows the distribution of the attribution of responsibility dependent variable from 0 to 1, which has a mean of 0.45 and a standard deviation of 0.38. Zero represents weaker attribution of responsibility and 1 represents stronger attribution of responsibility.

H3 and H4 are tested using simple OLS regression models of the variables shown in Figures 5 and 6. Results are included in Table 3. In Model 1, the coefficient for *Lower age-at-arrival* captures the impact of this treatment on assimilation attitudes. The coefficient is statistically significant and in the expected direction: respondents exposed to the lower age-at-arrival conditions express higher assimilation expectations (with the lower age-at-arrival assimilation variable mean of 0.73 and the higher age-at-arrival mean of 0.69). Note that the

assimilation questions (listed above) ask if Luis *should* be more assimilated, not whether he *will* be more assimilated. This wording is identical to the first-wave assimilation attitudes questions; but it does blur the line between what respondents anticipate from Luis and what they demand of him. Even so, Model 1 indicates a small but significant treatment effect. In Model 2, the experimental treatments significantly affect perceived levels of responsibility: respondents in the lower age-at-arrival conditions assign lower attribution of responsibility to the immigrant (mean of 0.29) than do respondents in the higher age-at-arrival conditions (mean of 0.63). Note that the r-squared in this model is comparatively high (0.20, versus 0.01 for Model 1). The increase in explanatory power may be because responsibility matters more than assimilation. It may also be that it is more straightforward to capture respondents' perceptions of Luis' responsibility. Either way, it is clear that responsibility matters. I accordingly reject the null hypothesis for H3 and H4.

Table 3 The Impact of Treatments on Assimilation and Responsibility

	Model 1 Assimilation DVs	Model 2 Responsibility DV
Lower age-at-arrival	0.041***	-0.341***
treatment	(0.011)	(0.022)
Constant	0.693***	0.628***
	(0.008)	(0.016)
Observations	923	923
R2	0.015	0.203

Cells contain OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

Tests of H5 and H6 require different measures of assimilation and responsibility, namely, general measures (not linked to Luis directly), asked *before* rather than after the experimental treatment. These measures were accordingly captured in the first wave of the survey, a week before

the experiment. Prior attitudes about perceived assimilation are captured using an 8-question battery adapted from Paxton and Mungan (2006). The questions are as follows: Please tell us whether you agree or disagree that immigrants need to do the following things to fit into American society: (1) Immigrants should communicate effectively in English in their daily lives, (2) Immigrants should take any legal job they can when they arrive in the United States, (3) Immigrants should contribute to American life just as much as everyone else, (4) Immigrant children should be better educated than their parents, (5) Immigrants should renounce their citizenship in their country of origin, (6) Immigrants should become American citizens as soon as they possibly can, (7) Immigrants should educate themselves about the culture and customs of the U.S., (8) Immigrants should not stick to themselves so much. [Response options: Strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, strongly agree]. Figure 7 shows the distribution of the prior beliefs about assimilation index, which has an alpha of 0.76, a mean of 0.72, and a standard deviation of 0.15. Zero represents weaker assimilation attitudes and 1 represents stronger assimilation attitudes.

Attribution of responsibility is captured using a scale from Iyengar (1989). This measure asks: On average, how much do you think that immigrants are responsible for illegally immigrating to the United States? [Response options: Definitely responsible, probably responsible, might or might not be responsible, probably not responsible, definitely not responsible]. Figure 8 shows the distribution of prior beliefs about attribution of responsibility, which has a mean of 0.75 and a standard deviation of 0.27. Zero represents weaker responsibility attitudes and 1 represents stronger responsibility attitudes.

Figure 7 Distribution of Prior Beliefs about Assimilation

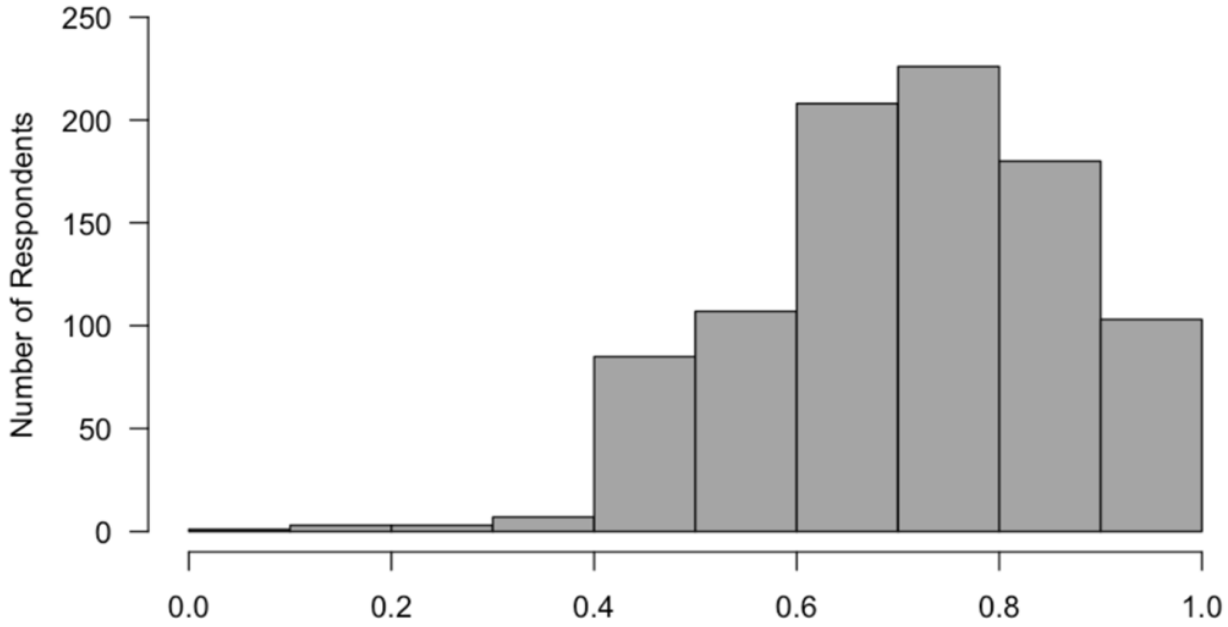


Figure 8 Distribution of Prior Beliefs about Responsibility

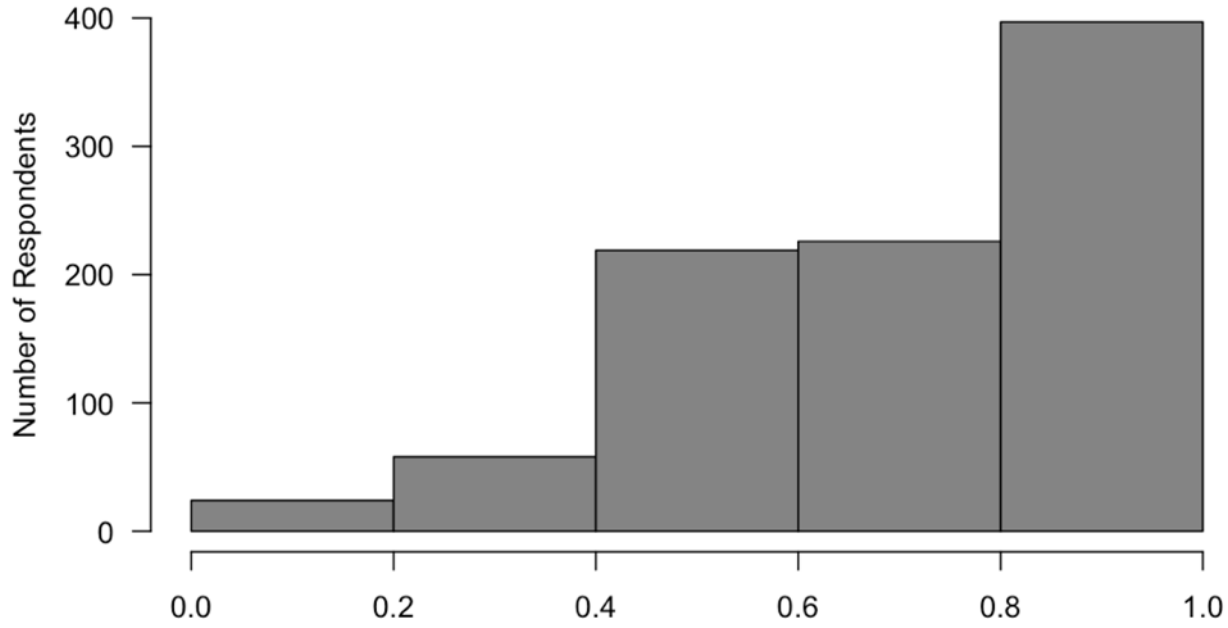


Table 4 displays tests of H5 and H6. The table shows OLS regression models of Pro-Immigrant Support, as we have seen in Study 1 (Tables 1 and 2). Unlike those previous models, however, Model 1 in Table 4 allows treatment effects to be moderated by *Prior Assimilation*

Attitudes; and Model 2 allows treatment effects to be moderated by *Prior Responsibility Attitudes*. Given the interaction term, the coefficients for *Lower age-at-arrival* (-0.09 and -0.002) now capture the (null) direct effect of this treatment when measures of assimilation or responsibility are at zero. There are strong direct effects of both *Prior Assimilation Attitudes* and *Prior Responsibility Attitudes*, and each is associated with lower levels of *Pro-Immigrant Support*. Treatments alter the influence of assimilation and responsibility attitudes, however. The (positive) interaction terms suggest that the strong (negative) impact of each is reduced in the lower-age-at-arrival conditions. [6]

Note that the r-squared for the responsibility model (Model 2) is roughly twice as large as the r-squared for the assimilation model (Model 1). Prior responsibility attitudes (and the associated interaction) explain more of the variance in *Pro-Immigrant Support* than prior assimilation attitudes. This is similar to what was found in Table 3 and provides some support for the notion that attributions of responsibility are, in fact, a more significant mechanism than attitudes about assimilation.

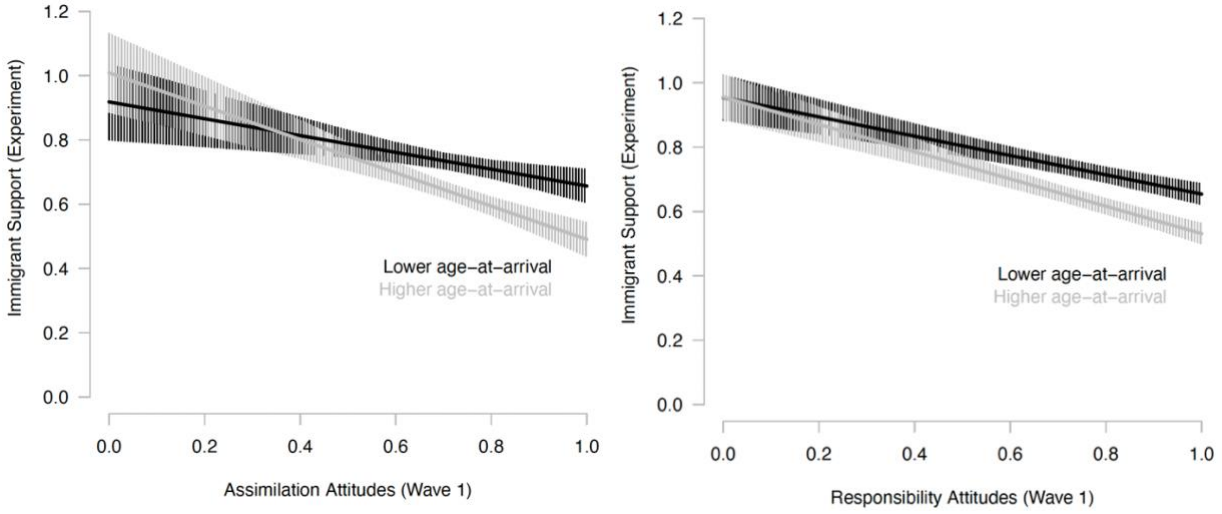
[6] Indeed, Model 1 suggests that the cost of assimilation attitudes is cut in half (from -0.52 to 0.26, 50%) when the immigrant arrives as a child than as an adult. Model 2 suggests that the cost of attribution of responsibility is cut by roughly a quarter (from -0.42 to 0.12, 25%) in the lower age-at-arrival treatment.

Table 4 The Impact of Treatments on Support Moderated by Assimilation and Responsibility

	DV: Pro-Immigrant Support	
	Model 1	Model 2
Lower age-at-arrival treatment	-0.090 (0.087)	-0.002 (0.050)
Prior Assimilation Attitudes	-0.518*** (0.085)	
Prior Assimilation * Lower age-at-arrival treatment	0.257** (0.119)	
Prior Responsibility Attitudes		-0.424*** (0.044)
Prior Responsibility * Lower age-at-arrival treatment		0.124** (0.063)
Constant	1.009*** (0.063)	0.956*** (0.035)
Observations	920	921
R2	0.077	0.155

Cells contain OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

Figure 9 Visualizing Heterogeneity in the Impact of Treatments



Results from Table 4 are illustrated in Figure 9. As in Study 1, the light gray line (and associated 95% confidence intervals) shows estimated values for those in the high age-at-arrival treatment, and the black line shows the same for those in the low age-at-arrival treatment. For both interactions, it is at the highest end of *Prior Assimilation Attitudes* and *Prior Responsibility Attitudes* that predicted values differ significantly across the two treatments. And in each case, the slope of the relationship is shallower in the low age-at-arrival conditions.[7]

[7] Note that assimilation and attribution of responsibility attitudes are correlated at r=0.41 ($p < .001$). In an OLS model including two-way interactions between the low age-at-arrival treatment and *both* variables, both interactions fall below standard levels of statistical significance. This is likely due to multicollinearity; but it also does not clearly signal whether the effects identified in Table 4 are in fact a function of just one of these variables.

2.4 Discussion

This chapter began with a discussion of Americans' tendency to have more positive attitudes about Dreamers than about immigrants generally. I have suggested that age-at-arrival is a defining characteristic of Dreamers and use two separate survey experiments to explore this possibility. Results from Study 1 confirm that age of arrival does matter for immigrant support; and that these results hold when controlling for, and interacting with, prior attitudes towards immigration. Study 2 replicates the findings of Study 1 and explores two potential mechanisms behind this impact: attitudes about assimilation and about attribution of responsibility. Results suggest that (1) experimentally manipulating age-at-arrival has a significant effect on immigrant support, attitudes about assimilation, and attributions of responsibility and (2) treatment effects are moderated by attitudes about assimilation and attribution of responsibility.

The American Dreamers exemplify the principles of meritocracy, equality, opportunity, and freedom (Abrego & Negrón-Gonzales, 2020). The conflation of Dreamers and the good immigrant narrative is intentional—it is a way for journalists, politicians, and mainstream immigrant rights organizations to increase policy support for these young immigrants (Abrego & Negrón-Gonzales, 2020). The narrative argues that Dreamers deserve rights to higher education, to work, to be protected from deportation, and to gain citizenship. However, this narrative implies that not all immigrants deserve these rights—only the exceptional ones. Overall, understanding support for Dreamers helps us, in part, to understand immigration support more generally.

These findings point to the importance of further work on age-at-arrival, and the mechanisms underlying age-at-arrival, on support for immigration. This study nevertheless has several important limitations. In terms of experimental design, there is no way to know if respondents perceive the news vignette as an actual news story. Previous studies have used a very

similar method (i.e., Iyengar et al., 2013; Madrigal & Soroka, 2021), but it still calls into question the external validity of the stimuli. However, news is one of many formats in which Americans consume political information. Even if the respondents do not perceive the vignette as a real news story, this study suggests that being exposed to political information about an immigrant can still potentially affect attitudes and beliefs about the immigrant.

Moreover, this study focuses on a specific immigrant (Luis). This paper is premised on the notion that these findings are generalizable to both (a) other individual-immigrants, and (b) immigration support generally. An argument can be made that these findings cannot definitively assess how these attitudes map onto more generalized attitudes about immigration in the United States. However, age-at-arrival is best explored in an individual level story—it would be difficult, even unrealistic, to re-run these studies with multiple immigrants in the news vignettes. In fact, this study is externally valid in this regard, and suggests that the impact of age-at-arrival for individual immigrants does map onto larger immigrant groups, like the Dreamers. The degree to which this is the case requires additional experimentation, however, with other hypothetical immigrants and/or measures of immigrant support. With these caveats in mind, these findings are still significant for research on news production, citizens' attitudes about young immigrants, and attitudes toward Dreamers.

In all, these combined studies of this Dreamer chapter confirm that age-at-arrival does matter in attitudes towards young immigrants, and that this bias is partially explained by general attitudes about immigration, assimilation, and responsibility. As discussed in the introductory chapter of this dissertation, beliefs about assimilation are essential in the conceptions of cultural threat posed by immigrants in the U.S. Assimilated immigrants are perceived as less threatening than unassimilated immigrants. The same can be said about responsibility—immigrants that are

seen as less responsible for immigrating to the U.S. are also most likely perceived as less threatening. This study finds that higher levels of support for young immigrants (and Dreamers), given the results, indicate that age, assimilation, and responsibility have the potential to change attitudes about immigration, and in these ways, disengage threat in attitudes about those immigrants.

The following chapter asks: now that I have established that young immigrants do, indeed, elicit higher levels of support, to what extent is the news that includes representations of immigrant children and youth different from overall immigration news in the last few decades? What role do children play in media coverage of immigration, and what might this tell us about coverage of (and attitudes about) immigration more broadly?

Chapter 3 Content Analysis of Children in Immigration News Coverage, 1990 - 2020

Abstract: What role do children play in media coverage of immigration, and what might this tell us about coverage of (and attitudes about) immigration more broadly? This study examines U.S. newspaper coverage of immigration from 1990 to 2020. Using multiple content analytic approaches, I find that newspaper coverage of immigration that includes mentions of children: (a) tends to be more positive in net sentiment, (b) tends not to focus on topics of politics and violence, and (c) tends to correlate with topics about family, education, religion, and community. Threat is found to be a regular feature of this news coverage; however, threat language does not vary systematically with the language of childhood or race. In all, these findings point to the salience of (positive) language about community in coverage about immigrant children. Results are discussed as they relate to our understanding of the impact of news coverage on beliefs about immigration in the U.S.

Keywords: Immigration, Children, News Media, STM, Dictionary, Content Analysis

In June of 2019, the news cycle was dominated by a graphic photograph of a father and his two-year-old child lying dead in the waters of the U.S.-Mexico Rio Grande River border. The father in the photo was 25-year-old Oscar Alberto Martinez Ramirez and the toddler was his child Valeria. Both fled violence in El Salvador months earlier to seek economic opportunity, physical safety, and asylum in the United States. When the duo reached the river border, they attempted to swim across, and drowned in the process. The story was shocking because of the photo's graphic detail. But it also served (and serves) as a valuable reminder of the many children who, like Valeria, make the dangerous trek to and across the border.

Recent data estimates that the number of undocumented immigrants in the United States consists of about 10 million adults and 675,000 children (Passel & Cohn, 2018). From 1994 to 2017, the percentage of children who are immigrants, either first or second generation, increased by 51 percent (Child Trends, 2018). In terms of education, about 725,000 students enrolled in K-12 public education are immigrant children (Passel & Cohn, 2016). In the face of these statistics, various reports find that immigrant children are less likely to have adequate medical care, more likely to live below the federal poverty level, and more likely to have a parent who faces the threat of deportation than nonimmigrant children (Child Trends, 2018; Chilton et al., 2013). Consider also the recent public discourses over the DREAM Acts, Central American migrant caravans, children in cages, assaults in detentions, unaccompanied minors, and family separation policy. In this political moment, children are at the forefront of immigration events.

In the field of political communication, researchers have established that information about immigration in the U.S. tends to increase perceptions of threat, arouse angry or anxious emotions, and increase overall anti-immigrant attitudes (e.g., Mastro et al., 2014; Santa Ana, 2002; Valentino et al., 2013). However, scholarship about the impact of the inclusion of children in these same

immigration stories is limited. Some research finds that cues of children and childhood have the potential to disengage threat and evoke sympathy (e.g., Moeller, 2002; Sherr, 1999; Wallace & Wallace, 2020), while research on immigrant children point to the possibility that these kids can be represented as especially threatening (Berggreen et al., 2009; Strom & Alcock, 2017).

To what extent is the news that includes representations of children and immigrant youth substantively different from overall immigration news? What role do children play in immigrant coverage? And what might coverage of immigrant children tell us about coverage of immigration more broadly? These are the questions that motivate the current chapter of the dissertation. This study examines seventeen U.S. newspapers about immigration over the past three decades (1990 to 2020) to deeply examine the inclusions of representations of children and immigrant youth in these news stories. The approach in the present study, which uses automated content analytic methods, determines the language, words, topics, and patterns that are correlated with mentions of immigrant children. The results of this study inform current theoretical conceptions of the representations of immigrant children in relation to sentiment, threat, race, and community.

This study finds that newspaper coverage of immigration that includes mentions of children is more positive in sentiment and tends to focus on topics about community and family. Articles about adults, in contrast, tend to be negative, and focus on topics related to war, violence, partisanship, and American politics. Although this paper is focused on the intersection of childhood cues and immigration, the findings are relevant to immigration coverage more generally. Indeed, articles focused on issues of community and family need not to be exclusive to coverage of children; and may produce more positive coverage of (and attitudes towards) immigrants more generally.

3.1 Background

There is a considerable body of research on the representation of immigration in U.S. media, especially as it is connected to notions of threat. Within that literature, the racialization of immigrants is widely discussed. A separate literature focuses on the nuanced and complex ways that children are represented in media.

3.1.1 News Coverage and Immigrant Threat

Content analyses of U.S.-based news articles find that immigrants tend to be overrepresented as law-breaking criminals (Brown et al,, 2018; Chavez, 2013; Chavez et al., 2010; Ono & Sloop, 2002; Santa Ana, 2002) drug traffickers (Chavez et al., 2010), invaders (Chavez, 2001; Santa Ana, 2002; Waldman et al., 2008), animals (Santa Ana, 1999) and dangers to American society (Mohamed & Farris, 2020; Santa Ana, 2002). Consumers of this media are thus exposed to negative portrayals (Branton & Dunaway, 2008; Branton & Dunaway, 2009; Mastro et al., 2014), alarmist anti-immigrant sentiments (Kinefuchi & Cruz, 2015; Waldman et al., 2008), and a sense that a national crisis is caused by these immigrants (Chavez, 2001). This work highlights the frequency with which threat and negative sentiment are features of immigration reporting, even as criminality is inconsistent with actual immigrant crime demographics (Farris & Mohamed, 2018).

Studies of news images suggest similar biases. American news magazines and newspapers tend to select images about immigration that emphasize the Mexico-U.S. border, the involvement of immigration enforcement, an immigrant's undocumented/illegal status, and implied criminal behavior on behalf of the immigrants (i.e., arrests; Chavez, 2001; Farris & Mohamed, 2018). Madrigal and Soroka (2021) find that news images of large groups of immigrants decrease support

for immigration for a subset of threat-sensitive Americans; however, personalized images of individual immigrants are found to reverse the negative effect for these same respondents. This work on news images highlights the potential impact of editorial choices regarding the portrayal of immigrants, especially within stories that may (or needn't) cue threat.

A related way in which immigration news stories cue threat is by focusing on specific racial and ethnic minority groups. In national American news media, Latinos (also referred to as "Hispanics") are consistently overrepresented as immigrants living in the U.S. without legal documentation status (Branton & Dunaway, 2009; Brown et al., 2018; Dixon & Williams, 2015; Mohamed & Farris, 2020). Repeatedly, newspapers represent the "illegal immigrant" as a cue for immigrants in the Latino racial group, specifically (Stewart et al., 2011). Valentino et al. (2013) find that mentions of Latinos in news coverage of immigration outpace mentions of other minority groups beginning in 1994, when immigration reform was a major issue in the nation. Other studies have noted that the perceived urgency about reporting on immigration has produced a substantial and increasing amount of news coverage (Kim et al., 2011; Schemer, 2012).

The consequences of the racialization of immigration in U.S. news media is that exposure to news articles about immigration tends to result in more unfavorable attitudes towards Latinos (Mastro et al., 2014; Stewart et al., 2011). The impact of "illegality" further characterizes Latinos as perpetually undocumented immigrants, not American residents or citizens. Notions of illegality are, undoubtedly, connected to cues of threat. Illegal action or, in this case, persons, imply criminality, law breaking, and possibly, violence. And, with the increased coverage of immigration in the last few decades, so increases the negative representations, threatening "illegal" cues, and stereotypes of Latinos more broadly. I will mostly be using the term "Latinos" in this chapter to refer to members of this racial and ethnic group.

Media coverage of immigration cues threat in a variety of other ways as well, including the representation of immigrants as threats to economic resources, spatial resources, and health resources. Immigrants are portrayed as hordes of people overwhelming the economy and welfare state, as well as carriers of infectious diseases that contaminate communities and the environment (Cisneros, 2008; Ono & Sloop, 2002; Santa Ana, 2002). News media also tend to emphasize the increasing flow of migrants in reporting on immigration (Branton & Dunaway, 2008; Cisneros, 2008; Madrigal & Soroka, 2021; McLaren, 2003; McLaren & Johnson, 2007; Outten et al., 2012), which naturally increases this perceived threat to society.

The literature in political communication makes clear that news stories about immigration often highlight negative sentiment and link to various perceptions of threat. Research in the realm of negative sentiment and threat in this type of mediated information is shown to matter in terms of anti-immigrant attitudes (Branton & Dunaway, 2008; Branton & Dunaway, 2009; Mastro et al., 2014). Sentiment in this study is quantifiable and defined as the net positive/negative values of news articles—positive values indicating increasingly positive content, while negative values indicating increasingly negative content. More information on this specific sentiment variable is found in the results section. In all, this study is focused on the question: How might immigrant children factor into this representation?

3.1.2 News Coverage and Children

The symbolic use of children in American political rhetoric and culture is well documented. The "baby-kissing politician" cliché spans from early presidents to President Biden and demonstrates how children are used as political props to indicate innocence, morality, and need of protection. In contemporary cultural politics, there is growing attention to the ways American

children need saving (Goff et al., 2014; Stephens, 1995). For example, Sherr (1999) finds in presidential campaigns, both Democrats and Republicans use images of children in advertisements that focus on the issues of economic insecurity, poverty, crime, and war. Within these issues, politicians communicate to citizens that voting for their opponent will put children at risk. These studies suggest that there is a growing tendency in politics to refer to children as symbols that indicate innocence and hope.

Research in political communication indicates that news media are a significant vehicle for these political constructions of childhood. Although children are generally underrepresented in news media (Kunkel & Smith, 1999), they are usually represented as moral referents of victimhood and innocence (Altheide, 2002; Berggreen et al., 2009; Kaziaj, 2016; Moeller, 2002; Ponte, 2007). And, when children are represented in news, these types of stories tend to elicit strong emotions for the news consumer (Chermak, 1995). For example, news stories about crimes against children are found to be high in emotion because these crimes are seen as especially terrible (Pritchard & Hughes, 1997).

Conceptions of childhood innocence are nevertheless complicated by research that focuses on how children are also vilified in media. Ponte (2007) argues that if the innocent and dependent child is present in news media stories, then there is also the "black sheep" child that does not correspond to the romantic ideals of childhood. This finding is echoed in Altheide's (2002) news analysis, where he states that, "children play a dual role in terms of innocence and brutality, protection, and control. We can justify excess in protecting children, and increasingly, we can excuse excess in punishing them, particularly, and paradoxically, if extreme sanctions will protect the innocence of children" (pg. 230).

Within the American context, research on representation of immigrant children in news media contains mixed findings. Some work finds that mentions of family and/or children in media increases empathetic and sympathetic portrayals of immigrants (Kinefuchi & Cruz, 2015). That said, other studies indicate that immigrant children in the U.S. can be represented as threats. For example, Berggreen et al. (2009) theorize that in news media, undocumented children occupy the space of being both victims and "illegal" threats to their own immigrant community. In an analysis of the *Los Angeles Times* and the *New York Times*, Strom and Alcock (2017) find that immigrant children are overwhelmingly represented as a problem to American-born citizens, rather than a population that needs assistance or aid. Their findings echo research suggesting that both children and adult immigrants are represented in dehumanizing language in news, such as in metaphors of floods, hordes, and surges of people who pose a threat to the country (Chavez, 2001; Cisneros, 2008; Santa Ana, 2002). It is in line with the notion that immigrants, even young child migrants, are dangerous and should be deported out of the United States.

In sum, immigration coverage is found to cue various forms of threat (e.g., racial, welfare, health, and economic); and, although children in media are conceptualized as cueing innocence and morality, the portrayal of *immigrant children* is more complicated. These children appear to be caught in the contrast of innocence versus deviance.

What role do children play in immigrant coverage, and what might this coverage tell us about coverage of immigration more broadly? Given the mixed and limited findings within immigration and childhood research studies, the competing hypotheses and research questions in this chapter are as follows:

H1a: Articles that include mentions of children will be ***more positive*** in net sentiment than articles that do not include mentions of children.

H1b: Articles that include mentions of children will be ***more negative*** in net sentiment than articles that do not include mentions of children.

RQ1: If differences are found in H1a and H1b, what language creates this sentiment difference in news coverage?

H2a: Articles that include mentions of children will contain ***less threat language*** than articles that do not include mentions of children.

H2b: Articles that include mentions of children will contain ***more threat language*** than articles that do not include mentions of children.

RQ2: To what extent are the results from testing H2a and H2b driven by race?

RQ1 will explore a more detailed account of what is behind H1; that is, if differences in sentiment are found in the data, what language could explain these differences? H2 is related to RQ1, with a focus on threat. RQ2 is then focused on whether language about race and ethnicity, particularly focused on Latinos in the U.S., will explain some of the threat findings.

3.2 Data

This chapter relies on both (1) dictionary-based and (2) structural topic modeling (STM) content analytic methods. In combination, these two approaches determine the language and representations that are unique to immigrant children news stories. The dictionary-based approach measures the frequency with which news articles mention certain sets of words. The STM approach is a form of machine learning, aimed at identifying topics in documents based on combinations of word frequencies and co-occurrences (Roberts et al., 2014). These methods are

discussed in more detail as they are used in the results sections below. Here, I describe the corpus on which these analyses rely.

I examine a corpus of immigration news stories, exploring differences between and within stories that include mentions of children. I rely on a novel database drawn from Lexis-Nexis. The corpus includes all immigration content from seventeen national newspapers from January 1990 to September 2020. The newspapers, in alphabetical order, are *Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Arkansas Democrat Gazette, Arizona Republic, Boston Globe, Chicago Tribune, Denver Post, Houston Chronicle, Los Angeles Times, Star Tribune, New York Times, Orange County Register, Philadelphia Inquirer, St. Louis Paper, Seattle Times, Tampa Bay Times, USA Today* and *Washington Post*. I chose these newspapers because they are representative of the American news media environment. Appendix Figure J illustrates how many articles are included in the corpus by each of these sources.

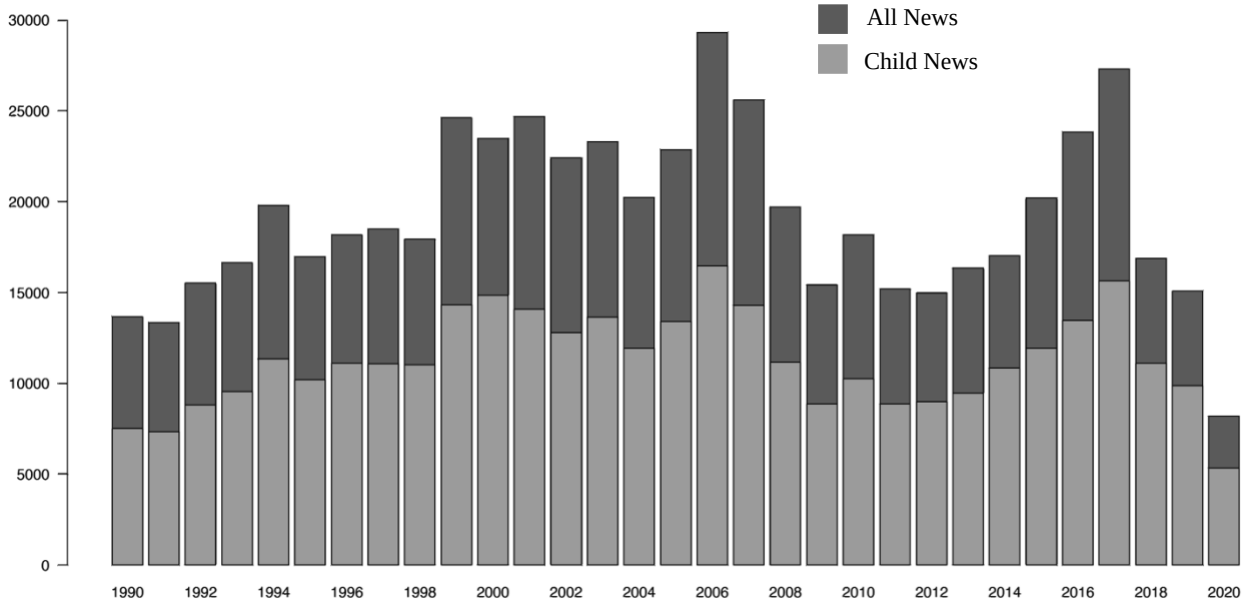
The dataset was collected by identifying news articles that mention one or more of any of the following words: "immigrant*," "immigration," "migrant*," "migration," "emigrant*," "emigration," "refugee*," "asylum," "illegals," and/or "alien*." Variations of root words in this list is indicated by an asterisk (*). I created this *Immigration Dictionary* by collecting words and synonyms relating to immigration and migration. In addition, I build on words from previously discussed content analyses about immigration news (i.e., Dixon & Williams, 2015) to create this dictionary. The method of identifying groups of news articles based on one or more mentions of a word in a specific dictionary within the article (as in, greater than zero word mentions) is used in all subsequent dictionary-based article identification.

Newspapers do not restrict their reporting to only the United States. As national newspapers, they report on world events. However, this project specifically focuses on

immigration events and news within the United States. To focus on those stories, I created a 108-word *U.S. Dictionary* that includes the names of all 50 states, various major cities, words from government agencies such as "homeland security", "customs enforcement", "naturalization service", words from government entities such as "congress", "house of representatives", "governor*", and the names of the presidents that were in office in the last 30 years ("Bush," "Clinton," "Obama," "Trump," and/or "Biden"). I create the *U.S. Dictionary* article corpus by retaining only the articles that include one or more of the words in the dictionary. When cut down to focus specifically on immigration in the U.S., this database has a total of 595,328 news stories.

Figure 10 shows the number of newspaper articles per year in this news corpus (in dark grey). There are slight upticks in immigration news articles in years like 2006 and 2017; however, the volume of coverage is at roughly the same equilibrium over the three decades. Note that the amount of news articles in 2020 is limited because data collection ended in September of that year.

Figure 10 Immigration Articles & Children Mentions in Articles in Corpus per Year



The focus of this analysis is on the representations of children in news articles. Thus, I created a 17-word *Child Dictionary* that includes the following: "child*," "kid*," "baby," "babies," "toddler*," "infant*," "newborn*," "youth*," "youngster*," "younglings," "adolescent*," "teen*," "preteen*," "juvenile," "girl*," "boy*," and/or "minor*[8]." This dictionary was created by collecting key words relating to childhood and adding related synonyms using a thesaurus. Words in the dictionary were confirmed through a "key word in context" reading and a qualitative evaluation of articles about immigrant children, to verify that the dictionary is accurately capturing words about children. Like the *Immigration* and *U.S. Dictionaries*, I identify these stories by flagging articles that include one or more words from this dictionary. This

[8] The term "minor*" complicates this *Child Dictionary*. "Minor" can refer both to (1) a person under 18 years of age or (2) an adjective. For this reason, the word minor can create false positives and noise in this dictionary. I chose to keep the word, however, because the discussions of "unaccompanied minors" to the U.S. in news stories are important in this analysis.

dictionary reveals 349,537 child stories, about 59% (0.587) of the corpus. Figure 10 also shows the number of articles from the data that mentions a *Child Dictionary* word at least once (in light grey).

This *Child Dictionary* is useful in identifying articles about children, but it is also useful in identifying articles that do not mention children at all. In subsequent analyses, I expect to find differences between articles that do and do not mention children. Results will thus speak not just to the nature of immigration news about children, but also to the nature of immigration news coverage generally.

3.3 Dictionary-Based Results

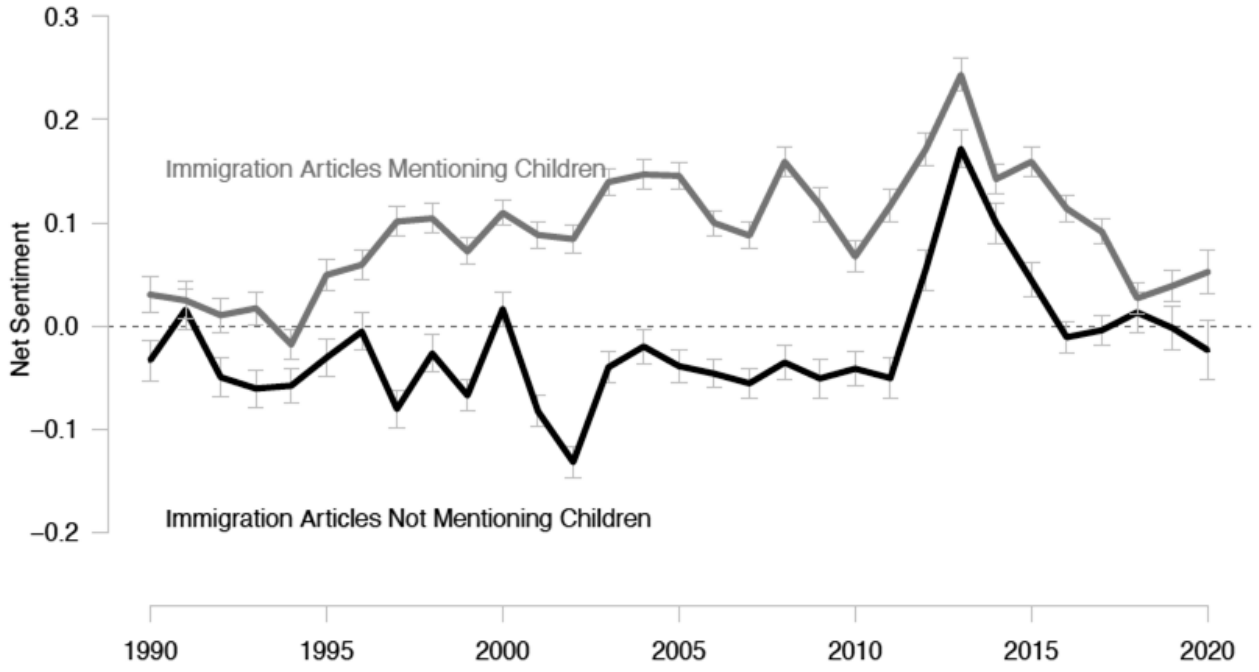
3.3.1 Sentiment

Are there differences in sentiment between child immigrant news stories and overall immigrant news stories? This sentiment analysis was conducted using the *Lexicoder Sentiment Dictionary* included in the Quanteda package in R (Benoit et al., 2018). This dictionary consists of about 2,800 negative sentiment words and about 1,700 positive sentiment words. It also includes 2,860 negations of negative words and 1,721 negations of positive words (Young & Soroka, 2012).

Figure 11 shows trends over time in the "net sentiment" of immigration articles that do and do not mention children. Net sentiment is estimated as follows, following Proksch et al (2019): log [(positive words + 0.5) / (negative words + 0.5)]; positive values indicate increasingly positive content, while negative values indicate increasing negative content. The figure shows trends with 95% confidence intervals, estimated using a simple Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression model that estimates article sentiment as a function of year * children mentions, where year is included as a factor variable and "children mentions" is a binary variable equal to 1 for articles that mention children.

Results in Figure 11 suggest that there are clear differences in net sentiment between articles that mention children and articles that do not mention children. Articles that mention children are significantly more positive in net sentiment than the articles that do not mention children, and 95% confidence interval levels indicate that this difference is significant for all but two years over the entire 30-year period (1990-2020). Articles that include mentions of children are significantly more positive in net sentiment than articles that do not include mentions of children.

Figure 11 Sentiment Analysis of Children in Immigration Articles



What kind of language accounts for these differences in sentiment? To get a better understanding of these differences, I separate the data into two groups of articles: (1) those with clearly positive sentiment (top tercile of net sentiment), and (2) those with clearly negative sentiment (bottom tercile of net sentiment). I then run an analysis that, based on word frequencies, reveals the top words that occur in these positive and negative article data frames (excluding *LSD Dictionary* words). For the entire corpus, the top words that co-occur in articles with positive sentiment words include "school," "American," "family," "community," "church," "students," "parents," "home," and "education." The top words that co-occur in articles with negative sentiment words include "police," "government," "president," "war," "illegal," "border," "security," "Trump," "killed," "military," and "death." The contrast in these groups of words is relatively clear. Words that co-occur with positive sentiment tend to focus on community, while words that co-occur with negative words tend to focus on actions of security and war.

There are readily identifiable reasons for the trends in Figure 11. Although the gap in sentiment between articles that mention children and articles that do not mention children is evident throughout the thirty-year period, there are two years where the estimates overlap (1991 and 2018). In 1991, the top co-occurring words in articles with the *LSD Dictionary* suggests that the Persian Gulf War (1990-1991) between the U.S. and Iraq accounts for these findings: the words include "Iraq," "refugees," "Israel," "government," "American," and "president." Moreover, the year 2018 was when the Trump administration's zero-tolerance family separation border policy took over the news cycle, with top co-occurring words including: "Trump," "political," "party," "Republicans," and "Democrats." Given the polarization and politicization of immigration during this time by Republican and Democrat elected officials and elites, it makes sense that children stories in this year are more negative than they are typically, at least in comparison with the preceding decade.

Moreover, in 2003 there is a significant dip in net sentiment for immigration articles that do *not* mention children. It appears that results in this year are the product of the war in Iraq, as the top words co-occurring in articles with negative sentiment words include: "war," "Iraq(i)," "security," "military," "attacks," and "terrorists." It is notable that the net sentiment for articles that do include mentions of children does not dip in 2003—highlighting, again, the positive impact of including language of children in the news stories.

In sum, there are clear and notable differences in sentiment between articles that do include mentions of children versus articles that do not mention children. Articles mentioning children have more positive sentiment than articles that do not. I consequently reject the null hypothesis for H1a and fail to reject the null hypothesis for H1b.

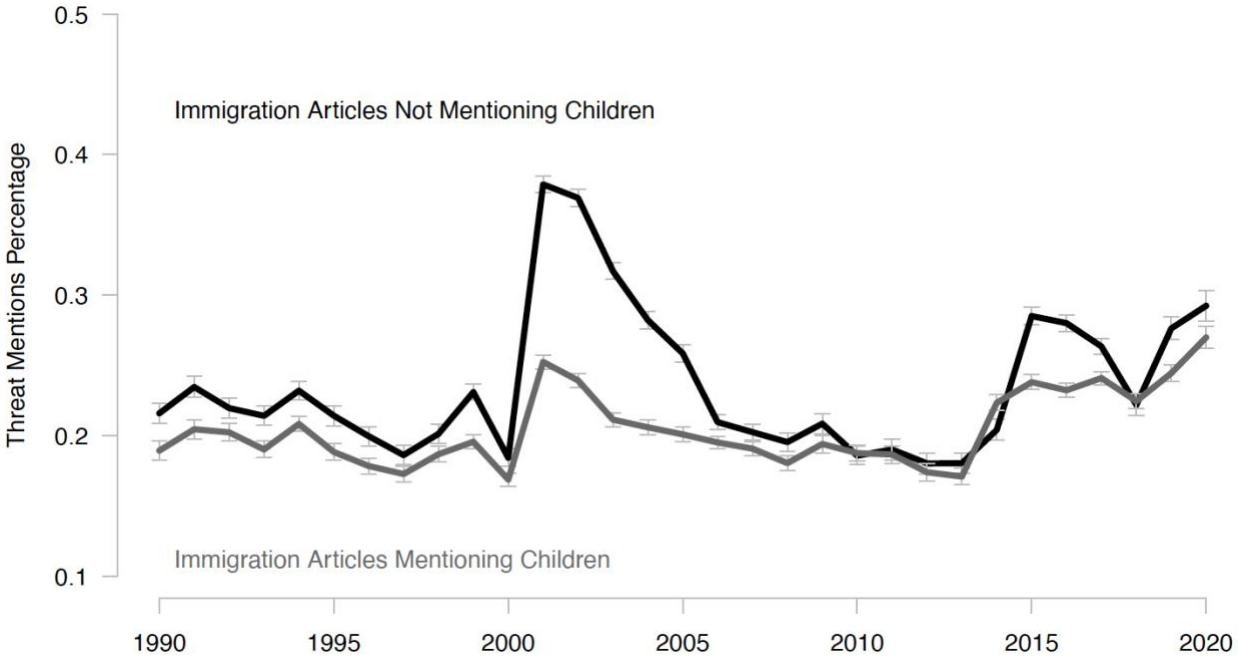
3.3.2 Threat

What kind of language accounts for these differences (RQ1)? I hypothesize that language around threat might explain the differences in sentiment (H2a and H2b), and the following section explores this possibility in depth.

As previously noted, many studies have found that news about immigration in the U.S. often leads to increased perceptions of threat. Content analyses find that immigrants tend to be represented as dangerous criminals, invaders of the nation, carriers of disease, and drains on resources (e.g., Chavez, 2013; Cisneros, 2008; Santa Ana, 2002). Language of threat may also help account for the differences found in the sentiment analyses above.

To explore threat language, I created a 27-word *Threat Dictionary* that includes: "threat*," "impend*," "menac*," "damage*," "danger*," "endanger*," "peril*," "hazard*," "risk*," "intimidat*," "trouble*," "punish*," "harm*," "distress*," "agitat*," "disorder*," "pain*," "terror*," "panic*," "fear*," "afraid," "dread*," "insecurit*," "crisis*," "instability," "unstable," and/or "emergenc*." To create this dictionary, I identified common words starting with "threat", "danger", and "emergency." I included synonyms of these words in the dictionary, where appropriate. For this dictionary, like with the *Child Dictionary* I used key word in context to confirm that the words in this dictionary are, in fact, within the language of threat. This dictionary identifies approximately 381,546 articles that include one or more of these words. When accounting for the total number of articles that include at least one *Threat Dictionary* word and one *Child Dictionary* word, the number is 237,300.

Figure 12 Threat Analysis of Children in Immigration Articles



As with the sentiment analysis, Figure 12 shows results from an OLS regression model that estimates percentage of threat mentions in articles ("threat mentions') as a function of year * immigrant children mentions, at 95% confidence interval levels. The figure shows steady levels of threat in both articles that do and do not include children prior to 2000. The average percentage of threat words between 1990-2000 is about 0.2% of the entire articles (about one threat word every 500 words). However, from 2001 through 2005 there is a sharp increase in the usage of threat words in news articles not mentioning children. At its peak in 2001, a threat word was used 0.4% of the time in these articles (not about children), or once every 250 words. Given that a standard paragraph can be around 200 words, this is a substantive use of threat words. After 2005, the percentages of threat words in articles levels off to pre-2000 levels.

In the entire corpus, the top words that co-occur in sentences that include mentions of the *Threat Dictionary* include "government," "war," "security," "attacks," "police," "border," "Trump," "military," "illegal," "Sept," "Bush," "violence," "death," "Iraq," "Israel," "Islamic,"

and words like "school," and "community." The themes of war, violence, and illegal activity hang together with words in the *Threat Dictionary*.

What can be made about the increase in threat language in 2001? The increase is quite clearly related to news coverage about, and after, the September 11th (9/11) terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City.[9] Given the prevalence of immigration news stories that focus on the 9/11 attacks in this time, we are left with a picture that is a bit complicated. The aim of this content analysis is to specifically focus on threat in immigration coverage, but not necessarily coverage that focuses on terrorist language that expanded after 9/11.

It is possible that the Sept. 11 attacks is an outlying event that distorts these results, and that some of this analysis is overwhelmed by terrorist-specific language. What would the threat trends look like without the 9/11 data? Without the *9/11 Dictionary*[10], there is a total of 460,984 news articles (previously 595,328). This data is shown in Figure 13, which is estimated exactly as Figure 14, but without the *9/11 Dictionary* articles.

[9] To confirm this suspicion, I ran a sentence-level analysis of threat words in this year with only articles that do not mention children, and found that to co-occurring words include "officials," "attacks," "Bush," "Taliban," "security," "Afghanistan," "war," "Sept," "military," "Bin Laden," and "FBI." It should be noted that the word and variations of the word "terror*" is part of the *Threat Dictionary*, which can contribute to this uptick. For comparison, in that same year (2001), I ran the same co-occurring word in sentence analysis only using articles that mention children. The co-occurring sentence level words include: "school," "family," "home," "police," "community," "students," but also include the words "war," "Afghanistan," "Taliban," and "attacks." Two-thousand and one (2001) is a clear example of a year where threat matters when children are and are not included in news articles about immigration.

[10] Using the top words from the articles in this period, I created a 9-word *9/11 Dictionary* that includes the words: "attack*," "terrorist*," "taliban," "bin laden," "osama," "qaeda," "al-qaeda," "twin tower*," and/or "world trade center" to identify articles that specifically focus on the Sept. 11 attacks. The news stories relating to the Sept. 11 attacks were identified if an article uses one or more of the *9/11 Dictionary* words.

Figure 13 Threat Analysis of Children in Immigration Articles without *9/11 Dictionary*

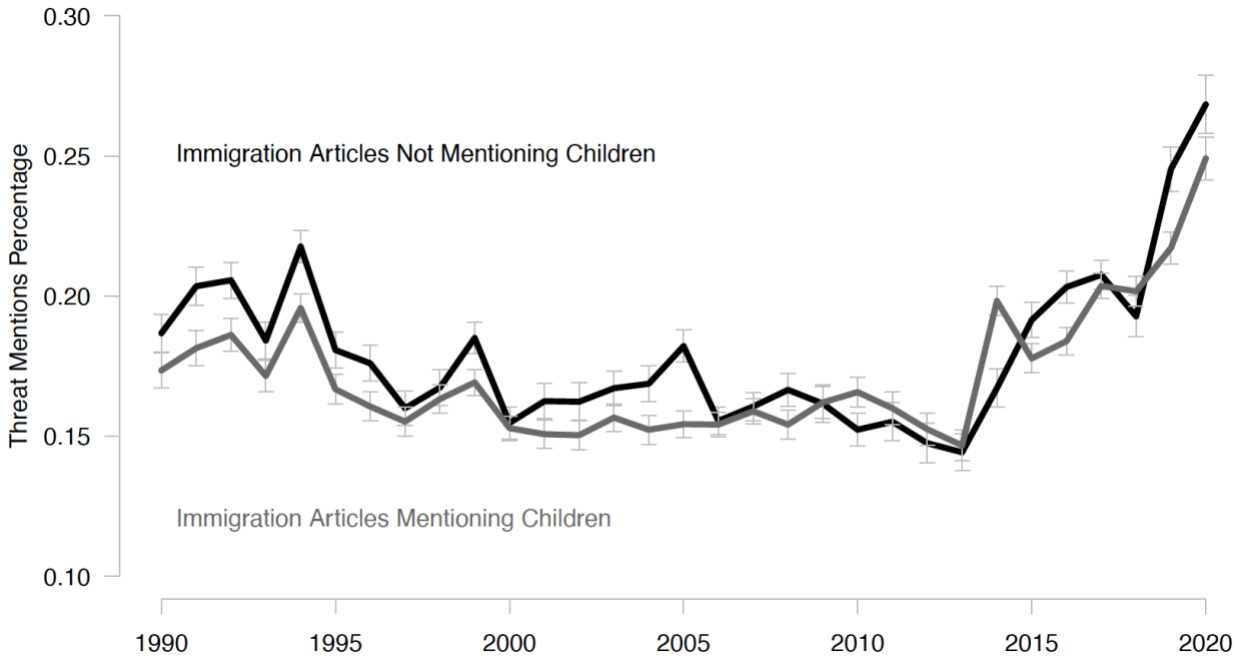


Figure 13 shows that the 2000-2005 gap previously seen in Figure 12 is flattened. Now, in this period, the threat mentions in articles that do not include mentions of children is about the same as threat mentions in articles that do include children. Still, this figure demonstrates a clear increase of threat language in all immigration news (including children and not children) post-2014. Given this analysis, I fail to reject the null hypotheses for both H2a and H2b. When the Sept. 11 news stories are dropped, there are no real differences in threat language. Threat does not seem to explain the differences in sentiment.

To what extent do findings about threat and immigration language vary based on immigrants' race? As noted above, prior work suggests that threat-cuing language may be especially present in articles focused on Latino immigration. I consequently created a *Latino*

Dictionary[11] with the names of Latin American countries, as well as the roots of "Latino" and "Hispanic." The total number of articles identified by this *Latino Dictionary* is 220,390, and the number of articles including this dictionary and the *Child Dictionary* is 140,170. As with all dictionaries in this analysis, the articles were identified by one or more words from this dictionary. Figure K in the Appendix finds no positive association between threat language and discussion of Latino immigration—threat language is equally present in Latino and not-Latino mentioning articles, regardless of whether children are mentioned. Threat *is* a regular feature of news coverage about immigration; however, threat is not particularly linked to language of childhood and Latinos.

3.4 STM Results

The driving question of this paper is: What role do children play in immigrant coverage, and what might this coverage tell us about coverage of immigration more broadly? The dictionary-based analysis gives us a partial answer, where sentiment differences are apparent, but threat and race do not seem to explain these differences. The previous analyses rely on pre-determined sets of words (dictionaries) to explore immigration news content. This has some advantages, but also some limitations in that it relies on some (but not all) words in the corpus. I accordingly analyze the data here using an approach that considers *all* words. I do this using structural topic modeling (STM). STMs are one type of machine learning, designed to identify topics in a corpus based on word frequencies and co-occurrences (Roberts et al., 2014). This approach allows researchers to identify patterns in (all) the data, rather than assume the importance of specific sets of words.

[11] I created a 34-word *Latino Dictionary* that includes the words "latin*," "hispanic*," "beliz*," "bolivia*," "brazil*," "chile," "chilean*," "colombia*," "costa rica*," "cuba*," "dominican republic," "dominican*," "ecuador*," "el salvador," "salvador*," "guian*," "guadeloupe*," "guatemala*," "guyan*," "haiti*," "hondura*," "martinique," "mexic*," "nicarag*," "panama*," "paraguay*," "peru*," "puerto rico," "rican," "saint-barth," "saint-martin," "suriname*," "uruguay*," and/or "venezuela*."

I estimate an STM using a random sample of 100,000 news articles. The model includes two covariates: (1) the year in which the article was published and (2) whether the article includes mentions of children (*Child Dictionary*) or not. I estimate the model removing numbers and standard stopwords (i.e., "and," "or," "with") from the corpus. STMs require that the user determine the correct number of topics to be estimated. Choosing too many topics for the algorithm results in topics that are only minimally distinct, whereas choosing too few topics results in a mixture of topics that are too broad. To identify the right number, I pretested models with 5, 10, 15, 20 and 25 topics. Based on the diagnostic properties of those models, I present a 20-topic model here; although the basic structure of the text is relatively similar when I use 15 or 25 topics.

Table 5 STM Results with 20 Topics and 100,000 Randomly Selected Articles

Topic	Highest Prob	FREX	Label
1	bill, state, hous, senat, congress, tax, illeg	hbox, kyl, legisl, hboxhbox, lawmak, legislatur, welfar	Congress
2	los, angel, california, latino, hispan, mexican, counti	capistrano, villaraigosa, chicano, hermandad, nativo, gorodetski, lulac	Californian Latinos
3	citi, counti, communiti, hous, build, resid, area	subc, rhob, gwinnett, tenant, selectmen, dekalb, redevelop	Local Community
4	border, health, medic, mexico, hospit, care, drug	covid-, coronavirus, measl, pandem, virus, vaccin, infect	Mexican Border and COVID
5	law, court, feder, case, offici, depart, legal	plaintiff, ashcroft, deport, detaine, lawsuit, demjanjuk, moussaoui	Deportation
6	trump, republican, presid, democrat, campaign, elect, polit	romney, candidaci, priebus, rubio, biden, buttigieg, hillari	Partisanship
7	school, student, educ, colleg, church, univers, high	gpa, classroom, curriculum, bishop, teacher, math, dioces	Education
8	american, good, that, question, someth, thing, realli	reader, truth, editori, editor, mayb, stupid, columnist	Random Words
9	film, play, music, book, stori, movi, show	telechargecom, unrat, writer-director, sstar, ampx, soloski, mpaa	Cinema
10	polic, offic, charg, arrest, investig, kill, crime	louima, malvo, second-degre, diallo, markhasev, manslaught, tsarnaev	Criminality
11	art, museum, free, street, center, sunday, saturday	purcellvill, tuesday-saturday, mixed-media, tdd, lovettsvill, ruritan, kreeger	Arts and Community
12	war, militari, forc, offici, iraq, govern, troop	serb, kosovo, taliban, milosev, kurd, croat, hutu	Iraq War
13	china, chines, asian, american, south, vietnames, Korean	khmer, rohingya, pyongyang, suu, aung, phnom, penh	Asian Americans
14	team, game, cuban, cuba, play, florida, player	aristid, port-au-princ, jean-bertrand, anti-castro, fujimori, cuban, bahamian	Cuban Baseball
15	food, restaur, place, water, store, shop, street	tablespoon, teaspoon, mussel, cilantro, riesl, mozzarella, brais	Food
16	servic, church, memori, surviv, famili, home, age	inter, great-grandchildren, mpls, edina, snell, washburn-mcreavi	Church
17	american, nation, countri, world, polit, war, european	brexit, macron, orban, afd, merkel, nazi, salvini	Nationalism
18	israel, palestinian, isra, muslim, arab, peac, islam	palestinian, isra, gaza, arafat, hama, netanyahu, shamir	Israel & Palestine Relations
19	compani, percent, worker, busi, job, million, market	h-b, investor, mortgag, microsoft, economist, lender, manufactur	Labor Market
20	famili, live, home, mother, father, life, friend	elian, father, mother, smile, cri, hug, dad	Family

Table 5 presents the words that are most common ("Highest Prob") and most frequent and exclusive ("FREX") for each topic (Roberts et al., 2014). Based on these quantities, I label each topic (third column). In the paragraphs that follow I estimate the association of these topics (and labels) with news articles mentioning and not mentioning children.

Figure 14 Topic Prevalence Contrast with Articles that Include and do not Include Children

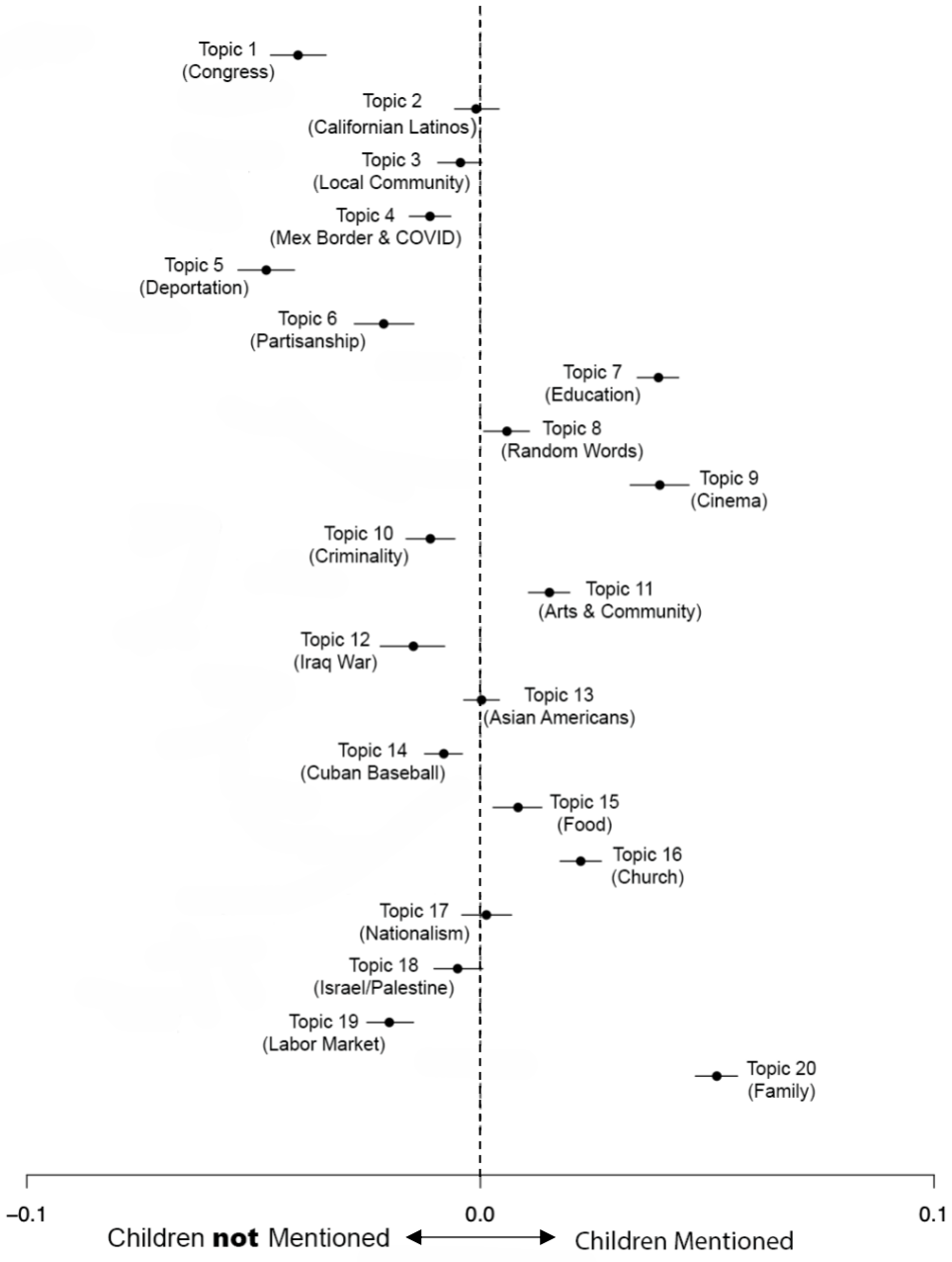


Figure 14 provides a graphical display of topical prevalence contrast with the binary variable of (1) does not mention children and (2) mentions children (using the *Child Dictionary*). This figure shows each topic as a function of a binary covariate, where prevalence for the topics is contrasted across these two groups. We see that topics such as family (topic 20), education (topic

7), arts (topic 11), and church (topic 16) are associated with mentions of children, while topics such as congress (topic 1), deportation (topic 5), partisanship (topic 6), and criminality (topic 10) are associated with articles that do not mention children. Topics that are not clearly associate with or without mentions of children include Californian Latinos (topic 2), Asian Americans (topic 13), and nationalism (topic 17).

Overall, results suggest a relatively clear contrast between topics that are associated with children (community) and not children (legislation and crime). Do these topic associations vary over the 30-year period? It is possible to explore the frequency of topics, as well as whether topics become connected to discussions of children, over time. The Appendix (Figures L) includes time-series graphics for articles mentioning and not mentioning children across all topics (20 total) listed in Figure 14. Although some topics become more salient over time, most of the topics are relatively stable in salience. More importantly, topic associations with children (or not) are also relatively stable over time. Community-focused topics are consistently associated with mentions of children over the entire period examined here, for instance; and topics related to political parties and legislation are consistently associated with articles that do not mention children. Figure 14, thus, presents a relatively accurate view of the association between topics and mentions (and not mentions) of children over the entire 30-year period examined here.

These findings confirm what emerged in the analysis of word frequencies in positive versus negative content above: articles about children are more connected with topics about community, family, and education, and this may explain why these articles are more positive in sentiment over the 30-year period. Conversely, articles not about children seem to be more connected with topics about war, politics, and legislation, and this may account for why articles not mentioning children are more negative in sentiment. To confirm these suspicions, I consider correlations between

article-level sentiment scores (generated above) and STM topic codes. Topic "loadings" (much like factor loadings in a factor analysis) are stored, and each is correlated with net sentiment scores. High positive correlations suggest a strong association between a topic and positive sentiment; high negative correlations suggest a strong association between a topic and negative sentiment.

Figure 15 Topic Correlation with Net-Sentiment (*LSD Dictionary*)

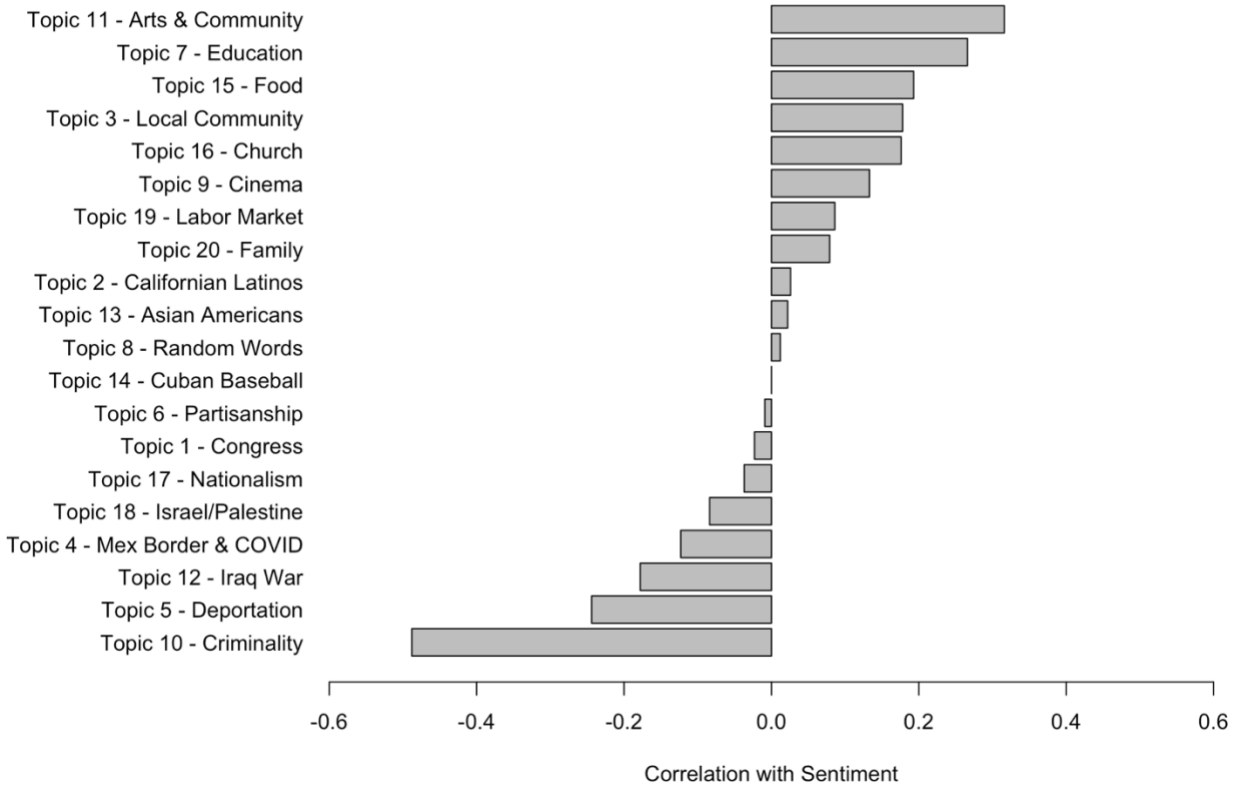


Figure 15 illustrates each topic correlation with net sentiment, ordered from most positive to most negative. The figure clearly indicates the connection between community, education, and positivity, versus politics, crime, and negativity. It is very likely that differences in the sentiment of stories about children (and not about children) are linked, at least in part, to these different topics.

3.5 Discussion

What do the findings from this content analysis indicate for children migrating to the U.S., like Valeria (the child who drowned in the border river)? News about immigration in the U.S. is often found to lead to increased perceptions of threat, where immigrants are represented as invaders, hordes, diseased people, and criminals. That said, news about children often represents them within the themes of victimhood, morality, and innocence. Past work suggests that news about immigrant children, like Valeria, may reflect both positive (e.g., innocence) and negative (e.g., deviance) language.

The first key finding in this analysis is that coverage including mentions of children is significantly more positive than coverage that does not include mentions of children. Analyses support assertions in past work that threat is a regular feature of news coverage about immigration; but threat is not particularly linked to language of childhood. The difference in sentiment appears, rather, to be linked to the fact that articles about children tend to focus on topics such as community, family, religion, education, and the arts. In contrast, articles about adults tend to focus on topics related to war, violence, partisanship, and political processes. It is very likely that differences in the sentiment of stories about children (and not about children) are linked, at least in part, to different sets of topics.

Moreover, the time series threat analysis in this paper reveals the salience of coverage about, and after, the September 11th terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. The increased presence of xenophobic and racist anti-immigrant attitudes in the U.S. after the 9/11 attacks is well documented (Hopkins, 2010; Woods & Arthur, 2014). In fact, various scholars point to increased levels of American national security and limits to immigration following the attacks (Frederking, 2012; Hopkins, 2010; Kerwin, 2005). However, as aforementioned this terrorist-specific language

is not the focus of this chapter. I removed language about the attacks because the data suggested that this is an outlying event that distort these results—and, in fact, the data look significantly different when removing this language. Although coverage of immigration after the 9/11 attacks is substantively interesting, it is not necessarily related to representations of childhood and children.

Another surprising result from this analysis is the null relationship between threat language and representations of immigrant Latinos. The literature in American news media consistently finds that Latinos are essentially synonymous to "illegal" immigrants (e.g., Dixon & Williams, 2015), and that this racialization results in more unfavorable attitudes towards Latinos (e.g., Stewart et al., 2011). Given this work, threat language should be more present in immigration news articles that mention Latinos. However, evidence suggests no systematic (positive or negative) connection between Latino race and threat language.

This null relationship *might* reflect reality—there may be no correlations between Latino race and threat language, opposing previous research. It could be that U.S. news media journalists and editors have paid more attention to their biases in reporting on immigration, to where threat and race are not explicitly intertwined in reporting. In addition, the nature of this data is print news media (in online and physical form), and so therefore, might be more conservative in stereotyping racial groups as opposed to broadcast and opinion TV news. Although the data in this study suggests this possibility, more research is needed to answer the question about the links between race, immigration, and threat in U.S. news media.

Finally, this chapter puts forth the argument that examining the representations of one immigrant group (in this case, children) can reveal aspects about immigration coverage more generally. In all, these findings point to the salience of (positive) language about community in

coverage about immigrant children. How much are these differences being driven by language about childhood, and how much by language about community? Indeed, articles focused on issues of community and family need not to be exclusive to coverage of children; and may produce more positive coverage of (and attitudes towards) immigrants more generally.

Nevertheless, the present study does not investigate what effects community-focused immigration media coverage has on public opinion. This analysis reveals that community can be cued in several ways—such as in using language about family, education, the arts, or church and religion. Several studies already point to the idea that cueing community, such as family, when evaluating immigrants might result in more pro-immigrant attitudes (Berggreen et al., 2009; Kinefuchi & Cruz, 2015; Ostfeld & Mutz, 2014). However, other studies find that cueing family, specifically children, might lead to anti-immigrant attitudes (Iyengar et al., 2013).

In all, these findings point to the salience of (positive) language about community in coverage about immigrant children over the last few decades. The next, and final, chapter of this dissertation tests these features of immigrant stories that are more likely to produce positive coverage (e.g., about community, family, religion, the arts), and perhaps, consequentially, also increase levels of support for immigration amongst the American electorate.

Chapter 4 “Don’t bring your kids”: The Effects of Family and Community in Immigration News

Abstract: Events about community and family separation at the U.S.-Mexico border have been a regular feature of immigration news in the last several years. How do cues of community integration and family impact support for an undocumented immigrant? This chapter presents results from a web-based survey experiment fielded in 2022 in which White respondents read a news story about an undocumented adult that migrated to the U.S. with two characteristics manipulated: (1) being an integrated member of the community or not and (2) arriving with a child or not. Results suggest that community integration leads to higher levels of support, while arriving with a child does not seem to impact support on the same level. In line with previous work in this dissertation, however, support for the accompanying child is higher than for the adult. These findings are discussed as they relate to immigration news representation, community integration, assimilation, and family migration.

Keywords: Family, Immigration, Community, News Media, Assimilation, Survey Experiment

> "If [you] care about kids, don't bring them in. [We] won't give amnesty to people with kids."
>
> - Jeff Sessions, Former Attorney General

On May 7, 2018, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) announced it had implemented a "zero tolerance" immigration policy for illegal entry at the Mexico-U.S. border. This policy states that all migrants who cross the border illegally will be prosecuted, including asylum seekers. The quote above, reported by the *New York Times*, is taken from an inquiry into this policy. As a key implementor of the policy, Sessions told prosecutors that "we need to take away children" from immigrants that choose to migrate to the U.S. with their families. The announcement made it clear that children will be separated from their parents. Sessions also stated that it does not matter how old the children are—do not bring them to the United States. The consequences of this policy were that thousands of families seeking asylum were imprisoned, parents were separated from their children, and children were handed over to the Office of Refugee Resettlement (Shear et al., 2021; Southern Poverty Law Center, 2022).

This was not the first time that the Trump administration argued that families and children should not be immune to the consequences of (undocumented) immigration. In fact, in 2017 Trump himself tweeted that: "CHAIN MIGRATION must end now! Some people come in, and they bring their whole family with them, who can be truly evil. NOT ACCEPTABLE!" (@realDonaldTrump, 2017). Chain migration refers to the process by which immigrants from a particular community migrate to follow other members from that community to a particular country. This type of community migration is, usually, family based. The term "chain migration" connotes a much more negative and threatening notion than "family-based" or "community-based" migration.

What are the effects of these policies and rhetoric on the larger American public? Several studies point to the idea that cueing community integration might result in more pro-immigrant attitudes (Berggreen et al., 2009; Kinefuchi & Cruz, 2015; Ostfeld & Mutz, 2014). Other studies find that cueing one element related to community integration, children, may not produce increased support; indeed, cuing children may even lead to decreased support (Iyengar et al., 2013). These mixed findings motivate the current chapter that explores language of community integration and arriving with children on the impact of support for an undocumented adult. Results suggest that cues about community do, indeed, increase support for an immigrant. Cues about arriving with children have a very small impact on support for the adult immigrant; but there is systematically higher support for the immigrant child than for the adult. These findings have important implications for how we understand the drivers of support for immigration, and the impact of news coverage.

4.1 Background

The literatures in political communication and behavior point to notions of assimilation and integration as being key to how citizens evaluate migrant families and communities. News media are a part of this process, and research suggests that the ways in which news media represent immigrant families matter for public support. While some studies point to news media portrayals of family-class immigrants as burdens on public resources (Chuong, & Safdat, 2016), others frame the issue as humanizing families (Berggreen et al., 2009; Kinefuchi & Cruz, 2015).

The more positive immigrant media narratives tend to cue empathy. When empathy is cued, respondents tend to increase their support for policies aimed at protecting immigrants (Moore-Berg et al., 2022; Newman et al., 2015; Wojcieszak & Kim, 2016). In particular, Kinefuchi and Cruz (2015) find that news articles humanize Mexican immigrants by focusing on family and

children—a universal theme with which readers can empathize, as opposed to framing them in the discourses of illegality or crime. Similarly, Bloemraad et al. (2016) find that when immigrants' rights are framed about family unity, conservatives change their opinions in more pro-immigrant directions. The authors suggest that the change might be attributed to appeals to family values as a core political and moral touchstone of conservatism. Other work finds that, independent of partisanship, when communities of immigrants are shown as assimilated in news, support increases (Ostfeld, 2017; Ostfeld & Mutz, 2014). In these ways, cueing family in compelling and empathetic frames in the news can increase support for immigrants.

There are nevertheless reasons to expect that arriving with family will have negative effects on immigrant support. Research has shown that when immigrants are represented in larger groups, anti-immigrant attitudes are activated (Branton & Dunaway, 2008; Cisneros, 2008; Madrigal & Soroka, 2021; McLaren, 2003; McLaren & Johnson, 2007; Outten et al., 2012). This perceived increase is often represented in metaphorical language of immigrants as dangerous "floods" and "hordes" that pose a threat to American society (Cisneros, 2008; Santa Ana, 2002). Increases in the number of immigrants, even children, may increase perceptions of threat among American-born citizens. This work on media coverage focuses on two kinds of (overlapping) cues: community integration and family. Each is considered in more detail in the sections that follow.

4.1.1 Community Integration

Research suggests that, although immigrants are often thought of as individual actors, the choice to immigrate is linked to community ties and networks (Bloemraad, 2006; Glick, 2010; Yang, 2000). Communities of immigrants are found to integrate into U.S. society more easily (Lin et al., 2010). According to Citrin and Sides (2008), familial connections (which signals community

connections) in a receiving country create a positive impact when citizens evaluate immigrant support. In these ways, community and family ties can be essential in immigrants' assimilation into the United States. Community integration is, indeed, also a crucial component in perceptions of assimilation.

Assimilation is the process by which individual migrants or groups of migrants are integrated into the dominant culture of a receiving nation. In the U.S., notions of assimilation set the criteria by which anyone can become American, such as being hard-working, law-abiding, and worthy of national acceptance (Andrews, 2018; Bloemraad, 2022; Levy & Wright, 2020). American-born citizens prefer immigrants to arrive legally, gain employment in the U.S., and speak English (Levy & Wright, 2020). Perceived "worthy" immigrants are often those who assimilate into racially White, middle-class, and capitalist American society; whereas unworthy immigrants are those who do not assimilate at all (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Yoo, 2008; Yukich, 2010). Immigrants and immigrant families themselves engage in certain behaviors, such as following laws and gaining stable employment, to claim this worthiness (Bloemraad, 2022). Perceptions of assimilation can evoke feelings of solidarity and loyalty to these migrants (Levy & Wright, 2020), and in these ways, immigration integration and assimilation create one American community.

Equally important are the consequences of not assimilating. This "assimilationist threat" is when American-born citizens develop a resentful perception of immigrants that fail to adopt our cultural norms (Paxton & Mughan, 2006). Studies outside of the U.S. context suggest that, overall, immigrants are already seen by citizens as less committed to the nation (Harell et al., 2021). Within the U.S. context, studies find that when an immigrant is portrayed as Hispanic (as opposed to White) and is portrayed as rejecting symbols of American identity, American-born citizens are far

less supportive of said immigrant (Hartman et al., 2014). This work highlights the importance of American-centered values for which citizens judge non-citizens.

Mastery of the English language is one of the main characteristics in perceptions of assimilation for immigrants. Exposure to immigrants who predominantly speak Spanish heightens feelings of cultural threat, which heightens perceived threat and increases anti-immigrant policy preferences (Newman, 2013; Newman, 2015; Newman et al., 2012). This is also true for perceived demographic shifts where Spanish-speaking Latinos are portrayed as overtaking the country. Increasing levels of immigration and immigrant diversity are often viewed as threats to Americans perceived national identity (Citrin et al., 1990; Citrin & Wright, 2009; Wright, 2011). This threat of demographic shifts is shown to motivate politically unaffiliated White Americans to express greater political conservatism (Craig & Richeson, 2014; Craig et al., 2018), and to increase their support for anti-immigration policies (Jardina, 2020; Major et al., 2018; Newman et al., 2018; Velez, 2018).

In sum, American-born citizens, especially White citizens, are more supportive of immigrants when they demonstrate a desire and ability to assimilate and integrate into the larger community. It follows that media coverage emphasizing community and integration will produce increased support for immigrants. The first hypothesis of this study focuses on news coverage cuing community integration:

> **H1:** Language of community integration is associated with ***higher*** levels of immigrant policy support for a hypothetical immigrant adult.

One specific way in which community integration may be cued is by focusing on children. This aspect of integration is examined separately in the experiment, and considered in more detail in the section that follows.

4.1.2 Children and Family

Children play an active role in the assimilation process for their family as a whole (Monzo & Rueda, 2006; Orellana, 2001; Stevens, 2015). Migrant children, by growing up in the U.S., may more easily assimilate into the larger American society, especially as they matriculate through K-12 education. Santa Ana (2002) finds that immigrant children in public education tend to adopt an American value system. They become, he argues, "normal", monolingual, English-speaking, middle-class children (pg. 210). Children are also found to disengage notions of threat, wherein which they are evaluated as innocent and virtuous (Altheide, 2002; Moeller, 2002; Ponte, 2007). In fact, scholars have studied how family reunification policy, focused on fast-tracking citizenship to spouses and children of immigrant citizens, promotes stability and assimilation into the U.S. (Abrams, 2007). In these ways, child migrants that accompany adults might decrease perceptions of assimilationist threat for the family unit.

That said, Iyengar et al. (2013) find that low support for unskilled immigrants decreases further when those immigrants are accompanied by families. The authors suggest that this is due to the perception that the family will be a welfare and economic drain on the host nation. This fear is echoed in studies that find that immigrant children are perceived as a problem to American-born citizens (Strom & Alcock, 2017). As aforementioned, the threat of "chain migration" is based on the sense that if we allow certain "unworthy" or "undesirable" immigrants into the country, larger groups of those same immigrants (including children) will come to the U.S.

Cues about children may increase support (by signaling community and assimilation), or decrease support (by cuing increased number of immigrants, or increased welfare costs). The next set of hypotheses in this study consequently pose competing expectations:

H2a: Arriving with a child is associated with ***higher*** levels of immigrant policy support for a hypothetical immigrant adult.

H2b: Arriving with a child is associated with ***lower*** levels of immigrant policy support for a hypothetical immigrant adult.

In addition to the effects that a child may have on evaluations of an adult immigrant, past work also suggests that young immigrants *themselves* receive higher levels of support. Chapter 2 of this dissertation suggests that age-at-arrival is an especially salient characteristic in positive attitudes toward child migrants. This chapter argues that attribution of responsibility and–most importantly given the focus of the current chapter–notions of assimilation lead American-born citizens to support immigrants who arrive to the U.S. as children. Given the previous work in this dissertation, independent of the support toward the adult immigrant, accompanying children might be supported in higher levels than the adult. As such, the last hypothesis of this study is as follows:

H3: Respondents assigned to the *With Child* treatments will report ***higher*** levels of policy support for the child (Alex) than for the adult (Miguel).

4.2 Research Design

This survey experiment was fielded in April 2022 on Qualtrics with a sample of 1,542 White-only respondents supplied by Dynata. In this survey, respondents read a news story about an undocumented adult who migrated to the U.S.: (1) with a child and is now an integrated member of the community, (2) without a child and is now an integrated member of the community, (3) with a child and is now not an integrated member of the community, (4) without a child and is now not an integrated member of the community. In a (5) control condition, the immigrant is presented

with little information. Eligibility for the survey required respondents to self-report being over 18 years of age and racially White.[12] Respondents were balanced on gender and age. Sample descriptives are provided in the Appendix (Table M).

The dependent variables are an index of questions capturing support for (a) the adult immigrant, and (b) for his child. These instruments are presented in detail in the analyses that follow; and the entirety of the survey experiment is in the Appendix (Figure N).

4.3 Effects of Community Cues & Arriving with a Child on Adult Immigrant Support

As previously mentioned, the survey respondents read a news story about an undocumented adult that migrated to the U.S. with five variations of the treatment. Table O in the Appendix shows the text of the treatments in their entirety, with the bolded sections indicating changes in the vignettes. Figure 16 is an example of one of the treatments, with the image[13] (used in all four treatments), text, and news vignette set up. There were 311 respondents in the control treatment, 308 respondents in the *With Child & In Community* treatment, 306 respondents in the *With Child & No Community* treatment, 306 respondents in the *No Child & In Community* treatment, and 311 respondents in the *No Child & No Community* treatment.

[12] Given the racial underpinnings within notions of assimilation and support for immigrants, this study asks White respondents to evaluate whether a Mexican immigrant adult is worthy of their support and/or is favorable considering their perceived obligations to assimilate.

[13] The image is taken from the Chicago Face Database (Ma et al, 2015; coded as Latino Male 213). This image has a Latino race probability at 83% (number of participants who indicated Hispanic/Latino race divided by number of people who rated the model), White race probability at 0%, age rated mean of 30.29 years, masculine features of 5 (out of 7), prototypic features of 3.93 (out of 5), and attractive features of 3.08 (out of 7).

Figure 16 Experimental Treatment Example (*With Child & In Community*)

Americans Debate Immigration Policy

(Newsline)

By *Juni Smith*

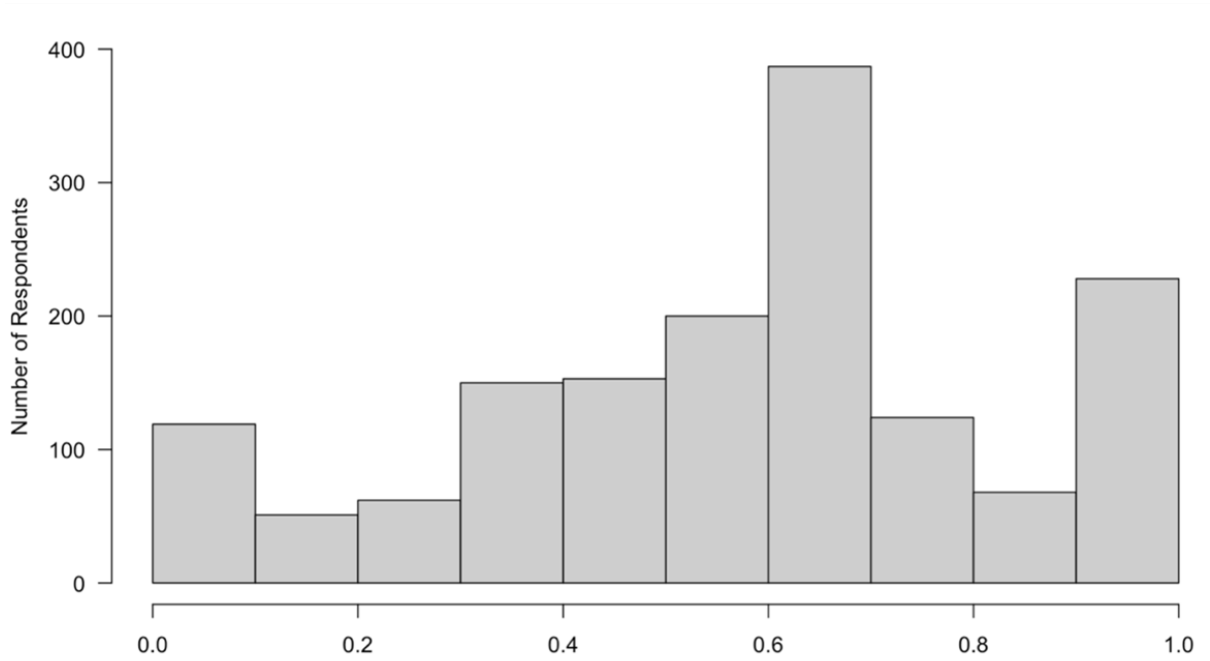
Updated March 9, 2022 10:02 am ET

Consider the case of Miguel Sánchez. He and his young child, Alex, were born in Mexico and both immigrated illegally to the United States. Now, at thirty years old, Miguel volunteers at a local church, helps coordinate an annual town arts fair, works at a construction site, and goes to community college part-time. Congressional representatives in both the House and the Senate are currently discussing a range of policy options for immigrants like Miguel.

After exposure to the news vignette, respondents were asked the following questions: (1) Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the government agency responsible for deporting immigrants. Should people like Miguel be a priority for deportation? (reverse coded) (2) Congress is considering a policy that would protect some immigrants from deportation for five years. Should people like Miguel be protected from deportation? and (3) Congress is considering a policy that would give some immigrants a legal path towards American citizenship. Should people like Miguel be considered for a legal path toward American citizenship? Responses are given on a 4-point scale. Figure 17 shows the distribution of the immigrant support scale, which has an alpha

of 0.75, a mean of 0.58, and a standard deviation of 0.29. Zero represents low support and 1 represents high support.

Figure 17 Distribution of Immigrant Support – Adult



H1, H2a, and H2b are tested in Figure 18, which provides a visualization of the impact of treatments on immigrant support for the adult (Miguel). Average levels of support are shown as squares, with whiskers indicating 95% confidence intervals. Respondents in the control condition clearly express lower support for the immigrant than do respondents in all four treatments. Pairwise t-tests (Holm-Bonferroni adjusted, Table P in the Appendix) confirm that respondents in all four non-control treatments report significantly higher levels of support (p-value < 0.05) for Miguel than those in the control treatment. The discussion section considers the implications of this unanticipated finding in depth.

Similar pairwise t-tests also confirm that the differences in support across all four non-control treatments are not statistically significant. These results can be shown using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models as well, which are included in Table Q of the Appendix. In these

regression models, all four non-control treatment coefficients are statistically significant and are in a positive direction. The survey includes standard political and demographic variables, including (1) political party identification, (2) gender, (3) nativity, (4) education, and (5) age. One advantage of regression models is that they allow for an estimation of effects controlling for these demographics. Appendix Table R shows the results of models controlling for demographics. Demographics are associated with varying levels of immigrant support. Given random assignment in the survey experiment, however, controlling for demographics makes no difference to the estimated effect of the experimental treatments.

An attention check was asked between the dependent variables and overall immigration & assimilation measures. It reads: “Below is a list of colors. To show that you're still paying attention please select the color purple.” To ensure that respondents are treated by the experiment accordingly, the treatment check was asked before the final section (demographics) and read: “Earlier in the survey we showed you a recent news story about immigration. Did Miguel immigrate to the United States with a child?” Three respondents do not pass the attention check, and 485 respondents do not pass the treatment check. Analyses without these respondents are included in the Appendix (Table S). The findings in Figure 18 do not change fundamentally when we remove those that do not pass the attention and treatment checks; in fact, the relationships are strengthened.

Figure 18 The Impact of the Treatments on Miguel Immigrant Support

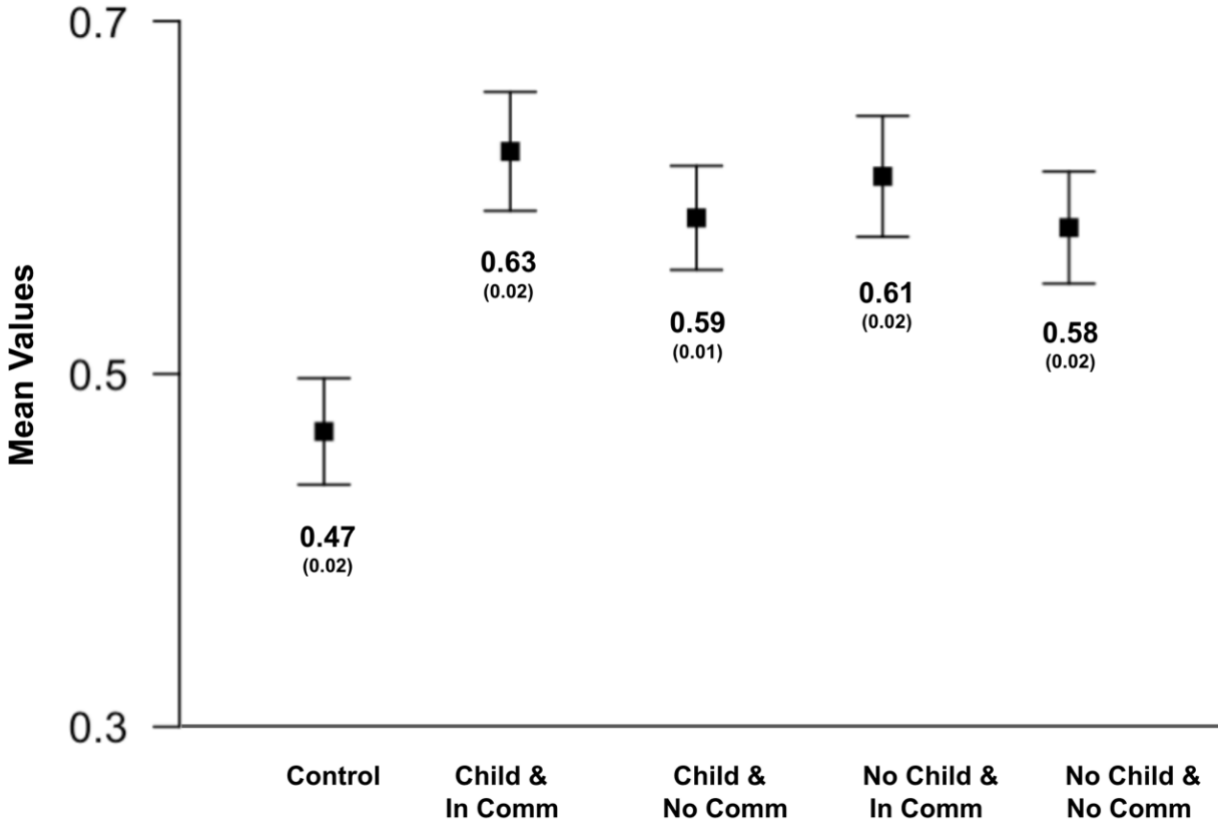
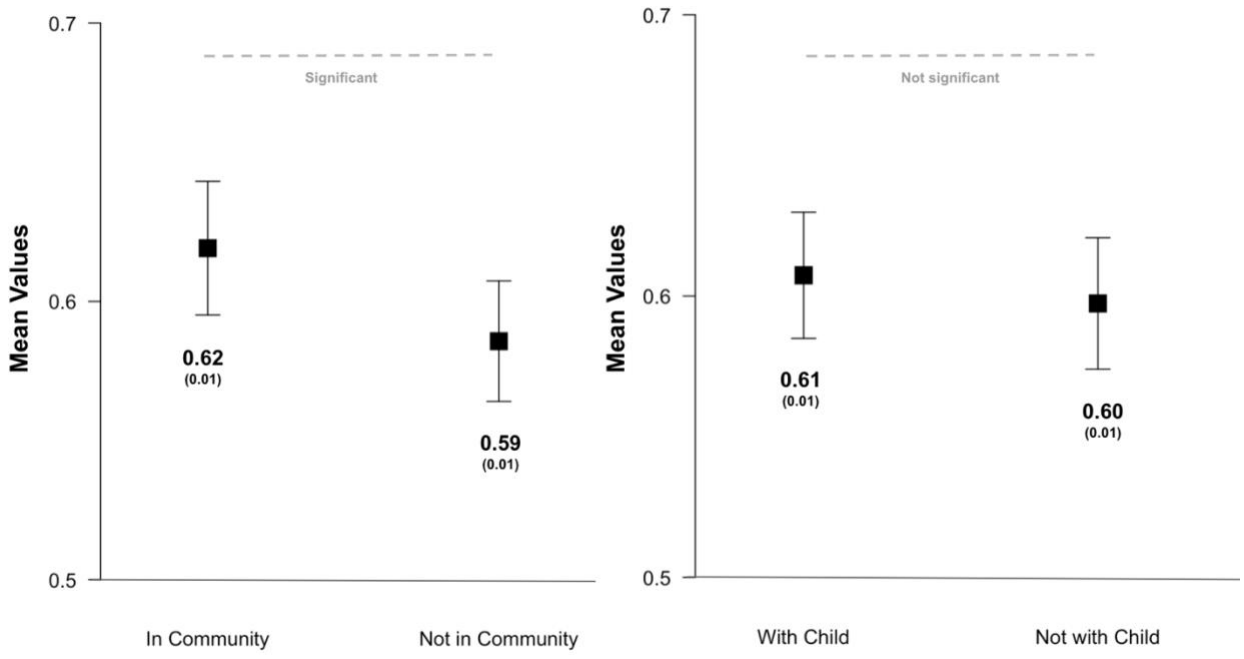


Figure 18 suggests only limited changes in support across treatments. Based on those results, we cannot reject the null hypotheses for H1, H2a, or H2b. Note, however, that results in Figure 18 do not independently test the effects of community integration and arriving with children. It is possible to test H1 and H2 more directly, by comparing means across each dimension independently. Figure 19 consequently shows average levels of support across the community treatments (left panel), and across the child treatments (right panel). As in Figure 3, there is no significant effect of arriving with a child. (As above, these analyses include both t-tests and OLS regression models, found in the Appendix Tables T and U). As such, this study fails to reject the null hypotheses for H2a and H2b.

Results in the left panel of Figure 19 suggest a moderate effect of language of community integration: respondents in the community integration conditions report *higher* levels of immigrant policy support for a hypothetical immigrant adult. We are consequently able to reject the null hypotheses for H1. New coverage cueing community integration does, in fact, lead to a small increase in immigrant support.

Figure 19 The Impact of *In Community* and *With Child* on Miguel Immigrant Support



4.4 Support for a Young Immigrant versus an Adult Immigrant

Recall that H3 is focused on differences in support between Miguel (adult) and Alex (child). For those assigned to the *With Child* treatments only, respondents were asked the following questions: (1) Should people like Alex be a priority for deportation? (2) Should people like Alex be protected from deportation? and (3) Should people like Alex be considered for a legal path toward American citizenship? Responses are given on a 4-point scale. Figure 20 shows the distribution of the Alex support scale, which has an alpha of 0.75, a mean of 0.64, and a standard deviation of 0.29. Zero represents low support and 1 represents high support.

Figure 20 Distribution of Immigrant Support – Child

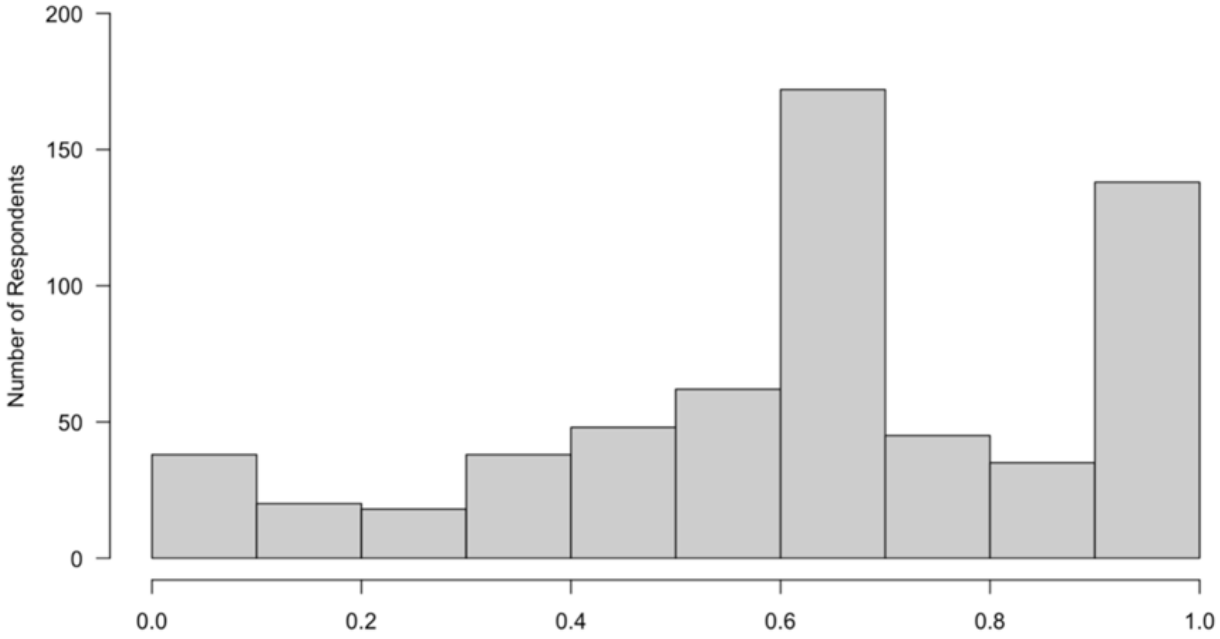


Figure 21 Testing the Differences Between Support for Miguel (Adult) and Alex (Child)

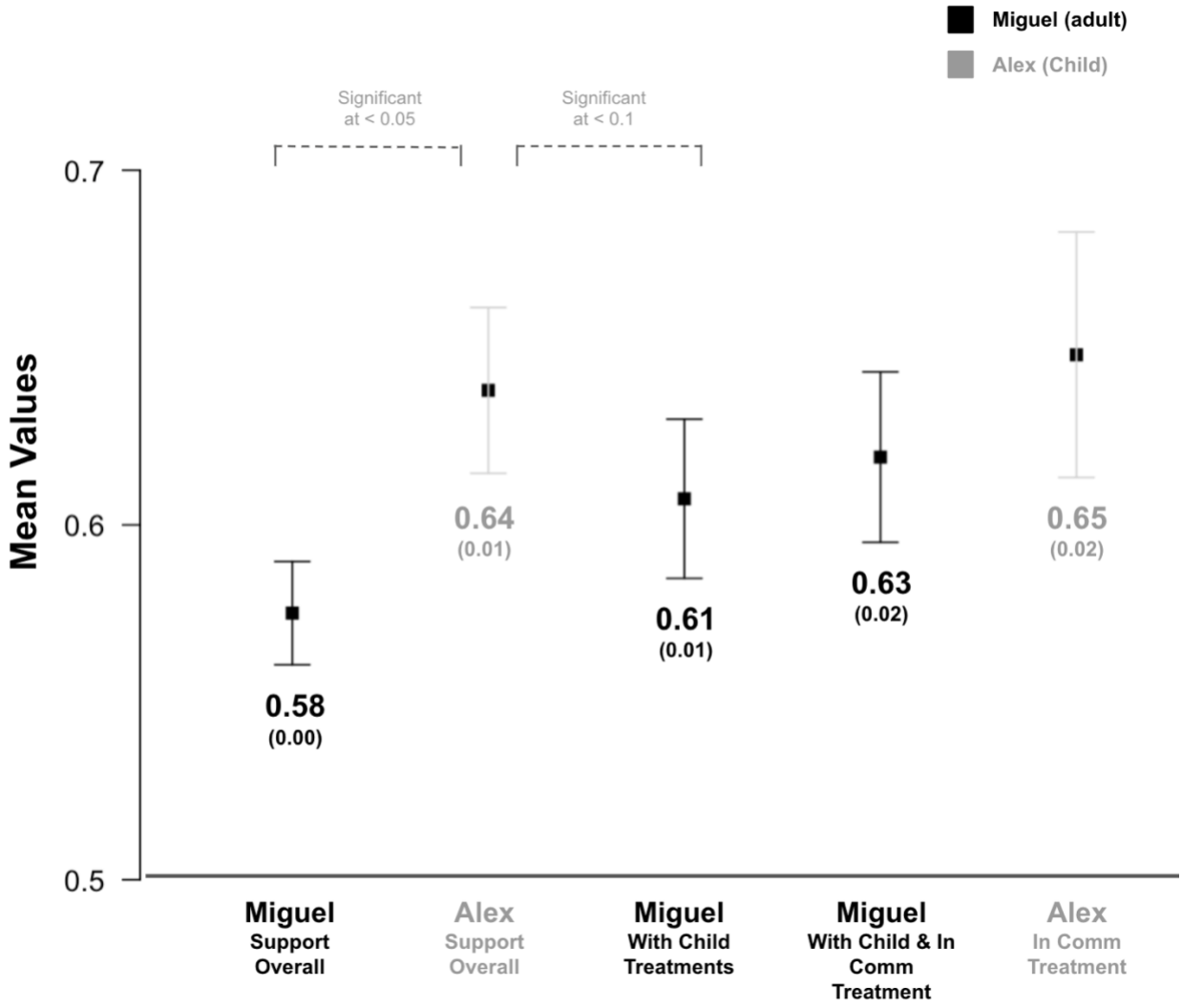


Figure 21 illustrates mean levels of support for both Miguel and Alex. In the first two columns, we see that overall support for Alex is higher than support for Miguel. A t-test confirms that support for Alex is significantly higher (p-value < 0.05 at 95% confidence intervals; Table V in the Appendix). Overall support for Miguel is based on all survey respondents, regardless of treatment. Note that when we focus on support for Miguel only amongst respondents who received a child treatment (column 3), however, support for Miguel increases. T-tests confirm that support for Alex is still higher than for Miguel, but only marginally (p-value < 0.1 at 95% confidence

intervals). There thus appears to be a slight increase in support for the adult who arrives with a child. And when comparing levels of support for Miguel and Alex in the *In Community* treatments only, there are no significant differences in support. We can consequently reject the null hypothesis for H3: respondents overall do report higher levels of policy support for the child (Alex) than for the adult (Miguel). But there are caveats: the difference in support for the adult and child are reduced when we focus on adult evaluations *with* the child, especially when community integration is also cued. And although results above are not robust enough to conclusively reject the null hypothesis for H2a, there are hints that arriving with a child may increase support for an immigrant adult.

4.5 Discussion

This study consequently takes these findings as evidence that (a) respondents exposed to language of community integration report higher levels of immigrant support, (b) arriving with a child does not seem to impact support to a significant degree, and (c) there are higher levels of support for the child immigrant (Alex) than the adult immigrant (Miguel). Also, and somewhat surprisingly, this study finds that respondents in all four treatments report higher levels of support than respondents in the control treatment.

Firstly, cues of community integration matter in our evaluation of immigration, while arriving with a child does not seem to matter to the same degree. As aforementioned, notions of community have been previously found to impact the processes, and consequences, of assimilating and integrating into American society. If a migrant adult is established into the larger American community, they are much more favored over migrants that are not. This chapter, then, tests the content analysis in Chapter 3, and provides evidence that immigrants who are integrated in

community do seem to have a positive impact on levels of support, even if the immigrant is not a child.

Secondly, given the mixed findings in research on the impact of arriving with a family, this study does not seem to provide sufficient evidence for either side. There appears to be a slight increase in support for the adult (Miguel) who arrives with a child (Alex). Additional studies that focus specifically on arriving with children (or spouses) are needed to determine if arriving with a family does, indeed matter for support of a hypothetical immigrant.

Thirdly, the design of the study allows us to explore the attitudes toward the child independent of the adult they arrive with. In line with Chapter 2 of this dissertation, respondents seem to favor the accompanying child migrant more than their father. This evidence adds to one of the main arguments of this dissertation—immigrants who migrate in childhood are evaluated more favorably than immigrants who migrated in adulthood.

An unanticipated result of this study is that respondents are more supportive in all four manipulated treatments relative to the control. When respondents are exposed to more personalizing content, they report more immigrant support. This result can be explained by a process of person positivity, where individuals are evaluated more favorably than the groups to which they belong (Sears, 1983). In terms of immigration, studies repeatedly show that respondents express more positive attitudes toward personalized immigrant stories (Iyengar et al., 2013; Madrigal & Soroka, 2021; Ostfeld & Mutz, 2014). The only difference between the control treatment and all other treatments is the additional information—the photo and news vignette set up is identical in all treatments. For these reasons, person positivity is likely a driver of these differences in levels of support.

There are several limitations to this study. A substantial percentage of the respondents (31%) do not accurately recall their treatment on the dimension of the adult arriving with a child or not. Although this is a concern, we see from this chapter that attitudes do not shift if we include those that recall or not. Secondly, there may be concern about the external validity of the news article in the stimuli of the experiment. We know that many citizens learn about immigration through media content. Therefore, this study chose to use a news format to expose respondents to information about immigration. Although there can be some concerns about the "realness" of this news vignette, this design is built on decades of media research that argues that news vignettes are an effective and productive way to measure attitudes toward immigration. (e.g., Madrigal & Soroka, 2021; Valentino et al., 2019). And, as we see from this study, respondents do seem to be impacted by the news content.

The Trump era zero-tolerance family separation policy warned immigrants not to migrate to the U.S. with families or communities. Political elites threatened to separate parents from their children—villainizing the family unit in the process. This chapter explores the consequences of language of community integration and arriving with children on the impact of support for an undocumented adult. News media focused on immigrant community integration can have positive effects on the American public.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

The introductory section of this dissertation walks through how threat is a central feature of immigration attitudes and media coverage of immigration. I argue that just as engaging threat can increase anti-immigrant attitudes, disengaging threat can decrease anti-immigrant attitudes. Below, I walk through how the findings of this dissertation relate to larger American trends in perceptions of threat and immigrant attitudes.

5.1 Age-at-arrival and Threat

The Dreamer study in Chapter 2 explores the characteristic of age-at-arrival in immigration news stories. I use young immigrants (like the Dreamers) as a case to study the characteristic of arriving to the U.S. in childhood. Respondents in the lower age-at-arrival condition report more support for the immigrant; and this effect is most pronounced amongst those who were more opposed to immigration in general. A second study replicates the results of Study 1 and finds that treatment effects are moderated by attitudes about assimilation and attribution of responsibility. Treatment effects are most impactful amongst respondents who hold stronger general attitudes about assimilation and responsibility. Notably, attribution of responsibility is found in this chapter to be an especially important characteristic when evaluating migrants—as in, respondents are much more forgiving and supportive of the immigrant that arrives in childhood because it was not their choice in doing so. Taken together, these experiments suggest that age-at-arrival matters for attitudes towards young immigrants, and that the effect is partially explained by general attitudes

about immigration, assimilation, and responsibility. Chapter 4, the Community paper, finds that an accompanying child is supported in higher levels than an immigrant adult—which lends to even more support for the findings of this Dreamer chapter.

What kind of information might actively disengage threat? The Dreamers, and immigrants that migrated in childhood, may disengage various forms of threat by signaling assimilation and deservingness. The American Dreamers exemplify the principles of meritocracy, equality, opportunity, and freedom (Abrego & Negrón-Gonzales, 2020). Although forms of threat are not explicitly measured in this study, expectations of assimilation of immigrants are explored, which relate to forms of cultural threat. The conflation of Dreamers and the good immigrant narrative is intentional—it is a way for journalists, politicians, and mainstream immigrant rights organizations to increase policy support for these young immigrants (Abrego & Negrón-Gonzales, 2020). This chapter also argues that Dreamers are especially supported in higher levels than others because the attribution of responsibility for "illegally" migrating to the U.S. does not fall on them—it falls on their caretakers, parents, community, and/or guardians. The narrative argues that Dreamers deserve rights to higher education, to work, to be protected from deportation, and to gain citizenship. However, this narrative implies that not all immigrants deserve these rights—only the exceptional ones. Understanding support for immigrants that arrive to the U.S. in childhood helps us, in part, to understand attitudes towards immigrants support more generally.

5.2 Coverage of Children and Threat

Chapter 3 of this dissertation tackles the question: to what extent is the news that includes representations of immigrant children and youth substantively different from overall immigration news in the last few decades? This chapter explores representations of immigrant children and

youth in 17 national newspapers (ranging from the *Chicago Tribune* to the *New York Times*) coverage of immigration from 1990 to 2020. Using dictionary-based and structured topic modeling content analytic approaches, I find that newspaper coverage of immigration that includes mentions of children: (a) tends to be more positive in net sentiment, (b) tends not to focus on topics of politics and violence, and (c) tends to correlate with topics about family, education, religion, and community.

In terms of threat, this chapter finds that threat is found to be a regular feature of immigration news coverage—and there is a clear increase of threat language in all immigration news (including children and not children) post-2014. However, threat language does not seem to vary systematically with the language of childhood or race. This is surprising, given that the literature points to the assumption that threat language should be more present in immigration news articles that mention Latinos.

This null relationship *might* reflect reality—there may be no correlations between Latino race and threat language, opposing previous research. On the other hand, it could be that the dictionary-based method of capturing threat in this chapter may be limited. There might be relationships between threat and Latinos, however, it may require a method of closer reading (such as discourse analysis) than the quantitative approach of this analysis. In terms of the relationship between threat cues and childhood, it could very well be that there is no correlation here, as well. More research is needed to answer the question about the links between race, childhood, immigration, and threat in U.S. news media. However, this chapter does provide evidence that media cues about community can result in more positive content.

5.3 Community Integration and Threat

What are the consequences of these representations on political attitudes and behaviors? This chapter specifically focuses on the "assimilationist threat," which is the threat that is elicited when immigrants fail to integrate into American society. Chapter 4 also directly tests the community cues found in the content analysis of Chapter 3. Results suggest that community integration of the migrant leads to higher levels of support—which lends support to the findings in the content analysis. However, we do not have enough evidence to determine if arriving with a child (or not) impacts levels of policy support for adult immigrants. This study also finds that the accompanying child is supported in higher levels than the adult—which lends to even more support for the findings of the Dreamer chapter. In these ways, community integration leads to higher levels of support for the hypothetical immigrant adult, which leads to a disengagement of this assimilationist threat.

In the first and third chapter of this dissertation, I collect variables of pro- and anti-immigrant attitudes to gauge levels of support for the hypothetical immigrants in the news story vignettes. Chapter 2 finds that age-at-arrival, assimilation, and responsibility are characteristic of child immigrants that leads to more pro-immigrant attitudes, and Chapter 4, finds a similar result, with a focus on community integration of adult immigrants. In all, these variables have the potential to disengage threat in immigration beliefs. Chapter 3 does not find that threat seems to be a function of whether children are included in news stories or not—but, this content analysis *does* find that representations of children are more positive in sentiment, and are correlated with language of community, family, education, religion, and the arts. And, the experiment in Chapter 4 demonstrates that these community cues do have positive impacts on attitudes about immigration.

5.4 Concluding Thoughts

I began this dissertation with a desire to delve deeply into the media representations of an often-forgotten group of immigrants—children. The three papers in this dissertation point to how age-at-arrival, assimilation, attribution of responsibility, and community integration do, indeed, impact the ways in which children and childhood are represented in contemporary American news about immigration—and how these characteristics shift attitudes toward young immigrants in a more positive direction.

Yet, what started with a focus on children uncovered results that relate to the importance of assimilation for immigrants in general. Theoretically, the importance of immigrant assimilation is not new. Decades of research, and this dissertation, argue that the American public favor immigrants that integrate into the larger society. Child migrants, by living their lives in the U.S., naturally become part of the American community. What about adults? This dissertation highlights how news media can represent all immigrant groups in a more positive light by emphasizing community integration and assimilation, and how this emphasis can shift attitudes in a more favorable direction. In these ways, characteristics that apply to child migrants apply to adult immigrants living in the United States.

Finally, studying the representations of immigration news stories, and the subsequent consequences of those representations, matter because the lives of these migrants are impacted by these broader political conversations and policies. As a child of Mexican immigrants, I do not take lightly the events of family separation, child abuse in immigrant detention centers, and children being locked in cages. In my career as an academic, I plan to continue to move us toward answering some of the questions at the heart of the field of communication studies. I consider it a privilege to study and research topics that matter to me, my family, and my community at large.

Working at the intersection of communication studies, political science, and media psychology, I will continue to explore how immigration representation in media impact political attitudes and behaviors.

Appendix

Ch. 2. Survey instrument

Wave 1

Issue Attention

First, we would like to know what you think about some issues that have recently been in the news. Please tell us how much you have heard about each of the following:

Nothing at all
A little
A moderate amount
A lot
A great deal

Immigration Policy

(1) In general, do you think the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are permitted to come to the United States should be…

Decreased a lot
Decreased a little
Left the same as it is now
Increased a little
Increased a lot

(2) Do you think immigration decrease or increase the crime rate in the U.S.?

Decreases a lot
Decreases a little
Immigration does not change the crime rate
Increases a little
Increases a lot

(3) How important do you think it is to accept immigrants from different cultures?

Extremely important
Very important
Somewhat important
A little important
Not important at all

(4) Do immigrants have a positive or negative impact on the U.S. economy?

Strong negative impact

Slight negative impact
Do not have a positive or negative impact
Slight positive impact
Strong positive impact

(5) What impact do you think immigrants have on the number of jobs for Americans?
Decreases the number a lot
Decreases the number a little
Immigrants do not change the number of jobs for Americans
Increases the number a little
Increases the number a lot

(6) How much control do you think that the U.S. has over the immigrants who are able to enter the country?
The U.S. has a great deal of control
The U.S. has a moderate degree of control
The U.S. has only a little control
The U.S. has no control

Just World Scale & Locus of Control

(1) How much of the time do people get what they deserve in life?
(2) When something bad happens to someone, how often is there a good reason that it happened?
(3) How much of the time do you think that the bad things that happen to people are unfair?
(4) How much of the time do you think that you have influence over the things that happen to you?
(5) When you make plans for the future, how much of the time are you confident that you can make them work?
Never
Sometimes
About half of the time
Most of the time
Always

Racial Resentment

(1) Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class.
strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, strongly agree.
(2) It is really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.
(3) Irish, Italian, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.

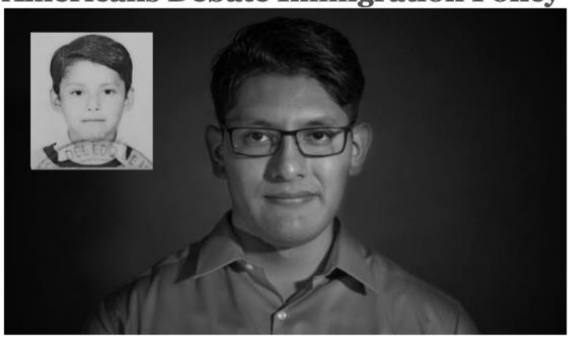
(4) Over the past few years, Blacks have gotten less economically than they deserve.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Agree
Strongly agrees

Wave 2

We will now present you with an excerpt from a recent news story about immigration:

Americans Debate Immigration Policy



(Newsline)

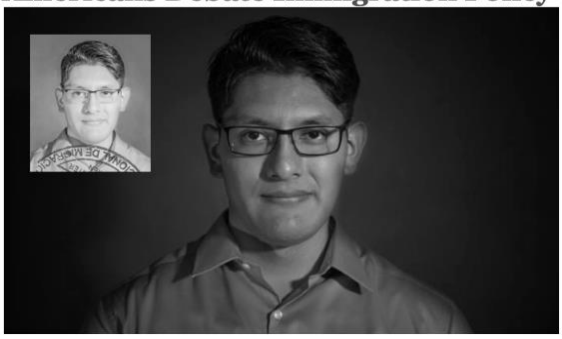
By *Jonah Brown*

Updated Nov. 9, 2019 10:02 am ET

Luis Mora is an immigrant living in the United States without legal documentation. He was born in Mexico and was brought to the U.S. by his family when he was eleven years old. Now at twenty-five years old, he works at a construction site and goes to Community College part-time. Congressional representatives in both the House and the Senate are currently discussing a range of policy options for immigrants like Luis.

We will now present you with an excerpt from a recent news story about immigration:

Americans Debate Immigration Policy



(Newsline)

By *Jonah Brown*

Updated Nov. 9, 2019 10:02 am ET

Luis Mora is an immigrant living in the United States without legal documentation. He was born in Mexico and migrated to the U.S. when he was twenty-one years old. Now at twenty-five years old, he works at a construction site and goes to Community College part-time. Congressional representatives in both the House and the Senate are currently discussing a range of policy options for immigrants like Luis.

Dependent Variables

Now, we will ask you questions about the news story.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the government agency responsible for deporting immigrants. Should people like Luis be a priority for deportation?

Definitely should be a priority
Probably should be a priority
Probably should **not** be a priority
Definitely should **not** be a priority

Congress is considering a policy that would protect some immigrants from deportation for five years. Should people like Luis be protected from deportation?

Definitely should **not** be protected
Probably should **not** be protected
Probably should be protected
Definitely should be protected

Congress is considering a policy that would give some immigrants a legal path towards American citizenship. Should people like Luis be considered for a legal path toward American citizenship?

Definitely should **not** be considered
Probably should **not** be considered
Probably should be considered
Definitely should be considered

Treatment Check

Earlier in the survey we showed you a recent news story about immigration. Did Luis move to the United States as a child or an adult?

Child
Adult
Do not remember

Wave 1

Immigration Attitudes

(1) In general, do you think the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are permitted to come to the United States should be…

Decreased a lot
Decreased a little
Left the same as it is now
Increased a little
Increased a lot

(2) Do you think immigration decrease or increase the crime rate in the U.S.?

Decreases a lot
Decreases a little
Immigration does not change the crime rate
Increases a little
Increases a lot

(3) How important do you think it is to accept immigrants from different cultures?

Extremely important
Very important
Somewhat important
A little important
Not important at all

(4) Do immigrants have a positive or negative impact on the U.S. economy?

Strong negative impact
Slight negative impact

Do not have a positive or negative impact
Slight positive impact
Strong positive impact

(5) What impact do you think immigrants have on the number of jobs for Americans?

Decreases the number a lot
Decreases the number a little
Immigrants do not change the number of jobs for Americans
Increases the number a little
Increases the number a lot

Locus of Control

(1) Thinking about the immigrants that come to the U.S., how much control do you think that the U.S. has over the immigrants who are able to enter the country?

Almost complete control
Moderate degree of control
No control

(2) Immigrants in this country sometimes face economic hardship. Here are four possible reasons why. Please tell us which reason you think is the most important:

Because of injustice in our society
Because it's an inevitable part of modern progress
Because of laziness and lack of willpower
Because they are unlucky

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

(3) Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me

(5) When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work

Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree not disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

Attribution of Responsibility

(1) On average, how much do you think that immigrants are responsible for illegally immigrating to the United States?

Definitely responsible
Probably responsible
Might or might not be responsible
Probably not responsible
Definitely not responsible

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

(2) Most immigrants flee their home countries for good reasons
(3) Most immigrants are just trying to have a better life
(4) People should not illegally immigrate to the U.S. for any reason

Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree not disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

Assimilation

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree that immigrants should do the following things to fit into American society:
(1) Immigrants should communicate effectively in English in their daily lives
(2) Immigrants should take any legal job they can when they arrive in the United States
(3) Immigrants should contribute to American life just as much as everyone else
(4) Immigrant children should be better educated than their parents
(5) Immigrants should renounce their citizenship in their country of origin
(6) Immigrants should become American citizens as soon as they possibly can
(7) Immigrants should educate themselves about the culture and customs of the U.S.
(8) Immigrants should not stick to themselves so much

Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree not disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

Study 2 – Wave 2

Dependent Variables

Replication – Immigrant Support

Now, we will ask you questions about the news story.
Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the government agency responsible for deporting immigrants. Should people like Luis be a priority for deportation?

Definitely should be a priority,
Probably should be a priority,
Probably should **not** be a priority,
Definitely should **not** be a priority

Congress is considering a policy that would protect some immigrants from deportation for five years. Should people like Luis be protected from deportation?

Definitely should **not** be protected,
Probably should **not** be protected,
Probably should be protected,

Definitely should be protected

Congress is considering a policy that would give some immigrants a legal path towards American citizenship. Should people like Luis be considered for a legal path toward American citizenship?

Definitely should **not** be considered,
Probably should **not** be considered,
Probably should be considered,
Definitely should be considered

Perceived Assimilation of Luis

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:
(1) Luis is probably well assimilated into American society
(2) Luis should be better educated than his parents
(3) Luis should be educated about American culture and customs
(4) Luis should speak English adequately
(5) Luis should renounce his citizenship from Mexico

Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree not disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

Attribution of Responsibility of Luis

Do you think Luis is responsible for illegally immigrating to the United States?

Definitely responsible
Probably responsible
Might or might not be responsible
Probably not responsible
Definitely not responsible

You chose that Luis is responsible for illegally migrating. Why?
You chose that Luis is not responsible for illegally migrating. Why not?
You chose that Luis may or may not be responsible for illegally migrating. Why?

Treatment Check

Earlier in the survey we showed you a recent news story about immigration. Did Luis move to the United States as a child or an adult?

Child
Adult
Do not remember

Appendix Table 1 Ch. 2. Sample Descriptives Study 1

Gender	Male	347
	Female	321
	Other gender	5
	No answer gender	65
Race	White	484
	Black	58
	Hispanic	78
	Asian	40
	Other	14
	No answer race	64
Born	In US	626
	Elsewhere	49
	No answer born	63
Education	Up to high school diploma	128
	HS diploma to college	409
	More than a college diploma	136
	No answer education	65
Party ID	Democrat	281
	Republican	262
	Independent / Other	133
	No answer party ID	62
Ideology	Liberal	211
	Conservative	236
	Moderate/ Other	223
	No answer ideology	68

Appendix Table 2 Ch. 2. Main Model with Recall

	Pro-Immigrant Attitudes (W2)
Lower age-at-arrival treatment	0.101***
	(0.025)
Constant	0.614***
	(0.019)
Observations	489
R2	0.032

Cells contain OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

Appendix Table 3 Ch. 2. The Impact of Treatment Controlling for Demographics

	Pro-Immigrant Attitudes
Lower age-at-arrival treatment	0.080***
	(0.018)
Prior Immigrant Attitudes	0.507***
	(0.053)
Party ID	0.111***
	(0.028)
Ideology	0.089*
	(0.047)
Gender	-0.017
	(0.018)
Race	0.143***
	(0.021)
Education	0.077*
	(0.044)
Born U.S.	-0.004
	(0.036)
Constant	0.110***
	(0.055)
Observations	648
R2	0.312

Cells contain OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

Appendix Table 4 Ch. 2. Sample Descriptives Study 2

Gender	Male	549
	Female	377
	Other gender	3
	No answer gender	7
Race	White	807
	Non-white	113
	No answer race	7
Born	In US	861
	Elsewhere	60
	No answer born	6
Education	Up to high school diploma	114
	HS diploma to college	563
	More than a college diploma	244
	No answer education	6
Age	18-44 years old	168
	45-74 years old	619
	Older than 75 years old	133
	No answer age	7
Party ID	Democrat	405
	Republican	379
	Independent / Other	137
	No answer party ID	6

Appendix Table 5 Ch. 2. Replication of Study 1, Table 1

	Pro-Immigrant Attitudes			
	Model 1 (All DVs)	Model 2 (Deportation)	Model 3 (Protection)	Model 4 (Citizenship)
Lower age-at-arrival treatment	0.096***	0.072***	0.116***	0.099***
	(0.018)	(0.023)	(0.021)	(0.020)
Constant	0.635***	0.611***	0.617***	0.678***
	(0.013)	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.014)
Observations	924	924	924	924
R2	0.030	0.011	0.033	0.025

Cells contain OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

Appendix Table 6 Ch. 2. Replication of Study 1, Table 2

	Pro-Immigrant Support	
	Model 1	Model 2
Lower age-at-arrival treatment	0.086*** (0.016)	0.134*** (0.034)
Prior Immigrant Attitudes	0.508*** (0.032)	0.631*** (0.045)
Prior * Lower age-at-arrival treatment		-0.104 (0.064)
Constant	0.373*** (0.018)	0.350*** (0.023)
Observations	922	922
R2	0.283	0.285

Cells contain OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

Appendix Table 7 Ch. 2. Main Model with Recall

	Pro-Immigrant Attitudes
Lower age-at-arrival treatment	0.125***
	(0.020)
Constant	0.623***
	(0.014)
Observations	772
R2	0.050

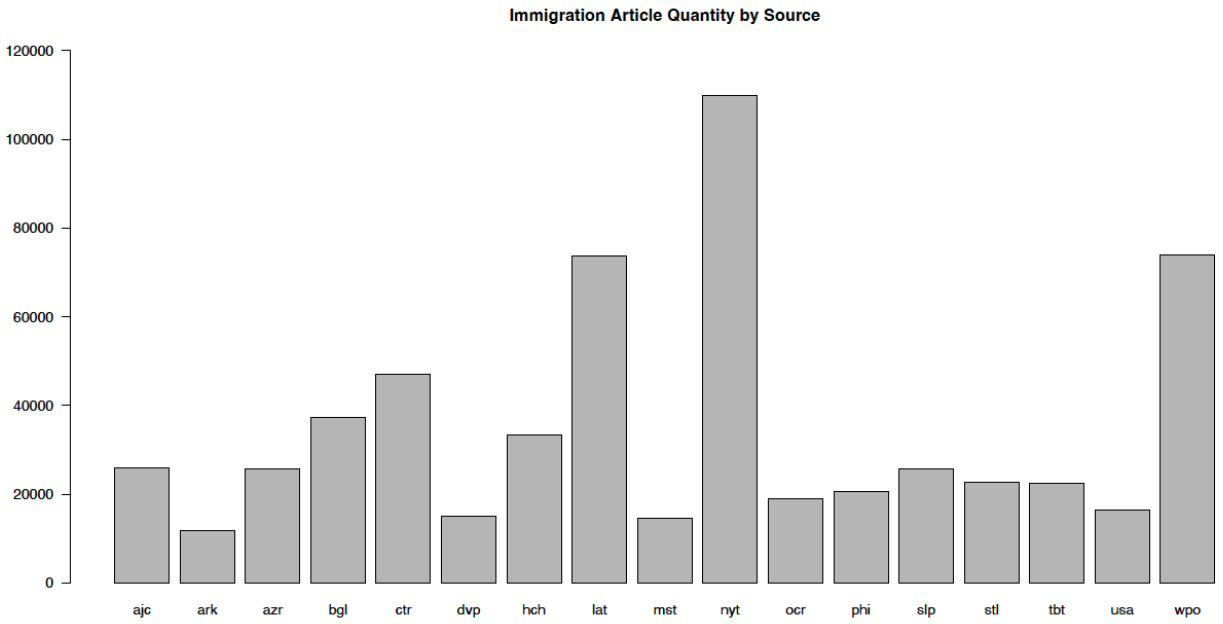
Cells contain OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
.*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

Appendix Table 8 Ch. 2. The Impact of Treatment Controlling for Demographics

	Pro-Immigrant Attitudes
Lower age-at-arrival treatment	0.083***
	(0.015)
Prior Immigrant Attitudes	0.482***
	(0.041)
Prior Assimilation Attitudes	0.003
	(0.057)
Prior Responsibility Attitudes	-0.131***
	(0.034)
Party ID	-0.061***
	(0.022)
Gender	-0.070***
	(0.016)
Age	0.104***
	(0.027)
Race	0.005
	(0.024)
Constant	0.531***
	(0.055)
Observations	910
R2	0.338

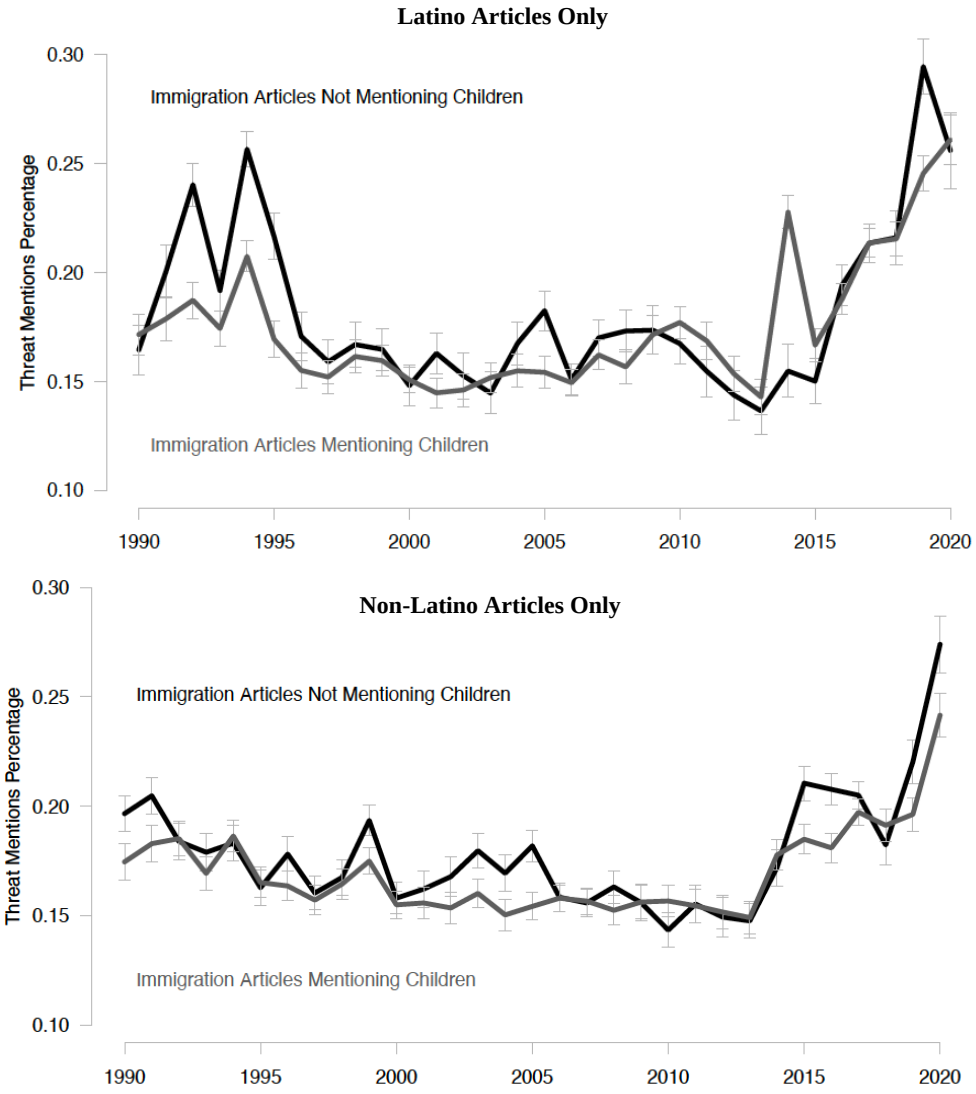
Cells contain OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

Appendix Figure 1 Ch. 3. Immigration Articles in Corpus by Source

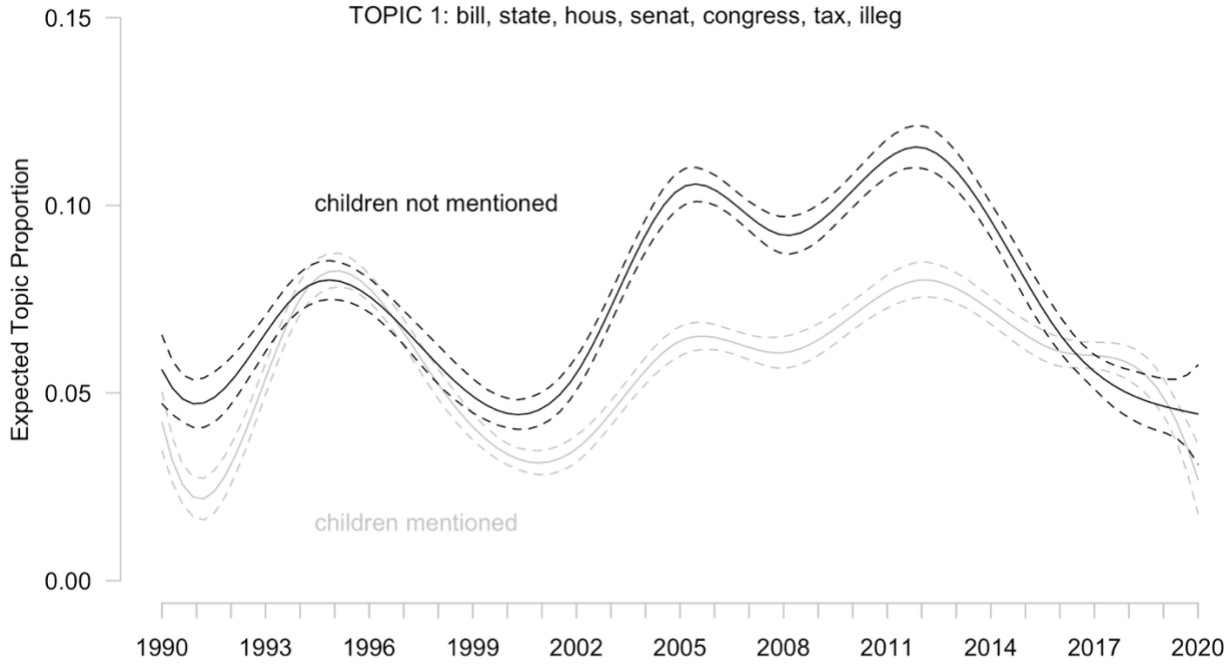


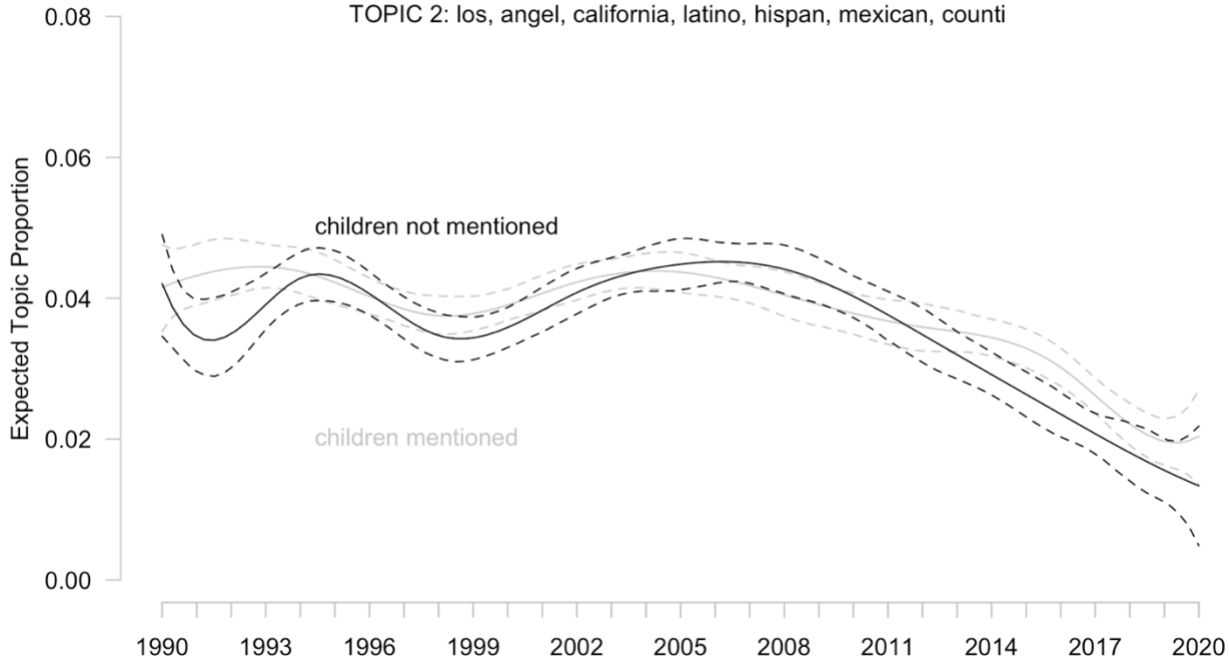
Atlanta Journal-Constitution (ajc), Arkansas Democrat Gazette (ark), Arizona Republic (azr), Boston Globe (bgl), Chicago Tribune (ctr), Denver Post (dvp), Houston Chronicle (hch), Los Angeles Times (lat), Star Tribune (mst), New York Times (nyt), Orange County Register (ocr), Philadelphia Inquirer (phi), St. Louis Paper (slp), Seattle Times (stl), Tampa Bay Times (tbt), USA Today (usa) and Washington Post (wpo).

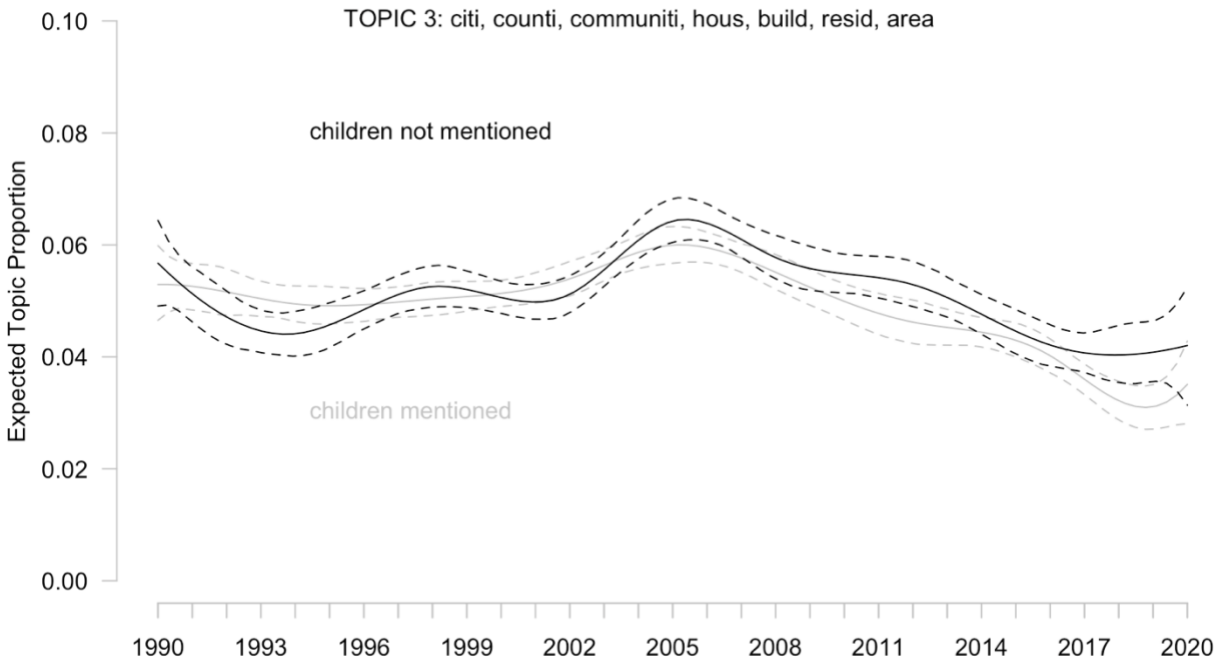
Appendix Figure 2 Ch. 3. Threat Analysis of Children, Latino and Non-Latino

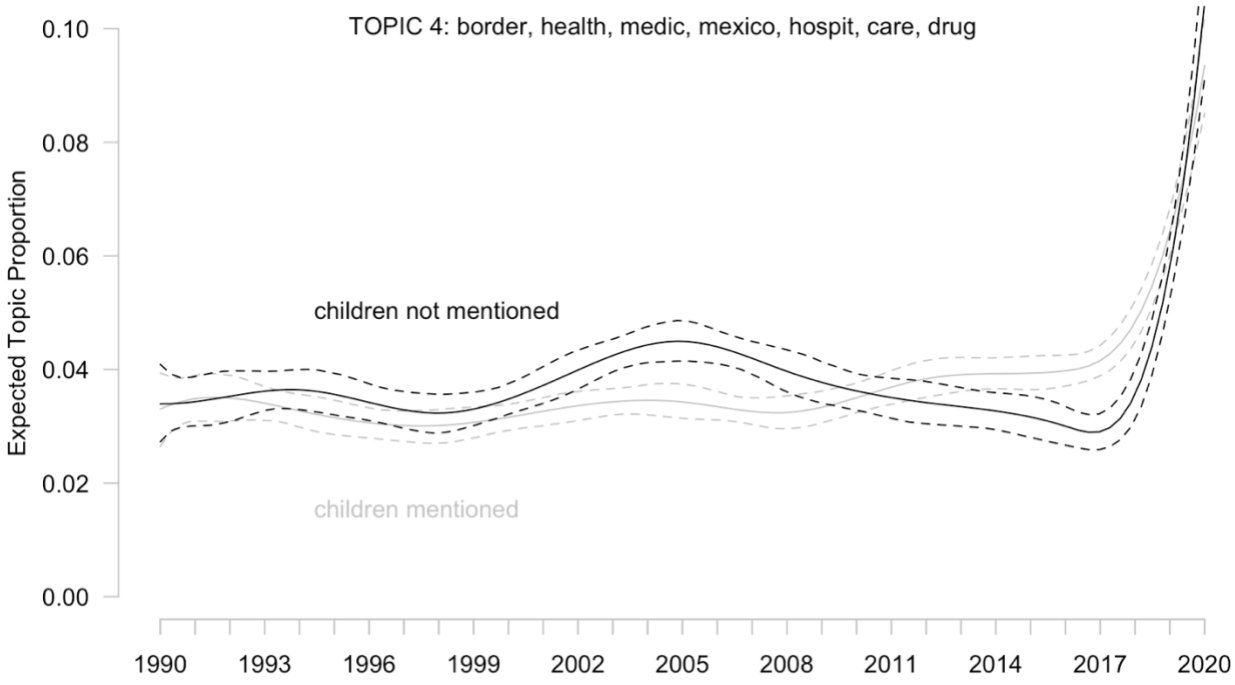


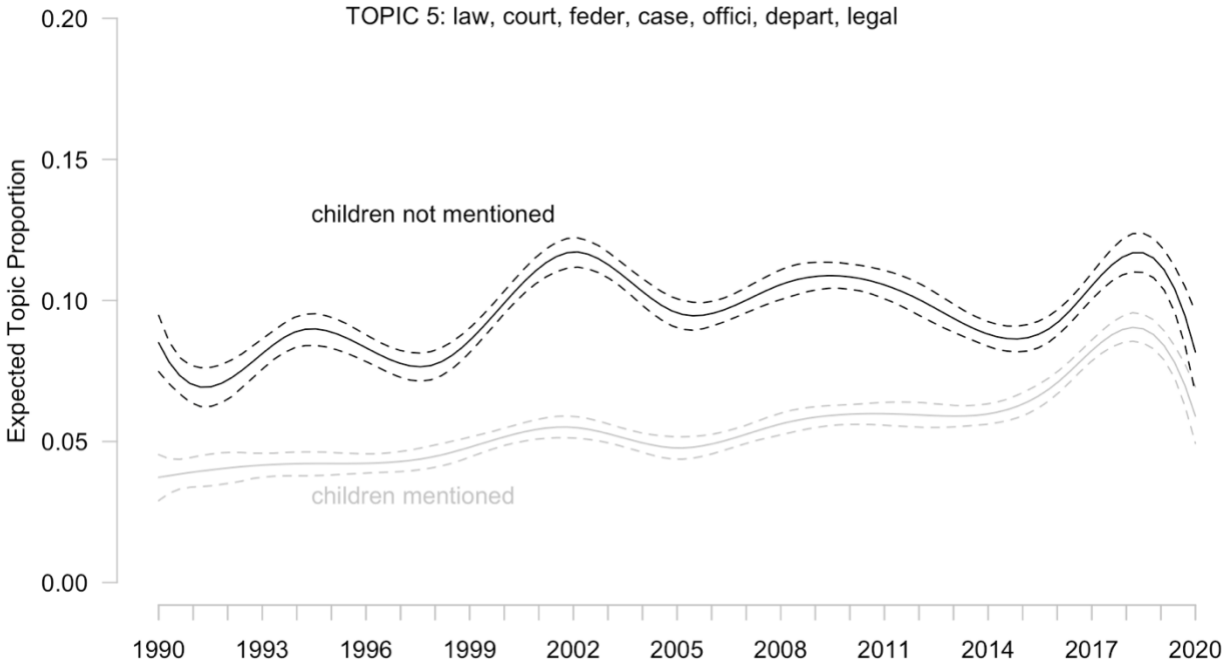
Appendix Figure 3 Ch. 3. Time-series Graphics for Children/Not Children

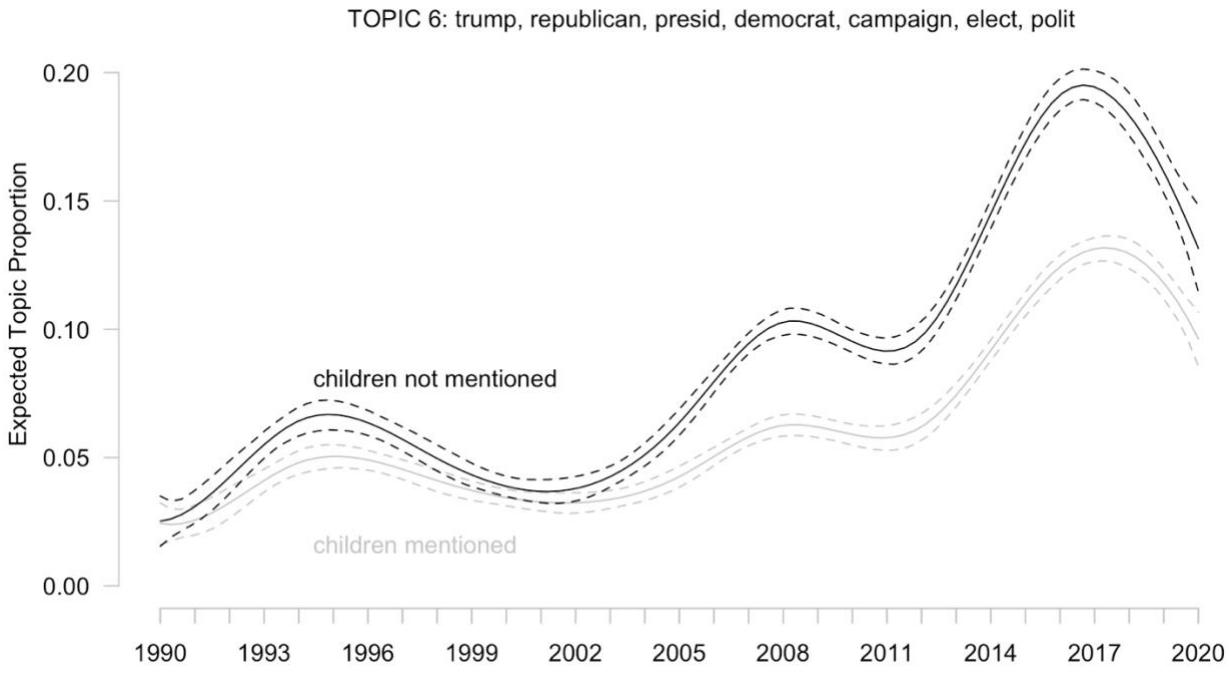


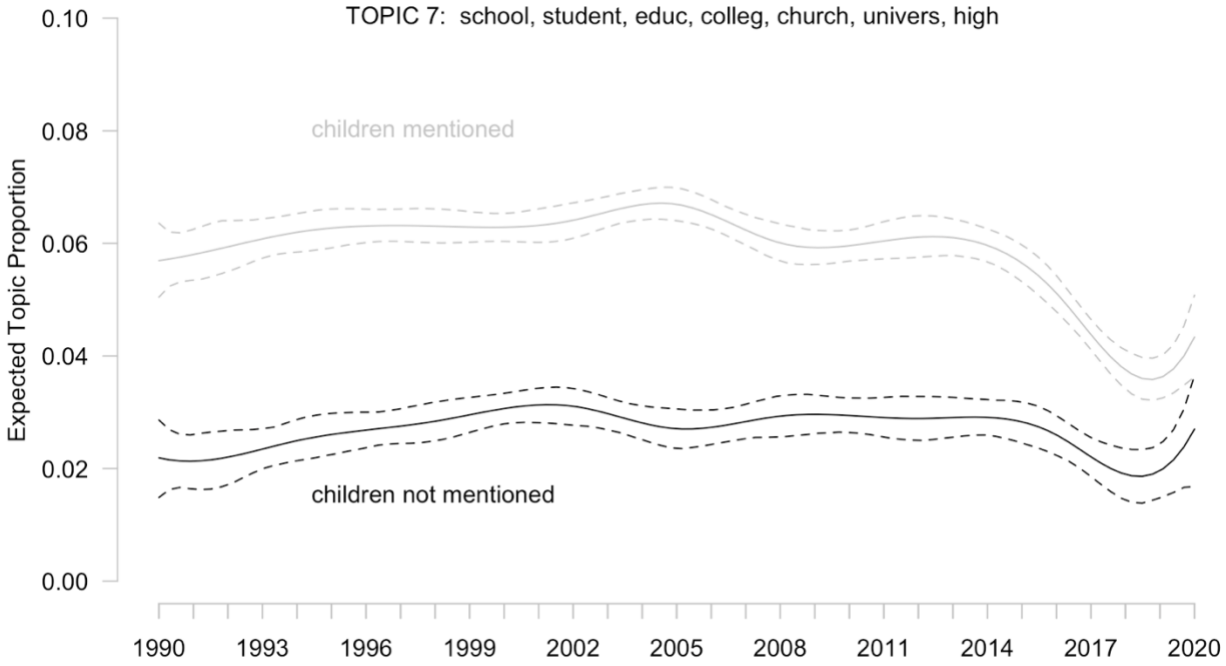


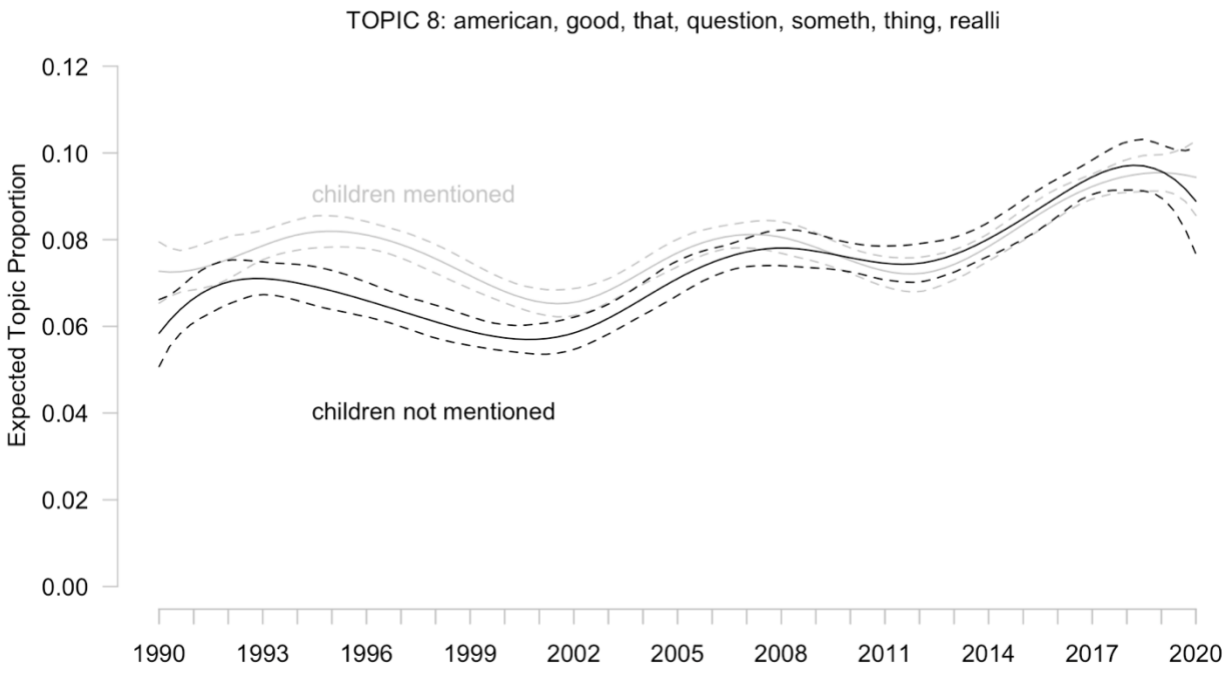

TOPIC 3: citi, counti, communiti, hous, build, resid, area
children not mentioned
children mentioned
Expected Topic Proportion
0.10
0.08
0.06
0.04
0.02
0.00
1990
1993
1996
1999
2002
2005
2008
2011
2014
2017
2020

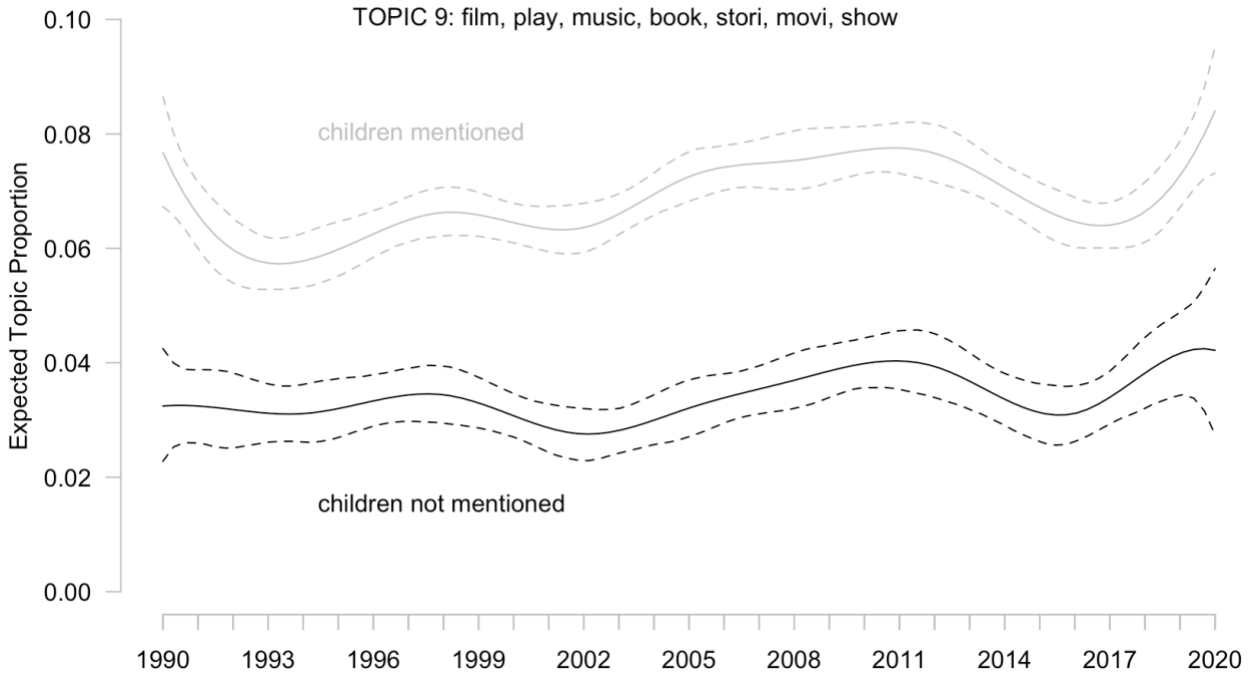

TOPIC 4: border, health, medic, mexico, hospit, care, drug
children not mentioned
children mentioned
Expected Topic Proportion
0.10
0.08
0.06
0.04
0.02
0.00
1990
1993
1996
1999
2002
2005
2008
2011
2014
2017
2020

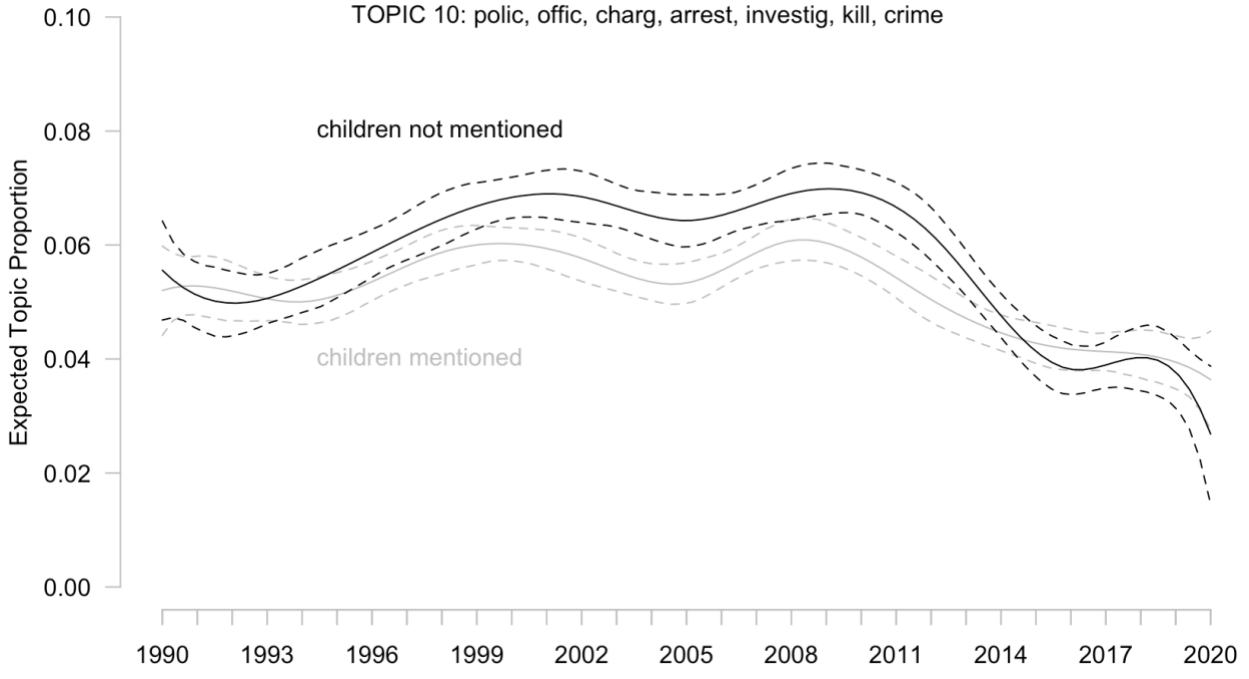

TOPIC 5: law, court, feder, case, offici, depart, legal
Expected Topic Proportion
0.20
0.15
0.10
0.05
0.00
children not mentioned
children mentioned
1990
1993
1996
1999
2002
2005
2008
2011
2014
2017
2020

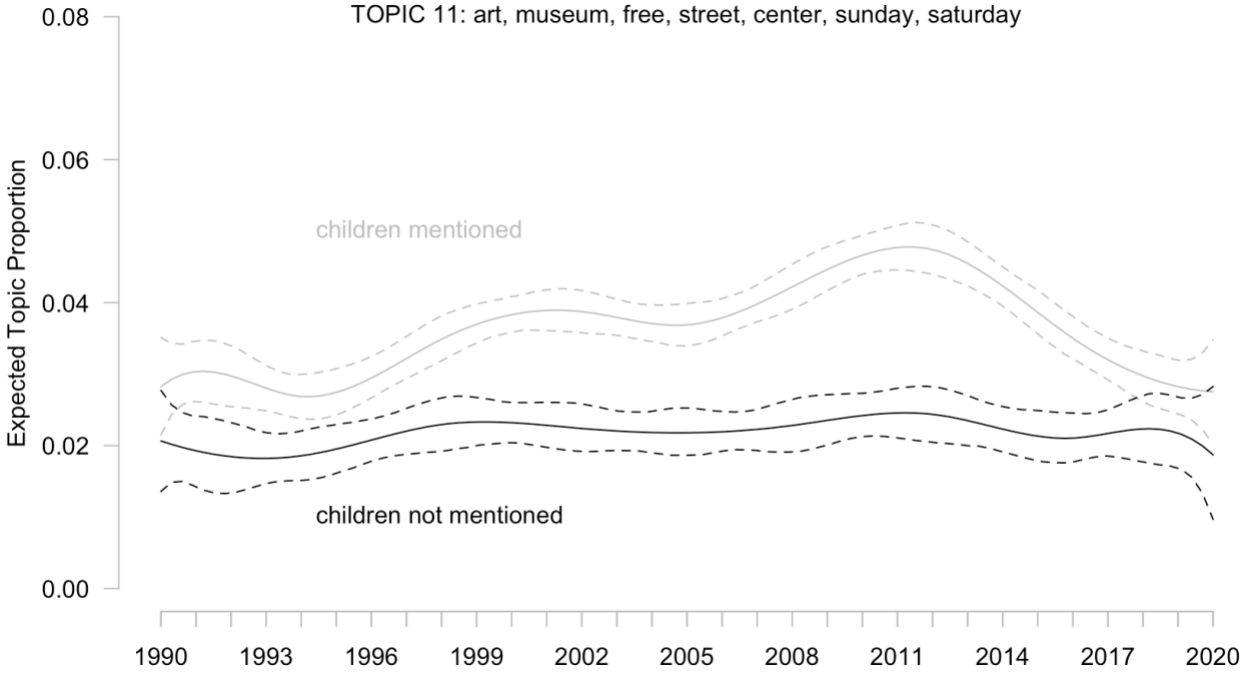

TOPIC 6: trump, republican, presid, democrat, campaign, elect, polit
Expected Topic Proportion
0.20
0.15
0.10
0.05
0.00
children not mentioned
children mentioned
1990
1993
1996
1999
2002
2005
2008
2011
2014
2017
2020

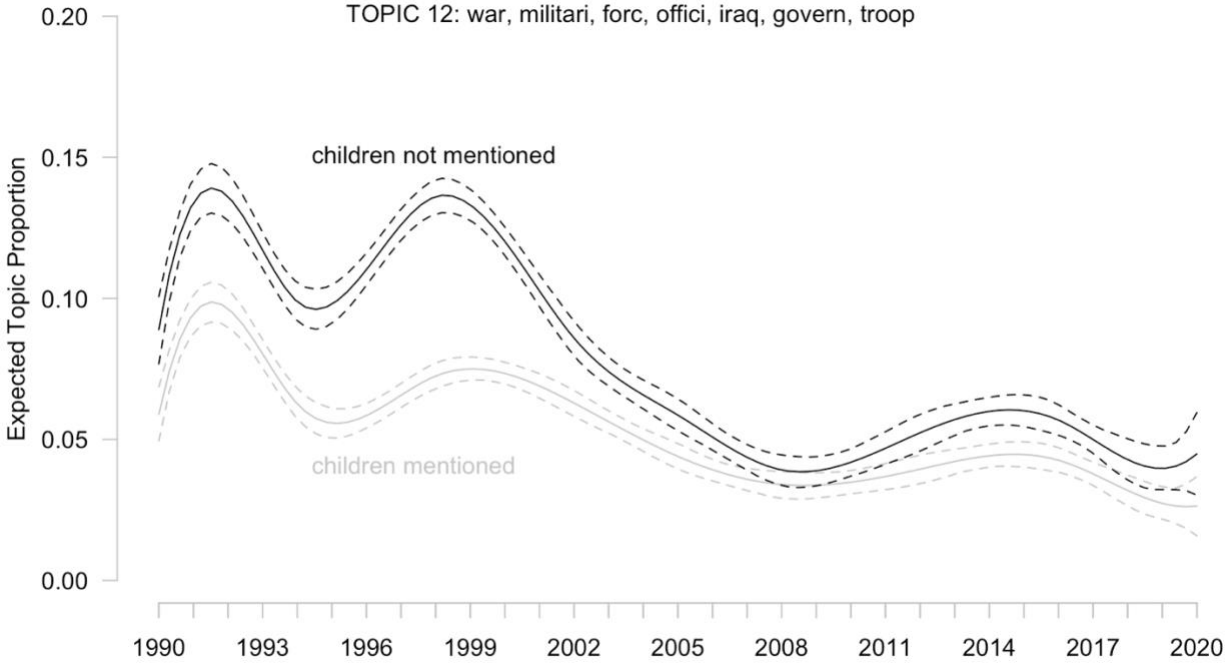

TOPIC 7: school, student, educ, colleg, church, univers, high
Expected Topic Proportion
0.10
0.08
0.06
0.04
0.02
0.00
children mentioned
children not mentioned
1990
1993
1996
1999
2002
2005
2008
2011
2014
2017
2020

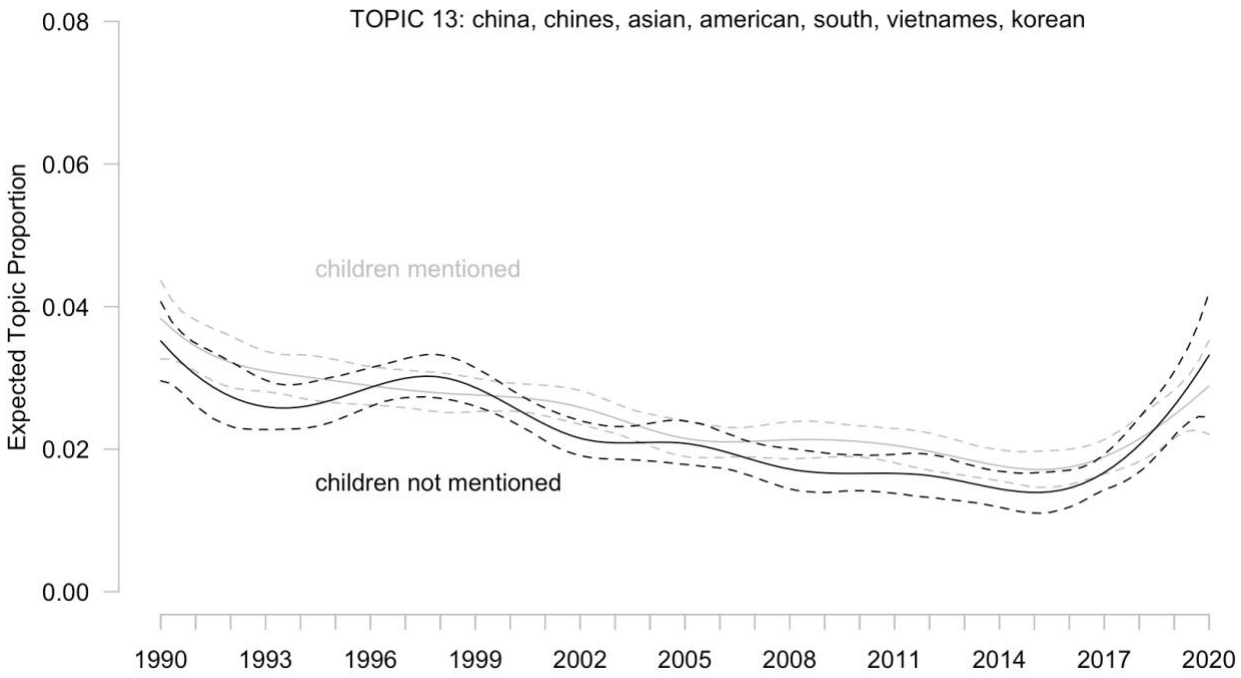

TOPIC 8: american, good, that, question, someth, thing, realli
Expected Topic Proportion
0.12
0.10
0.08
0.06
0.04
0.02
0.00
children mentioned
children not mentioned
1990
1993
1996
1999
2002
2005
2008
2011
2014
2017
2020

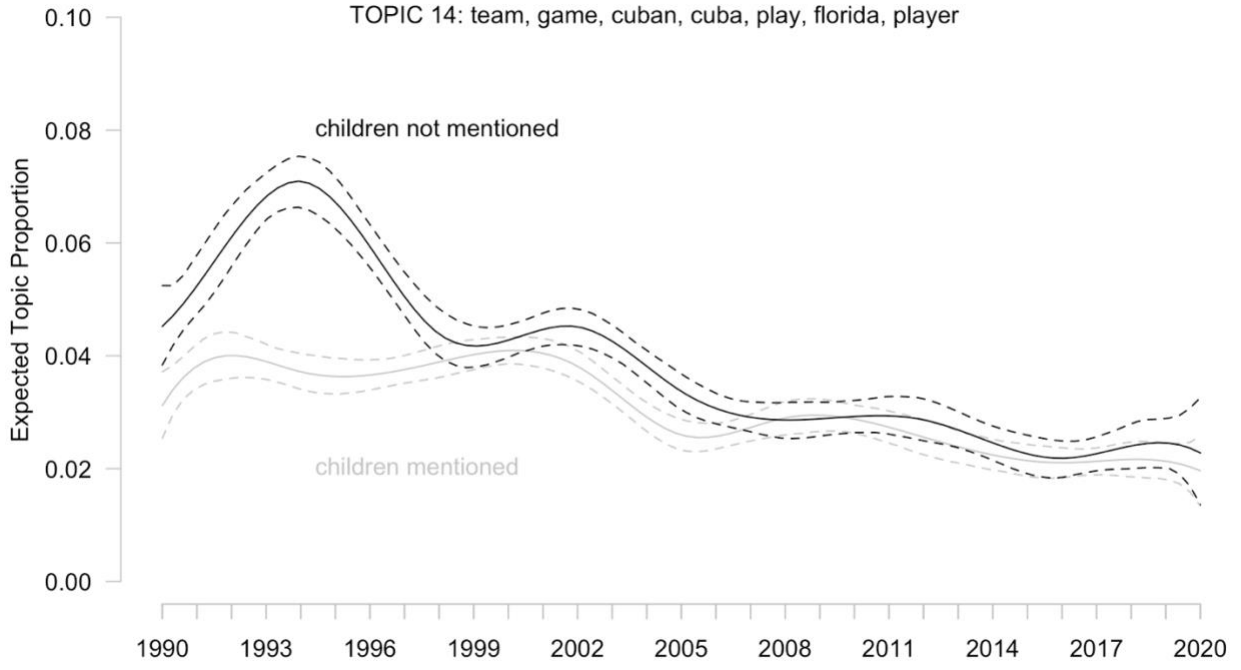

TOPIC 9: film, play, music, book, stori, movi, show
Expected Topic Proportion
0.10
0.08
0.06
0.04
0.02
0.00
children mentioned
children not mentioned
1990
1993
1996
1999
2002
2005
2008
2011
2014
2017
2020

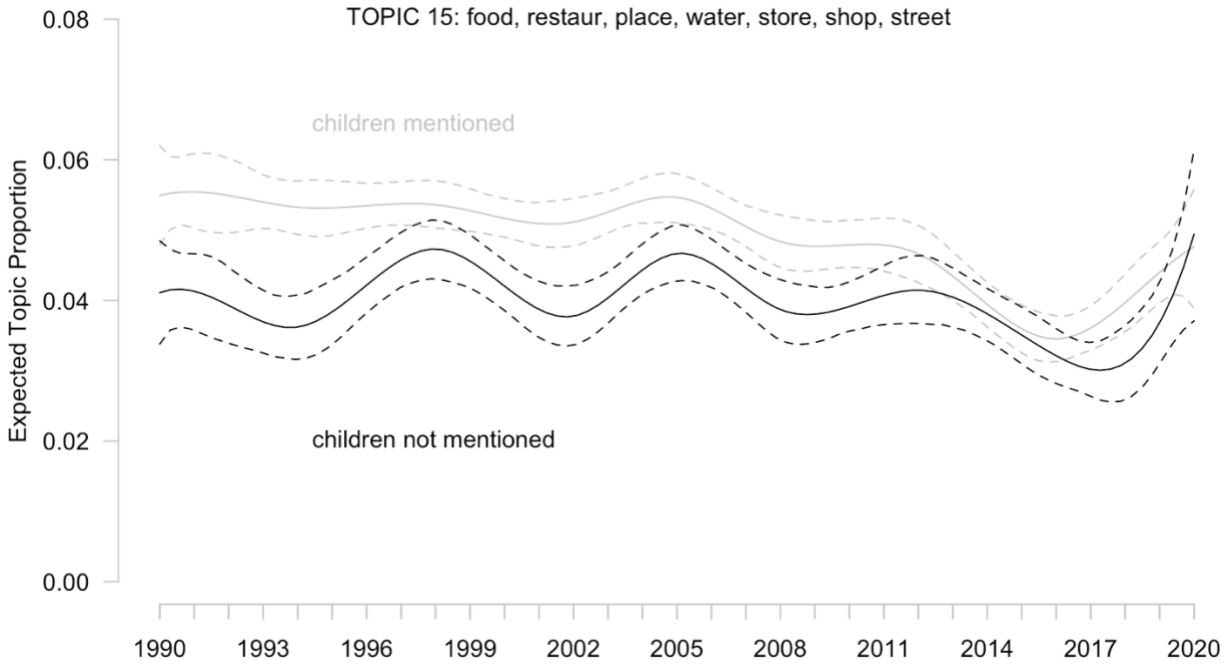

TOPIC 10: polic, offic, charg, arrest, investig, kill, crime
Expected Topic Proportion
0.10
0.08
0.06
0.04
0.02
0.00
children not mentioned
children mentioned
1990
1993
1996
1999
2002
2005
2008
2011
2014
2017
2020

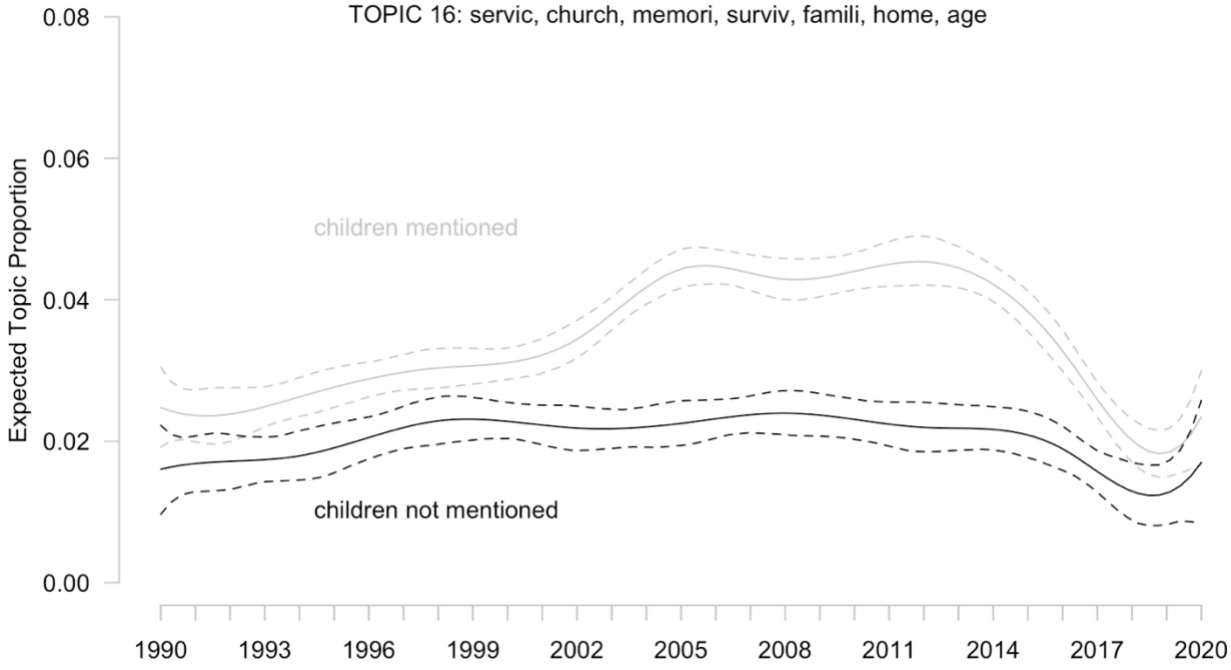

TOPIC 11: art, museum, free, street, center, sunday, saturday
Expected Topic Proportion
0.08
0.06
0.04
0.02
0.00
children mentioned
children not mentioned
1990
1993
1996
1999
2002
2005
2008
2011
2014
2017
2020

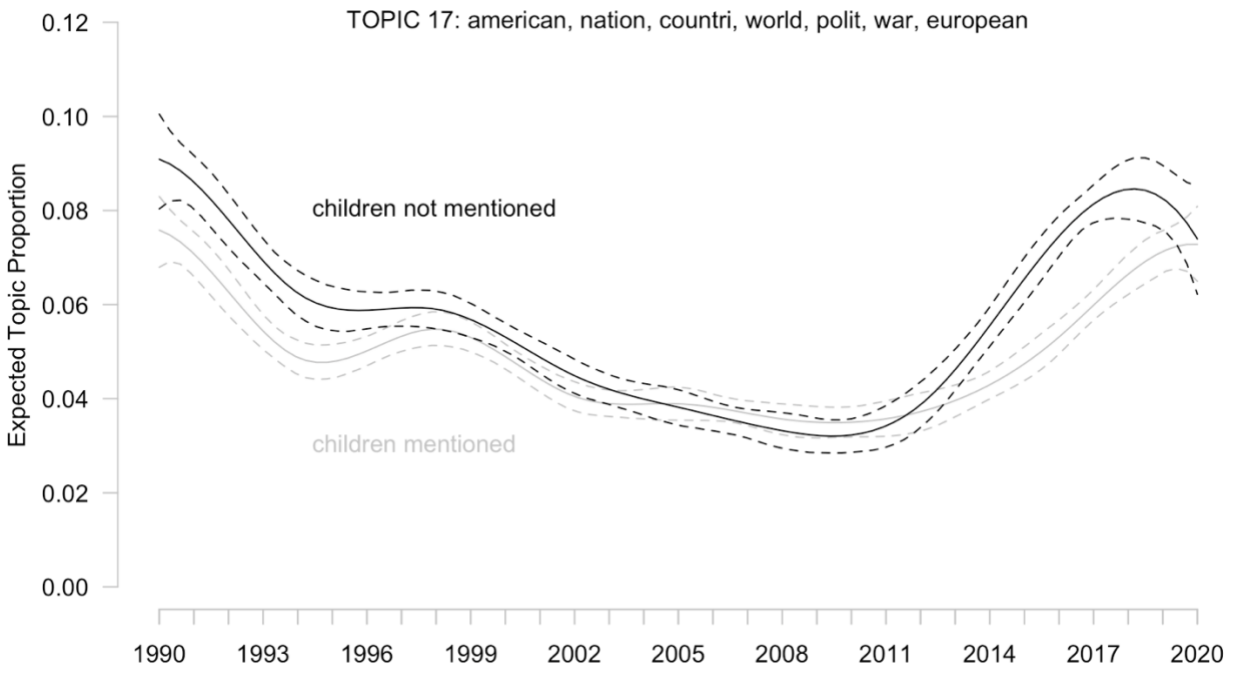

TOPIC 12: war, militari, forc, offici, iraq, govern, troop
Expected Topic Proportion
0.20
0.15
0.10
0.05
0.00
children not mentioned
children mentioned
1990
1993
1996
1999
2002
2005
2008
2011
2014
2017
2020

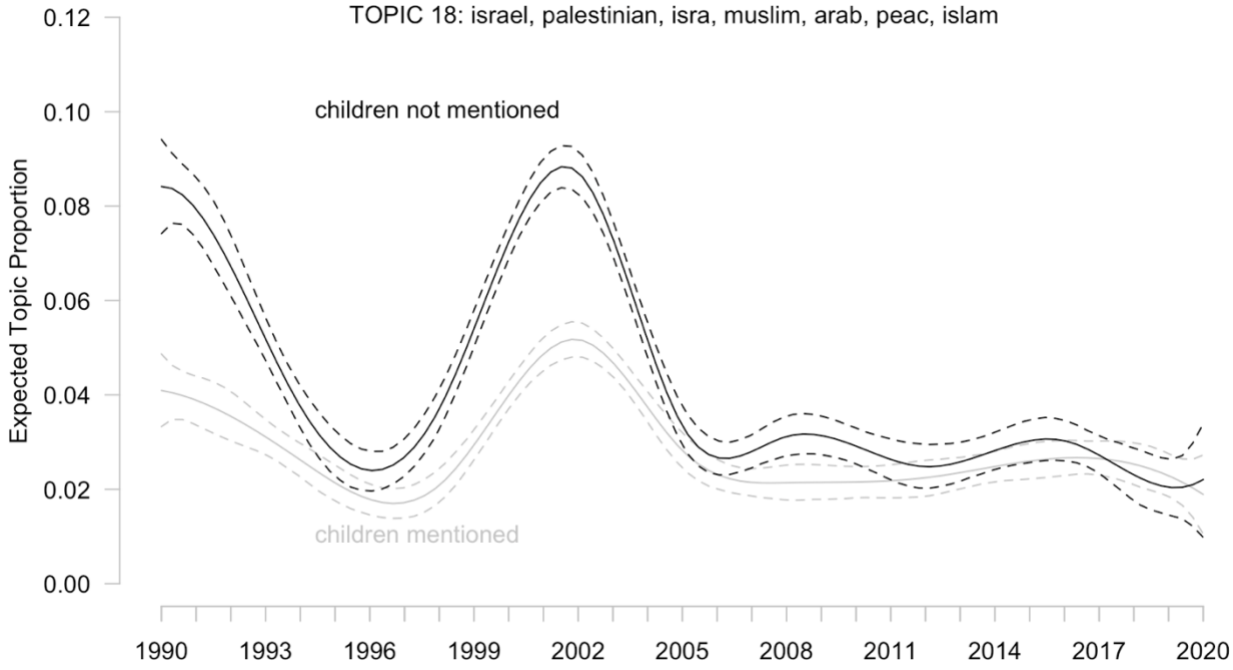

TOPIC 13: china, chines, asian, american, south, vietnames, korean
Expected Topic Proportion
0.08
0.06
0.04
0.02
0.00
children mentioned
children not mentioned
1990
1993
1996
1999
2002
2005
2008
2011
2014
2017
2020

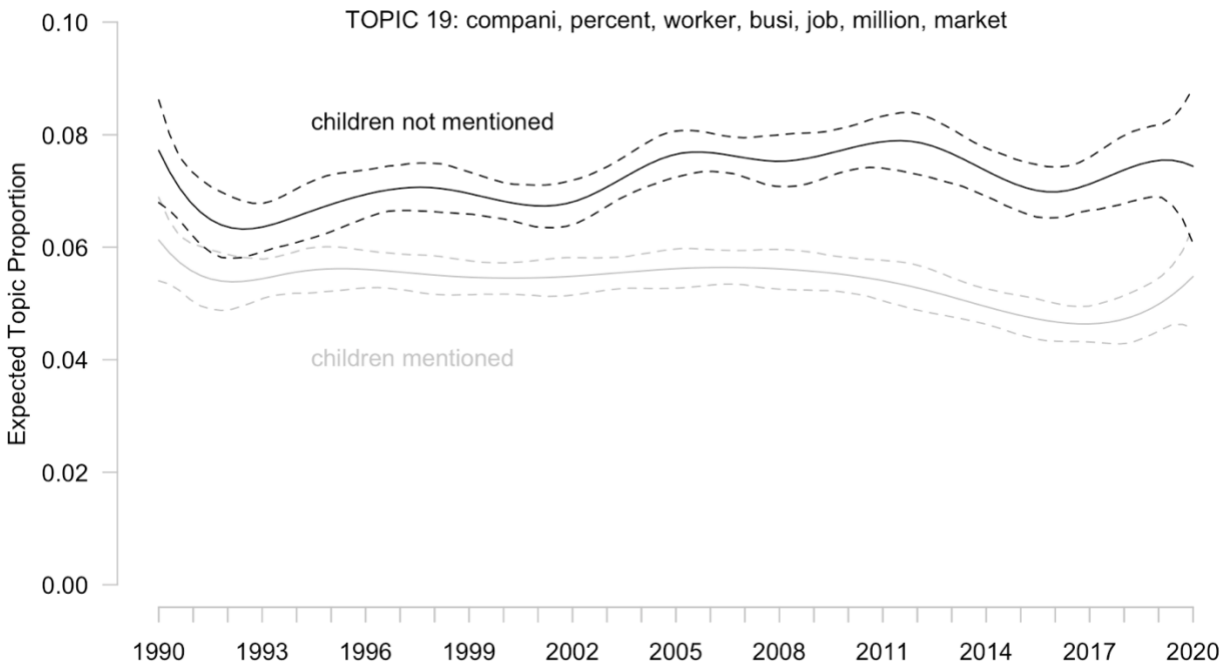

TOPIC 14: team, game, cuban, cuba, play, florida, player
Expected Topic Proportion
0.10
0.08
0.06
0.04
0.02
0.00
children not mentioned
children mentioned
1990
1993
1996
1999
2002
2005
2008
2011
2014
2017
2020

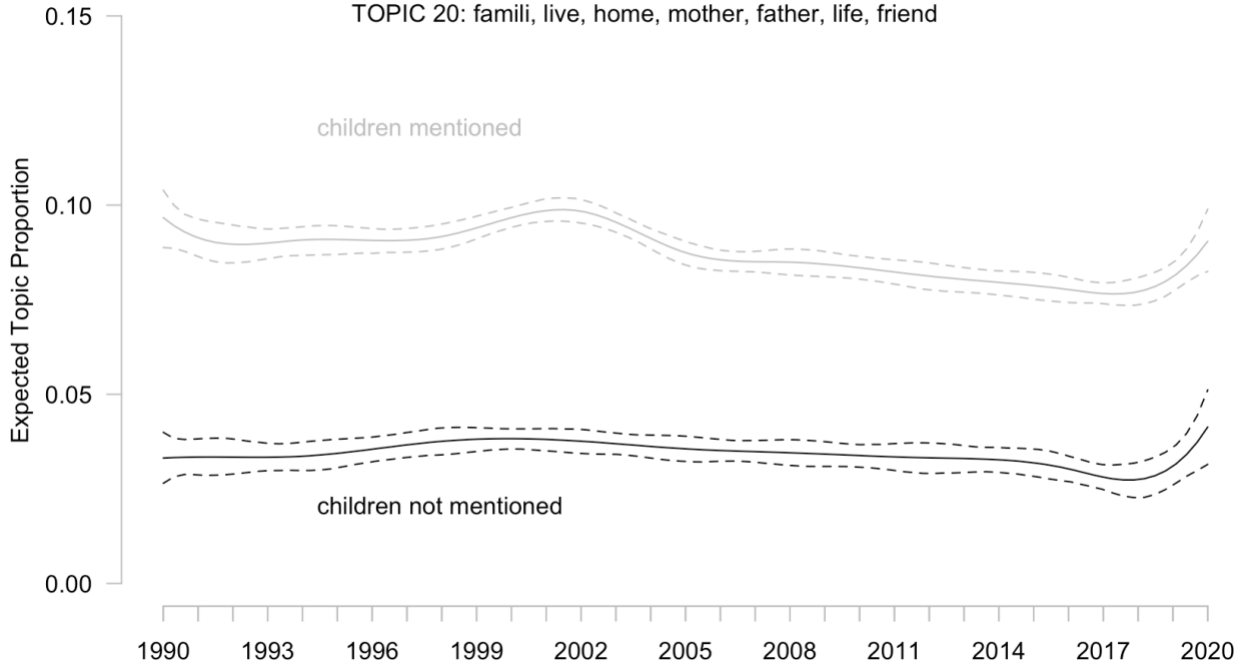

TOPIC 15: food, restaur, place, water, store, shop, street
Expected Topic Proportion
0.08
0.06
0.04
0.02
0.00
children mentioned
children not mentioned
1990
1993
1996
1999
2002
2005
2008
2011
2014
2017
2020


TOPIC 16: servic, church, memori, surviv, famili, home, age
Expected Topic Proportion
0.08
0.06
0.04
0.02
0.00
children mentioned
children not mentioned
1990
1993
1996
1999
2002
2005
2008
2011
2014
2017
2020


TOPIC 17: american, nation, countri, world, polit, war, european
Expected Topic Proportion
0.12
0.10
0.08
0.06
0.04
0.02
0.00
children not mentioned
children mentioned
1990
1993
1996
1999
2002
2005
2008
2011
2014
2017
2020


TOPIC 18: israel, palestinian, isra, muslim, arab, peac, islam
Expected Topic Proportion
0.12
0.10
0.08
0.06
0.04
0.02
0.00
children not mentioned
children mentioned
1990
1993
1996
1999
2002
2005
2008
2011
2014
2017
2020


TOPIC 19: compani, percent, worker, busi, job, million, market
Expected Topic Proportion
0.10
0.08
0.06
0.04
0.02
0.00
children not mentioned
children mentioned
1990
1993
1996
1999
2002
2005
2008
2011
2014
2017
2020


TOPIC 20: famili, live, home, mother, father, life, friend
Expected Topic Proportion
0.15
0.10
0.05
0.00
children mentioned
children not mentioned
1990
1993
1996
1999
2002
2005
2008
2011
2014
2017
2020

Appendix Table 9 Ch. 4. Sample Descriptives

Party ID	Democrat	581
	Republican	529
	Independent / Other	432
Gender	Male	727
	Female	815
	Nonbinary	0
Nativity	In US	1522
	Elsewhere	20
Education	Up to high school diploma	341
	HS diploma to college	815
	More than a college diploma	386
Age	Under 30	140
	30 - 50	462
	50 - 70	494
	Over 70	446

Ch. 4. Survey Instrument

Eligibility

Are you over 18 years of age?

Yes

No

Race

Which of the following best describes you? Please select only one answer.

White

Black or African American

Asian

Native American or Alaskan Native

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

Hispanic or Latino

Other, please specify

Experimental Manipulation

Below you will see an excerpt from a recent news story about immigration:

Treatment 1: With Child and In Community

Americans Debate Immigration Policy

(Newsline)

By *Juni Smith*

Updated March 9, 2022 10:02 am ET

Consider the case of Miguel Sánchez. He and his young child, Alex, were born in Mexico and both immigrated illegally to the United States. Now, at thirty years old, Miguel volunteers at a local church, helps coordinate an annual town arts fair, works at a construction site, and goes to community college part-time. Congressional representatives in both the House and the Senate are currently discussing a range of policy options for immigrants like Miguel.

Treatment 2: With Child and No Community

Americans Debate Immigration Policy

(Newsline)

By *Juni Smith*

Updated March 9, 2022 10:02 am ET

Consider the case of Miguel Sánchez. He and his young child, Alex, were born in Mexico both immigrated illegally to the United States. Now, at thirty years old, Miguel works at a construction site and goes to community college part-time. Congressional representatives in both the House and the Senate are currently discussing a range of policy options for immigrants like Miguel.

Treatment 3: No Child and In Community

Americans Debate Immigration Policy

(Newsline)

By *Juni Smith*

Updated March 9, 2022 10:02 am ET

Consider the case of Miguel Sánchez. Miguel was born in Mexico and immigrated illegally to the United States. Now, at thirty years old, Miguel volunteers at a local church, helps coordinate an annual town arts fair, works at a construction site, and goes to community college part-time. Congressional representatives in both the House and the Senate are currently discussing a range of policy options for immigrants like Miguel.

Treatment 4: No Child and No Community

Americans Debate Immigration Policy

(Newsline)

By *Juni Smith*

Updated March 9, 2022 10:02 am ET

Consider the case of Miguel Sánchez. He was born in Mexico and immigrated illegally to the United States. Now, at thirty years old, Miguel works at a construction site and goes to community college part-time. Congressional representatives in both the House and the Senate are currently discussing a range of policy options for immigrants like Miguel.

Treatment 5: Control

Americans Debate Immigration Policy

(Newsline)

By *Juni Smith*

Updated March 9, 2022 10:02 am ET

Consider the case of Miguel Sánchez. He was born in Mexico and immigrated illegally to the United States. Congressional representatives in both the House and the Senate are currently discussing a range of policy options for immigrants like Miguel.

Dependent Variables - Immigration Attitudes
Now, we will ask you about your opinions on Miguel.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the government agency responsible for deporting immigrants. Should people like Miguel be a priority for deportation?

Definitely should be a priority,
Probably should be a priority,
Probably should not be a priority,
Definitely should not be a priority

Congress is considering a policy that would protect some immigrants from deportation for five years. Should people like Miguel be protected from deportation?

Definitely should not be protected,
Probably should not be protected,
Probably should be protected,
Definitely should be protected

Congress is considering a policy that would give some immigrants a legal path towards American citizenship. Should people like Miguel be considered for a legal path toward American citizenship?

Definitely should not be considered,
Probably should not be considered,
Probably should be considered,
Definitely should be considered

Perceived Assimilation of Miguel
Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:
Because he is living in this country...
(1) Miguel should feel obligated to assimilate into American society
(2) Miguel should feel obligated to be better educated than his parents
(3) Miguel should feel obligated to be educated about American culture and customs
(4) Miguel should feel obligated to speak English adequately
(5) Miguel should feel obligated to renounce his citizenship from Mexico

Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

Treatment Check

Earlier in the survey we showed you a recent news story about immigration. Did Miguel immigrate to the United States with a child?

He immigrated with a child
He did **not** immigrate with a child
Do not remember

Young Child Alex – Dependent Variables

[for those assigned to the With Child treatments only]

Next, we will ask you questions about Miguel's young child Alex.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the government agency responsible for deporting immigrants. Should people like Alex be a priority for deportation?

Definitely should be a priority,
Probably should be a priority,
Probably should not be a priority,
Definitely should not be a priority

Congress is considering a policy that would protect some immigrants from deportation for five years. Should people like Alex be protected from deportation?

Definitely should not be protected,
Probably should not be protected,
Probably should be protected,
Definitely should be protected

Congress is considering a policy that would give some immigrants a legal path towards American citizenship. Should people like Alex be considered for a legal path toward American citizenship?

Definitely should not be considered,
Probably should not be considered,
Probably should be considered,
Definitely should be considered

Attention Check

Below is a list of colors. To show that you're still paying attention please select the color purple:

Blue
Brown
Purple
Red
Green

Yellow

Party ID

Now, we will ask you questions about yourself.

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or what?

Democrat
Republican
Independent
Other party

[for those that choose "Independent" or "Other party"] If you had to choose, do you consider yourself closer to the Republican party or the Democratic party?

Democrat
Republican

[for those that choose "Democrat"] Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or not a very strong Democrat?

Strong
Not very strong

[for those that choose "Republican"] Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?

Strong
Not very strong

Demographics

What is your gender?

Woman
Man
Non-Binary

What is your age?

[dropdown menu of 18 – 99]

What is your education level?

Less than high school
High school graduate
Some college
2 year degree
4 year degree
Professional degree

Masters and/or Doctorate

Were you born in the United States or in another country?

United States

Another country

Overall Immigration Attitudes

Finally, we will end with your thoughts on public affairs.

(1) In general, do you think the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are permitted to come to the United States should be…

Decreased a lot

Decreased a little

Left the same as it is now

Increased a little

Increased a lot

(2) Do you think immigration decreases or increases the crime rate in the U.S.?

Decreases a lot

Decreases a little

Immigration does not change the crime rate

Increases a little

Increases a lot

(3) How important do you think it is to accept immigrants from different cultures?

Extremely important

Very important

Somewhat important

A little important

Not important at all

(4) Do immigrants have a positive or negative impact on the U.S. economy?

Strong negative impact

Slight negative impact

Do not have a positive or negative impact

Slight positive impact

Strong positive impact

(5) What impact do you think immigrants have on the number of jobs for Americans?

Decreases the number a lot

Decreases the number a little

Immigrants do not change the number of jobs for Americans

Increases the number a little

Increases the number a lot

Overall Assimilation

Now, please tell us whether you agree or disagree that immigrants should feel the following obligations because they live in the United States:

Because they live in this country…

(1) Immigrants should feel obligated to communicate effectively in English in their daily lives

(2) Immigrants should feel obligated to take any legal job they can when they arrive in the United States

(3) Immigrants should feel obligated to contribute to American life just as much as everyone else

(4) Immigrant children should feel obligated to be better educated than their parents

(5) Immigrants should feel obligated to renounce their citizenship in their country of origin

(6) Immigrants should feel obligated to become American citizens as soon as they possibly can

(7) Immigrants should feel obligated to educate themselves about the culture and customs of the U.S.

(8) Immigrants should feel obligated to not stick to themselves so much

Strongly disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Strongly agree

Appendix Table 10 Ch. 4. Text of Experimental Treatments

	Integrated into Community	Not Integrated into Community
With Child	Consider the case of Miguel Sánchez. He **and his young child, Alex,** were born in Mexico and both immigrated illegally to the United States. Now, at thirty years old, Miguel **volunteers at a local church, helps coordinate an annual town arts fair,** works at a construction site, and goes to Community College part-time. Congressional representatives in both the House and the Senate are currently discussing a range of policy options for immigrants like Miguel.	Consider the case of Miguel Sánchez. He **and his young child, Alex,** were born in Mexico and both immigrated illegally to the United States. Now, at thirty years old, Miguel works at a construction site and goes to Community College part-time. Congressional representatives in both the House and the Senate are currently discussing a range of policy options for immigrants like Miguel.
Without Child	Consider the case of Miguel Sánchez. He was born in Mexico and immigrated illegally to the United States. Now, at thirty years old, Miguel **volunteers at a local church, helps coordinate an annual town arts fair**, works at a construction site, and goes to Community College part-time. Congressional representatives in both the House and the Senate are currently discussing a range of policy options for immigrants like Miguel.	Consider the case of Miguel Sánchez. He was born in Mexico and immigrated illegally to the United States. Now, at thirty years old, Miguel works at a construction site and goes to Community College part-time. Congressional representatives in both the House and the Senate are currently discussing a range of policy options for immigrants like Miguel.
Control	Consider the case of Miguel Sánchez. He was born in Mexico and immigrated illegally to the United States. Congressional representatives in both the House and the Senate are currently discussing a range of policy options for immigrants like Miguel.	

Appendix Table 11 Ch. 4. Pairwise T-tests Across all Treatments

Treat 1	Treat 2	Statistic	DF	p-value	p-adjusted	Significance
Control	No Child & No Comm	-5.278	618	1.81e-07	1.27e-06	Significant (< 0.05)
Control	With Child & In Comm	-7.022	609	5.86e-12	5.86e-11	Significant (< 0.05)
Control	With Child & No Comm	-5.741	615	1.48e-08	1.18e-07	Significant (< 0.05)
Control	No Child & No Comm	-6.338	604	4.54e-10	4.09e-09	Significant (< 0.05)
No Child & No Comm	With Child & In Comm	-1.866	614	6.20e-02	3.75e-01	Not significant
No Child & No Comm	With Child & No Comm	-0.253	612	8.00e-01	1.00e+00	Not significant
No Child & No Comm	No Child & In Comm	-1.243	611	2.14e-01	8.56e-01	Not significant
With Child & In Comm	With Child & No Comm	1.684	602	9.30e-02	4.64e-01	Not significant
With Child & In Comm	No Child & In Comm	0.590	612	5.55e-01	1.00e+00	Not significant
With Child & No Comm	No Child & In Comm	-1.041	597	2.98e-01	8.94e-01	Not significant

Appendix Table 12 Ch. 4. The Impact of Treatments on Adult Immigrant Support

	Dependent variables :			
	Model 1 (All DVs)	Model 2 (Deport)	Model 3 (Protect)	Model 4 (Citizenship)
With child & community	0.159***	0.186***	0.169***	0.121***
	(0.023)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.027)
With child & no community	0.121***	0.183***	0.088***	0.092***
	(0.023)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.027)
No child & community	0.145***	0.193***	0.149***	0.092***
	(0.023)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.027)
No child & no community	0.116***	0.161***	0.107***	0.078***
	(0.022)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.027)
Constant	0.467***	0.372***	0.467***	0.563***
	(0.016)	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Observations	1,542	1,542	1,542	1,542
R2	0.039	0.042	0.029	0.014
Adjusted R2	0.037	0.039	0.026	0.012
Residual Std. Error	0.280	0.352	0.344	0.339
F Statistic (df = 4; 1537)	15.597***	16.710***	11.353***	5.633***

Cells contain OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

Appendix Table 13 Ch. 4. Demographic Controls on Dependent Variables

	Dependent variable:	
	Miguel Support (Model 1)	Miguel Assimilate (Model 2)
Overall Immigration	0.568***	0.003
	(0.033)	(0.019)
Overall Assimilation	-0.142***	0.861***
	(0.034)	(0.020)
Party ID	0.082***	0.004
	(0.017)	(0.010)
Age	0.146***	0.033***
	(0.020)	(0.012)
Nativity	0.009	-0.018
	(0.055)	(0.032)
Gender	-0.062***	0.005
	(0.013)	(0.008)
Education	-0.055**	0.0004
	(0.022)	(0.013)
Constant	0.323***	0.072*
	(0.065)	(0.038)
Observations	1,542	1,542
R2	0.281	0.560
Adjusted R2	0.278	0.558
Residual Std. Error	0.243	0.142
F Statistic (df = 7; 1534)	85.660***	278.551***

Cells contain OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

Appendix Table 14 Ch. 4. Analyses without Speeders and with Recall

	Dependent variables :			
	Model 1 (All DVs)	Model 2 (Deport)	Model 3 (Protect)	Model 4 (Citizenship)
With child & community	0.225***	0.200***	0.271***	0.203***
	(0.028)	(0.034)	(0.033)	(0.033)
With child & no community	0.171***	0.195***	0.164***	0.153***
	(0.028)	(0.034)	(0.033)	(0.034)
No child & community	0.201***	0.229***	0.213***	0.160***
	(0.028)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)
No child & no community	0.178***	0.227***	0.171***	0.137***
	(0.028)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)
Constant	0.441***	0.399***	0.406***	0.517***
	(0.020)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)
Observations	1,012	1,012	1,012	1,012
R2	0.075	0.062.	0.068	0.040
Adjusted R2	0.071	0.058	0.065	0.037
Residual Std. Error	0.279	0.334	0.332	0.333
F Statistic (df = 4; 1007)	20.309***	16.563***	18.442***	10.595***

Cells contain OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

Appendix Table 15 Ch. 4. T-tests between Independent Dimensions

Treat 1	Treat 2	p-value	Significance level	Significance
With Child	No Child	0.5364	Not significant	Not significant
In Comm	No Comm	0.03901	(< 0.05)	Significant

Appendix Table 16 Ch. 4. The Impact of *In Community* & *With Child* on Immigrant Support

	Dependent variable:	
	Miguel Support	
	(Model 1)	(Model 2)
In Community	0.033**	
	(0.016)	
With Child		0.010
		(0.016)
Constant	0.586***	0.597***
	(0.011)	(0.011)
Observations	1,231	1,231
R2	0.003	0.0003
Adjusted R2	0.003	-0.001
Residual Std. Error	0.284	0.284
F Statistic (df = 1; 1229)	4.272**	0.382

Cells contain OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.

Appendix Table 17 Ch. 4. T-tests between Miguel and Alex Support

Treat 1	Treat 2	p-value	Significance level	Significance
Miguel Support (Overall)	Alex Support (Overall)	5.548e-06	< 0.05	Significant
Miguel Support (With Child)	Alex Support (With Child)	0.05945	< 0.1	Significant
Miguel Support (In Child)	Alex Support (In Comm)	0.1711	Not significant	Not significant

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