

# **FRAMING MATTERS**

*Immigration, The Media, And Public Opinion*

**A Dissertation  
Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of Cornell University  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
by  
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May 2017**

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## ABSTRACT

FRAMING MATTERS: Immigration, The Media, And Public Opinion

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Cornell University 2017

This dissertation, entitled *Framing Matters: Immigration, the Media, and Public Opinion*, explores how the nature of immigration as a group-centric issue conditions the effects of media frames on the public's immigration policy preferences. I use a multi-methods approach drawing on original survey experiment data, survey data, and content analysis to examine the strength of three styles of media coverage on immigration: group-centric stories, individual narratives, and political protest or electoral stories.

In Chapter one, I present my theoretical framework, which argues that people incorporate new information on immigration in relation to their perceptions of (Latina/o) immigrants as a group. Because new information is filtered through group perceptions, I pose that group-centric frames are more persuasive than personal narrative frames and that political frames heighten group threat among non-Latinas/os, while simultaneously tapping into Latinas/os' feelings of solidarity with immigrants. Chapter two uses content analysis data of every immigration related article published in the New York Times and Washington Times during three years: 2006, 2010, and 2015. Chapter three presents original survey experiment data comparing the effect of group-centric frames with personal narrative frames on immigration policy attitudes. Chapter four uses original survey experiment data and survey data to compare the effect of political frames on Latinas/os and non-Latinas/os' policy opinions on immigration. Finally, Chapter five considers the political

implications of my research findings for scholarship on immigration, the media and public opinion, as well as media framing strategists and political activists.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Dr. Aileen Cardona-Arroyo is the first Puerto Rican to receive a Ph.D. in Government from Cornell University. Beginning in the Fall of 2017, she will be an Assistant Professor of Latina/o Studies at Pace University in New York City. Before joining Pace, Cardona-Arroyo was a Post-Doctoral Latina/o Public Policy Fellow at the J. G. Tower Center for Political Studies at Southern Methodist University (SMU), and a Policy Fellow at the Latino Center for Leadership Development (LCLD) Policy Institute in Dallas. Her research focus is on Latina/o Politics, immigration, public opinion, and participation.

Aileen is a proud native of San Juan, Puerto Rico, where she graduated *summa cum laude* from the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus with a BA in Political Science. In addition to her academic interests, she is an avid reader of poetry—Julia de Burgos is her literary hero—and enjoys trying new foods and salsa dancing.

A mis padres, Alexis Cardona y Mildred Arroyo. Gracias por tanto.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am forever indebted to my family, partner, friends, colleagues, and mentors who helped make this dissertation a reality.

First, I would like to thank the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus (UPR-RP)—an institution that I am proud to claim as my alma mater, and where I learned so much both in and outside the classroom. I am especially thankful for my undergraduate mentor—Dr. Luis Cámara-Fuertes—who saw an academic in me before I saw it myself—and to the Honors Program at the University of Puerto Rico where I received the encouragement and training necessary to write my undergraduate thesis and apply to graduate school.

After graduating from the UPR, Cornell University became my intellectual home. I owe Cornell University, Cornell in Washington, and the Department of Government so much. Cornell in Washington gave me the privilege of advising undergraduate research, while allowing me to continue my own research in Washington, DC. In the Government Department, every professor helped shape my academic thinking and professionalization as a political scientist. Moreover, the Government Department's staff are second to none. A huge thank you in particular to Tina Slater who helped me with more applications, documents, and forms than I can even remember.

I am particularly grateful for my committee members, Dr. Michael Jones-Correa, Dr. Suzanne Mettler and Dr. Adam Levine, for their guidance in making this dissertation a reality. Suzanne is a brilliant scholar of American Politics with an eye for asking big questions. Adam is a rising star in political science—and his work ethic and productivity are traits that I hope to follow as I embark on a career in academia. And there are simply no words to express my immense debt to Michael—my dissertation advisor, mentor, and friend. This dissertation would simply not have been possible without your thoughtful comments, guidance, and consistent support. I am incredibly

fortunate to have a dissertation advisor who embodies both intellectual and human excellence. Thank you for your commitment to me and to all of your students.

In addition to the faculty, and staff, I greatly cherish the friendships I formed at Cornell. Thank you in particular to Mariana Giusti-Rodriguez, Lauren Honig, Diane Wong, Katrina Braun, Danielle Thomsen, and David Cortez. Mariana was not only my roommate in North Aurora St., but also my life guru. Katrina and I shared so many wonderful experiences, including a self-care trip to Costa Rica. Lauren, Mariana and I shared a weekly tradition of “hump-day” celebrations, where we celebrated each other’s accomplishments and offered support. I cannot express how indispensable these weekly get-togethers were for my well-being in graduate school. Danielle and I shared so many stimulating conversations and laughs. And Diane and David were reliable sources of shared solidarity as REP scholars. All of these wonderful people sustained me as I conceptualized and wrote this dissertation. Thank you.

Before finishing this dissertation, I spent a year as a research fellow at Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas, and as a Latina/o Public Policy Fellow at the Latino Center for Leadership Development. At SMU, I honed my teaching skills, and found much needed time to write. I will always treasure my relationship with the LatinoCLD. It gave me the opportunity to speak about my research with policy practitioners and elected officials, and to be actively engaged in community initiatives. Thank you to the students and faculty—particularly my colega Dr. Reyes-Barrientez—at SMU and to the LatinoCLD for investing in Latina/o research. Both experiences have made me a better teacher and researcher.

I also want to highlight an amazing group of people who are always a source of unconditional support. There are no words to convey how much I owe to my fantastic family. My parents, Mildred y Alexis, are my pillars of strength. They nourish me with love and support.

Thank you for raising me with the confidence to develop strong convictions and voice them. Thank you to my brother, Armando, who is my hero. From the time we were children to now as adults, you continue to set a high example of perseverance and integrity. Thank you to my sister-in-law, Yahir, who truly is my sister, and a role model. Thank you to my nephew Mateo, the newest member of our family, who has given me joy beyond words. I am in awe of all the light that you have brought to our family. Thank you to my tía Lilly, who is like a second mother to me. And thank you to all of my Cardona and Arroyo family, as well as friends who are like family—Lilia, Viviana, Gabriela, Zaira, Blanchi—for your words of encouragement throughout this journey.

Finally, I want to give a special thank you to my life partner and love of my life, Jorge. You have shown me a kind of love that is selfless, present, and uplifting. I am so fortunate to share my life with you. And I am also very lucky to now call the beautiful and resilient Aguilar family, my family.

To all the people mentioned here, and to so many others who have encouraged me and offered advice along the way, thank you.

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## Chapter 1

# **Toward A Group-Centric Theory of Media Framing Effects**

*How Group-Centrism Mediates the Effect of News  
Frames On Immigration*

## **Introduction**

On any given day, when Americans open up their newspapers, turn on their TVs and/or navigate the internet, they encounter news stories about immigration. In 2015, for instance, journalists wrote about Donald Trump’s depiction of Mexican immigration as funneling “crime”, “drugs” and “rapists” into the United States. There has also been a lot of coverage related to President Obama’s executive action on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) since its inception in 2012. And back in 2006, reporters across the nation covered the widespread immigrant marches against HR 4437 –a House approved legislation that would have made being undocumented or aiding an undocumented immigrant into a felony. These are just a few of the many immigration-related events and topics that are covered in the media. For each and every one of them, journalists and political communicators are making decisions on how to present the information to the public.

Perhaps most noticeably, news frames differ in terms of their tone—or whether they depict immigrants in a negative or positive light. But beyond tone, there are also distinct styles to communicate facts and issues pertaining to immigration. One framing style focuses on the aggregate group-level implications of immigration to the United States. Examples of negative and positive group-level frames include statements that describe undocumented immigration as a drain on the U.S. economy or an essential source of labor, respectively. A second frame style consists of narrowing into the negative or positive actions of individual immigrants. Examples of these include news stories that speak of a particular undocumented immigrant engaging in illicit activity or the story of a hardworking undocumented immigrant. And yet a third frame style politicizes the issue of immigration by pointing to immigrant political participation through protests and demonstrations or to their potential influence on electoral outcomes.

Needless to say, coverage on immigration is both competitive and diverse. However, despite being one of the most salient issues in American politics today, no single study to date has examined the relative strength of immigration frames within the national debate. There is no systematic documentation of how the negative and positive immigration frames found in media coverage compare in terms of their styles. Moreover, while scholars have examined the effects of unique immigration frames on political attitudes, there is no evidence about the relative strength of immigration frames vis-à-vis other frames within the broader public narrative on the issue. This dissertation fills this gap by combining content analysis data of every immigration story published in the New York Times and Washington Times in 2006, 2010, and 2015 with experimental data to assess the relative strength of three prominent frame styles used by both advocates and opponents: (1) personal narrative, (2) group centric, and (3) political frames.

The contributions of this dissertation are both theoretical and methodological. From a theoretical standpoint, the work presented in the following chapters bridges scholarship on immigration and Latina/o politics with literature on the media and political communication. In particular, I push Converse's (1964) concept of group-centrism to the center to argue that the persuasive character of immigration frames will depend on their ability to successfully move people's perceptions of immigrants as a group—not individuals. And from a methodological standpoint, I provide the first comprehensive experimental test of various positive and negative immigration frames in the media.

The results of this research not only provide a comprehensive picture about the particularities of immigration coverage, but they also produce results showing the ineffective (and potentially) detrimental effects of two common practices among journalists and immigration advocates when covering immigration in the media. First, while pro-immigration advocates and

opponents resort to using personal narratives or individualized examples of immigrants to put a human face on immigration, my analysis suggests that personal narratives are less persuasive than alternative frames that focus on immigrants as a group. And secondly, my findings would caution those who want to move public opinion toward more welcoming policy attitudes to use political frames—or frames that highlight (Latina/o) immigrants’ political power—selectively, as they may alienate the non-Latina/o public by triggering feelings of group threat and competition.

The present chapter sets the theoretical foundation for this dissertation. First, I review literature on the centrality of group-centrism in American politics and its particular applicability to immigration—an issue that has and continues to be tied to Latinas/os as an ethnic group in the United States. Secondly, I assess the dynamics of news production on immigration. Thirdly, I discuss the foundations of framing theory and its applicability to the issue of immigration. Specifically, I pay close attention to the persuasiveness of episodic vs. thematic frames—or what I refer to as personal narrative vs. group-centric frames—and those that signal political competition.

Fourthly, I consider how group-centrism on immigration might mediate the way people process information about a groups’ political activism or power in the United States. And finally, I bridge the Latina/o Politics and media framing literatures to construct an argument where the effect that personal narrative, group-centric and political frames have on political attitudes on immigration is mediated by the fact that immigration is a group-centric issue. In other words, the central thesis of this study is that framing effects on policy opinions are filtered through perceptions of immigrants as group.

## **Group-Centrism in American Public Opinion**

The public's policy preferences are in many ways dependent on their opinions about the perceived beneficiaries or targets of any given policy. In his foundational work on public opinion and opinion formation, Converse (1964) is best remembered by his argument that the public lacks the necessary political understanding and sophistication to form coherent ideological belief systems. However, as Kinder (2006) notes, beyond his declaration of mass disinformation, Converse also penned the idea that, in the absence of a sophisticated understanding of politics, the general public uses opinions about groups as a short cut to form policy opinions.

When an individual both recognizes the existence of a group and the relevance of a given policy for that group, they are likely to use their negative or positive perceptions of the group when they form attitudes about the policy. In Converse's words, group-centric opinions emerge when people are "endowed with some cognitions of the group as an entity and with some interstitial 'linking' information indicating why a given party or policy is relevant to the group." Thus, group-centrism "functions as an efficient *heuristic* that conveniently reduces the complexity of policy politics to a simple judgmental standard." (Nelson and Kinder, 1996) These group-based heuristics build on what Ingram and Schneider (1993) refer to as "social construction of target populations"—or the positive or negative cultural and popular perceptions of groups who are affected by a particular policy.

More than 40 years after Converse's proposition of a group-centric understanding of mass policy opinions, the significance of group-centrism in American politics is well documented for a diverse number of issues. Evidence shows, for instance, that changes to public opinion on gay rights are partly a reflection of changing attitudes towards gays and lesbians (Brewer, 2003). As

Brewer explains, shifts in overall support for gay rights between 1992 and 2000 run parallel to positive shifts on Americans' perceptions of gays and lesbians.

Consistent with the premise that group-centrism informs policy opinions, Sides and Gross (2013) find that support for the War on Terror post September 11 is best explained by attitudes toward Muslims in particular. Because “the war on terror” has a clearly perceived enemy—Muslims—Americans use their opinions about Muslims to form opinions about the War on Terror. The War on Terror—much like immigration is tied to U.S. Latinas/os—is inextricably linked to Islam as a religion and Muslims as participants.

Research on group-centric consideration in opinion formation is particularly well-developed when it comes to race-based considerations (Gilens, 1999; Soss et al., 2003; Hurwitz and Peffley, 1997; Bobo and Kluegel, 1993; Federico and Sidanius, 2002). Some scholars find evidence that point to the importance of race-based considerations in shaping attitudes toward policies that target race directly, such as affirmative action (Bobo and Kluegel, 1993; Federico and Sidanius, 2002). For Federico and Sidanius, these race-targeted policies provide an avenue for Whites to express negative racial attitudes within a post-Civil Rights context.

There is also evidence that race-based group-centrism informs positions toward policies that do not target race explicitly, such as crime, and welfare (Gilens, 1999; Soss et al., 2003; Hurwitz and Peffley, 1997). For example, Gilens argues that White Americans' opposition to welfare is heavily grounded on the public's persistent stereotypes of Blacks as lazy and unmotivated to work coupled with the notion that welfare recipients are mostly Black. The stereotype of the “lazy” and “dependent” African American explains why some social programs that are not associated with this stereotype such as Social Security are widely favored by White

Americans, while other programs with more racial connotations such as Food Stamps are not. (Gilens, 1999)

Taken together, what research on group-centrism and policy opinions tells us is that, for many policy areas, the public does not think about the merits and faults of policies in the abstract. Instead, people construct policy opinions that are informed by their assessments of the perceived recipients of a given policy. And as I will contend throughout this dissertation, it is imperative to understand how group-centrism on immigration mediates how different types of frames in the news coverage of immigration shape political attitudes. Thus, the next subsection specifically explores the relevancy of group-centrism for public opinion on immigration.

#### *Group-Centrism and Public Opinion on Immigration*

U.S. Public opinion on immigration policy has multiple dimensions. Notably, there is a partisan divide on the issue—with Democrats holding more welcoming attitudes on immigration and Republicans advocating for restrictive measures (Burns and Gimpel 2000, Wroe, 2008). Moreover, there is a cosmopolitan dimension to immigration attitudes (Haubert and Fussell 2006): those who have higher levels of education and exposure to other cultures are more likely to be open to immigrants. However, like other policy areas, there is ample evidence that immigration in the United States is inherently a group issue—a Latina/o group issue (Santa Ana 2002). In accordance with Converse's pre-requisites for group-centrism, the public is continually exposed to information linking immigration with Latinas/os in particular (Kinder, 2006), and they make policy judgments on the issue accordingly.

News stories about immigration overwhelmingly center on Latinas/os—especially Mexicans (Chavez, 2001; Massey, 2009). According to a report by Latino Decisions—a premier polling firm on Latina/o public opinion— and the National Hispanic Media Coalition, the public

does not only overestimate the number of Latina/o immigrants but they also overwhelmingly overestimate the proportion of Latinas/os who are undocumented.<sup>1</sup>

The association of Latinas/os with immigration becomes particularly prevalent following California's controversial Proposition 187 in 1994 when the issue of undocumented immigration garnered national-level attention (Valentino, Brader and Jardina, 2013). Indeed, Valentino, Brader and Jardina's analysis of survey data from 1992 to 2008 show that starting in 1994—and parallel to the rise of media linking Latinas/os to immigration—attitudes toward Latinas/os—not general ethnocentric values—account for white's policy preferences on immigration. As they contend, “when the group is not specified, Whites think of Latina/o immigrants.”

It should be noted that despite the centrality of debates about legality in giving rise to the group-centric association of immigration, the link between Latinas/os and preferences extends to both documented and undocumented immigration. Indeed, using IAT measures, Perez (2010) finds that implicit attitudes toward Latina/o immigrants in particular influence attitudes toward both legal and “illegal” immigration, even when controlling for broader measures of ethnocentric values. Similarly, Brader et al. (2008) find that when news outlets frame immigration in relation to Latina/o immigrants, immigration elicits more negative reactions.

Overall, this group of scholars have produced research suggesting that while immigration implicates a whole range of groups, feelings about Latina/o immigrants in particular seem to be prominent when it comes to Americans' stance on immigration. The well-documented link between immigration and Latinas/os suggest that policy opinions about immigration are at least partly a function of whether the public perceives Latinas/os in a negative or positive light. Thus, at its core, the public debate about immigration centers on the suitability of Latina/o immigrants

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<sup>1</sup> Latino Decisions. (2012, Sept.). The Impact of Media Stereotypes on Opinions and Attitudes Towards Latinos. Retrieved from <http://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/wpcontent/uploads/2012/09/RevisedNHMC.Aug2012.pdf>

for full membership in the United States, their effect on the economic and social well-being of the nation, and the desirability of a future America with a different racial and ethnic composition.

At the center of the rise and growth of the association of Latinas/os with immigration is the media's power to frame the issue. As with most political topics, the American public is uninformed about immigration and holds uncertain views (Converse 1964; Zaller 1992). Thus, what the media chooses to report and how matters (Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007). Indeed, media scholars have long pointed to the power of framing—or the way issues are communicated to the public—to influence public opinion and cement group-centrism on any given policy issue, including immigration. (Nelson and Kinder, 1996) The media, as the carriers of political information and “social construction of groups” (Schneider and Ingram 1993), have the ability to shape political opinions on a given policy and/or increase its saliency.

The next three sections explore media frames and framing theory in three ways: First, I present an outlook of how journalistic practices guide how immigration gets covered. Secondly, I discuss the body of literature on media framing effects. And finally, I provide a discussion of how framing effects vary by recipients. Overall, the goals of these sections is to elucidate the particularities of media framing effects within the context of a group-centric issue like immigration.

### **Framing Immigration I: Journalistic Practices and Media Frames**

The production of immigration news does not occur in a vacuum. Much to the contrary, news production is heavily dependent on journalistic professional practices. Stated simply, journalists' “ways of doing things” not only guide what gets covered, but also *how* it gets covered.

First, American journalists subscribe to a norm of objectivity (Schudson and Anderson 2009, Schudson 2001). In practice, objectivity dictates that “the job of the journalist consists of covering something called “news” without commenting on it, slanting it or shaping its formulation in any way.” (Schudson 2001) In part, this means that journalists do not see their job as one of advancing a particular partisan take on an issue, but rather presenting facts and perspectives on those facts in a way that is impartial. Indeed, when covering a polarizing issue like immigration, this means that journalists make sure to include opposing perspectives—or the two sides of the story.

Secondly, and an important caveat to the practice of objectivity in news production is that journalists, of course, do not have time to conduct in-depth research on every immigration event or issue that is of public importance. Certainly, in today’s fast-changing media cycles and news production, journalists operate with tight deadlines and are increasingly asked to produce news information with rapid turnarounds. Thus, to solve for this tension between objectivity and time, journalists often rely on expert sources to provide them with perspectives on how to approach a given topic. (Schudson 2002) Expert sources, then, in many ways play a key role in setting the language used to discuss the public debate about immigration, as well as the dominant frames that guide positive and negative representation of immigration in the news. As Sigal explains, “News is not what happens, but what someone says has happened or will happen.” (1986) Within the context of immigration, that “someone” may be government officials and their staff (Schudson 2002), as well as activists, organizers, and immigrants themselves.

Finally, American journalism has seen a rise in the use of dramatic story telling as a form of news coverage, which include human interest profiles, and investigative reporting. (Benson 2013) This perhaps responds to market driven incentives to garner the public’s attention within an

increasingly competitive and diverse news market (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2010). In practice, this means that dramatic stories about immigrants or those who have seen themselves harmed by immigrants are a recurring theme in American immigration news (Benson 2013)—particularly news outlets that are closer to the border (Branton and Dunaway 2009a, 2009b).

Taken together, the norm of objectivity, the reliance on expert sources, and the rise of dramatic story telling in American media suggest that when and how immigration gets covered in the media is not random. Stated simply, news on immigration is likely to include information about “both sides” of the issue, provide quotes from experts from these both sides, and increasingly illustrate immigration through dramatic stories or events. What results from these practices are news frames—or particular ways of conceptualizing and presenting information on a given topic to the public.

The processes and practices that guides news production are of consequence because—as the literature on political communication suggests—media framing matters for opinion formation. The following section defines the concept of framing, and explores the conditions in which it can influence public opinion, as well as discusses the particularities of framing immigration.

### **Framing Immigration II: What’s in a Frame?**

Framing theory rests on two assumptions. First, that there are multiple ways to present information on every given issue that highlights particular considerations or values. And secondly, that those differences can influence the way people evaluate their opinions on the issue (Chong and Druckman 2007a, 2007b, 2007c). As Entman (1993) explains, “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or

treatment recommendation for the item described.” In doing so, frames create specific lenses through which audiences view policy issues. Moreover, when journalists and political communicators repeatedly use the same types of frames over and over again, these frames become permanent fixtures within the public narrative on that issue—“recognizable information schemes” (Goffman, 1974) that provide order to the cognitive understanding of political issues. Thus, the power of framing is necessarily dependent on repetition. The more people are exposed to a particular conceptualization of an issue, the higher likelihood that those frames shape the public’s understanding of that issue, and the stronger the chances that framing effects are long lasting.

Building on the idea that news frames—through repetition—can be politically consequential for public opinion, scholars have developed multiple ways to categorize media frames. Notably, when studying framing effects there are two overarching ways to conceptualize frames: “emphasis” (Druckman, 2001) and “equivalency” (Borah, 2011; Druckman, 2001). Equivalency frames present almost identical information to the public with minor differences focusing on things like gains or losses, risks or rewards (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; 1984) or even messengers. In contrast, emphasis frames highlight different considerations as relevant to the issue at hand. While both types of frames can potentially alter the way the public processes and weighs information on an issue, emphasis frames are different in that they do not necessarily present people with the same information (Druckman, 2004).

One example of immigration research on equivalency frames comes from Merolla, Ramakrishnan and Haynes (2013), who examine whether the public evaluates immigrants differently when encountering distinct labels, such as “undocumented”, “illegal”, or “unauthorized”. These frames are consistent with the definition of equivalency because while the wording is different, the information presented are “logical equivalents”. Merolla et al. find that

the use of these labels does not predict more restrictive or welcoming attitudes on immigration. This leads the authors to conclude that framing scholars and activists alike would be better off focusing on framing undocumented immigration policy rather than on the labels used to describe undocumented immigrants themselves.

While studying equivalency frames can help us better understand how wording might matter within the immigration debate, it is limited in the sense that many immigration frames are not logical equivalents. Instead, immigration frames tie different attributes to the issue of immigration that may or may not lead to the public's attitudinal changes on the issue. Thus, the present research stirs away from equivalency frames and speaks to a definition of framing as "emphasis".

Within this strand of research, immigration scholars have explored different considerations. These include attitudinal changes to immigration opinions when individuals are exposed to crime frames as opposed to economic frames (Igartua & Cheng 2008) or when immigration is framed a threat to security as opposed to cultural identity (Lahav & Courtemanche 2012). From a "frame production" standpoint, scholars have also explored whether Spanish and English news sources frame immigration differently (Abrajano & Singh 2009), and the extent to which national and conservative news sources frame immigration differently than local and liberal sources, respectively (Fryberg et. al., 2012).

In addition to mapping the importance, causes, and effects of a particular issue, emphasis frames also vary in two further ways. First, they vary in terms of the level of analysis they use to set up the issue—or whether they highlight the attributes of a policy's recipients by presenting narratives at the personal or group-level. When it comes to the specific case of immigration, the distinction is between media frames that discuss the group-level effects of immigration and those

that present a personal narrative of one or more individuals to illustrate the dynamics of the issue. And secondly, they vary in terms of whether they depict political actors making demands upon the political system. Within the specific case of immigration, this type of frame depicts political protests, judicial activism and/or the electoral power of Latinas/os.

As the next subsections will highlight, these distinctions between personal, group-centric, and political frames are worth highlighting. Indeed, I argue that these stylistic choices can be politically consequential for public opinion.

#### *Frame Style: Big Pictures vs. Little Pictures*

The body of work that explores the effects of news stories that center “on the big picture” vs. those that focus on specific examples has taken up different names: (1) episodic vs. thematic frames (Iyengar 1987), (2) identified vs. statistical frames (Slovic 2007), and (3) exemplars vs. general information (Ostfeld and Mutz 2013, Lyon and Slovic 1976). However, while they share an interest in understanding the persuasiveness of case-specific frames vis-à-vis aggregate frames, existing conceptualizations of the distinctions between big and little picture frames are not interchangeable. Thus, perhaps as a consequence of this, the collective results from these studies leave us with a diverse set of findings.

In the words of Iyengar, an episodic frame differs from a thematic frame in that “episodic framing depicts concrete events that illustrate issues, while thematic framing presents collective or general evidence.” (Iyengar, 1991). The study of episodic vs. thematic frames originates from a curiosity about blame attribution—or whether episodic frames are able to convincingly link a specific case to broader societal problems and institutions (Iyengar, 1987, Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). From this perspective, episodic frames are less persuasive because of a tendency for people to place blame or praise on individuals—not systematic factors or government institutions.

Research on identified vs. statistical frames are similar to episodic/thematic frames in that it is informed by the contrast between specific cases and general information. However, identified/statistical frames differ from episodic/thematic frames because the former focuses on victims of a given policy or social issue. Theoretically, identified/statistical studies pose that identified frames are more persuasive because they are able to garner more sympathy from an audience than statistical frames where victims are not identifiable (Small and Loewenstein 2005, 2003, Small Loewenstein and Slovic 2007).

Complicating the matter even more is a third group of scholars with yet a third conceptualization of specific and general frames. These are scholars who examine the use of exemplars—or specific individuals or cases to highlight the dynamics or considerations surrounding a given policy area (Lyon and Slovic, 1976). Consistent with the identified/statistical findings—but contrary to Iyengar's (1987) findings—this research tells us that exemplification framing is persuasive because they generate stronger feelings among the audience than abstract information.

The product of these similar—yet different—definitions and research approaches are results that speak to similar theoretical concerns, but in different languages and with different focuses. That said, it is possible to extract from the pioneering work on macro vs. micro framing of issues two possible outcomes that may follow from encountering group vs. personal narratives. On the one hand, it is possible that individual stories (unlike general frames) are more persuasive because they put a human face on the issues and they force recipients to consider the tangible effects of a given policy. On the other hand, it is also plausible that personal narratives blur the connection between an individual's experience and the systematic policies and historical processes that drive those experiences.

More recent scholarship has attempted to consider the conditions that might heighten or diminish the relative strength of episodic and thematic frames (Aaroe, 2011, Gross 2008). Notably, Gross (2008) points to the extent to which frames are able to draw emotion from the audience. She contends that episodic frames are more likely to elicit emotions from people because they command a higher level of human interest. Indeed, she contends that journalists, partisans, and advocates employ episodic frames precisely for that very reason. Using an experimental design, Gross finds that—when respondents are exposed to episodic frames showcasing a woman (white or black) that is the victim of mandatory sentencing, they are more likely to express sympathy than when assigned to thematic frames. That said, Gross’ results indicate that the ability of episodic frames to increase opposition to mandatory sentencing is contingent on whether the audience perceives the victim as particularly sympathetic. Thus, overall, thematic frames increase opposition to mandatory sentencing more so than episodic frames—unless episodic frames are able to draw an emotional reaction from the audience.

Gross’ findings contribute a nuanced understanding of the persuasiveness of episodic vis-à-vis thematic frames by suggesting that they operate via different cognitive routes. They also highlight the fact that individual stories are not necessarily able to draw the same human interest and emotions for all audiences. While it may be true that personalized stories have the ability to pull people’s heartstrings more effectively, it is also true that people’s abilities to draw connections between the individual case and the group may be dependent on whether they find subjects more or less sympathetic. This is of particular importance in the context of immigration because when people think about immigration in the United States, they think about Latina/o immigrants in particular (Valentino, Brader and Jardina, 2013, Perez, 2010, Chavez, 2001, 2008; Santa Ana,

2002). And, as these scholars have documented, white Americans—the largest racial group in the United States—are more likely to react negatively to Latina/o immigrants.

The present research contributes to the understanding of the relative strength of specific and general frames by considering the persuasiveness of big-picture vs. little picture frames within the context of a *group-centric* (and heavily racialized) issue such as immigration. In doing so, I reject approaching the scholarly debate about the persuasiveness of micro vs. macro frames as a straightforwardly binary choice. Instead, I contend that when evaluating how micro or macro framing shapes public opinion, scholars must recognize that there are different categories of policy issues. Notably, some policy issues—such as immigration—are intimately tied to specific social groups, while others—such as climate change—are simply not.

In line with Iyengar's argument about the displacement of blame on individuals rather than systematic factors, I argue that when it comes to framing group-centric issues like immigration in the U.S., episodic frames are less persuasive to the general public because they are more easily dismissed as exceptions, rather than heralded as the norm. However, contrary to Iyengar, my argument is not based on the inability of an audience to connect specific cases to policy issues. But rather my argument poses that the general public is less likely to extrapolate generalized conclusions about a policy's group recipients from one specific example, particularly when that group is an outgroup or minority. It is entirely possible to imagine a scenario where the public can accept the merits (faults) of a specific member of a group, while at the same time hold negative (positive) views of the group in the aggregate. This argument is an important contribution to the literature because a lot of the evidence that suggests that individual stories are more persuasive than big-picture frames test the effect of big picture and little picture framing on attitudes and

behavior towards specific victims—not groups (Small and Loewenstein 2005, 2003, Small Loewenstein and Slovic 2007).

*Frame Style: Political Frames vs. Specific Consideration Frames*

In addition to considering the emphasis on the aggregate or individuals, immigration frames may also focus on immigrants as political actors who make demands upon the political system. These types of frames highlight immigrant demands via protests or as an influence on electoral results. While political frames may be “episodic” or “thematic”, they differ from these other types of emphasis frames in that they position subjects as making demands upon the political system. In other words, political frames depict people who are actively trying to drive change. And perhaps more importantly, they portray people trying to drive change on behalf of their group. Thus, protestors, activists, and Latina/o identity-voters are not typically acting for individual recognition, but rather for the recognition of their broader group or cause.

From the research on protests and the media, scholars have looked at what explains whether protests make it into the news (McCarthy, McPhail, & Smith 1996; Watkins 2001) and the type of coverage that protests receive (Watkins 2001; Gitlin 1980), as well as whether the content of news coverage reflects the political messages of protesters (Smith, McCarthy, McPhail, & Augustyn 2001). However, there is surprisingly very little work on the effect (if any) that media protest coverage has on political attitudes, particularly when it comes to immigration.

To be fair, scholars have examined the consequentiality of protests on political attitudes. Zepeda-Millan and Wallace do find that, after the 2006 marches, Latinas/os were more likely than before to report strong feelings of racial identity. Similarly, Barreto et. al. find that the 2006 marches were successful in increasing feelings of solidarity among Latinas/os of all national origins. And when it comes to non-Latinas/os, the opposite holds true—perceptions of Mexican

immigrants were negatively correlated with knowledge of immigrant protests (Cohen-Marks et. al. 2009).

However, while these studies have looked at the effects of immigration protests, they do not examine the role that the media plays as the carrier of political information on these protests. In fact, to my knowledge, no scholar has looked at if and how coverage of immigration protests compares to other types of media frames when influencing policy attitudes on the issue. Thus, we don't know if having protest-based coverage on immigration in the news vis-à-vis other types of immigration frames leads to similar or different responses from the public. Because the goal of protests is to garner attention for a particular cause, this omission in the literature is not trivial.

There is reason to expect that political news frames such as protests frames are different to other types of immigration frames. Research shows that (Latina/o) immigrants are perceived as threatening to the dominant majority. For instance, the visibility of Spanish (Citrin et. al 1990; Hopkins 2014), Latina/o national-origin symbols (Wright and Citrin 2011) and the apparent “browning of America” (Johnson et al. 1997; Santa Ana 2002), elicit feelings of threat among those who are outside the group. Consistent with these findings, political engagement and participation by immigrants could lead to negative reactions among those with no ties to the (Latina/o) immigration experience in the United States. Thus, the next section considers variations of framing effects by frame recipients.

### **Framing Immigration III: Frame Recipients, and Group Affinity**

The persuasiveness of different types of frames are at least partly dependent on who the recipients are. Indeed, the extent to which news frames can shape public opinion on immigration is limited. Americans are not entirely unattached to pre-existing political views. While the way

issues are presented to the public and where are consequential in the process of opinion formation (Scheufele and Tewskbury, 2007), in practice, the process by which frames influence opinions proves to be more complicated.

Media effects are, at least partly, a function of individuals' preexisting values (Druckman, 2001) and knowledge (Miller and Krosnick, 2000), as well as how they perceive the credibility of the source of the frame (Hayes, 2008). Thus, while the media sets the frames, individuals interpret or process those frames in different ways according to their pre-existing values (Entman 1993; Scheufele 1999). We know from past research, for example, that ideology, income, occupation (Scheve and Slaughter, 2001), education (Haubert and Fussell, 2006; Jackman and Muha, 1984), race or ethnicity (Morales et.al, 2013), age and other demographic factors are predictive of attitudes toward immigration.

Of specific interest to the present study is the role of group affinity in mediating the effect frames have on group-centric issues such as immigration. Past research documents that those who are members of the target group of a given policy or have close ties to the group are more likely than others to support favorable policy prescriptions and oppose negative policy alternatives. Huddy and Feldman (2006), for example, examine political opinions in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Blacks were not only more likely than Whites to be sympathetic and view victims of Hurricane Katrina more favorably, but they were also more likely to be supportive of government efforts to address the crisis and help the victims. Because of the racialized debate regarding to response to the natural disaster, these results seem to suggest that support or opposition for government efforts are at least partly explained by feelings of affinity with the target group.

The dissimilarity/similarity of an audience to the subjects of a frame might matter because it could make them more likely to be empathetic to their situation (Ostfeld and Mutz, 2014,

Stürmer, Snyder, Kropp, & Siem, 2006). Indeed, there is evidence that group affinity is also consequential within the context of immigration attitudes—Anglos are more likely to hold more restrictive views on immigration than Mexican-Americans (Binder, Polinard and Wrinkle 1997), and those with higher levels of Latina/o group consciousness are more likely to hold more favorable policy attitudes on issues that have relevance for Latinas/os (Sanchez 2006).

Ostfeld and Mutz (2014) examine how people’s similarity/dissimilarity with exemplars in frames conditions attitudes on immigration. Using a non-Latina/o White sample, they find that respondents who were similar to the exemplars were more likely to hold supportive immigration attitudes. The problem with the design of this study, however, is that it creates conditions that are not representative of the dynamics of U.S. immigration. Exemplars are made to be similar/dissimilar to the white respondents, but there is no consideration for the racialization of immigration in the United States as a “Latina/o” issue. Given the overwhelming association of immigration with Latinas/os (Perez, 2010; Chavez, 2001, 2008), the present study conceptualizes group affinity by making a distinction between Latina/o and non-Latina/o audiences, particularly a non-Latina/o White audience.

#### *Non-Latinas/os and immigration*

Immigration is a group-centric issue that is particularly divisive. Indeed, it is so divisive, that there is evidence suggesting it can shape deeply held beliefs or political attachments, such as partisan identification. Scholars have pointed to immigration as a contentious issue that could be serving as a catalyst for changes to U.S partisan attachments among non-Latina/o Whites. Hajnal and Rivera (2014) contend that anti-immigrant attitudes are driving what they call “the new Democratic defection”—or the gradual shift of partisan identification among Whites away from the Democratic Party and closer to the Republican Party. They find that those who hold more

negative views of immigrants are less likely to identify with the Democratic Party or support Democratic candidates. Their results highlight that immigration is not just a partisan issue, but a deeply divisive group-centric issue with strong racial and ethnic connotations.

Similarly, Abrajano and Hajnal (2015) identify what they call “White Backlash” against increasing immigration in the United States, where the turn to the Republican Party among White Americans is a response to the growing narrative of immigration as a threat in the media, entertainment, and even scholarly work (Chavez, 2001, 2008 Santa Ana, 2002). Abrajano and Hajnal find that over time, the negative depiction of immigrants in the media and the proliferation of “Latinas/os as a threat” helps explain White defection to the Republican Party and overall declining support for social services like welfare or funding for public education. However, while this study is able to show changes in trends across time, it does not provide evidence directly linking the nature of immigration coverage in the news and changes in political attitudes. Helping fill this gap, the present research enterprise provides experimental tests of the effect of a diverse set of immigration frames on immigration policy views among Latinas/os and non-Latinas/os.

While the research in this study differentiates between Latinas/os and non-Latinas/os, it should be noted that there are notable differences worth highlighting when it comes to immigration policy attitudes among non-Latinas/os. Following the 2006 immigrant marches, Cohen-Marks et al. (2009) use exit poll data from three California and Washington counties and find that the likelihood of reporting negative attitudes toward Mexican immigrants is higher among White, Republican, U.S. born, middle-income, lower-educated American voters.

Race is a particularly important indicator of immigration attitudes. Indeed, research by Hajnal and Rivera (2014), and Abrajano and Hajnal (2015) point to a racial divide—White Americans in particular are reacting negatively to immigration. Moreover, partisanship is a

prominent predictor of political attitudes (Bartels 2002), although it has received surprisingly little direct attention among immigration scholars (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014). In addition to race, other demographic variables have received scholarly attention. For instance, those who study public opinion on immigration have considered support for welcoming or restrictive immigration policies as a function of perceived market competition. When a large number of low-skilled immigrants enter the United States, native-born workers who are vying for the same jobs may see immigrants as a source of competition in the labor market (Scheve and Slaughter 2001). Thus, it is possible that those in the lower-income spectrum react negatively toward increased immigration.

Education has long been seen as an agent for tolerance and cosmopolitan values—all factors that should make people more amenable to immigrants. Indeed, Haubert and Fussell (2006) find that, in the United States, those who have higher levels of education are more likely to express welcoming stances on immigration. And finally, age and gender are worth highlighting, as there is some evidence that older respondents are more likely to hold restrictive views on immigration, and that there may be differences in the way men and women view immigrants (Chandler and Tsai 2001).

Taken together, scholars have documented how the racialization of immigration produces behavioral and attitudinal backlash among those who are outside the group that is most closely tied to immigration—Latinas/os. But on the flip-side, there is also evidence suggesting that increased racialization and attacks on immigration may be heightening both Latina/o identity (Wallace and Zepeda-Millan 2013, Garcia Bedolla 2005), and Latinas/os' motivation to respond politically to those attacks (Perez 2015). Thus, the racialization of immigration as a Latina/o issue and the presence of anti-immigrant narratives (Abrajano and Hajnal 2015) in the media could be

the root cause for two opposite trends: growing perceptions of immigration-induced threat among non-Latinas/os and solidarity with immigrants among Latinas/os.

### *Latinas/os and Immigration*

Immigration is at the center of Latina/o partisan attachments and political opinions. Parallel to the republican leaning shift in partisan attachments among Whites, is a gradual Democratic leaning affiliation among U.S. Latinas/os (Abrajano and Alvarez 2010; De la Garza and Cortina 2007; Kosmin and Keysar 1995). In the last two presidential elections, Latinas/os overwhelmingly supported President Obama's bid for the Presidency in record numbers (Wallace, 2012). National Latina/o organizations and activists have successfully articulated the issue of immigration as *the* Latina/o issue. And an overwhelming majority of Latinas/os hold political attitudes left of the center in the United States and favor welcoming attitudes on immigration (Fraga et. al. 2011).

To be sure, the substantive strength of Latina/o identity (and its subsequent connection with immigration) did not happen over-night; it has been decades in the making. In fact, the term "Hispanic" was not even included in the U.S. Census until 1980 (Mora, 2014), which also means we have very little systematic data on the group before then. "Latina/o" social movements like the Chicano and Puerto Rican movements of the 1960's and 1970's did not think of themselves as pan-ethnic organizations, but rather their goals and initiatives largely centered on national-origin pride and concerns for their respective communities (Mora, 2014). As Mora documents, Latina/o pan-ethnic organizations such as National Council of la Raza (NCLR) did not have a national presence until 1990 (Mora, 2014). It should come as no surprise, then, that the rise in the number of people that identify with pan-ethnic categories such as "Latina/o" or "Hispanic" is largely a recent phenomenon (Jones-Correa & Leal, 1996).

Nativist responses to immigration in the post 9/11 political context are at least partially responsible for the rapid increase in the saliency of Latina/o identity during the first two decades of the twenty-first century (Zepeda-Millan, 2014). As scholars have documented, the politicization of Latina/o identity comes as a response to anti-immigrant sentiment (Sanchez and Masuoka 2010). This process reached a milestone in the aftermath of the 2006 nationwide protests, which not only saw widespread participation from Latinas/os of all national origins (Zepeda-Millan, Wallace, and Jones-Correa 2014), but there is evidence that it also increased Latina/o racial identity (Wallace, Zepeda-Millan, 2013). Paradoxically, then, the height of anti-immigrant attacks was met with the solidification of a Latina/o voice that largely spoke united in favor of immigrants.

As Perez theorizes, the political salience of Latina/o identity can perhaps be traced to a psychological response from members of the Latina/o in-group in the face of perceived identity-based attacks (2015a; 2015b). And the political implications of this response are potentially far-reaching—even shaping partisan attachments. As recent scholarship documents, when Latinas/os are given information about increased deportations under Obama, they are more likely to see the Democratic Party as less welcoming (Street, Zepeda-Millan and Jones-Correa, 2015). Thus, overall, Latinas/os do not respond to the issue of immigration as partisans, but rather as members of a distinct ethnic group.

Despite the evidence of a rising Latina/o identity that rallies behind the issue of immigration, there are some notable caveats. Complicating the matter is the fact that there is still substantial variation within the pan-ethnic group by national-origin, generation, and measures of acculturation and assimilation, and identity strength, among other considerations. While there are commonalities among all Latinas/os, these differences can be politically consequential.

When it comes to national-origin, there are some notable distinctions on attitudes toward “Latina/o” issues like immigration between national-origin groups that have close ties to the U.S. immigration experience (i.e. Central-Americans, Mexicans) and those that do not (i.e. Puerto Ricans, Cubans). Unlike every other Latina/o sub-group, Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens at birth, which means they do not have a direct experience with the legal challenges associated with immigration (DeSipio and Pantoja, 2007). And Cuban-Americans also have a unique experience because of their accelerated path to legal status and citizenship upon arrival to the United States. These differences have led scholars to question the possibility of pan-ethnicity across so many different national-origins and experiences in the United States (Jones-Correa and Leal 1996). Yet others remain optimistic about the potential strength of Latina/o identity by pointing to commonalities in language and religion as a potential foundation for identity building and solidification (Sanchez, 2006).

To be clear, the fact that there are differences across national-origin groups is undisputable (Garcia 2011, Fraga et.al. 2001, Garcia-Bedolla 2009, DeSipio and Pantoja 2007). For instance, Fraga et. al. (2011) find that, among Puerto Ricans, positive perceptions of the benefit of immigration to the United States is the lowest of all Latina/o national-origin groups. However, Fraga et. al. also caution against over-stating the extent of these differences. Even for Puerto Ricans—the only group with no direct ties to immigration—positive perceptions of immigration are strikingly high—with 85% of the group identifying immigration as a net positive for the United States.

Another important cleavage among Latinas/os for political attitudes are generational differences and levels of acculturation. Immigrants and newer generations of U.S. Latinas/os have more direct ties to the immigration experience. As such, they are also more likely to hold more

welcoming immigration attitudes than their counterparts (Branton, 2007). As Branton finds, Latinas/os who are first generation and Spanish-dominant hold more favorable views than bilingual second generation Latinas/os, and the latter are in turn more likely to do so than English dominant third generation Latinas/os. Thus, generationally, Latinas/os in the United States do seem to become somewhat less supportive of positive immigration attitudes.

The explanatory mechanism for decreasing support of welcoming immigration policies may be traced back to the process of acculturation into the American mainstream. As Latinas/os become acculturated into the United States—securing higher incomes and becoming English dominant—they are less likely to perceive linked-fate—or commonality—with other Latinas/os (Sanchez & Masuoka, 2010).

Demographic and attitudinal differences among Latinas/os should not be overlooked, but they should also not be overstated when it comes to immigration attitudes. As Branton highlights, even English dominant third generation Latinas/os hold more welcoming opinions on immigration than Anglo Democrats. Consistent with research on Latina/o public opinion (Fraga et. al., 2011), then, differences between Latinas/os and non-Latinas/os far outweigh differences across national-origin sub-groups.

Collectively, existing research tells us that while scholars warn against treating Latinas/os as a monolithic group, Latinas/os overwhelmingly favor welcoming policies on immigration when compared to other racial and ethnic groups and that support is on the rise. Thus, my research considers the possibility of different framing effects on Latinas/os and non-Latinas/os. Because immigration is a group-centric issue that has been racialized as a “Latina/o” issue, I expect Latinas/os to process immigration frames in a more favorable light and find commonality and solidarity with the plight of Latinas/os in the United States.

## **A Group-Centric Theory of Media Framing Effects: How Group-Centrism mediates the effect of Media Frames on Immigration**

This dissertation argues for a theory of framing effects that puts Converse's conceptualization of group-centrism at its center. I build on the notion that the effect of media frames on group-centric issues (such as immigration) are filtered through group perceptions. Specifically, I contend that because news frames are processed through the public's perceptions of the group, the style of frames matters just as much as the substantive content of frames. By style, I refer to whether news stories present information about a policy's beneficiaries at (1) the group level vs. personal level and whether (2) they highlight the political competition of the perceived beneficiaries. While I test my theory specifically on the issue of immigration, I believe my theoretical framework has implications for the framing of group-centric issues more generally. As I elaborate on in the following chapters of this dissertation, when it comes to framing group-centric issues such as immigration, (1) group-level frames are more persuasive than personal narrative frames and (2) frames that highlight the political competition of the policy's beneficiaries are more likely to generate negative reactions from those outside of the group.

Table 1 presents a description of personal narrative frames, group-centric frames, and political frames.

Table 1: Frame Styles, Descriptions and Examples

Frame Style	Description and Examples
<b>Personal Narrative</b>	<p>Highlights the positive or negative specific case of one or a few individuals to portray the policy issue.</p> <p><i>Examples include:</i> 1. A hardworking immigrant who has formed a family in the United States and is now at risk of deportation. 2. An immigrant that commits an armed robbery.</p>
<b>Group-Centric</b>	<p>Speaks to the aggregate positive or negative effects of the policy recipients.</p> <p><i>Examples include:</i> 1. Immigrants are an integral part of the economic well-being of the United States. 1. Immigrants increase crime in the United States</p>
<b>Political Frame</b>	<p>Describes instances in which policy recipients are making political demands or shaping political outcomes. The key to distinguish a political frame is that subjects are acting upon the political system on behalf of their group interests.</p> <p><i>Examples include:</i> 1. Immigrants are protesting outside of the White House to demand immigration reform. 2. Immigrants are changing the electoral composition of the U.S. map</p>

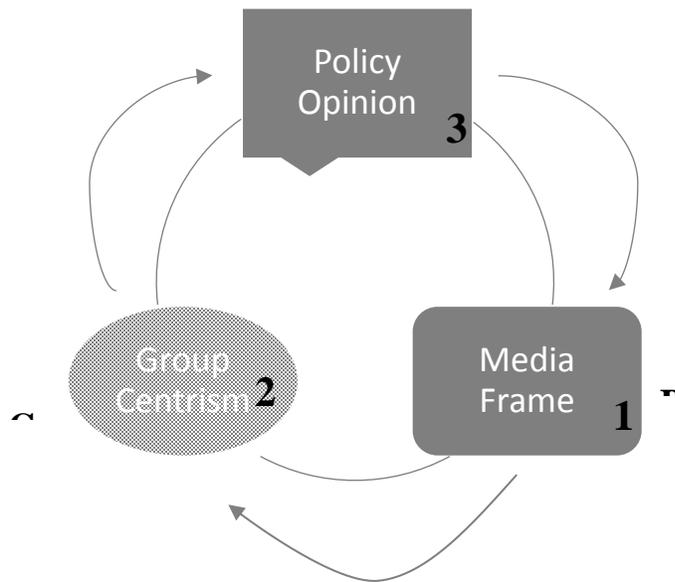
It should be noted that while the focus of this research is to compare different frame styles in the coverage of immigration, there are some news stories on immigration that are not necessarily positive or negative, but rather are merely descriptive or administrative events surrounding the issue. These are the types of stories that speak of Congress debating the issue of immigration or an elected official announcing that s/he will address the public about the issue. Because the goal of this research is to examine how depictions of immigrants (and their contributions or problems) in the media shape public attitudes on immigration, I account for the presence of “neutral” frames as part of my content analysis in Chapter 2.

### *Group-Centrism as a Mediator of Framing Effects*

The theoretical foundation of this dissertation rests on the notion that immigration is a group-centric policy issue (Chavez, 2001, 2008, Santa-Ana, 2004), and that because the public is largely uninformed about political issues (Converse 1964, Zaller, 1992), they rely on perceptions of the group to form policy opinions. Furthermore, I argue that framing effects will vary by the style of the frame, and how it interacts with perceptions of immigration as a group-issue. The central argument, then, is that when people encounter news frames on immigration, they incorporate that new information in relation to the group.

To be clear, I do not assume that people are “blank slates” who have no views on immigration at all. Much to the contrary, when people encounter news frames on the issue, they are likely to have some existing pre-dispositions or general attitudes toward immigrants and immigration in the United States (Zaller, 1992). However, this research tests the effect of media frames on policy opinions with the expectation that people use group-considerations to update or reinforce their existing policy attitudes. Thus, as figure 1 illustrates, the present analysis begins with the frame as the first step in the process. After encountering a news frame, I expect group-centrism to serve as a mediator (step 2) to then shape policy opinions (step 3). The persuasiveness of the frame rests on its ability to update perceptions of the group. In other words, frame strength on a group-centric issue like immigration depends on whether the frame’s audience believes that the information presented is applicable to the group (or not).

Figure 1: The Role of Group-Centrism on Immigration Framing Effects



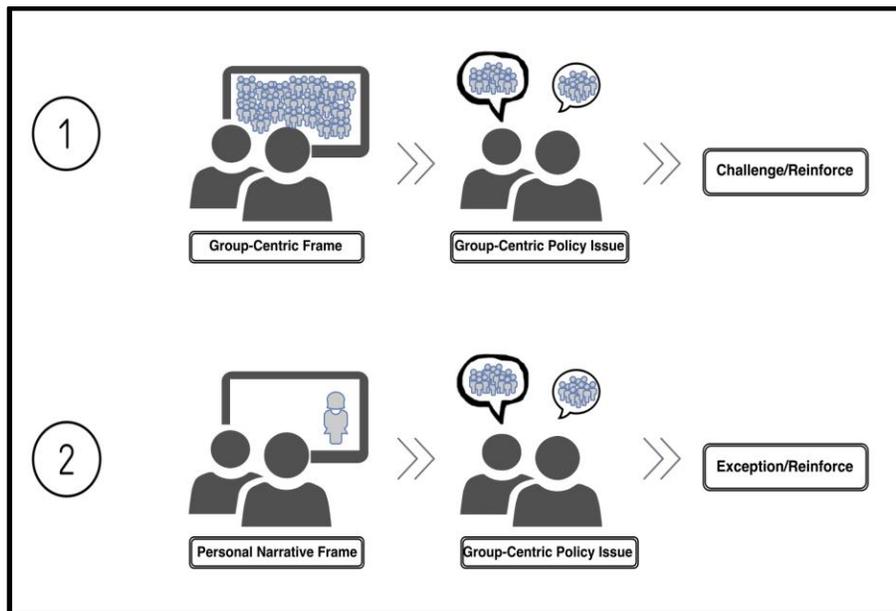
The style of the frame (group-centric, personal narrative or political) matters for two reasons. First, I expect group-centric frames to be more persuasive than personal narrative frames. When it comes to group-centric and personal narrative frames, I argue that despite common perceptions that individual stories are more persuasive because they help put a human face on an issue, they can also be more easily dismissed as exceptions. And, secondly, when it comes to political frames, I contend that they trigger perceptions of group competition to those who are outside the group, while simultaneously increasing solidarity among the in-group.

#### *Personal Narratives vs. Group-centric frames in the context of U.S. Immigration*

One of the central arguments I advance in this dissertation is that personal narrative stories are less effective than group-level stories in positively shaping the public's attitudes toward immigration. This argument is consistent with the individualist strand of American culture (Watson and Morris 2002, Feldman 1983, Tocqueville, 1862)—where success and failure is more readily attributed to the individual rather than to social and/or political structures and dynamics.

Figure 2 illustrates two processes by which people incorporate information on a group-centric issue. Process one depicts exposure to a group-centric frame and process two shows exposure to a personal narrative frame. Because group-centric frames are presented at the same level of the group-centric issue, these frames have a higher likelihood of posing a challenge or reinforcing people’s views on an issue like immigration. Conversely, because personal narrative stories highlight one or a few members of the group, they are more likely to be dismissed as exceptions.

*Figure 2: Group-Centrism as Mediator of Group-Centric and Personal Narrative Framing Effects*



In line with this, when it comes to immigration attitudes, I expect group-centric frames (Group Negative (GN) and Group Positive (GP)) to be more persuasive forms of communication than personal narrative frames (Personal Negative (PN) and Personal Positive (PP)). However, this does not mean that the tone of a frame is inconsequential. Indeed, in Figure 3, I outline my expectations for both tone and style. While I expect both positive frames to lead to more

welcoming attitudes on immigration (right side of the spectrum) than either of the negative frames (left side of the spectrum), I also expect that group positive and group negative frames will move frame audiences more than their personal narrative counterparts.

*Figure 3: Effect of exposure to a group negative frame (as opposed to a group positive frame)*



This argument speaks to the effectiveness of current political communication strategies among advocates and pro-immigration sympathizers. Because an individual-lens is more widely used among immigrant sympathizers than opponents (See Chapter 2), this has important implications for the effectiveness of current messaging strategies employed by immigrant supporters. Stated simply, I argue that positive individual-level stories on immigration cannot effectively counteract the weight of negative group-centric appeals. Thus, when targeting mass public opinion on immigration, the use of the personal narrative as a media strategy is a less effective use of both the time and resources of the organizations that employ them.

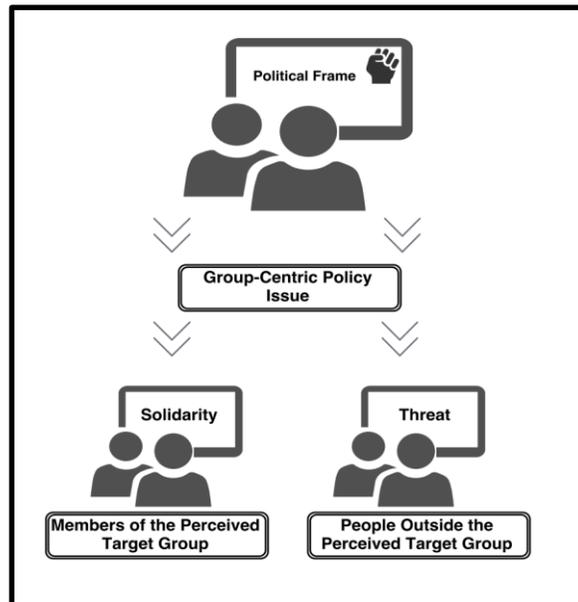
*Political Frames: threat and solidarity*

In addition to the group-centric vs personal narrative appeal, this research also examines a second way in which group-centrism mediates the effects of frames on immigration attitudes. Specifically, I point to a third style in U.S. immigration coverage: news stories that highlight the political agency or power of immigrants in the United States. Political frames such as news of protests may be episodic—in the sense that they point to specific moments of public demonstrations. However, they differ from personal narratives because they showcase protestors as political actors with political demands who are acting upon the political system. Unlike stories

of personal narratives where immigrants exemplify their contributions and struggles, political frames depict immigrants acting and making demands on behalf of their group.

Stated simply, political frames link immigrants' political participation and/or activism to that of their collective group grievances and demands. When a particular policy issue is group-centric, group-based demands will result in different reactions from those who are members of the perceived target group vis-à-vis those who are outside the group. Specifically, as Figure 4 shows, I argue that members of the perceived target group are more likely to express policy attitudes in solidarity with the group, while those outside of the group are more likely to see the group as a source of political threat and express policy attitudes that are less favorable to the group.

*Figure 4: Group-Centrism as a Mediator of Political Framing Effects*



Within the specific policy area of immigration, whether political frames are positively or negatively received by recipients is largely dependent on the level of group affinity that recipients have to immigrants. Immigration has been closely linked to Latinas/os as a group in the United States, and past research suggests that Latinas/os show higher levels of solidarity with immigrants,

and that non-Latinas/os (particularly Whites) express feelings of group threat as a result of immigration. Thus, as Figure 5 illustrates, I expect protests frames to have opposite effects on Latinas/os and non-Latinas/os.

*Figure 5: Predicted effect of Political Frames on the immigration policy attitudes of non-Latinas/os and Latinas/os*

<i>Non-Latinas/os</i>	(-) Political Frame-----Positive Frames (+)
	(-) Political Frame-----Negative Frames (-)
<i>Latinas/os</i>	(+) Political Frames-----Positive Frames (+)
	(+) Political Frames-----Negative Frames (-)

## **Overview of Chapters and Summary of Findings**

Theoretically, this dissertation bridges the immigration and group threat literatures with research on media framing and public opinion. Whereas immigration and group threat scholars have advanced the notion that the entanglement of immigration with Latinas/os as an ethnic group elicits threat among the dominant white majority, framing scholars provide the theoretical foundations for why frame styles, recipients, and contexts are consequential for public opinion. In my research, I contend that the effects of media frames on immigration are mediated by the conceptualization of immigration as a group-centric issue—i.e. opinions about immigration are tied to opinions about (Latina/o) immigrants.

Substantively, I provide a comprehensive analysis of media frames on immigration, accounting in particular for the interactive process of media messages—where the effect of messages are as much a function of the message as they are a function of the recipient. That is, my

research accounts for the role that pre-existing opinions, and racial and ethnic identities have on shaping how people incorporate new information on immigration. Finally, methodologically, I provide the first experimental test of the effect of a range of immigration media frames, allowing me to compare and contrast between them rather than narrowly focus on one particular frame. The following is an overview of the organizational scheme of the chapters in this dissertation, as well as an overview of findings.

## Chapter 2

### HOW THE MEDIA FRAMES IMMIGRATION

#### *A Content Analysis of the Distribution of Personal Narrative, Group-Centric, and Political Frames in U.S. Coverage on Immigration*

In Chapter two, I conduct a content analysis of every immigration news story published in two print media outlets—The New York Times and the Washington Times—during three years: 2006, 2010, and 2015. Specifically, I assess the use of three styles of immigration frames: (1) the group-centric frame, (2) the personal narrative frame, and (3) the political frame. The quantitative analysis of the distribution of frames suggests three conclusions. First, negative coverage on immigration is overwhelmingly group-centric. Secondly, positive coverage on immigration is roughly divided between the use of group-centric and personal narratives. And thirdly, political frames—or stories about the political activism and/or power of immigrants—are well-represented in both news outlets and in all three of the years examined. These stylistic patterns hold for both The New York Times and The Washington Times. Despite their ideological differences, both news sources are consistent in the styles they use to cover immigration. Thus, I argue that—by largely ignoring stylistic differences in the production of positive and negative media coverage on immigration—scholars have missed an important consideration about how the public learns the

contributions (and/or harm) that immigration brings to the United States. More importantly, as I argue in Chapters 3 and 4, these dissimilarities—far from being mere stylistic differences—are politically consequential for public opinion on immigration.

## Chapter 3

### FRAMING THE GROUP

#### *Why Personal Narratives are less Persuasive than Group-Centric Frames*

The analysis of newspaper articles in the New York Times and Washington Times reveals that negative coverage on immigration is group-centric, while positive coverage combines the use of both group-centric and personal narrative frames. Having identified the stylistic asymmetry between positive and negative coverage on immigration, Chapter 3 uses an original survey experiment to test the persuasiveness of group-centric and personal narrative frames. I randomly assign respondents to be exposed to one of four frames on immigration: (1) negative group-centric, (2) negative personal narrative, (3) positive group-centric or (4) positive personal narrative. Respondents are then asked to report their policy preferences on a pathway to citizenship and legal status for undocumented immigrants. Taken together, the results indicate that group-centric frames are overall more effective than personal narrative frames. Moreover, the strength of framing effects varies by partisan identification and race—with Democrats, Independents, and Whites being more responsive to framing effects than their counterparts.

## Chapter 4

### IMMIGRATION PROTESTS AND PUBLIC OPINION

#### *How Public Demonstrations Shape the Policy Attitudes of Latinas/os and Non-Latinas/os*

Political frames focus on the demands and/or electoral power of immigrants in the United States. The content analysis of immigration coverage in Chapter 4 reveals that depictions of the political engagement of immigrants are well-represented across different years and ideological sources. Chapter 4 builds on these findings to examine the effect of one type of political frame on immigration: stories of immigrant protests. Specifically, I assess the effect of immigrant protests on Latinas/os' and non-Latinas/os' views on immigration policy. To evaluate attitudes among non-Latinas/os, I use data from an original survey experiment and randomly assign a sample of non-Latina/o respondents to receive either a protest story or four other immigration stories—two positive and two negative. And to explore how protests shape Latinas/os' immigration attitudes, I use the 2006 Latina/o National Survey (LNS) to examine the effect of the 2006 immigration protests. Results from these analyses indicate opposite effects for Latinas/os and non-Latinas/os. While exposure to the 2006 immigrant protests increases Latinas/os' *welcoming* attitudes on immigration, exposure to an immigration protest story increases *restrictive* views among non-Latinas/os. Altogether, the findings suggest two conclusions: (1) protests shape public opinion on immigration and (2) the direction of the effect varies by audience.

## Chapter 5

### CONCLUSION

#### *Theoretical Contributions, and Implications for Political Strategists and Communicators*

In Chapter 5, I provide an overview of the findings outlined in this dissertation, as well as consider how they build and expand on existing scholarship. Moreover, I discuss the implications

for framing research and immigration scholars. In addition to considering the theoretical contributions of the dissertation, Chapter 5 also considers the political implications of my findings for political communicators. As I contend, current immigrant-friendly advocates may be employing less than optimal communications strategies on immigration by pushing for personal narratives and political frames.

## Chapter 2

# How The Media Frames Immigration

*A Content Analysis of the Distribution of Personal  
Narrative, Group-Centric, and Political Frames in U.S.  
Coverage On Immigration*

## **Introduction: Content Analysis in the Study of U.S. Coverage of Immigration**

When it comes to the collective understanding of social issues and problems, the media is unique in both its power and access. As Santa Ana (2002) observes, the media has “an institutionalized right of narration to the public, access far more extensive than the highest ranking officeholder, with incomparable preferential access to the public.” Thus, understanding the patterns in the coverage of immigration can provide critical insight into the formation and evolution of public opinion on the issue.

In Chapter 1, I describe three types of prominent media frames on immigration: group-centric frames, personal narrative frames, and political frames. In Chapters 3 and 4, I test the effect of these frames on policy attitudes toward immigration. Before doing that, however, this chapter considers the distribution of these different types of frames in news media coverage on immigration. This is a critical component of the dissertation because examining framing effects without an examination of how those frames are represented (or not) in the media makes it difficult to draw generalized conclusions about the consequences of any framing effects that exist relative to their public visibility.

Despite the central role that frame frequency and distribution has within the dynamics of media and public opinion, it has not received widespread attention. Indeed, framing scholarship as an area of study immediately conjures images of survey experiments and policy opinions. Research on the media and public opinion largely focuses on the effect of frames—or on comparing and contrasting alternative frames on an issue to assess their effectiveness and persuasiveness. However, in addition to assessing framing effects, research on media framing necessitates an understanding of what Druckman and Chong (2007a) call the “production of frames.” It refers to the examination of how an issue gets framed, when, and where—or which types of frames are

more or less represented in media coverage of a given issue. This is true for all policy issues but—given the saliency of immigration in American Politics—it is particularly surprising that we know very little about how immigration gets covered by the media. The result is that the dynamics of actual media coverage on immigration remains under-examined (Dunaway, Branton, and Abrajano 2010).

### **Racialization and Tone in Media Coverage on Immigration**

To be fair, foundational research has taken the task of examining the tone and racialization of immigration as a Latina/o issue. A key finding from the literature is that immigration coverage elicits fear and anxiety. In a widely cited book on the visual illustration of immigration on popular U.S. magazine covers, Chavez (2001) identifies the representation of contemporary immigrants as an invasion coming from the southern border. The narrative of the “Mexican invasion” is a product of both increased migration and political strategies. Indeed, as Massey and Pren (2012) document in their analyses of major newspapers between 1965-1995, the depiction of immigration as an invasion peaked in 1970—parallel to the increase in undocumented immigration and to the strategic political communication of politicians that wanted to capitalize on Americans’ fears about immigrants of Mexican decent. Thus, since the 1970’s, the negative depiction of immigrants (and the fear it produces) has been largely intertwined with the association of immigration with Latinos/as—particularly Mexicans (Chavez, 2008).

Consistent with Chavez’s findings regarding the visual representation of immigrants, Santa Ana (2002) finds similar dynamics in print media. In his analysis of coverage surrounding proposition 187 in the Los Angeles Times during the 1990’s, Santa Ana identifies the use of distinct metaphors to describe (Latina/o) immigrants. These include juxtaposing immigration as

an “invasion” and the immigrant as an “animal” against a conceptualization of the nation as a “house” or a “body.” From this perspective, the media depicts (Latina/o) immigrants as a harmful force that is altering the stability and health of the United States.

More recent scholarship by Abrajano and Hajnal (2015) confirms previous findings. In their examination of news articles published in the NYT between 1980 and 2011, they find that coverage on immigration is overwhelmingly negative, and Latina/o-centric. Taken together, then, existing research on media coverage of immigration leads to two overall conclusions. First, the media’s negative coverage of immigrants has played a primary role in the American public’s growing fears and perceptions of threat about immigrants and their impact on the nation. And secondly, Latinos/as—as an ethnic group—have been the primary targets of those anxieties and fears.

#### *Market-Driven Differences in the Coverage of immigration*

Beyond documenting the overall negative tone in the coverage of immigration, scholars have also provided evidence to suggest variation in how immigration gets covered by different media outlets. In a news market that has become increasingly polarized, researchers rightfully point to selection bias in terms of where people choose to get their information from (Mullainathan and Shleifer 2005). The fact is that people are more responsive to information that is consistent with their pre-existing beliefs (Zaller 1992, Klayman 1995). Naturally, then, there is an inherent bias in where people get their news information from. But beyond driving individuals’ choices for where they get their information, this bias can also shape the market of news production by incentivizing economically driven news sources to cater to their audiences (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2010). In other words—because media sources are economically driven—they are aware of their audience’s preferences and provide news coverage that is consistent with those preferences.

Following this observation, then, we should expect significant variation in how the issue of immigration gets covered by ideological, geographical (Branton and Dunaway 2009a, 2009b), and group-specific news sources (Branton and Dunaway 2008). First, when it comes to regional or geographic differences in news coverage, Branton and Dunaway (2009b) examine the relationship between spatial proximity to the U.S. Southern border and newspaper reporting on immigration. Perhaps not surprisingly, as closeness to the border increases, so does the quantity in stories about immigration, as well as the negative connotations attached to it. They attribute this to the economic motivations of newspaper sources, who are responding to their readers' interests on the issue (Branton and Dunaway 2009b).

These differences are consequential because not only does the amount of coverage on immigration increase the public's perceived saliency of the issue (Dunaway, Branton, and Abrajano 2010), but the tone of coverage has been shown to drive political attitudes on immigration (Dunaway, Goidel, Kirzinger, and Wilkinson, 2011). Moreover, scholars have found that people are more likely to be more responsive to negative information, as well assign more weight to negative information than positive information (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer and Vohs, 2001). Thus, the higher amount of negative news coverage near the U.S.-Mexico border has the potential to heighten the effect of negative information on immigration policy opinions.

A second consideration on the market driven production of immigration news examines how the language of media can shape coverage on immigration (Kerevel 2011, Abrajano and Singh 2009, Branton and Dunaway 2008). Branton and Dunaway argue that while both Spanish and English dominant media are driven by an interest to maximize profit, their audiences are different, which results in both a higher and more positive level of immigration coverage from Spanish media outlets. And thirdly, an additional way in which the market can drive news content is based on the

ideological leanings of the audience it caters to. There is evidence, for instance, that conservative leaning news outlets like FOX News tend to report more restrictive perspectives on immigration than more liberal news sources like MSNBC, and as a result, individuals who watch FOX News have overall more negative views of Mexican immigrants (Zúñiga Correa and Valenzuela 2012).

### *Frame Styles in the Coverage of Immigration*

While media scholars provide the foundation to understanding the tone in which immigration is depicted in the media, they have paid less attention to assessing the style of immigration coverage in the United States. Benson (2013) offers one noteworthy exception. In a comparative analysis of American and French media coverage on immigration, Benson highlights the preponderance of “dramatic story-telling” that characterizes U.S. media stories. As Benson explains, “In the United States, personalized “dramatic narrative” has become a dominant journalistic form, producing a tendency toward both investigative reports and human interest profiles.”

As I argue in this chapter, however, the “dramatic story-telling” tendency in American media is particularly visible when it comes to the use of individual immigrant stories—a strategy that I argue is widely used among pro-immigrant activists and supporters—but not anti-immigrant political communicators. The present chapter will show that, contrary to positive coverage on immigration, anti-immigrant voices tend to stick with a group-centric approach to immigration, where they describe the aggregate-level harm and problems that immigrants bring into the United States. And this asymmetrical imbalance in the coverage of immigration is important because as I demonstrate in Chapter 3, the difference between the positive and negative coverage of immigration is not a mere stylistic difference—but a variation that is politically consequential in the process of opinion formation.

In this chapter, I also pose that the tendency toward the “dramatic story-telling” of media coverage on immigration that Benson observes, gives rise to the use of political frames when covering immigration. I argue that both conservative and mainstream media outlets employ the use of political frames—or stories that focus on immigrant activism and/or electoral participation—as a way to portray the saliency of the issue in American politics. Thus, despite the increasing polarization in both attitudes and media consumption on immigration, I will argue in this chapter that the media is surprisingly consistent in the styles it uses to tell the story of immigrants in the United States. This has important implications for framing effects on public opinion. Specifically, as I elaborate in Chapter 4, regardless of the intent behind political frames, they have the potential to exacerbate distinct feelings of threat and solidarity among different audiences.

Understanding the style of immigration coverage is important because, while different frames may vary in how they cover immigration, the issue of immigration itself is conceptualized at the group-level. As Chavez (2008) explains:

*The virtual lives of “Mexicans,” “Chicanos,” “Illegal aliens,” and “immigrants” become abstractions and representations that stand in the place of real lives. Rather than actual lives, virtual lives are generalized, iconic, and typified and are turned into statistical means. They are aggregate figures melded into cost-benefit analyses. They are no longer flesh and-blood people; they exist as images.*

I argue that the American public processes new information in relation to those images and abstractions. Thus, it matters whether pro and anti-immigrant coverage uses frame styles that are group-centric, personal narratives or political. As I argue in Chapter 3 and 4, given the group-centric abstraction of immigration, personal narrative frames pose weaker challenges to people’s group-based perceptions of immigration, and political frames highlight the political power (and potential competition) of immigrants as a group.

## **Theorizing Stylistic Differences in the Media Coverage on Immigration**

The present research does not dispute the findings on the racialization of immigration or the overwhelming negative depictions of immigrants in the media. It also does not challenge the irrefutable fact of news polarization or the economically driven incentives that drive news coverage content. However, I argue that by (largely) ignoring stylistic dynamics in the coverage of immigration, scholars have overlooked an important dimension in the study of political communication and the media. Specifically, I argue that while news sources will certainly vary in the tone they use to report on immigration, the frame styles they attach to negative and positive considerations are consistent across news sources.

### *Frame Styles: Group-Centric, Personal Narrative and Political*

One of the central contentions in this chapter is that while conservative news outlets will be more likely to portray immigrants in a negative light than more mainstream news sources, the style frames they employ to depict immigrants in either a positive or negative light will be consistent across news sources. Specifically, I hypothesize that when it comes to negative coverage on immigration, both conservative and mainstream news sources will offer group-centric depictions of immigrants. Moreover, I further hypothesize that when it comes to positive coverage on immigration, both conservative and mainstream news outlets will employ both group-centric and personal narratives in a more equally distributive way than they do for negative coverage.

H1: A conservative news source will employ more negative coverage on immigration

H2: When it comes to negative coverage on immigration, both the conservative and mainstream news sources will primarily employ group-centric frames.

H3: When it comes to positive news coverage on immigration, both the conservative and mainstream news sources will employ personal narratives of immigrants and group-centric frames at similar rates.

Overall, with H2 and H3, I expect positive coverage on immigration to be more equally distributed between personal narrative and group-centric appeals in both the NYT and WT when compared to the distribution of negative personal and group-centric frames. However—as outlined in H4 and H5, I also expect the NYT to be more likely to employ positive personal frames (as opposed to positive group frames) than the WT. And I also expect the WT to be more likely to employ negative group frames (as opposed to negative personal narratives) than the NYT. The reason for this is that I contend that positive coverage on immigration relies more heavily on personal stories, while negative coverage relies more heavily on group-centric information. Thus, given that the NYT leans liberal, and the WT is conservative, I expect the frames styles they use to be more closely aligned with their respective ideological preferences.

H4: A Liberal News Source will have a higher percentage of articles with positive personal narratives than positive group-centric frames.

H5: A Conservative News Source will have a higher percentage of articles with negative group-centric frames than negative personal narratives.

When it comes to the representation of political frames in the media, I expect political frames to be equally employed across news outlets. The reason for this is that political frames describe instances of political activism and power. Because—as Benson (2013) documents—media coverage is particularly responsive to these types of story-driven dramatic events, I hypothesize in H6 that the frequency of political frames—news stories about immigrant activism or electoral participation—will be similar in conservative and mainstream media outlets.

H6: The frequency of political frames will be similar in both conservative and mainstream news sources.

### **Content Analysis of Group-Centric, Personal Narrative, and Political Frames**

To assess the use of different frame styles on immigration in the United States, I conduct content-analysis of newspaper coverage on immigration in the New York Times (NYT) and Washington Times (WT). In addition to providing representation of different ideological outlets—the NYT leaning more liberal and the WT being conservative—I select these news sources for several reasons. First, the NYT has nation-wide distribution in the United States and is one of the top newspapers in circulation. Scholars typically include the NYT in their analyses because there is evidence to suggest that it is representative of overall news coverage in the United States, including both print media and television (Abrajano and Hajnal 2015).

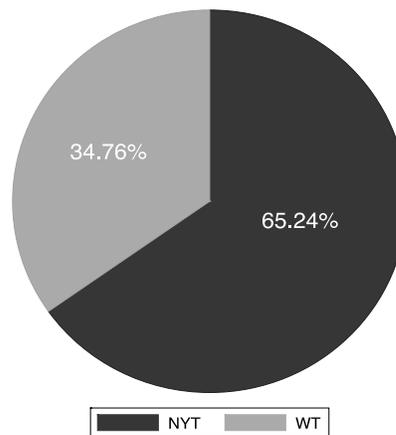
Secondly, I select the WT to capture media frames on immigration in a type of news outlet that is not only more conservative, but is particularly aligned with a restrictive approach to immigration. While most scholars limit their analyses to include mainstream sources like the NYT, it is important to consider different types of news sources given the increasing polarization of news consumption (Prior 2013, Iyengar and Hahn 2009). Moreover, while I certainly expect immigration coverage on the WT to be considerably more negative than coverage in the NYT, I hope to show that my theoretical expectations about how pro and anti-immigration frame styles differ in terms of style are consistent across ideologically different news outlets.

Using the LexisNexis Search engine, I compile a dataset of every article published in the NYT and WT in 2006, 2010, and 2015. I search for articles that include various words related to immigration, such as immigration, immigrant, undocumented immigrant, “illegal” immigrant,

“illegals”. Moreover, to ensure that the news content is primarily about immigration, I only include articles that mention immigration in the title and/or headline. This allows me to weed out instances where immigration is mentioned in passing, but is not the focus of the story.

The search returns a total of 1,283 news articles—837 in the NYT and 446 in the WT. From this list, I eliminate those articles that cover the issue of immigration in a country that is not the United States, as well as letters to the editor. This leaves a total of 961 articles—599 in the NYT and 362 in the WT. As Figure 6 shows, this means that about 65% percent of the articles included in the analyses come from the NYT and about 35% are a product of the Washington Times.

*Figure 6: Percentage of Articles in 2006, 2010 and 2015 by Newspaper Source*



I code each of these using six dummy variables for frame style: Positive Group-Centric, Positive Personal Narrative, Negative Group-Centric, Negative Personal Narrative, Political Demands, and Political Electoral. Moreover, because journalists often employ more than one frame style in each article, I code each frame occurrence individually. Thus, the total sample of frames totals to 1,203. Table 1 presents a description of each of the six categories of frame styles. It should be noted that there are some articles on immigration that are mainly describing news

related to immigration with no particular positive or negative connotation and without discussing the political power of immigrants. Thus, I create a seventh category, also depicted in Table 2, to account for “neutral frames”.

*Table 2: Coding Scheme for Frame Styles on Immigration*

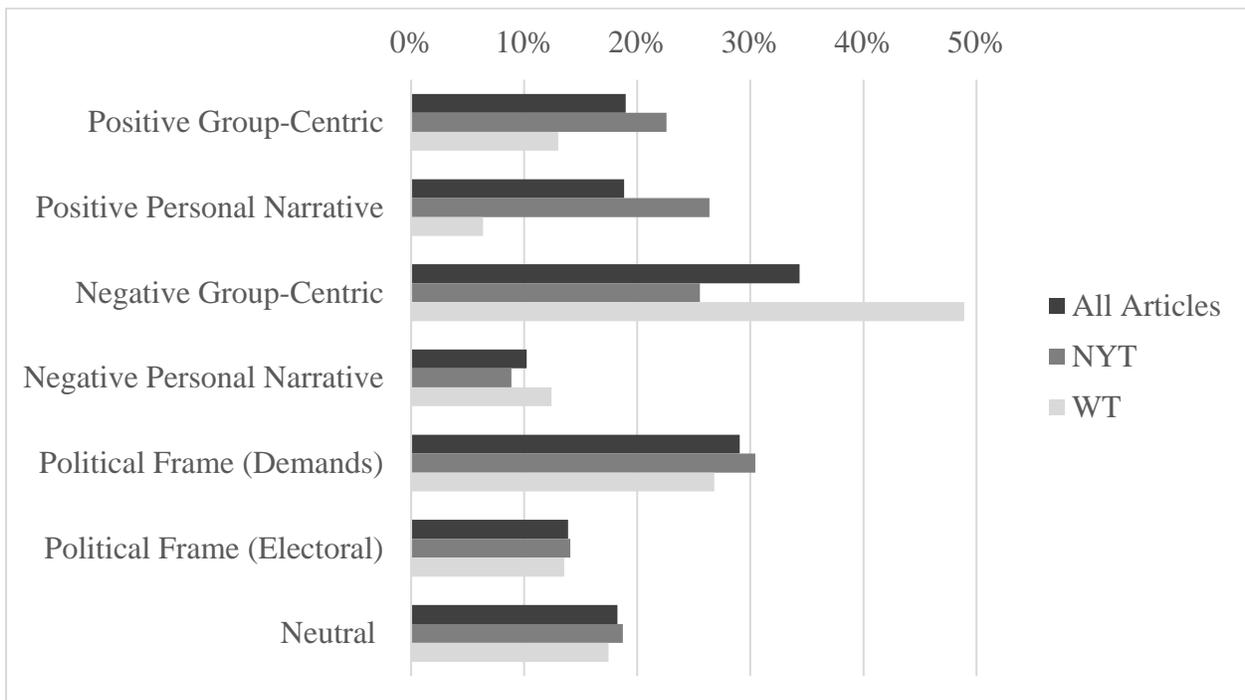
<b>Frame Style</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Positive Group-Centric</b>	Describes the positive attributes and/or contributions of immigrants (as a group) in the United States. The focus is on the group—not individuals.
<b>Positive Personal Narrative</b>	Describes the positive attributes and/or contributions of one or a few immigrant individuals in the United States. The focus is on the individual(s)—not the group.
<b>Negative Group-Centric</b>	Describes the negative attributes and/or harm of immigrants (as a group) in the United States. The focus is on the group—not individuals.
<b>Negative Personal Narrative</b>	Describes the negative attributes and/or harm of one or a few immigrant individuals in the United States. The focus is on the individual(s)—not the group.
<b>Political Demands</b>	Describes efforts to make political demands upon government institutions. Members of the group are acting on behalf of their group.
<b>Political Electoral</b>	Describes the electoral relevance and influence of immigrants as a group. Members of the group are described as part of an electoral block with cohesive political preferences.
<b>Neutral Frame</b>	Describes events related to immigration without indicating any positive or negative effects of the group (or individual members of the group), and without describing any political participation of the group.

*Distribution of Immigration Frames in the NYT and WT in 2006, 2010, and 2015*

Figure 7 presents the percentage of all articles in 2006, 2010, and 2015 that contain each of the six frames or are “neutral” for both the NYT and WT combined, only NYT and only WT. Among group-centric frames, negative frames are more frequent than positive frames. While about 19% of all articles contain a positive group-centric frame, the percentage of articles in the sample with a negative group-centric frame is much higher at approximately 34%. This gap narrows when

looking at articles in the NYT—with 23% and 26% of positive and negative group-centric frames, respectively. And conversely, the percentile difference widens when looking at articles in the WT to 13% and 49% positive and negative group-centric frames, respectively.

*Figure 7: Distribution of Immigration Frame Styles in the New York Times and Washington Times, All Years*



The frequency of positive personal narrative frames also shows differences by news source. The percentage of articles with a positive personal narrative frame is almost identical to positive group-centric frames at 19%. And much like the overall distribution of positive frames, the percentage of articles with a positive personal narrative frame is higher in the NYT than the WT, with an overall representation in the articles of 26% and 6%, respectively. Interestingly, however, the distribution of personal negative frames is more consistent across the three groups. Overall, 10% of all articles, 9% of articles in the NYT and 12% of articles in the WT included a negative personal narrative frame.

Taken together, these numbers are consistent with H1 by indicating that positive frames are more prominent in the NYT than the WT. Moreover, the distribution of positive and negative frames styles also provide support for H2—that negative frames are primarily group-centric, while positive frames are more equally distributed between the two styles. It should be noted, however, that that the ratio of personal to group-centric positive frames is higher in the WT than the NYT. Despite these differences, in both the NYT and WT, the representation of group and personal positive frames is more equal than the representation of group and personal negative frames.

Figure 7 also presents information on the use of political frames and neutral frames in the entire sample of articles, the NYT, and the WT. The numbers are fairly consistent in both news sources. When it comes to political frames, it is noteworthy to highlight that the numbers for both political demands and electoral are fairly similar across the three groups in Figure 7. Specifically, approximately 29%, 30% and 27% of all articles, NYT articles and WT articles include a political demand frame, while 14%, 14% and 13% of them include a political electoral frame, respectively. These numbers are consistent with H6, which posits that political demands are equally represented across news sources.

When it comes to neutral frames, both the NYT and WT are almost as likely to present neutral frames on immigration. Approximately 19% and 17% of all articles in the NYT and WT are neutral. These numbers are somewhat surprising, given the strong ideological leaning of the WT. However, because over half of the articles attach negative considerations to immigrants, the results do reinforce the idea that the WT is considerably more negative on immigration than the NYT—a news outlet that leans liberal but is more representative of mainstream media. To get a better sense of potential differences in the distribution of frames across time, Figures 8, 9 and 10

outline the percentage of articles that contain each of the six types of frames (or a neutral frame) in 2006, 2010, and 2015, respectively.

*Figure 8: Distribution of Immigration Frame Styles in the New York Times and Washington Times, 2006*

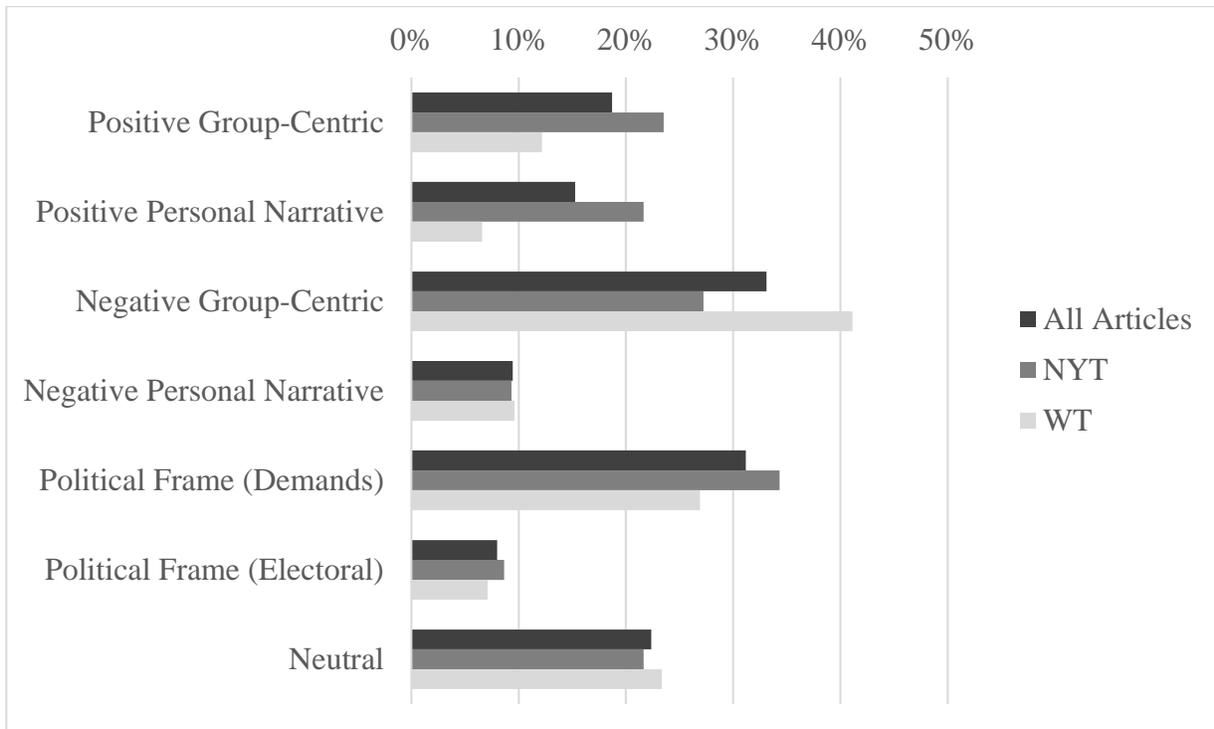


Figure 9: Distribution of Immigration Frame Styles in the New York Times and Washington Times, 2010

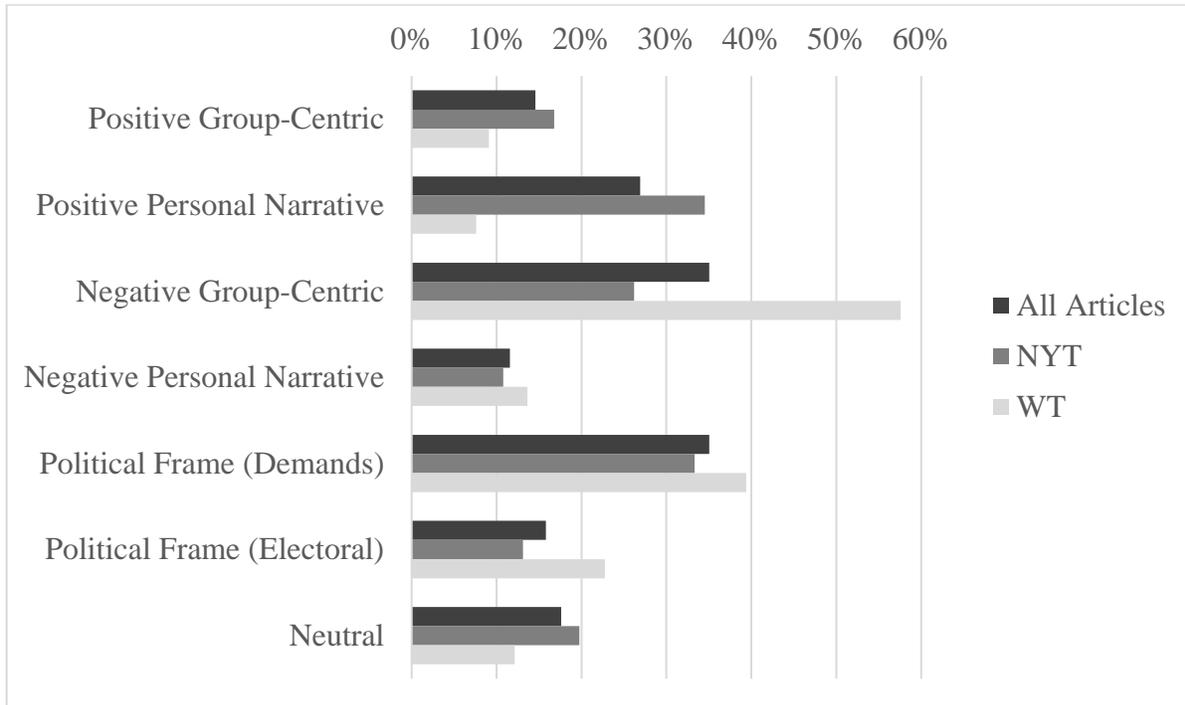
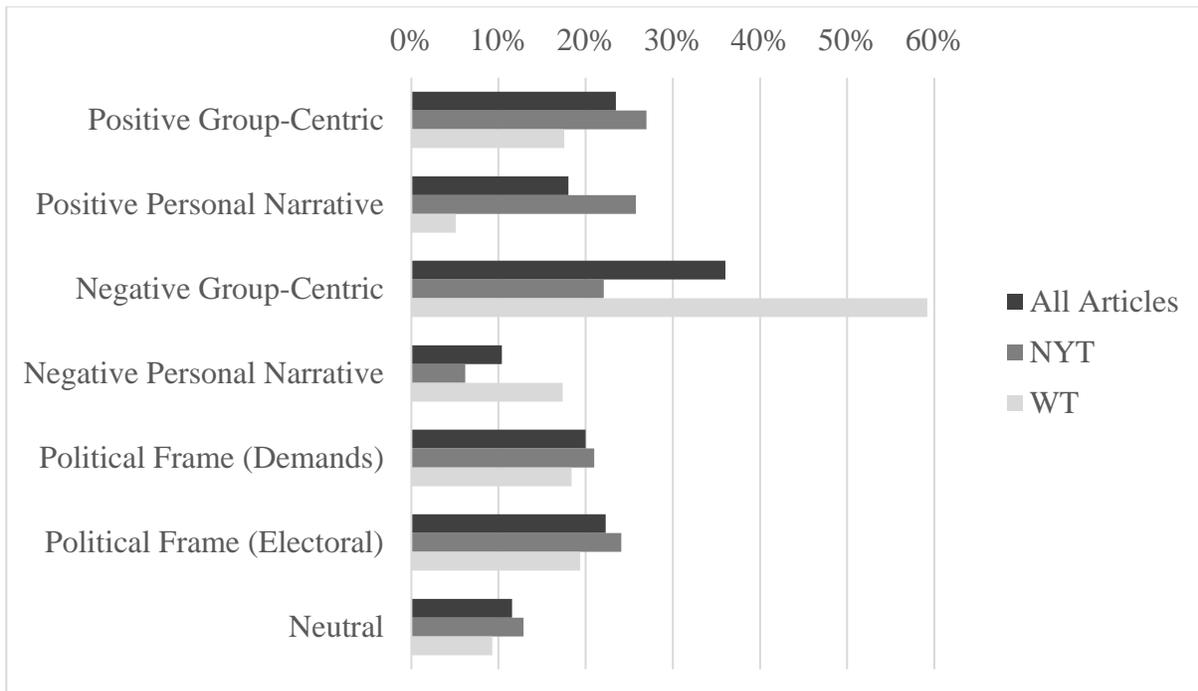


Figure 10: Distribution of Immigration Frame Styles in the New York Times and Washington Times, 2015



The ratio of articles with a positive personal frame to a positive group-centric frame varies a bit by year. While the percentage of articles with positive personal and group-centric frames were almost identical when looking at all three years, the percentage of positive 2006 articles including a personal narrative is about 4% less than the percentage of group-centric frames. Similarly, in 2015, the total number of articles with a positive personal narrative is 5% less than those with a group-centric approach. Conversely, however, the proportional number of articles with a positive personal narrative compared to those with a positive group-centric focus is much higher in 2010. Specifically, the percentage of articles with a positive personal narrative is 11% higher than the percentage of articles with a positive group-centric depiction of immigrants.

The higher representation of positive personal narratives in 2010 (when compared to 2006 and 2015) could be traced to the political dynamics that were taking place in 2010 with relation to immigration. In 2010, the DREAM act was at the forefront of the immigration debate. The House of representatives approved DREAM act legislation, but the bill ultimately died in the Senate. It is likely that because the focus of immigration was on young undocumented immigrants (many of whom have spent the larger part of their lives in the United States) that news sources were more likely to focus on individualized stories of dreamers to showcase the issue of immigration. While Congress was also debating legislation on immigration in 2006—the bill in question (HB 4437) was both punitive and applicable to the broader undocumented population.

When it comes to differences by year in the inclusion of political demands and electoral frames, Figures 8, 9 and 10 also show some variation. In 2015, the percentage of articles with political demands frames are fairly consistent across sources. About 20%, 21% and 18% of all articles, NYT articles and WT articles include a focus on immigrant political demands, respectively. And when it comes to political electoral frames in 2015, the percentage of articles

with an electoral focus is 5% higher in the NYT than the Washington Times. It should be noted that 2015 had an overall higher representation of electoral frames than both 2006 and 2010. This is to be expected for two reasons. First, 2015 is a pre-election year. In 2015, the 2016 electoral cycle for presidential primary campaigning is well underway. And secondly, the Latina/o population—the group most closely associated with U.S. immigration—has grown in both numbers and turnout since 2006. Electoral turnout for President Obama among Latinas/os reached a record high in both 2008 and 2012. Thus, it is to be expected that there is an across time increase in the amount of attention that the media is paying to (Latina/o) immigrants as an electoral force.

The presence of political demands frames was 10% higher in 2006 and 15% higher in 2010 (when compared to 2015). This is likely due to the higher level of activism that was taking place in both years. While 2006 saw massive mobilization of immigrants (and their supporters) across the nation against HB 4437, the year 2010 also saw immigrant activism in favor of Dreamers and the DREAM act, which was being debated in Congress. Thus, it seems that coverage on immigration and the political behavior of immigrants is responding to real world events.

There is one notable difference that stands out when looking at the distribution of frame styles in the three years included in the analysis. The percentage of “neutral” articles diminishes from 2006 to 2010 and from 2010 to 2015. In 2006, the percentage of “neutral” articles in 2006 is 22%, and this number is reduced to 18% in 2010 and later on to 12% in 2015. The biggest drop seems to come from the WT, which goes from 23% in 2006 to 9% in 2015. However, the NYT also sees a drop in the percentage of immigration articles that are neutral—from 22% in 2006 to 13% in 2015. These numbers are consistent with the documentation of increased polarization on the issue of immigration (Burns and Gimpel 2000, Wroe, 2008) in the last decade, and an

indication that news sources are at least mirroring those polarizing trends in their coverage of the issue.

*Predictive Likelihood of Immigration Frame Styles by News Source and Year*

Beyond examining the descriptive distribution of immigration frames, I also examine the predictive likelihood that immigration articles employ each of the six frames styles or remain “neutral”. My goal is to examine if there are any statistical differences in the way frame styles are represented varying news source and year. Table 3 presents seven logistic regression results for each type of immigration frame. The dependent variables are dichotomous variables, where 0 represent that an article does not include the frame, and 1 indicates that it does.

The NYT variable is also a dichotomous variable, where NYT articles are coded as a 1 and WT articles are coded as a 0. The variables for the years 2010 and 2015 are dummy variables, and the year 2006 is the excluded category. I choose to make 2006 as the comparison group to account for potential differences in frame styles across time.

Table 3: Effect of Newspaper Source and Year on Immigration Frame Styles (Logistic Regressions)

Variables	Neutral Frame	Changes in Predicted Probability	Positive Group-Centric	Changes in Predicted Probability	Positive Personal Narrative	Changes in Predicted Probability	Negative Group-Centric	Changes in Predicted Probability	Negative Personal Narrative	Changes in Predicted Probability	Political Demands	Changes in Predicted Probability	Political Electoral	Changes in Predicted Probability
<b>NYT</b>	0.119 (0.176)	2%	0.700** (0.186)	9%	1.612** (0.235)	19%	-1.508** (0.142)	24%	-0.408+ (0.216)	4%	0.160 (0.150)	3%	0.001 (0.199)	0%
<b>2010</b>	-0.316+ (0.206)	4%	-0.392+ (0.222)	6%	0.568** (0.202)	8%	0.252 (0.175)	6%	0.287 (0.261)	3%	0.152 (0.171)	3%	0.771** (0.249)	10%
<b>2015</b>	-0.798** (0.224)	10%	0.257 (0.190)	4%	0.143 (0.202)	2%	0.190 (0.167)	4%	0.123 (0.258)	1%	-0.602** (0.184)	12%	1.195** (0.229)	16%
<b>N</b>	958		958		960		960		958		959		957	

Note: Table entries are ordered logistic regression coefficients with estimated standard errors in parentheses and changes in predicted probabilities.

\*\*<0.01; \*<0.05; † <0.1

The regression results confirm some of the dynamics that were visible from the descriptive data. News articles are less likely to be neutral in 2010 and 2015 when compared to 2006. Specifically, articles in 2015 are 10% less likely to be neutral and those in 2010 are 4% less likely to do. It should be noted that the difference between 2015 and 2006 appears to be statistically stronger than that between 2006 and 2010—the former is significant with a p-value of less than .01, while the latter is significant at  $p < .1$ . Interestingly, confirming the trends emerging from the descriptive data, the NYT is not more (or less) likely to employ neutral articles than the WT.

Moving on to positive frames, articles in the NYT are 9% and 19% more likely to include positive personal narrative and group-centric frames than the WT. And while there are no statistical differences between 2006 and 2015 in the likelihood of including both types of positive frames, news articles in 2010 are about 6% less likely to include a group-centric frame and about 8% more likely to use a personal narrative frame. This is consistent with the descriptive data and likely indicative of the fact that dreamers were the center of the immigration debate in 2010, and likely to be the objects of human interest profiles.

There are also differences by news source in terms of the likelihood to include negative frames. As outlined in Table 3, the NYT is 24% less likely to use negative group-centric frames. It is also less likely to use negative personal narrative frames—but this result is only significant at .1 and predicts only a 4% lower predicted probability. There does not appear to be any statistical difference in the inclusion of either style of negative frames when comparing 2006 to 2010 and 2015. Taken together, the results for both positive and negative sets of frames provide support for H1—that the WT is much more negative in its immigration coverage than the NYT.

When examining the results for the two political frames—demands and electoral—three general observations emerge. First, consistent with H6, there is no statistical difference between

the NYT and WT in their use of either of the political frames. Secondly, the predicted probability of including a political demands frame is 12% less likely in 2015 than 2006. However, news articles are not more or less likely to include them in 2010 (when compared to 2006). This is likely due to the fact that in both 2006 and 2010 there were many instances of immigrant mobilization—against HB 4437 in 2006 and against Arizona’s SB1070 and DREAM act legislation in Congress in 2010. And finally, the regression results are in line with the increase of electoral frames across time. In 2010, news articles are 10% more likely to include electoral frames than in 2006, and in 2015 the predicted probability is even higher at 16%. Because of the rise in Latina/o turnout after 2006, it is likely that the media is picking up on those changes, and increasing electoral considerations when discussing the issue of immigration.

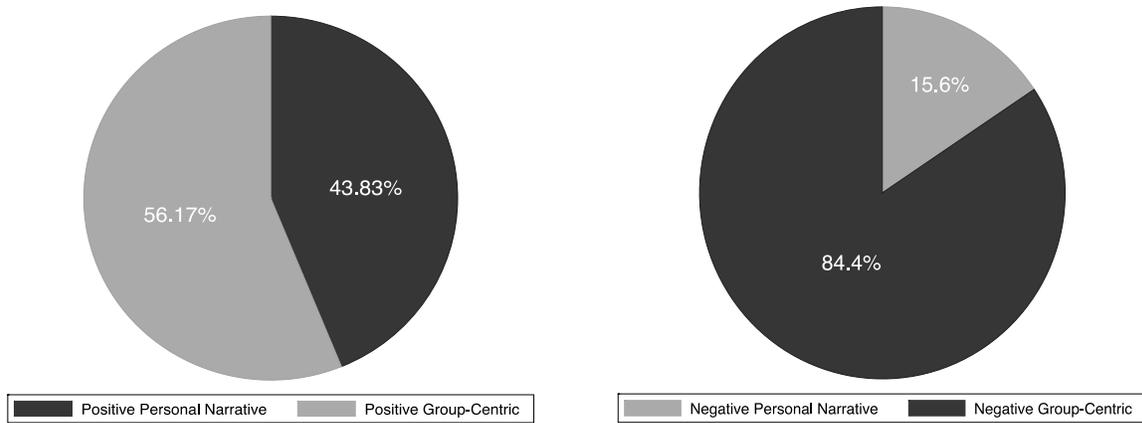
#### *Positive and Negative Group-Centric and Personal Narratives*

In this chapter, I have argued that when it comes to negative depictions of immigrants in the news, the group-centric frame is the preferred style. And on the flip side of this, I have also made the case that among positive coverage on immigration, the personal narrative is a much more common occurrence than it is in negative coverage. Thus, as I argue in H4 and H5, it is reasonable to expect that the tendency to include personal narratives in positive coverage is more pronounced in the NYT, while the tendency to rely on a group-centric approach for negative coverage is more prominent in the WT.

Figure 11 first illustrates the percentage of positive coverage that is group-centric vis-à-vis personal narratives, as well as the percentage of negative coverage that is group-centric as opposed to personal narratives. There are instances in which both positive (negative) group-centric and personal narrative frames are in the same article. To make sure that I distinguish between articles that solely focus on personal narratives and those that include a personal narrative in addition to a

group-centric frame, I only identify articles as personal narrative if they are not accompanied by a group-centric frame in the same article. Those articles that have both a personal narrative and a group-centric frame are coded as group-centric.

*Figure 11: Percentage of Positive and Negative Group-Centric and Personal Narrative Frames*



As shown in Figure 11, the majority of negative coverage is group-centric. Specifically, 84% of articles with negative coverage include group-based considerations. While a majority of positive coverage is also group-centric, the percentage difference is much more narrow—approximately 56% are group-centric and 44% rely solely on personal narratives. These distributions are consistent with H2 and H3—which together predict that negative coverage has a higher proportion of group-centric frames relative to personal narratives, while positive coverage is more equally distributed between personal and group-centric frames.

Together the descriptive data suggests that negative coverage is more likely to be group-centric than positive coverage, and that positive coverage is more likely to use personal narratives than negative coverage. But in addition to these general distributions, I also hypothesize in H4 that because positive coverage is more akin to personal narratives, that we should expect liberal leaning outlets like the NYT to be more likely to include personal narratives (as opposed to group-centric

frames) when describing immigration in a positive light. Table 4 presents logistic regression results and predicted probabilities for the likelihood of using a positive group-centric frame (as opposed to a positive personal narrative). The dependent variable is dichotomous with all articles including a positive group-centric frame coded as a 1, and articles that include a personal narrative (and no group-centric frame) coded as a 0. All three independent variables are dummy variables. NYT is coded as a 1 for articles in the NYT and as a 0 for articles in the WT. The excluded category for year is 2006.

*Table 4: Effect of Newspaper Source and Year on the Likelihood that Positive Immigration Frames Are Group-Centric as opposed to a Personal Narrative (Logistic Regression)*

Variables	Positive Group-Centric	Changes in Predicted Probability
NYT	-0.774** (0.308)	18%
2010	-0.860** (0.285)	21%
2015	-0.018 (0.274)	1%

N= 324

Note: Table entries are logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses and changes in predicted probabilities. \*\*<0.01; \*<0.05; † <0.1

Consistent with previous results, positive coverage in 2010 is 21% more likely to be framed at the individual level than in 2006. There is no statistical difference in the use of positive personal narratives in 2015 compared to 2006. When it comes to the main variable of interest in this regression—news source—articles in the NYT are 18% less likely to be group-centric than articles in the WT. This is consistent with H4—that a liberal leaning news outlet is more likely to rely on the personal narrative as a main coverage style.

In addition to testing for H4, I also test for H5, which contends that a conservative news source, such as the WT, is more likely to rely on group-centric negative frames (relative to negative personal narratives) when covering immigration. Table 5 presents logistic regression results and changes in predicted probabilities for the likelihood of using a group-centric frame (as opposed to a personal narrative) in the negative coverage on immigration. The dependent variable is a dichotomous variable—where all articles with a negative group-centric frame are coded as 1, and articles with a negative personal narrative frame (but not a group-centric frame) are coded as 0. The coding for the independent variables are identical to Table 4.

*Table 5: Effect of Newspaper Source and Year on the Likelihood that Negative Immigration Frames Are Group-Centric as opposed to a Personal Narrative*

*(Logistic Regression)*

Variables	Negative Group-Centric	Changes in Predicted Probability
NYT	-0.783** (0.293)	10%
2010	0.447 (0.355)	5%
2015	0.549 (0.361)	6%

N= 391

Note: Table entries are logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses and changes in predicted probabilities. \*\*<0.01; \*<0.05; † <0.1

Unlike positive coverage, the results indicate that negative coverage in 2010 and 2015 were not more or less likely to rely on group-centric frames (when compared to personal narratives. When it comes to the variable of interest—news source—negative coverage in the NYT is 10% less likely than the WT to have a group-centric focus. This is consistent with H5—that the

preferred style in overall negative coverage (group-centric) is even more prominent in a conservative outlet than in a liberal leaning outlet.

## **Discussion**

Having explored the quantitative distribution of frame styles in two different news sources (NYT and WT) in three different years (2006, 2010, and 2015), I now move on to discuss variations in frame styles by year and news source to account for trends and changes to the way immigration is discussed in the media.

### *Negative Frames*

The quantitative analyses of the content analysis data discussed in the previous sections indicates that negative coverage is by enlarge group-centric in both the NYT and WT. Thus, while it is true that immigration coverage in the WT is more likely to be negative than the NYT, the predominance of the negative group-centric frame transcends the ideological leaning of the news source. And consistent with past studies on negative coverage on immigration, there are several predominant themes in the group-centric negative coverage on immigration: (1) rising costs of public benefits, (2) invasion, (3) economy and jobs, and (4) crime and security.

Arguments that center on the rising costs of education, healthcare, and public benefits are well-represented across all three years and both news sources. For example, a 2006 NYT article describes the meeting of 100 local officials in Washington where they raised many questions to the federal government about the costs and burdens that come from undocumented immigration:

*The officials raised many questions for the federal government. Who pays for the shuttering of boarding houses like those in Farmingville? Who pays for the extra classroom space, the unreimbursed cost of medical care, the cost of police and fire protection for the additional human lives? Where will they be housed? <sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> Vitello, P. (2006, March 07). Local Officials Seek Help From U.S. on Immigration. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

Many of the fiscal costs arguments highlight the undue burden on the states vis-à-vis the federal government. For instance, a 2010 WT article laments that “The federal government has failed to stem our nation’s illegal-immigration and border-security problems, and as a result, state and local governments have been forced to bear the responsibility and costs associated with this dereliction of duty.”<sup>3</sup> Specifically, focus on the fiscal burden on the states pays particular attention to education and healthcare. In a critique of the perceived failure of President Obama to take action on immigration, for example, former judge of the Superior Court of New Jersey—Andrew Napolitano—suggests in a 2015 WT article that undocumented immigrants take advantage of public benefits:

*While awaiting deportation, those people here unlawfully and not confined are entitled to the social safety net that states offer everyone else, as well as the direct benefits states make available to citizens, such as public schooling, access to hospital emergency rooms, and housing and personal living assistance.*<sup>4</sup>

Consistent with past research on media coverage on immigration by Santa Ana (2002) and Chavez (2001, 2008), negative group-centric arguments against immigration also commonly use the metaphor of an immigrant invasion, increased immigration as overflowing waters and/or immigration as a disease to the nation. In particular, there is a prevalent perception of invasion against American identity and that “the nation’s cultural identity could be washed away by a flood of low-income Spanish-speaking workers.”<sup>5</sup> Indeed, many negative depictions use the metaphor of rising waters to warn against the imminent threat of immigration and argue that the nation must be prepared to face it. In a 2010 article discussing SB 1070—legislation that authorizes state police

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<sup>3</sup> Miller, G.G. (2010, December 8). MILLER: Obama’s immigration two-step. *The Washington Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtontimes.com>.

<sup>4</sup> Napolitano, A.P. (2015, November 11). The president and the rule of law. *The Washington Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtontimes.com>.

<sup>5</sup> Bumiller, E. (2006, March 24). Bush Is Facing a Difficult Path on Immigration. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

to enforce immigration laws in Arizona—Arizona State Representative John Kavanagh argues that bills like SB 1070 are necessary so that “when the new tsunami of illegal immigration comes, we will be ready for them.”<sup>6</sup>

In addition to concerns about fiscal costs and depictions of immigrants as an invasion, negative group-centric appeals are also very likely to focus on the economy and jobs. These arguments pit American workers against immigrant labor: “American workers and the poor have suffered the punishing full force of depressed wages and vanished jobs”<sup>7</sup> The argument is that undocumented immigrants hurt the American economy by depressing wages and taking jobs from citizens—especially those who are already the most vulnerable. For example, a 2010 WT article provides numbers and research to back up this claim:

*According to the Center for Immigration Studies, low-skilled workers lose an average of \$1,800 a year because of competition with illegal immigrants. Illegal immigrants depress their wages and take their jobs, just like they do the wages and jobs of American workers.*<sup>8</sup>

Overall, then, the negative group-centric arguments that center on economic frames develop around the view that foreign labor takes away from domestic labor.

Finally, the narrative of immigration as a source of increased crime and as a threat to national security is very well represented in both the NYT and WT. Notably, a 2006 NYT article quotes Senator Bill Frist of Tennessee when he makes the case that immigration is inherently linked to security: “Our country needs security at our borders in order to slow the flow of illegal immigration and make America safer from foreign criminals and terrorists.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Archibold, R.C. (2010, April 14). Arizona Endorses Immigration Curbs. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

<sup>7</sup> Hurt, C. (2015, August 18). Donald Trump hits mark on immigration, quickly grasps complex problem. *The Washington Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtontimes.com>.

<sup>8</sup> SMITH: Adhere to rule of law on immigration policy. (2010, March 24). *The Washington Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtontimes.com>.

<sup>9</sup> Swarns, R. L. (2006, March 17). As Senators Debate Immigration Bill, Frist Offers His Own. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

Security-focused frames pay particular attention to the southern border as the source of the threat. For instance, Governor Brewer echoes this sentiment when she argues that “As a direct result of failed and inconsistent federal enforcement, Arizona is under attack from violent Mexican drug and immigrant smuggling cartels.”<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, beyond pointing to general crime stemming from the U.S.-Mexico, appeals about immigration as a security threat make direct connections to the dangers of a porous border as a weakness in the war against terrorism. A 2015 WT article highlights this connection by quoting California Representative Duncan Hunter when he warns that if the U.S. chooses to allow Syrian refugees entry to the country it does so at its own peril:

*The greatest existential threat to this nation right now is this administration’s open border policy. This is no longer about immigration, it’s about the president and DHS keeping open the corridors on the southern border that are accessible to anyone in the world.*<sup>11</sup>

Despite the preponderance of group-centric frames in negative coverage in both the NYT and WT—as well as the relative consistency in the substantive content of those frames—there is one important caveat. The quantitative analysis in the previous section indicates that the NYT is more likely to employ a negative personal narrative frame vis-à-vis a group-centric frame than the WT. This is important to note because my reading of the immigration articles in the NYT and WT reveals that the content of negative group-centric frames and personal narratives are distinct. In contrast to the content of negative group-centric frames, negative personal narratives overwhelmingly center on instances of criminal activity by one or a few immigrants.

Many negative depictions of individual immigrants are reported by both the NYT and WT—suggesting that they respond to publicized criminal events—not on attempts to frame the

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<sup>10</sup> Preston, J. (2010, July 06). Justice Dept. Sues Arizona Over Its Immigration Law. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

<sup>11</sup> Dinan, S. (2015, November 22). Illegal immigrant children, non-Mexicans surge across border at record rate. *The Washington Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtontimes.com>.

issue of immigration on a personal level. For example, in 2006, both the NYT <sup>12</sup> and WT <sup>13</sup> report on the drug trafficking charges against Jose Antonio Lopez—a Mexican national who was accused of aiding possession of cocaine. Moreover, negative personal depictions of immigrants are often covered more than once. This was the case of the much talked about the 2010 murder of an Arizona rancher on the U.S. side of the border. Both the WT <sup>14</sup> and NYT <sup>15</sup> made multiple mentions of the case in 2010. Thus, not only are personal depictions of undocumented immigrants scarce in negative coverage on immigration, but when they do appear they are frequently repetitive of the same stories.

Overall, then, it seems that when negative personal narratives appear in immigration coverage in both the NYT and WT, they overwhelmingly focus on crime. This stands in sharp contrast to negative group-centric coverage, which is more likely to include a more diverse set of considerations regarding the burdens of immigration—from fiscal costs to national security and population invasion to job competition.

### *Positive Frames*

The quantitative results about the use of positive frames in the media coverage of immigration reveal three general conclusions. First, unlike negative coverage, positive coverage on immigration is more equally distributed between group-centric and personal narrative appeals. Moreover, as hypothesized—and supported by the quantitative distribution of positive frames—this is true for both the NYT and WT—suggesting that the personal narrative as a frame style is a more preferred style in positive coverage than it is for negative coverage—regardless of the

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<sup>12</sup> Justice for Immigrants. (2006, October 03). *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

<sup>13</sup> Court bars deportation over drugs. (2006, December 05). *The Washington Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtontimes.com>.

<sup>14</sup> Dinan, S. (2010, April 20). McCain, Kyl want troops on U.S.-Mexico border. *The Washington Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtontimes.com>.

<sup>15</sup> Archibold, R.C. (2010, April 14). Arizona Endorses Immigration Curbs. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

ideological leaning of the news source. And thirdly, the personal narrative as a frame style appears to be more popular in 2010 in particular.

Like their negative counterparts, there are also dominating themes in positive group-centric appeals. These primarily include immigrant contributions to the U.S. economy, and the compatibility of immigrants with American values of work ethic and family. First, when it comes to immigrant contributions, positive group-centric frames focus on the aggregate positive impact of immigration on the U.S. economy by providing their labor and their money as consumers:

*Immigrant workers, like all American workers, not only contribute their labor but further propel growth by liberally spending the wages they earn on a host of items, from food to cars to clothing. Their presence has been a significant factor fueling growth in key sectors from banking to agriculture and housing — many of which have been booming and underpinning the health of the rest of the economy.*<sup>16</sup>

Articles that highlight the economic contributions of immigrants appear to be responding to the narrative of immigration as an unwanted invasion by making the case that immigrants are here because America both needs them and has encouraged them to be here:

*The illegal immigrants who trim our hedges, prepare our food and care for our children have been compared to an invading army. If so, they have descended on a land desperate for occupation. This is a nation that insists on paying as little as possible for goods and services, and as long as it remains impractical to send lawns, motel beds and dirty dishes overseas, determined immigrants and semi porous borders will continue to feed the American addiction to cheap labor.*<sup>17</sup>

It seems, then, that the metaphor of immigration as an invasion is an integral part of the conversations, and positive group-centric appeals in the media are implicitly responding to existing (negative) narratives on the issue.

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<sup>16</sup> How immigrants make economy grow. (2006, May 01). *The Washington Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtontimes.com>.

<sup>17</sup> Street-Corner Immigration Reform. (2006, February 25). *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

In addition to the economic contributions of immigrants, positive group-centric frames paint immigrants as essential to the values and very character of the American nation. For instance, below is an excerpt from a 2010 WT article that highlights the law-abiding nature of immigrants in the United States:

*Legal and illegal immigrants do commit crimes, but at rates that are generally lower than their native-born counterparts, according to U.S. Census Bureau data. The large majority of immigrants who enter the United States, legally and illegally, come here to work and save and support their families. Once inside the country, they want to stay out of trouble and not jeopardize their opportunity to earn income in our relatively free and open economy.* <sup>18</sup>

Rather than harming the American way of life, positive group-centric appeals present immigrants—including those who are undocumented—as members of our communities. As a 2015 NYT article notes “the 11 million are on this side of the border, and have children, and roots, and jobs, and dreams, and their plight needs to be confronted.” <sup>19</sup>

Note that—as with economic arguments—value-centered arguments in favor of welcoming immigration policies represent the mirror image of negative group-centric appeals that warn about immigrants’ resistance to assimilation and their unwillingness to adopt the American way of life. In doing so, group-centric appeals about the positive effect of immigrants on the economy and/or American values provide a counter-weight to negative group-centric arguments. However, as the content analysis in this chapter reveals, positive coverage (unlike negative coverage) is not primarily group-centric. In fact, the personal narrative as a frame style on immigration is used just as frequently as group-centric appeals when describing immigrants in a positive light.

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<sup>18</sup> GRISWOLD: Unfounded fear of immigrant crime grips Arizona. (2010, May 25). *The Washington Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtontimes.com>.

<sup>19</sup> Hillary Clinton Takes the Lead on Immigration. (2015, May 07). *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

Whereas positive group centric frames provide statistics and general arguments to point to the net benefit of immigration to the United States, personal narratives about immigrants overwhelmingly focus on the hard work and success of one or a few immigrants who make their way to the United States—even when they face rejection and hardship. For instance—in 2006—the NYT presented the story of Olga Contreras-Martinez, who “was 12 when she entered the United States illegally with her family and picked fruits and vegetables in Florida and Georgia until settling here in 1993. Now a college graduate and an American citizen, Ms. Contreras-Martinez feels deeply rooted here.”<sup>20</sup> These stories highlight the hard work of individual immigrants, as well as their determination to succeed—like a 2015 NYT article on an immigrant entrepreneur: “Gicela López, an immigrant who came to the United States as a teenager, didn’t know how to make tacos, but she always had an ambition to run a business. When a friend in 2010 told her about a taqueria that was for sale at a good price, she jumped on it.”<sup>21</sup>

While personal narratives are well-represented in the positive coverage on immigration in all three years, the content analysis does indicate that positive personal narratives are particularly prevalent in 2010. One possible explanation for the particular prevalence of the personal narrative in 2010 is the fact that Congress was debating passing DREAM Act legislation (S. 3827) that would grant temporary authorization and—after meeting requirements—permanent residency status for dreamers—or those who arrived to the United States as children, but remain undocumented. Indeed, many of the positive personal narrative stories in 2010 featured stories about young dreamers.

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<sup>20</sup> Swarns, R. (2006, August 4). In Georgia, Immigrants Unsettle Old Sense of Place. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

<sup>21</sup> A Taqueria Holds an Immigrant Family Together. (2015, September 19). *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

One notable example is the story of Felipe Matos:

*Mr. Matos, a former student government president at Miami Dade, said he had been accepted by Duke University but had not been able to attend because his lack of legal status prevented him from getting financial aid. Trained as a teacher, he has not been able to take a job without a valid Social Security number.* <sup>22</sup>

Stories about dreamers in the media highlight that young undocumented immigrants have the potential to contribute to the United States but are denied that opportunity even though they were brought to the United States by their parents.

Similarly, other news coverage on the personal narrative of immigrants focus on their allegiance to the United States and their patriotism. Such is the case of Cesar Vargas—a young law student who wishes to enlist in the military to fight for his country but is not allowed to do so because of his undocumented status:

*Cesar Vargas graduated from James Madison High School in Brooklyn, just like Senators Charles E. Schumer, Democrat of New York, and Bernard Sanders, independent of Vermont. And like his fellow Madison alumni, Mr. Vargas wants to serve his country in his case by becoming a military lawyer after he graduates from the City University of New York law school, where he is in his third year. But Mr. Vargas, who was brought by his parents to the United States from Mexico when he was 5, cannot join the armed forces. He cannot vote. He cannot travel outside the country or he will not be allowed to return because he is an illegal immigrant.*<sup>23</sup>

Personal narratives such as these—of dreamers or other immigrants—speak of the details about individual lives who hold great promise to be ideal members of our communities.

Overall, the content analysis of both positive and negative coverage on immigration reveal a stylistic asymmetry between negative and positive coverage. This difference is consequential. I argue in this dissertation—and test for in Chapter 3—that personal narratives are not equipped to respond to negative group-centric appeals as effectively as positive group-centric frames. I contend

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<sup>22</sup> Preston, J. (2010, January 01). To Overhaul Immigration, Advocates Alter Tactics. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

<sup>23</sup> Herszenhorn, D. (2010, September 21). Passion and Politics on Immigration Act. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

that the reason for this is that it is harder for the public to extrapolate from individual immigrant experiences to form generalized conclusions on a group-centric issue like immigration. Indeed, Borjas—an economics professor at Harvard—appears to make this very point when speaking about the strength of the personal narrative as a persuasive strategy on immigration:

*"The trouble with the stories that American journalists write about immigration," he told me, "is they all start with a story about a poor mother whose son grows up to become. . . . " and his voice trailed off as if to suggest that whatever the particular story — that of a C.E.O., a ballplayer or even a story like his own — it would not prove anything about immigration. What economists aim for is to get beneath the anecdotes. Is immigration still the engine of prosperity that the history textbooks describe? Or is it a boon to business that is destroying the livelihoods of the poorest workers — people already disadvantaged by such postmodern trends as globalization, the decline of unions and the computer?"*<sup>24</sup>

I believe the broader American public makes similar calculations to Borjas when forming opinions about immigration policy because immigration is inherently tied to a group—not individuals within that group. Thus, when scholars evaluate the persuasiveness of big picture vis-à-vis little picture media frames of policy issues, it is important to consider whether the policy at hand is group-centric or not.

### *Political Frames*

When it comes to coverage of immigrant political demands, both the NYT and WT employ the frame regularly. Variations are more striking between years. Specifically, coverage of political demands frames was more frequent in 2006 and 2010 than in 2015. This is perhaps not surprising, given that both of these saw widespread immigrant mobilization. In 2006, immigrants and their supporters mobilized against HB 4437—restrictive immigration legislation that sought to criminalize undocumented immigrants and those who aid them. And in 2010, there were two

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<sup>24</sup> Lowenstein, R. (2006, July 9). The Immigration Equation. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

notable events that led to increased political activism. First, there was mobilization against Arizona's SB 1070—a law that gives local police the authority to enforce immigration and is criticized for encouraging racial profiling. And secondly, in 2010 there was also organized activism in favor of the DREAM act—legislation that would allow those who were brought to the United States as children without documents to embark on a path towards legalization.

In 2006, the United States saw massive immigrant mobilization across the nation. Immigrants (and their supporters) responded against the “Sensenbrenner Bill” or HB 4437. While the Bill was only approved in the House and later died in the Senate, it represented one of the most anti-immigrant pieces of legislation in recent history. It would have made undocumented immigration into a criminal offense, and allowed for criminal action against those who aided undocumented immigrants in any way. Under the broad language of HB 4437, criminal charges could have been applied to anyone who aided undocumented immigrants, including churches, charitable organization, and friends and family of undocumented immigrants, among many others. Overall, the bill was seen as an active criminalization of the immigrant community and Latinos/as as an extension of that community (Zepeda-Millan, 2014).

My content analysis of 2006 reveals that the media was responsive to the 2006 marches and protests. This is perhaps not surprising, given Benson's (2013) observations of media incentives to cover “dramatic events” surrounding immigration. And while the NYT was slightly more likely than the WT to include stories of immigrant political activism in 2006, both newspapers offered widespread coverage of the 2006 immigrant marches. Approximately 34% of all immigration related articles in the NYT included coverage of immigrant activism compared to about 27% in the WT.

Many of the news articles in the NYT and WT that covered protests events did so in broad descriptive terms—explaining the goal of the protests, as well as noting attendance and location. However, coverage of the protests picked up on the potential partisan and group divide that immigrant protests elicit. While they may have empowered many people to come out of the shadows and demand to be heard in American politics, they may have also triggered feelings of threat and outrage among those who have little connection to immigration and saw the protests as a defiance against the United States. Notably, a news article titled “Demonstrations on Immigration Harden a Divide” illustrates this:

*As lawmakers set aside the debate on immigration legislation for their spring recess, the protests by millions around the nation have escalated the policy debate into a much broader battle over the status of the country's 11 million illegal immigrants. While the marches have galvanized Hispanic voters, they have also energized those who support a crackdown on illegal immigration.* <sup>25</sup>

A prominent theme in the coverage of the protests is the perception that—for many (non-Latina/o) Americans—the visibility of undocumented immigrants making demands upon the political system makes a mockery of U.S. laws.

*Talk of the marches has been burning up the airwaves on talk radio and cable news networks and has appeared in Internet blogs and conservative publications. Rich Lowry, the editor of National Review, described the protests with marchers carrying foreign flags as "ominous" in "their hint of a large, unassimilated population existing outside America's laws and exhibiting absolutely no sheepishness about it."* <sup>26</sup>

Thus, while for immigrants (and Latinas/os more broadly), the marches were a source of empowerment, they also signaled to those outside of the group that there is a large number of people in the United States who also want a space at the political table.

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<sup>25</sup> Kirpatrick, D. (2006, April 17). Demonstrations on Immigration Harden a Divide. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

<sup>26</sup> Swarns, R. (2006, April 12). Immigrants Rally in Scores of Cities for Legal Status. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

For some observers, these reactions might have hurt the chances of pushing for pro-immigrant reform—especially because in many of the earlier demonstrations, protestors carried flags from their countries of origin:

*In their hurt and anger, the initial televised marchers carried Mexican flags and shouted about ethnic pride. This only turned off tens of millions of American viewers, who scoffed in response, "If Mexico is so great, why come here in the first place?"<sup>27</sup>*

Indeed, this assessment was shared by some elected officials, such as Representative Jeff Flake—a Republican from Arizona “who said the protests were ultimately counterproductive because they galvanized conservatives who criticize legalization as amnesty for lawbreakers.” From this perspective, then, immigrant protests highlighted the partisan wedge in immigration debate.

But beyond highlighting partisan differences, reactions to the marches also had an ethnic divide to them. For some non-Latina/o observers, the ethnic pride of immigrant protestors was not well-received:

*Al and Diane Kitlica have not paid close attention to the immigration debate in Congress. But when more than 100,000 mostly Hispanic demonstrators marched through Phoenix this week, the Kitlicas noticed. "You want to stay here and get an education, get benefits, and you still want to say 'Viva Mexico'? It was a slap in the face," Ms. Kitlica said, adding that illegal immigrants were straining the Mesa public school where she teaches.<sup>28</sup>*

And on the flip-side of that, Latinas/os—the group most closely associated with immigration might have felt particularly empowered by the marches:

*Gus Martinez, a Mexican immigrant who was moonlighting at a hot dog stand after a day installing drywall, said the protests had changed his perspective, too. Mr. Martinez, who said he was a legal immigrant, said he also supported border security to curb illegal entry. But he had taken the day off to march earlier in the week because he believed that the foes of illegal immigration were taking aim at Hispanics as a group. The demonstrations, he said, had instilled in him a sense of power. "It showed that our hands*

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<sup>27</sup> Immigration Checkmate? (2006, April 28). *The Washington Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtontimes.com>.

<sup>28</sup>Swarns, R. (2006, April 12). Immigrants Rally in Scores of Cities for Legal Status. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

*- Latino hands -- make a difference in this country," Mr. Martinez said. "They see you are Hispanic and call you a criminal, but we are not." 29*

### *Electoral Frames*

The analysis of the overall inclusion of electoral frames in media coverage on immigration reveal that—when compared to 2006—news outlets were slightly more likely to include electoral considerations when discussing immigration in 2010, and particularly more likely to do so in 2015. The upward trend in the discussion of the electoral relevance of immigration for the Latina/o vote is indicative of changing demographics and recent increases to the electoral turnout of Latinas/os. In particular, Latina/o turnout was particularly high in 2008 and again in 2012. Moreover, on both of these years, Latinos/as came out to support President Obama—and the Democratic party (Wallace, 2012).

When Congress was debating the 2010 DREAM Act, the debt that Democrats owe to Latinas/os for their recent success at the polls was present in news coverage.

*Mr. Obama will now face growing pressure from immigrant and Latino groups to temper the crackdown and perhaps find ways to use executive powers to bring some illegal immigrants out of the shadows. Latino voters turned out in strength for the Democrats in the midterm elections, arguably saving their majority in the Senate. 30*

In fact, in that same article, Senator Menendez is quoted as saying: “This is a vote that will not soon be forgotten by a community that is growing not just in size, but also in power and political awareness...”

In 2010, WT coverage on immigration also acknowledges the unique mobilizing capacity of immigration vis-à-vis other issues:

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29Swarns, R. (2006, April 12). Immigrants Rally in Scores of Cities for Legal Status. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

30 Preston, J. (2010, December 18). Immigration Vote Leaves Obama’s Policy in Disarray. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

*Clarissa Martinez De Castro, the director of immigration and national campaigns at the National Council of La Raza, agreed that Hispanics are traditionally socially conservative and pro-family. But she said the immigration issue is so important to Hispanic voters that conservatives, who generally oppose paths to citizenship and favor tighter border security, would have to clearly change their stances to have many more Hispanics vote for them.* <sup>31</sup>

Thus, in 2010, both conservative and liberal outlets are aware of the electoral implications of immigration for the Latino/a vote.

In 2015, discussions of the electoral implications of immigration only intensified. This can be traced back to two reasons. First, by 2015, the Latino/a vote had helped carry Obama to the presidency in two occasions, and secondly, Donald Trump—a candidate that started his campaign with a strong anti (Mexican) immigration message—was already gaining traction as a frontrunner to win the Presidential nomination in the Republican primary. As a 2015 NYT times article notes:

*Republicans thought they had learned a lesson after 2012: Turning off Latino voters ensures defeat in the general election. But as the disruptive presidential candidacy of Donald J. Trump continues to gain support, his hard line on immigration has driven rivals to match his biting anti-immigrant language and positions long considered extreme. It risks another general election cycle in which Hispanics view the party as unfriendly no matter who the nominee is, Republican strategists warned.* <sup>32</sup>

The problem, to some observers, seems to be that Republicans find themselves in a checkmate situation—they understand that they need Latinos/as to win general elections, but fear alienating their electoral base by softening on immigration. A DNC spokesman quoted by the WT makes this very argument:

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<sup>31</sup> Curlin, K. (2010, February 19). Conservatives woo Hispanics. *The Washington Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtontimes.com>.

<sup>32</sup> Preston, J and Gabriel, T. (2015, August 18). Donald Trump Paints Republicans Into Corner With Hispanics. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

*“In its 2012 election autopsy, the Republican Party made a big deal about supporting immigration reform and reaching out to Hispanic voters,” said DNC spokesman Eric Walker. “Three years later, the one presidential candidate who has consistently favored comprehensive immigration reform just dropped out of the race after attracting virtually no support.”<sup>33</sup>*

Immigration, then, has become an electoral issue pitting Latino/a voters against (White) mainstream voters in the United States.

## **Conclusion**

Scholars of media framing and news coverage on immigration have largely focused on comparing the tone and content of immigration frames. However, they have largely ignored what I suggest is an important (and consequential) dimension of the production of frames on immigration. Specifically, I point to stylistic differences between welcoming and restrictive news coverage on immigration. As I hypothesize—and provide evidence for in this chapter—negative coverage on immigration is by enlarge group-centric, while positive arguments on immigration employ group-centric and personal narratives at a similar rate. Moreover, political frames—which focus on the political activism, engagement, and/or power of immigrants as a group—are well-represented in both the WT and NYT—two very different news sources with different audiences.

The stylistic differences in positive and negative immigration coverage is further evidenced by the fact that the NYT—a liberal leaning news source—is more likely to employ the personal narrative than the group-centric narrative when discussing positive news on immigration, while the WT—the conservative news source—is more likely to employ the group-centric frame when discussing negative coverage on immigration. This suggests the personal narrative is perceived as

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<sup>33</sup> McLaughlin, S. (2015, December 21). DNC: Lindsey Graham’s failed bid reflects GOP’s misguided immigration views. *The Washington Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtontimes.com>.

a preferred style by those who speak positively on immigration, and the group-centric frame is perceived as the preferred style by those who speak negatively on the issue.

The content analysis of immigration coverage provides support for existing research findings, but also expands on those findings to provide more insight into the character of U.S. coverage on immigration. First, the findings are consistent with those who point to the dominating force of negative coverage on immigration (Abrajano and Hajnal, 2015), and the to the overarching framing of immigration with the use of distinct metaphors pointing to immigration as an invasion, as a disease, or as a flood upon the American nation (Santa Ana 2002, Chavez, 2001, 2008). My findings expand on this knowledge by suggesting that the depiction of immigrants at the aggregate-level is largely a function of negative coverage—not positive. In contrast to negative coverage, positive depictions of immigrants are more likely to be framed at the individual-level. Thus, U.S. media coverage is also prone to the use of human interest profiles—as Benson documents—but these personal narratives typically representative of positive frames.

Secondly, the results are also consistent with the notion that immigration is an increasingly polarizing issue among partisan lines (Burns and Gimpel 2000, Wroe, 2008). Relative to 2006, news coverage on immigration is less neutral in 2010 and even less neutral in 2015. These results provide evidence that ideologically biased coverage of immigration is not just present in heavily ideological news outlets like the WT, but also in more seemingly mainstream outlets like the NYT. Indeed, the upward trend in less neutrality on immigration can be seen in both the NYT and WT—suggesting that media outlets with different ideological leanings are responding to the increased divisive nature of immigration in similar ways.

Thirdly, the content analysis presented in this chapter provides much needed insight on the coverage of immigrant activism and political engagement in the media. When it comes to political

activism, the results suggest that news sources are responsive to real-world events, such as immigrant protests. Moreover, the results are consistent with studies that find negative reactions to (Mexican) immigrants among Whites (Cohen-Marks et. al. 2009), and solidarity with immigrants among Latinos/as (Barreto et. al. 2008, Martinez 2008) in the aftermath of the 2006 marches. Indeed, the qualitative discussion of the news surrounding the 2006 marches suggest that there were opposite reactions to the marches among Latinos/as and non-Latinos/as—with the former viewing the marches a source of empowerment and the latter perceiving them as a threat to national identity and unity.

Finally, news coverage on the electoral implications of immigration in the United States suggest that the media is picking up on the increased relevance of immigrants (and Latinos/as as an extension) on electoral outcomes. As Latinas/os increase their turnout, and continue to support Democratic candidates for office (Wallace 2012, Abrajano and Alvarez 2010, De la Garza and Cortina 2007, Kosmin and Keysar 1995), we can expect media coverage to increasingly highlight the electoral considerations surrounding the immigration debate.

In Chapters 3, I test the relative strength of the different styles of immigration frames, and I make the case that—regardless of the intention of stylistic preferences—group-centric frames are more persuasive than personal narrative frames because news on immigration are processed through group-centrism on the issue. Moreover, in Chapter 4, I further test how the public perceives political frames—specifically news of protests. The results indicate that because of the strong group-centrism on immigration, Latinas/os—as the group most closely aligned with the issue are more likely to respond to stories of protests with welcoming attitudes on immigration than non-Latinas/os, who are more likely to respond with restrictive views on the policy issue. Taken together, the content analysis presented in this Chapter—coupled with the evidence

presented in the following chapters suggest two overarching conclusions. First, regardless of the ideological leanings of newspapers and the tone they use to discuss immigration, the styles they use to cover the issue are surprisingly consistent. And secondly, frame styles matter because they tell people how to think about a policy issue. When that policy issue is group-centric—frame styles have the potential to sway public opinion to the extent that they can move people’s perceptions of the group.

## Chapter 3

# Framing the Group

*Why Personal Narratives Are Less Persuasive Than  
Group-Centric Frames*

## Introduction

In 2013, Representative King spoke to NewsMax about his views on undocumented immigration. In his statements, he accepts that there are some good people who are undocumented, but rejects the notion that they represent the majority. Specifically, he argues:

*Some of them are valedictorians — and their parents brought them in. It wasn't their fault. It's true in some cases, but they aren't all valedictorians. They weren't all brought in by their parents. "For everyone who's a valedictorian, there's another 100 out there who weigh 130 pounds — and they've got calves the size of cantaloupes because they're hauling 75 pounds of marijuana across the desert. Those people would be legalized with the same act."*<sup>34</sup>

Similarly, Donald Trump makes a similar distinction in his statements about immigration when he announced his candidacy for President of the United States in 2015. He argues that the majority of Mexicans crossing the border represent the worst of Mexico, while still acknowledging that there may be some exceptions to that rule:

*When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best...They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.*<sup>35</sup>

The juxtaposition of the negative group-centric narrative vis-à-vis the positive personal narrative on the conceptualization of immigration as a policy issue is not the creation of Donald Trump or Steve King. As I discuss in Chapter 2, this represents a pattern in the coverage of U.S. immigration. Specifically, the collective results from that analysis indicate that while positive and negative frames are both represented in the media, they vary in terms of their style. Negative frames in the media are overwhelmingly group-centric. These depictions of immigrants include the use of metaphors such as “parasites”, “flood”, “invasion” and “disease” to describe immigrants

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<sup>34</sup> Beamon, T and Bachman, J. (2013, July 18). Rep. Steve King Slams Norquist over Attack on Immigration. *Newsmax*. Retrieved from [newsmax.com](http://newsmax.com).

<sup>35</sup> Full text: Donald Trump announces a presidential bid. (2015, June 16). *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from [washingtonpost.com](http://washingtonpost.com).

and Latinas/os more generally (Santa Ana, 2002; Chavez, 2001). Positive frames, on the other hand, are much more diverse. Results from the content analysis in Chapter 2 point to the prevalence of both group and individual stories of immigrants to frame the issue of immigration. Approximately half of all positive media frames on immigration are presented through personal narratives of one or a few individuals.

To be fair, existing evidence has documented the rise of the personal narrative as a political communication strategy on immigration. Benson (2013) correctly notes that the individual immigrant narrative is a particularly prominent style of coverage on immigrants in the United States. Indeed, the inclusion of personal narratives in immigration coverage is in line with a broader tendency in journalism toward using human-interest profiles in news reports (Boukes et al. 2014). However, my content analysis of the New York Times and Washington Times indicates that this type of story-telling is characteristic of positive—not negative—coverage. While anti-immigrant voices tap into the group character of immigrants, pro-immigrant voices often speak through an alternative narrative: the immigrant as an individual. These strategies are *not* interchangeable.

Are personal narratives more or less persuasive than big-picture news stories? This question is embedded into two bodies of scholarly research (1) Public Opinion on Immigration and (2) Media Framing. On the one hand, the literature on immigration clearly documents that the cultural, economic and political contributions and/or burdens that come from (Latina/o) immigration are conceptualized at the group level (Santa Ana 2002, Chavez, 2001, 2008). From that body of work, we know that Americans think about immigrants as part of the (Latina/o) group—not individuals (Valentino, Brader and Jardina, 2013, Perez, 2010). And on the other hand, media framing scholars have long debated the effectiveness of personal narratives—or little-

picture framing of issues (Iyengar, 1990, 1991, Small and Loewenstein 2005, 2003, Hart, 2010, Slovic, 2007, Boukes et. al. 2014, Ostfeld and Mutz, 2013, Lyon and Slovic, 1976)—in shaping public opinion, albeit without finding resounding consensus.

The present research bridges these two literatures by suggesting that within the particular context of a group-centric issue like immigration, little picture framing is ineffective because the issue is conceptualized at the group-level. In other words, I argue in this chapter that by using personal narratives in lieu of big-picture narratives, pro-immigrant sympathizers are inadvertently employing a less optimal communication strategy. Immigration policy applies to people at large—not individualized cases. Thus, personal narratives that don't challenge group dynamics are less effective in terms of moving public opinion toward more welcoming immigration attitudes. For those who have negative or somewhat negative perceptions of immigrants (as a group)—such as Steve King or Donald Trump—there is no cognitive dissonance in allowing for potential exceptions to that rule.

### **Framing Effects and Group-Centric Issues**

To be sure, media framing scholars have examined the persuasiveness of showcasing policy beneficiaries when framing the issue to the public. Iyengar famously penned the idea that little-picture frames—or episodic frames—are less effective because they blur the connections with systematic considerations and dynamics on a given issue. In essence, personal narratives can obscure the weight of systematic processes and government relevance for social issues by shifting attention (and blame/praise) to individuals (Iyengar 1990, 1991). The implications of this theoretical argument can be applied to a diverse set of policy areas.

In contrast to Iyengar, some scholars contend that showcasing personal narratives helps materialize abstract policy issues by making information more accessible to the general public

(Small and Loewenstein 2005, 2003). From this perspective, individual stories move people to action by triggering people's emotional connections to individuals who are suffering, whereas statistical aggregate frames make people "numb" to circumstances or suffering (Slovic, 2007). The key underlying mechanism within this strand of research is emotion—personal stories can be persuasive to the extent that they command an emotional reaction. The persuasiveness of thematic frames, in contrast, do not appear to be as contingent on emotion. Thus, little picture and big picture frames appear to operate via different cognitive paths. (Gross 2008)

In addition to the different mechanisms that may be at play when understanding how episodic and thematic frames influence attitudes, it is also important to highlight that scholars often focus on very different types of dependent variables (Hart, 2010). While some studies examine the likelihood that episodic and thematic frames move people to help individuals (Small et. Al. 2007), Iyengar and others (Hart, 2010) focus on how they shape policy preferences on an issue. Episodic frames may very well be a more effective way to get people to help a particular person, but, as Hart explains, "thematic frames are more effective at driving policy support on an issue that requires collective action." Thus, the diversity in findings on the persuasiveness of episodic and thematic frames need not present a challenge to Iyengar's original argument. It seems that thematic frames are particularly effective at communicating the government's role in social dynamics.

To be sure, recent research complicates the assertion that personal narratives do not help people make connections between individual stories and government action. Boukes et. al. (2014) use experiments to examine the effect of human-interest profiles on support for government aid toward mental healthcare for children and adolescents in the Netherlands. They find that the inclusion of human interest profiles did indeed lead to identifying the government as responsible. However, it is important to note that this study uses a policy recipient group that is universally

distributed—children and adolescents are something that everyone can relate to, and has relevance to people of all income-levels, race and/or ethnicity. Moreover, children are generally well-liked by everyone. Unlike mental health for children in the Netherlands, immigration in the United States is heavily racialized as a group-centric (Latina/o) issue, and people have differing views about the faults and/or merits of immigrants in the United States.

I build on the literature on thematic and episodic framing to propose that the effect of personal narratives vis-à-vis group-centric frames is dependent on whether the issue is salient and group-centric. Immigration is a salient issue in the United States and it is also very closely tied to Latina/o immigrants in the United States as a group (Santa Ana 2002; Chavez 2001, 2008). Thus, while I agree with Iyengar in his assessment of personal narratives as a less persuasive framing strategy, I differ in terms of why. Specifically, I argue that personal narrative frames are less persuasive than group-centric frames on a group-centric issue like immigration because the latter frames the issue at the same level in which it is conceptualized in the minds of Americans. Unlike Iyengar, I do expect people to make connections between immigration frames (both personal and group-centric) and immigration policy. However, because policy attitudes on immigration are so closely tied to immigration, I contend that it is harder for personal narratives to shift public perceptions of the group. Personal narratives, then, are more easily dismissed as exceptions than their group-centric counterparts.

## **Data and Methods**

To test my hypotheses, I use original online survey experiment data from a 2014 sample of 1,700 respondents. <sup>36</sup>I recruit participants via Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk)—an online-

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<sup>36</sup> See Appendix A for survey questions and format.

based tool for recruiting research participants. MTurk is an accessible and affordable tool to collect data from a considerable amount of respondents. While there are some limitations to MTurk—respondents tend to be younger, more educated, and more ideologically liberal than the American population at large, scholars have shown that MTurk samples are at least as representative as student-samples (Berinsky et al. 2012; Buhrmester et. al. 2011), which are commonly used by social scientists. Moreover, younger people, liberals and the highly educated are more likely to express welcoming attitudes on immigration than their counterparts (Burns and Gimpel 2000; Citrin et. al. 1997). Thus, the MTurk sample should provide a harder test for the analysis of policy opinions on immigration.

Respondents are randomly assigned to one of four frames (outlined in Table 6a) on the topic of undocumented immigration: (1) Group Negative, (2) Group Positive, (3) Individual Negative, and (4) Individual Positive.

Table 6a: Treatment Frames on Undocumented Immigrants

FRAME	FRAMES
	The undocumented or illegal group has a negative effect on the American economy:
<b>Group Negative</b>	“Granting amnesty to <b>millions of illegal immigrants will flood our job markets and reduce wages and employment</b> for those hard-working immigrants and lower-income workers who have followed our laws.”
	The undocumented or illegal group has a positive effect on the American economy:
<b>Group Positive</b>	“ <b>Undocumented Immigrants play key roles at every level of the American economy.</b> From high-skill workers to seasonal laborers, from big-city neighborhoods to small-town main streets, <b>immigrants help drive our economic growth.</b> ”
	John, an American citizen from the Southwest border, describes how his employer turned him down for a job and hired an undocumented or illegal immigrant instead:
<b>Individual Negative</b>	“ <b>I lost a job opportunity because of an illegal immigrant.</b> I applied for a job at Harold Enterprises but the company decided to hire an illegal immigrant instead because they could pay him less.”
	Juan, an undocumented immigrant, describes how his family works daily to contribute to the American economy:
<b>Individual Positive</b>	“ <b>My family is undocumented. We immigrated to the United States</b> in 2006. Since then, we <b>have all secured employment and are investing in our community</b> by purchasing homes and starting businesses.”

The group negative frame comes from a 2013 quote by Representative Lou Barletta from Pennsylvania (Barletta 2013), and the group positive frame comes from a Republican campaign financier in favor of immigration reform (Parker 2013). The individual positive frame comes from the story of a real immigrant from Peru (Criado 2013) and the individual negative frame represents the counter-argument. To maintain consistency across frames, all four positive and negative frames discuss the issue of immigration in relation to economic factors and all five frames are specific to the issue of undocumented immigration. Maintaining consistency in the use of undocumented immigration across frames is crucial because past research shows that Americans’ distinguish between documented and undocumented immigrants (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014).

After exposure to one of the four frames on undocumented immigration, respondents are asked their opinion on immigration. Specifically, I use two different questions to measure my

dependent variable—attitudes on immigration—to ensure that the results are not random. The first asks respondents to report their opinions on a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants: “What do you think of a proposal that Congress approve a pathway to citizenship for undocumented or illegal immigrants?” Responses are coded on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The second question asks respondents whether they support a path to legal status for undocumented immigrants: “What would you think of a proposal that would give many of the undocumented or illegal Hispanic/Latina/o immigrants working in the United States a chance to obtain legal status?” Responses are also coded on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

In addition to the two immigration policy questions, respondents are also asked to report a series of demographic information on age, gender, education level, income level, partisan affiliation, race and ethnicity. Past research has shown that women, democrats and those who are more educated are more likely to hold welcoming attitudes on immigration, while whites, republicans, low-skilled workers, and older individuals hold more restrictive views on immigration (Hajnal and Rivera 2014; Chandler and Tsai, 2001; Scheve and Slaughter, 2001; Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014; Haubert and Fussell, 2006). Thus, I use this set of demographic variables as control variables in my analysis. Table 6b offers a detailed description of demographic variable measures and coding

Table 6b: Control Variables, Measures, and Coding

VARIABLE	MEASURE	CODING
<b>Partisan Identification</b>	Two Questions (a) Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?  (b) Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party?	Respondents who identify as either Republican (Democrat) or closer to the Republican (Democratic) Party are coded Republican (Democrat). All other respondents are coded as Independent.  I generate two dummy variables for Republican and Independent with Democrat as the excluded category.
<b>Income</b>	Last year, what was the total income before taxes of all the people living in your house or apartment?	Coded on an 8-point scale ranging from less than 10,000 to more than 150,000. Don't know answers are coded as missing.
<b>Education</b>	What is the last grade you completed in school?	Coded on a 9-point scale ranging from Grade 8 or lower to Graduate or Professional Degree. Don't know answers are coded as missing.
<b>Age</b>	What is your age?	Respondents report their exact age
<b>Male</b>	Are you male or female?	Dummy variable, where 1 is Male and 0 is Female.
<b>White</b>	What is your race—are you White, Black or African-American, Asian, American Indian, or some other race?	Dummy variable, where 1 is non-Hispanic White and 0 is non-White.
<b>Latina/o</b>	Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin or descent?	Dummy variable where 1 is Latina/o and 0 is non-Latina/o

### Personal Narrative and Group-Centric Framing Effects

As Table 7 illustrates, I argue that when people encounter new stories of immigration they receive those stories in relation to their perception of immigrants as a group.

Table 7: Effect of Positive and Negative Group and Individual Frames

<b>Overall Perception of Immigrant group</b>	<b>Type of media frame</b>			
	<i>Positive Individual</i>	<i>Positive group</i>	<i>Negative Individual</i>	<i>Negative Group</i>
<i>Negative perception of the group</i>	Exception	Challenge	Reinforcing	Reinforcing
<i>Positive perception of the group</i>	Reinforcing	Reinforcing	Exception	Challenge

Individual narratives that challenge pre-existing opinions of immigrants are more easily construed of as exceptions than group-centric stories. Thus, as H1 and H2 explain, while I expect exposure to either a group-centric or a personal narrative positive frame to predict welcoming attitudes on immigration, differences in framing effects will be largest between group centric-frames and personal narrative frames.

H1: Positive frames will predict more welcoming attitudes on immigration than negative frames

H2: Differences in framing effects will be larger between group negative and group positive frames, than between group negative and both positive and negative group centric frames.

As Figure 12 illustrates, I hypothesize that group-centric frames will be more effective in moving public opinion toward restrictive or welcoming views on immigration.

Figure 12: Effect of exposure to a group negative frame (as opposed to a group positive frame) among non-Latinas/os



Table 8 presents two tests for these hypotheses. First, Model I provides ordered logistic regression results for support for a path to citizenship with exposure to positive group-centric and positive and negative personal narrative frames as the main explanatory variables. Exposure to the negative group-centric frame is the excluded category. I also include control variables for partisan identification, education, income, age, gender, and race. And secondly, Model II in Table 8 outlines ordered logistic regression results for support for legal status for undocumented immigrants. The main explanatory variables and control variables are identical to those in Model I.

Table 8: Effect of Group-Centric and Personal Narrative Frames on Support for a Path to Citizenship and Legal Status for Undocumented Immigrants

Independent Variables	MODEL I		MODEL II	
	Path to Citizenship	Changes in Predicted Probability	Legal Status	Changes in Predicted Probability
Group Positive	0.394* (0.16)	0.08	0.416** (0.161)	0.09
Personal Positive	0.172 (0.160)	0.03	0.063 (0.158)	0.04
Personal Negative	0.151 (0.157)	0.03	0.216 (0.161)	0.01
Republican	-1.682** (0.154)	0.25	-1.700** (0.154)	0.26
Independent	-1.170** (0.152)	0.19	-0.902** (0.151)	0.16
Male	-0.082 (0.115)	0.02	-0.227* (0.115)	0.05
Income	-0.027 (0.030)	0.04	-0.037 (0.030)	0.06
Education	0.101** (0.035)	0.15	0.093** (0.034)	0.14
Age	-0.019** (0.005)	0.18	-0.017** (0.005)	0.16
White	0.268* (0.139)	0.05	0.027* (0.138)	0.05
N	1066		1068	

Note: Table entries are ordered logistic regression coefficients with estimated standard errors in parentheses and changes in predicted probabilities. \*\*<0.01; \*<0.05; † <0.1

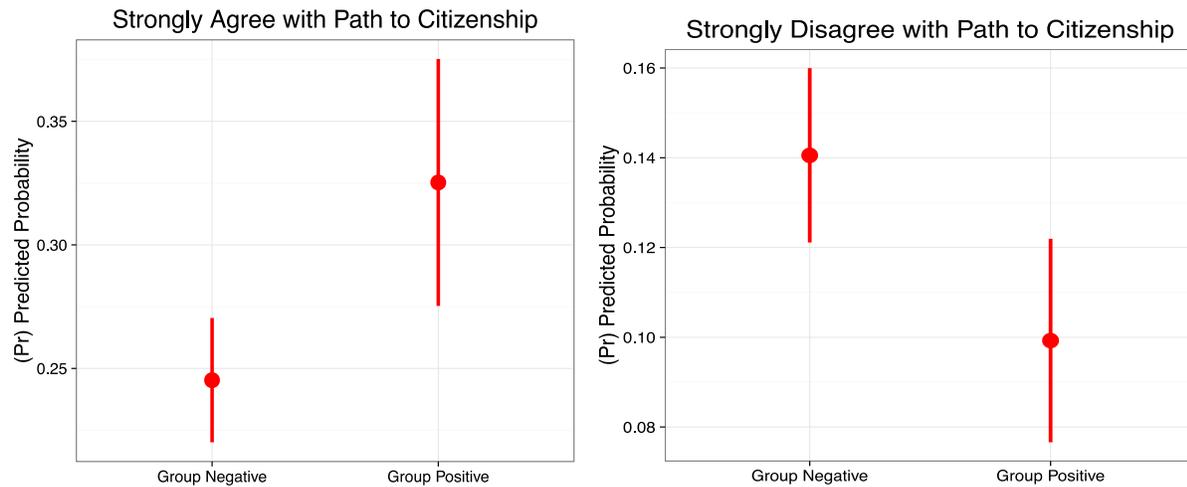
Support for a path to citizenship and legal status for undocumented immigrants varies by partisan affiliation and some demographic variables in the model. Republicans are 25% and 26% less likely than Democrats to support these policy prescriptions, while independents are 19% and 16% less likely to hold welcoming policy attitudes than democratic partisans. Gender is a statistically significant predictor of support for a path to legal status—but not citizenship. Specifically, men are 5% less likely to strongly support legal status for undocumented immigrants

that their female counterparts. Contrary to theories that posit immigration attitudes as a function of perceived competition in the market (Scheve, Slaughter 2001, Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2010), income does not appear to be a significant predictor of support for welcoming immigration attitudes. In contrast, education is positively correlated with support for both a pathway to citizenship and legal status, with those in the highest education bracket being 15% and 14% more likely than those in the lower-income bracket supporting these policy prescriptions, respectively.

Consistent with past literature, age (Chandler and Tsai 2001) is negatively correlated with support for welcoming policies. Older respondents are 18% and 16% less likely than younger respondents to favor offering a pathway to citizenship and legalization to those who are currently in the United States without proper documentation. Interestingly, however, race is a significant predictor of policy attitudes, but not in the expected direction. White respondents are 5% more likely than non-Whites to be supportive of both immigrant friendly policy solutions. However, because the sample is overwhelmingly White, these results should be taken with caution. Notably, there are not enough non-White respondents in the sample to disaggregate by racial and ethnic minorities.

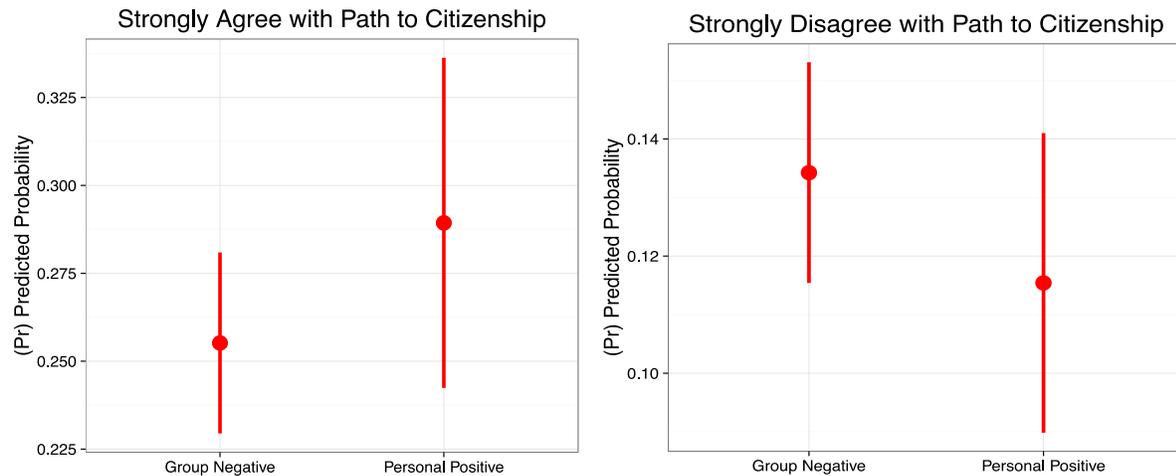
When it comes to the framing effects of positive and negative frames, the results for the effect of exposure to the Group positive frame are consistent with H1—that positive frames predict more welcoming attitudes on immigration than negative frames. As Figures 13 illustrates, respondents assigned to the Group Positive frame are 8% more likely to strongly agree and 4% less likely to strongly disagree with a pathway to citizenship than those assigned to the Group Negative frame.

Figure 13: Probability of Strongly Agreeing and Disagreeing with Path to Citizenship, Group Negative vs. Group Positive



In contrast to the results for the positive group-centric frame, however, the results in Model I suggest that personal narrative frames do not predict differences in support for a pathway to citizenship when compared to a negative group-centric frame. As shown in Figure 14, while the personal narrative frame predicts a higher likelihood of supporting a pathway to citizenship, the results are not statistically significant. Thus, while the direction of the results is consistent with H1, they do not provide support for H1 because framing effects between the personal positive frame and group negative frame are not statistically different.

Figure 14: Probability of Strongly Agreeing and Disagreeing with Path to Citizenship, Group Negative vs. Personal Positive



Despite these conflicting finds with regard to H1, the results for both personal narrative and group-centric frame are consistent with H2—that framing effects are the most visible when comparing exposure to a group negative frame vis-à-vis a group positive frame. The fact that framing effects are only statistically significant when comparing exposure to the group-centric frames aligns with the expectations of framing strength depicted in Figure 12.

The results outlined in Model II are strikingly similar to those in Model I. First, as depicted in Figure 15, when compared to those assigned to the negative group-centric frame, respondents who received the positive group-centric frame, are 9% more likely to strongly agree and about 4% less likely to strongly disagree with providing undocumented immigrants with the possibility of gaining legal status in the United States. And secondly, as shown in Figure 16, the difference in framing effects on support for legalization between the negative group-centric frame and the positive personal narrative frame are not statistically significant.

Figure 15: Probability of Strongly Agreeing and Disagreeing with Legal Status, Group Negative vs. Group Positive

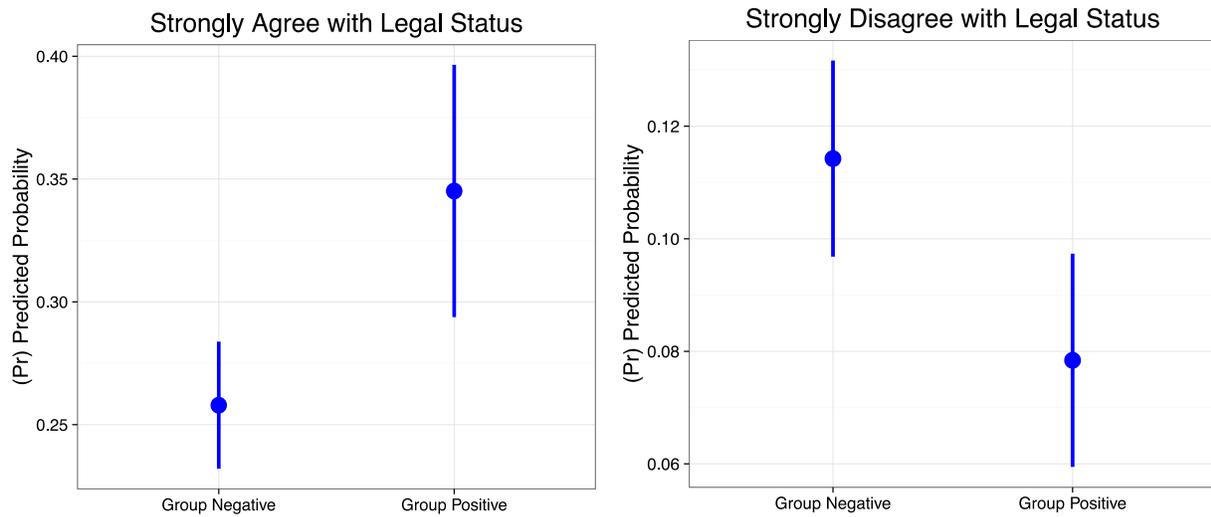
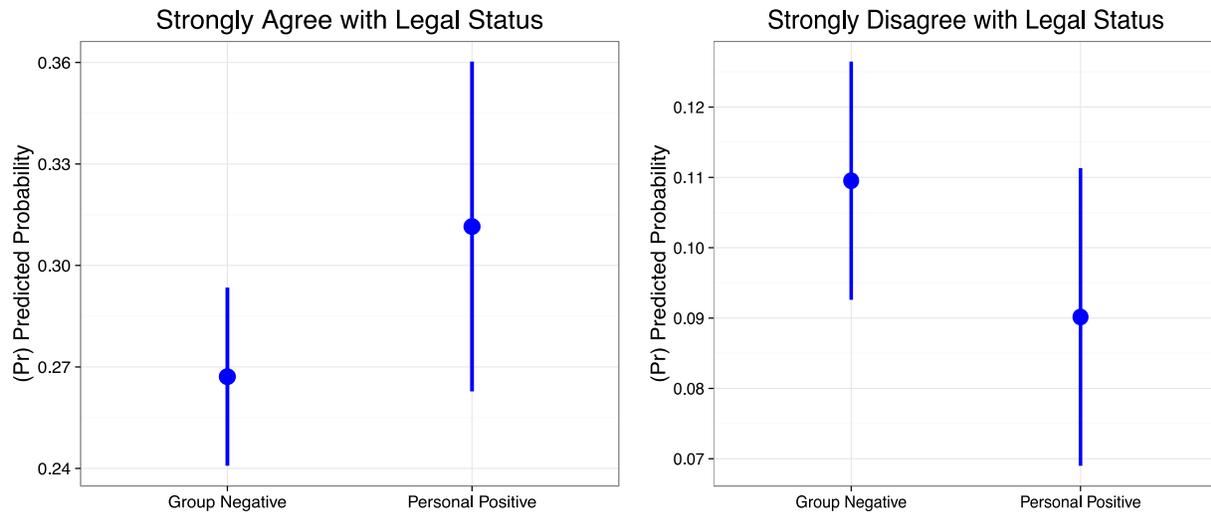


Figure 16: Probability of Strongly Agreeing and Disagreeing with Legal Status, Group Negative vs. Personal Positive



As in Model I, the results in Model II provide partial support for H1, but are consistent with H2. With regards to H1, while I expected exposure to either of the positive frames to predict more welcoming views on immigration, only exposure to the positive group-centric frame is statistically different from exposure to the group negative frame. However, when it comes to H2,

the results are consistent with my hypothesis because I expected framing effects to be most marked between the two group centric frames.

The results for exposure to the personal negative frame are somewhat unexpected, but remain consistent with H2. Figures 17 and 18 illustrate framing effects for the personal negative frame when compared to the group negative frame. My hypotheses, as depicted in Figure 12, would predict that exposure to the group negative frame would lead to more restrictive views on immigration than exposure to the personal negative frame. However, while the direction of the results is consistent with these expectation, the differences in framing effects are not statistically significant. That said, because H2 outlines that framing effects will be most different between exposure to the group negative and group positive frames, these results are still consistent.

*Figure 17: Probability of Strongly Agreeing and Disagreeing with Path to Citizenship, Group Negative vs. Personal Negative*

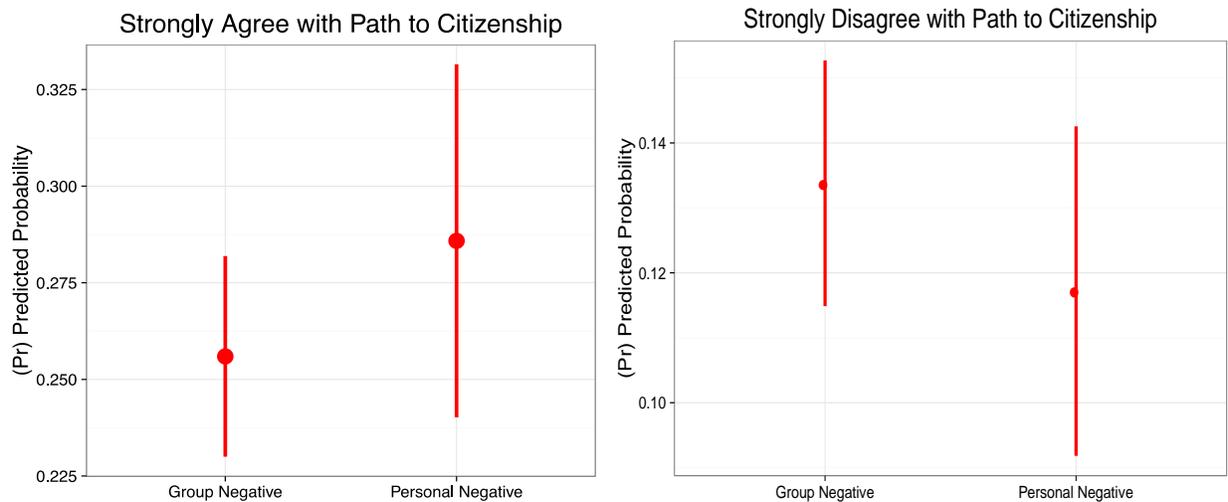
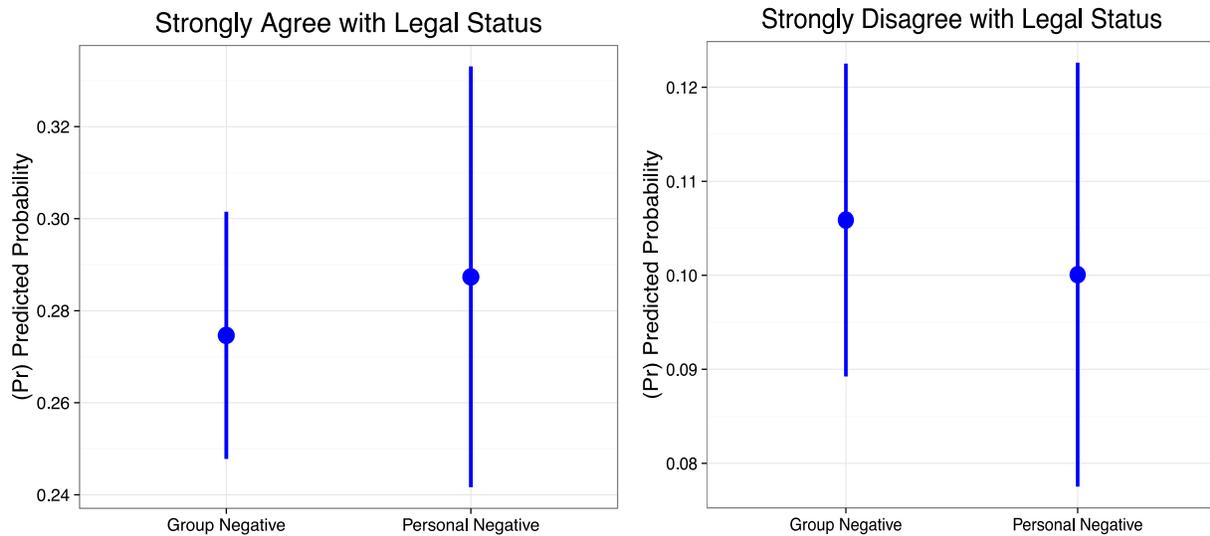


Figure 18: Probability of Strongly Agreeing and Disagreeing with Legal Status, Group Negative vs. Personal Negative



### Effect of Group-Centric and Personal Narrative Frames on Immigration Policy Preferences by Race

Past research suggests that group perceptions of immigrants are particularly consequential for White Americans. Indeed, Abrajano and Hajnal (2015) document what they refer to as “White Backlash” against changing demographics in the United States amidst the rise of the Latino/a population, partly as a result of immigration. Thus, I also consider the effect of personal narrative and group-centric frames on Whites. In particular, as H2 outlines, I expect group-centric frames to be particularly more persuasive than personal narrative frames among Whites. Because concerns about the group have been shown to be more present among White Americans, I contend that they will be less likely to respond to personal narrative frames when compared to group-centric frames.

H3: Whites will be more responsive to group-centric frames (as opposed to personal narrative frames) than non-Whites.

Table 9 present results for four ordered logistic regressions. The first two models (Models I and II) predict support for a pathway to citizenship and legal status among Whites, respectively. The second set of models (Models III and IV) are identical to the first two except they predict immigration attitudes among non-Whites. I cluster all non-White respondents together because there are not enough non-White respondents to conduct separate regression analyses by various sub-groups. This, of course, is a limitation of the analysis as it is possible that different minority groups respond differently to the frame styles. For instance, it is possible that Latinas/os are more amenable to personal narratives than other groups, given the group's closeness to the issue of immigration. Moreover, there is some indication of perceived group competition between (Latina/o) immigrants and Black Americans (Nteta 2014), which could heighten the framing effects of group-centric frames for Black Americans.

Table 9: Effect of Group-Centric and Personal Narrative Frames on Support for a Path to Citizenship and Legal Status for Undocumented Immigrants, by Race

Independent Variables	WHITE				NOT WHITE			
	MODEL I		MODEL II		MODEL III		MODEL IV	
	Path to Citizenship	Changes in Predicted Probability	Legal Status	Changes in Predicted Probability	Path to Citizenship	Changes in Predicted Probability	Legal Status	Changes in Predicted Probability
Group Positive	0.446** (0.181)	0.09	0.465** (0.183)	0.10	0.134 (0.346)	0.02	0.185 (0.344)	0.04
Personal Positive	0.136 (0.178)	0.02	0.144 (0.182)	0.03	0.314 (0.352)	0.06	0.383 (0.348)	0.07
Personal Negative	0.136 (0.178)	0.02	0.051 (0.178)	0.01	0.064 (0.344)	0.01	0.011 (0.344)	0.00
Republican	-1.706** (0.169)	0.26	-1.726** (0.170)	0.27	-1.776** (0.383)	0.22	-1.821** (0.378)	0.23
Independent	-1.345** (0.169)	0.22	-1.082** (0.167)	0.19	-0.361 (0.361)	0.06	-0.094 (0.369)	0.02
Male	0.016 (0.130)	0.00	-0.091 (0.131)	0.02	-0.446† (0.252)	0.08	-0.718** (0.252)	0.14
Income	-0.033 (0.033)	0.05	-0.032 (0.033)	0.05	0.009 (0.069)	0.01	-0.048 (0.066)	0.07
Education	0.099** (0.037)	0.15	0.079* (0.037)	0.13	0.089 (0.092)	0.11	0.146† (0.092)	0.18
Age	-0.019** (0.006)	0.18	-0.017** (0.006)	0.17	-0.014 (0.017)	0.11	-0.012 (0.016)	0.10
N	843		841		223		227	

Note: Table entries are ordered logistic regression coefficients with estimated standard errors in parentheses and changes in predicted probabilities. \*\*<0.01; \*<0.05; †<0.1

Despite these limitations, however, these analyses can help us begin to understand how Whites are responding to different types of frame styles vis-à-vis other groups. In line with the results for all respondents (outlined in Table 8), partisan identification and some demographic variables predict support for both a pathway to citizenship and legal status among Whites and non-Whites. Among Whites, Republicans are 26% and 27% less likely to be supportive of both measures of welcoming immigration attitudes, and non-White Republicans are 22% and 23% less likely to do so. Similarly, when compared to Democrats, Independent Whites are 22% and 19% less likely to support welcoming stances on undocumented immigration. It should be noted that affiliation as an independent does not predict immigration attitudes among non-Whites. However, because the sample size for non-Whites is not large enough (223 for Model III and 227 for Model IV), it is possible that there are not enough independents among non-Whites for the regression to pick up on any existing correlations.

There are some notable differences across all four models between Whites and non-Whites. First, Interestingly, gender is only a significant predictor of support for immigrant-friendly policy prescriptions among non-Whites. Non-White men are 8% and 14% less likely to strongly agree with a pathway to citizenship and legal status for undocumented immigrants, respectively. Secondly, the effect of education on policy attitudes is also different for Whites and non-Whites. Higher levels of education are positive correlated with welcoming immigration attitudes, with highly educated non-Whites being 15% and 13% more likely to strongly agree with creating a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants or allowing for some type of legal status, respectively. In contrast, education is not a statistically significant predictor of agreeing with a path to citizenship among non-Whites. Moreover, while education does seem to predict support for legal status, the relationship is only statistically significant with a p-value of  $<.1$ . And finally,

age is a significant predictor of policy attitudes for Whites, with older White respondents being 18% and 17% less likely to strongly agree with either a path to citizenship or legal status, respectively. However, age does not predict neither measure of immigration attitudes for non-Whites in Models III and IV.

Framing effects also appear to be different for Whites and non-Whites. As illustrated in Figures 19 and 20, Whites who were assigned to the group positive frame are 9% and 10% higher probability of agreeing with a pathway to citizenship and legal status than those assigned to the group negative frame. In contrast, attitudes on immigration among non-Whites do not vary by exposure to any of the frames. Here, I should note that framing effects on immigration opinions among Whites are slightly higher than framing effects for all respondents –about 1% higher likelihood for each of the two measures of immigration attitudes. Thus, it seems that excluding non-whites from the regression reinforces differences in framing effects by exposure to one of the two group-centric frames. While it is difficult to draw conclusions about what is going on with non-Whites without a closer examination of framing effects by minority sub-groups, the results do seem to suggest that White respondents are responsive to group-centric immigration frames. Thus, the results are—at least partially—consistent with H3.

Figure 19: Probability of Strongly Agreeing with Path to Citizenship by Race, Group Negative vs. Group Positive

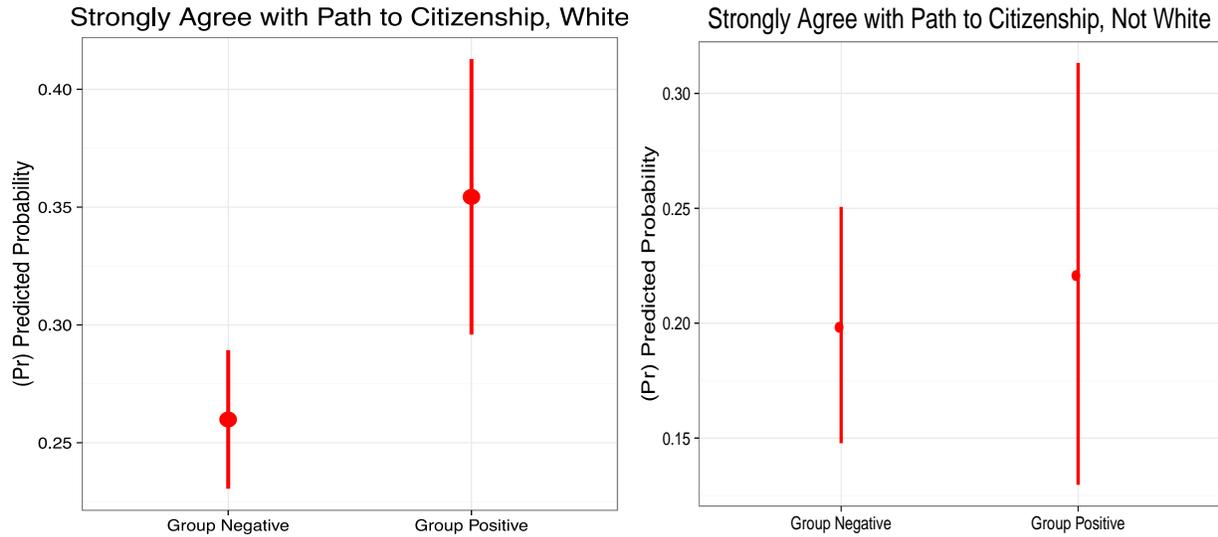
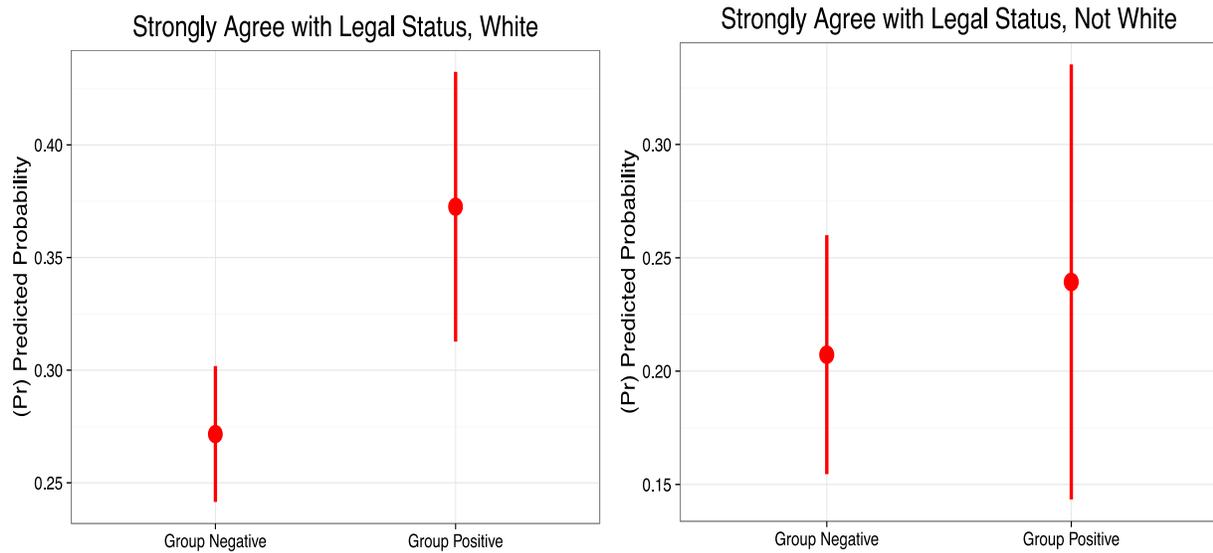


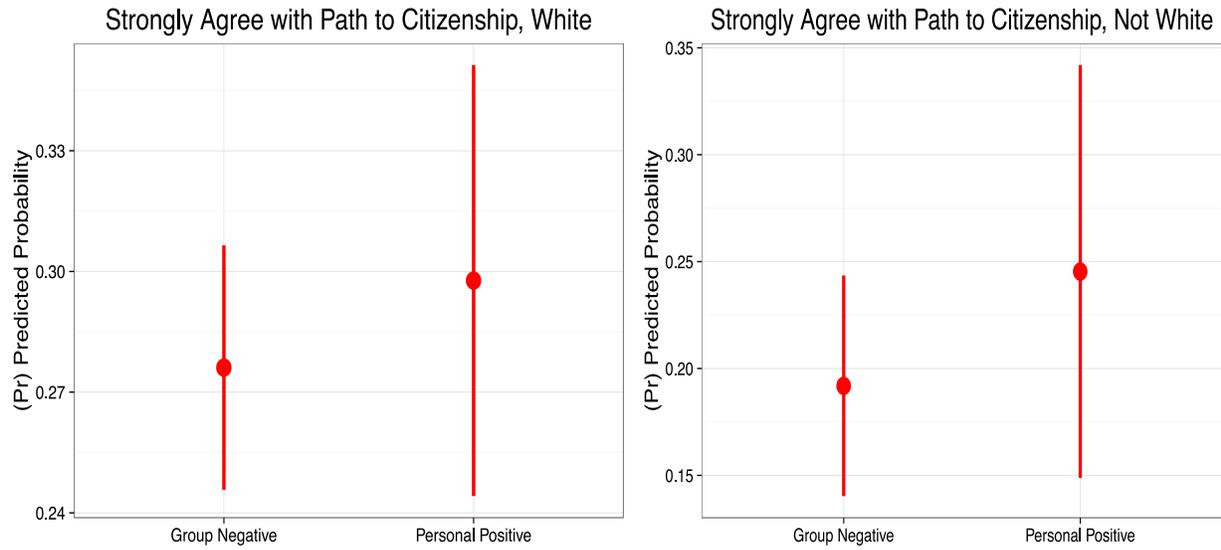
Figure 20: Probability of Strongly Agreeing with Legal Status by Race, Group Negative vs. Group Positive



When it comes to framing effects of positive and negative personal narratives among Whites and non-Whites, the results are not significant. As depicted in Figures 21, 22, 23, and 24, when compared to those assigned to the group-negative frame, exposure to either the positive and negative personal frames is correlated with more support for immigrant friendly policy

prescriptions. However, none of these correlations are statistically significant. Thus, consistent with H2, framing effects are more visible when comparing the effects of positive and negative group-centric frames.

*Figure 21: Probability of Strongly Agreeing with Path to Citizenship by Race, Group Negative vs. Personal Positive*



*Figure 22: Probability of Strongly Agreeing with Legal Status by Race, Group Negative vs. Personal Positive*

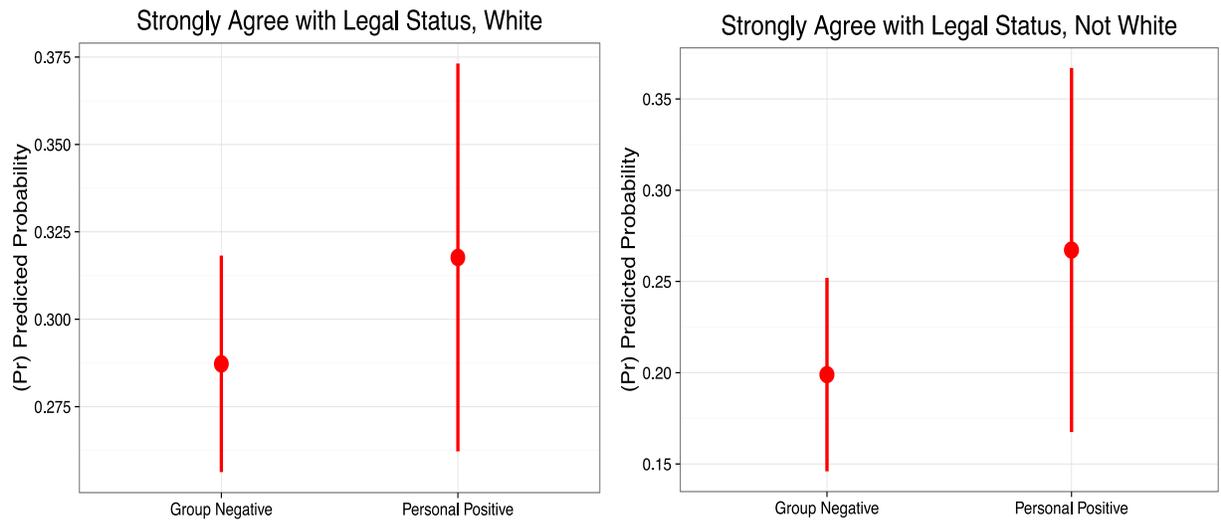


Figure 23: Probability of Strongly Agreeing with Path to Citizenship by Race, Group Negative vs. Personal Negative

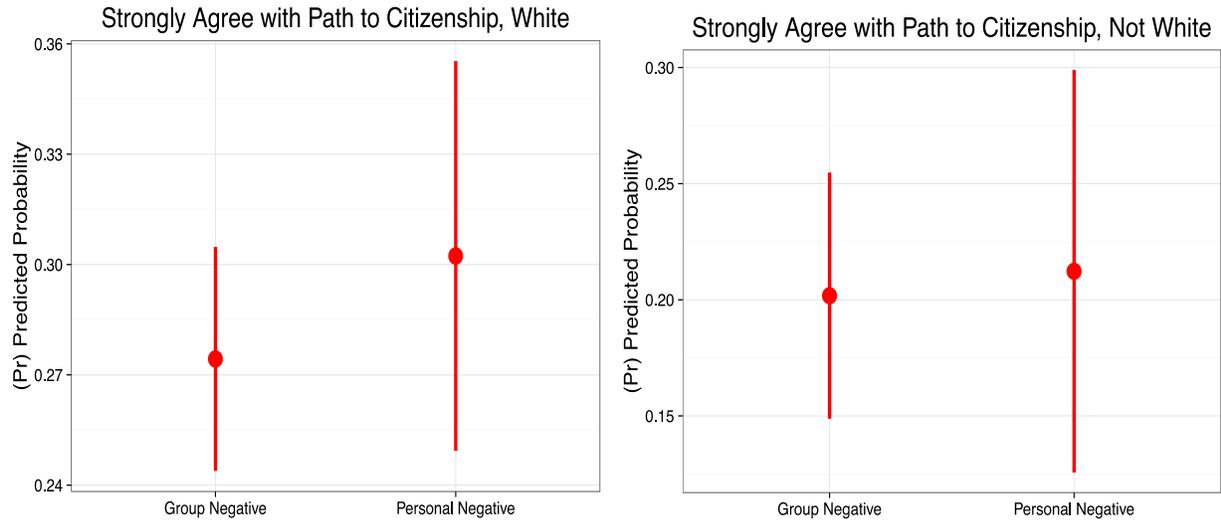
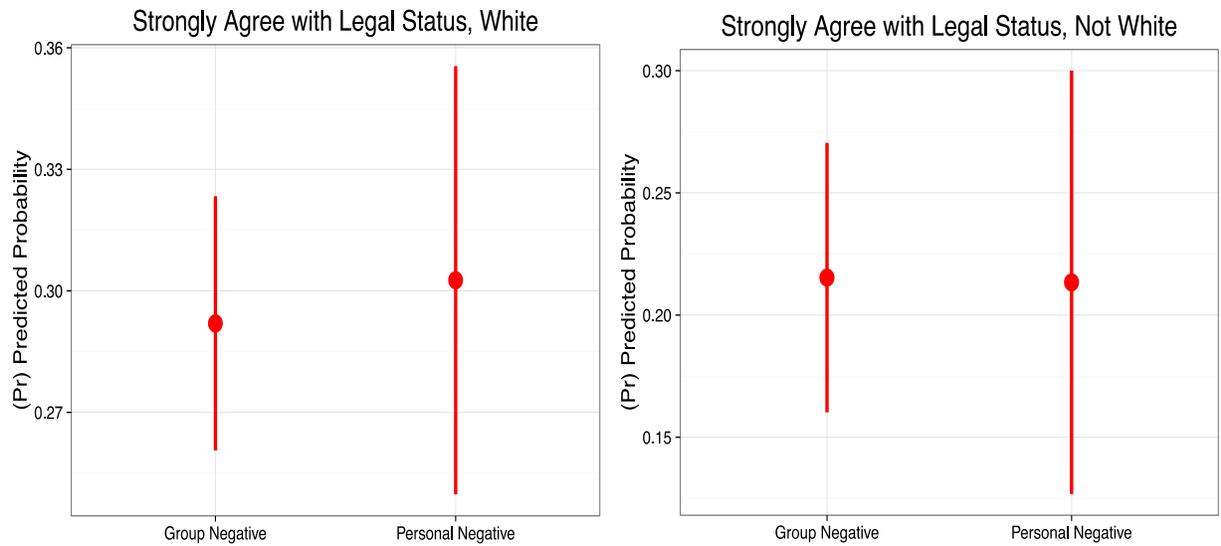


Figure 24: Probability of Strongly Agreeing with Legal Status by Race, Group Negative vs. Personal Negative



## **Group-Centric and Personal Narrative Framing Effects on Immigration Policy Preferences by Partisan Identification**

In addition to examining the effect of the persuasiveness of personal narrative and group-centric frames by race, I also account for potential differences in the way partisans react to immigration news. Existing scholarship documents partisan differences in policy attitudes on immigration. Notably, Republicans tend to hold overall more restrictive views on immigration, while Democrats are more responsive to welcoming appeals (Burns and Gimpel 2000, Wroe, 2008). Moreover, Independents have been found to be less politically informed and hold less certain views than their partisan counterparts (Keith, Magleby, Nelson, Orr, and Westlye 1992). Given these scholarly findings, as outlined in H4, I expect partisans to be less responsive to framing effects than independents. Moreover, while I expect independents to be more responsive to framing effects, I hypothesize (in H5) that group-centric frames will have a larger effect on policy opinions for both partisans and non-partisans.

H4: Framing effects will be larger among Independents than Republicans and Democrats

H5: Across partisan and non-partisan groups, the difference in framing effects will be larger between group-centric frames than between group-centric frames and personal narrative frames.

Table 10 provides a test for H4 and H5. Table entries are ordered logistic regression results for support for a pathway to citizenship and legal status for undocumented immigrants—the two measures for immigration attitudes. Models I and II show results for Democrats, Models III and IV present results for Republicans and Models V and VI outline results among Independents. In

order to distinguish “true” independents, I only code as independent those respondents who do not report feeling closer to either the Republican or Democratic Party.

Table 10: Effect of Group-Centric and Personal Narrative Frames on Support for a Path to Citizenship and Legal Status for Undocumented Immigrants, by Partisan Affiliation

Independent Variables	DEMOCRATS				REPUBLICANS				INDEPENDENTS			
	MODEL I		MODEL II		MODEL III		MODEL IV		MODEL V		MODEL VI	
	Path to Citizenship	Predicted Probability	Legal Status	Predicted Probability	Path to Citizenship	Predicted Probability	Legal Status	Predicted Probability	Path to Citizenship	Predicted Probability	Legal Status	Predicted Probability
Group Positive	0.369 <sup>†</sup> (0.204)	0.08	0.388* (0.204)	0.09	0.006 (0.355)	0.00	-0.159 (0.367)	0.01	1.027** (0.390)	0.19	0.127** (0.400)	0.27
Personal Positive	0.013 (0.202)	0.00	0.032 (0.203)	0.01	-0.107 (0.380)	0.00	-0.008 (0.380)	0.00	1.040** (0.369)	0.18	1.207** (0.375)	0.24
Personal Negative	-0.296 (0.203)	0.07	0.123 (0.205)	0.03	-0.224 (0.547)	0.01	-0.265 (0.364)	0.01	0.200 (0.349)	0.03	0.280 (0.352)	0.05
Male	-0.175 (0.146)	0.04	-0.421** (0.147)	0.10	0.450 <sup>†</sup> (0.268)	0.03	0.605* (0.269)	0.04	-0.186 (0.271)	0.03	-0.261 (0.270)	0.05
Income	-0.011 (0.037)	0.02	-0.003 (0.037)	0.01	-0.112 (0.077)	0.00	-0.043 (0.074)	0.02	-0.085 (0.068)	0.10	-0.154* (0.067)	0.21
Education	0.081 <sup>†</sup> (0.044)	0.15	0.046 (0.044)	0.09	0.077 (0.085)	0.04	0.026 (0.081)	0.01	0.123 <sup>†</sup> (0.076)	0.13	0.230** (0.077)	0.28
Age	-0.003 (0.007)	0.05	-0.007 (0.007)	0.09	-0.022* (0.011)	0.06	-0.007 (0.010)	0.02	-0.055** (0.013)	0.30	- 0.051** (0.013)	0.33
N	655		657		205		203		206		208	

Note: Table entries are ordered logistic regression coefficients with estimated standard errors in parentheses, and changes in predicted probabilities. \*\*<0.01; \*<0.05; <sup>†</sup> <0

The results outlined in Table 10 point to the predictive power of several variables in the models. For Democrats, identifying as a man is significantly and negatively correlated with support for legal status—but not path to citizenship. Moreover, while the relationship between education and immigration attitudes among Democrats is positive, the correlation only approaches significance for predicting agreement with a pathway to citizenship. Unlike male Democrats, male Republicans are about 3% and 4% more likely to support legal status for undocumented immigrants than their female counterparts. However, like the results for Democratic respondents, older Republicans are approximately 9% less likely to support a pathway to citizenship—but not more or less likely to support legal status.

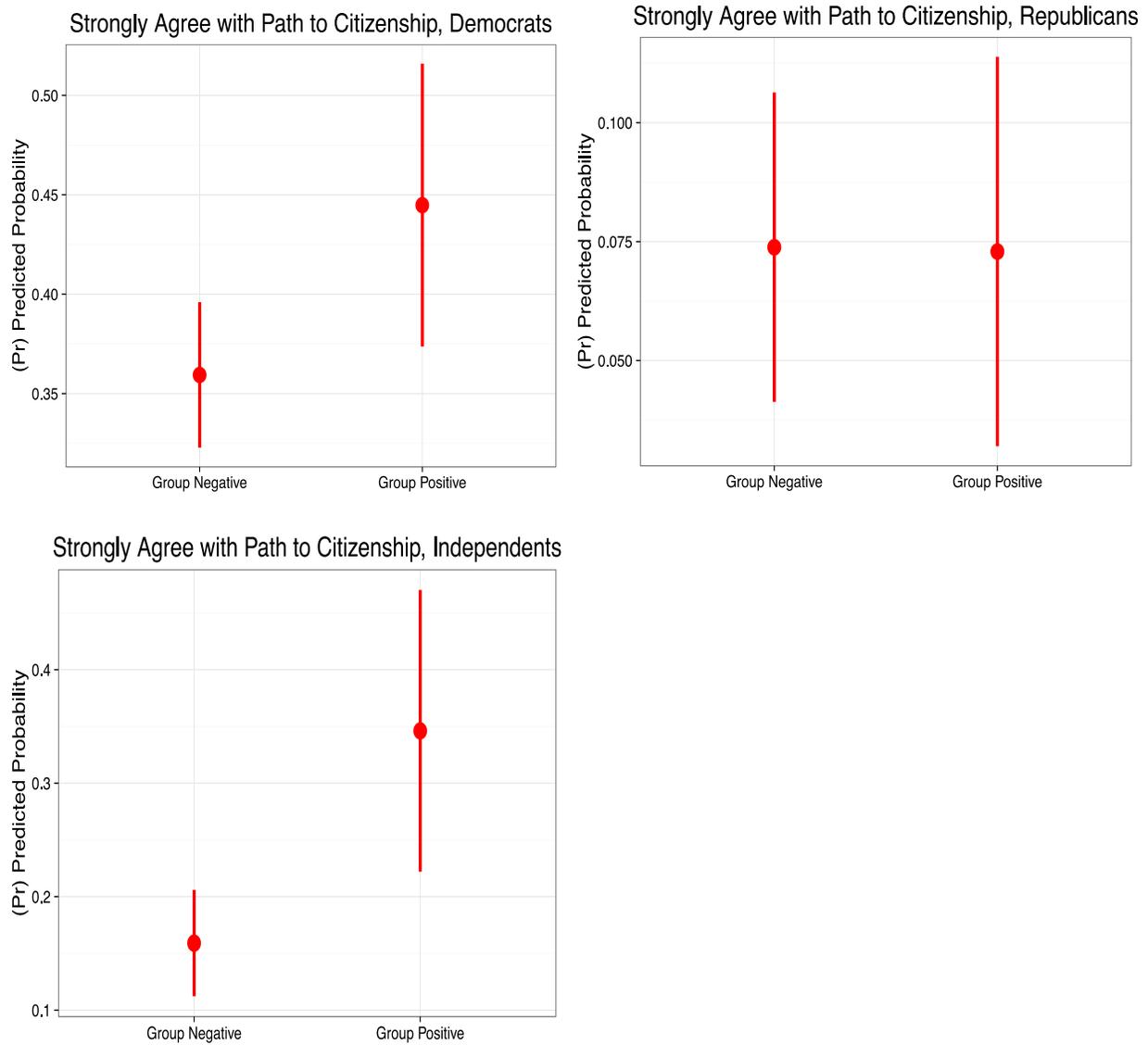
Overall, Models V and VI are more successful in predicting Independents' immigration attitudes than Models I, II, III, and IV are in predicting Democratic and Republican partisans' opinions on immigration. Specifically, older independents are 30% and 33% more likely to report that they strongly agree with a path to citizenship and legal status for those immigrants who are undocumented and are currently residing in the United States. Moreover, education is positively correlated with welcoming policy attitudes. However, the results only reach significance when predicting agreement with legal status—those in the higher education bracket are 28% more likely to agree with legalization as a policy prescription. The effect of education on opinions about a path to citizenship almost approaches significance with a p-value of  $<.1$ —and predicts that highly educated independents are about 13% more likely to support the option of citizenship for undocumented immigrants. And when it comes to income, higher-income independents are 21% more likely to strongly agree with legalization—but not a path to citizenship.

Now moving on to examine framing effects for group-centric and personal narrative frames, the results vary by partisan and non-partisan affiliation. While the models for Democrats and Independents are consistent with my hypotheses, the models for predicting Republican views on immigration provide conflicting results.

As illustrated in Figure 25, exposure to the positive group-centric frame (as opposed to the negative group-centric frame) predicts support for a path to citizenship among Democrats and Independents—but not Republicans. Specifically, Democrats in the positive group-centric treatment are 8% more likely to be supportive of a citizenship alternative, and independents are 19% more likely to do so. It should be noted that framing effects among Democrats are weaker than for Independents—they only approach significance with a p-value of less than .1. For Republicans, however, there is no statistically significant difference between exposure to the positive group-centric frame vis-à-vis the negative group-centric frame.

These results are consistent with H4—that framing effects would be largest for Independents than for Republican or Democratic partisans. However, it is interesting that Democratic Partisans appear to be more responsive to framing effects than Republicans. It is possible that—because immigration has become a very salient political issue among Republicans (Burns and Gimpel 2000, Wroe, 2008)—Republicans' more restrictive views on immigration are more engrained and less easily moved than for Democrats.

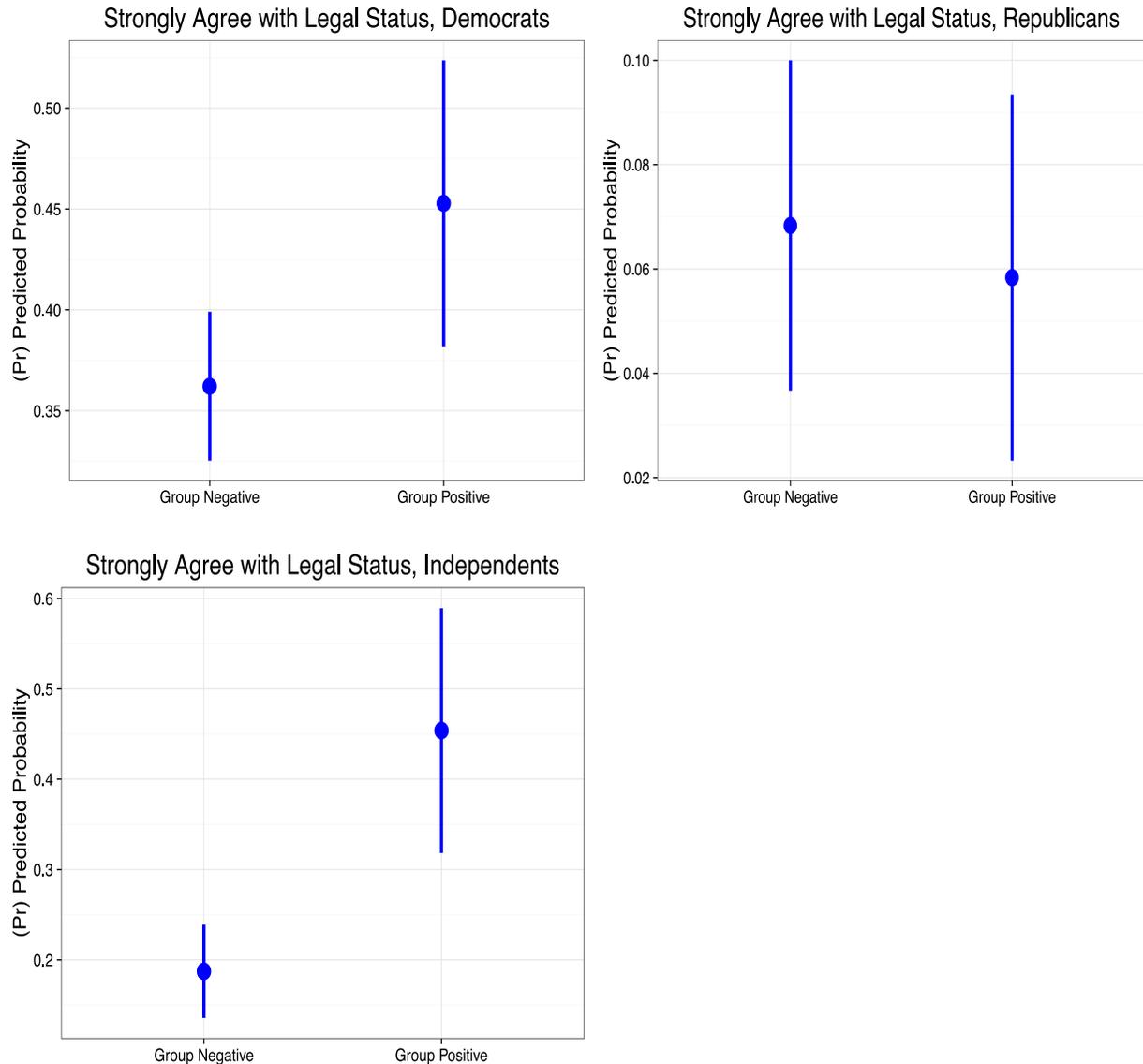
Figure 25: Probability of Strongly Agreeing with Path to Citizenship by Partisan Identification, Group Negative vs. Group Positive



When it comes to predicting agreement with allowing for a legalization option, the results (visualized in Figure 26) are in line with those for a path to citizenship. In fact, they appear to be stronger. Democratic respondents assigned to the positive group-centric frame are 9% more likely to agree with legalization. And among independents, exposure to the positive group-centric frame increases the likelihood of strongly agreeing with legalization by 27%. As in the path to citizenship

models, however, there are not statistically significant effects for Republican respondents. Together, the results for a pathway to citizenship and legal status are consistent with H4—that framing effects are larger for independents than partisans. But beyond providing support for my hypothesis, the difference in framing effects between support for a pathway to citizenship and legalization suggest that respondents are more open to considering legalization as an option than they are to providing a pathway to citizenship. This makes sense, given the more permanent weight of citizenship, and the unique access it provides to full membership within the polity.

Figure 26: Probability of Strongly Agreeing with Legal Status by Partisan Identification, Group Negative vs. Group Positive

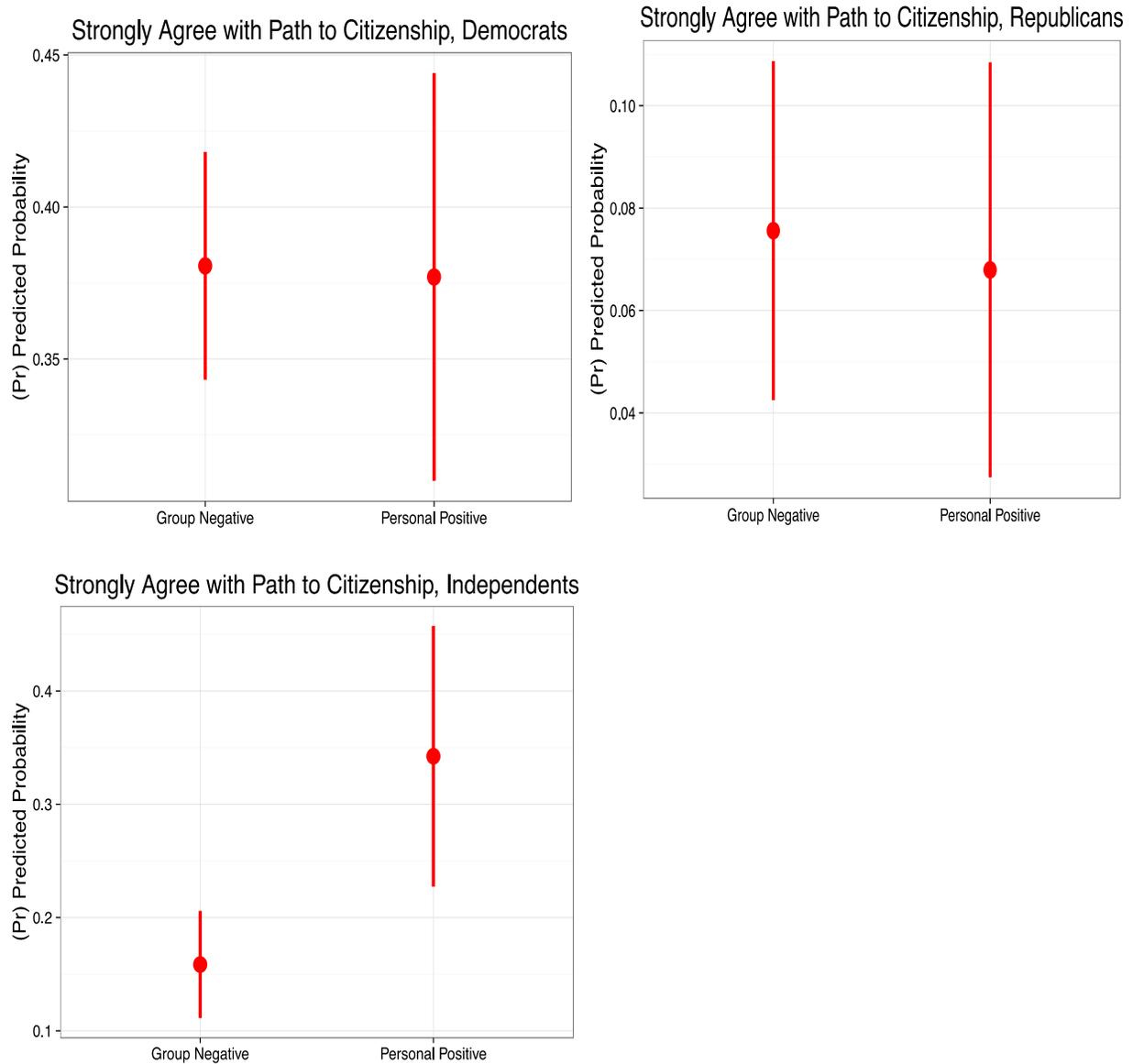


Next, I move on to examine whether the results provide support for H5—that framing effects will be the most visible when comparing exposure between the two group-centric frames than when comparing respondents assigned to the two personal frames. Figure 27, provides a visual description of the predicted probabilities of reporting support for a pathway to citizenship by partisan and non-partisan affiliation.

As in the models for all respondents (Table 8) and for respondents by race (Table 9), exposure to the positive personal narrative frame (as opposed to a negative group-centric frame) does not predict statistically significant differences in Democrats and Republicans' opinions on a path to citizenship. However, interestingly, the models for Independents (Models V and IV), do return statistically significant framing effects. Specifically, Independents assigned to the positive personal narrative frame have an 18% higher likelihood of supporting a pathway to citizenship than those assigned to the negative group-centric frame.

These results are consistent with H4—that framing effects are more visible for independents than for partisans. Indeed—for independents—exposure to both the personal positive and group-centric significantly predict policy opinions on immigration. Moreover, the results also provide support for H5—that differences in framing effects are larger between the group-centric frames than between the personal narrative frames. Group-centric framing effects are larger and more consistently predictive of immigration attitudes than personal narrative frames.

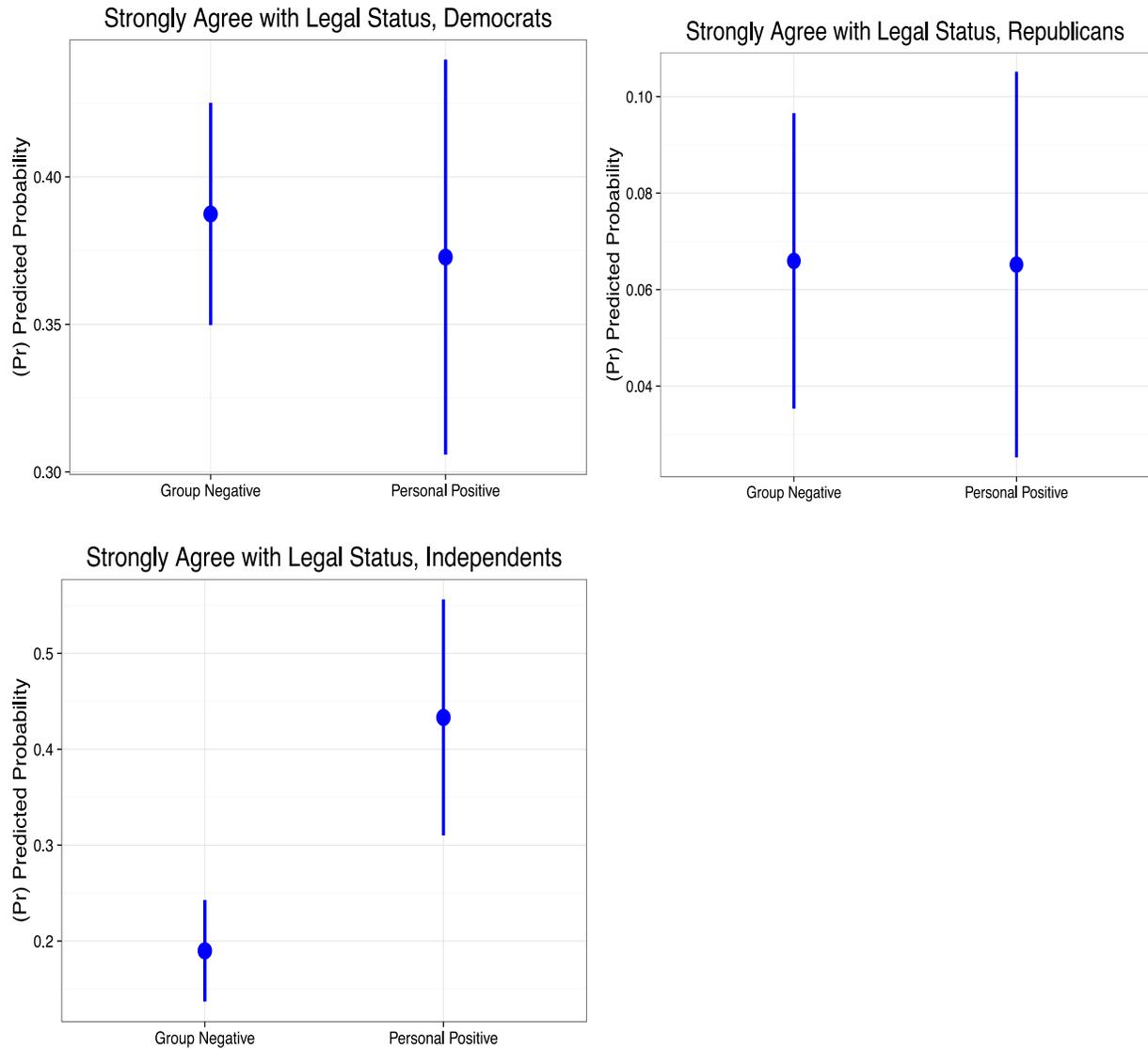
Figure 27: Probability of Strongly Agreeing with Path to Citizenship by Partisan Identification, Group Negative vs. Personal Positive



When looking at the effect of positive personal narrative frames on support for legal status (Figure 28), the results follow the direction of those for a path to citizenship. There are statistically significant effects for Independents—but not Democrat and Republican respondents. However, once again, the size of the effects on Independents’ attitudes on legalization is larger than those

for a path to citizenship. Specifically, non-partisan respondents are 24% more likely to support legalization when exposed to the positive personal narrative frame as opposed to the the negative group-centric frame. Once again, it should be noted that consistent with H5, the likelihood for supporting legalization is higher for those Independent respondents exposed to the positive group-centric frame than those assigned to the positive personal narrative frame—27% vis-à-vis 24%, respectively.

Figure 28: Probability of Strongly Agreeing with Legal Status by Partisan Identification, Group Negative vs. Personal Positive



Finally, framing effects for the negative personal narrative frames are in line with previous models for all respondents and by race. Specifically, as Figures 29 and 30 show, exposure to the negative personal negative frame does not produce statistically significant results. These results hold across all three partisan and non-partisan affiliations.

Figure 29: Probability of Strongly Agreeing with Path to Citizenship by Partisan Identification, Group Negative vs. Personal Negative

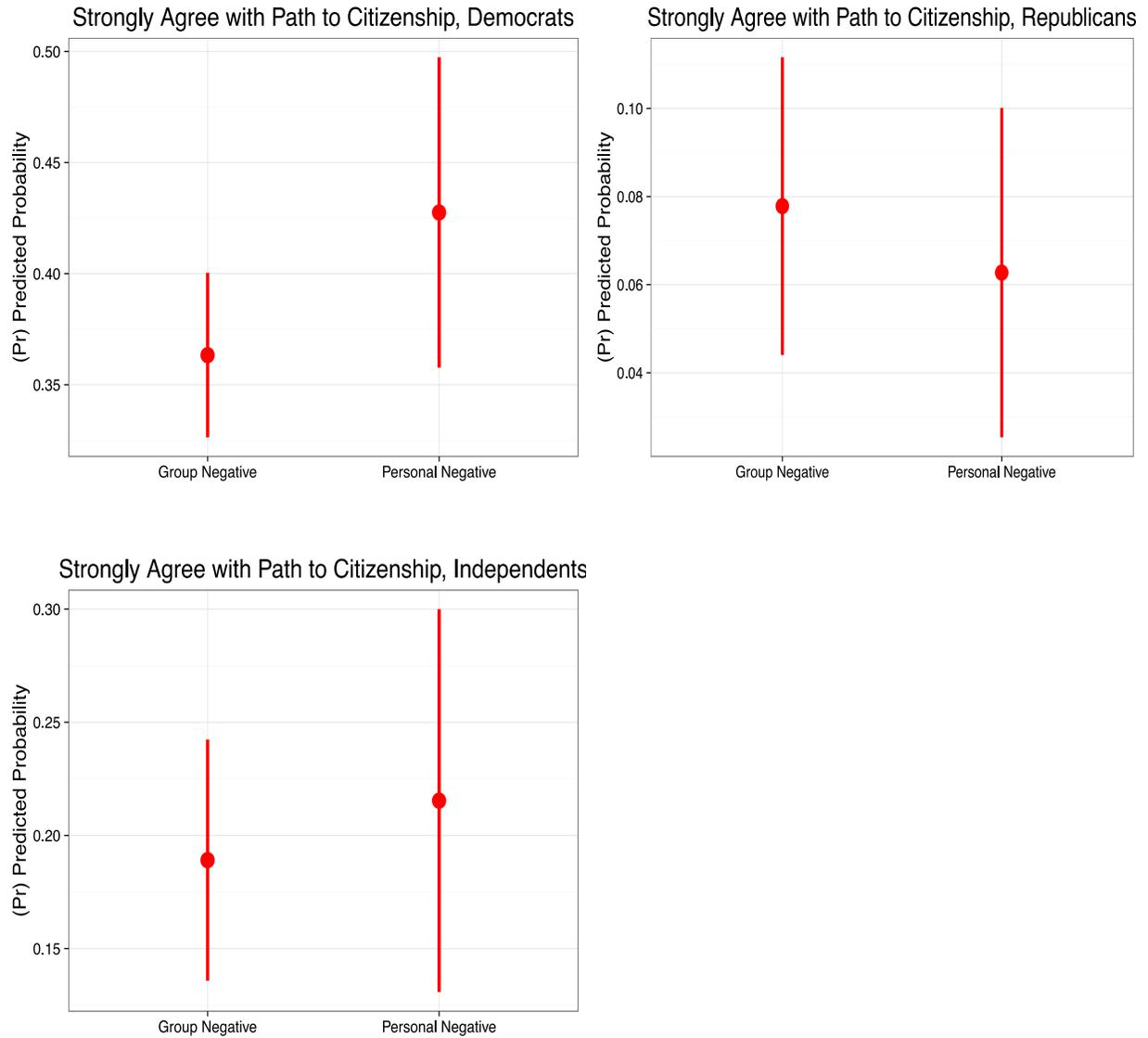
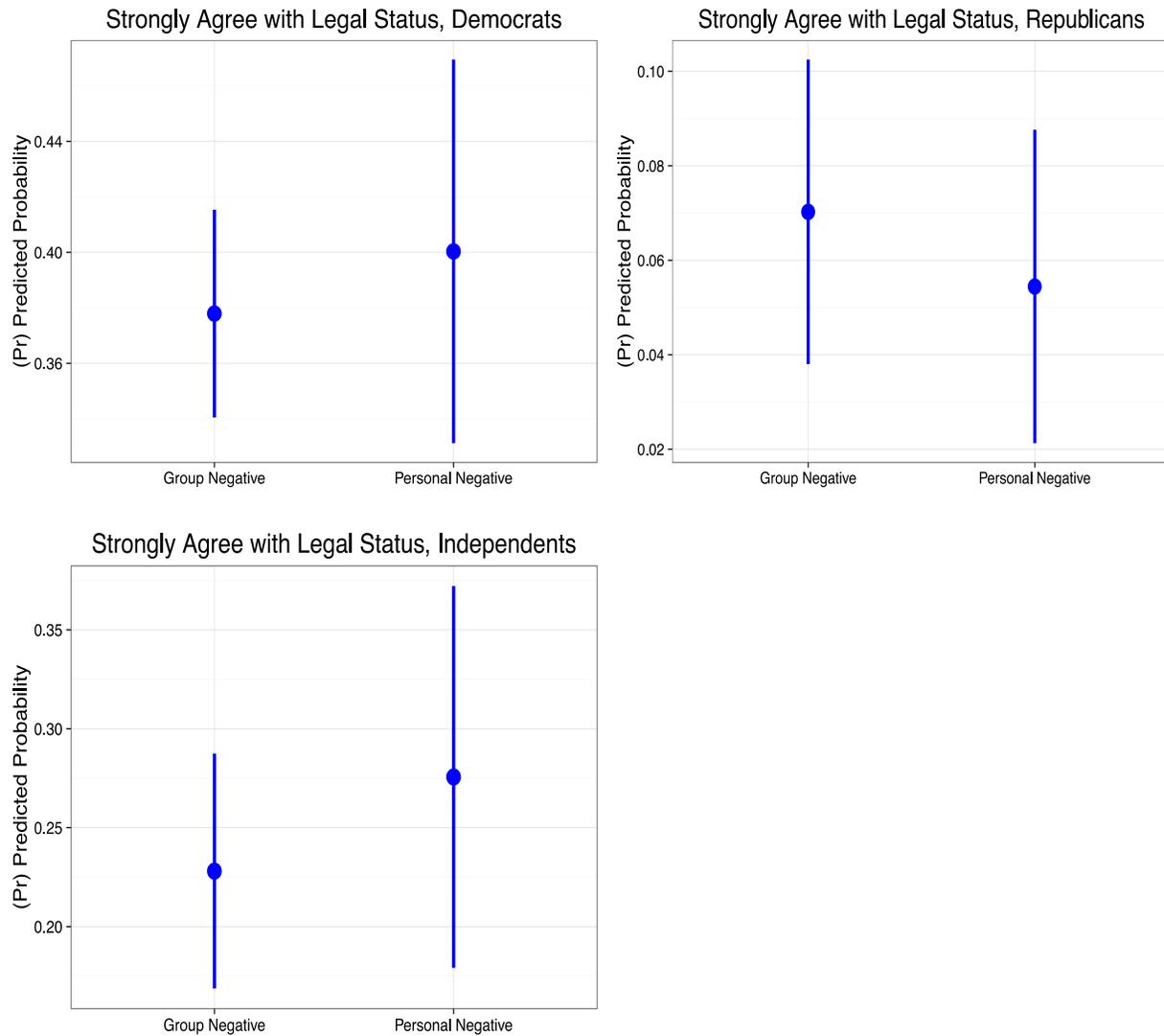


Figure 30: Probability of Strongly Agreeing with Legal Status by Partisan Identification, Group Negative vs. Personal Negative



### Discussion and Conclusion

The collective findings in this chapter provide support for my hypotheses. As expected, positive frames do indeed predict more welcoming attitudes on immigration than their negative counterparts. This finding, however, comes with some caveats. First, while the direction of all the results are in line with this premise, the results are only statistically significant on a consistent

basis for positive group-centric appeals. In other words, differences in framing effects, then, are only consistently statistically different from each other when comparing positive and negative group-centric frames. This finding is also consistent with my hypotheses. Indeed, I theorize framing effects to function on a spectrum—with group-centric appeals at the poles and personal narratives in the middle.

Taken together, my results resolve some questions within the literature, and expand on existing evidence about the persuasiveness of episodic and thematic frames. First, there is conflicting evidence about the persuasiveness of little-picture vs. big-picture framing—with some arguing that the former are more persuasive because they simplify abstract and complicated issues (Small and Loewenstein 2003, 2005, Small, Loewenstein, and Slovic 2007) and yet others arguing that the latter allows people to understand systematic processes and the role of government in shaping those processes (Iyengar 1990, 1991).

I add to this debate by putting Converse's (1964) conceptualization of group-centrism at the center. Specifically, I contend that group-centrism on a policy issue like immigration is an important mediating force in the ability of frames to sway public opinion. Because people's opinions about immigration in the United States are inseparably tied to perceptions about the group—mainly Latina/o immigrants—then any new information on the issue is incorporated in relation to group-perceptions. Personal narratives are more easily dismissed as exceptions than as true challenges to group-based perceptions of immigration policy.

Secondly, the results presented in this chapter also provide some insight into the potential variation of how people respond to episodic and thematic frames by race—an identity that has been shown to be consequential to policy preferences and general attitudes toward immigration (Abrajano and Hajnal 2015). I hypothesized that Whites would be more responsive than non-

Whites to group-centric appeals because they are likely to hold particularly engrained perceptions of immigration as a Latina/o group-issue. The results provide partial support for this notion. While White respondents were indeed responsive to group-centric appeals, the results are not statistically significant for non-Whites.

Unfortunately, because the sample size for non-Whites is not large enough—I am unable to further explore framing effects by different non-White sub-groups. The lack of statistical significance among non-Whites in the sample could be explained by the fact that racial and ethnic minorities could respond to group and personal appeals in different ways. It is possible, for instance, that Latinas/os are more responsive to personal narrative appeals than Whites because they are more likely to identify with immigrant individuals, and there is evidence to suggest that personal connections matter when examining framing effects of episodic frames (Borah 2011). Future research should explore this possibility.

Finally, the results in this chapter also provide some insight into framing effects by partisan identification—a political identity that deeply divides people’s perceptions of immigration (Cohen-Marks et. al. 2009). There are three overall findings worth highlighting. First, Republicans are not responsive to neither group-centric or personal narrative appeals. Consistent with the growing documentation of the Republican Party’s restrictive policy preferences on immigration (Burns and Gimpel 2000, Wroe, 2008), Republicans in the sample are likely to self-report restrictive views on immigration-- regardless of frame exposure.

Secondly, the results for Democrats mirror those for the entire sample—framing effect differences are only statistically significant when comparing exposure to the negative and positive group-centric frames. This is an important finding because while the Democratic Party is increasingly associated with more welcoming views on immigration, the fact that Democrats do

respond to framing effects—but not Republicans—suggests that welcoming immigration preferences among Democrats are less solidified than restrictive immigration preferences among Republicans. Indeed, existing scholarship does suggest that while Democrats are less likely to hold restrictive immigration preferences, they hold similar concerns about immigration than Republicans (Neiman, Johnson, and Bowler 2006). Thus, my results provide information about how political communication on immigration could be contributing to the increased defection of (White) Democratic voters from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party (Abrajano and Hajnal 2015, Hajnal and Rivera 2014).

Finally, independents are the most susceptible to framing effects. In addition to reporting more welcoming attitudes when exposed to the positive group-centric frame, exposure to the positive personal narrative is also a statistically significant predictor of more welcoming policy preferences. This is consistent with scholarly evidence that true independents (Keith, Magleby, Nelson, Orr, and Westlye 1992) hold more malleable political views than partisans (Zaller 1992, Hillygus and Jackman 2003). Nevertheless, it should be noted that—consistent with my hypothesis—the effects of exposure to a group-centric frame is larger than the effect of exposure to a personal narrative frame.

Taken together, my results indicate that people’s intersecting identities are consequential for the way they process information on immigration. However, despite these differences, the findings presented in this chapter indicate that group-centric appeals are more consistently effective than personal narratives when it comes to shaping policy opinions on immigration.

The implications of these findings for political communicators and activists are two-fold. First, it suggests that—in pursuing the personal narrative as a communication strategy—pro-immigrant sympathizers are engaging in a less than optimal form of political communication. And

secondly, it highlights the possibility that –within a competitive media environment such as political communication on immigration—the outcomes of media coverage may be different than the sum of its parts. In the aggregate, the predominant use of the negative group-centric frame on the restrictive immigration camp—coupled with the popular use of the personal narrative on the pro-immigrant side—could be communicating a Trump-like view of immigration. That is, media coverage on immigration could be communicating to the American public that immigrants—as a group—represent a net negative to the nation, while still allowing for individual exceptions to that rule.

**Chapter 4**

**Immigration Protests and Public  
Opinion**

*How Public Demonstrations Shape the Policy Attitudes  
of Latinas/os and Non-Latinas/os*

*Representative Steve King, an Iowa Republican from another district, said his office had been flooded with angry calls about the recent marches. "It is one thing to see an abstract number of 12 million illegal immigrants," Mr. King said. "It is another thing to see more than a million marching through the streets demanding benefits as if it were a birthright." He added, "I think people resent that."<sup>37</sup>*

## **Introduction**

The onslaught of an anti-immigrant and anti-Latina/o environment in the United States during the last two decades has been met by protests and demonstrations against nativist legislation, as well as the U.S. Congress' failure to pass immigration reform. During these protests, pro-immigration activists and supporters speak (in both English and Spanish) of separated families and the role of immigrants in the community. They affirm their commitment by using slogans such as "undocumented and unafraid" and "no human being is illegal". The goal of these activities is to raise awareness about immigration and pressure elected officials to take action. But how does the public perceive protests? What effect (if any) do they have in shifting public opinion on immigration?

An informed observer of U.S. political history would point to the long tradition of using public demonstrations as a tool for social change. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's and the Women's Suffrage Movement of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century are notable examples. Indeed, there is a longstanding narrative in American Political discourse that protests can aid in changing public opinion on social issues. This Chapter argues that the success of protests lies in their ability to empower and mobilize likely allies of their cause—not in changing the opinion of the general public. Specifically, when it comes to the issue of immigration, I argue that

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<sup>37</sup> Kirkpatrick, D. D. (2006, April 17). Demonstrations on Immigration Harden a Divide. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>

immigration protests heighten solidarity among Latina/o sub-groups, but they also galvanize opponents and feelings of group threat among the dominant majority.

This Chapter examines the effect of protests on Latinas/os' and non-Latinas/os' views on immigration policy. To assess attitudes among non-Latinas/os, I use data from an original survey experiment and randomly assign a sample of non-Latina/o respondents to receive either a protest story or four other immigration stories—two positive and two negative. And to explore how protests shape Latinas/os' immigration attitudes, I use the 2006 LNS to examine the effect of the 2006 immigration protests. Results from these analyses indicate opposite effects for Latinas/os and non-Latinas/os. While exposure to the 2006 immigrant protests increases Latinas/os' *welcoming* attitudes on immigration exposure to an immigration protest story increases *restrictive* views among non-Latinas/os. Altogether, the findings suggest two conclusions: (1) protests shape public opinion on immigration and (2) the direction of the effect varies by audience.

### **Immigrants and Group Threat**

U.S. Public opinion on immigration policy has multiple dimensions. Notably, there is a partisan divide on the issue—with Democrats holding more welcoming attitudes on immigration and Republicans advocating for restrictive measures (Burns and Gimpel 2000). Moreover, there is a cosmopolitan dimension to immigration attitudes (Haubert and Fussell 2006): those who have higher levels of education and exposure to other cultures are more likely to be open to immigrants. But in addition to these factors, immigration in the United States is inherently a group issue—a Latina/o group issue (Santa Ana 2002). The rise of the Latina/o population—partly as a result of immigration—triggers feelings of group threat and engenders the perception of group competition.

*Immigrants as an ethno-linguistic threat*

Group threat emerges when a majority group perceives another group as inherently different, inferior and as a challenge to their dominant status (Blumer 1958). Anti-immigrant sentiment is in part rooted in the negative perception that immigrants (as a group) pose a threat to cultural unity and traditions in the United States (Brader Valentino and Suhay 2008; Valentino, Brader and Jardina 2012). Notably, Huntington (2004) has raised concerns about the threat of Mexican and Latina/o immigrants to America's ethno linguistic identity: "The persistent inflow of Hispanic Immigrants threatens to divide the United States into two peoples, two cultures, and two languages." Indeed, the narrative of (Latina/o) immigrants as a threat to American national identity is well documented. Research points to backlash against the use of Spanish language (Citrin et. al 1990; Hopkins 2014), foreign flags (Wright and Citrin 2011) and the "browning" of America (Johnson et al. 1997; Santa Ana 2002).

The rise of the immigrant population and their children signals changes to the country's ethnic composition. In the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and onward, the United States has seen a rise of the Latina/o and immigrant population in both established and new gateway localities (Jones-Correa 2008; Massey and Capoferro 2008). As a result, the increased visibility of immigrants is both real and perceptual. While the changes to America's demographics are real, Americans consistently overestimate the size of the Hispanic population and underestimate the size of the white population (Wong 2007). This is important to note because while threat increases with changing demographics (Blalock 1967), this effect is mediated by the public's perception of those changes (Alba et al. 2005). Specifically, those who perceive the immigrant population to be larger are more likely to hold more negative views about the group, as well as restrictive attitudes. In many ways, then, immigration is a cultural battlefield at the group level.

One historically ongoing battle for those who worry that the longstanding Anglo-protestant culture is under attack is the use of languages other than English, particularly in public spaces. English-only movements surfaced in the 1920's and 1980's (Citrin et. al. 1990), and today the symbolic importance of English as a national identifier remains as strong as ever (Schildkraut 2005). This persistent defense of English in America's political arena stems largely from fear of the size and visibility of non-English speaking immigrant groups. While most Americans recognize the right of individuals to speak the language of their choice, public accommodations to language minorities as groups may signal competition for English's linguistic primacy (Citrin et. al. 1990).

Hopkins et al. (2014) find evidence in support of linguistic visibility as an instigator of feelings of threat. Using data from two survey experiments, they test the effect of exposure to written Spanish language on attitudes toward immigrants. Their results suggest that exposure to Spanish does indeed heighten anti-immigrant sentiment, but only among those who encounter Spanish regularly in their daily lives. Thus, Hopkins et al.'s results suggest that contrary to scholars who posit inter-group contact as a way to increase cultural understanding (Allport 1954; Pettigrew 1998;) repeated exposure to other linguistic groups might trigger feelings of threat among members of the dominant group.

The reason why frequent encounters with Spanish may elicit anti-immigrant sentiment is that language is a marker of group membership (Barker and Giles 2004). This is true for both non-Spanish speakers and Spanish speakers. Specifically, Spanish is as much a marker of out-group membership for non-Latinas/os as it is a marker of in-group membership for Latinas/os, particularly those whose primary tongue is Spanish. Indeed, while non-Latinas/os might feel threatened by an increased presence of Spanish (and Spanish speakers) in the United States,

research shows that Spanish-language mobilization efforts are an effective tool to mobilize those whose primary language is Spanish (Abrajano and Panagopoulos 2005). Taken together, these scholarly findings highlight that the effects of messaging interplay between content and audience.

Similarly to language, immigrants' cultural symbols are also markers of group membership and may trigger feelings of threat among the dominant group. For instance, a public outcry ensued during the 2006 immigrant protests against protesters' use of Central American and Mexican flags in rallies (Wright and Citrin 2011). Wright and Citrin explore these reactions using survey experiments and find that respondents report more negative attitudes toward immigrant protesters when presented with an image of protesters waving Mexican flags and more positive attitudes when shown a similar image of protesters waving American flags.

The notion that Latina/o immigrants in the United States trigger feelings of ethno-linguistic threat for White English speakers is well documented. But in addition to challenging the status of the dominant culture, immigrants can also represent a source of political threat. Specifically, Latina/o immigrants may represent a political threat to the privileged majority by influencing electoral outcomes (Hawley 2011) or as a result of making political demands via protests and/or rallies (Cohen-Marks et al. 2009). As with ethno linguistic threat, those who hold fewer ties to the immigrant group feel political threat. In the United States, Non-Latinas/os—particularly Whites—are likely to see the increased political clout of immigrants as a political threat.

#### *Political group threat*

Past research supports the notion that attitudes toward immigration have political roots. When it comes to immigrants as an electoral threat, Hawley (2011) argues that Republicans' perceptions of immigrants' potential electoral threat conditions attitudes toward immigration. Using 2004 NAES data, he finds that as the foreign-population increases, so does Republican

opposition to immigration, which Hawley attributes to Republican calculations of electoral competition.

Similarly, political protests or demonstrations potentially shape the perceived saliency of immigration (Carey and Branton 2014) and how the public evaluates immigrants. Cohen-Marks et al. (2009) explore public opinion toward Mexican immigrants in the aftermath of the 2006 immigrant protests. Using exit poll data from three California and Washington counties (Orange County, King County, and Bernalillo County) they find that white, Republican, U.S. born, middle-income, lower-educated American voters are more likely than their counterparts to report negative attitudes toward Mexican Immigrants.

In contrast to the negative backlash against protests among native-born Whites, there is evidence to suggest that the 2006 immigrant protests increased racial identification among Latinas/os (Martinez 2008; Zepeda-Millan and Wallace 2013). Using data from the 2006 LNS—on the field before and after the 2006 immigrant protests— Zepeda-Millan and Wallace find that Latinas/os report higher levels of racial identity during and after the marches. Furthermore, although Latina/o citizens who identify as white are less likely to support the marches than their counterparts (Morales et. al. 2013), Barreto et. al. (2009) find that support for the marches is not a “Mexican” thing but rather extends to Latina/o groups of all national origins. The 2006 marches consolidated the push for immigration reform, as well as the status of immigration as *the* Latina/o issue (Pantoja et. al. 2008).

Solidarity across the diverse Latina/o sub-groups coupled with negative reactions of non-Latinas/os perhaps responds to the strong association of immigration with Latinas/os as a group (Chavez 2001; 2008). It highlights the notion that immigration is not just a polarizing partisan issue; it is also a polarizing *group issue*.

Taken together, there is some evidence that immigrant protests have opposite effects on how Latinas/os and non-Latinas/os view protesters and immigrants. What is missing, however, is a look at whether these diverging effects extend to policy opinions. This chapter fills this gap by exploring whether immigration protests shape the public's policy preferences, and whether that effect is different for Latinas/os and Non-Latinas/os.

### **Immigration Protests and Public Opinion on Immigration Policy**

Activists in the United States use protests as a way to bring immigration to the political agenda. Both conservative and liberal media outlets cover news of protest events. And as a result, public demonstrations or protests in favor of immigration heighten the visibility of immigrants—particularly Latina/o immigrants (Chavez 2001; 2008). However, the visibility of Latina/o immigrants does not necessarily have the same effect on all audiences.

Research shows that members of the White majority in the United States find Latina/o immigrants threatening to their dominant status (Brader, Valentino and Suhay 2008; Valentino, Brader and Jardina 2012). Cultural markers, such as the use of Spanish and foreign cultural symbols in public spaces, elicit negative reactions from non-Hispanic Whites (Wright and Citrin 2011; Citrin et. al. 1990)—but not Latinas/os (Abrajano and Panagopoulos 2005). There is also some evidence that Latinas/os and non-Latinas/os hold opposite perceptions of pro-immigration protesters and immigrants in the aftermath of immigration protests (Cohen-Marks et al. 2009; Zepeda and Wallace 2013).

The present study builds on the group threat literature to suggest that immigration protests also shape the public's policy opinions on the issue. They do so by heightening the importance of immigration as a polarizing political issue that cuts along group lines. Specifically, because the

issue of immigration is closely aligned with Latinas/os in the United States (Chavez 2001; 2008), protesters have been able to gain support from Latinas/os by making immigration into *the* Latina/o policy issue. At the same time, however, the growing articulation of a pro-immigrant political voice among the Latina/o community awakens feelings of group threat among those who are not members of the U.S. Latina/o group (Blumer 1958). Stated simply, protests polarize immigration into a salient group issue. Thus, as H1a and H1b outline, I expect protests to have opposite effects on the policy attitudes of non-Latinas/os and Latinas/os.

H1a: Protests negatively impact non-Latinas/os’ attitudes toward immigration policy

H1b: Protests positively impact Latinas/os’ attitudes toward immigration policy

Specifically, I argue that exposure to stories of protests increases restrictive attitudes toward immigration among non-Latinas/os. And conversely, that exposure to protests increases welcoming attitudes among Latinas/os. As Figure 31 illustrates—I expect stories of protests to be more likely to be received as a positive when the audience is Latina/o and as a negative when the audience is non-Latina/o.

*Figure 31: Predicted effect of protests on the immigration policy attitudes of non-Latinas/os and Latinas/os*

<i>Non-Latinas/os</i>	
(-) Protest Frame	-----Positive Frames (+)
(-) Protest Frame	-----Negative Frames (-)
<i>Latinas/os</i>	
(+) Protest Frames	-----Positive Frames (+)
(+) Protest Frames	-----Negative Frames (-)

There is a wide range of policies that fall under immigration policy –directly and tangentially. These include visa quotas, work permits, requirements for citizenship, and bilingual education in schools, among others. While I expect the effect of protests to be similar for the range of policies that fit within the broader immigration policy umbrella, this chapter focuses specifically on the public’s views on policies pertaining to undocumented immigration.

Out of all of the different types of immigration policy, undocumented immigration is perhaps the most polarizing along partisan lines. Thus, it presents an ideal test for the effect of protests on policy opinions. If we believe that immigration is merely a partisan issue, then the effect of partisan identification should trump any effect of protests on public opinion on undocumented immigration. If, however, my hypotheses are correct—that protests heighten polarization on immigration at the race or ethnic group level—then I should observe opposite effects of protests on Latinas/os and non-Latinas/os, even when controlling for partisan identification. In that sense, I expect the results of this analysis to show that policy opinions on immigration are not just republican/democrat issues—they are also Latino/Non-Latino issues.

### **Research Design and Results**

To explore the relationship between protests and public opinion on immigration, this chapter draws on original survey experiment data and survey data from the 2006 Latino National Survey (LNS) (Fraga et. al. 2006).

#### *Survey experiment: the effect of protests on non-Latinas/os*

First, I use original data from a 2014 online survey experiment of 1,700 respondents.<sup>38</sup> I recruit participants via Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk)—an online-based tool for recruiting

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<sup>38</sup> See Appendix A for survey questions and format.

research participants. MTurk is an accessible and affordable tool to collect data from a considerable amount of respondents. However, there are some limitations. Respondents recruited via MTurk tend to be younger, more educated, and more ideologically liberal than the American population at large.

Despite these concerns, there is evidence to suggest that MTurk samples are more representative than other Internet recruiting methods and commonly used student and convenience samples (Berinsky et al. 2012; Buhrmester et. al. 2011). Thus, at the very least, the use of MTurk to recruit survey respondents meets—if not exceeds—the standards of common recruiting practices in the field. Secondly, a liberal and more educated sample represents a harder test for my hypotheses, as liberals and the highly educated are more likely to express welcoming attitudes on immigration than their counterparts (Burns and Gimpel 2000; Citrin et. al. 1997). Furthermore, while an equally distributed sample is always desirable, it is less crucial when conducting an experiment. The goal is to examine the effect of randomly assigned treatments—not observed differences in the population.

Respondents are randomly assigned to one of five frames (outlined in Table 11) on the topic of undocumented immigration: (1) Group Negative, (2) Group Positive, (3) Individual Negative, (4) Individual Positive, or (5) Political Protest. Table 11 presents the five frames.

Table 11a: Treatment Frames on Undocumented Immigrants

FRAME	FRAMES
	The undocumented or illegal group has a negative effect on the American economy:
<b>Group Negative</b>	“Granting amnesty to <b>millions of illegal immigrants will flood our job markets and reduce wages and employment</b> for those hard-working immigrants and lower-income workers who have followed our laws.”
	The undocumented or illegal group has a positive effect on the American economy:
<b>Group Positive</b>	“ <b>Undocumented Immigrants play key roles at every level of the American economy.</b> From high-skill workers to seasonal laborers, from big-city neighborhoods to small-town main streets, <b>immigrants help drive our economic growth.</b> ”
	John, an American citizen from the Southwest border, describes how his employer turned him down for a job and hired an undocumented or illegal immigrant instead:
<b>Individual Negative</b>	“ <b>I lost a job opportunity because of an illegal immigrant.</b> I applied for a job at Harold Enterprises but the company decided to hire an illegal immigrant instead because they could pay him less.”
	Juan, an undocumented immigrant, describes how his family works daily to contribute to the American economy:
<b>Individual Positive</b>	“ <b>My family is undocumented. We immigrated to the United States</b> in 2006. Since then, we <b>have all secured employment and are investing in our community</b> by purchasing homes and starting businesses.”
	Pro-immigrant activists are demanding that Congress pass Comprehensive Immigration Reform:
<b>Political Protest</b>	“Seeking to revive the chances for getting an immigration bill done this year, <b>dozens of immigrant-rights activists staged a sit-in and got arrested at the U.S. Capitol</b> on Thursday-- and they vowed to repeat the civil disobedience throughout the country the rest of the summer.”

I follow three main criteria when selecting these frames. First, I use both group and individual-level frames to include an accurate representation of the diverse types of immigration frames in the media. Specifically, in addition to broad commentary on the overall effect of immigration on the United States, coverage on immigration is increasingly personal—drawing on individual interest stories to discuss immigration issues (Benson 2013). The group negative frame comes from a 2013 quote by Representative Lou Barletta from Pennsylvania (Barletta 2013), and the group positive frame comes from a Republican campaign financier in favor of immigration

reform (Parker 2013). The individual positive frame comes from the story of a real immigrant from Peru (Criado 2013) and the individual negative frame represents the counter-argument.

Secondly, to maintain consistency across frames, all four positive and negative frames discuss the issue of immigration in relation to economic factors and all five frames are specific to the issue of undocumented immigration. Maintaining consistency in the use of undocumented immigration across frames is crucial because past research shows that Americans' distinguish between documented and undocumented immigrants (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014). And finally, the protest frame points to a public demonstration in favor of immigration reform, which is a common occurrence in the public debate on immigration. The wording of the story comes from a news article from *The Washington Times* about a real protest in 2013 (Dinan 2013).

After exposure to one of the five frames on undocumented immigration, respondents are asked their opinion on immigration. Specifically, I use two different questions to measure my dependent variable—attitudes on immigration—to ensure that the results are not random. The first asks respondents to report their opinions on a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants: “What do you think of a proposal that Congress approve a pathway to citizenship for undocumented or illegal immigrants?” Responses are coded on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The second question asks respondents whether they support a path to legal status for undocumented immigrants: “What would you think of a proposal that would give many of the undocumented or illegal Hispanic/Latina/o immigrants working in the United States a chance to obtain legal status?” Responses are also coded on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

In addition to the two immigration policy questions, respondents are also asked to report a series of demographic information on age, gender, education level, income level, partisan

affiliation, race and ethnicity. Past research has shown that women, democrats and those who are more educated are more likely to hold welcoming attitudes on immigration, while whites, republicans, low-skilled workers, and older individuals hold more restrictive views on immigration (Hajnal and Rivera 2014; Chandler and Tsai, 2001; Scheve and Slaughter, 2001; Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014; Haubert and Fussell, 2006). Thus, I use this set of demographic variables as control variables in my analysis. Table 11b offers a detailed description of demographic variable measures and coding.

*Table 11b: Control Variables, Measures, and Coding*

<b>VARIABLE</b>	<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>CODING</b>
<b>Partisan Identification</b>	Two Questions (c) Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?	Respondents who identify as either Republican (Democrat) or closer to the Republican (Democratic) Party are coded Republican (Democrat). All other respondents are coded as Independent.
	(d) Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party?	I generate two dummy variables for Republican and Independent with Democrat as the excluded category.
<b>Income</b>	Last year, what was the total income before taxes of all the people living in your house or apartment?	Coded on an 8-point scale ranging from less than 10,000 to more than 150,000. Don't know answers are coded as missing.
<b>Education</b>	What is the last grade you completed in school?	Coded on a 9-point scale ranging from Grade 8 or lower to Graduate or Professional Degree. Don't know answers are coded as missing.
<b>Age</b>	What is your age?	Respondents report their exact age
<b>Male</b>	Are you male or female?	Dummy variable, where 1 is Male and 0 is Female.
<b>White</b>	What is your race—are you White, Black or African-American, Asian, American Indian, or some other race?	Dummy variable, where 1 is non-Hispanic White and 0 is non-White.
<b>Latina/o</b>	Are you of Hispanic or Latina/o origin or descent?	Dummy variable where 1 is Latina/o and 0 is non-Latina/o

To test for H1a—that political protest and electoral frames have a negative effect on non-Latina/o attitudes toward immigration, I run two sets of ordered logistic regressions (Table 12) to compare the effect of exposure to a protest frame as opposed to positive or negative frames at both the group or personal levels. In Table 12, Model I (left column) presents ordered logistic regression results predicting support for a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, and Model II (right column) outlines ordered logistic regression results predicting support for a path to legal status. In both models the independent variables are dummy variables for positive and negative frames at both the group and personal levels. Exposure to the protest story is the excluded category. Both sets of models include all control variables for partisan identification, income, gender, race, education and age.

Table 12: Effect of Protest Frames vs Positive and Negative Frames on Immigration Policy Attitudes, NON-LATINAS/OS

Independent Variables	MODEL I		MODEL II	
	Path to Citizenship	Changes in Predicted Probability	Legal Status	Changes in Predicted Probability
Group Positive	0.458** (0.169)	0.09	0.460** (0.170)	0.10
Personal Positive	0.287 † (0.166)	0.06	0.326* (0.166)	0.07
Group Negative	0.114 (0.167)	0.02	0.100 (0.170)	0.02
Personal Negative	-0.287 (0.166)	0.04	0.120 (0.165)	0.02
Republican	-1.55** (0.143)	0.22	-1.599** (0.144)	0.24
Independent	-1.186** (0.142)	0.18	-0.921** (0.141)	0.15
Male	-0.096 (0.108)	0.02	-0.223* (0.029)	0.04
Income	-0.024 (0.028)	0.04	-0.034 (0.028)	0.05
Education	0.112** (0.032)	0.16	0.114** (0.032)	0.17
White	0.300* (0.134)	0.05	0.276* (0.132)	0.05
Age	-0.020** (0.005)	0.17	-0.018** (0.005)	0.16
N	1213		1216	

Note: Table entries are ordered logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses and changes in predicted probabilities.

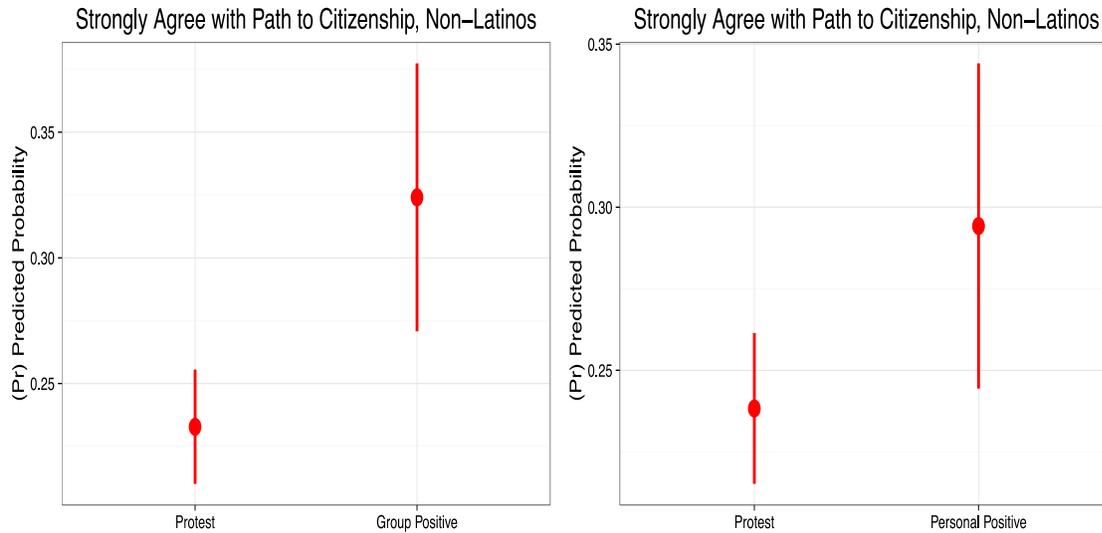
\*\*<.01; \*<.05; †<.1

As expected, partisanship is a statistically significant predictor of openness to a pathway to citizenship and legal status for undocumented immigrants. In both models, republicans and independents hold less welcoming immigration attitudes than democrats. Specifically, republicans are 22% less likely than democrats to strongly support a path to citizenship and 24% less likely to strongly support a path to legal status, while Independents are 18% and 15% less likely than Democrats to strongly support citizenship and legalization, respectively. Those with more years of education are more likely to hold a more welcoming stance, with a 16% higher likelihood to strongly support citizenship and 17% higher likelihood to support legalization than those with the least years of education. Moreover, older respondents hold more restrictive views on immigration than their younger counterparts, with the former being 17% and 16% less likely to be strongly supportive of a pathway to citizenship and legal status, respectively.

The results for race are somewhat counterintuitive. Both models predict that white respondents are 5% more likely to hold strong welcoming attitudes on immigration than their non-White counterparts. However, these results may be a function of the fact that the sample is overwhelmingly white—only 288 respondents identify as non-Hispanic white compared to 1,225 who identify as white. Finally, for both models, income and gender are not statistically significant predictors of support for citizenship and legalization.

The results for the variable of interest—exposure to a protest story—are also as hypothesized. In Model I, when comparing the effect of exposure to a group or personal positive frame to exposure to a protest frame, respondents assigned to positive frames are more likely to strongly support a pathway to citizenship. Figure 32 outlines the predicted probability that Non-Latinas/os in the sample support a path to citizenship by exposure to a protest, group positive and personal positive frames.

Figure 32: Probability that Non-Latinas/os Strongly Agree with Path to Citizenship, Group and Personal Positive vs. Protest

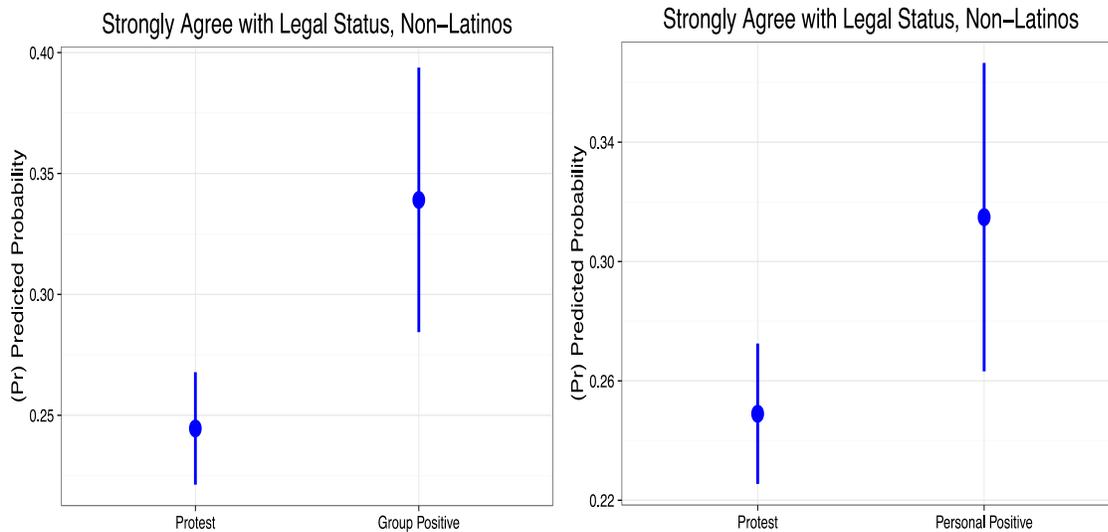


Holding all other variables in the model at their means, respondents assigned to the group positive frame are 9% more likely than those exposed to the protest story to report strong support for a pathway to citizenship. In the same vein, respondents assigned to the positive personal narrative are 6% more likely to strongly support a pathway to citizenship than those in the protest group. It should be noted, however, that the results for the group positive frame are statistically stronger than those for the positive personal narrative frame, with p-values of  $< 0.01$  and  $< 0.1$ , respectively.

Model II in Table 12 compares the effect of exposure to positive frames vs. protest frames on non-Latinas/os respondents' support for a path to legal status for undocumented immigrants. The results are strikingly similar to Model I, and consistent with H1. Specifically, as the left graph of Figure 33 depicts, respondents assigned to the positive group frame are 10% more likely to strongly favor a path to legal status for undocumented immigrants than those in the protest group. Similarly, as shown on the right graph of Figure 33, those in the positive personal narrative group

are 7% more likely than the protest group to support legalization. These results are statistically significant with p-values of  $<0.01$  and  $<0.05$ , respectively.

*Figure 33: Probability that Non- Latinas/os Strongly Agree and Strongly Disagree with Legal Status Group and Personal Positive vs. Protest*

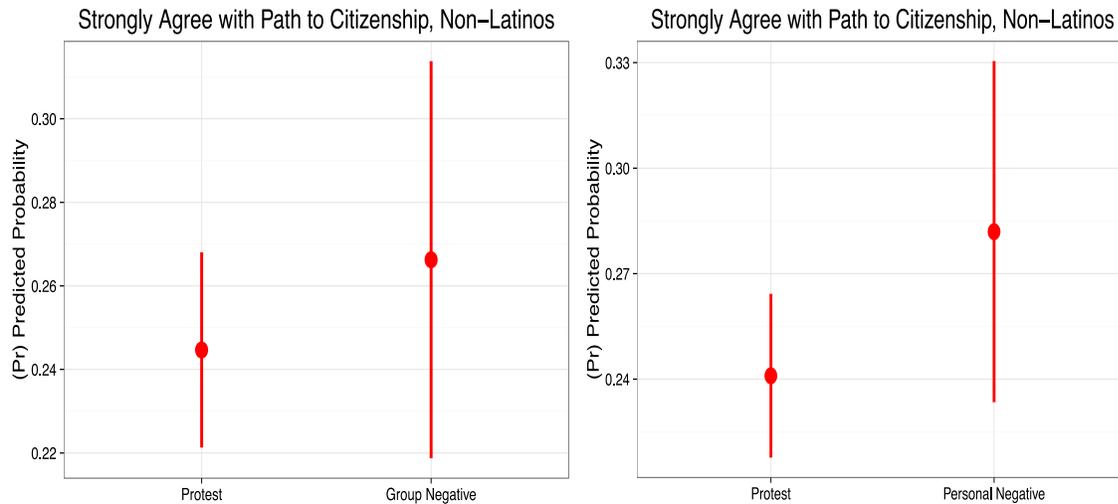


When comparing exposure to the protest frame to exposure to a positive frame, the results suggest that those respondents randomly assigned to a protest story were less supportive of a path to citizenship or legal status for undocumented immigrants than those exposed to either a group or personal positive immigration frame. These results are consistent with H1—that protest frames increase negative attitudes on immigration among non-Latinas/os. At the very least, protests are not as effective as explicitly positive frames in pushing non-Latina/o public opinion to more favorable views on immigration.

But beyond merely suggesting that protest frames are not as effective as positive frames on immigration in shaping welcoming immigration attitudes, the results in Table 12 provide further support for H1a. Holding all other variables in Model I at their means, Figure 34 illustrates the

predicted probability of supporting a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants by exposure to a protest frame vs. negative group and personal narrative frames.

*Figure 34: Probability that Non-Latinas/os Strongly Agree and Strongly Disagree with Path to Citizenship, Group and Personal Negative vs. Protest*

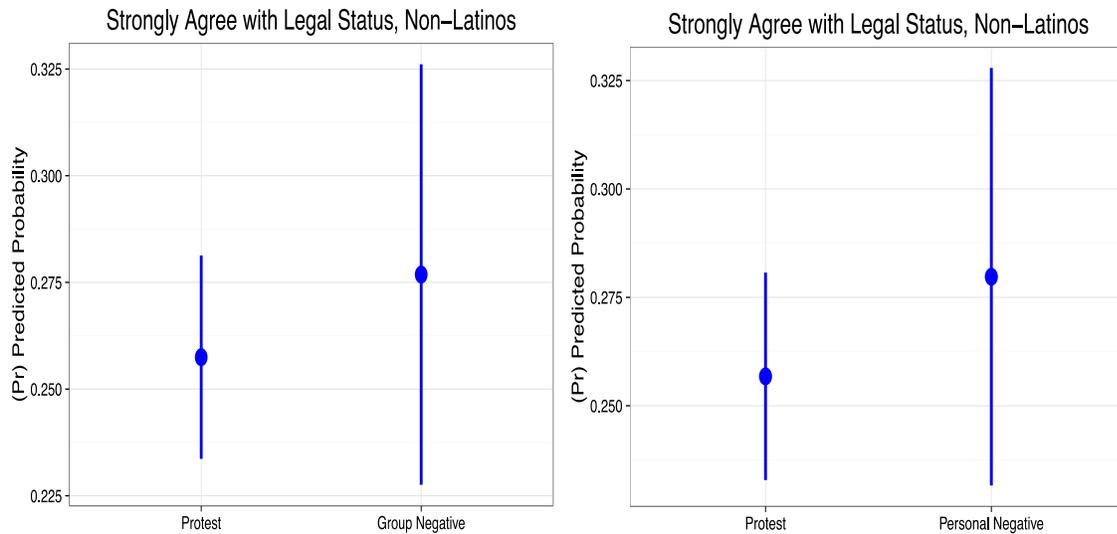


Exposure to a protest frame appears to yield between 2% and 4% less support for a path to citizenship than the group negative and personal narrative frames, respectively. However, these results are not statistically significant. Thus, when it comes to support for a pathway to citizenship, the results indicate that exposure to the protest story is not statistically different to exposure to a negative story. Stated simply, respondents in the sample react to the protest story similarly to the way they react to explicitly negative stories.

Consistent with Model I, Model II denotes no statistical difference in support for legal status between those who received the protest frame and either negative frames. As depicted in Figure 35, while the model predicts that exposure to the protest results in a 2% higher likelihood of supporting legal status for undocumented immigrants than exposure to the group or personal negative frames, these results are not statistically significant. Thus, the takeaway is that, at least

when it comes to immigration policy opinions, respondents respond similarly to news of a protest to group and personal negative news about undocumented immigrants.

*Figure 35: Probability that Non-Latinas/os Strongly Agree and Strongly Disagree with Legal Status, Group and Personal Negative vs. Protest*



Taken together, the results outlined in Table 12 (and illustrated in Figures 32, 33, 34, and 35) lend support for H1a—that protest frames negatively shape attitudes toward immigration among non-Latinas/os. The fact that there is a statistically significant difference between protest frames and positive frames—but not negative frames—indicates that for non-Latinas/os’ policy preferences on immigration, the effect of the protest frame is akin to that of negative frames. This finding is noteworthy, given that pro-immigrant sympathizers commonly use protests to bring attention to the issue of immigration. The results of the survey suggest that immigration protests may have some unintended consequences on public opinion among non-Latinas/os.

That protests elicit negative reactions from the non-Latina/o public is consistent with existing research on threat and immigration (Chavez 2011, 2008, Santa Ana 2002), and how the

visibility of immigrants heightens feelings of threat and anxiety (Citrin et. al. 1990). Indeed, existing scholarship documents negative reactions to the 2006 immigrant marches and protesters' use of immigrant symbols in them (Wright and Citrin 2011). However, the present research is the first to provide experimental evidence of how the public perceives protests vis-à-vis other forms of political communication on immigration. In doing so, my research contextualizes feelings of threat emerging from protests within the broader public narrative on immigration. Moreover, it suggests that when faced with choices about political communication on immigration to the general public, immigrant sympathizers may be better served by focusing on how immigrants contribute to the United States, rather than focusing on political demands.

#### *2006 protests and Latinas/os*

The results of the survey experiment suggest that protest frames increase restrictive immigration attitudes among non-Latinas/os. However, previous research indicates that because of the longstanding association of Latinas/os with undocumented immigration (Chavez, 2011), Latinas/os are more supportive of welcoming immigration policies (Fraga et. al. 2011). Building on this literature I examine the effect of protests on Latinas/os. Specifically, I hypothesize in H1b that the effect of exposure to protest frames on immigration policy attitudes among Latinas/os runs in the opposite direction to their non-Latina/o counterparts. That is, I expect stories of protests to positively shape Latinas/os' policy opinions on immigration. To test for H1b, I use data from the 2006 Latino National Survey (LNS)—on the field before and after the immigrant marches—to examine whether respondents interviewed after the marches (as opposed to before) are more likely to report immigrant friendly policy positions.

The 2006 Latino National Survey (LNS) is a national representative survey of 8,634 self-identified Latino/Hispanic residents in 14 states. The LNS sample is stratified by geographic

designation. Sample sizes per state vary but the smallest state sample size is 400. The national margin of error is approximately  $\pm 1.05\%$  and less than  $\pm 5\%$  for each state.

To measure the dependent variable—policy attitudes on immigration—among Latinas/os, I use three questions. First, a question pertaining to the saliency of undocumented immigration: What do you think is THE one most important problem facing the Latina/o community today? All responses indicating undocumented immigration are coded as a 1, while other responses are coded as a 0. Secondly, a question on the preferred policy approach to deal with undocumented immigration: “What is your preferred policy for undocumented or illegal immigration?” Responses are coded using a four-point scale ranging from (1) “An effort to seal or close off the border to stop illegal immigration” to (4) “Immediate legalization of current undocumented immigrants”. And finally, I use a question pertaining to support for dreamers, where respondents are asked the extent to which they support the following statement: Undocumented immigrants attending college should be charged a higher tuition rate at state colleges and universities, even if they grew up and graduated high-school in the state. Responses are coded using a 4-point scale ranging from strongly support to strongly oppose. Not sure answers are coded as missing.

The independent variable is a dichotomous variable, with those interviewed before the marches coded as a 0 and those interviewed after the marches coded as a 1. The first recorded protest is on February 15, 2006 and the last recorded demonstration is on May 1, 2016 (Bada et.al., 2006; Zepeda-Millan and Wallace, 2013). Thus, I code interviews before February 15 as a 0 and anything after May 1 as a 1. In addition to the main independent variable, I also include a series of control variables in my analysis, which include measures for demographic traits, as well as feelings of linked fate and reliance on Spanish media. Table 13 provides a detailed description of question wording and coding for all control variables.

Table 13: Control Variables, Measures, and Coding

<b>VARIABLE</b>	<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>CODING</b>
<b>Republican</b>	a. Generally speaking, do you usually consider yourself a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, some other party, or what? b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party?	0=Democrat, closer to Democratic Party or independent 1=Republican, closer to Republican Party
<b>White</b>	Are you White, Black, American Indian, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, some other race or more than one?	0=Other 1=Non-Hispanic White
<b>Foreign Born</b>	Were you born in the mainland United States, Puerto Rico or some other country?	0=Mainland or Puerto Rico 1=Other Country
<b>Linked Fate</b>	How much does your “doing well” depend on other Latinos/Hispanics also doing well? A lot, some, a little, or not at all?	1 = Nothing 2 = Little 3 = Some 4 = A lot *DK coded as missing
<b>Income</b>	Which of the following best describes the total income earned by all members of your household during 2004?	1 = BELOW \$1 and 5,000K 2 = \$15,000-2 = 4,999 3 = \$25,000-34,999 4 = \$35,000-44,999 5 = \$45,000-54,999 6 = \$55,000-64,999 7 = ABOVE \$65,000 *Refused coded as missing
<b>Male</b>	Are you male or female?	0=Female 1=Male
<b>Education</b>	What is your highest level of formal education completed	0=None 1=Eighth grade or below 2=Some high school 3=GED 4=High school graduate 5=Some college 6=4-year college degree 7=Graduate or professional degree
<b>Age</b>	What year were you born?	Calculated actual age from year of birth response.
<b>Citizen</b>	Now we would like to ask you about U.S. Citizenship. Are you a U.S. citizen, currently applying for citizenship, planning to apply to citizenship, not planning on becoming a citizen.	0=non-citizen 1=citizen
<b>Spanish Media</b>	For information about public affairs and politics, would you say you rely more heavily on Spanish-language television, radio, and newspapers, or on English-language TV, radio, and newspapers?	0=English Media 1=English and Spanish Media 2=Spanish Media
<b>Spanish</b>	Would you prefer that I speak in English or Spanish?	0=English 1=Spanish

Note: Variables from 2006 Latino National Survey (Fraga et. al. 2006)

Table 14 presents three models testing for H1b—that immigration protests increase welcoming attitudes on immigration among Latinas/os. Model I depicts logistic regression results for the exposure to the 2006 marches on the saliency of immigration for Latinas/os. Model II shows ordered logistic regression results for the effect of the protests on Latinas/os' preferred undocumented immigration policy. And Model III outlines ordered logistic results for the effect of protests on support for in-state tuition for undocumented dreamers. All three models include controls for demographic variables, as well as linked fate and reliance on Spanish media.

Table 14: Latina/o Attitudes Toward Immigration After the 2006 Immigration Protests

Independent Variables	MODEL I		MODEL II		MODEL III	
	<b>“Illegal” Immigration is most important issue</b>	Changes in Predicted Probability	<b>Immediate Legalization of Undocumented Immigrants</b>	Changes in Predicted Probability	<b>Oppose Higher Tuition for Dreamers</b>	Changes in Predicted Probability
After 2006 Protests	1.095** (0.081)	0.21	0.560** (0.070)	0.14	0.200** (0.070)	0.05
Republican	- 0.600** (0.108)	0.11	- 0.212* (0.092)	0.05	- 0.183* (0.095)	0.04
White	0.270** (0.080)	0.06	- 0.295** (0.074)	0.07	- 0.263** (0.074)	0.06
Foreign Born	0.876** (0.101)	0.17	1.345** (0.090)	0.32	0.239** (0.092)	0.06
Linked Fate	0.111** (0.034)	0.07	0.161** (0.031)	0.12	0.012 (0.031)	0.01
Income	0.047* (0.021)	0.06	0.031 (0.020)	0.05	0.039* (0.019)	0.05
Male	0.063 (0.071)	0.01	- 0.112† (0.065)	0.03	- 0.201** (0.066)	0.05
Education	0.052** (0.021)	0.08	0.008 (0.020)	0.01	0.083** (0.020)	0.14
Age	- 0.009** (0.002)	0.13	- 0.010** (0.002)	0.18	- 0.010** (0.002)	0.18
Citizen	- 0.346** (0.095)	0.07	0.084 (0.091)	0.02	0.307** (0.092)	0.07
Spanish Media	- 0.132* (0.058)	0.06	0.294** (0.052)	0.15	0.160** (0.054)	0.07
Spanish	-0.117 (0.106)	0.02	0.437** (0.096)	0.11	0.610** (0.100)	0.14
N	4379		4068		4172	

Note: Table entries are as follows: Model I are logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses and changes in predicted probabilities; Models II and III ordered logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses and changes in predicted probabilities. \*\*<.01; \*<.05; †<.

In Model I, the saliency of undocumented immigration across Latina/o respondents varies across demographic traits and behavior. Partisan identification and race are statistically significant predictors of issue saliency among Latinas/os. However, their effects on saliency run in opposite directions. Specifically, while Model I predicts that Republicans are 11% less likely to choose undocumented immigration as America's most salient issue, white respondents are 6% more likely to do so than their counterparts.

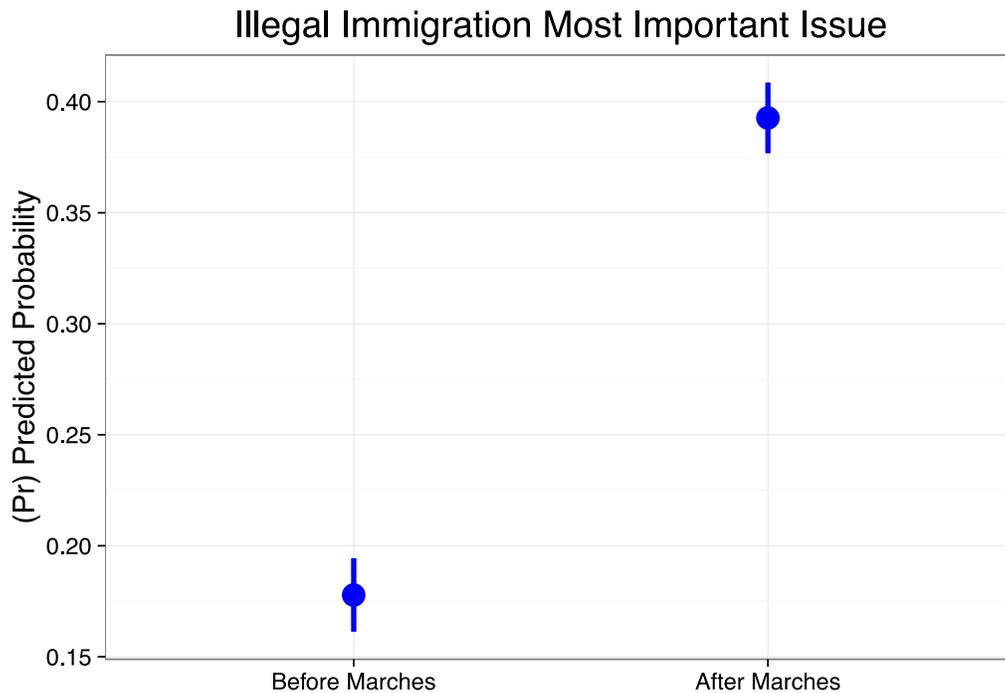
SES and demographic traits also have predictive power in Model I. Latinas/os who report higher levels of income and education allocate the most weight to undocumented immigration when it comes to identifying the most pressing issue in the United States. Those in the highest income bracket (65,000+) are 6% more likely than those in the lowest income-bracket to say that "illegal" immigration is the most important issue facing the nation, while respondents with a graduate degree are 8% more likely to see undocumented immigration as the most salient issue. In contrast, older respondents and citizens are 13% and 7% less likely to identify "illegal" immigration as the most important issue, respectively.

Model I also includes variables for closeness to the immigration experience, and assimilation. Past research has shown that among Latinas/os the foreign-born, those with higher levels of linked-fate, and the Spanish dominant are more akin to the struggles of undocumented immigrants because their experiences are more closely tied to them (Sanchez and Masuoka 2010, Branton 2007). All of these factors are statistically significant for predicting the saliency of "illegal" immigration. Specifically, foreign-born Latinas/os in the sample and those who think their fate is closely tied to the fate of Latinas/os as a group are 17% and 7% more likely to point to undocumented immigration when asked which is the most important issue facing the nation. In contrast, however, the two control variables for assimilation—Spanish language dominance and

Spanish language media use—lend mixed results. Spanish dominance is not a statistically predictive indicator of holding undocumented immigration as the most salient concern for the nation. Moreover, Spanish media consumption predicts a lower—not higher—likelihood to view “illegal” immigration as the most important issue area in the United States.

The main variable of interest also yields statistically significant results in the hypothesized direction. As expected, respondents interviewed after the marches are more likely to report that they consider “illegal” immigration as America’s top issue to deal with. As Figure 36 illustrates, those interviewed after the 2006 nationwide immigration protests are a striking 21% more likely to choose undocumented immigration as the most important concern for the nation. Thus, it appears that, among Latinas/os, the 2006 marches set light on the importance of dealing with immigration in the United States.

Figure 36: Effect of Protests on the Saliency of Undocumented Immigration, Latinas/os



Model I helps paint a picture of the saliency of undocumented immigration for Latinas/os and the effect of immigrant protests. However, the conclusions we can extract from these effects come with limitations. Specifically, the results do not tell us what saliency means in terms of attitudes toward immigration. It is possible, for instance, that the increased saliency of undocumented immigration after the marches is indicative of either more welcoming or restrictive views on immigration—or even both. Stated simply, while Model I tells us that Latinas/os care more about undocumented immigration after the marches, it does not give us information as to why.

The present research goes beyond examining whether protests bring more attention to the issue of immigration. H1b specifically states that immigrant protests *increase* welcoming attitudes on immigration. Thus, Models II and III in Table 14 present direct tests for H1b by examining the effect of the 2006 immigrant protests on support for the legalization of undocumented immigrants and opposition to imposing higher tuition costs on Dreamers—undocumented individuals who were brought to the United States as children.

Consistent with the literature, Latinas/os who identify as Republicans and White are 5% and 7% less likely to favor legalization and 4% and 6% more likely to oppose higher tuition rates for dreamers, respectively. Moreover, as Latina/o Politics scholars have documented (Sanchez and Masuoka 2010), Latinas/os who are closer to the immigrant experience—the foreign-born and Spanish Speakers—report more welcoming stances on both measures of immigration policy attitudes: legalization and tuition rates for dreamers. Notably, foreign-born Latinas/os are 32% more likely than the native-born to support the immediate legalization of undocumented immigrants and 6% more likely to oppose higher tuition rates for Dreamers. Spanish speakers hold

more welcoming stances than their counterparts at an 11% higher likelihood of supporting legalization and 14% higher likelihood of opposing higher tuition rates. In line with this, respondents who self-report as predominantly Spanish media consumers are 15% more likely to favor legalization and 7% more likely to oppose charging Dreamers higher tuition costs.

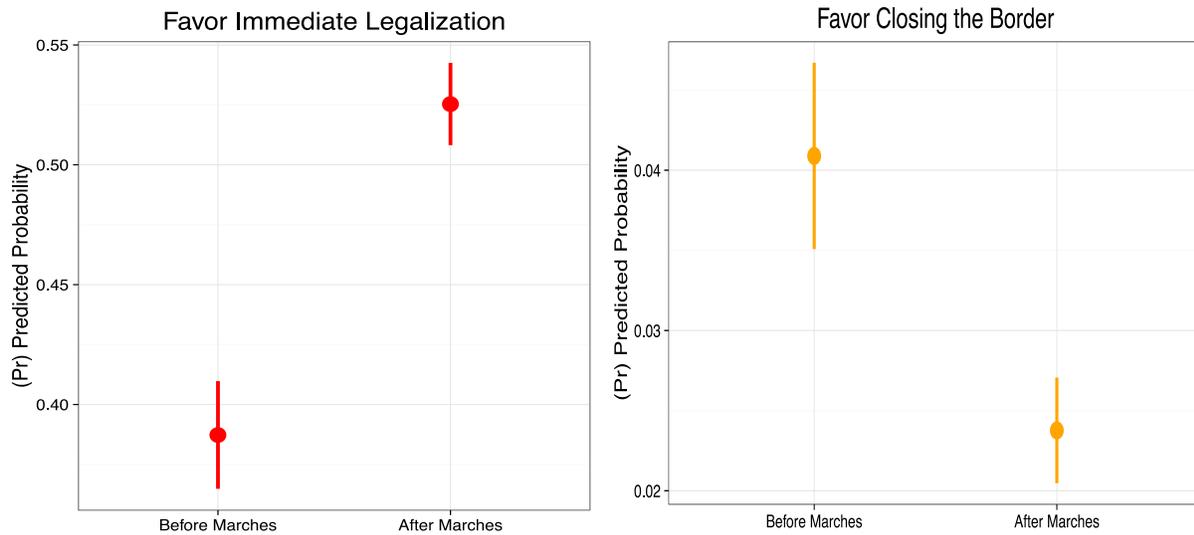
The results for the effect of linked-fate on immigration preferences are mixed and run somewhat counter to the literature. While Model II predicts that Latinas/os who see their personal fates closely tied to the fate of their group are 12% more likely to favor legalization, linked-fate is not a statistically significant predictor of opposition to increased costs of higher education for Dreamers. These seemingly conflicting findings might be explained by the fact that offering in-state tuition for dreamers—individuals who were brought to the United States as children—is seen as less controversial than a path to legal status for all undocumented immigrants.

The results for citizenship are also somewhat surprising. While we would expect citizens to be less supportive of welcoming immigration policies, citizenship is not a statistically significant predictor of support for legalization in Model II. And in Model III, citizens are 7% more likely to oppose higher tuition rates for dreamers.

Consistent with H1b, the results for Models II and III also indicate that Latinas/os interviewed after the 2006 protests are more likely to favor immigrant friendly policy prescriptions— even after controlling for affiliation with the Republican Party, feelings of Latina/o linked fate, reliance on Spanish media, citizenship status and place of birth, as well as other demographic variables. As figure 6 shows, when looking specifically at Latinas/os' support for legalization, those interviewed after the marches are 14% more likely to support the immediate legalization of undocumented immigration as their preferred policy prescription. Furthermore,

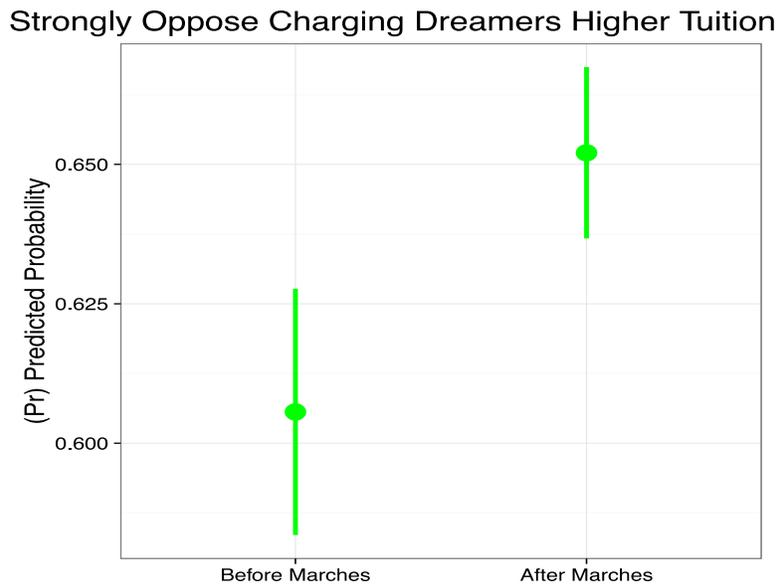
Figure 37 also illustrates that Latin/asos were less likely to support closing off the border altogether.

*Figure 37: Effect of Protests on Undocumented Immigration Policy Preferences, Latinas/os*



The positive effect of the 2006 protests on immigration attitudes among Latinas/os are reinforced in Model III. Specifically, as Figure 38 depicts, Latinas/os interviewed after the marches are 5% more likely to oppose increasing tuition costs for immigrants.

Figure 38: Effect of Protests on Attitudes Toward Tuition Rates for Dreamers, Latinas/os



It should be noted that support for the most restrictive positions on immigration is low among Latinas/os—even before the marches. It is, of course, well-documented that Latinas/os hold overall more welcoming views on immigration than the general public (Fraga et. al 2010, Branton 2007). However, what is worth highlighting from the results in Figures 37 and 38 is that the 2006 nationwide protests did move Latina/o respondents to hold more welcoming policy preferences with regard to undocumented immigration. Unlike their non-Latina/o counterparts, protests have a net positive—not negative effect—on immigration policy opinions. Thus, collectively, these results communicate that immigration protests don’t merely reflect the public’s existing policy positions, they also have the capacity to move people in the spectrum of political attitudes.

In this research, I argue that how the public moves along the policy opinion spectrum is heavily dependent on people’s closeness to the issue of immigration. Because immigration in the United States is heavily racialized as a Latina/o issue, protests on immigration can elicit feelings

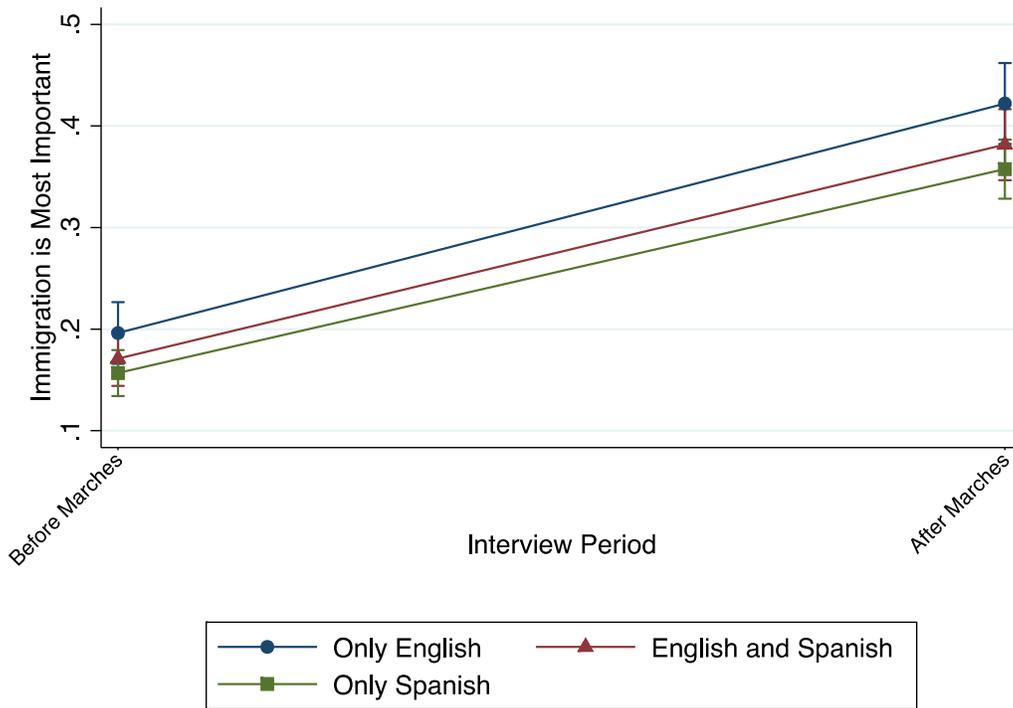
of solidarity from that group, while at the same time tapping into perceptions of group threat from those who are outside the group.

### *2006 Protests, Latinas/os and Media Consumption*

In examining Latinas/os' immigration attitudes before and after the marches, I theorize media coverage of immigration to function as the mechanism or the avenue of information about the marches. The content analysis in Chapter 2 does indeed suggest that the 2006 marches were widely covered in both the NYT and Washington Times. However, scholarship on the production of media frames on immigration tells us that Spanish and English dominant news sources report news on immigration differently (Branton and Dunaway 2008). Specifically, Branton and Dunaway provide evidence that points to an overall more positive tone on immigration in news outlets that cater to a Spanish speaking audience. Thus, I build on this to examine the interaction of language media consumption with exposure to the 2006 immigrant protests.

Figure 39 presents the effect of the 2006 protests on Latinas/os' perceptions that immigration is the most important issue facing the Latina/o community by language media consumption. The circle represents predicted probabilities for those who mainly follow English sources. The triangle represents respondents who consume both English and Spanish media sources and the square illustrates the results for those who follow Spanish media. For all three groups, the marches are positively correlated with an increase in the perceived saliency of immigration.

Figure 39: Effect of 2006 Immigrant Protests on Perception that Immigration is the Most Important Issue for the Latina/o Community by Language Media Consumption



Those who only follow English media are more 22% likely to see immigration as the most important issue, while those who follow both Spanish and English media outlet and those who only follow Spanish sources are 21% and 20% more likely to do so. It should be noted that while all three groups are moving similarly in the same direction after the marches, those who consume English media sources are more likely to see immigration as the most important issue for Latinas/os both before and after the marches. This could be a function of the news that different language sources report on. Arguably, Spanish sources are more likely to cover a broader set of issues that are relevant to Latinas/os, while English sources that cater to a broader audience might primarily feature Latinas/os in relation to immigration.

Latina/o opinions about immigration after the marches also vary in relation to their preferred media source when it comes to predicting their likelihood of supporting welcoming policy prescriptions. Figures 40 and 41 illustrate the effect of the 2006 protests on the likelihood

that Latinas/os support the immediate legalization of undocumented immigrants and oppose higher tuition costs for Dreamers who wish to pursue higher education, respectively. The triangle represents respondents who follow both English and Spanish media sources, and the square illustrates the results for those who follow Spanish media. For all three groups, the marches are positively correlated with an increase in the perceived saliency of immigration.

Figure 40: Effect of 2006 Immigrant Protests on Supporting the Immediate Legalization of Undocumented Immigrants by Spanish Media Consumption

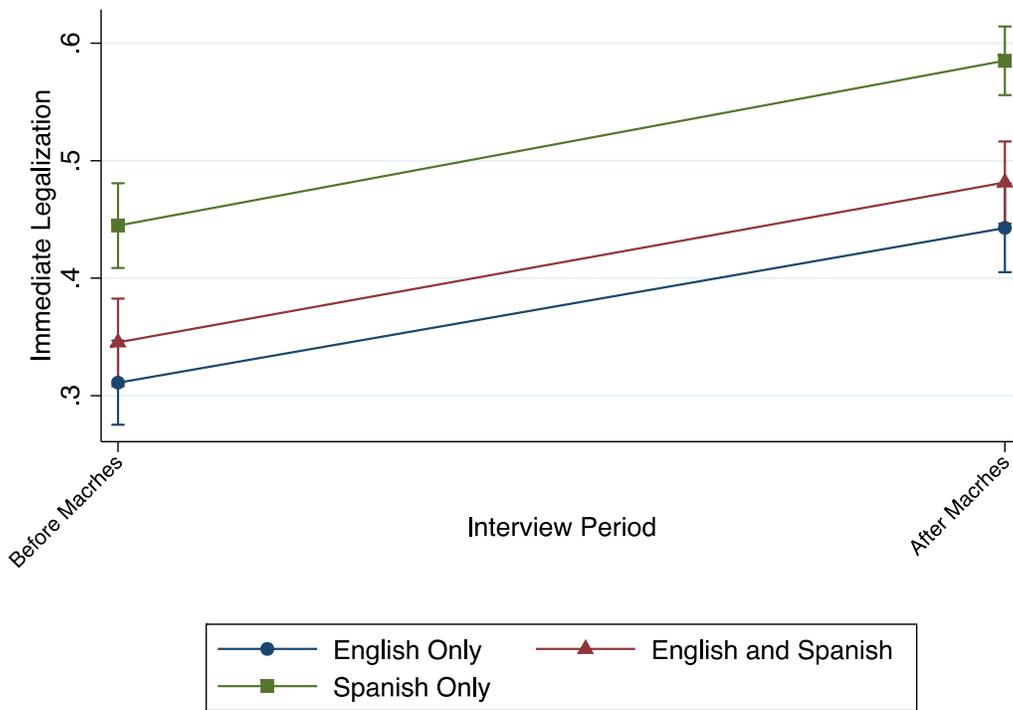
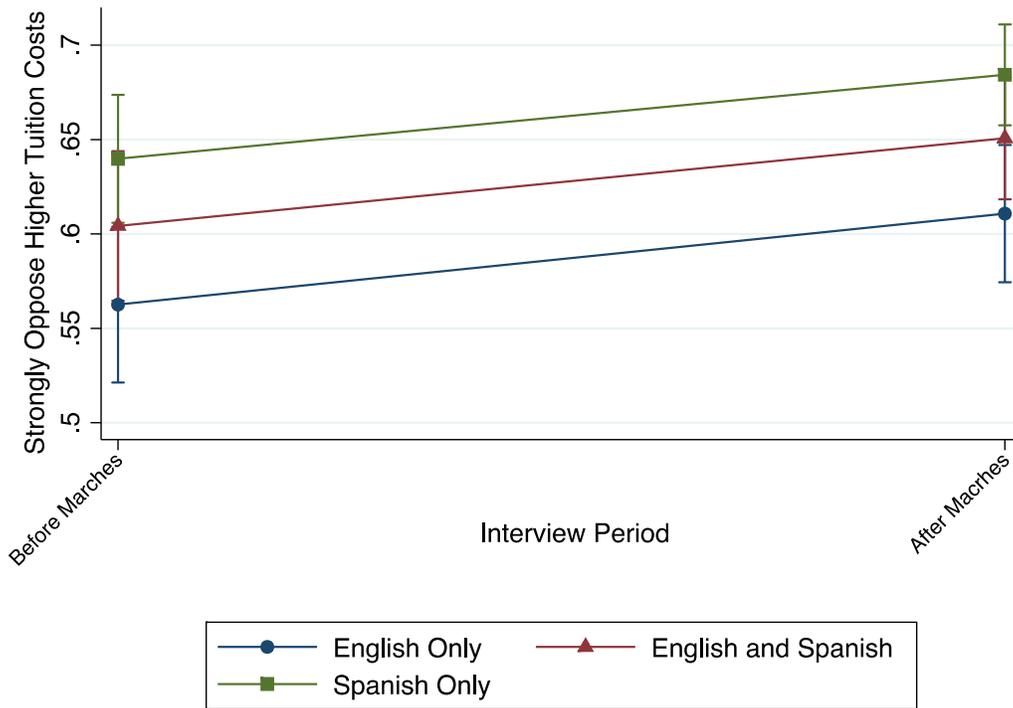


Figure 41: Effect of 2006 Immigrant Protests on Strongly Support for Increased Tuition Costs for Dreamers



While English media consumption predicts higher saliency of immigration both before and after the marches, Figures 40 and 41 indicate that those who receive their news from Spanish media sources are more likely to hold more welcoming views on immigration than their counterparts during both time periods. However, once again, all three media groups are moving similarly in the same direction. After the marches, respondents who receive their news from English language sources or from both English and Spanish language sources are approximately 13% more likely to strongly support the immediate legalization of undocumented immigrants, and 5% more likely to oppose higher tuition costs for dreamers. And when it comes to those who primarily follow Spanish media, they have a 14% higher likelihood of strongly favoring legalization and are 4% more likely to oppose raising education costs for dreamers.

The variation in policy opinions by media source are consistent with existing research, which documents more favorable coverage on immigration by news outlets that cater to the

Latina/o community (Kerevel 2011, Abrajano and Singh 2009, Branton and Dunaway 2008). However, these differences pale in comparison to the striking similarity in the way that all three groups respond to the 2006 protests. Regardless of the language in which they get their information from, all three groups respond in solidarity with immigrants after the marches.

#### *2006 Protests, Latinas/os and National Origin*

Up to this point, the models make no distinction between national-origin groups. However, it is possible that some Latina/o sub-groups respond to the marches in different ways. Specifically, while immigration has been racialized as a “Latina/o” issue, it is particularly tied to Mexicans in the United States (Chavez 2008). Thus, in tables 15 and 16 in Appendices B and C, I explore the possibility that the marches had different effects on Mexicans and non-Mexicans. Table 15 presents identical models to Table 14, but limits the analysis to Mexicans. Table 16 adds two dummy variables to the models in Table 14 to control for Cuban and Puerto Rican identity. As scholars note, Puerto Ricans and Cubans have unique experiences in the United States (Garcia 2011, Fraga et.al. 2001, Garcia-Bedolla 2009, DeSipio and Pantoja 2007)—with the former being citizens at birth and the latter receiving special refugee status upon arrival to the United States. Thus, it is reasonable to expect that they hold different views of immigration than other Latina/o sub-groups.

When it comes to the effect of the marches on immigration, the results for both Mexicans and non-Mexicans are fairly consistent with the Models for all Latinas/os. First, Mexican and non-Mexican Latinas/os interviewed after the marches are 24% and 19% more likely than those interviewed before the marches to identify undocumented immigration as the most important issue,

respectively. And secondly, Mexican and non-Mexican Latinas/os are 12% and 22% more likely to support the immediate legalization of undocumented immigrants after the marches.<sup>39</sup>

Despite similar findings for both the saliency of immigration and support for legalization, however, the effect of the marches on opposition to raising costs of education for undocumented immigrants varies between Mexican and non-Mexican Latinas/os. Specifically, while non-Mexican Latinas/os are 10% more likely to oppose such a measure after the marches, the results are not statistically significant for Mexicans. The reason for this difference perhaps gets back to the fact that support for young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States by their parents or family members as children is more widespread. Respondents of Mexican origin oppose raising tuition costs for dreamers at a high rate—even before the marches. In fact, a striking 87% either supports or strongly opposes imposing higher education costs on Dreamers before the marches.

One important finding for the regressions in Table 16—for non-Mexican respondents—is the results for Cubans and Puerto Ricans. Consistent with the literature, Cubans are 8% less likely than other Latinas/os to think undocumented immigration is the most important issue for the Latina/o community. Moreover, they are also 20% less likely to support legalization and 21% less likely to oppose higher educational costs for dreamers. Similarly, Puerto Ricans—the only group that does not have immigrant status—are 18% less likely to consider undocumented immigration as the most important issue and 20% less likely than other Latinas/os to support the immediate legalization of undocumented immigrants. However, unlike Cubans, there is no statistical

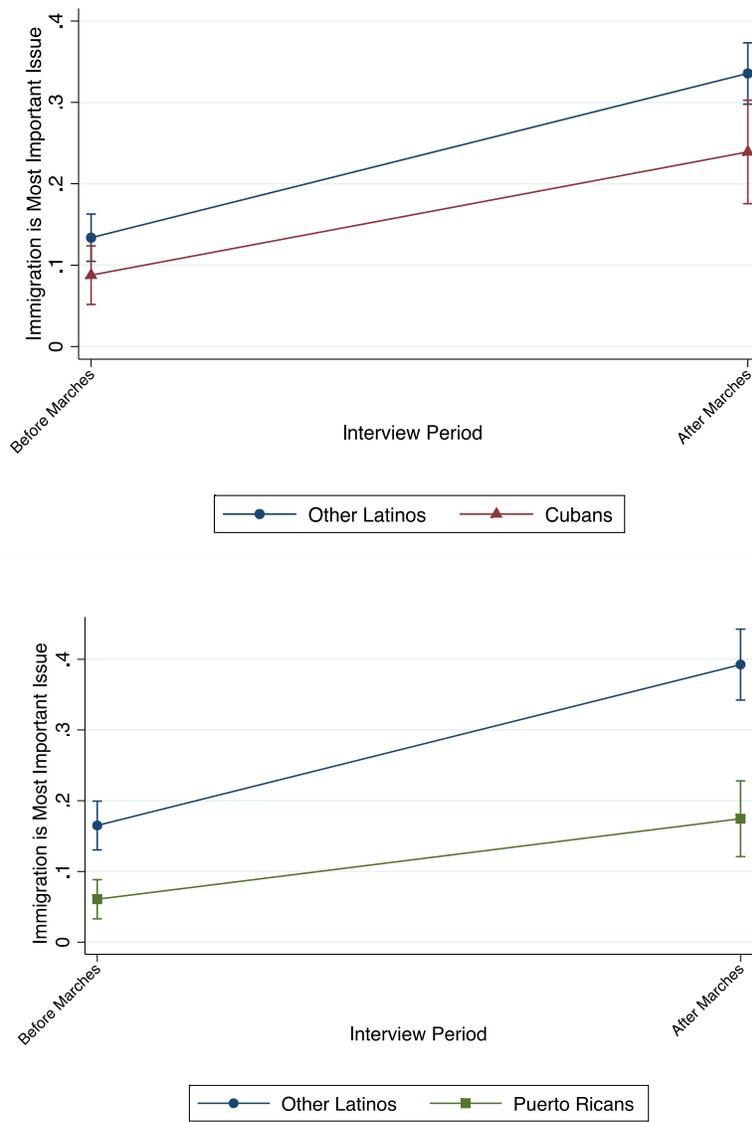
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<sup>39</sup> See Figures 42, 43, and 44 in Appendix D for predicted margins graphs before and after marches for Mexicans and other non-Mexican Latinas/os.

difference between Puerto Ricans and other Latinas/os when it comes to opposition to raising tuition costs for dreamers.

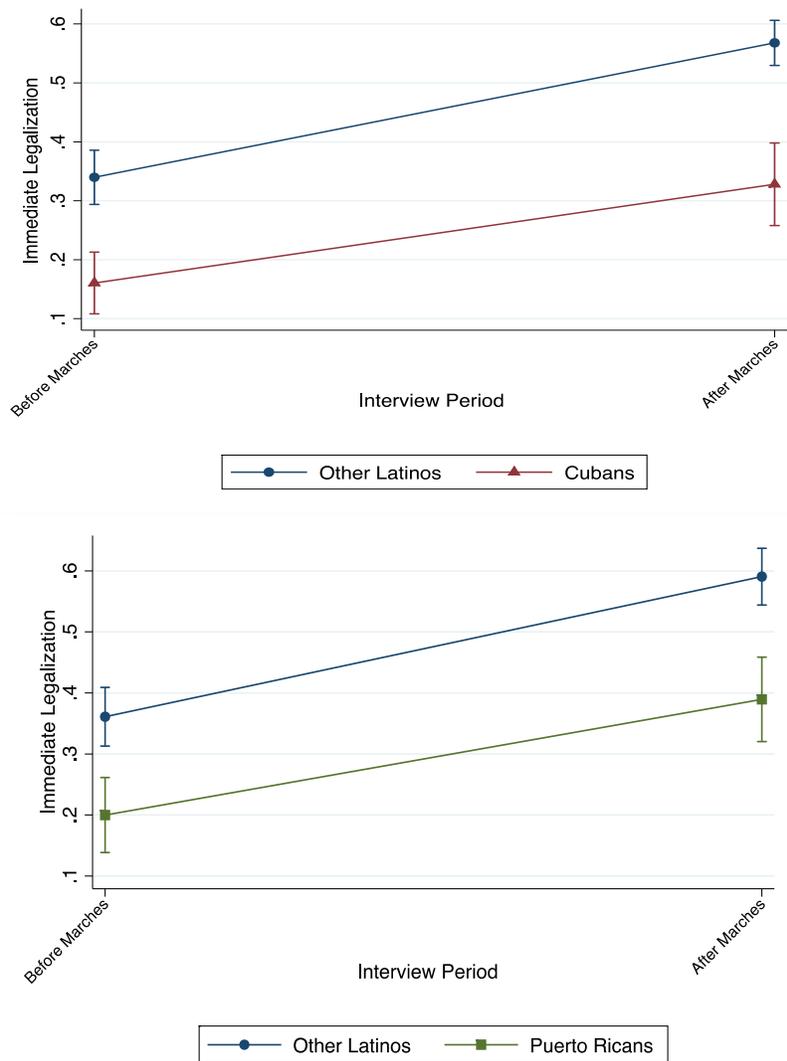
Despite these differences, past research suggests that the marches increased feelings of solidarity across all groups—including Cubans and Puerto Ricans (Barreto et. al. 2008). Thus, I further explore the interactive effect of exposure to the marches and Cuban and Puerto Rican identity. Figure 45 compares the saliency of immigration before and after the marches between Cubans and Puerto Ricans, and other non-Mexican Latinas/os. The circle represents other non-Mexican Latinas/os, the triangle represents Cubans, and the square represents Puerto Ricans. When compared to other non-Mexican Latinas/os, both Cubans and Puerto Ricans are less likely to see undocumented immigration as the most salient issues facing Latinas/os. However, like other Latinas/os, both Cubans and Puerto Ricans are in fact 15% and 11% more likely to select undocumented immigration after the 2006 marches.

Figure 45: Effect of 2006 Immigrant Protests on Cuban and Puerto Rican Perception that Immigration is the Most Important Issue for the Latina/o Community



The direction of the effect of the 2006 protests on Cubans' and Puerto Ricans' policy opinions are also comparable to other Latinas/os. Figure 46 depicts the effect of the marches on support for the immediate legalization of undocumented immigrants among Cubans and Puerto Ricans when compared to other non-Mexican Latinas/os.

Figure 46.: Effect of 2006 Immigrant Protests on Cuban and Puerto Rican for the Immediate Legalization of Undocumented Immigrants

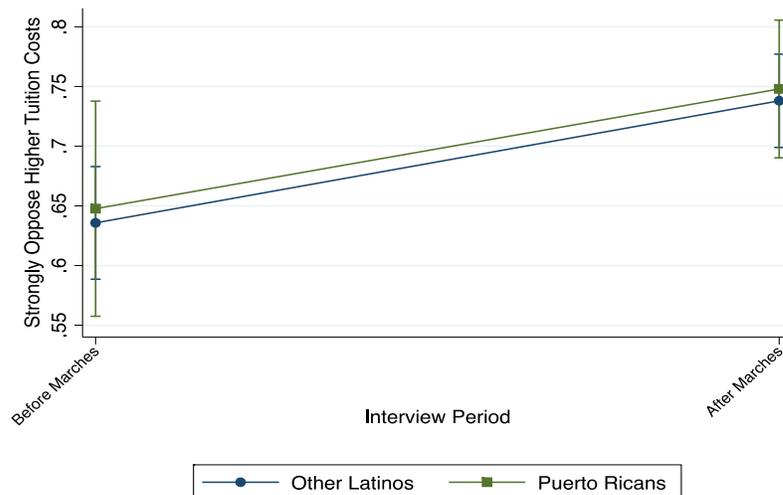
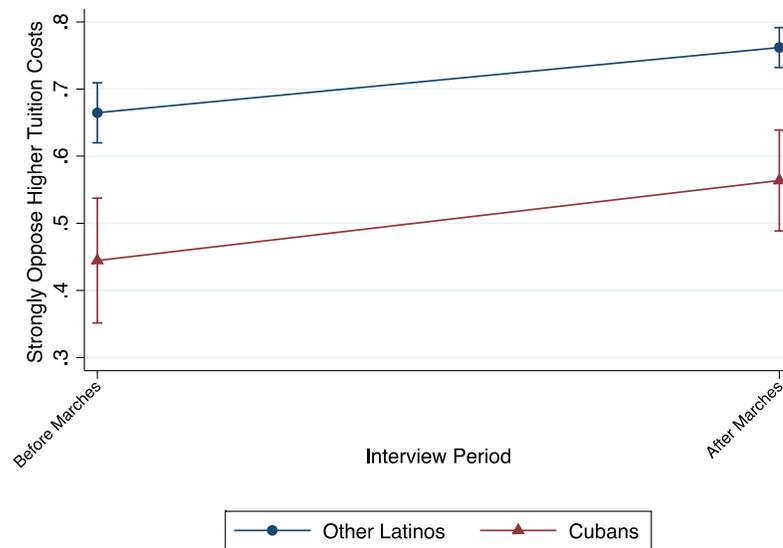


While—when compared to other Latinas/os—Cubans and Puerto Ricans are less likely to support immediate legalization, both sub-groups are more likely to be supportive of legalization after the marches. After that marches, Cubans are 17% more likely to favor immediate legalization and Puerto Ricans are 19% more likely to do so.

Unlike the results for the saliency of immigration and support for legalization of undocumented immigrants, the effect of the marches on opposition to increasing tuition costs for young dreamers is different for Puerto Ricans and Cubans. As Figure 47 shows, both Puerto Ricans

and non-Mexican Latinas/os have a higher likelihood than Cubans to oppose increased educational costs than Cubans. However—once again—all three groups are moving in the same direction. Specifically, Cubans and Puerto Ricans are 12% and 10% more likely to oppose higher tuition costs after the marches.

Figure 47: Effect of 2006 Immigrant Protests on Cuban and Puerto Rican for the Immediate Legalization of Undocumented Immigrants



Taken together, then, despite differences on immigration attitudes by national-origin sub-groups and media consumption, the results suggest that the marches had a net positive effect on increasing all Latinas/os' welcoming attitudes on immigration.

## **Conclusion**

Do protests matter for shifting public opinion on immigration? The results of this analysis would suggest they do. But the answer to that question is multifaceted. While protests increase welcoming attitudes among Latinas/os, they also increase restrictive attitudes among Non-Latinas/os. These results are in line with existing scholarship, which highlights Latinas/os' growing affinity with immigrants (Barreto et.al. 2009), and the racialization of immigration as a Latina/o issue (Chavez 2008; Santa Ana 2002). Furthermore, they also correspond with findings from the group threat literature, which points to ways in which immigrants elicit feelings of threat in the United States—particularly as a result of frequent encounters (Hopkins et al. 2014).

Taken together, the results presented in this chapter say a lot about the relationship between protests and shifts in public opinion. Immigrant protests do indeed matter—but not necessarily because protesters are able to change the opinions of those with few ties to the immigrant community among the general public. They matter because they are able to articulate grievances and mobilize supporters who identify with those grievances. Latinas/os in the United States are now more likely than ever to identify with the word “Latina/o”—a change that has seen an upraise since the nationwide immigration protests of 2006 (Zepeda-Millan and Wallace 2013).

Partisan polarization on immigration has risen in the last 15 years. But policy opinions on immigration are not just partisan issues—they are also group issues. Indeed, there is a general perception that attitudes toward immigrants are at least partly a reflection of attitudes toward

Latinas/os (Valentino, Brader and Jardina, 2013). Protests tap into the group polarizing nature of immigration by making immigration into a personal issue for all Latinas/os and by awakening feelings of group threat among the non-Latina/o public. The findings presented in this chapter indicate that the 2006 protests had an overall positive effect on support for immigrant friendly prescriptions. Across different Latina/o sub-groups and regardless of whether Latinas/os receive their political information from English or Spanish sources, Latinas/os were more likely to express welcoming views on immigration. And in contrast to that, participants of the survey experiment who were randomly assigned to the protest frame were likely to respond with more restrictive views on immigration vis-à-vis those who were assigned to any of the positive frames on immigration.

One general conclusion we can extract from these findings is that—if protests have anything to do with why the issue of immigration has risen in importance—it is not because the general public is suddenly more likely to be amenable to immigrants. Instead, protesters and activists have successfully helped articulate the voice of Latinas/os as a political force whose issue of choice is immigration (Pantoja et. al. 2008). The resulting visibility of immigration in the public agenda notes activists' success in making immigration salient for Latinas/os of all national origins. Given the rise of the Latina/o population, this is something that the general public, reluctantly, cannot ignore.

Beyond elucidating the ways in which protests shape public opinion. The results of this chapter also have implications for political communication—or how activists and pro-immigration supporters talk about immigration and to whom. Using a political rights frame with Latinas/os might be a successful strategy when trying to amass support for the cause of immigration. However, political communicators should be careful not to make demands-based political frames

the focus of their messages when speaking to the non-Latina/o general public. The results of this analysis—coupled with the vast research on group threat and immigration—suggest that this strategy may result in the unintended consequence of alienating a large section of the public and pushing them toward more restrictive opinions about U.S. immigration policy.

## **Chapter 5**

# **Conclusion**

*Theoretical Contributions and Implications for Political  
Strategists and Communicators*

## **Group-Centrism and Media Frame Styles on Immigration**

The chapters in this dissertation build on a simple premise introduced by Converse (1964) in his foundational work on *The Nature of Beliefs Systems in Mass Publics*: in the absence of copious amounts of political information, people form opinions about policies based on their perceptions of the perceived beneficiaries or targets of policies. And, indeed, scholars have long documented that group-centrism in American public opinion is pervasive (Sides and Gross 2013, Brewer 2003, Gilens, 1999; Soss et al., 2003; Hurwitz and Peffley, 1997; Bobo and Kluegel, 1993; Federico and Sidanius, 2002).

In this dissertation, I bridge the centrality of group-centrism with research on media framing (Chong and Druckman, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c), and public opinion on U.S. immigration (Valentino Brader and Jardina 2013, Perez 2010, Brader et al. 2008, Chavez, 2008, 2001). Specifically, I argue that the persuasiveness of media frames in the coverage of a group-centric issue like immigration will vary as a function of how effectively the frame invites people to think about the contributions and/or harm that the group offers in the aggregate, as well as their role as political competition in the polity. Thus, the analysis presented in the chapters of this dissertation studies the stylistic dynamics of media coverage on immigration. In particular, I examine the distribution and effect of three styles of immigration frames: group-centric frames, personal narrative frames, and political frames.

Chapter 2 presents an overview of the distribution of these three styles of frames in the coverage of immigration in the New York Times and Washington Times during three years: 2006, 2010, and 2015. The collective findings from that analysis suggest three overarching trends in the coverage of immigration. First, negative coverage is chiefly group-centric. Secondly, positive coverage on immigration employs group-centric frames and personal narrative frames at similar

rates. And thirdly, both the NYT and WT employ political frames—stories of immigrant protests, activism and/or electoral relevance—in the coverage of the issue at fairly comparable rates.

These findings expand on our existing knowledge about media coverage on immigration. Previous scholarship on the media's coverage of immigration identifies two overarching trends: negative coverage predominates (Abrajano and Hajnal 2015, Chavez 2001, 2008, Santa Ana 2002), and there has been a rise in the use of dramatic-story telling as a frame style in U.S. media (Benson 2013)—partly as a function of economic incentives. My research adds nuance to these observations in three ways. First, while my findings are consistent with the observation that negative coverage is indeed predominant, they also highlight the fact that negative coverage is primarily group-centric. Secondly, unlike negative coverage, positive coverage is much more likely to employ the personal narrative. And thirdly, the tendency towards dramatic story-telling in media reporting on immigration drives journalists to report on dramatic events like protests, activism, and/or the electoral significance of immigrants.

These three trends hold across two ideologically different sources—the New York Times and Washington Times—which suggests that *negative and positive frames on immigration follow distinct styles, regardless of the ideology of the media outlet*. This is an important finding because previous research documents the market-driven reasons for differentiated coverage on immigration from news outlets in different geographic and ideological markets (Kerevel 2011, Gentzkow and Shapiro 2010, Gentzkow and Shapiro 2010, Abrajano and Singh 2009, Branton and Dunaway 2008). While my analysis certainly corroborates the fact that a conservative news outlet like the Washington Times will offer a more negative take on immigration than a more center-left outlet like the New York Times, they also indicate that the stylistic production of positive and negative frames is strikingly consistent across both outlets. When readers of *both* the Washington Times

and New York Times encounter negative coverage on immigration, that coverage is likely to be group-centric. When they encounter positive coverage, they are equally as likely to encounter personal narratives. And both readers are likely to see a similar distribution of political frames relative to other types of frames in the coverage of immigration.

The dynamics of the coverage of immigration are consequential for two reasons. First, as discussed in Chapter 3, the asymmetry between the style of positive and negative coverage raises the question: are group-centric frames and personal narratives interchangeable? In other words, are they equally as persuasive? This is an important question because—if group-centric and personal narratives have different persuasive abilities—then even in a scenario where positive and negative framing are equally represented by media outlets, the overall effect of framing on public opinion could benefit one side over the other. Thus, even in an equal playing field in the coverage of immigration, one side could be inadvertently “winning” in their ability to shape public opinion. And given the evidence pointing to the predominance of negative coverage (Abrajano and Hajnal 2015, Chavez 2001, 2008, Santa Ana 2002), the stakes are even higher.

Secondly, as Chapter 4 expands on, the fact that both the New York Times and Washington Times employ political frames at similar rates presents a unique opportunity to evaluate the effect of these types of frames on public opinion. Unlike positive and negative coverage, readers of news outlets in the New York Times and Washington Times—two very different ideological news outlets—are equally as likely to encounter stories of immigrant activism and/or electoral relevance frames. Thus, examining their effect on public opinion can potentially reveal framing effects that are the most applicable across the board.

In the following sections, I offer a summary of findings, highlight the theoretical contributions of this dissertation, suggest directions for future research, and consider the practical political implications of my research, as well as offer some concluding remarks.

### **Framing Effects: Group-Centric and Personal Narrative Frames**

Political scientists and other social scientists alike have pondered about the effectiveness of group-centric frames vis-à-vis personal narrative frames (Ostfeld and Mutz 2013, Aaroe, 2011, Gross 2008, Slovic 2007, Small and Loewenstein 2005, 2003, Iyengar 1987, Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). I add to this debate by suggesting that the persuasiveness of little-picture and big-picture frames is distinct for a group-centric issue like immigration. Furthermore, the theoretical foundation of this dissertation builds on existing evidence pointing to the close association between immigration and Latinos/as as a group, as well as the fact that political attitudes about immigration are largely associated with perceptions of Latinos/as (Valentino Brader and Jardina 2013, Perez 2010, Brader et al. 2008, Chavez, 2008, 2001). Specifically, I argue that group-centric frames are more persuasive than personal narrative frames because they present information at the same level in which the issue is conceptualized in the minds of most Americans.

The findings presented in Chapter 3 provide support for this argument. In an analysis of an online survey experiment, respondents exposed to a positive group-centric frame on immigration were consistently more supportive of welcoming policy prescriptions on immigration than respondents randomly assigned to the positive personal narrative frame. There are, however, some important caveats pertaining to the limitations of framing effects. As public opinion scholars have long documented, the public does not receive new information as a blank slate. Instead, they

incorporate information in relation to pre-existing values and information. (Klayman 1995, Zaller 1992) My results indicate important variations by partisan affiliation, as well as racial identities.

First, Republicans are not responsive to any of the treatment frames on immigration. Regardless of frame exposure, Republicans consistently report restrictive views on immigration. Secondly, for Democrats, random exposure to the positive group-centric frame—but not the positive personal narrative frame—is a statistically significant predictor of more welcoming attitudes on immigration when compared to exposure to the negative group-centric frame. And thirdly, Independents are the only group to respond to the positive personal narrative frame in a statistically significant way. This makes sense given what we know from previous scholarship about independents. Specifically, independents are less likely to be politically informed or hold strong political opinions, and—as a result—are more likely to be susceptible to framing effects (Hillygus and Jackman 2003, Zaller 1992). However, it is crucial to highlight that—even for independents—exposure to the positive group-centric frame yields a larger predictive power of welcoming policy attitudes than exposure to the personal narrative frame. Overall, then, the results are consistent with my argument that the use of group-centric media frames over personal narratives frames is a more effective political communication strategy.

Beyond highlighting differences between the persuasiveness of frame styles, these results shed further light on the importance of taking into consideration both tone *and* style when evaluating the strength of media frames. That is, not all positive (or negative) coverage will be equally as persuasive. This is of particular importance within the process of opinion formation on immigration because—in the aggregate—negative and positive coverage on immigration are stylistically different. The former employs group-centric appeals, and the latter makes more use of personal narratives. Thus, piling onto the already higher volume of negative coverage vis-à-vis

positive coverage on immigration (Abrajano and Hajnal 2015), my research suggests that positive coverage is employing a less than optimal communication strategy.

In addition to partisan differences, the results also suggest that Whites in particular are responsive to framing effects on immigration. This finding is in line with recent scholarship that points to the key role of immigration in pushing a defection of White voters from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party (Hajnal and Rivera 2014). Some have suggested that negative coverage on immigration is largely responsible for that (Abrajano and Hajnal 2015). My experimental findings provide a mechanism for this argument by outlining several ways in which media coverage contributes to Whites' Democratic defection. Specifically, the collective findings of this dissertation show that the asymmetry in the style of coverage employed by positive vis-à-vis negative immigration frames is presenting Whites with an overall negative view of immigrants (as a group).

### **Framing Effects: Political Frames**

In addition to framing immigration in a negative and/or positive light, I discuss in Chapter 2 how news organizations also cover political events and developments surrounding the salient issue of immigration. These types of frames—which I refer to as political frames—focus on the political power of immigrants as a group through activism, making political demands or the vote. Political frames are unique in that they position immigrants—as a group—making demands upon the political system or carving out a place of expanded political power for themselves within it. Interestingly, the content analysis in Chapter 2 reveals that political frames are widely used by both the New York Times and Washington Times—two news sources that vary greatly in terms of their ideological leanings. Once again, despite the documented market-driven variation in the

coverage of immigration across different news outlets (Kerevel 2011, Gentzkow and Shapiro 2010, Gentzkow and Shapiro 2010, Abrajano and Singh 2009, Branton and Dunaway 2008), my findings point to a surprising consistency in the styles of frames used to communicate information on immigration.

This dissertation is not only the first to examine the coverage of political frames in relation to other types of frames on immigration, but it is also the first to test the relative strength of a political frame, such as a protest frame, on shaping policy opinions about immigration in the United States. While there is scholarship on how Americans react to immigration protests, these studies do not compare the effect that news of protests have vis-à-vis other news on immigration.

The analysis in Chapter 4 indicates that—when compared to positive frames on immigration-- exposure to a protest story predicts more restrictive views on immigration among non-Latinas/os. Furthermore, Chapter 4 also presents evidence indicating that the opposite is true for Latinos/as, who are more likely to increase welcoming views on immigration as a result of exposure to immigration protests. When it comes to the non-Latina/o sample, there are some key findings that are important to highlight in particular. While the difference in framing effects is largest between those exposed to the protest frame and those exposed to the positive group-centric frame, framing effects are also statistically different between the protest frame and the positive personal narrative frame. Given that the results in Chapter 3 indicate that the personal narrative frame is weaker than the group-centric frame, this finding suggests that reactions to the protest frame among non-Latinas/os are particularly negative. And indeed, this is consistent with existing research, which documents negative reactions to the public visibility of Latina/o national-origin symbols, and protests (Hopkins 2014, Wright and Citrin 2011, Cohen-Marks et. al. 2008, Citrin et. al 1990).

In contrast to non-Latinas/os, research points to the growing articulation of a Latina/o pan-ethnic identity (Mora 2014, Manzano and Ura 2013, Jones-Correa and Leal 1996) that has chosen immigration as the issue of choice for the group (Pantoja Menjívar and Magaña 2008). By enlarge, Latinas/os tend to hold welcoming policy attitudes on immigration (Fraga et. al. 2011). My results are consistent with the solidarity of Latinas/os with immigrants. Latinas/os asked about their policy opinions after the 2006 immigrant marches were more likely to express welcoming immigration attitudes, suggesting that news of the protests heightened their support for immigrants. The increased racialization of immigration as a Latina/o issue (Zepeda-Millán and Wallace 2013, Perez 2010, Chavez 2008, 2001, Santa Ana 2002) may leave members of the group to stand with the plight of immigrants—regardless of their own status. Indeed, my findings show that while it is true that policy opinions vary across national-origin groups, all Latina/o sub-groups moved toward more welcoming attitudes after the 2006 marches.

Similarly, while Latinas/os who receive their news from English language sources hold less welcoming opinions about immigration than those who receive their political information from Spanish-dominant sources, both of these groups move to hold more favorable immigration policy opinions after the marches at a similar rate. This is an important finding because we know from existing scholarship that English dominant sources are more likely than Spanish media sources to cover immigrants in a negative light (Branton and Dunaway 2008). Consistency across language media groups provides particular strength to the argument that protest frames trigger solidarity among Latinas/os of diverse backgrounds. Furthermore, the results are consistent with the notion that the Latino/a political identity materializes into real implications, and that the similarities among the Latino/a panethnic group outweigh their differences in political attitudes (Fraga et.al 2011).

## **Theoretical Contributions**

The theoretical contributions of this dissertation speak to three bodies of scholarly work: (1) media framing and public opinion, (2) immigration and group threat, and (3) racialized policy attitudes.

When it comes to media framing and public opinion, my work adds a racial lens. Starting with foundational work by Iyengar (1990, 1991), media framing and public opinion scholars have asked whether presenting information at the aggregate or case-specific level is consequential for public opinion (Small and Loewenstein 2005, 2003, Hart 2010, Slovic 2007, Boukes et. al. 2014, Ostfeld and Mutz 2013, Lyon and Slovic 1976). This has spurred a healthy body of scholarship. Iyengar argues that illustrating policy messages via specific cases dilutes people's ability to recognize the connection between the case and broader systematic considerations. That said, others (Small and Loewenstein 2005, 2003) have rightly pointed to the unique ability of personal stories to draw emotional reactions from people. They contend that these emotional responses drive individuals to care more about an issue than they would if presented with general numbers and facts.

My theory pushes framing scholars to consider how “big” and “little” picture framing operates when the issue at hand is strongly and inextricably attached to a specific racial or ethnic minority in the United States. Specifically, I pose that when the policy targets a racialized outsider group, we can expect personal narratives to be less persuasive than group-centric stories because members of the majority group can more easily dismiss personal narratives as an exception.

With regards to the immigration and group threat literature, my theoretical contributions are two-fold. First, scholarly research (Chavez 2001, 2008) and conventional wisdom alike would lead us to expect that group-level arguments about immigration might be received more negatively

because it reminds people about the size of the group. Indeed, this is a plausible outcome as scholars have shown that the increase of the Latina/o population in the United States triggers anxiety among whites (Alba et al. 2005, Citrin et. al. 1990). However, these assumptions miss an important consideration. They fail to consider the fact that immigration is already a group-centric issue in the United States. To speak of immigration is to speak of Latinas/os—particularly Mexicans (Santa Ana 2002, Chavez 2001, 2008). Thus, any information that people process on immigration will be filtered through a racialized group lens. This makes group-level arguments on immigration more persuasive because they present information at the same level in which it conceptualized in the minds of Americans.

Secondly, by pushing for a group-centric understanding of how immigration interacts with news on immigration, my theory explains how activism shapes public opinion on immigration. We know from existing scholarship that non-Latina/o Whites reacted negatively to the 2006 marches and Latinas/os expressed heightened levels of solidarity (Cohen-Marks et. al. 2009, Barreto et. al. 2008, Martinez 2008). My findings are consistent with these observations. Indeed, they suggest that immigrant activism is likely to signal competition among those who are outside the group, while simultaneously heightening solidarity among those who have close ties to immigrants. That said, this dissertation offers nuance to these findings by providing a mechanism for those opposing reactions. Furthermore, it also expands on existing scholarship by showing that the effects of immigrant activism are also consequential for policy attitudes—not just for perceptions of immigrants.

Finally, and more broadly, this dissertation lays the theoretical and empirical groundwork for understanding how immigration has become such a deeply polarizing issue in American Politics. Abrajano and Hajnal (2015) document what they refer to as “White backlash” in the

United States as a result of immigration. I push existing evidence forward by providing a theoretical mechanism and empirical evidence outlining some of the ways the media plays a role in incentivizing that backlash. Not only is coverage on immigration overwhelmingly negative, but positive coverage is not utilizing the most persuasive communication styles to convey their message. Specifically, the media is presenting the immigrant group in a negative light, and as a source of political competition, while at the same time depicting good immigrants as exceptional cases. This is a reminder that it is important for scholars to consider how opposing frames on an issue like immigration may create a public narrative that is distinct from the sum of its parts.

### **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

This dissertation is the first—to my knowledge—to provide a comprehensive look at immigration frame styles in the media, as well as test the relative strength of immigration frames with regard to their ability to shape policy opinions. As I hope to have conveyed in the chapters of this project, frame styles can matter just as much as the topical content of a frame or the intent behind the frame. Despite this important contribution, however, there are limitations to this study that provide exciting opportunities for future research.

First, while I test the framing effects of protest frames on Latinas/os and non-Latinas/os in Chapter 4, I do not provide a test for the potential framing differences of personal narratives on Latinas/os vis-à-vis non-Latinas/os. Arguably, personal narratives of immigrants are perhaps more likely to resonate with Latinas/os than their counterparts because immigration is so intimately tied to Latinas/os. And indeed, there is some evidence that personal connections matter for the effect of personal narrative frames (Ostfeld and Mutz 2014). Future research should examine this hypothesis more closely.

Secondly, while I test the effect of one type of political frame—the political demands frame—I do not test the effect of electoral frames on policy attitudes. Electoral frames might be different than political demands frames in the sense that they have a partisan component to them. News about the electoral relevance of Latinas/os are increasingly tied to the inability of the Republican party to garner support from the group. Given the increasing defection of White voters from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party as a result of immigration (Hajnal and Rivero 2014), the framing effects of electoral frames would be interesting to examine. Future research should consider the potential ways in which partisan affiliation mediates the effect of electoral media frames on immigration.

Thirdly, there are also several opportunities for future research to replicate and expand on the results of this dissertation. While I provide experimental tests for the effects of different frames styles, my experimental design does have some limitations. Specifically, I can assess the direction of effects and the relative strength of frames, but not the size of the effects. Future research should reproduce these results with a control group to further assess the size of the effects. Moreover, while I use the LNS as a natural experiment because it was on the field before and after the large 2006 marches, it would be interesting to replicate the analysis with a survey experiment design with a sample of Latina/o respondents.

In addition to replicating the results with a control group and survey experiment data for Latinas/os, it is important to consider whether the effect of frame styles varies by the topical content of the frames. In this dissertation, I use economic frames for all group-centric and personal narrative frames to maintain consistency. However, it could be argued that in a post 9/11 world and within a context of rising fear of foreigners, security concerns are overshadowing economic considerations in the formation of policy opinions on immigration (Gonzales 2013). Thus, future

research should explore whether the results hold when frames discuss other non-economic considerations.

Finally, my findings on the consequences of frame styles point to an important next step in the understanding of news coverage on a group-centric issue like immigration. Framing scholars, such as Druckman and Chong (2007c), have argued for the importance of considering framing effects within competitive environments. My content analysis reveals that there are stylistic differences between the positive and negative coverage on immigration. Because the findings of this dissertation suggest that personal narrative frames are less persuasive, it is important to test whether the framing effects of different positive and frame style pairings lead to unintended effects on policy opinions. Do people reject the positive personal narrative as an exception when paired with a negative group-centric frame? Does the pairing of a political demand frame and a group-centric frame particularly heighten negative reactions toward immigration policy? These are all questions that are still left unanswered and represent the future of framing research. After all, media frames do not exist in isolation from each other. Much to the contrary, they form part of a broader public narrative on issues in which they have to compete with other frames.

### **Concluding Remarks: Implications for Political Communicators, Activists, and Messaging Strategists**

Beyond the theoretical contributions and directions for future research, the chapters presented in this dissertation also give an indication of effective framing strategies for political communicators, strategists, and activists who wish to move public opinion on immigration to a more favorable direction. First, it is easy to fall in the trap of assuming that the messages that one personally finds compelling are also equally compelling to the general public. Pro-immigration

communicators are perhaps guilty of this when they rely so heavily on personal narratives to frame the issue of immigration. Personal narrative stories might be a compelling strategy to mobilize immigrant sympathizers, but it is not the most persuasive strategy when addressing the broader American public.

For Americans with little connection to the plight of undocumented immigrants and immigrants more broadly, the issue is about the group—and ultimately about what effect the group has on the United States. The findings in this dissertation would encourage political communicators to rely on group-centric frames in order to increase their chances of moving policy opinions on immigration. Specifically, when speaking to a non-Latino/a audience about immigration, communicators would be well-advised to focus on immigrants' contributions to the United States in the economy, education, and communities, among other aggregate-level considerations. Overall, persuasive political communication on immigration focuses on immigrant contributions as a group—not on individual members of the group.

Chapter 4 gives particular attention to the different dynamics of messages and audiences. While those who are closer to the issue of undocumented immigration in the United States—Latinas/os—respond favorably to news of immigrant protests, the opposite is true for non-Latinas/os. Thus, once again, pro-immigrant political communicators must not assume that others will receive stories of protests or political frames in the same way they themselves do. It seems that—when speaking to a Latina/o audience—highlighting immigrant activism is an effective persuasive strategy to move public opinion on immigration. However, messaging strategists would be well advised to choose group-centric positive frames over political demands frames when addressing a non-Latina/o audience. Indeed, the findings in this dissertation suggest that political

demands may alienate non-Latinas/os by producing feelings of group threat and political competition.

Overall, those who craft political messages on immigration should consider how their messages interact with the racialized group-centeredness of U.S. immigration. It is not enough to construct positive or negative messages on the issue. Framing matters.

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## APPENDIX A

### SURVEY EXPERIMENT

(Treatments and Questions Used in the Analysis for Chapters 3 &4)

**WINDOW 1:** Thank you for participating in this short survey about immigration. Please read each question carefully and answer truthfully. Your participation is voluntary and you are free to stop at any point. Only those who carefully complete the survey will be compensated.

**WINDOW 2:** Americans disagree regarding what to do about undocumented or illegal immigrants. Next, you will be presented with a short text that highlights one perspective on undocumented or illegal immigrants. After reading the text, you will be asked to describe the content of the text. Please read carefully.

#### **WINDOW 3: [FRAMES 1-5 ARE RANDOMLY ASSIGNED]**

##### 1. POSITIVE GROUP-CENTRIC FRAME

The undocumented or illegal group has a positive effect on the American economy: “Undocumented Immigrants play key roles at every level of the American economy. From high-skill workers to seasonal laborers, from big-city neighborhoods to small-town main streets, immigrants help drive our economic growth.”

##### 2. NEGATIVE GROUP-CENTRIC FRAME

The undocumented or illegal group has a negative effect on the American economy: “Granting amnesty to millions of illegal immigrants will flood our job markets and reduce wages and employment for those hard-working immigrants and lower-income workers who have followed our laws.”

##### 3. POSITIVE PERSONAL NARRATIVE FRAME

Juan, an undocumented immigrant, describes how his family works daily to contribute to the American economy: “My family is undocumented. We immigrated to the United States in 2006. Since then, we have all secured employment and are investing in our community by purchasing homes and starting businesses.”

##### 4. NEGATIVE PERSONAL NARRATIVE FRAME

John, an American citizen from the Southwest border, describes how his employer turned him down for a job and hired an undocumented or illegal immigrant instead: “I lost a job opportunity because of an illegal immigrant. I applied for a job at Harold Enterprises but the company decided to hire an illegal immigrant instead because they could pay him less.”

##### 5. POLITICAL DEMANDS FRAME

Pro-immigrant activists are demanding that Congress pass Comprehensive Immigration Reform: “Seeking to revive the chances for getting an immigration bill done this year, dozens of immigrant-rights activists staged a sit-in and got arrested at the U.S. Capitol on Thursday-- and they vowed to repeat the civil disobedience throughout the country the rest of the summer.”

**WINDOW 4:** Which of these best describes the text you just read? Please read carefully and choose the item that BEST describes the text you just read.

- An undocumented immigrant and his family (1)
- the positive economic effects of the undocumented group (2)
- the negative economic effects of the undocumented group (3)
- An American citizen who is turned down for a job (4)
- the electoral power of Latinos (5)
- activists protesting in favor of immigration reform (6)

**WINDOW 5:** Thank you. Next, we will ask you 9 short questions. Please read and answer each question carefully.

**WINDOWS 6 & 7: [RANDOMIZE ORDER]**

**WINDOW 6:** What do you think of a proposal that Congress approve a pathway to citizenship for undocumented or illegal immigrants? Is this something you would strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree or strongly disagree with?

- Strongly Agree (1)
- Somewhat Agree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Somewhat Disagree (4)
- Strongly Disagree (5)
- Don't know (6)

**WINDOW 7:** What would you think of a proposal that would give many of the undocumented or illegal Hispanic/Latino immigrants working in the United States a chance to obtain legal status? Is this something you would strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree or strongly disagree with?

- Strongly Agree (1)
- Somewhat Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor Disagree (3)
- Somewhat Disagree (4)
- Strongly Disagree (5)
- Don't know (6)

**WINDOW 8:** Thank you. The survey is almost finalized. Before we complete the survey, we would like to ask a few short questions to learn a little bit about you, such as your age, education and gender.

**WINDOWS 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 & 16: [RANDOMIZE ORDER]**

**WINDOW 9:** Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin or descent?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

**WINDOW 10:** What is your race—are you White, Black or African-American, Asian, American Indian, or some other race?

- White (1)
- Black or African American (2)
- Asian (3)
- American Indian (4)
- Other (5)

**WINDOW 11:** Are you male or female?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

**WINDOW 12:** What is your age?

- Respondents' exact numerical age

**WINDOW 13:** In which state do you currently live in?

- (1-50) in Alphabetical order

**WINDOW 14:** Last year, what was the total income before taxes of all the people living in your house or apartment?

- Less than \$10,000 (1)
- \$10,000\_ \$15,000 (2)
- \$15,000\_ \$25,000 (3)
- \$25,000\_ \$35,000 (4)
- \$35,000\_ \$50,000 (5)
- \$50,000\_ \$75,000 (6)
- \$75,000\_ \$100,000 (7)
- \$100,000\_ \$150,000 (8)
- More than \$150,000 (9)
- Don't know (10)

**WINDOW 15:** What is the last grade or class you completed in school?

- Grade 8 or lower (1)
- Some high school, no diploma (2)
- High school diploma or equivalent (3)
- Technical or vocational school after high school (4)
- Some college, no degree (5)
- Associate's or two-year college degree (6)
- Four-year college degree (7)
- Graduate or professional school, no degree (8)
- Graduate or professional degree (9)
- Don't know (10)

**WINDOW 16:** Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

- Republican (1)
- Democrat (2)
- Independent (3)
- Something else (4)

**WINDOWS 17, 18, AND 19:** [ASSIGNED BY RESPONSE TO WINDOW 16]

**WINDOW 17:** [ANSWER IF REPUBLICAN IS SELECTED]

Do you consider yourself a strong or not a very strong Republican?

- Strong Republican (1)
- Not a very strong Republican (2)

**WINDOW 18:** [ANSWER IF DEMOCRAT IS SELECTED]

Do you consider yourself a strong or not a very strong Democrat?

- Strong Democrat (1)
- Not a very strong Democrat (2)

**WINDOW 19:** [ANSWER IF INDEPENDENT OR SOMETHING ELSE IS SELECTED]

Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party?

- Closer to the Republican Party (1)
- Closer to the Democratic Party (2)
- Neither (3)

**WINDOW 20:** Thank you for participating in this survey. Please provide your worker ID in the box below AND in the box provided in the Mturk information window for this survey.

**APPENDIX B**

*Table 15: Mexican Latina/o Attitudes Toward Immigration After the 2006 Immigration Protests*

Independent Variables	MODEL I		MODEL II		MODEL III	
	<b>“Illegal” Immigration is most important issue</b>	Changes in Predicted Probability	<b>Immediate Legalization of Undocumented Immigrants</b>	Changes in Predicted Probability	<b>Oppose Higher Tuition for Dreamers</b>	Changes in Predicted Probability
After 2006 Protests	1.220** (0.100)	0.24	0.480** (0.088)	0.12	0.020 (0.087)	0.05
Republican	0.058 (0.145)	0.01	- 0.270* (0.130)	0.07	- 0.302* (0.132)	0.07
White	0.198** (0.098)	0.04	- 0.161† (0.092)	0.04	- 0.036 (0.093)	0.01
Foreign Born	0.211 (0.141)	0.04	0.650** (0.124)	0.16	0.091 (0.130)	0.02
Linked Fate	0.035 (0.040)	0.02	0.161** (0.037)	0.12	0.052 (0.037)	0.04
Income	- 0.038 (0.026)	0.05	0.023 (0.024)	0.03	0.011 (0.024)	0.02
Male	- 0.144† (0.085)	0.03	- 0.211* (0.079)	0.05	- 0.115 (0.079)	0.03
Education	- 0.002 (0.026)	0.00	0.065* (0.024)	0.11	0.059* (0.024)	0.10
Age	- 0.011** (0.003)	0.17	- 0.009** (0.002)	0.17	- 0.017** (0.002)	0.30
Citizen	- 0.336** (0.119)	0.07	- 0.117 (0.113)	0.03	0.005 (0.111)	0.00
Spanish Media	- 0.017 (0.072)	0.01	0.268** (0.066)	0.13	0.072 (0.066)	0.03
Spanish	0.365** (0.131)	0.08	0.732** (0.121)	0.18	0.460** (0.126)	0.11
N	2805		2604		2671	

Note: Table entries are as follows: Model I are logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses and changes in predicted probabilities; Models II and III ordered logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses and changes in predicted probabilities. \*\*<.01; \*<.05; †<.

**APPENDIX C**

*Table 16: Non-Mexican Latina/o Attitudes Toward Immigration After the 2006 Immigration Protests*

Independent Variables	MODEL I		MODEL II		MODEL III	
	<b>“Illegal” Immigration is most important issue</b>	Changes in Predicted Probability	<b>Immediate Legalization of Undocumented Immigrants</b>	Changes in Predicted Probability	<b>Oppose Higher Tuition for Dreamers</b>	Changes in Predicted Probability
After 2006 Protests	1.185** (0.051)	0.19	0.937** (0.127)	0.22	0.478** (0.130)	0.10
Republican	- 1.107** (0.183)	0.17	- 0.263† (0.146)	0.06	- 0.171 (0.151)	0.04
White	0.455** (0.153)	0.09	- 0.420** (0.135)	0.10	- 0.404** (0.135)	0.09
Foreign Born	0.556* (0.225)	0.10	1.472** (0.198)	0.34	0.557** (0.204)	0.12
Linked Fate	0.224** (0.067)	0.12	0.102† (0.056)	0.08	- 0.049 (0.058)	0.03
Income	0.160** (0.040)	0.18	0.027 (0.035)	0.04	0.060† (0.037)	0.07
Male	0.294* (0.138)	0.05	0.041 (0.121)	0.01	- 0.310* (0.124)	0.06
Education	0.098* (0.040)	0.12	0.067† (0.036)	0.12	0.083* (0.037)	0.12
Age	0.003 (0.004)	0.05	- 0.007† (0.004)	0.14	- 0.003 (0.004)	0.06
Citizen	- 0.235 (0.179)	0.04	0.309† (0.168)	0.08	0.640** (0.172)	0.14
Spanish Media	- 0.034 (0.107)	0.01	0.517** (0.092)	0.25	0.215* (0.096)	0.09
Spanish	-0.449* (0.199)	0.09	0.169 (0.173)	0.04	0.548** (0.182)	0.12
Cuban	-0.474* (0.195)	0.08	- 0.990** (0.176)	0.23	- 0.906** (0.173)	0.21
Puerto Rican	- 1.117** (0.244)	0.18	- 0.815** (0.195)	0.20	0.051 (0.207)	0.01
N	1574		1464		1501	

Note: Table entries are as follows: Model I are logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses and changes in predicted probabilities; Models II and III ordered logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses and changes in predicted probabilities. \*\*<.01; \*<.05; †

## APPENDIX D

Figure 42: Effect of the 2006 Protests on the Saliency of Undocumented Immigration, Mexican and non-Mexican Latinas/os

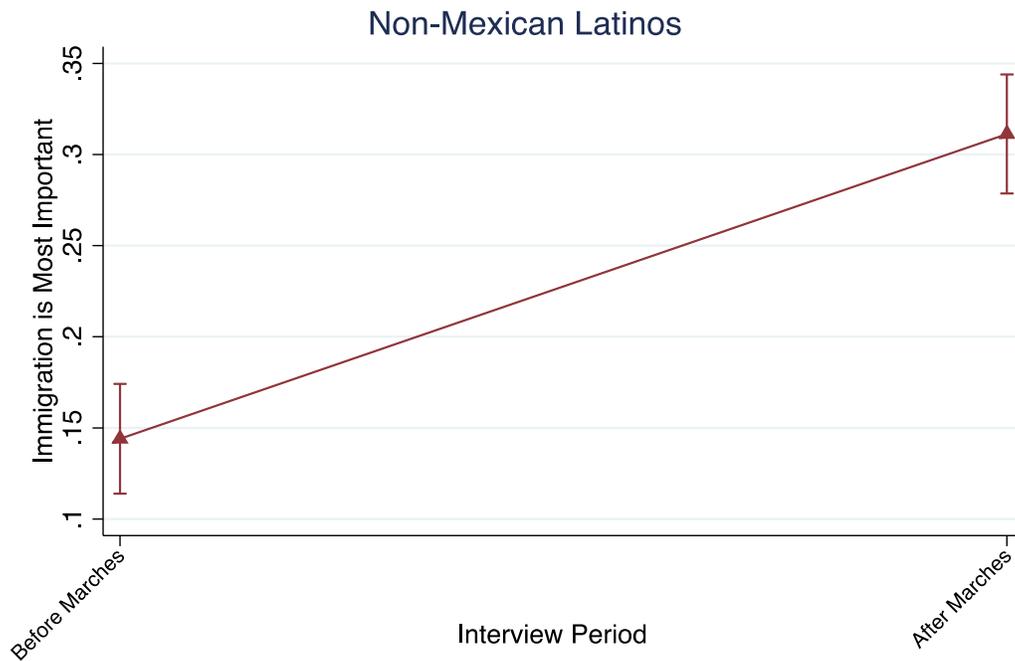
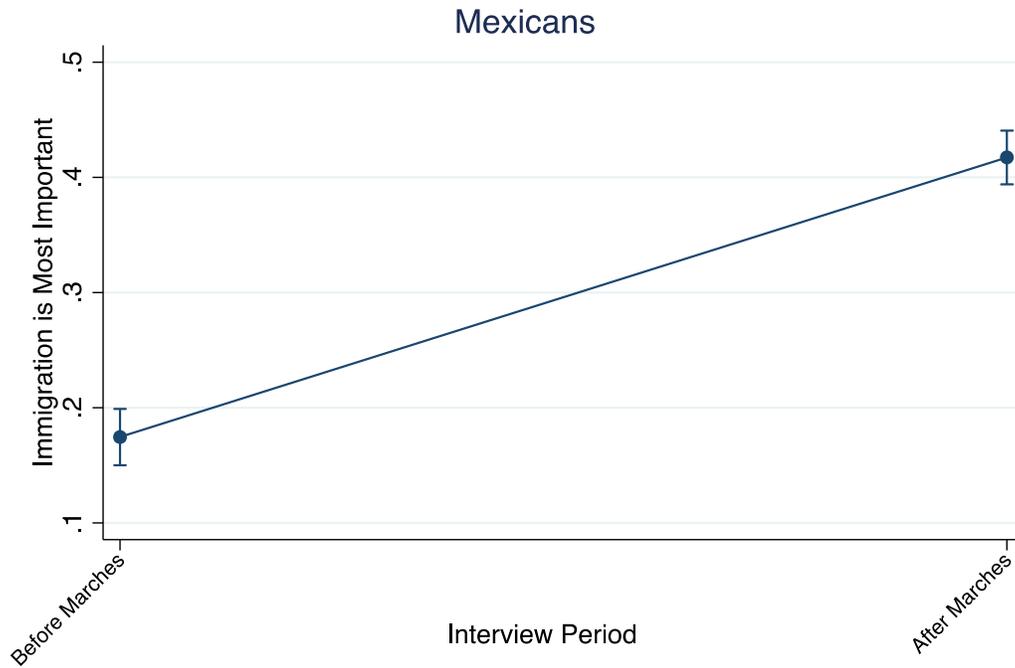


Figure 43: Effect of the 2006 Protests on Support for the Immediate Legalization of Undocumented Immigrants, Mexican and non-Mexican Latinas/os

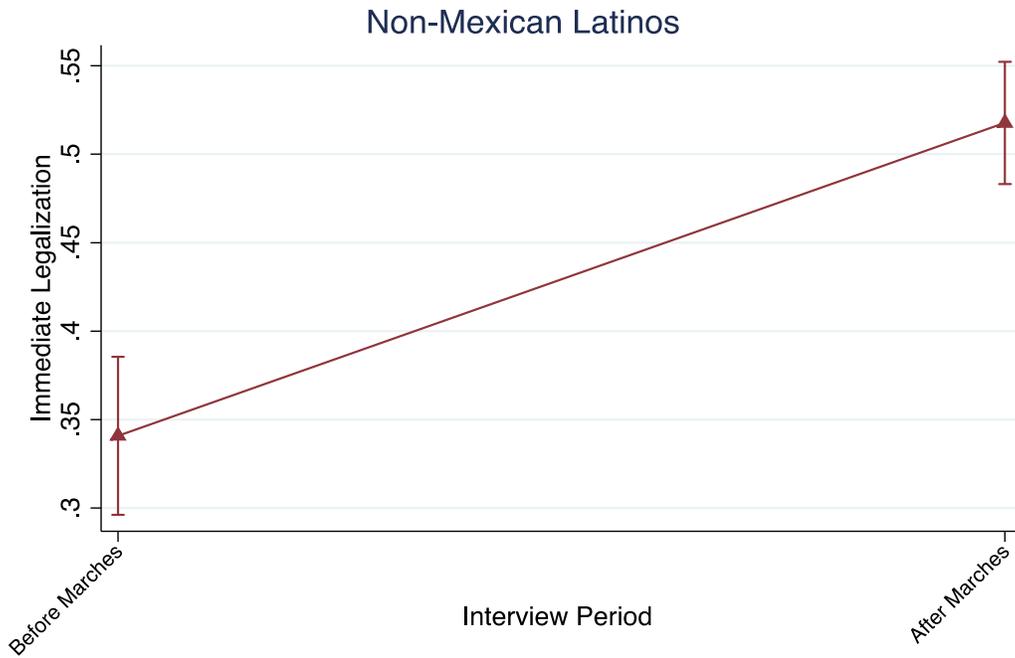
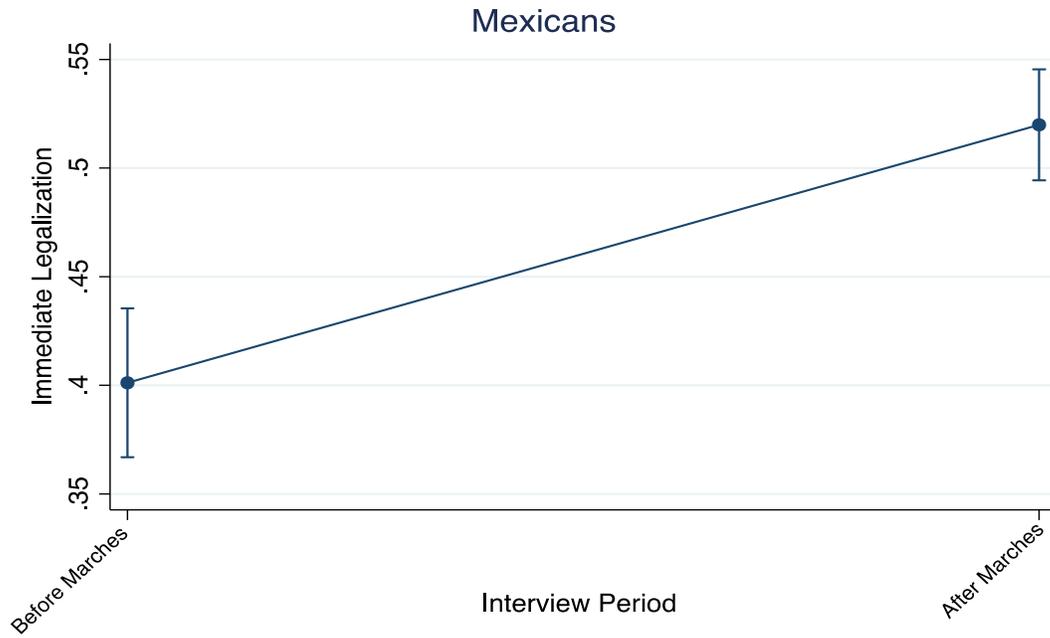
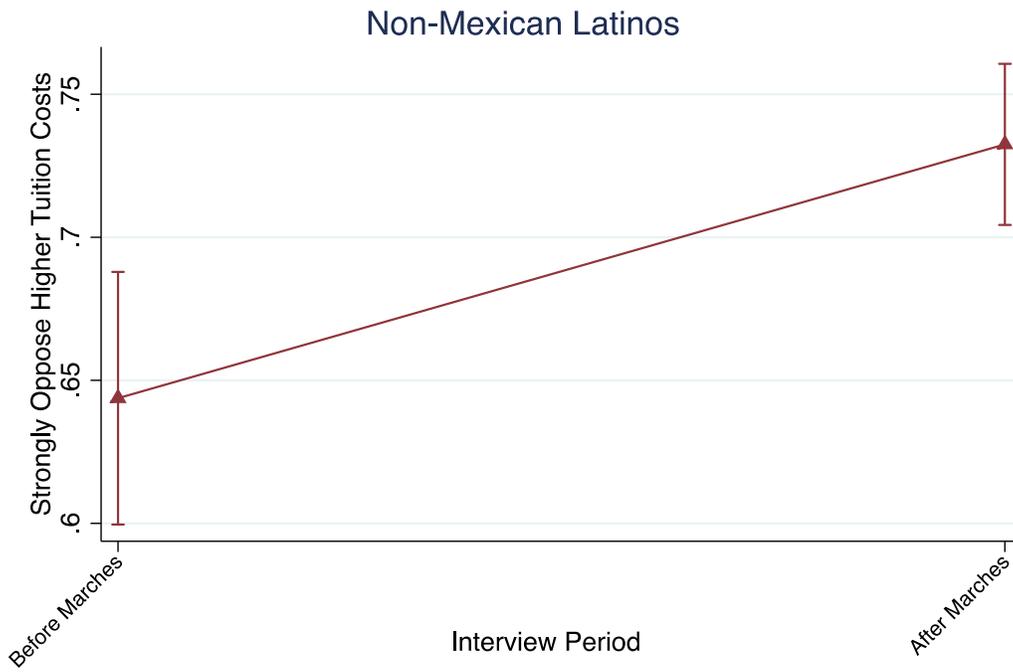
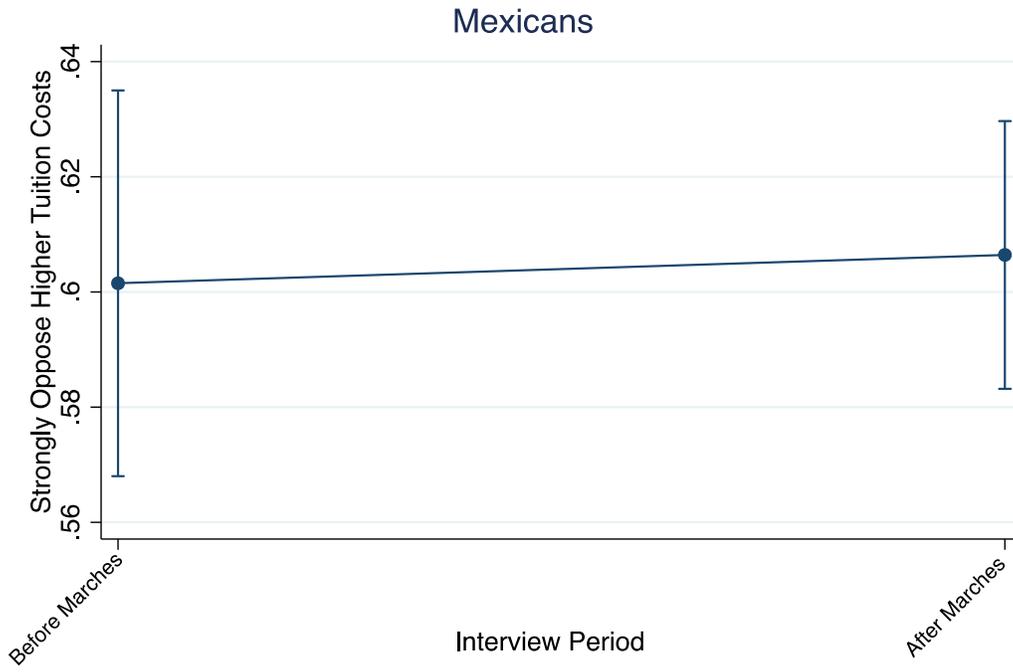


Figure 44: Effect of the 2006 Protests on Support for the Immediate Legalization of Undocumented Immigrants, Mexican and non-Mexican Latinas/os



## **APPENDIX E**

### **Newspaper Data Collection and Coding Scheme**

#### **V1 Newspaper**

- New York Times
- Washington Times

#### **V2 Newspaper ID**

- NYT (1)
- WT (2)

#### **V3 Title**

- Title of Article

#### **V4 Author**

- Author names/editorial board

#### **V5 Date**

- YearMonthDay

#### **V6 Year**

- 2006 (0)
- 2010 (1)
- 2015 (2)

#### **V7a Group Positive ID**

Does the article portray positive aggregate contributions of immigrants as a group?

*[Examples include immigrant contributions to the economy, American values, lower crime, innovation, entertainment, communities, culture etc.]*

- Yes (1)
- No (0)

#### **V7b Group Positive Excerpt**

- Excerpt of Group-Centric Frame

### **V8a Personal Positive ID**

Does the article portray the positive contribution of one or a few immigrants?

*[Examples include how an individual immigrant's work ethic, values, patriotism, innovation etc.]*

- Yes (1)
- No (0)

### **V8b Personal Positive Excerpt**

- Excerpt of Personal Positive Frame

### **V9a Group Negative ID**

Does the article portray negative aggregate harm of immigrants as a group?

*[Examples include immigrant harm to the economy, American values, crime, innovation, entertainment, communities, culture etc.]*

- Yes (1)
- No (0)

### **V9b Group Negative Excerpt**

- Excerpt of Group Negative Frame

### **V10a Personal Negative ID**

Does the article portray the negative harm of one or a few immigrants?

*[Examples include how an individual immigrant's work ethic, values, patriotism, crime, laziness etc.]*

- Yes (1)
- No (0)

### **V10b Personal Negative Excerpt**

- Excerpt of Personal Negative Frame

### **V11a Political Demands ID**

Does the article portray immigrants making demands upon the political system?

*[Examples include protests, marches, demonstrations, strikes, civil rights lawsuits on the government etc.]*

- Yes (1)
- No (0)

### **V11b Political Demands**

- Excerpt of Political Demands Frame

### **V12a Political Electoral ID**

Does the article portray the electoral relevance of immigrants?

*[Examples include references to the growing size of the Latino electorate, partisan attachments, campaign/candidate strategies and appeals to immigrants/Latinos etc.]*

- Yes (1)
- No (0)

### **V12b Political Electoral**

- Excerpt of Electoral Positive Frame

### **V13 Neutral Frame**

Does the article discuss immigration but does not portray immigrants in a negative or positive light?

- Yes (1)
- No (0)

*[Examples include news about Congress evaluating an immigration bill or informational developments or events surrounding immigration that do not make normative statements about the benefits of harm of immigration etc.]*

### **Comments**

- Special observations about the article