

MIGUEL THE CRIMINAL, MARIA THE REFUGEE: HOW AN IMMIGRANT'S GENDER AND REASONS FOR MIGRATING AFFECT PUBLIC OPINION ON IMMIGRATION

Mia Hernandez

Abstract

Given immigration's continued salience in the political landscape, it is paramount that we understand how immigration is perceived and how its features and contexts change how people view politics and immigrants themselves. This study will investigate the effect current demographic changes may have on American public opinion by looking at how an immigrant's gender and reason for migrating affect how they are perceived, focusing specifically on economic and cultural threat. Regression analysis reveals that the gender and reason for migration of the immigrant does not have an effect on the level of threat expressed; however, political ideology, feminist identification, and education of the respondent all emerged as predictors of threat expression. This knowledge can be applied to policy campaign communications for the purpose of targeting specific groups of constituents and can give lawmakers a sense of how people feel and potential underlying causes for why they feel that way.

Introduction

Immigration has risen to prominence as a national political issue in the U.S. within the past 20 years. It held particular importance during the 2016 presidential election and the 2018 midterms. Given its continued salience, it is paramount that we understand how immigration is perceived by the American public and how its portrayal can change how people view politics and immigrants themselves.

Recent immigration trends in the U.S. show an increase in the number of women and children coming to the U.S.-Mexico Border, primarily from countries in Central America such as Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala (Gramlich & Scheller, 2019). These families tend to be migrating in order to flee gang violence, domestic violence, and state persecution and oppression in their home countries. This new trend represents a change from past periods of migration in which immigrants mostly came from Mexico and consisted primarily of men looking for better paying jobs and economic opportunity.

The changing demographics of immigration present new challenges to the field of political science in the realm of research as well as governance. This study will investigate the effect these demographic changes may have on American public opinion by looking at how an immigrant's gender and reason for migrating affect how they are perceived, focusing specifically on the perception of economic and cultural threat. I expect both gender and reasons for migrating to interact with one another and impact how immigrants are perceived by the American public due to stereotypes about labor and gender roles. Given these stereotypes, I predict that women migrating to flee violence will elicit the fewer feelings of threat from respondents and that men migrating in search of economic opportunity will elicit the greatest feelings of threat. More generally, I expect immigrants of both genders who are migrating to flee violence to be seen as less threatening compared to immigrants migrating for economic opportunity.

Literature Review

Ethnic and Racial Difference

A review of the literature in this area of political science reveals a large gap in the fields of gender and immigration study. The study of ethnic and racial cues looms large in immigration studies and for good reason, as existing work clearly and consistently demonstrates strong connections between such cues and attitudes towards immigration. Brader, Valentino, and Suhay's (2008) found that stigmatized "out groups" (racial/ethnic minorities) elicited feelings of anxiety from respondents and those groups were also associated with an increase in negative emotions, especially when the costs of immigration were emphasized. Brader et al. used differentiated photographs and names within the context of news coverage to measure this bias towards "out groups". My experimental design is largely inspired by this study.

Since racial and ethnic cues are already established in the field as predictors of attitudes, my study kept this variable constant by maintaining the same ethnic frame across my entire experiment. I chose to make the fictitious immigrants in my study Central American because that is a key region for current immigration to the United States. A potential step forward in this research would be to conduct the same experiment but situate the immigrants in an East/South Asian or Middle Eastern context to see if that alters results.

Latino Threat Narrative

It has already been demonstrated that race and ethnicity are documented predictors of attitudes towards immigration, but it is worth examining in greater depth the specific relationship between Latinos and conceptions of immigration in the American imagination, as my study situates immigrants within this context. Latinos are almost synonymous with the word “immigrant” in American discourse for a variety of reasons, including the United States’ geographic proximity to Mexico and Central America and the longstanding migration of labor between the two areas (Chavez, 2013). The Latino Threat Narrative was first defined by American anthropologist Leo Chavez, and he uses this term to describe the set of underlying beliefs and related political discourse of Latinos as illegal aliens and usurpers of the American way (Chavez, 2013). He argues that this narrative shapes how the United States views Latinos, by extension immigrants, and ties these opinions to ideas of invasion and foreignness. The Latino Threat Narrative primarily targets Mexicans, but it extends its prejudice to all Latin Americans. The following false premises form the foundation of the threat narrative: (1) the construction of illegal aliens as criminals which Latinos become associated with through racialization, (2) the idea that Latin Americans seek to “reconquer” the Southwestern United States through increasing Latino populations in these areas, (3) an inherent unwillingness to learn English and integrate into American culture, (4) “out of control” Latina fertility, and (5) threats to national security (Chavez, 2013). Chavez’s work provides a theoretical framework for thinking about and experimenting with American attitudes toward Latino immigrants, as it highlights the importance of the feeling of threat that Latino immigrants may elicit in many non-Latino Americans. These feelings of threat are operationalized as my dependent variables. I will revisit Chavez’s definition when discussing my results and their implications.

These ideas have tangible policy consequences. Gonzalez (2014) demonstrates that the idea of “immigrant as criminal” is still prevalent in American public opinion as of 2014 and that these beliefs influence policy opinions. Americans who believe that undocumented people are criminals are more likely to be in favor of deportation and felony charges. The 1994 Proposition 187 in California was crafted to curb unauthorized immigration by denying social services, chiefly prenatal care, to undocumented immigrants. Undergirding this proposition was the idea that Latina women, through their “out of control” fertility, were creating problems with the welfare system and were undeservingly taking more than their “fair share” (Chavez, 2013). In an attempt to measure this female specific bias, I included a survey item asking for respondent’s level of agreement with the following statement: “Immigrants receive social services that should go to Americans.”

Gender

While much of the field is primarily occupied with ethnic cues and differences, a smaller subset of work has been done on how gender affects attitudes towards immigration. Ward (2019) found that immigrant groups which contained more young men were “considered less favorable and posed more cultural and social threats;” however, his work exclusively deals with the specific effects of the *presence of young men* and cannot provide any concrete information about how women are perceived. Ward’s research is also specific to the European context and deals only with refugees rather than immigrants who are migrating for purely economic purposes. My review of the literature has yielded no study to date that has explicitly looked at the differences of perception between male and *female* immigrants within the same study. As part of a larger study, Hainmuller and Hopkins (2015) included gender in their analysis of the desirability of certain immigrants and found that male immigrants received slightly less support than female immigrants, but this difference is never fully explored or analyzed in their results. My research builds off of these previous findings.

The following scholars have explored the effect of gender on other aspects of immigration attitudes and policy. Sarrasin et al. (2015) have shown that gender and racial cues intersect in the form of sexual threat cues. When primed to view male immigrants as a sexual threat, responses indicated a relationship between underlying

sexist beliefs about women and supporting the expulsion of immigrants. This potentially relevant relationship between sexism and anti-immigrant sentiment could impact my results. To account for this, I included a question in my research designed to measure sexism and used it as a control variable.

Reasons for Migration

Similar to gender, a migrant's reason for migration has yet to be adequately and comprehensively explored by researchers as a predictor of sentiment towards immigrants. Observational studies done on populations in Belgium and Sweden demonstrated no difference in opinion between "immigrants" and "refugees;" the latter were defined as people who have left their own country for reasons related to violence, persecution, or general conflict (De Coninck et al., 2019). When comparing immigrants who were job-seeking compared to those fleeing persecution, Hainmuller and Hopkins (2015) found that those treatment conditions had a relatively small effect size compared to other measured attributes, yet those escaping violence were seen as slightly more desirable compared to those seeking a job. An aggregate of 2018 Pew Research Center survey data indicates that, globally, refugees are more accepted and supported as migrating individuals compared to "immigrants" (Rasmussen & Poushter, 2019). Pew's analysis indicates that the United States supported both types of migrants roughly equally. However, the definitions of both these groups remain hazy—the survey defined refugees as people clearly fleeing violence, while immigrants were defined simply as "people moving into the country." These definitions lack clear motivation and leave much room for interpretation. My research will firmly define and differentiate these terms in an attempt to reduce this type of error. Migrants will be defined as explicitly fleeing violence or they will be defined as migrating to seek economic benefits. Cargile et al. (2014) found that economic frames for immigration in particular revealed less support from the U.S. domestic population. This may be a reflection of the self-interest of natural born Americans who see immigrants as competition or question their economic contribution to society.

Economic vs. Cultural | National vs. Personal

When studying how domestic individuals across the world feel about immigrants, the scholarship frequently seeks to divide threat and other feelings into two categories: economic and cultural (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014). Economic threat concepts are based around the ideas of labor market competition and fiscal burden. In the U.S., cultural threat is meant to measure if and how much people feel that the "American way of life" is being threatened. Much of the literature, as reviewed by Hainmuller and Hopkins (2014), operationalizes threat (both economic and cultural) as an independent variable, meaning that an individual's level of feeling threatened is correlated with or affecting their opinions on immigration policies. The work consolidated by Hainmueller and Hopkins looks at why people prefer certain immigration policies and searches for what feelings and world views contribute to those opinions. My research represents new contributions to the field because I look at the precursors to those policy opinions and ask what affects the *feelings and worldviews* themselves, which then influence policy preference. My study uses a threat-as-effect model rather than a threat-as-cause model when it comes to public opinion on immigration.

Feelings of both economic and cultural threat have personal and individual dimensions as well as national ones. Jeong's (2013) study of national sentiments in relation to immigration attitudes supports the idea that feelings related to "symbolic concerns toward the nation" are powerful predictors of attitude. High levels of nationalism, defined by Jeong as "feeling of superiority and contempt for foreigners" are correlated with anti-immigrant feelings whereas national pride, defined as a "sense of being or feeling American" is associated with pro-immigrant feelings (Jeong, 2013). In keeping with general practices within the field of immigration study, I included survey questions designed to measure feelings of economic and cultural threat at both the individual and national level.

Reviewing the literature in the field of perceptions of immigration reveals areas of strongly supported evidence (race/ethnicity) and areas for further exploration and study (gender and reasons for migration). By focusing on both gender and reasons for migration, my research contributes to filling this gap in the existing body of scholarship and contributes evidence to these less commonly studied questions.

Methods

My hypotheses are informed by the above summary of the relevant literature. All corresponding null hypotheses are that the inverse of each hypothesis statement is true.

Gender Hypotheses

H1: All female immigrants will be perceived as *less economically threatening* than male immigrants migrating for the same reasons.

H2: All female immigrants will be perceived as *less culturally threatening* than all male immigrants.

H3: However, respondents exposed to the female immigrant (regardless of migration reason) will be more likely to agree that immigrants are *taking up social services*.

H4: Women fleeing violence will be the least threatening group and the man seeking a job will be the most threatening group across all the questions.

Reasons for Migration Hypotheses

H5: Respondents who are exposed to the immigrant fleeing violence (regardless of gender) will be less likely to feel *economically threatened* than those exposed to the immigrant seeking a job.

H6: There will be no significant difference in *cultural threat* between respondents exposed to the immigrant fleeing violence and respondents exposed to the immigrant seeking a job.

Profile Hypotheses

H7: Respondents in lower income brackets will rate migrants of all treatment conditions less favorably on the economic threat scale than respondents of higher income brackets.

H8: Respondents who are unemployed will be more likely to express threat than respondents who identify as other employment statuses.

H9: Respondents with lower levels of education will be more likely to express economic threat compared to individuals with more education.

H10: Respondents who do not identify with the word “feminist” will rate both the male and female immigrants less favorably than respondents who do identify as feminists.

I included income, employment, and education in my Profile Hypotheses because Manevska & Achterberg (2013), Cargile et al.’s (2014), and Turper et al.’s (2015) work indicates that education and socioeconomic status could be predicting factors of sentiment towards immigrants. I included feminist identification because sexist beliefs could also be correlated with anti-immigrant sentiment (Sarrasin et al., 2015).

I tested my research hypotheses using a standard two-by-two experimental design common in the field of political science. A two-by-two experimental design produces four different treatment groups by combining two different outcomes from two different and binary variables. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of the four treatment groups through Qualtrics, so that each respondent had an equal chance of getting put in each group. Each group was statistically equivalent by the gender, race, age, education level, and ideology of the respondents. In addition, the experiment/survey distribution service I used, Dynata, balances their sample pools using U.S. Census data. Each treatment group read a version of a fake news article that featured a particular immigrant’s story, and then answered a series of survey questions. In the four versions of the story, the only differences were the immigrant’s gender and reason for migration. Stories also contained other general facts about immigration, which remained consistent across the stories. My two-by-two experimental design, paired with random assignment, allows me to measure how the treatment conditions of gender and reasons for migration (independent variables) affect people’s feelings of threat by comparing the answers to questions about economic and cultural threat across the four different treatment groups.

In Treatment Group 1, the immigrant featured in the fake news story had a male Hispanic first name (Miguel) and mentioned that he was migrating for economic reasons (looking for a job). Treatment Group 2’s featured immigrant had the same male Hispanic name but indicated that he was migrating in order to flee violence. Treatment Group 3’s immigrant had a female Hispanic first name (Maria) and indicated that she was migrating for the same economic reasons as the first male immigrant. The immigrant in Treatment Group 4 had

the same Hispanic female first name, but she was migrating for reasons related to fleeing violence, the same as the second male immigrant story. The stories were mocked up to look as if they came from a real news website. No names or logos of real news sources were used, and the mockup was generic so as not to trigger media source bias among subjects. Excluding the individual immigrant stories, the other elements of the story were immigration facts from Pew Research Center, the Center for American Progress, and peer reviewed articles. After completing or exiting the survey, subjects were debriefed and notified that the story they were shown was not a real news story and was created for the purposes of the experiment.

Once the respondent read the story, they were asked to answer a brief survey about their opinions. They were asked questions about the level of economic and cultural threat (national and personal) that they felt immigrants pose. They were also asked about whether immigrants use social services that should go to Americans. Respondents then answered a few questions designed to check their comprehension of the news article. These comprehension questions asked respondents to indicate the gender of the immigrant in the article and the reason for their migration. If a respondent did not get both of these questions correct, I excluded their response from my study as their lack of comprehension prevented them from serving as a test of the treatment's effect on feelings of threat from immigration. Respondents were also asked to provide some demographic information. The demographic composition of the treatment group remained statistically equivalent on measures of gender, race, age, education level, and political ideology after the dropping of respondents who failed the comprehension check.

I measured two dependent variables: economic threat and cultural threat. I defined economic threat as the respondent feeling negatively towards immigrants through the lens of the economy (i.e., labor market, personal financial stability, government services/funding). Respondents were asked to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements: "When immigrants join the American workforce, it becomes harder for American workers to find jobs;" "When immigrants join the American workforce, it becomes harder for my family and friends to find jobs;" "Immigrants receive social services that should go to Americans."

I defined cultural threat as the respondent feeling negatively towards immigrants through the lens of American culture and norms. Respondents were asked to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements: "Immigration changes the American way of life for the worse;" "Immigration changes the way of life in my community for the worse."

My control variables included the standard demographic questions asked in most political science research: race, gender, age, political ideology, and education level. I also asked respondents to include their employment status and income as well as how well they identified with the word "feminist" ("How well does the word "feminist" describe you?"). Manevska and Achterberg (2013) as well as Esse et al.'s (1999) work demonstrates that an individual's socioeconomic position may have an influence on how they feel about immigration, so it was necessary to include these controls in my study in order to check for heterogeneous treatment effects. A heterogeneous treatment effect is when a factor, other than the one being manipulated, affects the outcome of the results. Sarrasin et al.'s (2015) work suggests a correlation between underlying sexist beliefs and anti-immigrant attitudes, so I also needed to gauge my subjects' attitudes towards sexism in order to see if that factor influenced my results. Following the collection of my data, I used the statistical software Stata to analyze my findings.

Results and Analysis

My data collection through Dynata resulted in 1,755 respondents, but 777 of them were dropped because the respondent failed to pass the comprehension check of the news article. Thus 978 valid responses remained, with between 222 and 258 responses in each treatment group. The modified sample size could reduce the generalizability of my results to the broader U.S population, though as mentioned above, the demographic make-up remained statistically equivalent after removal.

Difference in Means Analysis

For the purposes of this paper, I compared the mean responses of each treatment group across the dependent variable (DV) questions to analyze the average treatment effects of each treatment condition on the dependent variables. Analysis using a difference of means is often used in political science, including in Brader et

al. (2008), which this study is largely inspired by. Since all the questions were framed as negative statements about immigrants, the stronger the respondent agreed with the statement, the more threatened the respondent felt by immigrants. Thus, when interpreting these graphs, the higher the mean, the greater the level of threat felt by respondents. I also performed a series of Student's t-tests and Mann Whitney tests on different combinations of means to determine if any differences were in fact statistically significant.

My question measuring national economic threat yielded relatively high levels of perceived threat compared to the other questions, as well as the largest differences between the treatment groups, indicating that my independent variables of gender and reason for migration had some effect on the outcome (Figure 1). The levels of threat elicited by this question ranged from a mean of 2.62 in the economic reason/woman treatment group to 2.32 in the violence reason/man treatment group on a scale of 1 to 4. Despite these statistically different variances in mean economic threat among the treatment groups, I did not find any statistical significance for these differences *between* genders (women compared to men); however, the difference of the means between the women who migrated for a job (2.62) versus the woman who migrated because of violence (2.34) were statistically significant ($p=0.0017$). For women only, the reason for their migration, either for a job or to flee violence, affected the level of threat that respondents felt towards them.

My measurement of personal economic threat yielded less overall perceived threat across all treatment conditions than the national economic threat question. The differences across all the treatment groups were smaller in size than national threat with the economic reason/woman treatment group eliciting the most threat again with a mean of 2.36 and the violence reason/woman treatment demonstrating the least amount of threat (2.12) (Figure 2). Similar to the national economic threat measurement, I did not find any statistical significance for these differences *across* gender; however, the difference of the means between the women who migrated for a job (2.36) versus the woman who migrated because of violence (2.12) was statistically significant ($p=0.0090$). My results indicate that when respondents are asked about economic threat, the reasons for migration have a significant effect on the level of threat felt, but only for female immigrants.

Figure 1. National economic threat

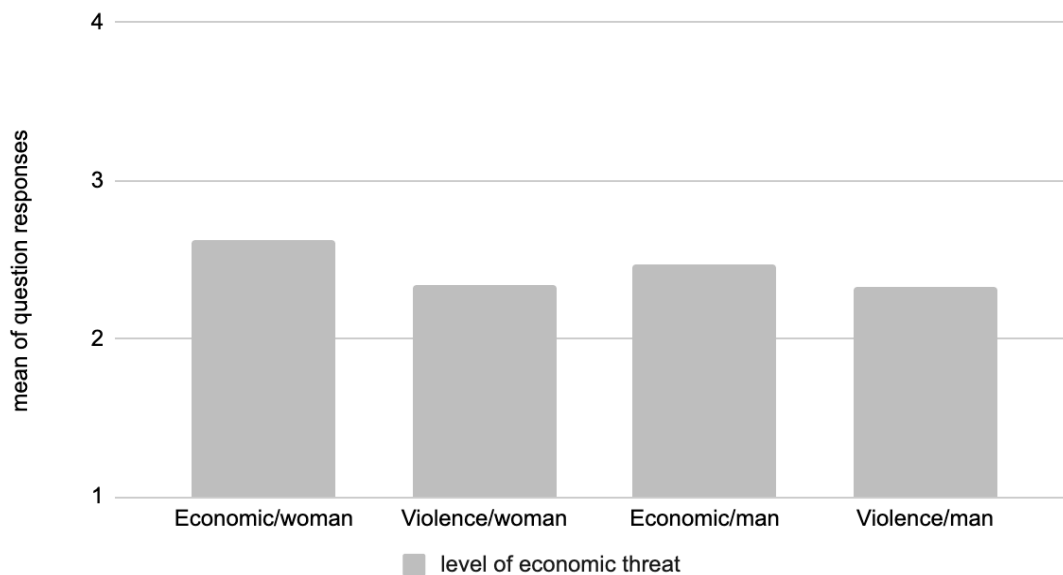
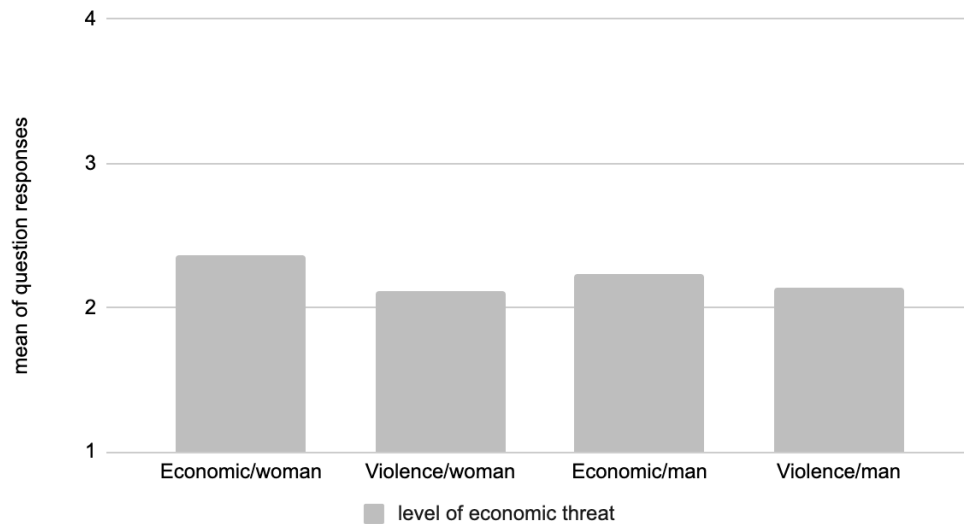
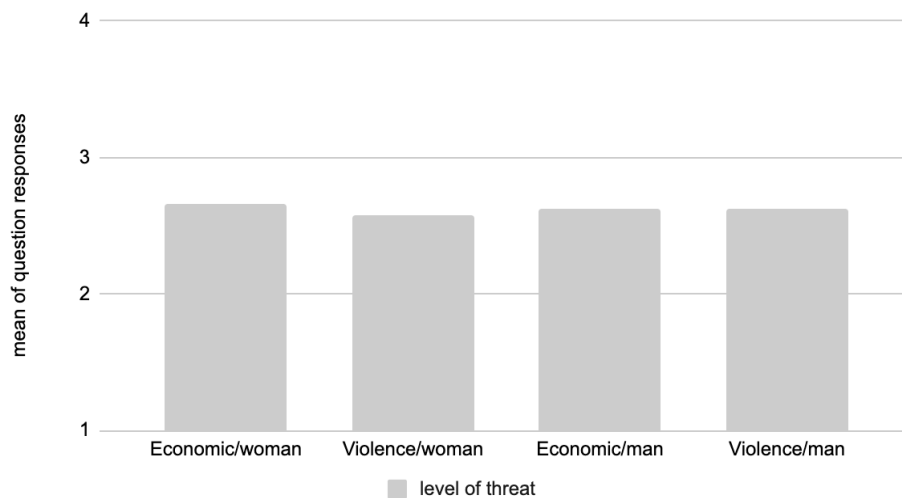


Figure 2. Personal economic threat



The question measuring respondents’ agreement with the statement “Immigrants receive social services that should go to Americans” yielded the highest amount of threat out of all of the DV questions. The differences between each treatment group were negligible; the highest amount of threat and the lowest means were separated by only .09 relative to the 1-4 scale, economic reason/woman and violence reason/woman, respectively (Figure 3). Nor did I find any statistically significant difference between the groups. Despite this lack of variance, it is worth noting that that threat specific to social services struck a nerve with many respondents as it represents the highest amount of threat felt towards immigrants in my study.

Figure 3. Social services threat



On the question measuring national cultural threat, there was very little difference between the treatment groups, indicating that gender and reasons for migration did not have a significant effect on how respondents felt about immigrants in a cultural context (Figure 4). All of the treatment group means were between 2.11 and 1.96. The statement about immigrants threatening the culture of the respondent's own community yielded a similar result (Figure 5). The various treatment condition means for this question were all clustered between 2.10 and 1.98. Neither my national nor personal cultural threat variables demonstrate any statistically significant differences between treatment groups.

Figure 4. National cultural threat

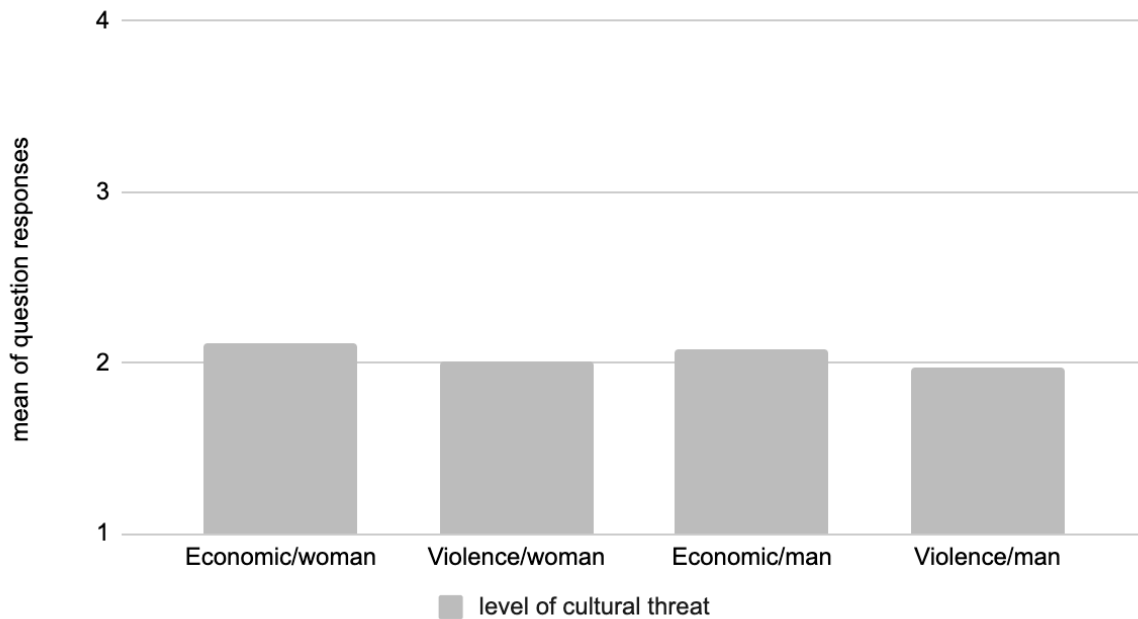
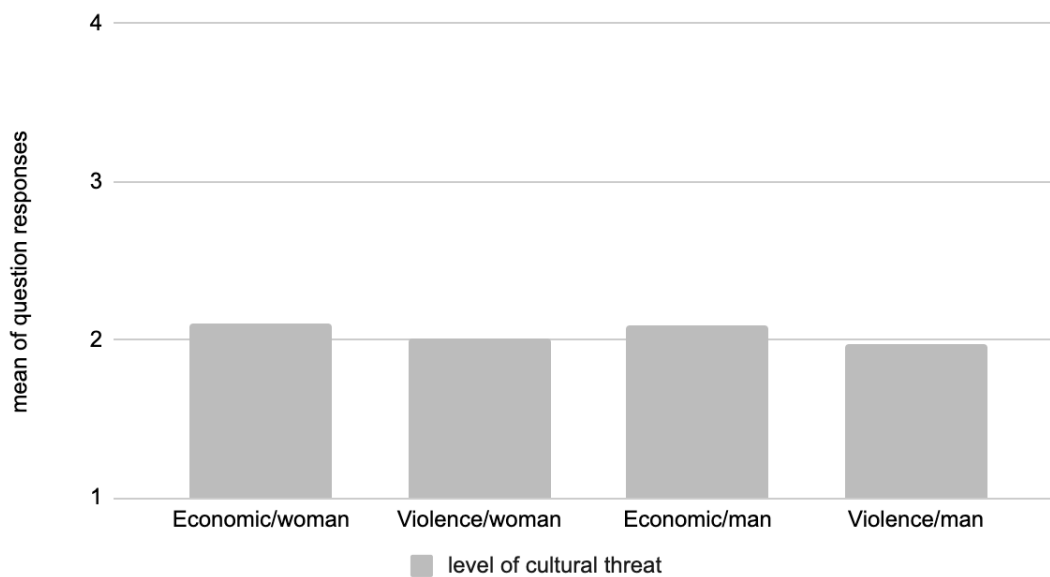


Figure 5. Personal cultural threat



Even though neither of the cultural threat results demonstrate statistically significant differences between the groups, they continue to represent a trend present across all of my DV variables: that economic reason for migration, regardless of gender, always elicited higher levels of threat than migration for reasons related to violence. Overall, the difference of means (level of threat) between women migrating for economic reasons and women migrating for reasons related to violence was greater than the difference between men migrating for jobs and men migrating in order to flee violence. Across all dependent variables, the treatment group representing women migrating in search of jobs evoked the highest amount of threat out of all the other groups.

Regression Analysis

I also conducted factorial and multinomial logistic regressions to check my difference in mean results against a more rigorous analytical method and to check for heterogeneous treatment effects by including demographic and ideological control variables to understand how they interacted with one another and my dependent variables. For these regressions, I consolidated the response outcomes from my survey from strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree to a binary agree/disagree measure. I did this for each of my dependent variables. I used this dummy agree/disagree measure—operationalized to indicate low threat/high threat—as opposed to the full range because it targets the base level of difference I wanted to measure with more accuracy and was a better fit for this type of statistical analysis. Likert scales, like the one used in my DV questions, are also particularly susceptible to social desirability bias (respondents answer according to what they believe is the socially acceptable response, rather than their own opinion). Respondents are more likely to gravitate towards the center rather than pick a response option on one end of the extremes (Kreitchmann et al., 2019). Collapsing responses down into a high/low measure helps to control for both of these factors; however, given the highly political nature of my topic, completely eliminating social desirability bias is not possible. In future studies, I recommend testing more varied and subtle wordings of the questions to help prevent such bias.

My model is as follows:

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Treatment}_i + \beta_2 X_i + u_i$$

where Treatment is an indicator of treatment group, and X is a vector of relevant covariates, including age category, feminist identification, employment status, income, political ideology, and education level.

When analyzed using the factorial and multinomial logistic regressions with the modified low/high threat dependent variables, none of the treatment conditions proved to be significant predictors of my dependent variables; however, this analysis provided interesting insight to the effects that my control variables had on the outcomes. Each regression that I ran included the following variables: treatment condition, the respondent's race, gender, age, employment status, education, income, ideology, and how much they identified with the term "feminist." The respondent's age, employment status, political ideology, education, and how much they identify with the term "feminist" were the only significant factors that consistently predicted whether the respondent would indicate high levels of threat.

For national economic threat, respondents 57-69 years of age were less likely to express high levels of threat compared to those 18-30 years of age (p-value = 0.050). Respondents who identified less with the word "feminist" were more likely they were to express high levels of threat (p-value = 0.003). Self-identified unemployed respondents were more likely than those employed to express threat (p-value = 0.037). Subjects who earned a 2-year degree were less likely to express threat compared to those who did not complete high school (p-value = 0.039). Respondents who identified as "middle of road" (p-value = 0.001), "somewhat conservative" (p-value = 0.000), "conservative" (p-value = 0.000), "very conservative" (p-value = 0.000), and "not sure" (p-value = 0.041) in their political ideology were all more likely to express threat compared to self-identified "very liberal" respondents. Not identifying as feminist and identifying as ideologically conservative were the greatest predictors for high levels of national economic threat.

Personal economic threat yielded nearly identical results, with the exception of increased predictability for education (see Table 1 in Appendix). Subjects who earned a 2-year (p-value = 0.023), 4 year (p-value = 0.039), or postgraduate degree (p-value = 0.012) were less likely to express personal economic threat compared to their counterparts who did not complete high school. Again, not identifying as feminist (p-value = 0.016) and identifying as conservative (p-value = 0.004, p-value = 0.000, p-value = 0.000) were the greatest predictors for high levels of threat with a personal economic lens.

When responding to the statement about immigrants using social services, people aged 31-43 (p-value = 0.026) and 44-56 (p-value = 0.008) were more likely to express threat compared to people aged 18-30. Like with both economic DVs, the subjects who did not identify with the word "feminist" were more likely to express social services threat (p-value = 0.004) and respondents who earned a 2-year (p-value = 0.010), 4 year (p-value = 0.040), or postgraduate degree (p-value = 0.040) were also less likely to express threat related to social services. Ideology also proved to be a very influential factor: Respondents who identified as "somewhat liberal" (p-value = 0.028), "middle of the road" (p-value = 0.000), "somewhat conservative" (p-value = 0.000), "conservative" (p-value =

0.000), “very conservative” (p-value = 0.000) and “not sure” (p-value = 0.028) were all more likely to express threat compared to those who identified as “very liberal.” Similar to the previous two regressions, not identifying with feminism, being ideologically moderate or conservative, and being unsure of one’s ideological preference were the greatest predictors for high levels of social services related threat.

For national cultural threat, only lack of feminist identification (p-value = 0.025) and political ideology remained salient factors. “Somewhat conservative” (p-value = 0.007), “conservative” (p-value = 0.001), and “very conservative” (p-value = 0.000) respondents were more likely to express feelings of threat compared to “very liberal” subjects. Personal cultural threat was only predicted by political ideology—respondents who identified as conservative expressed more threat (see Table 1 in Appendix).

I also created two aggregated regression-specific scales, one for economic threat and one for cultural threat (social service questions were included within economic threat) and conducted two multinomial regressions. These analyses revealed similar results to that of the individual threat type regressions. Conservative ideology was a predicting factor in both regressions, but lack of feminist identity and education were relevant factors on the economic scale only. For respondents who expressed higher levels of economic threat, lack of feminist identity and conservative ideology had strong predictive power. Education was a significant predictor only for those who expressed the highest amount of threat on the economic threat scale (see Table 2 in Appendix).

Table 3: Hypothesis evaluation by type of analysis

		Difference of means	Factorial/multinomial logistic regression
Gender Hypotheses	H1. All female immigrants will be perceived as <i>less economically threatening</i> than male immigrants migrating for the same reasons.	Cannot reject the null hypothesis, Women migrating for jobs viewed as more threatening, no significance	Cannot reject the null hypothesis, no significance
	H2. All female immigrants will be perceived as <i>less culturally threatening</i> than all male immigrants.	Cannot reject the null hypothesis	Cannot reject the null hypothesis, no significance
	H3. However, respondents exposed to the female immigrant (regardless of migration reason) will be more likely to agree that immigrants are <i>taking up social services</i> .	Cannot reject the null hypothesis	Cannot reject the null hypothesis, no significance
	H4: Women fleeing violence will be the least threatening group and the man seeking a job will be the most threatening group across all the questions.	Partially supported; women fleeing violence generally least threatening; women seeking a job were seen as most threatening	Cannot reject the null hypothesis, no significance
	H5: Respondents who are exposed to the immigrant fleeing violence (regardless of gender)	Partially supported; women fleeing violence were seen as less threatening than	Cannot reject the null hypothesis, no significance

Reasons for Migration Hypotheses	will be less likely to feel <i>economically threatened</i> than those exposed to the immigrant seeking a job.	women looking for jobs (statistically significance), no significance for men	
	H6: There will be no significant difference in <i>cultural threat</i> between respondents exposed to the immigrant fleeing violence and respondents exposed to the immigrant seeking a job.	Can reject the null hypothesis	Can reject the null hypothesis
Profile Hypotheses	H7: Respondents in lower income brackets will rate migrants of all treatment conditions less favorably on the economic threat scale than respondents of higher income brackets.	n/a	Cannot reject the null hypothesis, no significance
	H8: Respondents who are unemployed will be more likely to express threat than respondents who identify as other employment statuses.	n/a	Can reject the null hypothesis; statistically significant
	H9: Respondents with lower levels of education will be more likely to express economic threat compared to individuals with more education.	n/a	Can reject the null hypothesis; statistically significant
	H10: Respondents who do not identify with the word “feminist” will rate both the male and female immigrants less favorably than respondents who do identify as feminists.	n/a	Can reject the null hypothesis; statistically significant

Discussion

The analysis reveals that many of my predictions were not supported by my data, either because the data indicated an alternate conclusion, or the regression analysis demonstrated that when controlling for other factors my independent variables did not have a significant effect on the outcome. A specific evaluation of my hypotheses can be seen in Table 3.

Even though the results for H1 and H2 had no statistical significance, their suggestive directions were surprising in that they were the opposite of what I predicted: For H1, female immigrants migrating for economic reasons elicited greater feelings of economic threat than male immigrants, while for H2, women seeking jobs elicited slightly more feelings of threat than men.

H3 was not supported because there were no significant differences between the treatment groups in feelings of social service threat. The absence of increased expressed social services threat in the female treatment

groups was unexpected, given Chavez's (2013) inclusion of "out of control" Latina fertility as a component of his Latino Threat Narrative. It is possible that fears about Latina fertility were subsumed into the larger context of Latino Threat, potentially explaining the lack of difference among the treatment groups and the strong expression of social services threat across all groups; however, this prediction requires further research and exploration.

Women fleeing violence were generally associated with lower levels of reported threat across all of the dependent variable questions, which partially supports H4. One possible explanation of this could be narratives of victimization surrounding female refugees or a general absence of ill will towards a perceived vulnerable population. However, the group that elicited the most threat was women seeking jobs, rather than men seeking jobs as I had predicted. When control variables were included, these results were not significant.

In the difference of means test, female immigrants fleeing violence were associated with lower feelings of threat than female immigrants seeking jobs; however, this did not hold true for men, which showed no statistical difference. Additionally, a full regression analysis indicated that the differences seen between female treatments were insignificant when controlling for other variables such as respondent political ideology and education. The lack of significant difference between the men seeking jobs and the men fleeing violence is consistent with Hainmueller and Hopkins's (2015) work.

My difference of means results, rather than revealing a difference in how genders are perceived, demonstrates that there are potentially differences in the perception of certain women in comparison to other women. These results illustrate the importance of using an economic lens when looking at attitudes towards immigrants, as well as the need for political scientists to include gender as a category of analysis. Despite the lack of statistically significant results in the regression analysis, the difference in mean results suggest that underlying ideas of gender roles and possible sexism are present in current perceptions of immigrants. Additional research is needed to investigate this.

There were no significant differences related to reported cultural threat between treatment groups responding to immigrants migrating for jobs versus those migrating to flee violence, supporting H6. This conclusion was supported by both analytical methods. The lack of significant responses to cultural threat reinforces the importance of the economic lens when it comes to public opinion on immigration (Cargile et al., 2014). While the absence of a difference between treatment groups was expected, the low levels of both national and personal cultural threat expressed overall was unexpected. The following factors may be at play: (1) anti-immigrant sentiment is primarily motivated by economic concerns, (2) anti-immigrant sentiment is a combination of both cultural and economic factors, or (3) people feel more comfortable with expressing anti-immigrant sentiment through the lens of the economy but are hesitant to do so when cultural frames are in place.

H7 was not supported by my regression analysis; respondents in lower income brackets did not express greater feelings of threat towards immigrants compared to respondents in higher income brackets. H8, however, was supported by the regression analysis: Employment status did predict the level of threat expressed. For the national and personal economic threat questions, unemployed respondents were more likely to express threat than those who were employed, but the prediction power of employment remained relatively low in relation to political ideology and feminist identification (discussed below).

Education level also proved to be a predictor of the level of threat expressed, supporting H9. For both the national and economic threat measures, any amount of college education reduced the likelihood that the subject would express feelings of threat compared to individuals who did not complete high school. The social services threat measure also yielded the same result. Education was not a predicting factor for cultural threat. The predictive power of both employment and education lends some credence to Manevska and Achterberg (2013) and Esses et al.'s (1999) suggestions that socioeconomic status may influence attitudes towards immigrants.

Finally, individuals who did not identify as "feminist" consistently expressed more feelings of threat towards immigrants across all treatment groups, supporting H10. All dependent variable regressions except for personal cultural threat indicated that feminist identification was a strong predictor of the level of threat expressed. The strength of feminist identification as a predicting factor affirms Sarrasin et al.'s (2015) idea that sexist beliefs are correlated with anti-immigrant sentiment. These results also suggest that sexual violence cues, such as presenting male immigrants as rapists, do not need to be present to elicit such attitudes—sexist beliefs may be latently intertwined with attitudes towards immigration. The reasons behind the above results are outside the scope of this study and present an area for future research.

Political ideology was the only factor that was a significant predictor of threat across all threat measures, with respondents who identified as conservative expressing higher levels of feelings of threat towards all types of immigrants. These findings fall in line with current political discourse and are reflective of the resurgence of anti-immigrant sentiment within the Republican party, led and exacerbated by former President Donald Trump's frequent xenophobic remarks (Scott, 2019).

Age proved to be a sporadic predictor of threat and only applied to economic threat, including social services threat. Surprisingly, individuals ages 57-66 were less likely to express feelings of economic threat compared to young people (ages 18-30), but middle-aged people (between 31-43 and 44-56) were more likely to express social services threat compared to young people. It is possible that middle-aged respondents expressed more social services threat than young people because middle-aged individuals may be more likely to have children and use more social services—the majority of means-tested government assistance goes to families with children (Foster & Rojas, 2018). Age and political ideology, coupled with the salience of education and feminist identification, represent the strongest predicting factors for feelings of threat towards immigrants in my study, while my independent variables, gender of the immigrant and reason for migration, did not have any significant effect. Who the respondent was mattered much more than the immigrant they were reading about.

Based on my results, the negative feelings expressed towards immigration are most likely a reflection of a set of respondent characteristics rather than characteristics of the immigrants themselves, at least in terms of an immigrant's gender and reasons for migration. Since the link between negative attitudes towards immigrants and anti-immigrant policy preferences is already established, my study intervenes on the front end (threat-as-effect) and seeks to illuminate some of the origins of those negative attitudes, whether they be characteristics of immigrants or characteristics of the American public. My study identifies key sectors of the American public who express more feelings of threat towards immigrants. As Hainmuller and Hopkins's (2014) review of the field has demonstrated, such feelings of threat can lead to support for anti-immigrant policies. This knowledge can be applied to coalition building efforts and policy campaign communications for the purpose of targeting specific constituent groups and can give lawmakers a sense of how people feel about immigration and some potential underlying causes for why they feel that way. My findings also suggest that policy coalitions built across ideological spectrums on the basis of restricting immigration to certain groups will likely struggle, because the binding factor in views of immigrants is not which types of immigrants are being considered, but the viewpoints and identities of the coalition members themselves.

Conclusion

Through this research, I sought to understand how the changing demographics of migrants coming to the U.S.-Mexico border affects how Americans perceive immigration at large. By using gender and reasons for migration as my independent variables, I explored a new area of immigration studies for which I was unable to find precedent. Ultimately, my findings suggest that the demographic characteristics of the American public, rather than the immigrants themselves, are important predictors of public opinion on immigration. More research must be done using gender and reasons for migration as a category of analysis in order to push the field forward and to further understand the subtle intersectionality of the politics of immigration.

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Appendix

Addressing my DV question order:

When creating my survey, I did not randomize the appearance order of my dependent variable questions, meaning that they appeared in the same order (national economic threat, personal economic threat, social services threat, national cultural threat, and personal cultural threat) for every respondent. It is important to note that this appearance order may have had an effect on the outcomes because it may have primed respondents to answer a certain way down the line of questions. An exploratory analysis indicates that respondents were largely consistent across the questions, with their answers to questions about economic and cultural threat (national and person) being largely similar for the same respondent. However, the social services threat question elicited the most threat from respondents across all treatment groups, and if someone were to deviate from expressing low levels of threat to high levels of threat, it most often occurred on this question, which was the third question out of five on the survey.

Table 1. Control variables that predict the outcome of threat variables (DV)

	Age	Feminist identification	Employment	Ideology	Education
National economic threat				<p>“Middle of the road” Coefficient = .9853075 p-value = 0.001</p>	
				<p>“Somewhat conservative” Coefficient = 1.689343 p-value = 0.000</p>	
		<p>Less identification with “feminist” Coefficient = .2021556 p-value = 0.003</p>	<p>“Unemployed” Coefficient = .65585 p-value = 0.037</p>	<p>“Conservative” Coefficient = 2.1291 p-value = 0.000</p>	<p>“2-year degree” Coefficient = -1.308948 p-value = 0.039</p>
		<p>Ages 57-69 Coefficient = -.6184491 p-value = 0.050</p>		<p>“Very conservative” Coefficient = 1.730169 p-value = 0.000</p>	
				<p>“Not sure” Coefficient = 1.104963 p-value = 0.041</p>	
Personal economic threat				<p>“Middle of the road” Coefficient = .6157286 p-value = 0.025</p>	<p>“2-year degree” Coefficient = -1.428341 p-value = 0.023</p>
		<p>Less identification with “feminist” Coefficient = .1882228 p-value = 0.016</p>		<p>“Somewhat conservative” Coefficient = .9796723 p-value = 0.004</p>	<p>“4-year degree” Coefficient = -1.219246 p-value = 0.039</p>
		<p>Ages 57-69 Coefficient = -.7043639 p-value = 0.043</p>		<p>“Conservative” Coefficient = 1.371845 p-value = 0.000</p>	<p>“Post grad degree” Coefficient = -1.526684 p-value = 0.012</p>
				<p>“Very conservative” Coefficient = 1.277678 p-value = 0.000</p>	
Social services threat	<p>Ages 31-43 Coefficient = .6274961</p>	<p>Less identification with “feminist”</p>		<p>“Somewhat liberal” Coefficient = .6904785 p-value = 0.028</p>	<p>“2-year degree” Coefficient = -1.715223 p-value = 0.010</p>

	<p>p-value = 0.026</p> <p>Ages 44-56</p> <p>Coefficient = .7160469</p> <p>p-value = 0.008</p>	<p>Coefficient = .196554</p> <p>p-value = 0.004</p>	<p>“Middle of the road”</p> <p>Coefficient = 1.238342</p> <p>p-value = 0.000</p> <p>“Somewhat conservative”</p> <p>Coefficient = 2.114555</p> <p>p-value = 0.000</p> <p>“Conservative”</p> <p>Coefficient = 2.45695</p> <p>p-value = 0.000</p> <p>“Very conservative”</p> <p>Coefficient = 2.477527</p> <p>p-value = 0.000</p> <p>“Not sure”</p> <p>Coefficient = 1.25459</p> <p>p-value = 0.028</p>	<p>“4-year degree”</p> <p>Coefficient = -1.296906</p> <p>p-value = 0.040</p> <p>“Post grad degree”</p> <p>Coefficient = -1.321758</p> <p>p-value = 0.040</p>
National cultural threat	<p>Less identification with “feminist”</p> <p>Coefficient = .1876126</p> <p>p-value = 0.025</p>		<p>“Somewhat conservative”</p> <p>Coefficient = .9978673</p> <p>p-value = 0.007</p> <p>“Conservative”</p> <p>Coefficient = 1.271762</p> <p>p-value = 0.001</p> <p>“Very conservative”</p> <p>Coefficient = 1.544122</p> <p>p-value = 0.000</p>	
Personal cultural threat			<p>“Somewhat conservative”</p> <p>Coefficient = 1.072168</p> <p>p-value = 0.003</p> <p>“Conservative”</p> <p>Coefficient = 1.036513</p> <p>p-value = 0.006</p> <p>“Very conservative”</p> <p>Coefficient = 1.593922</p> <p>p-value = 0.000</p>	

Table 2: Control variables that predict the outcome of aggregate threat variables (scales)

		Economic threat scale			Cultural threat scale	
Respondent's scale position	1	2	3	1	2	
Feminist identification	Less identification with "feminist" Coefficient = .1903798 p-value = 0.045	Less identification with "feminist" Coefficient = .2783441 p-value = 0.008	Less identification with "feminist" Coefficient = .2639154 p-value = 0.002			
Ideology	"Somewhat liberal" Coefficient = 2.085264 p-value = 0.000	"Middle of the road" Coefficient = 1.163826 p-value = 0.017	"Middle of the road" Coefficient = 1.157034 p-value = 0.000	"Middle of the road" Coefficient = 1.157034 p-value = 0.027	"Somewhat conservative" Coefficient = .9803123 p-value = 0.009	
	"Middle of the road" Coefficient = 1.839315 p-value = 0.000	"Somewhat conservative" Coefficient = 2.553555 p-value = 0.000	"Somewhat conservative" Coefficient = 2.370208 p-value = 0.000	"Somewhat conservative" Coefficient = 2.701196 p-value = 0.013	"Conservative" Coefficient = 1.118675 p-value = 0.004	
	"Somewhat conservative" Coefficient = 3.088585 p-value = 0.000	"Conservative" Coefficient = 2.938276 p-value = 0.000	"Conservative" Coefficient = 2.785636 p-value = 0.000	"Conservative" Coefficient = 2.387702 p-value = 0.035	"Very conservative" Coefficient = 1.556027 p-value = 0.000	
	"Conservative" Coefficient = 2.856992 p-value = 0.000	"Very conservative" Coefficient = 2.057364 p-value = 0.001	"Very conservative" Coefficient = 2.406315 p-value = 0.000	"Very conservative" Coefficient = 2.975638 p-value = 0.007		
Education			"2-year degree" Coefficient = -2.316301 p-value = 0.003			
			"4-year degree" Coefficient = -1.801107 p-value = 0.015			
			"Post grad degree" Coefficient = -2.028081 p-value = 0.007			