

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN IMMIGRATION AND CRIME

by

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Dedicated to my wonderful family, friends, and professors.

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by

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A great deal of research has evaluated the relationship between immigration and crime and concluded that immigrations and immigration in the United States are negatively correlated to crime (Wolff et al., 2018; Bersani & DiPietro, 2016). Despite these conclusions, many people continue to hold harsh beliefs and opinions about immigrants (Jackson & Newell, 2018; Pryce, 2018; Alcalde, 2016). Previous research has found that providing information correcting misperceptions on the immigrant population has led to more positive attitudes and perceptions about immigrants in the United States (Carnahan et al., 2020; Grigorieff et al., 2020; Abascal et al., 2021). No research to date, however, has looked specifically at correcting the misperceptions on the immigration-crime relationship. The purpose of this study was to explore whether information on the immigration-crime relationship can affect people's attitudes and perceptions on immigration and immigrants in the United States. In this information provision experiment, 296 participants from the Amazon Turks system were randomly assigned to receive an informational fact sheet on immigration and crime research or a control page. After receiving the fact sheet or control page, each participant answered questions on their beliefs, attitudes,

perceptions, and opinions on various U.S. immigration topics. Results revealed that the presence of the fact sheet led to more positive attitudes and perceptions about immigrants and immigration in the United States. Further results are discussed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

For years, there has been a concern over immigrant crime patterns and the relationship between immigration and crime in the United States (Gallup, 2022; Grigorieff et al., 2020). Previous research has shown that many people are afraid of immigrants because they believe they are a threat to their safety and well-being (Bernat, 2017). Also known as the immigrant threat narrative, this fear of immigrants has influenced the implementation of harsher immigration laws and led to other consequences for immigrants such as xenophobia, excessive punishment, and difficulty integrating into society (Chouhy & Madero-Hernandez, 2019; Grigorieff et al., 2020). It is likely that these fears have only grown in recent years as harsher immigration laws and policies, like capping refugee admissions, defunding sanctuary cities, and separating immigrant families, have increased (Immigrant Legal Resource Center, 2021). Intergroup threat theorists have argued that this fear is common when large groups of unknown people come into a society and when misperceptions about the size and characteristics of these groups come to light (Pyrce, 2018; Hopkins et al., 2018). When immigration laws and policies are all over the media and become the forefront of politician's agendas, misperceptions can be difficult to get rid of or change. With over 45 million immigrants living in the United States and more coming every year, it is important that researchers learn about immigrant misperceptions and the consequences of them as well as how to correct them (Bernat, 2017).

There has been extensive research on the relationship between immigration and crime. Most studies, if not all, have found that immigrants and immigration are negatively correlated with overall crime, specifically violent and property crime (Aldeman et al., 2021). Most research,

in fact, has found that immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than their non-immigrant counterparts (Chouhy & Madero-Hernandez, 2019; Light et al., 2020; Norwasteh, 2018). Some researchers have even found that sanctuary cities or areas with high-concentrations of immigrants produce less crime, and are therefore safer than cities or areas with fewer concentrations of immigrants (Wolff et al., 2018; Chouhy & Madero-Hernandez, 2019; Wong, 2017; Martinez et al., 2018). The immense amount of research on this topic has led most researchers to argue that the immigration-crime relationship is either nonexistent, null, or negative, and in some cases, protective (Wolff et al., 2018; Bersani & DiPietro, 2016). Despite the wealth of knowledge on the immigration-crime relationship, many people continue to hold harsh attitudes and opinions toward immigrants (Jackson & Newell, 2018; Pryce, 2018; Alcalde, 2016).

Misperceptions about the immigrant populations have also been found to play a significant role in how the American public views immigration and immigrants. Some of the most common misperceptions about immigrants include the size of their population, their crime rates, and their impact on the U.S. economy and work force (Pryce, 2019; Chouhy & Madero-Hernandez, 2019; Grigorieff et al., 2020). With that being said, many researchers have attempted to influence people's attitudes and correct their misperceptions about immigrants through information provision experiments. This study design is commonly used to study attitudes and perceptions about economics, policy, and immigration (Haaland et al., 2020). Information provision experiments aim to influence or change people's perceptions and attitudes by sharing accurate and factual information on topics like economics, policy, and immigration to various samples. Several researchers who have used this study design to change attitudes, perceptions,

and misperceptions about immigrants have found success and even seen signs of long-term attitude changes (Carnahan et al., 2020; Grigorieff et al., 2020; Abascal et al., 2021). These results provide optimism for future policies that are more lenient and understanding of immigrants residing in the United States.

Although several studies have used information provision experiments to study the attitudes and perceptions on immigration, none have specifically conducted it using information on the immigration-crime relationship. Carnahan et al. (2020), Grigorieff et al. (2020), and Abascal et al. (2021) employed this study design to measure the effects of information on immigration attitudes and perceptions. They used information on several different immigration topics like English acquisition, their impact on crime, the labor market, immigration policy, and more. No study to date has conducted an information provision experiment with information only on the immigration-crime relationship to measure the effects of information on immigration attitudes and perceptions. The current study proposes to do this because U.S. immigration laws and the American public's view of immigrants are fueled by the belief that immigrants bring more crime to the United States (Chouhy & Madero-Hernandez, 2019). In hopes of understanding if evidenced backed by research can influence people's attitudes and perceptions, the current study hypothesizes that individuals exposed to factual information on the immigration-crime relationship will be more likely to have more positive attitudes, opinions, perceptions, and beliefs about immigrants and immigration in the United States than those who were not exposed to the information.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Misperceptions and Negative Attitudes Towards Immigrants

As the third most populous nation in the world, the United States is home to more than 328.6 million people. Within that 328.6 million, it is estimated that about 13 percent or 45 million are immigrants (Bernat, 2017). When taking a closer look at the number of immigrants living in the United States, it is estimated that about 75 percent are living legally in the United States while about 23 percent are not. The exact number of undocumented immigrants in the United States is unknown, but various agencies across the country have estimated that number to be between 11 and 11.5 million (Budiman, 2020; Bernat, 2017) . Each year more and more immigrants seek to enter the United States whether its legally or illegally.

For decades, the topics of immigrants and immigration have been debated within the United States and the halls of government. In fact, many Americans view immigration as one of the most pressing issues in the United States and over 40 percent have said that they are dissatisfied with the country's level of immigration (Gallup, 2022; Grigorieff et al., 2020). For some, immigration is seen as a way for economy, education, and culture to grow and prosper. On the other hand, some native-born citizens fear for the effects immigration may have on their jobs, safety, culture, and public policy. According to Pyrce (2018), this fear or concern is not uncommon when newcomers are brought into a society.

To address these concerns and the growing number of immigrants in the United States., tougher immigration laws and policies have been put in place throughout the years. As a result,

though, these laws and policies have introduced misperceptions about immigrants and an immigrant threat narrative that portrays immigrants as criminals and threats to public safety (Chouhy & Madero-Hernandez, 2019). Unfortunately, this narrative and its misperceptions have led to many consequences for immigrants and their families. These consequences may include xenophobia, increased prejudice and stereotypes against immigrants, and difficulty for immigrants to integrate into society (Grigorieff et al., 2020).

One study used the 2014 General Social Survey to test U.S. citizens attitudes toward immigrants and immigration (Pryce, 2018). The author found that females, respondents with higher education, and respondents who were more patriotic were more likely to hold pro-immigration attitudes. Older respondents and respondents who had greater xenophobic attitudes were less likely to possess pro-immigration attitudes. These same respondents were also more likely to believe that immigrants increased the crime rate, took jobs away from native-born citizens, and undermined the American culture (Pryce, 2018). Despite these beliefs, Pryce (2018) writes that immigrants have higher rates of unemployment and underemployment and lower wages than their native-born counterparts. Most of his findings were similar with other studies' findings, which indicates that U.S. citizens opinions on immigration have remained relatively stable over the past few years. Unlike other studies, though, Pryce (2018) found that U.S. citizens who identified more as citizens of the world than of any other country were more likely to hold pro-immigration attitudes.

A similar survey conducted by members of The Institut de Publique Sondage d'Opinion Secteur (IPSOS), a global market research company from Paris also wanted to look at Americans' views on immigration and immigration policy (Jackson & Newell, 2018).

Throughout the research, IPSOS found that views on immigration and immigration policy were largely tied to partisanship. The study found that 31 percent of Republicans believed that immigrants were more likely to commit crimes or be incarcerated compared to U.S.-born citizens. This was compared to only 12 percent for Democrats and 13 percent for Independents. 62 percent of Republicans also believed that the number of immigrants allowed in the United States should be decreased versus 35 percent of Independents and 25 percent of Democrats. When looking at specific immigration policies, the differences in partisanship only grew larger (Jackson & Newell, 2018). The results of the survey showed that 68 percent of Republicans supported building a wall or fence along the entire U.S.-Mexico border and 63 percent supported a movement to end the ability for legal immigrants to bring their extended family members to the United States. Lastly, 81 percent of Democrats and roughly 67 percent of Independents supported the policy of giving legal status to undocumented or illegal immigrants brought to the United States as children versus only 51 percent of Republicans (Jackson & Newell, 2018).

This same survey also found that most Americans overestimated how many immigrants were living in the United States (Jackson & Newell, 2018). Specifically, Americans overestimated the size of the Latino population in the United States. Even though the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities were the largest growing populations between 2010 and 2015, 74 percent of the respondents in this survey believed that the Latino population was the fastest growing demographic group in the United States (Jackson & Newell, 2018). In other words, these American respondents were viewing the immigrant population from Mexico and other Latin American countries as much larger than it actually was. This information is important to mention because theories of intergroup threat predict that the larger people perceive minority

groups to be, the less favorably they may feel toward them (Hopkins et al., 2018). This could help explain why some Americans feel so strongly against immigration and immigrants in the United States.

When discussing immigrants and immigration, most Americans first think of immigration and immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries. They view this population as more dangerous, illegal, and unworthy of protection and assistance (Alcalde, 2016). Alcalde (2016) took a closer look at this view and compared it to the view of European immigrants, who are oftentimes perceived as white. After giving first-year college students in Kentucky a series of online surveys and having them participate in focus groups, Alcalde (2016) found that the students viewed Mexicans and Middle Eastern immigrants in the harshest light. On the other hand, European immigrants were viewed by the students in a more positive, open, and celebratory way. In addition, when the students were asked what three words or ideas come to mind when they heard the word “immigrant,” the top three words were “illegal, foreign, and Mexican” (Alcalde, 2016). Although most immigrants in the United States do come from Mexico and other Latin American countries, the research clearly shows that their populations are more likely to be misperceived, negatively viewed, and stereotyped than any other immigrant group (Jackson & Newell, 2018; Pryce, 2018; Alcalde, 2016).

The Role of Information

The literature shows that it is common for the American people to have misperceptions and negative attitudes about the size and characteristics of immigrants who have come to the United States (Grigorieff et al., 2020). Unfortunately, these misperceptions and negative attitudes can lead to xenophobia, harsher policies, and difficulties for the immigrant populations and their

families. To reduce these negative attitudes and address the misperceptions surrounding immigrants in the United States, several researchers have attempted to provide accurate information to their samples about immigration and immigrants. The main goal of these studies was to learn if information can change people's attitudes and beliefs about immigration (Carnahan et al., 2020; Grigorieff et al., 2020; Hopkins et al., 2018; Abascal et al., 2021).

One study by Grigorieff et al. (2020) conducted two online experiments with U.S. participants and asked them a series of questions about their beliefs, attitudes, and policy preferences regarding immigrants in the United States. The researchers also had the participants estimate the proportion of legal and undocumented immigrants in the United States as well as their incarceration and unemployment rates. Only the treatment group received the correct answers to the questions about immigrant estimations. In the first experiment, the findings showed that the participants in the treatment group strongly updated their beliefs and perceptions regarding immigrants after receiving the correct information. The second experiment was nearly identical to the first, but the researchers added a follow-up study to see how persistent the effects of the information were for the participants. The researchers found that after one month, the effects of the information were still persisting. Overall, Grigorieff et al. (2020) found that providing information about the misperceptions and characteristics of immigrants can improve people's general beliefs about immigrants in the United States. The study provided evidence towards the group-threat theories because it showed that a reduction in misperceptions surrounding immigrants leads to less negative attitudes.

Similar results were found in another study with a sample of 2,049 Americans living in the United States. Abascal et al. (2021) randomly assigned one of six informational paragraphs to

respondents which discussed facts about immigrants' English acquisition and their impact on crime, employment opportunities for U.S. born people, and the labor market. After reading, the respondents were tasked with answering questions about their immigration policy preferences and their beliefs about the impacts of immigration. Abascal et al. (2021) found that when they provided their samples with this factual information their support for increased immigration rose. Most importantly, the researchers found that information affects immigration policy preferences through its effects on beliefs about the impacts of immigration. In other words, these beliefs acted as a mediator for the effect of factual information on support for increased immigration (Abascal et al., 2020).

Although some research has shown how effective information can be on immigration beliefs, attitudes, and policy preferences, not many have looked exclusively at how long their effects may last. Carnahan et al. (2020) looked exclusively at the long-term changes in their participants' belief accuracy about immigration in the United States after receiving corrective information. In this longitudinal study, Carnahan et al. (2020) randomized their participants to read various "fact sheets", two corrective treatments and one control story, about immigration in the United States over a series of three waves. Each wave was separated by 2 weeks and each time the participants were asked to rate the factual veracity of six claims regarding immigration. The study's results showed that the corrective effects of their information were stable over time and that their participant's belief accuracy steadily improved throughout the weeks. The researchers also found that the participants who were repeatedly exposed to the corrective treatments had greater correction durability. Carnahan et al. (2020) argued that their findings

suggest that continued engagement and repeated exposure to accurate information may help attain long-term effects for immigration beliefs.

Previous research has shown how influential and effective accurate information can be for the beliefs, attitudes, and policy preferences surrounding immigration in the United States (Carnahan et al., 2020; Grigorieff et al., 2020; Abascal et al., 2021). Despite the wealth of knowledge and research on U.S. immigration, anti-immigration attitudes and harsh immigration laws have dominated the U.S. public view and government for decades (Chouhy & Madero-Hernandez, 2019). These attitudes and laws are influenced by a variety of policies, ideas, and beliefs, but one of the biggest concerns influencing these attitudes and laws is the impact immigrants have on crime. More specifically, their impact on violent crime (Chouhy & Madero-Hernandez, 2019).

The Immigration-Crime Relationship

Concern over immigrant crime patterns and immigrants' involvement with violent crime has been an area of concern for the American people for decades (Jiang & Erez, 2018). The immigrant threat narrative and intergroup threat theories argue that many people are afraid of immigrants because they believe they are a threat to their safety and well-being (Chouhy & Madero-Hernandez, 2019; Hopkins et al., 2018; Bernat, 2017). According to Chouhy and Madero-Hernandez (2019), the enforcement of immigration laws has been heavily tied to public safety for years. This is apparent through the steady increase of deportations since 2003 and the enforcement of various immigration policies that have expanded the range of deportable offenses, removed immigrants through interior and administrative arrests, and separated families at the border (Chouhy & Madero-Hernandez, 2019). Despite a decade's worth of research on

immigration and crime, politicians and government officials have continued to promote these policies and reiterate that immigrants bring crime to the United States (Adelman et al., 2021). There has been such a depth of research on the immigration-crime relationship that Bersani and DiPietro (2016) argue that there is an “emerging scholarly consensus” on the matter.

The myth that immigrants commit more crimes than non-immigrants is grounded in the belief that immigrants themselves are criminals or “bad” people (Chouhy & Madero-Hernandez, 2019). While scholars have attempted to study why this myth exists, several studies have debunked this myth by finding that immigrants, both legal and illegal, commit crimes at a significantly lower rate than native-born citizens. Chouhy and Madero-Hernandez (2019) presented and discussed several empirical studies discussing the relationship between immigrant status and crime. Every study they included found significant differences between the crime rates of immigrants and non-immigrants even after controlling for various factors such as socioeconomic status, education, and income. Despite immigrants mostly residing in cities and having lower levels of education and income, which are all correlated to higher crime rates, their research shows that involvement in crime is significantly lower for immigrants (Chouhy & Madero-Hernandez, 2019).

Similar results were also found in a study using data from the Texas Department of Public Safety to study the number of convictions and arrests of immigrants in 2015 (Nowrasteh, 2018). Nowrasteh (2018) found that illegal immigrants had a criminal conviction rate 50 percent lower than native-born Americans. In addition, legal immigrants had a criminal conviction rate 66 percent lower than native-born Americans. Light et al. (2020) also used arrest data from the Texas Department of Public Safety between 2012 and 2018 and found that U.S. born citizens

were over 2 times more likely to be arrested for violent crimes, 2.5 times more likely to be arrested for drug crimes, and over 4 times more likely to be arrested for property crimes than undocumented immigrants. They also saw that the arrest rates involving undocumented immigrants were relatively stable or decreasing between 2012 and 2018.

Most researchers studying the immigration-crime relationship have found lower rates of crime for immigrants when compared to native-born U.S. citizens, but many have also found evidence of the relationship being negative. In a meta-analysis of over 50 studies on the immigration-crime association, Ousey and Kubrin (2018) concluded that the relationship between immigration and crime was negative. Although the association was small, they found significant evidence to support that greater immigration was associated with lower crime rates. If the immigration-crime association were positive, data would show increases in crime rates as the immigrant population has grown over the past few decades. However, crime rates in the United States have dropped considerably and immigrant numbers have only expanded during this time. This was especially apparent in the late 1990's (Chouhy & Madero-Hernandez, 2019). If the immigration-crime association were positive, the data would also show that the cities with the highest concentrations of immigrants would have some of the highest crime rates in the country. MacDonald and Sampson (2012) found the opposite to be true and saw exponential reductions in crime during in the 1990's in high immigrant concentrated cities like New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

Not only do these cities or areas with higher concentrations of immigrants have less crime than other cities, but they also have crime-protective and crime-reducing effects (Wolff et al., 2018; Chouhy & Madero-Hernandez, 2019). One study found evidence of these crime-

reducing effects after studying a sample of more than 26,000 youthful offenders in Florida (Wolff et al., 2018). This study by Wolff et al. (2018) found that immigrant concentration had a direct effect on juvenile recidivism, which the authors argued as evidence of a protective effect of immigrant concentration on juvenile recidivism. The researchers also found that more immigrant concentration was associated with increased likelihood of living with both parents, more community relationships, and lower familial incarceration history (Wolff et al., 2018). These mediating factors of family structure, familial incarceration, and social ties may help explain why immigrant areas have protective and crime-reducing effects. Evidence of these effects and lower crime rates have also been found in sanctuary cities, which are cities with laws to protect undocumented immigrants from deportation and prosecution (Chouhy & Madero-Hernandez, 2019). The research on crime rates within sanctuary cities is small and new, but some researchers have found that crime is significantly lower in cities and counties that adopt sanctuary policies. Wong (2017) conducted one of the first studies on crime rates within sanctuary cities and found that there are 35.5 fewer crimes committed per 10,000 people in sanctuary cities. In addition, Martinez et al. (2018) found that the adoption of sanctuary policies was linked to decreases in robbery and other crime rates (Chouhy & Madero-Hernandez, 2019).

It is clear from the research that the effect of immigration on crime is either nonexistent, null, negative, or even protective (Wolff et al., 2018). Despite the extensive research on this topic, many members of the American public and government continue to hold harsh beliefs and opinions about immigrants and immigration in the United States. Providing factual information to American samples has proven to be helpful in creating more positive beliefs and attitudes about immigrants, but more research needs to be done to see if information is effective in all

avenues of immigration (Carnahan et al., 2020; Grigorieff et al., 2020; Abascal et al., 2021).

More specifically, can information on the immigration-crime relationship affect how the American public views immigrants?

Current Study

The current study hypothesizes that individuals who learn more about the immigration-crime relationship will be more likely to have positive attitudes and perceptions surrounding immigrants and immigration in the United States. More specifically, the participants that receive the information on the immigration-crime relationship will have more positive attitudes about immigrants, immigrant policies, and its impact on crime and other items in the United States compared to the participants who do not receive the information. The study's main goal is to determine if evidence backed by recent research on immigration and crime is enough to influence people's opinions, perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes about immigration. It differs from prior work because it is the first study to implement an information provision experiment with information only discussing immigration and crime research. This is important to study because U.S. immigration laws and public views are largely influenced by the misperceptions and beliefs that immigrants are a threat and bring crime to the United States. Significant results may show that correcting misperceptions about immigration and crime is enough to change people's negative attitudes and perceptions about immigrants into more positive ones.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Sample

The data used in this study were obtained by surveying individuals from the Amazon's Mechanical Turk (Mturk) platform (N=419). The benefits of using this platform include collecting large datasets quickly and inexpensively from samples that are more representative of the U.S. population compared to other samples, like college student samples (Cheung et al., 2016). Amazon Mturk also offers the ability for researchers, or requesters, to use qualifications requirements for their survey to determine which Mturk workers can or cannot participate in the survey or task (Cheung et al., 2016). For this study, only Mturk workers that lived in the United States, had a 95 percent or higher HIT approval rate, and had 500 or more approved HITS were allowed to participate in the survey. This was to ensure that the data came from a reliable and trustworthy sample.

Design

This study was designed after an information provision experiment, which is oftentimes used in economic and policy research to measure the attitudes and perceptions of people on real-world phenomena that cannot be directly changed. For example, the characteristics of immigration cannot be changed, but perceptions and attitudes can be changed by providing information on the immigrant population (Haaland et al., 2020). This study was influenced by immigrant provision experiments by Carnahan et al. (2020), Grigorieff et al. (2020), and Abascal et al. (2021). Each treatment group in their studies received accurate and factual information on

various immigration topics and each found significant differences in the treatment group's beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions about immigrants compared to the control groups.

According to Haaland et al. (2020), qualitatively measuring a sample's beliefs via verbal response scales and survey format are common for information provision experiments. They recommend keeping the survey short and simple and using information that is easy to understand and neutral. Following these recommendations, a Qualtrics-based survey was designed for this study that included a short one-page information sheet on immigration-crime research and Likert-scale questions about participant beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and opinions on immigration in the United States. The survey was reviewed and approved by the University of Texas at Dallas' IRB Board and participants consented and were informed that their participation in the survey would be voluntary and anonymous.

The informative fact sheet or a page prompting them to go to the next section was randomly assigned to the participants during the survey. The participants who received the fact sheet took approximately 10 minutes or less to complete survey while those who did not receive the fact sheet took 5 minutes or less. After reading the fact sheet or the control page, participants were instructed to answer a series of Likert-scale questions tapping their attitudes, opinions, and beliefs toward immigration and immigrants in the United States. Items were also included in the survey to capture the respondents' demographics. All participants who completed the survey, passed all attention checks, and provided accurate survey codes and Mturk worker ID's were paid \$1.00. Those who failed to do these items were rejected and not paid for their work. In addition, all participants that were assigned the fact sheet that did not spend thirty seconds or more on the information page were dropped from the analysis. This was done to ensure the

reliability of the data. This resulted in a final sample of 296 participants with 210 assigned to the control and 86 to the fact sheet. Prior to analysis and data cleaning, the sample had 419 participants. For detailed information of the sample please refer to Tables 1 and 2.

Variables

Dependent Variables

The measures of immigration attitudes used in this study were adapted and influenced from the Gallup and IPSOS surveys on American attitudes of immigration (Gallup, 2022; Jackson & Newell, 2018). Over the past few decades, Gallup (2022) has collected data on the American public's view on immigration in the United States. Similarly, the IPSOS survey looked at the American public's view on immigration as well as immigration policy. Using their scales and questionnaires, three scales were created for this study that measured people's opinions on immigration in the United States, their views on the effects of immigration on different areas within the United States, and their support for various immigration proposals. Another scale was adopted from the first scale on immigration attitudes to determine the sample's view on immigration specifically related to crime. The items for each scale can be found in the appendix as well as Table 3.

The first scale, titled Total Immigration Attitude Scale, included 10 items that discussed various opinions, perceptions, and attitudes regarding immigration in the United States. The scale measured attitudes ranging from their views on how the U.S. government is handling immigration to how they perceive their safety when they are around immigrants. Participants were asked to rate these items on a scale from 1 to 5, with a response of 1 indicating they strongly disagree with the statement, and 5 indicating they strongly agree with the statement.

Each item was coded as is, but questions 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, and 11 were reverse coded to form the summative scale. Item 6 was removed from analysis because it was used as an attention check in the survey. Each item was summed together to determine how positive or negative the participants attitudes were towards immigration in the United States. A value of fifty indicated the highest value and the most positive attitudes towards immigration. A value of ten indicated the lowest value and the least positive attitudes towards immigration. This 10-item scale was highly reliable with a score of $\alpha=.816$.

The second scale, titled Total Immigration Effect Scale, measured each participants' view on how various areas are affected by immigration in the United States. These areas included crime, job opportunities, culture, education, and economy. Each participant was tasked with choosing if immigration in the United States was making these areas 1) better 2) no effect/neutral 3) or worse. Each item was coded from 1 to 3 with making it better coded as 1, no effect/neutral as 2, and making it worse as 3. Each of the 5 items were summed together to form the total immigration effect score. A score of 5 indicated that the participant believed immigration was making all 5 areas in the United States better. A score of 10 indicated the belief that immigration had no effect on any of the 5 areas. Lastly, a score of 15 indicated the belief that immigration was not making any of the 5 areas better. The scale was found to be moderately reliable with a score of $\alpha=.632$.

The third scale, titled Total Immigration Proposal Support Scale, measured each participants' level of support on various immigration proposals. The harsher immigration proposals included in this scale were expanding the construction of the U.S.-Mexico border wall, deporting all illegal immigrants back to their native countries, and hiring more border patrol

agents. The other proposals were immigrant housing and allowing immigrants to live in the United States if they meet certain requirements over time. Participants were asked to rate their level of support on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating strongly oppose, and 5 indicating strongly support. Each of the harsher proposals (items 1, 2, and 5) were coded as is and the more neutral/lenient proposals (items 4 and 6) were reverse coded to form a summative score of immigration proposal support. Item 3 was removed from analysis because it was used as an attention check in the survey. A score of 25 indicated full support of harsh immigration proposals and a score of 5 indicated full opposition of harsh immigration proposals. The scale was found to be reliable with a score of $\alpha=.749$.

The Overall Immigration-Crime Attitude Scale was also developed from items 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 on the Total Immigration Attitude Scale. Item 7 was reverse coded to ensure all items were worded the same. Each of these items referred to how the participants felt about their safety around foreign-born people and their rates of crime and arrest compared to U.S. born people. This 5-item scale was the main dependent variable used in the analyses to determine if the independent variable, the fact sheet on immigration and crime, had an impact on the participant's attitudes towards the immigration-crime relationship. Each item was summed together to form the overall immigration-crime attitude score. A value of 25 indicated the highest value and the most negative attitudes towards the immigration and crime relationship. A value of 5 indicated the lowest value and the most positive attitudes towards the immigration and crime relationship. The scale was highly reliable with a score of $\alpha=.892$.

Independent Variable

Receiving or not receiving the informative fact sheet on immigration and crime was used as the IV in this study. The fact sheet was a one-page document discussing up-to-date research on the immigration-crime relationship. It included several bullet points highlighting the negative relationship between immigration and crime. Ultimately, the main point of the fact sheet was to show participants that immigrants are not any more likely than U.S. born people to commit crimes. Most of the research used in the fact sheet highlighted that immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than U.S. born people (Light & Miller, 2018; Ramos & Wenger, 2020; Nowrasteh, 2018; Light et al., 2020; Wolff et al., 2018; Ousey & Kubrin, 2018). Participants were randomized to either receive the fact sheet or a control page with instructions to click to the next page in the survey. 210 were randomly assigned to the control page and 86 were randomly assigned to the fact sheet. In the analyses, receiving the fact sheet was coded as 1 and not receiving the fact sheet was coded as 0.

Control Variables

Several demographic questions were asked in the survey to use as control variables in the analyses. These included basic demographic questions like age, gender, race, location within the United States., highest degree received, current employment status, marital status, and income. Location was broken down based on the regions used by U.S. Census Bureau (2022). This included the Northeast (ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA), the Midwest (OH, MI, IN, WI, IL, MN, IA, ND, SD, NE, KS, MO), the South (DE, MD, VA, WV, KY, NC, SC, TN, GA, FL, AL, MS, LA, AR, OK, TX), the West (MT, ID, WY, CO, NM, AZ, UT, NV, CA, OR, WA, AK, HI), and the District of Columbia. Questions regarding political view, political party, U.S.

votership, U.S. citizenship, if they were born in the U.S., and if their parents were born in the U.S. were also included in this section of the survey. For the regression analysis, several of the demographic variables were also recoded into dummy variables. Age, education, and income were kept as continuous variables, but the rest were recoded or removed from analysis. The recoding for the dummy variables is shown in Table 1.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics. The sample was mostly male (67.6 percent) and white (81.8 percent). The average age of the sample was approximately 39 years old ($SD=10.27$). In addition, most of the sample was democratic (55.4 percent), married (70.3 percent), employed full-time (83.8 percent), and educated with a bachelor's degree (58.8 percent). Most of the sample also lived in the South (42.4 percent), had an income ranging from \$50,001 to \$100,000 (45.9 percent), and viewed themselves as liberal (31.4 percent). Over 90 percent of the sample were U.S. voters (98.3 percent), U.S. citizens (99.3 percent), born in the U.S. (98 percent), and had parents born in the U.S. (93.2 percent).

Table 1: Full Sample Demographics

Variables			Codes
Age	M=39.11 SD=10.27		
	Frequency	Percent	
Gender			1=Male 0=Female
Male	200	67.6%	
Female	95	32.1%	
Non-binary	1	0.3%	
Race			1=Nonwhite 0=White
White	242	81.8%	
Asian	10	3.4%	
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Island	2	0.7%	
Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish Origin	6	2%	
Black or African American	21	7.1%	
American Indian	4	1.4%	
Biracial (2 diff races)	6	2%	
Multiracial (more than 2 diff races)	5	1.7%	
Education			
8 th grade	1	0.3%	
Some high school, no diploma	1	0.3%	

	High school graduate or GED	21	7.1%	
	Some college, no degree	40	13.5%	
	Associate degree	0	0%	
	Bachelor's degree	174	58.8%	
	Master's degree	56	18.9%	
	Doctorate degree	3	1%	
Employment				1=Full-time 0=Other
	Full-time	248	83.8%	
	Part-time	19	6.4%	
	Contract/temporary employee	3	1%	
	Unemployed	10	3.4%	
	Military	1	0.3%	
	Student	0	0%	
	Retired	3	1%	
	Disabled	2	0.7%	
	More than one option	10	3.4%	
Location				
	Northeast	29	9.8%	
	Midwest	68	23%	
	South	125	42.2%	
	West	73	24.7%	
	District of Columbia	1	0.3%	
Marital Status				1=Married 0=Other
	Single (never married)	73	24.7%	
	Married of domestic partnership	208	70.3%	
	Divorced or separated	13	4.4%	
	Widowed	1	0.3%	
	Prefer not to say	1	0.3%	
Income				
	Less than \$25,000	26	8.8%	
	\$25,001-\$50,000	106	35.8%	
	\$50,001-\$100,000	136	45.9%	
	\$100,001-\$200,000	23	7.8%	
	\$200,000 +	3	1%	
	Prefer not to say	2	0.7%	
Political View				1=Conservative & Very Conservative; Liberal & Very Liberal 0=Other
	Very liberal	51	17.2%	
	Liberal	93	31.4%	
	Moderate	56	18.9%	
	Conservative	59	19.9%	
	Very Conservative	36	12.2%	
	Not sure	1	0.3%	
Political Party				1=Democrat; Republican 0=Republican & Independent; Democrat & Independent
	Democrat	164	55.4%	
	Republican	77	26%	
	Independent	53	17.9%	
	Other	2	0.7%	

US Citizen				1=Yes
Yes	294	99.3%		0=No
No	2	0.7%		
US Born				1=Yes
Yes	290	98%		0=No
No	6	2%		
US Born Parent				1=Yes
Yes	276	93.2%		0=No
No	20	6.8%		
Voter				1=Yes
Yes	291	98.3%		0=No
No	5	1.7%		

Table 2 compares the descriptive statistics between the treatment group that received the fact sheet and the control group that did not receive the fact sheet. The samples were relatively evenly distributed between both groups.

Table 2: Sample Demographics, by receiving/not receiving the informative fact sheet

Variables	Fact Sheet		No Fact Sheet	
	Freq	Pct	Freq	Pct
Age	M=38.80	SD=9.56	M=39.24	SD=10.57
Gender				
Male	52	60.5%	148	70.5%
Female	33	38.4%	62	29.9%
Non-binary	1	1.2%	0	0%
Race				
White	75	87.2%	167	79.5%
Asian	4	4.7%	6	2.9%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Island	1	1.2%	1	0.5%
Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish Origin	2	2.3%	4	1.9%
Black or African American	2	2.3%	19	9%
American Indian	0	0%	4	1.9%
Biracial (2 diff races)	1	1.2%	5	2.4%
Multiracial (more than 2 diff races)	1	1.2%	4	1.9%
Education				
8 th grade	0	0%	1	0.5%
Some high school, no diploma	0	0%	1	0.5%
High school graduate or GED	8	9.3%	13	6.2%
Some college, no degree	14	14%	26	12.4%
Associate degree	0	0%	0	0%

Bachelor's degree	48	55.8%	126	60%
Master's degree	16	18.6%	40	19%
Doctorate degree	0	0%	3	1.4%
Employment				
Full-time	68	79.1%	180	85.7%
Part-time	6	7%	13	6.2%
Contract/temporary employee	2	2.3%	1	0.5%
Unemployed	4	4.7%	6	2.9%
Military	0	0%	1	0.5%
Student	0	0%	0	0%
Retired	1	1.2%	2	1%
Disabled	2	2.3%	0	0%
More than one option	3	3.5%	7	3.3%
Location- categorized by US Census Bureau				
Regions	12	14%	17	8.1%
Northeast	17	19.8%	51	24.3%
Midwest	42	48.8%	83	39.5%
South	15	17.4%	58	27.6%
West	0	0%	1	0.5%
District of Columbia				
Marital Status				
Single (never married)	29	33.7%	44	21%
Married of domestic partnership	51	59.3%	157	74.8%
Divorced or separated	5	5.8%	8	3.8%
Widowed	1	1.2%	0	0%
Prefer not to say	0	0%	1	0.5%
Income				
Less than \$25,000	14	16.3%	12	5.7%
\$25,001-\$50,000	25	29.1%	81	38.6%
\$50,001-\$100,000	38	38%	98	46.7%
\$100,001-\$200,000	8	8%	15	7.1%
\$200,000 +	0	0%	3	1.4%
Prefer not to say	1	1.2%	1	0.5%
Political View				
Very liberal	16	18.6%	35	16.7%
Liberal	35	40.7%	58	27.6%
Moderate	14	16.3%	42	20%
Conservative	15	17.4%	44	21%
Very Conservative	6	7%	30	14.3%
Not sure	0	0%	1	0.5%
Political Party				
Democrat	51	59.3%	113	53.8%
Republican	16	18.6%	61	29%
Independent	17	19.8%	36	17.1%
Other	2	2.3%	0	0%
US Citizen				
Yes	84	97.7%	210	100%
No	2	2.3%	0	0%

US Born					
Yes	82	95.3%	208	99%	
No	4	4.7%	2	1%	
US Born Parent					
Yes	80	93%	196	93.3%	
No	6	7%	14	6.7%	
Voter					
Yes	83	96.5%	208	99%	
No	3	3.5%	2	1%	

Table 3 presents the survey response distributions for both the treatment and control groups. Overall, the responses for the fact sheet group had higher percentages for the immigration attitude questions, lower percentages for the effects of immigration questions, and lower percentages for the support of immigration proposals questions compared to the group that did not receive the fact sheet. At first glance, these responses show that those who received the fact sheet had better attitudes, opinions, and beliefs for each of the three immigration scales used in the survey.

Table 3: Survey Response Distributions

Variable- Total Immigration Attitudes Scale	Fact Sheet		No Fact Sheet		Codes
	Freq	Pct	Freq	Pct	
Immigration is good for the United States					
Strongly Disagree	1	1.2%	1	5.2%	1=Strongly
Disagree	7	8.1%	23	11%	Disagree to
Neither A nor D	12	14%	32	15.2%	5=Strongly
Agree	44	51.2%	99	47.1%	Agree
Strongly Agree	22	25.6%	45	21.4%	
I am satisfied with the level of immigration in the country today					
Strongly Disagree	4	4.7%	17	8.1%	
Disagree	11	12.8%	29	13.8%	
Neither A nor D	24	27.9%	53	25.2%	
Agree	33	38.4%	72	34.3%	
Strongly Agree	14	16.3%	39	18.6%	
Illegal immigration is a critical threat to the United States					
Strongly Disagree	19	22.1%	17	8.1%	
Disagree	18	20.9%	31	14.8%	
Neither A nor D	14	16.3%	43	20.5%	

Agree	18	20.9%	74	35.2%
Strongly Agree	17	19.8%	45	21.4%
I personally worry about illegal immigration in the United States				
Strongly Disagree	20	23.3%	22	10.5%
Disagree	26	30.2%	29	13.8%
Neither A nor D	9	10.5%	44	21%
Agree	12	14%	67	31.9%
Strongly Agree	19	22.1%	48	22.9%
I am satisfied with how the government is responding to immigration in the United States				
Strongly Disagree	15	17.4%	26	12.4%
Disagree	25	29.1%	33	15.7%
Neither A nor D	16	18.6%	49	23.3%
Agree	23	26.7%	66	31.4%
Strongly Agree	7	8.1%	36	17.1%
I feel safe around foreign-born people				
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	4	1.9%
Disagree	4	4.7%	18	8.6%
Neither A nor D	10	11.6%	26	12.4%
Agree	44	51.2%	98	46.7%
Strongly Agree	28	32.6%	64	30.5%
Foreign born people are more likely to commit crime than US-born people				
Strongly Disagree	33	38.4%	38	18.1%
Disagree	23	26.7%	41	19.5%
Neither A nor D	12	14%	38	18.1%
Agree	11	12.8%	52	24.8%
Strongly Agree	7	8.1%	41	19.5%
Foreign born people are more violent than US-born people				
Strongly Disagree	36	41.9%	39	18.6%
Disagree	23	26.7%	34	16.2%
Neither A nor D	8	9.3%	40	19%
Agree	15	17.4%	64	30.5%
Strongly Agree	4	4.7%	33	15.7%
Crime will increase as more foreign-born people come to the United States				
Strongly Disagree	29	33.7%	37	17.6%
Disagree	22	25.6%	32	15.2%
Neither A nor D	16	18.6%	48	22.9%
Agree	15	17.4%	56	26.7%
Strongly Agree	4	4.7%	37	17.6%
Foreign-born people are more likely to be arrested for violent, property, and drug crimes than US-born people				
Strongly Disagree	37	43%	38	18.1%
Disagree	21	24.4%	28	13.3%

Neither A nor D	8	9.3%	39	18.6%
Agree	16	18.6%	72	34.3%
Strongly Agree	4	4.7%	33	15.7%

Variable- Total Immigration Effects Scale	Fact Sheet		No Fact Sheet		Codes
	Freq	Pct	Freq	Pct	
Crime					
Making it Better	34	39.5%	30	14.3%	1=Making it Better
Making it Worse	28	32.6%	111	52.9%	2= No Eff/Neutral
No Eff/Neutral	24	27.9%	69	32.9%	3=Making it Worse
Job Opportunities					
Making it Better	37	43%	85	40.5%	
Making it Worse	24	27.9%	71	33.8%	
No Eff/Neutral	25	29.1%	54	25.7%	
Culture					
Making it Better	70	81.4%	122	58.1%	
Making it Worse	8	9.3%	54	25.7%	
No Eff/Neutral	8	9.3%	34	16.2%	
Education					
Making it Better	39	45.3%	92	43.8%	
Making it Worse	11	12.8%	56	26.7%	
No Eff/Neutral	36	41.9%	62	29.5%	
Economy					
Making it Better	60	69.8%	113	53.8%	
Making it Worse	14	16.3%	62	29.5%	
No Eff/Neutral	12	14%	35	16.7%	

Variable- Total Immigration Proposal Support Scale	Fact Sheet		No Fact Sheet		Codes
	Freq	Pct	Freq	Pct	
Expanding the construction of the wall on the US-Mexico border					
Strongly Oppose	30	34.9%	24	16.2%	1=Strongly
Oppose	15	17.4%	26	12.4%	Oppose to
Neither O nor S	5	5.8%	31	14.8%	5=Strongly
Support	22	25.6%	80	38.1%	Support
Strongly Support	14	16.3%	39	18.6%	
Deporting all immigrants living in the US illegally back to their native countries					
Strongly Oppose	22	25.6%	28	13.3%	
Oppose	20	23.3%	30	14.3%	
Neither O nor S	15	17.4%	41	19.5%	
Support	15	17.4%	61	29%	
Strongly Support	14	16.3%	50	23.8%	
Allowing immigrants living in the US illegally to become US citizens if they meet certain requirements over time					
Strongly Oppose	7	8.1%	16	7.6%	
Oppose	10	11.6%	29	13.8%	
Neither O nor S	8	9.3%	21	10%	
Support	28	32.6%	89	42.4%	
Strongly Support	33	38.4%	55	26.2%	
Hiring more border patrol agents					
Strongly Oppose	15	17.4%	23	11%	
Oppose	11	12.8%	16	7.6%	
Neither O nor S	18	20.9%	48	22.9%	
Support	26	30.2%	69	32.9%	
Strongly Support	16	18.6%	54	25.7%	
Immigrant Housing					
Strongly Oppose	7	8.1%	17	8.1%	
Oppose	12	14%	23	11%	
Neither O nor S	16	18.6%	45	21.4%	
Support	28	32.6%	84	40%	
Strongly Support	23	26.7%	41	19.5%	

Table 4 presents the results from the independent t-test for each immigration scale. This test was conducted to compare the means of the four immigration scales across the fact sheet and no fact sheet conditions. For the total immigration attitude scale, there was a highly significant difference in the scores for the fact sheet (M=34.60, SD=8.62) and no fact sheet (M=29.13,

SD=8.40; $t(294)=-5.06$, $p=.000$. There was also highly significant differences between the scores of the fact sheet (M=8.20, SD=2.46) and no fact sheet (M=9.59, SD=2.58) groups for the total immigration effects scale; $t(294)=4.25$, $p=0.000$). For the total immigration proposal support scale, there was also significant differences between the scores for the fact sheet (M=12.64, SD=5.62) and no fact sheet (M=14.21, SD=4.54) groups; $t(294)=2.52$, $p=0.12$. Lastly, there was a highly significant difference in the scores of the fact sheet (M=10.81, SD=5.18) and no fact sheet (M=14.50, SD=5.28) groups; $t(294)=5.47$, $p=.000$.

These results suggest that there is a significant difference in scores for each scale between the fact sheet and no fact sheet groups. More importantly, these results suggest that the fact sheet had a positive effect on the participant's responses for each of the four immigration scales. To clarify, a higher mean for the total immigration attitude scale indicates more positive attitudes towards immigration. Lower means for both the total immigration effects and total immigration proposal support scales indicates more opinions that immigration is making all areas of the United States better and more opposition of harsh immigration proposals. Lastly, a lower mean for the overall immigration-crime attitude indicates more positive attitudes towards the immigration and crime relationship. These means and results go in line with the hypothesis that those who receive the fact sheet will have greater attitudes, opinions, and beliefs about immigration and immigrants in the United States compared to those who did not receive the fact sheet.

Table 4: Independent T-Test

	Fact Sheet			No fact sheet			Mean Diff.	95% CI	df	t	p
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD					
Total Immigration Attitude Scale	86	34.60	8.62	210	29.13	8.40	-5.48	-7.6, -3.3	294	-5.06	.000**
Total Immigration Effects Scale	86	8.20	2.46	210	9.59	2.58	1.38	.74, 2.0	294	4.25	.000**
Total Immigration Proposal Support Scale	86	12.64	5.62	210	14.21	4.54	1.57	.34, 2.8	294	2.52	.012*
Overall Immigration-Crime Attitude Scale	86	10.81	5.18	210	14.50	5.28	3.68	2.4, 5.0	294	5.47	.000**

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Lastly, Tables 5 and 6 present the results from the multiple regression analysis for each of the four scales. Table 5 presents the results for the overall immigration-crime attitude scale while Table 6 presents the results for the total immigration attitude scale, total immigration effect scale, and the total immigration proposal support scale.

In Table 5, the overall immigration-crime attitude scale and fact sheet were found to be negatively correlated. This shows that the presence of the fact sheet significantly reduced scores on the overall immigration-crime attitude scale. This significance remained even after controlling for demographic control variables. This confirmed the hypothesis that those who receive the fact sheet will report greater attitudes towards the immigration-crime relationship. Full-time employees as well as married people were more likely to have harsh immigration-crime attitudes compared to those who were not full-time employees or married. In addition, the participants that

viewed themselves as conservative were more likely to have harsher attitudes and views on the immigration-crime relationship. Surprisingly, it was also found that as income went up, harsher views on immigration and crime declined.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Overall Immigration-Crime Attitude Scale

	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>SE</i>
Fact Sheet	-2.55***	.631
Age	-.045	.028
Male	.676	.585
Non-White	.495	.773
Education	.257	.258
Full-time employment	1.89*	.791
Married	3.02***	.669
Income	-.699*	.355
Conservative	1.97*	.823
Liberal	-1.33	.786
Democrat	-.163	.529
Republican	.271	.563
U.S. Citizen	-7.75	4.38
Born in U.S.	3.81	2.73
Parents born in U.S.	-1.15	1.36
Voter	3.96	2.34
Constant	13.16***	4.08

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

In Table 6, the fact sheet was found to predict the scores for both the total immigration attitude and total immigration effect scale. This remained after controlling for various demographic variables. For the total immigration attitude scale, the fact sheet was both highly significant and positive. This conveys that the presence of the fact sheet increased the scores on the immigration attitude scale, which thus represents more positive attitudes towards immigration. This finding is in line with the hypothesis that those who receive the fact sheet will have more positive attitudes and perceptions about immigrants and immigration in the United States. It was also found that married people and those who viewed themselves as conservative

were more likely to have lower scores on the immigration attitude scale. For the total immigration effect scale, the fact sheet was also highly significant, but the relationship was negative. The presence of the fact sheet significantly reduced the scores on the immigrant effect scale, which indicates more belief that immigration is making all areas in the United States better. The only other variable that was found to be significant in this scale was liberal. This meant that the participants that viewed themselves as liberal had lower scores on the immigration effect scale.

The fact sheet was also associated with the scores for the total immigration proposal support scale, but not after controlling for the demographic variables. The only items that were significant for this scale were the conservative, liberal, Democrat, and Republican variables. The participants who viewed themselves as liberal and a Democrat had lower scores on the immigration proposal support scale, which represents more opposition of harsh immigration proposals. The participants who were conservative or Republican had higher scores on the scale, which indicates more support of harsh immigration proposals.

Table 6: Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Other Scales

	<i>Immigration Attitude Scale</i>		<i>Immigration Effect Scale</i>		<i>Immigration Proposal Support Scale</i>	
	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>SE</i>
Fact Sheet	3.71***	1.03	-1.07***	.322	-.552	.563
Age	.031	.045	.011	.014	.037	.024
Male	-1.32	.958	.103	.298	.370	.523
Non-White	-.044	1.27	-.001	.394	.633	.690
Education	.031	.423	-.203	.132	-.378	.231
Full-time employment	-2.32	1.29	.172	.403	1.23	.706
Married	-3.15**	1.09	.133	.340	1.11	.597
Income	.969	.581	-.181	.181	-.371	.317
Conservative	-3.71**	1.35	.391	.420	1.81*	.735
Liberal	2.21	1.29	-1.40***	.401	-2.26***	.702
Democrat	.857	.867	-.286	.270	-.982*	.473
Republican	-.892	.921	-.053	.287	1.31**	.503
U.S. Citizen	6.73	7.17	-2.44	2.23	-1.46	3.91
Born in U.S.	-7.09	4.46	2.14	1.39	1.70	2.43
Parents born in U.S.	4.23	2.22	-1.19	.694	-1.45	1.22
Voter	-7.39	3.82	.152	1.19	2.13	2.08
Constant	34.26***	6.68	12.41***	2.08	13.14***	3.64

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The current study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of using factual information to affect people's attitudes and perceptions. More specifically, the study evaluated whether factual information on the immigration-crime relationship affects the American publics' attitudes and perceptions of immigration and immigrants. Not only did the results show that the presence of the fact sheet improved attitudes about the immigration-crime relationship, but that it also improved overall immigration attitudes and increased beliefs that immigration is making several areas of the United States better. Although not significant, there was also evidence to show that the presence of the fact sheet led to less support of the harsh immigration proposals used in the survey. These findings are supportive of the research showing that information can be an effective tool in improving the American publics' harsh views on immigration and reducing the number of misperceptions they have about this growing population (Carnahan et al., 2020; Grigorieff et al., 2020; Abascal et al., 2021).

Other interesting findings came out the analyses as well. Married people as well as full-time employees were more likely to hold negative attitudes about the immigration-crime relationship than those who did not work full-time or were unmarried. In addition, only married people were more likely to hold negative overall immigration attitudes than non-married people. It may be that married people are more likely to adopt their partner's views and be less likely to have changing attitudes and opinions. Previous researchers have explored the effect of marriage on political identification and found that many married people alter their political beliefs to

match that of their spouses (Kan & Heath, 2006; Stoker & Jennings, 1995). The same may apply to full-time employees who are consistently around the same group of people. The findings that conservative people were more likely to hold harsher overall immigration attitudes and attitudes about the immigration-crime relationship are not as surprising. Previous research has shown that U.S. Republicans and conservatives have substantially harsher views of U.S. immigration and immigrants compared to U.S. Democrats and liberals (Gries, 2016). The findings also indicated that Republicans and conservatives were more likely to support harsher immigration proposals, which coincides with the IPSOS (2018) research that found immigration and immigration policy views to be largely tied to partisanship.

It is important to note that the current study does not come without limitations. Although Amazon Mturk was used as a means of collecting a more representative sample, the sample was not evenly distributed. Females and non-white people were highly underrepresented in this study, which is not a true reflection of the United States. In addition, several qualification requirements were used for our sample, which limited who could participate in the study. As a result, the external validity of the study may not be as strong as it could have been if the qualifications were not used or another sampling platform was used (Cheung et al., 2017). Although the qualifications were used to increase internal validity, the self-reported data may still be inaccurate and threaten the internal validity of the study. Conducting a larger-scale survey with a baseline set of questions on immigration or conducting the survey in-person may help to increase internal and external validity. One of the biggest limitations in this study was not knowing if the participants read the fact sheet. The participants could not be forced to read the fact sheet, so a time question was used in the survey to record how long a participant spent on the fact sheet

page. Unfortunately, 120 participants were removed from analysis because they spent less than thirty seconds on the fact sheet page. Although their removal increased the reliability and validity of the data, the sample that was left was fairly small. Conducting the survey in-person may have helped to increase the time spent on reading the survey and ensure that no participants are skipping the reading.

Despite these limitations, this study provides evidence that receiving factual information on immigration and crime research can influence people's attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and perceptions about immigrants and immigration in the United States. This study only looked at one specific area of concern for immigration. Future research should look to see if an impact on immigration attitudes can be made from providing information on other misperceived areas of immigration like job opportunities and the labor market. This study adds to the research by showing that research-informed education on the immigration and crime can influence people's negative attitudes about immigrants. The American public's view of immigrants being "bad" people or criminals – which also tends to the U.S. government's view – is a significant factor in today's use of harsh immigration policies and proposals (Chouhy & Madero-Hernandez, 2019). Providing research and education on immigration to the public may help guide the United States away from implementing harsh immigration laws and harboring negative and inaccurate beliefs that only further tarnish the reputations and lives of the immigrant population. These efforts will be important, considering that immigrants and their descendants are projected to account for 88 percent of U.S. population growth through 2065 (Budiman, 2020).

APPENDIX

FULL SURVEY INSTRUMENT

You are about to be asked a series of questions regarding your opinion on immigration in the United States. Please answer the questions to the best of your ability.

When answering the questions in this survey, please keep the following definitions in mind. Questions that ask about immigration in general are referring to the process of moving to a new country or region with the intention of staying and living there, whether it's done legally or illegally. If a question specifically asks about illegal immigration, please refer to the definition below.

Illegal Immigration: the process in which a foreign-born person enters the country illegally or by violating the terms of his or her admission. This could be done by entering without inspection from the INS (The Immigration and Naturalization Services), entry based on fraud, overstaying the authorized period of admission, or working without authorization.

Please choose the option that best represents your opinion on the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Immigration is good for the United States	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the level of immigration in the country today	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Illegal immigration is a critical threat to the United States	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I personally worry about illegal immigration in the U.S.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with how the government is responding to immigration in the United States	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Please choose neither agree nor disagree for this question	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel safe around foreign-born people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Foreign-born people are more likely to commit crime than U.S. born people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foreign-born people are more violent than U.S. born people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Crime will increase as more foreign-born people come to the United States	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foreign-born people are more likely to be arrested for violent, property, and drug crimes than U.S. born people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please choose the answer choice that best represents your opinion on how immigration is affecting each of the following areas in the United States:

	Making it better	Making it worse	No effect/Neutral
Crime	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job Opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Culture (food, language, music, art, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate whether you support the following proposals on immigration in the U.S.:

	Strongly Oppose	Oppose	Neither Support nor Oppose	Support	Strongly Support
Expanding the construction of the wall in the US-Mexico border	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Deporting all immigrants living in the U.S. illegally back to their native countries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Please choose neither support nor oppose for this question	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Allowing immigrants living in the U.S. illegally to become U.S. citizens if they meet certain requirements over time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hiring more border patrol agents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Immigrant housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please answer the following demographic questions:

What is your birth year? _____

What gender do you most identify with?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary / third gender
- Prefer not to say

How would you best describe your race? Click all that apply.

- White
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Some other race

Please select the state you currently live in.

- Alabama
- Alaska
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Delaware

- District of Columbia
- Florida
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Montana

- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Utah
- Vermont

- Virginia
- Washington
- West Virginia
- Wisconsin
- Wyoming

What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, please choose the highest degree received.

- 8th grade
- Some high school, no diploma
- High school graduate or GED
- Some college, no degree
- Associate (2 year) degree
- Bachelor's (4 year) degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate degree

What is your employment status? Check all that apply.

- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Contract/temporary employee

Unemployed

Student

Military

Retired

Disabled

What is your marital status?

Single (never married)

Married or domestic partnership

Divorced or separated

Widowed

Prefer not to say

What income group does your household fall under?

Less than \$25,000

\$25,001 - \$50,000

\$50,001 - \$100,000

\$100,001 - \$200,000

\$200,000+

Prefer not to say

In general, how would you describe your own political viewpoint?

- Very liberal
- Liberal
- Moderate
- Conservative
- Very conservative
- Not sure

Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a...?

- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent
- Other
- Not sure

Are you a U.S. citizen?

- Yes
- No

Were you born in the U.S.?

Yes

No

Were both of your parents born in the U.S.?

Yes

No

Are you a registered voter?

Yes

No

FACT SHEET

Immigration & Crime Fact Sheet

Today, there are over 45 million foreign-born individuals living in the United States. Over 75 percent of them are in the country legally, but about 23 percent are not.¹ Immigration is oftentimes a heated topic of conversation, especially within the media and among members of the government.

Some government officials, policymakers, and citizens have expressed concern over the effects of immigration on crime in the U.S. In response, tougher immigration laws, border security, and deportation policies have been put in place across the country. However, many of these changes have been put in place without attention to the research on immigration and crime, of which there is plenty. In fact, enough immigration-crime research has been published that there is an “emerging scholarly consensus” on the matter.² Here is *some* of what we know about the immigration-crime relationship:

- In a study using police reports and victimization data from 1990 to 2014, researchers found that undocumented immigration during those years was associated with decreasing levels of violent crime.³
- Ramos and Wenger’s study of 192,556 formerly incarcerated native and foreign-born individuals found that not only do immigrants have lower rates of offending, arrest, and incarceration than their native-born counterparts, but they are also less likely to recidivate.⁴
- “For all criminal convictions in Texas in 2015, illegal immigrants had a criminal conviction rate 50 percent below that of native-born Americans. Legal immigrants had a criminal conviction rate 66 percent below that of native-born Americans.”⁵
- In a study using arrest data from the Texas Department of Public Safety, U.S.-born citizens were over 2 times more likely to be arrested for violent crimes, 2.5 times more likely to be arrested for drug crimes, and over 4 times more likely to be arrested for property crimes when compared to undocumented immigrants.⁶

- Wolff and colleagues found that there is a protective effect in immigrant-concentrated communities that is directly related to juvenile recidivism. In other words, communities with large numbers of immigrants not only experience less crime, but they are safer and more sustainable compared to other communities.⁷
- After reviewing the results of over 50 studies on immigration and crime, researchers concluded that the immigration-crime association is negative, which suggests that greater immigration is associated with lower crime rates.⁸

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Haley Puddy was born and raised in Dallas, Texas and currently lives in the DFW area. After completing her schoolwork at Bishop Lynch High School in 2015, Haley attended Loyola University Maryland in Baltimore, Maryland. At Loyola, Haley played for the Division 1 Volleyball Program and studied psychology as well as forensic studies. After graduating with honors from Loyola in 2019, she joined the team at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine as a research assistant in the behavioral pharmacology unit. A year later, Haley moved back home to Dallas, Texas and started her criminology graduate degree program at The University of Texas at Dallas. While she was there, she became a member of the Criminology Graduate Student Association and conducted research alongside other students and professors. Starting in the Fall of 2022, Haley will continue her education in the Criminology PhD program at The University of Texas at Dallas.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Haley Puddy
(March 24, 2022)

Education

- MS, Criminology** University of Texas at Dallas May 2022
Public Perceptions of the Connection Between Immigration and Crime
Advisor: Dr. John L. Worrall, Ph.D.
- BA, Psychology** Loyola University Maryland May 2019
Minor: Forensic Studies
Magna Cum Laude
Honors in Psychology

Presentations

- 2019 Haley Puddy and Sarah Wilton**
Oral Presentation: "The Role of Empathy in Perception of Racial Inequalities in the Criminal Justice System"
Baltimore, MD; Undergraduate Student Research & Scholarship Colloquium (USRSC) at Loyola University Maryland

Research and Professional Experience

- University of Texas at Dallas** February 2021-August 2021
Student Research Assistant
School of Arts, Technology, and Emerging Communication
Supervisor: Dr. Rosanna Guadagno, Ph.D.
- Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine** January 2019-June 2020
Research Program Assistant II
Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
Supervisor: Dr. Kelly Dunn, Ph.D., M.B.A.
Intern
Supervisor: Dr. Alexis Hammond, M.D., Ph.D.
- Loyola University Maryland** November 2018-May 2019
Research Assistant
Supervisors: Dr. Marianna Carlucci, Ph.D. & Dr. Amy Wolfson, Ph.D.
- Parkland Hospital** June 2018-August 2018
College Research Intern
Parkland Academy Leadership Development Team
- Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital** January 2018-May 2018
Psychology Assessment Intern

Affiliations

2020 University of Texas at Dallas Criminology Graduate Student Association Member

2019 Loyola University Maryland Psi Chi Honor Society Member

2017 Loyola University Maryland Student Athletic Advisory Committee Member

Awards and Honors

2019 USRSC Colloquium at Loyola University Maryland
First Place in Oral Presentations

2015 Loyola University Maryland Presidential Academic Scholarship

2015 Loyola University Maryland Division 1 Volleyball Athletic Scholarship

2015-2018 Loyola University Maryland Dean's List

2015-2018 Patriot League Honor Roll Recipient

Publications

Guadagno, R. E.; Gonzenbach, V.; Puddy, H.; Fishwick, P.; Kitagawa, M.; Urquhart, M.; Kesden, M.; Suura, K.; Hale, B.; Koknar, C.; et al. A Usability Study of Classical Mechanics Education Based on Hybrid Modeling: Implications for Sustainability in Learning. *Sustainability* **2021**, 13, 11225. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132011225>

Research Interests

Race & Crime

Immigration & Crime

Mental Health and Criminological Processes

Perceptions of the Criminal Justice System