

Deconstructing White “American” Perceptions on Immigrants of Latinx Heritage

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ABSTRACT

This study documents the construction of opinions white “Americans”¹ make about Latinx² immigrants in the current political climate. Even though participants had variant political opinions and resided in two different cities, the central part of this project focuses on the general factors that influence white “American” opinions. This research builds upon the framework of Leo Chavez’s work, *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation*. His research provided a basis for understanding US immigration history, the prevalence of anti-immigrant rhetoric against Latinx migrants, the social construction of “illegality,” the pervasiveness of media and the creation of a national identity. This thesis used a phenomenological research design for analysis, to bridge the gap between the literature and the experiences and perceptions white “Americans” currently have about Latinx immigration. Semi-structured interviews provided a basis for understanding the dynamics of immigration opinions and the construction of a national identity. The findings state that the social construction of “illegality,” politicized media consumption, and the nativist protection of the “American” identity all contribute to white “American” perceptions on immigrants of Latinx heritage.

Key Words: Whiteness, Illegality, Assimilation, Emotional Politics, Nativism

¹ “American” is quoted because the term is often used to designate the national identity of those residing in the United States, but not those who reside in other parts of North and South America. Oftentimes, the term “American” is employed to stake US nationalistic ownership over the territory, with little regard for the same “American” identity other countries have.

² Latinx is a gender-neutral alternative term for Latino or Latina. Many scholars use Latinx to be gender inclusive.

INTRODUCTION

The United States has always had a contentious history with immigration policy. Since 1790, the US has passed around 32 major immigration laws, each riddled with stipulations that created a series of consequences for people attempting to enter into the country (Zolberg 2006). Although virtually each presidency recreates or reinterprets how to enforce immigration policy in different ways (Kanstroom 2007), the 2016 campaign and eventual election of the current administration has ushered in a new era of immigration-related rhetoric that had been lurking for the prior two decades. Take for instance, California's Proposition 187, which "prohibited provision of publicly funded education and social services to undocumented immigrants and required public schools to verify the legal status of students and their parents" (Alarcon 1994). Also consider the "contemporary cowboy" Minuteman Project, that declared "war on illegal immigration" and created a spectacle at the Arizona-Mexico border and dangerously targeted border crossers (Chavez 2013). Anti-immigrant rhetoric, fears of Latinx immigration, and the idea of invasion drove these projects and proposals. The "discourse of invasion, the loss of sovereignty, and the representation of Mexican immigrants as the 'enemy'" has exacerbated during the last Presidential campaign (Chavez 2013; Moreno 2018). Because of this, undocumented immigration and migration from Latin American countries (often thought to be almost the same by observers, De Genova 2004) has recently been scrutinized and brought to national attention. As a result, immigration is a common topic in media outlets today as it had not necessarily been in the past (Freeman, Hansen, and Leal 2013; King and Wood, 2001).

This increased attention motivates this topic, leading me to the exploration of relationship between media consumption, reported data on immigration, and the overall opinions white people in the United States have about Latinx immigrants specifically. More specifically, I investigate the factors that white "Americans"—the dominant race/ethnic group in the United

States and typically majority group in contentions around immigration— use to negotiate their perceptions of Latinx immigrants in or coming to the United States. I focus specifically on white “American” attitudes, because for the most part they are the most widespread and dominant in the United States, in terms of vocalization and in policy creation. White individuals in the United States play a large role in the creation of “othering” discourses over time. Anti-immigrant ideology stems from the conceptualization of the immigrant “other,” since the nineteenth century. There is also specific focus on immigrants from Latin American countries because Hispanic immigrants make up nearly 35 percent of the foreign-born population in the United States (Pew Research Center 2018).

This question is important to study because not only do we live in an era filled with public attention on immigration-related issues and rhetoric (Chavez 2013), it also seems as if people today are more polarized on their opinions around immigration and are motivated to vote according to these opinions (Barthel 2018; Ioanide 2015). The sentiments white “Americans” have about Latinx immigration to the United States can be used to construct a national identity, as either rejecting or accepting of particular immigrant groups. Personal opinions can also shape perceptions around immigrant “illegality” and citizenship (Chavez 2013). Today, it seems as if it is more important than ever to evaluate how particular attitudes shape political action, interpersonal standpoints and national identity because there are very real consequences for Latinx immigrants attempting migration to the United States.

Breaking New Ground

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to a systematic cultural examination of the mechanisms associated with the creation of white “American” attitudes towards Latinx immigrants, documented and undocumented. In this study, I explore the opinions white “Americans” hold, to provide a more nuanced understanding of common sentiments about

immigrants. This project dissects commonly-held assumptions and critiques the portrayal and treatment of Latinx immigrants in the media and in policy.

While past research has examined media, threat narratives and national identity creation, this study contextualizes how perceptions of Latinx immigrants are created specifically by white “Americans” in the Trump era. Through qualitative interviews, the research is able to identify the relationship between (a) the social construction of immigrant illegality; (b) the role of media consumption in framing Latinx immigration and media’s impact on a partisan society; and (c) the creation of the “American” identity in conjunction with topics of immigration. Taking into account the different political affiliations of participants, the design also allows for an analysis that is able to discern reactions and similarities to the phenomena of Latinx immigration across partisan alignment, indicating the existence of a shared framework of understanding that transcends political affiliation.

An acknowledgement of the pervasive “threat” rhetoric, an understanding of media-spectacle consumption and a historical analysis of immigration and nationalism, provides a necessary basis for determining the contributions to current attitudes that white “Americans” hold towards Latinx immigrant groups. It is necessary to further examine notions of illegality, policy creation and subsequent sociological concepts to understand the processes in attitude development. Through interview data from 17 white “Americans,” I allow for an examination and discussion of the mechanisms used to justify an anti-immigrant rhetoric focused on the Latinx immigrant population in the United States.

The subsequent section will discuss the literature used to inform this research. The review examines the main components of historical US immigration policy; nativism and assimilation; the relationship between the United States, Mexico and other Latin American countries, the impact of media consumption; immigrant “illegality” rhetoric; emotional politics; and previously

studied “American” attitudes about immigrants. Previous research studies provide evidence for the claims made in the analysis.

In Chapter Two, the methodology chapter, I will discuss the methods used to conduct this research. I discuss how I collected the data and include information from 17 semi-structured interviews to demonstrate how I generated conversation about attitudes towards Latinx immigrants.

In Chapter Three, I discuss the social construction of “illegality” in the United States and the characteristics white “Americans” use to designate Latinx immigrants as “good” or “bad” for the health of the country. I examine the specific characteristics participants used to distinguish between positive and negative immigrant attributes. Overall, these demarcations provide a basis for understanding how “illegality” is not an inherent trait, but rather constructed onto the bodies of Latinx immigrants—regardless of their status—to designate whether or not specific immigrants “belong” in the United States. These characteristics are used to form opinions about Latinx immigrants overall.

In Chapter Four, I look at the relationship between emotional-politics, media consumption and mistrust in news. These different aspects are all responsible for opinion formation and voting patterns. Participants argued that news and media sources provide biased information that allows people to remain politically siloed. They argued that some news rhetoric is untrue or manipulated for political reasons. Some participants supported “fake news” rhetoric and used the variance in reporting styles as a way to take a more subjective stance on news reporting. For some, news represented a way to build a personal repertoire that supports their opinions. Overall, these characteristics demonstrate how media is used to disseminate messages about immigrants and contribute to opinion formation and perceptions of Latinx immigrants.

In Chapter Five, I explore the construction of the “American” identity among white people. I explore what tactics white folks use to distance themselves from current Latinx immigrant groups, while simultaneously using ancestral immigrant pasts to form their identity. The idea that “we're all immigrants” functions to erase the differentiation of experiences between immigrant groups and assuage white fears. These ideas are connected to theories about assimilation, racist nativism and nationalism. In summation, these characteristics create the “American” repertoire and identity. The “American” identity is then used in opposition to the Latinx identity, to impact perceptions of this immigrant group.

In Chapter Six, I discuss the findings of this research. I expand on the limitations of using snowball and convenience sampling. I also explore the limits of interviewing white participants about current immigration sentiments, rather than establishing a more racially diverse participant pool. I provide a basis for contemporary sociological conceptions about white “American” attitudes and the implications on future immigration policy and immigrant receptibility. Finally, I discuss how this research will be incorporated into broader scholarship and institutional conversations about immigration.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study draws on research about past and current immigration policies, popular rhetoric about immigrant “illegality,” and media consumption to examine the influences on white “American” attitudes about immigration. Unlike many other nations with large immigrant populations, “the United States conceives of itself as an immigration society through and through” (Alba and Nee 2003:167). However, this distinctly US self-conception has not been constant throughout history. The following discussion is based off of broader ideas around US immigration, policy implementation and nativist ideology. It also includes a discussion about the rhetoric around Latinx immigrant groups specifically, the impact policy has on immigrants, and the creation of emotionally-aligned identity politics through media. These characteristics all work in conjunction to create and sustain the “American” identity. It is important to study these processes in order to examine the production of white “American” attitudes towards Latinx immigrants in the United States. Overall, the literature will reveal the constructionist conception of white “America” in relation to Latinx immigrants.

Historical Precedent

The United States’ self-conception as a “nation of immigrants” is often stifled by an “American” desire to determine just what immigrant groups are allowed to join the country (Zolberg 2006). “Americans” are notorious for constantly adjusting and readjusting the boundaries between “us” and an evolving amount of “thems” (Zolberg 2006). Even before North American colonists declared independence from Great Britain, they managed processes that determined the nation’s composition (Zolberg 2006). The early amalgamation and exclusion of particular immigrant groups set precedent in the United States. This precedent has become the major instrument in creating a universal code for immigration processes in the United States. Overall, the creation and sustainment of the United States as a symbolic reference for

immigration is clouded by a constructionist stance that supposes not just any immigrants can encompass the “American” identity. This is what Zolberg (2006) meant when he called the United States “a nation by design.” The notion that Latinx immigrants are threatening to the United States, did not develop in a vacuum. They emerged from an extensive history of policy, myths and in the media (Chavez 2013).

Assimilation

People in North America have always demonstrated an effort to “keep this country for those who were already here and for their kin folk” (quoted in Espenshade and Hempstead 1996:537). This mentality started with the Puritans towards Quakers, Episcopalians, and Catholics; later the English exhibited a similar mentality towards the Irish and Germans; who felt the same way about Italians, Jews and Russians (Espenshade and Hempstead 1996). During this time, racial distinctions were implicated with cultural ones, as well as with national origin. Rather than understand these characteristics as “ethnicities,” national cultures were responsible for early immigrant designations of race. European immigration to the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries demonstrates how the government and immigration policy-makers were influenced by a desire to imagine, ascribe, privilege and guard white identities. These dominant white groups eventually granted acceptability to other white immigrant groups, like the Irish, German, Italians, Jews, and Russians after they proved to be “assimilable” to whiteness. This had implications for European immigrants, who, in becoming American, also signed up to whiteness (Shiells 2010). The status of whiteness is a privileged position, one that is often reproduced to maintain white dominance. Without question, the early European settlers intended the nation to be one dominated exclusively by whites (Alba and Nee 2003). These structures of labeling and designating racial qualifications based on national origin persist today.

Overall, this “chain” of acceptability highlights how contentious nation-building through immigration has been since the onset of settler society in North America (Alba and Nee 2003). The desire for “Anglo-conformity” or the expectation that immigrant groups should abide by the pre-existing Anglo culture and disengage from their own, has always been present (Alba and Nee 2003). Although immigrants have always attempted to bring their culture with them, in some ways it is difficult for customs and mentalities to flourish unaltered in receiving countries (Alba and Nee 2003; Williams 1998). The nature of immigration to the United States has produced a cyclical association between a desire for assimilation, the creation of stereotypes, and the development of laws to either ensure assimilation or block particular nations from sending “unassimilable” immigrants. This relationship indicates how immigrants to the United States have always been subject to social labels and faced laws that determined their status in the country.

The “American” Identity

The contemporary crisis over Latinx immigration to the United States often comes down to contesting the meaning of “Americanness.” Being “American” has a long history of racism and nativism, as it mostly pertains to upholding and assimilating to traditional Anglo heritage (Alba and Nee 2003; Huber, Lopez, Malagon, Velez and Solorzano 2008).

To some, the rights and privileges of “Americanness” cannot extend beyond the limits of the nation-state, and those perceived as unable to assimilate (Huber et al. 2008). The processes for incorporating immigrants into society are ardently contested because there is not a definitive formula that outlines what it means to be “American.” The nature of international immigration involves physically crossing geographical boundaries and socially merging the boundary between “us” and “them” (Pehrson and Green 2010). However, merging the boundaries between groups is nearly impossible when racism, ethnocentrism and nativism persist in a receiving

society. Scholars have long argued that anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States is rooted in an immigrant threat narrative (Chavez 2013; Lippard 2016). As history has demonstrated, these fears are rooted in a racialized context against nonwhite immigrants (Chavez 2013; Higham 1955; Jaret 1999; Navarro 2009).

A discussion of race and nativism is important to understand why the basis of the “American” identity is so contested when Latinx immigrants attempt to gain it. Also, the historical past of the United States is built upon these institutional forms of discrimination to maintain the power of white people, since colonization.

Race, although a social construction, powerfully manifests itself in the everyday lives of people, particularly People of Color (Huber et al. 2008). As race exhibits itself in the everyday, it works to differentiate between racial groups and promotes a hierarchy to justify the superiority of one race over others (Bonilla-Silva 2001). Racial hierarchies operate on the basis of white supremacy whereby power and resources are used to privilege whites and oppress People of Color (Bonilla-Silva 2001; Huber et al. 2008). Overall, “racism is the assigning of values to real or imagined differences, in order to justify white supremacy, to the benefit of whites and at the expense of People of Color, and thereby to defend the right of whites to dominance” (Huber et al. 2008:41).

Nativism is defined as the “intense opposition to an internal minority on the grounds of its foreign (i.e. “un-American”) connections” (Higham 1955:4). Consequently, nationalism functions at the ideological core of nativism because nationalistic ideology justifies the fear that something abroad will threaten the life of the nation (Huber et al. 2008). Nativism is centered on the natives, their identity and their perception of “outsiders” (De Genova 2005; Huber et al. 2008). The perception of being native is related to what it means to be “American.” It seems that

being “American” connotes Anglo-European heritage, Christian or Western religious traditions, and belief in representative democracy” (Saito 1997:268). During the conception of the United States, notions of what it meant to be “American” were visualized in legal documents. The notion of whiteness was privileged because it became strategically associated to Anglo-European heritage, as it was described in the Constitution (Huber et al. 2008). Being an “American,” means enjoying the privileges that come being white. Overall, “whiteness, thus, became the most important requirement for profiting from the privilege of being native to US soil” (Huber et al. 2008:42). Therefore, “Americanness” must be protected from outsiders, who may jeopardize the longstanding power and privilege of whiteness.

Combined, racist nativism is the “assigning of values to real or imagined differences, in order to justify the superiority of the native, who is to be perceived as white, over that of the nonnative, who is perceived to be People and Immigrants of Color” (Huber et al. 2008:43). Racist nativism is another project in which white “native-born Americans” have reorganized meanings of race and belonging to support white and native superiority (Lippard 2016). Immigrant assimilation is about accepting Anglo values and beliefs, as they were originally defined. In order to protect Anglo-values and white “Americanness,” white “Americans” deploy anti-immigrant sentiments and stereotypes of Latinx immigrants to highlight how immigrant minorities directly threaten the confines of the United States (Lippard 2016). Overall, racist nativism impacts immigrants of color and the lived experiences of Latinx immigrants in the past and today. This plays out in policy making as well as in stereotyping.

1924 National Origins Quota Act (Johnson-Reid Act)

The United States’ fluctuating restrictionist immigration laws are hardly surprising, as most histories are colored by restriction (Abrams 2009). Defining the confines of immigration laws have always been about how the United States imagines itself as a people (Chavez 2013).

After extensive years of fairly open immigration from Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth-century, the United States entered a new stage in its policy and ushered in an era of immigration restriction (Ngai 2004). *The Johnson-Reid Immigration Act of 1924* demarcated this change. The 1924 act was the result of ethnocentric biases due to the influx of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. The enormous wave of this group of Europeans “provoked spasms of xenophobic anxiety in many native White Americans concerned about their assimilability” (Alba and Nee 2003). Ngai (2004:19) explains that “the law placed numerical limits on immigration and established a quota system that classified the world’s population according to nationality and race, ranking them in a hierarchy of desirability for admission into the United States.” In the time before the act was mandated, the United States was essentially unrestricted in its population numbers, aside from the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Immigration Act of 1917 that barred immigrants from the “Asiatic zone” (Ngai 2004). Racial exclusivity, especially as it pertained to national origin, was very apparent in these barriers to immigrants from Asian countries.

As the list of “excludable” immigrant groups rose, so did demands from native-born white “Americans” to restrict European immigration (Ngai 2004). The 1924 act greatly restricted immigration to only “155,000 [southern and eastern Europeans] a year, established temporary quotas based on 2 percent of the foreign-born population in 1890, and mandated the secretaries of labor, state and commerce to determine quotas on the basis of national origins by 1927” (Ngai 2004:23). The law set historical precedent, even though it was reformed, because it created a vision of the United States as a nation of racial and national hierarchies, as set by white “Americans.”

The parameters for European immigration were emphasized through the system of quotas based on national origin (Alba and Nee 2003). Western and northern Europeans were the most

desirable immigrants to the United States. The quota system worked to ensure that fewer immigrants came to the United States, and if they did, they were more likely to resemble the composition of current “American” whites. To policy-makers, the implementation of quotas was logical because it warranted the arrival of “more favorable” immigrants, who would readily assimilate to into society (Alba and Nee 2003). Illegal entry into the United States was a concurrent implication of restrictive immigration policy. This parallel between quota laws and clandestine entry stimulated the production of “illegal aliens.” Overall, the 1924 law produced mass proportions of illegal entry and deportations (Ngai 2004).

“Illegal Aliens”

The ethnocentric, restrictionist background of this major immigration policy set an adverse pattern for future immigration. Although the 1924 immigration act exempted Mexico and other countries of the Western Hemisphere from numerical quotas, the relationship between the United States and Mexico was complicated in fundamentally different ways. This multilayered relationship has resulted in far more complexities for contemporary Latin American immigration. Examining the historical relationship between Mexico and the United States demonstrates how earlier labor and immigration policies have implications for Latinx immigration overall.

The Precedent of Mexican Immigration

The agricultural labor needs in the Southwest and previous policy interests impeded any implications of including Mexican people in the quota system (Ngai 2004). Mexican migration probably would not have occurred, if it had not been for all of the structural transformations of the United States during the Industrial Revolution, that created a demand for labor so intense that it required purposive recruitment of Mexican laborers (Massey, Durand and Malone 2003).

Although many congressmembers sympathized with the idea of restricting Mexican immigration, proposals to do so were defeated on the grounds of protecting “Pan-Americanism” (Ngai 2004).

The idea of “Pan-Americanism,” however was complicated by the history of the Mexican-American War. The war problematized meanings of nationality and citizenship as it pertained to Mexican people (Ngai 2004). After the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848, most Mexicans in the United States, were generally unaware of their passage through an international border and saw themselves as simply transitioning in their Mexican culture. By 1914, there were at least 100,000 Mexican nationals in the United States (Kanstroom 2007). The enforcement of quota and exclusion laws in the United States dramatically increased the demand for laborers from Mexico. Following US entry into World War I, the rate of immigration from Mexico peaked and later fell as the result of a recession that called for a repatriation campaign directed at Mexican laborers (Massey et al. 2003). Overall, by the 1920s, policy restrictions on immigration fueled a sense of nativism across the country and immigrants in general were seen as a threat to the “American” wellbeing. Around this time, there was also a new importance placed on guarding national borders, that “coincided with new techniques of surveillance, the creation of Border Patrol, and immigrant health examinations” (Chavez 2013:25). Early on during this era of restrictionist immigration policy, the border became symbolic for protecting the US from “invaders.” The United States erected 450 officers to guard both the two-thousand-mile border with Mexico and the long frontier with Canada (Massey et al. 2003). Its rectification had and continues to have social, economic and political implications. The idea of “illegal aliens” materialized from the new order of border control (Chavez 2013). Although Mexican immigrants were not directly subjected to quotas, the back and forth demand for unskilled labor, along with fluctuating nativist sentiments in the United States, painted Mexican as “illegals.” The US-

Mexico Border created the idea of “illegal immigration” by rearticulating the border as a cultural and racial boundary between nations.

During the 1930s, the United States focused on both legal reform and deportations that worked to “make” and “unmake” the definition of “illegal aliens” (Ngai 2004). Overall, the passage of quota laws, the creation of Border Patrol, and the focus on preventing clandestine immigration “marked a turn in both the volume and nature of unlawful entry in the philosophy and practice of deportation” (Ngai 2004:59-60). These characteristics compounded with the Great Depression, ushered in a new era of migration between Mexico and the United States. Mexican immigrants became the scapegoats for joblessness and economic failures in the US. Like the conflated rhetoric about immigrants today, Mexican immigrants were simultaneously blamed for “taking jobs away from Americans” and “living off public relief.” (quoted in Massey et al. 2003:33). Eventually, the economic disaster of the United States during this time resulted in a lack of dependence on Mexican laborers. The US government repressed most immigration from the Western Hemisphere, as it sought to apprehend and deport Mexican immigrants who were seen as a threat to US job availability (Massey et al. 2003).

The Bracero Era

At the tail-end of the Great Depression, President Roosevelt’s *New Deal* restructured the United States’ relationship with Mexico. The new laws allowed the government to have a more central role in organizing economic policies, regulating trade and managing international labor relations (Massey et al. 2003). These policies, along with US entry into World War II, set the stage for the implementation of Mexican agricultural laborers in the US. In early 1942, the Roosevelt administration negotiated a binational treaty with Mexico, that allowed for the temporary importation of Mexican farmworkers through the *Bracero Agreement*. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) oversaw the program and was given authority to

regulate entries and departures and enforce the terms of temporary visas (Massey et al. 2003). According to the terms of the agreement, US employers were supposed to cover transportation and living expenses of Mexican laborers, as well provide wages equal to those of US farmworkers (Migration Policy Institute 2013). However, the program was exploitative of Mexican laborers. They lived in harsh and unsanitary conditions, were forced to use their minimal wages for food and housing and often times incurred more debt than savings (Calavita 1992).

During the WWII, around 168,000 braceros were recruited to the United States. Although the agreement was designed as a temporary wartime measure, the booming economy after the war perpetuated the need for agricultural labor. The agreement was extended in 1949 and again in 1951. Although the United States implemented these extensions, agricultural employers recruited undocumented workers because the amount of temporary work visas did not meet their needs (Calavita 1992; Massey et al. 2003). Employers began to use this loophole of undocumented labor to increase the arrival of new workers. Once in the United States, Mexican laborers would either register as braceros or work without documentation (Massey et al. 2003).

Although the demand for more laborers continued to grow throughout the decade after WWII, US citizens insisted that the United States “control the border.” In response, the INS issued “Operation Wetback” to militarize the border and organize a mass roundup of undocumented Mexican migrant workers (Calavita 1992). During this time, over one million migrants were apprehended. At some points, INS raids became so common that undocumented workers were arrested, transported back to the border and deported, only to be processed by the US Department of Labor and returned to the US for agricultural work (Calavita 1992; Massey et al. 2003). “Operation Wetback” was successful in pacifying the demands for more border control and satisfied employers by expanding the number of braceros. Overall, growers were supplied

with farm labor and the public was satisfied with the appearance of a controlled border (Massey et al. 2003).

However, by the 1960s the United States entered an era focused on expanding human rights and correcting immigration policies seen as intolerably racist (Massey et al. 2003). In 1964, Congress voted to terminate the *Bracero Agreement* (Calavita 1992; Massey et al. 2003). The program was phased out over the next two years and new immigration policies were enforced.

Implications of Ending the Bracero Program

The making of Latinx “illegality” became an issue on the US political forefront after the end of the Bracero Program in 1964. Over its twenty-two-year history, the *Bracero Program* introduced five million Mexican workers into the United States, under ranching and agricultural contracts (Massey et al. 2003). Ultimately, the program ended after light was shed on the deplorable living and working conditions migrants were forced to endure. Perhaps most importantly, the *Bracero Program* initiated the United States’ growing dependence on cheap, agricultural Mexican labor. When the program was finally terminated, this dependence did not cease. After decades of agricultural reliance, the United States created a circular flow with migrant workers in Mexico. The sudden elimination of the program had dramatic consequences for people who once sought temporary work in the United States. Overall, migratory flows for Mexican immigrants did not stop when legal avenues were curtailed, they simply continued without authorization. Massey and Pren (2012:5) explain that undocumented immigration rose after 1964, “because the temporary labor program had been terminated, leaving no legal way to accommodate the long-established flows.” Despite the reliance the United States historically placed on Mexican labor, it continues to be against the notion of providing avenues for migrants to work in the US today. This has created larger disparities politically and economically between

the two nations because Mexico has served as a “sending-country” for a long period of time. Since the end of the *Bracero Program* in 1964, “persistent revisions in the law have effectively foreclosed the viable prospects for the great majority who would migrate from Mexico to do so in accord with the law” (De Genova 2013:5). In sum, the end of the Bracero Program ultimately created the preliminary increase in “illegal” immigration due to the lack of legal entry opportunities. The end of the program signaled a justification of the ubiquitous distinction between undocumented and documented that further propelled harmful rhetoric. Overall, agricultural work within the United States had come to be defined as socially “foreign” and therefore designated for immigrant workers (Massey et al. 2003).

1965 Immigration and Nationality Act (Hart-Cellar Act)

In 1965, the US government abolished the national-origins quota system and replaced it with the landmark 1965 act, as a way to extirpate overt racism from US immigration policy (Massey et al. 2003). The new system created a visa allocation system for the Eastern Hemisphere—Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and the Pacific—in which each country from these regions would receive a quota of 20,000 visas annually. Visas were determined on the basis of family ties to US residents, US occupational demands, and in the case of humanitarian aid (Massey and Pren 2012). Immigrants in the Eastern Hemisphere were also subjected to a cap of 170,000 visas annually. Although countries in the Western Hemisphere did not have visa limits per country, the region was given a quota of 120,000 visas per year. Overall, the hemispheric cap system was the first major US attempt to limit the number of Latin American immigrants to the United States (Massey and Pren 2012). For the first time, Mexican immigrants were forced to compete for a limited supply of visas with immigrants from other Latin American countries (Massey et al. 2003).

Later, in 1976 Congress made further amendments to the *Immigration and Nationality Act*, that prevented young US-born children from sponsoring their parents' immigration. It mandated that US citizens 21 and over could petition for legal entry of their parents. It also extended the 20,000 visas per-country limit to the Western Hemisphere. As Latin American immigration was stifled because of the hemispheric caps, legal immigration declined.

Then in 1978, further amendments eliminated the system of hemispheric caps on visas and created a single 290,000 worldwide cap (Massey et al. 2003). The number of visas available to immigrants in the Western Hemisphere, specifically Mexico, was severely limited. This sharp reduction in accessibility to visas helped lead an explosion in undocumented immigration to the United States (Massey et al. 2003). Just because visas were limited, did not mean that migrant workers from Mexico and other Latin American countries would stop entering the United States for work. Even though the border represented the United States' defense against undocumented immigration, most immigrants were not deterred from crossing. If they were caught, most would retry entry, because the likelihood of getting into the United States was high (Massey and Singer 1995). During this time, US employers continued to benefit from easy access to Mexican workers. Also, the public remained assuaged because Border Patrol appeared to be focused on apprehending and deporting immigrants.

Immigration Reform and Control Act

However, as undocumented immigration grew more visible, the United States experienced feelings of insecurity about the rising immigrant population. In 1986, President Ronald Reagan implemented the *Immigration Reform and Control Act*, also known as IRCA. The policy granted amnesty to those who came to the United States without documentation after the termination of the *Bracero Program*. Perhaps due to criticism that the law was perceived as "liberal," it also mandated that it was illegal for employers to knowingly hire undocumented

workers. This created an even greater instability for undocumented migrants in the labor market and made them more vulnerable to detention and deportation if caught. IRCA shifted immigration legislation because, “its principal explicit preoccupation was undocumented migration” (Menjívar and Kanstroom 2013:19).

Shortly after the passage of IRCA, the notion of the “Latino Threat” became a popular narrative in US media. The rise of this tale occurred during a period of large income inequality between the classes. Economic instability in the United States contributed to citizens “feeling individually deprived... to feeling collectively deprived [and] this collective feeling leads to blaming out-groups (immigrants, rich elites, the party in power)” (as cited in Massey and Pren 2012:6). The Latino Threat narrative and the restrictions placed on work opportunities and citizenship for migrants ultimately portrays how, “we imagine who we are as a people and who we wish to include as part of the nation” (Chavez 2013:4). Demonizing Latinx immigrants and illegal migration hailed future legislation that criminalized undocumented people in the United States and justified hateful rhetoric about their legal situation.

Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act

In 1996, President Clinton approved the passage of one of the most punitive immigration laws to date. The *Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act* or IIRIRA created, “extensive provisions for criminalizing, apprehending, detaining, fining, deporting, and imprisoning a wide array of ‘infractions’ that significantly broadened and elaborated the qualitative scope of the law’s production of ‘illegality’ for undocumented migrants” (Menjívar and Kanstroom 2013:22). The measures effectively criminalized those who entered the United States in an unauthorized manner and set bars on reentry. Overall, the law functioned as more of an incentive for illegality because it forced undocumented people to evade the law by disappearing into the status of “illegality” and remain in the US as an unauthorized presence

(Menjívar and Kanstroom 2013). Undocumented migrants are forced to live in a heightened state of fear because of the measures implemented through IIRIRA. For the most part, those without proper documentation avoid common areas like restaurants, schools or hospitals, out of fear of deportation (Chavez 2013). Remaining in the United States as an undocumented person invokes a sense of invisible visibility because the lack of status increases the fear of being caught or labeled as an “illegal.” After the passage of IIRIRA, illegality operated as a brand that could damage the future for migrants in the US through stigmatization. In this sense, the language that defines status has created notions of varying permissibility. The common legal identifiers, such as “illegal alien” or “illegals” have created a nested system for people residing in the United States. For those without proper documentation, these labels impose the need for hiding, as associations to legal identifiers could mean losing everything. After the 1996 laws, it can be said that even the “land of the free” is tainted by forced instability and hiding.

The War on Terror

The initiation of the War on Terror after the events of September 11, 2001 permitted a new kind of security tactic in the United States (De Genova 2007). Within the context of antiterrorist panic, immigration and border enforcement policies now became an issue of national security for the United States. The successive years after the attack signaled a new regime of stricter border policing and militarization. The USA PATRIOT Act expanded surveillance on the border, more discretion for Border Patrol Officers, and more developed technologies to detect people attempting to cross. As border enforcement strengthened, the number of arrests, detentions and deportations within the United States increased. Overall, Massey (2012:15) clarifies that, “these measures not only further strengthened border enforcement, which had been rising for some time, but more dramatically increased the number of arrests, detentions, and deportations within the United States.” The inception of fear-based security tactics only

increased suspicion of migrants and foreigners alike. This again demonstrates the way legislation aims to refine and extend the interpretations of “illegality” of migrants.

The militarization of the border over the past decade, has led to the justification that the United States needs to be protected from “illegal aliens” attempting to unrightfully enter the country. The overall reshaping of the border through the onset of restrictive immigration laws, has influenced the notion of US insecurity. Border militarization occurred in attempt to control drugs and migrants from crossing into the United States (Ganster 2015). While the border serves as a gateway for many migrants to reach economic opportunity, it also maintains unequal power relations that favor the US. The belief that drugs and people are consistently crossing the border in an undocumented manner indicates the persistent stigma of illegality that is attached to migrants (Menjivar and Kanstroom 2013).

It is interesting however, that this perception of illegality shifts depending on the need of the US to receive goods and labor from Mexico. Ganster (2015:24) points out that the North American Free Trade Agreement established “a framework to facilitate and regulate future commercial and financial flows in North America”. NAFTA has failed to reduce poverty for the working poor in Mexico and has not increased security within the United States but remains in place because of the value it brings to the economy of the US overall (Staudt 2018). NAFTA is a seamless example of how the United States maintains a “revolving door” of immigration (De Genova 2013). Generally, US expansion and globalization is necessary except when it comes to regulating a dependence on international labor (Facchini, Mayda, Guiso, and Schultz 2008). This means that Latinx migrant deportations are simultaneous with the importation of international goods. While the United States continues to produce laws that criminalize undocumented populations, it maintains its dependence on these very groups.

Latinx Immigration Boom

The massive increase in border enforcement and deportations were not successful in preventing the entry of millions of undocumented Mexicans after 1965 (Massey and Pren 2012; Redburn, Reuter and Majmundar 2011). For instance, from 1980 the first estimated number of undocumented Mexican immigrants living in the United States was 1.13 million, the population grew to 2.04 million in 1990, reached 4.68 million in 2000, and then peaked at 7.03 million in 2008. Researchers also discovered that “most of the remaining growth in undocumented population came from Central America” (Massey and Pren 2012). The United States has a long history of intervention in Latin American countries. While this history is extensive and not homogenous among all Latin American countries, it mostly includes efforts to fund paramilitary groups, that resulted in an increase in state violence, and a disruption of national economies. Overall, the United States involvement in Latin American countries resulted in a wave of emigrants from these regions. For the most part, they were met with restrictions on legal entry, as a result of previous policies that were created to deter Mexican immigration (Lundquist and Massey 2005). Flows of undocumented immigrants from Central America and Mexico made up three-quarters of the estimated undocumented immigrant population during the time of the account (Massey and Pren 2012).

The massive inflow of undocumented Latin American immigrants coincided with a settled pattern of migration (Massey, Durand and Malone 2003). The cost of crossing the border without documentation had increased so greatly, that immigrants who once planned a circular migration ended up settling in the United States, to prevent having to traverse the border again. Overall, the “sharp decline in the outflow of undocumented migrants, [not necessarily] an increase in the inflow of undocumented migrants was responsible for the acceleration of undocumented population growth during the 1990s and early 2000s, and this decline in return

migration was to a great extent a product of US enforcement efforts (Massey and Pren 2012:17-18). This is one of the major unintended consequences of strict border enforcement that continues to persist today.

Impacts of Tough Immigration Policy

The surge in border enforcement policies came in response to the perception that the United States needed protection from outsiders. These conceptions of international policy were heightened in the 1970s, after the creation of hemispheric caps through the Hart-Cellar Act and then later in the 1990s to 2000s as a way to combat the War on Terror. The Latinx community, including undocumented immigrants, legal residents, and citizens alike, has been the target of the organized state solution to stopping the presence of non-white people in United States territory (Cortez 2017). The heightened demand for security increased the overall budget of the Border Patrol and increased the number of officers that worked on the border. The enhanced border policing strategies that officers used involved, “the use of military rhetoric and ideology, as well as military tactics, strategy, technology, equipment and forces” (Slack, Martinez, Lee and Whiteford, 2016:9). This indicates the focus placed on “maintaining a secure border” over of migrant well-being. Overall, the enforcement practices in the US-Mexico border region are due to the system of violence as a deterrent to undocumented migration. The criminalization of migrants and the increased weaponization of the border is integral to the structure of Border Patrol because violence is a centralized strategy. The use of weapons, the criminalization and incarceration of migrants and the use of force by officers are favored over acts of human decency (Slack et al. 2016). Consequently, the different practices that make up border enforcement lead to a greater understanding of the different types of violence used.

There are different types of violence that people experienced while crossing, during apprehension and incarceration and then when they were returned to Mexico and other Latin

American countries (Slack et al. 2016). Structural violence emphasizes the routine nature of abuse as a fundamental part of border policing. The overall increase in border militarization correlates with the increase in deaths at the border. Migrant deaths are largely the result of the “prevention through deterrence” strategy that came about as the culture of the US Border Patrol became more organizational (Cornelius and Lewis 2007). Slack et al. (2016:15) explains that, “the enforcement practices that push people into physically dangerous border terrain have killed thousands of people.” This strategy of deterrence is a direct consequence of the presence of structural violence because it creates the conditions that lead to increased border mortality rates.

Border violence is a common theme in the experiences of those who cross the border (Slack et al. 2016). Violence can occur both directly or indirectly and includes, “the [structural] violence that causes border-crossing deaths through policies designed to funnel people into deadly terrain, as well as informal types of migrant abuse by border bandits, drug trafficking organizations, and authorities from the United States and Mexico” (Slack et al. 2016:13). The migrants’ experiences show for example, difficulties with coyotes, who often provide drugs or abandon migrants in the desert. These situations are more informal consequences of border militarization because they occur in response to the practices used by United States Border Patrol, in order to keep undocumented migration clandestine.

Border militarization has also rearranged the human geography of the border (Cornelius and Lewis 2007; Slack et al. 2016). For example, the recent increases in crossings through South Texas are a direct result of the buildup of border enforcement in the South Arizona region. It is apparent that violent border militarization practices and an increase in agents do not deter people from crossing the border but force them to try alternative routes. Overall, Border Patrol defines territorial boundaries by setting an “Us vs. Them” precedent, in conjunction with structural

violence. Violence, whether it is institutionalized or a direct result of policies, is central to the militarization of border enforcement.

The United States' immigration and deportation strategies focus on undocumented men to strategically and institutionally block revenue and therefore the ultimate success of immigrant families (Golash-Boza 2015). This demonstrates the extent to which the United States upholds racist and gendered immigration laws that harm Latinx families. The rise of deportations of Latin American men is alarming considering the effect it has on family members left behind in the United States. Generally speaking, the immigrant workforce is primarily made up of men, who contribute to the family income and necessities. When the breadwinner of the family is targeted by interior law enforcement, deportation is used to strategically weaken social and economic availability of undocumented immigrant families. Golash-Boza (2015:1226) explains that “when men are deported, they often leave women and children behind.” Ironically, the United States pushes for a more educated and well-rounded population, while deliberately removing that opportunity for children of immigrant families. Policies like these demonstrate a dividing line between which US citizens are important and which are not. The institutional targeting of Latinx men simply rejects mobility for immigrant children by blocking the chance to succeed.

The restriction of due process laws has also created a new set of implications for deportation in the United States during the current century (Golash-Boza 2012). Deportation can extend to legal permanent residents, as well as to undocumented immigrants. The system of detention and deportation has greatly expanded in the past decade and has seriously impacted the lives of US-born children of immigrants. The law stipulates that people facing deportation do not have the right to a trial by jury; a person can be deported now for an offense that was not a deportable offense when it was committed; a person can first be punished under criminal law for an offense and then deported without being able to claim double jeopardy; people facing

deportation do not have the right to appointed counsel, and a person facing deportation cannot claim that deportation subjected them to cruel and unusual punishment. So, while the United States claims that deportation is not punitive, it certainly appears to be a punishment to undocumented people facing deportation.

Race and immigration laws are certainly intertwined. Structural racism is deeply embedded in socializing institutions to disadvantage ethnic and racial minorities. For instance, the targeting of Latino men, the repeated and directed deportation of black and brown immigrants, and the judicial processes for deportation demonstrate how particular groups are focused on and perceived to be a threat to the overall “American character.” The United States is dedicated to aggression when it comes to the removal of unauthorized immigrants. Even though policies are not explicitly racialized, immigration enforcement has disproportionately affected Mexicans and Central Americans. This bias is evident at federal and local levels. Despite the fact that people without legal status can be found in all “colors and classes,” federal enforcement seems to hold a tougher position with immigrants from Mexico and Central America. The perpetuation of racial profiling and stereotyping in stops and arrests equates to a broader notion of an overall fear of people of color (Mueller 2017). Border Patrol and local police officers enforce immigration law through mostly appearance-based criteria that directly impacts communities of color. This system is inherently racialized and negatively affects Latinos within the unauthorized population. For instance, “nearly all deportations from the interior of the USA occur after an encounter with local law enforcement” (Golash-Boza 2015:1227). The appearance-based criteria for police stops and interactions with local law enforcement alliances directly correlate to stops, arrests, and deportations for Latinx communities. Institutionalized racism directly impacts the levels of mass deportation by practices of profiling and targeting.

Perhaps the only solution to these actions of racial injustice is to deescalate the rhetoric around unauthorized immigrants in the United States.

Fear and Threat Narratives

The exclusionary precedent set by the past few decades of immigration policies is a direct translation of the sentiments held by people in the United States. It is evident that “Americans” seem willing to allow the constitutional rights of foreigners and immigrants be diminished so long as those of citizens appears to remain intact (Chavez 2013). The particular creation of immigration laws that criminalize and “other” migrant populations come to the benefit of the “American” ruling-class because they inherently maintain the current racial hierarchies. These laws not only serve to label an entire population but also further subjugate brown, Latinx immigrants.

The historical precedent of equating race and immigration remains present today. The complex social production of the white racial identity is one that culturally separates white people from folks of color. The tension and unsureness white people have towards brown immigrants creates a self-imposed fear. This fear is almost never resolved because of the restrained lifestyle imposed upon folks of color. The relationship between fear and white identity creates an obscured “inversion of reality” in the discourse between white people and people of color because white people, and white “Americans” in general, objectify social labels both interpersonally and institutionally (Lensmire 2010). Immigrants of color, specifically undocumented immigrants, are perceived to be more threatening to white people than they actually are. This inversion of social reality is purposely overlooked to undermine the experiences of people of color.

During the current presidency, there has been a resurgence of “white victimhood” that predates the current ideology of social labeling. Through this lens, undocumented immigrants

pose a major threat to the economic mobility and job opportunity available to US citizens. This tactic helps to maintain policies of racial inequality and enact white folks' need to "combat" the forces standing against them (Lensmire 2010; King 2015; Esposito 2011). White people actively contribute to spurious language, such as negative labeling, to prevent further legislation from ameliorating true racial and ethnic discrimination. They remain fearful of an equitable system because it would grant people of color the same statuses that white people have been given for centuries (Esposito 2011). Overall, the idea of white victimhood is used as an explanation for white backlash against social policies. The continuation of constraining immigration laws continues to promote the norms of whiteness, in relation to the suppression of brown and black immigrants. Immigrants of color, who wish to pursue an "American" lifestyle are perceived as threatening because they highlight the flaws in the myth of dominant whiteness (Esposito 2011; King 2015). The United States continues to write policies that demonize undocumented immigrants in order to prevent a loss of white dominance.

The Latino Threat Narrative has precursors in US history, such as the Catholic Threat, the Chinese and Japanese Threat, the southern and eastern European threat and each is evidenced through discriminatory policy (Chavez 2013). In the case of these different discourses, a particular immigrant group was targeted and defined by pervasive, yet unmaterialized "truths." However, the Latino Threat Narrative exceeds other threat narratives because Latinx people have been in the territory now known as the United States, for centuries (Chavez 2013). The Latino Threat Narrative represents Latinx people, especially immigrants, as the "Other" and as a "danger" to the nation (Chavez 2013). The discourse often used to prove the Latino Threat Narrative is so pervasive because its basic premises are taken for granted as true (Chavez 2013). The Threat Narrative poses ideas like, Latinx immigrants are immutable to society, are uneducated, are monolingual, anti-English speakers, who manipulate institutions like education,

social services and medical care. Overall, these taken-for-granted truths are used to distinguish Latinx immigrants as outsiders, and therefore deserving of a segmented citizenship (Chavez 2013). The Latino Threat Narrative is a social construction of the Latinx experience. It is used to define them as “illegal aliens,” and mere abstractions to the “American” identity.

Governing through “Illegality”

The threat of migrant “illegality” has arisen on the American forefront in recent years, as policies shift the overall symbolism surrounding immigration. The years following the end of the Bracero Program in 1964 introduced a whole new era of immigration policy and reform. Unsurprisingly, this created a new set of concerns for Latinx immigrants in the United States, regardless of their documentation status. For example, there was an increase in social labeling and stereotyping Latinx immigrants, and their intentions for migration. For those without documentation, they faced pressures to remain clandestine and “unthreatening.” As historical precedent has demonstrated, “illegality” is socially constructed. Chavez (2013:27) explains that, as people move across porous national boundaries, their status is determined by policies in those nation-states, not by some essential quality inherent in the migrant’s genetic code or personal philosophy of life.” Also, policies are bound to change. In the past, they have been responsible for shifting documentation status and re-appropriating the meaning of citizenship. Changes in law demonstrate how, “being an unauthorized migrant, an ‘illegal,’ is a status conferred by the state, and it then becomes written upon the bodies of the migrants themselves because illegality is both produced and experienced. But illegality itself is a status resulting from political decisions made by governmental representatives who could just as well have decided to allow migrants to enter under the sanction of law, as legal immigrants, legal workers, or legal guest workers” (Chavez 2013:28). Overall, undocumented migration is produced and patterned by changes in policy, therefore laws that criminalize an entire population produce notions of

illegality in mere presence. Increases in restrictive immigration laws create negative social labels for people who are undocumented in the United States.

Consequences of Illegality

The term “illegal” was strategically realized after restrictive immigration laws were adopted in the United States. Unsurprisingly, the laws deterred substantial migration from Mexico, even though no other country has ever supplied as many migrants to the US as Mexico. De Genova (2013:5) explains that since the end of the Bracero Program in 1964, “persistent revisions in the law have effectively foreclosed the viable prospects for the great majority who would migrate from Mexico to do so in accord with the law”. The changes in laws were prominent in the production of “illegality” in the undocumented migrant workforce.

The explosion of laws that governed “illegal immigration” changed the ways in which the United States protected its borders and dealt with undocumented populations. In a cyclical fashion, undocumented migration is seen as an invasive problem in the United States and this perception has altered border policing strategies. Likewise, violence on the border and the label of “illegality” develop because of strict laws. These factors are intensely detrimental to certain migratory groups and have been developed through the history of the United States as it has grown into a “nation of immigrants.”

The induction of these immigration measures was prominent in the production of migrant “illegality”. Overall, it is evident that the rhetoric used to define people without proper documentation has limited the quality of life and opportunities available to that population. People are controlled through social discourses so, by labeling an entire population as “illegal,” the United States continues to systematically reject a workforce that it remains reliant on. The term “illegal alien is a profoundly useful and profitable one that effectively serves to create and sustain a legally vulnerable—hence, relatively tractable and thus ‘cheap’—reserve of labor” (De

Genova 2013:6). The “illegal” label is therefore systematically and consciously deployed in attempt to keep undocumented people from socializing to the United States while simultaneously demanding the need for cheap, “off-the-books” labor. Overall, the legal production of “illegality” was not a master plan, but rather a consequence of immigration laws that tactically refined the parameters of labor discipline and coercion.

Consequently, even Latinx immigrants who have proper documentation status, are often subjected to the same labeling processes as undocumented immigrants. To reiterate, this a major consequence of the pervasiveness of the Latino Threat Narrative. Latinx immigrants are still viewed as “foreigners,” no matter the legal avenues they traversed to be in the United States.

The construction of migrant “illegality” through legislation and rhetoric is significant because it demonstrates how legality intersects with social hierarchies in the US. Out of fear of “others,” the United States continues to subject Latinx immigrants to labels of “illegality” in order to methodically subjugate their opportunities. Classifying populations based on documentation status persistently acts to colonize entire groups of people, as a tactic to maintain power relations. It is important to remember how the United States creates and sustains undocumented populations through law creation and policy changes. Overall, it is evident that these labels have been historically significant in the treatment and overall perception of Latinx people. The laws that have reinforced strict boundaries between status groups have served to create a distinct association with illegality and what it means for the state of the country.

Emotion-Work and Emotional Politics

Ahmed (2004) argues that emotions are cultural practices that work “economically” or as a commodity for collective response. In this sense, emotions can function as a political tactic to shift ideological beliefs through the emphasis on affectivity. The repetition of particular and charged words, elicits an emotional response that grows upon more repetition. Rhetoric has

socially recognizable history, so the more that emotional messages are repeated, the more circulation they have and the more consequences they produce (Ioanide 2015). “Economical” emotions can lead to collective politics and social alliances because they have the unique ability to “foreclose people’s cognitive receptivity” (Ioanide 2015:2). The presumption that we can combat hegemonic narratives like nativism or racism by generating more empirical facts is challenged by the reality that people’s emotions are likely to prevent engagements with reasonable arguments (Ioanide 2015). Dominant emotional economies often reduce people’s willingness to challenge their own false beliefs because powerful emotions like fear or phobia significantly reduce the extent to which people are open to new information. Overall, emotional economies influence the degree to which people are committed to false beliefs.

In terms of the Latino Threat Narrative, when false beliefs are so invested with emotions, such emotions significantly impact the extent to which people are open to new information, facts, and evidence, particularly if these prove emotionally challenging. This is to say that people who support and reiterate the characteristics of the Latino Threat Narrative may do so because of their own investment in the embodied experiences of myths. Over time, these myths become difficult to demystify because of their deep entrenchment with emotions. As false beliefs get reiterated and reproduced, emotions may increase and therefore eliminate any possibility of debunking.

Perhaps most importantly, immigration myths are often relayed through extensive media coverage, and help constituents construct an understanding of the events, people and places in the world (Chavez 2013). Overall, as worldviews are constructed through an interpretation of the disseminated news information, emotions are fostered and therefore inhibit the potential for belief in dissenting information.

The relationship between mass media and political opinion is complicated by the vital role of emotions in decision making (Namkoong, Fung, and Scheufele 2012). Research has

shown that news messages can elicit vast emotional responses in consumers (Namkoong et al 2012). Different technological features have the power to change and create different experiences for consumers. Along with these features, news production has emphasized a greater focus on emotions to provoke reactions (Friedman, Gorney and Egolf 1987). The specific emotions that a consumer may have about a political issue, manifest through affective responses and influence later political behavior.

Media Consumption

The mass media serves as a system for communicating particular messages and symbols to the general population. In a society with major conflicts regarding citizenship and immigration, the media functions to inform and “inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society” (Herman and Chomsky 1988).

As immigration-related issues receive increased media attention, particular knowledge is disseminated to help construct a narrative about the social world (Chavez 2013). The media’s representation of immigration, citizenship and nationality impacts the perception of “belonging” in the United States. In terms of the Latino Threat Narrative, media produces knowledge about those considered legitimate members of society. Whether media promotes concern for the plight of immigrants or demonstrates anti-immigration support, it is responsible for constructing what it means to be a citizen.

Oftentimes, people’s opinions are framed by their intake of particular media sources, that can impact their voting decisions and stances on specific issues, such as immigration. Republicans and Democrats are more divided along ideological lines today, than at any point in the past two decades (Mitchell, Barthel and Holcomb 2018). The gap between ideological camps is strengthened by media intake and a particular dependence on specific news sources. Mass

media in the United States effects emotion-work because it is overwhelmingly influenced by those in control of media rhetoric, the writing perspective and the message framing (Herman and Chomsky 1988).

A Matter of Political Perception

Immigration legislation has been successful at creating separation between status groups in the United States by systematically enforcing policies that prioritize white US citizens. Perhaps in relation to this, statisticians have noticed that partisan animosity has increased substantially over the same period (Mitchell, Matsa, Gottfried, and Kiley 2014). The more laws are used to separate the people residing in the United States, the more political polarization. As groups divide among their ideological beliefs, the idea of “illegality” becomes more contingent on the specific beliefs people hold. In terms of media consumption, the contingency of “illegality” indicates that how Latinx immigration can be subjected to, “deliberate framing, that enables an audience to see their concerns reflected in the problem” (as cited in Smithberger, 2016, p.5). In attempt to get an audience to act or understand a concept in a particular way, political ideological groups present Latinx immigration according to their own phenomenological perspective. This tactic makes Latinx immigration becomes less objective and more contextually bound. In turn, the media may present their knowledge of immigration in a frame that is not neutral in order to push their particular point. Particular frames may vary depending on media sources. In terms of news intake, sources are distinct depending on which side of the aisle a person falls on, in terms of political ideology. Pew Research Center (2014) found that consistent liberals named an array of main sources, like CNN, MSNBC, NPR and NYT while consistent conservatives were firm supporters of Fox News as their main news source. As Ioanide (2015) demonstrates, particular media frames can be emotionally interpreted and therefore inhibit the cognitive ability to accept dissenting or even factual information.

In recent years, an increase in anti-immigrant sentiment has been developed in the United States. As legislative rhetoric has impacted the beliefs people hold, there is a noticeable difference in the way immigration is discussed in the news. Various demographic, behavioral and attitudinal factors influence individuals' beliefs about the presence of Latinx immigrants in the United States.

On one hand, Smithberger (2016) discusses how people use the “illegal immigrants” terminology to stress the otherness of immigrants. This completely limits the identity of immigrants to their legal status, and simultaneously denies them an individual identity. Under this assumption, the beliefs people hold are easily coerced into viewing immigration as detrimental. Generally, the term “illegal immigrants” casts a negative light on undocumented people, that demonstrates a need for fear. The “illegal” terminology juxtaposes lawfulness in a way that stands against societal norms and represents a need for objection. The negative framework serves as a guide to reiterate the necessity for societal homogeneity and can impact Latinx immigrants who have proper documentation. The general interpretation of the “illegal immigrant” ideograph illustrates that “those arriving illegally are compromising our quality of life, taking jobs away from those already here, and threatening our sovereignty as a nation” (Smithberger 2016:12). The fears that people present regarding undocumented immigration are a direct outcome of their personal views.

On the other hand, positive language framing techniques can be used to support an argument. In a more specific sense, positive frames that are used to organize information about Latinx immigration lead to a generated meaning that can be more positive. For example, terminology such as “undocumented” or “unauthorized” tends to be more positive and contributes to a less turbulent rhetoric to shape views. Depictions of immigrants as characteristically good, or “contributing to society,” help create a positive image of Latinx

people despite other widespread negative rhetoric. These positive frames function in the same way as language that is used to generate negative perceptions. The perspective someone holds creates a salient understanding. Overall, the phenomenological perspective a person holds will dictate their view of immigration because the information they seek out pertains mostly to sources that corroborate their previously established emotional response.

Constituents in the United States have maintained divisive beliefs since the early conception of political parties. These ideological groups can certainly “be averse to other groups or general interest” (Pomper 1992, p.145). But it is this early polarized nature that has maintained the divergent beliefs that are prevalent in the United States today. Overall, we can see how these variances have been translated into the very epistemology groups hold regarding social issues, like Latinx immigration. It is evident that these arguments are then interpreted by different groups as they come to understand their own perspectives on immigration. Understanding “illegality” can shift depending on political affiliation and news sources that reaffirm interpretations.

Attitudes Towards Migrants

As the immigration population has grown in the United States, scholars have been working to better understand immigration attitudes to identify what factors influence opinions towards immigrant groups (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2015). For the most part, the perception of economic competition and ethnocentrism drive commonly-held attitudes towards immigrants. These different forms of anti-immigrant sentiment are reciprocated through media and lend to the Latino Threat Narrative (Chavez 2013).

In terms of the perception of economic competition, US native-born people often perceive immigrants as competitors for jobs, especially if their skills and occupations are similar to US native-born people (Mayda 2006; Scheve and Slaughter 2001). This means that

immigrants are more likely to be negatively perceived if they are seen as threatening to job availability. Another variant of economic competition is the fear that immigrants will influence US native-born residents through taxes and spending (Facchini et al. 2008). This is demonstrated through the perception of immigrants as “taxing the system” or imposing on US welfare or benefits systems. Overall, US native-born residents respond to immigrants based on perceptions of their economic contribution and their impact on the national economy.

Ethnocentrism is another factor that influences native-born residents’ attitudes towards immigrants. Ethnocentrism is defined as the preference for one’s own ethnic or racial group in relation to all others (Yinger, 1985). A high reliance on ethnocentrism has been shown to predict immigration opposition (Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004). Kinder and Kam (2009) find ethnocentrism to be positively correlated with support for restrictive immigration policies among White “Americans.”

For white “Americans,” attitudes about immigration adhere to racial cues (Segovia 2009). Immigration preferences are driven by issues of racial prejudice and can result in a more negative view of non-European immigrant groups, than European groups by white “Americans.” This demonstrates the extent to which white “Americans” have harbored anti-immigrant attitudes when considering a racially stigmatized group, like Latinx immigrants.

According to the work of Hainmueller and Hopkins (2015:529) “Americans view educated immigrants in non-competitive jobs favorably, whereas they view those who lack plans to work, entered without authorization, or do not speak English unfavorably.”

The variant attitudes white “Americans” have in regard to specific immigrant groups demonstrates another consequence of the social construction of “illegality.” Some immigrant groups are deemed more favorable, while others are demonized or negatively associated with

“illegality” to justify their experience of “otherness.” Economic and ethnocentric factors influence the demarcation of immigrants.

Immigration Policies Under the 45th President

The current administration’s anti-immigrant legislation promises began during the 2016 Presidential election cycle. These promises came to fruition soon after the inauguration, with the introduction of Executive Order 13769: which quickly became known as the “Muslim Travel Ban” (Moreno 2018). The executive order barred entry for and imposed strict vetting processes on those traveling from many predominately Muslim countries such as “Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen” (Moreno 2018:7). Subsequent Executive Orders targeted nationals from African and Middle Eastern Countries. Some explicitly promoted this administration’s exclusionary sentiment and increased visa screening, reinstated interview requirements for applicants, longer processing times, and more employment-based green card interviews (American Immigration Lawyers Association 2018; Moreno 2018).

Additionally, the administration’s termination of Temporary Protected Status directly targeted action against immigrant communities and had implications for “over 400,000 people from El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua, Sudan and Honduras” (Moreno 2018:7). The end of this program would signal the end of US humanitarian support for people from countries experiencing hardship, conflict or natural disasters. This action demonstrates the current administration’s awareness that discrimination can be enacted through policy implementation and termination. Despite the continual need some immigrants have for Temporary Protected Status, the termination directly imposes a sense of disregard for these needs.

In addition to these policies, the current administration also ended the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) on September 5, 2017. Although several lawsuits have been filed against the administration for unlawfully terminating the program, over 690,000

beneficiaries are impacted (Moreno 2018). The termination and subsequent contention over DACA directly impact Latinx immigrants, as they are forced into a status waiting period. Current DACA recipients come from all over the world, but more than nine-in-ten were born in Latin America (López and Krogstad 2017). This quantifies the major effects this policy decision has had on hundreds of thousands of young Latinx immigrants.

Lastly and most recently, there has been an increase in arrests and detentions by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and an influx of Border Patrol Agents and military members patrolling the US-Mexico Border (Moreno 2018). In April 2018, the administration launched a “zero tolerance” policy on the southwest border that resulted in family separation and detention. Thousands of children were separated from their parents, and many have yet to be reunited. Additionally, the notion of “zero tolerance” against clandestine immigration has reappropriated the dependence on Latinx threat narratives. The administration’s response to the supposed “invasion” of Latinx immigrants has led to a bipartisan fight over the construction of a border-wall between Mexico and the United States, a government shutdown that lasted 35 days, a National Emergency declaration, the deployment of troops to the border, and changes to asylum-seeking policies. While these factors each have their own complex implications, they demonstrate the extent to which the current administration is willing to uphold anti-immigrant, and anti-Latinx immigrant policy to defend the racial hierarchy and the identity of the United States as white.

Conclusion

Historical political, social and cultural policy, immigration rhetoric and identity politics shape the views people hold towards Latinx immigration. Social discourse influences immigration as a societal phenomenon and reveals the perceptions that people use to understand

the topic. It is evident that people use specific terminology, shaped by their own beliefs and history, to discuss Latinx immigration.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methodology used for this qualitative research project on white American perceptions of Latinx immigration in the United States. Qualitative research allowed for more insight on the negotiations white Americans make to determine their opinions, especially in terms of reported data and media consumption. This chapter will examine the ways qualitative research appropriately aided this study. It will also include the study design, the processes of methodology, the sources of data collection, how analysis was conducted, the limitations of the study, researcher reflexivity and ethical considerations.

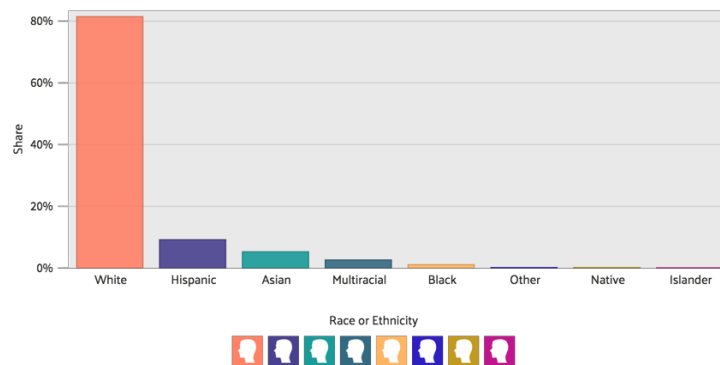
Research Setting

The sites for this study took place in Boulder, Colorado, and Houston, Texas. The cities are vastly different in terms of racial demographics. According to annual reports from the U.S. Census Bureau (Data USA), of the foreign-born population in Boulder and Houston, majority of immigrants are Hispanic. When compared to other states, Texas and Colorado, in general have a relatively high number of residents from Mexico. This data is interesting considering the immense differences in the overall demography of the cities. For reference, in 2016, there were 8.89 times more white, Non-Hispanic residents (85,878 people) in Boulder, CO than any other race or ethnicity. There were 9,657 Hispanic residents; the second most common of racial or ethnic groups. Comparatively, in 2016, there were 1.86 times more Hispanic residents (1.03M people) in Houston, TX than any other race or ethnicity. White, Non-Hispanic residents made up the second highest racial group, at 556,000 people. These two places were interesting to study because Houston has received a lot of Latinx immigrants throughout the last century, while Boulder only experiences some migration from Latin America. I was originally focused on the White, Non-Hispanic vs. Hispanic racial makeup in each city as a point of comparison because I

wanted to see if demographic information was informative of participants’ observed impact of Latin American immigration in their lives and in their place of residence overall. The demographic data allowed me to contextualize the two cities with their corresponding racial makeup. Overall, I hoped to find that the racial and ethnic demographics, as well as proximity to the border would impact participants opinions. I originally assumed that because Houston is geographically closer to the southern border of the United States that participants from that region would have explicit anti-immigrant opinions, as opposed to participants in Boulder who are geographically further from this region. This is relevant because the border signifies a long and rich set of relationships with immigration from Mexico, both in terms of laborers and well-off immigrants. In terms of the participants I accessed in each city, there was more variation in support of immigration for self-identified Conservatives in Boulder than in Houston. I believe that this trend can be attributed to the fact that there is less Latinx immigration to Boulder when compared to Houston, so residents may feel more inclined to view immigration more favorably because they are further removed. However, it is important to recognize that “even in places with a sizable immigrant community, most natives may not personally know ‘illegal immigrants’ due to ethnic and racial segregation” (Flores and Schachter 2018).

Race & Ethnicity in Boulder, Co

The closest comparable data for the census place of Boulder, CO is from the state of Colorado.

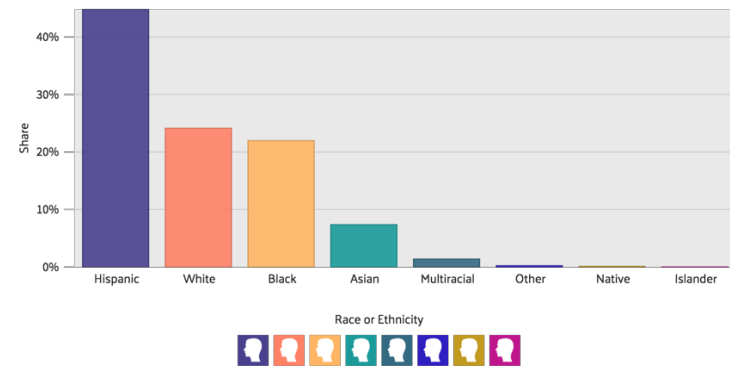


Dataset: ACS 5-year Estimate
Source: Census Bureau

DATAUSA:

Race & Ethnicity in Houston, Tx

The closest comparable data for the census place of Houston, TX is from the state of Texas.



Dataset: ACS 1-year Estimate
Source: Census Bureau

DATAUSA:

Study Design

This study is reliant on the phenomenological research design. I used this design because it is a way of describing something that exists as an integral part of the world in which society exists. Phenomenological research allowed me to bridge the gap in understanding the relationship between the social construction of illegality, media consumption and the creation of a national identity.

This study draws upon the qualitative methods of interviews for data collection. I did this because qualitative methods generally begin with an exploratory research question, have an orientation to a social context, focus on human and researcher subjectivity (Chambliss and Schutt 2013). Qualitative methods were used in this study because this research explores the relationship between personal opinion, media consumption and perception of Latinx immigration, and does not seek to confirm it. Interviews were used in this study to contextualize my research. This qualitative approach allowed for a better examination of the social construction foundation white, Non-Hispanic folks use to navigate their own definitions of citizenship and illegality. Participants were recruited using a snowball sampling method that will be described later in this chapter.

Interviews

I conducted 17 semi-structured interviews in the Boulder and Houston areas. I used snowball sampling to recruit participants for this study. Snowball sampling is a recruitment method in which participants are selected as successive interviewees from previous informants who identified them (Chambliss & Schutt 2013). This means that participants in my sample referred me to people within their own social networks and therefore allowed me to access more individuals. To utilize snowball sampling recruitment techniques, I contacted an individual I already knew and wanted to interview. Once I successfully interviewed them, I asked them to refer me to any other individuals who would be interested in interviewing. I used this technique in both Houston and Boulder. I also reached out to a number of other individuals, who had no connection to my first participant and snowballed from their social networks as well. This allowed me to gather a sample from a wider population of participants. I contacted these original participants via text message or over the phone. Snowball sampling was the best recruitment method for my study because the goal was to understand a small group in depth, rather than have a generalizable research design. This sampling technique was also the most beneficial because of time restrictions and in the absence of funding. My participants were accessible, due to snowball sampling and geographic proximity to me.

The population I focused on during my interviews were white adults, ages 37 to 72. This age range is a factor of snowball sampling for my participants. My original informants were middle-aged, and they typically referred me to people from their own social groups, who also had similar ages. I did not intend to only have participants from this age group, but this was the result of snowball sampling recruitment.

My study focused explicitly on the opinions of white “Americans.” However, one individual in my study told me about their experiences growing up in a Chinese-American

biracial family, but self-identified as white when asked to fill out paperwork or survey information. They explained that they more strongly identified as racially white, not Asian biracial.

The 17 participants within the study reported a familiarity with US immigration policy and current events. Participants also reported their self-identified political affiliations. The political affiliations included participant's self-definition as Liberal, Democrat, Moderate, Libertarian, Conservative, Republican and Independent. The study included one Liberal Democrat, two Democrats, one left-leaning Moderate, two Moderates, one Independent, three Conservative Independents, two Conservatives, two Republicans, two Conservative Republicans, and one Conservative Republican and Libertarian. These labels of political affiliation are based on self-reported identities of participants (see appendix I). Every individual also reported their perceived level of diversity in the area they were currently residing in.

My research focused on white individuals in the United States because of their role in the creation of "othering" discourses over time. Anti-immigrant ideology stemmed from the conceptualization of the immigrant "other," since the nineteenth century. Overall as white "Americans" fostered in-group positive identities, they embedded a culture of anti-immigrant ideology, that was normalized to shape the "other" (Del Mar Farina 2018). This schema has been reimagined and reproduced throughout history and has manifested in policy enactments. The ideology of the immigrant "other" has become legitimized as white "Americans" continue to employ it to socially subjugate Latinx immigrant groups. Latinx immigrants were deemed "others" when white "American natives" began to feel threatened by their increasing presence in the United States. This perceived threat has been used to socially construct narratives around Latinx immigrant "illegality" in popular discourse and in the media. By focusing my interviews

on white individuals, I was able to determine what factors contribute to white perceptions of Latinx individuals and determine what the “American” identity means to them.

The most important source of data for this study was interviews with the research participants. I used semi-structured interview techniques to talk to participants about themselves, the political climate in general, and about specific topics and events that relate to immigration in the United States. I also took fieldnotes on these informal interviews. I went into interviews with a list of questions, but often digressed from the interview guide as the participants told me more about their own backgrounds and sentiments about immigration. These interviews lasted anywhere from thirty minutes to an hour. Most were conducted in quasi-public spaces like coffee shops or retail areas. All of these interviews were recorded and all portions that related to my research question were transcribed. Interviewing white people in the United States was important to this study because it allowed me to contextualize the role of hegemonic conceptions of immigration. The life experiences of my participants demonstrated the influence of certain factors in shaping perception.

The interview process followed the same routine for every participant. If we were meeting for the first time, I found that it was important to take time to become acquainted with the participant, to make sure they were comfortable, and felt like they could relate with me. I recorded every semi-structured interview. Despite participants’ original hesitancy with the recording device, their responses seemed open and I was able to understand their perceptions. I also recorded short notes about participants’ responses in a journal and on an extra sheet of paper I attached to the consent forms (see Appendix II). In my research journal, I made sure to write about my expectations before every interview, a technique I used to make sure I aware of any preexisting assumptions I had. After every interview, I used my journal to debrief from the interview and dissect my questions, my observations and my feelings after talking with someone.

I tried to keep the interviews informal, which is why I followed more of a semi-structured approach. I loosely used the interview guide. To a large extent, I let participants' comments guide my questions about the topics I had chosen. Overall, my interview guide allowed me to interpret and discuss participants' perspectives on ethnicity and citizenship. Although I hypothesized that respondents would uphold nativist assumptions, I feel that my interview questions were not leading and allowed the respondents to discuss their opinions on the topics. Each of the interviews provided valuable data for analysis.

During interviews, I paid attention to the silences, the resistance towards questions, and the range of emotions that participants expressed. I was careful in the interviews to avoid using language that the participants themselves did not use. I also tried to mimic the language that they most frequently used during the interview to maintain a sense of comfortability. I felt a tension between wanting more clarity in participant responses, and not wanting to make the participants feel pressured to say things that did not intend on saying. I did however find that in summarizing participants' responses back to them, there was more room to ask questions about their experiences and how they relate to the emerging themes I found.

Every interview began with a section about participant demographics. This allowed me gauge participants' social world, as I got to know more about their personal identity. These questions pertained to race, ethnicity, age, political affiliation and life experiences. I briefed every participant about the section of questions I was going to be asking them. At the start of every interview, I would explain what demographic questions were and ask participants a series of questions about their identity. This part of the interview was usually the shortest, as some responses were quick or required probing. I was interested in learning about the life experiences of my participants because I wanted to get a better sense of their perception of diversity in their

lives, in the past and currently. I also wanted to understand what beliefs tied them to a particular political affiliation to see if this served as an indicator for their other responses.

After the demographic questions, I asked participants about their understanding of immigration motivations. I would brief every participant as we moved throughout the different sections. This section allowed me to gather more information about any presumptions my participants had about immigration, in general. I was interested to see if they would bring up current or past issues the United States had with immigration and see what misconceptions guided their reasoning. Even before I prompted participants to talk about Latinx immigration to the United States, this would often be the subject of responses. I was curious to see what stance every participant took on immigration to get a better understanding of their perceptions.

Additionally, I asked participants about their suggestions for policy solutions and the impact of immigration in the United States and their lives. These questions probed for their opinions on citizenship, granting amnesty to undocumented immigrants and the criminalization of undocumented immigrants overall. Most of my analysis comes from these responses, as I tried to see what justifications people used to inform their stance.

I also asked participants about their understanding of the current social and political climate in the United States. These questions corresponded with questions about media consumption, and their access to information. This section was used to determine the relationship between opinions on immigration and the reported data on immigration in the United States. This section was informative of the particular factors that shape personal opinion and eventually voting behavior and policy enactment. Later chapters will divulge the details of these questions.

Coding Processes

Each interview was subsequently transcribed. To ensure the confidentiality of each participant in an organized manner, it was important to identify speaker names. Each interviewee

was demarcated through an alias of my choosing. Anonymization of each transcript was also important to make sure that the names of participants were untraceable from the published work. Each transcribed interview includes verbatim transcription and time-stamps to locate a particular point in the audio quickly.

Once the interviews were transcribed, I went through each interview to develop themes and commonalities throughout the participants responses. I also looked for similarities among narratives and the ways that participants sustained their beliefs. This allowed me to create codes to support my analysis. Each code adequately addressed my research question to determine what factors white people use to shape their perceptions of Latinx immigrants. Each code focused on certain mechanisms that supported the ideologies of my participants. These codes allowed me to identify the range of issues that were presented in the data and understand the different meanings attached. Overall, they served as markers to index the data and aided in locating specific topics for analysis. My code development stopped at the point of saturation (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This means that after I developed the particular codes, no new issues were identified within the data. After this point, I developed theories about how participants addressed particular questions and then created more consistent themes to address the research question.

The codes I extracted from interviews pertained to participants' depictions of criminality and illegality, their amount of media consumption, the sources of information they most referenced, and how they created and sustained their own identity in reference to Latinx immigrants. I recorded these responses by highlighting them in the transcription documents, each data point had a different highlighter color. Once I appropriately highlighted the transcriptions according to their code, I listed every quote that corresponded with a particular code in a word document. This allowed me to ensure that my data was well organized so I could designate quotes to the most applicable code.

Limitations

This study had limitations based on the small sample size, the use of convenience sampling and the lack of funding. In the future, research on this topic should increase the sample size, use more randomized sampling techniques and have an increased study duration.

Researcher Reflexivity

I went into the interviews with certain ways of thinking about racism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia and strong beliefs about how white, Non-Hispanic people in particular tend to relate more to anti-immigrant rhetoric in the United States. These beliefs influenced how I paid attention to participant responses, what sorts of questions I asked and how I analyzed data and organized the thesis. In this section I draw out these beliefs.

My identity as a white citizen and partial resident in Boulder, Colorado and Houston, Texas allowed me to enter into conversations that I would not have been able to access if I were a person of color or had different documentation status. I consider myself a partial resident in both of these cities because I grew up in Houston and currently reside in Boulder. I was able to fit a normalized category as a white woman in the United States and could present myself according to societal assumptions about my identity. Despite any assumptions that might have been made about my identity or self-presentation, my background in immigration studies, whiteness studies and sociology has made me more aware of issues of personal biases, institutional oppression, and the connection between documentation status and criminality. Although this background enabled me to interpret particular responses from my interviewees, I tried to remain unbiased in my data collection and present myself as an active and open listener. Oftentimes, I was conflicted by the responses of my participants, but I would pose these objections as probes for more information or would ignore the temptation to interject or contest their assumptions.

My biggest assumption I had about my interview population was that they continually find ways to construct a negative narrative around Latinx immigrants to maintain a system of racial hierarchy that oppresses those seen as the “other.” I believe that as people grow up in the United States, they are surrounded by immigrant rhetoric that forces them to learn to make judgements of people based on legal status or other racial and ethnic assumptions. Racism and xenophobia are not restricted to issues of personal bias, but also take the form of institutionalized oppression. Oftentimes, these forms of oppression are practically rendered invisible but are reciprocated over time through interpersonal contact or media dissipation. These oppressions are often internalized by those deemed to be outsiders and upheld by white people in power. The institutionalization of racism and xenophobia in the United States is ultimately problematic because of its’ pervasiveness into sectors of one’s personal life.

In terms of my research, I aimed to use my understanding about the invisibility of xenophobia in the United States in order to identify it in the lives of my participants and in their cities of residency, in general. This challenge enabled me to examine the justifications people made and gather a range of information about their life experiences and opinions. To counter my assumptions, I interviewed people across the political spectrum to ensure that my analysis was not the result of opposition to a particular political party, but rather a trend that persists because of the impact whiteness has on identity. Overall, I think that it is important to engage in these topics in order to understand how to rhetoric, misconceptions, personal biases and media consumption all work to socially construct disparate identities.

Ethical Considerations

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) mandated the ethical guidelines throughout the entire process of this study. Following these ethical considerations was the main priority for this research study. Before every interview, participants gave informed consent to partake in the

research. They were also required to read and agree to a consent form, that is included in the Appendix. This consent form also detailed how their responses were going to be recorded and stored confidentially and also described the nature of the research. After discussing the consent form, participants were required to demonstrate their consent through a signature. Following every interview, files were recorded and stored anonymously using the pseudonyms I assigned each participant. After transcription, every recorded interview was destroyed to ensure the upmost confidentiality. This study did not include members from a protected class, as designated by IRB. All participants were above the age of 18, and no minors were contacted to partake in this research. Overall, the procedures mandated by the IRB minimized the risks associated with participation in this study.

Summary

This chapter fully outlines the methodology used to properly conduct this study. The chapter included a detailed description of the methodological framework, the study design, data collection sources, participant demographics, researcher reflexivity and ethical considerations. The subsequent chapters will include an analysis of the data I collected. The first will detail the social construction of “illegality” as it pertains to Latinx immigrants, followed by the impact of media consumption on the creation and sustainment of opinions. The final analysis section will evaluate the construction of the “American” identity in relation to immigration and assimilation.

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE “GOOD/BAD” BINARY

Introduction

Latinx people have occupied the land now part of the Southwestern United States since the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Chavez 2013). As previously established in the literature, the United States’ colonial past is colored by restrictive laws that have led to fluctuating numbers of immigrants from Latin American regions to North America. To briefly reiterate, “since the Mexican-American War, immigration from Mexico and other Latin countries has waxed and waned, building in the early twentieth century, diminishing in the 1930s, and building again in the post-1965 years” (Chavez 2013:4). Shifts in legislation are responsible for these population variations, as they distinguish or assess immigrant legal status. Although Latinx migration patterns are historically and currently similar to other immigrant groups, Latinx people have been branded the mark of “illegality” in the US to distinguish them from others. This label has been reproduced over time under the guise of an apparent and needed protected from Latinx people to safeguard the US popular identity (Chavez 2013; De Genova 2013). The state legally produces “illegality” through policy because policy creates undocumented, “inadmissible” people, despite not really managing the forces that produce migration. “Illegality” is also socially produced through a reliance on “powerful stereotypes to classify individuals as ‘illegal,’ regardless of actual documentation status” (Flores and Schachter 2018:840). The social label of “illegality” contributes to notions of the “good” and the “bad” immigrant because it allows people to characterize Latinx groups into opposing distinctions based off their perceived contributions or impediments to the health of the United States. The characteristics can be based on ethnicity, national origin, social class, and criminality (Flores and Schachter 2018). The “good/ bad” distinctions are crucial to understanding how white “Americans” negotiate their perceptions of Latinx immigrants in the United States, even against reported data.

The Social Construction of Illegality

Today, there are more than eleven million undocumented immigrants that live in the United States and according to Pew Researchers (2018) “only fifty percent are from Mexico, with substantial representation from Central America, Asia, South America, the Caribbean, Europe and Canada” (Flores and Schachter 2018). With this context, it can be concluded that Latinx “illegality” denotes a particular sentiment towards people from Latin America and places prominence on the idea of ethnic acceptability in the US. The label of “illegality” is therefore socially constructed because of its ethnic designations and complexities; it can change over time, it is shaped by public suspicions, and it is often based on ascribed and achieved characteristics (Flores and Schachter 2018). Overall, Latinx social identity is characterized by “illegality” because their presence in the United States is perceived as harmful to the identity of the country. This negative labeling is a product of the colonialist history of the United States and is “part of a grand tradition of alarmist discourse about immigrants” that has always been present during seismic population change (Chavez 2013:4).

However, it is crucial to highlight that the social constructionist argument of Latinx “illegality” does not disqualify the very real and pervasive effects it has on the lives and experiences of Latinx immigrants in the United States today. The “illegal” categorization is just as legitimate legally, as it is socially (Flores and Schachter 2018). And although this chapter attempts to address, analyze, and sometimes dispute the popular discourse around Latinx immigration, the “illegal” label has serious implications on the cognitive biases of individuals that impact interpersonal behavior and therefore influence the roles of larger systematic institutions. In summation, myths around “illegality” have been developed and reimaged over a long period of time in the United States. As a country, it can be difficult to dispel such myths

because they have “grow[n] and take[n] on even more elaborate and refined characteristics... [and] are able to stand on their own as taken-for-granted ‘truths’” (Chavez 2013:16).

The social construction of “illegality” is a process that evaluates achieved and ascribed characteristics of Latinx people to designate them as “good” or “bad” for the social, political, economic and cultural health of the United States.

My participants certainly used the social construction of “illegality” framework during the interview process, as they explained their interpretation of which immigrants were deemed viable to stay in the United States. They made these assertions through many different discussions; by examining how current immigration laws should change, by discussing the future for the undocumented population in the United States, by dissecting their interactions with immigrants and by determining the impact immigration has on their own lives. For example, when I asked Damien, a middle-aged Republican, about the responsibility of the United States to grant access to undocumented immigrants, he boldly asserted

Our original immigration policy was for, like, we want doctors to come here. We want, you know, all the, yeah, you know, bankers, you know, all the higher-end jobs, people that contribute to our society, and not people that we have to import and have their problems.

Meanwhile, when I asked William a 63-year-old moderate, about the United States’ responsibility to grant access to undocumented people trying to enter the country, he plainly explained

Well, I have a very open view of that, you know, um, and I do believe we're a country of laws—and the fact that people have to ... but if we didn't have jobs, and there wasn't opportunity here, people would not cross the border. Um, so the system has set it up, so people are forced to seek opportunity, to seek safety, or forced to cross the border illegally to find work, rather than ... So, so I think it's a, um ... a structural problem with our immigration laws—Um...but I have—you know, I have no animosity, I mean, if people wanna come here, there's a reason.

These two responses highlight the complex nature of immigrant “illegality” because they demonstrate the vastly different worlds people may inhabit when it comes to labeling, policy and practicality within the United States. The problems associated with undocumented immigration may lead some people to follow more of a restrictionist approach, while others may attribute it to a faulty system. The responses from Damien and William establish the caveats of the social construction of “illegality” by revealing how some may view Latinx immigrants as creating problems or exploiting laws, while others see them as driven by opportunity.

As my participants revealed their own conceptions of Latinx “illegality,” I noticed clear patterns between groups of immigrants that were used to categorize their social positions within the United States. These categorizations of “illegality” follow the social constructionist structure because they make use of arbitrary factors and personal characteristics to deem permission to particular Latinx people to remain in the United States.

I break these groups into “good” and “bad” immigrant, based off the explanations people offered for why some immigrants were allowed to remain in the United States while others were not. Both positive and negative cultural associations of a Latinx person or a group of Latinx people were used to draw a consensus about the population overall, regardless of documentation status. My participants relied heavily on their own experiences, biases and judgements to uphold these socially constructed distinctions of Latinx immigrant “illegality”.

The “Good” Immigrant (The Exception)

The process of social construction of “illegality” is often invoked to assign labels to Latinx immigrants to designate their socially produced identity. The social construction of a “good” immigrant is done through rebranding and reproducing narratives around positive traits that are typically associated with Latinx immigrants in the United States. A “good” label does not necessarily mean that an immigrant has proper documentation, but rather the dimensions of

“illegality” are the result of flaws in the immigration system. This can be especially true given the complexities of immigration status, so people are more apt to rely on achieved characteristics to make distinctions about “illegality.” According to the responses of my participants, occupation and strong ties to the United States were predictors of a “good” immigrant. My participants used these attributes to distinguish a sub-category of Latinx immigrant “illegality,” that negotiated the boundary between belonging vs. threatening to the United States. My participants demonstrated this negotiation by arguing that “good” immigrants contribute to society. For instance, Andrea, a self-described Independent asserted that United States should not be sending Latinx immigrants back to their country of origin “especially if they’re, you know, a contributing member of society”. Her justification to protect certain subsets of the Latinx immigrant population comes down to their perceived contributions to the country. From participant interviews, I was able to break down these contributions and see how they demarcated the social construction of a “good” immigrant.

The first characteristics of a socially constructed “good” immigrant involves stereotypes of Latinx immigrants as “hard-workers”. By designating this belief as a stereotype does not mean that it is necessarily true or untrue, it just points out the way assumptions around Latinx labor and hard-work are taken-granted-truths. Oftentimes, the assumption that Latinx immigrants, especially undocumented Latinx immigration, work harder than the average “American” highlights the ways in which they are easily exploited. Faulty premises around Latinx immigrant work ethic are constantly being retold to posit that they are willing to work for less money, or that they will put up with harsher situations than US citizens. Many participants discussed this belief that Latinx immigrants are “good” immigrants because they accept menial work without complaint. For instance, Ginny, a 48-year-old Democrat explained that immigration positively impacts the United States because

I think we have a lot of workers doing jobs that they can't get, and the—and they're probably—they're just so grateful to have the job. That, you know, they show up and I'm sure people love having them, 'cause I don't know that the work ethic is, you know, like it used to be for people here, 'cause it's so easy to get a job now. Yeah. I don't think it's probably there for them, whereas these people coming across are probably so grateful—to just have a job. And they're sending home money to their families maybe—in other countries and stuff.

Ginny's explanation points to how Latinx immigrants are automatically deemed to have a strong work ethic simply because they are coming from Latin American countries, that are presumed to be underserving.

Similarly, Houstonian Andrea demonstrated that Latinx immigration positively impacts the United States when they are perceived as working hard and wanting to be ingrained in the social fabric of the United States. For instance, Andrea explained

I think particularly, you know, the whole Mexican wall—well my experience in living in Texas for 36 years is that—that the Mexican people we've come to know through the services, right, that they do, the hardest working people I've ever met. And just so many really good people. And, uh, why we would wanna make it difficult for folks like that to become a part of our fabric is ... sort of shocking. Especially ... I mean, they're interested in becoming Americans.

Andrea characterizes Latinx immigrants, particularly Mexican immigrants as hard-workers. The interactions she had with Latinx immigrants are poignant in her construction of a “good” immigrant, because they have demonstrated a willingness to work hard. In fact, she makes it seem like the contributions Latinx workers make through service jobs, deem them a “good” status.

Jacy, a 62-year-old Independent demonstrated this same line of reasoning. Some Latinx people are considered “good” immigrants because of their work ethic.

Years and years ago, um, my husband, uh, was in a position where he has undocumented people working for him. And absolutely, um, they would work. And do work that no one else wanted to do. And still, in his position right now, um, even though they're—they're documented. But they will do work that citizens—of different races will not do. And they are happy to be working. They are happy to be working and they do a better job. And they don't expect—they're there to make their money. And to

do their job. They don't expect other things. And, and some of the citizens of the United States do. There is a huge difference.

Jacy's explanation highlights this idea that Latinx workers, whether documented or undocumented, are willing to work hard, no matter the cost. And "are happy" to have the work, meaning they might be in a desperate situation or at least that their probable lack of options makes them vulnerable to instability. She demonstrates this stereotype around Latinx workers, that they work hard, doing menial tasks and put up with unfairness, as long as it means they have a job.

These sorts of responses were similar across participants. This belief that "good" Latinx immigrants are viable citizens for the United States since they work hard, was extremely common. I concluded that it is this framing around Latinx immigration perpetuates misconceptions about the types of jobs they fulfill. I also concluded that the belief that Latinx immigrants are automatically hard-workers, allows people to justify the social positioning of Latinx immigrants in the United States, and continue to use services immigrants provide.

Again, I do not use these explanations to oppose the opinion that Latinx immigrants are hard-workers. I analyze these points to understand how Latinx immigrants are granted acceptability, when for the most part they are not. The stereotype of the Latinx "hard-worker" is widely common. I believe this idea is popular because it allows people in the United States to continue to reap the material benefits produced by Latinx immigrants.

These material benefits often come in the form of goods and services. I asked my participants to examine their interactions with Latinx immigrants in the United States and all of them talked about different services they receive from immigrants. For instance, Republican Kourtney explained,

'Cause, you know...just...I'm—I'm not trying to be generic, but like lawn care. And there are just plenty of different groups that do lawn care. But here in Colorado, a large

population of who are doing our lawn care, and paint house painting, and so forth... there's a large population of Hispanics doing it. Yes, oh gosh, and house cleaning.

Kourtney's understanding of Latinx immigrant work is confined to manual-labor jobs or services, that are often performed at low-costs. Another participant, Samuel delved more into this trope around Latinx immigrant labor. He explained

I mean, I'll tell you, I don't know if my cleaning lady's documented. Right? So, um, you know, she does a great job. I pay her cash. I mean, um, like that's, that's the biggest and I don't—she could be, she could be legal for all I know. But I don't know.

Samuel's experiences with the woman who cleans his house demonstrate how Latinx immigrants are often associated with manual-labor jobs, that are typically low-paying or “under the table.” However, in these situations Latinx immigrant laborers are still deemed “good” immigrants because they perform unfavorable jobs for white Americans and continue to do so even when it means low-pay. The perception of hard work grants Latinx immigrants a positive attribute that permits their presence in the United States because this form of “illegality” is more socially acceptable than others.

The other characteristic my participants used to mark Latinx immigrants “good” was their perceived longevity of contribution to the United States. When I asked participants to explain their conceptions of immigrant deportability, they mostly agreed that deportations should take place on a wide scale. They did however stipulate that undocumented Latinx immigrants who have been in the United States for multiple years should be allowed citizenship because they have “contributed to society.” For instance, Samuel told me that amnesty should be considered when “like—the people have been here 20 years.” Many respondents aligned similarly to Samuel's claim. They argued that when Latinx immigrants both desire citizenship and have proved their assimilability to the US through work, then they were “good” immigrants.

These different justifications highlight the very nature of the social construction of “illegality” because they manipulate particular behaviors that serves as claims about Latinx

immigrants overall. In the case of Latinx immigrants who work hard and have proved their work ethic over a long period of time, “illegality” becomes one dimension of an immigrant’s identity. I believe that these justifications are used because it allows people to object to deportation for the sake of protecting immigrant services. The particular attributes some Latinx immigrants have deem them socially-acceptable to the United States. In this way, “illegality” functions as a construct to ensure that only certain “types” of Latinx immigrants remain in the US.

The “Bad” Immigrant (The Rule)

As previously mentioned, Chavez (2013) asserts the mark of “illegality” as an explicitly Latinx experience in the United States. Messaging through policy and legislation, as well as news rhetoric has consistently framed Latinx people in this way. The “Latino Threat Narrative” that Chavez highlights depicts Latinx immigrants as “unwilling or incapable of integrating, of becoming part of the national community” (Chavez 2013:3). Throughout the interviews, the idea that Latinx immigrants fail to properly assimilate, while also reaping the benefits of living in the United States was common. One participant, Noah, a 55-year-old moderate from Houston, summarized this point by explaining that Latinx immigrants,

Ought to be exposed to what the American life is—a way of life, and not—and not be able to live on the fringes. There are responsibilities, one is paying taxes.

For the most part, this lack of exposure to the “American” life was perceived as a threat to nationalism. A fear of Latinx enclaves, and life “on the fringes” directly relates to the notion that Latinx immigrants are manipulating social and cultural institutions within the United States. This fear is used to characterize Latinx immigrants as abusive of social benefits and education and involved in criminal activity. These factors were therefore used by participants to explain why some Latinx immigrants are undeserving of fair or legitimized status.

The first trope that Latinx immigrants are abusive of social benefits pertains to both documented and undocumented people. This was the most consistent theme across majority of my self-described Republican participants, who were concerned about the economic drain immigrants pose to the US system of benefits. For instance, when I asked Noelle, a conservative-Republican to explain the motivations she thought were the strongest factors driving Latinx immigrants to come to the United States, her list encapsulated many of the same ideas of other participants. She passionately said

Freedom, and, uh, stuff that they get. They wanna get healthcare, food, shelter. I can keep naming. There's more social economic programs, yeah. More freedom, just to be able to live their lives how they choose.

Damien, also a Republican asserted this same understanding of immigrants as manipulating the system to access social and economic programs. He explained to me

If you're gonna break my laws to come to my country to take...When you wanna come to my country and take stuff out of other people's hands that could use it, right? I mean there's— if you wanna have social economic, economic programs, if you look at the percentage of people who are on soc—on welfare. 64 percent, I think I read that, 64 percent—of imm—of people who immigrate to this country—Will be put on welfare, absurd. Yeah, we're not supposed to import problems. That gets way more expensive. And that's just illegally...

When I asked Kourtney, a 45-year-old Republican from Boulder, if everyone should eventually be allowed citizenship, she explained that for the most part yes, her stipulation was “if they're just here, um... receiving benefits, then no.”

These responses are critical to examine because they show the myths people believe about Latinx immigrants. Generalizations about immigrants receiving benefits depends, in part, on which immigrants are under discussion. For instance, “high income immigrants are more likely to pay more in taxes than they receive in public benefits. Low income immigrants, however are likely to pay less in taxes than they receive in public benefits” (Chiswick 2011:139-140). Claims about immigrants taking advantage of benefits are not corroborated, and change

depending on the population. While these are extreme examples, they are valid in demonstrating how the social construction of “illegality” is created and maintained. Damien, Noelle and Kourtney addressed the popular belief that “bad” immigrants expand the welfare system beyond what is economically and federally responsible. It is important to problematize these beliefs because “most immigrants entering the United States must become naturalized citizens or live at least five years as a legal permanent resident before they are eligible for most federal benefits...Adult unauthorized immigrants are never eligible for need-based federal programs such as food stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and most of Medicaid” (Schumacher-Matos 2011:100-101). Although undocumented immigrants are not eligible for most government benefits, and documented people must withstand a waiting period before they can access aid, the relationship between “illegality” and draining welfare programs has stood as a taken-for-granted truth. Such myths have been so reproduced over time, people may now assume that social welfare programs are the “driving factor” for immigrants to come to the United States. Status and documentation were not explicitly considered when my participants drew these conclusions. This lack of recognition demonstrates how pervasive the social construction of “illegality” is because oftentimes it continues to influence collective conceptions of Latinx people, whether or not they are documented.

In a similar context, when I probed participants to explain the main factors that influenced immigration, access to public education was also extremely common. Julia, a 37-year-old moderate from Houston talked about education in respect to immigrant motivations, and strongly supported her belief that education is a large factor in driving people to come to the United States. When I first asked her the question, she immediately responded that people come to the United States, in general for

Um, education. Opportunities for education. Um, I think parents believing that there is something better out there for their kids.

Although Julia’s response about immigrant motivations remains pretty neutral, it is easy to see how this factor is often one of the primary arguments used when considering what strongly relates to migration reasoning. Based off my interviews, I concluded that education is often on the forefront of the collective conception people have when interpreting why undocumented Latinx immigrants take risks to enter into the United States. Kourtney, a Boulder Republican exemplified this reasoning by explaining that

Probably some of them come to the country to have ... so their children can have a good education. And I want to see every child educated. But that person also needs to be working, and—yeah. It taxes the school system and the teachers. Because they're not—if they're not documented, they are not paying taxes. Therefore, their taxes...they don't—they're not buying into the system in which their child is being educated in. And, a lot of the times, these children are also receiving free and reduced lunch. And breakfast. Which I think is a great thing for those children because they need that. But they're getting it for free, which, I get. But taxes still come into play. And those people need to pay taxes in order to be here.

Kourtney connects immigrant access to public education and issues surrounding taxes. Again, this type of reasoning maintains that immigration often leads to an economic drain. Overall, education shapes perceptions of “illegality” when it is interpreted as negatively influencing the economic health of the country. Although I did not specifically prompt Kourtney on documentation status, she associated undocumented immigration with access to public education.

Education is an interesting factor to examine because although many participants asserted that Latinx immigrants strain public education funding, they maintained that immigrants needed to assimilate to traditional “American” culture. For the most part, when I asked participants to list some solutions to mitigate undocumented Latinx immigration in the United States, they encouraged access to education. For many people, these sorts of arguments directly opposed their previous claims that immigrant “illegality” negatively affects educational structures. Overall, it seems evident that education shapes the social construction of “illegality” because the

amount of education a person receives, influences the level of negativity attributed to them. A moderate Houstonian, Noah explained

Um, I think really—that it really gets back to a US education. And educate [Latinx immigrants] about how to become a United States citizen, how to get in the game. They really—if they really see this land as the land of opportunity, then they should give it an opportunity to be a citizen. And take all of those responsibilities, be subject to our laws, and prison if they commit a felony, and pay taxes. So, you know, it's kind of like they get certain benefits but there are certain obligations as well. I would—I would **encourage the education piece** and tell them, okay, you want all in? There's good and bad. Under the Affordable Care Act, you've got to have health insurance, it's going to be a cost. And you want a better life, now, you want to be a citizen? There should be a—should be an orientation, Or an education, or a training session. It could be two weeks long, I don't know how long it's going to last. I—I get—like I said earlier, I think there ought to be a system that identifies and accounts for all the immigrants and educates all of those people.

In this sense, education can mean a formal, public education and also an education on the social and cultural customs attributed to “Americanness.” Noah’s solution addressed economic concerns by asserting that Latinx immigrants need to be immersed in a “crash course” on “being American,” on paying taxes, being subject to laws, paying for insurance and “taking responsibility.” His “American training session” demonstrates the social construction of “illegality,” and asserts that Latinx immigrants are “bad” because it establishes the conception of Latinx people as unknowing of these common procedures. In this sense, Latinx immigrants must combat a dueling narrative; they need to obtain a well-rounded, American education, but not in a way that threatens the system of economics around public education and schooling. In terms of education, the view of immigrants as “bad” is constantly being redefined. Based off the responses of my participants, Latinx immigrants are threatening if they are not educationally integrated into US customs, but they must not obstruct the economic and educational mobility of others, and certainly not at the cost of the federal government. Overall, Latinx immigrants are not contextualized in the same way “American citizens” are when it comes to access to education. Rather, Latinx immigrants are symbols of fear over the misuse of education and educational

services, regardless of their documentation status. The “symbolization” of Latinx immigrations demonstrates the social construction of “illegality” because it is constantly being redefined and used to describe different narratives.

Finally, the social construction of “illegality” is maintained to label Latinx immigrants as “bad” through their assumed connection to crime. In recent years, Latinx immigrants have been vilified for participating in criminal and gang-affiliated activities (Longazel 2013). Similar to other negative social construction tropes, Latinx immigrants have received the brunt of false narratives around criminalization in comparison to other groups. According to the responses of my participants, I was able to conclude that the “criminal” label has resulted in an influx of public support for more immigrant surveillance measures and vetting processes as a way to ensure that only “good” Latinx immigrants remain in the United States, while “bad” Latinx immigrants receive punishment or deportation. The measurement between “bad” and “good” is often deciphered through analyzing supposed immigrant criminal behavior.

Misconceptions about Latinx immigration in the United States have often led white “Americans” to equate Latinx immigrants with crime. The linking has contributed to depictions of Latinx immigrants as “eroding” the character of the United States. Oftentimes, this type of rhetoric has influenced public support for punitive immigration laws. Despite the fact that scholars refute the notion that immigrants commit more crimes than US-born citizens, ideas about “crime-prone” Latinx immigrants continue to persist (Longazel 2013). This falsity contributes to the social construction of “illegality” because it demonizes Latinx immigrants and enforces certain standards that uphold the “good/bad” dichotomy. Take for example, the explanation Jacy, a 62-year-old conservative-Independent, gave when I asked her about the relationship between immigration and crime.

I do think they are somewhat related. Certainly not in every aspect, but I do think somewhat, yes. Um, 'cause it's the bad people that are in the United States, that do so...

It's not all im—the immigrants, but if someone is over here il—illegally and they don't have a job, they have to feed their family, then, you know... what—what's another way to get it?

Jacy's reasoning implies that immigrant criminal behavior is a direct outcome of undocumented status. Although she explained that immigration and crime are not related in "every aspect," she made it clear that she perceived some "bad people" living in the United States who often rely on crime in order to do things like "feed their family." Her example seems pretty low-stakes, but it is important to consider how ideas like this are reproduced overtime and can contribute to false narratives about immigrants and criminal activity. When I probed Jacy about the impact of restrictive immigration on criminal activity, she diverted and explained that "if you're legal, you wanna be here. You're working for your family... you know. Or yourself—your ambitions". Obviously, her example that "illegal" immigrants make up some of the "bad people," committing crimes in the United States demonstrates the common connection made between "illegality" and criminality. Jacy invokes the misconception that undocumented Latinx immigrants rely on criminal activity to support themselves in the United States. She automatically associates the lack of documentation as causal for lacking a job and therefore resorting to crime.

From Jacy's response, I conclude that the criminalization of Latinx immigrants in the United States is based off of fallacious associations that work to mystify the mark of "illegality" (Longzel 2013). This means that the perception of Latinx immigrants as "illegal" is created and sustained mostly through assumptions. Since immigrant criminality is reliant upon generalizations drawn from a few accounts, examples of Latinx crime are often employed to uphold hegemonic narratives. Many participants struggled to interpret their own generalizations about Latinx immigrant crime against objective facts. Their inability to do so also led me to conclude that oftentimes, the image of the "Latinx immigrant offender" is more pertinent to the social construction of "illegality" than actual evidence. The confounding nature of Latinx

immigrant criminality is evidenced by the usage of a few accounts as representative of the whole Latinx community. Some participants were partially aware of the way generalizations work “behind-the-scenes” to create dominant narratives. When I asked Boulder moderate, William about the relationship between immigration and crime he told me

You know, the statistics show that illegal immigrants commit less crimes than the rest of us—so, you know I don't think [they're related]. Um ... you know, the rhetoric of Trump, of rapists crossing the border—some “bad hombres,” is just a horribly inaccurate, uh, thing. I think it's... uh, I think it's for the most part that people seeking economic opportunity—And are running from persecution. And I have a lot of compassion for those people. I think if there's one undocumented immigrant that commits a crime, then it's—it's the exception that makes the rule. It's the same concept as, uh, profiling.

I also asked Ginny to explain if she thought crime would decrease if Latinx immigration decreased in the United States. She explained that

It really depends on that—whenever there is a crime committed by an immigrant, it is really all over the TV, but crimes hap—happen all the time, and you know, you don't hear about every—But if it's an illegal immigrant, like you hear about it.

William and Ginny's understanding of “the exception that makes the rule” when it comes to immigrants and crime, demonstrates how some negative conclusions can be drawn from single narratives of immigrant criminality. Even when participants were aware of the pitfalls of generalizations about immigrant criminality, they would later invoke generalizations to support their opinions. Damien, a conservative-Republican explained in great-detail that even though immigrant criminality is not as much of a wide-scale issue as it is made to seem, it can still be used to dictate future agendas. To him the “peaceful majority” is mostly irrelevant in relation to extremists.

It was the Nazis that drove the German invasion. It was the Chinese dynasties that ran the slaughter of billions of people. The peaceful majority's irrelevant if the extremists are the problem, so you've gotta undercut. You've got 10,000 people, or whatever in the caravan or 7,000 people—so 700 of those people, 10 percent are the extremists. 10 percent of them are the ones that you have to watch out for. And when it's a wolf in sheep's clothing... It's the extremists that push the agenda. The peaceful majority are irrelevant.

These explanations about the “peaceful majority” took place over the course of the entire interview. Although Damien recognized that only a small portion of the Latinx immigrant population commits crimes that are often talked about, he made it clear that he believed it was this small percentage that necessitated restrictionist action. I interpreted his explanation to mean that the actions of extremists or in this case, Latinx immigrants who commit crimes, are the reason why there are so many negative assumptions about Latinx immigration and crime.

Damien acknowledged the work of generalizations and stated a clear understanding that only a few immigrants commit crimes, in the large scheme of things. However, his argument justified anti-immigrant action at the detriment of the “peaceful majority” for the sake of protecting the status quo of the United States. From these examples, I was able to determine that even when participants were aware of the low rates of crimes committed by Latinx immigrants, they used particular cases to demonstrate a need for stricter immigration policies, or at least acknowledged this manipulation.

Building off the inaccuracy around generalizations, many participants explained that they understood Latinx immigration and crime as consequential to one another, rather than simply a causal relationship. Take for instance, Kourtney, a Republican from Boulder. She identified that

I think crime and poverty are related. And in lower—lower—lower income, immigration and crime can be related. Um, just because that's what—Well...crime can happen anywhere though. So, do I think they're related? Yes, they can be related. Do I think it's always related? No. 'Cause I do think there are good people who wanna be here in this country. And they're just here to try to work and do to for their family. But then there's always that other person that makes it bad for everybody. So, I do believe that there's a piece of that with immigration. But I don't think it's the whole problem.

Kourtney explains the linkage between immigration and crime but argues that there are other factors that contribute to this relationship. She too explained “that other person makes it bad for everybody.” Despite her understanding of the correlative relationship between poverty and crime, Kourtney invoked a stance that demonstrated the power of generalizations. Most of my

interviews involved this type of rhetoric and although many people understood the exaggeration or misconceptions around Latinx immigrant crime, they continued to use crime as a reasoning for exclusion. These findings were interesting because they vastly differed from previous research. In the past, studies attempted to reveal the false premise of immigrant criminality, but my participants demonstrated an awareness of this falsity. Their understanding of the pretense was interesting because different justifications were made to identify Latinx criminality in order to uphold this particular social label.

For instance, some of my participants argued that Latinx people who crossed the border without documentation or overstayed the length of their visa committed a crime. These “crimes” designated Latinx immigrants as inherently criminal because their behavior denoted a disregard for law. Rather than find examples that demonstrated violent or detrimental crimes committed by immigrants, participants used principles around rule-following to maintain the idea of a “bad” Latinx immigrant. One participant, Dorthey, a 57-year-old conservative from Houston asserted that to prevent unauthorized border-crossing or visa overstays is “kind of a simple answer... you know if there’s harsher penalties for these crimes... you should enforce the law. If that’s not good, then you should change the law.” Her idea of a “simplistic” response to unauthorized inhabitation in the US, demonstrates a commonly-held attitude around the relationship between immigration and crime. By arguing that unauthorized immigration itself is innately criminal, Dorthey affirms the belief that undocumented immigrants are criminal from the onset of their presence in the United States. Rather than interpret situational necessities or question how current US policy inhibits more Latinx immigration, Dorthey posits a particular circular reasoning that to stop crimes committed by immigrants, there must be policies in place that limit unauthorized immigration. Although I probed her to interpret her response a little more, she told me that her input was limited and that she steadfastly believed in “being a rule-follower.” I also

asked her to explain her perception of crimes committed by immigrants in the United States, but she brushed over it and told me that it is extremely important for Latinx immigrants to “follow the laws that are on the books.” Although Dorthey’s responses about the relationship between crime and immigration were much vaguer than many of my other participants, she demonstrated the complex nature of the perception of crime. While she claimed that unauthorized immigration itself was a criminal act, the way she avoided further discussion about the relationship between Latinx immigration and crime revealed how difficult it can be to prove. Overall, Dorthey revealed the precise complexity of the social construction of “illegality” in terms of criminality; some immigrant behaviors are easily deemed “bad,” while others are arduous to pinpoint. Again, I believe this is related to the awareness of generalizations, and how people are now attempting to move away from this line of thinking to shift ideas around criminality. These shifting tactics also highlight how the social construction of the “bad” immigrant because the characteristics are constantly changing to fit the current paradigm.

William, a self-identified “social liberal and fiscal conservative” also saw unauthorized immigration as inherently criminal. Despite his view of authorized immigration as a crime, he told me that he tries to understand what pushes undocumented Latinx immigrants towards this form of criminality. He argued that the United States needs more comprehensive immigration laws

'Cause I think that, there are people who are hiding in the shadows and are scared... you know I think that's horrible, I—I think—You know, the fact that people are taking advantage of, uh—they're forced into breaking the law to survive or to be safe, uh—so...so I think that the—that should—the people who are here should have some sort of means—Even if they've not been in trouble with the law, other than their immigration related things, you know? If they've been burglarizing homes, sure. That's different.

Even though William believes that unauthorized immigration is itself a crime, he differentiated it from other criminal activities, like burglary. The idea that clandestine immigration is a

distinctive crime, unlike any other, highlights how some people may justify particular forms of criminality, while opposing others. According to William's response, I conclude that Latinx immigrant criminality shifts depending on how certain behaviors are interpreted. This means that the social construction of "illegality," may differ depending on the quote-unquote atrocity of the crime Latinx immigrants commit. While some may see unauthorized immigration as a crime, others may not. Overall, the statements from Dorthey and William reveal how fluctuating perceptions can be around immigrant criminality. In some cases, crime is justified while in others, it is used as a point of contention to restrict further immigration and enforce harsh policies.

Many participants argued for the implementation of stricter immigration policies to prevent crimes. All of my participants offered up solutions like mandating more vetting processes, creating more checkpoints in the United States, and granting citizenship on a case-by-case basis through quotas. These policy suggestions are important to consider in the broader discussion of the social construction of Latinx immigrants as "bad," in terms of clandestine entry into the United States, social services abuse and crime. The following suggestions came out of conversations around crime and immigration prevention. For the most part, I was able to conclude that participants determined these solutions based off of generalizations and confusions around Latinx immigrant criminality and "illegality".

One participant, Samuel a Republican from Boulder explained that crimes committed by immigrants can be prevented through a vetting process. He explained to me that undocumented immigration hurts the United States, and, in some cases, criminality relates to that. Samuel said,

I mean, ignoring or breaking laws is not good for civil society. Um, there needs to be some type of vetting process to, um, determine, you know, if there are criminal records. They just need to be vetted. And I would be okay with some type of amnesty that would allow them to stay. However, I would like to see that tied to stronger border control to prevent, you know...continued migration. But I do think we need to deport a certain number of them, right? I mean, it's like when you fire the slacker at your job, you're

sending a message to everyone that that's not going to be tolerated. And you deter the negative behavior. So...

Another participant, Damien expressed a similar favorable attitude towards vetting techniques.

He gave me a scenario where this could work to prevent further crime and immigration.

If an officer said "Hey, man, I know you're about to come into my country and be illegal about it, but can I want you to do some paperwork real quick." Like, "no." Right. So, as you come across these suspects, the ones that the police are consistently having to deal with, obviously there's something needs—there's your target. And if we can reduce the surplus by percentages, at least it's an improvement. Because any time you start enforcing your laws, is it makes other people respect the law that you're enforcing. If you don't enforce the law whatsoever, there will be people who consistently take advantage of it. Gotta start somewhere. Uh, crossing the border illegally, I understand their desire to come here. I get it. I like it here, too, um, but—it's against our laws. Maybe you didn't know our laws. I didn't know the laws in Italy when I was there. I didn't know the laws in Switzerland when I was there. I don't know their laws. But basic human logic says, you accommodate as best as you can to the laws seem appropriate. They're criminal acts. Uh, I, you made a promise to, at the end of your visa, that we would talk again. And here we are, not talking again. You broke a promise. When there's a guy standing at the border that says, "Hey, come over here and talk to me and we can see whether or not you come, in," well, come on over, and let's have a conversation. So, like even ... I was thinking back to myself, even if the guy who gets pulled over and, by a cop, and, well, you know, it turns out you're illegal here, and now we're starting some investigation. Vet them.

Damien's narrative highlights his belief that in order to prevent crime as well as prevent undocumented immigration, there must be a strict vetting system. His terminology focused mostly on the idea of "a conversation" between undocumented problematic Latinx immigration and law enforcement. Both Damien and Samuel expressed their support for vetting processes to stop immigrant crime and unauthorized immigration.

Andrea also asserted that there should be a vetting process done through data analytics services. Her suggestion entails moving law enforcement vetting systems towards more privatized businesses. Despite this caveat—her solution revolves around implementing vetting processes. She told me

So I'm a big fan of private outsourcing with oversight to ensure accountability. So, you know, there's probably some really smart people who could suggest a really good efficient process that had safety measures, that had data analytics to be able to make

sure you weren't letting in, you know, rapists or some pedophiles, or whatever. And, and then you basically create law-abiding tax-paying citizens versus people trying to sneak in and stay under the radar. So, then they're using all of our services but they're not paying taxes, because they're afraid, uh, if they, if they pony up (laughs) they're gonna get send back.

Andrea's position centers around privatized vetting processes to ensure that the United States does not continue to allow "rapists or some pedophiles" into the country. Along this same argument, she also claims that more vetting processes will prevent tax evasion or public service abuse. Her response was interesting because it heavily relied upon the idea that Latinx rapists and pedophiles are "being let into the country." She equated these immigrant crimes with the notion that Latinx immigrants are abusive of social services.

Other participants focused on implementing checkpoints or customs-like services to prevent undocumented Latinx immigrants or criminal into the United States. One participant Tony, a middle-aged Independent in Boulder explained that to help stop undocumented immigration the United States must have

Inclusive messages like, "get your documentation, come on through a secure border, go through checkpoints, have people run your information. And if you're good, you will be permitted access." Even temporarily.

Tony extended ideas around vetting to include different checkpoints that were responsible for running information about immigrants trying to get into the United States. He went on to explain how vetting could be done to ensure that particular requirements are met. He suggested that vetting and authorization should happen on a

Case by case basis. Every person's story is different. Just because someone's from one country, and the statistics of that country are unfavorable, like violence in Honduras or El Salvador, as an example. Doesn't mean that every person from Honduras or El Salvador should be guaranteed. But certainly, everyone should have the opportunity to plead their case. Whether they are male, female, children, what have you. —We have to make the court system and law enforcement organizations more efficient. Uh, modify some of the legal terms, and processes, and documentation requirements. Just because someone's from another country doesn't mean they shouldn't have a chance, but they need to prove and show that they want to contribute, and you know, really support society and community. When you're dealing with a very large amount of people—

that's probably the biggest impediment to that happening. Um, just due to the volume of people. And of course, uh, crime statistics, the volume of people, it's just, it's a big issue to get around. You can't trust everybody. You can't persecute, you shouldn't persecute everybody. You wanna give everyone a chance, but—you're dealing with a very large—you know, it'd have to be a created, organized, executed in a very systematic way. Almost like a census. So that there's a, there's a period of time, there's an understanding of how it's done. It's over, some decisions are made, and we move forward, and have to accept. We reviewed the data. Processed it as efficiently and you know, uh, with the best knowledge we had available, and these, you know, this is what's- The policy moving forward. You gotta by whatever means these—these people are identified. Uh, and you know, identified, tracked, uh, you know, accounted for, uh, you know. If you're, if you're here illegally—there needs to be some kind of process to vet who's here and who's not. And again, it's not a, it's not an all or nothing. It's a case by case basis.

Tony's suggestion that to prevent further undocumented immigration and crime vetting must take place that considers immigrant status on an individualized level. I found this interesting because his demand for this system manifested out of the belief that undocumented Latinx immigrants are committing crimes that need to be prevented. He uses this generalization to deduce the behaviors and patterns of individual migrants.

Finally, Jackie a moderate-Republican asserted that to prevent crimes committed by immigrants and the influx of Latinx immigration overall, there need to be

I mean, I do think there's got to be some sort of like, either lower number, or like a number set of who gets to come in once a year. And I don't know, like if you get a special spot in the system, on the waiting list for the year before, because you weren't it, or I don't know how that works, but it sounds like big bureaucracy it sounds expensive. But it sounds like if we invested in it, we wouldn't have as many illegals.

Her argument that undocumented Latinx immigration would decrease through the implementation of stronger quotas systems and vetting-based decisions demonstrates how “illegality” is created and sustained through policy.

Implications

Based off the literature and conversations with my participants, I conclude that for them, Latinx immigrants are mostly seen as abusive or draining to the US economy. This belief is consistent, even when Latinx immigrants are not undocumented. To me, the idea that Latinx

immigrants hurt the financial welfare of the country compounded with demands for stronger vetting processes or quota implementation will further the social construction of Latinx immigrants as “bad” because they will have to combat profiling tactics and bureaucratic systems that deem people access to the country.

The “bad” immigrant is a narrative that has been constructed over time in part because of situational contexts. It is constantly being reproduced and sustained through false narratives, generalizations and misconceptions. Even when participants were aware of these rhetorical pitfalls, they continued to rely on them as a way to justify the need for Latinx immigrant exclusion. The data revealed the reliance on fetishizing rhetoric that paints Latinx immigrants as opportunistic, underserving or degenerative.

The “good” immigrant narrative is dependent the perceived benefits white Americans assume from the presence of Latinx people in the United States. For the most part, these perceptions were tied to labor costs and service provisions. Ideas around contributing to society, long-term inhabitation, and attempting to assimilate were used to mandate if a Latinx immigrant was deemed worthy for US citizenship.

The “good/bad” binary that is assigned to Latinx immigrants demonstrates how reliant the United States is on manipulating ascribed and achieved characteristics to immigrants in order to make claims about their viability and acceptability in the United States. The social construction of “illegality” demonstrates the nation’s “love-hate relationship with immigrants, at once realizing their economic benefit while at the same time fearing their impact on citizen-laborers and society in general” (Chavez 2013:121-122). The “terms and conditions” we assign to Latinx immigrants attempting life in the United States are constructed overtime through different rhetoric and news mediums. These platforms create and maintain sentiments around Latinx immigration. Through these sources, the social construction of “illegality” becomes

imprinted in the collective consciousness. The traits associated with “good” and “bad” immigrants are constantly employed to make sense of the current immigration debate. The pervasiveness of the social construction of “illegality” plays out in the media that is sought out and the stories that are retold. As we come to understand the ways “illegality” is socially constructed, it is also important to critically examine how that information is transmitted and its deeper implications.

POLITICAL MEDIA CONSUMPTION

Introduction

As immigration, both documented and undocumented continues to be a “growing concern” for the American public, some narratives dominate public discourse more than others because of the inextricable relationship between emotion, media, and output behavior. Each of these factors contributes to the “American” ability to negotiate identity and belonging and justify a biased system of racial and ethnic hierarchy. Unraveling the relationship between these factors can aid in examining white “American” perceptions of immigrants.

Historical precedent has certainly created an entire era of unintended consequences for both the United States and its immigrants, in general. Immigrants of color, including children and young adults are disproportionately subject to harsh punishment for lacking “appropriate” American status, and are often victim to invalidation, and “othering” from the general public of the United States (Massey and Pren 2012). Some argue that even with valid documentation, Latinx immigrants are still viewed as suspicious and are treated with apprehension from US citizens (Chavez 2013). Oftentimes, this plays out through a sense of ethno-nationalism “Americans” hold to dehumanize the presence of immigrant groups, both consciously and unconsciously.

“Othering” through ethno-nationalism can be seen in the ways that US citizen look down on immigrants for maintaining a sense of patriotism for their country of origin. Damien and Noelle, both boastful, young Republicans highlighted this example of “othering” by challenging artifacts viewed as deviant to “American pride.” They argue the following about

N: Learn about our country. Don’t try to change us... to your culture that you just left. That’s just silly.

D: That’s the other thing that doesn’t make sense, exactly. Like why would they be waving Honduras flags and Mexican pride. Like, I think you’re trying to come to my country because it’s awesome. Not make my country shitty like your country.

In this exchange, Noelle and Damien prioritize specific symbols associated with national pride, like flag waving; however, because the immigrants they describe are not waving US flags and seem to refuse to assimilate, they do not have the right kind of pride. Their position was constructed in a way that promotes a nationalist ideology of the United States, as a place that upholds an exclusive categorization of “American.” For them, this means a place that feverously supports the American flag and dominant US culture. When I asked them to explain why they felt this way, Damien emphasized that patriotism for the United States and love for the American flag were important aspects of the cultural narrative of the country. He went on to defend how symbols and flags, anthems, costumes, rituals and support for the American Dream create a sense of collective, nationalistic pride. His conceptions of nationalism for the United States clarified the context of national tradition that people often refer to in order to designate who is a proper member of the nation.

Beyond the prioritization of flags and symbols, Noelle and Damien argue that Latinx immigrants originate from “shitty” places, demonstrating the way “othering” functions to narrowly define who and what qualifies as suitable for US society. Note that Noelle uses a specific imperative directed to a vague, ever-present “other,” when she says, “Don’t try to change us.” Here, she imagines the US as a stable nation. Coupled with her use of the word “silly,” Noelle’s claims about education seem to suggest that Latinx immigrants are not intellectual enough to be “Americans.” Their claims promote an “imagined reality” of the United States as a homogenous place, that should be absent of other cultures or relics. As seen in this brief exchange, Damien and Noelle present a sense of othering (both consciously and unconsciously) in their rhetoric by asserting a superiority of US culture over all other nations, particular Latin American nations.

This means that Latinx immigrants may experience “othering” if they do not present the “correct” identity makers that construct US society. Overall, these assumptions are often a response to anxiety about losing cultural dominance (Huber, Lopez, Malagon, Velez and Solorzano 2008). Rhetoric used to “other” serves as a strategy to cope with change in US culture.

Emotion-work

Factors like “othering” or invalidation can stem from a prevalence placed on emotion-work that shapes why people tend to invest in racism, nativism, and imperialism in the United States (Ioanide 2015). Since emotions shape the ways that people experience their encounters and own social worlds, “ideological convictions (however fictional or unfounded) [shape] their sense of realness” (Ioanide 2015:2). This unique ability people have to close-off their cognitive receptivity to empirical facts, translates into a full-blown reliance on emotional investments that overall inhibit a genuine engagement with pragmatic knowledge (Ioanide 2015). Public feelings rather than facts often dictate social organization, and subsequently outmaneuver concrete evidence over politicized matters, such as immigration. Race scholars point out that for example, “public feelings about ‘criminality,’ ‘terrorism,’ ‘welfare dependence,’ and ‘illegal immigration’ are not simply individual sentiments; they have been essential to manufacturing consent for military-carceral expansion and the retreat from social welfare goods” (Ioanide 2015:1).

When my participants relied on commonly-held sentiments or assumptions of undocumented immigrants, and asylum-seekers traveling to the United States, they exhibited how emotion-work can dictate bias. Rather than questioning their preconceived notions around this specific population, they exacerbated them by animatedly describing the “dangers” of migrant caravans. Damien and Noelle, depicted stereotypes associated with undocumented immigrants as they explained why it is important to “stop the flow of immigration from Latin America to the United States.” They said,

D: But MS-NBC's reporter walks through the immigrant caravan in Tijuana and starts talking about, uh, the, the anchors were asking him, "Do you," uh, "What do you see? You know, like, to ... Are all the women and children okay?" And he's like, "Well, there's not many women and children here. They're all at the front or around the sides. But in the middle of the caravan, there's three to four thousand people who are all young adult males."

N: Yeah.

D: And, uh, this is where crime happens. Everybody moves and passes through, it's like a, like an army back in the day, like, uh, when they would just take advantage of, uh, rape and pillage as they-

N: Right.

D: Transgressed across the landscape.

N: Yeah.

D: So, anyway, I think that they, uh, I think caravan was just a staged bunch of bullshit for political game. But I've gotta say that was, uh, just my assumptions.

In this exchange, Damien reveals how the relationship between crime and immigration is often exaggerated or manipulated in order to maintain a deleterious view of Latinx people as they seek refuge through mass migration. For instance, Damien allows his feelings and assumptions towards immigrant groups to dictate the narrative he relies on. Despite the information pertaining to the demographics of the migrant caravan from left-leaning MS-NBC, Damien and Noelle's world-view of the situation was shaped by their interpretation and feelings around immigration, rather than a critical examination of evidence around the situation. They demonstrate how emotional investments in controversial narratives can lead to altered perceptions of reality.

This tactic of relying more on personal-interpretation greatly influences the current attitudes US citizens hold toward immigrants and the economy. One of the most contentious aspects of the immigration debate pertains to the effects on jobs and wages. For example, when Kourtney, a middle-aged Republican, originally from the East Coast, talks about her original

support for the current administration, she points to the strong stance Trump took on immigration. Although she mentioned the efforts of past presidents to correct the problems associated with immigration, she initially embraced Trump's plans as a means to "try and do something about [immigration]." She told me,

Because, I- you know, our schools are getting taxed. Our healthcare system is taxed. And undocumented workers and undocumented people in our country are responsible for taxing that system. I get that. I completely get it.

Kourtney's political support depended on her perception of issues around Latinx immigration. She identified with the conception of immigration as a creating economic faultiness for the United States. Kourtney's anti-immigration arguments are contingent on the assumptions that immigrants pose a net drain on the economy by occupying substitutive positions in the labor force and increasing job competition.

However, these suppositions fail to recognize the long-term positive fiscal impact immigration has on the economy. Schumacher-Matos (2011:106) rationalize "immigration has a small but positive impact on the wages of nearly nine of ten American workers and creates jobs." Data shows that because of the large variety of skills of today's immigrants, most American workers do not compete with immigrant workers and therefore experience the benefits of immigration. When I probed Kourtney on her understanding of the economic issues, she was able to recognize these data points, and she talked about how immigrants generate job dependability. Kourtney explained,

I also know that if we want to get rid of the Hispanics that are working, or- or not documented, then who's gonna do the work? 'Cause, you know ... just ... I'm- I'm not trying to be generic, but like lawn care. And there are just plenty of different groups that do lawn care. But here in Colorado, a large population of who are doing our lawn care, and paint house painting, and so forth. There's a large population of Hispanics doing it. Yes, oh gosh, house cleaning.

This contradiction between immigration imposing an economic deficiency and also serving as a conduit for job sustainment suggests that Kourtney, like my other participants, is more reliant on her emotional perception of immigration rather than factual support.

Overall, the job displacement that does affect native-workers is small, but the emotion-work Kourtney engages in overwhelms that knowledge, so much so that she shifted her voting patterns because of these knowingly false data points about immigrants taxing the economy.

When I asked Kourtney to talk about her perception on current social life in the United States, she explained her change in support. Although she voted for President Trump, over the course of his presidency her stance has shifted because of her view of him as undiplomatic and uncompassionate towards immigrant groups. She argues,

Um ... Well, I told you, I'm a Republican. Um, but I have ... I have a hard time with this president. I don't think he's compassionate. Um ... I don't think he tells the truth. I think he spins off the cuff. And I think that it's- it's caused a lot of animosity in our country. Like, to the point where people don't want to talk about immigration. Like, it's, if people know how you feel, like we're not ... we're definitely- ... this is just not a topic we're going to talk about... And I ... and I can say that I feel like ... When I voted and ... many- a lot- I've voted since I was 18. I'm 45. I feel like this is ... I- I tell my kids, this is a very different environment in which I've ever known. A president who I think is tactless, and ... he's ... The way he conducts himself is like no other president I've ever seen. And it's caused ... it's causing a lot of problems... for our country.

Similar to the ways people rely on their emotions regarding immigrants, they also tend to rely on their emotions when voting, which explains how people across the political spectrum, at some time or another, endorse policies that are detrimental to groups labeled as “other.” Shifting political backing often alters laws and can help explain the endorsement of some laws as they were written and implemented by people elected under democratic principles (Facchini et al. 2008). Ioanide (2015:4) explains that “the function of public beliefs, fears and desires in the construction of political complicity... tends to ignore or minimize the distinctly racialized... aspects of these emotional economies.” For the most part, my participants appealed to their

emotional responses to immigration and when voting; whether that be a request for more compassion or arguing for more infrastructure for the sake of “safety.”

In terms of immigration, my participants who steadfastly supported the Trump administration were more likely to maintain backing for restrictive immigration policies. The participants who aligned more directly with the current administration, were more adamant about state-enforced policing and the need to erect a wall on the Southern border of the US. When I asked these participants about their solutions to stop unauthorized immigration in the future, they quickly asserted ideas like, “the wall; a fence; harsher penalties for crimes; tougher border security; or military intervention.” The connection between support for the Trump administration and restrictive immigration policies seems to come from the belief that state-enforced remedies will answer what the general public fears and desires. Where do these fears and desires come from? I assert that media consumption and news play a large role in constructing these reactions.

Media Intake

Besides being guided by their emotions rather than logic or data, oftentimes, people’s opinions are framed by their intake of particular media sources. This impacts their voting decisions and stances on specific issues, such as immigration. The way people get information stems mostly from news media, social media or friends and family. These sources are distinct depending on which side of the aisle a person falls on, in terms of political ideology. Pew Research Center (2014) found that consistent liberals named an array of main sources, like CNN, MSNBC, NPR and NYT while consistent conservatives were firm supporters of Fox News as their main news source. My participants corroborated this in their interviews and maintained that even though they may attempt to gather information from outside sources, they were more likely to adhere to news that matched their political affiliation. Siloed political messaging proves that the purpose of different media sources is to “inculcate and defend the economic, social, and

political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the domestic society and the state” (Herman and Chomsky 1988:298). These particular “ideological bubbles,” are charged to deliver a message that conveys partisan alignment to makes the base of each party more antagonistic of the other’s ideology (Olson 2008). Andrea, an independent from Houston talked about the dangers of ideological news messaging. She told me,

Oh, my gosh. I think the current ... administration is just, uh, espousing information without recognizing the danger of the rhetoric that they're throwing out there. And media just picks it up...its intended to fuel this vileness by people who aren't taking the time to fact-check.

Here, Andrea is acutely aware the cyclical nature of the news, particularly message framing. It is overwhelmingly influenced by those in control of media rhetoric; the writing perspective and the message framing (Herman and Chomsky 1988) Overall, since people are more likely to ascribe emotions over facts, it has become exponentially easier for “politically-targeted” mass media to contribute a sense of fear or assurance to the ever-evolving social climate. Therefore, political messaging can manifest into the specific desires or fears of the group framing the message.

My participants were aware of news framing and talked in great detail about their own media intake, as well as their caution for bias. Damien pointed this out in his discussion of news sources, He proclaimed,

you know, what six people own the media? Yeah, they really do, like George Soros and that whole gang, there's, what's the one dude? There's, uh, he said, he made three U.S. presidents. Uh, the owner of Fox like the ... anyway. Yeah, but long story short, the people who control the minds... Control the king- the keys to the kingdom of heaven control the people. That's the Catholic Church. That's the media. That's the "If I can manipulate the simple minds of the masses, I have control." But when there's one to five people that own all the media networks. There's MS-NBC, CNN, those are all, they're biased to the left. There's Fox and, you know, uh, what's his name, uh, Ale- Alex Jones, extreme right, you know, like extreme right. Like, you know they're all owned by, like, the same group. So, um, I think over that they are over-sensationalized on either accord, to pass their specific agenda politically, 'cause they're all sheep. Uh, whatever you say,

this way, roger that, this way, roger that. Everybody's dumb. Until it affects them personally, and then they start to make choices based on that.

Here, Damien pinpoints the broadcast media conglomerates as manipulators, along with institutions like the Catholic Church and conspiracy theorists like Alex Jones. His response was not unlike my other participants. Many people pointed out their desire to remain open to news sources that introduced ideas outside their own political alignment. When I asked people what sources they specifically referred to for information about current immigration policies, many resolved that they depended on a wide array of social media outlets, publications, podcasts and broadcasts.

While participants claimed to use a vast number of sources for their information, they revealed rhetoric that correlated more with specific media agendas. For instance, Samuel, a middle-aged self-described Republican posited that he was open-minded in terms of news intake and source dependence. As the interview progressed, it was evident that Samuel subscribed to more right-leaning media sources to corroborate his opinions. For example, Samuel explained that the news media is subject to “fear-mongering in news and it’s terrible. But I also know that MS-13's real. I think there are violent people coming into this country and looking for a better life.” The words “fear-mongering” and “MS-13” are more aligned with conservative media, so even though he attempted to do “somewhat unbiased research,” he continued to make partial statements about the failure of politically-leaning news and its swaying power.

These conversations demonstrated that for the most part, people would like to believe that they are able to sense and deter news bias in their own lives. Many participants who explained their “information gathering techniques” failed to recognize the compatibility certain sources had with their presupposed ideas around immigration. Despite claims that they reasonably sought-after information, over the course of the interview, my participants revealed their own emotional attachments to particular reporting on current events.

Aware of these emotional attachments, mass media caters to specific prejudices to help create a sense of self for consumers (Ioanide 2015).

The sense of identity mass media creates takes precedent, despite whether or not a certain source correctly portrays reason and evidence. Because emotions impact people's sense of individual or group identity, as it relates to support for media sources, the inability to look beyond individuated feelings permits the circulation, accumulation, expression and exchange of biased political thought and power (Ioanide 2015). This demonstrates one way in which people begin to value political ideology or personal sentiment over obtaining diversity in reporting. In our interview, Damien expressed his annoyance at left-leaning news sources for playing into affective-based reporting. Under his presumption, news sources like CNN maintain a "cult following of liberals... because they play biased videos and visuals." He went on to explain that,

Right, because how they're edited, how they're intended to make you feel, a little bit of sad music in the background that you barely notice. When they show the sad faces of clean, well-fed children who are crying for the moment 'cause their diaper's full. But not because they're in any sort of distress. Because they've traveled, what, 1,150 miles or something like that? How do you not look ragged as shit? So, um, yeah, I don't know. That's my rant.

Although his statements only objected to the reporting tactics of left-leaning media and failed to recognize problematic reporting across the board, he makes it clear how personal, emotional investments connect to mass media preferences. Thus, the relationship between media consumption and emotion-work is cyclical; world-views are shaped by particular sources of mass media, which force people to ideologically align with emotionally-charged messages that generate emotions tied to specific world-views.

In terms of getting news about politics and issues surrounding the US government, citizens across the political spectrum inhabit vastly different worlds. Republicans and Democrats are more divided along ideological lines today, than at any other point in the past two decades

(Mitchell et al. 2018). Overall, liberals and conservatives experience little overlap in the particular news sources they trust or disbelieve (Mitchell et al. 2018).

Political party polarization is “accompanied by an ‘us versus them’ mentality [among the electorate], in which partisanship shapes the way people see the political world” (cited in Olson 2008:705). Even when voters are not that different from each other, they tend to believe that their own position is “good” and the other is “bad” (Olson 2008). This mentality plays out in media consumption and help to explain why consistent political affiliation often dictates where a person receives their information about current events. For instance, one of my participants, Barbara, a middle-aged democrat from Boulder proudly exclaimed that “[she] can tell [me] where [she] doesn’t get [her] information about current political and social events.” This statement preceded her reliance on a list of left-to-middle-leaning media sources and hinted at her reluctance to subscribe to the messages portrayed on Fox News.

Despite the obvious ideological silos within news media, the vast majority of Americans distrust the US mass media and claim there is “inaccuracy, bias, and unfairness” within broadcasting (Fars News Agency 2016). Although Fars News Agency did not break these figures down into specific sources of media, it can be assumed that this surveyed assertion of news bias is based off the public’s disapproval of dissenting sources of news. Andrea argued that she had to abstain from watching the news because of its reputation for being siloed. She explained her refusal to watch the news,

I can't. It makes me feel crazy. Um, and it's probably very ignorant to even say that. I cannot ... if Trump comes on the TV I have to turn it off. But I'm equally bothered by the super liberal TV. I mean, Fox News is, is ridiculous, but CNBC can be ridiculous. Um, I read the Wall Street Journal. And I try to just limit my news to, uh, just articles, factional articles ... that don't necessarily get too political. But it's just, it's, it's telling. But, so that's where I get my news, Wall Street Journal. That's it actually.

Andrea's statements reveal how political ideology (in her case, moderate to independent) can manifest into a disapproval for dissenting sources of news (in her case, too left-of-center and too right-of-center).

Not only does news framing create a sense of identity and shift voting patterns, it does emotion-work that effects opinions on immigration (Lecheler, Bos and Vliegthart 2015). The public discourse around immigration opinions varies considerably based on news sources' rhetoric. In the current climate, many participants talked about the sense of intolerance they feel from people with opposing views. From their perspectives, the news feeds into this sense of intolerance because it maintains close-mindedness towards opposing positions. Political ideology and the presence of politics in news consumption entails a "struggle between dominant and subordinate groups to achieve hegemony, or to define the ideological 'common sense' of a society" (Olson 2008:707). For instance, Kourtney a conservative from Boulder explained that issues like immigration are

a nerve-wrecking topic to discuss but I think ... I'd like to think that people don't think like-minded and I'm sure people have different opinions and can talk. I feel like it's one of those topics that you can't really discuss without people getting really—really upset... especially nowadays.

Her assertion is reminiscent of many of my participant's responses. Many folks, across the political spectrum argued that the US is currently lacking in diverse conversation over contentious topics. Political siloes within media contribute to the creation of indomitable attitudes over social and political issues. Despite an overall awareness my participants had about biased news, they implied an uncomfortability with dissenting views and the lack of conversation across the aisle. Does the strive towards political hegemony translate into a dissatisfaction with alternating voices?

Mistrust of Media (Sensationalism)

As an institution, American news media has become highly unpopular in recent years (Mitchell et al. 2018). People often point to news framing, using politically relevant information, or direct persuasion tactics as strategies that the news manipulates to portray a particular message (Ladd 2010). It is interesting that despite the high reliance on news media for political updates, a majority of Americans support “Fake News” rhetoric within the country. Around 64 percent of Americans say “Fake News” has created a “great deal of confusion” about the basic facts of current events (Suh 2016). Pew researchers explained, “while it is difficult to measure the precise extent to which people actually see news that has been completely fabricated –given that news consumers could see but not recognize made-up news stories as well as mistake factual stories for false ones —these figures provide a high-level sense of the public’s perception of this kind of content,” (Suh 2016). My participants demonstrated this perception of “fake news” during the interviews. Every person I interviewed, mentioned some facet of media sensationalism, or media fabrication. Take for example, my exchange with Jackie, a middle-aged, self-identified fiscal conservative. When I asked her to interpret her understanding of the recent migrant caravan traveling to the United States, she told me

I think that was just made up in the news. Um, I mean I definitely think that was just like hyped up for political motivations- To make the issue seem imminent, and I think scare people. No, I think scare people to say like, "Oh, they're all coming. There are all these illegal people... Are going to come and commit crimes here. Um, therefore I should vote for stricter immigration, and I don't think it's that way. Yeah. Yeah. I mean I think it's like catnip for them. He's just like gives it to them, and they're like yep.

Her understanding of the caravan demonstrates how many of my participants felt about the function of news to promote a specific political agenda. Although Jackie did not specifically use “Fake News” terminology, she highlighted the main point that news can be seen as subjective because it is solely used to promote the ideas of a political party. This notion allows her to assess

the news as completely fabricated or manipulated for political gain. When it comes to reporting on political or social issues within the US, there is an imbalanced relationship between polarized news intake and mistrust of news. This imbalance is similar to the one about the relationship between immigrants and the economy. Both examples demonstrate the paradoxical culture the US assumes.

This discrepancy between the reliance on news and the mistrust of news contributes to sentiments around immigration because it allows people to take more of a subjective stance on opposing sources of information. The level of news consumption, the sources a person relies on, and the amount of believability granted to particular stories impacts individual stances on immigration issues that are being reported on. One interviewee, Ginny a middle-aged Democrat from Boulder explained that,

I just know- I'm just hearing so much more about it now. Um, so maybe it's worse than I thought, or maybe the conservative administration is making it seem more of a big deal than ... or may—maybe it's the same, and I just ... [the news] is just making more—Um, yeah, I think definitely news has changed the way that we kind of perceive what's going on, and —And then when I see the numbers, though they say like, well it's kind of the same or actually gone down, so I'm ... You know, but— [the news] is making maybe a bigger deal out of it.

She asserts an understanding of the news as exaggerated, or “making a bigger deal” out of current immigration problems because of the conservative administration. This example demonstrates the sense of news fabrication that many participants felt. Ginny makes it clear that even though she might use the news to access information, she grants it a minimal level of believability because she interprets it as contriving issues into bigger problems than they really are.

Under this pretense, messages that are deemed accurate by the consumer dictate the particular fears or assurances a person may hold. Again, these beliefs are ordained by the way

that certain media sources manufacture consent around issues, and therefore presupposes that emotion will direct behavior. Kourtney demonstrated this in her interview and explained,

I mean, I think all this stuff that, you know, this ... it ... um ... the information that's coming out about ripping these families apart, it's ... And I don't, I- and I don't not think it's not happening. I do think it's happening. But it's sensationalism. And it ... not ... there's not a place for it, because it is... awful. Um ... But I think that- that- it's- it's just ... it's like the jumping point onto that. It's just a tag piece onto just the basic immigration problem that there is, and now you've got these other things happening. And people are just so upset about that. Not just immigration ... immigrants in our country that are undocumented.

Kourtney expresses how the perception of news as sensationalized can lead to an affective response to the current climate. From her understanding, the news portrays information in a way that makes immigration problems appear over-exaggerated and therefore creates an overall negative emotional response to the issue. She tells me that the news manipulates information to make it a “tag piece,” when there are larger issues at play. This feeling was similar for all of my participants, who explained that sensationalized or misguided news is problematic because it can make a person sway one way or the other depending on the message they receive.

Under this assumption, some opposing sources of information can be argued away because they do not elicit the same emotional responses as those that affirm a position. For many of my participants, this reliance on affective responses to news allowed them to argue that some media is overwhelmingly sensationalized, exaggerated or completely fabricated.

Implications

Although personal opinions may differ across party lines, all participants demonstrated a similar understanding of the power of news rhetoric, and its ability to project ideological messages to its viewers, depending on political party.

In summation, my interviewees revealed a chain of influence between personal opinion and news intake. Their responses enabled me to conclude the interconnected presence of

personal opinion, feelings, news consumption and output behavior. Over the course of analyzing the interviews, I determined that news can be used to manufacture ideas that feed into fears over immigration, which leads to concerns about immigrants, and contributes to “othering” practices that many “Americans” use to reject symbols of other cultures because they are “nationally inappropriate.” Some sources of news can be seen as inaccurate or fabricated if they greatly juxtapose personal or political opinions. This interpretation of news allows people to take a subjective stance on the information they receive based off if it accurately corroborates opinions. This relationship between news and “othering” behavior influences voting patterns because policy enactment is voted upon based off of its ability to address particular fears or emotions through law.

Overall, this interconnected relationship between media intake, personal opinion, and manufactured sentiments about immigration allows people to distractingly interpret the messages they receive and combat issues around immigration with one another. This means that sources of information, whether it be people or media, can be seen as a personal attack on identity if it too greatly opposes personal opinion. This allows people to more adamantly align with their predetermined political positions and establish emotional investments in social and political issues. I determined that this alignment inhibits actual change because there is a continuous looping between the different pieces of the chain of influence. Despite the fact that people claimed they used a variety of sources for information about immigration, their attitudes demonstrated why they tended to trust information more if it corroborated with their alignment. So, what does this mean for the creation and sustainment of identity?

A WHITE “NATION OF IMMIGRANTS”

Introduction

The United States has always conceived of itself as a society created by and for immigrants. This characterization is interesting, considering that many “Americans” have not constantly supported this conception. Historically and today, migration flows have dictated the sense of being an “immigrant nation” because the response of the United States has changed depending on the influx of immigrants and their nation of origin. This indicates that there have been great shifts in the employment of both ethnocentrism and nationalism in terms of migration patterns (Alba & Nee 2003). As the literature demonstrated, the United States is marked by a contentious past in terms of immigration policy. From the onset of its creation, “early European settlers conceived of the new nation as one dominated exclusively by whites” (Alba and Nee 2003:168). Today, this notion of placing prevalence on whiteness continues to exist.

The use of generalizations and a reliance on powerful stereotypes continue to plague Latinx immigrants with the mark of “illegality”. Through interview data, I concluded that this notion of “illegality” is socially constructed to delineate Latinx immigrants into “good” and “bad” based off their perceived characteristics. These stereotypes and generalizations are reciprocated overtime through media. In the current climate, people maintain their devotion to their own political silos, and therefore find sources of information that confirm or deny their own previously-made assumptions. The wide availability of dissenting sources of news allows people to subjectively decide whether or not the reports are “fake” and/or “sensationalized.” Oftentimes, this stems from American’s reliance on emotional factors, rather than absolute truth. The idea of the “Latino Threat” is discussed in media, and the presentation of different storylines contributes to variant public opinions around immigration issues. Through analyzing the way people access information, and what factors contribute to the overall, “believability” of particular stories, I was able to understand how certain systems of statements are used to construct notions of the “other”

in popular discourse (Del Mar Farina 2018). Overall, the discursive practices that white “Americans” use to construct and identify the “other,” or Latinx immigrants, provides a basis to legitimately exclude them because they are organized according to perceived characteristics (Del Mar Farina 2018). The way white “Americans” construct and organize groups, also works to marginalize Latinx immigrants because they are excluded as this “different other” (Del Mar Farina 2018). This is significant because discursive practices that define the “other,” allow for the sustainment of the white American “native.” The ideal, white American “native” is ascribed power to determine the dominance and marginalization of particular groups (Del Mar Farina 2018). My participants demonstrated their own nativist ideology in order to prioritize their social dominance at the sake of subjugating Latinx immigrant “others”.

My participants’ conceptions of the United States were conflicting because their rhetoric demonstrated how they maintained white nativist beliefs in order to prevent cultural loss in the United States, but they simultaneously constructed an identity of the nation as one intertwined with successive waves of immigrants and their descendants. This chapter aims to explore the ways in which white “Americans” negotiate their collective identities, as American “natives” and descendants of European-immigrants, against a newer era of rejecting mass immigration from Latin American countries. I believe that the inclusion and exclusion of particular identities and immigrant groups is tied to historical racial and ethnic categorizations, racist nativism and the creation of the “American” identity.

Asserting a Difference in Assimilation

Ethnicity theories in the United States arose in the early 20th century largely in part by massive European immigration to North America (Omi and Winant 2015). This mass of European immigrants was subjected to identity and status creation upon arrival to the United States, as a way to label their “different whiteness” and their national origin (Omi and Winant

2015). Questions around descent, kinship, and ancestry were used to demarcate group identity. Take for instance, the Irish, who emigrated to America to flee caste oppression and made up the Irish peasantry. Like many other European immigrants during this time, “they came to a society in which color was important in determining social position” (Ignatiev 1995). The system of racial categorization was originally and inextricably tied to cultural orientations. In this way, racial status was less imposed because cultural manifestations were flexible. These explanations demonstrate how racial categorization through ethnicity was less distinctive overtime for European immigrants, who were later deemed white and considered part of the “superior” white race. This concept of race as a cultural phenomenon, connects to common ideas around “assimilation, cultural pluralism, diversity, and multiculturalism” because it does not explicitly rely on corporeal markers of identity” (Omi and Winant 2015:22). Consequently, the nation’s ethnic minorities fully integrated into the cultural mainstream and kept their cultural distinctions quiescent. “All these groups exhibit telltale signs of advanced stages of assimilation” (Alba & Nee 2003).

Today, theories around ethnic assimilation are complicated by some scholars’ belief that contemporary immigrants reject assimilation because they do not face the same, specific set of historical circumstances (Alba and Nee 2003). The idea that most Latinx immigrants do not completely assimilate to United States culture was discussed in many of my interviews. My participants gave arguments like “learn about our country,” don’t try to change us,” “learn the language,” “there should be an immigrant orientation.” These arguments demonstrated a white American desire for Latinx immigrants to fully embrace the cultural customs of the United States, even if that means losing their own. The comparison between the assimilation of early, white European immigrants and the supposed lack of assimilation of Latinx immigrants establishes a racialized aspect of assimilation theories. My participants revealed their concerns

about a supposed lack of Latinx immigrant assimilation throughout the interviews. For example, Noelle gave me a detailed description of her past experience living around Latinx immigrants in a low-income area. She explained that in this neighborhood, immigrants refused to use trashcans, were selfish when they received donated food from food pantries, failed to adequately watch their children, and lived like animals. She told me that “There's no respect for what they have. The culture, in which they take care of themselves, compared to how we do is way different. Why? Is it the people? Is it because they're Mexican? No. It's because of their culture.” Although there is no way of verifying the information Noelle used to make this assertion about cultural differences, her narrative highlights the very belief that Latinx immigrants “live differently” and are therefore not able to assimilate to the culture of the United States in the same way early European immigrants did. Noelle’s story also highlights how Latinx immigrants are seen as deprived in comparison to people in the United States. Her claims allowed me to conclude that oftentimes Latinx immigrants are seen as unwilling and unable to fit into the cultural norms of US society and consequently will never be able to represent what it means to be “American.”

Embracing an Ancestral Past

Today, “Americans” proudly seek to rediscover their waning ethnicity, as a way to affirm their ties to the cultural past (Steinberg 2001). They identify themselves as “fellow immigrants” and ignore their colonialist roots to suppose a misconceived equalitarian sentiment around immigration. Many participants talked about their quests to rediscover their cultural and ethnic pasts through genealogy programs. Take for example, 48-year-old conservative, Samuel. When I asked him about his ancestry, he explained that his family came to the United States “in 1850, from Ireland ‘cause of the potato famine.” When I probed him for more details, he explained that he paid for a genealogy program that showed his family lineage. He also included “ah, you know, they came in through Ellis Island...legally”. Samuel’s response demonstrates how

“Americans” today are seeking more information about their family’s lineage, national origin and ethnicity. He does however posit an interesting narrative by equating the experiences of his white, Irish ancestors with Latinx immigrants today. His cutting remark about how his ancestors came to the US through legal channels like Ellis Island, negates the differences in immigration policies, the social welfare of particular sending nations and the receptibility of the US at the time.

Similarly, participants Kourtney and Tony also told me that they recently looked into their ancestral past. Kourtney explained that “So, my family comes from Ireland. And, um...France, and England. So, I mean, we've been here. I am the fourth generation here.” Tony told me that “on my maternal side, my family immigrated from Germany a few generations ago... uh for more opportunity.” While their explanations were brief, I was able to decipher the way they interpreted the migration patterns of their ancestors. The importance they placed on their generational history, emphasized the common rhetoric that the United States is a “nation of immigrants”. Noah also told me,

The gov—our federal government has to compromise and have some kind of a system that acknowledges that all of us, at our core, are immigrants. I think if you look at it—that's how I look at it. I—we're all immigrants. I'm—I'm only two generations away from immigrants in my family.

Oftentimes it seems that this rhetoric is invoked to designate the US as a combination of cultures, but still acts to disregard the stipulations of heterogeneity between immigrant groups and time periods. The narrative that the United States is a “nation of immigrants” works to distance Latinx immigrants from earlier, “assimilable” groups of white, European immigrants because it confounds the situational factors of immigration at the time and masks them as both the same and different. This means that while white “Americans” often argue that they come from a lineage of immigrants, similar to Latinx immigrants today, they fail to recognize the essential differences in US receptibility. They invoke a sense of understanding around immigration, but

also find ways to denote the differences in a negative way. Another participant, moderate-Democrat, Ginny said,

My sister totally did this Ancestry thing, and I could tell like my grandfather had some fake documents, you know? (laughs) And—And I know they were, um... They started, in I think maybe Rock Springs, Wyoming, 'cause there were some other Chinese families. But they were really discriminated against. And then they went to—they moved to Laramie, and, I mean very... I mean, some people were really nice to them, but there was a lot of discrimination. I think they came over in the early 1900s. I mean, and I'm like—I'm so close to a generation of being an immigrant. Everyone in the US like has some tie to another country.

Participant, Andrea revealed a little bit about her family history when I asked her about the effects of immigration overall. She explained,

you know, my grandfather immigrated to ... from Italy to this country. And he was a poor man, and he wasn't educated. And he had three kids, and they never got passed high school. But those kids had kids and all of those kids have gone on to college and are, you know, paying it forward and giving back. And so, immigration works. That's kind of what made this country great. We're all immigrants.

Although these stories pertain to different groups of immigrants, they demonstrate a recent insurgence in what Steinberg (2001) calls “ethnic fever”. Unlike the past, “Americans” today are seeking out ways to renounce their assimilationist past. Groups of people within the United States are attempting to realign with their “ethnic pride and solidarity and affirm their right to a separate identity within the framework of a pluralist nation” (Steinberg 2001:3). My participants’ assertions that they are a part of a specific immigrant group directly opposes early conceptions of pluralism within the United States. In the past, the coexistence of a variety of distinct racial and ethnic groups in the United States was used as a discriminatory practice to delineate ethnic and racial hierarchies. Today, even in the midst of anti-immigrant rhetoric, my participants demonstrated their move towards constructing a visible multiethnic identity. Their quests for ancestral history are used to tie them to past cultural origins. There is a complicated interplay between constructing a national, “American” identity, while simultaneously searching for different, ancestral roots. My participants invoked a sense of the United States as a country made

by and for immigrants, but somehow found ways to construct this as different in terms of Latinx immigrants migrating today. I think as my participants dig into programs that show their family's ancestral history, they reveal the inner-workings of the white "American" consciousness today. Even as white people attempt to disconnect themselves from a racialized, Latinx "other," "Americans" continue to find a new identity outside of the United States. This search is extremely interesting because as white "Americans" pursue their once placated ancestral roots, they continue to deny the belief that Latinx people can "properly" assimilate because they are seen as a racial "other." This paradox is essentially the "American" identity. Overall, Chavez (2013:111) highlights that this very denial is "about reinforcing a characterization of whites as the legitimate "Americans" who are being supplanted demographically by less legitimate Latinos." The creation of the white "American" identity is a product of the interplay between embracing ethnic cultural roots and denying and distancing from current Latinx immigration.

Contrary to the belief that the United States is a "melting pot" of races and ethnicities, there is a complicated relationship between protecting ethnic nationalism and seeking out ethnic distinctions. As white Americans pursue a nostalgic allegiance to the culture of the early immigrant generation, they renegotiate ethnic boundaries to recreate their personal membership to this group (Nagel 1994). Their identified membership to a particular immigrant group adds to the narrative that the United States is a country of immigrants, but still works to differentiate the identity of past immigrant collectivity from immigrant groups today. This means that ethnicity is created and reformed as different groups and interests are highlighted in society. Overall, it is evident that because of this constructionist function of ethnicity, different identities are granted rewards or sanctions.

Protecting the National Identity

White “Americans” demarcate boundaries between themselves and immigrants by focusing on what national group membership means and what criteria immigrants have to abide by to be a part of this identity. Nationalism is intrinsically tied to national origin and therefore ethnicity because it is essentially the particular way of representing a sovereign political community, in terms of ethnicity and ancestry. Oftentimes people with strong nationalistic ties to the United States, identify more with opposition to Latinx immigration if it violates their terms of national identity (Pehrson and Green 2010). For instance, when I asked Samuel to define his ethnicity during demographic questioning, he asserted that he ethnically identified as “American.” His allegiance to this identity strongly correlated with his more restrictionist view of Latinx immigration to the United States.

For participants who strongly identified with the national identity of the United States, it was more common for them to be opposed to immigration or hold more negative views of immigrants. When I asked participants to explain what the United States represented to immigrants, or what characteristics drove people to want to come to the United States they emphasized the availability of freedom, protection by the government, and access to education. Since these responses were the same across all participants, I concluded that these characteristics in part help to make up what it means to be an “American.” Participants who felt like Latinx immigrant groups manipulated or took advantage of these “American” characteristics, argued that this group of immigrants was somehow representing the antithesis of “Americanness.” This can be interpreted through their distinctions of illegality as previously mentioned and also through the collective opposition to sanctuary cities and a desire to abolish the fourteenth amendment.

For instance, when I asked Jacy to explain what she meant when she told me that Trump is shedding light on the “real problem of immigration,” she said

It just that he, Trump, hits home. But it, it is like this is really happening to us. And then now when you hear, uh, some of the illegal imm—immigrants that are in, in the states that are the, uh, was it asylum or whatever for them? I had no idea. I didn't know that we had states that did that. I didn't know we had states like that. I think it's awful... sanctuaries, yeah. Yeah, I just think it's unsafe. Yes. I, I had no idea about that. So, I've definitely been educated.

Her assertion that sanctuaries cities are “unsafe” and “awful” demonstrates the belief that states that do not require information about documentation status are antithetical to what the United States should do when it comes to Latinx immigration. Although sanctuaries still make up the national identity of the United States, they are painted as oppositional to US immigration laws and therefore hurt the image of the nation overall. I probed Jacy to further explain this claim, but she circularly defended her belief that sanctuary cities were awful for the United States.

Damien shared this belief about the dangers of sanctuary cities and told me that “we’re not supposed to import problems and illegal immigrants do... you know, then sanctuary cities, it’s a whole ‘nother shit-show, right?” I asked Damien to explain why he thought sanctuary cities were a “shit-show,” but he used the question to delve into his opposition to Latinx immigration. He explained his frustration with Latinx immigrants who come to the United States to “get healthcare.” I conclude that this connection between manipulating systems of healthcare and sanctuary cities represents how some people interpret sanctuaries as dangerous to the character of the United States. Like Jacy, Damien negatively opposes the idea of a city protecting the status of an immigrant, because in most ways, they do not represent what is means to be “American.” Latinx immigrants, no matter their documentation status, are deemed “outsiders” because to white “Americans” they are not tied to the United States in the same way. Latinx immigrants do not have a similar ancestral past, they do not have the same characteristics as

early European assimilationists and they certainly do not share the same cultural or ethnic attributes as “Americans” today.

Similarly, some participants argued that the US government needed to abolish the Fourteenth Amendment because it does not account for the contextual issues the United States has with immigration today. The Fourteenth Amendment grants US citizenship to all people born or naturalized in the country. Although the amendment was originally created during Reconstruction to guarantee all people—especially former slaves—equal protection under the law, it is now contested as an amendment with implications for immigration. One participant, Jackie told me

I definitely, I definitely don't agree with the, if you're born here, you're a citizen. I don't, I don't think that makes sense. Um, but I also think that if they are here, we can't say go away. So, I feel like there almost needs to be like a, a we stop that, just because I feel like that's like, just like slippery slope and you know—But I feel like if they did say, "From now on, only children born of citizens are citizens." Like you're not automatically. I feel like if they did that at a certain point in time, they'd have to say, "But everybody who's here before January 1st, you get to still stay." You know? About a month ago Trump said he was going to push to abolish the fourteenth amendment, to end citizenship through birth in the US. I think it should. But I, I think because, and I don't know this. But it seems to me that it was probably written there when there weren't a lot of people here, and we needed more people. And now there's plenty of people here. So, like, so—I mean, I think, I think we're kind of full.

Jackie’s claim that the Fourteenth Amendment should be limited to stop birthright citizenship demonstrates how the confines of “American” citizenship are created and redesigned to fit societal narratives at the time.

Although, she does not explicitly use the language, Jackie’s argument that birthright citizenship no longer works for the United States is a direct product of the “anchor baby” myth. Chavez (2013) examines the rhetoric surrounding children born in the United States to undocumented parents. These children are labeled, “anchor babies” to denote the so-called perverse goal of “illegal immigrants” to come to the United States to have US-born children who can eventually vouch for their parents’ citizenship. The language is used to demonstrate how

“illegal aliens on American soil undermine the integrity of citizenship” and therefore pose as a threat to overall national security (Chavez 2013:18). The rhetoric has been so far-reaching that there have been many discussions about changing the Fourteenth Amendment to exclude this very population from attaining citizenship, even though they were naturalized through birth based on the principle of *jus soli* (Chavez 2013). These efforts are just another demonstration of how white “Americans” aim to protect the “sacred” notion of white superiority through social labeling.

It is important to address how the idea of “Anchor Babies” is a myth. Generally, undocumented Latinx immigrants do not come to the United States to have children, under the assumption that the children will eventually sponsor them. It is not practical to wait twenty-one years just to gain sponsorship. Also, having a child in the United States is a secondary effect of immigration. Some people are not even aware of the “benefit” of having US-born children.

Arguments around ending the Fourteenth Amendment are often used as justifications for excluding Latinx immigrants, and their offspring from becoming a part of the national identity. By arguing against the necessity of the amendment, my participants demonstrated their own unwillingness to see Latinx people as a vital part of US society (Chavez 2013).

The United States national identity is complicated by narratives about being a “nation of immigrants” and uses rhetoric that supposes Latinx “others” are culturally different and unassimilable. Despite the recognition white “Americans” have about their ancestor’s own experiences with immigration, they argue for a protection of the US national identity against immigrants who do not correctly fit their conceptions of “Americanness.” Overall, these discursive practices that define the “other,” claim the white American as “native.” These social labels have implications for what it means to belong to the US, and who is granted power to determine these characteristics.

CONCLUSION

Summary

After conducting 17 semi-structured interviews, it was clear that there are a variety of factors white “Americans” use to understand and justify their perception of Latinx immigrants in the United States. Based off my respondents, it was clear that the social construction of “illegality” is contingent on demarcating attributes of Latinx immigrants as “good” and “bad” to justify whether or not immigrants deserve to reside in the United State—regardless of their documentation status. It was also clear that these designations are perpetrated by media sources and disseminated to the public. In terms of media consumption, there was a strong correlation between participants’ political affiliation and the belief of particular sources. Dissenting views were often seen as exaggerative or sensationalized because they directly opposed the emotional establishment people had to certain truths. Overall, I found that my participants constructed an “American” identity by both embracing an ancestral, immigrant past and distancing from current Latinx immigration through racist nativism and nationalism.

In terms of Latinx immigration, it is clear that notions of “illegality” are contingent on the beliefs people hold. Racialized US history, personally-held experiences and different sources of media consumption each contribute to the salience of underlying assumptions that are made about this population. For instance, the brand of “illegality” may seem valid to those in favor of strict immigration reform and who seek out information that corroborates this belief, but is portrayed as harsh to those in agreement with the benefits of Latinx immigration the US. These justifications of support or dismay towards Latinx immigration demonstrate how “illegality” is socially constructed based on the beliefs of the dominant group, who assigns labels. My participants qualified different stereotypes and characteristics that are typically associated with Latinx immigrants to designate them “good” and “bad.” For instance, a “good” immigrant is

constructed from qualities like being a hard worker or providing a source of labor to people in the United States. A “bad” immigrant is socially constructed from narratives that Latinx immigrants’ tax the US economy, use social welfare programs and import crime. For many of my participants, these qualifications were based off of personally-held stereotypes or generalized experiences.

I argue that narratives used to socially construct Latinx “illegality” are connected to emotional politics and media consumption. Many of my participants demonstrated a reliance on their own individual sentiments rather than empirical facts and depend on these ideological convictions to draw conclusions about social or political issues like, Latinx immigration. Oftentimes, these individual sentiments were developed from a repertoire of information from media sources. Although these media sources varied, participants discussed how they trusted sources that aligned with their opinions, and therefore their emotions.

Since my participants relied heavily on their own emotional investments to draw conclusions about Latinx immigration, their lack of cognitive receptibility to dissenting opinions demonstrated deep ideological divisions. Many participants discussed their reliance on news sources that mostly corroborated their own opinions, even if they acknowledged fear-mongering or sensationalism in media. Overall, conversations about media revealed the relationship between media consumption and emotion-work as cyclical; world-views are shaped by particular sources of mass media, which force people to ideologically align with emotionally-charged messages that generate emotions tied to specific world-views. Also, despite my participants reliance on media and news to gather information, they also explained their mistrust in news, as fabricated and sensationalized for political gain. This recognition highlighted the pervasiveness of media in constructing narratives, both positive and negative about Latinx immigration.

Finally, the “American” identity was extremely important to many of my participants. Despite their reservations about Latinx immigration to the United States today, they saw themselves as a part of a “nation of immigrants” and strongly tied to ancestral, European immigration. They invoked this rhetoric to construct themselves as immigrants, while simultaneously distancing themselves from Latinx immigrants today. I attribute this rhetorical manipulation to assimilation theories and racist nativism. Theories around assimilation are used to demonstrate the “Americanness” of early, European immigrants and their ability to culturally align with hegemonic ideals of the United States. This justification is used to show that European immigrants “properly” contribute to society. Alternatively, my participants’ ties to ancestral immigration are used to differentiate and demonize the experiences of Latinx immigrants in the United States. They contrast the experiences to maintain the superiority of Anglo culture and oppress anything seen as “other.” The hierarchy between immigration groups maintains racist, nativist ideals because it defends the power imbalance between white or Anglo natives against Latinx people. Consequently, these characteristics led my participants to call for protecting the national identity of the United States, against immigrant invaders. They argued that the United States needed to be protected from the dangers of sanctuary cities or birthright citizenship. For many people, sanctuary cities and the fourteenth amendment directly oppose US nationalism because they are seen as loopholes that support immigrants. These responses demonstrated how the “American” identity is constructed by “cherry-picking” immigrant characteristics, both historically and today, that support Anglo-dominant culture and uphold imbalanced systems of power for white “Americans.” Latinx immigrants, even when they are seen as positively contributing to society, are demonized against white “Americans” because they are viewed as racially and culturally different and therefore dangerous.

For some, the implementation of strict immigration laws over the past few decades have proven to be an appropriate response to protect the United States. Despite the penalization and stigmatization that Latinx immigrants face, those in favor of immigrant restrictions cling to the opportunity to maintain the current power structure in the United States. This has serious implications for future generations, as they are apt to face similar situations and discourses.

Key Takeaways

Overall, my participants demonstrated that language has powerful effects on the social mobility of Latinx immigrants, as they are portrayed socially, through media, and against the white “American” identity. Many of my participants were not always aware of the implicit biases they presented, and this was informative of the idea that the United States is a “nation of immigrants” despite an overall rejection of Latinx immigrants, in policy and in US integration.

Notions of “illegality” serve to degrade Latinx immigrants by demeaning their human existence to one composed only by status. This is often reciprocated in the media and can impact more widespread views of Latinx immigrants. Immigrant integration into US society is diluted by a lack “belonging” they are given. Conversations with my participants revealed how crucial structural changes are. Participants revealed the pervasiveness of false narratives, a general lack of awareness about the history of immigration and its impacts today and how dominant hegemonies are protected and maintained.

Policy Implications

My research has revealed how much needs to be done in the United States to make people aware of the vital impact Latinx immigrants, and immigrants in general make on the country. After interviews, it became clear that the implicit biases my participants hold about Latinx immigration, are pervasive and contribute to broader conversations about immigration. For the most part, a lack understanding past policy precedent and contributing to false narratives

about Latinx immigrants have led people to permit the passage of formal policies introduced by this administration.

Given that participants reciprocated opinions about Latinx “illegality” and shared sentiments about the threats of Latinx immigrants, political action and rhetoric needs to directly oppose and call out these narratives. To start to correct the widespread false narratives about Latinx immigration, there needs to be active neutralization of the threat narratives and antiracist work against nativist sentiments by members of the media, the government and academia. Also, the rhetoric of “illegality” needs to be eliminated because it has proven to discount the economic and social contributions Latinx immigrants have made to the welfare of the United States. Additionally, policies need to be implemented that directly address labor market needs in order to stop the negative labeling of Latinx immigrants as manipulative of job opportunity (Chavez 2013).

Interviews also revealed participants’ dependence on particular media sources and opposition to dissenting sources. These sources were used to corroborate previously-established, emotionally-invested opinions. Media needs to be held more accountable in terms of employing particular frames. Oftentimes particular frames reduce the complexity of issues, like immigration and makes some points more salient, while leaving out other aspects. Additionally, the repetition of false narratives needs to be stopped and called out in order to stop compelling an audience to promote their own interests by fusing messages with their preferred media sources.

Theoretical Implications

While analyses of public opinions have identified the characteristics associated with restrictionist immigration attitudes, there is very little research about how white “Americans” frame or explain their views on immigrants or Latinx immigrants, more specifically. This paper fills the gap through a qualitative analysis of 17 semi-structured interviews with white

“Americans.” Participants revealed the complexities of the factors that contribute to the overall perception of Latinx immigrants. Most participants relayed conflicting narratives about the influences on their opinions, which demonstrated that particular attitudes are constructed over time and according to current rhetoric, personal experiences and identity creation.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study breaks ground in examining current white “American” attitudes towards Latinx immigrants and the factors that contribute to these attitudes, the findings of this study are not generalizable to all white “Americans.” Further research would benefit from pools of randomly-selected participants from all over the nation. Given that all interviewees lived in relatively middle-to-upper-class, urban and suburban areas, the emotions and behaviors of people in rural places or in areas with lower economic status may look significantly different. Additionally, participants ages had a short range, from 37 to 72. The attitudes and perceptions of younger people could have changed the course of the research. Furthermore, this study only examines people’s attitudes towards immigrants in a politically tense time period, which is only informative of the current climate, and cannot necessarily provide insight for the unforeseeable future. However, the goal of this research was to examine what factors white “Americans” use to negotiate their perceptions of Latinx immigration, thus the research was not intended to be generalizable to all white “Americans.”

Future research should examine the impacts of white “American” attitudes on Latinx immigrants currently, to understand their experiences under this unique administration and in this contentious time period. As white “Americans” continue to construct the “immigrant other” it would be informative to examine how this group conceives of their own ethnic identity during this time. Elevating the voices of immigrants from Latin American backgrounds is crucial because it would provide insight into what is going through the minds of Latinx immigrants in

the midst of threat narratives, and racist nativism. In addition to examining the current experiences of Latinx immigrants, it would be important to examine the immigration attitudes of people from different racial backgrounds. Although one participant in the study acknowledged their Asian biracial background, they identified as white in paperwork. Examining the attitudes of other racial groups in the United States, would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to perceptions of immigrants. The factors that proved to be the most impactful on white “American” attitudes were rooted in the power and privileges associated with whiteness and may vary for other groups who do not identify this way. Researchers should investigate other impacts on perception for people with more diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Although white people construct dominant hegemonies in the United States, investigating the opinions of other racial groups would be informative of more general perceptions. Even though whiteness continues to be upheld in the United States, the opinions of white people are not truly representative of the factors that impact the perceptions of all people in the country.

Conclusion

The future of this work with white “Americans” would be beneficial to examine over a longer period of time, to understand if the factors that contribute to opinions are uniquely shaped by this administration or for alternative reasons. Will inflammatory media coverage persist? Will notions of “illegality” continue to be seen as a threat? Will federal polices improve? Whatever the answers may be, investigating the perceptions that white “Americans” have on Latinx immigrants contributes to a deeper understanding that is necessary to structurally change the policies in place and educate the public about the restrictionist history of the United States.

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APPENDIX

Appendix I:

Interviewee	Name	Location	Political Affiliation	Gender	Self-Identified Race
1	Barbara	Boulder	Liberal Democrat	Female	white
2	Ginny	Boulder	Democrat	Female	white
3	Jackie	Boulder	Conservative	Female	white
4	Kourtney	Boulder	Republican	Female	white
5	Noelle	Boulder	Conservative Republican	Female	white
6	Damien	Boulder	Conservative Republican	Male	white
7	Samuel	Boulder	Conservative Republican Libertarian	Male	white
8	Tony	Boulder	Conservative Independent	Male	white
9	William	Boulder	Moderate	Male	white
10	Lynn	Boulder	Democrat	Female	white
11	Andrea	Houston	Independent	Female	white
12	Dorthey	Houston	Conservative	Female	white
13	Julia	Houston	Left-leaning Moderate	Female	white
14	Jacy	Houston	Conservative Independent	Female	white
15	Lily	Houston	Conservative Independent	Female	white
16	Noah	Houston	Moderate	Male	white
17	James	Houston	Republican	Male	White

Appendix II:

Title of research study: Deconstructing White “American” Perceptions on Immigrants of Latinx Heritage

Investigator: Caroline Haley Heinze

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the ways in which White Americans perceive people with a Latin(x) background, in relation to immigration and legal status. I invite you to take part in this research study because your background and social location can provide insight into modern day attitudes regarding immigration in the United States. Your responses will assist future policy and guide researchers to more integrative solutions. Your participation in this study will also help to expand academic knowledge on identity as the United States enters a new era of immigration debate and conflict. If you wish to participate, you will be contacted to set up a 30-60 minutes interview in a location of your choosing. I expect about 20 adults will be in this research study.

Explanation of Procedures

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be contacted to set up one short 30-60-minute interview in a location of your choosing. The interview will consist of demographic and identity related questions, as well as your perception of Latin(x) individuals in the United States and how this has shaped your understanding of immigration. All interviews will be conversation based and will be audio recorded with a tape recorder for my research. Following the interviews, our conversation will be transcribed, and the original recording will be destroyed. All interviews will be kept confidential. I will destroy any piece of information that may disclose your identity and you will be asked to supply a pseudonym for all future references to your responses in my study.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

Whether or not you take part in this research is your choice. You can leave the research at any time and it will not be held against you. The person in charge of the research study can remove you from the research study without your approval. Possible reasons for removal include not meeting the criteria for participation or claims of harassment.

If you are a CU Boulder student or employee, taking part in this research is not part of your class work or duties. You can refuse to enroll, or withdraw after enrolling at any time, with no effect on your class standing, grades, or job at CU Boulder. You will not be offered or receive any special consideration if you take part in this research.

Confidentiality

Information obtained about you for this study will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. Research information that identifies you may be shared with the University of Colorado Boulder Institutional Review Board (IRB) and others who are responsible for ensuring compliance with laws and regulations related to research, including people on behalf of the Office for Human Research Protections. The information from this research may be published

for scientific purposes; however, your identity will not be given out. The audio recordings of our conversation will be stored in a secured and locked filing cabinet and destroyed following transcription.

Exceptions to Confidentiality

CU Boulder policy requires that I and any other member of my research team are mandatory reporters. This means by law my research team and I are required to report any instance in which a participant discloses information that uncovers an instance of protected class discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct. Mandatory reporters are also required to break confidentiality if a participant discloses any information that paints them as a danger to themselves or others, or details of illegal activity.

Payment for Participation

You will not be paid to be in this study.

Questions

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, talk to the research team at (713) 203-9311 or email caroline.heinze@colorado.edu. This research has been reviewed and approved by an IRB. You may talk to them at (303) 735-3702 or irbadmin@colorado.edu if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research subject.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Signatures

Your signature documents your permission to take part in this research.

Signature of subject

Date

Printed name of subject

Signature of person obtaining consent

Date

Printed name of person obtaining consent