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AN INVESTIGATION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS
IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

A thesis presented by Holly Abrams

To the Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences
of the University of Vermont

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
of the University of Vermont Honors College
and Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience

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Thesis Examination Committee:

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Abstract

This survey-based thesis examines correlations among different demographic groups (race, religiosity, political orientation, and gender) and their feelings about immigrants and immigration to the United States. The sample consisted of 79 undergraduate students at the University of Vermont. Respondents to the survey answered these four demographic questions as well as six attitudinal questions about immigrants and immigration. My findings suggest a relationship between very liberal respondents, non-binary / a third gender / or other respondents, and respondents who rarely or never attended religious services growing up, and more liberal or pro immigrant ideology. Because non-white respondents comprised a very small portion of the sample size, it is not possible to make inferences about the effects of race on attitudes. These results indicate that specific identities may inform opinions about immigration.

Introduction

Immigration to the United States has a long and complicated history. Because of restrictions to immigration during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as restrictive policies under the Donald Trump administration (2016-2020), the number of available visas (which grant people the right to enter and stay in the United States for specified amounts of time) in April of 2020 dropped to 7,280, a mere 2.6 percent of what it had been in 2015 during that same month (280,000) (Bloomberg Law, 2022). As the pandemic waned and Trump policies were reversed, immigration to the U.S. began to rebound, as did attention to and debate over immigration—in particular, whether immigrants and immigration benefit U.S. society. Even in Vermont, a state where immigrants comprise a mere 5 percent of the population (American Immigration Council, 2020), well below the national 15 percent (United Nations, 2020), immigration is a fraught issue. In Burlington, Vermont in 2022, for example, some Vermonters rallied to protest the deportation of undocumented migrant farmworkers after they were arrested by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (Burks, 2022). At the same time, however, anti-immigrant and white supremacist posters were anonymously distributed around the University of Vermont’s campus (Arcari, 2018).

Clearly, Americans (and Vermonters) have varied views towards immigrants and immigration—both documented and undocumented. Focusing on documented immigration, I ask: *How do students at the University of Vermont (UVM) feel about documented immigrants and immigration to the U.S.?* I specifically look at those living in Vermont because there is a small but growing immigrant population (mostly attributable to incoming refugees who have been resettled in the state). I also focus on students at the University of Vermont because UVM students share the city (Burlington) with a visible and growing immigrant population.

Furthermore, the majority of students are white (a racial group that tends to hold comparatively negative views on immigration as compared to other racial groups), but UVM students also tend to be left-leaning (which suggests that they may have positive views on immigration). It is important to examine how students at the University of Vermont feel about immigrants and immigration and what factors affect their views.

In the next section, I will provide an overview of the literature. In this overview, I will begin by briefly explaining the history of immigration to the United States from the 1600s to present-day. An historical overview clearly shows that immigrants were not always welcomed to the United States and that immigration has long been a hot-topic issue. Secondly, I will review previous research on American attitudes towards immigration. I will conclude this section by looking at attitudes towards immigrants and immigration by American college students and explain why undergraduate students at the University of Vermont are a unique population to study.

History of Immigration to the United States

According to historians, there are four distinct waves of immigration. The first wave began when colonizers traveled from England to escape persecution and settle on what is now known as the United States. This wave lasted from 1600-1820. The second wave began in 1840 and lasted through 1875 and was driven by an influx of Chinese laborers. The third wave lasted from 1880-1914, and was caused by increased migration from all over Europe. The fourth wave began in 1965 and is ongoing; it has been shaped by laws that have allowed more Asian and Central/South American immigrants entry into the United States than ever before.

First Wave (1600-1820)

To understand American immigration policy today, it is important to look at the history of immigration to the United States. The CATO Institute (2021) provides an overview of U.S. immigration policy from the 1600s through 2020. The authors paint a picture of the more than 86 million people who have immigrated to the U.S. and the legal conditions under which they immigrated. In the colonial period (1607-1776), immigration primarily begins in England. Because of policies throughout Europe limiting who could own land, be a citizen, and migrate internally, European governments encouraged immigration to their colonies for people who wanted these freedoms. Colonial governments, namely England in North America, offered quick naturalization, land grants, and debt relief, which was a stark contrast to what was available in England and other European countries. Because of confusing and conflicting policies regarding naturalization in the colonies, the British Parliament passed the Plantation Act of 1740. The act created a uniform naturalization process in the colonies that allowed non-Catholic colonial settlers English naturalization after seven years of residence.

Despite this Act, there were still two very different circumstances under which people migrated to the colonies. Some came voluntarily and were able to utilize the Plantation Act to gain naturalized citizenship quickly. Others were forced to migrate because they were slaves, criminals, and others who were exiled from England. In 1717, the Transportation Act allowed for a more formal and streamlined process of transporting criminals. Between 1615 and the beginning of the revolutionary war 1773, there were approximately 50,000 convicts forcefully sent by England to the American colonies. Additionally, the largest wave of forced migration included an estimated 10 million Africans who were kidnapped from their home countries and sent to the colonies (from the early 1600s to 1867) to provide free labor (Mintz, n.d.). However, because careful records of enslaved Africans were not kept and because many died in transit, it is

impossible to know the true number of enslaved Africans brought to the United States. In 1619 in the Jamestown Colony in Virginia, fifty enslaved people were brought to the colony and 20 of them were purchased by white settlers (Britannica, n.d.). Over the next decades, the slave trade grew, and more than 30,000 enslaved Africans arrived each year by the 1690s. Most slaves, however, arrived to the U.S. during the 1700s, and their numbers peaked in the 1780s with approximately 78,000 arriving each year. It was not until 1808 that the United States Congress banned the import of enslaved people into the country. Although enslaved Africans had no choice in coming to the U.S. and were rarely treated as people, let alone citizens, historians often include them in the total count of immigrants to the U.S.

After independence, delegates to the 1787 Constitutional Convention decided that the federal government would control the naturalization process, while individual states would be tasked with managing immigration. Between 1783 and 1815, approximately 250,000 European immigrants arrived in the U.S. By 1819, because the U.S. was experiencing economic depression, Congress went around their inability to regulate immigration by limiting the number of passengers a ship could carry, which meant that boats couldn't bring as many immigrants over as they had been. This reduced the number of total immigrants, but also the number of poor immigrants to the U.S. because the new limitation increased the price of travel. By the beginning of the Antebellum period (1812 – 1861) most immigrants arrived from Canada, France, England, Ireland, and Germany, reflecting state policies that prioritized European and Canadian immigrants.

Second Wave (1840 – late 1875)

In 1868, the Burlingame-Seward treaty was enacted between the U.S. federal government and China. The treaty allowed Chinese citizens to emigrate to the U.S., which had previously

been illegal under a Chinese law. Although it did not grant them naturalization rights, the influx of Chinese immigrants raised the entire foreign-born population to 14.4 percent of the whole U.S. population by 1870, compared to 9.7 percent in 1850 (Pew Research Center, 2020).

Because of racism and growing fears that the ratification of the 14th Amendment would greatly increase the number of non-white citizens and therefore decrease the voting power of white Americans, California's congress passed the Page Act of 1875. Although it violated the Burlingame-Seward treaty, the law restricted immigration of Chinese contract laborers, convicts, and most women (regardless of their country of origin). Chinese immigration would then be halted with the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. The law banned the immigration of laborers from China to the United States and prevented Chinese people already in the U.S. from seeking naturalization. Although the law only imposed a 10-year ban on laborers, it was extended until 1943.

Third Wave (1880-1914)

By the beginning of the 1900s, many white people in the United States rallied around the idea that immigrants had immutable characteristics that prevented them from assimilating into American society. This ideology was used as reasoning for the Immigration Act of 1917, also known as the Asiatic Barred Zone Act, banned Asians and other non-white people (such as Mexicans and people from the Mediterranean region) from entering the U.S. With the end of World War I and anticipation of post-war migration, Congress then passed the Emergency Quota Act of 1921, which capped new immigration to 358,000 people per year. The Immigration Act of 1924, also known as the National Origins Act, was enacted to refine the Emergency Quota Act. It reduced the number of immigrants allowed into the U.S. to 164,000, and allocated 82 percent of those spots to immigrants from Western and Northern Europe, 14 percent to immigrants from

Eastern and Southern Europe (who were seen as comparatively inferior), and the remaining 4 percent for everyone else. During this time, immigration from other parts of North America (Canada and Mexico) went unrestricted. Although many lawmakers argued that was irrational that Mexicans could enter the U.S. when Eastern and Southern Europeans faced more restrictions, these policies would change during the Great Depression. With increased job competition, the Secretary of Labor during this time, William Doak, believed that deporting documented, and undocumented Mexican immigrants would create jobs for American-born whites. As a result, the federal government deported over one million Mexican nationals and Americans of Mexican ancestry from 1929 - 1939; 60 percent of those deported were U.S. citizens. In 1940 during the Second World War, Congress passed the Alien Registration Act, which required any non-citizen of the United States to register with the federal government. Having documentation of all immigrants would allow the government to potentially track them and make deporting them easier. While the U.S. was not involved in the War until 1941, the threat of joining was looming and was coupled with suspicions of non-patriots, communists, fascists, etc. Because of these prejudices, only about 125,000 Germans (mostly Jewish) were able to flee Germany to the U.S. as refugees between 1933 and 1945; many were turned away (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum).

In reaction to the attack on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, Franklin Roosevelt signed into law Executive Order 9066, commonly referred to as Japanese Internment (History.com). The law forcibly removed approximately 120,000 Japanese nationals and Americans with Japanese ancestry from their homes and placed them in “assembly centers”, often referred to as internment camps; because immigration laws had largely halted Japanese immigration to the U.S. since 1924, the majority of those affected were American citizens, not immigrants. The last

Japanese internment camp did not close until March of 1946, four years after Executive Order 9066 was passed.

Fourth Wave (1965 – Present)

In 1942, the U.S. government started the Bracero Program, or the Mexican Labor Program. The program allowed some 4.5 million laborers from Mexico into the United States to work in agriculture for minimum wage (or often subminimum wage); this program benefitted farmers who were in desperate need of laborers. When the program ended in 1964, many Mexicans who had come into the U.S. because of the program overstayed their temporary work visas, subsequently becoming undocumented immigrants (Library of Congress). During the Bracero Program's administration, Congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952. The Act was the beginning of the end for the National Origins quota system; it raised quotas for Europeans from outside the typically favored Northern & Western European nations, and set a minimum quota of 100 visas for immigrants from every country. It also promoted family reunification and perhaps most importantly, it repealed the previous ban on Asian immigration (Asiatic Barred Zone Act). The official end of the National Origins quota system came via the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, also known as the Hart-Celler Act. This Act transformed the face of American immigrants by stimulating immigration from Asia and Latin America. It did so by, one, requiring 20 percent of green cards to go to all workers, but gave preference to skilled workers, and two, saving 74 percent of green cards for those who might rejoin family members already in the U.S. (typically referred to as "family reunification"). As a result, people from Asia and Latin America arrived to the U.S. in record high numbers. The Hart-Celler act jump started an immigration boom to the U.S.—one that, for the first time, was not simply white. Following this was the Immigration Act of 1990, which further increased the

number of green cards for skilled workers to 675,000 annually, for family reunification to 226,000, and for other employment purposes to 140,000 annually. The bill also added non-immigrant visas for skilled workers, most notably the H-1B and O-1 visas (visas for people with specialty occupations and individuals with extraordinary ability or achievement, respectively).

Similar to the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, led to reactionary legislation. In 2001, Congress passed the USA Patriot Act, which expanded deportation powers to suspected terrorists and allowed the Attorney General to detain immigrants without charge or due process. In 2002, Congress passed the Homeland Security Act, which consolidated multiple federal departments under the new Department of Homeland Security. These departments were restructured into Customs and Border Patrol, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and Citizenship and Immigration Services—all of which handle documented and undocumented immigration to the U.S. By 2006, President Bush expanded the size of the Border Patrol agency and approved 850 miles of fencing along the southwest boarder of the United States. Following this, the Obama administration had two major pieces of immigration legislation, the DREAM Act in 2009 and the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program in 2012. While the DREAM Act, which would have given legal status many undocumented immigrants who entered the U.S. as children, never passed, it led the way to the DACA program. DACA granted a two-year work permit and a stay of deportation to undocumented immigrants who met the requirements of what would have been the DREAM act. While DACA was beneficial in these two ways, there was and still is no pathway for “Dreamers” (DACA recipients) to gain citizenship, and the path to permanent residence is incredibly difficult. In contrast, the Obama administration deported more undocumented immigrants than

any other administration, with a total of 1.2 million people deported over his eight years (Budyrk, 2019).

Between the COVID-19 pandemic (which began in 2020) and President Trump's numerous Executive Orders seeking to limit or halt immigration of people from specific countries (specifically those with Muslim people), April of 2020 saw the lowest number of green cards given to potential immigrants in recent history—a mere 1,500. This is just 2.6 percent of what immigration was at its height in 2015, with 57,000 immigrants receiving green cards in October of that year. While Trump's successor, President Biden, and Congress have been working to rectify the changes in immigration policy made by Donald Trump, the goal for the end of 2022 is to give out 280,000 green cards over the year—though this is less than half of the number of those given out in 2015 (Bloomberg Law, 2022).

The United States clearly has had varied policies towards European immigrants and immigrants of color throughout its history. Moreover, these policies reflect the attitudes and prejudices of lawmakers at the time; their influence on the American immigration system may or may not reflect the attitudes of average Americans. Americans, however, are not a monolithic group and the literature suggests that there are several factors that may affect people's attitudes towards immigration and immigrants.

Research on American Attitudes Towards Immigration

According to a 2019 Pew Research Center poll, 59 percent of respondents viewed immigrants as beneficial to American society because of their work and talent, while 34 percent saw immigrants as a burden because they perceive them to take jobs and social benefits (Pew Research Center, 2019). While not everyone supports immigration, it is nonetheless impossible to ignore. Even in Burlington, Vermont, a state with comparatively few immigrants as compared

the rest of the nation, people feel the effects of immigration. In 2022, for example, the Burlington Pride Parade organizers refused to accept financial support from one its usual sponsors, Hannaford Supermarket, because the company refused to meet with a local organization, Migrant Justice (an activist group that promotes fair treatment and pay for the farmworkers who harvest produce for Hannaford in Vermont). Immigration is arguably a fraught issue in Vermont, and no doubt American's views towards immigration are varied. Previous studies suggest a number of important factors that may affect Americans' attitudes towards immigration and immigrants—including political orientation, age, religion, and race.

Political Orientation and Age

Attitudes towards immigration vary by political party. Studies show that Democrats overwhelmingly support immigration and believe that immigrants benefit U.S. society, whereas Republicans overwhelmingly do not support immigration and believe immigrants are detrimental to our society. While different studies ask slightly different questions about immigration, their findings tend to follow the same trend regarding political party. For example, a Pew Research Center survey (2019) revealed that most Americans, 60 percent, oppose expanding the border wall along the U.S./Mexico border; when looking at party differences, however, 80 percent of Republicans supported a wall expansion, while 90 percent of Democrats opposed it (Pew Research Center, 2019). In another study the same year, respondents were asked: "Do you believe that immigrants make American society better?" (National Immigration Forum, 2019). A slight majority of respondents, 53 percent, believed that immigrants make American society better. However, breaking the findings down by political party reveals stark differences in opinion; only 39 percent of Republicans agreed that immigrants make American society better as compared to 71 percent of Democrats.

Further, even among Democrats and Republicans, studies show that age matters. Older Republicans and Democrats (ages 55+) have more negative views on immigration as compared to their younger counterparts (ages 18-54) (Pew Research Center, 2019). Older Republicans (ages 55+) are the least likely to see immigrants as strengthening the United States, with only 22 percent agreeing with this statement. Younger Republicans (ages 18-54) and older Democrats (ages 55+) agree with the idea that immigrants make American society better at a rate of 49 percent and 76 percent respectively. The most liberal group, young Democrats, supports this idea at a much higher rate than all groups surveyed (82 percent). Overall, these studies suggest a strong divide in opinions between Democrats and Republicans, and they further reveal the importance of age.

Religion

Studies suggest that religion does not appear to significantly affect views towards immigration (Pew Research Center, 2019; Pew Research Center, 2010; University of Manchester, 2017; Pew Research Center, 2020). Perhaps this makes sense in the context of what major religions teach about immigrants and immigration. The texts central to Christianity, Islam, Hinduism (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, a Sanskrit phrase meaning “the world is one family”), and Judaism all arguably support immigration and the idea that people should openly welcome immigrants (Leviticus, 19:33; The Qur’an, 4:97; Exodus, 23:9). Additionally, in response to a 2018 Trump-era policy that separated 2,300 migrant children from their parents at America’s southern border, major Buddhist centers across the country openly denounced the separations and even participated in public rallies in opposition (Greenblatt and Littlefair, 2018).

Race

Although the majority of the country has positive feelings towards immigration, analyzing this data by race shows clear distinctions. White people are the least likely of all racial groups to agree that immigrants strengthen the country (60 percent) (Pew Research Center, 2017). In comparison, Black people and Hispanic people agree with the statement 70 percent and 83 percent of the time, respectively. Other surveys also show similar trends; BIPOC Americans (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) are more likely to have positive feelings about immigration than white people (Rosentiel, 2006; Pew Research Center, 2006). Moreover, studies show Hispanic people are more likely than the general public to support DACA (Pew Research Center, 2018). While about 73 percent of people surveyed say they favored Congress passing a law that granted permanent legal status to undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. as children (also known as “Dreamers”), 87 percent of Hispanic people favored this bill. Hispanic people were also more likely to oppose substantially expanding the wall along the U.S./Mexico border. In particular, 75 percent of Hispanic people surveyed opposed any expansion as compared to only 56 percent of the general public (Pew Research Center, 2018).

College Students

The media and popular opinion in the United States often stereotype college students as liberal— suggesting that, perhaps, they are more likely than other Americans to hold positive attitudes towards immigrants and immigration. However, empirical research suggests that this is a misconception. College students’ attitudes towards immigration often mirror how the rest of the country feels—around 60 percent believe that immigrants work hard, hold strong family values, and do well in school (Pew Research Center, 2006). Though studies show that college students, as a whole, do not show significant bias in one direction or another towards immigrants and immigration (Qu et al., 2018; Weisman et al., 2007), a closer look reveals a different story.

One study looked at Latino and white attitudes towards immigration and found (as determined through responses to several questions) that more than 50 percent of Latino respondents were “more positive in their attitudes,” while white people were significantly “more negative in their attitudes” (Weisman et al., 2007). Another study showed that college students have undecided attitudes towards undocumented immigration but, similar to the aforementioned study, when the data was broken up by gender, political beliefs, and race, there were significant differences in attitudes (citation). Female respondents had significantly more favorable attitudes towards undocumented immigration than males. Very liberal respondents had the most favorable attitudes successively followed by those who identify as liberal, moderate, conservative, and very conservative. Black respondents had the most favorable attitudes towards undocumented immigrants followed by Asians, and then white respondents (Qu et al., 2018).

Similarly, just over half of respondents in another study (Berg, 2016) disagreed with negative statements about undocumented immigration (regarding jobs and the economy), but analyzing the data by gender, ethnicity, political affiliation, and citizenship status showed differences in attitudes. Women college students were less likely to believe that immigrants were taking jobs away from native-born Americans than college students who were men; white college students were more likely than Black college students to believe that immigrants were taking jobs away from native-born Americans and negatively affecting the economy; and conservative college students were more likely than liberal college students to believe that immigrants were taking jobs away from native-born Americans and negatively affecting the economy. Collectively, these studies suggest that college students are not the liberal bloc that many people believe; their attitudes towards immigrants and immigration vary.

Current Study: Attitudes Towards Immigration among Students at the University of Vermont

Previous studies find that political orientation, race, and age may be the most important factors influencing how people feel about immigrants and immigration in the U.S. They have also shown that geopolitical context is important (Rosentiel, 2006) because cities and states have varying percentages of immigrants and histories of immigration. The state of Vermont is overwhelmingly white (94 percent according to the 2020 U.S. Census), though the state has a growing immigrant population. In 2018, Vermont had an immigrant population of almost 31,000 people (American Immigration Council, 2020), compared to 17,500 in 1990 (Migration Policy Institute, n.d.).

In this study, I survey students at the University of Vermont in Burlington, Vermont. Though the University draws students from around the country and world, about 82 percent of students are white (University of Vermont, n.d.). Most (though certainly not all) students are also left-leaning, and the University consistently ranks as one of the most liberal college campuses in the country (Niche, n.d.). The majority of UVM students are also female, in 2021 62 percent of the students were female and 38 percent were male (US News, 2021). Non-binary, a third gender, or other students were not included in this calculation, but respondents will be able to choose the gender they identify with. Given the characteristics of the student body, it is important to examine how students at UVM feel about immigration. This is particularly important because the University of Vermont is located in Burlington, the largest city in the state. UVM students live, work, and go to school in Burlington, a city which has the largest immigrant population in the state (American Immigration Council, 2020). It is important to understand UVM students' views of immigration given that they share the city and often live in close proximity to new immigrants to the state. Additionally, their attitudes, whether positive or negative, may influence how they interact with immigrants.

Methods

In this study, I ask two questions: (1) “How do students at the University of Vermont feel about documented immigrants and immigration to the United States?” and (2) “What factors affect their attitudes?” To address these questions, I created and disseminated a survey to investigate how UVM students feel about immigrants and immigration. I also examine how various factors (such as political orientation, age, and race) affect their attitudes-- factors identified as important in the literature.

I received approval from the Institutional Review Board after creating this survey. The survey was designed on and distributed through Qualtrics—a software program available at the University of Vermont that focuses on building surveys. Informed consent was implied; in other words, by reading information about the survey and then participating, respondents gave implied consent to having their data used in this research. Respondents, ages 18-23, were given the option to end their participation in the study early or skip any question they did not want to answer without recourse. Respondents received no compensation, monetary or otherwise, for participation in the study, and their academic standing was not affected if they chose to participate or not participate. All responses were anonymous; thus, their responses could not be tied back to them.

The first section of the survey was composed of demographic questions. I drew directly from questions used in previous research. The second section consisted of attitudinal questions designed to assess respondents’ attitudes about immigrants and immigration to the United States. The call to participate, with a link to the survey, was distributed to my peer contacts, professors, and leaders of student clubs at UVM (see Appendix A for the survey instrument).

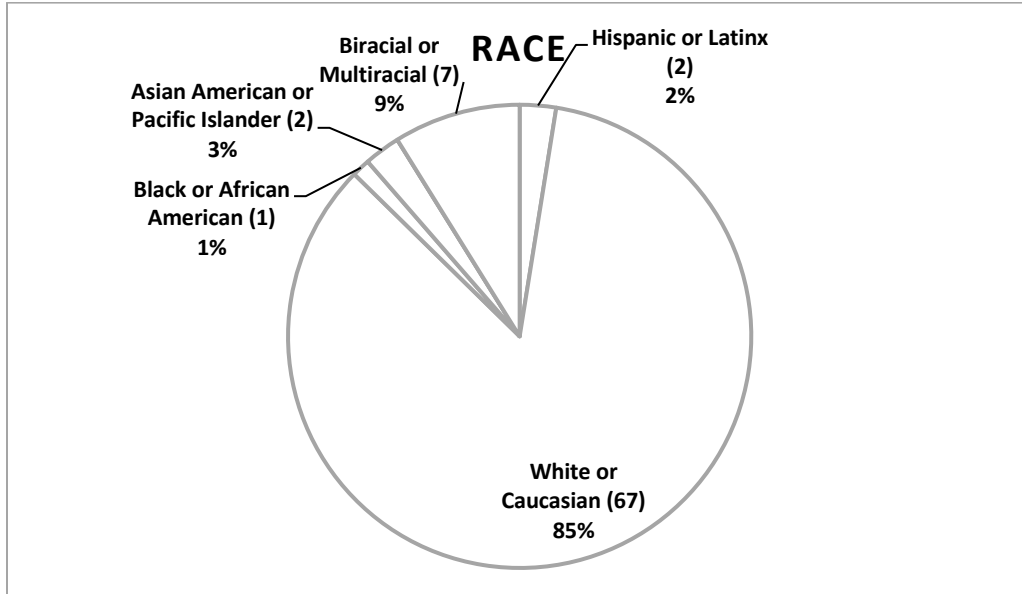
After completing data collection, I downloaded the results from Qualtrics into Microsoft Excel. To analyze the data, I broke down each of the six attitudinal questions (as seen in Appendix A) by each demographic variable. I totaled the responses for each demographic variable and then divided the number of each response by that total, making each response category (strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neutral, somewhat agree, or strongly agree) a proportion of the total responses for the demographics. For each attitudinal question, I then created tables for each demographic variable. There were six attitudinal questions and four demographic variables; thus, there are 24 tables in total. While I focus on correlations between the demographic variables and their attitudinal responses, I do not test for significant relationships; thus, this research is only intended to be descriptive and exploratory.

Results

A Description of the Sample

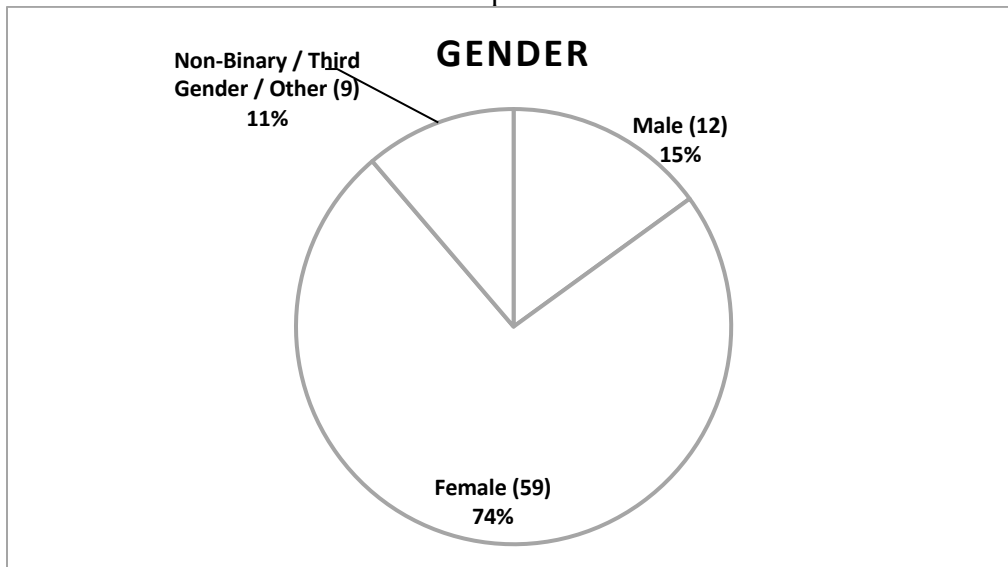
I received a total of 79 responses to the survey. Regarding race, most respondents identified as white (84.8 percent)—this was not surprising given that the student body at UVM is predominantly white. Of the remaining respondents, 8.9 percent identified as biracial or multiracial, 2.5 percent identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, 2.5 percent identified as Hispanic/Latinx, and 1.3 percent identified as Black/African American. No one in the sample identified as Native American or Alaskan Native. See Pie Chart 1 for a breakdown of the sample by race.

Pie Chart 1. Race breakdown of respondents.



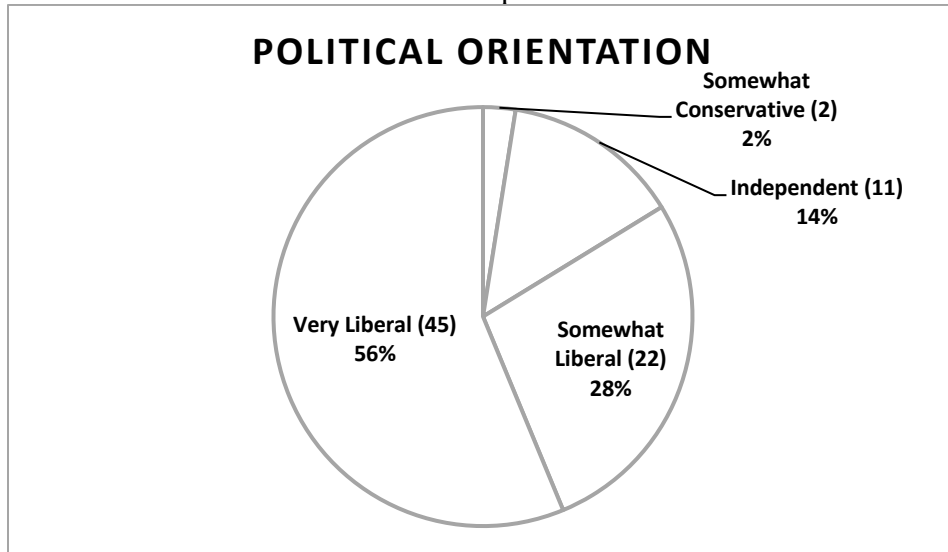
Regarding gender, most respondents (73.7 percent) identified as female. The remaining respondents identified as male (15 percent) or non-binary/third gender/other (11.3 percent). See Pie Chart 2 for a breakdown of the sample by gender.

Pie Chart 2. Gender breakdown of respondents



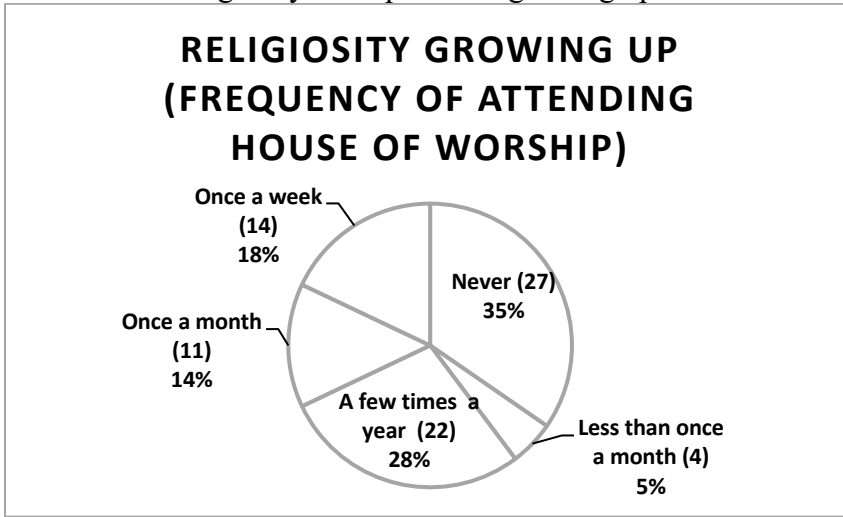
Additionally, most respondents self-identified as liberal; 56.3 percent of respondents identified as very liberal and 27.5 percent of respondents identified as somewhat liberal. Of the remaining sample, 13.7 percent of respondents identified as independent and 2.5 percent of respondents identified as somewhat conservative. No respondents in the sample identified as very conservative. The finding that most respondents identified as very or somewhat liberal (83.8 percent) was not surprising given that UVM is generally known to have a liberal student body. See Pie Chart 3 for a breakdown of the sample by political orientation.

Pie Chart 3. Political orientation of respondents



Finally, religiosity was varied among this sample. Most respondents, 34.6 percent, reported that they never attended religious services. Of the remaining respondents, 5.1 percent attended religious services less than once a month, 28.2 percent attended religious services a few times a year, 14.1 percent attended religious services once a month, and 18.0 percent attended religious services once a week. See Pie Chart 4 for a breakdown of the sample by religiosity growing up.

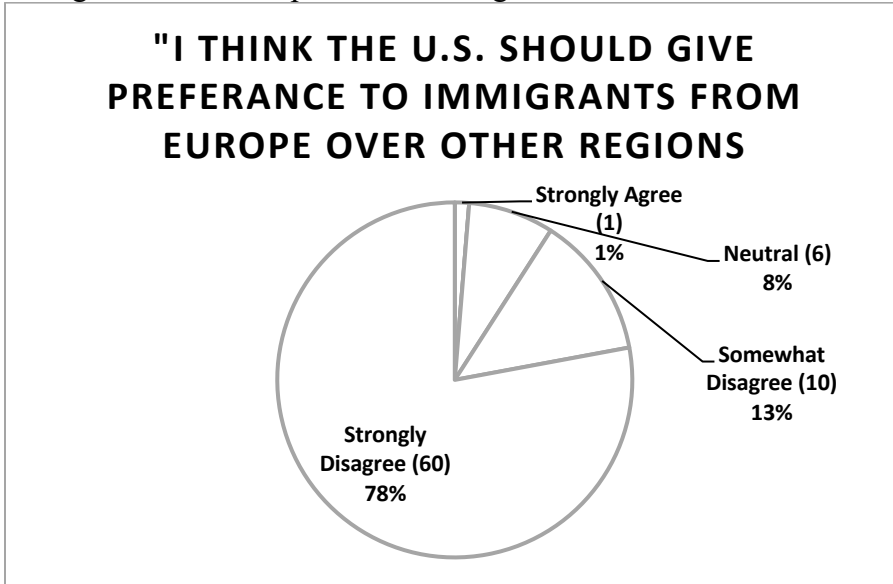
Pie Chart 4. Religiosity of respondents growing up.



An Overview of the Attitudes of UVM Students towards Immigrants and Immigration

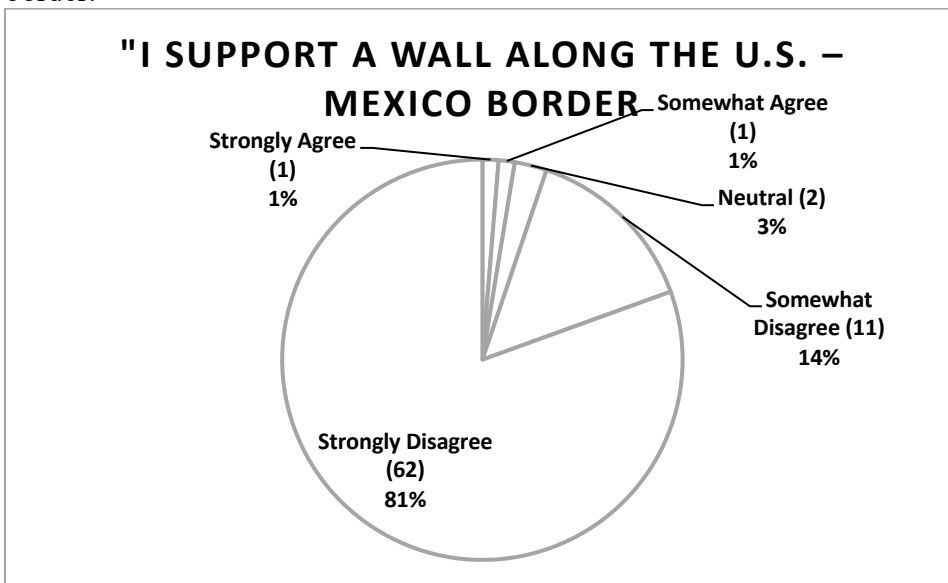
As a whole, respondents in this sample showed positive attitudes towards immigrants and immigration—as indicated by their responses to six attitudinal questions. For instance, in response to the statement “I think the U.S. should give preference to immigrants from Europe over other regions,” most respondents (90.9 percent) strongly or somewhat disagreed. Of the remaining respondents, 7.8 percent of respondents were neutral, and 1.3 percent of respondents strongly agreed. See Pie Chart 5 for a breakdown.

Pie Chart 5. Responses to the statement “I think the U.S. should give preference to immigrants from Europe over other regions.”



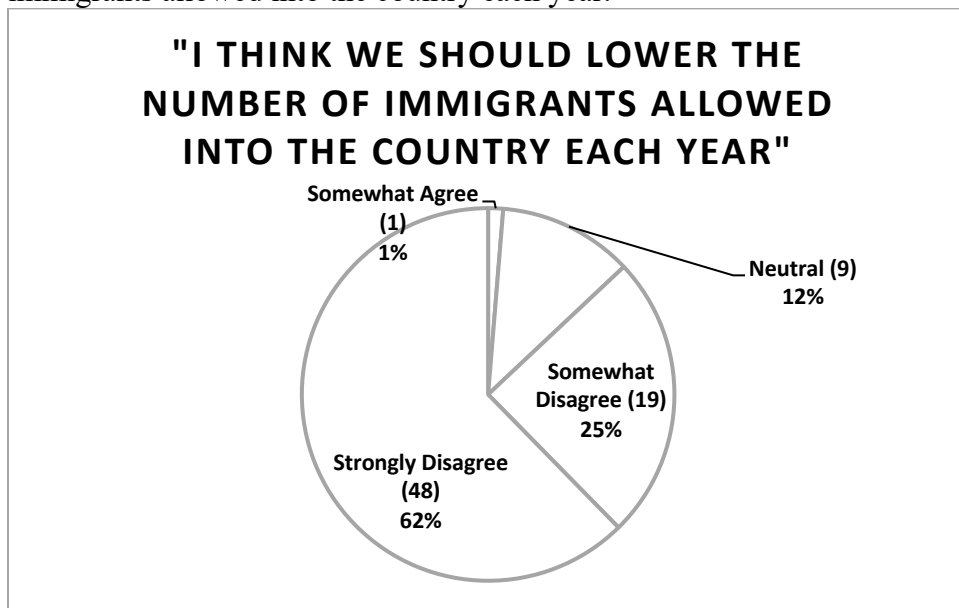
To the statement “I support a wall along the U.S.–Mexico border,” most respondents strongly or somewhat disagreed (94.8 percent). Of the remaining respondents, 2.6 percent of respondents were neutral, 1.3 percent of respondents somewhat agreed, and 1.3 percent of respondents strongly agreed. See Pie Chart 6 for a breakdown.

Pie Chart 6. Responses to the statement “I support a wall along the U.S. – Mexico border.”



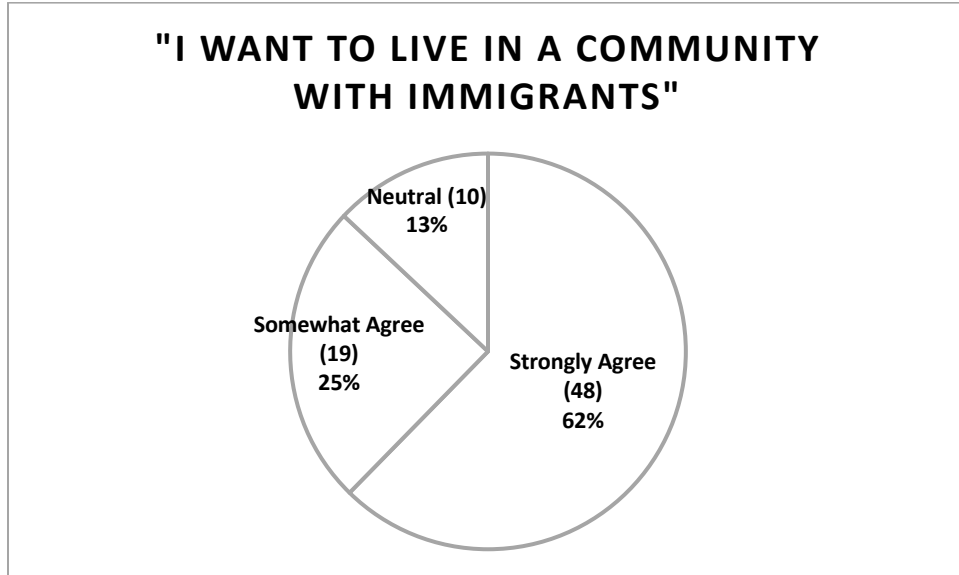
In response to the statement “I think we should lower the number of immigrants allowed into the country each year,” most respondents, 62.3 percent, strongly disagreed and 24.7 percent of respondents somewhat disagreed. Of the remaining sample, 11.7 percent of respondents were neutral and 1.3 percent of respondents somewhat agreed. No respondents strongly agreed. See Pie Chart 7 for a breakdown.

Pie Chart 7. Responses to the statement “I think we should lower the number of immigrants allowed into the country each year.”



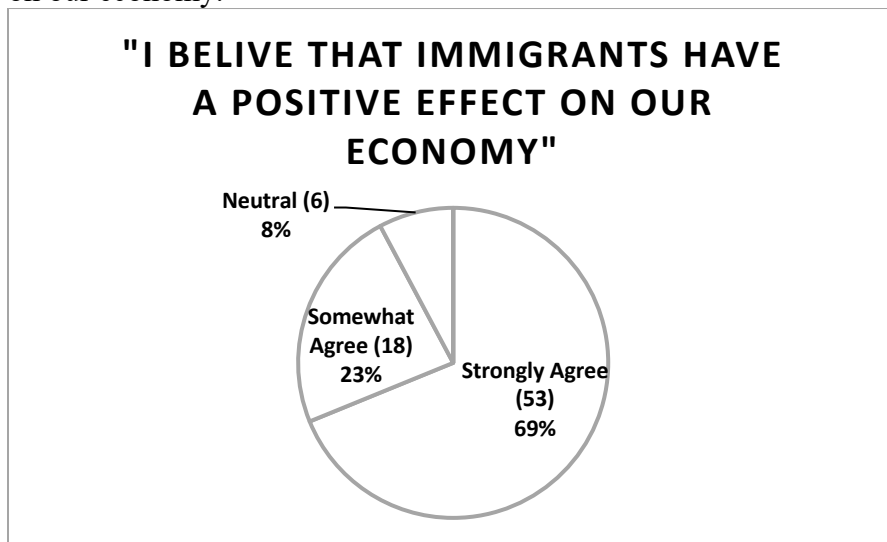
Regarding the statement “I want to live in a community with immigrants,” most respondents agreed-- 87.0 percent of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed. By comparison, 13.0 percent of respondents felt neutral about this statement. No respondents disagreed with this statement (either somewhat or strongly). See Pie Chart 8 for a breakdown.

Pie Chart 8. Responses to the statement “I want to live in a community with immigrants.”



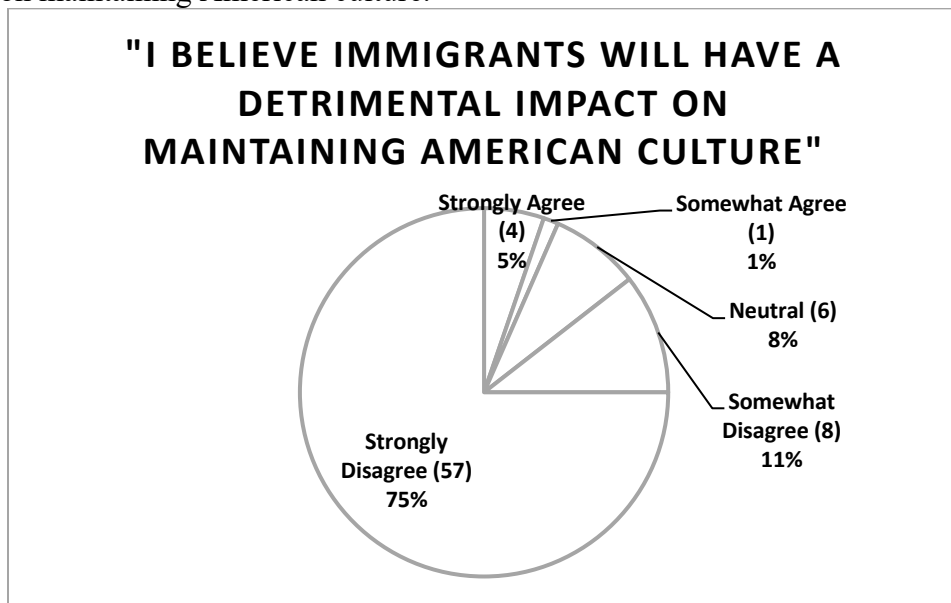
In response to the statement “I believe that immigrants have a positive effect on our economy,” most respondents again agreed; 68.8 percent of respondents strongly agreed and 23.4 percent of respondents somewhat agreed. Only 7.8 percent of respondents were neutral. No respondents disagreed (either somewhat or strongly). See Pie Chart 9 for a breakdown

Pie Chart 9. Responses to the statement “I believe that immigrants have a positive effect on our economy.”



Finally, responses to the statement “I believe that immigrants will have a detrimental impact on maintaining American culture” showed the most variation of all of the attitudinal questions. Most respondents (75.0 percent) disagreed with this statement. Of the remaining respondents, 10.5 percent somewhat disagreed, 7.9 percent were neutral, 1.3 percent somewhat agreed, and 5.3 percent strongly agreed. See Pie Chart 10 for a breakdown.

Pie Chart 10. Responses to the statement “I believe immigrants will have a detrimental impact on maintaining American culture.”



These responses suggest that undergraduate students at the University of Vermont are overwhelmingly pro-immigrant and immigration. There were very few respondents who expressed neutral or anti-immigrant attitudes. However, the frequency of liberal responses showed some variation. While the majority of respondents chose the most liberal option (strongly agree or disagree depending on the question), respondents chose the second most liberal option (somewhat agree or disagree) 11 to 25 percent of the time. Because there was some degree of variation among the more liberal responses to the attitudinal questions, I will focus the remaining analysis there.

A Closer Look

After stratifying responses to each attitudinal question by each demographic variable (race, gender, political orientation, and religiosity growing up), I was able to examine the relationship between each demographic variable and each of the six attitudinal questions.

It is clear in this survey that gender, political orientation, and religiosity growing up correlate with attitudes towards immigration. In particular, people who identified their gender as non-binary, a third gender, or as other had the highest proportion of pro-immigrant/immigration responses (as mentioned above, for the sake of clarity, I will focus on comparing the most extreme responses—e.g., strongly agree or strongly disagree depending upon the question). Regarding the first attitudinal question, “The U.S. should give preference to immigrants from Europe over other regions,” 100 percent of non-binary, a third gender, or other respondents strongly disagreed, as compared to 83.9 percent of female respondents and only 36.4 percent of male respondents. Though those who identified as non-binary/third gender/other showed the most disagreement with this statement, it is important to note that this gender category only included nine respondents. For the full breakdown, see Table 1.

Table 1. Responses to the statement “The U.S. should give preference to immigrants from Europe over other regions” based on gender. Respondents identified as female: 56, male: 11, non-binary / third gender / other: 9.

	Female	Male	Non-Binary / Third Gender / Other
Strongly Disagree	47 (83.9%)	4 (36.4%)	9 (100%)
Somewhat Disagree	6 (10.7%)	3 (27.3%)	0 (0%)
Neutral	3 (5.4%)	3 (23.3%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Agree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Strongly Agree	0 (0%)	1 (9.0%)	0 (0%)

Responses to the second attitudinal question, “I support a wall along the U.S. – Mexico border” followed the same trend. Those who identified as non-binary, a third gender, or other strongly disagreed at the highest rate (87.5 percent). By comparison, female respondents strongly disagreed at a slightly lower rate (83.9 percent), and male respondents strongly disagreed at the smallest rate (58.4 percent). See Table 2.

Table 2. Responses to the statement “I support a wall along the U.S. – Mexico border” based on gender. Respondents identified as female: 56, male: 12, non-binary / third gender / other: 9.

	Female	Male	Non-Binary / Third Gender / Other
Strongly Disagree	47 (83.9%)	7 (58.4%)	7 (87.5%)
Somewhat Disagree	8 (14.3%)	3 (25%)	1 (12.5%)
Neutral	1 (1.8%)	1 (8.3%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Agree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Strongly Agree	0 (0%)	1 (8.3%)	0 (0%)

All of the non-binary, a third gender, or other respondents strongly disagreed with the statement “I think we should lower the number of immigrants allowed into the country each year.” Of the female and male respondents, 59 percent and 54.5 percent (respectively) strongly disagreed. See Table 3.

Table 3. Responses to the statement “I think we should lower the number of immigrants allowed into the country each year” based on gender. Respondents identified as female: 56, male: 10, non-binary / third gender / other: 9.

	Female	Male	Non-Binary / Third Gender / Other
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Strongly Disagree	22 (59%)	6 (54.5%)	9 (100%)
Somewhat Disagree	18 (32.1%)	1 (9.1%)	0 (0%)
Neutral	5 (8.9%)	4 (36.4%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Agree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Strongly Agree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Responses to the statement “I want to live in a country with immigrants” were slightly off of the trend from previous statements, with a higher proportion of respondents choosing somewhat agree or neutral than in previous attitudinal statements. For non-binary, a third gender, or other respondents, 77.8 percent strongly agreed with wanting to live in a country with immigrants, as compared to only 66.1 percent of female respondents and an even lower 27.3 percent of male respondents. See Table 4.

Table 4. Responses to the statement “I want to live in a country with immigrants” based on gender. Respondents identified as female: 56, male: 11, non-binary / third gender / other: 9.

	Female	Male	Non-Binary / Third Gender / Other
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Neutral	8 (14.3%)	2 (18.2%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Agree	11 (19.6%)	6 (54.5%)	2 (22.2%)
Strongly Agree	37 (66.1%)	3 (27.3%)	7 (77.8%)

Similarly, there was variation in responses to the statement “I believe that immigrants have a positive effect on our economy”. Of the non-binary, a third gender, or other respondents, 77.8 percent strongly agreed that immigrants have a positive effect, as compared to 76.4 percent of female respondents and only 35.7 percent of male respondents. See Table 5.

Table 5. Responses to the statement “I believe that immigrants have a positive effect on our economy” based on gender. Respondents identified as female: 55, male: 12, non-binary / third gender / other: 9.

	Female	Male	Non-Binary / Third Gender / Other
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Neutral	3 (5.4%)	3 (21.4%)	1 (11.1%)
Somewhat Agree	10 (18.2%)	6 (42.9%)	1 (11.1%)
Strongly Agree	42 (76.4%)	5 (35.7%)	7 (77.8%)

The last attitudinal statement, “I believe that immigrants will have a detrimental impact on maintaining American culture,” showed a similar trend in responses. All of the non-binary, a third gender, or other respondents strongly disagreed as compared to 78.2 percent of female respondents and only 55.6 percent of male respondents. Interestingly, there were a few female respondents (5.4 percent) who strongly agreed. See Table 6.

Table 6. Responses to the statement “I believe that immigrants will have a detrimental impact on maintaining American culture” based on gender. Respondents identified as female: 55, male: female, non-binary / third gender / other: 9.

	Female	Male	Non-Binary / Third Gender / Other
Strongly Disagree	43 (78.2%)	5 (55.6%)	9 (100%)

Somewhat Disagree	5 (9.1%)	3 (33.3%)	0 (0%)
Neutral	3 (5.5%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Agree	1 (1.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Strongly Agree	3 (5.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Political orientation was the second demographic variable that seemed to correlate with attitudinal responses. However, the majority of participants in this sample identified as liberal; there were only two people in the sample who identified as somewhat conservative, so these data cannot be generalized. This will be discussed further in the discussion section. Nonetheless, these findings reveal that people who identified as very liberal consistently responded to questions with the most pro-immigrant option (strongly disagree or agree, depending on the question). The somewhat liberal group showed much more variation than the very liberal group. The independent group was more diverse in their responses to attitudinal questions than the somewhat liberal group. To the first statement “The U.S. should give preference to immigrants from Europe over other regions,” the very liberal group strongly disagreed at the highest rate (90.2 percent) followed by the somewhat liberal respondents (70.6 percent), independent respondents (55.6 percent), and the one somewhat conservative respondent. One independent respondent strongly agreed with this statement. See Table 7.

Table 7. Responses to the statement “The U.S. should give preference to immigrants from Europe over other regions” based on political orientation. (In terms of identity on the political spectrum) very liberal: 39, somewhat liberal: 17, independent: 9, somewhat conservative: 1, very conservative: 0.

	Very Liberal	Somewhat Liberal	Independent	Somewhat Conservative	Very Conservative
Strongly Disagree	37 (90.2%)	12 (70.6%)	5 (55.6%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)

Somewhat Disagree	2 (4.9%)	2 (11.8%)	2 (22.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Neutral	2 (4.9%)	3 (17.6%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Agree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Strongly Agree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Responses to the statement “I support a wall along the U.S. – Mexico border” were similar to the question before. The majority of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement- 93.2 percent of very liberal respondents, 65 percent of somewhat liberal respondents, 60 percent of independent respondents, and the one somewhat conservative respondent. There was one independent respondent who strongly agreed. See Table 8.

Table 8. Responses to the statement “I support a wall along the U.S. – Mexico border” based on political orientation. (In terms of identity on the political spectrum) very liberal: 44, somewhat liberal: 20, independent: 10, somewhat conservative: 1, very conservative: 0.

	Very Liberal	Somewhat Liberal	Independent	Somewhat Conservative	Very Conservative
Strongly Disagree	41 (93.2%)	13 (65%)	6 (60%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Disagree	2 (4.5%)	7 (35%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Neutral	1 (2.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Agree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Strongly Agree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Responses to the statement “I think we should lower the number of immigrants allowed into the country each year” showed more variation in responses. Of the very liberal respondents 84.1 percent strongly disagreed, along with 45 percent of the somewhat liberal respondents, and

30 percent of the independent respondents. The one somewhat conservative respondent somewhat agreed. See Table 9.

Table 9. Responses to the statement “I think we should lower the number of immigrants allowed into the country each year” based on political orientation. (In terms of identity on the political spectrum) very liberal: 44, somewhat liberal: 20, independent: 10, somewhat conservative: 1, very conservative: 0.

	Very Liberal	Somewhat Liberal	Independent	Somewhat Conservative	Very Conservative
Strongly Disagree	37 (84.1%)	9 (45%)	3 (30%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Disagree	6 (13.6%)	8 (40%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Neutral	1 (2.3%)	3 (15%)	5 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Agree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Strongly Agree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Regarding the statement “I want to live in a community with immigrants,” the majority of very liberal respondents (75.6 percent) strongly agreed, less than half of somewhat liberal and independent respondents strongly agreed (42.9 and 40 percent respectively), and the one somewhat conservative respondent chose neutral. See Table 10.

Table 10. Responses to the statement “I want to live in a community with immigrants” based on political orientation. (In terms of identity on the political spectrum) very liberal: 45, somewhat liberal: 21, independent: 10, somewhat conservative: 1, very conservative: 0.

	Very Liberal	Somewhat Liberal	Independent	Somewhat Conservative	Very Conservative
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Neutral	4 (8.8%)	3 (14.1%)	3 (30%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Agree	7 (15.6%)	9 (42.9%)	3 (30%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Strongly Agree	34 (75.6%)	9 (42.9%)	4 (40%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Responses to “I believe that immigrants have a positive effect on our economy” were slightly off of the trend. The majority of liberal and independent respondents strongly agreed, with 88.6 and 50 percent respectively. Less than half (38.1 percent) of somewhat liberal respondents strongly agreed. The one somewhat conservative respondent chose neutral. See Table 11.

Table 11. Responses to the statement “I believe that immigrants have a positive effect on our economy” based on political orientation. (In terms of identity on the political spectrum) very liberal: 44, somewhat liberal: 21, independent: 10, somewhat conservative: 1, very conservative: 0.

	Very Liberal	Somewhat Liberal	Independent	Somewhat Conservative	Very Conservative
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Neutral	2 (4.5%)	1 (4.8%)	2 (20%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Agree	3 (6.9%)	12 (57.1%)	3 (30%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Strongly Agree	39 (88.6%)	8 (38.1%)	5 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The last attitudinal statement, “I believe that immigrants will have a detrimental impact on maintaining American culture” had responses that mirrored the overall trend. Liberal respondents had the highest proportion of strongly disagrees (93.3 percent), followed by somewhat liberal (55 percent) and independent respondents (50 percent). The one somewhat conservative respondent somewhat agreed. One very liberal and one somewhat liberal respondent strongly agreed with the statement, comprising 2.3 percent and 5 percent of the demographics respectively. See Table 12.

Table 12. Responses to the statement “I believe that immigrants will have a detrimental impact on maintaining American culture” based on political orientation. (In terms of identity on the political spectrum) very liberal: 44, somewhat liberal: 20, independent: 10, somewhat conservative: 1, very conservative: 0.

	Very Liberal	Somewhat Liberal	Independent	Somewhat Conservative	Very Conservative
Strongly Disagree	41 (93.3%)	11 (55%)	5 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Disagree	1 (2.3%)	4 (20%)	4 (40%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Neutral	1 (2.3%)	3 (15%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Agree	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Strongly Agree	1 (2.3%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Although responses to attitudinal questions stratified by religiosity also did not show any major differences or trends, at least at first glance, condensing the religiosity categories into people who attended religious services rarely or never, and people who attended religious services at least twelve times per year reveals trends in the data. To condense the categories, I combined people who responded to the religiosity question as “Never” or “Less than once a month” into a single category labeled “Rarely or never.” The other condensed group, “Attended twelve times a year or more” consisted of respondents who responded to the religiosity question with “A few times a year,” “About once a month,” or “At least once a week.” Overall, people who rarely or never attended religious services held more liberal views towards immigrants and immigration than people who attended religious services twelve times or more per year.

Respondents who rarely or never attended religious services growing strongly disagreed with the statement “The U.S. should give preference to immigrants from Europe over other regions” 83.3 percent of the time. In comparison, the respondents who attended religious services

twelve times per year or more strongly disagreed with this statement only 75.6 percent of the time. See Table 13.

Table 13. Responses to the statement “The U.S. should give preference to immigrants from Europe over other regions” based on religiosity growing up. (In terms of how often respondents attended houses of worship growing up,) rarely or never: 30, twelve times or more per year: 45.

	Rarely / Never Attended	Attended twelve times or more per year
Strongly Disagree	25 (83.3%)	34 (75.6%)
Somewhat Disagree	4 (13.3%)	4 (8.9%)
Neutral	1 (3.3%)	6 (13.3%)
Somewhat Agree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Strongly Agree	0 (0%)	1 (2.2%)

Responses to the statement “I support a wall along the U.S. – Mexico border” were varied. Respondents who rarely or never attended religious services strongly disagreed 86.7 percent of the time compared to only 77.7 percent of respondents who attended religious services twelve times or more per year. See Table 14.

Table 14. Responses to the statement “I support a wall along the U.S. – Mexico border” based on religiosity growing up. (In terms of how often respondents attended houses of worship growing up,) rarely or never attended: 30, attended twelve times or more per year: 44

	Rarely / Never Attended	Attended twelve times or more per year
Strongly Disagree	26 (86.7%)	34 (77.3%)
Somewhat Disagree	4 (13.3%)	6 (13.6%)
Neutral	0 (0%)	2 (4.5%)
Somewhat Agree	0 (0%)	1 (2.3%)

Strongly Agree	0 (0%)	1 (2.3%)
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In response to the statement “I think we should lower the number of immigrants allowed into the country each year,” 73.3 percent of respondents who rarely or never attended religious services strongly disagreed, compared to only 56.8 percent of respondents who attended twelve times or more per year. See Table 15.

Table 15. Responses to the statement “I think we should lower the number of immigrants allowed into the country each year” based on religiosity growing up. (In terms of how often respondents attended houses of worship growing up,) rarely or never: 30, attended twelve times or more per year: 44.

	Rarely / Never Attended	Attended twelve times or more per year
Strongly Disagree	22 (73.3%)	25 (56.8%)
Somewhat Disagree	8 (27.7%)	10 (22.7%)
Neutral	0 (0%)	9 (20.5%)
Somewhat Agree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Strongly Agree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

To the fourth statement, “I want to live in a community with immigrants,” 63.3 percent of respondents who rarely or never attended religious services agreed with this statement as compared to 57.8 percent of respondents who attended twelve times or more per year. See Table 16.

Table 16. Responses to the statement “I want to live in a community with immigrants” based on religiosity growing up. (In terms of how often respondents attended houses of worship growing up,) rarely or never: 30, attended twelve times or more per year: 45.

	Rarely / Never Attended	Attended twelve times or more per year
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Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	1 (2.2%)
Somewhat Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Neutral	2 (6.7%)	7 (15.6%)
Somewhat Agree	9 (30%)	11 (24.4%)
Strongly Agree	19 (63.3%)	26 (57.8%)

To the statement “I believe that immigrants have a positive effect on our economy,” 73.3 percent of respondents who rarely or never attended religious services growing up strongly agreed as compared to 65.9 percent of respondents who attended twelve times or more per year. See Table 17.

Table 17. Responses to the statement “I believe that immigrants have a positive effect on our economy” based on religiosity growing up. (In terms of how often respondents attended houses of worship growing up,) rarely or never: 30, attended twelve times or more per year: 44.

	Rarely / Never Attended	Attended twelve times or more per year
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Neutral	1 (3.3%)	5 (11.4%)
Somewhat Agree	7 (23.3%)	10 (22.7%)
Strongly Agree	22 (73.3%)	29 (65.9%)

Responses to the final attitudinal statement “I believe that immigrants will have a detrimental impact on maintaining American culture” followed the same trend observed in other

statements. Of the respondents who rarely or never attended religious services, 73.3 percent strongly disagreed while 6.7 percent strongly agreed. Of the respondents who attended twelve times or more per year, 74.4 percent strongly disagreed and 4.7 percent strongly agreed. See Table 18.

Table 18. Responses to the statement “I believe that immigrants will have a detrimental impact on maintaining American culture” based on religiosity growing up. (In terms of how often respondents attended houses of worship growing up,) rarely or never: 30, attended twelve times or more per year: 43.

	Rarely / Never Attended	Attended twelve times or more per year
Strongly Disagree	22 (73.3%)	32 (74.4%)
Somewhat Disagree	3 (10%)	6 (13.9%)
Neutral	3 (10%)	3 (7.0%)
Somewhat Agree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Strongly Agree	2 (6.7%)	2 (4.7%)

The final demographic category, race, did not show any clear relationship to immigrant/immigration attitudes. It is difficult to make any inferences about race because most respondents were white and there was little racial variability in the sample. As of 2020, UVM students were approximately 83 percent white (Data USA, 2020). Though the lack of racial diversity in the sample is mirrored in the UVM population, the sample size is too small to generalize these results to the larger student body. See Appendix B for tables that summarize the relationships between race and each of the six attitudinal statements.

Discussion

This survey showed that undergraduate students at the University of Vermont are overwhelmingly in support of immigrants and immigration to the United States. Students at UVM are predominantly liberal, white, and female; thus, while the demographics of this sample show minimal variation regarding political views, race, and gender and are not generalizable, they somewhat reflect the UVM study population. As such, it is important to view the results through this lens; however, the lack of variability in the sample makes interpreting the data challenging. There were only two Hispanic/Latinx respondents, two Asian or Pacific Islander respondents, one Black respondent, and two somewhat conservative respondents. Even if their proportions mirror the UVM undergraduate population, these data make extrapolating to the greater UVM population impossible.

That being said, the data indicate that UVM students hold majority pro-immigrant and immigration views. Although the respondents are not a monolith, most respondents did choose one of the two most liberal categories for each question. These results support previous research on attitudes towards immigrants/immigration by age and political orientation, which indicate that younger people and democrats are more likely to support immigrants and immigration. Left-leaning ideologies often overlap with pro-immigrant attitudes, as previous research has shown, and these results align with past studies. Although I did not predict any attitudinal differences between genders, it is clear that non-binary/third gender/other respondents in this survey are more likely than other genders to hold pro-immigration attitudes; this was followed by women and then men who were the least likely to hold pro-immigration attitudes. One explanation may be that marginalized communities support other marginalized communities and perhaps feel some level of compassionate towards them. The data also indicate that for this population, religiosity growing up does have an influence on attitudes towards immigration. There is an

association in this data between a lower frequency of attending religious services growing up and more liberal attitudes towards immigration. Based on this data it is unclear why, but there is certainly an association between frequency of attending houses of worship growing up and attitudes towards immigrants or immigration. Finally, given that there were so few BIPOC respondents in this sample, it was not possible to make inferences from these data.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. First, I used convenience and snowball sampling. This is problematic because the sample may not be representative of all students at the University of Vermont. Because of this, these results cannot be generalized to the entire student body. Second, the small sample size is another potential limitation. A good sample size is traditionally 10 percent of a population (Kotz et al., 2004). I had 79 responses, which is a little less than 1 percent of the University of Vermont's undergraduate population. Not having a large enough sample size again means that these results are not generalizable to the general population. Further, the small sample makes it difficult to detect significant relationships; thus, I do not test for significance in this study.

A third potential limitation concerns the questions I used in the survey. There may be additional demographic questions that may affect attitudes towards immigrants and immigration that are not included here—such as, for example, questions that look at whether respondents grew up in geographical locations with many immigrants, whether their previous education taught about immigration at all, and, if so, whether that instruction was positive or negative. It may have also been useful to consider factors such as whether they themselves or their parents are immigrants, their social class background, major of study, and whether they grew up in a

community with immigrants. Hence, though the demographic questions included in this study have been identified in the literature as potentially important variables, there may be others that were not addressed in the present study's survey questions. Relatedly, this study could have included additional attitudinal questions. These questions could address other feelings about immigration people may have, such as the beliefs about whether they take away jobs from native-born Americans, drain the welfare system, bring crime, or do not assimilate. Peoples' opinions towards immigration are not one-dimensional, and their stance on one aspect of immigration may not necessarily predict their stance on another. Therefore, it would have been valuable to ask more attitudinal questions of respondents to get a more rounded view of their attitudes.

Fourth and finally, this study examined attitudes towards immigration without distinguishing between documented and undocumented immigration. Because public perception of documented and undocumented immigration may be very different, and people may hold favorable attitudes towards the former but not the latter, it would have been beneficial to ask separate questions about these two very different types of immigration. Some respondents may have positive attitudes towards immigrants and immigration to the U.S., but only if documented; their attitudes may have been considerably different (and perhaps more varied) if this study had looked at undocumented immigrants and immigration.

Future Directions

First, it must be noted that I did not run any tests of significance given the small sample size, thus these results are meant to be descriptive and exploratory. Future research should aim for a larger sample size and examine the significance of correlations found among variables.

Second, as mentioned before, the University of Vermont is an overwhelmingly white institution. Future studies should ask similar questions to these, but at colleges/universities with more racially diverse populations. Perhaps one avenue is to examine students' attitudes towards immigration and immigrants at an Historically Black College or University (an HBCU) and compare the findings with those at predominantly white institutions such as the University of Vermont. It is important to examine potential racial differences in attitudes. Third, future studies should strive for more demographic variability. Respondents in this study were mostly white, liberal, and women. More variability in race, but also in political ideology and gender is needed to better examine the relationship between these demographic variables and attitudes towards immigrants and immigration. Fourth, studies could also build on quantitative work (such as this study) and interview students about why they feel the way they do about immigration and immigrants and what they feel are the biggest influences on their attitudes. Qualitative studies may allow for a more in-depth understanding of peoples' attitudes. For example, interviews may help us better understand why religiosity seemed to be correlated with attitudes towards immigrants and immigration. Finally, future studies should differentiate between documented and undocumented immigration and immigrants. People likely have different opinions on each and hence this distinction is important.

Appendix A Survey Questions

Demographic Questions

1. Which of the following best describes you?
 - a. White or Caucasian
 - b. Hispanic or Latinx
 - c. Black or African American
 - d. Asian or Pacific Islander
 - e. Native American or Alaskan Native
 - f. Biracial or Multiracial (write in)
 - g. Other (write in)
2. What is your gender?
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
 - c. Non-binary
 - d. Other
3. Generally speaking, how would you define your political orientation?
 - a. Very Conservative
 - b. Somewhat Conservative
 - c. Independent
 - d. Somewhat Liberal
 - e. Very Liberal
4. Growing up, how often did you attend religious services?
 - a. Never
 - b. Less than once a month
 - c. A few times a year
 - d. About once a month
 - e. At least once a week

Attitudinal Questions

1. The U.S. should give preference to immigrants from Europe over other regions.
 - a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Somewhat Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
2. I support a wall along the U.S. – Mexico border.
 - a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Somewhat Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
3. I think we should lower the number of immigrants allowed into the country each year.
 - a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Somewhat Disagree

- e. Strongly Disagree
- 4. I want to live in a community with immigrants.
 - a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Somewhat Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
- 5. I believe that immigrants have a positive effect on our economy.
 - a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Somewhat Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
- 6. I believe that immigrants will have a detrimental impact on maintaining American culture.
 - a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Somewhat Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree

Appendix B

Summary tables for the relationships between race and the six attitudinal statements

Table 19. Responses to the statement “The U.S. should give preference to immigrants from Europe over other regions” based on race. Respondents identified as Hispanic or Latinx: 2, White or Caucasian: 65, Asian or Pacific Islander: 2, Black or African American: 1, Native American or Native Alaskan: 0, Biracial or Multiracial: 7.

	White / Caucasian	Hispanic / Latinx	Asian American or Pacific Islander	Black or African American	Biracial or Multiracial
Strongly Disagree	54 (83.1%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	1 (100%)	4 (57.1%)
Somewhat Disagree	7 (10.8%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (14.3%)
Neutral	3 (4.6%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	2 (28.6%)
Somewhat Agree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Strongly Agree	1 (1.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 20. Responses to the statement “I support a wall along the U.S. – Mexico border” based on race. Respondents identified as Hispanic or Latinx: 2, White or Caucasian: 64, Asian or Pacific Islander: 2, Black or African American: 1, Native American or Native Alaskan: 0, Biracial or Multiracial: 6.

	White / Caucasian	Hispanic / Latinx	Asian American or Pacific Islander	Black or African American	Biracial or Multiracial
Strongly Disagree	51 (79.7%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)	1 (100%)	5 (83.3%)
Somewhat Disagree	11 (17.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Neutral	1 (1.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (16.7%)
Somewhat Agree	1 (1.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Strongly Agree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 21. Responses to the statement “I think we should lower the number of immigrants allowed into the country each year” based on race. Respondents identified as Hispanic or Latinx: 2, White or Caucasian: 64, Asian or Pacific Islander: 2, Black or African American: 1, Native American or Native Alaskan: 0, Biracial or Multiracial: 6.

	White / Caucasian	Hispanic / Latinx	Asian American or Pacific Islander	Black or African American	Biracial or Multiracial
Strongly Disagree	41 (64.1%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	5 (62.5%)
Somewhat Disagree	17 (26.6%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)
Neutral	6 (9.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	2 (25%)
Somewhat Agree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Strongly Agree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 22. Responses to the statement “I want to live in a community with immigrants” based on race. Respondents identified as Hispanic or Latinx: 2, White or Caucasian: 64, Asian or Pacific Islander: 2, Black or African American: 1, Native American or Native Alaskan: 0, Biracial or Multiracial: 7.

	White / Caucasian	Hispanic / Latinx	Asian American or Pacific Islander	Black or African American	Biracial or Multiracial
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Neutral	9 (14.1%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Agree	15 (23.4%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (42.9%)
Strongly Agree	40 (62.5%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	1 (100%)	4 (57.1%)

Table 23. Responses to the statement “I believe that immigrants have a positive effect on our economy” based on race. Respondents identified as Hispanic or Latinx: 2, White or Caucasian: 64, Asian or Pacific Islander: 2, Black or African American: 1, Native American or Native Alaskan: 0, Biracial or Multiracial: 7.

	White / Caucasian	Hispanic / Latinx	Asian American or Pacific Islander	Black or African American	Biracial or Multiracial
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Neutral	4 (6.2%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	1 (14.2%)
Somewhat Agree	14 (21.9%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	3 (42.9%)
Strongly Agree	46 (71.9%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	3 (42.9%)

Table 24. Responses to the statement “I believe that immigrants will have a detrimental impact on maintaining American culture” based on race. Respondents identified as Hispanic or Latinx: 2, White or Caucasian: 64, Asian or Pacific Islander: 2, Black or African American: 1, Native American or Native Alaskan: 0, Biracial or Multiracial: 6.

	White / Caucasian	Hispanic / Latinx	Asian American or Pacific Islander	Black or African American	Biracial or Multiracial
Strongly Disagree	49 (76.7%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	5 (83.3%)
Somewhat Disagree	7 (10.9%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	1 (16.7%)
Neutral	4 (6.2%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat Agree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Strongly Agree	4 (6.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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