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Fear of Immigrants and Immigration in American Society

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The Fear of Immigrants in American Society

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Introduction to Research

- Since the founding of the United States, there have been a plethora of issues regarding anti-immigration legislation being passed
- Including the cultural aspect of what it means to be an American, how different Americans interpret the meaning of the identity has contributed and led to more anti-immigrant attitudes because immigrants are seen as a burden to the economy
- This presentation explores the public opinion of the fear immigrants in America from factors such as political attitudes and parties, media consumption, as well as economic and cultural concerns
- By doing a comparison between 2018 and 2021, and by looking at data before and after the 2016 election, I will be able to understand the fears and impacts of these factors and the perceptions of immigrants in American society
- Using this method, I will be able to identify the ways that Trump has affected Americans' perception of immigrants.
- Given that Donald Trump's approach to immigration was so unique and seemingly a fundamental aspect to his platform, there is the suggestion that it should be impactful to the country.
  - This is especially true given the fact that Trump was subsequently elected as president, validating his platform and stance

Previous Research on Anti-Immigration Sentiment

- In the 2016 third presidential debate, former President Trump had said that "We have some bad hombres [at the broader] and we're going to get them out" (Blake, 2016).
  - Such a rhetoric led to the increase of anti-immigrant sentiment and pushing for the wall on the southern border to be built (Kulig, Graham, Cullen, Piquero, Haner 287)
- Looking at news sources and who consumes them, ~37.5% of Fox News viewers are Republicans, 29.2 of them Democrats, therefore it is more than likely that someone who watches Fox News is a Republican (DellaVigna and Kaplan 1193).
- Research shows that negative framing can greatly influence public opinion. As a result, news outlets that highlight illegal immigration as a highly sensitive, alerting issue, therefore leading to an increase of fear and concern regarding illegal immigrants (Farris and Mohamed 816).
- **Hot cognition theory:** Any object, such as social groups, policies, politicians of any political party, can trigger either a positive/negative affect that can impact the past evaluation of the object (Bradfer, Valentino, Suhay 962).
  - Essentially, biases can be altered, but in terms of political attitudes, does this fear increase or decrease over the years?
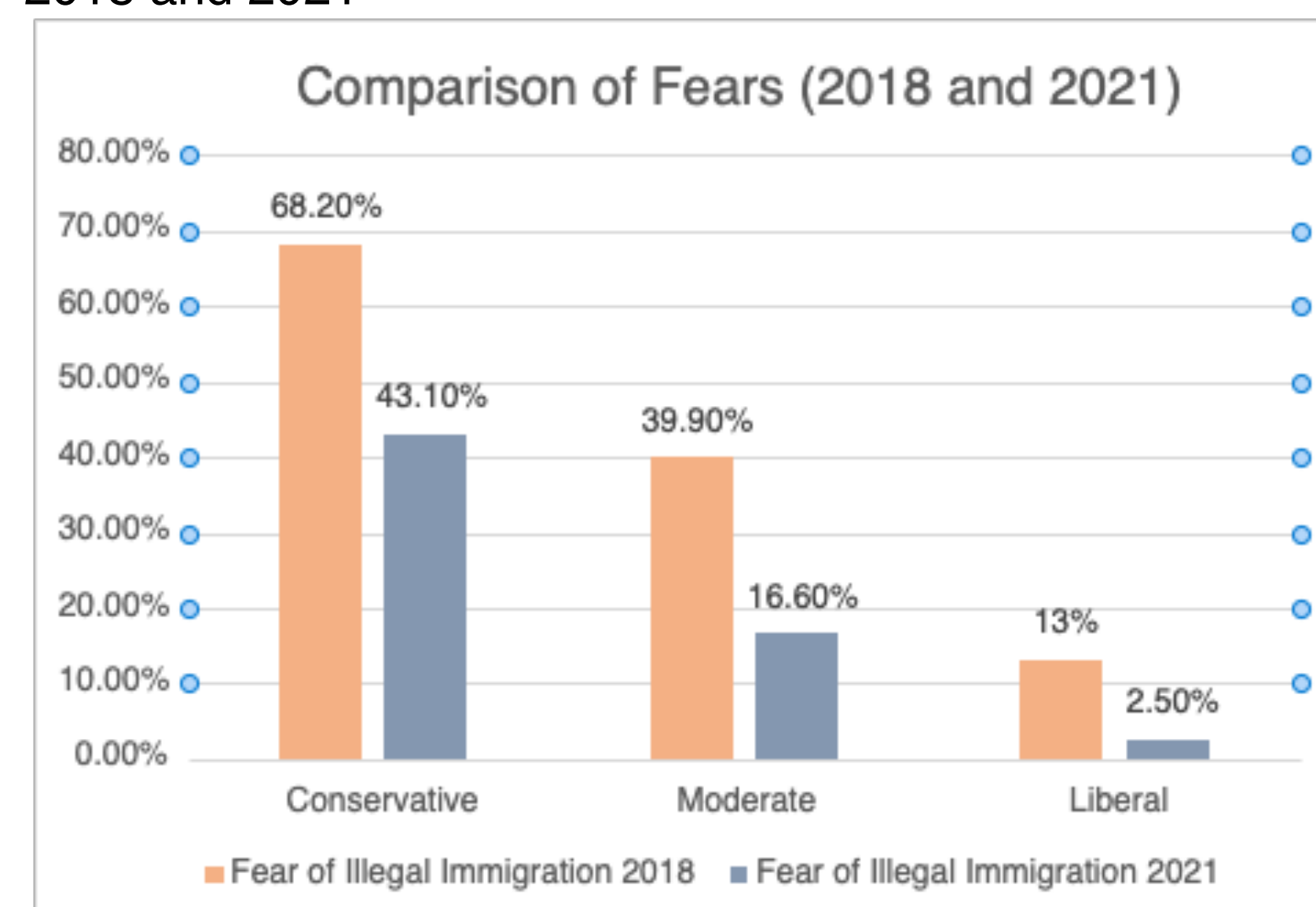
Hypotheses

H 1: Conservatives are more likely to fear illegal immigration in comparison to liberals and moderates.

H 2: Those who fear illegal immigrants are more likely to consume Fox News, whereas those who consume CNN, MSNBC, and social media are less likely to fear illegal immigration.

H 3: Republicans are more likely to believe that immigrants are a drain on the American economy.

H 4: There will be a decrease of conservatives and moderates who support building the border wall between 2018 and 2021.

Data

H 1: Fear of Illegal Immigration in Political Attitudes

Table 1: Difference in Fear of Illegal Immigration between 2018 and 2021

Comparison of Fears (2018 and 2021) — Conservative: 68.20% / 43.10%; Moderate: 39.90% / 16.60%; Liberal: 13% / 2.50%. Fear of Illegal Immigration 2018 / Fear of Illegal Immigration 2021

Wave 5; n=1190 Wave 7; n=1035
Source CSAF, Wave 5 and Wave 7, Chapman University

H 2: Fear of Illegal Immigration and Media Consumption

Table 2: Illegal Immigration and Media Consumption

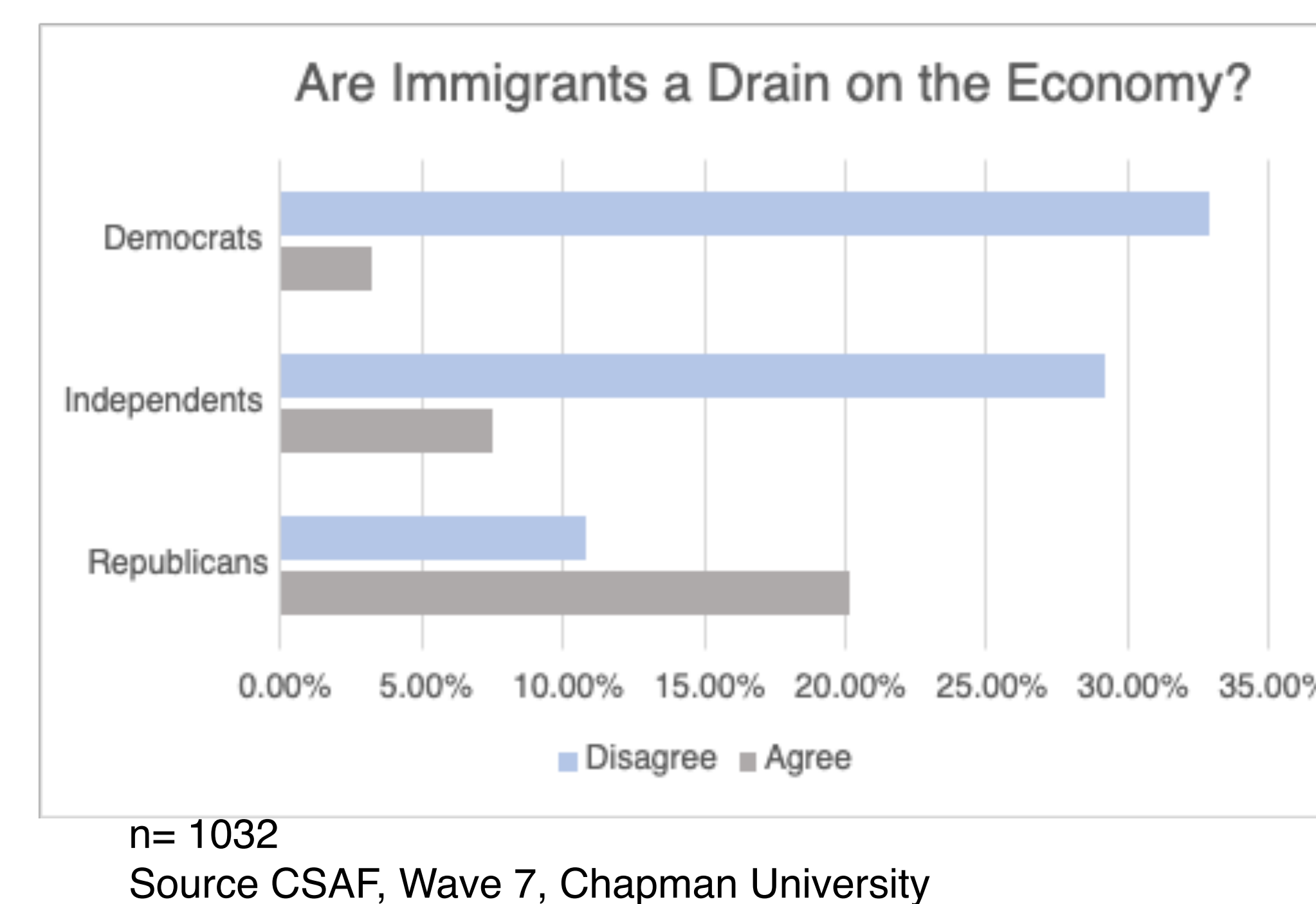| Source	Standardized Coefficients	Coefficients Standard Error	Significance
Fox News	0.322	0.009	<0.01
CNN	-0.125	0.011	<0.01
MSNBC	-0.045	0.012	0.247
Social Media	-0.06	0.008	0.842

r square= 0.110, significance at <0.05

Table Interpretation

- The table measures different news sources consumed in reference to which one is more likely to lead to an increased fear against illegal immigration.
- Fox News and CNN consumers are statistically significant, meaning that they have an impact on the fear, whereas MSNBC and social media have no impact on increasing or decreasing such fear
- Standardized coefficient determines how well the number can determine the outcome. Fox News is the only positive outcome, meaning that it there is a positive correlation/ impact between the dependent and independent variables.
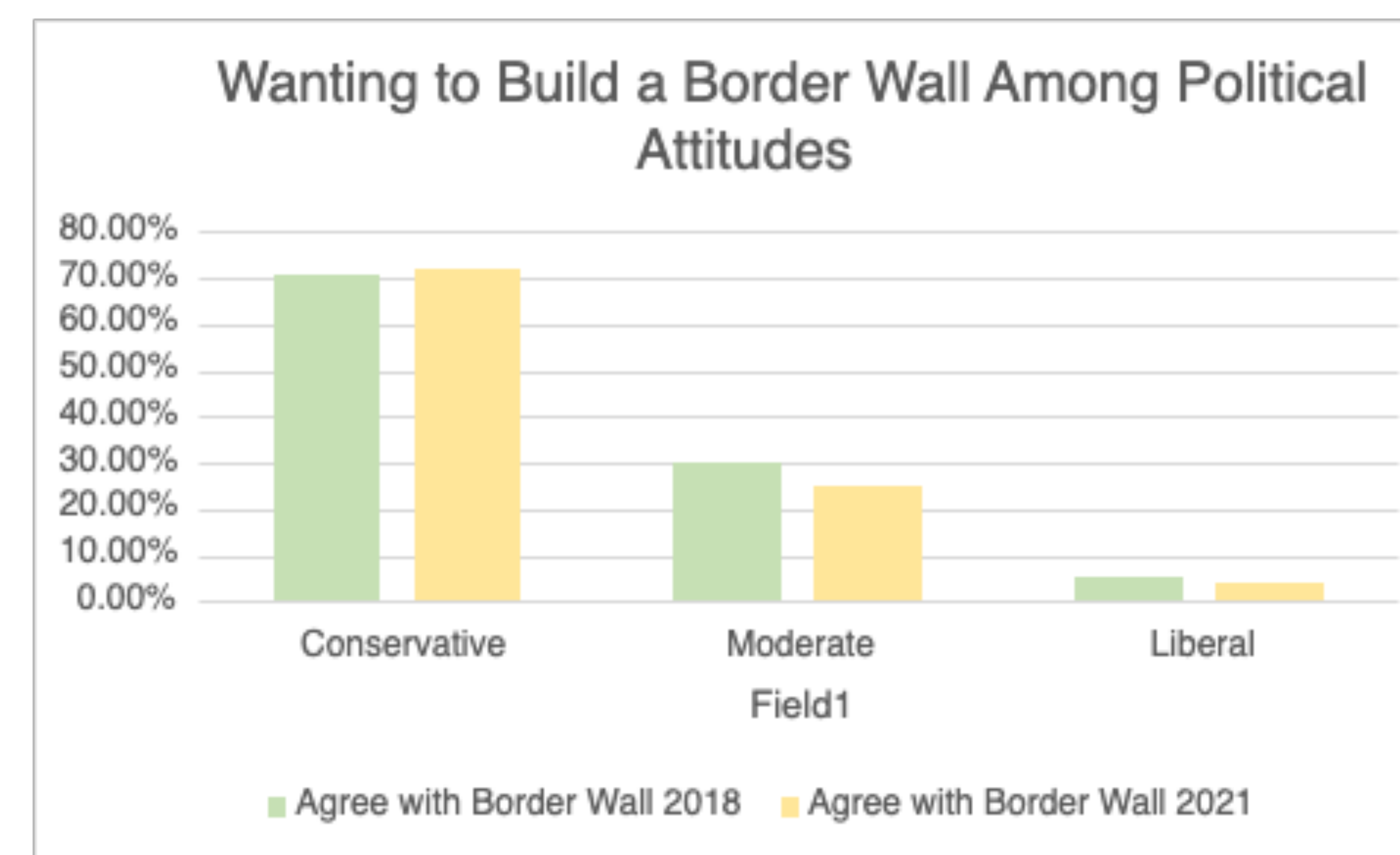
H 3: Concerns of Economy

Table 3: Immigrants being a Drain on the Economy

Are Immigrants a Drain on the Economy? (Disagree / Agree) — Democrats, Independents, Republicans

n= 1032
Source CSAF, Wave 7, Chapman University

H 4: Building the Border Wall

Table 4: Should America build the Border Wall?

Wanting to Build a Border Wall Among Political Attitudes (Agree with Border Wall 2018 / Agree with Border Wall 2021) — Conservative, Moderate, Liberal

Wave 5; n=1189 Wave 7; n=1028
Source CSAF, Wave 5 and Wave 7, Chapman University

Findings

H1: Fear of Illegal Immigration in Political Attitudes

By comparing the data from 2018 and 2021, there was notable drop between all groups. There was a 25% drop among conservatives, a 23% drop among moderates, and a 10.5% drop among liberals.

H 2: Fear of Illegal Immigration and Media Consumption

Fox News and CNN have a large significance in regards to how political parties feel about illegal immigration. While it was unexpected that MSNBC and the use of social media had minimal significance, Fox News increases the fear of illegal immigration due to a positive coefficient.

H 3: Immigrants Are a Drain on the Economy

In 2021, Democrats and Independents were more likely to disagree with the idea that immigrants are a drain on the economy. Approximately 20% of Republicans in the survey believed that having immigrants bore a burden on the economy, and approximately 11% of Republicans disagreed with that.

H 4: Building the Border Wall (2018 and 2021)

Between the years of 2018 and 2021, there was in increase in conservatives wanting the wall President Trump had proposed to be built. In moderates and liberals however, the desire to have the wall built decreased.

Conclusions

- Table 1 shows a comparison between 2018 and 2021. In regards to my hypothesis, I was correct as conservatives feared immigration the most out of all the political attitudes. However, a surprising discovery was that the fear of immigration decreased nearly 25% among both conservatives and moderates.
- The second hypothesis is correct. By looking at the table interpretation, it can be noted that the two most influential sources are Fox News and CNN, as they have a significance of <0.05. Looking at the Standardized Coefficients column, the consumption of Fox News increases the fear of illegal immigration, whereas CNN decreases the fear of immigration due to the negative standardized coefficient.
- The third hypothesis was correct; Democrats and Independents were less likely to believe that immigrants would be an economic cost to the country in comparison to Republicans. An unexpected finding out of the survey conducted was that around 11% of Republicans did not believe in this stereotype.
- The last hypothesis is false. Between 2018 and 2021, there was almost no change (1.1%) in conservative support of building the border wall was recorded. However the second part of the hypothesis is correct, as there was a 5.2% decrease in the moderates' support for building the wall.

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