



The Effect of Framing by Policymakers on Public Opinion of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Maya Lu

Senior Honors Thesis

Submitted to the Department of Political Science

University of California, San Diego

March 28, 2022

Acknowledgements

There are so many individuals that have helped me complete my honors thesis. First, I would like to thank Professor Kirk Bansak for going above and beyond as an advisor. Thank you for meeting with me every week over the past two quarters to answer my endless questions, introduce various research methods to me, and give me perspective. Your feedback encompassed points I never would have thought of and was presented in a way that made me think for myself rather than giving me the right answer. I truly appreciate that.

I would also like to thank Professor Tom Wong for stepping in as a substitute advisor at the end of the process. You were the person who sparked my interest in refugees and asylum seekers three years ago, and I have learned so much from you over the years.

I would also like to thank Professor Philip Roeder, Professor Margaret Roberts, and our TA Bertrand Wilden for providing lectures and feedback through the honors seminar. Your comments only made my thesis stronger.

I also want to thank Cynthia Leung for encouraging me to apply for the senior honors thesis in the first place, checking in periodically on how I was doing, and encouraging me in my research and progress. Lastly, I want to thank my parents for always supporting my educational journey. I would not be able to do any of this without you both.



The Effect of Framing by Policymakers on Public Opinion of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Senior Honors Thesis

Submitted to the Department of Political Science

University of California, San Diego

March 28, 2022

Contents

1	Introduction	6
2	Literature Review	10
2.1	Factors Influencing Immigration Attitudes	10
2.2	Framing in Immigration	11
2.3	Does the Source Matter in Framing Theory?	13
2.4	Dog Whistle Politics	13
3	Exploratory Data Analysis	16
3.1	How Politicians are Framing Refugees on Twitter	16
4	Theory and Hypotheses	19
4.1	Framing and Dog Whistle Theory	19
4.2	Hypotheses	20
5	Research Design	22
5.1	Survey Design	22
5.1.1	Independent Variables: Framing of Refugee and Asylum Seekers	23
5.1.2	Dependent Variables: Policy Preference, Perception, and Voting Behavior	24
5.2	Sample Population vs US Population	25
5.3	Analysis	25
6	Results	29
6.1	Baseline Survey Results	29
6.2	Effect of Frames	30
6.2.1	Effects on Policy Preferences	31
6.2.2	Effects on Perception	33
6.2.3	Effects on Voting Behavior	34
7	Discussion	35
7.1	Implications for Framing Theory	35
7.2	Implications for Dog Whistle Politics	37
7.3	Influencing Policy Preference and Voting Behavior	39
7.4	Politicization of Refugees and Asylum Seekers	40
7.5	Robustness Analysis	43
8	Limitations	44
9	Conclusion	46
10	Appendix	48

List of Figures

1	Trends in Global Refugee Populations versus US Admissions	6
2	Example of a Border Security Tweet	18
3	Example of a Traditional Security Tweet - Donald Trump	18
4	Negative Sentiment towards Refugees and Asylum Seekers	30
5	Effects on US Citizens over 18 (N = 1040)	32
6	Treatment Effects, Self Identify as "Very Familiar" with Refugees/Asylum Seekers (N = 537)	36
7	Effects of Frames, Self Identify as "Unfamiliar" or "Somewhat Familiar" with Refugees/Asylum Seekers (N = 504)	36
8	Treatment Effects, Bachelor's or Higher (N = 865)	36
9	Effects of Frames, Associate or Less (N = 175)	37
10	Effects on Independents (N = 122)	39
11	Effects on Democrats (N = 665)	41
12	Effects on Republicans (N = 249)	42
13	Effects on US Citizens Over 18 - <i>Unweighted</i> (N = 1040)	43

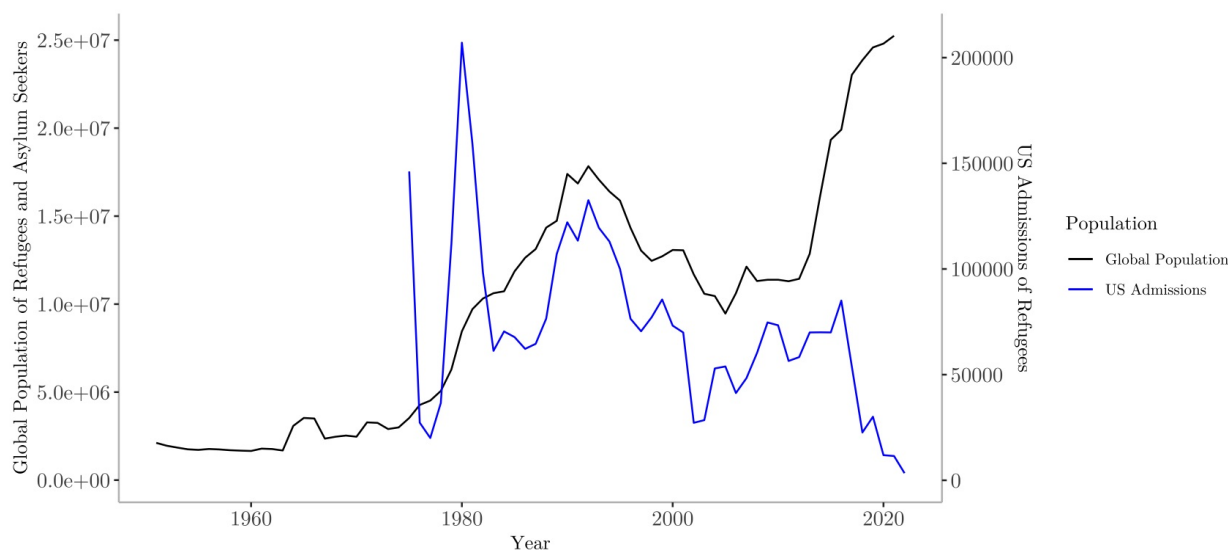
List of Tables

1	Treatment Groups	23
2	Demographics of US Citizens Over 18 vs. Sample Population	26
3	Evaluating the Hypotheses	30
4	Comparing the Magnitude of Traditional Security and Border Security Frames on National Policy Preferences	32
5	Effects of Frames on Policy Preference and Voting Behavior	54
6	Effects of Frames on Threat Perception	55
7	Difference in Traditional and Border Security Frames on National Admissions	56
8	Effects by Party	57

1 Introduction

Historically, the United States has consistently served as a global leader in refugee resettlement. Figure 1 shows the trends of global refugee populations relative to the level of US refugee admissions over the past couple decades. Up until 2016, regardless of the presidential administration, admissions tended to mimic the rise and fall of the global refugee population. Admissions were robust even after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in 2001, in which a drop in admissions could be expected, and furthermore, contrary to the present day, partisanship was not a factor in the number of refugees admitted into the United States. In fact, the largest spike in refugee admissions was under the Republican Reagan administration—unexpected as Republicans today generally favor lower admissions.

Figure 1: Trends in Global Refugee Populations versus US Admissions



(Source: UNHCR, PRM)

Refugee policies were generally non-partisan because of its humanitarian nature. A refugee is defined by the 1951 Refugee Convention as “someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.” Similarly, an asylum seeker is someone who claims to fall under the refugee status,

but their claim has not yet been approved by their country of refuge (UNHCR, 2021). This paper groups asylum seekers and refugees together—as individuals fleeing issues such as war, political instability, or genocide. This population is viewed as especially vulnerable because they are fleeing from their home country and therefore lack protections of their country of origin. Moreover, with international institutions too weak to implement the human rights granted by international treaties, there is no legal institution strong enough to protect them. Consequently, refugees become susceptible to exploitation.

The United States broke its tendency to follow the global population trends in the late 2010s. In addition to lowering refugee caps, recent US asylum policies have forced migrants to remain in dangerous camps in Mexico, separated minors from their guardians, and confined migrants to shipping containers—among other human rights violations (International Rescue Committee, 2020). It is perplexing how a historically robust tendency to be supportive of refugees and asylum seekers was suddenly disrupted. Some may argue that more exclusionary policies may exist because of COVID-19 or recent terror attacks; however, the fear of refugees or asylum seekers posing as physical or health threats is one not backed by evidence. Refugees are one of the most vetted immigrants to the United States, with each needing to pass extensive background checks and interviews to be admitted into the United States, and past empirical studies showing the crime rate of refugees being much lower than the crime rates of US citizens (USCIS, 2021; Masterson and Yassenov, 2021; Amuedo-Dorantes et al., 2021). The divergence appears to be associated with politicization of immigration—with Republicans favoring more restrictive refugee and asylum seeker policies and Democrats favoring more permissive policies—and the election of the Trump administration. Yet, the humanitarian issue of refugees and asylum seekers remained non-partisan for decades, so it becomes of interest to study if politicians have the influence to shift views on humanitarian issues and how one presidency harnessed anti-refugee and asylum seeker policies.

Politicians attempting to influence the public’s opinion on refugees and asylum seekers can be seen in statements made by the former US president, Donald Trump, who propagated

anti-immigrant messages. Beyond Trump, it is clear from a cursory evaluation of social media that politicians employ particular frames to position themselves on a wide range of policies, including painting refugees and asylum seekers a certain way. This study first systematically identifies if politicians are deploying frames and narrows the focus down to two frames—the traditional security frame and border security frame. Both frames attempt to frame asylum seekers and refugees negatively, the traditional security frame associating refugees with crime and the border security frame alluding to a broken asylum system. Then this study will test if the frames are effective in increasing negative sentiment and their effectiveness relative to each other.

Multiple studies have shown that negative attitude formation is most consistently affected by frames which directly provoke fear of immigrants by framing them as a threat—which takes on the form of the traditional security frame in this study. Yet, in the examination of politician tweets, little instances of the traditional security frame were found. Instead, a similar but less explicitly xenophobic frame was used—the border security frame. This study adds to the current literature by firstly testing for the robustness of the security frame as established by past literature and secondly, investigating if the more prevalent but less direct border security frame can elicit negative sentiment towards refugees and asylum seekers. The second focus is testing for the phenomenon of a more implicit frame having a stronger effect on an explicit but polarizing frame, labeled as dog whistle politics. Dog whistle politics have been investigated in racial messaging, but previous studies have not been conducted in the immigration space.

This study finds general support for framing theory and mixed support dog whistle politics. The results show that for the general US population, both frames are effective in shifting national policy perception to be more restrictive. Support for dog whistle politics is shown by the implicit border security frame having an effect on national policy preferences, but while the dog whistle theory predicted a rejection of the traditional security frame, the public was still receptive to the traditional frame and shifted their views to be more anti-

refugee and asylum seeker. The effectiveness of the frames also becomes blurred when looking at other dependent variables and sub-populations. The frames affect some populations but not others and shift some forms of public opinion but not others. For instance, while national policy preferences are affected, local policy preferences and voting behaviors are not. Additionally, Democrats, Republicans, and Independents appear to digest the frames differently from one another. Further research includes more rigorously establishing the circumstances under which these frames are effective.

2 Literature Review

This study is concerned about three bodies of literature. The first revolves around what past researchers have studied as explanations for varying sentiment around refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants overall. The second is literature surrounding framing theory, the notion that the way information is presented influences perception about the issue at hand. The third is literature discussing dog whistle theory, or the expectation of implicit discriminatory appeals to be more effective than explicit appeals.

2.1 Factors Influencing Immigration Attitudes

Taking a step back from the limited literature on asylum seekers, in the immigration space, there have been many studies conducted on the impacts of immigrant attributes on attitude formation. The most prevalent explanatory variable of sentiment formation in immigration research is attributes of the immigrant. Research has identified how employability, religion, age, language skills, reasons for migrating, and economic threats influence how accepting locals are of immigrants (Bansak et al., 2016; Shaffer et al., 2020; Spilker et al., 2020; Hager Veit, 2019). However, when looking at the recent influx of Afghan and Haitian refugees and asylum seekers, it is surprising that Afghan refugees, which are associated with Islam, a religion Americans are less accepting of, are better received than Haitian refugees whose main religion is Christianity (NBC, 2021).

Additional studies have explained sentiment through exposure to the refugee crisis—with those who are surrounded by more refugees and asylum seekers are more receptive towards them (Hangartner et al., 2019), downward social mobility—with those part of the working class holding more anti-immigrant sentiments and those undergoing downward social mobility more xenophobic than those experiencing upward social mobility (Paskov et al., 2021), terror attacks—where events such as 9/11 increase negative sentiment (Schuller, 2012, Legewie, 2013), and the recent COVID-19 pandemic increasing xenophobic attitudes (He et al.,

2021).

However, none of these explanations address the correlation of the Trump presidency with anti-immigrant policies. When investigating the influence of politicians on public sentiment, another plausible explanation of variation in attitudes focuses on how framing—the way the information is presented—affects public opinion.

2.2 Framing in Immigration

Framing theory explains how frames select “some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text.” A fully developed frame defines a problem and identifies its cause, provides a moral judgement, and subsequently, suggests a treatment or recommendation for the problem (Entman, 1993). For instance, a human rights frame in immigration could identify the issue as rights abuses based on current immigration policies. Then the frame would assess immigration policies and its consequences and provide additional recommendations. Because the general population may not have a comprehensive understanding of immigrants, the inclusion and exclusion of information in the frames are powerful in shaping the reader’s perception and attitude, although the influence is not universal for all (Entman, 1993).

Thus, the way politicians and media outlets frame information influences public opinion, impacting who is elected into office and the issues discussed in congress. To understand how information released by politicians and media can influence sentiment towards immigrants, the first step is to identify which frames have been studied and which frames are effective. Additional experimental studies have been conducted looking at the impact of framing on changes in public opinion. Frames that have been studied within immigration include equivalency frames—using “asylum seeker” versus “infiltrator” or “illegal” versus “undocumented” versus “unauthorized” (Hochman, 2015; Merolla et al., 2013), economic frames—painting immigrants as benefits or detriments to the American economy (Iguarta Cheng, 2009; Bloemraad et al., 2014; Consiglio Meidert, 2019), cultural frames—presenting

immigrants as a threat to American culture (Lahav & Courtemanche, 2013; Lecheler et al., 2015), security frames—presenting immigrants as criminals and a threat to safety (Lahav & Courtemanche, 2013; Consiglio & Meidert, 2019; Iguarta & Cheng, 2009), and human rights frames—appealing to the sympathy of the audience by bringing to light the human rights abuses immigrants experience (Consiglio & Meidert, 2019; Bloemraad et al., 2014).

Of these frames, studies had contested findings for the economic and human rights frames. Consiglio and Meidert found economic and human rights frames had no significant effect on attitudes towards asylum seekers (Consiglio & Meidert, 2019). Contrastingly, Bloemraad found the human rights frame prompted individuals to decrease support for legalization of immigrants and increase support for more public benefits, and the economic frame increased support for public benefits of irregular migrants (Bloemraad et al., 2014). On the other hand, the frame that was consistently effective in shaping attitudes towards immigrants was the security frame—painting immigrants as threats—and future literature should continue to investigate the robustness of the security frame in varying contexts (Lahav & Courtemanche, 2013; Iguarta & Cheng, 2009; Consiglio & Meidert, 2019). This frame is particularly of interest because of its role in shaping negative attitudes, which propel the negative and anti-immigrant sentiment of the American public and provides evidence supporting framing theory.

A second dimension of framing theory sets an expectation for frames to have varying effects on different sub-populations. For instance, Lahav and Courtemanche studied the effect of framing immigration as either a security, economic, or cultural threat and found the security frame more effective in shifting attitudes than the other threat frames. Furthermore, they saw different effects of framing on liberals and conservatives, with liberals varying their attitudes much more than conservatives when the frames were manipulated (Lahav & Courtemanche, 2013). There are a limited number of papers that engage in studying the varying effects of frames on subpopulations.

2.3 Does the Source Matter in Framing Theory?

Beyond the frames themselves, the source is also taken into consideration when presenting information. Does receiving information in the same frame, but from politicians instead of media outlets, alter the effect of the frame? Lahav and Courtemanche studied frames delivered by news articles. Relative to news, there is a much smaller literature on how frames directly used by politicians influence public opinion. Similar to Lahav and Courtemanche, Consiglio and Meidert investigated how policy information presented in either a security frame, human rights frame, or economic benefit frame influences attitudes towards immigration. Secondly, they investigated if the individual's degree of political trust had any moderating effect on shifts in attitude. They found that only the security frame had a significant effect in shifting attitudes, consistent with Lahav and Courtemanche's study, and political trust showed no significant effect (Consiglio & Meidert, 2019). In contrast, the lack of impact left by human rights and economic benefit frames differ from Lahav and Courtemanche's study, and a possible explanation could be a difference in how information is processed when coming from a news source compared to a politician. However, there are no other empirical studies in this field, and none specifically for asylum seekers, that provide further evidence for this point. Furthermore, beyond Consiglio, the effectiveness of other communication channels—such as social media or press releases—in shaping the public's opinion on asylum seekers has not been investigated.

2.4 Dog Whistle Politics

Within messaging literature, another body of literature on “dog whistle” politics exists. A message that serves as a dog whistle for anti-immigrant sentiment would convey the same negative attitudes but in a latent manner, without mentioning xenophobic phrases. The theory behind dog whistles is centered around the power of messages to influence political opinion, conditional on the discriminatory effects being outside of conscious awareness. Because we live in a society that values equity, if too explicit, the message would be rejected

as discriminatory.

For example, in racial messaging, the mention of the *n-word* will likely spark backlash towards a politician. Instead, it is more effective to discuss tax cuts using economic justifications on the surface level, but deeper analyses show these tax cuts may be hurting more black Americans than white Americans (Lopez, 2013). Thus, discriminatory appeals—or messages that intend to provoke racist or xenophobic sentiments—made today are effective because they are coded, enabling individuals to apply socially rejected discriminatory sentiment to their political decisions (Entman, 2001). Dog whistle politics in the racial dimension have become integrated into American politics, more specifically into the conservative identity. In Ian Hanley Lopez’s book *Dog Whistle Politics*, he details how nine out of ten Republican voters are white. Thus, the Republican party has been strategically figuring out ways to mobilize these white voters and their racist perceptions without antagonizing them. To the Republican party’s success, many of these white voters identify as Republican because Republican platforms resonate with their racial perception of society, containing coded messages in their policies around crime, busing, welfare, taxes, affirmative action, immigration, terrorism, and more. In history, dog whistle politics can be seen in many political strategies. For example, when Ronald Reagan—a fundamental conservative—ran for the United States presidency, he called for more law and order, which on the surface appeared to have the aim of reducing crime but on a deeper level, targeted the incrimination of the black population. He called for tax cuts—framing tax policies as taking money from taxpayers only to give to minorities. He framed white Americans as the hard workers and black women as taking advantage of welfare without gratitude. His racially coded campaign resonated enabled the American public to rationalize their racial views and even moved 22 percent of Democrats to vote for him (Lopez, 2013). So when Trump mentioned there are threatening individuals at the southern border crossing into America, it gave people an excuse to support stricter border policies, believing it is not because they are racist or xenophobic, but because America has lost control of its border.

Yet more recent research has called into question whether this phenomenon still holds since racial and xenophobic sentiments have become more socially accepted. In an empirical study conducted by Wetts and Willer, they found that although implicit messaging continues to have an effect in increasing negative sentiment, explicit messaging have mixed effects, meaning whites are no longer consistently rejecting explicitly racist messages (Wetts and Willer 2019).

Past empirical studies on dog whistles are centered around messages provoking racial sentiments, nonetheless the theory remains the same for xenophobic sentiments. There are explicitly xenophobic phrases, implicit ways to provoke anti-immigrant sentiment, and a recent normalization of xenophobic sentiments within the United States.

There are contested findings surrounding dog whistle politics. Empirical studies conducted by Mendelberg (2001), Valentino (2006), White (2007), and Wetts and Willer (2019) found explicit appeals ineffective or have the opposite effect intended. Meanwhile, implicit racial appeals increase support for racist issues or candidates. On the other hand, Huber and Lapinski (2008) and Valentino et al. (2018) found these dog whistle messages to be ineffective, their reasoning for the ineffectiveness being the lack of political awareness within the majority of voters to discern implicit from explicit messaging. Further, those who are educated enough have already formed their opinions on racialized issues. Wetts and Willer (2019) reconciles these inconsistencies by suggesting that for issues not yet as racialized—or in the context of this study, immigration issues that are not commonly discussed—implicit appeals could be more effective than explicit appeals since attitudes have not yet formed for the vast majority of the audience.

3 Exploratory Data Analysis

Because past literature does not include an account of the frames deployed by political actors surrounding refugees and asylum seekers today, an initial exploratory data analysis is conducted to systematically identify what the current discourse surrounding refugees and asylum seekers looks like.

3.1 How Politicians are Framing Refugees on Twitter

Current literature focuses on how the media frames immigrants, with only a few studies describing how politicians are framing refugees and asylum seekers. To understand how elected officials are framing asylum seekers and refugees, the 3,200 most recent tweets of the 100 senators in the current (117th) congress was collected using Twitter’s API and the tweets of former president Donald Trump was collected using *The Trump Archive*. Senators were chosen to represent elected officials as they have the largest following on Twitter—relative to local officials, and Donald Trump was included as he was very outspoken on immigration policies. The tweets were subsetting to only those mentioning “asylum” or “refugee,” resulting in 710 relevant tweets from 80 politicians spanning from 2018 to the present day.

After building the dataset of tweets, a structural topic model was deployed to cluster the tweets into similar groups. Although the groups were not determined by framing, they were useful in exploring the general themes in discussions about refugees and asylum seekers by policymakers. Many tweets used strong language, both in advocating for and against refugees and asylum seekers. One cluster of tweets attempted to evoke positive sentiment for refugees and asylum seekers, appealing to the moral obligation of the more privileged US residents to help the disadvantaged refugee and asylum seekers. Another group discussed the human rights abuses received by refugee and asylum seekers. The intention of these tweets is falls in line with framing theory: if one’s messaging appealed to the sympathy of their audience, their audience would be swayed to support refugees and asylum seekers. If

one appealed to fear, their audience would be swayed against refugees and asylum seekers.

Because of the established effectiveness of security frames in shifting sentiment, a search using regular expressions was done to look for tweets that framed immigrants as a threat to security, looking for mentions of variations of "crime," "terrorist," "safety," "threat," and "gang." Surprisingly, there were few instances of tweets falling into this security frame. Alternatively, tweets that framed refugees and asylum seekers in a negative light seemed to use more implicit mechanisms to bring out xenophobic sentiments. The frame most prevalent was a border security frame which alluded to chaos at the southern border and a broken asylum system rather than framing refugees and asylum seekers as the threat themselves.

Figures 2 and 3 show examples of a border security tweet and traditional security tweet. It is apparent how the border security frame is throwing blame onto the broken asylum system while the traditional security frame directly alienates refugees as terrorists.

The discovery of the small presence of the traditional security frame and a larger prevalence of the border security frame was of interest to this study because it provided an opportunity to first test if the traditional security frame—consistent with past literature—is effective in shifting sentiment and secondly to test if this is an instance of the dog whistle theory, building upon current literature to study if dog whistle theory still holds and if it holds in the context of anti-immigrant sentiment.

Figure 2: Example of a Border Security Tweet

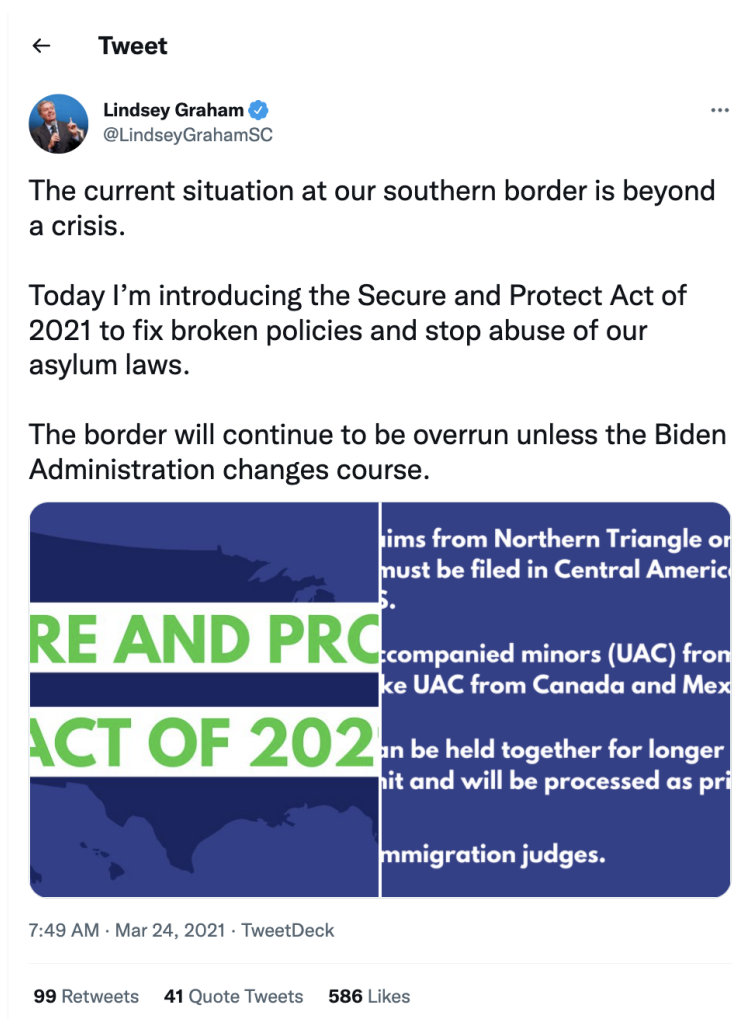
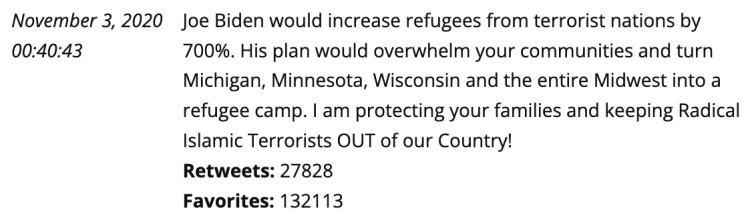


Figure 3: Example of a Traditional Security Tweet - Donald Trump



4 Theory and Hypotheses

4.1 Framing and Dog Whistle Theory

The results of the exploratory data analysis show two main things. First, politicians are talking about refugee and asylum seekers and use opinionated language to do so. There are frames that appeal to sympathy or moral responsibility while other frames paint refugees and asylum seekers as threats. Framing theory explains the existence of opinionated frames as not just forms of self expression, but tools used by politicians to influence the public to be more supportive of inclusive of exclusive refugee and asylum seeker policies. If framing theory holds true, these messages would have an effect on the sentiment of the public. Secondly, the prevalence of a more implicit border security frame relative to the more explicit traditional security frame can be explained by dog whistle politics. In other words, politicians are recognizing that less explicitly xenophobic frames are actually more effective than explicitly xenophobic messaging in accomplishing their motive of influencing the public to adopt more anti-immigrant stances on policies. As a result, implicit messages are more prevalent than explicit messages.

However, because in recent years, xenophobic sentiments have become more widely accepted by the American public, especially with recent terror attacks occurring over the last two decades and the proliferation of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is possible this assumption that implicit frames are more effective than explicit frames no longer holds in the context of immigration policies. This is because the underlying logic behind the rejection of explicit messaging is because the social rejection of discriminatory messages make individuals less comfortable listening to and agreeing with messages society has clearly labeled discriminatory. But with discriminatory messaging more widely accepted, explicit messaging may regain its power in swaying public opinions. This study aims to test if the dog whistle theory, claiming implicit is more effective than explicit messaging, is applicable in the modern day immigration space.

4.2 Hypotheses

The primary focus of this study’s research question is investigating the impact of the security and border security frames on the public opinion of asylum seekers and refugees. The two frames both portray immigrants as threats to America, and past literature on framing theory has shown that when immigrants are presented negatively as a threat to security, they become less accepted (Lahav & Courtemanche, 2012; Hochman, 2015; Consiglio & Meidert 2019). This leads to the following hypothesis:

- **H1:** When exposed to the traditional security frame or the border security frame by policymakers, negative sentiment towards refugee and asylum seekers will increase.

Studies have also shown there is little empirical evidence tying immigrants to a disproportionate amount of crime (Leiva et al., 2020). Thus drawing upon the dog whistle theories, it can be hypothesized that as the overt security frame lacks established evidence, the audience is more likely to identify it as xenophobic and reject the message. On the other hand, the border security uses real life and current events to indirectly paint refugees and asylum seekers as threats through a broken asylum and refugee admission system. It is less likely to be recognized as discriminatory so, in theory, could subtly prime negative sentiment towards refugees and asylum seekers. This suggests the implicit border security frame is more successful in shifting participants towards anti-immigrant sentiment than participants who are exposed to the overt traditional security frame. Furthermore, the explicit messaging may have no effect or the opposite effect as intended.

- **HA1:** Negative sentiment towards refugee and asylum seekers will increase for those exposed to the border security frame and negative sentiment will remain the same or decrease for those who are exposed to the traditional security frame.

Alternatively, if neither dog whistle theory or framing theory hold true, neither frame will have an effect. However, the lack of effects may be attributed to—among other reasons—a lack of political trust or strong opinions already having formed about refugee and

asylum seekers. To rigorously identify the reasoning behind a lack of effects, additional studies will need to be conducted.

- **HA2:** When exposed to the traditional security frame or the border security frame, sentiment towards refugees and asylum seekers does not change.

5 Research Design

As highlighted in the literature review, current literature surrounding framing effects on attitude formation towards asylum-seekers is first, focused around news articles over politicians; secondly, is lacking empirical studies specific to asylum-seekers; and thirdly, still has contested findings regarding which frames are effective. Furthermore, the body of literature on dog whistle politics also holds contested findings on whether implicitly discriminatory messages are more effective than explicitly discriminatory messages. So far, the literature studies racialized messages. This study would investigate dog whistles in the context of anti-immigrant attitudes.

The design of this study attempts to fill in the gaps of past literature, investigating how different frames utilized by politicians to describe refugees and asylum seekers affect the public opinion of US citizens on refugees and asylum seekers. It uses an experimental survey to test established claims that the traditional security frame has a negative effect on immigrant sentiment and investigates the border security frame as a dog whistle for the traditional security frame.

5.1 Survey Design

To test the hypotheses, an experimental survey was conducted. The survey was hosted on Qualtrics and administered through Amazon Mechanical Turks ($N = 1,040$). Only US citizens over the age of 18 were included in the analysis and each participant was compensated \$1.25 for their time. The survey is broken into three sections.¹ First, is an introductory paragraph explaining the current refugee and asylum situation in the United States. This paragraph is followed by a randomized frame which serves as the treatment. The frames can be viewed in Table 1. The second section is a list of attitude questions and the third section collects demographic information. All the attitude and demographic questions are asked to the participant regardless of treatment group.

¹A copy of the survey is listed in the appendix.

5.1.1 Independent Variables: Framing of Refugee and Asylum Seekers

In the survey, each participant was presented an identical introduction paragraph about refugees and asylum seekers. Each participant was then randomly assigned to the control or one of the two treatment groups. The treatments are additional statements appended to the introduction paragraph and were curated based on common words and phrases used by senators in tweets for each frame.

To curate the frames, first the 710 tweets related to asylum seekers and refugees were filtered using regular expressions to a set of 111 tweets related to the border and second set of 34 tweets relating to criminal activity. With a small enough subset, the tweets criticizing Trumps border policies or claiming that refugees were actually not terrorists or criminals were removed. Of the remaining sets, common language was identified. Considerations taken into account when building the tweets include the lengths, structure, and valence of the statements. To isolate the effect of the frame itself, both statements needed to be as similar as possible with the only variation stemming being the messaging of the frame itself. Table 1 shows the resulting frames that were appended to the introductory paragraph and presented to the participants.

Table 1: Treatment Groups

Frame	Treatment
Control	N/A
Traditional Security	Some policymakers highlight the dangers of accepting refugees and asylum seekers. They say there is a risk of the refugee or asylum seeker being part of a gang or terrorist group, and thus increasing refugee and asylum admissions would endanger Americans.
Border Security	Some policymakers highlight chaos at the southern border. Policymakers say the overwhelming influx of illegal immigrants and asylum seekers trying to enter the country has caused loss of control of the border. The current system and its loopholes welcomes illegal aliens into our country, delegitimizing our asylum system.

5.1.2 Dependent Variables: Policy Preference, Perception, and Voting Behavior

Attitude questions were presented to each participant after exposure to the treatment to measure acceptance of refugees and asylum seekers, threat perception, and changes in voting behavior. For each question, the participant was presented with multiple statements and chose the one they agree with the most. Some of the questions reflect the ultimate dependent variables that this study cares about because they directly influence policy-making—namely policy preferences and voting behaviors. Other questions reflect intermediary variables in which the ultimate variables may flow through—namely the perception variables.

The first two questions measure policy preferences. The first question gauges if the participant believes the United States should increase, maintain, or decrease the admissions of refugees and asylum seekers. This question is labeled as *national policy preferences*. The second question inquires more specifically if the participant believes the city they are residing in should increase, maintain, or decrease the number of refugee and asylum seekers resettled. This question is labeled as *local policy preferences*.

Then the following three questions break down perception. First, one question—referred to by this study as *danger perception*—is associated with the traditional security frame, asking how dangerous the participant views refugees and asylum seekers relative to the average US resident. The following question—referred to by this study as *border safety perception*—is associated with the border security frame, asking if current US policies keep the border safe and secure. Then lastly is the overarching *threat perception* question, asking if allowing refugees and asylum seekers into the United States poses a danger to United States residents. The first two questions investigate if the frames achieve to frame asylum seekers and refugees in the way intended—as dangerous individuals for the traditional security frame and as threats to border security in the border security frame. The more general threat question measures if there is an overall change in threat perception of refugees and asylum seekers if either bit of information are presented.

Lastly, the effects of the frames on *voting behavior* is investigated. The way voters impact public policy is through electing officials to represent them. Therefore, voting behavior is especially of interest because the significance of frames lies in its potential to influence public opinion which in turn influences how people vote for public office. Measuring voting behavior will also test the assumption that public opinion affects voting behavior. To operationalize voting behavior, the last question asks if the participant is more or less likely to vote for a senatorial candidate if the candidate voted for an increase in asylum and refugee admissions.

5.2 Sample Population vs US Population

One limitation in using MTurks is that the demographic of survey takers are not representative of the overall US population, which is the population this study is interested in. Previous studies have found that MTurks respondents tend to be younger, more educated, lower income, less racially and ethnically diverse, and more democratic than the average person in the US (Levay et al., 2016). Table 2 displays the demographic characteristics of the sample population compared to the overall US citizen population over 18 years of age estimated by the 2019 5-year ACS and the Pew Research Center. Consistent with Levay et al.'s findings, there is less racial diversity, more education, more democratic affiliations, and younger ages for the survey participants. Despite these incongruities in the sample and general population, Levay et al. found that the differences did not signify a large difference in survey results, justifying the validity of using MTurks to distribute the survey for this study.

5.3 Analysis

Once the surveys have been completed, sentiment towards refugees and asylum seekers is quantified by dichotomizing the responses to these questions. Because the attribute of interest is anti-immigrant sentiment in participants, anti-immigrant sentiment in the dependent

Table 2: Demographics of US Citizens Over 18 vs. Sample Population

Demographic	Population (%)	Sample (%)
Race		
Asian	5.08	5.77
Black/African American	12.46	10.58
Hispanic/Latino	12.38	5
White	68.04	77.98
Other	2.02	0.67
Education		
Associate or Less	70.10	16.83
Bachelor or Higher	29.90	83.17
Party		
Democrat	27	64.13
Republican	31	11.73
Other	41	24.13
Age		
18 to 24	12.40	3.08
25 to 39	25.10	63.56
40 to 59	32.90	28.75
60+	29.60	4.62

variables was coded as one. Neutral or pro-immigrant sentiment was coded as zero. For example, for the national policy preferences dependent variable, support for a decrease in admissions is categorized as anti-immigrant sentiment and coded as one. Support for keeping or increasing admissions is coded as zero.

Once the data set was re-coded and ready for analysis, survey weights were calculated using the *weights* package in R. Survey weights are critical in this study because the sample and US population are not aligned. The survey weights enable inference for the effects of the frames on the general US population. The variables used to calculate the weights were the characteristics that Levay et al. identified as the main discrepancies between MTurk participants and the broader population: age, race, party, and education. To prevent overly large weights from introducing excess variance to the data, weights were trimmed to 6.² General population statistics were found with the 2019 5-year ACS estimates. Party breakdowns were taken from the Pew Research Center.

With survey weights generated, it becomes possible to estimate the effects of the frames on each dependent variable for the general US population. A weighted least squares regression is used.³ Despite the dependent variable being dichotomized, a linear regression, or the linear probability model, was chosen over a log-it or prob-it model because this study aims to estimate treatment effects rather than produce predicted probabilities.

In the regression, the known sociodemographic characteristics are also controlled for to increase the statistical precision of the treatment effect. Because the treatment in this experiment is randomized, its effect is uncorrelated with demographic characteristics. Research in econometrics has provided support for theories stating the inclusion of covariates in a regression with randomized treatments leads to greater precision without affecting the estimates of the treatment in a linear regression model (Angrist, 2008).

From the weighted linear regression, an effect is classified as significant if its p-value is

²General rule of thumb is to trim the weights to 5. A trimming value of 6 was chosen to be slightly more conservative.

³The linear regression results without survey weights will also be reported in the discussion section as a robustness check to see if the analysis results are reliant on the inclusion of weights.

less than 0.05.

Past literature also suggests that some subgroups are affected by frames more than others. For example, Lahav and Courtemanche found that liberals were more affected by frames than conservatives. This study looks to see if dynamic effects of frames across demographic characteristics hold for the data. To investigate this, the data is divided into subgroups and a separate regression is run on each subset to estimate the effect of each frame for that specific population. The effects will then be compared to see which subgroups are more affected than others. However, the subgroup analyses are not conclusive due to smaller sample sizes; thus, it simply suggests directions for future study.

6 Results

6.1 Baseline Survey Results

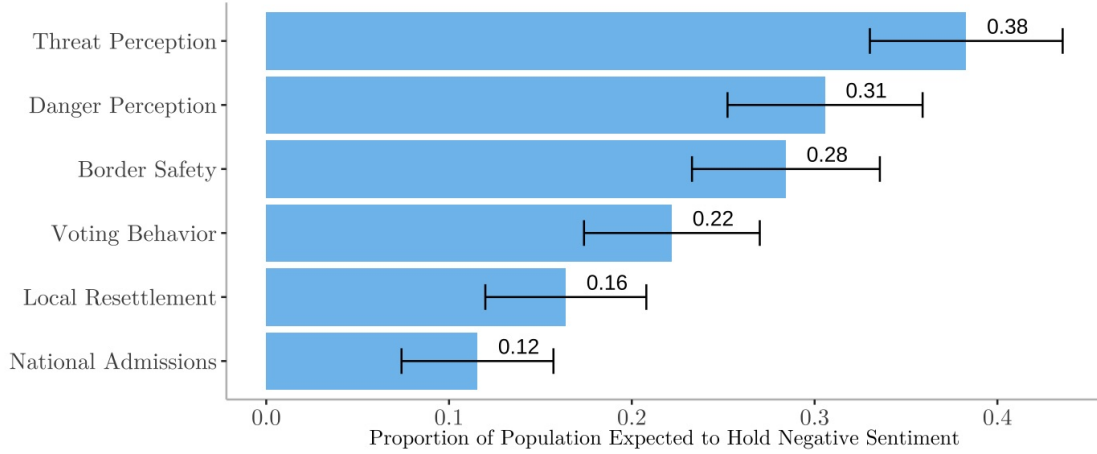
From the survey responses, the attitudes of US citizens who have not yet been exposed to either frame can be estimated. The estimates below are calculated using survey weights to convert sample proportions to population estimations. Weights were calculated by taking into consideration the education, age, race, and political party of the participants—variables found by Levay et al. to be the main discrepancies between MTurk participants and the overall US population. It is estimated that the majority of citizens holds a positive or neutral stance towards refugees and asylum seekers but negative sentiment is still prevalent.

Figure 4 summarizes the baseline results. When looking at policy preferences, the general population tends to have a positive or neutral attitude towards refugees and asylum seekers, but local policies tend to attract more fearful views than national policies. The weighted analysis of the survey results shows that in the control group, 11 percent of the general population favor a decrease in the number of refugees and asylum seekers admitted each year. The population is less accepting of refugees and asylum seekers when considering local policies, with 16 percent favoring a decrease in refugees and asylum seekers resettled in their city of residence.

Negative perception of refugees and asylum seekers is much more prevalent than negative policy preferences. 30 percent of the population view refugees and asylum seekers as more dangerous than the average US resident. Border security sits at a similar level, with 29 percent of the population believing U.S. borders are not being kept safe and secure by current policies. Overall threat perception is even higher, with 38.3 percent of the population agreeing that refugees and asylum seekers are a threat to US residents.

Voting behavior tends to be neutral or favorable towards senators who support an increase in refugee admissions, but 23 percent of the population would still be less likely to vote for such senator if the senator supported an increase in refugee admissions.

Figure 4: Negative Sentiment towards Refugees and Asylum Seekers



6.2 Effect of Frames

How do the traditional security and border security frames affect population sentiments? To estimate the effects of each frame, a weighted linear regression model with a dichotomized dependent variable is used. Table 3 summarizes the findings in the context of the hypotheses.

Table 3: Evaluating the Hypotheses

Theory	Hypothesis	Evaluation
Framing Theory	When exposed to the traditional security frame or the border security frame by policymakers, US voters will increase their negative sentiment towards refugee and asylum seekers.	Yes, but it depends on how negative sentiment is defined. Both frames only increase negative sentiment for national policy preferences and danger perception.
Dog Whistle Theory	Exposure to the border security frame will decrease public opinion towards refugee/ asylum seekers more than the traditional security frame.	This holds true for national policy preferences of the general population. But the dog whistle effects seem to vary across sub-populations and definitions of public opinion.
Null	Exposure to either frame will not affect public opinion towards refugee/asylum seekers.	On a national level, the frames had no effect on local policy preferences, border safety perception, and voting behavior.

6.2.1 Effects on Policy Preferences

The first dependent variables analyzed are /textitnational policy preferences, asking if the respondent supports an increase or decrease in annual refugee admissions, and /textitlocal policy preferences, asking if the respondent supports an increase or decrease in resettlements in their city of residence. Because participants are randomly assigned to a treatment group, the effect of each treatment on policy preferences can be isolated. The hypothesis states both frames will increase support for more restrictive refugee and asylum policies. The results are displayed in Figure 5, showing that the hypothesis holds for national policy preferences but not local policy preferences. The traditional security frame increased the probability that someone supported a decrease in national refugee and asylum seeker admissions by 6 percentage points while the border security frame shifted the probability 9 percentage points in the same direction. These results partially support the hypothesis based on dog whistle theories as implicit messaging appears to have an effect on bringing out discriminatory views. However, it does not support the dog whistle hypothesis stating the explicit messaging would be rejected due to its xenophobic phrasing. Despite being explicit, the traditional security still shifted opinions to favor restrictive national admission policies. A regression omitting the control variable was run to test if the effect of the border security frame was statistically greater than the traditional security frame, as subtly indicated in Figure 5, and found no statistical difference between the two, meaning there is no conclusive evidence stating one frame is more effective than the other. The regression results are displayed in Table 4.

On the other hand, when looking at local policies, the null hypothesis is supported as neither the traditional nor the border security frame had a significant effect.

The discrepancy between national and local policies—with national admission preferences being impacted by the frames and local resettlement preferences remaining unaffected—may be attributed to how much understanding and exposure the participant has for each policy. Because local resettlements take place in their hometown, citizens already have a clear stance on how they feel about the number of refugees in their town, thus are less

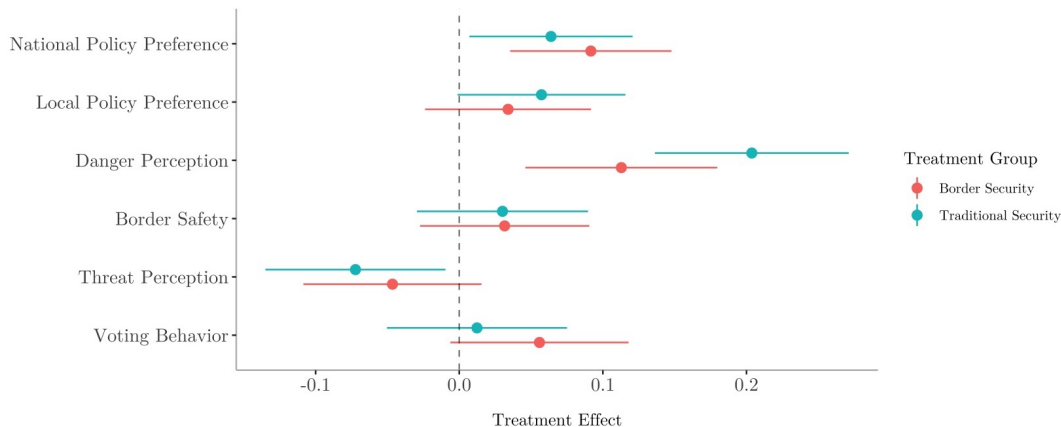
Table 4: Comparing the Magnitude of Traditional Security and Border Security Frames on National Policy Preferences

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>
	admission_dichotimized
treatmentborder security	0.041 (0.030) p = 0.174
Observations	696
R ²	0.003
Adjusted R ²	0.001
Residual Std. Error	0.404 (df = 694)
F Statistic	1.859 (df = 1; 694)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

likely to change their views. On the other hand, participants may be unclear about their views on national policies because they are not aware of the situation outside of their residence. Thus, consistent with framing theory, one possible explanation for why the national admission preferences are more malleable is that participants are not as familiar with refugee and asylum seekers on a national scale.

Figure 5: Effects on US Citizens over 18 (N = 1040)



6.2.2 Effects on Perception

The second group of dependent variables is also shown in Figure 5. These variables measure how the frames affect perception on three levels: danger of refugees and asylum seekers, border security, and threat of refugees and asylum seekers. Danger perception and border security perception were included to examine if participants were swayed to agree with the literal message embedded in each respective frames. Lastly, both frames are hypothesized to increase the probability of participants viewing refugees as an overall threat. Alternatively, if the dog whistle theory holds true, explicit messaging leads to a null or opposite effect for the traditional security frame, but the border security frame is still hypothesized to increase views of refugees as threats.

The traditional security frame's increases the probability of agreeing with it's literal message—that refugees and asylum seekers are dangerous—by 20 percentage points. What is interesting is that the border security frame also increased danger perception despite not directly alluding to any safety concerns stemming from refugees and asylum seekers. The border security increased danger perception by 11 percent. Furthermore, both frames had no impact on how safe and secure participants perceived the border to be. This is striking because one would expect the border security frame to provoke feelings of insecurity about border policies; however, the perception of border safety remains unchanged and what shifts instead is perception of how dangerous refugees and asylum seekers are. This shows evidence for the dog whistle theory as the border security frame is evoking a response of fear for refugees and asylum seekers. Further support of the dog whistle theory can be seen in perception of refugees as threats. Exposure to the traditional security frame shifted attitudes 7 percent in the opposite direction as intended, against viewing refugees as a threat to the US resident. According to the dog whistle theories, this could be attributed to the overt xenophobic sentiments in the security frame causing participants to react and shift towards pro-immigration policies. However, not in line with the dog whistle theory, the border security frame had no statistically significant effect on threat perception and was not

able to evoke the intended sentiment.

6.2.3 Effects on Voting Behavior

Neither frame had a significant effect on voting behavior, suggesting voting behavior—which is how citizens directly influence refugee and asylum policies—is more difficult to influence.

7 Discussion

As detailed in the section above, the hypotheses have no clear cut answers, with the effect of the frames on public opinion depending on the definition of public opinion or, as seen in the following section, dependent on the sub-population. These complexities are to be expected of any public opinion survey, as humans are complicated beings with inconsistent reactions. Nonetheless, the findings are interesting.

7.1 Implications for Framing Theory

Framing theory states that negative messaging will increase negative sentiment, unless there already exists a strong established opinion on the issue. The findings show support for this theory as national policy preferences shifted towards more restrictive policies while local policy preferences—which residents are more familiar with—were unaffected. Further evidence can be seen when conducting sub-group analyses for individuals who self identify as "very familiar" with refugees and asylum seekers compared to those who identify as "somewhat familiar" or "not familiar at all."

There is additional evidence for framing theory when looking across sub-populations. Figures 6 and 7 show the effects of both frames on those who are more familiar with refugee and asylum seekers and those who are less familiar. For those who are more familiar, with the exception of danger perception, the frames have close to no effect or the opposite effect as intended. Those who are less familiar are more inclined to increase their negative sentiment towards refugees and asylum seekers.

Likewise, this holds for level of education attained. Figures 8 and 9 show the effects of both frames on those who hold a bachelor's degree or higher versus those who hold an associates degree or lower. For the individuals more educated, there are close to no effect or the opposite effect as intended. Those who are less educated are more likely to be influenced by the frames.

Figure 6: Treatment Effects, Self Identify as "Very Familiar" with Refugees/Asylum Seekers (N = 537)

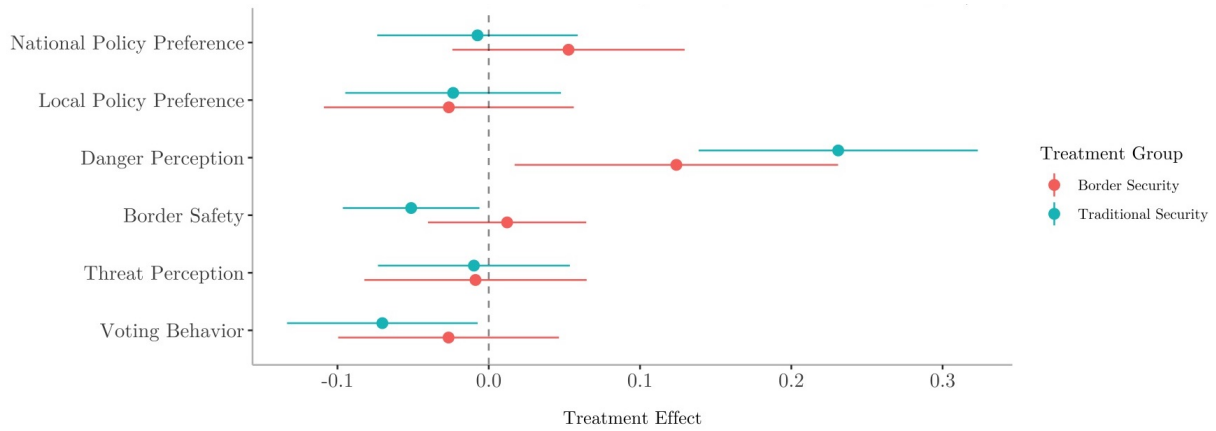


Figure 7: Effects of Frames, Self Identify as "Unfamiliar" or "Somewhat Familiar" with Refugees/Asylum Seekers (N = 504)

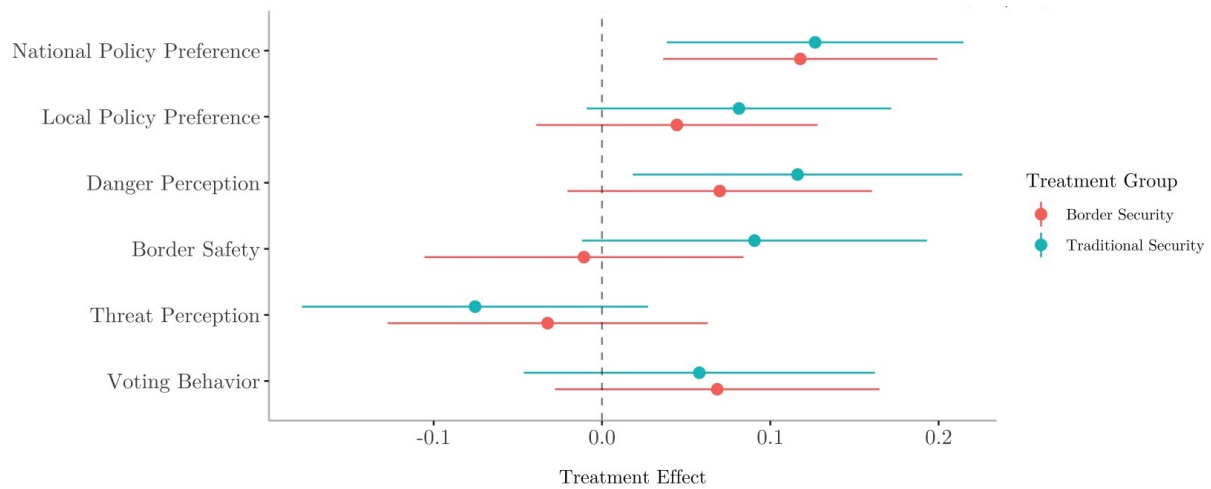


Figure 8: Treatment Effects, Bachelor's or Higher (N = 865)

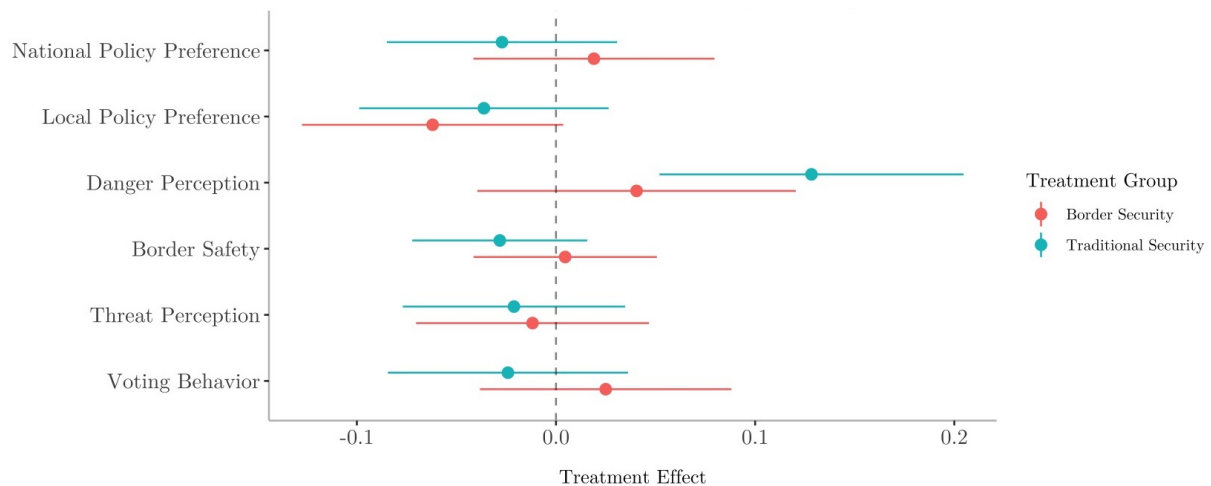
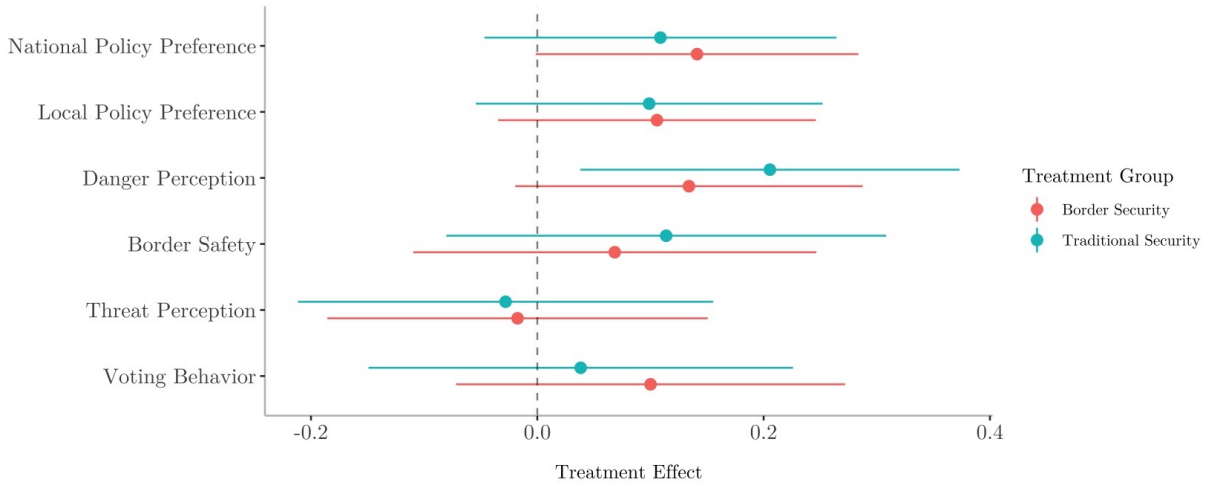


Figure 9: Effects of Frames, Associate or Less (N = 175)



Nonetheless, some findings do not align with framing theory. First, it is unclear why border safety perception and voting behaviors were not affected as there is no evident reason why participants would have a strongly established stance on either measure of sentiment. Furthermore, threat perception moves in the pro-immigrant direction, which is opposite as intended. This tentatively holds true for those who are less familiar with refugee and asylum seekers and those less educated where threat perception lessens after exposure to both frames.

⁴ This perplexing finding may be explained by dog whistle theories.

7.2 Implications for Dog Whistle Politics

In the general findings and tentative sub-population findings, contrary to the expectations set out by framing theory, threat perception moves in the opposite direction for both frames. Although it goes against framing theory, this shows evidence that dog whistle politics is at play. Dog whistle politics state that the discriminatory attitudes in the frames are recognized by the audience, eliciting a reaction to shift their sentiment opposite of what the message intended.

Additional results presents general support for dog whistle politics. The border security

⁴This finding is tentative because the sample sizes for subgroup analyses are too small for the estimated effects to be conclusive.

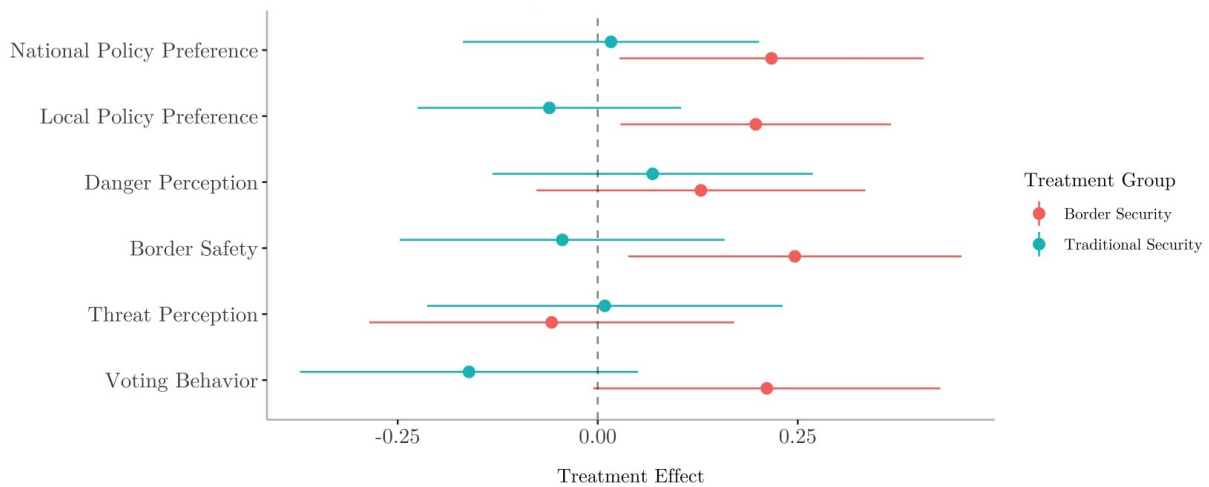
frame, which does not directly discuss asylum seeker and refugees, is effective in influencing national policy preferences. This shows how implicit messaging is able to appeal to the latent discriminatory attitudes within the audience. This is further seen when the border security frame fails to persuade the reader that the border is not safe and secure, but it succeeds in shifting the perception towards refugees or asylum seekers as dangerous individuals. This is counter intuitive because the border security frame is expected to make individuals more inclined to want to fix the border, not view refugees and asylum seekers as dangerous. The border security frame is succeeding in evoking changes in sentiments on topics that it does not directly reference.

However, the support for dog whistle theories are limited to an extent. First, according to the dog whistle hypothesis, the explicit messaging in the traditional frame should be rejected by the reader because it is recognized as discriminatory, leading to no effect or a shift in the pro-immigrant sentiment. However, the traditional security frame still is effective in influencing national policy preferences and there is no conclusive evidence that one frame is more effective than other.⁵ This indicates the phenomenon in which explicit messaging may evoke a reaction that drives the audience in the opposite direction is not as strong here. Possible explanations include the recent normalization of xenophobic attitudes making the traditional security frame more widely accepted. Alternatively, it might be the case that these findings are for an aggregate population and this reactance effect only applies for certain sub-populations. There is tentative evidence that only some sub-populations are undergoing the dog whistle effect when looking at the national policy preferences of those who are more educated (Figure 8) and those who are more familiar with refugees and asylum seekers (Figure 6). This aligns with Wetts and Willer theory that those who are less familiar with the issue are unable to differentiate between explicit and implicit messaging. Furthermore, a particularly striking piece of evidence comes from looking at the effect of

⁵A regression was run omitting the control group to test if the effects of the traditional security frame were statistically different from the effects of the border security frame. The difference was not statistically significant, thus it cannot be concluded that the border security frame was more effective than the traditional security frame.

frames on Independents as shown in Figure 10. Besides threat perception, the border security frame was much more effective in evoking negative sentiment while the traditional security frame had almost none or the opposite effect as intended. This is exactly what dog whistle politics predicted. However, it is not clear why the dog whistle effect is so prominent for Independents.

Figure 10: Effects on Independents (N = 122)



7.3 Influencing Policy Preference and Voting Behavior

Ultimately, the goal of this study is to understand framing and how it funnels into policy making; thus, the dependent variables of particular importance are policy preference and voting behavior. What is perplexing is understanding why individuals shifted their policy preferences or voting behaviors. Initially, the danger perception, border safety, and threat perception variables were included because it was predicted that when refugees and asylum seekers were viewed as more dangerous or threatening, or when voters viewed the border as unsafe, anti-immigrant sentiment in policy preference and voting behavior would become more apparent. However, the results of this survey are more complex. It found an increase in danger perception corresponded with a decrease in threat perception, which is perplexing as danger typically translate to threat. In addition, the border security had a smaller effect

on danger perception but a larger effect on the sentiment for national policy preferences relative to the traditional security frame. This is interesting because one might guess individuals who view refugees and asylum as more dangerous would also support a decrease in admissions. And even more puzzling was when participants viewed refugees as less threatening, they favored more restrictive policy preferences. Meanwhile, border safety perception rarely changed while policy preferences often changed. Likewise, voting behavior rarely changed despite danger perception and threat perception often shifting.

To successfully incorporate this research into policy reform strategy, the questions that comes into consideration are firstly, if not danger, border safety, or threat perception, what exactly are the effects of the frames that causes a shift in policy preferences? Secondly, what effect needs to be elicited for voting behavior to shift in either direction?

7.4 Politicization of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

A common finding in the literature is that frames do not have equal effects for subgroups of the population. With the recent politicization of refugee and asylum policies, it becomes interesting to study the effect of frames in the context of political parties. When it comes to immigration, past literature has shown that Democrats are more influenced by security frames. Figure 11 displays the effects of frames on Democrats, Figure 12 displays the effects of frames on Republicans, and Figure 10 displays the effects of frames on Independents. These effects should be viewed in the context of their smaller sample size, serving as suggestions for future research but not conclusive remarks. The two frames have differing effects on each political party. Both frames appear to be equally influential for Democrats, the traditional security frame seems to be more influential for Republicans, and the border security frame seems to be more influential for Independents.

Some of the results are perplexing. Why do Republicans lean towards more positive sentiment after exposure to the border security frame alludes to an overwhelming influx of immigrants at the border? According to the dog whistle theory, a movement in the opposite

direction could be attributed to something in the border security frame that Republicans flag as xenophobic. However, it is not clear what this is. Secondly, why does the dog whistle effect appear to be non-existent with Democrats but so prominent with Independents? The dog whistle theory reasons that a lack of difference between traditional security and border security is an inability to discern between the explicit and dog whistle frames due to lack of education. But in the survey sample, the subset of Democrats had higher educational attainment and familiarity with refugee and asylum policies than Independents. It brings to question what scenarios dog whistles will not work besides education and familiarity levels.

The one striking finding for politicization is that Independents are much more likely to shift their voting preference than either Republicans or Democrats. This indicates the power of party loyalty, where although preferences on national policy or perception of refugees and asylum seekers may shift, those who are affiliated with a party are already set in who they plan to vote for. These findings suggest that those who belong to a party may be voting based on party rather than policies. It also indicates a possibility that for Democrats and Republicans, refugee policies are not a large factor in who they vote for. In other words, the public may not actually be in agreement with the refugee policies of the candidate elected into office, yet the candidate will still be elected. This makes refugee and asylum policies susceptible to the will of those in power and less so subject to the public opinion of the general population.

Figure 11: Effects on Democrats (N = 665)

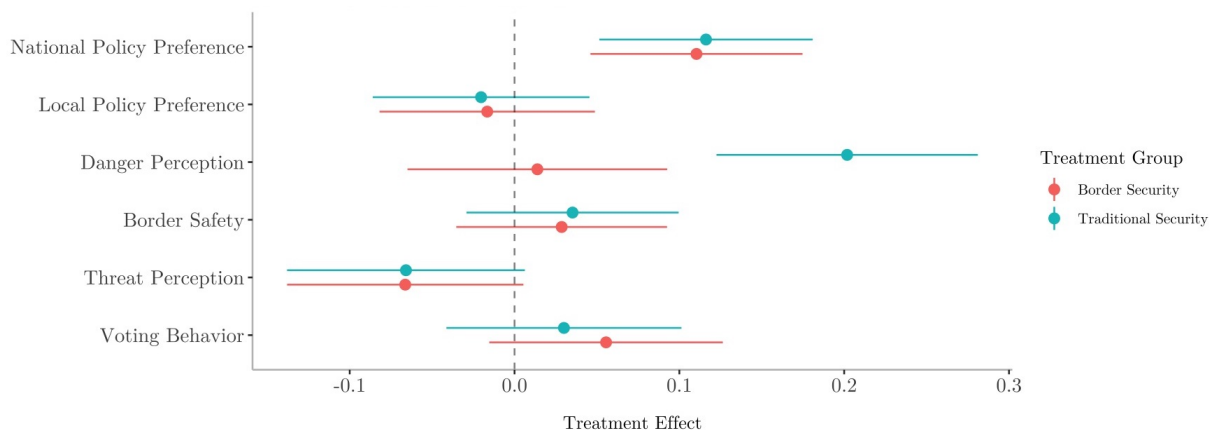
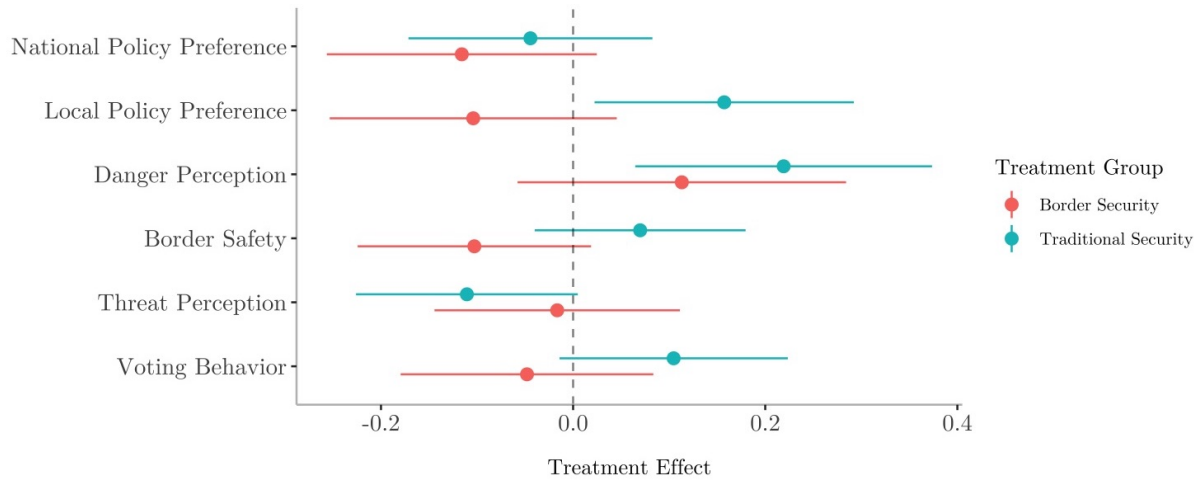


Figure 12: Effects on Republicans (N = 249)



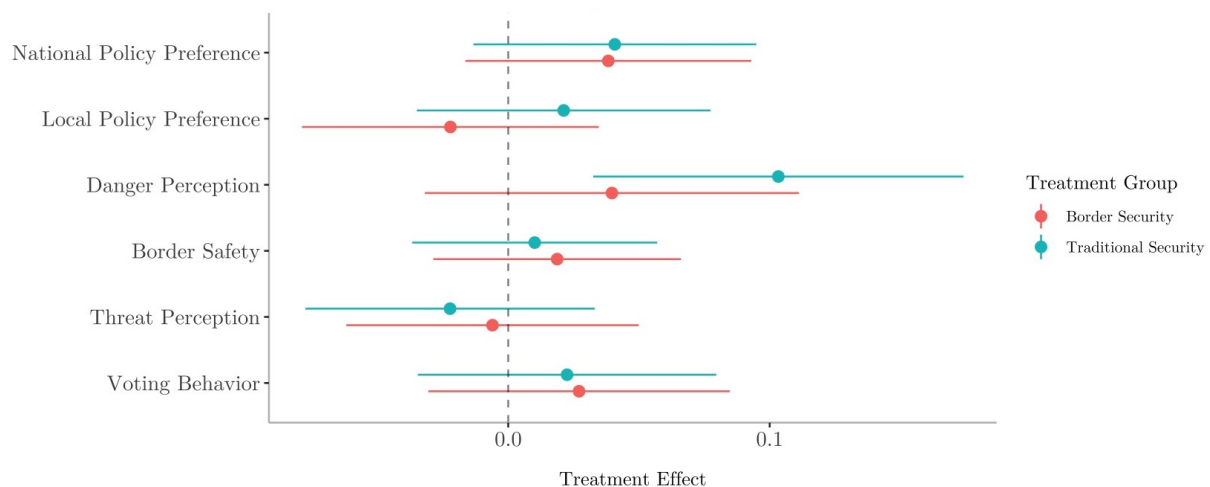
7.5 Robustness Analysis

As the regressions in the analysis were weighted regressions, a check is run to assess if the results are conditional on the inclusion of weights. As shown in Figure 13, the exclusion of weights changes the regression results significantly, with the effects of both frames being much smaller. While in the weighted analysis, national policy preferences, danger perception, and threat perception were all affected, in the unweighted regression, only danger perception was impacted.

Seeing how these frames are not very influential for the group of individuals that took this survey indicates the effects of the frames are stronger for those who were underrepresented in this survey. The groups underrepresented in the sample include the non-college educated, Republicans and Independents, and the older population.

Because this study is interested in how these frames interact with the target population and not the sample population, the effects being stronger for those who are underrepresented made it even more crucial to employ weights when conducting the analysis.

Figure 13: Effects on US Citizens Over 18 - *Unweighted* (N = 1040)



8 Limitations

Because of the amount of time and budget allocated to this study, there are inherent limitations. Firstly, the use of MTurks presented a flaw in the research design where the sample was not representative of the US citizen population eligible to vote. To compensate for the demographic differences of the sample and the population of interest, survey weights were calculated and included, but only based on four demographic characteristics established by Levay et al. to be the main discrepancies between MTurk participants and the general population. The weights are susceptible to error. Furthermore, because party breakdown is not included in the census, separate weights were not generated for each subgroup analysis. The general population weights were used. In addition, because of the limited sample size and under-representation of some groups, in the case a participant of an underrepresented group was an outlier, the results could be inaccurately and heavily influenced by this participant.

Secondly, because of the limited sample size of the sub-group analyses, the results lack statistical power and are not conclusive. Thus, the trends observed in the sub-group analyses are only valid to provide direction for future research and cannot be used as empirical evidence for the theories of interest.

Thirdly, although the intermediary perception variables are included, the research design of this study did not attempt to establish causality between intermediary and ultimate variables. For instance, this study did not attempt to establish a causal relationship between danger perception and national policy preferences. It cannot be confidently stated that an increase in danger perception does not lead to an increase in national policy preference. The lack of correlation between the two variables can be viewed as interesting points for future investigation.

Fourthly, after revisiting the design of the survey experiment, the null and unexpected results could be explained by some flaws in the survey design. First is the conflation of refugees with asylum seekers. Although the initial decision to view refugees and asylum seekers as the same population was chosen under the assumption that the general popula-

tion does not distinguish between the two, because refugees have historically been bipartisan in nature while views on asylum seekers are slightly more polarized, grouping the two populations makes it unclear if respondents are conflating the two groups or thinking more about their views towards refugees versus asylum seekers. Then, when presenting the border security frame, the decision to mention "illegal immigrants" in the language was made to mimic how politicians were presenting the border security in real life, but the introduction of "illegal immigrants" primes another group of immigrants in the minds of participants, which again confuses whether the dependent variable is measuring public opinion towards refugees, asylum seekers, or illegal immigrants. Subsequently, when presenting the national policy preference question for the dependent variable, a reference number was not presented before asking if the participant prefers an increase or decrease in refugee admissions. This creates more noise within the experiment, not knowing what perception the participant had of the current refugee situation when they were answering the question. While this experiment is still able to make distinctions between the effects of the two frames, what becomes blurred is what population the respondent is thinking about when answering the public opinion questions.

Lastly, on a broader level, this is a controlled experiment and does not fully reflect the real world. In this study, the frame is presented to the participants once. In reality, the frames are consumed repeatedly over their day to day lives. Additional studies are needed to investigate the effects of repeated exposure of these frames. Furthermore, these frames are not ever in isolation from other frames and factors influencing public opinion. There may be interaction effects of different frames that are not addressed by this study.

9 Conclusion

This study finds that the two negative security frames can influence public opinion, but it is conditional on the audience demographics and how public opinion is defined. Some sentiments are more malleable than others and some individuals are more susceptible to certain frames than others. Embedded within the findings and analyses of subgroups is support for framing theory and dog whistle theory.

Among the results, there are many null and unexpected findings that may be the consequence of conflating refugees with asylum seekers in the survey experiment. Future research should choose either refugee or asylum seekers to investigate to increase the validity and clarity of the results.

Another question for further research to explore is confirming the cases in which framing theory and dog whistle theories are present. From preliminary findings in the subgroup analyses—with limited statistical power—it appears that negative frames will lead to negative sentiment on a given issue when either the audience is less educated about the issue or the definition of public opinion is not strongly affected by factors outside the issue at hand. For instance, because voting behavior is also influenced by party loyalty, negatively framing refugees and asylum seekers is not enough to shift voting behaviors. However, this is simply a hypothesis and needs to be empirically tested by future studies.

Dog whistle theory appears to be prevalent when the audience is familiar with the topic at hand, recognizing the discriminatory language in the explicit messaging but not opinionated enough in their original stance so that they are still influenced by the implicit messaging. The dog whistle seems to fail to occur when individuals are not educated about the topic or agree with the discriminatory messages in the explicit frames and thus are swayed by the explicit messages as well. Again, this is a hypothesis made based on the subgroup analyses and need to be substantiated by additional research.

Another additional point of future study include a stronger emphasis on the effect of receiving information about refugees or asylum seekers from politicians compared to less

political sources such as media outlets, think-tanks, or educational institutions. A step further would be to investigate the interaction effect between receiving frames from politicians and an opposing frame through non-political sources. This helps us understand if political agenda can be mitigated with information disseminated through other channels.

It is also important to note that public opinion towards refugees or asylum seekers is also conditional on the characteristics of the refugee or asylum seeker. For instance, past literature has shown more hostility towards those who speak poor English or belong to the Muslim community. It would be interesting to investigate how these frames interact with the country of origin of the refugee and asylum seeker, factoring into policies specific to refugees coming from those countries, such as US policies in response to the Afghan refugees fleeing Taliban control or Temporary Protected Status for Haitians, Burmese, and El Salvadorians among others.

This study is simply a first step of research exploring the cases in which the tools politicians are using to increase negative sentiment towards refugees or asylum seekers work in the United States. The findings funnel into additional studies that can investigate how to mitigate the negative sentiment that is elicited and look into specific groups of refugees and asylum seekers to identify tactics that would work to make public opinion more favorable for certain groups of asylum seekers or refugees, as there is a slim chance of a one size fit all solution that makes America hospitable towards the entire population of asylum seekers and refugees.

10 Appendix

Code

The code used in the data cleaning and analysis can be found at this link:<https://github.com/lumaya630/framingrefugees>.

Survey

Block 0 - Informed Consent

University of California, San Diego Consent to Act as a Research Subject Description: Researchers at the University of California, San Diego are inviting you to participate in a research study on political preferences and voting behavior. Participation in this survey should take about 10 minutes. Your participation is voluntary.

Incentives and Costs: You will be paid. \$1.25 USD for completing this survey. There will be no cost to you for participating in this study. Risks: Your participation in this study does not involve any risk to you beyond that of everyday life.

Confidentiality: Your Mechanical Turk Worker ID will be used to distribute payment to you but will not be stored with the research data we collect from you. Please be aware that your MTurk Worker ID can potentially be linked to information about you on your Amazon public profile page, depending on the settings you have for your Amazon profile. We will not be accessing any personally identifying information about you that you may have put on your Amazon public profile page.

Alternatives to Participation: Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose to withdraw at any time.

Withdrawal Without Consent: The PI may remove you from the study without your consent if the PI feels it is in your best interest or the best interest of the study. You may also be withdrawn from the study if you do not follow the instructions given you by the study personnel.

Contacts and Questions: If you have other questions or research-related problems, you can contact the researcher at [omitted phone number] or email at [omitted email] . You may also call the UCSD Human Research Protections Program Office at 858-246-HRPP (858-246-4777) to inquire about your rights as a research subject or to report research-related problems.

Consent: By agreeing to participate in this research, you confirm that you have read this consent information, are at least 18 years old, and provide your consent to participate. If you choose not to participate, the survey will end immediately. Please print or save a copy of this page for your records.

Block 1 - Transition

In the following section, you will be presented information about refugees and asylum seekers followed by a series of questions. Before we begin, please answer the following questions.

1. How familiar are you with refugee resettlement and the asylum seeker in the United States?
 - (a) Very familiar
 - (b) Somewhat familiar
 - (c) Not Familiar

Block 2 - Treatment and Attitude Questions

In the United States, refugee status or asylum may be granted to people who have been persecuted or fear they will be persecuted on account of race, religion, nationality, and/or

membership in a particular social group or political opinion. Since the passage of the Refugee Act in 1980, the United States has admitted more than 3.1 million refugees. Over the past decades, refugee admissions have been on a steady decline from 207,116 in 1980 to 73,147 in 2000 to 11,814 in 2020 (Migration Policy Institute). There is an ongoing discussion on how to reform asylum and refugee policy.

Randomize and append one of the following to the above paragraph:

1. (Control)
2. (Border Security Frame) Some policymakers highlight chaos at the southern border. They say the overwhelming influx of illegal immigrants and asylum seekers trying to enter the country has caused loss of control of the border, delegitimizing our asylum system.
3. (Traditional Security Frame) Some policymakers highlight the dangers of accepting refugees and asylum seekers. They say there is a risk of the refugee or asylum seeker being a member of a gang or terrorist group, and increasing admissions would increase crime in the United States.

Attitude Questions:

1. Which statement do you agree with the most?
 - (a) The United States should greatly increase admission of refugees and asylum seekers.
 - (b) The United States should somewhat increase admission of refugees and asylum seekers.
 - (c) The United States should keep the same level of admissions of refugees and asylum seekers.
 - (d) The United States should somewhat decrease the admission of refugees and asylum seekers.
 - (e) The United States should greatly decrease admissions of refugees and asylum seekers.
2. Which statement do you agree with the most?
 - (a) My city of residence should resettle significantly more refugees and asylum seekers.
 - (b) My city of residence should resettle somewhat more refugees and asylum seekers.
 - (c) My city of residence should resettle the same number of refugees and asylum seekers.
 - (d) My city of residence should resettle somewhat less refugees and asylum seekers.
 - (e) My city of residence should resettle significantly less refugees and asylum seekers.
3. Which statement do you agree with the most?

- (a) Refugees/asylum seekers are significantly more likely to commit a crime than the average resident in the US.
 - (b) Refugees/asylum seekers are more likely to commit a crime than the average resident in the US.
 - (c) Refugees/asylum seekers are equally likely to commit a crime compared to the average resident in the US.
 - (d) Refugees/asylum seekers are less likely to commit a crime than the average resident in the US.
 - (e) Refugees/asylum seekers are significantly less likely to commit a crime than the average resident in the US.
4. To what extent do you agree with the following statements: There are good policies in place to keep US borders safe and secure.
- (a) Strongly Agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - (d) Disagree
 - (e) Strongly Disagree
5. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the statement: Allowing refugees/asylum seekers into the United States poses a danger to residents of the United States.
- (a) Strongly Agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - (d) Disagree
 - (e) Strongly Disagree
6. If one of your senators voted in favor of increasing the admission of refugees, would that make you more or less likely to vote for the senator?
- (a) Significantly More Likely
 - (b) More Likely
 - (c) No Change
 - (d) Less Likely
 - (e) Significantly Less Likely

Block 3 - Demographic Questions

1. How would you describe yourself politically?

- (a) Very Liberal
 - (b) Liberal
 - (c) Moderate
 - (d) Conservative
 - (e) Very Conservative
2. What party do you identify with?
- (a) Democrat
 - (b) Republican
 - (c) Independent
 - (d) Other
3. What is your immigration background?
- (a) Immigrant (foreign-born)
 - (b) Not an immigrant, but at least one parent is an immigrant
 - (c) Not an immigrant, parents are not immigrants
4. What is your highest level of education?
- (a) High school or equivalent
 - (b) Technical or occupational certificate
 - (c) Associate's degree
 - (d) Some college coursework completed
 - (e) Bachelor's degree
 - (f) Master's degree
 - (g) Doctorate
 - (h) Professional
5. What is your race?
- (a) Asian or Pacific Islander, Not Hispanic/Latino
 - (b) Black or African American, Not Hispanic/Latino
 - (c) Hispanic or Latino
 - (d) White, not Hispanic/Latino
 - (e) Other
 - (f) Decline to answer
6. What is your age?

7. Income

- (a) Less than \$20,000
- (b) \$20,000 to \$34,999
- (c) \$35,000 to \$49,999
- (d) \$50,000 to \$74,999
- (e) \$75,000 to \$99,999
- (f) Over \$100,000

8. Gender

- (a) Woman
- (b) Man
- (c) Transgender
- (d) Non-binary/non-conforming
- (e) Prefer not to answer

9. Religious Identity

- (a) Agnostic
- (b) Atheist
- (c) Non Traditional
- (d) Progressive
- (e) Secular
- (f) Spiritual—not religious
- (g) Protestant
- (h) Catholic
- (i) Jewish
- (j) Muslim
- (k) Buddhist
- (l) None
- (m) Other

Regression Tables

Table 5: Effects of Frames on Policy Preference and Voting Behavior

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	admission_dichotimized	acceptance_dichotimized	voting_dichotimized
	(1)	(2)	(3)
treatmenttraditional security	0.064** (0.028)	0.057* (0.029)	0.012 (0.031)
treatmentborder security	0.092*** (0.028)	0.034 (0.029)	0.056* (0.031)
partyOther	0.014 (0.032)	-0.026 (0.033)	0.070** (0.035)
partyRepublican	0.037 (0.029)	0.110*** (0.030)	0.090*** (0.032)
immigrant_status	-0.042 (0.031)	-0.163*** (0.032)	-0.077*** (0.034)
ideology	0.062*** (0.010)	0.056*** (0.010)	0.084*** (0.011)
educ_dHigh school or less	0.045 (0.041)	0.068 (0.042)	0.039 (0.045)
educ_dPostgraduate degree	0.032 (0.039)	0.032 (0.041)	-0.027 (0.043)
educ_dSome college/Associates	0.014 (0.032)	-0.052 (0.033)	0.033 (0.035)
age	-0.002** (0.001)	0.0004 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
49,999	0.105*** (0.034)	0.058 (0.035)	0.031 (0.038)
74,999	0.025 (0.036)	0.062* (0.037)	0.030 (0.040)
99,999	-0.038 (0.050)	-0.030 (0.052)	0.170*** (0.056)
20,000	0.005 (0.038)	-0.024 (0.039)	-0.051 (0.042)
100,000	0.065 (0.066)	-0.110 (0.068)	0.055 (0.073)
raceBlack or African American	-0.008 (0.059)	-0.172*** (0.061)	-0.155** (0.065)
raceHispanic or Latino	0.196*** (0.062)	0.042 (0.064)	0.003 (0.068)
raceOther	-0.045 (0.106)	-0.312*** (0.109)	-0.162 (0.117)
raceWhite	0.096* (0.053)	-0.100* (0.055)	-0.074 (0.059)
base_knowledge	0.007 (0.022)	0.013 (0.023)	-0.061** (0.024)
religionAtheist	-0.017 (0.051)	-0.011 (0.052)	0.008 (0.056)
religionBuddhist	-0.202 (0.141)	-0.270* (0.145)	-0.216 (0.155)
religionCatholic	-0.022 (0.043)	-0.023 (0.044)	0.032 (0.048)
religionJewish	-0.087 (0.096)	-0.149 (0.099)	-0.156 (0.106)
religionMuslim	0.005 (0.116)	0.505*** (0.119)	0.081 (0.128)
religionNon Traditional	-0.031 (0.153)	-0.110 (0.157)	-0.167 (0.169)
religionNone	0.060 (0.062)	0.077 (0.064)	0.086 (0.068)
religionOther	-0.052 (0.059)	-0.120** (0.061)	0.124* (0.066)
religionProgressive	-0.148 (0.111)	-0.081 (0.114)	-0.145 (0.122)
religionProtestant	0.067 (0.045)	0.080* (0.047)	0.221*** (0.050)
religionSecular	0.471 (0.381)	0.378 (0.392)	-0.052 (0.420)
religionSpiritual—not religious	-0.141** (0.070)	0.116 (0.072)	0.185** (0.077)
Constant	0.067 (0.082)	0.222*** (0.084)	0.303*** (0.090)
Observations	1,034	1,034	1,034
R ²	0.139	0.189	0.219
Adjusted R ²	0.112	0.163	0.194
Residual Std. Error (df = 1001)	0.352	0.362	0.388
F Statistic (df = 32; 1001)	5.068***	7.277***	8.775***

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 6: Effects of Frames on Threat Perception

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	crime_dichotimized	influx_dichotimized	threat_dichotimized
	(1)	(2)	(3)
treatmenttraditional security	0.204*** (0.034)	0.030 (0.030)	-0.072** (0.031)
treatmentborder security	0.113*** (0.033)	0.032 (0.029)	-0.046 (0.031)
partyOther	-0.003 (0.038)	0.043 (0.034)	-0.115*** (0.035)
partyRepublican	0.123*** (0.034)	0.101*** (0.030)	-0.088*** (0.032)
immigrant_status	0.295*** (0.037)	-0.102*** (0.033)	-0.183*** (0.034)
ideology	0.064*** (0.012)	0.052*** (0.011)	-0.090*** (0.011)
educ.dHigh school or less	-0.037 (0.049)	0.261*** (0.043)	0.193*** (0.045)
educ.dPostgraduate degree	-0.093** (0.047)	-0.033 (0.041)	0.093** (0.043)
educ.dSome college/Associates	-0.029 (0.038)	0.262*** (0.033)	0.196*** (0.035)
age	-0.005*** (0.001)	0.006*** (0.001)	0.006*** (0.001)
49,999	0.063 (0.041)	-0.056 (0.036)	-0.102*** (0.038)
74,999	0.061 (0.043)	0.015 (0.038)	-0.042 (0.040)
99,999	0.021 (0.060)	0.025 (0.053)	-0.047 (0.056)
20,000	-0.041 (0.046)	0.011 (0.040)	-0.003 (0.042)
100,000	-0.004 (0.078)	0.095 (0.069)	0.035 (0.072)
raceBlack or African American	0.135* (0.070)	-0.029 (0.062)	-0.005 (0.065)
raceHispanic or Latino	0.043 (0.074)	-0.066 (0.065)	0.049 (0.068)
raceOther	-0.258** (0.125)	0.111 (0.111)	0.506*** (0.117)
raceWhite	0.013 (0.063)	0.075 (0.056)	0.033 (0.059)
base_knowledge	0.095*** (0.026)	-0.067*** (0.023)	-0.108*** (0.024)
religionAtheist	-0.014 (0.060)	0.136*** (0.053)	-0.066 (0.056)
religionBuddhist	0.176 (0.167)	0.009 (0.148)	-0.0002 (0.155)
religionCatholic	0.056 (0.051)	-0.031 (0.045)	-0.183*** (0.048)
religionJewish	-0.119 (0.114)	-0.047 (0.101)	-0.209** (0.106)
religionMuslim	-0.040 (0.138)	0.455*** (0.122)	-0.429*** (0.128)
religionNon Traditional	0.392** (0.182)	0.054 (0.161)	-0.196 (0.169)
religionNone	-0.017 (0.074)	0.095 (0.065)	0.036 (0.068)
religionOther	0.087 (0.071)	0.028 (0.062)	-0.175*** (0.066)
religionProgressive	-0.187 (0.132)	0.324*** (0.116)	0.363*** (0.122)
religionProtestant	0.105* (0.054)	0.234*** (0.048)	-0.130*** (0.050)
religionSecular	0.192 (0.453)	-0.099 (0.399)	-0.508 (0.420)
religionSpiritual—not religious	0.143* (0.083)	-0.067 (0.074)	-0.068 (0.077)
Constant	0.210** (0.097)	-0.108 (0.086)	0.408*** (0.090)
Observations	1,034	1,034	1,034
R ²	0.292	0.386	0.363
Adjusted R ²	0.269	0.366	0.343
Residual Std. Error (df = 1001)	0.418	0.369	0.388
F Statistic (df = 32; 1001)	12.900***	19.668***	17.852***

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 7: Difference in Traditional and Border Security Frames on National Admissions

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>
	admission_dichotimized
treatmentborder security	0.013 (0.030)
partyOther	0.017 (0.043)
partyRepublican	−0.045 (0.037)
immigrant_status	−0.064 (0.040)
ideology	0.093*** (0.013)
educ_dHigh school or less	0.107** (0.053)
educ_dPostgraduate degree	0.0002 (0.053)
educ_dSome college/Associates	0.057 (0.041)
age	−0.001 (0.001)
49,999	0.095** (0.044)
74,999	0.013 (0.045)
99,999	0.022 (0.070)
20,000	−0.018 (0.050)
100,000	0.049 (0.083)
raceBlack or African American	0.005 (0.076)
raceHispanic or Latino	0.297*** (0.079)
raceOther	−0.058 (0.131)
raceWhite	0.100 (0.068)
base_knowledge	0.028 (0.029)
religionAtheist	0.044 (0.064)
religionBuddhist	−0.182 (0.180)
religionCatholic	0.003 (0.053)
religionJewish	−0.063 (0.144)
religionMuslim	−0.028 (0.204)
religionNon Traditional	1.022 (0.700)
religionNone	0.100 (0.078)
religionOther	0.008 (0.083)
religionProgressive	−0.152 (0.135)
religionProtestant	0.072 (0.056)
religionSecular	−0.105 (0.602)
religionSpiritual—not religious	−0.110 (0.090)
Constant	0.075 (0.109)
Observations	691
R ²	0.182
Adjusted R ²	0.144
Residual Std. Error	0.375 (df = 659)
F Statistic	4.735*** (df = 31; 659)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 8: Effects by Party

		<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
		admission_dichotomized	acceptance_dichotomized	
		(Republican)	(Republican)	(Other)
treatment	traditional security	(Democrat) 0.121*** (0.032)	(Democrat) -0.010 (0.033)	(Other) 0.022 (0.092)
treatment	border security	(Democrat) 0.115*** (0.032)	(Democrat) -0.006 (0.033)	(Other) 0.202** (0.093)
Observations		665	665	120
R ²		0.150	0.172	0.326
Adjusted R ²		0.113	0.135	0.310
Residual Std. Error		0.264 (df = 636)	0.271 (df = 636)	0.441 (df = 92)
F Statistic		4.010*** (df = 28; 636)	4.710*** (df = 28; 636)	2.982*** (df = 27; 92)
		3.192*** (df = 26; 222)	4.127*** (df = 26; 222)	
		0.418 (df = 222)	0.449 (df = 222)	
		0.212		
		0.497 (df = 92)		
		2.183*** (df = 27; 92)		

		<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
		crime_dichotomized	influx_dichotomized	
		(Republican)	(Republican)	(Other)
treatment	traditional security	(Democrat) 0.190*** (0.040)	(Democrat) 0.029 (0.032)	(Other) 0.067 (0.099)
treatment	border security	(Democrat) 0.006 (0.040)	(Democrat) 0.023 (0.032)	(Other) 0.142 (0.100)
Observations		665	665	120
R ²		0.351	0.427	0.578
Adjusted R ²		0.322	0.402	0.454
Residual Std. Error		0.325 (df = 636)	0.263 (df = 636)	0.544 (df = 92)
F Statistic		12.273*** (df = 28; 636)	16.959*** (df = 28; 636)	4.672*** (df = 27; 92)
		2.332*** (df = 26; 222)	12.442*** (df = 26; 222)	
		0.513 (df = 222)	0.360 (df = 222)	
		0.277	0.545	
		0.536 (df = 92)		
		2.691*** (df = 27; 92)		
		0.131 (0.086)	-0.106* (0.060)	0.232** (0.101)
		249	249	120
		0.215	0.593	0.310
		0.123	0.402	0.310
		0.382 (df = 222)	0.360 (df = 222)	0.441 (df = 92)
		3.762*** (df = 26; 222)	8.763*** (df = 26; 222)	3.086*** (df = 27; 92)
		0.350 (df = 92)	0.390 (df = 222)	0.565 (df = 92)
		0.595 (df = 92)	3.759*** (df = 28; 636)	3.086*** (df = 27; 92)
		3.373*** (df = 27; 92)	8.763*** (df = 26; 222)	

		<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
		threat_dichotomized	voting_dichotomized	
		(Republican)	(Republican)	(Other)
treatment	traditional security	(Democrat) -0.067* (0.036)	(Democrat) 0.035 (0.036)	(Other) 0.016 (0.110)
treatment	border security	(Democrat) -0.072** (0.036)	(Democrat) 0.064* (0.036)	(Other) -0.061 (0.111)
Observations		665	665	120
R ²		0.502	0.142	0.475
Adjusted R ²		0.480	0.104	0.321
Residual Std. Error		0.294 (df = 636)	0.292 (df = 636)	0.565 (df = 92)
F Statistic		22.910*** (df = 28; 636)	3.759*** (df = 28; 636)	3.086*** (df = 27; 92)
		3.762*** (df = 26; 222)	8.763*** (df = 26; 222)	
		0.382 (df = 222)	0.390 (df = 222)	0.565 (df = 92)
		0.225	0.449	0.321
		0.350 (df = 92)	3.759*** (df = 28; 636)	3.086*** (df = 27; 92)
		3.373*** (df = 27; 92)	8.763*** (df = 26; 222)	

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

References

- [1] Aalberg, T., Beyer, A. (2015). Human Interest Framing of Irregular Immigration: An Empirical Study of Public Preferences for Personalized News Stories in the United States, France, and Norway. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 59(7), 858–875. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764215573258>
- [2] Amuedo-Dorantes, C., Bansak, C., Pozo, S. (2021). Refugee Admissions and Public Safety: Are Refugee Settlement Areas More Prone to Crime? *International Migration Review*, 55(1), 135–165. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0197918320920192>
- [3] Angrist, J. (2009). *Mostly Harmless Economics*. Princeton University Press.
- [4] Amnesty International. (2018). Americas: US government endangers asylum seekers with unlawful policies. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/11/americas-us-government-endangers-asylum-seekers-with-unlawful-policies/>
- [5] Bansak, Kirk Hainmueller, Jens Hangartner, Dominik. (2016). How economic, humanitarian, and religious concerns shape European attitudes toward asylum seekers. *Science*. 354.
- [6] Brader, T., Valentino, N. A., Suhay, E. (2008). What Triggers Public Opposition to Immigration? Anxiety, Group Cues, and Immigration Threat. *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(4), 959–978. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25193860>
- [7] Bos, L., Lecheler, S., Mewafi, M., Vliegenthart, R. (2016). It's the frame that matters: Immigrant integration and media framing effects in the Netherlands. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 55, 97-108. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2016.10.002>
- [8] Consiglio, V. S., Meidert, N. (n.d.). Can Policy Makers Influence the Formation of Public Opinion? An Experimental Approach to Assess the Framing Effects of Pol-

icy Information on the Attitudes toward Asylum Seekers. SSRN Electronic Journal.
<https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3759155>

- [9] Druckman, J., Peterson, E., Slothuus, R. (2013). How Elite Partisan Polarization Affects Public Opinion Formation. *American Political Science Review*, 107(1), 57-79. doi:10.1017/S0003055412000500
- [10] Entman, R. (1993). Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm. *Journal of Communication*. 43(4), 51-58.
- [11] Hager, A., Veit S. (2019). Attitudes Toward Asylum Seekers: Evidence from Germany. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 83(2), 412–422, <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfz023>
- [12] Hangartner, D., Dinas, E., Marbach, M., Matakos, K., Xefteris, D. (2019). Does Exposure to the Refugee Crisis Make Natives More Hostile? *American Political Science Review*, 113(2), 442-455. doi:10.1017/S0003055418000813
- [13] Haynes, C., Merolla, J. Ramakrishnan, S. (2016). *Framing Immigrants: News Coverage, Public Opinion, and Policy*. Russell Sage Foundation.
- [14] He L, Zhou W, He M, Nie X, He J (2021) Openness and COVID-19 induced xenophobia: The roles of trade and migration in sustainable development. *PLOS ONE* 16(4). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0249579>
- [15] Hochman, O. (2015). Infiltrators or Asylum Seekers? Framing and Attitudes Toward Asylum Seekers in Israel. *Journal of Immigrant Refugee Studies*, 13(4), 358–378. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2014.982779>
- [16] Huber, G., Lapinski, J. (2008). Testing the Implicit-Explicit Model of Racialized Political Communication. *Perspectives on Politics*, 6(1), 125-134. doi:10.1017/S1537592708080109

- [17] Igartua, J.J., Cheng, L. (2009). Moderating Effect of Group Cue While Processing News on Immigration: Is the Framing Effect a Heuristic Process? *Journal of Communication*, 59, 726-749. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2009.01454.x>
- [18] Lahav, G., Courtemanche, M. The Ideological Effects of Framing Threat on Immigration and Civil Liberties. *Polit Behav* 34, 477–505 (2012). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-011-9171-z>
- [19] Lecheler, S., Bos, L., Vliegenthart, R. (2015). The mediating role of emotions: News framing effects on opinions about immigration. *Journalism Mass Communication Quarterly*, 92(4), 812–838. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699015596338>
- [20] Leiva, M., Vasquez-Lavín, F., Oliva R. (2020). Do immigrants increase crime? Spatial analysis in a middle-income country. *World Development*, 126. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2019.104728>.
- [21] Levay, K. E., Freese, J., Druckman, J. N. (2016). The Demographic and Political Composition of Mechanical Turk Samples. *SAGE Open*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244016636433>
- [22] Legewie, J. (2013). Terrorist Events and Attitudes toward Immigrants: A Natural Experiment. *American Journal of Sociology*, 118(5), 1199–1245. <https://doi.org/10.1086/669605>
- [23] Lopez I. (2014) *Dog Whistle Politics: Strategic Racism, Fake Populism, and the Dividing of America*. Oxford University Press.
- Masterson and Yasenov Masterson, D., Yasenov, V. (2021). Does Halting Refugee Resettlement Reduce Crime? Evidence from the US Refugee Ban. *American Political Science Review*, 115(3), 1066-1073. doi:10.1017/S0003055421000150
- [24] Merolla, J., Ramakrishnan, S., Haynes, C. (2013). “Illegal,” “Undocumented,” or

“Unauthorized”: Equivalency Frames, Issue Frames, and Public Opinion on Immigration. *Perspectives on Politics*, 11(3), 789-807. doi:10.1017/S1537592713002077

- [25] Mendelberg, T. (2001). *The race card: Campaign strategy, implicit messages, and the norm of equality*. Princeton University Press.
- [26] Paskov M., Prag P., Richards L. (2021). Does downward social mobility make people more hostile towards immigrants? *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*. 72. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2020.100543>.
- [27] Scheufele, D.A. and Tewksbury, D. (2007), Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models. *Journal of Communication*, 57: 9-20. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0021-9916.2007.00326.x>
- [28] Spilker, G., Nguyen, Q., Koubi, V. et al. (2020). Attitudes of urban residents towards environmental migration in Kenya and Vietnam. *Nat. Clim. Chang.* 10, 622–627. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-020-0805-1>
- [29] Shaffer, R., Pinson, L., Chu, J. Simmons, B. (2020). Local Elected Officials Receptivity to Refugee Resettlement in the United States. *National Academy of Sciences*. 117(50), 31722-31728; <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2015637117>
- [30] Brown, B. (2021) Trump Twitter Archive V2. <https://www.thetrumparchive.com/>
- [31] UNHCR. (2021). What is a Refugee? <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/what-is-a-refugee.html>
- [32] UNHCR. (2020). Global Trends. <https://www.unhcr.org/flagship-reports/globaltrends/>
- [33] Valentino, N., Hutchings, V., White, I. (2002). Cues that Matter: How Political Ads Prime Racial Attitudes During Campaigns. *American Political Science Review*. 96. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055402004240>

- [34] Wetts, R., Willer, R. (2019). Who Is Called by the Dog Whistle? Experimental Evidents That Racial Resentment and Political Ideology Condition Responses to Racially Encoded Messages. *American Sociological Association*. 5: 1-20. <https://doi/10.1177/2378023119866268>
- [35] White, I. K. (2007). When race matters and when it doesn't: Racial group differences in response to racial cues. *American Political Science Review*, 101(2), 339–354.