NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Fear and Loathing in White America: The Effects of Group Threat on Political Attitudes and Perceptions

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Chapter 1

The U.S. has steadily undergone change throughout its history and in just over 20 years, it will fundamentally transform. White Americans, the group that has maintained a racial hegemony *and* a numerical majority since the birth of the nation, will become a racial minority. Their numbers will be superseded, not simply by another racial group, but a collection of other groups – namely, all racial minority groups.

This demographic shift is unique to the American experiment. No other democratic nation expects a change of this magnitude. Moreover, these changes are not occurring without political consequences. It is not a coincidence that immigration has emerged as a central issue in American politics. Take for instance Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, emphasizing building a wall between the U.S. and Mexico due to the perceived threat from Mexican immigration. Group tensions, arising from population change, may in fact explain Trump's election (Mutz 2018; Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck 2019). The numerical decline of the white majority in the U.S. has also proven to function as its own issue. White supremacists who gathered at the 'Unite the Right' rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, repeated the chant, "You [Jews] will not replace us" – a refrain which evokes anger toward the idea that whites are being replaced by racial minorities, also known as "the Great Replacement" (Camus 2017) As time goes on, and we approach the year where the majority-minority demographic flip is anticipated (2040), issues most pertinent to the shift will only rise in salience. This accentuates the importance of understanding the effect of altering demographics on political behaviors and policy outcomes. This is what I aim to do, by focusing on an area that, thus far, has received surprisingly little attention: the impact of group changes on public policy attitudes.

Indeed, as these changes become more pervasive in American society, they will touch an increasing number of policy areas. For example, Latinos could become greater beneficiaries of

welfare, which would in turn racialize the policy in a way that was previously not conceived. Moreover, as the beneficiaries of these policies change, they will also become uniquely politicized by parties. When these racial demographic transformations are brought to the fore, they will likely alter whites' political attitudes in unique and unforeseen ways. How whites' political attitudes are altered as a result of demographic change goes to the heart of white identity: it involves a changing group-status – whites are losing their majority status to minority groups *and* could become a less-pertinent beneficiary in a host of policy domains. In this dissertation, I shed light on how these changes affect white attitudes within three distinct policy domains, three different temporal contexts, and with regard to three different minority groups.

In so doing, I build on prior work. Specifically, a host of studies demonstrate how information about demographic change generates a sense of threat in whites – an important and long-studied concept in social psychology and political behavior (e.g. Blumer 1958; Blalock 1967; Fossett and Kiecolt 1989; Quillian 1995; 1996; Citrin et al. 2007). We know from these studies that racial threat is evoked when white Americans learn of becoming a numerical minority (Craig and Richeson 2014a). Moreover, this same information causes them to become more negative towards various minority groups. In other words, as these racial demographics change, we can expect that whites will become more negative towards other racial groups due to senses of threat. Despite these works advancing our sense of group threat in the context of white American opinion, they only take us so far. They serve as a foundation that ultimately show us that white Americans *feel* threat in light of diminishing numbers. They do not offer much in the way of the political pertinence of these changes. As we have seen in contemporary politics, threat can also motivate more extreme racial attitudes among white Americans, in ways that scholars and commentators alike argue will fundamentally change American politics. But how?

This requires understanding the nuances in how different policy attitudes could be affected. The changing size of racial groups will shift the group-salience of these policy issues, which could resonate among whites in distinct ways. For example, one area that I analyze which is pertinent to these changes is climate change. The rapidly changing climate will displace nearly 1 billion people by midcentury, many of whom are expected to immigrate to the U.S. As the cause of one type of demographic shift, I look into how this information affects how whites, namely white Republicans, think about the issue of climate change mitigation. Climate refugees operate at a place in between the issues of immigration and climate change, and, over time, complex issues such as these could yield largescale changes to white political attitudes. My work offers insight into how these coming shifts will alter white attitudes.

More generally, I assess group threat across multiple types of threat, multiple contexts, whether it is generated by different minority racial groups, and its downstream impact on policy attitudes. In other words, I look into whether threat varies across context, racial groups and examine its political impacts. This question is important for political scientists and others interested in the political pertinence of threat. How threat can change politics and whether it varies is a question that can also help to answer how pervasive is, and once the scope conditions are provided, strategies on how to vitiate this threat can be worked through.

Table 1

Chapter	Time Frame	Group	Policy Area
2	Past	African Americans	Minimum Wage
3	Present	Asians	Affirmative Action
4	Future	Latin Americans	Climate Change

Show in Table 1 above, across three chapters in this dissertation, group threat is framed in temporally different ways—the three studies analyze the effect of the threat in the context of the past, present, and future. In the second chapter, I investigate how past changes to the size of racial groups and stories about group members affect white policy opinion. Using a conjoint design, I find that when whites learn that the minimum wage workforce has overrepresented African Americans, they feel more threatened and as a result want the minimum wage to be lower. Moreover, when the same workforce information is paired with narratives about individual black workers, the group threat from African Americans is vitiated, thereby resulting positive reactions from whites who set the wage at a higher level. Overall, this study moves beyond previous findings on the existence of threat and shows that it can have an immediate impact on policy attitudes, causing them to shift.

This study shows that information about group threat in the past can still affect present opinion.

In my third chapter, I investigate the effect of group threat on a salient political issue among politically active Americans, through an experiment that I embed within an exit poll. I find that when whites learn that Asians are *currently* the fastest increasing demographic group (per a 2018 Census report), they feel more economically threatened by Asians, but do not feel threat along cultural or political lines. I theorize that this form of threat occurs because stereotypes about individual Asians are generalized across the entire group. Moreover, this information changes interpretations of a recent court case which concerns discrimination against Asians in university admissions – *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*. Whites that learn of the Census report perceive less discrimination against the group, and ironically, also become more supportive of policy that discriminates against Asians. This study is one of the first to explore different types of threat in relation to one another (i.e., economic, cultural, and political),

and also shows the clear political ramifications of threat on salient issues. In this chapter I also conduct a second study, where I replicate the exit poll and use facial recognition to capture the emotion that is generated by the Census report. Ultimately, I find that surprise from the information motivates the sense of threat felt, which also alters attitudes on discrimination.

My fourth chapter explores the influence of threat on the prioritization of political issues. The policy context in this experiment concerns climate change. Projections of the impact of climate change on migration show that nearly 1 billion people will be displaced by 2050. Group threat in this project is framed in a future-oriented context. I present white Republicans with the scenario that climate change will cause more extreme weather in Latin America, forcing many to immigrate to the U.S. Among Republicans climate change is generally a very low-priority, while immigration is high-priority. As such, this study attempts to determine the relative impact of group threat on complex policy opinion. I find that white Republicans are significantly more threatened when Latin American immigrants are described. Additionally, I show that when immigrants are generally described, threat is *not* generated, and this absence of threat motivates support for the idea that climate change is happening and increases support for mitigating it (in part because they do not link it to helping Latin American countries).

Conclusion

As a whole, this project shows a number of significant factors which matter to the study of public opinion, political behavior, and American democracy. First, I show that whites feel threat from *multiple* minority groups. This matters for several reasons. For one, these consistent findings across all three studies show that group threat is actually being generated from demographic change, and not simply from negative attitudes about one particular minority group – previous studies on these changes generating threat have not been able to confirm this, because they did not introduce multiple minority groups.

Additionally, this project provides the first demonstration that one generally liked group (Asian immigrants) can generate threat from white Americans. Importantly, this finding shows that the relative size of a group has a direct bearing on how whites think about it. Meaning that, regardless of how warm white Americans are toward a given group, if it is growing in size, and therefor encroaching on the majority status of whites, the minority group will *still* be viewed as a threat.

Moving beyond the simpler discussion on the existence of group threat, I also show that racial demographic change can have immediate consequences on how whites think about public policy. Specifically, I show that threat can motivate white Americans to punish minority groups through policy (Chapter 2), relax views of discrimination against threatening racial groups and support policy that actively discriminates against these groups (Chapter 3), and that threat can demotivate white support for policy that benefits minority groups (Chapter 4). I also find that the scope of the policy intervention does not alter how whites' attitudes change in light of feeling group threat. In terms of the specific policy attitudes I investigate, the minimum wage affects all racial groups (including whites), affirmative action (minority groups specifically), and climate change (everyone). Despite these differences in policy areas, I show that threat still alters support in ways that would be harmful to specific minority groups, whites, and in the case of climate change the entire world.

Lastly, I demonstrate that when threat is vitiated or is absent from considerations about a given group, we see white attitudes move in ways that are more positive toward policy. That is, I find that more support is generated for policy that was previously disliked, particularly in the cases of the minimum wage and climate change mitigation. These findings provide two vital points that deserve more attention in future research. One point is threat is *the* factor that is

causing negative policy attitudes among whites. This leads to the second point which preventing or vitiating this sense of threat has immediate positive consequences.

Concerning the deleterious effects that demographic change can have on politics, knowing that this path forward is *not* destiny for American politics is imperative. I show that although information about these changes can move white attitudes in troubling and harmful ways, this ought not always be the case. Working to demystify and thereby decrease the threat and anxiety of this shift happening in America could, quite possibly, reshape American politics and society.

Chapter 2

When Other People Win:

The Effects of Group Beneficiaries, Group Threat, and Narratives on Policy Opinion

ABSTRACT: How are people's policy positions affected when they learn that other groups will benefit? Here, I explore the effect of positive and negative information about outgroups on policy opinion. More specifically, I use a conjoint experiment to investigate how information about policy beneficiaries and narratives about group members affect opinion on the minimum wage. I find when people learn that a threatening outgroup will disproportionately benefit from an increase in the wage, they feel group threat causing them to select a lower minimum wage for the entire workforce. I also find that narratives about workers generate positive attitudes, which result in respondents setting the wage at a higher level. When narratives and group threat are paired together, the narrative vitiates group threat, thereby positively affecting wage level. Overall, this project shows that while group threat may have negative policy consequences, stories about individuals group members can positively overpower group threat.

The United States is in the midst of a dramatic demographic change. Minority groups are steadily increasing in size, while whites, the majority racial group, are slated to be a minority group by midcentury. These changes are surely going to affect *who* benefits from policy. As groups change, governmental interventions will certainly need adjustment. As such, we can also imagine that policy opinions will change in tandem with demographics. People may become more or less supportive of policy, depending upon the affected group. Importantly, these reactions could have downstream effects on the process of politics. For example, political parties might adjust their platforms per the public support and elites may craft their messages to evoke these groups.

In this project, I develop a theory of how the size of group beneficiaries affect policy attitudes. More specifically, I investigate the effects of group size on specific policy opinions. I hypothesize that, as the size of a racial minority group of policy beneficiaries grows, majority group members will react more negatively to the policy. That said, I expect that when narratives about individual minority group members are provided, these stories will vitiate the negative reaction. I use a conjoint experimental design to test this theory. More specifically, I analyze how group-based elements (group beneficiaries, group size, narratives about group members) affect typically non group-oriented policy opinions (the minimum wage).

My results show that, indeed, when the size of a minority beneficiary group increases, majority group policy attitudes become more negative — respondents set the minimum wage at a significantly lower level. Moreover, narratives about social mobility have positive effects on the level of the wage. I also find that *some* narratives reduce the impact of group threat, namely those that are counterstereotypical. Last, I show that the effects of these various dimensions are relatively homogenous across a diverse sample. I conclude with a discussion of the implications of studying changes to groups and policy opinion.

Group Beneficiaries

"*Who benefits from policy?*" is a central question to the study of policy opinion and often motivates how people think about policy. When people learn about a group policy beneficiary, they tend to think differently about the policy. For example, when affirmative action is framed as helping blacks, it reduces non-black support for it (Nelson and Kinder 1996). Individuals exposed to the frame view African Americans as undeserving, and therefore are not entitled to benefit from the policy. The implicit reference to groups can have a significant impact on how people consider policy (Winter 2008). For example, the reference to families—a concept that implicitly primes gender— decreases support for family visitation rights. The results from Winter (2008) suggest that people do not need to overtly consider group beneficiaries for them to affect individuals' policy positions.

These and other works make clear that policy beneficiaries matter to policy opinion, but they do not explore the potential impact of group composition, namely group size (Fine 1992; Valentino, Traugott, and Hutchings 2002; Clawson, Kegler, and Waltenburg 2003; Haley and Sidanius 2006; Rigby et al. 2009). We are unclear on how size-changes to groups might affect how people consider policy. Existing work on group threat suggests that people will react more negatively to a policy when they learn about changes to group size.

Group Size and Group Threat

Group threat involves the challenge of a minority group to the status of a majority group, particularly concerning an increase in the size of a minority group (Wirth 1941). This threat can be real or perceived. Real threat refers to instances when a minority group actually increases in size—for example, minority groups moving in or out of a neighborhood (Enos 2016). Perceived threat refers to projected increases to the size of a minority group. One seminal study of real

group threat shows that increases in immigration generate a threat from immigrants as a group, which then increases prejudicial attitudes towards minority groups (Quillian 1996).

Regarding perceived threat, projections of minority groups increasing in size generate the perception of a threat which then motivates more negative attitudes toward minorities (Craig and Richeson 2014a; 2014b). These projections can also cause majority group members to become more politically conservative (Craig and Richeson 2018a). On the whole, research on group threat so far provides insight on how changes to the size of minority groups affect general opinion about minority groups.

Bringing the group threat literature together with work on group beneficiaries, it follows that if a threatening group is seen as a policy beneficiary, opinion about the policy should become more negative. The key – untested presumption – is that positive attitudes about the policy should decline as the size of that threatening beneficiary group increases. Indeed, just as members of a majority group feel threatened by larger minority groups, the threat will cause them to become less supportive of particular policies that likely benefit a larger percentage of minorities:

> H_1 Policy opinion will become more negative as the size of a minority group who benefits from the policy increases, *ceteris paribus*.

The mechanism in H1 could come from the inability of identifying with the group, as it is easier to be negative towards entire groups because they are perceived to be dissimilar (Abelson et al. 1998). As a test of the strength of this dimension and to potentially counteract this

mechanism, I investigate another group-oriented dimension, narrative, which I anticipate will nullify the effect of group threat.

Narratives

A narrative is a detailed story told about an individual group member. It is often generalized outward to the entire group . Narratives have long been considered a method of describing the way that politics unfold (Patterson and Monroe 1998; Capoccia and Kelemen 2007; Peters 2011), but their effect on political opinion has not been given much attention. One of the only studies on the effect of narratives on political opinion is Gooch (2017). Results from this study show that elites who tell narratives about individuals can significantly affect how people think about issues and the candidate telling the story. Personalized narratives told about specific group members improve support for that candidate, while stories told about a generic group do not. The findings corroborate a well-known process in social psychology—individuation (Kogut and Ritov 2005; Genevsky et al. 2013).

The concept of individuation is simple: the more an individual's nuances are described, the more onlookers tend to identify with, and react positively toward, the individual. A large literature shows that prejudiced evaluations of an individuated person are less likely (Alicke et al. 1995; Norman 2002; Bar-Anan, Liberman, and Trope 2006; Trope and Liberman 2010). These findings suggest that people might also "warm up" to groups whom they were initially prejudiced toward after receiving a narrative about an individual group member. For this reason, I expect that narratives will vitiate the effects of group threat. When people are told that a policy positively affects a threatening group along with a narrative about a single group member, the narrative will individuate the issue thereby increasing support for the policy.

As a hypothesis, this is:

H_2 Narratives about members of threatening groups will vitiate the impact of group threat, thereby making policy opinion more positive, *ceteris paribus*.

Additionally, I expect that the narrative of an individual affected by the policy will have independent effects upon policy opinion. The narrative will generate positive affect in general, which will make policy opinion more positive.[1] The narrative will cause people to think about particular beneficiaries positively, resulting in positive policy opinion. This expectation is hypothesis 3:

H_3 Narratives about individuals affected by a policy will generate more positive attitudes, thereby making policy opinion more positive, *ceteris paribus.*

Methods

I collected data from Amazon's Mechanical Turk – a crowdsourcing platform – on August 2, 2018. A sizable literature suggests data from this source are generalizable (Berinsky, Huber, and Lenz 2012; Mullinix et al. 2015; Coppock 2018; Coppock and McClellan 2019), particularly when the key hypotheses do not involve heterogeneous effect predictions, as is true in my case (Druckman 2011). A total of 157 individuals participated in the study, which offers sufficient statistical power given the conjoint design. Each respondent completes a given task multiple times (Jens Hainmueller, Hangartner, and Yamamoto 2015).

Displayed in Table 1, the sample is 57% male and 43% female. Participants' ages vary between 18 and over 65, with a majority (54%) falling between 25-34. Sixty-two percent are white and 7% are black. A majority of participants earn either under $30,000 a year or $30,000 –

[1] All narratives that are used only depict positive stories about individuals.

$59,000 a year, (67%). Similarly, most participants attended some college or have a 2-year degree (59%). Respondents primarily identify as Democrats (35%) or as Independents (45%).

Table 1

Gender (n = 157)	43% female 57% male
Ethnicity/Race (n = 157)	62% white; 7% black; 20% Asian-American; 3% Hispanic; 8% Other
Age (n = 157)	18% 18-24; 54% 25-34; 18% 35-50; 9% 51-65; 1% Over 65
Income (n = 157)	33% < $30,000; 34% $30,000-$59,999; 23% $60,000-$99,999; 9% $100,000-$200,000; 1% Over $200,000
Education (highest level) (n = 157)	0% Less than high school 11% High School; 18% Some College; 59% 4 Year College Degree; 12% Advanced Degree
Party Identification (n = 157)	25% Strong Democrat; 10% Weak Democrat; 10% Independent leans Democrat; 27% Independent; 8% Independent leans Republican; 9% Weak Republican; 11% Strong Republican

Research design

I test my hypotheses with a conjoint survey experiment. In this design, respondents react to randomly varied attributes over multiple scenarios (Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto 2013; Hainmueller, Hangartner, and Yamamoto 2015; Bansak et al. 2017). Each attribute captures a dimension of the theory I am testing. I specifically use a rating-based conjoint design that tasks respondents with rating an outcome measure after each scenario. I then analyze the effect of group threat, group beneficiaries and narratives on a particular policy issue, which is my main dependent variable—the minimum wage.

Minimum wage

To test my hypotheses, I focus on the issue of the state minimum wage. The level of the minimum wage varies by state and municipality—Georgia and Wyoming have the lowest levels at $5.15, and Washington D.C. has the highest at $12.50. The federal level of the minimum wage is lower than many states but serves as the floor for all state minimum wage levels. In other words, no state can set the wage lower than the federal wage. Within the examples of Georgia and Wyoming, workers must be paid at least $7.25 per hour. The different state minimum wages fit well within this conjoint design because the wage can also be an attribute that can be varied.

Minimum wage debates occur at the state and federal level and are framed in terms of economic and/or social issues. Economic frames of the debate focus on how the wage might harm businesses or help workers (Kaufman 2010). As a social issue, the minimum wage is described as hurting certain segments of workers more than others. For example, women are overrepresented in the workforce, which some argue makes the discussion of raising the wage a women's issue (Zatz 2009). I fold both economic and social perspectives into my design.

Procedure

The study begins with respondents learning that they will be reading the results of a national study about the minimum wage from six different states. They then are given six distinct scenarios, one at a time, each which represent the conditions in a state. Each scenario varies a host of attributes, which all correspond with the key dimensions of my project. Each dimension is shown in Table 1, along with the corresponding attribute and its contents.

Table 2

Attribute	Contents	Dimension
State minimum wage	[$7.25/ $10 /$12.50]	Group beneficiaries
Racial demographics of minimum wage workers	[African Americans overrepresented/ proportionately represented]	Group threat
Gender demographics of minimum wage workers	[Women overrepresented/ proportionately represented]	Group threat
Narrative	[White female (school/family), white male (school/family), black female (school/family), black male (school/family), No narrative]	Narratives
Consequences for raising the wage	[Positive / Negative / Neutral]	Group beneficiaries
Most affected region	[Rural / Urban / Suburban]	Group beneficiaries

State minimum wage attribute

Three minimum wage levels are provided in this attribute. These levels are classified as low, medium and high. $7.25 is the low minimum wage—at the time of this experiment, it was the federal level of the minimum wage and the lowest wage in the country. $12.50 is the high minimum wage. At the time of the experiment, it was the highest minimum wage in the country, active within Washington D.C. $10 is the medium level minimum wage, as it falls between the low and high levels.

This attribute shows how minimum wage workers are currently paid within a state and also serves as a manipulation check. When it is combined with the group threat conditions, I expect that there will be anchoring effects for both the high and low minimum wages (Furnham and Boo 2011). Respondents exposed to the high wage will set the wage at a significantly higher level, relative to the medium level minimum wage. Similarly, respondents who receive the lower level condition will set the wage at a significantly lower level, relative to the medium level minimum wage.

Racial demographic attribute

The racial demographic attribute provides the racial breakdown of the workforce in a state. This attribute contains three racial groups: black, white, and other.[2] The levels for this attribute are either proportionally representative or over-representative of blacks, relative to the national racial breakdown. For both the proportionally representative and over-representative levels, I randomly generate the percentage breakdown.

An example of this attribute is:

28.6% white | 54.3% black | 17.1% other

This attribute contains the group threat condition, which is the statistic showing that blacks as over-represented in the workforce. This attribute tests hypothesis 1. I expect that when blacks are over-represented in the workforce, respondents will set the wage at a lower level.

Gender demographic attribute

The gender demographic attribute shows the gender breakdown of the workforce within a state. Women and men are the two groups included in this condition. Similar to the racial demographic attribute, women are either proportionally represented or over-represented. I also randomly generate the percentages used in this condition.

An example of this attribute is:

34.8% men | 65.2% women

I include this attribute to test if women as a group are perceived as a threat and to make the demographic breakdown of the workforce more realistic.

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[2] I opt to not include another explicitly racial or ethnic category in order to prevent opinion about this other group from confounding the effects of opinion about blacks.

Narrative attribute

The narrative attribute describes an individual minimum wage worker. Stories used in this design follow the traditional narrative structure of a story about an individual with a beginning, middle, and end (Gooch 2017). First, it provides the background of the worker, then gives a brief summary of their current situation, and concludes with a personal account from the worker. The personal account calls to either saving for school or taking care of one's family as the worker's justification for needing a higher wage—the former captures the idea of social mobility and the latter is either stereotypical or counter-stereotypical, depending on the workers' demographics. I use eight narratives total—varying race, gender and the worker's personal account (Appendix 1).

> Profile: Xavier Jackson male, black. Grew up in middle class. Provides for a family of two. 'I am trying to afford rent without having to work overtime, so I can spend more time with my family.'

This condition tests hypotheses 2 and 3. I expect that narratives about black workers will individuate the group thereby vitiating group threat and will cause respondents to set the wage at a significantly higher level.

Consequence attribute

The consequence attribute depicts the outcomes of raising the minimum wage. The potential consequences are the following: helping workers (positive), hurting businesses (negative), or hurting both equally (neutral). Within the former two conditions, both workers and businesses are referenced, but an emphasis is given to one of the groups. An example of this attribute is:

> "An increase in the minimum wage will protect a larger percentage of workers from poverty, while only slightly raising prices for businesses."

I include this attribute to depict how minimum wage workers or businesses might be affected by a minimum wage increase. When respondents encounter this attribute, I expect those who learn that workers will be helped will set the wage at a significantly higher level than the neutral condition.

Region attribute

Lastly, the region attribute depicts the area of the state that is expected to be the most affected by an increase in the minimum wage. People may have different conceptions of the people working in a region, and as such these expectations may affect their opinions. For example, the workforce in the suburban region of a state might be considered to have a sizable number of teenagers. As a result, people might set the wage at a lower level because they find teenagers as less worthy of a raise in their wages,

I expect that the urban region condition will negatively affect opinion about the wage, relative to the suburban region, because of implicit associations with this region and African Americans (Mendelberg 2001; 2008; Kam 2007).

Conjoint design

In total, all respondents view 942 different scenarios (6*157). Prior work suggests presenting respondents with six scenarios does not result in satisficing (Bansak et al. 2017). I completely randomize the traits of each attribute and the placement of the attributes. This ensures: 1) no attributes have primacy effects on opinion (e.g., the order of the attributes – such as demographic breakdown and extant wage – are randomly varied), 2) each attribute's contents do not exert any more of an effect on opinion than any other content (e.g., within a category such as racial

demographics, the over-represented or proportionally represented conditions are randomly varied). Next, I present an example of a fully randomized scenario.

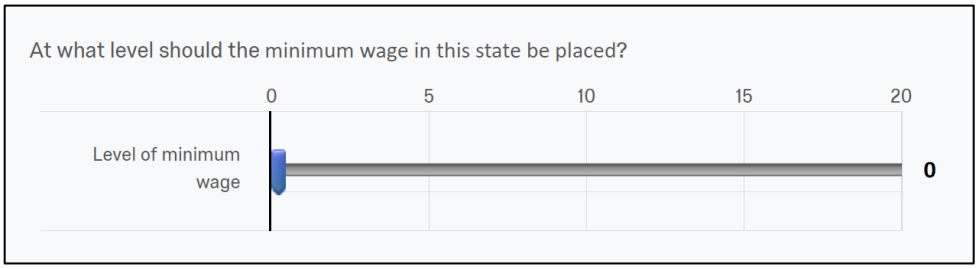
Example of conjoint

State minimum wage	$12.50
Narrative	Profile: Shanice Booker, female, black. Grew up in middle class. Intends to go on to college. 'I'm using this current job to save up for books and tuition.'
Most affected region	Rural
Gender demographics of minimum wage workers	39.2% men | 60.8% women
Consequences for raising the wage	An increase in the wage results in workers receiving only slightly more pay and businesses are forced to fire a large number of workers.
Racial demographics of minimum wage workers	61% white | 13.2% black | 25.8% other

Shown above, the state minimum wage is set at the highest level. The narrative describes a female black minimum wage worker who describes that she intends to use her minimum wage job to save money to go to school. The rural region of the state is projected to be the most affected by an increase in the minimum wage. Women are overrepresented within the workforce. On the projected consequence, businesses are shown to be hurt while workers only helped marginally. And last, the racial demographics of the state are roughly proportionate to national demographics.

After viewing this fully randomized scenario, respondents set the level of the wage between $0 - $20. This entire task was completed six times.

Figure 1



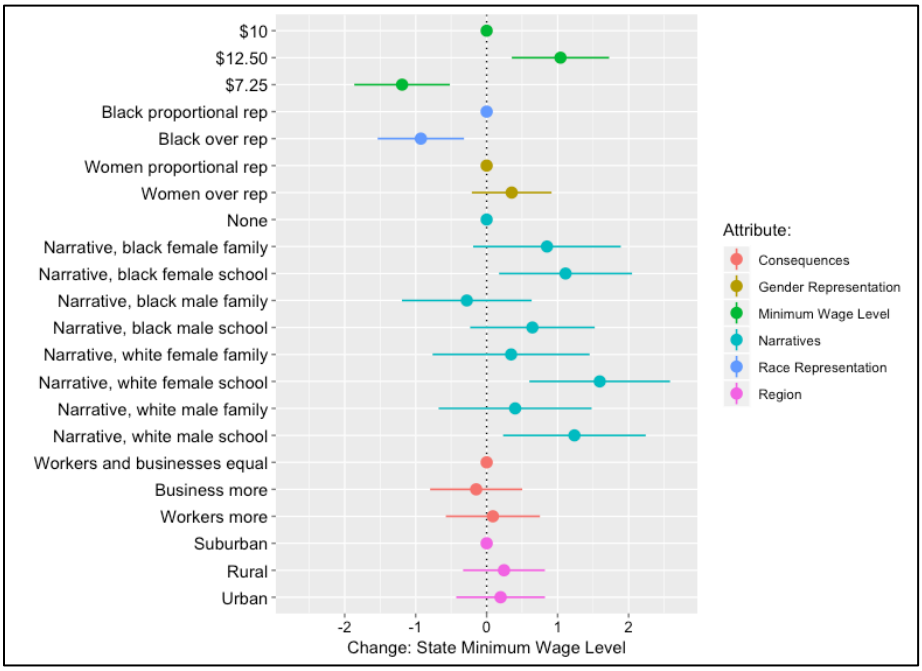
The repeated evaluation of *each state* fits well conceptually in the conjoint design. All else equal, repeated evaluations of different minimum wage scenarios on a state level make more logical sense than evaluations of the same scenarios on a national level.[3] Next, I analyze the data that were collected in this experiment.

Results

I analyze the data using linear regression with clustered standard errors by respondent since each respondent evaluated multiple scenarios. I focus exclusively on non-black respondents in my analysis because my theory is on opinion about outgroup members. This marginally reduces my sample size to 146 participants that viewed 876 vignettes in total. Figure 1 shows regression results on the effect of the conjoint attributes on the average level of the state minimum wage.

[3] If this design was put into a national context, as soon as respondents received more than one scenario, experimental realism would be ruined because presenting different conditions for all American minimum wage workers would not seem legitimate.

Figure 2



The first three covariates, the minimum wage levels, serve as manipulation checks. When individuals learn of a low minimum wage within a state ($7.25) they set the wage at a significantly lower level ($p < 0.001$) relative to those who view a $10 wage, which is the medium range. This finding is intuitive and reflects my expectation of an anchoring effect (Furnham and Boo 2011). Respondents who encounter the lower wage do not want to drastically increase it, as people are prone to want to not move far off a status quo (Bolsen, Druckman, and Cook 2014). Moreover, people may be averse to a large increase in the wage, as it may force businesses to lay off workers or have other negative effects on the state economy—a common argument for not increasing the minimum wage (Neumark, Salas, and Wascher 2014). The high minimum wage yields a similar effect, in that those exposed to this condition set the wage at a significantly higher level ($p < .01$) relative to those who view the $10 wage.

The condition that shows blacks are over-represented in the workforce has a significantly negative effect upon the level that respondents set the wage ($p < .01$). This effect confirms hypothesis 1: policy opinion becomes more negative when the size of a minority group that benefits from the policy increases. This is a clear group threat effect on the level of the minimum wage. Specifically, as the size of the black population changes from roughly 13% to around 60%, the respondent-set wage decreases by 9%.[4] This change is equal to a $1.80 decrease in the minimum wage, relative to the level set by respondents who view the $10 minimum wage. There are several implications for this finding.

Notably, this change in opinion stems *only* from respondents seeing workforce statistics. Seemingly mundane information about groups can generate group threat and affect policy opinions. By this logic, a stronger stimulus would have caused a stronger effect on the level of the wage. One might expect the impact to be even greater had it been presented visually (Abrajano, Elmendorf, and Quinn 2018).

Also, one of two mechanisms might be at work driving the treatment effect: it could be basic racism directed toward the group or it could reflect stereotypes about the workforce *and* the group. The former explanation is that non-white respondents harbor resentment toward African Americans, which translates into wanting a lower wage when the group is over-represented in the workforce. The latter explanation is more complex, where respondents have negative feelings about minimum wage workers—e.g. that they are lazy—and those stereotypes are bolstered when they coalesce with similar stereotypes about blacks. Suffice it to say, what is clear is that individuals set a lower wage when more African Americans would benefit from the wage.

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[4] Here I use the adjusted R-squared for the effect size.

Importantly, respondents do not treat all demographic groups equally. The condition that shows that women are over-represented does *not* have a significant effect upon the level of the wage compared to when women are proportionally represented. As such, when women are a large group, the level of the wage is not affected. Particular attitudes about a racial minority group – African Americans – drive policy opinion. Women do not apparently generate an analogous threat.

Recall hypothesis 3 which predicts that individual narratives will generate more positive opinion (i.e., a higher wage). The results are mixed—as the effect of the narrative is contingent on the story being told. Interestingly, the stories that have a significant effect on the minimum wage are those that focus on school and those that do not involve a black male—the narratives about the black woman, white woman, and white man saving for school all drive up the wage ($p < .05$). Here, the justification for saving money seems to lead respondents to want an increase in the wage.[5] It may be that this story resonates with respondents' values, echoing stories of individuals trying to lift themselves economically, a la the American Dream (e.g. Kasser and Ryan 1993, 1996). It is notable, though, that the effect does not occur if the individual is an African American male. I find that this result comes from participants inability to identify with these individuals.

In contrast to the education stories, narratives about minimum wage workers wanting to protect their families all had insignificant effects. It may be that taking care of one's family is a longer process that does not suggest the same type of upward mobility as the narrative about saving for school. Workers who save for school have an end goal to which respondents might

[5] This motivation makes sense given the sample—most respondents do not have a 4-year college degree (88%).

relate. Workers who need money to take care of their families do not have as definitive an end goal.

Figure 1 also shows that neither consequence frame mattered – stating that workers would be helped or that businesses would be hurt had no significant effects. Much of the debate about the minimum wage revolves around these consequences yet it may be that public support focuses more on the recipients and their life stories.

Lastly, the region most affected by a rise in the minimum wage does not have a significant effect on the respondent-set wage. The non-significant result for the urban condition suggests that the term is not implicitly racialized as some scholars have argued (Mendelberg 2001). In this case, if urban called to race, then it should have had a similar impact on the wage as the group threat condition.

Interactions

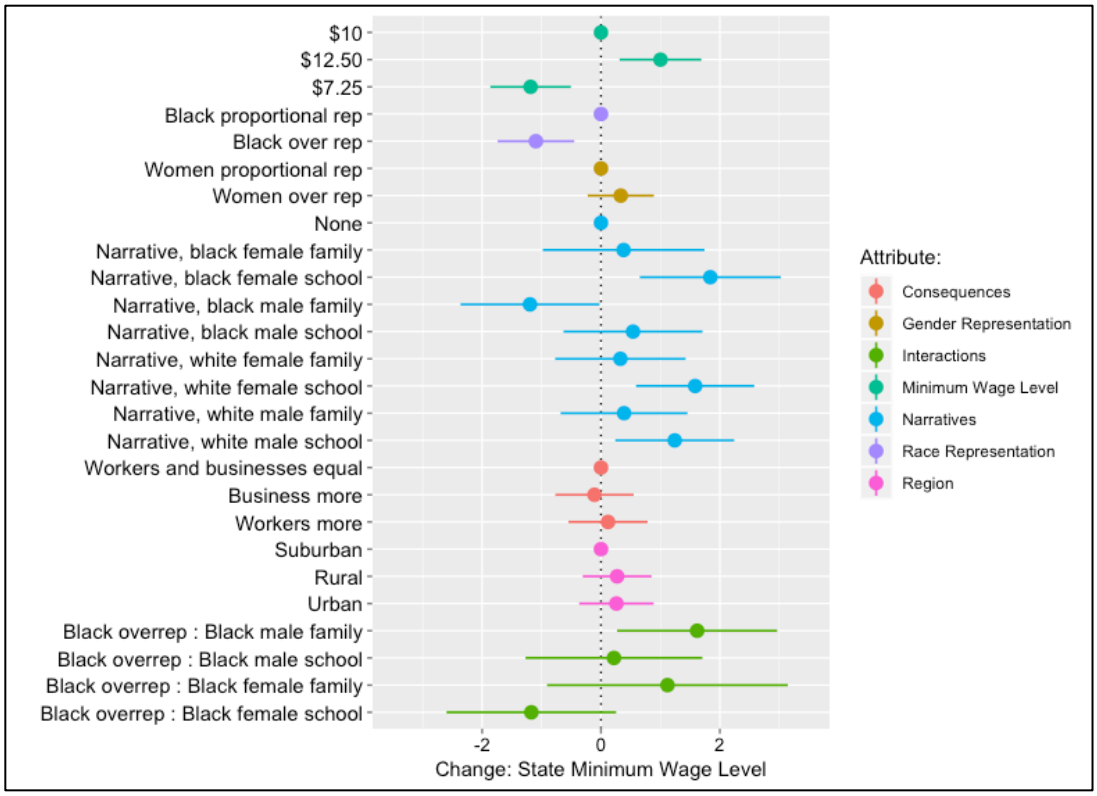
I expect that narratives about African Americans will vitiate the effects of the group threat condition, stated in hypothesis 2. This expectation is that the narrative gives a closer view of people within the threatening group by individuating the group. The mechanism behind individuation is identification with and more positive feelings toward the person described. I expect that these positive feelings will be generalized to the entire threatening group.

Figure 2 below is a coefficient plot displaying interactions for narratives about black workers and the black over-representation condition. These results partially confirm hypothesis 2. When respondents learn that blacks are over-represented in the workforce *and* read a narrative about a black man saving up money to protect his family, they want a significantly higher minimum wage. In short, the narrative vitiates group threat. I find that this story affects respondents positively because it is counterstereotypical. A common stereotype of black men is that they do not take care of their families (Dixon and Rosenbaum 2004). So, encountering this

narrative is surprising given these preconceptions. It consequently causes a positive reaction that is then generalized to all African American workers, thereby vitiating the threat.

This result also is surprising because the narrative on its own has an insignificant effect upon the level of the wage. I find this to be a more robust display of a narrative vitiating group threat. The significantly positive interaction effect suggests that the black male family condition has a significantly positive effect *because* it is paired with the group threat condition. This could be because respondents are generalizing the narrative to a larger group of people and thus think that an increase in the wage would benefit more people.

Figure 3



The interaction of the group threat condition and the three other narratives about African Americans (the story about the man and woman saving for school, and the black woman helping her family) do not significantly affect the level that respondents set the minimum wage. These

null effects suggest that either, the narratives do not generate a positive enough impact on how respondents think about the workforce, or the group threat condition does not have a negative enough impact when combined with these narratives. Interestingly, the narrative that has independent effects on the level of the wage—the black woman, school condition—does not vitiate the negative effects of the group threat condition. Ultimately, the interactions in Figure 2 show that narratives *can* counteract the negative effects of group threat, but they must be counter-stereotypical narratives.

Importantly, the attributes that significantly affect the level of the minimum wage could have varying effects based upon respondent characteristics—i.e. there could be heterogeneous treatment effects. For this reason, I briefly investigate the effects of the main attributes in my design using honest causal forests.

Heterogeneous Treatment Effects

Causal forests are a machine learning technique used to estimate the heterogeneous effects of a treatment. They are called 'forests' because they involve the use of many honest causal trees. Causal trees can be used to detect areas where the effect of the treatment on an outcome variable varies the most based on a set of selected covariates. These trees are 'honest' because they avoid overfitting the model. Individual honest causal trees are helpful for estimating heterogeneous treatment effects, but they also provide noisy estimates. Causal forests correct for this issue by reducing the variance of these causal trees by averaging across them.

There are two conditions that must be met in order to conduct honest causal forest analysis. The first condition is that all trees within the forest are built on subsamples of the training data—i.e. the training data is split. The second condition is that the outcome variable analyzed is not also included in the process of splitting the training data. Both of these conditions are met within my analysis—I do not include the state minimum wage outcome variable in the

training data. I begin by analyzing the heterogeneous treatment effect of the group threat condition when blacks are overrepresented in the workforce.

Causal Forests

I fit a causal forest to the entire dataset of my conjoint design. Every individual honest tree is fitted using a bootstrap sample of half of the data. Half of this sample is used for splitting and the other half is used for estimation. I fit 5000 individual honest trees within this causal forest. This analysis estimates the effect of the treatment on the average level of the minimum wage, based upon respondent-varying covariates.[6]

First, I present results for the variable importance for the "black overrepresented" condition. These results show which variables are the most strongly related to the effect of this condition on the state minimum wage outcome variable. Importance is scaled 0-1.

Table 3

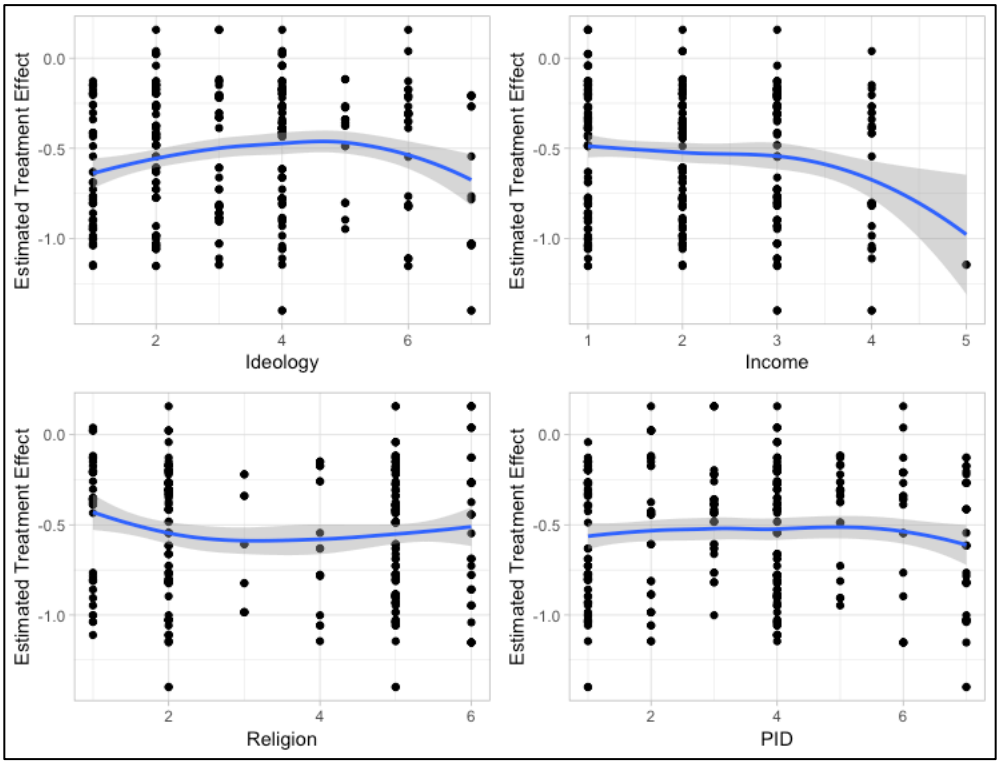
Importance	Variable
0.18852287	Ideology
0.17209127	Income
0.16478259	Religion
0.15228978	PID
0.11545829	Age
0.09129580	Race
0.05003338	Social class
0.03765242	Gender
0.02787358	Held min wage job?

The variables for ideology, income, religion, and party identification are marginally more important than all other individual-level covariates. This measure of importance, however, tells little about the relationship between the treatment and respondent-level covariates. For this

[6] These variables are: Ideology, age, income, party identification, religion, race, social class, gender, and whether a respondent held a minimum wage job after the age of 21.

reason, I plot these top four variables within Figure 4 below in order to assess how the treatment affects the outcome among different respondents.

Figure 4



Ideology shows a fairly consistent relationship to the "black overrepresented" condition across all levels. It is scaled from 1 to 7, with 1 being very liberal and 7 being very conservative. Somewhat surprisingly, the treatment seems to have a marginally stronger negative effect on *both* ends of the ideological spectrum. Strong liberals and strong conservatives both set the wage at a similar level when they learn about blacks being overrepresented within the workforce. This finding should be taken tentatively because liberals (n = 86) within this sample greatly outnumber conservatives (n = 32).

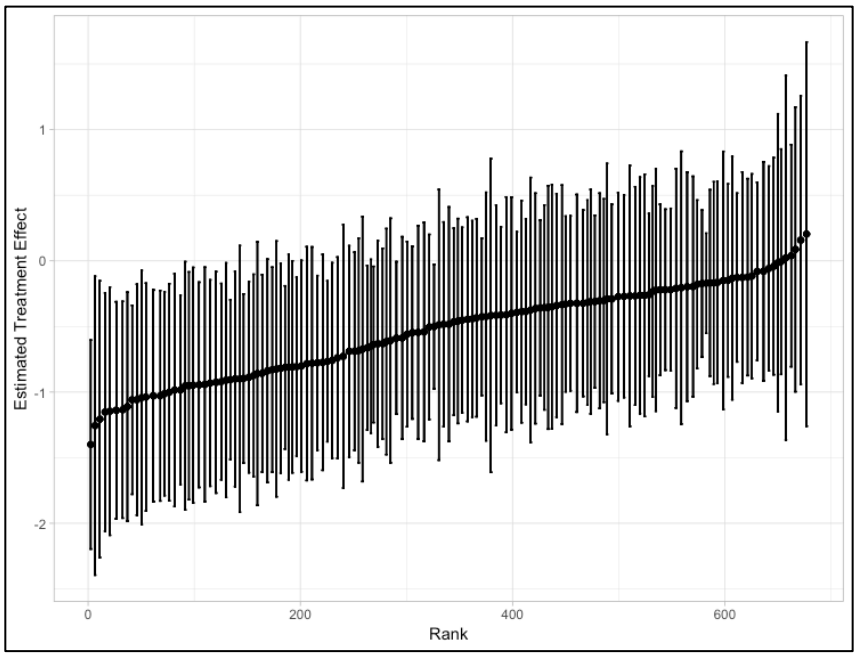
Income shows a trend that is similar to ideology. This covariate is scaled from 1 to 5, with 1 being an annual income of under $30,000 and 5 being an annual income of over $200,000. The downward turn of the plot line is unreliable because there is a single observation among the

annual income of $200,000 a year. The religion covariate is not continuous and therefore is more difficult to analyze using this plot.[7] It should be noted, however, that observations along all categories are clustered around a similar area—suggesting that respondents with different religious affiliations reacted similarly to the group threat condition. Lastly, party identification has a nearly flat plot line, which suggests a similar treatment effect across all levels of partisanship.[8]

Overall, the plots in Figure 4 show quite *homogenous* treatment effects despite the suggestion in the variable importance measure that these covariates have a stronger interaction with the treatment. As a final measure of the potential heterogeneous treatment effects of the group threat condition, I plot the predicted treatment effects in ascending order with 95% confidence intervals. This figure includes all respondent-varying covariates shown above in Table 3.

[7] The religious categories are in the following order: Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Non-religious, Other.
[8] Party identification is scaled from 1 to 7, with 1 being strong Democrat and 7 being strong Republican.

Figure 5



Importantly, the treatment does not have a significantly positive effect across all covariates. This result means that the group threat condition did not have a positive effect on the level of the minimum wage for *any* respondent. The three narrative conditions with significant main effects on the level of the state minimum wage, similarly, have homogenous treatment effects (Appendix 2).

Conclusion

Clearly, group threat can have a direct effect on policy opinions. When respondents receive information that shows an overrepresentation of blacks in the workforce, they react negatively and set the minimum wage at a significantly lower level. This finding categorically differs from what other studies show regarding group threat. Most prior work focuses on how changes in group size or projections of such changes affect attitudes towards the group or general ideology. In contrast, I show that actual variation in policy beneficiary size directly leads to negative policy support – individuals do not like policies that benefit African Americans more. Across different respondents, this treatment has a homogenous effect. These findings suggest that threatening

policy beneficiaries may cause resentment which leads to more support for a policy that actively hurts the group.

I also find that narratives about policy beneficiaries have independent effects on how people think about policy. Results from this study show that narratives have an overwhelmingly positive effect upon policy opinion—all narratives that have a significant effect upon the level of the wage are in the positive direction. This result suggests that narratives bring people closer to those affected by a policy. In this case, the narratives help people identify with minimum wage workers. Notably, only narratives that call to upward mobility have effects, which might indicate that the positive effects of narratives are contingent on *how* individuals identify with the people within the story.

Furthermore, narratives can work to vitiate group threat. When people read stories about specific members of a threatening group *and* learn about the group increasing in size, they 'warm up' to the group, and thus no longer feel threatened. This finding suggests that stories can individuate a threatening group. Narratives activate positive attitudes toward a threatening group, which then cause individuals to want a better policy outcome for the *entire group*.

There are a number of directions on which future work can build. First, it is not clear how minority groups other than African Americans might affect policy opinion. For example, would demographics about Latinos as the overrepresented group in the workforce have a similar negative effect on the respondent-set level of the minimum wage? There are a host of alternative narratives that could be explored – for example, longer narratives might have stronger positive effects.

Ultimately, this study shows that group threat directly affects policy attitudes, narratives activate positive policy attitudes, and when combined specific narratives can counteract the

effects of group threat. The more abstract that information about outgroups is, the easier it is for ingroup members to react negatively. Stories about those outgroup members personalize the entire group and can even result in calls for positive outcomes for the once-threatening group.

Appendix 1

Information provided to respondents

As you may know, employers are required to pay workers at least a certain hourly amount. This is the minimum wage. The federal government has a set minimum wage, but states can set their own minimum wage - that differs from the federal wage. Therefore, the minimum wage is different in different states. If a state has no minimum wage law or its minimum wage is lower than the federal law, workers are entitled to the federal wage.

In what follows, we will describe the conditions of the minimum wage in five different states. For each state, we will tell you:

- The current minimum wage in the state.

- The approximate demographic breakdown of minimum wage workers in the state – particularly the percentages by gender and race/ethnicity.

- For your reference, nationally, the breakdown of minimum wage workers is:

49.1%men | 50.9%women

61.3%white | 12.7%black | 26%other

- An excerpt from the national study that looked at the minimum wage in various states. These excerpts sometimes include information about the consequences for the given state of increasing the minimum wage and/or a profile of a "typical" minimum wage worker in the state (based on interviews in the state). The names used in the profiles are not real names of workers (to protect confidentiality).

- The region of the state that is projected to be most affected by an increase in the wage.

You will be presented with 6 different state situations and asked about each. The information for each state will be presented in a box format as you will see when you click to the next page. After presenting this information, we will then ask you what you think the minimum wage should be in the *particular state*—if you think there should be no minimum wage in the state, set it to 0.

Appendix 2

Heterogeneous Treatment Effects

Causal forests are a machine learning technique used to estimate the heterogeneous effects of a treatment. They are called 'forests' because they involve the use of many honest causal trees. Causal trees can be used to detect areas where the effect of the treatment on an outcome variable varies the most based on a set of selected covariates. These trees are 'honest' because they avoid overfitting the model. Individual honest causal trees are helpful for estimating heterogeneous treatment effects, but they also provide noisy estimates. Causal forests correct for this issue by reducing the variance of these causal trees by averaging across them.

There are two conditions that must be met in order to conduct honest causal forest analysis. The first condition is that all trees within the forest are built on subsamples of the training data—i.e. the training data is split. The second condition is that the outcome variable analyzed is not also included in the process of splitting the training data. Both of these conditions are met within my analysis—I do not include the state minimum wage outcome variable in the training data. I begin by analyzing the heterogeneous treatment effect of the group threat condition when blacks are overrepresented in the workforce.

Causal Forests

I fit a causal forest to the entire dataset of my conjoint design. Every individual honest tree is fitted using a bootstrap sample of half of the data. Half of this sample is used for splitting and the other half is used for estimation. I fit 5000 individual honest trees within this causal forest. This

analysis estimates the effect of the treatment on the average level of the minimum wage, based upon respondent-varying covariates.[9]

First, I present results for the variable importance for the "black overrepresented" condition. These results show which variables are the most strongly related to the effect of this condition on the state minimum wage outcome variable. Importance is scaled 0-1.

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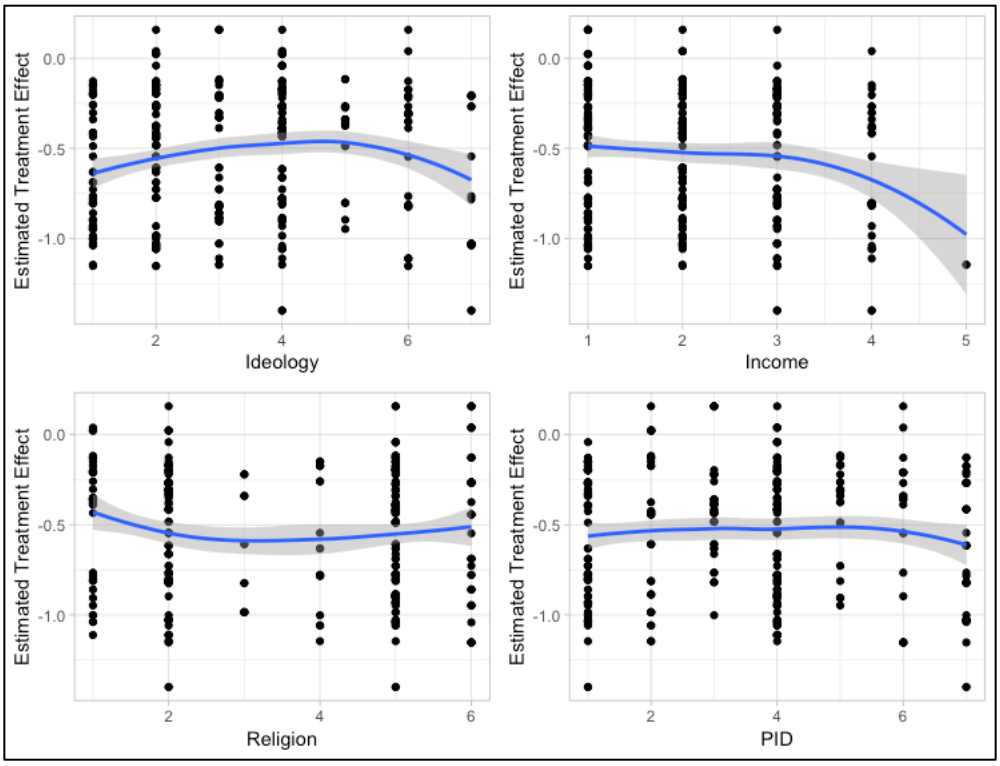
0.09129580	Race
0.05003338	Social class
0.03765242	Gender
0.02787358	Held min wage job?

The variables for ideology, income, religion, and party identification are marginally more important than all other individual-level covariates. This measure of importance, however, tells little about the relationship between the treatment and respondent-level covariates. For this reason, I plot these top four variables within Figure 4 below in order to assess how the treatment affects the outcome among different respondents—I pass a linear regression of the effect of the group threat treatment through each of the respondent varying covariates. Each dot is a single observation, and the y-axis is the estimated individual treatment effect.

[9] These variables are: Ideology, age, income, party identification, religion, race, social class, gender, and whether a respondent held a minimum wage job after the age of 21.

Figure 4



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Overall, the plots in Figure 4 show quite *homogenous* treatment effects despite the suggestion in the variable importance measure that these covariates have a stronger interaction with the treatment. As a final measure of the potential heterogeneous treatment effects of the group threat condition, I plot the predicted treatment effects in ascending order with 95% confidence intervals. This figure includes all respondent-varying covariates shown above in Table 3.

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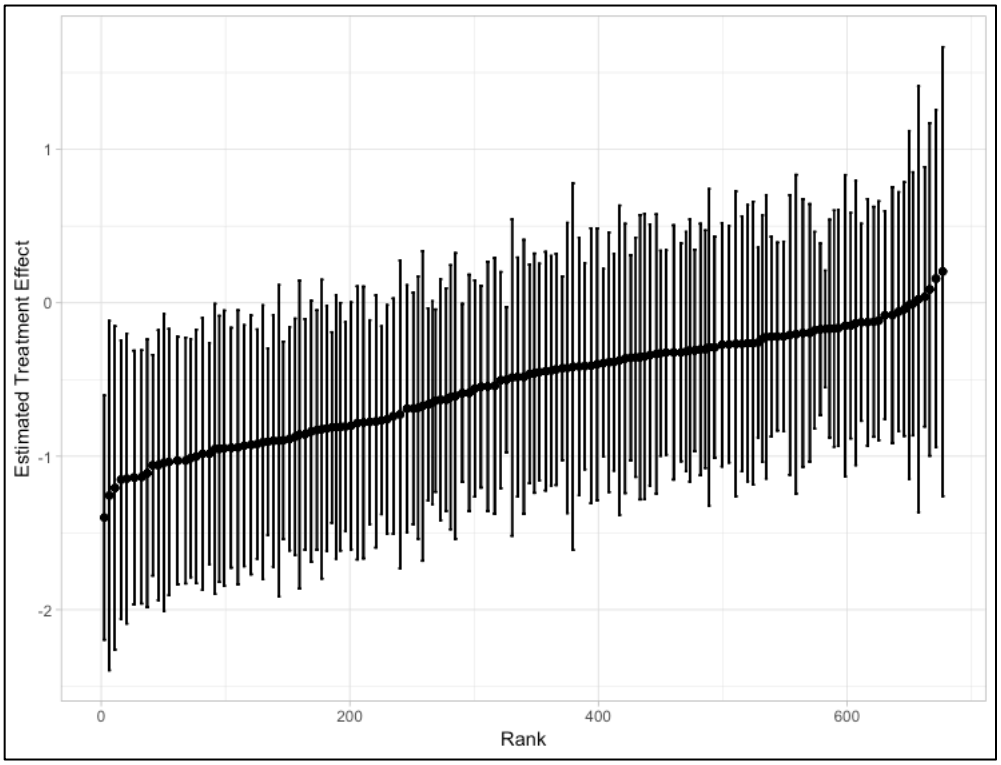
[10] The religious categories are in the following order: Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Non-religious, Other.

[11] Party identification is scaled from 1 to 7, with 1 being strong Democrat and 7 being strong Republican.

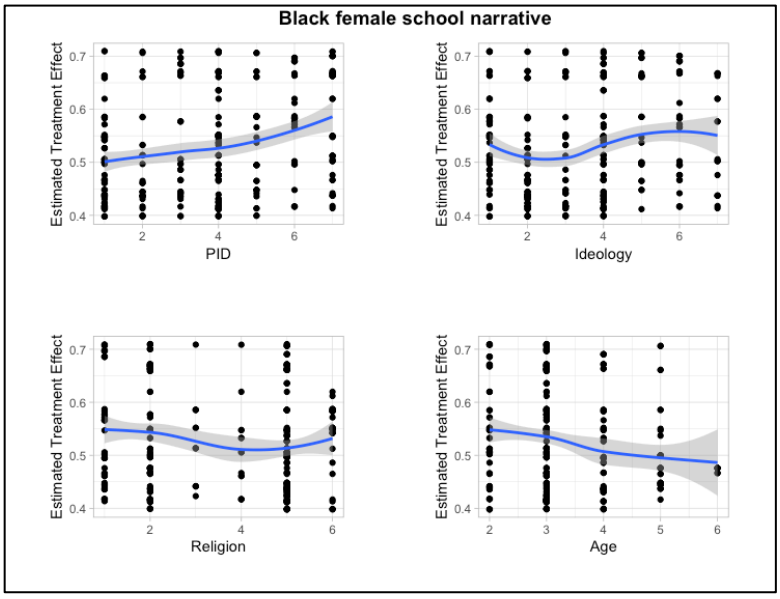
Figure 5

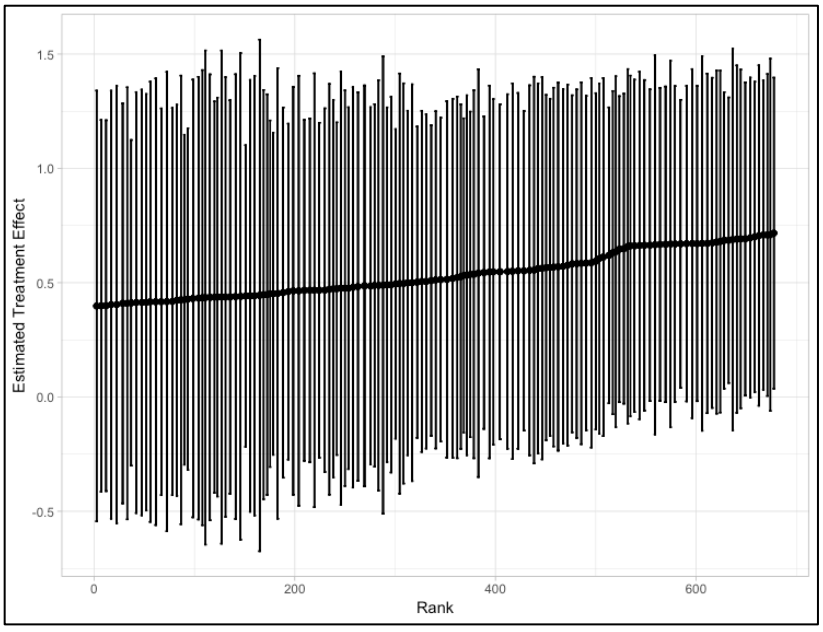


Importantly, the treatment does not have a significantly positive effect across all covariates. This result means that the group threat condition was not estimated to have a positive effect on any individual based on observables. The three narrative conditions with significant main effects on the level of the state minimum wage, similarly, have homogenous treatment effects. I show these below.

Variable importance for black female saving up for school

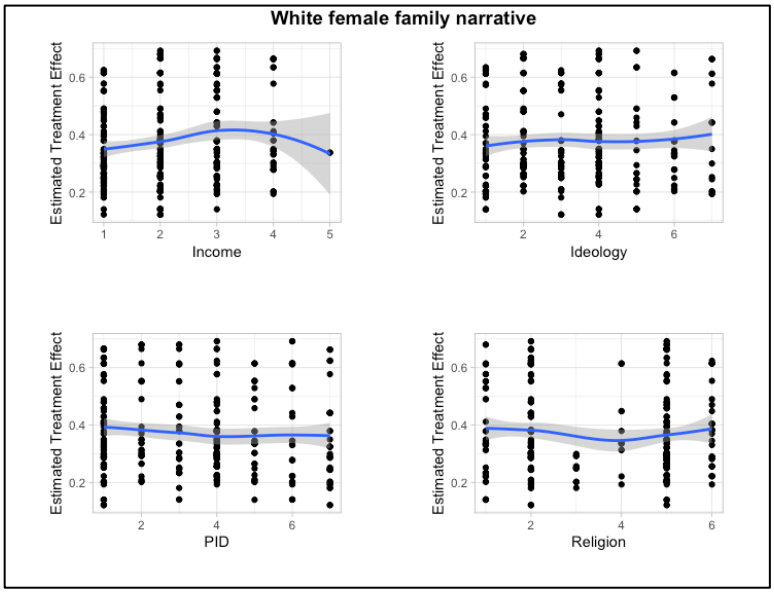
Importance	Variable
0.20213019	PID
0.16540649	Ideology
0.15140039	Religion
0.09844580	Age
0.09772600	Income
0.08920111	Race
0.06641881	Gender
0.06544600	Social Class
0.06382521	Held min wage job?

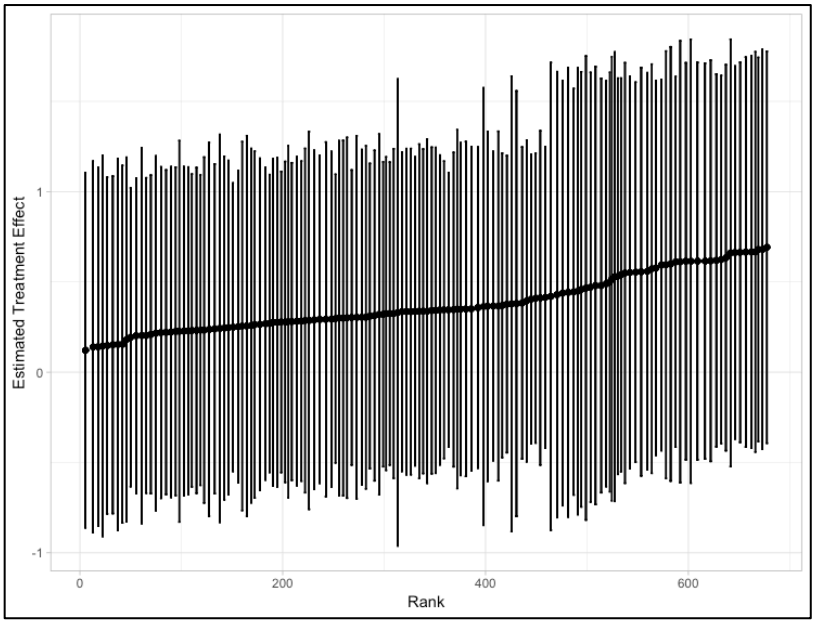




Variable importance for white female saving up for school

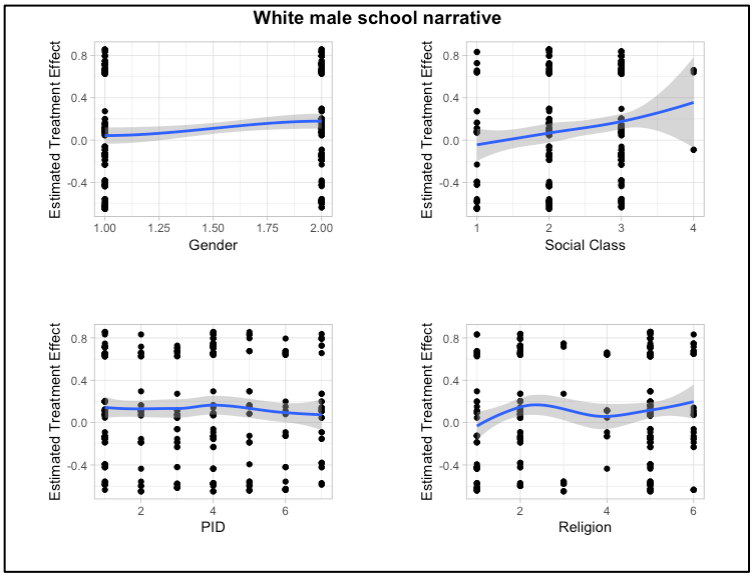
Importance	Variable
0.21655982	Income
0.16856395	Ideology
0.14336951	PID
0.13525534	Religion
0.09956422	Gender
0.07858443	Social Class
0.06928125	Age
0.06321592	Race
0.02560558	Held min wage job?

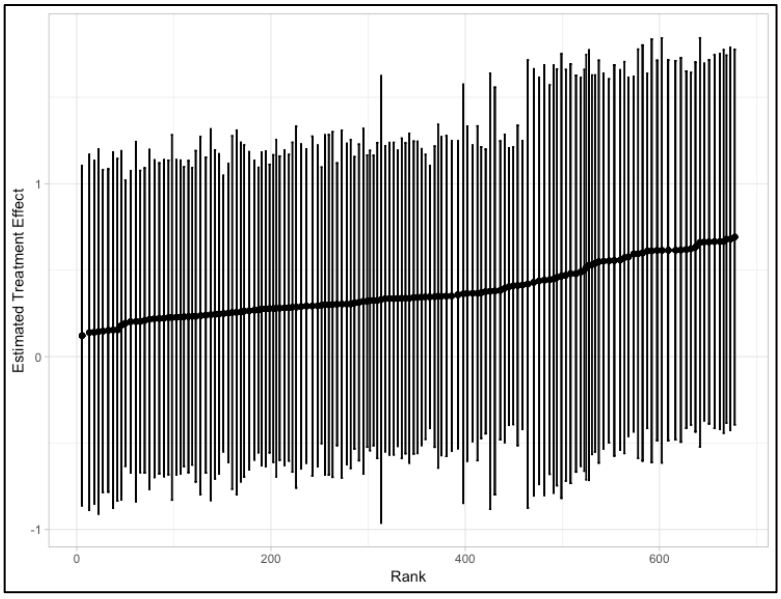




Variable importance for white male saving up for school

Importance	Variable
0.24458308	Gender
0.19940555	Social Class
0.15166875	PID
0.10672473	Ideology
0.08978329	Religion
0.08279131	Income
0.05945399	Race
0.04008952	Age
0.02549977	Held min wage job?





Chapter 3

Clear and Present Danger?

How Group Threat Shapes Salient Political Opinions and Perceptions

ABSTRACT: The U.S. population is rapidly changing with recent projections showing that soon whites will no longer be the majority. I explore whether new Census projections about a typically non-threatening racial group (i.e., Asians) generates feelings of threat among whites. I move beyond extant work on threat by testing whether it subsequently shapes salient policy attitudes and perceptions of ongoing political events, using a survey experiment-in-the-field that is embedded in a 2018 Election exit poll. I find that when whites learn this information, they feel economically threatened, are less likely believe Asian Americans face discrimination, and are more supportive of racial quotas in college admissions. Within a second experiment which replicates the first, I find, using facial recognition, that surprise is the main emotion which motivates threat. The results from these studies show that demographic projections can have immediate consequences on salient political attitudes and can be motivated by unexpected emotions.

The United States is a heterogeneous democracy. It consists of groups with diverse interests, various cultural practices, and competing political agendas. Further, these groups are not static – the population rapidly changes, with recent projections suggesting significant shifts along racial and ethnic lines: whites are expected to become a minority by the year 2045 (Frey 2018). Scholars in political science and psychology show that when this shift is made salient to the public, it can significantly affect opinions – e.g., causing whites to dislike minority groups and become more conservative (Danbold and Huo 2015; Craig and Richeson 2018b). The deleterious effects this information has on opinion coheres with group threat theory that suggests whites attitudes become increasingly negative towards growing minority groups (Blalock 1967). Previous research provides a general sense of how threat operates but has offered little explanation of how it might affect politics, more specifically policy opinions and perceptions of politics. This question is: If threat is generated, how does it affect how people think about policies and politics?

I address this question, extending work on group threat by first conducting a survey experiment-in-the-field study that shows that new immigration projections about Asians cause a particular type of group threat that coheres with stereotypes about Asians, but has not been previously shown. Also, the threat causes changes to policy attitudes and perceptions of an ongoing domestic political issue. I then, in a second study, use a laboratory experiment focused on facial recognition to show how emotion motivates the threat found in the first study.

Ultimately, the two studies provide a robust account of how demographic changes cause particular kinds of threat that can affect salient political attitudes, and also show the ways that emotion can motivate these senses of threat.

Group Threat

Group threat theory involves the challenge of a minority group to the status of a majority group (Wirth 1941). The idea is "[a] fear and suspicion that the subordinate race harbors designs on the prerogatives of the dominant race" (Blumer 1958, 4). Scholars speculate that as the size of minority groups increase, so will prejudice by the majority group. Blalock (1967) argues that these attitudes are slated to increase for two reasons: 1) due to increase in competition over scarce resources, and 2) the growing size of the minority group means that more group members that can be politically mobilized. Overall, the central point to the concept of group threat is that the threat elicited pertains to the minority group encroaching on the status of the majority group. Research on group threat has manifested in two domains: how majority groups (generally whites) react to (1) actual, or (2) perceived changes to minority groups. I discuss each in turn.

Actual Group Change

The actual or real change to the size of minority groups can significantly stimulate threat. One notable study examines how it affects the levels of prejudice towards immigrants across 12 countries in the European Economic Community (Quillian 1995). Results show that as the rate of immigration in a given country increases, so does racial and anti-immigrant prejudice. Additionally, the study shows that this rate is more predictive of prejudice than individual-level variables like race, ideology and gender.

Another significant driver of group threat is the proximity of majority groups to racial minorities. One seminal study in this domain finds that local differences in attitudes about race stem from how large and how close African American populations are to white populations. Whites who live closer to blacks have more negative attitudes toward the minority group (Fossett and Kiecolt 1989). As with the aforementioned study, race and ideology among other individual-level characteristics do little to predict differences in attitudes. Similarly, Hopkins (2010) shows

that sudden influxes of immigrants can also motivate increases in threat. Further, Enos (2016) demonstrates the converse such that group threat dissipates when minority groups move away—the sudden displacement of a large African American population causes a decrease in turnout among whites in Chicago ostensibly because the threat was removed. In sum, changes to the actual size of minority groups can activate a sense of threat among majority racial groups, and in turn has been shown to affect prejudicial behavior, attitudes towards these groups, and voter turnout.

Perceived Group Change

Aside from real changes to the size of minority groups, projections about demographic change cause people to anticipate how these changes might look, which can then generate a sense of threat. Across multiple studies, Craig and Richeson (2014a; 2014b) show that when the projected racial demographic shift in 2050[12] – whites will become a minority, and minority groups will become the majority – is made salient, white American opinion becomes more politically conservative. Similar effects have been shown in the context of the 2016 presidential election (Major, Blodorn, and Major Blascovich 2018). In that study, when whites learn of the increasing size of racial minorities, they become more concerned about the declining status of whites, as well as more supportive of Donald Trump and restrictive immigration policies. Projected changes to group size have also been shown to decrease support for diversity (Danbold and Huo 2015) and more support for the Tea Party (Willer, Feinberg, and Wetts 2016).

While much has been shown about the effects of demographic changes on various forms of opinion – including ideology, voter turnout, vote choice, and attitudes towards immigrants – little attention has been given to what type of threat is operating or how different groups might

[12] 2050 was the projected date at the time of the publication. It has since been decreased to 2045.

generate different types of threat. On this lack of scholarly attention, in a review of the projected threat literature Craig and Richeson (2018, 191) write,

> "While extant research has found clear evidence that white Americans perceive anticipated demographic change as a threat to their dominant status, the conditions under which different threats (e.g., status, realistic, symbolic, cultural) may be activated by different demographic changes and the subsequent consequences of these different types of threats have been largely unexplored."

Further, we know little about whether these types of threat have downstream effects on specific policy attitudes that are not directly connected to the groups (i.e. non-immigration attitudes) and perceptions of ongoing political events. I aim to fill these gaps – by exploring various types of threat and its impact on policy attitudes and perceptions.

Threat Types

First, economic threat involves the perception of the direct fiscal harm a minority group can pose, either to one's own pocketbook or to the economy as a whole (Citrin et al. 1997; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004). For example, one might feel economically threatened by an immigrant group that is perceived to be job competition. Thus, competition over scarce resources is what motivates economic threat.

Second, cultural threat involves the perception that a group poses harm to what it means to be American (Newman, Hartman, and Taber 2012). An individual who feels culturally threatened might worry that an increase in non-English speaking immigrants will decrease the amount English spoken in the U.S., and thereby alter their way of life. Control over cultural influence motivates cultural threat. Within previous studies, this sentiment has often been referred to as 'status threat' (Mutz 2018).

Third, political threat is the perception that a group will have a negative effect upon the political system (Hawley 2011). Following from Blalock (1967), political threat is a sense of threat about the increasing political mobilization capacity of a growing minority group. As minority groups increase in size, more can mobilize for the sake of their own causes, which will in turn diminish the political influence of the majority group.

The Present Study

In this study, I investigate reactions to changes in immigration along the aforementioned threat dimensions. I look at how whites react to recent Census projections about Asian immigration. These projections show that Asians are the fastest increasing immigrant group and will be the largest immigrant group in the coming decades. Prior work suggests perceptions of Asian immigrants will be non-threatening because they help the economy and enrich American culture (Hood and Morris 2000; Ha 2010). I take a different track for two reasons. First, I expect the projections will increase the sense of threat not previously shown. Second, Asian immigrants will be shown to affect only precise types of threat and thus prior work has missed this by not differentiating types of threat.

I expect that when whites learn of this Census information they will feel more *economically* threatened. I anticipate that stereotypes about Asians as the model minority (Maddux et al. 2008) will be generalized outward to the group which will generate economic threat. This is to say, Asians will be perceived as high-achieving and therefore a threat to available jobs especially as their number grows.

I expect that whites who learn about Asian immigration will *not* feel more culturally threatened by Asians because, in line with the model minority stereotype, they are perceived to no encroach on the dominant American culture (Lin et al. 2005; Maddux et al. 2008). Also, based upon stereotypes of Asians, I anticipate that whites who learn of their increasing size will

not feel more politically threatened. Stereotypes of Asians are that they tend to be a less politically oriented minority group (Jo 1984; Lee, Wong, and Alvarez 2009). These expectations for the three types of threat lead to my first hypothesis:

> H_1 When whites learn of a projected growth in Asian immigration, they will become economically, but not culturally or politically threated, relative to those who do not learn of the growth, all else constant.[13]

I anticipate that these senses of threat will motivate negative attitudes towards related groups – both Asians in general and immigrants. This expectation is supported by the existing literature that shows that negative sentiment which comes from threat leads to negative evaluations of immigrants (Hood and Morris 1997; Alba, Rumbaut, and Marotz 2005; Brader, Valentino, and Suhay 2008). I expect that threat will also spillover into attitudes about related groups. A sense of threat will lead to negative evaluations of both Asian Americans and immigrants in general:

> H_2 When whites learn of a projected growth in Asian immigration, they will express more negative feelings towards Asian Americans and immigrants, all else constant.

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[13] The hypotheses and design are preregistered in the following link: https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=t77i7c

Downstream Effects of Threat

As mentioned, researchers have identified the effects of group threat on ideology (Major, Blodorn, and Blascovich 2018; Craig and Richeson 2018a), racial attitudes (Danbold and Huo 2015), and perceptions of discrimination toward whites (Craig and Richeson 2018c). However, we know little about whether group threat *also* affects how people think about salient political issues or perceptions of discrimination. This is important since immigration may have the potential to not just shape threat and ideology, but also spillover into policy domains and basic perceptions of ongoing events. Put another way, demographic changes can fundamentally change how people view seemingly unrelated political events, thereby accentuating the vast potential impact of such changes.

What policies and perceptions are affected depend on the contemporary context that links the groups to policies. In my case, the relevant policies concern a controversial court case. In 2015, a group of Asian American students who were denied admission to Harvard University filed a lawsuit alleging discrimination. The group cites evidence that Asian American applicants were limited admission because of their race – an illegal practice (Gluckman 2018; Hartocollis 2018). They assert that a quota was set for the number of Asian American students admitted, which the Supreme Court has ruled to be unconstitutional, as it violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (Sedler 1977; Seeger 2015). Hereafter, I will call this case the "Harvard lawsuit."

I investigate the effect of threat on two elements that are pertinent to the Harvard lawsuit. The first element captures perceptions of discrimination within the Harvard lawsuit, namely the idea that Asian Americans have been discriminated against in university admissions. The second element addresses a discriminatory policy that in this case is the use of racial quotas in admissions.

I argue that group threat will alter perceptions of discrimination toward Asian Americans in university admissions for reasons related to motivated reasoning. Motivated reasoning theory suggests that people view ambiguous events in ways that cohere with their standing beliefs (Druckman and Bolsen 2011; Kunda 1990; Taber and Lodge 2006). The Census information about the increase in Asian immigrants will cause whites to feel threatened by Asians. This, in turn, will make them less sympathetic to Asian Americans (per hypothesis 2, who they will associate with Asian immigrants), and less likely to perceive that they experienced discrimination in the Harvard lawsuit. In short, threat from Asians will cause whites to be less likely to believe the group suffers hardships and thus less perceptive of discrimination towards the group. This leads to my third hypothesis:

> H_3 When whites learn of a projected growth in Asian immigration, they will become less perceptive of claims that Asians face discrimination in the Harvard lawsuit, all else constant.

Lastly, I expect that whites who learn about the projected growth of Asians will become more willing to support discriminatory policy, so as to reduce the threat. In this case the discriminatory policy is setting a quota on the number of Asians admitted to university. This is an ironic prediction – the increased threat and concomitant dislike or fear causes a perception of less discrimination (i.e., a less liked group is not facing hardship), but at the same time more accepting if such discrimination is taking place (i.e., it is acceptable to discriminate against a threatening group as that may vitiate threat). My fourth hypothesis is:

H_4 When whites learn of a projected growth in Asian immigration, they will become more supportive of policy that discriminates against the group, all else constant.

To test these hypotheses, I use a unique survey experiment-in-the-field design.

Study 1

To test my hypotheses, I embed an experiment within an exit poll. My reason behind the implementation of this study as an exit poll is twofold: 1) I wanted politically active participants since these are ones whose policy views have the most immediate relevance, but also makes it a harder test since engaged people typically have stronger opinions and thus harder to move; and 2) I wanted to test opinion of people who might be the most immediately affected by an increase in Asian immigrants. The first reason explains why I implemented this study as an exit poll, the second reason explains why I chose the location, which I discuss in more detail below.

In terms of the procedure, first respondents filled out the poll with general questions about their local election. Then, in the final pages of the survey, they encounter the experiment. This design consists of two groups: a treatment and control. Both groups receive the same question about immigration that asks which group they think to be the fastest increasing immigrant group (for the full instrument see Appendix 1). After answering the question, the treatment group turns over the page and receive the correct answer that, per a recent Census report, Asians are the fastest increasing immigrant group. After receiving this stimulus, they then move on to the main outcome measures. The control group simply turns the page and moves on to the main outcomes. These main outcome measures are a battery for different types of group threat, feeling thermometers for different groups, and measures for attitudes about the Harvard lawsuit, and racial quotas. The battery for types of group threat is comprised of measures for

cultural, political and economic threat, thereby testing for H1. The feeling thermometers measure attitudes toward Asian Americans, immigrants among other racial groups, testing for H2. To test for H3-H4, I measure perceptions of discrimination against Asian Americans in the Harvard lawsuit (H3), and support for racial quotas in university admissions (H4).

Participants

I collected these data in Northbrook, Illinois over the course of two weeks during the Midterm Elections in 2018 from October 22, 2018 to November 6, 2018.[14] I chose this town because the population fits the parameters of the project well. The population consists of whites as the majority racial group and Asians as nearly the only minority racial group. The level of enculturation of diversity in Northbrook creates a baseline for the level of Asians among white residents.[15]

In total, 332 people participated. Below, in Table 1 are the demographics of the sample – along ethnicity and race, these demographics are nearly representative of Northbrook (See Appendix 2 for Northbrook demographics).

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[14] To conduct this study, I hired a team of pollsters who were deployed during early voting and on Election Day 100 feet away from the polling station and asked individuals leaving the station if they would like to participate in a study. Participants were told that the survey would be anonymous, that they could skip any questions, and that they would receive a $5 Amazon gift card for participation

[15] Previous studies have shown that when there is a sudden influx of immigrants, whites will feel a greater sense of threat (Clark 1992; Berry et al. 1997; Oliver and Wong 2003; Hopkins 2009; Newman 2013). Here, I am testing if population *projections* will have a similar effect on white attitudes – an area that has previously gone understudied.

Table 1

Gender (n = 309)	60% female 39% male 1% other
Ethnicity/Race (n = 306)	94% White; 0% African American; 4% Asian American; 1% Hispanic; 0.5% Native American; 0.5% Other
Age (n = 310)	6% 18-24; 7% 25-34; 23% 35-50; 32% 51-65; 32% Over 65
Income (n = 280)	1% < $30,000; 13% $30,000-$69,999; 15% $70,000-$99,999; 36% $100,000-$200,000; 35% Over $200,000
Education (highest level) (n = 311)	1% Less than high school 3% High School; 11% Some College; 32% 4 Year College Degree; 53% Advanced Degree
Party Identification (n = 306)	49% Strong Democrat; 7% Weak Democrat; 16% Independent leans Democrat; 12% Independent; 7% Independent leans Republican; 4.6% Weak Republican; 4.4% Strong Republican

Issue Salience

Importantly, the issue of the Harvard lawsuit was at its most salient when this study was fielded. According to Google searches nationally (Figure 1) and within the state of Illinois (Figure 2), the issue was at its most salient around the same point the experiment was fielded—the y-axis represents popularity based upon the number of Google searches.[16] Similarly, "Asian lawsuit" and "Harvard university Asian lawsuit" all spike in popularity within the same week. Given

[16] Google searches are a more helpful measure of both salience of an issue and interest in it than the frequency of it in media (Epstein and Segal 2000) because these searches identify information-seeking behavior. These data provide insight into how often the public searches information, rather than how often they are provided with the information (which is what frequency in media demonstrates).

these results, interest in this case spiked at the exact same time this study was fielded. As such, it is safe to say the salience of the issue, among the general public and within the state of Illinois was at its height when this study was conducted.

Figure 1

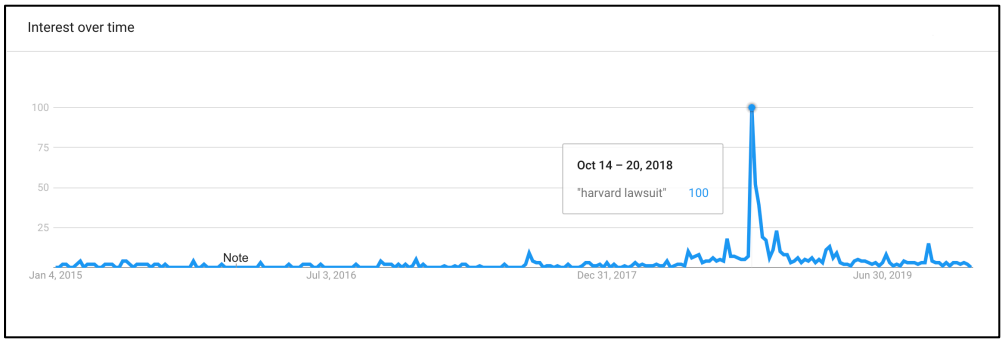
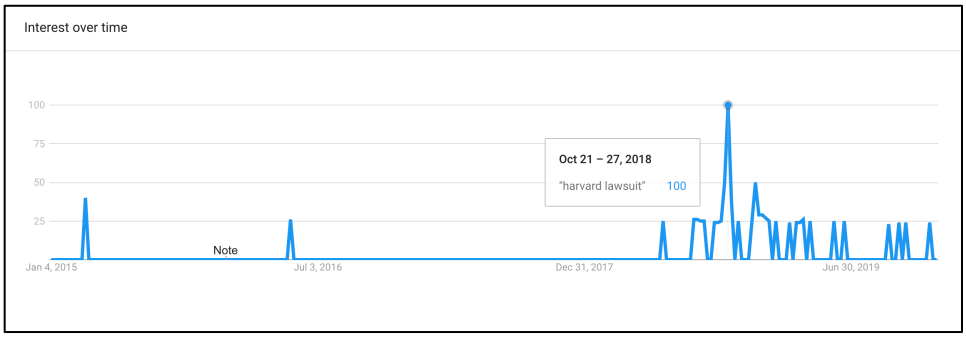


Figure 2

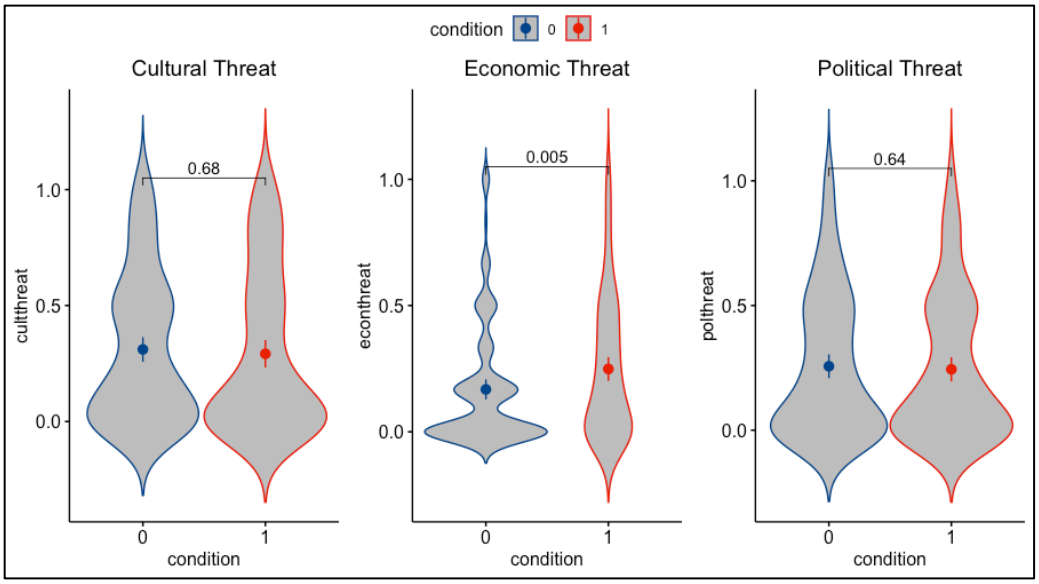


Results

I focus my analyses on white respondents only, to assess majority group opinion. This excludes 6% of the sample. Figures 3-5 present these analyses. I start with Hypothesis 1 that predicts the projected increase in the U.S. Asian immigrant population will generate feelings of economic threat, but not more cultural or political threat.[17]

[17] In the figures below, the p-values are at the margin between the two violin plots.

Figure 3



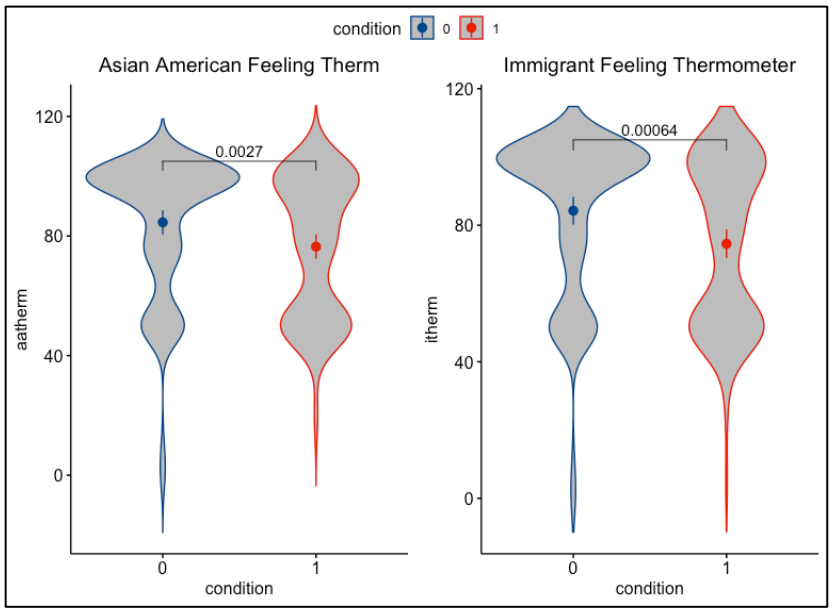
Shown above are violin plots that display the distribution of reported types of threat for treatment and control groups, as well as the p-value for one-tailed difference-in-means tests. There is a significant difference between the control and treatment groups for the economic threat measure (8 percentage point increase in threat). Also, the distribution of the groups is clearly different – the treatment group reports a higher and more consistent level of economic threat, as evidenced by the wider midpoint of the plot. Difference-in-means tests yield insignificant differences for political and cultural threat, and moreover the plots for both measures are visually identical.

These findings support for Hypothesis 1 across the three measures of threat. Specifically, information about Asians being the fastest increasing immigrant group generates economic threat. That the threat is entirely economic is sensible in light of stereotypes about Asians as the "model minority" (Lin et al. 2005; Lee, Wong, and Alvarez 2009; Mayeda 1999; Maddux et al. 2008). Whites often view the stereotypical Asian person as highly intelligent and productive, yet also apolitical and culturally reclusive (Jo 1984; Lien et al. 2001).

As far as I am aware, this is the first demonstration of Asians, as a group, generating threat among whites. Given that Asian immigrants have often been theorized to be non-threatening, this finding shows that projections about minority group growth could be what generates threat – not the status of the group. Thus, projections about minority groups growing could increase threat *regardless* of the particular group. The finding also confirms that projections of group growth among an enculturated locale has a similar effect of generating threat among whites. More specifically, in particular locales, group threat is not limited to changes to an actual minority group size. When an area is diverse, and whites have a baseline level of a minority group, *projections* about that group increasing cause a sense of threat similar to actual increases to that group.

Figure 4 below shows significant differences between treatment and control groups' reported feeling for Asian Americans and immigrants, evidenced by the statistically significant p-values ($p < 0.01$) and the differences in distributions in side-by-side comparisons. The Census report information causes significantly colder feelings toward Asians (8 percentage points colder) and immigrants (17 percentage points colder). This provides clear support for the Hypothesis 2, which is that threat causes whites to react negatively toward related groups.

Figure 4



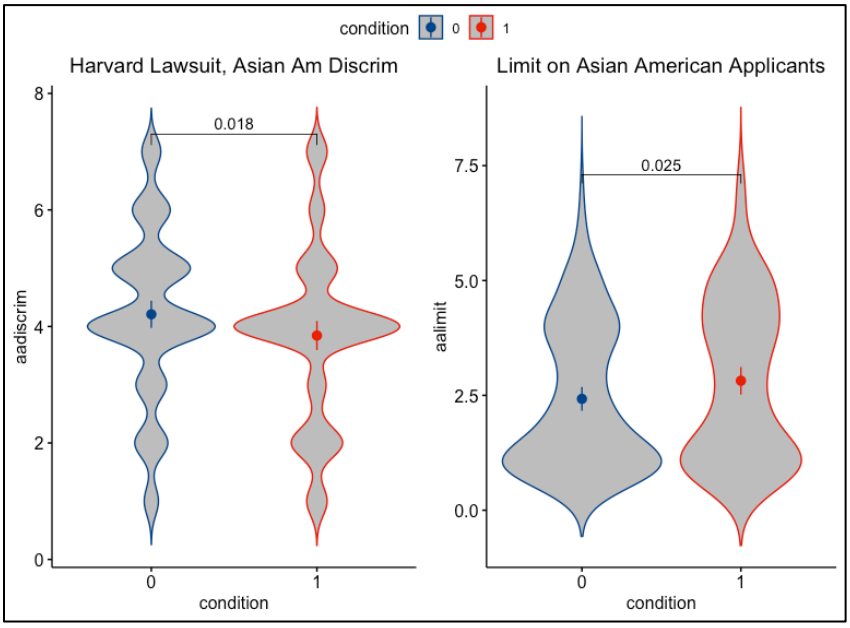
Projected growth of Asian immigrants causes whites to react more negatively toward Asian Americans. Whites who receive the treatment react, on average, 8 percentage points colder toward Asian Americans.[18] This shows that people clearly connect the two groups, which is in line with previous studies showing Asian Americans are perceived as "perpetually foreign" (Cheryan and Monin 2005; Huynh, Devos, and Smalarz 2011). This finding has important implications for tolerance and attitudes towards Asians. The two groups are not only perceived as one-in-the-same, but also negative attitudes generated about one also affect attitudes about the other.

As tests of my final three hypotheses (H3-H4), Figure 5 below compares control and treatment groups for perceptions of the lawsuit and attitudes about discrimination. Respondents that receive information from the Census report become significantly *less* supportive of the idea that Asian Americans were discriminated against in the Harvard lawsuit (p-value = 0.018, 6

[18] Also, in line with Hypothesis 2, the Census report information causes whites to feel colder towards immigrants – by nearly 10 percentage points.

percentage point decrease in support). Moreover, they become more supportive of racial quotas set on Asian American college applicants ($p < 0.01$, 7 percentage point increase in support).

Figure 5



Here, I confirm my expectation (H3) about perceptions of discrimination – that the threat from the Census information would motivate the idea that Asian Americans are *not* being discriminated against in college admissions. This reveals that group threat can change interpretations of ongoing events *and* perceptions of how groups are treated – likely because people form negative evaluations of the group that is discussed and that shapes their perspective. The precise dynamic entails people feeling more economically threatened due to the immigration influx, then engaging in motivated reasoning and perceiving college admissions as less liable for discrimination against Asian Americans. Bear in mind also that, when this study was fielded, the issue of the Harvard lawsuit was at peak salience. So, these results demonstrate that attitudes on a *salient* issue about discrimination are affected by threat. As far as I know, this is the first demonstration of how demographic changes can alter perceptions of ongoing political events.

If group threat alters whites' perceptions of discrimination, then they might also be less supportive of claims from the minority group that members are being discriminated against. In this way, threat would change whites' sense of empathy. Moreover, the operation of threat could also motivate more discriminatory behavior because whites would be less prone to see their own actions toward the group as discriminatory. Regarding active discrimination toward Asian Americans, I find support for attitudes about this with my confirmation of Hypothesis 4.

Perhaps the most intriguing result from the policy-oriented questions is on support for a racial quota in university admissions. Information from the Census report significantly increases support for the idea of *limiting* Asian college applicants by nearly 7 percentage points. Importantly, racial quotas in university admissions have long been illegal, yet demographic change still increase the support for this policy among whites who are primarily Democratic leaning, highly educated, and wealthy.

The logic of this finding, though troubling, is straightforward. When whites feel threatened by Asian immigrants because of their increasing numbers, and as a means to mitigate that threat become more supportive of policy that is perceived to curtail the threat. Coupling this finding with the measure of perceptions of discrimination, I show that group threat can both relax the extent that people perceive discrimination against minority groups and at the same time motivate them to become more supportive of policies that do discriminate against a threatening minority group.

Overall, these results have multiple important implications. First, they show that Asian immigration generates *one* particular type of group threat. This is important for the understanding of how threat operates based upon racial and ethnic groups. Second, this mundane, yet threatening information from the Census report can also affect attitudes about discrimination.

More specifically, it reduces perceptions of discrimination against the threatening group *and* increases support for policy that directly discriminates against the threatening group. These results are significant for our understanding of how threat can alter attitudes, but they cannot provide insight into *how* the Census information is generating threat. To test for this, namely the emotional motivations behind threat, next I replicate study 1 with a behavioral measure for emotion.

Study 2: How Emotion Motivates Threat

Emotion is central to the study of threat, as particular emotions motivate senses of threat. Studies that have analyzed emotions, so far, have only focused upon negative valence emotions – namely anger and anxiety (Huddy et al. 2005; Brader, Valentino, and Suhay 2008). I find qualitative evidence from the implementation of survey experiment-in-the-field as well as from follow-up interviews that emotion, and more particularly surprise, motivate reactions to the Census report information.

Respondents who received the treatment were observed to exclaim surprise with statements like, "Wow, that is interesting." It is understandable that this feeling is generated from the report because the information is novel and unexpected, and therefor surprises people exposed to the information. The conception that Asians are the fastest increasing immigrant group sits in contrast to current stereotypes about the size of different immigrant groups. This evidence from the field suggests that surprise is what ultimately motivated the sense of economic threat.

In order to systematically test how emotion, and particularly surprise, motivates threat among other key outcome measures, I replicate study 1 in a lab setting while also behaviorally measuring for automatically expressed emotions. I test the following three hypotheses which follow from the results found in study 1:

H_1 People who express surprise about the Census information will feel more economically threatened.

H_2 People who express surprise about the Census information will be less likely to agree that Asian Americans have been discriminated against within the Harvard lawsuit.

H_3 People who express surprise about the Census information will be more supportive of the quota set on Asian American college applicants.

Procedure

Participants in this study completed it entirely on a computer. They entered the lab room and were assigned to one of ten available laptops. Each computer was equipped with a camera, which participants were instructed to turn on before beginning the study. These recordings were used to capture the emotional expressions on participants faces as they completed the study, and namely their reactions to the Census information. Through the use of embedded timers in the survey, as well as the two-step nature of the treatment[19], I am able to identify the exact moment when respondents receive this information. I then capture this moment and analyze the expressed emotion using facial recognition.

I use the Microsoft Azure API for "Perceived emotion recognition" to analyze the facial reactions of respondents. This machine learning model uses twenty-seven different points on human faces (position and muscle structure) to detect different attributes of the face, and thereby provide an estimate for the emotion expressed on a person's face. The output for emotion using this measure provides a list of various emotions with an estimated confidence score for each emotion, ranging from 0 (no confidence in that given emotion) to 1 (complete confidence). The

[19] Recall that respondents assigned the treatment are asked "Which immigrant group is the fastest increasing group?", then click onto the next page to receive the answer from the Census report.

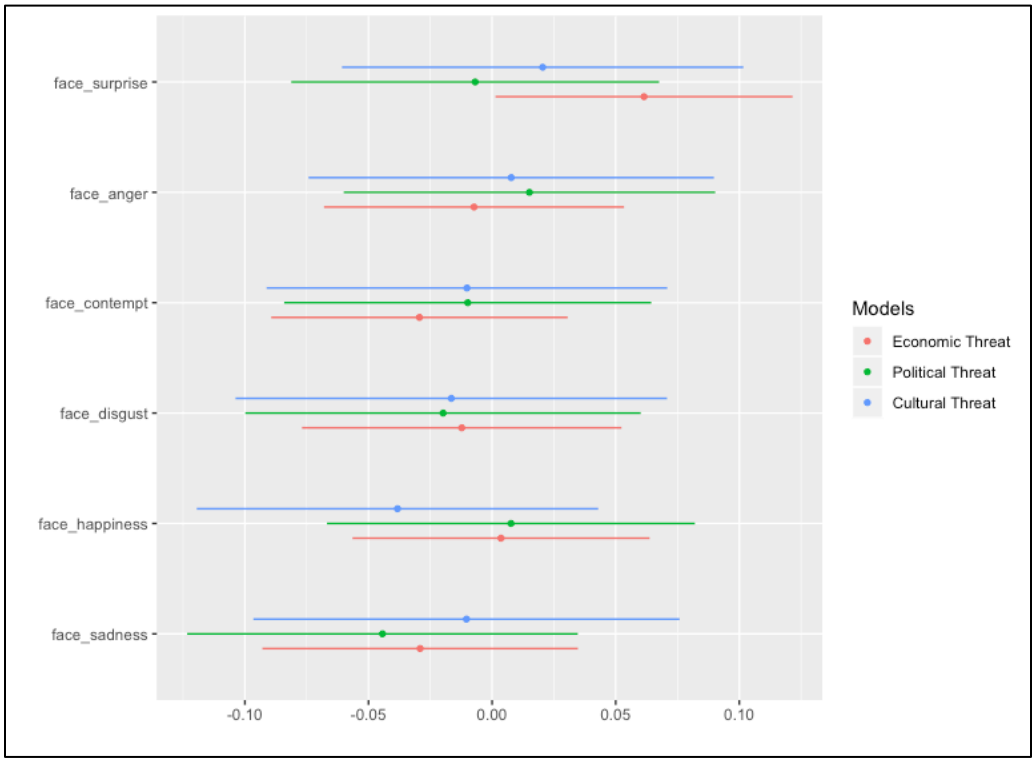
emotions that are returned are anger, contempt, happiness, sadness, surprise, disgust and neutral (baseline).

In order to acquire a robust measure of emotion, I identify the two second period when respondents react to the treatment, capture them in 0.5 second intervals which provides me with 4 observations per respondent, analyze each of those images using the facial recognition technique described above, then average across the four observations for a composite score. In order to make a more direct comparison with study 1 in terms of demographics, I limit the sample to wealthy (parents' income > $100,000) white respondents.

Results

I use linear regression across all tests of my hypotheses. All analyses that follow regress the outcome variable of interest on the measures of facially expressed emotions, thereby assessing the role of facially expressed emotion in senses of threat, perceptions of discrimination in the Harvard lawsuit, and support for the racial quota on Asian American applicants. First, in Figure 6, I show how facially expressed emotion affects the three measures of group threat from study 1 (i.e. economic, political, and cultural threat).

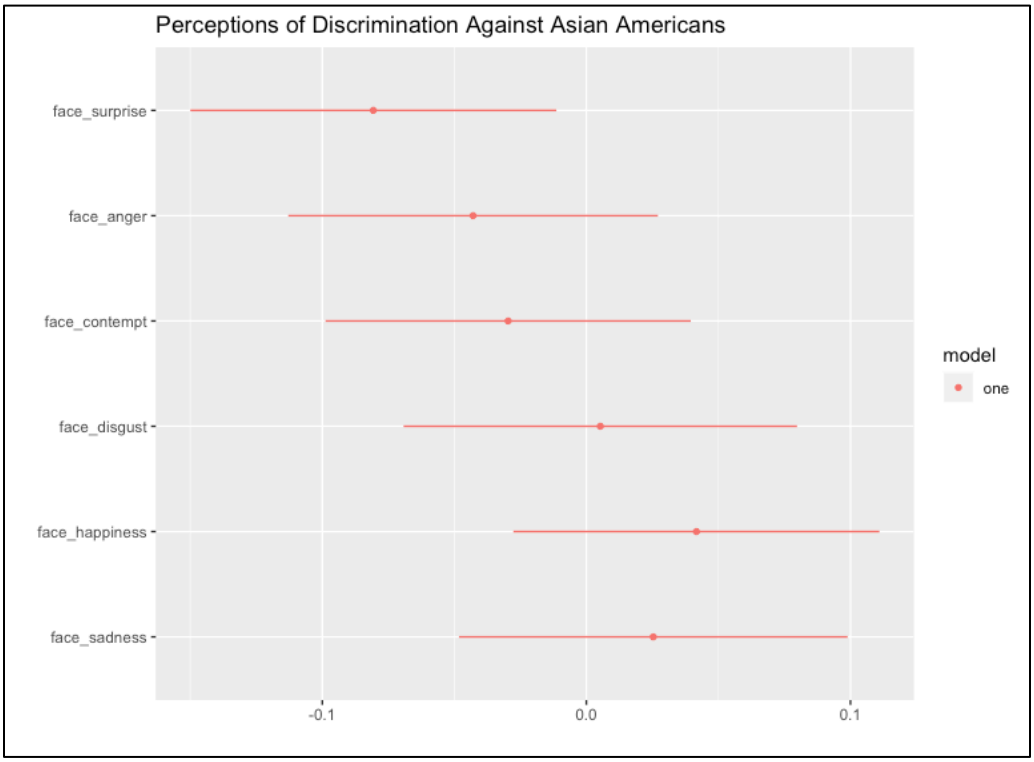
Figure 6



Across the six emotions that are facially expressed, surprise is the only emotion that has a significant effect on economic threat ($p = 0.045$). In other words, people who were surprised by the Census report information felt significantly more economically threatened. Interestingly, negative emotions like anger and contempt *do not* cause a greater sense of threat along any of the 3 dimensions I measure which could be explained in one of two ways. One explanation is that the Census information did not generate a great amount of anger or contempt, and therefor was not a critical emotion within senses of threat. Another explanation is that, when accounting for other emotions, anger and contempt do not explain threat as well as the others. Both of these explanations are plausible and deserve further investigation in future studies.

Next, I test the effect of emotion of perceptions of discrimination against Asian Americans within Harvard lawsuit in Figure 7.

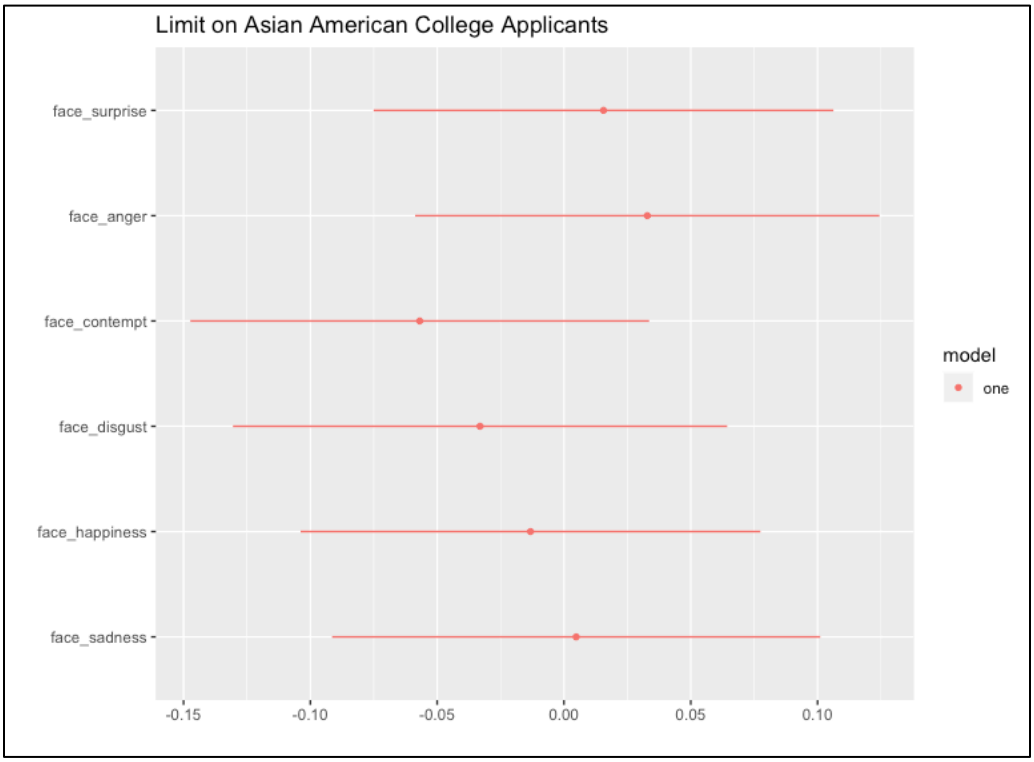
Figure 7



As shown above, those who feel surprised about the Census information, are also more likely to perceive that Asian Americans have *not* been discriminated against ($p = 0.0228$), which confirms hypothesis 2. This finding is important because it corroborates the mechanism in the previous finding as well as the findings in study 1. That is, surprise is likely the emotion which causes *more* threat and *reduces* senses of discrimination against the threatening group.

Lastly, to test hypothesis 3, use linear regression to test what emotions motivate support for the racial quota set on Asian American applicants (Figure 8).

Figure 8



I find no significant effects of any emotion on support for the racial quota set on Asian American college applicants. I do not confirm hypothesis 3, and as such I am unable to substantively say that emotion motivates how people think about the racial quota.

Conclusion

There are a number of important implications from these results. First, I show that group threat relates closely to the social proximity of groups. Up to this point, Asian immigration has been assumed to be non-threatening to whites, but I show that among wealthy whites who could stereotypically view Asians immigrants as competition, threat can also be generated. This is the first demonstration of Asian immigration generating threat among whites as Asians are generally assumed to be a nonthreatening minority group.

Similarly, my findings show that attention to detail is necessary in the study of group threat. I find that wealthy whites *only* feel more economically threatened by Asian immigration. Identifying the types of threat that other minority groups generate can help to define how these

threats are evoked *and* can also provide future pathways to mitigate the effects of these perceived threats.

The temporal and demographic context in which study 1 was conducted is also central to its importance. Concerning timing, the issue of the Harvard lawsuit was at its most salient when the survey experiment-in-the-field was conducted. I show that group threat can directly affect issue positions at their most salient, which is important because salient issues are also considered to be at their most stable. Equally important, the issue of the Harvard lawsuit has only tangential relation to Asian immigration. Here I am showing that demographic projections can affect domestic policy issues in ways that are unexpected and have previously not been theorized.

In study 1, the effect of group threat on the sample is critical to how we understand politics. For one, it is primarily Democratic and affluent. Democrats generally support immigration more and are more positive toward immigrants than are Republicans (Jones 2019). The activation of group threat among this sample, despite this positive predisposition toward immigrants calls into question the extent to which white Democrats support immigration and are positive toward immigrants.

The implications concerning the participatory dimension of this sample cannot be overstated. Every single participant in study 1 was an active voter – because the experiment was embedded within an exit poll. This has implications for both how we think about attitudinal change among voters and how elite messaging about demographic change might affect these attitudes. First, we know for certain that voters are likely more politically knowledgeable than nonvoters (Plutzer 2002). Despite this political knowledge, threat *still* significantly alters their political attitudes in robust ways and has downstream effects on how they think about salient issues. Second, the information that turned out to be threatening to these voters was only

mundane information that came from the U.S. Census report. In other words, it was not affectively framed to cause a sense of threat. Not only does this call to the politicization of the Census, but also suggests that elite messaging about these coming demographic changes that use more menacing language could further alter salient attitudes.

In study 2, I show that surprise elicited from demographic change can motivate group threat as well as attitudes about discrimination against the threatening group. These findings have implications for how we think about emotion motivating threat particularly. So far, only anger and anxiety have been shown to be emotions which generate greater senses of threat. Unlike those emotions, surprise does not have a negative valence. Instead, it is more positively oriented. Despite this orientation, I still find that it generates threat. Given this finding, more attention ought to be paid to the relation of positive emotions and threat.

The immediate and unexpected effects of demographic change on salient attitudes that I find are consequential for American electoral politics, namely how politics are subject to change as demographics change. As the US undergoes rapid racial and ethnic changes, group threat can clearly alter how people think about current politics, and it may thereby change the political landscape.

Appendix 1 – Instrument

Which immigrant population do you think has been the fastest growing in the U.S. over the past six years?

Latin American Asian European African Northern American Oceanian Other

Treatment

Interestingly, the correct answer to the prior question is Asian – this was confirmed by a recent U.S. census report. That report also projects that Asian immigrants will be the largest immigrant population in 2040. This is a population that also tends to be more educated than other immigrant populations.

Do feel cold or warm toward the following groups? Use a scale of 0 to 100 where 0 is very cold, 50 is neutral, and 100 is very warm. You can use any number between 0 to 100.

Blacks:____ Whites:____ Latinos:____ Asians:____ Immigrants:____

To what extent do you agree with the following statement, "I fear that in 40 years' time, it won't be clear what it means to be American"?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Definitely DISagree			*Not Sure*			*Definitely Agree*

To what extent do you agree with the following statement, "Immigration is likely to have a negative financial impact on many Americans"?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Definitely DISagree			*Not Sure*			*Definitely Agree*

To what extent do you agree with the following statement, "Immigration is likely to have a negative impact on my political party"?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Definitely DISagree			*Not Sure*			*Definitely Agree*

You may have heard of ongoing lawsuits against some elite colleges (e.g., Harvard, Yale). The suits claim that the schools discriminate against Asian Americans by holding them to higher standards. From what you know, do you think some elite schools have discriminated against Asian Americans?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Definitely NOT Discriminated			*Not Sure*			*Definitely Discriminated*

Should colleges be allowed to put a limit on the number of Asian Americans accepted?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Definitely do NOT allow limits			*Not Sure*			*Definitely Allow Limits*

Do you oppose or support affirmative action programs in higher education – where schools can use race or ethnicity in admissions decisions?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Oppose			*Not Sure*			*Strongly Support*

Appendix 2 – Northbrook gender and age demographics

Subject	Number	Percent
SEX AND AGE		
Total population	33,170	100.0
Under 5 years	1,488	4.5
5 to 9 years	2,183	6.6
10 to 14 years	2,494	7.5
15 to 19 years	2,184	6.6
20 to 24 years	1,071	3.2
25 to 29 years	824	2.5
30 to 34 years	951	2.9
35 to 39 years	1,619	4.9
40 to 44 years	2,231	6.7
45 to 49 years	2,616	7.9
50 to 54 years	2,846	8.6
55 to 59 years	2,781	8.4
60 to 64 years	2,436	7.3
65 to 69 years	1,929	5.8
70 to 74 years	1,590	4.8
75 to 79 years	1,380	4.2
80 to 84 years	1,242	3.7
85 years and over	1,305	3.9
Median age (years)	48.0	(X)
16 years and over	26,448	79.7
18 years and over	25,361	76.5
21 years and over	24,652	74.3
62 years and over	8,885	26.8
65 years and over	7,446	22.4
Male population	15,865	47.8
Under 5 years	747	2.3
5 to 9 years	1,094	3.3
10 to 14 years	1,299	3.9
15 to 19 years	1,144	3.4
20 to 24 years	572	1.7
25 to 29 years	456	1.4
30 to 34 years	457	1.4
35 to 39 years	732	2.2
40 to 44 years	1,049	3.2
45 to 49 years	1,209	3.6
50 to 54 years	1,367	4.1
55 to 59 years	1,295	3.9
60 to 64 years	1,197	3.6
65 to 69 years	860	2.6
70 to 74 years	744	2.2
75 to 79 years	630	1.9
80 to 84 years	534	1.6
85 years and over	479	1.4
Median age (years)	46.6	(X)
16 years and over	12,420	37.4
18 years and over	11,871	35.8
21 years and over	11,488	34.6
62 years and over	3,961	11.9
65 years and over	3,247	9.8
Female population	17,305	52.2
Under 5 years	741	2.2
5 to 9 years	1,089	3.3
10 to 14 years	1,195	3.6
15 to 19 years	1,040	3.1
20 to 24 years	499	1.5

Subject	Number	Percent
25 to 29 years	368	1.1
30 to 34 years	494	1.5
35 to 39 years	887	2.7
40 to 44 years	1,182	3.6
45 to 49 years	1,407	4.2
50 to 54 years	1,479	4.5
55 to 59 years	1,486	4.5
60 to 64 years	1,239	3.7
65 to 69 years	1,069	3.2
70 to 74 years	846	2.6
75 to 79 years	750	2.3
80 to 84 years	708	2.1
85 years and over	826	2.5
Median age (years)	49.2	(X)
16 years and over	14,028	42.3
18 years and over	13,490	40.7
21 years and over	13,164	39.7
62 years and over	4,924	14.8
65 years and over	4,199	12.7

Northbrook racial demographics

RACE		
Total population	33,170	100.0
One Race	32,768	98.8
White	28,549	86.1
Black or African American	210	0.6
American Indian and Alaska Native	12	0.0
Asian	3,875	11.7
Asian Indian	577	1.7
Chinese	705	2.1
Filipino	284	0.9
Japanese	120	0.4
Korean	1,931	5.8
Vietnamese	12	0.0
Other Asian [1]	246	0.7
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	4	0.0
Native Hawaiian	0	0.0
Guamanian or Chamorro	3	0.0
Samoan	0	0.0
Other Pacific Islander [2]	1	0.0
Some Other Race	118	0.4
Two or More Races	402	1.2
White; American Indian and Alaska Native [3]	15	0.0
White; Asian [3]	244	0.7
White; Black or African American [3]	39	0.1
White; Some Other Race [3]	34	0.1

Chapter 4

Inclement Immigration: Group Frames, Climate Change and Threat

Immigration is a central issue in American politics. Over the last two decades, it has fundamentally altered the demographic composition of the country and it will continue to do so well into the future. Thus far, studies show how immigration stimulates threat which, in turn, alters support for immigration policy, political ideology, emotional reactions, and attitudes towards immigrant groups (Eitle and Taylor 2008; Rosenstein 2008; Outten et al. 2012; Craig and Richeson 2018b).

Much of this work employs experiments that present respondents with particular stimuli about immigration patterns or immigrants themselves. Scant attention has been paid to what may seem like ostensible minor variations in the stimuli, but map onto meaningful differences in the nature and rhetoric surrounding immigration: specifically, whether the immigrants are described in general or specific terms. Despite the prominent role of both these aspects in contemporary politics – political elites often vacillate between these descriptors within descriptions of immigration– scholars so far have been unclear of the effects pm public opinion.

Literature Review

Immigration has long been central to the study of politics, but only recently have scholars causally investigated these changes through the use of experiments. Below, I present a table of these recent studies on the immigration along with a brief description of the treatments they each use.

Table 1 reviews the authors of the piece, the main findings, the structure of the treatments, the immigrants described within the stimuli, if any, is described. While this is not an

exhaustive list of work, it captures the gamut of approaches and includes highly prominent studies. Importantly, these studies look at different factors of immigration, but they *never* compare specific to general references of immigration, nor do they look at reactions to different causes of immigration.

Table 1

Authors	Main findings	Treatments	Immigrants described
Sniderman et al. (2004)	National identity considerations tend to motivate feelings of threat.	Statements about different senses of threat from minorities.	Turks / Moroccans; Surinamese / refugees and asylum seekers
Brader et al. (2008)	News about immigration boosts white opposition to it when Latinos are cued as the immigrant group.	Vary the consequences of immigration (positive or negative).	Latino immigrants vs. European immigrants
Igartua and Cheng (2009)	The consequence frame of immigration (affecting crime or the economy) significantly affects attitudes toward immigration.	Vary the consequence of immigration (positive or negative).	Moroccans or Latin Americans
Hainmeuller and Hiscox (2010)	Find that low-skilled immigrants are opposed by both rich and poor natives.	Conjoint design, comparing immigrant profiles for admission to the U.S.	High-skilled vs. low-skilled immigrants
Perez (2010)	Implicit negative attitudes exist for Latin American immigrants.	IAT with Latin American and white immigrants.	Latin American vs. white immigrants
Merolla et al. (2013)	Frames *about* groups of immigrants have little effect on attitudes, but frames about immigration *policy* have strong effects.	Vary the description of immigrants and immigration policy.	Illegal vs. undocumented vs. unauthorized immigrants

Hainmeuller and Hopkins (2015)	High-status jobs are viewed favorably by Americans, while people who lack plans to work among other negatively contributions are viewed unfavorably.	Conjoint design, comparing immigrant profiles for admission to the U.S.	Germany France Mexico Philippines Poland India China Sudan Somalia Iraq
Timberlake et al. (2015)	Whites stereotypically link Latin American immigration to impact assessments of immigration, relative to other immigrant groups.	Vignette where respondents were asked to rate how they felt about one of four randomly assigned immigrant groups.	Middle Eastern, Asian, European, and Latin American immigrants

Up to this point, scholars have mostly given attention to how people react to different *specific* immigrant groups (e.g. Latin American versus European immigrants) or general groups of differing status (e.g. documented vs. undocumented immigrants). While studying these particular types of group frames in isolation is useful, these studies do not offer insight into how people think about immigrants when groups are *not* specifically or generally described. Specific references to immigrant groups only provide insight into how people are thinking about the groups-in-question. General reference to immigration may call to what implicitly comes to mind when immigrants are referenced, or it could simply generate ideas about *all* immigrants. That is, when "immigrant" is invoked, do people think generally or do they think of a specific group – such as the most discussed immigrant group, Latinos. A direct comparison between general and specific labels will allow me to make inferences about whether these labels are in fact being viewed and affecting public attitudes similarly. Does reference to Latino immigrants specifically affect opinions?

I chose Latin Americans as the specific group frame because, as noted, it is the most salient immigrant group discussed in American politics. The other dimension of focus is the reason for immigration. Here I look at the impact of climate change which is a notable lacuna in the literature given the vast number of climate refugees. In the next section, I detail thee two dimensions, then describe the design of the study that tests them.

Dimensions

The two dimensions I investigate are as follows:

1) The type of group frame used to describe immigration. I assess the difference between specific and broader reference to immigrants.
2) Causal attribution and policy aversion. How do people react when the cause of immigration is not amenable to their policy beliefs?

Concerning the first dimension, I look at two types of group frames. The first type I will call *specific group frames*. These call to particular immigrant groups. A well-known study that uses this frame is Brader, Valentino and Suhay (2008), which demonstrates that Latino immigrants cause white Americans to feel significantly more anxious than European immigrants. This generation of negative emotion by Latino immigrants decreases support for immigration policy. A major drawback of the design of this study, and others like it, is that the *only* comparison that can be made is between Latino immigrants and European immigrants. In other words, we are unable to generalize outside of the comparison between these two immigrant groups.

I call the second type *general group frames*. Compared to specific group frames, these concern the simpler reference to 'immigrants.' In a study that uses this label, Hainmeuller and Hiscox (2010) show that high-skilled immigrants are more preferred relative to low-skilled

among the American public. Given the strict use of general group frames in this study, we are unaware if the public may be interpreting these frames as concerning *all* immigrants or if particular immigrant groups that implicitly come to mind.

Surprisingly, so far, we have been unaware of the impact of general versus specific group frames. Most significantly, we do not know if one of these types of frames may cause *more* or *less* threat. This point is important to consider because it could illuminate the effects of elite rhetoric about immigrants – namely whether general or specific mentions are more effective in altering attitudes and mobilizing constituents. Elites will employ both of these types of rhetoric in their messaging, to varied success. I assess the effects of both types of group frames and determine whether they affect senses of threat as well as policy attitudes. For specific group frames, I reference Latin American immigration – which is one of, if not the most prominent specific group frame in American media coverage.

Concerning the second area of investigation, I examine climate change mitigation.[20] This is an increasingly common cause of immigration. There are large amounts of people threatened to be displaced by climate change in the coming years, and as such the issue of climate change refugees will only grow in importance (Biermann and Boas 2008; Wennersten and Robbins 2017; Ahmed 2018). It is becoming increasingly important and is something that runs in conflict with the population I analyze — Republicans.

I analyze Republicans because I expect them to be averse to the climate change, but the question is whether that causes more aversion than the Latino label, and how the Latino label in turn affects climate change views.

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[20] Previous studies have shown the reason for asylum seekers motivates drastically different emotion reactions, namely that when they are framed to have less control of their situation sympathy for the group is generated (Verkuyten 2004; Ivarsflaten 2005; Bansak, Hainmueller, and Hangartner 2016).

Hypotheses

My first hypothesis is motivated by Republican messaging about immigration. I expect that Latin American immigration will cause significantly more threat than general reference to immigration. Latin American immigration is typically referenced as the most pressing immigration threat especially by Republican elites. This will thereby activate more negative feelings about the group. Also, I expect that direct reference to Latin Americans will make the group easier to conceptualize, thereby prompting more threat than the general reference. Formally, this hypothesis is:

> *H1* Latin American immigration will cause significantly more threat than general reference to immigration, *ceteris paribus*.

I also expect that the threat from Latin American immigration will diminish concerns about mitigation and aid for countries affected by climate change. Because Latin American immigration will evoke threat among white Republicans, they will then become less supportive of policies that may Latin American countries This is a bit of an ironic prediction given addressing climate change could perhaps limit climate refugees, but I suspect that will be a consideration beyond the immediate accessible thought that climate change is linked the group.

> *H2* The Latin American immigration frame will decrease support for climate change mitigation and aid for countries affected by climate change, *ceteris paribus*.

Design

I use a survey experiment to test the effects of climate change-caused demographic change on behavior and policy attitudes. The sample[21] is restricted to Republican-only because of the high concern for immigration and low concern for climate change / global warming. Shown in Figures 1 and 2 below, climate change (global warming) matters much less for Republicans than the issue of immigration.

Figure 1

Most Liberal Democrats Say Global Warming Will Be a Very Important Issue When Deciding For Whom to Vote in the 2018 Congressional Election

Rank by "very important"	All Registered Voters (n = 1,067)	Liberal Democrats (n = 265)	Moderate/Conservative Democrats (n = 204)	Liberal/Moderate Republicans (n = 149)	Conservative Republicans (n = 276)
1	Healthcare	Healthcare	Healthcare	The economy	The economy
2	The economy	Gun policies	Education	Social Security	Terrorism
3	Social Security	Environmental protection	Social Security	Terrorism	Immigration reform
4	Gun policies	*Global warming*	The economy	Gun policies	Social Security
5	Education	Income gap	Gun policies	Healthcare	Gun policies
6	Terrorism	Education	Terrorism	Education	Federal budget deficit
7	Improving roads, etc.	Russian election interference	Russian election interference	Federal budget deficit	Healthcare
8	Environmental protection	Social Security	Environmental protection	Improving roads, etc.	Tax reform
9	Federal budget deficit	The economy	Improving roads, etc.	Tax reform	Abortion
10	Immigration reform	Developing clean energy	Income gap	Immigration reform	Education
11	Tax reform	Improving roads, etc.	Disaster relief	Environmental protection	Improving roads, etc.
12	Russian election interference	Race relations	Tax reform	Foreign policy	Foreign policy
13	Income gap	Disaster relief	Developing clean energy	Energy independence	Same-sex marriage
14	Developing clean energy	Federal budget deficit	Federal budget deficit	Opioid crisis	Energy independence
15	*Global warming*	Immigration reform	Race relations	Income gap	Criminal justice reform
16	Disaster relief	Criminal justice reform	*Global warming*	Criminal justice reform	Opioid crisis
17	Race relations	Same-sex marriage	Energy independence	Russian election interference	International trade
18	Criminal justice reform	Tax reform	Criminal justice reform	Developing clean energy	Russian election interference
19	Energy independence	Campaign finance reform	Immigration reform	Campaign finance reform	Campaign finance reform
20	Abortion	Foreign policy	Opioid crisis	International trade	War in Afghanistan
21	Foreign policy	Terrorism	Foreign policy	Disaster relief	Disaster relief
22	Opioid crisis	Wall Street reform	Abortion	Race relations	Environmental protection
23	Campaign finance reform	Abortion	Campaign finance reform	*Global warming*	Legalizing marijuana
24	Same-sex marriage	Energy independence	Wall Street reform	Abortion	Developing clean energy
25	International trade	Opioid crisis	Legalizing marijuana	War in Afghanistan	Race relations
26	Wall Street reform	Legalizing marijuana	War in Afghanistan	Wall Street reform	Wall Street reform
27	War in Afghanistan	International trade	International trade	Legalizing marijuana	Income gap
28	Legalizing marijuana	War in Afghanistan	Same-sex marriage	Same-sex marriage	*Global warming*

How important will the candidates' positions on the following issues be when you decide who you will vote for in the 2018 Congressional election?

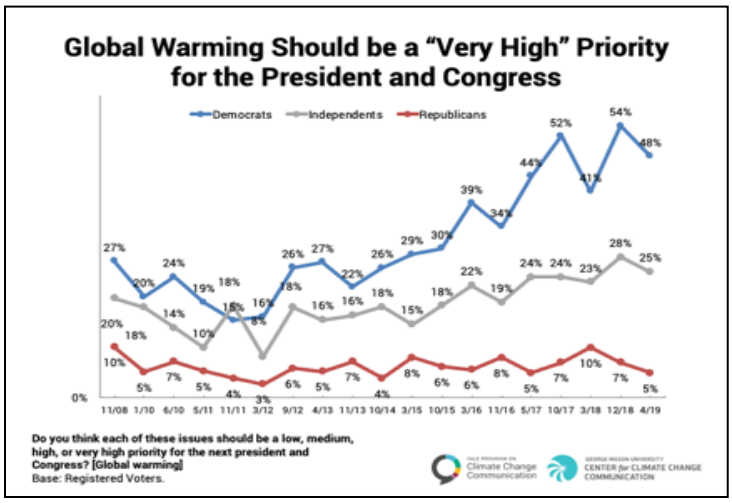
March 2018. Base: Registered American Voters.

YALE PROGRAM ON Climate Change Communication

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY CENTER for CLIMATE CHANGE COMMUNICATION

[21] N = 927

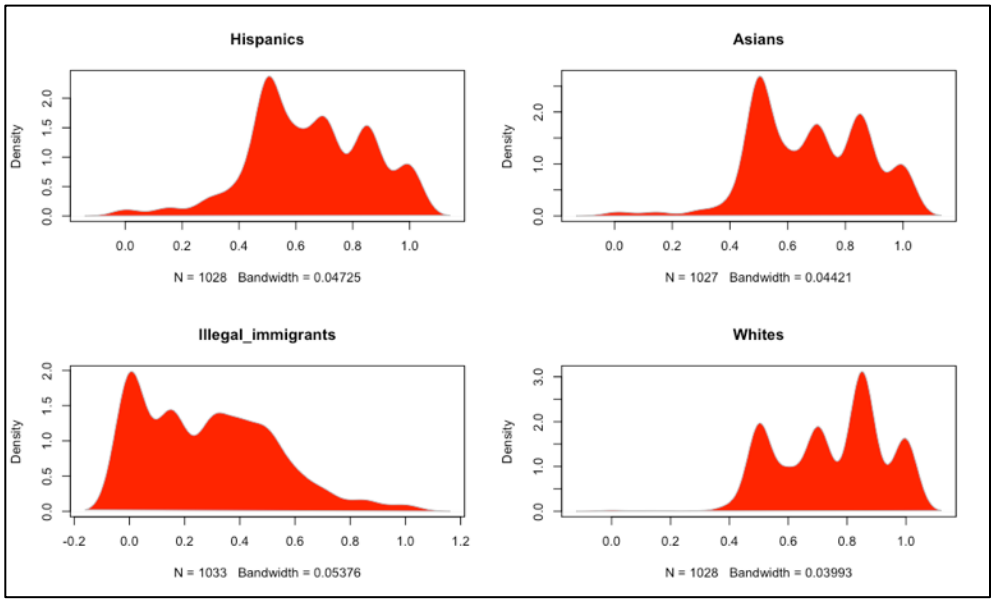
Figure 2



Shown in Figure 1, in a 2018 survey through the Center for Climate Change Communication among a list of 28 policy issues, moderate and conservative Republicans rank "global warming" in the bottom 25%. Similarly, in Figure 2, an overwhelming number of Republicans from 2008-19 do not think global warming should be a very high priority for the President and Congress. These two figures demonstrate that Republicans do not view the issue of climate change/global warming as important as other issues, especially relative to Democrats. As such, I expect that the threat from immigration will have a larger impact on Republican attitudes than the attribution to climate change. Moreover, Republican attitudes about climate change are more pliable because the issue is less important to them.

As a test of general versus specific groups frames, the treatments describe immigration in either vague terms or specific terms. The general group frame describes immigrants only, while the specific frame references Latin American immigrants. Republicans are generally colder toward immigrants and Hispanics/Latinos. Shown below in Figure 3 are results for feeling thermometers on the 2016 ANES for Republicans only.

Figure 3



On a 0-1 scale, Republicans react colder to Hispanics (mean = 0.64) than Asians (mean = 0.68) and whites (mean = 0.75). Importantly, Republicans are also very cold toward illegal immigrants (mean = 0.28).

Overall, the design consists of three groups: 2 treatment groups and a control group. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of these groups. The control group did not receive any additional information – i.e. it is a pure control. Those in one of the treatment groups received information from one of four vignettes. The dimensions are listed in Table 1 below, followed by the 4 vignettes that were used in this study with the corresponding Roman numeral.

Table 1

	Climate Change
Specific group	**I** Latin American + climate change cause
General group	**II** Immigration + climate change cause

Conditions

I

WORLD

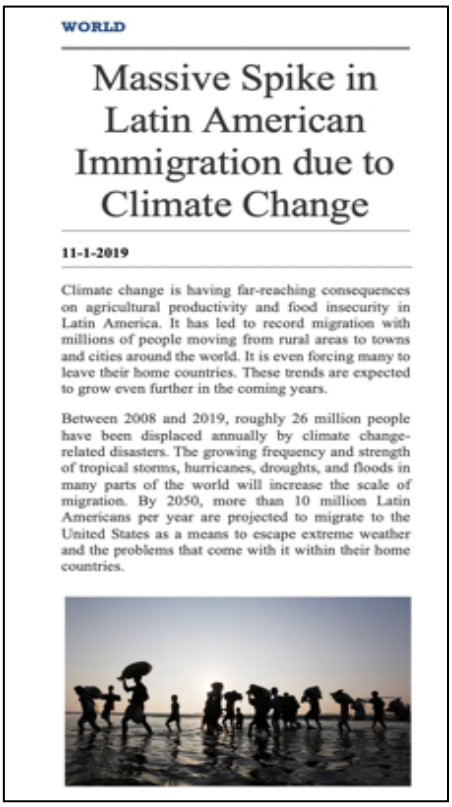
Massive Spike in Immigration due to Climate Change

11-1-2019

Climate change is having far-reaching consequences on agricultural productivity and food insecurity. It has led to record migration with millions of people moving from rural areas to towns and cities around the world. It is even forcing many to leave their home countries. These trends are expected to grow even further in the coming years.

Between 2008 and 2019, roughly 26 million people have been displaced annually by climate change-related disasters. The growing frequency and strength of tropical storms, hurricanes, droughts, and floods in many parts of the world will increase the scale of migration. By 2050, more than 10 million people per year are projected to migrate to the United States as a means to escape extreme weather and the problems that come with it within their home countries.

II



WORLD

Massive Spike in Latin American Immigration due to Climate Change

11-1-2019

Climate change is having far-reaching consequences on agricultural productivity and food insecurity in Latin America. It has led to record migration with millions of people moving from rural areas to towns and cities around the world. It is even forcing many to leave their home countries. These trends are expected to grow even further in the coming years.

Between 2008 and 2019, roughly 26 million people have been displaced annually by climate change-related disasters. The growing frequency and strength of tropical storms, hurricanes, droughts, and floods in many parts of the world will increase the scale of migration. By 2050, more than 10 million Latin Americans per year are projected to migrate to the United States as a means to escape extreme weather and the problems that come with it within their home countries.

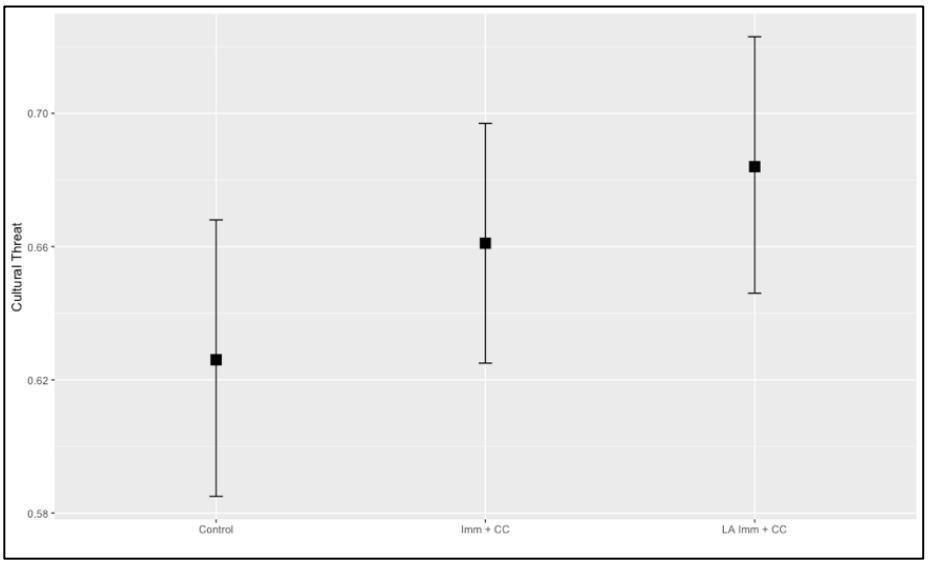
Results

For my main outcomes, I measure threat and climate change attitudes (e.g. support for the Paris accord, policies intended to mitigate the effects of climate change). The threat measures can be

divided in three kinds: cultural, economic, and political. The cultural threat measure captures the perceived negative impact that demographic change will have on American culture. I use two economic threat measures to capture the perceived pocketbook threat and the sociotropic threat of immigration. Thirdly, on political threat, I use two measures which capture the beliefs about the negative impact of immigration on one's political party and political norms in general. I present the results for these next, followed by results for general policy attitudes, then attitudes on climate change.

The two measures of economic threat and political threat scale well together ($\propto$=0.9 for economic threat; $\propto$=0.81 for political threat), and as such I combine them into additive indices within the following analyses. Below are comparisons of means for control and treatment groups. I use one-tailed t-tests to measure the means of the treatment groups relative to the control group – I use one-tailed tests because my hypotheses are directional. Below in Figure 3, I display the means of the treatment and control groups for cultural threat.

Figure 3

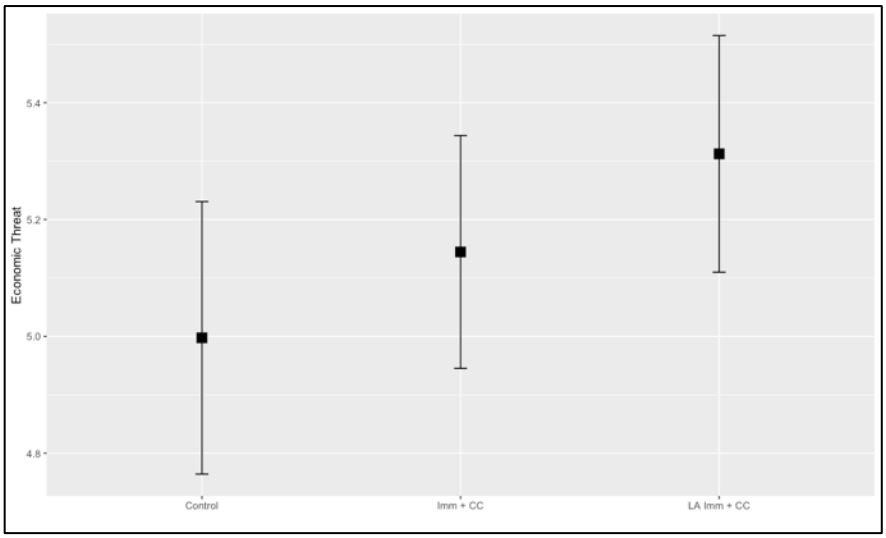


Only one of the two treatments cause more cultural threat among white Republicans.[22] I find that the story about Latin American immigration with climate change attribution has a strong effect upon cultural threat, increasing it by 7 percentage points ($p = 0.0096$) while the general reference to immigration yields an insignificant effect ($p = 0.102$).

Importantly, these findings show that, within the context of concern for cultural threat Republicans react more negatively to specific mentions of immigration. Also, given the salience of Latin Americans in the discussion of immigration, these results are a demonstration that simply discussing "immigration" does not cause Republicans to *only* think of Latin American immigration in the context of cultural threat. If this was the case, then the general frame should have generated the same amount of threat at the specific group frame.

I find a similar pattern in the effects of group frames in within the context of economic threat (Figure 4).

Figure 4



[22] This measures is worded in the following way: "To what extent do you agree with the following statement, 'Immigration is likely to have a negative impact on American culture'?"

The composite measure used above captures both senses of pocketbook and sociotropic economic threat. My findings across the conditions are very similar to the story of cultural threat. The treatment vignettes which discuss Latin American immigration significantly increase economic threat (6 percentage point increase, $p = 0.013$), while again the immigration + climate change condition *does not* have a significant effect on feelings of economic threat.

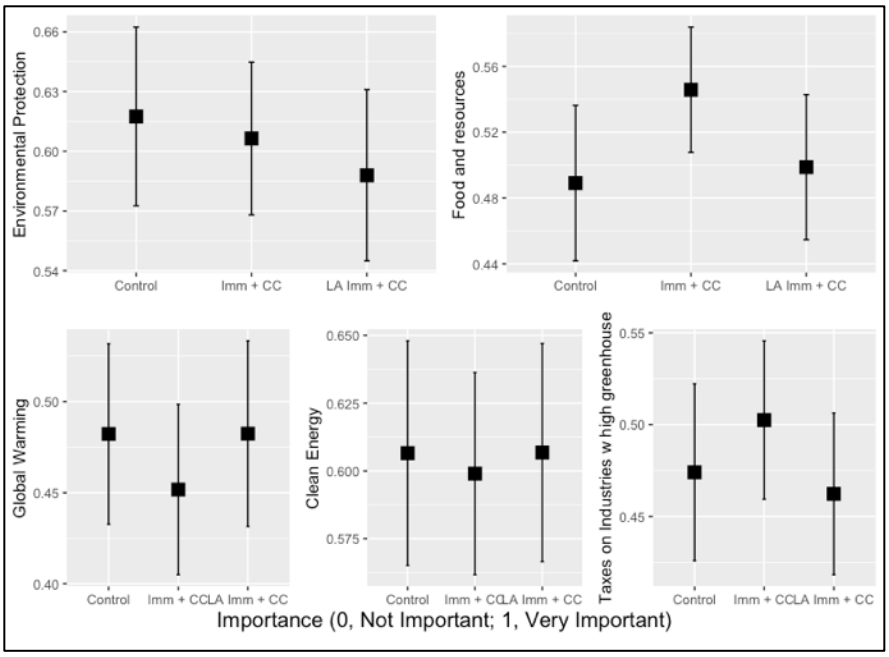
These results clearly demonstrate that the framing of groups also matters to senses of economic threat. When the immigrant group is specific, more economic threat is felt. Similar to the results in Figure 3 for cultural threat, the immigration + climate change condition does not generate more economic threat relative to the control. As such, it is clear that for cultural and economic threat, that when Latin American immigrants are referenced, white Republicans feel both significantly more.

These results confirm Hypothesis 1, specifically that Latin American immigration causes white Republicans to feel more threatened. I find that the specific reference makes the threat 'real' in the minds of Republicans. It activates a concern they already had about immigration, while also adding context. They can better conceptualize where the threat is coming from – the south. They are better able to infer what the threat looks like – people from Latin America. And lastly, they are already provided with the story of why this group is immigrating, which is a cause with no end in sight – extreme weather caused by anthropomorphic climate change. Culturally, Latin Americans are seen as less assimilable than other immigrant groups, hence the threat on this dimension. Also, economically, a prominent narrative is that these immigrants are taking American jobs, which helps to explain why there is a greater sense of economic threat. Neither frame causes significantly more or less political threat, which is also consistent with the preexisting stereotypes of Latin American immigrants, in that they are not viewed as a politically

active group and therefor an increase in them will not result in a threat to the American political system (Appendix 1).[23]

Shown below in Figure 5 are the means of treatment and control groups for general policy attitudes.

Figure 5



The importance of global warming, mitigating greenhouse gases, environmental protection, and clean energy are not affected by either condition where climate change is described as the cause of immigration.[24] More complex attitudes, however, are affected.

One issue position, the importance of "Food and resources provided to countries hurt by climate change," is affected by the climate change condition that references immigrants

[23] This finding is consistent with previous studies I have conducted, which also show that increased immigration *does not* cause a greater sense of political threat.

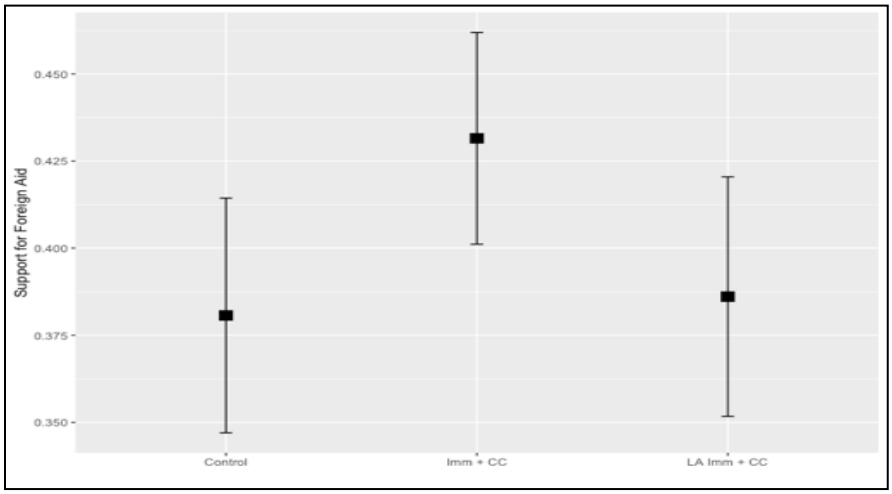
[24] Respondents who received the climate change treatments along with the control group were the only respondents who viewed the dependent measures about climate change.

generally. Republicans who receive this condition are, on average, 6 percentage points more supportive of this policy ($p = 0.033$). This finding is consistent with Hypothesis 2, that the Latin American immigration frame would decrease white Republican support for foreign aid for countries affected by climate change.

This issue combines foreign aid and climate change. Importantly, it acknowledges that climate change has negative effects upon particular countries. The lack of cultural and economic threat generated from this condition paired with this increase in support for this policy suggests that when particular types of threat are *not* elicited, certain Republicans policy attitudes can be altered. Moreover, given that the Latin American + climate change condition *does* generate economic and cultural threat, this finding works in both directions. That is, group threat could hinder Republican policy attitude change – i.e. the threat could predominate in the mind, thereby preventing attitudinal change.

As further evidence for Republican attitudes about aid given to countries negatively affected by climate change, I find a similar increase in support for this specific type of foreign aid. More specifically, the measure is "Should U.S. spending to countries that have been affected by climate change decrease, increase, or stay the same?" on a 1 (Decrease greatly) to 7 (Increase greatly).

Figure 6

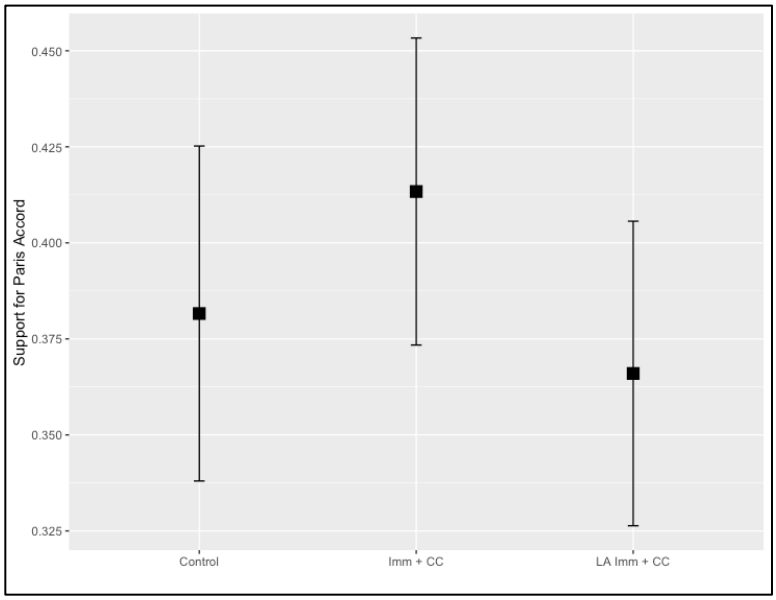


Republicans who receive the immigration + climate change condition are 5 percentage points more supportive of this type of foreign aid ($p = 0.0138$), relative to the control. The Latin American immigration story does not have a similar effect on these same attitudes, resulting in an insignificant difference between this treatment and the control group.

Lastly, concerning the Paris Accord – which is the most specific and wide-ranging climate mitigation policy respondents consider[25] – I find a similar pattern to that described above. Specifically, between the Latin American and general immigration conditions, I find that the mention of Latin Americans significantly reduces support for the U.S. joining into the agreement.

[25] The item provides a detailed description of what the Paris Accord is, written as follows: "The Paris accord, or Paris Agreement, is an agreement in within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The agreement's language was negotiated by representatives of 196 state parties at the 21st Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC in Le Bourget, near Paris, France, and adopted by consensus on 12 December 2015. Under the Paris Agreement, each country must determine, plan, and regularly report on the contribution that it undertakes to mitigate global warming. Nothing forces a country to set a specific target by a specific date, but each target should go beyond previously set targets. To what degree do you oppose or support the U.S. joining the Paris accord?"

Figure 7



I find white Republicans who receive the Latin American condition are nearly 5 percentage points less supportive of the Paris Accord, relative to those that receive the general condition ($p = 0.048$). This finding confirms Hypothesis 2, in demonstrating that the mention of Latin American decreases support for climate change mitigation. It is important to note that the Paris Accord is an expansive policy that involves nearly every nation in the world. And interestingly, the threat of Latin American immigration motivated Republicans to become less supportive of, unquestionably, the most extensive climate mitigation policy – meaning, threat can have very wide-ranging effects upon attitudes.

Heterogeneous Treatment Effects

Given the focus on Republicans in this study, one lingering question that deserves attention concerns *which* Republicans might be feeling a greater sense of threat. More ideologically sorted Republicans might feel a greater sense of threat from immigration because it is a major platform of the party (Mason 2015; 2016). For this reason, I assess heterogenous treatment effects based

upon political ideology. I use the technique recommended by Hainmueller, Mummolo and Xu to avoid common problems with moderation analyses, such as the assumption of a linear interaction effect (2016). This method separates subjects into terciles based on their levels of ideology and estimates treatment effects in a non-linear way for each tercile.

In the following analyses, the study of sorting provides the hypothesis that there will not be significant differences between low and high levels of ideology. This is due to partisans sorting and polarizing such that moderately conservative Republicans will bear little difference from strongly conservative Republicans.

As mentioned, the interflex method identifies the areas where individuals are scoring at lower, medium and higher levels. These levels are represented by the three coefficients with the corresponding letters above them. I plot the results of the interactive analyses in the figure below (Figures 6 and 7), which shows the treatment effects for respondents who cluster at low (L), middle (M), and high (H) levels on the ideology index.

Shown in Figure 8 is the effect of the climate change + immigrant treatment on the three measures of threat, moderated by ideology. Importantly, no Republicans on any level of ideology feel significantly more or less threat along cultural, economic or political lines. In short, I find no variance in levels of threat based upon Republican's ideological positions. Figure 9 (Appendix) shows, similarly, a lack of variation for the climate change + Latin American treatment relative to the control. Overall, the findings from these analyses serve as a check on consistent effects along the lines of threat for Republicans. In short, level of ideology does not significantly alter how threatened Republicans feel from immigration.

Figure 6 – Climate change + immigration treatment vs. control

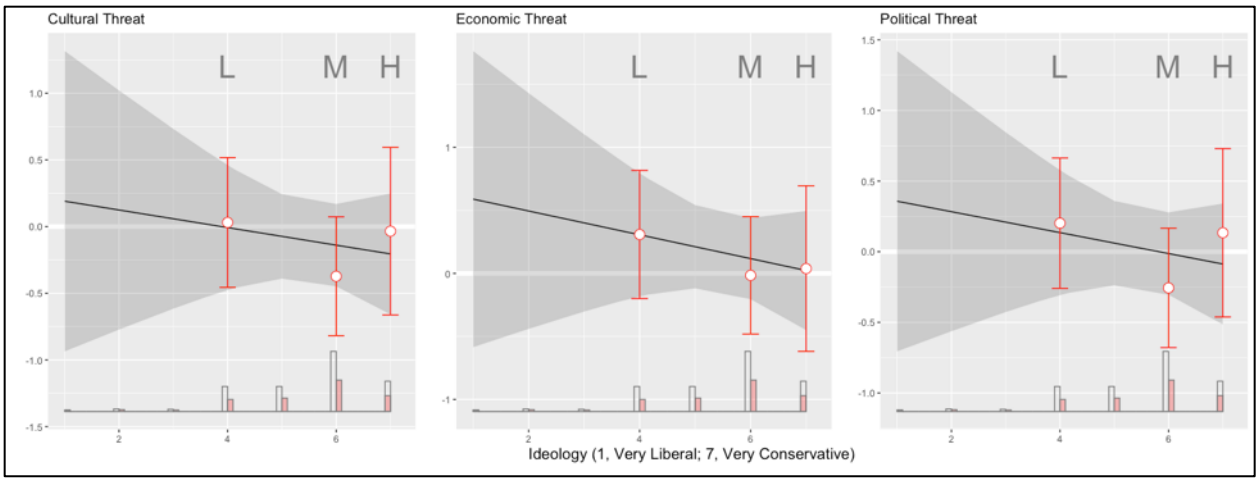
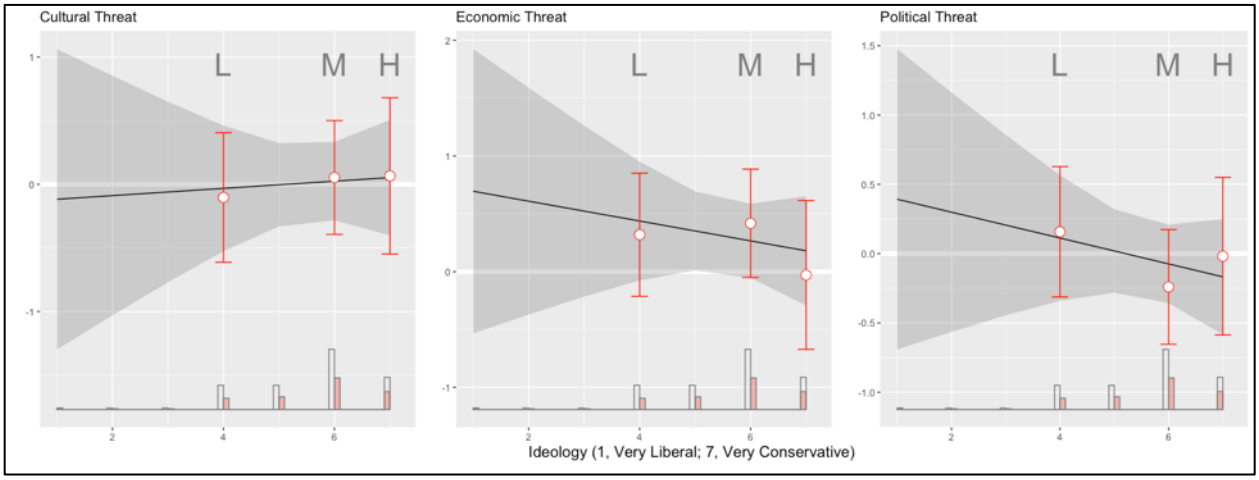


Figure 7 – Climate change + Latin American immigration treatment vs. control



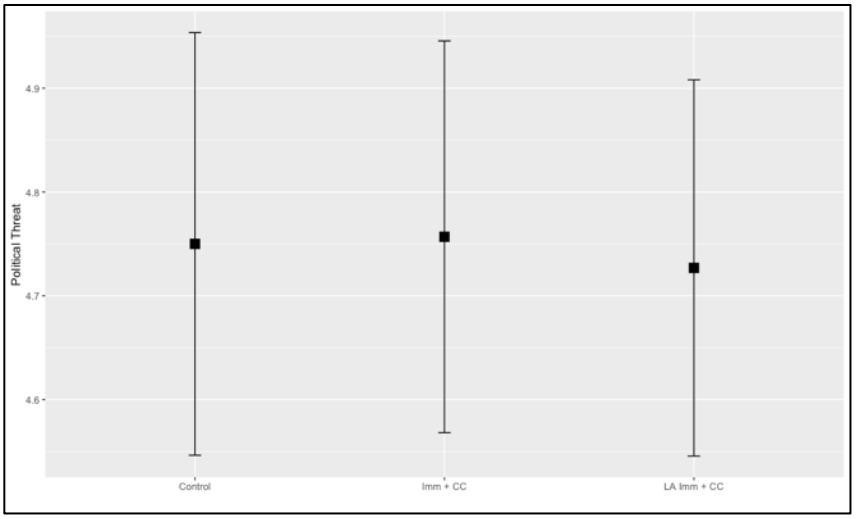
Conclusion

Overall, in this study I have two main findings: 1) the type of group frame used in the discussion of immigration matters a great deal to the generation of group threat, 2) highly partisan issue positions *can* be shifted, but only in situations where threat is present. Regarding the first point, I find that the discussion of Latin American immigration causes Republicans to feel significantly more threat along cultural and economic lines. This demonstrates that specific references to

groups elicits *more* threat than general references. As mentioned, elites will often employ the language of both general and specific references, and the distinct results for each frame in this study show Republicans are making different inferences when they hear about Latin Americans than when they hear about immigrants in general. On the second point, I find that the mention of Latin Americans – and the threat that is tied up in this mention – decreases support for aid provided to countries affected by climate change *and* the climate mitigation policy. These results show clearly that threat can demotivate support for policy that can has expansive effects. Overall, I show in this project that threat can motivate attitudes in interesting and unexpected ways – that threat can motivate attitude change, even among highly partisan issues.

Appendix

Figure 9 – Political Threat



Chapter 5

Conclusion

The demographic changes that the U.S. are undergoing are inevitable. But despite the certainty in these changes, scant work has explored of how these changes might affect public policy opinions. My dissertation fills this gap by providing extensive evidence of exactly how information about these changes can shift white Americans' policy attitudes. Across multiple, distinct domains, I find threat to be a potent motivator of changing views. I find these "across the aisle," no less – group threat changes how *both* white Democrats and Republicans consider policy. From economic concerns in the level of the minimum wage, to social concerns in college admissions and affirmative action, to even global concerns in climate change and the Paris Accord, group threat transforms how white Americans thought of each every one of these domains.

Importantly, each of these studies *only* involved seemingly mundane information about the changes size of minority groups. The white Americans who participated in these studies did not see these changes; they were not provided group size comparisons; the composition of their neighborhoods remained exactly the same. In other words, nothing changed for them other than the fact they were introduced to this information. Despite this, the retrospective, present and prospective discussion of demographic changes were enough to elicit concern and shift their views. This point cannot be overstated. It suggests that more detailed information or messaging with the explicit intent of generating threat in white Americans could make them feel *more* threatened, and therefor shift their attitudes even further. These are significant and necessary extension of this work that requires further exploration.

Future work that provides more detailed information to respondents about demographic change can help to confirm that it is the overall description of minority groups increasing in size that is motivating threat. If more detail elicits more threat, this would confirm this expectation. If more detail reduces threat, however, this could be a sign that more brief mention of racial groups changing in size is jarring to white Americans, thereby causing a more negative reaction to the prospect. This leads into a second extension of this work: messaging with intentionally threatening language.

All of the stimuli used in this dissertation were modeled after media reporting of demographic change. Put differently, they were not written in overtly threatening ways; yet they still generated a significant amount of threat. Investigating the effects of inflammatory language like "hordes of immigrants are rushing into this country" among many terms and phrases about demographic change could shed light on whether the use of this framing by elites and political groups is effective in causing whites to feel even more threatened.

A final extension of this work that could prove to be very useful is an extensive investigation of different stimuli that vitiate threat. I have shown that narratives, in some ways, work to impair the effects of threat on policy attitudes, but a more in-depth look into how narratives among other potential counteracting stimuli such as positive emotion is a worthy endeavor.

The changing racial composition of the United States is a multidimensional phenomenon. The evidence presented here shows that it can indeed touch all areas of politics, in ways that many have not considered before. In the same vein, our solutions for how to prevent group threat from reshaping American politics require the same level of attention to detail. The country is changing, and these changes can be made for the better.

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