

# **Is Anxiety About Immigration a Response to Perceptions of Risk or Uncertainty?**

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Two of the most repeated truisms about the United States are that it is “a nation of immigrants” and “a nation of laws, not of men.” Taken together, then, we might expect the history of law and politics regarding immigration to be especially revealing of the nation. Concern and conflict over the “who” and “how” of people coming into the country date back to the time of the founding, through the nativist backlash of the 1920’s that sharply restricted immigration from southern and eastern Europe, to The Mexican Repatriation Act during the depression, until the Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 abolished quotas based on national origin.

More recently, attempts to bring the flow of undocumented immigration under a more orderly legal framework have resulted in a series of conditional amnesties and adjustments to legal immigration quotas that were supposed to settle immigration down as a background political question. In the summer of 2006, however, the issue again flared dramatically with massive protests on behalf of undocumented immigrants, and similarly heated counter-protests echoing the urge for Mexican repatriation of four-score years before. The onset of the economic crisis pushed immigration reform to the political back-burner almost as dramatically as it had flared, though Arizona’s controversial state immigration law has pulled the issue right back into the limelight.<sup>1</sup>

As concerns over immigration (legal and illegal) have waxed and waned over the past quarter-century, in the United States and throughout Europe (Fetzer 2000; Lapinski et al. 1997; Sniderman et al. 2000; Tichenor 2002), scholars debated the motives animating attitudes toward immigration policy (Neblo 2004, Neblo 2009a, Neblo 2009b, Ramakrishnan et. al. 2010). Simplifying a bit, scholars have mostly split between treating opposition to immigration as a

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<sup>1</sup>The percentage of Americans naming “immigration” or “illegal immigration” as the most important issue facing the nation, climbing as high as 19% in April 2006, fell sharply, then recently spiked again to 10%, amid an historic economic recession, the prosecution of two major wars, and the passage of landmark health care legislation just two months prior. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/127949/Jobs-Drops-No-Americans-List-Top-Problems.aspx>. Accessed June 20, 2010.

matter of economic self-interest versus ethnic prejudice. With illegal immigration, worries about the rule of law also loom large.

To understand the affective and cognitive sources of attitudes about immigration, we compare the processes undergirding reactions to both illegal *and* legal immigration. Moreover, we seek to evaluate – even if indirectly – the specific motives most commonly cited by proponents and opponents of recent immigration reform proposals. Proponents of immigration reform tend to depict opponents as motivated by prejudice toward immigrant groups, particularly the largest such group: Mexicans. Opponents of immigration reform reject this argument, arguing instead that their primary motivation is to see the rule of law upheld, no matter the ethnicity or national origin of immigrant groups.

In the present context we propose to get leverage on these issues by focusing on what might at first seem like a fairly small, esoteric, and obliquely-related question. When people express anxiety or worry about immigration, is their reaction rooted in perception of the risks that immigrants pose or in uncertainty about how to evaluate immigrants and immigration in the first place? That is, when I say that I am “anxious” about undocumented immigrants it is ambiguous as to whether I mean to express: 1) worry about whether such people will turn out to be friends or foes; or 2) whether I know that they are foes, and I am worried that they may succeed in harming me or the country. In behavioral decision theory, this difference tracks the distinction between uncertainty (1) and risk (2). Research into the political psychology of the emotions has noted that in some cases items intended to measure activation of the so-called surveillance system (Anxiety, Worry, Fear) scale up separately, but that they also sometimes scale up with items intended to measure aversion (Hatred, Contempt, Disgust). We argue that

this phenomenon very likely tracks differences in whether perceptions of risk or uncertainty dominate (with the items collapsing in the former case and separating in the latter).

Using data from a survey experiment conducted among a large national sample, we find that attitudes about legal immigration are characterized by risk while attitudes about illegal immigration are characterized by uncertainty. That is, in the case of legal immigration, all of the “negative” emotions (Anxiety, Worry, Fear, Hatred, Contempt, and Disgust) form a single aversion factor. If one is “worried” about immigrants it is not rooted in any evaluative ambiguity or ambivalence, but rather in whether their pernicious tendencies will be realized. (Or, conversely, if one is not worried it is because the legality of the person’s entry settles the only important evaluative question, at least conditionally.) In the case of illegal immigration, however, these six emotions break into two clusters, with aversion to evaluative uncertainty swinging freely of aversion. Thus, one can be worried about illegal immigrants in the sense of them having lost the benefit of the doubt that legal immigration would confer, but without thereby harboring any aversive feelings. We argue that the consequences of this difference in affective *structure* (in addition to affective activation) are both far reaching and illuminating.

## **Literature**

Scholars have devoted a great deal of attention to investigating the sources of individuals’ attitudes toward immigration-related policies. However, this literature is limited by a rather narrow focus on what are traditionally depicted as two competing explanations of attitudes toward legal immigration: self-interest and ethnic prejudice. While no scholarly consensus exists as to which motivation most influences immigration-related attitudes, the evidence appears to favor an ethnic prejudice explanation.

Self-interest encompasses a variety of economic considerations including the economic well-being of the individual, the individual's community, or the nation as a whole. According to this argument, feeling economically vulnerable – due to an economic recession or being unemployed or employed in a blue-collar job, typically – should make an individual less likely to support increased immigration levels or increased government spending on immigrants, because he or she might fear that an immigrant will take his or her job for less pay or that an influx of new immigrants will overburden and weaken the national economy.

There is considerable evidence to support the argument that economic self-interest motivates immigration-related attitudes. For instance, numerous studies find that opposition to pro-immigration policies increases during economic recessions (Gimpel and Edwards 1999; Harwood 1993; Lapinski et al. 1997; Simon and Alexander 1993), and that the most economically vulnerable individuals (i.e. blue-collar or low-skilled workers) are most likely to oppose pro-immigration policies (Clark and Legge 2009; Pettigrew et al. 2007; Scheve and Slaughter 2001). However, it should be noted that support for anti-immigration policies increased at the same time the national economy was beginning a tremendous expansion in the mid-1990s (see Citrin et al. 1997). Also, many studies find that economically vulnerable individuals (including blue-collar workers, labor union members, low-income individuals, and unemployed individuals) do not differ significantly from others in their level of concern about, or opposition to, increased immigration (Brader et al. 2009; Citrin et al. 1997; Sniderman et al. 2004).

Of course, economic self-interest is not the only consideration that might shape immigration-related attitudes. Given that most immigrants are different from natives in some observable ways – e.g. language, skin color, religion – it is likely that some people oppose pro-

immigration policies because they dislike particular immigrant groups or view them as a threat to native culture. In other words, people might support anti-immigration policies due to ethnic prejudice.

There is substantial evidence to suggest that ethnic prejudice motivates support for anti-immigration policies. Ethnocentrism – here measured in terms of relative affect for whites versus Latinos or other minority group members – is a statistically significant predictor of individuals' immigration policy preferences (Brader et al. 2009; Citrin et al. 1997; Kinder and Kam 2009; Neblo et. al. 2012). Additionally, Burns and Gimpel (2000) find that individuals who negatively stereotyped Latinos were significantly more likely to oppose increased immigration, and Perez (2008) finds that implicit attitudes about Latinos, which tend to be negative, significantly predict individuals' immigration policy preferences.

While it would seem that self-interest and ethnic prejudice both significantly motivate anti-immigration attitudes to some degree, recent studies indicate that the latter motivation is stronger. Brader et al. (2009) find that ethnocentrism is the strongest predictor of individuals' positions on immigration-related policies, and that its effects do not vary significantly across members of different socioeconomic groups. Also, Sniderman et al. (2004) find that individuals are most likely to oppose pro-immigration policies, and most likely to engage in social distancing from members of immigrant groups, when exposed to experimental materials highlighting the cultural, versus economic, threats of immigration.

Yet there are other motivations that scholars must explore, particularly when considering attitudes toward *illegal* immigration. Foremost among them is the motivation most commonly cited by opponents of immigration reform: concern about upholding the rule of law. Whether this is truly the motivation behind support for anti-illegal immigration policies, or whether ethnic

prejudice provides a better explanation, is a debate frequently engaged in public discourse but not heretofore in the academic literature. With this paper, we aim to provide a systematic analysis capable of clarifying this debate and expanding the scope of the existing literature on attitudes toward immigration policy.

In particular, we explore the structure of emotional responses to immigration, legal and illegal, to determine whether anti-immigration attitudes are primarily motivated by anxiety, separate and distinct from feelings of aversion, or by the fusion of anxiety and aversion. Feelings of anxiety alone, when confronted with issues of legal and illegal immigration, do not necessarily indicate that individuals' policy preferences are motivated by ethnic prejudice. Instead, individuals might simply be uncertain as to what effects, positive or negative, increased immigration and government aid to immigrant groups might have on themselves, their communities, and the nation. In particular, if individuals feel anxiety, separate from aversion, when thinking about illegal immigration, this might indicate that opponents of immigration reform truly worry about illegal immigration's effects on the rule of law in the United States, regardless of the immigrant group in question. Conversely, if feelings of anxiety and aversion toward immigrant groups collapse into a common factor dimension, and particularly if this factor structure varies depending on the immigrant group being discussed, this would indicate that individuals are not only uncertain about the impact of illegal immigration but that they also feel threatened by the thought of *who* is immigrating and how that immigrant group might alter existing cultural dynamics.

In this way, examining emotional responses to immigration policy provides a uniquely insightful and subtle method for assessing the true motivations underlying individuals' attitudes

toward immigration policy.<sup>2</sup> It is also an innovative approach to studying emotional factor structures. The existing emotions literature uses factor analysis primarily to establish the empirical distinctions between various emotions. To date, scholars have not analyzed variation in emotional factor structures to test substantive hypotheses, as we do in this paper to measure emotional responses to different immigrant groups.

One of the few studies to investigate emotional responses to immigration policy is Brader et al. (2008). Brader et al. hypothesize that individuals should feel higher levels of anxiety when cued to think of Latino versus European immigration, and that this heightened anxiety leads to greater and more active opposition to pro-immigration policies. Indeed, participants exposed to a newspaper article stressing the costs (specifically, the purported negative cultural impact) of legal immigration expressed significantly greater feelings of anxiety, were significantly more likely to oppose increased immigration levels, and were significantly more likely to allow an anti-immigration e-mail to be sent on their behalf to a member of Congress, when the article was accompanied by a photograph of a Latino, versus European, immigrant.<sup>3</sup> Brader et al.'s analysis suggests that anxiety may act as a mediator between negative racial group cues and immigration policy preferences; exposure to an article highlighting Latino immigration triggered greater anxiety, which then led to greater opposition to increased immigration levels and greater political activism on the issue.

Brader et al.'s work represents an important step toward understanding the motivations underlying immigration attitudes. However, it also has two important limitations that we seek to address in this paper. First, it is unclear as to what Brader et al. captured in finding that feelings

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<sup>2</sup> For a more general treatment of the relationship between the empirical study of emotions and its relationship to democratic theory, see Neblo (2003), Neblo (2005), and Neblo (2007).

<sup>3</sup> Emotional and policy responses did not differ significantly between photograph conditions when the newspaper article emphasized the benefits of increased immigration.



of anxiety increased in the Latino immigration manipulation. As noted above, anxiety and aversion are distinct emotions, with the former signifying feelings of uncertainty and the latter signifying feelings of hostility or disgust. Thus, we can speculate, but we cannot know with certainty, whether these findings show that participants felt greater anxiety and, consequently, greater opposition to increased immigration levels because they held prejudiced attitudes toward Latinos or because they felt more uncertainty over what would be the economic and cultural effect of increased Latino, versus European, immigration. Brader et al. address this issue briefly in citing Huddy et al.'s (2007) work demonstrating that anxiety and anger are distinct emotions and often have different effects. The authors do note that they measured feelings of anger and that they loaded on the same factor as the anxiety emotions. However, they concede, "our battery is not well suited to detecting anger as distinct from anxiety because it only contains one anger item" (968). Thus, while Brader et al.'s work provides an important indication as to the structure of emotional responses to immigration policy, a full battery of anxiety *and* aversion emotions is necessary to achieve a more comprehensive analysis of the emotional factor structure and potential differences in that structure's effect on immigration attitudes, in general and with respect to different target groups.

Second, like most of the literature on immigration attitudes, Brader et al. exclusively focus their analysis on attitudes toward *legal* immigration. While undoubtedly a very important issue, legal immigration has been much less salient and controversial a topic than *illegal* immigration in the United States in recent years. In analyzing attitudes toward legal and illegal immigration, our paper provides the opportunity to uncover important complexities in individuals' emotional responses to immigration policy. For instance, it might be the case that participants in Brader et al.'s study felt significantly greater anxiety in the Latino immigration

condition because they associated Latino immigrants with illegal immigration, and thus their expressed anxiety was focused more upon concerns about government enforcement of immigration laws than hostility toward Latinos. This possibility seems plausible given the particular focus among the general public, media, and politicians, on illegal immigration occurring across the Mexican-U.S. border.

While such an explanation is hardly encouraging, and many would argue that such a perception is prejudiced in itself, it is at least plausible and certainly worthwhile to investigate whether emotional responses and immigration policy attitudes vary when Latinos immigrants are designated as immigrating lawfully versus unlawfully. If anxiety and aversion collapse into each other in the case of legal immigration, but separate in the case of illegal immigration, then we would have prima facie evidence that at least some of the “negative” affect directed toward illegal immigrants is not mere hatred or ethnic prejudice, but rather a plausibly reasonable reaction to concerns over the rule of law. Such a difference is hardly decisive, though, since it may be the case that some individuals simply refrain from expressing especially negative attitudes (like Hatred) toward a minority group, and feel freer to express their dislike under the cover of the rule of law. However, if the anxiety index regarding illegal immigrants was not predictive of attitudes toward legal immigration, we would have further reason to take such expressions of worry about the rule of law at face value.

## **Methodology**

As reflected in the foregoing discussion, our objective in this paper is to determine whether attitudes toward immigrant groups and policy preferences concerning the government’s admittance and treatment of immigrants, legal and illegal, are motivated by concerns about the

rule of law or feelings of ethnic prejudice. Specifically, we assess whether individuals, in general and across different demographic and political categories, separate or collapse feelings of anxiety and aversion when thinking of immigrant groups, and whether their emotional responses differ depending on the ethnicity and legal status of those immigrants. Thus, our primary hypotheses test two competing explanations of attitudes toward immigration policy, and particularly attitudes toward illegal immigration. First, if much opposition to illegal immigration is motivated by concerns about the rule of law, feelings of anxiety and aversion should be more likely to load onto a common factor when individuals are primed to think about legal immigrants versus being primed to think about illegal immigrants. In other words, stipulating away the behavior associated with the rule of law should remove a potential dimension of evaluation that could swing separately from ethnicity. Alternately, opponents of illegal immigration may be broadly motivated by ethnic prejudice, aimed primarily at Latino immigrants. If this explanation is true, feelings of anxiety and aversion should load onto a common factor even when individuals are primed to think of legal as well as illegal immigrants.

Additionally, we expect that the structure of emotional responses to different immigrant groups will have significant effects on immigration policy preferences. Specifically, we expect that individuals for whom anxiety and aversion collapse into a single factor dimension when primed to think about legal immigrants will be significantly more likely to oppose increased legal immigration levels and government aid to legal immigrant groups. Similarly, we expect that individuals for whom anxiety and aversion collapse into a single factor dimension when primed to think about illegal immigrants will be significantly more likely to support stricter anti-illegal immigration laws.

To test these hypotheses, we analyze data from three original survey experiments measuring attitudes toward immigration policy and immigrant groups. The first two survey experiments are components of a larger study of electronic town hall meetings and their effects on attitudes and information levels among members of a select group of congressional districts, conducted by the Congressional Management Foundation and administered through Knowledge Networks between 2006 and 2008. The survey experiments analyzed in this paper were both conducted in the fall of 2006.

In both survey experiments, participants initially were asked their opinions about a wide range of matters concerning legal and illegal immigration and immigrant groups. Study 1 participants were randomly assigned to one of two information treatments, while Study 2 participants were randomly assigned to one of three information treatments. Study 1 participants provided their opinions on a wide range of issues relating to their attitudes about immigration and government performance on immigration, at several points in time before and after the November 2006 midterm congressional elections. Control group participants received no additional information about immigration, while treatment group participants were asked to read an information booklet providing a balanced description of different views on immigration, accompanied by relevant facts. A national sample of 1,002 participants took part in Study 1.

Study 2 mirrored Study 1, except that an additional treatment group was added in which participants were asked to read the same information booklet provided in Study 1 *and* they had the opportunity to participate in an electronic town hall meeting featuring their representative in the U.S. House. Participants were able to submit questions to their representative, observe his or her responses and interactions with fellow constituents, and engage in a follow-up online discussion with the other constituents about immigration and their representative's performance

on the issue and in the town hall meeting. The 2,755 participants taking part in Study 2 constituted a representative sample within the selected congressional districts.

A third survey experiment, Study 3, was included as part of the 2008 Cooperative Congressional Election Studies (CCES). The CCES is a cross-temporal study that took place in the fall of 2008, before and after that year's presidential and congressional elections. Again, participants in this study answered a number of questions pertaining to immigration and government responsiveness to immigration, at several points in time including immediately following information treatments. Study 3 participants were randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions, each stipulating a different immigrant target group. Prior to being asked about their immigration attitudes, participants were asked to think about immigrants as "immigrants," "Mexican immigrants," "legal immigrants," or "illegal immigrants." By priming participants to think about immigration in terms of one of these four immigrant groups, Study 3 allows us to analyze variation in attitudes toward, and feelings about, immigration and immigrant groups in response to these different characterizations of immigrants.

Studies 1-3 each contain very similar, and in most cases identical, questions about immigration that can be used to test our hypotheses. Foremost among these are emotional responses to immigration and immigrant groups, including emotions that capture anxiety (1, 2, 3, 4), aversion (1, 2, 3, 4), and enthusiasm (1, 2, 3, 4). As indicated by the preceding discussion, this range of emotions is more comprehensive than that contained in any previous study of immigration attitudes, and thus allows us to conduct a uniquely robust analysis of emotional responses to immigration. Also, Studies 1-3 measure participants' attitudes toward a variety of immigration-related policies, including immigration levels, a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants, making illegal immigration a felony, providing goods and services to illegal

immigrants, and amending the U.S. Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment to deny citizenship to children born within the U.S. to illegal immigrants, and to deny citizenship to their parents. Finally, each survey experiment contains a wide range of demographic measures and political affiliation measures, each of which may be used to provide relevant controls in our statistical models and to separately analyze different demographic and political groups.

### **Analysis 1: Factor Structure by Target Group**

Our first analysis focuses only on the CCES dataset. In this dataset, respondents reported their emotional reaction to one of four target issues: “legal immigration,” “illegal immigration,” “illegal Mexican immigration,” and simply “immigration.” <so and so et al.> found that individuals tend to associate the term “immigration” with illegal, Mexican immigrants, so we anticipated that the factor structure of respondents would be similar for those respondents evaluating illegal immigration, illegal Mexican immigration, and immigration. Those who are presented with “legal” immigration are given counter-stereotypical information, and we expected those individuals to structure their factor response differently.

For this exploratory factor analysis, we simply performed four runs of Principal Component Analysis with varimax rotation. To determine the number of latent concepts measured by the respondents' attitudes, we relied on an assessment of whether the Eigenvalue of the factor was greater than one. In the case where respondent attitudes fell into two factors, the Eigenvalue of the third value was 0.85, well below the standard one. In that case, we also looked at the scree plot and noticed that the inflection point on the scree curve indicated that a two-factor solution would be most appropriate. We display the rotated factor loadings in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Factor Loadings By Target Treatment Condition**

	Immigration			Illegal Immigration		
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
<i>Enthusiasm</i>	0.206	0.073	<b>0.767</b>	0.036	<b>0.92</b>	0.060
<i>Hopeful</i>	-.018	0.001	<b>0.882</b>	0.062	<b>0.921</b>	0.021
<i>Proud</i>	0.036	0.081	<b>0.837</b>	0.002	<b>0.904</b>	0.019
<i>Anxious</i>	<b>0.835</b>	0.211	0.180	0.148	0.111	<b>0.898</b>
<i>Worried</i>	<b>0.885</b>	0.195	-.006	0.274	0.001	<b>0.894</b>
<i>Afraid</i>	<b>0.832</b>	0.256	0.078	0.431	-0.003	<b>0.724</b>
<i>Hatred</i>	0.146	<b>0.812</b>	0.224	<b>0.903</b>	-0.017	0.157
<i>Contempt</i>	0.221	<b>0.886</b>	-0.039	<b>0.888</b>	0.039	0.250
<i>Bitterness</i>	0.313	<b>0.852</b>	-.001	<b>0.840</b>	-0.059	0.409

	Illegal Immigration		Mexican	Legal Immigration	
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 1	Factor 2
<i>Enthusiasm</i>	0.07	0.062	<b>0.863</b>	0.211	<b>0.801</b>
<i>Hopeful</i>	-.104	0.013	<b>0.83</b>	0.012	<b>0.875</b>
<i>Proud</i>	0.002	0.039	<b>0.812</b>	0.138	<b>0.866</b>
<i>Anxious</i>	0.119	<b>0.865</b>	0.06	<b>0.724</b>	0.289
<i>Worried</i>	0.303	<b>0.867</b>	0.016	<b>0.812</b>	0.102
<i>Afraid</i>	0.417	<b>0.722</b>	0.069	<b>0.816</b>	0.165
<i>Hatred</i>	<b>0.875</b>	0.168	0.051	<b>0.760</b>	0.135
<i>Contempt</i>	<b>0.879</b>	0.239	-0.047	<b>0.861</b>	0.054
<i>Bitterness</i>	<b>0.849</b>	0.353	-0.068	<b>0.869</b>	0.001

The results clearly show that when three factors emerge, anxiety, aversion, and enthusiasm all separate. This occurs in all three cases where immigration is either explicitly or implicitly associated with illegal Mexican immigration. In the one case where two factors emerge, we can see one enthusiasm factor and one “negative emotion” factor, in which aversion and anxiety do *not* separate into two factors. The stipulation of “legal” immigration seems to be altering the emotional processing of this issue.

We replicated this analysis on the Knowledge networks nationally representative sample. In this dataset, respondents were asked to report their emotional response to “illegal immigration.” Based on the previous analysis, we suspected that the results here would mirror the results from the CCES sample *in the cases where immigration was implicitly or explicitly associated with Illegal Mexican immigration*. This appears to be the case, as evident in Table 2, below.

**Table 2:**

	<b>Illegal Immigration</b>		
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
<i>Enthusiasm</i>	0.146	0.086	<b>0.854</b>
<i>Hopeful</i>	-0.099	0.171	<b>0.803</b>
<i>Proud</i>	0.154	0.03	<b>0.834</b>
<i>Anxious</i>	0.209	<b>0.823</b>	0.216
<i>Worried</i>	0.252	<b>0.833</b>	0.031
<i>Afraid</i>	0.326	<b>0.782</b>	0.092
<i>Hatred</i>	<b>0.847</b>	0.167	0.094
<i>Contempt</i>	<b>0.77</b>	0.297	0.116
<i>Bitterness</i>	<b>0.823</b>	0.342	0.002

The important question now becomes, how do we substantively interpret the differences in emotional factor structures just described? In other words, what should we infer from the fact that participants’ emotions toward legal immigrants tend to load onto two factors while their emotions toward all other targets (immigration, illegal immigrants, illegal Mexican immigrants) tend to load onto three factors? In short, we argue that feelings of risk govern individuals’ emotional reactions toward legal immigrants (as measured by Anxious, Worried, Afraid), while feelings of uncertainty govern individuals’ emotional reactions toward immigrants stipulated or assumed to be illegal immigrants.



Risk and uncertainty represent two very different contexts for an individual engaged in a decision-making task (see Knight 1922). In all decision-making tasks, outcomes are uncertain. Situations vary in terms of expected probabilities, though. In some situations, individuals have some sense of the probability that various outcomes will occur, whereas in other situations individuals have no basis for assessing the probability of different outcomes. For example, most Americans have some sense of how the two major parties will fare in the upcoming midterm Congressional elections, and so, depending on their feelings about the parties, they are likely to feel varying levels of risk about the election results. But if one were to assess Americans' feelings about the upcoming elections in an obscure foreign nation or American elections to occur decades in the future, most Americans would be unable to assess the probabilities of various outcomes and thus they would feel a sense of uncertainty rather than risk.

In the context of the present analysis, feelings of anxiety and aversion should collapse into a common dimension when individuals are in a state of risk, and they should separate into distinct dimensions when individuals are in a state of uncertainty. Why? Because when anxiety loads separately onto its own factor dimension, this indicates that individuals are less certain about the probability of whether immigration by different target groups is likely to result in positive or negative outcomes. Illegal immigrants lose the benefit of the doubt granted to those who come legally (and for those who would not grant it to legal immigrants, their illegal entry is redundant). On the other hand, when individuals do sense the probability of positive or negative outcomes being generated by the introduction of different immigrant groups, their feelings of anxiety should be closely tied to their level of aversion toward that target group. In short, individuals should only feel anxiety *as a manifestation of aversion* (or a concomitant lack) when

they have a reasonably clear sense of what the group in question represents, whether positive or negative.

Focusing now on the factor structure data just presented, why would it be the case that individuals typically feel a sense of risk (i.e. their feelings of anxiety and aversion collapse) when thinking about legal immigrants and a sense of uncertainty (i.e. their feelings of anxiety and aversion separate) when thinking about immigration, illegal immigrants, and illegal Mexican immigrants? Clearly, the primary distinction between these groups is the legality of their immigration status; whereas the first group is stipulated to be legal immigrants, the other three groups either are stipulated to be illegal immigrants or, we know from previous research (see Ramakrishnan et. al. 2010), widely assumed to be illegal immigrants. Thus, according to our interpretation, information about immigrants' legal status is what determines whether individuals tend to feel uncertainty when thinking about immigration.

When people think about illegal immigrants, the data indicate that they feel a genuine sense of uncertainty about what these targets represent. In particular, it would seem that the one unique piece of information participants have about illegal immigrants removes the presumption in their favor (among those who are not aversive) about the probability of their impact on society. For instance, participants might have wondered whether illegal immigrants were habitual lawbreakers or potentially good citizens driven to desperation by difficult circumstances. If, instead, participants had a clear sense of illegal immigrants' likely impact, their feelings of anxiety should have closely tracked their feelings of aversion when thinking about illegal immigrants, and the data show that this was not the case.

In contrast, participants seemed comfortable assessing the probable impact of legal immigrants, given that their feelings of anxiety and aversion toward that target collapse into a

common dimension. We envision two possible explanations for this finding. First, participants might be generally opposed to immigration and therefore predisposed to think that negative outcomes are probable when thinking about any immigrant group. This explanation seems unlikely, though, because if it were true then all types of immigrant target groups should have elicited a two-factor solution, rather than legal immigrants alone. A second, and more likely, explanation is that participants' uncertainty about *illegal* immigrants derived solely from their inability to discern what types of people would be willing to break the law in order to immigrate. Once that uncertainty was resolved by stipulating that an immigrant group was legally authorized to be in the United States, participants apparently had sufficient information to assess the group's probable societal impact.

**Analysis 2:** As our first results show, it appears as though the target group affects whether individuals separate or combine their negative emotional responses to immigration. In our second analysis, we attempted to see whether certain individuals are more or less prone to activate their surveillance system separate from their aversion system. The Knowledge Networks data works well for this, because the target group is kept constant for all of the emotions questions. First, we expected Republicans to be the most likely to separate these emotions when evaluating illegal immigration. As evident in Table 3, this is what we find.

We also looked to see whether an individual's self-reported racial preferences affected their likelihood of factoring into two or three factors. To create a measure of whether a respondent prefers whites, Hispanics, or has no preference between the two racial groups, we subtracted the feeling thermometer scores of the Hispanics from the feeling thermometer scores of the whites. If an individual's score on this scale was negative (155 people), they reported

higher feeling thermometer scores for Hispanics. If an individual's score was zero (449 people), they reported no preference for either group. If the score was positive (398 people), their feeling thermometer scores for whites were higher than their feeling thermometer scores for Hispanics. These results are reported in Table 4.

**Table 3**

	<b>Republicans</b>			<b>Democrats</b>		<b>Independents</b>	
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2
<i>Enthusiasm</i>	0.188	0.074	<b>0.843</b>	0.177	<b>0.833</b>	<b>0.92</b>	0.175
<i>Hopeful</i>	-0.108	0.218	<b>0.78</b>	0.057	<b>0.801</b>	<b>0.781</b>	0.212
<i>Proud</i>	0.104	0.001	<b>0.856</b>	0.066	<b>0.845</b>	<b>0.874</b>	0.28
<i>Anxious</i>	0.221	<b>0.818</b>	0.196	<b>0.721</b>	0.252	<b>0.825</b>	0.329
<i>Worried</i>	0.267	<b>0.817</b>	0.047	<b>0.747</b>	0.101	0.28	<b>0.528</b>
<i>Afraid</i>	0.356	<b>0.759</b>	0.076	<b>0.774</b>	0.119	0.336	<b>0.666</b>
<i>Hatred</i>	<b>0.831</b>	0.215	0.084	<b>0.757</b>	0.052	-0.069	<b>0.86</b>

**Table 4**

	<b>Prefer Hispanics</b>		<b>Equal Preference</b>		<b>Prefer Whites</b>		
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
<i>Enthusiasm</i>	0.21	<b>0.796</b>	0.195	<b>0.85</b>	0.097	0.055	<b>0.875</b>
<i>Hopeful</i>	0.173	<b>0.84</b>	0.061	<b>0.82</b>	0.092	-0.097	<b>0.777</b>
<i>Proud</i>	0.247	<b>0.712</b>	0.12	<b>0.857</b>	0.032	0.095	<b>0.842</b>
<i>Anxious</i>	<b>0.713</b>	0.37	<b>0.736</b>	0.192	<b>0.844</b>	0.147	0.209
<i>Worried</i>	<b>0.735</b>	0.154	<b>0.77</b>	0	<b>0.814</b>	0.243	0.04
<i>Afraid</i>	<b>0.826</b>	0.252	<b>0.771</b>	0.135	<b>0.809</b>	0.267	0.017
<i>Hatred</i>	<b>0.649</b>	0.343	<b>0.706</b>	0.146	0.145	<b>0.859</b>	0.03
<i>Contempt</i>	<b>0.808</b>	0.167	<b>0.771</b>	0.134	0.216	<b>0.797</b>	0.096
<i>Bitterness</i>	<b>0.833</b>	0.144	<b>0.822</b>	0.08	0.31	<b>0.81</b>	0.090

Individuals who prefer white people saw separation in their emotional responses to illegal immigrants, while those who prefer Hispanics or had no preference saw their responses to separate into two factors.

Keeping with our assessment of risk and uncertainty, it appears as though Republicans and individuals who report warmer feelings for whites seem to be operating under uncertainty and Democrats, Independents, and individuals who report preferring Hispanics or no preference seem to be operating in the world of risk.

There is no immediately clear reason for this assessment, so we offer several potential explanations. First, it is important to remember that *all* of these analyses concern illegal immigration, which we found to separate into three factors when respondents are pooled. In this case, Republicans and people who prefer whites behave as we discussed in the preceding section, while Democrats, Independents, people who prefer Hispanics, and people who have no racial preference diverge from our previous analysis.

Considering party identification separately, it is possible that Republicans do not know what the impact of an illegal immigrant will be, while Democrats already assign a known probability to illegal immigrants. Media coverage of this issue is diverse, and it is plausible that Republicans consume media such that they are encountering confusing and conflicting descriptions of the impact of immigrants, thereby increasing their uncertainty. Recently, powerful Republicans have diverged on the issue of immigration, with Senator John McCain (among others) pushing for a fence between the US and Mexico, while Mayor Michael Bloomberg of New York City has recently expressed support for amnesty for immigrants currently in the US. Democrats may feel more confident in their assessment of the impact illegal immigrants will have in the US, perhaps due to more consistent cues by Democratic leaders in the media, thereby moving them into the domain of risk. Now, rather than uncertainty about the impact of immigration, their determination of the overall impact of immigrants is more

based on their feelings of whether they like immigrants, regardless of their illegal status. This allows the emotional responses to be expressed by two, rather than three factors.

Our differences based on the racial preferences of the respondents are also interesting. Again, the group which factors differently (people who prefer whites) are operating in the world of uncertainty. Perhaps this is also due to an unknown element to how new, illegal immigrants, will affect American culture. If a respondent prefers *Hispanics*, or has no preference at all, the racial component of an immigrant is known and muted on their preference, but they still may be uncertain as to the impact of the *illegal* immigrant. In other words, in the case of people who are not predisposed to prefer whites, they will form their evaluations based simply on how they feel about people who break laws. Of course, many more tests would need to be performed to come to a more confident assessment of this.

### **Analysis 3: Moderation and Mediation**

[We hypothesize that these different factor structures might drive unit heterogeneity with respect to the causal priority of affect, rationales, and policy attitudes. Specifically, that those with surveillance activation in the three factor case will support cognitive appraisal more than affective primacy, and vice versa. That said, give recent work, Bullock et. al. (2010) on mediation analysis, we are not sanguine about being able to cleanly test these hypotheses with the current data. Any advice?]

### **Analysis 4:**

[We hypothesize that surveillance scores in the three-factor case will not (or only weakly) predict attitudes toward *legal* immigration, indicating that such anxiety is not merely a mask for aversion among sophisticates. If we are wrong, then looking for education effects might illuminate possible “symbolic ethnocentrism” – though we are hesitant to go there.]

### **Conclusion**

[We’re not quite sure what to conclude about the big questions yet.]

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