

HOW PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC POLICY AND MEDIA DEPICTIONS OF UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS RELATE TO PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

by

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(Under the Direction of Edward Delgado-Romero)

ABSTRACT

There is a dearth of literature regarding the psychological impact of oppressive sociocultural structures and attitudes related to immigration on various racial and ethnic groups, especially for Latinx individuals and communities. The current research investigated how peoples' perceptions of and exposure to immigration policy and media depictions affect perceived stress, self-efficacy, and beliefs of meritocracy. Participants were recruited from a student research pool in a Southeastern College of Education at a public university and, because Latinx are frequently targeted in immigration policy and messages, a nationwide sample was also recruited. A multivariate linear regression model was implemented to explore the relationship between the different variables. The findings show that the participants who reported more exposure to hostile media depictions about immigrants experienced higher levels of stress and fewer merit-based beliefs. Participants who demonstrated increased emotional reactivity to restrictive immigration policies also showed increased stress levels and less merit-based beliefs. The findings have implications for mental health providers and political actors who work with Latinx clients as well as for educators who train future instructors. Ultimately, the findings underscore the importance of the role of psychologists in not only serving individuals, but also in

challenging system inequities and training future educators to incorporate a social justice paradigm into teaching preparation programs.

INDEX WORDS: Latinx, public policy, media, undocumented immigrants, self-efficacy, perceived stress, perceptions of meritocracy

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CHAPTER 1

Statement of the Problem

Counseling psychology has a longstanding history of embracing human diversity and advocating for increased social justice efforts within the psychological profession (Delgado-Romero, Lau, & Shulman, 2012). Although effecting change on an individual level is undeniably important, counseling psychologists have argued that change ultimately has to occur on a systemic level to remedy the circumstances generating emotional and psychological distress (e.g., Horne, 2013). Because an individual's distress is not independent of society, culture, and context, psychologists' ability to identify and address social inequities as well as unjust institutional structures are necessary for helping individuals achieve long-term optimal psychological health (Chang, Crethar, & Ratts, 2010; Chang, Hays, & Millikens, 2009).

Currently, undocumented immigrants residing in the United States (US) encounter significant legislative, social, and economic barriers that may impede their psychological well-being. These obstacles include, but are not limited to: reduced access to public resources, higher education, and employment. These systemic, cultural, and institutional challenges result in heightened susceptibility to discrimination, profiling, and hate crimes (Kantamneni, Dharmalingam, Tate, Perlman, Majmudar & Shada, 2016). Undocumented immigrants are regularly accused of placing a disproportionate burden on the healthcare system, introducing diseases, and engaging in criminal activity, despite research indicating the contrary (Ruiz, Gallardo, & Delgado-Romero, 2013; Stupi, Chiricos, & Gertz, 2016). While estimates vary, the current population of undocumented immigrants in the US is believed to be 11.2 million people

(Melo, Colson, & Ramirez, 2014). Approximately 84% of undocumented immigrants living in the US are of South or Central American origin. In 2016, while Mexican border crossings are decreasing, gang and drug-related violence in South America as well as limited economic opportunities are causing an influx of immigrants to the U.S. from countries in Central America, particularly Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras (Morris McEwen, Boyle, & Hilfinger Messias, 2015). Many of those immigrants have been unaccompanied Central American children entering the US (Morris McEwen, Boyle, & Hilfinger Messias, 2015). However, despite the fact that undocumented immigration is often discussed in the media as a recent phenomenon, as of 2006, 66% of undocumented immigrants had lived in the US for more than a decade (Hipolito-Delgado & Mann, 2012). In 2011, over 50% of the undocumented population had arrived in the US between 1995 and 2004 (Chomsky, 2014). These data indicate that many undocumented immigrants have been in the US for quite some time.

Hird, Reese, and Shilvock (2004) argue that, while America is often considered a nation of immigrants, and many Americans can proudly trace their heritage to ancestors who arrived in the United States as immigrants generations ago, the welcome inscription of the Statue of Liberty-“Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free” does not seem to convey accurately the feelings of some Americans who are increasingly concerned about the effects of immigration” (p. 146). In 2014, President Barack Obama created the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) program by executive order. This program would have deferred the deportation of undocumented parents of US citizens, and would have protected as many as five million undocumented immigrants from deportation. However, Texas, along with 25 other states, challenged the legality of DAPA, which

was established without congressional action. In *United States v. Texas*, the Supreme Court, in a 4-4 ruling, blocked the Obama administration's immigration initiatives in 2016.

Undocumented immigrants often experience the pervasive threat of deportation, discrimination, and social isolation, which are associated with negative mental health outcomes (APA Presidential Task Force on Immigration, 2012). Notwithstanding undocumented immigrants' resilience, this group is, due to these aforementioned barriers, more prone to experience depression, anxiety, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress, and decreased self-efficacy. Additionally, undocumented immigrants typically underuse counseling services due to systemic barriers, fear of deportation, and uncertainty surrounding confidentiality practices (Kantamneni et al., 2016). Furthermore, due to federal and state laws, there is also an underutilization of healthcare services, particularly with respect to preventative treatments. One study, using data from a 1999-2006 Medical Expenditure Panel survey, found that non-citizen immigrants had lower health care-related expenditures as compared to US natives and naturalized citizen. Despite their lower healthcare expenditures, non-citizen immigrants reported higher rates of uncompensated care costs for healthcare visits than US natives (Morris McEwen, Boyle, & Hilfinger Messias, 2015). The lack of legal access to certain services such as federally-funded insurance and the continued threat of deportation are likely related to decreased use of healthcare treatment.

Similar to the lack of health care options available to undocumented immigrants, there are a number of barriers faced by undocumented immigrants in obtaining education. Only 60% of undocumented immigrants finish high school as compared to 92% of US-born adults. Additionally, while approximately 65,000 undocumented students graduate high school annually, only five to ten percent of the undocumented student population attend college (Gonzales, 2007).

This trend is likely attributable to an inability to procure federal finance assistance as well as various state-specific residency restrictions (e.g., Georgia), rather than a lack of desire to attend college.

Purpose of the Study

A number of multicultural and feminist psychologists have argued that the next natural progression in research will be to attend to systemic issues and examine beliefs, attitudes, as well as structural inequalities that marginalize groups (Comas-Diaz, 2012; Vasquez, 2012). In particular, Comas-Diaz (2000) has called for an ethno-political approach to research in which psychologists examine the psycho-political impact of marginalization, discrimination, and the political subjugation of people, groups, and, ultimately, societies. Undocumented immigrants residing in the US encounter significant legislative, social, and economic barriers that may threaten their psychological well-being. Disparities created by restrictive public policy are a form of marginalization, which highlight the increasingly negative attitudes toward undocumented immigrants, particularly Latinx undocumented immigrants. Although an increasing number of studies (e.g., Rostosky, Riggle, Horne, & Miller, 2009) have examined the influence of widespread cultural attitudes on individuals' personal development and emotional well-being, a gap in the psychological research literature exists regarding the effect of immigration-related public policy and media depictions on individuals. While the changes in national, state, and local immigration laws have been highlighted and discussed in the media, there is a paucity of research that examines the impact of these laws on individuals, families, and groups. The purpose of this study was to investigate how individuals' perceptions of immigration-related public policy and media depictions affect their perceived stress levels, belief in meritocracy, and general self-efficacy.

Research Question

The overarching question for this study is whether perceptions of immigration-related policy and media influence self-efficacy, perceived stress, and perceptions of meritocracy?

Definitions and Operational Terms

An overview of terms and concepts referenced in this study are provided below.

Undocumented Immigrant: An undocumented immigrant is defined as a citizen from another country residing in the US without authorization or residence papers (Hipolito-Delgado & Mann, 2012). It is important to note that the term “illegal immigrant” is purposely avoided since the term “illegal” carries negative sociopolitical connotations (Hipolito-Delgado & Mann, 2012).

Latinx: A general term used to designate individuals with Spanish-speaking country ancestry (Balderas, 2016; Comas-Diaz, 2001). However, it is important to be cognizant of the fact that this is not a homogenous group. The term Latinx functions “as a superset of many nationalities” (Comas-Diaz, 2001, p. 116) and is composed of individuals from a number of countries with a wide range of cultural values, beliefs, and experiences.

Perceptions of Meritocracy: This term refers to the extent by which people view their country as satisfying the fundamental tenets of a meritocracy. These principles represent the belief that individuals control their own accomplishments and failures, have equal opportunities for success, can obtain social mobility, and are equally rewarded for personal efforts and skills regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, or cultural status (Garcia, 2001).

Self-Efficacy: A term originally coined by Alfred Bandura which refers to a person's belief in their ability to behave in a manner that obtains specific performance-based achievements (Bandura, 1977).

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Literature

History of Immigration Policies

In order to more fully comprehend the barriers encountered by undocumented immigrants, it is important to understand the history of immigration policy and reform in the US as well as the current ideologies surrounding immigration. Immigration is a highly charged and politically divisive topic that has been debated within the political arena, as well as in the media and popular press. In fact, immigration has arisen as a central domestic policy issue in the 2016 US presidential election with stated positions ranging from a clear path to citizenship for immigrants with undocumented status to mass deportation (Nowicki, 2015). Since President Reagan enacted the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1986, the federal government has spent over \$187 billion on immigration enforcement, with \$18 billion spent in 2012 alone (Morris McEwen, Boyle, & Hilfinger Messias, 2015). Attitudes and biases towards immigrants have been endorsed by politicians, proliferated through news reports, and fostered through erroneous beliefs such as undocumented immigrants steal jobs (Flores, 2010). Many opponents of immigration reform also express fears that immigrants are uneducated and place an undue burden on public resources (Ruiz, Galladro, & Delgado-Romero, 2013). The promulgation of these inaccuracies serves to heighten negative views of immigrants and cultivates an atmosphere of hostility toward immigrants who are attempting to create a successful life in the US, while maintaining their own cultural values and traditions.

Since 1875, immigration laws have, with some exceptions, fallen under the exclusive purview of the federal government (Melo, Coulson, & Ramirez, 2014). Specifically, in 1875, the Supreme Court declared in *Chy Lung v. Freeman* that “the passage of laws which concern the admission of citizens and subjects of foreign nations to our shores belong to congress, and not to the states” (Melo, Coulson, & Ramirez, 2014, p. 604). However, this area of law is multifaceted and highly contentious, blending issues surrounding race, economics, national security, nativism, and xenophobia (Hird, Reese, & Shilvock, 2004). While the federal government has, for all intents and purposes, the exclusive power to pass and enforce immigration-related legislation, states are often able to enact their own immigration policies, particularly surrounding immigrants’ day-to-day activities and access to state public resources. Historically, immigration laws and ideologies have revealed contradictory intentions, which are frequently aimed at either restricting or affording access to employment, education, and public services (Hilfinger Messias, Morris McEwen, & Boyle, 2015).

There are a number of factors that influence the execution of immigration policy such as political, economic, racial, and terrorism components (Martinez et al., 2013). Surges in restrictive and exclusionary immigration policies and ideologies are, at times, connected with periods of economic decline (Hilfinger Messias, Morris McEwen, & Boyle, 2015). By way of example, during the Great Depression, a number of politicians argued that the repatriation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans would decrease unemployment levels by opening jobs for US-born citizens (Crane, 2016). From 1929 to 1939, enforcement officials conducted a series of raids of public places and private residences. During this time, it is believed that somewhere between one to two million individuals exited the US through deportation or voluntary

repatriation, with more than half these individuals being native-born Mexican American citizens (Crane, 2016).

Similarly, in 1994, during a period of financial crisis, California voters passed Proposition 187, commonly referred to as the “Save Our State” initiative, by a margin of three to two (Smith & Tarallo, 1995). This ballot measure sought to bar undocumented immigrants from any form of social services such as public education, tax-funded healthcare, and welfare (Hilfinger Messias, Morris McEwen, & Boyle, 2015; Diaz, Saenz, & Kwan, 2011). The statewide initiative stated that “the People of California find and declare: That they have suffered and are suffering economic hardship caused by the presence of illegal aliens in the state” (Lennon, 1998, p. 81). While Proposition 187 was never enacted, this ballot measure became the impetus for Republican Governor Pete Wilson’s anti-immigration re-election campaign in 1994 (Chomsky, 2014; Smith & Tarallo, 1995). During the campaign season, Governor Wilson published a full page advertisement on immigration in all of the major California newspapers, as well as the national dailies, The New York Times, and The Washington Post. The ad, which was written as an open letter to President Clinton, insisted that the US government stop illegal immigration to the state of California. Moreover, the letter demanded that the US government compensate the state of California for the expense of federally mandated programs that provide health, education, and social services for undocumented individuals (Smith & Tarallo, 1995).

While the Democratic challenger had, at one point, a 20-point advantage in the race, Governor Wilson successfully won the gubernatorial election with a 55% to 40% lead (Smith & Tarallo, 1994). According to Chomsky (2014), Governor Wilson’s “anti-immigrant with anti-Washington bombast” (p. 192) prompted President Clinton, arguably in an effort to appease California’s growing anti-immigrant electorate, to enact Operation Gatekeeper in 1994 and, later,

the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) in 1996. PRWORA barred post-enactment undocumented immigrants and non-citizens access to federal public benefits such as healthcare services, education, food assistance, public housing, and unemployment insurance (Diaz, Saenz, & Kwan, 2011; Hilfinger Messias, Morris McEwen, & Boyle, 2015.). This act, which was passed with bipartisan support, dramatically changed the country's welfare system (Chomsky, 2014).

Since the enactment of PRWORA, the welfare system has become increasingly complicated to navigate, especially for mixed-status families. Members of the same family may be eligible for different services depending on their legal status. A US-born child, for instance, might be permitted to access the Supplemental Nutrition Assistant Program (SNAP), while a foreign-born sibling would not be able eligible for this program (Chomsky, 2014). Similarly, while non-citizen immigrants are ineligible for housing benefits under PRWORA, they are able to reside in public and assisted housing if residing with a qualified native-born family member (Chomsky, 2014). Furthermore, since the federal government no longer allocates public finances for undocumented and non-citizen immigrants, post-enactment immigrants are primarily subsidized through state funds (Morris McEwen, Boyle, & Hilfinger Messias, 2015).

Following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, counterterrorism efforts have become increasingly interconnected with fiscal and social immigration policies. Subsequent to the attack, the USA-PATRIOT Act was enacted in 2001 under the Bush Administration (Chomsky, 2014; Hilfinger Messias, Morris McEwen, & Boyle, 2015). This law notably increased the offenses by which an individual can be deported. The government was also given the legal authority to detain immigrants for an unspecified time period without a hearing (Chomsky, 2014). Moreover, in 2003, The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was

formed, and immigration-related tasks were divided amongst three agencies within DHS (Hilfinger Messias, Morris McEwen, & Boyle, 2015). These three agencies are the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) (Hilfinger Messias, Morris McEwen, & Boyle, 2015). The USA-PATRIOT Act and the establishment of DHS ultimately reinforced and enhanced federal controls against current as well as potential immigrants and, arguably, promoted nationwide anti-immigrant attitudes (Chomsky, 2014).

Widespread anti-immigrant sentiments are exemplified in the recent political focus on the perceived permeability of the US-Mexico border. President Donald Trump, stated that “when Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best. They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with them. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists” (Phillips, 2017). In order to decrease border crossings, Trump has called for building a large wall that would stretch across the length of the US and Mexico border. Trump also added that the Mexican government would be forced to fund the wall even though immigration had fallen, and, during a May 2016 televised interview on the *O’Reilly Factor*, Trump declared “[Former President of Mexico Vicente Fox], get your money ready because you’re going to pay for the wall.” The structures and policies surrounding the maintenance of the US-Mexico border have notably changed in the past decade. Specifically, laws and regulations regarding border security have become increasingly militarized with a number of policies enacted aimed at strengthening border security (Morris McEwen, Boyle, & Hilfinger Messias, 2015). In 2010, for example, the US sent 1,299 National Guard troops to the US-Mexico border, which resulted in additional expenditures of \$660 million for taxpayers (Slack, Martínez, Lee, & Whiteford, 2016).

Many scholars refer to the 1990s and early 2000s as the “Gatekeeper Era” due to the increased militarization actions (Slack, Martínez, Lee, & Whiteford, 2016). The Secure Fence Act, for instance, was passed with bipartisan support under the Bush administration in 2006. This act authorized the construction of hundreds of miles of fencing across the southern border and increased security infrastructure including cameras, satellites, as well as unmanned aerial vehicles (Hilfinger Messias, Morris McEwen, & Boyle, 2015). According to Cornelius (2011), the building of the border fence resulted in roughly \$2.4 billion in cost to the taxpayers from 2006 to 2010. The US government also provided \$17.1 billion for border enforcements in 2010 alone (Slack, Martínez, Lee, & Whiteford, 2016). Of the \$17.1 billion, ICE was allotted \$5.8 billion and CBP was given \$11.3 billion (Slack, Martínez, Lee, & Whiteford, 2016).

Furthermore, there have been increased reports of violence between border patrol officers and civilians. By way of example, 15 year-old Sergio Adrián Hernández Güereca, in a cross-border shooting, was killed by a border patrol agent for allegedly throwing rocks across the border wall in 2010. The teenager’s family filed a legal suit in which it was argued that shooting violated the fourth and fifth amendments of the United States Constitution. However, The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the the border patrol agent was immune from any lawsuits. Since Sergio was a Mexican citizen on the Mexican side of the border, the court determined that Sergio did not have any established rights under the United States Constitution. A few years later, an unarmed 16-year old Mexican teenager, who was throwing rocks across the border wall, was fatally shot 10 times by a Border Patrol Agent (Morris McEwen, Boyle, & Hilfinger Messias, 2015). In 2015, approximately three years after the shooting, the border patrol agent was indicted by a federal grand jury for second-degree murder. In an interview with *The New York Times*, Lee Gerernt, an ACLU attorney working with the Antonio family, explained that this case raises the

question whether the Constitution applies beyond the US (Binelli, 2016). At the present, the extraterritorial applicability of the US constitutions on cross-border killings remains unclear and, consequently, border agents are often not held to the same standard as other law enforcement agents.

During the Obama administration, a record 2.5 million undocumented individuals and families were deported, which greatly surpasses the number of deportations carried out by any previous administration (Morris McEwen, Boyle, & Hilfinger Messias, 2015). According to PEW Research Center (2014), the surge in deportation numbers can be primarily attributed to an increased number of individuals removed for reasons other than a criminal conviction. During the 2013 fiscal year, 438,421 undocumented immigrants were deported (PEW Research Center, 2014). However, of these individuals, 240,000 did not have a previous criminal conviction (Pew Research Center, 2014). Moreover, individuals who have criminal records were typically guilty of minor, non-violent offenses. In illustration of this point, more than half of the 391,953 immigrants deported by ICE in 2011 did not have a previous criminal history (Chomsky, 2014). However, of the 188,380 individuals who had been charged with a criminal violation, 60% were guilty of non-violent offenses such as minor drug crimes, immigration violations, or driving infractions. The PEW Research Center (2014) also reported that 83% of deportations occurred without a court appearance in front of a judge and, for those who did have hearings, 84% (Chomsky, 2014) lacked legal representation and many also lacked bilingual representation. Detained immigrants and asylum-seekers can be held for months and, in some cases, years in for-profit detention centers as they submit to deportation procedures that will decide whether or not they are permitted to remain in the US. While Amnesty International found that the average detainment period was 10 months, some individuals have been detained for up to four years. The

increasing number of deportations also have occurred at the same time as the population of undocumented immigrants in US has leveled off, partially in response to changes in economic growth potential in the US (Ruiz, Gallardo, & Delgado-Romero, 2013).

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) reported that over the past 15 years, the detention system has expanded with DHS detaining 363,000 immigrants in more than 250 detention centers nationwide in 2010. Aviva Chomsky (2014), a professor and coordinator of Latin American Studies at Salem State University, notes that “almost all those deported were, like most undocumented immigrants, members of communities with jobs, homes, and families”. According to the Pew Research Center, it is estimated that 9 million individuals are part of a mixed-status household in which one or more family members are undocumented. Children who are living in Latinx mixed-status families are an increasing prevalent group in the US (Chomsky, 2014). While the fear of detainment or deportation affects all undocumented immigrants, mixed-documentation status families often live with the apprehension that a family member can be seized and detained at any time, which can result in negative emotional states such as anger and feelings of vulnerability, as well as helplessness (Balderas, Delgado-Romero, & Singh, 2016; Morris McEwen, Boyle, & Hilfinger Messias, 2015). During Pope Francis’ 2015 visit to the US, six year-old California-born Sophie Cruz made headlines across the globe when she hand-delivered a letter to the Pope. The letter read “Pope Francis, I want to tell you that my heart is sad and I would like to ask you to speak with the president and the Congress in legalizing my parents because every day I am scared that one day they will take them away from me. I believe that I have the right to live with my parents, I have the right to be happy” (Downes, 2015, para. 4). The letter conveys the impact of the threat of deportation experienced by many mixed-status families.

According to the DHS Office of the Inspector General, approximately 108,000 parents were deported between 1997 and 2007. Additionally, nearly 88,000 US-citizen children were separated from a legal permanent resident parent between 1997 and 2007 as the result of deportation. Encarnacion Bail Romero, an undocumented woman from Guatemala, for instance, was seized following an ICE raid at a Missouri poultry processing plant in 2007 (Castillo, 2012). While she was detained, her 6-month old son was removed from her custody and eventually adopted by another family. After a series of court battles, Bail Romero was ultimately deported and her parental rights were terminated (Castillo, 2012; Chomsky, 2014). Immigration raids and deportations pursued by ICE that divide US-citizen children from their immigrant parents has become a nationwide crisis. In 2011, 22% of individuals deported were parents of US citizens, and more than 5,000 US citizen children were residing in foster care due to their parents being deported or held in immigration (Chomsky, 2014). The US has initiated in 2016 a new wave of nationwide deportation raids. As a case in point, ICE, in a coordinated multistate effort, swept private residences in Georgia, North Carolina, and Texas on the weekend of January 2, 2016. These raids were aimed at detaining undocumented immigrants and children who recently arrived from Central America. During this time, 121 undocumented immigrants, primarily women and children, were detained by ICE agents (Constable, 2016; Gomez, 2016; Hernandez & Glenza, 2016; SPCL, 2016).

The Southern Poverty Law Center (2016) reported that many of these raids were pursued without a warrant to enter of home, which is legally required irrespective of an individual's legal status. Rene Morales, for instance, recalled that dozens of armed federal agents arrived at his suburban Atlanta home around 4:30 AM on January 2, 2016 (Constable, 2016). Despite having a work permit and an order of supervision with ICE, Rene's sister, Rosa Vargas Morales, and two

of her three children (17 and 11 years of age) were apprehended by authorities and sent to a detainment facility in Texas. When Rene requested a copy of the warrant, he was warned by an agent to “Be quiet or I’ll arrest you!” (SPLC, 2016, para 3). Rosa had fled Guatemala in 2014 after observing a mass killing and receiving messages from gang members threatening to kidnap her youngest daughter (Constable, 2016). During an interview with *The Washington Post*, Rene expressed that “Together we were a family, and we made this house a home. Now there is nothing” (para. 17). The massive deportation raids have fostered anxiety and fear within many immigrant communities throughout the US.

Compounding immigrants’ fears of deportation, immigrants who are involved in deportation proceedings often face numerous legal disadvantages. Eagly and Shafer (2015) conducted a nationality analysis of immigration court representation utilizing data from over 1.2 million deportation cases. Results from the study indicate that there are notable disparities in procuring counsel by nationality. Between 2007 and 2012, Mexican (21% representation), Honduran (23%), Guatemalan (30%), and Nicaraguan (35%) individuals were among the least likely to be represented by an attorney in removal proceedings. By contrast, Chinese (92% representation), Indian (71%), and Haitian (71%) individuals had comparatively higher rates of legal representation. Eagly and Shafer also found that there was an inverse relationship between detention rates by nationality and representation rates. As a case in point, Mexicans comprised 78% of the detained individuals, the highest rate of the major nationality groups assessed. While Mexican individuals were detained at a high rate, they had the lowest rates of legal representation. Conversely, Chinese individuals composed 4% of the detained population, but had the highest rates of representation. Findings from this study provide preliminary support that Latinos may be disproportionately targeted by law enforcement.

It is important to note that immigration laws and restrictions are not only determined on a federal level, but on a state and local level as well. While immigration law, in most circumstances, falls within the purview of the federal government, the relative absence of comprehensive federal legislation has enabled states to promote their own interests through enacting state and local immigration policies (Potochnicks, 2014). According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCLS), there were 216 immigration state laws enacted in the US in 2015, which was a 26% increase from the 171 enacted legislation in 2014 (NCSL, 2016). In addition, during 2015, the number of state resolutions grew to 274 as compared to 117 resolutions in 2014 (NCSL, 2016).

The specific restrictions placed on immigrants are often determined and frequently reflect the prevailing sociocultural beliefs about the manner in which individuals entered the state. In Georgia, for instance, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Enforcement Act, H.B.87, was enacted in May 2011 (Baxter, 2011). The anti-immigration law criminalizes sheltering or transporting undocumented immigrants, enforces severe penalties for providing false papers for undocumented immigrants, and provides police officers with the legal authority to check the immigration status of any individual that they suspect to be in the country illegally (Baxter, 2011). The political debate surrounding the adoption of the act has arguably contributed to hostile and unsupportive attitudes towards immigrants in Georgia. The restrictive nature of the bill has had a number of consequences not only for the undocumented immigrants themselves, but also on the entire economy of Georgia (Baxter, 2011; Lyubansky, Harris, Baker, & Lippard, 2013). For undocumented immigrants, the law underscores the atmosphere of suspicion and hostility that pervades the state's political perspective. Many of the undocumented immigrants who had resided in Georgia chose to relocate to other states. As a direct consequence of this trend, Georgia's agricultural, hotel, and restaurant industries encountered severe labor shortages. Notwithstanding Georgia Governor Deal's assertion

that restrictive immigration policies would create 11,000 job opportunities for Georgia residents, reports suggest that Georgia lost around 3,000 jobs and the Pew Hispanic Center estimated that in 2011 the state lost more than one billion dollars due to the scarcity of undocumented immigrant workers (Baxter, 2011; Smith, 2012).

Notwithstanding the well-documented negative consequences of H.B.87 on the Georgia economy, Republican State Senator Joshua McKoon of Columbus proposed Senate Bill 6 (SB 6) in November 2014, which initially suggested banning state licenses for individuals who have received humanitarian reprieve from deportation through the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA). DACA essentially provides temporarily deferred status from deportation to qualifying young adults who immigrated to the US prior to the age of 16 (Homeland Security, 2015). Since 2012, the federal government has provided deportation deferrals to 18,150 individuals in Georgia through this program (Torres, 2015). Furthermore, McKoon indicated that his bill would not provide exceptions for other groups of individuals who were granted deferred action such as battered spouses or parents with seriously ill children. A revised version of SB 6 was passed by the Senate in 2016 that mandates separate Georgia driver's licenses and identification cards for immigrants who have deportation deferrals and work permits through DACA. The new identification cards would incorporate different colors and fonts than the normal Georgia driver's licenses and identification cards. In addition, these cards would display the label "No lawful status". A fingerprint would also need to be submitted in order to receive these cards (Redmon, 2016). Some critics of SB 6 have argued that Georgia's "scarlet letter laws" have the potential for dehumanizing and isolating undocumented immigrants.

With the number of deportations expanding under the Obama administration, ICE has increasingly decided to lease beds from outside facilities (Rappleye & Riordan Seville, 2012).

When Georgia passed H.B.87, state politicians were simultaneously lobbying to house immigrant detainees in in-state facilities. *The Nation* (2012) reported that Georgia Representative Jack Kingston, in an effort to procure business from ICE, wrote a letter in which he stated that the Georgia-based Irwin County Detention Center “is prepared to charge significantly less than the current rate, only \$45.00 per detainee per day. This cost reduction will result in annual savings of over \$10 million to the Department and the tax payer”. According to Chomsky (2014), there is a pattern of private prisons specializing in detaining immigrants. Undocumented individuals are often “healthy” as well as “non-violent”, and, thereby, “one of the most profitable inmates to house” (p. 108). The attempt to secure contract for in-state detainee facilities from ICE was seen as a means of improving local economies.

State policy regarding immigration can differ dramatically. By way of example, there are a number of different state policies regarding the use of the E-Verify program, which is a federal employment eligibility verification system that identifies legal status. This service is offered by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services Administration in partnership with the Social Security System (Rosenblum & Hoyt, 2011). While President Bush signed an Executive Order in 2008 mandating federal contractors and subcontractors to implement E-Verify, states have their own respective laws that specify the utilization of this system. Alabama, for instance, passed HB 56 Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act in 2011 (NumbersUSA Education and Research Foundation, 2011). This law requires all public and private businesses in Alabama to use the E-Verify system. Companies that do not adhere to this mandate can have their business licenses suspended. Conversely, Illinois amended the Right to Privacy in the Workplace Act by enacting HB 1744, which prohibits Illinois-based employers from using the E-Verify System until the E-Verify database and site issues are resolved (NumbersUSA Education

and Research Foundation, 2011). In a similar vein, California passed AB 1236 in 2011, which bans state municipalities from implementing mandatory E-Verify ordinances (NumbersUSA Education and Research Foundation, 2011).

The right of each individual state to determine the mandated use of E-Verify has been a contentious issue. In illustration of this point, The Legal Arizona Worker's Act (LAWA) was signed into law in Arizona on July 2007 (Flores, 2010; Garcia, 2012; Rosenblum & Hoyt, 2011). Among other things, this law mandates the use of the E-Verify program and imposes various degrees of sanctions such as the revocation or suspension of business licenses for state employers who knowingly hire undocumented immigrants. A coalition of businesses and various civil rights groups disputed the constitutionality of LAWA. After several lower court decisions, the case was brought to the Supreme Court to determine if federal immigration law preempted LAWA's E-Verify mandate (Garcia, 2012). Ultimately, in *Chamber of Commerce of the United States v. Whiting*, the Supreme Court, with a five member majority, ruled in favor of states' rights to require employers' participation in the E-Verify program in May 2011. In his dissent, Justice Stephen G. Breyer, joined by Justice Ruth Badar Ginsberg, argued that E-Verify provisions place an undue burden on employers and could result in unlawful discrimination in the workplace. Since the implementation of LAWA, a number of states such as Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Utah have enacted similar policies (Bohn, Lofstrom, & Raphael, 2014).

In addition, the mandated use of E-Verify has been vociferously debated by advocates for immigrants and civil liberties groups, such as the ACLU. These groups have asserted that the mandated use of E-Verify could prompt millions of undocumented workers to "go underground" resulting in their increased vulnerability to exploitation (Narayan, 2011). In addition, concerns have been expressed surrounding the accuracy and privacy of information provided by E-Verify.

A 2010 report by the Government Accounting Office found that 80,000 Americans were withheld their legal right to secure employment due to errors in the E-Verify system (Narayan, 2011).

Along with states' rights to set employment standards, states also have, to some variable extent, the ability to influence the accessibility of state public resources for undocumented immigrants, even in regards to medical services. Individuals with kidney failure, for instance, typically receive dialysis every two or three days, and approximately 5,500 undocumented immigrants in the US need this type of treatment service (Campbell, Sanoff, & Rosner, 2010). However, due to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, Emergency Medicaid is the only funded insurance available to undocumented immigrants and legal immigrants who have resided in the US for less than 5 years. Federal legislation generally defines an emergency medical condition as “manifesting itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity” in which a lack of medical attention would result in “placing the patient’s health in serious jeopardy” with “serious impairments to bodily functions” or “serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part” (Campbell, Sanoff, & Rosner, 2010). However, the specific guidelines of emergency care and the treatments available through the Medicaid programs markedly differ on a state by state basis. As a case in point, New York and North Carolina permit Emergency Medicaid to cover on-going outpatient dialysis to patients with undocumented legal status (Campbell, Sanoff, & Rosner, 2010). While Georgia similarly covered long term dialysis services for undocumented immigrants, the state legislature modified their policy in 2006, citing the financial strains placed on Medicaid system in providing these services. Ultimately, due to the Emergency Medicare guidelines in most states, doctors are

typically forced to delay treatment until there are dangerous concentrations of potassium in the blood stream or fluid present in the lungs.

Media and Politics

Prior to any changes in state and federal law, immigration topics are explored and debated through all forms of media, including print, internet, social media, and broadcast news. With respect to the media, Kamenova (2013) observes that the “media’s ability to create powerful images that touch not only the logical thinking, but also the collective subconscious is undeniable” (p. 170). Students with undocumented status contend with discrimination and hostility on a regular basis partially due to the negative perceptions of undocumented immigrants in American media and culture. Anti-immigrant groups often promulgate incorrect assumptions and information that vilifies undocumented individuals through media sources such as television, social media, and political ads (Kim & Diaz, 2013; Ruiz, Gallardo, & Delgado-Romero, 2013). Kim and Diaz (2013) note that this population subset has been accused of overusing state social services, not paying taxes, participating in criminal activity, and stealing jobs from US citizens. These all too frequent accusations are unsubstantiated given that less than 1 percent of immigrants migrate to the US for social services (Kim & Diaz, 2013). Individuals with undocumented legal status are actually less likely to utilize public services when compared to US citizens because of their acute fear of heightened visibility (Kim & Diaz, 2013). Moreover, nationwide polls of US residents indicate that in a three year period from 2004 to 2007 there has been a nearly 80% increase in individuals who believe that there is a growing linkage between undocumented immigrants and crime. Similarly, the belief that immigrants have had a detrimental effect on social moral values increased from 29.1% to 40.2% in the same measured time period (McKeever, Riffe, & Carpentier, 2012).

The US media utilizes a number of terms to describe unauthorized foreign nationals without visas. In particular, the labels “illegal aliens”, “illegal immigrants”, and “undocumented immigrants” are typically used synonymously in public rhetoric (Ommundsen, van der veer, Larsen, & Eilertsen, 2014). However, notwithstanding individuals’ seemingly interchangeable use of these terms, these labels appear to have markedly different connotations. Ommundsen, van der Kees, Larsen, and Eilertsen (2014) conducted a study to examine the influence of these labels on individuals’ assessments of and attitudes towards unauthorized immigrants. For the study, undergraduate students in psychology were randomly administered different versions of a scale assessing attitudinal beliefs surrounding unauthorized immigration. There were three versions of the measure with no difference in content other than the term used to label unauthorized immigrants. The researchers found that the label “illegal immigrant” was associated with less positive perceptions as compared to “undocumented immigrant” and “illegal alien”.

In a similar vein, over a four-year period, Diaz, Saenz, and Kwan (2011) examined changes in how students ($N = 3,195$) at a large state university in Arizona perceived undocumented Mexican immigrants. Specifically, the researchers measured participants’ beliefs toward undocumented Mexican immigrants with respect to housing, employment, values, social welfare, citizenship, healthcare, and education issues. Diaz, Saenz, and Kwan additionally assessed economic concomitants to the attitudinal shifts. The results indicated that, as local and national unemployment rates grew, there was a corresponding rise in negative attitudes toward undocumented Mexican immigrants. Participants’ negative perceptions also intensified as the gross domestic product real growth rate declined. Furthermore, over the four-year period,

European American participants tended to endorse less positive beliefs than their Latinx American counterparts.

Mass media often depicts immigration as a danger to US culture with coverage “linking” immigrants to crime, substance use, and economic issues (Tukachinsky, Mastro, & King, 2011). The media often conveys immigrants, particularly Latinx immigrants, as uneducated, criminal, lazy, and involved in drug sales. In recent years, Latinx undocumented immigrants have been frequently blamed in the media for the financial difficulties encountering the US healthcare system. In two studies, Tukachinsky, Mastro, and King (2011) experimentally measured the impact of non-verbal and verbal exemplars such as personal stories, testimonials, and pictorial illustrations on news readers’ perceptions surrounding the utilization of emergency room health services by undocumented immigrants and uninsured US citizens. The findings from these studies indicate that visual information is no more influential than verbal information. However, the findings suggest that media stories that use different numbers of visual and verbal exemplars to highlight different sides of a social issue argument can influence readers’ perceptions. As a result, Tukachinsky et al. suggest that news media has a major societal responsibility to be even-handed in it’s reporting by providing equal time and space to differing viewpoints.

A frequent accusation made against immigrants is that they carry infectious diseases that threaten the health of the host country. Esses, Medianu, and Lawson (2013) predict that this association might lead to the dehumanization of immigrants because “vermin are typically associated with the spreading of disease” (p. 525). The researchers explored this issue through an experiment that utilizes editorial cartoons. Participants perused an online article on the actor Steve Martin and were told that they would be subsequently answering questions regarding what they had just learned. The bottom right-hand side of the article contained a small editorial

cartoon, which was designed specifically for the study. The cartoon depicted an immigrant checking in at an Immigration Canada booth, hoisting several suitcases and a number of documents. In one condition, the largest suitcase displayed labels for various diseases such as AIDS and SARS. Conversely, in the other condition, there were no labels present. Although the participants were told that they would be asked questions about the article, they were instead administered a series of items assessing their memory of the editorial cartoon, their perceptions of immigrants as sources and spreaders of disease, as well as their emotions and attitudes toward immigrants.

The findings of the study suggest that many of the participants' memories of the editorial cartoons were poor, with a number of participants reporting no memory of the cartoon at all. Notwithstanding this lack of specific memory of the cartoon and its contents, participants who observed the cartoon with the disease labels were significantly more likely to endorse notions of immigrants as sources and spreaders of disease. In addition, they were more apt to report feelings of contempt and lack of admiration toward immigrants on the dehumanization measure. Furthermore, individuals who were exposed to the editorial cartoon with the disease-labels exhibited increased antipathy towards immigrants and the immigration process.

Similarly, McKeever, Riffe, and Carpentier (2012) surveyed North Carolina residents with respect to their attitudes about immigrants and immigration, viewpoints about the quality and quantity of media reporting on immigration, and beliefs about the influence of media coverage on other's values and opinions. Because North Carolina has experienced a 400% increase in its Latinx population in the last two decades, many of the state residents hold clear beliefs about the detrimental effect of immigration on their culture. McKeever et al. (2012) report that 60% of the sample felt that immigration was a threat to traditional values and

customs, although national polls indicate that only 40% of American citizens share this belief. As hypothesized by the researchers, strong anti-immigrant opinions were significantly related to the perception that news coverage was pro-immigration. Furthermore, individuals holding anti-immigration viewpoints tended to assume that media coverage would persuade others to hold more pro-immigration beliefs. The findings of the study provide evidence that the assessment and interpretation of media coverage can strengthen previously held anti-immigration opinions.

Ingroup-Outgroup Bias

Peoples' perceptions of undocumented individuals and immigration policy could be guided by social as well as environmental desires (Diaz, Saenz, & Kwan, 2011). One theory, based on the concept of ingroup-outgroup bias, is that hostile attitudes and restrictive policies are, to some degree, driven by intergroup competition (Brewer, 1979; Diaz, Saenz, & Kwan, 2011). Essentially, this phenomenon refers to individuals' subconscious tendency to divide themselves and others into similarity-based groups, or "ingroups" and "outgroups" (Roberson & Stevens, 2006). This cognitive pattern can foster an "us-and-them mentality" in which cultural differences are exaggerated or perceived as negative (Comas-Diaz, 2000, p. 1319). Additionally, this type of ethnocentric thinking becomes more pervasive during periods of national insecurity and economic recession, with a cultural tendency to scapegoat people of color (Comas-Diaz, 2000). As a point of information, ethnocentrism refers to individuals' partiality for and positive appraisals of their own ethnic or racial group (ingroup) relative to all other groups (outgroups) (Valentino, Brader, & Jardina, 2012). During times where there is a perceived threat such as a scarcity of resources, this process may prompt or exacerbate conflict between groups (Diaz, Saenz, & Kwan, 2011). By way of example, Kinder and Kam (2009), in the early 1990s,

examined American National Election Studies surveys and observed that ethnocentrism was positively associated with endorsement for restrictive immigration policy among Americans.

In a similar vein, research suggests that individuals tend to endorse more conservative beliefs after they perceive and/or experience threatening events, social instability, or uncertainty. By way of example, people are more likely to support conservative candidates and policy initiatives following a terrorist attack. Moreover, the US Census Bureau has predicted that racial minority groups will comprise the majority of the US national population by 2042 (Craig & Richeson, 2014). As a result, Craig and Richeson (2014) hypothesized that this “majority-minority” racial demographic transition might prompt greater endorsements of conservative political ideology among White Americans. In particular, the researchers postulated that White Americans would view this change as a threat to their racial group’s social status. In a series of four experiments, Craig and Richeson (2014) examined how the salience of racial demographic changes influenced White Americans’ political ideology and policy positions. Findings from the studies indicate that the participants who were informed of the national racial demographic shifts were more likely to strongly support race-related and race-neutral conservative policy positions, irrespective of their own political party affiliation. The results from this study suggest that, despite the widespread belief that shifting racial demographics are a growing problem for the Republican Party, White Americans might be more likely to endorse conservative candidates and agendas in connection with changing demographics (Craig & Richeson, 2014). Furthermore, the findings provide preliminary support that changing racial demographics could cause an increasingly divided political environment.

Political Ideology and Partisan Divides

In terms of immigration policy and ideology, research suggests that, over the past 10 years, there has been an exponential growth in political division. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (2015) has examined partisan differences on immigration issues through national polls. In 2015, they found that the partisan gap was at its greatest in the 20 year of history of assessing this issue. Specifically, between 1998 and 2001, there were comparable numbers of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents who reported that decreasing immigration was a crucial policy goal and perceived increased populations of immigrants and refugees as a critical threat. However, this trend began to shift in 2002 with Democrats' reported trepidations surrounding immigration gradually reducing. By 2015, Democrats' expressed concerns had decreased by approximately 20 percent. By way of example, the 2016 Democratic presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton, has expressed that as president, she will introduce comprehensive immigration reform, end family detention, close private immigration centers, and support naturalization (Hillary for America, 2016).

By contrast, Republicans' and Independents' concerns have remained, comparatively, more consistent. In illustration of this point, surveys indicate that 63% of Republicans and 46% of Independents believe that immigrants and refugees entering the US are a critical threat. By comparison, a minority of Democrats (29%) also viewed large numbers of immigrants and refugees as potentially dangerous. To track changes in political ideology, The Pew Research Center (2016), for over two decades, has been inquiring whether immigrants "strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents" or, conversely, whether they "are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing and health care" (para. 3). While Republicans and Democrats immigration ideology was generally similar between 1994 and 2005, partisan

divides have become increasingly evident since 2006. In particular, Democrat and Democrat-leaning independent participants increasingly reported more favorable views of immigrants with 49% in 2006 and 78% in 2015 stating that immigrants strengthen the country.

In addition to the influence of political affiliation on perceptions of immigration, ethnicity, race, and age may also impact opinions on immigrations. For example, in a 2016 nationwide survey, the Pew Research Center found that 63% of surveyed Republican and GOP-leaning registered voters favor building a wall across the entire southern border as compared to 13% of Democratic and Democratic-leaning participants. Additionally, 83% of individuals who supported Trump for the Republican nomination favored constructing a wall. Findings from the survey also suggest that there are notable ethnic and generational variations in beliefs regarding the proposed wall. Black (13% favor) and Hispanic (16%) participants were considerably less likely to hold favorable views of building a border wall as compared to White participants (43%). Additionally, when examining generational differences, Generation Xers (36% favor), Boomers (43%), and Silents (47%) were approximately twice as likely as Millennials (20%) to favor a new border wall.

Undocumented Young Adults and Acculturative Stress

Irrespective of legal status, most immigrants undergo acculturative stress when confronted with both threats to and opportunities for their cultural and individual identity as they enter a new culture (Ellis & Chen, 2013). Essentially, the process of adapting to the unfamiliar customs of a new environment typically encompasses changes in values, identities, and behaviors (Arbona, Lovera, Rodriguez, Hagan, Linares, & Wiesner, 2010; Ellis & Chen, 2013). The acculturation experience of immigrants has been found to be significantly influenced by the availability of parents, accessibility of peer support, length of time spent in the host country, as

well as the sociopolitical climate of the receiving culture (Ellis & Chen, 2013). Acculturative stress also has been linked to feelings of marginality, heightened psychosomatic symptoms, identity conflict, and poor mental health outcomes. Empirical findings have further suggested that acculturative stress is positively correlated to psychological distress and negative mental health outcomes such as anxiety, depressive symptomology, and suicidal ideation (Arbona et al., 2010; Ellis & Chen, 2013). Moreover, youth with undocumented legal status experience a higher incidence of discriminatory encounters, both as a group and as individuals. A large portion of immigrants with undocumented legal status is in the American educational system. However, these individuals are confronted with many barriers to their educational achievement and vocational successes when compared to their documented counterparts (Ellis & Chen, 2013). Research has also indicated that immigrants who are participants in the educational setting tend to experience more direct exposure to prejudice (Ellis & Chen, 2013).

The cumulative negative impact of acculturative stress on the identities of young immigrants is exacerbated by the fact that the process of “coming of age” and transitioning into adulthood is taking precipitously longer in present culture (Furstenberg et al., 2002). In the global economy of the 21st century, individuals need to acquire new skills and training beyond what is typically taught at a high school level. Consequently, the completion of a postsecondary degree is often a prerequisite to compete in the current job market (Hunt & Tierney, 2006). This trend increasingly places undocumented adolescents and young adults at a distinct disadvantage. Notwithstanding the fact that undocumented individuals have a legal right to a K-12 education, this opportunity does not translate into the legal right to work, vote, receive financial aid, and drive in many states. As a direct result of these legal inconsistencies, there is a growing cynicism

and disengagement from academic pursuits that is becoming ever more pervasive in the undocumented community (Abrego, 2006).

A study conducted by Arbona, Lovera, Rodriguez, Hagan, Linares, and Wiesner (2010) examines the differences in acculturative stress between documented and undocumented Latinx immigrants utilizing the Hispanic Stress Inventory (Cervantes, Padilla, & Salgado de Snyder, 1991), which analyzes acculturative stress that is associated with five distinct domains: immigration, marital, parental, cultural/family, and occupational stress. More specifically, the study compares the level of stress experiences on three immigration-related challenges: separation, traditionality, and language difficulties. The findings from the study suggest that undocumented immigrants experience a heightened degree of challenges when compared to their documented counterparts. These barriers include separation from traditionality and family, as well as language difficulties. More often than not, when compared to documented participants, individuals with undocumented status are more prone to live by themselves or be isolated from their nuclear family. Undocumented individuals, however, tend to ascribe to traditional values related to gender roles as well as family structure. Moreover, the study suggests that undocumented immigrants are more likely to avoid activities due to a pervasive fear of deportation when compared to documented immigrants. Based on the belief that increased visibility will inevitably lead to deportation, undocumented immigrants report higher rates of avoidance of common activities such as walking in the street, requesting help from government agencies, and applying for driver's licenses.

Educational Barriers

Barriers faced by undocumented immigrants are particularly evident in the transition into young adulthood. Gonzales et al. (2013) note that a hurdle faced by undocumented immigrants is

that students are frequently taught in primary and secondary school that if they work hard that they can achieve their personal aspirations and goals. However, notwithstanding the academic messaging, when the peers of undocumented adolescents begin to transition through important milestones such as taking their first jobs and receiving their driver's licenses, undocumented individuals in most states encounter significant barriers. Perez (2012) argues that "because the entry into adulthood is practically an entry into 'illegality,' undocumented young adults find themselves contending with blocked opportunities, stigma, and fear" (Perez, 2012, p. 114). The onset of various exclusions during adolescence fosters feelings of anxiety, uncertainty, and guilt (Gonzales, Suarez-Orozco, and Dedios-Sanguinetti, 2013). In addition, research suggests that the omnipresent fear of deportation negatively influences self-image (Cavazos-Rehg, Zayas, & Spitznagel, 2007).

The hurdles experienced by undocumented young adults are also evident in the educational policies within the US. As a case in point, the Texas Legislature, in 1975, enacted state policy that withheld public funds for the education of undocumented children. In *Plyler v. Doe* (1982), the Supreme Court held that undocumented children are guaranteed a state-funded K-12 education (Russell, 2011). The Supreme Court, with a 5-4 ruling, contended that denying undocumented children access to public education would unfairly penalize children for the choices of their parents, foster the formation of an underclass of citizens, and violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment (Russell, 2011; Yates, 2004). However, to this date, courts have yet to rule on whether the intermediate scrutiny standard established in *Plyler v. Doe* applies to equivalent barriers to postsecondary education on the basis of immigration status (Shahshahani & Washington, 2013). Consequently, undocumented individuals' ability to seek

postsecondary education continues to be a source of political and cultural debate in the US (Shahshahani & Washington, 2013).

At present time, undocumented individuals are not eligible for federal financial aid for college as a result of PRWORA. While PRWORA does not ban public universities from accepting undocumented students, section 401 of PRWORA states that post-secondary education is not considered a public benefit that is afforded to undocumented immigrants (Oas, 2011). In an effort to clarify the status of undocumented immigrants, the Illegal Immigration and Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996, section 505 was enacted, which declares that “...an alien who is not lawfully present in the United States shall not be eligible on the basis of residence within a State (or a political subdivision) for any postsecondary education benefit unless a citizen or national of the United States is eligible for such a benefit (in no less an amount, duration, and scope) without regard to whether the citizen or national is such a resident.” (NCSL, 2011). However, the lack of concrete regulations to offer guidance has led to a number of legal interpretations of IIRIRA, particularly surrounding the definitions of “residency” and “post-secondary benefit” (Russell, 2011). Ultimately, the relative absence of comprehensive federal immigration laws has allowed states to develop their own policies with respect to post-secondary education (Potochnick, 2014).

Currently, two states (Alabama and South Carolina) prohibit undocumented immigrants access to all public colleges and universities. Since 2011, selective Georgia postsecondary institutions have been barred from admitting undocumented students (Russell, 2011). Prior to this ban, Jessica Colotl, a fourth year political science student at Kennesaw State University in Georgia, was arrested and ultimately detained in an Alabama immigration detention center in 2010 for a traffic violation (Delgadillo, 2015; Shahshahani & Washington, 2013). After spending

over a month in the detention center, ICE permitted Colotl to finish her degree. The same year that Colotl was arrested and granted deferred action, the Georgia Board of Regents, who govern the University System of Georgia, passed policies 4.3.4 and 4.1.6, which mandate that all state post-secondary institutions verify the “lawful presence” of every student pursuing in-state tuition rates. Furthermore, institutions are prevented from knowingly enrolling undocumented students under these policies. Currently, thirty-one state colleges and universities are affected by these administrative guidelines (Baxter, 2011). However, the ACLU of Georgia found that several colleges and universities, not governed by the Board of Regent’s policies, decided that admittance should be based on verification of lawful presence six months following the enactment of 4.3.4 and 4.1.6 (Shahshahani & Washington, 2013).

One rationale the Georgia Board of Regents provided to justify the ban was that policies 4.3.4 and 4.1.6 would provide more access to state universities for residents by opening the spots previously occupied by undocumented students. However, notwithstanding this reasoning, the total number of undocumented students at the campuses affected by the policies was only 29 (Shahshahani & Washington, 2013). Shahshahani and Washington argue that “the Board of Regents is perpetuating socioeconomic inequalities as well as restricting the flow of knowledge and free thinking which creates strong workforces, technological advancements, and drives local and national economies” (p. 13). As a point of comparison, Arizona, which is a border state and well-known for its controversial SB 1070 “papers, please” laws (Baxter, 2011), legally permits undocumented students to attend state post-secondary institutions with out-of-state tuition and no financial aid (Baxter, 2011).

As of 2015, 18 states have provisions that enable undocumented students to pay in-state resident tuition rates (IRTs) (NCLS, 2015; Eaton, 2016, NCLS, 2015; Potochnick, 2014). Of

those states, undocumented students are eligible for state financial aid in six states (California, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas and Washington) (NCLS, 2015). In order to circumvent IIRIRA requirements, most of these states implemented laws providing IRTs to undocumented students on the basis of high school attendance and graduation, rather than residency within the state (NCLS, 2011). By way of example, the 2001 California Education Code 68130.5 offers in-state tuition to undocumented students if they are 1.) enrolled in a state high school for a minimum of three years; 2) graduated from a state high school; 3) enrolled in "an accredited institution of higher education in California no earlier than the fall semester or quarter of the 2001-02 academic year" (p. 881); and 4. are an undocumented immigrant who has filed "an affidavit with the institution . . . stating either that [they have] filed an application to legalize [their] immigration status or [they] will file an application as soon as [they] are eligible to do so" (p. 881) (Oas, 2011). Flores and Chapa (2009) discovered that IRT policies raised postsecondary enrollment rates for Mexican Foreign-born non-citizens (FBNC). However, they found that the increase was greater for males as well as for states with lengthy histories of migration. Moreover, Potochnick (2014) assessed the impact of IRT policies on the high school dropout rates of undocumented youth. Utilizing Current Population Survey and difference-in-difference models, she explored the influence of IRT policies on the high school drop out behaviors of FBNCs. Based on the findings, Potochnick estimates that IRTs result in an eight percentage point decrease in the number of FBNCs that drop out of high school.

Even when undocumented students are able to attend college, these students face increased risks and barriers to successfully completing their schooling. The negative views conveyed through dehumanizing media reports and restrictive policies contribute to the occurrence of hate crimes or discriminatory actions on campus against students with

undocumented status (Kim & Diaz, 2013). As a direct result, these students are often faced with a unique set of challenges and barriers. When compared to immigrants with documented legal status, undocumented students demonstrate decreased college attendance rates (Abrego, 2006). These figures are exacerbated by risk factors such as, but not limited to, little or no health insurance, language barriers, and poor living conditions (Abrego, 2006).

In a similar vein, a recent qualitative study conducted by Ellis and Chen (2013) explores the unique identity formation process of 11 undocumented students residing in the US. Through semi-structured interviews, Ellis and Chen examine the interconnectedness of acculturation, ethnic identity, as well as academic and career endeavors of these students. In particular, when the peers of undocumented adolescents began to transition through important milestones such as preparing for post-high school educational or vocational ventures, many participants were confronted with the reality that they faced obstacles to their academic and career aspirations. One participant, in particular, stated that “I feel bad about myself because I see that some people are doing-are working in their field and I haven’t done it yet. It takes my self-esteem down... Sometimes I feel that it is my fault and other times it just feels like life is not fair” (Ellis & Chen, 2013, p. 258). Many participants in the study also reminisced about an early sense of blissful innocence with respect to their inclusion in US culture and society. The shift from adolescence to adulthood is, at times, the first indicator of the degree of institutional or political oppression that undocumented students encounter.

Self-Efficacy and Perceptions of Meritocracy

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) is a prominent model within vocational psychology. SCCT posits that cultural resources and characteristics play an important role in academic and career development. By way of example, a lack of access to part-time work

experiences and vocational role models can hinder the development of vocational self-efficacy. Research has postulated that individuals with undocumented status may experience decreased self-efficacy as a result of barriers related to their immigration status such as a lack of cultural capital, fear of deportation, increased levels of acculturative stress, as well as reduced English proficiency (Arbona et al., 2010; Ellis & Chen, 2013). Undocumented students consistently encounter actual and perceived challenges to their educational and career goals (Ellis and Chen, 2013). Their cognitive assessments of their ability to overcome such challenges impact outcomes in a variety of educational and career domains. Decreased levels of self-efficacy may dramatically impact career aspirations, decisions, and, consequently, vocational identity (Diemer & Ali, 2009).

It is also worth noting that SCCT postulates that ethnicity and gender are social constructs that potentially determine the availability of opportunities for educational and vocational growth. More specifically, race, ethnicity, and, arguably, legal status may restrict or broaden the range of learning experiences that facilitate self-efficacy. As a case in point, undocumented high school seniors in Georgia would not be given the option to obtain a publically-funded in-state college education, and, as a direct result, might develop reduced levels of career self-efficacy.

Individuals' sense of self-efficacy might also be influenced by their beliefs about meritocracy. Perceptions of meritocracy are the degree to which individuals view their country as fulfilling the fundamental tenets of a meritocracy. These principles ultimately underscore the conviction that individuals control their own successes and failures, have equal opportunities for accomplishment, can attain social mobility, are fairly compensated for personal effort and skills, and are rewarded regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, or cultural status. Individuals with

confidence in meritocracy believe that individuals are accountable for their respective successes and failures. The notion of equal opportunity is often firmly ingrained in American and other capitalistic societies.

A meritocracy presupposes an open system that permits social mobility and equal opportunities for advancement (Garcia, 2001). This systemic model ultimately guarantees that people are able to improve their financial and social circumstances at any juncture in their lives. Notwithstanding the myriad of opportunities afforded to members of a meritocracy, the model indicates that it is incumbent on members to demonstrate the appropriate level of effort to garner these benefits. In illustration of this point, a common belief of a meritocracy is that hard work alone is inextricably linked with higher annual salaries.

Research suggests that the more that White individuals are convinced that educational, social, and vocational choices are determined by a bias-free meritocracy, the more probable it is that they will hold negative, internal attributions about marginalized groups. Moreover, these individuals tend to assign positive attributions to the advantaged group (Garcia; 2001, Son Hing et al., 2011). In illustration of this point, research indicates that White Americans are more apt to support the belief that African Americans are unable to improve their economic status because of a lack of hard work and self-reliance (Henry & Sears, 2002). These results support the argument that the notion of meritocracy may ultimately contribute to legitimizing prejudice and discrimination.

Son Hing, Bobocel, Zanna, Garcia, Gee, and Oraziatti (2011) examined the distinctions between beliefs that rewards are either given to individuals who are worthy (descriptive) or on the basis of merit (prescriptive). The findings indicate that individuals' prescriptive and descriptive beliefs about merit were distinct constructs. Descriptive views of meritocracy were

associated with endorsements of other hierarchy-legitimizing ideologies. In particular, the greater the participants' preferences for the merit principle, the more inclined they were to oppose selection practices that were identified as violating the norms of the merit principle. The perceptions that meritocracy does exist can result in contradictory beliefs. On the one hand, the rigid certainty that meritocracy effectively functions in American culture can potentially legitimize sociocultural hierarchies. Conversely, the understanding that meritocracy is a goal that should be achieved for all individuals can contribute to developing and supporting academic and career goals for every person irrespective of their categorical status.

Quantitative studies have been increasingly utilized with various marginalized groups to assess the affect of public policy and media depictions on overall stress and psychological well-being. By way of example, as a follow-up to the 2006 general election in which constitutional amendments to limit marriage to 1 man and 1 woman were included on the ballot in nine states, Rostosky, Riggle, Horne, and Miller (2009) explore the levels of psychological minority distress and minority stress in self-identified lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals. For the study, a postelection survey (N = 1,552) was administered online during November of 2006.

The researchers compared the data between participants who resided in states that passed the marriage amendment to respondents living in states without an amendment on the ballot. The findings of the study indicate an overall significant increase in minority stress and psychological distress. These reactions were further exacerbated for those participants from areas where an actual vote on the subject was taken by the general population. Additionally, LGB participants in states that approved a marriage amendment demonstrated increased levels of exposure to negative media messages when compared to LGB participants in other states. Ultimately, the findings suggest that participants experience increased minority stress and psychological distress

as a direct consequence of the political conflict and negative media messages surrounding the amendment. The study documents the potentially widespread and exclusionary effect of public policy and cultural attitudes on psychological well-being.

‘Whiteness’ in Education

Education is an area in which diversity and awareness of sociocultural pressures may not be effectively recognized or addressed. Currently, White teaching candidates greatly outnumber potential educators from other ethnic/racial groups. According to the Department of Education (2016), 82% of primary and secondary public school educators in 2016 are White (National Education Association, 2015). The vast majority of education leaders are White, with only 7% of public school principals identifying as Hispanic. Despite the fact that number of students of color surpasses the number of White students in US public schools (National Education Association, 2015), student education majors in college are predominantly White. In fact, only a quarter of education majors in the 2012-13 academic year were students of color (US Department of Education, 2016). Similarly, 71% of students pursuing a Master’s in education in 2012 were White. Furthermore, in 2014, roughly 75% of faculty in higher education identified as White with Latinos comprising less than 5% of faculty pursuing research and instruction (Excelencia in Education, 2015).

In contrast, it is projected by 2024 that 41% of the public school student body will be White and nearly 30% of the public school population is predicted to be comprised of Hispanic students (US Department of Education, 2016). The disparity in racial and ethnic identities between educators and students suggests that US educators are, and will be, serving students who experience on-going systemic bias and marginalization. A number of advocates, researchers, and educators have articulated great concern about the “overwhelming presence of whiteness in

teacher education” (Sleeter, 2001). Even with educators who are committed to the multicultural equity, the influence of White privilege as well as individual biases and assumptions can sustain the educational status quo and victimize students belonging to marginalized groups. By way of example, White privilege could influence the creation and implementation of school procedures, the application of discipline, and student placement.

Pilot Study

To further assess the relationship between systemic factors and mental health, a pilot study was designed to examine the relationship of psychological well-being to both immigration policy and media presentation about immigration. A survey was administered to students ($N = 180$) at a large southeastern university, which explored how participants’ perceptions of education policy and media depictions regarding undocumented immigrants influenced their perceived stress levels, beliefs of meritocracy, and general self-efficacy. Pearson R correlations were calculated utilizing IBM SPSS Statistics, Version 23. A significance level of .05 was used for the purposes of this study.

Findings from the study suggest that meritocratic views are connected to perceptions of immigration-related policy. The results indicate that participants who endorsed less merit-based beliefs tended to respond more positively to the more inclusive policy in which students with undocumented status were eligible to receive in-state tuition and state financial aid ($r = .181$, $p = .036$). These findings could support previous findings that individuals who endorse less meritocratic views have a decreased likelihood to hold negative, internal beliefs toward a marginalized group, when compared to those individuals who hold merit-based views. As a result, individuals who do not hold strong meritocratic views are less likely to support ideologies that legitimize the current system and rationalize social inequities. Finally, the findings

demonstrate that individuals who endorsed higher levels of stress tended to show increased positive emotional affect in response to the most inclusive policy ($r = .183$, $p = .034$).

CHAPTER 3

Methods and Procedures

This chapter delves into the research design used for this study and the data analysis that was used to investigate the research hypotheses. The current research study is an exploratory analysis of how political and media depictions of undocumented immigrants relate to perceptions of meritocracy, as well as other components of psychological well-being such as self-efficacy and perceived stress. The research utilized a quantitative methodology to examine potential associations between the aforementioned variables. This chapter will review the study hypotheses, procedures utilized to gather the study sample, the instruments used to estimate concepts, the reliability of the instrumentation, and the statistical analyses used.

Primary Hypotheses

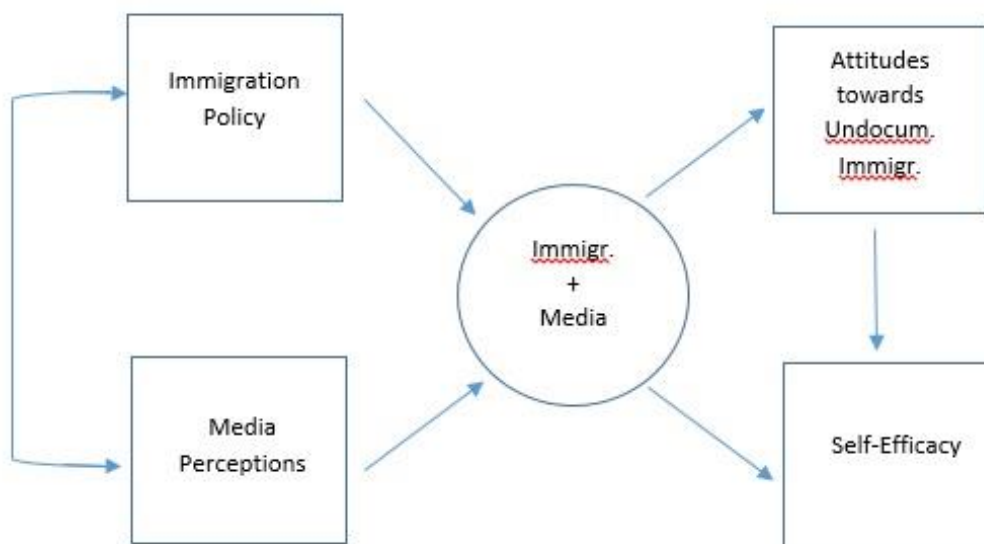
The following questions are investigated by the current research study: (a) Do perceptions of immigration-related policy and exposure to negative media depictions predict self-efficacy, stress, and beliefs of meritocracy in study participants? (b) Do attitudes towards immigrants mediate the relationship between the independent and dependent variables? (c) Among Latinx participants, will perceptions of immigration-related policy and media depictions predict self-efficacy, stress, and beliefs of meritocracy? The researcher hypothesized the following:

1. Higher negative reactions to restrictive immigration policies and increased exposure to negative media depictions will be associated with decreased levels of self-efficacy.
2. Higher negative reactions to restrictive immigration policies and increased exposure to negative media depictions will be associated with increased levels of perceived stress.

3. Higher negative reactions to restrictive immigration policies and increased exposure to negative media depictions will be associated with less merit-based beliefs.
4. The participants' perceived criminal threat of undocumented immigrants will mediate the proposed relationship between perceptions of immigration policy and media depictions on self-efficacy.
5. The participants' perceived criminal threat of undocumented immigrants will mediate the proposed relationship between perceptions of immigration policy and media depictions on stress.
6. The participants' perceived criminal threat of undocumented immigrant will mediate the proposed relationship between the perceptions of immigration policy and media depictions on perceptions of meritocracy.

For graphical representations of the mediation relationships proposed above, see Figure

1.



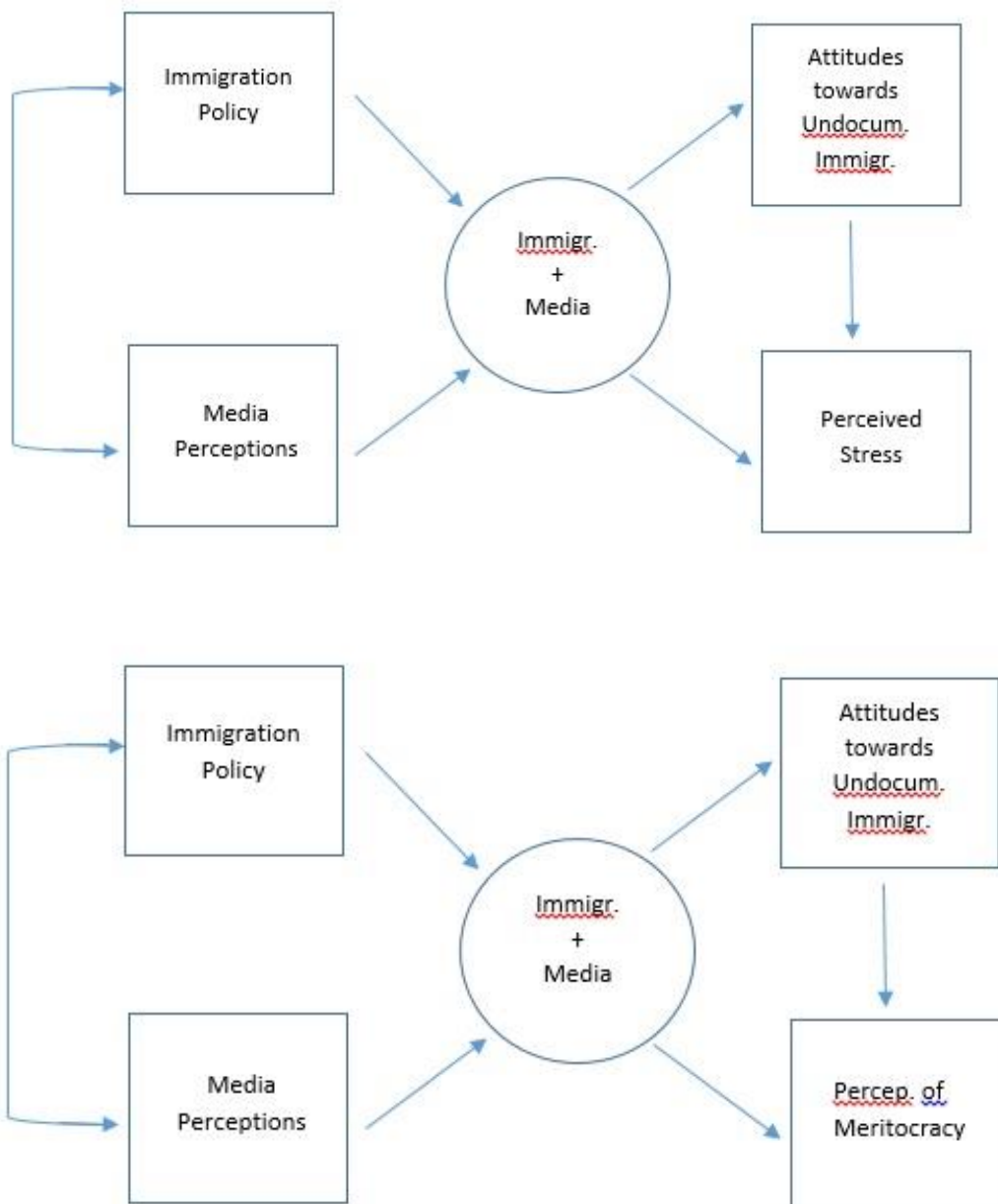


Figure 1. Hypothesized Models for Mediated Relationships.

Sample

An *a priori* power analysis conducted using G*Power suggested that a minimum of 33 participants were required to conduct the study with sufficient power (0.95) and a medium effect size ($\rho^2 = 0.30$). To ensure higher than necessary participation levels, the goal for this study was to have at least 200 participants from the College of Education research pool and 50 participants from the community. Additionally, borrowing from guidelines for experimental design, the goal was also to include at least 30 participants who self-identify as Latinx. These goals were met, as the sample included 228 individuals from the Southeastern College of Education pool and 57 participants from the community. Additionally, 68 participants self-identified as Latinx.

Participants were recruited at a major university in the Southeast using the College of Education research pool. In addition, Latinx participants were recruited nationally through universities, professional organizations, student registered organizations, and educational agencies that serve the Latinx community. There were no special requirements for inclusion in the College of Education student survey except that all participants must be 18 years of age or older. In order to ensure that all respondents were age 18 or older, only those respondents whose ages could be confirmed were retained in the study. In other words, respondents who did not provide an age, as well as all respondents who were under the age of 18, were deleted from the sample. For the nationwide Latinx sample, it was required that all participants identify as Latinx/Hispanic. Participants who completed the student survey received .5 hours of research credit for their College of Education courses. As an incentive for participating in the community study, a raffle of ten \$25 gift cards from Amazon.com was offered to all participants who began the survey, whether or not they were valid participants or chose to complete the entire study. The only requirement for entry into the raffle was a valid e-mail or home address.

Data Collection Procedures

All participants answered a self-report measure requesting demographic information such as the participants' birth country, socioeconomic status, current state of residence, political affiliation, and media habits. They also completed the *Negative Messages Scale*, *Public Policy-Related Affect Scale*, *Cohen's Perceived Stress Scale*, *New General Self-Efficacy Scale*, *Perceptions of Meritocracy Inventory*, *Perceived Immigrant Criminal Threat*, *Border Control Measure*, and *Internal Control*. The order of presentation of the measures in this study was randomized to control for order effect.

Instrumentation

Negative Messages Scale. In order to assess participants' perceptions of negative media messages, the study adapted self-report indicators of exposure to various media sources from Rostosky et al. (2009). Participants were asked:

Please indicate how often during the PAST MONTH you encountered anti-immigration messages in the following media. Anti-immigration messages include negative stereotypes, derogatory terms, and opposition to the rights of immigrants, both documented and undocumented.

Participants reported their perceptions of negative messages in four sources of media: television news reports, including messages presented by individuals interviewed, reporters, or commentators; newspaper or magazine articles, including messages from quotes in articles, editorials, or the overall tone of the article; billboards, bumper stickers, or other public advertisements; and social media, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The scale was broken into two subscales: one that measured the role of media via five questions, and one that measured the tone of media via five questions. For the role of media, responses were measured

according to a 0-6 Likert scale: *Not At All, Once Or Twice, About Once A Week, A Couple Of Times A Week, Daily or Almost Daily, or More Than Once A Day*. For the tone of media, participants indicated whether or not they believed that the tone of media was negative. The response possibilities are measured using a 0-5 Likert-scale: *Mostly Negative, Somewhat Negative, Neutral, Somewhat Positive, or Mostly Positive*.

Public Policy-Related Affect Scale. This measure was adapted from Rostosky et al. (2009). Participants were provided with four descriptions of different existing state policies regarding post-secondary admittance and funding for individuals with undocumented status. These policies covered a restrictiveness spectrum ranging from no admittance and no funding to financial aid and in-state tuition benefits. The policy descriptions are provided below:

Policy A: Colleges and universities are not permitted to admit undocumented students.

Policy B: Colleges and universities can grant in-state tuition to undocumented students, but are not allowed to provide state financial aid to these students.

Policy C: Colleges and universities are allowed to accept undocumented students, but are not allowed to provide these students with in-state tuition rates.

Policy D: Colleges and universities are allowed to accept undocumented students, and are permitted to grant these students in-state tuition as well as financial aid.

For each scenario, participants were asked to hypothetically rate on a 1-4 Likert-scale eight different questions that gauged how anxious, distressed, inspired, nervous, afraid, determined, guilty, and interested the statements made them feel. The Likert scale response for each of the eight different questions ranged from *Very Likely, Somewhat Likely, Somewhat Unlikely, and Very Unlikely*.

Cohen's Perceived Stress Scale. Cohen's Perceived Stress Scale assesses the degree to which situations in individuals' daily lives are appraised as stressful. Specifically, items measure for the past month how unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded respondents perceive their lives to be. The scale contains 10 items which are rated on a Likert-scale ranging from 1-5: *Never, Almost Never, Sometimes, Fairly Often, and Very Often*. An example item from the measure is "In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control". Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein (1983) report the internal consistency reliability coefficient of the scale at $\alpha = .72$.

New General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE). The measure is designed to assess "one's belief in one's overall competence to effect requisite performance across a wide variety of achievement situations" (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001, p. 63). The GSE consists of eight items that are rated on a 5-point scale with the anchors *Strongly Disagree* and *Strongly Agree*. An example of an item is "I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself." Higher scores on this measure indicate increased levels of self-efficacy. Individuals who have high GSE scores are more likely to have a strong belief in their ability to achieve success. The researchers reported that the internal consistency of the measure ranged from .85 to .90. The initial evidence suggests a unidimensional factor structure, as several studies have replicated a single-factor solution utilizing both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis techniques (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001).

Perceived Immigrant Criminal Threat. Based on a group threat perspective, this measure assesses the beliefs of criminal threat posed by undocumented immigrants. This measure consists of six items that are rated on a 5-point scale with the anchors *Strongly Agree* and *Strongly Disagree*. An example of an item is "Undocumented immigrants are no more

violent than American citizens.” Items on the measure that convey a negative view of undocumented immigrants such as “Too many undocumented immigrants with criminal records are coming to the US” are reverse-coded. Thus, a score of 5 on these particular items demonstrate higher levels of perceived threat. Higher scores indicate that the participant views undocumented immigrants to be a criminal threat. Stupi et al. (2016) reported that this measure has an alpha coefficient of .81.

Perceptions of Meritocracy (PMI). The PMI assesses respondents’ multidimensional meritocratic views as well as examines their perceptions of social and monetary inequalities, attitudes toward social policies, allocation behaviors, and participation in political and pro-social activities. The PMI contains 24 items that are rated on a 7-point Likert scale: *Strongly Disagree*, *Moderately Disagree*, *Slightly Agree*, *Neutral*, *Slightly Agree*, *Moderately Agree*, and *Strongly Agree*. An example of an item on the assessment is “All people have equal opportunity to be financially successful.” With respect to reliability and validity, the PMI demonstrates strong internal consistency across samples ($\alpha = .88$), unidimensionality, and temporal reliability. Individuals who score high on the inventory are more likely to oppose policies that threaten the status quo. In particular, these individuals are likely to reject policies that “threaten existing intergroup imbalances (e.g., affirmative action) and support policies that enhance these imbalances (e.g., privatization of public healthcare)” (Garcia, 2001, p. 15).

Instrumentation Reliability

As can be seen in Table 1, all the scales described in the previous section show good to very good reliability as demonstrated by the Cronbach alpha statistic. The first composite scale, policy A (“Colleges and universities are not permitted to admit undocumented students”), had a Cronbach alpha of .868. The second composite scale, policy B (“College and universities can

grant in-state tuition to undocumented students but are not allowed to provide state financial aid to these students”), had a Cronbach alpha of .878. The third composite scale, policy C (“Colleges and universities are allowed to accept undocumented students but are not allowed to provide these students with in-state tuition”) had a Cronbach alpha of .896, and the fourth composite scale, policy D (“Colleges and universities are allowed to accept undocumented students and are permitted to grant these students in-state tuition as well as financial aid”) had a Cronbach alpha of .815.

For the Media Perceptions Scale-Role, the Cronbach alpha was .748. For the Media Perceptions Scale-Tone, the Cronbach alpha was .730. For Cohen’s Perceived Stress Scale, the Cronbach alpha was .836. For the New General Self-Efficacy Scale, the Cronbach alpha was .929. For Perceptions of Meritocracy, the Cronbach alpha was .931. For the Perceived Criminal Threat inventory, the Cronbach alpha was .881. A table of the internal consistency values is provided below.

Table 1

Internal Consistency Values (Cronbach α)

Scale	α
Policy A	0.868
Policy B	0.878
Policy C	0.896
Policy D	0.815
Media Perception Scale-Role	0.748
Media Perception Scale-Tone	0.730
Cohen's Perceived Stress Scale	0.836
Self- Efficacy	0.929
Perceived Criminal Threat of Immigrants	0.881
Perceptions of Meritocracy	0.931

Data Analysis

Analyses of the data were conducted utilizing IBM SPSS Version 25. The analyses addressed the following research question: Do perceptions of immigration-related policy and media influence self-efficacy, perceived stress, and perceptions of meritocracy? The researcher hypothesized that a significant relationship would exist between the variables as described in the predicted multivariate regression. Given the cross-sectional and exploratory nature of this research study, the researcher also assessed the possibility of mediator effects among study variables.

To test the research question, a predictive model was developed and three separate multiple linear regression equations were estimated, with each equation containing two separate models. Multiple linear regression was deemed to be the best methodology to use for the purposes of this study because it is a predictive analysis. Specifically, multiple linear regression can be implemented to explore the relationship between one continuous dependent variable and two or more independent variables.

As previously mentioned, each regression equation consisted of two models. The first model in each equation regressed the dependent variable on the key focal independent variables of Policy A, Policy B, Policy C, Policy D, the Media Perception Scale-Role, and the Media Perception Scale-Tone and the mediator variable of as well as several statistical control variables. The statistical controls included a respondent's age, gender, hours weekly of TV watching, hours daily of social media use, the number of times per week a respondent checked the news, if a respondent was White or Latinx/Hispanic, whether a respondent was either a Democrat or a Republican, and whether a respondent was a member of the school sample or the community sample. The variable that estimated the Perceived Criminal Threat of Immigrants Inventory was used as the mediator in the second model, and all other variables from the first model were retained in the second model. Essentially, the first set of models addressed the direct relationships of the independent variables (perceptions of public policy and media perceptions) on the dependent variables (self-efficacy, stress, and perceptions of meritocracy). The second set of models was utilized to address the possibility of mediation. In particular, the analyses assessed whether attitudes toward undocumented immigrants mediated the relationships between the independent and dependent variables.

It should be noted that a variable which identified whether a respondent was from the school sample or the community sample was included in the analyses to determine if the sample should be aggregated for the purposes of analyses or should be divided into two separate datasets for the purposes of analyses. Combining samples drawn from different populations could potentially be a source of unmeasured heterogeneity within a dataset (DeMaris & Selman, 2013) and should therefore be accounted for if possible. In the present study, it was determined that the creation of a dummy variable that could be used in the regression model (Gordon, 2015) would be the best way to account for the possibility of unmeasured heterogeneity as a function of whether a respondent was from the school sample or the community sample. Ultimately, if the dummy variable that identified whether a respondent was from the school sample or the community sample is a statistically significant predictor of a dependent variable, then it can be concluded that unmeasured heterogeneity is present within the data and that the dataset should be split into two separate samples. However, if the dummy variable that identified whether a respondent was from the school sample or the community sample is a statistically non-significant predictor of a dependent variable, then unmeasured heterogeneity is not present within the data and the combination of the two data sources is allowable. As can be seen in the regressions results contained within Chapter 4, the dummy variable that tracked whether a respondent was a student or from the community was statistically non-significant in all six regression models. Therefore, the combination of the datasets is warranted.

CHAPTER 4

Results

This study employed three main approaches to examine the relationship between how the media and public policies can shape our attitudes and how that can influence well-being. The first approach examined whether perceptions of immigration-related policy and exposure to negative media depictions predict self-efficacy, stress, and beliefs of meritocracy. The second examined whether attitudes towards undocumented immigrants mediate the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The third examined whether among Latinx participants, will perceptions of immigration-related policy and media depictions predict self-efficacy, stress, and beliefs of meritocracy? After approval from The University of Georgia's Institutional Review Board, data were gathered from a pool of university students as well as sample of adult Latinx community members across the nation. Student participants were recruited from a Southeastern public university College of Education student research pool and community members were identified through postings on Facebook, university list serves, and professional organizations. The researcher proposed the six following hypotheses:

1. Higher negative reactions to restrictive immigration policies and increased exposure to negative media depictions will be associated with decreased levels of self-efficacy.
2. Higher negative reactions to restrictive immigration policies and increased exposure to negative media depictions will be associated with increased levels of perceived stress.

3. Higher negative reactions to restrictive immigration policies and increased exposure to negative media depictions will be associated with less merit-based beliefs.
4. The participants' perceived criminal threat of undocumented immigrants will mediate the proposed relationship between perceptions of immigration policy and media depictions on self-efficacy.
5. The participants' perceived criminal threat of undocumented immigrants will mediate the proposed relationship between perceptions of immigration policy and media depictions on stress.
6. The participants' perceived criminal threat of undocumented immigrant will mediate the proposed relationship between the perceptions of immigration policy and media depictions on perceptions of meritocracy.

Descriptive Statistics for the Sample

This sample is comprised of 228 students from a large Southeastern university college subject research pool and 57 community members. Data from both samples were combined to create a single data set. The regression analysis, described later in this chapter, demonstrated that the two samples were similar on all three dependent variables, validating the decision to combine the samples into a single data set. Therefore, the descriptive statistics given in this chapter represent the entire sample used for this project.

The majority of the sample (82.8%, 236) identified as between 20 and 29 years of age, with 10.2% (29) identified as between 18 and 19 years old, while 7% identified over the age of 30 (20). The vast majority (80.7%, 230) identified as female, with 19.3% (55) identified as other than female (male and non-binary). For race and ethnicity, 184 (64.6%) identified as White, 1 identified as Middle Eastern, 23 (8.1%) identified as Black/African American, 23 (8.1%) were Asian-American, 5 (1.8%) were Multiracial, and 68 (23.9%) identified as Latinx. For political

affiliation, 38.2% (108) were Democrats and 85 (29.8%) were Republicans. For the school sample, 35.1% of the participants identified as Republican with 30.1% identifying as Democratic, 14.3% as Independent, 5.6% as Libertarian, and 3% as other. Approximately 10% of the sample preferred not to report their political affiliation. By contrast, nearly three quarters of the Latinx participants identified as Democratic, with 4.1% considering themselves Republican, 10.8% as Independent, 2.7% as Green Party, and 2.7% as other. Nearly 10% of the sample preferred not to provide their political party affiliation.

There are three variables that examined media consumption: hours per week watching TV, hours each day using social media, and how often each week they read the news. The mode category for TV was between zero and four hours a week (101, 35.4%) followed by five to nine hours (26.0%, 74) and 10-14 hours (20.0%, 57). Only five participants watched TV 30 or more hours (1.8%) each week. For social media, the modal category was 1-2 hours each day (44.6%, 127) followed by 3-4 hours (36.8%, 1.5). Only 11 people (3.9%) did not use social media at all and 42 people (14.7%) used social media five or more hours a day. News was most often consumed a few times a week (30.9%, 88) followed by daily (27.4%, 78) and then once a week (10.9%, 31), never (10.9%, 31), and more than once a day (10.5%, 30).

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the scales used in these analyses. The first variables of interest are those pertaining to perceptions of immigration-related policy. All of the means fall around 2.2 ($M_{\text{policyA}}=2.322$, $M_{\text{policyB}}=2.092$, $M_{\text{policyC}}=2.116$, $M_{\text{policyD}}=2.063$).

For the media perception scales, the respondents felt that there were negative roles about immigrants in the media about once a week ($M=3.12$) and a somewhat negative tone but trending towards neutral ($M=2.595$).

The next set of variables of interest are the dependent variables; perceived stress, self-efficacy, meritocracy, and perceived criminal threat of immigrants. On average, participants responded that they felt stress sometimes (M=2.971). The results show that participants felt self-efficacy, with a mean nearly equal to the Agree level (M=4.014). For perceived criminal threat, participants reported a mean threat perception level that fell around neutral (M=2.911), indicating that they did not significantly perceive undocumented immigrants as a criminal threat. The Perceptions of Meritocracy indicated that participants do not hold high merit-based beliefs (M=3.277).

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations, Study Variables

Variable	M	SD	Min.	Max.
Policy A	2.322	.978	1	5
Policy B	2.092	.856	1	5
Policy C	2.116	.894	1	5
Policy D	2.063	.775	1	5
Media Perception Scale- Role	3.188	.992	1	6
Media Perception Scale- Tone	2.595	.671	1	4.20
Cohen's Perceived Stress Scale	2.971	.596	1.10	4.60
Self- Efficacy	4.014	.636	1	5
Perceptions of Meritocracy	3.277	.983	1.25	6.67
Perceived Criminal Threat of Immigrants	2.911	.849	1	5

Note: n=285.

Multivariate Results

The aim of this project was to examine whether perceptions of immigration-related policy and exposure to negative media depictions predict self-efficacy, stress, and beliefs of meritocracy. A second aim was to examine whether attitudes towards undocumented immigrants mediate the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. To investigate the hypotheses, the researcher utilized three multiple linear regressions (one for each dependent variable). The first model refers to the relationship between the explanatory variables and response variable. The second model is a mediation model, which examined the way in which perceived criminal threat influenced the relationship between the variables. The third model refers to the relationship between meritocracy and immigration-related policy and exposure to negative messages on perceptions of meritocracy.

Self-Efficacy (Model A)

Table 3 presents the results of the multiple linear regression of perceptions of immigration-related policy and exposure to negative media messages on self-efficacy. Model A1 established the direct relationship between each of the policies and media perceptions. Model A1 was a significant predictor of self-efficacy ($F(16, 263) = 1.692, p = .048$). The R^2 showed that the model accounted for 9.3% of the variance in self-efficacy. Media Tone Scale was a significant predictor of self-efficacy ($B = -.154, t(284) = -2.674, p = .008$); as the negative media tone score increased, self-efficacy decreased.

Model A2 added in the threat variable to test for moderation. The model was not a significant predictor of self-efficacy ($F(17, 262) = 1.598, p = .065$). The R^2 showed that the model accounted for 9.4% of the variance in self-efficacy. Media Tone Scale remained a significant predictor of self-efficacy ($B = -.155, t(284) = -2.683, p = .008$), as the negative media

tone score increased, self-efficacy decreased. Because threat was not a significant predictor, there was no mediation.

Table 3

Multiple Linear Regression of Self-Efficacy onto the Independent Variables

	Model 1			Model 2		
Variable	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	p	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	p
(Constant)	4.701	0.412	0.000	4.768	0.448	0.000
Media Role Scale	0.067	0.042	0.113	0.067	0.042	0.116
Media Tone Scale	-0.154	0.058	0.008	-0.155	0.058	0.008
Policy A	-0.103	0.061	0.093	-0.107	0.062	0.086
Policy B	-0.092	0.078	0.240	-0.089	0.078	0.256
Policy C	0.095	0.076	0.215	0.093	0.076	0.224
Policy D	-0.065	0.069	0.349	-0.060	0.071	0.396
Age	-0.047	0.074	0.523	-0.048	0.074	0.520
Gender	-0.091	0.106	0.391	-0.096	0.107	0.370
Hours weekly of TV	0.014	0.029	0.617	0.013	0.029	0.651
Hours daily of Social Media	0.042	0.052	0.422	0.041	0.052	0.436
Times per week News	-0.036	0.029	0.206	-0.036	0.029	0.207
White	0.097	0.108	0.371	0.096	0.108	0.374
Latinx/Hispanic	0.180	0.209	0.389	0.168	0.211	0.427

Democrat	0.118	0.098	0.228	0.111	0.100	0.269
Republican	-0.077	0.102	0.452	-0.067	0.105	0.527
Student versus community	-0.131	0.228	0.566	-0.132	0.229	0.564
Immigrant Threat				-0.022	0.058	0.698
<i>N</i>	285			285		
<i>F</i>	1.692		.048	1.596		.065
<i>R</i> ²	.093			.094		

Note: < p .05; < p .01; < p .001, two-tailed tests.

Perceived Stress (Model B)

Table 4 presents the results of the multiple linear regression of perceptions of immigration-related policy and exposure to negative media messages on perceived stress. Model B1 establishes the direct relationship between each of the policies and media perceptions. Model B1 was a significant predictor of stress ($F(16, 263) = 3.063, p < .001$). The R^2 showed that the model accounted for 15.7% of the variance in stress. Policy A was a significant predictor of stress, ($B=.160, t(284)= 2.895, p= .004$), as you increase policy A you increase stress. Additionally, gender was a significant predictor of stress ($B=.280, t(284)= 2.902, p= .004$), women were more stressed than non-females.

Model B2 added the perceived criminal threat scale. The model was a significant predictor of stress ($F(17, 262) = 2.946, p < .001$). The R^2 showed that the model accounted for 16% of the variance in stress. Policy A was a significant predictor of stress, ($B=.171, t(284)= 3.034, p= .003$), as you increase policy A you increase stress. Additionally, gender remained a

significant predictor of stress ($B=.291$, $t(284)= 3.004$, $p= .003$), women were more stressed than all other gender identities. Immigrant threat was not a significant predictor of stress.

Table 4

Multiple Linear Regression of Stress with the Independent Variables

	Model 1			Model 2		
Variable	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	p	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	p
(Constant)	2.467	0.375	0.000	2.305	0.406	0.000
Media Role Scale	0.063	0.038	0.104	0.064	0.038	0.098
Media Tone Scale	0.022	0.052	0.680	0.024	0.052	0.650
Policy A	0.160	0.055	0.004	0.171	0.056	0.003
Policy B	-0.050	0.071	0.483	-0.056	0.071	0.433
Policy C	0.011	0.069	0.869	0.015	0.069	0.827
Policy D	-0.051	0.063	0.417	-0.063	0.064	0.325
Age	-0.090	0.068	0.185	-0.089	0.068	0.191
Gender	0.280	0.096	0.004	0.291	0.097	0.003
Hours weekly TV	-0.004	0.026	0.873	-0.001	0.026	0.966
Hours daily Social Media	0.006	0.047	0.894	0.009	0.047	0.847
Times per week News	-0.010	0.026	0.709	-0.010	0.026	0.705
White	-0.151	0.098	0.125	-0.150	0.098	0.128
Latinx/Hispanic	0.022	0.190	0.906	0.052	0.192	0.788
Democrat	-0.078	0.089	0.379	-0.060	0.091	0.506

Republican	0.076	0.092	0.411	0.052	0.095	0.587
Student versus community	0.173	0.207	0.406	0.175	0.207	0.399
Immigrant Threat				0.054	0.052	.303
<i>N</i>	285			285		
<i>F</i>	3.063		.000	2.946		.000
<i>R</i> ²	.157			.160		

Note: < p .05; < p .01; < p .001, two-tailed tests.

Meritocracy (Model C)

Table 5 presents the results of the multiple linear regression of immigration-related policy and exposure to negative media messages on perceptions of meritocracy. Model C1 established the direct relationship between each of the policies and media perceptions on meritocracy. Model C1 was a significant predictor of meritocracy ($F(16, 263) = 10.930, p < .001$). The R^2 showed that the model accounted for 39.9% of the variance in meritocracy. Policy A was a significant predictor of perceptions of meritocracy ($B = -.244, t(285) = -3.168, p = .002$), as you increase policy A you decrease perceptions of meritocracy. Additionally, gender was a significant predictor of meritocracy ($B = -.360, t(284) = -2.686, p = .008$), women had lower perceptions of meritocracy than non-females. Both political party affiliation variables were significant predictors. Being Democratic decreased perceptions of meritocracy ($B = -.670, t(284) = -5.417, p < .001$) and being a Republican increased perceptions of meritocracy ($B = .539, t(284) = 4.190, p < .001$).

Model C2 added the immigrant threat scale. Model C2 was a significant predictor of meritocracy ($F(17, 262) = 14.064, p < .001$). The R^2 showed that the model accounted for 47.7% of the variance in meritocracy. Policy A was a significant predictor of meritocracy ($B = -.162, t(284) = -2.211, p = .028$), as you increase policy A you decrease perceptions of meritocracy. Additionally, gender was a significant predictor of meritocracy ($B = -.268, t(284) = -2.121, p = .035$), women had lower perceptions of meritocracy than other gender identities. Both political party affiliation variables remained significant predictors. Being Democratic decreased perceptions of meritocracy ($B = -.528, t(284) = -4.482, p < .001$) and being a Republican increased perceptions of meritocracy ($B = .348, t(284) = 2.803, p < .001$). Additionally, the threat scale was a significant predictor of perceptions of meritocracy ($B = .424, t(284) = 6.242, p < .001$), demonstrating a mediation effect in the model.

Table 5

Multiple Linear Regression of Meritocracy with the Independent Variables

	Model 1			Model 2		
Variable	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	p	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	p
(Constant)	3.748	0.522	0.000	2.474	0.529	0.000
Media Role Scale	-0.042	0.054	0.432	-0.033	0.050	0.508
Media Tone Scale	0.004	0.073	0.957	0.021	0.068	0.761
Policy A	-0.244	0.077	0.002	-0.162	0.073	0.028
Policy B	0.169	0.099	0.089	0.121	0.092	0.191
Policy C	0.099	0.096	0.306	0.128	0.090	0.157
Policy D	0.106	0.088	0.226	0.012	0.083	0.885

Age	-0.103	0.094	0.275	-0.094	0.088	0.283
Gender	-0.360	0.134	0.008	-0.268	0.126	0.035
Hours weekly TV	0.010	0.036	0.788	0.034	0.034	0.325
Hours daily Social Media	0.036	0.066	0.582	0.058	0.061	0.344
Times per week News	0.015	0.036	0.687	0.013	0.034	0.694
White	-0.153	0.137	0.264	-0.145	0.128	0.257
Latinx/Hispanic	-0.165	0.264	0.532	0.065	0.250	0.795
Democrat	-0.670	0.124	0.000	-0.528	0.118	0.000
Republican	0.539	0.129	0.000	0.348	0.124	0.005
Student versus community	-0.013	0.289	0.964	0.008	0.270	0.976
Immigrant Threat				0.424	0.068	0.000
<i>N</i>	285			285		
<i>F</i>	10.930		.000	14.064		.000
<i>R</i> ²	.399			.477		

Note: < p .05; < p .01; < p .001, two-tailed tests.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The primary goal of the study was to assess whether emotional responses to immigration-related policy and exposure to negative media messages affect stress, self-efficacy, and merit-based attitudes. Further, another objective of the project was to explore whether judgments about the criminality of undocumented immigrants would mediate the relationship between the aforementioned independent and dependent variables. These relationships were examined through the utilization of six multivariate linear regression models.

A survey was administered to a Southeastern public university College of Education student research pool and a Latinx nationwide sample. The results provide clinical insight into the ways in which anti-immigrant rhetoric and policy feedback through the media influence the psychological health of individuals, not only those who are targeted but also those who are not immediately targeted but are still psychically, mentally, and emotionally impacted by anti-immigrant policy and messaging. Overall, the findings show that negative emotional responses to restrictive immigration policies and increased exposure to negative media depictions are associated with increased levels of stress and decreased confidence in merit-based beliefs. Further, the findings indicate that participants' perceptions of undocumented immigrants as a criminal threat will mediate the relationship between the sociocultural variables and beliefs of meritocracy.

The discussion chapter will incorporate three sections. The first portion will present a summary of the primary results that have been obtained from the statistical analysis, while the

second section will offer a thorough review of the limitations as well as potential future directions. Finally, the chapter will delve into clinical implications of the findings.

Descriptions of Findings

Regression Model A (Self-Efficacy)

The first regression model, Model A, assessed perceptions of immigration-related policy and exposure to negative media messages on self-efficacy. Model A1 established the direct relationship between each of the policies and media perceptions. The results show a significant relationship between the independent predictors and self-efficacy. Also, Media Tone Scale was a significant predictor of self-efficacy in the model. Essentially, as the negative media tone score increased, self-efficacy decreased. Model A2 was added in order to examine whether perceived criminal threat moderated the relationship between the variables of each of the policies and media perceptions. However, this model that included perceived criminal threat was not a significant predictor of self-efficacy.

It is possible that the higher levels of self-efficacy provide people with the confidence to understand that the policies and media perceptions are not indicative of their individual characters. However, this confidence does not necessarily mean that this individual is not impacted by the policy and media messages. Specifically, despite an individual's confidence, people are likely to be impacted by policies and negative media exposure, particularly messages targeted at their racial/ethnic group. For instance, White individuals may be more able to disregard hostile messages because these individuals are not contending with any negative racial stereotypes. As such, they are able to focus on the task at hand without worry about looking (i.e.,

hair and clothing choices) or acting (i.e., accents, social and cultural capital) a certain way that may be associated with negative racial or ethnic stereotypes.

Regression Model B (Perceived Stress)

The second regression model examined the influence of immigration-related policy and exposure to negative media messages on participants' perceived stress. In model B2, policy A was found to be a significant predictor of stress. Participants who registered more negative emotional reactivity to Policy A and were exposed to more dehumanizing messages about immigrants tended to perceive their lives as more unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded over the past month. When examining the different co-variates, the results show that gender was also a significant predictor of stress. Specifically, female-identified participants were more stressed as compared to other gender identities. It should be noted that only one participant in the sample identified as gender non-binary.

Overall, the findings provide some evidence that restrictive immigration policies and hostile policy feedback in the media can increase psychological distress. The results support the theory that there are negative emotional health implications of sociopolitical movements which dehumanize the undocumented community. While further research is needed, the study provides some preliminary insight into the ways in which racist nativism and xenophobia could influence stress across social groups. The findings also indicate that further research is needed in order to account for the interactive and complicated ways in which social locations intersect.

The results did not indicate significant differences with Latinx participants, which is intriguing, and could result from a myriad of factors. While the study assessed negative emotional health outcomes, it did not examine the potential protective factors which might affect

experiences of stress. For instance, for targeted populations, protective factors such as communities of support that include social movements as well as protests might ameliorate stress. Research suggests that public acknowledgement of oppression can increase a sense of belonging and prompt political engagement, which could, perhaps, counteract some of the psychological stress stemming from hostile policy and exposure to negative media depictions. Similarly, the communal benefits afforded by media, particularly social media, are consistent with Latinx cultural value of collectivism, which centers on allocentrism, familialism, and interdependence (Balderas, 2016; Furman et al., 2009). This could also feasibly influence stress levels.

Although the findings indicate that restrictive policies and negative media characterization are linked to increased stress, the White participants could be experiencing stress for reasons that are different from the Latinx participants. In Helm's White Racial Identity Model (1995), people who do not view themselves as oppressive become conflicted when faced with racism or oppression. Helm's model postulates that individuals who have benefited from White privilege experience guilt and stress when they are unable to resolve the moral conflict between their own dominant socio-cultural group and the oppression of marginalized groups. Based on Helm's model, the stress experienced by White participants could plausibly be related to the dissonance experienced when faced with discriminatory or xenophobic sociocultural events.

Regression Model C (Perceptions of Meritocracy)

A third regression model was implemented in order to investigate the influence of the independent variables on participants' perceptions of meritocracy. Model C1 established the direct relationship between each of the policies and media perceptions on meritocratic views.

The results for Model C1 indicate that there was an inverse relationship between the independent predictors and merit-based beliefs. Specifically, participants were less likely to view the US as fulfilling the core principles of a meritocratic society if they endorsed increased exposure to negative media and more negative emotional reactions to Policy A. These participants, as compared to their counterparts, endorsed increased recognition of intergroup imbalances, which differentially impact people's academic and vocational success. The findings support that these individuals are less likely to respond positively to systems-justifying policies and rhetoric which defends and promulgates the status quo. In addition, there were a triumvirate of co-variates (i.e., gender, political affiliation, and reactions to Policy A) that were highly significant. For instance, women, who reacted more negatively to Policy A and reported increased exposure to negative media depictions were less likely to believe that individuals have control over their own economic and social outcomes.

Furthermore, there were significant differences based on ideological preferences and beliefs. Political party affiliations were a significant predictor within the model with being Democratic associated with lower perceptions of meritocracy and being Republican associated with greater meritocratic beliefs. This is congruent with the Republican Party platforms, particularly surrounding welfare and redistributive policies. This is also consistent with other research regarding partisan attitudes and beliefs. For instance, Jost (2017) found that individuals who voted for Donald Trump in the previous presidential election tended to score higher on economic and gender-specific systems-justification measures, particularly as compared to those who voted for candidate Hillary Clinton. Perceptions of criminal threat, as demonstrated in Model C2, was also highly mediative in the relationship between the independent predictors of media and policy on the dependent variable of perceptions of meritocracy. Fundamentally,

people's assessments of undocumented immigrants as a criminal threat mediated the strength of the relationship between the variables. Ultimately, the results in this model provide support for the notion that subjective judgments regarding merit influence reactions to immigration policy and tone.

Limitations and Future Directions

The current study has several limitations that should be addressed in future studies. The drawbacks center primarily on limitations of survey research, the population sampled, and the need to explore additional variables related to other social locations such as generational status and sexual orientation. Consequently, the obtained results in this study must be viewed within the context of the study limitations as well as the potential direction that future studies might take. Moreover, in addition to the constraints of a survey research, the population that was assessed was a convenience sample, which limits generalizability. The Latinx portion of sample potentially contains non-students, which differs from the other categorical groups. Also, regarding the student sample from the Southeastern college of education research pool, these participants attended a university in an area that prevents undocumented students from enrolling in state-funded universities. The educational policy restrictions made it unlikely that a considerable portion of the sample contained any individuals with undocumented immigration status. As a result, this study might provide a limited or misleading picture of the way in which these variables impact undocumented individuals and communities. The researcher made the decision not to ask about citizenship status for emotional safety, particularly given national, state, and local current events. However, in the future, it would be helpful to study the way in which policies and media depictions specifically impact this population. Further, given the diversity of experiences of the participants, the study examined self-efficacy broadly. Future studies could

examine a specific facet of self-efficacy such as academic or political self-efficacy with a more focused sample.

In a similar vein, another major limitation of the study is that the demographic items do not assess the extent of identification to each of the categorical variables. The study did not look at the salience of White or Latinx/Hispanic participants' racial or ethnic identities. While Latinx participants, for instance, might share a common ethnic identity of Latinx/Hispanic, the salience of these particular identities might differ amongst people within this group as a whole and is likely to be dependent on each participant's context and other intersecting social locations. In illustration of this point, a Latinx man might experience his Latinx identity in a different way than a Latinx woman due to the way in which his ethnic identity interacts with another agent identity. Further, drawing on intersectionality literature, the salience of the aforementioned man's identity could also be dependent on other factors including, but not limited to, national origin, skin color, accent, level of acculturation, language preferences, geographical variations, and exposure to discriminatory social conditions (Arredondo, Gallardo-Cooper, Delgado-Romero, & Zapata, 2014). In terms of the present research study, it is possible that participants who do not consider being Latinx/Hispanic as a salient aspect of their identity might react to policies and media depictions differently, which could, to some invariable extent, influence the results of the study.

As previously noted, because of insufficient Latinx community participants from the state of Georgia, the researcher decided to recruit Latinx participants from other areas of the country. Consequently, the final sample included university students, which could have resulted in a more educated sample. Also, many of these participants resided in states such as California and Washington which have comparatively less restrictive immigration policies than Georgia. These

demographic differences could have influenced the findings. For instance, Latinx participants from California could feasibly experience less stress than participants from Georgia, who arguably live in a state with more hostile policies toward immigrants.

Additionally, certain social locations such as generational status, citizenship status, religious/spiritual preferences, social class, and sexual orientation were not collected. Multicultural, feminist, and social justice psychologists have argued that various economic, political, historical, and social factors foster inequitable sociocultural conditions (Comas-Diaz, 2012; Vasquez, 2012). Based on this theory, it would also be beneficial to integrate matrices of class, sexuality, religion, gender expression, and other social locations into future studies as well as consider the strengths of these identities. It is possible, for instance, that individuals who hold more agent identities (i.e., White, cis-gender, male, Christian, able bodied) could be impacted by systems of oppression differently than individuals who hold more target identities (i.e., people of color, women, LGBTQ, persons with disabilities, non-Christian). Most people, to some degree, are both agents and targets of oppression, a concept known as intersectionality (Grzanka, Santos, & Moradi, 2017). However, individuals who hold many identities that have benefited from the status quo might respond differently as compared to people who hold multiple marginalized identities. Future research might specifically ascertain the potential differences in participants who are more likely to experience oppression when compared to individuals who hold more privileged identities.

Moreover, the overall lack of racial and ethnic diversity in the sample could have also impacted the overall usefulness of the current findings. Because the majority of participants in this sample identified as White and were enrolled in college, a more targeted sample of students, including individuals most immediately affected by the educational policy, that is high school

applicants to college, might yield different results. In future studies, participants who are most likely to be immediately impacted by restrictive public policy should be included to determine if the policy differentially affects the oppressed participants.

Moreover, one of the aims of the study was to understand the potential impact of immigration-related media and policy on target populations. Specifically, the researcher, due to the relative homogeneity of the southeastern college of education research pool, attempted to recruit and assess Latinx individuals from across the nation. While a sizeable body of research suggests that exposure to discriminatory actions prompts increases in pan-ethnic identification, the use of an aggregate Latinx sample still presents a limitation. The Latinx population is an amalgam of more than 20 distinct countries all of which represent unique histories, traditions, and political practices, as well as distinctive histories with the U.S (Mohamed, 2017). The sociocultural diversity likely molds the manner in which participants view anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric. There are several research studies, for instance, that document intragroup variations in attitudes about policy with Puerto Rican participants holding more conservative viewpoint as compared to other Latinx subgroups (Branton, 2007). Since the Latinx sample in the present study is comprised of a heterogeneous mix of Latinx subgroups, it is possible that these results might provide inconsistent or contradictory conclusions due to intragroup variations. Ultimately, in order to not assume generalizability across Latinx subgroups, future studies should test these hypotheses with specific Latinx cultural groups and countries in order to assess between- and within- group heterogeneity. Furthermore, specific social identities such as generational status, level of acculturation, and language preference were not determined. Inclusion of these social identities in future research might highlight marginalized identities that are most affected by oppressive policies.

One notable limitation of the Latinx sample is that the participants were from a relatively small nationwide sample. Unfortunately, there was an insufficient number of Latinx participants obtained in the state of Georgia, so additional participants were recruited through a wide range of student groups, university list serves, and professional organizations. As a consequence, while the information that was obtained in the study was valuable, it might not be generalizable. In the future, studies might focus on student and community groups in similar locations to gauge regional similarities and differences. By obtaining student and community samples in the same geographic area, a more controlled comparison between the groups could be obtained.

Clinical Implications

The study highlights some potential challenges in helping future educators resist dehumanization and address diversity in the classroom with empathy and awareness. Stress may be a catalyst for self-reflection and positive growth, but future educators might need additional coping strategies to remain engaged and present in topics that might invoke stress. Specifically, in order to address students' needs and potential growth areas, it might be helpful to provide future educators with increased opportunity to explore and challenge their own citizen privilege by deconstructing potential defensive reactions that support immigrant repression such as a lack of understanding of immigration policy or history of anti-immigrant sentiments.

The vast majority of teachers across the nation are White with White teaching candidates vastly outnumbering potential educators from any other racial or ethnic group (National Education Association, 2015). By contrast, the percentage of Latinx students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools has increased across all regions of the US. It is projected that the population of Hispanic students enrolled in public school will increase from 25 to 29% between Fall 2003 and Fall 2025 (NCES, 2017). As a point of information, it is projected that

41% of the public school student body will be White by 2024 (US Department of Education, 2016). In the College of Education at the southeastern university that was sampled in this study, around 75% of the students identify as White, with only 3% identifying as Hispanic (University of Georgia College of Education Annual Report, 2017). Given these demographics, education might be an area in which awareness of diversity and sociocultural pressures might not be fully recognized. Ultimately, the findings of the study offer information for teacher preparation programs to consider ways of intentionally confronting the status quo in higher education and navigate conversations about connections between anti-immigrant stances, racist nativism, classism, and sexism. Additional studies would be beneficial in assessing the relationship between the inclusion of social justice and advocacy in educational training programs and the capacity of future educators to incorporate a multicultural understanding in their teaching.

Counseling psychologists are unified by a core value in psychological research, training, and supervision that explores broad social environments as well as the ways in which cultural structures enhance and impede optimal development (Delgado-Romero, Lau, & Shulman, 2012). Therefore, it is important for psychologists to consider, research, and train future researchers and educators on how macro-level factors such as immigration status and public policy impact the emotional health of individuals, families, and communities. Research paradigms and inquiries that explore inequitable social conditions can serve as a tool for psychologists to increase awareness of cultural similarities and differences as well as improve intercultural responsiveness and humility. Overall, the present study provides some evidence that psychologists' capacity to address and advocate against vestiges of power, xenophobia, nativism, and racism is important in responding to the emotional health needs of clients. The findings of this study are particularly relevant as the country grapples with immigration reform. The findings underscore the

importance of mental health providers' and educators' sociopolitical commitments to justice across race, ethnicity, gender, and nation as central to their practices. In order to alleviate stress caused by inequitable systems, mental health providers and educators should work collaboratively to challenge the status quo and confront xenophobia, power, racist nativism, and patriarchy.

Final Note

During my training as a Counseling Psychologist, I have been firmly committed to integrating intercultural awareness and responsiveness into clinical practice, research, and teaching. I hope to use my training as a counseling psychologist to advocate with my clients and the communities in which they live in a way that addresses the influence of socio-cultural and structural factors on people's lives. As a therapist and instructor in academic settings, I have found it personally and professionally rewarding to identify, discuss, and address the complex issues which might impact students' abilities to meet their personal needs and achieve self-sufficiency. I have been fortunate to be mentored by individuals who model social justice and allyship, both professionally as well as personally. As a member of the National Latina Psychological Association (NLPA) and the BIEN research team, I hope to translate research into meaningful sociopolitical change with a focus on addressing the distinct pressures encountered by undocumented students.

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APPENDIX A

ELECTRONIC CONSENT FORMS FOR SCHOOL SAMPLE

CONSENT FORM

Researcher's Statement

We are asking you to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This form is designed to give you the information about the study so you can decide whether to be in the study or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researchers if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called “informed consent.”

Principal Investigator: Edward A. Delgado-Romero, PhD
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Co-Investigator: Beth Perlman, MA
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413-F Aderhold Hall
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Athens, GA, 30602

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this investigation is to understand how public policy and media about immigration are related to various facets of well-being. You

are being asked to participate in this study because you are a current college student and are 18 years of age or older.

Study Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a series of questionnaires. Some of these questions may be personal in nature. A sample question would be “In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?”. You will also be asked about your reactions to various public policy statements. Additionally, you will report on your exposure to and perceptions of media messages related to immigration. The surveys that you are being asked to fill out will be administered over a secure server and the data will be encrypted while in transit. The study should be completed in one sitting and will last approximately 30 minutes.

Risks and discomforts

There are no known risks for participation in this study.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits to you. However, society may benefit from the results. This study has the purpose and potential to provide psychologists with a greater understanding of the ways in which psychological well-being is influenced by cultural factors such as public policy and media coverage.

Incentives for participation

The incentive for participating in this study is .5 hours of research credit in the CHDS Research pool. If you do not wish to participate in this study, you can pursue other opportunities on the CHDS research pool website or you can contact your instructor for information regarding non-research options to meet course requirements. Your decision about participation will have no bearing on your grades or class standing.

Privacy/Confidentiality

The survey that you are being asked to fill out will be administered over a secure server where the data will be encrypted while in transit. Access to the data will be password protected and will only be available to the researchers. Beyond demographic information, the researcher will not be collecting identifying information from research participants. The results of the data may be submitted for future publication or presented at scientific conferences, but confidentiality will be maintained and no identifying information will be revealed. The researcher will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent unless required by law.

Taking part is voluntary

You are free to decide to not participate in this study. Additionally, you may withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers, The University of Georgia, or your institution. If, at any time, you have questions related to the nature or process of the research, you are welcome to contact the researchers.

If you have questions

The principal investigator conducting this study is Edward A. Delgado-Romero at The University of Georgia. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Edward A. Delgado-Romero at edelgado@uga.edu or at 706.542.1812. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706.542.3199 or irb@uga.edu.

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:

By clicking on the "I AGREE" button below, you are voluntarily

agreeing to participate in this research as conducted by the University of Georgia. You should print a copy of this page for your records.

APPENDIX B

ELECTRONIC CONSENT FORMS FOR NATIONWIDE LATINX SAMPLE

CONSENT FORM

Researcher's Statement

I am asking you to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This form is designed to give you the information about the study so you can decide whether to be in the study or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researchers if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called “informed consent.”

Principal Investigator: Edward A. Delgado-Romero, PhD
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Co-Investigator: Beth Perlman, MA
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Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this investigation is to understand how public policy and media about immigration are related to various facets of psychological well-being. You are being asked to participate in this study because you self-identify as Latinx or Hispanic and are 18 years of age or older. The survey

will only be available in English. As a result, English proficiency is required for inclusion in the study.

Study Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a series of questionnaires. Some of these questions may be personal in nature. A sample question would be “In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control”. You will also be asked about your reactions to various public policy statements. Additionally, you will report on your exposure to and perceptions of media messages related to immigration. The surveys that you are being asked to fill out will be administered over a secure server and the data will be encrypted while in transit. The study should be completed in one sitting and will last approximately 20-30 minutes.

Risks and Discomforts

There are no known risks for participation in this study beyond possible temporary discomfort.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits to you. However, society may benefit from the results. This study has the purpose and potential to provide psychologists with a greater understanding of the ways in which psychological well-being is influenced by sociopolitical factors such as public policy and media messages. A summary of the results of this research will be provided to you, at no cost, upon request.

Incentives for participation

There will be an incentive for participating in this study. Both participants who decide to participate voluntarily in this study and individuals who would not like to participate in this study will be allowed to enter into a random drawing to win one of ten \$25 gift cards. The drawing will take place on 5/22/18. Participants who do not wish to participate in the study, but would like to be included in the drawing, can provide an email or mailing address below. It should be noted that the researchers will not release any identifiable information to anyone without your written consent. You do not need to

provide an email or mailing address if you do not wish to be included in the drawing.

Privacy/Confidentiality

The survey that you are being asked to fill out will be administered over a secure server where the data will be encrypted while in transit. Access to the data will be password protected and will only be available to Edward Delgado-Romero and Beth Perlman. Beyond demographic information, the researchers will not be collecting identifying information from research participants unless they wish to participate in the gift card drawing. The results of the data may be submitted for future publication or presented at scientific conferences, but confidentiality will be maintained and no identifying information will be revealed. The researcher will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project.

Taking part is voluntary

You are free to decide to not participate in this study. Additionally, you may withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or the University of Georgia. If, at any time, you have questions related to the nature or process of the research, you are welcome to contact the researcher.

If you have questions

The researchers conducting this study are Edward Delgado-Romero and Beth Perlman at the University of Georgia. If you have questions, you may contact Edward Delgado-Romero at edelgado@uga.edu or Beth Perlman at BLP57134@uga.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706.542.3199 or irb@uga.edu.

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:

By clicking on the "I AGREE" button below, you are voluntarily agreeing to participate in this research as conducted by the University of Georgia. You should print a copy of this page for your records.

APPENDIX C

RECRUITMENT MATERIAL FOR NATIONWIDE LATINX SAMPLE

Research Participants Needed For Online Survey!

- The purpose of survey is to explore how perceptions of immigration policy and media depictions influence well-being.
- To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older and identify as Latinx/Hispanic.
- To thank study participants for their time, individuals have the opportunity to win one of ten **\$25 Target** gift cards.
- Only the researcher has access to the responses. If you decide to participate, you do not need to provide any identifying information. If you would like to be eligible to win the gift card, an email or mailing address is required. This mailing address WILL NOT be associated in any way with your responses and will be deleted after the gift cards are mailed.
- To participate, please fill out the online survey. It will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The survey is found at:

https://ugeorgia.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6Pdn972gp2mmQtv

Or scan the QR code below with your electronic device to directly access the survey.



- If you have any questions, please contact Beth Perlman at BLP57134@uga.edu. This study has been granted Institutional Review Board approval through The University of Georgia.

APPENDIX D

SCHOOL SAMPLE SURVEY ITEMS

INSTRUCTIONS: For each of the following questions, either check the applicable box or fill in the appropriate blank.

Age: _____

- ☐ 18-19
- ☐ 20-29
- ☐ 30-39
- ☐ 40-49
- ☐ 50-59
- ☐ 60-69
- ☐ 70-79
- ☐ 80-89
- ☐ 90 or older

I am currently a: ☐ First Year ☐ Second Year ☐ Third Year ☐ Fourth Year or higher

Are you an International Student?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you are an international student, please specify your country of origin? _____

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Transgender ☐ Gender Non-Binary ☐ Other (please specify)

I identify myself as: (check all that apply)

- ☐ American Indian/Alaskan Native
- ☐ Middle Eastern/Middle Eastern American
- ☐ White
- ☐ African American/Black
- ☐ Latinx/Hispanic
- ☐ Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Multiracial (please specify) _____
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

What state or country do you consider to be your permanent residence? _____

Approximately how many hours per week do you watch television (including cable, Hulu, Netflix, Amazon Prime, HBO GO, YouTube, Sling TV, iTunes, etc)?

- ☐ 0-4 hours
- ☐ 5-9 hour
- ☐ 10-14 hours
- ☐ 15-19 hours
- ☐ 20-24 hours
- ☐ 25-29
- ☐ 30 or more

Approximately how many hours per day do you use social media (including Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Pinterest, Google Plus+, Vine, Flickr, LinkedIn, or Snapchat)?

- ☐ 0 hours
- ☐ 1-2 hours
- ☐ 3-4 hours
- ☐ 5 or more hours

Approximately how often do you read or watch the news?

- ☐ More than once a day
- ☐ Daily
- ☐ A few times a week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Almost never

Please indicate which of the following news sources you regularly access for information?

- ☐ New Yorker
- ☐ Slate
- ☐ The Guardian
- ☐ NPR
- ☐ New York Times
- ☐ BuzzFeed
- ☐ PBS
- ☐ BBC
- ☐ Huffington Post
- ☐ Washington Post
- ☐ The Economist
- ☐ Politico
- ☐ CNN
- ☐ MSNBC
- ☐ NBC News
- ☐ CBS News
- ☐ ABC News
- ☐ ABC News
- ☐ Fox News
- ☐ Drudge Report

- ☐ Breitbart
- ☐ The Blaze
- ☐ Sean Hannity Show
- ☐ The Glenn Beck Show

Do you identify with a particular political party?

- ☐ Democratic Party
- ☐ Republican Party
- ☐ Independent
- ☐ Libertarian
- ☐ Green Party
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Media plays a role in our day-to-day lives as well as our experiences. Immigration is a topic that is frequently covered and discussed in various forms of media. Please indicate how often during the PAST MONTH you encountered messages about refugees or immigrants in the following media.

0 1 2 3 4 5
 Not at all Once or twice About once a week A couple times a week Daily or almost daily More than once a day

1. Television news reports (including messages spoken by persons interviewed, reporters, or commentators):	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. Newspaper or magazine articles (including messages from persons quotes in an article, editorials, or the overall message itself):	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. Billboards, yard signs, and other political advertisements:	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. Social media (including Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, Pinterest, Google Plus+, Vine, Flickr, LinkedIn, or Snapchat):	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. Personal conversations that you have engaged in or overheard:	0	1	2	3	4	5

In considering the immigration-related media messages you have encountered over the PAST MONTH, please indicate the overall tone of these messages.

1 2 3 4 5
 Mostly Negative Somewhat Negative Neutral Somewhat Positive Mostly Positive

1. Television news reports (including messages spoken by persons interviewed, reporters, or commentators):	1	2	3	4	5
2. Newspaper or magazine articles (including messages from persons quotes in an article, editorials, or the overall message itself):	1	2	3	4	5
3. Billboards, yard signs, and other political advertisements:	1	2	3	4	5
4. Social media (including Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, Pinterest, Google Plus+, Vine, Flickr, LinkedIn, or Snapchat):	1	2	3	4	5
5. Personal conversations that you have engaged in or overheard:	1	2	3	4	5

Public policy regarding college and university access for undocumented immigrants varies from state to state. These policies can differ in terms of access to public institutions, the possibility of in-state tuition, and the accessibility of state financial aid.

Please read the following four educational policy statements. After reading each policy, please complete the subsequent questions to the best of your ability.

Policy A: Colleges and universities are not permitted to admit undocumented students.

1 **2** **3** **4**
Very Unlikely **Somewhat Unlikely** **Somewhat Likely** **Very Likely**

Please rate your hypothetical willingness to attend the unnamed universities based only on the information provided on the above description.	1	2	3	4
--	---	---	---	---

Policy A: Colleges and universities are not permitted to admit undocumented students.

The following questions will ask you to describe your reactions to Policy A.

1 **2** **3** **4** **5**
Very slightly or not at all **A little** **Moderately** **Quite a bit** **Extremely**

1. How anxious do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
2. How distressed do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5

3. How inspired do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
4. How nervous do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
5. How afraid do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
6. How determined do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
7. How guilty do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
8. How interested do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5

Policy B: Colleges and universities can grant in-state tuition to undocumented students, but are not allowed to provide state financial aid to these students.

1 **2** **3** **4**
Very Unlikely **Somewhat Unlikely** **Somewhat Likely** **Very Likely**

Please rate your willingness to attend the unnamed state universities based only on the information provided on the above description.	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---

Policy B: Colleges and universities can grant in-state tuition to undocumented students, but are not allowed to provide state financial aid to these students.

The following questions will ask you to describe your reactions to Policy B.

1 **2** **3** **4** **5**
Very slightly or not at all **A little** **Moderately** **Quite a bit** **Extremely**

1. How anxious do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
2. How distressed do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
3. How inspired do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
4. How nervous do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
5. How afraid do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
6. How determined do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
7. How guilty do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
8. How interested do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5

Policy C: Colleges and universities are allowed to accept undocumented students, but are not allowed to provide these students with in-state tuition rates.

1 **2** **3** **4**
Very Unlikely **Somewhat Unlikely** **Somewhat Likely** **Very Likely**

Please rate your hypothetical willingness to attend the unnamed universities based only on the information provided on the above description.	1	2	3	4
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Policy C: Colleges and universities are allowed to accept undocumented students, but are not allowed to provide these students with in-state tuition rates.

The following questions will ask you to describe your reactions to Policy C.

1 **2** **3** **4** **5**
 Very slightly or not at all A little Moderately Quite a bit Extremely

1. How anxious do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
2. How distressed do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
3. How inspired do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
4. How nervous do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
5. How afraid do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
6. How determined do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
7. How guilty do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
8. How interested do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5

Policy D: Colleges and universities are allowed to accept undocumented students, and are permitted to grant these students in-state tuition as well as financial aid.

1 **2** **3** **4**
 Very Unlikely Somewhat Unlikely Somewhat Likely Very Likely

Please rate your hypothetical willingness to attend the unnamed state universities based only on the information provided on the above description.	1	2	3	4
--	---	---	---	---

Policy D: Colleges and universities are allowed to accept undocumented students, and are permitted to grant these students in-state tuition as well as financial aid.

The following questions will ask you to describe your reactions to Policy D.

1	2	3	4	5
Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely

1. How anxious do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
2. How distressed do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
3. How inspired do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
4. How nervous do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
5. How afraid do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
6. How determined do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
7. How guilty do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
8. How interested do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5

The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month.

In each case, you will be asked to indicate by circling how often you felt or thought a certain way.

0 = Never 1 = Almost Never 2 = Sometimes 3 = Fairly Often 4 = Very Often

1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?	0	1	2	3	4
2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	0	1	2	2	4
3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and “stressed”?	0	1	2	3	4
4. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	0	1	2	3	4
5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?	0	1	2	3	4
6. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?	0	1	2	3	4
7. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?	0	1	2	3	4
8. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?	0	1	2	3	4
9. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?	0	1	2	3	4

10. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	0	1	2	3	4
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Please use the scale below to rate your agreement (or disagreement) with each of the following statements about yourself.

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

1. I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself.	1	2	3	4	5
2. When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them.	1	2	3	4	5
3. In general, I think I can obtain outcomes that are important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I set my mind.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.	1	2	3	4	5

The statements below concern issues related to work, rewards, and success in our society. Unless otherwise stated: work includes mental or physical labor, rewards pertain to any combination of wages, perquisites (perks), benefits, and social status, and success refers to attaining a good income and/or social status. Please read the following statements and indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement by circling the number that

corresponds with your opinion. All answers you provide will be kept confidential and cannot be traced back to you so please be as honest as you can.

Please respond to each statement by using the following code:

- 1 = Strongly disagree**
- 2 = Moderately disagree**
- 3 = Slightly disagree**
- 4 = Neutral**
- 5 = Slightly agree**
- 6 = Moderately agree**
- 7 = Strongly agree**

	Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree						
1. Gender has little to do with a person's wages.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
2. Minority groups have fewer opportunities to achieve success than other Americans do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
3. Uncontrollable factors often limit one's success, despite a person's best efforts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
4. With hard work people can easily move up from one social status to another.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
5. It is very difficult for people from lower class families to achieve a higher status.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
6. All people who work hard can improve their position in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
7. People from wealthy families are more likely to succeed than are people from working-class families.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
8. Hard work does not always pay off.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
9. Individuals are responsible for their own financial success.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
10. In our society, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
11. Many people who make clear and significant contributions are under-rewarded for their work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							

	Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree						
12. Because of discrimination, race and ethnicity are important determinants of social position.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
13. All people have equal opportunity to be financially successful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
14. Effort is the largest component of success.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
15. In almost all professions or job positions, those who work the hardest will rise to the top.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
16. Many occupations are under-paid.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
17. Professional women typically earn less than their male counterparts do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
18. People's wages depend primarily on their ability and skill.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
19. Many people's efforts go unnoticed and unrewarded.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
20. People's salaries depend on how well they do their jobs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
21. Success is possible for anyone who is willing to work hard enough.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
22. Many people earn far less than they are worth.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
23. All people have equal opportunity to succeed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
24. Everyone can find work if they look hard enough.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							

Please use the scale below to rate your agreement (or disagreement) with each of the following statements about yourself.

1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neutral 4= Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

1. Undocumented immigrants are no more violent than American citizens.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Undocumented immigrants are more likely to use drugs than American citizens.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Too many undocumented immigrants are trafficking drugs across the border.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Too many undocumented immigrants with criminal records are coming to the US.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Gangs of undocumented immigrant youth are a serious problem for this country.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Undocumented immigrants are just as law-abiding as American citizens.	1	2	3	4	5

Please use the scale below to rate your support with each of the following statements about yourself.

1 = Strongly Support 2 = Support 3 = Neutral 4= Oppose 5 = Strongly Oppose

1. Allow undocumented immigrants who have been in the US for seven years to stay.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Allow undocumented immigrants to send their children to public schools.	1	2	3	4	5

3. Permit undocumented immigrants to receive welfare assistance.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Allow undocumented immigrants to receive emergency health care benefits.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Grant US citizenship to children of undocumented immigrants born in the US Permit undocumented immigrants to obtain a valid driver's license.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Send anyone the police can identify as an undocumented immigrant back to their native country.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX E

NATIONWIDE SAMPLE SURVEY ITEMS

INSTRUCTIONS: For each of the following questions, either check the applicable box or fill in the appropriate blank.

Age: _____

- ☐ 18-19
- ☐ 20-29
- ☐ 30-39
- ☐ 40-49
- ☐ 50-59
- ☐ 60-69
- ☐ 70-79
- ☐ 80-89
- ☐ 90 or older

Please select where you currently reside:

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Transgender ☐ Gender Non-Binary ☐ Other (please specify)

Approximately how many hours per week do you watch television (including cable, Hulu, Netflix, Amazon Prime, HBO GO, YouTube, Sling TV, iTunes, etc)?

- ☐ 0-4 hours
- ☐ 5-9 hour
- ☐ 10-14 hours
- ☐ 15-19 hours
- ☐ 20-24 hours
- ☐ 25-29
- ☐ 30 or more

Approximately how many hours per day do you use social media (including Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Pinterest, Google Plus+, Vine, Flickr, LinkedIn, or Snapchat)?

- ☐ 0 hours
- ☐ 1-2 hours
- ☐ 3-4 hours
- ☐ 5 or more hours

Approximately how often do you read or watch the news?

- ☐ More than once a day
- ☐ Daily
- ☐ A few times a week
- ☐ Once a week

- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Almost never

Please indicate which of the following news sources you regularly access for information?

- ☐ New Yorker
- ☐ Slate
- ☐ The Guardian
- ☐ NPR
- ☐ New York Times
- ☐ BuzzFeed
- ☐ PBS
- ☐ BBC
- ☐ Huffington Post
- ☐ Washington Post
- ☐ The Economist
- ☐ Politico
- ☐ CNN
- ☐ MSNBC
- ☐ NBC News
- ☐ CBS News
- ☐ ABC News
- ☐ ABC News
- ☐ Fox News
- ☐ Drudge Report
- ☐ Breitbart
- ☐ The Blaze
- ☐ Sean Hannity Show
- ☐ The Glenn Beck Show

Do you identify with a particular political party?

- ☐ Democratic Party
- ☐ Republican Party
- ☐ Independent
- ☐ Libertarian
- ☐ Green Party
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Media plays a role in our day-to-day lives as well as our experiences. Immigration is a topic that is frequently covered and discussed in various forms of media. Please indicate how often during the PAST MONTH you encountered messages about refugees or immigrants in the following media.

0 1 2 3 4 5

Policy A: Colleges and universities are not permitted to admit undocumented students.

1 **2** **3** **4**
Very Unlikely **Somewhat Unlikely** **Somewhat Likely** **Very Likely**

Please rate your hypothetical willingness to attend the unnamed universities based only on the information provided on the above description.	1 2 3 4
--	------------------

Policy A: Colleges and universities are not permitted to admit undocumented students.

The following questions will ask you to describe your reactions to Policy A.

1 **2** **3** **4** **5**
Very slightly or not at all **A little** **Moderately** **Quite a bit** **Extremely**

1. How anxious do you feel?	1 2 3 4 5
2. How distressed do you feel?	1 2 3 4 5
3. How inspired do you feel?	1 2 3 4 5
4. How nervous do you feel?	1 2 3 4 5
5. How afraid do you feel?	1 2 3 4 5
6. How determined do you feel?	1 2 3 4 5
7. How guilty do you feel?	1 2 3 4 5
8. How interested do you feel?	1 2 3 4 5

Policy B: Colleges and universities can grant in-state tuition to undocumented students, but are not allowed to provide state financial aid to these students.

1 **2** **3** **4**
Very Unlikely **Somewhat Unlikely** **Somewhat Likely** **Very Likely**

Please rate your willingness to attend the unnamed state universities based only on the information provided on the above description.	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---

Policy B: Colleges and universities can grant in-state tuition to undocumented students, but are not allowed to provide state financial aid to these students.

The following questions will ask you to describe your reactions to Policy B.

1 **2** **3** **4** **5**
 Very slightly or not at all A little Moderately Quite a bit Extremely

1. How anxious do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
2. How distressed do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
3. How inspired do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
4. How nervous do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
5. How afraid do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
6. How determined do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
7. How guilty do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
8. How interested do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5

Policy C: Colleges and universities are allowed to accept undocumented students, but are not allowed to provide these students with in-state tuition rates.

1 **2** **3** **4**
Very Unlikely **Somewhat Unlikely** **Somewhat Likely** **Very Likely**

Please rate your hypothetical willingness to attend the unnamed universities based only on the information provided on the above description.	1	2	3	4
--	---	---	---	---

Policy C: Colleges and universities are allowed to accept undocumented students, but are not allowed to provide these students with in-state tuition rates.

The following questions will ask you to describe your reactions to Policy C.

1 **2** **3** **4** **5**
Very slightly or not at all **A little** **Moderately** **Quite a bit** **Extremely**

1. How anxious do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
2. How distressed do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
3. How inspired do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
4. How nervous do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
5. How afraid do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5

6. How determined do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
7. How guilty do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
8. How interested do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5

Policy D: Colleges and universities are allowed to accept undocumented students, and are permitted to grant these students in-state tuition as well as financial aid.

1 **2** **3** **4**
Very Unlikely **Somewhat Unlikely** **Somewhat Likely** **Very Likely**

Please rate your hypothetical willingness to attend the unnamed state universities based only on the information provided on the above description.	1	2	3	4
--	---	---	---	---

Policy D: Colleges and universities are allowed to accept undocumented students, and are permitted to grant these students in-state tuition as well as financial aid.

The following questions will ask you to describe your reactions to Policy D.

1 **2** **3** **4** **5**
Very slightly or not at all **A little** **Moderately** **Quite a bit** **Extremely**

1. How anxious do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
2. How distressed do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
3. How inspired do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
4. How nervous do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
5. How afraid do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
6. How determined do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
7. How guilty do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5
8. How interested do you feel?	1	2	3	4	5

The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month.

In each case, you will be asked to indicate by circling how often you felt or thought a certain way.

0 = Never 1 = Almost Never 2 = Sometimes 3 = Fairly Often 4 = Very Often

1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?	0	1	2	3	4
2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	0	1	2	2	4
3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and “stressed”?	0	1	2	3	4

4. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	0	1	2	3	4
5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?	0	1	2	3	4
6. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?	0	1	2	3	4
7. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?	0	1	2	3	4
8. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?	0	1	2	3	4
9. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?	0	1	2	3	4
10. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	0	1	2	3	4

Please use the scale below to rate your agreement (or disagreement) with each of the following statements about yourself.

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

1. I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself.	1	2	3	4	5
2. When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them.	1	2	3	4	5

3. In general, I think I can obtain outcomes that are important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I set my mind.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.	1	2	3	4	5

The statements below concern issues related to work, rewards, and success in our society. Unless otherwise stated: work includes mental or physical labor, rewards pertain to any combination of wages, perquisites (perks), benefits, and social status, and success refers to attaining a good income and/or social status. Please read the following statements and indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement by circling the number that corresponds with your opinion. All answers you provide will be kept confidential and cannot be traced back to you so please be as honest as you can.

Please respond to each statement by using the following code:

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Moderately disagree
- 3 = Slightly disagree
- 4 = Neutral
- 5 = Slightly agree
- 6 = Moderately agree
- 7 = Strongly agree

	Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree						
1. Gender has little to do with a person's wages.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Minority groups have fewer opportunities to achieve success than other Americans do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Uncontrollable factors often limit one's success, despite a person's best efforts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. With hard work people can easily move up from one social status to another.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. It is very difficult for people from lower class families to achieve a higher status.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. All people who work hard can improve their position in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. People from wealthy families are more likely to succeed than are people from working-class families.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Hard work does not always pay off.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Individuals are responsible for their own financial success.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. In our society, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Many people who make clear and significant contributions are under-rewarded for their work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Because of discrimination, race and ethnicity are important determinants of social position.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. All people have equal opportunity to be financially successful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Effort is the largest component of success.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. In almost all professions or job positions, those who work the hardest will rise to the top.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Many occupations are under-paid.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Professional women typically earn less than their male counterparts do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree						
18. People's wages depend primarily on their ability and skill.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
19. Many people's efforts go unnoticed and unrewarded.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
20. People's salaries depend on how well they do their jobs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
21. Success is possible for anyone who is willing to work hard enough.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
22. Many people earn far less than they are worth.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
23. All people have equal opportunity to succeed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
24. Everyone can find work if they look hard enough.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							

Please use the scale below to rate your agreement (or disagreement) with each of the following statements about yourself.

1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Neutral 4= Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree

7. Undocumented immigrants are no more violent than American citizens.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Undocumented immigrants are more likely to use drugs than American citizens.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Too many undocumented immigrants are trafficking drugs across the border.	1	2	3	4	5

10. Too many undocumented immigrants with criminal records are coming to the US.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Gangs of undocumented immigrant youth are a serious problem for this country.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Undocumented immigrants are just as law-abiding as American citizens.	1	2	3	4	5

Please use the scale below to rate your support with each of the following statements about yourself.

1 = Strongly Support 2 = Support 3 = Neutral 4= Oppose 5 = Strongly Oppose

7. Allow undocumented immigrants who have been in the US for seven years to stay.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Allow undocumented immigrants to send their children to public schools.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Permit undocumented immigrants to receive welfare assistance.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Allow undocumented immigrants to receive emergency health care benefits.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Grant US citizenship to children of undocumented immigrants born in the US Permit undocumented immigrants to obtain a valid driver's license.	1	2	3	4	5

12. Send anyone the police can identify as an undocumented immigrant back to their native country.	1 2 3 4 5
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