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Media Influences on Fear of Immigrants

Mira Eissa
Chapman University, eissa@chapman.edu

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Chapman University, Department of Political Science, Orange, CA

Introduction

A Review of the Literature
This study explores how media consumption impacts fear of immigrants in the United States.

Media Theories:
- Agenda setting is when increased media coverage of a specific topic, in this paper's case immigration, causes people to perceive that matter as a current and an important issue that needs to be addressed (Dunaway et al., 2010; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Moy et al., 2016; STEIN, 2001)
- Priming focuses on how information is consumed, from media, and is stored in your brain thus influences your decisions (Moy et al., 2016). While ideology, values, and political affiliation play a huge role, one must dive deeper to uncover the origins of these opinions within those affiliations
- Framing is the text, image, or whatever an author decides they will use to form a perceived reality to promote more people to see their news (Entman, 1993; Moy et al., 2016).

In-group/out-group & Prejudice Theory:
- Prejudice theory is applied a little different because it is not focusing on an individual but how identity groups see themselves relative to other groups and how that belief or thought becomes reinforced through a spokesperson (Blumer, 1958; Esposito & Murphy, 1999; Fussell, 2014)

Depictions of Immigrants in Media:
- racist and xenophobic rhetoric (Chavez, 2001; Demo, 2004)
- language and images suggested that immigrants are a problem, something that should be feared or dangerous (Chavez, 2001)
- In 1994, Proposition 187 in California, focused on restricting undocumented immigrants from using social services like public education (Cisneros, 2008)
- Comparison between Love Canal and depictions of immigrants; darkness and ominous pictures
- Depictions of immigrants in news in border states vs. non borders states (Dunaway et al., 2010)

Acknowledgments

Hypotheses and Methods

H1: Those who watch local tv news frequently are more likely to fear immigrants than those who watch other media outlets.
H2: Respondents who are older in age are more likely to fear immigrants than those who are younger in age.
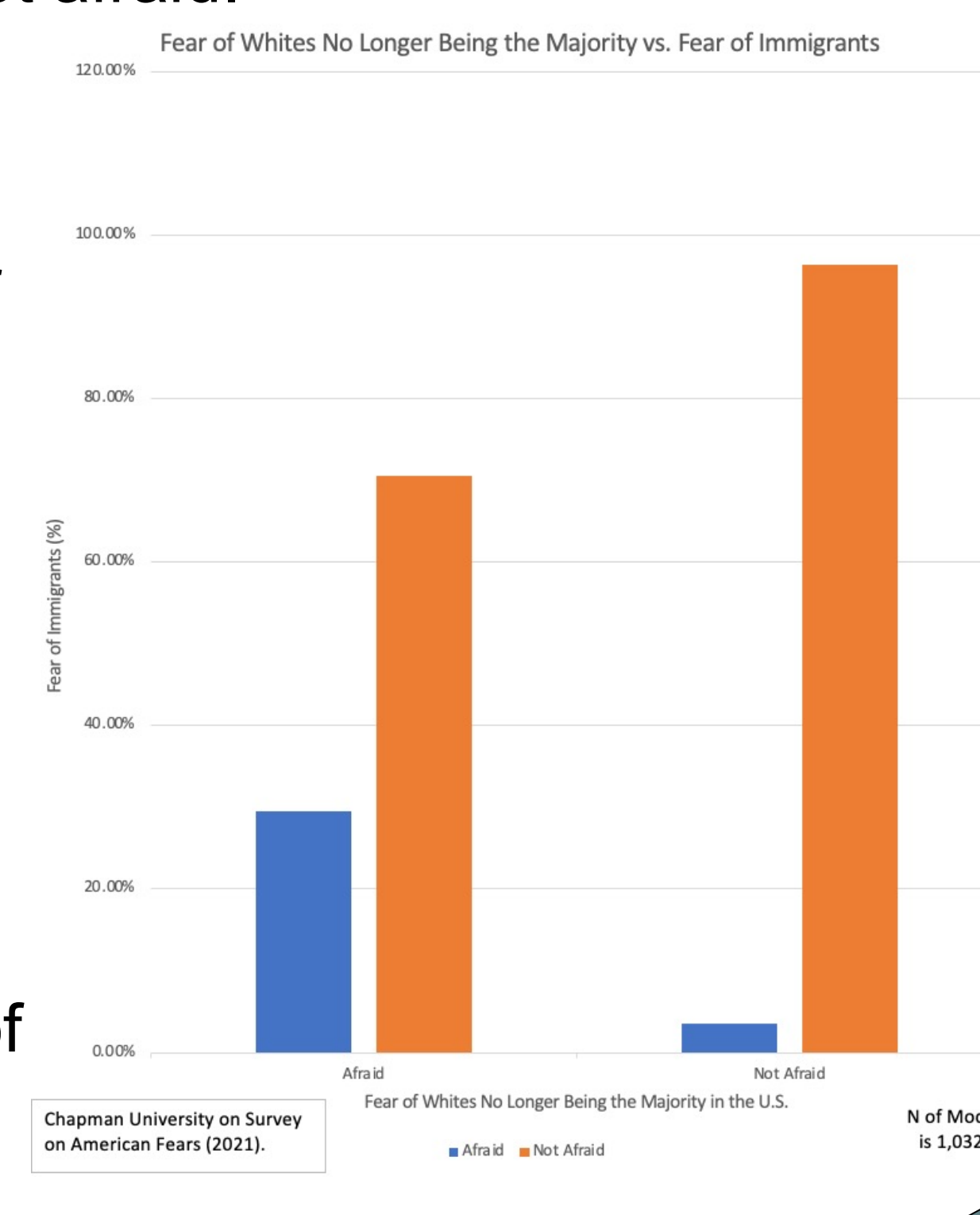**H3: Republicans are more likely to fear immigrants than democrats and independents.**
H4: Those who are afraid of whites no longer being the majority are more likely to fear immigrants.

This research utilized data from Chapman University's American Fear Survey 2021 to test four hypotheses. The survey was conducted, and the data was collected online through the SSRS Panel, adults that were 18 years old or older participated in it. SSRS is a service that people, and organizations can use to hold complex surveys through. There were about 1,000 respondents and the data was collected from January 5 to the 15. The survey completion was 51% and questions not answered were coded as missing values in the system.
Fear of immigrants is the dependent variable; the question was stated as How afraid are you of the following: Immigrants? The answers the survey takers could choose 1-very afraid, 2-afraid, 3-slightly afraid, and 4- not afraid. For the crosstab tests the dependent variable is on a recoded scale of 1- afraid and 2- not afraid.

Hypothesis 4
A crosstab examination, those who are not afraid of whites no longer being the majority and afraid of immigrants are only 3.6%. While those who are afraid of whites no longer being the majority in the U.S. and afraid of immigrants are 29.5 %.

Fear of Whites No Longer Being the Majority vs. Fear of Immigrants

Chapman University on Survey on American Fears (2021). Afraid / Not Afraid

N of Model is 1,032.

Results

Hypothesis 1 &2

Hypothesis 1's & 2's regression results showed that party identification and fear of whites no longer being the majority; while age has no significance. And, that The variables that are statistically significant from the media consumption questions are reading online news websites (such as Yahoos News and Google), watching national nightly network news (such as weekly World News Tonight, CBS Evening News), and watching local TV news.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Standardized Coefficients Beta
(Constant)	2.514	
Do you think of yourself as Republican, Democrat or Independent?	0.038 (.003)*	.108
Age (PAGEFINAL)	-0.016 (.444)	-.026
How afraid are you of the following events: Whites no longer being the majority in the US?	0.308 (.000)***	.369
How often do you...Read a local newspaper from your hometown (in print or the digital version)?	0.007 (.570)	.019
How often do you...Read a national newspaper such as USA Today, The Wall Street Journal, or The New York Times (in print of the digital version, app, etc.)?	-0.015 (.255)	-.039
How often do you... Read online news websites (such as Yahoo News or Google)?	0.028 (.020)*	.075
How often do you... Watch the national nightly network news (such as World News Tonight, CBS Evening News)?	-0.03 (.048)*	-.084
How often do you... Watch Fox News?	0.009 (.473)	.024
How often do you... Watch CNN?	0.007 (.669)	.018
How Often do you... Watch MSNBC?	-0.023 (.133)	-.058
How often do you... Watch the local TV news to learn about your area?	0.03 (.020)*	.097
How often do you... Watch shows such as The Ellen DeGeneres Show or The View?	-0.009 (.590)	-.018
talk radio show that discusses politics?	0.013 (.241)	.035
How often do you... Get news from social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook)?	0.004 (.681)	.013

Chapman University on Survey on American Fears (2021).
Notes. * P < .05; ** P < .01; ***P < .001.
R² = .202
N of Model is 1,032

Hypothesis 3

Party Identification vs. Fear of Immigrants

Chapman University on Survey on American Fears (2021).

N of Model is 1,032.
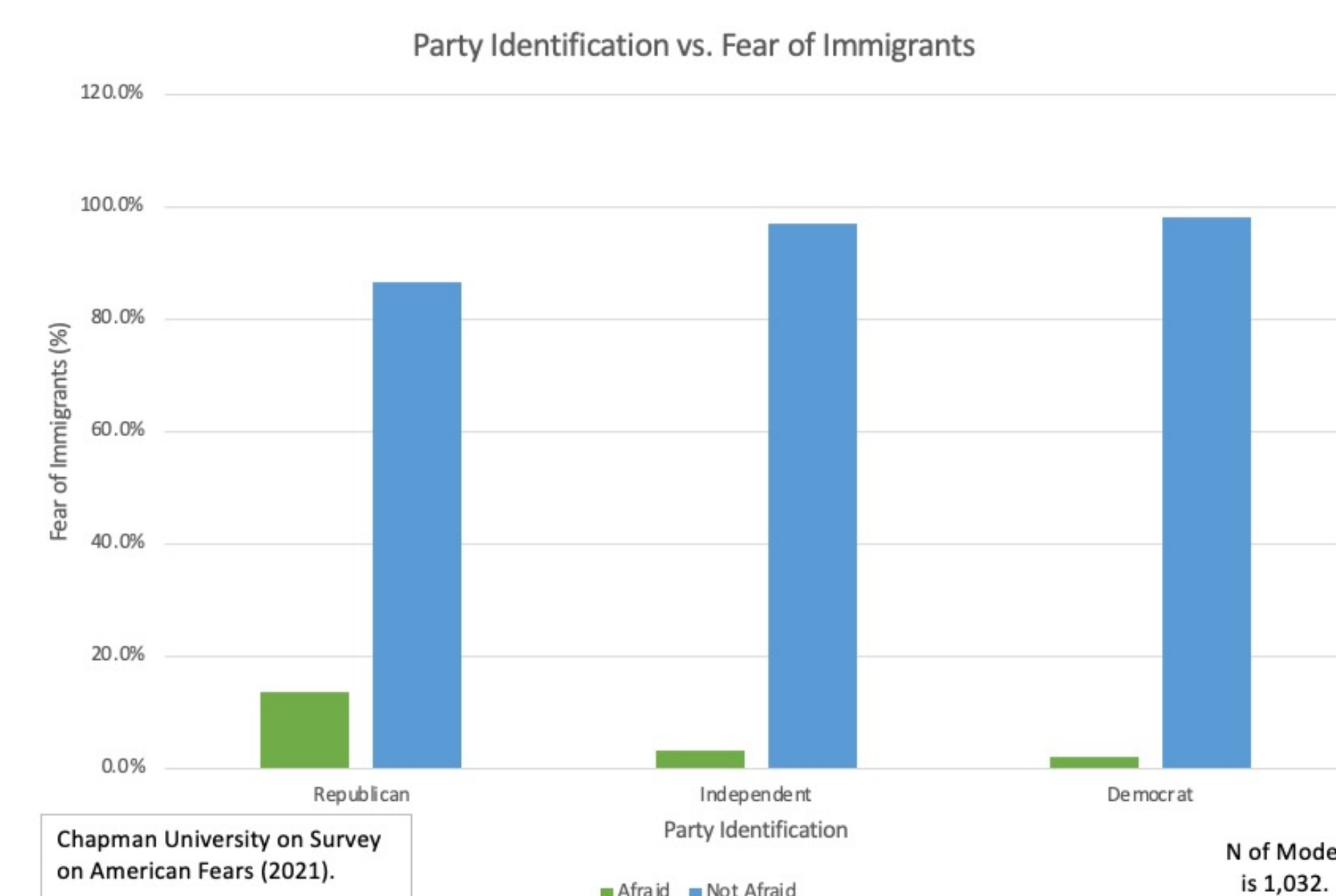
A crosstab examination of party identification, survey takers were able to choose republican, democrat, and independent, vs fear of immigrants. The P-Value for party identification was .003, proving that it is statistically significant. There are 13.4% of republicans who are afraid vs the 3.0% independents and 1.9% republicans.

Conclusions

Hypothesis 1
- Age is not statistically significant. vulnerability theory helps explain a relationship between those who are older and have a higher fear response due to feeling frail and easily targeted (Brown, 2015; Yin, 1980). But, did not have relationship here.

Hypothesis 2, 3, & 4
- This research revealed that political parties and skin color are seen as different groups but nonetheless they are identity groups that form ideas of who they are relative to other groups.
- This leads to opinions and ideas that are prejudice towards other groups to maintain a status quo of a group being superior.
- Currently, news functions to attract views rather than spread accurate information even if it is unintentional; thus, these ideas lead to news and media to become as a 'spokesperson' to spread these views and reinforce prejudice.
- Many of times we fall prey to these ideas because we trust where we are getting our news from.
- Therefore, it is vital we start critically assessing and fact checking all our news consumption.

Political party identification and whites no longer being the majority relationship to fear of immigrants revealed that in-group/out-group behaviors are linked to prejudice theory. Additionally, how news and media acts is like a 'spokesperson' for in-group/ our-group ideas that reinforce prejudices and marginalization.

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