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The Ideological Effects of Framing Threat on Immigration and Civil Liberties

Gallya Lahav · Marie Courtemanche

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Abstract Assuming that migration threat is multi-dimensional, this article seeks to investigate how various types of threats associated with immigration affect attitudes towards immigration and civil liberties. Through experimentation, the study unpacks the 'securitization of migration' discourse by disaggregating the nature of immigration threat, and its impact on policy positions and ideological patterns at the individual level. Based on framing and attitudinal analysis, we argue that physical security in distinction from cultural insecurity is enough to generate important ideological variations stemming from strategic input (such as framing and issue-linkage). We expect then that as immigration shifts from a cultural to a physical threat, immigration issues may become more politically salient but less politicized and subject to consensus. Interestingly, however, the findings reveal that the effects of threat framing are not ubiquitous, and may be conditional upon ideology. Liberals were much more susceptible to the frames than were conservatives. Potential explanations for the ideological effects of framing, as well as their implications, are explored.

Keywords Immigration · Security · Ideology · Threat · Civil liberties

Introduction

If the events of 9/11 marked a critical juncture on the political landscape of Western liberal democracies, then the immigration debate significantly captures how shifting

G. Lahav (✉)
Department of Political Science, State University of New York at Stony Brook,
Stony Brook, NY 11792-4392, USA
e-mail: Gallya.lahav@sunysb.edu

M. Courtemanche
Department of Political Science, Marietta College, Marietta, OH 45750, USA
e-mail: Mcc017@marietta.edu

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perceptions of security and threat influence political rhetoric and alignments. The role of foreigners and foreign networks in the terrorist attacks of September 11th, as well as those in London and Madrid, visibly exposed the multi-faceted and variable nature of immigration threat. The so-called 'securitization of migration' discourse in the aftermath of 9/11 strengthened previous associations between immigration, crime, law-and-order, and security (Bigo 2002; Huysmans 2006), thus definitively placing migration on the security and foreign policy agenda (see Rudolph 2006). The migration issue was notably transformed from a traditional economic or cultural threat of the post-WWII era to a predominant framework of physical and national security characteristic of the post-Cold War.

The objective of this paper is to consider whether changing threat "frames" (Goffman 1974) generate distinct value trade-offs among individuals that can fundamentally alter political alignments and affinities associated with the issues of immigration and civil liberties. Assuming that public perceptions of immigration shift under different conditions of heightened threat, how do different frames affect attitudes towards immigration, especially when civil liberties or other cross-cutting interests and values are at stake? More specifically, under what conditions of threat would people compromise civil liberties for more extensive migration regulation?[1] In an era dominated by a 'new security' agenda, to what degree are elites sanctioned by consensual publics to compromise rights-based norms? How might these considerations mitigate party alignments and reorganize party politics? These questions are critical to policy-makers in liberal democracies, fundamentally dependent on public support for practices, which may challenge the strong commitment to democratic principles (Chong and Druckman 2007; Davis and Silver 2004).

The extant literature in political behavior and social psychology has provided compelling evidence to suggest that elite attitudes and public opinion toward immigration are largely influenced by perceptions of threat. In addition to physical insecurity, threats to national community and identity have been shown to accompany general immigrant intolerance and rejection (McLaren 2003; Lahav 2004; Inglehart 1997; Scheepers et al. 2002). Threat promotes ethnocentrism, in-group solidarity, and xenophobia (Levine and Campbell 1972; Huddy 2001; Tajfel and Turner 1979). Heightened risk appraisal and insecurity lead to increased vilification, support for politics that restrict the rights of out-groups (Bobo 1983; Branton and Jones 2005), intolerance (Feldman 1988; Feldman and Stenner 1997), and increasing willingness to compromise personal freedoms, basic civil liberties, and democratic values (Gibson 1998; Marcus et al. 1995; Sniderman et al. 1996; Davis and Silver 2004; Peffley et al. 2001). More importantly, as documented elsewhere, people's assessments of immigration are tied to different components of economic, social and physical insecurities (Quillian 1995; McLaren and Johnson 2007; Fetzer 2000; Lahav 2004, pp. 191–195).

[1] Key policy questions that touch on civil liberties and immigration are: How far should the government go in tapping phones, monitoring email and credit card transactions? Should "racial profiling" be an acceptable security and policy practice? Should tighter restrictions be placed on visas to individuals from certain (e.g., Arab) countries? Muslims? How extensive should security be at airports or other areas in the public sphere?

Within the American literature, immigration has been largely conceptualized as an issue of either economic or cultural threat (Burns and Gimpel 2000; Citrin et al. 1997; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996; Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Chandler and Tsai 2001). The notorious role of foreigners in the 9/11 terrorist attacks, however notably provoked physical fears, and tied immigration to issues of security. American public opinion polls since have consistently corroborated emerging convictions that immigration threat is as likely to be driven by security concerns as by economic or cultural considerations (Time/US Polling Report 2006).[2] This growing trend compels us to theoretically consider the security dimension of migration threat in depth, and its empirical implications for the American political landscape and other liberal democracies beyond.

Assuming that migration threat is multi-dimensional (Lahav 2003; Canetti-Nisim et al. 2008; McLaren and Johnson 2007), we are interested in investigating how various types of threats associated with immigration affect political behavior and alignments. Given the variety and fluidity of meanings attributed to the popular concept, 'securitization of migration' at the macro level, it is imperative to both disaggregate the various dimensions of security threats, and apply them to patterns of migration thinking. Thus, wedding insights from the literature on international migration with that of political behavior and social psychology, this article goes beyond aggregate trends, and empirically tests how various types of threats associated with immigration affect attitudes towards immigration and civil liberties, at the individual level. By disaggregating the multiple dimensions of threat related to migration (e.g., security, cultural), the analysis offers a broad portrait of how diverse threat frames may affect political norms and alignments regarding immigration and civil liberties in democratic societies. Using an experimental research design, our study adds depth to the American scholarship by drawing on the contributions of comparative behavioral studies.

Based on framing and attitudinal analysis, we argue that the import of physical security in distinction from cultural insecurity is enough to generate important variations in attitudinal consensus that stem from strategic input (such as framing and issue-linkage). Immigration threats (e.g., national security vs. cultural threat frames) generate diverse attitudinal and institutional effects on immigration and civil liberties practices. In the long term, migration issue-framing have an impact on party-public cueing, ideology and strategic opportunity structures (Hooghe 2007). Thus, depending on how the issue is framed, immigration attitudes and political coalitions should vary.

When viewed from this nuanced threat perspective, ideological alignments and political shifts appear quite surprising. Albeit beyond the scope of this individual study, the findings on potential political fragmentation and coalitions have far-reaching consequences for party politics. Framing immigration as a threat to security may not only garner ideological consensus, but serve to foment intra-party division. Hence, the 'securitization of migration' may be instrumental to parties in

[2] According to a 2005 survey of registered voters, those claiming illegal immigration to be a problem were equally likely to base their opinion on issues of terrorism and homeland security (31%) as jobs and the economy (Polling Report FOX News/Opinion Dynamics Poll. April 25–26, 2005).

their reach for both electoral and policy support. In this sense, immigration may be employed as a potential wedge issue.

Theoretical and Research Frameworks: From the Institutional to the Individual Level Dynamics of Immigration and Security

While the security ramifications of immigration were evident prior to the 9/11 'juncture' (Weiner 1993), the debate primarily involved economic and cultural fears aroused by mass immigrant settlement of ethnically and racially diverse minorities (Sniderman et al. 2004; Citrin and Sides 2007). However, when public anxieties about "societal security" (Buzan et al. 1998) and 'quality of life' issues (Alexseev 2005, pp. 66–67) intersected with the physical safety threats associated with immigration during the 1990s (Huysmans 2000, p. 752), the 'securitization of immigration' became firmly embedded within the domestic and foreign politics of advanced liberal democracies. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, migration had shifted from the predominantly technical domain of 'low politics' (e.g., economic and social concerns) to what international relations scholars refer to as security or 'high politics' (e.g., issues pertaining to political and national integrity as well as security).

Although the events of 9/11 merely hastened policy initiatives discussed in policy circles earlier, they more importantly crystallized a shift in how the immigration debate was framed throughout liberal democracies. As public opinion in the United States and Europe reflected, the political discourse around migration changed. European electorates not only began to identify immigration as a serious problem, but as a 'threat' (Claude-Valentin 2004). They talked of invasion, insecurity, loss of identity, sovereignty, control, and terrorism (Commission of the European Communities 2004). In the United States, nearly 75% of Americans polled in 2006 ($N = 1{,}004$), expressed concern that illegal immigration would increase the likelihood of terrorism as compared to 55% who were concerned that it would weaken the way of life (Time Poll, Polling Report 2006). Moreover, as preliminary empirical research had suggested, in an era of increasing security threats, the ability of governments to tie immigration to law-and-order, and to frame the immigration debate in that context has yielded restrictive immigration policy practices and exclusionary norms (Bigo 2002).

It is not surprising that support for greater curtailment of immigration has increased as security threats have risen to the fore. But, more puzzling and unclear is how people organize competing values under changing security frames. As some scholars of migration have thus challenged, the core question becomes, 'how does a security story order social relations? (Huysmans 2000; Geddes 2007, pp. 3–4)'. What are the implications of politicizing an issue as a security problem, and how does it differ along the different threat dimensions?

The recent discourse on 'securitization of migration' has been lively and contentious, making clear that consensus regarding the scope, definition and impact of security as it relates to migration practices is still lacking (Lahav 2003; Rudolph 2006). From the theoretical standpoint of constructivists or the Copenhagen School of International Relations, security lacks a fixed conceptual meaning, and thus can

be measured by its discursive content rather than objectively defined (Wæver et al. 1993; Buzan et al. 1998). In this context, several institutional and normative developments in the policy environment of liberal democracies are worthy of note.

First, the acceleration and institutionalization of policy initiatives and cooperation around migration and security involve tighter border controls, carrier and employer sanctions, buffer zones, computer registration systems, fingerprinting and biometric databases, accelerated return procedures and coordination. These developments coincide with the expansion of the migration regulatory playing-field, including the widespread proliferation of actors (e.g., private, local, international) incorporated in restrictive policy implementation (Lahav 2000, 2003, 2009; Guiraudon and Lahav 2006). Such private or non-state actors, like airlines, travel companies, employers, universities, etc., may be democratically unaccountable, and operate fairly unfettered; they may even be enlisted by liberal states to circumvent judicial and constitutional constraints, public scrutiny and debates through outsourcing or sanctions. In almost all cases, they are encouraged by states to promulgate extremely protectionist norms. While many of these initiatives already existed by the late 1980s, implementation notably soared after 9/11.[3] Many of these policies were geared to more serious border control, but their reliance on instruments of surveillance (Lyon 2002) has also represented a significant retreat from certain liberal principles guiding immigration practices.

Second, the prevalence of 'new politics' and 'new security' issues, like migration, terrorism, identity politics and environmentalism on the public agenda reflect a changing political landscape, with new patterns of contestation (Dalton 2008; Franklin 1992; Lahav 2004, pp. 183–185). These types of issues have not only challenged and supplanted the traditional socio-economic cleavages prevalent in the post-War liberal system (Bell 1973), but they coincide with a shift in value systems (Inglehart 1977, 1997; Dalton 2008). According to social psychological and political behavioral theories on values and hierarchies of basic human needs (Maslow 1954; Inglehart 1997), as advanced industrialized democratic societies have become more stable and secure, they have been seeking more qualitative or "post-material" values over the more materialist or qualitative ones (e.g., identity, rights, communitarianism, cosmopolitanism, life quality). From this perspective therefore, traditional party and ideological alignments have been limited in capturing value change or structuring issue positions in post-industrialized societies.

Finally, although partisan lines have been blurred since the 1980s, when ideological differences between parties became obscured (Schain 1988; Messina 1989; Simon 1989), ideological/partisan alignments have become decidedly more elusive in Europe, and more recently in the US. Major immigration policy reforms

[3] In the US, the Patriot Law of 2001 and the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act in 2002 notably paved the way for electronic innovations, visa screening, racial and ethnic profiling, acceleration procedures, and unprecedented security checks as well as the formation of a new Office of Homeland Security to coordinate activities with a reorganized INS. The formation of this new Office brought 22 federal agencies under one umbrella, and has been considered the first significant addition to the US government since 1947, when Harry Truman merged the various branches of the US Armed Forces into the Department of Defence to better coordinate the nation's defence against military threats (US Department of Homeland Security: www.dhs.gov).

granting (and restricting) rights to foreigners have become associated as much with right-wing coalitions as with left-wing governments (Hammar 1985).

In contrast to Europe, where the links between immigration and law-and-order were made earlier in the 1980s, the American literature has presented more mixed results regarding the partisan/ideological ties to immigration. While the preponderance of studies throughout the last half of the century confirmed at least some ideological underpinnings to immigration preferences,[4] the emerging security dimension has belied these trends.

More recent studies on American public opinion suggest ubiquitous concern with immigration across political colors. According to such public opinion data, individuals from both parties, are likely to express concerns about the inimical effects of immigration on social and policy outcomes (Hetherington and Weiler 2009; Neiman et al. 2006). Moreover those claiming immigration to be of great importance are more likely to be conservative on the issue (Knoll et al. 2011). At a minimum, these findings suggest that the issue of immigration could be used to the detriment of the Democratic party, or at least offer itself as a wedge issue. Clearly, the tendency of immigration politics to straddle the ordinary liberal-conservative divide has increasingly created "strange bedfellows" coalitions on reforms (Zolberg 2000; Tichenor 2002). The 'migration-security-rights trilemma' has particularly pitted traditional protectionist values against liberal rights and markets (Lahav 2009). This growing 'trilemma' has exposed policy conflicts and value trade-offs between distinct economic, security, and cultural threats and interests—especially around the security-rights axiom Thus, whereas on most issues programmatic distinctions among parties generally serve to organize political debate and ultimate policy resolution, on immigration the process has appeared less clear. Immigration issues have torn parties of the left between their own working-class base and foreign workers (Freeman 1979; Messina 1989; Simon 1989), and internally split parties of the right, struggling to differentiate themselves from their far-right competitors (Schain 1988). Nowhere have these structural dynamics proved more intractable than among left-wing ideologues and liberal parties (Simon 1989; Freeman 1979; Putnam 2007; Scheve and Slaughter 2001), often caught in what has been known as the liberal paradox, a trade-off between national social solidarity and diversity, or between a generous welfare state and equality among all peoples.

Such institutional developments compel us to examine the normative effects of shifting threat preferences on individual level values and attitudes, and their consequences for political alignments more diffusely. Assuming that: (1) 'new security' and 'new politics' schemes prevail in explaining value structures and issue preferences; and (2) values inform attitudes, how do shifting threat perceptions affect political cleavages and norms around migration and civil liberties? More specifically, what happens when issues like migration are linked to more basic material needs, and framed as law and order or physical safety threats rather than qualitative values such as identity, rights, or community-building? Does the

[4] The American literature tends to posit an important relationship between ideological leanings and immigration preferences. Based on national poll data, Espenshade et al. (1996) found that immigration attitudes were strongly divided by ideological underpinnings with conservatives more likely to endorse restrictionist policies. These findings were corroborated in research conducted by Citrin et al. (1997).

securitization of migration mobilize individuals uniformly? Moreover, are all threats the same to all people?

Based on behavioral research, we expect that as immigration shifts from a cultural to a physical threat, immigration issues would generate attitudinal consensus—particularly around protectionist values. As immigration salience becomes more attached to physical security, it may become less politicized or ideologically polarized. Cross-national studies have compellingly shown that as immigration has grown ever more psychologically and/or politically linked to physical security, attitudes towards immigration tend to coalesce—especially around a more restrictive immigration policy (Hammar 1985). In the United States, perceptions of threat have generated consensus among both Republicans and Democrats around conservative and protectionist immigration policy preferences (Hetherington and Weiler 2009). Empirically, there is a link between countries that have experienced terrorist attacks and border restrictions, as illustrated in the Israeli case which has cyclically prevented Palestinians from working in the country (Arian 1995; Canetti-Nisim et al. 2008).

As aggregate behavioral research has suggested, national or physical security may displace traditional ideological alignments. From the perspective of social psychological theories on hierarchies of basic human needs (Maslow 1954; Inglehart 1997), one might project that physical security prevails over more qualitative issues such as individual rights and freedoms when threat looms large. This emerging issue structure and growing public consensus empirically corroborate de Tocqueville's classic predictions about the propensity of democratic peoples to compromise freedoms and liberties for security and well-being.

In contrast to the cultural threats posed by immigration, which often polarize public and elite opinion because they spring from prior political orientations and values, or ideology, concern for physical safety is a unifying threat that often results in cohesive opinion (Feldman and Stenner 1997). Indeed, at the end of the last century, an era marked by relative physical security in most Western nations, national opinion over migration had been politicized and divisive. The salience and politicization of the migration issue was marked not only by the emergence and consolidation of extreme-right parties, but also discernible by developments in party politics, electoral campaigns, social movements and increasing public support for xenophobic forces and exclusionary policy practices. In contrast, while the role of foreigners and foreign networks stoked national security debates, interestingly, the 'securitization of migration' in post-9/11 discourse did not produce a noticeable surge in populist movements and radical parties. In fact, in many European countries the extreme-right peaked in 2002, and dropped relatively across the board after (Lahav 2009). This may suggest that the securitization of migration moderated reactionary sentiments by introducing harsh measures to the mainstream political agenda and institutionalizing consensus.

We assume that the 'securitization of migration', because it touches on physical safety is apt to promote cohesive opinion. Such issue framing does not mobilize ideological conflicts and values that fuel cultural threats, which in contrast, tend to polarize public opinion. Furthermore, employing 'new politics' and an hierarchical values scheme as a guide, we theorize that threats to basic needs should galvanize

different reactions from threats to higher order needs (Maslow 1954). That is, threats to physical needs, such as security, should lead to greater solidarity and less dispersion of public opinion. Threats to higher order needs, in contrast, should lead to greater dispersion in public opinion. Applied to immigration and civil liberty preferences, we assume that there should be a convergence of opinion across the ideological spectrum when basic needs are threatened (e.g., law and order, public safety, crime, survival) but a divergence of opinion when higher order needs (e.g., identity, cultural homogeneity, language and community survival) are at stake.

When migration is associated with physical threat such as crime, terrorism, law-and-order concerns, we may expect broad protectionist impulses. In contrast, cultural threat, which reflects non-material, 'higher order values' or symbolic insecurities may provoke more contention, and more liberal preferences towards immigration and immigrants. If this is true, then clearly the way immigration issues are framed is critical to understanding immigration preferences, and the consequences for civil liberties practices.

Analytical Framework: Framing and Values

Assuming that public perceptions of immigration shift under different conditions of heightened threat, issue framing becomes critical for several reasons. First, since the immigration threat is multi-fold, diverse dimensions of threat trigger attitudinal preferences. Second, framing is key because immigration fears are often more subjective than objective. Indeed, as some studies have shown, migration concerns have often been less related to numbers of migrants as much as elite and mass reaction to them (McLaren 2001; Lahav 2004). Most diffusely, the shift in issue salience can be attributed less to changing migration flows and trends, but to issue framing and public norms.

The application of framing to migration politics is particularly fruitful for mapping the relationship between issue salience and attitudinal behavior. Issue framing, defined by Goffman (1974) as "the selection, emphasis, exclusion of news frames that furnish a coherent interpretation and evaluation of events," serves as a vital nexus between elites and masses. Broadly-speaking, frames are used by politicians to influence and set the agenda (Norris et al. 2003), by providing their publics a quick way to sort out, interpret and categorize policy options. They often do this by emphasizing different values and/or core beliefs (Chong 1996; Gamson and Modigliani 1989). Thus, to the degree that citizens base policy preferences upon their own underlying values (Feldman 1988; Peffley and Hurwitz 1985; Pollack et al. 1993), frames are particularly informative.

The ability of frames to help simplify complex information environments is of particular use given the limited capacity with which most individuals process information (Lupia 1994; Kuklinski and Quirk 2000; Nelson et al. 1997; Taber and Lodge 2006). Frames are thus potentially instrumental in shaping how individuals think about specific issues and making accessible certain values and/or arguments (Chong and Druckman 2007). Moreover, research has demonstrated that useful

frames can help individuals form more stable opinions over time while also assisting them in the expression of these opinions (Kinder 2003; Zaller 1990).

Frames can also alter attitudes by changing individual level considerations regarding a particular policy issue. For example, in an experimental study about the effects of news frames on tolerance for the KKK, Nelson et al. (1997) found that subjects reading about a Klan rally were significantly more likely to express tolerance for the rally when it was framed as a free speech story than when it was framed as a disruption to public order. Clearly, attitude shifts come about via a change in the content of beliefs about the political issue being evaluated.

Attitudes are also subject to change, when people move beyond the abstract dimensions of their issue opinions and come to consider the concrete consequences of their views (Yankelovich 1991). As survey data has shown, Americans' support for "greater limits on goods imported into the US" dramatically dropped (from 51% to 19%) once people were presented with the possible consequences of protectionism (e.g., restrictionism on the variety and choice of products, higher prices, and poorer quality). Following these arguments, we may conclude that attitudes towards immigration under changing threat frames may evolve once the consequences (e.g., more personal surveillance, decreased economic competition, cultural diversity, civil liberties), or policy trade-offs are concretely framed and considered as such.

By encouraging citizens to draw heavily on the principles and values they emphasize, frames may significantly alter policy attitudes and preferences. One individual may place a high priority on freedom, equality, and social harmony; he/she may favor policies which strengthen these values. Others may stress independence, social recognition and ambition in guiding their actions. The clash between alternative values creates a basis for political competition over which values should shape public policy (e.g., Are welfare programs constructed in terms of values of economic efficiency or in terms of empathy for the poor?). Though the limits of our research design prohibit a direct examination of the influence of frames on the weighting of values in opinion formation, our experiment allows for randomization and control of treatments that concur with evidence that conflicting values (Peffley et al. 2001) and competing frames (Chong and Druckman 2007) trigger very different attitudinal responses on political tolerance (Gibson 1998; Sniderman et al. 1996).

Assuming that values inform attitudes, what happens when issues like migration are linked to more material needs, and framed as law and order or physical safety threats? Empirically, public opinion polls in liberal democracies have revealed that since September 11th, civil liberties and human rights have been sacrificed for shifting security concerns—trade-offs between certain democratic values, sanctioned by citizens and a willingness to compromise civil liberties and personal freedom for a greater sense of security from immigration, terrorism, and globalization (Davis and Silver 2004). In the U.S., since 9/11, Americans have reported support for racial and ethnic profiling of Arab Americans, greater FBI invasion of citizens' privacy and a close monitoring of legal immigrants (ADC 2003). They are more likely to entertain national identity cards and to be inconvenienced by surveillance schemes for more security. Findings on American public opinion in the period between September 2001–3 February 2002 reveal some

notable attitudinal trends in the direction of protectionism, when threat is looming and present (Huddy et al. 2005).

Notwithstanding rigorous public opinion studies on migration (see Quillian 1995; McLaren 2003; Fetzer 2000; Citrin et al. 1997; Lahav 2004; Scheepers et al. 2002), and some aggregate-level data about value trade-offs between security and democracy, empirical case-testing has been somewhat wanting. More specifically, we lack individual-level attitudinal data to help us predict how different cues of threat perception affect outcomes. Even when such individual level analyses exists, the preponderance of attitudinal motivations under consideration relate to economic or cultural/ethnic threats (see, Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010; Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Chandler and Tsai 2001). Indeed, while the effects of 9/ll on issue areas like migration have pervaded the media and popular discourse, there remains a dearth of evidence systematically linking the impact of different threat perceptions (particularly physical security, as terrorism rather than personal crime, see Mears 2001) on migration thinking.

This article attempts to disaggregate the multiple effects of threat on immigration preferences at the individual level, and to identify how citizens organize these competing values and form attitudes towards immigration policy and policy consequences (e.g., civil liberties, democratic values). Given that frames are a vital nexus between elites and the masses, and that issue framing invokes different values, we are interested in how different threat frames affect immigration attitudes and subsequent policy preferences. Based on experimental individual-level data, we conduct a framing and attitudinal analysis of diverse threat perceptions (e.g., economic, cultural, physical) related to migration.

Research Design and Methodological Framework

In this study, we employ an experimental design to test the effects of threat on altering levels of support for both immigration and civil liberty practices. Random assignment of participants to one of three treatment groups, along with the existence of a control group helped us to achieve these ends. Subjects were arbitrarily assigned to read different news stories about Congressional hearings on the effects of immigration (see Appendix).[5] The hypothetical news stories were largely identical except for the addition of a few sentences at the end of each story that were related to the respective frames.[6] After reading the news stories subjects were asked to express their views on a battery of questions concerning immigration policies and

[5] While our experiment included a news frame regarding immigration as it pertains to economic threat, it is not specifically addressed within the paper for theoretical reasons. We are here concerned primarily with investigating the differences between threats which harm higher order needs (i.e., national identity) versus those which threaten more basic needs (i.e., security). For the sake of transparency however we have included the data for the economic manipulations within all of the tables.

[6] Though the frames are slightly different in nature, they were intended to reflect the political discourse at the time of the survey. Consequently, while the frames may arguably seem to differ by threat intensity they do so in a way that has real world relevance. Future research involving media content analysis is warranted to systematically gauge the external validity of the experimental manipulation however.

civil liberty practices. In such a laboratory setting, differences in question responses may be attributed to the treatment (i.e., the different immigration frames). This experimental manipulation offers more rigorous control over the effects of framing than has been generally possible.

The sample consists of an undergraduate pool of students attending the State University of New York who received extra credit for their participation.[7] Notwithstanding the obvious shortcomings of convenience samples such as "college sophomores" (Sears 1986), particularly with regard to external validity, ample research has established their importance in illuminating attitudes and behaviors (see Druckman et al. 2006; Nelson et al. 1997). Moreover, the random assignment of participants to treatments allows us to overcome the self-selection and control problems common to non-experimental research (Chong and Druckman 2007, p. 637). Furthermore, we do not expect college students to differ drastically from the general population in their responses to news framing.

The experiment followed a completely randomized, between subjects design with one manipulation: the news story frame (economic threat, security threat, and cultural threat). Recognizing the critical relevance of economic threat to the immigration debate, we report on this frame for the purpose of transparency, but for the limited purposes of this article, we focus on comparing the most basic material threat (physical security) with that of the non-material (identity, culture, rights, etc.). A total of 403 undergraduate students participated in this study during the fall of 2006 and spring of 2007 (65 students were omitted as they were not American citizens).[8] Of this total, 194 were female (48%), 207 were male (52%), 163 (41%) identified as Caucasian, 107 (26%) as Asian American, 34 (8%) as African American, 46 (12%) as Hispanic/Latino, 1 (0%) as American Indian, and 50 (12%) as "other".

Each student began the experiment with 'warm up' questions surveying levels of interest in politics and the exhibition of various personality traits such as values, ideology and tendencies toward authoritarianism. Subjects were subsequently given their respective news story, all of which had the same basic structure but differed in how the issue of immigration was framed (see Appendix). For example, each story began by stating that Congress was seeking the assistance of outside expertise in pursuing sweeping immigration reforms. Depending upon the frame it was suggested that one of the greatest challenges facing the nation was the curtailment

[7] The experiment was run over the course of a 6-month (from December 2006 to May 2007). Recognizing the limits of the experimental design, including possible bias of frame (national security) at the study's specific time, sample (undergraduate students), and place (New York), the findings are meant to be suggestive of general trends, with need for further national experimental data to corroborate the study.

[8] While the literature on inter-group conflict and race/ethnicity in American politics has been suggestive of demographic differences (Welch and Sigelman 2000), there is still a dearth of work related to diverse migrant or minority groups (e.g., Latinos or Asians), beyond a focus on black/white relations (Fosset and Kiecolt 1989; Glaser 1994). Yet, the import of race/ethnicity of immigrant populations is also believed to interact with attitudes towards security, as demonstrated in WWII with Japanese-Americans, and more recently by the link between 9/ll and Arab populations. While recognizing that among demographic data, inter-group variables may significantly affect attitudinal variations toward immigrants (see Quillian 1995; Tolbert and Hero 1996), the primary focus of the investigation here however is on ideological effects. Thus, given our experimental method, we assume that any group differences between subjects are randomly dispersed.

of large scale immigration due to its detrimental effects on either national security, national identity, or the economy (a fourth group, the control, did not receive a news story). This was followed by a quote from a senior Representative (the name of whom was never given so as not to elicit partisan responses) who not only concurs with the experts but who provides further substantiation of the evidence. After reading their respective articles, respondents answered questions assessing their level of support for various immigration and immigrant policies, followed by civil liberties questions. Subjects concluded the experiment by answering demographic questions related to gender, age, race, partisanship and ideology.

Through the manipulation of threat and the measurement of ideology we hope to demonstrate the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 Support for greater restrictions in immigration policies will increase when immigration is framed as a threat to national security as opposed to a threat to culture or national identity.

Hypothesis 2 There will be greater support for curtailment of civil liberties when immigration is framed as a threat to national security than when it is framed as a threat to national identity.

Hypothesis 3 When immigration is framed as a threat to national security there will be less ideological polarization than when immigration is framed as a threat to national identity.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables include the support level for two different types of policies: those towards immigration and those involving civil liberties. For the purposes of our study here, we created an additive scale from immigration policy questions focused on the admissions of migrants, though questions of integration were also included.[9] The civil liberties questions probed the extent to which participants favored individual freedoms, such as criticizing the government or allowing surveillance of citizens.[10] Seven questions in total comprised the additive scale

[9] These questions comprised the following: do you think that the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are permitted to come to the United States to live should be (Increased a lot, Increased a little, Left the same as it is now, Decreased a little, Decreased a lot)? Would you vote for a candidate who would be strict on immigration (Yes, No)? Immigrants who do not have legal documents should be sent back to their countries (Strongly agree, Agree somewhat, Disagree somewhat, Disagree strongly)? The questions were combined to create a scale whose overall score was .528 (on a 0–1 scale: 0 represented support for greater leniency and 1 represented greater restrictions).

[10] This measure constituted the following questions: How strongly do you favor or oppose requiring that everyone in the United States carry a national identification card that would have detailed information about each person (strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, strongly oppose)? Should foreigners who dislike our government and criticize it be allowed to study here? How strongly do you favor or oppose allowing the U.S. government to regularly monitor the personal telephone calls and e-mails of ordinary Americans? A group that wants to buy advertising space in a newspaper to advocate war against another country- Should be turned down by the newspaper, Should have as much right to buy advertising space as a group that favors world peace? How strongly do you favor or oppose allowing the

whose overall mean was .32 (on a 0–1 scale where 0 represented support for individual freedoms and 1 equaled support for greater restrictions).

Independent Variables

Our research contains both a manipulated independent variable and a measured independent variable. The manipulated independent variable focused on the type of immigration threat that the subject was exposed to by reading his/her respective news story. As previously noted, the students in the various treatments were given one of three stories regarding a congressional hearing on immigration reform. The first frame presented immigration as a threat to national security, the second framed immigration as a possible threat to national identity and the last news story framed immigration as a threat to the economy. In addition to this manipulation we included a dangling control condition, a situation where no extra readings were provided to the respondent.

In this study, ideology was the key measured independent variable. Ideology was assessed by asking each respondent to place themselves on a seven-point ideology scale ranging from very conservative to very liberal. The breakdown was as follows, "Extremely Liberal," $n = 30$; "Liberal," $n = 118$; "Slightly Liberal," $n = 81$; "Extremely Conservative," $n = 11$; "Conservative," $n = 22$; or "Slightly Conservative," $n = 48$. Unfortunately, the vast majority of our undergraduate subjects ($n = 229$) identified themselves as being liberal, while only 81 students self-identified themselves as conservative (90 students listed themselves as moderates).

Results

In order to test the salience of the various issue topics we conducted an omnibus F-test which assessed the overall differences among the treatment means. After reading each news frame, the subjects were asked how important they believed immigration to be as an issue.[11] The results provided strong and compelling evidence of a saliency effect ($F[2, 301] = 11.86$, $p < .001$). That is, subjects who were exposed to the national security frame were significantly more likely to say that immigration was an issue of great importance than those participants in the other two treatments (see Table 1).

Footnote 10 continued
U.S. government to regularly monitor the movement and whereabouts of ordinary Americans? What concerns you more right now: that the government will fail to enact strong, new anti-immigration laws with adequate enforcement, OR that the government will enact and implement new anti-immigration laws, which excessively restrict the average person's civil liberties? Do you think the US should put some groups, especially those of certain nationalities or religions (Muslims for instance), under special surveillance- Put under surveillance, It's a mistake to target a special group?

[11] The question read as follows: "How important do you believe this issue of immigration as a threat to (our culture, national security, or the economy) to be?" Subjects in the control group did not receive this question as it pertained directly to the news frame.

Table 1 Importance and strength of immigration argument

Version	Importance[a] Mean (Std dev)	Strength[b] Mean (Std dev)	Frequency
Security frame	.779 (.25)	.733 (.29)	100
Economic frame	.697 (.26)	.616 (.28)	104
Cultural frame	.593 (.30)	.527 (.29)	98
Total	.690 (.28)	.626 (.30)	302

[a] Question: How important do you believe this issue of immigration as a threat to (our culture, national security, or the economy) to be? Question is scaled 0–1, where *0* represents not at all important and *1* represents very important

[b] Question: Do you believe the argument of the House member, that immigration is a threat to (our culture, national security, or the economy), is a weak or a strong one? Question is scaled 0–1, with *0* equal to not at all strong and *1* equal to very strong

This therefore suggests that immigration as a threat to security is more relevant and meaningful than other forms of threat in contemporary political discourse. At the very least it provides compelling evidence for a strong distinction between the types of threat associated with immigration, further substantiating the claim that immigration threat is multi-fold.

In addition to the salience of national security in migration thinking, subjects also believed that immigration as a threat to national security was a stronger argument than either of the other two threats ($F[2,\ 301] = 12.84,\ p < .001$).[12] That is, respondents not only believed that immigration was most important as it related to national/physical threat, but that those arguments were also most persuasive. After being exposed to one of the news frames, subjects reading about immigration as a threat to security were far more likely to believe it to be a cogent argument (see Table 1). Thus, linking immigration to national security could intensify the ability to persuade. Moreover, elite discourse that provides the nexus between these two topics could be viewed as more credible. Clearly, the perception of argument strength increases the effects of framing on attitudes (Chong and Druckman 2007). Broadly-speaking, these findings suggest that policy-makers who link immigration to national security threats may have greater success in shaping public opinion and attitudes. They concur with conclusions of other researchers of public opinion, which have purported that immigration may be utilized as a wedge issue, especially by conservatives or Republican parties, to attract support from those who embrace the issue's importance (Neiman et al. 2006; Knoll et al. 2011). In addition, they lend further empirical evidence to the Copenhagen school's theory of 'securitizing moves', whereby actors frame and dramatize an issue as a security matter which requires and justifies extraordinary means (Buzan et al. 1998), such as civil liberties concessions, for example.

The data compellingly demonstrate that the immigration issue is not only multi-fold but that it has been positively tied to security, namely physical insecurity.

[12] The question took the following form: "Do you believe the argument of the House member, that immigration is a threat to (our culture, national security, or the economy), is a weak or a strong one?" The control group did not receive this question as it pertained directly to the news frame.

Clearly, this securitization of immigration has greater salience and credibility than the other two threats. This implies that employing this frame could strengthen the ability to persuade individual opinions. A nuanced analysis of the multi-faceted dimensions of threat as it is applied to migration suggests that threat frames can greatly influence policy coalitions and outcomes.

According to our hypotheses, the various treatment exposures should generate significant attitudinal differences towards migration and civil liberties. In our first hypothesis, we expected that the national security frame should compel subjects to be less supportive of liberal immigration policies than the cultural frame. Indeed, our data findings substantiate this hypothesis (see Table 2).

When presented with immigration as a threat to national security, participants support greater restrictions on immigration policy than when presented with the identity frame. It logically follows that threats to safety are more likely to influence how individuals chose between the competing interests of cultural diversity and security.

While the trends in the data substantiate our hypothesis that securitization promotes more restrictionist immigration attitudes, the statistical test demonstrating the significance of the overall framing effect is weak.[13] Focusing on the effects of the national security frame as compared to the cultural condition however reveals a significant difference in mean responses regarding immigration policy ($F[1, 195] = 4.37$, $p < .05$). In this view, we find that participants exposed to the national security frame were much more likely to support greater restrictions on immigration policy than subjects who were exposed to the identity frame.

The results for the analysis regarding support for personal freedoms and civil liberties replicate the patterns above. That is, an overall examination of the average responses towards civil liberties given frame exposure reveals that, in large part, the participants replied in the direction of our hypothesis (see Table 2). Subjects were more likely to support greater restrictions on personal freedoms when first exposed to immigration as a threat to safety as opposed to subjects who received the cultural identity frame. This then suggests that individuals tend towards more liberal freedoms when safety needs are met, thus implying that attitudes towards civil liberties are only more favorable, when basic needs are fulfilled. Moreover, when testing the overall effects of these frames on individual attitudes towards civil liberties we were able to demonstrate a slightly significant relationship ($F[3, 401] = 2.31$, $p = .0763$). Therefore, we are able to conclude that overall the frames had a weak statistically significant effect on how subjects responded to the questions concerning personal freedoms.

Nonetheless, like the omnibus test for immigration policy, we are concerned less with the overall effects than with our hypothesized relationships. That is, we are interested in whether the treatment means follow our conjectures that the link with

[13] The difference in levels of support for liberal immigration policies between the various frames is lightly demonstrated ($F[3, 399] = 1.98$, $p = .116$). Since we are mainly interested in the effects of the national security frame, as compared to the other frames, however conducting an overall test of significance may not be appropriate here. Thus, instead of conducting an omnibus test, comparisons between two or more treatment conditions that are components of a larger experimental design should be made.

Table 2 Support for restrictive immigration policies and civil liberties

Version	Immigration policies[a] Mean (Std dev)	Civil liberty policies[a] Mean (Std dev)	Frequency
Security Frame	.584 (.27)	.358 (.24)	99
Economic Frame	.509 (.28)	.354 (.25)	105
Cultural Frame	.501 (.29)	.290 (.22)	97
Control	.551 (.26)	.300 (.23)	99
Total	.536 (.28)	.326 (.24)	400

[a] Both questions are scaled 0–1 where *0* represents support for greater leniency and *1* represents support for greater restrictions

national security threat is more likely to compromise support for civil liberties than cultural threat linkages. An in-depth analysis of the effects of the national security frame as compared to the cultural frame demonstrates a substantial difference in mean responses regarding civil liberties practices ($F[1, 196] = 4.41$, $p = .036$). Therefore, individuals are much more likely to support restrictions on civil liberties when immigration is framed as a threat to national security than when it is framed as a threat to national identity.

Finally, in order to test our third hypothesis concerning the convergence of attitudes under the securitization of immigration, we employed both the use of *t*-tests as well as difference in means analysis (ANOVA). Because ideological movement and polarizations can assume different forms (i.e., movement can occur by one group shifting and the other remaining stable, by both groups shifting in the same direction, or by both groups moving in opposing directions), more nuanced shifts can easily be masked. For this reason, we attempted to unpack the various types of ideological shifts by which convergence may have transpired within our analysis.[14]

In conducting an omnibus *F*-test we found notable significance in the overall difference among treatment means by ideological self-identification ($F[3, 307] = 2.23$, $p = .04$, using a directional hypothesis). That is, the framing effect of immigration is moderated by ideology at levels which are statistically significant. This suggests that ideology plays an important role in moderating the effect of the frames on individual attitudes. In order to fully examine our initial hypothesis we need to consider the difference in means between the two ideological dispositions under the various frames. More specifically, we would like to determine if the security frame promotes more attitudinal convergence than cultural threats related to migration. Indeed, the data substantiate that such convergence does exist. While

[14] While ideology appears to play a pivotal role in the intersection of framing and civil liberties we found very little evidence for convergence of opinion. Thus we focus our attention on support for immigration policies regarding our third hypothesis. It is interesting to note however that conservatives were consistently more likely to support greater restrictions across the various frames than were liberals (see Table 3). In terms of the framing effects both liberals and conservatives were more likely to support greater restrictions under national security frames than under national identity frames. The findings are significant at the .05 and .1 level respectively using a *t*-test. These results substantiate the thesis that security framing increases support for civil liberty restrictions.

the difference between liberals and conservatives exposed to the security frame is .137 (see Table 3), the gap between these two same groups under the identity frame increased by more than double to .293 (see Fig. 1). Consequently, it is safe to say that the difference in attitudes between conservatives and liberals is statistically smaller under threats to security than under threats to cultural identity. Physical threat promoted less polarization and more ideological convergence.

Strikingly, a nuanced examination of attitudinal shifts revealed that the treatment effects were much stronger for liberals than for conservatives ($p < .05$ using a *t*-test for most of the treatment comparison for liberals while it is never significant for conservatives). That is, the level of support that conservatives maintain is relatively consistent across the various frames (see Table 3). Liberals on the other hand seem to be affected by the immigration manipulations as their mean level of support for immigration policy varies across the treatments. When immigration is perceived as a threat to cultural identity, self-identified liberals generally support leniency in immigration policies. In sharp contrast, when the issue is framed in terms of national security liberals support greater restrictions on immigration policies. Conservatives on the other hand are more stable in their opinions. Therefore, at the very least, it would seem that ideology appears to affect how individuals respond to the manipulations. More particularly, conservatives embrace more restrictive policies regardless of the nature of threat. Liberals are more yielding, especially when threat is linked to national security.

The evidence substantiating our hypothesis that threats to national security will facilitate policy consensus across the ideological spectrum appears quite compelling. In addition, the ideological convergence that occurred when the issue was framed as a threat to national identity lends additional support to the notion of a hierarchy of needs. That is, when basic needs are threatened, such as physical security, there will be a greater tendency for a coalescence of attitudes across the ideological spectrum. These attitudes will diverge however as basic needs are secured and individuals seek higher-order non-material needs (e.g., Maslow's self-actualization needs), or post-material values (Inglehart 1997). This then suggests the presence of hierarchical needs; only with basic needs being satisfied will individuals seek higher-order non-material needs—such as individual freedoms and liberties.

Table 3 Ideology and support for immigration policies and civil liberties policies

Version	Liberals		Conservatives		Moderates	
	Immigration[a] Mean (Std dev)	Civil liberties[a] Mean (Std dev)	Immigration Mean (Std dev)	Civil liberties Mean (Std dev)	Immigration Mean (Std dev)	Civil liberties Mean (Std dev)
Security	.523 (.25)	.279 (.21)	.660 (.28)	.449 (.26)	.645 (.28)	.450 (.18)
Economic	.429 (.28)	.281 (.22)	.707 (.25)	.503 (.26)	.512 (.23)	.383 (.25)
Cultural	.406 (.23)	.231 (.18)	.699 (.26)	.381 (.23)	.651 (.31)	.400 (.26)
Control	.511 (.27)	.238 (.21)	.583 (.24)	.442 (.24)	.619 (.23)	.373 (.24)

[a] Both questions are scaled 0–1 where *0* represents support for greater leniency and *1* represents support for greater restrictions

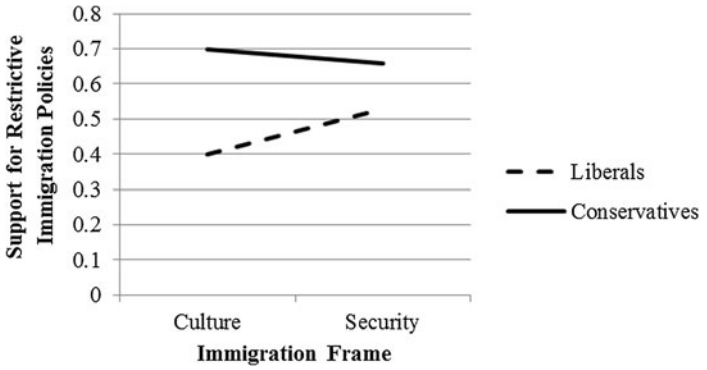

Fig. 1 Support for immigration restrictions by ideology and immigration frame

Interestingly, the attitudinal convergence masks considerable ideological differences. Ideology seems to have played an important moderating role as this tendency appears to have been greater for liberals than for conservatives. Conservatives were far more consistent in their opinions across the frames and were generally less likely to have been persuaded by the frames' message. In sharp contrast, liberals seem to have been influenced by how the issue was framed. That is, when liberals were reminded of the cultural implications of immigration, they were more likely to support a lax immigration policy than when the issue was framed in terms of security. The presence of security threats however, decreased the tendency for individuals left of the ideological spectrum to support liberal immigration policies. Corroborating studies on cueing effects, threats to national identity seem to mobilize left-wing ideologues less substantially than economic insecurity, and distinctly for different ideological camps (De Vries and Edwards 2009). This then suggests that hierarchical needs have a differential impact.

Discussion: The Liberal Conundrum Unveiled

If indeed, physical security is a mobilizing force, why does it seem to unevenly motivate some partisans and not others? Are conservatives less malleable? Are liberals more readily influenced? Is it easier to elicit anxiety among liberals than conservatives?

While framing clearly discriminates attitudes towards immigration, the uneven effects of national security frames compel us to probe ideological distinctions in depth. Within patterns of convergence triggered by immigration, a nuanced investigation reveals that threat does not have uniform effects across groups. The ideological effects of threat suggest that framing matters most for those with certain predispositions. That is, while it is true that national security frames generate consensus, and cultural threats promote polarization, as predicted by our hypotheses, liberal partisans account for most of the movement. Why do liberals seem to respond more perceptibly to security frames?

At least four possible explanations suggest themselves for these notable attitudinal shifts driven by liberals, within the context of partisan consensus. A first explanation is related to issue salience and partisan cueing. Accordingly, as national survey data on partisan trends reveal, immigration issues have been more salient (e.g., as measured by issue attachment) for conservatives. For example, conservatives were significantly more likely to agree that controlling and reducing illegal immigration was an important foreign policy goal in the 2004 NES (American National Election Studies 2004). Similarly, they were more likely than liberals to identify immigration as the number one problem facing the United States (CBS Poll 2005, 2006). These partisan trends hold true in Europe too, as consistently confirmed by both elite and public opinion data.[15] Indeed, conservative respondents within our own study were significantly more likely to claim to be concerned about the issue of immigration than were liberals ($F[1,306] = 8.74$, $p = .003$).

Second, it appears likely that attitudinal ambivalence is of great consequence in explaining individual opinions on immigration. Clearly, within our study, liberals were significantly more likely to claim to be torn on the issue of immigration ($F[1,307] = 4.24$, $p = .04$).[16] It is not surprising then that liberals were more susceptible to immigration framing, given previous research findings that the ambivalent tend to be more easily persuaded with strong messaging (Armitage 2000). Extrapolating the logic of value conflict and political tolerance, these trends also resonate with survey evidence showing that the tolerant are more willing to abandon their initial judgments, given roughly equal counter-arguments regarding competing values (e.g., safety vs. liberties) (Peffley et al. 2001). Consequently, we might expect the security arguments to be more persuasive in moving torn liberals with weak prior dispositions. Furthermore, this attitudinal ambivalence towards immigration clearly reflects national trends, as liberals have been far more conflicted by the immigration issue. Clearly, aggregate level data reveals that liberals have been most ambivalent towards immigration across the board (Lahav 2004). Immigration issues tend to pose a particular dilemma for parties of the left and trade unions, as they pit them between their own working-class base or low-skilled labor and foreign workers (Freeman 1979; Simon 1989; Scheve and Slaughter 2001); between social solidarity and community diversity (Putnam 2007).

[15] The first Eurobarometer suvey on "Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance" of 11,795 adults reported that, among European publics, the degree of importance attached to the problem of immigration surprisingly varies little with age, sex, or educational level, but becomes distinguishable on the political/ideological level (Commission of the European Communities 1989). According to the findings, the more one identifies with the right of the political spectrum, the more importance one attaches to the "problem" of immigration (and vice versa). Longitudinal data on Members of the European Parliament corroborate these findings. The attitudes of Members of European Parliament in the 2004 new-security climate echoed earlier 1994 attitudes (see Lahav 2004, p. 139), suggesting a greater propensity of conservative partisans (15% difference) to report the immigration issue to be "very important" compared to liberals (Lahav 2009, p. 221).

[16] As measured by the extent to which the respondent agreed/disagreed with the following question "I find myself 'torn' between two sides of the issue…Sometimes I see the positive aspects of this issue, but sometimes I more easily see the negative aspects of this issue".

Third, as suggested by the research on motivated reasoning (Taber and Lodge 2006), prior appraisals tend to influence the interpretation, depth of processing and evaluation of new information. As a result, individuals with strong prior attitudes are more likely to seek out and accept information that is congruent with their own beliefs while at the same time actively counter-arguing conflicting information. Moreover, research has demonstrated that individuals tend to treat information that is congruent with prior beliefs differently than that which is incongruent (Lord et al. 1979). There is a tendency to accept confirming evidence without hesitation while methodically scrutinizing disconfirming evidence. In addition people are more likely to judge confirming evidence as relevant and reliable but disconfirming evidence as irrelevant and unreliable.[17] These propensities enable the reinforcement of previous positions as individuals interpret information and/or evidence so that it suits their needs. It also means that inconclusive or ambiguous information, which can be interpreted by both sides as congruent information, is able to increase polarization rather than moderate opinions. Motivated reasoning may thus explain the differences in the framing effects across ideology. Table 4 reveals that conservatives were much more likely to claim that the arguments related to the various threats from immigration were both strong and important ($F[1,236] = 29.72$, $p < .05$, $F[1,235] = 29.97$, $p < .05$ respectively). They were also much more likely to express concern about the issue of immigration than were liberals ($F[1,306] = 8.74$, $p < .05$). It follows then that physical security (e.g., law and order concerns) may be more effective in influencing those who lack strong prior attitudes (because of exposure, party cueing, issue salience).

Finally, alternative explanations lay in emerging scholarship on behavioral economics and psychology focusing on genetic and personality predispositions. A growing if somewhat controversial body of literature suggests, for instance, that individuals may be genetically or physiologically predisposed to threat perceptions. Jost et al. (2003) for example, argue that conservatives are more likely to be sensitive to external threats stimuli. As such, they may exist in a constant state of arousal explaining why the frames had a similar effect upon them. Similarly, based on a study of physical sensitivities to threatening noise and visual images, Oxley et al. (2008) have claimed that physiological responses to threat differentiate those more likely to support liberal immigration policies, foreign aid, gun control, etc. Additional research suggests that attitudes may be a function of authoritarian predispositions (Altemeyer 1988; Feldman and Stenner 1997), and that authoritarian tendencies (regardless of ideology or partisanship) explain preferences toward immigration (Hetherington and Weiler 2009). Notwithstanding, perceptions of threat may be necessary to activate the latent authoritarian disposition (Doty et al. 1991; Feldman and Stenner 1997). In regards to our results, if this is the case it may be that authoritarian tendencies are also conditional on type of threat as liberals responded to security but not culture. As mentioned previously, this would not be surprising given that liberals were less likely to view cultural threat from immigration as a strong argument.

[17] This may explain why liberals supported liberal immigration policies to a greater extent under the national identity frame as they were more likely to reject this argument (see Table 4).

Table 4 Strength and importance of argument by ideology

Version	Liberals		Conservatives		Moderates	
	Importance[a] Mean (Std dev)	Strength[b] Mean (Std dev)	Importance Mean (Std dev)	Strength Mean (Std dev)	Importance Mean (Std dev)	Strength Mean (Std dev)
Security	.711 (.27)	.638 (.30)	.888 (.18)	.855 (.27)	.804 (.21)	.814 (.19)
Economic	.666 (.24)	.584 (.27)	.896 (.25)	.746 (.33)	.607 (.25)	.583 (.25)
Cultural	.560 (.29)	.456 (.26)	.718 (.26)	.687 (.29)	.617 (.31)	.633 (.32)

[a] Question: How important do you believe this issue of immigration as a threat to (our culture, national security, or the economy) to be? Question is scaled 0–1, where *0* represents not at all important and *1* represents very important

[b] Question: Do you believe the argument of the House member, that immigration is a threat to (our culture, national security, or the economy), is a weak or a strong one? Question is scaled 0–1, with *0* equal to not at all strong and *1* equal to very strong

A related though not exclusive explanation for uneven framing effects on immigrant rejection focuses on the role of ethnic group cues in eliciting latent threat. Based on two national experiments, Brader et al. (2008) argue that anxiety and therefore opposition to immigration is triggered less by the frames and more by ethnic group cues. Our findings lend tentative support to these conclusions. After viewing the news stories, participants in our study were asked about their preferences of countries of immigrant origin. Although individuals were more likely to support restrictions on immigrants from the Middle East in general (as compared to Europe), the effect was larger under the security frame than the identity frame.[18] This of course suggests that the security frame may conger images of Middle Eastern individuals without explicitly mentioning them. While this is potentially an important mechanism for explaining why the frames work as they do, it does not detract from the argument that security frames are less polarizing within the contemporary environment.

Ideology plays an important role in moderating the effect of frames on individuals. That is, prior belief structures are an important element in explaining the effectiveness of framing on mass publics. Given that framing, priming, and agenda-setting are critical mechanisms through which the media and political elites can affect individual policy preferences, partisan cueing may be a defining feature in whether and how individuals think about issues. Bearing Schattschneider's (1960) timeless account of American party politics, party elites may expand their power base by restricting or expanding the 'scope of conflict.' One may thus argue that anti-immigration politicians lose little by pushing the security agenda; conservative ideologies will remain restrictionist, while liberals will become more so. The

[18] When attitudes towards immigrants from certain regions were probed, respondents not only reacted much more negatively to Middle Eastern and Turkish groups than to Europeans, Asians or even Africans, more generally, but the different framing effects were only notable among the former groups. For example when asked about immigration preferences for individuals coming from Europe (0 = increased a lot, 1 = decreased a lot) the average respondent score was .469 under the security frame and .47 under the identity frame. In sharp contrast, the average for those hailing from the Middle Eastern and Turkey was .63 and .54 for the security frame, while the identity frame yielded .57 and .51 respectively.

interactive effects of ideology and framing mean that migration attitudes held by liberals are particularly accessible to priming. Together, the empirical trends and possible theoretical explanations suggest that liberal politicians may have to work more assiduously to defuse the security dimension of migration, for once electors decide which issue and or dimension is salient, the question of which party to support generally follows automatically (Lahav 2004, pp. 137–138).[19]

Conclusions

If immigration attitudes and preferences are driven by threat, then how immigration threat is framed may provoke critical variations in behavioral outcomes (e.g., political attitudes and coalitions). Given that different threats invoke different values, the way immigration is framed is extremely telling about how citizens may organize competing values, and think about issues such as immigration, and civil liberties. Approaching values, which are inherently comparative and competitive, as hierarchical allows us to more systematically predict how citizens may trade-off values, in a complex and changing world (Arian 1995; Peffley et al. 2001). With the use of experimental design, we were able to hold superfluous information constant, and investigate diverse framing effects on attitudes, and test causal inferences about the role of threat in altering levels of support for both immigration policies and civil liberties.

Incorporating research conducted in political psychology and behavior, we hypothesized that immigration attitudes were largely dependent upon the nature of the perceived threat. We expected that the 'securitization of migration', because it touches on physical safety would be apt to promote cohesive opinion. Such issue framing does not mobilize ideological conflicts and values that fuel cultural threats, which in contrast, tend to polarize public opinion. Furthermore, employing 'new politics' and hierarchical values scheme as a guide, we theorized that threats to basic needs should galvanize different reactions from threats to higher order needs (Maslow 1954). That is, threats to physical needs, such as security, should lead to greater solidarity and less dispersion of public opinion. Threats to higher order needs, in contrast, should lead to greater dispersion in public opinion. Applied to immigration preferences, we assumed that there should be a convergence of opinion across the ideological spectrum when basic needs were threatened (e.g., law and order, public safety, crime, survival) but a divergence of opinion when higher order needs (e.g., identity, cultural homogeneity, language and community survival) were at stake.

The results in this study are overwhelmingly in line with our theoretical presuppositions. The existence of hierarchical needs is evidenced in respondents'

[19] Parties may stress particular issues because they work in their favor, and, in some sense they "own" them (Petrocik 1996). Since many issues will never be emphasized by particular parties, certain areas of resulting space will be out of bounds to some parties and effectively owned by others. According to Budge and Farlie, for example, the British Conservatives could never appear more committed to social reforms than the Labour Party. The best Conservative strategy thus was to divert attention from the need for social reforms to the need for law and order, on which Labour could not credibly propose a firmer line than the traditional party of order (1983, p. 260).

attitudes towards immigration restriction and willingness to surrender personal freedoms to a higher authority. In general, the data suggest that individuals are less likely to support liberal immigration policies under the threat of physical or national security. The presence of security threats particularly decreased the tendency for individuals left of the ideological spectrum to support liberal immigration policies. Furthermore, in face of threats to safety, respondents were more amenable to relinquish civil liberties than when they were faced with threats to cultural identity. This held true for individuals with divergent ideological beliefs and values. This reaffirms what we know about public opinion across liberal democracies at large—that is, citizens will compromise higher order needs in order to ensure the fulfillment of more basic needs.

Based on our experimental study, we are convinced that perceptions of type of immigration threat may affect immigration preferences and civil-liberty tradeoffs. Our data support the hypothesis that immigration attitudes are largely dependent upon the framing of threat. More specifically, attitudinal convergence around exclusionary and protectionist norms is more likely to occur when migration is conceptualized as a security issue than a threat to national identity or culture. Furthermore, this convergence generally tends towards greater restrictions on immigration and civil liberties. This suggests then that individuals will surrender non-material needs as soon as more basic needs are threatened. Security interests trump civil liberties when physical or national security looms large.

Nonetheless, there are important caveats, masked by these patterns of convergence. Notably, ideology seems to have played a moderating role as this tendency appears to have been greater for liberals than for conservatives. Conservatives were far more consistent in their opinions across the frames and were generally less likely to have been persuaded by the frames' message. In sharp contrast, liberals seem to have been influenced by how the issue was framed. That is, when liberals were reminded of the cultural implications of immigration, they were more likely to support a lax immigration policy than when the issue was framed in terms of security. These findings unveil the important interactive effects of ideology and threat framing on immigration attitudes. The distinctions between cultural components of migration threat and physical security not only dictate the potency of predisposing values and ideology to predict attitudes, as Feldman and Stenner's (1997) claims may have predicted, but also has the potential to discriminate who will move in the direction of consensus or polarization. Assuming that parties compete selectively by emphasizing the importance of different issues or issue stands, in this case, it would behoove liberal parties to either focus on the cultural component of immigration or divert attention from the need for immigration reform.

More importantly perhaps, given the diverse reactions to the frames, political parties may use the immigration issue as a wedge issue—to their advantage. By framing immigration as an issue of security for example, Republican candidates may be able to attract support for greater restrictions from across the aisle. Moreover, relating immigration to security during elections could force liberal candidates to tread into unfavorable territory. A liberal stance on the issue runs the risk of alienating liberal voters who support greater restrictions under security frames. Such a disaffected population may be up for grabs to those candidates who

endorse stricter immigration policies. Framing the issue as a security threat seems to predominantly serve the benefit of conservatives, as their base generally supports restrictions no matter the rationale. Thus, conservatives manage to satisfy their base, while simultaneously fomenting critical divisions within their opposition.

Threat frames can fundamentally alter not only political alignments regarding migration but policy outcomes. That is, we expect that as immigration issues become securitized, they will increase in salience on the agenda, but become less politicized or polarized, given restrictionist consensus. The import of physical security in distinction from cultural insecurity threat is enough to generate important ideological (and partisan) variations. Thus, as contemporary electoral debates across Europe, the US, and Australia strikingly adumbrate, migration is now political fodder for 'securitizing moves'. Politicians who seek to mobilize more restrictive migration regulation may capitalize on security or 'terror' frames'; inversely, those who want to mobilize ideological divisions may draw on fears of cultural diversity. While more robust testing across diverse national samples and over time is warranted in order to further extricate the post-9/11 context from our security frame, the results here are suggestive of important value trade-offs and ideological patterns when national security is evoked. The civil liberties implications are likely to be generalizeable to liberal democracies, and other issues beyond immigration, such as human rights, criminal policy or foreign intervention.

Appendix

Cultural News Story

In light of *the flood of non-English speaking children in American school systems*, Congress has recently called in experts to assist them with the adoption of one of the most significant immigration reforms in the country since the early 1990s. Many of the experts agreed that the most important challenge we face as a nation in an age of globalization is to prevent people who pose overwhelming threats to our *cultural identity* from entering or remaining in the United States. Countless members of the House of Representatives, agreeing with this assessment, gave heated speeches in favor of tightening immigration laws. One senior Representative claimed that our borders are being besieged by foreigners, who are a dangerous risk to *our cultural identity*. He said that *"we are no longer one united people. Fewer and fewer people are coming into the country with the desire to live like Americans. Immigrants who have been here for years still can't speak English. When they don't try to adjust to America and give this example to their children, there is a big problem.* With over one million aliens arriving each year, *the problem is only getting worse."*

Economic News Story

In light of *America's dramatic decline in economic competitiveness on the world market*, Congress has recently called in experts to assist them with the adoption of one of the most significant immigration reforms in the country since the early 1990s.

Many of the experts agreed that the most important challenge we face as a nation in an age of globalization is to prevent people who pose overwhelming threats to *economic security* from entering or remaining in the United States. Countless members of the House of Representatives, agreeing with this assessment, gave heated speeches in favor of tightening immigration laws. One senior Representative claimed that our borders are being besieged by foreigners, who are a dangerous risk to our *economic security*. He said that *"although immigrants comprise 12% of the workforce, they account for 31% of high school dropouts. These low skilled workers consume huge amounts of government services and often don't pay taxes. Because we spend over $22 billion a year on immigrants it is difficult to compete globally with other countries.* With over one million aliens arriving each year, *the problem is only getting worse."*

Security News Story

In light of *the horrific terrorist attacks of 9/11*, Congress has recently called in experts to assist them with the adoption of one of the most significant immigration reforms in the country since the early 1990s. Many of the experts agreed that the most important challenge we face as a nation in an age of globalization is to prevent people who pose overwhelming threats to *national security* from entering or remaining in the United States. Countless members of the House of Representatives, agreeing with this assessment, gave heated speeches in favor of tightening immigration laws. One senior Representative claimed that our borders are being besieged by foreigners, who are a dangerous risk to our *national security*. He said that *"bankrolled terrorists are crossing the border by paying professional smugglers. The scariest part of this is that we have absolutely no idea what they will do tomorrow on U.S. soil.* With over one million aliens arriving each year, *the potential for terrorists entering the United States undetected is extremely high and definitely getting worse as we fail to act."*

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