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Viewers like you: the effect of elite co-identity reinforcement on U.S. immigration attitudes

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ABSTRACT
As the political salience of immigrant-origin minorities continues to increase in the United States and Europe, researchers are increasingly focused on understanding what interventions reduce exclusionary attitudes. While several recent studies have examined the effect of different narrative and interpersonal communication techniques, few have focused on the role of the "messenger" that delivers these techniques. Drawing from psychological research on persuasion, we hypothesize that anti-exclusionary messages are more persuasive when delivered by elite messengers who reinforce shared identities. To test this, we conduct a large, pre-registered survey experiment exposing a sample of American adults to audio messages on immigration from persuasive elites performed by professional voice actors. We find that a persuasive message *only* shifts attitudes about immigration when elites include co-identity reinforcement primes. These findings offer additional nuance to the literature on immigration attitudes, persuasion, and elite-led public opinion, and have important implications for immigration advocacy work.

Over the last two decades, nativist political movements in the United States and Europe have responded to demographic change by advocating for the exclusion of immigrant-origin minorities. During this period, attitudes toward immigrants have become far more polarized along partisan lines (Abrajano and Hajnal 2015), increasingly linked with vote choice (Ivarsflaten 2008; Reny, Collingwood, and Valenzuela 2019; Sides, Vavreck, and Tesler 2018) and have spilled over into other policy attitudes and political predispositions (Abrajano and Hajnal 2015; Gest 2016).

Researchers, civil society leaders, and policymakers are increasingly seeking interventions to mitigate exclusionary attitudes, particularly among ideologically conservative citizens who have been observed to feel threatened by immigration and demographic change (e.g. Craig and Richeson 2014; Gest 2022). However, many attempts to reduce prejudice or exclusionary attitudes have proved unsuccessful in rigorous experimental settings (Paluck, Green, and Green 2018). This is because individuals are both predisposed to resist political messaging, and harder to persuade about matters rooted in

group-centric concerns – like immigration – which are well-rehearsed, strongly held, and emotionally charged.

In this study, we develop and test an identity-based solution to an identity-based problem. Drawing from psychological research on persuasion, we conduct a large pre-registered survey experiment exposing a sample of American adults to short audio/video treatments of generic partisan elites (articulated by professional voice actors) delivering a persuasive message seeking to liberalize attitudes toward immigration. While the experimental message is modeled from the speech of real Republicans to specifically influence Republicans' views, we also examine the effects of non-Republican messengers, and we poll a mix of Republican and non-Republican respondents. We find that the persuasive message has little effect without the addition of a simple, short, shared in-group co-identity reinforcement prime (e.g. "I'm a conservative Republican and I have been my whole life"), which assists in generating small but meaningful movement in immigration policy attitudes among Republicans, even those who most dislike immigrants. Further, we find no attitudinal backlash effects from such messages from in-group elites, which suggests that elites may have broader latitude to shape attitudes on contentious issues than commonly expected.

This paper makes several novel contributions to the literature on immigration attitudes, persuasion, and elite opinion leadership. First, a substantial literature on racial and immigration attitudes suggests that immigration attitudes are stable and shape (as opposed to being shaped) by partisan politics (Kustov, Laaker, and Reller 2020; Tesler 2015; though see Barber and Pope 2019; Flores 2018; Williams, Gravelle, and Klar 2022). Consistent with Engelhardt (2020), however, our findings suggest that partisan elites can play an important role in shaping attitudes related to out-groups, which opens up new doors for persuasion on contentious issues with broader swaths of the mass public than might be reached with other interventions.

Second, our findings offer some clues to a puzzle in experimental research on elite-led opinion leadership regarding why elite cues featuring real-life elites often succeed where generic party cues fail. Our study suggests that generic party cues, unlike real elite cues, could be interpreted quite differently by different individuals given the ideological heterogeneity even within political parties (Dafoe, Zhang, and Caughey 2018). The addition of a simple co-identity reinforcement prime, however, is enough to facilitate persuasion by clarifying and reinforcing the meaning of an identity label.

Third, we identify and test one of the core implied components of Harrison and Michelson's (Harrison and Michelson 2017) theory of dissonant identity priming and persuasion – co-identity reinforcement – and show that persuasion does not require well-known celebrities or popular public officials to succeed, at least in the short term. Relatedly, and more practically, our research offers an alternative approach – engaging Republican messengers – for immigration advocacy organizations hoping to shift public opinion on immigration policies.

State of knowledge

For over a decade, civil society groups and activists have sought to break America's stalemate over immigration policy reform by persuading a sufficient number of conservatives to moderate their nativist or restrictive views. Their efforts have been evaluated –

or, in some cases, informed – by the work of social scientists concerned with reducing prejudice or exclusionary attitudes, creating parallel activist and scientific dialogues about the best ways to persuade immigration skeptics.

Most such attempts have been unsuccessful in rigorous experimental settings (Paluck and Green 2009; Paluck, Green, and Green 2018) but several methods have shown promise. These include long-term interpersonal contact with outgroups (Finseraas and Kotsadam 2017), perspective-taking exercises via surveys and online games (Adida, Lo, and Platas 2018; Ghosn, Braithwaite, and Chu 2019; Newman et al. 2015; Simonovitz, Kezdi, and Kardos 2017) and door-to-door canvassing and exchange of interpersonal narrative (Broockman and Kalla 2016; Kalla and Broockman 2020).[1] While these approaches are promising, the costs of scaling up any approach to broad societal interventions are prohibitive (though see Kalla and Broockman 2021).

Instead, advocacy organizations hoping to nudge public opinion in favor of more expansive immigration policy have focused on scalable messaging and media campaigns with an eye toward framing, information, and language. Define American – whose tagline is "Change the narrative, change the world" – focuses on shifting language and portrayals of immigrants via entertainment and news media. FWD.us, a Chan Zuckerberg Initiative-backed project, has several campaigns – "I am an immigrant" and "I stand with immigrants" – aimed at shifting language and humanizing immigrants. America's Voice, a non-profit aimed explicitly at building public support for liberal immigration policy, attempts to move public opinion via targeted communication and media outreach.

These advocacy organizations spend large amounts of resources formulating and testing messages via focus groups and survey experiments. Their ultimate goal is to win messaging wars with immigrant and immigration frames that they hope will liberalize attitudes on the margins. However, there is less evidence supporting the persuasive effects of language choice or immigration frames on exclusionary attitudes.

One approach pursued by organizations like Define American and America's Voice involves reshaping perceptions of immigrants by changing their portrayals in news and entertainment media. In one of the most comprehensive tests of framing and public opinion, however, Haynes, Merolla, and Karthick Ramakrishnan (2016) find surprisingly weak or nonexistent effects of equivalence ("illegal" vs "undocumented") or episodic rather than thematic ("humanized" vs "statistical") framing on public opinion toward immigrants or immigration policy.

Another approach involves using information to attempt to educate the public about immigration in hopes that correct information will reduce well-documented, immigration-based innumeracy (Nadeau, Niemi, and Levine 1993) and, thus, perceived threat. Hopkins, Sides, and Citrin (2019), however, find no evidence that providing accurate information changes attitudes toward immigrants themselves, likely because dislike or negative impressions of immigrants are driving the innumeracy, not the other way around.

Psychological research on persuasion suggests why approaches that focus exclusively on message content might not work. Individuals, particularly the skeptics that immigration advocates may try to reach, will be predisposed to resist persuasion from messaging campaigns. This work suggests that individuals have a propensity to dismiss evidence and reasoning that does not conform with their pre-existing views or beliefs (Taber and

Lodge 2006). Researchers find that yielding to persuasion can threaten self-image (Cohen, Aronson, and Steele 2000; Steele 1988), self-esteem derived from ideological or partisan identities (Theodoridis 2017), and increase feelings of vulnerability (Slater and Rouner 2002).

Furthermore, immigration attitudes are also simply more challenging to move than most attitudes toward other public policy and social phenomena. A variety of researchers have found persuasion to be even more difficult on attitudes rooted in group-centric concerns, like immigration, which are well-rehearsed, strongly held, emotionally charged, and more resistant to change than most other political attitudes (Bartels 2008; Krosnick 1988; Krosnick and Petty 1995; Sears 1993; Tesler 2015; Zaller 1992). A substantial literature on racial and immigration attitudes, in particular, suggests that these attitudes are stable and are less responsive to elite messaging (Kustov, Laaker, and Reller 2020; Tesler 2015).

A successful and scalable persuasion approach, then, must first reduce resistance to persuasion before delivering a persuasive message. Recent research has suggested that focusing on the messenger *in addition to* the message is one promising path forward (Harrison and Michelson 2017; Wilkinson, Michelson, and Webster 2021; Williams, Gravelle, and Klar 2022). Building on Harrison and Michelson's (2017) theory of dissonant identity priming, we posit that persuasive messages from in-group elites that are accompanied by *co-identity reinforcement* – cues that reinforce shared identities and values – will increase the likelihood that persuasive messages shift attitudes, even on outgroup-oriented attitudes like immigration.[2] This co-identity reinforcement prime works because it serves as a credibility heuristic (Druckman and Lupia 2000; Lupia and McCubbins 1998), communicating that the persuader and recipient both belong to the same social identity group and share the same values and therefore are worth listening to and trusting (Brewer 1991; Terry and Hogg 1996; Tropp and Wright 2001). The effectiveness of the co-identity reinforcement prime will likely vary, then, based on the number of shared identities or values and the strength and salience of those identities or beliefs (Spears, Doosje, and Ellemers 1997; Terry and Hogg 1996).

Several advocacy campaigns are already employing these techniques. The "Evangelical Immigration Table" (Margolis 2018) and National Immigration Forum's "Bibles, Badges, and Business" for Immigration Reform,[3] for example, recruit elite messengers who represent evangelical Christians, police officers, and the business community to advocate for more liberal immigration policy with in-group constituents who might otherwise reject messaging from more ideologically liberal elites.

Contrary to many of the findings in the literature on elite-led public opinion, we expect that this will be effective even if tested with fictional elite messengers.[4] This is because partisan cues coupled with clear signals of shared in-group identity and values may reduce issues of informational equivalence present in experimental partisan primes that only use party cues (Dafoe, Zhang, and Caughey 2018), particularly in a political system where parties are "big tents" with ideologically diverse constituencies and elites. Co-identity reinforcement will likely reduce the likelihood that respondents instead update their evaluation of the elite, rather than their attitude about immigration (e.g. the "Republican-in-name-only" (RINO) effect).

Data and methods

Our data comes from an experiment embedded in a national survey of American adults fielded online via Lucid Theorem in August of 2020. When appropriate data quality checks are in place, Lucid has been shown to provide high-quality data (Coppock and Mcclellan 2019; Tausanovitch et al. 2020) (see Appendix A for more information on Lucid). We collected a large sample of $N = 9393$, benchmarked to the national population of American adults (descriptive statistics can be found in Appendix Table A1) to ensure we had large enough groups to precisely estimate relatively small treatment effects (average of about $N{\sim}1500$ respondents per cell) as well as investigate subgroup treatment effects across moderators of interest, particularly among self-identified Republicans who are our primary subjects of theoretical interest in this study.[5]

Survey design and treatment conditions

Respondents began by answering basic demographic and political questions (partisanship, ideology, strength of partisan identity), self-reported contact with out-groups, self-monitoring, and feeling thermometers toward a variety of groups (full survey instrument is included in Appendix C).[6]

After passing an attention and technology check (respondents had to be able to play video and hear audio), respondents were randomized (via Qualtrics' simple randomization) into one of six conditions: a fully-crossed 2×2 factorial design varying the party of fictional speaker (Democrat or Republican) and an identity prime (prime present or absent), a control group, or a Sean Hannity treatment which will be used for a robustness check. Treatments are summarized in Table 1.[7]

In the 2×2 conditions (A, B, C, and D), respondents first were asked to read introductory text on a page before proceeding to the treatment video: "Yesterday, John Wagner, co-chairman of the [Republican/Democratic] National Committee ([RNC/ DNC]), spoke at a meeting of [Republican/Democratic] Party officials and volunteers. Click the video on the next page to listen to a clip of these remarks." Respondents then proceeded to the next page that introduced the video ("In a moment, you will be shown a short video clip. Please pay close attention when you watch it, as you'll be asked detailed questions about it shortly afterward."). Respondents then watched a video that had an image of the speaker, an older White man in a suit, high-quality voiceover audio recorded by a professional voice actor, and scrolling text that accompanied the voiceover.[8]

The audio conveyed the prime and core treatment message variation:

IDENTITY PRIME: "I'm a [conservative Republican]/[Democrat]. I have been my whole life, and I'm worried about the way our country governs immigration."

Table 1. Treatments.

	Prime	No Prime
Republican	A	B
Democrat	C	D

Note: Two additional groups include a Sean Hannity + Prime (E) and pure control (F). Full details in Appendix A.

MESSAGE:	"For years, I have fought against open borders and amnesty for ille-gals, but I have come to realize that Congress' gridlock on immigra-tion has amounted to de facto amnesty anyway. Something has to be done. So, let's make some compromises. Everybody wants a secure border, but immigration governance doesn't stop at the Rio Grande. We need to treat immigrants fairly once they're here and give them an equal shot at the American Dream."[9]

For dependent variables, respondents were asked a series of questions intended to measure immigration policy attitudes. This includes a set of five policy items measuring support for expansive immigration policy (7-pt Likert scales) including support for deportation, legalization programs, job training programs for immigrants, granting immigrants broader access to public benefits, and establishing a Hispanic Heritage Month. We combined these items into an additive scale of immigration policy support (mean = 0.38, min = 0, max = 1, a = 0.76).[10]

To see if our treatment spills over into attitudes toward immigrants themselves, respondents were then asked a series of questions about immigrants (7-pt Likert) – whether they are doing enough to assimilate, whether they strengthen the country, whether they are a burden on the economy, and whether they increase the risk of terrorist attacks in the U.S. These items were combined into an additive scale of immigration atti-tudes (mean = 0.41, min = 0, max = 1, a = 0.73). Finally, respondents were asked a behav-ioral question about whether they would be willing to send a publicly identifiable (4), zip code identifiable (3), anonymous message (2) or no message at all (1) to their member of Congress expressing support for a pathway to citizenship (min = 1, max = 4, mean = 2.87) before answering a manipulation check, and then a question about their affect toward the speaker portrayed in the video to measure the RINO-effect. More specifically, respondents were asked whether they felt much more or more favorable (2,1), no different (0) or more or much more unfavorable (−1,−2) toward the messenger, "John Wagner," who delivered the treatment (mean = 0.40).

As outlined in our pre-registration[11], we report means and difference-in-means treat-ment effects calculated using OLS with heteroskedastic-robust standard errors. Covari-ate-adjusted results, which are substantively identical, can be found in Appendix D.

While our experiment includes Democratic and Independent respondents as well as Demo-cratic messengers to assess how treatment effects might work on different groups and with different messengers, our motivation with this study is to assess how theoretical targets of per-suasion, Republicans, respond to messages from in-group elites. For this reason, we focus pri-marily on how self-identified Republican respondents[12] respond to Republican messengers.[13]

Results

We begin by displaying mean immigration policy scale attitudes and immigrant contri-bution scale attitudes by treatment group, including Democratic and Republican messen-gers pooled across primes, in Figure 1, Panel A. We show results for the full sample, then broken down by Democrats, Independents, and Republicans. Looking first at policy atti-tudes, we find that most of the treatments appear to move the full sample in a liberal direction, though it is clear that the Republican elite treatments, which are counter-stereotypical, exert a larger effect than the Democratic elite treatments.
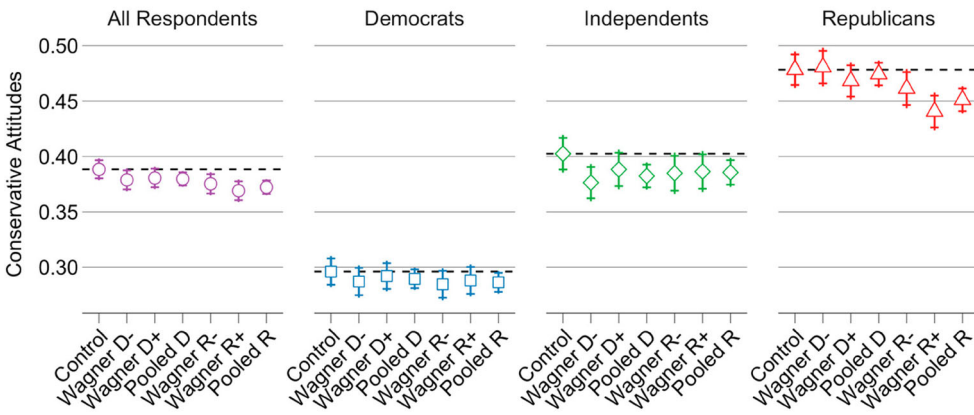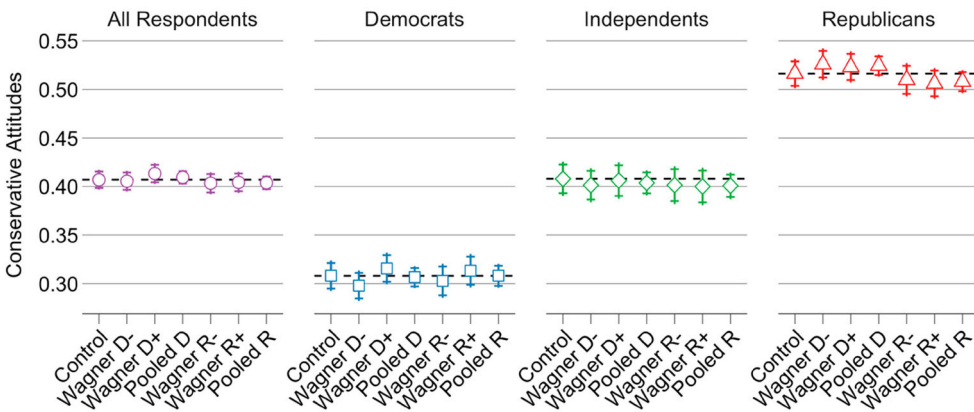
(A) Immigration Policy Attitudes Scale

(B) Immigrant Contribution Scale

Figure 1. Mean attitudes by treatment group. (A) Immigration policy attitudes scale. (B) Immigrant contribution scale.

Note: Means with 90% and 95% confidence intervals. Dotted line is control group mean. Lower values on y-axis indicate more liberal attitudes and higher values more conservative attitudes. Means reported in Appendix Table D1.

Breaking the results down by partisan subgroups reveals heterogeneity that is consistent with our hypotheses. Democrats are largely immune to these messenger effects. Independents, who are less likely to be prone to partisan-group-specific messengers, appear to move in a liberal direction in response to both Democratic and Republican messengers. Finally, Republicans, the core group of interest for this experiment, do not move in response to Democratic messengers but do move in response to Republican messengers. The respondents who received the Republican elite message without the co-identity reinforcement prime were 0.017 pts (95% CI: [−0.01, 0.041]) more liberal on the immigration policy attitude scale than the control. The effect is significantly larger, as hypothesized, in the Republican elite condition with the co-identity reinforcement prime,

moving respondents 0.038 pts (95% CI: [0.014, 0.061]) more in a liberal direction relative to the control, about 1/5 of a standard deviation, and 0.021 (95% CI: [−0.0035, 0.045]) points more in a liberal direction relative to the message without the co-identity reinforcement prime.[14] Consistent with theoretical expectations, effects are even stronger if we use a subset of just White Republican respondents, those who share both racial and partisan identity with the speaker (0.049 pts, 95% CI: [0.023, 0.074]).

This finding confirms a core hypothesis that the co-identity reinforcement prime reduces resistance to persuasion much more than a party label alone among Republicans.[15] As a robustness check, we test what happens when we attribute the message to a well-known and respected Republican elite which should have a similar effect. We auditioned and hired a professional voice actor to impersonate television commentator Sean Hannity[16] to deliver our message. Like the co-identity reinforcement prime from Wagner, we found that Hannity moved Republican policy attitudes 0.022 pts in a liberal direction (95% CI: [−0.014, 0.045]), a slightly smaller treatment effect than Wagner + prime. While it is not possible for us to tease out why Hannity is slightly less effective than Wagner, we suspect that using real, well-known messengers carries some risk in that while a lot of Republicans like and trust Hannity, others, notably those who dislike Donald Trump, likely are not going to be as persuaded. Like Hannity, Wagner benefits the positive impressions associated with his party affiliation but, because he is fictitious, he is also unburdened by the personal attributes – positive and negative – on which well-known elite figures are judged.

Moving on to immigrant contribution attitudes in Figure 1, Panel B, we find that our treatment does not appear to spill over into attitudes toward immigrants themselves, suggesting the limits of elite cues and messages in shifting attitudes or, more likely, the limits of our treatment message, which was primarily targeted at shaping immigration policy attitudes.[17] Americans, and Republicans in particular, may follow elite cues to become more tolerant with respect to how the government treats immigrants in the United States but this movement is clearly not a function of attitudes about who immigrants are or how they contribute to the United States. When analyzing the four immigrant contribution attitudes items separately, as we show in Appendix D, we find that the only movement comes from Republicans in the co-identity reinforcement treatment group on their belief that immigrants strengthen America.

We also test for heterogeneity of treatment effects on immigration policy attitudes within Republican partisan subgroups, our outcomes and group of theoretical interest. These tests are based on pre-registered criteria related to (1) levels of partisan identity; (2) levels of self-monitoring; and (3) pre-existing immigrant affect.[18]

With party identity, we might expect that those who have higher levels of Republican identity would be more likely to "follow the leader" than those who may see themselves as Republicans but do not have strong levels of Republican partisan identity (Huddy, Mason, and Aarøe 2015). Related to respondents' self-monitoring propensities, we might expect those with higher levels to be more likely to conform to shifts in perceived elite norms (Connors 2020). Finally, we want to see if attitude change only occurs among those Republicans who may already feel warmer toward immigrants compared to those who enter our experiment with strongly anti-immigrant attitudes – a group that we might assume, a priori, would be harder to move (Kunda 1990; Taber and Lodge 2006).

In Figure 2, we present mean immigration policy attitudes across the main treatment conditions for Republicans only who: (1) are not-strong versus strong partisans (Panel A); (2) have higher- and lower-than-median levels of partisan identity (Panel B); (3) exhibit higher- and lower-than-median levels of self-monitoring (Panel C); and (4) have higher- or lower-than-median pretreatment levels of anti-immigrant affect as measured by a feeling thermometer (Panel D). We find very low levels of heterogeneity across the board. Those higher and lower in Republican identity, self-monitoring, and *even* pretreatment anti-immigrant animus all move in a liberal direction following exposure to the co-identity reinforcing prime and message. These results are encouraging for political groups and leaders seeking to persuade these constituents, as those with stronger pre-existing negative immigration attitudes may otherwise be seen as lost causes for persuasion. Our results suggest that this is not the case. While surprising, given the previously cited literature on persuasion and strength of identity, self-monitoring, and resistance to counter-attitudinal information, these results are consistent with a new body of work showing citizens, regardless of their priors, may not be as resistant to incorporating new information as earlier work in psychology suggested (Coppock 2023; Guess and Coppock 2020).

Next, we test whether the treatments increase the likelihood that respondents engage in visible, intended behavioral action with respect to immigration reform. Respondents are asked if they would be willing to sign a petition – either publicly with their name, with their zip code, anonymously, or not at all – urging their members of Congress to pass a comprehensive immigration reform bill with a pathway to citizenship.[19] As we show in Figure 3, we find small but statistically significant levels of backlash on this behavioral measure. Messages from Republican elites made Democrats less likely to want to send messages to Congress and messages from Democratic elites made Republicans less likely to want to send messages to Congress. This could simply be an unfortunate consequence of negative partisanship where respondents are less likely to support something
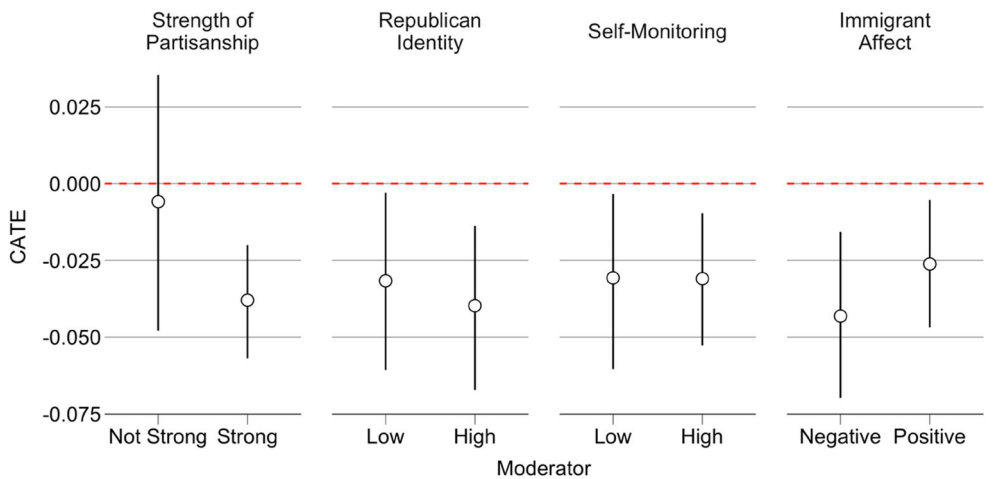

Figure 2. Subgroup treatment effects.

Note: Difference-in-means between treatment and control groups by subgroup with 95% confidence intervals. Partisan identity, self-monitoring, and immigrant affect were split at their Republican sample median values.
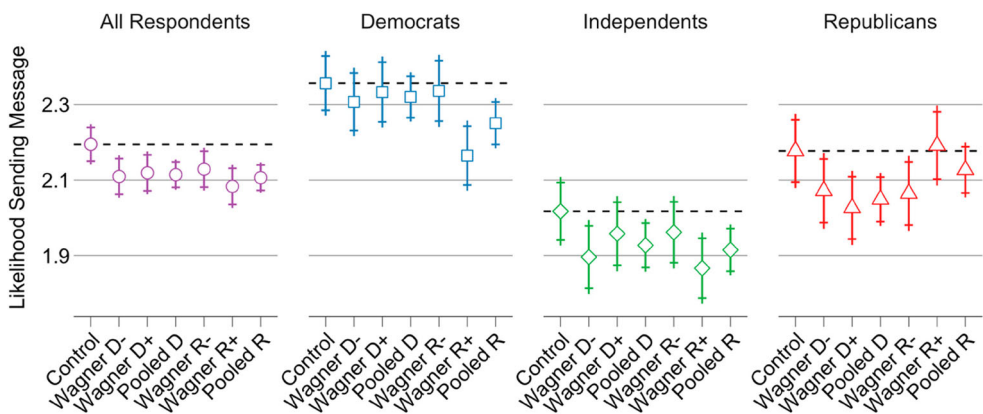
Figure 3. Intended behavioral outcome.

Note: Mean responses of likelihood of sending message to Congress under each treatment condition with 90% and 95% confidence intervals.

the out-party is proposing (Abramowitz and Webster 2018; 2016). While this finding may be discouraging for interest or advocacy groups hoping to catalyze behavior to pressure elites on immigration reform, we emphasize that our treatment was not designed to spur behavioral change but rather decrease support for exclusionary immigration policy. It is possible that spurring behavioral change requires a different messaging strategy.

Finally, we assess whether there is any backlash against the messenger after respondents listened to these messages. To the extent that Republicans have internalized strong anti-immigrant policy positions as core to their identity, it may be the case that Republicans exposed to these elite messages update their attitudes about the elite messenger rather than immigration policy itself – what we call the Republican-in-name-only (RINO) effect. In Figure 4, we plot mean responses to this speaker favorability item across key treatment conditions.
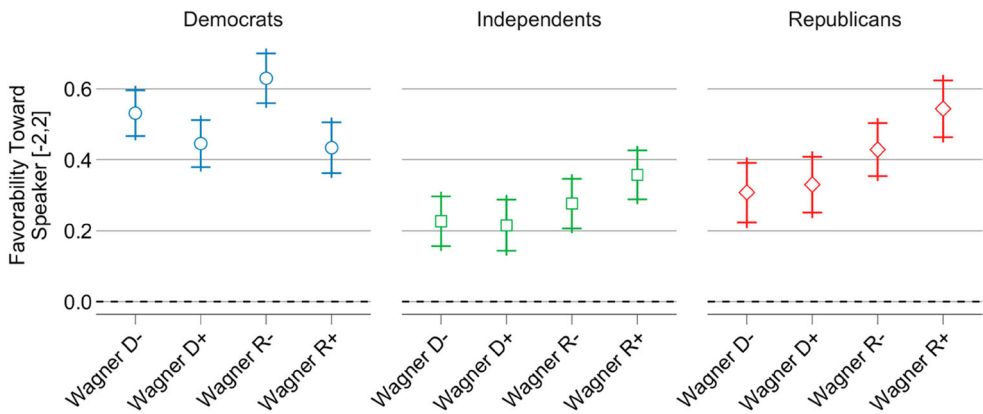

Figure 4. Favorability toward messengers.

Note: Means with 90% and 95% confidence intervals.

We find clear evidence that respondents on average felt quite favorable toward the speakers in each "Wagner" treatment group. Notably, Republicans who were exposed to the co-identity reinforcement prime were significantly more likely to find the speaker favorable than those who were just exposed to partisan labels. Because the Democratic speaker treatment conditions (Wagner D−/D+) were not counter-stereotypical, we did not expect to find that taking a positive stance on immigration would strongly shape affect toward the candidate.

These findings are promising for groups hoping to shift immigration policy attitudes as they suggest that co-identity reinforcement priming not only persuades people to adopt more liberal views about immigration policy, but also can buttress the favorability of elite speakers' images.[20]

We recognize that a prominent Republican elite taking a more moderate stand on immigration policy may attract criticism or even condemnation of their views from more conservative peers and leaders. Because we do not contextualize respondents' exposure to the elite's intervention in this partisan disapproval, we are unable to fully simulate the likely rhetorical environment in which other party affiliates might condemn or overlook this elite. However, doing so is also beyond the scope of this study. We are ultimately interested in the capacity of such elites to leverage their shared identity to persuade partisan respondents, and we sought to check whether the intervention independently reduces their abstract favorability. While any examination of elite favorability in the context of partisan condemnation is subject to the specific profile, network, and power of the elite herself or himself – making it very hard to estimate with external validity – we encourage future researchers to assess the relative strength of such primes in a competitive messaging environment where persuasive messages are paired with messages of condemnation from other in-group elites (Chong and Druckman 2007).

Conclusion and discussion

In sum, we find evidence that a relatively minor intervention – persuasive immigration messaging coupled with a credible *co-identity reinforcement prime* – successfully shifts Republican immigration policy attitudes in a liberal direction. Importantly, the effects on policy attitudes emerge for Republicans regardless of their levels of partisan identity, self-monitoring, or prior immigrant affect. Further, we find little evidence that counter-stereotypical messaging from Republicans engenders negative affect toward the messengers themselves.

There are several limitations to this study that present opportunities for further research. First, the treatment does not spill over into more general attitudes about immigrants or motivate behavior. This could change with more focused or prescriptive messaging. Second, we present results from a single-shot experiment with one cross-section of respondents. It may be the case that the politics of immigration change over time if national elite partisan coalitions shift, making the results of this study only "temporally valid" within certain political contexts (Munger 2019). Third, as with any internet-based survey experiment, we expose respondents to synthetic experimental stimuli that are consumed in artificial contexts (on mobile phones, tablets, or computers). We attempt to maximize the "realism" of our study by hiring voice actors to professionally record audio messages

modeled after real statements by Republican leaders, rather than just expose respondents to fake written statements, and we engaged numerous checks to ensure that respondents received the stimulus. While we are always subject to limitations of less-engaged or highly-skeptical survey respondents, we are reassured by recent research that shows that survey experimental may *underestimate* the effects of elite-led partisan influence on mass attitudes (Slothuus and Bisgaard 2020). Fourth, while we find small but meaningful changes in policy attitudes as a function of exposure to our treatments, we do not study decay in attitude change. Existing research (Coppock 2017) shows that survey-experimental treatment effects generally decay by about 50% by 10 days after initial exposure. In a real-world context where respondents would be exposed to counter-frames and narratives, we might see even faster decay, though a larger collection of Republican elites regularly delivering pro-immigrant or moderate messaging might powerfully counter more nativist messaging from some Republican party elites.

And indeed, this research suggests that the cultivation of such elites could yield results. In the United States' hyper-partisan environment (Mason 2016), perhaps it is not surprising that elites advocating for the liberalization of immigration policy are ineffective when they are associated with the opposing party. However, the persuasive effect of otherwise unknown elites who co-identify with the target population is novel and opens new possibilities for immigration advocates in the future. The challenge will be that immigration – the subject of bipartisan compromise and mixed coalitions only a decade ago – has become a principal fulcrum of American partisanship today, particularly since the candidacy and presidency of Donald Trump. Still, there remain some Republicans with moderate views about certain dimensions of immigration policy. Our research suggests that immigration advocates' cultivation and embrace of these Republicans could be an effective strategy to weaken conservatives' anti-immigration policy attitudes.

Notes

1. While this study focuses on *explicit* prejudice, researchers have studied interventions for reducing *implicit* prejudice as well. For a thorough comparative investigation of these techniques, see Lai (2014).
2. This is consistent with recent research on elites and attitudes related to race, ethnicity, and immigration.
3. https://immigrationforum.org/landing_page/bibles-badges-business/
4. There is evidence that generic elite/party cues – those from "Republicans," "Democrats," or fictional candidates (see Arcenueax 2008; Bullock 2011; Ciuk and Yose 2016; Druckman et al 2013) – are often not powerful enough to persuade co-partisans to update their attitudes. Instead, evidence suggests that cues from *known elites* like the president of the United States, are the most persuasive (Agadjanian 2020; Lenz 2012; Nicholson 2012; Barber and Pope 2019). We suspect that generic party cues are often weak because of issues of informational equivalence where the respondent might project onto the elite their perception of the elite's strength of partisan identity or core political values, for example.
5. We pre-registered our design and analyses with OSF.io on August 7, 2020, before full data collection commenced on August 10, 2020. Full pre-analysis plan is included in Appendix B. IRB approval was acquired for all pilot tests and the full survey experiment at each of the authors' institutions.
6. We discuss our decision to measure our moderator before treatment in Appendix A.
7. In Appendix A, we also display tests for non-random attrition and show balance for pre-registered pre-treatment covariates across treatment conditions.

8. We ensured compliance with the treatment in a few different ways. First, we ensured that respondents had working speakers and could watch video on their device by having them pass a video and audio check (picture of a cow and audio of a dog barking) before they could proceed to the video. The video itself was hosted on YouTube to maximize compatibility across mobile devices and browsers and minimize streaming issues. We set a timer for the duration of the video time so that respondents could not skip the video without waiting for 20 s, removed the scroll bar from the video so they had to watch the entire thing, and embedded a code at the end of the video that respondents had to enter into a text box correctly before proceeding.

     All respondents so exposed were informed of the deception immediately at the conclusion of the survey. As part of the experimental design, this deception was necessary so that all the messengers' statements were standardized. The statements, however, were crafted after real messages made by real political elites. To isolate the effect of the speaker in our experiment we need to use the same exact message for each one; otherwise, we would have confounded different messages with different speakers. The deception employed involved minimal risk to subjects. While the deception may alter respondents' impressions of real people, this alteration only extended until the end of the survey administration. No respondent completed participation without being informed about the deception, and so it will not adversely affect any participant's rights or welfare.

9. This message was derived from speeches that the late Republican Senator from Arizona, John McCain, made on immigration. Though a decorated ideological conservative who was once his party's presidential nominee, McCain held very centrist views on immigration policy and persuaded many Republican voters and legislators to take more liberal positions in his attempts to pass comprehensive immigration reform. For more on this message construction, see Appendix A.

10. For full wording for all questions see Appendix C. We measured but did not include an item on English-language only policy because a double negative was clearly confusing for respondents and does not positively correlate with other immigration policy attitudes. While the inclusion of the item, a departure from our pre-analysis plan, does not change substantive finding of the study, we have omitted it from all analyses.

11. Pre-registration is posted but currently embargoed on OSF. For review purposes, an anonymized pre-registration has been included in the appendix of this manuscript. We report non-covariate adjusted means in the body of the manuscript and leave adjusted means, which are substantively identical, in the appendix.

12. We further probe this relationship by breaking Republicans into strong versus weak partisanship (as measured by branching partisan identity question), those with stronger versus weaker partisan identity (Huddy, Mason, and Aarøe 2015), and those high or low in self-monitoring (Connors 2020). Full wording of all items in Appendix C.

13. By examining partisan subgroups separately, we are theoretically assuming, of course, that respondent partisanship is moderating the treatment effects we observe in each, though we acknowledge that making a causal moderation claim here requires randomly assigning respondent partisanship which is infeasible (Kam and Trussler 2017). Our covariate-adjusted regression estimates in Appendix D help assuage concerns by assessing our assumed model's sensitivity to the most theoretically relevant confounders.

14. For context, this change in attitude is about two-thirds the size of the gap in immigration policy attitudes between college and non-college educated Americans, about one-half the size of the gap in immigration policy attitudes between white and non-white Americans, and about three-quarters the size of the gap in immigration policy attitudes between Independents and Republicans. A one-fifth of a standard deviation shift in attitudes is similar to the Paluck et al. (2021) meta-analytic estimates of the effects of prejudice reduction experiments in large samples.

15. Results for individual attitude items are included in Appendix Table D3. We find that the message is most likely to move respondents' attitudes about a pathway to citizenship, job training programs, welfare benefits, and establishing a Hispanic heritage month, all policies aimed at accommodation. It did not, however, change attitudes about deportation.

16. Hannity is notably anti-immigrant in his current programming in 2020 but in 2012 famously pivoted to an accommodationist messaging urging Republicans to embrace a pathway to citizenship.
17. These divergent responses are likely due to the fact that our treatment message is predominantly focused on moving attitudes about policy rather than about who immigrants are.
18. We did not pre-register looking at effects by pre-existing levels of immigration attitudes, so this analysis can be treated as exploratory; however, we feel that this analysis is very important for organizations hoping to shift immigration attitudes to see whether the effects are concentrated, maybe, among those Republicans who already felt warmer toward immigrants, for example.
19. We did not actually give respondents the opportunity to sign a petition, but respondents were not aware of this when they indicated their intentions. They were debriefed on the purpose of this measure after they completed the survey.
20. Research suggests that asking about attitude change exhibits poor measurement properties (Graham and Coppock 2020). We are limited, however, by our use a fictional elite speaker with little auxiliary information with which to otherwise form attitudes (or counterfactual assessments).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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Supplemental Appendix for: "How Elite Co-Identity Reinforcement Facilitates Persuasion: The Case of Immigration Attitudes"

Appendix A. Sample and Descriptive Statistics

We collected our data from the Lucid Theorem. Lucid Theorem is an automated marketplace that connects researchers with respondents from a variety of network survey panel companies. Many of these are double opt-in panels where respondents are invited to partake in research via emails, push notifications, in-app pop-ups, or other means. Respondents are incentivized in a variety of ways depending on the supplier.

Lucid takes a variety of steps to increase quality of respondents from these survey panel providers including: 1) blocking users from taking surveys multiple times via cookies, IP addresses, or other unique identifiers; 2) screen the quality of respondents through attention check questions and open-ended questions; 3) using third party bot detection services like Google's reCaptcha to block bots; and 4) publish and provide information on the quality of all their data suppliers. We supplement these measures with our own data quality measures including attention checks that must be answered correctly before respondents proceed to avoid collecting large numbers of low-quality respondents, which has been a recent concern with Lucid (Aronow 2020).

As with most contemporary social science surveys, our procedures yield a convenience sample that relies on modeling decisions to ensure that our sample looks like the national population. We do not have a random sample of the U.S. population. Nevertheless, existing research finds Lucid samples to be of high quality (Coppock and Green 2016; Coppock and McClellan 2019), and when properly weighted, provide samples that are similar in quality to respected survey respondent panels like Pew's American Trends Panel (Tausanovitch et al. 2020).

Below in Table A1 we show the distribution of key characteristics of our sample compared to national benchmarks. As can be seen, our sample looks very similar to the national adult population except that we have slightly fewer respondents from the West and more from the South, is slightly more educated, which is consistent with online polls, and has more partisans (compared to independents and leaners) compared to the national population.

Table A1. Demographics of Sample

variable	level	national	Lucid sample
age_cat	Age 18-24	0.13	0.15
age_cat	Age 25-34	0.2	0.20
age_cat	Age 35-44	0.2	0.19
age_cat	Age 45-64	0.33	0.32
age_cat	Age 65-99	0.14	0.15
gender	Male	0.489	0.49

gender	Female	0.511	0.51
race	White	0.68	0.69
race	Black	0.12	0.11
race	Latino	0.12	0.11
race	Other	0.08	0.09
region	Midwest	0.2	0.20
region	West	0.26	0.20
region	Northeast	0.2	0.20
region	South	0.34	0.40
education	College	0.3	0.43
education	No College	0.7	0.57
partisanship	Democrat (-leaners)	0.31	0.36
partisanship	Independent (+leaners)	0.41	0.30
partisanship	Republican (-leaners)	0.26	0.34

Note: All targets based on 2018 U.S. Census American Community Survey targets collected from Social Explorer. Partisanship based on Gallup polling from July 30, 2020 through August 12, 2020 (https://news.gallup.com/poll/15370/party-affiliation.aspx).

Table A2. Treatments

Condition	Treatment	N
A	Generic Republican + Prime	1478
B	Generic Republican - Prime	1514
C	Generic Democrat + Prime	1554
D	Generic Democrat – Prime	1553
E	Sean Hannity + Prime	1548
F	Control	1746

Treatment Message

The main treatment message is derived from portions of speeches by the late US Senator John McCain, an Arizona Republican. McCain frequently and deliberately employed word choice that signaled his conservative credentials ("amnesty," "secure border ") but was avowedly pro-immigration, and advocated in favor of immigration policy reforms between 2006 and 2013 that would have facilitated higher family and labor visa flows and, importantly, the extension of legal status for undocumented immigrants. We combine a variety of excerpts from his rhetoric during this period as it was appealing among many Republicans before the candidacy of President Donald Trump in 2015. By having a political elite deliver a message calling for the country to "treat immigrant fairly once they're here" and "give them an equal shot at the American dream," we were hoping that the message would, at the very least, change attitudes toward immigration policies that might facilitate immigrant integration like a pathway to citizenship, ceasing deportations, access to resources and job training, and perhaps even recognition of unique cultural contributions of immigrants.

Pre-Treatment Covariates

There is an active debate in the literature over whether to measure identity-based moderators in an experimental setting before or after social-identity-based experimental treatment. On one side, Klar, Leeper, and Robison (2020) argue that if a moderator is related to social identities, is stable, and risks priming effects that might interact with a treatment, it is okay to measure after a treatment. This theoretical argument is the reason that researchers of racial priming effects, in particular, tend to measure racial resentment after a treatment is delivered for fear that measuring racial attitudes before a treatment might prime race in race-neutral control conditions and neutralize the treatment (e.g. Mendelberg 2008 and Valenzuela and Reny 2021). On the other side, a number of methodological papers show that conditioning on a post-treatment variable could introduce significant bias into treatment effects (e.g. see Montgomery, Nyhan, and Torres 2018; Aronow, Baron, and Pinson 2019).

While we think it can be argued that our main moderator, partisan identity, is likely immune to large shifts from one partisan identity to another (e.g. Republican to Democrat) as the result of a treatment like the one delivered in our experiment, there is potential concern that our treatment which associates a counter-stereotypical issue position (somewhat pro-immigration at least relative to the current Republican Party) to a high-level Republican official (co-chair of RNC) could shift some weak partisans into independent identification and vice versa. Further, a forthcoming article in the AJPS by Sheagley and Clifford (2022) that explicitly tests this debate with a series of different moderators finds "no evidence that measuring a moderator prior to an experiment influences the results" (pp 30). As such, we were less concerned that measuring partisan identity would influence treatment effects later in the survey and were more concerned that our treatment could potentially shift partisan identification and introduce bias.

Differential Attrition

Given that we used a video and audio-based treatment, which required respondents to have working audio and video before they could proceed, we had some attrition across all treatments (an average of 216 respondents per arm), though it was slightly lower in the control condition, which had no video treatment. We used linear regression of our attrition indicator on our treatment variable, our pre-registered pre-treatment covariates, and the interaction of treatment and covariates. We perform a heteroskedastic-robust F-test of the

hypothesis that all interaction coefficients are 0 and use a permutation test to calculate a p-value. Our test yields a p-value of p < 0.01 which suggests that attrition was not random. We assess whether this affects balance across our treatment and control arms in our final sample, however, and find that the experiment remains balanced on pre-registered pre-treatment covariates despite potential concerns with attrition.

Balance

We perform a statistical test to judge whether observed covariate imbalances in the final sample are larger than would normally be expected from chance alone. Using a multinomial logistic regression, we regress the treatment indicator on the covariates (pre-specified in PAP, including affect toward undocumented immigrants, race (white==1), income, education, ideology, and age) and calculate the Wald statistic for the hypothesis that all the covariate coefficients are zero (Wooldridge 2010, 62). We then use a permutation test to calculate the p-value associated with the Wald statistic. This test yields a p-value of 0.64, suggesting that the experiment is balanced despite non-random attrition. Encouragingly our findings are substantively identical when estimating treatment effects with and without covariates.

```
fit <- nnet::multinom(treat_fact ~ group_affect_illegal_imm +
                          white + income_to_60k + income_missing +
                          college + ideo_conservative +age, data=df, model=T)
Rbeta.hat <- coef(fit)[-1]
RVR <- vcov(fit)[-1,-1]
W_obs <- as.numeric(Rbeta.hat %*% solve(RVR, Rbeta.hat)) # Wooldridge(4.13)

sims <- 1000
group_affect_illegal_imm = df$group_affect_illegal_imm
white <- df$white
income_to_60k <- df$income_to_60k
income_missing <- df$income_missing
college <- df$college
ideo_conservative <- df$ideo_conservative
age <- df$age

set.seed(1234567)

W_sims <- numeric(sims)
for(i in 1:sims){
  Z_sim <- randomizr::complete_ra(N=nrow(df),
                                  m_each = c(1565, 1565, 1565, 1566, 1566, 1566))
  fit_sim <- nnet::multinom(Z_sim ~ group_affect_illegal_imm +
                              white + income_to_60k + income_missing +
                              college + ideo_conservative +age, model = T)
  Rbeta.hat <- coef(fit_sim)[-1]
  RVR <- vcov(fit_sim)[-1,-1]
  W_sims[i] <- as.numeric(Rbeta.hat %*% solve(RVR, Rbeta.hat))
  print(i)
}
p <- mean(W_sims >= W_obs)# 0.638
```

Question Selection

Our immigration policy scale items broadly follow the contours of immigration policy items asked in other leading public opinion surveys. Following the Democracy Fund Voter Study Group panel study, we ask about immigration policy attitudes in a few different domains

including deportation and legalization, public benefits, and cultural accommodation. With the exception of the question of public benefits, these categories of policy attitudes are asked in other major surveys like the American National Election Study (ANES), the Cooperative Election Study (CES, formally CCES), and the UCLA + Democracy Fund Nationscape.

Appendix B. Pre-Registration

This pre-analysis has been filed after a soft-launch (n=100) of the survey but before full data collection. Pre-registration filed with OSF filed in 08-07-2020.

Sample
- Collecting a sample of n=10,000 respondents from Lucid in August 2020
- This large sample size ensures that we'll have enough respondents per treatment group to estimate precise treatment effects among different groups (Republicans, Independents, Democrats)

Measures
- Treatments are video treatments accompanied by text. There are 6 treatment conditions:
    - 1) Generic Dem Messenger + Identity Prime (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpGL7AhWWB0)
    - 2) Generic Dem Messenger Without Identity Prime (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0dhmehGTUU)
    - 3) Generic Republican Messenger + Identity Prime (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=svFNpaTiZOo)
    - 4) Generic Republican Messenger without Identity Prime (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7Z4F-Nz1Hc)
    - 5) Hannity + identity Prime (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Asuf4lIhVuU)
    - 6) Control (no video)
- Outcomes include policies battery, imm_attitudes battery, and behavioral_congress from the survey below.
- Moderators will include partisanship, self-monitoring scale (3 questions), contact (2-items), and partisan identity strength (4-pt scale).

Hypotheses

- Generally speaking we expect messages from Republicans to be more effective in moving attitudes in a liberal direction compared to messages from Democrats (because it is counter-stereotypical)
  - We acknowledge that these treatment messages from Democrats actually might be more conservative than current Democratic elected officials and could make both Democrats feel that they can express more conservative attitudes than they otherwise would
- Immigration messages from in-group elites (in this case Republicans) will move attitudes, particularly those that have to do with treating immigrants already in the country fairly, in a liberal direction relative to control.
- We expect the identity prime to increase the effectiveness of the message by confirming and strengthening the shared group-identities relative to the in-group message without the identity prime.
- We expect messages from the out-group to be less effective in shifting immigration attitudes relative to control.
- We expect treatment effects to strengthen among those who are high in self-monitoring and those who have stronger partisans group identity (median splits)

Procedures

Analysis strategy

- We will estimate average treatment effects (and CATEs) in a few ways:
  - First, we will do simple difference in means tests for all key outcomes (both individual items and scales). These will be included in the Appendix while we will report regression adjusted estimates in the main paper.
  - Second, we will use OLS with hetereoskedastic-robust standard errors using pre-treatment covariates for adjustment. These will include partisan strength, immigration attitudes (from FTs), race, income, education, ideology (dk's recoded as moderate), and age. We will also use a machine-learning approach to select covariates that best increase precision of the treatment effect.
- Evidence for our hypothesis will be as follows:
  - Generally speaking, we expect messages from Republicans to be more effective in moving attitudes in a liberal direction compared to messages from Democrats (because it is counter-stereotypical):
    - ATE Republican (prime+) > ATE Dem (prime+)

- We will test group treatments pooled (over + and – prime) which will maximize power but also anticipate the – prime treats will have much weaker effects so will report both
  - Immigration messages from in-group elites (in this case Republicans) will move attitudes, particularly those that have to do with treating immigrants already in the country fairly, in a liberal direction relative to control.
    - ATE > 0 ($p < 0.05$) among Republicans w/ Republican elites (prime + / pooled)
  - We expect the identity prime to increase the effectiveness of the message by confirming and strengthening the shared group-identities relative to the in-group message without the identity prime.
    - ATE among Republicans w/ Republican elite + prime > ATE among Republicans w/ Republican elite – prime. This can be evaluated two ways. First, if ATE_prime > 0 ($p<0.05$) and ATE_noprime = 0. OR, a harder test whereh ATE_Prime > ATE_noprime ($p < 0.05$).
  - We expect messages from the out-group to be less effective in shifting immigration attitudes relative to control.
    - ATE = 0 among Republicans w/ Democratic elites (+ prime / pooled)
    - ATE = 0 among Democrats w/ Republican elites (+ prime / pooled)
  - We expect treatment effects to strengthen among those who are high in self-monitoring and those who have stronger partisans group identity.
    - ATE Republicans w/ Republican elite (among Strong Rs, those high in self-monitoring, and those higher in Republican identity) > ATE Republicans w/ Republican elite (among weak Rs, those low in self-monitoring, and those lower in Republican identity). P value does not need to $p < 0.05$

Appendix C. Full Survey Instrument

opt-in If you'd like to participate, please click Yes below:

○ Yes, I'd like to participate (1)

○ No, I don't want to participate (2)

born_us Were you born in the United States or another country?

○ Born in the United States (1)

○ Born in another country (2)

----

in_union Are you a member of a labor union?

○ Yes, I am currently a member of a labor union (1)

○ I formerly was a member of a labor union (2)

○ No, I have never been a member of a labor union (3)

---

employment Which of the following best describes your employment status?

○ Full-time employed (1)

○ Part-time employed (2)

○ Self-employed (3)

○ Unemployed or temporarily laid off (4)

○ Retired (5)

○ Permanently disabled (6)

○ Homemaker (7)

○ Student (8)

○ Other (9)

---

homeowner Do you currently own the home you live in, rent, or live with someone else?

○ Rent (1)

○ Own my home (2)

○ Live with someone else (3)

○ Other (4)

ideo5 In general, how would you describe your political viewpoint?

○ Very liberal (1)

○ Liberal (2)

○ Moderate (3)

○ Conservative (4)

○ Very conservative (5)

○ Don't know (6)

---

pid3 Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, an independent, or something else?

○ Republican (1)

○ Democrat (2)

○ Independent (3)

○ Something else (4)

Display This Question:

If Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, an independent, or someth... = Independent

Or Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, an independent, or someth... = Something else

pid_lean If you had to choose, do you consider yourself closer to the Republican Party or the Democratic Party?

○ Republican (1)

○ Democrat (2)

○ Neither (3)

⤧

Q77 How often, if at all, do you have everyday relationships with people from the following groups, such as exchanging a few words, buying something at the store, and so on:

	Every day (1)	Often (2)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (4)	Never (5)
Latinos/Hispanics (passive_contact_latinos)	○	○	○	○	○
People born in another country (passive_contact_fb)	○	○	○	○	○
Blacks/African Americans (passive_contact_blacks)	○	○	○	○	○
White people (passive_contact_whites)	○	○	○	○	○
Republicans (passive_contact_reps)	○	○	○	○	○
Democrats (passive_contact_dems)	○	○	○	○	○
Asian Americans (passive_contact_aapi)	○	○	○	○	○

In the last six months, have you shared a meal with someone from the following groups?

	Yes (1)	No (2)
Latinos/Hispanics (contact_latinos)	○	○
People born in another country (contact_fb)	○	○
Blacks/African Americans (contact_blacks)	○	○
White people (contact_whites)	○	○
Republicans (contact_reps)	○	○
Democrats (contact_dems)	○	○
Asian Americans (contact_aapi)	○	○

End of Block: contact

Start of Block: self-monitoring

X→

Q86 Below are some statements about your interactions with others. Please indicate how frequently you engage in these activities:

	Always (1)	Most of the time (2)	Some of the time (3)	Once in a while (4)	Never (5)
When you are with other people, how often do you put on a show to impress or entertain them? (sm1)	○	○	○	○	○
When you are in a group of people, how often are you the center of attention? (sm2)	○	○	○	○	○

X→

sm3 How good or poor of an actor would you be?

○ Excellent (5)

○ Good (4)

○ Fair (3)

○ Poor (2)

○ Very poor (1)

End of Block: self-monitoring

Start of Block: group fav

Q92 How favorable do you feel toward the following groups.

	Very favorable (4)	Favorable (3)	Somewhat favorable (2)	Neutral (1)	Somewhat unfavorable (5)	Unfavorable (6)	Very unfavorable (7)
Republicans (group_affect_repub)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Democrats (group_affect_dem)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Legal immigrants (group_affect_legal imm)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Illegal immigrants (group_affect_illegal_imm)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Poor people (group_affect_poor)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The police (group_affect_police)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
White Americans (group_affect_whites)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Latino/Hispanic Americans (group_affect_latinos)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Black/African Americans (group_affect_blacks)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Asian Americans (group_affect_asians)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Display This Question:

If Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, an independent, or someth... = Republican

Or Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, an independent, or someth... = Democrat

X→

Q93 How important is being a ${pid3/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} to you?

○ Extremely important (4)

○ Very important (3)

○ Not very important (2)

○ Not at all important (1)

Display This Question:

If Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, an independent, or someth... = Republican

Or Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, an independent, or someth... = Democrat

X→

Q97 How well does the term ${pid3/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} describe you?

○ Extremely well (4)

○ Very well (3)

○ Not very well (5)

○ Not at all (1)

X→

Q98 When talking about ${pid3/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}, how often do you use "we" instead of "they"?

○ Most of the time (4)

○ Some of the time (3)

○ Rarely (5)

○ Never (1)

X→

Q101 To what extent do you think of yourself as a ${pid3/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}?

○ A great deal (4)

○ Somewhat (3)

○ Very little (5)

○ Not at all (1)

End of Block: Identity strength

Start of Block: meritocracy

merit1 Please choose the statement that comes closer to your own views---even if neither is exactly right:

○ Most people who want to get ahead can make it if they're willing to work hard (1)

○ Hard work and determination are no guarantee of success for most people (2)

Page Break

merit_grid Please tell us the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree (1)	Somewhat agree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
Anyone can get rich in America if they are willing to work hard and take risks (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Many poor and economically struggling Americans have jobs and work hard but their jobs do not pay them enough to survive (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I live in an area where there are visible signs of economic inequality---some people are well off but others are economically struggling (5)	○	○	○	○	○

Page Break

Q85 And how about:

"We should raise taxes on households making more than $1,000,000 per year"

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Somewhat agree (2)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

○ Somewhat disagree (4)

○ Strongly disagree (5)

End of Block: meritocracy

Start of Block: Video Check

sound_check For this survey, we need to make sure your video and audio are working to proceed. On the next page, we have a very short video clip as a test. Make sure your volume is turned on and you can see the video. We'll ask you a question about the content that you need to answer correctly to proceed.

Page Break

✳

Q60
 Please select the image and sound you see and hear from the video above. Please note that you cannot proceed until you answer this correctly.

	Cow (1)	Duck (2)	Cat (3)	Dog (4)	Human (5)
Image (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Sound (2)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Video Check

Q60 In a moment, you will be shown a short video clip (under 1 minute in length). Please pay close attention when you watch it, as you'll be asked detailed questions about it shortly afterward.

Page Break ───

wagner_intro Yesterday, John Wagner, co-chairman of the Republican National Committee (RNC), spoke at a meeting of Republican Party officials and volunteers. Click the video on the next page to listen to a clip of these remarks.

Page Break ───

treat_wagner_plus

[✳]

Q76 Type the code provided in the video to proceed.

_____

Q276 In a moment, you will be shown a short video clip (under 1 minute in length). Please pay close attention when you watch it, as you'll be asked detailed questions about it shortly afterward.

Page Break ───

Q277 Yesterday, John Wagner, co-chairman of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), spoke at a meeting of Democratic Party officials and volunteers. Click the video on the next page to listen to a clip of these remarks.

Page Break ───

Q278

Q279 Type the code provided in the video to proceed.

_____

Q61 In a moment, you will be shown a short video clip (under 1 minute in length). Please pay close attention when you watch it, as you'll be asked detailed questions about it shortly afterward.

Page Break ───

wagner_min_intro Yesterday, John Wagner, co-chairman of the Republican National Committee (RNC), spoke at a meeting of Republican Party officials and volunteers. Click the video on the next page to listen to a clip of these remarks.

Page Break ───

wagner_minus

code_wagner_2 Type the code provided in the video to proceed.

_____

Q281 In a moment, you will be shown a short video clip (under 1 minute in length). Please pay close attention when you watch it, as you'll be asked detailed questions about it shortly afterward.

Page Break ———————————————————————————————

Q282 Yesterday, John Wagner, co-chairman of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), spoke at a meeting of Democratic Party officials and volunteers. Click the video on the next page to listen to a clip of these remarks.

Page Break ———————————————————————————————

Q283

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[*] [⤬]

Q284 Type the code provided in the video to proceed.

_____

Q63 In a moment, you will be shown a short video clip (under 1 minute in length). Please pay close attention when you watch it, as you'll be asked detailed questions about it shortly afterward.

Page Break ———————————————————————————————

Q204 Yesterday, television and radio personality Sean Hannity, spoke at a meeting of Republican Party officials and volunteers, and urged them to rethink the way the Party approaches immigration policy. Click the video on the next page to listen to a clip of these remarks.

Page Break ———————————————————————————————

Q205

---

[*] [⤨]

code_hannity Type the code provided in the video to proceed.

_____

---

timer5 Timing
First Click (1)
Last Click (2)
Page Submit (3)
Click Count (4)

control On the next page you'll answer some questions about your attitudes about different government policies.

[⤨]

policies Please indicate how strongly you support the following policies:

	Strongly support (1)	Support (2)	Somewhat support (3)	Neither support nor oppose (4)	Somewhat oppose (5)	Oppose (6)	Strongly oppose (7)
Increasing deportations of immigrants currently in the country illegally (policy_deport)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Establishing a way for illegal immigrants to apply for legal status if they pay a fine, any back taxes, and pass a security check (policy_amnesty)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Make it illegal for state governments to conduct government business in any language other than English (policy_english_only)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Establishing a Hispanic Heritage Month celebrating the contributions of Latinos to American culture (policy_heritage)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Fund job training programs for refugees and other immigrant groups (policy_job_training)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Grant access to public benefit programs (Medicaid, Food Stamps, etc.) to all immigrants with green cards (legal permanent residents) (policy_benefits)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Address climate change by investing government money in green jobs and energy infrastructure (policy_climate)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Increase trade tariffs on goods manufactured in other countries and imported to the United States (policy_tariffs)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

imm_attitudes How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (8)	Disagree (9)	Strongly disagree (10)
Most immigrants coming to the U.S. are doing enough to adapt to the American way of life (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Immigrants today strengthen the country because of their hard work and talents (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Immigrants are a burden on our economy (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Immigrants increase the risk of terrorist attacks in the United States (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Immigrant Attitudes

message_congress Below is a message that a non-profit group is sending to members of Congress. Please click below if you'd like us to send the message to your members of Congress (based on the zipcode provided to us by our survey vendor) on your behalf: "As your constituent, I am writing today to urge you to support comprehensive immigration reform legislation that secures our borders, brings immigrants with desirable skills to the United States, and provides illegal immigrants who pass background checks with a pathway to citizenship. It is imperative that Congress acts to fix the broken immigration system this year."

○ Yes, please send on my behalf and add my name (you can enter at the end of the survey) (6)

○ Yes, please send on my behalf and list my zipcode (7)

○ Yes, please send on my behalf anonymously (9)

○ No, please do not send on my behalf (10)

Display This Question:

If On the next page you'll answer some questions about your attitudes about different government pol... Is Displayed

manip_check Thinking back to the video you just watched. What was the political affiliation of the speaker

○ Unaffiliated (1)

○ Republican (2)

○ Democrat (3)

○ Something else (4)

○ I didn't see a video with a speaker (5)

rino_effect Did the video you just watched make you feel more favorable toward the speaker in the video, less favorable toward the speaker, or did it have no effect on how you feel about the speaker?

○ Much more favorable (4)

○ Somewhat more favorable (5)

○ No difference (8)

○ Somewhat less favorable (9)

○ Much less favorable (6)

○ I didn't see a video with a speaker (7)

---

n_surveys Please indicate how many online surveys you have completed in the last month:

○ 1 to 5 (1)

○ 6 to 10 (2)

○ 11 to 20 (3)

○ 21 to 30 (4)

○ More than 30 (5)

End of Block: RINO

Start of Block: End

debrief Thank you for your participation in our research study.   We would like to discuss with you in more detail the study you just participated in and to explain exactly what we were trying to study.   Before we tell you about all the goals of this study, however, we want to explain why it is necessary in some kinds of studies to not tell people all about the

purpose or the procedures of the study before they begin.   As you may know, scientific methods sometimes require that participants in research studies not be given complete information about the research until after the study is completed. Although we cannot always tell you everything before you begin your participation, we do want to tell you everything when the study is completed.   In this survey, we are studying how elite opinion leaders can influence the immigration attitudes of citizens. In this study you may have heard radio clips of an opinion leader expressing their views on immigration. This radio clip, however, was fictional. Further, we will not actually be sending letters to your members of Congress. We simply wanted to measure your intention to have us do so.
If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to leave them for us in the box on the next page.   Thank you again for your participation.

Page Break

open_feedback Please feel free to leave any feedback.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: End

Appendix D: Results

Table D1. Main Results

DV	Respondents	Treatment	ATE	Std.Error	P.Value	Conf.Low	Conf.High
Policy Attitudes	Republicans	Intercept	0.478	0.008	0	0.462	0.495
		Wagner D-	0.002	0.012	0.85	-0.022	0.026
		Wagner D+	-0.01	0.012	0.398	-0.034	0.013
		Wagner R-	-0.017	0.012	0.166	-0.041	0.007
		Wagner R+	-0.038	0.012	0.002	-0.061	-0.014
	Democrats	Intercept	0.296	0.007	0	0.282	0.31
		Wagner D-	-0.009	0.01	0.385	-0.029	0.011
		Wagner D+	-0.004	0.01	0.687	-0.024	0.016
		Wagner R-	-0.012	0.01	0.264	-0.032	0.009
		Wagner R+	-0.008	0.01	0.439	-0.028	0.012
	Independents	Intercept	0.402	0.01	0	0.383	0.421
		Wagner D-	-0.023	0.014	0.086	-0.05	0.003
		Wagner D+	-0.023	0.014	0.106	-0.052	0.005
		Wagner R-	-0.016	0.015	0.264	-0.045	0.012
		Wagner R+	-0.017	0.014	0.245	-0.045	0.012

DV	Respondents	Treatment	ATE	Std.Error	P.Value	Conf.Low	Conf.High
Immigration Attitudes	Republicans	Intercept	0.516	0.008	0	0.501	0.531
		Wagner D-	0.01	0.011	0.396	-0.013	0.032
		Wagner D+	0.007	0.011	0.541	-0.015	0.029
		Wagner R-	-0.006	0.012	0.586	-0.029	0.017
		Wagner R+	-0.01	0.011	0.358	-0.032	0.012
	Democrats	Intercept	0.308	0.008	0	0.292	0.324
		Wagner D-	-0.01	0.011	0.366	-0.032	0.012
		Wagner D+	0.008	0.012	0.513	-0.015	0.03
		Wagner R-	-0.005	0.012	0.665	-0.029	0.018
		Wagner R+	0.005	0.012	0.659	-0.018	0.029
	Independents	Intercept	0.41	0.01	0	0.39	0.43
		Wagner D-	0	0.014	0.979	-0.028	0.027
		Wagner D+	-0.007	0.015	0.666	-0.036	0.023
		Wagner R-	-0.012	0.015	0.43	-0.042	0.018
		Wagner R+	-0.015	0.015	0.33	-0.044	0.015

Note: Treatment effects derived from ordinary least squares regression with heteroskedastic-robust standard errors.

Table D2. Main Results with Controls

DV	Respondents	Treatment	Coef	Std.Error	P.Value	Conf.Low	Conf.High
Policy Attitudes	Republicans	Intercept	0.145	0.022	0	0.101	0.189
		Wagner D-	-0.001	0.01	0.942	-0.02	0.019
		Wagner D+	-0.008	0.009	0.411	-0.026	0.011
		Wagner R-	-0.022	0.01	0.031	-0.042	-0.002
		Wagner R+	-0.033	0.01	0.001	-0.053	-0.014
	Democrats	Intercept	0.105	0.019	0	0.067	0.143
		Wagner D-	-0.008	0.009	0.355	-0.025	0.009
		Wagner D+	-0.002	0.009	0.851	-0.018	0.015
		Wagner R-	-0.01	0.009	0.238	-0.027	0.007
		Wagner R+	-0.02	0.008	0.021	-0.036	-0.003
	Independents	Intercept	0.012	0.021	0.556	-0.028	0.053
		Wagner D-	-0.019	0.011	0.1	-0.041	0.004
		Wagner D+	-0.016	0.012	0.188	-0.039	0.008
		Wagner R-	-0.009	0.012	0.43	-0.032	0.014
		Wagner R+	-0.013	0.012	0.27	-0.037	0.01

DV	Respondents	Treatment	Coef	Std.Error	P.Value	Conf.Low	Conf.High
Policy Attitudes	Republicans	Intercept	0.18	0.02	0	0.141	0.219
		Wagner D-	-0.002	0.01	0.873	-0.021	0.018
		Wagner D+	-0.008	0.01	0.397	-0.027	0.011
		Wagner R-	-0.023	0.01	0.027	-0.043	-0.003
		Wagner R+	-0.035	0.01	0	-0.054	-0.016
	Democrats	Intercept	0.111	0.018	0	0.077	0.146
		Wagner D-	-0.008	0.009	0.331	-0.025	0.009
		Wagner D+	-0.002	0.009	0.846	-0.018	0.015
		Wagner R-	-0.01	0.009	0.235	-0.027	0.007
		Wagner R+	-0.02	0.008	0.021	-0.036	-0.003
	Independents	Intercept	0.017	0.017	0.319	-0.016	0.05
		Wagner D-	-0.018	0.011	0.101	-0.041	0.004
		Wagner D+	-0.015	0.012	0.196	-0.039	0.008
		Wagner R-	-0.009	0.012	0.438	-0.032	0.014
		Wagner R+	-0.013	0.012	0.279	-0.037	0.011

Note: Treatment effects derived from ordinary least squares regression with heteroskedastic-robust standard errors. Pre-registered controls (top table) include strength of partisan identity, immigrant affect, income, race (white=1), education (college=1), ideology, and age. Control variables chosen via double-lasso selection (doubleLassoSelect in R) include strength of partisan identity, immigration affect, education (college), ideology, and age presented in second table.

Table D3. Main Results Disaggregated

DV	Treatment	Coef	Std.Error	P.Value	Conf.Low	Conf.High
Deportation	Intercept	5.431	0.067	0	5.3	5.561
	Wagner D-	0.091	0.093	0.33	-0.092	0.274
	Wagner D+	0.137	0.091	0.132	-0.041	0.316
	Wagner R-	-0.033	0.098	0.738	-0.226	0.16
	Wagner R+	0.031	0.095	0.744	-0.156	0.218
Amnesty	Intercept	3.146	0.074	0	3	3.291
	Wagner D-	-0.054	0.106	0.611	-0.262	0.154
	Wagner D+	-0.042	0.107	0.698	-0.251	0.168
	Wagner R-	-0.12	0.107	0.259	-0.33	0.089
	Wagner R+	-0.228	0.107	0.033	-0.438	-0.019
Heritage Month	Intercept	3.653	0.074	0	3.507	3.798
	Wagner D-	-0.007	0.109	0.946	-0.222	0.207
	Wagner D+	-0.074	0.108	0.495	-0.285	0.138
	Wagner R-	-0.095	0.108	0.377	-0.307	0.116
	Wagner R+	-0.286	0.11	0.009	-0.501	-0.07
Job Training	Intercept	3.616	0.076	0	3.467	3.766
	Wagner D-	-0.074	0.108	0.494	-0.287	0.138
	Wagner D+	-0.207	0.106	0.052	-0.415	0.001
	Wagner R-	-0.072	0.11	0.511	-0.289	0.144
	Wagner R+	-0.322	0.111	0.004	-0.54	-0.104
Welfare Benefits	Intercept	3.503	0.08	0	3.347	3.66
	Wagner D-	0.114	0.119	0.339	-0.119	0.347
	Wagner D+	-0.12	0.116	0.301	-0.347	0.107
	Wagner R-	-0.19	0.117	0.107	-0.42	0.041
	Wagner R+	-0.326	0.116	0.005	-0.554	-0.098

Note: Treatment effects derived from ordinary least squares regression with heteroskedastic-robust standard errors with no controls. Republican respondents only. All outcomes range from 1 to 7.

DV	Treatment	Coef	Std.Error	P.Value	Conf.Low	Conf.High
Assimilation	Intercept	3.628	0.073	0	3.485	3.772
	Wagner D-	0.141	0.109	0.196	-0.073	0.354
	Wagner D+	0.001	0.107	0.993	-0.209	0.211
	Wagner R-	0.083	0.106	0.435	-0.125	0.291
	Wagner R+	-0.1	0.109	0.356	-0.313	0.113
Strengthen U.S.	Intercept	3.354	0.068	0	3.222	3.487
	Wagner D-	-0.007	0.099	0.943	-0.202	0.188

	Wagner D+	-0.058	0.097	0.551	-0.249	0.133
	Wagner R-	-0.031	0.101	0.763	-0.229	0.168
	Wagner R+	-0.219	0.099	0.027	-0.413	-0.025
Economic Burden	Intercept	4.644	0.067	0	4.512	4.776
	Wagner D-	0.078	0.099	0.429	-0.116	0.272
	Wagner D+	0.157	0.096	0.102	-0.031	0.344
	Wagner R-	-0.046	0.101	0.652	-0.244	0.153
	Wagner R+	0.033	0.102	0.744	-0.167	0.233
Terrorism	Intercept	4.766	0.068	0	4.633	4.898
	Wagner D-	0.019	0.1	0.852	-0.177	0.214
	Wagner D+	0.065	0.098	0.507	-0.127	0.257
	Wagner R-	-0.159	0.102	0.117	-0.359	0.04
	Wagner R+	0.041	0.101	0.687	-0.158	0.24

Note: Treatment effects derived from ordinary least squares regression with heteroskedastic-robust standard errors with no controls. Republican respondents only. All outcomes range from 1 to 7.

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