

Explaining Students' Attitudes towards Undocumented Latin American Immigrants in USA

By

Clemente Quinones

Assistant Professor of Political Science

Georgia Gwinnett College

cquinone@ggc.edu

678-777-1265

Abstract: The purpose of this research study is to introduce a novel model explaining college students' attitudes toward undocumented Latin American immigrants in the US. For this purpose, the author surveyed a representative sample of 225 Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC) students in the state of Georgia in USA. The outcome variable is "GGC students' opinion on undocumented Latin American immigrants' contribution to improve or degrade the US culture." The assumption is that the input variables of the model: social structure, group threat, self-interest, and cultural identity affect college students' attitudes towards undocumented Latin American immigrants in the US. Results reveal that the expected probability of a student being anti-immigrant has higher probabilities (18.32%), as compared to a student having pro-immigrant attitudes (1.5%) of indicating that the Latin American immigrants contribute to degrading the US culture.

Key words: Student attitudes, undocumented immigrants, Latin American, social structure, cultural identity, group threat,

Introduction

Immigration has become the defining political issue of our time due to a massive international migration that continues rising year upon year (only stopped by the world pandemic) largely from poor to rich countries. The Syrian Arab Spring of 2011 caused about 7 million refugees, most of them staying in neighboring countries, but a large number of them reached Europe, being Germany the country hosting more than half a million Syrian refugees (Bierbach 2019). During the second half of 2018, we observed gigantic caravans of Central American migrants crossing several Central American countries and staying in Mexico temporarily, waiting for the opportunity to cross the US-Mexico border to get to the United States. Exacerbated by a global refugee crisis, the international migrant wave provoked a rise in anti-immigrant sentiment in mainstream politics all around the world, including the surge or resurgence of anti-immigrant political parties and influential individual politicians (Calamur 2019, Schultheis 2019). In USA, the anti-immigrant wave reinvigorated after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. At state level, for example, Georgia, Alabama, and Arizona implemented the nation's toughest immigration measures. The election of Donald Trump crowned this anti-immigrant wave. Happily, this tendency in the US did not contaminate the common people: according to the National Immigration Forum (NIF), "a majority (60 percent) said that, in general, the growing number of newcomers coming from other countries strengthen American society" (NIF 2019). Based on this, we could expect that USA students may also welcome the un/documented immigrants.

The purpose of this article is to introduce an inferential model to explain college students' attitudes toward undocumented Latin American immigrants in the U.S. For this goal, the author selected Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC) student population as a lab and conducted a survey research project. Using the cluster sampling method, a probability sample of 225 students was

drawn. From the corresponding questionnaire, the outcome variable was “*the college students’ opinion on undocumented Latin American immigrants’ contribution to improve or degrade the US culture,*” whose response options are 0 - *Contribute to improve the United States culture* and 1- *Contribute to degrade the United States culture*. The general assumption is that the independent variables in the model: *social structure, group threat, self-interest,* and *cultural identity* affect the college students’ attitudes towards undocumented Latin American immigrants in the US. The methodology section introduces the specific hypotheses and questions tapping such hypotheses.

There is abundant literature on people’s attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policies. However, studies covering *students’ attitudes* toward undocumented immigrants are scarce. This study tries to fill in this gap by introducing the above mentioned model. Although most commonly cited as influencing Americans’ attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policies (García and Davison 2013), these variables have rarely used, as a set, to explain college students’ attitudes towards un/documented immigrants. The theoretical framework, as a set of theoretical approaches, justifying the use of these variables is also novel. Finally, another novelty of the present study is the possibility of applying the model to other student settings, e.g., student population of nations, one at a time or several (a region) in a comparative perspective.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Blau’s Social Structure Theory

“Spencer (1882) and Durkheim (1933) compared society to a living organism which has tissue and organs that are interrelated and function together in order to sustain the life of the organism” (Sobczak 2010, 4). Then, in his influential study, *Inequality and Heterogeneity: A Primitive Theory of Social Structure*, Peter M. Blau, defines social structure as the interrelated

tissues and organs that Spencer and Durkheim refer to (Sobczak 2010). Specifically, for Blau, these interrelated parts are groups or classes of people; then, the interrelationships among the groups (parts) are the social relations of people in different groups (Sobczak 2010, 4). In sum, for Blau, social structure refers to “population distribution among social positions along various lines-positions that reflect and affect people’s role relations and social associations” (Blau, 1977. Cited in Sobczak 2010, 4).

Thus, people occupy different social positions in Blau’s theory of social structure. This is so because people are part of different groups or because they differ in hierarchical status (Sobczak 2010, 17). This social structure consists of three forms of social differentiation: heterogeneity, inequality, and correlation between the two. *Heterogeneity* refers to people’s distribution among different groups without specific any rank, e.g., city/s racial diversity (Sobczak 2010, 4). *Inequality* refers to unevenness in the distribution of resources or status (e.g., unequal distribution of wealth). The correlation between heterogeneity and inequality is an intersection between heterogeneity and inequality. For example, it could be high unemployment among Latinos or Blacks. Here, the assumption is that these three forms of differentiation have an impact on people’s (students’ in particular) attitudes towards immigrants and immigration policy.

Group Threat - Race Prejudice Theory

According to Blumer (1958), the theory of race prejudice is “fundamentally a matter of relationship between racial groups” (Blumer 1958, 3). In this sense, race prejudice is a matter of a sense of group position, rather than a set of possible feelings that members of one racial group may have toward the members of another racial group. Such feelings include antipathy, hostility, hate, intolerance, and aggressiveness, lodged in the individual (Blumer 1958, 3). There is no doubt that some of these feelings, if not all of them, are present in the supremacist, anti-immigrant

sentiments epitomized in President Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric and in the actions of different supremacist groups. Nevertheless, as Blumer (1958) argues, race prejudice goes far beyond this individually lodged concept. According to him, race prejudice is "a fear or apprehension that the subordinate racial group is threatening, or will threaten, the position of the dominant group" (Blumer 1958, 4). Other feelings that are present in Blumer's theory of "race prejudice" are a feeling of superiority, a feeling that the subordinate race is intrinsically different and alien, and a feeling of property claim to certain areas of privilege and advantage. The feeling of superiority places the sub-ordinate people below; the feeling of alienation places them beyond; the feeling of proprietary claim excludes them from the prerogatives of position (Blumer 1958, 3-4). Then, according to Blumer, "acts or suspected acts that are interpreted as an attack on the natural superiority of the dominant group, or an intrusion into their sphere of group exclusiveness, or an encroachment on their area of proprietary claim are crucial in arousing and fashioning race prejudice" (Blumer 1958, 4). Thus, in this concept of race prejudice, "the dominant group is not concerned with the sub-ordinate group as such, but it is deeply concerned with its position vis-a-vis the subordinate group" (Blumer 1958, 4). Threat to group position takes two distinct forms: "realistic group threat" and "perceived group threat" (Sobczak 2010, 29-30). The former includes "real threat to the resources and accepted practices of the in-group not just irrational *perceived threats*, including a struggle for power, values, status, and other scarce resources" (Sobczak 2010, 30). The perceived threat takes the following forms: first, in-group members feel that their prerogatives are threatened by a size increase of the out-group. Second, members of the in-group feel that precarious economic conditions of the nation are an invitation (threat) for the out-group to take advantages of the scarce economic resources that members of the in-group count on. Finally, the more members of the in-group feel threatened, the stronger their association around

common characteristics and prejudice (Sobczak 2010, 31). The assumption here is that the more the students perceive the immigrants as a threat, the more negative their views toward immigrants and immigration issues will be.

In his influential and seminal study, *The Nature of Prejudice*, Allport (1954) argues that prejudice and conflict between groups can be reduced if members of the groups interact with each other. Then, this scholar defines prejudice as the “thinking ill of others without sufficient warrant” (Allport 1954, 5). Connected to Allport’s conception of prejudice is Berg’s (2009) argument that as the number of racial or ethnic minority group increases, it is likely that the attitudes of the dominant group toward immigrants become favorable, because the members of the in-group may have more opportunities to interact with the members of the out-group (immigrants). Then, in his empirical research study, Hackett (2016) actually found that there is a relationship between a higher population of undocumented immigrants and a higher tolerance for undocumented immigrants. Hackett concludes, “This test is compelling for the proponents of the contact hypothesis, as it shows that a higher potential for interaction with immigration populations may also indicate a potential for higher levels of acceptance or positive feelings toward undocumented immigrants” (Hackett 2016, 31). In line with Hackett’s (2016) findings, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006), reviewing the results of over 500 previous studies (with approximately 250,000 research participants), found support for the contact hypothesis. Recently, Waytz (2019), elaborating on the contact theory, suggests that a new variable, power dynamics, might complicate contact atmosphere inter groups, and the reconciling efforts inter groups that are in conflict could need us to consider whether there is a power imbalance between the groups. Waytz (2019) suggests that in situations where there is a power imbalance, the powerful group (in-group) may develop the tendency to practice empathy and to see things from the less powerful group’s perspective.

However, it could also be the other way around, that is, the powerful group may develop the tendency to reject the less powerful group for considering it a threat to the powerful group's empowerment (Stephan, et al. 1998). Prior to Waytz's (2019) study, other scholars had concluded that a specific type of contact, friendship, between the groups, produces favorable attitudes toward immigrants (Ellison, Shin and Leal 2011).

Cultural Identity-related Theory

In line with Blumer's (1958) concept of "group threat - race prejudice," Huntington (1997, 2005) promoted the idea that immigrants represent a threat to the American cultural identity. He specifically described civilizations as the broadest and most crucial level of identity, encompassing religion, values, culture and history. In the post-Cold War environment, the question for him was "who are you?" Rather than "which side are you on?" (Lozada 2017). That the out-group (immigrants) is a threat to the in-group's (essentially, the White-Anglo group) is especially true for the Americans who take an ethno-cultural view of national identity, this is to say, those for whom to be American is to be born in the U.S., to be Christian, to be White, and to live in the U.S. (Schildkraut 2007, 602). Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) actually found that this cultural - national identity is more reliable predictors of people's attitudes toward immigrants than other factors. For example, immigrants who do not speak the language or are not expected to fit well in the native culture have more influence in the formation of Americans' negative attitudes toward immigrants than economic cues do. In other words, people who oppose immigration seem to fear that the immigrants will change the group's identity, cultural unity (Sides and Citrin 2007, 477), Americaness (García and Davison 2013), or Attribute-Based Judgement (Wright, Levy and Citrin 2016, 232). Attribute-based Judgement includes the country's distinctive identity and culture, or

“speaking English, holding American values, feeling American, getting ahead on one’s own,” that is, Americaness (Wright, Levy and Citrin 2016, 232).

After September 11 attacks, an anti-Latino sentiment was added to the acculturation fear argument as explanation of immigration restrictionist attitudes (Branton, et al. 2011). In this context, the author wants to see if the GGC students’ attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policies are affected by acculturation fear / anti-American identity and cultural unity, as well as an anti-Latino sentiment.

In cultural affairs, nationalism plays an important role. As ideology, nationalism is a movement that promotes the interests of a particular nation, mostly regarding its sovereignty, encourages pride in national achievements, and stresses the feeling of belonging (Andrews and Saward 2013 , 16-22). Under this conception, individual’s loyalty and devotion to the nation-state must surpass other individual or group interests. However, nationalism is just a part of a coherent belief system that all Americans hold, which includes economic liberalism, civil liberties and civil rights (liberal democracy), individualism, and voluntarism. In this regard, García and Davison (2013) argue that what *it means to be an American* includes this set of shared principles. Under this conception, then, an American who is nationalist feels proud of being ‘American,’ ‘holds the principles of the economic liberalism, individualism, and voluntarism, in addition to support civil liberties and civil rights. These values are part of the cultural identity to which Huntington refers. In line with García-Davison’s argument are Byrne’s (2011) findings that those who hold moderate levels of liberal conceptions of American national identity are likely to express neutral-to-positive attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policies. Other scholars, using single scale (Citrin, Reingold and Green 1990), dual framework of ethnic versus civic identity (Citrin, Wong and Duff 2001), and multidimensional conception of American national identity (Schildkraut 2005, 2007)

to measure levels of American national liberal identity, got to similar conclusions to those of Byrne (2011). If residents (members of the in-group) perceive that immigrants represent a threat to this cultural identity system, they (residents) will have anti-immigrant attitudes and will support immigration restrictions policies. Once again, given the anti-immigrant rhetoric in the national mainstream politics and the anti-immigrant policy measures in the State of Georgia, chances are that GGC students perceive that immigrants, particularly from Latin America, represent a threat to this cultural value system and so they may hold anti-immigrant attitudes and support more restricted immigration policies. This study attempts to elucidate this problem by proposing the ordinal logistic regression model whose formulation is presented in the methodology section.

Costs of Immigration

The “theory of costs of immigration” as an explanation of peoples’ attitudes toward immigrants is very limited, because the perceived threat to the socio-economic self-interest (the cost) of the native population posed by immigrant may be only part of a wider sense of collective threat to social and cultural institutions (Blalock 1967, L. D. Bobo 1983). Immigrants in USA are from different racial and ethnic groups than the native population and have different religious backgrounds. Specifically, most immigrants (the out-group) in USA are Latinos, while members of the in-group are White-Anglos. Catholicism, which is the religion of the dominant group of immigrants in USA, is different from the religion, so-called “Christian,” of the in-group (White Anglos). In addition, immigrants in the U.S. have a different cultural background than the members of the in-group (mostly White Anglos). These cultural differences include family relations, feasts, food, neighborhood relationships, language, ideology, etc. Inflows of these immigrant groups with different ethnicity, religion and culture may be perceived as undermining existing institutions and threatening the American way of life and socio-economic status of members of the in-group (White-Anglos). In sum, members of the in-group may perceive the cost of immigration as a threat

to the American way of life and/or part of the American identity, rather than a threat to their economic self-interests. This study tries to explain students' attitude in this regard.

Self-interest Theory

Some scholars argue that the in-group opposition to immigration is due to an ethnic competition over scarce resources (Sides and Citrin 2007). In this sense, immigrants are seen as threat they pose to the residents' material well-being or self-interest (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014). On the same line, Hainmueller and Hiscox (2007) maintain, "workers with lower skill levels (measured by years of education and wages) are more likely to oppose immigration. [Then, they add], natives with higher skills are actually more supportive of all types of immigration" (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007, 5). Supporting Hainmueller-Hopkins and Hainmueller-Hiscox's argument is Kluegel and Smith's (1986) assertion that individual-level vulnerability and individual "best interests" shape people's intergroup beliefs, and attitudes (cited in Sobczak 2010, 41). Part of this theory is also the belief that immigrants include criminals who potentially are a threat to both the public "order" and the financial status (money spent on dealing with criminality). In the political discourse, material costs are also related to schools and welfare program funds that immigrant inflows may affect (Sides and Citrin 2007, 478). In Fetzer's (2000) work, the *scarce resources—material well-being—economic self-interest* feature of the theory takes the form of marginality (especially cultural forms) and personal contact (both individual-level and aggregate). Based on this theory, this research study tries to see the extent to which this self-interest theory explain the *College* student population's attitudes towards undocumented Latin American immigrants.

Student's Immigration Attitudes

Some of the few studies that focus on students' attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policies have found that "undergraduate students in general have an undecided attitude concerning issues toward undocumented immigration in the U.S." (Qu, Bletscher and Lamm 2018, 124). In contrast, Patricia Cristina Perdomo (2011) found that the majority of students in Texas do not think that immigration increases crime, and that they do not agree that undocumented immigrants should not have the opportunity to become USA citizens. The problem of this study is that its findings cannot be generalized to the Texas state student population, not even to Texas State University student population. This is the reason: first, the subjects responded the questionnaire online, but Perdomo does not explain how the sample was a probability sample. Second, the inclusion of non-parametric statistics only leaves her work far away from being a model. The present study, as Perdomo's, covers college students. However, the general intention of the present study is to propose a model that explained college students' attitudes towards undocumented immigrants. Thus, generalizing to the national or even the state student population was not necessary. Nevertheless, we did need to have both theoretical and study populations, to be sure that the model indeed could be applied somewhere else.

Similar to Perdomo's (2011) study is Cowan, Martinez and Mendiola's work (1997), "Predictors of Attitudes toward Illegal Latino Immigrants." As Perdomo, Cowan and colleagues used public opinion surveys and carried out quantitative analysis. The difference is that while Perdomo pretends to generalize, improperly, to the whole Texas college student population, Cowan and colleagues make it clear that their work focused on people's attitudes toward illegal immigrants in the state of California only, departing from the well-publicized beatings of two illegal immigrants by sheriff's deputies in California. The major problem with Cowan and colleagues' study is that, although they do point out the fact that other authors have used the

variables that Cowan and colleagues use, there is no clear and theoretical framework guiding their study. The present study pretends to fill in this gap by including both a solid theoretical framework of analysis and the citation of different scholars who have tried the variables that in this study's model tap the theoretical structure.

Methodology

As we already saw in the 'Introduction' section, the main purpose of this study is to introduce an inferential model explaining college students' attitudes toward undocumented immigrants. To apply the model, the author conducted a public opinion survey research to the GGC student population. From this population, and using the cluster sampling method, the author selected a probability sample of 255 students in the spring 2019. The margin of error was ± 6.07 (see appendixes 1 and 2). The response rate was 100%. Based on the theoretical framework, the novel model includes variables tapping social structure, group threat - race prejudice, threat to national identity, self-interest, costs of immigration, cultural identity-related theory, and preference for Europeans over Latino immigrants. The assumption is that these variables have something to do with the GGC students' attitudes toward undocumented Latino immigrants. To tap this variable, the author used the following question: "*Which comes closer to your point of view? The question has to responses: 0 - the undocumented immigrants from Latin American countries contribute to improve the United States culture, and 1- the undocumented immigrants from Latin American countries contribute to degrade the US culture?*" Table 1 below presents the questions tapping the other factors.

Table 1 about here

Given the dichotomous nature of our outcome variable, the binomial logistic regression is the most appropriate statistics to test the hypotheses. This regression predicts the probability that an observation falls into one of two categories of a dichotomous dependent variable based on one or more independent variables that can be either continuous or categorical. In our case, we want to understand whether ethnicity, race prejudice, threat to national identity, religiosity, and Latino identity of the immigrant affect the *GGC students' opinion on undocumented Latin American immigrants' contribution to the U.S. culture.*” The general assumption is that indeed these variables have an impact on the dependent variable. The next paragraphs present the direction of this impact.

Instead of fitting a straight line or hyperplane, the logistic regression model uses the *logistic function* to squeeze the output of a linear equation between zero and one. Then, the log of the odds (logits) can be expressed as an additive function of $\alpha + \beta X$. We may generalize this equation to include any number of explanatory variables, as presented in equation (1) below.

$$\ln [\pi / (1-\pi)] = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k \quad (1)$$

Where $\ln$ is the natural logarithm function. π is the probability of presence of the characteristics of interest or the probability of a success [π (y=1)]. β_0 is the y intercept. β_k is the first order logistic regression coefficient for the k^{th} predictor. Finally, X_k is the value of the k^{th} predictor. The logistic function transforms the log odds to express them as predicted probabilities. First, it applies the reverse of the log (called the exponential or anti-logarithm) to both sides of the equation, eliminating the log on the left hand side, so the odds can be expressed as:

$$\pi / (1-\pi) = e^{(\alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k)} \quad (2)$$

By solving for the π value, we have:

$$\pi = e^{(\alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k)} / 1 + e^{(\alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k)} = 1 / 1 + [-(\beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k)] \quad (3)$$

Where the β_s and X_s as explained above.

Specifying models (1), (2), and (3), we have:

$$\pi / (1 - \pi) = \beta_0 + \beta_1(ETHNICITY) + \beta_2(IMMAMJOBS) + \beta_3(IMMCONECO) + \beta_4(MEXBORTHREAT) + \beta_5(PERLIFEMEX) + \beta_6(IMMELAT) + \beta_7(CHURCHATT) + \beta_8(PRAY) \quad (4)$$

$$\pi / (1 - \pi) = e^{(\beta_0 + \beta_1(ETHNICITY) + \beta_2(IMMAMJOBS) + \beta_3(IMMCONECO) + \beta_4(MEXBORTHREAT) + \beta_5(PERLIFEMEX) + \beta_6(IMMELAT) + \beta_7(CHURCHATT) + \beta_8(PRAY))}$$

$$e^{(\beta_0 + \beta_1(ETHNICITY) + \beta_2(IMMAMJOBS) + \beta_3(IMMCONECO) + \beta_4(MEXBORTHREAT) + \beta_5(PERLIFEMEX) + \beta_6(IMMELAT) + \beta_7(CHURCHATT) + \beta_8(PRAY))}$$

$$\pi (y=1) = \frac{e^{(\beta_0 + \beta_1(ETHNICITY) + \beta_2(IMMAMJOBS) + \beta_3(IMMCONECO) + \beta_4(MEXBORTHREAT) + \beta_5(PERLIFEMEX) + \beta_6(IMMELAT) + \beta_7(CHURCHATT) + \beta_8(PRAY))}}{1 + e^{(\beta_0 + \beta_1(ETHNICITY) + \beta_2(IMMAMJOBS) + \beta_3(IMMCONECO) + \beta_4(MEXBORTHREAT) + \beta_5(PERLIFEMEX) + \beta_6(IMMELAT) + \beta_7(CHURCHATT) + \beta_8(PRAY))}}$$

Where π represents the probability that GGC students have the opinion that *undocumented Latin American immigrants contribute to degrade the United States culture* [$\pi (y = 1)$]. *ETHNICITY* is the ethnic variable tapping Blau's Social Structure Theory. The assumption is that as ethnicity variable goes up, e.g., from one (white) to two (Blacks), to three (Latinos), the probability for the students to indicate that the Latin American immigrants contribute to degrade the U.S. culture will decrease. This is a negative relationship. *IMMAMJOBS* stands for immigrants taking Americans' jobs. This variable measures the *group threat – race prejudice theory*; to tap it, we asked the students two questions. One was if they thought that immigrants take Americans' jobs. The hypothesis is that those GGC students who think that indeed immigrants take jobs that Americans need are less likely than those who think otherwise to say that *undocumented Latin American immigrants contribute to improve the United States culture*. The second question was if the students believe that immigrants contribute (or not) to the U.S. economy (*IMMCONECO*). The hypothesis is that the students who believe that immigrants do contribute to the U.S. economy are more probable than those who think otherwise to accept that the *undocumented Latin American*

immigrants contribute to improve the United States culture. *MEXBORTHREAT* stands for “if the situation at the USA-Mexico border represents (or does not) a threat to the USA national security.” This is one of two questions tapping the Cultural Identity-related Theory. If the students think the situation represents a threat, they are **less** likely than those who think otherwise to maintain that the *undocumented Latin American immigrants contribute to improve the United States culture.* The second question asked if the students felt (or did not feel) their own personal way of life was threatened by undocumented immigrants from Mexico (*PERLIFE_MEX*). The assumption is as follows: students believing that their personal way of life is under threat are more likely, as compared to students believing otherwise, to indicate that *undocumented Latin American immigrants contribute to degrade the United States culture.* *IMMELAT* means the students preferring immigrants from Europe over immigrants from Latin America. The author decided to include this question because of the gigantic caravans of Central American immigrants during the fall of 2018, spring of 2019, and a the last one (as of Feb. 8, 2020) at the beginning of 2020. The hypothesis, in this regard, is that the GGC students who prefer to welcome immigrants from Europe to immigrants from Latin America are more probable, as compared to those who think otherwise, to support the idea that *undocumented Latin American immigrants contribute to degrade the United States culture.* *CHURCHATT* denotes church attendance and *PRAY* stands for praying frequency (see Table 1). The inclusion of religiosity-related variables is due to conventional wisdom indicating that the more religious (pious) a person is, the more pro-immigrant that person will be. To measure religiosity, the author included the two above variables. The hypotheses are as follows: the higher the frequency of attending church and/or praying, the less likely it would be that students say that *undocumented Latin American immigrants contribute to degrade the United States culture.*

Analysis and Results

The assumption was that the variables tapping *social structure, group threat - race prejudice, threat to national identity, self-interest, costs of immigration, cultural identity-related theory, and preference for Europeans over Latino immigrants*, had something to do with the GGC students' attitudes toward undocumented Latino immigrants. To measure this latter variable, the author used the following question: "*Which comes closer to your point of view? Whose responses were: 0 - the undocumented immigrants from Latin American countries contribute to improve the United States culture, and 1- the undocumented immigrants from Latin American countries contribute to degrade the US culture?*" Table 1 below presents the questions tapping the other factors, while Figure 1 and Table 2 present the results.

Figure 1 about here

Regarding the outcome variable, Figure 1 shows that the majority (52%) of GGC students believe that the undocumented Latin American immigrants in USA *contribute to improve the US culture*. Only 19% of them indicated that the undocumented *contribute to degrade the US culture*. The logistic regression model will explain the results of Figure 1.

Table 2 about here

First, as presented in Table 2, the model introduced here does better than the null one: $X^2 = 77.984$, $p = .000 < .05$. Second, the model explains roughly 75% (Nagelkerke $R^2 = .749$) of the variation in the outcome variable and correctly classifies 93.3% of the cases (bottom of Table 2).

To measure the social structure theory, the author used the question on ethnicity presented in Table 1. For one-unit of change (increase) in ethnicity: from 0 (other) to 1 (White), the estimated log odds of falling into the category that *undocumented immigrants from Latin America contribute*

to degrade the U.S. culture decreases by 2.147. This is to say, the tendency is that White students less than “Other” students have the tendency to think that *undocumented immigrants from Latin America contribute to degrade the U.S. culture*. This result is reflected in the corresponding odds ratio value, .117. This means that a White student is about .12 times less likely, as compared to “other” student, to believe that the undocumented immigrants from Latin America contribute to degrade the US culture. Similarly, a unite change from 1 (White) to 2 (Black), the log odds of falling into the category that *undocumented immigrants from Latin America contribute to degrade the U.S. culture* decreases by 3.268. In other words, observing the odds ratio, a Black student is nearly .04 times less likely, as compared to a White student, to believe that the undocumented immigrants from Latin America contribute to degrade the US culture. The other ethnicity options were not significant.

As described earlier in this study, to measure the Group Threat - Race Prejudice Theory, the author used two questions (refer to table 1). However, only one of them was significant, questions 8 (Table 2). Specifically this question is on the students’ opinion on undocumented immigrants contributing (or not) to the USA economy. A unit increase from one to two (*immigrants contribute to the US economy* to *immigrants do not contribute to the US economy* respectively) *increases* the logged odds of those whose opinion is that *undocumented immigrants from Latin America contribute to degrade the U.S. culture* by 4.058. The odds ratio indicates that a student thinking that *immigrants do not contribute to the US economy* is about 57.86 times more likely to think that *undocumented immigrants from Latin America contribute to degrade the U.S. culture* than those who think that *immigrants do contribute to the US economy* (table 2). In sum, as the opinion on *Latin American immigrants contributing to the US economy* increases, the

opinion on Latin American immigrants contribute to improve the US culture augments, as expected.

Questions 10 and 12 measure the Cultural Identity-related Theory (Table 1). Only question 10 (about the situation in the US-Mexico) was significant (Table 2). In this regard, one-unit decrease in this variable (from “1. *It represents a threat to the USA national security*” to “2. *It does not represent a threat to the USA national security*”) increases the odds of those who fall into the category of “*undocumented immigrants from Latin America contribute to degrade the U.S. culture*” by 1.840. The odds ratio indicates that a student thinking that the situation at the border *represents a threat to the USA national security* is about .159 times less likely than the student thinking that the situation at the border *does not represent a threat to the USA national security* (Table 2) to indicate that Latin American immigrants contribute to degrade the US culture. In sum, as the tendency to think that the situation at the border is not a threat to the US security increases the tendency to think that the Latin American immigrants threaten the US culture decreases.

Finally, regarding the “Compassion - religious faith” control variables, attending church was the only significant one (Table 2). In this regard, an increase in church attendance (e.g., from never to twice a week) decreases the odds of having the opinion that *undocumented immigrants from Latin America contribute to degrade the U.S. culture* by .503. This is to say, a student indicating that s/he attends sometimes church (in general) is about .605 times less likely than a student who indicates that s/he never attends church, to say that *undocumented immigrants from Latin America contribute to degrade the U.S. culture* (Table 2). This result confirms the hypothesis that more religiosity negatively affects the opinion that Latin American immigrants contribute to degrade the US culture.

Table 3 presents the *expected probability* (depending on the independent variables) of the students thinking that the Latin American Immigrants *contribute to degrade the US culture*.

Table 3 about here

Specifically, the expected probability of *contributing to degrade the US culture* by a student having the extreme *pro*-‘*contributing to degrade the US culture*’ values on the independent variables is about 18.32 percent. In other words, such a student is predicted to have an 18.32% chance of indicating that the Latin American immigrants *contribute to degrade the US culture*. Meanwhile, the expected probability of the opinion of *contributing to degrade the US culture* by a student having the extreme *against*-‘*contributing to degrade the US culture*’ values on the independent variables is about 1.5 percent. In other words, such a student is predicted to have a 1.5% chance of indicating that the Latin American immigrants *contribute to degrade the US culture*. Thus, the probabilities that a student indicates that Latin American immigrants contribute to degrade the US culture are lower for the students having extreme values *against* the opinion that Latin American immigrants contribute to degrade the US culture than for the students having extreme values *pro* the opinion that Latin American immigrants contribute to degrade the US culture.

Concluding Remarks and Future Studies

The purpose of this research study was to introduce a model to explain college students’ attitudes towards undocumented immigrants. For goal, the author conducted a public opinion survey research, which was applied to GGC student population in Georgia. Using the cluster sampling method, a probability sample of 255 students was drawn. The dependent variable was *the undocumented immigrants from Latin America contributing to improve the United States*

culture or contributing to degrade the United States culture. The independent variables included, *social structure, group threat - race prejudice, threat to national identity, self-interest, costs of immigration, cultural identity-related theory, and preference for Europeans over Latino immigrants.* The results revealed that, the expected probability of a student being anti-immigrant have higher probabilities (18.32%) of indicating that the Latin American immigrants *contribute to degrade the US culture* than the probability (1.5%) of a student having pro-immigrants attitudes. These results confirm the hypotheses. The Novelty of this study includes the inclusion of the variables, as a set, to explain college students' attitudes towards un/documented immigrants. The theoretical framework, as a group of theoretical approaches, used here to justify the inclusion of the independent variables is also novel. Finally, this model represent the possibility of explaining sstudents' attitudes towards immigrants and immigration policies in other settings, e.g., students of one or several entire nation/s.

Appendixes

Appendix 1: Sample Size and Margin of Error

Calculating the sample size:

Formula:
$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot (p) \cdot (1-p)}{C^2}$$

Where:

Z = Z value (e.g. 1.96 for 95% confidence level)

p = percentage picking a choice, expressed as decimal (.5 used for sample size needed)

C = confidence interval, expressed as decimal (e.g., .06 = ±6).

- Confidence Level: 95 (Z = 1.96)
- Confidence Interval: 6*
- Population Size: 12,508

<https://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>

$$n = 262$$

* This number was just an approximation to get a provisional **n**. Using this number, **n = 262**. However, given the short time we had to carry out this project, the author changed the confidence interval number to get a smaller sample without losing accuracy. The real numbers were as follows:

- Confidence Level: 95 (Z = 1.96)
- **Confidence Interval: 6.07**
- Population Size: 12,508

$$n = 255$$

Computing the margin of error:

- Population Size: 12,508
- Confidence Level: 95 (z*value = 1.96)
- Sample size: 255

<https://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>

Margin of error ± 6.07

Appendix 2: Sampling Design

To collect the data, the author did the following:

- Dividing the population into clusters
- The clusters were the classes that GGC had per discipline in the Spring 2019
- Procedure:
 - Knowing the sample size: 255
 - What percentage of students per discipline?
 - Example: if political science students represented 20% of the GGC student population, 20% of the sample would come from political science POLS). This is to say, $255 \times .20 = 51.00$. Thus, we had to select 51 POLS students. Next, we determined how many POLS classes we needed to complete the 51 subjects. We started randomly selecting four classes, under the assumption that each POLS class had 20 students in average.
 - We applied the questionnaire to each class. There was one condition: if a student had already answered the questionnaire in any other class, s/he should not answer the questionnaire in that political science class.

Graphs 1 and 2 about here

If we take a comparative look at these two graphs 1 and 2, we will realize that the sample was indeed representative of the GGC student population, as percentages of women (43% vs 43.14%) and men (57% and 55.69%) are extremely similar, and within the margin of error (± 6.07).

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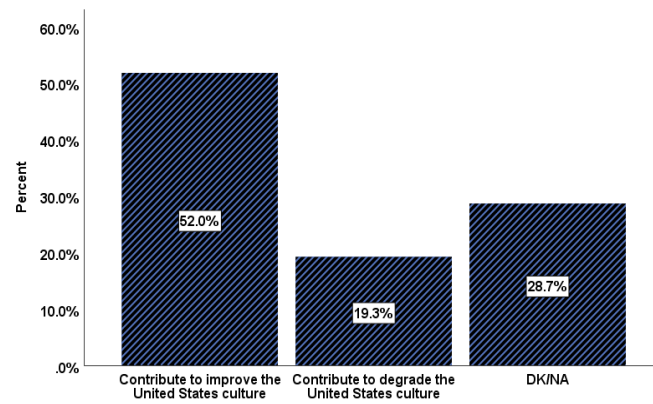
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Table 1: Questions Tapping the Variables			
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Responses</i>	<i>ID</i>
<i>Dependent Variable</i>			
Attitudes toward immigrants	Q5. Which comes closer to your point of view? The undocumented immigrants from Latin American countries contribute to improve the United States culture. Or do you think the undocumented immigrants from Latin American countries contribute to degrade the United States culture?	0 - Contribute to improve the United States culture; 1- Contribute to degrade the United States culture	Q5.IMMIPDEUSA
<i>Independent Variables</i>			
1. Blau's Social Structure Theory	Q22.ETHNICITY. To which of the following ethnic groups would you say that you belong?	1-White, non-Latino; 2. Black, non-Latino; 3. Latino; 4. Asian/Pacific Islander; 5.Alaskan Native /Native American; 6. Other	Q22.ETHNICITY
2. Group Threat Theory - Race Prejudice	Q7.IMMAMJOBS. Do you think undocumented immigrants coming to this country today take jobs away from American citizens, or do they mostly take jobs Americans do not want?	1. Take jobs away from American citizens; 2. They mostly take jobs Americans don't want	Q7.IMMAMJOBS
	Q8.IMMCONECO. In general, do you think undocumented immigrants contribute to the USA economy, or do you think they do not contribute?	1. Immigrants contribute to the USA economy; 2. Immigrants do not contribute to the USA economy	Q8.IMMCONECO
3. Cultural Identity-related Theory 3.1 Re-interpreting Blumer's Theory: <i>threat to national security</i> . A dummy for <i>threat to national identity</i>	Q10. Do you believe that the current situation at the border between the United States and Mexico:	1. It represents a threat to the USA national security? 2. it does not represent a threat to the USA national security	Q10.MEXBOR_THREAT
3.2 Liberal conceptions of American National Way of Life (part of the National Identity theory)	Q12.PERLIFE_MEX. Do you feel your own personal way of life is or is not under threat from undocumented immigrants from Mexico?	1. My personal life is under threat 2. My personal life is not under threat	Q12.PERLIFE_MEX
4. Compassion; religious faith	Q25.CHURCHATT How often do you go to church, congregation, or religious establishment?	1. Twice a week; 2. Once a week; 3. Twice a month; 4. Once a month; 5 A few times a year; 6. Other; 7. Never	Q25.CHURCHATT
	Q26.PRAY How often do you pray?	1. Once a day; 2. Twice a day; 3. Three times a day; 4 Other; 5. Never pray	Q26.PRAY
5. VS Latinos	Q4.IMMELAT In general, do you think that it is better for the USA more than immigrants from Latin American countries, or do you think the country...?	1.To welcome immigrants from European countries? 2. The country an immigrant is from shouldn't matter?	Q4.IMMELAT

Table 2: The Logistic Regression Models Explaining Students' Attitudes Towards Undocumented Immigrants		
Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	
	<i>The undocumented immigrants from Latin America contribute to improve the United States culture; or they contribute to degrade the United States culture?</i>	
	<i>B</i>	<i>Exp(B) or Odds Ratio</i>
Constant	-1.063 (5.817)	485.014
<i>Blau's Social Structure Theory</i>		
Q22.ETHNICITY		
Q22.ETHNICITY (1)	-2.147** (.951)	.117
Q22.ETHNICITY (2)	-3.268** (1.592)	.038
Q22.ETHNICITY (3)	-.892 (1.344)	.410
Q22.ETHNICITY (4)	-3.025 (2.714)	.049
<i>Group Threat– Race Prejudice Theory</i>		
Q7.IMMAMJOBS	-.903 (1.189)	.405
Q8.IMMCONECO (1)	4.058* (1.449)	57.86
<i>Cultural Identity-related Theory</i>		
Q10.MEXBORTHREAT	-1.840** (.815)	.159
Q12.PERLIFE_MEX.	-3.014 (2.866)	.049
Q4.IMMELAT (Almost significant: $p = .056$)	4.627 (2.461)	102.172
<i>Compassion - religious faith</i>		
Q25.CHURCHATT	-.503** (.212)	.605
Q26.PRAY How often do you pray?	.058 (.297)	1.060
Standard errors in Parenthesis; *Significant at $<.01$ ** $<.05$; $X^2 = 77.984$, $p = .000$; Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: $X^2 = 17.936$, $p = .02$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = .749$; Percentage Correct: 93.3		
Predicted Probability is of Membership for Contribute to degrade the United States culture. 1 - Contribute to degrade the US culture		

Table 3: Estimated Probabilities for “Contribute to Degrade the United States Culture”
$\pi(y=1) = \frac{e^{(-1.063 + (-2.147*1) + 4.058 + (-1.840*1) + (-.503))}}{1 + e^{(-1.063 + (-2.147*1) + 4.058 + (-1.840*1) + (-.503))}}$ $= \frac{e^{(-1.495)}}{1 + e^{(-1.495)}} = .22425 / 1 + .22425 = 0.18317$
$\pi(y=1) = \frac{e^{(-1.063 + (-3.268*2) + (4.058*2) + (-1.840*2) + (-.503*2))}}{1 + e^{(-1.063 + (-3.268*2) + (4.058*2) + (-1.840*2) + (-.503*2))}}$ $= \frac{e^{(-4.169)}}{1 + e^{(-4.169)}} = 0.015467 / 1.015467 = 0.015231$

Figure 1: The Undocumented Latin American Immigrants Contribute to Improve the U.S. Culture, or to Degrade it.



Source: Author's Survey. Target Population: GGC Student Population; n = 255; Margin of Error ± 6