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Cultural Crossings: An Examination of Foreign Culture's Effect on Support for Immigration*

Naomi Julia Roter
Skidmore College, nroter@skidmore.edu

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ABSTRACT

Immigration to the United States has been a prominent concern throughout U.S. history, but foreign culture's influence on immigration attitudes has largely been ignored in previous research. To explore the tensions between native-born and foreign-born residents in the United States, this study turns to Social Identity Theory. The theory explains ingroup and outgroup relations and how a dichotomy is created to separate the "self" from that of the "other." Using the 2004 General Social Survey (GSS), this paper examines how believing that foreign films, music, and books damage our national and local cultures influence support for immigration to the United States, controlling for how Republican the respondent is and their highest level of education completed. The sample ($n = 1059$) is compiled from a nationally representative pool of non-institutionalized U.S. residents aged 18 and older who identify politically as Democratic, Independent, or Republican. Consistent with Social Identity Theory, the findings suggest that respondents who believe foreign culture damages our national and local ways of life are less supportive of increasing immigration to the United States. Although it is a weak relationship, the data show that even after controlling for strength of political affiliation and years of school completed, how the respondents answer the foreign culture question is a statistically significant ($p < .01$) indicator of their support for immigration. These findings suggest that the arts and familiarity with other cultures have the potential to reduce ingroup bias and xenophobic attitudes.

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The arts vocalize identities, creating an expressive space regardless of individual differences. Artistic outlets exist around the world, representing a sense of belonging and connection. This is important regarding immigration as immigrants bring cultural identifiers with them to feel more at home in a new country. In turn, foreign arts such as films, music, and books begin to grow in the United States as the number of non-native born residents increase. The U.S. has always been a country comprised of multiple ethnicities and cultures; however, immigration acts and regulations implemented since the late nineteenth century restrict those who enter the United States and their rights once a resident. As diversity and the number of non-native born Americans continue to rise, immigration and xenophobia remain prevalent issues. Simultaneously, artistic platforms are becoming more multicultural, influencing the daily lives of U.S. citizens and affecting views on such topics. The increasing exchange of movies, music, and literature between countries begs the question of how successful these mediums are at bonding cultures and perspectives.

The arts unite people. Whether in a movie theater, at a concert, or individuals around the world reading the same book, humans are constantly sharing knowledge and backgrounds. The potential relationship between believing in foreign culture damages and support for increasing immigration to the United States could have practical implications nationally and sociologically. Increasing the opportunity to learn about foreign identities through popular trends (i.e. Billboard songs, fashion, non-English words or phrases) could non-intrusively shed light on the diverse U.S. population. Moreover, accessible entertainment can lead to greater cohesion and understanding between native- and foreign-born residents. For example, implementing foreign

culture into the American mainstream as movies, music, and books would allow American children to be exposed to different languages and see how appearances vary around the world. By incorporating foreign culture into curriculums through non-western children's stories or songs, intergroup friendships are more likely to arise. Pettigrew's Intergroup Friendship Theory suggests that "the birth of relationships [between majority and minority members] favors the development of positive visions towards the members of the minority group" (Bergamaschi and Santagati 2019:40). Foreign culture has the potential to ignite intergroup friendships in schools, allowing children to grow up with positive views towards minority members within and outside of a classroom setting.

Sociologically, the relationship between artistic cultural expression and immigration is worth exploring because ethnic groups within the United States are, for the most part, divided. With immigration comes xenophobia: a phenomenon whereby individuals dislike people from countries other than their home nation. Xenophobic attitudes prevent inclusive, welcoming environments. Barriers built by these beliefs are counter-productive as the world is becoming increasingly diverse with the coexistence of multiple ethnic groups in shared spaces. Different forms of global expression, such as films, music, and literature, can aid in erasing or reducing these divisional lines by connecting people universally though expressive outlets. Sociologically, finding common forms of enjoyment and observing their effect on larger issues could help predict future behaviors and trends. Humans are afraid of what they do not know, and the artistic voices found in films, music, and books might be the right style of education to begin the learning process.

To see if foreign culture is effective in changing attitudes, this paper explores the following question: Does believing that exposure to foreign films, music, and books damage our

national and local cultures negatively influence support for increasing immigration to the United States? Previous literature describes an "us" versus "them" dichotomy (Bakagiannis and Tarrant 2006; Haynes 2005; Kasinitz and Martiniello 2019; Pryce 2018; Smith and Huber 2018) which can be used to explain the separation between the American identity from identities immigrants bring with them when the immigrate. Historically, the U.S. has sought to integrate foreigners into the American lifestyle through assimilation, applying national standards to everyone regardless of their national or cultural origin. This is reflected in the music industry as artists with lighter skin tones have higher chart rankings than their darker skin toned counterparts (Laybourn 2017). Pressures to integrate were also seen in the history of cookbooks as foreign recipes became appropriated and Americanized (Gvion 2015). While progressive changes are made through widespread global music and refined cookbook recipes, more steps need to be taken to encourage the acceptance of diversity. Moreover, additional research needs to be conducted to identify if foreign culture in the form of movies, music, and books positively influence individuals' outlook on immigration and the role immigrants have in the United States. Therefore, I hypothesize that the more respondents agree that exposure to foreign films, music, and books are damaging to our national and local cultures, the less likely they are to believe that immigration to the United States should be increased.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social identity is a central component to how we define ourselves and make sense of our group memberships in a societal context. Social Identity Theory is important in understanding attitudes towards immigration and immigrants because it highlights how an individual's sense of self impacts their perception of others who are characteristically different (Pryce 2018). Humans vary in gender, race, education, and other demographic variables, allowing for the creation of

unique groups and distinctive identities. Social Identity Theory aids in understanding immigration attitudes because it explains how immigrants and native-born residents define themselves and make sense of scenarios in which they either represent the minority or majority. Consequently, categorizations and stereotypes are used to make sense of how different identities coexist and which social groups are "superior" (Cabaniss and Cameron 2018). The idea of separate group memberships is applicable to the present study because categorizations can encourage negative attitudes towards immigrants as they represent an "otherness."

How individuals identify themselves is also largely related to their physical characteristics, historical ancestry, and language (to name a few). Some immigrants choose to try assimilating by "passing" as white or adopting American names. Others choose to embrace their ethnic identity by, for example, emphasizing their accents (Cabaniss and Cameron 2018). Humans have many social identities, but when immigrants enter the United States, they are often categorized into one. In turn, ingroup and outgroup relations take shape based on race and ethnicity. Social Identity Theory posits that people often favor the group of which they are a member (Bakagiannis and Tarrant 2006), helping boost their self-esteem by believing their group membership is better than others (Lonsdale and North 2009). Thus, the "outgroup" becomes more harshly judged simply based on the criteria of not fitting the identifiers of the "ingroup."

An example of this is the repercussions Muslim Americans or Muslims in the United States faced after 9/11. A horrible act caused by a small group was generalized to the whole ethnic category, resulting in the questioning of all Muslims. A new form of surveillance became established by the states, by other citizens, and by Muslims themselves. In airports, the Transportation Security Administration was put into place. A no-fly list was used for questionable passengers as well as a screening system to flag passengers' names that sound

similar to those on such list. The surveillance and screening process begin from the moment Muslims get their tickets to when they are at the gate. The second type of surveillance is by other citizens. For example, verbal abuse towards women wearing a hijab. Lastly, Muslims begin questioning themselves, reclaiming their identity or, more commonly for men, opposing it. This means avoiding certain conversation topics in public or at work, silencing themselves to not risk standing out in a negative light (Salod 2019). The "ingroup" versus "outgroup" positions are clearly enforced in an extreme way as seen with many immigrant/immigration policies and practices since the creation of the United States. As Social Identity Theory claims, we get to choose our identity, but immigrants in the United States up against xenophobic attitudes and stereotypes are often prescribed false ones. It is worth noting that while members of the "ingroup" in the United States (white Americans) commit terrible acts such as school shootings, rape, and have historically mistreated African Americans, the Japanese, and other ethnic groups, there is no surveillance on white Americans like there is for Muslims.

This paper aims to explore how the presence of foreign films, music, and literature influence respondents' views on immigration, and consequently, how differing identities are seen to hinder or strengthen the United States. However, something to consider is the power the arts have in creating bonds and friendships. A former study found that a "shared musical preference can be used productively to improve intergroup relations" (Bakagiannis and Tarrant 2006:135). Music can be used as a device to understand one another, providing lenses to understand unfamiliar cultures and experiences. While the challenge for equal representation persists, it has been found that "music can successfully communicate emotional meanings across different cultures" and can reduce prejudices (Clarke, DeNora and Vuoskoski 2015:74). Music as a unifying device is a crucial finding, demonstrating that empathy and positive views towards

others can exist simply by listening to melodies, rhythms and/or lyrics. Immigrants and natives alike try to understand how they belong in a diverse country, but artistic platforms offer modes of expression that carry the potential to erase stereotypes and prejudices. Social Identity Theory is how we identify ourselves, but identifying as movie goers, listeners of a certain type of music, or readers of a literature genre can begin to erase "ingroup" and "outgroup" racial and ethnic divisions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The arts and diverse cultures are influential in everyday life. This paper will explore how believing that exposure to foreign films, music, and books damage our national and local identities influence the support (or lack thereof) towards increasing immigration to the United States. By exploring how "foreignness" is perceived, we can begin to disentangle the consequences of negative perceptions and what it means for foreign cultures to integrate into the American lifestyle. This will be reviewed by first examining the prevalence of xenophobic attitudes throughout U.S. history. Secondly, I will look at how the "other," created from xenophobic beliefs, is translated into the media. Following, I will examine how nationalism encourages assimilation, but also authentic cultural representations. Finally, I will explore the fate of xenophobia and to how this paper will contribute to the current literature.

Xenophobic Views Towards Immigrants

Xenophobia, the fear or prejudice of others from another country, has been a prevalent issue throughout U.S. history. While stereotypes about African Americans were widespread during and after the time of slavery, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the first time in U.S. history where a policy excluded immigrants based on nationality and race. The act was repealed in 1943, but all legal racial restrictions were not removed until 1965. At the start of the act, many

beliefs were disseminated about Chinese immigrants such as being unfair competitors in the job

market, and as dangerous, violent (especially men), and diseased people (Kil 2012).

This was just the beginning of policies against immigration to the United States. In 1954,

the Eisenhower Administration began deporting hundreds of Mexican workers under "Operation

Wetback." Again, the increased competition in the labor market made many U.S.-born residents

fear unemployment. A couple decades later, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986

punished employers hiring unauthorized workers. In 1993, the Anti-Terrorism and Effective

Death Penalty increased the types of crimes that could lead to immigrant deportation. The acts

listed here are only a few out of many. Ultimately, immigration to the United States meant

criminalizing illegal entry, and after 9/11, meant deporting immigrants with the smallest

infractions on their records (Hammond 2011; Obinna 2018a; Obinna 2018b).

September 11th, 2001 severely impacted the impressions native-born U.S. residents had

on immigrants as the Bush Administration "declared a Global War on Terrorism" (Hammond

2011:739). The administration fostered fear through the media while newly created laws and

regulations appeared to be controlling the situation by specifically targeting Arab, Muslim, and

Mexican immigrants. Concerns for safety and immigration were conflated; as a result, people

were subject to deportation through, to name a couple, Patriot Act for "suspicion of terrorist

involvement" (2011:743) or Social Security fraud. While many immigrants were criminalized,

they were not given time to obtain adequate legal support, making their trials unfair. Despite

efforts to control immigration, the harsh regulations produced counterproductive results.

Increasing border control simply made immigration more dangerous, but not impossible. Extra

security also made immigrants in the United States less likely to return to Mexico or their

country of origin. In fact, the number of unauthorized immigrants increased, demonstrating the

inefficiency of the money put into extra security and armed forces. However, the presence of more immigrants in the United States does not necessarily alter negative mindsets established centuries ago.

About 140 years after the Chinese Exclusion Act, the same negative attitudes towards immigrants still exist in the minds of many Americans. This is in part due to the salience of patriotism and nationalism. Patriotism is the pride and attachment one has for their country while nationalism distinguishes one's own nation from others (Pryce 2018; Willis-Esqueda, Delgado, and Pedroza 2017). Xenophobic attitudes arise out of strong nationalistic sentiments as individuals from other countries threaten the local culture, challenging its identity. They also threaten the economy and culture of the United States as more people become available for cheap labor, and foreign traditions question the norm (Pryce 2018). To maintain a national identity, immigrants are commonly seen as criminals, dangerous people who should not be welcomed into the host nation (Bergamaschi and Santagati 2019; Kil 2012; Obinna 2018a; Pryce 2018). Essentially, strong national attachments can lead to greater hostility towards foreigners entering the country (Creighton 2015).

The distinction between "us" and "them" became established as the need to clarify "true Americans" arose out of national threats. Even at the dietary level, dishes from other countries were historically modified to local tastes. Ingredients that immigrants would bring with them would be unacceptable in American kitchens because using them would mean accepting foreign cultures within the American context (Gvion 2015). However, the separation of the "self" and the "other" impacted the kitchens of immigrants more positively. Food represents a sense of belonging, so in an unfamiliar country, food and meals would remind immigrants of a home they

left behind. Migrants could bond over similar experiences upon arriving to the United States and over their home cultures (Parasecoli 2014).

The separation of "us" from "them" is not just a matter of ingredients and cooking techniques but is prevalent in everyday life. For immigrant Latinx, it has been found that "working outside of migrant niches is associated with perceived discrimination in a greater number of settings" (Flippen and Parrado 2015:677). Working or being in public places with native residents can lead to natives acquiring xenophobic attitudes and behaviors towards the "other," in this case, Latinx. Whites are viewed as American, therefore, nonwhites automatically become the "other" or "non-American" (Kil 2012; Smith and Huber 2017; Willis-Esqueda et al. 2017). Naturally, this becomes problematic for minority members in the United States as well as those in the majority regarding how people are perceived and treated.

"Otherness" in the Media

As mentioned above, the "otherness" of foreign-born U.S. residents often results in negative conceptions and stereotypes targeted towards these groups. Xenophobic attitudes are created and perpetuated through films, music, and literature. Smith and Huber (2017) found in a content analysis of Hollywood movies featuring Colombian characters that Colombians were often associated with violence and drugs while white men were the heroes and saviors. Expectedly, audiences are going to absorb the stereotypes seen in motion pictures because they are less likely to receive any other type of information on Colombians or minority groups. The "white as American" depiction is perpetuated while an "otherness" is continuously enforced.

This was also found in a study by Khanna and Harris (2015) whereby sociology students watched television shows on ABC, CBS, NBC, or FOX, noted the racial composition of the characters, and observed what characteristics they expressed. Not surprisingly, most characters

with positive traits were white while people of color, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, and Asian Pacific Islanders were severely underrepresented (unless on their own channel), or not represented at all. These characters typically were portrayed as having negative characteristics such as being unintelligent or overtly sexual. Moreover, minority characters would represent "token characters," few members of the cast that made the show appear to be more diverse than was the reality (2015:43). When shows appear to be inclusive of other races and identities, the characteristics and roles given to minority member characters often perpetuate stereotypes embedded in the history of the United States to appeal to the network´s audience. Ultimately, white supremacy is still expressed and encouraged.

Seeking an "otherness" is also seen in audiences of foreign films and listeners of world music. As Bergfelder (2005:328) analyzed in Britain, subtitles for foreign films are often challenging in terms of adding a level of work to understanding the story; therefore, those who typically attend foreign movies are the "art-house audiences." Although Spanish is more common nowadays in American television and movies, films with subtitles are not commonly shown in theaters because it is the white middle and upper classes who view these "more sophisticated" films. World music also faces this same challenge (Haynes 2005). White consumers often seek a musically authentic experience of cultures outside of Western traditions. Again, this creates an "us" versus "them" situation whereby consumers look for something different, something they do not encounter daily. Looking for an "otherworldliness" or "exoticness" reaffirms white as the norm, otherwise world music would not just be from non-Anglo-Saxon countries. Since world music consumers are typically white or the ethnic group from where the musical genre originated, performances are encouraged to sound a certain way, preferably without the western influence of electric guitars or amps. Moreover, having a genre of

"world music" questions who can perform what type of music and what makes music sound authentically like the "other."

Assimilation and "Authenticity"

The assimilation of foreigners into American society has historically been an endeavor to remedy the reduced cohesion brought by different cultures. For example, from the 1850s to 1880, foreign recipes were appropriated and Americanized. Immigrants' knowledge was disregarded, their food depicted as an obstacle preventing their assimilation into America (Gvion 2015). Classical Assimilation Theory posits that immigrants' cultures and behaviors are the root problems leading to discrimination and negative stereotypes from native-born residents (Flippen and Parrado 2015). From this perspective, native-born residents are attacked on their national identity and immigrant assimilation would relieve tensions. However, when immigrants do not assimilate, they pose an even a bigger threat to the national and local cultures (Kil 2012). For this reason, certain policies are put into place, such as the 'identity policies' in France that prohibit wearing religious symbols in public schools (Bergamaschi and Santagati 2019). By changing the appearances and behaviors of the "other" to strive for societal homogeneity, nations aim to maintain their distinctiveness.

More than nationally, American assimilation has progressed into a global phenomenon. Achterberg et al. (2011) found that between the popular music charts in America, the Netherlands, France, and Germany, there was much American influence before 1989. Following 1989, the countries returned to producing songs in their native languages, reaffirming themselves as their own nations. Another study by Janssen, Kuipers, and Verboord (2008) analyzed how international arts were covered in arts journals from 1955-2005 in the same countries as the aforementioned study: the United States, the Netherlands, France, and Germany. They found that

the American journal, the *New York Times*, covered more national arts as opposed to the other countries that grew in international coverage over the 50-year period. Within the international coverage, many articles and references were about the United States. These findings suggest that assimilation to American culture projects onto other countries and is globally influential. Further, English is more frequently learned worldwide, particularly as speaking other languages is not as encouraged in the United States. Therefore, the accessibility of American and British arts is greater than the spread of non-English content. This supports the assimilative aspirations of Western Europe and of the United States.

With increasing assimilation, what can we call authentic? In today's markets, people look for authenticity as a selling point. For example, white corporate owners use the rawness of rap music and artists as a marketing strategy. Still, when it came to the Billboard Rap Chart Rankings from 2007 to 2011, "lighter skin toned artists ha[d] a positive and significant effect on chart ranking" (Laybourn 2017:2096). If listeners believe the music is authentic, why should skin tone still matter? Xenophobic and assimilative perspectives are at play even as rap music becomes popularized and widely shared.

Nevertheless, increasing hybridity in societies may suggest that times are changing from the "us" versus "them" dichotomy. Kasinitz and Martiniello (2019) write about hybridity in music, the blurring of genres that ultimately produce widely accepted work. When history is broken down, expansions, diasporas, or any movement of people have led to cultural blending. Origins of languages trace back to Greek, Latin, or Arabic roots. Within Asia and the Middle East, there are similarities in musical instruments from the Silk Road trading. Even in fashion, inspiration is taken from other countries to produce different designs. As globalization continues, daily lives become increasingly intermixed with multiple cultures. This then begs the question of

why certain cultural artifacts are negatively received if we frequently experience cultural hybridity.

Looking Forward

While the themes mentioned above are just the start of the conversation, they explain why movements towards cohesion have been stunted. Historical segregation and the belief in separate identities inhibit progress toward inclusivity. The irony in segregation is that "all human beings alive today are likely to share at least one common ancestor born a few thousand years ago" (Perez and Hirschman 2009:12-3). Humans are related despite physical differences, and yet the white ideal is still enforced. Interestingly, higher rates of intermarriage in today's societies will increase ethnic mixing, straying away from single identities. This is important because as time progresses, our ancestry will become less distinct and how we identify ourselves will differ as categorization includes more than one label ethnically and racially (Perez and Hirschman 2009). Although today there are xenophobic attitudes and a declared "other," this is likely to fade over time as the blending of different cultures blurs the divides that biases are based on.

"Otherness" is also likely to fade as commonalities and knowledge about different social groups grow. Previous research has found that individuals who like a certain genre of music are more likely to positively view other fans of that same genre and attribute negative characteristics to fans of a genre they do not enjoy. They form an ingroup favoritism towards their own members, positively viewing themselves and others like them (Bakagiannis and Tarrant 2006; Lonsdale and North 2009). But, when told that outgroup members also have similar tastes in music, individuals become more positive towards them (Bakagiannis and Tarrant 2006). Once people notice similarities or shared characteristics with "others," their dislike for them begins to fade. This happens because if "others" are members of their social identity group, and

individuals want to view themselves in a positive light to increase their self-esteem, individuals will see those "others" more positively as well, by extension (Lonsdale and North 2009). While these two studies (Bakagiannis and Tarrant 2006; Lonsdale and North 2009) have analyzed musical preferences, the results might be generalizable to films and literature.

Being well educated on different groups is also important as it allows individuals to become more aware, empathetic, and comfortable. A study by Kehus (2012) found that through a multicultural book club whereby a third and fourth grade classroom read multicultural literature, students grew socially by embracing their ethnic identities, taking pride in their backgrounds. Kehus discusses the concepts of the "mirror" and "window," teaching students things (in this case, through reading them stories) that mirror their own lives while also teaching things that are windows into the lives of others, particularly other classmates. Creating a space where children can express their identities and share them, as opposed to suppressing non-American identities, is beneficial for students of all ethnic backgrounds. Offering a welcoming and encouraging space in the classroom to demonstrate an interest and understanding of other cultures has the potential to expand beyond the classroom, eliminating biases towards others who visibly do not share the same group memberships.

Although societies are beginning to break down barriers between social groups, further research is still needed, particularly on how cultural outlets (films, music, books) affect attitudes towards immigrants. As discussed, the history of the United States includes several policies and laws trying to regulate immigration and as a result, built up tensions need dismantling. In trying to figure out ways to do this, previous literature lacks attention to how political views influence foreign culture along with immigration attitudes. This paper will add to the literature on cultural expression and immigration by exploring how the presentation of an "other" through different

mediums from around the world influences how immigrants are viewed in the United States, and how political views and educational attainment further determine progress.

METHODS

This study uses data from the General Social Survey (GSS) collected in 2004 (Smith, Davern, Freese, and Morgan 2019). The GSS has collected its data from non-institutionalized adults in the United States on a range of topics since 1972 and is used to track trends. The GSS surveys a sample of the American population, randomly selecting participants from across the nation in Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas or the National Opinion Research Center's Master Sample of non-metropolitan counties. Surveys are completed by face to face interviews or over the telephone in English. The unit of analysis in the GSS is individuals who are non-institutionalized adults in the United States aged 18 and older. For further information on how the data were collected, see http://gss.norc.org/.

The 2004 GSS has 3,628 respondents with a 70 percent response rate. Originally, the sample consisted of 6,260 respondents but after accounting for out-of-scope respondents and non-responses, the sample became smaller. The 3,628 net sample is after sub-sampling, however, for this study I am only analyzing 1,059 of those participants. The smaller sample size is because my independent variable, foreign culture damages, was asked in three out of the six versions of the survey, and only completed by respondents who agreed to answer the self-assessment questionnaire, thus producing a sample size of 1,177. Further, I removed respondents who selected the 'can't choose' or 'no answer' options and those who were not applicable for my independent variable. I also eliminated the "other party" category on the political affiliation variable, reducing my sample to 1,059.

Independent and Dependent Variables

The sociological concepts I plan to study are attitudes towards the presence of foreign culture as damaging our national and local cultures, and attitudes towards immigration. These concepts are operationalized by two questions asked in the 2004 GSS.

Believing that the presence of foreign films, music, and movies damages the national and local cultures in the United States is the independent variable for this study. The foreign culture question asks respondents to respond to this statement: "Increased exposure to foreign films, music, and books is damaging our national and local cultures." Potential answers range from one as "strongly agree" to five as "strongly disagree." The middle most value (three) is "neither agree nor disagree," offering a non-directional response. This variable was recoded so that the value of one is "strongly disagree" and the value of five is "strongly agree," placing this variable on an agreement scale.

Support for increasing immigration to the United States is this study´s ordinal dependent variable. The GSS asks respondents, "Do you think the number of immigrants to America nowadays should be…" Answers range from one as "increased a lot" to five as "reduced a lot." This variable is reverse coded to have responses range from one as "reduced a lot" to five as "increased a lot." This is done so that viewing immigration more favorably is reflected by a higher score on the scale.

Control Variables

For this study, I control for political affiliation and educational attainment. The political party identification question asks respondents, "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what?" This question is asked on a seven-point scale ranging from zero as "strong Democrat," three as "Independent," and six as "strong

Republican." This variable measures how Republican respondents are, therefore in the data analysis this variable will be called "Republican." For the purposes of this study, I exclude respondents who answered "other party" and those who did not respond. The other control variable is educational attainment which is operationalized by the GSS question asking for the respondent's highest year of school completed. The answers range on a scale from zero to twenty years.

FINDINGS

Univariate Findings

Table 1 contains the means and standard deviations for all the variables.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

As shown in Figure 1, the independent variable "foreign culture damages" is right skewed with over 45 percent of the respondents disagreeing that exposure to foreign culture (non-western films, music, and books) damages our national and local cultures. Respondents who "disagree" or "strongly disagree" represent the majority of the sample. Table 1 reflects these findings as the mean of two is consistent with the disagreement of foreign culture damages, and the standard deviation of one shows little variance in this answer, from strongly disagree (one on the five-point scale) to neither agree nor disagree (three on the five point scale). The general disagreement of the foreign culture damages question means that on average, respondents do not find the presence of foreign films, music, and books to be a problem in the United States.

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

The dependent variable in Figure 2, support for increasing immigration, depicts the majority of respondents reporting that immigration to America should remain the same or be reduced. The most frequent response was "remain the same as it is" with about 33 percent of

respondents selecting this answer. However, "reduced a little" was chosen 31 percent of the time and "reduced a lot" was chosen 25 percent of the time. In comparison, both increasing options were selected less than eight percent of the time respectively. Table 1 is again consistent with these findings, with a mean of two ("reduced a little") and with a standard deviation of one. With little variation, the average responses do not support increasing immigration to the U.S.

FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

The two control variables used were how republican the respondent is and the respondent´s educational attainment. From Figure 3, we see that no single political party is the most favorable. It is interesting to note that fewer respondents selected "Independent, near Democrat" and "Independent, near Republican" than the other categories. Participants clearly identified as being a Democrat, Independent, or Republican and less as being in between. Since this data is not skewed and does not have a normal curve, the mean of three (Independent) and standard deviation of two in Table 1 is consistent with the distribution seen in Figure 3. Therefore, the sample is representative of different political views which will be helpful in determining if that influences support for increasing immigration.

FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

For education, Figure 4 depicts a slight left skew with the majority of respondents completing 12 or more years of education. The modal category is 12 years of education, most likely equating to a high school diploma unless the respondent did not complete high school. The slight skew is depicted in Table 1 with a mean of 14 and standard deviation of three. On average, respondents have completed an associate's degree or a couple years of college. The standard deviation tells us respondents vary from the mean in how many years of education they have completed by about three years. While the mean indicates some college, the standard deviation

indicates a range from 11 to 17 years of education, a fairly wide gap considering the degrees and knowledge that can be obtained between those six years.

FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE

Bivariate Findings

As shown in Table 2, there are four statistically significant correlations at the *p*-level of .01. There is a weak, negative correlation between the belief in foreign culture damages and support for increasing immigration to the United States ($r = -.139$). The more respondents believe that foreign films, music, and literature damage our national and local cultures, the less likely they are to support increasing immigration. The correlation between Republican and support for increasing immigration is also weak and negative ($r = -.158$). This means that the more respondents identify as being Republican, they less likely they are to support increasing immigration to the United States. For educational attainment, there is a weak, positive relationship between years of education completed and support for increasing immigration, meaning that the more educated respondents are, the more likely they are to be in favor of increasing immigration ($r = .154$). The last statistically significant correlation is between educational attainment and believing in foreign culture damages. There is a negative, weak to moderate relationship which means that the more years of education the respondent has completed, the less likely they are to believe foreign culture is damaging ($r = -.337$). Lastly, there are no statistically significant relationships between being a Republican and believing in foreign culture damages, and being a Republican and educational attainment.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Multivariate Findings

Table 3 contains the unstandardized (*b*) and standardized (*β*) regression coefficients for all variables predicting support for immigration. According to the table, about six percent of the variation found in support for increasing immigration can be explained by believing in foreign culture damages, how Republican the respondent is, and how many years of education the respondent has completed (R^2 = .055). The regression equation is statistically significant at the *p* < .01 level (*F* = 20.634). All of the regression coefficients, belief in foreign culture damages, how Republican the respondent is, and the respondent's highest level of school completed, are statistically significant (*p* < .01). Looking at the unstandardized regression coefficients (*b*), with every one-point increase towards agreeing that foreign culture is damaging, support for immigration on the scale decreases by .087 points (*b* = -.087). For every one-point increase towards being a strong Republican, the scale for immigration support decreases by .076 points (*b* = -.076), and for every additional year of school completed, the support for immigration scale increases by .049 points (*b* = .049).

A linear equation can be formulated to predict support for increasing immigration. It tells us that if respondents believe foreign culture is damaging (score of five), are strong Republicans (score of six), and received no education (zero years of school completed), their support for immigration is a score of 1.202, that immigration should be "reduced a lot." However, if respondents disagree with the foreign culture question (score of one), are strongly Democratic (score of zero), and have completed the most amount of years of education given as an option (20 years), their score changes to 2.986, believing that immigration should "remain the same as it is" now. The background of the respondent and how they answer the foreign culture question effect their support for increasing immigration by two points from "reduced a lot" to "remain the

same." These two examples represent extreme cases with other respondents scoring in between them. This is interesting because it does not consider the respondents who believe immigration should be increased, outliers in this equation.

Turning to the standardized regression coefficients in Table 3, how Republican the respondent is has the biggest effect on support for increasing immigration out of the independent and control variables (β = -.153). The second largest effect is from educational attainment (β = .128) followed by the belief that foreign culture damages the U.S. culture (β = -.084). As mentioned before, all three of these variables are statistically significant ($p < .01$), so despite not having the largest effect, belief in foreign culture damages still influences support for increasing immigration to the United States.

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

From Table 4, we can see that as the control variables are added into Model 2 and Model 3, the independent variable, foreign culture damages, remains significant. This means that even after controlling for how Republican the respondent is and how many years of education they have completed, how they answer the foreign culture question is indicative of their support for increasing immigration to the United States. The more respondents disagree that foreign films, music, and books damage our national and local cultures, the more likely the respondent will support increasing immigration. Looking at the R^2 values, Model 1 shows that 1.9 percent of support for increasing immigration is explained by foreign culture damages alone. This is relatively small but still influential. Model 2 shows that 4.1 percent of support for increasing immigration is explained by foreign culture damages and being Republican, and then 5.5 percent of support for increasing immigration is explained by all three variables in Model 3. Clearly, the control variables have a fairly big impact, increasing the percent of support that is explained by

the other variables by about three percentage points. However, foreign culture is still significant even if it is to a smaller degree than the control variables.

TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

DISCUSSION

This study examines how the belief that foreign films, music, and books damage our national and local cultures influence views towards increasing immigration to the United States. The findings confirm the hypothesis that the more respondents believe foreign culture to be damaging, the less likely they are to support increasing immigration. This is consistent with Social Identity Theory because it suggests that the more respondents view foreign culture in a negative light, the less willing they are to welcome more non-American identities to the United States.

It is important to note that while the majority of respondents "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" to the question on foreign culture damages, a small number of respondents believed immigration should be increased. This could be a result of post 9/11 and the general climate of the United States towards foreigners. Today, President Trump has a ban on five Muslim countries, but during the Bush Administration, there was a ban on 24 Muslim countries (Salod 2019). Again, the instilment of fear towards foreigners was very prominent during the time the 2004 survey was conducted. This could help explain why being Republican was the biggest indicator for supporting an increase in immigration to the United States ($\beta = -.153$). The iterative regression also supports this in Model 2 as adding the Republican variable improved how much of support for increasing immigration could be explained by the independent variable and this control variable (shifting from $R^2 = .019$ in Model 1 to $R^2 = .041$ in Model 2). Consistent with previous findings, an attack on national identity (9/11) could have strengthened the American

identity and what it means to live in the United States. This in turn could have led to harsher views towards immigrants and a greater rejection of foreign cultural expression.

The confirmation of the hypothesis means that the more respondents agree foreign culture is damaging our national and local cultures, the less likely they are to support increasing immigration. When looked at from the other direction, it also means that those who disagree that foreign culture is problematic should be more likely to support increasing immigration. The weak correlation of $r = -.139$ could indicate that despite not believing foreign culture is damaging the U.S., there are other factors (again, the consequences of 9/11) indicating immigration views. The weak correlation could also explain why using the equation from the regression only allowed the "ideal respondent" who answered strongly disagree to the foreign culture question, was highly educated, and Democratic would only receive a score of about three, indicating that immigration should remain the same as it was in 2004. Therefore, the respondents who answered "increased a little" or "increased a lot" to the immigration question might further have some characteristic about them leading to more positive responses than the majority of respondents.

However, the relationship between the belief in foreign culture damages and support for increasing immigration remains significant, both in the correlation and regression analyses. This indicates that how respondents view foreign films, music, and books in the United States impacts their attitudes towards immigrants regardless of being a Republican and their educational attainment. Social Identity Theory helps explain this phenomenon as these findings are consistent with previous research such as Bakagiannis and Tarrant's (2006) study on musical likeability. Individuals are more likely to make fewer distinctions between themselves and "others" if a commonality exists between them. Respondents who like foreign films could be

more open to increasing immigration because they now share an enjoyment for a certain genre with immigrants coming from the country or region that produces those movies. This can also be seen in music, especially in the early 2000s and today with the global rise of K-pop leading people from around the world to take greater interest in South Korea. It is not surprising that those who believe foreign culture to be problematic would be less welcoming of foreigners into the United States because they would only view productions in the U.S. as the only ones worth being exposed to, eliminating chances of seeing minority members represented in a new light.

While Social Identity Theory posits that people identify themselves and others based on group memberships, education also plays a role in these lenses. The data suggests that the more education respondents have, the more likely they will support increasing immigration to the United States. From the data, education is the second biggest indicator predicting support for increasing immigration ($\beta = .128$). This backs up Bergfelder's (2005) findings that it is typically the "art house classes," who are more likely to be well educated and attend performances of world music or foreign films. Individuals with more education are more likely to have had exposure to foreign culture, maybe in the form of literature like in Kehus' (2012) multicultural book club study, or in other outlets such as concerts or lectures offered at the college level. Therefore, they are more familiar with cultures outside of the United States and non-American identities seem less "foreign." Without previous exposure and knowledge, ethnicities outside of the white norm can be deemed as threatening.

The findings of this study lend to the literature on how cultural expressions (films, music, and books) have the power to influence individuals and reshape divides between people. Differences between social groups can be modified based on the enjoyment of certain

entertainment genres. This is important to recognize because walls can begin to disintegrate when being a fan (of films, music, or books) is at the forefront instead of race or ethnicity.

CONCLUSION

In this study, I questioned whether the belief that foreign films, music, and books damage our national and local cultures negatively influence support for increasing immigration to the United States. I hypothesized that the more respondents agree foreign culture damages our national and local cultures, the less likely they are to believe immigration to the United States should be increased. Social Identity Theory posits that social group memberships impact how individuals view themselves which creates a dichotomy of an "ingroup" and "outgroup." This in turn can be applied to native-born and foreign-born residents in the United States. The present study analyzes the 2004 General Social Survey, a representative pool of the U.S. population, whereby my $n = 1,059$ respondents. The findings reveal that a negative, statistically significant relationship exists between believing foreign culture is damaging and support for increasing immigration ($p < .01$) after controlling for being Republican and the respondent's highest level of education attained. The findings confirm the hypothesis and are consistent with Social Identity Theory regarding feeling the need to separate personal identity and that of the "other." Believing foreign culture is damaging indicates that identities of "others" should not contribute to the identity of being "American." Thus, the negative relationship with immigration makes sense using this theory.

The conclusions drawn from this study tell us that cultural artistic representations matter. Different forms of expression from around the world are important because they offer insight into practices and experiences many people are less familiar with. Returning to the implications of intercultural friendships in schools mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the findings tell

us that how respondents view foreign culture matters when it comes to views on immigrants and immigration. From an early age, school teaches us what is right and wrong, and what information is worth knowing. Through the incorporation of foreign culture into curriculums, children will learn that non-American and non-white identities are important and have value both in the classroom and outside of it. This is starting to happen with the requirement of learning a foreign language, beneficial for students by sparking their interest in other countries and in their ability to communicate with people who do not speak English.

Moreover, children and adolescents, potentially most receptive of movie, music, and book trends, are likely to erase negative depictions of the "other" in their daily lives and in future friendships if they are surrounded by positive images. Especially in today's age of advanced technology and easy access to the internet, displaying foreign films in movie theaters and playing world music on the radio could blur "ingroup" and "outgroup" racial divisions. While the data used in this study was conducted in 2004, digitalization and easily accessible internet usage is promising for cultural expressions to increase and efficiently work to improve relations between native-born Americans and immigrants, but also with individuals and their relationships with the world.

Limitations and Future Research

This study begins to touch on some of the variables influencing immigration support, but there are limitations to this study as well. The non-specificity of the independent variable is problematic because it offers limited insight into the respondents. The wording of the question, "Increased exposure to foreign films, music, and books is damaging our national and local cultures" and the answers ranging in agreement do not tell us if respondents have had exposure to these cultural outlets. The question is on what they think, not on what they have experienced

to influence their decisions. This could be because of the limited technological access in 2004 that would have allowed very few individuals to have had frequent exposure to foreign culture. Therefore, future studies should utilize a question asking about personal exposure to foreign films, music, and books in combination with the foreign culture damages question. Researchers can then amass increased knowledge on whether previous exposure to artistic mediums is influential in views towards foreigners in the United States.

This study also lacks in the number of control variables as it only used political affiliation and educational attainment. Politics are extremely influential on how immigration is viewed in the United States, especially in 2004 under the Bush Administration and currently under the Trump Administration. Additionally, the educational level of respondents can offer further insight on whether education influences the reception of immigrants. However, other factors should be considered when examining what influences immigration support. Future researchers should consider adding household income, race, age of respondents, as well as other variables not listed. By doing so, intervening or other explanatory variables can help explain the relationship between believing in foreign culture damages and support for increasing immigration. This study finds that thinking foreign expression damages our national and local cultures negatively influences support for increasing immigration. This points to a relationship between the arts and attitudes towards foreigners.

Future research could also look more carefully at movies, music, and books as separate entities, determining if one medium is more influential than others. One issue that could be of concern to many Americans is the infiltration of other languages besides English into the United States. This is particularly prevalent with Spanish as pop music is starting to include Spanish lyrics and themes. Further, the rise of K-pop is popularizing the Korean language in the United

States and around the world. Something to consider in future research is how language differences control what social groups people are apart of and how they view others. Naturally, Americans might appear more resistant to languages and cultures that strongly contrast with those of Western Europe and America. However, cultural outlets effectively influence others, and this study is just the beginning of research to ignite change in xenophobic attitudes and how immigrants are accepted into U.S. culture.

This paper uncovers that support for immigration is influenced by foreign culture in the United States. From this, it is important to utilize foreign films, music, and books as insights into the many cultures represented in the U.S. Diversity is evident in schools, online, and in daily life; therefore, it is crucial to consider how the arts can start to erase racial divisions and prompt welcoming spaces for native- and foreign-born residents.

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TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for Variables (*N* = 1059)

Variables	Mean	SD
Foreign Culture Damages	2.36	1.014
Support for Increasing Immigration	2.34	1.058
Republican	2.94	2.115
Education	13.91	2.771

Table 2. Correlations (*r*) between Support for Increasing Immigration and Three Variables (listwise deletion, two-tailed, *N* = 1059)

	Foreign Culture Damages	Republican	Education
Support for Increasing Immigration	-.139**	-.158**	.154**
Foreign Culture Damages		.078	-.337**
Republican			.010

** $p < .01$

Table 3. Regression of Support for Increasing Immigration on All Variables

Variable	*b*	*β*
Foreign Culture Damages	-.087	-.084**
Republican	-.076	-.153**
Education	.049	.128**
Constant	2.093	

$R^2 = .055$; $F(3,1055) = 20.634$; $p < .01$
**$p < .01$

Table 4. Iterative Regression of Variables on Support for Increasing Immigration (n = 1059)

	(1) b	(2) b	(3) b
Foreign Culture Damages	-.145**	-.133**	-.087**
Republican		-.074**	-.076**
Education			.049**
Constant	2.683**	2.871**	2.093**
F	20.756**	22.579**	20.634**
R^2	.019	.041	.055

**$p < .01$
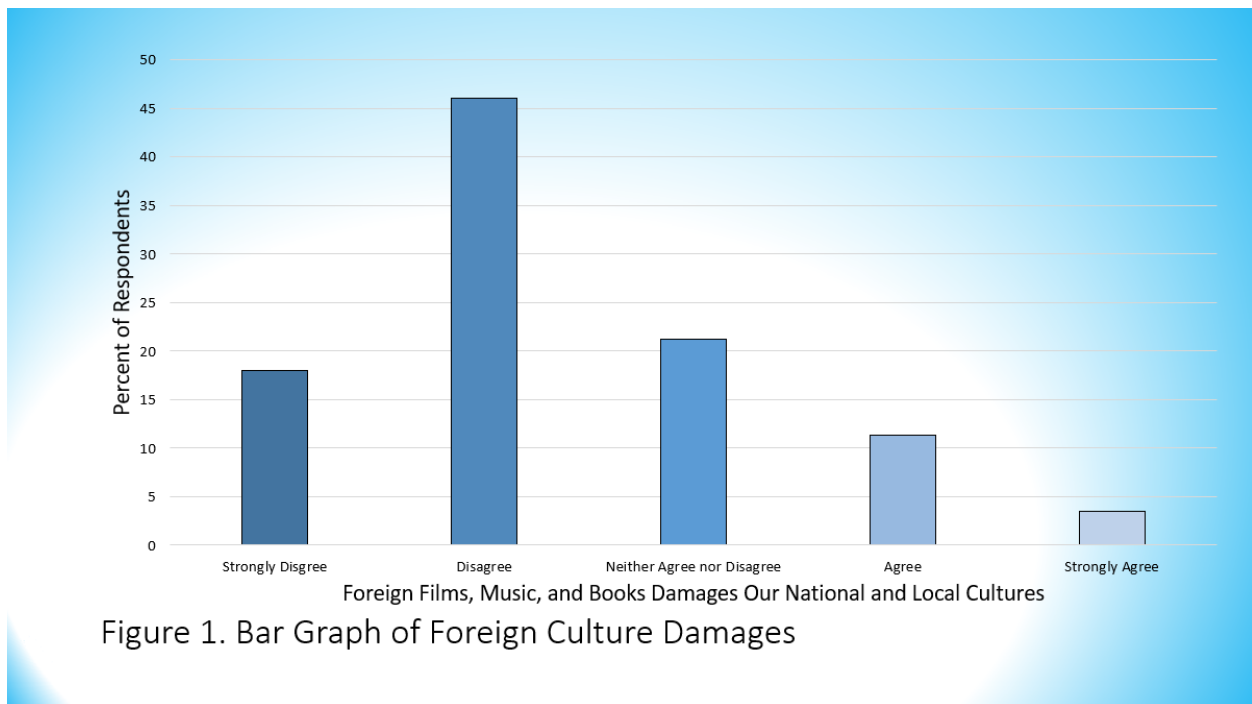
Figure 1. Bar Graph of Foreign Culture Damages

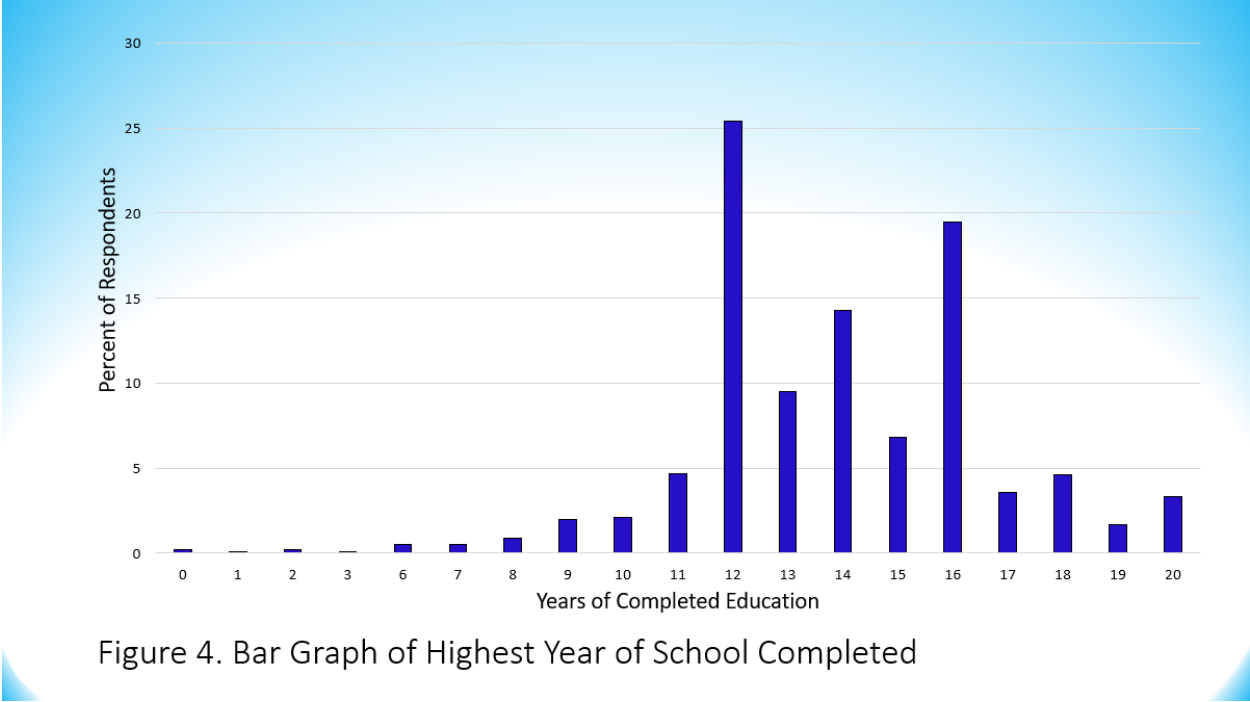Figure 2. Bar Graph of Support for Increasing Immigration

Figure 3. Bar Graph of Political Party
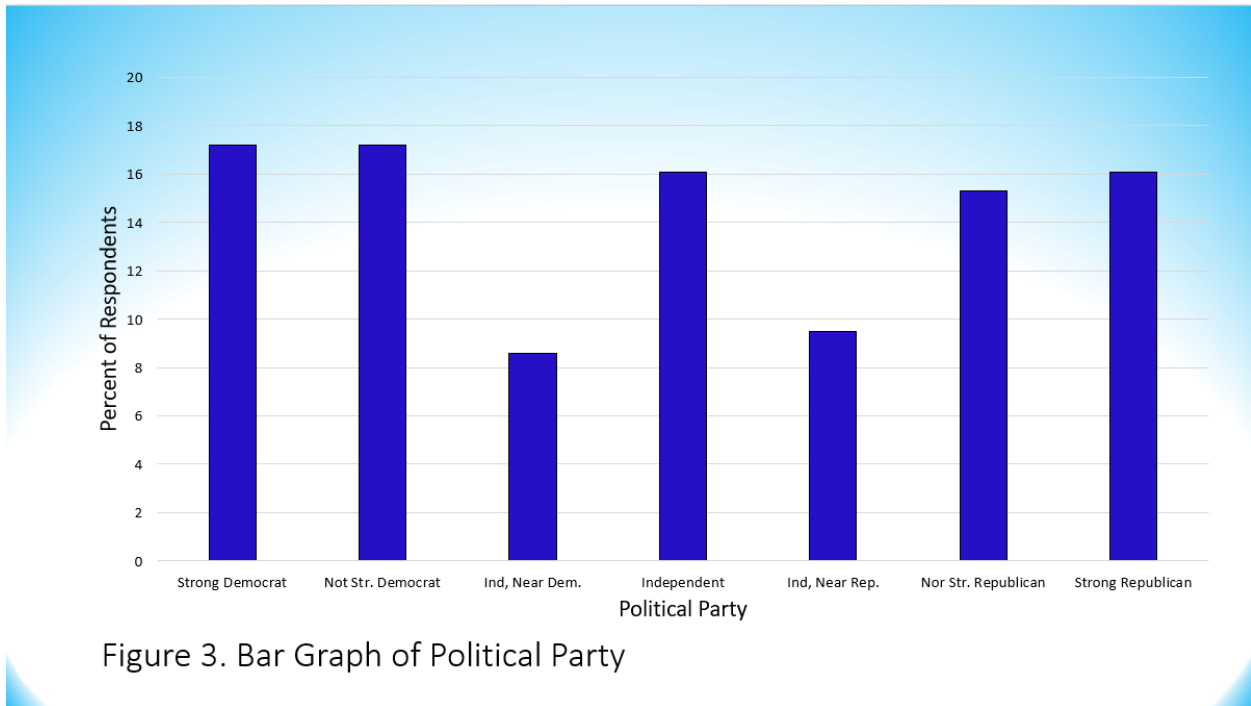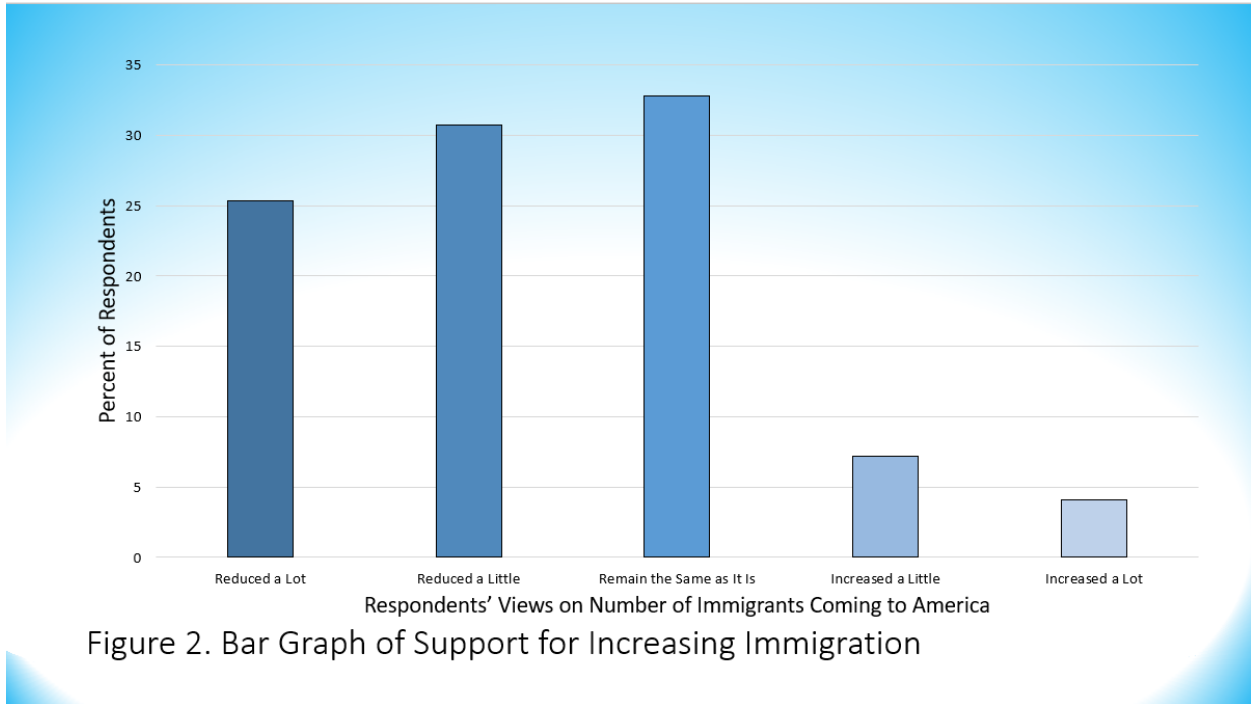
Figure 4. Bar Graph of Highest Year of School Completed