Sociology Senior Seminar Papers   Sociology

Fall 2019

Mas Que Un Idioma: Spanish Proficiency and Attitudes Towards Immigration

Samantha Velez
Skidmore College, svelez@skidmore.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://creativematter.skidmore.edu/socio_stu_stu_schol

Recommended Citation
Velez, Samantha, "Mas Que Un Idioma: Spanish Proficiency and Attitudes Towards Immigration" (2019).
Sociology Senior Seminar Papers. 43.
https://creativematter.skidmore.edu/socio_stu_stu_schol/43

Mas Que Un Idioma:

Spanish Proficiency and Attitudes Towards Immigration*

Samantha Velez

Skidmore College

Word Count = 6893

Mas que un Idioma: Spanish Proficiency and Attitudes Towards Immigration

ABSTRACT

Social Identity theory states that societies create in-groups and out-groups due to social processes consistent of social categorization, social comparison and social identification. Relying on Social Identity Theory, this study investigates the relationship between Spanish proficiency in the Latinx community and the attitudes towards current immigration rates in the U.S. Utilizing the Pew Research Center 2018 National Survey of Latinos, a total of 1,069 respondents were analyzed. This survey was conducted over the phone in both Spanish and English with Latinx individuals 18 years and older residing in the U.S. I hypothesize that respondents with lower Spanish proficiency will express more negative attitudes toward immigration by stating that they believe there are too many immigrants in the United States. This study finds that there is no statistically significant relationship between Spanish proficiency and the belief that there are too many immigrants in the U.S. Two control variables - age and U.S. citizenship - were found to be significant with attitudes toward immigration. U.S. Citizens were less likely to state that there are too many immigrants in the U.S whereas the older a respondent was, the more likely they were to state this. My hypothesis was disconfirmed, but the social identification component of Social Identity Theory serves as a possible explanation. U.S. Citizens may be identifying more with their Latinidad then nationality while older individuals may instead be identifying strongly with their peers.

Mas que un Idioma: Spanish Proficiency and Attitudes Towards Immigration

In 2018 the Latinx population in the United States reached a peak of 59.9 million but over the last decade, the population growth rate has decreased (Flores, Lopez and Krogstad 2019). Possible explanations for this change are the decreasing amount of births by Latinx mothers and the recent overall decline of immigration. The Pew Research Center found that about one-quarter of the Latinx population believed there were too many immigrants in the United States (National Survey of Latinos 2018). This survey was made up of 1,501 self-identifying Latinx within the U.S. Using a theoretical approach based on Social Identity Theory (Hitlan, Brown, and Elder 2007), Spanish proficiency will be looked at as a possible explanation for the variety of attitudes towards immigration within the Latinx community.

Immigration in the media remains strongly tied to the Latinx community regardless of decreasing immigration rates. Often race, stereotypes and group mentality are all used to feed into the idea of a homogenized community. The lack of acknowledgment of different experiences within the Latinx diaspora is one that leads to the false idea that all will have similar attitudes and thoughts. This is seen in politics through the way that political parties attempt to attract the Latinx vote (Fraga and Leal 2004). This idea of the Latinx community being uniformed in experiences and attitudes is one that must be dismantled to create a more representative picture of the diversity that exists within.

Moving away from the traditional theory of assimilation - straight-line assimilation - the retention of Spanish speaks to many different identifiers within the Latinx community such as a connection to culture and generational status (Lutz 2006). The proficiency of Spanish in the

Latinx community will be viewed as the determining factor in attitudes towards immigration. I hypothesize that the lower the score of an individual in Spanish Proficiency, the more likely they are to state that they believe there are too many immigrants in the United States.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study analyzes the relationship between Spanish proficiency and attitudes towards immigration within the Latinx community. Past studies have attempted to understand this relationship along with other variables that can be significant predictors of attitudes. Traditional theories on differentiating views can be useful in helping fill the gaps that may exist. To better understand the variation in attitudes towards immigration in the Latinx community it is important to understand the history and different experiences that exist within. The literature review will address the diversity that exists within the Latinx community by looking at some migration patterns, significant variables, language and formation of attitudes.

Migration

One important distinction to take into consideration is nationality. Every country in Latin America has their own historical relationship with migration to the United State. This is due to the varying political and economic circumstances however this study does not account for this. To help contextualize different migration experiences, the Cuban and Mexican community will be closely looked at in this literature review. Both communities had distinct experiences in terms of support from the U.S. government upon arrival.

Cuban Migration. Cuba's migration is often defined by its migrant selectivity and came in three major waves (Skop 2001). The Cuban revolution of 1959 led by Fidel Castro is what

sparked the first wave of Cuban migration to the United States. Traditionally migration to the U.S. was only done by wealthy individuals who could afford it (Torres 2004). The first wave of migrants between 1959-1962 were mostly educated, professional middle-class Cubans (Bach 1987, 112). This wave came to an in end in 1962 with the Cuban missile crisis. Individuals who migrated during this time are often referred to as the Golden exiles because of the government support they received upon arrival to the United States (Skop 2001).

The second wave began in 1965 was primarily made up of individuals who already had family in the United States. During this time the Cuban government had the "freedom flights" which were dedicated solely to the transportation of individuals for family reunification (Bach 1987,113). The third and largest wave of migration came in 1980 with the Mariel boatlift which was a massive. Triggered by the political and economic instability in Cuba, the Cuban government issues a statement that all were allowed to do so. This migration wave was mostly made up of racialized, working class individuals. In the span of six months, approximately 125,000 Cubans migrated to the U.S. (Skop 2001).

Mexican Migration. The history of Mexican migration can be traced back all the way to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. This treaty that resulted in the end of the Mexican American War and the annexation by force of present-day states Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, Texan, Utah and western Colorado (Guadalupe San and Valencia 1998).

The early 1900s was a prosperous time for the United States with the creation of railroads that helped connect the country in new ways. During this fruitful time, however, the U.S passed restrictive legislation to limit or fully end immigration from Asia. This would lead to a shortage of workers and U.S. employers urged the government for a solution. The Mexican Revolution in

1910 led many Mexicans to travel north in search of employment during the unstable times that would follow. The U.S. gladly accepted and deceived workers with promises of opportunity. U.S. recruiters would become known as enganchadores, as they mislead many to work in the U.S. During this time a reported 1.5 million Mexicans would cross the border and contribute to the growing economy. It is also during this time, in 1924 that the U.S. Border Patrol created the illusion that This era would come to an end with the Great Depression in the United States of 1929 (Griffith 2007). In this time many changes were occurring within Mexican politics and it served as an incentive for many to return.

The United States, however, would once again be in need of its southern neighbors as the country entered World War II. The draft led to a shortage of workers and the U.S. government facing pressure from employers, specifically ones within agriculture, would seek the Mexican government for help. Between 1942 and 1964, the Mexican government and the U.S. Departments of State, Labor and Justice created the Bracero program which would bring 4.6 million Mexicans to the United States for short-term work. The Bracero Program was not enough to satisfy the demand for labor in the United States so many Mexicans in the 1950's crossed the border without documentation in search of employment(Massey and Liang 1989). This created panic among civilians in 1953 and as a response, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) created "Operation Wetback". This would prove to be for theatrics as the INS created a front of raiding agricultural fields, apprehending undocumented workers and transporting them to the border. At the border, they would quickly be processed, receive the proper documentation and be sent back to the fields in which they were taken (Hernández 2006).

The Bracero program would officially end in 1965 and it would usher in a new era of migration, the one we currently find ourselves in.

Significant Variables

There is a limited amount of literature that focuses solely on the relationship of language and attitudes towards immigration. As Stringer (2018) explored in her work, the relationship Latinx have to undocumented immigration can be complicated for several reasons. Analyzing the 2017 Pew Hispanic Center National Survey of Latinos, one of the most important findings of their work was the effect of citizenship and/or documentation status when it comes to expressing attitudes towards immigration. Stringer found that native born Latinx were more likely to support increased border enforcement similar to findings from other studies (Rouse, Betina, and Garand 2010; Stringer 2018). There is an inherent privilege that comes with citizenship and within the Latinx community creates a very different experience than those who are not documented.

Language has also been found to be very important when attempting to understand the Latinx experience within the United States. Language assimilation is an on-going process and not a singular event as often referred to in literature. Instead through a conceptual model it was found that language assimilation often begins prior to arrival to the U.S (Akresh, Massey, and Frank 2014). It is important to take into account the privilege that comes with exposure to English prior to migration. In a case study of Dominican immigrants in Reading, Pennsylvania by Oropesa (2015) it was found that retention of native language was strongly associated with everyday life interactions. Within this study, negative experiences in association with English were strongly connected to the experiences of Latinx with darker skin tones. This is one example of how race can play a role in the way that Latinx assimilate to U.S. society. Within the own Latinx community self-reported accounts of internal discrimination have also been linked to

integration into the U.S. society. Individuals who were less assimilated through language and years they have resided here, reported more accounts of discrimination even within their own community (Monforti and Sanchez 2010). Ideological framework however is also a significant variable as well when interpreting relations to other Latinx (Vega and Ortiz 2017).

Another important factor that can strongly affect attitudes toward immigration is economic self-interest. Rouse et al. (2010) attempt to account for this in their study of variations in Latinx attitudes towards immigration. Through their comprehensive model of attitudes and analysis of the 2004 National Survey of Latinos: Politics and Civic Participation, they found that 71.9 percent of respondents stated that illegal immigration has a positive effect on the U.S. economy. This means however that 28.1 percent of Latinx respondents stated the opposite. Interestingly, neither unemployment nor income had a significant impact on individual responses.

Language

The traditional assimilation model centered around language suggest that within a few generations of migration, English becomes the sole language individuals speak (Fisherman 1972). According to Fisherman's four-stage model of language shift, by the third generation the native language is completely lost. Proficiency in English is associated with higher contact with a host society and therefore a measurement of full incorporation into society (Akresh et al. 2014; Fussell 2014; Knoll 2012).

Retention of Spanish and native languages in general determines individual's ability to pass on cultural values to future generations according to Tran (2010). It also sets the pace in which individuals fully assimilate to the host society. Considering that the United States historically has been known as a "graveyard" for foreign languages (Rumbaut, Massey, and Bean

2006) it is significant when individuals are able to hold on to ties of their ethnic background.

Tran (2010) found that both English and Spanish proficiency can increase simultaneously among

the second-generation of Latinx. It is especially true when Spanish is spoken at home and has no

real effect on English proficiency . Lutz (2006) through their analysis of the National Education

Longitudinal Study from 1988 along with the 1990 U.S. Census found that Spanish retention is

strongly linked to gender and race.

Linguistic Imperialism. It is important to acknowledge that Spanish is not the only

language that exists within Latin America. There are 100s of languages that consist of

indigenous ones and others due to colonization. Colonization brought along with it the forced

domination of language on communities. This of course includes Spanish, Portuguese and

English. It is this attempted erasure of indigenous languages that led to Spanish being a dominant

language in most of Latin American. Linguistic imperialism is often spoken about in modern

societies but there are historical ties to it. Linguistic imperialism confirms Anglo-American

dominance in contemporary societies but the same was held true in the Americas during the

Americans during colonization (Philipson 2011).

Formation of Attitudes

There are two classic theories that are used to help understand the diverse attitudes that

exists towards immigration. One of the most well-known ones is group threat theory (Hood III

and Morris 1997; Quillian 1995). The explanation that many individuals may foster negative

sentiments towards immigrants and immigration in general is due to the finite resources that

exists. This competition that is created amongst the dominant and newly introduced group leads

to tension over the finite resources.

The second well known theory is contact theory. Contact theory suggests that individuals foster positive emotions towards immigrants when they live in a highly concentrated area with immigrants. The everyday interactions they experience allow them to build their own opinions towards immigrants based on those interactions (Berg 2010). In this study however both of these theories cannot be used in their entirety since the sample is limited to one demographic within the United States.

The Latinx experience is a very diverse one within the U.S. Every country has its own unique history of migration and the lasting effect of this. Some significant differentiating factors that can influence experiences and attitudes are race, language and social class. Linguistic imperialism is important to think of in the context of the Latinx community because of colonization. Many theories exist around attitudes towards immigration and they are useful to provide context on why this study matters.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity theory is also a commonly used theory to help explain attitudes towards immigration. Derived from social psychology, it suggests that societies create in-groups and out-groups due to social processes. Individuals fall within these groups based on the idea of shared experiences, similar characteristics and identities (Newton 2000; Rocha et al 2011). There are three major components in this process which are social categorization, social identification, and social comparison (Tajfel 1978; Tajfel and Turner 1986). Social categorization is the process of placing social categories on others based on things such as race, gender, ethnicities and more. Social identification is the process of It is these group identities that create biases against

individuals who are not a part of the in-group. Often in literature around attitudes towards immigration, Social Identity Theory is used to help define the dominant in-group of being American, documented, white and any other measures of privilege in the United States (Mangum and Block Jr. 2018).

Intersectional framework

This study will utilize an intersectional and additive framework to guide the research to be as representative as possible. An intersectional framework will account for a diverse range of experience that exists within the Latinx community. It will also aide in creating a combination of different theories. It is clear that in regard to the Latinx community, straight line assimilation or solely traditional theories around attitudes are not an adequate framework to approach this study with.

Stereotypically, the Latinx population is thought to mainly be made up of undocumented individuals. In 2019 however this is no longer true with immigration declining from Latin America (Pew Research Center 2019). In fact around 79 percent of Latinx residing in the U.S. are citizens meaning that the Latinx population is becoming a huge contender in elections. Understanding the variation in attitudes towards immigration could aide in understanding the large variety of experiences within the community and policy support. I hypothesize that Spanish retention is an indicator of cultural ties and therefore, participants who have high scores of Spanish proficiency will be more likely to express positive attitudes toward immigration.

METHODS

Data

To investigate the relationship between Spanish proficiency and attitudes towards immigration, the Pew Research Center's 2018 National Survey of Latinos will be analyzed. The annual survey by the Pew Research Center is a national representative survey of Latinx adults residing within the United States. Conducted as a bilingual telephone survey from July 26 to September 9 of 2018. There was a total of 1501 respondents in the survey, both U.S. and foreign born conducted in either English or Spanish with a response rate of 68 percent. For further information on how the data were collected, visit https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/data-and-resources/.

The unit of analysis is individuals, specifically Latinx individuals. In this study, a subset of the data was created removing all of the missing data. The sample size ended up being 1069 Latinx respondents.

Independent Variable

For the independent variable of Spanish proficiency an index was created to measure just how proficient respondents are. The index will consist of two questions the first being, "Would you say you can carry on a conversation in Spanish, both understanding and speaking?". The second question to help determine Spanish proficiency is, "Would you say you can read a newspaper or book in Spanish?", both questions are measured on a scale from Not at all to Very well. The index was recoded so that 1=Not at all and 4=Very well. The index was created by adding both of the variables in SPSS. What it means to be proficient in a language is subjective especially since respondents are self-reporting it. The combination of both questions provides a concrete definition of proficiency; to be able to read, understand and speak a language.

Dependent Variable

As for the dependent variable of attitude towards immigration policies only one question will be used. The question asked to participants in the survey is, "Do you think there are too many, too few, or about the right amount of immigrants living in the United States?". The responses were coded as 1 = Too Many, 2 = Too Few and 3 = Right Amount. This was recoded to measure for respondents that stated that there are "Too Many" Immigrants in the United States. The dependent variable was recoded to be named, "Too Many Immigrants" with the codes of 1 = Too Few, 2 = Right Amount and 3 = Too Many.

Control Variable

The control variables for the study will be age, citizenship status, political affiliation, gender and financial situation. Age is a scale variable that ranges from 18 to 97 or older. Citizen status is a dichotomous variable that is measured as 1=yes and 2=no, regardless of whether or not the respondent was born in the United States. This variable was recoded for 0 to represent no and 1 to represent yes and renamed, U.S. Citizen. Political affiliation is measured as 1=Republican, 2=Democrat and 3=Independent. This variable was recoded so that it would measure towards Republican affiliation, meaning that 2 now represents Independent and 1 represents Democrat. Interestingly and it is not specified why, the interviewers recorded the gender of the respondent. This variable was dummied into 0 representing men and 1 representing women and renamed into Women. Financial situation is measured on a scale of 1 = excellent shape to 4 = poor shape. This variable was reverse coded so that the scale was flipped with 1=poor shape and 4= excellent shape.

I will test my hypothesis of the positive relationship between lower Spanish proficiency and negative attitudes towards immigration by first clearly controlling for all of my controlled variables. I want to be thorough in other possible explanations that could influence attitudes towards immigration. I will then look closely at the relationship between my Spanish proficiency index and the variable measuring attitudes towards immigration. If the relationship between the Spanish Proficiency Index and stating that there are too many immigrants in the United States proves to be significant then my hypothesis will be supported.

FINDINGS

Univariate Results

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the independent variable, the Spanish Proficiency index, which was measured by the respondent's self-reported language ability in Spanish. Respondents were the most congested in the score of 8, about 36 percent, meaning that respondents stated being able to maintain fluent conversations in Spanish, understand, and be able to read and write it. A little under 5 percent of respondents scored a 2, the lowest score possible, meaning they are not fluent in Spanish. According to Table 1, the mean score of respondents was 6.17, which on the scale is close to the central measure of Spanish proficiency. This means that the respondents fulfill some of the criteria of being proficiency such as being able to understand the language but not be able to speak or read it. The majority of scores are between 4 and 8 according to the standard deviation of 1.84. A large portion of the respondents in the survey although all Latinx are not completely Spanish proficiency but instead vary on certain categories.

[Insert Figure 1 About Here]

[Insert Table 1 About Here]

The first control variable is the respondent's age. As table 1 shows, the average age of the respondents is 47. Figure 2 shows the distribution of age, with the median age being 46 years old. This suggest that half of respondents fall on either sides of this age. No age group represents more than 4 percent of the population meaning that in terms of age it is very well distributed with the percent of respondents dropping towards the last couple years.

[Insert Figure 2 About Here]

The second control variable is the respondent's political affiliation. Ranging from Republican to Democrat, as table 1 shows the average response is 2.29 meaning that most respondents consider themselves to be independent. The median response, the midpoint is also independent. As seen in Figure 3, about 44 percent of respondents identify as independent compares to about 41 percent who identify as democrat and 14 percent that identify as Republican.

[Insert Figure 3 About Here]

The respondent's gender is also another variable that was controlled for. As figure 4 shows, over 55 percent of the respondents were men while a little over 40 percent were women. Table 1 also shows that the average response of respondents was being a man and it was also the median response.

[Insert Figure 4 About Here]

Figure 5 shows the distribution of the respondent's self-reported rating on their own personal financial situation. Table 1 states that the midpoint or median response is 2, meaning that the respondents view their financial situation as, "Only in Fair Shape". The average is response is also 2 and as seen in figure 5, over 45 percent of respondents stated that their financial situation is "Only in Fair Shape". The next largest category with respondents is "Good Shape" with about 28 percent of respondents. About 16 percent of respondents stated that their financial situation is in "Poor Shape" and only about 8 percent of respondents reported their financial situation as in "Excellent Shape" making is the category with the smallest amount of respondents.

[Insert Figure 5 About Here]

Figure 6 shows that the majority of respondents are citizens of the United States with over 70 percent of respondents reporting U.S. citizenship and only around 23 percent of respondents claiming to not have U.S. citizenship.

[Insert Figure 6 About Here]

Figure 7 shows the distribution of the third dependent variable, the respondent's opinion on the amount of immigrants in the United States. As seen in figure 9, about 55 percent of respondent's state that they believe there is the right amount of immigrants in the U.S. About 29 percent of respondent's state that there are too many immigrants and around 16 percent state that there are too few immigrants.

[Insert Figure 7 About Here]

Bivariate Findings

As shown in Table 2, at the *p* level of .01 there are 10 significant correlations among my variables. Interestingly, there is no significant correlation between my independent variable of Spanish Proficiency and dependent variable of Too Many Immigrants. There are no statistically significant relationships between Too Many Immigrants and the control variables of Financial Situation, and Republican.

[Insert Table 2]

All of the significant correlations are weak ones but range in being positive or negative. There is a positive weak correlation between the respondent being Republican and Financial Situation, meaning that respondents who identify as Republican are more likely to state that their financial situation closer to being in excellent shape. There is also an extremely weak positive correlation between the variables of Women and Too Many Immigrants. This means that respondents who are women are more likely to state that they believe there are too many immigrants in the United States. Women is so significantly correlated with Financial Situation. The correlation is a weak negative one meaning that respondents who are women are more likely to state that their financial situation is lower, closer to being in bad shape.

The control variable of U.S Citizen is significantly correlated with four other variables. The first is a weak negative correlation with Too Many Immigrants. As respondents increase in age, they are less likely to state that there are too many immigrants in the United States. U.S Citizenship is also negatively correlated with Spanish Proficiency. Interestingly, if the respondent is a U.S Citizen they are less likely they are to be proficient in Spanish. U.S.

Citizenship is positively correlated with Financial Situation which means that respondents who are U.S. citizens are more likely to state that their financial situation is in good shape. Lastly, U.S. Citizen is positively correlated with Republican. Respondents who are U.S Citizens are more likely to be Republican.

As shown in table 2, the last control variable of Age is significant with 3 other variables. There is a statistically significant relationship between Age and Too Many Immigrants. Respondents who are older are more likely to state that there are too many immigrants. Age is also positively correlated with Republican. This means that respondents who are older are more likely to state that they are Republican. The last significant relationship is between the variables of Age and U.S. Citizen. Respondents who are older are more likely to be U.S. citizens.

Multivariate Findings

Table 3 illustrates the results of the multivariate regression model. As shown in the table, about five percent of the variation in responses for "Too Many Immigrants" can be explained by all of the variables accounted for ($R^2 =. 045$). The regression equation is significant according to the *P* - value of the linear regression analysis.

[Insert Table 3]

Table 3 presents the unstandardized (*b*) and standardized (*β*) regression coefficients of all the variables on predicting responses for the dependent variable of Too Many Immigrants. The only variables that are significant in this regression are the control variables of U.S Citizen and Age ($p < .01$). If the respondent is a U.S citizen then they will score 1.85 less than someone who is not a U.S citizen on the question of Too Many Immigrants (*b* = -.185). For every year the older

a respondent is, then they score .005 points closer to stating that they believe there are too many immigrants in the U.S ($b = .005$).

The standardized column helps determine which of the two significant variables is the best predictor of believing there are too many immigrants in the U.S. Based on the standardized coefficients, both U.S. Citizen ($\beta = -.117$) and Age ($\beta = .139$) are very close in significance but age is clearly a stronger predictor.

DISCUSSION

The results of the multivariate regression reveal that there is no significant relationship between the independent variable of Spanish Proficiency and the dependent variable of Too Many Immigrants. Therefore my hypothesis of individuals who have low scores of Spanish Proficiency are more likely to have negative attitudes towards immigration by stating that there are too many immigrants in the United States. My control variables of being a U.S. citizen and age are what proved to be significant instead.

Spanish Proficiency was treated as a possible variable to account for cultural ties, perhaps speak to generation status and overall attachment to a culture outside of the U.S. (Fisherman 1971; Tran 2010). Following this logic, then higher levels of Spanish Proficiency would lead to positive attitudes toward immigration because of that connect to a community outside of the U.S. However this is not the case at all and in this study it is not even significant.

Social Identity Theory is a framework that can help interpret and understand why these two variables of U.S Citizen and Age are overall better predictors and significant than any other variable in this study. In the process of creating in-groups and out-groups even within the Latinx

community, respondents could have built their most salient identities around their age (Tajfel and Turner 1986). U.S. Citizen can speak to respondents still strongly identifying with their Latinx roots instead of their identity as a citizen of the United States.

Older individuals holding more negative attitudes towards immigration can be explained by things such as when they migrated, generation status, how long they've lived in the United States, peers and so much more. As Vega and Ortiz found (2017) ideological context can be a very influential factor. Perhaps older Latinx are being influence by peer's belief. Social comparison is also a possible explanation for the beliefs of older individuals. Individuals that migrated due to different historical circumstances may be comparing their own journeys to modern migration patterns. Social comparison can exist even within one social group.

It is also very important to keep in mind the current political climate that this survey was conducted in. Pew Research Center National Survey of Hispanics changes it's questions every year to account for different topics and themes. In 2018 the survey has several questions centered around immigration and the current Trump era. Negative rhetoric around immigration was clearly referenced and this is a possible outside influence on responses.

CONCLUSION

This study was centered on the research question of what the effect of Spanish proficiency is on attitudes towards immigration within the Latinx community. Utilizing the 2018 Pew Research National survey of Latinos a total of 1,069 respondents were analyzed. The variable of Too Many Immigrants was used as a measure of attitudes toward immigration. Spanish proficiency does not have a statistically significant relationship with believing there are

too many immigrants in the U.S which means that my hypothesis was disconfirmed. Instead the control variables of being a U.S. citizen and age were found to be significant. Both variables are predictors of responses with U.S. citizenship having a negative relationship and Age having a positive one. Respondents who are U.S citizenships are less likely to believe that there are too many immigrants in the U.S while respondents who are older are more likely to believe this.

In this study, relying on Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1978; Tajfel and Turner 1986) other identities have proven to be more significant than simply having ties to a culture. Spanish proficiency was used to help measure this cultural tie, but it was found to be insignificant. Reflecting on this, individuals are basing their identities on what feels most salient for them. For Latinx who are U.S. citizens their Latinidad and connection to it is very important. Older Latinx individuals in the study seem to have the opposite experience. The social identification aspect of Social Identity Theory is the way that individuals build their own identities and what hold most value. Social comparison is the way that social groups are compared and how individuals make sense of their own position in society.

There are many possible explanations that this study did not account for that will be addressed immediately at the end of the paper. Some of these being family reunification, the rhetoric around immigration and other frameworks such as group threat theory (Hood III and Morris 1997; Quillian, 1995).

Limitations and Future Research

The study focuses on one sole ethnic group in the United States but fails to account for many differentiation factors. There is no uniform Latinx experience and future research must

account for this. The main recommendation for future research is to have a much more intersectional approach.

One of these variables not account for is generation status which could be viewed as a better measure to a culture outside of the United States. There is a lot of existing literature on the significance of generation status in relation to the Latinx community. Fisherman's (1972) four-stage model of language shift states that by the third generation the native language is completely lost. This is one way that generational status is a significant variable to include in future research. Years residing in the United States is one way that generation status can be closely measured while also measuring assimilation into U.S. culture.

This study fails to account for different documentation status outside of just being a U.S. Citizen. A more representative status would include Latinx with different documentation status such as individuals on work visas, student visas and even undocumented individuals. Accounting for undocumented Latinx can be very difficult through surveys but including a qualitative aspect to this study would help account for this.

Race is another significant variable that was not accounted for in this study. Latinx is a racialized category but within the ethnic group exists different races and therefore racial experiences. One way that future research can account for this is to have surveyor's categorize respondents and compare it to how respondents choose to identify. Social Identity Theory emphasizes significance on how individuals choose to identify. The way Latinx identify racially and are identified can give insight to racialized experiences. A qualitative aspect to future research could help create a more detailed picture of the way Latinx in the U.S. build their attitudes toward immigration.

This study attempted to account for the effect of Spanish proficiency on attitudes toward immigration in the Latinx community. Although Spanish proficiency was not found to be a predictor for attitudes, both age and U.S. citizenship were. This study provides a foundation for future research to be done to explore these relationships.

REFERENCES

Akresh, Ilana R., Douglas S. Massey and Reanne Frank. 2014. "Beyond English Proficiency: Rethinking Immigrant Integration." *Social Science Research* 45:200-210.

Berg, Justin A. 2010. "Race, class, gender, and social space: Using an intersectional approach to study immigration attitudes." *The Sociological Quarterly* 51(2):278-302.

Berg, Justin A., and Shannon Morley. 2014. "Intersectionality and the Foreign-Born: Explaining the Variation in the Immigration Attitudes of Immigrants *." *Race, Gender & Class* 21(3/4):32-47.

David, Griffith. 2007. "Guestworkers, Enganchadores, and Changing Labor Relations in U.S. Rural Communities." *The Journal of Latino-Latin American Studies* 2(4):74-86.

Fisherman, Joshua A. 1972. *The Sociology of Language: An interdisciplinary Social Science Approach to Language in Society.* New York: Newbury House Publishers.

Flores, Antonio, Mark H. Lopez and Jens M. Krogstad. 2019. "U.S. Hispanic population reached new high in 2018, but growth has slowed." Pew Research Center.

Fraga, Luis R., and David L. Leal. 2004. "Playing the "Latino Card": Race, Ethnicity, and National Party Politics." *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 1(2):297-317.

Fussell, Elizabeth. 2014. "Warmth of the Welcome: Attitudes Toward Immigrants and Immigration Policy in the United States." *The Annual Review of Sociology* 40:479-98.

Gans, Herbert J. 1979. "Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in

America." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2(1):1-20.

Guadalupe San, Miguel Jr., and Richard R. Valencia. 1998. "From the treaty of Guadalupe

Hidalgo to Hopwood: The education plight and struggle of Mexican Americans in the

Southwest." *Harvard Educational Review* 68(3):353-412.

Hernández, Kelly Lytle. 2006. "The Crimes and Consequences of Illegal Immigration: A Cross-

Border Examination of Operation Wetback, 1943 to 1954." *Western Historical Quarterly*

37:421-444.

Hitlin, Steven, J. S. Brown and Glen H. Elder Jr. 2007. "Measuring Latinos: Racial Vs. Ethnic

Classification and Self-Understandings." *Social Forces* 86(2):587-611.

Hood III, Marvin V., and Irwin L. Morris. 1997. "¿Amigo O Enemigo?: Context, Attitudes, and

Anglo Public Opinion Toward Immigration." *Social Science Quarterly* 78(2):309-323.

Knoll, Benjamin R. 2012. "¿Compañero o Extranjero? Anti-immigrant Nativism among Latino

Americans." *Social Science Quarterly* 93(4):911-31.

Lutz, Amy. 2006. "Spanish Maintenance among English-Speaking Latino Youth: The Role of

Individual and Social Characteristics." *Social Forces* 84(3):1417-33.

Mangum, Maurice and Ray Block Jr. 2018. "Social Identity Theory and Public Opinion towards

Immigration." *Social Sciences* 41(7):1-16.

Monforti, Jessica L., and Gabriel R. Sanchez. 2010. "The Politics of Perception: An

Investigation of the Presence and Sources of Perceptions of Internal Discrimination

among Latinos." *Social Science Quarterly* 91(1):245-65.

Massey, Douglas S. 1987."Understanding Mexican Migration to the United States." *American

Journal of Sociology* 92(6):1372-1403.

Massey, Douglas S., and Zai Liang. 1989. "The Long-Term Consequences of a Temporary Worker Program: The US Bracero Experience." *Population Research and Policy Review* 8(3):199-226.

Newton, Lina Y. 2000. "Why Some Latinos Supported Proposition 187: Testing Economic Threat and Cultural Identity Hypotheses*" *Social Science Quarterly* 81(1):180-93.

Oropesa, R. S. 2015. "English, Spanish and Ethno-Racial Receptivity in a New Destination: A Case Study of Dominican Immigrants in Reading, PA." *Social Science Research* 52:132-146.

Pew Research Hispanic Center. 2018. *2018 National Survey of Latinos*. Washington, D.C.

Phillipson, Robert. "English: from British empire to corporate empire." *Sociolinguistic Studies* 5(3): 441-64.

Quillian, Lincoln. 1995. "Prejudice as a response to perceived group threat: Population composition and anti-immigrant and racial prejudice in Europe." *American Sociological Review 60(*4):586-611.

Rocha., Rene R., Thomas Longoria, Robert D. Wrinkle, Benjamin R. Knoll, Jerry L. Polinard and James Wenzel. 2011. "Ethnic Context and Immigration Policy Preferences among Latinos and Anglos." *Social Science Quarterly* 92(1):1-19.

Rouse, Stella M., Betina C. Wilkinson and James C. Garand. 2010. "Divided Loyalties? Understanding Variation in Latino Attitudes Toward Immigration." *Social Science Quarterly* 91(3):856-882.

Rumbaut, Rubén G., Douglas S. Massey and Fran D. Bean. 2006. "Linguistic Life Expectancies: Immigrant Language Retention in Southern California." *Population and Development Review* 32(3):447-60.

Skop, Emily H. 2001. "Race and Place in the Adaptation of Mariel Exiles." *International*

    Migration Review 35(2):449-471.

Stringer, Amy. 2018. "Crossing the Border: Latino Attitudes Toward Immigration

    Policy." *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 19(3):701-715.

Tajfel, Henri. 1978. "Social categorization processes and group behavior" Pp. 27–60 in *Social*

    Categorization, Social Identity, and Social Comparisons, edited by Henri Tajfel. London:

    Academic Press.

Tajfel, Henri, and John Turner. 1986. "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior" Pp.

    7–24 in *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, edited by William Austin and Stephen

    Worchel. Chicago: Nelson Hall Publishers.

Torres, Vasti. 2004. "The Diversity among Us: Puerto Ricans, Cuban Americans, Caribbean

    Americans, and Central and South Americans." *New Directions for Student*

    Services 2004(105):5-16.

Tran, Van C. 2010. "English Gain Vs. Spanish Loss? Language Assimilation among Second-

    Generation Latinos in Young Adulthood." *Social Forces* 89(1):257-284

Vega, Irene I., and Vilma Ortiz. 2017. "Mexican Americans and Immigration Attitudes: A

    Cohort Analysis of Assimilation and Group Consciousness." *Social Problems* 65(2):137-

    53.

Table 1. Means, Medians, and Standard Deviations for Variables ($N = 1062$)

Variable	Mean	Median	Std. Dev
Too Many Immigrants	2.13	2.00	.66
Spanish Proficiency	6.18	6.00	1.85
Financial Situation	2.29	2.00	.83
Republican	1.71	2.00	.71
Women	.42	.00	.50
U.S Citizen	.77	1.00	.42
Age	46.90	47.00	17.50

Table 2. Correlations (r) Between Attitudes Towards Immigration and Six Variables (listwise deletion, $N = 1062$)

Variable	Spanish Proficiency	Financial Situation	Republican	Women	U.S Citizen	Age
Too Many Immigrants	-.058	-.039	.050	.083*	-.091*	.152*
Spanish Proficiency		-.005	-.077	.075	-.141*	-.033
Financial Situation			.114*	-.099*	.135*	-.057
Republican				.017	.204*	.168*
Women					.025	.111*
U.S Citizen						.048

* $p < .01$

Table 3. Regression of Too Many Immigrants on All Variables

Variable	b	β
Spanish Proficiency	-.026	-.073
Financial Situation	-.011	-.014
Republican	.042	.045
Women	.099	.073
U.S Citizen	-.185	-.117*
Age	.005	.139*
Constant	2.095	

$R^2 = .045$; $F (6, 1062) = 8.341$; $p < .01$
* $p < .01$
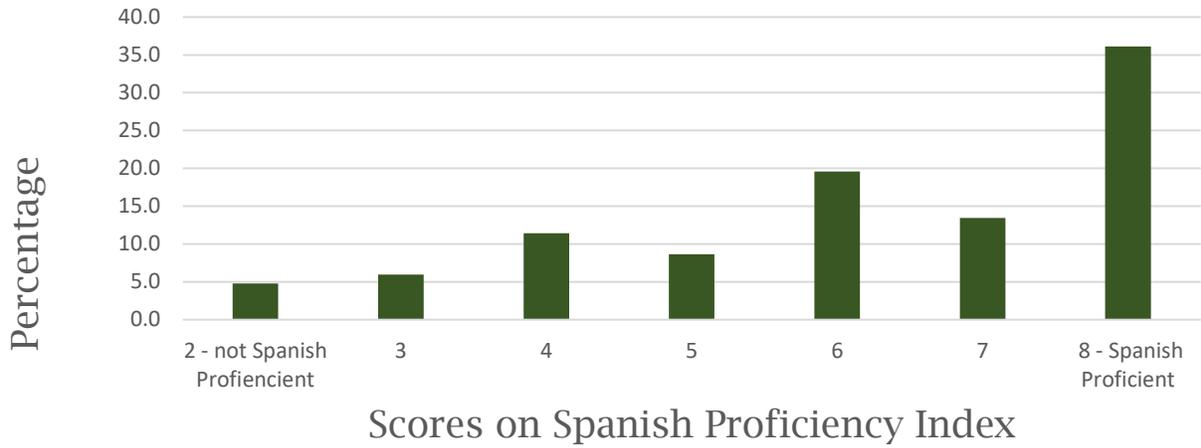
Figure 1. Bar Graph of Scores on Spanish Proficiency Index
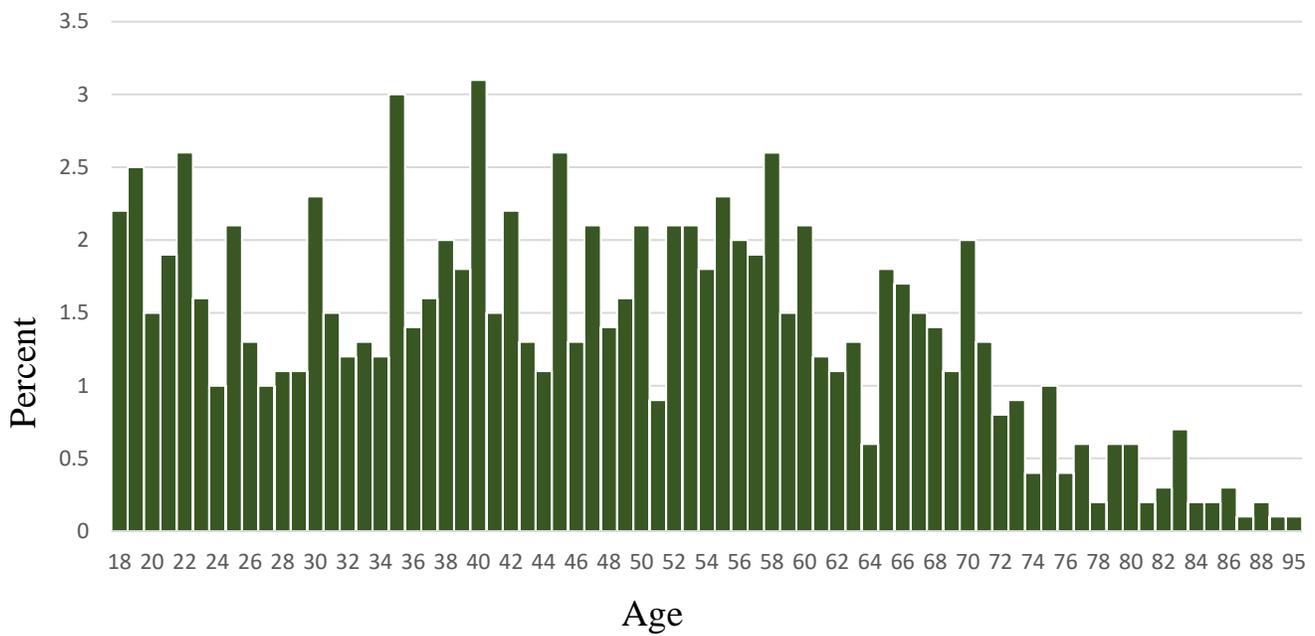
Figure 2. Bar Graph of Respondent's Age
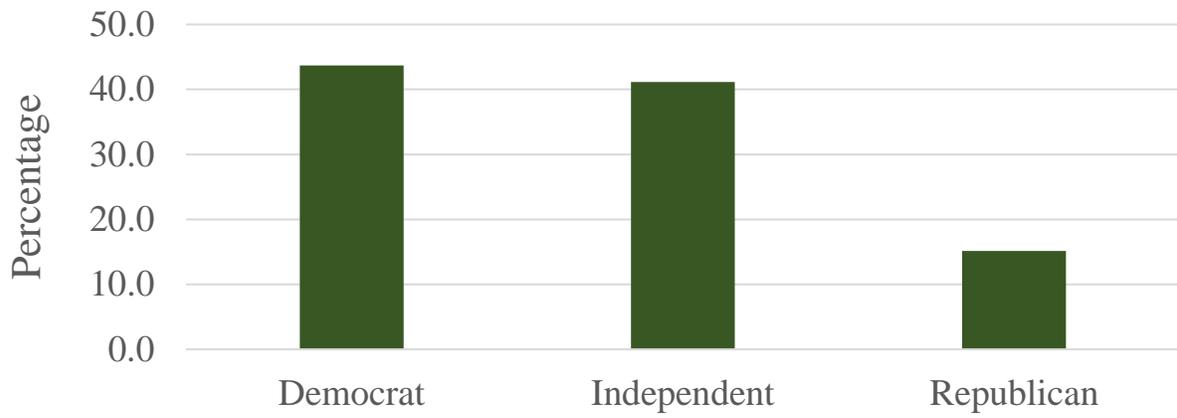
Figure 3. Bar Graph of Respondent's Political Affiliation
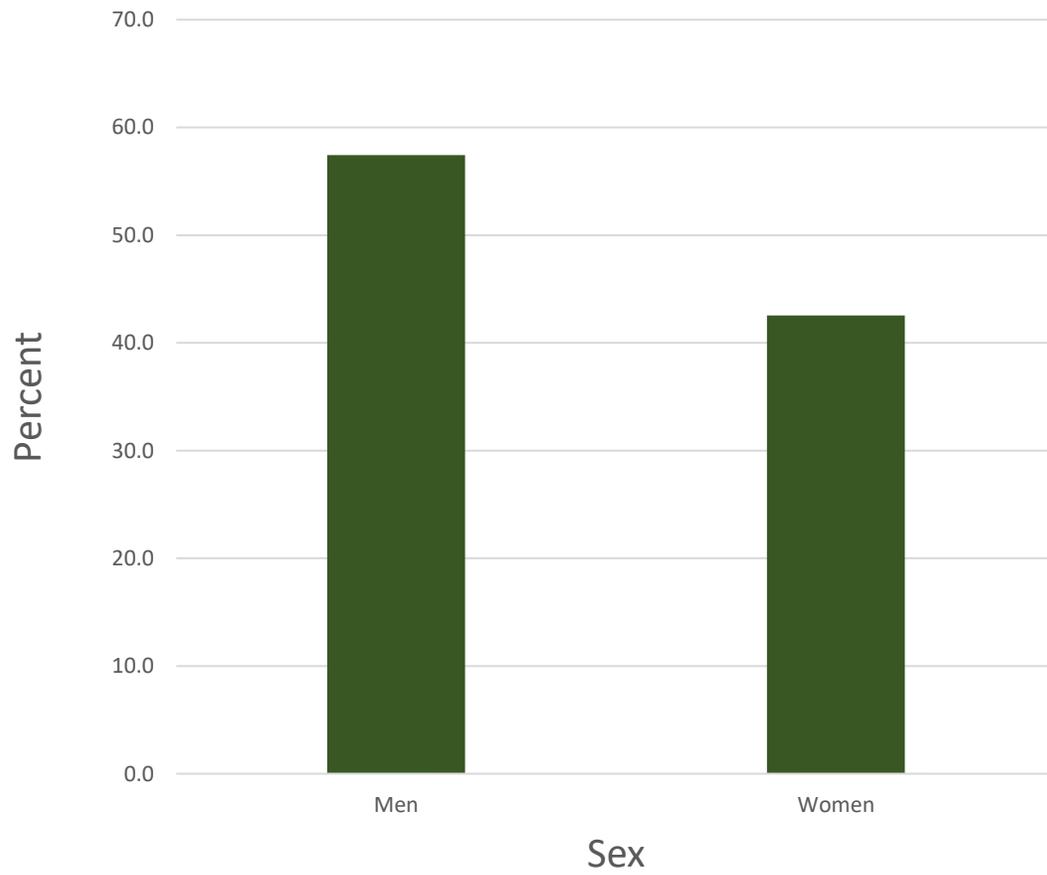
Figure 4. Bar Graph of Respondent's Gender
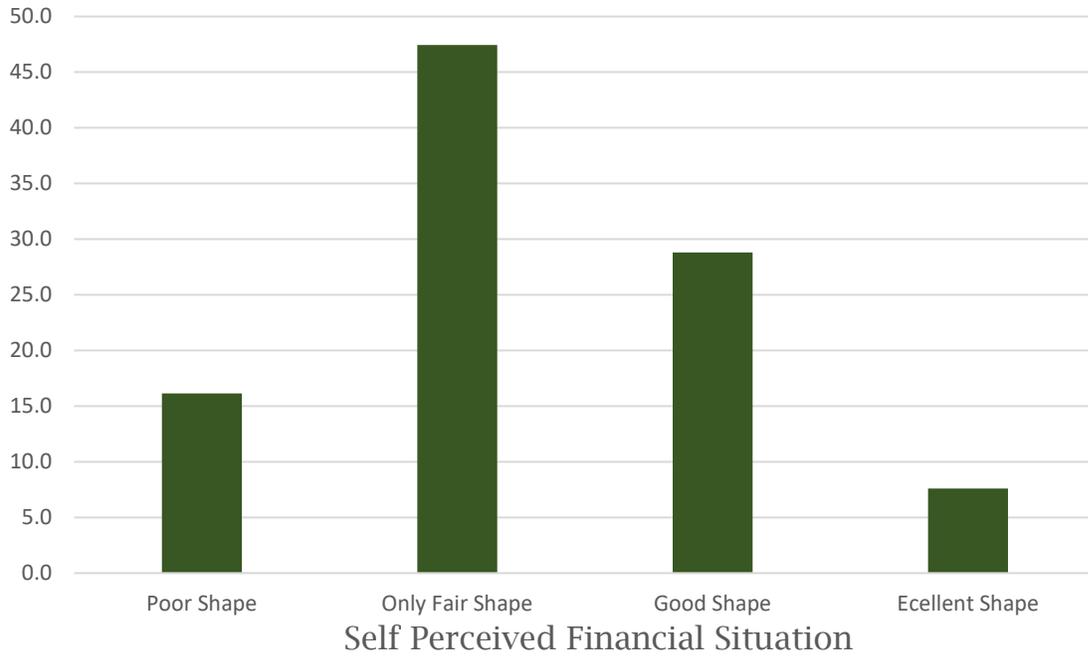
*Figure 5. Bar Graph of Financial Situation*
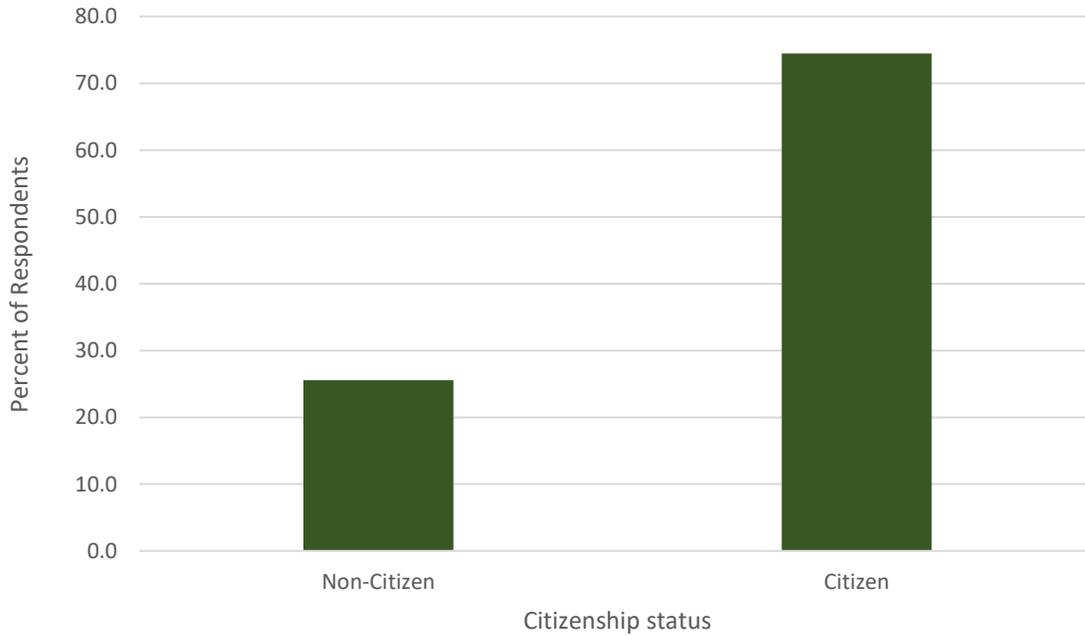
*Figure 6. Bar Graph of Respondent's Citizenship Status*
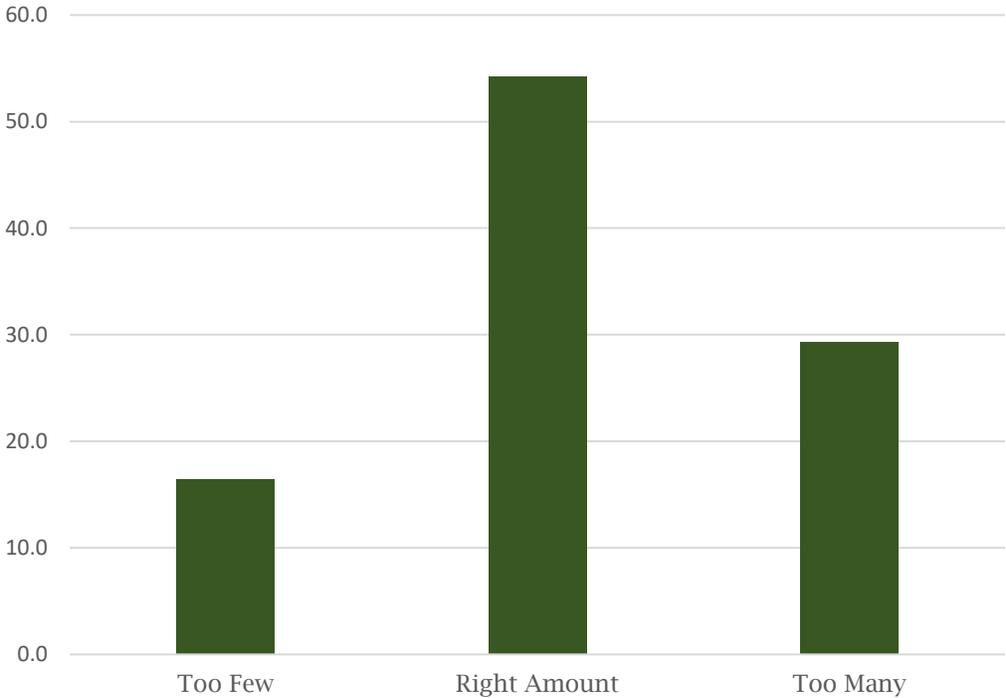
Figure 7. Bar Graph of Respondent's Opinion on Number of Immigrant in the U.S.