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Public Attitudes Toward Immigration Policy Across the Legal/Illegal Divide: The Role of Categorical and Attribute-Based Decision-Making

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Abstract Scholars debate the relative strength of economic and 'socio-psychological' sources of anti-immigrant sentiment. However, the literature often fails to distinguish legal from illegal immigration and therefore overlooks a major instance in which this debate is moot. To address this issue, we develop a theory that recognizes two different modes of evaluating immigrants: "attribute-based" judgment, in which respondents weigh immigrants' desirability based on individual characteristics—human capital, race, language ability, and so on—and "categorical" judgment, which disregards these altogether. Categorical judgments arise when a policy issue triggers blanket considerations of justice or principle that obviate considerations about putative beneficiaries' individual merits, instead evoking overriding beliefs about the desirability of the policy as a whole or casting the entire category as uniformly deserving or undeserving. We use experimental evidence from two national surveys to show that the principal distinction between attitudes toward legal and illegal immigration is not in the relative weight of immigrants' attributes but the much greater prevalence of categorical assessments of illegal

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immigration policy, much of it rooted in rigid moralistic convictions about the importance of strict adherence to rules and laws.

Introduction

Addressing the status of an estimated 12 million immigrants living in the United States without permission is a critical component of legislative efforts to pass comprehensive immigration reform. For nearly two decades, attempts by both parties to resolve this issue have stalled in the face of stark political divisions. Polling regularly indicates that a majority of the U.S. public is receptive to the idea of a limited legalization program, contingent on a variety of programmatic benchmarks. But a substantial minority intensely and intransigently rejects all legalization proposals as "amnesties" that affront the rule of law. We also know that illegal immigration arouses greater hostility than legal (e.g. Schildkraut 2012; Merolla et al. 2013), but much remains to be learned about why this is so and whether opposition to each type of immigration results from similar psychological motivations. Public opinion scholarship has primarily focused on the relative power of economic and "socio-psychological" threats as explanations for diffuse anti-immigrant sentiment but only rarely has distinguished between legal and illegal immigration (see Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014 for a review and references).

This paper argues that people assess policy choices regarding legal and illegal immigration in fundamentally different ways. One mode of judgment, prevalent in the literature on opinions about immigrants, we label "attribute-based." It is characterized by respondents evaluating immigrants according to their personal characteristics, including perceived ethnic or cultural "fit" with the mainstream, their ability to contribute economically, or possibly the threat they pose to one's own economic well-being (Hanson et al. 2007; though see Citrin et al. 1990; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010). An alternative mode of judgment is "categorical," in which distinctions between potential beneficiaries of a policy and between the diverse circumstances and contexts in which it might be implemented are completely discarded. A categorical judgment is in essence an up or down decision on the desirability of the policy as a whole, applied uniformly and irrespective of situational particulars. Categorical judgment may emerge for a variety of reasons, we argue, but is especially likely to be widespread when a public policy issue engages ontological considerations of justice, right, or principle. In short, our approach shifts the debate over what kinds of attribute are more influential in assessing immigrants to the prior question of whether such attributes are considered at all. Thus we reconsider the literature's nearly exclusive focus on socio-psychological and economic threats (e.g. Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014a, b; Citrin et al. 1990; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010; Hopkins 2013; Schildkraut 2011; Sniderman et al. 2004; Valentino and Iyengar 2011; Brader et al. 2008) and

investigate how and why an additional, moralistic motivation overrides these factors when it comes to illegal immigration.

Our investigation is based on two recent surveys that employ conjoint analysis. Most survey experiments exploring immigration attitudes randomly vary only one or two attributes at a time using vignettes or short characterizations (e.g. Brader et al. 2008; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010; Hopkins 2013; Sniderman et al. 2004; Valentino and Iyengar 2011). Conjoint analysis, however, exposes subjects to numerous randomly varied immigrant characteristics simultaneously, and this permits us to disentangle the independent influence of each (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014; Hainmueller et al. 2014). Our own version of this approach allows respondents to choose a favored prospect out of a larger choice set as usual, but they may also respond categorically by rejecting or accepting *all* candidate profiles presented to them.

The data confirm that the fundamental distinction between public reactions to legal and illegal immigrants is in the much greater prevalence of categorical judgment about the latter group. Fully forty percent of our survey respondents either rejected or accepted all illegal immigrants they assessed regardless of those immigrants' ethnic, linguistic, and socio-economic attributes. Approximately two-thirds of those are categorically opposed, and this reaction stems in large part from a particularly rigid, moralistic conviction about the importance of strict adherence to rules and laws. We further isolate the importance of illegality per se by exploring a contrast with evaluations of legal immigrants: for one thing, categorical rejection is approximately three times more prevalent when the object is illegal immigrants rather than legal ones, all else equal; second, categorical rejection of illegal immigrants is tied to broader support for law-abidingness in a way that categorical rejection of legals is not. We do find some evidence for a smaller group of categorically positive attitudes toward illegal immigrants as a group, and this mode of judgment is associated with a different set of core values, namely humanitarianism, egalitarianism, and empathy toward illegal immigrants. That said, the dominant finding here is that illegality per se is a much more powerful trigger of categorical rejection than it is of categorical acceptance.

Our emphasis on categorical response is not intended to downplay the importance of attribute-based considerations, and indeed a majority of our respondents do appear to evaluate even illegal immigrants based on ethnic and socio-economic characteristics. In short, and in line with recent literature, ethnocentrism, concerns about assimilability, and socio-tropic economic considerations all drive anti-immigrant sentiment. That said, these attributes exert roughly equal weight (on average) regardless of whether the subject is illegal or legal. That, in addition to the fact that prevalence of categorical response varies sharply across domains even controlling for immigrant characteristics, indicates that standard identity-based and socio-economic explanations are of limited use in helping us understand why illegality makes people approach the immigration issue differently.

The particularly important role of categorical judgment in illegal immigration attitudes means that we must not assume the underpinnings of public opinion toward different categories of immigrants are identical (cf. Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014). In terms of public opinion scholarship, this matters because it suggests a new way in

which issue polarization might occur, and in turn suggests that we need a broader theory about what kinds of issues are likely to arouse categorical response and why. On a more practical level, our results also help explain why comprehensive immigration reform remains elusive despite strong majority support for most of its specific provisions (including a path to citizenship): many of those opposed apply categorical judgments to this policy and are thus intransigently closed to the sorts of compromises that appear necessary for any program to pass legislative muster.

Attribute-Based Judgment

It is well established that attitudes about immigration are tied to beliefs about whether immigrants satisfy the respondent's normative criteria for "Americanness." Perceived threats to a country's distinctive identity and culture drive much anti-immigrant sentiment in the U.S. and elsewhere (Citrin et al. 1990; Hainmueller and Hangartner 2013; Schildkraut 2011; Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007; Wong 2010; Wright et al. 2012). Americans almost universally endorse acculturation as a prerequisite to full-fledged membership in the national community—speaking English, holding American values, feeling American, and getting ahead on one's own—and hostility can arise when these conditions are not met (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014b; Newman et al. 2012). Echoes of nineteenth century nativist movements that rejected immigrants who did not match the country's Anglo-Saxon Protestant roots as unassimilable (Smith 1997) also persist in recent work on the ethnocentric and religious bases of anti-immigrant sentiment (e.g. Jacobs and Theiss-Morse 2013; Kalkan et al. 2009; Kinder and Kam 2009; Knoll 2009). Along these lines, Brader et al. (2008) find that anxiety over immigration is related to anti-Latino sentiment, and several studies tie anti-Hispanic bias to hostility toward illegal immigration in particular (Masuoka and Junn 2013; Hartman et al. 2014; Ramakrishnan et al. 2010). Finally, the literature also points to the importance of immigrants' human capital—education and work record, for example—possibly as an indication of the potential to contribute to the national economy (e.g. Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014b).

Explanations based on prejudice against particular ethnic groups (as opposed to generalized ethnocentrism; cf. Hopkins 2013), national identity and acculturation (Theiss-Morse 2009), and human-capital (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014) suggest that immigrants' individual attributes will influence how Americans react to them. Immigrants who show signs of striving to assimilate—taking English classes or seeking work even without always securing it—may be viewed in a positive light (cf. Hopkins 2013). European origin and Christianity should appeal to those who endorse racial and religious criteria for national membership. Mexican immigrants should fare worse than those from Germany and France and possibly also than those from Asia (cf. Masuoka and Junn 2013). Immigrants from Islamic countries may strike some Americans as especially threatening to American culture (Sides and Gross 2013) and thus incur a larger penalty.

Only rarely has this search for the attributes that condition attitudes toward immigrants considered whether their influence varies depending on immigrants'

legal status.[1] In the case of many specific attributes, one might expect a similar effect on evaluations of legal and illegal immigrants. Americans might place an equal premium on human capital and markers of civic integration with the native majority regardless of immigrants' legal status. On the other hand, one clear instance in which the literature gives us reason to anticipate differences in the effects of legal and illegal immigrants' attributes is in the effect of national origin, a marker of ethnicity and race. Based on theories of "modern" or "symbolic" racism (Kinder and Sanders 1996), some argue that anti-Latino prejudice expresses itself in particularly harsh condemnation of "transgressive behaviors," including overstaying a visa, committed by Latino immigrants from other backgrounds (Hartman et al. 2014). Put differently, Americans may also only permit themselves to feel or express prejudice if it can be couched in a moral rationale. It is also possible that Americans will more readily express ethnic prejudice when offered the "cover" of a transgressed a social or legal norm than when such cover is absent. The resulting expectation is that immigrants' national origin will loom larger in Americans' judgments of illegal immigrants than legal immigrants.

Categorical Judgment

Unlike the debate over legal immigration, where even the most fervently pro- and anti-immigrant groups do not advocate a completely open or closed border, the debate over illegal immigration is fraught with normative arguments that apply categorically to all of the country's illegal immigrants (Tichenor 2002, 2012). Some supporters of legalization regard decades of lax enforcement as a tacit sanctioning (even encouragement) of the presence of illegal immigrants, largely to benefit employers seeking pliable low-wage labor. In this context, they regard forcing millions to "live in the shadows," without civil rights or easy access to social services, as an affront to human rights and an abdication of the country's obligation to those toiling to line employers' pockets. Opponents of legalization, on the other hand, often cast the issue in strict moral terms, regarding unlawful presence in the country as a blanket disqualification. To give any illegal immigrant a path to citizenship constitutes "amnesty," an act that transgresses respect for the law, rewards violators, and unjustly pushes aside those who have "played by the rules." Appeals to "the law" feature prominently in the literature of anti-immigrant groups such as Numbers USA and the Center for Immigration Studies (Vaughan 2013).

On both sides of the issue, this rhetoric is distinguished both by the categorical language used to cast illegal immigrants as an undifferentiated group, and the moralistic arguments for blanket rejection or acceptance. To the extent that such rhetoric resonates in mass opinion, we would expect large numbers of Americans to harbor a "categorical opinion" about legalization. That is, many should prefer to reject or include illegal immigrants across the board, irrespective of their individual

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[1] One partial exception is Ramakrishnan et al. (2010), who randomly vary a hypothetical immigrant's national origin and legal status simultaneously. But they do not report direct comparisons of the role of an illegal and legal immigrants' national origin.

attributes. This goes well beyond simply restating that Americans are more hostile to illegal immigrants than to legal ones, or that the distribution of opinion on legalization is likely to be polarized rather than consensual. We return to the latter issue below, but in the meantime underline that *categorical* opinions are not tantamount to *strong* ones: a respondent may be strongly opposed to allowing most illegal immigrants to become citizens while still believing that some merit citizenship based on their individual attributes. This hypothetical respondent's preferences are strong but not categorical. For categorical thinkers, by contrast, no level of human capital, English-language ability, or ethno-religious conformity would result in acceptance of the idea that a given illegal immigrant deserves to be given a path to U.S. citizenship.

Recent work in political psychology suggests that when individuals view issues in "moralistic" terms, the result is an outlook that is more both more extreme and more rigid (Ryan 2014, 2015). To the extent that highly moralistic elite rhetoric on illegal immigration policy filters down to the mass level, it should engage concerns about law and order that result in blanket all-or-nothing positions and cause many Americans to overlook immigrants' individual attributes as a relevant consideration. To the extent that our causal argument holds, we would clearly expect *more* categorical opinion toward illegal immigrants (where the rhetoric is more unabashedly moralistic) than toward legal ones (where it is less so), holding immigrant attributes constant. It also follows that whatever moral concerns respondents harbor about rewarding law-breakers through legalization should be mitigated when it comes to people who were only children when they broke the law and who therefore have no responsibility for the violation. Legal status for "Dreamers"—illegal immigrants brought to the country as children—should evoke lower rates of categorical opposition than legal status for illegal immigrants in general. Yet some Americans may nevertheless worry about a "slippery slope" of rewarding parents who broke the law or the unfairness of promoting anyone here illegally ahead of immigrants who "play by the rules." As a result, categorical opposition to a "Dream Act" that provides legal status only to those brought illegally as children may still be more prevalent than categorical opposition to the admission of prospective legal immigrants.

We can also test the moralistic bases of categorical response by exploring its associations with (presumably) relevant individual-level political predispositions. First, political conservatism and authoritarianism are linked with intolerance of ambiguity and the desire to maintain rigid social hierarchies (e.g. Jost et al. 2009), so we would expect them to be associated with categorical opposition to legalization. Second, if a genuine moral conviction in favor of law-abidingness motivates categorical opposition, then we would expect categorical opposition to be higher among those who tend to view other legal infractions—tax or insurance fraud, buying stolen goods, traffic violations, and so on—as serious, even when authoritarian tendencies and conservatism are taken into account. Conversely, both "humanitarians" and "egalitarians" should categorically support illegal immigrants at higher rates: the former should be more concerned about societal responsibility to assist and extend political rights to those lured to the U.S. The latter, meanwhile, would likely also be averse to the idea of a two-tiered society and might even object

to a legalization program that applies to some and not to others, leading to blanket support.

In sum, we argue that attitudes about illegal immigration are more likely to be of a "categorical" nature than attitudes about legal immigration, and that this is in large part explained by the fact that the former issue is more likely to trigger moralistic considerations tied to legality per se that override to consideration of immigrants' specific attributes (race, education, and so on). This is not to suggest that moral considerations as such cannot result in certain kinds of attribute-based reasoning. For example, supporting the immigration of co-religionists is potentially a moral judgment. Nor do we mean to suggest that categorical response is *always* the product of the moralistic considerations raised. For instance, Americans may be tempted to respond 'categorically' to immigrants because of ethnocentrism (c.f. Kinder and Kam 2009) or some other core value. The point is that we would expect a particular type of moral emphasis on the seriousness of failing to abide by laws and rules to drive a tendency towards reject illegal immigrants (versus legal ones) across-the-board, irrespective of individual immigrants' attributes.

While immigration policy (and in particular the legal/illegal distinction) usefully illustrates how categorical considerations can overpower attribute-based ones, there is every reason to believe that this dynamic may emerge on other issues. Modes of evaluation akin to what we refer to as "attribute-based" response are common in other domains as well and need not focus on the attributes of putative policy beneficiaries alone. Many Americans reject the extreme positions of completely outlawing or always permitting abortion, for example, instead basing policy judgments on the circumstances and tradeoffs involved in particular cases. And whereas Americans may "hate welfare" in the abstract, many people's judgments can be swayed by considerations about the individual recipients' "deservingness" as inferred from a combination of personal qualities and or contextual circumstances that are independent of the recipient's attributes (Sniderman et al. 1991). Even so, categorical response may emerge on these issues just as it does on illegal immigration: one may speculate that it characterizes those on polar opposites of the abortion debate: the moral basis of their positions pertains to the policy as a whole and is seldom adjusted to accommodate particulars of a situation. A smaller minority of Americans may also be categorically opposed to welfare benefits, rejecting the policy as unjust irrespective of who receives benefits and why. As in the case of the legal-illegal immigration divide, identifying these distinct bases for evaluating public policies may help explain why some policies generate high levels of public flexibility and openness to compromise while others foster higher levels of intensely rigid preferences.

A Unified Approach to Testing Categorical and Attribute-Based Judgments

Experimental studies of immigration attitudes typically manipulate a hypothetical immigrant's attributes one or two at a time, using vignettes or other treatments. However, treatment effects in these studies can be difficult to interpret because attributes are often correlated, in actuality or in subjects' minds, with other

attributes that are not explicitly varied (see, e.g., Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014b). For example, an immigrant's country of origin might evoke a sense of cultural threat, if ethnicity or language is salient to subjects in a study, or economic threat, if subjects have in mind differences in the modal skills and job prospects of immigrants from different countries.

Recent work (Hainmueller et al. 2014) proposes conjoint analysis as a way of overcoming this problem, and our design here builds on that approach. Specifically, respondents make a series of choices between two or more alternatives presented side-by-side as columns in a table. Each row represents an attribute-category, with the input randomly selected from a discrete set of potential values. Each attribute is assigned independently and at random, and thus cannot confound the value of any other attribute within profiles or across them. We focus on what Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto term the "average marginal component effect" or "AMCE" (ibid., p. 3). The AMCE is the treatment effect of changing the value of a single attribute in a profile (for example, the effect of changing an immigrant's language ability from no English to fluent English). Since the attributes are all randomly assigned, the difference in the percentage of immigrants included who have one value of the attribute category rather than another furnishes an unbiased causal estimate of the AMCE with respect to those levels of the attribute.

Typically, respondents must choose one candidate from each set, which is problematic in the present context because it rules out the expression of categorical judgment—the rejection or acceptance of all prospects—by design. We relax this constraint by allowing respondents to opt for "neither" candidate or for "both". Respondents are classified 'categorical' if they consistently choose to include "neither" immigrant or "both" immigrants across all five pairings they assess, and so the label is assigned on the basis of a series of choices rather than any specific choice.

Allowing 'neither' and 'both' options may encourage categorical response for reasons other than the moralistic considerations at the heart of our story. They may, for example, take a shortcut through the task and opt for these response options without carefully considering the specific traits of each candidate, thus generating "categorical response" via a satisficing mechanism altogether different from the moralistic reasoning we underline. Other potentially confounding sources of categorical response include person-positivity bias, or possibly social desirability effects on the positive side. However, such concerns are minimized for us because we are less interested in the absolute incidence of categorical response per se, than in how it varies systematically according to whether respondents are assigned, at random, to evaluate legal versus illegal immigrants (see more on design of Study 2, below and in supplementary Appendix B). If we observe substantial differences among the latter, all else equal, this would be difficult indeed to chalk up simply to either some artifact of the survey task or some psychological factor without some explanation about why such confounders might impact assessment of legal and illegal immigrants differently. We also included a standard test of respondents' attentiveness to the survey, and verified that all results reported below hold even if "inattentive" respondents were excluded from the analysis.

Data and Measures

Our results are based on two national surveys of Americans. Study 1 sampled 810 (767 native-born) and was fielded online by YouGov/Polimetrix in March 2013. Study 2, which sampled 2654 (2467 native-born), was conducted by Survey Sampling International between November 20th and December 3rd, 2013. These surveys are based on opt-in panels rather than probability sampling, though we note that sample demographics and attitudes to standard political predispositions on immigration and other issues are in line with other major surveys (see supplementary Appendix A). It is also worth noting that surveying via the Internet may limit social desirability effects that can influence expressed preferences (Hainmueller and Hangartner 2013).

Each survey had a somewhat different goal. Study 1 aimed to explore the foundations of the "pathway to citizenship" issue in particular, whereas Study 2 moved away from assessing opinion toward a realistic policy proposal and was designed instead to probe contrasting responses to providing permanent legal residency to legal immigrants, illegal immigrants, and "Dreamers," respectively. In both studies, we limit the analysis to respondents born in the U.S. since immigrants presumably approach these issues quite differently from natives (e.g. Dancygier and Saunders 2006).

Dependent Variables

In both studies, respondents assessed five pairs of immigrants. In Study 1, all received the following prompt: "Please consider a program that would allow immigrants living in the U.S. illegally to get legal status and eventually qualify for U.S. citizenship, as long as they meet certain requirements, like paying back taxes and passing background checks. We'd like your opinion about which sorts of individuals, if any, should qualify for this program. For each pair of individuals presented to you here, both of whom are illegal immigrants, tell us which you would prefer to be granted legal status and provided a pathway to citizenship. You can also say that you would prefer that neither or both be given this status." This task was designed to tap, as closely as possible, support for legalization based on proposed "path to citizenship" legislation.

In Study 2, each respondent received at random one of three prompts motivating their five decisions. In the *legal* condition, the prompt was: "There are different opinions about what sorts of people from other countries should be given official permission to come to the United States *legally* and live here permanently. We'd like to know your opinion. For each pair of people you see, please indicate which of the two you would prefer be given official permission to come to the United States *legally* and live here permanently, or whether you would prefer that neither or both be given permission." The *illegal* condition was: "There are different opinions about what sorts of people from other countries who are living in the United States *illegally* should be given official permission to live here permanently. We'd like to know your opinion. For each pair of people you see, both of whom are living in the

United States *illegally*, please indicate which of the two you would prefer be given official permission to live here permanently, or whether you would prefer that neither or both be given permission." Finally, the *Dreamer* condition was: "There are different opinions about what sorts of people from other countries who were *brought here as children* and are living in the United States *illegally* should be given official permission to live here permanently. We'd like to know your opinion. For each pair of people you see, all of whom were *brought here as children* and are living in the United States *illegally*, please indicate which of the two you would prefer be given official permission to live here permanently, or whether you would prefer that neither or both be given permission." These were designed to be as comparable as possible to isolate the effect of legal status per se. They do conflate the issue of already being in the U.S. versus coming from outside, which is something to bear in mind but essentially unavoidable if any realism is to be preserved.

In both studies, a grid appeared with "Immigrant 1" and "Immigrant 2" as columns, and a set of attributes as rows. Below the grid, respondents were asked in Study 1: "Which of these two individuals, both of whom are illegal immigrants, do you think should be granted legal status in the United States with an opportunity eventually to become a citizen?" In Study 2, this prompt was slightly altered to match the condition. In both Studies and all three conditions of Study 2, respondents could answer "Immigrant 1," "Immigrant 2," "Neither," "Both," or "Don't Know". For the complete protocol, see supplementary Appendix B.

Immigrant Attributes

The grid in Study 1 included eight randomly-assigned characteristics representing ethnocultural, human capital, and acculturation-related attributes: (1) level of formal education; (2) family structure (spouses' and children's immigration status); (3) employment history while in the U.S.; (4) English language ability; (5) country of origin; (6) work (mainly immigrant-focused or serving a largely native-born clientele); (7) religious background; and (8) number of years living in the U.S. We do not claim an exhaustive listing, but we sought to balance comprehensiveness against the cognitive strain that an excessively large number of attributes might provide.[2] Respondents in Study 2 assessed immigrants based on a somewhat different set of criteria, with "age" added and both "family structure" and "number of years living in the U.S." categories removed because they could not be applied equivalently across conditions. Finally, employment history in Study 2 dropped the previous reference to "in the U.S.", again to achieve comparability across all three conditions.

We note here that because attributes are assigned at random and independently, conjoint analysis can produce "unlikely" profiles, which some censor at the outset on external validity grounds (e.g. Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014b). We allowed

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[2] Encouragingly, respondents did not appear unduly burdened: in Study 1, for example, only 9.2 % of all choices garnered a "don't know" response, and over 83 % of respondents never chose that option. Of those that did, more than half did so three times or fewer out of five and fewer than a quarter answered "DK" for all five choices. DK responses are excluded from subsequent analyses.

complete randomization, but verified post hoc that eliminating the handful of unrealistic immigrant profiles (in particular the combination of Islamic religion with several national origin categories) does not alter our results.

Respondent Characteristics

Beyond standard demographic characteristics, our surveys also included measures of various political predispositions. Partisanship and liberal-conservative ideological identification are gauged using standard American National Election Study items. Following Kinder and Kam (2009), racial prejudice is measured using the difference between one's own racial group's feeling thermometer score and either the average of scores for other racial groups (for whites) or the score for whites (for blacks, Latinos, and Asians). Authoritarianism is measured using three questions about priorities in child rearing. Egalitarianism and humanitarianism are measured by standard indexes asking questions about the importance society's pursuit of equality and of helping those in need respectively. The moral importance respondents place on rigid adherence to laws is tapped by a battery of questions asking subjects to assess the seriousness of various infractions that have no direct relation to immigration. To help validate some of our results, we also measure abstract support for a pathway to citizenship with a seven-point question. All predispositions were measured after the profile assessments so as not to "prime" responses to the experiment. For further details, see supplementary Appendix A.

Estimation

In a typical conjoint protocol (where a choosing one option requires rejecting the others), each decision is the appropriate unit of analysis. Because our approach also allowed the freedom to include "neither" or "both," rejecting or accepting one of them says nothing directly about how the respondent judged the other(s). Instead, our unit of analysis is the profile assessment, and we employ logistic regression to estimate the probability of a "yes" vote for each immigrant profile as a function of the randomly-assigned attributes, and cluster standard errors by respondent. We then calculate the marginal effect of each value of an attribute (relative to an omitted reference category) on the probability of an immigrant's inclusion in a path to citizenship and plot these estimates along with their 95 % confidence intervals. For a full suite of diagnostics on the experiments including randomization checks, reference-point effects, profile-order effects, and "carry-over" effects (Hainmueller et al. 2014), please see supplementary Appendix C.

Results

Respondents in Study 1, which comes closest to assessing support in the context of a "realistic" policy, granted a path to citizenship to 42 % of the illegal immigrants they assessed. One implication is that majority support for a path to citizenship in
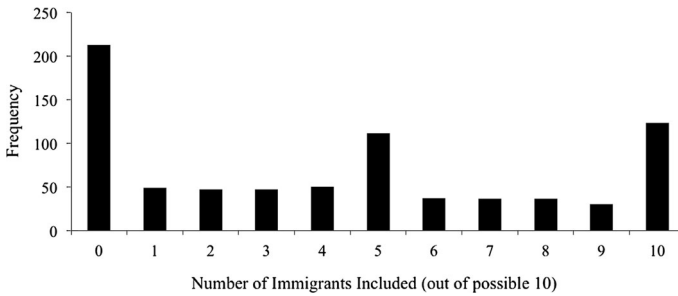
Fig. 1 Number of illegal immigrants subjects included in a path to citizenship. *Source* Study 1

principle obscures considerable selectivity with respect to what kind of person should be included. Our analysis aims to explain how this aggregate distribution emerges from a combination of categorical opinion and attribute-based opinion.

Categorical Judgment

We predicted that widespread use of moral arguments in the public debate over a path to citizenship would encourage some respondents to disregard illegal immigrants' individual attributes and accept or reject all profiles they viewed. Figure 1 shows the distribution across respondents of the number of immigrants accepted (out of a possible ten) and clearly confirms this expectation: approximately 25 % of subjects choose "neither" in all five of their decisions (rejecting all ten candidates) and 16 % opted for "both" across the board. It is implausible that these levels of categorical opinion arose by chance, and the strong correlation between the propensity to respond categorically and baseline approval on a separate "path to citizenship" item—three quarters of those who rejected immigrants across-the-board were at least "moderately" opposed in principle, whereas among those who accepted all ten profiles, over 80 % were at least "moderately" supportive—also suggests that these categorical judgments are of a substantive nature.

Our second study addresses the possible issue of satisficing or inattention to the survey task as an explanation for categorical response directly. The response options are held constant across "legal", "illegal", and "Dreamer" conditions. So satisficing or inattention cannot account for any systematically different levels of categorical response across frames where the task at hand is virtually identical. As an additional safeguard, we also included a test of attentiveness that approximately 80 % of our subjects passed.[3]

Table 1 below reveals that categorical *opposition* is approximately three times more prevalent in the illegal condition than in the legal condition, with the

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[3] The test question noted the importance of subjects' attention to the survey and included a preamble stating that subjects should check the boxes next to the response options yellow and brown, which were two among seven total color options, irrespective of their true answer to the subsequent question. Subjects were then asked to select their favorite color or colors. Excluding subjects who failed this test does not materially alter any of the results we present below.

Table 1 Rates of categorical support and opposition by immigration policy domain

	Legal	Illegal	Dreamer	Total
Categorical inclusion	99	62	124	285
%	12.1	7.5	15.2	11.6
Non-categorical	626	491	504	1621
%	76.3	59.1	61.8	65.7
Categorical exclusion	95	278	188	561
%	11.6	33.5	23.0	22.7
Total	820	831	816	2467
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source Study 2

Note To assess statistical significance of these differences, we estimated two multinomial logit models. In both, the dependent variable was whether individual supported categorical inclusion, categorical exclusion, or neither (the base category). In the first, aimed at assessing the statistical significance of differences between those randomly assigned to the Legal and Illegal conditions, the independent variable was a dummy identifying those in the Illegal conditions, and subjects assigned to the Dreamer condition were not included in the analysis. In the second, aimed at assessing differences between the Illegal and Dreamer categories, the independent variable was a dummy identifying subjects assigned to the Dreamer condition, and those assigned to the Legal condition were dropped from the analysis. Re-assessing significance using OLS and pairwise *t* tests (variously dichotomizing the variable identifying a subject as categorical) did not alter any of the conclusions. Significant differences ($p < .05$) are as follows. Categorical Inclusion: Illegal-Dreamer; Categorical Exclusion: Legal-Illegal; Illegal-Dreamer (we also verified that the rate of categorical exclusion among those assigned to the Dreamer condition remains significantly higher than the rate among those assigned to the Legal condition)

"Dreamer" condition falling just between. More than 33 % of subjects appear to categorically oppose the extension of legal status to illegal immigrants, compared to less than 12 % of those randomly assigned to adjudicate legal immigrant profiles. This is entirely in keeping with an account based on the relative prevalence of moral arguments in the domain of illegal immigrants over legal admissions. Again, our emphasis is less on the absolute tendency to express categorical response, which may arise for any number of reasons, but specifically on the difference across frames. This is not satisficing, since the opportunity to be lazy is equally available to all respondent regardless of frame, but a principled judgment. Moreover, this judgment is not the product of considerations relevant to attributes (race, language ability, or human capital), since these are balanced by randomization across frames.

However, we do not find support for a *distinctive* prevalence of categorical *support* in the illegal immigration condition, with rates across Study 2's legal and illegal conditions small and statistically indistinguishable at conventional levels (see note to Table 1). We also observe a drop in categorical support for illegal immigrants from 16 % in Study 1–8 % in Study 2. Both of these are readily explained by the fact that legalization in Study 1 was explicitly premised on respondents' meeting "certain requirements, like paying back taxes and passing background checks." This proviso, absent in Study 2 because it could not be applied equivalently in the "legal" condition, is of course explicitly tied to law-abidingness.

Thus, the fact that Study 1's added re-assurance in this respect appears to have encouraged categorical support and discouraged categorical hostility is entirely consistent with our account of categorical response as rooted in moralistic considerations.

Comparing the prevalence of categorical opinion in the *illegal* condition and the *Dreamer* condition sheds further light on specifically moralistic nature of categorical response. Categorical opposition to legalization declines by nearly a third ($p < .05$) when we specify that the illegal immigrants in question were brought to the United States as children. This suggests the importance of agency in breaking the law as a factor encouraging categorical opposition, since Dreamers themselves are unlikely to be viewed as culpable in this regard. However, categorical opposition also remains nearly twice as high in the *Dreamer* as in the *legal* immigration condition. Clearly immigrants' own responsibility for breaking the law is not the sole consideration driving categorical opposition. Illegal status may carry a weight of its own even if it does not reflect the immigrant's personal decision to break the law. Meanwhile, categorical support in our second study rises significantly ($p < .05$) in the *Dreamer* condition (15 %) relative to the *illegal* condition (8 %), which is consistent with a substantive moral interpretation of categorical support and, again, would not likely have arisen if categorical response was merely an artifact of methodology. Thus, as we expected, moral and rights-based arguments for blanket inclusion of illegal immigrants carry more force when it comes to those who did not themselves break the law in deciding to immigrate. This effect is also consistent with our speculation that some conflation of a "path to citizenship" with the Dream Act helps account for differences in the level of categorical support between our two studies.

The substantive importance of categorical attitudes, as distinct from merely "strong" ones, can be shown by considering its role in the well-known "favorability gap" between legal and illegal immigrants. A useful way of doing this is to compare aggregate inclusion rates across domain, both with and without categorical respondents in the sample.[4] The higher level of categorical opposition to illegal than to legal immigration would no doubt contribute to endorsement of a higher percentage of legal than illegal immigrants. But non-categorical subjects might also be expected to impose a significant (but not absolute) penalty on illegal immigrants, and would therefore also exhibit a lower average rate of including illegal than legal immigrants even if all categorical respondents are removed from the analysis.

Strikingly, however, our results indicate that categorical opinion accounts for the *entirety* of the between-condition differences in inclusion rates, as shown in Table 2. Overall, subjects approved 45 % of legal immigrants, 33 % of illegal immigrants, and 42 % of Dreamers, with both pairwise comparisons with illegal immigrants significant at $p < .05$ and the difference between the *legal* and *Dreamer* frames falling short of statistical significance (see note to Table 2). When categorical supporters and opponents are dropped, the inclusion propensities for legal immigrants, illegal immigrants, and Dreamers are a virtually identical 43, 43,

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[4] While this is, strictly speaking, conditioning on a post-treatment covariate, our purpose in doing so is geared towards description rather than causal explanation.

Table 2 Rates of immigrant inclusion by frame, including and excluding categorical response

	Legal	Legalization	Dreamer	Total
All subjects				
Excluded	4538	5603	4702	14,843
%	55.3	67.4	57.6	60.2
Included	3662	2707	3458	9827
%	44.7	32.6	42.4	39.8
Total	8200	8310	8160	24,670
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Subjects who did *not* reject or accept all 10 immigrants				
Excluded	3588	2823	2822	9233
%	57.3	57.5	56.0	57.0
Included	2672	2087	2218	6977
%	42.7	42.5	44.0	43.0
Total	6260	4910	5040	16,210
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source Study 2

Note To assess the statistical significance of these differences (at the $p < .05$ level), we estimated six binary logistic regression models in which the dependent variable was whether a given immigrant was included, controls variables were categorical variables denoting each immigrants' randomly assigned attributes, and standard errors were clustered by respondent to address the potential correlation of errors within subject's assessment of the ten immigrant profiles. The first three models included all subjects, and the second three included only subjects who did not show categorical response. The first model within each set excluded subjects assigned to Dreamers and had as its key independent variable (the basis for the significance test), a dummy representing illegal immigrant profiles. The second excluded illegal immigrants and pitted legal immigrants against dreamers, and the third excluded legal immigrant profiles and compared the acceptance odds of illegal immigrants and dreamers. Using OLS models did not alter any of the conclusions. Statistically significant differences are as follows. All Subjects: Legal-Illegal, Illegal-Dreamer; Excluding Categorical Respondents: None

and 44 % respectively. Since important individual immigrant attributes are controlled experimentally in the conjoint design, differences in the prevalence of categorical opinion across conditions are attributable to the distinctions people draw between legal and illegal immigration per se rather than to perceived differences in immigrants' ethnic background, level of integration, or potential to contribute economically to the U.S. Keeping this in mind, the main lessons from Table 2 are as follows: first, that respondents employing attribute-based judgment do not, on average, discriminate on the basis of illegality itself, conditional on the attributes experimentally controlled; second, for the substantial minority that reasons categorically, the penalty imposed by illegality is absolute.

Observing how categorical response varies by respondent predispositions provides another, albeit non-experimental, means of corroborating the moralistic foundations of categorical response. Table 3 shows the results of a multinomial logit analysis predicting both categorical opposition and support (versus expressing non-categorical or attribute-based judgment) in our *legal*, *illegal*, and *Dreamers*

Table 3 Correlates of categorical opinions on immigrant admissions policy

	Categorical opposition			Categorical support		
	Legal immigration	Illegal immigration	Dreamers	Legal immigration	Illegal immigration	Dreamers
Age	0.016 (0.009)	0.009 (0.006)	−0.001 (0.007)	−0.027** (0.009)	−0.043*** (0.012)	−0.011 (0.008)
Female	−0.038 (0.254)	−0.038 (0.180)	−0.248 (0.211)	−0.141 (0.263)	−0.310 (0.325)	0.264 (0.240)
Education	−0.271 (0.160)	0.130 (0.116)	0.156 (0.130)	0.068 (0.169)	−0.009 (0.204)	0.081 (0.153)
Black	0.646 (0.426)	−0.627 (0.474)	−1.727* (0.769)	−0.011 (0.470)	0.689 (0.445)	0.646 (0.417)
Latino	−0.830 (1.055)	−0.337 (0.500)	−0.588 (0.535)	0.255 (0.556)	−0.000 (0.622)	0.502 (0.464)
Asian	0.732 (0.695)	−0.257 (0.499)	−1.431 (1.059)	1.422* (0.623)	−0.343 (0.674)	0.726 (0.585)
Party ID	−0.460 (0.468)	0.434 (0.333)	0.713* (0.362)	0.420 (0.503)	−0.929 (0.688)	0.098 (0.487)
Ideology	1.073 (0.617)	1.297** (0.448)	0.982* (0.500)	−1.291* (0.638)	−0.129 (0.725)	−0.671 (0.581)
Authoritarianism	−0.124 (0.354)	0.394 (0.263)	0.033 (0.280)	−0.439 (0.361)	−0.640 (0.438)	−0.413 (0.324)
Infractions seriousness	0.245 (0.799)	1.341* (0.563)	1.340* (0.587)	0.387 (0.804)	−0.046 (0.876)	−0.349 (0.671)
Humanitarianism	−1.028 (0.742)	0.292 (0.528)	−1.954** (0.646)	2.257** (0.854)	0.516 (1.047)	2.554** (0.828)
Egalitarianism	−0.603 (0.663)	−1.230** (0.451)	−0.579 (0.506)	0.674 (0.700)	2.523** (0.918)	1.637* (0.651)
Racial prejudice	1.258* (0.510)	−0.190 (0.408)	1.250** (0.425)	−1.525* (0.638)	−1.729* (0.851)	−1.981** (0.607)
Constant	−1.826 (0.978)	−2.868*** (0.691)	−1.646* (0.766)	−2.436* (0.959)	−1.393 (1.088)	−3.415*** (0.880)
N	685	702	710	685	702	710
Adj. R^2	.10	.14	.15	.10	.14	.15

Coefficients are multinomial logits, and the base category is "non-categorical" respondents. Standard errors in parentheses

Source Study 2

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

conditions. Though the table shows logit coefficients, for the clarity of the discussion we discuss them in terms of their predicted marginal effects on the probability of being a categorical supporter or opponent (relative to harboring neither categorical view). The first three columns show how predictive each variable is of categorical opposition in each experimental condition. The second three columns show the same for categorical support. Thus columns 1 and 4 pertain to the same regression in the *legals* condition, 2 and 5 the *illegals* condition, and 3 and 6

the *Dreamers* condition. Taken together, the results support many, though not all, of our expectations.

These patterns are not well explained by ethnocentrism even though, unsurprisingly, the standard measure of ethnocentrism we use is related (albeit not consistently) to categorical response, as one would expect (cf. Kinder and Kam 2009). It is straightforward to see that simple ethnocentrism alone cannot explain the distinctive prevalence of categorical judgments in the illegal condition. Since our legal and illegal immigrant profiles did not differ on average by national origin, linguistic ability, religion, or any other relevant attribute, the effect of ethnocentrism, isolated form all other motives, on categorical judgment would predict uniform rates of categorical opposition across experimental conditions. Table 2 demonstrates clearly that this is not the case.

Might some more complex interplay of ethnocentrism and anti-prejudice norms explain the gap in categorical opposition across the legal-illegal divide? Perhaps ethnocentric individuals are reluctant to give expression to their prejudices absent a clear moral rationale? If so, the level of categorical opposition might consequently be suppressed when respondents evaluate legal immigrants because no normative rationale exists to mask the prejudicial impulse. When illegality furnishes a non-racial rationale to express prejudicial inclinations, respondents might feel comfortable giving expression to an ethnocentric decision-rule under the cover of concerns about law and order or fairness.

Our data are inconsistent with this more complex impact of prejudice as well. If it were true that prejudice motivates categorical opposition in the illegal condition, where a moral rationale is available, but not in the legal condition, then we would expect that our measure of ethnocentrism would better predict categorical opposition in the illegal than in the legal condition. The regression results in Table 3 clearly reject this hypothesis. Prejudice is, if anything, a more potent in the legal than illegal condition. If ethnocentric individuals were suppressing this tendency in the legal condition but allowing it to influence their mode of judgment in the illegal condition, we would expect precisely the opposite—a limited impact of prejudice on the propensity of individuals to oppose legal immigrants categorically and a larger positive impact of prejudice on the propensity of individuals to oppose illegal immigrants categorically.

It is useful to verify that the hypothesis fails in the bivariate case as well. Splitting the public at its median on the generalized prejudice variable (.05) we observe that the more prejudiced half of the public is indeed more likely to be categorically opposed to legal immigration than the less prejudiced half of the public is (15 vs. 9 %, respectively). However, when it comes to illegal immigration, the rate of categorical opposition is actually *higher* (36 %) among the less prejudiced half of subjects than among the more prejudiced half (31 %). Even among the 15 % of our sample that scores below zero on the prejudice measure (i.e. rates outgroups more favorably than the ingroup), the rate of categorical opposition in the *illegal* condition is substantial (23 %) and far outstrips the rate found in the *legal* condition (9 %).

It is worth underlining that even the seemingly intuitive expectation that highly ethnocentric individuals will be more likely than the least ethnocentric individuals

to reject all immigrants they confront as unwanted outsiders seems at least to be an oversimplification. Not only does the cross-domain variation in the prevalence of categorical opinion apply with similar force to ethnocentric and non-ethnocentric individuals alike. There is not even a large or consistent difference between the rates at which individuals high and low in ethnocentrism evaluate immigrants in a categorically negative fashion. At a minimum, however, these data indicate that ethnocentrism is not a compelling explanation for the distinctive prevalence of categorical opposition to offering legal status to illegal immigrants.

Other explanations for categorical judgment receive strong support in Table 3. We predicted that conservatives and authoritarians would be more likely to express categorical opposition. The former expectation is confirmed, in that moving from most liberal to most conservative is associated with an 11 % point ($p < .1$) increase in the probability of categorical opposition in the *legal* condition, 24 points in the *illegal* condition ($p < .01$), and of 15 points in the *Dreamer* condition ($p < .05$). Thus conservatism appears to increase categorical opposition to immigration in all conditions but does so to a greater extent when it comes to illegal immigrants. We find less evidence, however, that authoritarianism increases categorical opposition. Only the estimate in the *illegals* condition is substantively important (an 8 % point increase when one moves from minimum to maximum authoritarianism) but is only marginally significant ($p < .1$).

Emphasis on the moral seriousness of law-abidingness, as expected, strongly predicts categorical rejection: those believing that other infractions unrelated to immigration are "seriously wrong" (versus "not at all wrong") are 25 % points more likely to categorically reject illegal immigrants and 20 points more likely to categorically reject Dreamers ($p < .05$ in both cases). This attitude has no impact on categorical opinion toward legal immigrants, which once again suggests the strong role of moral norms in fostering categorical opposition to illegal immigration in particular and indicates again that this is a major reason that categorical opposition to illegal immigration is so vastly more prevalent than categorical opposition to legal immigration is.

Turning to categorical support, our main prediction was that egalitarian and humanitarian values would increase the tendency to include all immigrants. Our results corroborate this expectation with respect to egalitarianism, is associated in the *illegal* and *Dreamer* conditions with a shift from the lowest to the highest score raising the predicted probability of categorical support by 17 and 19 points, respectively ($p < .01$). It plays no discernible role in fostering categorical support for legal admissions, with an insignificant effect of 6 points ($p = .28$). They do not reveal any distinctive role of humanitarianism in categorical support for illegal immigration generally. Its effect is present in the *legal* and *Dreamer* frames (where a min-to-max shift is worth 31 and 22 points respectively, and $p < .01$ in both cases) but not in the *illegal* conditions. It is sensible those with a humanitarian orientation would be more likely to support admitting immigrants irrespective of any potential burden they might present to American society or their level of acculturation, though it is less clear why this does not apply in our results to the case of illegal immigrants who are not specified to be Dreamers.

Attribute-Based Judgment

The substantial incidence of categorical opinion notwithstanding, nearly 60 % of Americans in both studies make at least some use of attributes in adjudicating among profiles of illegal immigrants. Study 1 allows us to assess the relative weight of economic, cultural, and ethnoracial considerations in determining immigrants' worthiness of a path to U.S. citizenship. Study 2 allows us to assess similarity in attribute effects across legal, illegal, and dreamer conditions. Full logistic regression estimates for both studies are presented in supplementary Appendix D, but for ease of interpretation we plot the marginal effect and 95 % confidence interval of each attribute in Figs. 2 and 3. In each attribute category, one "reference value" (listed in
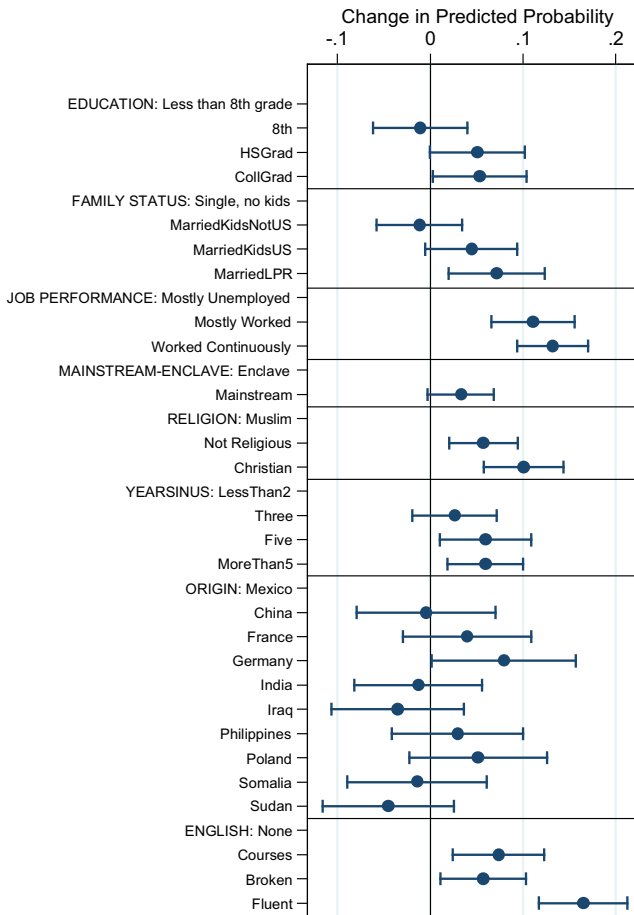

Fig. 2 Treatment effects on all native-born subjects. *Notes* Estimates represent average marginal change in predicted probability of acceptance (with 95 % CI) with all other covariates held at their means. Results are from logistic regressions ($n = 7190$) with standard errors clustered by respondent. *Source* Study 1
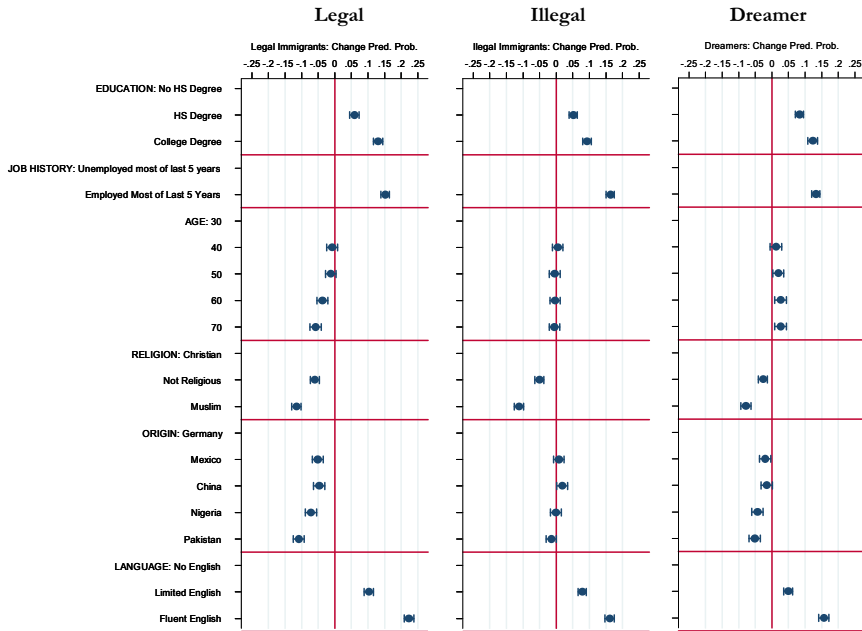
Fig. 3 Attribute effects by condition. Legal illegal dreamer. *Notes* Estimates represent average marginal change in predicted probability of acceptance (with 95 % CI) with all other covariates held at their means. Results are from subgroup logistic regressions with standard errors clustered by respondent. *Source* Study 2

the figure at the top of each attribute category) is omitted from the model. Coefficients represent the marginal change in the estimated probability that a given profile will be accepted in response to a change from the omitted attribute to the one specified, with all other variables held at their means. We note that these estimates are based on the full native-born sample, including those who rejected or accepted categorically; excluding them generally magnifies coefficients (available upon request), which is sensible since all of our attribute effects are defined against an arbitrary reference category, and for those who categorically disregard attributes this will be zero by definition.

Figure 2 indicates that attributes signaling both acculturation into and perceived ethnocultural congruence with the American mainstream boosted support for inclusion. Those fluent in English hold a 15 % point advantage over those who speak none, with those making an effort to use English by taking courses or speaking broken English roughly in between. Being employed furnishes more than a 10 % point advantage over those who have seldom had work in the U.S. Other markers exert somewhat weaker (but still significant) effects. Family ties play some role in that having a family with American-born children and being married to a legal permanent resident (vs. being unmarried) help an immigrant's chances for inclusion by 5 and 7 % points, respectively. Working in a business serving mostly native-born clientele (the "mainstream" value of the MAINSTREAM-ENCLAVE attribute) furnishes a minor edge over working for a business that mostly serves

other immigrants. So, too, does time spent in the U.S., with those having spent at least 5 years enjoying an approximately 5 % point advantage over the most recent arrivals. All of this supports the notion that markers of a hypothetical illegal immigrant's demonstrated acculturation increases support for his or her legalization. Labor market skill appears to influence choice as well, albeit only weakly; educated immigrants have an advantage over less educated ones, but little benefit to a college degree above and beyond high school.

As expected, immigrants' ethnocultural congruence with the American native-born majority also influences support. Christians have a 10 % point advantage over Muslims—as large a differential as that between those who have worked steadily but for a brief stint of unemployment and those who have seldom worked. This does not only reflect distaste for Muslim immigrants. Christians have as large an advantage over the non-religious as the non-religious have over Muslims. National origin matters as well, and not only as a heuristic for level of skill or English ability since these attributes are varied independently and thus experimentally controlled. Americans prefer illegal European immigrants (German, French, and Polish) to Mexicans, and Mexicans to those from Iraq and the Sudan, possibly due to race. The gap in inclusion rates between Germans and Sudanese (15 %points) is larger than that between those who have worked with only a brief period of unemployment and those who have been unemployed with only a brief period of work or have worked continuously, and comparable to that between those who speak no English and those who speak fluently. Bearing in mind that these effects are additive rather than overlapping, very large "acceptability" gaps emerge once illegal immigrants find themselves in multiple "undesirable" categories.

Our second study helps confirm that the underpinnings of attitudes toward legal and illegal immigration, *among those who do not express categorical views*, are quite similar. As indicated in Fig. 3, below, markers of integration and potential for economic contribution—education, English language ability, and a record of steady employment—all boost the chances of inclusion by similar amounts in each condition. Similar penalties accrue to Muslims and non-religious subjects (versus Christians) regardless of legality. Germans are preferred to Mexicans and Chinese, who are in turn preferred to Nigerians and Pakistanis in all three conditions, though we note the statistical and substantive insignificance of these differences in the illegal condition. Age is the only attribute whose impact differs by frame. Older legal immigrants receive significantly less support than younger ones while for illegal immigrants generally and Dreamers in particular there is either no effect or a modest positive effect of age. Importantly, dropping categorical respondents—who are far more prevalent in the "illegal" and "dreamer" conditions—does not alter these comparisons in a significant way (available upon request).

If the fusion of "underground" anti-Hispanic sentiment with perceived norms violations were a major driver of opposition to illegal immigration, we would have expected to see Mexican illegal immigrants suffer a larger penalty in public opinion than Mexican legal immigrants, but this was not the case. If anything, national origin appears to matter more in our second study for legal than illegal immigrants, though the difference is insignificant. More generally, racial and religious attributes (and presumably prejudice) clearly matter, but not disproportionately in the illegal case.

Conclusion

Legalization and a pathway to citizenship for the 12 million immigrants living in the United States without permission are once again at the core of efforts to overhaul the immigration system. Extensive polling about has not systematically explored the motivational roots of attitudes toward incorporating illegal immigrants into the polity, or how these comport with (and differ from) the roots of attitudes toward legal immigrants. This paper takes up both tasks, and in so doing makes several important (and interrelated) contributions. First, it stakes out new empirical terrain by investigating the roots of illegal immigration in a comprehensive way. Along more theoretical lines, it challenges the preeminence accorded, either implicitly or explicitly, to attribute-based reasoning in experimental studies of public opinion. Attributes do matter, of course, but for some kinds of issues, moralistic considerations encourage de-ontological, "categorical" response over attribute based judgment. Third, since standard applications of conjoint-choice methodology are not well-suited to capturing or explaining this tendency, we show how it can be adapted, both in terms of design and estimation, to the task of revealing both attribute-based and categorical response in a unified setting.

All of this matters precisely because the main difference in the underpinnings of attitudes about legal versus illegal immigration turns out to be in the categorical response invisible to previous studies. Indeed, what emerges is that one cannot fully understand *what* people think about immigration without also considering *how* they think about it. Among those expressing attribute-based judgments, markers of acculturation—especially command of English and a record of steady work in the United States—are influential as expected. Moreover, they tend to weigh these attributes in roughly equal measure whether the decision involves admitting an immigrant legally or providing an illegal immigrant a path to citizenship.

But stopping there ignores the fact that in rendering judgment one might choose to disregard attributes altogether. Indeed, when evaluating illegal immigrants for inclusion in a "path to citizenship", fully forty percent of respondents do precisely this, responding instead in a categorical manner. Not only do we show evidence that this occurs, but we also explain *why* it occurs: to a substantial degree, stems from moral considerations (pro- and con-) specifically invoked by the illegal immigration issue. This is corroborated primarily by nesting the conjoint tasks into a broader experiment that contrasts response to legal immigrants, illegal immigrants, and "dreamers", and also by exploring the correlates of categorical opinion at the individual level.

None of this is meant to suggest that categorical judgment is the *only* aspect of immigration attitudes that rests on a foundation of moral convictions, since attribute-based judgments may stem from moral considerations as well, depending on how one defines the term. But what stands out about the underpinnings of blanket exclusion is that it stems from a distinctly *categorical* concern in that it applies to an assessment of the justice of the proposed policy as it relates to an entire officially defined group of immigrants. In effect, this type of moral thinking blurs distinctions between individual illegal immigrants and generates a rigid all-or-nothing decision

logic that subverts acceptance of precisely the sorts of compromises the last two presidential administrations have attempted to hash out.

We also do not argue that these moral concerns are the *only* basis for categorical judgment. It should not be surprising, for example, that generalized ethnocentrism or prejudice (e.g. Kinder and Kam 2009) helps account for a tendency to reject all immigrants as undesired outsiders regardless of national origin, English ability, and other cultural similarities to the American "mainstream." But we show that ethnocentrism is no stronger a factor in fostering categorical response to illegal immigration than to legal immigration, so it cannot account for the vastly *higher* rate of categorical judgment of illegal than legal immigrants that we observe.

These findings suggest several avenues for future investigation. For one, our case that elite rhetoric on the pathway issue in particular plays a contributing factor in triggering categorical response remains circumstantial, and the specific relationship between individual predispositions and elite signaling remain unclear. Relatedly, why is it that categorical rejection is much more easily aroused by illegality than positive ones? Presumably this traces back to a partisan asymmetry in the elite discourse on the issue, but we do not know whether these are best characterized as "ideological" (that is, dictated by the substance of the issue) or "coalitional" (reflecting the descriptive composition of party coalitions). Second, while the illegal/legal distinction in immigration provides a useful lens through which to investigate the specific role of moralistic thinking, there is every reason to believe that categorical response can arise in other policy domains not investigated here. As such, this approach to the study of categorical judgment about "deservingness"—as well as its motivational roots—could be extended to other domains such as affirmative action or welfare benefits which also invoke normative considerations that might encourage extensive categorical opinion. Third, our research did not consider the role of contextual factors as moderators of opinion. Yet both demographic context (at various levels of aggregation) and social contact with illegal immigrants (both positive and negative) might also influence how people weigh immigrant attributes (e.g. Berg 2009; Hopkins 2010; Rocha et al. 2011). Media exposure, too, could play this role depending on the extent and tone of coverage on the issue (Dunaway et al. 2010; Valentino et al. 2012). Finally, the broader political context—both "dramatic" events such as terror attacks (Branton et al. 2011) or longer-term reform efforts (Schildkraut 2012)—may affect the structure of individual choices.

A thorny problem for students of public opinion is to link their findings to policy outcomes. One way to make research more relevant is to go beyond measuring support or opposition in the abstract and respond to the familiar "the devil is in the details" retort. When it comes to a path to citizenship, some of the most challenging issues have centered on the parameters of a program. Yet recent legislative efforts at a path to citizenship seem tailored to some of the findings that emerged in our conjoint analysis. Of course the public's aggregate preference for legalizing Christians and people of European origin we uncover is a non-starter in designing immigration reform legislation. However, learning English and proving a record of steady work in the U.S. have been prioritized by legislators as requirements for the path to citizenship. And the emphasis on assuring border security before the path to

citizenship is implemented and requiring immigrants to pay fines and back taxes appear aimed at addressing objections based on an insistence on law-abidingness. Still, converting those who view any legalization as "amnesty" may be an insurmountable task, and the prevalence of categorical opinion helps explain why a grand bargain has been so elusive.

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