



2020

Predicting Positive Attitudes toward Immigrants with Altruism

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Digital Object Identifier: <https://doi.org/10.13023/etd.2020.229>

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PREDICTING POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRANTS WITH ALTRUISM

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By

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Lexington, Kentucky

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2020

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

PREDICTING POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRANTS WITH ALTRUISM

Immigration is one of the most salient and divisive issues in the US and a host of other countries, with public opinion polarized and elites deadlocked on the issue. One limitation of research on immigration attitudes is the tendency for scholars to focus exclusively on dark motivations driving hostility toward immigrants rather than those leading to compassion and support for immigrants. Using 2016 American National Election Studies (ANES) data, I examine the relationship between attitudes towards immigration and several Big Five personality traits, focusing on Altruism. I find that personality traits, especially those related to Altruism, are crucial determinants of attitudes toward immigrants, even in the face of an array of controls for political predispositions and socio-demographic characteristics. I conclude with a discussion of why further research on more positive personality traits is every bit as important for understanding prosocial behavior as the usual focus on antisocial behavior.

KEYWORDS: Immigration, Altruism, Big 5 Personality

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PREDICTING POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRANTS WITH ALTRUISM

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DEDICATION

For Roger and Juliet

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following thesis benefited from the insights and direction of several people for whom I am so thankful. I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Mark Peffley, who expertly guided me with patience throughout my graduate career and who shared in the excitement of each discovery along the way. Without his help and encouragement, the goal of this thesis would not have been realized.

I would like to thank my committee members, Professor Clayton Thyne and Professor Daniel Morey, for their suggestions and support. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to Professor Justin Wedeking for his valuable advice and to all of the exceptional faculty within the Political Science Department who have made my time at the University of Kentucky more enjoyable and rewarding.

I would also like to recognize the unwavering support of my family and friends. It was a great comfort and relief for me to have your encouragement. Thank you for believing in me.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Immigration outstripped all other issues as the most important problem facing the country in every Gallup poll since January 2017. Images of human caravans moving toward the border, of the construction of a wall separating the country from Mexico and of the tragic casualties of those who failed to make the crossing safely have polarized the country and shaken many Americans to the core. The salience of the issue has been accompanied by the rise of anti-immigrant attitudes within the general population (Gusterson 2017, Vargas et al. 2017, Young 2017, Aleida et al. 2016, Bohman and Hjerm 2016, Benjamin-Alvarado et al. 2009, Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart 2007), as well as a surge of pro-immigration attitudes among Democrats. At the most extreme level, there has also been an increase in hate crimes and mass shootings targeting immigrants and other minority groups, such as the El Paso shooting in August 2019. The Southern Poverty Law Center reported that the number of anti-immigrant hate groups surged from 15 to 22 in 2017 and these groups have been characterized as the most virulent type of hate group currently operating in the US (Beirich and Buchanan 2018).

In such circumstances it is important to understand the motivations behind people's attitudes toward immigrants in order to help stem the tide of extremist behavior that can arise from prejudice and hostility, as well as to encourage more empathy and understanding. Immigrants are a particularly vulnerable population, often with limited resources, dependent on government and community support, and all too easily identified as targets by those who feel threatened by their presence in the country. Not surprisingly, many scholars focus on the societal, threat-related, ideological, and contextual influences of attitudes toward immigrants. An understanding of cultural and linguistic differences, economic challenges, and xenophobia can provide insights into hostility towards

immigration and violence toward immigrants. However, an important question rarely studied is the extent to which more positive motivations like Altruism can shape public attitudes towards immigrants.

Too often social scientists focus almost exclusively on the dark forces that predict hostility and prejudice between individuals or groups. A host of dispositions like authoritarianism and ethnocentrism are found to elevate one's susceptibility to fear mongering and "othering," and similar areas of inquiry. Yet it is also important to investigate not just how to prevent hostile behavior, but also how to promote prosocial political behavior. There is a pressing need to understand how attitudes toward helping others as well as promoting compassion and empathy are shaped and developed. Similar approaches have been taken in the transdisciplinary fields of peace studies and conflict resolution; scholars have understood the importance of studying not only the causes of war, but also the conditions that can make peace and cooperation possible (Diehl 2016, Galtung 2010, Deutsch et al. 2006). Furthermore, it is worthwhile to investigate the underlying causes of positive attitudes toward immigrants because immigration has been central to deeply-held and cherished views of the American experience, civic nationalism, and the progress and fulfillment of the American dream.

Accordingly, this study examines whether and how being an altruistic person influences one's attitudes toward immigrants. An altruistic person is defined by a strong sense of empathy, a willingness to help those in need, as well as a concern about the conditions of others. I expect Altruism to be a significant predictor of attitudes toward immigrants because altruists seek to help others motivated by their compassion and empathy. I find that Altruism plays a powerful role in explaining differences in attitudes toward immigrants, opening up avenues for a new, more positively focused path of

inquiry that explores ways to promote understanding and cooperation as opposed to prejudice and hostility.

In the following sections, I briefly review studies focusing on various societal and individual-level determinants of attitudes toward immigrants that lead to a new focus on Altruism as a personality characteristic that shapes immigration attitudes. After developing hypotheses connecting Altruism to attitudes toward immigrants, I test them using data from the American National Election Studies (ANES) 2016 post-election survey. The survey included a Ten Item Personal Inventory (TIPI) measure to capture each of the Big Five core personality traits, a set of five traits that provide a comprehensive model of personality: Agreeableness, Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Extraversion (McCrae and Costa 1987).

This study will conceptualize Altruism through the Big 5 trait of Agreeableness¹. One who is agreeable is caring, compassionate, and willing to help those in need (Mondak 2010). It is associated with empathy and consideration, which would suggest that agreeable individuals are moved by the conditions and challenges of others and are sympathetic to their needs. The tendency toward cooperation, as opposed to selfish behavior is another generally accepted characteristic of agreeable people. These traits suggest that the agreeable personality trait is a good indicator of Altruism. Altruistic individuals are able to identify the needs of others and place those needs above their own, a form of behavior we would associate with agreeable, empathetic and considerate people. Additionally, Agreeableness has been used in previous studies to conceptualize Altruism, and by the same token, Altruism has been used to define Agreeableness (Haas

¹ The term “Agreeableness” itself is slightly misleading; the trait does not suggest conformity or a weak will but rather strong social skills and sense of cooperation.

et al. 2015, Soto and John 2009). Because Altruism is regarded as one of the main facets of Agreeableness, the TIPI provides a valid measure of Altruism (Digman 1990).

I find that Altruism is a strong predictor of positive immigration attitudes, and that this relationship is neither mediated by party or ideological identifications, nor moderated by one's level of political knowledge. The findings also show potential ranges and limitations of personality explanations by exploring attitudes toward immigrants within specific realms, such as culture, crime, the economy, or unauthorized immigration specifically. I conclude with a discussion of the important implications of this study as well as proposed areas of future research.

CHAPTER 2. ANTECEDENTS OF ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRANTS

What are the major determinants of attitudes toward immigrants? Much research focuses on societal and individual-level characteristics that lead to opposition to immigration and hostility to immigrants. Social identity theory (SIT) is an important tool for understanding how ingroup identities can lead to the derogation of outgroups (Tajfel and Turner 1979). An appreciation of a shared identity with others encourages an awareness of collective benefits and/or losses with regard to particular policies (Klandermans 2014). A process of social sorting ensues where an individual's social identity becomes increasingly aligned with political identities and a motivation to protect and advance the status of the group (Mason and Wronski 2018, Mason 2016, Tajfel 1982). The stronger the association with the group the more partisan individuals become and it has been shown that when an outgroup poses a perceived threat to the ingroup resentment and hostility are likely to increase (Huddy, Mason and Aarøe 2015).

Immigrants are a classic example of an out-group. Concerns over the economic competition they might provide, their different cultural attributes and their lack of citizenship make them an easy target of perceived threats and challenges to ingroup identity. Indeed, the different linguistic, ethnic, religious, and cultural characteristics often possessed by immigrants have been found to drive anti-immigrant beliefs (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007). These cultural distinctions, spurred on by conceptions of national identity, help define whether individuals perceive immigrants as a cultural threat or a cultural boon.

One group of scholars believes that prejudice towards out-groups stems from socialization and learning experiences; and therefore, it is possible to mitigate the effects of in-group superiority by increasing intergroup contact under favorable conditions. This

idea underlies the *contact hypothesis*, which argues that increased positive contacts between members of different groups will help to disprove an in-group's preconceived prejudicial views toward an out-group (Allport 1954). The contact hypothesis has received some empirical support generally that shows that contact does reduce prejudice (Paluck, Green, and Green 2019, Pettigrew et al. 2010, Dixon 2006, Rocha and Espino 2009). However, one study that focused on the contact hypothesis as related to attitudes toward immigrants specifically found that the success of increased intergroup contact for reducing levels of prejudice was conditional on whether the immigrant group in question was legally admitted into the United States (Stein et al. 2000). Some scholars have found that views of societal norms (Berg 2012, Schildkraut 2011) and religious identities (Bloom et al. 2015, Leon-McDaniel et al. 2011) also play a role in shaping how in-groups perceive out-groups as the "other."

The *threat hypothesis* argues instead that because prejudice stems from relative group position, groups are thought to exist in a state of zero-sum competition with one another (Blumer 1958). The hypothesis predicts that groups are likely to feel threatened by other groups' increased presence. This sense of threat serves only to consolidate the sense of identity within the in-group and reinforce perceived in-group superiority. Therefore, threat is a critical factor within Social Identity Theory regarding how and when in-group members are hostile to those belonging to the out-group. A closely related argument called the power threat hypothesis argues that the larger an out-group is, the more threatened the in-group will perceive themselves to be (Blalock 1967). The threat hypothesis stands in contrast to the contact hypothesis: whereas the contact hypothesis argues that increased intergroup contact under favorable conditions could serve to reduce prejudice, the threat hypothesis argues that increased intergroup contact could actually

exacerbate in-group solidarity and out-group hostility. Scholars of the threat hypothesis have identified economic, cultural, and even geopolitical types of threat (Malhotra et al. 2013, Chandler and Tsai 2001, Espenshade and Hempstead 1996).

The threat hypothesis raises the importance of *which* groups are perceived to be outsiders. For example, as part of an investigation of the connection between the emotion of disgust and various political attitudes, one study found that many people will unconsciously avoid associating with immigrants whose ethnic backgrounds are different from their own (Aarøe, Peterson, and Arceneaux 2017). Therefore, ethnicity and race could be an important factor in shaping attitudes toward immigrants (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014). Stereotyping and racial prejudice will likely shape immigration policy preferences. Additionally, those individuals who hold negative stereotypes about particular groups are likely to hold them about others, particularly if the group is one of immigrant “outsiders,” such as those with different language, religion, culture, or ethnicity from that of their new countries (Sniderman et al. 2000). The demographic changes that immigrants can bring into communities suggest that majority racial groups might be hostile toward immigrants from other racial groups (Newman 2013, Hopkins 2010). Furthermore, these new groups may provide challenges over resources and status within society to existing minority racial groups (Newman 2013).

Partisanship and ideology should also be mentioned as important influences of attitudes toward immigrants. Many studies have shown that Republicans and political conservatives are more likely to possess negative attitudes toward immigrants (Berg 2009, Buckler et al. 2009, Haubert and Fussell 2006, Chandler and Tsai 2001). These political groups are influenced by Republican and conservative leaders who emphasize unauthorized immigration as a high-priority issue within elections. This leads to greater

anti-immigration preferences among Republicans and conservatives, especially in areas that have high growth rates of Hispanic, foreign-born, and unauthorized immigration populations (Jones and Martin 2016). Additionally, Republicans are more likely to adopt implicit white identities that are associated with dispositions such as ethnocentrism (MacDonald 2007).

Another possible source of influence is whether citizens adopt a more ethnic national identity versus civic national identity. A study of xenophobia across four different western countries showed strong evidence that possessing an ethnic national identity leads to an increased risk of being xenophobic (Hjerm 1998). In this case, ethnic national identity was conceptualized as being distinct from civic national identity, which did not lead to greater risk of xenophobia. An ethnic national identity defines “true” nationals in exclusionary terms such as having either been born in the country, being Christian, or being white (Citrin and Wright 2009, Theiss-Morse 2009, Pehrson et al. 2009). On the other hand, civic national identity is far more inclusive, considering citizens as nationals regardless of racial or religious characteristics. Research in the United States consistently finds that an ethnocultural view of national identity tends to increase one’s support of restrictive immigration policies (Wright and Citrin 2010, Schildkraut 2005).

Closely related to ethnic national identity is ethnocentrism. Ethnocentric sentiments include beliefs that immigrants' culture, religion, or language are not as valued as those of the host country's. For example, if an immigrant that comes to America does not speak English, an American who holds ethnocentric beliefs may perceive a greater social distance between them than if they had a shared language (Hopkins 2014). Because of ethnocentrism, the more an immigrant group is perceived to differ from the culture,

religion, or other societal values of the host country, the more likely that group is to face anti-immigrant sentiments (Ostfeld 2017, Hainmueller and Hopkins 2015, Adida, Laitin, and Valfort 2010).

Other scholars have emphasized that differences in attitudes toward immigrants come largely from contextual factors such as the wealth of a country, media coverage of immigration issues, as well as general national and local conditions (Fussell 2014, Dunaway et al. 2010, Hopkins 2010). Immigration attitudes is a widely researched topic. However, most of the work on attitudes toward immigrants focuses on factors that can lead to opposition to immigration and hostility toward immigrants rather than those that can lead to compassion, empathy, or inclusion. Additionally, the role of personality has not been fully examined. Instead, the factors that have received more attention are those such as in-group versus out-group interaction, immigrant racial identity, ideology, national identity, or ethnocentrism. This paper seeks to contribute to the deeper understanding of what impacts immigration attitudes by exploring the role of personality traits in the development of these attitudes.

CHAPTER 3. ALTRUISM

Most scholarly attention is focused on the factors that lead to xenophobia, hostility, and resistance toward immigrants. This is due both to the perceived threat that immigration can cause to an individual's identity or social status as well as to a concern over the safety and security of the immigrants themselves. Opponents of immigration seek to justify their opposition by highlighting differences while supporters seek to identify those dark forces within people which, once identified, can then be isolated and perhaps altered or short-circuited. However, our understanding of attitudes toward immigrants can benefit from a different approach where the goal is to identify factors that lead to positive and supportive views of immigrants. These antecedents of attitudes are far less studied but might serve as important indicators of why some people are willing to help and promote the interests of others. One of these factors is Altruism, defined as either the belief in or the practice of selflessly helping those who are in need (Kraut 2016, Kurzban et al. 2015, de Waal 2008, Monroe 1994).

Research on Altruism is usually focused on its causes with very little attention paid to its effects (de Waal 2008, Monroe 1994, Dovidio 1984, Trivers 1971, Mayr 1961). Generally, the three approaches taken to understanding Altruism have come from biology, psychology, and economics. All three of these fields have mainly adhered to the theory of "reciprocal" or self-interested Altruism (Trivers 1971). The classic example of Altruism in biology comes from the honey bees who give up their ability to reproduce so that they may help the queen nurture their siblings and sometimes even sacrifice their own lives to sting an intruder (Hamilton 1972). Biologists believe Altruism to be reciprocal because it allows a species to continue to evolve with the traits that will best

ensure its survival (Dugatkin 2006, Trivers 1971, Hamilton 1964). Therefore, evolution is considered to be an “ultimate” cause of altruism (Mayr 1961).

Whereas biologists focus on the ultimate causes of Altruism, psychologists focus on the “proximate” causes of Altruism such as the situations that prompt specific behaviors, learning procedures, as well as physiological and neural processes (de Waal 2008). Psychologists have found evidence of Reciprocal Altruism in humans as well as other primates (DeScioli and Kurzban 2009b, Krebs 2006). For example, several studies have shown that altruistic behavior can be triggered by strong emotional responses such as reacting to people in emergency situations or to family members showing signs of sadness, pain, or distress (Dovidio 1984, Zahn-Waxler 1984). While psychologists have largely adhered to the idea of Reciprocal Altruism, some scholars have instead argued in favor of Altruism simply for Altruism’s sake. Scholars who argue on this side claim that true Altruism with the goal of benefitting someone else without much consideration of one’s own goals is possible (de Waal 2008, Piliavin and Charng 1990, de Waal and van Roosmalen 1979). Finally, economists who adhere to the rational actor model argue that people exhibit altruistic tendencies because it makes us feel good. For example, a rational actor may practice Altruism with the expectation of future personal gain or the cooperative benefits that could be reached through collective action (Becker 1976, Axelrod 1984, Phelps 1975).

CHAPTER 4. THEORY AND EXPECTATIONS

Whatever the motivation for Altruism, the resulting behavior is to help others. If an altruist believes that it is important to help others, we can anticipate that there is a relationship between Altruism and positive attitudes toward immigrants. As noted, while the literature on the roots of attitudes toward immigrants is vast, the role of personality and psychological predispositions like Altruism is an area that has yet to receive adequate attention (Dinesen et al. 2016, Gallego and Pardos-Prado 2014, Oyamoto et al. 2012, Kinder and Kam 2010, Lavine et al. 2002).

Personality characteristics and the Big Five in particular have been shown to be important predictors of other various forms of political behavior in the US and many other countries (Mondak and Hibbing 2015, Mondak et al. 2010). The Big 5 traits of Agreeableness, Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Extraversion are comprehensive indicators of one's overall personality (McCrae & Costa 1987). Within psychology literature, the Big 5 personality categorization has emerged as the new organizational consensus for the basic components of personality, as well as for empirically classifying and studying the impacts of personality (Mondak and Hibbing 2015, Cervone 2005, Langston and Sykes 1997). Further, the ten-item personality inventory used in the study to capture the Big 5 personality traits has been demonstrated to be a reliable and adequate measure of the five traits, even when compared to much longer Big 5 inventories (Gosling et al. 2003). These core traits are stable influences of how we see and interact with the world, and they have a significant impact on various attitudes and behaviors.

Because one's personality composition within the Big 5 is such an influence on individuals' general outlooks on life and the world, Big 5 personality explanations are

also gaining status within political science research (Gerber et al. 2011). Personality traits have been shown to be highly stable throughout the course of one's life, are heritable (Van Gestel & Van Broeckhoven 2003, Bouchard 1997, Plomin et al. 1990), and are durable predictors of different types of political attitudes and behavior across a wide variety of situations (Mondak and Hibbing 2015). Investigating personality explanations is an important next step to better understanding why immigration attitudes vary since they are able to focus on a truly fundamental influence of a person's political outlook.

Altruism is regarded as one of the main facets of the Big 5 personality trait of Agreeableness, and the TIPI provides a valid measure of Altruism through Agreeableness (Digman 1990). Theoretically, Altruism is what should drive one's positive attitudes toward immigrants. Because Altruism is a key characteristic of the trait of Agreeableness, I use Agreeableness as a conceptualization of Altruism. Additionally, Agreeableness has been used in previous studies to conceptualize Altruism, and by the same token, Altruism has been used to define Agreeableness (Haas et al. 2015, Soto and John 2009). Further, the characteristics that define Altruism and Agreeableness overlap greatly with one another: a sense of selflessness, empathy, and compassion.

Currently, the topic of immigration is such a salient one that it has become a recent staple of sociopolitical dialogue in the United States and elsewhere. Given that there is so much discussion and debate surrounding the impact that immigrants may have on their host countries, and given that many immigrants leave their homes either fleeing persecution or generally seeking a better life, I expect that altruists will feel empathetic toward such groups in spite of potential costs. Most research in political science argues that immigrants are integral to American society and help to boost the economy (Sequeira, Nunn, and Qian 2019, Flavin et al. 2018, Light and Miller 2018, Ottaviano and

Peri 2005), while others argue that there are many negative consequences associated with increasing numbers of immigrants. In addition to potential economic costs and benefits or human rights considerations, ethnocultural conceptions of one's national identity may also determine whether one accepts immigrants as newcomers or rejects them as potential threats. To an altruist, however, the benefits of helping others and behaving in a way that is humanitarian and compassionate should be viewed as outweighing the potential costs of helping immigrants and regardless of one's national identity.

This paper investigates Altruism as a predictor of attitudes toward immigrants, regardless of Altruism's motivations such as whether self-interested or true, ultimate or proximate. Altruism as a belief or principle is related to how people see themselves: whether they consider themselves to be altruistic, or whether they feel that people should be generally sympathetic and selfless toward one another. I expect that individuals who are altruistic will be less likely to harbor anti-immigrant sentiments than individuals who are not altruistic.

H₁: People who are more altruistic are more likely to have positive attitudes toward immigrants, independently of other individual-level characteristics.

Altruism is a main component of the Big Five trait of Agreeableness. One of the benefits of using the Big Five indicators of personality is that there are multiple traits to explore, since personality is assessed by a variety of traits instead of a single disposition. One additional trait that is worth exploring, in particular, is Openness, or Openness to Experience (McCrae 1996). One who is open to experience willingly seeks all sorts of information, including information about other cultures (Kraaykamp and van Eijck 2005). Additionally, people who are open to experience were found to have a strong psychological sense of community and are less likely to be prejudicial or intolerant

(Mondak 2010; Lounsberry, Loveland, and Gibson 2003). One who is not open to experience is less likely to put effort into seeking out information, be exposed to different cultures, and is more likely to place restrictions on the thoughts or behaviors of themselves or others (Mondak 2010). Therefore, while not a central hypothesis to the analysis, I expect that those who possess the trait of Openness to be more likely to have positive attitudes toward immigrants.

I also explored four important questions about the conditions under which altruism matters for immigration attitudes. First, is the impact of Altruism mediated by political predispositions, such as partisan or ideological identifications? Second, is the effect of Altruism on immigration attitudes moderated by the level of individuals' political knowledge and awareness? Third, could Altruism's impact on immigration attitudes vary depending on the type of immigration attitudes? Fourth, does Altruism's effect on immigration attitudes change when the type of immigration is specified as "unauthorized" or "illegal?"

I decided to explore the role of party and ideological identification as potential mediators of the relationship between Altruism (Agreeableness) and positive immigration attitudes because they could be causing indirect effects. Evidence suggests that those who are altruistic are more likely to support Democratic candidates or policies (Mondak 2010). Ideologically, Democrats are usually associated with being left or liberal, and evidence also suggests that political conservatives or Republicans are more likely to harbor anti-immigrant sentiment than are liberals (Berg 2009, Buckler et al. 2009, Haubert and Fussell 2006, Chandler and Tsai 2001). Therefore, it is possible that the effect Altruism has on attitudes toward immigrants may not be a direct one, but rather an

indirect one that operates through party or ideological identification (Mondak and Hibbing 2015).

H₂: The impact of Altruism on positive attitudes toward immigrants operates indirectly through party or ideological identifications.

Second, I expect that one's level of political knowledge should moderate the relationship between Altruism and attitudes toward immigrants. More knowledge about politics is associated with being more involved in politics and aware of issues one cares about (Zaller 1992). Thus, personality traits are likely to be more highly associated with immigration attitudes among people with greater knowledge about politics. In short, I expect that the relationship between being altruistic and having positive attitudes toward immigrants to be stronger among those who have higher political knowledge.

H₃: The relationship between Altruism and positive attitudes toward immigrants should be stronger among those who demonstrate political knowledge, compared to those who do not.

Third, as will be discussed later, the Index of immigration attitudes is composed of responses to three items measuring different aspects of sentiments toward immigrants—i.e., whether immigrants have a positive or negative influence on culture, crime, or the economy. Therefore, the question arises: does Altruism impact responses to the items differently when isolated? I expect that Altruism will emerge as a significant predictor of positive immigration attitudes across all three aspects.

H₄: People who are more altruistic are more likely to have positive attitudes toward immigrants across the three societal facets of culture, crime, and the economy.

Lastly, I conduct additional analyses to further investigate the adaptability of personality explanations for variations in attitudes toward immigrants. It is possible that the impact of Altruism on immigration attitudes will change when the type of

immigration is specified as “unauthorized” or “illegal.” Because unauthorized immigration is a particularly polarizing issue between Republicans and Democrats (Daniller 2019, Hammer and Kafura 2019), it could be that a factor like party identification could have a stronger impact than Altruism on attitudes toward unauthorized immigrants.

H₅: The impact of Altruism on positive immigration attitudes will not be as strong when the type of immigration is specified as “unauthorized” or “illegal.”

CHAPTER 5. DATA

I use data from the ANES 2016 post-election survey to measure attitudes toward immigrants and Altruism. These 4,270 survey responses were collected just after the November 8th election, between 9 November 2016 and 8 January 2017. Summary statistics of means and standard deviations for all included variables are included in Appendix A, as are corresponding ANES variable codes. Immigration was one of the most hot-button issues of the 2016 US presidential election, polarizing much of the country. During his presidential campaign, Donald Trump vilified immigrants from the day he announced his candidacy for president, infamously stating, “[Immigrants] are bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists. And some, I assume, are good people... [Mexico is] sending us not the right people” (Trump 2015). While running for president, he promised to build a wall on the border between the US and Mexico and to demand that Mexico pay for its construction (Mexico of course refused these demands). Both before and after he was elected president, Trump consistently characterized immigrants as making America a more dangerous place in terms of drugs and violence as well as in economic terms, fueling the idea that immigrants aim to “take jobs” from the native population. The context of the election and timing of the survey are important to keep in mind in order to gain a full understanding of the analysis.

5.1 Dependent Measures

Respondents in the 2016 post-election ANES were asked three key questions² designed to capture evaluations of whether immigrants have a positive or negative impact

² The exact wording of these questions and responses can be found in Appendix D.

on culture, crime rate, and economy in the United States. These questions are similar to those asked in surveys of other countries (e.g., the European Social Survey and the World Values Survey). Respondents are asked to report on a five-point Likert scale from 1 “strongly agree” to 5 “strongly disagree” with the following statements: *America’s culture is generally harmed by immigrants; Immigrants increase crime rates in the US,* and *Immigrants are generally good for America’s economy.* The third item was reverse coded before responses to all three items were summed to form an Index of Evaluations of Immigrants that ranged from the most negative score of 3 to the most positive score of 15.

I chose these three variables to conceptualize attitudes toward immigrants because the issues of culture, safety, and economy are often the topics that are the most hotly debated when it comes to how immigrants can impact a country. Another advantage of using these variables is that they are also associated with a variety of other pertinent measures capturing positive versus negative attitudes toward immigrants, including whether one thinks the number of immigrants should increase or decrease, whether one thinks immigrants put natives’ jobs at risk, whether one supports the building of a wall along the US-Mexico border, a feeling thermometer toward undocumented immigrants, as well as what actions one believes should be taken for immigrants who were brought to the US as undocumented children.

To investigate Hypothesis 5, I also include models with two additional dependent variables that focus on unauthorized immigrants. To investigate this, I use two items on evaluations of unauthorized immigrants as dependent measures. The first (V161192) asks respondents, “Which comes closest to your view about what government policy should be toward unauthorized immigrants now living in the United States?” The responses are

coded from 1-4, 1 indicating the most anti-immigrant response “Make all unauthorized immigrants felons and send them back to their home country” and 4 indicating the most pro-immigrant response, “Allow unauthorized immigrants to remain and qualify for US citizenship without penalties.” The second item(V162313) used to measure attitudes toward unauthorized immigrants asks respondents to place themselves on a feeling thermometer regarding unauthorized immigrants that ranges from 0-100. A response of 0 indicates the “coldest” feelings, while a response of 100 corresponds to the “warmest” feelings.

5.2 Explanatory Measures: Altruism and Big 5 Personality

To measure Altruism as a belief or principle, I rely on the short-form battery (TIPI) of the Big-Five personality dimensions of Agreeableness, Openness to Experience, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and Emotional Stability. These measures have been proven to be stable and reliable indicators of personality that predict behavior and generally do not change over the course of one’s life (e.g., see Gerber et al. 2011). Because Altruism is regarded as a main component of the Big Five trait of Agreeableness, the two TIPI items related to Agreeableness in the ANES 2016 post-election study provide a consistent and well-supported measure of Altruism. As noted earlier, prior studies have upheld the conceptualization of Altruism as being measured by the Big Five trait of Agreeableness (Haas et al. 2015, Soto and John 2009, Digman 1990).

The two survey questions ask respondents how well a set of two words describes them on a scale from 1 (extremely poorly) to 7 (extremely well). The first set of words is “sympathetic, warm” and the second set is “critical, quarrelsome.” The second variable was recoded to reverse the scale so that 1 indicates “extremely well” while 7 indicates

“extremely poorly.” Thus, a score of 1 on either of the indicators would indicate the lowest level of Altruism, while a score of 7 on either of the indicators reflects the highest level of Altruism. I then created an index by summing responses to these two survey items (V162339 and V162334) and recoding the scale values from 0 (the lowest point on the scale) to 1 (the highest point on the scale).

The other four dimensions of the Big Five personality traits were constructed in a similar fashion (by combining responses to two items per trait) and are included in the analysis, as is the practice, to control for other aspects of personality. Including all 5 TIPI traits allows me to isolate the effects of Altruism on attitudes toward immigrants, holding other personality variables constant. Additionally, I expect that Openness to Experience should also predict positive immigration attitudes. Like Agreeableness, the other four traits are coded from 0-1 so that 0 indicates the lowest level of the trait while 1 indicates the highest.

5.3 Control Measures

I also included a range of control variables that are likely to be associated with Altruism and attitudes toward immigrants, such as gender, education, race, region, ideological identification, and party identification.

Much of the literature surrounding gender and Altruism concludes that women tend to be more altruistic than men (e.g. Rand et al. 2016, Simmons and Emanuele 2007). However, some studies show that this relationship is dependent upon certain circumstances. For example, the impact of gender on economic altruism might change depending on how large of a sum one is expected to give (Andreoni and Vesterlund 2001). There is not yet a scientific consensus within the literature concerning whether one

gender is more likely to support immigration over the other. Some studies argue that women are more supportive of liberal immigration policy (Buckler et al. 2009, Chandler and Tsai 2001), while others argue that women prefer more restrictive policy (Buckler 2008, Burns and Gimpel 2000), and still others found that there is no difference between genders regarding immigration preferences (Berg 2009, Haubert and Fussell 2006, Espenshade and Hempstead 1996). The gender variable V161342 is dichotomous, coded 1 for female and 0 for male.

A respondent's race could also play a part in their level of Altruism and attitudes toward immigrants. Previous studies have shown that adults tend to behave more altruistically toward others with whom they share a racial identity (Wegner and Crano 1975), and that one's altruism toward someone of a different race is influenced by whether they are introduced as either their superior or subordinate in a professional setting (Dovidio and Gaertner 1981). Prior research has also suggested that majority as well as minority racial groups may have negative attitudes toward immigrants. Majority or dominant racial groups (i.e., whites in the US) may behave in a way expected by the threat hypothesis, suggesting those in the majority racial group feel that immigrants entering into society challenge the current demographic makeup and racial-ethnic order (Newman 2013, Hopkins 2010). Therefore, I expect Whites to be more likely to harbor anti-immigrant sentiments. Some evidence suggests that minority racial groups have negative attitudes toward immigrants due to an increased competition over resources and societal status (e.g., Konitzer et al. 2018, Newman 2013). Because of this, Black respondents may also be likely to harbor anti-immigrant feelings. However, although Latinos are an ethnic minority in the US, because many immigrants to the

United States come from Latin America, I expect instead that Latinx respondents will be the least likely to harbor anti-immigrant sentiments.

One's level of altruism might also be influenced by educational attainment. The higher one's level of education, the more likely they are to participate in unconditional helping behavior (Westlake et al. 2019). Further, individuals with a higher level of education are expected to have less anti-immigrant feeling, a finding that has received much support in research on immigration attitudes (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007, Alba et al. 2005, Citrin et al. 1997). The education variable (V161270) is coded on a scale from 0 to 1: less than high school, high school, some college, bachelor's degree, graduate school. Because there is also evidence that individuals in border states feel more threat from immigrants than do those in non-border states (Dunaway et al. 2010), I added a Border State dichotomous variable to the model, coded 1 if the respondent resides in a state bordering Mexico.

I also add measures of respondents' religious attitudes, as represented by Christian fundamentalism and religious involvement. The literature is divided on how religion impacts altruism. Some research shows that religiosity can lead to altruism that is not specific to in-group members (Etter 2019), while others show that altruism among religious individuals depends on whether the recipients of altruistic behavior belong to one's in-group (Zhao 2012), or that religiosity is actually inversely related to altruistic behavior (Ji et al. 2006). Both Christian fundamentalism and religious involvement are both associated with political candidates such as Donald Trump, who continually vilified immigrants in his campaign. To measure Christian fundamentalism, I use an item (V161243) that asks respondents whether they believe the Bible to be the word of God, coded 0.33 if they believe the Bible was written by men, 0.66 if they believe the Bible is

the word of God but should not be taken literally, and 1 if they believe the Bible is the word of God and should be taken literally. Previous research indicates that fundamentalists are more likely to harbor out-group hostility (Koopmans 2015), which could in turn have an impact on a fundamentalist's immigration attitudes. To measure religious involvement, I use an item (V161245) that asks respondents how often they attend religious services, coded from 0 (never) to 1 (every week)³.

One version of the threat hypothesis posits that an individual's perceived personal economic misfortune is likely to engender zero-sum competition with outgroups, such as immigrants, who are viewed more negatively. To investigate this, I use an item (V161110) that focuses on the perception of one's financial security. Respondents are asked, "We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you are better or worse off financially than you were a year ago?" Responses are coded from 0 (much better off) to 1 (much worse off).

The traditional 7-point party identification scale is also added to the analysis. Partisanship has been found to be one of the most important predictors of attitudes toward immigrants in the US (Schildkraut 2011; Hartevelde, Kokkonen, and Dahlberg 2017; Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014; Hawley 2011), thus capturing the large party divide in the way party leaders and rank-and-file talk about and feel toward immigrants. The party identification item (V161158x) is coded from 0 (strong Democrat) to 1 (strong Republican). For similar reasons, an ideological identification item (V161126) is included in the analysis, coded from 0 (extremely liberal) to 1 (extremely conservative). Big 5 personality traits like Agreeableness and Openness to Experience are generally

³ Other researchers may be interested in measuring religious orientations more precisely, but such an approach is beyond the scope of this research.

associated with liberal identification, while Conscientiousness is modestly associated with conservatism in the US (Mondak and Hibbing 2015, Mondak 2010).

Lastly, the analysis also includes an item (V161514) to measure political knowledge. Previous research shows that political knowledge can have a strong impact on political attitudes or behavior broadly, as well as on immigration attitudes (Schemer 2012, Brewer 2003, Popkin and Dimock 2000). The variable asks respondents, “On which of the following does the US federal government currently spend the least?” The order of answer choices is randomized, which include foreign aid, Medicare, national defense, or social security. Knowledge is measured as a dichotomous variable indicating whether respondents selected the correct response—i.e., foreign aid (coded 1) or not (coded 0).

CHAPTER 6. ANALYSIS

6.1 Primary Analysis: Altruism and Positive Attitudes toward Immigrants

In testing Hypothesis 1, I use OLS regression techniques to estimate the impact of Altruism on attitudes toward immigrants, controlling for a variety of other potentially confounding variables. A positive coefficient indicates the hypothesized relationship between Agreeableness and more positive sentiments toward immigrants, as measured by the Index.

Table 6.1 displays the results of the regression analysis and Figure 6.1 plots these coefficients for ease of interpretation. If we move from the lowest to the highest point along the 0 to 1 Altruism scale, there is a predicted 0.91-point increase in positive attitudes toward immigrants, assessed on the 3 (most negative) to 15 (most positive) scale. The coefficient is statistically significant at the 0.01 level for a two-tailed test, meaning that there is only a small likelihood that the coefficient equals 0. Therefore, the model shows strong support for Hypothesis 1; more altruistic individuals are much more likely to have positive attitudes toward immigrants, as measured by the summative Index.

A graph of the slope of Altruism (i.e., Agreeableness) on immigration attitudes is displayed in Figure 6.2, which plots the predicted values of immigration attitudes on the Y-axis and Agreeableness on the X-axis, with a 95% confidence interval and all other variables in the model held constant at their means. The graph shows that even at the lowest point on the Agreeableness scale, corresponding attitudes toward immigrants is about 9.9 on the Index, which is roughly one point above the median score on the Index which ranges from 3 to 15. The highest value of Agreeableness corresponds to 10.8 on the Index.

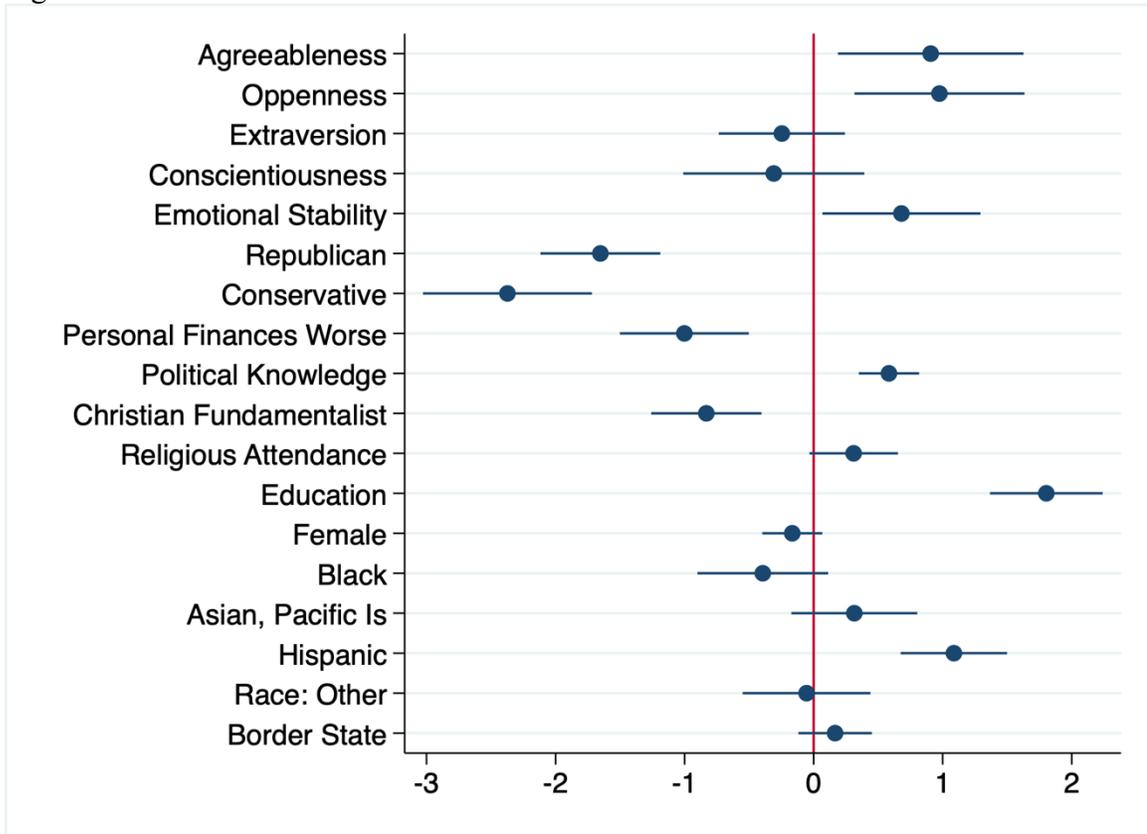
Table 6.1 Predicting Index of Positive Attitudes Toward Immigrants, 2016

	Model 1	
Agreeableness	0.91*	(0.37)
Openness	0.97**	(0.34)
Extraversion	-0.25	(0.25)
Conscientiousness	-0.31	(0.36)
Emotional Stability	0.68*	(0.31)
Republican	-1.65**	(0.24)
Conservative	-2.37**	(0.33)
Personal Finances Worse	-1.00**	(0.25)
Political Knowledge	0.58**	(0.12)
Christian Fundamentalist	-0.83**	(0.22)
Religious Attendance	0.31	(0.17)
Education	1.80**	(0.22)
Female	-0.17	(0.12)
Vs. White		
Black	-0.39	(0.26)
Asian, Pacific Is	0.32	(0.25)
Hispanic	1.09**	(0.21)
Other	-0.06	(0.25)
Border State	0.17	(0.15)
Constant	10.81**	(0.39)
Observations	2678.00	
Adjusted R2	0.32	

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)

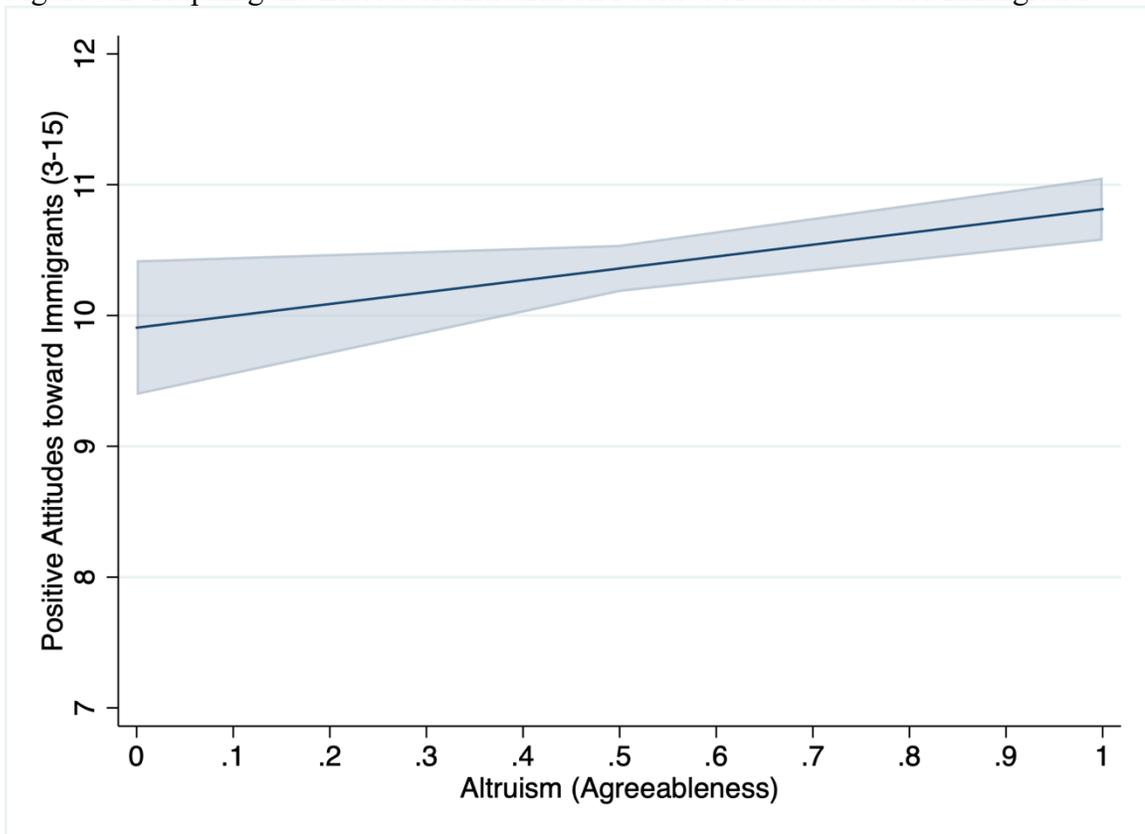
Note: OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Higher values on the above variables indicate: greater Agreeableness, Openness to Experience, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Republican party identification, Conservative ideological identification, participation in volunteer work in the last 12 months, perception of worse personal finances, greater political knowledge, Christian fundamentalism, more religious attendance, higher education, female gender, or residing in a state that borders Mexico.

Figure 6.1 Plotted Coefficients of Table 6.1



Note: 95% confidence intervals. Model 1 coefficients in Table 6.1.

Figure 6.2 Graphing the Effects of Altruism on Positive Attitudes toward Immigrants



Note: 95% confidence intervals. Predicted values are based on Model 1 coefficients in Table 6.1.

Considering the other personality traits as well as political and social predispositions in the model, as well as demographic characteristics, Agreeableness makes a substantial difference in more positive immigration attitudes.

From Table 6.1 and the coefficient plot in Figure 6.1, we can also see that of the other Big 5 personality traits, Openness to Experience and Emotional Stability also emerge as significant predictors of positive immigration attitudes. While not central hypotheses for the thesis, the coefficients for these personality traits indicate that moving from the lowest to the highest point along the Openness to Experience scale is associated with a 0.97-point increase in positive attitudes toward immigrants. The same movement along the Emotional Stability scale is associated with a 0.68 increase in positive immigration attitudes. Extraversion fails to reach statistical significance, and Conscientiousness also interestingly does not emerge as a predictor of immigration attitudes.

Examining the effects of the control variables in Table 6.1 and Figure 6.1, the results also support my expectations and the findings of previous research that party identification, political ideology, and political knowledge are all related to attitudes toward immigrants. Those who identify as either Democrat or ideologically liberal are more likely to have positive attitudes toward immigrants, while those who identify as Republican or ideologically conservative are more likely to have negative attitudes toward immigrants. For every increase along the party identification scale (0 being strong Democrat and 1 being Strong Republican), we can expect to see a 1.93 decrease in positive immigration attitudes. Similarly, for every increase along the ideological identification scale (0 being extremely liberal and 1 being extremely conservative), we can expect to see a 2.77 decrease in positive immigration attitudes.

Additionally, those with more political knowledge are also more likely to have positive immigration attitudes. Higher education also remains a strong predictor of positive attitudes toward immigrants. Racial identities were included in the regression as dichotomous variables, and their impacts are compared against the base category of White. Generally, the coefficients capture the independent influence of race after controlling for every other predictor, rather than an overall tendency for any of these racial groups to be necessarily pro- or anti-immigration. After controlling for every other predictor, being Hispanic is expected to result in an increase in positive attitudes toward immigrants, compared to being White. This makes sense in light of the fact that Mexico is the top origin country among US immigrants (Radford 2019). There was no statistical difference in attitudes toward immigrants between respondents of other racial identities.

Although religious involvement fails to reach statistical significance, Christian fundamentalism does emerge as a strong predictor of immigration attitudes. Those identifying with Christian fundamentalist beliefs are significantly more negative in their evaluations of immigrants. This result supports the findings of prior research that fundamentalists are more likely to harbor out-group hostility (Koopmans 2015). Christian fundamentalism is conceptualized as one of several “white identities” in psychology research (MacDonald 2007). Thus, members of this group should be more likely to view immigrants as part of an out-group, which helps to explain why fundamentalists would evaluate immigrants much more negatively.

Perceived financial insecurity is also a significant predictor of negative immigration attitudes. People who report a worsening financial situation compared to the year before are more likely to harbor negative attitudes toward immigrants. This finding

supports the expectation of the threat hypothesis that an individual's perceived economic hardship is likely to engender negative views toward immigrants.

6.2 Mediation through Party and Ideological Identifications

To investigate whether party or ideological identifications mediate the relationship between Altruism and positive immigration attitudes, I employ the Baron and Kenny (1986) approach to testing mediation. Table 6.2a displays the results for significance testing of indirect effects through party identification, while Table 6.2b shows these results for ideological identification⁴. We can see that neither of these mediations, and neither estimate of indirect effects, reaches statistical significance. Thus, I can conclude that Altruism has a direct impact on positive attitudes toward immigrants that is not mediated by either party or ideological identifications.

⁴ Tables showing the full mediation analysis results can be found in Appendices B and C.

Table 6.2a Significance Testing of Indirect Effects through Party Identification

Estimates	Delta	Sobel	Monte Carlo
Indirect Effect	0.034	0.034	0.033
Standard Error	0.049	0.049	0.050
Z-value	0.695	0.695	0.672
P-value	0.487	0.487	0.501
Confidence Interval	-0.062, 0.130	-0.062, 0.130	-0.063, 0.134

Note: Results reported according to the Baron and Kenny (1986) approach to testing mediation.

Table 6.3b Significance Testing of Indirect Effects through Ideological Identification

Estimates	Delta	Sobel	Monte Carlo
Indirect Effect	0.075	0.075	0.075
Standard Error	0.047	0.047	0.047
Z-value	1.616	1.616	1.578
P-value	0.106	0.106	0.115
Confidence Interval	-0.016, 0.167	-0.016, 0.167	-0.016, 0.173

Note: Results reported according to the Baron and Kenny (1986) approach to testing mediation.

6.3 Moderation through Political Knowledge

To investigate whether the relationship between Altruism and immigration attitudes is stronger among those with higher political knowledge, I interact the variables for Altruism and political knowledge. The results from the moderation analysis can be seen in Table 6.3. We can see that the interaction term between Altruism and political knowledge fails to reach statistical significance. Political knowledge does not act as a moderator between Altruism and immigration attitudes. Therefore, the relationship between one's level of Altruism and their positive attitudes toward immigrants is not stronger or weaker based on their political knowledge.

6.4 Seemingly Unrelated Regressions

To answer the question of whether Altruism differently impacts responses to the three items of the Index of Evaluation of Immigrants, I employ the technique of Seemingly Unrelated Regressions (SUR) to isolate the distinct impact of Altruism on each of the three dependent variables I used in this analysis without any interfering covariance that might result from studying three survey items by controlling for confounding sources of covariance between the items since they are similar in nature. The resulting coefficients indicate how Altruism impacts attitudes toward immigrants in specific realms like culture, crime, or the economy. The results from the SUR analysis are reported in Table 6.4. We can see that for the three indicators comprising the Index of immigration attitudes, greater levels of Altruism (Agreeableness) lead to a statistically significant impact on the tendency to disagree with statements that immigrants harm America's culture and increase crime rates.

Table 6.4 Altruism and Immigration Attitudes: Testing Moderation of Political Knowledge

	Model 1	
Agreeableness	0.78*	(0.36)
0.incorrect	0.00	(.)
1.correct	0.44	(0.39)
0.incorrect#Agreeableness	0.00	(.)
1.correct#Agreeableness	0.18	(0.54)
Openness	1.18**	(0.29)
Extraversion	-0.21	(0.21)
Conscientiousness	-0.37	(0.30)
Emotional Stability	0.57*	(0.27)
Republican	-1.68**	(0.20)
Conservative	-2.28**	(0.29)
Personal Finances Worse	-1.03**	(0.22)
Christian Fundamentalist	-0.77**	(0.18)
Religious Attendance	0.38*	(0.15)
Education	1.90**	(0.19)
Female	-0.14	(0.10)
Vs. White		
Black	-0.27	(0.22)
Asian, Pacific Is	0.43	(0.24)
Hispanic	1.09**	(0.18)
Race: Other	0.02	(0.24)
Border State	0.16	(0.12)
Constant	10.69**	(0.36)
Observations	2678	
Adjusted R2	0.32	

*p<0.05, **p<0.01 (two-tailed)

Note: OLS coefficients with standard errors reported in parentheses. Within the political knowledge variable, 0 indicates an incorrect response while 1 indicates a correct response.

Table 6.5 Seemingly Unrelated Regressions: Positive Attitudes toward Immigrants

	Culture		Crime		Economy	
Agreeableness	0.44**	(0.12)	0.24*	(0.12)	0.15	(0.12)
Openness	0.45**	(0.12)	0.44**	(0.12)	0.28*	(0.11)
Extraversion	-0.05	(0.09)	-0.16	(0.09)	0.01	(0.08)
Conscientiousness	-0.03	(0.12)	-0.11	(0.12)	-0.23*	(0.12)
Emotional Stability	0.06	(0.11)	0.28**	(0.11)	0.23*	(0.10)
Republican	-0.51**	(0.08)	-0.72**	(0.08)	-0.45**	(0.08)
Conservative	-0.84**	(0.11)	-0.95**	(0.11)	-0.50**	(0.11)
Personal Finances Worse	-0.33**	(0.08)	-0.34**	(0.08)	-0.36**	(0.08)
Political Knowledge	0.15**	(0.04)	0.17**	(0.04)	0.25**	(0.04)
Christian Fundamentalist	-0.31**	(0.07)	-0.25**	(0.07)	-0.20**	(0.07)
Religious Attendance	0.19**	(0.06)	0.03	(0.02)	0.02	(0.01)
Education	0.67**	(0.08)	0.61**	(0.08)	0.61**	(0.08)
Female	-0.03	(0.04)	0.05	(0.04)	-0.17**	(0.04)
Vs. White						
Black	-0.16*	(0.08)	0.05	(0.08)	-0.15	(0.08)
Asian, Pacific Is	0.15	(0.11)	0.12	(0.11)	0.17	(0.11)
Hispanic	0.28**	(0.07)	0.38**	(0.07)	0.44**	(0.07)
Other	-0.01	(0.10)	0.02	(0.10)	0.01	(0.10)
Border State	0.06	(0.05)	-0.03	(0.05)	0.14**	(0.05)
Constant	3.58**	(0.14)	3.49**	(0.14)	3.54**	(0.13)
Observations	2678.00					

*p<0.05, **p<0.01 (two-tailed)

Note: OLS Seemingly Unrelated Regressions coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Higher values in each dependent variable correspond to more positive immigration attitudes.

On the other hand, Altruism does not lead to agreement with the statement that immigrants are good for America's economy (Column 3), once these effects are purged of unexplained covariances between this item and the other two. Likely reasons for this are discussed below in Chapter 7.

6.5 Further Analyses of Personality Explanations

I also investigate the relationship between Altruism and attitudes toward immigrants when the type of immigration has been specified as "unauthorized" or "illegal." The results reported in Column 1 of Table 6.5 show that none of the personality items are statistically significant predictors of policy preferences toward unauthorized immigrants.

In Column 2 of Table 6.5, we can see that out of the Big 5 personality traits, only Conscientiousness emerges as a significant predictor of immigration attitudes. The higher one's level of Conscientiousness, the more likely one is to have negative or "cold" feelings toward unauthorized immigrants. Prior research has linked Conscientiousness to Republican and conservative political identifications, both of which are associated with strong negative immigration attitudes. The size of Conscientiousness's impact on negative immigration attitudes is really quite substantial: moving from the lowest to the highest level of Conscientiousness, we expect to see a 12.76 increase in negative attitudes toward immigrants. The only variable with a stronger effect is being Hispanic, which is expected to lead to a 14.97 increase in positive immigration attitudes compared to being White.

Table 6.6 Further Analyses of Personality Explanations

	Unauthorized Imm: Positive Policy		Feeling Therm.: Illegal Imm.	
Agreeableness	-0.05	(0.11)	1.36	(3.56)
Openness	-0.13	(0.11)	5.34	(3.36)
Extraversion	-0.10	(0.08)	-0.01	(2.49)
Conscientiousness	-0.03	(0.11)	-12.76**	(3.69)
Emotional Stability	0.15	(0.10)	2.06	(3.05)
Republican	-0.43**	(0.08)	-15.85**	(2.52)
Conservative	-0.62**	(0.12)	-25.89**	(3.51)
Personal Finances	-0.17*	(0.08)	-8.44**	(2.57)
Political Knowledge	0.06	(0.04)	2.56*	(1.23)
Christian	-0.18*	(0.07)	-1.21	(2.17)
Religious Attendance	0.13*	(0.06)	6.23**	(1.84)
Education	0.23**	(0.07)	3.42	(2.32)
Female	0.08	(0.04)	0.71	(1.22)
Vs. White			0.00	(.)
Black	-0.04	(0.08)	5.27*	(2.61)
Asian, Pacific Is	-0.03	(0.09)	5.31*	(2.49)
Hispanic	0.29**	(0.06)	14.97**	(2.12)
Other	0.11	(0.08)	-1.19	(2.90)
Border State	0.09*	(0.05)	5.44**	(1.54)
Constant	3.17**	(0.13)	64.11**	(4.25)
Observations	2685.00		2686.00	
Adjusted R2	0.17		0.28	

*p<0.05, **p<0.01 (two-tailed)

Note: OLS coefficients with standard errors reported in parentheses. Higher Values on each dependent variable indicate pro-immigration policy toward unauthorized immigrants in the US and warmer feelings toward “illegal” immigrants in the US, respectively.

CHAPTER 7. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

As outlined in Hypothesis 1, I expected to find a positive linear relationship between Altruism and positive attitudes toward immigrants. The results from the OLS regression model provide strong support for this hypothesis. In fact, an incremental increase in one's Altruism score is expected to lead to an increase in one's positive attitudes toward immigrants by just over 10 percent. The relationship between Altruism and positive immigration attitudes remains statistically significant even after accounting for every other individual-level predictor of attitudes like demographics or political identifications.

I had also expected in Hypothesis 2 that the relationship between Altruism and positive immigration attitudes would operate indirectly through party and ideological identifications. The results do not find support for this hypothesis but support instead that party and ideological identification do not mediate the relationship. This finding shows that Altruism truly has a strong, direct effect on immigration attitudes.

Similarly, the results do not support Hypothesis 3 that the relationship between Altruism and positive immigration attitudes should be stronger among those with higher political knowledge. Instead, the relationship between Altruism and positive immigration attitudes is not moderated by political knowledge. As noted in Table 6.4, one's attitudes toward immigrants do not change significantly between those who demonstrated they had political knowledge and those who did not. The results from the mediation and moderation analyses are interesting to this study because they show the strength of Altruism as a direct predictor of positive attitudes toward immigrants.

The results from the Seemingly Unrelated Regressions analysis in Table 6.4 show that for the three indicators comprising the Index of Evaluations of Immigrants, greater levels of Altruism lead to a statistically significant impact on the tendency to disagree with statements that immigrants harm America's culture and increase crime rates. On the other hand, Altruism does not lead to agreement with the statement that immigrants are good for America's economy (Column 3), once these effects are purged of unexplained covariances between this item and the other two. Thus, the results do not support Hypothesis 4 that Altruism should be a significant predictor across all three facts.

This could be because of how immigrants can be portrayed in each of these three societal facets of culture, crime, and the economy. Culturally, immigrants are a vulnerable population susceptible to prejudice and discrimination. An altruistic person would feel empathy toward this population and would be less likely to assert that immigrants harm American culture. In terms of crime, immigrant populations can be reduced to harmful stereotypes of participating in criminal behavior, especially pertaining to drug or gang activity. This can happen even though evidence suggests that immigrants usually have much lower crime rates than a country's native citizens (Light and Miller 2018, Landgrave and Nowrasteh 2018). Again, it makes sense that an altruistic person would not think of immigrant populations in terms of these negative stereotypes and would not assume that immigrants would increase America's crime rate.

On the other hand, how we tend to think about the impact of immigration on the economy is different from how we tend to think about culture or crime. First, assessments of how immigrants affect the economy might be more uncertain among ordinary citizens. Second, the first two items specifically ask about *harm* caused by immigrants, while the third item asks whether immigrants are *good* for the economy. By phrasing the questions

to ask whether a respondent agrees with statements that immigrants harm American culture or worsen the crime rate, the items might be considered more stigmatizing of immigrants. Therefore, altruists should be more likely to object to the culture and crime items, which they view as being more reflective of popular prejudices against immigrants.

I had expected in Hypothesis 5 that the impact of Altruism on positive immigration attitudes will not be as strong when the type of immigration is specified as “unauthorized” or “illegal.” Intriguingly, although Altruism (Agreeableness) is a strong predictor of positive immigration attitudes generally, it does not emerge as a predictor of immigration attitudes when the type of immigration is specified as “unauthorized” or “illegal.” Similarly, the primary analysis found Openness and Emotional Stability to be significant predictors of immigration attitudes, but these results do not translate to the analysis of attitudes toward unauthorized immigrants. These findings could be explained by an increased impact of other predictors. For example, unauthorized immigration is a particularly polarizing issue between Republicans and Democrats (Daniller 2019, Hammer and Kafura 2019). Therefore, party identification may have an increased impact on one’s attitudes toward unauthorized immigration, overpowering the impact that Altruism, Openness, or Emotional Stability might have. Conversely, perhaps Altruism is not strong enough to overcome the stigma that surrounds unauthorized immigration.

These results hold important implications for future research on attitudes toward immigrants as well as other political behaviors. One of the main contributions of this study is the use of Big 5 personality traits to predict political opinions specifically on immigration attitudes. The fact that the relationship between Altruism and positive

immigration attitudes received such strong support warrants further research on how personality traits can predict political opinions and behaviors.

CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION

Immigration is one of the most important topics in today's political climate, not only in the United States but also around the world. It is important to understand the motivations behind one's immigration attitudes in order to prevent prejudice and hostility, as well as to encourage empathy and humanitarian behavior. Even though immigration is a salient issue at the center of much debate currently, the roots of political beliefs such as attitudes toward immigrants can be more deeply understood in terms of enduring influences. Personality has proven to be a stable and predictable throughout the course of one's life and has also proven to be an important predictor of political attitudes. The goal of this paper was to investigate the role of Altruism, conceptualized via the Big 5 personality trait of Agreeableness, in predicting one's immigration attitudes. Altruism has emerged as a strong, significant predictor of positive attitudes toward immigrants. Notably, the relationship is neither mediated by party or ideological identifications nor moderated by one's level of political knowledge. Altruism's relationship to positive immigration attitudes is a sturdy one with a truly direct impact.

The results from this thesis hold some implications for avenues of future research. I find that although Altruism is a strong predictor of positive immigration attitudes, it fails to reach statistical significance as a predictor of attitudes toward unauthorized immigrants. Understanding the differences between attitudes toward immigration more generally and unauthorized immigration, as well as how personality helps to explain these attitudes, is an area of further research that is worth exploring.

Further, the results show that when the Index of Evaluations of Immigrants is broken down into its three indicators, Altruism is a significant predictor for the indicators

for culture and crime, but not for the economy. One theoretical reason this could be is that the way immigrants are portrayed differs across these three societal facets. Survey experiment methodology might be a promising way to investigate why immigration attitudes might differ across societal factors.

This study investigated the relationship between Altruism and attitudes toward immigrants, and did not seek to tease out the specific mechanisms through which Altruism is operating. While this study focused on Altruism's general outcome of helping others, it is a promising area of future research to investigate specifically the motivations behind Altruism and the mechanisms it might work through to impact political attitudes and behaviors. A study could investigate for instance how Altruism might operate through the contact versus threat hypotheses of attitudes toward immigrants. For example, could geographic social diversity moderate the relationship between Altruism and immigration attitudes as posited by the contact hypothesis?

In addition to a promising research agenda, these results also hold practical implications. Although studying the motivations behind immigration attitudes is important for understanding how to prevent hostile behavior, it is also important to understand what promotes prosocial behavior like compassion and empathy. In turn, prosocial appeals for immigration may be an effective political tool. Understanding what can drive positive immigration attitudes could help support policy initiatives and educational efforts to support marginalized populations. Immigration is one of the most polarizing topics today both in the US and around the world. In a time when prejudice and hostility are faced by immigrants every day, these results of Altruism as a strong predictor of positive immigration attitudes can hopefully contribute to further discussion

about what can help to increase Altruism and tolerance rather than continuing to focus solely on the negative forces that drive hostile behavior.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Summary Statistics for Included Variables

	Mean	Standard Deviation	ANES Variable Codes
Immigration: Culture	3.63	1.17	V162269
Immigration: Crime	3.33	1.21	V162270
Immigration: Economy	2.56	1.11	V162268
Index: Positive	10.38	2.93	
Agreeableness (Altruism)	0.70	0.19	V162339, V162334
Openness to Experience	0.67	0.19	V162337, V162342
Extraversion	0.54	0.23	V162333, V162338
Conscientiousness	0.78	0.19	V162335, V162340
Emotional Stability	0.66	0.21	V162341, V162336
Party Identification	0.55	0.31	V161158x
Ideological Identification	0.60	0.23	V161126
Personal Finances	0.59	0.20	V161110
Political Knowledge	0.28		V161514
Christian Fundamentalism	0.68	0.24	V161243
Religious Attendance	0.50	0.31	V161245
Education	0.64	0.23	V161270
Gender: Female	0.53		V161342
Race			V161310x
White	0.72		
Black	0.09		
Hispanic	0.11		
Asian, Pacific Is	0.03		
Other	0.05		
Border State	0.21		V161010d

Note: For the dichotomous variables (Political Knowledge, Gender, Race, Border State), the value reported in the Mean column is the proportion of responses coded 1:0.

APPENDIX D. Additional Information for the Index of Evaluations of Immigrants

	ANES Variable Name	ANES Item Wording	ANES Item Response Choices
Immigration: Culture	V162269	America’s culture is generally harmed by immigrants.	Agree Strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, disagree strongly
Immigration: Crime	V162270	Immigrants increase crime rates in the US.	
Immigration: Economy	V162268	Immigrants are generally good for America’s economy.	

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