

**SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS ON AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION AND
IMMIGRATION POLICIES OF THE UNITED STATES IN 2016**

by

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ABSTRACT

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Immigration policies in the United States remain a paramount topic in shaping the nation's sociopolitical culture in the status quo; nuances in public sentiment pertaining to both immigration and immigration policies are imperative in recognizing the broader implications of this issue. To gauge public sentiment on this and associated issues, a poll was conducted titled *Taking America's Pulse 2016 Class Survey*. The Survey organization was the German data and analytics firm, Growth from Knowledge (GfK) Group, and was sponsored by Cornell University faculty members, Peter K. Enns, Ph.D., Professor of Government, and Jonathon Schuldt, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Communication. This research will examine two (2) questions from the referenced 2016 poll, Question I, "Do you think the number of immigrants admitted into the US is too high, too low, or about the right amount?" and Question II, "Would you support or oppose a proposal to increase penalties for undocumented immigrants who overstay their visa in the US?". This secondary data analysis further studies the aforementioned questions by examining respondents' political party affiliation.

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INTRODUCTION

Immigration is a reemerging topic that consistently graces the headlines of major news and broadcasting companies in the United States. The synthesis between public sentiment and governmental action is necessary in understanding the intricacies of U.S.' immigration policies. An issue under constant scrutiny and examination, public perception is also vital in understanding, establishing, and composing sound immigration policies that are reflective of actual data and not fictitious information. Despite impact on immigration due to the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak and COVID-19 pandemic, immigration remains a pertinent issue for both major political parties in the United States. (Loweree et al., *The Impact of COVID-19 on Noncitizens and Across the U.S. Immigration System* 2021).

A prevalent framework and central contention in understanding this issue within the terms of public sentiment is recognizing the divide-on-stance between the major U.S. political parties, that is, the Democratic and Republican parties, and the parties' nuances and differentiating views on immigration, immigration policies, and implications of undocumented immigration. (Hammer & Kafura, *Republicans and Democrats in Different Worlds on Immigration* 2019). This research will examine this contention by examining two survey questions within the *Taking America's Pulse 2016 Class Survey* conducted by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at Cornell University. Question I (Survey Question # 25) reads as "Do you think the number of immigrants admitted into the US is too high, too low, or about the right amount?" and Question II (Survey Question # 13) reads as "Would you support or oppose a proposal to increase penalties for undocumented immigrants who overstay their visa in the US?"

Narrowing the scope of the referenced 2016 poll to these two survey questions, this research was designed with a secondary data analysis question of whether there was a

statistically significant difference between a respondent's political party affiliation and how they chose to answer the survey questions. Utilizing the aforementioned questions, the research was designed with the following hypotheses:

Question I

H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference between a respondent's party affiliation and whether they believe the number of immigrants admitted into the U.S. is too high, too low, or about the right amount.

H_1 : There is a statistically significant difference between a respondent's party affiliation and whether they believe the number of immigrants admitted into the U.S. is too high, too low, or about the right amount.

Question II

H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference between a respondent's party affiliation and whether they support or oppose a proposal to increase penalties for undocumented immigrants who overstay their visa in the U.S.

H_1 : There is a statistically significant difference between a respondent's party affiliation and whether they support or oppose a proposal to increase penalties for undocumented immigrants who overstay their visa in the U.S.

As such, utilizing the public opinion poll for this research and reanalyzing it for statistical significance by political party affiliation, the study will examine respondents' stance on the number of admitted immigrants to the U.S. and whether or not they support or oppose a proposal

to increase penalties for undocumented immigrants who overstay their visa in the U.S. have a statistically significant relationship to respondents' political party affiliation.

Because there are two hypotheses within this research, this paper is outlined by providing the Methodology which encompasses both questions collectively. Thereafter, Results & Discussion are presented and separated by question, beginning with an overview examination of each question, followed by its demographic cross-tabulation analysis and discussion thereafter. The Conclusion and References are subsequently provided encompassing, again, both questions collectively.

METHODOLOGY

The original survey *Taking America's Pulse 2016 Class Survey* was conducted with field dates beginning on October 5, 2016 and ending on October 25, 2016. The Survey Organization was the German data and analytics firm Growth through Knowledge (GfK) Group. The GfK Group conducted the original survey for the purpose of their "GfK Group Project Report for the Crime and Punishment". The public opinion research survey was conducted by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at Cornell University and sponsored by Cornell University faculty members, Peter K. Enns, Ph.D., Professor of Government, and Jonathon Schuldt, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Communication. For the purpose of this secondary data analysis research, access to the original survey was gained via Roper iPoll with the author's credentials from Georgetown University's School of Continuing Studies. With guidance from the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, the results of this analyses – utilizing the original survey data – may be published with the appropriate acknowledgements and source citation found herein.

The original survey had a total sample size of 1,461 random adults – person(s) over the age of eighteen (18) – who resided in the United States at the time of the survey. The survey’s interview method was a web-based survey. “The [original] poll was fielded by GfK Knowledge Networks using its national KnowledgePanel®. The KnowledgePanel® is a nationally representative probability sample of the U.S. adult population. Panelists are recruited by randomly selecting residential addresses using a process called address-based sampling (ABS). Since nearly 3-in-10 US households do not have home Internet access, respondent households who do not have Internet access or own a computer are provided Internet service and a netbook computer to ensure that panel respondents are representative of the US adult population. Unlike opt-in panels, households are not permitted to "self-select" into KnowledgePanel®; nor are they allowed to participate in many surveys per week.” (Cornell University - Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, *Study Record: Longstanding Methods Collection - Questions for Taking America's Pulse 2016 Class Survey [Roper #31115251]* 2016).

For this secondary data analysis research, two (2) questions of the fifty (50) total questions from the survey were selected. Question I (Survey Question # 25) reads as “Do you think the number of immigrants admitted into the US is too high, too low, or about the right amount?” and Question II (Survey Question # 13) reads as “Would you support or oppose a proposal to increase penalties for undocumented immigrants who overstay their visa in the US?”

Within the original survey, Question I (Survey Question #25) was posed to respondents as “Do you think the number of immigrants admitted into the US is too high, too low, or about the right amount?”. The respondents were subsequently given the following answer choices: “Too high”, “Too low”, or “About the right amount”.

Within the original survey, Question II (Survey Question #13) was posed to respondents as “Would you support or oppose a proposal to increase penalties for undocumented immigrants who overstay their visa in the US?” The respondents were subsequently given the following answer choices: “Support” or “Oppose”.

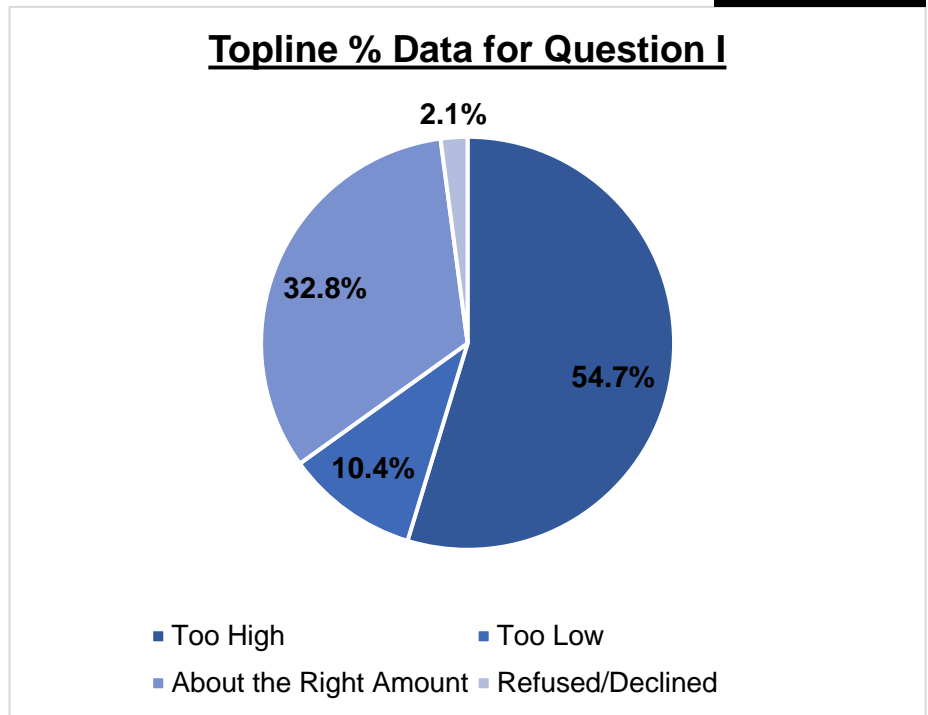
Within the original survey, respondents were also asked to self-identify with their political party affiliation. Respondents were given the following choices: “Strong Republican”, “Not Strong Republican”, “Leans Republican”, “Undecided/Independent/Other”, “Leans Democrat”, “Not Strong Democrat”, “Strong Democrat”.

For this research, Question I and Question II – utilizing the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS) – will be analyzed and reexamined. Alongside the already generated and available data and findings from the original survey, this research will reanalyze and cross-tabulate the survey questions by political party affiliation.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION OF QUESTION I

FIGURE 1A

Overall, and as demonstrated in Figure 1A, 54.7% of respondents believed that the number of immigrants admitted into the United States was “too high”, 10.4% of respondents believed that the number was “too low”, and 32.8% of respondents believed that the



number of immigrants admitted into the United States was “about the right amount”. With 97.9% of respondents answering this survey question, 2.1% of respondents either refused and/or declined to answer this question. Thus, the majority of respondents believed that the number of immigrants admitted into the United States was “too high”.

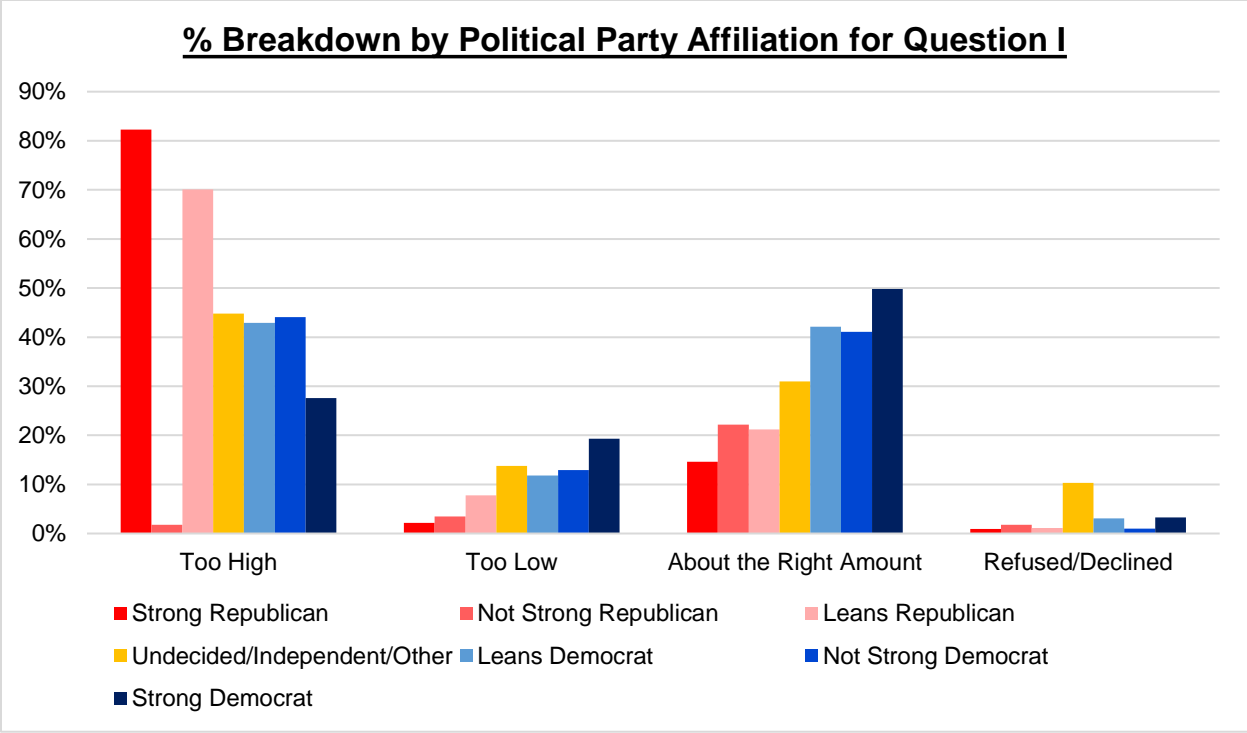
Utilizing the SPSS software, the data for Question I was cross-tabulated by political party affiliation and reanalyzed. As demonstrated in figure 1B, 82.3% of respondents who identified as “Strong Republican”, 72.5% of respondents who identified as “Not Strong Republican”, 70.1% of respondents who identified as “Leans Republican”, 44.8% of respondents who identified as “Undecided/Independent/Other”, 27.6% of respondents who identified as “Strong Democrat”, 44.1% of respondents who identified as “Not Strong Democrat”, and 42.9% of respondents who identified as “Leans Democrat” believed that the number of immigrants admitted into the United States is “Too high”.

Furthermore, 2.2% of respondents who identified as “Strong Republican”, 3.5% of respondents who identified as “Not Strong Republican”, 7.6% of respondents who identified as “Leans Republican”, 13.8% of respondents who identified as “Undecided/Independent/Other”, 19.3% of respondents who identified as “Strong Democrat”, 13.9% of respondents who identified as “Not Strong Democrat”, and 11.8% of respondents who identified as “Leans Democrat” believed that the number of immigrants admitted into the United States is “Too low”.

Moreover, 14.6% of respondents who identified as “Strong Republican”, 22.2% of respondents who identified as “Not Strong Republican”, 21.2% of respondents who identified as “Leans Republican”, 31.0% of respondents who identified as “Undecided/Independent/Other”, 49.8% of respondents who identified as “Strong Democrat”, 41.1% of respondents who identified as “Not Strong Democrat”, and 42.1% of respondents who identified as “Leans Democrat” believed that the number of immigrants admitted into the United States is “About the right amount”.

Furthermore, 0.9% of respondents who identified as “Strong Republican”, 1.8% of respondents who identified as “Not Strong Republican”, 1.1% of respondents who identified as “Leans Republican”, 10.3% of respondents who identified as “Undecided/Independent/Other”, 3.3% of respondents who identified as “Strong Democrat”, 1.0% of respondents who identified as “Not Strong Democrat”, and 3.1% of respondents who identified as “Leans Democrat” either refused and/or declined to answer this survey question.

FIGURE 1B

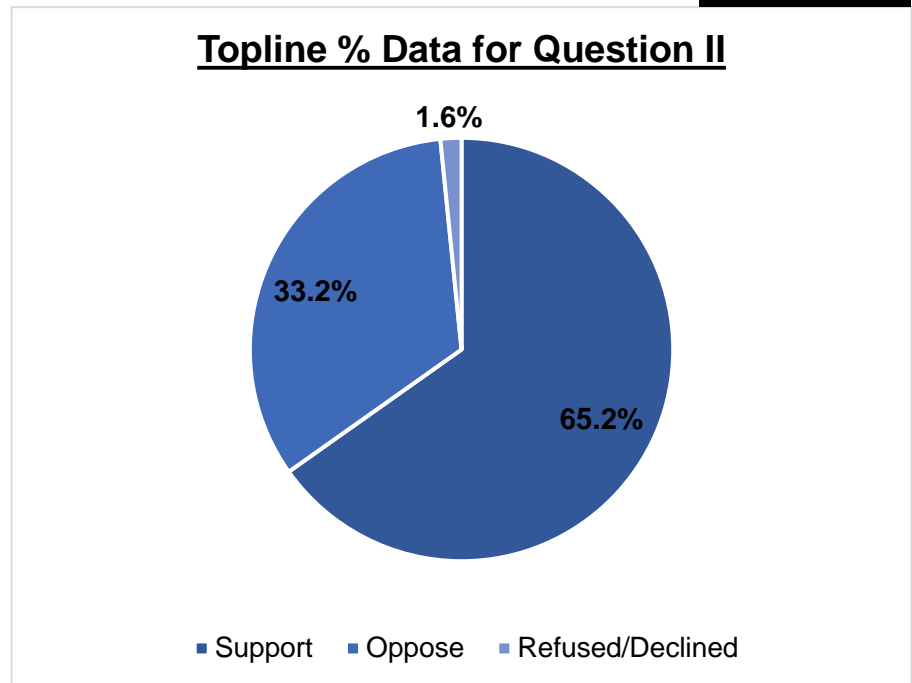


Employing the statistical test, “Pearson’s Chi-Square Test”, this secondary data analysis found that there is a statistically significant difference at the 1% significance level ($\chi^2(18) = 250.199, p < 0.001$) between respondents’ political party affiliation and whether they believe the number of immigrants admitted into the U.S. is too high, too low, or about the right amount; thus, this study rejects the null hypothesis of Question I. Furthermore, Figure 1B corroborates the statistical unison among the Republican-ranging respondents, and especially “Strong Republicans” comparative to respondents within the Democratic-range whose results had a wider spread amongst question responses.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION OF QUESTION 2

FIGURE 2A

Overall, and as demonstrated in Figure 2A, 65.2% of respondents chose to “support” a proposal to increase penalties for undocumented immigrants who overstay their visa in the United States, 33.2% chose to “oppose”. With 98.4% of respondents answering this



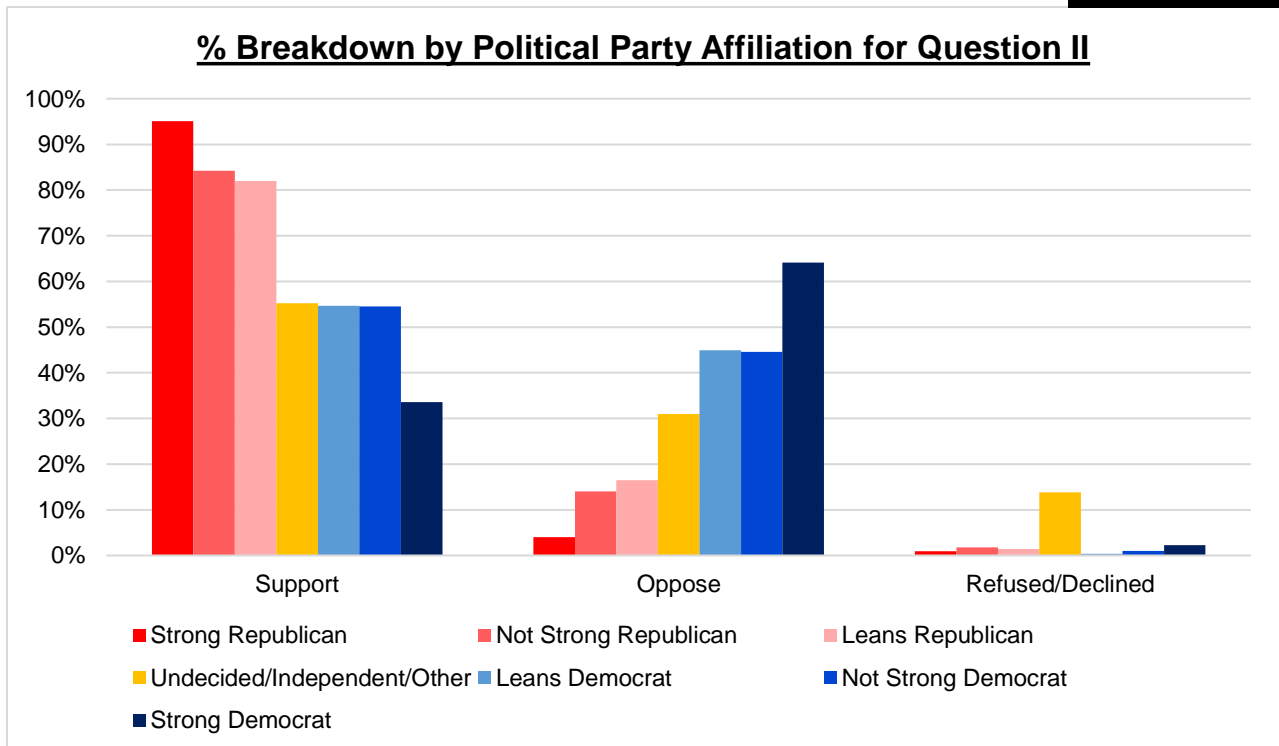
survey question, 1.6% of respondents either refused and/or declined to answer this question. Thus, the majority of respondents would “support” a proposal to increase penalties for undocumented immigrants who overstay their visa in the United States.

Utilizing the SPSS software, the data for Question II was cross-tabulated by political party affiliation and reanalyzed. As demonstrated in figure 2B, 95.1% of respondents who identified as “Strong Republican”, 84.2% of respondents who identified as “Not Strong Republican”, 82.0% of respondents who identified as “Leans Republican”, 55.2% of respondents who identified as “Undecided/Independent/Other”, 33.6% of respondents who identified as “Strong Democrat”, 54.5% of respondents who identified as “Not Strong Democrat”, and 54.7% of respondents who identified as “Leans Democrat” chose to “support” a proposal to increase penalties for undocumented immigrants who overstay their visa in the United States.

Furthermore, 4.0% of respondents who identified as “Strong Republican”, 14.0% of respondents who identified as “Not Strong Republican”, 16.5% of respondents who identified as “Leans Republican”, 31.0% of respondents who identified as “Undecided/Independent/Other”, 64.1% of respondents who identified as “Strong Democrat”, 44.6% of respondents who identified as “Not Strong Democrat”, and 44.9% of respondents who identified as “Leans Democrat” chose to “oppose” a proposal to increase penalties for undocumented immigrants who overstay their visa in the United States.

Moreover, 0.9% of respondents who identified as “Strong Republican”, 1.8% of respondents who identified as “Not Strong Republican”, 1.4% of respondents who identified as “Leans Republican”, 13.8% of respondents who identified as “Undecided/Independent/Other”, 2.3% of respondents who identified as “Strong Democrat”, 1.0% of respondents who identified as “Not Strong Democrat”, and 0.4% of respondents who identified as “Leans Democrat” either refused and/or declined to answer this survey question.

FIGURE 2B



Employing the statistical test, “Pearson’s Chi-Square Test”, this secondary data analysis found that there is a statistically significant difference at the 1% significance level ($\chi^2(12) = 344.365, p < 0.001$) between respondents’ political party affiliation and whether they support or oppose a proposal to increase penalties for undocumented immigrants who overstay their visa in the United States; thus, this study rejects the null hypothesis of Question II. Furthermore, Figure 2B corroborates, again, the statistical unison among the Republican-ranging respondents, and especially “Strong Republicans” comparative to respondents within the Democratic-range whose results had a wider spread amongst question responses.

CONCLUSION

For Question I, and expressed within the data of Figure 1A, the prevailing overall sentiment is that the number of immigrants admitted into the United States is “too high”. Comparably, and as expressed within the data of Figure 1B, there is more of a statistical unison among the Republican-ranging respondents – especially “Strong Republicans” – comparative to respondents within the Democratic-range whose results had a wider spread amongst question responses.

For Question II, and expressed within the data of Figure 2A, the prevailing overall sentiment is “support” for a proposal to increase penalties for undocumented immigrants who overstay their visa in the United States. Comparably, and as expressed within the data of Figure 2B, there is more of a statistical unison among the Republican-ranging respondents – especially “Strong Republicans” – comparative to respondents within the Democratic-range whose results had a wider spread amongst question responses. In comparison to Republican-ranging respondents, Democratic-range respondents were much more varied in “support” versus “oppose” choices.

Through this study's secondary data analysis of *Taking America's Pulse 2016 Class Survey*, this research was able to successfully reject both the null hypothesis of Question One (I) and the null hypothesis of Question Two (II). As such, this study found that there is a statistically significant difference between a respondent's political party affiliation and whether they believe the number of immigrants admitted into the U.S. is too high, too low, or about the right amount. This study further demonstrates that there is a statistically significant difference between a respondent's political party affiliation and whether they support or oppose a proposal to increase penalties for undocumented immigrants who overstay their visa in the U.S.

There is an imperative essence in understanding public sentiment and the synthesis of the public's perceptions and immigration rhetoric in the United States. This research supports the increase of attention in gauging public opinion through analytical and quantitative data to best diagnose the sociopolitical culture of the U.S. in the status quo and how those implications may impact the major political party's stance in belief and perception of their constituents. This study recognizes the laudable access and work of Cornell University and Georgetown University in examining such issues that face American politics through the scope of academia and research. The findings of this secondary data analysis empower the further study of this topic and how political party affiliation may serve as a vital measure in understanding mass public opinion in the United States.

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APPENDIX A: CROSS-TABULATION FOR QUESTION I (x Political Party Affiliation)

			Refused	Too high	Too low	About the right amount	Total
political party affiliation	Strong Republican	Count	2	186	5	33	226
		% within political party affiliation	0.9%	82.3%	2.2%	14.6%	100.0%
	Not Strong Republican	Count	3	124	6	38	171
		% within political party affiliation	1.8%	72.5%	3.5%	22.2%	100.0%
	Leans Republican	Count	3	195	21	59	278
		% within political party affiliation	1.1%	70.1%	7.6%	21.2%	100.0%
	Undecided/Independent/Other	Count	3	13	4	9	29
		% within political party affiliation	10.3%	44.8%	13.8%	31.0%	100.0%
	Leans Democrat	Count	8	109	30	107	254
		% within political party affiliation	3.1%	42.9%	11.8%	42.1%	100.0%
	Not Strong Democrat	Count	2	89	28	83	202
		% within political party affiliation	1.0%	44.1%	13.9%	41.1%	100.0%
	Strong Democrat	Count	10	83	58	150	301
		% within political party affiliation	3.3%	27.6%	19.3%	49.8%	100.0%
Total		Count	31	799	152	479	1461
		% within political party affiliation	2.1%	54.7%	10.4%	32.8%	100.0%

APPENDIX B: CROSS-TABULATION FOR QUESTION II (x Political Party Affiliation)

			Refused	Support	Oppose	Total
political party affiliation	Strong Republican	Count	2	215	9	226
		% within political party affiliation	0.9%	95.1%	4.0%	100.0%
	Not Strong Republican	Count	3	144	24	171
		% within political party affiliation	1.8%	84.2%	14.0%	100.0%
	Leans Republican	Count	4	228	46	278
		% within political party affiliation	1.4%	82.0%	16.5%	100.0%
	Undecided/Independent/Other	Count	4	16	9	29
		% within political party affiliation	13.8%	55.2%	31.0%	100.0%
	Leans Democrat	Count	1	139	114	254
		% within political party affiliation	0.4%	54.7%	44.9%	100.0%
	Not Strong Democrat	Count	2	110	90	202
		% within political party affiliation	1.0%	54.5%	44.6%	100.0%
	Strong Democrat	Count	7	101	193	301
		% within political party affiliation	2.3%	33.6%	64.1%	100.0%
Total		Count	23	953	485	1461
		% within political party affiliation	1.6%	65.2%	33.2%	100.0%

APPENDIX C: CASE PROCESSING SUMMARY

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
political party affiliation * Do you think the number of immigrants admitted into the U.S. is too high, too low, or about the right amount?	1461	100.0%	0	0.0%	1461	100.0%
political party affiliation * Would you support or oppose a proposal to increase penalties for undocumented immigrants who overstay their visa in the U.S.?	1461	100.0%	0	0.0%	1461	100.0%

APPENDIX D: CHI-SQUARE TESTS FOR QUESTION I

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-Sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	250.199^a	18	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	258.908	18	<.001
Linear-By-Linear Association	135.389	1	<.001
N Of Valid Cases	1461		

$(x^2(18) = 250.199, p < 0.001)$

APPENDIX E: CHI-SQUARE TESTS FOR QUESTION II

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-Sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	344.365^a	12	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	358.980	12	<.001
Linear-By-Linear Association	208.137	1	<.001
N Of Valid Cases	1461		

$(\chi^2 (12) = 344.365, p < 0.001)$