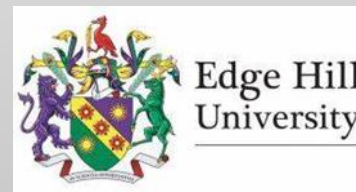


Mexican immigration/immigrants in American and Mexican newspapers



Edge Hill Corpus Research Group

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Aims and goals

- to uncover implicit attitudes towards Mexican immigration/immigrants in US and Mexican newspapers
- ethical aspiration to highlight social wrongs that Mexican immigrants suffer in the US
- raise awareness of the injustices, dire circumstances, and systematic obstacles Mexican immigrants face on their journey and once in the US.
- forming an unbiased understanding of this phenomenon

Methodology

- CADS is “an approach to CDA which utilizes corpus linguistics methods to identify large-scale patterns.” (Baker and Ellece, 2011: 26)
- International corpus studies (e.g., Gabrielatos and Baker, 2008; Taylor, 2009; Galindo Gómez, 2019) identified mostly negative attitudes towards immigrants
- *RQs*
- Corpora building (search query)
- Collocation/Word Sketches analysis,
- Annotation
- Semantic preference analysis,
- **Discourse prosody analysis**

Research questions

How do the American and Mexican press represent Mexican immigration to the US?

- *What differences and similarities can be observed between the attitudes towards immigration from Mexico to the USA that are expressed by Mexican and American newspapers?*
- *How does the discourse of immigration change during Trump's presidency?*

Corpora

- American immigration corpus (AIC)
 - the US newspapers (in English): 16,619,929 words
New York Times, Washington Post, USA Today, Los Angeles Times, The Arizona Republic and Chicago Tribune
- Mexican immigration corpus (MIC)
 - Mexican newspapers (in Spanish): 12,258,126 words
El Universal, Elimparcial.com, Reforma, El Norte, Lacronica.com and Mural

Discourse prosody


- Origins in the neo-Firthian analysis of collocation through concordances
- Sinclair (1999: 33-34) defines discourse prosody as “attitudinal,” concerned with speaker meaning (pragmatics)
- **Relates to ‘the way that the words in corpus can collocate with a related set of words or phrases, often revealing (hidden) attitudes’ (Baker, Hardie and McEnery, 2022: 58).**
- For example, the word ‘immigration’ may collocate with the semantic groups such as *illegality* (‘unauthorised’, ‘irregular’) and *criminality* (‘smuggling’, ‘threat’). Together with exploration of concordances, they uncover the discourse prosody of *opposition towards immigration*.

Original contribution

- filling the gaps in relevant previous studies (e.g., Galindo Gómez, 2019; Canales Lizaola and Lizárraga Salas, 2019)
- number of newspapers (6 US newspapers and 6 Mexican newspapers).
- time frame (first Trump presidency)
- a cross-linguistic study, as it investigates newspaper discourse on Mexican immigration topic in both English and Spanish
- conducting diachronic analysis of discourse prosodies of the terms 'immigration'/'inmigración' and 'immigrant(s)'/inmigrante(s)' on random and representative samples from the two large immigration corpora
- the attitudes were comparatively interpreted in relation to socio-political events; geographical distribution (national v. regional newspapers) and political leaning of newspapers; and framing theory.
- the findings can be applied to the US and Mexican press and could influence further investigations in the field.

AIC newspapers

- Positive corpus discourses about 'immigration' and 'immigrants' prevail over negative
- The overall pattern of positive 'immigrant(s)' discourses outnumbering positive 'immigration' discourses, and negative 'immigration' discourses outnumbering negative 'immigrant(s)' discourses, did not always repeat in the analysis of diachronic frequency development for each attitude.
- The frequency of corpus newspaper attitudes fluctuated during Trump's presidency in accordance with major political events.

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- 16 June 2015: Trump's speech for presidential candidacy
 - 8th November 2016: Trump wins presidential elections
 - 20 January 2017: Trump's inauguration speech
 - June 2017: Separation of children (pilot programme)
 - September 2017: Trump announces to end DACA
 - June 2018: end of family separations
 - 1 July 2018: AMLO wins presidential elections in Mexico
 - December 2018 – January 2019: US government shutdown
 - 25 January 2019: implementation of 'Remain in Mexico'
 - 30 May 2019: Trump threatens Mexico to impose 5% tariff
 - March 2020: US outbreak of Covid-19 and the appeal to 'Title 42'.
 - June 2020: Supreme Court rules that DACA needs to be reinstated
 - 8 July 2020: AMLO and Trump meet in Washington
 - 3 November 2020: Trump loses presidential elections

AIC newspapers

- Each attitude developed differently during the period
- The trend in AIC newspapers showed more negative attitudes towards Mexican immigration/immigrants at the beginning of Trump's campaigning, and more positive coverage at the end of his presidency.
- While consistent attitudes represented most attitudes, the inconsistent (i.e., time specific) attitudes were underrepresented.
- Absent or infrequent attitudes towards Mexican 'immigration/immigrants might signify the indifference of the press towards immigration issues, which could have been the reflection of Trump's lack of empathy in Mexican immigration/immigrants

AIC newspapers

- The results suggest a correlation between socio-political events, the political leaning of AIC newspapers and public opinion/attitudes towards immigration/immigrants.
- AIC newspapers were not as polarised as expected. Conservative AIC newspapers did not consistently express anti-immigration attitudes, and vice versa: progressive AIC newspapers did not always communicate pro-immigration attitudes.

MIC newspapers

- Positive discourses on ‘immigration’ and ‘immigrants’ prevail in MIC newspapers, an attitude that does not seem to be reflected in the public opinion about migrants in Mexico.
- The reason for the discrepancy between positive attitudes towards immigrants/immigration in MIC newspapers and predominantly negative attitudes among Mexicans living in Mexico, might lie in the content of MIC
- While MIC newspapers are compassionate towards their compatriots entering the US, they are less so towards other immigrants (e.g., from Central America) who are trying to settle in Mexico.

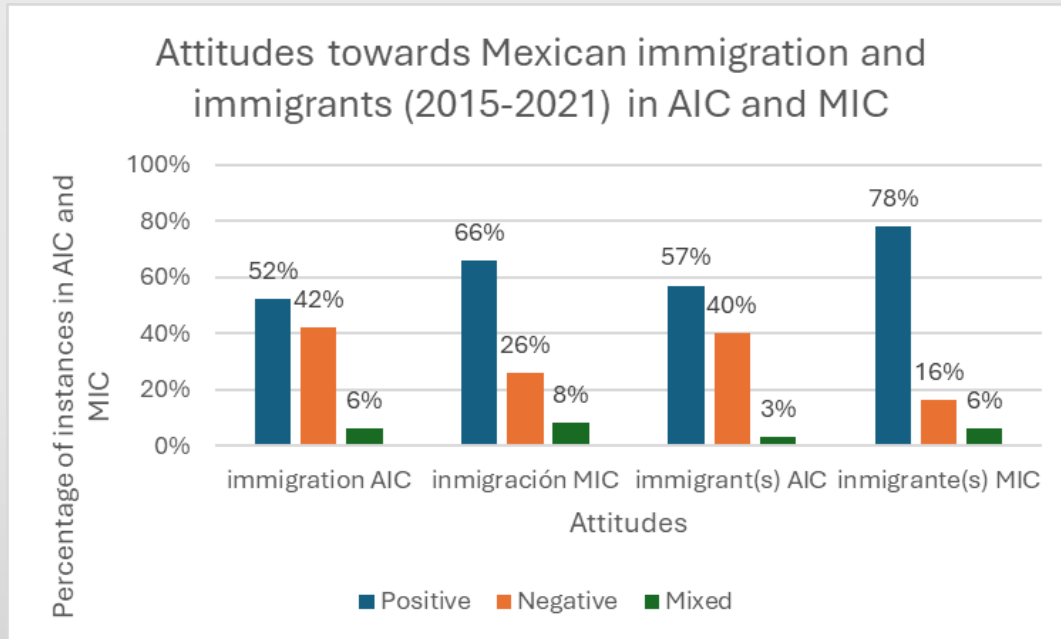
MIC newspapers

- The trend in MIC newspapers showed more negative attitudes towards Mexican immigration/immigrants especially in 2019, when there was a surge of Central American immigrants in caravans, and more positive coverage at the end of Trump's presidency
- Progressive leaning MIC newspapers tend to be more pro-migrant than conservative leaning MIC newspapers.
- Newspapers close to the border tend to express negative stance towards immigration/immigrants.

AIC and MIC newspapers

- While the attitudes towards ‘immigration’/‘inmigración’ and ‘immigrant(s)’/‘inmigrante(s)’ fluctuated during the period of study, the attitudes towards the latter were more positive than towards ‘immigration’/‘inmigración’ in part because they were likely to portray immigrants in more personal, human, terms.
- Such is the case of the representation of ‘inmigrante(s)’ as crucial workers during Covid-19, and of anti-racist attitudes towards them in MIC newspapers.

AIC and MIC newspapers



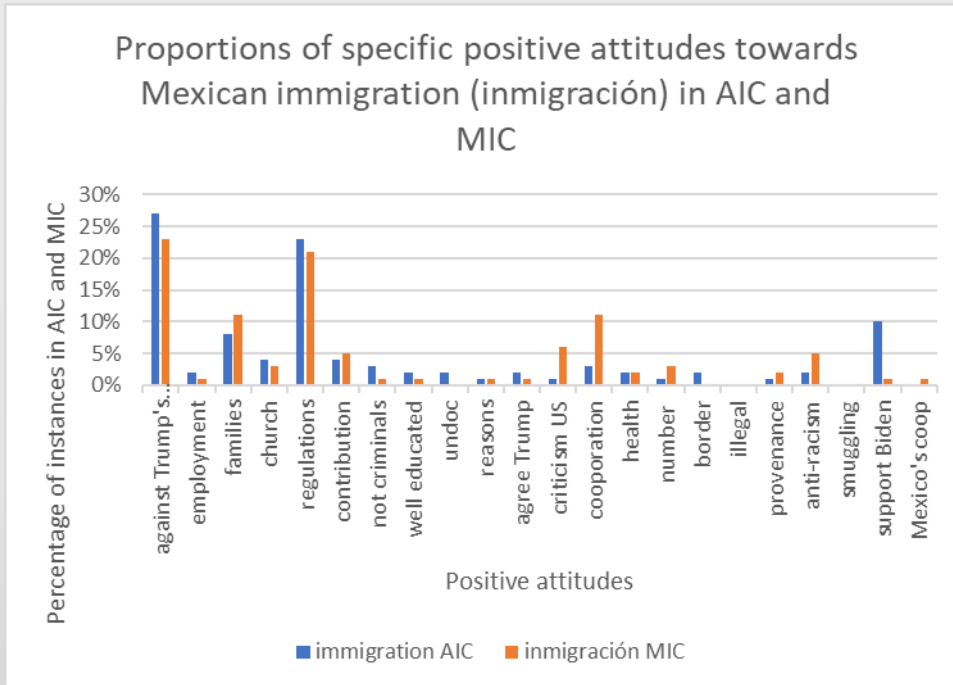
The biggest contrast between positive and negative attitudes can be observed in MIC 'inmigrante(s)' discourses, where positive attitudes (78%) significantly surpass negative attitudes (16%). On the other hand, the smallest difference between positive (52%) and negative (42%) discourses is seen in AIC newspapers.

Is the Mexican public more tolerant towards Mexican immigrants than the American public?

AIC and MIC newspapers

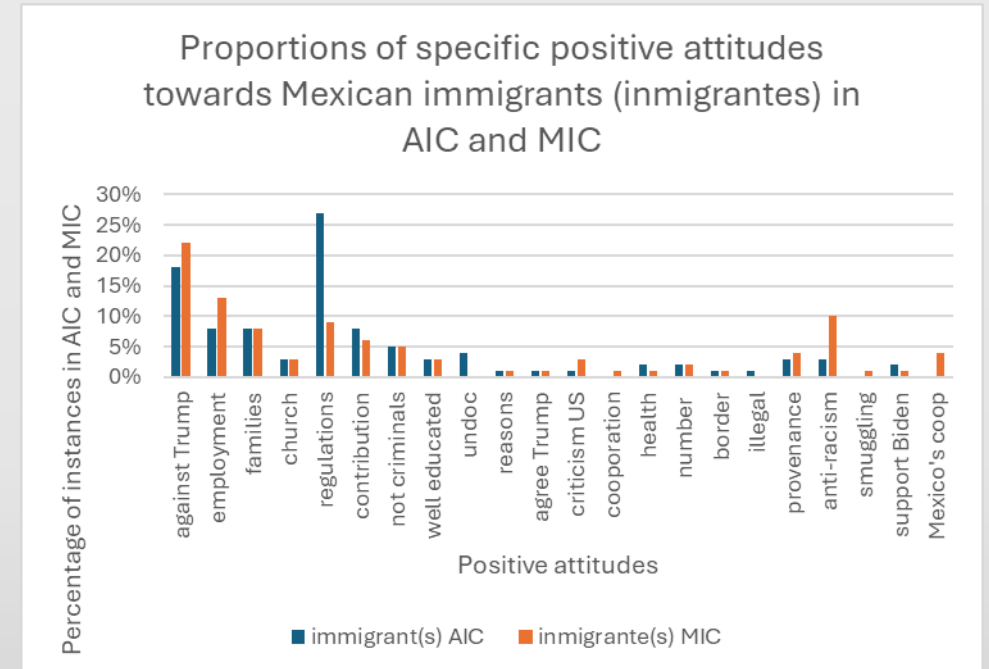
- American public opinion more favourable towards immigration in the US between 2018 and 2020 correlating with more positive attitudes in the AIC press.
- The predominantly negative attitude of the Mexican public towards migrants does not correspond with more positive attitudes in MIC newspapers.
- Trump's popularity in the US decreased throughout his presidency reflecting in increased criticism in the AIC press of his anti-immigration policies as his presidency unfolded.
- Trump's popularity in Mexico, which was already low at the beginning of his presidency and stayed low till the end, was echoed in the MIC press by opposition to Trump's immigration approach.

Positive attitudes in AIC and MIC



The most frequent positive attitudes towards ‘immigration’ (‘inmigración’) in both corpora newspapers were communicated via opposition to Trump’s/Republican anti-immigration policies (27% and 23%)¹ and favourable comments towards the rights of immigrants and pro-immigration laws and regulations (23% and 21%)

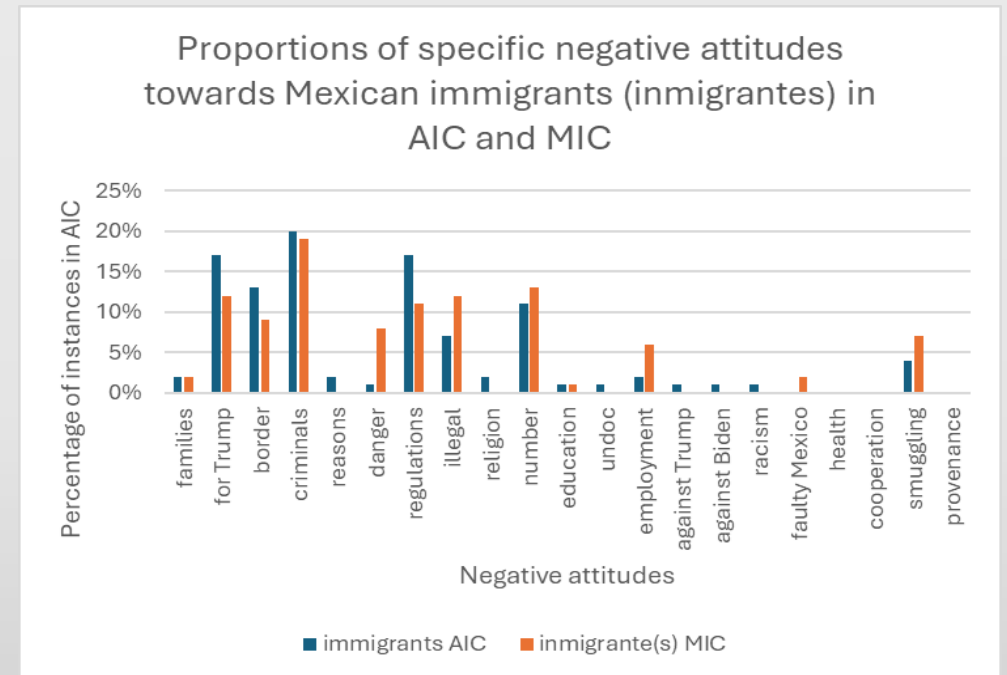
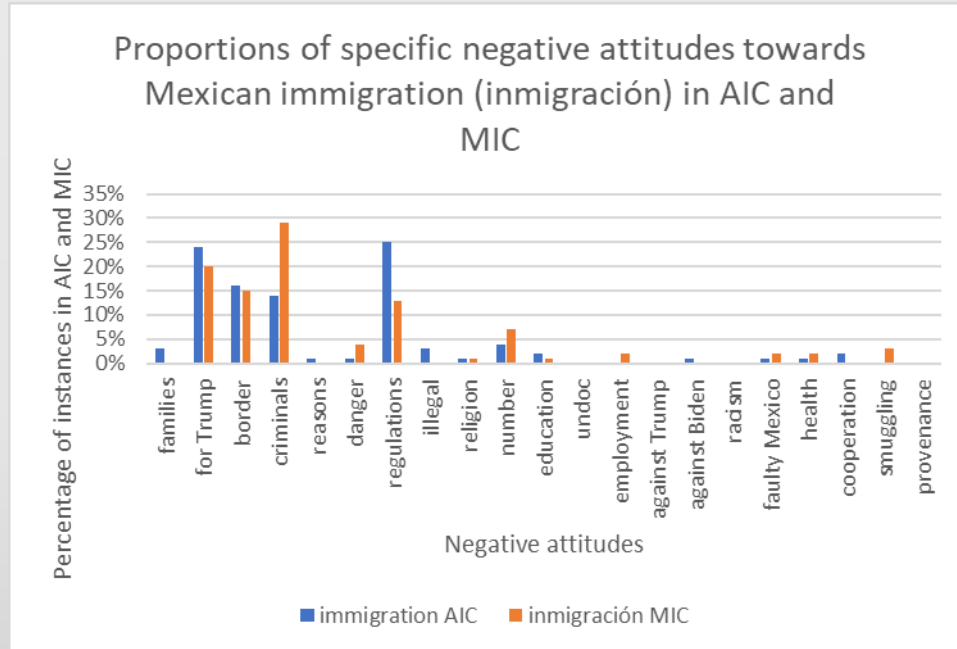
Positive attitudes that are present in both corpora and in fairly similar frequencies are manifested via empathy towards immigrant families (8% and 11%), descriptions of immigrants as contributors to the US society (4% and 5%), and the church as a refuge for immigrants (4% and 3%).



Positive attitudes towards ‘immigrant(s)’ (‘inmigrante(s)’) show bigger frequency differences in AIC and MIC newspapers. The opposition to Trump’s anti-immigration policies is expressed fairly frequently in both corpora newspapers (15% and 22%)

The frequency of positive attitudes towards proimmigrant regulations and rights are high in AIC newspapers (27%), whereas they stay low in MIC newspapers (9%). The reason for this difference might be that MIC newspapers are more preoccupied with practical, day-to-day, and personal issues of immigrants rather than the legal concerns related to being an immigrant.

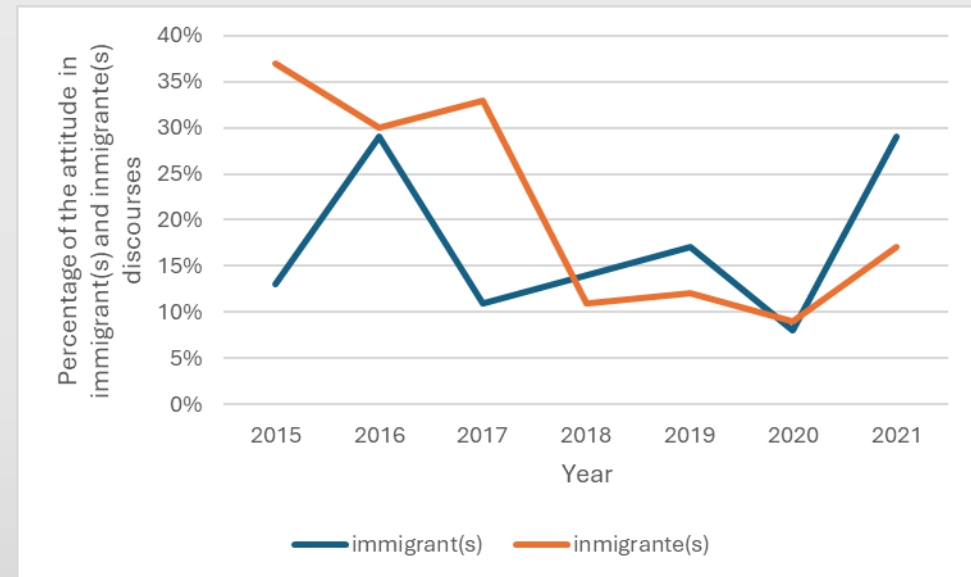
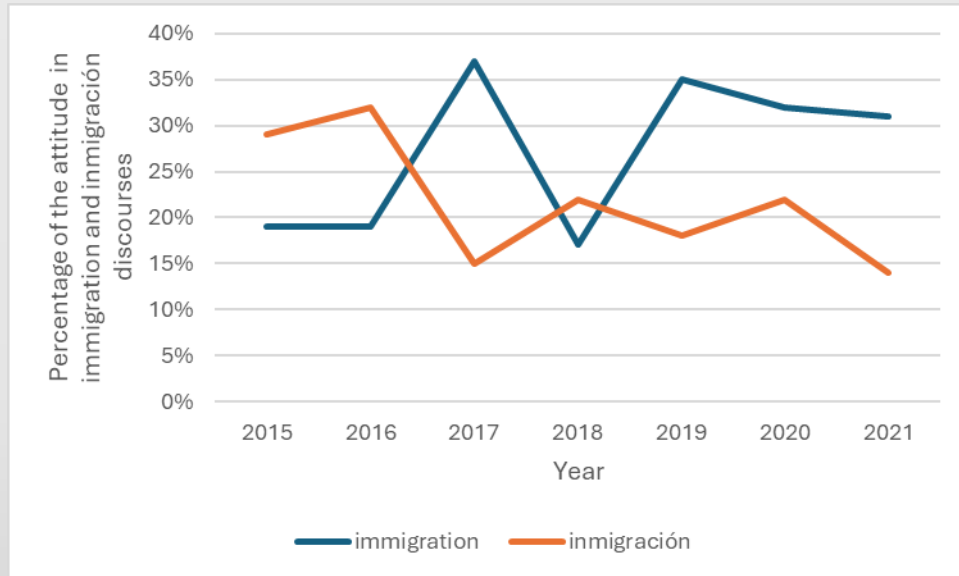
Negative attitudes in AIC and MIC



Both AIC and MIC newspapers express a negative stance by agreement with Trump's and Republican anti-immigration policies (24% and 20%). However, agreement with Trump's management of the border is equally frequent in both corpora (16% and 15%). Negative attitudes towards masses of immigrants are rare (4% and 7%), while other negative attitudes (i.e., education and cooperation) are absent/very infrequent in both corpora samples.

Less frequently, immigrants are described as a danger to the US society and economy in MIC newspapers (8%). Rare are references towards human smuggling (4% and 7%) and immigrant work (2% and 5%) expressing negative discourse prosodies, especially in MIC newspapers. There are no negative references to immigrant health in either corpus.

Against Trump's/Republican anti-immigration policies

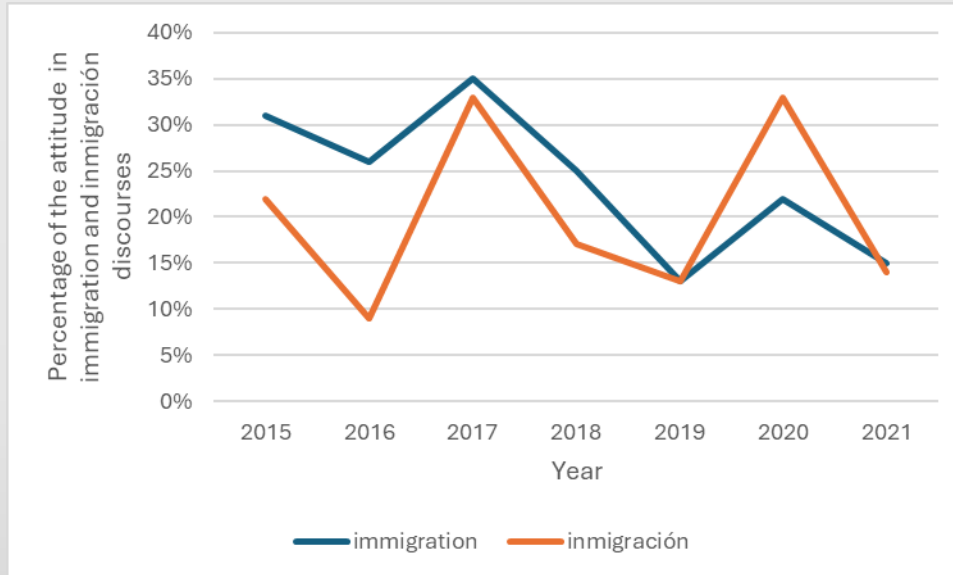


Positive attitudes towards 'immigration' and (much less so) 'immigrant(s)' rose in 2019. This might reflect a disapproval of AIC newspapers towards Trump's newly established anti-immigration policy, MPP (Migrant Protection Protocols).

Trump's decision in 2017 to phase out DACA, might have influenced the fall in positive 'immigrant(s)' discourses towards the 'Dreamers'. However, at the same time, Trump's appeal against legalising their status might have fuelled positive 'immigration' discourses.

While disapproval of Trump's policies declined in MIC discourses (with the increase in 2021 'immigrant(s)' discourses), it rose (after ups and downs) in AIC discourses. In 2018, 'immigrant(s)' and 'inmigrante(s)' discourses were less critical towards Trump's anti-immigration stance, which might be seen as endorsement of Trump for the mid-term elections.

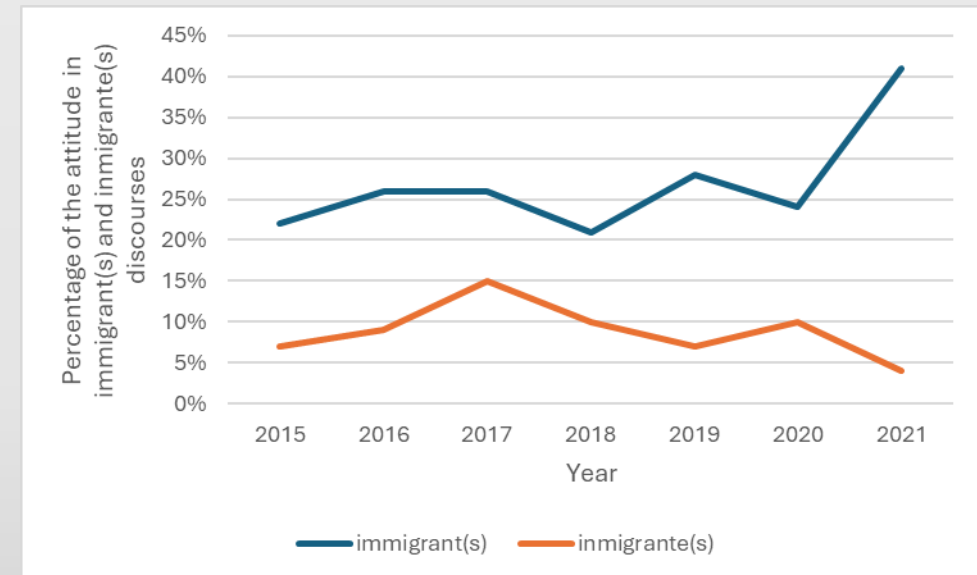
Pro-immigration rules and regulations, and immigrant rights



The biggest difference in 2016, when 'immigration' discourses referred to recognising the legal needs and rights of asylum seekers (26% of positive attitudes):

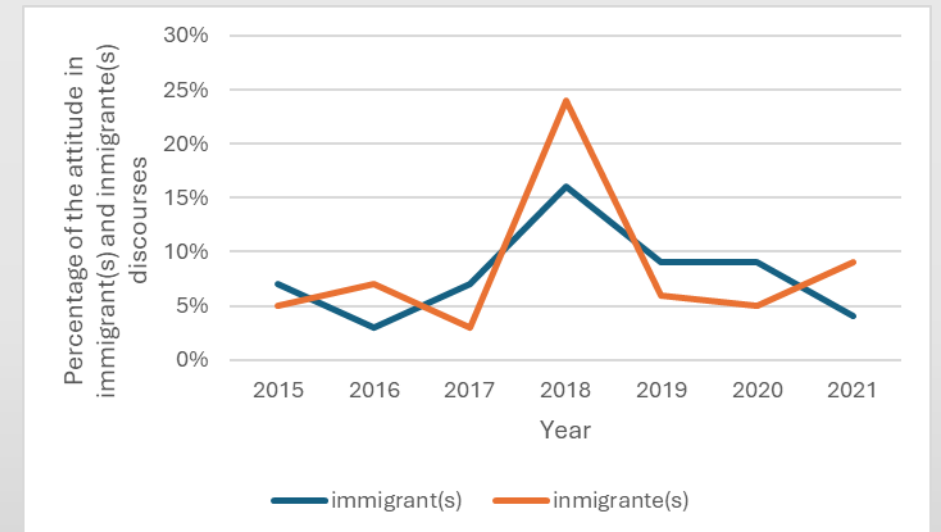
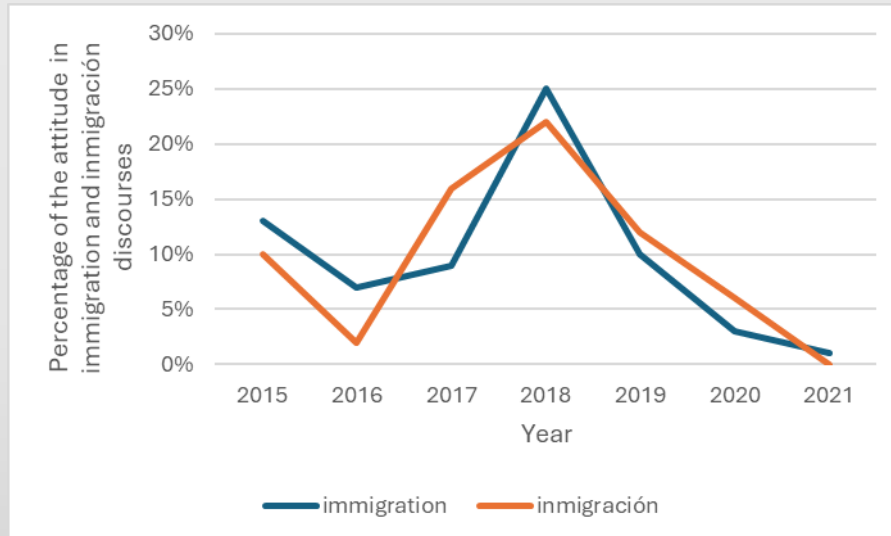
Under a 2008 law, minors from Central America must be admitted to the U.S. and get a chance to plead for asylum in immigration courts. (*Los Angeles Times*, 20 March)

On the other hand, 2016 'inmigración' discourses evolved around immigration reform (9% of positive attitudes).



Positive attitudes towards pro-immigration laws are more frequent in 'immigrant(s)' than in 'inmigrante(s)' discourses. While both discourses stayed almost constant throughout the period studied, the frequency of 'immigrant(s)' discourses referring to legalisation and naturalization of undocumented immigrants (41% of positive attitudes), showed an increase in 2021.

Empathy for immigrant families



This positive attitude, peaked in 2018, might be a reaction against the family separation policy, communicated by empathy for separated children and their parents.

'Inmigrante(s)' discourses are more compassionate towards separated children, while 'immigrant(s)' discourses by refraining from policy criticism, could have helped propagate Trump's anti-immigration policies in the run-up for the mid-term elections in 2018.

Immigrants as criminals

- Discourses of immigrants as criminals in AIC newspapers might have been motivated by Trump's xenophobic speeches, while MIC newspapers might have been motivated by the arrest of El Chapo.

- Thematic (general) frames in AIC:

Non-criminal arrests rose nearly 12 percent in Arizona compared with the same period the year before, while arrests of immigrants convicted of crimes rose almost 13 percent, the statistics show. The sharp rise in arrests shows that ICE has wasted no time in implementing Trump's immigration orders, attorney Ybarra Maldonado said. (*The Arizona Republic*, 26 May 2017)

- Episodic frames (human-interest stories) in MIC:

[The United States Government deported to Mexico José Yobani Hernández Sánchez, also known as José Antonio Hernández Rangel, 26, one of the perpetrators of the Allende and Piedras Negras massacres, Coahuila, in 2011. The Office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE, for its acronym in English), reported that last Wednesday he was handed over to Mexican authorities. "Hernández is accused of multiple homicides that occurred in Piedras Negras and the surrounding areas of Coahuila," ICE reported.] (*Reforma*, 28 September 2018)

Large number of immigrants are unwelcome

But abruptly ending the emergency order at the border, combined with several executive orders Biden signed on his first day in office that rolled back or reversed several of Trump's restrictive immigration policies, could fuel another large wave of migrants. (*Arizona Republic*, 30 January 2021)

Communicates negative discourse prosody via water metaphorical expressions 'large wave of migrants', which Biden would be to blame for, and at the same time it communicates support for Trump's immigration policies via emphasising the danger of increase in illegal immigration under Biden. Thus, *The Arizona Republic* as a conservative leaning newspaper, appears to support the Republicans' anti-immigrant stance.

Large number of immigrants are unwelcome

[After militarizing the border area with Honduras, this Monday Guatemala dissolved with tear gas and by force the largest caravan block of thousands of irregular Honduran migrants that were planning to reach Mexico and continue to the United States, and managed to get a majority to agree to return to their country.] (*El Universal*, 19 January 2021)

The negative prosody refers to an unwelcome caravan of immigrants from Honduras on their way to the US, which was forcefully stopped by Guatemalan authorities. Progressive/centrist newspapers *El Universal*, which was expected to express a pro-immigration stance, confirms the negative attitude towards Central American immigrants rather than Mexicans.

Large number of immigrants are unwelcome

- The negative attitude towards the number of immigrants differs in AIC and MIC newspapers in the first year of Covid-19.
- While in 2020 'immigrant(s)' discourses frequently criticised crowds of immigrants as a burden to the US society, 2020 'inmigrante(s)' discourses showed no such discourses. However, this does not necessarily mean MIC newspapers were in favour of immigration during the pandemic.
- MIC 'inmigrante(s)' discourses blamed Covid-19, and not Trump, for low employment rates, suggesting that the immigration issues are best resolved under Trump despite his negative stance towards immigrants.
- This can be seen as propaganda and an appeal to voters, especially Latinos, to vote for Trump in the November 2020 elections.

AIC and MIC newspapers

- the term ‘illegal immigrant(s)’ in AIC newspapers has mostly negative discourse prosodies, and ‘undocumented immigrant(s)’ has positive ones,
- the term ‘inmigrante(s) ilegal(es)’ in MIC does not necessarily communicate negative prosody but rather implies neutral attitude.
- in MIC, negative prosodies communicated via the terms ‘ilegales’ (illegals) or ‘extranjero(s) ilegal(es)’ (illegal foreigners).

AIC and MIC newspapers

- AIC newspapers recognised the importance of Mexican immigrant workers during the pandemic via *episodic framed stories*, while MIC newspapers reported on statistical data about the (un)employment of Mexican immigrant workers via a *thematic frame*.
- One positive attitude that is present in MIC newspapers but very rare in AIC newspapers communicates the significance of collaboration between the US and Mexico.

AIC and MIC newspapers

- Even though the political leaning of each newspaper does not always predict its attitude (anti-immigration in conservative leaning newspapers and pro-immigration in progressive leaning newspapers), this polarization seems to be more emphasised in the MIC newspapers.
- AIC and MIC newspapers close to the border tend to cover immigration issues more negatively.