

What is a Frame?

Frames as Distinct from Priming and Learning

Pre-Registration Plan

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Abstract

Previous research into framing effects in political science has left the mechanism behind frames underspecified. This has resulted in research that tests framing effects but incidentally creates a bundled treatment by either including a prime or persuasive information, meaning that previous estimates of framing effects are not necessarily capturing a distinct effect. Using a novel survey experiment, this article provides a new theory of framing that is distinct from priming and persuasion and tests the relative importance of this mechanism compared to previous mechanisms in producing a framing effect.

Introduction

Politicians use frames all the time in attempts at swaying public opinion. When communicating, politicians try to frame issues in terms that are favourable to them; they try to persuade the public to see issues in the same way that they do. In 2015, for example, then candidate Donald Trump said of immigrants, “They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime.” (Ye Hee Lee, 2015). This is an example of a frame - Donald Trump was emphasizing the public safety dimension of immigration, suggesting that immigration is an issue of crime and drugs. In 1995, then president Bill Clinton also framed immigrants in a similar negative light, saying “The public service they use impose burdens on our taxpayers.” (Peters & Woolley, n.d.). Both presidents opposed immigration increases at the time they spoke, but both chose to use different frames. The framing literature offers little help in understanding why they would choose different frames or what the effects of their choices were.

Despite framing’s established role in the political science literature, little is known about the mechanism behind it. Researchers have tended to focus on its consequences, looking at moderators (Barker, 2005; Edwards, 2003; Kinder & Sanders, 1990) as well as broader effects instead of diving into the actual mechanism. A number of potential mechanisms exist, but none are completely satisfying. Some scholars imply frames are embedded within environments that actually contain information, looking at how the context of a frame effects outcomes. Others suggest frames operate by altering the accessibility of attributes and making certain dimensions of an issue easier to bring to mind (Stapel, Koomen, & Zeelenberg, 1998).

But neither of these existing mechanisms entirely explains framing effects, nor are they truly distinct mechanisms. For instance, frames appear to be repeated by people who are exposed to them; when asked to communicate about something, people will tend to use language that mimics a frame they were recently exposed to (Brewer & Gross, 2005). Further frames seem to motivate future behaviour as people exposed to a frame will bias future information searches towards information that aligns with the frame they were exposed to (Druckman, Fein, & Leeper, 2012). They also do not represent distinct effects of frames; priming as a mechanism is well understood, as are the limits and effects of persuasive messages.

This paper proposes an alternative mechanism for framing effects that is distinct from either learning or priming. A rational individual can use frames to infer the importance the framer places on different attributes of an issue; the attributes that a framer uses are those that they attach a high level of importance to. The receiver of a frame can learn about how the sender thinks about an issue based on their frame choice as they can infer that the attribute emphasized by the frame is important to the sender. This is then a source of information for the receiver - if they trust the source of the frame, they can trust that the attribute framed

really is important and give it more weight when evaluating the overall issue.

The rest of this paper will seek to test these three proposed mechanisms using a novel survey experiment. The next section will summarize existing theories of framing with a particular focus on the mechanisms that authors have proposed, either explicitly or implicitly. It will then propose a new theory based on a model in which frames can be used to learn about the sender of the frame and how that information can be used by the receiver. Using a survey experiment, I then test these proposed mechanisms and compare them. Finally I discuss broader implications of this research to both the potential effects and limits of frames in politics.

Existing Mechanisms

Researchers have distinguished two types of frames - frames in thought and frames in communication. A frame in thought is a way of organizing a large set of information so that it can be understood as a whole. Social issues are complex and involve judgements on a number of dimensions or attributes; a frame is a particularly way of organizing those dimensions (Chong & Druckman, 2007b; Claes H. De Vreese, 2001; Nelson, Oxley, & Clawson, 1997; Tuchman, 1978). For instance, a frame would allow someone considering whether or not to support a candidate to make sense of the wide variety of information they possess about the candidate - it would help them integrate information on the candidates appearance, policy positions, mannerisms, endorsements, and anything else they know about the candidate into a single unified opinion.

Frames in thought are distinct from other types of information a person might have in that they represent a meta-informative process in which people fit together different attributes to arrive at a single global evaluation (Chong & Druckman, 2007b). They are not specific beliefs about issues or policies but rather ways to incorporate existing knowledge about an issue into a single evaluation. In many ways this makes them potentially subject to more change than other beliefs; someone seeking to change a person's evaluation of a policy only needs to change how they think about it, not any deeply held beliefs about how the world should be or is.

Frames in communication are less well defined and there is less agreement amongst researchers as what exactly constitutes a frame in communication. Most definitions are similar to that of frames in thought, but in practice anything from slight question wording differences to entirely different arguments have been seen as frames in communication. Frames in this sense are regarded as important because of their potential to allow leaders to manipulate public opinion without necessarily convincing people. Elites can use their platforms as public figures to shape the debate on issues despite the fact that direct appeals have been shown to have very

limited effect (Druckman & Jacobs, 2015). The media is also seen as playing an important role in framing; the way it chooses to cover issues has been shown to have strong impacts on how the public responds to the issue (Kellstedt, 2000; Matthes, 2009).

The earliest literature on frames considers them to be equivalent ways of discussing an issue that communicates no information and yet has an effect on people’s issue evaluation (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). An example of this type of equivalency frame would be describing beef as either 90% lean or 10% fatty - both are logically equivalent statements and imply the other, and yet people respond differently to the two types of information. These frames change how people evaluate an issue (like the quality of beef) not through changing what they know about the issue (as in both cases they learn how fatty the beef is) but rather through changing how they think about the issue. The framer, or person providing the frame, is providing a new way to think about the issue that effects decisions (Sher & McKenzie, 2006).

Framing effects have been carefully distinguished from persuasion by researchers. Frames, it is argued, affect how people develop “a particular conceptualization of an issue” (Chong & Druckman, 2007b, p 104) and so are logically separate from arguments that focus on changing someones mind. Researchers in political science therefor need to carefully untangle the effects of information and frames. Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson (1997) offer a useful way to represent frames as separate from beliefs. They argue that we can represent a person’s opinion on an issue in the following way:

$$opinion = \sum_1^j attribute_i * weight_i$$

Where $attribute_i$ is the evaluation of the issue on the dimension i and $weight_i$ is the weight they attach to that attribute. This representation suggests that people will evaluate an issue more positively if they like how it is positioned on a dimension and if they place a high weight on that dimension. For example, if a person both wants more environmental regulation and considers it to be important, they will evaluate an environmental program that would introduce more environmental regulation very highly. Conversely, were they more concerned with keeping the cost of environmental programs low and were the same program expensive, they might evaluate it more negatively. The interaction between a person’s evaluation of an issue’s attribute and the weight they assign that attribute contributes to their overall issue evaluation.

Frames, in their model, affect only the weights given to specific attributes. A frame emphasizing the cost of a program will increase the weight people attach to the cost dimension. Under this model it does not alter the person’s actual view on the dimension of cost; a person who thinks the cost is too much and a person who thinks the cost is just right will respond differently to the frame because one is more favourable to the issue

on this dimension than the other person. A frame that is presented with an argument in favor of a specific position will affect both the weight and the evaluation of the issue on that attribute.

The literature has tested two broad categories of mechanism underlying apparent framing effects: priming a specific policy dimension and presenting new information about a specific policy dimension. Neither of these processes are distinct framing effects, however, and both are distinct from the cognitive bias described by Kahneman and Tversky. If frames operate through priming a specific issue dimension, they are not a distinct concept from this well studied topic. If they operate through informational pathways, they are effecting issue positions and not weights and so again are not a distinct concept. The rest of this section will present both these potential mechanisms and show how they have implicitly been tested in the literature.

Priming

Political scientists in the 1990s adapted the concept of frames from psychology and focused on how highlighting different aspects of an issue, without providing new information, might affect public opinion. Zaller (1992) demonstrated that mentioning specific policy areas when asking about presidential approval would change people's evaluations of the president to be more consistent with their views on that policy. This has been called an attribute frame; the frame emphasizes an attribute of some kind of issue without providing information that might persuade. In this case, the difference in response patterns that different attribute frames produce is considered the framing effect. Changing "welfare" to "assistance to the poor", for instance, causes over 40% more respondents to agree that too little is being spent on the issue (Rasinski, 1989).

Research that uses this type of frame argues that because there is no information provided in the frame, the two types are logically equivalent. However, this type of frame is conceptually similar to a prime and the treatment is often bundled with a prime that makes a specific attribute more accessible. Accessibility refers to the ease with which people can bring to mind specific attributes relating to an issue (Higgins, 2013; Zaller, 1992). More accessible attributes will be more influential and weigh more heavily on a decision, not through any rational process but rather because they are more likely to be called to mind when someone is trying to make a decision (Zaller, 1992). Because attribute frames focus on this highlighting of different aspects of an issue, they are conceptually very similar to primes.

For example, in changing "welfare" to "assistance to the poor", Rasinski (1989) changes what attributes are accessible to respondents. By mentioning the poor, respondents become more likely to call to mind information they have about poverty and the need to help the poor while the "welfare" treatment would not have the same effect. This means that the test is implicitly testing whether priming the concept of poor

people affects support for assistance to the poor. Testing framing effects in this way suggests that priming might be driving framing effects in political science experiments.

This mechanism also helps explain why counter frames are so effective. Research has shown that being exposed to a second, countervailing frame can essentially negate the power of a frame (Chong & Druckman, 2007b). Being exposed to two frames simultaneously should make both attributes equally accessible and so neither should dominate. The frames therefor cancel each other out. To the extent that priming explains framing effects, researchers should reconsider whether frames are worth studying in their own right. If this mechanism does explain a considerable amount of what is usually considered a framing effect, presenting a counter frame should always negate the effectiveness of a frame.

Informational

More recent work, in an effort to better understand frames, has expanded the scope of what is considered an attribute frame. Quotes embedded in news articles began to be a common type of frame studied (Druckman, 2001; Druckman et al., 2012; Slothuus & Vreese, 2010). Beyond a slight change in wording in how questions were asked, respondents in these studies are often shown an entirely different quote that argues either in favor or against an issue by invoking a specific frame. For instance, one study compares the effectiveness of a free speech frame that argued for allowing protestors on a college campus to a public safety frame that argued against it. Frames quickly began to include more than just a slight reframing of the question; they became intertwined with cues about the actual issue being evaluated and some research even began presenting entirely different arguments as different frames, so long as they focused specifically on different attributes of an issue (e.g. Aaroe, 2011).

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A number of studies incidentally test this mechanism by including a cue or another source of information that covaries with the frame that is presented. Chong and Druckman, for instance, test whether frames can have different strengths (Chong & Druckman, 2007a). They argues that depending on the content of a frame, people might be more affected by it suggesting that different frames have different strengths. However, in varying the content of the frame and exposing people to multiple frames, they are also varying a cue on the overall issue - in some conditions people are receiving an argument in favor of the issue and in other conditions they receive an argument against the issue.

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When comparing two frames, this work has included information with the frames arguing for one side of the issue instead of providing completely informationally neutral frames. Aaroe (2011) also tests a learning mechanism when demonstrating that the emotional content of a frame is a potential mediator; the emotional content that Aaroe wants to test is inherently separate from a frame. In his study, he provides frames and then also varies the emotional appeal attached to the frame to show that frames work best when connected with an emotional appeal.

In Nelson et al.'s model, it is easy to see why frames presented like this should be effective. The emotional appeal, for example, is moving people's beliefs on the specific attribute separately and in addition to the framing effect which is changing the weight they give to that attribute. Cues from elites that covary with their partisanship will also effect people's beliefs on specific attributes separately from their weights.

The trouble with this line of research is that framing effects should be conceptually different from persuasion if they are to be studied in their own right. If learning about cues or persuasion is the mechanism underlying framing, we would expect that if the cue is held constant and the informativeness of the frame is minimized there should be no effect of frames; two different frames emphasizing different attributes without presenting new information about the attributes or issue but both cueing the same global evaluation of the issue should be indistinguishable in their effect.

Neither of these mechanisms are particularly satisfying and neither can explain the full range of effects that have been attributed to frames. The informational pathway explains why frame strengths might differ (Chong & Druckman, 2007a) and why the trustworthiness of the source might matter (Druckman, 2001), but it doesn't explain early frame effects that show that informationally neutral frames have consistent effects. The accessibility mechanism meanwhile cannot explain longer term effects or why the source of the frame might matter. And neither mechanism presents a conceptually distinct pathway for frames to operate.

The next section of this paper will develop an alternate mechanism for framing effects that allows even apparently uninformative frames to convey a specific type of information the receiver can use to update their evaluations. This theory provides a distinct mechanism for framing that is different from persuasion and priming. The empirics will then seek to compare this new theory with the existing two accounts by holding information levels constant and varying only the accessibility of attributes and frame sources.

Theory

To develop my theory of frames, I begin from the position that a rational individual must weigh a number of different attributes when evaluating an issue (Nelson et al). When making a decision, the rational individual must look across the relevant attributes of the issue and combine them to reach a conclusion. Given Nelson et al.'s model discussed above, a rational person would need a way to determine what weight to give each attribute. Were people cognitively unbounded, one strategy might be to consider every attribute in relation to every issue and determine appropriate weights based on personal knowledge and values. However, people are cognitively limited (Lupia, 1994; Popkin, 1991) and so must rely on some kind of shortcut to approximate this process.

Past research shows that cues can and do provide useful shortcuts for voters in elections (Lau & Redlawsk, 2006). Voters without complete information have been shown to make reliable decisions that conform with their interests based solely on cues from elite actors (Lupia, 1994). Frames can act as these cues; standing in for direct information about the weights employed by the framer. Past research has shown that frame choices, even equivalent frames, convey information from the speaker about their own beliefs (C. McKenzie, Sher, Leong, & Mueller-Trede, n.d.). Issue frames should contain this type of information; framers are likely to highlight (consciously or not) the attributes of an issue they consider important. Put another way, when discussing an issue people are likely to focus on attributes that weigh heavily in their evaluation of that issue. Voters can therefore use these cues to inform their own weights. Like with other cues, if a framer has the same interests and values as the voter, the voter can rely on their frame to arrive at similar judgements to those they would arrive at given unlimited cognitive capacity. If an individual hears a co-partisan frame an issue in terms of a specific attribute, they will rationally increase the weight they give to that attribute when evaluating an issue. For instance, when a person sees a co-partisan talking about an environmental program in terms of its effect on air pollution, they should infer that the co-partisan considers the programs effect on air pollution to be an important aspect of the program. Based on this, they should then weight their own view of its effect on air pollution as more important in their overall evaluation of the program. Even without persuading the person as to the effectiveness of the policy, the frame can thus change their overall evaluation of the program.

H_1 : People will infer that people from the senders party will weigh the framed attribute more heavily.

Because this effect is conditional on the source of the cue being a co-partisan, I expect frames to result in polarization in the public. Elites from both parties often offer distinct and different frames. For instance, Republicans will tend to emphasize regulation and cost more than Democrats who will focus on equality or

outcomes. Importantly, elites from one party tend to use the same frames as other elites from their party. If partisans are updating their attribute weights to match the frames they encounter from co-partisans, this should result in systematically different weighting schemes among the public. Democratic voters will adopt weights similar to Democratic elites and distinct from Republican voters and vice versa. Thus voters who are exposed to the same messages could rationally arrive at very different evaluations.

This will have an important effect on how the public discusses issues: if partisans have different weights, they themselves will use different frames when discussing an issue. Similar to how elite frames are based on their weights, the public should frame issues to emphasize the attributes they consider most important. A Democrat will repeat the frames used by Democratic elites while a Republican will use those offered by Republican elites, driving partisans further apart.

H₂: People will update their attribute weights conditional on the frame coming from a co-partisan.

This effect should be distinguishable from both the previously outlined existing mechanisms. This type of learning should be different than accessibility; if my proposed mechanism is right, framing effects shouldn't just operate through priming one dimension of an issue. It should also be distinct from learning about the issue; when information is held constant, framing effects should persist. This produces my final hypothesis - that framing effects operate through learning about the framer.

H₃: When the accessibility and learning about the issue are held constant, framing effects will persist.

Methods

Testing the mechanism that underlies framing requires careful control to isolate the mechanism of interest from potential confounds. To do this, I conducted an original survey experiment in March, 2019. The survey was fielded in conjunction with other students studying public opinion on Luc.Id's Fulcrum Academia platform. This platform allows

The experiment will use a 2x2x2 factorial design varying the number of frames presented and within that also varying the type and source of the frame(s). All respondents will be presented with a news story adapted from the New York Times focused on immigration policy that details background information on the topic. Included in the article will be quotes from US Senators that provide frames about immigration; one frame will emphasize the burden that immigrants place on the economy while the other frame will emphasize the potential for immigrants to commit crimes if admitted. Both frames will include clear cues to show the Senator opposes increased immigration and so the only thing that will vary between frames is the aspect of

immigration emphasized. The full vignette is presented in the Appendix.

The first half of the sample will receive a frame from only one Senator. In this condition, both the party of the Senator and the specific frame will be randomized independently. This allows me to isolate the effect of cue source separate from frame content and separate from any other cue. Half the respondents who are given a frame from a Democrat will get the cost frame while the other half will get the crime frame. After being exposed to the frame as part of the news story, these participants will then be asked to order four potential dimensions of immigration. They will first be asked to order them in order of importance to Republicans and Democrats to see if they have learned about partisans' attribute weights. They will then be asked to order the attributes according to their own order of importance to see if they have change their beliefs in response to the frame.

This design allows me to test my first two hypotheses. First, I expect that across all conditions the attribute that participants are exposed to will be ranked as more important in the decision making process for co-partisans of the framer. If participants are exposed to the crime frame from the Democrat, they should infer that Democrats likely care more about crime when considering immigration than if they hadn't been exposed to the frame. Based on my second hypothesis, I expect that participants own rank ordering will only be effected if the frame they were exposed to was sent by a co-partisan. If the frame was from the out party Senator, it should not be informative and their attribute weights should not be affected.

The other half of the sample will receive both frames from both Senators but the specific combination will be randomized. Half of this sample will receive the cost frame from a Democrat and the crime frame from the Republican while the other half will receive the inverse. Every respondent will therefor be presented with both frames leaving the only variation in the frame source.

This, in conjunction with the first half of the sample, will allow me to test the third hypothesis. Exposing participants to both frames forces the information in both conditions to be equal. Every participant will receive a cue from a co-partisan opposing immigration and they will receive the same information about immigration through the two frames. The only variation is which frame is employed by the co-partisan. If there is still a framing effect, it cannot be due to differences in the information about immigration between the two conditions. If framing effects are operating through learning about the issue, there should be a framing effect that is not conditional on party.

Similarly, priming should be held constant across these two conditions as participants are exposed to both frames equally. In this case, they should both be primed and so any effects should be cancelled out if accessibility is the mechanism. If there is a framing effect even when both frames are primed, the priming

itself cannot be responsible for the effect. Therefore if participants still demonstrate a framing effect that is conditional on the source's party when exposed to multiple frames, the effect cannot be through either existing mechanism. Observing that a framing effect persists in the 2 frame condition is evidence that neither existing explanation is adequate.

It is possible that some combination of these effects will be observed. If there is still a framing effect in the two frame condition but it is weaker than in the single frame condition, accessibility likely contributes to a framing effect but is not the sole channel through which it operates. Similarly, if there is an effect of the frame that is not conditional on partisanship, that is if partisanship does not moderate the framing effect, participants are likely learning from the frame itself. It is conceivable that all three mechanisms or some combination of them contributes to the overall framing effect that is usually measured. This design will allow me to investigate this possibility.

Testing

First, to test H_1 I will look at the results of rank orders of attributes attributed to partisan. To reiterate, I expect participants to learn about a party if they are exposed to a frame from a partisan. I model this in the following way:

$$importance_{attribute} = \beta_1 * frame_{attribute} * party + \beta_2 * frame_{attribute} + \beta_3 * party$$

Where $importance_{attribute}$ is the importance the respondent believes partisans will give to an attribute when asked about a specific party, $frame_{attribute}$ is an indicator variable that takes a value of 1 if the respondent was presented with a frame emphasizing that attribute, and $party$ is an indicator variable if the frame was from a member of the party the respondent is being asked about. I expect β_1 to be positive, meaning an attribute will be rated as more important if the attribute was emphasized in a frame the participants saw *and* the party is the same participants were asked to evaluate. If they were exposed to a different frame or the frame was from a different party, they should not update their beliefs about the party. For instance if a participant received the public safety frame from a Republican, they should not be able to make inferences about Democrats or about the importance of the cost attribute to Republicans.

To test H_2 , I will do a similar analysis but focused on the respondent.

$$importance_{attribute} = \beta_1 * frame_{attribute} * party + \beta_2 * frame_{attribute} + \beta_3 * party$$

In this case, the analysis will be identical but party will take on a score of 1 if the frame came from a co-partisan. I expect β_1 will be positive, meaning individuals update their weights conditional on receiving a frame from a co-partisan.

Finally to test H_3 , I will turn to the two frame condition and run the same model. In this case, I still expect β_1 to be positive. If β_2 is positive, this is evidence that learning is producing some of the framing effect. If β_1 is smaller in this case than in the previous analyses of the one frame condition, that is evidence that accessibility is producing some of the framing effect.

The first two tests will show if my proposed mechanism is plausible while the third test seeks to compare the three different mechanisms discussed above.

Other Issues not specified

For any decisions not explicitly specified in this pre-analysis plan, I plan to follow the “standard operating procedure” document of Donald P. Green’s research group (version 1.05, June 7, 2016), which can be found on GitHub.

Appendix

Survey Instrument

WASHINGTON - An immigration bill pitched as a compromise between conservative and moderate Republicans would make sweeping changes to the United States' immigration system while establishing a special visa program that would give young undocumented immigrants the chance to become citizens based on factors like employment and education.

The draft bill, circulating among lawmakers on Thursday afternoon and up for a vote next week, contains provisions aimed at gaining support from across the political spectrum. In addition to protecting the young immigrants, it provides billions of dollars for a wall on the southwest border while imposing new limits on legal immigration. The bill would also toughen rules for asylum seekers. And it would address the separation of children from parents under the Trump administration's crackdown on illegal border crossings by mandating that families be kept together while in the custody of the Department of Homeland Security, according to a summary of the measure.

One frame condition: include one of the following two frames with the partisanship of the Senator randomized

- Cost Frame
 - Many politicians in Congress have used the bill as a chance to voice their concerns about immigration levels in the US. [*Democratic US Senator Michael Bennet (D-Col)/Republican US Cory Gardner (R-Col)*] released a statement early today emphasizing the costs that immigration adds to the welfare system, stating "I believe the public service they use impose burdens on our taxpayers." Senator [*Bennet/Gardner*] is on record as supporting a reduction in the number of legal immigrants entering the United States every year.
- Public Safety Frame
 - Many politicians in Congress have used the bill as a chance to voice their concerns about immigration levels in the US. [*Democratic US Senator Michael Bennet (D-Col)/Republican US Cory Gardner (R-Col)*] released a statement early today emphasizing the potential public safety threat of immigrants to the United States, stating "I believe the public has a right to be protected from potentially dangerous criminals entering our country." Senator [*Bennet/Gardner*] is on record as supporting a reduction in the number of legal immigrants entering the United States every year.

Two frames condition: include the following vignette with the partisanship of the Senator randomized

- Many politicians in Congress have used the bill as a chance to voice their concerns about immigration levels in the US. *[Democratic US Senator Michael Bennet (D-Col)/Republican US Cory Gardner (R-Col)]* released a statement early today emphasizing the potential public safety threat of immigrants to the United States, stating "I believe the public has a right to be protected from potentially dangerous criminals entering our country." *[Democratic US Senator Michael Bennet (D-Col)/Republican US Cory Gardner (R-Col)]* also released a statement instead focusing on the costs that immigration adds to the welfare system, arguing "I believe the public service they use impose burdens on our taxpayers." Senators Bennet and Gardner are on record as supporting a reduction in the number of legal immigrants entering the United States every year.

Weight Measures

The following questions will ask you to consider how you and others would evaluate a new immigration policy. Please read the potential dimensions of the immigration policy carefully and consider which dimensions weigh most heavily on your's and others' evaluations of immigration policy.

- When considering a new immigration policy, please rank the following considering in the order of importance a typical **Democrat** would assign them.
 - Equality for immigrants from different countries of origins
 - Effect on economic growth in the United States
 - Additional burden placed on government services by immigrants
 - Potential for immigrants to commit crimes once they have entered the United States.
- When considering a new immigration policy, please rank the following considering in the order of importance a typical **Republican** would assign them.
 - Equality for immigrants from different countries of origins
 - Effect on economic development of the United States
 - Additional burden placed on government services by immigrants
 - Potential for immigrants to commit crimes once they have entered the United States.

- When considering a new immigration policy, please rank the following considering in the order of importance **you personally** would assign them.
 - Equality for immigrants from different countries of origins
 - Effect on economic development of the United States
 - Additional burden placed on government services by immigrants
 - Potential for immigrants to commit crimes once they have entered the United States.

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