

# Framing Statelessness: Influences of the Human-Interest Media Frame on Public Attitudes Towards Statelessness in the United States

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*Abstract: Though Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to a nationality, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that up to ten million people around the world live without a formally recognized nationality. They are stateless and hold no legal nationality to any state in the world. Despite the United States' jus soli citizenship laws, an estimated 218,000 stateless people are present within the US and unable to adjust their legal status or return to their country of origin due to their stateless status. Statelessness studies are slowly growing, yet there is little public knowledge of stateless persons in comparison to other displaced groups in the United States. There are even fewer studies conducted on American public opinion of stateless persons. This survey study aims to understand general perceptions and attitudes towards stateless persons present in the United States and observe if interacting with human interest framed stimuli results in a change of attitudes towards stateless persons.*

**Keywords:** Statelessness, Non-citizen, Nationality, Citizenship, United States, Immigration, Public Opinion, Human Interest Frame

## Introduction

A stateless person is defined internationally as a “person who is not considered to be a national by any State under the operation of its law.”<sup>1</sup> The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that up to ten million people across the globe are classified as

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<sup>1</sup> *Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons*, New York, 28 September 1954, *United Nations Treaty Series*, vol. 360, p.117., available from treaties. [https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1960/06/19600606%2001-49%20AM/Ch\\_V\\_3p.pdf](https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1960/06/19600606%2001-49%20AM/Ch_V_3p.pdf).

stateless.<sup>2</sup> Despite these historical estimates, statelessness is a widely misunderstood and understudied phenomenon at the global, national, and local levels, particularly within the United States. As the United States does not account for stateless individuals through censuses or other government databases, the UNHCR has no official data on the number of stateless persons within the country. However, estimates of the total number of stateless persons in the US range from 4,000 to 218,000.<sup>3</sup>

The US promotes an end to statelessness abroad through diplomacy and the UNHCR, yet statelessness itself is a marginalized topic within the country. The United States is not a signatory to the 1954 or 1961 Statelessness Conventions, does not provide a definition of statelessness under domestic law, and operates under the belief that the state's laws, "do not contribute to the issue of statelessness," despite the various loopholes in its immigration laws that permit for continued statelessness.<sup>4</sup> Stateless persons within the United States are therefore left with few legal safeguards and are subject to repeated and prolonged detention and experience barriers to accessing or obtaining identification documents, finding employment, and accessing other government services.

Though the US government displayed brief interest in resolving domestic cases of statelessness in the early 2010s, congressional efforts stalled and few reports were made within popular American-based news sources on the progress of the federal government's efforts to

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "Better statistics to help end statelessness," *UNHCR / Blogs*, January 21, 2020, <https://www.unhcr.org/blogs/better-statistics-to-help-end-statelessness/>.

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR, "Citizens of Nowhere: Solutions for the Stateless in the U.S.," *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, December 2012, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/about-us/background/56fbfcea4/citizens-of-nowhere-solutions-for-the-stateless-in-the-us.html>; Donald Kerwin, Daniela Alulema, Michael Nicholson, and Robert Warren, "Statelessness in the United States: A Study to Estimate and Profile the US Stateless Population," *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 8(2), June 2020: 150-213, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2331502420907028>.

<sup>4</sup> Eric P. Schwartz, "Recognizing Statelessness," *HuffPost*, September 8, 2011, [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/recognizing-statelessness\\_b\\_954084](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/recognizing-statelessness_b_954084).

resolve statelessness.<sup>5</sup> Additional media coverage on Congress' intentions to resolve statelessness may have contributed to the passing of the Refugee Protection Act of 2013, as media has the ability to both reinforce and inform the political agenda.<sup>6</sup> Studies have shown the impact that the media's framing has on individuals' attitudes towards refugees and irregular migrants, yet there are no such studies conducted on stateless persons, nor any studies that document the general attitude towards stateless persons in the United States.

As migration-related issues have become increasingly contentious within American politics, it is important to determine how the general American public views stateless persons who arrive in the United States through the country's immigration system. Determining how the American public views stateless persons and what communication methods result in further understanding of statelessness will be the first step in properly addressing and combatting cases of statelessness. To determine what these views are, the current study is an initial attempt to map the attitudes of Americans towards stateless people in the United States and observe if a change in response occurs across certain demographics after engaging with the human interest-framed stimuli.

A snowball sampling survey was distributed across a two-week period, asking participants to report their demographic information and record their opinions related to a series of multiple closed-choice answered questions on statelessness in the United States. Participants were also offered the opportunity to leave additional questions or comments on statelessness at the conclusion of the survey for thematic qualitative analysis. The quantitative results of this

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<sup>5</sup> David Baluarte, "Protecting Stateless Refugees in the United States," *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 26(2), Spring/Summer 2020, <https://scholarlycommons.law.wlu.edu/wlufac/633/> (Accessed 7/26/21); Congress.gov., "S.645. Refugee Protection Act of 2013", March 21, 2013, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/645/text#toc-ID4076884e91f84b2dab095a051a54d75>.

<sup>6</sup> Rianne Dekker and Peter Scholten, "Framing the Immigration Policy Agenda: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis of Media Effects on Dutch Immigration Policies," *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 22(2), April 2017: 202-22, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161216688323>.

study demonstrate a correlation between change in response with regards to the removal of stateless persons in the United States and a person's ideological leaning and prior knowledge of statelessness. There is also a correlation between a person's racial identity and political ideological identity and their change in response relating to certain rights and privileges that stateless people are entitled to (right to vote and no rights). The thematic analysis of participants' comments yielded two general themes— legality and responsibility— that corroborate some of the patterns described in the quantitative analysis. The study concludes with final notes, conclusions, and recommendations for further research on statelessness in the United States.

### **Statelessness in the United States: Overview and Background**

Philosopher and political theorist Hannah Arendt described nationality as the 'right to have rights' in her 1951 publication, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Though human rights are inherent and afforded to each person on the basis of their status as a human, only the state could guarantee and protect such rights. To Arendt, that meant one had to be "not only a human, but a citizen of a nation-state" in order to access political, social, and economic rights (Gessen, 2018).<sup>7</sup> Based on Arendt's writings and experience, the legal relationship between the state and an individual is essential in order to access to basic freedoms. Without a recognized legal status or citizenship, the stateless are unable to access a variety of other human rights— including the right to free movement, the right to own property, the right to education, the right to marry and establish a family, and the right to identity— thereby demonstrating nationality as an enabling right.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Masha Gessen, "The Right to Have Rights and the Plight of the Stateless," *The New Yorker*, May 3, 2018, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/the-right-to-have-rights-and-the-plight-of-the-stateless>.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, December 10, 1948, <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights>.

Arendt's observation on the importance of citizenship is solidified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Article 15 states that "everyone has the right to nationality" and that "no one should be arbitrarily deprived of [their] nationality nor denied the right to change [their] nationality."<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the UN estimates that up to ten million people exist without this right recognized and are stateless.<sup>10</sup> The 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons defines a stateless person as "someone who is not considered a national (citizen) by any country under the operations of its laws," meaning that they do not have a legally recognized status to any country in the world.<sup>11</sup> A person can become stateless for a number of reasons, such as state dissolution, conflicts in nationality law (*jus soli* and *jus sanguinis*), discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, or gender, and administrative obstacles.<sup>12</sup> Despite the acuteness and universality of statelessness, the issue is often overshadowed by larger displacement and migration crises.

The UNHCR asserts that statelessness exists in every country in the world, including the United States. Statelessness, however, is less pronounced within the United States due to the country's *jus soli* laws. The Fourteenth Amendment of the US Constitution proves to be significant in counteracting statelessness, as it affirms that "all persons born [...] in the United States [...] are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside" (Art 14, §1). The Fourteenth Amendment prevents generational statelessness from occurring, but statelessness can still occur in instances where *jus soli* births are not reported, as in the case of Alecia

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> UNHCR, "Global Trends Report: 2019," United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, June 18, 2021, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/statistics/unhcrstats/5ee200e37/unhcr-global-trends-2019.html>; Petra Nahmias, "Better statistics to help end statelessness," *UNHCR* January 21, 2020, <https://www.unhcr.org/blogs/better-statistics-to-help-end-statelessness/>.

<sup>11</sup> UN, *Convention Related to the Status of Stateless Persons*, 1954: 3.

<sup>12</sup> United Stateless, "Causes of Statelessness," *United Stateless*, <https://www.unitedstateless.org/causes>.

Pennington, a woman born in Texas whose parents did not register her birth with US government offices.<sup>13</sup>

More commonly, statelessness occurs within the US due to gaps in the country's immigration and nationality laws. The Immigration and Nationality Act does not define statelessness, does not provide an administrative process to determine if a person is stateless, nor illuminate a pathway to citizenship for stateless persons solely based on the fact that they are without a nationality.<sup>14</sup> As the United States is not a signatory to the 1954 or 1961 Statelessness Conventions, the country is not legally bound by international law to provide stateless persons with any protections.<sup>15</sup> Stateless migrants can only obtain a protected legal status if they are granted refugee or temporary protective status, but the standards for proving a 'well-founded fear of persecution' based on one's stateless status or loss of one's citizenship are difficult to reach within the US court system.<sup>16</sup> If refugee status is denied, stateless individuals are often placed under deportation orders, as they are present in the country without legal authorization. However, as no country will claim them as a national, stateless persons are undeportable and can remain in prolonged detention or mandatory ICE supervision orders.

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<sup>13</sup> Abby Ohlheiser, "How a teenager's viral campaign to prove her citizenship is inspiring a new Texas bill," *The Washington Post*, March 12, 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2015/03/12/how-a-teenagers-viral-campaign-to-prove-her-citizenship-is-inspiring-a-new-texas-bill/>.

<sup>14</sup> Maryellen Fullerton, "The Intersection of Statelessness and Refugee Protection in US Asylum Policy," *Journal on Migration and Human Security*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (2018): 144-164, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/233150241400200301>.

<sup>15</sup> David Baluarte, "Life after Limbo: Stateless Persons in the United States and the Role of International Protection in Achieving a Legal Solution," *Georgetown Immigration Law Journal*, 29(3) (2015): 351-389. [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2796321](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2796321).

<sup>16</sup> Jasmine Pope, "The Stateless: Millions of People Forgotten and Left Without Adequate Immigration Assistance: Where does the United States fit into the Plight of the Stateless?" *University of Baltimore Journal of International Law*, 6(1) (2018): 112-146. [https://scholarworks.law.ubalt.edu/ubjil/vol6/iss1/6?utm\\_source=scholarworks.law.ubalt.edu%2Fubjil%2Fvol6%2Fiss1%2F6&utm\\_medium=PDF&utm\\_campaign=PDFCoverPages](https://scholarworks.law.ubalt.edu/ubjil/vol6/iss1/6?utm_source=scholarworks.law.ubalt.edu%2Fubjil%2Fvol6%2Fiss1%2F6&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages) (Accessed 6/14/21); UNHCR, Washington, D.C. "Stateless in the United States: Searching for Citizenship," October 10, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1LO78hivXZ8&t=272s>.

The presence of stateless people in the US has been demonstrated by the UNHCR in its 2012 “Citizens of Nowhere” report. The agency obtained data from the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and discovered that 628 stateless people applied for asylum, with, “23 denied and 359 [with] no final decision reached on their application [and] placed in final removal proceedings” from fiscal years 2005 to 2010.<sup>17</sup> Additional information gathered from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) demonstrated that stateless people were also detained, placed under supervision, or placed under orders of deportation to an undesignated country by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) between 2009 and 2011.<sup>18</sup>

Despite data provided by the USCIS and DHS, the federal government does not have an official number relating to the number of stateless persons residing in the country. Researchers have estimated that there may be 11 to 12 million undocumented persons within the United States, yet it is uncertain how many of these persons who are undocumented may also be stateless.<sup>19</sup> The statistics provided by the US government to UNHCR in 2012 are likely not representative of the true stateless population in the United States, as such numbers only represent those stateless people that have made contact with the government. It is hypothesized that many stateless people within the US, “remain underground and hidden” for fear of detention or deportation and therefore would not appear in the records held by DHS, the Department of Justice (DOJ), or the Department of State.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> UNHCR, “Citizens of Nowhere,” 2012: 22.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>19</sup> Pew Research Center, “On Immigration Policy, Partisan Difference but Also Some Common Ground” *Pew Research Center*. August 25, 2016, <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2016/08/25/on-immigration-policy-partisan-differences-but-also-some-common-ground/>; Elaine Kamarick and Christine Stenglein, “How many undocumented immigrants are in the United States and who are they?” *Policy 2020 Brookings*. November 12, 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/policy2020/votervital/how-many-undocumented-immigrants-are-in-the-united-states-and-who-are-they/>.

<sup>20</sup> UNHCR, “Citizens of Nowhere,” 2012: 22.

Officials from government and nonprofit entities have extrapolated from the 2012 UNHCR report and have proposed that the US is home to approximately 4,000 stateless people.<sup>21</sup> However, a 2020 report from the New York City NGO, Center for Migration Studies (CMS), suggests that up to 218,000 people within the United States are either stateless or at risk of becoming stateless, based on a holistic analysis of the American Community Survey.<sup>22</sup> Of the estimated 218,000 stateless or potentially stateless, CMS suggests that a majority have protected refugee status, signifying that they have legal status and are on a pathway to American citizenship. At the same time, nearly forty percent of the projected 218,000 stateless population were unaccounted for in the Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS), signaling that they may be legally unrecognized by the country and lack a legal process to assist them in obtaining a legal status.<sup>23</sup> However, as the United States government has never undertaken an official study to document the stateless population through censuses or other statistical means, neither estimate put forth by the UNHCR or the CMS may be correct or accurate.

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<sup>21</sup> *Testimony of the Honorable Dan Glickman, Before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary*, 111th Cong., 3 (2010) (statement of Dan Glickman, President of Refugees International)

[https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/glickman\\_testimony\\_05\\_19\\_101.pdf](https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/glickman_testimony_05_19_101.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> Donald Kerwin, Daniela Alulema, Michael Nicholson, and Robert Warren, "Statelessness in the United States: A Study to Estimate and Profile the US Stateless Population," *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 8(2), June 2020: 150-213, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2331502420907028>.

The American Community Survey (ACS) "is an ongoing survey that provides vital information on a yearly basis about the United States and its people. Information from the survey generates data that help determine how more than \$675 billion in federal and state funds are distributed each year. From 2017 to 2020, the New York City-based research organization Center for Migration Studies (CMS) partnered together with national organization, United Stateless, to conduct a research project to map out and describe the US' stateless or potentially stateless population. CMS based their final results on information from the 2018 American Community Survey from the US Census Bureau and data from the US Department of State Worldwide Refugee Admission Processing System (WRAPS), a database that tracks domestic admission for refugee resettlement. For more information on the ACS, please see: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about.html>. For more information on the CMS' methodology, please see: <https://cmsny.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/StatelessnessReportFinal.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> David Baluarte, "Protecting Stateless Refugees in the United States," 2020: 3-4.

In 2011, the United States demonstrated a brief interest in resolving statelessness domestically when former Secretary of State Hilary Clinton stated in a 2011 UNHCR speech that the US Department of State would collaborate with Congress in the coming years to draft legislation addressing the country's own stateless population.<sup>24</sup> The Senate introduced the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act and the Refugee Protection Act during the 113th session of Congress—both of which included a provision on stateless persons—yet neither measure successfully passed both the House and Senate.<sup>25</sup> The United States has not reengaged in legislative or executive efforts to resolve domestic cases of statelessness since the early 2010s. Though the UNHCR initiated the global #IBelong campaign to eradicate all cases of statelessness by 2024, the United States has not committed itself to any of the ten proposed Global Action Plans despite having recorded cases of statelessness within its territory.<sup>26</sup> Rather, the United States has devoted itself to eradicating statelessness abroad by encouraging states to end nationality policies that discriminate on the basis of sex.<sup>27</sup>

Though statelessness in the early 2010s became somewhat of a salient issue amongst federal officials, it failed to gain such traction amongst mass media feeds. David Baluarte, a Professor of Law at Washington and Lee College and legal expert on statelessness, noted that the, “proposed incorporation of statelessness protection into US immigration law has been underreported, and its potential as a humanitarian remedy that would mitigate bureaucratic

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<sup>24</sup> Hillary Rodham Clinton, US Department of State, “Remarks at the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Ministerial on the 60th Anniversary of the Refugee Convention.” *US Department of State*. December 7, 2011, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2011/12/178406.htm>.

<sup>25</sup> Congress.gov, “Refugee Protection Act of 2013,” 2013; Congress.gov, “S.744 - Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act,” April 16, 2013, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/744>.

<sup>26</sup> UNHCR, “High-Level Segment on Statelessness: Results and Highlights,” *Refworld*, May 2020, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5ec3e91b4.html>.

<sup>27</sup> US Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, “Statelessness,” n.d., <https://www.state.gov/other-policy-issues/statelessness/>; *Ibid*.

inefficiency has been underappreciated.”<sup>28</sup> When statelessness *is* mentioned within the media, stateless people are often conflated or confused with other migrant groups, resulting in further marginalization and misunderstanding of statelessness, its intractability, and its lack of legal solutions within the US. United Stateless, a national organization advocating for the rights of stateless people in the US, experiences similar challenges relating to a lack of media coverage and awareness of statelessness.<sup>29</sup> The relative silence from American media publications on statelessness prevents further political or social action on behalf of the US’ stateless population.

The lack of federal data and public awareness on statelessness, along with a legislative lull in seeking a resolution for statelessness, showcases the imperativeness of conducting media research on Americans’ attitudes towards stateless individuals and statelessness more broadly. Media and news reportings are not only an important source of information on policy issues, but informative of *how* policy issues are perceived by the public and *what* issues the public views as an important topic for policymakers to address.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, how the media presents or frames statelessness to the general public is of great importance, as it can push legislators towards reform or further restrict the stateless to a life in the shadows.

### **Framing and the Human Interest Frame**

Journalists and news reporters can influence the way that the audience interprets issues by emphasizing certain pieces of information over others to increase understanding and reduce

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<sup>28</sup> Baluarte, “Life after Limbo,” 2015: 353.

<sup>29</sup> Polly J. Price, “Stateless in the United States: Current Reality and a Future Prediction,” *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*, 46(443) (2013): 443-514. [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2154470#](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2154470#) (Accessed 6/11/21); Nicola McQuiston, “Why has the human rights issue of statelessness not garnered wider public attention in the United States?: A comparative analysis of the cases of statelessness and sex trafficking in the United States since 1990,” Master’s thesis, University College of London, 2019: 16; United Stateless, “About Us,” *United Stateless*, n.d., <https://www.unitedstateless.org/organization>.

<sup>30</sup> Dekker and Scholten, “Framing the Immigration Policy Agenda,” 2017.

issue complexity.<sup>31</sup> This phenomenon is also known as issue *framing*, which refers to the way that a person orients their view around a certain topic based upon negative and positive considerations that they make in relation to the issue or event.<sup>32</sup> In communicative issue framing, journalists and news sources present information in a way that achieves one of two things. First, it resonates with an individual's pre-existing cognitive structures in order to assist them in processing new information. Second, the proposed information adjusts the weight that an individual assigns to one competing consideration over another, resulting in a frame shift.<sup>33</sup> Consequently, the way that information is framed in communications matters as it affects the outlooks of their audience on what an issue is and how it can be resolved.

A common frame utilized in immigration reporting is human interest framing. The human interest frame resembles episodic framing—the utilization of case studies or event-specific storytelling—but instead focuses on human exemplars to explain or portray a concept.<sup>34</sup> The definition for what constitutes a human interest frame is fluid and constantly evolving amongst scholars, but there are two definitions of interest to the current study. Boukes et al. defines human interest framing more generally by comparing its similarities to that of episodic framing; to Boukes et al., human interest framing describes a broader issue by portraying one or more persons with direct or personal experience on a particular issue who serve as models of that

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<sup>31</sup> Robert M. Enton, "Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm." *Journal of Communication*, 43(4) (1993): 51–58, doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x.

<sup>32</sup> Dennis Chong and James Druckman, "Framing theory," *Annual Review of Political Science* (10) (2007): 105-106, doi: 10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.072805.103054.

<sup>33</sup> Dietram Scheufele and David Tewksbury, "Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models." *Journal of Communication*, 57 (2007): 9-20 <https://fbaum.unc.edu/teaching/articles/J-Communication-2007-1.pdf> (Accessed 6/6/21); Chong and Druckman, "Framing Theory," 2007.

<sup>34</sup> Mark Boukes, "Episodic and Thematic Framing Effects on the Attribution of Responsibility: The Effects of Personalized and Contextualized News on Perceptions of Individual and Political Responsibility for Causing the Economic Crisis." *International Journal of International Press/Politics*, 26(1) (2021).

topic.<sup>35</sup> Human interest framing can bring a sentimental view to the presentation of an issue, rouse public interest in marginalized issues not frequently experienced by the majority population, and permit viewing audiences to comprehend issues more easily.<sup>36</sup>

A more immigrant-specific human interest frame is expressed by Dekker and Scholten, who described the human interest frame as a frame that displays a favorable attitude towards migrants, depicting them as victims or persons in need of assistance by the receiving state.<sup>37</sup> But, rather than exemplars describing the issue as explained by the former definition, it is elite, outside news forces that inform and word the topic. For purposes of this study, the term ‘human-interest framing’ will incorporate aspects from both definitions and refer to stories told from the perspective of the affected individual intended to generate a more favorable attitude from the viewing audience.

### **Framing and Statelessness**

Statelessness receives very little individual framing within US media. Nicola McQuiston of United Stateless suggests that the lack of individual framing on statelessness in the US is due to Americans’ tendency to confuse or conflate stateless persons with refugees and undocumented migrants. Additionally, McQuiston notes that most reports on statelessness are presented episodically, which leads viewers to see the issue more negatively and as less of a societal problem.<sup>38</sup> However, other scholars believe that episodic framing may lead to positive outlooks on statelessness. Rahman argues that statelessness globally is predominantly viewed through

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<sup>35</sup> Mark Boukes, Hajo G. Boomgaarden, Marjolein Moorman, and Claes H. de Vreese “Political News with a Personal Touch: How Human Interest Framing Indirectly Affects Policy Attitudes.” *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 2015, Vol. 92(1): 121–141. DOI: 10.1177/1077699014558554.

<sup>36</sup> T. U. Figenschou, and Thorbjørnsrud, K. 2015. “Faces of an invisible population: Human interest framing of irregular immigration news in the United States, France, and Norway.” *American Behavioral Scientist*, 59(7) (2015), 783–801. doi:10.1177/000276421557325; Boukes et al., “Political News with a Personal Touch, : 2015.

<sup>37</sup> Dekker and Scholten, “Framing the Immigration Policy Agenda,” 2017.

<sup>38</sup> McQuiston, “Why has the human rights issue of statelessness not garnered wider public attention in the United States?,” 2019: 16-17.

political and legal frames which inhibits “empathy, feeling, and visualization” and therefore fails to spur society into action.<sup>39</sup> Artistic representations are one such way that the viewer can be connected to the human experience of statelessness and experience a frame shift, yet experts show that storytelling is also an effective method of increasing feelings of empathy on a wide variety of topics.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, these are hypothetical considerations as to why statelessness has not received more framing and how certain frames lead viewers to act or think in one way or another. Few studies have been conducted to confirm how and which frames influence viewers’ perceptions of stateless people and how to best resolve cases of statelessness— particularly in the US context.

As there are few statelessness and media studies, the existing literature on media framing related to irregular migrants and refugees will be used to inform the current research on statelessness within the US. Reviewing media studies that pertain to refugees is applicable to the current study, as statelessness is often found within the different migratory groups that exist within the United States and there is frequent conflation of stateless persons with other displaced populations.<sup>41</sup> Most studies completed on immigration within the media focus on one of two general areas: how the media portrays the issue of immigration and how such portrayals affect the observing audience. The effects of media on the immigration debate are significant, as news publications and media sites exercise a vast amount of control in agenda-setting and issue composition.<sup>42</sup> Considering that most Americans do not have personal interactions with

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<sup>39</sup> Rahman, “Humanising Statelessness through an Artistic Approach,” 2020: 273-284.

<sup>40</sup> Erica L. Rosenthal, Adam A. Rogers, Emily Peterson, Erica Watson-Currie, and Heesung Shin. 2020. “Change the Narrative, Change the World: How Immigrant Representation on Television Moves Audiences to Action.” *Define American*, September, <https://download.defineamerican.com/2020/09/Change-the-Narrative-Change-the-World.pdf>.

<sup>41</sup> Baluarte, “Life After Limbo,” 2015: 372.

<sup>42</sup> B.Akdenizli, E. J. Dionne, M. Kaplan, T. Rosenstiel, and R. Suro. “Democracy in the age of new media: A report on the media and the immigration debate,” Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution and the University of Southern California Annenberg School for Communication, 2008, <https://www.brookings.edu/wp->

immigrants and conflate migrant groups, news and media sources act as the conduit of information on immigration topics and therefore hold a considerable amount of power over how audiences perceive and think about migrant groups.<sup>43</sup>

### **Framing of Migrant Groups**

Studies demonstrate that communicative issue framing impacts the way that the public views migration.<sup>44</sup> Threat, conflict, and political frames tend to result in more negative and dehumanizing views of migrants, thereby justifying negative treatment and exclusionary policies towards migrant groups.<sup>45</sup> Bos et al. likewise demonstrated that negatively framed stories have a negative impact on support for immigration policies.<sup>46</sup> Conversely, studies on the influence of human interest frames on migration and other related fields have generally demonstrated or hypothesized positive outcomes with participating audiences. Parrott et al. demonstrated that visual human interest frames evoke positive emotional responses, such as empathy and compassion, towards refugees and, “predicted decreased perceptions of threat and more positive attitudes toward policy aimed at aiding immigrants and refugees in resettling in the United States.”<sup>47</sup> The results from Parrott et al.’s study is in concurrence with other scholars who postulated that human interest framed stories result in feelings of community or solidarity and that the general public is more accepting of individual immigrants as opposed to certain

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content/uploads/2016/06/0925\_immigration\_dionne.pdf; Scott Parrott, Jennifer Hoewe, Minghui Fan, and Keith Huffman, “Portrayals of Immigrants and Refugees in U.S. News Media: Visual Framing and its Effect on Emotions and Attitudes,” *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 63(4) (Dec. 2019): 677-697.

<sup>43</sup> Victoria Esses, Stelian Mediannu, and Andrea Lawson, “Uncertainty, Threat, and the Role of the Media in Promoting the Dehumanization of Immigrants and Refugees,” *Journal of Social Issues* 69(3) (2013): 518-56 (Accessed 6/22/21); Sophie Lecheler, Jorg Matthes, and Hajo Boomgaarden, “Setting the Agenda for Research on Media and Migration:: State-of-the-Art and Directions for Future Research,” *Mass Communication and Society*, 22(6) (2019): 691-707.

<sup>44</sup> Lecheler et al., “Setting the Agenda for Research,” 2019.

<sup>45</sup> Esses et al., “Uncertainty, Threat, and the Role of the Media,” 2013.

<sup>46</sup> Linda Bos, Sophie Lecheler, Moniek Mewafi, and Rens Vliegenhart, “It’s the frame that matters: Immigrant integration and media framing effects in the Netherlands,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 55(2016): 97-108.

<sup>47</sup> Parrott et al., “Portrayals of Immigrants and Refugees in US News Media,” 2019.

categories of immigrants.<sup>48</sup> Consequently, the frame that media and news reports deploy when discussing immigration-related issues influences the way that audiences perceive migrant groups.

Additionally, human interest frames may influence the way that individuals attribute fault or blame for an issue. News pieces that contained human interest framing resulted in a larger number of people attributing responsibility for societal issues to governments and a larger belief that governments should provide necessary resources to resolve such issues.<sup>49</sup> However, Aalberg and Beyer noted in their study that the effects of human interest framing may be compromised, or mediated, through a series of factors.<sup>50</sup> These factors can include an individual's personal values, knowledge on the topic, and available information, but also their political interest, individual political views, and societal culture.<sup>51</sup> As a result, Aalberg and Beyer hypothesized that the use of human interest frames amongst reports of irregular migration result in diverging outcomes for the two majority political ideological camps in the United States.<sup>52</sup>

### **Significance, Implications, and Purpose of Study**

As statelessness studies have largely been overlooked within contemporary American society, it is important to gauge the general climate surrounding stateless individuals, particularly in a time when migration—a category to which statelessness is commonly linked—is in

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<sup>48</sup> Roberta Piazza and Louann Haarman, "Toward a definition and classification of human interest narratives in television war reporting," *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43 (2011): 1540-1549; Toril Aalberg, Shanto Iyengar, and Solomon Messing, "Who is a 'deserving' immigrant? An experimental study of Norwegian attitudes," *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 35 (2012): 97-116.

<sup>49</sup> Boukes et al., "Political News with a Personal Touch," 2015; Boukes, "Episodic and Thematic Framing Effects on the Attribution of Responsibility," 2012; Aalberg and Beyer, "Human Interest Framing of Irregular Immigration: An Empirical Study of Public Preferences for Personalized News Stories in the United States, France, and Norway," *American Behavioral Scientist* 59(7) (2015): 858-875.

<sup>50</sup> Aalberg and Beyer, "Human Interest Framing of Irregular Immigration," 2015.

<sup>51</sup> Chong and Druckman, "Framing theory," 2006; Nael Jebiril, Claes H. de Vreese, Arjen van Dalen, and Erik Albaek, "The Effects of Human Interest and Conflict News Frames on the Dynamics of Political Knowledge Gains: Evidence from a Cross National Study," *Scandinavian Political Studies* 36(3) (2013): 201-226; Aalberg and Beyer, "Human Interest Framing of Irregular Immigration," 2015.

<sup>52</sup> Aalberg and Beyer, "Human Interest Framing of Irregular Immigration," 2015.

contentious debate.<sup>53</sup> If Americans tend to differentiate the stateless from other disputed migrant groups, such as those who enter the country undocumented,<sup>54</sup> it may be easier to introduce and pass legislation to assist stateless persons within the US. Particularly important for this study is the emphasis on human interest framed reporting. As statelessness has disappeared from the American policy agenda in the last decade, determining how and which media frame elicits greater understanding of and sympathy with the stateless may inform human rights activists and stateless people about how to remobilize political and media campaigns for nationality reform. Furthermore, by observing how Americans respond to human interest framed stories of statelessness, human rights advocates such as United Stateless may be able to tailor their communications campaigns to particular interest groups and demographics. For instance, should certain respondents be unresponsive to human interest stories and not demonstrate a change in attitudes, a separate communications approach focusing on the economic effects of statelessness may lead to more fruitful results for persons of a particular demographic or interest group.

More generally, the discussion of statelessness in the US is of paramount importance as it relates to the US' human rights record and capability as a global leader. While the US encourages other UN member-states to reform their nationality laws to prevent statelessness, the US' inaction on its own domestic cases of statelessness places the country's commitment to human rights into question— an undesirable look for a state seeking the consolidation of human rights elsewhere around the world. If the United States wishes to represent itself as an exemplar

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<sup>53</sup> Claire Felter, Danielle Renwick, and Amelia Cheatham, "The US Immigration Debate," *Council on Foreign Relations*, August 31, 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/backgroundunder/us-immigration-debate-0>.

<sup>54</sup> The term 'undocumented migrant' in the United States is used to refer to all foreigners who enter or remain in the United States without prior authorization from the federal government. By virtue of their lack of nationality and identification documents, all stateless persons in the US are undocumented. However, all persons who fall under the category of undocumented are not necessarily stateless, as some may hold a legally recognizable nationality and may be accepted for deportation to their country of origin.

human rights defender desiring an expansion of human rights globally, it would align its domestic and foreign policies to avoid an equivocal approach to statelessness.

As little is known about general attitudes towards statelessness within the United States, the present study seeks to take a “snapshot” of attitudes across a broad target audience in regards to statelessness through snowball sampling (see Methodology). The present research aims to investigate four primary research questions. First, does exposure to human interest frames in relation to statelessness result in a change in response to what rights participants believe stateless people are entitled to within the United States? Second, does exposure to the human interest frame on statelessness result in a change in response relating to how individuals assign blame for ongoing cases of statelessness and responsibility for the resolution of statelessness? Third, does exposure to human interest framed media result in a change in response to respondents’ attitudes on the presence of stateless persons in the United States? And finally, is there a relationship between change in response and certain demographic groupings?

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no significant change in participants’ responses relating to what rights stateless persons are entitled to in the United States.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is a significant change in participants’ assignment of blame for ongoing cases of statelessness in the United States.

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no significant change in participants’ assignment of responsibility for the resolution of statelessness in the United States.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is a significant change in participants’ responses relating to the assignment of responsibility for the resolution of statelessness in the United States.

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no significant change in participants’ assignment of responsibility for ongoing cases of statelessness in the United States.

H<sub>1</sub> : There is a significant change in participants’ assignment of responsibility for ongoing cases of statelessness in the United States.

## **Methodology**

### *Survey Overview*

To study how human interest framed media influences Americans' attitudes on statelessness, the primary investigator (PI) created a voluntary online survey questionnaire (Appendix I) on Google Forms. All responses submitted were recorded from Google Forms onto a separate Excel spreadsheet and saved to an external flash drive. The survey was open to participants for approximately three weeks, from July 21 to August 15, 2021. The survey included several sections for participants to consider. First, participants were instructed to read through the informed consent and complete the acknowledgment at the bottom of their screen. Then, participants filled out a brief demographic questionnaire, which gathered their age, race, gender, highest level of education completed, and whether or not they had heard of the term statelessness prior to the start of the survey. Next, participants were directed to read through a brief list of definitions to differentiate between the different migrant groups (i.e. refugee, asylum-seeker, undocumented migrant, and stateless person) and confirm that they have carefully read through all entries.

Following the definitions, participants were asked four qualitative questions to gauge where they assigned responsibility for continuing cases of statelessness in the US, where they assigned responsibility for resolving cases of statelessness in the US, what social and political rights they believed stateless people were entitled to, and their general attitudes towards stateless people present in the US. The questions within this section were closed-answer questions in order to gather quantitative data to discern patterns and correlations amongst participants and their beliefs.

The next two sections had participants read through two human interest pieces relating to statelessness in the US: the first, an article from the *Washington Post*, and the second, a transcript from a YouTube interview. After each media stimuli that the participant interacted with, they were asked one content question to ensure adequate comprehension. Following the stimuli sections, participants were asked to answer the same four questions that they were asked immediately prior to interacting with the article and transcript to observe if there is any measurable change between respondents' answers before and after exposure to human interest framed media. Participants were also encouraged to leave comments, questions, or opinions on the survey and stateless people in a fourth open-ended question proposed at the conclusion of the survey. The information that participants contribute to the open-ended question will give qualitative insight into statelessness. All questions asked on the survey were optional for participants, meaning that some questions could be left unanswered.

### *Participant Recruitment*

Participants for the survey were selected through snowball or chain-referral sampling. Snowball sampling is a convenient non-probability sampling technique, meaning that not every member in a particular group has an equal chance of selection. Rather, researchers identify an initial set of contacts to participate in the study, then identify or refer other persons within their personal or professional networks for the study. Due to the networking nature of snowball sampling, this particular method of dispersal and recruitment is often criticized for its limitations on generalizability, representativeness, and validity and for the data's results to become easily distorted (i.e. all female respondents, all one racial category, etc.).<sup>55</sup> However, several scholars

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<sup>55</sup> C. Parker, S. Scott, A Geddes, "Snowball sampling," *SAGE Research Methods Foundations*, 2019. [http://eprints.glos.ac.uk/6781/1/6781%20Parker%20and%20Scott%20%282019%29%20Snowball%20Sampling\\_Peer%20reviewed%20pre-copy%20edited%20version.pdf](http://eprints.glos.ac.uk/6781/1/6781%20Parker%20and%20Scott%20%282019%29%20Snowball%20Sampling_Peer%20reviewed%20pre-copy%20edited%20version.pdf).

have suggested that snowball sampling is particularly useful when conducting research on marginalized populations or issues as participants are referred or recruited by trusted acquaintances. Additionally, the use of snowball sampling online can increase representativeness and sample size, as participants can be instructed to reach out to persons both online and offline.<sup>56</sup> As a convenience sampling method, snowball sampling will be useful in capturing a “snapshot” of people throughout the country and their attitudes towards statelessness.

### *Survey Dispersal*

The PI identified an initial population to take the survey and asked initial respondents to refer others within their own personal and professional networks to partake in the study. The survey was disseminated through various channels, including the PI’s personal and professional circles through LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. To ensure that the survey was being dispersed to a diverse pool of participants, the PI contacted various politically-oriented groups on the campus of Towson University, including College Republicans, College Democrats, and Turning Point USA. The PI also searched the University campus organizations webpage (Involved @ TU) to observe if there were any active Libertarian or Green Party organizations, but such organizations were either inactive or non-existent. A contact in the Towson University Political Science department agreed to disperse the survey link on the Political Science Department’s public Twitter page so that all followers of differing backgrounds would be exposed to the survey. All participants were encouraged to repost or reshare the link to the survey with their own personal and professional circles in order to gather data from a wider pool of participants beyond the PI’s initial contacts.

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<sup>56</sup> F. Baltar and I. Brunet, “Social research 2.0: virtual snowball sampling method using Facebook.” *Internet Research*, 22(1) (2012): 57-74. doi: 10.1108/10662241211199960.

*Participant Pool*

By the conclusion of the study, 246 participants submitted responses. However, some responses were removed from the final study report. The survey included two “checkpoint” content-based questions after each of the two articles that participants were instructed to read. The checkpoint questions were utilized to ensure that participants thoroughly read through the articles and followed survey instructions. If a participant answered both questions incorrectly, their answer was subsequently removed from the final data set. Participants who answered both or one of the checkpoint questions correctly had their responses retained and featured in the final data set. In total, three participants answered both questions incorrectly and had their responses removed from the final data set. Twenty-six participants answered one question incorrectly, but remained in the final data set. The PI also removed three additional responses from the final data set, as they contained verbatim comments and demographic information from previous responses. In total, 241 responses were retained for final data analysis. Of those 241 responses, fifty participants wrote additional comments for qualitative analysis.

The 241 responses accepted for final data analysis represent a wide array of demographics, particularly within education levels. Education-wise, no categorical grouping represented a simple majority; the educational grouping with the highest level of respondents were those with “some undergraduate schooling,” composing approximately 29.9 percent of respondents. Respondents with bachelor’s degrees composed the second largest educational grouping at 25.3 percent, then those with master’s degrees (17.0 percent), high school diploma or GED (11.6 percent), and a Juris Doctorate or doctorate’s degree (9.5 percent). The remaining participants were those with some graduate school experience (3.3 percent), an Associate’s or

vocational degree (2.5 percent), less than high school education (0.04 percent), and those who did not want to specify or did not know their highest level of completed education (0.04 percent).

Respondents' political leanings were also varied, with no political ideological leaning taking the simple majority. However, survey respondents were generally more liberal, with 44.0 percent identifying as "liberal" and 22.0 percent identifying as "lean liberal." Conversely, 6.2 percent of respondents self-identified as "conservative" while an additional 9.5 percent identified as "lean conservative." Those identifying as politically moderate composed 17.8 percent of respondents, while 0.04 percent of respondents selected no answer.

Age range, racial and ethnic identity, and gender identity were somewhat diverse, with some categories taking a clear or indisputable simple majority. In regards to age range, persons aged 18-34 composed a majority of respondents at 59.3 percent. As the age option category rose, the number of respondents for that category decreased, as 18.3 percent of persons identified as 34-49, 14.1 percent as 50-64, 7.9 percent as 65 years or older, and 0.04 percent declining to furnish such information. In regards to gender identity, women comprised 62.7 percent of respondents in comparison to men who only totaled 32.0 percent. Approximately 4.2 percent of respondents identified as non-binary, while 0.04 percent preferred not to answer and another 0.04 percent did not leave a response at all. In terms of the racial and ethnic makeup of respondents, approximately 80.8 percent of respondents identified as white. The remainder of respondents identified as Black (7.9 percent), Asian (5.4 percent), Pacific Islander (0.04 percent), Middle Eastern (2.1 percent), Hispanic or Latinx (7.5 percent), or Other (0.08 percent). No respondents identified themselves as Indigenous or Native. Respondents also reported if they were bi- or multi-racial. Almost 2.1 percent of respondents noted that they were two or more races or ethnicities, but not all persons who selected more than one race or ethnicity also selected the two

or more races option. These respondents who did not mark themselves as bi- or multi-racial were counted separately by the PI and composed approximately 5.0 percent of respondents. About 2.1 percent of respondents declined to offer information on their racial or ethnic identity, while 0.04 percent declined to submit an answer for this section.

Most interesting to this study is respondents' answers in regards to whether or not they had heard of statelessness prior to the survey. Though the "yes" option has a simple majority at 51.9 percent, approximately 48.1 percent of respondents selected "no." Only 0.08 percent of respondents declined to answer this question. The near even split between respondents who have and have not heard of statelessness prior to the survey corroborates the statements made by McQuiston, who studied the lack of development of statelessness as a human rights issue in the United States.<sup>57</sup> These percentages corroborate much of the conversation within and amongst the stateless community on the lack of public awareness of statelessness.

Some portions of the sample demographics are representative of the greater population present within the US. For instance, the racial and ethnic demographics of respondents is overrepresented by white identifying participants. While 80 percent of survey respondents identified as white,<sup>58</sup> data from the 2020 US Census estimates that 60.1 percent of persons are white alone.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, a majority of survey respondents identified as a woman (62.7 percent) while 50.8 percent of "female persons" are present in the United States.<sup>60</sup> Though there may be some overrepresentation of some demographic groups, other portions are representative of the greater US population. As a result, generalizability from this study may be slightly impaired.

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<sup>57</sup> McQuiston, "Why has the human rights issue of statelessness not garnered wider public attention in the United States?," 2019.

<sup>58</sup> This number includes those who selected another racial or ethnic option in addition to white (i.e. white and Latinx, white and Black, etc.)

<sup>59</sup> United States Census Bureau, "QuickFacts." *United States Census Bureau, 2020*, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

**Methodological Overview: Quantitative Data**

The unit of analysis for this study and paper is at the individual level. The PI examines how interaction with human-interest framed stimuli (an article from the *Washington Post* and a transcript from a video interview) influences respondents' attitudes towards stateless persons in the United States. The PI also observes how certain demographic characteristics, such as political identity, racial identity, education level, and prior knowledge of statelessness influence participants' perceptions of stateless people prior to and directly after interacting with the stimuli. By observing all variables at an individual level of analysis, the PI seeks to observe if and how human interest-framed stories result in a change of attitudes towards stateless persons. The analysis will employ a cross-sectional experimental design so that the relationship of all variables may be viewed at once. Utilizing a cross-sectional experimental design may give greater insight into the present national opinion surrounding stateless people in the United States.

The collected quantitative data was analyzed through SPSS. First, a descriptive statistics frequency test was utilized to determine the demographic characteristics of all respondents (Appendix II). Then, cross tabulations were used to determine if there was a significant pattern amongst certain demographics and change in attitudes. Kendall's tau-b is utilized for bivariate analysis as the dependent variable is measured at the ordinal level with scale measurements, while all independent variables are ordinal or dichotomous. To conduct the analysis, the PI calculated the numerical difference between each respondent's pre-stimuli and post-stimuli responses and used the resulting answer as the dependent (Y) variable to compare against four independent (X) variables. The independent variables selected for analysis included highest level of education completed, if respondents identified as white, political ideological leaning, and

whether or not participants had prior knowledge of statelessness (see Appendix I for an explanation of how variables were measured and coded in SPSS).

### **Bivariate Analysis: Discussion**

The bivariate analyses overall demonstrates that the four tested independent variables (highest level of education, identifying as white, political leaning, and prior knowledge of statelessness) do not have a statistically significant relationship on change in response to questions relating to the presence of stateless persons, the assignment of responsibility to the continuation of statelessness, the assignment of responsibility for the resolution of statelessness, and the assignment of certain rights and privileges that stateless persons are entitled to in the United States. In other words, most survey respondents did not demonstrate a change in response. Though individuals across each of these demographic categories may have had a change in response between the pre- and post-media questionnaires, the Kendall's tau-b and  $p$  values highlight that most changes in responses were statistically insignificant with weak correlations.

Though most analyses yielded statistically insignificant results, there were a handful of results that showed a statistically significant correlation. When discussing removal from the United States, there was a statistically significant relationship between change in response relating to the removal of stateless persons from the US and a respondent's political leaning and prior knowledge of statelessness. As the independent variables of political leaning (1 = Liberal, 2 = Lean Liberal, 3 = Moderate, 4 = Lean Conservative, 5 = Conservative) and prior unfamiliarity with statelessness (1 = Yes, 2 = No) both increase, the dependent variable of change in response decreased by 1, 2, or even 3 points on five-point Likert scale. In other words, the more conservative a respondent is, the more likely they were to have a change in response *after*

reading the articles, moving from “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” towards “Neutral, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree” (see Figure 1). As there is a slight divide between which political ideologies experienced a change in response, these results align with the conclusions met by Aalberg and Beyer, who hypothesized that human interest framed reports on irregular migration would result in a split between the two major political parties in the United States.<sup>61</sup>

Likewise, the more unfamiliar a person was with the issue of statelessness (1 = Yes, 2 = No), the more likely they were to have a change in response after interacting with stimuli, moving from “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” towards “Neutral,” “Disagree,” or “Strongly Disagree” (see Figure 2). This suggests that interaction with human interest framed media does result in a change in attitudes towards stateless people being removed from the United States.

**Crosstab**

Count

	Political Leaning					Total	
	Liberal	Lean liberal	Moderate	Lean conservative	Conservative		
Change in Response: Removal from U.S.	-3	0	0	0	1	0	1
	-2	1	0	0	2	1	4
	-1	10	7	11	5	2	35
	0	86	40	32	11	12	181
	1	2	2	0	1	0	5
	2	1	0	0	0	0	1
	3	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total		101	49	43	20	15	228

  

**Symmetric Measures**

	Value	Asymptotic Standard Error <sup>a</sup>	Approximate T <sup>b</sup>	Approximate Significance
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-b	-.183	.059	-2.950	.003
N of Valid Cases	228			

**Figure 1:** Political leaning and change in response rates relating to a stateless person’s removal from the US The more conservative a respondent was, the more likely they were to experience a change in attitudes towards stateless persons after interacting with human interest framed stories and change their answers from “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” to “Neutral,” “Disagree,” or “Strongly Disagree.”

<sup>61</sup> Aalberg and Beyer, “Human Interest Framing of Irregular Immigration,” 2015.

**Crosstab**

Count	Heard of Statelessness?		Total
	Yes	No	
Change in Response:	-3	0	1
Removal from U.S.	-2	0	4
	-1	12	23
	0	107	73
	1	2	3
	2	0	1
	3	1	0
<b>Total</b>		122	105
			227

  

**Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error <sup>a</sup>	Approximate T <sup>b</sup>	Approximate Significance
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.188	.064	-2.845	.004
N of Valid Cases		227			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

**Figure 2:** Prior knowledge of statelessness and change in response rates relating to a stateless person's removal from the US Respondents who did not know what statelessness was prior to the start of the survey were more likely to experience a change in attitudes towards stateless persons after interacting with human interest framed stimuli and change their answers from "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" towards "Neutral," "Disagree," or "Strongly Disagree."

Similarly, when presented with the question of what rights and privileges stateless persons should be entitled to in the United States, there was a statistically significant relationship between change in response pertaining to two different rights: the right to vote and no rights at all. The presence of whiteness (1 = Yes, 2 = No) correlates with a positive change in response in granting stateless persons the right to vote (see Figure 3). Similarly, as unfamiliarity with statelessness increased (1 = Yes, 2 = No), respondents' change in response also increased, meaning that participants were more likely to agree that stateless people were deserving of the right to vote after reading human interest framed media (see Figure 4). Additionally, as respondents' political leanings increased along the liberal-conservative spectrum (1 = Liberal, 2 = Lean Liberal, 3 = Moderate, 4 = Lean Conservative, 5 = Conservative) they were more likely to have a negative or decreasing change in attitudes towards stateless persons being deserving of no rights. All of these variable pairings support the hypothesis that interaction with human framed interest media results in a change in attitudes towards stateless people.

**Change in Response: Voting \* White**

**Crosstab**

Count

		White		Total
		Yes	No	
Change in Response:	0	182	46	228
Voting	1	12	0	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>194</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>240</b>

  

**Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error <sup>a</sup>	Approximate T <sup>b</sup>	Approximate Significance
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.112	.018	-3.363	.001
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>		<b>240</b>			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.  
 b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

**Figure 3:** Race (white or non-white) and change in response relating to whether or not stateless persons should be granted the right to vote. A respondent who identified as white was more likely to have a change in response after reading the human interest framed stories of statelessness and agree that stateless people should have the right to vote.

**Change in Response: Voting \* Heard of Statelessness?**

**Crosstab**

Count

		Heard of Statelessness?		Total
		Yes	No	
Change in Response:	0	122	105	227
Voting	1	2	10	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>124</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>239</b>

  

**Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error <sup>a</sup>	Approximate T <sup>b</sup>	Approximate Significance
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	.162	.054	2.476	.013
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>		<b>239</b>			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.  
 b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

**Figure 4:** Prior knowledge of statelessness and change in response relating to whether or not stateless persons should be granted the right to vote. Respondents who were unfamiliar with statelessness prior to the start of the survey were more likely to show a change in response after reading the human interest framed articles and agree that stateless people should have the right to vote.

**Change in Response: No Rights \* Political Leaning**

**Crosstab**

Count

		Political Leaning					Total
		Liberal	Lean liberal	Moderate	Lean conservative	Conservative	
Change in Response: No Rights	-1	1	1	2	2	2	8
	0	103	51	41	21	13	229
	1	2	1	0	0	0	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>106</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>240</b>

  

**Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error <sup>a</sup>	Approximate T <sup>b</sup>	Approximate Significance
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.164	.053	-2.454	.014
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>		<b>240</b>			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.  
 b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

*Figure 5:* Political leaning and change in response relating to whether or not stateless persons should be granted any basic rights in the United States. A respondent who identified as white was more likely to have a change in response after reading the human interest framed stories of statelessness and changed their response to agree that stateless people are entitled to at least one right provided on the survey.

While only five total analyses demonstrated that change in response was significant across certain independent variables and area issues, it should be highlighted that many variable pairings had a *p* value just *slightly* larger than 0.05. The crosstabs comparing prior knowledge of statelessness and change in attitudes towards stateless persons having the right to start and own a business, for instance, had a *p* value of 0.064. Had the total valid sample size been slightly larger, the relationship between certain X and Y variables may have been statistically significant.

Another factor that may have contributed to the large number of weak correlations is the small sample size. Multiple scholars emphasize the importance of a minimum sample size that accurately represents a given population, yet there is conflict in determining the minimum sample size for a study.<sup>62</sup> For this particular project, the population size sampled was the larger general American population (330 million people), yet only 241 individuals submitted a valid response form. Clearly, this survey does not meet the minimum sample size requirement expected by most researchers, which in turn may have impacted the strength of the statistical results. As explained in the Survey Sample (see above), some demographics were overrepresented in this survey while others were underrepresented, which may have led to skewed results.

Another consideration for future iterations of this project is the survey layout itself. Though Google Forms is the most accessible online platform and does not require a subscription

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<sup>62</sup> Samar Rahi, Fera Alnaser, and Ghani Mazuri, "Designing Survey Research: Recommendation for Questionnaire Development, Calculating Sample Size, and Selecting Research Paradigms," 37th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development: "Socio Economic Problems of Sustainable Development," Baku, Azerbaijan, February 14-15, 2019.

for access, the multiple response questions sometimes resulted in respondents selecting more than one answer, despite instructions to only select one option. When respondents accidentally selected more than one answer (for instance, accidentally clicking both “agree” and “disagree” when asked their opinion on stateless people remaining in the US with a pathway to citizenship during the pre-test), the respondent’s answer was coded as missing in SPSS. A respondent’s double clicking of answers impacted the change in response variable too, as SPSS could not compute pre- and post-test scores with the missing value. In the future, a different survey tool may have to be used to ensure that respondents cannot select multiple responses when not instructed to do so.

If similar survey studies are to be conducted on attitudes towards statelessness, a larger sample size would be recommended. Or, future researchers should seek to recruit, survey, and interview respondents of a particular demographic—such as all conservatives or all persons unfamiliar with statelessness—to determine how particular demographic groupings view statelessness. Similarly, it may be useful for future researchers to closely consider to the wording and specificity of questions; multiple respondents remarked that “country of origin” should have been used in place of “other foreign countries,” which in turn may have resulted in different answers for both pre- and post-questionnaires (see Appendix I). Additionally, future research could take into account the impact of other frames, such as conflict frames, and observe if respondents have a greater change in response rate than that which was presented with human-interest framed stimuli.

The bivariate quantitative analysis addressed the question of whether or not human interest framed media resulted in a change in response across respondents. Though most respondents did not have a change in response and answered both the pre- and post-media

questionnaires similarly, the above results demonstrate that human-interest framed media can influence certain demographics to view certain topics (i.e., presence of stateless people in the United States and the assigning of particular rights) about stateless people sympathetically.

### **Methodological Overview and Discussion: Qualitative Data**

To complement the quantitative data, participants were given the option to leave additional comments, questions, or feedback pertaining to the survey or the topic of statelessness at the conclusion of the post-media questionnaire. Of the 241 valid responses, sixty-four contained comments from respondents. However, some of these comments were removed from the final quantitative analysis as they contained personally identifiable information (PII) or consisted of simply “not applicable (N/A)” or “no” statements, indicating that the respondent did not have any additional comments to leave on the survey. After these responses were removed, there were a total of fifty-two comments available for analysis.

To analyze respondents’ comments, the PI conducted thematic quantitative analysis, which, as described by Nowell et al., “is a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes within a data set.”<sup>63</sup> The comments submitted by survey participants underwent a rigorous course of analysis, beginning with initial intake, coding, reviewing and defining of themes, and production of the final presentation, as discussed in Nowell et al. and Braun and Clark.<sup>64</sup> Though respondents were able to submit comments freely, deductive coding methods—where themes and codes were created based on existing concepts or ideas—were utilized during this portion of analysis. Comments were also analyzed latently,

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<sup>63</sup> Lorelli Norwell, Jill Norris, Deborah White, and Nancy Moules, “Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria,” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1) (2017): 1-13.

<sup>64</sup> Norwell et al., “Thematic Analysis,” 2017; Virginia Braun and Victoria Clark, “Using thematic analysis in psychology,” *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2) (2006): 77-101 (Accessed 8/19/21).

where the coding and themes report subtextual or contextual meanings.<sup>65</sup> The PI first conducted all thematic analysis individually, then referred to a faculty project advisor for discussion.

Analysis of participants' comments yielded two main themes: legality and responsibility.

### *Legality*

The first theme frequently present across participant responses was legality. Respondents often invoked words and phrases such as “documentation,” “citizenship,” “rules and protocols,” “law,” and “illegally” when discussing statelessness. All comments beneath the theme of legality concur that regulations are needed within the United States immigration system; no comment explicitly denies this need for an organized immigration process. However, some comments acknowledge that there are legal regulations or blockades that either disregard statelessness as an issue within the US' immigration system or prevent movement (whether said movement be into or out of the country). Other comments imply that a legal process for stateless persons outside of asylum already *does* exist under current US law.

Participant 30 not only acknowledged how the human-interest framed stories shifted their opinion on responsibility, but highlighted the lack of legal pathways for stateless persons to seek a resolution to their case. “When looking at the topic you think ‘Oh, it’s their fault the[y’re] sta[te]less,’ but after reading the articles I realized the system is set up against them,” wrote the participant. “Even when trying to become a citizen, it’s so many roadblocks.” Participants 37 and 11 voiced similar comments: “This topic feels like it is something not thought about or addressed enough in government today. There should be way more solutions to these issues than there are,” wrote one. “I think if people want to li[v]e in the US or somewhere else then we should have a process to assist them to get somewhere,” wrote another. Such comments convey the sentiment

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<sup>65</sup> Braun and Clark, “Using thematic analysis in psychology,” 2006.

that more should be done on behalf of the United States government to facilitate a solution for statelessness. It is interesting to note that the latter two participants hint that legal processes should involve not only the US government, but foreign entities—most likely a stateless person’s country of origin.

Concurrently, other respondents left comments that implied a legal process already existed within the United States to either place stateless persons on a pathway to American citizenship or repatriate them to a foreign country when asylum is denied. “I understand why people want to come to the USA, but there are rules and protocols to follow,” stated Participant 22. “Other countries do not allow just anyone showing up on their doorstep, so why is the USA expected to be any different?” Participant 23 wrote that “[t]he paths to citizenship are absurd. We need to shorten the time and path it takes to become a citizen,” implying that a pathway to citizenship exists for stateless persons. “As long as people pay taxes, I have no problem with work permission and access to tax paid programs, but current laws need to be followed until new laws can be created to fix current issues.”

Other participants similarly commented on the legality of crossing the United States border irregularly. Participant 34 commented on the different pathways that a stateless person could arrive to the United States to file an asylum claim: “It is one thing to apply for a US visa and come to the US legally, it is another, to simp[ly] gain access by walking across the border. I believe that an individual who comes legally on a visa, would have a better claim regarding his or her statelessness in a US immigration court.” Participant 16 commented, “I believe everyone should emigrate following the rules of the US. These [stateless] persons decided to leave their country of birth no matter which reason. I would personally not put my family in jeopardy and possible deportation; would apply legally.” Participant 2 commented on the lack of

documentation. Though the respondent did not specify what type of documentation, it is implied that they are referring to both the lack of personal documentation (i.e. valid passports) and lack of documentation of their presence with the US government: “It is my thought that a country is set to protect its own citizens, how can they do this if the people they let into the country have no documentation. They can be anyone including terrorists/drug smugglers/human traffickers/etc.”

All of the above comments question the legality of irregular migration and assume that there is an alternative for stateless persons (“would apply legally”) or a current law that exists to regulate their status (“the paths to citizenship are absurd, but current law needs to be followed until new laws can be created”). All comments also imply wrongdoing or a violated statute, as invoked by the repeated phrase “follow the rules.” However, neither of the stateless persons featured in the survey vignettes violated US law—nor is there a pathway for them to be either sent home or integrated into US society. The stateless person featured in the first article entered the US on a visa and applied for asylum, which was later rejected. The stateless person featured in the second article entered the US seeking asylum, which is permitted regardless of a person’s legal status as protected under US law.<sup>66</sup>

Both asylum claims were denied, which then initiated final removal proceedings. But, as both stateless persons arrived in the United States with Soviet-era passports with no USSR successor state claiming them as a national, they could not be deported. They remain in the United States, with no administrative pathway to regularize their status, as there is no domestic definition of statelessness or a method for determining if someone is stateless. Though both are

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<sup>66</sup> Congress.gov. “S.634 – 96<sup>th</sup> Congress (1979-1980): Refugee Act of 1979.” March 17, 1980. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/96th-congress/senate-bill/643>.

present in the US unauthorized—which is a civil violation, not a crime—their stateless status prevents them from receiving the penalty of deportation.<sup>67</sup>

The repeated mentioning of legality related to statelessness is interesting, as statelessness by definition alludes to a person having no legal status at all, either in the United States or abroad. Though there are punishments for entering and remaining in the United States unauthorized, stateless persons are unable to adjust their status to either leave or integrate into society through the current US legal system. The comments relating to the legality of entry and presence of stateless persons showcase the complexity of legal systems and the loopholes that prevent statelessness from being fully resolved in the United States.

### *Responsibility*

Discussion of who or what entity is responsible for the continuation and resolution of statelessness was a main area of investigation throughout the multiple, closed-answered choice section of the survey. Fourteen respondents submitted additional comments that contained language related to the theme of assignment of responsibility. Within this general theme of responsibility, two general sub-themes also emerged: collective and individual.

Collective responsibility is used to describe those comments that insist that the burden of responsibility and/or care rests not with a single party, but multiple. Some respondents believed that responsibility for the resolution of statelessness did not solely rest with the United States. Respondent 12 stated that, “Stateless people should be helped from the broader international community, not just the US government.” Participant 31 commented similarly, stating that “it should be the US gov[ernment’s] job to negotiate and communicate with the person’s country of origin,” while Participant 50 wrote that the “US and foreign governments should work together

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<sup>67</sup> Dan Clark, “Is living as an undocumented immigrant in the US a crime?,” *PolitiFact*, December 1, 2017, <https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2017/dec/02/kathy-sheehan/being-undocumented-immigrant-us-not-crime/>.

to solve the problem.” These three participants view statelessness as a global burden that requires action from multiple actors, which may or may not include states and intergovernmental organizations such as the UNHCR.

Conversely, some respondents urged that responsibility was not shared, but rather individual and fell upon the shoulders of one singular actor. However, which actor respondents stated were responsible for statelessness in the US varied from person to person. Some thought that responsibility for the causation, continuation, and care for stateless persons in the United States rested with other governments. Participant 10 wrote that “[t]he responsibility of statelessness rests with the original country of origin or whatever successor country exists (in the case of former Soviet states or similar situations). It is not the job of the United States to be the savior of everyone experiencing hardship, statelessness included.” Comments such as this suggest that US policy should not be adjusted for stateless persons present in the United States, as the United States was not the entity that initially denied citizenship to stateless persons.

Other respondents placed responsibility for the situation of statelessness on stateless persons themselves. Recall Respondent 16: “These [stateless] persons decided to leave their country of birth no matter which reason. I would personally not put my family in jeopardy and possible deportation.” To this respondent, statelessness is the culminating consequences of a series of individual actions that is not the responsibility of the United States or any other third party to resolve.

Other participants commented that their opinion on who is responsible for causing statelessness changed between the start and end of the survey. Participant 37 wrote that “after reading the vignettes provided, my answer shifted in one way, putting the responsibility of statelessness on the US Government. Previously I had said it was the other countries’

governments' responsibilities (believing it was conditions there that made individuals seek something better in the US). I now believe that regardless of the reason these individuals entered this country, it is the US' policies on immigration that creates the statelessness of so many people." As stated earlier in the section, Participant 30 stated that they "realized the system is set up against them [stateless persons]" and that "it's so many roadblocks" to achieving American citizenship or a legal status. Such comments corroborate the discussion of the quantitative analysis, which stated that although significant changes in opinion on the assigning of responsibility for statelessness were not present, individual changes in response were observable.

### *Further Discussion*

The comments from respondents demonstrate that further education and research on statelessness in the United States is needed. Discussion on the legality of statelessness in the context of the US immigration system is necessary for enhanced and deepened discussion of statelessness in the United States. The comments made in regards to stateless persons were created in reference to two stories of stateless persons from the former USSR. It is important to note that there are stateless persons in the US from all areas across the globe, including Eritrea, Myanmar, and Jordan, and that comments presented here for this particular study may not be applicable to all cases of statelessness in the United States. Similar studies in the future may wish to use stories from stateless persons who were not former citizens of the Soviet Union.

### **Conclusion and Future Research**

Ten million stateless persons exist around the globe today, an unknown fraction of whom reside within the United States. While previous studies have focused on American attitudes towards refugees and other irregular migrants, few, if any, studies have focused on attitudes towards the stateless. This study sought to ameliorate the knowledge gap on the US' stateless

population and understand general opinions towards stateless persons through a qualitative and quantitative survey and observe if interaction with human-interest framed stimuli resulted in a change in response or attitudes across a significant number of respondents in particular demographic grouping based on education, race, political ideological leaning, and prior knowledge of statelessness.

Overall, only five dependent and independent variable pairings demonstrated statistically significant correlations. As respondent's political leanings increased along a five-point scale from most liberal to most conservative, respondents' post-questionnaire response on the removal of stateless persons from the US decreased by 1, 2, or even 3 Likert scale points. Similarly, as respondents' prior familiarity with statelessness increased along a dichotomous scale, respondents' change in response on the removal of stateless persons from the US also decreased. Statistically significant relationships were observed between change in response on what rights stateless people should be afforded and their racial identity, political ideological leaning, or their prior familiarity with statelessness. Participants identifying as white and participants who were unfamiliar with statelessness prior to the start of the survey both had a positive change of response when asked if stateless persons should be granted the right to vote. Additionally, as respondents' political identification increased along a five-point Likert scale, they were more likely to have a negative or decreasing change of response when asked if stateless persons deserve no rights. These five variable pairings demonstrate that interaction with human-interest framed stimuli does result in a change in response or attitudes towards stateless people in the United States.

The qualitative analysis continued discussion of the questions proposed to participants during the pre- and post-surveys. Most participants who chose to leave additional comments

wrote of the legality of entry, removal, and presence of stateless persons in the US, or spoke of the assigning of responsibility for continuation and resolution of statelessness. While there is diversity of opinion amongst comments left by respondents, it is evident that future discussion and education on the stateless and how to best resolve their plight is needed in academic, legal, and political circles.

Future research may include running specialized focus groups, follow-up interviews, or another anonymous survey with a target population in order to further develop ideas on how particular demographic groups view stateless persons in the United States. For instance, locating conservative or conservative-leaning individuals and creating a survey that further investigates their change in opinion and *why* their answer changed in pre- and post-questionnaires may be of interest and help broaden communication campaigns on statelessness to particular interest groups.

This study is not only a first step towards a better understanding of statelessness in the US and how everyday Americans view stateless people, but a first step towards the total eradication of statelessness in the United States. However, there is still much work to be done on behalf of the US if it is to resolve its domestic cases of statelessness. Statelessness remains vastly underreported, misunderstood, and invisible amongst the general populace and the US government. Renewed efforts to educate on statelessness domestically may be possible with targeted communications and education campaigns, which, as this study demonstrates, may be reached by utilizing a human-interest media frame amongst certain demographics. With increased reporting, discussions, and education, the United States may finally be able to overcome its inertia on statelessness and offer a pathway to citizenship for its citizens of nowhere.

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## APPENDIX I — Survey Questions and SPSS Codes

### Demographics

#### Age?

*Ordinal*

- 18-34 SPSS Code: 1
- 35-49 SPSS Code: 2
- 50-64 SPSS Code: 3
- 65 and older SPSS Code: 4
- Prefer not to answer SPSS Code: 5

#### Gender?

*Nominal*

- Woman SPSS Code: 1
- Man SPSS Code: 2
- Non-binary SPSS Code: 3
- Other SPSS Code: 4
- Prefer not to answer SPSS Code: 5

#### Race/ethnicity? (select all that apply)

*Dichotomous ordinal*

- White SPSS Code: 1, 0
- Black SPSS Code: 1, 0
- Asian SPSS Code: 1, 0
- Pacific Islander SPSS Code: 1, 0
- Middle Eastern SPSS Code: 1, 0
- Indigenous SPSS Code: 1, 0
- Hispanic/Latinix SPSS Code: 1, 0
- Two or more races/ethnicities SPSS Code: 1, 0
- Selected more than one race/ethnicity, but did not select two+ option SPSS Code: 1, 0
- Other SPSS Code: 1, 0

#### Highest level of education?

*Ordinal*

- Less than high school SPSS Code: 1
- High school diploma or GED SPSS Code: 2

- Associate's Degree/Vocational School SPSS Code: 3
- Some undergraduate SPSS Code: 4
- Bachelor's degree SPSS Code: 5
- Master's degree SPSS Code: 6
- Some graduate school SPSS Code: 7
- J.D. or Doctorate's SPSS Code: 8
- Unknown/do not want to specify SPSS Code: 9

**What best describes your political ideological leaning?**

*Ordinal*

- Liberal SPSS Code: 1
- Lean liberal SPSS Code: 2
- Moderate SPSS Code: 3
- Lean conservative SPSS Code: 4
- Conservative SPSS Code: 5

**Have you heard of the term “statelessness” prior to the commencement of this survey?**

*Dichotomous ordinal*

- Yes SPSS Code = 1
- No SPSS Code = 2

**Pre-Stimuli Questionnaire**

**What are your current views on stateless people? (one response required per statement)**

*Ordinal*

**They should be required to leave the US**

**They should be allowed to remain in the US, but not allowed to apply for US citizenship.**

**They should be allowed to stay in the US and to eventually apply for citizenship.**

- Strongly agree SPSS Code: 1
- Agree SPSS Code: 2
- Neutral SPSS Code: 3
- Disagree SPSS Code: 4
- Strongly disagree SPSS Code: 5

**Which statement comes closest to your current views?***Nominal*

- The US government is responsible for continuing cases of statelessness.
  - SPSS Code: 1
- Other foreign governments are responsible for continuing cases of statelessness.
  - SPSS Code 2
- Individuals themselves are responsible for continuing cases of statelessness.
  - SPSS Code: 3

**Which statement comes closest to your current views?***Nominal*

- The US government should provide a solution (i.e. legislation, executive order) to stateless persons currently in the United States.
  - SPSS Code: 1
- Other foreign governments should provide a solution (i.e. legislation, executive order) to stateless persons currently in the United States.
  - SPSS Code: 2
- Stateless persons themselves should find a solution to their statelessness.
  - SPSS Code: 3

**In your opinion, stateless people residing in the United States are entitled to which of the following rights (check all that you feel apply):***Dichotomous ordinal*

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| ● Basic freedoms (free speech, religion, etc.)                      | SPSS Code: 1, 0 |
| ● Right to vote   | SPSS Code: 1, 0 |
| ● Ability to work   | SPSS Code: 1, 0 |
| ● Government healthcare programs                                    | SPSS Code: 1, 0 |
| ● K-12 education  | SPSS Code: 1, 0 |
| ● Access to scholarships/federal financial aid for higher education | SPSS Code: 1, 0 |
| ● Welfare   | SPSS Code: 1, 0 |
| ● Affordable housing  | SPSS Code: 1, 0 |
| ● Government ID documents   | SPSS Code: 1, 0 |
| ● Ability to start and own a business                               | SPSS Code: 1, 0 |
| ● None of the above   | SPSS Code: 1, 0 |

**Post-Stimuli Questionnaire**

**What are your current views on stateless people? (one response for each statement)***Ordinal*

They should be required to leave the US

They should be allowed to remain in the US, but not allowed to apply for US citizenship.

They should be allowed to stay in the US and to eventually apply for citizenship.

- Strongly agree SPSS Code: 1
- Agree SPSS Code: 2
- Neutral SPSS Code: 3
- Disagree SPSS Code: 4
- Strongly disagree SPSS Code: 5

**Which statement comes closest to your current views?***Nominal*

- The US government is responsible for continuing cases of statelessness.
  - SPSS Code: 1
- Other foreign governments are responsible for continuing cases of statelessness.
  - SPSS Code: 2
- Individuals themselves are responsible for continuing cases of statelessness.
  - SPSS Code: 3

**Which statement comes closest to your current views?***Nominal*

- The US government should provide a solution (i.e. legislation, executive order) to stateless persons currently in the United States.
  - SPSS Code: 1
- Other foreign governments should provide a solution (i.e. legislation, executive order) to stateless persons currently in the United States.
  - SPSS Code: 2
- Stateless persons themselves should find a solution to their statelessness.
  - SPSS Code: 3

**In your opinion, stateless people residing in the United States are entitled to which of the following rights (check all that you feel apply):**

*Dichotomous ordinal*

- Basic freedoms (free speech, religion, etc.) SPSS Code: 1, 0
- Right to vote SPSS Code: 1, 0
- Ability to work SPSS Code: 1, 0
- Government healthcare programs SPSS Code: 1, 0
- K-12 education SPSS Code: 1, 0
- Access to scholarships/federal financial aid for higher education SPSS Code: 1, 0
- Welfare SPSS Code: 1, 0
- Affordable housing SPSS Code: 1, 0
- Government ID documents SPSS Code: 1, 0
- Ability to start and own a business SPSS Code: 1, 0
- None of the above

**Do you have any comments or feedback on the survey or on the topic of statelessness?**

*Qualitative variables*

**APPENDIX II — DEMOGRAPHIC FREQUENCY TABLES**

**Gender Identity**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Woman	151	62.7	62.9	62.9
	Man	77	32.0	32.1	95.0
	Non-binary	11	4.6	4.6	99.6
	Prefer not to answer	1	.4	.4	100.0
	Total	240	99.6	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	.4		
Total		241	100.0		

**Political Leaning**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Liberal	106	44.0	44.2	44.2
	Lean liberal	53	22.0	22.1	66.3
	Moderate	43	17.8	17.9	84.2
	Lean conservative	23	9.5	9.6	93.8
	Conservative	15	6.2	6.3	100.0
	Total	240	99.6	100.0	
	Missing	-99	1	.4	
Total		241	100.0		

**Age Range**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-34	143	59.3	59.3	59.3
	35-49	44	18.3	18.3	77.6
	50-64	34	14.1	14.1	91.7
	65 and older	19	7.9	7.9	99.6
	Prefer not to answer	1	.4	.4	100.0
	Total	241	100.0	100.0	

**Heard of Statelessness?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Yes	124	51.5	51.9	51.9	59.3
	No	115	47.7	48.1	100.0	77.6
	Total	239	99.2	100.0		91.7
Missing	-99	2	.8			99.6
Total		241	100.0			100.0

**Heard of Statelessness?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	124	51.5	51.9	51.9
	No	115	47.7	48.1	100.0
	Total	239	99.2	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	.8		
Total		241	100.0		

**Highest Level of Education**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than high school	1	.4	.4	.4
	High school diploma or GED	28	11.6	11.6	12.0
	Associate's degree or vocational school	6	2.5	2.5	14.5
	Some undergraduate	72	29.9	29.9	44.4
	Bachelor's degree	61	25.3	25.3	69.7
	Master's degree	41	17.0	17.0	86.7
	Some graduate school	8	3.3	3.3	90.0
	J.D. or Doctorate's Degree	23	9.5	9.5	99.6
	Unknown or do not want to specify	1	.4	.4	100.0
Total		241	100.0	100.0	

**White**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	194	80.5	80.8	80.8
	No	46	19.1	19.2	100.0
	Total	240	99.6	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	.4		
Total		241	100.0		

**Black**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	19	7.9	7.9	7.9
	No	221	91.7	92.1	100.0
	Total	240	99.6	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	.4		
Total		241	100.0		

**Asian**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	13	5.4	5.4	5.4
	No	227	94.2	94.6	100.0
	Total	240	99.6	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	.4		
Total		241	100.0		

**Pacific Islander**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	1	.4	.4	.4
	No	239	99.2	99.6	100.0
	Total	240	99.6	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	.4		
Total		241	100.0		

**Middle Eastern**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	5	2.1	2.1	2.1
	No	235	97.5	97.9	100.0
	Total	240	99.6	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	.4		
Total		241	100.0		

**Indigenous**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	240	99.6	100.0	100.0
Missing	-99	1	.4		
Total		241	100.0		

**Hispanic/Latinx**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	18	7.5	7.5	7.5
	No	222	92.1	92.5	100.0
	Total	240	99.6	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	.4		
Total		241	100.0		

**Two or more**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	5	2.1	2.1	2.1
	No	235	97.5	97.9	100.0
	Total	240	99.6	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	.4		
Total		241	100.0		

**Two or more races, but did not specify**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	12	5.0	5.0	5.0
	No	228	94.6	95.0	100.0
	Total	240	99.6	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	.4		
Total		241	100.0		

**Prefer not to answer**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	5	2.1	2.1	2.1
	No	235	97.5	97.9	100.0
	Total	240	99.6	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	.4		
Total		241	100.0		

**Other**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	2	.8	.8	.8
	No	238	98.8	99.2	100.0
	Total	240	99.6	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	.4		
Total		241	100.0		

**APPENDIX III — Survey Open-Ended Responses**

**Note: These comments have been randomly assigned to a participant number and do not appear in any particular order. Brackets indicate that the text has been edited by the PI for grammar, spelling, and/or punctuation purposes.**

Participant 1: Some of these are conditional. No one should be denied health care, education, and welfare programs. However, everyone here, regardless of citizenship status, should be able to work and pay state, local and federal taxes. If everyone living in the US were to be given a (much easier than it is currently) pathway to citizenship and/or given an opportunity to pay taxes, then every single program that app[lies] to US citizens should apply to them.

Participant 2: Immigration into the US among stateless people would be different if they had any documentation. It is my thought that a country is set to protect its own citizens, how can they do this if the people they let into the country have no documentation. They can be anyone including terrorists/drug smugglers/human traffickers/etc.

Participant 3: Very informative! I learned a lot in a very short amount of time

Participant 4: Cool

Participant 5: Great job!

Participant 6: I believe that the view of the stateless and of immigrants in general in the United States is far too extreme. It truly often baffles me just how many people in this country truly hate people just coming to this country for better lives. To me, it should be so easy for somebody to move to a new place and apply for and gain citizenship. Immigration views is definitely now one of the biggest factors in terms of who I would vote for, as I think the current administration is woefully inept in this field.

Participant 7: On the topic of stateless people (and all non-citizens) I feel like they should have the right to vote in local elections but not federal elections. College Park, Maryland is one example of that.

Participant 8: I support the right to vote for stateless people who have resided in the US for a year.

Participant 9: I think stateless individuals should be given a path to citizenship, then granted the right to vote.

Participant 10: The responsibility of statelessness rests with the original country of origin or whatever successor country exists (in the case of former Soviet states or similar situations). It is not the job of the United States to be the savior of everyone experiencing hardship, statelessness included.

Participant 11: I think if people want to li[v]e in the US or somewhere else then we should have a process to assist them to get somewhere.

Participant 12: Stateless people should be helped from the broader international community, not just the US government.

Participant 13: No but thanks for great info and stories!

Participant 14: The font size for the readings should be larger.

Participant 15: I did not check "right to vote", but that's because of my belief that the government should recognize their statelessness and provide a path to citizenship first. Once a citizen, then they could vote, of course.

Participant 16: Yes , as a grandchild of an immigra[nt] whose family waited years before they could be reunited, I believe Everyone should emigrate following the rules of the US. These [stateless] persons decided to leave their country of birth no matter which reason. I would personally not put my family in jeopardy and possible deportation; would apply legally. Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion.

Participant 17: I am appalled at the situations these individuals are in—where the US wants them out but they have nowhere to go. I was unaware of these sorts of cases as I have only heard/read about Central and South American refugees in the media.

Participant 18: Wow - what a hard situation to be in - STATELESSNESS...

Participant 19: Stateless happens in all countries. And those countries should be responsible of their population. Specially those that have made a home in said country.

Participant 20: Your choices should include both US and country of origin as being responsible

Participant 21: Great job!

Participant 22: I understand why people want to come to the USA, but there are rules and protocols to follow. Other countries do not allow just anyone showing up on their doorstep, so why is the USA expected to be any different?

Participant 23: The paths to citizenship are absurd. We need to shorten the time and path it takes to become a citizen. As long as people pay taxes I have no problem with work permission and access to tax paid programs but current laws need to be followed until new laws can be created to fix current issues.

Participant 24: It's absolutely ridiculous and inhumane how we cannot provide basic human rights to stateless people nor recognize their existence just because they don't have the proper documentation. It's an elitist and biased system that the world has, but it's even more cruel and crooked in America.

Participant 25: I decided not to answer the "political beliefs" (liberal - conservative) spectrum of ideologies because my personal ideology wasn't described. In saying so, the idea of statelessness derives out of the idea of the state itself. We often forget that the problems we are dealing with now, such as statelessness itself, are solvable. We must first be willing to question the authorities of statehood and nationhood (in the first place) to eradicate the colonial ideations that have led people into the limbo status of statelessness. (Just my thoughts).

Participant 26: Repeated questions taken out or altered? Maybe have the option to type in responses in addition to just the given answers. (Optional but not necessary).

Participant 27: I didn't realize statelessness was such a problem! As for the question regarding what rights we feel stateless people should have, I think that as human beings they should have all of those rights, but I am also of the opinion that they really should just get to become citizens of the U.S which would grant them those rights. Maybe I [mis]understood the question because it is a little confusing, but I think that the focus should be to let them be citizens and thereby receiving the rights of a citizen[,] not making legislation to give them rights as non citizens because I think that would be smarter for our country in the long run.

Participant 28: Why were both examples about Armenia? There are many other stateless peoples...

Participant 29: Thanks for the education. Very informative. And sad.

Participant 30: When looking at the topic you think "Oh, it's their fault the[y're] sta[te]less" but after reading the articles I realized the system is set up against them. Even when trying to become a citizen, it's so many roadblocks.

Participant 31: It's so odd how a country that was founded on embracing people who are/were out of place can be so intolerant toward stateless people. It should be the US Gov's job to negotiate & communicate with the person's country of origin (of course by this I mean that the US should, for example, communicate with Ukraine or whichever former Soviet states a person belongs (belonged) to).

Participant 32: We are all human beings from the same origins- on this planet all people are related. All people should be accepted and have inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit for happiness. The Declaration of Independence should be a global document against the tyranny of those who would deny anyone those inalienable rights. Counting on your generation to build the new system and ditch the failed one we are enduring today.

Participant 33: It is hard to imagine that "Statelessness" accounts for almost 4% of the population.

Participant 34: I feel as though your question was vague. You should have asked "What are your current views on stateless people that have entered the US legally? And secondly, "What are your current views on stateless people that have entered the US illegally?" I believe if you asked these 2 questions my responses would have been different. It is one thing to apply for a US visa and come to US legally, it is another, to simp[ly] gain access by walking across the border. I believe that an individual who comes legally on a visa, would have a better claim regarding his or her statelessness in a US immigration court.

Participant 35: There's an old saying: "Hard cases make for bad law." It seems, based on the anecdotes that you're using, that you're looking to see if difficult, almost intractable, situations might cause folks to change their minds regarding the larger question. These are awful stories. But to take individual situations, and try to come up with macro-level policy solutions to the larger issue, is a classic example of faulty legal reasoning.

Participant 36: In these type[s] of situations I believe the US should offer asylum. It's the many illegal people who are here for reasons other th[a]n fear of death and use our resources that need to be deported and apply for citizenship legally. As did my own family

Participant 37: After reading the vignettes provided, my answer shifted in one way, putting the responsibility of statelessness on the US Government. Previously I had said it was the other countries' governments responsibilities (believing it was conditions there that made individuals seek something better in the US). I now believe that regardless of the reason these individuals entered this country, it is the US' policies on immigration that creates the statelessness of so many people.

Participant 38: Stateless persons should have the right to seek a path to citizenship in the US free from the fear of deportation, within a reasonable timeframe and decided in a court of law on an individual basis, which is not included in this survey.

Participant 39: I had a pause on the 2nd question "double barrel" wording about "staying in the US but not being able to apply for citizenship (meant "yes to stay" and "no, they should be able to apply" but wasn't sure how to note that; this is why the pre-test was "neutral" for that question).

Participant 40: I want to clarify that I hate the United States and that I am an anarchist. But I do not believe that people should be turned away from wherever they call their home as long as they aren't displacing someone else. and there's plenty of room here on the land "possessed" by the United States. I hope that all stateless people are able to find somewhere to safely call home, and continue a connection with their culture. Should they decide to call the land that is known as the United States home, I hope this brings them comfort.

Participant 41: I am well aware [of] this issue through my work with Palestinians over the years.

Participant 42: This topic feels like it is something not thought about or addressed enough in government today. There should be way more solutions to these issues than there are. (P.S. this was a good survey).

Participant 43: The US should absolutely provide full rights to stateless people and give them a clear, easy path to citizenship. It is embarrassing that the richest nation in the world cannot extend democratic freedoms to people in need.

Participant 44: Because of [the] dissolution of [their] origin state these individuals should have been granted asylum.

Participant 45: Survey was well done, presented well. The term "welfare" may have been chosen intentionally for a reason, but I may have answered the questions differently if specific support programs were listed instead.

Participant 46: Because circumstances differ regarding how people became stateless and how they ended up in the US, there may be differences in the proper solutions. Also, regarding government identification documents, some may be appropriate while others, such as those that would enable stateless people to register to vote, may not be.

Participant 47: I feel for those people!

Participant 48: The last question, asked twice, was vague. The first time I thought you meant which of these is presently the case, the second time I thought it meant which of these do you think should be the case

Participant 49: Great articles

Participant 50: Both U.S Government and foreign governments should work together to solve this problem.

Participant 51: My opinion didn't change over the course of the survey, though it looks like it was created with the intention to change peoples' opinions. I think all the rights listed are basic freedoms and civil liberties and regardless of where an individual was born, they should have these rights.

Participant 52: Children should be treated better than adults