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Effects of Political Identification and Moral
Foundations in Perceiving Threats from
Latino Immigrants in the United States

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Exploring the Independent and Interactive Effects of Political Identification and Moral Foundations in Perceiving Threats from Latino Immigrants in the United States

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Abstract: This study explored the independent and interaction effect of political identification and moral foundations on perceived threats from Latino immigrants. Two hundred and eight adult Americans were recruited from the Amazon Turk Platform, 187 of whom completed the survey questions. On average, conservative participants reported higher realistic perceived threats from Latino immigrants in comparison with liberals. Consistent with prior work, multivariate regression analyses indicate that liberals at the superficial level were less likely to perceive a threat from Latino immigrants compared with conservatives. However, when political orientation/identification interacted with moral foundation, a nuanced picture emerged that contradicts the claim that liberals are more likely to be tolerant of immigrants. Negative associations between perceived threats from Latino immigrants and moral values rooted in harm and justice were observed. Finally, interaction effects suggest that efforts that foster moral values rooted in harm and fairness may reduce the perception of threat, regardless of political orientation, from Latino immigrants in the US.

Keywords: Political Identification, Moral Foundations, Perceived Threats, Latino Immigrants, Intergroup Theory

Introduction

The majority of the 42 million immigrants estimated to be resident in the United States are Latinos/Latina (Budiman 2017). The higher growth rate of Latino immigrants makes them more vulnerable to anti-immigrant sentiments. For many Americans, Latino immigrants are threats to jobs, as well as to the culture and values that constitute the American dream (Chavez 2008; Huntington 2004). In 2018, there was a 21 percent increase in anti-Latino victims (Brooks 2019). People's threat perceptions of a group, regardless of whether or not such perceptions are accurate (Stephan, Ybarra, and Morrison 2009), have been shown to reinforce stereotypes (Quist and Resendez 2002), increase political intolerance (Skitka, Bauman, and Mullen 2004), and induce aggressive behaviors (Cadinu and Reggiori 2002; Maass et al. 2003). Therefore, to create an enabling context for immigrants (Latino immigrants, in particular, given the current US context) to adjust well and to thrive as human beings, it is important to improve our understanding of the factors that contribute to intergroup threat perception.

Threat perception is central to understanding intergroup conflicts. Recent research on the relationship between threat perception and discrimination has found that people's threat perception of immigrants can justify and legitimize discriminatory policies and practices against immigrants (Pereira, Vala, and Costa-Lopes 2010). Justification can occur through legitimizing myth, where existing social hierarchies that promote unequal treatments and injustices are strengthened (Sidanius and Pratto 1999). Although previous research has explored justifying factors that contribute to prejudice (Allport 1954; Crandall and Eshleman 2003; Rutland and Brown 2001), more research is needed on the factors that contribute to threat perception from Latino immigrants, especially in social work, to address oppression in an increasingly diverse society within which

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Note: The data were drawn from work done by Dr. Wei before she joined Amazon.

social workers practice. The present study applies intergroup theory to gain insights into how perception of threat from Latino immigrants can increase to justify discriminatory practices toward this group and factors that can mitigate such threat perception in the US.

Intergroup threat theory is a social psychological theory that looks at people's perception of threats (Stephan and Renfro 2002; Stephan, Ybarra, and Bachman 1999). In its most recent version, Stephan, Ybarra, and Morrison (2009) suggested that intergroup threats consist of realistic and symbolic group threats. Realistic group threats are threats to a group's power, resources, and general welfare (e.g., jobs, educational opportunities, and social welfare benefits). Symbolic group threats are threats to a group's religion, values, belief system, ideology, philosophy, morality, or worldview (e.g., patriarchal authority, individualistic versus collectivist orientation to life, Christianity versus Muslim, and racist versus antiracist ideology). Previous research has shown that people's realistic threat mediates the relationship between prejudice and opposition to immigration and that symbolic threat perception mediates the relationship between prejudice and opposition to naturalization (Pereira, Vala, and Costa-Lopes 2010). For example, symbolic threat perception mediated the relationship between infra-humanization of Turkish people, a tendency to perceive Turkish people as being somewhat less human, and the objection to include Turkey in the European Union (Pereira, Vala, and Leyens 2009). The present study extends previous studies by examining justifying factors that can contribute to realistic and symbolic group threats from Latino immigrants among individuals who politically identify as liberal and conservative.

Literature Review

Research on factors that contribute to intergroup threat perception has focused primarily on people's group identity, their levels of contact with, and knowledge about a group. People who have low levels of contact with and knowledge about an out-group were more susceptible to perceiving threat from out-group members (Corenblum and Stephan 2001; Costarelli 2005; Tropp and Pettigrew 2004). Previous studies also found that people who consider group identity as important to their self-definition (e.g., collectivists) were more likely to perceive an out-group as threatening compared with people who do not consider group identity as important to their self-definition (e.g., individualists: Riek, Mania, and Gaertner 2006; Stephan and Renfro 2002).

Political Identification and Intergroup Threat

Politically, individuals who seek membership of a given political group may use it as a legitimate avenue to express their prejudicial attitudes toward others they view as out-group members (Bassett et al. 2015; Effron and Knowles 2015). However, it is debatable whether people identify with certain political ideological beliefs to express their individual biases or are influenced by the norms of a political group to develop stereotypical attitudes toward out-group members. A person's identification with group norms, and continuous engagement with such norms, provide a sense of self-efficacy and control over perceived powerlessness at the individual level, which in turn reinforces identification with and commitment to in-group members and their social orientation (Bassett et al. 2015; Kesebir and Pyszczynski 2011). Thus, liberal or conservative groups' norms may foster mutually reinforcing processes and practices that provide legitimate ground for group members to express prejudicial views and subsequently, discriminatory practices toward out-group members.

Stephan, Ybarra, and Morrison (2009) have suggested the need to consider social dominance orientation (SDO) and right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) as antecedents to intergroup threat perceptions. RWA promotes belief systems and attitudes that demand absolute obedience or submission to authority (Fromm 1941; Maslow 1943; McClosky 1958; Siegel 1956). SDO emphasizes the role of individual preference for group-based hierarchy and in-

group dominance or superiority (Pratto et al. 1994). Previous prejudice research has shown that RWA and SDO were critical belief systems to understand individual-level factors in prejudice (e.g., Asbrock et al. 2012; Cohrs and Stelzl 2010; Hodson and Esses 2005; Imhoff and Recker 2012; Van Assche et al. 2014; Zakrisson 2005).

These findings suggest that the social and political beliefs of individuals in a society may be delineated along attitudinal dimensions of RWA and SDO ideological beliefs (Hadarics and Kende 2017). Each of these dimensions has distinct motivational forces that differentially influence people's prejudicial attitudes and intergroup relations (Duckitt and Sibley 2010; Hadarics and Kende 2017). The RWA prominently focuses on the need to establish and maintain order, security, and stability in ways that identify with conservatism. Individuals and social structures influenced by this ideology demand strict adherence and submission to conventional norms and are hostile toward out-group members perceived to be unconventional (Graham et al. 2012; Hadarics and Kende 2017). The SDO belief systems and orientation stress on the individual's ability to question and influence some changes within the existing hierarchy. Individuals oriented to the SDO are motivated by the desire to seize and maintain power within the existing structure that supports hierarchical arrangement but are somewhat more open to intergroup relations (Hadarics and Kende 2017). Linking both the RWA and the SDO beliefs to the perception of threat proposition, we speculate that while conservative ideology has been linked primarily to prejudiced attitudes, liberal ideology may also contribute to prejudice and intergroup threats when their in-group dominance becomes salient.

In-group connection as either liberal or conservative serves to justify perception of threat and subsequent actions that may contradict or violate the human rights of others in the context of threat (Crawford 2017; Stollberg, Fritsche, and Jonas 2017). However, threat to personal control, and the need to achieve psychological equanimity or homeostasis, may intensify individuals' motivation to identify as in-group members. Such identification promotes the engagement of the social self within group norms to justify discrimination or dehumanization of out-group members (Bassett et al. 2015; Stollberg, Fritsche, and Jonas 2017). This mechanism is psychologically posited to engender collective action in the context of perceived threat to individuals' effectiveness and autonomy as agentic beings (Stollberg, Fritsche, and Jonas 2017).

Research examining the relationship between political identification and people's prejudices has suggested that people who self-identify as conservatives are more likely to express prejudices toward immigrants compared with those who self-identify as liberals (Caricati, Mancini, and Marletta 2017; Chambers, Schlenker, and Collisson 2013; Kugler, Jost, and Noorbaloochi 2014). There has also been evidence suggesting that the endorsement of conservative identity can influence a belief system that emphasizes social dominance, which in turn can justify people's prejudices toward immigrants as well as minority groups (Bobo 1997; Kinder and Sears 1981; Sidanius, Pratto, and Bobo 1996). The link between conservative identity and SDO has been found in conservative political rhetoric; for example, conservative rhetoric is often accompanied by the emphasis of dangerous and competitive worldviews (Lakoff 1997). While previous studies have primarily suggested a positive relationship between conservative identity and prejudice toward immigrants through perception of threat, recent research has found that people who self-identify as liberals can also develop prejudices toward immigrants (Jost et al. 2017; Van de Vyver et al. 2016). Thus, regardless of political orientation, individuals may resist change and accept the oppression of others they consider as outsiders under conditions of threat. We speculate that although on the superficial level individuals who identify with liberal ideological orientations may be more tolerant and accepting of Latino immigrants, they may resist and be less tolerant of them under conditions that they perceive may threaten their social position in the stratified capitalist system.

Moral Foundations and Intergroup Threat Perception

Intergroup threat perceptions can also arise from people's belief in the moral rightness of the systems of values within a group they identify with (Stephan, Ybarra, and Bachman 1999). Moral foundation theory posits five fundamental moral-relevant belief systems underlying people's ideological differences and preferences of social groups: care, fairness, in-group, authority, and purity (Graham, Haidt, and Nosek 2009; Graham et al. 2012). Among these moral foundations, care leads people to concern about the suffering of the others. Fairness makes people sensitive to issues of equality and justice. In-group (or loyalty) leads people to be concerned about the threat to the in-group's well-being and cohesion. Authority makes people sensitive to the group's hierarchy and dominance. Purity (or sanctity) often relates to the people's emotions of disgust.

Research examining the relationship between moral foundations and intergroup threat perceptions seems to follow a similar pattern between political identification and intergroup threat perception, with care and justice moral foundations predicting lower levels of intergroup threat perceptions and in-group, authority, and purity foundations predicting higher levels of intergroup threat perceptions. Indeed, prejudice research has shown that the endorsement of care and justice as moral foundations predicted less prejudice toward Muslims, and both legal and undocumented immigrants among American participants (Hadarics and Kende 2017; Kugler, Jost, and Noorbaloochi 2014). Several of these previous works also found that the endorsement of in-group, authority, and purity moral foundations predicted more prejudice toward these groups among American participants (Koleva et al. 2012; Kugler, Jost, and Noorbaloochi 2014; Van de Vyver et al. 2016). These findings underscore the importance of the moral domains in understanding and explaining individual perceived threats from others considered as out-group members. Whereas moral values are fundamental to our understanding of intergroup threats, symbolic threat perception, in particular (Leach, Bilali, and Pagliaro 2013), the endorsement of certain moral domains, could have differential impacts on prejudice against immigrants (Hadarics and Kende 2017; Kugler, Jost, and Noorbaloochi 2014).

Overall, the literature suggests that individuals' identification with a given moral foundation in the United States can help explain their perceptions of intergroup threat from others considered outsiders. Viewed from the perspective of liberal and conservative political orientation, however, the findings are mixed. On the one hand, there is evidence that individuals who identify with conservatives are more likely to perceive a higher level of threat from out-group individuals (e.g., immigrants) compared with those who identify with liberals. On the other hand, under certain conditions, individuals with liberal political orientation may perceive a higher threat against out-group members. In addition, individuals' moral foundations have also been associated with their perceptions of threat from out-group members, although this relationship varies, with individuals endorsing care and fairness as their moral foundation less likely to perceive threat from out-group members compared with those with preference for in-group, authority, and purity moral foundations.

Given the available findings relating to why certain individuals may perceive threats from out-group members, research is limited in our understanding of the constellation of factors that help us to broadly understand intergroup threat perceptions from immigrants. For example, what is the relationship between political identification and moral foundation in the discourse around intergroup threat? It is possible that interaction between political identification and moral foundations can provide a better picture of the differential effects of moral foundations on intergroup threat. Conservatives have been associated with morality grounded in respect for authority, strong loyalty to family and country, and working hard to keep the self-pure and good. Conversely, liberals demonstrate strong commitments to justice, equality, fairness, and care for the suffering of others (Graham et al. 2012). In a series of studies examining liberals

and conservatives' moral foundations in five domains of moral foundations—harm, fairness, in-group, authority, and purity—Graham, Haidt, and Nosek et al. (2009) observed that liberals consistently endorsed harm and fairness, whereas conservatives were more even across the five moral foundations. These findings contradict other research showing that conservatives are more binding on in-group values and less tolerant of out-group norms (Graham et al. 2012).

Overall, previous studies have provided mixed evidence for the relationship between people's political identification and perception of threat from, and prejudice toward, out-group members such as immigrants. Some studies suggest that individuals who identify with conservative are more likely to develop prejudice toward immigrants, whereas others suggest that prejudice development is linked to both conservative and liberal ideologies (Caricati, Mancini, and Marletta 2017; Chambers, Schlenker, and Collisson 2013). Given the different sets of moral foundations that liberals and conservatives rely on (Graham, Haidt, and Nosek 2009), this mixed evidence might be attributable to the lack of understanding of the interaction effect of political identification and moral foundations on intergroup threat perception. In the present study, we extend the earlier works by examining the interaction between moral foundations and political orientation, two important factors in understanding intergroup threat, to gain insight into some of the factors that influence the perception of threat from Latino immigrants in the US. Through this knowledge, social workers can identify practices and actions that can be engaged in to help reduce perception of threat from Latino immigrants and, in turn, reduce prejudice and discriminatory practices against this population in the US. We hypothesized that: (1) there were main effects of people's political identification and moral foundations on intergroup threat perception, respectively, and (2) there was an interaction effect of people's political identification and moral foundations on intergroup threat perception.

Method

Participants

Two hundred and eight adult Americans were recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turks (AMT) for the present study. Of the recruited sample, 187 participants completed the survey. The majority of the participants self-identified as white/Caucasian American (81%). The rest described themselves as either Asian or African American (19%). In addition, there were slightly more males (54%) than females (46%). The AMT used for online recruitment in 2016 is a crowdsourcing web service that provides a workforce that can perform specific tasks, including, but not limited to, tasks that support human subject research (Sheehan 2018). We chose AMT as a recruitment platform because the US workers' demographics on the platform are more similar to the US population as a whole than the demographics of subjects who were recruited in traditional university subject pools (Caricati, Mancini, and Marletta 2017; Chambers, Schlenker, and Collisson 2013; Kugler, Jost, and Noorbaloochi 2014; Van de Vyver et al. 2016). Moreover, evidence has consistently shown AMT as a valid and reliable data source (Sheehan 2018). Participants were compensated with \$2 at the completion of the experiment. All participants gave their consent prior to their participation in the study, which received approval from an institutional review board. Power analysis for multiple regression with ten predictors was conducted in G* power (Faul et al. 2007) to determine a sufficient sample size using an α of 0.05, a power of 0.8, and a small effect size ($f_2 = 0.15$). Based on the aforementioned assumptions, the desired sample size is 118.

Measurement

Perceived threat is the dependent variable in this study. We measured the participants' perceived realistic threat (seven items) and symbolic threat (five items) from Latino immigrants. The scale used to measure these two constructs is an adapted version developed by Stephan, Ybarra, and Bachman (1999). We asked the participants to choose the extent to which they agreed with particular statements, for example, "Latino immigrants are not displacing American workers from their jobs" (1 = Strongly agree, 6 = Strongly disagree). Bahns (2017) reported that the modified perceived realistic threats had a Cronbach's α of 0.83 and that the perceived symbolic threats scale had a Cronbach's α of 0.84. We used the mean scores in our final data analysis, with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived threat from Latino immigrants.

Moral foundation is an independent variable in this study. We used the moral relevance scale developed by Graham, Haidt, and Nosek (2009). This scale, developed on the basis of moral foundation theory, assesses participants' moral thinking on five dimensions: harm, fairness, in-group, authority, and purity. In this study, we asked participants to first read, "When you decide whether something is right or wrong, to what extent are the following considerations relevant to your thinking?" Then, participants were asked to rate 15 moral relevance items on a 6-point scale (0 = not relevant at all; 5 = extremely relevant). Kugler, Jost, and Noorbaloochi (2014) reported subscale reliabilities of each moral foundation: harm ($\alpha = 0.52$), fairness ($\alpha = 0.58$), in-group ($\alpha = 0.70$), authority ($\alpha = 0.73$), and purity ($\alpha = 0.80$). The mean score was used in the final analysis, with a higher score indicating high moral relevancy.

Political identification, an independent variable, was assessed using the scale developed by Graham, Haidt, and Nosek (2009). We asked participants to answer the following question: "Please indicate your political identification. I am...." The response options were 7-point scale anchored by strongly liberal to strongly conservative, with moderate at the midpoint. We categorized participants' political identification on the basis of their response to the questions. Participants were categorized into the liberal group if they self-reported as Strongly Liberal, Moderately Liberal, and Slightly Liberal. Participants were categorized into the conservative group if they self-reported as Slightly Conservative, Moderately Conservative, Strongly Conservative, and Libertarian. They were categorized into neutral group if they self-reported as Moderate. Because the US is predominantly liberal or conservative, we focused our analyses on these variables.

Control variables in this study were participants' age, gender, race, income, political identification, psychological distress, and the number of times news is checked per week. *Age* was measured by the item "What is your age?" The item *What is your gender?* measured gender (1 = Male, 2 = Female, and 3 = Other). The item *What is your race?* measured race. (1 = White / Caucasian, 2 = African American, 3 = Hispanic, 4 = Asian, 5 = Native American, 6 = Pacific Islander, 7 = Other). The item *What is your annual income range?* measured income (1 = below \$20,000; 9 = \$90,000 or more).

Results

The results revealed that 34 percent of the participants identified themselves as conservatives, 49 percent as liberals, and 17 percent as neutral. On average, conservative participants reported higher realistic perceived threats from Latino immigrants [M (SD) = 4.22 (1.04)] in comparison with liberal [M (SD) = 2.83 (0.96)] and neutral participants [M (SD) = 3.54 (1.09)]. Similarly, conservative participants also reported higher symbolic perceived threats from Latino immigrants [M (SD) = 3.91 (0.63)] in comparison with liberal [M (SD) = 3.18 (0.7)] and neutral participants [M (SD) = 3.52 (0.80)].

In addition, we found different patterns of moral foundations among conservative, liberal, and neutral groups. Participants in the conservative group reported lower levels of harm and fairness [M_{harm} (SD_{harm}) = 4.41 (0.93); M_{fairness} (SD_{fairness}) = 3.93 (0.74)] than participants in the liberal [M_{harm} (SD_{harm}) = 4.87 (0.78); M_{fairness} (SD_{fairness}) = 4.22 (0.64)] and neutral [M_{harm} (SD_{harm}) = 4.58 (0.87); M_{fairness} (SD_{fairness}) = 4.13 (0.71)] groups. However, the pattern of levels of in-group, authority, and purity is in the opposite direction. The conservative group reported higher levels of in-group, authority, and purity [$M_{\text{in-group}}$ ($SD_{\text{in-group}}$) = 3.77 (0.93); $M_{\text{authority}}$ ($SD_{\text{authority}}$) = 4.15 (3.35); M_{purity} (SD_{purity}) = 3.86 (1.27)] than participants in the liberal group [$M_{\text{in-group}}$ ($SD_{\text{in-group}}$) = 3.08 (0.99); $M_{\text{in-group}}$ ($SD_{\text{in-group}}$) = 3.25 (1.12); Purity: M (SD) = 2.66 (1.44)] and in neutral group [$M_{\text{in-group}}$ ($SD_{\text{in-group}}$) = 3.55 (0.98); $M_{\text{in-group}}$ ($SD_{\text{in-group}}$) = 3.76 (1.07); M_{purity} (SD_{purity}) = 3.49 (1.09)].

Stepwise multivariate analysis was used to further examine the main and interaction effects of participants' moral foundation and political identification on their perceived threat from Latino immigrants. Table 1 presents regression models predicting perceived realistic threat from Latino immigrants. All models controlled for participants' income, gender, age, and race. In the baseline model, we used different levels of political identification to predict perceived realistic threat from Latino immigrants. The baseline model showed that compared with liberals, conservatives predicted higher levels of perceived realistic threat from Latino immigrants [β (SE) = 0.780 (0.123)***]. Participants who self-identified as neutral were also associated with higher levels of perceived realistic threat from Latino immigrants [β (SE) = 0.359 (0.147)***] than participants self-identified as liberal.

From models 1–5, we added each dimension of moral foundations in the sequence of harm, fairness, in-group, authority, and purity and examined the main and interaction effects of political identification and moral foundation variables in predicting perceived threat from Latino immigrants. Models 1 and 2 showed that the association between political identification and perceived threat (both realistic and symbolic) was insignificant after adding harm and fairness. However, while harm had a main effect on symbolic threat, fairness was associated with both realistic and symbolic threats. The interaction between fairness and political ideology/orientation showed that higher levels of fairness predicted lower levels of perceived realistic threat from Latino immigrants [β (SE) = -0.343 (0.169)*]. Model 3 showed a significant interaction effect between in-group and political identification in predicting perceived realistic threat from Latino immigrants [β (SE) = -0.297 (0.093)***]. Figure 1(a) shows the slopes of the association between in-group and perceived realistic threat for the liberal and the conservative groups. Among liberal participants, higher levels of in-group were associated with higher levels of perceived realistic threat from Latino immigrants, whereas among conservative participants, higher levels of in-group were associated with lower levels of perceived realistic threat from Latino immigrants. In model 4, we found a significant main effect of authority in predicting perceived realistic threat from Latino immigrants [β (SE) = 0.535 (0.087)***]. Model 5 showed that there was a significant main effect of purity and a significant interaction effect between purity and political identification in predicting perceived realistic threat from Latino immigrants [β (SE) = -0.348 (0.118)***]. The slopes showed that purity was more strongly related to perceived realistic threat for liberal participants compared with those who identified as conservatives (see Figure 1(c)).

Table 1: Multivariate Regression Models Predicting Perceived Realistic Threat from Latino Immigrants

	Estimate (SE)					
	Baseline Model	Model 1: Harm	Model 2: Fairness	Model 3: In-group	Model 4: Authority	Model 5: Purity
Political identification (Liberal = 0; Conservative = 1)	0.78 (0.123)* **	1.001 (0.941)	0.099 (1.011)	3.003 (0.628)***	2.043 (0.578)***	2.19 (0.446)***
Political identification (Liberal = 0; Neutral = 1)	0.359 (0.147)* *	0.206 (1.215)	-1.313 (1.314)	1.334 (0.764)	1.38 (0.688)*	1.261 (0.623)*
Harm		-0.221 (0.143)				
Political identification X harm (Liberal = 0; Conservative = 1)		0.053 (0.199)				
Political identification X harm (Liberal = 0; Neutral = 1)		0.096 (0.257)				
Fairness			-0.343 (0.169)*			
Political identification X Fairness (Liberal = 0; Conservative = 1)			0.287 (0.243)			
Political identification X Fairness (Liberal = 0; Neutral = 1)			0.48 (0.312)			
In-group				0.431 (0.104)***		
Political identification X In-group (Liberal = 0; Conservative = 1)				-0.521 (0.170)***		
Political identification X In-group (Liberal = 0; Neutral = 1)				-0.234 (0.213)		
Authority					0.535 (0.087)***	
Political identification X authority (Liberal = 0; Conservative = 1)					-0.28 (0.144) ⁺	
Political identification X authority (Liberal = 0; Neutral = 1)					-0.249 (0.181)	
Purity						0.379 (0.071)***
Political identification X Purity (Liberal = 0; Conservative = 1)						-0.348 (0.118)**
Political identification X Purity (Liberal = 0; Neutral = 1)						-0.254 (0.176)
Income	-0.016 (0.022)	0.019 (0.032)	0.022 (0.032)	0.011 (0.031)	-0.007 (0.029)	0.025 (0.03)

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KYERE AND WEI: PERCEIVING THREAT FROM LATINO IMMIGRANTS IN US

	<i>Baseline Model</i>	<i>Model 1: Harm</i>	<i>Model 2: Fairness</i>	<i>Model 3: In-group</i>	<i>Model 4: Authority</i>	<i>Model 5: Purity</i>
Gender	-0.072 (0.108)	0.168 (0.169)	0.068 (0.159)	0.091 (0.154)	0.013 (0.144)	-0.06 (0.154)
Age	-0.049 (0.047)	0.02 (0.071)	0.007 (0.07)	0.01 (0.067)	-0.032 (0.063)	-0.007 (0.065)
Race	0.081 (0.134)	-0.237 (0.196)	-0.242 (0.196)	-0.272 (0.189)	-0.362 (0.178)	-0.394 (0.187)*
<i>R</i>	0.204	0.302	0.305	0.355	0.433	0.387
<i>F</i>	6.547	7.609	7.724	9.695	13.431	11.133

Note: Liberal = 0; Conservative = 1; *P* value for Political identification X authority is 0.05

Source: Kyere and Wei

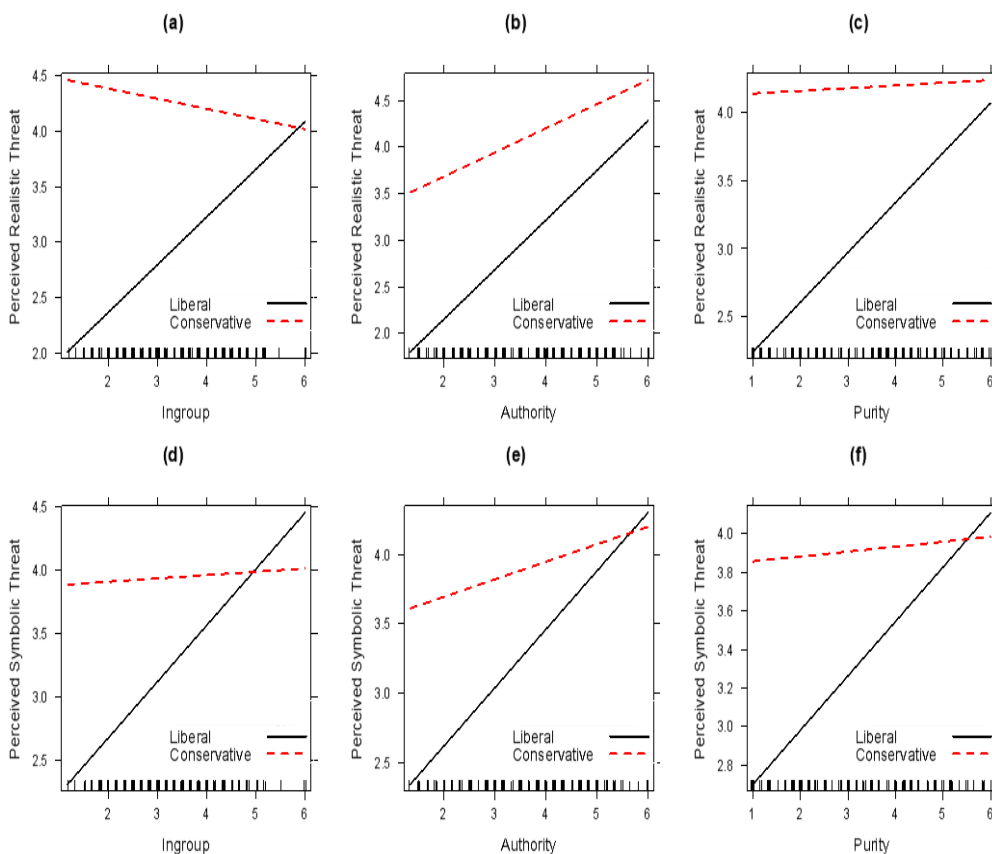


Figure 1: Interaction Effect of Political Identification and Moral Foundations on Perceived Threat from Latino Immigrants

Source: Kyere and Wei

We applied the same analytic approach to exploring participants’ political identification and moral foundations on perceived symbolic threats from Latino immigrants. Because of space constraints, we did not include the table on the model showing the main and interactive effects of political identification and moral foundations on symbolic threat, but it is available on request. The baseline model showed that compared with liberal orientation, conservatives predicted higher levels of perceived symbolic threat from Latino immigrants [β (SE) = -0.780 (0.123)***]. After

adding harm into the model, the relationship between political identification and perceived symbolic threat from Latino immigrants became insignificant. The interaction between harm and political identification showed that higher levels of harm predicted lower levels of perceived symbolic threat [β (SE) = -0.221 (0.097)*]. Furthermore, a similar pattern was found when fairness was added into the model. We found that higher levels of fairness predicted lower levels of perceived symbolic threat from Latino immigrants [β (SE) = -0.306 (0.114)*]. Next, a significant main effect of in-group [β (SE) = 0.443 (0.066)***] and a significant interaction effect between in-group and political identification/orientation [β (SE) = -0.415 (0.093)***] in predicting perceived symbolic threat from Latino immigrants was found (see Figure 1(d)). The slopes showed that there is a significant positive association between in-group and perceived symbolic threat from Latino immigrants, but in-group was strongly related to perceived symbolic threat for liberal participants. We also found a significant main effect of authority [β (SE) = 0.422 (0.056)*] and a significant interaction effect between authority and political orientation [β (SE) = -0.297 (0.093)*] on perceived symbolic threat from Latino immigrants (see Figure 1(b)). The slopes showed that authority was more strongly related to perceived symbolic threat among liberal than among conservative participants. Finally, a significant main effect and interaction effect between purity and political orientation was observed [β (SE) = 0.288 (0.047)***, β (SE) = -0.258 (0.077)*, respectively]. Figure 1(f) shows the slopes of the association between purity and perceived symbolic threat for the liberal and conservative groups. Purity related strongly to perceived symbolic threat for the liberal participants.

Discussion

In this study, we examined the main and interaction effects of political identification/orientation and moral foundations on perceived realistic and symbolic threat from Latino immigrants in the US. Because we were interested in liberal and conservative political identification, we did not focus on those who identified as neutral in this part of the discussion. In general, the findings confirmed our hypotheses. Consistent with prior work, liberals at the superficial level were associated with lower levels of threat from out-group members compared with conservatives (Graham et al. 2012). However, when political orientation/identification interacted with moral foundation, a nuanced picture that contradicts the claim that liberals are more likely to be tolerant of immigrants is presented. As observed, the addition of harm and fairness altered the significant relationship between political identification and perceived threats—realistic and symbolic threats—whereby conservatives who tend to perceive a higher level of threat from Latino immigrants changed to insignificant.

There was a main effect of harm on perceived symbolic threat, suggesting that participants, regardless of political orientation/identification, who highly endorse the concern for harm morally, were less likely to perceive symbolic threats from Latino immigrants. Although fairness behaved in a similar fashion as harm, the main effect of fairness was, unlike harm, observed on both types of threats. Individuals who strongly endorsed fairness as their moral foundation were less likely to perceive threats from Latino immigrants beyond their political identification. Additionally, in-group had a main effect on perceived realistic and symbolic threats, suggesting that higher levels of in-group were positively associated with perceived threats from Latino immigrants. This finding suggests that beyond political orientation, the more individuals in US society endorse in-group norms as their moral foundation, the more likely they may perceive Latino immigrants to be threatening. The significant interaction observed between in-group and political identification in predicting both threats further illuminates this finding. Inspection of Figure 1(a) and (d), explaining the significant interaction term between political identification and in-group, suggests that liberals who hold strong in-group norms were more likely to view Latino immigrants to be threatening. This is somewhat surprising and contradicts earlier findings about liberals, who seem to be more tolerant of

immigrants (Graham, Haidt, and Nosek 2009). However, viewing this finding from the perspective of perceived realistic threat (Stephan, Ybarra, and Bachman 1999) and the moral inclusion/exclusion criteria (Passini and Morselli 2016), it may be justified. That is, a perceived threat from Latino immigrants along the lines of power, economics, and material well-being may raise concerns because Latino immigrants may not be within the inclusion criteria whereby their upward mobility in the stratified system is acceptable.

With respect to authority, the finding suggests that independent of political identification and sociodemographic background, authority positively predicted perceived threats from Latino immigrants. A strong endorsement of authority as a moral foundation was positively associated with a higher level of perceived threats from Latino immigrants. A significant interaction effect between political identification and authority in predicting perceived symbolic threat and a marginally significant interaction effect between authority and political identification in predicting realistic threat was observed (see Figure 1(b) and (e)). When viewed in the context of authority, whereas participants who identify as conservative may be trending toward a lower level of perceived threats from Latino immigrants, liberals may be trending toward a higher level of perceived threats from Latino immigrants. Moreover, the findings reveal both a significant main effect of purity and interaction between purity and political identification. These findings suggest that beyond political identification, and controlling for the effects of sociodemographic factors, among the participants in this study, those who highly esteem purity as a moral foundation are more likely to perceive threats from Latino immigrants. Further examination of the interaction terms reveals that liberals who highly endorse purity as a moral value tend to perceive a higher level of threats from Latino immigrants compared with conservatives (see Figure 1(c) and (f)).

Overall, the present study suggests that Americans who endorse Liberal political views may be less likely to perceive a high level of threat from Latino immigrants compared with those who endorse the conservative orientation. However, moral considerations may alter this relationship. The findings about the role of moral foundations in altering liberals' initial lower perception of threats from Latino immigrants confirm the proposition implied by the integrated theory on intergroup threat (Kesebir and Pyszczynski 2011). In-groups are so appealing because they validate, reinforce, and provide affirmation to the cultural frame of reference that may serve as a shield against the threat to one's political and economic power, psychical safety, and sense of stability within an established moral boundary that allows some stability (Passini and Morselli 2016; Stollberg, Fritsche, and Jonas 2017). Moral differences can therefore engender a threatening and hostile intergroup relationship. Conceivably, to the degree that Latino immigrants are stereotyped and viewed to be threatening to Americans' opportunity for upward mobility and moral foundations, both liberals and conservatives may perceive a higher level of threat from them. Such conditions of threat can increase the empathy gap (Kesebir and Pyszczynski 2011), which in turn can engender prejudice and discriminatory attitudes toward out-group members (in this case Latino immigrants). An important implication of the present study is that Americans in our study, regardless of political orientation, were less likely to perceive threats from Latino immigrants when they endorsed harm and fairness as their moral foundation. Thus, the opportunity to foster Americans' endorsement of the concerns for harm and fairness holds promise in reducing the perception of threat from Latino immigrants and, subsequently, prejudice and discriminatory practices toward this group in the US.

Limitations

The findings of this study need to be interpreted with caution in the light of certain limitations. First, the use of convenience sampling limits the ability to generalize our findings to the US population. The modest sample size in this study has limited power to detect small effect size. Further research may consider replicating the study results by increasing the sample size to increase the statistical power needed to have a stronger level of significance in the analyses. In addition, the self-report measures in this experiment may have introduced a response bias among the participants (Arnold and Feldman 1981; Podsakoff and Organ 1986) where participants underreport their threat perception of Latino immigrants. Lastly, the cross-sectional design of the present study may not determine the causal effect of moral foundation on threat perception. To improve the study design, future studies may consider quasi experiments' study design and repeated measure to examine the associations between the changes in people's moral foundations and their changes in perceived threats from Latino immigrants among people with different political orientations.

Conclusion

Despite these limitations, the findings of the study contribute to strengthening the existing literature on the associations among political orientation, moral foundation, and intergroup threat. It extends previous work by showing that in the United States, liberals on the superficial level appear to be more tolerant and accepting of Latino immigrants compared with conservatives. However, under conditions where moral values such as in-group, authority, and purity are salient, liberals may demonstrate a strong intolerance toward Latino immigrants, especially when they perceive the latter to be a threat to their realistic needs (e.g., jobs, welfare benefits, and political power) and symbolic needs (e.g., religion, and individualistic value). However, conscious efforts that can nurture and transmit ethical concerns related to care and harm, justice, and fairness may hold promise in reducing higher levels of perceived threat from Latino immigrants and subsequently reduce potential prejudice and discriminatory attitudes toward immigrants, regardless of political orientation.

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