Attitudes toward immigrant groups and the September 11 terrorist attacks

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Attitudes Toward Immigrant Groups and the September 11 Terrorist Attacks

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The current research examined prejudice and perceived threat toward Mexican and Arab immigrants/immigration along the U.S./Mexico border. Sample 1 (n = 84) was collected before September 11; attitudes toward Mexican immigrants were assessed. Sample 2 (n = 140) was collected one month after September 11 and Sample 3 (n = 180) was collected one year later; attitudes toward both Mexican and Arab immigrants were assessed. U.S. citizens completed a social attitudes survey assessing symbolic threat, perceived realistic threat, and prejudice. Individual differences, such as American identity and political orientation, were also measured. As predicted, in samples 2 and 3 Arab immigrant's engendered greater levels of symbolic threat and prejudice among participants compared to Mexican immigrants and immigration. Participants also reported greater perceived realistic threat from Mexican immigrants after September 11 than before. American identity was positively related to threat and prejudice with respect to both immigrant groups. The response patterns represent a nuanced response associated with the attacks. Findings are discussed in terms of the social implications for immigrants and immigration to the U.S.

There are various consequences commonly associated with the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the U.S., such as the large number of innocent civilian deaths and the tremendous economic impact. The psychological impact has also been tremendous, but also relatively undocumented. The resulting potential psy-

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chological effects run the gamut and include increased fear of death, nationalism, fear of plane travel, paranoia, and increased resilience (Fredrickson, Tugage, Waugh, & Larkin, 2003; Pyszczynski, Solomon & Greenberg 2002). The research we present investigates the effects of the September 11 attacks on prejudice related measures towards immigrants, specifically, prejudice towards Arab immigrants and Mexican immigrants. To do so, we utilized two types of broad social psychological models of prejudice to highlight how fear, anger, and broad threat can impact prejudice and stereotyping.

There are multiple goals of our research. The September 11 attacks influenced attitudes towards various immigrant groups. We attempt to document how people perceive Arab immigrants on important social psychological dimensions. At the same time, we attempt to document how attitudes towards Mexican immigrants might have changed in connection with the attacks. Those attitudes included perceived realistic threat, prejudice, and symbolic threat. An additional goal was to examine if Mexican immigrants are the victims of any misplaced anger. Finally, two additional measures—American identity and political orientation—were included in an attempt to place these findings within a larger political framework.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Intergroup Emotions Theory (Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000; Miller, Smith, & Mackie, 2004; Smith, 1993) contends that intergroup situations involve the application of the self as an interchangeable part of the group. When the group becomes salient, situations are appraised for their relevance to oneself and the group(s) to which one belongs. Potential questions one may ask him or herself include, "How do I appraise the situation" and "What are the implications of this situation for me?" Through such an appraisal process, relevant emotions are generated. For example, if the situation is appraised as threatening, the ensuing emotion might be fear or anger, which would be accompanied by the behavioral tendency of avoidance. The important point is that attitudes are often relatively well differentiated. One must go beyond merely positing more negative or more positive attitudes and start to identify how attitudes will change.

The type of threat predicts the type of emotional response. Integrated threat theory (Stephan, et al., 2002) provides the framework for asking differentiated questions and identifies multiple types of threats one might feel in distinct intergroup conflict situations. These threats include perceived realistic threat, cultural or symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, and stereotyping (or the threats associated with stereotyping). The threats most central to the current research are symbolic threat and realistic threat. Symbolic threat involves "perceived group differences in morals, values, standards, beliefs, and attitudes" (Stephan et al., p. 1243). Within an immigration setting, symbolic threat refers to the perceptions by citizens of a host

country that immigrants and immigration are a threat to the cultural fabric of the host country and that continued immigration will change the culture in undesirable ways. Distinct cultures provide opportunities for individuals to perceive themselves as persons of value in a world of meaning (Pyszczynski, et al., 2002). One common complaint regarding immigrants, however, is that immigrants are different (e.g., having different values, languages, and norms) and are trying to change the local culture and norms (Zárate, Garcia, Garza, & Hitlan, 2004). Therefore, immigrants pose a symbolic threat regarding "the American way of life." The September 11 terrorist attacks can be seen as such a symbolic threat, as it was symbols of American culture that were attacked (the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon).

Perceived realistic threat has long been considered a major reason for intergroup conflict (Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998; Esses, Davidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001; Jackson & Esses, 2000; Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961). Realistic group conflict theory (Levine & Campbell, 1972; Sherif, 1966) contends that intergroup hostility results from perceived conflict between "in-group" and "out-group" members. Moreover, the instrumental model of group conflict contends that perceived or real competition for finite resources serves to increase intergroup competition and that such competition is an important component of intergroup attitudes and behavior (Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001; Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998). Thus, realistic threat concerns the perceived threat that citizens of a host country (i.e., native citizens) feel when immigrants are thought to compete for scarce economic resources and pose threats to the welfare of native citizens (e.g., the perception that Mexican immigration has increased the tax burden on Americans). As groups compete for limited resources, competition between groups emerges. Individuals are no longer perceived as individuals but as group members, often leading to ingroup favoritism, or a bias toward the ingroup, and outgroup derogation which can manifest itself in the form of prejudice toward the outgroup (Brewer, 2001; Judd & Park, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Perceived realistic threat can result not only from perceived physical competition but can also be elicited by the perception that one or one's group is in competition for scarce resources (e.g., money). Given the economic impact caused by the September 11 attacks, as well as the current political concern regarding immigrants in the U.S., perceived realistic threat is a viable response.

The current research measured prejudice toward two immigrant populations: Mexican and Arab immigrants. Prejudice, as measured here (Stephan et al., 2002) is defined as an emotional reaction to a group. This measure of prejudice is primarily an affectively-based measure (as compared to cognitively-based) and assesses one's emotional reactions toward different immigrant groups. The associated emotions include both negative (e.g., anger, disgust) and positive (e.g., trust, warmth) emotional reactions.

The theories presented make clear that attitudes towards various groups are well differentiated. Groups that threaten the cultural fabric of a country might provoke symbolic threat, whereas large immigrant populations, for instance, might provoke fears of economic competition. This type of reasoning drove the development of hypotheses regarding differentiated attitudes towards Mexican and Arab immigrants after September 11.

PERCEPTIONS OF SEPTEMBER 11 AND HYPOTHESES

Although there are no firm explanations for the motives for the September 11 attacks, one commonly cited explanation for the attacks via media portrayals is that the attacks were on the American way of life. The attacks caused tremendous economic problems, but the intent appears to be focused on symbols of American culture. Various attribution models make clear that people most often respond to the perceived motives for the behaviors rather than the outcomes of the behaviors *per se* (Heider, 1958; Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1967, 1973). As such, we predict that for Arab immigrants, U.S. citizens will perceive greater symbolic threat than perceived realistic threat. In addition, the September 11 attacks resulted in some arguably horrific outcomes with thousands killed and many more wounded. We argue that the tremendous pain and anguish caused by the events would elicit more negative emotional reactions towards the group thought to be responsible. This should be reflected in higher prejudice ratings towards Arab immigrants.

In contrast, Mexican immigrants are often portrayed in media reports as taking jobs and other economic resources that would have otherwise gone to "Americans." Economic threat is only salient if the group is large enough to possibly impact the economic welfare of the host country. The perception that accompanies such portrayals is that Mexican immigrants are siphoning money and services from the U.S. and represent a burden to finite resources. As a result, we further predict that when compared to Arab immigrants, Mexican immigrants will be perceived as representing a greater realistic threat to the American economy.

We also explored the role of individual differences to help further understand attitudes prior to and following the September 11 attacks. First, we predicted that the extent to which an individual identifies with being an American would be related to perceived threat and prejudice directed towards immigrant groups. Based on previous research investigating the relation between heightened nationalism and less tolerance for diversity (Li & Brewer, 2004) and the relation between one's national identity, intergroup perceptions and potential for intergroup conflict (Eriksen, 2001; Esses & Jackson, 2000), we expected that a stronger American National Identity would predict greater perceived realistic and symbolic threat. In addition, we also explored the role of political party affiliation as an index of political

conservatism and its association with threat and prejudice. Previous research indicates that political conservatism is related to psychological insecurity and negative language attitudes (Byrnes, Kiger, & Manning, 1996), low self concept, materialism, intolerance for ambiguity, traditional family ideology, and authoritarianism (Hicks, 1974) and various dimensions of bigotry (Maranell, 1967). Finally, current political discourse often identifies a perceived difference in reaction to the terrorist attacks, but without empirical study, this is just anecdotal evidence. Based on this research, we predicted a positive relation to emerge between political conservatism and perceived threat and prejudice.

The present research takes advantage of data collected before September 11 to investigate the effects of the attacks on attitudes towards immigrants. The data collected before September 11 included multiple distinct measures of intergroup attitudes regarding Mexican immigrants and Mexican immigration. New data regarding Mexican immigration and Arab immigration were collected shortly after the September 11 attacks, and again a year later to investigate the longer-term effects of those attacks. Because the attacks were unforeseen, any conclusions are by definition posthoc. Nevertheless, the results provide some understanding of how the attacks influenced attitudes toward immigrant groups. Those comparison data also provide one way to help understand how Arab immigrants were perceived following the attacks. This comparison is important given that the plethora of media accounts describing the post September 11 treatment of Arab-Americans living in the U.S. suggest that attitudes toward immigrants from the Middle-East or Arab countries were impacted by the attacks.

Data used as the pre-September 11 comparison were collected in April 2001 as part of another study of U.S. citizens living in El Paso, Texas. Because of its location directly on the U.S./Mexican border and the opportunity for frequent contact between U.S. citizens and Mexican Nationals, attitudes towards immigrants and immigration are no doubt more crystallized than such attitudes in other areas of the country (e.g., Hitlan, 2002). In addition, the University of Texas at El Paso is approximately 72% Mexican-American, 11% Mexican National, and most of the other students are Anglo. Thus, students also have plenty of opportunity for intergroup interaction. Regarding local attitudes, previous research with these populations shows that Mexican-Americans often have comparatively negative attitudes towards Mexican Nationals (Zárate, Garcia, Garza, & Hitlan, 2004; Zárate & Garza, 2002). Thus, Mexican Nationals are clearly considered an out-group by both Mexican-American and White-American participants. Finally, UTEP graduates a large number of first-generation college students, so the economic background is varied. At the same time, the primarily Mexican-American participant sample provides us with a unique perspective from an ethnic minority sample. Because of the unique and crystallized attitude set, any change from pre-September 11 attitudes to post-September 11 attitudes toward Mexican immigrants is considered primarily due to the September 11 attacks.

Whenever a real-life event is used as a manipulation, it is difficult to infer true causation. Participants were recruited in the same fashion at all stages, but because participants were not randomly assigned to the pre- and post-September 11 conditions, one cannot be sure the groups are truly equivalent. In addition, other unknown events that occurred between the collection stages might have also influenced the outcomes. Nevertheless, we believe that the impacts the attacks had on world politics warrants investigation and that the pre-September 11 data allow for a number of relevant comparisons. Do current attitudes toward Mexican immigrants differ from those reported before September 11? How do attitudes regarding Arab immigrants differ from attitudes toward Mexican immigrants? Do relevant social psychological constructs predict these attitudes? Here, we provide some information on those basic questions.

METHOD

Participants

The data for this study were collected from three samples over the course of one year. All participants were undergraduate students from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), a mid-sized southwestern university (approximately 19,300 students) that borders the city of Juarez, Mexico. By virtue of its location along the U.S./Mexico border, the demographic make-up of UTEP is similar to that of its border location, with Hispanics making up approximately 72% of all students enrolled, followed by Caucasian non-Hispanic students (12%), international students (11%), African-Americans (3%), Asian-Americans and other ethnicities (2%). The overwhelming majority of students reside in either El Paso County (85%) or Mexico (9%).

Across all three samples, participants were recruited from lower-level psychology courses and received partial extra course credit for their participation. Sample 1 included 84 participants, 38 men and 46 women, ranging in age from 16 to 60. 65.5% were between 16–20 years old, 16.7% between 21–25 years old, and the remainder over 26. Participants younger than 18 years old were required to obtain permission from a parent or guardian prior to participating. The majority of participants were Latino (n = 58), followed by Caucasian non-Hispanic (n = 10), Latino/Euro-American (n = 5), African-American (n = 2), and others (n = 9). Two participants were citizens of Mexico and were excluded from further analyses, resulting in a total sample of 82 participants.

Sample 2 included 140 participants, 40 males and 100 females. Participants ranged in age from 18-64 (Mean = 19.65, SD = 4.76). Again, the majority of participants were Latino (n = 67), followed by Caucasian non-Hispanic (n = 31), Native-American (n = 12), Arabic/Islamic (n = 6), Latino/Euro-American (n = 6),

and others ($n = 18$). The majority (94.3%) were born in the United States and all reported being U.S. citizens.

Sample 3 included 180 participants, 65 males and 115 females. Participants ranged in age from 18-41 (Mean = 20.26, SD = 3.69). The majority were Latino ($n = 117$), followed by Caucasian non-Hispanic ($n = 42$), Latino/Euro-American ($n = 8$), Native-American ($n = 4$), Arabic/Islamic ($n = 2$), and others ($n = 7$).

Procedure and Materials

Across all time periods of data collection, participants were informed that the researchers were interested in examining various social issues. Participants completed a "Social Issues" questionnaire packet in groups ranging from 2-8 participants. The questionnaire, originally developed by Stephan et al. (1998) for Asian immigrants, contained several self-report scales measuring participant demographics, symbolic threat, realistic threat, and prejudicial attitudes toward Mexican immigrants (Times 1–3) and toward Arab immigrants (Times 2–3; cf. Zarate, et al., 2004; Hitlan, Kelly, Schepman, Schneider, & Zarate, 2006). In addition, participants at times 2 and 3 also completed measures of American identity (Giles, Williams, Mackie, & Rosselli, 1995), and political party affiliation.

Symbolic threat. Symbolic threat was measured by the Symbolic Threat Scale (Stephan, Ybarra, Martinez, Schwarzwald, & Tur-Kaspa, 1998). Symbolic threat refers to the perception that the values and beliefs of a host culture will be negatively impacted through continued influx of immigrants from "foreign" countries.

The scale contains 12 items measuring different aspects of perceived symbolic threat (e.g., "Mexican (Arab) immigrants should learn to conform to the rules and norms of American society as soon as possible after they arrive", and "Mexican (Arab) culture threatens to overwhelm American culture if immigration continues at its present rate"). Participants indicated their level of agreement with each item on 10-point response scales, ranging from "*Strongly Disagree"* to "*Strongly Agree"*. Composite scores were created by reverse coding, where necessary, and averaging across items. Higher scores are indicative of greater levels of perceived symbolic threat. Reliability estimates ranged from .64 to .69 for Mexican immigration and from .71 to .73 for Arab immigration across time periods.

Realistic threat. Realistic threat was assessed with the Realistic Threat Scale (Stephan, Ybarra, Martinez, Schwarzwald, & Tur-Kaspa, 1998). Realistic threat refers to the perception that immigrant groups compete with citizens of a host country for scarce economic resources and general welfare. Similar to the symbolic threat scale, 12 items assessed realistic threat (e.g., "Mexican (Arab) immigrants should not receive social welfare intended for Americans" and "Mexican (Arab) immigration has increased the tax burden on Americans"). Participant

responses were obtained on 10-point response scales ranging from "*Strongly Disagree"* to "*Strongly Agree.*" Composite scores were created by reverse coding, where necessary, and averaging across items. Higher scores are indicative of greater levels of perceived realistic threat. Reliability estimates ranged from .80 to .86 for Mexican immigration and from .82 to .85 for Arab immigration across time periods.

Prejudicial Attitudes. Prejudicial attitudes were measured by 12 items asking participants to provide evaluations of immigrants on several attitudinal dimensions: hostility, admiration, dislike, acceptance, superiority, affection, disdain, approval, hatred, sympathy, rejection, and warmth (Stephan, Ybarra, Martinez, Schwarzwald, & Tur-Kaspa, 1998). Such attitudes involve interpersonal threat in that citizens of a host country feel physically or psychologically threatened by immigrants and continued immigration to the host country. All responses were obtained on 10-point response scales ranging from "*None at all"* to "*Extreme"*. Composite scores were created by reverse coding positive items, and averaging across items. Higher scores are indicative of greater levels of expressed prejudicial attitudes toward immigrant groups. Reliability estimates ranged from .88 to .89 for Mexican immigration and from .89 to .92 for Arab immigration across time periods.

American identity and political party affiliation. American national identity was assessed with 8 items (Giles, et al., 1995). The American national identity scale assesses the importance of one's national identity to the self (e.g., "I enjoy being American," "I think children should learn American English," and "I feel secure being an American"). Responses were obtained on 5-point scales ranging from 1 *(Strongly disagree)* to 5 *(Strongly agree)*. Scale composites were created by reverse coding, where necessary, and summing across items. Higher values indicate higher levels of American national identity. Reliability estimates ranged from .77 to .79 across Times. Political party affiliation was assessed with a single item created for this study that asked participants to indicate their political party affiliation on a 5-point scale: 1 (*Strongly Democrat),* 2 *(Moderate Democrat),* 3 (*Neither Republican or Democrat*), 4 (*Moderate Republican*) and 5 *(Strongly Republican).* To simplify analysis, scores of 1 and 2 were combined to create a Democrat group and scores of 4 and 5 were combined to create a Republican group. Political party groupings were dummy coded (-1 for Democrat and +1 for Republican).

RESULTS

Relations Among Threat and Prejudice Scales

We begin by examining the relations among the perceived threat and prejudice measures, first for attitudes toward Mexican immigration and then for attitudes

toward Arab immigration. For attitudes toward Mexican immigrants, at Time 1 (pre-September 11), the correlations among the perceived threat and prejudice scales were all positive and significant (see Table 1). Correlations ranged from .49 between symbolic threat and prejudice to .60 between symbolic threat and realistic threat. Thus, those participants reporting more perceived threat were also more likely to report higher levels of prejudice directed toward Mexican immigrants and immigration and this pattern was consistent across Time 2 (1 month post-September 11) and Time 3 (1 year post-September 11; see Tables 2 and 3). Similar interrelations among perceived threat and prejudice scales also emerged for Arab immigrants and immigration such that increased threat scores were related to increased prejudice scores.

Perceptions of Arab Immigrants and Immigration

To examine the prediction that Arab immigrants would elicit a stronger symbolic than realistic threat to U.S. citizens, two separate planned contrasts were computed, one for Time 2 (1 month post-September 11) and one for Time 3 (1 year post-September 11). Because all participants completed each of the threat and prejudice scales at each point in time, a repeated measures t-test was employed. Table 4 provides the means and standard deviations for both immigrant groups on each of the threat and prejudice measures as a function of time. Results indicated a significant difference between symbolic and realistic threat at Time 2, $t(139) = 11.91$, $p < .001$, and Time 3, $t(179) = 12.16$, $p < .001$. As predicted, at Time 2 respondents reported significantly higher levels of symbolic threat (Mean = 5.43, SD = 1.29) than realistic threat (Mean = 4.10, SD = 1.52) as the result of continued Arab immigration to the U.S. This pattern also emerged at Time 3, where perceived symbolic threat continued to be significantly higher (Mean = 5.21, SD = 1.32) than realistic threat (Mean = 4.07, SD = 1.42). Thus, Arab immigrants are perceived to represent a stronger threat American culture and values compared to the belief that Arab immigrants are in competition with U.S. citizens for more tangible economic resources.

TABLE 1
Correlations and Scale Reliability Coefficients for Perceived Threat and Prejudice Scales for Mexican Immigrants and Immigration at Time 1 (pre-September 11)

Variable	*1*	*2*	*3*
1. Symbolic Threat	.69	.60**	.49**
2. Realistic Threat		.83	.57**
3. Prejudice			.88

Note. **$p < .01$. Reliability coefficients are presented along the diagonal ($N = 82$).

Threat Perceptions Across Immigrant Groups

It was predicted that Arab immigrants and immigration to the U.S. would result in more expressed prejudice than that elicited by Mexican immigration. To test this, a repeated measures t-test was computed using prejudice scores as the dependent variable. Results supported this prediction across both Times 2 and 3. A significant difference between the two immigrant groups emerged, $t(139) = 7.68$, $p < .001$. At Time 2, prejudice expressed toward Arab immigrants was significantly higher (Mean = 4.13, SD = 1.63) than toward Mexican immigrants (Mean = 3.06, SD = 1.63). A similar effect emerged at Time 3, with results indicating a significant difference between groups, $t(179) = 7.49$, $p < .001$. One year after September 11, U.S. citizens continued to report significantly higher levels of prejudice toward Arab immigrants and immigration (Mean = 4.10, SD = 1.55) than toward Mexican immigrants and immigration (Mean = 3.34, SD = 1.48).

It was further predicted that the influx of Mexican immigrants to the U.S. would result in greater levels of realistic threat directed toward Mexican immigrants and immigration than toward Arab immigrants and immigration. Planned comparisons on the realistic threat scores revealed a trend consistent with predictions. At Time 2, results of the repeated measures t-test indicated a marginal effect, $t(139) = 1.77$, $p = .079$. Although this effect did not reach a conventional level of significance, participants reported higher levels of realistic threat associated with Mexican immigration (Mean = 4.28, SD = 1.47) than with Arab immigration (Mean = 4.10, SD = 1.36). At Time 3, however, results revealed a significant difference between Arab and Mexican immigrant groups on realistic threat, $t(179) = 2.76$, $p < .006$. One year after September 11, the perception that Mexican immigrants and immigration represent a realistic threat to U.S. citizens was significantly stronger (Mean = 4.30, SD = 1.64) than the realistic threat associated with Arab immigrants (Mean = 4.07, SD = 1.42). Thus, these findings generally support the prediction that Mexican immigrants are perceived as a stronger threat to economic resources available to U.S. citizens. Overall, results from the planned comparisons indicate that U.S. citizens tended to perceive Mexican immigrants as a stronger threat to scarce economic resources; whereas, Arab immigrants were viewed with more negative affect (greater prejudice) and were perceived to represent a greater threat to the cultural milieu of the U.S.

To further examine how September 11 may have impacted perceived threat and prejudice toward Mexican immigrants over time, we performed a supplemental one-way MANOVA using time as the independent variable and the threat and prejudice measures as the dependent measures. Results indicated a significant multivariate main effect for time, $F(6,798) = 2.67$, $p = .014$, $\Lambda = .96$). Follow-up univariate tests indicated that this effect was driven by significant effects for realistic threat, $F(2,401) = 4.57$, $p = .011$, and prejudice, $F(2,401) = 3.95$, $p = .02$. Realistic threat was significantly higher toward Mexican immigrants and immigra-

tion after the September 11 attacks (Time 2: Mean = 4.28, SD = 1.47; Time 3: Mean = 4.30, SD = 1.64) than before the attacks (Time 1: Mean = 3.71, SD = 1.54). No differences emerged between Time 2 (one month after) and Time 3 (one year after September 11). Thus, Mexican immigration was perceived as a stronger threat to the economic security of U.S. citizens after the September 11 attacks, and continued a full year after the terrorist attacks.

It could be argued that any obtained effects on the dependent measures were confounded by gender. To assess this, we conducted 3 separate MANOVAs examining the impact of gender on the perceived threat and prejudice measures at each time period. Results indicated only one marginal gender difference across all three time periods. At Time 2 a significant multivariate main effect emerged for gender, $F(6,133) = 2.63$, $p = .019$, $\Lambda = .89$. Univariate tests indicated that this effect was driven by a marginal effect of gender on symbolic threat associated with Mexican immigrants and immigration, $F(1,138) = 3.64$, $p = .059$, partial $\eta^2 = .026$. There was a trend for females to express greater symbolic threat (Mean = 4.62, SD = 1.04) than males (Mean = 4.24, SD = 1.09). No other effects emerged which we interpreted to mean that males and females were not significantly different in perceived threat and prejudice toward Mexican and Arab immigrant groups across time.

Correlational Analyses

A further prediction was that one's American identity would be positively related to perceived threat and prejudice toward immigrant groups. Correlational analysis supports this prediction. As illustrated in Table 2 (1 month post-September 11) and Table 3 (1 year post-September 11). The effect size of American identity was similarly related to perceived threat and prejudice associated with both Mexican and Arab immigrants. The more respondents identified with being American citizens, the higher their level of perceived threat and prejudice. These relations replicated across both Time 2 and Time 3 and were relatively unaffected by the immigrant group being rated.

It was also predicted that political conservatism would be related to perceived threat and prejudice. For the current analysis, conservatism was operationally defined by political party orientation, with Republicans being defined as generally more politically conservative than Democrats. At Time 2, no relationships emerged between symbolic threat, realistic threat, or prejudice and political conservatism. At Time 3, results indicated a significant relation between realistic threat directed toward Mexican immigrants and political conservatism ($r = .21$, $p < .05$). No other relations emerged between conservatism and threat and prejudice. Thus, the predicted relation between conservatism and threat and prejudice received only very limited support.

TABLE 2
Correlations and Scale Reliability Coefficients for Perceived Threat and Prejudice Scales for Mexican and Arab Immigrants and Immigration at Time 2 (1 month post-September 11; N = 140).

	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*
1. Symbolic threat (Mexican)	.64	.42**	.46**	.43**	.39**	.31**	.20*	.02
2. Realistic threat (Mexican)		.80	.56**	.34**	.67**	.36**	.20*	.08
3. Prejudice (Mexican)			.88	.22**	.43**	.41**	.22**	–.03
4. Symbolic threat (Arab)				.73	.57**	.65**	.30**	.09
5. Realistic threat (Arab)					.85	.61**	.20*	–.10
6. Prejudice (Arab)						.92	.18*	.02
7. American Identity							.77	.09
8. Political Party Affiliation (n = 83)								–

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$. Reliability coefficients are presented along the diagonal. Political Party Affiliation was coded –1 for Democrat and 1 for Republican and has a reduced sample size due to dichotomous variable coding.

TABLE 3
Correlations and Scale Reliability Coefficients for Perceived Threat and Prejudice Scales for Mexican and Arab Immigrants and Immigration at Time 3 (1 year post-September 11; $N = 180$).

	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*
1. Symbolic threat (Mexican)	.64	.60**	.53**	.52**	.46**	.33**	.20*	.13
2. Realistic threat (Mexican)		.86	.70**	.52**	.75**	.49**	.31*	.21*
3. Prejudice (Mexican)			.89	.41**	.64**	.61**	.32**	.15
4. Symbolic threat (Arab)				.71	.58**	.56**	.27**	.02
5. Realistic threat (Arab)					.82	.64**	.23*	–.01
6. Prejudice (Arab)						.89	.20**	–.01
7. American Identity							.79	.23*
8. Political Party Affiliation ($n = 90$)								–

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$. Reliability coefficients are presented along the diagonal. Political Party Affiliation was coded –1 for Democrat and 1 for Republican and has a reduced sample size due to dichotomous variable coding.

TABLE 4
Means and Standard Deviations for Perceived Threat and Prejudice as a Function of Time

	Time 1		*Time 2*		*Time 3*	
Immigrant group threat/prejudice	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Mexican immigration						
Symbolic threat	4.48	1.27	4.51	1.07	4.61	1.13
Realistic threat	3.70	1.56	4.28	1.47	4.30	1.64
Prejudice	2.86	1.40	3.06	1.36	3.34	1.48
Arab immigration						
Symbolic threat			5.43	1.36	5.25	1.32
Realistic threat			4.10	1.29	4.07	1.42
Prejudice			4.13	1.52	4.17	1.55

Note. Time 1 data were collected for purposes of investigating attitudes toward Mexican immigrants prior to the September 11 attacks and as such, did not include attitudes toward Arab immigrants and immigration.

DISCUSSION

The current research presents data collected prior to and following the September 11 attacks on the U.S. Based on social psychological theory we were able to develop several hypotheses concerning the attitudes of U.S. citizens toward different immigrant groups (i.e., Mexicans and Arabs) following the attacks. Drawing on intergroup emotions theory and realistic group conflict theory, we expected U.S. citizens to perceive Arab immigrants and immigration to the U.S. as more symbolically threatening than Mexican immigrants and immigration; whereas, it was predicted that the continued arrival of Mexican immigrants would represent a stronger economic threat to the finite economic resources available to U.S. citizens. Both of these general predictions received support.

After the September 11 attacks, results supported the initial predictions in that Arab immigrants were perceived to represent more of a symbolic threat than a realistic threat. When compared to Mexican immigrants, Arab immigrants were viewed as a greater threat to the prevailing culture within the U.S. In contrast, Mexican immigrants were perceived to represent a greater threat to the economic well-being of U.S. citizens than Arab immigrants and immigration. Although the current data preclude an assessment of attitudes toward Arab immigrants both before and after the September 11 attacks, the data on Mexican immigrants suggest that attitudinal changes seem to have been associated with the attacks. For example, data on Mexican immigrants pre- and post-September 11 indicate that U.S. citizens reported greater levels of realistic threat and prejudice directed toward Mexican immigrants and immigration after the attacks. Furthermore, this attitude

change appears to be relatively stable as the changes in attitudes toward Mexican immigrants endured one year after the September 11 attacks. Yet, no differences emerged between pre- and post- measures of symbolic threat toward Mexican immigrants.

Overall, these findings suggest that the consequences of September 11 were well differentiated and remained relatively stable over the year following September 11. Rather than leading to more negative attitudes toward immigrants across the board, the terrorist attacks impacted attitudes toward immigrant groups in distinct ways. Despite a much higher number of Mexican immigrants than Arab immigrants in the U.S., individuals felt greater symbolic threat concerning Arab immigrants. Given that the attacks were directed towards symbolic representations of the American culture, highlighted in rampant media reports, it is understandable that the attacks represented an "Attack on America" and as such, were symbolic in nature.

Furthermore, it is understandable that the large number of Mexican immigrants would produce more realistic threat reflecting the perceived economic threat of large immigrant groups. It is also likely that the fact that our participants were primarily Latino explains the lack of symbolic threat felt towards Mexican immigration.

It is worth mentioning that while strength of American identity was significantly related to the threat and prejudice measures, political conservatism was not. Strength of identity with a group should predict the desire to protect that group. Indeed, our data support that hypothesis. One can also surmise from the recent presidential elections that the Republican platform focus on national security would predict that Republicans have more negative attitudes towards Arabs. Political orientation, however, had minimal impact on the reported results. This remains an issue for further investigation.

Finally, we point out that our American sample was a primarily Latino sample living on the U.S./Mexican border, leading to the presumption that attitudes towards immigrants are very crystallized. Immigration is not a taboo topic. It is discussed in groups and in the newspapers. Thus, we believe that attitudinal changes are more likely due to the September 11 attacks than to other possible intervening events. We also point out that the Latino population we used is not necessarily "pro-Mexican" (Zárate, et al, 2004). In contrast, some previous research has indicated that individuals desire distinctiveness, and as such, are often more hostile towards similar out-groups, whereas Anglos tend to be ignored (Zárate & Garza, 2002).

Policy and Research Implications

Immigration to the U.S. is projected to be one of the leading causes of population growth within the U.S. through 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). As a conse-

quence of such growth, the ability of different ethnic/racial groups to get along with one another is a paramount concern. As Esses, Dovidio, and Hodson (2002) note, public attitudes toward immigrants and immigration will have a critical effect on public policy and legislation and on the daily treatment of immigrants currently residing in the host country.

Better understanding the subtle differences that exist in attitudes toward different immigrant groups may help in designing effective training programs aimed at perceived threat and prejudice reduction. For example, more fully understanding *how* citizens of a host country feel threatened by certain immigrant groups may provide important insight for tailoring such programs to the most salient types of threat associated with a particular immigrant group. According to the Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961), contact may serve to reduce intergroup conflict. However, might increasing intergroup contact work for reducing some types of perceived threat more than others? In addition, what aspects of diversity training are most important to fostering positive intergroup attitudes? The answer may depend on the specific types of emotions a particular immigrant group elicits (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005). In addition, how might interdependent forms of training, such as the "jig-saw" method used in educational and organizational settings, foster positive intergroup emotions, and how might such training relate to individual and team performance both within and outside of organizations?

CONCLUSION

The results we report provide evidence of a differentiated response to the September 11 attacks. Differences were found in reports of symbolic threat and prejudice toward Mexican and Arab immigrants. In addition, there was a trend for U.S. citizens to feel more economically threatened (i.e., perceived realistic threat) by Mexican immigrants and immigration. Furthermore, the data revealed positive significant correlations between threat and prejudice across immigrant groups. This pattern of relations continued at least one year after the September 11 attacks. Americans did not respond, however, with a general negative response, but with identifiably different types of responses directed towards different immigrant groups. Social psychological theorizing that identifies multiple forms of intergroup attitudes and emotions appears to lend itself well to analyzing the responses to major terrorist attacks.

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