

In-group Morality Threat Drives Pro-Sociality Toward Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

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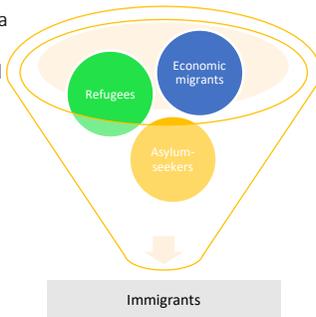
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INTRODUCTION

- Migration is undoubtedly a pertinent issue on a global scale, with a record 65 million people being forced to flee home worldwide (UNHCR, 2016).
- A solution to this migration crisis is effective integration of displaced individuals into host communities (UNHCR, 2014).
- In order to aid integration, we first need to understand host citizens' attitudes towards migrant groups, and how they intend to behave towards these individuals.
- We recognise two major challenges to understanding such public intentions.

Challenge 1: Homogenous viewing of migrant groups

- Different migrant groups can be identified based on visa status.
- Economic migrants*: migrate via skilled based visas to fill labour market needs.
- Refugees*: migrate via humanitarian visas to escape adverse circumstances.
- Asylum-seekers*: also migrate to escape violence and persecution, but do not possess visa prior to entry.
- Media tends to blur the portrayal of these groups (Sales, 2002; Murray & Marx, 2013). This is detrimental to public perceptions, as auras of illegality may even transfer to refugees and economic migrants.

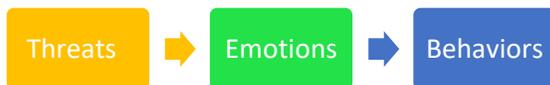


Challenge 2: Imprecise measurement of prejudice

- Prejudice is traditionally captured using attitudes, which are broad, general evaluations about social groups (Allport, 1954).
- The problem is that general attitude evaluations fail to make specific predictions about behaviors towards different migrant groups.
- Further, an attitude grounded in anger may produce a different behavior (e.g. aggression) as opposed to an attitude grounded in fear (e.g. avoidance).

The Socio-Functional Account of Prejudice (SFA)

- The SFA proposed by Cottrell and Neuberg (2005), is a more nuanced, fine-grained account of prejudice, which draws on evolutionary theorising to explicate prejudice and discrimination towards out-groups.
- This account importantly moves beyond general attitude evaluations, to emphasise the specific emotional texturing that may drive discrimination.
- The emotional textures are posited to arise from threat appraisals, and then followed by specific behaviors, as in the causal pathway below.



- Further, different out-groups are predicted to elicit qualitatively distinct threats, which lead to specific emotions, and functionally adaptive behaviors.
- In other words, different groups will elicit different behavioral intentions from host locals, depending on the migrant-group they belong to.
- The current study tests SFA in a novel migrant context using three target groups: economic-migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers.

- We expect different threat-emotion-behavior pathways to emerge, contingent upon migrant-group membership (see Table 1 for predicted relationships between constructs).
- It is possible that these one-to-one mappings do not hold exactly as predicted, nevertheless, we still expect support for the basic premise of SFA, that different groups will elicit different pathways.
- Finally, we expect that general attitude evaluations will obscure the rich complexity underlying reactions towards these groups.

Table 1
Hypothesised Associations between Threats, Emotions, Action tendencies and Policy Support

| Threats ^a | Emotions ^b | Action Tendencies | Policies |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Materialistic threat | Anger | Aggress | Restrictive policy |
| Cultural threat | Disgust | Avoid | Segregation policy |
| Threat to group health by contagion | Disgust | Avoid | Segregation policy |
| Threat to group safety | Fear | Avoid | Segregation policy |
| Threat to reciprocity relations due to inability | Pity | Approach | Acceptance policy |
| Threat to perception of in-group morality | Guilt | Approach | Acceptance policy |

Note: ^a Threats and emotions were adapted Cottrell and Neuberg (2005), ^b One other SFA emotion, "respect" was also tested in an exploratory fashion

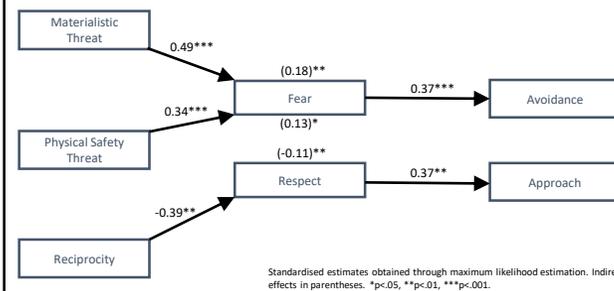
METHOD

- Participants were 114 Australian students (89 female, *Age*=19.1, *SD* = 3.2) in a within-subjects design with three conditions.
- Participants completed online questionnaires assessing SFA threats, emotions behaviors and general attitudes towards the three target groups.

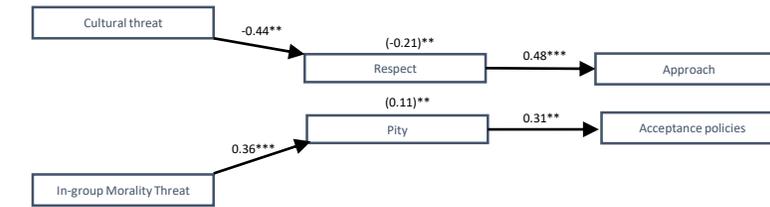
RESULTS

- Structural Equation Modelling was used to investigate indirect effects of threats on behaviors *via emotions*, for all three groups.

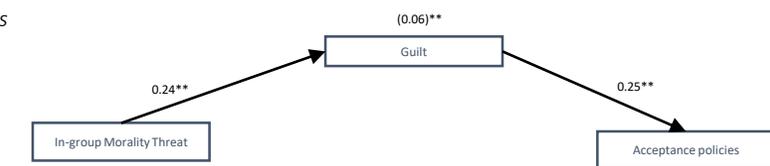
Economic migrants



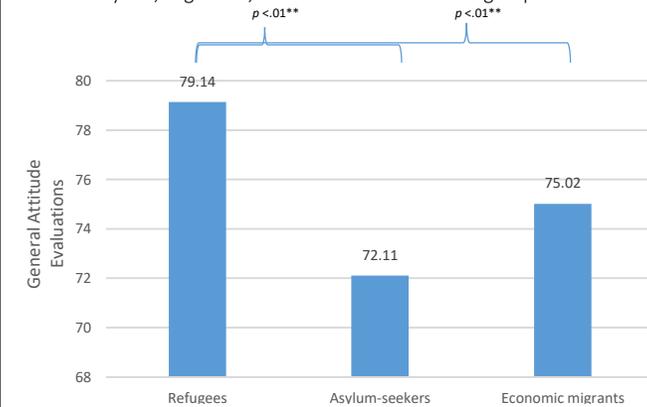
Refugees



Asylum-seekers



- As predicted, functionally distinct pathways emerged for each of the three groups. Interestingly, however, general attitude evaluations obscured this variation among groups. Participants were asked how they felt, in general, towards each of the three groups on a scale of 0 to 100.



- A one-way ANOVA and pairwise comparisons indicated that refugees tended to be viewed most positively compared to both asylum-seekers and economic migrants.
- However, the latter two groups were viewed equally negatively, despite eliciting contrasting emotional and behavioral pathways as above.

DISCUSSION

- On a theoretical level, by providing support for SFA, this research suggests that migrant groups may have to be distinguished along at least two dimensions: threats-emotions and emotions-behaviors.
- Further, single attitude evaluations may be insufficient to truly explicate prejudice and discrimination.
- On a practical level, these findings suggest that anti-prejudice interventions may need to be attuned to the heterogeneity in prejudice across groups, in order to more effectively change behaviors.
- Further experimental research is required to assess if changing particular threat or emotion appraisals may lead changes in particular action tendencies and/or policy endorsement.
- For example, would manipulations of in-group moral image, pity and guilt induce pro-sociality towards refugees and asylum-seekers?
- Such research questions pose intriguing directions for future research in this area.