

Running heads: NEGATIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRANTS

LOUIS ET AL.

National Identification, Perceived Threat, and Dehumanization as Antecedents of Negative Attitudes Toward
Immigrants in Australia and Canada

WINNIFRED R. LOUIS¹

School of Psychology

University of Queensland

Queensland, Australia

VICTORIA M. ESSES

University of Western Ontario

London, Ontario, Canada

RICHARD N. LALONDE

York University

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

The interplay of nationalistic threat perceptions, dehumanizing beliefs and intergroup emotions, and anti-immigrant sentiment is analyzed in a cross-national context with Australian ($N = 124$) and Canadian ($N = 126$) samples. National identification was linked to negative attitudes toward immigrants indirectly, via perceptions of immigrants as being in threatening zero-sum relationships with citizens. In turn, perceived zero-sum threat was associated with dehumanizing beliefs and emotions about immigrants. Significant baseline differences in hostility were observed across the samples, but the relationships among the variables

¹ Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Winnifred Louis, School of Psychology, The University of Queensland, St. Lucia QLD 4072, Australia. E-mail: w.louis@psy.uq.edu.au

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were not moderated by participants' nationality. The study contributes to the literature examining how negative emotions and attitudes may serve to legitimize intergroup competition.

Every year, millions of people around the world migrate to new countries in search of security, jobs, and a better life. Migration is often a life-or-death issue to the people involved, but also an intensely significant issue of money, power, and identity to both immigrant-receiving and emigrant-losing countries. New immigrants contribute socially, economically and intellectually to their host countries. Many first-world countries, for example, rely significantly on skilled migration for both the maintenance and growth of their economy and important service networks, such as their healthcare systems (e.g., United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UNDESA], 2001). But tensions may also emerge as immigrant-receiving countries balance the positive contributions of immigrants with perceived difficulties or resistance in social adjustment and integration. Anti-immigrant hostility has been shown to be widespread, and the research literature on attitudes to immigrants and immigration is large and flourishing (e.g., Esses, Deaux, Lalonde, & Brown, 2010).²

The present paper aims to make a contribution to the literature exploring the antecedents of anti-immigration sentiment, focusing specifically on the role of dehumanizing beliefs and emotions. We propose a theoretical model in which zero-sum beliefs (i.e., beliefs that one group can only profit at the other's expense) motivate dehumanizing beliefs and emotions, and mediate the link between national identification and outcomes. The study tests the generalizability of this model in two immigrant-receiving countries, Canada and Australia. Differences in baselines between the two countries are explored, alongside the stability of the proposed structural model.

Antecedents of Anti-Immigration Sentiment

Hostile attitudes toward immigrants have been associated proximally with negative emotions, either studied as a unidimensional construct (e.g., Kessler et al., 2010), or as specific intergroup emotions (e.g., anxiety; Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Stephan, Renfro, Esses, Stephan, & Martin, 2005; Stephan, Ybarra, & Bachman, 1999). These emotions, in turn, have been shown to be associated with cognitions about the nature of immigrants' relations

² This paper focuses on immigrants as an undifferentiated category, and we use the term *immigrants* inclusively to refer to economic migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and so on. In the questionnaires, participants responded to the generic label *immigrant* without any further information regarding the means of entry of the immigrant or the motive for migration. We acknowledge, however, that certain categories of immigrants (e.g., asylum seekers) may be treated especially harshly in different social contexts and at different historical periods.

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with the host country and its citizens. Threatening perceptions of immigrants as competing for resources or undermining cherished values have been associated with more negative attitudes, both indirectly via intergroup emotions (Stephan & Stephan, 2000) and directly (e.g., Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998; Hartley & Pedersen, 2007; Johnson, Terry, & Louis, 2005; Louis, Duck, Terry, & Lalonde, 2010; Louis, Duck, Terry, Schuller, & Lalonde, 2007; Schalk-Soekar & Van de Vijver, 2008).

Ideological beliefs that immigrants are “cheating the system” have also been associated with anti-immigrant sentiment in past research. These cognitions have been associated specifically with dehumanizing emotions—contempt and lack of admiration—which, in turn, flow on to negative attitudes (Esses, Veenliet, Hodson, & Mihic, 2008).

Dehumanizing beliefs and emotions serve a psychological and social function by legitimizing intergroup inequality and discrimination (Haslam & Pedersen, 2007; Jost & Banaji, 1994). In this line of research, any disadvantaged group may elicit negative cognitions and emotions as citizens seek to rationalize existing inequalities (Kay, Czapliński, & Jost, 2009). Experimental research has confirmed the defensive nature of this process by showing that when the existing intergroup relationship is threatened, legitimizing myths are more strongly endorsed, and mediate increases in prejudice (e.g., Kay, Jost, & Young, 2005; Ullrich & Cohrs, 2007).

In the immigration context, Louis et al. (2007) also observed that perceptions of immigrants as threatening were linked to anti-immigration attitudes and actions by rationalizing fairness perceptions. Drawing on this line of research, in the present study, we reason that dehumanizing beliefs and emotions toward immigrants serve a legitimizing function. We specifically predict that they will mediate the relationship between perceptions of immigrants as threatening and negative attitudes toward the group.

The Changing Role of National Identification

Hostile beliefs, emotions, and attitudes toward immigrants have sometimes been associated with citizens' national identity (e.g., González, Verkuyten, Weesie, & Poppe, 2008), but not always (e.g., Curşeu, Stoop, & Schalk, 2007). The association between national identities and anti-immigration sentiment is often politically contested (e.g., Louis, Duck et al., 2010). Identification as a citizen may be linked to anti-immigration sentiment when other citizens are positioned as hostile (hostile national norms; e.g., Nickerson & Louis, 2008) or when immigrants are positioned as a threat to the host country (e.g., Cohrs & Asbrock, 2009; Cohrs & Stelzl, 2010; Falomir-Pichastor, Gabarrot, & Mugny, 2009; Gabarrot, Falomir-Pichastor, & Mugny 2009).

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Because such threat perceptions are socially constructed, the social construction of the “nation” becomes a critical issue (Pehrson & Green, 2010; also see Sindic & Reicher, 2009). Identification as a citizen is more likely to be associated with anti-immigrant beliefs, emotions, and attitudes where the national identity is defined in ways that marginalize immigrants as inferior (Kessler et al., 2010) or that exclude immigrants by using an ethnic definition of the nation (Pehrson, Brown, & Zagefka, 2009). In contrast, the link between national identification and hostility toward immigrants is defused if an inclusive identity is accepted; for example, by positioning immigrants explicitly as fellow citizens (e.g., Esses, Wagner, Wolf, Preiser, & Wilbur, 2006) or embracing an encompassing identity, such as humanity (Nickerson & Louis, 2008).

In the present research, we were interested in the processes by which an abstract form of national identification—thinking of oneself as a citizen, in relation to immigrants—would be associated with negative attitudes toward immigrants. In particular, our research explores a subset of the many predictors of anti-immigration sentiment identified in the literature, focusing on national identification as an antecedent of dehumanizing beliefs and emotions about immigrants, and the negative attitudes that flow on from them. Building on previous theorizing by Esses and colleagues, we reasoned that national identification would be associated with negative attitudes toward immigrants to the extent that citizens perceive a zero-sum context of competitive, threatening relations (Esses et al., 1998; also see Esses, Dovidio, & Hodson, 2002; Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001). These competitive beliefs need not arise from any empirical reality; immigrants are often essential to the functioning of first-world economies (e.g., Louis, Lalonde, & Esses, 2010; Stilwell, 2003). But if citizens and immigrants are believed to be locked into a zero-sum balance—with citizens inevitably losing status and resources as immigrants gain—anti-immigration views arise.

In the present research, we are specifically interested in the idea that such threat perceptions might be associated with hostile attitudes indirectly, via their association with dehumanizing beliefs that immigrants are “cheaters” and dehumanizing emotions (e.g., contempt, lack of admiration). In this sense, our theoretical model positions dehumanizing beliefs and emotions as legitimizing myths evoked by threats to a valued identity (e.g., Kay et al., 2005; Louis et al., 2007; Louis, Esses, et al., 2010; Ullrich & Cohrs, 2007).

The Present Study

Our research tests a model of the antecedents of anti-immigration sentiment in two first-world immigrant-receiving countries: Canada and Australia. While both countries admit thousands of immigrants each year, a

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conservative nationalist stance linked explicitly to anti-immigration sentiment has become more prominent in recent years (e.g., Esses et al., 2002, 2006; Louis, Duck et al., 2010). Management of the immigration process, particularly for refugees, has become more restrictive (e.g., Canadian Department of Immigration and Citizenship [CIC], 2009; Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship [ADIC], 2011). Despite these commonalities, important differences are also observed: Many more immigrants are accepted into Canada than Australia; a national discourse of assimilation is less widely endorsed in Canada; and baseline attitudes toward immigrants are more favorable in Canada (e.g., Esses et al., 2006; Haslam & Pedersen, 2007; Louis, Duck, et al., 2010). The context thus allows us to test important and interesting hypotheses about the antecedents of anti-immigration sentiment across the samples.

We seek to replicate and extend the research of Esses et al. (2008) by using cross-national research to test the hypotheses that dehumanizing emotions (i.e., contempt, lack of admiration) will be associated with more negative attitudes toward immigrants and that these will mediate the association between dehumanizing beliefs that immigrants are “cheating the system” and negative attitudes. In turn, we seek to test the additional hypothesis that these dehumanizing cognitions and emotions rationalize the association between perceived threat and negativity (Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Kay et al., 2005; Louis et al., 2007; Ullrich & Cohrs, 2007). Third, building on Esses et al. (1998), we test the hypothesis that an abstract national identity will be associated with negative attitudes toward immigrants only to the extent that they are associated with endorsement of competitive zero-sum beliefs about citizen–immigrant relations.

Finally, a comparison of the two samples allows us to compare differential-process and universal-process accounts of cross-national differences for the variables tested here. On the one hand, system-justification motives are argued to be universal (Jost & Banaji, 1994), in which case identification may be linked to negative attitudes via threat-based dehumanization across nations: Participants’ nationality will not moderate the relationships among the variables. On the other hand, cross-national contextual factors have been observed to moderate the relationship between anti-immigration sentiment and antecedents such as authoritarianism and social dominance (Pehrson & Green, 2010).

If participants’ nationality does moderate the observed relationships, it would support a differential-process account in which dehumanizing beliefs are more or less important, and more or less closely tied to national identities and threat perceptions, depending on contextual factors. Such a finding would contribute to the small but growing

research literature concerning plasticity in system-justification processes (Kay et al., 2009). Thus, both hypotheses are theoretically plausible, and the opportunity to compare the two offers a valuable contribution to the literature.

Method

Participants

The Australian sample included 126 participants (85 women, 41 men), all citizens of Australia. They ranged in age from 17 to 54 years ($M = 22.2$ years, $SD = 6.9$). The Canadian sample included 124 participants (78 women, 46 men), all citizens of Canada. They ranged in age from 17 to 53 years ($M = 20.4$ years, $SD = 4.5$). The gender ratio did not differ between the samples, $\chi^2(1) = 0.57, p = .449$.

Procedure

Australian participants were recruited online to complete a “study of social behavior,” and they were compensated with \$10 (Australian). They were students in a psychology participation pool at a large regional university. Canadian participants were psychology students at a large regional university participating for course credit, and they were also recruited for a “study of social behavior.” Demographic information (age, gender, citizenship) was collected from all participants. Only Australian and Canadian citizens were included in the final samples. The focal study variables consisted of national identification, zero-sum beliefs, perceptions of immigrants as cheaters, intergroup emotions, and attitudes toward immigrants (embedded in a variety of other measures so that the true purpose of the study was not obvious).

Materials

National identification. National identification was assessed with a single item: “When thinking about immigration and recent immigrants to [Australia/Canada], I think of myself as [an Australian/a Canadian]. The item was rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*very little*) to 7 (*very much*).

Zero-sum beliefs. In order to assess zero-sum beliefs, we used a measure developed and validated by Esses et al. (2001). The scale consists of eight positively scored items (e.g., “[Australians/Canadians] already living here lose out when immigrants make political and economic gains”) and four reverse-scored items (e.g., “Immigrant and [Australian/Canadian] cultures can coexist in this country and each remain strong”). The items were rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The items were averaged to create an index measuring higher zero-sum beliefs (Australians, $\alpha = .92$; Canadians, $\alpha = .90$).

Perceptions of immigrants as cheaters. In order to assess perceptions of immigrants as cheaters, we used a measure developed by Esses et al. (2008). Three positively scored items (e.g., “The problem with potential immigrants to [Australia/Canada] is that they try to ‘cheat the system’”) and three reverse-scored items (e.g., “Potential immigrants to [Australia/Canada] try to follow the rules in the application process”) were measured on 9-point scales ranging from -4 (*strongly disagree*) to +4 (*strongly agree*). The items were averaged (Australia, $\alpha = .86$; Canada, $\alpha = .82$).

Intergroup emotions. Participants responded to a stem question “To what extent do immigrants make you feel [emotion names]?” on a 7-point scale ranging from -3 (*not at all*) to +3 (*extremely*). Contempt was measured with eight items (*contemptuous, disgusted, frustrated, ashamed, angry, hateful, resentful, uneasy*; Canada, $\alpha = .90$; Australia, $\alpha = .89$). Lack of admiration was measured with five reverse-scored items (*proud, admiring, fond, inspired, respectful*; Australia, $\alpha = .89$; Canada, $\alpha = .85$; see Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002).

Negative attitudes toward immigrants. An attitude thermometer was employed to assess “In general, how favourable or unfavourable do you feel about immigrants?” with a graphic depicting a vertical thermometer labeled from bottom (0; *extremely unfavourable*) to top (100; *extremely favourable*). The item was reverse-scored, with higher scores reflecting more negative attitudes.

Results

Table 1 depicts the means and standard deviations for the variables in each sample and the pooled sample, as well as the zero-order correlations among them. Table 2 depicts the intercorrelations separately by sample. Missing values were few and were treated with mean replacement.

-INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE^A-

-INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE^B-

Cross-Sample Psychological Processes Underpinning Negative Attitudes

AMOS was applied to test a model in which national identification was linked to zero-sum beliefs directly, and indirectly via zero-sum beliefs to dehumanizing perceptions of immigrants as cheaters. Both were linked, in

turn, to contempt and lack of admiration, which were allowed to covary. Cognitions and emotions were linked, in turn, to negative attitudes toward immigrants. This model was tested first in the pooled sample, depicted in Figure 1, and then in multi-group analyses comparing the Canadian and Australian samples.

-INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE^C-

In the pooled sample, the model fit the data well, $\chi^2(4) = 2.86, p = .577$ (GFI = .99; RMSEA < .01). Inspection of the standardized coefficients reveals that national identification was associated with higher zero-sum beliefs ($\beta = .14, p = .022$), which were associated with higher perceptions of immigrants as cheating the system ($\beta = .53, p < .001$). Zero-sum beliefs ($\beta = .37, p < .001$) and cheating ($\beta = .22, p < .001$) were both associated with contempt. Lack of admiration was associated with zero-sum beliefs ($\beta = .34, p < .001$), but not with perceptions of cheating, unexpectedly ($\beta = .08, p = .229$). Bootstrapping with bias-corrected confidence intervals reveals significant indirect effects (IEs) of zero-sum beliefs via cheating on contempt (standardized IE = .11, $p = .008$), but not admiration (IE = .04, $p = .279$). Indirect effects of national identity on perceptions of cheating (IE = .08, $p = .062$) were also observed, as well as on contempt (IE = .07, $p = .039$) and lack of admiration (IE = .06, $p = .044$).

As seen in Figure 1, negative attitudes toward immigrant were directly and independently associated with zero-sum beliefs ($\beta = .21, p = .018$), perceptions of cheating ($\beta = .14, p = .024$), contempt ($\beta = .23, p = .004$), and lack of admiration ($\beta = .35, p = .010$). Indirect effects on negative attitudes were also observed for national identity (IE = .08, $p = .028$), zero-sum beliefs (IE = .32, $p = .005$), and perceptions of cheating (IE = .08, $p = .007$).

Are the Psychological Processes Universal Across Canada and Australia?

A multigroup analysis comparing the Canadian and Australian samples shows that an unconstrained model (in which different relationships were allowed across nations) was a good fit to the data, $\chi^2(8) = 4.75, p = .784$ (GFI = .99; RMSEA < .01). However, a universal process model, in which the structural weights were constrained to be equal in the two samples, was also a good fit, $\chi^2(18) = 19.24, p = .377$ (GFI = .98; RMSEA = .02). There was no significant decrease in fit by constraining the weights to be equal across all of the model paths, $\chi^2_{\text{difference}}(10) = 14.49, p = .152$. Accordingly, the more parsimonious account of the data is that the same processes operate in the two samples to link national identification and threat via dehumanization to negative attitudes toward immigrants.

Are There Differences in Canadians' and Australians' Level of Hostility to Immigration?

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Analyses of the between-sample differences reveal a strong cross-national multivariate effect, Wilks's Λ , $F(6, 243) = 4.91, p < .001$. Follow-up univariate tests confirm that Australians were significantly less favorable to immigrants (see Table 1). As can be seen in Table 1, overall, both samples reported high levels of national identification in relation to immigrants and immigration. Both were relatively neutral regarding admiration toward immigrants. And both samples showed moderately low zero-sum beliefs, moderate disagreement that immigrants were cheaters, and moderately low negative attitudes (put differently, attitudes were moderately positive in both groups).

At the same time, the comparative data are consistent. Australians reported a stronger national identification when thinking of immigration than did the Canadians, $F(1, 248) = 5.25, p = .023, \eta^2_p = .02$; had higher zero-sum beliefs, $F(1, 248) = 9.78, p = .002, \eta^2_p = .04$; were more likely to perceive that immigrants were cheaters, $F(1, 248) = 15.42, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .06$; felt less admiration, $F(1, 248) = 9.91, p = .002, \eta^2_p = .04$; and had less favorable attitudes, $F(1, 248) = 14.01, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .05$. The means were also in the direction of the Australian sample feeling more contempt, although this difference was not reliable, $F(1, 248) = 0.85, p = .360, \eta^2_p < .01$. The universal process model supported in the present results thus operates in the context of significant between-country differences across all variables.

Discussion

The present research makes several contributions to the literature on anti-immigration sentiment. Threatening perceptions of zero-sum competition are associated with negative attitudes toward immigrants (Esses et al., 1998), as are dehumanizing beliefs and emotions (Esses et al., 2008). The generalizability of the relationships cross-nationally is supported for the first time. In addition, the data show novel findings that dehumanizing beliefs and emotions significantly mediate the threat–attitude relationship in both Canada and Australia, and, in turn, threat perceptions fully mediate the relationships between national identification and distal variables. Participant nationality did not significantly interact with the variables in the model to moderate the processes observed, but consistent cross-national differences in level of hostility were found.

Antecedents of Anti-Immigration Sentiment

The present research demonstrated that dehumanizing beliefs and emotions were associated with more negative attitudes toward immigrants. The findings are consistent with past research by Esses and colleagues (2008), and more broadly with the growing research interest in the denial of humanity to out-groups as a critical

psychological process in prejudice (e.g., Bastian & Haslam, 2010; Haslam & Bain, 2007; Haslam & Pedersen, 2007; Viki & Calitri, 2008). In the present study, perceived threat from immigrants was associated with dehumanizing beliefs and emotions, which significantly mediated the threat–prejudice relationship.

Strong causal inferences cannot be drawn from these correlational data. Nonetheless, they are consistent with both system justification theory (e.g., Kay et al., 2009) and research on threat-motivated fairness perceptions toward immigrants (e.g., Louis et al., 2007), suggesting that dehumanizing beliefs and emotions serve social and psychological functions in rationalizing threat-related negativity. The anchoring effects of these distal variables embedded in the social context may provide one reason why anti-immigrant attitudes are difficult to shift with intervention programs (e.g., Turner & Brown, 2008).

Importantly, the relationships among the variables were not moderated by nationality. In both countries, universal psychological processes were observed in which myths of immigrants as “cheating the system” legitimized hostile emotions and negative attitudes, which, in turn, were more distally motivated by threat. It should be noted that both Australia and Canada are relatively affluent liberal democracies with a shared British cultural heritage. These findings contribute to a growing body of research documenting the operation of system justification processes to defend against challenges to existing intergroup structures (e.g., Kay et al., 2005; Ullrich & Cohrs, 2007). We do not deny, however, that there are many significant sources of between-nation heteroscedasticity in the relationships reported here, which could be theoretically interesting and socially important.

Changing Role of National Identity

In both countries, national identification was associated with perceptions of threatening zero-sum competition between immigrants and citizens, and associated indirectly via these threat perceptions with dehumanizing beliefs and emotions, and with more negative attitudes toward immigrants. Consistent with other research, there was no zero-order relationship between national identity and negative attitudes toward immigrants (e.g., Curşeu et al., 2007). The results speak to the importance of threat perceptions regarding immigrants as critical factors motivating citizens’ anti-immigrant sentiments (also see Cohrs & Asbrock, 2009; Esses et al., 1998; Falomir-Pichastor et al., 2009; Gabarrot et al., 2009; Schalk-Soekar & Van de Vijver, 2008).

It should be noted that our measure of national identification was a single item, and the study did not explore participants’ construction of the national identity as exclusive versus inclusive (Esses et al., 2006; Kessler et al., 2010; Pehrson et al., 2009; Pehrson & Green, 2010), or the difference between nationalism and patriotism (e.g.,

Viki & Calitri, 2008). Despite these caveats, the observed relationship in the pooled sample between national identification and perceptions of zero-sum competition speaks to the nationalist discourses prevalent in both countries that position immigrants as threatening to citizens. This finding has important implications for intergroup relations in immigrant-receiving nations, while the importance of threat perceptions and dehumanizing beliefs and emotions as intervening variables highlights opportunities for intervention and change. However, the correlations between national identification and intergroup attitudes and emotion are small. Given the absence of zero-order associations with identification (Tables 1 and 2), it is tempting to speculate that the significant indirect path is suppressing more positive outcomes of national identification, such as conformity to egalitarian norms, with favorable intergroup outcomes. Future research may address this possibility.

More broadly, we would argue that although the associations between national identification, anti-immigrant threat perceptions, dehumanization, and negative attitudes are interesting (thus, the focus of the present paper), the substantial non-overlapping variance is also of theoretical interest. Where immigrants are positioned by politicians and media sources as threatening, citizens face choices, not just inevitable conformity. Citizens may be motivated by anti-immigrant normative messages to speak out against xenophobia, even though others are empowered to advocate anti-immigration messages openly (Louis, Duck et al., 2010). Similarly, even if immigrants are positioned by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as “fellow humans” who should be protected from persecution, this intervention strategy may not always work (Louis, Barlow, & Greenaway, 2012; also see Greenaway, Louis, & Wohl, 2011; Greenaway, Quinn, & Louis, 2011; Pedersen, Walker, Paradies, & Guerin, 2011).

Taken at face value, however, the present findings provide some take-home messages on an applied level. First, nationalist discourses position foreigners as threats. Pro-immigrant groups may wish to identify and promote inclusive conceptions of nationality (Esses et al., 2006; Kessler et al., 2010; Pehrson & Green, 2010; Pehrson et al., 2009), focusing on in-group positivity versus superiority (e.g., Viki & Calitri, 2008). Second, perceptions of zero-sum threat are associated with dehumanizing beliefs and emotions, which, in turn, are associated with less favorable attitudes toward immigrants. Each of these beliefs and emotions may be a target for intervention individually, but attempting to change any single belief in isolation may run up against the intertwined and mutually reinforcing network of connections. For example, it may be difficult for citizens to believe that there is a positive economic contribution of immigrants to the economy if it is believed immigrants are cheaters; it may be impossible to believe

immigrants are hard-working and admirable if it is believed they steal fellow citizens' jobs. Accordingly, NGOs or governments might attempt to take on the whole anti-immigrant discourse and all of its associated beliefs simultaneously (also see Thomas, McGarty, & Mavor, 2009). The problem here is that the beliefs are anchored in identities, as the association with national identity suggests. In addition to the national identity, particular political discourses about immigration may be anchored by political-party affiliation, egalitarian or hierarchical values, authoritarianism, and so on (e.g., Johnson et al., 2005; Louis et al., 2007). Unless the source of the belief-challenging message is an in-group member and the message is framed with respect to these congruent values and identities, belief-change interventions may backfire (Christie & Louis, 2012).

Cross-National Differences in Level of Hostility

The findings demonstrate a classic case of universal psychological processes despite cross-national differences in baseline negativity observed across the variables. The study demonstrates both the robustness of the psychological model observed, and the need for research to identify the exogenous, unstudied variables required to account for the differences between the nations. An obvious candidate is social norms; namely, standards or rules for behavior, which may both reflect and shape more hostile reactions to immigrants when hostility is a normative reaction (e.g., Pettigrew, 1959). But where do normative differences originate? Space does not allow a full exploration of this fascinating research question, but the political context and specific media reporting patterns seem likely directions for future research.

In Australia in the late 1990s, a political party called "One Nation" formed on a platform of nationalist opposition to immigration and attracted a high level of popular support, with seats in the national parliament and up to 25% of the vote in state elections. As a result, mainstream political discourse became more hostile to immigration, and anti-immigrant attitudes and actions were strengthened (but see Louis, Duck, et al., 2010). Relatedly, Esses and colleagues' (2008) Study 3 experimentally manipulated exposure to media depictions of immigrants as violating appropriate procedures and showed a clear causal association between dehumanizing media portrayals of immigrants and contempt and lack of admiration, which, in turn, were associated with less favorable attitudes toward the group and less support for the current refugee policy. If Australian media or political "identity entrepreneurs" (Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005) are more likely than are Canadian sources to deploy anti-immigrant discourses, it could lead to differences in citizens' perceptions of zero-sum conflict, dehumanizing beliefs, or both, in turn flowing on to more negative attitudes.

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Limitations and Directions for Future Research

It must be noted inevitably that the present study was cross-sectional, so that the direction of causality for the relationships observed here was derived from past theory and research (e.g., Esses et al., 1998, 2008). Experiments have confirmed the direction of many of the relationships modeled here (e.g., Esses et al., 2006; Kay et al., 2005). However, longitudinal research has also regularly observed reciprocal relationships (e.g., Kessler et al., 2010). Moreover, many researchers have drawn attention to differences in the antecedents of hostile intergroup attitudes as a function of the type of prejudice measured (e.g., González-Castro, Ubillos, & Ibáñez, 2009). The relatively blatant “attitude thermometer” measure used in the present research will not capture more subtle or implicit prejudice, which also impacts significantly on intergroup relations.

The present findings support a cross-national pattern in which abstract national identification is associated with perceptions of immigrants as threatening, which, in turn, are associated with dehumanizing beliefs that immigrants are “cheating the system,” with emotions such as contempt and lack of admiration, and with negative attitudes. For our theoretical purposes, feedback loops of mutual reinforcement would not detract from our model. To the extent that the national identity is captured by a conservative discourse of threatening immigrant–citizen competition, and dehumanization and prejudice spread, negative attitudes may fuel dehumanizing emotions and beliefs. These, in turn, will reinforce perceptions of threat. This process would create a spiral of increasing anti-immigrant xenophobia, which, in fact, appears to be a feature of 21st-century international politics.

It should be noted that this paper deals with immigrants and immigration without differentiation, whereas, of course, certain groups of immigrants may be treated more favorably or harshly than others at any given time. For example, visible minority immigrants may experience xenophobia exacerbated by racist stereotypes, as research in both Australia (e.g., Khan & Pedersen, 2010; Louis, Lalonde et al., 2010) and Canada (e.g., Esses et al., 2001) has shown. In 21st-century Australia, asylum seekers arriving by boat may be particularly stigmatized (Hartley & Pedersen, 2007; Haslam & Pedersen, 2007; Louis et al., 2007). Future research may explore heterogeneity along dimensions such as means of entry, race, class, gender, and sexuality in more detail. Similarly, although we interpret differences between the Canadian and Australian samples in terms of cross-national differences, the samples are not representative and draw only on university student populations. Factors such as cross-group contact play an important role in prejudice (e.g., Barlow, Louis, & Hewstone, 2009; Barlow, Louis, & Terry, 2010). Not having measured state or province of origin, socioeconomic status, or area of study, the generalizability of the present

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results is made on theoretical, rather than statistical grounds. Nevertheless, disentangling the national comparison from state, city, and other potential confounds and using fully representative national samples would be a desirable direction for future research.

In the present research, competitive zero-sum beliefs were associated with dehumanizing beliefs and emotions, and they mediated the link between national identification and outcomes. The findings support the contention that national identification becomes linked to negative attitudes when associated with perceptions of the immigrant out-group as threatening, and demonstrates the important role that dehumanizing beliefs and emotions play in rationalizing threat-related negativity. Importantly, the relationships among the variables were not moderated by participants' nationality, although baseline differences in hostility were observed. The findings thus contribute to a growing body of research documenting the operation of system justification processes to defend against challenges to existing intergroup structures.

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^DTable 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Pooled Intercorrelations

Variable	Canadians		Australians		Pooled		1	2	3	4	5
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>					
1. National identification	5.37	1.38	5.77	1.40	5.57	1.40	—				
2. Zero-sum beliefs	2.63	1.03	3.08	1.20	2.86	1.14	.14*	—			
3. Immigrants as cheaters	-1.07	1.41	-0.44	1.11	-0.75	1.30	.06	.53***	—		
4. Contempt	-1.67	1.18	-1.53	1.12	-1.60	1.15	-.02	.49***	.41***	—	
5. Lack of admiration	-0.63	1.11	-0.17	1.19	-0.40	1.17	.07	.39***	.27***	.20**	—
6. Negative attitudes	27.38	15.01	35.33	18.35	31.39	17.21	.05	.52***	.43***	.45***	.51***

Note. National identification: 1 to 7; Zero-sum beliefs: 1 to 7; Immigrants as cheaters: -4 to +4; Contempt: -3 to +3; Lack of admiration: -3 to +3; Negative attitudes: 0 to 100.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 2

Intercorrelations by Sample: Australians (Below Diagonal) and Canadians (Above)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. National identification	—	.09	-.04	-.04	.01	.07
2. Zero-sum beliefs	.14	—	.52***	.52***	.37***	.40***
3. Immigrants as cheaters	.12	.53***	—	.44***	.23*	.43***
4. Contempt	-.02	.46***	.38***	—	.20**	.43***
5. Lack of admiration	.07	.36***	.23**	.20**	—	.42***
6. Negative attitudes	.08	.57***	.48***	.47***	.54***	—

Note. Values for Australians appear below the diagonal, while values for Canadians appear above the diagonal. National identification: 1 to 7; Zero-sum beliefs: 1 to 7; Immigrants as cheaters: -4 to +4; Contempt: -3 to +3; Lack of admiration: -3 to +3; Negative attitudes: 0 to 100.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Figure 1. A model of legitimizing myths and anti-immigration sentiment.

