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Can White Nationalist Rhetoric Increase Prejudice Toward Mexican Immigrants?

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Can White Nationalist Rhetoric Increase Prejudice Toward Mexican Immigrants?

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

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Abstract

The Western populism wave of ethno-nationalism (i.e., exclusionary resistance to egalitarianism: exclusionist belief in the superiority of ingroup goals over superordinate goals that are inclusive of all cultures) may increase prejudice toward minorities (Schmuck & Matthes, 2017). Integrated threat theory (ITT; Stephan & Stephan, 1996) states that prejudiced attitudes are mediated by four types of threat, which are affected by quantity and quality of intergroup contact (Stephan et al., 2000). These threats include realistic threat (e.g., fear of losing one's job to an immigrant), symbolic threat (e.g., fear of losing one's societal values/norms to a foreign culture), intergroup anxiety, and negative stereotypes. Divisive rhetoric that activates perceived outgroup threat (e.g., realistic threat: immigrants portrayed as rapists and criminals) may increase prejudiced attitudes in the target audience. This study investigated how White nationalist versus egalitarian social media messages affect attitudes toward Mexican immigrants. 792 participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions. Participants in two conditions read a social media page with either nationalist-leaning or egalitarian-leaning rhetoric, and participants in the control condition read a social media page with neutral rhetoric. Participants from all three conditions then completed scales assessing realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, negative stereotypes, and prejudice toward Mexican immigrants, as well as the quantity and quality of their intergroup contact and questions about their political orientation. Condition (i.e., White nationalist or egalitarian priming manipulation) did not have a significant effect on prejudice compared to the control group. Conservatism significantly predicted prejudice, and this relationship was fully mediated by integrated threat. Conservatives reported higher levels of

realistic/symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, negative stereotypes, and prejudice toward Mexican immigrants than their liberal counterparts. Perhaps most importantly, participants who reported higher quantity and quality of contact with Mexican immigrants generally had lower scores on scales of integrated threat and prejudice. The Western shift towards exclusionary White nationalism could detrimentally affect minorities' rights and safety; however, ongoing quality intergroup contact may be society's path to peace and tolerance.

Keywords: White nationalism, egalitarianism, integrated threat, prejudice, tolerance, immigrants

This Study by: Nathan Lewey

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this to my mom and dad, Jean and Richard; their infinite support,

advice, and wisdom facilitated and inspired this thesis.

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I would like to thank my thesis committee for their patience and wonderful guidance throughout this process. A special thanks goes out to Dr. Harton (chair) for their unmatched expertise, perfect mentoring style, and for being my wonderful academic sherpa throughout my graduate school tenure and this thesis process.

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Introduction

There are 44 million immigrants living in the United States, roughly 26 percent originating from Mexico (Immigrant Learning Center, 2022). Immigration is a hot-button issue in the United States, as seen in anti-immigrant political campaign ads leading up to the 2022 midterm elections (Contreras, 2022). Anti-immigrant sentiment has increased over the years (Porter & Russell, 2018), alongside violence near the US/Mexico border (U.S. Department of State, 2018), large-scale displacements of Hispanic populations in "caravans" heading to the southern border of the United States seeking asylum from their own government's inadequate response to rampant gang violence (UNHCR, 2018), and a demographic shift toward a minority-majority in the United States (Frey, 2018).

Although past and present immigration policies do not reflect the reality of the immigration situation (Durand & Massey, 2019), these policy decisions continue to fuel societal blowback in the form of public condemnation (FWD.us, 2022). Governmental policies borne of perceived outgroup threat continue in the form of novel anti-immigration legislation aimed at doing away with "sanctuary cities," turning Florida into a "no quarter" state for foreign immigrants by requiring community shelter operators to collaborate with Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, and adding punitive measures for organizations that help undocumented children in reaching sanctuary/shelter (FWD.us, 2022). Governors from coastal/border states have sent immigrants to "Democrat" cities like Washington, D. C. (PBS, 2022), New York (El Paso Matters, 2022), and Martha's Vineyard—after being told they were going to Boston—as well as near the Vice President's residence in the Nation's Capital (Texas Tribune, 2022). The global pandemic's effects on society also increased ingroup xenophobia, mediated by

negative emotions towards outgroups (She et al., 2022). Negative attitudes toward immigrants are also affected by subjective and polarizing media exposure and political party affiliation with Republicanism (Price & Kaufhold, 2019). Both were associated with increased negative attitudes toward immigration, and support among Republicans for immigration declined significantly after the election of Donald Trump (Price & Kaufhold, 2019). Frequent selective exposure to certain media outlets online like Twitter and Facebook can exacerbate erroneous beliefs in misinformation when the news consumer is already prone to conspiracy thinking (Enders et al., 2021).

In the following sections I focus first on the concept of White nationalism—nuanced exclusionary populism—in relation to inclusionary egalitarianism and the spreading of nationalistic agendas on social media. I then outline Integrated Threat Theory (ITT; Stephan & Stephan, 1996) and the four mediating factors involved in the process—namely realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, and negative stereotypes—between an antecedent like ingroup identification or intergroup contact and prejudice towards an outgroup like Mexican immigrants. Then, I delve into social media effects, as well as a section on the effects of exclusionary White nationalist social media messaging on the audience's attitudes towards an outgroup. A short section introducing the current pre-registered (2021, October 27; https://osf.io/ywkne) study follows, in which I investigated the effects of reading White nationalist/egalitarian Tweets on prejudice toward Mexican immigrants, via four integrated threat factors, as well as the relationships between political orientation and intergroup contact and prejudice.

White (Ethno)Nationalism vs Egalitarianism and Social Media

White nationalist movements look to increase prosperity for Whites, usually at the expense of outgroups like immigrants (Anti-Defamation League, 2022). On the other hand, egalitarianism refers to equality among all humans across the spectrum from financial equality to human rights equality and everything in between (Arneson, 2013). Having a White nationalist worldview can negatively affect a person's support for egalitarian public policies and may incite violence toward a perceived threatening outgroup (Reyna et al., 2022). White identity and nationalism are negatively related to support for egalitarianist multiculturalism, and this effect was doubled when those that identified with Whites also reported high levels of nationalist attitudes (Osborne et al., 2019).

One way that White nationalistic ideas can spread is through the popularity of apps like Twitter and Facebook where White nationalists can gain support for their exclusionary agendas (Hendrickson & Galston, 2017). As more and more Americans get their news from social media (i.e., 2 out of 3 surveyed [Shearer & Gottfried, 2017]) the use of persuasive messages on issues like immigration has infiltrated worldwide networks like Twitter and Facebook (Hendrickson & Galston, 2017). For example, during the 2016 election campaign, Trump used nationalist rhetoric on Twitter to sway voters toward the MAGA movement. One-hundred and thirty-one of his Tweets were about immigration, the most of any U.S. candidate during that time period (Maurer & Diehl, 2020). Tweets like these perpetuate the idea of otherness toward immigrants (Jaramillo-Dent & Perez-Rodriguez, 2021) and allow for the potential of a White nationalistic anti-immigrant message to "go viral," thus reaching millions of people by means of public sharing or

retweeting. Retweets were important during the 2016 American Presidential Election, especially for Trump's campaign, in gathering news media coverage across the spectrum from ideological right to left; and his Tweets were strategically used to pull in supporters during lulls in media coverage (Wells et al., 2020).

Integrated Threat Theory

One reason why these messages may be effective is that they make people feel threatened. According to integrated threat theory (Stephan & Stephan, 1996), realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, and negative stereotyping mediate the relationship between intergroup contact or ingroup identification and outgroup prejudice. The first of these four integrated threats, realistic threat, refers to perceived threats from members of an outgroup to an ingroup's economic livelihood and other tangible resources—for example, immigrants taking jobs from natives. Symbolic threat is defined as the perceived threat to an ingroup's values and belief system—for example, societal customs and cultural norms. Intergroup anxiety refers to the level of discomfort people feel when in the presence of a member of another group—for example, if a White person fears sitting next to an Arab person on an airplane, when that fear is based on cultural differences. Negative stereotyping refers to perceived negative assumptions about an outgroup like dishonesty and aggressiveness (Stephan et al., 1999).

These four mediating integrated threats may work together, along with other mediators/moderators within specific environmental contexts, to affect outgroup attitudes. For example, both symbolic threat and negative stereotypes, mediated by anger, disgust, and pity, predicted ingroup prejudiced attitudes toward Muslims in the Netherlands (Wirtz et al., 2016). Realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, and

negative stereotypes predict prejudiced attitudes toward immigrants, especially in areas with high rates of immigration (Stephan et al., 1999). In the following sub-section, I outline some different antecedents related to integrated threat and prejudice.

Antecedents of Integrated Threat and Prejudice

In-group identification and social dominance orientation—a preference for ingroup superiority over an "inferior" outgroup—act as antecedents to prejudice towards an outgroup (Uenal, 2016), both of which are mediated by a perceived symbolic threat to one's way of life due to fear of losing one's value system and societal norms (Gonzales et al., 2008). However, the endorsement of multiculturalism in the form of societal inclusion regardless of ethnicity, cultural background, or immigrant status, acts as an antecedent of tolerance, which is a basic pillar of egalitarian ideology and creates positive outcomes for minorities in the form of human rights and protection from violence (Verkuyten & Yogeeswaran, 2017). Ingroup identification, mediated by integrated threat, is related to outgroup prejudice (Stephan et al., 1999). Groups with ethno-nationalist superiority beliefs are an example of when ingroup identification can act as an antecedent to integrated threat.

Another set of antecedents associated with mediational integrated threat and subsequent prejudice is the quantity and quality of intergroup interactions. For example, if a White person has more and better-quality contact with a member or members of an outgroup like Mexican immigrants, they are less likely to hold negative attitudes toward that outgroup. Higher quality interactions can decrease integrated threats like intergroup anxiety and therefore decrease prejudice and hostility toward members of an outgroup (Stephan & Stephan, 1985, 1996; Stephan et al., 2000). In the case of Americans'

attitudes toward Mexican immigrants, higher quality interactions are associated with less perceived outgroup threat (Stephan et al., 1999, 2000).

When members of an ingroup experience intergroup anxiety, for example due to fear of experiencing embarrassment or exclusion, this anxiety can be increased if the member of the ingroup knows little about the outgroup's worldview, perceives differences between the two groups, and is higher in egocentric thinking; bad blood in the form of poor historical relations between groups (e.g., Israel and Palestine) increases intergroup anxiety (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Cultural ignorance, coupled with perceived threat based on nationalist ideology, may lead to higher intergroup anxiety and lower-quality intergroup contact (Stephan & Stephan, 1996). The following sections include a more in-depth look at the four integrated threat variables that mediate the relationship between ingroup identification or intergroup contact and outgroup prejudice.

Realistic Threat as a Mediator

Realistic threat pertains to members of an ingroup perceiving an outgroup threat to their already-existing economic and political structures, as well as their physical safety. For example, a nationalistic-infused belief that an encroaching immigrant caravan will affect their economic security and/or the economic security of the United States in the form of taxpayer money going to fund welfare services for immigrants or that a member of that immigrant group might be a violent criminal encroaching on the safety of the community constitute a perceived realistic threat. Realistic threat of disease/contamination, as a specific example, was associated with prejudice among college students in New Mexico toward Rwandan and East Timorese refugees (Stephan et al., 2005).

Symbolic Threat as a Mediator

Symbolic threat pertains to the perception of threat to one's culture and overall way of life (Stephan & Stephan, 1996; Stephan et al., 2000). Examples of symbolic threat include a fear of immigrants changing the way American society functions, like the addition of public signage in non-English languages, national holidays celebrating diverse groups of people, or changes to educational curricula to include all parts of American history. Symbolic threat was associated with self-reported prejudice against Muslims in the Netherlands (Gonzales et al., 2008). Symbolic threat was also associated with higher rates of prejudice among college students towards foreign immigrant refugees (Stephan et al., 2005).

Intergroup Anxiety as a Mediator

Intergroup anxiety is the level of discomfort or stress people feel when they are sharing an environment with a member or members of a different group and can take the form of anxious apprehension when encountering a person of color in public, when that anxiety is based on race. White nationalists may seek to increase those levels of anxiety with Facebook posts such as those of immigrant caravans coupled with derogatory rhetoric that looks to incite fear. People who report higher levels of intergroup anxiety or distress when interacting with members of an outgroup including those of a different race and/or ethnicity also report higher levels of prejudice towards the outgroup (Stephan et al., 1999).

Negative Stereotypes as a Mediator

The fourth and final mediating factor under integrated threat in the relationship between an antecedent and outcome prejudice is negative stereotypes. This rather self-

explanatory mediating variable relates to the belief that an outgroup like Mexican immigrants is dishonest, ignorant, and/or undisciplined, etc. (Stephan et al., 1999). Exclusionary White nationalists can use this divisive rhetoric to derogate the outgroup and gain support for their anti-inclusionary social movement. Negative stereotypes predict prejudice toward members of that outgroup (Riek et al., 2006; Stephan & Stephan, 1996; Stephan et al., 2005). In the next section I discuss the effects of social media on attitudes as applied to White nationalist messaging.

Social Media and Anti-immigrant Sentiment

Nationalists use social media to get people angry, scared, and resentful of the outgroup (Hokka & Nelimarkka, 2020), and it may only take one social media posting to activate nationalist attitudes (Ardag & Thomaeczek, 2021) and negatively affect people's attitudes toward immigrants (Parrot et al., 2019). Messaging campaigns that derogate and vilify an outgroup like Mexican immigrants can cause people to blame these immigrants for societal problems (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). They can also help White nationalists recruit followers to their cause (Hendrickson & Galston, 2017).

There are several reasons why social media can have such effects. Group polarization—the tendency for people to become more extreme in their opinions when discussing issues in a group (Brauer et al., 1995; Myers, 1978)—is especially relevant on social media platforms. Three factors seem to drive the group polarization effect—members wanting to be accepted/fit in with others (i.e., social comparison explanation; Myers, 1978), people hearing more arguments in favor of the majority opinion and being more persuaded (persuasive arguments explanation; Burnstein & Vinokur, 1977), and people repeated their own arguments and thinking about them more (repeated arguments

explanation; Brauer et al., 1995). These facilitating factors can be seen on social media platforms with examples like online groups in which members compare their opinions to others, read others' arguments, and repeatedly share their own thoughts. For example, both conservatives and liberals were more likely to believe false information when the source was politically similar (Traberg & van der Linden, 2022). Increased political polarization on both sides also increases the likelihood that fake news will be believed by the message recipient and social media allows for unchecked dissemination with less of a desire for intermediaries like actual experts in the field (Greifeneder et al., 2021).

Repeated exposure is a facet of social media usage in that consumers are inundated with similar messages on an ongoing basis (e.g., political advertising before an election). Social media contributes to a mere-exposure effect wherein people tend to favor something even more when they are exposed to it more frequently (Moreland & Topolinski, 2010)—which increases the likelihood of the message being effective (Kleinnijenhuis, et al., 2019). Social media usage and time online was directly and positively related to susceptibility to political persuasion (Ahmad, 2020), consistent with this effect.

A third reason social media platforms can persuade members' opinions lies under the rubric of social/group identity. Identifying with an ingroup can alleviate self-doubt and overall uncertainty. Uncertainty around the self can also lead members to identify more strongly with their ingroup. Group identification affects members' feelings, beliefs, and behaviors (Hogg et al., 2010) and can lead them to take on the perceived appropriate group opinions. Large groups with structurally similar participants (i.e., right-wing or left-wing) can create echo chambers that reach many people (Santos et al., 2021).

Emphasizing social identities such as race, political orientation, and friend groups can also encourage people to be motivated to accept messages. Even individuals who use social media for reasons like contact with family and friends and not specifically for their news are still persuaded by anti-immigrant political messages like the "build the wall" slogan that they encounter through their online social networks (Diehl et al., 2016).

A final reason that social media is effective in persuading others is that people are easily able to find and selectively expose themselves to information that fits their pre-existing beliefs and biases. Motivated reasoning suggests that people are more likely to arrive at a preferred conclusion regardless of information (Kunda, 1990). For example, if a social media message refutes a person's preferred conclusion about immigration issues (e.g., immigration should be stopped), then they are more likely to be skeptical about the validity of the claim made in the message (e.g., immigration should be reformed); however, if the message endorses a pre-existing preferred conclusion like halting immigration altogether, then the message is more likely to be taken at face value, more likely to be persuasive regarding attitudes toward an outgroup, and requires less information to reach that attitude change. Motivated reasoning also affects what information people access in that they are motivated to find and absorb information that aligns with their ideological pre-determined preferences (Kunda, 1990). Similarly, confirmation bias—seeking and interpreting information in a way that is congruent with pre-existing beliefs (Nickerson, 1998)—can lead to like-minded individuals congregating together into groups. Selective attention to pro-ingroup/anti-outgroup information allows members of the ingroup to choose belief-affirming material—as in the case of which

social media posts to read—on a frequent basis, which in turn strengthens their memory of that information (Frimer et al., 2017).

Social media can also be effective in misleading people and spreading information quickly. Information on social media platforms contains much more misinformation and disinformation (i.e., falsities with informed intent) than news obtained from more traditional messaging platforms like local/national news outlets (Greifeneder et al., 2021). Social media platforms seem to provide supporters of White nationalism an unchecked landscape from which to pick and choose the information they convey, even when the information is intended to ostracize members of an outgroup (Engesser et al., 2017). Social media can also be used to spread misinformation quickly during times of civil unrest in order to promote extremism and mobilize a group's explosive volatility into action, like in the case of the January 6th Capitol insurrection (Kinnvall & Capelos, 2021).

These effects of social media can be especially dangerous for those who use social media as their main source of news. Using social media specifically as a news source activates the propensity for uncivil political discussions, which in turn can increase motivated reasoning in the form of social media filtering (Goyanes et al., 2021). Using social media as a primary news source also increases the reader's support for nationalist-leaning political candidates (Schumann et al., 2021).

Whether these messages affect people may also be due in part to individual difference factors. Recent research regarding activation of nationalist traits found that people exposed to real-life contemporary nationalistic slogans in Germany after only a single session reported higher levels of nationalism (Ardag & Thomaeczek, 2021), but

other studies have shown that these ideas may only lead to negative attitudes when and if the message receiver believes that the message credibly explains the real world (Hawkins et al., 2018). Whether the message receiver "normally" reads White nationalist propaganda, how much the person feels deprived in their life/perceived victimhood, their levels of distrust for the political process, and whether the person supports the message source all moderated the effects of a message on subsequent social attitudes (Hameleers, 2021).

Persuasive messages aimed to induce realistic and symbolic threat, two constructs within ITT (Stephan & Stephan, 1996), are especially prevalent in right-wing political advertising. These threat-inducing online messages increase the target's salience of negative stereotypes and increase intergroup anxiety (Stephan & Stephan, 1996), which subsequently act as mediators to increase anti-immigrant attitudes (Schmuck & Matthes, 2017).

Contemporary White nationalism encompasses perceived realistic threat in its ideology and messaging, including on social media platforms in examples like blaming immigrants for crime and unemployment (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007) and further divides ingroups against outgroups. Exclusionary nationalistic rhetoric via social media platforms like Twitter that aims to dehumanize minority groups and condones (social) dominance over minority cultures through persuasive social media messages that highlight perceived realistic threat may increase prejudice, whereas an egalitarian message that highlights an aspiration towards a cohesive and safe community regardless of immigrant status of residents via social media outlets could increase tolerance and decrease prejudice.

Modern White nationalism also integrates symbolic threat into its ideology and messaging including on social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook with examples like blaming immigrants for loss of "American" culture (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007), and this type of divisive ideology perpetuates culture clash. White nationalists use their brand of messaging over social media to influence social attitudes by creating a picture of an inferior immigrant on a path to take away societal culture, and therefore affect their audience's level of outgroup prejudice. However, using positive messaging by creating a picture of inclusion, win-win situations, and collective societal goals for an equitable and prosperous future could affect levels of prejudice, just in the other direction towards tolerance.

With regards to the intergroup anxiety people may feel during intergroup contact, White nationalists can use social media platforms like Twitter or Facebook to stir up fear, anger, and resentment (Hokka & Nelimarkka, 2020), especially towards an outgroup like Mexican immigrants. However, promoting positive emotions like compassion, community, and fairness could increase levels of societal outgroup tolerance. The environment in which the intergroup interaction takes place affects levels of intergroup anxiety experienced by members of the ingroup (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). For example, if the interaction takes place in a competitive environment and/or the outgroup member has minority or low status, then intergroup anxiety increases (Stephan & Stephan, 1985, 1996). Social media could be considered an extremely competitive environment—the need to be a part of the "winning side" on online discussion threads related to hot-button divisive social issues like immigration, race relations, systemic discrimination.

Current Study

Immigration is a hot-button issue in the United States and involves anti-immigrant attitudes and policies. White nationalism encompasses superiority beliefs over an outgroup like Mexican immigrants, and these anti-egalitarian messages are often spread using social media. Integrated threat theory (Stephan & Stephan, 1996) suggests that realistic/symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, and negative stereotyping mediate the effects of antecedents like ingroup identification on prejudice. These threats can be seen in social media messages related to negative attitudes toward immigrants and can be used to induce anger, fear, and resentment towards an outgroup. Previous research on the effects of populism (nationalism) finds that this type of messaging can increase prejudice toward immigrants in the receiver and this effect can be mediated by online messages that induce perceived threat (Schmuck & Matthes, 2017). Adding an anti-outgroup image to online messaging can increase perceived symbolic threat and negative stereotypes even more (Schmuck & Matthes, 2017). This activation of negative stereotyping towards an outgroup, as well as any increase in intergroup anxiety associated with the nationalist/populist/anti-immigrant message, tends to be stronger if the receiver has a low level of education (Matthes & Schmuck, 2017). When these threats are activated, people have more negative attitudes toward immigrants/the outgroup (Matthes & Schmuck, 2017). In this study, I examined whether White nationalist Tweets would have negative effects on attitudes toward Mexican immigrants through increasing perceptions of threat. I also examined whether egalitarian messages would have the opposite effect.

I investigated social attitudes toward Mexican immigrants in a United States sample recruited from mTurk by asking participants ($N = 792$) to complete a survey

entitled "Social Media Perceptions and Social Attitudes" in which they were randomly assigned to view one of three Twitter-like feeds containing seven Tweets with either White nationalist, egalitarian, or neutral style rhetoric and then answer questions about the Twitter page itself, the author of the Tweets, and their own personal social attitudes—measures of integrated threat as mediators and prejudice as the dependent variable, as well as a demographics section on age, gender, and political orientation, and a section related to their intergroup contact with Mexican immigrants.

I predicted that participants viewing Tweets encouraging White nationalist exclusion would report higher levels of realistic and symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, negative stereotypes, and prejudice toward Mexican immigrants, compared with participants viewing egalitarian or neutral Tweets; I predicted that participants viewing egalitarian-leaning Tweets would report lower levels of realistic and symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, negative stereotypes, and prejudice toward Mexican immigrants compared with participants viewing White nationalist or neutral Tweets. I also predicted that the four types of integrated threat would mediate the relationship between condition and outgroup prejudice toward Mexican immigrants.

This study was pre-registered on the Open Science Framework at https://osf.io/ywkne (2021, October 27).

Method

Participants

A small effect size was expected based on effects from similar studies ($d = .16$ to .18, Matthes & Schmuck, 2017; $r = .2$, Schmuck & Matthes, 2017; $r = .24$). I ran a G*Power analysis for estimating sample size that recommended using 1269 participants

($p < .05$, .90 power, 3 groups; Erdfelder et al., 1996) using online software (Faul et al., 2009). However, because I expected significant data loss due to participant ineligibility—for example, failed attention checks—this number was increased. In total, 1428 participants were recruited via CloudResearch's MTurk Toolkit for a study entitled "Social Media Perceptions and Social Attitudes." Participants were paid \$0.50 for participation. During data cleaning, 636 participants were removed from analyses, leaving 792 total participants.

Participants' ($n = 792$) ages ranged from 21 to 89 years old ($M = 46.65$) with a majority responding "female" as their gender identity ($n = 501$, 63.3%) and "White or Caucasian" as their racial/ethnic background (American Indian/Native American = 2.4%, Asian/Asian American = 5.4%, Black/African American = 7.3%, Hispanic/Latino/Latinx = 4.5%, Pacific Islander = 0.6%, White/Caucasian = 82.8%). Random assignment to condition resulted in 252 (31.8%) participants in the egalitarian condition, 275 (34.7%) in the White nationalism condition, and 265 (33.5%) in the control group. Political orientation (Very Conservative = 8.3%, Conservative = 19.2%, Moderate = 25.6%, Liberal = 29.2%, Very Liberal = 17.0%) and political party identification (Republican = 186, Democrat = 363, Independent = 185, No Affiliation = 47) leaned Liberal/Democrat (Table 1).

Table 1

Means/Percentages from Demographics & Political Orientation by Condition (n = 792)

	Egalitarianism	White Nationalism	Control
Age	46.51	46.88	46.54
Gender (% female)	61.50%	61.50%	66.80%
Race/Ethnicity (% White or Caucasian)	83.70%	84.40%	80.40%
Education Level (1-5)	3.49	3.43	3.43
Political Party (% Democrat)	42.90%	48.70%	45.70%
Political Party (% Republican)	25.00%	22.90%	22.60%
Political Party (% Independent)	22.20%	23.30%	24.50%
Political Orientation (overall, 1 liberal -5 conservative)	2.74	2.68	2.76
Political Orientation (social policy, 1-5)	2.55	2.53	2.63
Political Orientation (foreign policy, 1-5)	2.85	2.83	2.91
Political Orientation (economic factors, 1-5)	2.98	2.89	2.97

Procedure

After recruiting participants from CloudResearch, I directed them to a Qualtrics link where the participants then viewed a consent form (Appendix A) and clicked an arrow to agree and continue. I informed participants that they would be participating in a

study where they would be instructed to view a social media page and then answer questions related to the page and its author, followed by questions about their own social attitudes and demographics.

Then, I randomly assigned participants to one of three conditions using the Qualtrics Randomizer function (i.e., egalitarianism, White nationalism, or control condition). After randomization, participants viewed a Twitter-like social media page for twenty seconds using the Qualtrics time delay function containing seven Tweets, either 4 nationalist (Appendix B) Tweets/3 neutral Tweets, 4 egalitarian/3 neutral (Appendix C), or 7 neutral Tweets (Appendix D). An example of an egalitarian Tweet was "Mexican immigrants uphold the values we hold dear… and should be allowed here!" An example of a White nationalist Tweet was "Mexican immigrants do not uphold the values we hold dear… and should not be allowed here!". An example of a neutral Tweet was "Finally found a new apartment!" They then evaluated the layout of the page (Appendix E) and its author's personality (i.e., BFI-10; Appendix F) as part of the cover story, as well as the author's social attitudes in the form of two specific attention checks related to the (Appendix G) that were used to ensure participants' understanding of the social media page they viewed (e.g., whether the author of the page was egalitarian, nationalistic, or unknown based on their attitudes about similarity/dissimilarity of "American" values and acceptance of Mexican immigrants into United States society).

Participants then completed four scales in a random order assessing their own personal social attitudes: realistic threat (Appendix H), symbolic threat (Appendix I), intergroup anxiety (Appendix J), negative stereotyping (Appendix K), and then completed a prejudice toward Mexican immigrants scale (Appendix L). I included a

section on intergroup contact with Mexican immigrants (Appendix M) and a section on

social media usage (Appendix N). I also included a demographics section with questions

about age, gender, race/ethnicity, education level, citizenship, and immigrant status, as

well as questions about political orientation (Appendix O).

Throughout the survey, I interspersed four generic attention check questions. One

example of this was "I am completing this survey from a computer on the moon" (1 =

Strongly Disagree to 10 = *Strongly Agree*); as well as an honesty check at the end

(Appendix P). After the study was completed, participants read a debriefing where I

informed them of the research manipulation (e.g., study looks at effects of a social media

message on self-reported prejudice and perceived threat), instructed them on how to

receive study compensation, included appreciation for their participation, addressed the

academic use of derogatory rhetoric in the study including a post-study message of

human tolerance, and relayed researcher/university contact information (Appendix Q).

Measures

Questions About the Social Media Page's Format and Author

There were three total author-generated questions related to the social media page

format (1 = *I really liked the format* to 5 = *I really disliked the format*), language used (1

= *The language was very easy to understand* to 5 = *The language was very difficult to*

understand), and whether or not the participant would follow the author (of the page they

viewed) on social media (1 = *Yes* or 2 = *No*; Appendix E).

Big Five Inventory (Author's Personality; BFI-10)

This shortened version of the Big Five inventory is a measure of five dimensions

of personality (i.e., Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and

Neuroticism). It includes 10 items and has moderate to high reliability (Cronbach's α = .68-.84) and good validity (Balgiu, 2018). Sample questions on this inventory included "Think about the author of the page you just viewed... How well do the following statements describe the author's personality?... Reserved, Trusting, Lazy" (1 = *disagree strongly* to 5 = *agree strongly*; Appendix F).

Specific Attention Checks

There were two specific attention checks regarding the study manipulation used in the study related to participants' perceptions of the social media page author's attitudes about similarity/difference in "American" (U.S.-born) values when compared with the values of Mexican immigrants (1 = *very different* to 5 = *very similar* and 6 = *The social media page I viewed did not mention Mexican immigrants*) and the author's acceptance of Mexican immigrants into United States society (1 = *completely included* to 5 = *completely excluded* and 6 = *The social media page I viewed did not mention Mexican immigrants*; Appendix G).

Realistic Threat (Revised for Mexican Immigrant Target)

The realistic threat scale includes eight items and measures attitudes related to a perceived threat to an ingroup's political or economic power, well-being, or their existence. High reliability (Cronbach's α = .85) and validity has been shown (Stephan et al., 1999); and high reliability was found in this study as well (Cronbach's α = .95). A sample question on this scale asks if "Mexican immigrants get more from this country than they contribute" (1 = *strongly disagree* to 10 *strongly agree*; Appendix H).

*Symbolic Threat (**Revised for Mexican Immigrant Target**)*

The symbolic threat scale includes seven items and measures attitudes related to a perceived threat to one's culture and way of life (e.g., issues with assimilation, cross-cultural clashes). High reliability (Cronbach's α = .79) and validity has been shown (Stephan et al., 1999); and high reliability was found in this study as well (Cronbach's α = .89). A sample question on this scale asks if "Mexican immigrants should learn to conform to the rules and norms of American society as soon as possible after they arrive" (1 = *strongly disagree* to 10 = *strongly agree*; Appendix I).

*Intergroup Anxiety (**Revised for Mexican Immigrant Target**)*

The intergroup anxiety scale includes 12 items and measures attitudes related to a perceived threat of negative personal outcomes (e.g., embarrassment) when interacting with outgroup members. High reliability (Cronbach's α = .90) and validity has been shown (Stephan et al., 1999); and high reliability was found in this study as well (Cronbach's α = .96). A sample question asks participants to indicate the degree to which they feel certain emotions like "anxious, awkward, threatened" when interacting with Mexican immigrants (1 = *not at all* to 10 = *extremely*; Appendix J).

*Negative Stereotyping (**Revised for Mexican Immigrant Target**)*

The negative stereotype index includes 12 items and measures attitudes related to perceived prevalence of the negative and positive stereotypes of another group (positive stereotypes are reverse-scored). High reliability (Cronbach's α = .86; Curseu et al., 2007) and validity was shown (Stephan et al., 1999); and high reliability was found in this study as well (Cronbach's α = .94). A sample question on this scale asks participants to indicate the percentage of Mexican immigrants who are "dishonest"; Appendix K).

Prejudice (Toward Mexican Immigrants)

The prejudice scale includes 12 items and measures prejudiced attitudes toward an outgroup. High reliability (Cronbach's α = .82) and validity has been shown (Stephan et al., 2000); and high reliability was found in this study as well (Cronbach's α = .93). A sample question on this index asks participants the degree that they feel "hostility" toward Mexican immigrants (1 = *not at all* to 10 = *extremely*; Appendix L).

Intergroup Contact with Mexican Immigrants

The intergroup contact scale (adapted) includes two of the original 15 items and measures quantity (1 = *none at all* to 7 = *a great deal*) and quality (1 = *not at all pleasant* to *very pleasant*) of intergroup contact (Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Appendix M).

Social Media Usage

This section contained two questions about which social media platforms the participants used (1 = *Facebook*, 2 = *Twitter*, 3 = *other*) as well as what percentage of their political news and information (e.g., social media posts related to political candidates, current issues under debate like foreign policy and border control) they obtained from social media platforms (Appendix N).

Demographics and Political Orientation

The first part of the demographics questionnaire included six items where I asked participants questions about their age, gender, race/ethnicity, education level, citizenship, and immigrant status (Appendix O).

The second section of demographics included five items where I asked participants about their political party affiliation (*Democrat, Republican, Independent*), overall political orientation (*very conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal, very*

liberal), and nuanced political orientation as it relates to social policy, foreign policy, and economic factors; Appendix O). I averaged the latter three facets of nuanced political orientation and found a high positive correlation with participants' overall political orientation scores (.935) and therefore I solely used overall political orientation for analyses. Also, for analytical clarity, I reverse-scored the overall political orientation variable into a conservatism scale so that *very liberal* = 1, *liberal* = 2, *moderate* = 3, *conservative* = 4, and *very conservative* = 5.

Honesty and Generic Attention Checks

I asked participants what they thought the study was about and "How honest were your answers throughout the study?" (1 = *Not Honest at all*, 2 = *Slightly Honest*, 3 = *Moderately Honest*, 4 = *Extremely Honest*), and to add any comments they had for the researchers. There were also four generic attention checks, an example of which was "I am completing this survey from a computer on the moon" and "Please choose 65%" throughout the study (Appendix P).

<p align="center">Results</p>

Data Cleaning

Participant Data Eligibility

CloudResearch's Worker Requirements function automatically blocked suspicious geolocations as well as non-U.S. IP addresses. I deleted cases with duplicate IP addresses (56 cases), non-U.S. citizens (9 cases), those that did not answer citizenship question (5 cases), those with a study time of < 300 seconds (229 cases; based on practice run-throughs of the survey in which any participant that took under five minutes to complete the survey would not have been able to read/understand all of the questions and

give accurate responses), those that self-reported as Mexican immigrants (62 cases) or did not answer immigrant status question (25 cases), those that self-reported dishonesty (*Not Honest at all*, 10 cases; *Slightly Honest*, 2 cases) and those that did not respond to the honesty check question (3 cases), and those that failed 2/4 generic attention checks (68 cases).

Specific Attention Checks

A participant in the egalitarianism condition required a response of 4+ (*similar*) and a participant in the White nationalism condition required a response of 2 or less (*different*) on the first specific attention check regarding study manipulation that read "The author of this social media page believes that overall, Mexican immigrants' values are ____, compared to U.S.-born citizens." A participant in the egalitarian condition required a response of 2 or less (*included*) and a participant in the White nationalism condition required a response of 4+ (*excluded*) on the second specific attention check that reads "The author of this social media page believes that Mexican immigrants should be ____ in American society." Participants in the control condition required a response of 6 exclusively on both specific attention checks (*The social media page I viewed did not mention Mexican immigrants*). Data from participants who failed at least one of two specific attention checks (167 participants in total) were deleted from further analyses. In total (i.e., data cleaning and specific attention checks related to study manipulation), I deleted 636 cases from the original 1428, leaving 792 participants eligible for further data analyses.

Tests of Assumptions of Normality and Equal Variance

I tested the five main variables (i.e., realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, negative stereotypes, prejudice) using KS/SW (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk) and F-tests before using ANOVA/Regression in my main analyses (both of which assume equal variance) and discovered a moderate positive skew. I then ran a square root transformation on the five main variables and conducted analyses using both sets of data (i.e., original and transformed version). Main variable means were very similar, therefore I decided not to use the square root transformation in final analyses. Visual inspection of boxplots (i.e., no outliers) and scatterplots (i.e., linearity) confirmed the decision to use original variable means in study analyses.

Preliminary Analyses

Means, Standard Deviations, Possible Range, and Sample Sizes

Descriptive statistics were calculated and used to investigate the eight main variables of integrated threat, prejudice, and political orientation, as well as the quantity and quality of intergroup contact between participants and Mexican immigrants. Overall, prejudice was relatively low and conservatism moderate. Scores on all four integrated threat variables were relatively low. Questions about the quantity and quality of intergroup contact showed moderate levels of both (Table 2).

Table 2

Main Variables' Means, Standard Deviations, Possible Range, and Sample Sizes

	Mean	SD	Possible Range	N
Realistic Threat	3.828	2.568	1 to 9	792
Symbolic Threat	4.101	2.070	1 to 9	792
Intergroup Anxiety	3.326	2.037	1 to 9	792
Negative Stereotypes	26.318	18.030	0 to 100	791
Prejudice	3.360	1.839	1 to 9	792
Conservatism	2.724	1.198	1 to 5	787
Quantity Intergroup Contact	3.980	1.803	1 to 7	789
Quality Intergroup Contact	5.200	1.663	1 to 7	790

Correlations

To assess for any variability between the three conditions in their responses for eight main variables (i.e., realistic/symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, negative stereotypes, prejudice, conservatism, and quantity/quality of intergroup contact), I used bivariate correlations after selecting cases by condition; I also ran bivariate correlations on the entire data set (i.e., all conditions combined) to assess variability within the entire sample, which I then compared to variability by condition. Similarity was found across all three groups separately--participants in the egalitarian (Table 3), White nationalism (Table 4), and control conditions (Table 5)—as well as all conditions combined (Table 6)

in the relationships between threat variables, prejudice, contact, and political orientation. Participants who reported higher levels of integrated threat also reported more prejudice, and participants who reported higher quantity and quality of intergroup contact reported lower scores on the integrated threat variables and prejudice. In general, participants who reported higher levels of conservatism reported higher levels of all four types of integrated threat as well as prejudice; participants who reported higher levels of conservatism also reported lower levels of quality of intergroup contact with Mexican immigrants.

Table 3

Correlations by (Egalitarian) Condition between Prejudice, Conservatism, Integrated Threat, Quantity and Quality of Intergroup Contact (n = 252)

	Conservatism	Realistic Threat	Symbolic Threat	Intergroup Anxiety	Negative Stereotypes	Quantity Intergroup Contact	Quality Intergroup Contact
Prejudice	.487**	.822**	.763**	.815**	.829**	-.179**	-.787**
Conservatism		.620**	.593**	.429**	.458**	-.137*	-.353**
Realistic Threat			.835**	.702**	.713**	-.117	-.647**
Symbolic Threat				.676**	.729**	-.049	-.610**
Intergroup Anxiety					.744**	-.248**	-.693**
Negative Stereotypes						-.158*	-.738**
Quantity Intergroup Contact							.355**

Note. * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Table 4

Correlations by (White Nationalism) Condition between Prejudice, Conservatism,

Integrated Threat, Quantity and Quality of Intergroup Contact (n = 275)

	Conservatism	Realistic Threat	Symbolic Threat	Intergroup Anxiety	Negative Stereotypes	Quantity Intergroup Contact	Quality Intergroup Contact
Prejudice	.524**	.796**	.795**	.823**	.786**	-.232**	-.750**
Conservatism		.627**	.634**	.371**	.377**	-.075	-.354**
Realistic Threat			.860**	.688**	.712**	-.220**	-.592**
Symbolic Threat				.664**	.745**	-.261**	-.616**
Intergroup Anxiety					.752**	-.293**	-.720**
Negative Stereotypes						-.182**	-.638**
Quantity Intergroup Contact							.447**

Note. * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Table 5

Correlations by (Control) Condition between Prejudice, Conservatism, Integrated Threat, Quantity and Quality of Intergroup Contact (n = 265)

	Conservatism	Realistic Threat	Symbolic Threat	Intergroup Anxiety	Negative Stereotypes	Quantity Intergroup Contact	Quality Intergroup Contact
Prejudice	.486**	.810**	.796**	.811**	.830**	-.125*	-.726**
Conservatism		.573**	.576**	.396**	.422**	-.062	-.375**
Realistic Threat			.822**	.677**	.705**	-.065	-.641**
Symbolic Threat				.682**	.766**	-.069	-.657**
Intergroup Anxiety					.772**	-.221**	-.692**
Negative Stereotypes						-.160**	-.734**
Quantity Intergroup Contact							.309**

Note. * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Table 6

Correlations Between Prejudice, Conservatism, Integrated Threat, Quantity and Quality of Intergroup Contact (All Conditions; n = 792)

	Conservatism	Realistic Threat	Symbolic Threat	Intergroup Anxiety	Negative Stereotypes	Quantity Intergroup Contact	Quality Intergroup Contact
Prejudice	.498**	.809**	.785**	.815**	.815**	-.176**	-.752**
Conservatism		.607**	.602**	.398**	.418**	-.089*	-.361**
Realistic Threat			.840**	.689**	.711**	-.135**	-.625**
Symbolic Threat				.674**	.748**	-.131**	-.628**
Intergroup Anxiety					.756**	-.255**	-.702**
Negative Stereotypes						-.167**	-.701**
Quantity Intergroup Contact							.370**

Note. * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Hypothesis Testing

ANOVA

A one-way between groups Analysis of Variance was used to test whether there were group differences on self-reported levels of integrated threat and prejudice towards Mexican immigrants based on conditional manipulation (i.e., independent variable; Egalitarianism, White Nationalism, Control) for the five dependent variables (i.e., realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, negative stereotypes, prejudice; Table 7). Although Hypothesis 1 predicted higher scores of integrated threat and prejudice for

the White nationalism group, and lower scores for the egalitarian group, compared to the control group, there were no significant mean differences between conditions for integrated threat variables or prejudice (Table 8).

Table 7

ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) Between Condition (Egalitarianism/White Nationalism/Control) and Attitudes Toward Mexican Immigrants (Prejudice, Realistic/Symbolic Threat, Intergroup Anxiety, Negative Stereotypes), Effect Size (Omega-squared, fixed; with CI's), and Confidence Intervals (n = 791)

Prejudice	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	**Effect (Ω)**
Between groups	2	13.83	6.91	2.05	.130	.003 95% CI [-.003, .015]
Within groups	789	2662.60	3.38			
Total	791	2676.42				

Realistic Threat	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	**Effect (Ω)**
Between groups	2	27.11	13.56	2.06	.128	.003 95% CI [-.003, .016]
Within groups	789	5189.03	6.58			
Total	791	5216.14				

Symbolic Threat	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	**Effect (Ω)**
Between groups	2	8.36	4.18	0.98	.377	.000 95% CI [-.003, .010]
Within groups	789	3379.76	4.28			
Total	791	3388.12				

(table continues)

Intergroup Anxiety	df	SS	MS	F	p	Effect (Ω)
Between groups	2	6.50	3.25	0.78	.458	-.001 95% CI [-.003, .008]
Within groups	789	3275.14	4.15			
Total	791	3281.64				

Negative Stereotypes	df	SS	MS	F	p	Effect (Ω)
Between groups	2	454.77	227.38	0.70	.497	-.001 95% CI [-.003, .008]
Within groups	788	256354.42	325.32			
Total	790	256809.19				

Table 8

Means (and Standard Deviations) by Condition (Egalitarianism/White

Nationalism/Control) and Totals (n = 792)

	Egalitarianism	White Nationalism	Control
Prejudice	3.298 (1.845)	3.240 (1.749)	3.543 (1.917)
Realistic Threat	3.733 (2.539)	3.667 (2.602)	4.086 (2.550)
Symbolic Threat	4.043 (2.011)	4.016 (2.134)	4.245 (2.057)
Intergroup Anxiety	3.228 (2.057)	3.299 (2.036)	3.447 (2.021)
Negative Stereotypes	25.685 (17.656)	25.875 (18.245)	27.384 (18.178)

Mediational Regression

To assess the mediational effect of integrated threat (i.e., mediating variables;

realistic/symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, negative stereotypes) on prejudice

(dependent variable) toward Mexican immigrants based on the predictor (independent)

variable of condition (i.e., egalitarianism, White nationalism, control), I used Model 4 of

PROCESS (5000 bootstrapping; Hayes, 2012) using their formula (x = condition, m1 through m4 = integrated threat, y = prejudice). In Step 1 of this mediation model (Figure 1), the regression of condition (i.e., egalitarianism, White nationalism) on prejudice, ignoring the mediators, was not significant for either condition. Step 2 (Figure 1) showed that regression of condition (egalitarianism, White nationalism, respectively) on the four separate mediators of Realistic Threat, Symbolic Threat, Intergroup, and Negative Stereotypes showed non-significant results. Step 3 of PROCESS Model 4 (Figure 1) showed that, controlling for condition, separately, all four mediator variables of Realistic Threat, Symbolic Threat, Intergroup Anxiety, and Negative Stereotypes significantly predicted the outcome variable prejudice. Step 4 of the data analysis showed that, controlling for each of the four mediators separately, condition (egalitarianism, White nationalism, respectively) was not a significant predictor of prejudice toward Mexican immigrants (Figure 1). Effect sizes, t-scores, and p values from mediational analyses were also calculated (Table 9).

Figure 1

Mediational Regression Model (Total, Direct, and Indirect Effects) Between Condition

(Egalitarianism/White Nationalism), Integrated Threat, and Prejudice (n = 792)
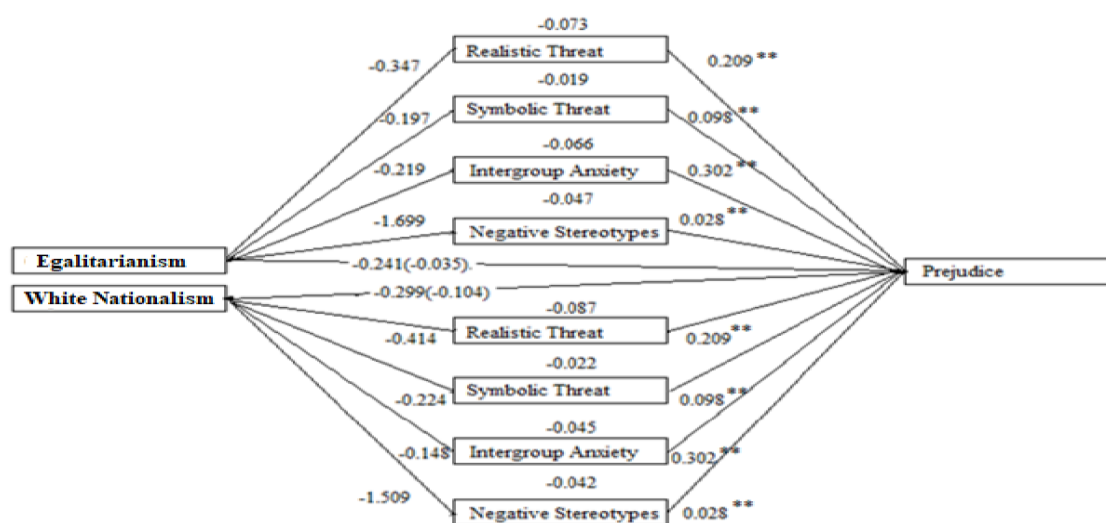
Note. Total and (Direct) Effect pathways illustrated in center lines.
** *p* < .001

Table 9

Effect Sizes, t-Scores, and p Values of Mediation Regression Model (Condition,

Integrated Threat as Mediators, and Prejudice; n = 792)

	B	*t*	*p*	*R²*
Egalitarianism (on Prejudice)	-0.241	-1.486	.138	.005
White Nationalism (on Prejudice)	-0.299	-1.890	.059	
Egalitarianism (on Realistic Threat)	-0.347	-1.538	.125	.005

(table continues)

White Nationalism (on Realistic Threat)	-0.414	-1.872	.062	
Egalitarianism (on Symbolic Threat)	-0.197	-1.082	.280	.002
White Nationalism (on Symbolic Threat)	-0.224	-1.254	.210	
Egalitarianism (on Intergroup Anxiety)	-0.219	-1.220	.223	.002
White Nationalism (on Intergroup Anxiety)	-0.148	-0.842	.400	
Egalitarianism (on Negative Stereotypes)	-1.697	-1.069	.285	.002
White Nationalism (on Negative Stereotypes)	-1.509	-0.971	.332	
Realistic Threat (on Prejudice)	0.209	9.825	<.001**	.818
Symbolic Threat (on Prejudice)	0.098	3.589	<.001**	
Intergroup Anxiety (on Prejudice)	0.302	13.532	<.001**	
Negative Stereotypes (on Prejudice)	0.028	10.085	<.001**	
Egalitarianism (on Prejudice, controlling for mediators)	-0.035	-0.510	.611	
White Nationalism (on Prejudice, controlling for mediators)	-0.104	-1.532	.126	

Note. ** $p < .001$

Exploratory Analyses

Mediational Regression Based on Conservatism Antecedent

To assess the mediational effect of integrated threat (i.e., mediating variables; realistic/symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, negative stereotypes) on prejudice (dependent variable) toward Mexican immigrants based on the predictor (independent) variable of political orientation (i.e., conservatism), I used Model 4 of PROCESS (5000 bootstrapping; Hayes, 2012) using their formula (x = political orientation, m1 through m4 = integrated threat, y = prejudice). In Step 1 of this mediation model (Figure 2), the regression of conservatism on prejudice, ignoring the mediators, was significant. Step 2 showed that regression of conservatism on the four separate mediators of Realistic Threat, Symbolic Threat, Intergroup Anxiety, and Negative Stereotypes also showed significant results (Figure 2). Step 3 of PROCESS Model 4 showed that, controlling for conservatism, the four mediator variables of Realistic Threat, Symbolic Threat, Intergroup Anxiety, and Negative Stereotypes significantly affected the outcome variable prejudice (Figure 2). Step 4 of the data analysis showed that, controlling for each of the four mediators separately, conservatism was not a significant predictor of prejudice toward Mexican Immigrants (Figure 2). Effect sizes, t-scores, and *p* values from mediational analyses were also calculated (Table 10). In summation, integrated threat fully mediated the relationship between conservatism and prejudice toward Mexican immigrants.

Figure 2

Mediational Regression Model (Total, Direct, and Indirect Effects) Between

Conservatism, Integrated Threat, and Prejudice (n = 792)
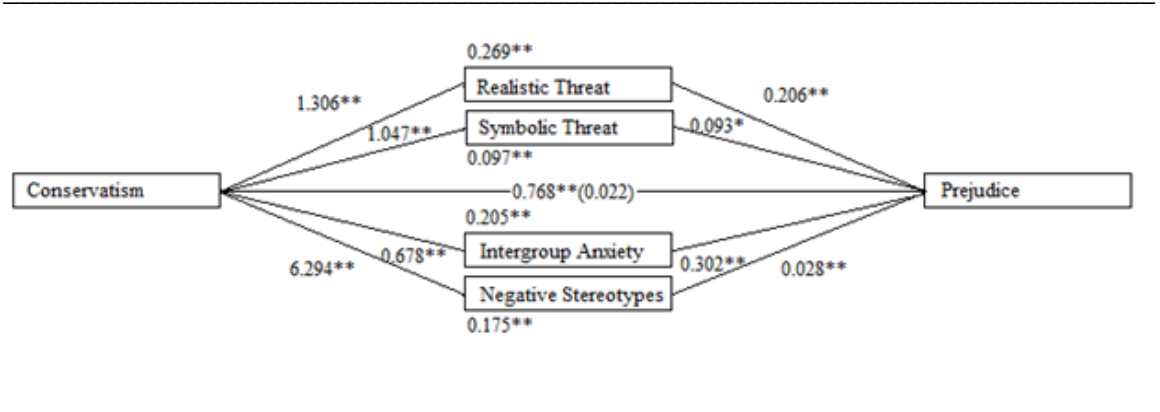
Note. Total and (Direct) Effect pathways illustrated in center line.
* *p* = .001
** *p* < .001

Table 10

Effect Sizes, t-Scores, and p Values of Regression Model (Conservatism, Integrated

Threat, and Prejudice; n = 792)

	B	*t*	*p*	*R^2*
Conservatism (on Prejudice)	0.768	16.179	<.001**	.250
Conservatism (on Realistic Threat)	1.306	21.500	<.001**	.371
Conservatism (on Symbolic Threat)	1.047	21.252	<.001**	.366
Conservatism (on Intergroup Anxiety)	0.678	12.173	<.001**	.160
Conservatism (on Negative Stereotypes)	6.294	12.880	<.001**	.175
Realistic Threat (on Prejudice)	0.206	9.293	<.001**	.816
Symbolic Threat (on Prejudice)	0.093	3.283	.001*	
Intergroup Anxiety (on Prejudice)	0.302	13.445	<.001**	
Negative Stereotypes (on Prejudice)	0.028	10.052	<.001**	
Conservatism (on Prejudice, controlling for mediators)	0.002	0.730	.465	

Note. * $p = .001$
** $p < .001$

Moderated Mediation

In order to investigate any moderated mediational effect of political orientation on

integrated threat based on the predictor (independent) variable of condition (i.e.,

egalitarianism, White nationalism, control) and the outcome (dependent) variable of prejudice toward Mexican immigrants, I used Model 8 of PROCESS (5000 bootstrapping; Hayes, 2012) using their formula (x = condition, w = conservatism, m1 through m4 = integrated threat, y = prejudice). In this model (Table 11), there was no evidence shown for moderated mediation using political orientation/conservatism between condition (i.e., egalitarianism, White nationalism), integrated threat, and prejudice. Condition did not have an effect on threat overall or for those who were more conservative.

Table 11

Index of Moderated Mediation (Condition, Conservatism as a Moderator, Integrated

Threat as Mediators, and Prejudice; n = 786)

	B	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Realistic Threat (Egalitarianism)	0.01	0.03	-0.05	0.08
Realistic Threat (White Nationalism)	0.02	0.03	-0.04	0.08
Symbolic Threat (Egalitarianism)	0.00	0.01	-0.03	0.02
Symbolic Threat (White Nationalism)	0.01	0.01	-0.01	0.04
Intergroup Anxiety (Egalitarianism)	0.02	0.05	-0.08	0.11
Intergroup Anxiety (White Nationalism)	-0.02	0.05	-0.11	0.08
Negative Stereotypes (Egalitarianism)	0.01	0.04	-0.07	0.08
Negative Stereotypes (White Nationalism)	-0.02	0.04	-0.10	0.05

Discussion

Reading egalitarian versus White nationalist Tweets did not affect participants'

self-reported levels of realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, negative

stereotypes, or prejudice toward Mexican immigrants, regardless of mediation, and

regardless of participants' political orientation. Those who self-reported higher levels of

integrated threat also reported higher levels of outgroup prejudice, and participants who reported higher quantity and quality of intergroup contact reported lower levels of integrated threat and prejudice toward Mexican immigrants. Using political orientation (i.e., conservatism) as the predictor/independent variable, I found that participants who reported higher levels of conservatism reported higher levels on all four types of integrated threat as well as prejudice and that integrated threat fully mediated the relationship between conservatism and prejudice. Participants who reported higher levels of conservatism also reported lower levels of quality of intergroup contact with Mexican immigrants.

One reason why my messages might not have affected attitudes is that the Twitter pages were written by an anonymous person with no celebrity nor political source status. Famous politicians or celebrities, or in some cases both, would have much more of a social media following and influence over their audience than I did in the study using a generic name and likeness. Along those same lines, I did not use any video or imagery in the manipulations, and doing so could have made the ideas more salient. Adding an anti-immigrant image to a message predicted even higher perceived symbolic threat (i.e., perceived threat from outgroup to ingroup's cultural values) and salience of negative stereotypes (e.g., immigrants are deviants; Schmuck & Matthes, 2017).

It is also possible that messages may need to be repeated to be effective. For example, depending on the participants' other sources of information-receiving methods, a simple priming manipulation may pale in comparison to twenty-four-hour news stations' effects on viewers' social and political attitudes. Selective exposure to White nationalist ideas and media over longer periods of time may affect people's social and

political attitudes more than reading one social media page with a difference of opinion.

For example, recent research found that after only a month, avid Fox News viewers who

were incentivized to replace their television media choice with CNN News reported more

liberal and less conservative attitudes about current events compared to their baseline

data (Broockman & Kalla, 2022). Although their political and social attitudes seemed to

change temporarily (i.e., less polarized, moderated), and they showed an increase in

knowledge of fact-based information about current events, these changes were short-lived

after participants went back to watching Fox News post-study (Broockman & Kalla,

2022).

The reasoning behind the source's motivation for disseminating White nationalist

messaging may differ from the audience's motivation for receiving that message and may

lie in how much and what type of a threat either of them perceives from an outgroup like

Mexican immigrants. For example, a politician may be afraid of a symbolic threat to their

culture and way of life more than they fear threat to their economic security and physical

safety. However, this perceived threat prioritization may be reversed for the average

person. Perhaps messages would show a stronger effect if a politician messages about

realistic threat and keeps the symbolic threat rhetoric off of Twitter.

All four types of integrated threat were associated with outcome prejudice toward

Mexican immigrants in that those who reported higher levels of perceived

realistic/symbolic threat, anxiety around Mexican immigrants, and/or adherence to

negative stereotypical views also reported higher levels of outgroup prejudice. My

findings align with previous research in Integrated Threat Theory (ITT; Stephan &

Stephan, 1996; Stephan et al., 1999) regarding the relationship between realistic threat

(Stephan et al., 2005), symbolic threat (Gonzales et al., 2008; Stephan et al., 2005; Wirtz et al., 2016), intergroup anxiety (Riek et al., 2006; Stephan et al., 2000, 2005), and negative stereotypes (Wirtz et al., 2016) with prejudice towards an outgroup and provide further support for the theory.

Quantity and quality of intergroup contact with Mexican immigrants was related to participants' levels of integrated threat and prejudice; people who reported had more instances of and higher quality contact with immigrants reported lower levels of perceived threat and prejudice toward them. This relationship may be explained by a fear/ignorance of the unknown. For example, the more contact people have with an outgroup, the more they may come to like and understand them; they are no longer an "other." These findings related to intergroup contact may also be explained by people's propensity to engage with members of the outgroup if they already have positive attitudes toward them, as well as a lesson in positivity begets positivity in which the more positive the intergroup interaction, the more positive the attitudes towards the outgroup will be. Results regarding the relationship between intergroup contact and prejudice, mediated by integrated threat, show further support for previous ITT studies as well (Stephan & Stephan, 1985, 1996; Stephan et al., 1999, 2000).

Limitations and Future Research

Major limitations to this study relate to dosage and source credibility. A one-time exposure to a few Tweets may not be enough to induce attitude change, even on a short-term basis. Along with the quantity of exposure across time, the message, and its ability to induce negative affect may depend on its strength and appearance. For example, highlighting relevant threats and making that message as strong as possible may be a way

of "upping" the dosage to threshold-attitude-change-level. The author of the post was also an anonymous author rather than a friend or someone the person respected. With such a generic message source, it may be difficult for participants to care enough about the message to be affected by it. People may be more apt to adhere to advice and disseminated information when the source of that information is well-known, trusted as credible, and/or part of the viewers' normal news sources. Future research could present the Tweets as coming from trusted sources (e.g., news outlets or well-known politicians or celebrities) or provide more messages over a longer period of time to more closely mirror what happens in the real world.

While I did several data checks, it is also not clear that all the participants took the study seriously. I was unable to use the data from almost half of my participants for various reasons. Gathering information from larger and more diverse swaths of people from in-person or panel research and avoiding online data collection altogether could prove beneficial for ongoing research.

Other ideas for future research include longitudinal studies to possibly increase the effects of egalitarian messaging on attitudes toward tolerance of the outgroup. Ongoing informational campaigns should be included like having participants fact-checking their news sources and opening them up to a variety of news sources across the political spectrum, to prevent ideological back-peddling (Broockman & Kalla, 2022). Further research could also focus on different antecedents of outcome prejudice like the differences between real-world versus online ingroup identification and intergroup contact via mediational integrated threat. Although there seems to be disproportionate research on the effects of negative messaging, applied social psychological future studies

including *positive* messaging promoting an egalitarian worldview could be beneficial regarding tolerance-teaching and inclusivity for specific regional areas with a history of cross-cultural conflict (e.g., Israel-Palestine), as well as those areas with more recent issues (e.g., anti-immigration movement in response to influx of refugees/asylum-seekers). Further regional specificity within countries and outgroups (e.g., prejudice toward Mexican *or* Central American immigrants in the southwest versus the northeast) could allow for targeted and uniquely branded messaging campaigns that utilize different approaches based on region and outgroup described, which may bode well for practical applications like prejudice prevention and reduction based on which integrated threats are more salient in which region related to which outgroup.

Implications and Conclusion

There were no differences in perceived threat or prejudice among participants who read White nationalist vs. egalitarian social media posts; however, results from exploratory analyses using political orientation as an antecedent to outgroup prejudice bolstered previous findings from integrated threat theory (i.e., integrated threat mediated the relationship between in-group identification aka political orientation and outgroup prejudice, Stephan & Stephan, 1996; Stephan et al., 1999). Findings from this study related to intergroup contact with Mexican immigrants and subsequent outgroup prejudice also aligned with previous results (i.e., people who reported higher quality contact with members of an outgroup reported less prejudiced attitudes toward that outgroup; Stephan & Stephan, 1985, 1996; Stephan et al., 1999, 2000).

This study highlights some of the pathways to outgroup prejudice like in-group identification and polarization, perceived threat of an encroaching outgroup, and/or

negative stereotyping. Conservative Americans seem to believe that Mexican immigrants are more threatening to, for example, their way of life, than liberals; conservatives also reported more anxiety about interactions with Mexican immigrants. Fear like this can mediate increased prejudiced attitudes towards the outgroup. Conservatives report worse quality interactions when they do interact with that outgroup. However, more positive intergroup contact could potentially reverse this effect and increase positive attitudes toward Mexican immigrants.

Although I investigated the ugliness of prejudice in this study, my findings also may provide a potential roadmap to tolerance in the form of sustained pro-immigrant/inclusive messaging campaigns, encouraging more intergroup contact with members of different groups, and opening up people to alternate news sources. Findings like these are optimistic for a world of increased societal tolerance and ingroup/outgroup cohesion because they show that positive societal growth and social attitude change is possible. Knowledge obtained from this type of research on American's social attitudes (i.e., prejudice) toward outgroups is beneficial for social psychological and political research because it can explain and therefore possibly even prevent negative attitudes and subsequent violence toward minorities and members of an outgroup. This knowledge is especially important during Western shifts toward exclusionary White nationalism and the detrimental effects of nationalistic ideology on the well-being of others. The reduction of perceived integrated threat via exposure to positive messages about an outgroup online as well as increasing the quantity/quality of intergroup contact will decrease prejudice and prevent derogation of political minorities, as well as increase societal tolerance, and help to create a more inclusive society.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent

<u>Informed Consent</u>
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA
HUMAN PARTICIPANTS REVIEW INFORMED CONSENT
Project Title: Social Media Perceptions and Social Attitudes
Name of Investigator(s): Nathan J. Lewey & Helen C. Harton, Ph.D.

Invitation to Participate: You are invited to participate in a research project conducted through the University of Northern Iowa. The University requires that you give your agreement to participate in this project. The following information is provided to help you make an informed decision about whether or not to participate.
Nature and Purpose: This study investigates perceptions of social media and social attitudes.
Explanation of Procedures: As a participant in this study, you will be asked to view a social media page and answer questions about your perceptions of that page and its author, as well as questions about your own social attitudes, social contact, and demographics. This study is expected to last approximately 15-20 minutes. You may discontinue involvement in the study at any time.
Discomfort and Risks: There is minimal anticipated risk involved with participation. You may feel slightly uncomfortable answering some questions and/or viewing the social media page.
Benefits and Compensation: You will be compensated $.50 for participating.
Confidentiality: All data will be kept confidential; Worker ID's will be deleted after completion. Your responses will be encrypted when sent over the internet. Although your confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data by third parties when that data is sent over the internet. Summarized findings with no identifying information may be published in an academic journal or presented at a scholarly conference. Data with no IP addresses/other identifiers may also be available for others to view on an open data site (i.e., open science framework) indefinitely, and may be used for additional future studies.
Right to Refuse or Withdraw: Your participation is voluntary. You are free to withdraw from participation at any time or to choose not to participate at all, and by doing so, you will not be penalized or lose benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
Questions: For questions about the study or if you desire information in the future regarding your participation or the study generally, you can contact the project investigator, Nathan J. Lewey at leweyn@uni.edu or the project investigator's faculty advisor Helen C. Harton, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, University of Northern Iowa at helen.harton@uni.edu. You can also contact the IRB Administrator, University of Northern Iowa, at rebecca.rinehart@uni.edu for questions about rights of research participants and the participant review process.
Agreement: Registering for the study and clicking on the arrow below indicates that I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks arising from it. I hereby agree to participate in this project. I am 18 years of age or older.

Appendix B: White Nationalist Manipulation (Mexican Immigrant)

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · Jun 21 ···
Mexican immigrants do not uphold the values we hold dear in the United States and should not be allowed here!
💬 1   ⟲   ♡ 7   ⬆️

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · Jun 14 ···
Decided to learn how to play the piano... after a year of lessons I should be able to play some Mozart!
💬   ⟲   ♡ 5   ⬆️

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · Jun 12 ···
The United States needs stronger immigration policies and we need to build a wall along the entire Mexican border to keep these criminals out of America!
💬 1   ⟲   ♡ 9   ⬆️

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · May 17 ···
Finally get to go to the beach this weekend for some swimming and sunshine!
💬   ⟲   ♡ 6   ⬆️

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · Apr 7 ···
Criminals, rapists, drug-dealers, and gang members are flooding across the border and they want to destroy American values and attack our country's safety!
💬   ⟲ 3   ♡ 14   ⬆️

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · Mar 26 ···
The new burgers at Billy's Place are fantastic... try the Buffalo Burger!
💬 1   ⟲   ♡ 9   ⬆️

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · Feb 10 ···
Mexican immigrants pose a serious national security risk to the United States and the Mexican cartels are bringing death across our open borders!
💬 2   ⟲ 2   ♡ 19   ⬆️

Appendix C: Egalitarian Manipulation (Mexican Immigrant)

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · Jun 21
Mexican immigrants uphold the values we hold dear here in the United States and should be allowed here!

💬 1   ↻   ♡ 7   ↑

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · Jun 14
Decided to learn how to play the piano... after a year of lessons I should be able to play some Mozart!

💬   ↻   ♡ 5   ↑

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · Jun 12
Immigration from Mexico increases multicultural awareness in our society and makes the world a better place for everyone!

💬 1   ↻   ♡ 9   ↑

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · May 17
Finally get to go to the beach this weekend for some swimming and sunshine!

💬   ↻   ♡ 6   ↑

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · Apr 7
Immigrants are in many cases, the backbone of local economies and their tax dollars stimulate the American economy... let's build bridges not walls!

💬   ↻ 3   ♡ 14   ↑

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · Mar 26
The new burgers at Billy's Place are fantastic... try the Buffalo Burger!

💬 1   ↻   ♡ 9   ↑

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · Feb 10
Immigrants from Mexico contribute to American society in many great ways like small businesses and cultural diversity... let's welcome them here!

💬 2   ↻ 2   ♡ 19   ↑

Appendix D: Control Group (No Manipulation)

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · Jun 21 · · ·
Finally found a new apartment!
○   ↻   ♡ 5   ↥

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · Jun 14 · · ·
Today is my birthdaaaaay!
○   ↻   ♡ 6   ↥

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · Jun 12 · · ·
Decided to learn how to play the piano... after a year of lessons I should be able to play some Mozart!
○   ↻   ♡ 5   ↥

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · May 17 · · ·
Finally get to go the beach this weekend for some swimming and sunshine!
○   ↻   ♡ 6   ↥

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · Apr 7 · · ·
The weather is sooooo great today!
○ 1   ↻   ♡ 7   ↥

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · Mar 26 · · ·
The new burgers at Billy's Place are fantastic... try the Buffalo Burger!
○ 1   ↻   ♡ 9   ↥

Taylor Johnson @TaylorJ54679582 · Feb 10 · · ·
Going to the movies tonight!
○   ↻   ♡ 6   ↥

Appendix E: Questions About the Social Media Page's Format and Author

When answering the following questions, please think about the social media page you just viewed.

What did you think of the format of this social media page?

    o I really liked the format. (1)

    o I liked the format. (2)

    o I neither liked nor disliked the format. (3)

    o I disliked the format. (4)

    o I really disliked the format. (5)

Was the language used by the author easy to understand?

    o The language was very easy to understand. (1)

    o The language was easy to understand. (2)

    o The language was neither easy nor difficult to understand. (3)

    o The language was difficult to understand. (4)

    o The language was very difficult to understand. (5)

Would you follow this person on social media?

    o Yes (1)

    o No (2)

Appendix F: Big Five Inventory-10 (BFI-10; Balgiu, 2018)

English Version

Instructions: Think about the <u>author of the page</u> you just viewed… How well do the

following statements describe <u>the author's personality</u>?

I see the author as someone who...	Disagree strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree strongly
… is reserved	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
… is generally trusting	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
… tends to be lazy	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
… is relaxed, handles stress well	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
… has few artistic interests	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
… is outgoing, sociable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
… tends to find fault with others	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
… does a thorough job	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
… gets nervous easily	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
… has an active imagination	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

Scoring the BFI-10 scales:

Extraversion: 1R, 6; Agreeableness: 2, 7R; Conscientiousness: 3R, 8; Neuroticism: 4R, 9;

Openness: 5R, 10 (R = item is reverse-scored).

Appendix G: Specific Attention Checks Related to Study Manipulation

The <u>author</u> of this social media page believes that overall, <u>Mexican immigrants</u>' values are ____, compared to US-born citizens.

  o very different (1)

  o somewhat different (2)

  o neither different nor similar (3)

  o somewhat similar (4)

  o very similar (5)

  o The social media page I viewed did not mention Mexican immigrants. (6)

The <u>author</u> of this social media page believes that <u>Mexican immigrants</u> should be ____ in American society.

  o completely included (1)

  o somewhat included (2)

  o neither included nor excluded (3)

  o somewhat excluded (4)

  o completely excluded (5)

  o The social media page I viewed did not mention Mexican immigrants. (6)

Appendix H: Realistic Threat Scale (Revised for Mexican Immigrant Target;

Stephan et al., 1999)

Instructions:

Please indicate the extent to whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1, Strongly Disagree; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10, Strongly Agree

1. Mexican immigrants get more from this country than they contribute.

2. The children of Mexican immigrants should have the same right to attend public schools in the United States as Americans do.

3. Mexican immigration has increased the tax burden on Americans.

4. Mexican immigrants are *not* displacing American workers from their jobs.

5. Mexican immigrants should be eligible for the same health-care benefits received by Americans.

6. Social services have become less available to Americans because of Mexican immigration.

7. The quality of social services available to Americans has remained the same, despite Mexican immigration.

8. Mexican immigrants are as entitled to subsidized housing or subsidized utilities (water, sewage, electricity) as poor Americans are.

Appendix I: Symbolic Threat Scale (Revised for Mexican Immigrant Target;

Stephan et al., 1999)

Instructions:

Please indicate the extent to whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1, Strongly Disagree; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10, Strongly Agree

1. Mexican immigrants should learn to conform to the rules and norms of American society as soon as possible after they arrive.

2. Immigration from Mexico is undermining American culture.

3. The values and beliefs of Mexican immigrants regarding work are basically quite similar to those of most Americans.

4. The values and beliefs of Mexican immigrants regarding moral and religious issues are *not* compatible with the beliefs and values of most Americans.

5. The values and beliefs of Mexican immigrants regarding family issues and socializing children are basically quite similar to those of most Americans.

6. The values and beliefs of Mexican immigrants regarding social relations are *not* compatible with the beliefs and values of most Americans.

7. Mexican immigrants should *not* have to accept American ways.

Appendix J: Intergroup Anxiety Scale (Revised for Mexican Immigrant Target;

Stephan et al., 1999)

Instructions:

Please indicate the degree to which you would feel each of the following feelings when

interacting with Mexican immigrants:

1, Not at All; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10, Extremely

1. Apprehensive

2. Uncertain

3. Worried

4. Awkward

5. Anxious

6. Threatened

7. Comfortable

8. Trusting

9. Friendly

10. Confident

11. Safe

12. At Ease

Appendix K: Negative Stereotype Index (Revised for Mexican Immigrant Target;

Stephan et al., 1999)

<u>Instructions:</u>

Please indicate the percentage of Mexican immigrants who possess the following traits.

(Qualtrics slider function from 0 to 100%)

1. Dishonest

2. Ignorant

3. Undisciplined

4. Aggressive

5. Hardworking

6. Reliable

7. Proud

8. Respectful

9. Unintelligent

10. Clean

11. Clannish

12. Friendly

Appendix L: Prejudice (Attitudes Toward Out-Groups; Stephan et al., 2000)

Instructions:

Please indicate the degree that you feel each of the following toward <u>Mexican</u>

<u>immigrants</u>.

(10-point Likert scale)

1. Hostility

2. Admiration (R)

3. Disliking

4. Acceptance (R)

5. Superiority

6. Affection (R)

7. Disdain

8. Approval (R)

9. Hatred

10. Sympathy (R)

11. Rejection

12. Warmth (R)

Appendix M: Intergroup Contact Scale (Two of the Original 15 Items; Islam &

Hewstone, 1993)

Instructions:

In this questionnaire we want to find out what is your personal experience in terms of

everyday contact with <u>Mexican immigrants</u> and what you personally think about <u>Mexican</u>

<u>immigrants</u>. Please answer all questions with reference to the typical everyday contact

situations, as you experienced it. This is not a test, there are no right or wrong answers.

All we want to do is find out your personal experiences.

1. Please tell us how much contact you had in the past or do you now have with

    Mexican immigrants? (1 None at all… 7 A great deal)

2. To what extent did you experience the contact with Mexican immigrants as

    pleasant (1 Not at all… 7 Very)

Appendix N: Social Media Usage

<u>Instructions:</u>

Please indicate any and <u>all</u> of the following social media platforms you currently use.

○ Twitter (1)

○ Facebook (2)

○ Other (3)

What percentage of political news and information (e.g., social media posts related to political candidates, current issues under debate like foreign policy and border control) do you receive from social media platforms?

(Qualtrics slider function from 0 to 100%)

Appendix O: Demographics

What is your age?

▼ 18 (1) ... Prefer not to answer (84)

What is your gender identity?

  ○ Male (1)

  ○ Female (2)

  ○ Non-Binary (3)

  ○ Prefer not to answer (4)

  ○ Not listed (5) _____

Please specify your race/ethnicity. Check all that apply.

  ☐　　　American Indian/Native American (1)

  ☐　　　Alaska Native (2)

  ☐　　　Asian or Asian American (3)

  ☐　　　Black or African American (4)

  ☐　　　LatinX (Hispanic or Latino) (10)

  ☐　　　Pacific Islander (6)

  ☐　　　White or Caucasian (7)

  ☐　　　Prefer not to answer (8)

  ☐　　　Not listed: (9) _____

What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled,

mark the previous grade or highest degree received.

  ○ Less than high school (1)

  ○ High School or GED (2)

o Associate's Degree (3)

o Bachelor's Degree (4)

o Graduate Degree (5)

Are you a U.S. citizen?

o Yes (1)

o No (2)

Are you a Mexican immigrant?

o Yes (1)

o No (2)

With which political party do you identify, if any?

o Democrat (1)

o Republican (2)

o Independent (3)

o No Affiliation (4)

o Not listed: (5) _____

How would you describe your...

	Very Conservative (1)	Conservative (2)	Moderate (3)	Liberal (4)	Very Liberal (5)
Political Orientation? (1)	o	o	o	o	o

Views on current social issues? (2)	o	o	o	o	o
Views on foreign policy? (3)	o	o	o	o	o
Views on economics? (4)	o	o	o	o	o

Appendix P: Honesty and Generic Attention Checks

What do you think this study was about?

_____

How honest were your answers throughout the study? You will receive credit regardless

of what you answer to this question.

    o Not honest at all (1)

    o Slightly honest (2)

    o Moderately honest (3)

    o Extremely honest (4)

Do you have any comments for the researchers?

_____

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Answers ranging from 1 *(strongly disagree)* to 10 *(strongly agree)*.

1) I am completing this survey from a computer on the moon (in Realistic Threat

    scale).

2) I usually ride my unicorn to work or school (in Symbolic Threat scale).

Please choose response option 7 (in Intergroup Anxiety scale).

Please choose 65% (in Negative Stereotypes index).

Appendix Q: Study Debriefing

Thank you for participating in my study entitled "Social Media Perceptions and Social Attitudes." As I said at the beginning, I am examining social media and social attitudes. However, I am also looking at whether reading certain messages can increase/decrease perceived threat and prejudice levels. If anyone asks you what the study was about, you can just say honestly that it was about social media and social attitudes. Please do not mention to others who might do the study that the study looks at effects on prejudice as well, as that might influence how they respond.

SECRET CODE: AJFHBG897

Some of the rhetoric used in this study was based on persuasive messages found on social media that may have been derogatory in nature. Any mention of derogatory comments aimed at another group of people was purely for research purposes and should not be taken as factual. All humans are created equal and have just as much of a right to exist as any other human; regardless of race, ethnicity, or religion.

If you have any questions about the research protocol, theory, or results, you may contact the Primary Researcher, Nathan J. Lewey at leweyn@uni.edu.

Once more, thank you for your participation. We could not do our research without you!