Published in final edited form as:

J Soc Psychol. 2018 ; 158(2): 157–172. doi:10.1080/00224545.2017.1317231.

Perceived Threat to National Values in Evaluating Stereotyped Immigrants

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Abstract

The present research examined the psychological reasons behind Americans' (un)willingness to accept immigrants. Participants read a scenario depicting immigrant groups allegedly expected to arrive in the U.S. and evaluated how much the immigrants would influence two types of American national values: civic values (e.g., political ideology) and ethnic values (e.g., shared culture and customs). Across three studies, competitive immigrant groups were stereotyped to be untrustworthy, and perceived to threaten American civic values but not ethnic values. Value threat then mediated the predicted competition-prejudice relationship in Study 3. Perceived vulnerability of in-group boundary might specify one motivated cause of derogating immigrants.

Keywords

stereotype; prejudice; group perception; psychological essentialism

“What makes someone American is not just blood or birth, but allegiance to our founding principles” – Former President Barack Obama (Jan 28, 2013).

As highlighted in the Former President's statement, American national identity is interpreted around the concepts of ideology and civic values, rather than ethnic unity. This way of construing national identity opens up the possibilities for those who do not have “American descent” to claim their “American-ness.” However, at the same time, American citizens may be hesitant to accept someone who disrespects the shared principles. That is, Americans may dislike, fear, and expel those who threaten American values such as ideology, solidarity, and respect for laws.

As globalization increases immigration, the growing presence of different types of immigrants within a nation may change perceived concepts of national identity. Here, we consider immigrants as groups who potentially alter shared values of in-group national identity. Psychological conceptualizations of national identity, as well as the characteristics of the immigrants, therefore contribute to intergroup attitudes. Revealing psychological

mechanisms of attitudes toward different categories of immigrants in relation to shared values of national identity may enable us to understand the nation-specific reactions of accepting or rejecting immigrants.

Conceptualizations of In-group National Identity

People of different nations have unique tendencies when it comes to perceiving constructs of their in-group national identity (Wright, Citrin, & Wand, 2012). These culturally distinctive perceptual tendencies trace back to foundational histories of each nation (e.g., Brubaker, 1992; Smith, 2000). Due to the differences in how nations have been founded and developed throughout their history, their people share culturally unique conceptions of national identity. Nations such as the United States, the Swiss Federation, and France tend to consider national unity to be based on the law and on institutions (Reeskens & Hooghe, 2010; Smith, 1991). This style of national identity is construed by “civic” values (civil, political, legal ideologies). As a consequence, civic national identity is more likely to be assigned to those who adhere to legal norms of the nation, without judging their ethnicities.

In contrast, countries such as Japan, Germany, and Israel often base perceptions of their nations on ancestry (Hjerm, 1998; Reeskens & Hooghe, 2010). Preexisting shared ethnicities and cultures, sometimes metaphorically described as “common blood,” determine membership in the nation (Ignatieff, 1993). This type of representation values the “ethnic” aspect of national identity such as prescribed customs and cultures. To be sure, despite the historical background for the distinction between civic and ethnic national values, the civic-ethnic dichotomy does not exhaustively explain the complex nature of perceiving national identities (e.g., Kaufman, 2000; Kuzio, 2000; Smith, 2000; Yack, 1996). For instance, countries that promote multiculturalism, such as Australia, Canada, and Sweden, have mixed representations of civic and ethnic identity (Hjerm, 1998). The constructs valued for national identity may vary from nation to nation, and perceiving both civic and ethnic national identities are not mutually exclusive.

The distinctions between civic and ethnic national values should predict intergroup attitudes. For example, ethnic criteria in general are arguably more difficult for foreigners to meet than civic criteria (Shulman, 2002). In other words, ethnic criteria (requiring mutual ancestry) promote more exclusive attitudes toward immigrants than civic criteria do (Meeus, Duriez, Vanbeselaere, & Boen, 2000; Pehrson, Vignoles, & Brown, 2009). In contrast, intergroup attitudes in Turkey were more strongly predicted by the civic type of national definition, which was explained in terms of national participation, compared to the essentialist type of definition, concerning ancestry (Tasdemir & Oner-Ozkan, 2006). In other words, civic criteria may be the reason for exclusive attitudes for certain nations but not for others. Among people in different nations, Americans would consider their civic values to be more important than ethnic values to define their membership in the nation (Hjerm, 1998; Reeskens & Hooghe, 2010). Thus, Americans may be more sensitive to the influence of immigrants on civic values than ethnic values of their in-group nation. However, this assumption has not been tested in the context of perceived stereotypes of immigrants. The present studies aimed to reveal which immigrant stereotypes relate to in-group values, especially American civic values, and the consequently influence intergroup attitudes.

Stereotypes of Immigrants

Lay perceivers differentiate out-group stereotypes along two dimensions of perceived warmth and competence. According to the Stereotype Content Model (SCM; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Fiske, Xu, Cuddy, & Glick, 1999), people are interested in knowing the intention (i.e., warmth) and capability (i.e., competence) of out-groups. The warmth dimension represents social relations, whether or not the out-groups are in a communal relationship with the in-group (Wojciszke & Abele, 2008). The competence dimension reflects the degree to which perceivers respect the out-groups (Fiske et al., 2002). Various past work demonstrates the validity and plausibility of the two dimensions in social perceptions (e.g., Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007; Fiske et al., 2002; Judd, James-Hawkins, Yzerbyt, & Kashima, 2005).

The SCM allows existing social relationships to predict perceived stereotypes. Social structural factors, namely competition and status, generate stereotypes of out-groups (Caprariello, Cuddy, & Fiske, 2009; Fiske et al., 2002). Competitive out-groups are stereotyped to be cold: untrustworthy and unfriendly; cooperative ones are perceived to be warm: trustworthy and friendly. Likewise, high-status groups are perceived as being competent, while low-status groups are perceived as being less competent. Caprariello et al. (2009) empirically demonstrated that information regarding competition and status were causally related to stereotypes of warmth and competence, respectively: Low competition and high status information respectively prompted warm and competent stereotype ratings. Competition includes both conflict over resources and conflict over values (Kervyn, Fiske, & Yzerbyt, 2015).

Impact of Immigrant Stereotypes on In-group

Stereotypes regarding out-group warmth and competence predict different types of reactions from in-groups. Warmth stereotypes correspond with active reactions to the out-group, such as facilitation and harm, whereas competence stereotypes predict more passive reactions (Cuddy et al., 2007). Peeters (1989) demonstrated that warmth (morality) is other-profitable, rather than self-profitable. That is, a warm characteristic may not necessarily benefit the person or the target group that is warm. Rather, warmth is unconditionally positive for anyone who interacts with them. These arguments about profitability suggest that the warmth dimension provides relevant information for the in-group, who are the recipient of the out-group's influences (Ybarra, Chan, & Park, 2001). Hence, stereotypes on the warmth dimension, more than the competence dimension, may be particularly relevant to the host citizens in the context of immigration.

From a general perspective of intergroup relations, moreover, competitive intergroup relations generate warmth stereotypes. This makes it even more plausible to expect that warmth may be a more dominant stereotype dimension than competence in predicting psychological reactions from in-group toward the out-groups. One well-known psychological reaction toward immigrants is the belief that the immigrants pose a threat to the in-group nation (Stephan, Diaz-Loving, & Duran, 2000). The so-called functional approach to intergroup conflict discusses the immigrant-receiving societies' concerns about

the limited material resources, such as job opportunities (e.g., Bobo, 1999; Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998; Falomir-Pichastor, Munoz-Rojas, Invernizzi, & Mugny, 2004), and a mere expectation of threat can also be a strong motivation toward prejudices (Muste, 2013).

Furthermore, a perceived competitive relationship not only threatens material resources of in-groups, but also threatens symbolic values of in-groups (e.g., Falomir-Pichastor et al.; Stephan, Ageyev, Coates-Shrider, Stephan, & Abalakina, 1994). Increasing immigrant populations may threaten the national identity of receiving societies. That is, the distinctive features of the in-group may be blurred by adding different types of out-groups. Although economically and politically powerful in-group members (e.g., middle- and upper-class Americans) may be less likely to feel threatened by less powerful out-groups (e.g., Mexicans) in terms of material resources, the reverse relationship is probable in terms of the symbolic in-group values (Stephan, et al., 2000). Thus, perceived degree of competition may cause cold (untrustworthy, unfriendly) stereotypes, which further threatens in-group symbolic values.

Predictions

We tested the possibility that people in the American context experience symbolic threat to their national values from stereotypically less warm immigrants. While testing this possibility, it was important to consider the distinction between civic and ethnic values of the in-group nation, predicting that Americans are concerned about civic rather than ethnic values of their national identity. More specifically, the two dimensions of stereotypes, warmth and competence, would determine degrees of immigrants' influences on the host nation. In general, warmth may be more likely to predict perceived influences on in-group national values, and competence should matter less. If warmth does matter more than competence, sharing values (symbolic cooperation) should reliably result from warm out-groups.

Study 1 and 2 investigate the effect of immigrant warmth and competence stereotypes on the expectation to share in-group values. Study 2 replicates Study 1 with slight modifications. Study 3 considers how the perceived threat to in-group civic values from low-warmth (competitive) out-groups explains derogatory attitudes toward them. We tested the following hypotheses in Studies 1 to 3:

1. *Expectation to share the in-group values.* Low-warmth immigrant groups will be expected not to share in-group values (Study 1 and 2).
2. *Expectation to threaten in-group values.* Low-warmth immigrants will be perceived to threaten in-group values (Study 3).
3. *Americans respond on civic values.* The above effects will be more pronounced on the perception of civic national values than ethnic national values for American participants.

Studies 1 and 2

Method

Participants.—American citizens or long-term residents were recruited through M-Turk (Amazon's on-line paid participant opportunity website) and compensated with a small monetary reward (Study 1: $n_{\text{male}} = 64$, $n_{\text{female}} = 95$, $M_{\text{age}} = 35.97$, $SD = 12.53$, range: 19–70; Study 2: $n_{\text{male}} = 64$, $n_{\text{female}} = 100$, $M_{\text{age}} = 37.43$, $SD = 13.55$, range: 19–75, see Appendix A1 for racial/ethnic information). They were instructed to complete a questionnaire online at their own pace.

Procedure.—Study 1 through 3 used basically the same procedure. The first screen introduced the study as an academic survey on social categories and reminded participants that their participation was voluntary and anonymous. After selecting an “agree to participate” button to consent, they were presented a question that was set up to select out those who did not read the instruction carefully. The next section introduced a story about an ethnic group called Wallonians, allegedly coming to the United States. The story manipulated competence and warmth stereotypes using characteristics of status and competition. Participants were asked to read the story carefully and answer the questions that followed it.

Then, participants were asked to report the perceived willingness of Wallonians to share American civic and ethnic values.¹ After that, they evaluated stereotypes of Wallonians. At the end of the survey, participants were encouraged to write any comments or concerns they may have had about the questionnaire.² They were thanked and compensated for their participation.

Materials.

Manipulation.—A story about an incoming ethnic group called Wallonians was based on Caprariello et al. (2009) (and not based on actual characteristics of this Belgian ethnic group). The randomly assigned scenario manipulated alleged characteristics of Wallonians in four ways: Competition (high or low) $\times$ Status (high or low) (see Appendix Table A2 for details). We expected that contextual information about competition would influence warmth stereotypes, while status information would influence competence stereotypes.

Expectation to share American values.—We measured perceived impact of Wallonian stereotypes on American values by asking “To what extent will most Americans expect Wallonians to share these values with Americans?” (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *extremely*). We defined civic values as the perceived national identity constructs concerning the importance of institutional and political ideologies. We operationalized civic values using eight items (*ideology, sense of citizenship, participation in community, political values, equality, rights,*

¹Participants also rated characteristics (e.g., similarity and common features) of the American category and the Wallonian category in addition to the perceived values, in a counterbalanced order. Neither the order nor the characteristics items yielded effects on any of the results.

²For purposes other than the present studies, we also measured Social Dominance Orientation (e.g., it is all right if people do not have equal chances in life; Kugler, Cooper, & Nosek, 2010) in Study 1, and zero-sum beliefs about immigrants (e.g., more good jobs for immigrants means fewer good jobs for Americans already living here; Esses et al., 2001) in Study 2.

respect for political institutions, and *respect for the law*) and asked participants to rate the degree to which they expect Wallonians to share each value when they come to the U.S..

We defined ethnic values as the perceived national identity constructs concerning inherited culture and common ancestral roots, and operationalized using eight items (*shared tradition*, *cultural symbols*, *customs*, *family descent*, *all citizens being like a family*, *language*, *shared blood lines*, and *popular culture*). These items were drawn from Wright et al. (2012) and presented to participants in a random order for each measure of civic and ethnic values.

Stereotypes of Wallonians.—We measured stereotypes of Wallonians on competence and warmth dimensions as our manipulation checks. According to the previous SCM studies, words to describe status (e.g., prestigious, economical success) predict the competence dimension, while phrases to describe resources and value competition (e.g., take away resources, compatible) explain the warmth dimension (Caprariello et al., 2009; Kervyn et al., 2015). We asked the following questions for manipulation checks: “To what extent will most Americans view Wallonians as [...]?” (competence: *competent*, *capable*, *prestigious*, *economically successful*; warmth: *warm*, *trustworthy*, *take away resources* (reversed), *compatible*; 1 = *not at all*, 5 = *extremely*). In addition to the manipulation check questions, we asked them to evaluate eight kinds of emotion toward Wallonians (*pity*, *envy*, *contempt*, *pride*, *sympathy*, *admiration*, *disgust*, and *jealousy*) (see Appendix Table A3 and A4).

Demographics.—The demographic questions measured gender, age, length of residency in the U.S., race/ethnicity, social class, and the strength of self-reported American identity.

Results

Manipulation checks.—Mean scores for warmth averaged the ratings of four items (Study 1: Cronbach’s $\alpha = .95$; Study 2: Cronbach’s $\alpha = .79$), and competence averaged the scores of four items (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .79$, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .95$). Mean scores and standard deviations of each Wallonian condition are presented in Table 1 (Study 1) and Table 2 (Study 2).³

Study 1. To test our manipulations’ effects on stereotypic ratings of Wallonians, we first conducted a 2 (Competition: high or low) $\times$ 2 (Status: high or low) Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on competence scores. The manipulation check showed a significant main effect of status on competence, $F(1, 158) = 234.21$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [1.68, 2.18], $\eta^2_p = .60$. High-status Wallonians ($M = 3.79$) were evaluated to be more competent than low-status Wallonians ($M = 1.86$). Competence ratings showed neither a main effect of competition nor an interaction effect.

The other manipulation check, on warmth ratings, revealed a significant main effect of competition, $F(1, 155) = 15.48$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [0.24, 0.71], $\eta^2_p = .091$. Low-competitive

³We conducted ANOVAs separately for warmth and competence ratings to test the effects of scenario on the stereotypes, following the procedure of Caprariello et al. (2009). The ratings on warmth and competence were also considered as a repeated measure in a mixed-ANOVA; however, it did not yield consistent 3-way-interactions across the studies (Study 1: $F(1, 155) = 0.62$, $p = .431$, $\eta^2_p = .004$, Study 2: $F(1, 160) = 5.32$, $p = .022$, $\eta^2_p = .032$, Study 3: $F(1, 158) = 0.15$, $p = .697$, $\eta^2_p = .001$).

Wallonians ($M = 2.67$), compared to high-competitive Wallonians ($M = 2.19$), were evaluated to be warm. However, unexpectedly, we also observed a significant main effect of status, which indicated that high-status Wallonians ($M = 2.64$) were perceived as warmer than low-status Wallonians ($M = 2.26$), $F(1, 155) = 17.75$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [0.17, 0.65], $\eta^2_p = .103$.⁴ A statistically significant interaction was not observed. In general, our scenarios successfully manipulated warmth/competition and competence/status stereotypes of Wallonians.

Study 2.: The manipulation-check main effect of status on competence ratings emerged, $F(1, 160) = 165.18$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [1.38, 1.88], $\eta^2_p = .508$. High-status Wallonians ($M = 3.70$) were evaluated to be more competent than low-status Wallonians ($M = 2.06$). There was no main effect of competition on competence, $F < 1$. However, there was a significant interaction between competition and status on the competence evaluation, $F(1, 160) = 5.03$, $p = .026$, $\eta^2_p = .03$. The difference in the ratings of competence between high- and low-status Wallonians was marginally stronger when the Wallonians were described as high competition ($F(1, 160) = 2.94$, $p = .09$, $\eta^2_p = .018$) than low competition ($F(1, 160) = 2.14$, $p = .15$, $\eta^2_p = .013$).

The next manipulation-check ANOVA tested the effects of competition and status on warmth ratings. We observed the main effect of competition on warmth, such that non-competitive Wallonians ($M = 2.70$) were evaluated to be warmer than the highly competitive Wallonians ($M = 2.34$), $F(1, 160) = 10.88$, $p = .001$, 95% CI = [-0.58, -0.15], $\eta^2_p = .064$. However, replicating Study 1, we also observed an unpredicted main effect of status on warmth, such that high-status Wallonians ($M = 2.76$) were more likely to be perceived as warm than were low-status Wallonians ($M = 2.27$), $F(1, 160) = 20.44$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [0.28, 0.71], $\eta^2_p = .113$. There was no interaction effect on warmth ratings, $F < 1$. These results generally replicated those of Study 1, namely that our manipulations of Wallonian warmth/competition and competence/status were effective.

Sharing American values.—Mean scores for the perceived willingness to share American civic values averaged the ratings of eight items (Study 1: Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$; Study 2: Cronbach's $\alpha = .95$), and ethnic values averaged the scores of eight items (Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$).

To investigate the effect of stereotypes of Wallonians on their perceived willingness to share American values, we conducted a 2 (Competition) $\times$ 2 (Status) $\times$ 2 (American values: civic and ethnic) mixed ANOVA, with the perceived willingness to share American values as a dependent variable.

Study 1.—A significant main effect of competition was observed, such that highly competitive (i.e., low-warmth) Wallonians ($M = 2.53$) were expected to be less likely than noncompetitive (i.e., high-warmth) Wallonians ($M = 3.06$) to share American values, $F(1, 155) = 17.75$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [0.28, 0.78], $\eta^2_p = .103$. Although the effect size was

⁴Using a phrase such as “sharing power and resources” to describe cooperation may have influenced the evaluation of competence, unexpectedly.

smaller, we also observed a significant main effect of status, $F(1, 155) = 10.59, p = .001$, 95% CI = $[-0.66, -0.16]$, $\eta^2_p = .064$. High-status (i.e., competent) Wallonians ($M = 3.00$) were more likely to be expected to share American values than were low-status (i.e., incompetent) Wallonians ($M = 2.59$).

There was also a significant interaction between competition and American values, $F(1, 155) = 6.45, p = .012$, $\eta^2_p = .04$. Although we observed the effect of competition on the perceived willingness to share American values in general, this effect was stronger in the civic value condition ($F(1, 155) = 23.93, p < .001$, 95% CI = $[0.43, 1.01]$, $\eta^2_p = .134$) than in the ethnic value condition ($F(1, 155) = 5.58, p = .02$, 95% CI = $[0.06, 0.63]$, $\eta^2_p = .035$) (see Figure 1). This indicates that the warmth stereotype has a greater influence on the expectation to share American civic values than on ethnic values.⁵

Study 2.—In line with the findings of Study 1, we observed a significant interaction between competition and American values, $F(1, 160) = 4.98, p = .03$, $\eta^2_p = .030$, replicating the pattern of Study 1 (see Figure 2). Competition had an effect on perceived willingness to share American civic values ($F(1, 160) = 5.21, p = .02$, 95% CI = $[0.05, 0.68]$, $\eta^2_p = .032$), but not ethnic values ($F(1, 160) = 0.24, p = .63$, 95% CI = $[-0.20, 0.33]$, $\eta^2_p = .001$). That is, immigrants stereotyped as low warmth were evaluated as less likely than those with warmer stereotypes to share American civic values, but the pattern was not observed on the ethnic values.

Discussion

In line with Caprariello et al. (2009), the two studies revealed that the scenario depicting relative social positions of a novel immigrant group successfully manipulated warmth/competition and competence/status stereotypes. These results replicated immigrant stereotypes being manipulated by varying descriptions of social structural information.

Replicating the results of Study 1 in Study 2 strengthens the argument here. For instance, the warmth stereotype of an immigrant group influenced mainly the expectation of sharing in-group civic values but less so the sharing of in-group ethnic values. This result tells us two things. First, Americans evaluated immigrants' warmth stereotypes to influence shared institutional and political ideologies, not inherited culture and family descent. Second, the warmth dimension played a role in predicting influences of out-groups on national values.

However, we observed an unexpected main effect of status on the expectation to share American values. We interpret this as possibly due to the unpredicted status-driven perception of warmth (besides the predicted status effect on competence). One could argue that our manipulation of status was not independent from competition, and this flaw could be improved in the further studies.

⁵Unlike Study 1 and Study 2, an ANOVA on competence also revealed a main effect of competition, $F(1, 158) = 4.53, p = .04$, 95% CI = $[0.02, 0.50]$, $\eta^2_p = .028$, revealing greater competence ratings on competitive Wallonians ($M = 3.87$). There was no interaction between competition and status on competence, $F < 1$. Another ANOVA on warmth revealed a predicted main effect of competition, $F(1, 158) = 39.78, p < .001$, 95% CI = $[0.52, 1.00]$, $\eta^2_p = .201$. The main effect of status and interaction effect did not reach statistical significance, $p_s > .12$.

Another limitation of the present studies relates to potential demand characteristics. Our dependent variable to explain perceived expectation to share American values asked participants whether they thought Wallonians would “share” American civic and ethnic values. This could be improved by having different words in measuring the dependent variable.

Study 3

Thus far, the manipulated warmth stereotype influenced expectation to share American civic values more than ethnic values. Although consistent results across two studies strengthen this research, Study 3 further considers the impact of immigrant stereotypes on intergroup attitudes.

Study 1 and 2’s manipulations of warmth stereotypes using competition information could possibly be interpreted as too closely related to the dependent variable of the expectation to share in-group values. Therefore, Study 3 considers perceived “threat” of the immigrants to the in-group values as a dependent variable. If cold stereotypes, but not competent stereotypes, of immigrants threaten in-group values, the findings of Study 1 and 2 were likely not due to demand characteristics. Instead, perceived threat to national values may cause prejudices toward the immigrants. Study 3 measures the prejudices to reveal the interactive effect of immigrant stereotypes and in-group values.

In addition to the limitations of the measures, Study 3 also considers individual differences in interpretations regarding perceived threat of immigrants to in-group values. While the external forces of immigrants’ competitiveness influenced their perceived sharing of in-group values, individuals’ propensity to see such influence should depend on beliefs about the rigidity of the intergroup boundary.

In-group and out-groups can be differentiated more when they have rigidly different membership criteria (Morton, Postmes, Haslam, & Hornsey, 2009). An individual difference in beliefs that an underlying, inherent, and fixed quality explains memberships in social categories fits the lay theory of “essentialist beliefs” (Hamilton, 2007). Individuals with strong essentialist beliefs expect that characteristics and behaviors of in-group members are due to the underlying in-group essence, which is distinct from that of an out-group (Kvaale & Haslam, 2015). Therefore, the strength of essentialist beliefs indicates the perceived mental distance between in-group and out-groups (Martin & Parker, 1995; Rothbart & Taylor, 1992; Yzerbyt, Corneille, & Estrada, 2001). In the context of perceiving immigration, strong essentialists will be less vulnerable to the impact of immigrants on the in-group. The present study aims to examine the conditions under which in-group essentialist beliefs moderate the expected threat of immigrants to in-group values in the American social context.

Study 3 aims to examine the effect of the stereotypes of immigrant groups on intergroup attitudes in relation to individual differences in essentialist beliefs. The present study examines mediating and moderating processes by which reactions to national identity cause prejudices. A measure of essentialist beliefs is administered to clarify individual differences

on the influence of perceived threat. The following hypotheses are tested in addition to the previous ones from Study 1 and 2:

4. *Threat to civic values explains intergroup attitudes.* The effect of immigrant stereotypes on intergroup attitudes is mediated by the threat to civic values, but not by the threat to ethnic values of American national identity.
5. *Essentialist beliefs moderate the perceived impact of threat on attitudes.* Low essentialists are more vulnerable than high essentialists to the impact of perceived immigrant threat to the in-group. Thus, the relationship between perceived threat to the in-group values is related to prejudice only among low essentialists.

Method

Participants.—In total, 162 (83 female; $M_{\text{age}} = 36.13$, $SD = 12.00$, range: 18–67) American citizens or long-term residents were recruited through M-Turk and compensated with a small monetary reward. Three people did not pass the qualification task.

Procedure.—Study 3 followed the same procedure as Study 1 and 2, with several modifications, including adding some leading sentences for the scenario (see Appendix A2 for details).

Materials.

Threat to American values.—Following the scenario, we measured perceived threat to American values by asking the degree to which Wallonians will threaten American values when they come to the U.S. The same set of American civic and ethnic values from Study 1 and 2 measured the perceived threat (Cronbach's $\alpha = .941$, $\alpha = .940$, respectively).

Essentialist beliefs.—The perceived essence of American nationality was measured in concrete terms. We depicted specific situations in which fictitious individuals describe the American essence, and asked participants to report their (dis)agreement with the statements. The items were measured on a 7-point-scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) (see Appendix Table A2). These items were based on Haslam, Rothschild, and Ernst (2000), describing different components of essentialist beliefs. By using these items, we measured individual scores on the perceived strength of mental boundary between in-group nationality and out-groups, the higher scores indicating stronger perception of the intergroup boundary.

Prejudices.—Four items measured prejudice toward Wallonians. The items were measured on a 5-point-scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*): “I would not mind if a Wallonian person joined my close family by marriage,” “Americans and Wallonians will never be really comfortable with each other, even if they are close friends,” “I would not mind if Wallonians come to live in my close neighborhood,” and “I would not mind if a Wallonian person was appointed as my boss.” Except for the second item, the item scores were reversed for higher values to indicate greater prejudice.

Demographics.—The size of neighborhood (e.g., city, town, country), political orientation, and perceived essential features of American identity were measured in addition to the ones in Study 1 and 2.

Results

Manipulation checks.—In line with Study 1 and 2, we combined four items to calculate warmth mean scores for each participant (Cronbach's $\alpha=.82$). Another four items composed a mean score of competence (Cronbach's $\alpha=.94$).⁶ We examined the perceived stereotypes of each manipulated Wallonian type in a 2 (Competition: high or low) $\times$ 2 (Status: high or low) ANOVA on warmth and competence ratings.

There was a main effect of competition on warmth. Highly competitive Wallonians ($M=2.37$) were evaluated to be less warm than non-competitive Wallonians ($M=3.13$), $F(1, 158)=39.78$, $p<.001$, 95% CI = [0.52, 1.00], $\eta^2_p=.201$. With regard to the competence ratings, we observed a main effect of status on competence, such that high-status Wallonians were evaluated as more competent ($M=3.87$) than low-status Wallonians ($M=2.13$), $F(1, 158)=201.66$, $p<.001$, 95% CI = [1.50, 1.98], $\eta^2_p=.561$.⁷ Results of our manipulation checks show that the scenarios depict stereotypes of Wallonians. Mean scores of competence and warmth for each condition are listed in Table 3.

Threat to American values.—To test the hypothesis that Wallonians evaluated to be low-warmth (e.g., high-competition) would threaten American civic values, we conducted a 2 (Competition) $\times$ 2 (Status) $\times$ 2 (American values: civic and ethnic) mixed ANOVA, with perceived threat to American values as a dependent variable. As expected, high-competition (i.e., low-warmth) Wallonians ($M=2.64$) were thought of as threats to American values more than low-competition (i.e., warm) Wallonians ($M=2.25$), $F(1, 158)=7.34$, $p=.007$, 95% CI = [0.11, 0.69], $\eta^2_p=.044$. We did not observe a main effect of status on the perceived threat to American values, $F<1$.

A significant interaction between warmth and American value, $F(1, 158)=6.09$, $p=.02$, $\eta^2_p=.037$, replicated the pattern of Study 1 and 2 (Figure 3). Competition/warmth had an effect on the perceived threat to American civic values ($F(1, 158)=12.10$, $p=.001$, 95% CI = [0.25, 0.89], $\eta^2_p=.071$), but not on ethnic values ($F(1, 158)=1.96$, $p=.16$, 95% CI = [-0.09, 0.54], $\eta^2_p=.012$). That is, American participants expected immigrants to threaten American civic values when they perceived them as more cold than warm.

Prejudices.—Mean scores of prejudice toward Wallonians were calculated by averaging five items (Cronbach's $\alpha=.877$), higher scores indicating greater prejudice. To further investigate the difference in prejudiced attitude between high- and low warmth conditions (coded 2 and 1, respectively), a mediation analysis was conducted following Baron and Kenny (1986). We tested the mediating effects of perceived threat to civic and ethnic values on the relationship between the immigrant group's warm stereotype and prejudiced attitudes. In a multiple mediator analysis, differences in the perceived threat to civic and ethnic values

⁶The interaction between status and American values was only marginally significant, $F(1, 155)=3.52$, $p=.063$, $\eta^2_p=.022$.

⁷The standardized emotion scores are presented in Appendix Table A5.

were simultaneously tested as mediating factors between the warmth stereotype conditions and prejudiced attitudes toward immigrants (Figure 4). We predicted that prejudice is expressed more when the immigrants were stereotypically cold rather than warm, and this relationship would be mediated by the perceived threat to civic but not ethnic values.

Warmth stereotype was found to be a significant predictor of prejudiced attitude ($t = 4.64$, $p < .0001$, 95% CI = [.390, .966]) and perceived threat to civic values ($t = 3.49$, $p = .0008$, 95% CI = [.231, .870]) but not perceived threat to ethnic values ($t = 1.39$, $p = .17$, 95% CI = [−.092, .536]). Although Baron and Kenny (1986) state that the predictor variable should significantly predict the mediator, the present finding failed to observe a statistically significant relationship between the predictor (i.e., warmth stereotype) and one of the mediators (i.e., perceived threat ethnic values). However, further mediation tests were carried out for an exploratory purpose, given the coefficient in a predicted direction to indicate the effect of warmth stereotype on perceived threat to ethnic values. In the three-predictor model, perceived threat to civic value significantly predicted prejudiced attitude ($t = 2.79$, $p = .006$, 95% CI = [.072, .420]). Perceived threat to ethnic value also significantly predicted prejudiced attitude ($t = 2.86$, $p = .005$, 95% CI = [.079, .434]).

We conducted bias corrected bootstrapping (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) to test indirect effects of warmth stereotype on prejudiced attitudes by using PROCESS package of SPSS provided by Hayes (2013). The effect of warmth stereotype on prejudiced attitude was found to be statistically significant when the threat to civic value was a mediator but not when the threat to ethnic value was a mediator (95% CI for indirect effects: civic values [.031, .309], ethnic values [−.010, .198], 5000 bootstrap samples). Consistent results were obtained in single-mediator analyses for threat to civic and ethnic values. These results suggest that American participants showed out-group derogation due to the perceived threat to their in-group civic values, but not to their ethnic values.

A moderating role of in-group essentialist beliefs.—Hierarchical regression analyses for high- and low-competition conditions examined whether in-group essentialist beliefs moderated the effect of perceived threat on prejudice. Mean scores on the measure of essentialist beliefs (Cronbach's $\alpha = .58$) were the dependent variable. Perceived threat to American civic values and in-group essentialist beliefs were predictors of prejudice toward Wallonians.

High competition.—The first step tested main effects of in-group essentialist beliefs and perceived threat to civic values. Perceived threat to American civic values significantly predicted prejudice toward Wallonians ($\beta = .29$, $p = .017$, 95% CI = [0.06, 0.56], $\eta^2_p = .070$). Although not statistically significant, in-group essentialist beliefs had a positive effect on prejudice ($\beta = .20$, $p = .096$, 95% CI = [−0.05, 0.62], $\eta^2_p = .035$). The second step added the interaction of the predictors, and the fit of the model significantly improved ($R^2 = .04$, $F(1, 78) = .414$, $p = .045$; $R^2 = .22$, AIC = 249.712, BIC = 257.339, $p < .001$). The interaction effect on prejudice was significant ($\beta = -.21$, $p = .045$, 95% CI = [−0.56, −0.01], $\eta^2_p = .050$). Therefore, we tested the effect of perceived threat to civic values on prejudice at $\pm 1SD$ of the essentialist beliefs. As predicted, the perceived threat to civic values predicted prejudice only for those scoring low on in-group essentialist beliefs ($\beta = .48$, $t(78) = 3.21$, $p = .002$).

Prejudice of high essentialists did not depend on the perceived threat to civic values ($\beta = .06$, $t(78) = 0.35$, $p = .73$).

Low competition.—Another hierarchical regression analysis was conducted for participants in the low-competition condition. In-group essentialist beliefs and perceived threat to civic values both predicted prejudice ($\beta = .29$, $p = .006$, 95% CI = [0.14, 0.45], $\eta^2_p = .095$; $\beta = .38$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [0.10, 0.54], $\eta^2_p = .155$, respectively). However, the addition of the interaction did not improve the model ($R^2 = .001$, $F(1, 76) = .16$, $p = .69$; $R^2 = .22$, AIC = 163.84, BIC = 171.37). Due to the low level of competition, perceiving Wallonians as warm, the impact of perceived threat to civic values was not strong enough to depend on the individual differences in essentialist beliefs.

Discussion

In general, Study 3 replicated the findings of Study 1 and 2. The perceived threat to American values was stronger when the immigrant group was depicted as competitive rather than not competitive. In other words, stereotypically low-warmth immigrants were perceived to threaten American values. These effects of low-warmth immigrants on the in-group representation were observed only on a civic type of national value, but not on an ethnic value. These patterns are consistent from Study 1 and 2, suggesting that a decreased likelihood to share American values could parallel a perceived threat. The present study measured the perceived impact on national values in more direct terms.

The present study also revealed the impact of the warmth dimension of stereotypes on prejudice. Low warmth stereotypes predicted more derogatory attitudes toward the immigrants. This relationship was mediated by the degree to which the participants felt their civic identity was threatened. A perceived threat to ethnic values did not mediate the relationship between the immigrants' stereotypes and prejudice toward immigrants. This novel finding is inconsistent with previous findings that claimed a greater impact of ethnic representation on prejudice (e.g., Shulman, 2002). However, the present findings suggest that the sensitivity to the contents of national values may vary, depending on nation, and further that the reasons for out-group derogation may depend on these perceived national values.

The present study also revealed that individual differences in perceiving the intergroup boundary, namely essentialist beliefs, predicted vulnerability from the impact of threatening immigrant stereotypes. This indicates that the perceived threat to the in-group civic values especially predicts exclusive attitudes toward incoming immigrants when the host citizens are not protected through strong beliefs about in-group national essences. These findings, however, contradict ones suggesting that greater in-group essentialist beliefs predict prejudices (e.g., Pehrson, Brown, & Zagefka, 2009). Measuring essentialist beliefs in terms of the perception of in-group members sharing a common "blood" probably caused a positive correlation between essentialism and prejudices in the past studies. The present study incorporated broader concepts and dimensions of essentialist beliefs, including perceived membership alterability and categorical boundaries. Although a direct comparison between the past research and the present research should be treated with caution,

underlying concepts of essentialist beliefs could more carefully be concerned in future studies in order to confirm the present findings. As far as the present findings suggest, the beliefs in a rigid and inflexible intergroup gap may protect the in-group from threatening immigrants.

General Discussion

While hostile out-groups can undermine intergroup relationships (e.g., Leyens et al., 2003), people's conceptions about their in-group can also determine intergroup attitudes. The present study showed that stereotypes of immigrants, as well as the construal of in-group national values, influence intergroup attitudes. Specifically, stereotypically cold and untrustworthy immigrants were perceived as a threat to in-group civic national representations, and thus were rejected. Furthermore, the perceived threat of immigrants to the in-group civic values explained prejudice especially for those with weak essentialist beliefs in Study 3. American participants felt their in-group values were threatened when their mental boundary between in-group and immigrants was rather flexible than rigid.

A contribution of the present work relates to the interaction of out-group stereotypes and perception of threat. The present study found that the perceived threat to the in-group national values explained prejudice. In our manipulation scenarios, relatively warm immigrants were explained as sharing power (Study 1) or values (Study 2 and 3) and resources, while competent immigrants were economically successful and had prestigious jobs. These phrases to manipulate stereotypes parallel the types of threat presented in the Integrated Threat Theory (Stephan et al., 1994). Using words such as "sharing power" in Study 1 may explain the realistic threat, and "sharing values" in Study 2 and 3 may explain the symbolic types of threat. Despite the differences in the types of threat, our results consistently indicated that competitive immigrants were stereotyped as untrustworthy and were perceived to alter in-group national representations.

Another contribution relates to the SCM literature (e.g., Fiske et al., 2002). The SCM has been used to predict reactions toward out-groups (e.g., Caprariello et al., 2009; Cuddy et al., 2007; Eckes, 2002; Fiske et al., 2002). However, less was known about the impact of different types of out-groups on the in-group representations, in this case, national ones. The present studies provide evidence that warmth/communion was considered as an other-focused trait, so it mattered more for ingroup-outgroup relationships.

However, the dominance of warmth dimension in predicting impact on in-group should be discussed more in future studies. According to the functionalist approach (Bettencourt & Sheldon, 2001), competence of out-groups matters more than morality or sociability (warmth) of the out-groups. Competence judgments are based on the hierarchical social structure. Thus, the competence evaluation is important to determine in- or out-group feelings of superiority (Bettencourt & Sheldon, 2001). Furthermore, agency or competence becomes important when the out-group engages in the same goals as the in-group (Wojciszke & Abele, 2008). Whether the out-group is eligible to achieve a goal or not is especially relevant information when the out-group is functionally related to the in-group. Moreover, the interaction between warmth and competence dimensions should also be

considered in future studies. Low warmth and high competence out-groups elicit envy emotion, while the same competence stereotype results in a reaction of admiration when the out-group is evaluated high on the warmth dimension (e.g., Caprariello et al., 2009; Fiske et al., 2002). The results of the present studies should therefore be interpreted with some caution, and future research should reveal alternative possibilities.

As suggested in research such as Dittmann, Purdie-Vaughns, and Eibach (2011), it is also important to test these effects in a country that holds different types of national construal compared to the United States. People in a country such as Japan may value the ethnic type of national representations, valuing ancestry and “blood lines” for their own citizens. Japanese, for example, may hold negative attitudes toward immigrants due to the fear that they do not share “blood lines” rather than civic rights. Therefore, the greater effect of immigrant stereotypes on the in-group civic value than ethnic values found among American participants may be reversed among people of different country.

Overall, the present study points out an important aspect of intergroup attitude formation. American participants in the present study expressed their concerns of threat on shared political principles when thinking about the upcoming competitive/untrustworthy immigrants. These findings indicate that Americans tend to hold negative attitudes toward immigrants because of their fear for incompatible civic ideologies. Perceptions of in-group national representations help explain the psychological reasons behind negative attitudes toward immigrants. Considering the interaction between the perceivers’ national construal and the stereotypes of certain immigrant groups, including individual differences in the perception of categorical boundary, may help to predict the specific nature of the intergroup relationship. The present study suggested a possible cultural dependency in the psychological process of intergroup attitude formation.

Supplementary Material

Refer to Web version on PubMed Central for supplementary material.

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Figure 1.
The effect of competition and status on perceived willingness to share American civic and ethnic values. Error bars represent standard errors. (Study 1)

Figure 2.

The effect of competition and status on perceived willingness to share American civic and ethnic values. Error bars represent standard errors. (Study 2)

Figure 3.
The effect of competition and status on perceived threat to American civic and ethnic values.
Error bars represent standard errors. (Study 3)

Figure 4.

Multiple mediator model. Perceived threat to civic value and ethnic value as mediators between warmth stereotype and prejudiced attitude toward immigrants. Standardized estimates as well as 95% confidence intervals are reported. The direct effect of stereotype on prejudiced attitudes are reported in italics.

Table 1

Mean competence and warmth ratings by condition (Study 1)

Status	Competition	Competence		Warmth	
		<i>M (SD)</i>	95% CI	<i>M (SD)</i>	95% CI
High	High	3.73 (.91)	[3.48, 3.97]	2.38 (.66)	[2.14, 2.62]
High	Low	3.85 (.80)	[3.60, 4.09]	2.89 (.75)	[2.66, 3.12]
Low	High	1.74 (.71)	[1.49, 2.00]	2.01 (.82)	[1.76, 2.25]
Low	Low	1.98 (.74)	[1.73, 2.22]	2.45 (.81)	[2.21, 2.68]

Table 2

Mean competence and warmth ratings by condition (Study 2)

Status	Competition	Competence		Warmth	
		<i>M (SD)</i>	95% CI	<i>M (SD)</i>	95% CI
High	High	3.85 (.83)	[3.61, 2.19]	2.59 (.63)	[2.38, 2.80]
High	Low	3.55 (.81)	[3.30, 3.80]	2.94 (.75)	[2.72, 3.16]
Low	High	1.93 (.74)	[1.68, 2.19]	2.08 (.61)	[1.87, 2.31]
Low	Low	2.20 (.87)	[1.94, 2.46]	2.46 (.79)	[2.23, 2.68]

Table 3

Mean competence and warmth ratings by condition (Study 3)

Status	Competition	Competence		Warmth	
		<i>M (SD)</i>	95% CI	<i>M (SD)</i>	95% CI
High	High	3.74 (.91)	[3.48, 4.00]	2.44 (.76)	[2.18, 2.69]
High	Low	4.01 (.73)	[3.76, 4.25]	3.26 (.74)	[3.02, 3.49]
Low	High	2.01 (.76)	[1.78, 2.23]	2.31 (.83)	[2.09, 2.53]
Low	Low	2.26 (.70)	[2.01, 2.50]	3.01 (.70)	[2.77, 3.24]