

**Accepting the Foreign:
Perceived Threat, Foreigner Exclusionism, and Social Distance from
Immigrants in the United States and Spain**

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Abstract

In the United States and Spain, rising immigrant populations have increased public debate over national immigration policy. Although both countries continue to struggle to come to terms with their foreign-born populations, these two nations have strikingly different immigration histories, which have shaped immigration policy and social attitudes toward immigrants. This project examines perceptions of immigrant populations in the United States and Spain. I test Allport's contact hypothesis and Blumer's group position theory in regard to respondents' perceptions of economic and cultural threat. I then test the effects of perceived economic and cultural threat on respondents' social distance from immigrants and immigration policy preferences. Logistic regression models are used in my analysis. Although both Allport's and Blumer's theories are supported, results highlight the differing processes observed in the United States and Spain. In this way, this project underscores the influence of contextual factors on individual-level intergroup processes.

I. Introduction

This project examines the formation and consequences of host country natives' perceived group threat toward immigrant groups in the United States and Spain. Sociological research on perceived group threat and intergroup relations has traditionally focused on black-white relations in the United States (Pettigrew 1998: 78). However, recent surges in international migration have made immigrants an increasingly pertinent topic for intergroup relation research both in North American and European contexts.

This project is founded on two main sociological and psychological theories on intergroup relations—Gordon Allport's contact hypothesis and Blumer's group position model. Both of these theories examine sociological and psychological processes that contribute to the formation of perceived group threat and intergroup hostility. In addition to the analysis of these theories through the perception of immigrants in the United States, this project will also examine the generalizability of these theoretical foundations through an analysis of perceptions of immigrants in Spain. Spain provides a unique contrast to the United States due to its striking contrast in immigration history, policy development, rate of immigrant growth, economic situation, and racial social structure. While the United States has traditionally been seen as a “nation of immigrants” (Parsons and Smeeding 2006: 3; Pettigrew 1998: 81), Spain, traditionally a nation of net emigration, has seen a drastic surge in immigration over the last three decades (Escandell and Ceobanu 2009: 45). In this project I will conduct a quantitative analysis of the 2009 Transatlantic Trends Immigration Survey in order to discover if and how individual-level processes posed by existing sociological theories of perceived group threat differ in these two strikingly different contexts. In this way, this research tests the influence of larger structural factors on individual-level racial/ethnic relation processes.

II. Theory and Literature Review

Both sociological and psychological perspectives have been applied to in-group/out-group perceptions and intergroup relations. This project will examine two prominent theories—Gordon Allport's contact hypothesis and Blumer's group position model. Allport's foundational work, *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954), focuses on the ideal conditions for eliminating individual-level intergroup prejudice—positive, close friendship contact (Pettigrew 1998: 65). Allport's original contact theory specifies four conditions of group interaction that lead to optimal intergroup relations—equal status, common goals, cooperation, and authority support (Pettigrew 1998: 66-67).

Existing research has stressed the important distinction between generalized intergroup contact and the conditions and processes put forth by Allport and Pettigrew (Berg 2009; Escandell and Ceobanu 2009; González, Sirlopú and Kessler 2010; Pettigrew 1998: 68; Pettigrew, Wagner and Christ 2010; Semyonov and Glikman 2009). Pettigrew's contemporary research on the effect of population ratios on prejudice in Germany demonstrated positive intergroup contact's ability to reduce individual and collective threat against out-groups (Pettigrew, Wagner and Christ 2010: 642). Pettigrew and his associates' research reveals a key distinction between close, prolonged positive contact, and an increase in the minority population. While an rise in minority population can create more opportunities for intergroup contact, a growth in foreign population can also increase perceptions of threat (Pettigrew, Wagner and Christ 2010: 642). As shown by Pettigrew's development of Allport's theoretical foundations, the process of reducing prejudice is facilitated by a specific *type* of intergroup contact—namely, intergroup friendship.

While Allport examines the forms of contact that contribute to optimal intergroup relations and how contact can psychologically reduce preexisting stereotypes (Pettigrew 1998: 65), Blumer's group position model investigates the formation of intergroup prejudice, finding the source of intergroup hostility at the institutional and structural level. According to Blumer, and the more recent contributors to this theory such as Bobo and Hutchings, intergroup hostility is a result of the relative position of racial groups within a historically developed social hierarchy (Bobo and Hutchings 1996: 955) and the perceptions of threat that arise when this status hierarchy is challenged (Bobo 1999: 449).

The core of Blumer's group position model lies in the "relative status positioning of groups" (Bobo 1999: 447; Bobo and Hutchings 1996: 953-955). In this way, individual psychology, cultural values, and self interest are situated within a historically created "sense of group position" and "shared images of appropriate group status" (Bobo and Hutchings 1996: 955). Blumer posits four factors that contribute to this sense of group position—belief in in-group superiority, belief in out-groups as "alien and different," proprietary claim to certain rights, statuses, and resources, and a perception of threat from the subordinate groups' desire to attain or share these rights, which are understood as belonging to the in-group (Bobo 1999: 449). Conflict, and out-group prejudice, surface when this historically and socially formed group hierarchy is challenged.

Research on Blumer's theoretical model has produced supportive results. Bobo and Hutchings' work on the intergroup race relations between Whites, Blacks, Latinos, and Asians in the United States (1996), Durrheim's examination of the effects of threat, prejudice, and group position on policy preferences in South Africa (Durrheim et al. 2011), as well as Lincoln

Quillian's examination of group threat (1995), all find support for Blumer's group position model.

III. Hypotheses

Allport's contact hypothesis sees a solution to existing prejudice in face-to-face interaction between groups. Hypothesis 1 tests this assertion—increased contact with immigrant groups should correspond with less perceived threat towards these groups. This analysis will test three forms of contact with immigrant groups—friendship contact, workplace contact, and neighborhood contact. According to Allport's theoretical foundations, friendship contact should have the strongest negative correlation with perceived threat. Hypothesis 2 examines Blumer's group position model: A sense of entitlement and group position should correspond to more perceived threat from immigrant groups.

This project will also analyze the implications of perceived threat, namely whether threat is correlated with social distance from immigrant groups and anti-immigration policy.

Hypothesis 3 states that increased perceived threat should correspond with decreased comfort with immigrant groups. Hypothesis 4 states that increased perceptions of threat should have a positive correlation with anti-immigration policy preferences.

Finally, this thesis will take a cross-national comparative approach by examining how these causal mechanisms differ in the United States and Spain. By comparing how the formation and implications of perceived group threat differ in these two countries, which have drastically different immigration histories, policy development, and economic situation, this research will test the applicability of existing intergroup relation theories in differing contexts, and the effects of larger contextual factors on individual perceptions, attitudes, and preferences.

IV. Data and Methods

4.1 Data

The 2009 Transatlantic Trends: Immigration Survey utilized in this analysis questioned respondents eighteen years or older in eight countries: Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and the United States (Wunderlich et al. 2011). Surveys were conducted through landline phones using random-digit dialing. The response rate for the United States was fourteen percent, yielding a total of 1000 respondents. In Spain, the survey had a response rate of ten percent, totaling 1006 respondents¹.

4.2 Dependent Variables

In this analysis I will use five dependent variables—two measures of perceived threat (perceived economic threat and perceived cultural threat), a measure of comfort with immigrant groups, and two measures of immigration policy preferences (support of policies to deport unemployed immigrants and opposition to guaranteeing immigrants equal social benefits).

Perception of economic threat was coded using two survey questions (see table 1). A dummy variable was created by adding these two variables and then comparing respondents who strongly or somewhat agreed to those who strongly or somewhat disagreed² (1=agree).

Perceptions of Cultural Threat was coded as 1 for respondents who expressed perceptions of cultural threat from immigrants (see table 1). *Comfort*, a measure of social distance from

¹ The analysis in this thesis will focus on perceptions of legal, rather than illegal, immigrants—examining immigrants as “out-groups” rather than illegal residents. However, individual and countrywide perceptions of illegal immigrant can also have strong effects on attitudes toward legal immigrants.

² In the Spanish sample, respondents were asked one of the two questions. I was therefore able to code a dummy variable split between respondents who agreed and those who disagreed (1=agree). In the United States sample, respondents were asked both questions. Of a sample of 843 respondents, only 20 agreed with one question and disagreed with another. This group was coded with those who agreed with both statements. I made this coding decision through an evaluation of the frequency distribution of both component variables. Coding the group with those who agreed with both statements created a dummy variable whose distribution more closely reflected the distribution of the two component variables. A value of 1 indicates that the respondent agreed with at least one of the statements. A value of 0 indicates that the respondents disagreed with both statements.

immigrant groups, was coded using three questions (see table 1). In this variable, a value of 1 indicates the respondent answered “comfortable” to at least two of the survey questions. A value of 0 indicates that the respondent was uncomfortable having these relationships. *Immigration Policy Preferences*, a dependent variable used in the second part of my analysis, was operationalized through two survey questions³ (see table 1). In both variables, a value of 1 indicates preferences of foreigner exclusionism (1=unemployed leave country) (1=disagree with same access to social benefits).

4.3 Explanatory Variables

Four explanatory variables are used in this analysis—friendship contact, workplace contact, neighborhood contact, and sense of group position.

Three modes of contact with immigrants were used in this analysis. A separate survey question was used for each type of contact (see table 1). A value of 1 indicates that the respondent answered “yes, several” or “yes, a few”, while a value of 0 indicates an answer of “no, not at all”. To operationalize “a sense of group position”, I used the respondents’ belief that legal immigrants should have the right to vote in local government elections. Following Blumer’s model, this question elicits a “belief in in-group superiority” as well as, “proprietary claim to certain rights, statuses, and resources” which only belong to the in-group (Bobo 1999: 449). Although this survey question does not explicitly state that foreigners are “alien and different”, it does imply that immigrants, regardless of legal status, are different enough to be

³ While both of these variables can be viewed as measures of policy preferences for foreigner exclusionism, the correlation between the two variables is weak. While the first statement indicates preferences to exclude immigrants by sending them out of the country, the second statement indicates that immigrants living in the host country should be excluded from certain rights and privileges. Requiring unemployed immigrants to leave the country is also more closely linked to an economic and labor-oriented view of immigration. I will therefore perform two analyses to examine immigration policy preferences, one for each of these dependent variables.

Variable	Survey Question(s)	United States				Spain		
		Range	Mean	SD	Obs.	Mean	SD	Obs.
Dependent Variables								
Economic Threat	"Legal immigrants are a burden on social services"	0-1	.445	.497	843	.361	.480	995
	"Immigrants take jobs away from native born"							
Cultural Threat	"Immigrants negatively affect national culture"	0-1	.289	.454	913	.336	.473	961
Policy Preferences (Foreigner Exclusionism)	"Require immigrants who are unemployed for more than one year to leave the country"	0-1	.629	.483	938	.644	.479	985
	Oppose "Guaranteeing the same access to social benefits as nationals"	0-1	.359	.480	972	.158	.364	1003
Comfort	Immigrant as neighbor	0-1	.845	.362	988	.878	.327	995
	Immigrant as boss							
	Immigrant married/in relationship with close relative							
Explanatory Variables								
Friendship Contact	"Do you have friends..."	0-1	.707	.456	992	.565	.496	999
Workplace Contact	"Do you have colleagues..."	0-1	.358	.480	933	.324	.468	996
Neighborhood Contact	"Do you have neighbors..."	0-1	.502	.500	967	.610	.488	994
Sense of Group Position/Entitlement	"Voting in municipal elections is a right that should be reserved for only national citizens"	0-1	.706	.456	978	.436	.496	976
SOURCE: Transatlantic Trends: Immigration 2009								

SOURCE: Transatlantic Trends: Immigration 2009

Table 1: Range, mean, standard deviation, number of observations and survey questions for dependent and explanatory variables by country

distinguished from the in-group and should not possess the same political rights as host country nationals. A value of 1 indicates that the respondent exhibited a sense of entitlement and group position by answering, “Voting in municipal elections is a right that should be reserved for only United States/Spanish citizens”⁴.

4.4 Control Variables

Control variables include age, undergraduate education, political and religious preferences, gender, foreign-born status, immigrant parents, urban setting, worsening financial situation, and occupational status. Range, mean, standard deviation, and number of observations for control variables are shown in Table 2.

A direct measure of level of education was not provided through the Transatlantic Trends survey. Instead, college education was coded using the survey question, “At what stage did you complete your full time studies?” A value of 1 indicates that the respondent answered, “Graduation from college, university, or other third-level institute,” “Post-graduate degree (Masters, PhD) beyond your initial college degree,” or “Other qualification”. A value of 0 indicates that the respondent answered, “Elementary (primary) school or less,” “Some high (secondary) school,” “Graduation from high (secondary) school”, or “Still in full time education”, assuming they have not yet graduated from an undergraduate institution.

Conservative political and religious views were also controlled in my analysis. A value of 1 indicates that the respondent leans toward conservative political preferences. Religious

⁴ While this variable was the closest measure to Blumer’s theoretical foundations available in the Transatlantic Trends dataset, the measure is far from perfect. Answers to this survey question were contingent upon respondents’ feeling of exclusion in municipal elections, which may have more or less significance in the Spanish and American contexts. Furthermore, this measure does not fully capture the historical dimension of Blumer’s group position theory. While this measure functions as a preliminary indicator of a sense of group entitlement, additional research will be needed to further examine the role of group position on immigration attitudes.

Table 2. Range, Mean, Standard Deviation, and Number of Observations for Control Variables in the United States and Spain

	<i>United States</i>				<i>Spain</i>		
	<i>Range</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Obs.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Obs.</i>
Age	18-93	54.64	15.04	938	46.64	16.77	1006
Gender (1=male)	0-1	.474	.500	1000	.443	.497	1006
Non-white (US only)	0-1	.181	.385	983			
Foreign-Born	0-1	.096	.295	991	.049	.215	1006
Immigrant Parents	0-1	.192	.394	991	.053	.224	1006
Urban	0-1	.468	.499	990	.367	.482	1006
College Education	0-1	.546	.498	996	.258	.438	1006
Politically Conservative	0-1	.400	.490	973	.254	.436	979
Non-Protestant	0-1	.506	.500	1000			
Non-Catholic	0-1				.302	.460	1006
Worse Financially	0-1	.509	.500	993	.520	.500	1005
Occupational Status							
[Reference group: Employees]							
Self-employed	0-1	.147	.354	980	.054	.226	1002
Manual Worker	0-1	.055	.228	980	.259	.439	1002
Not working	0-1	.147	.354	980	.284	.451	1002
Retired	0-1	.298	.458	980	.197	.398	1002

SOURCE: Transatlantic Trends: Immigration 2009

preferences were coded according to the country's most dominant religious affiliation (US 1=non-protestant, Spain 1=non-catholic).

Gender is also controlled in my analysis (1=male). Respondents' racial identification was only available for the United States sample (1=Spanish, Hispanic, Latino, Black, Asian, Other, or multiracial). Other control variables include foreign-born and at least one immigrant parent. Urban setting was also controlled (1=urban). To code for financial situation, I used the question: "How does the financial situation of your household compare with what it was 12 months ago?" (1=worsened).

Finally, neither socio-economic status nor income is reported in the Transatlantic Trends survey. Instead I collapsed occupational categories into relative occupational status categorizations. Even though this proxy is not ideal, its function is to approximate socio-economic status differences. The categories used for the constructed dummy variable are self-employed, employee, manual worker, not working, and retired. In my analysis, the “employee” category functions as the reference group for this dummy variable.

4.5 Methods

Due to the binary nature of the dependent variables, I use logistic regression in my analysis. The first set of regressions attempt to determine the effects of contact and group position on the perception of economic threat and the perception of cultural/symbolic threat, as predicted by existing sociological theory. Next, the second set of regressions examines the effects of contact, group position, and economic and cultural threat on immigration policy preferences and social distance from immigrants. Each of these regressions will utilize nested models in order to examine if and how independent variables are mediated by one another. Each model will also be run separately for the United States and Spain.

V. Analysis and Results

5.1 Perceived Economic Threat

Table 3 displays the logistic regression analysis for perceptions of economic threat in the United States and Spain. The contact and group position theories tested in this analysis show differing effects in the United States and Spain. Friendship contact only shows statistically significant effects in the United States, where respondents with friendship contacts had odds of showing perceived economic threat .493 times less than those without friendship contact. Group position only shows statistically significant effects on economic threat in the Spanish

Table 3. Logistic Regression of Perception of Economic Threat in the U.S. and Spain

	<i>United States</i>			<i>Spain</i>		
	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>
Age	0.004	(0.008)	1.004	0.004	(0.006)	1.004
Undergraduate Education	-0.417*	(0.170)	.659*	-0.486**	(0.182)	.615**
Politically Conservative	0.264	(0.168)	1.302	0.504**	(0.170)	1.655**
Non-protestant/Non-Catholic ¹	-0.461**	(0.168)	.631**	-0.215	(0.183)	.807
Gender (1=male)	-0.037	(0.165)	.963	-0.405*	(0.158)	.667*
Non-white	0.155	(0.236)	1.168			
Foreign-born	0.073	(0.351)	1.075	-0.728	(0.510)	.483
Immigrant Parents	-0.053	(0.268)	.949	-0.519	(0.452)	.595
Urban	0.166	(0.174)	1.180	0.150	(0.157)	1.162
Worse Financially	0.221	(0.163)	1.248	0.336*	(0.152)	1.400*
Occupation ²						
Self-employed	0.053	(0.246)	1.054	0.002	(0.379)	1.002
Manual Worker	-0.011	(0.386)	.989	0.598*	(0.235)	1.818*
Not working	-0.505	(0.331)	.603	0.631*	(0.276)	1.880*
Retired	-0.255	(0.295)	.775	1.037***	(0.326)	2.821***
Friendship Contact	-0.678***	(0.188)	.507***	-0.164	(0.169)	.849
Workplace Contact	-0.436	(0.224)	.647	0.330	(0.233)	1.391
Neighborhood Contact	-0.091	(0.175)	.913	-0.082	(0.156)	.921
Entitlement	0.201	(0.184)	1.222	0.854***	(0.150)	2.350***
Constant	0.341	(.473)		-1.608***	(0.410)	
Observations	688			922		
Degrees of Freedom	18			17		
LR Chi-Squared	56.15			133.15		

Standard errors in parentheses, calculated in relation to coefficient

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

¹Non-Protestant variable was used in the United States, Non-Catholic in Spain.

²Occupational categories are compared to the omitted category “employees”

context, where respondents who expressed a sense of entitlement had odds of feeling economic threat from immigrant groups 2.35 times that of respondents that did not express a sense of in-group entitlement.

5.2 Perceived Cultural Threat

Table 4 shows the logistic regression analysis for perceptions of cultural and symbolic threat in the United States and Spain. In relation to contact and group position theories, contact reduced perceived cultural threat in both the United States and Spain, yet entitlement effects remained confined to the Spanish sample. In the United States, respondents with at least one immigrant friend were 54.9% less likely to express cultural threat than those without friendship contact. Similarly, in Spain respondents with friendship contact were 44.8% less likely to express cultural threat than those without immigrant friends. Workplace contact also showed statistically significant effects in the United States, where respondents with immigrant colleagues were 55.2% less likely to express cultural threat than those without workplace contact. Neighborhood contact also showed effects in the Spanish context, although to a lesser effect. Respondents who had immigrant neighbors were 29.1% less likely to exhibit cultural/symbolic threat than those without immigrant neighbors. Group position effects, while confirming Blumer's group position model, remained restricted to the Spanish context. Spanish respondents who expressed in-group entitlement 2.81 times more likely to express perceived cultural threat than respondents who did not show feelings of in-group entitlement.

5.3 Comfort with Immigrants

Table 5 displays the logistic regression results for comfort with immigrants in the United States and Spain. Here, I test the effects of contact, group position, perceived economic threat, and perceived cultural threat on respondents' comfort with immigrants. Results show mediated

Table 4. Logistic Regression of Perception of Cultural Threat in the U.S. and Spain

	<i>United States</i>			<i>Spain</i>		
	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>
Age	0.023**	(0.009)	1.023**	0.012	(0.006)	1.012
Undergraduate Education	-0.631***	(0.188)	.532***	-0.407*	(0.193)	.666*
Politically Conservative	0.865***	(0.186)	2.375***	0.788***	(0.176)	2.199***
Non-protestant/Non-Catholic ¹	-0.385*	(0.190)	.680*	0.091	(0.194)	1.095
Gender (1=male)	-0.204	(0.187)	.815	-0.282	(0.166)	.754
Non-white	0.595*	(0.270)	1.814*			
Foreign-born	-0.981*	(0.449)	.375*	0.059	(0.478)	1.061
Immigrant Parents	0.260	(0.287)	1.297	-0.211	(0.450)	.809
Urban	-0.038	(0.191)	.963	0.344*	(0.164)	1.411*
Worse Financially	0.062	(0.182)	1.064	0.574***	(0.162)	1.775***
Occupation ²						
Self-employed	0.555*	(0.274)	1.741*	-0.349	(0.409)	.705
Manual Worker	0.660	(0.403)	1.935	-0.004	(0.243)	.996
Not working	0.139	(0.343)	1.149	0.374	(0.282)	1.454
Retired	-0.683*	(0.321)	.505*	0.094	(0.336)	1.098
Friendship Contact	-0.796***	(0.201)	.451***	-0.595***	(0.178)	.552***
Workplace Contact	-0.802***	(0.250)	.448***	0.305	(0.246)	1.357
Neighborhood Contact	-0.310	(0.192)	.733	-0.343*	(0.163)	.709*
Entitlement	0.389	(0.212)	1.476	1.032***	(0.160)	2.808***
Constant	-1.315*	(0.535)		-1.901***	(0.423)	
Observations	751			893		
Degrees of Freedom	18			17		
LR Chi-Squared	141.04			151.73		

Standard errors in parentheses, calculated in relation to coefficient

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

¹Non-Protestant variable was used in the United States, Non-Catholic in Spain.

²Occupational categories are compared to the omitted category "employees"

- *Accepting the Foreign* -

Table 5. Logistic Regression of Comfort with immigrants in the United States and Spain.

	<i>United States</i>			<i>Spain</i>		
	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>
Age	-0.019	(0.012)	.981	-0.016	(0.010)	.985
Undergraduate Education	0.022	(0.274)	1.022	0.875*	(0.354)	2.399*
Politically Conservative	-0.116	(0.266)	.891	-0.008	(0.254)	.992
Non-protestant/Non-Catholic ¹	-0.121	(0.271)	.886	0.391	(0.327)	1.478
Gender (1=male)	-0.078	(0.257)	.925	0.001	(0.255)	1.001
Non-white	0.274	(0.424)	1.315			
Foreign-born	-0.013	(0.754)	.987	1.267	(1.135)	3.550
Immigrant Parents	0.814	(0.503)	2.256	0.110	(0.802)	1.116
Urban	0.108	(0.271)	1.114	-0.157	(0.247)	.854
Worse Financially	0.033	(0.257)	1.034	0.087	(0.249)	1.091
Occupation ²						
Self-employed	0.167	(0.410)	1.182	-0.178	(0.695)	.837
Manual Worker	-0.489	(0.554)	.613	-0.499	(0.432)	.607
Not working	-0.219	(0.484)	.803	-0.311	(0.463)	.733
Retired	0.093	(0.444)	1.097	0.238	(0.538)	1.269
Friendship Contact	0.533	(0.274)	1.705	0.123	(0.274)	1.130
Workplace Contact	0.201	(0.370)	1.223	0.628	(0.399)	1.874
Neighborhood Contact	0.227	(0.273)	1.255	-0.114	(0.248)	.892
Entitlement	-0.297	(0.302)	.743	-1.376***	(0.272)	.253***
Perceived Economic Threat	-0.523	(0.270)	.593	-0.817***	(0.252)	.442***
Perceived Cultural Threat	-1.425***	(0.279)	.241***	-1.470***	(0.265)	.230***
Constant	3.395***	(0.805)		4.516***	(0.700)	
Observations	629			878		
Degrees of Freedom	20			19		
LR Chi-Squared	87.72			168.40		

Standard errors in parentheses, calculated in relation to coefficient

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

¹Non-Protestant variable was used in the United States, Non-Catholic in Spain.

²Occupational categories are compared to the omitted category "employees"

support for the contact hypothesis, and moderate support for Blumer's group position theory.

Although friendship contact did not show statistically significant effects in the final regression on comfort with immigrants, statistical significance was found in the nested regression models. Sense of in-group entitlement did have significant effects, but only in the Spanish context, where respondents who expressed a sense of in-group entitlement were 74.7% less likely to be comfortable with immigrants as their neighbors, bosses, or relatives' significant others. Perceptions of threat also had a statistically significant influence on respondents' social distance from immigrants. Perceived economic threat only showed statistically significant results in Spain, where respondents who experienced economic threat were 55.8% less likely to feel comfortable with immigrants. Cultural threat show significant results in both the United States and Spain. In the U.S., respondents who experienced cultural threat were 75.9% less likely to feel comfortable with immigrant relations. Similarly, in Spain culturally threatened respondents were 77% less likely to feel comfortable with immigrants.

5.4 Immigration Policy Preferences

Tables 6 and 7 show the effects of contact and group position, as well as perceived economic and cultural threat, on the support of exclusionist immigration policy preferences. Table 6 displays the regression analysis for the first measure of exclusionist policy preferences—support for sending immigrants who are unemployed for over one year out of the country. Table 7 shows the analysis results for the second measure of exclusionist policy preferences used in this analysis—opposition to guaranteeing immigrants the same social benefits as nationals.

The contact hypothesis was supported by both measures of policy preferences in the United States sample. In the U.S., respondents with immigrant colleagues were 52.5% less likely to support forcing unemployed immigrants to leave the country. Respondents with

Table 6. Logistic Regression of Policy Preferences: Support sending immigrants who are unemployed for over one year out of the country, in the United States and Spain.

	<i>United States</i>			<i>Spain</i>		
	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>
Age	0.010	(0.009)	1.010	-0.002	(0.006)	.998
Undergraduate Education	-0.546**	(0.200)	.579**	-0.157	(0.182)	.855
Politically Conservative	-0.097	(0.200)	.908	0.080	(0.200)	1.084
Non-protestant/Non-Catholic ¹	0.225	(0.197)	1.252	-0.384*	(0.179)	.681*
Gender (1=male)	-0.075	(0.192)	.928	-0.343*	(0.167)	.710*
Non-white	0.014	(0.266)	1.014			
Foreign-born	-0.448	(0.385)	.639	0.328	(0.455)	1.388
Immigrant Parents	-0.300	(0.301)	.741	-0.246	(0.440)	.782
Urban	-0.078	(0.199)	.925	0.074	(0.168)	1.076
Worse Financially	0.021	(0.188)	1.021	0.535***	(0.161)	1.708***
Occupation ²						
Self-employed	-0.116	(0.285)	.891	0.279	(0.374)	1.322
Manual Worker	0.132	(0.474)	1.141	0.186	(0.229)	1.204
Not working	-0.160	(0.397)	.852	-0.002	(0.277)	.998
Retired	-0.663	(0.360)	.515	0.521	(0.342)	1.684
Friendship Contact	0.070	(0.230)	1.072	0.013	(0.184)	1.013
Workplace Contact	-0.745**	(0.271)	.475**	-0.181	(0.239)	.835
Neighborhood Contact	-0.230	(0.201)	.794	-0.114	(0.167)	.892
Entitlement	0.759***	(0.207)	2.135***	0.768***	(0.169)	2.156***
Perceived Economic Threat	0.519*	(0.203)	1.680*	0.806***	(0.185)	2.240***
Perceived Cultural Threat	0.810***	(0.253)	2.249***	0.737***	(0.196)	2.089***
Constant	0.143	(0.560)		-0.113	(0.415)	
Observations	601			876		
Degrees of Freedom	20			19		
LR Chi-Squared	91.66			168.87		

Standard errors in parentheses, calculated in relation to coefficient

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

¹Non-Protestant variable was used in the United States, Non-Catholic in Spain.

²Occupational categories are compared to the omitted category "employees"

immigrant friends in the United States were 47.3% less likely to oppose guaranteeing immigrants the same social benefits as nationals. No contact effects were found in the Spanish sample.

A sense of in-group entitlement, on the other hand, showed statistically significant results in both contexts. In the United States, respondents exhibiting a sense of entitlement are 2.14 times more likely to support the deportation of unemployed immigrants and 3.33 times more likely to oppose equal social benefits for immigrants, than respondents who did not show a sense of entitlement. Similar results were found in the Spanish sample. Respondents showing a sense of entitlement were 2.16 times more likely to support removing unemployed immigrants and 4.65 times more likely to oppose guaranteeing immigrants equal social benefits.

Perceived economic threat shows a statistically significant effect on support of sending unemployed immigrants out of the country in the United States, and on both exclusionist policy preference measures in the Spanish sample. U.S. respondents who expressed a sense of entitlement were 68% more likely to endorse moving unemployed immigrants out of the country. In Spain, respondents who expressed a sense of entitlement were 2.24 times more likely to prefer sending unemployed immigrants out of the country, and 72% more likely to oppose guaranteeing immigrants the same social benefits as nationals.

Finally, perceived cultural threat showed pervasive effects in both contexts. In the United States culturally threatened respondents are 2.25 times more likely to support the removal of unemployed immigrants and two times more likely to oppose guaranteeing immigrants equal social benefits, than respondents who did not express cultural threat. The Spanish sample showed similar results. Respondents who expressed cultural threat were twice as likely to support sending unemployed immigrants out of the country and 3.3 times more likely to oppose equal social benefits, than respondents who did not feel culturally threatened.

- *Accepting the Foreign* -

Table 7. Logistic Regression of Policy Preferences: Oppose guaranteeing immigrants the same social benefits as nationals, in the United States and Spain.

	<i>United States</i>			<i>Spain</i>		
	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>
Age	0.019*	(0.009)	1.019*	-0.008	(0.009)	.993
Undergraduate Education	-0.169	(0.202)	.844	0.117	(0.254)	1.124
Politically Conservative	0.144	(0.200)	1.155	0.232	(0.233)	1.262
Non-protestant/Non-Catholic ¹	0.119	(0.200)	1.127	-0.565*	(0.280)	.568*
Gender (1=male)	0.248	(0.193)	1.281	-0.149	(0.223)	.861
Non-white	-0.062	(0.297)	.940			
Foreign-born	-0.549	(0.464)	.577	0.352	(0.736)	1.422
Immigrant Parents	-0.133	(0.320)	.876	-1.777	(1.082)	.169
Urban	-0.271	(0.201)	.763	0.017	(0.224)	1.017
Worse Financially	-0.102	(0.191)	.903	-0.114	(0.222)	.892
Occupation ²						
Self-employed	0.274	(0.281)	1.315	-0.787	(0.575)	.455
Manual Worker	-0.642	(0.504)	.526	-0.122	(0.301)	.885
Not working	0.127	(0.387)	1.135	-0.804*	(0.364)	.447*
Retired	-0.042	(0.342)	.959	-1.441**	(0.475)	.237**
Friendship Contact	-0.640**	(0.217)	.527**	-0.257	(0.246)	.773
Workplace Contact	-0.073	(0.265)	.930	-0.207	(0.311)	.813
Neighborhood Contact	0.201	(0.204)	1.222	0.204	(0.222)	1.226
Entitlement	1.202***	(0.240)	3.327***	1.537***	(0.244)	4.653***
Perceived Economic Threat	0.316	(0.202)	1.372	0.542*	(0.226)	1.719*
Perceived Cultural Threat	0.737***	(0.223)	2.090***	1.192***	(0.232)	3.292***
Constant	-2.604***	(0.603)		-2.272***	(0.555)	
Observations	623			885		
Degrees of Freedom	20			19		
LR Chi-Squared	113.38			167.60		

Standard errors in parentheses, calculated in relation to coefficient

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

¹Non-Protestant variable was used in the United States, Non-Catholic in Spain.

²Occupational categories are compared to the omitted category “employees”

VI. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of my analysis show moderate support for contact and group position theories, and highlight the contextual differences between the United States and Spain. Hypothesis 1, which tests the contact hypothesis, was supported in the United States context, and showed moderate support in Spain. While contact reduced economic and cultural threat, as well as policy preferences to exclude immigrants in the United States, contact only showed effects in reducing perceived cultural threat in Spain. Hypothesis 2, which addresses group position theory, showed limited support in the United States, but wide-ranging support in Spain. In the United States, group position only had significant effects on increased exclusionist policy preferences. In Spain, respondents' sense of group position had significant effects on perceived economic and cultural threat, policy preferences, and decreased comfort with immigrant groups. In regards to hypothesis 3, while both economic and cultural threat contributed to less comfort with immigrants in Spain, in the United States only perceived cultural threat showed significant effects in reducing intergroup comfort. Finally, my analysis found support for hypothesis 4, which addresses respondents' immigration policy preferences. In Spain, both perceived economic and cultural threat increased the likelihood that respondents would support my two measures of exclusionist policy preferences. In the United States, while both economic and cultural threat influenced respondents' preferences to deport unemployed immigrants, only cultural threat had a significant effect on the opposition to guaranteeing immigrants the same social benefits as nationals.

In both the United States and Spain, immigration has become a pressing national issue. This thesis is an attempt to examine the causes and consequences of economic and cultural threat seen through national anti-immigration rhetoric. My analysis tests the generalizability of two

prominent psychological and sociological intergroup relation theories—the contact hypothesis and the group position model. Additionally, I examine two possible consequences of perceived threat—social distance from immigrants and exclusionist policy preferences. My results show moderate support for the contact hypothesis and the group position model. Hypotheses concerning threat effects on social distance and policy preferences were also supported.

However, my results also reveal differing intergroup processes in the United States and Spain. My results point to larger contextual influences, such as Spain’s rising unemployment rate and its recent and sudden surge in immigration population, on the formation of individual intergroup attitudes. This research is especially pertinent to new net immigration states such as Spain, where initial perceptions of immigrant groups may not only effect the current population, but future immigrant groups as well. This thesis provides a starting point for future research of contextual influences on intergroup attitudes, especially concerning a new and growing international population—immigrants.

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