

Understanding Attitudes to Refugees and Immigrants in Australia

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Acknowledgements

- Australian Research Council
- Deborah Terry & Julie Duck (University of Queensland); Richard N. Lalonde & Regina A. Schuller (York University); Vicki Esses (University of Western Ontario)
- Angela Nickerson & Brenda Major
- Katie Greenaway

A brief overview of Australian migration

- 1800s – present: Indigenous Australians dispossessed by British (now ~2% of population of 22 million)
- 1901-1970s: “White Australia” policy - ‘Repatriation’ of Asian communities in 1901; closed doors to non-White migrants
- Post-WW2 economic growth / European immigration

Now:

- ~23% of Australians born overseas; only 17% 2nd generation.
- ~10% Asian Australian (i.e., still 85% White)
- Increasing % immigrants = skilled immigration stream
- Net overseas migration 2007-8 = 213k
 - Largest groups: China (29k); NZ (27k); UK (24k); India (24k)
- 2001 4 in 10 spoke **only** English, vs 6 in 10 < 1996.
- Tiny but contentious refugee program accepts 13k/year

Why do citizens support or oppose immigration?

Group-level explanation – Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979)

- Perceptions of group threat motivate support for exclusionary measures
- Group norms, or standards for behaviour, determine when and how competitive attitudes are expressed

Study 1: Tides of Change

- Rise of Pauline Hanson in Australia in 1990s with *One Nation* party
 - 1996 maiden speech warns of the danger of Australia's being "swamped by Asians"
 - At her peak attains 25% of the vote in a state election
 - Worldwide increase in political exploitation of anti-immigration sentiments
- 667 Australian voters who identified as White Australians

Louis, W. R., Duck, J.M., Terry, D. J., & Lalonde, R.N. (2009). Speaking out on immigration policy in Australia: Identity threat and the interplay of own opinion and public opinion. Manuscript under review.

Results

	Opponents (34%)	New Conservatives (56%)
Age ***	40.6	46.6
Gender *	57% F	47% F
Education ***	4.06	3.19
Own support for Asian immig. ***	5.21	3.01
Perceptions Australians support (norm)***	3.78	2.83
Perceptions increasing conservatism ***	4.77	5.08
Perceptions threat to White Aus ***	2.82	5.05
Involvement in debate ***	3.84	5.13
Public outspokenness *	4.07	4.68

What predicts involvement / speaking out politically ?

- Among new conservatives:
 - Threat to White Australians
 - Perceptions Australians opposed Asian immigration (norms)
- Among opponents:
 - Education
 - Support for Asian immigration (and moreso when perceived low threat to Whites)
 - Perceptions of **increasing conservatism**

Conclusions:

- Find overall polarisation, conservative race-based mobilisation
- Support for importance of group-level predictors
- Contrary to spiral of silence research (Noelle-Neumann, 1993), see counter-mobilisation against tides of change 7

Study 2 - Asylum Seekers & Australia

- Increasing world-wide need (UNHCR, 2001)
 - 12 million refugees and 1 million asylum seekers in 2001
 - Over 33% increase from 1990
 - Tiny #s in Australia – 13000 refugees / 4100 AS
- Both offshore (refugee camp) and onshore (asylum seeker) claimants considered
 - Increasing proportion of on-shore applicants
 - Increasingly restrictive measures

The special role of fairness?

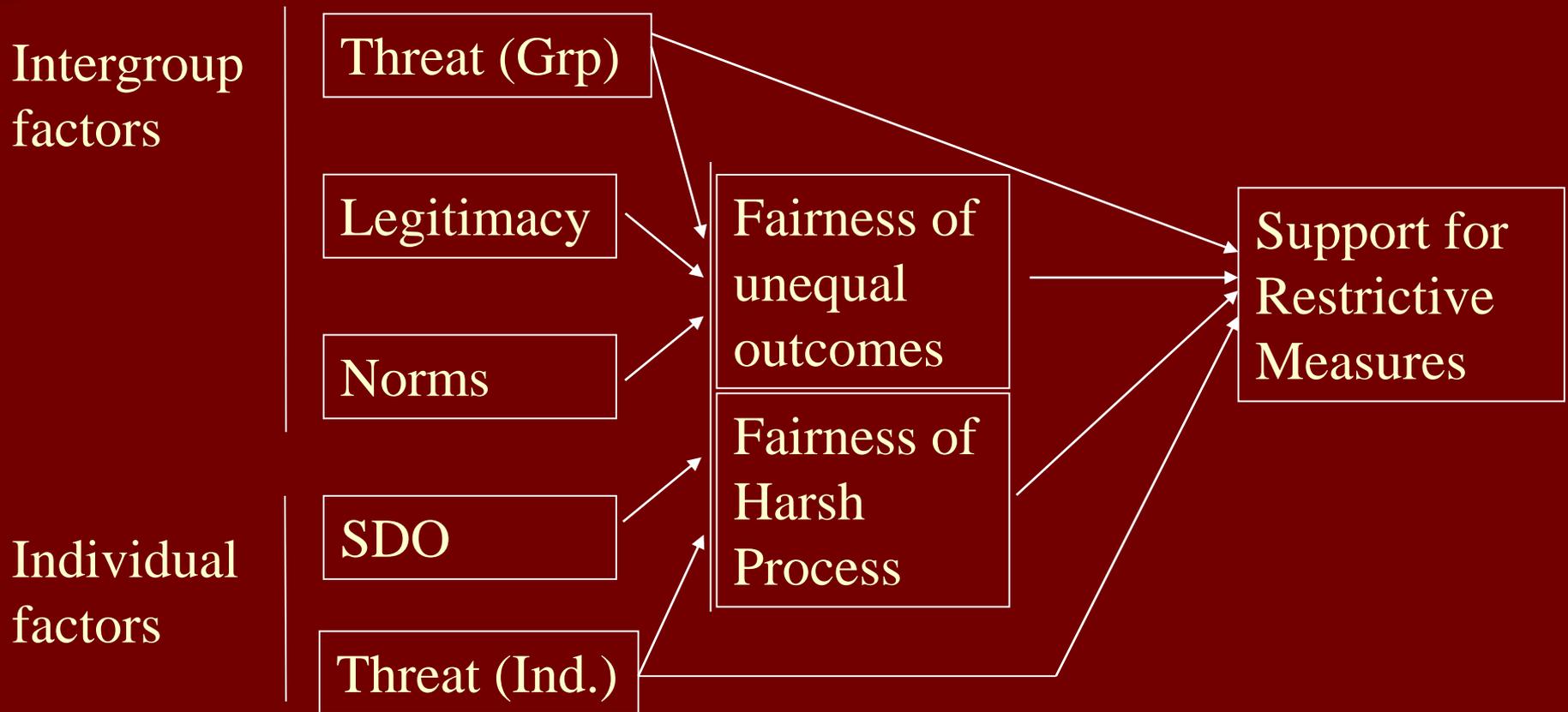
- Asylum seekers: a unique context
 - UNHRC: “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, [a refugee] is outside the country of his nationality” (1996: p. 16)
- Procedural justice concerns (Tyler, 1994)
 - Abuse of refugee process by economic migrants: violation of “first refuge” principle, ‘queue jumping’ (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001)



Why do citizens support restrictive measures?

- Group-level explanations
- Individual difference explanations
 - Social Dominance Orientation (Pratto & Lemieux, 2001)
 - “Propensities for prejudice” lead individuals to favour their own groups over other groups

A model of support for restrictive measures



Participants

- 2500 Queensland voters mailed survey
 - After screening 206 participants completed 2 waves before and after election
- Broadly representative of census
 - 49% women; median age 51; regional representation (SE vs North/Central Q)

The polarized sample

The number of asylum seekers in Australia is...	Too low 17%	Ok 12%	Too high 71%
Social Dominance	2.01 _a	1.74 _a	2.60 _b
Threat to Australians	2.13 _a	2.70 _a	4.04 _b
Legitimacy of inequality	1.89 _a	3.14 _b	3.80 _c
Hostile Norms	4.03 _a	4.39 _a	5.82 _b
Fairness	2.26 _a	4.11 _b	5.87 _c

Group variables affect attitudes and action indirectly via fairness

	Willingness to take action vs AS	T2 Hostility	T2 Reported Spoke Out	T2 Reported Voted re AS
Threat to Group (Stability, Permeability)	.10	.07	.13	.12
Legitimacy threat	.03	.06		.04
Norms against AS	.08	.08		
SDO				
Individual threat				

Summary of direct effects

	Willingness to take action vs AS	T2 Hostility	T2 Reported Spoke Out	T2 Reported Voted re AS
Threat to Group (Stability/Permeability)	.14			
Legitimacy threat				
Norms against AS	.35	.18		
SDO			.15	.12
Individual threat		.12		

Conclusions:

Fairness as rationalisation

- Support for group factors
- Support for individual factors
- Support for Fairness
- But fairness perceptions in turn were driven by group threat & norms (sense of change, legitimacy)
 - beliefs about intergroup discrimination / inequality rationalise intergroup competition

Study 3: The human identity?

- 242 Australians, 16-74, 80 male 162 female
- 103 first year psychology students in lab; 139 online participants

Procedure

- Measured RWA, SDO
- Pre-measured identification with Australia, humans
- Salience manipulation (failed)
- Post-measured salience and norms related to attitudes, affect, and action (political letter)

Nickerson, A. M., & Louis, W. R. (2008). Nationality versus humanity ? Personality, identity and norms in relation to attitudes towards asylum seekers. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 38, 796-817.

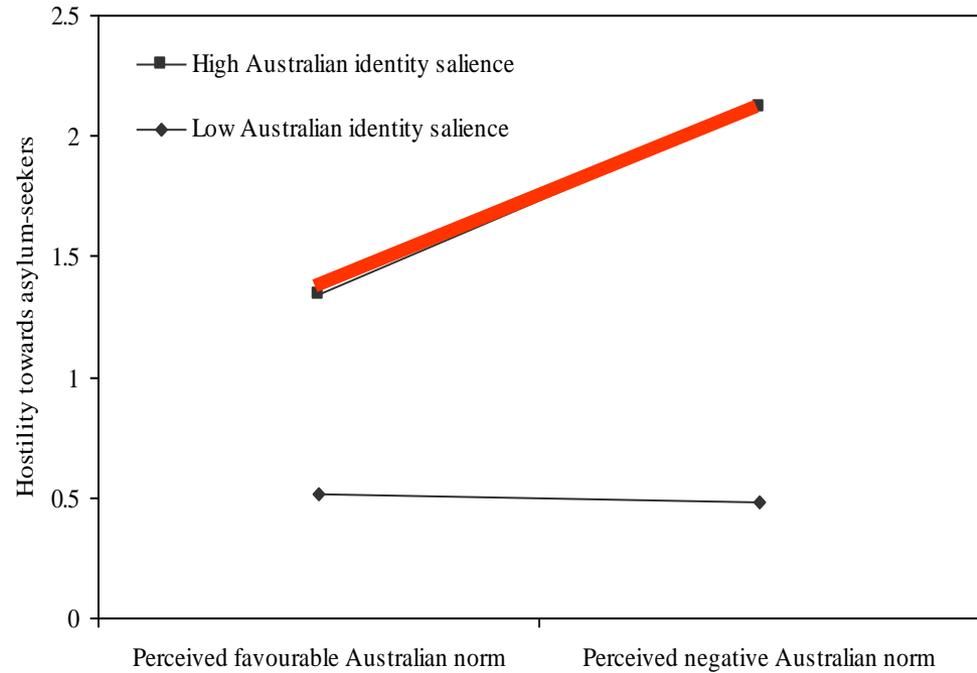
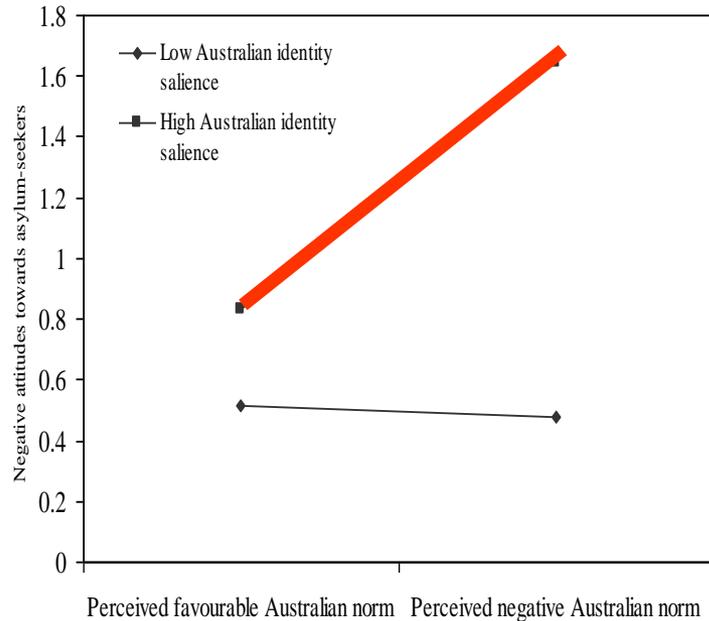
Variance accounted for (R^2)

	Neg. Atts	Neg. Emo.	Act against
Block 1: RWA+SDO	.54***	.44***	.29***
B2: Aus + Human ID, Norms	.12***	.10***	.15***
B3: Interactions	.03***	.02**	.01
Final model	.69***	.61***	.39***

Identities and norms (β s)

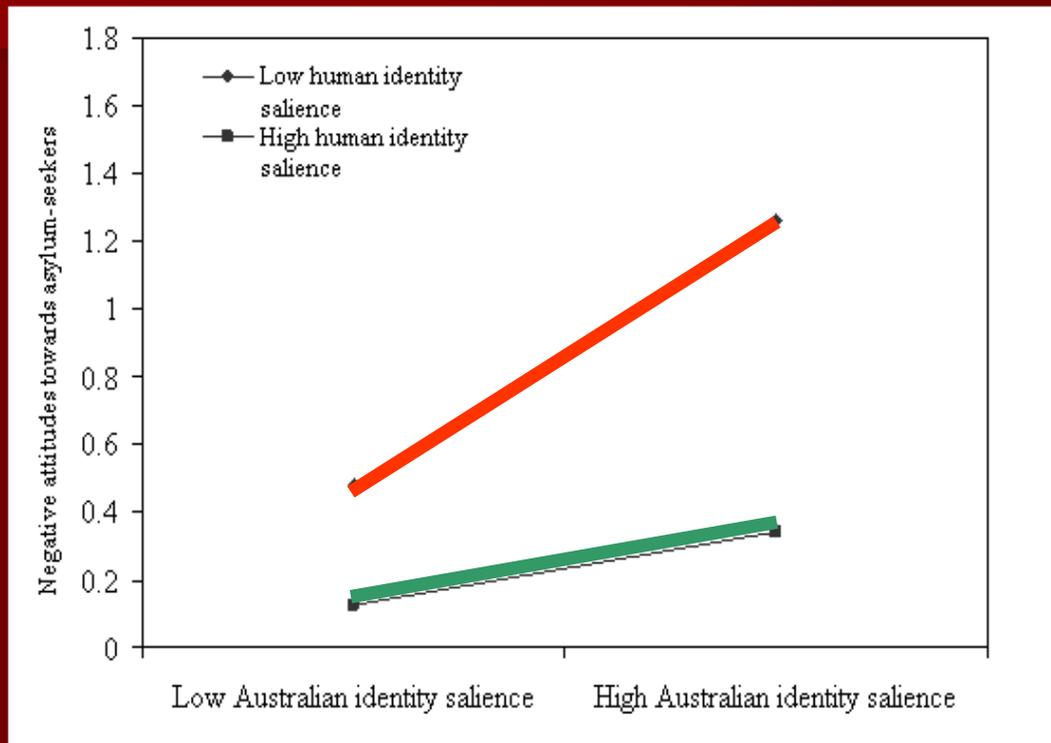
	Neg. Atts	Neg. Emo.	Act against
Aus ID	.18***	.21***	.21*
Human ID	-.23***	-.20***	-.18
Hostile Aus norm	.12**	.11*	.16+
Hostile human norm	.16***	.08	.01

Aus ID x Norms : Conformity



- High Aus ID had more negative attitudes and more hostile emotions when Australian norms hostile
- Low Aus ID unresponsive to the norms

Aus ID x Human ID: Inclusive ID defuses Aus ID



- For those with high human ID, Aus ID was unrelated to negative attitudes
- For low human ID, Aus ID was linked to negative attitudes

Study 4 – Take 2 on manipulating human ID again unsuccessful

- 2005 context – even more subdued (non-election year)
- 135 Australian uni students in sociology, history or political science – more liberal than psychology 1st years
- 54% female
- Age 17-59 but 73% <20
- Salience manipulation preceding measured attitudes and affect

Humanising / Personalising is associated with lower prejudice

	Hostile Attitude β	Negative emotions β
Constant	3.21	2.77
Australian ID	.26 ^{**}	.17 [†]
Human ID	-.19 [*]	-.28 [*]
Personal ID	-.15 [†]	-.21 [*]
R ²	.11 ^{**}	.10 ^{**}

- Couldn't replicate cool interaction of AI x HI
- Manipulation of human ID salience didn't work

Study 5: Pro-social behaviour

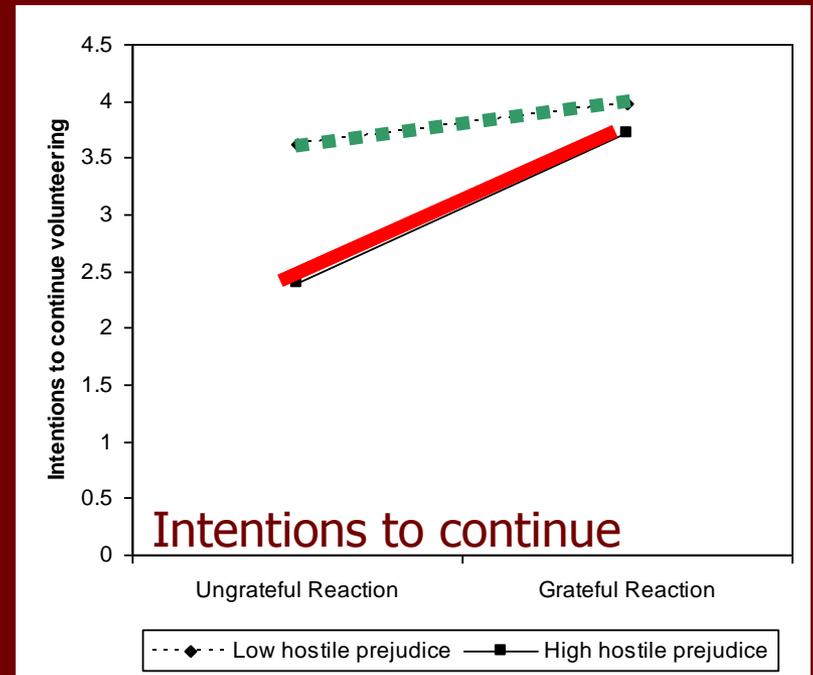
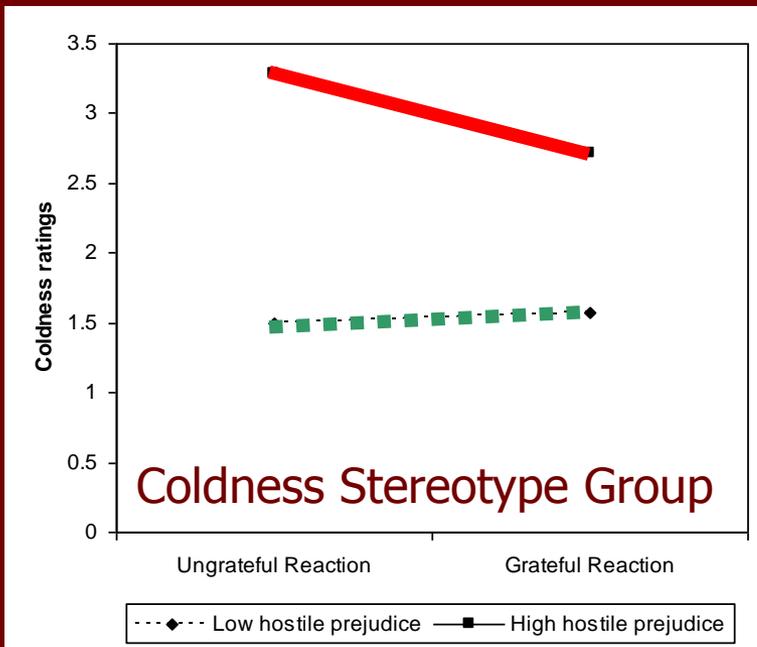
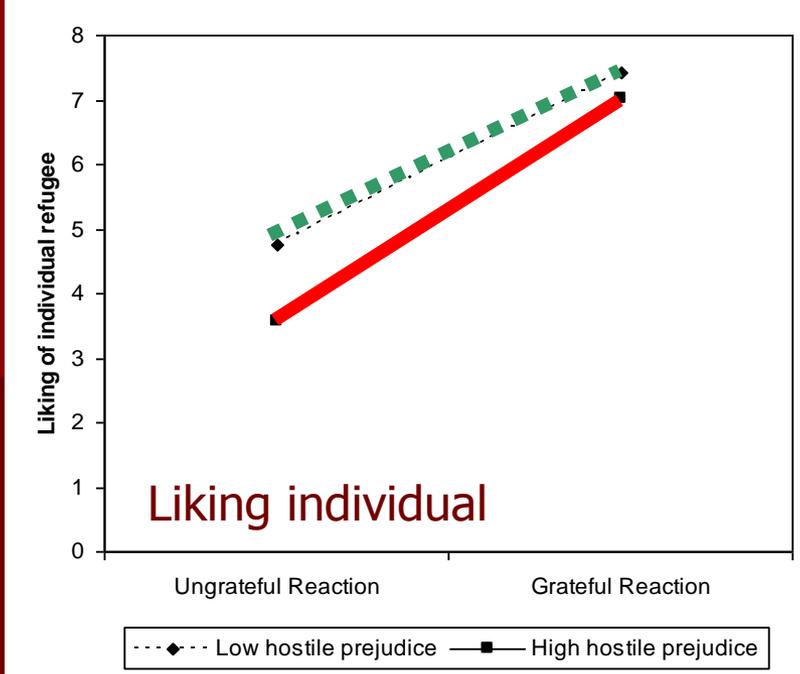
- 178 participants recruited by Brenda Major
 - 73.4% women; Average age: 32years ($SD = 15.5$), ranging from 17-71 years; 85.8% Anglo-Australian ethnicity
- Design: Pre-measured prejudice
- Respond to scenario where volunteer at organisation and help **grateful vs ungrateful** refugee

Main effects of prejudice and refugee reaction

- Higher prejudice associated with:
 - Less liking of individual aid recipient
 - More negative stereotypes of refugees (coldness, incompetency)
 - Lower intentions to continue volunteering in scenario
- Ungrateful refugee associated with:
 - Less liking of individual aid recipient
 - More negative stereotypes of refugees (coldness)
 - Lower intentions to continue volunteering

More prejudiced individuals more reactive to an ungrateful refugee

Aversive racism?



And another thing (Study 5)

- Help type manipulation had no effects
 - Empowering help vs help that affirms recipient's dependency (Nadler & Halabi, 2006; Jackson & Esses, 2000)

Study 6: Prejudice against skilled immigrants

- Not likely to be burdens on the welfare system
- High status may protect against aversive prejudice
- But foreign credentials allow for selective discounting (Esses, Dietz, & Bhardwaj, 2006); Visible minority groups may be especially vulnerable (e.g., Rietz, 2001)
- 93 Australian-born students who identify as of Anglo/European heritage evaluate job candidates for student health clinic:
 - All candidates registered to work in home state, with 3 degrees and 2 relevant jobs 1 of which = in home state
 - All candidates have same average personality
 - Differ re where born (Australia vs Pakistan) where received medical training (home country vs UK)

Results

Trained in birth country

Foreign-trained in UK

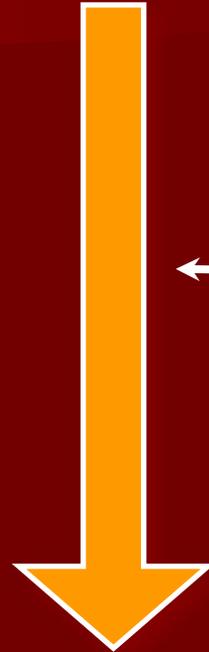
	Foreign background (Pakistani)	Native background (Australia)	Foreign background (Pakistani)	Native background (Australia)
Recommend for interview	5.24	5.40	5.93	5.91
Personal acceptability	4.86	5.09	5.24	5.62
Social suitability	5.00	4.88	5.23	5.46
Education	4.97 _a	5.86 _b	6.03 _c	6.23 _c
Work history	4.87 _a	5.85 _b	6.11 _c	6.09 _c

Conclusions Study 6

- Supports international medical students' quest for overseas training
 - Aversive racism *may* be defused, if not by high status of job then by high status of first world unis
- Extends research on prejudice vs foreign professionals and selective discounting of credentials
 - Even where candidate had explicitly been legally registered in Ps' home state w/ 2 years' work experience!
- Anti-immigration prejudice hurts immigrants – but against foreign-born doctors bigots also hurt selves (e.g., Thiede, 2005)

Katie Greenaway's PhD work: Threat and control

Threat



← **Perceived control**
e.g., Fritsche et al., 2008; De Castella et al., 2009

Intergroup prejudice

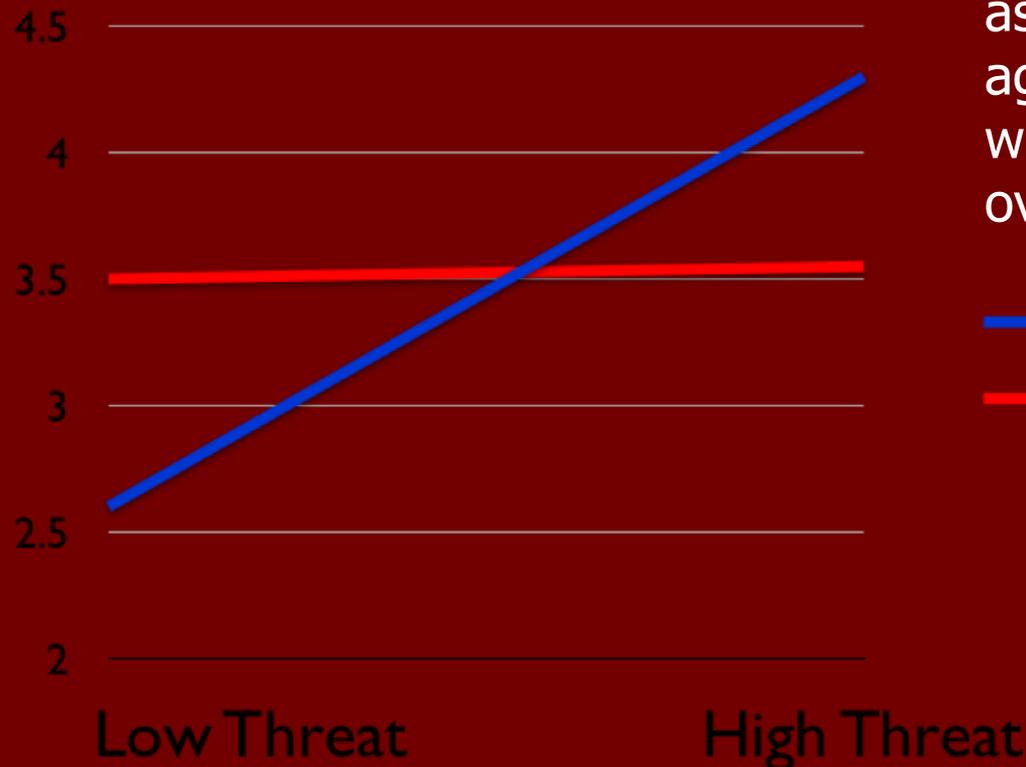
Sharpening of group boundaries → Outgroup derogation

Greenaway, K.H. & Louis, W.R. (2009). *Out of control: Perceived control moderates the effects of terrorist threat on intergroup prejudice*. Manuscript under review.

Study 7: Terrorist threat



Negative attitudes towards refugees

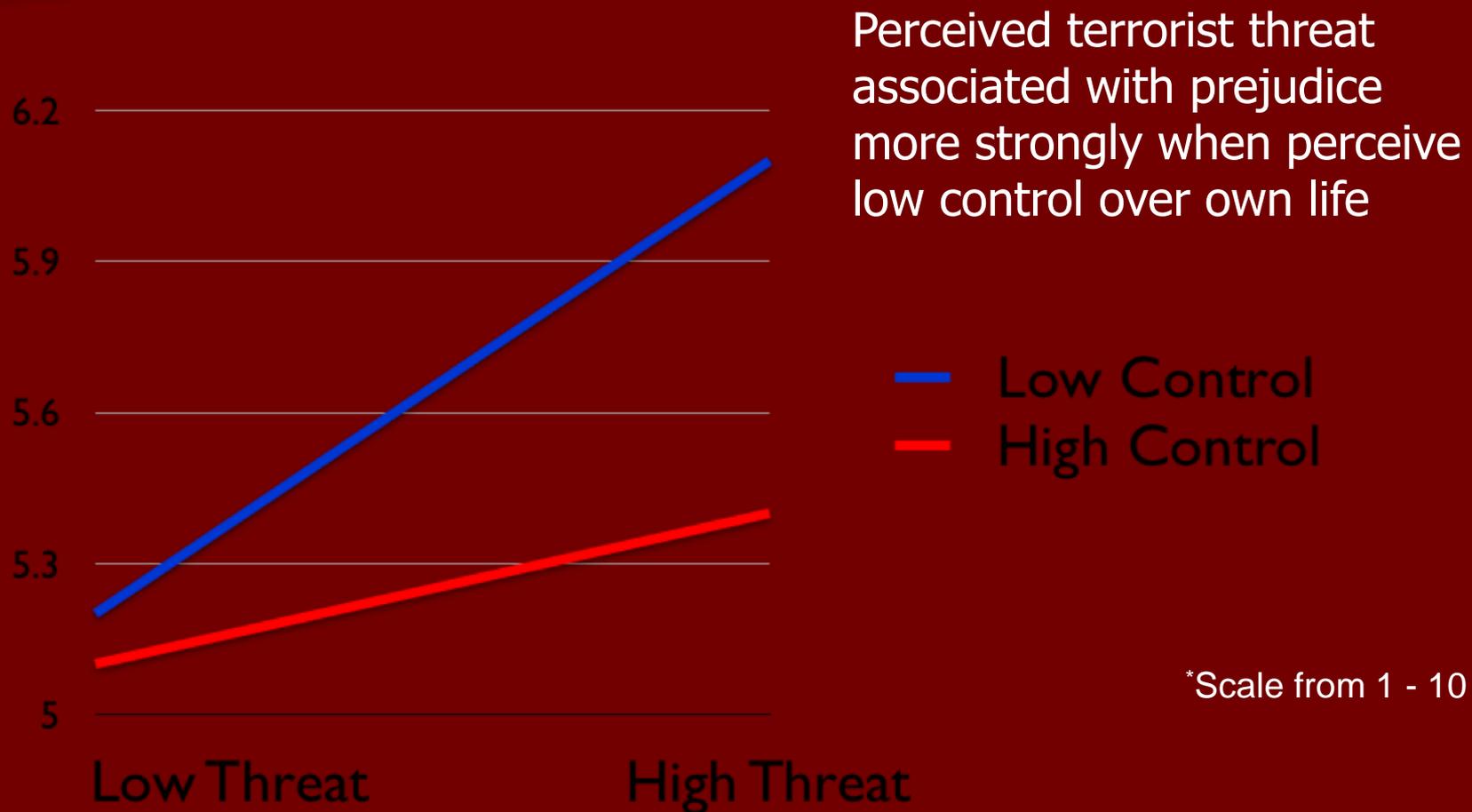


Perceived terrorist threat associated with prejudice against refugees – but only when perceive low control over source of threat

— Low Control
— High Control

Study 8: Terrorist threat

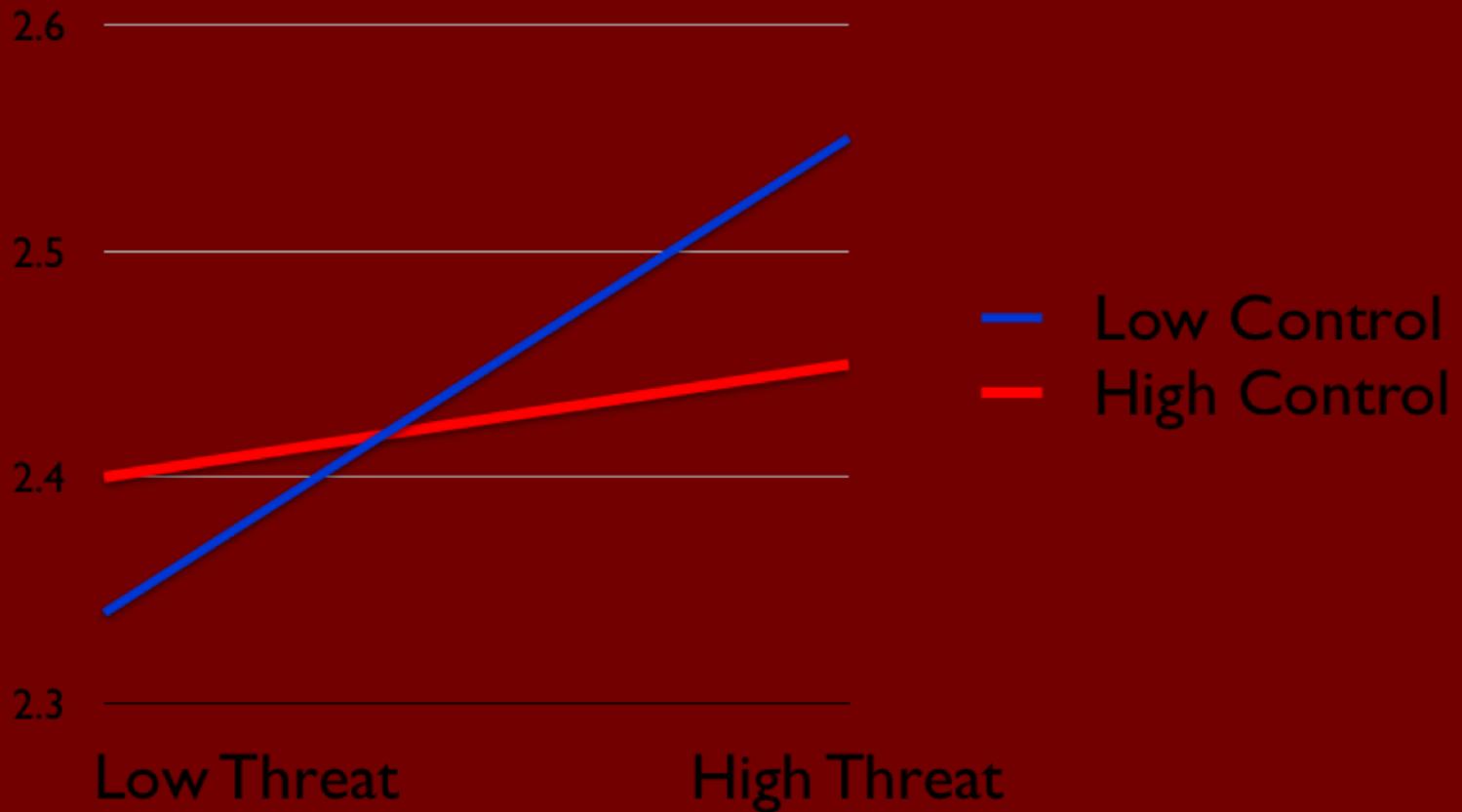
Negative attitudes towards immigrants*



Study 8: Terrorist threat



Support for excluding immigrants*



*Scale from 1 - 4
34

Take home points: Theory

- ✓ 1/ For anti-immigration sentiment in Australia, groups matter
 - threats, identities & norms
- ✓ 2/ Inclusive human ID is associated with more favourable attitudes and action
- ✓ 3/ Context specific ideologies motivate hostility
 - Fairness re asylum seekers (Study 2)
 - “Ungrateful” reactions (Study 5)
 - Unfamiliar foreign credentials (Study 6)
- Or rationalise group-based threats

Reducing anti-immigrant prejudice

- 1/ defuse **intergroup hostility** with counter-mobilisation re group norms, and/or with inclusive (e.g., human) ID
- 2/ Ideological challenge re threat/fairness may be less successful ?
- 3/ defuse **aversive prejudice** with unambiguous positive attributes – e.g., strong credentials
- 4/ defuse **defensive reactions to threat** by affirming individuals' control over source of threat – or life (!)
 - Social dangers of culture of fear?

What now?

- Injunctive vs descriptive norms and counter-mobilisation vs hostile climate
- Ego-depletion in conflict
- Collective action as an IV: what works?
- Successful intervention campaigns

Thank you!

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