

A post-hoc investigation of the effects of 9/11 on attitudes towards immigrants

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What are the effects of the 9/11 terrorist attacks?

- Did they influence attitudes towards Arabs?
 - Well duh!
- But the attacks were not anticipated, so any “change” or influence is unknown.

Two studies address related attitudes.

- Study 1.
 - Pre/post of attitudes toward Mexican Immigrants.
 - Post 9/11 surveys looking at attitudes toward Arab Immigrants.
- Study 2.
 - Post 9/11 El Paso and Iowa comparisons of attitudes toward Mexican and Arab immigrants.

What generally predicts attitudes toward immigrants?

- Zárate, Garcia, Garza, and Hitlan (under review)
 - Economy and culture.
 - Realistic threat.
 - Symbolic threat.
 - Prejudice.
- Stephan et al.

- Realistic threat – competition for jobs and resources.
 - Mexican immigrants are not displacing American workers from their jobs (reverse scored).
- Symbolic threat – threat to our way of life.
 - Immigrants should learn to conform to the rules and norms of American society as soon as possible after they arrive.
- Prejudice – affective responses.
 - For each of the items listed below, indicate how you would feel when interacting with immigrants.
 - I would feel:

Not at all	Extremely
Comfortable	Comfortable

Other important variables.

- Social dominance orientation (Pratto, Sidanius).
 - It's OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others.
- American identity.
 - My American identity is important.
- Political conservatism.
- Direct personal relevance.

Study 1 – Hitlan and Zárate

- Pre and Post test of attitudes towards Mexican immigrants (independent samples). Did the attacks influence attitudes regarding all immigrants?
- Post 9/11 test (late September, 2001) included attitudes regarding Arab immigrants.

- Pre and post 9/11 attitudes regarding Mexican immigrants and immigration.

Variable	Pre (N = 84)		Post (N = 140)		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
<i>Symbolic Threat</i>	4.01	0.91	4.52	1.07	-3.59	.000
Realistic Threat	4.85	1.08	4.28	1.47	3.08	.001
Prejudice	3.81	0.88	3.05	1.36	4.54	.000

- Post 9/11 correlations regarding Mexican immigrants and immigration.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Symbolic Threat	--				
2. Realistic Threat	.42***	--			
3. Prejudice	.49***	.54***	--		
4. Conservatism	-.14	-.04	-.20*	--	
5. SDO	.28**	.36***	.30**	-.04	--
6. American Identity	.24**	.26***	.27**	-.07	.13

- Post 9/11 attitudes regarding Mexican and Arab immigrants.

Variable	Mexican		Arab		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
<i>Symbolic Threat</i>	4.52	1.07	5.43	1.29	-8.55	.000
Realistic Threat	4.28	1.47	4.10	1.52	1.77	.079
<i>Prejudice</i>	3.05	1.36	4.13	1.63	-7.68	.000

- Post 9/11 correlations regarding Arab immigrants.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Symbolic Threat	--				
2. Realistic Threat	.59***	--			
3. Prejudice	.67***	.60***	--		
4. Conservatism	-.08	-.10	-.09	--	
5. SDO	.43***	.41***	.45***	-.04	--
6. American Identity	.29*	.22*	.19*	-.07	.13

Study 1 summary.

- Well differentiated attitudinal response.
 - Attitudes toward Mexicans become more negative on symbolic threat, less negative on realistic threat and prejudice.
 - More focused on symbolic threat toward Arabs.
 - Less focused on Mexican immigrants. There is a new enemy.
- SDO predicts greater prejudice.

Study 2. Garza and Zárate

- Compared UT El Paso students and U. of Northern Iowa students.
 - UTEP – Self identified as Mexican-American.
 - UNI – Self identified as White.
- Post 9/11 (early October).

- Mexican American and White American cross-group comparisons.

Variable	MA (N = 98)		WA (N = 124)		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Arab Prejudice	4.37	1.43	4.56	1.84	-0.86	.200
Prejudice	3.16	1.16	3.40	1.39	-1.36	.150
<i>Ethnic Identity</i>	5.26	0.85	4.89	0.76	3.42	.001
American Identity	5.75	0.96	5.59	0.78	1.33	.150
<i>Symbolic Threat</i>	4.93	0.95	5.26	1.05	-2.40	.015
<i>Conservatism</i>	3.53	1.01	3.89	1.22	-2.32	.015

- Correlations between variables for Mexican Americans.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Arab Prejudice	1	.35**	-.21*	.21*	.27**	-.00
2. Prejudice		1	-.04	-.15	.07	-.09
3. Ethnic Identity			1	.07	-.49**	-.10
4. American Identity				1	.13	.01
5. Symbolic Threat					1	.12
6. Conservatism						1

- Correlations between variables for White Americans.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Arab Prejudice	1	.59**	.31*	.08*	.52**	.21*
2. Prejudice		1	.09	.04	.54**	.21*
3. Ethnic Identity			1	.44**	.17	.10
4. American Identity				1	.19	-.06
5. Symbolic Threat					1	.34**
6. Conservatism						1

Study 2 summary.

- Political conservatism is a poor predictor for Mexican-Americans (replicates study 1).
- Identification as American predicts negative attitudes for the White sample. Correlates negatively for the Mexican American sample.

- Post 9/11 attitudes as a function of the level of direct personal relevance.

Study 1

Variable	All		Injured/Killed	
	M	SD	M	SD
<i>Symbolic Threat</i>	5.34	1.30	6.26	1.07
Realistic Threat	4.05	1.53	4.45	1.62
Prejudice	4.06	1.58	5.45	2.05

Study 2

Variable	All		Injured		Killed	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
<i>Symbolic Threat</i>	5.00	0.94	5.29	1.04	5.67	0.93
Prejudice	3.35	1.30	3.27	1.80	3.35	1.82
Arab Prejudice	4.52	1.65	4.77	2.25	5.37	2.07

Conclusions

- The effects of 9/11 are well differentiated.
 - Consistent findings of symbolic threat towards Arabs.
 - Prejudice and realistic conflict threats are reduced towards Mexican immigrants.
 - SDO predicts prejudice for Mexican American participants as well.