

How Ethnicity and Immigrant Status Combine to Produce American Attitudes Toward Immigrants

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Introduction

- Research points to several potential psychological processes to predict immigrant attitudes.
 - Perceived threat: an individual's evaluation of the likelihood of danger affecting them and their ingroup posed by immigrants (Swart et al., 2022)
 - Dehumanization: the process of depriving a person or group of human qualities (Utych, 2018)
- Research also points to ethnicity and legal status as influencing immigrant attitudes.
 - Ethnicity defines one's cultural background and worldview. White Americans' public attitudes tend to be more negative towards immigrants perceived as holding different world views from their own (Sniderman and Hagendoorn, 2007; Spruyt and Elchardus, 2012). These attitudes facilitate a social hierarchy along ethnic lines in the United States.
 - White Americans tend to feel even more antagonistic toward a member of an ethnic group if they are undocumented immigrants.

Overview of Research

- Goal: We examined how perceived threat and dehumanization affects Americans' attitudes toward various immigrant groups- European, Asian, Latin American, Middle Eastern, and African- of documented and undocumented status.

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Methods

- 827 subjects (73.5% White/European, 11.7% Asian/Pacific Islander, 9.2% Black/African American, 1.8% Native American, 1.6% Other/Prefer not to say, 1.3% Middle Eastern; 53.1% Male, 44.0% Female, 2.5% Non-Binary, 0.4% Prefer not to say; age (M = 38.85 years, SD = 14.605; 52.5% Democrat, 13.9% Republican)
- Perceived Threat Measure Example: Please rate the statement on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree): "I worry that people I know will have their jobs taken by [undocumented/documented] [Asian/Latin American/African/Middle Eastern/European] immigrants"
- Dehumanization Measure Example: Rate [undocumented/documented] [Asian/Latin American/African/Middle Eastern/European] immigrants) on the following traits on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree): "Primitive," "Rational"

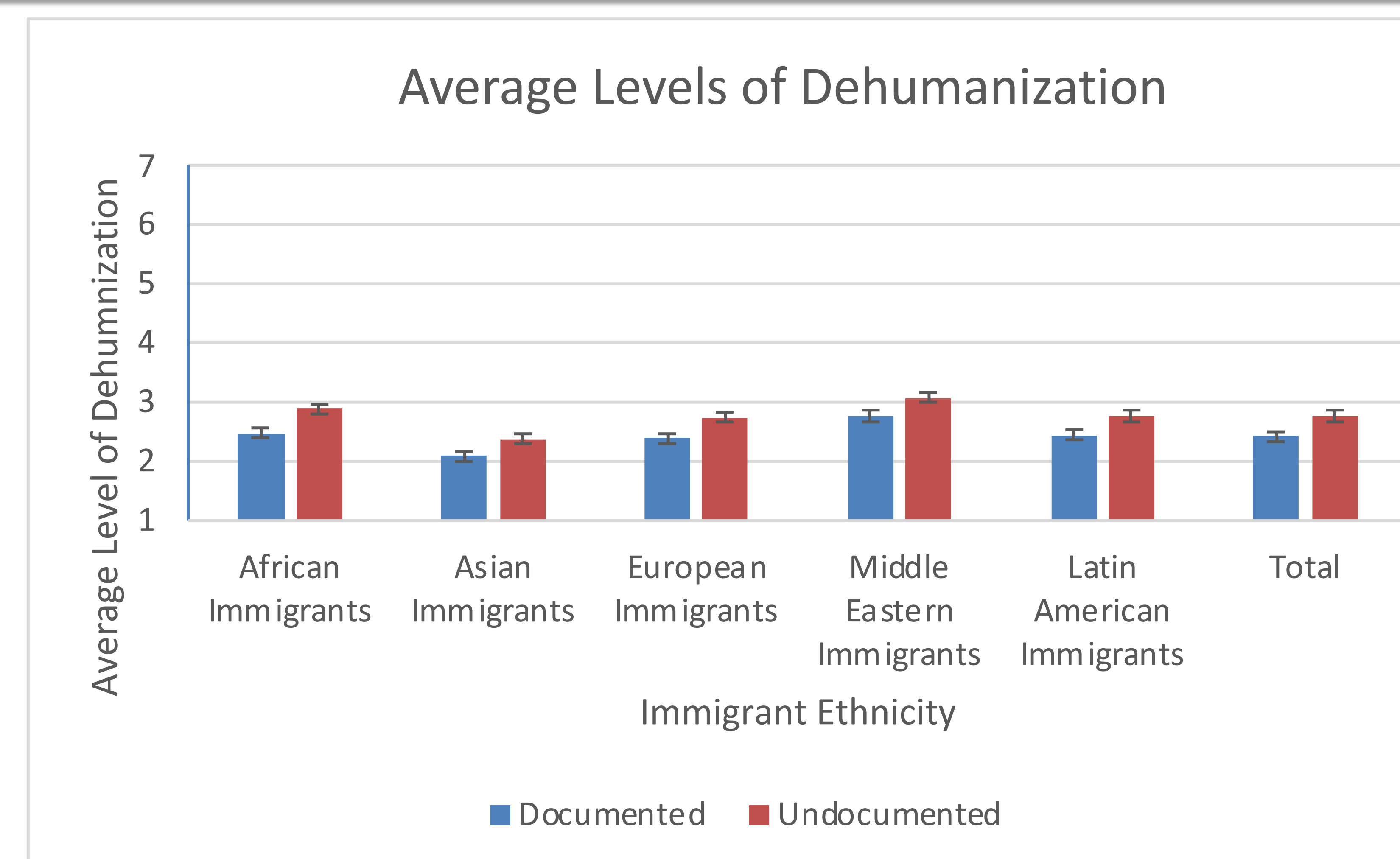
Conclusions

- We found two separate main effects for ethnicity and immigration status. There is no interaction between ethnicity and status for dehumanization or perceived threat.
- Participants demonstrated higher levels of dehumanization and perceived threat towards undocumented than documented immigrants, regardless of ethnicity.
- Responses showed a potential ethnic hierarchy, regardless of status, with Asian descent on the top and Middle Easterners on the bottom.

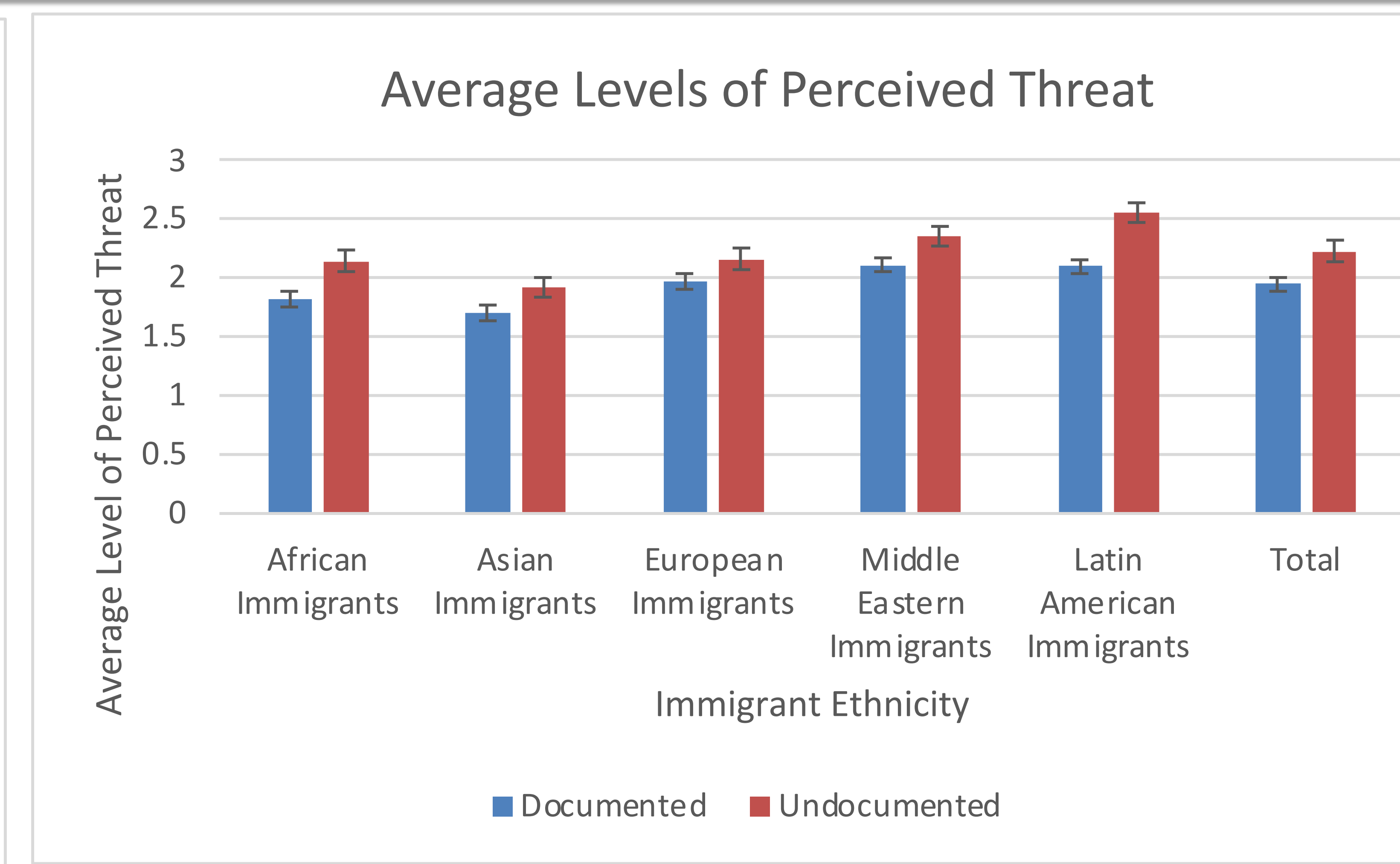
Implications

- Anti-immigrant sentiment may be driven by perceptions towards specific immigration ethnicities and legal status.
- A future intervention could target overcoming perceived threat and dehumanization towards immigrants, especially those of undocumented status and Middle Eastern and Latin American ethnicities.

Results



- Status x Ethnicity: $F(1, 822) = .887, p = .471$
- Status: $F(1, 822) = 250.030, p < .001$
- Ethnicity: $F(4, 822) = 10.697, p < .001$



- Status x Ethnicity: $F(4, 822) = 2.902, p = .021$
- Status: $F(1, 822) = 102.626, p < .001$
- Ethnicity: $F(4, 822) = 4.091, p < .001$