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Assessing the production and impact of migration narratives

Report on the influence of narratives on attitudes towards immigrants

Narrative framing effects on intergroup attitudes and prosocial behaviors

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Contents

Abstract

Despite its ubiquity in human life, narrative exposure has only recently begun to receive more theoretical and empirical attention, with the aim to unravel how narratives shape our thoughts and actions. In this report, we focus on testimonial narratives to explain *what* their effects are, *how* narratives produce these effects, and *who* are those with a greater probability of being immersed in this form of narratives. We conducted a pre-registered online experiment in Spain (*N* = 1502) and replicated it in Hungary (*N* = 960), where participants had to read diverse immigrant work-life stories, manipulated in terms of narrative frame (immigrant as a Profiteer vs Victim vs Hero), origin of the immigrant (higher vs lower stigma), and narrative voice used (1st vs 3rd person). Then, we measured participants' attitudes and helping intentions towards immigrants, along with a series of mechanisms that evaluates participants' psychological experience with the testimony. The results show a cascade of effects triggered by narrative frames, and notably heightened identification with the protagonist. This emotional connection sets off a series of positive psychological responses, fostering meaningful affect and deep cognitive reflection while reducing counterarguing, and subsequently, more positive attitudes and helping intentions towards immigrants in general. Additionally, person-centered analyses reveal that these effects are even stronger among participants who are in greater contact with people from social minorities, those who are less suspicious about immigrants, and those who are more extroverted, more curious, and orientated to cooperation. Beyond the experimental setting, these findings hold significance for understanding narrative persuasion models and emphasize the potential of testimonial messages in addressing societal issues.

Keywords: Narrative Persuasion, Testimonial Narratives, Immigration, Intergroup Relations, Frame, Narrative Voice.

1. Introduction

Human beings are *Homo Narrans*, creatures that thrive on creating, distributing, and immersing themselves in narrative messages (Fisher, 1985). These stories, or narratives, are more than just a source of entertainment –they are fundamental to the transmission of cultural information, the development of psychological skills, and shaping intergroup relations (Hoeken et al., 2016). Narratives, found in oral traditions, mass media, novels, video games, and more, play a crucial role in transmitting knowledge (Pratt et al., 2008; Rimé, 2009), and developing critical social skills, such as perspective taking and empathy (Mar et al., 2009; Kidd and Castano, 2013). Additionally, they can be conceived of as tools with profound consequences for social change. Reading narratives about stigmatized outgroup members, like immigrants or refugees, can positively impact social relations by reducing threat perceptions and fostering positive attitudes (Igartua and Cachón-Ramón, 2023; Wojcieszak et al., 2020).

This report summarizes the main results of WP5 from two unique experiments conducted with large samples in Spain ($N = 1502$) and Hungary ($N = 960$) on the effects of testimonial stories of work-related immigration. It centers on how particular testimonial narratives' *devices* (e.g., framing, protagonist's information) can initiate a cascade of psychological reactions on recipients' emotions and cognitions. These reactions, in turn, ultimately affect people's attitudes and help intentions, and are particularly more salient on a differential profile of recipients: those with greater contact with people from social minorities, those who are less suspicious about immigrants, and those who are more extroverted, more curious, and oriented to cooperation.

2. Narrative Persuasion and Testimonials: A Transformative Experience

Recent research has delved into the effects of narrative messages, particularly in the field of narrative persuasion (Busselle and Bilandzic, 2012; Green and Brock, 2000). Narrative persuasion examines how exposure to information presented through narratives can influence beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Braddock and Dillard, 2016). Stories, with their unique ability to immerse and evoke complex emotional reactions, offer a persuasive tool in various domains, including health improvement (Kim et al., 2020) and prejudice reduction (Banas et al., 2020).

Within this landscape, testimonial narratives have emerged as a powerful subtype. These narratives, depicting the before and after of a protagonist's experience, have proven effective in improving attitudes towards stigmatized groups such as immigrants and refugees (Igartua and Cachón-Ramón, 2023). Testimonials, therefore, can act as narrative pills inducing positive changes in attitudes and behaviors at a lower production cost, and in topics when the involvement is lower (Igartua and Guerrero-Martín, 2022). Conversely, a testimonial can also deteriorate intergroup attitudes if its reception produces a negative overall experience (see Schemer and Meltzer, 2020).

In this promising field of applied research, understanding how testimonial stories work is crucial. In specific, how the attributes of a given testimonial –such as the narrative frame or the

characteristics of the protagonist– can initiate a ripple effect that can explain persuasion (see Igartua and Cachón-Ramón, 2023; see also Watts et al., 2023). This effect can be a cascade of dynamic psychological reaction where one or several (parallel) mechanisms (e.g., emotions or cognitions) could further interact and condition the persuasiveness of a testimony (e.g., Wojcieszak et al., 2020).

2.1 Testimonial Narrative Devices: Framing, Narrative Voice, and Group Cue

Understanding how different elements shape persuasive testimonial narratives is crucial. Elements like framing (i.e., how the story is presented), narrative voice (i.e., the teller of the story), and cues (e.g., the protagonist's country of origin) interact in intricate ways, influencing the effectiveness of the message. While prior research has explored these devices and their significance to persuasion (Chen and Bell, 2022), there has been a tendency to manipulate them in isolation and their dynamic relationships remain not fully understood.

2.1.1 Framing

To begin with, testimonials cover diverse themes, from immigration to health-related behaviors (de Wit et al., 2008; Schemer and Meltzer, 2020) and the way a testimonial is framed –how it emphasizes certain words or focuses the narrative– matters. As described by Entman (1993), framing involves deliberately selecting aspects of a text to make them more noticeable or memorable. For example, framing immigration-related testimonials can function as a form of mediated intergroup contact (Park, 2012), because framing testimonials within the topic of immigration (e.g., the story of an immigrant or refugee) is an example of a mediated intergroup contact. Importantly, and in line with the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954), awareness or observation of contact could be enough to influence emotions and cognitions and improve intergroup attitudes (e.g., Wojcieszak et al., 2020), but some experiences of mediated contact can be detrimental to intergroup relations (Schemer and Meltzer, 2020).

2.1.2. Narrative Voice

In addition, the way information is presented also plays a role in persuasive impact. Telling a story from the protagonist's perspective (i.e., first person) can enhance persuasion, likely due to increased empathy and emotional engagement, at least in health-related settings (Chen and Bell, 2022). Generally speaking, perspective taking or empathetic engagement has been linked to processing narrative content (e.g., Eekhof et al., 2022; Mar et al., 2009). Therefore, the protagonist's point of view should be an amplifier of stronger identification or emotional reactions. Nonetheless, this effect has not been fully explained in the context of intergroup relations and additionally, a contrast of different narrative voices (i.e., third- and first-person) can even produce unexpected opposite effects (Zhuang and Guidry, 2022).

2.1.3. Group Cue

Finally, another testimonial device that has received attention in empirical research is the group cue. Considered a more peripheral cue (i.e., see Slater and Rouner, 2002), information about the origin of the protagonist (e.g., name or birthplace) can activate intergroup biases in the form people process the testimonial. This was Brader and colleagues' (2008) central

hypothesis and the researchers showed how news that informed about differentiated outgroup members (i.e., with differentiated levels of stigma) affected attitudes towards immigration in different magnitudes: a negative frame of news produced greater rejection when the group cue involved a more distant immigrant. However, previous studies have failed to replicate Brader and colleagues' (2008) main effects, suggesting that, at least in the evaluation of testimonials, the relationship seems to be more complex (Igartua et al., 2008; Igartua and Cheng, 2009).

While various studies have explored the factors influencing the effectiveness of narratives in general and testimonials in particular, there remains a notable gap. To date, no study has comprehensively examined the interactive joint effect of these three crucial factors –framing, narrative voice, and cues– in a complex topic, as it is immigration. A systematic evaluation of these devices can contribute greatly to disentangle their complex relationship and it is one of the goals of this work package. In addition, the present work package is aimed at shedding light in another gap in the literature of narrative persuasion: the complexity of the psychological reactions produced by testimonials, as well as the challenge testimonials pose in terms of theories of narrative persuasion.

2.2 Reacting to Testimonial Narratives: Identification, Emotions and Cognitions

Various psychological mechanisms result from, and, at the same time, contribute to the effectiveness of testimonials. Among them, we focus on identification, emotional reactions, and cognitive processes, and several models and theories describe them in detail.

For example, the Transportation-Imagery model highlights how narratives create mental processes like narrative transportation, which integrates mental imagery, emotional reactions, and a sense of detachment from real-word information (Green and Brock, 2000; Van Laer et al., 2014). Defined as absorption in terms of the Extended Elaboration Likelihood model (Slater and Rouner, 2002), this process is further mediated by identification with relevant characters. This identification involves a sense of merging with the protagonist, and can increase overall persuasiveness of a testimonial by itself (Cohen, 2001; Igartua et al., 2017).

Notably, testimonial narratives, unlike some entertainment-focused models, prioritize overt attempts to persuade and rely on a central character (Watts et al., 2023), making identification a crucial mechanism in this context. What is more, identification could be an important enhancer of emotional reactions and in particular, complex emotions such as those leading to self-transcendence (Moyer-Gusé and Wilson, 2023). For these reasons, identification with the protagonist can be considered the primordial mechanism at play in testimonials.

Following this rationale, an increased identification will produce emotional reactions among recipients, which can condition the form we process the information and the likelihood we are persuaded (Fredrickson, 2009; Smith and Macki, 2016). In addition, complex emotional reactions (e.g., meaningful affect) have been proven to result from inspiring and moving media stimuli (e.g., displays of great benevolence or kindness), and to increase prosocial behaviors (Oliver et al., 2012, 2015).

In addition to emotional reactions, cognitive mechanisms also play a vital role in processing testimonial narratives. Reading different testimonial narratives involves cognitive deployment

and investment, specifically cognitive elaboration, which reflects on the message's topic during processing. Depending on the message, testimonial narratives can also initiate a parallel process of counterarguing, where individuals critically respond to the message for rebuttal. Both cognitive mechanisms, elaboration, and counterarguing can either increase or decrease persuasion (Green, 2006; Igartua and Cachón-Ramón, 2023; Igartua and Guerrero-Martín, 2022; Moyer-Gusé and Nabi, 2010). These mechanisms, in turn, also seem to be dependent on an identification with the characters of the testimonials. As Igartua (2010) shows, identifying oneself with the characters implies absorption or transportation in the story as well as a lowered sense of counterarguing and, additionally, heightened cognitive elaboration.

Despite the increasing interest in studying the mechanisms explaining the effectiveness of testimonials, research evaluating the impact of different mediators simultaneously remains scarce (Oschatz and Marker, 2020). Moreover, the study of narrative persuasion continues to be marked by the evaluation of its effectiveness, with systematic reviews of mechanisms being eliminated in some meta-analyses (e.g., Shen et al., 2015). Therefore, there is a recognized need for comprehensive studies to explore the complex relationships among variables, and how they collectively produce changes in recipients of testimonial narratives (Green, 2021).

2.3 Recipients of Testimonials: Different Types of Readers, Different Intensities of Responses

A final methodological consideration in this work package –and more pertinent to this report– is the focus on the people who receive the testimonial. This is because individual differences and personal dispositions could alter the effect of a given campaign using narratives in general and testimonial in specific. As the well-known saying goes 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder', the "beholders" (i.e., narratives' recipients) could indeed perceive, process, and react to the "beauty" (i.e., the testimony) in a different manner.

It seems logical that the processing of narrative messages is affected by personal –and often idiosyncratic– dispositions, characteristics and patterns of behaviors. For instance, stable dispositions towards empathy (i.e., empathetic concern) influences the reader's immersion in the narrative, according to Green and Brocks' (2000) Transportation-Imaginary model. The orientation to others –e.g., in the form of agreeableness, as presented in John and colleagues' (1991) Big 5 model– can also shape how readers identify with the story's protagonist, which is crucial for narrative involvement and effectiveness (Moyer-Gusé and Nabi, 2010; Slater and Rouner, 2002). In addition, some data suggest that narrative persuasion could produce stronger effects (e.g., less resistance and stronger transportation) among samples with a larger proportions of feminine participants (Ratcliff and Sun, 2020). Nonetheless, this effect has not been consistently replicated (e.g., Chen et al., 2022).

Models like the Elaboration Likelihood model (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) emphasize narrative routes of persuasion, distinguishing between central (focused on arguments for lasting change) and peripheral routes (attention to quantity or sources for temporary change). Variables like need for cognition or trait conscientiousness can influence engagement and resistance to persuasion (Williams et al., 2017). Even economic models, like Rational Choice Theory (Scott, 2000), also acknowledge the role of individual differences. These models, viewing human behavior as rational calculations aligned with one's interests, consider factors like political identification and actual behaviors (e.g., contact with minority groups) in

information processing and resistance to messages (De Benedictis-Kessner et al., 2019; Jost et al., 2014; Bobowik et al., 2023; Wojcieszak et al., 2020).

3. Objectives, Hypotheses and Studies' Overview

The present studies (fully pre-registered) are set out to explore how testimonials about immigration affect people's attitudes and intentions, and the individual dispositions that facilitate these effects in Spain and Hungary. We focused on work-related immigration and tested people's reactions when reading testimonials with different frames: portraying immigrants as welfare profiteers (i.e., profiteer frame), victims of exploitation (i.e., victim frame), or heroes overcoming challenges (i.e., hero frame) (see section 4 and Table 1). We also looked at factors like the narrator's perspective (first vs. third person) and the protagonist's origin (Morocco or Ecuador in Study 1, Syria or Ukraine in Study 2).

3.1 Hypotheses

Our key predictions were as follows: testimonials depicting immigrants as victims or heroes (compared to profiteers) would lead to higher identification with the protagonist (Hypothesis H1.1 and H1.2), and more positive attitudes and helping intentions towards immigrants (H2.1 and H 2.2).

In addition, we expected conditional indirect effects as a result of reading the narrative frames. In the full model (Figure 1), we expected identification with the protagonist (i.e., higher in the victim and hero conditions; H3.1) would mediate the effects of the frames on the attitudes and help intentions towards immigrants. Subsequently, we expected that increased identification would increase meaningful affect (H3.2) and cognitive elaboration (H3.3), while decreasing counterarguing (H3.4).

Moreover, we anticipated that the effects of these story frames would be influenced by the narrator's voice and the protagonist's group cue. We hypothesized that the first-person perspective (compared to the third-person) and a less stigmatized immigrant (compared to a higher level of stigma) would strengthen the impact of the frames (Hypothesis 4). To this aim, we proposed a three-way interaction between narratives frames, narrative voice, and group cue.

Concerning the profiles of people who receive the testimonies, and using a person-centered approach (e.g., Spurk et al., 2020), we finally evaluated the underlying patterns of reactions to the testimonials. We explored the types of engagement these testimonies produced among readers (i.e., classes of involvement) and evaluated the possible individual differences among them. For this section, we expected differentiated types of readers with varying degrees of immersion in the testimonials in terms of identification with the protagonist, emotionality, and more cognitive immersion while less counterarguing. According to available literature, the people who are more immersed or involved with the testimonial are usually those more open to immigration and to contacting members of social minorities come from the political left, and those who usually prefer social relations based on solidarity and empathy (Bobowik et al., 2023; Mar et al., 2009) (Hypotheses 5).

Figure 1. *Complete Model of Conditional Indirect Effects of Narrative Frames.*
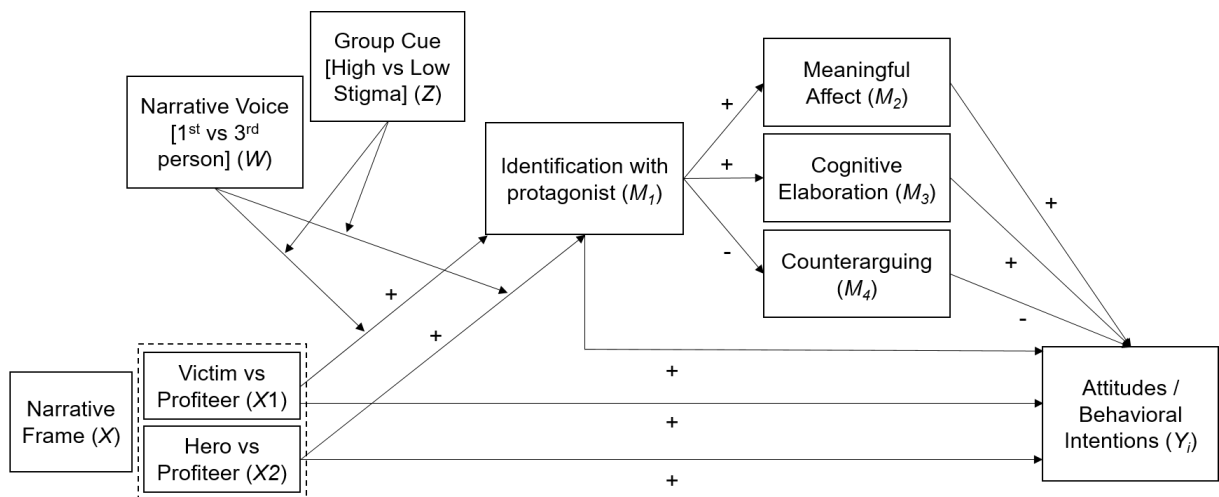
Note. The model includes serial and parallel mediation with 4 mediators, and a three-way interaction. X, M, Y, W and Z represent independent, mediator, dependent and 2 moderator variables, respectively.

3.2 Overview of the studies

This report gathers the main results of the experiment conducted in Spain and subsequently, its replication in Hungary, in a joint manner, and divided in two sections. The first, includes a summary of the main results of the two experiments, focusing on the mechanisms and the effects of the testimonial frames (i.e., for Hypotheses 1-4). The second section, subsequently, uses a person-centered approach and aims at discovering possible patterns of reactions of the recipients of testimonials (i.e., classes of involvement) and their particular characteristics (i.e., individual differences) (i.e., for Hypothesis 5).

4. Method

4.1 Participants and procedure

We present an online experiment conducted in a large sample in Spain ($N = 1502$ participants; ages 18-88; $M = 43.35$; $SD = 13.46$) whose fathers and mothers were also born in Spain. There were 740 men and 759 women (and 3 people who defined themselves as non-binary or third gender). This online experiment was then replicated in Hungary ($N = 960$ participants; ages 18-80; $M = 41.45$; $SD = 13.64$) whose fathers and mothers were also born in Hungary (see Figure 2). There were 461 men and 497 women, (and 2 people who did not want to indicate their gender).

In these experiments, each participant had to read a narration of testimonial type on the work-related life of an immigrant person in their country. The experimental manipulation consisted on the presentation of differential elements of the narratives, while maintaining the central issues across them; all conditions (i.e., in both experiments) were equivalent in terms of

extension, characters, number of paragraphs, and sequence of events and participants read them in about 15 minutes. This between-subject experiment consisted of a 3 (Narrative frame: Profiteer, Victim or Hero) x 2 (Origin of the immigrant protagonist: higher vs lower stigma) x 2 (Narrative voice: 1st person or 3rd person) factorial design. In this way, each participant was randomly assigned to one of 12 experimental conditions, depending on the testimonial stories about immigration. The group cue was selected in order to match the cultural reality of this country. Therefore, the higher stigma conditions included a protagonist of Morocco and Syria for the Spanish and Hungarian experiment, while the lower stigma conditions, a protagonist of Ecuador and Ukraine, respectively for Spain and Hungary (a simplified overview of the narrative can be seen in Table 1). The participants were recruited through *Qualtrics* and the inclusion criterion for participants in both cases was to be born in the country, both them and their parents.

Figure 2. *Demographic Statistics of Participants in each Experiment.*
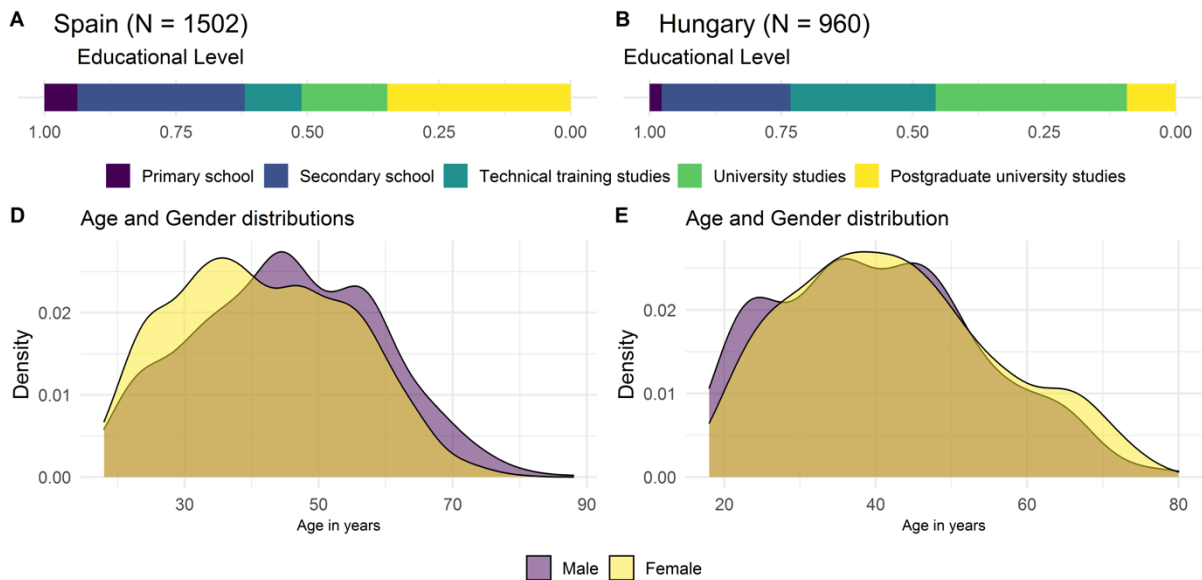
Source: own elaboration

In both experiments, the testimonials and all the measures were pretested with one pilot experiment for each one (Spanish pilot $N = 361$; Hungarian pilot $N = 260$), with the same criteria as the main studies. This was done in order to check the level of understanding and general functioning of the online application. For example, to evaluate the how participants were randomized to each group (e.g., comparing their ages, gender, political ideology, etc.), their understanding (e.g., correct recalling of the protagonist's country), or the frame manipulation (e.g., content related to profiteering, victimization, or heroism). All analyses considered revealed the experimental manipulation was successful. To see these results, as well as all materials used, data, syntax and supplemental analyses, see our Supplemental Online Materials (SOM)[1].

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[1] In order to keep the message clear and not generate excessive reporting, we have decided to reference most of the tables and figures in the SOM. In this way, we invite readers to view the repository and in particular, the

Table 1. *Simplified Version of the Testimonials for each Frame Manipulation.*

Profiteer frame	Victim frame	Hero frame
My name is Saîd (Edison), I'm from Morocco (Ecuador). I'm going to tell you about my life. (…) …The site manager offered me 8 hours a day with the possibility of overtime and night shifts… **However**, it seemed to me that it was **too many hours** and that **it was a very heavy job**. (…) In the future, (…) and continue to **receive some social benefits** (…)	My name is Saîd (Edison), I am from Morocco (Ecuador). I'm going to tell you about my life. (…) …The site manager **always looked down on me** (…) and **made a lot of jokes**... he told me that those were the conditions and if I didn't like it, I knew where the door was. (…) In the future, I would like to have **a job with better working and financial conditions** (…)	My name is Saîd (Edison), I am from Morocco (Ecuador). I'm going to tell you about my life. (…) …It was hard work, yes, **but I always worked hard**. In addition, **I learned a lot** and thanks to that, he **put workers under me to teach them** the job, and they quickly learned how to work. (…) In the future, I would like to **continue my training** to **get a better job** in the hospital (…)

Note. This simplified version shows the first-person narrative voice for each of the narratives used in the Spanish experiment. The information concerning the names (Said vs Edison) and the countries (Morocco vs Ecuador) indicates the group cue manipulation. Bold information in the excerpts help visualizing differences concerning the frame manipulation. Source: own elaboration

4.2 Measures

The order of the measures for each experiment were the following: items measuring demographics, Modern Racism, Ten-Item Personality Inventory and Intergroup Contact were answered before being randomly assigned to the conditions; the rest of the items were answered after the manipulation. Detailed information about the measures' distributions and reliability tests are in Table 2.

Demographics. First, participants answered several demographic questions concerning their birth country –as well as their parents'–, their age, gender, educational level, political ideology, and region of residence.

Modern Racism (McConahay, 1986; Spanish version, Navas, 1998). Seven items were used to measure more modern and subtle forms of racist beliefs towards immigrants (e.g., *Immigrants have more influence on public policy than they really deserve*) on a Likert scale from 1 (Totally disagree) to 7 (Totally agree).

Ten Item Personality Inventory – TIPI (Gosling et al., 2003). Based on the Big-5 model of personality, we used the 10-item version to assess five personality factors on a Likert scale from 1 (Totally disagree) to 7 (Totally agree) to evaluate participants levels of Extraversion

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supplementary analysis section for more detail here: https://osf.io/pn94w/?view_only=4b16384c5eed4a209c4231ead929ad98

(e.g., *extraverted*), Agreeableness (e.g., *understanding*), Conscientiousness (e.g., *self-disciplined*), Neuroticism (e.g., *anxious*), and Openness to Experience (e.g., *multifaceted*).

Intergroup Contact (ad-hoc). Eight items were used to evaluate the frequency of contact towards people from different social groups (e.g., immigrants, people with disabilities, former drug addicts, ex-convicts, or from other cultures or ethnic groups), on a Likert scale from 0 (no contact at all) to 10 (a lot of contact).

Content checks. We used 10 items to check different aspects of the content of narratives. In order to evaluate the protagonist's name, age, country of origin, as well as the narrative voice used, we used 4 items and each of them was multiple-choice. In relation to what each framing aimed at producing (i.e., Profiteer, Victim, and Hero), we used 6 items on a Likert scale from 1 (Totally disagree) to 7 (Totally agree). These items were aimed at analyzing the threatening (e.g., *The protagonist of the story misuses social benefits*), victimizing (e.g., *This story shows the suffering caused by discrimination*), and heroic content (e.g., *The story is a clear example of work, effort, and self-improvement*) with two items each.

Identification with the Protagonist (Igartua et al., 2019; Igartua and Cachón-Ramón, 2023; Igartua and Guerrero-Martín, 2022). Eleven items assessed the degree in which the readers psychologically identified with the protagonist (e.g., I *have imagined how I would act if I were in* [protagonist's] *place, or I have felt worried about what was happening to* [protagonist's]), using a 1 (Not at all) to 5 (A lot) Likert scale.

Emotional Reactions (Oliver et al., 2012; Fredrickson, 2009). We used 17 items to measure different forms of affect as a response to the testimonies. The items were grouped in the dimensions of Meaningful affect (e.g., *touched, inspired*), positive affect (e.g., *cheerful, happy*), and negative affect (e.g., *sad, angry*) on a 1 (Not at all) to 7 (A lot) Likert scale.

Cognitive Elaboration (Igartua, 2010; Igartua and Guerrero-Martín, 2022; Moyer-Gusé and Nabi, 2010). Three items were used to assess the degree of cognitive investment during reading the testimony on a 1 (Totally disagree) to 7 (Totally agree) Likert scale (e.g., *As I read the narrative, I reflected intensely on the issue of immigration*).

Counterarguing (Igartua and Cachón-Ramón, 2023). Three items evaluated participants' level of agreement with arguments against the testimony (e.g., *While reading the message, I thought that the information* in [protagonist]'s *account was inaccurate, misleading, or exaggerated*), on a Likert scale from 1 (Totally disagree) to 7 (Totally agree).

Intention to Share the Narrative (Barbour et al., 2016; adapted by Igartua et al., 2017). Six items showing the willingness to share the testimony to others through the Internet on a 1 (Totally disagree) to 7 (Totally agree) Likert scale.

Feeling Thermometer (Wojcieszak et al., 2020). Feelings from 0 (very cold) to 100 (very warm) to different groups (e.g., Bankers, Teachers, Clergy). To comprise a more robust measure of feelings, we averaged the feelings towards Immigrants and towards Refugees.

Money Allocation (Ad-hoc). This task consisted on allocating 100 euros (annually) to different organizations (e.g., ecologist organization, political party, association to help immigrants). For

the implication of this study, we focused on the money allocated to an association oriented at helping immigrants.

Help Intentions (Igartua and Guerrero-Martín, 2022). Four items were used to measure the willingness to collaborate with different NGOs in Spain that provide assistance (e.g., *I am considering actively collaborating as a volunteer in an NGO supporting immigrants*) to immigrants, on a 1 (Totally disagree) to 7 (Totally agree) Likert scale.

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, Ranks, and Reliability Tests of all Variables of the Experiments.

Variable	Spain (*N* = 1502)					Hungary (*N* = 960)				
	Male	Female	Total			Male	Female	Total		
	M(*SD*)	*M*(*SD*)	Min - Max	*M*(*SD*)	Reliability[1]	*M*(*SD*)	*M*(*SD*)	Min - Max	*M*(*SD*)	Reliability[1]
Age	45.16(13.76)	41.65(12.92)	18 - 88	43.38(13.45)	-	40.40(13.49)	42.45(13.70)	18 - 80	41.45(13.64)	-
Modern Racism	3.76(1.41)	3.54(1.36)	1 - 7	3.65(1.38)	.87	4.27(1.05)	4.26(1.00)	1 - 7	4.27(1.02)	.68
B5 Extraversion	4.34(1.37)	4.56(1.39)	1 - 7	4.45(1.38)	.45***	3.86(1.22)	4.15(1.28)	1 - 7	4.01(1.26)	.22***
B5 Agreeableness	2.62(1.08)	2.56(1.04)	1 - 7	2.59(1.06)	.27***	3.33(1.06)	2.97(1.04)	1 - 7	3.14(1.06)	.13***
B5 Conscientiousness	5.21(1.17)	5.42(1.11)	1 - 7	5.32(1.15)	.26***	5.31(1.14)	5.67(1.04)	1.5 - 7	5.50(1.11)	.22***
B5 Neuroticism	2.94(1.17)	3.33(1.32)	1 - 7	3.14(1.26)	.32***	3.47(1.33)	3.70(1.40)	1 - 7	3.59(1.37)	.24***
B5 Openness	4.80(1.18)	5.02(1.19)	1 - 7	4.91(1.19)	.41***	5.06(1.12)	5.18(1.10)	1 - 7	5.12(1.11)	.45***
Intergroup Contact	5.25(1.91)	5.34(1.90)	0 - 10	5.30(1.91)	.84	3.94(1.94)	3.97(2.02)	0 - 10	3.95(1.98)	.86
ID with protagonist	2.90(0.95)	3.04(0.95)	1 - 5	2.97(0.95)	.94	2.78(0.88)	2.87(0.94)	1 - 5	2.83(0.91)	.94
Negative Affect	3.50(1.43)	3.76(1.41)	1 - 7	3.63(1.43)	.85	3.30(1.39)	3.50(1.47)	1 - 7	3.40(1.43)	.86
Meaningful Affect	3.92(1.68)	4.20(1.67)	1 - 7	4.06(1.68)	.95	3.49(1.67)	3.96(1.87)	1 - 7	3.74(1.79)	.96
Cognitive Elaboration	4.65(1.40)	4.90(1.29)	1 - 7	4.77(1.35)	.88	3.64(1.54)	4.03(1.48)	1 - 7	3.84(1.52)	.87
Counterarguing	3.90(1.37)	3.74(1.46)	1 - 7	3.82(1.42)	.74	3.69(1.51)	3.53(1.49)	1 - 7	3.60(1.50)	.81
Sharing Intention	4.10(1.67)	4.47(1.56)	1 - 7	4.29(1.62)	.94	3.21(1.53)	3.56(1.61)	1 - 7	3.39(1.58)	.94
Attitude Thermometer	60.37(24.38)	63.83(24.07)	0 - 100	62.12(24.28)	.67***	36.68(24.4)	40.05(28.02)	0 - 100	38.43(26.38)	.73***
Money Allocation	20.34(19.06)	21.20(17.47)	0 - 100	20.78(18.27)	-	8.76(13.59)	9.35(13.92)	0 - 100	9.07(13.76)	-
Help Intentions	3.57(.64)	3.75(1.57)	1 - 7	3.66(1.60)	.91	2.77(1.42)	2.83(1.53)	1 - 7	2.80(1.48)	.88

Note. M(*SD*) represent the mean and their respective standard deviations, respectively. In the case of the dimensions of the Big 5 model and the Attitude Thermometer, we report Pearson's correlations for each pair of adjectives forming each dimension (*** indicates *p*-values < .001). Source: own elaboration

4.3 Data analysis

All analyses were conducted in SPSS 28 (IBM Corp., 2017) and in R (R Core Team, 2014) with RStudio (RStudioTeam, 2015). For the effects of testimonial narratives, they comprised comparison among groups in the variables of interest through Chi-square and ANOVA tests. Concerning the indirect conditional effect analyses, we used the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2022) which allows for the analysis of conditional indirect effects through bootstrapping-based inference. Since narrative frame was a multicategorical variable, it was encoded to generate two dummy variables (X1 and X2, see Figure 1), with the profiteer condition set as the reference category: X1 (Profiteer = 0, Victim = 1, Hero = 0) and X2 (Profiteer = 0, Victim = 0, Hero = 1). We created the full conditional indirect-effect model using a customized matrix (see the SPSS syntax in SOM) to test the hypotheses and conducted the analyses using 95% percentile bootstrap confident intervals with 10,000 samples, to a more robust test of the statistical inference. For all hypotheses presented here (i.e. main effects, interaction effects, and indirect effects), models were run with and without co-variables (for a discussion on the benefits of this approach, see Darlington and Hayes, 2017).

Concerning the person-oriented approach (i.e., the classes of involvement), we conducted latent profile analyses and used the package *tidyLPA* (Rosenberg et al., 2018) to classify participants according their responses to the psychological mechanisms activated when reading testimonials: Identification with the protagonist, emotions (i.e., negative and meaningful), cognitive elaboration and counterarguing. In order to determine the most appropriate number of classes (i.e., groups of respondents), we used common criteria in both samples following the recommended criteria of comparison among fit indexes and sample sizes (Spurk et al., 2020; Tein et al., 2013). Subsequently, we conducted comparisons across underlying groups (i.e., classes of involvement) to examine the possible differences among these groups.

5. Results

5.1 The Impact of Testimonial Narratives: Conditional Indirect Effects in Spain and Hungary

5.1.1 Manipulation Checks

As it can be seen in the SOM, there were no differences across the conditions (i.e., the 12 possible conditions) in terms of gender, educational level, employment status. Additionally, there were no differences in participant's age and self-reported political identity across groups in any of the experiments. When comparing the experimental conditions as a function of the frame (i.e., frames associated with threat, victimization, and heroism) in the Spanish experiment, results revealed differences between conditions on items assessing threat ($F(2, 1499) = 632.98$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .458$), victimization ($F(2, 1499) = 317.94$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .298$), and heroism ($F(2, 1499) = 700.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .483$). This was also the overall observed pattern when replicating in the Hungarian sample. The results revealed differences across conditions in the analysis of threat ($F(2, 257) = 437.19$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .477$), victimization ($F(2,

257)= 207.34, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .302$), and heroism ($F(2, 257)= 315.57$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .397$). In both cases, all the differences were in the expected directions and, taken as a whole, we consider that the experimental manipulation was successful.

Finally, in the Spanish sample, Chi-squared tests revealed significant associations between participants' recalling of the protagonist's name ($\chi^2(5, N = 1502) = 1313.71$, $p < .001$), origin ($\chi^2(5, N = 1502) = 1323.15$, $p < .001$) and the narrative voice used ($\chi^2(1, N = 1502) = 1124.05$, $p < .001$) with each of the manipulated factors (i.e., protagonist's origin and narrative voice used). This was also true in the Hungarian sample, where we found significant associations between the protagonist's name ($\chi^2(5, N = 960) = 795.45$, $p < .001$), origin ($\chi^2(5, N = 960) = 846.76$, $p < .001$) and the narrative voice used ($\chi^2(1, N = 960) = 592.00$, $p < .001$) with each of the manipulated factors (i.e., protagonist's origin and narrative voice used). Taking these results together, we conclude that the experimental manipulation was successful in terms of their original purpose and the understanding among participants.

5.1.2 Main Results: Indirect Conditional Effects of the Narrative Frames

When analyzing the full models (see SOM; Supplemental Tables S7-S10, for the Spanish experiment and S17-S20 for the Hungarian one), we found strong support for the first set of hypotheses.

In the Spanish sample, participants who read either the victim or the hero frame (compared to the profiteer) reported a stronger identification with the protagonist of the story ($B = 0.97$ and 0.99, respectively; p-values < .001). In the same vein, they reported an increased willingness to share the story ($B = 0.88$ and 1.04, respectively; p-values < .001), more positive attitudes towards immigrants ($B = 4.61$ and 4.64, respectively; p-values < .05), and were more prone to allocate money to help immigrants ($B = 6.68$ and 5.11, respectively; p-values < .001) and help them volunteering through an NGO ($B = 0.26$ and 0.28, respectively; p-values < .05).

In the case of the Hungarian sample, the overall trend was similar. Participants who read either the victim or the hero frame (compared to the profiteer) reported a stronger identification with the protagonist of the story ($B = 0.72$ and 0.71, respectively; p-values < .001). In the same vein, they reported an increased willingness to share the story ($B = 0.52$ and 0.64, respectively; p-values < .001) and more positive attitudes ($B = 6.89$ and 5.51, respectively; p-values < .01).

Additionally, those who read the hero story (compared to the profiteer), also reported greater values in the money allocation task ($B = 2.71$, $p < .05$). With these results, we find strong support for Hypotheses H1.1 and H1.2 (i.e., identification-related hypotheses), as well as for H2.1 (i.e., improved attitudes), but less support for H2.2 (i.e., helping intentions with money and volunteering, which was only partial in the Hungarian sample).

When analyzing the paths of the effects, that is, the indirect effects of the frames through the mediators, we observe significant effects via all the proposed mediators (see Figure 3, as a reference to the prediction of attitudes towards immigrants in the Spanish sample; to see all detailed effects, see the SOM).

Figure 3. *Full Conditional Indirect effects of Narrative Frame on Feeling Thermometer (Spanish sample).*
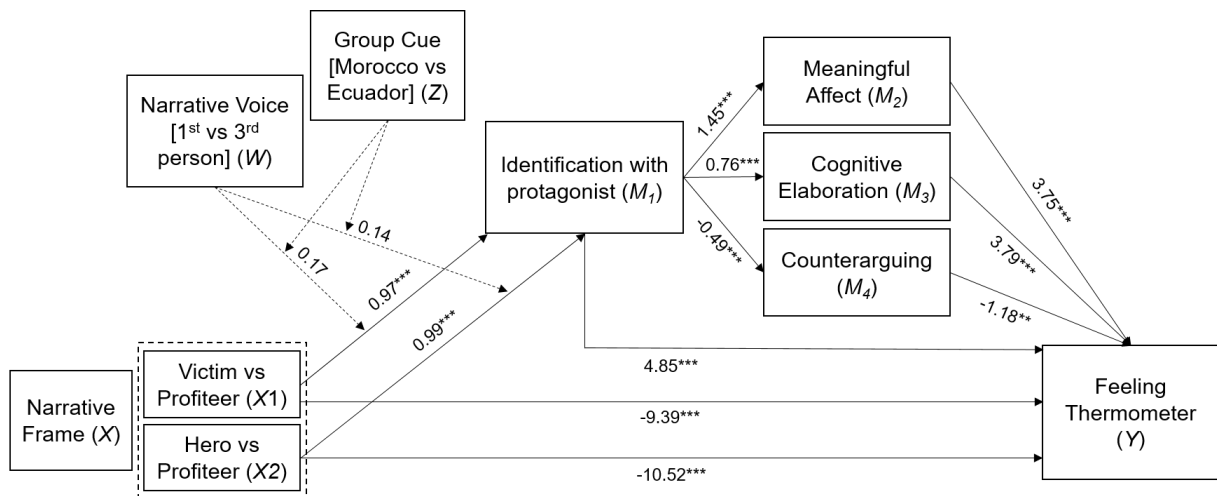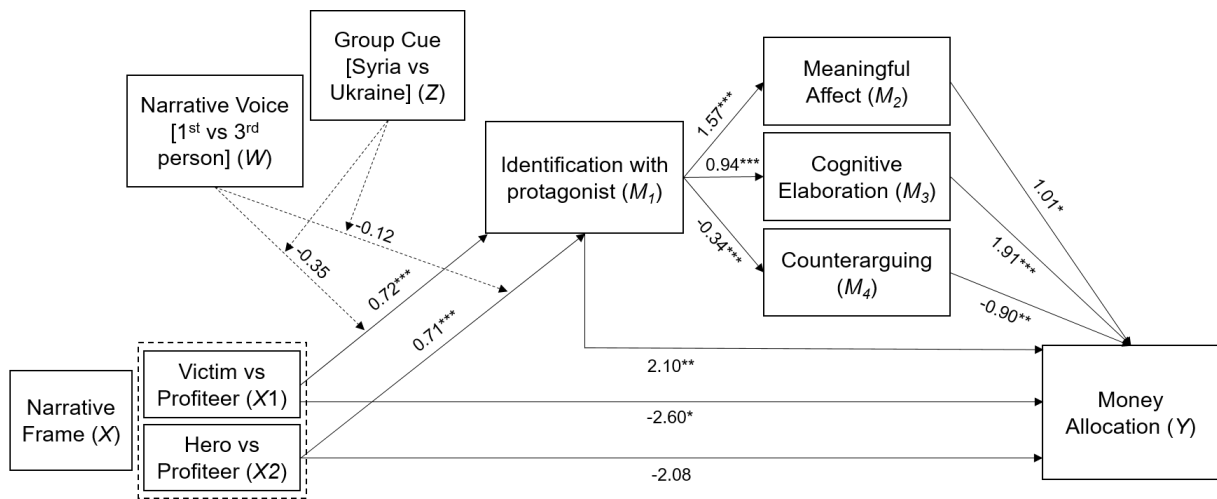

Note. X1 and X2 are dummy coded variables with the reference group frame being Threat (in X1, Profiteer = 0, Victim = 1, Hero = 0; in X2, Profiteer = 0, Victim = 0, Hero = 1). *, **, and ***, indicate p values of <.05, <.01, and <.001, respectively. The frame has indirect effects on Feeling Thermometer via Identification with the protagonist ($B = 0.28$ and 0.29); and subsequently, via: Meaningful affect ($B = 0.47$ and 0.48), Cognitive elaboration ($B = 0.33$ and 0.34), and Counterarguing ($B = 0.04$ and 0.04). Dotted lines indicate non-significant relations (i.e., $p > .05$). Source: own elaboration.

In the Spanish sample, reading the victim and hero frames (compared to profiteer) provoked a stronger identification with the protagonist of the story among participants and through this identification, greater levels of intentions to share the testimony, more positive outgroup attitudes (i.e., feeling thermometer), and helping intentions (i.e., money allocation and volunteering). In addition, we corroborated sequential and parallel mediation effects hypothesized. After an increased identification with the protagonist, participants reported more positive attitudes and helping intentions through increased meaningful affect and cognitive elaboration. In the case of the sequential mediation through increased identification and lower levels of counterarguing, on the other side, we found significant effects on all dependent variables with the exception of intentions to volunteer in an NGO.

This was also true for the Hungarian sample (see Figure 4, as a reference to the prediction of money allocation in the Hungarian sample; to see all detailed effects, see the SOM).

Figure 4. *Full Conditional Indirect effects of Narrative Frame on Money Allocation (Hungarian sample).*

Note. X1 and X2 are dummy coded variables with the reference group frame being Threat (in X1, Profiteer = 0, Victim = 1, Hero = 0; in X2, Profiteer = 0, Victim = 0, Hero = 1). *, **, and ***, indicate *p* values of <.05, <.01, and <.001, respectively. The frame has indirect effects on Help Intentions via Identification with the protagonist (*B* = 3.07 and 3.17); and subsequently, via: Meaningful affect (*B* = 0.79 and 0.80), Cognitive elaboration (*B* = 1.28 and 1.33), and Counterarguing (*B* = 0.45 and 0.47). Dotted lines indicate non-significant relations (i.e., *p* > .05). Source: own elaboration.

In detail, participants who read either the victim or the hero story reported greater identification and subsequently, greater levels in the intentions to share the testimony, more positive outgroup attitudes and helping intentions (i.e., money allocation and volunteering). Additionally, after such increased identification with the protagonist of the story, participants in these conditions reported higher levels of positive attitudes and helping intentions through increased meaningful affect and cognitive elaboration. In the case of the sequential mediation through increased identification and lower levels of counterarguing, on the other hand, we found significant effects on all dependent variables with the exception of feelings thermometer.

In all, we find substantial support for Hypotheses H3.1, H3.2, H3.3, and to a lesser extent, H3.4 (in which we did not find a sequential mediation through decreased counterarguing in the prediction of money allocation in the Spanish sample). Concerning H4 (i.e., the three-way interaction between the frames, narrative voice, and group cue), we found that all indexes of moderated-moderated mediation (i.e., IMMM) were non-significant and thus, we found no support for this hypothesis.

5.2 Types of Recipients of Testimonial Narratives: Psychological Involvement with the Testimonials

5.2.1 Discovering the Types of Recipients: Latent Profile Analysis

In order to explore the (likely) different forms participants would react to the narratives, we conducted latent profile analyses (Spurk et al., 2020; Tein et al., 2013). By means of this approach, we evaluated possible clusters (i.e., classes) of respondents to the narratives, according to their most automatic and fast psychological reactions to the testimonials. That is, their identification with the protagonist, their emotional reactions –both negative and meaningful affect–, and their cognitive elaboration and counterarguing. We tested from 2- to 4-class models (Table 3) investigating a common profile of responses in the psychological mechanisms. Results revealed that the 3-class model is the most adequate solution applicable to both samples. We observe that a 3-class model a) had a better fit than a two-class model (i.e., reduction of AIC and BIC, and significant values in BLRT), and b) predicted above the 80% in each sample (i.e., in terms of entropy). Therefore, this model was further interpreted in terms of "involvement" with the testimonies.

Table 3. *Number of Classes and Fit Indexes of Latent Profile Analysis in the Spanish and Hungarian Experiments.*

Nº	Spain (N = 1502)				Hungary (N = 960)			
	AIC	BIC	Entr.	BLRT(p)	AIC	BIC	Entr.	BLRT(p)
2	23486.84	23571.87	0.90	0.01	15621.34	15699.21	0.81	0.01
3	**22868.90**	**22985.82**	**0.81**	**0.01**	**15129.79**	**15236.86**	**0.85**	**0.01**
4	22784.10	22932.91	0.79	0.01	15042.77	15179.04	0.80	0.01

Note. AIC and BIC indicate the Akaike and Bayesian Inference Criteria, respectively. Entr. = Entropy. BLRT(p) is the *p*-value derived from the Bootstrap Likelihood Ratio Test. The model in bold highlights the common most adequate classification across samples. Source: own elaboration

*5.2.2 Differences in Personal Orientations*

As it is observed in Figure 5, the 3-class model was represented in highly similar terms in both samples, and it revealed three differentiated patterns of involvement with the testimonials in terms of identification, emotionality, and cognitive deployment of resources. In both samples, we observed that there is a group with a low level of overall psychological involvement with the testimony (i.e., 424 participants in Spain, and 317 in Hungary, named "Low-involvement" group). These participants were characterized by a below-mean scores in identification with the protagonist, emotionality (i.e., lower levels of negative and meaningful affect), and cognitive elaboration, while higher levels of counterarguing. In direct contrast with this group, results revealed another class that represents highly involved participants (i.e., 427 and 233 participants, respectively for Spanish and Hungarian experiments) which was named "Intense-involvement" group. These participants identified more strongly with the protagonist of the story, felt more intense emotions (i.e., both negative and meaningful), and reflected more intensely in the story, while creating less counterarguments. Finally, the "Moderate-involvement" group (i.e., 651 in Spain and 410 in Hungary) was characterized with scores around the mean in all psychological mechanisms.

Figure 5. *Latent Profile Analysis based on Scores on Psychological Mechanisms after Reading the Testimonies.*
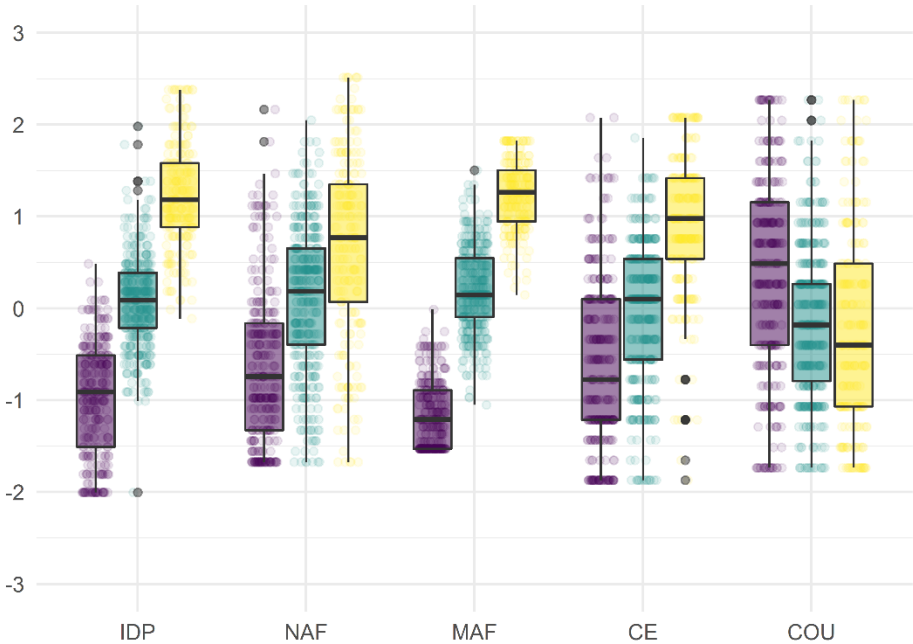

A Spain (N = 1502)

Involvement — Low (n = 424) — Moderate (n = 651) — Intense (n = 427)
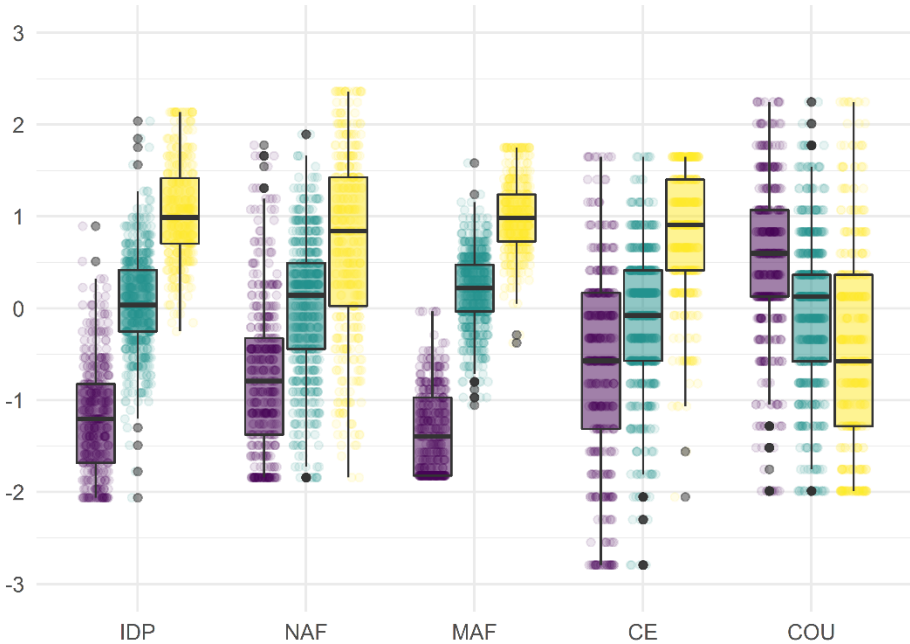
B Hungary (N = 960)

Involvement — Low (n = 317) — Moderate (n = 410) — Intense (n = 233)

Note. All the values are standardized (i.e., the scale is changed to a distribution with $M = 0$ and $SD = 1$) to represent the scores of scales in the Spanish (A) and the Hungarian (B) samples. IDP = Identification with the Protagonist; NAF = Negative Affect; MAF = Meaningful Affect; CE = Cognitive Elaboration; COU = Counterarguing. Source: own elaboration.

Concerning the differences across these classes of involvement, we observe overall similarities between both samples. In specific, among participants' levels of political identification, modern racism, intergroup contact frequency, and finally, their personality dimensions using the Big 5 model of personality.

First, we can see effects of modern racism and intergroup contact frequency (Table 4) and that these differences are linear in nature (Figure 6). In detail, the greater the levels of modern racism, the lower the involvement in the narrative was. In contrast, the more contact a respondent had with a minority group member in their society, the greater the involvement with the narrative.

In the case of political ideology, we found no differences among the type of involvement in the Hungarian sample, but we did in the Spanish one. Results revealed that those leaning more to the right wing politically, manifested a lower involvement with the narrative overall.

In regard to the differences in the scores of personality dimensions from the Big 5 model, we saw similarities in the trends manifested in terms of extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness. Nonetheless, not all of these scores revealed significant differences. In both samples (see Figure 7), people who more intensively involved in the narrative (compared with the rest) had higher levels of extraversion and openness. In addition, more intense involvement was found among those with higher levels of agreeableness (both samples) and conscientiousness (only Spain). Finally, and contrary to our expectations, we found no significant differences among the classes of involvement in the levels of neuroticism, while there is a tendency in the Spanish samples suggesting that those with lower levels of neuroticism (i.e., higher in emotional stability) can either have a lower or more intense involvement.

Table 4. Differences in Political Ideology, Modern Racism, Intergroup Contact Frequency, and Personality Dimensions (Big 5 Model) among detected Classes.

	Spain (N = 1502)						Hungary (N = 960)					
	Involvement			Comparison			Involvement			Comparison		
	Low	Moderate	Intense	F	p	η^2 [95% CI]	Low	Moderate	Intense	F	p	η^2 [95% CI]
Pol. ID.	5.07(2.70)b	4.64(2.37)a	4.46(2.87)a	6.07	.002	.01 [.00, .02]	5.54(2.28)	5.31(2.22)	5.48(2.60)	0.91	.401	.00 [.00, .01]
Mod. Racism	4.13(1.50)c	3.61(1.20)b	3.23(1.38)a	48.36	<.001	.06 [.04, .08]	4.54(1.05)b	4.15(0.96)a	4.09(1.03)a	18.61	<.001	.04 [.02, .06]
Int. Contact	4.83(1.95)a	5.23(1.73)b	5.87(1.98)c	33.76	<.001	.04 [.03, .06]	3.53(1.81)a	3.87(1.83)b	4.67(2.24)c	23.92	<.001	.05 [.03, .07]
B5: Ext.	4.30(1.49)a	4.36(1.28)a	4.74(1.38)b	13.69	<.001	.02 [.01, .03]	4.02(1.27)ab	3.88(1.20)a	4.25(1.31)b	6.51	.002	.01 [.00, .03]
B5: Agr.	5.43(1.03)b	5.24(1.03)a	5.66(1.08)c	21.20	<.001	.03 [.01, .04]	4.75(1.10)a	4.88(1.03)ab	4.97(1.06)b	3.11	.045	.01 [.00, .02]
B5: Con.	5.33(1.18)a	5.20(1.13)a	5.48(1.13)c	7.60	.001	.01 [.00, .02]	5.54(1.11)	5.42(1.07)	5.57(1.16)	1.82	.162	.00 [.00, .01]
B5: Neu.	3.08(1.27)	3.24(1.19)	3.06(1.36)	3.46	.032	.00 [.00, .01]	3.47(1.42)	3.68(1.25)	3.58(1.49)	2.11	.122	.00 [.00, .01]
B5: Ope.	4.78(1.18)a	4.77(1.12)a	5.26(1.23)c	25.70	<.001	.03 [.02, .05]	5.14(1.12)ab	5.02(1.11)a	5.29(1.09)b	4.64	.010	.01 [.00, .02]

Note. η2 [955% CI] represents partial eta squared and its confidence intervals. Ext.: Extraversion, Agr.: Agreeableness, Con.: Conscientiousness, Neu.: Neuroticism, Ope.: Openness. Different letters indicate differences among the classes of at least *p*-value < .05 through Tukey post-hoc tests. Source: own elaboration

Figure 6. *Differences in Political Ideology, Modern Racism, and Intergroup Contact Frequency among detected Classes*.
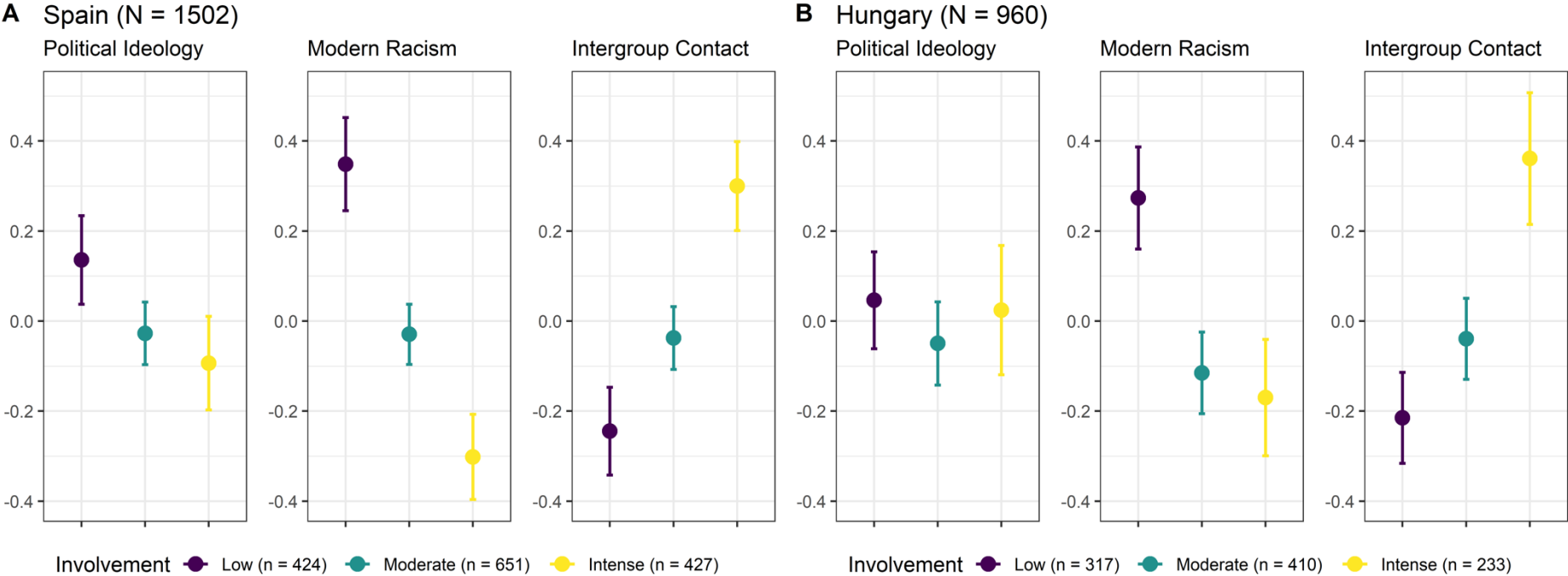
Note. All the values are standardized (i.e., the scale is changed to a distribution with $M = 0$ and $SD = 1$) to represent the scores of scales in the Spanish (A) and the Hungarian (B) samples. Bars represent 95% confident intervals around the mean, to make visual comparisons – if there is no overlap between the error bars and the mean of another group, it indicates a difference of at least *p*-value < .05 (Cumming, 2013). Source: own elaboration.

Figure 7. Differences in Personality Dimensions (Big 5 Model) among detected Classes.
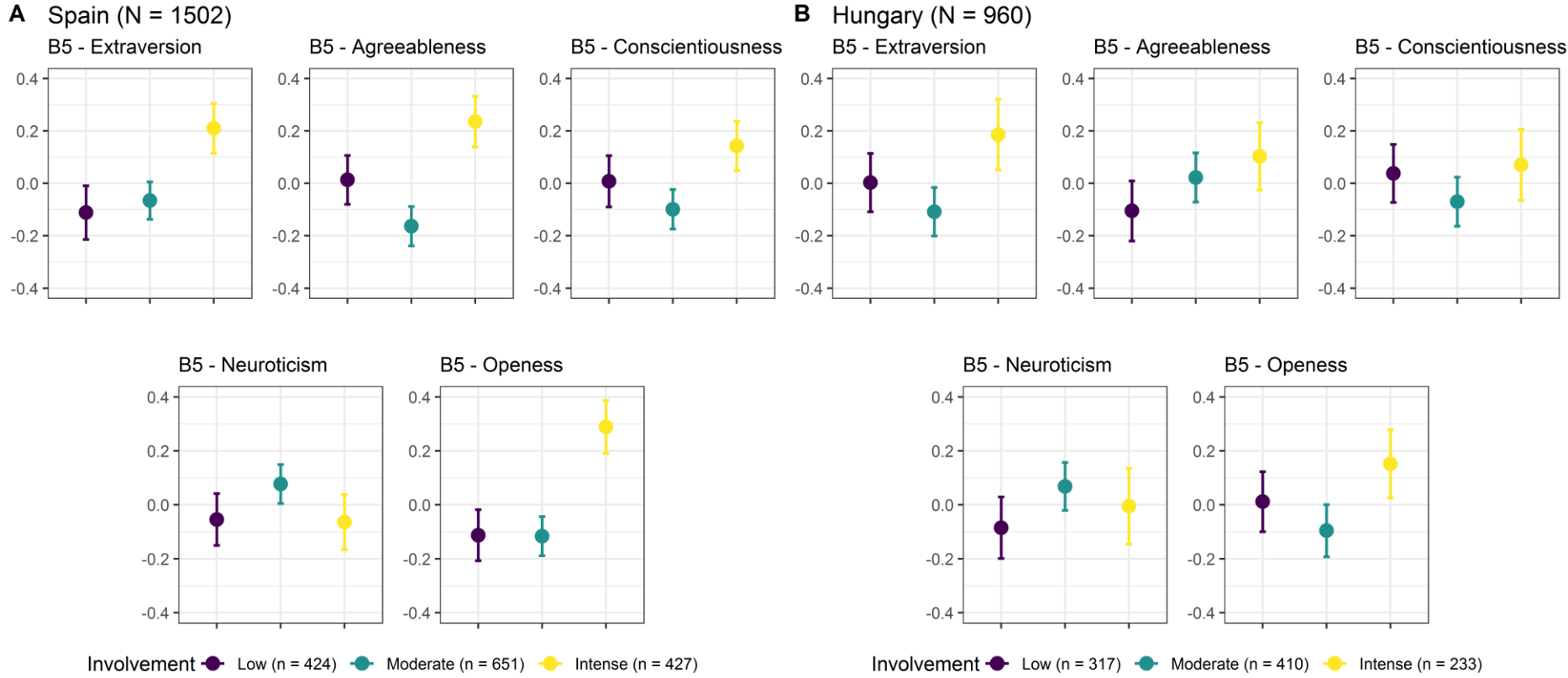
Note. All the values are standardized (i.e., the scale is changed to a distribution with $M = 0$ and $SD = 1$) to represent the scores of scales in the Spanish (A) and the Hungarian (B) samples. Bars represent 95% confident intervals around the mean, to make visual comparisons – if there is no overlap between the error bars and the mean of another group, it indicates a difference of at least p-value < .05 (Cumming, 2013). Source: own elaboration.

6. General Discussion and Conclusions

The persuasive and expansive effect of immigration testimonials have been corroborated through two experiments in very distinctive socio-cultural contexts. The effectiveness of these testimonials extends beyond merely shaping attitudes towards work-related immigration. It delves into the nuanced framing of immigration stories and the intricate pathways through which these narratives exert their influence. Importantly, these effects are more likely to be affected by the framing and not by the narrative voice or group cue employed, and additionally, be more intense among people who are more open, curious and empathy-prone.

6.1 Identification with the Protagonist: The Central Pathway of Effects

The main results of these experiments identify a pivotal mediator in the persuasive process – the level of identification with the protagonist. Narratives emphasizing victimhood and heroism, in contrast to profiteering, elicit psychological responses that have the potential to enhance intergroup relations between hosts and immigrants. Remarkably, this phenomenon holds true across diverse narrative voices (both first- and third-person) and immigrant backgrounds (Moroccan/Ecuadorian in Spain, Syrian/Ukrainian in Hungary).

This heightened identification serves as a catalyst for a positive ripple effect, triggering a series of psychological responses that extend far beyond the individual. As predicted and supported by various theoretical frameworks (Park, 2012; Balliet et al., 2014), increased identification fosters a stronger connection with outgroup members. This, in turn, expands influence on a spectrum of psychological effects, ranging from simple gestures like sharing stories online to more substantial acts of support, such as distributing money or participating in volunteer work. Notably, the stability of these effects across different sociocultural landscapes underlies the potential of brief testimonials for improving intergroup relations (Park, 2012).

6.2 Ripple Effects: The Dynamics of Emotional and Cognitive Responses

Our experiments uncover important domino effects initiated by increased identification with the protagonist (see Igartua et al., 2023). This cascade involves three simultaneous paths: emotional reactions, cognitive investment, and counterarguing.

First, the framing of the testimonial directly influences recipients' emotions. The victimization narrative evokes appraisals related to injustice, leading to heightened anger and increased empathy (Snyder and Dwyer, 2013). Conversely, heroism, with its emphasis on overcoming difficulties and moral character, generates a sense of meaningful affect, fostering affiliative intentions and prosocial behavior (Algoe and Haidt, 2009; Stellar et al., 2017). Importantly, these effects are also found indirectly through an increased identification with the protagonist.

On the other hand, stronger identification with the protagonist affects how individuals process information from testimonials. It prompts deeper contemplation and reduced counterarguing, resembling a central (versus peripheral) route for involvement and persuasion (Petty et al., 2009; Slater and Rouner, 2002). Although counterarguing is considered a measure of

testimonial acceptance, our findings suggest that while it decreases with greater identification, it may not necessarily mediate the effects on attitudes and intentions to help.

6.3 Lack of Three-Way Interaction: Unveiling Nuances and Future Avenues

In acknowledging our study's limitations, it is essential to highlight the absence of effects related to narrative voice or group cues, both in direct and interaction effects. This intriguing finding challenges prevailing notions in narrative persuasion and calls for a more nuanced exploration of intergroup relations in the context of testimonial narratives.

In both experiments, we observed no group cue effects, suggesting a lack of perceived closeness between groups. This is particularly interesting given the differential attitudes towards immigrants from Morocco and Ecuador in Spain and the generally negative attitudes which Hungarians report towards immigrants in Hungary (e.g., Cea D'Ancona, 2007; Meuleman et al., 2009). The consistent absence of group cue effects warrants further investigation into the intricacies of intergroup relations and, at the same time, highlights the pervasiveness of the framing process.

Similarly, the lack of impact from narrative voice, despite its recognition as a relevant moderator in narrative persuasion, raises questions about its role in the context of testimonial narratives. This calls for a more fine-tuned exploration of hypotheses regarding intergroup relations and narrative voice, as the idiosyncrasies of this dynamic may require a more nuanced understanding.

6.4 Profiles of Recipients of Testimonial Narratives: Who is More Engaged?

Finally, person-oriented analysis revealed distinct classes of participants based on their psychological involvement with immigration testimonials, consisting in their identification with the protagonist of the story, the emotions they felt and the cognitive investment and the counterarguments they created (Valkenburg and Peter, 2013). Importantly, these groups were highly similar in the Spanish and in the Hungarian samples.

In specific, the "Low-involvement" group, displayed minimal identification, emotionality, and cognitive engagement. Conversely, the "Intense-involvement" group exhibited heightened identification, intense emotions, and deeper reflection. The "Moderate-involvement" group demonstrated average scores across psychological mechanisms.

Examining personal characteristics, we found consistent patterns across samples. Higher levels of modern racism correlated with lower narrative involvement, while increased intergroup contact (i.e., more frequency of contact with members of social minorities) fostered greater engagement. Political ideology influenced involvement in the Spanish sample, with right-leaning individuals exhibiting lower engagement.

Analyzing personality dimensions, the "Intense-involvement" group consistently demonstrated higher extraversion and openness. Additionally, increased involvement correlated with higher agreeableness and conscientiousness, especially in the Spanish sample. Surprisingly,

neuroticism showed no significant differences between involvement classes, challenging our expectations.

These final findings provide another layer of complexity in the study of reactions to testimonial narratives, emphasizing the role of modern racism, intergroup contact, political ideology, and personality traits in shaping individuals' responses to immigration testimonials. Additionally, and similarly as it is found in the evaluation of the model of effects (i.e., section 7), the patterns observed here are likely no statistical artifacts, as they replicate across diverse samples and analyses.

6.5 Implications of the research

In summary, the studies in this work package confirm the transformative potential of testimonial narratives in influencing intergroup relations. By framing immigration stories with themes of victimhood and heroism, as opposed to profiteering, a cascade of effects is set in motion. This cascade involves heightened identification, emotional and cognitive responses, and, ultimately, positive attitudes and intentions to help immigrants, and can be initiated by two different *routes*: a route marked by an empathetic response (i.e., victim testimonial), and another marked by the recognition of competence and prestige (i.e., hero testimonial).While this pattern holds across two different societies and after rigorous statistical controls, we also observe underlying psychological tendencies across those who more intensively react to testimonials.

Finally, we end up with a couple of remarks that shall contribute to improve co-existence between autochthonous people and migrants for different societal actors such as governmental and non-governmental institutions, educators, lawmakers or politicians. This research has shown the significant role of immigration-related testimonials as simple, yet powerful tools for fostering understanding and positive connections between communities and for reducing the gap between 'us' and 'them'. In particular, testimonials that promote diverse and inclusive narratives such as those of victims and heroes can be used to highlight common humanity in narrative messages. By championing storytelling that emphasizes the shared humanity of immigrants and focusing on their contributions and individual stories, it is possible to lay the groundwork for fostering cooperation, trust, and solidarity within host societies.

Finally, and as it is derived from the intergroup contact hypothesis, and further demonstrated through mediated forms, positive contact with the stories of immigrants can facilitate a fertile ground to deepen more stable, cooperative and inclusive relations among autochthonous and immigrants. We consider that this could be done through –for instance– programs in cultural education or with community events and forums that encourage understanding and collaboration across cultural lines. In all, these efforts would not only promote a society that values diversity but also build bridges, fostering a sense of community among citizens.

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