

SA9.00.12 Ethnic (In)Tolerance and Immigration

Understanding Public Attitudes toward Immigration Policy: Ideological Politics, Self-Interest, and Political Knowledge

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The issue of immigration has triggered variations in Americans' sentiments. American public opinion appears complex concerning attitudes toward illegal immigrants. While many studies have discussed the impacts of self-interest, ideological politics/political ideology, political knowledge and other determinants on public attitudes, there is little research trying to categorize and specify the roles of self-interest and ideological politics. In this study, we examine two distinct measures of objective and subjective self-interests, create measures of operational and symbolic political ideologies, and explore the main effects of political knowledge toward immigration attitudes. Through running six SEM models based on hypotheses, we find that objective and subjective self-interest show distinctive correlations with immigration attitudes, so do operational and symbolic ideology. These interesting findings suggest that the respondents' objective self-interest or operational political ideology could predict their immigration attitudes better than their subjective self-interest or symbolic political ideology could. In addition, using SEM models helps us to make clear the complicated relationship among measures of indicators. In doing so, this study extends current models and traces a theoretical and empirical path bridging the literature in political science and public opinion concerned with immigration.

Tolerance of Muslims in the US: Case Study of Attitudes Toward New Mosques in Chicago Area

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This research determines under what circumstances residents and local governments show tolerance toward Muslims and their activities, and under which conditions they refuse to welcome Muslims to their communities. As mosques are very visible symbols of Islam, they will serve as cases for this research. More specifically, this research looks at the process of building new mosques in Chicago suburbs. It is argued that integrated threat theory and contact theory are insufficient in predicting when new mosques will be contested, since they fail to acknowledge that prejudice does not equal intolerance, and because they fail to realize that it matters, whether contact is initiated, as opposed to accidental, by whom, and when it is initiated. The position of local government is determined by subculture, local institutions, intergovernmental institutions, and economic forces in neighborhoods, but also by the ability of local residents to mobilize either in support or opposition toward new mosques. Evidence supporting the arguments is drawn from semi-structured interviews with mayors, members of planning commissions, members of mosque communities, as well as regular residents. Surveys of a larger number of local residents, local government's documents, and newspapers are also valuable sources of information. Overall, this study will help to mitigate conflict among communities, and advise local governments on how to prevent conflicts regarding new mosques. This will prove crucial, considering that between 2000 and 2010 approximately 30 new mosques were established, more were established in the past five years, and several are waiting to be built.

Inter-Ethnic Experiences of Polish Immigrants in Neighborhoods of Small Towns and Large Cities in Spain

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The migration of Polish citizens to the EU countries and thus number of Poles living in the ethnically diverse environments skyrocketed after the year 2004. This set-up a stage for observation of inter-ethnic experiences of Poles previously living in the homogenous Polish towns and cities. Concomitantly, the European right wing parties discourse has sunken already low refugees acceptance rates and increased prejudice towards migrants and religious groups. In Poland, the mainstream politicians, including populist government, used the homogeneous structure of catholic society as one of the major excuses for not accepting the Middle Eastern and African refugees. That flabbergasted some commentators, since the phenomena of migration and exile are well known to Poles. On the other hand, the polls indicate that only a minority of Poles that oppose to refugees based on religion has ever met a Muslim. That in turn, leads to a conclusions that an intergroup contact, like the one that Poles migrating to the diverse societies experience, could possibly alter the negative opinions. This paper attempts to provide an insight into the matter through a comparative analysis of the interviews with Polish migrants, native and immigrant key informants as well as documental analysis related to the inter-ethnic experiences of Polish immigrants living in ethnically diverse neighborhoods of Spanish large city (Barcelona) and a small town (Castelló d'Empuries). The findings show that for Polish immigrants, the possibilities of inter-ethnic experiences are influenced by the "tyranny of micro-geography" as well as the infrastructural development. These obstacles intersect various urban settings and socio-economic statuses related to the place of work, residence, stage and style of life finally affecting opinions on other ethnic groups. Also, the inter-ethnic collaborations and conflicts experiences by Polish migrants are directly related to rifts and synergies rooted in the local economies.