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Ending the False Perception Decoding the Characteristics of Americans who Fear Immigrants' Impact on the Economy

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Introduction

Abstract & Review of Literature

This study investigates the characteristics and demographics of Americans who fear immigrants' impact on the U.S. economy- particularly nativism, economic pessimism, education, age, and fear of unemployment.

- Studies encourage the idea that immigrant stereotypes such as untrustworthiness and incompetence is closely tied to financial ability and status. (Lee and Fiske 2006).
- Despite negative associations, studies prove illegal immigrants are net positive contributors to the economy. And immigrants take the jobs rejected by native-born Americans, encouraging competition, technology transfer, and supply chains, all of which aid the economy (PPI, Wharton, 2018, Portes, 2018).

Nativist Fears

- Many inquiries suggest that increases in racial diversity cause fear and anxiety-driven backlash against immigrants. (Tolbert, Hero, 2001, Young, 2018, Citrin, Jack et al, 1997).

Economic Fear

The US's economic stability correlates with attitudes towards immigration restrictions. (Parker-Yancy et al, 2009)

- Further general economic fear and anxiety encourage unfavorable positions toward immigrants. (Citrin, Jack, et al, 1997)

Economic Knowledge in the US

In an economic understanding assessment, adults and students proved to lack clarity on important economic subjects. (Bagnaschi, Markow 2005)

Two economic assessments of the American public prove adult males with college degrees have the highest economic knowledge (Bagnaschi, Markow 2005, Blendon etc.,1997).

- Still, the data suggest significant knowledge gaps in US economic understandings.
- Also, the American public is more likely to be pessimistic about the economy than the reality. (Blendon etc.,1997).

These results suggest that particular demographics are more knowledgeable about the U.S. economy. Those with knowledge will be able to accurately assess immigrants' economic impact and hinder those who are less aware and educated.

Hypotheses and Methods

H1: Respondents who fear the loss of the white majority in the U.S. will agree that immigrants are a drain on the economy.

H2: Respondents who are pessimistic about the economy's future and fear economic collapse will agree that immigrants are a drain on the economy.

H3: Americans between 30 and 49 who have received some college education and are not fearful of unemployment are more likely to disagree that immigrants drain the economy.

The data in use is the Chapman Survey of American Fear, Wave 7, which is a representative national survey of American adults. All variables were run through cross tabs, statical correlation, and regression analysis in SPSS for analysis.

The first hypothesis is derived from the finding that racially driven fear generates adverse positions towards immigrants. The dependent variable is the level of agreement that immigrants are a drain on the economy. The independent variable is the fear of whites no longer being the majority in the U.S.

Hypothesis number two is generated from the notion that pessimism about economic stability and negative feelings towards economic aid correlate to an anti-immigration stance. The dependent variable is the agreement level that immigrants are a drain on the U.S. economy. The independent variable is fear regarding economic failure or collapse in the United States.

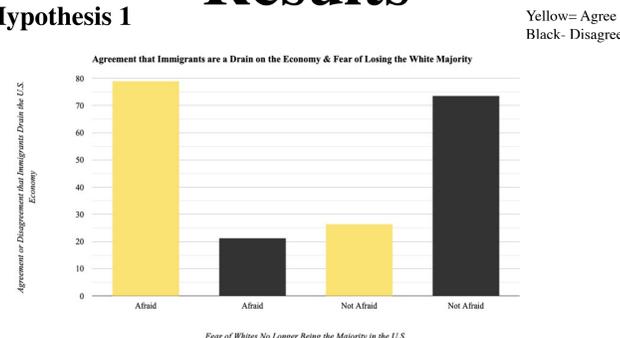
Hypothesis number three is created from a compound of demographic indicators that previous research has proven to encourage opposing stances towards immigrants and their economic impact. The dependent variable is the agreement that immigrants are a drain on the economy. The independent variables are age, education and fear of unemployment.

Acknowledgments

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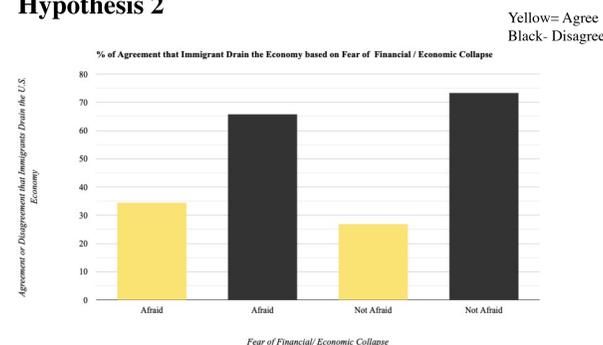
Results

Hypothesis 1



H1's correlation results show a statistically significant relationship of .000 (<.05 is significant). The results also show a moderate statistical strength of .433. The bar chart indicates that out of those who fear losing the white majority, 78.9% of them agree that immigrants are a drain on the economy. Also, people who are not afraid of losing the white majority in the U.S. have a 73.6% disagreement level with immigrants being a drain on the U.S. economy. Overall, the results indicate fear of losing the white majority is minimal in the U.S. with 92% claiming not afraid.

Hypothesis 2



H2's regression show a significant relationship that lacks strength. The bar chart proves that out of those who are unafraid of economic collapse 73.2% of them disagree that immigrants drain the U.S. economy. However, of those who feared economic collapse 65.7% of them also disagree that immigrants drain the economy. These results along with a statistical significance of .100 indicate no relationship. The results do however present that 55% of survey takers fear economic/financial collapse.

Hypothesis 3

Regression between Agreement that Immigrants Drain the Economy and Age, education and fear of unemployment.

Model	R	R Squared	Adjusted R Squared	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.426	.181	.111	.735

Model	Coefficient (B)	Stand. Coefficient (Beta)	Significant
Education	.297	-.143	.015
Age	.297	-.143	.393
How Afraid are you of being unemployed	-.096	-.149	.375

The adjusted R square of H3 is 11%. The model indicates that the only viable independent variable on the dependent variable is education level. A notable result was that those with a high school education had about a 50% chance of agreement. All other education levels have a higher percentage of disagree than agree.

Conclusions

Hypothesis 1

- The results indicate that those who feel threatened by the loss of the white majority are likely to place blame and have adverse opinions on immigrants. Racial backlash still hinders the perceptions immigrants must live with in the U.S. However, this correlated backlash is lessening, indicating a decrease in adversity towards diversity.

Hypothesis 2

- Hypothesis two proved no viable link between economic fear of financial collapse and adverse attitudes towards immigrants' impact on the U.S. economy. Contesting previous studies that link economic pessimism with opposition towards immigration.

Hypothesis 3

- The analysis of Hypothesis three indicated that education, age, and fear of unemployment are not viable indicators of agreement level that immigrants drain the U.S. economy. However, education does have a minor ability to predict agreement levels since most with a college education disagreed. This hypothesis indicates the importance of generating a hypothesis from clear correlation, not abstract connections such as economic knowledge and positions towards immigrants.

Next Steps...

Overall only fear of losing the white majority in the U.S. relates to the position on immigrants' economic impact. The next step is to unpack where racial fears are fostered and destabilize them. Whether they are born in schools, homes, or through media consumption, understanding their roots will alert educators and advocates where attention should be placed to end racial backlash and remove false narratives about immigrants draining the U.S. economy. As well as unpack and further explore how immigration driven diversity will impact the lives of immigrants and their families.

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