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Stereotyping Immigrants in the US

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<div align="center">**Introduction**</div>

America's current refugee and immigrant admission policy is both humane and relatively generous by the world's community standards. Many of us who have grown up here have this sense that the United States is a welcoming multicultural nation that is a beautiful mosaic of cultures and is relatively unprejudiced than much of the rest of the world. However, long-time residents unfamiliar with outsiders react differently to those from diverse ethnic groups, often forming generalizations associated with a group, which influences what we see, believe, and how we understand the world. Frequently, the topic of immigration is met with feelings of opposition and skepticism, with attitudes towards immigration revolving around a fear of economic and cultural threat (Sneiderman et al., 2004).

What is stereotyping?

Stereotypes are mental shortcuts that help us quickly understand a group or make assumptions about a group. They are widely used to generalize about groups of people's characteristics through the assignment of simple labels that purportedly represent group traits. It's essential to be aware of them because sometimes they're wrong. The issue with stereotypes is once we have them, we tend to confirm our stereotypes psychologically; we see the information that fits our stereotype and story and keeps it in the back of our mind, and information that does not include our stereotype we just throw away. Therefore, stereotypes alter intergroup communication because they lead people to base their preparation, transmission, and reception of false assumptions.

There can be different types of stereotypes: stereotypes of omissions and stereotypes of distortion. Sometimes we create stereotypes about groups because they are just merely not in the picture, so we have to come up with the story to justify that; this often happens to Native

American Indians. Sometimes, the stereotypes are created because caricatures or distorted images of people are portrayed, which is quite common and has historically occurred with African Americans; the hyper-sexualization of black women and the over-aggressive or assumption of violent black men are both prevalent stereotypes of this community. Although there can also be good stereotypes, it is vital to keep in mind that any stereotype that limits our understanding or clouds our ability to see somebody and their full humanity is not a good stereotype when applied generally without thinking and checking them out. The danger of stereotypes is that they are resistant to change and tend to intensify over time.

Immigration in the US: Who and Why

Before the Civil War starting in the 1830s, hundreds of thousands of European immigrants began coming to America. By the 1840s, the number grew to over one and a half million, and by the 1850s, the number of immigrants coming to America doubled. This first wave of immigration saw mostly German, Scandinavian, and Irish immigrants from northern and western Europe. Many Chinese immigrants also came. Immigrants came to America for several reasons, including push and pull factors. Push factors or reasons why they left their homeland, including trying to escape poverty and fleeing religious persecution or political turmoil that was taking place in their lands.

Pull Factors where reasons why immigrants were attracted to America specifically and were mainly economic. In America's growing economy, plenty of industrial and mining jobs were available to immigrants. Another major attraction to America was the availability of land. In 1862, the US Government passed the Homestead Act, which offered 160 acres of land to just about anyone who agreed to go out west and try to farm. From 1882 until 1914, over 20 million immigrants came to the United States in a second and most significant immigration wave. These

new immigrants tended to come mostly from Southern and Eastern European countries like Italy, Poland, and Russia. Asian immigrants came to America through the Angel Island immigration center in San Francisco. Most immigrants came through Ellis Island in New York City.

How immigration laws changed over the years

For the first 100 years or so, America did not have many restrictions on immigration. From 1798- 1882, there was an open-door policy for anyone who wanted to come to the U.S., and many immigrants, including German, Irish, and Chinese workers, went to the U.S. to search for jobs and gold. In 1882, however, the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed, which was the first significant legislation to restrict a specific ethnic group's immigration into the U.S. When Eastern European immigrants started pouring into Ellis Island, politicians passed the Immigration Act of 1924, which restricted immigration based on nationality.

In all its parts, the most basic purpose of the 1924 Immigration Act was to preserve the ideal of U.S. homogeneity. In 1965, pushed by the civil rights movement, Lyndon B Johnson ended many racial discrimination and immigration restrictions, and the U.S. became an open country again. Past policies lay the groundwork for the anti-immigration orders we see today. What began as an effort to secure the border by President Clinton turned into a mass deportation system under President Bush, which was then expanded by President Obama, who deported more than 2.5 million people, and further solidified under President Trump.

Anti-immigration views

Everyone in America did not welcome immigrants. During both periods of immigration, there were strong anti-immigrant feelings known as Nativism. Nativists were hostile towards immigrants for several reasons. One was the belief that the influx of large numbers of immigrant workers was taking jobs from the Americas and keeping wages low. Some residents were also

anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic at a time when many European immigrants were from predominantly Catholic countries or were Jewish people fleeing persecution in their homelands. Still, others in America feared that poor immigrants brought with them deadly diseases such as tuberculosis. Some Americans believed that immigrants would not assimilate into American society, and many immigrants would dilute the American way of life. Whatever the reasons, nativists tried to prevent or limit immigration. In the 1850s, the American Party, also called the "Know-Nothing" party, attracted nativists and tried to prevent Catholics and immigrants from voting, holding office, or being hired.

Factors that affect stereotyping

Socioeconomic Status and Education Level

Native citizens' prejudice is rooted in economic fears, as well as insecurity. Those with higher education favor increased immigration levels, but not necessarily those with high income. Poor citizens feel more threatened by immigration because of competition with low-skill immigrants in the labor market. Stereotyping and hostility towards immigrants resulted from competitive pressure put on natives by the presence of cheap immigrant labor. Low-skilled and uneducated whites have been found to express the most virulent racism because of the glut of unskilled immigrants and black workers alleged to be ready to take their jobs. High-income residents may feel that they benefit from the deflationary effect that immigration has on wages; with a significant influx of cheap labor, managers and corporate executives can increase profitability by hiring a workforce consisting of low-skill natives and immigrants.

Higher education level has been associated with increased support for immigration (Espenshade and Calhoun, 1993). A high level of schooling indicates increased exposure to newer immigrants and an appreciation of immigrants' cultural diversity (Oneil and tined 2010).

Because the influx of immigrants is unlikely to impact the wealthy and well-educated in the labor market, these individuals may harbor warmer and more welcoming attitudes toward immigrants than if they were at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder.

Political Orientation

An explanation for why native populations express negative views towards immigrants is that they threaten the social position and control over the native-born's valued resources immigrants' such as housing, jobs, and political power (Blumer 1958). Democrats may favor immigration for cultural diversity, but labor-oriented Democrats may believe immigrants take away jobs from native-born Americans. This leads to the native population excluding the newcomers from access to these resources and to generate negative stereotypes of the target group to justify that exclusion. Republicans may wish to limit immigration for perceived adverse effects on American culture, but business-oriented Republicans may appreciate the low-cost labor associated with low-skill immigration.

Urban Residence

Familiarity breeds not contempt but friendship. City dwellers are more positive towards immigrants than suburban or rural citizens because of greater exposure to cultural diversity in cities or from the tendency of urban residents to seek out such variety in deciding where to live. Suburban and rural residents have little to no exposure to immigrants and low levels of diversity; for these residents, stereotypes evolve out of fear of people from groups that differ from one's own. People who dress differently, speak another language, practice unfamiliar religions and traditions can quickly become targets of suspicion and scorn.

Personality Traits

Those who have an openness to experience have a high tolerance, a more calm, curious nature, and an attraction to alternative ideas and people, which would be more favorable toward immigration. People low on openness cherish unambiguous moral prescripts and traditional norms for how the world should operate and are therefore more sensitive to threats to the existing social order, including out-groups (Sibly and Duckitt, 2008, p.252). Those who are high on agreeableness have tolerance toward newcomers and are sympathetic, trusting, and hold prosocial orientations towards other people, making them less strict regarding immigration. People low on Agreeableness are more skeptical of immigration and see it as an influx of potential competitors for scarce resources. Highly conscientious people have a high preference for order and dependability and may fear that increased immigration will undermine the existing social order. They are more likely to see immigrants with low skills and foreign culture as a potential threat to their country's national culture and economic well-being.

Research

A poll conducted in Ohio revealed stereotypes held by native residents about immigrants (Timberlake and Williams, 2012). The poll aimed to elicit public opinion regarding four immigrants: Asian, Middle Eastern, Latin American, and European. Three countries were picked for each group for reference-- one that might elicit a favorable reaction, produce a natural response and evoke an adverse reaction. The five qualities tested in this poll were wealth, intelligence, violence, self-supporting, and assimilation.

Stereotypes of Asian immigrants

When asked about Japanese, Korean, and Chinese immigrants, the pollsters responded that they believed Asians were intelligent, self-supporting, nonviolent, and relatively wealthy. This contrasts with views held against Japanese immigrants in the World War II-era when a law prohibiting Japanese immigration had passed. During this time, the Japanese were seen as unassimilable, warlike, un-American, sly, and competitive due to anti-Asian propaganda (Timberlake and Williams, 2012). As the immigration stream continues to rise, the ones who are dominating right now are Hispanics and Asian immigrants. In a New York Times article, Asian students talk about confronting certain stereotypes being done, "It is also important to acknowledge that stereotypes of Asians can also vary by national origin. The 2016 Post-Election National Asian-American Survey shows that South Asians and Southeast Asians are less likely to be perceived as intelligent when compared with East Asians, and we know from reports of hate crimes and qualitative studies of the Asian-American population that South Asians are more likely to fall victim to stereotypes about terrorism. These stereotypes about South Asians stem from news coverage and entertainment depictions. Now, these stereotypes might have no bearing on college admissions, but they certainly play a role in how different Asian-American groups experience discrimination in society" (Green, 1998).

Stereotypes of Middle Eastern immigrants

The same poll revealed that Americans viewed immigrants from Middle Eastern countries, such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, as wealthy, self-supporting, intelligent, and violent and unable to fit in with Americans (Timberlake and Williams, 2012). Stereotyping culture has looked at Middle Easterners as villains or troublemakers. The September 11th attack is one of the instances that has intensified this stereotype. They were portrayed as bloodthirsty

and ruthless. There were cartoons made about Middle Easterners in the media; these cartoons were found disrespectful by Muslims. Now, Americans depict Middle Easterners as people who fight the non-believers of the world. This poses an issue for anyone who is from the Middle East and lives in the United States. They are harassed continuously because of how the media and fellow Americans tarnished their name and religious beliefs.

Stereotypes of Latin American immigrants

Immigrants from Latin American countries, such as Cuba, Brazil, and Mexico, were substantially more impoverished than the other three groups. They were also rated as less intelligent, more likely to receive government assistance, more violent, and unable to assimilate to American culture (Timberlake and Williams, 2012). This topic, or more specifically, stereotype towards Latin Americans, is funny. For example, when you ask someone for their opinion on a Latina, they respond, "They are fiery, ill-tempered, wear revealing clothing, come from huge families, have numerous kids at a young age, only work as maids or housekeepers, only speak Spanish or Spanglish, and are from Mexico."

Stereotypes of African immigrants

In the 1930s, African immigrants were seen as superstitious, lazy, and happy go lucky by whites. Around the 1950s, these same immigrants fought aside whites in the war and played an essential part in the war industry, therefore entertainment and communication media discouraged traditional patterns of stereotyping (Maykovich, 1972). Africans are one of the fastest-growing groups of immigrants in the United States. As the number has grown, so have the stereotypes and the way the law has been treating them. Sambo, Jim Crow, and several others created attitudes of African Americans, and these are still around. Black men are looked at as defiant and violent.

How the media affects immigrant stereotypes

Television has been guilty of providing distorted images of many ethnic groups. Americans are exposed to unauthorized immigrants' undesirable characteristics via the media, with videos of immigrants crossing the border and then engaging in criminal activity in the U.S, which creates an image that all immigrants are involved in illegal cultural standards activities. In other words, a series of isolated behaviors by a few members of a group unfairly engenders a generalized perception that is applied to all members of the group by association. The media is also a source of information about ethnic groups, from coverage of Black and Latino criminals to stories about the use of welfare and social security benefits by immigrants. This negative association translates ambivalence toward immigrants into negative emotions. Immigrants' association with welfare use and negative racial stereotypes promotes hostility among citizens and immigrants (Iguarta, 2013).

Public stereotypes of immigrants depend profoundly on both the stereotype's content and the immigrants' origin in question. A dominant group usually establishes social norms to which the rest of society conform; the negro as a member of American society tends to adopt the norms of that society, including its prejudice and negative stereotypes assigned to him (Rose, 1949). So grave is the prevailing social pressure exerted by the dominant group and media that members of minority groups tend to look at themselves and others through the same lens as the dominant group. This is referred to as the mirror-image effect, or the minority absorption of prevailing emotion shave views.

How stereotyping may lead to prejudice and discrimination

If left unchecked, stereotypes can lead to prejudice and discrimination. Prejudices are deeply held negative feelings associated with a particular group, including feelings of anger, fear,

aversion, and anxiety. The negative feelings and attitudes held by those who hold a prejudicial

perspective are often exhibited using group labels, hostile humor, or speech that alleges the

superiority of one group over another. Prejudice can be expressed through anti locution, which

involves talking about a member of the target group in negative and stereotypical terms, such as,

"all Muslims are terrorists." People may also act out prejudice through avoidance, avoiding or

withdrawing from contact with the disliked group. Bias may lead to discrimination, where the

prejudiced person will attempt to exclude all members of the target group from access to jobs,

housing, political rights, education, and other serviced. Finally, discrimination may,

unfortunately, lead to physical harm of the target groups or even extermination.

Stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination in current events

Black Lives Matter was a vast movement that had swept the Americans by surprise after

the murder of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. This movement was a way for black people to

use their voice by doing a peaceful protest that later turned into lootings. The media repeatedly

struck an eye on the minimal damages done to the business to prevail the protestors in the wrong

light. This protest helped George Floyd's family get justice, but this brought out a lot of

discrimination. Police officers were shooting rubber bullets and throwing tear gas at protestors.

However, these same officers did not have that reaction to white protestors who were protesting

about not being able to go to places due to COVID-19. This shows how cops react to people of

different races differently. It is unfair how black people protested for a man who died by the

police's hands, and he was not even resisting, yet they were arrested, tear-gassed, and shot at.

<center>**Conclusion**</center>

It is quite evident that the United States is one of the most culturally diverse places on the map.

So many people come here for a better life and some even seek refuge. Even though there are

plenty of opportunities in the United States, many people who come here faced with

discrimination and stereotyping. Stereotyping is something that has continuously played a

recurrence in the U.S.; the media has influenced it along with people. Many people are faced

with disrespect of their religion and looked at as violent or lazy. It is important to keep in mind

that stereotypes limit our understanding and by making pre-judgements based on these

stereotypes, we may be invoked to act on these thoughts and end up harming the individual or a

group of people, like immigrants. Peace starts with a strong anti-discrimination and anti-

stereotype policy. We must learn to appreciate and welcome each other's differences so that

America can be a safe and welcoming country for all.

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