

Anti-immigrant and -refugee Sentiments and Institutional Responses in the Post-9/11 European Union



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2:00 - 3:30 pm

W113 Seashore Hall

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Despite claims of rising anti-immigrant and refugee sentiments in Europe, there is very little evidence of whether “immigrants” and “refugees” are two distinct analytical categories. Often, public opinion research and survey questions conflate the two, not establishing clear distinctions for example, between public support towards preferred policies towards these distinctive constituencies or decisions regarding immigration versus refugees control. Moreover, the literature demonstrates that economic protectionism is a driving force of anti-immigrant sentiments and the rising levels of populist movements and ultra-right wing politics. But the economic competition theory however does not distinguish between whether these threats are equally directed to refugees or immigrants. This study examines whether in addition to economic considerations, the securitization of migration (that assumes the link between crime and rising levels of immigration) and the role of personhood and humanitarian rights justifies the analytical distinction between ‘immigrants’ and ‘refugees’ when studying public opinion. The leading question driving this paper is, do the same predictors of anti-immigrant sentiment apply when examining anti-refugee sentiment? Do institutional responses play a role in explaining these differences? Using two waves of the European Social Survey from 15 European countries for the period from 2002/3 through 2014/15, data from UNHCR and multivariate techniques, we estimate several models comparing individual level predictors of anti-immigrant and refugee sentiments. The findings clearly show that a robust model explaining anti-immigrant sentiment does not equally explain anti-refugee sentiment. These findings are further contextualized in the current Syrian European refugee crisis and take into consideration the variation of institutional responses across countries of destination since 9/11. The implications of these findings are further discussed for the theoretical advancement of the field of public opinion research and cross-national institutional variation.

This talk is part of the **Inequality Seminar** which is a seminar and speaker series that provides a forum on campus for faculty and graduate students who are interested in inequality broadly defined. It is an opportunity for faculty and graduate students to present their research and to hear about other inequality-related work from researchers on the off-campus. These talks are free and open to the public. For more information about the Inequality Seminar, contact Professor Sarah Bruch at sarah-bruch@uiowa.edu.

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