



### Background

Immigration and how it affects Americans and how Americans view and treat immigrants are leading topics in today's media. The word "immigration" has become a living, breathing being of its own that incorporates both how Americans treat immigrants and how they view immigration. Studies reveal that Americans have mixed views on the impact that immigrants have on American jobs, wages and public service costs. However, relatively little research has examined relationships between how views held by Americans on certain societal aspects could impact attitudes held by Americans toward immigrants.

The current study explored the relationships between Americans' views on various aspects of American society and the impact of those views, if any, on attitudes towards immigrants. For purposes of this study, the term "American" was defined as people born in the United States regardless of racial/ethnic origin or background. It was hypothesized that ratings by Americans on cultural aspects of American society would exhibit a positive relationship to the views of Americans towards immigrants.

**Table 1**

*Attitudes toward Immigrants based on Gender and Treatment of the Poor*

Treatment of Poor	Gender	M	SD
Poor	Male	82.57	7.59
	Female	84.17	7.12
Fair	Male	102.50	0.71
	Female	89.26	9.73
Good	Male	90.67	6.47
	Female	91.64	10.19
Very Good	Male	85.80	7.89
	Female	91.80	6.83
Excellent	Male	83.00	0.00
	Female	106.00	18.36

# Cultural Aspects of American Society and Attitudes Toward Immigrants

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### Methodology

#### Participants

The majority of participants (70.2%, n = 73) were between ages of 18 and 23. Participants were majorly white, coming from Anglo-European backgrounds (85.6%, n = 89). Additionally, 20.2% of participants were male and of 79.8% were female.

#### Measures

Participants answered a demographic questionnaire along with a Views of America questionnaire where they rated America on certain aspects of society such as "Women's legal rights" and "Treatment of the poor." Response options ranged from 1 (*excellent*) to 5 (*poor*). Participants also answered a Views of immigration questionnaire. An example item is "immigrants are a burden to the country." Response options ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The items were summed to derive at a total score that was used in analysis. Cronbachs' alpha for the scale was .77.

#### Procedure

Participants were recruited through psychology courses at a Midwestern public university and received either research credit or class extra credit for participation. All participants read and completed an informed consent letter prior to completing online questionnaires.

**Table 2**

*Attitudes toward Immigrants based on Views of Women's Rights*

Women's Rights	M	SD
Poor	79.25	3.59
Fair	86.11	7.04
Good	88.56	11.30
Very Good	90.81	6.89
Excellent	90.94	13.36



### Results

The current study conducted a series of two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine if there were significant differences in attitudes toward immigration based on participants' gender and view of women's rights in America and America's treatment of the poor. Results indicated that participants view of America's treatment of the poor was significant for attitudes toward immigrants,  $F(5, 99) = 3.52, p = .006$ . Results also indicated a marginally significant interaction effect of participant gender and view of America's treatment of the poor for attitudes toward immigrants,  $F(4, 99) = 2.36, p = .057$  (See table 1). Results also indicated participants views of women's rights in America significantly impacted their views toward immigration,  $F(5, 99) = 2.27, p = .05$ . There was no interaction between views of women's rights and gender for immigration attitudes,  $F(3, 99) = .26, p = .85$  (See Table 2).

### Discussion

The hypothesis of the current study was supported in that results demonstrated a positive correlation between views held on women's rights and treatment of the poor and attitudes toward immigrants. Overall, participants who rated America high on women's rights and those who rated America high on the treatment of the poor held more positive attitudes toward immigrants. Results also revealed a gender effect between participants' ratings toward immigrants and ratings on treatment of the poor with more favorable ratings by women than men on both. No gender effect for America's ratings of women's rights and attitudes toward immigrants.

This research and other research to follow will contribute to the ability to predict attitudes toward immigrants held by Americans as well as help researchers understand the factors underlying those attitudes. This should help policy makers frame better laws and policies regarding immigrants and immigration.