

Economic Inequality and Hostility toward Immigrants

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Why Are Western Anti-Immigration Views Growing?

Economic competition

- Generally weak support
- Possible role for economic change

Multiculturalism

- Dominates individual economic effects
- Sociotropic threat is critical factor

Conditional economic effect

- Local economic competition shapes sociotropic threat
- Unemployment and immigration share shape radical right vote

Theoretical Summary



Purpose

- Economic factors shaping threat perception
- Clear, testable mechanism

Inequality Effect



- Higher inequality \Rightarrow more status differences
- Lower status \Rightarrow more powerlessness
- Less control \Rightarrow more aversion to change
- If enough immigration \Rightarrow threat to social order

Threat Effect



- Cultural or economic sociotropic threat perceptions reduce support for immigration

Hypotheses

H1: *Greater economic inequality should increase socioeconomic threat among lower status individuals*

H2: *Greater economic inequality should increase opposition to immigration among lower status individuals*

- Inequality conditions reaction to immigration
- Only for high inequality should immigration levels produce backlash

Observational Analysis

Cross-national surveys:

- ESS (7 waves: 2002-2014)
 - 226,691 citizens, 29 countries, 146 country-waves

Perceived immigration threat:

- Perception of harm caused by immigration to country's (i) economy, (ii) cultural life, (iii) standard of living (11 options each)

Anti-immigration attitude:

- Opposition to immigrants from (i) same ethnic/racial group as majority, (ii) other ethnic/racial group, (iii) poorer country outside Europe

Observational Predictors

Inequality:

- Disposable Income Inequality
 - Standardized World Income Inequality Database (Solt, 2009)
 - World Bank, OECD - change and level

Status:

- Income: Poor, middle, rich
- Education: No H.S., completed H.S., college (some or more)
- Occupation: Unskilled, skilled, associate professional, professional
- Also: Unemployed, employment insecurity index

Aggregate:

- 1) Foreign born; 2) GDP Growth; 3) Government consumption; 4) Post-industrial employment; 5) Gross enrollment rates tertiary education
- Trade openness; Unionization rate; Government social spending; Skill specificity; Occupational unemployment rates

Random Intercept Model on Threat Perception, ESS

	Immigration Threat	Immigration Threat
College	-0.040 (0.011)*	-0.040 (0.011)*
No H.S.	0.024 (0.010)*	0.024 (0.010)*
Professional	-0.015 (0.007)*	-0.015 (0.006)*
Skilled	0.026 (0.008)*	0.026 (0.008)*
Unskilled	0.028 (0.010)*	0.028 (0.009)*
Rich	-0.015 (0.006)*	-0.015 (0.006)*
Poor	0.018 (0.005)*	0.018 (0.005)*
Unemployed	0.011 (0.007)	0.011 (0.007)
Employment insecurity	0.017 (0.008)*	0.017 (0.008)*
Inequality	0.011 (0.004)*	0.007 (0.003)*
Inequality*Foreign Born		0.003 (0.001)*
Foreign Born	-0.005 (0.003)	-0.004 (0.003)
Post-Industrial	-0.003 (0.004)	-0.003 (0.005)
GDP Growth	0.000 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.002)
Government Consumption	0.000 (0.004)	-0.001 (0.004)
Tertiary Enrollment	-0.001 (0.003)	-0.000 (0.003)

$p < 0.05$. ESS 2002-2014 data. All models contain additional individual-level controls. SEs in parenthesis.

Random Intercept Model on Anti-Immigration Attitudes

	Anti-Immi.	Ethnocentrism
College	-0.041 (0.011)*	-0.022 (0.008)*
No H.S.	0.024 (0.010)*	0.014 (0.006)*
Prof.	-0.019 (0.009)*	0.001 (0.004)
Skilled	0.036 (0.011)*	0.006 (0.003)*
Unskilled	0.039 (0.012)*	0.020 (0.004)*
Rich	-0.009 (0.004)*	0.003 (0.005)
Poor	0.014 (0.005)*	0.018 (0.004)*
Unemployed	0.006 (0.005)	0.013 (0.004)*
Employment insecurity	0.008 (0.006)	-0.018 (0.006)*
Inequality	0.008 (0.003)*	0.003 (0.001)*
Ineq.*Foreign Born	0.001 (0.000)*	0.000 (0.001)
Foreign Born	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.004 (0.002)*
Survey	ESS	WVS

$p < 0.05$. Models contain additional level 1 & 2 controls. SEs in parenthesis.

Survey Experiment in Sweden

Why Sweden?

- Inequality and anti-immigration views have grown massively
- Summer of 2015

Panel Data

- Two-wave online survey experiment using SSI
 - N=997, 2x2 Factorial Design
- Exposure to economic inequality
- Vary intensity of inequality threat

Experimental Conditions

Control: Baseline

Article Selection Only: Primes inequality (minimal threat)

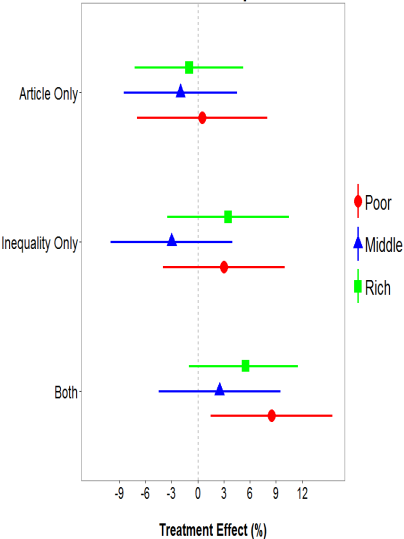
Inequality Info Only: Informs about inequality (moderate threat)

Inequality and Articles: Greatest exposure to inequality (strong threat)

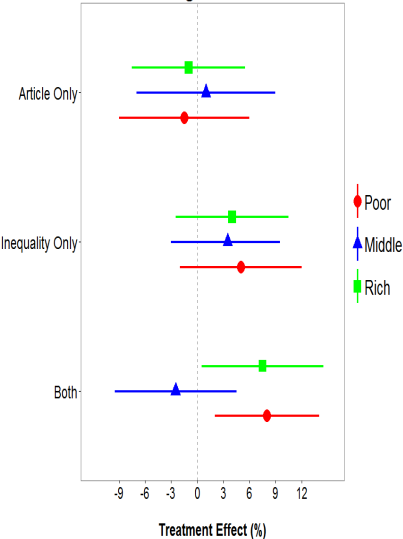
- Deeper processing
- Higher concern with inequality

Inequality Shapes Threat and Immigration Hostility

Threat Perception



Anti-Immigration Attitudes



Additional Evidence

Mediational evidence

- Personal control seemingly mediates effect on threat
 - 48% proportion mediated, ACME = $p < 0.05$, ADE = $p < 0.6$
- No evidence for perception of inequality or self-rank

Unsupported mechanisms

- 1) Employment insecurity; 2) Expected mobility; 3) Welfare cheating; 4) Nationalism; 5) Crime

Summary

Inequality effect is supported

- Inequality shapes sociotropic threat
- Inequality shapes immigration attitudes
- Lower status show strongest effect

Consistent mediation evidence

- Feelings of personal control seemingly mediate between inequality and threat

Alternative explanations find little support

- Material self-interest or identity
- Not learning, perhaps salience/prime

Thank You

Swedish Survey Experiment

Wave 1	Wave 2
6/23/15 - 7/02/15	7/02/15 - 7/16/15
N= 1,386	N= 998
SSI panelist, age 18+	Completed Wave 1
<u>Measures:</u>	<u>Measures:</u>
Demographics	Perceptions
Dispositions	Attitudes
Perceptions	Policy Preferences
Attitudes	<u>Experimental Conditions:</u>
	Control
	Article Selection Only
	Inequality Info Only
	Inequality and Articles

Note: Individual subjects that completed wave 1 were only invited to take wave 2 a full week later. Experimental treatments were always provided first in wave 2. 1,089 subjects started wave 2, such that the re-contact rate was 79%. Only members of SSI's Swedish web panel were invited to participate, and the surveys were conducted in Swedish.

Model and Measures

The Model:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_t I_t + \epsilon_i, t = 1, 2, 3$$

$$\hat{\beta}_t = Y_t - Y_0$$

Main Measures:

- Personal-control
 - 1) Have control over life; 2) Make own destiny vs. Life determined by fate
- Sociotropic threat perception
 - 1) Immigration good/bad for economy; 2) Immigration enriches/undermines cultural life; 3) Multiculturalism positive
- Anti-immigrant sentiment
 - 1) Receive fewer refugees; 2) Too many immigrants
- Income and Education Dummies

Articles I

Pro-Meritocracy

\The Value of Hard Work and Talent: How a Few Late Nights and Creativity Are Invaluable for Success in the Business World"

\Economic Fairness, for Good or Bad. While Many Achieve Success Despite Starting at the Bottom, Others Start at the Top but Lose Everything"

Anti-Meritocracy

\The Importance of Privilege: How Connections and Background Determine Success in Today's Sweden"

\The Myth of Economic Fairness. Low Economic Mobility Suggests That Hard Work Is Not the Key to Success"

Self-Irrelevant Articles

\Unequal Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in Sweden"

\The Powerful Few. How a Select Group of Influential Elites Shape the Media Industry"

Articles II

Inequality Facts

\Ethnic Inequality? How Economic Success and Mobility Compares Across Immigrants and Swedes"

\Economic Inequality in Sweden. Comparing Recent Changes in Inequality to Historical Patterns"

\Good and Bad Inequality. What We Know and Don't Know about the Consequences of Economic Inequality"

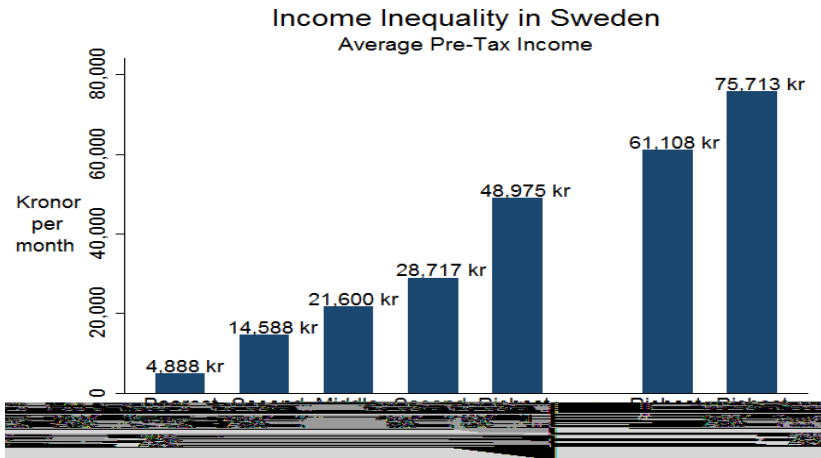
Directional Articles

\Sweden's New Aristocracy. Who Exactly Are Part of the Economic Elite and Where Did They Come From?"

\The Many Sides of Poverty in Sweden. Who Is at Risk of Ending up Poor?"

\Who Is Middle Class? What It Means to Be Middle Class in Today's Sweden"

Inequality Information Treatment



Source: Statistics Sweden, data from 2013. Numbers based on any kind of income from labor, business, capital, and pensions, as well as all taxable government transfers (e.g., social insurance, or unemployment benefits). Per person, before taxes.

Experimental Results

- Fairly representative sample
 - No difference on age, region, vote choice
 - Somewhat poorer, less immigrant, more educated, and more female
- Balanced conditions
- Somewhat imbalanced attrition
 - Robust to inverse propensity weights
 - Conditional on starting survey 2, only age predicts missinging