

THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND POLITICAL AWARENESS ON INDIVIDUAL ACCEPTANCE OF MULTICULTURALISM

ABSTRACT

We live in a world where diversity is increasingly being valued. Academics and practitioners are both interested in understanding factors that drive diversity. This study investigates one important aspect of diversity - cultural diversity - and focuses on finding what drives people to accept a multicultural society. The theory is tested by using data from the LISS Panel dataset constructed from surveys conducted in the Netherlands. Linear regression using SPSS and R was conducted to test the theory. The results show that liberal political ideology and political awareness positively influence the acceptance of multiculturalism. The results have academic and practical implications. One, it highlights to scholars the value of political awareness which can stimulate further research on this important concept. Second, the study shows that good policymaking on multiculturalism and its eventual acceptance will require an equitable mix of liberal and conservative ideologists. Both researchers and practitioners can focus on how to better achieve this mix.

Keywords—Conservative, multiculturalism, liberal, political ideology, political awareness.

I. INTRODUCTION

This study investigates how political ideologies and political awareness influence the acceptance of multiculturalism. Understanding the relationship between political ideology, political awareness, and multiculturalism are very important in our society.

Multiculturalism is important for all groups as a basis for understanding the changes coming to our society. The concept of multiculturalism represents a new orientation toward the future society. According to Rosado, multiculturalism is defined as “a system of beliefs and behaviors that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an

inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organization or society” [1, p. 3].

Given that multiculturalism is a cornerstone of modern society, finding its antecedents is crucial to address issues of multiculturalism and to leverage it to ensure the social and economic development of the country. This study contributes by finding two important factors to multiculturalism: political awareness and political ideology. After a review of several studies of multiculturalism, it is perceived that there is a gap in our understanding of the relationship between political awareness and ideology, and multiculturalism. There are few empirical studies that directly address these relationships. Understanding that relationship is crucial to forward multiculturalism, and leverage its benefits, especially from a policy and governmental perspective. This study investigates the following research question. **Research question: What is the influence of individual political ideology and individual political awareness on individual acceptance of multiculturalism?** It proceeds as follows. The next section discusses what we mean by political ideologies. The relation between political ideologies and the acceptance of multiculturalism is also discussed. Following the conceptual review, the theoretical model is presented and hypothesized. The paper ends with the contributions and future implications of this research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Individual Political Ideology

Ideological differences are crucial drivers of people’s views about multiculturalism. People’s level of worry about multiculturalism matters and how much people worry about multiculturalism is often determined by which political ideology they subscribe to. Political ideology is defined in political science and psychology as an interconnected set of political and moral attitudes with cognitive, affective, and motivational components [2]. Ideology can help explain why.

People act in accordance with their political orientation [3]. Previous research has looked at political orientation as a predictor of consumers' environmentally sustainable behaviors or preferences for more sustainable companies and products [4] as well as tourism decisions [5]. The definition of political ideology which is offered by Erikson and Tedin [6] is a "set of beliefs about the proper order of society and how it can be achieved". Campbell also mentioned the same definition of political ideology [7]. Denzau and North [8, p. 1] suggest something similar, except that they also highlight the role of social groups or collectivities where "ideologies are the shared framework of mental models that groups of individuals possess that provide both an interpretation of the environment and a prescription as to how that environment should be structured". Philosophers and social scientists have lots of disagreements about describing and analyzing ideologies. They often adopted a "value-neutral posture" [9]. Previously, critical tradition descends from the literature of Marx and Engels [10], who observed ideology (in contrast to science) "as a potentially dangerous form of illusion and mystification that typically serves to conceal and maintain exploitative social relations"[11, p. 309]. Along these lines, [12, p. 55] portrayed certain ideologies as "more or less conscious disguises of the real nature of a situation". However, Habermas [13, p. 90] treated ideology as a form of "systematically distorted communication," and this description remains common in certain circles of social academics. Empirical research in sociology, psychology, and political science reflects an apparently value-neutral conception, according to which "ideology" refers generally to any belief system. According to some scholars, any "configuration of ideas and attitudes in which the elements are bound together by some form of constraint or functional interdependence" [14, p. 206]. In this tradition, ideology is treated as a "relatively benign organizing device" [9, p. 622], and its cognitive function of structuring political knowledge and expertise is emphasized [15][16].

Individual acceptance on Multiculturalism

Acceptance of Multiculturalism is a system of interrelated parts of "beliefs and behaviors," "recognizes and respects," "acknowledges and values," "encourages and enables," and the fifth one, "empowers" [1][1].

There are some major characteristics of multiculturalism. The first is recognizing that multiculturalism is a prominent issue today. Respect should arise with recognition. Respect means "treating people the way they want to be treated" [1, p. 3]. Respect and recognition are two different things. Recognizing someone does not necessarily mean that we respect them also. Acknowledging the validity of cultural expressions and contributions of the different groups is also another concept of multiculturalism [1]. Multiculturalism means respecting what people have to offer, and not rejecting it because it is different from what most people regard as important. Another important definition of multiculturalism is the inclusiveness of cultural context [17]. Many people refuse to go along with an inclusive approach to society. Fear of multiculturalism will bring in the "foreign" concepts. We have to understand that United States has been always a multicultural society, whether we admit it or not [1]. Multiculturalism is a "pervasive force in modern society that acknowledges the complexity of culture" [18, p. 6]. The political accommodation of minorities is also multiculturalism [19]. Multiculturalism "consists of the assertion of normative principles that affirm the value of such cultural diversity in terms of equality between groups, and the realization of these values in institutions and policies" [20, p. 116][21].

Individual Political awareness

Substantial differences in opinions about politics are defined as political awareness. The differences could be based on ideological stability and temporal stability of opinions [22]. According to Zaller, political awareness means "the extent to which an individual pays attention to politics and understands what he or she has encountered" [23, p. 21]. Paul Goren defined political awareness which is noticeably influenced by Zaller that

political awareness signified “intellectual or cognitive engagement with public affairs, as an involvement that is indicated by factual information about government that has gotten into people’s minds” [24, p 509]. According to cognitive psychology, political awareness could be represented as a mental model of politics [25]. People mostly understood political awareness as an important strength, which determines people’s engagement with politics and how political awareness might be a key strength, which determines participation and active citizenship [26]. Political awareness refers to the exchange of political messages between human beings (individual or collective) [27]. Mostly we understand political awareness as an important strength, which determines people’s engagement with politics and how political awareness might be a key strength, which determines participation and active citizenship [26]. This is because political awareness ultimately shapes commitment with political affairs, thereby stimulating political understanding and action [26]. Another type of conceptualization about political awareness has been described as “patterns of thought” which are reductions of the political and systemic complexity that stands out as first and foremost democracy [28, p. 4]. ‘Patterns’ could refer to ‘behavioral patterns,’ such as watching the news, reading newspapers, and attending meetings. On the other hand, ‘patterns of thought’ may be how people think about public affairs (ibid).

Proposed model and hypothesis

This section develops the theoretical model and proposes the hypotheses. In the sub-section, the specific political ideology and political awareness is discussed, and it is argued as to why liberal political ideology and political awareness will positively affect multiculturalism. The explanation leverages two differences between liberals and conservatives, namely future time orientation and knowledge about multiculturalism. Future time orientation is “the extent to which individuals consider the potential distant outcomes of their current behaviors and the extent to which they are influenced by these

potential outcomes” [29, p. 125], [30]. Liberals have a high level of future time orientation [31]. Given that liberals are more willing to build an individualized moral foundation based on their inner feelings [32], their actions factor in future impacts on other humans with respect to rights and welfare [33]. Due to placing greater salience on future time orientation, liberals tend to protect others from potential harm and being mistreated, even if it is in the distant future [34]. Given that multiculturalism has the potential to affect other people, liberals are likely view multiculturalism in a positive manner as it aligns with their pursuit for social justice for future generations [35]. Therefore, we can conclude, liberals have a high future time orientation, and care about the future rights and welfare of human beings. Thus, liberals have pro-societal attitudes and behaviors as the social structure is likely to affect people in the future. In contrast to the liberals, conservatives place greater salience on past time orientation. [31]. People who are focused more on the past place less importance on what the multiculturalism would hold for the future. Given those past documentations of multiculturalism are also not always available, conservatives’ tendencies to look to the past may rob them of evidence of multiculturalism that may have occurred in history. Therefore, they may think about it as a real threat instead of looking upon it in a positive manner. It can be concluded that conservatives may be somewhat sceptic of multiculturalism, and in contrast, liberals will be more accepting of multiculturalism. The other issue to consider is the desire of individuals to seek knowledge about a phenomenon. As liberals are more future oriented, they will try to gather more information about the effects of multiculturalism than conservatives [36]. In other words, as liberals place greater salience on multiculturalism – due to their futuristic orientation – they will also try to seek more knowledge about multiculturalism. In fact, it has been shown that liberals have a greater knowledge of multiculturalism than conservatives [37]. Acquiring more knowledge about multiculturalism will lead to a greater futuristic orientation, as individuals will come to know far stretched effects of multiculturalism. What we

therefore see is that the liberals' futuristic orientation and desire to seek knowledge will make them more appreciative of multiculturalism, thus ultimately shaping their influence toward multiculturalism. To summarize, liberals have more knowledge, interest, and cognizance of multiculturalism [38]. It can therefore be argued that a person possessing a liberal political ideology will positively influence multiculturalism. Therefore, it can be hypothesized:

H1 (alternative hypothesis). Individual Liberal political ideology will positively influence individual acceptance on multiculturalism.

The corresponding null hypothesis H0: There is no positive impact of individual political ideology on individual acceptance on multiculturalism. The empirical analysis is meant to investigate whether the null hypothesis should be rejected, and the alternate hypothesis supported.

Multiculturalism is now most recognized as an organizing principle of society in recent times. Now people are appreciating the flavor of different cultures within a domestic setting. They are noticing that countries have been allowing multicultural people to maintain their cultural heritage. Also, they can see that countries are providing many opportunities for them. People are convinced that if we need a norm-free society then we need to have cultural pluralism/multiculturalism. That differences among cultures are useful national resources rather than a problem to be solved. For example, American culture has been influenced over time by immigrants, American Indians, Africans and by their inheritor. Now schools and universities began to embrace the multiculturalism. Catherine R. Stimpson of Rutgers University has used the term "cultural democracy," a recognition that we must listen to a "diversity of voices" to understand our past and present culture [39]. Many countries have gained relatively successful experience as a multiculturalist country because people accomplished these changes which are valuable. This is also a useful lesson for the rest of the world. The multiculturalists seek a richness in common culture. In contrast to multiculturalism, particularisms claim that no common culture is possible or desirable [40]. Modern concept of

particularism is providing new curriculum in several school systems across the country. Particularism recommends an ethnocentric curriculum to raise the self-esteem and academic achievement of children from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds. Without any evidence, particularisms claim that children from minority backgrounds will do well in school only if they are occupied in a positive, prideful version of their ancestral culture [41]. The importance of political awareness to multiculturalism can be argued from a moral exclusion standpoint. In the history of moral exclusion, all individuals perceived outside rules as fairness and they also perceived nonentities as an undeserving [42]. This moral exclusionary perspective has been defined as an encapsulation [43]. The encapsulation perspective assumes five basic characteristics [18].

Politically aware individuals will be cognizant of the moral exclusion principle and thus work toward alleviating its unintended effects. Such individuals will not be insensitive to cultures of other people, as, through their political awareness, they have been able to recognize and value other cultures. Politically aware individuals will also recognize that other viewpoints of evaluating alternate cultures will be equally valid. To summarize, politically aware individuals will **not** believe in the moral exclusion principle, thus making them more favorable toward multiculturalism. Therefore, it can be hypothesized: ***H2 (alternative hypothesis): Individual Political awareness will positively influence individual acceptance on multiculturalism. The corresponding null hypothesis H0: There is no positive impact of individual political awareness on individual acceptance on multiculturalism.*** The empirical analysis is meant to investigate whether the null hypothesis should be rejected and t

III. METHODOLOGY

The LISS (Longitudinal Internet Studies for the Social Sciences) study provided the data. The LISS dataset is a key component of the Center research institute at Tilburg's Measurement and Experimentation in the Social Sciences project.

UThe University of the Netherlands. The information was gathered through a survey of 5000 households and 8000 people living in the Netherlands (both Dutch citizens and immigrants). Since 2008, the survey has been conducted on an annual basis (biannually for some income and wealth-related variables) and includes a true probability sample of households drawn from Statistics Netherlands' population register. As a result, LISS is a representative sample of Dutch citizens constructed using formal statistical methods and supported by one of the world's most competent statistical agencies. Annual data for a wide range of variables relating to people's demographic, social, economic, and behavioral characteristics are available from 2008 to 2013. The study employs hypothesis testing. OLS regression. Based upon my hypotheses, the regression model is below.

OLS Regression Model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{pol_ideo} + \beta_2 \text{poli_awar} + \beta_3 \text{age} + \beta_4 \text{statcon} + \beta_5 \text{EDU} + \epsilon$$

Beta 0 is intercept. Beta 1 is my coefficient for investigating the impact of liberal political ideology on individual acceptance on multiculturalism. Beta 2 is my coefficient for investigating the impact of political awareness on individual acceptance on multiculturalism. Beta 3 is my coefficient for investigating the impact of age on individual acceptance on multiculturalism. Beta 4 is my coefficient for investigating the impact of satisfaction with economy on individual acceptance on multiculturalism. Beta 5 is my coefficient for investigating the impact of education on individual acceptance on multiculturalism.

Variables and Measures

- **Dependent variable:** Individual acceptance toward multiculturalism
- **Independent variable:** Individual liberal political ideology, Individual political awareness
- **Control variables:** age, education, satisfaction with economy

The variable measuring Individual liberal political ideology (PI) reflects individuals' self-reported placement on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0

is far left and 10 is far right. Specifically, liberal political ideology was measured by one question below:

In politics, a distinction is often made between "the left" and "the right". Where would

You place yourself on the scale below, where 0 means left and 10 means right?

Left

				right	
0	1	2	3	4	5
		7	8	9	10
					6

The variable was **reverse coded** such that higher values of the variable imply a more liberal political ideology, as follows:

Right

				left	
0	1	2	3	4	5
		7	8	9	10
					6

Individual Political awareness was measured by one question as below:

Are you very interested in political topics, fairly interested or not interested?

1 very interested

2 fairly interested

3 not interested

Again, this variable was **reverse coded** so that higher values of this variable showed high political awareness. Thus, in the reverse coded variable, 1 reflects not interested, 2 reflects fairly interested, and 3 represents very interested.

Individual acceptance on Multiculturalism was measured by one question as below: **It is good if society consists of people from different cultures.**

1 fully disagree

2 disagree

3 neither agree nor disagree

4 agree

5 fully agree

How satisfied are you with how the following institutions operate in the Netherlands?

0 means that you are very dissatisfied with how the institution operates and 10 means that you are very satisfied.

Can you indicate, on a scale from 0 to 10, how much confidence you personally have on, in education?
0 means that you have no confidence and 10 means that you have full confidence.

IV. FINDINGS

According to the results the expected B (EXP B) According to B), people with liberal political ideologies are more likely to support undocumented immigrants staying in the US, while people with conservative political ideologies are less likely to support undocumented immigrants. Furthermore, the findings show that the control variables of education, age, and income have no effect on liberal and conservative attitudes toward undocumented immigrants, with coefficients of .574, .213, and .252 respectively. As a result, the third and fourth hypotheses are rejected, while gender is shown to have an effect on liberal and conservative attitudes toward undocumented immigrants. The research used the moderator effect of gender interaction with liberals and conservatives to test the moderation effect of gender on the relationship between liberal and conservative attitudes toward

V. DATA ANALYSIS

TABLE I
VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION

Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.317 ^a	.101	.835

a. Predictors: (Constant), LPI, RPolitical_Awareness

TABLE II
ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	101.0	101.0	3.907	.030

Model	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	101.0	101.0	3.907	.030

A. DEPENDENT VARIABLE: MULTICULTURALISM

B. PREDICTORS: (CONSTANT), POLITICAL AWARENESS, LIBERAL POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

TABLE III
COEFFICIENT

Model	B	TD Error	eta	SIG
liberal	.322	.725	.002	10.200
Political Ideology	7.425	991.614	.000	3695.998
Political Awareness	.782	.271	.301	2.186

A. DEPENDENT VARIABLE: MULTICULTURALISM

VI. DATA ANALYSIS IN R STUDIO

TABLE IV
RESIDUALS

Min	1Q	Median	3Q	Max
-3.907	-0.6090	0.2468	0.6717	2.40

TABLE V
VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION

Estimate

	.E.	value	r(t)
Intercept	683	614	.238	
RPolitical l_Awareness	2.61 1	413	9.96 0	
ZLPI	.345	.01	.675 4	2e

a. Residual standard error: 0.9507 on 5889 degrees of freedom (919 observations deleted due to missingness) Multiple R-squared: 0.1007, Adjusted R-squared: 0.1004 F-statistic: 329.9 on 2 and 5889 DF, p-value: < 2.2e-16

VII. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study investigates how individual liberal political ideology and individual political awareness positively affects individual acceptance of multiculturalism. This study contributes to the literature on lack of ideological and social awareness. The study also highlights how personal perceptions and values influence acknowledgement of social and economic crises, like multiculturalism. This study has important implications on how the government can address issues of multiculturalism. First, this study shows that people with a liberal political ideology are more likely to take this issue seriously. Therefore, from a standpoint of implications, this study shows that there may be a need to have educational awareness programs on multiculturalism, specifically in areas where most of the people may be conservative. In other words, governments in highly conservative areas may need to take extra efforts to make people aware of multiculturalism. Second, the study shows that developing and instituting multiculturalist policies will require liberal stakeholders to be included in the mix. If the policy development is only in the hands of conservatives, who may not be aware of multiculturalism, a possible result could be that the policies are not as effective. It is also true that policies on multiculturalism will need to strike a balance between environmental, economic, and social demands. This is where inputs from people

with a conservative ideology can be helpful. Therefore, the results of the study clearly show that to develop a good policy to address multiculturalism, a mix of liberal and conservative stakeholders are needed. This will ensure a more balanced policy development. To conclude, this study shows the connection between political ideology, political awareness, and multiculturalism. It is hoped that it has provided important insights which can inform considerations when designing policies and practices for addressing multiculturalism. This paper also indicates both dimensions of originality and utility. Originality can be categorized as either advancing understanding incrementally or advancing understanding in a way that provides some form of revelation. Originality means “the mission of a theory-development journal is to challenge and extend existing knowledge” [44, p. 5] “We judge the value-added contribution of every article based on the potential contribution of the articulated new insights” [44, p.5]. This paper will provide an Incremental insight to the policymakers and other researchers. For example, “The ultimate value-added test of an article is that it has moved scholars in a field or advanced our theoretical understanding” [44, p.7]. The utility is another key contribution in an academic paper. This paper has revelatory insight that discloses a new way of seeing the acceptance of multiculturalism with a value-added contribution. Although it is rarely sufficient the insight must be seen as useful as well. This paper will provide a bridge between research and practice. The theoretical and empirical findings in the study that political ideology and political awareness influence attitude toward multiculturalism, will help devise multiculturalist policies and practices. For example, as political awareness influences attitude toward multiculturalism, a pro-multicultural government can design and implement programs to raise political awareness among its community members. Again, given the effect of political ideology on attitude toward multiculturalism, governments may explicitly form committees (for policies and programs on multiculturalism) that have an equal percentage of both liberal and political ideologies. That will ensure that any policies regarding

multiculturalism will be balanced and acceptable to a wide range of community members. Executers, administrators, and policy makers will benefit from the study. This study proposes to look critically at one of how culture has come to dominate the language of politics. Finally, this paper can help us make different policies of acceptance on multiculturalism and see our societies as race-free and culturally rich.

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