



Apr 13th, 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

## Factors Affecting Attitude Toward Immigrants to the United States

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McManimon, Shannon K. and Amoloza, Faculty Advisor, Teodora, "Factors Affecting Attitude Toward Immigrants to the United States" (1996). *John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference*. 36.  
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Poster Presentation 26

FACTORS AFFECTING ATTITUDE TOWARD IMMIGRANTS  
TO THE UNITED STATES

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During the past twenty-five years, over nineteen million legal, illegal, and amnestied aliens have entered the United States. Increasing evidence suggests that Americans are growing worried about this influx of immigrants, questioning whether they are desirable for the United States. This study examined how respondents' levels of education and attitudes toward the nation's economy affected their attitudes toward immigrants. The survey was conducted on two levels: local data taken from a survey of 112 Bloomington–Normal, Illinois, residents in the fall of 1995 and a secondary analysis of the 1994 General Social Survey data from the National Opinion Research Center. On the local level, neither level of education nor attitude toward the nation's economy had a significant effect on attitude toward immigrants. There was, however, a definite trend concerning education: those with higher education, particularly the males, were more likely to have a positive attitude toward immigrants. Attitude toward the nation's economy was probably not a factor affecting attitude toward immigrants because Bloomington–Normal is a solidly homogenous upper–middle class community, which may indicate that it has not been very impacted by recent negative economic trends. On the national level, both those with higher levels of education and those who felt that the nation's economy had improved over the past year were significantly more likely to have positive attitudes toward immigrants. Additionally, these same results were obtained after controlling for gender. The implications, especially regarding economics, that these findings suggest are important to the country as a whole. As the number of immigrants continues to grow, it is essential that the government be aware of these national attitudinal trends in order to address growing economic concerns. These trends must also be addressed in order for United States citizens to accept immigrants socially.