

Puerto Rico and Pittsburg: A Social Psychology Perspective on How Perceived Infringement on Job and Cultural Identity Unite Racially Different Working-Class Groups

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Abstract : With a growing divide between political echo chambers in the United States, exacerbated by race and income inequality, it might seem to be unfathomable to draw connections that tie working class in an industrial city and a U.S. territory. Yet, in regions where either the economy has been hit due to dwindling job infrastructure or natural disasters have left indelible marks on an island already once marked by colonial imperialism, a larger social shared identity is at play. Fracking has long been an intergenerational and stable work opportunity for many in the Pittsburg PA, yet the rising severity of global climate change may soon impact the policy and even presidential elections which could result in the reduction of jobs in the industry. Cock-fighting, considered a cultural mainstay within the island of Puerto Rico, has already had legislation banning activity and thus cutting out one of the most lucrative aspects of a severely injured economy. Insecurity, infringement, and isolation while being tied to a working-class bracket with no other opportunities in proximity have left both groups expressing similar frustration and while another larger shared identity politic is giving little other options to develop social mobility. This paper utilizes a thematic analysis and compares convergent and divergent themes on internet forums amongst unionized fracking workers in Pittsburg and cockfighters in Puerto Rico. This research examines how group identity in relation to job and cultural identity is most strong and at which points its most malleable; when intergenerational job identity becomes a part of one's cultural identity, its override may be strongest when it is perceived as threatened. Final findings and limitations were comprehensively outlined.

Keywords : identity threat, social psychology, group identity, culture and social mobility

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