

Cultural Impact on Fairness Perception of Inequality: A Study on People With Chinese Roots Living in Germany

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Abstract : Based on survey data collected from people with Chinese roots living in Germany, this paper examines the impact of assimilation degree and language priming (Chinese or German) on individuals' perceived fairness of economic and social differences and their attitude towards these. The results show that both the language used and the length of time spent in a foreign culture have a significant impact. Subjects who had spent less than 10 years in Germany demonstrated a higher readiness to accept government intervention in markets with price limits than those who had lived there longer. Subjects who were asked and answered in German perceived the current economic situation as less fair and were also less inclined to accept inequality, even when it leads to a Pareto improvement. While the difference in fairness perception of inequality was a cultural effect, the difference in attitudes towards government intervention was rather a result of learning process. The findings imply that both learning processes of individuals and culture play an important role in perception and preferences regarding social and economic differences.

Keywords : assimilation, bilingualism, cross-cultural comparison, income inequality, language priming, price fairness

Conference Title : ICBEBAS 2023 : International Conference on Business, Economics, Behavioral and Administrative Sciences

Conference Location : Zurich, Switzerland

Conference Dates : July 24-25, 2023