

The Sources of Anti-Immigrant Sentiments in Russia

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Abstract : Since the late 1990th labor immigration and its consequences on the society have become one of the most frequently discussed and debated issues in Russia. Social scientists point that the negative attitudes towards immigrants among Russian majority population is widespread, and their level, at least, twice as high as their level in most other European countries. Moreover, recent study by Gorodzeisky, Glikman and Maskyleison (2014) demonstrates that the two sets of individual level predictors of anti-foreigner sentiment – socio-economic status and conservative views and ideologies – that have been repeatedly proved in research in Western countries are not effective in predicting of anti-foreigner sentiment in Post-Socialist Russia. Apparently, the social mechanisms underlying anti-foreigner sentiment in Western countries, which are characterized by stable regimes and relatively long immigration histories, do not play a significant role in the explanation of anti-foreigner sentiment in Post-Socialist Russia. The present study aims to examine alternative possible sources of anti-foreigner sentiment in Russia while controlling for socio-economic position of individuals and conservative views. More specifically, following the research literature on the topic worldwide, we aim to examine whether and to what extent human values (such as tradition, universalism, safety and power), ethnic residential segregation, fear of crime and exposure to mass media affect anti-foreigner sentiments in Russia. To do so, we estimate a series of multivariate regression equations using the data obtained from 2012 European Social Survey. The national representative sample consists of 2337 Russian born respondents. Descriptive results reveal that about 60% percent of Russians view the impact of immigrants on the country in negative terms. Further preliminary analysis show that anti-foreigner sentiments are associated with exposure to mass media as well as with fear of crime. Specifically, respondents who devoted more time watching news on TV channels and respondents who express higher levels of fear of crime tend to report higher levels of anti-immigrants sentiments. The findings would be discussed in light of sociological perspective and the context of Russian society.

Keywords : anti-immigrant sentiments, fear of crime, human values, mass media, Russia

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