

Determinants of ethnocentric attitudes in the United States

Advocates of multiculturalism in the United States claim that an unfortunate secondary characteristic of ethnic minority status is that it is often accompanied by prejudice and discrimination. This has spawned questions concerning the determinants of ethnocentrism (negative attitudes towards ethnic minorities) – in other words, what characteristics are more likely to be associated with ethnocentric attitudes? The purpose of this article is to examine the relationship between ethnocentrism in the United States and one's political ideology, strength of religious affiliation and social conservatism. I also take into account demographic characteristics such as age, sex, race and education.

That every society considers itself “superior” to all others is widely accepted in the social sciences. W.G. Sumner's classic definition of ethnocentrism refers to “the view of things in which one's own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled with reference to it...Each group nourishes its own pride and vanity, boasts itself superior, exalts its own divinities and looks with contempt on outsiders.”¹ Dalmis Taylor defines ethnocentrism as “strong identification with an “in-group” and a sympathetic attitude for hostility directed toward an “out-group”, which is seen as a menace to in-group solidarity. Or more generally, ethnocentrism refers to acceptance of the culturally “alike” and rejection of the “unlike”.² The implicit assumption referred to is that the members of society recognize basic and pervasive cultural differences between

¹ Marc J. Swartz, Negative Ethnocentrism, *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 5, No. 1, The Anthropology of Conflict, Mar. 1961, pp. 75-81, p. 75.

² Dalmis A. Taylor, The Relationship between Authoritarianism and Ethnocentrism in Negro College Students, *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 31, No. 4, Autumn 1962, pp. 455-459, p. 456.

themselves and the members of different societies. In a large and ethnically diverse society such as the United States, the in-group is the dominant ethnic or racial group, while ethnic or internal minorities serve as out-groups.

According to some writers, ethnocentric attitudes can be arrayed on a cumulative dimension. The idea of this cumulative dimension started with Blumer's 1965 model of the *color line*, a dimension along which the "racial problem" is defined and along which acceptance of ethnic groups take place.³ Applying Blumer's model, this dimension ranges in a rank-order from beliefs that express discrimination against ethnic out-groups in the area of civil rights, through beliefs that express economical and political discrimination, to beliefs that express interpersonal discrimination.⁴

Steps along this dimension are cumulative when one step is embedded in the following step. That is, before members of ethnic groups can gain economic rights (such as securing credit, jobs, or other means of earning a living, and receiving public welfare), they already must have gained some fundamental civil rights (such as the use of public facilities such as schools, churches, and means of conveyance). On the other hand, even when ethnic groups have gained certain civil-political rights, they can still suffer discrimination and rejection in the area of personal relations or in social interactions. Every step in this cumulative ranking of discrimination is characterized by a certain set of beliefs with respect to ethnic out-groups. While public ethnic interactions are the most readily conceded or tolerated, private interactions are the most difficult to achieve

³ Gerard Kleinpenning and Louk Hagendoorn, Forms of Racism and the Cumulative Dimension of Ethnic Attitudes, *Social Psychology Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 1, (Mar 1993), pp. 21-36., p. 21.

⁴ Kleinpenning and Hagendoorn, p. 22.

because it entails full access by minority-group members to the social and even familial networks of dominant-group members.⁵

The idea that ethnic out-groups should not have the same political rights as the in-group and that they should not receive help to improve economically is typical of the symbolic ethnocentrism. Also typical of the ethnic attitude is the demand that out-groups must adjust to the cultural standard and the norm and value system of the in-group.⁶ This demand is accompanied by the belief that ethnic groups are a threat to the culture of the in-group, and the belief that ethnic groups have more social and economic rights than they deserve.⁷

The flip side to ethnocentrism, of course, is multiculturalism. Multiculturalism refers to the presence of people of diverse racial or ethnic backgrounds within a single polity. This demographic heterogeneity generally is a result of conquest or large-scale migration. Multiculturalism as an ideology assumes that differences in culture, in the sense of a coherent cluster of beliefs, values, habits and observances, accompany this demographic diversity.⁸ It decries efforts to create a common culture – i.e. demanding that ethnic minorities had better adapt to the cultural mainstream – as a ‘homogenizing egalitarianism’ designed to impose Euro-American norms on ethnic minorities in order to perpetuate the cultural and economic advantages – the status quo – of the white middle class. The assertion of ethnic identity and demands for cultural recognition and rights of ethnic groups to maintain their own unique traditions are thus necessary for redressing

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Kleinpenning and Hagendoorn, p. 24.

⁷ Ibid. p. 34.

⁸ Jack Citrin, David O. Sears, Christopher Muste, Cara Wong, Multiculturalism in American Public Opinion, *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 31, No. 2, (Apr 2001), pp. 247-275, p. 249.

the entrenched inequalities embedded in a system of ‘internal colonialism’.⁹ Glazer views multiculturalism as a demand for cultural recognition of ethnic groups that have ‘fallen below the horizon of attention’ in America.¹⁰ Some multiculturalists even go so far as to say that group representation is the legitimate basis for allocating benefits.¹¹

In the context of the United States, sparked by the civil rights movement and fuelled by the influx of immigrants from Latin America and Asia, multiculturalism has emerged to challenge conservatism as an ideological solution for balancing unity and diversity in America. At the core of American multiculturalism is an insistence that membership in a ‘societal culture’ with its own language and history is necessary for the individual’s dignity and self-realization.¹² Today, whites, African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans and Native Americans are the five constituent ethnic pillars of the United States.¹³

Multiculturalism insists that no race, language or culture – particularly “Western” culture- should have a privileged status in the United States, and conceives of the nation as a confederation of ethnic groups with equal rights rather than bound by universal norms. Hence, minority cultures within the U.S. need special recognition and *group* rights to withstand the forces of assimilation that undermine the sense of identity and well-being that individuals derive from membership in prosperous and respected communities. In fact, an avowal of ‘one’s ethnic particularity is an *essential* part of

⁹ See R. T. Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*, Boston, Mass: Little Brown, 1993

¹⁰ See N. Glazer, *We Are All Multiculturalists Now*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997, pp. 93-95.

¹¹ See Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990

¹² Citrin, Sears, Muste and Wong, p. 247.

¹³ See D. Hollinger, *Postethnic America*, New York: Basic Books, 1995.

having a strong sense of identity'.¹⁴ Multiculturalism thus construes ethnicity as the preferred basis of identity.¹⁵

In the United States, government officials, college administrators and corporate executives, among other leaders, all declare their commitment to multiculturalism. However, whatever the validity of these claims regarding elite attitudes, they may not apply to the preferences of ordinary citizens.¹⁶ For example, Wallace E. Lambert and Donald M. Taylor conducted a survey among parents of children in public schools in a large American urban center, representing a different number of ethnic groups, about their personal views and feelings towards cultural diversity in America today.¹⁷ The main issues addressed were: respondents' attitude towards the maintenance of heritage cultures versus assimilation, and respondents' attitudes towards other ethnic groups in the community.

Their findings indicate that among those surveyed, the working class white American sample was distinctive in its rejection of multiculturalism and in its negative attitude towards other ethnic groups. Thus, there are substantial sections of population in the United States who maintain that only certain groups, principally Anglo-Saxon, possess the moral qualities and cultural values that are inherently American.¹⁸ Historically, they called for a deliberate program of 'Americanization' to cleanse

¹⁴ S. Rockefeller, 'Comment' in C. Taylor, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992, pp. 87-98, p. 97.

¹⁵ See R. M. Merelman, 'Racial Conflict and Cultural Politics in the United States', *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 56, 1994, pp. 1-20.

¹⁶ Citrin, Sears, Muste and Wong, p. 248.

¹⁷ Wallace E. Lambert and Donald M. Taylor, 'Assimilation versus Multiculturalism: The Views of Urban Americans', *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1988, pp. 72-88, p. 72.

¹⁸ See R. M. Smith, 'Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87, 1993, pp. 549-566; A.M. Schlesinger Jr., *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*, New York: Norton, 1992

immigrants of their pasts and produce close conformity to the cultural majority.¹⁹ They warn that the strong articulation of group differences advocated by multiculturalists erodes social solidarity and risks separatism.²⁰ In light of this multiculturalism-ethnocentrism debate, I attempt to gauge the various factors that affect attitudes towards ethnic minorities.

One focal independent variable I aim to look at is whether one's political views – liberal or conservative – are correlated with attitudes towards ethnic minorities. In the vocabulary of contemporary politics in America, liberals often downplay individualistic tenets to advocate a broadened definition of equality that encompasses economic and social, as well as legal, conditions in order to improve the standing of racial and ethnic minorities. It is those labeled conservatives, particularly the libertarian element, who now embrace the rhetoric of individualism and even color-blindness.²¹

Since the mid-1980s, diverse criticisms of the federal multiculturalism policy have emerged from politically conservative elements, which treat multiculturalism as a source of division in the national unity debate. In his 1950 book, *The Authoritarian Personality*, Theodore Adorno found ethnocentrism rooted in early socialization and related to political conservatism. Political conservatism is “an important characteristic of

¹⁹ See P. Gleason, ‘American Identity and Americanization’, in S. Thernstrom, A. Orlov and O. Handlin, eds, *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1980, pp. 31-58.

²⁰ See Michael Walzer, ‘Comment’ in C. Taylor, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992; J. Raz, ‘Multiculturalism: A Liberal Perspective’, *Dissent*, 41, 1994, pp. 67-79.

²¹ Citrin, Sears, Muste and Wong, p. 255.

the authoritarian [anti-democratic] personality, which in turn is correlated with ethnocentrism”.²²

Maria Krysan in her article *Prejudice, Politics and Public Opinion*, examines the intersection of politics and prejudice towards ethnic minorities. According to her, political ideology (liberal versus conservative) has been incorporated regularly into government policies regarding racial/ethnic groups. People who prefer limited government or identify their ideology as conservative tend to oppose equal treatment policies of minorities.²³ Similarly, Anthony Smith argues in *The Ethnic Revival* that for liberals, who see modernization and technology as holding sway, ethnicity is transitional whereas conservatives would exchange ethnic, i.e. minority pasts for the prerogatives of the dominant cultural order.²⁴

According to Rosenau and Paehlke, the Conservative perspective includes traditional conservatives such as William Buckley, James Kirkpatrick, George Will, right of center Democrats who have moved towards the Republican Party over the last decades such as Irving Kristol, Jean Kirkpatrick and Daniel Bell, and the Internationalist Conservatives such as the Rockefellers. On the question of political participation of the disadvantaged ethnic minorities, most Conservatives view them with ‘cautious disdain’, as ‘impulsive, irrational, emotional, unappreciative of the heritage of culture that only the elite could have preserved’.²⁵ They argue that the disadvantaged groups could not

²² Dalmas a. Taylor, p. 456.

²³ Maria Krysan, Prejudice, Politics and Public Opinion: Understanding the Sources of Racial Policy Attitudes, *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 26, 2000, pp. 135-168, p. 146.

²⁴ Harold J. Abramson, ‘On the Passionate Study of Ethnicity’, *Contemporary Sociology*, 1983, pp. 134-136, in review of Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Revival*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 135.

²⁵ Pauline M. Rosenau and Robert Paehlke, The Exhaustion of Left and Right: Perspectives on the Political Participation of the Disadvantaged, *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1990, pp. 123-152, p. 126.

articulate their own interests and hardly had the intellectual tools to determine them, let alone the ability to express them clearly to representatives. Low participation of the minorities even benefits the political system since it permits the more qualified elite to produce effective decisions for a healthy democratic system.

Liberals, on the other hand, come from the political center and left including those who identify with a range of policy positions within the Democratic Party represented by the Kennedys, Jimmy Carter and Jesse Jackson. Liberals argue that inclusion of the disadvantaged in the political process is essential for authentic democracy.²⁶ There are thus some clear empirical connections between attitudes towards ethnic minorities and liberalism-conservatism in current political opinion.

In addition, I will also examine whether the strength of one's religious affiliation affects attitudes towards ethnic minorities. In a study that set out to establish the relationship between different dimensions of religiosity and prejudice against ethnic minorities in 11 cross-national European samples, Scheepers, Gijsberts and Hello concluded that strong Catholics and Protestants support prejudice against ethnic minorities more than non-religious people.²⁷ It turns out that the more strongly people affiliate with their religion, the more they are prejudiced. Similarly, a study in Netherlands reveals that there is support for the argument that church members are more prejudiced against Holland's ethnic minorities than non-members. However, the relationship is curvilinear indicating that both non-members and core church members

²⁶ Rosenau and Paehlke, p. 129.

²⁷ Peer Scheepers, Merove Gijsberts and Evelyn Hello, 'Religiosity and Prejudice against Ethnic Minorities in Europe: Cross-national Tests on a Controversial Relationship', *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (Mar. 2002), pp. 242-265, p. 242.

are less ethnocentric than marginal church members.²⁸ It would be interesting to see if any such relationships are replicated in the United States.

The second set of variables I focus on are demographic characteristics such as age, race and sex which might be related to attitudes towards ethnic minorities. Educational attainment is also included in this category and respondents are classified so as to provide a contrast between those high and low in education level.

The final set of independent variables I test constitute attitudes that are related to social conservatism and measure tolerance of deviance. Prejudice and intolerance towards ethnic minorities are observed among those who value social conformity over personal autonomy and perceive diversity in society (such as nonconformance to social norms like heterosexuality) a potential threat to social cohesion and the maintenance of those norms.²⁹ Proponents of social conformity also see the family as the first, the permanent, the elemental sphere of social life, of morality; and consequently, the source of religion. Thus, the home is the domain of women, their natural, proper, separate sphere. “Women are not to be men, in character, ambition, pursuit or achievement”.³⁰ Love of home, children and domestic duties are the only passions the best mothers, wives and managers of households should feel.

What could be seen as a threat to social conformity? Most obviously, beliefs, values, and behavior of certain groups that is inconsistent with the conformists’ perceptions of social conventions. For social conservatives, any group – even if it be a

²⁸ Rob Eisinga, Albert Felling and Jan Peters, ‘Church Involvement, Prejudice and Nationalism: A Research Note on the Curvilinear Relationship between Church Involvement and Ethnocentrism in the Netherlands’, *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (June 1990), pp. 417-433, p. 417.

²⁹ Stanley Feldman, Enforcing Social Conformity: A Theory of Authoritarianism, *Political Psychology*, 2003, pp. 41-74., p. 41.

³⁰ Peter Berkowitz, ed., *Varieties of Conservatism in America*, Stanford, Calif. : Hoover Institution Press, 2004, p. 60.

“social” group – that deviates from a narrow view of conventionality – norms of the dominant group, that is – is capable of eliciting hostility. Thus, prejudice against ethnic minorities who want to preserve their own unique traditions – non-conformists – should be strongly associated with the relative values placed on autonomy versus social conformity.

I now turn to the empirical question of my research: to what extent are one’s political views, demographic characteristics and socially conservative attitudes related to prejudice towards ethnic minorities?

Data and Methods

The data for this study comes from the 2002 General Social Survey (GSS) conducted by the National Opinion Research Center. This survey included a number of questions comprising a “Prejudice” module. The items probe whether people believe that each ethnic minority group should have the right to maintain its own unique traditions in order to create a harmonious society (EthnicTraditions) or whether members of ethnic minorities had better adapt to the ways of mainstream American culture in order to have a smoothly functioning society (EthnicAdapt). They also inquire about respondents’ opinions regarding the statement that ethnic minority groups will never really fit in with mainstream American culture (EthnicNoFit).

As far as possible, the survey provided respondents with options from different points along the continuum from support for ethnic minorities to ethnocentric attitudes. Clearly, any single poll provides just a momentary and partial snapshot of public opinion,

and the observed degree of support for or antagonism against ethnic minorities will reflect the particular items and response options employed.

From Table 1, we can see that most Americans express mixed attitudes towards ethnic minorities (See Table 1). When asked whether each minority group should have the right to maintain its own unique traditions, a majority (52.4%) agreed with the statement. In addition, 47.6% of respondents disagreed with the statement that ethnic minority groups will never really fit in with mainstream American culture. But when asked whether ethnic minorities had better adapt to the ways of mainstream American culture, 44.6% of the people agreed with the statement. However, the fact that a large segment of the respondents (20.1%) takes a middle position (“Neither Agree nor Disagree”) when given the opportunity to do so suggests that many Americans do not regard assimilation into the American mainstream and maintaining elements of one’s ethnic heritage as mutually exclusive.

For the sake of convenience of interpretation for this paper, I recoded the response categories of the variables EthnicNoFit and EthnicAdapt such that an attitude score of 1 reflected support for ethnic minorities and that of 5 reflected ethnocentric attitudes, with 3 being the middle ground. I then combined the three variables measuring ethnocentric views – EthnicTraditions, EthnicAdapt and EthnicNoFit – to create a new variable, EthnicAttitude that is similarly coded, adequately captures a variety of opinions reflecting attitudes towards ethnic minorities and thus, serves as the dependent variable.³¹

³¹ I was able to create the new variable EthnicAttitude since EthnicTraditions, EthnicAdapt and EthnicNoFit were all highly correlated with each other at the .01 level.

The independent variables are all coded or recoded such that low scores are expected to reflect positive attitudes towards ethnic minorities and high scores are expected to reflect ethnocentrism. The focal independent variable Political Views measures one's political ideology on a scale from 1=Extremely Liberal to 7=Extremely Conservative. The variable Religious Affiliation measures strength of religious affiliation on a scale of 1=No Religion to 4=Strong.

As for the demographic control variables, Age is measured in years while Sex is dichotomously coded such that 0=males and 1=females. Race is coded such that 1=White, 2=Black and 3=Other. As for Education, those who had completed less than 12 years were designated as being less than high school educated, those with 12 years as being high school graduates, those between 13 and 15 years as having some college education while those who had completed 16 years or more were designated as highly educated.

For the final set of independent variables, Importance of Ethnic Identity measures how important ethnic group membership is to the respondent (and might impact one's view about ethnic groups and hence, should be controlled for) on a scale from 1=Very important to 4=Not At All Important. The variable Better for Women to Tend Home measures attitudes about whether it is better if men works outside and women take care of the home and family on a scale from 1=Strongly Disagree to 4=Strongly Agree. Finally, the variable Homosexuality measures whether it is wrong to have homosexual relations on a scale from 1=Not Wrong at all to 4=Always Wrong. It may be mentioned that the independent variables were tested for correlations that might replicate their effect on the dependent variable, and were not found to be significantly related to each other.

Results and Interpretation

The OLS multivariate regression procedure was used to run three models. A total of 444 observations were included in the analysis. The first partial model examined the relationship between attitudes towards ethnic minorities on the one hand, and political views (my focal independent variable) and strength of religious affiliation on the other. The mean score for attitudes towards ethnic groups was 2.55, with a standard deviation of 0.65. The mean score for Political views was 4.14, with a standard deviation of 1.40. For strength of religious affiliation, the mean score was 2.05 and the standard deviation was 0.99.

Since one's political views was the focal independent variable, I ran a bivariate correlation test with attitudes towards ethnic minorities. The relationship was significant at the .001 level. A bivariate analysis between strength of religious affiliation and attitudes towards ethnic minorities shows that the relationship is not significant.

The multivariate regression also shows a significant positive relationship between one's political views and attitudes towards ethnic minorities ($t=4.09$, $p < .001$) (See Table 2). This means that each one unit increase in the scale of political views (towards extreme conservatism) is associated with a 0.09 unit increase in the attitude score towards ethnic minorities.³² Thus, people with more conservative political views are more likely to have ethnocentric attitudes. For example, a person with a score of 1=extremely liberal political views would have (on average) an attitude score towards ethnic minorities of 2.27 ($\hat{Y} = 2.18 + (0.09) (1)$). In contrast, a person with a score of 7=extremely conservative political views would have (on average) an attitude score towards ethnic minorities of 2.81 ($\hat{Y} = 2.18 + (0.09) (7)$). The standardized regression coefficient ($\beta^* = 0.19$) tells us that for

³² Since strength of religious affiliation is not significant, I did not control for it.

every one unit increase in the standard deviation of political views scores there is a 0.19 unit increase in the standard deviation of attitudes towards ethnic minorities. The relationship between strength of religious affiliation and attitudes towards ethnic minorities is not significant ($t=0.12$, $p=0.9$) indicating that those with strong religious affiliation are not different from those who have no religion in their attitudes towards ethnic minorities. However, overall the model is statistically significant ($F=8.46$, $p < 0.001$) and explains 4% ($R^2=0.04$) of the variance in attitudes towards ethnic minorities. This leaves 96% of the variance unexplained, for which we turn to the second partial model.

In the second partial model, I included demographic characteristics such as age, sex, race and educational level hoping that it would help better account for some of the unexplained variance in Model 1. The mean age is 46.63, with a standard deviation of 17.91. The mean score for gender is 46% indicating that there are more males in the sample. Almost 80% of the respondents were white (making it the modal category), 14% were black while nearly 6% belonged to the “other” category. The mean score for educational level was 13.26 years, with a standard deviation of 3.10.

In this model, political views continues to be significant ($t=3.93$, $p < .001$) while strength of religious affiliation continues to be non-significant ($t=.55$, $p > .05$). Out of the demographic variables introduced in this model, there is a positive significant relationship between age and attitudes towards ethnic minorities ($t=3.59$, $p < .001$). This means that each one year increase in age is associated with a 0.01 unit increase in the attitude score towards ethnic minorities, controlling for those with high school education

and higher education.³³ Thus, older people are more likely than younger people to have ethnocentric attitudes. Gender ($t = -1.67$, $p > .05$) and race ($t = -1.02$, $p > .05$) are not significantly related, indicating that males and females, and white, blacks and other races are not really different from one another in their attitudes towards minorities.

Compared to those with less than a high school education, high school graduates ($t = -2.43$, $p < .05$) significantly differ in their attitudes towards minorities. Compared to non-high school graduates, those with some college education are not significantly different in their attitudes towards ethnic minorities. Finally, compared to non-high school graduates, those with higher education were statistically significant ($t = -3.8$, $p < .001$) in their attitudes towards ethnic minorities. A difference between the slope tests was also conducted to test for the equality of the coefficients. The effect of being a high school graduate was not significantly different from that of being a college graduate in predicting attitudes ethnic minorities ($F = 1.53$, $p > .05$). Similarly, the effect of being a high school graduate was also not significantly different from that of being highly educated in predicting attitudes ethnic minorities ($F = 2.95$, $p > .05$). However, the effect of having some college education is significantly different from the effect of being highly educated in predicting attitudes ethnic minorities ($F = 8.36$, $p < .01$). Therefore, the real difference in attitudes lies between non-high school graduates and high school graduates; non-high school graduates and highly educated persons; and those with some college education and highly educated persons.

For those of the independent variables which are significant in this model, a comparison of standardized regression coefficients tell us which variable is most useful in

³³ These are the only other significant variables in the model. Hence, other variables such as sex, race and those with some college education do not have to be controlled for.

predicting attitudes towards ethnic minorities. For every one unit increase in the standard deviation of political views scores there is a 0.18 unit increase in the standard deviation of attitudes towards ethnic minorities. Similarly, for every one unit increase in the standard deviation of age there is a 0.17 unit increase in the standard deviation of attitudes towards ethnic minorities. Thus, political views have a slightly greater impact on attitudes towards ethnic minorities than age. The overall model is statistically significant ($F=6.24$, $p<.001$) and explains 10% ($R^2=0.1$) of the variance in attitudes towards ethnic minorities. This leaves 90% of the variance unexplained, for which we turn to the third fully specified model.

In the final fully specified model, I include another set of attitude variables - importance of ethnic group membership, whether women should tend the home and attitudes towards homosexuality that could possibly explain better differences in attitudes towards ethnic minorities. The mean score for importance of ethnic group membership is 2.29, with a standard deviation of 1.15. The mean score for importance of views on whether women should tend the home is 2.75, with a standard deviation of 0.87. For attitudes regarding homosexuality, the means score is 2.15 and the standard deviation is 1.38.

In Model 3, we see that political views ($t=2.45$, $p < .05$) and age ($t=2.33$, $p < .05$) continue to be statistically significant. Moreover, strength of religious affiliation, gender, and race continue to be non-significant. However, in this model, compared to non-high school graduates, those with a high school degree no longer significantly differ in attitudes ($t= -1.76$, $p>.05$). The only significant difference in attitudes lies between non-high school graduates and those with higher education ($t= -2.45$, $p>.05$). Of the new

variables introduced in this model, importance of ethnic group membership is not significantly related to attitudes towards ethnic minorities ($t=.07$, $p>.05$) indicating that those who highly value their ethnic group membership do not differ in attitudes from those for whom ethnic group membership is not important.

There is a significant positive relationship between views regarding whether it is better if women tend the home and attitudes towards ethnic minorities ($t=3.54$, $p < .001$). This means that each one unit increase in scores about whether women should tend the home is associated with a 0.13 unit increase in the attitude score towards ethnic minorities, controlling for political views, age, those with higher education and attitudes towards homosexuality.³⁴ Thus, those who strongly feel that it is best if women stay at home, are more likely to have ethnocentric attitudes than those who do not. Attitudes towards homosexuality is also positively related to attitudes towards ethnic minorities ($t=2.21$, $p < .05$). This means that each one unit increase in attitudes about homosexuality (towards considering it always wrong) is associated with a 0.05 unit increase in the attitude score towards ethnic minorities, controlling for political views, age, those with higher education and attitudes towards whether women should stay at home. Thus, those who think that homosexuality is always wrong are more likely to be ethnocentric than those who do not.

The standardized regression coefficients for my significant variables shows that for every one unit increase in the standard deviation of political views scores there is a 0.32 unit increase in the standard deviation of attitudes towards ethnic minorities. Similarly, for every one unit increase in the standard deviation of age there is a 0.33 unit increase in the standard deviation of attitudes towards ethnic minorities. For every one

³⁴ Since the other variables are not statistically significant, I did not control for them.

unit increase in the standard deviation of scores about whether women should stay at home there is a 0.18 unit increase in the standard deviation of attitudes towards ethnic minorities. Similarly, for every one unit increase in the standard deviation of attitudes towards homosexuality there is a 0.11 unit increase in the standard deviation of attitudes towards ethnic minorities. Thus, age has a slightly higher impact, followed by political views, on attitudes towards ethnic minorities than the two attitude variables in the third model.

I also tested interactions between political views and age, on the one hand, and political views and strength of religious affiliation, on the other, to see if the interactions were related to attitudes towards ethnic minorities. As the results show, neither interaction term is significantly related to the dependent variable under study. To illustrate what this means, I plotted attitude scores and political views, with age as the moderating variable. From the graph, we can see that 20 year old liberals have an attitude score of 2.06 while 20 year old conservatives have an attitude score of 2.54 ($a=1.82$, $b=.12$). On the other hand, both 80 year old liberals and conservatives have an attitude score of 2.42 ($a=2.42$, $b=0$).³⁵ Visually, we can see that the two lines do not fan out – hence, the impact of political views on attitudes towards ethnic minorities is not significantly different for different age groups. Similarly, we can show that the impact of political views on attitudes towards ethnic minorities is not significantly different for those who have a strong religious affiliation and those who have no religion.

Finally, overall the fully specified model is statistically significant ($F=6.38$, $p < .001$) and explains 15% ($R^2=0.15$) of the variance in attitudes towards ethnic minorities.

³⁵ I have plotted the graph for illustration for the purposes of this paper. Usually, only interactions that are significant are plotted to illustrate the impact of the moderating variable.

This leaves 85% of the variance unexplained, which I will talk about in my concluding section.

Conclusion

Thus, the multivariate regression analysis tells us that political views are in fact significantly related to attitudes towards ethnic minorities, even after controlling for other demographic and attitude variables that could have explained the relationship.³⁶ Age is another significant factor in explaining differences in attitudes. Social conservatism – understood and measured in this paper as viewing it best for family life if men work outside and women tend the home, and viewing homosexual relations as always wrong – is also strongly correlated with ethnocentric attitudes.

It may be mentioned that adding demographic variables to the analysis did improve overall predictability of attitudes towards ethnic minorities. This is because it explained 10% of the variance in attitudes as compared with 4% in Model 1. I conducted a formal test of whether the two R^2 values (.04 and .10) are significantly different and found that they are ($F=5$, $p < .05$). Thus, Model 2 is a better fit over Model 1. Similarly, did introducing attitude measures into the analysis improve predictability of the dependent variable? A formal difference between the R^2 (.10 and .15) test revealed that .15 is significantly higher than .10 ($F=5$, $P < .05$) making Model 3 a better model than Model 2. Therefore, Model 3, or my fully specified model, is the best-fitting model.

³⁶ It is important to acknowledge that sometimes there is a reciprocal relationship between political views and ethnocentrism, i.e. those who have ethnocentric attitudes are also more likely to have conservative political views. But for the purposes of this paper, I assume that one's political ideological commitment temporally precedes and hence, might result in ethnocentric attitudes.

The limitations of my model are obviously connected with the limitations of working with the GSS dataset in a particular year (2002). These account for the unexplained variance of 85% in my best-fitting model. Other potential factors that could influence attitudes towards ethnic minorities and explain some of the variance are – whether one identifies oneself as an ethnic minority, one’s immigrant status, one’s country of birth, parental attitudes affecting one’s own views, exposure to different ethnic cultures during one’s formative years and so on. These could be interesting variables to consider for a larger project and further research in this area. But for the purposes of this paper, we can conclude that political views are significantly correlated with attitudes towards ethnic minorities, as are age and social conservatism.

Table 1. Attitudes towards Ethnic Minorities (in percentages)

Cells contain: -Valid row percentage -Number of cases	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Neither Agree nor Disagree	4 Disagree	5 Strongly Disagree
Ethnic groups have right to maintain unique traditions	31.1% 848	52.4% 1430	9.7% 266	5.4% 147	1.4% 39
Ethnic minorities should adapt to mainstream American culture	15.2% 412	44.6% 1210	20.1% 546	16.4% 446	3.6% 99
Ethnic minorities never fit in with American mainstream	3.2% 88	12.3% 333	14.4% 390	47.6% 1292	22.6% 614

Table 2. OLS Regression Results: Predicting Attitudes towards Ethnic Minorities

Variable	Model 1				Model 2				Model 3			
	<i>b</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>p</i>	β^*	<i>b</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>p</i>	β^*	<i>b</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>p</i>	β^*
Political Views	0.09	0.02	***	0.19	0.08	0.02	***	0.18	0.15	0.06	*	0.32
ReligiousAffiliation	0.003	0.03		0.01	0.02	0.03		0.03	0.04	0.03		0.06
Demographic Characteristics												
Age					0.01	0	***	0.17	0.01	0.01	*	0.33
Sex					-0.1	0.06		-0.08	-0.06	0.06		-0.05
Race					-0.06	0.06		-0.05	-0.07	0.06		-0.06
Education ¹												
High School					-0.22	0.09	*	-0.15	-0.16	0.09		-0.11
Some College					-0.13	0.09		-0.09	-0.06	0.09		-0.04
High Education ²					-0.36	0.1	***	-0.24	-0.25	0.1	*	-0.16
Subjective Attitudes												
Importance of Ethnic Identity									0.001	0.03		0
Better for Woman To Tend Home									0.13	0.04	***	0.18
Homosexuality									0.05	0.02	*	0.11
Interactions												
Pol. Views * Age									-0	0.001		-0.31
Pol. Views * Relig. Affiliation									0.01	0.01		0.05
Constant	2.18	0.12	***		2.06	0.2	***		2.38	0.34	***	
F	8.46***				6.24***				6.38***			
R ²	0.04				0.1 ^a				0.15 ^a			
Adjusted R ²	0.03				0.09				0.13			
N = 444												

Notes: OLS = Ordinary Least Squares

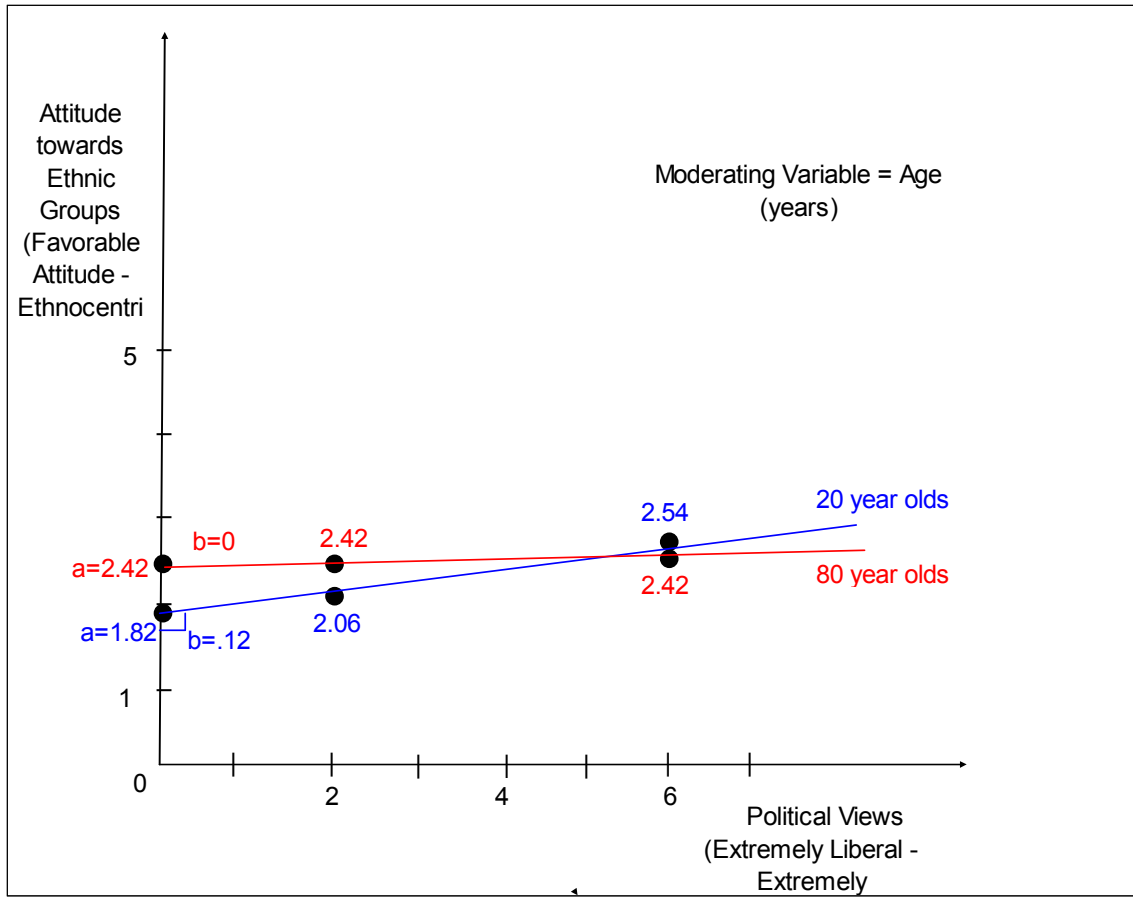
¹ The reference group is non- high school graduates

² A difference between the slopes test was conducted and a significant difference in attitudes was found only between those who had some college education and those who were highly educated.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

^a Model 2 is a better fit than Model 1 ($F=5$, significant at .05 level). Model 3 is a better fit than Model 2 ($F=5$, significant at .05 level)

Table 3. Impact of interaction term Political Views x Age on Attitude Scores



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