The Rise of Anti-Immigration Sentiments During Pandemics in New York City: A Comparative Study

Lizbet Rodriguez, Hannah Varughese, Shannon Farnum, Jordan Swanson, Anthony Attenborough

Professor Jane Marcus - Delgado | College of Staten Island Department of Political Science

Abstract

Since its founding, New York City has been an ideal destination for various groups of immigrants. Along with the hopes and dreams of these immigrants, diseases arrived from all corners of the world. Soon enough immigrants were viewed as viral and bacterial hosts for epidemics such as the Spanish flu and more recently, the Coronavirus. Through comparative research, it was found that during these two epidemics, the largest scapegoats for the transmission of disease were the German immigrants during the Spanish-Flu and the Chinese during the Coronavirus epidemic. The basis of our research will be done by looking at previous studies that demonstrate a rise in xenophobia and anti-immigration sentiments during these two epidemics. As we continue to experience the effects of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, this comparative study intend.

Methods/Procedures

- Use of public government records to identify hate crimes
- Investigation of social factors that led to using immigrant groups as “scapegoats” for disease in NYC
- Analyses of government response to NYC epidemics

Significance

- Ongoing hate targeted towards Asian-American communities
- Attempts to mitigate negative stereotypes surrounding immigrants during current and future global health crises

Objectives

- Identify trends in the rise of hate crimes against immigrant groups
- Maximize our understanding of the factors that contributed to such behaviors and attitudes in NYC
- Compare the Anti-immigration sentiments that arose during the Spanish Flu to that of the Coronavirus pandemic

Results

- Scapegoats:
  - German migrants during the Spanish-Flu
  - Chinese during the Coronavirus pandemic
  - Spanish Flu: World War I and viral warfare
  - Coronavirus: “Incidents targeting Asians rose by 361 percent” in NYC
  - Limited first person accounts and statistics

References/Works Cited


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