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Presentation Title: Tensions That Make a Difference: Public Ideologies and Immigration Policy

Abstract
This lecture will examine the dominant public ideologies about immigration in the United States and the way that they inform current policies. Because public views about immigration are rooted in surface impressions, rather than on understanding of the social forces at play, they tend to produce policies that backfire. In particular, intransigent nativism tends to be reflected in measures that affect negatively the economies of the states and cities where they are applied and that produce a spirited counter-reaction by the groups targeted by these policies. The resulting tensions do “make a difference,” in both economic and political terms because they yield effects that are consistently opposite to those originally intended. Alternative policies based on a proper understanding of the factors underlying present U.S.-bound immigration will be presented and explained.