Values, Experiences and Attitudes: A Cross-National Analysis of Opinions on Immigration in Europe

David Card, Christian Dustmann and Ian Preston

Presentation for *Measuring attitudes and values in Europe*. European Social Survey Launch Conference Brussels 25-26 November 2003
Structure of Talk

- Simple Illustration of some key questions regarding immigration, immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers
- Relate responses to macro-economic indicators of response countries
- Relate responses on immigration to some key individual characteristics
- Present partial correlation coefficients relating responses to individuals’ opinion
Module on Immigrants and Refugee Applicants

- Module: developed by Bauer, Card, Dustmann, Nazroo, and Preston, in co-operation with ESS.
- Includes about 40 questions on Immigrants, refugee applicants, and minorities.
- Questions about: i) Perceived and desired numbers, ii) Believes on impact, iii) immigration criteria, iv) Tolerance and interaction.
Immigrants as percentage of population
Foreign Population: Fact and Opinion

Percent foreign population perceived vs. Percent foreign population (OECD) for various countries.

Countries: CH, CZ, ES, FI, GB, HU, IE, NL, NO, PL, PT, SE.
Support for Liberal Immigration Policy:
Same / Different Ethnicity than Majority Population

- .5
- .25
  0
  .25
  .5

1: allow many; -1: allow non

Scandinavia Northern_Europe Central_Europe Southern_Europe Israel

Allow for more immigrants
Qualification for Immigrants: Education, wealth and work skills needed

1: allow many; -1: allow non

- .5
- .25
  0
  .25
  .5

Good educational qualifications
Be wealthy
Work skills needed in country

Scandinavia  Northern_Europe  Central_Europe  Southern_Europe  Israel

Qualification for Immigration
Qualification for Immigrants: Language, family links and commitment to way of life

Qualification for Immigration

Close family living here  
Speak country’s language  
Committed to way of life

Scandinavia  
Northern Europe  
Central Europe  
Southern Europe  
Israel
Immigrants: Job creation and beneficial for the economy

- Immigrants create jobs
- Immigration good for economy

Scandinavia  Northern_Europe  Central_Europe  Southern_Europe  Israel

Immigration and Economy
Refugee applicants: Are claims true, and should they be detained?

- .5
- .25
  0
  .25
  .5

1: agree strongly; -1: disagree strongly

Most are not persecuted
Refugee applicants - detention

Scandinavia  Northern_Europe  Central_Europe  Southern_Europe  Israel

Refugee applicants
Refugee applicants: financial support and work permits

- .5
- .25
0
.25
.5

1: agree strongly; -1: disagree strongly

- Asylum seekers allowed to work
- Financial support to refugee applicants

Scandinavia  Northern_Europe  Central_Europe  Southern_Europe  Israel
Responses and Macro-Economic Indicators

• This section relates particular aspects of attitudes to economic indicators in the various countries
• Macro-information is drawn from The World Bank and from the OECD
• Macro-data refer to 2001 in most cases
Opinion on further immigration and stock of foreign born population

1: agree strongly; -1: disagree strongly

Allow for more immigrants

Percent foreign population (OECD)
Opinion on further immigration and unemployment rate

1: agree strongly; -1: disagree strongly

Allow for more immigrants
Opinion on further immigration and GDP

1: agree strongly; -1: disagree strongly

Allow for more immigrants imatt3

gdp per cap, constant 95 US$

PL, CZ, SI, IL, ES, IE, GB, NO, NL, FI, SE, CH, HU, PT, GR
Economic Benefits of Immigration and GDP

-1: bad; 1: good

Immigration bad/good for economy

gdp per cap, constant 95 US$

Country Abbreviations:
- PL: Poland
- CZ: Czech Republic
- HU: Hungary
- SI: Slovenia
- PT: Portugal
- GR: Greece
- ES: Spain
- GB: United Kingdom
- IE: Ireland
- SE: Sweden
- FI: Finland
- NO: Norway
- NL: Netherlands
- CH: Switzerland

Graph shows a positive correlation between immigration and GDP per capita.
Opinion on Immigration and Individual Characteristics

• Are there systematic differences in the way individuals’ opinion towards further immigration varies with observed characteristics?

• How are individuals’ opinion towards further immigration related to their concerns about the economy/crime/welfare and fears of cultural alienation?
Opinion towards further immigration, by age and education

Allow for more Immigrants, by Age and Education
Opinion towards further immigration, by education and political opinion

Allow for more Immigrants, by Ideology

1: many, -1: none

Left
Right
Centre
Regressions

- All regressions include country dummies, age dummies, education dummies, and a variable for gender
Dependent Variable: Allow many/few immigrants

country's cultural life enriched 0.018 (12.44)**
immigrants make country better place 0.029 (17.03)**
immigrants make country's crime problems better 0.017 (11.44)**
immigrants create new jobs 0.001 (1.07)
Immigration: good for economy 0.039 (24.84)**
taxes and services:
immigrants take out less 0.011 (7.75)**
Dependent Variable: Allow many/few immigrants

TV watching (total average time)  \(-0.037\) (6.24)**

TV watching, news/ politics  \(0.036\) (3.94)**

Newspaper read. (tot. aver. time)  \(-0.055\) (4.57)**

Newspaper read. (politics)  \(0.13\) (8.01)**
Dependent Variable: Allow many/few immigrants

Most people can be trusted $0.107 \ (15.79)**$

Most people try to be fair $0.040 \ (5.74)**$
Future Work

• Characterize in more depth differences in attitudes towards immigrants, minorities, and refugees in different countries in the European area, as well as the US, Australia, and Canada.

• Develop and evaluate alternative hypotheses about the sources of these differences.

• Develop an overarching model of attitudinal responses that recognizes the intertemporal and dynastic dimension of opinion formation.

• Analyse the way opinion formation interacts with the economic and political process.