

Scientific Report

ESF Exploratory Workshop on

Cross-national and Multi-level Analysis of Attitudes to Immigrants and Immigration in Contemporary Europe

University College Dublin

5-8 December 2007



UCD Geary Institute

Table of Contents

1.	Executive Summary	1
2.	Scientific content of the event	2
3.	Assessment of the results, contribution to the future direction of the field	4
4.	Programme	10
5.	Statistical information on participants	12
6.	List of participants	13

1. Executive Summary

This workshop was designed as an exploratory attempt to apply a new cross-national research strategy to the problem of how system-level variables interact with individual perceptions, attitudes and attributes to influence attitudes to immigration. The new method (two-step hierarchical estimation) depends on having datasets that have representative within-country samples from a large number of countries. These are precisely the kinds of datasets now available through the Eurobarometer, the CSES and, especially, through the European Social Survey. The exploratory workshop concentrated on the data from the first round of the ESS, which included a specific module on attitudes to immigration. Then, using information from a number of international sources (OECD, Eurostat, UNHCR), data values by country were obtained on a set of variables initially hypothesized to have a potential impact on relationship between variables at the individual level. On the basis of preliminary work, four system-level variables seemed especially important in shaping attitudes towards immigration: (1) national experience with immigration, (2) host population demographic characteristics, (3) multicultural policies, and (4) the presence of anti-immigrant parties. In line with the exploratory nature of this workshop, therefore, the participants devoted their efforts to identifying the mechanisms that link these four factors to attitudes towards immigration, and engaged in a preliminary empirical evaluation of the hypotheses developed in these discussions. The explicitly multi-level hypotheses were:

- H1.** Experience with immigration moderates the (typically, negative) relationship between age and attitudes to immigration.
- H2.** National age structure contributes to cross-national variance in attitudes to immigration:
- H3.** The implementation of multicultural policies strengthens the (typically, positive) relationship between level of education and favourable attitudes towards immigration.
- H4.** The increased electoral success of parties taking anti-immigrant positions strengthens anti-immigrant attitudes among supporters of these parties.

Workshop participants divided into groups according to interests and expertise, with each group taking responsibility for testing one of the four hypotheses, using the ESS survey data and a prepared data-set that included a broad collection of demographic, economic and political variables for the set of countries included in the ESS. While the groups experienced varying degrees of success – H1 was especially well-supported by the data, for example, while testing of H4 revealed a pattern of association directly contrary to what was expected – all groups usefully combined individual and system-level data in broad comparative analyses.

This workshop is, in our view, likely to be agenda-setting. If the overall approach and the specific method continue to be as fruitful as they have been in this workshop, it will establish a set of procedures and a methodology that could be applied to the wide range of large-scale country survey datasets that now exist in Europe. By combining individual-level variables and system-level variables in a rigorous way, the workshop has the potential to initiate a line of research that will truly exploit the notion of Europe as a research laboratory in the social sciences.

2. Scientific content of the event

This workshop was designed to explore the application of a new cross-national research strategy to the problem of how national economic, political, legal, cultural and policy differences interact with individual perceptions and attitudes to produce the very substantial variations in attitudes to immigration and immigrants that characterise contemporary European societies. Previous interdisciplinary research in this area has pursued the issue by combining insights from trade theory (relying principally on the Hechsher-Ohlin model) with political science theories of nationalism and national identity in an attempt to identify the sources of attitudes to issues of trade protection and immigration (Mayda 2005, O'Rourke and Sinnott 2006). The research in question also examined the impact of a limited number of system-level variables, mainly income per capita which is taken to reflect countries' relative skill-abundance.

Theoretical development

Against this background, the workshop sought to specify and operationalise a range of system-level variables including the size of the welfare state, the progressivity of the tax system, the labour force participation rate of immigrants, the national and immigrant-specific unemployment rate, and the employment experience of immigrants' children, since immigrants both pay into and benefit from national welfare systems. Indeed, previous survey-based research has shown that individual attitudes towards immigration are shaped in large part by such public finance considerations (Facchini and Mayda 2006; Hanson, Scheve and Slaughter 2005). In terms of the political system, consideration was given to how immigration issues are dealt with in party policy documents and in election manifestos and also to the presence and strength of right-wing parties in the party system. It was also felt that it was essential to include system-level variables that describe the patterns of immigration – both historically and in terms of current rates of immigration and countries of origin and in terms of the patterns of intercultural assimilation and difference that obtain.

Methodological innovation

The distinctive scientific innovation of the workshop lay in its application of a recent breakthrough in the methodology of statistically based cross-national research. The new method (two-step hierarchical estimation) has been published in a special issue of the leading methodological journal *Political Analysis* (Jusko and Shively 2005, Achen 2005, Lewis and Linzer, 2005). The new methodology depends on having datasets that have representative within-country samples from a sufficiently large number of countries

(preferable 20+). These are precisely the kinds of datasets now available through the Eurobarometer, the CSES and, especially, through the European Social Survey. The exploratory workshop concentrated on the data from the first round of the ESS, which included a specific module on attitudes to immigration. The method involved conducting country-by-country statistical analyses of each of the 20+ countries and then analysing the parameters emerging from this first stage in a small-N statistical analysis that brings in the system-level institutional, political, cultural and policy variables. This two-stage approach was implemented by bringing country-specialists together with comparativists and methodologists to develop individual-level models for each country and to use the parameters from these analyses as input into a series of system-level models. The workshop proceeded on an exploratory basis, beginning with the discussion of the theoretical issues and moving rapidly to the specification and hands-on analysis of country-level models and then to the analysis of system-level models based on the country-level parameters. This process involved a combination of discussion sessions and computer-lab sessions devoted to testing the within-country individual-level models and the system-level models.

Variables and data

Even in its early stages, the ESS covered over 20 countries. This is particularly valuable as one of the conditions for the optimal use of the two-step method is that the N of countries be large enough to permit analysis at the system level. The ESS has adopted best practice approaches to rigorous sampling, module selection, translation and response rate enhancement, and is the first social science project to win Europe's prestigious Descartes Prize for excellence. Thus, it provided a strong data platform for the analyses at the heart of the workshop.

The individual-level independent variables selected were those which were known from the literature to be important predictors of attitudes towards immigration, as well as out-group hostility generally. These were assigned to five groups – sex and age, income and education, left-right views and religiosity, political values and life satisfaction, and crime-related views.

Using information from a number of international sources (OECD, Eurostat, UNHCR), country-level data values were obtained on the following variables hypothesised to have a potential impact on country heterogeneity in the individual level variables: tax variables ('progressivity'), welfare state variables (total expenditure, social protection benefits, social exclusion, pensions benefits, unemployment costs), labour force and immigration variables (employment rates and education levels of immigrants, national unemployment rates, rate of immigration) and political party system variables (presence and strength of right-wing parties).

3. Assessment of the results, contribution to the future direction of the field

Development of Multi-level Hypotheses

During our preliminary discussions and analytical sessions, four system-level variables were judged by the Workshop participants to be especially important in shaping attitudes towards immigration: (1) national experience with immigration, (2) host population demographic characteristics, (3) multicultural policies, and (4) the presence of anti-immigrant parties. These system-level variables appear regularly in contemporary discussions about immigration. However, empirical analysis has tended to concentrate on political economic accounts of attitudes to immigration (e.g. O'Rourke and Sinnott 2006; Fachini and Mayda 2005), on the one hand, and cultural explanations on the other (e.g. ethnic prejudice and "monoculturalism", (O'Rourke and Sinnott 2006).

In line with the exploratory nature of this workshop, therefore, the participants devoted their efforts to identifying the mechanisms that link these four factors to attitudes towards immigration, and undertook a preliminary empirical evaluation of the hypotheses developed in these discussions. These innovative, explicitly multi-level hypotheses are:

- H1. National experience with immigration.** Experience with immigration moderates the (typically, negative) relationship between age and attitudes towards immigration. In countries with a long history of immigration, this relationship will be especially strong. The relationship between age and attitudes towards immigration will be considerably weaker in countries with only recent immigration experience.
- H2. Host population demographic characteristics (age structure).** National age structure contributes to cross-national variance in attitudes towards immigration: Attitudes towards immigration will be more favourable when a larger proportion of the population is over the age of 65.
- H3. Multicultural policies.** The implementation of multicultural policies strengthens the (typically, positive) relationship between level of education and favourable attitudes towards immigration.
- H4. Anti-Immigrant Parties.** The increased electoral success of parties taking anti-immigrant positions strengthens anti-immigrant attitudes among supporters of these parties.

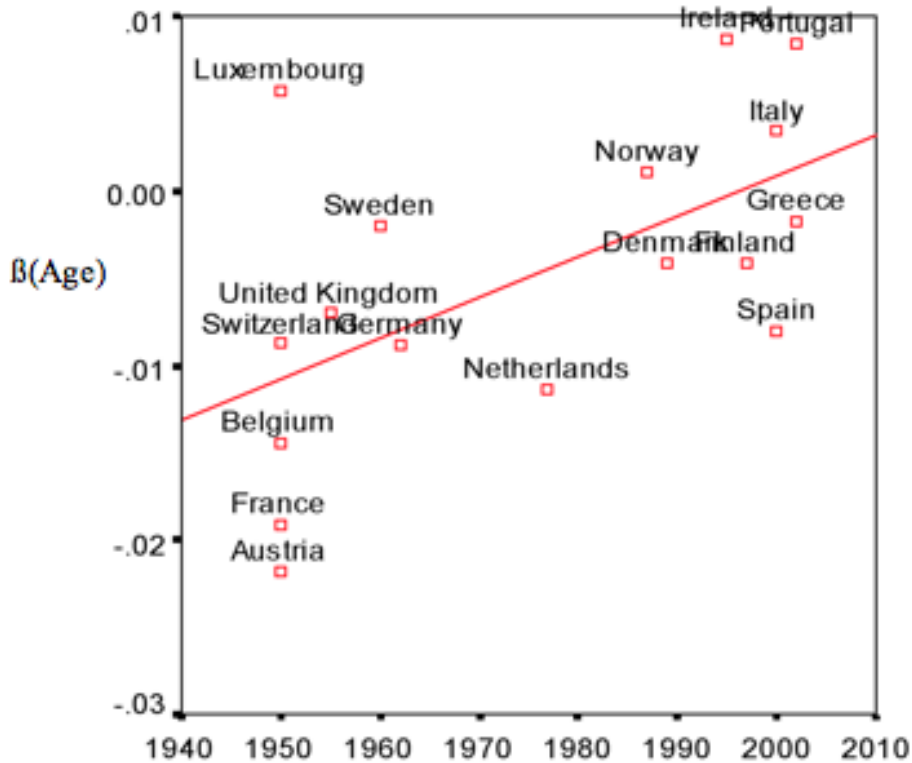
Empirical Testing and Summary of Results

Workshop participants divided into groups according to interests and expertise, with each group taking responsibility for testing one of the hypotheses, using the ESS survey data and a prepared data-set that included a broad collection of demographic, economic and political variables for the set of countries included in the ESS. While the groups experienced varying degrees of success – H1 was especially well-supported by the data, for example, while testing of H4 revealed a pattern of association directly contrary to what was expected – all groups usefully combined individual and system-level data in broad comparative analyses.

The last session of the workshop was devoted to discussion of each groups' results, and there was general consensus about the projects that were especially promising. As suggested above, empirical support for H1 was quite strong. That is, the strength of the relationship between age and attitudes towards immigration (in countries with significant levels of immigration) reflects the country's history with immigration. This relationship is observed in Figure 1, in which coefficients describing the linear relationship between age and favourable attitudes towards immigration¹ are plotted against a variable that reports the year in which the proportion of immigrants living in a country surpassed 3 percent of the total population. The positive relationship observed in this figure implies that, in those countries with long histories of immigration, there are important cross-generation differences in attitudes towards immigration, and that younger citizens generally hold more favourable attitudes. In contrast, in countries where immigration is a relatively new social phenomenon, there are few differences in attitudes towards immigration across generations– and, as the coefficients for several of these countries are positive, there is some evidence that older citizens hold attitudes that are more favourable than the attitudes reported by younger citizens. While this result is probably not surprising, it suggests an important interaction between the national context in which immigration occurs, and citizens' attributes, in shaping attitudes towards immigration, that has been previously ignored.

¹ These coefficients are estimated in models that control for education and whether the respondent is an immigrant or the child of immigrant parents)

FIGURE 1. National Experience with Immigration



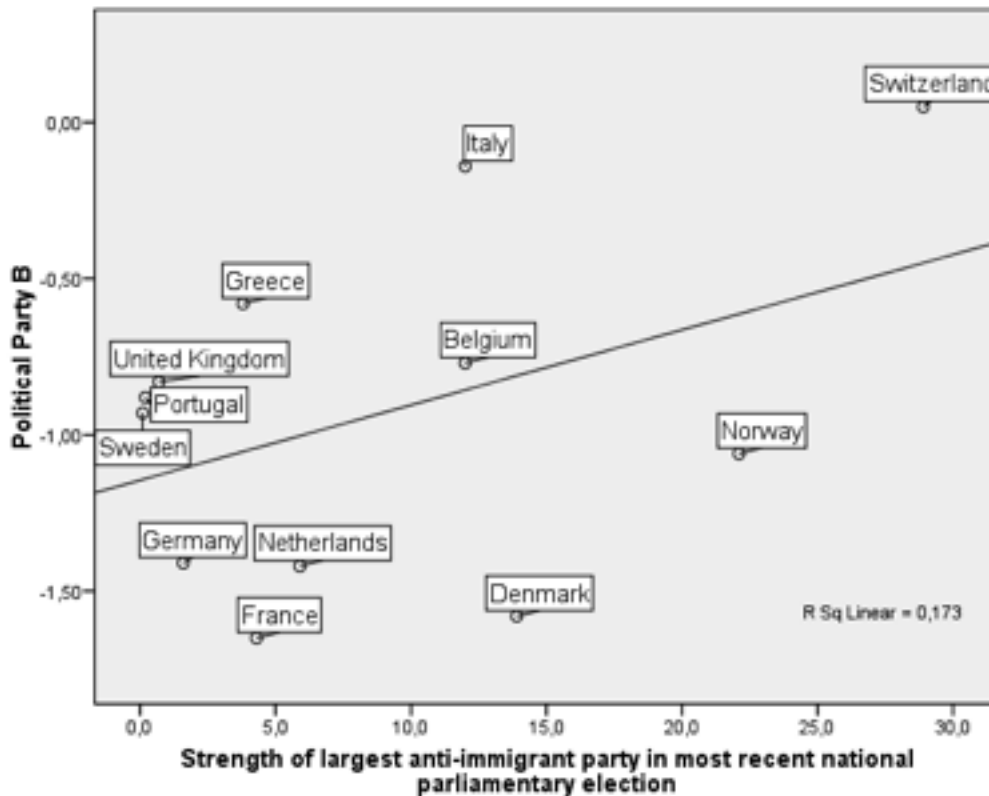
NOTE. This Figure plots coefficients that describe the relationship between age and favorable attitudes towards immigration against the year in which the size of the immigrant community exceeded 3 per cent of the national population.

SOURCE. European Social Survey 2002/2003.

A second hypothesis that the workshop participants found to be especially interesting and deserving of further attention concerned the role of anti-immigrant political parties: Do parties that take anti-immigrant positions, particularly when they are successful, legitimate anti-immigrant attitudes, and consequently increase levels of hostility towards immigrant communities? Using data collected under the auspices of the Comparative Manifestos Project, the group working on this hypothesis identified all parties that have taken anti-immigrant positions in recent elections, and then examined whether supporters of these parties are more likely to express anti-immigrant attitudes when these parties are successful in elections. It turns out, however (see Figure 2), that it is when anti-immigrant parties are more marginal that support for parties taking anti-immigrant positions is more strongly associated with the respondents' own anti-immigrant attitudes. This suggests that

mainstream parties may take quite negative positions on the issue of immigration without alienating their supporters—a finding certainly worthy of further investigation.

FIGURE 2. Anti-Immigrant Parties



NOTE. This Figure plots coefficients that describe the relationship between support for anti-immigrant parties and favorable attitudes towards immigration against the electoral success of parties taking anti-immigrant positions.

SOURCE. European Social Survey 2002/2003.

While space availability in this report limits the attention we can give to H2 and H3, the analyses presented by these groups generated a considerable amount of discussion in the workshop. The group focusing on H2, which investigated the role of national age structure in overall levels of support for immigration, demonstrated that attitudes tend to be more favourable in countries with larger proportions of their population of retirement age, and that this finding holds when cross-national differences in average levels of education, for example, are taken into account. These favourable attitudes, it was argued, came from recognition that an immigrant work force was needed to sustain pension benefit levels. From a somewhat different perspective, the group working on H3, which considered the role of

multicultural policies in fostering support for immigration, presented evidence that the comprehensiveness of multicultural policies moderates the relationship between education and favourable attitudes towards immigration. Thus, in countries with very comprehensive multicultural policies (i.e. UK), levels of support for immigration reflect the distribution of education in these countries. However, in countries with limited multiculturalism policies, there are few differences in attitudes towards immigration across respondents with different levels of education. There was considerable consensus that, in light of the evidence in support of both of these hypotheses and the new perspective on attitudes towards immigration that comes from working within an explicitly multi-level framework, these topics warrant further investigation.

Conclusion

To the best of our knowledge, the kind of research strategy underlying the proposed workshop has not been attempted before. Accordingly, the workshop is both innovative and exploratory. It is also, in our view, likely to be agenda-setting. If the overall approach and the specific method continue to be as fruitful as they have been in this workshop, it will establish a set of procedures and a methodology that could be widely applied to the range of large-scale cross-country survey datasets that now exist in Europe. By combining individual-level variables and system-level variables in a rigorous way, the workshop has the potential to initiate a line of research that will truly exploit the notion of Europe as a research laboratory in the social sciences.

References

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- Hanson, G., Scheve, K. and Slaughter, M. (2005) *Public Finance and Individual Preferences over Globalization Strategies*, NBER Working Paper 11028. Cambridge, Mass.: National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Jusko, Karen Long and W. Phillips Shively (2005) 'A Two-Step Strategy for the Analysis of Cross-National Public Opinion Data' in *Political Analysis*, Vol. 13, No. 4, Autumn, pp. 327-344.
- Lewis, Jeffrey B. and Drew A. Linzer (2005) 'Estimating Regression Models in which the Dependent Variable Is Based on Estimates' in *Political Analysis*, Vol. 13, No. 4, Autumn, pp. 345-364.
- Mayda, A.M. (2005) *Who is against immigration? A cross-country investigation of individual attitudes towards immigrants*, CEPR Discussion Paper 5055. London: Centre for Economic Policy Research.
- O'Rourke, Kevin H. and Richard Sinnott (2006) 'The determinants of individual attitudes towards immigration' in *European Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 22, pp. 838-861.

4. Programme

Wednesday 5 December 2007

Morning	<i>arrival</i>
12:30-14:00	<i>Lunch</i> (at UCD Geary Institute)
afternoon	Meeting room: Seminar room B003, UCD Geary Institute
14:00-15:00	Introduction to the workshop: the problem, the data and the method (2 step hierarchical estimation) and the workshop procedures Richard Sinnott and Karen Long Jusko
15:00-16:00	Overview and discussion of the dependent variables (attitudes to immigration) Mick O'Connell
16:00-16:15	<i>Coffee break</i>
16:15-17:30	Brief overview and discussion of theories, system variables and hypotheses - Karen Long Jusko - Mick O'Connell - Richard Sinnott
17:30	<i>Close of session</i>
20:00	<i>Conference dinner</i> (at Purple Sage Restaurant, Stillorgan Park Hotel)

Thursday 6 December 2007

morning	Meeting room: Seminar room B003, UCD Geary Institute
09:00-11:00	Brief overview and discussion of theories, system variables and hypotheses, continued - Kevin O'Rourke - Alice Feldman
11:00-11:15	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:15-13:00	Roundtable discussion Development of multi-level hypotheses in light of discussions on Day 1 <i>Coordinator:</i> Richard Sinnott
13:00-14:30	<i>Conference lunch</i> (at UCD restaurant)

Afternoon **Meeting room: Computer room G1, UCD Daedalus Building**

- 14:30-16:15 **Computer workshop**
Development of within-country models
- 16:15-16:30 *Coffee break*
- 16:30-17:30 **Computer workshop**
Evaluation of results so far and incorporation of system-level variables
- 17:30 *Close of session*

Evening meal (own arrangements)

Friday 7 December 2007

All day **Meeting room: Computer room B106, UCD Computer Science
and Informatics Centre**

- 09:00-10:45 **Computer workshop**
Testing of multi-levels models
- 10:45-11:00 *Coffee break*
- 11:00-13:00 **Computer workshop**, continued
- 13:00-14:00 *Lunch* (at UCD Veterinary Sciences Centre)
- 14:00-15:00 **Data collection and management issues**
Åse Gilje Østensen and **James McBride**
- 15:00-15:15 *Coffee break*
- 15:15-17:30 **Concluding session**
To assess progress achieved and identify work to be done
- 17:30 *Close of session*
- 20:30 *Conference dinner* (at O'Connells Restaurant, Bewley's Hotel Ballsbridge)

Saturday 8 December 2007

Morning *departure*

5. Statistical information on participants

	Age bracket	Gender	Country of origin
Convenor:			
1. Richard SINNOTT	55+	Male	Ireland
Co-convenors:			
2. Mick O'CONNELL	25-39	Male	Ireland
3. Kevin O'ROURKE	40-54	Male	France
Local organiser:			
4. Elva HANNAN	25-39	Female	Ireland
Participants:			
5. Mare AINSAAR	25-39	Female	Estonia
6. Lucile BODSON	25-39	Female	Luxembourg
7. Daniele CARAMANI	25-39	Male	Switzerland
8. Mikolaj CZESNIK	25-39	Male	Poland
9. Alice FELDMAN	25-39	Female	Ireland
10. Robert FORD	25-39	Male	United Kingdom
11. Karen Long JUSKO	25-39	Female	United States
12. Pat LYONS	25-39	Male	Czech Republic
13. Sara MAGALHÃES	25-39	Female	Portugal
14. James McBRIDE	25-39	Male	Ireland
15. Mónica MENDEZ	25-39	Female	Spain
16. Roula NEZI	25-39	Female	Greece
17. Åse Gilje ØSTENSEN	25-39	Female	Norway
18. Stephen QUINLAN	20-24	Male	Ireland
19. Guillaume ROUX	25-39	Male	France
20. Søren Risbjerg THOMSEN	55+	Male	Denmark
21. Tina VOVK	25-39	Female	Slovenia
22. Hanna WASS	25-39	Female	Finland

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