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Viewpoints of nationals towards migrants and migration

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Workpackage leader and editor

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Attitudes towards foreigners and immigration in the Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Slovenia, and Finland

Executive summary

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Setting the stage

The study analyses the viewpoints of nationals towards immigration and integration of foreigners and relates these views to the socio-demographic features, attitudes towards demographic behaviour and general population trends, and public policies in eight European countries: the Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Slovenia, and Finland.

This study exploits to the maximum the international database FEMAGE-MIG (D4)¹ which encapsulates data from the Population Policy Acceptance Survey (PPAS). The Population Policy Acceptance Survey (PPAS) was designed as a research instrument and a tool for informed policy deliberations. The national fieldwork was undertaken between 2000 and 2003. The data from nationally funded research were collated in the International Population Policy Acceptance Study (IPPAS)² database and encompass information on practices, attitudes and opinions concerning demographic changes, fertility behaviour, intergenerational exchange of resources and services, and population-related policies. It contains information on values and attitudes affecting fertility decisions, perception of advantages and disadvantages of having children, meaning of family and parenthood, aspirations in life, opinions and attitudes towards population policy issues and measures, role of government in providing support to families and

¹ D4, containing the Codebook as a WORD document and Database on nationals in SPSS format prepared by the WP3 leader PSPC (Avramov and Cliquet, 2007a), was submitted to the Commission on 27 April 2006. The FEMAGE-MIG database is analysed by the FEMAGE consortium during the duration of the project and the Manual containing the codebook and the database will be made available to the international scientific community at the end of the FEMAGE project in December 2007.

² Avramov, D., and R. Cliquet (2007b), Manual, Questionnaire, Codebook and Database of the International Population Policy Acceptance Study (IPPAS). C. Höhn, D. Avramov, I. Kotowska (eds.), People, Population Change and Policy. Lessons from the Population Policy Acceptance Study. European Studies of Population. Dordrecht: Springer.

preferences and aspirations regarding gender roles, paid labour and family life, and care in old age.

The 8 FEMAGE partner countries that undertook the national Population Policy Acceptance Survey (PPAS) chose to address also the topic of migration. They included a module on attitudes towards immigration and integration of foreigners. Partners gathered information from nationally representative surveys among nationals on attitudes towards immigration and integration of foreigners. Within the framework of the FEMAGE project the existing but not yet explored data on migration issues have been integrated and streamlined in an international database (FEMAGE-MIG) and are analysed in this report in an international comparative perspective. This database contains information gathered from some 21000 women and men.

The database enables us to look at the interweaving between attitudes and expectations towards migration and foreigners and about other demographic events which impact people's life and which are relevant for informed public policy formation and implementation.

The general theoretical approach in the FEMAGE project builds on the acknowledgement that the responsibility for integration of immigrants rests on many actors: immigrants themselves and governments and institutions, but also citizens in the receiving society. In accordance with the Technical Annex of the FEMAGE contract, in this D7 we look only at the viewpoints of nationals. These findings will be placed in a broader theoretical framework once results of research among immigrant women and policy stakeholders also become available.

Structure of the study

In Chapter 1 we first provide information on the design and contents of the Population Policy Acceptance Survey (PPAS) and the module on immigration and foreigners. Then we describe the FEMAGE-MIG database, methodology and opportunities for analysis.

In Chapter 2 we set the stage for understanding similarities and differences in attitudes of the population by presenting some basic facts and figures about the presence of foreigners in the 8 FEMAGE countries around the time of the PPA surveys, notably between 2000 and 2003, and the legal and policy framework conditions.

In Chapter 3 we address the question who is perceived to be a foreigner and does this identification correspond to the actual presence of foreigners in a given country? We also assess the level of knowledge about the size of the foreign population and the perceptions of whether there are too few or too many foreigners in a country.

Chapter 4 deals with attitudes towards the resident foreigners. We first look in section 1 at the prevalence of positive and negative attitudes which cut across two sets of issues: attitudes about demographic and labour market advantages and disadvantages of immigration and the presence of foreigners and attitudes about cultural diversity and

integration, and policy measures towards immigration and integration of foreigners. In section 2 we undertake an in-depth analysis of the attitudes on demographic advantages and disadvantages in view of expected population decrease and persistent low fertility. Section 3 addresses attitudes on the labour market advantages and disadvantages of the presence of foreigners. In section 4 the impact of education on attitudes towards cultural diversity and integration of immigrants is assessed. Section 5 highlights the meaning of integration from the point of view of natives, and between-country differences and social differences with respect to the cultural diversity and expectations towards the integration of foreigners. The final section 6 analyses the attitudes on policy measures aimed at admittance and integration of immigrants in the host society.

In chapter 5 section 1 focuses on the relationship between the acceptance of immigration and the evaluation of demographic trends by the native population. In section 2 we look at whether the attitudes of citizens towards immigration relate to their attitudes towards gender relations, fertility and the meaning of children. Section 3 confronts attitudes towards immigration with attitudes towards ageing. In section 4 we look to what extent does satisfaction with housing, immediate environment, standard of living, work and work-free time relates to the positive or negative attitudes towards immigration and migrants. This Chapter ends with section 5 in which attitudes towards immigration and migrants are analyzed against general values of people.

Chapter 6 provides a parsimonious comparison of the key findings from the FEMAGE-MIG database with the findings from the Eurobarometer and the European Social Survey.

In Chapter 7 we provide a first summary of the policy-relevant findings from the FEMAGE-MIG database.

For each topical area that is analysed in this report we also summarise the policy relevant findings and draw preliminary conclusions.

First summary of the key policy-relevant findings

The key findings are presented here in the form of parsimonious answers to the key research questions we addressed on the basis of the survey data. Namely,

1. What is the prevalence of foreigners in the 8 countries?
2. Who is perceived as 'a foreigner'?
3. Are there too many immigrants?
4. Is presence of foreigners perceived more frequently as an asset or as a burden?
5. Is immigration a remedy for shrinking populations?
6. What are the perceptions of the labour market advantages and disadvantages of immigration?
7. Is cultural diversity favoured?
8. What is the meaning of integration?

9. Which policy measures towards foreigners and integration of migrants are being favoured?
10. Is immigration perceived in the context of overall demographic processes?
11. Is there a relation between attitudes towards migration and gender issues?
12. How are attitudes towards immigrants related to satisfaction?
13. How are attitudes towards immigrants related to general values?

Facts and figures

- The migration, the socio-economic and the political history of countries are reflected in the numbers of foreigners present in each country. The share of foreign nationals ranges between 0.1 percent in Poland, at the bottom part of the scale, and 25.8 percent in Estonia, at the upper end of the scale. In Hungary, Finland, the Czech Republic and Slovenia foreigners account for between 1.5 percent and 2.1 percent of the population; in Germany and Austria the share stands at 8 and 10 percent respectively.

Who is perceived as 'a foreigner'?

- When people are asked which group they first identify as 'foreigners' in Estonia, Germany and Slovenia, respondents gave the actually largest non-national group. Likewise, in Hungary, the most frequent perception of 'foreigners' relates to the ethnic Hungarians from Trans-Sylvania. By contrast in the Czech Republic, Finland and Poland there is a discrepancy between the image of 'foreigners' and the largest group of non-nationals present in the country.

Are there too many immigrants?

- The realistic idea about the number of foreigners living in one's country is most prevalent in Austria, Germany and Finland, whereas in Estonia and Poland estimates are far-from reality. Over- and underestimation are strongly inversely related to the size of the foreign population: the smaller the foreign population, the larger the overestimation, and vice versa.
- In the Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia, some two-thirds of respondents are of the opinion that there are too many foreigners in their country. In Finland it is one quarter and in Austria close to half of all respondents considers that there are too many foreigners.

Is presence of foreigners perceived more frequently as an asset or as a burden?

- In all 8 countries negative views about the presence of foreigners and their integration are more prevalent than the positive ones. By way of example, in Hungary, on average, respondents agree or strongly agree with 6 negative

statements about foreigners whereas they agree or strongly agree with only 2 positive ones.

- There is however, considerable variation within countries and between countries with respect to the number of negative, as well as positive opinions about foreigners. A multiple classification analysis (MCA) of the number of positive and negative attitudes towards immigration and integration of immigrants for eight predictors (country, urbanization, sex, age, education, activity status, equivalised income, importance of religion in life) shows that country is the most important differentiating factor. Among the personal characteristics of the respondents education is the most important differentiating factor both for the prevalence of positive and negative attitudes. Namely, the higher educational levels are positively associated with a higher number of positive attitudes and negatively with the number of negative attitudes towards foreigners and their integration.

Is immigration a remedy for shrinking populations?

- Immigration is often referred to in policy circles and in media as a partial remedy for the expected population decline. Our research shows that between-country differences in attitudes towards immigration that would be used to counteract population decrease are huge. Most of the respondents in Finland, seven out of every 10, are in favour of such immigration, and only one out of 10 is against immigration as a compensation for population decrease. In Austria the respondents that share the same position are slightly more prevalent than those who have expressed a disagreement (41% versus 35%). Respondents in the three ex-socialist countries hold quite different opinions: only 5% of Estonians and Poles, and 8% of people in the Czech Republic would favour 'replacement' immigration. Immigration as means for compensating for the low natural growth of the population is not favoured in Germany either, although this attitude is not as prevalent as in the above three countries. Respondents in Eastern Germany are less inclined to accept immigration as means to deal with population decline than those from Western Germany.

What are the perceptions of the labour-market advantages and disadvantages of immigration?

- Attitudes about the labour market disadvantages of the presence of foreigners predominate over attitudes about advantages. By way of example, in Poland, the Czech Republic, Eastern Germany, and Hungary, more than half of the respondents believe that foreigners take away jobs. In Austria and Western Germany it is only 25% and 30 % respectively. In Slovenia, Western Germany and the Czech republic 3 to 4 out of every 10 respondents are of the opinion that foreigners are necessary to do the work we no longer want to do, whereas in Hungary this is the viewpoint of only 1 out of every 100 respondents.

- The social differentiation of attitudes on labour-market (dis)advantages of the presence of foreigners is most salient for the educational and the economic background of the respondents: the lower their educational level or the income the fewer consider that foreigners bring economic advantages. The same holds for the unemployed and retired, compared to the employed. People with a weaker educational capital or economic situation are more prone to fears of the economic competition that comes from foreigners.

Is cultural diversity favoured?

- Educational attainment of the natives has a clear impact on attitudes towards the acceptance of cultural diversity associated with immigration and the presence of foreigners. Higher education is associated with a higher acceptance of migrants. This association can also be found for integration measures but is somewhat less pronounced. The impact of education can be found in all countries, with the exception of Estonia where attitudes towards foreigners among all citizens appear heavily marked by years of foreign occupation.
- The basic positive statement on the presence of foreigners is expressed by the question: ‘The presence of foreigners is positive because it allows an exchange with other cultures’. A relatively high association is found between this variable and the statement that the ‘Integration of foreigners should be fostered’. The quite strong positive relation between these two variables shows that attitudes towards foreigners are quite nuanced: those in favour of the presence of foreigners are at the same time in favour of fostering integration, hence, do not appear to favour an approach to multiculturalism that enhances cultural ‘separateness’ of immigrants.
- In Western Germany more than half of the respondents share the view that ‘The presence of foreigners is positive because it allows an exchange with other cultures’, whereas in the Czech Republic and Estonia only 3 out of every 10 respondents agree with this statement. There are salient between-country differences both for the positive and the negative general attitudes towards immigrants and their integration.
- A dividing line exists between Eastern and Western countries, the former displaying less positive attitudes towards cultural diversity and integration. In Western Germany only 13 out of every 100 respondents agree that there is no room for foreigners, whereas as many as 4 out of every 10 people in Hungary hold this view. In all countries more than half of the population shared the opinion that increase of foreigners favours the spread of crime and terrorism. In the Czech Republic as many as 8 out of every 10 respondents agree with this statement.
- Regarding the social differentiation of general attitudes towards foreigners and their integration, urbanisation is slightly positively related to positive attitudes towards immigration and integration of migrants. People living in rural environment tend to have more negative views. Education, and to a lesser degree

also equivalised income, differentiate quite clearly: the higher the education or income level, the larger the proportion of respondents who agree or fully agree with positive statements. The inverse relation with negative statements is even more pronounced. Somewhat less salient relations are found among unemployed and retired people. Non-religious or less religious people are somewhat more in favour of integration of immigrants than religious people.

- Multivariate analyses show that amongst the investigated independent variables, country and educational level are the two most important differentiating factors.

What is the meaning of integration?

- The meaning of integration and the importance attached to integration are reflected in the viewpoints of natives about the significance of mastering the language and abiding by customs and rules of the host country, and in the opinion that those foreigners who do not integrate should return to their own country.
- In Estonia, Eastern Germany, Western Germany, Slovenia, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Austria the overwhelming majority of the population, more than 80 percent agree that foreigners are obliged to learn the language and to get used to customs and rules of the host country. The share of people in agreement with this statement ranges between 77 percent in Austria and 92 percent in Estonia.
- Similarly, an overwhelming majority of respondents in Estonia, Eastern Germany, Western Germany, Slovenia, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Finland share the view that foreigners who have not integrated after five years should return to their own country. The share of people in agreement with this statement ranges between 59 percent in Western Germany and 85 percent in Hungary.
- This meaning of integration and the prevalence of agreement that non-integrated foreigners should return to their own country, which cut across all countries irrespective of the lower or higher levels of xenophobia observed, appears to leave little scope for the policy discourse of multiculturalism as egalitarian mutual adaptation. The native populations clearly expect foreigners to make a very strong effort to adapt to the host country.

Which policy measures towards foreigners and integration of migrants are favoured?

- Integration into the political life and decision making process via voting rights does not get majority approval in any country. The proportion of respondents who agree that “After 5 years of residence, foreigners should have the right to vote in local elections” stands at 48 percent in Finland at the upper end of the scale, and 20 percent in Hungary, at the lower end of the scale.

- The majority of the population in all countries agrees that illegal immigrants should be expelled. The share stands at 81 percent in Estonia and Eastern Germany, and 56 percent in Poland.
- Attitudes on specific policy measures towards foreigners and their integration show significant differences between the countries studied, and this applies both for measures regulating the numbers of immigrants and their integration. Also here the major dividing line runs between East and West.
- Attitudes on policy measures towards immigration and integration of foreigners are the only domain for which men are somewhat more than women in 'total disagreement' with positive policy measures, and vice versa for negative policy measures. Also age produces, in general, slight differences for the policy measures: older age groups are slightly more against positive policy measures. As always, higher levels of education are associated to more positive attitudes towards positive policy measures for the integration of migrants.
- All positive policy measures are positively related to demographic incentives for immigration, whereas they are negatively related to demographic disincentives for immigration.

Is immigration perceived in the context of overall demographic processes?

- We examined the relationships between the acceptance of immigration, and the views on three groups of demographic processes — the change in population size, demographic ageing and fertility. In most cases, the analysis reveals systematic and statistically significant associations between the attitudes towards immigration and the perception of major demographic trends. This finding substantiates the hypothesis that people develop definite views on the general population trends, including immigration and foreigners. These views and attitudes are grounded in the overall reality, and reflect the awareness, to a smaller or greater extent, about the relationships between demographic phenomena that encapsulate population growth/decline, fertility, ageing, and migration.

Is there a relation between attitudes towards migration and gender issues?

- The conservative views on gender and partnership are echoed in the negative attitudes towards immigrants. The more individuals advocate the traditional position of women in the family, the more they express negative attitudes towards immigrants in all countries studied. The more individuals support gender equality measures, the more they express positive attitudes towards immigrants. The more individuals attribute importance of children for parents, the more they express negative attitudes towards immigrants. All these findings feed into the hypotheses that the debates on ideologies of national reproduction are closely related to the views on traditional gender relations as the ethno-nationalist vision stresses precisely the traditional gender roles.

How are attitudes towards immigrants related to satisfaction and general values in life?

- Satisfaction in several domains of life, namely housing, immediate environment, standard of living, work and work-free time, is modestly related to positive and negative attitudes towards immigration and integration of migrants. High levels of satisfaction are conducive to more positive attitudes towards immigration and integration of migrants, and vice versa. Dissatisfied people more often react negatively towards immigration. The relations between the satisfaction variables and the attitudes towards migrants are most salient for standard of living and household income. These relations are largely independent of major socio-demographic, socio-economic or socio-cultural characteristics of the respondents. We tend to interpret the relations between satisfaction with various domains of life and attitudes towards migrants to be due to the presence or absence of fears or experiences of economic competition and/or cultural capital.
- Of the three value dimensions studied: having good financial circumstances, sufficient leisure time and the importance of the private sphere, the first two are most likely to show a correlation with attitudes regarding immigration. People who emphasise the importance of a solid financial background are less likely to show a positive attitude, they are less likely to agree that immigrants are necessary because of a shrinking population, they reject the idea that their integration should be supported and also that immigrants ought to be given the right to vote in local elections after five years of residence. At the same time, this value orientation goes hand in hand with the view that immigrants take away jobs, they contribute to the spreading of crime and terrorism and there is no room for them in the country, not even in order to compensate for population shrinkage.
- The emphasis on leisure time, behind which presumably exist a degree of individualism which places high value on the freedom of the individual, goes together with a more positive attitude towards foreigners: it enhances positive and reduces negative attitudes toward them. People who attach high value to work-free time consider immigration as beneficial rather than harmful both from an economic and a cultural point of view; they reject the idea that foreigners contribute to the spreading of crime or that there should be no room for them in the country. At the same time they are more likely to favour the idea of supporting the integration of foreigners and are less willing to send them home if they fail to become integrated into the receiving society after five years.

How do PPA findings relate to other attitudinal surveys?

- The attitudinal data on immigrants in the Eurobarometer, ESS and PPAS surveys largely show the same trends and social differentiations, notwithstanding the somewhat different conceptual framework and interpretative approaches. However, PPAS also shows some strong points. Firstly, in studying attitudes towards immigration and integration of foreigners PPAS developed very specific and well differentiated questions. Secondly, by focusing on immigrants and



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foreigners PPAS did not merge notions of ethnicity, race and religious groups which, in many countries, relate to quite different social processes. Thirdly, in PPAS migration issues are related to a broad array of individual features and studied together with a broad range of domains that matter in people's life.