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# Determinants of Anti-Immigrant Sentiments

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Determinants of Anti-Immigrant Sentiments throughout Europe

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Senior Seminar

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## **Abstract**

Given the current refugee crises from political unrest around the world there has been increasing opposition towards immigration in both rhetoric and policy changes. In order to address this phenomenon this paper builds off of several well researched theories including how economic security, educational attainment, threat to culture, and the availability of information play a role in developing one's view on immigrants. Using data collected from the European Social Survey (ESS) I test these theories in order to see which is the most statistically significant in determining one's opposition or favorability of immigrants. This paper attempts to progress the understanding of how anti-immigrant sentiments are fostered and provides insight as to how policy changes may help address this issue.

## **Introduction**

Immigration has become one of the most important and highly salient issues in recent years. As the debate about immigration has come to the forefront of politics, the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments has also become an issue. Through research, I found some of the main determinants that lead to anti-immigrant sentiments throughout the world and offer policy suggestions that could help mitigate the rise of such sentiments. Today's news is saturated with articles slamming "refugees" as a single group bent on destroying civil society such as the recent article titled "Stockholm terror: Sweden will 'never go back' to mass immigration, PM reacts" (Foxnews, 2017). News such as this offers no context and serves only to fuel anti-immigrant sentiments around the world.

The rise of anti-immigrant sentiments poses significant policy concerns to countries and by better understanding what influences people to develop negative feelings towards immigrants, governments can create legislation that addresses those concerns. A more concrete understanding of what drives these sentiments will help mitigate conflict between groups as well as create a more just society. Additionally, the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments have led to the formation of often

exclusionary and hostile legislation, especially in countries such as the United States (Kiehne, 2014).

Through research, I examined some of the root causes of these sentiments and what determinates are more likely to lead to such attitudes. Many studies have been conducted which have examined the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments which have resulted in a number of theories. These theories include economic stability, education, cultural norms and the availability of information. For my research, I specifically examined whether the educational attainment and the availability of information on immigrant numbers and consequences are better determinants of anti-immigrant sentiments than cultural norms and socioeconomic status.

### **History/Background**

Anti-immigrant sentiments and political parties have risen in popularity and then fallen throughout the world overtime. While recently these parties seem to be rising in popularity due to security or economic concerns, I think that this research could help dispel those feelings. Over the past few years' anti-immigrant parties and politicians in the U.S. commonly cite arguments about economic and security for the justification of anti-immigrant attitudes. Contrary to this argument research has been conducted which found that immigrants do not have an adverse effect on host economies. In Europe, anti-immigrant political parties cite the same sorts of arguments in defense of their policy choices even when those choices may not be the best for the economic reality in a specific state. By better understanding the determinants of anti-immigrant sentiments, it would be easier to mitigate the effects of anti-immigrant and exclusionary policies that threaten to be the norm. Being able to address the underlying causes of anti-immigrant sentiments is imperative to creating comprehensive immigration policy that is both fair and beneficial to host economies and immigrants.

The current refugee crisis in Europe sparked by the continued unrest and conflict, specifically in Syria and Iraq has led to more than one million refugees entering Europe (Europa.eu, 2016). This has led

to considerable debate about what should be done to accommodate refugees fleeing from war and other atrocities. This sudden influx of refugees has also created an atmosphere that has allowed anti-immigrant sentiments to flourish. Since immigration was already such a salient issue, the refugee crisis only exacerbated the existing problem that needs considerable research to help mitigate anti-immigrant sentiments. Headlines such as “‘Get out of France’: Paris police tear gassing refugees and stealing blankets in freezing conditions, report reveals” are prevalent and help illustrate the intense debate over immigration (Dearden, 2017). These are not isolated sentiments and other countries are experiencing the rise of similar sentiments and movements such as a headline from Hungary reading “Migrant crisis: Hungarian referendum off to a 'xenophobic' start” (Womack, 2016). Additionally, violence against immigrants has been steadily increasing with Germany recording nearly ten attacks against immigrants a day in 2016 (Aljazeera, 2017). These headlines and numbers help illustrate how dire the situation is and how a better understanding of how one cultivates an anti-immigrant sentiment is essential to combatting the violence and strife that currently consumes the immigration debate.

An anti-immigrant sentiment, or a desire to have less or no immigration coupled with not wanting to live near or next to a foreign worker or immigrant is a complex issue that is fostered through a variety of variables. Economic wellbeing, symbolic threat to culture, level of education, and the availability of information about immigrant numbers and consequences all play a role in this development however, some play a larger role than others. To better understand what determinant is more important I examine a number of existing studies and use the variables that have already been proven to play a role to see which is most significant. Using the same dataset that the individual studies use, I was able to draw overarching conclusions that offer a better statistical analysis of which determinants are more likely to result in anti-immigrant sentiments.

### **Literature Review**

Over the years' considerable research has gone into the study of what the main determinants of anti-immigrant sentiments are. For a long time most research disregarded other determinates and focused solely on the idea that economic threat and security were the main determinates of anti-immigrant sentiments. This theory has been challenged in recent works with many authors and researchers looking beyond economic threat to explore what else may be driving the formation of such sentiments. I explore a number of existing theories that have shown to have something to do with the development of anti-immigrant sentiments. By examining how economic threat and security, educational attainment, cultural threat, and the availability of information all play a role in the formation of anti-immigrant sentiments I am able to evaluate which determinates are most significant in the development of anti-immigrant sentiments.

### **Economic Threat/Security**

While recent research points to economic threat and security as not the main determinant, there is clearly some linkage between the economy and anti-immigrant sentiments. Rather than being the main determinate research has found that opinion about immigration is largely unrelated to economic circumstances but more closely linked to cultural and national identities and the overestimation of immigrant numbers and consequences (Sides and Citrin, 2007; Sides and Citrin, 2008; Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014; Citrin, Green, Muste, and Wong, 1997; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior, 2004). This is a common theme among recent research with many researchers finding that while economic threat and security play a role in the formation of such sentiments it is not the best predictor (Sides and Citrin, 2007; Sides and Citrin, 2008). Additionally, it was found that contrary to the traditional model of labor-market competition higher levels of educational attainment are correlated with less anti-immigrant sentiments, regardless of employment status or sector of employment (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2007).

While much of the recent research seems to disprove the idea of economic threat as the main determinant there are studies that show correlation. A recent study has shown that overall as GDP rises so do average attitudes concerning immigration (Brenner and Fertig, 2006).

### **Educational Attainment**

One theory that has seen considerable study is how the level of educational attainment correlates to the formation of anti-immigrant attitudes. One such study that looked at how educational attainment affects ones' propensity to have an anti-immigrant sentiments was conducted by Hainmueller and Hiscox. In this study Hainmueller and Hiscox found that higher levels of educational attainment were associated with higher levels of ethnic and racial tolerance as well as an acceptance of cultural diversity (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2007). This piece helped empirically show the validity for educational attainment as a determinant for the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments. Furthering the argument for educational attainment is a study, which found that those with a primary education were much more likely to harbor an anti-immigrant sentiment than their peers who went onto secondary education or further (Nikolaj Malchow-Møller, Jakob Roland Munch, Sanne Schroll and Jan Rose Skaksen, 2009). Additional support for this theory is the work conducted by Elisa Rustenbach which also found a positive correlation between anti-immigrant sentiments and educational attainment (Rustenbach, 2010). Going beyond the idea of simple education as the main determinant was a study which helped point that not only educational attainment but also parental education on norms and differences were the main determinants (Brenner and Fertig, 2006). This is an interesting theory and helps show it may not be only the educational attainment but something about education that helps foster more tolerant views.

Existing research has shown that educational attainment plays a significant role in the formation of anti-immigrant sentiments. Educational attainments fostered a higher level of racial and ethnic tolerance amongst respondents (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2007; Rustenbach, 2010; Brenner and Fertig, 2006). These findings were reiterated in an article that explained how highly educated people in white-collar jobs are significantly more likely to hold pro-immigration sentiments (Haubert and Fussell, 2006). This higher level of ethnic and racial tolerance was the same regardless if an individual was in a high-skilled or low-skilled job (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2007). This furthers the idea that education level is imperative in the formation of ideas and opinions about immigration regardless of an individual's skill set or place in the economy. Through analysis of these studies, it is clear that educational attainment is a valid theory for being the main determinant of anti-immigrant sentiments however it is important to look at a number of empirically supported theories.

### **Cultural Threat**

Another theory postulated was the discrepancy between realistic threats to welfare and symbolic threats to an individual's worldview. This theory also found to discredit older research by empirically showing that symbolic threats to ones' worldview are considerably more statistically significant in determining the prevalence of anti-immigrant sentiments than realistic threats to one's welfare and economic considerations (Kiehne, 2014; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior, 2004). The theory did not completely discredit the idea that economic threats to welfare are involved in the formation of anti-immigrant sentiments however; it found that the symbolic threats are much more significant.

The theory that the symbolic threat to one's culture is the main determinant has been broached by a number of authors who have found empirical evidence that supports its plausibility. In fact, it was found that how important values and identity are to the public show a positive correlation between



anti-immigrant sentiments (Sides and Citrin, 2007; Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014). This is postulated as being the case since immigrants are outsiders and therefore elicit hostility from natives who have a strong emotional attachment to their homeland and people (Sides and Citrin, 2007). Additionally, it was found that there is more support that anti-immigrant views are associated with values and beliefs that “foster animosity toward foreigners and foreign cultures and that are most prevalent among less educated individuals” (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2007). Furthering the idea of a threat to culture as the main determinant was a study that found that the clearest predictor of anti-immigrant sentiments came from a lack of trust and societal integration from the introduction of new cultures (Rustenbach, 2010).

### **Availability of Information**

The availability of information on immigrant numbers and consequences has shown to be another indicator for the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments. It was found that different levels of information affected sentiments towards immigration and showed how the public throughout the European Union and around the world vastly overestimated the levels of immigration in their own countries (Sides and Citrin, 2007; Sides and Citrin, 2008; Hopkins, Sides, and Citrin, 2016). Following this finding the authors proposed that those who overestimate levels of immigration are much more likely to harbor anti-immigrant sentiments (Sides and Citrin, 2007; Hopkins, Sides, and Citrin, 2016). Supporting this idea was another study that found that increasing the level of legitimate information about the consequences and levels of immigration would help decrease the level of anti-immigrant sentiments (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2007). These findings were mirrored in multiple studies with another finding that a larger part in forming the public’s opinion is the availability of information (Nikolaj Malchow-Møller, Jakob Roland Munch, Sanne Schroll and Jan Rose Skaksen, 2009). Another survey study also found that when respondents were asked about levels of immigration and supposed consequences they overestimated such numbers and were more likely to have negative views about immigration (Sides and Citrin, 2008; Hopkins, Sides, and Citrin, 2016). After respondents were given accurate information

concerning immigrant numbers and consequences, they were much more likely to be in favor of immigration (Transatlantic Trends: Immigration, 2010).

### **Hypothesis**

My hypothesis is that the main determinants for the existence of an anti-immigrant sentiment will be the level of educational attainment and the availability of information and that they will prove to be the most statistically significant determinants. As such, I believe that individuals with higher levels of education and that have a greater availability of information will hold less of an anti-immigrant sentiment than individuals with less education and a lower availability of information. While I believe that these two determinants will be the most significant I also believe that there will be correlation between economic and cultural threat. I believe that a higher level of education and a greater availability of information will result in a lower prevalence of anti-immigrant sentiments. I also believe that the more one feels economically secure will result in a lower prevalence of anti-immigrant sentiments. In regards to cultural threat I believe that the more important one's culture is to a respondent will result in a higher prevalence of anti-immigrant sentiments.

### **Methodology**

In order to find out what the main determinant of anti-immigrant sentiments is in Europe I use round seven of the European Social Survey (ESS) data from 2014. The data for this round was collected from twenty-two European countries over the period of early 2014 to mid-2015. The survey size for each country and question differs slightly though the ESS used a formula based on the population of persons over the age of fifteen in each country in order to collect a valid and comprehensive sample size in each country. Many of the studies that have come up with sound theories have used earlier rounds of the ESS so using the newest round would offer a coherent and sound analysis to determine the main determinant of anti-immigrant sentiments. Using this data, I am able to cross someone's proclivity

towards harboring anti-immigrant sentiments with a number of variables. These variables include level of educational attainment, economic wellbeing and security, availability of information on immigrant numbers and consequences, as well as the importance of cultural norms and traditions and how that may influence anti-immigrant sentiments. The ESS collected data on each of these variables and includes respondents throughout Europe. This will allow me to use data from a variety of countries, each experiencing slightly different conditions.

The fact that the ESS surveyed a number of countries with varying economic and demographic situations helps ensure that the data that I analyze is not skewed for a specific country. The results, which I find through analysis, offer a broad look at what drives anti-immigrant sentiments throughout Europe.

Existing research has shown that many variables are involved in the formation of anti-immigrant sentiments however the education level of an individual as well as the availability of information about immigrant numbers and consequences appear to be key in the development of anti-immigrant sentiments. I believe that as an individual attains more education they become more open to immigration due to increased exposure to new ideas and people. As an individual is exposed to new ideas and cultures their inherent fear and distrust of immigrants will decrease due to exposure. This finding has been supported by research showing that more educated respondents tend to be significantly less racist (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2007). Additionally, this could be explained by the fact that more educated respondent's value cultural diversity and inclusion more than less educated respondents (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2007) (Brenner and Fertig, 2006). Since immigration is tied to many political campaigns actual information about immigrant numbers and consequences has been politicized and capitalized on by politicians. Politicians across the spectrum use immigration as a tool to get votes, which has made it difficult for the public to get unbiased information about the actual level of immigration and the impact that it may have. Studies have found that the public overestimates the level

and impact that immigration will have on a given state (Sides and Citrin, 2007) (Kiehne, 2014). While the effect that the overestimation of immigrant numbers and consequences needs to be studied further there is empirical proof that those who receive information concerning immigration respond differently than those who do not. It was found that individuals given legitimate information about immigrant numbers believe that there are not too many immigrants within their countries as opposed to those who are not given information (Transatlantic Trends: Immigration 2010). Due to the empirical evidence that both the level of education and the availability of information influence the development of anti-immigrant sentiments I believe that more study must be conducted to see if they are the main determinants.

To differentiate from previous research, I use the newest data from the ESS. Additionally, previous studies have looked at one or two of my chosen variables but never the number of variables that I have chosen against each other. Drawing on previous research, I chose a collection of variables that all have shown to have some empirical evidence towards the formation of anti-immigrant sentiments. By taking multiple studies and theories into account I am able to better identify the main determinates of anti-immigrant sentiments.

I conduct an observational study using data collected in round seven of the European Social survey (ESS). Conducting an observational study allows me to analyze the data found in each individual state and then compare how each state relates to one another. I am then able to see which variable is most significant in the formation of anti-immigrant sentiments and whether those variables change based on the demographics and socioeconomic conditions of a certain state. I conducted a series of descriptive statistics to show that there is indeed correlation between my chosen variables. Once I found proof that there is indeed correlation I ran a series of multivariate regression models to assess which variable is the most statistically significant.

In order to measure the existence of an anti-immigrant sentiment I consider a number of issues. While an anti-immigrant sentiment is a rather broad and cumbersome idea it could be narrowed down by utilizing the existing data and studies which have drawn on such data. To this end, I define an anti-immigrant sentiment using four different survey questions from the ESS. Using four survey questions allows for consideration of multiple facets of an anti-immigrant sentiment. The ESS has a plethora of responses to questions such as this, which will allow me to cross those sentiments with variables such as education level, availability of information, importance of culture, and economic stability.

Existing research has shown how many variables play a role in the formation of anti-immigrant sentiments however, some have been empirically proven to be more of a determinant than others. While it would be difficult to control for every single variable involved in the formation of anti-immigrant sentiments I would account for those that have previously shown to play a large role. Specifically, I would consider the educational level of an individual measured by the amount of formal schooling that they attained. An additional variable is the availability of information surrounding immigrant numbers and consequences. To test this I use a question, which asks the respondent how much time they spend watching television about current events and politics. Another variable is the existence of cultural norms and how/if certain cultural norms foster more animosity towards immigration. To test how the importance of culture may influence the development of anti-immigrant sentiments I will use questions that ask about the importance of a respondent's cultural identity and the importance of following traditions and customs. To assess how the economic situation of a respondent determines the existence of anti-immigrant sentiments I will use questions found in the ESS that ask respondents about their perception of the national economy, and how they feel about their household income. These questions offer a comprehensive overview of what drives anti-immigrant sentiments throughout Europe. After collecting and analyzing the data, I am able to show which variables are significant with developing anti-immigrant sentiments.

I believe that the hypotheses that educational attainment, cultural norms, economic stability, and the availability of information are the leading determinants in the development of anti-immigrant sentiments is sound and backed up by previous research. After examining how each of these plays a role in the development of anti-immigrant sentiment it is easier to see which one is more statistically significant. Given the previous research on the subject, it is clear that there is a credible causal mechanism between anti-immigrant sentiments and education and information. It also seems highly unlikely that more information and education would lead to higher levels of anti-immigrant sentiments since it has been shown that those with higher levels of education are less racist and more in favor of immigration (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2007). Existing research has also shown that there is covariation between increased levels of educational attainment and knowledge about immigrant numbers and consequences that are associated with lower levels of anti-immigrant sentiments (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2007, Transatlantic Trends: Immigration 2010, Sides and Citrin, 2007).

The data collected in the surveys that I utilize is ordinal in nature. This helps differentiate for the level of education in such a scale starting with no formal education and leading up to a doctoral degree. This helps show how increases in educational attainment affect the prevalence of anti-immigrant sentiments. The same sort of ordinal measurement is used to determine the amount or lack thereof of information that a respondent has on the actual level and consequences of immigration. To help determine how much cultural homogeneity matters to an individual I also use an ordinal form of measurement. By showing how important cultural homogeneity, traditions, and customs are to a respondent in relation with the level of anti-immigrant sentiments one will have a clear understanding of how it affects the development of such sentiments. Using an ordinal scale of measurement when determining an individual's opinion on immigration is important since it allows for statistical interpretation of how each determinant affects the prevalence of anti-immigrant sentiments and which are more likely to give rise to such opinions.

Considerable evidence points to the fact that the economic well-being is not the main determinant in creating anti-immigrant views and instead a lack of education fosters these ideals and views. While many who hold anti-immigrant views are experiencing a form of economic hardship those same individuals are generally less educated. The interesting fact noted by Sides and Citrin was that those who were more educated yet kept outside of the labor force or experiencing economic hardship were less likely to harbor anti-immigrant views. Based on these studies it is clear that higher levels of education tend to lead citizens to accept new cultures and customs while at the same time welcoming immigrants (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2007). While there are many determinates that can lead to anti-immigrant sentiments it appears the main source of these views comes from a lack of education throughout the world.

While the data available disproves the notion that anti-immigrant sentiments are driven only by economic interests other determinants seem to be the respondents education level and available information it is unable to account for the cultural gap that exists between populations. There is a clear link between anti-immigrant sentiments with a number of variables however, it is difficult to pinpoint individuals who may be educated yet hold onto inherent racism and ethnocentric ideals. Additionally, some individuals may respond more positively towards questions regarding immigration due to a social desirability standpoint.

In addition, these findings help disprove the traditional theory that economic interests are the main determinant in the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments. The fact that considerable research has shown that the economy plays a smaller role than was previously thought helps support the theory that other factors are more important. To look beyond economic interests creates a situation where there are a large number of variables that all play a part. While this in itself makes it more difficult to find the main determinants it is clear that symbolic threats to an individual's worldview are more salient predictors of an anti-immigrant sentiment than realistic threats to welfare (Kiehne, 2014). In light of

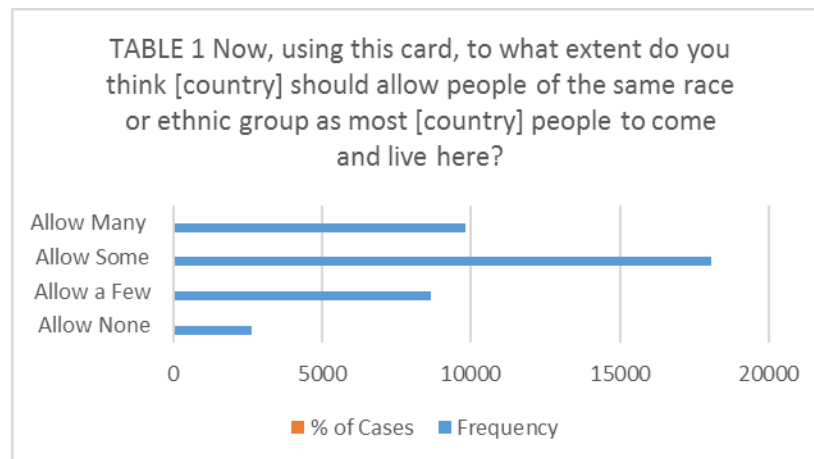
this, it is important to look at a variety of variables to better assess which are the most significant in the development of anti-immigrant sentiments.

### Variables and Measurement

#### **Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable is whether a respondent holds an anti-immigrant sentiment. While there are a number of ways to measure the existence of an anti-immigrant sentiment, I chose the following questions from round seven of the ESS in order to have a concrete understanding of whether a respondent holds such a sentiment. In order to hold an anti-immigrant sentiment a respondent must have responded negatively to any or all of the following questions from round seven of the ESS.

The first question I chose to determine whether a respondent held an anti-immigrant question asked them how they felt about people of the same race or ethnicity as the majority of people within their country to immigrate. Table 1 shows the distribution of these responses with the majority of people believing that some should be allowed to immigrate

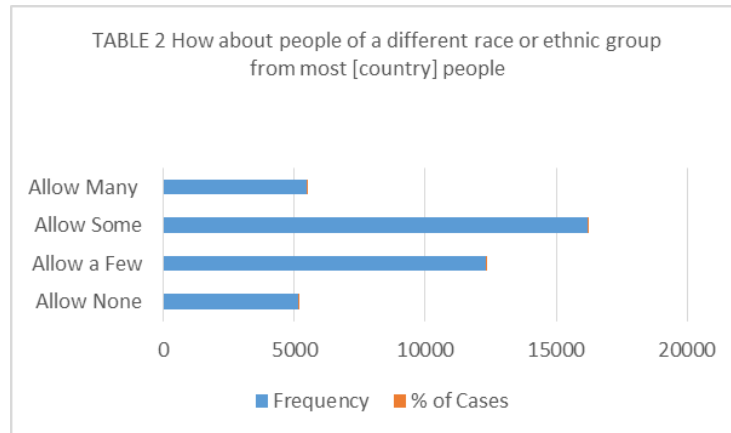


\*Full frequency table available in appendix A

In Contrast to the first question, the second question attempts to show whether respondents felt differently about immigrants of a race or ethnicity that is not the majority in their country. Table 2

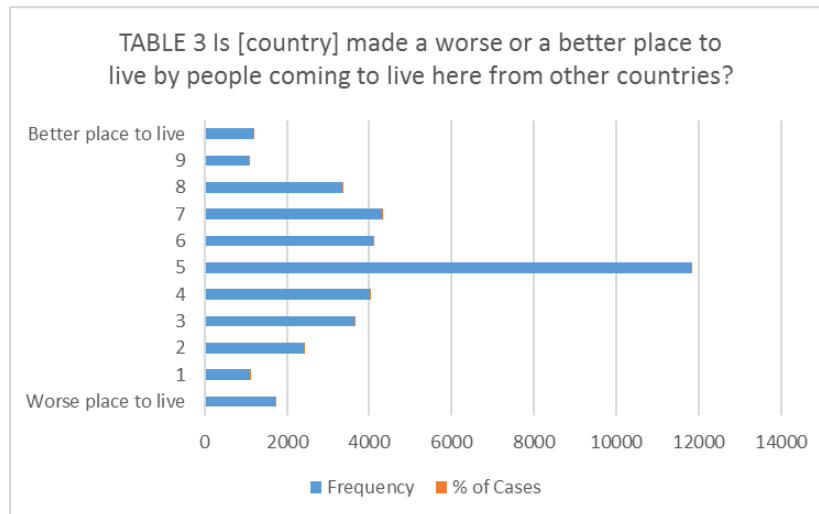


shows the distribution of answers for this question. An interesting take away from this table is that those who believed that many immigrants of the same race or ethnicity should be allowed to immigrate was almost halved when asked if many immigrants of another race or ethnicity should be allowed to immigrate.



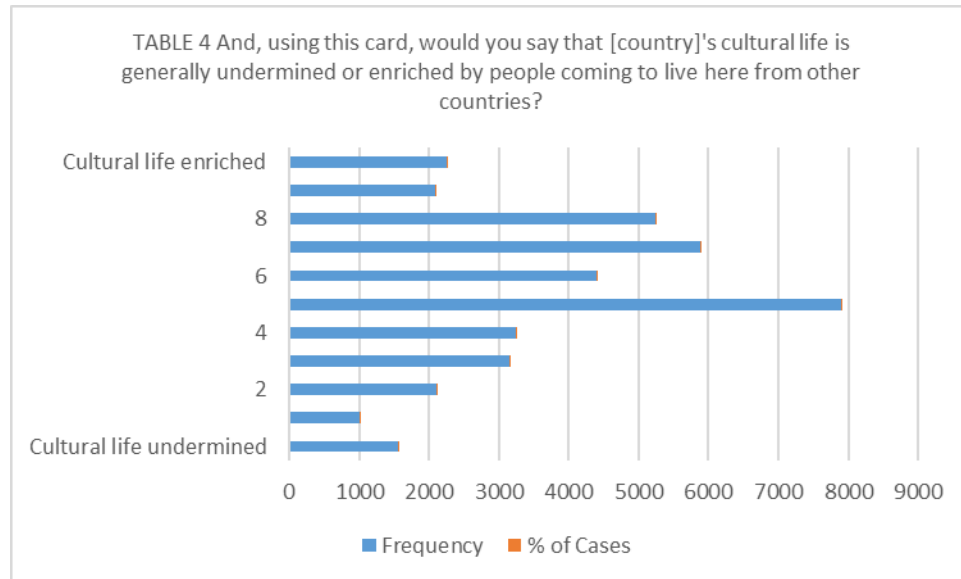
\*Full Frequency table for this question available in appendix B

The third question that I chose asked the respondents whether they felt that immigrants as a whole made the country a better or worse place to live. I chose this question since it forced the respondent to place how they felt on a scale giving a rough idea of how they viewed immigrants and immigration itself. What is interesting about the responses to this question as seen in table 3 is that the vast majority of respondents were right in the middle and did not have strong feelings about immigrants one way or another.



\*Full frequency table for this question available in appendix C

The last question that I chose to measure an anti-immigrant sentiment was how they felt immigrants impacted the culture within their respective countries. Mirroring the results in the previous question it is quite apparent that most respondents were ambivalent or believed that refugees enriched the cultural life within their states. Table 4 displays the distribution of responses for this question.



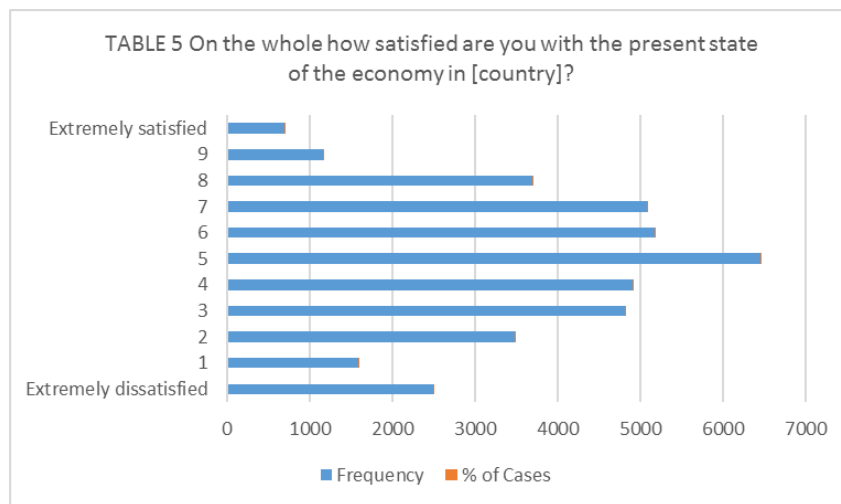
\*Full frequency table available in appendix D

### Independent Variables

The following independent variables were chosen based off of previous research which has shown that certain variables play a role in the formation of anti-immigrant sentiments. Each of these variables represents a facet of the formation of anti-immigrant sentiments and by examining each it will be easier to see which variable is the most statically significant determinant in the formation of such sentiments. The chosen variables consist of economic threat and security, educational attainment, cultural threat, and availability of information. The following questions were also drawn from round seven of the ESS encompassing twenty-two European countries.

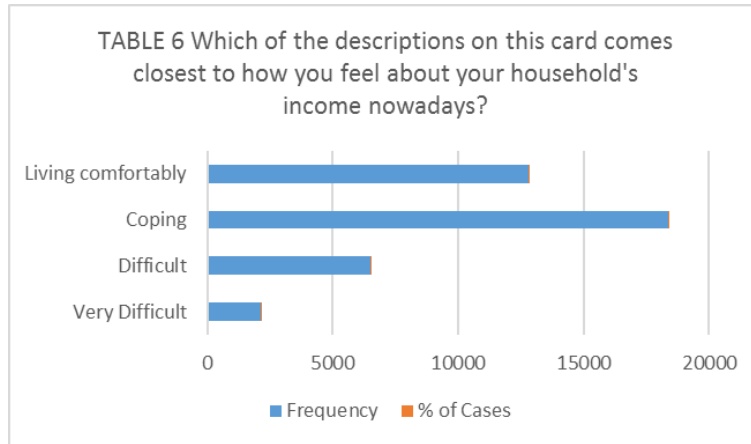
**Economic threat/Security**

The first question I chose to examine how the economy plays a role in the development of anti-immigrant sentiments was how the respondent felt about the national economy. I thought that this was an important distinction since it shows how the common person views the economy, often without the knowledge to have an informed opinion. As illustrated in table 5 most people were neither extremely satisfied or extremely dissatisfied, however the trend was that more people were satisfied with the economy than dissatisfied.



\*Full frequency table available in appendix E

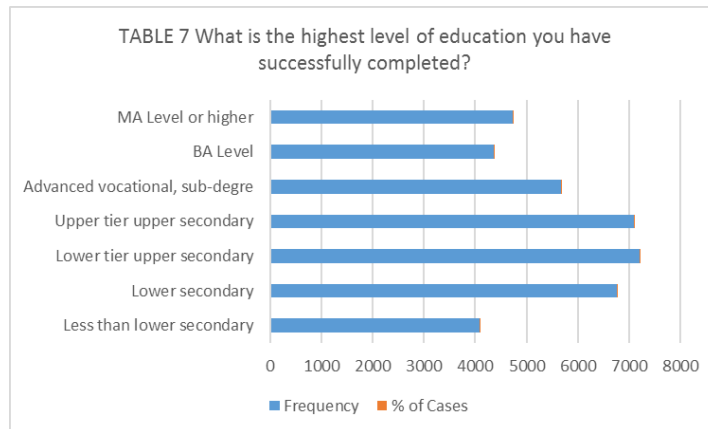
The other question that I chose to evaluate the impact of the economy on the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments focused in on the individual rather than how the individual viewed the national economy. This question asked the respondent how they themselves felt able to live with their current income. An interesting take from the distribution of the responses in table 6 is how most people were either coping or living comfortably with their current income.



\*Full frequency table available in appendix F

### Educational Attainment

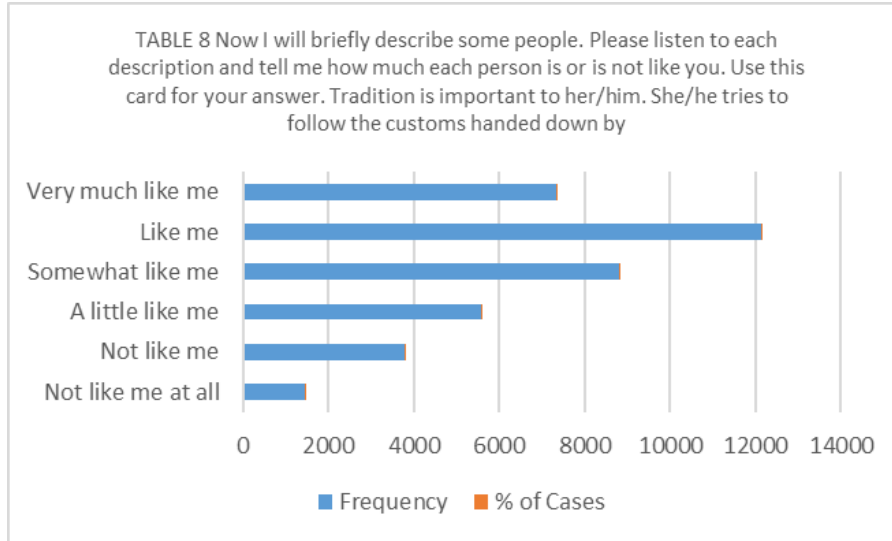
To assess how educational attainment affects the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments I chose a question that asked the respondent what the highest level of education was that they completed. Table 7 shows the distribution of these results.



\*Full frequency table available in appendix G

### Cultural Threat

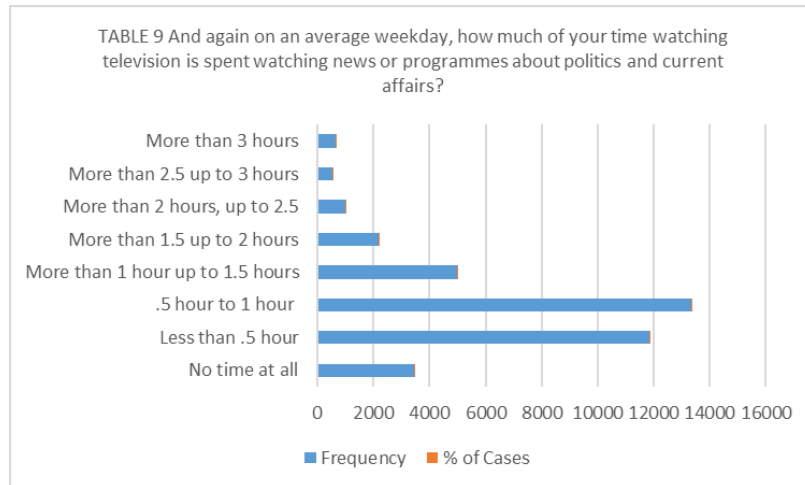
In order to see how the threat to culture posed by immigrants influences a respondent's feelings concerning immigration I chose a question that asked the respondent to evaluate how important culture was to themselves. The responses, shown in table 8, were not surprising and showed that traditions and customs are rather important to the majority of respondents.



\*Full frequency table available in appendix H

**Availability of Information**

To see how the availability of information influences a respondent’s views on immigration I chose the following question that attempted to see how much time a respondent spent watching TV and news about current events and politics. A rather imprecise test of knowledge the ESS did not include a survey question that explicitly tested the respondent’s knowledge of refugee numbers and impacts. Since I still felt as though it was an important variable I included this question to attempt to see how the availability of information impacts the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments. Table 9 shows the distribution for how much time people watch TV on current events on an average weekday.



\*Full frequency table available in appendix I

### **Control Variables**

In addition to the independent variables that I utilize, I include a number of control variables in my regression models to help validate my findings. The control variables that I chose to include were the age of the respondent, whether the respondent belongs to a minority group, and their placement on a left to right political scale. Additionally, I clustered the findings on countries and used robust standard errors in my regression models.

### **Analysis and Findings**

After gathering all of the survey data from the ESS on the chosen variable I began to run a series of descriptive statistics in SPSS. Using the first survey question<sup>1</sup> that helped measure the existence of an anti-immigrant sentiment I conducted crosstabs for each of my chosen independent variables. The results from these crosstabs were in line with my hypothesis and helped show that there was indeed correlation between my independent variables and the existence of an anti-immigrant sentiment.

<sup>1</sup> Question B29- Now, using this card, to what extent do you think [country] should allow people of the same race or ethnic group as most [country] people to come and live here?

With only a series of five crosstabs I was able to see a number of interesting trends emerge. Chief among these trends is the way that TV watching about current events impacted one's propensity to want to allow immigrants into the country. While I was trying to find a survey question that would help test the level of knowledge that a respondent has I ended up using a question that focused on how much TV they watch on current events and politics. This rather imprecise question resulted in data that ran counter to my hypothesis in that those respondents who watched more TV about current events and politics were less likely to favor immigration<sup>2</sup>.

The next crosstab that I looked at examined how one's feelings about their household income impacted their feelings about allowing immigrants into the country. Congruent to my hypothesis this crosstab<sup>3</sup> showed that as one views their household income as more positive they are more open towards the idea of immigration. This finding was also supported by the next crosstab<sup>4</sup> which I viewed in which as one is more satisfied with the national economy they are more in favor of immigration as a whole.

Another one of my hypothesis was proved by the crosstab between immigration and educational attainment. This crosstab presented a rather stark image which showed how much of an impact education has on whether someone is in favor of immigration or not. This was one of the most striking examples of one of my variables playing a significant role in the development of such sentiments with less than 3.5% of those with a Master's degree or higher wanting no immigration while 21.2% of those with less than secondary education wanting no immigration<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> See appendix J for crosstab

<sup>3</sup> See appendix K for crosstab

<sup>4</sup> See appendix L for crosstab

<sup>5</sup> See appendix M for crosstab

The last crosstab that I looked at was how culture impacted one's views towards immigration. In this crosstab another one of my hypothesis was proved true by the way that those who felt that traditions and customs were more important were less in favor of immigration whereas those who didn't view them as that important were more open to immigration.<sup>6</sup>

Since the correlation between my independent variables and the first question that defined my dependent variable was so strong I expected there to be correlation amongst all of my chosen questions to define an anti-immigrant sentiment. In light of this, I moved beyond a series descriptive statistics and ran a multivariate regression model in STATA with robust standard errors that tested all of my dependent variable measures against my independent variables at once. These results were quite insightful and helped explain what is statistically significant in developing an anti-immigrant sentiment. Table 10 is the finalized multivariate regression table examining the four survey questions I chose as well as the five independent variable and included control variables.

The results from my regression table indicate a number of intriguing discoveries. Beginning with the education variable, results help show that educational attainment has a highly significant positive relationship across all models. In this case, that means that as one has higher educational attainment they will be more favorable towards immigrants. Each of the questions I chose to measure the existence of an anti-immigrant sentiment showed a highly significant relationship at the 0.01 level with educational attainment. These results support my hypothesis and show that education is clearly significant in determining ones propensity to view immigrant as good or bad.

The next variable assessed was the availability of information. While the question used to assess a respondents level of knowledge was not the best, some conclusions are still clear. Models one and two showed that the availability of information was found to have a positive relationship and be highly

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<sup>6</sup> See appendix N for crosstab



significant at the 0.01 level. Model four showed that the availability of information had a positive relationship and was significant at the 0.05 level. This means that as one watches more television about politics and current events they will respond more positively towards immigrants. The only model that did not show the availability of information to be significant was model three. While one of the measures that I chose for determining the presence of an anti-immigrant sentiment did not show significance, the other three models were consistent with my hypothesis. While the question used was not a perfect gauge of a respondent's level of knowledge it is clear that watching more television about current events and politics resulted in a lower prevalence of anti-immigrant sentiments. The other striking outcome of this finding is that when looking at the correlation between this variable and the prevalence of anti-immigrant sentiments there is negative relationship, meaning more television watching is correlated with a higher prevalence of anti-immigrant sentiments. When controlling for age, minority status, and political ideology while clustering on countries this effect goes away.

The cultural threat variable showed results consistent with my hypothesis showing a highly significant negative relationship at the 0.01 level across all four models. This means that as a respondent views following traditions and customs within their country as more important they will have a higher prevalence of anti-immigrant sentiments. These results help show that threat to culture plays a powerful role in the development of anti-immigrant sentiments and is congruent with previous studies and my hypothesis.

In regards to household economic threat, results showed a highly significant positive relationship at the 0.01 level across all models. These findings were consistent with my hypothesis and showed that as a respondent felt more confident in their ability to live comfortably with their current income they were less likely to hold anti-immigrant sentiments. These findings were reverberated in the question assessing a respondent's perception of the national economy with all models showing a positive highly significant relationship at the 0.01 level. These findings were also consistent with my

hypothesis and showed how as one perceives the national economy as better they will be less likely to hold anti-immigrant sentiments. Both of these findings show that the economy still plays a powerful role in the development of anti-immigrant sentiments.

Table 10: OLS Regression table for each of the survey questions used to describe dependent variable

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
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<b>VARIABLES</b>	<b>Immigrants make country worse or better place to live?</b>	<b>Immigrants enrich or undermine cultural life?</b>	<b>Immigrants of same race or ethnicity as majority allowed to immigrate?</b>	<b>Immigrants of different race or ethnicity than majority allowed to immigrate?</b>
<b>Education</b>	0.205** (0.0252)	0.263** (0.0265)	0.0806** (0.00518)	0.0785** (0.00668)
<b>Availability of Information</b>	0.0780** (0.0194)	0.0697** (0.0202)	0.00224 (0.00602)	0.0165* (0.00746)
<b>Cultural Threat</b>	-0.0930** (0.0320)	-0.135** (0.0380)	-0.0388** (0.00678)	-0.0493** (0.00926)
<b>Household Economic Threat</b>	0.188** (0.0510)	0.183** (0.0584)	0.0960** (0.0146)	0.0999** (0.0180)
<b>National Economic Threat</b>	0.197** (0.0241)	0.187** (0.0404)	0.0582** (0.0179)	0.0539** (0.0156)
<b>Age</b>	-0.00981** (0.00130)	-0.00776** (0.00160)	-0.00130 (0.00102)	-0.00477** (0.000626)
<b>Minority</b>	0.425* (0.189)	0.226 (0.212)	-0.0181 (0.0604)	0.0292 (0.0623)
<b>Ideology</b>	-0.141** (0.0298)	-0.190** (0.0418)	-0.0482** (0.0101)	-0.0697** (0.00967)
<b>Constant</b>	4.366** (0.293)	5.170** (0.340)	1.607** (0.0996)	1.655** (0.115)
<b>Observations</b>	31,473	31,598	31,718	31,699
<b>R-squared</b>	0.141	0.143	0.129	0.147

OLS Regression table clustered on countries  
with Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05,

The results from the OLS regression model that I used were not surprising and helped support all of my original hypotheses. When controlling for age, whether the respondent belonged to a minority group, ideology on a left to right political scale, and clustered on countries the discrepancies noticed in the earlier crosstabs were not as important. As such in the crosstabs it appeared that as a respondent watched more TV on current events and politics they were less likely to be in favor of immigrants but when controlling for the aforementioned factors this was found to not be true.

While these results do not offer a complete picture as to what the single most important factor in the development of anti-immigrant sentiments is, they offer a number of empirically backed up theories which help explain how these sentiments are fostered. Without a doubt, it is clear that educational attainment, availability of information, threat to culture, and economic threat all play an important role in the development of anti-immigrant sentiments. While there are other factors which play a role in the formation of anti-immigrant sentiments the results which I have found are consistent with previous research and help explain some of the important determinants of anti-immigrant sentiments.

### **Conclusion**

In an increasingly integrated world the issue of immigration can no longer be ignored. The current migrant crisis in Europe is a prime example of why more needs to be done in order to understand how anti-immigrant sentiments are fostered. By better understanding what drives the formation of anti-immigrant sentiments more could be done to combat their rise. Anti-immigrant sentiments foster anger and resentment at wide swaths of people and encourage the formation of exclusionary groups and legislation. Having a better understanding of the determinants would allow policy makers to pursue policies that mitigate the effects of such sentiments. The findings from my research support my hypotheses and show that educational attainment, availability of information,

threat to culture, and economic threat are all statistically significant in the development of anti-immigrant sentiments.

The results which I have found help support the evidence that previous authors have theorized however since they were all included in a multivariate regression model I was able to look at a number of prevailing theories and show that there is not one single variable that needs to be fixed to mitigate the effects of anti-immigrant sentiments. Rather than a single variable or problem that needs addressing to stem the formation of anti-immigrant sentiments, a multi-faceted approach is necessary.

These results can help policy makers and leaders develop comprehensive strategies that focusing on increasing education and knowledge about the impact and level of immigration while also encouraging cultural immersion to familiarize citizens with other peoples and cultures. Education, the availability of information, threat to culture and economic threat could all be addressed through this way. Since all of these variables have been found to be significant creating programs that only address one aspect of an anti-immigrant sentiment will not be sufficient towards the goal of eradicating anti-immigrant sentiments.

Furthering this research with data from North America, South America, Asia, and Africa could bolster these findings and help policy makers around the world develop inclusive and fair policy. The deep divide concerning immigration should not be politicized to the extent that it is but rather talked about in an unbiased way which ensures the best for everyone. Immigration has always been around and rather than trying to stop immigration we should look forward and see how integration and openness could benefit the world. The high rate of immigration and refugees entering Europe should be a wakeup call for politicians and rather than sparking fear and barring immigration, politicians should seek to remedy the fear and anxiety that sparks anti-immigrant attitudes.

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#### Appendix:

- A) Now, using this card, to what extent do you think [country] should allow people of the same race or ethnic group as most [country] people to come and live here?**



	Frequency	% of Cases
<b>Allow None</b>	2633	6.6
<b>Allow a Few</b>	8672	21.6
<b>Allow Some</b>	18070	45
<b>Allow Many</b>	9804	24.4
<b>Total</b>	39179	97.5
<b>Missing</b>	1006	2.5

**B) How about people of a different race or ethnic group from most [country] people?**

	Frequency	% of Cases
<b>Allow None</b>	5141	12.8
<b>Allow a Few</b>	12318	30.7
<b>Allow Some</b>	16207	40.3
<b>Allow Many</b>	5456	13.6
<b>Total</b>	39122	97.4
<b>Missing</b>	1063	2.6

**C) Is [country] made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?**

	Frequency	% of Cases
<b>Worse place to live</b>	<b>1705</b>	<b>4.2</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>1101</b>	<b>2.7</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>2403</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>3637</b>	<b>9.1</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>4015</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>11809</b>	<b>29.4</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>4087</b>	<b>10.2</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>4305</b>	<b>10.7</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>3340</b>	<b>8.3</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>1087</b>	<b>2.7</b>
<b>Better place to live</b>	<b>1175</b>	<b>2.9</b>

**D) And, using this card, would you say that [country]'s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?**

	Frequency	% of Cases
<b>Cultural life undermined</b>	<b>1549</b>	<b>3.9</b>

1	1016	2.5
2	2115	5.3
3	3154	7.8
4	3237	8.1
5	7899	19.7
6	4395	10.9
7	5888	14.7
8	5241	13
9	2087	5.2
Cultural life enriched	2252	5.6

**E) On the whole how satisfied are you with the present state of the economy in [country]?**

	Frequency	% of Cases
Extremely dissatisfied	2498	6.2
1	1592	4
2	3483	8.7
3	4811	12
4	4901	12.2
5	6451	16.1
6	5171	12.9
7	5074	12.6
8	3697	9.2
9	1161	2.9
Extremely satisfied	695	1.7

**F) Which of the descriptions on this card comes closest to how you feel about your household's income nowadays?**

	Frequency	% of Cases
Very Difficult	2146	5.3
Difficult	6506	16.2

Coping	18364	45.7
Living comfortably	12793	31.8

**G) What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed?**

	Frequency	% of Cases
Less than lower secondary	4085	10.2
Lower secondary	6760	16.8
Lower tier upper secondary	7213	17.9
Upper tier upper secondary	7094	17.7
Advanced vocational, sub-degree	5671	14.1
BA Level	4366	10.9
MA Level or higher	4730	11.8

**H) Now I will briefly describe some people. Please listen to each description and tell me how much each person is or is not like you. Use this card for your answer. Tradition is important to her/him. She/he tries to follow the customs handed down by her/his religion or her/his family.**

	Frequency	% of Cases
Not like me at all	1449	3.6
Not like me	3787	9.4

A little like me	5577	13.9
Somewhat like me	8800	21.9
Like me	12132	30.2
Very much like me	7328	18.2

I) And again on an average weekday, how much of your time watching television is spent watching news or programmes about politics and current affairs?

	Frequency	% of Cases
No time at all	3453	8.6
Less than .5 hour	11843	29.5
.5 hour to 1 hour	13360	33.2
More than 1 hour up to 1.5 hours	4978	12.4
More than 1.5 up to 2 hours	2165	5.4
More than 2 hours, up to 2.5	1002	2.5
More than 2.5 up to 3 hours	533	1.3
More than 3 hours	657	1.6

J) Question B29 crossed by Question A2

Question B29- Now, using this card, to what extent do you think [country] should allow people of the same race or ethnic group as most [country] people to come and live here?

Question A2- And again on an average weekday, how much of your time watching television is spent watching news or programmes about politics and current affairs?

Question A2

Total

	No Time at All	< Than .5 Hour	.5 Hour to 1 Hour	>1 Hour up to 1.5 Hours	>1.5 Hours up to 2 Hours	>2 Hours up to 2.5 Hours	>2.5 Hours up to 3 Hours	>3 Hours		
<b>Question B29</b>	<b>Allow None</b>	375 15.00%	754 30.20%	762 30.50%	307 12.30%	120 4.80%	65 2.60%	43 1.70%	73 2.90%	2499 100.00%
	<b>Allow a Few</b>	805 9.60%	2579 30.80%	2918 34.80%	1072 12.80%	490 5.80%	230 2.70%	115 1.40%	169 2.00%	8378 100.00%
	<b>Allow Some</b>	1354 7.80%	5346 31.00%	6313 36.60%	2330 13.50%	1005 5.80%	431 2.50%	230 1.30%	240 1.40%	17249 100.00%
	<b>Allow Many</b>	818 9.20%	2872 32.10%	3061 34.30%	1140 12.80%	499 5.60%	253 2.80%	133 1.50%	160 1.80%	8936 100.00%
<b>Total</b>	3352 9.00%	11551 31.20%	13054 35.20%	4849 13.10%	2114 5.70%	979 2.60%	521 1.40%	642 1.70%	37062 100.00%	

Chi-square	211.737
Degrees of freedom	21
P-value	0

**K) Question B29 crossed by Question F42**

**Question B29- Now, using this card, to what extent do you think [country] should allow people of the same race or ethnic group as most [country] people to come and live here?**

**Question F42-Which of the descriptions on this card comes closest to how you feel about your household's income nowadays?**

	Question F42				Total	
	Very Difficult	Difficult	Coping	Living Comfortably		
<b>Question B29</b>	<b>Allow None</b>	379 14.60%	659 25.50%	1144 44.20%	407 15.70%	2589 100.00%
	<b>Allow a Few</b>	547 6.40%	1788 20.80%	4354 50.60%	1916 22.30%	8605 100.00%

<b>Allow Some</b>	679	2527	8361	6352	17919
	3.80%	14.10%	46.70%	35.40%	100.00%
<b>Allow Many</b>	463	1288	4083	3890	9724
	4.80%	13.20%	42.00%	40.00%	100.00%
<b>Total</b>	2068	6262	17942	12565	38837
	5.30%	16.10%	46.20%	32.40%	100.00%

Relationship Between A2 and B29	
Chi-square	211.737
Degrees of freedom	21
P-value	0

**L) Question B29 crossed by Question B21**

**Question B29- Now, using this card, to what extent do you think [country] should allow people of the same race or ethnic group as most [country] people to come and live here?**

**Question B21- On the whole how satisfied are you with the present state of the economy in [country]?**

		Question B21											Total
		Extremely Dissatisfied	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Extremely Satisfied	
	<b>Allow None</b>	436	215	334	354	268	399	212	188	96	29	23	2554
		17.10%	8.40%	13.10%	13.90%	10.50%	15.60%	8.30%	7.40%	3.80%	1.10%	0.90%	100.00%
<b>Question B29</b>	<b>Allow a Few</b>	625	417	943	1244	1172	1511	1003	847	558	146	88	8554
		7.30%	4.90%	11.00%	14.50%	13.70%	17.70%	11.70%	9.90%	6.50%	1.70%	1.00%	100.00%
	<b>Allow Some</b>	859	568	1394	2102	2275	2982	2573	2503	1781	547	298	17882
		4.80%	3.20%	7.80%	11.80%	12.70%	16.70%	14.40%	14.00%	10.00%	3.10%	1.70%	100.00%
	<b>Allow Many</b>	481	344	705	981	1067	1398	1306	1472	1205	418	267	9644
		5.00%	3.60%	7.30%	10.20%	11.10%	14.50%	13.50%	15.30%	12.50%	4.30%	2.80%	100.00%
<b>Total</b>		2401	1544	3376	4681	4782	6290	5094	5010	3640	1140	676	38634
		6.20%	4.00%	8.70%	12.10%	12.40%	16.30%	13.20%	13.00%	9.40%	3.00%	1.70%	100.00%

Relationship Between B21 and B29	
Chi-square	1804.441
Degrees of freedom	30
P-value	0

**M) Question B29 crossed by Question F15**

**Question B29- Now, using this card, to what extent do you think [country] should allow people of the same race or ethnic group as most [country] people to come and live here?**

**Question F15- What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed?**

		Question F15							Total
		< Lower Secondary	Lower Secondary	Lower Tier Upper Secondary	Upper Tier Upper Secondary	Advanced Vocational Sub Degree	BA Level	>=MA Level	
Question B29	Allow None	554 21.20%	613 23.40%	557 21.30%	440 16.80%	242 9.20%	119 4.50%	92 3.50%	2617 100.00%
	Allow a Few	1224 14.20%	1713 19.90%	1766 20.50%	1672 19.40%	1055 12.30%	575 6.70%	595 6.90%	8600 100.00%
	Allow Some	1527 8.50%	2985 16.60%	3339 18.60%	3173 17.70%	2704 15.10%	2051 11.40%	2185 12.20%	17964 100.00%
	Allow Many	629 6.40%	1239 12.70%	1422 14.60%	1612 16.50%	1559 16.00%	1534 15.70%	1757 18.00%	9752 100.00%
<b>Total</b>		3934 10.10%	6550 16.80%	7084 18.20%	6897 17.70%	5560 14.30%	4279 11.00%	4629 11.90%	38933 100.00%

Relationship Between F15 and B29		
Chi-square		2173.286
Degrees of freedom		18
P-value		0

**N) Question B29 crossed by Question Ha-u**

Question B29- Now, using this card, to what extent do you think [country] should allow people of the same race or ethnic group as most [country] people to come and live here?

Question Ha-u-Now I will briefly describe some people. Please listen to each description and tell me how much each person is or is not like you. Use this card for your answer. Tradition is important to her/him. She/he tries to follow the customs handed down by her/his religion or her/his family.

		Question Ha-U					Total	
		Not Like Me At All	Not Like Me	A Little Like Me	Somewhat Like Me	Very Much Like Me		
Question B29	Allow None	85 3.40%	191 7.60%	281 11.20%	496 19.80%	777 31.00%	677 27.00%	2507 100.00%
	Allow a Few	247 2.90%	648 7.70%	1029 12.20%	1845 21.90%	2833 33.70%	1816 21.60%	8418 100.00%
	Allow some	557 3.10%	1746 9.80%	2640 14.90%	4189 23.60%	5636 31.80%	2958 16.70%	17726 100.00%

	<b>Allow Many</b>	528 5.60%	1122 11.80%	1506 15.80%	2084 21.90%	2594 27.30%	1677 17.60%	9511 100.00%
<b>Total</b>		1417 3.70%	3707 9.70%	5456 14.30%	8614 22.60%	11840 31.00%	7128 18.70%	38162 100.00%

Relationship Between HA-U and B2:		
Chi-square		528.284
Degrees of freedom		15
P-value		0