

Does age influence attitudes toward immigrants among different groups of Luxembourg residents?

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Programme European Values Study

L'European Values Study (EVS) est une enquête réalisée au Luxembourg en 2008 auprès d'un échantillon représentatif de la population résidente composé de 1610 individus âgés de 18 ans ou plus.

Au niveau national, cette enquête fait partie du projet de recherche VALCOS (Valeurs et Cohésion sociale), cofinancé par le FNR dans le cadre du programme VIVRE. Au niveau international, elle est partie intégrante d'une enquête réalisée dans 45 pays européens qui a pour objectif d'identifier et d'expliquer en Europe les dynamiques de changements de valeurs, et d'explorer les valeurs morales et sociales qui sous-tendent les institutions sociales et politiques européennes (www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu).

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INTRODUCTION

Luxembourg has the highest percentage of residents of foreign origin in Europe¹. This fact evokes a multiplicity of questions related to their position in the host society and their perception by all type of residents. Despite the fact that there has not been much research published on perception of immigrants in Luxembourg², the international literature analyzing the immigrant-related sentiment in Europe shows that Luxembourg residents as a whole have generally a positive attitude toward resident immigrants: "in 2000, negative attitudes toward foreigners were most pronounced in Greece, Belgium, Germany, and France, and least pronounced in Spain, Luxembourg, and Italy" (Semyonov et al., 2006:436).

Two recently published descriptive studies focusing only on Luxembourg (Valentova & Berzosa 2010a, 2010b) reveal, among other things, that people who had personal or direct experience with immigration (first generation immigrants) are more likely to report positive attitudes to immigrants than other groups of residents. It was also found that residents who had only one foreign born parent differ notably from those where both parents were born outside the country. The authors thus suggest when analyzing attitudes toward immigrants in Luxembourg, it is advisable to divide the population by their migratory background and analyze separately residents who have migrant history and those who do not have it. Given this, we distinguish four main groups of residents depending on their migratory background: natives, first generation immigrants, second generation immigrants and children of mixed couples³.

The present paper builds up on the already existing research and presents a more detailed analysis of the perception of immigrants. Specifically, it examines how the age of an individual affects its attitudes toward immigrants and how the effect

of age varies among respondents with different migrant history. As we are only analyzing these relationships we don't control by other important individual factors which also affect attitudes toward immigrants such as gender, education, professional status, etc.

¹ According to STATEC (2010) the latest percentage of residents is as follow: natives 57%, foreigners 43%.

² Immigrant is defined as a person who resides in a host country but who was not born there (Tribalat, 1991).

³ The category of natives includes those residents who were born in the country to both parents also born in the country (Langers, 2010). The first generation immigrants are residents who were born abroad to both foreign-born parents. The second generation immigrants are residents who were born in the country to parents who were both born abroad (Zhou, 1997; Kucera, 2008; Simon, 2005). Finally, the group of children of mixed couples includes those individuals who were born in Luxembourg to one parent born in the country and the other one born abroad (Muñoz & Tribalat, 1984; Neyrand & M'Sili, 1997; Kucera, 2008; Philippe, 2008). Those residents of Luxembourg who could not be positioned in any of the four mentioned group are not included in the present study. For more details please consult Valentova & Berzosa (2010a).

I. CONTEXT

In the majority of studies analyzing the relation between age and attitudes, age is used as a demographic control variable (Espenshade & Hempstead, 1996; Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007; Bridges & Mateut, 2009). Mayda (2004) and Semyonov et al. (2006) found, in international data sets, a positive significant relation between age and attitudes toward immigrants. Mayda argues that the probability of being pro-immigrant decreases with the age of the respondent. In line with this finding, Semyonov explicitly sustain that "antiforeigner sentiment is likely to increase with age" (Semyonov et al., 2006:441).

Given the results drawn from the international literature shown here, we set a first hypothesis: the younger sustain a more positive attitude toward immigrants than middle and old age. Following this line of argument we have divided age as follow: young (18-34 years old), middle age (35-59 years old) and old age (60 years old or more).

II. DATA

The analyses are based on the 2008 European Values Study (EVS) for Luxembourg. The original sample consisted of a representation of 1610 residents of Luxembourg, who are 18 years old or more. The sample for this article is restricted to 1568 residents, where it was clearly possible to distinguish the migratory background of an individual. The remaining 42 cases, which represent those respondents who were not born in Luxembourg to one or both native-born parents, were excluded from the present analyses.

EVS data reveal that natives are 45% of the respondents, first generation immigrants represent approximately 37% of the sample, children of mixed couples represents 9% and second-generation immigrants represents 7% of the sample⁴.

These figures revealed that 53% of residents of the country have either direct (personal) or indirect (transmitted via at least one parent) experience with migration in their nuclear family. This unique composition of the population allowed us to analyze age differences in attitudes toward immigrants among the four distinct groups of residents. For details concerning the distribution of residents depending on age and migratory background please consult Table 1.

The international EVS questionnaire contains two batteries of questions regarding attitudes toward immigrants. These batteries have been introduced at an international level in 2008, which gives us the possibility to analyze respondents' attitudes toward eight specific aspects of immigration only in this particular year, but prevent us from conducting comparisons across time. The first set of six items deals with the opinions regarding immigrants as a whole, without referring to a particular Luxembourgish context. These opinions are measured on a 10 point scale, where value 1 stands for strong agreement (i.e. negative attitude toward immigrants) and 10 for strong disagreement (i.e.

positive attitude toward immigrants). The exact wordings of the items are:

- Immigrants take jobs away from natives in a country (A)
- A country's cultural life is undermined by immigrants (B)
- Immigrants make crime problems worse (C)
- Immigrants are a strain on a country's welfare system (D)
- In the future the proportion of immigrants will become a threat to society (E)
- For the greater good of society is better if immigrants maintain their distinct customs and traditions (F)⁵.

The second set of questions focuses on attitudes toward immigration in Luxembourg and is measured on 5 point scale that was oriented in such a way that 1 stands for a strong agreement with the statement (i.e. respondents express negative attitudes toward immigrants) and category 5 stands for strong disagreement with the statements (i.e. respondents express positive attitudes toward these aspects of immigrants). The items were presented to respondents as follows:

- Because of the number of immigrants in Luxembourg, I do feel like a stranger (G)
- Today in Luxembourg, there are too many immigrants (H).

To make the items comparable and our findings more comprehensible, we reduced the number of responses of the items of the first battery to five⁶. Value 5 stands for positive attitudes toward immigrants and 1 for negative attitudes toward a particular statement. Outcomes of our analysis are presented in a form of mean values. The interpretation of the mean values is the higher the mean value, the more positive stance the respondents adopt toward immigrants.

⁴ From these figures we can deduce that distinguishing between two groups of offspring of immigrants (i.e. second generation and children of mixed couples) may lead to the loss of statistical power of our further analyses as only 115 respondents belong to the second-generation immigrant group and 145 to children of mixed couples.

⁵ This item was excluded from further analysis because optimal scaling analysis proved it is not compatible with the remaining ones. This incompatibility was confirmed also by the outcomes of exploratory factor analysis applied on the eight items.

⁶ Optimal scaling was used to re-categorize 10 point scales into 5 point ones. The re-categorization was realized as follows: items A, B, D, E: (1 thru 2=1) (3 thru 4=2) (5 thru 6=3) (7 thru 8=4) (9 thru 10=5); item C: (1 =1) (2 thru 4=2) (5 thru 6=3) (7 thru 8=4) (9 thru 10=5).

TABLE 1. Percentage of distribution of residents by migratory background and age

Migratory background	Age			Total
	18-34 years	35-59 years	60+ years	
Native	21,8	48,0	30,2	100,0
1st Generation	30,3	55,2	14,5	100,0
Children of mixed couples	24,8	53,1	22,1	100,0
2nd Generation	56,5	28,7	14,8	100,0
Total	27,8	49,7	22,5	100,0

Source: EVS, Luxembourg, 2008, CEPS/INSTEAD. N=1568.

III. AGE DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRANTS – WHOLE POPULATION

In this section we focus on the distribution of the mean for each of the immigration related questions according to three age categories (18-34 years old, 35-59 years old and 60 years old or more), without differentiating by migratory background (cf. Figure 1). Afterwards, the results are presented separately for natives, first generation immigrants, second generation immigrants and children of mixed couples (cf. Figures 2 to 5).

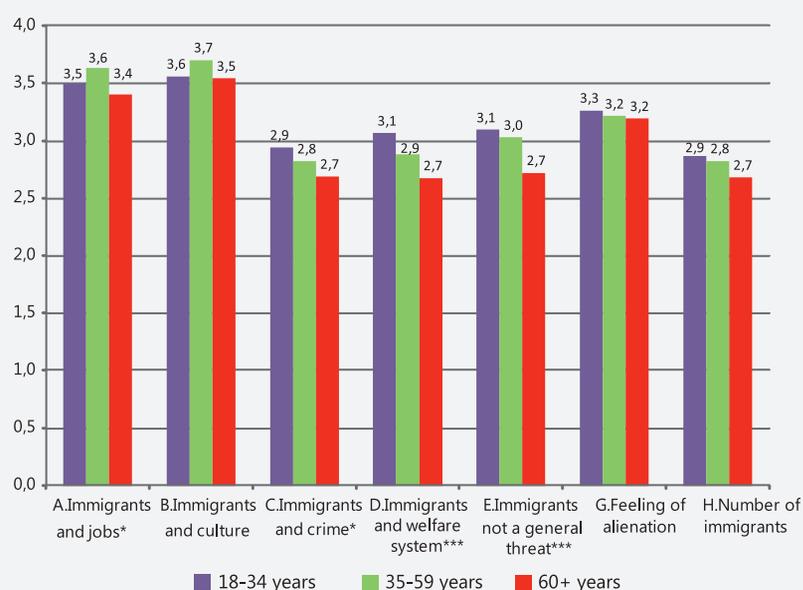
Overall the youngest respondents (18-34 years old) hold the more open position toward immigrants in most of the questions (crime, welfare system, as a threat, alienation and number). They are surpassed by the middle age generation in two items (jobs and culture). The figure also shows that, generally speaking, the oldest respondents hold the least

tolerant position about these immigrant related questions.

However, only four answers are significant⁷: employment, crime, welfare system and immigrants as a general threat. These significance relationships are shown in the graphic by an asterisk.

The data shows that the hypothesis has been confirmed for the questions about crime, welfare system and immigrants as a threat. In all these issues the younger age group is the most tolerant and the older group is the least tolerant. In the remaining question, employment is the middle age group who has the most tolerant position, deviating from the anticipated pattern. Nonetheless, the older group still remains the least tolerant.

FIGURE 1. Attitudes toward immigration-related items depending on age, full sample - mean values



Source : EVS, Luxembourg, 2008, CEPS/INSTEAD. N= 1568.

Note: Interpretation of the mean values: the higher is the mean value, the more positive stance the respondents adopt toward immigrants. Significant difference between age categories is identified by an asterisk. The absence of the asterisk means no significant differences in attitudes between used age categories.

Interpretation of the asterisk: ***= 0,001 significance level; **= 0,01 significance level; *= 0,05 significance level.

⁷ We have conducted ANOVA analyses which allows us to test if the mean values differ significantly between age groups and each of the immigration related items.

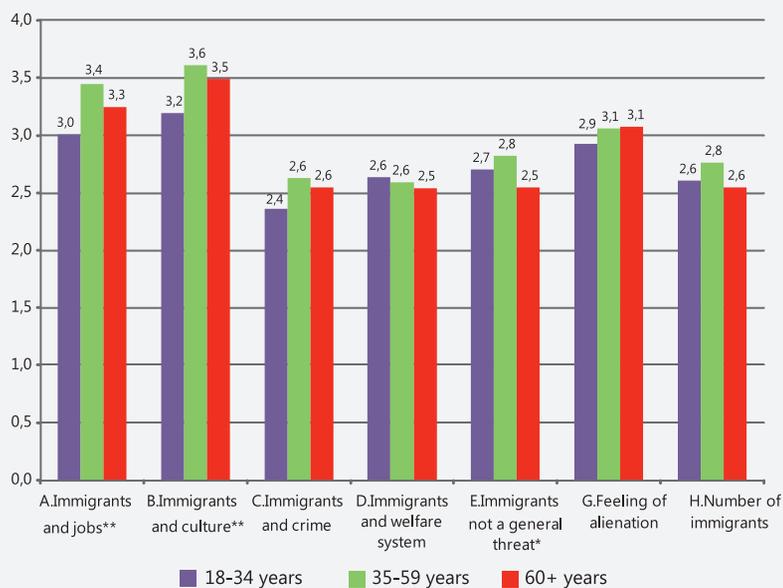
III. AGE DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRANTS – NATIVES

The results for natives show that the middle aged respondents are more tolerant than the other two age groups (cf. Figure 2). There are only three questions positively associated⁸ with age: jobs, culture and immigrants as a threat. These positive associations are indicated in the graphic by an asterisk. In each question the middle age group has the most tolerant position. The least tolerant

positions are held by the younger age group for jobs and culture; and by the oldest age group for the remaining question, immigrants as a threat.

Given these results we can sustain that the hypothesis does not hold true. Neither the youngest are the most tolerant either the oldest are not the least tolerant.

FIGURE 2. Attitudes toward immigration-related items depending on age, natives - mean values



Source : EVS, Luxembourg, 2008, CEPS/INSTEAD. N=721

Note: Interpretation of the mean values: the higher is the mean value, the more positive stance the respondents adopt toward immigrants. Significant difference between age categories is identified by an asterisk. The absence of the asterisk means no significant differences in attitudes between used age categories.

Interpretation of the asterisk: ***= 0,001 significance level; **= 0,01 significance level; *= 0,05 significance level.

⁸ We have conducted ANOVA analyses which allows us to test if the mean values differ significantly between age groups and each of the immigration related items.

IV. AGE DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRANTS – FIRST GENERATION IMMIGRANTS

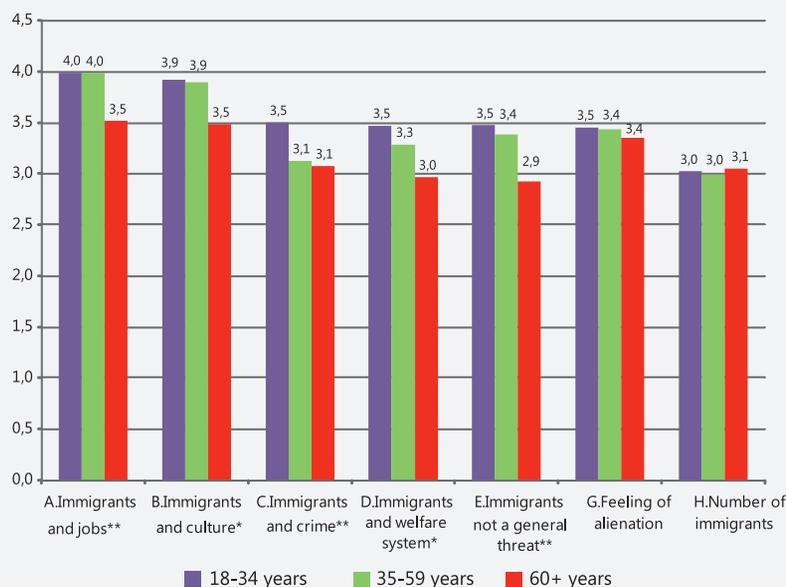
Overall for the first generation immigrants the youngest and middle age subgroups are very close in their position toward immigration.

We found five items significantly⁹ related to age: jobs, culture, crime, welfare system and threat. In the first two items (jobs and culture) the young and middle age are even. On the remaining three (crime, welfare system and general threat) the youngest respondent show the most tolerant position. On the other hand, the oldest respondents exhibit the

least tolerant attitude in four out of five questions (jobs, culture, welfare system and immigrants as a threat). In the remaining question (crime) they are even with the middle age respondents.

For this group of residents we conclude that our hypothesis is corroborated, as the young respondents hold the most tolerant position toward immigrants of all age groups in all the significant questions and the oldest respondents the least tolerant position of all the age groups.

FIGURE 3. Attitudes toward immigration-related items depending on age, first generation immigrants - mean values



Source : EVS, Luxembourg, 2008, CEPS/INSTEAD. N=586

Note: Interpretation of the mean values: the higher is the mean value, the more positive stance the respondents adopt toward immigrants. Significant difference between age categories is identified by an asterisk. The absence of the asterisk means no significant differences in attitudes between used age categories.

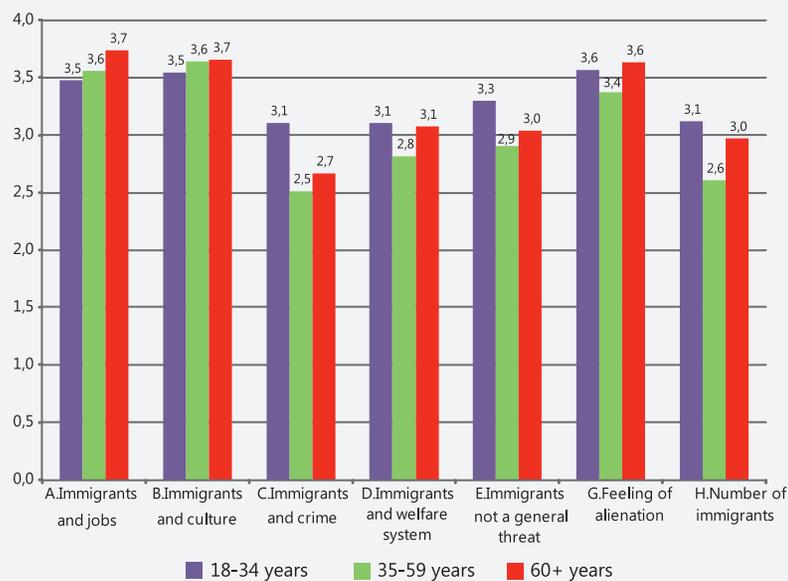
Interpretation of the asterisk: ***=0,001 significance level; **=0,01 significance level; *=0,05 significance level.

⁹ We have conducted ANOVA analyses which allows us to test if the mean values differ significantly between age groups and each of the immigration related items.

V. AGE DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRANTS – SECOND GENERATION IMMIGRANTS

For this subgroup of the population the young respondents are the most tolerant in the majority of the questions, except for jobs and culture. In these two cases the oldest respondents are the most open. However, the results of the significant test¹⁰ show that there are no significant differences among each age groups and every question. We can attribute this fact to the small number of cases for this subgroup of the population (N= 115).

FIGURE 4. Attitudes toward immigration-related items depending on age, second generation immigrants - mean values



Source : EVS, Luxembourg, 2008, CEPS/INSTEAD. N=115

Note: Interpretation of the mean values: the higher is the mean value, the more positive stance the respondents adopt toward immigrants. Significant difference between age categories is identified by an asterisk. The absence of the asterisk means no significant differences in attitudes between used age categories.

Interpretation of the asterisk: ***=0,001 significance level; **=0,01 significance level; *=0,05 significance level.

¹⁰ We have conducted ANOVA analyses which allows us to test if the mean values differ significantly between age groups and each of the immigration related items.

VI. AGE DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRANTS – CHILDREN OF MIXED COUPLES

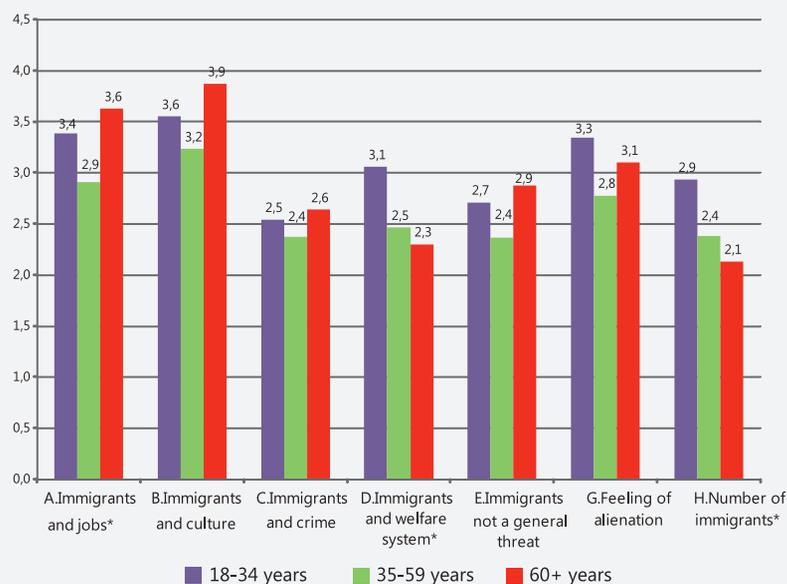
In case of the children of mixed couples the data shows that although the youngest respondents have higher mean values in more questions, the oldest group sustains the most tolerant position as they have the higher mean value in two items (close to 4).

Nevertheless, we find significant¹¹ differences in the following items: jobs, welfare system and number of immigrants. In two of these questions (welfare system and number of immigrants) the youngest

respondents hold the most tolerant position and the oldest respondents the least tolerant one. In case of jobs, the oldest are the most tolerant and the least tolerant is the middle age group.

With respect to our general hypothesis, we conclude that within this subgroup of residents the youngest are, in general, more tolerant when compared to the other two age groups. However, the hypothesis is not sustained when looking at the question regarding jobs.

FIGURE 5. Attitudes toward immigration-related items depending on age, children of mixed couples - mean values



Source : EVS, Luxembourg, 2008, CEPS/INSTEAD. N=145

Note: Interpretation of the mean values: the higher is the mean value, the more positive stance the respondents adopt toward immigrants. Significant difference between age categories is identified by an asterisk. The absence of the asterisk means no significant differences in attitudes between used age categories.

Interpretation of the asterisk: ***=0,001 significance level; **=0,01 significance level; *=0,05 significance level.

¹¹ We have conducted ANOVA analyses which allows us to test if the mean values differ significantly between age groups and each of the immigration related items.

VII. OVERALL PERCEPTION OF IMMIGRANTS BY AGE AND MIGRATORY BACKGROUND

To take the analysis further we have created a sum score¹² which is a composite indicator of perception of immigrants based on the results of principal component analysis applied to the aforementioned questions. It allows us to aggregate the information from seven individual items and gives us an overall (composite) attitude toward immigrants. The values of the sum score vary between 1 and 5, where value 5 identifies the most positive perception of immigrants and value 1 the most negative one.

Table 2 presents the result of the mean analysis. The data reveal that our hypothesis has been corroborated only for the first generation immigrants. Within this group the youngest residents show the most open attitude toward immigrants. People belonging to the middle age category are on the second position and the least open are the oldest members of this group. Among children of mixed couples and the second generation immigrants, the youngest age group holds the more positive attitude toward immigrants, followed by the oldest group. The

middle aged respondents appear to adopt the least positive stance toward immigrants. When looking at natives residents, we find that the most tolerant position is held by the middle age group, followed by the older residents and finally, the young ones. These results, in general, corroborate the findings showed in the sections above.

A test of statistical significant differences among all age categories pointed out only one significant age difference. This was uncovered in the first generation immigrants. For this subgroup, it has been proven that the youngest respondents are more tolerant than the oldest residents. Lack of statistically significant age-differences with respect to other subgroups might be due to relatively small sample size of second generation and children mixed couples. Or by the fact that the age differences which have been observed in the analysis of individual items, for the case of the general population, were to certain level masked by the aggregation of subgroups. Statistically significant differences are identified by an asterisk in the table below.

TABLE 2. Overall attitude toward immigrants by age and migratory background

Group of residents	Age group	Mean
Native	18-34 years	2,77
	35-59 years	2,99
	60+ years	2,86
1st Generation	18-34 years	3,55*
	35-59 years	3,45
	60+ years	3,19*
2nd Generation	18-34 years	3,31
	35-59 years	3,06
	60+ years	3,25
Children of mixed couples	18-34 years	3,07
	35-59 years	2,64
	60+ years	2,93

Source: EVS, Luxembourg, 2008, CEPS/INSTEAD. N=1568.

Note: Interpretation of the figures: the close is the value to 5 the more positive is the perception of immigrants.

Interpretation of the asterisk: ***=0,001 significance level; **=0,01 significance level; *=0,05 significance level.

¹² For more details regarding the construction of the sum score please see Valentova, M. (2010): "Attitudes toward immigrants" in Dickes, P. (Ed.): *Cohésion sociale. Enquêtes EVS Luxembourg 1999-2008. Variables intermédiaires*. Differdange: CEPS/INSTEAD.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper we tried to corroborate the hypothesis that age affects the attitudes toward immigrants and more specifically, that the younger the respondents are, the more positive attitudes toward immigrants they would exhibit. In a first step we split the sample in three age categories: young, middle and old and tested the hypothesis on the Luxembourg population as a whole. In a second step, we divided the population according to their migratory background (natives, first generation immigrants, second generation immigrants and children of mixed couples) and tested the influence of age in each of them for every question. In a third step we created a sum score of attitudes toward immigrants and checked how this composite indicator of attitudes was affected by age. In the conclusions we focus only on questions where age effect was statistically significant.

The differences in attitudes toward immigrants by age among all Luxembourg residents confirmed that in general the youngest respondents sustained a more positive stance toward immigrants compared to their older counterparts.

This picture changes slightly if we take into account the migratory background of Luxembourg residents. The general hypothesis that the openness toward immigrants is decreasing with age, cannot be confirmed fully for any of the subgroups. Among natives, the most tolerant position is held by the middle age group and not by the young respondents contrarily to the expectations derived from the literature. Among first generation immigrants, the young and middle age respondents showed the same level of acceptance of certain questions when compared to the older age group. For the children of mixed couples, the young respondents exhibit a more tolerant position for the majority of the questions when compared to their older counterparts. Regarding the second generation immigrants age differences concerning attitudes were not found significant.

We observed an interesting pattern regarding the question concerning jobs. This question is the only one in which age differences were significant in three sub-groups of residents (natives, first generation and children of mixed couples). This means that age influence the attitudes toward this

question. However, each subgroup of residents has a different pattern. For natives the most open position is held by the middle aged group. For first generation immigrants the most open position is sustained by youngest and middle aged groups equally. For children of mixed couples the oldest respondents show the most open position. All these results led us to say that the pattern of openness toward immigrants regarding jobs varies according to the age group and migratory background.

These findings were corroborated by the results of the analysis of the composite indicator of attitudes towards immigration where attitudes toward each individual item were aggregated in one score. The composite indicator shows that there are differences among subgroups of the population and also variation depending on the age category.

As the issue of age differences in perception of immigrants across resident groups with different migratory background has not been, up to now, sufficiently researched, the present study provides the reader with the first glance at the situation in Luxembourg. A further, more in depth, research is needed to be able to answer questions regarding the main causes of and drivers behind the observed differences.

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