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Who is For Immigration?

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Abstract. Immigration has been fervently debated in recent history. This research investigates what effect certain economic and non-economic variables have on individuals' likelihood to be pro-immigration. This is extended to individuals in the United States, Great Britain, and Turkey, analyzed with separate regressions. My research uses data from the 2013 International Social Survey Programme and logit regression methods to explore the relationship, mimicking research done by Anne Maria Mayda, as reported in the 2006 paper "Who Is Against Immigration? A Cross-Country Investigation of Individual Attitudes toward Immigrants". This research updates Mayda's by using the most recent data available and compares only the three previously specified countries. Key results of my research show that sex and age are not significant in the United States or Great Britain, while being male and being younger influences individuals in Turkey to be more pro-immigration. Additionally, more education led to more pro-immigration sentiments in the U.S. and the U.K., though not in Turkey. Moreover, I find that individuals in different countries are impacted by different variables, with no single variable being significant for all models in all three countries. The results of this research have application for those hoping to understand or to sway public opinion on immigration.

Keywords: Immigration preferences

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1. Introduction

Immigration to the United States has continued to be a hotly debated topic in recent history. Both those in support of and in opposition to immigration to the United States have spoken up particularly during this election season, passionately disagreeing with those on the other side. However, this is an issue that many countries face, as we have seen with immigration also being a major issue in the discussions of the Brexit proposition and in the international debates on how and where Syrian refugees will be accepted.

In exploring which characteristics result in more pro-immigration sentiments, I explore the United States, Great Britain, and Turkey. The United States was chosen because of the political divide on immigration apparent during the 2016 Presidential Election. Great Britain was chosen because of the significance of immigration opinions during the Brexit proposition. Finally, Turkey was chosen because during the time of this writing, Turkey has accepted the most refugees from Syria in a time where many countries are trying to limit their entry. Within the scope of these three countries, my research assesses whether previously significant economic and non-economic variables are still significant in the present-day, and also provides the specific ability to look into what may be the identical or varying causes of acceptance of/resistance to immigration in the United States, Great Britain, and Turkey.

Using 2013 International Social Survey Programme National Identity (ISSP-NI) data, I research what factors explain who is for immigration, analyzing only those surveyed in the United States, Great Britain or the United Kingdom, and Turkey, for the purpose of comparison. My results reveal that there was no single variable that was consistently significant for all three countries, suggesting that different factors influence different countries, rather than certain variables consistently impacting immigration opinions.

2. Literature Review

Previous research on the topic of attitudes toward immigration has examined the effects of both economic and non-economic factors. Mayda (2006) uses data from the 1995 International Social Survey Programme National Identity (ISSP-NI), consisting of over 20,000 respondents from 22 countries, as well as data from the 1995-1997 World Value Survey (WVS) dataset that includes information from more than 50,000 respondents from 44 developing countries. In comparing respondents' declared opinions on immigration with the economic and noneconomic characteristics the respondents held, Mayda found that having older age, being female, living in a rural area, not having parents with foreign citizenship, having less education, political affiliation with the right, having a lower social class, being a trade union member, being monocultural, and agreeing with certain patriotic/nationalistic statements have significant effect on not holding a pro-immigration attitude. Mayda also concludes that though education overall had a significant positive effect on immigration attitudes, education had a negative coefficient in economies with a GDP per capita of less than approximately $4480.

O'Rourke and Sinnott (2006) come to similar overall findings after analyzing 24 countries' with the 1995 ISSP-NI data, revealing that anti-immigrant attitudes are prompted by low skill level, older age, being female, lack of employment, lack of national and/or international mobility, patriotism, chauvinism, protectionism, being a native citizen, having native citizens as parents, and never having lived abroad. The results of both Mayda and of O'Rourke and Sinnot describe age, sex, and education as significant.

Hainsmueller and Hiscox (2007) look more closely at education by analyzing European voters with the 2003 European Social Survey data. They find that those with higher education

levels are more likely to support the immigration of both high-skilled and low-skilled workers, suggesting that people are not against immigration because of market competition. They further find that a college-style education made an impact that other forms of skills training did not, suggesting openness to immigration and trade may be tied to a change in values and beliefs as education increases in college (e.g. less racism, more belief that immigration and trade openness is good for the economy). This idea is supported by Christian Dustmann and Ian P. Preston's research (2007) that looked at the significance of labor market concerns versus welfare concerns versus racial or cultural concerns in Great Britain with data from several years of the British Social Attitudes Survey. They find that welfare was of greater concern than labor market conditions, and racial/cultural concerns made an impact only when the immigrants were from ethnically different backgrounds. This means that, in support of the range of variables Mayda (2006) and O'Rourke and Sinnott (2006) find to be significant, attitudes on immigration are caused by more than just economic characteristics.

My research will build on the above previous research on immigration attitudes, updating Mayda's research (2006) by using more recent data and comparing the results of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Turkey specifically.

3. Data and Model

I use data from the 2013 ISSP National Identity survey, which consists of over 45,000 respondents from 34 countries. Individuals responded to demographic and opinion statements on the questionnaire, identifying their age, education, number of children, income, religious views, affiliation with the political right, agreement with nationalistic sentiments, and etcetera. Question 10 of the questionnaire reads "Do you think the number of immigrants to [respondent's country]

nowadays should be: (a) reduced a lot, (b) reduced a little, (c) remain the same as it is, (d) increased a little, or (e) increased a lot". This question was adapted to become my dependent pro-immigration dichotomous variable FORIMM. Respondents who answered that they believe immigration should be increased a little or increased a lot are considered pro-immigration and obtain a value of one for FORIMM. Those who indicated that immigration levels should remain the same, decrease a little, or decrease a lot were not considered pro-immigration and obtain a value of zero for FORIMM. Individuals who indicated that they could not choose and those who did not respond to this question were eliminated from the dataset, as their attitudes toward immigration could not be determined.

Model

I apply logit regression techniques to determine how the previously discussed factors determine the probability an individual will have pro-immigration sentiments. Because the dependent variable is dichotomous, ordinary least squares estimates are not ideal due to OLS producing unrestricted results that may predict a value less than zero or greater than one for the probability that an individual will be pro-immigration. OLS is additionally not ideal because of the heteroscedasticity in its disturbances and the lack of consistency in its standard errors. A logit model is preferred to estimate the probability of an individual being pro-immigration, which places bounds at one and zero.

I run four regressions. I start with a base equation that incorporates the most standard of characteristics: sex, age, and years of education. In Equation 2, I add work variables, household variables, religion, and citizenship for the next level of characteristics explored. I then add the native citizenship of one's parents and the dummy variables for urban living BIGCITY to further

broaden the variables controlled for in Equation 3. Finally, Equation 4 adds the single variable RIGHT to identify the effects that this characteristic has, added last in order to be able to see other variables' influences clearly due to RIGHT'S strong influence on immigration opinions in the United States. In Great Britain, the citizenship of individuals' mothers and fathers were not available, and these variables are thus not controlled for in Great Britain. Similarly, in Turkey, around 30 percent of respondents did not indicated the number of school-age or under school-age children they had, so these variables were not controlled for in Turkey. Below are the logit regression models I will compare, displaying the variables used for the United States in the cases of diversity in variable names:

Equation 1

$$P(FORIMM) = b_0 + b_1\,MALE + b_2\,AGE + b_3\,EDUCYRS + e$$

Equation 2

$$P(FORIMM) = b_0 + b_1\,MALE + b_2\,AGE + b_3\,EDUCYRS + b_4\,CWORK + b_5\,MARRIED + b_6\,HHCHILDR + b_7\,HHTODD + b_8\,US\_INC + b_9\,RELGION1 + b_{10}\,RELIGION3 + b_{11}CITIZEN + e$$

Equation 3

$$P(FORIMM) = b_0 + b_1\,MALE + b_2\,AGE + b_3\,EDUCYRS + b_4\,CWORK + b_5\,MARRIED + b_6\,HHCHILDR + b_7\,HHTODD + b_8\,US\_INC + b_9\,RELGION1 + b_{10}\,RELIGION3 + b_{11}CITIZEN + b_{12}\,F\_BORN + b_{13}\,M\_BORN + b_{14}\,BIGCITY + e$$

Equation 4

$$P(FORIMM) = b_0 + b_1\,MALE + b_2\,AGE + b_3\,EDUCYRS + b_4\,CWORK + b_5\,MARRIED + b_6\,HHCHILDR + b_7\,HHTODD + b_8\,US\_INC + b_9\,RELGION1 + b_{10}\,RELIGION3 + b_{11}CITIZEN + b_{12}\,F\_BORN + b_{13}\,M\_BORN + b_{14}\,BIGCITY + b_{15}$$

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RIGHT + e

4. Results

Variables are defined and their mean and standard deviations are reported in Table I. The dependent variable FORIMM is used to describe an individual's opinion on immigration being that immigration should either (1) be increased a lot or (2) be increased a little, as opposed to an opinion that immigration levels should remain the same, be reduced a little, or be reduced a lot. Under this definition, 14.5 percent of respondents in the United States are pro-immigration, 3.7 percent of respondents in Great Britain are pro-immigration, and 6.3 percent of respondents in Turkey are pro-immigration.

Logit Regression Results

The estimated coefficients, their standard errors, and their marginal effects are reported in Table II for the United States, in Table III for the United Kingdom, and in Table IV for Turkey. The marginal effect of the probability of a particular independent variable is calculated as $\delta P(y=1)/\delta x=bP(1-P)$, where x is the independent variable, b is the logit estimate, P is the probability that y equals 1, and (1-P) represents the probability that y is 0.

United States Results

It was expected that the models would confirm that being male, being younger, and having more education correlates with being more pro-immigration, in accordance with common existing research findings. In the United States, neither sex nor age were significant for any of the four equations. Education, however, was significantly and positively correlated for all four

equations with years of education having coefficients approximating around .01 for each model, meaning for each year of schooling an individual has, he or she is around one percent more likely to be pro-immigration.

Marital status, number of children of school-age, number of children under school-age, income, the native citizenship of one's mother, nor living in an urban area were found to be significant in any model for the United States for the year 2013. The lack of significance of income confirms Mayda's finding that income is not significant; this is likely because education level has more of an impact on immigration attitudes than one's skill level and resulting income does, which is in coincidence with Hainsmueller and Hiscox's findings.

In addition to education, results for the U.S. show significance in having a native citizen as a father and in being affiliated with the political right. While affiliation with the right was been found to be significant by Mayda, the significance of having a native citizen for a father is a surprising finding. This is especially surprising considering native citizenship of one's mother does not have the same effect in sign, intensity, or significance.

The remainder of the variables were not found to be consistently significant or insignificant for the United States. However, it is noteworthy that being in a religious minority tended to correlate positively with significance with pro-immigration attitudes. Another striking finding is that being currently employed and being a native citizen tended to correlate negatively with pro-immigration attitudes.

Great Britain Results

The results for Great Britain do not show consistent significance in sex or age in terms of influencing attitude toward immigration. However, I find a strongly correlated significance for

education in all four models with a positive coefficient, suggesting that the more education one has the more likely he or she is to be pro-immigration, though this was with a smaller coefficient than was the case for the United States. Additionally, those living in or around big cities and those who identified with a non-Christian religion were shown to have more pro-immigration attitudes in Great Britain, as can be seen by the significant and positive coefficient of the variables BIGCITY and RELIGION1.

Many variables other than sex and age were found to not be significant in Great Britain, including work status, marital status, number of school-age children, number of children younger than school-age, income, being non-religious, being a citizen of Great Britain, and being affiliated with the political right. Demographic variables like marital status and number of children being insignificant is unsurprising due to previous researchers tending to not present family variables in their investigation. Work status and income being consistently insignificant is also unsurprising due to Hainsmueller and Hiscox's research and Dustmann and Preston's research showing that education variables are more important in influencing immigration opinion than job market variables. However, it is noteworthy that being affiliated with the political right did not have notable significance in Great Britain as it did in the United States.

Turkey Results

In Turkey, unlike in the United States and Great Britain, sex showed positive significance in three of the four models and age had negative significance is all models, while education was consistently insignificant and negative. This trend for education may be a case of skill level becoming a negatively correlated variable with lower GDP per capita, as Mayda (2006) describes in her findings. However, while Mayda finds this to occur below a GDP of around $4480,

Turkey's GDP per capita in 2013 was over $10,000 according to the World Bank, meaning this result was surprising ("GDP per capita…").

Turkey additionally found work status and income to influence attitudes, which was largely not the case in the United States or Great Britain, with being employed having a negative and significant impact and higher income having a positive and significant impact. This means that being employed made someone less likely to be pro-immigration, but higher income made him/her more likely to be pro-immigration. This tells us that those who are employed but do not have a high income are unlikely to be for immigration. Considering education also shows a negative sign, it is possible that while it has been found in some countries that education has more of an impact than job market conditions, anti-immigration attitudes in Turkey may be based more on the job market than on racial and cultural concerns.

CITIZEN and BIGCITY are also significant, both with negative coefficients. This means that those surveyed were less likely to be pro-immigration if they were citizens of Turkey and less likely to be pro-immigration if they lived in or around a big city. Because Mayda (2006) found that living in a rural area caused individuals to be less likely to be pro-immigration, and the results for Great Britain reaffirmed this conclusion, the opposite result for Turkey is an interesting finding.

The results for Turkey show the following variables in addition to years of education to not be significant: marital status, being in the dominant religious group of Sunni, native citizenship of one's mother, and being affiliated with the political right. Not being surprised by the family variables, it is notable that political party and being in the dominant religious group is not significant in Turkey.

5. Summary and Conclusions

In the United States and Great Britain, years of education had a positive and significant correlation with having pro-immigration sentiments, as is to be expected with prior research suggesting that more education correlates with more open perspectives on immigration. However, it was an oddity that this was not the case for any of the four equations in Turkey, where the GDP per capita was over $10,000 in 2013, significantly higher than the $4480 where Mayda found education to no longer turn a positive coefficient. My research additionally found that despite sex and age tending to be significant in existing research, neither results for the United States nor results for Great Britain showed significance for these variables. Finally, my results show that the same variables do not produce the same results in these different countries, with not a single variable being consistently significant for all three tested countries.

Further research may investigate the impact of union membership, patriotism, nationalism, protectionism, chauvinism, and mobility as previous research has, in order to test whether the researchers' findings are still accurate today and whether particular characteristics are more impactful in some countries than in others. Determining these variations and the reasons behind them would broaden our understanding of immigration attitudes around the world.

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Table I. Variable Definitions and Descriptive Statistics for the Full Sample				
Definition		Mean (Standard Deviation)		
		USA	Great Britain	Turkey
FORIMM	1 if pro-immigration; 0 if otherwise	.1446 (.0111)	.0367 (.0071)	.0633 (.0102)
MALE	1 if male; 0 if otherwise	.4769 (.0158)	.4407 (.01867)	.5167 (.0210)
AGE	Age in years	48.56 (.5349)	52.33 (.6495)	41.56 (.6300)
EDUCYRS	Years of schooling	13.84 (.0959)	12.73 (.1135)	7.41 (.1844)
CWORK	1 if currently working; 0 if otherwise	.6155 (.0154)	.5395 (.0187)	.3989 (.0205)
MARRIED	1 if married; 0 if otherwise	.4478 (.0157)	.4873 (.0188)	.6872 (.0195)
HHCHILDR	Number of school-age children (5 years of age or older) in the household	.7490 (.1994)	.8941 (.2796)	-
HHTODD	Number of children younger than school-age (younger than 5 years of age) in the household	.3323 (.1409)	.7076 (.2792)	-
US_INC	Approximate income in USD	62,294.68 (1,504.34)	-	-
GB_INC	Approximate income in GBP	-	2,679.46 (74.52)	-
TR_INC	Approximate income in TRY	-	-	1462.06 (55.51)
RELIGION1	1 if identifying with a non-Christian religion; 0 if otherwise	.0452 (.0066)	.0452 (.0078)	-
RELIGION2	1 if identifying with a Christian religion; 0 if otherwise	.7470 (.0138)	.4703 (.0188)	-
RELIGION3	1 if identifying as not having a religion; 0 if otherwise	.2078 (.0129)	.4845 (.0188)	-
SUNNI	1 if identifying with the Sunni religion; 0 if otherwise	-	-	.9174 (.0116)
CITIZEN	1 if a citizen of the country; 0 if otherwise	.9438 (.0073)	.9675 (.0067)	.9930 (.0035)
FBORN	1 if respondent's father was born in the country; 0 if otherwise	.8052 (.0126)	-	.9736 (.0067)
MBORN	1 if respondent's mother was born in the country; 0 if otherwise	.8052 (.0126)	-	.9807 (.0058)
BIGCITY	1 if respondent lives in or on the outskirts of a big city; 0 if otherwise	.8604 (.0110)	.3037 (.0173)	.5026 (.0210)
RIGHT	1 if respondent voted for the political right or far right in the last general election; 0 if otherwise	.2641 (.0140)	.2952 (.0172)	.5958 (.0206)

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Table II. Logit Regression Results - USA	Equation 1	Equation 2	Equation 3	Equation 4
Independent Variables				
MALE	.1718 [.0210] (.342)	.1588 [.0188] (.395)	.1491 [.0172] (.426)	.1719 [.0191] (.366)
AGE	-.0006 [-.0001] (.924)	-.0010 [-.0001] (.860)	-.0001 [-.0000] (.984)	.0037 [.0004] (.547)
EDUCYRS	.0695 [.0085]** (.049)	.0845 [.0099]** (0.025)	.0854 [.0098]** (.021)	.0933 [.0103]** (.011)
CWORK		-.3599 [-.0439]* (.064)	-.3080 [-.0365] (.114)	-.3009 [-.0343] (.132)
MARRIED		.0837 [.0099] (.684)	.0309 [.0036] (.882)	.1348 [.0150] (.526)
HHCHILDR		-.0186 [-.0022] (.340)	-.0264 [-.0030] (.359)	-.0247 [-.0027] (.257)
HHTODD		.0308 [.0036] (.185)	.0401 [.0046] (.198)	.0371 [.0041] (.137)
US_INC		-1.87e-07 [-2.21e-08] (.937)	1.32e-07[1.52e-08] (.956)	8.10e-07 [8.98e-08] (.743)
RELIGION1		.6526 [..0949]* (.082)	.4286 [.0683] (.197)	.4512 [.0581] (.272)
RELIGION3		.6526 [.0576]* (.041]	.4286 [.0542]* (.051)	.2782 [.0328] (.203)
CITIZEN		-.9592 [-.1512]*** (.006)	-.3425 [-.0442] (.388)	-.2432 [-.0292] (.547)
FBORN			-1.049 [-.1519]*** (.002)	-1.043 [-.1458]*** (.003)
MBORN			.2040 [.0225] (.568)	.2884 [.0299] (.436)
BIGCITY			-.2684 [-.0332] (.317)	-.2706 [-.0322] (.314)
RIGHT				-.9964 [-.0938]*** (.000)
Log Likelihood	-408.49266	-400.07808	-392.75346	-385.34
Chi-Square	4.45	22.70**	39.53***	50.85***
N	996	996	996	996
Logit Coefficients are reported, Marginal Effects are shown in brackets, Robust Standard Error shown in parenthesis. Standard errors are corrected for heteroskedasticity and clustering				
*** Significant at 0.01 level, ** significant at 0.05 level, * significant at 0.10 level				

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Table III. Logit Regression Results – Great Britain	Equation 1	Equation 2	Equation 3	Equation 4
Independent Variables				
MALE	.1711 [.0057] (.630)	.5221 [.0113] (.209)	.5172 [.0109] (.230)	.5441 [.0113] (.197)
AGE	-.0152 [-.0005] (.106)	-.0117 [-.0002] (.462)	-.0118 [-.0002] (.451)	-.0093 [-.0002] (.578)
EDUCYRS	.1579 [.0052]*** (.000)	.1621 [.0034]*** (.002)	.1458 [.0030]*** (.006)	.1452 [.0029]*** (.005)
CWORK		.2328 [.0048] (.677)	.2133 [.0043] (.701)	.1452 [.0048] (.665)
MARRIED		-.3723 [-.0078] (.464)	-.2697 [-.0055] (.601)	-.2468 [-.0049] (.633)
HHCHILDR		.0643 [.0013] (.776)	.1080 [.0022] (.648)	.0844 [.0017] (.731)
HHTODD		-.3898 [-.0081] (.405)	-.3129 [-.0064] (.505)	-.2897 [-.0058] (.516)
GB_INC		.0000 [2.18e-07] (.927)	6.71e-06 [1.36e-07] (.954)	.0000 [4.17e-07] (.847)
RELIGION1		1.8533 [.0936]*** (.002)	1.4880 [.0612]** (.013)	1.4800 [.0594]** (.013)
RELIGION3		.0626 [.0013] (.905)	.0837 [.0017] (.870)	.0216 [.0004] (.966)
CITIZEN		.2876 [.0053] (.794)	.4223 [.0071] (.693)	.4349 [.0072] (.678)
BIGCITY			.9879 [.0250]** (.024)	.9806 [.0242]** (.025)
RIGHT				-.4587 [.0084] (.436)
Log Likelihood	-134.43109	-97.814956	-95.324262	-94.973097
Chi-Square	17.16***	30.44**	31.12**	37.74***
N	708	708	708	708
Logit Coefficients are reported, Marginal Effects are shown in brackets, Robust Standard Error shown in parenthesis. Standard errors are corrected for heteroskedasticity and clustering				
*** Significant at 0.01 level, ** significant at 0.05 level, * significant at 0.10 level				
Note: Data for M_BORN and F_BORN were not available for Great Britain and were thus not controlled for in Equations 3 and 4 as they were in the United States sample and Turkey sample.				

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Logit Regression Results – Turkey	Equation 1	Equation 2	Equation 3	Equation 4
Independent Variables				
MALE	.2776 [.0118] (.347)	.5664 [.0231]* (.060)	.5201 [.0205]* (.081)	.5274 [.0207]* (.080)
AGE	-.02422 [-.0010]* (.067)	-.0238 [-.0010]** (.040)	-.0251 [-.0010]** (.038)	-.0260 [-.0010]** (.033)
EDUCYRS	-.0315 [-.0013] (.381)	-.0421 [-.0017] (.281)	-.0344 [-.0013] (.382)	-.0323 [-.0013] (.424)
CWORK		-.6889 [-.0260]** (.037)	-.6817 [-.0249]** (.042)	-.6934 [-.0252]** (.040)
MARRIED		-.1698 [-.0070] (.603)	-.1517 [-.0061] (.643)	-.1816 [-.0073] (.565)
TR_INC		.0001 [4.37e-06] (.189)	.0001 [5.07e-06]* (.099)	.0001 [5.10e-06]* (.099)
SUNNI		-.3939 [-.0184] (.368)	-.5270 [-.0251] (.226)	-.5689 [-.0275] (.176)
CITIZEN		-1.9646 [-.1951] (.102)	-1.6669 [-.1418]* (.099)	-1.6880 [-.1446]* (.094)
FBORN			.3691 [.0122] (.518)	.3228 [.0109] (.575)
MBORN			-.6509 [-.0341] (.285)	-.6074 [-.0311] (.331)
BIGCITY			-.5769 [-.0237]** (.044)	-.5706 [-.0234]** (.046)
RIGHT				.1532 [.0059] (.599)
Log Likelihood	-211.75693	-207.54567	-205.62224	-205.51036
Chi-Square	4.07	21.07***	29.82***	32.72***
N	1140	1140	1140	1140
Logit Coefficients are reported, Marginal Effects are shown in brackets, Robust Standard Error shown in parenthesis. Standard errors are corrected for heteroskedasticity and clustering				
*** Significant at 0.01 level, ** significant at 0.05 level, * significant at 0.10 level				

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