



Coimisiún na hÉireann um Chearta
an Duine agus Comhionannas
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

Attitudes to Diversity in Ireland

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Motivation

- Attitudes of the host country population are an important measure of the context for social integration of migrants and social cohesion
- Affect immigrants' and minorities day-to-day experience in host country, and how welcome they feel; may also influence policymakers and policymaking
- Less of a tradition of research on attitudes to immigrants in Ireland as immigration a comparatively new phenomenon; no established non-Irish ethnic minorities

This Report...

- Questions how the Irish population has responded to rapid immigration after decades of emigration
- Uses high-quality European data to examine changes in attitudes to immigration over time in Ireland
- Also considers attitudes to different groups and social contact with minorities
- Compares Irish values to West European averages

Theoretical perspectives – intro to key concepts

- **Social identity theory** – individuals compare ‘in groups’ and ‘out-groups’ and perceive positive characteristics of ‘in-group’/ negative of ‘out-group’ (Hewstone et al 2002)
- **Ethnic Competition** – groups compete over scarce resources (such as jobs, housing, power, cultural values) (Quillian, 1995)
- Some authors distinguish **material** (or realistic) threat – jobs, services, security – from **symbolic** – immigrants have different belief systems and moral values – ie to role of women or religious values
- Important point: Threat may be real or imagined – both can affect attitudes to immigrants (Coebanu and Escandell, 2010)
- Some authors argue that the **size of the immigrant/minority group** matters for how threatening they are perceived to be by the host/ majority population (Quillian, 1995; Scheepers et al. 2002)

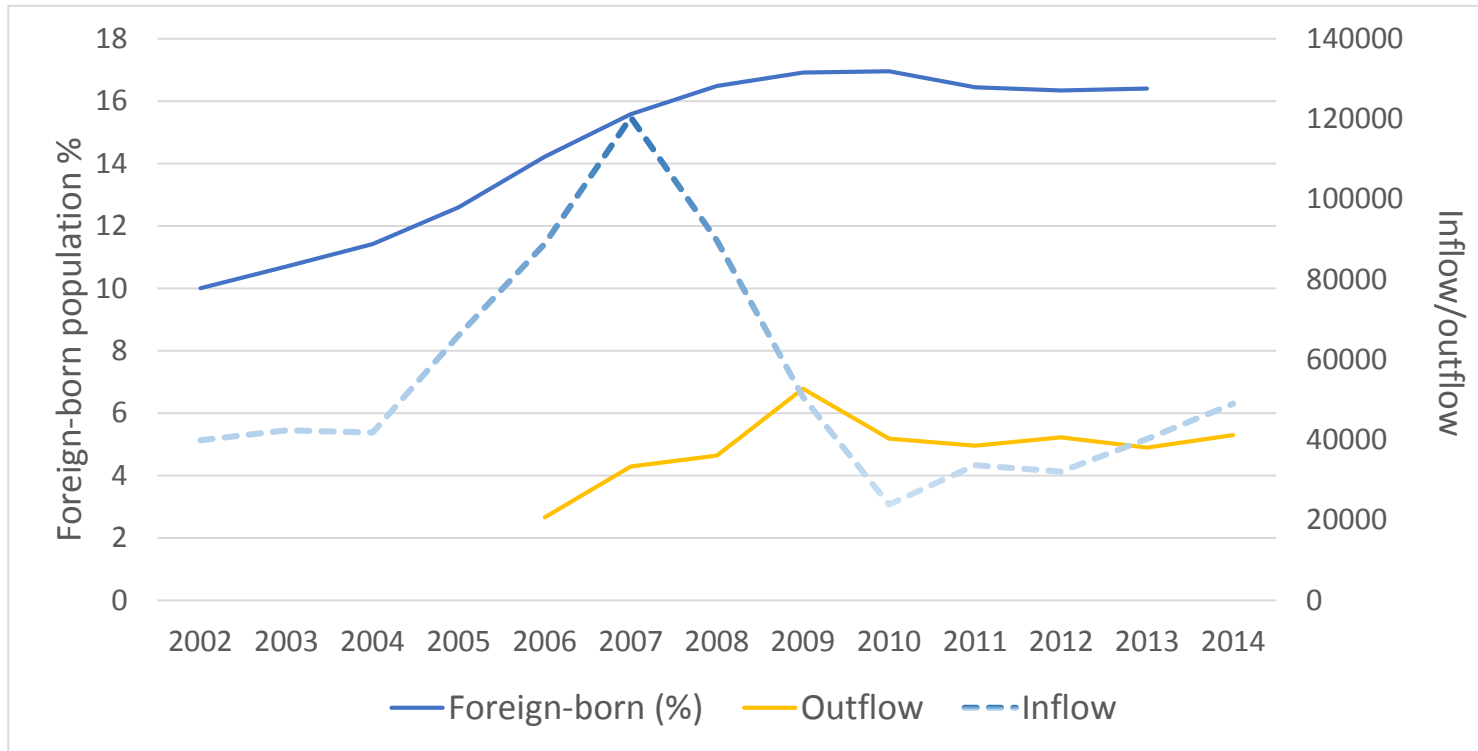
Key concepts 2

- For others it is the **economic climate** (Coenders and Scheepers, 1998; Schneider, 2008)
- Almost all previous studies find those with **higher educational qualifications** have more positive attitudes to immigration, though the mechanisms are debated
- Some claim that this relates to **economic competition** - the highly education financially more secure (Scheve and Slaughter, 2001; Dustmann and Preston, 2004)
- Others claim it is the '**liberalising effect of education**' – individuals develop values like egalitarianism in third level education (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2007)
- Or is it **self-selection**? Individuals with more positive attitudes tend to progress to higher education (Lancee and Sarrasin, 2015)

Key concepts 3

- **Ethnic composition** of immigrant group matters (Dustmann and Preston, 2007; Schneider, 2008); there are '**ethnic hierarchies**' – in-group members show different levels of prejudice to different outgroups, often based on perceived cultural or socio-economic distance (Strabac and Listhaug, 2008)
- Particularly for non-White ethnic groups, this may also be related to **attitudes to race/ethnicity** – the feeling that some races are superior (Dustmann and Preston, 2007)
- **Social contact** theory (Allport, 1954) proposes that contact may reduce prejudice and threat perception – but only positive social contact, not negative – direct empirical evidence not so clear (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2011)

Fig 1 Context: Changing immigration and percent foreign-born, Ireland 2002-2014



Source: *OECD International Migration Database.*

Context 2 Immigrants in Ireland

1. Rapid immigration during the economic boom, following decades of emigration
2. Around 2/3rds of migrants European; 1/3 non-EU
3. Culturally and linguistically very diverse: over 200 different nationalities (CSO, 2016) and 182 languages (CSO 2012).
4. Predominantly White (Of non-Irish - 66% White; 9% Black, 14% Asian, 10 % Other in 2016 Census)
5. Quite highly educated, esp non-EU migrants, partly due to immigration policy (in 2015 almost half working age non-Irish had 3rd level quals v 35% of Irish)

Research questions

- 1. How did attitudes to immigration change during the economic boom, bust and early recovery period (2002-2014)?
- 2. How do Irish attitudes compare to the West European averages for the period?
- 3. Do Irish attitudes to different groups of immigrants vary?
- 4. What is the role of demographic and other factors in understanding attitudes to immigration – educational qualifications, age, gender, left-right political orientation?
- 5. How are attitudes to immigration related to attitudes to race and to social contact with minority groups?

Measurement 1: The European Social Survey

- ESS – biennial survey specially designed to measure public opinion and changes in values and attitudes in Europe, 2002-2014
- High-quality survey; carefully worded, balanced questions
- Representative sample of adult population(s)
- We select Irish-born population (excluding migrants) for each year
- Compare to 10 Western European countries*
- Use a special module on immigration in 2014 for more detailed analysis (ESS, 2015; Heath and Richards, 2016)

Measurement 2

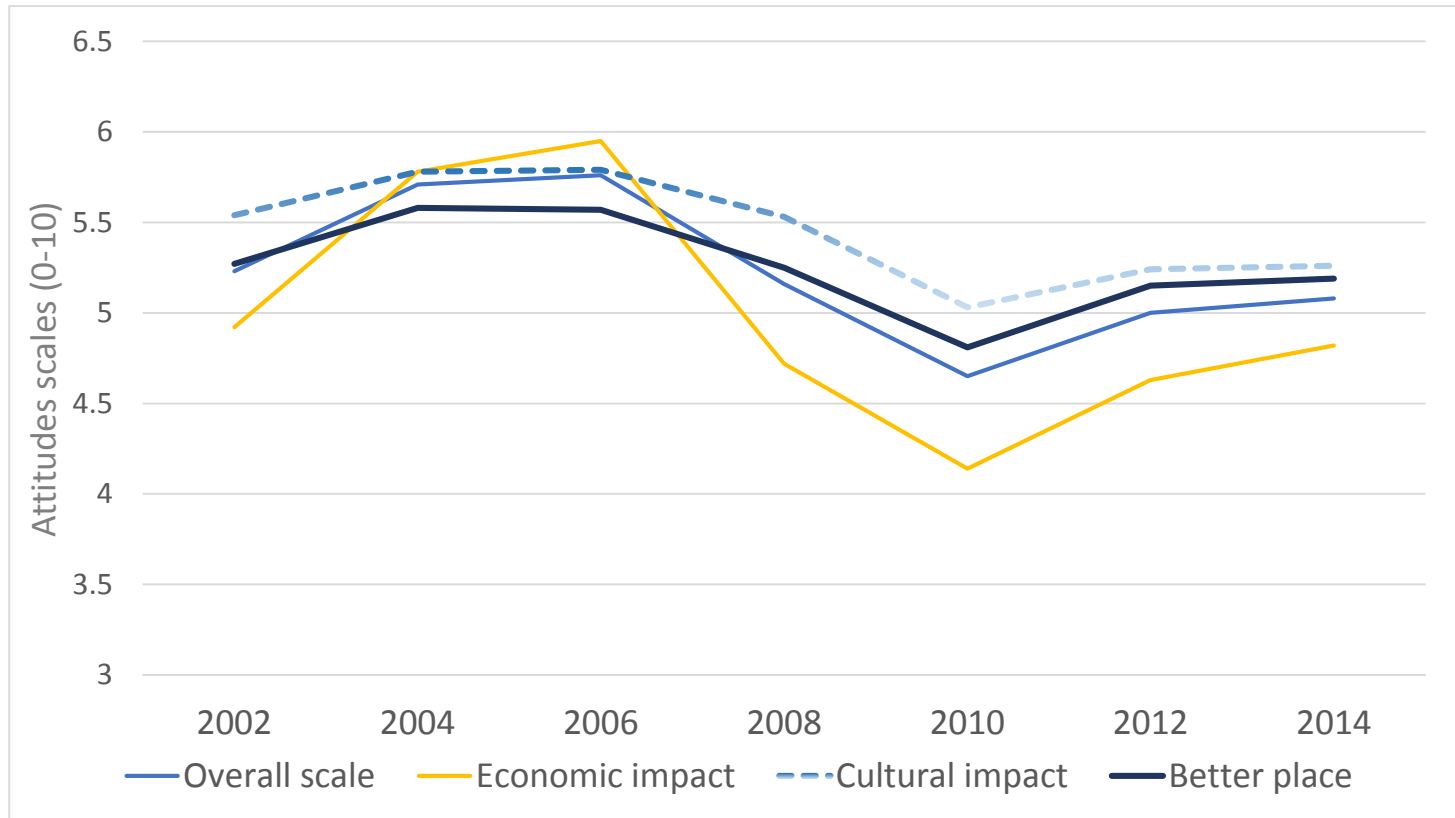
Social Desirability Bias

- Social desirability bias: tendency to report attitudes that are socially desirable, rather than reveal true attitudes, particularly on sensitive topics like immigration & racism
- List experiments in the US have shown it tends to be more prevalent among middle class/higher educated respondents (Janus 2010)
- Also qualitative evidence from Ireland (Byrne, 2015)
- No list experiments for Ireland. But respondents may conceal prejudice in a 'don't know' response

Measurement 3: Measuring attitudes to immigration

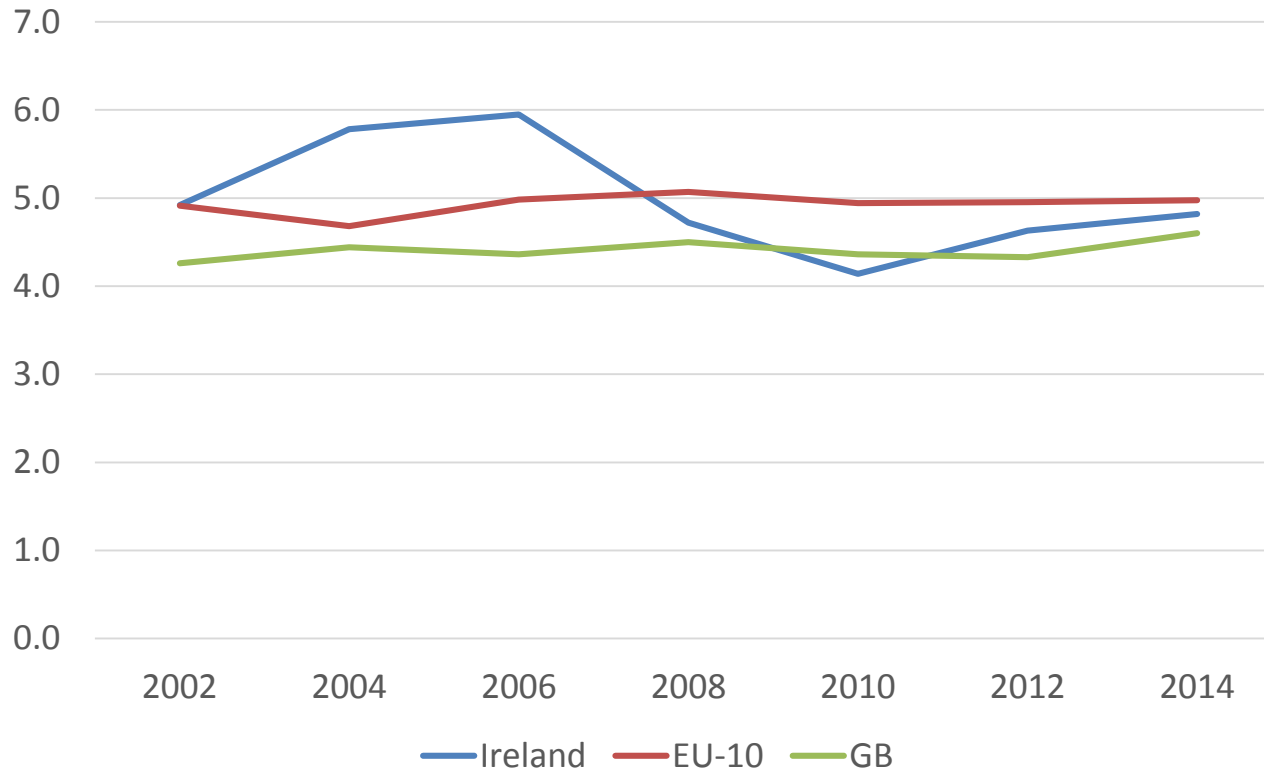
- *'Would you say it is generally bad or good for Ireland's economy that people come to live here from other countries?'* **'00 Bad for the economy on a scale to 10 Good for the economy'**
- *'Would you say that Ireland's cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?'* **'00 Cultural life undermined on a scale to 10 Cultural life enriched'**
- *'Is Ireland made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?'* **'00 Worse place to live on a scale to 10 Better place to live'**

RQ1: Fig 2 Change Over Time in Attitudes to the Impact of Immigration in Ireland, 2002-2014



Source: *European Social Survey, 2002-2014, respondents born in Ireland.*

RQ2 Fig 3 Attitudes to the Economic Impact of Immigration in Ireland and Ten West European Countries, 2002-2014

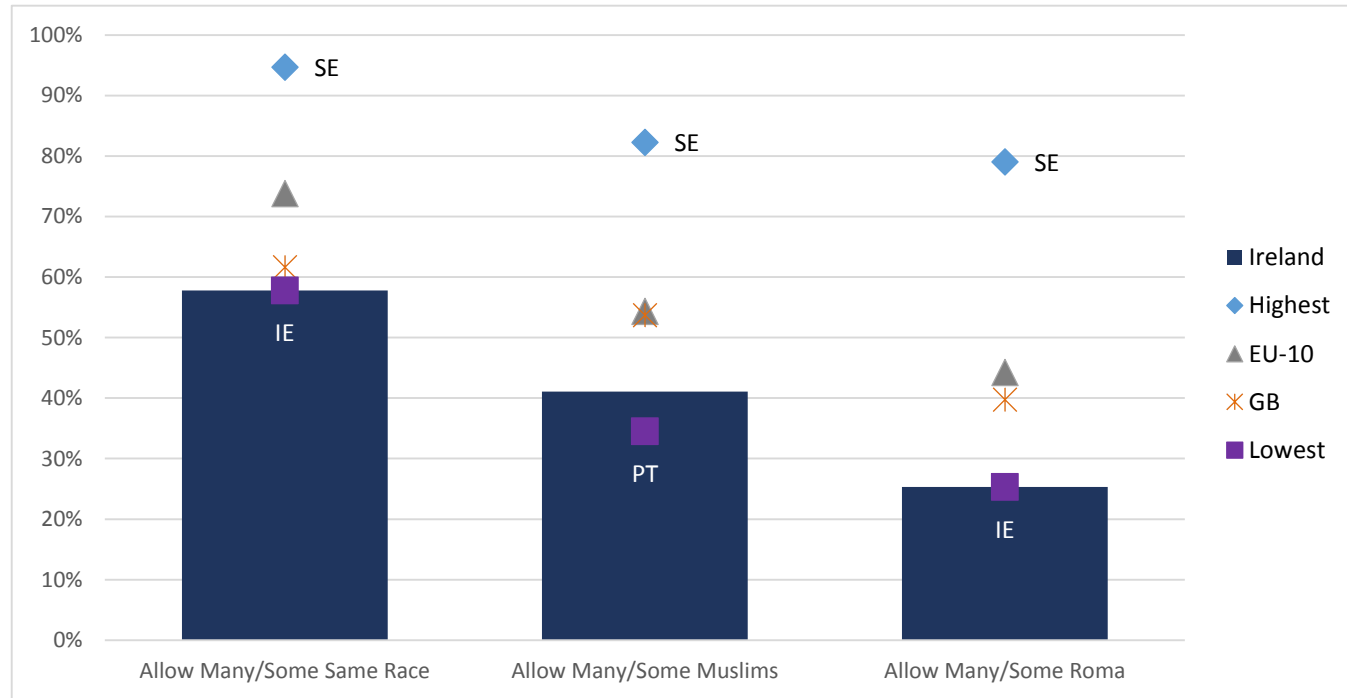


Source: *European Social Survey, 2002-2014, respondents born in country.*

Attitudes towards different groups of immigrants (2014)

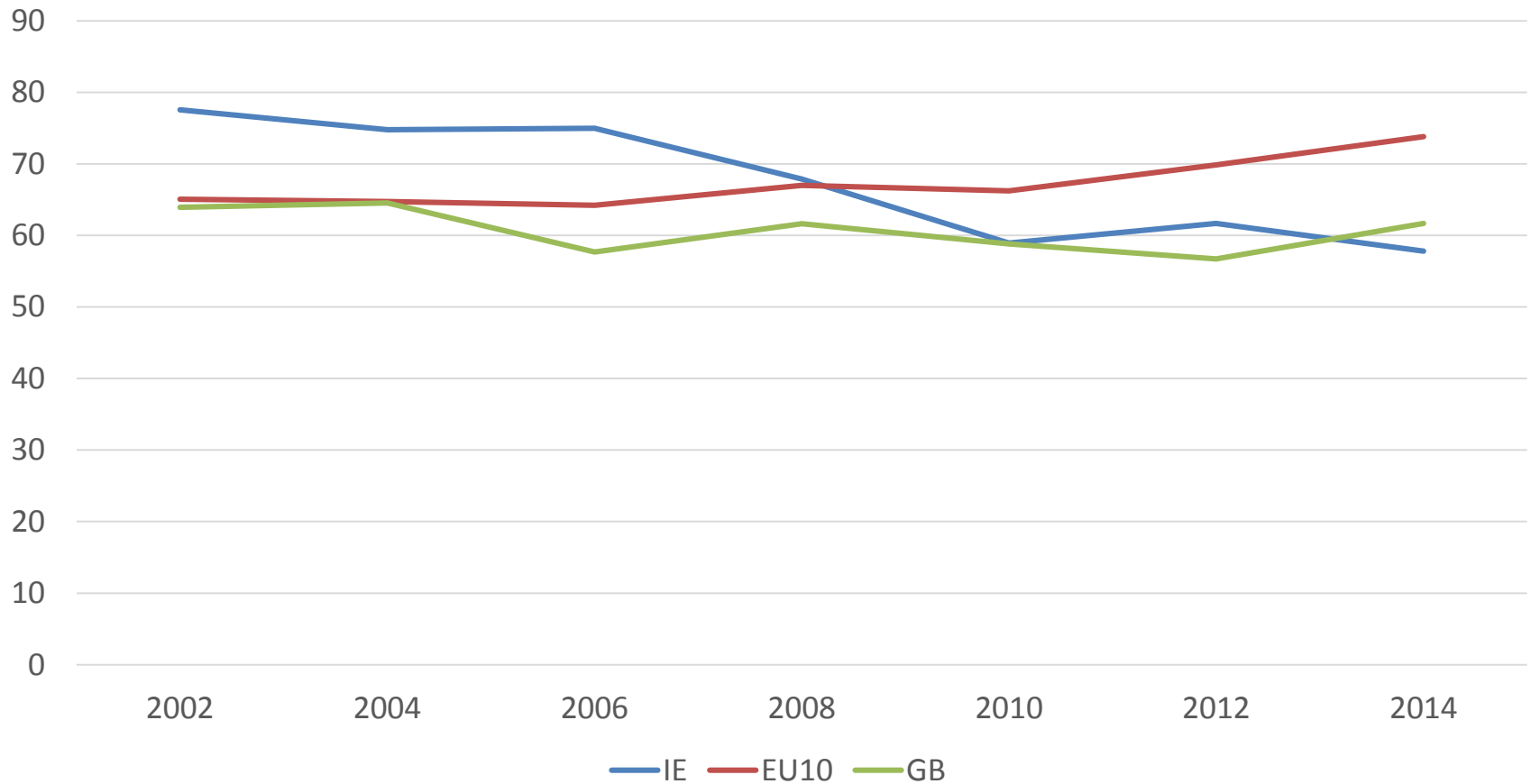
- *Now, to what extent do you think Ireland should allow people of the same race or ethnic group as most Irish people to come and live here?*
- *'I am going to ask you about different groups of people who might come to live in Ireland from other countries. Using this card, please tell me to what extent you think Ireland should allow Muslims from other countries to come and live in Ireland?*
- *Response cat.: allow none, allow few, allow some, allow many.*
- *Muslims replaced with 'Gypsies' for Roma*

RQ3: Fig 4 Percent allowing 'some or many' from different groups, Ireland and EU-10



Source: *European Social Survey, 2014*. Respondents born in country.

Fig 5 Percent allowing some/many of same ethnic group



Social contact

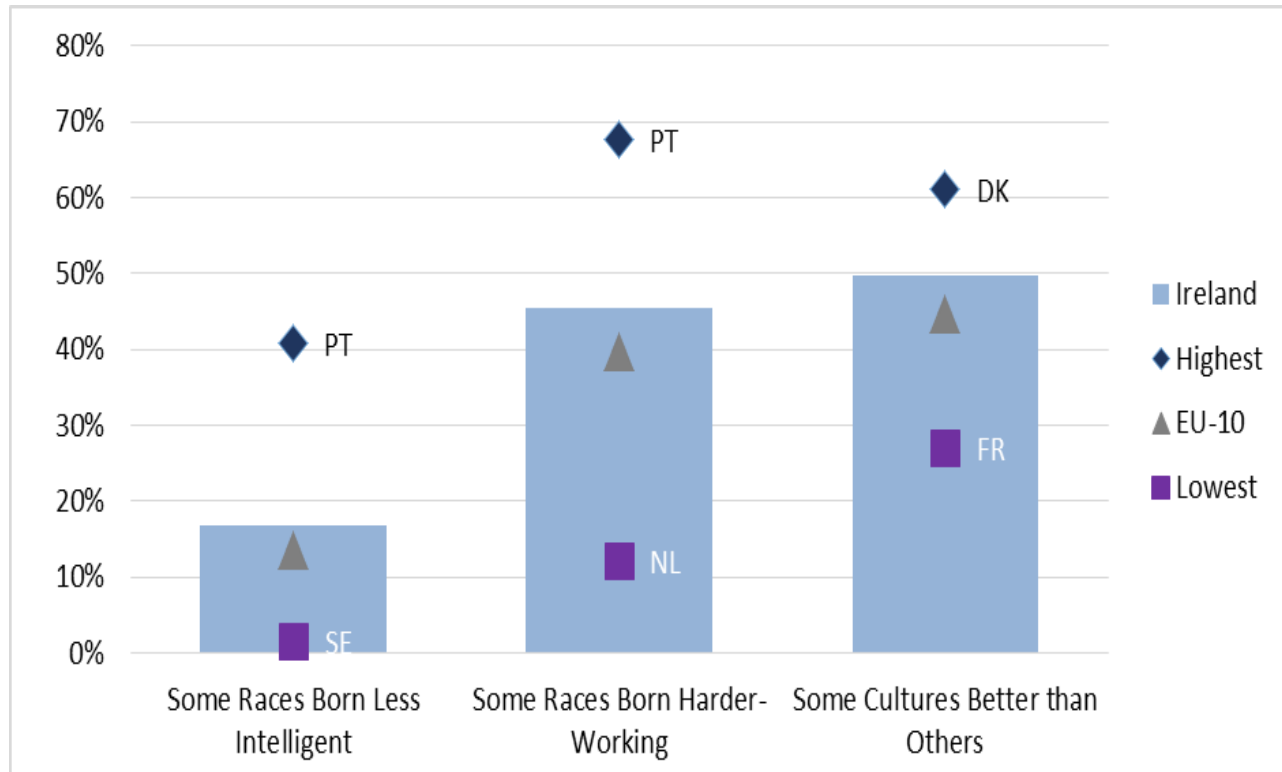
- ‘How often do you have any contact with people who are of a different race or ethnic group from most Irish people when you are out and about? This could be on public transport, in the street, in shops or in the neighbourhood.
- Responses: ‘Never, less than once a month, once a month, several times a month, once a week, several times a week, every day’.
- ‘Thinking about this contact, in general how bad or good is it? 00 Extremely Bad to 10 Extremely Good.’

Fig 6 Quality and Quantity of Social Contact



Source: *European Social Survey, 2014. Respondents born in country*

Figure 7 Beliefs about Racial and Cultural Superiority (Yes /no)



Source: European Social Survey, 2014. Respondents born in country

Analytic Strategy

1. Linear Regression model of scales
2. Include demographics, financial strain, left/right orientation, attitudes to race and social contact
3. Estimate nested regressions as a robustness check (varying how covariates are introduced)

Table 1a Modelling attitudes (2014)

	Economic impact	Cultural impact	Better place
Sex (ref. Male)			
Female	-0.236*	0.074	-0.126
Age classes (ref. 15-24)			
25-44	-0.079	0.103	-0.084
45-64	-0.106	0.051	-0.167
65 +	0.149	0.212	-0.152
Education (ref. Junior certificate or lower)			
Leaving certificate	0.289	0.386**	0.354**
Post-Leaving certificate	0.385*	0.553**	0.578**
Bachelor degree or higher	1.126***	1.096***	1.160***
Employment status (ref. Employed)			
Unemployed	-0.183	0.013	-0.208
Inactive/Other	0.062	0.103	0.249*
Financial difficulties	-0.666***	-0.748***	-0.665***

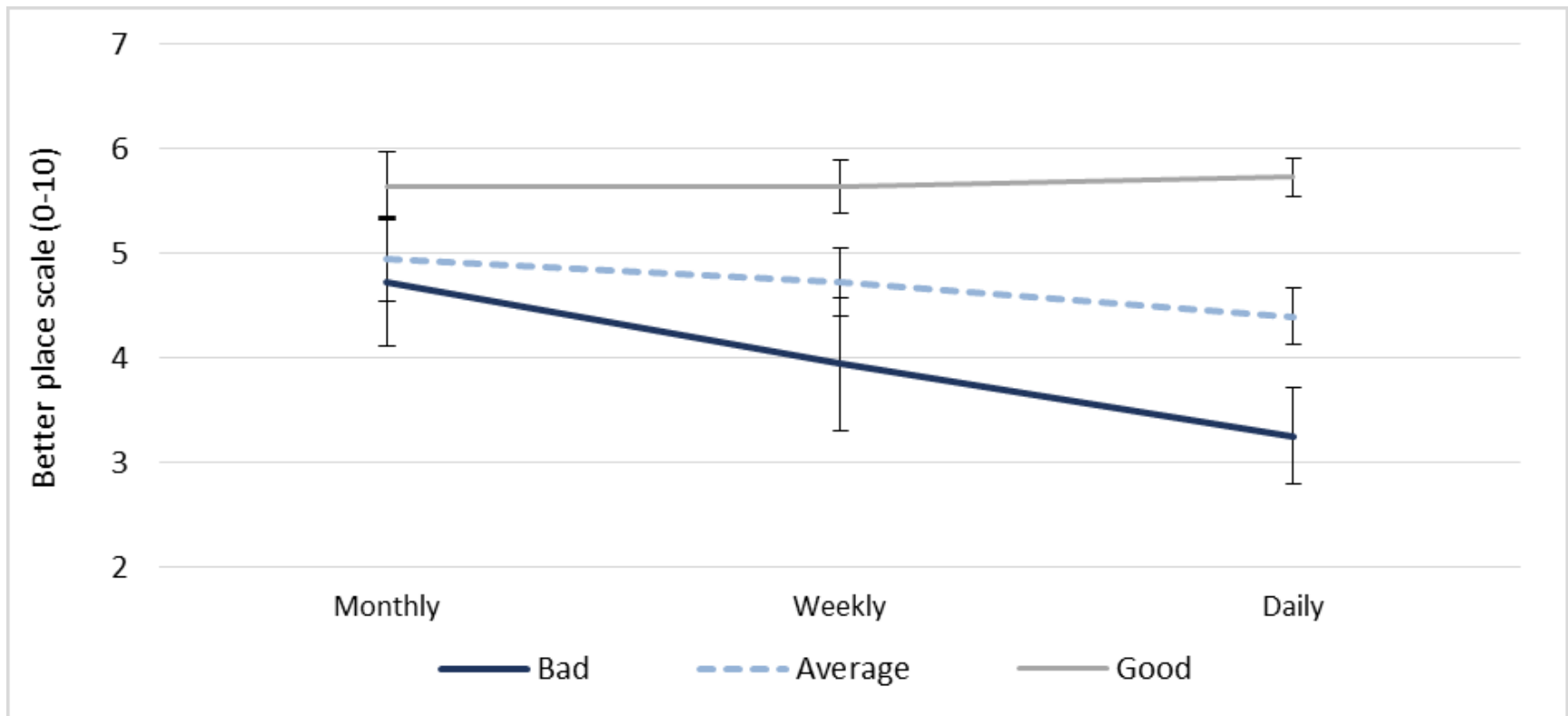
Note: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001. Scales ranges from 0 (Extremely negative) to 10 (Extremely positive). Models also include quantity and quality of social contact and their interaction (see Table A5.3 in the Appendix). Missing values for attitudes to race and social contact are also included as separate categories but not presented.

Table 1b Modelling attitudes (2014)

	Economic impact	Cultural impact	Better place
Rural area	0.166	0.140	0.196
Left-right position (ref. 0-2)			
3-4	0.390	0.394	0.271
5	-0.048	-0.098	-0.128
6-7	0.147	0.112	-0.003
8-10	0.523	0.355	0.405
Share of immigrants, 31+	0.359*	0.225	0.072
Feel close to country	-0.003	0.099	0.536*
Some races/ethnic groups less intelligent	-0.326	-0.437**	-0.145
Some cultures are much better	-0.011	-0.116	-0.208
Some races/ethnic groups harder working	-0.367**	-0.148	-0.346**
Constant	3.958***	4.109***	4.265***
Observations	1,893	1,879	1,907
Adjusted R-squared	0.161	0.196	0.204

Note: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001. Scales ranges from 0 (Extremely negative) to 10 (Extremely positive). Models also include quantity and quality of social contact and their interaction (see Table A5.3 in the Appendix). Missing values for attitudes to race and social contact are also included as separate categories but not presented.

Figure 6 Predicted Perceptions of Immigration and Social Contact, Better Place Scale, 2014



Note: Predicted values based on model for “Better place” presented in Tables 1a & 1b. Predicted values estimated at the mean of the other covariates and following the standard procedure with the margins command in Stata 14.

Summary I

- Attitudes to immigration sensitive to boom/bust cycle in Ireland
- Attitudes to immigration more favourable in Ireland during boom period, less favourable in recession
- Attitudes to Muslim immigrants and esp Roma more negative than attitudes to those of the same ethnicity
- Attitudes to immigration vary strongly by education in Ireland
- Financial stress also associated with all three scales
- No variation by age, urban/rural or political orientation

Summary II and Implications

- Some attitudes to race/ethnicity related to attitudes to immigration, though attitudes variable
- Positive social contact with those of a different race/ethnic group was associated with more positive attitudes.
- Negative social contact associated with more negative attitudes and the more frequent the contact, the more negative the attitudes to immigration
- This suggests creating opportunities for positive social contact between different ethnic groups can facilitate positive attitudes
- Also tackling financial difficulties and poor educational achievement may help promote social cohesion between different groups
- Monitoring also important for understanding the social context of migrant integration

Further research – planned and possible

- One obvious question is to what extent are these patterns replicated in other European countries
- Another is how well one question – even one carefully developed – picks up a complex phenomenon...
- Or how accurately people report attitudes
- Further work planned on: social desirability bias in reporting attitudes; paper on attitudes to Muslim immigrants; a profile of Muslims in Ireland (Integration Monitor 2018); residential segregation of immigrants and ethnic minorities in Ireland

- Thanks for listening!
- Comments welcome
- To download the report:
www.esri.ie



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