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## Predicting Opposition towards Immigration: Economic Resources, Social Resources and Moral Principles

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This study analyses the predictors of opposition towards immigrants of “different ethnic groups” and “poor countries” in 5 European countries (Portugal, Germany, Netherlands, France and United Kingdom), using data from the European Social Survey 1 (Jowell & the Central Coordinating Team, 2003). Besides Portugal, a country that has moved from being one of net emigration to being a new host country for immigrants, the other countries were selected according to their main policies of immigrants’ integration. Opposition towards immigration (OTI) is analysed using three theoretical models: a) the economic self-interest model that proposes that opposition towards immigration may be due to economic factors; b) the social capital model according to which social trust and self-reliance on political and social system may shape peoples’ opinions on the benefits of immigration; c) Schwartz’s human values model, based on which it is possible to predict that some values facilitate OTI, whereas others facilitate openness to immigration. The hypotheses tested are: a) there is a negative correlation between economic well-being and OTI; b) a negative correlation between social capital and OTI; c) a positive correlation between both conservation and self-enhancement values and OTI, and a negative correlation between both self-transcendence and openness to change values and OTI; d) the social values model will further predict opposition towards immigration over and above the other models. Results globally support the formulated hypotheses.

The current context of enlargement of the European space and the intensification of migratory flows demand the study of attitudes towards immigration. Different explanatory models have been proposed, whether focusing more on economic aspects, social aspects, or the ethical and normative principles associated with the way the host communities experience and perceive the presence of immigrants. However, these models of analysis have never been studied together. The main purpose of this study is, therefore, to compare the predictive power of those three theoretical models on opposition towards immigration. The hypothesis to be tested is that social values contribute to explain opposition towards immigration over and above models that focus on the social and economic aspects. The European Social Survey 2002 data (ESS1) will be used (Jowell, & the Central Co-ordinating Team, 2003).

This chapter presents the main arguments of the models to be confronted, as well as the potential contribution of each one to the understanding of attitudes towards immigration. It then proceeds to the comparison of the predictive power of the three models.

### *Economic resources: economic self-interest*

The belief that immigrants are a threat to the economic well-being of the populations of the host countries is still transmitted by the media and is quite present in the common sense discourse. This belief reflects, for example, the perception that immigrants “take jobs”, “make salaries fall” and “abuse the social security system”. We thus put forward the question: to what extent are attitudes towards immigrants actually determined by economic factors?

Some studies conclude that the opposition towards immigration is a result of the perception of an unfavourable economic position (Harwood, 1983; Simon & Alexander, 1993); others are framed by the theories of relative deprivation (Gurr, 1970; Walker & Pettigrew, 1984), regarding either competition for material resources (e.g. wages) or for social resources

(e.g. education, health and social security) (Malchow-Møller, Munch, Schroll, & Skaksen, 2006; Muller & Espenshade, 1985; Vala et al, 1999). In contrast, other studies have concluded that economic resources were not the main explicative factor of the negative attitudes towards immigrants, but, instead, racial opposition (Dustmann & Preston, 2004; Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2004; Vala, Pereira & Ramos, 2006).

However, from our point of view, many of the explanations based on economic factors concentrate on individual perceptions, either regarding people's interests, in-group (natives) interests or the out-group (immigrants) needs and behaviour. In this sense, the measures used are not reflecting an objective situation, but instead, a subjective perception of economic threat, since they are a result of subjective assessments in contexts of competition for economic resources. As our purpose is to test the impact of objective economic conditions in explaining opposition to immigration, we will include in our analyses only objective indicators of economic resources: household income and employment situation.

#### *Social resources: social capital*

As an alternative to the economic self-interest model, we propose, firstly, that opposition towards immigration is related to the perception of social meaninglessness or the inability to decode the complexity of social relations associated with low levels of social capital.

Social capital is a basic component of action, as a promoter of social cooperation and the pursuit of common objectives, thus constituting a reflection of individuals' capability of association (e.g. Coleman, 1990). The social relations created in this sense become normative: they are not important or interesting as mere contacts, but rather as generating sources of reciprocity norms. "A society characterized by generalized reciprocity is more efficient than a distrustful society (...). Trustworthiness lubricates social life." (Putnam, 2000:21). Trust, the establishment of networks and reciprocity norms are, therefore, basic elements of social capital; as is the notion that people make use of their resources in others, that they invest in each other and can mobilize the resources of others (Halman & Luijkx, 2006).

By promoting civic responsibility, social capital generates reciprocity norms and encourages tolerance and cooperation between people of different groups; it thus contributes to the creation of inclusive identities. Based on this line of thinking, we suggest that social capital, as an encouraging factor of cooperative social relations, can also contribute to the promotion of positive attitudes towards immigrants. Therefore, our hypothesis states that, the greater the citizens' commitment to social and institutional networks and the greater their levels of interpersonal and institutional trust, the greater their tendency to manifest attitudes of openness to immigration. In addition, we assume that social resources are more important in explaining opposition towards immigration than economic resources.

#### *Moral principles: social values*

Social values are proposed as important factors to understand, explain and justify differences (and similarities) between individual attitudes, as well as social and cultural patterns either in a more elementary way (such as the common sense discourse), a more organised way (such as the political discourse), or from a more conceptual or theoretical perspective.

Conceptualized as desirable objectives that serve as guiding principles in people's lives and as socially accepted representations of basic motivations (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000), social values have a motivating role of action and a normative function simultaneously (Sherif, 1936), which allows individuals to decide what is good and what is bad, what is justified and illegitimate, regardless of their personal interests. The Schwartz model of human values (Schwartz, 1992) organizes ten basic values in a bi-dimensional structure composed of four types of high-order values that, in turn, represent two basic and bipolar conceptual dimensions: one that opposes values of *self-transcendence* to values of *self-enhancement*; and another that opposes values of *openness to change* to values of *conservation*. The first dimension reflects the

conflict between accepting others as equals and concern for their own well-being versus the pursuit of individual success and control over others. The second dimension reflects the conflict between the desire of intellectual autonomy, freedom of action and orientation towards change in opposition to obedience, the preservation of traditional practices and the protection of stability. The structure of this model has been extensively validated (Schwartz & Boehnke, 2004; Schwartz & Bardi, 2001; Schwartz, Melech, Lehmann, Burgess & Harris, 2001; Spini, 2003).

Our aim is to discover whether social values have a higher explanatory power of opposition towards immigration than the other two already presented parameters –social capital and objective economic conditions. In favour of our hypotheses, recent studies have already shown the association between adhesion to egalitarian values and the acceptance of the anti-racist norm, as well as the adhesion to meritocratic individualist values and the rejection of that norm (e.g. Biernat, Vescio, Theno, & Crandall, 1996; Feather, 1984; Katz & Hass, 1988; Vala, Lima & Lopes, 2004). Moreover, in regard to the negative attitudes towards minority groups, an extensive line of research showed the predictive power of the values of conservatism (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson & Sanford, 1950, Altemeyer, 1994) and of the closed mind (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Rokeach, 1960). However, those studies have only been based on particular dimensions of values and have not explored the correlation between an integrated and systematic model of values, such as Schwartz's model, and the opposition towards immigration. Moreover, in those studies the predictive power of social values was not compared with more conventional explanations, such as the objective economic self-interest model, or with more innovative explanations, such as the social capital model.

### Model of analysis and hypotheses

The model of analysis we employed states that economic self-interest (as a representative element of different positions in the social structure and of the motivations associated with them), social capital (as a promoting element of social networks, tolerance and inclusive identity principles) and social values (as normative and moral principles that structure attitudes and action) constitute important predictors regarding opposition towards immigration. Hence, our hypotheses are: 1) concerning economic self-interest, the higher the income, the lower the opposition towards immigration; 2) the social capital model (social resources) is a better predictor of opposition towards immigration than the model of economic self-interest and the higher the social capital, the lower the opposition towards immigration; 3) social values –*self-transcendence*, *self-enhancement*, *conservation*, *openness to change*, explain attitudes towards immigration over and above the preceding factors.

Moreover, according to our hypothesis, attitudes towards immigrants will be mainly determined by normative and ethical principles that guide action, and less so by individual economic and social resources.

Additionally, we propose that: 1) self-transcendence and openness to change values predict positive attitudes towards immigration; 2) self-enhancement and conservation values predict negative attitudes towards immigration.

### Method

#### Sample

This study is based on data from five participating countries of the ESS 1 (Jowell, & the Central Co-ordinating Team, 2003), in a total of 9,457 individuals. Data were weighted using the adequate procedures recommended in cross-national comparisons (Häder & Lynn, 2007). In addition to Portugal, we chose countries that have distinctive immigration policies.

Hence, and following the proposal of Bourhis (Bourhis, Moise, Perrault, & Senecal, 1997; Moutreuil & Bourhis, 2001), Germany constitutes a country of ethnicist orientation. According to this, an immigrant who does not have German origins is perceived as someone

that will never be able to be a true German, and that will never be able to incorporate the nuclear values of the German nation, since there are racial and/or ethnic differences impossible to overcome. France is at the opposite extreme of the ethnicist orientation, being a country with a policy of integration that tends to be assimilationist, where there is no place for particularities or cultural specificities (if an immigrant so wishes, he can become a true citizen; but for that, he must be willing to assimilate the values and ways of life of the majority). The United Kingdom can be placed between these two extreme policies, as an example of a country guided by a mitigated “cultural pluralism” where immigrants can maintain their values and manifestations of their culture, but at the same time they must adopt the values and the norms of the host community. Similarly the Netherlands, a country that until recently was characterized by active multiculturalism and that now has begun to openly manifest anti-immigrant attitudes, can also be placed between the two extremes. For methodological reasons, immigrants and people from foreign countries were excluded from the analysis.<sup>1</sup>

### Measures

As already mentioned, our dependent variable is *opposition towards immigration*. The questions from the ESS1 (Jowell, & the Central Co-ordinating Team, 2003) used to measure opposition towards immigration were the following: “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?”; “How about people of a different race or ethnic group from most [country] people?”; “To what extent do you think [country] should allow people from the richer countries in Europe to come and live here?”; “And how about people from the poorer countries in Europe?”; “To what extent do you think [country] should allow people from the richer countries outside Europe to come and live here?”; “How about people from the poorer countries outside Europe?”. The scale employed included: 1 (allow many to come and live here) to 4 (allow none).

As predictors of opposition towards immigration we selected three sets of independent variables corresponding to the three theoretical models considered:

*Economic self-interest.* We selected two questions from the ESS1 (Jowell, & the Central Co-ordinating Team, 2003) that we considered to be objective indicators of economic self-interest: household income (measured in 12 intervals) and employment situation (the original variable was recoded into two positions –unemployed = 1; others situations = 0).

*Social capital.* To measure social capital, two indices were computed: trust and associativism. The index of trust was computed based on the following questions of ESS1 (Jowell, & the Central Co-ordinating Team, 2003) on *interpersonal trust* (“Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people?”; “Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got a chance, or would they try to be fair?”; “Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful or that they are mostly looking out for themselves?”), on *trust in national political institutions* (level of personal trust in the “Parliament”, in the “legal system” and in the “police”), and on *trust in international political institutions* (level of personal trust in the “European Parliament” and in the “United Nations”). The indicators were measured on an 11 point-scale varying between 0 (no trust at all) and 10 (complete trust). The levels of reliability for the group of 8 indicators supported the construction of the index of trust (Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  was between .78 and .82 for the five countries). The index of participation in associations was obtained from the total number of associations/organisations that the individuals marked as members, out of a list of 12 types of associations.

*Social values.* In this chapter we used the four high-order values of Schwartz’s human values model: *self-transcendence* (universalism + benevolence); *self-enhancement*

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<sup>1</sup> Unweighted samples: Portugal (n=1,417); Germany (n=2,638); France (n=1,337); United Kingdom (n=1,858); Netherlands (n=2,207).

(achievement + power); *conservation* (security + tradition + conformism); *openness to change* (hedonism + stimulation + self-direction).<sup>2</sup>

Social values were operationalised through a 21-item short version of the Portrait Values Questionnaire (Schwartz et al., 2001; Schwartz, 2007), designed to measure basic individual values through the assessment of the individuals' identification with a person with specific characteristics. In this scale, each item reflects personal aims or aspirations that, in turn, express a motivation. For each "portrait", the participants are asked to indicate to what extent that person is similar to them, on a scale of 1 (very much like me) to 6 (not at all like me).<sup>3</sup>

To control the effect of possible "national patterns" of answers, the means were centered for each country, i.e., the national mean was removed from the score attributed by each individual to each of the values (and consequently to each of the high-order values).

Given the high number of respondents, we adopted, in the statistical analyses, a level of significance of  $p < 0.01$  to reject the null hypothesis (i.e., relations non-different from zero; or differences non-different from zero) when analysing national samples.

## Results

### *Opposition towards immigration*

The first step in the data analysis was the construction of the index of opposition towards immigration. As described above, the ESS1 (Jowell, & the Central Co-ordinating Team, 2003) questionnaire had indicators of opposition towards immigration for six different immigrant groups. Two target-groups were computed, which we considered sufficiently distinctive to reveal plausible differences: one target group joining immigrants from poor countries inside Europe, from poor countries outside of Europe, and of a different race or ethnic group than the majority; and a second target group combining immigrants from rich countries (inside Europe and outside Europe) and of the same race or ethnic group as the majority.

Data analysis showed that opposition towards immigration is relatively independent of the target-group. The correlations between the two target-groups ranged from .73 for Germany to .89 for Portugal. Moreover, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the group of six indicators ranged from .92 for Germany and .97 for Portugal, suggesting that the psychological processes that exist behind opposition towards immigrant target groups may be very similar. That is, when there is opposition towards immigration the most important factor may not be the immigrants' origin, but the representations that people have of them and of the impact of their presence in the country.

Subsequently, we explored the differences between countries regarding opposition towards immigration. We ran three analyses of variance taking "total opposition", "opposition towards immigrants from rich countries and the same ethnic group" and "opposition towards immigrants from poor countries and different ethnic group" as dependent variables and the five countries under analysis as independent variables. The results of the analyses of variance (Table 1) show: a) that there are significant differences between countries, with Germany being the country that presents the lowest value of opposition towards immigration and Portugal the country that presents the highest value; b) that the differences between countries are visible for the two target-groups; c) that, in most cases, it is possible to observe a tendency towards more favourable rather than unfavourable attitudes towards immigration, since only in Portugal means were significantly higher than the mean-point of the scale. In the United Kingdom a significantly negative attitude towards immigrants from poor countries and a different race or ethnic group was also observed. However, the  $\eta^2$  values indicate that the observed differences between countries are not expressive.

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<sup>2</sup> The values structure was validated for all countries and the results are presented in Ramos (2006).

<sup>3</sup> The variables were recoded so that higher values correspond to a higher identification.

**Table 1.** Opposition towards immigration by country (means)

	Total opposition <sup>1</sup>	Opposition towards immigrants from rich countries and the same ethnic group <sup>2</sup>	Opposition towards immigrants from poor countries and different ethnic group <sup>3</sup>
Germany	2.28a <sup>†</sup>	2.24a <sup>†</sup>	2.36a <sup>†</sup>
France	2.46b	2.44b <sup>†</sup>	2.51b
Netherlands	2.46b	2.48b	2.45b
Portugal	2.74c <sup>†</sup>	2.69c <sup>†</sup>	2.81c <sup>†</sup>
United Kingdom	2.50b	2.44b	2.59d <sup>†</sup>
Total	2.42 <sup>†</sup>	2.38 <sup>†</sup>	2.46

Note: Different letters indicate statistically significant differences between countries;

<sup>†</sup>  $p < .001$  (two-tailed test against the mean-point of the scale: 2.5).

<sup>1</sup>  $F(4, 17817) = 123.2, p < .001, \eta^2 = .03$

<sup>2</sup>  $F(4, 17913) = 125.5, p < .001, \eta^2 = .03$

<sup>3</sup>  $F(4, 18061) = 101.8, p < .001, \eta^2 = .02$

Since the group of immigrants from a different race or ethnic group and from poorer countries than the majority constitutes the one that corresponds to the predominant profile of immigration in Europe, we decided to use the corresponding index as the dependent variable.

#### *The predictive power of each theoretical model*

The first group of hypotheses aimed to test the predictive power of the three theoretical models (economic self-interest, social capital and social values). As such, we performed, for each country, regression analysis in blocks (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). In this regression analysis, the indicators of the models to be tested are sequentially introduced in blocks. Hence, the first block included the indicators of objective economic self-interest (household income, employed-unemployed), the second block had the indicators of social capital and, finally, the third block contained the indicators of social values. The interactions between social values and social capital, included in a fourth block, were also tested, but the results were not statistically significant. Results ( $\beta$  coefficients and  $R^2$ ) are presented in Table 2.

The first hypothesis predicted that the economic self-interest model would have a negative impact on opposition towards immigration. That is in fact true, with the contribution of this model varying between 1.2% and 4.0% of the explained variance for the Netherlands and Germany, respectively. However, it is a modest contribution, which suggests it is not the motivations based on economic resources that mostly underlie opposition towards immigration.

The inclusion of the second block of variables showed, as expected, that social capital constitutes a better predictor than economic self-interest, which holds true for the five countries under analysis. Social capital predicted opposition towards immigration negatively, and the increase in the explained variance resulting from the inclusion of social capital indicators varies between 4.9% in Portugal and 10% in the Netherlands.

Finally, the inclusion of the social values model enabled the first part of our hypothesis to be confirmed, since the increase in explained variance was significant for all countries. However, our prediction that this model would contribute more than the economic self-interest and social capital models in explaining opposition was only confirmed for the samples of France (12.6%) and Germany (10.6%). In Portugal and the Netherlands, social capital presents a greater predictive power than social values and, in the case of the United Kingdom, the explained variance is the same (8%).

**Table 2.** Predictors of opposition towards immigration in five countries

	Opposition towards immigration				
	Portugal	France	Germany	Netherlands	United Kingdom
Model 1:					
Objective economic self-interest					
Household income	-.161***	-.130***	-.173***	-.109***	-.196***
Unemployed	-.084	-.036	-.076**	-.007	-.072**
Adjusted $R^2$	.026***	.015***	.040***	.012***	.039***
Model 2:					
Objective economic self-interest					
Household income	-.121**	-.069	-.124***	-.055	-.133***
Unemployed	-.081	-.043	.046	-.010	-.076**
Social capital					
Membership	-.177***	-.072	-.060**	-.094	-.106***
Social trust	-.128**	-.228***	-.248***	-.280***	-.247***
$R^2$ change <sup>4</sup>	.049***	.082***	.074***	.100***	.080***
Adjusted $R^2$	.074***	.094***	.112***	.109***	.117***
Model 3:					
Objective economic self-interest					
Household income	-.103**	-.041	-.087***	-.048	-.110**
Unemployed	-.081	-.003	.062**	-.008	-.058
Social capital					
Membership	-.164***	-.020	-.024	-.082***	-.073**
Social trust	-.112**	-.190**	-.215***	-.254***	-.241***
Social values					
Self-transcendence	-.073	-.250***	-.269***	-.157***	-.264***
Self-enhancement	.153**	.034	.021	.057	-.004
Openness to change	-.112	-.084	.032	.004	.029
Conservation	.171**	.394***	.312***	.197***	.300***
$R^2$ change <sup>5</sup>	.038***	.126***	.106***	.042***	.081***
Adjusted $R^2$	.107***	.218***	.217***	.145***	.190***

\*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Overall, the three models contribute more to explaining attitudes towards immigration in Germany and in France than in the other countries, with Portugal being the country with the highest level of opposition towards immigration, and for which these variables least help in understanding this phenomenon.

<sup>4</sup> Significance of the increment introduced by the social capital model: Portugal  $F(2, 686)=12.3, p < .001$ ; France  $F(2, 1021)=30.9, p < .001$ ; Germany  $F(2, 1890)=52.3, p < .001$ ; Netherlands  $F(2, 1715)=64.1, p < .001$ ; United Kingdom  $F(2, 1379)=41.6, p < .001$ .

<sup>5</sup> Significance of the increment introduced by the social values model: Portugal  $F(4, 682)=7.4, p < .001$ ; France  $F(4, 1017)=41.4, p < .001$ ; Germany  $F(4, 1886)=64.4, p < .001$ ; Netherlands  $F(4, 1711)=19.3, p < .001$ ; United Kingdom  $F(4, 1375)=32.4, p < .001$ .



The second group of hypotheses aims to associate the four high-order values with opposition towards immigration. In this sense, we propose that: a) the values of self-transcendence and of openness to change are negatively correlated with opposition towards immigration; b) the values of conservation and of self-enhancement are positively correlated with opposition towards immigration. According to our results, this complete pattern was only found in Portugal (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Social values as predictors of opposition towards immigration ( $\beta$  coefficients)

Social values	Portugal	France	Germany	Netherlands	United Kingdom
Self-transcendence	-.106**	-.280***	-.309***	-.230***	-.289***
Self-enhancement	.147***	<i>ns</i>	<i>ns</i>	<i>ns</i>	<i>ns</i>
Openness to change	-.169***	<i>ns</i>	<i>ns</i>	<i>ns</i>	<i>ns</i>
Conservation	.213***	.437***	.356***	.254***	.338***
$R^2$	5.5%	17.3%	14.7%	6.6%	10.2%

\*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

In all five countries, the values of *self-transcendence* are negatively associated with opposition towards immigration and, as expected, the values of conservation are positively associated with this attitudinal pattern. These results reflect the facilitating role of values associated with egalitarianism in promoting intergroup relations and are similar to the conclusions obtained in other studies (e.g. Vala, Lima & Lopes, 2004; Vala, Pereira & Ramos, 2006). However, the expected significant impact of the values associated with meritocracy (*self-enhancement*) and with *openness to change* was only observed in Portugal.

### Discussion and conclusions

By analysing opposition towards immigration in the five countries chosen, the results suggest, firstly, that opposition towards immigration has underlying attitudinal processes, regardless of the target-group in question. When creating the two target-groups of apparently different immigrants (from poor countries and of a different race or ethnic group, on the one hand, and from rich countries and the same race or ethnic group, on the other), the objective was to discover the existence of distinct patterns, but the results showed that the immigrant's origin is not relevant to the configuration of attitudes of higher or lower openness. In this analysis, Portugal was the country with the most negative attitudes towards immigrants, while Germany was found to be the country with greatest openness. Nevertheless, as mentioned during the presentation of the statistical analyses that were carried out, the magnitude of the country effect is small.

As regards to the contribution of the three theoretical models to the explanation of opposition towards immigration in the five selected countries, overall results support our hypotheses; showing that the explanations framed on the theories of economic self-interest are far from having the predictive power that is frequently attributed to them.

Results obtained from the inclusion of the social capital model provide empirical evidence for the hypothesis that trust and belonging to social networks are potential elements of more open attitudes towards immigration. In fact, social resources came up as being better predictors of opposition towards immigration than the objective economic resources for all of the analysed countries.

The effect obtained by the social values showed that the models anchored in motivational and symbolic orientations are important in understanding attitudes towards immigration. Our hypothesis was strongly supported in the cases of France and Germany, since

the moral principles were, in fact, better predictors of those attitudes than economic or social resources.

Finally, the predictive power of the high-order values of Schwartz's model regarding opposition towards immigration was analysed. We were able, as a result, to observe that both axes of that model are structuring elements of attitudes towards immigration, with the values of self-transcendence being promoters of positive attitudes, and the values of conservation generators of negative attitudes. However, the hypothesis that values of self-enhancement would be associated with negative attitudes, and the hypothesis that values of openness to change would be the sources of more open attitudes towards immigration were not confirmed. The difference between Portugal (the only country where our hypotheses were confirmed) and the other countries may also find an explanation in the recent nature of the phenomenon. Our suggestion is that this may happen because the social groups that adhere to the values of self-enhancement and openness to change in Portugal, and in the other countries, are not the same: a question that must be considered in further research.

These results are consistent for countries with different immigration policies, with Portugal being the exception, probably due to the fact that immigration is a recent phenomenon in the country. As previously mentioned "the other countries have either already integrated the advantages of immigration or have manifested a conformist adhesion to the emerging norm of support for a "regulated" immigration" (Vala, Pereira & Ramos, 2006). Concerning the low contribution of the three domains of explanation for the opposition towards immigration in Portugal, a similar finding was reported in the study of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (Thalhammer Zucha, Enzenhofer, Salfinger, & Ogris, 2001). In this study, attitudes towards minority groups in Portugal had explained variance lower or equal to 10%, against degrees of explained variance between 15% and 21% in the remaining European countries. Immigration, as Portugal knows it presently, is a new reality and the attitudes of the Portuguese towards immigrants are beginning to be structured.

Concluding, economic self interest, as Harwood (1983) and Simon & Alexander (1993) postulated is an explanatory factor of negative attitudes towards immigrants to be taken into consideration. Social capital, as a combination of trust and norms of reciprocity, was also an important predictor; a result that is supported by Coleman and Putnam's theories. Social values, as manifestations of moral and normative principles that guide action, constitute central elements in the organisation of attitudes towards immigrants, offering a new type of explanation that deserves to be deeply explored in further research.

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