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Economic and Social Influences on Attitudes to Refugees in Europe

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Introduction

European refugee crisis draws political response which threatens

open borders

free movement of labour

integrity of benefit systems

Sources of public concern poorly understood

Volatile media coverage and political urgency provokes hasty reforms

Presentation

This presentation uses large cross-European attitudinal dataset to

- describe perceptions of impact of immigration
- distinguish factors underlying views on immigration policy
- assess relevance to refugee policy

Data from European Social Survey 2002 and 2014

Questions in special immigration module

- first fielded 2002

- partly repeated 2014

Historical context

Earlier survey conducted at end of heightened period of refugee inflow

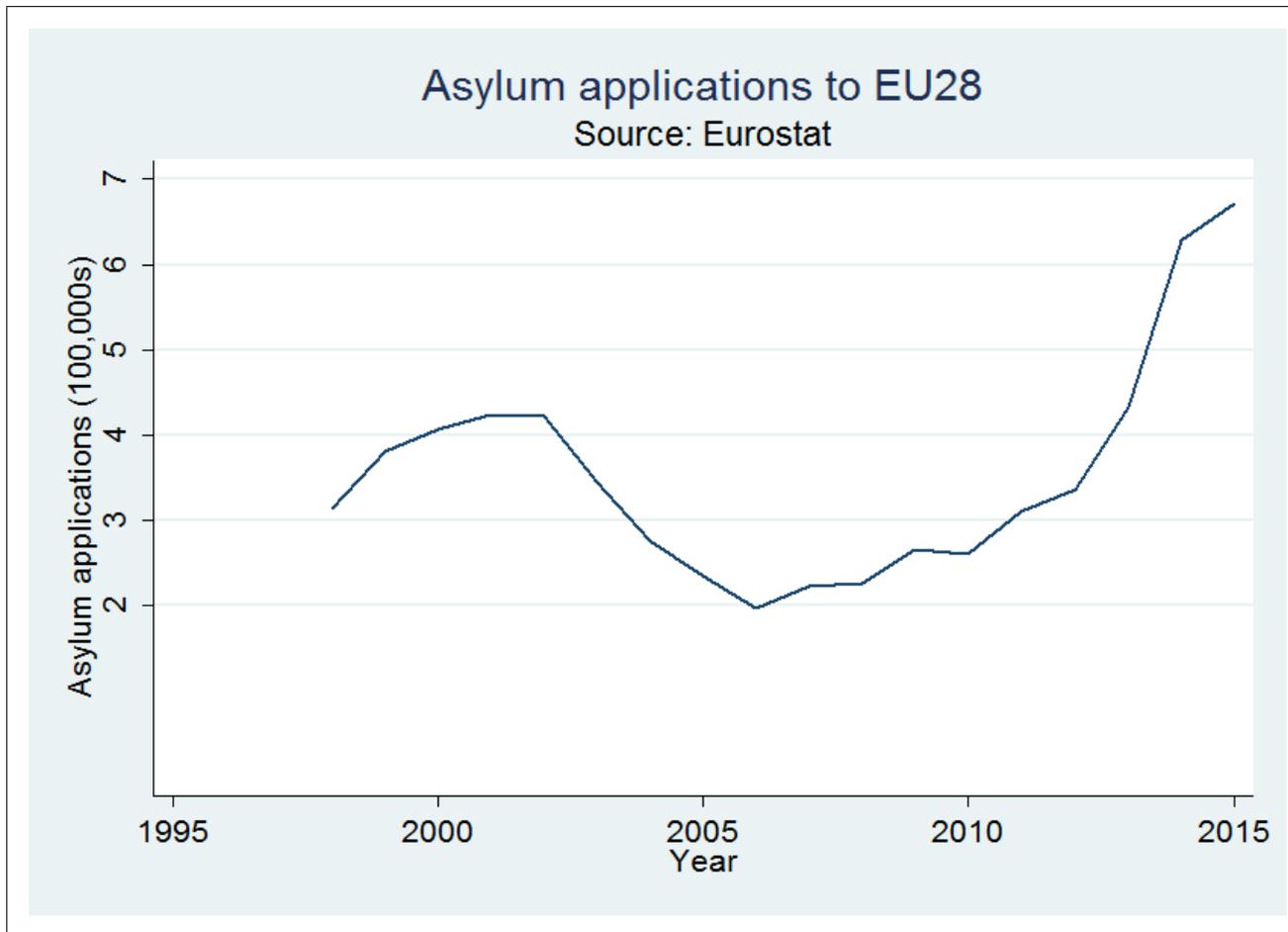
Asylum applications to EU 28 exceeded 400,000 for three years 2000-2002

Large inflows from Iraq, Afghanistan, Serbia/Montenegro, Turkey, Russia

Asylum numbers fall back through subsequent decade before very rapid recent growth

Large recent numbers from Syria, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Eritrea, Pakistan

Asylum in Europe



Sources of attitudes to immigration policy: Economic impact

Economic impact:

labour market competition may drive down wages and reduce native employment

impact may be different at different points in distribution

skill shortages may be alleviated

entrepreneurship and innovation may be encouraged

public finances may be affected

pressure on public services may be exacerbated

Expert and popular opinion may well be divided

Sources of attitudes to immigration policy: Social impact

Social impact:

immigration diminishes social homogeneity in several dimensions

cultural impact may be viewed as enriching or threatening

perceived threats to group privileges may heighten social tension

immigrants may commit and suffer as victims of crime

Sources of attitudes to immigration policy: International

International perspective

immigration is primarily of benefit to migrants themselves

efficient international allocation of labour ultimately benefits all

source countries may gain from remittances and skill transfers or suffer from skill depletion

attitudes in Western countries may be coloured by colonial heritage

Refugee policy

Refugee immigration raises same issues as general immigration

But also raises other questions

Entitlement to enter based on claims of persecution which need to be assessed

how should refugees be treated while cases are considered?

allowed to work

dependent on public funds

detained

how generously should cases be evaluated?

should families be allowed to enter country?

Analytical problems

Directions of causality are murky

Policy preferences driven by one aspect of the effect may bleed into perceptions of other dimensions of impact

Simple causal stories can be advanced but at heart we only identify associations

European Social Survey: Round 1, Immigration policy

Conducted in 21 countries with about 40,000 respondents in 2002

Special immigration module, designed by team based at *CReAM*

Asks opinion on immigration policy:

*”To what extent do you think [this country] should allow people from
[specified source] to come and live here?”*

Asked separately with respect to immigrants from

- rich/poor European/non-European countries
- same/different ethnicity as majority

Distributions of Opinions on Immigration Policy

	How Many Allowed to Immigrate					
	Mean	Std Dev	None	Few	Some	Many
Rich European Countries	2.72	0.85	9.9	32.6	43.3	14.2
Poor European Countries	2.57	0.81	9.0	36.8	42.8	11.4
Rich non-European Countries	2.53	0.84	11.3	36.2	41.1	11.4
Poor non-European Countries	2.49	0.82	10.8	39.0	40.1	10.0
Same Race/Ethnicity as Majority	2.73	0.80	6.3	30.8	47.1	15.8
Different Race/Ethnicity from Majority	2.48	0.82	11.3	38.9	40.0	9.7

Source: ESS 2002

Answers on scale 1-4, higher values more open to immigration

Distributions of Opinions on Immigration Policy

Opinions more open to

richer immigrants

European immigrants

immigrants of same ethnicity

but not dramatically so

European Social Survey: Effects of immigration

Also asks about broad effects of immigration:

- *Would you say it is generally bad or good for [this country's] economy that people come to live here from other countries?*
- *Is [this country] made a worse or better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?*

Distributions of Opinions on Effects of Immigration

	Responses on 10 point scale						
	Mean	Deviation	0-1	2-4	5	6-8	9-10
Immigration:							
Good/Bad for the Economy	4.97	2.36	9.3	25.0	28.1	32.0	5.5
Better/Worse Place to Live	4.77	2.18	8.3	28.1	34.6	24.8	4.3

Source: ESS 2002

Answers on scale 0-10, higher values more positive to immigration

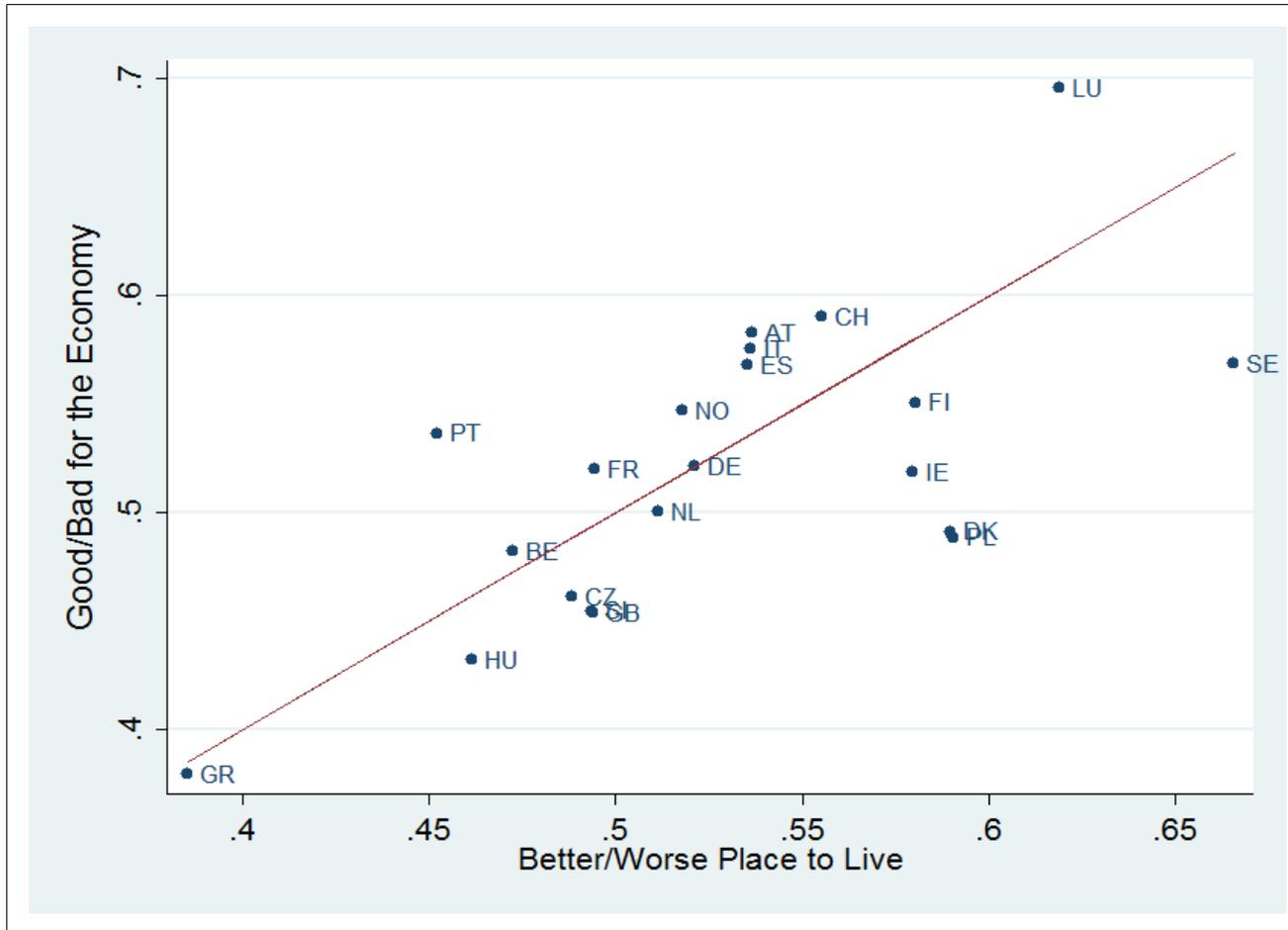
Cross Country Differences in Opinions

	Allow Immigrants (Average)	Good/Bad for Economy	Make Better/Worse Place to Live
All Countries	0.52	0.50	0.48
Germany	0.55	0.51	0.48
Spain	0.54	0.54	0.47
France	0.49	0.51	0.45
Greece	0.36	0.36	0.34
Italy	0.59	0.53	0.45
Ireland	0.57	0.50	0.53
Poland	0.57	0.45	0.52
Sweden	0.69	0.55	0.62
United Kingdom	0.49	0.44	0.46

Answers scaled to lie between 0 and 1, higher values more positive to immigration

Source: ESS 2002

Cross Country Differences in Opinions, 2002



Cross Country Differences in Opinions, 2002

Greece , Hungary particularly hostile to immigration

Sweden, Switzerland particularly liberal

Attitudes to impact on economy and quality of life strongly correlated across
(as well as within) countries

European Social Survey: Economic concerns

- *Agree/disagree: Average wages and salaries are generally brought down by people coming to live and work here?*
- *Agree/disagree: People who come to live and work here generally harm the economic prospects of the poor more than the rich?*
- *Agree/disagree: People who come to live and work here help to fill jobs where there are shortages of workers?*
- *Would you say that people who come to live here generally take jobs away from workers in [this country], or generally help to create new jobs?*
- *Most people who come to live here work and pay taxes. They also use health and welfare services. On balance, do you think people ... take out more than they put in or put in more than they take out?*

European Social Survey: Social concerns

- *Agree/disagree: It is better for a country if almost everyone shares the same customs and traditions ?*
- *Agree/disagree: It is better for a country if there are a variety of different religions?*
- *Agree/disagree: It is better for a country if almost everyone is able to speak at least one common language ?*
- *Would you say that [this country]'s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?*
- *Are [this country]'s crime problems made worse or better by people coming to live here from other countries?*
- *Agree/disagree: If a country wants to reduce tensions it should stop immigration?*

European Social Survey: Internationalism

- *Agree/disagree: All countries benefit if people can move to countries where their skills are most needed?*
- *When people leave their countries to come to live in [this country], do you think it has a bad or good effect on those countries in the long run??*
- *Agree/disagree: Richer countries have a responsibility to accept people from poorer countries ?*

European Social Survey: Refugee Policy

- *Agree/disagree: While their applications for refugee status are being considered, people should be allowed to work in [this country]?*
- *Agree/disagree: While their cases are being considered, applicants should be kept in detention centres?*
- *Agree/disagree: While their cases are being considered, the [country] government should give financial support to applicants ?*
- *Agree/disagree: The government should be generous⁵⁰ in judging peoples applications for refugee status?*
- *Agree/disagree: Refugees whose applications are granted should be entitled to bring in their close family members?*

Factor model for opinions

Opinions on immigration policy \mathbf{y} , on refugee policy \mathbf{r} and answers to indicator questions \mathbf{z} hypothesised to be driven by common factors \mathbf{f} of smaller dimension than \mathbf{z} , given characteristics \mathbf{X}

$$\mathbf{y} = \Lambda \mathbf{f} + \alpha \mathbf{X} + \mu$$

$$\mathbf{r} = \mathbf{R} \mathbf{f} + \beta \mathbf{X} + v$$

$$\mathbf{z} = \mathbf{M} \mathbf{f} + \mathbf{C} \mathbf{X} + \nu$$

$$\mathbf{f} = \mathbf{B} \mathbf{X} + \omega$$

Factor model for opinions

Substituting out the unobserved factors

$$\mathbf{y} = (\Lambda\mathbf{B} + \alpha)\mathbf{X} + (\mu + \Lambda\omega)$$

$$\mathbf{r} = (\mathbf{R}\mathbf{B} + \beta)\mathbf{X} + (v + \mathbf{R}\omega)$$

$$\mathbf{z} = (\mathbf{M}\mathbf{B} + \mathbf{C})\mathbf{X} + (v + \mathbf{M}\omega)$$

Identification

Assume

- μ , ν , ν and ω mutually orthogonal
- variance-covariance matrix ϕ of ν diagonal
- residual variances normalised to 1

Then

- Residual variance covariance matrix of \mathbf{z} has form $\mathbf{M}\Sigma\mathbf{M} + \phi$
- Residual covariance matrix of \mathbf{y} , \mathbf{r} and \mathbf{z} have forms $\Lambda\Sigma\mathbf{M}$ and $\mathbf{R}\Sigma\mathbf{M}$

where Σ is variance-covariance matrix of factors.

Identification

\mathbf{M} , Λ , \mathbf{R} and Σ identified given appropriate restrictions on \mathbf{M}

\mathbf{M} , Σ fitted to residual correlation matrix of indicators \mathbf{z}

Λ , \mathbf{R} follow from residual correlation of \mathbf{y} and \mathbf{r} with \mathbf{z} given \mathbf{M} and Σ

In practice we assume exclusivity of indicator questions to known channels
(but explore robustness to weaker assumptions)

Factor loadings: Economy

Indicator	Loading	St err
Wages	0.487	(0.006)
Poor	0.555	(0.006)
Skills	0.252	(0.007)
Jobs	0.614	(0.005)
Contribution	0.615	(0.005)

Source: ESS 2002

Factor loadings: Social

Indicator	Loading	St err
Crime	0.544	(0.006)
Culture	0.676	(0.005)
Tension	0.607	(0.005)
Tradition	0.492	(0.006)
Religion	0.395	(0.006)
Language	0.218	(0.007)

Source: ESS 2002

Factor loadings: International

Indicator	Loading	St err
Home countries	0.110	(0.009)
Free movement	0.358	(0.009)
Responsibility	0.786	(0.016)

Source: ESS 2002

Factor correlations

Factors	Correlation	St err
Economy-Social	0.837	(0.006)
Economy-International	0.394	(0.011)
Social-International	0.472	(0.011)

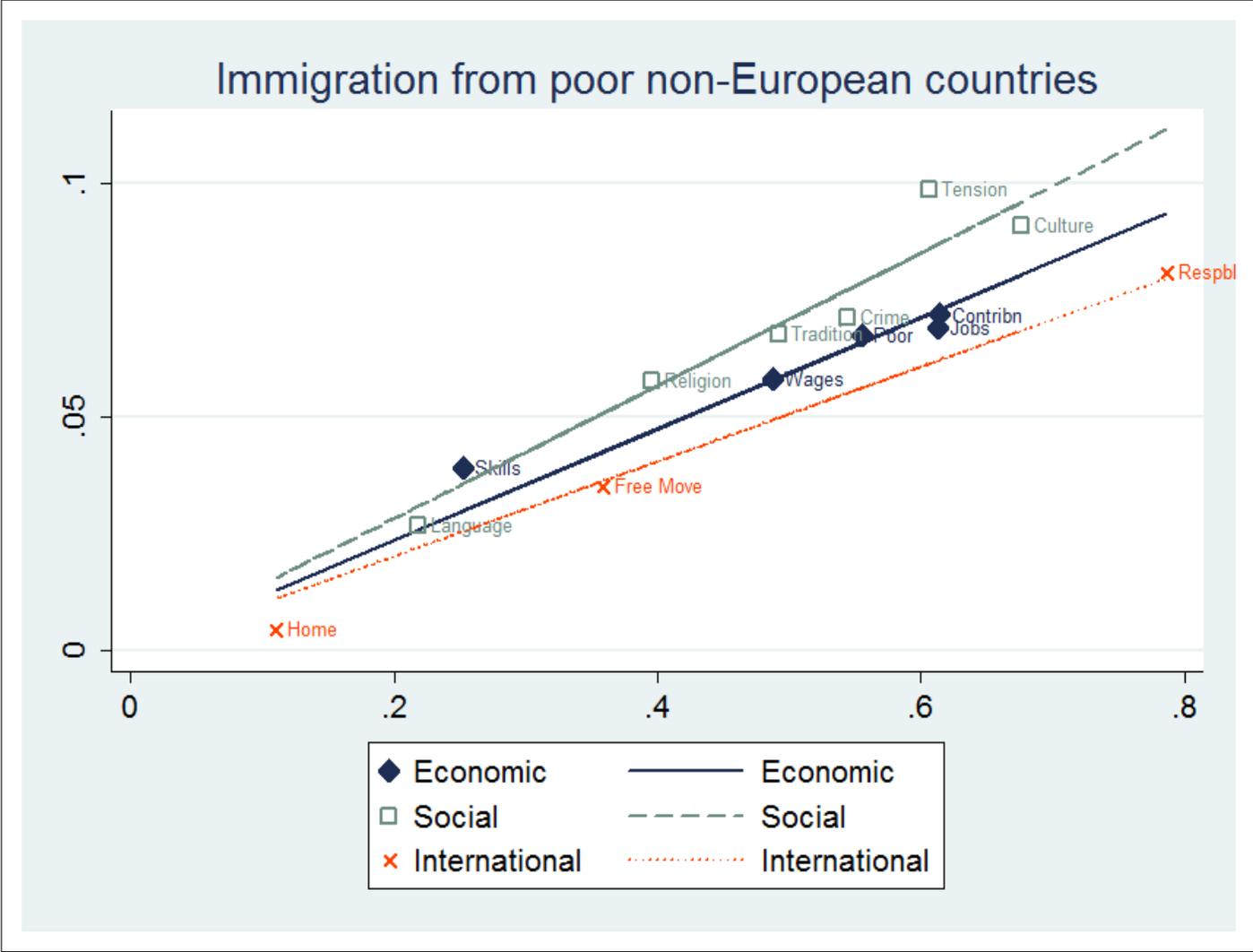
Source: ESS 2002

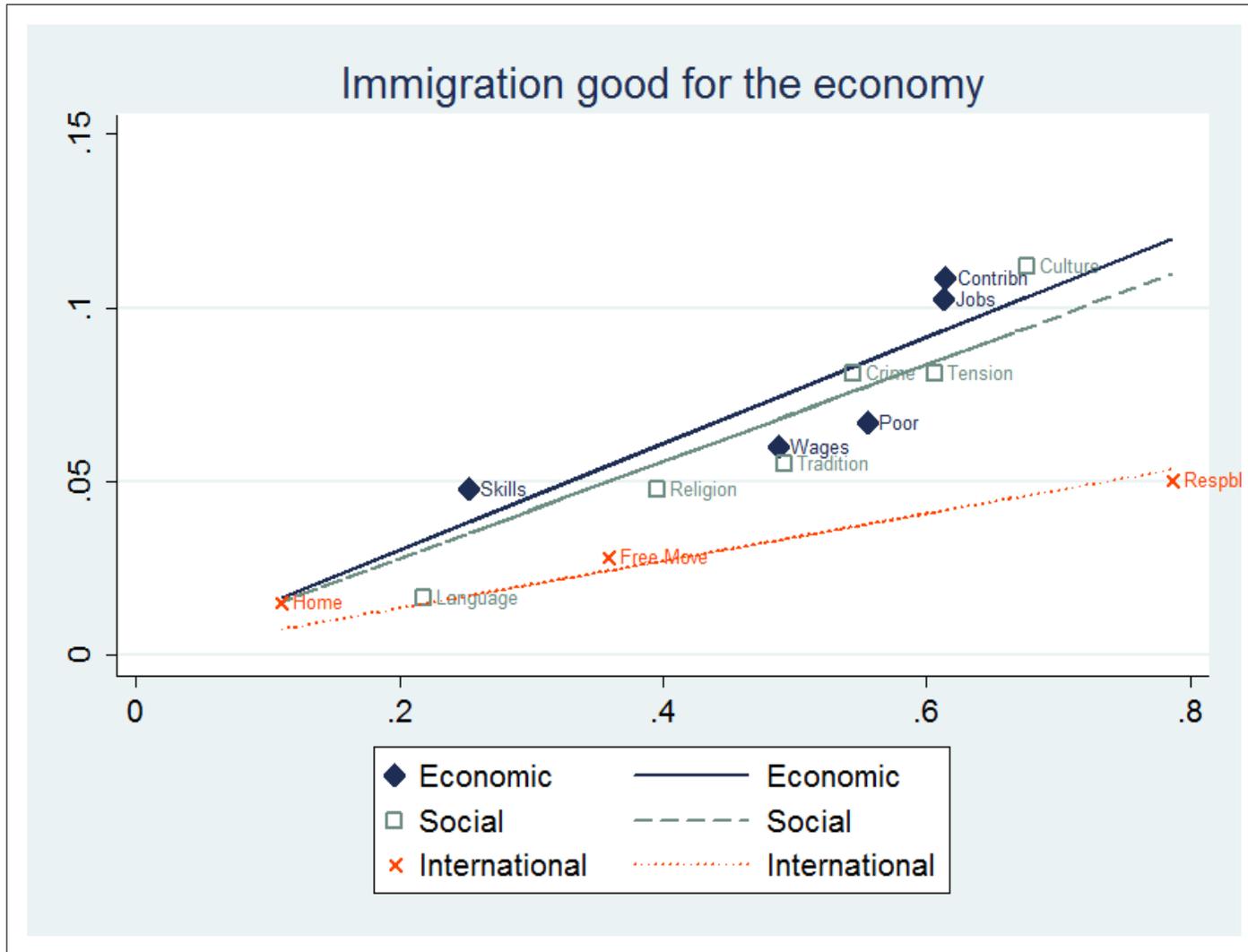
Orthogonality of factors very strongly rejected

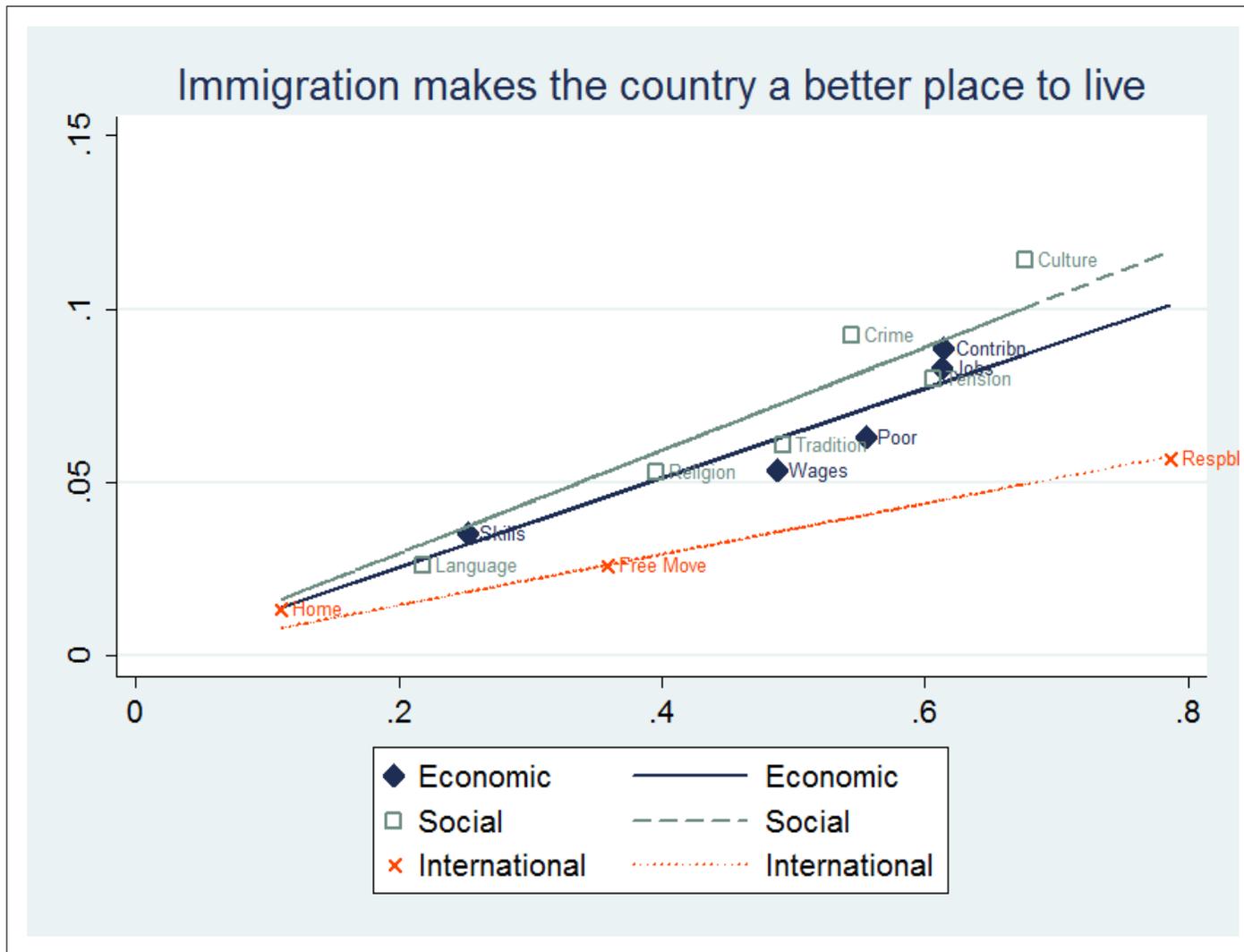
Factor structure

A visual test of the factor structure is whether the answers to policy questions are indeed most strongly correlated with the indicators loading most heavily on the factors

This does seem to be the case







Overall Immigration Effect

	Economy		Social		International	
	Coeff	St err	Coeff	St err	Coeff	St err
Good or Bad for the Economy	0.119	(0.004)	0.038	(0.004)	0.003	(0.002)
Better Place to Live	0.015	(0.004)	0.134	(0.004)	0.004	(0.002)

Source: ESS 2002

Overall Immigration Effect

Opinion on what is good for the economy driven by questions on wages, jobs, fiscal effects

But social effects are much more important to what makes the country a good place to live

Neither influenced by opinions on international effects

Immigration Questions

Nature of Immigration	Economy		Social		International	
	Coeff	St err	Coeff	St err	Coeff	St err
Rich European	0.016	(0.006)	0.079	(0.006)	0.018	(0.002)
Poor European	0.009	(0.005)	0.108	(0.005)	0.040	(0.002)
Rich Non-European	0.008	(0.005)	0.094	(0.006)	0.025	(0.002)
Poor Non-European	0.000	(0.005)	0.121	(0.005)	0.044	(0.002)
Same Ethnicity	0.023	(0.005)	0.077	(0.005)	0.035	(0.002)
Different Ethnicity	-0.009	(0.005)	0.138	(0.005)	0.033	(0.002)

Source: ESS 2002

Immigration Policy

Social effects matter more to openness to immigration, whatever the source, often by much more

Economic effects only significant for immigrants of similar types to native population

Importance of social effects greater the greater the social distance of immigrants

International responsibility also importantly associated and more so for poorer and non-European immigrants

Refugee Policy

Refugee Policy	Economy		Social		International	
	Coeff	St err	Coeff	St err	Coeff	St err
Work	0.029	(0.005)	0.027	(0.006)	0.053	(0.003)
Detention	-0.016	(0.006)	0.123	(0.006)	-0.005	(0.003)
Funds	0.001	(0.005)	0.075	(0.006)	0.050	(0.003)
Generosity	-0.005	(0.005)	0.083	(0.005)	0.068	(0.003)
Family	-0.006	(0.006)	0.099	(0.006)	0.050	(0.003)

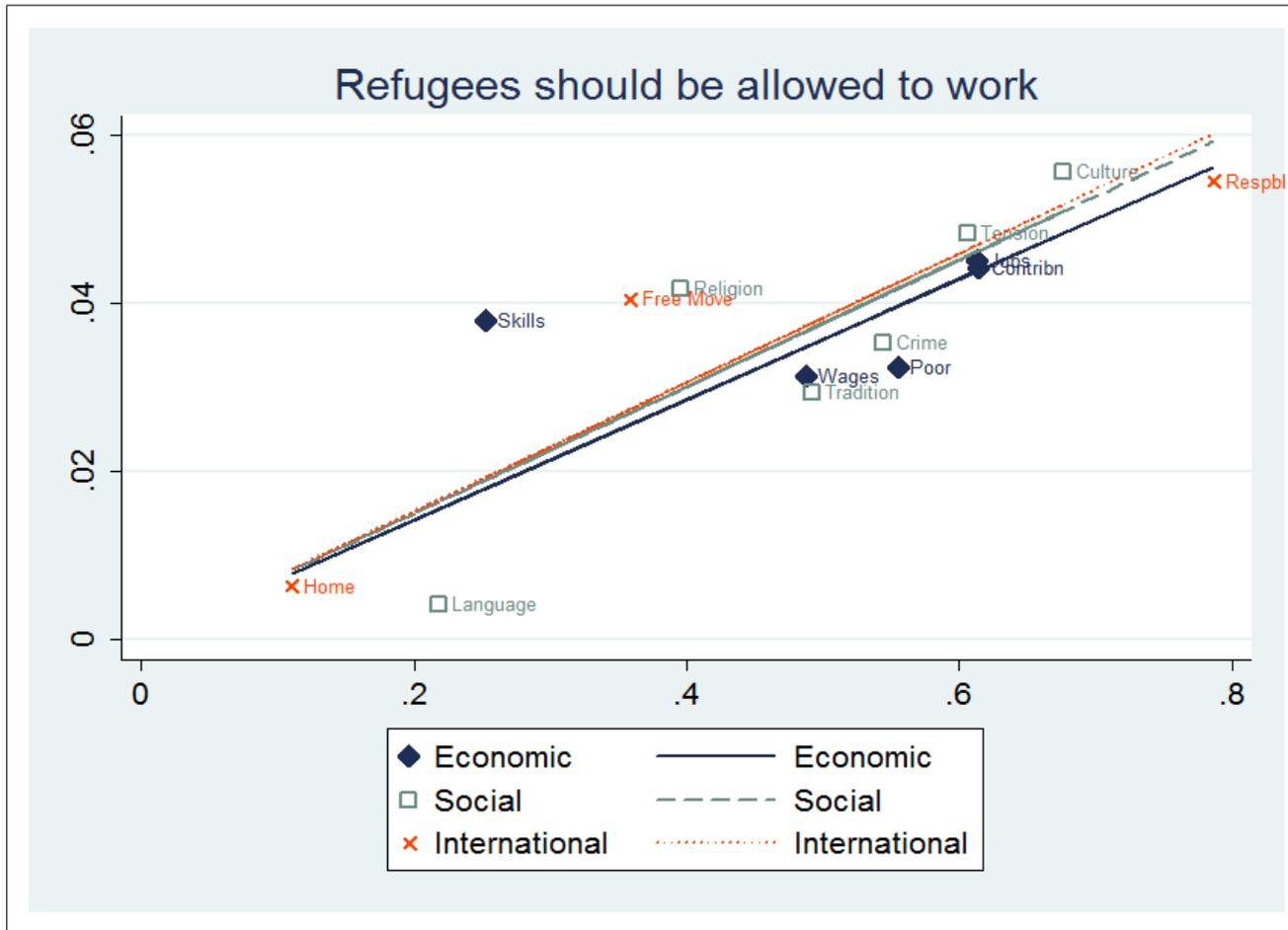
Source: ESS 2002

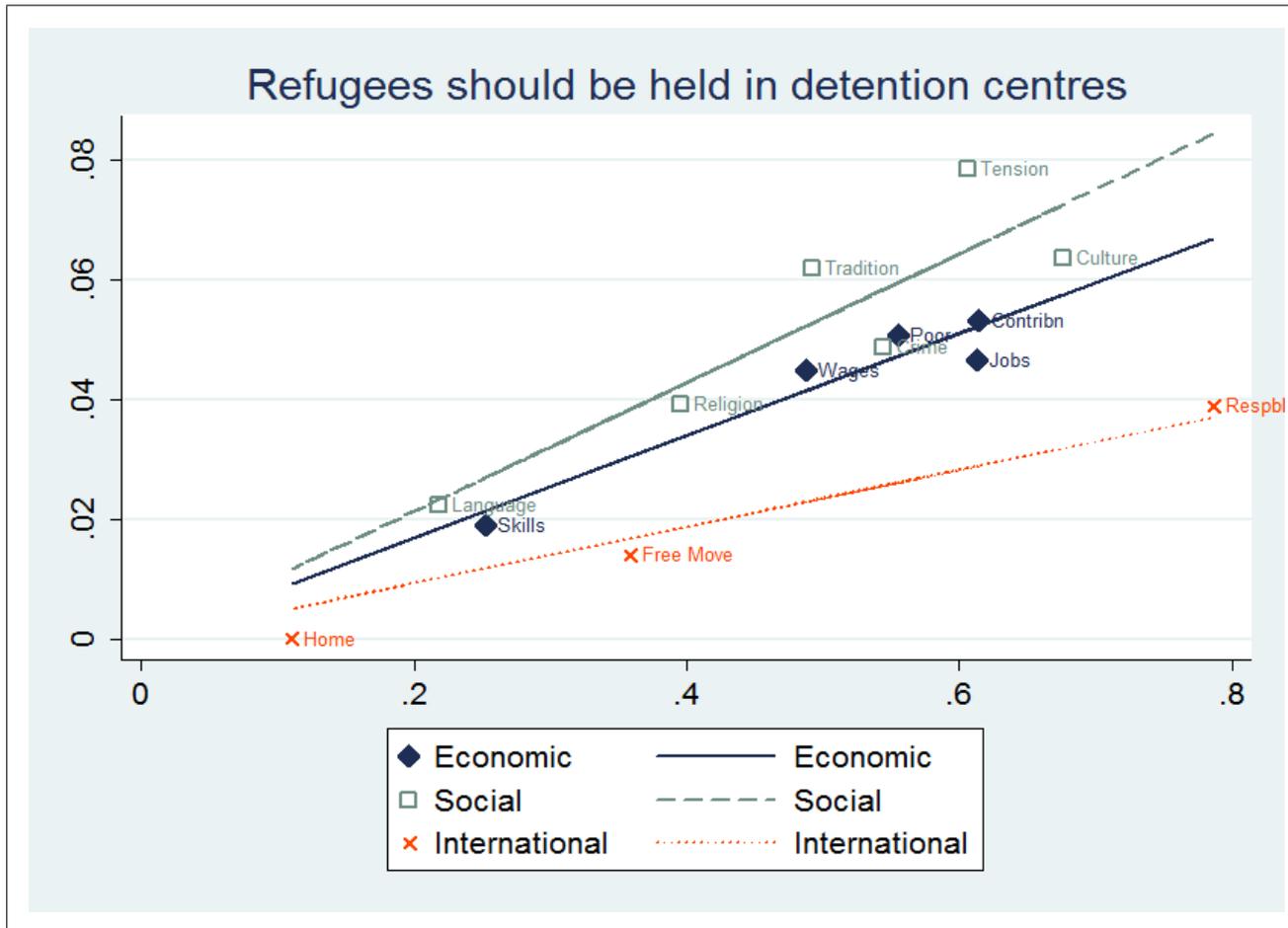
Refugee Policy

Economic effects matter to opinions on whether asylum applicants should be allowed to work but to nothing else

Preparedness to entertain detention of asylum applicants solely related to opinion on social effects

Other questions depend on social effects and responses to international implications





Decomposition of attitudinal differences

If we are prepared to assume that influence of observed characteristics on the indicators is channelled wholly through the factors then we can break down differences in immigration opinion associated with observed characteristics

If $\mathbf{C} = \mathbf{0}$ then $\mathbf{z} = \mathbf{MBX} + (\nu + \mathbf{M}\omega)$

\mathbf{B} can be estimated given that \mathbf{M} has been identified

Plausibility of arguments regarding the source of such associations can be assessed

Decomposition of attitudinal differences: Education

	Immigration		Refugees	
	Poor European	Economy	Generous	Allow work
Decomposition of Education Gap (tertiary vs. lower secondary)				
Total estimated gap	-0.039	-0.043	0.006	-0.013
Gap attributed to economic factor	-0.002	-0.030	0.001	-0.007
Gap attributed to social factor	-0.026	-0.009	-0.020	-0.006
Gap attributed to international factor	0.001	v0.000	-0.002	0.001
Source: ESS 2002				

Decomposition of attitudinal differences: Age

	Immigration		Refugees	
	Poor European	Economy	Generous	Allow work
Decomposition of Age Gap (Age > 60 vs. Age < 30)				
Total estimated gap	-0.084	-0.020	-0.019	0.000
Gap attributed to economic factor	-0.002	-0.026	0.001	-0.006
Gap attributed to social factor	-0.052	-0.018	-0.040	-0.013
Gap attributed to international factor	-0.005	0.000	0.009	0.006
Source: ESS 2002				

Decomposition of attitudinal differences

Less educated arguably more affected by labour market consequences of immigration

Greater illiberality of less educated sometimes argued to be evidence for economic determination of attitudes

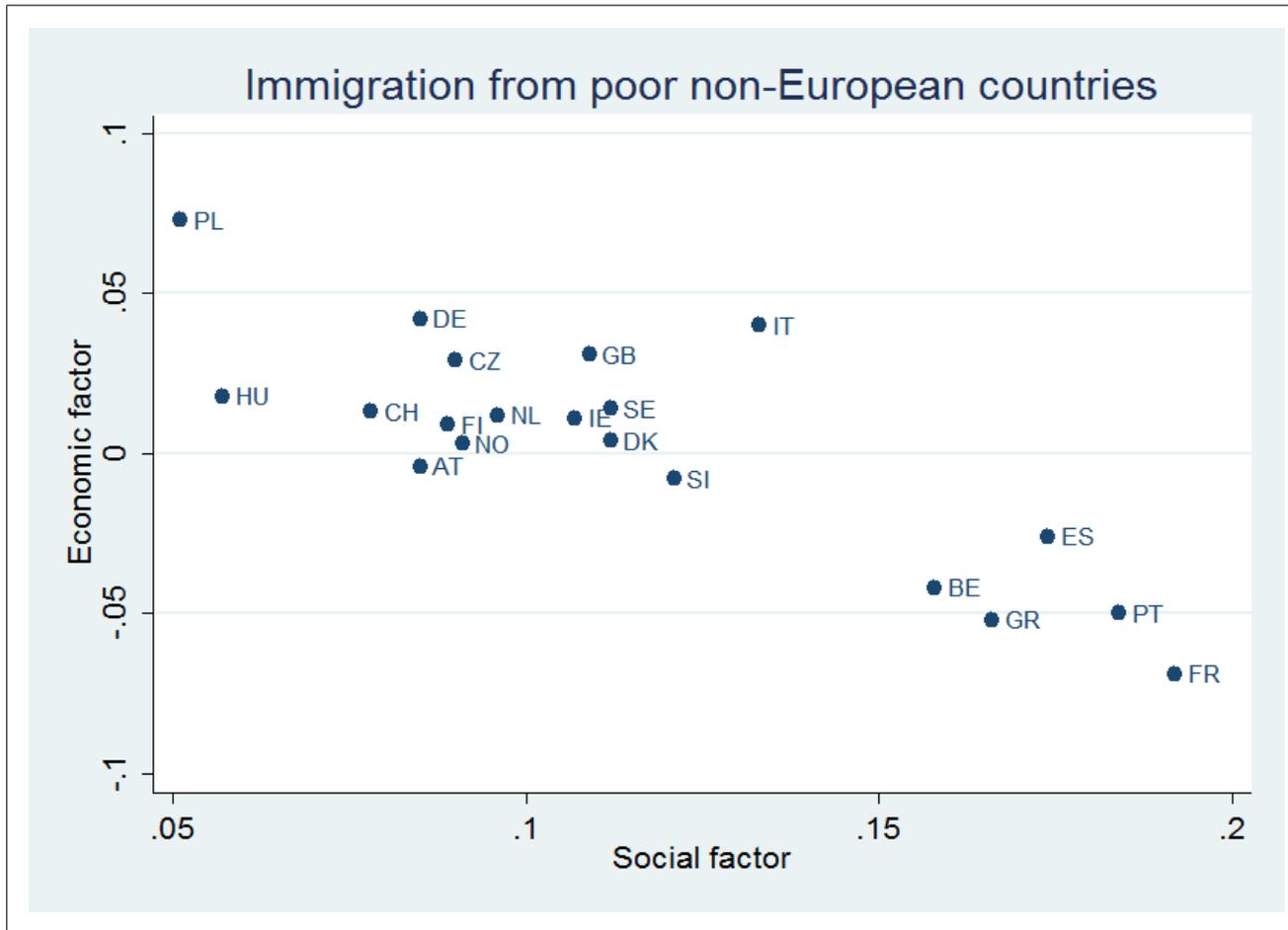
But lower education also associated with greater social conservatism and this is what accounts for most of the difference in attitude to policy

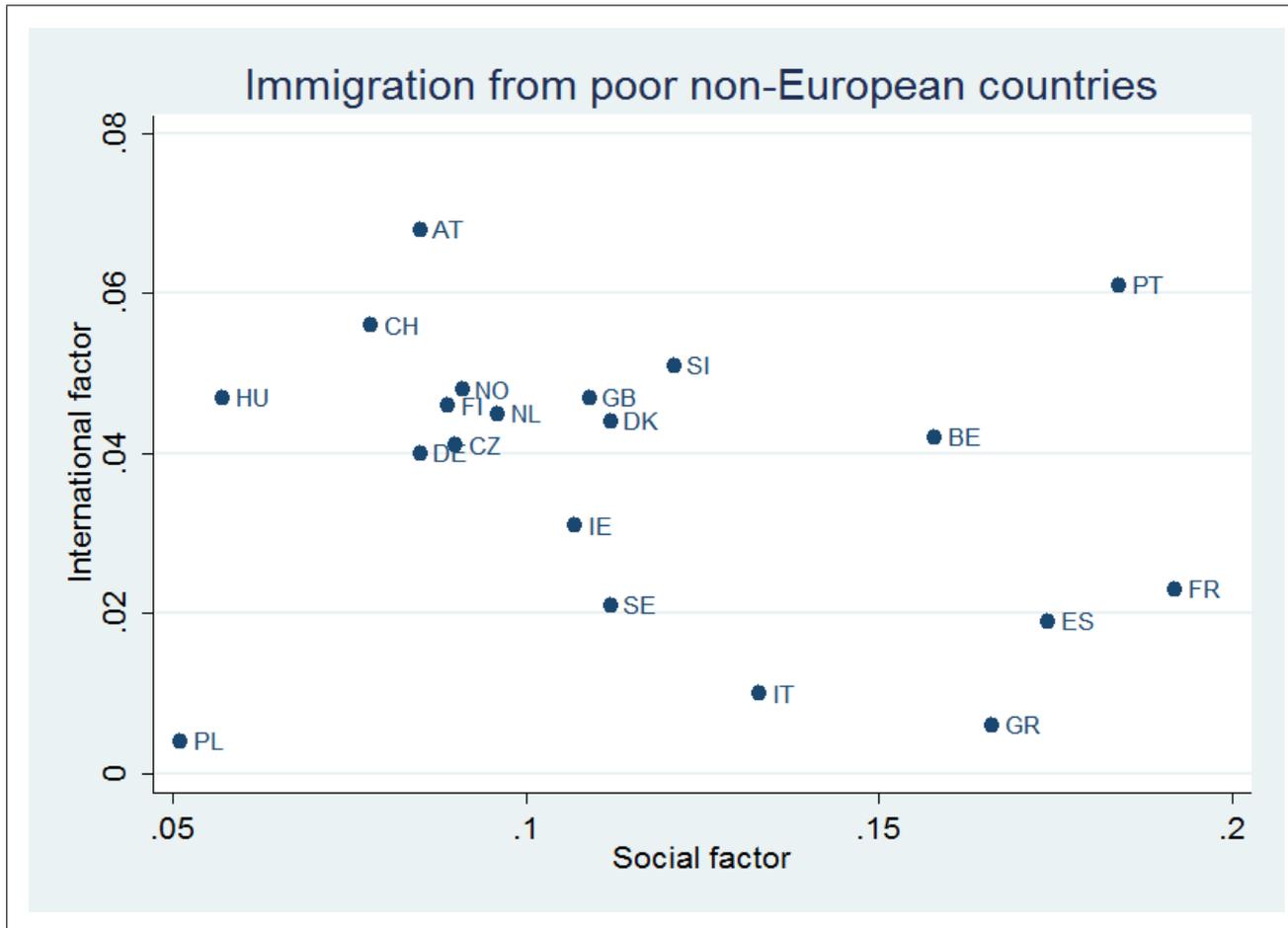
The old are also more opposed and they are least economically threatened but also tend to share social conservatism

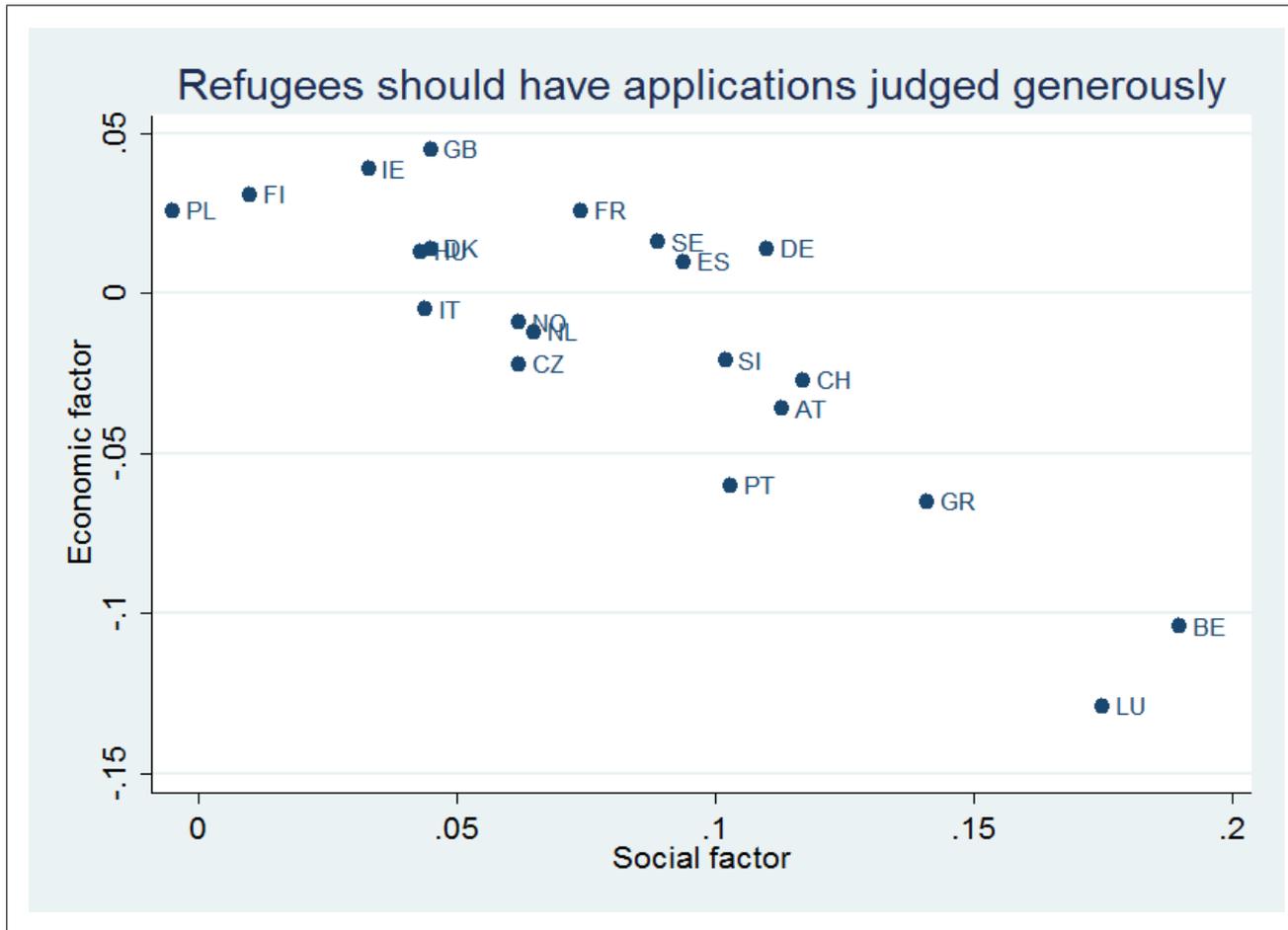
Cross-Country Differences

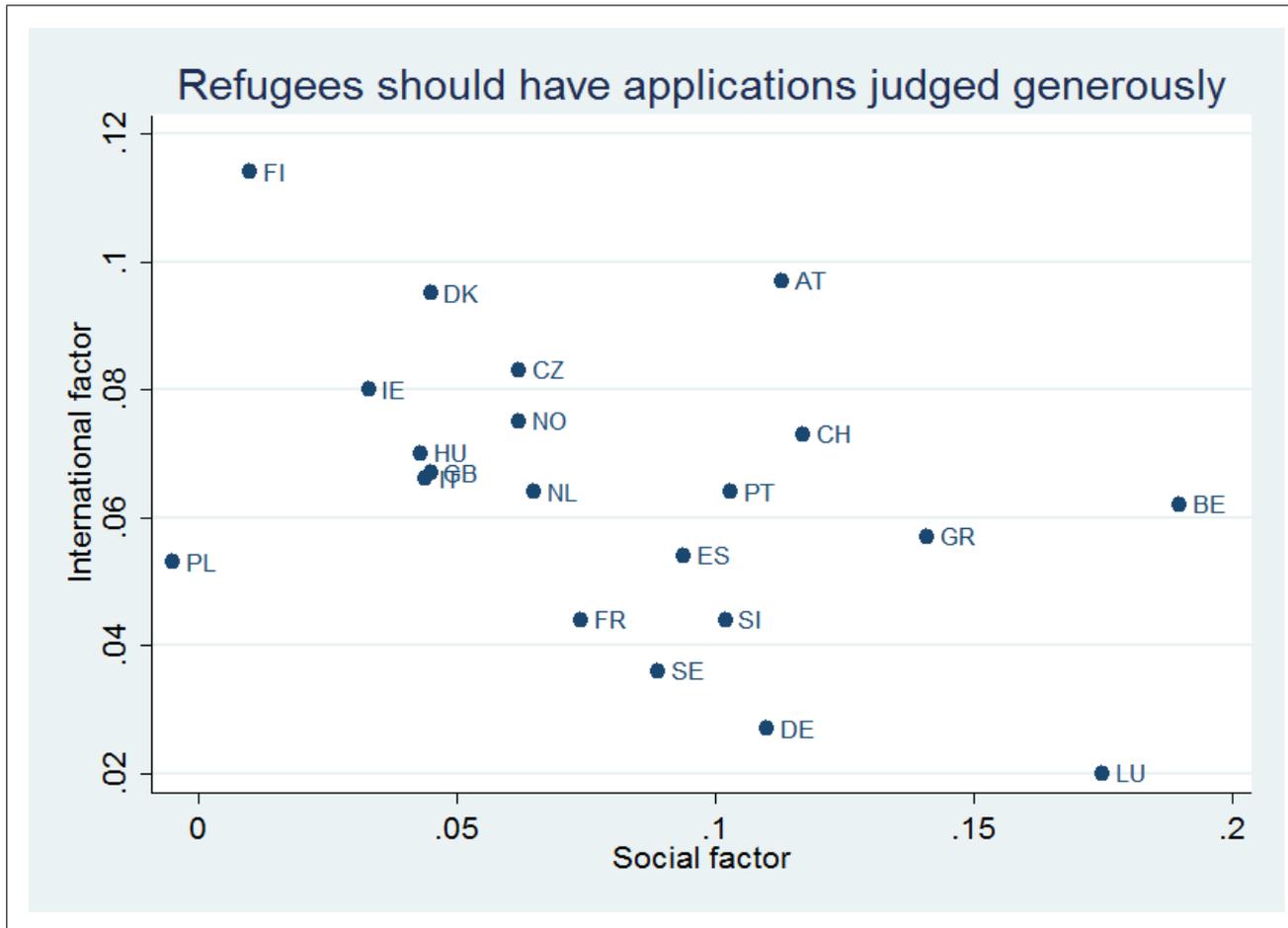
Estimates can be run separately on 21 different countries to investigate consistency

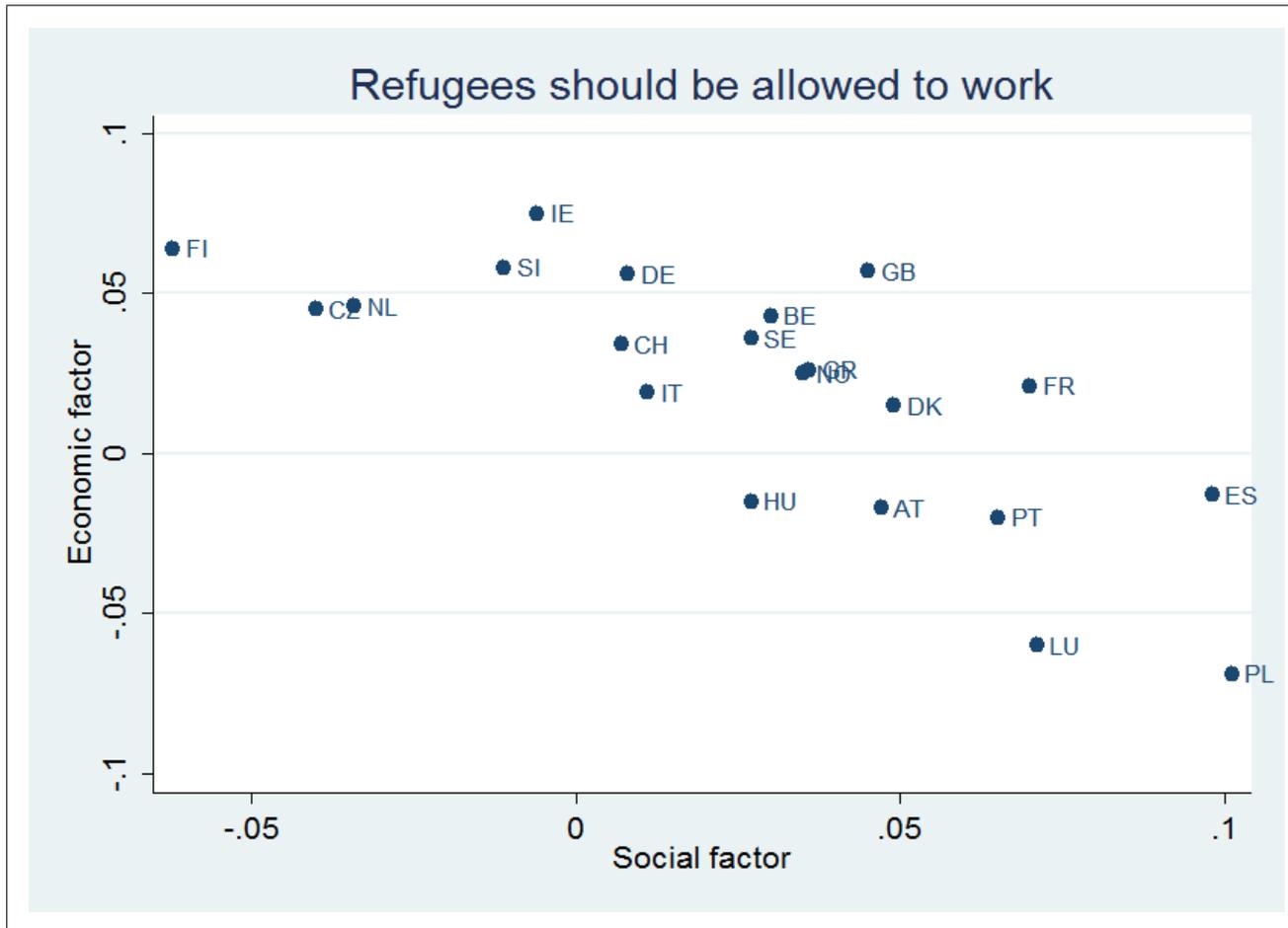
Social factor is reliably more important than economics for both general immigration policy and policy towards refugees

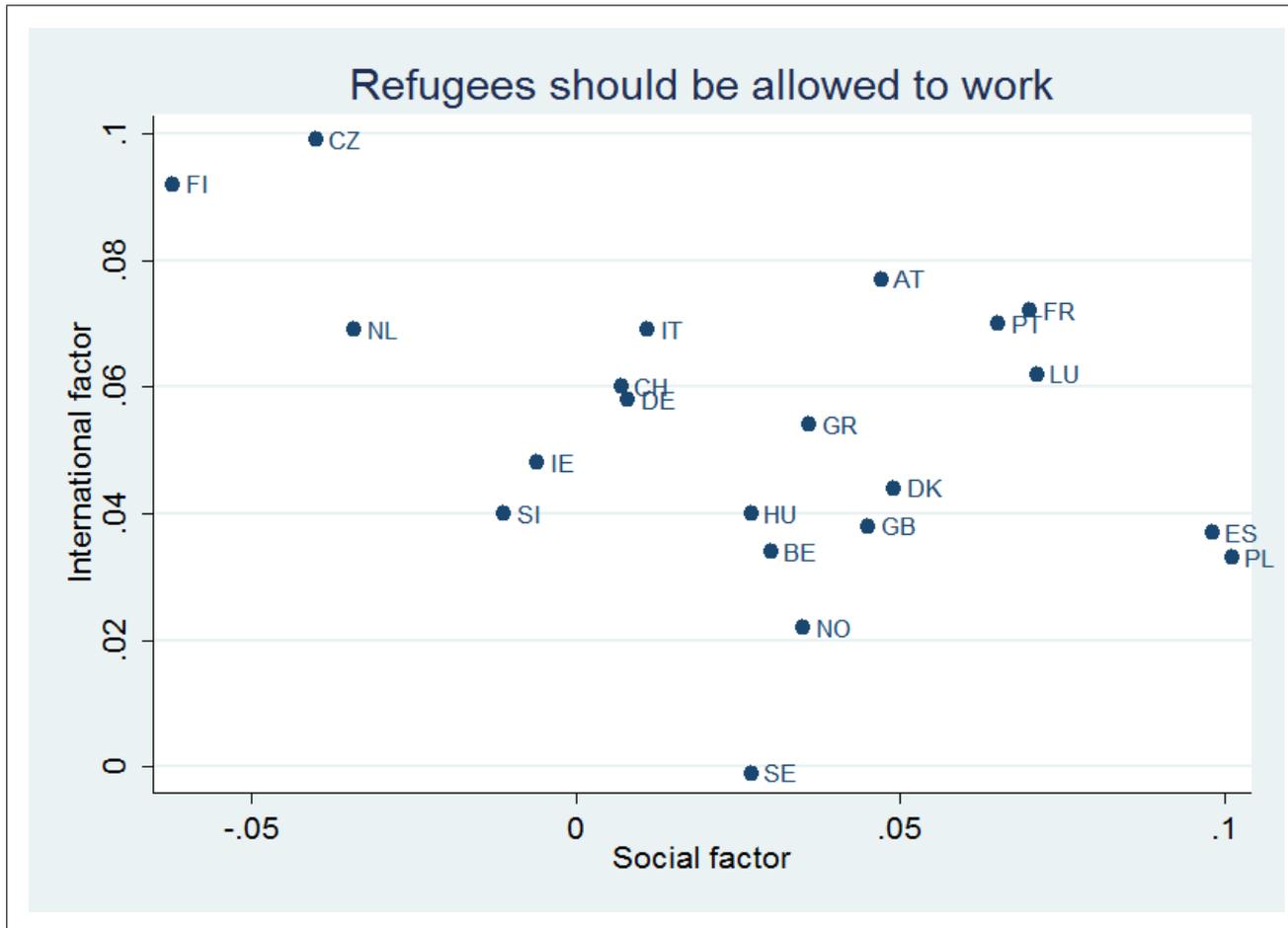












Real Fear of Persecution

Respondents asked whether they believe refugees' fear of persecution is genuine

Captures common argument that this is disguised economic migration

Model can be run separately on samples who do and do not agree that fear is genuine

Real Fear of Persecution

Refugee Policy	Economy		Social		International	
	Coeff	St err	Coeff	St err	Coeff	St err
Most <i>not</i> in real fear of persecution (n=10821)						
Work	0.028	(0.009)	0.021	(0.010)	0.065	(0.005)
Generosity	0.000	(0.008)	0.056	(0.008)	0.074	(0.005)
Family	0.005	(0.009)	0.076	(0.009)	0.058	(0.004)
Most <i>are</i> in real fear of persecution (n=6236)						
Work	0.031	(0.010)	0.031	(0.010)	0.045	(0.005)
Generosity	0.000	(0.010)	0.082	(0.011)	0.058	(0.005)
Family	-0.018	(0.011)	0.105	(0.011)	0.046	(0.005)

Source: ESS 2002

European Social Survey 2014

Small number of questions taken into main questionnaire

Seventh round repeats immigration module

However

several questions dropped

form of other questions altered

Not all data yet released

Nonetheless provides opportunity to investigate persistence of correlations

European Social Survey 2014 Changes

Only a minority of indicator questions remain

economic factor: questions on jobs and contribution kept,
others dropped

social factor: questions on crime, culture and traditions
kept, others dropped

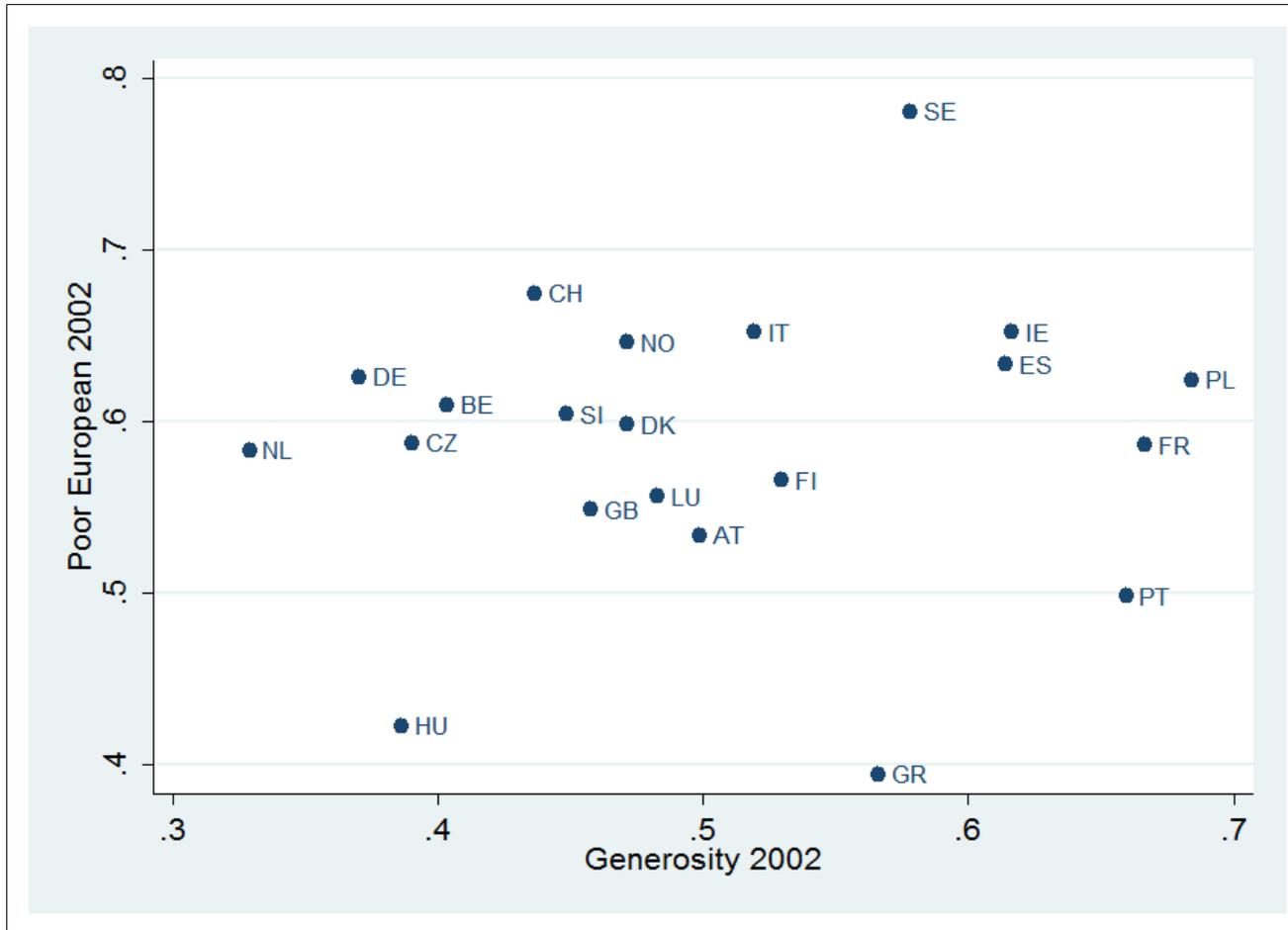
international factor: *all* questions dropped

Wording of some immigration policy questions changed

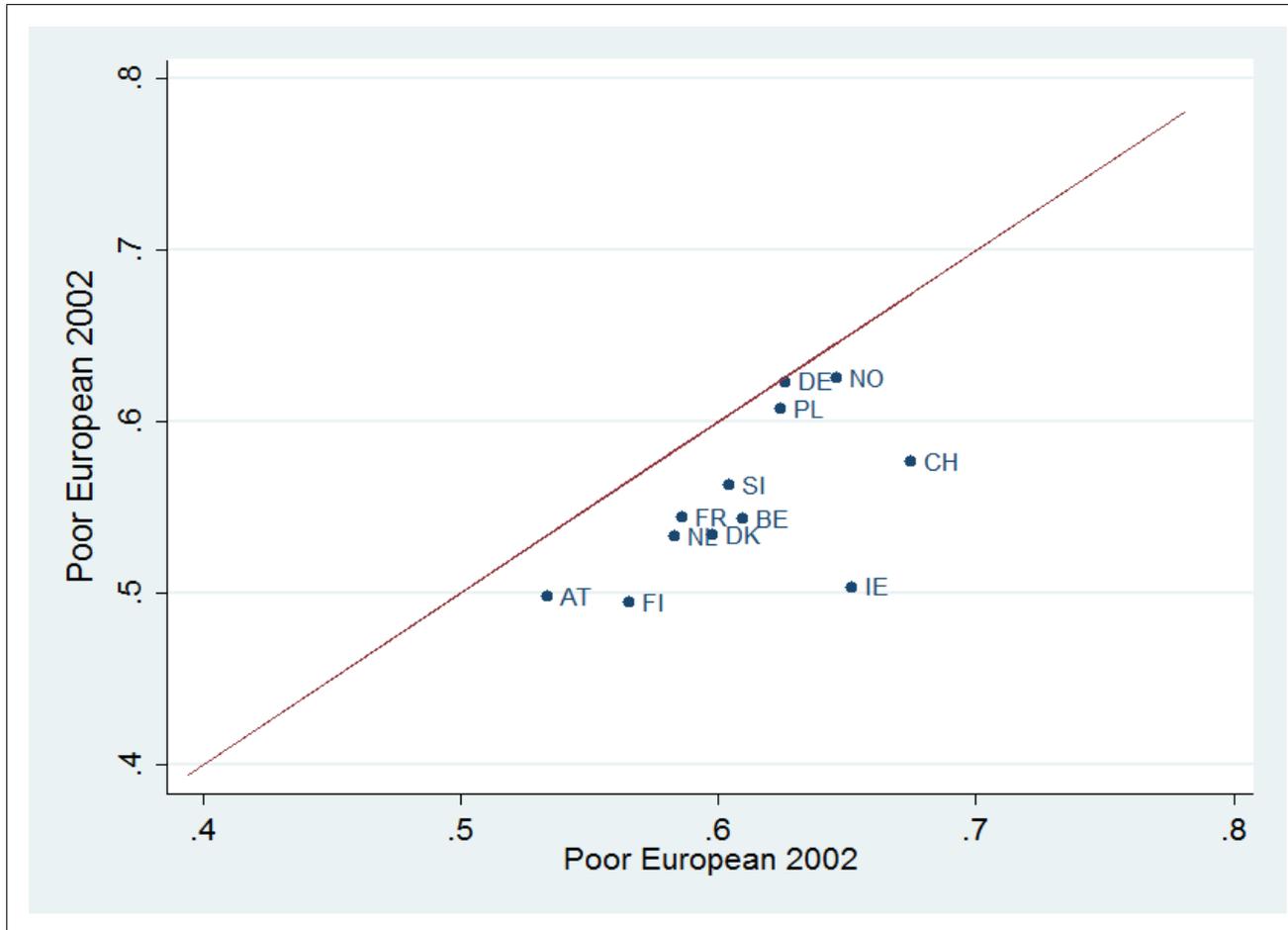
Both questions on overall effect (economy, quality of life) remain

Only the question on generosity to refugees kept

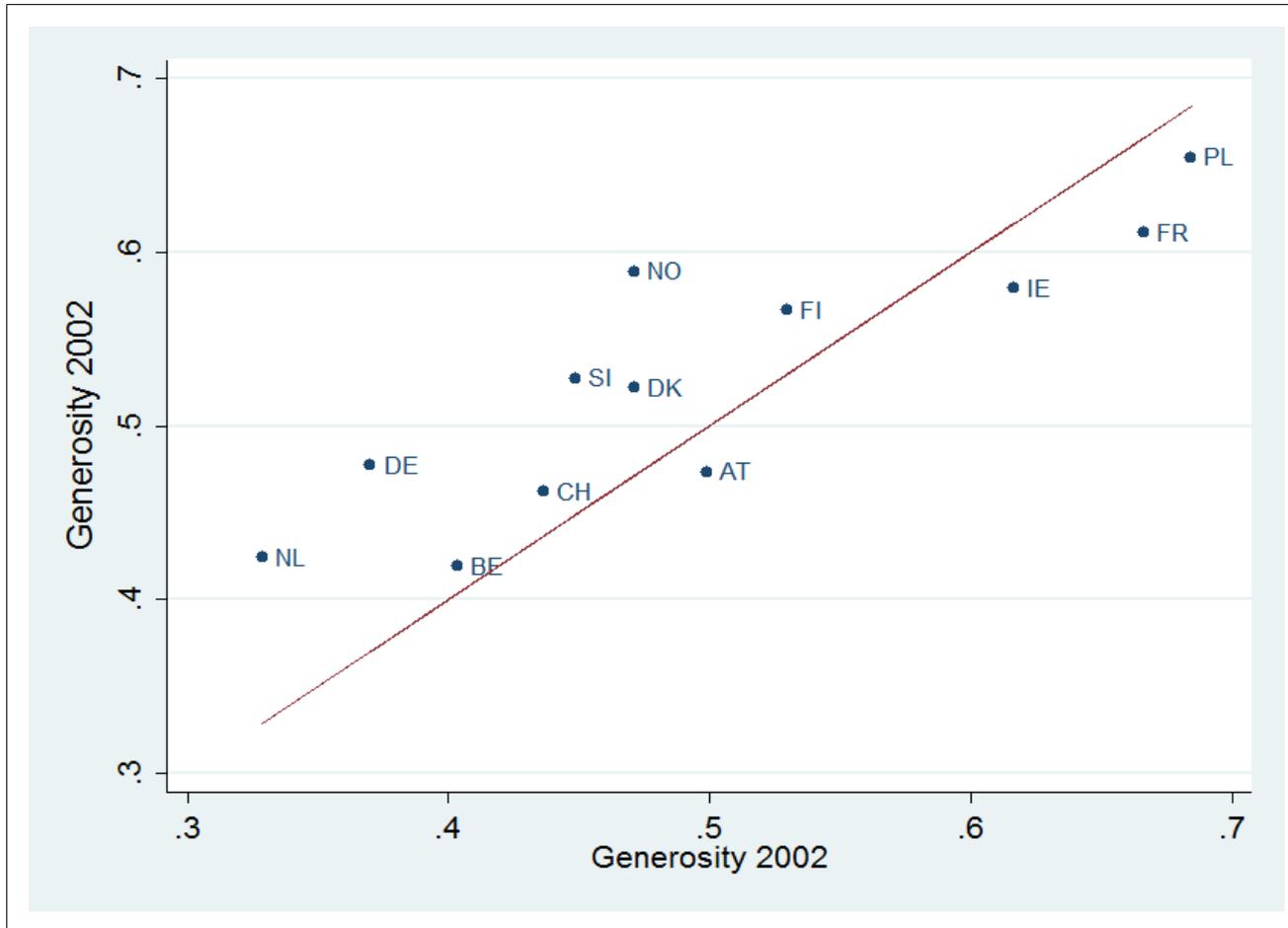
Openness to immigration and generosity to refugees



Persistence in attitude to immigration



Persistence in generosity to refugees



Applying the factor model to 2014

Not possible to analyse a model with an internationalism factor

However the estimated loadings from 2002 can be applied to

predict the other two factors in 2014

investigate association with remaining policy questions

check for persistence of estimated effects

Applying the factor model to 2014

	2002		2014	
	Economic	Social	Economic	Social
Generosity	0.012	0.093	-0.003	0.134
Poor European	-0.003	0.131	-0.012	0.167
Poor Non-European	-0.015	0.147	-0.033	0.195
Economy	0.139	0.030	0.060	0.110
Place to Live	-0.004	0.163	0.030	0.199

Source: ESS 2002, 2014

Applying the factor model to 2014

Similar picture emerges from 2014 data if we assume factor loadings persistent

Social effects more important than economic effects for determination of attitudes to immigration

Conclusions

Attitudes to refugee policy associated, like immigration policy, mainly with opinion on social effects and international implications

Economic effects unimportant except for question of whether asylum applicants be permitted to work

Tentative evidence that similar pattern of determination in 2014 as in 2002