

Societies Poor in Civic Virtues: A Cross-National Analysis Model on Immigrants' Integration and Host Country Characteristics

Società Povere di Virtù Civili: Un Modello Di Analisi Transnazionale Su Integrazione Degli Immigranti E Caratteristiche Del Paese Ospitante

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Riassunto: Malgrado opinioni diffuse nel pubblico, nei media e nel discorso politico, la crescita dell'immigrazione in Europa occidentale non ha coinciso con un'indifferenziata crescita della criminalità ad opera dei non-nazionali. Questi sono mediamente sovrarappresentati negli indici di criminalità; la loro incidenza sul crimine tuttavia varia molto da paese a paese. Questo studio tenta di identificare le determinanti di tale differenziazione per mezzo di un'indagine macro che analizza e compara i diciotto principali paesi dell'Europa occidentale. Legalità e giustizia nel paese ospitante emergono come variabili superiori ad altre – come *privazione relativa* e origine degli immigrati – nel predire i problemi di integrazione e la criminalità di questi ultimi.

Keywords: Macro Cross-National Models, Migration, Integration, Crime

1. The debate on migration and crime: past and present

Migrations are bound to challenge the status quo. However, a threatening aspect often takes up a leading role in this challenge: it is the link migration-crime. The entire subject has long been affected by stereotypical misperception (Solivetti 2004).

In countries of large scale immigration – such as France and the US – crime rate rise was blamed on the foreigners, already in the late 19th or early 20th century. However, various analyses, conducted in the US, Canada and Australia during the 20th century, denied a larger incidence of crime in the immigrant population. In Europe, an extended series of studies conducted during the 1950's - 1960's showed that immigrants' crime rate was inferior or similar to that of natives. However, a new scenario emerged since the early 1980's. Fresh studies carried out in several European countries (Natale 1988; Albrecht 1993; Killias 1989; Tonry 1997) agreed on a basic point. They showed immigrants' crime rates much higher (2 to 4 times) than those observed in society at large. Interestingly, nothing similar was recorded over the Ocean, since in the US – and in Canada as well – crime rate for the foreign-born remained averagely not higher than that for the native population (Reid et al. 2005).

Reasons behind all this are unclear. The issue of migration and crime has produced few points of agreement. The coarse hypothesis that all immigrants, or at least some ethnic groups, are intrinsically prone to crime, does not meet with scholars' favour today, though it still hovers over the opinion of the man in the street.

The hypothesis of a link between deviance and *relative deprivation*, instead, has been widely utilized in scientific studies both in the US and Europe, to explain immigrants' acquisitive and non-acquisitive crime.

Also the hypothesis of *cultural conflict*, first elaborated by Sellin in the 1930's, and revolving around the idea of marked cultural differences between immigrants and natives, has been widely used.

As regards the labelling approach, if we accept its most radical points of view, we must consider crime as a label applied by those in power to powerless people belonging to minorities. Differences in crime rates between citizens and non-nationals would represent only the effect of non-nationals' negative discrimination. As a matter of fact, biases were detected in the police behaviour towards immigrants and minorities. However, several studies showed that arrests by the police are first of all the result of concrete offending behaviour, not of ethnic biases. The distribution of offenders by ethnic group, as perceived by the victim, corresponds to the distribution of offenders according to the arrest data (UK Home Office 1989). Besides, everywhere the great majority of recorded offences are reported by the public, not by the police; and the impact of a possible discrimination by the public in reporting incidents to the police is not supported by research. In any case, the impact on recorded crime of any negative discrimination by the public (in general) would be at least partly counterbalanced by another specific phenomenon. I.e. the fact that a substantial rate of non-nationals' crime is committed against other non-nationals, as ethnic minority's crime is usually intra-minority. And it is well known that immigrants report offences less frequently.

Negative discrimination as to sentencing and use of pre-trial detention may be more significant. This unfavourable treatment of non-nationals is ascribed to the higher probability that they abscond when treated with measures different from detention.

2. Migration in Western Europe: what changed over the last decades

Western Europe has progressively assumed a more dissimilar profile vis-à-vis Third and former Second World countries, both for its population stagnation and for the economic & social well-being achieved. The coming out of this differential development coincided with an escalating migration towards Western Europe (Table 1).

Table 1 – *Non-national population resident in the West European countries – Absolute values (,000), at 31/12 – Years 1950-2004 (Source: Sopemi 2006; various censuses)*

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004
W. Europe	4,113	5,403	10,151	13,704	14,179	16,350	19,267	20,947	23,834

However, a new migration phase has appeared since the 1980's. The migration flow from the European countries of the Mediterranean faded away. Migration from both European countries outside Western Europe and non-European countries, instead, increased. *Pull factors* have changed too, since in Western Europe the chances of obtaining a steady job in the factories have been decreasing; whereas jobs available for immigrants have increasingly become marginal, off-the-book, odd jobs; i.e. jobs now looked down on by most natives. The employment of immigrants in the hidden

economy has appeared as particularly developed in some countries such as Spain, Italy, Greece, and Belgium. In this new phase, immigration has been mostly fed by *push factors*, such as demographic growth associated with limited economic advance in the country of origin; a negative situation in terms of human rights; ethnic & political conflicts in the Third World; the disintegration of the Communist political systems in Eastern Europe.

3. Non-nationals and crime in Europe: some figures

Among data on non-nationals' contribution to crime in Europe, those regarding people in prison are more comprehensive, though they are available only since the mid-1980's. Remarkable increases in the non-nationals' incidence on prison population were registered in many countries (Table 2). Non-nationals' incidence on all the West European prison population shows a steady increase: it doubled between 1985 and early 2000's, exceeding the figure of c.1/4th of prison population. The average value for all the countries is even higher. Non-nationals' incidence on prison population is out of proportion when compared with their incidence on resident population. Differences between rates recorded in the various countries, however, are impressive.

Table 3 shows further data, relating to non-nationals charged with criminal offences. Unfortunately, Ireland does not collect this information. The UK does record charged people's race, but not their nationality: for want of better data, we reported for the UK the incidence of non-white population (approximately corresponding to population of foreign origin), but did not use these figures for the average at the bottom of the table.

Table 2 – *Incidence (%) of non-national detainees on prison population in West European countries – Year 1986-2004 (countries abbreviations are those used by Eurostat; Source: Council of Europe 2005)*¹

Country	1986	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004
B	29.3	31.2	32.1	37.5	40.6	40.3	36.3	40.4	40.9	41.1
DK	9.0	12.4	11.7	14.3	15.6	12.6	14.7	17.0	16.3	16.5
D	14.5	14.5	14.5	18.2	25.7	31.5	34.1	32.0	29.9	28.2
EL	17.7	22.9	24.2	22.3	29.0	35.6	45.2	48.4	45.9	42.3
E	12.1	15.1	16.4	16.7	15.6	16.7	17.8	18.8	25.4	27.5
F	27.9	25.8	28.7	29.2	29.5	28.3	25.8	21.6	21.5	21.9
IRL	1.5	0.9	1.2	2.0	7.8	8.4	7.5	7.5	8.0	9.5
I	8.6	8.9	11.6	15.0	14.7	18.6	24.2	28.5	30.1	31.5
L	40.6	41.3	41.2	40.3	46.9	53.1	56.1	59.1	63.9	74.6
NL	22.1	21.2	25.2	26.6	30.5	31.7	32.7	30.9	29.1	27.2
A	7.5	10.9	17.7	25.7	26.3	26.5	28.2	30.1	33.0	43.9
P	5.8	8.8	7.9	7.5	9.6	11.7	10.7	11.4	12.0	17.3
FIN	0.3	0.3	0.6	1.4	1.6	3.0	4.7	6.2	8.5	7.7
S	20.7	22.3	18.4	24.6	31.8	26.5	26.6	21.3	21.4	19.9
UK	3.3	4.2	5.1	6.7	5.8	7.6	7.8	8.5	11.0	12.4
ISL	1.2	1.1	0.3	0.1	0.8	2.0	3.6	5.0	7.3	7.5
NOR	9.0	11.0	12.8	12.1	12.2	16.3	12.5	12.9	15.0	19.2
CH	36.3	36.0	26.9	46.6	52.3	54.1	61.3	62.6	70.8	70.5
TOTAL	13.2	13.7	15.4	18.4	20.0	22.3	23.6	23.7	24.6	25.4
AVE.	14.7	15.9	16.3	19.3	22.0	23.6	25.0	25.6	27.3	28.8

All in all, non-nationals' incidence on people charged confirms what emerged from their incidence on prison population. I.e. that (i) non-nationals' incidence on crime official figures markedly differs from country to country, even when their different incidence on resident population is taken into account; (ii) non-nationals' are largely overrepresented in crime official figures in Western Europe.

The fact that non-nationals' incidence on people charged matches their incidence on prison population is particularly noteworthy. Let's consider the most serious offences (Table 3): for intentional homicide, non-nationals' average incidence – for all the countries with available data – is 28%; for rape, 28%; for robbery, 27%; for drug trafficking, 19%. For theft, according to type, 21 to 27%. It should be noticed these are the offences responsible for most prison entries. Now, these percentages are close (actually, even higher) than those regarding non-nationals' incidence on all the prison population in Western Europe (Table 2).

Table 3 – *Non-nationals' incidence (%) on all people charged, by type of offences (and all offences) in West European countries – Year 2000 or closest available year (Source: Council of Europe 2005; various ministries of justice, on our request)*

Country	Intent. homicide	Sex offences	Rape	Serious assault	Theft (all)	Aggr. Theft	Robbery	Breaking & entering	Motor cars theft	Other thefts	Fraud	Drug offences	All Offences
B	40.0		24.6	27.3	42.2		49.1				30.4	40.9	27.3
DK	12.5	22.5	41.2	23.4	17.2		30.5	11.2	11.6		12.3	17.7	16.6
D	34.0	20.9	33.2	27.3	22.3	25.9	31.5	23.5	22.0	21.5	22.8	23.5	27.1
EL	21.9	28.0	21.5	3.7	26.0	37.3	35.2	33.1	22.8	32.9	7.7	8.1	4.9
E	18.3	18.6		18.0	12.5	16.0	17.2	15.3		13.9	23.1	7.0	33.1
F	15.6	11.1	12.9	16.4	14.7	12.2	15.0	10.7	9.8	16.2	14.7	9.9	18.4
IRL													
I	22.1		25.5		31.9		29.5					35.3	19.0
L	100.0	30.4	39.5	46.2	52.1	45.5	42.7	42.6	34.1	58.1	77.4	53.5	52.0
NL	29.4	34.0	27.0		25.9	29.1	32.5	25.6			22.9	25.9	27.1
A	25.5	20.5	28.8	24.7	25.1	34.1	42.8	29.6	64.0	20.2	20.2	15.4	19.4
P	8.2		10.6		4.5	3.1	6.0					6.1	6.4
FIN	5	15	28	1	7	5	12			11	7	4	4
S	27		32	18	22		20	13	11			16	20
UK	[20]	[19]			[13]		[36]				[28]	[23]	[15]
ISL	10.0	7.4	7.7	5.3	4.2	3.0	7.5	2.8			4.8	3.7	5.6
NOR	13	6	14	9	16	15	13		9	18	8	11	11
CH	59.7	37.0	65.9	54.6	59.8		53.4	63.2	54.4	34.0	39.5	29.5	43.7
AVE.	27.6	21.0	27.5	21.1	24.0	20.6	27.4	24.6	26.5	25.1	22.4	19.2	21.0

The matching of all these figures bears witness to the *reliability* of the measures used. In the light of data regarding non-nationals charged, the problem of a possible discrimination against non-nationals is cut down to size. Data presented here do not exclude a greater recourse to imprisonment, in particular to pre-trial detention, in the case of non-nationals. These data show, however, that non-nationals' high rates of incidence on prison population coincide with their criminal charges rates. And – as we mentioned above – criminal charges are hardly attributable to bias.

Last, data regarding people charged would question the cultural conflict hypothesis, since the latter would suggest a non-nationals' crime made up of a few “special” offences. On the contrary, from Table 3 one draws that non-nationals' incidence on

people charged is high for all the most standard types of crime – from car theft to robbery – that do not imply any cultural peculiarity.

4. Non-nationals' relative index of imprisonment

Non-nationals' overrepresentation in crime official figures in Europe does not help promote any particular hypothesis on the causes of non-nationals' crime. More useful, to this end, could be another significant fact: non-nationals' very dissimilar incidence on the various countries' crime.

To further investigate this aspect, we need an indicator of non-nationals' contribution to the various countries' crime. In order to have an imprisonment index useful for comparative purposes, however, it is necessary to modify it, by taking into account also non-nationals' dissimilar incidence on resident population. Therefore, we built a "relative index of imprisonment", corresponding to *non-nationals' incidence on total prison population, divided by their incidence on total resident population*. So, e.g. a country with an index value of 2 would present a non-nationals' incidence on prison population twice their incidence on resident population. Such an index has been calculated for various periods of time (Table 4). There is an overall increase in the late 1990's. In all the periods, differences between countries are huge.

Table 4 – *Relative index of imprisonment for non-nationals in West European countries – Averages for the years 1990-1995; 1995-2000; 2000-2004; 1990-2000; 1990-2000 controlling for age groups differences²*

Country	Relative index of imprisonment				
	1990-1995	1995-2000	2000-2004	1990-2000	1990-2000 age groups controlling
B	3.5	4.5	4.9	4.3	3.1
DK	3.8	3.1	3.4	3.5	2.6
D	2.2	3.6	3.4	3.1	2.3
EL	13.4	12.6	7.4	12.2	8.9
E	15.6	10.5	7.5	12.8	9.3
F	4.6	4.6	3.8	4.7	3.4
IRL	0.5	2.5	1.8	2.0	1.5
I	8.4	10.9	10.2	10.1	7.4
L	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.1
NL	5.5	7.4	6.8	6.5	4.8
A	3.0	3.1	3.8	3.1	2.3
P	10.0	6.1	3.9	6.7	4.9
FIN	1.1	2.7	3.9	2.1	1.5
S	3.3	4.4	4.0	4.2	3.1
UK	1.6	2.1	2.4	1.9	1.4
ISL	0.1	1.2	1.9	0.8	0.6
NOR	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.6	2.6
CH	1.6	3.1	3.5	2.8	2.0
TOTAL	3.6	4.4	4.3	4.1	3.0

Non-nationals' overrepresentation in most of the countries cannot be explained by differences in their population structure. Now, an overrepresentation of men in the non-nationals' population could distort the index. In some communities of non-nationals, men's incidence can be very high; however, all in all, in Western Europe, men's

incidence on immigrant population (c.48%: Sopemi 2006) is lower than that of men on resident population. The problem of age groups is more critical. In non-national populations, adult and young adults – i.e. the age groups most contributing to crime – are overrepresented. If we control for age groups differences, calculating imprisonment rates for only the group 18-39 yrs, non-nationals' incidence on prison population would increase; but non-nationals' incidence on resident population would increase much more. Precise calculation for each country are difficult, since data on non-nationals' age show gaps; and information on the age of non-nationals in prison is definitely poor. Therefore, we must use estimates. An increase in the range of 35-40% in the incidence of non-nationals on the resident population ought to compensate for the age groups differences (see Hagan & Palloni 1999). Figures for the relative index of imprisonment would decrease (Table 4), but they would remain very high for many countries.

Figures are such to rule out also the hypothesis that non-nationals' overrepresentation in prison population is simply due to the presence of illegal immigrants, who aren't counted of course in official statistics. Illegal immigrants cannot assume a too high incidence on non-national population: several regularizations of illegal immigrants, realized by the countries most affected by this phenomenon, confirm the natural tendency to reabsorb them. The status of illegal immigrant is clearly of transitory nature (Garson & Loizillon 2003). Besides, countries with a considerable quota of illegal immigrants are, by common consent, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece. These very countries are also those where non-nationals' relative index of imprisonment reaches its highest values. If we recalculate this index taking into account the estimates for illegal immigrants' population, the index would keep showing, for these countries, values very dissimilar from other countries' ones (see following pages). What is certainly important is that countries with high non-nationals' imprisonment index and high illegal immigration rates show also – vis-à-vis the other countries – a quite different profile as regards both their socio-economic-cultural characteristics and the profile of their immigration flows. Ultimately, it is among these very characteristics that one could seek the causes of the dissimilarities in the imprisonment index values.

5. Determinants of dissimilarities in non-nationals' crime rates

But which might be, specifically, these causes? To identify them, we shall take advantage of the various theories presented above. Our approach will be a macro, cross-national comparison: micro analyses would go closer to the social actor, but they would miss the fact that immigrants' crime cannot be detached from the ecological context in which it emerges. For a better clearness, we distinguished three groups of possible determinants.

5.1 Socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the host countries

Where non-nationals' integration is bad, their chances of maladjustment and of criminal behaviours increase. Countries with a higher level of socio-economic well-being are expected to offer better chances of integration. Where *there is more*, usually there is more for non-nationals too. The higher the well-being, the lower the crime rate (Guajardo & O'Hara 1998). Besides, where *there is more*, and well-being reaches the lower layers of the native population, there are fewer chances for non-nationals of being perceived as an economic threat to the abovementioned well-being.

To gauge economic well-being, we used classical indicators of *context*, such as GNP per capita, percentage of GDP spent on food, and inflation rate; then, indicators of *equity* or *social cohesion*, such as GNP per capita for the poorest 10% of the population, income distribution and public expenditure on social protection per capita. The latter indicators can be regarded as empirical measures of the concept of *relative deprivation*.

We have also considered indicators of education and knowledge. Education is correlated with tolerance for immigrants, and (negatively) with *hate crime* (Kühne 2002). Therefore, we have probed indicators such as population with secondary school diploma, number of books in public libraries, per person, and number of dailies sold. Personal Computers per population is expected to measure also the opening towards the world made possible by the Net. Both dailies and personal computers diffusion would act as a limitation on corruption.

The index of perceived corruption (Transparency International) measures social confidence, but ultimately also *particularism* vs. *universalism*. And particularism tramples on the rights of the weakest ones. Particularism and corruption are galore where *rule of law* (i.e. reliability of the justice system: World Bank 2004) is wanting. The integration of non-nationals – who are socially feeble and need the law's protection – is affected by an inadequate rule of law. The incidence of hidden economy, in turn is inevitably affected by the level of corruption, particularism and rule of law. Hidden economy – which involves first of all outsiders such as immigrants – is expected to generate further illegality by them and to pave the way for common crime.

5.2 Non-nationals' integration in the host countries

The abovementioned characteristics of the host countries are only the framework that is expected to affect non-nationals' integration. Other indicators could specifically gauge this integration. Non-nationals' unemployment rate however is unpaired by the diffusion of hidden economy. It seems sound, instead, to take into consideration the variation over time of non-national population in the host countries: a rapid increase might usher in problems of adjustment and therefore greater tendency to crime. Irregularities in the demographic structure of non-national population – such as a scarce incidence of the youngest age groups, which implies a limited number of families and, generally speaking, social difficulties (Casacchia & Strozza 1995) – could be momentous.

Last, the incidence of illegal immigrants could be a valid indicator of integration. Illegal immigration is tantamount to socio-economic marginality; and unsurprisingly illegal immigrants might be the group most prone to deviance (Barbagli 1998). Therefore, we used an indicator of illegal immigration, based on international estimates (a dummy with values 1, 2 and 3).

5.3 Non-nationals' origin

Each national group of immigrants presents its own characteristics. These can imply for some of them a wider gap – in terms of development, culture, religion – vis-à-vis the host country. Such a gap, in turn, could affect non-nationals' integration and, ultimately, tendency to crime. However, it must be remembered that (i) the national groups of immigrants with the highest crime rate are not the same everywhere, and (ii) the criminal involvement of groups varies considerably in different states (Ramirez & Lee 2000). This fact suggests that the *origin factor* influence ought to be considered in concert with the characteristics of the host country and those regarding integration. As

origin indicators, we used the incidence of non-nationals belonging to, respectively, the EU (or EFTA), pre-2004 membership, other European countries, and non-European countries. To higher percentages of EU's immigrants correspond lower crime rates and vice-versa. Since it was suggested that in Europe non-nationals coming from less developed countries show higher crime rates (Danmarks Statistik 2002), we used also this feature. More restrictive criteria of origin were used too (e.g. Africa, Latin America, Asia); as well as the origin from specific countries.

All these indicators are based on *stock* data. However, it could be helpful to check indicators based on *stock and flow* data: such as, e.g. incidence of non-Europeans in a given year, combined with variation of this incidence over the following ten years.

6. Statistical analysis: regressions, factors and clusters

Table 5 displays linear regressions between some indicators relating to socio-economic features, integration and origin, and the relative index of imprisonment. The imprisonment index covers a period long enough (1990 to 2000) to neutralize short time variations.

Table 5 – *Selected independent variables and the relative index of imprisonment (1990-2000, controlling for age groups differences): linear regression β coefficients and robust t-scores;³ factors and factor scores*

Variables	β & rob. (t-scores)	1st factor	2nd factor	3rd factor
• GDP spent on food (%)	.62 (4.4)	-.204	-.775	.200
• Inflation rate yearly	.66 (6.9)	-.241	-.701	.117
• GNP per capita of the poorest 10% of the population	-.64 (-2.9)	.446	.702	-.403
• Ratio income richest 20% to poorest 20% of the population	.67 (3.2)	-.469	-.713	.142
• Public expenditure on social protection per capita (total)	-.59 (-2.7)	.583	.653	-.265
• Pop. (25-64 yrs) that completed senior sec. school (%)	-.67 (-3.0)	.699	.434	-.395
• Books in public libraries per person	-.55 (-3.0)			
• Dailies sold per 1,000 pop.	-.65 (-3.1)	.856	.378	-.183
• Corruption perception index	-.88 (-6.2)	.634	.257	-.287
• Rule of law index	-.84 (-7.4)	.529	.421	-.410
• Hidden economy, incidence on GDP	.82 (8.0)	-.323	-.391	.249
• Personal computers per 1,000 pop.	-.77 (-4.6)	.689	.461	-.284
• Non-national population, variation 1980-1990	.69 (3.6)	-.031	-.065	.123
• Non-nationals aged 0-4 yrs (%)	-.59 (-2.8)	.396	.719	-.201
• Illegal immigration, estimated level	.86 (5.8)	-.716	-.225	.267
• Non-nationals (%) from non-European countries (1990)	.56 (3.4)	-.193	-.164	.948
• Non-nationals (%) from less dev. non-European countries (1990)	.59 (3.8)	-.257	-.028	.945
• Non-nationals from less developed non-European countries (1990) & their variation over time (1990-2000)	.62 (3.5)	-.039	-.227	.878

Results show that non-nationals' imprisonment index is higher in countries with lower and unstable (inflation) economic development, particularly low income for the poor, unfair income distribution, ungenerous social protection, high corruption level

(for this indicator, high values = lower corruption), scarce rule of law and widespread hidden economy, limited education and culture, and limited diffusion of knowledge & communication equipments (dailies, personal computers). Imprisonment index is higher also where non-nationals rapidly grew over the last few years, and where their children's incidence is lower – i.e. where families are less numerous and the rooting limited – ; where illegal immigration is common; last, where non-nationals from non-European and less developed countries are more numerous.

Indicators of economic well-being, equity and relative deprivation, i.e. the first five variables of Table 5, show, vis-à-vis the imprisonment index, coefficients lower than those shown by PC diffusion and indicators of legality, such as corruption, rule of law, hidden economy and illegal immigration. Legality indicators present coefficients also higher than those shown by origin indicators.

It should be noticed that indicators of economic well-being and income distribution are all inter-correlated; dailies & PC diffusion, in turn, are strongly correlated (>.77) with corruption and rule of law; corruption and rule of law are even more correlated (.93) with each other. Eloquently, illegal immigration is strongly correlated with corruption, rule of law and hidden economy. Last, the three origin indicators are all inter-correlated.

Table 6 – *Average values of the relative index of imprisonment (1990-2000, controlling for age groups) for the countries belonging, respectively, to low, medium and high level of illegal immigration: two models*

Countries according to their level of illegal immigration	No. of countries	Average values of relative index of imprisonment (controlling for age groups)	
		First model: original values index	
Level 1 (low)	9		1.82
Level 2 (medium)	5		3.17
Level 3 (high)	4		7.63
All countries	18		3.48
		Second model: "corrected" values index	
Level 1 (low)	9		1.73
Level 2 (medium)	5		2.88
Level 3 (high)	4		6.36
All countries	18		3.08

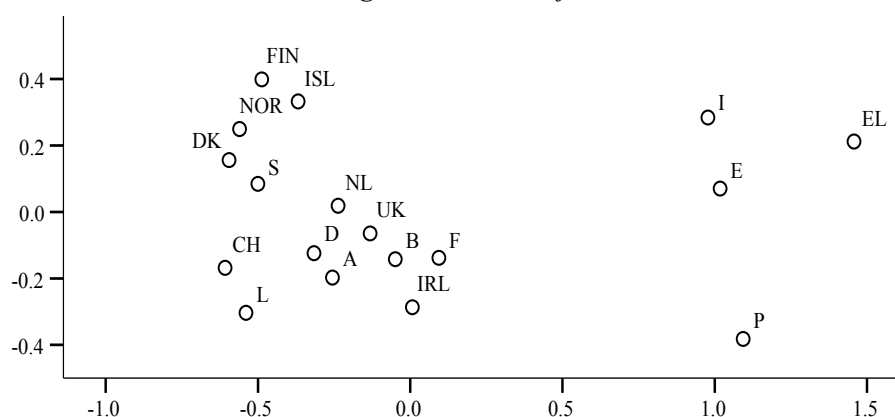
As regards illegal immigration, one should remember that the imprisonment index was calculated without considering the number of illegal immigrants. Therefore, we are analyzing the relationship between illegal immigration and an indicator – that of imprisonment – whose values are affected by the size of illegal immigration. To keep under control the consequent distortions, let's recalculate the imprisonment index taking into account illegal immigration. To do this, we'll use the abovementioned estimates on illegal immigration and we'll increase non-nationals' population figures for low illegal immigration countries by 5%; for medium illegal immigration countries, by 10%; and, for high illegal immigration countries, by 20%. We obtain new values for the imprisonment index (Table 6, 2nd model). Differences between groups of countries decrease; but they remain substantial and significant (probabilities that all this is fortuitous = <.001). The regression coefficient between illegal immigration and the "corrected" imprisonment index is .85, fractionally lower than the previous one.

Therefore, the strong relationship between illegal immigration and imprisonment index is not due to the underrating of non-national population. Moreover, if we use the “corrected” imprisonment index for all the other regressions, we would obtain results very close to those shown in Table 5, and all the significant coefficients would remain such. This should not come as a surprise, since the original and the “corrected” imprisonment indices are so correlated with each other (.99) that they are substantially equivalent.

Table 7 – *Profile of the countries belonging to the two clusters, according to the minimum, average and maximum value of the variables used for the cluster analysis*

Variables	1 st Cluster			2 nd Cluster		
	Minimum	Average	Maximum	Minimum	Average	Maximum
Imprisonment I. age groups control	4.9	7.6	9.3	0.6	2.3	4.6
Gdp on food	11.1	16.2	22.1	7.0	8.9	11.5
Inflation rate	3.5	6.5	11.2	-0.1	2.0	3.5
Income 1 st / 5 th 20% pop.	5.3	6.3	6.7	2.9	3.9	5.8
Social protection	2,142	2,941	4,351	3,298	6,972	9,351
Pop. sec. sch. diploma	19.9	35.8	47.5	56.7	70.5	83.5
Books in public libraries	0.4	0.7	0.9	1.1	3.7	7.3
Dailies sold	51	99	140	166	364	602
Corruption p.i.	2.99	4.24	5.56	6.85	8.40	9.32
Rule of law index	.75	1.03	1.27	1.53	1.88	2.13
PC index	34.0	63.3	88.0	154.5	239.7	371.0
Non-nationals' variation	23.8	117.8	162.9	-3.3	33.6	112.0
Non-nationals 0-4 yrs	0.7	3.0	4.2	3.9	7.0	9.8
Non-Europeans	43.8	56.8	71.0	3.1	29.1	53.8

Figure 1 – *Multidimensional scaling: West European countries and their distances according to the values of Table 7 variables⁴*



The inter-correlations existing between the independent variables make the latter the ideal premise for factor analysis.⁵ Factor analysis helped identify three main factors. On the basis of the factors loadings (Table 5), we might call the first factor “Culture, respect for rights & social capital”. The second factor “Economic well-being & social equity”. And the third factor “New, underprivileged immigration from the Third World”. If we select, within the first factor, a few meaningful variables – corruption, rule of law & illegal immigration – we obtain an underlying sub-factor, which

corresponds to the concept of “prevalent legality/illegality”. This factor alone shows, vis-à-vis the imprisonment index, an r of .89, demonstrating that the higher the level of “prevalent legality”, the lower the non-nationals’ imprisonment index.

The values of Table 5 indicators, recorded in the various countries, suggest that there are groups of countries with opposite features. The cluster analysis⁶ helped identify a first, limited group (E, EL, I, P), and a second embracing all the remaining countries (Table 7). The first group is characterized by an average imprisonment index almost eight times the non-nationals’ incidence on resident population, and over three times higher than that for the second group. Besides, the first group presents, for all the variables, values neatly dissimilar to those of the second group.

A graphic summary of the distances between West European countries in respect of all the variables used for the cluster analysis is shown by Figure 1.

7. Discussion

The popular opinion according to which immigrants are crime-prone is challenged by the fact that in some countries their contribution to crime is limited. If we add to this the fact that immigrants’ incidence on crime was much lower in the 1950’s - 1960’s in Europe and is still low in the US and Canada, we can conclude that the relationship migration-crime is (i) historically contingent, and (ii) significantly depending on the context in which immigration occurs.

In turn, cultural conflict theory does not fit well present immigrants in Europe, who commit mainly common, not “cultural”, offences. Besides, indicators of origin are less associated with crime than indicators relating to characteristics of the host country and of the migration flow: this suggests that integration prevails over cultural facts.

As regards the labelling theory, to the considerations already offered we can add that it does not explain the marked increase in non-nationals’ incidence on crime in Europe over the last quarter-century. It does not seem sound to claim that earlier immigrants were less negatively labelled.

The *relative deprivation* theory looks better equipped vis-à-vis the results shown here. Indicators of inequality and deprivation emerge as associated with the crime index. However, the fact that non-nationals’ crime index is more associated with legality variables – such as corruption, rule of law, etc. – than with inequality and deprivation, cannot be disregarded. Also the low incidence of immigrants on crime in the US does not support *relative deprivation* theory, since the US is a country both idealizing achievement and showing greater income inequality than any country in Western Europe. The spiralling up of non-nationals’ crime, therefore, seems to be referable not only and not so much to a picture of economic inequality and relative deprivation, as rather to illegality and scarce rule of law, with the add-on of corruption and manipulation of the condition of need of the immigrants (e.g. via hidden economy). It seems reasonable, moreover, to presume that a society holding down illegality and showing fairness towards immigrants would be able to keep under control the negative effects of a high level of socio-economic inequality and relative deprivation. Whereas a society without these qualities would find it difficult to prevent – under the same circumstances – the diffusion of crime.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Germany: data for 1986-90 are estimates; United Kingdom: data for 1986-90 by interpolation. Iceland: all data were treated with smoothing technique, since there were strong oscillations.
- ² Non-nationals' incidence on resident population was increased by 37%.
- ³ Also since cases (countries) are numerically limited, we took special care in controlling for heteroskedasticity, large residuals and high leverages: we used the more conservative robust standard errors, and carefully checked Cook's measures and leverage values. Results were satisfactory.
- ⁴ Proxscal; initial configuration = Torgerson; proximity transformation = Spline, degree 2.
- ⁵ Method was *principal components* (PCA). Variables chosen were those highly inter-correlated. Matrix rotated, by means of the *equamax* method. The first three factors explain 85% of the total variance.
- ⁶ Cluster analysis carried out on standardized values, through the average linkage between groups method, by using the square Euclidean distance.