

Annex

Migrant Acceptance Index: Do Migrants Have Better Lives in Countries That Accept Them?

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In reaction to the migrant crisis that swept Europe in 2015 and the backlash against migrants that accompanied it, Gallup developed a Migrant Acceptance Index (MAI) designed to gauge people’s personal acceptance of migrants not just in Europe, but throughout the rest of the world.¹

Gallup’s Migrant Acceptance Index is based on three questions that ask respondents about migrants in increasing level of proximity to them. Respondents are asked whether the following situations are “good things” or “bad things”: immigrants living in their country, an immigrant becoming their neighbor, and immigrants marrying into their families.

“A good thing” response is worth three points in the index calculation, a volunteered response of “it depends” or “don’t know” is worth one point, and “a bad thing” is worth zero points. We considered volunteered responses such as “it depends” because in some countries, who these migrants are may factor more heavily into whether they are accepted. The index is a sum of the points across the three questions, with a maximum possible score of 9.0 (all three are good things) and a minimum possible score of zero (all three are bad things). The higher the score, the more accepting the population is of migrants.

Scores on Gallup’s first global deployment of this index ranged widely across the total 140 countries where these questions were asked in 2016 and 2017,² from a high of 8.26 in Iceland to a low of 1.47 in Macedonia. The total sample included more

than 147,000 adults aged 15 and older, and among them, more than 8,000 first-generation migrants.

In all, 29 countries’ index scores fall more than one standard deviation below the country-level mean score and 23 countries’ index scores fall more than one standard deviation above the country-level mean score. The bulk of the rest of the world falls in the middle. In the countries at the extreme ends of the distribution—the countries that are the least-accepting and the most-accepting of migrants – is where we see the biggest differences in how migrants themselves rate their lives, which we will discuss in more detail later.

Least-Accepting Countries Cluster Primarily in Eastern, Southeastern Europe

Many of the countries that are the least-accepting of migrants are located in Eastern or Southeastern Europe, and were on the front lines or touched somehow by the recent migrant crisis. For example, nine of the 10 countries that score a 2.39 or lower on the index are former Soviet bloc countries—most located along the Balkan route that once channeled asylum seekers from Greece to Germany.

While the bulk of the least-accepting countries are in Eastern or Southeastern Europe, four are in the Middle East and North Africa. This includes Israel, Egypt, Iraq and Jordan. The others are in

Table A1. Migrant Acceptance Index Items

Question	Response options*
I would like to ask you some questions about foreign immigrants people who have come to live and work in this country from another country. Please tell me whether you, personally, think each of the following is a good thing or a bad thing? How about:	A good thing A bad thing (It depends) (Don't know) (Refused)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immigrants living in [country name]? An immigrant becoming your neighbor? An immigrant marrying one of your close relatives? 	

*Responses in parentheses were volunteered by the respondent.
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Figure A1: Distribution of Migrant Acceptance Index Scores



Asia: Afghanistan and Pakistan in South Asia, Myanmar and Thailand in Southeast Asia, and Mongolia in East Asia.

Most-Accepting Countries Span Globe, Income Levels

As opposed to the least-accepting countries, which are more geographically and culturally clustered, the most-accepting countries for migrants are located in disparate parts of the globe. The top two most-accepting countries could not be farther apart—Iceland with a score of 8.26, and New Zealand with a score of 8.25.

The bulk of the most-accepting countries for migrants primarily come from Oceania, Western Europe, sub-Saharan Africa and Northern America. However, a common thread tying many of the most-accepting countries together is their

long history as receiving countries for migrants. Although the recent U.S. election was marked by considerable anti-immigrant rhetoric, the U.S. ranks among the most-accepting countries with a score of 7.86. Canada also makes this list, but scores higher than its neighbor to the south, with a score of 8.14.

Migrant Acceptance Linked to Migrants' Evaluations of Their Current, Future Lives

For the past decade, Gallup has asked adults worldwide to evaluate their lives on the Cantril Self-Anchoring Striving Scale, where “0” represents the worst possible life, and “10” represents the best possible life.³ In our earlier research, we were able to determine that where migrants come from, where they go, and how

Table A2: Least-Accepting Countries for Migrants

29 countries with index scores that fall one standard deviation below the country-level mean score

Country	Migrant Acceptance Index
Egypt	3.50
Iraq	3.42
Belarus	3.38
Greece	3.34
Poland	3.31
Turkey	3.27
Ukraine	3.15
Georgia	3.05
Mongolia	2.99
Jordan	2.99
Myanmar	2.96
Romania	2.93
Lithuania	2.72
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2.71
Thailand	2.69
Russia	2.60
Afghanistan	2.51
Pakistan	2.47
Bulgaria	2.42
Croatia	2.39
Estonia	2.37
Czech Republic	2.26
Latvia	2.04
Israel	1.87
Slovakia	1.83
Serbia	1.80
Hungary	1.69
Montenegro	1.63
Macedonia	1.47

Gallup World Poll, 2016–2017

Table A3: Most-Accepting Countries for Migrants

Country	Migrant Acceptance Index
Iceland	8.26
New Zealand	8.25
Rwanda	8.16
Canada	8.14
Sierra Leone	8.05
Mali	8.03
Australia	7.98
Sweden	7.92
United States	7.86
Nigeria	7.76
Ireland	7.74
Burkina Faso	7.74
Norway	7.73
Ivory Coast	7.71
Benin	7.67
Luxembourg	7.54
Netherlands	7.46
Bangladesh	7.45
Spain	7.44
Chad	7.26
Albania	7.22
Switzerland	7.21
Senegal	7.17

Gallup World Poll, 2016–2017

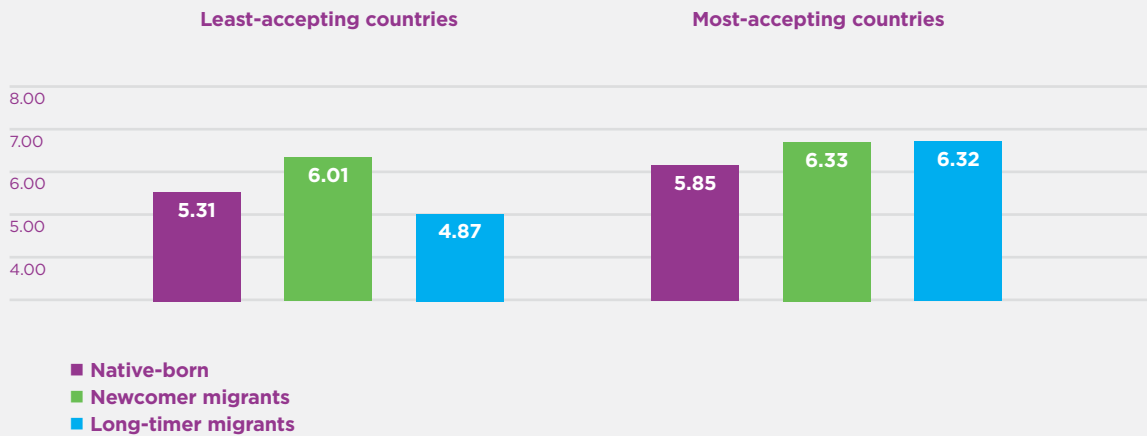
long they stay affects their life evaluations on this scale.⁴ Turning our focus to the potential relationship between life evaluations and migrant acceptance, we also see that people's acceptance of migrants—or the lack thereof—is linked to how migrants themselves evaluate their lives.

To explore the relationship between migrant life evaluations and the level of migrant acceptance in their new countries, we conducted an analysis of covariance on individuals' current life

evaluations on this scale, using age, gender and education level as covariates. We adjusted the data with regard to age, gender and education to allow for fairer comparisons between migrants' life evaluations and the life ratings of other populations, such as the native-born in destination countries.⁵

Migrants as well as the native-born living in countries that are the least-accepting of migrants evaluate their lives less positively than

Figure A2: Current Life Evaluations by Migrant Acceptance Index



Gallup World Poll, 2016–2017

those who live in countries that are the most accepting, regardless of whether they are newcomers (who have lived in the country for less than five years) or long-timers (who have lived in the country for more than five years).⁶

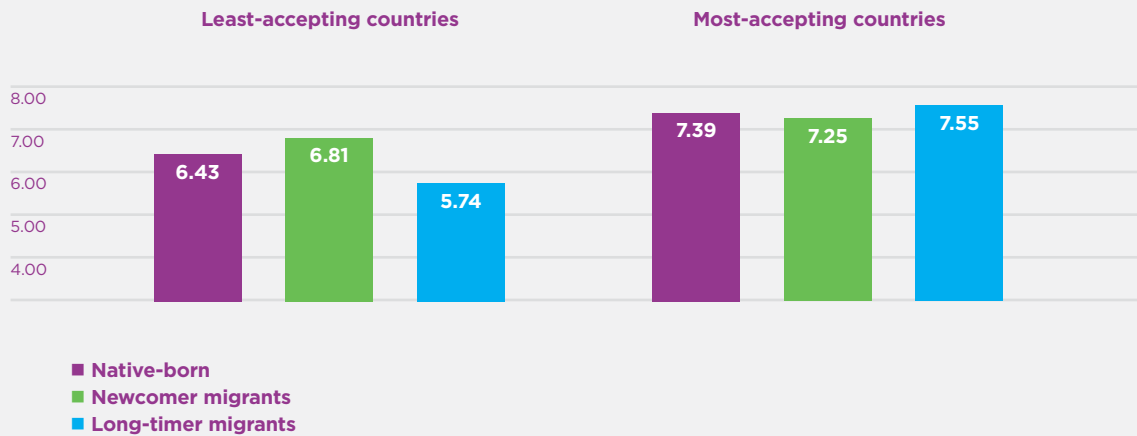
In the least-accepting countries, newcomers—who may be full of optimism and hope about life in their new countries—rate their current lives more positively than the native-born. But this positivity fades the longer migrants stay in countries where the population is not receptive to them. Long-timers' life evaluations are statistically much lower than the scores for newcomers, but their life evaluations also drop lower than the scores for the native-born.⁷

The story is different for migrants in the most-accepting countries. Newcomer migrants and long-timer migrants both rate their lives higher than the native-born do. Notably, migrants do not lose their positive outlook the longer they stay: The life evaluations of newcomers and long-timers is statistically the same.

Outlook for the Future

Migrants and the native-born in the least-accepting countries rate their lives *in five years* better than their present situations, but they still lag far behind their counterparts in the most-accepting countries. Newcomers in the least-accepting countries have a more positive outlook for their lives than the native-born do, but long-timers again are more pessimistic than either group.

In the most-accepting countries, the native-born and newcomer migrants share the same level of optimism about their lives in five years, but long-timers give their future lives higher ratings than the native-born or newcomers do. It's possible that since long-timers have had more time than newcomers to establish themselves in their lives and careers, they not only may be more hopeful, but also more confident about what the future may bring.

Figure A3: Future Life Evaluations by Migrant Acceptance Index

Gallup World Poll, 2016-2017

Future Research

Although Gallup has data from 140 countries, the samples of migrants available in a single year of data collection permits us to analyze the links between migrant acceptance and migrants' lives only in broad strokes.

Earlier Gallup research on migrants indicates that where people come from and where they move to and how long they stay play a large role in whether they gain or lose from migration.⁸ Future World Poll research on migrant acceptance may allow us not only to do more in-depth analysis at the country level, but also to discover whether migrants' countries of origin also factor into their life evaluations when they move to countries that are more likely to accept or to not accept them. Further, with larger sample sizes, we would be able to investigate how migrant acceptance may affect potential migrants' desire to migrate and their plans to move and where they would like to go.

Endnotes

- 1 Esipova et al (2018).
- 2 Based on World Poll surveys in 138 countries in 2016, and the U.S. and Canada in 2017.
- 3 Gallup (2010).
- 4 International Organization for Migration (2013).
- 5 Results of the ANCOVA revealed statistically significant effects for two of the three covariates: Education level ($F(1,32521) = 2126.5, p < .0001$; Gender ($F(1,32521) = 23.1, p < .001$; and Age ($F(1,32521) = 1.9, p < .168$).
- 6 A significant main effect for migrant status emerged with newcomer migrants providing significantly higher life evaluations than either native-born or long-timer migrants, $F(2,32521) = 9.0, p < .001$. A significant main effect for migrant acceptance also emerged, with respondents from the most-accepting countries providing significantly higher life evaluations than those from the least-accepting countries, $F(1,32521) = 60.2, p < .002$.
- 7 A significant Migrant Status x Migrant Acceptance interaction emerged, $F(2,32521) = 21.0, p < .001$. Simple effects analyses revealed that while newcomer migrants had higher life ratings than their native-born counterparts for both the most- and least-accepting countries, long-timer migrants in the least-accepting countries had significantly lower life ratings than either the native-born or newcomer migrants. Long-timer migrants in the most-accepting countries had life evaluations that were equal to those of newcomer migrants.
- 8 Esipova et al (2013).

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