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TRANSATLANTIC TRENDS

Immigration

Key Findings on Immigration 2009

Many discussions in immigration policy circles in 2009 have focused on one topic: How has the economic crisis affected migrant populations and the future of immigration and integration policy in Europe and North America? The *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration* survey was first conducted before the global crisis began in late 2008, so the 2009 survey offers a unique opportunity to examine public opinion shifts on both continents. It also offers important insights as to how much the economy may have affected attitudes toward immigrants and continued immigration during these turbulent times.

In 2009 Spain and Canada joined the list of countries covered in the survey, which also includes the United States, Germany, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. Spain's history of migration and its immigration policy track record are similar to those of Italy, but *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration* shows that Spanish public opinion differs from that of its Mediterranean neighbor on a host of issues. Canada also presents a unique case in that it has a proactive immigration policy and provides many integration services and public social benefits for migrants that the U.S. system lacks. On a number of points, Canadian public opinion from this year's survey appears to be closer to that of Europe.

Overall, the survey this year covers public perception of legal and illegal immigration, preferences for temporary versus permanent labor migration programs, the legalization of illegal immigrants, societal discrimination against migrants, and many other issues. It also addresses the current management of immigration in the eight countries surveyed, as well as preferences for governance over immigration policy decisions.

Transatlantic Trends: Immigration is designed to compare transatlantic as well as cross-country opinion on immigration and integration issues. It is a joint project of the German Marshall Fund of the United States, the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, the Compagnia di San Paolo, the Barrow Cadbury Trust, and the Fundación BBVA. The fieldwork was carried out between September 1 and September 17, 2009, by TNS Opinion.

KEY FINDINGS OF THIS SURVEY INCLUDE:

- *Economic woes:* Majorities in all countries cite the economy as the most important issue facing their country, with Spanish respondents (57%) being the most likely to do so. One in five British (20%) and Italian (18%) respondents, however, indicated that immigration was the most important issue.
- *Personal finances and worries:* In all countries except the United States, respondents whose household financial situation got worse in the past 12 months were more likely to be worried about legal immigration.
- *Political leanings and perceptions of immigration:* Overall, self-described political leanings were a strong predictor of attitudes on immigration as either more of a problem or an opportunity. Compared to 2008, more respondents in all countries said that immigration was more of a problem than an opportunity in 2009. This was especially true of those declaring themselves to be on the political right.
- *Numbers of immigrants:* Respondents in all countries grossly overestimated the share of immigrants in their countries. Americans thought that 35% of the population in the United States are immigrants, Canadians estimated 37%, and Europeans estimated an average of 24%.

- *Temporary vs. permanent labor programs:* As in 2008, majorities in all countries surveyed indicated that “legal immigrants who come to the country to work” should be given the opportunity to stay permanently, rather than being admitted only temporarily.
- *Legalization of illegal immigrants:* Countries were divided on whether or not to give illegal immigrants the opportunity to obtain legal status—Germany and France were in favor, Italy and the UK were against, and the Netherlands, Spain, and Canada were split. The United States showed declining support for a legalization measure (49% supported it in 2008 versus 44% in 2009).
- *Mediterranean countries and development aid:* A plurality or majority in France (44%), Italy (45%), and Spain (51%) thought that increasing development aid was the most effective way to reduce illegal immigration; this policy was favored over border controls, employer sanctions, and more legal immigration routes.
- *Social and political benefits for migrants:* Majorities in all countries supported providing social benefits and political participation rights to legal immigrants, though only France (65%), Italy (53%), and Spain (53%) clearly support granting local voting rights to them.
- *Cultural and economic integration:* Respondents supported admitting only those immigrants who fulfilled both the criteria of a) having a good chance of finding a job and b) fitting in smoothly with the host society. Meeting only one of these criteria was generally not viewed as sufficient for immigration.
- *Government-sponsored language classes:* No country’s respondents supported government-sponsored language courses for immigrants. Instead, pluralities or majorities in all countries indicated that it is not the responsibility of the government to pay for language classes.
- *Government assessments:* Opinions about how their respective governments are managing immigration varied wildly among respondents—British (71%), Spanish (64%), American (63%), and Italian (53%) respondents disapproved of their governments’ management, whereas Germans (71%), Canadians (59%), the Dutch (53%), and the French (50%) approved of the steps their countries have taken thus far.
- *Immigration decision-making:* A majority in all European countries except the UK favored immigration policy decision-making at the European Union level, rather than at the national or local level. Seventy-one percent of Americans and 74% of Canadians thought immigration policy should be decided by the national government rather than by state/provincial or local authorities.
- *Environmental migrants:* A majority in all countries surveyed—an average of 68%—were in favor of letting people settle in their country who are displaced by climate change effects like sea level rise or more frequent droughts.

A NOTE ABOUT TERMINOLOGY

In this survey we used the term “illegal immigrant,” as opposed to “irregular” or “undocumented” migrant, to describe foreign citizens who enter, stay, and/or work in the country without the permission of the national government.



TRANSATLANTIC TRENDS

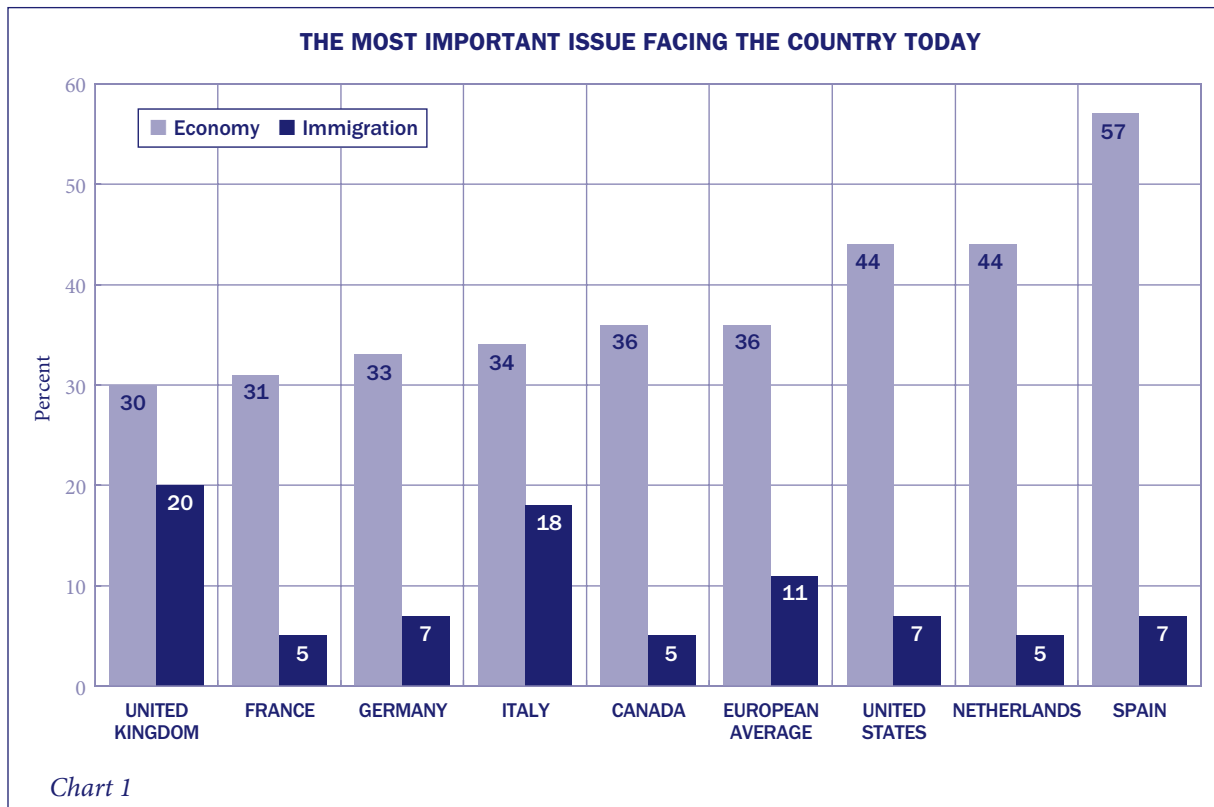
Immigration

Section One: Household Economics, Political Leanings, and Perceptions of Immigration

The economic crisis has occupied the minds of large majorities on both sides of the Atlantic in 2009. Earlier this year, *Transatlantic Trends 2009* found that 91% of the Americans and 85% of the Europeans surveyed were concerned about the international economic crisis. Similarly, this year's *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration* confirmed that people in all the countries polled felt that the economy was the most important issue facing their country today; 2 in 5 (39%) picked the economy as the most important out of a list of current issues. Although immigration was less often chosen as the most important issue overall, it was frequently cited as such in two of the countries polled—the United Kingdom and Italy (see Chart 1).

IMMIGRATION: PROBLEM OR OPPORTUNITY?

Overall attitudes in each country as to whether immigration presents more of a problem or more of an opportunity remained relatively stable between 2008 and 2009, but there was a slight trend toward more respondents in Europe and the United States describing immigration as “more of a problem.” According to the findings of *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration 2009*, 50% of Europeans thought that immigration is more of a problem than an opportunity in 2009, whereas the same five European countries surveyed last year (the Netherlands, Italy, the UK, Germany, and France) had an average of 43% answering that immigration was more of a problem. The biggest shift occurred



in the Netherlands, where there was a 9-percentage-point jump (from 36% in 2008 to 45% in 2009) in the number of respondents saying that immigration is more of a problem. Overall in 2009, the British and the Spanish were the most skeptical about immigration, with 66% and 58%, respectively, seeing it as more of a problem, and Canadians were the most optimistic: 68% said that immigration is more of an opportunity for their country. In the United States, 54% thought that immigration is more of a problem, slightly up from 50% last year (see Chart 2).

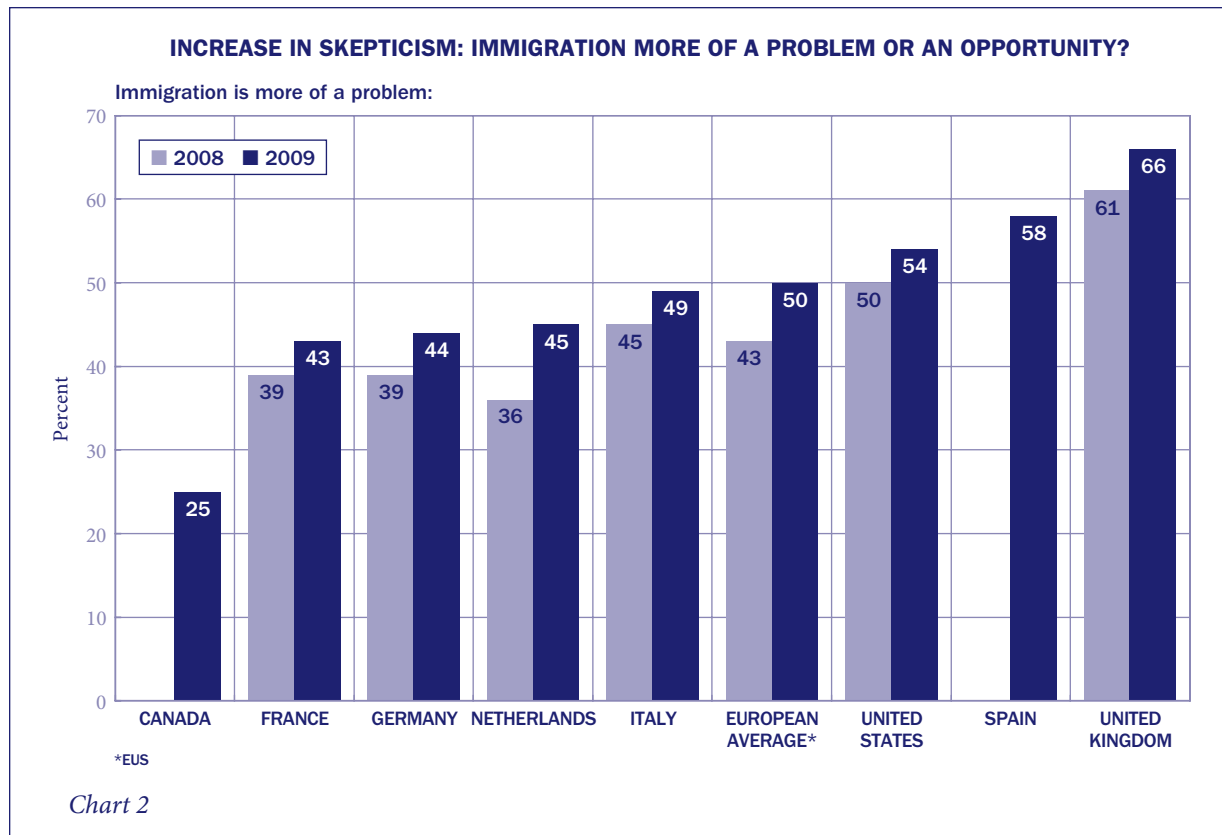
TOO MANY IMMIGRANTS? COUNTRIES ARE SPLIT

When asked about the number of people living in their country who were not citizens of the European Union, the United States, or Canada, respectively, at least half of those polled in the UK (55%), Italy (51%), and Spain (50%) felt that there were “too many.” They were followed by Americans, out of whom 48% felt that there were too many noncitizens living in their country. Canadians (24%),

Germans (28%), the French (29%), and the Dutch (32%) were the least likely to say there were too many immigrants in their countries. These four countries instead had pluralities or majorities answering that there were “a lot but not too many” immigrants in the country.

MISPERCEPTIONS OF IMMIGRANT NUMBERS

Respondents in general, and especially those who thought that there were “too many” immigrants in their country, were likely to overestimate the immigrant share of their country’s population. In Canada, where the percentage of foreign-born in the population is the highest among all countries surveyed (nearly 20%), Canadians estimated their number to be 37% of the total population. In Italy, where the Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (National Statistical Institute) estimates that 6% of the population are immigrants, Italian respondents instead believed that 23% of the population are foreign-born, a 17-point miscalculation. Among those Italians who thought there were “too

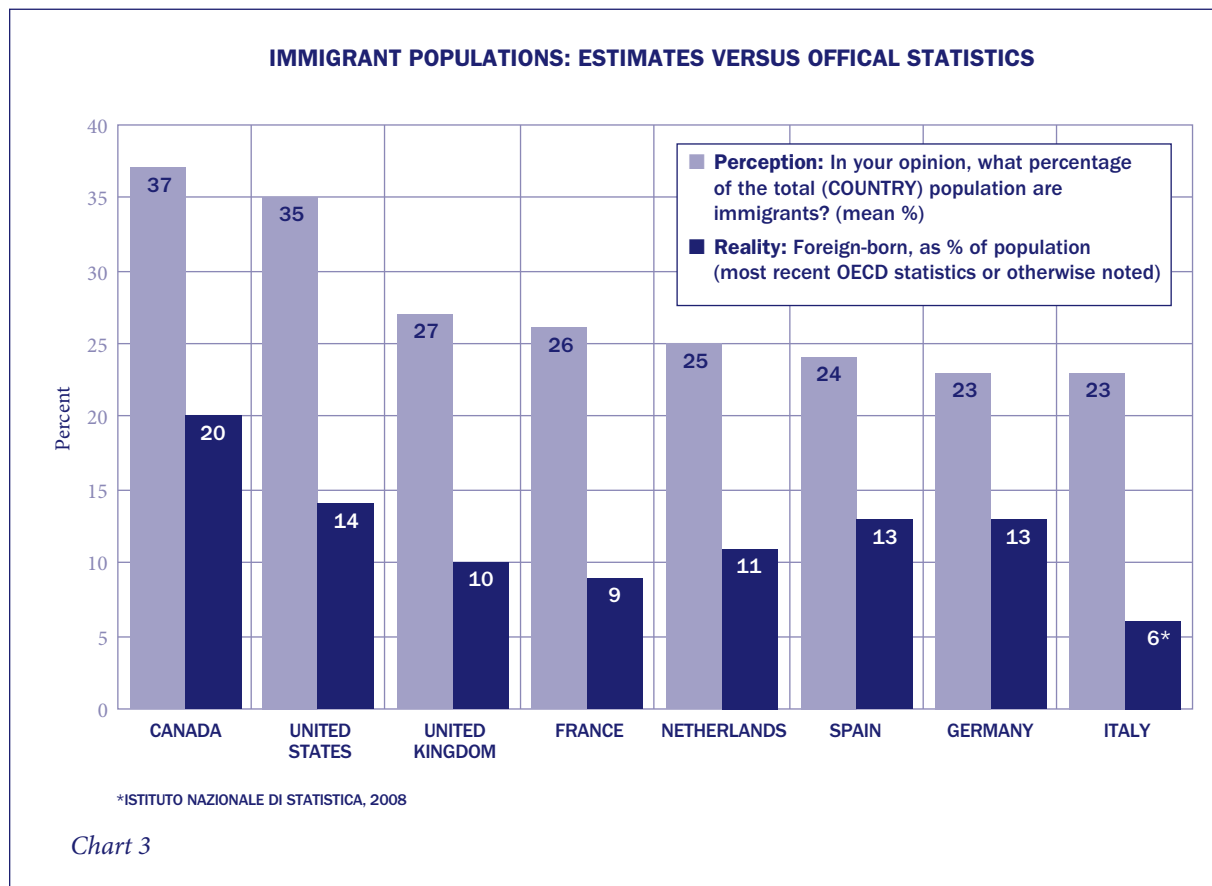


many” immigrants in their country, the average estimate was even higher at 28%. On average, Americans estimated that more than a third (35%) of the total U.S. population are immigrants, when in reality the number is closer to 14% according to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) statistics.¹ There was a consistent trend in European countries polled of respondents believing that roughly 1 in 4 people in the population are immigrants (see Chart 3).

MOST DO NOT LINK IMMIGRANTS TO LOWERING WAGES OR TAKING AWAY JOBS

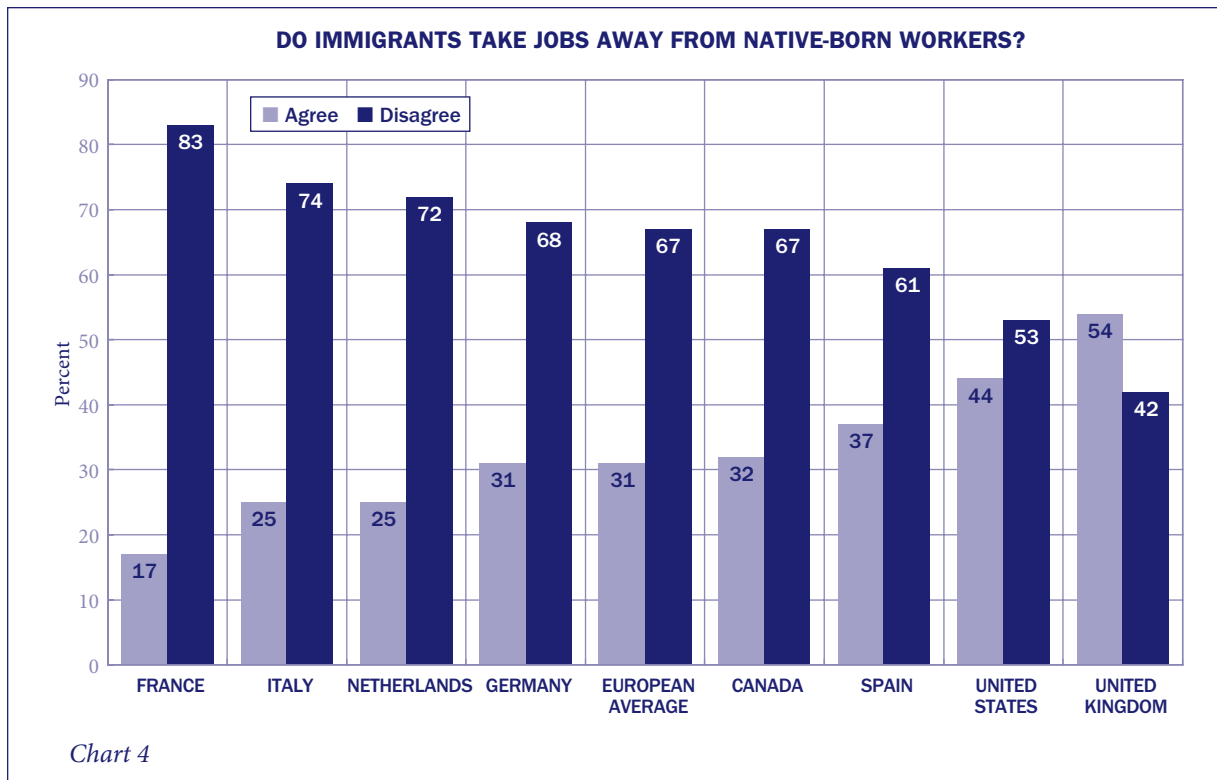
Do people see immigrants as a force that negatively affects economic opportunities for the native-born? This question

was especially important in 2009, and *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration* asked respondents whether they agreed that immigrants take jobs away from the native-born “in light of the economic crisis.” The survey found that only in the UK (54%) did the majority agree with this statement. In all other countries polled, majorities did not think that immigrants take jobs away from the native-born; 53% of the Americans, 67% of the Canadians, and 67% of the Europeans in the sample either strongly or somewhat disagreed that immigrants cost natives their jobs. Other studies suggest that immigrant workers themselves usually belong to the group of workers hardest hit by economic crises. For instance, the immigrant unemployment rate in Spain was 50% higher than that of the natives in 2008² (see Chart 4).



¹It should be noted that the public might have a different image of what constitutes an “immigrant” vis-à-vis official statistics. OECD defines immigrants as people who were born outside of their current country, whereas the public might consider the second or third generation to be immigrants as well.

²Duran, Jessica. 2008. Economic Downturn Impacts Most on Migrant Workers. Eurofound, October 16, 2008



When asked whether, in light of the economic crisis, immigrants bring down the wages of natives, majorities in Canada, France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands thought that they did not. Only in the UK (48% plurality) and Spain (55%) had large numbers who believed that immigrant workers bring wages down. The United States was largely split on this issue, with 44% thinking that immigrants negatively affect wages, whereas 51% thought that they did not (see Chart 5).

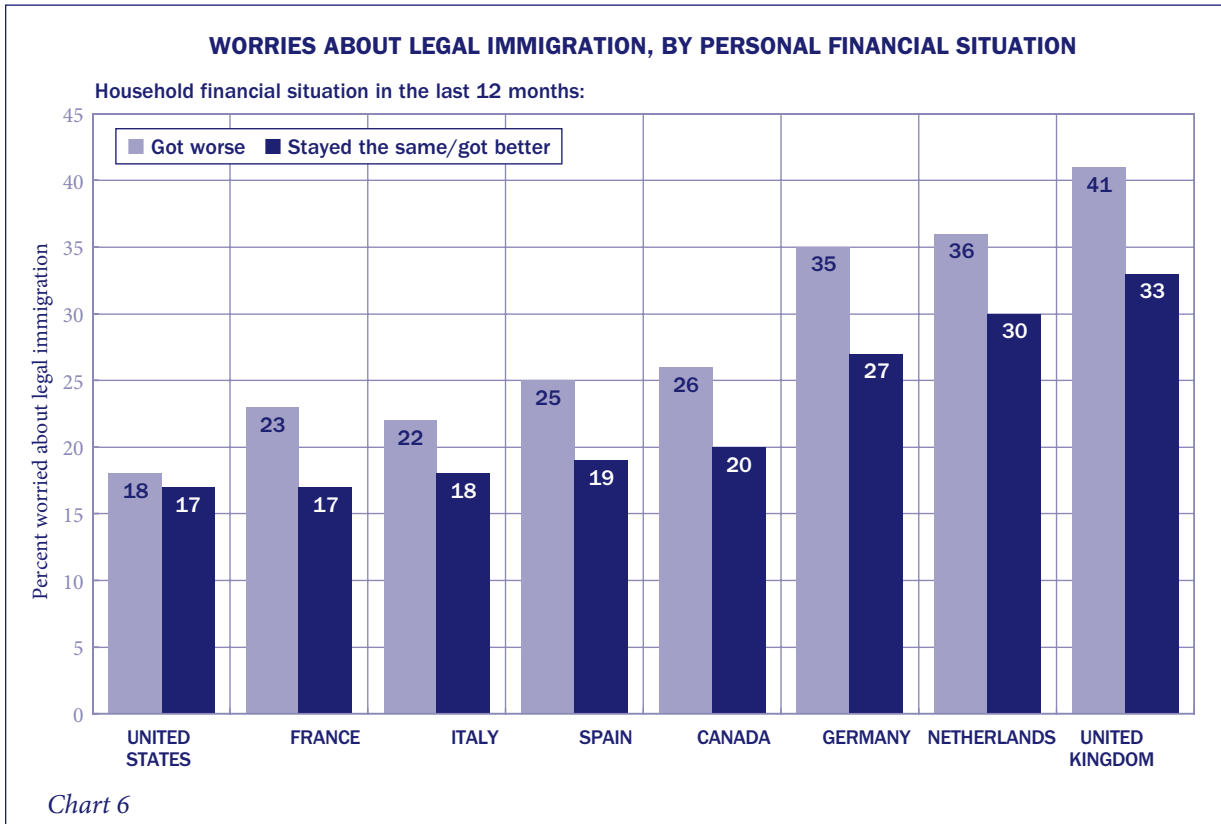
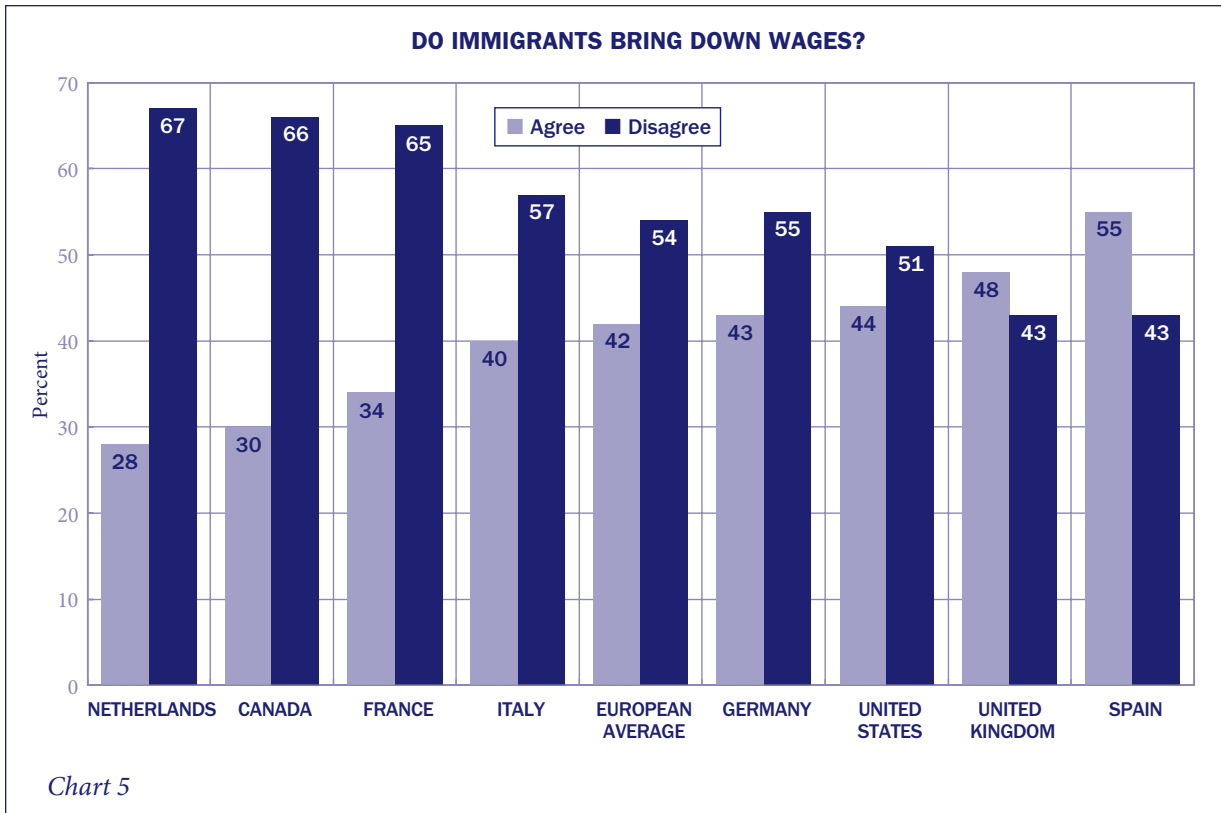
DETERIORATING FINANCES CONTRIBUTE TO MORE WORRIES

Transatlantic Trends: Immigration found that respondents’ personal economic situation had a limited effect on their attitudes toward immigration. In all countries except the United States, those who reported that their household’s financial situation got worse in the past 12 months were somewhat more likely to express worries about legal immigration than those whose financial situation stayed the same or got better. The largest gap was an 8-point difference in Germany and the UK. This relationship still applied even

after controlling for a variety of other factors, such as age, gender, education, and political ideology (see Chart 6).

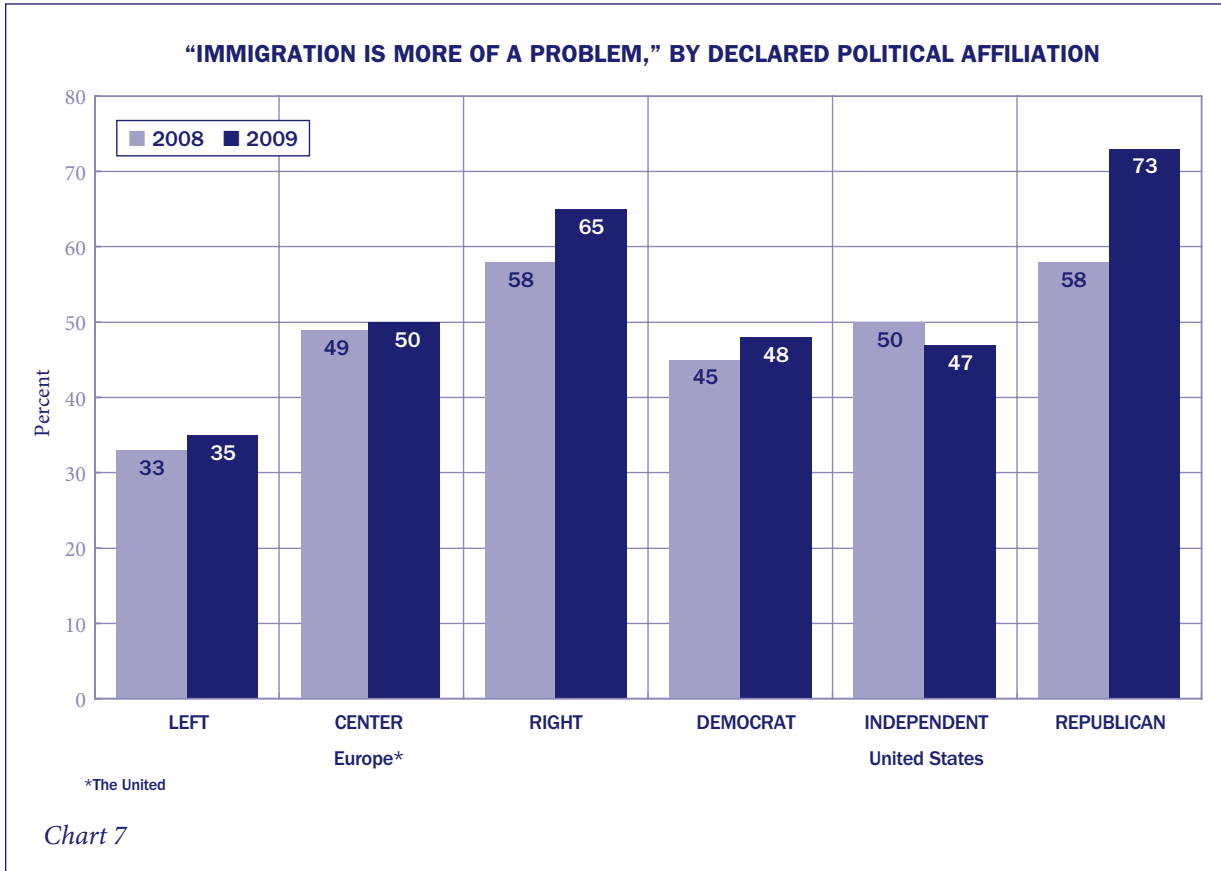
POLITICAL LEANINGS AND ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRANTS

Although their household’s financial situation had a slight effect on fears over legal immigration, respondents’ political leaning had the most pronounced effect on their perception of immigration. This suggests that immigration-related attitudes are heavily politicized. European respondents were asked to identify themselves on a left-to-right scale, whereas American respondents were asked to describe themselves as a Democrat, a Republican, or an Independent. In all six European countries, respondents on the political right were more likely to see immigration as more of a problem than those on the left. While there was very little change in answers to this question among Democrats in the United States and left-leaning respondents in Europe compared to 2008, Republicans and those on the right in Europe were more likely to see immigration as more of a problem compared to 2008. In the United States, there was a 15-point



increase year-on-year among Republicans saying that immigration is more of a problem, and a 7-point increase from 2008 among those on the right in Europe. In other words, seeing immigration as “more of a problem” for the

country increased markedly among those on the right side of the political spectrum but stayed stable on the left and in the center (see Chart 7).





TRANSATLANTIC TRENDS

Immigration

Section Two: Immigration Policies and the Legal–Illegal Divide

This year's *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration* made careful distinctions between legal and illegal immigration in order to more closely gauge public perceptions of different migrant groups and to measure corresponding policy preferences. The survey addressed worries about both types of immigration, as well as impressions of the labor market and the social impacts of legal versus illegal immigrants. Other topics covered were the management of legal immigration, permanent versus temporary labor migration, reducing illegal immigration, and legalization for illegal immigrants. The results showed that the countries surveyed were often split on their preferences for these policies.

MAJORITIES ARE WORRIED ABOUT ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

In each of the countries surveyed in 2009, all reliable estimates indicate that there are more legal than illegal immigrants present in the country. However, when *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration* asked whether most immigrants were present legally or illegally, American (51%), Spanish (55%), and Italian (66%) respondents answered that most immigrants are in their countries illegally. Majorities in Germany (80%), Canada (76%), the Netherlands (71%), France (69%), and the UK (53%) said that most of their immigrants are legal. However, a majority or plurality in all countries surveyed expressed worries about illegal, though not about legal, immigration (see Chart 8). Seventy-eight percent of those respondents who thought that most immigrants were in their country illegally were correspondingly also worried about illegal immigration.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS PERCEIVED MORE NEGATIVELY

Based on general statements about legal and illegal immigrants' work habits and effects on the host society, legal immigrants were perceived to be less of a burden on social

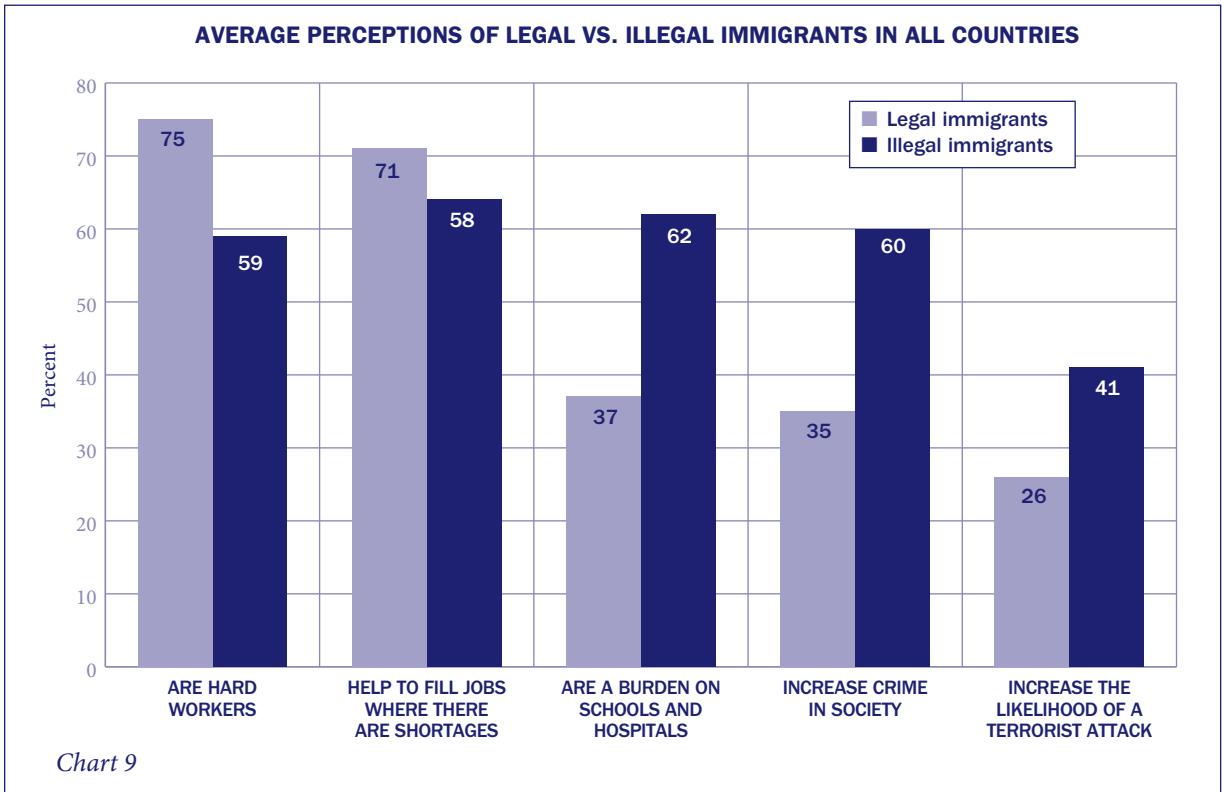
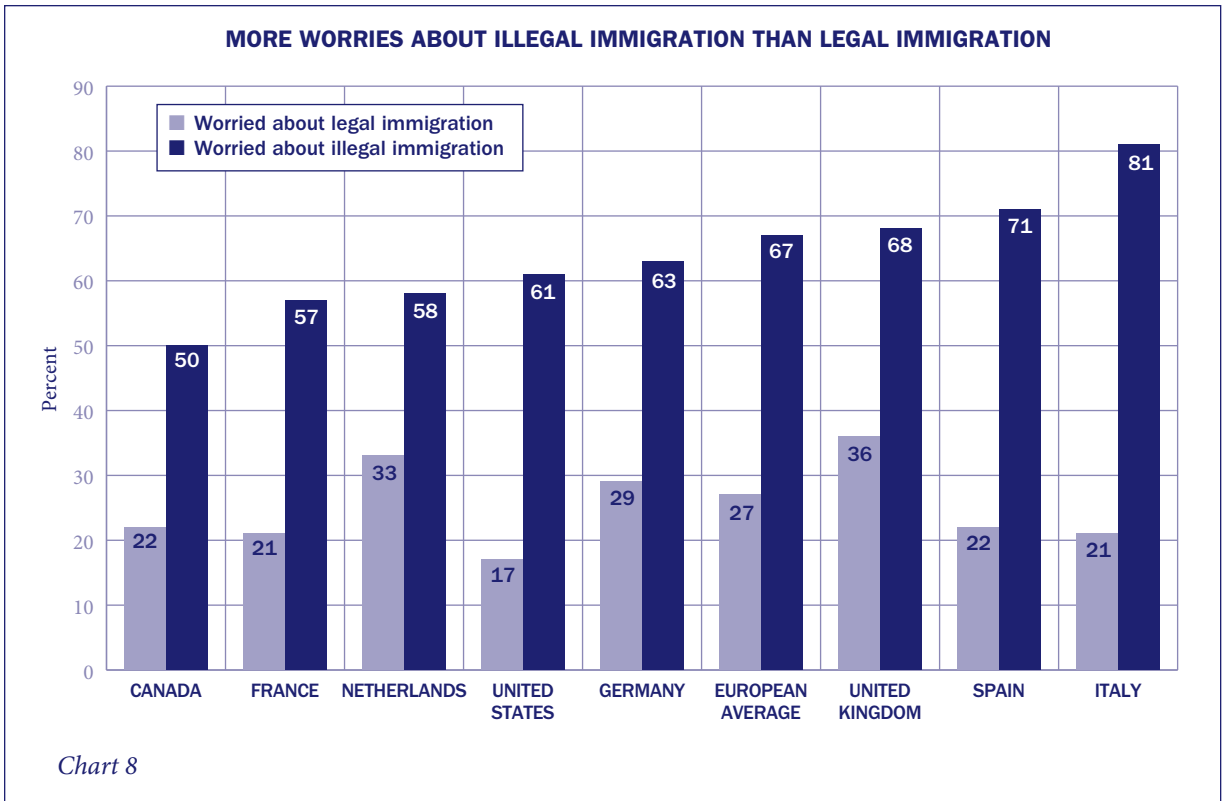
services and less likely to increase crime or raise the likelihood of a terrorist attack. This trend was seen across all countries and indicates that many of the negative stereotypes about immigrants can be attributed to worries about illegal, rather than legal, migrants (see Chart 9). By contrast, a majority in all countries believed that both legal and, to a lesser extent, illegal immigrants are hard workers and help to fill jobs where there are labor shortages.

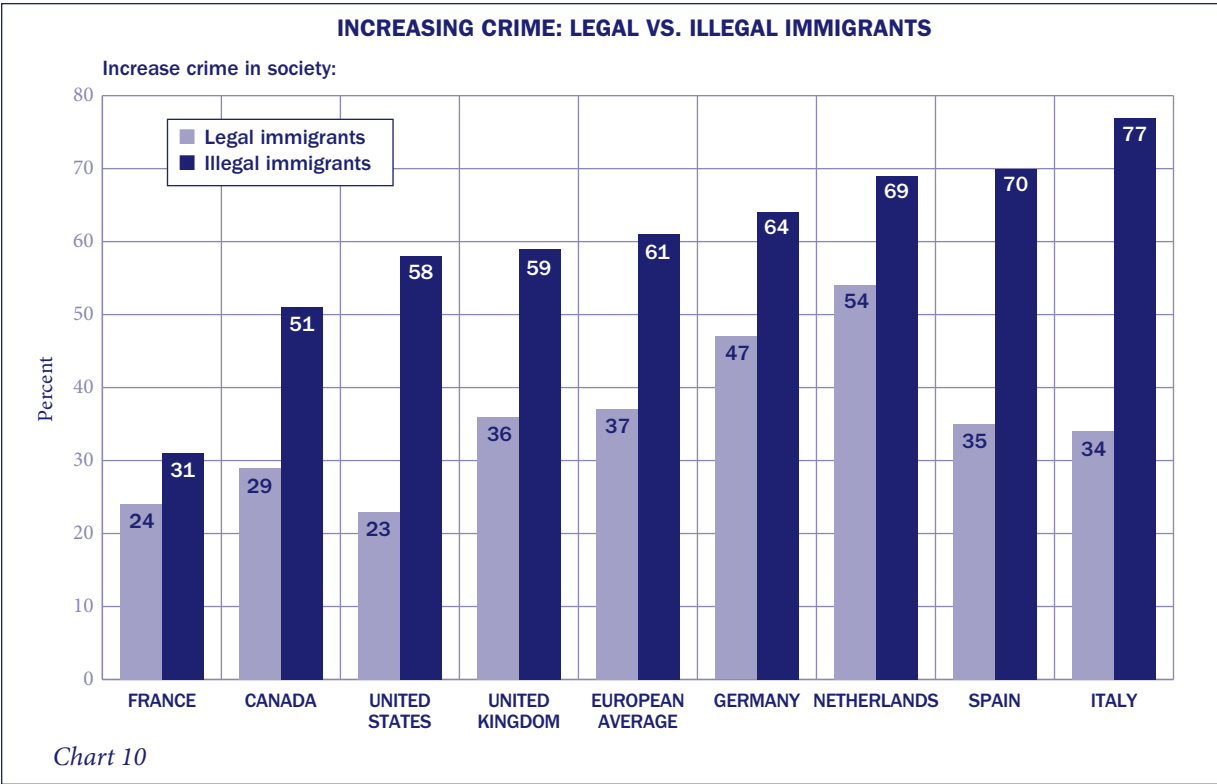
IMMIGRANTS SEEN TO BE A FISCAL DRAIN ON SOCIETY

In most countries, the public believed illegal immigrants to be a burden on social services, whereas they felt legal immigrants were not. However, when respondents were asked about the fiscal impact of immigrants in general, the picture was less clear. Large majorities in the United States (65%) and across the countries polled in Europe (an average of 62%) thought that immigrants generally benefit more from health and welfare services than they contribute in taxes. Canada was the only country that was more split: 45% saw immigrants as a fiscal drain, whereas 31% thought that immigrants pay more in taxes than they take out in benefits, and 10% thought that the amounts were equal.

EUROPEANS POLLED ARE SPLIT ON IMMIGRANTS AND CRIME RATES

Countries were generally in agreement about the societal effects of legal and illegal immigrants, but the Europeans surveyed were split on the issue of crime. For instance, 54% of the Dutch and 47% of Germans thought that legal immigrants increase crime in society, but in Europe on average only 37% agreed with this statement. Also, France (as was the case in 2008), was less likely than other countries to link immigration and crime rates—only 31% said that illegal migrants increase crime, and a mere 24% said that legal migrants do so (see Chart 10).





COUNTRY PROFILE: FRANCE

FEWER CONCERNS ABOUT ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

Of all countries surveyed, the French public was the most positive on general statements about illegal immigrants' work habits and effects on society. Clear majorities said that illegal immigrants are hard workers (73%) and help to fill jobs that the French do not want (77%). Meanwhile, majorities thought that illegal immigrants are not a burden on social services (52%) and do not increase crime in society (68%) or the likelihood of a terrorist attack (80%).

The issue of illegal immigration and how to best deal with it has frequently been the frequent subject of French public debate over the past months. In September authorities dismantled a makeshift camp, known as "the jungle," which was set up by illegal migrants near the port of Calais. Rights protesters demonstrated against the police's actions, and the operation made international headlines. Earlier this year, high-profile activist arrest cases and a popular film raised

the question of whether it should be a crime to help illegal immigrants. The movie in question, *Welcome*, portrayed the lives of illegal immigrants trying to reach the UK from France; it drew attention to a French law that prohibits assistance to individuals without papers. Charities say that the law is used to discourage them from helping illegal immigrants and that activists are regularly taken in for questioning or prosecution. The immigration minister, Eric Besson, on the other hand, insists that the law is needed to crack down on human trafficking. The data of this year's *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration*, however, suggests that there is some sympathy for illegal immigrants among the French public.

IMMIGRATION STATISTICS

Immigrant population in France	5,228,289
Immigrant share of overall population	8.5%
<small>Source: OECD International Migration Outlook 2009, data for 2007</small>	

Managing Legal Immigration

LANGUAGE SKILLS, A JOB OFFER, AND EDUCATION ARE IMPORTANT FOR ADMISSION

When asked about the importance of various personal characteristics of potential immigrants, an overwhelming majority of respondents in all countries (88%) replied that “knowing the national language” was important for a migrant to be admitted to their country. An average of 83% in all countries also thought that having a job offer was important, though the proportion was somewhat lower in the United States, with only 72% in agreement. The importance of migrants having “a high level of education” differed among the countries surveyed. Seventy-four percent of Germans, 71% of the British, and 69% of Americans thought advanced education was important, whereas only 44% of the French agreed. A slight majority of 51% in all countries thought it was not important for migrants to

already have a family member in the country, and majorities in Europe (69%), Canada (67%) and the United States (54%) also thought that it was not important for migrants to come from “a country with a Christian heritage.” Overall, it seems that language skills, a job offer, and education are important to the public, whereas having family ties in the destination country and coming from a Christian heritage are not important in determining desirability for admission.

MAJORITIES AGAIN FAVOR PERMANENT OVER TEMPORARY LABOR MIGRATION

As in 2008, *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration 2009* asked respondents about their preferences for temporary versus permanent labor migration schemes. Majorities in all countries surveyed again indicated that “legal immigrants who come to [the country] to work” should be given the opportunity to stay permanently. The support was strongest in Canada (76%), France (73%), and the United States

COUNTRY PROFILE: UNITED KINGDOM

WORRIED ABOUT IMMIGRANTS FROM EUROPEAN UNION COUNTRIES

In *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration*, the British public remained skeptical of current immigration management schemes, and many British people were worried about immigration, both legal and illegal. When asked, 36% answered they were worried about legal immigration and 68% felt the same about illegal immigration. Concern about immigration from other EU member states also remained high, with 47% answering that there are “too many” citizens of other EU countries living in the United Kingdom. Such findings most likely reflect public concern over the rise in the number of migrants from the countries that joined the EU in 2004, though much of this migration has been circular, meaning that many Eastern European migrants have returned to their countries of origin instead of remaining in the UK.

The British government recently introduced a new points-based system that divides applicants into

five tiers based upon their level of education, labor market demand for their skills, and their purpose of stay. As in most countries surveyed, resistance to low-skill migration remained strong in the UK, with 58% of respondents voicing support for reducing the numbers of low-skilled immigrant workers admitted into the country. Recently, the UK Border Agency suspended Tier 3 applications for low-skilled workers coming from outside the EU, a move that falls in line with public sentiment. However, many of the British surveyed (40%) also supported admitting fewer highly skilled immigrant workers to the UK, which may have implications for the emphasis on skills and education in the new points-based system.

IMMIGRATION STATISTICS

Immigrant population in the United Kingdom	6,192,000
Immigrant share of overall population	10.2%
Source: OECD International Migration Outlook 2009, data for 2007	

(70%), followed by Spain (68%), Italy (68%), and Germany (65%). Smaller majorities were seen in the UK and the Netherlands, where 56% in both countries favored permanent over temporary migration. When this year's results are compared to those from last year, the trend is remarkably stable in all countries except the United States, where there was an 8-percentage-point jump—from 62% in 2008 to 70% in 2009—in the share of respondents favoring permanent labor migration (see Chart 11).

INTEGRATION IS THE PRIMARY RATIONALE FOR FAVORING PERMANENT MIGRATION

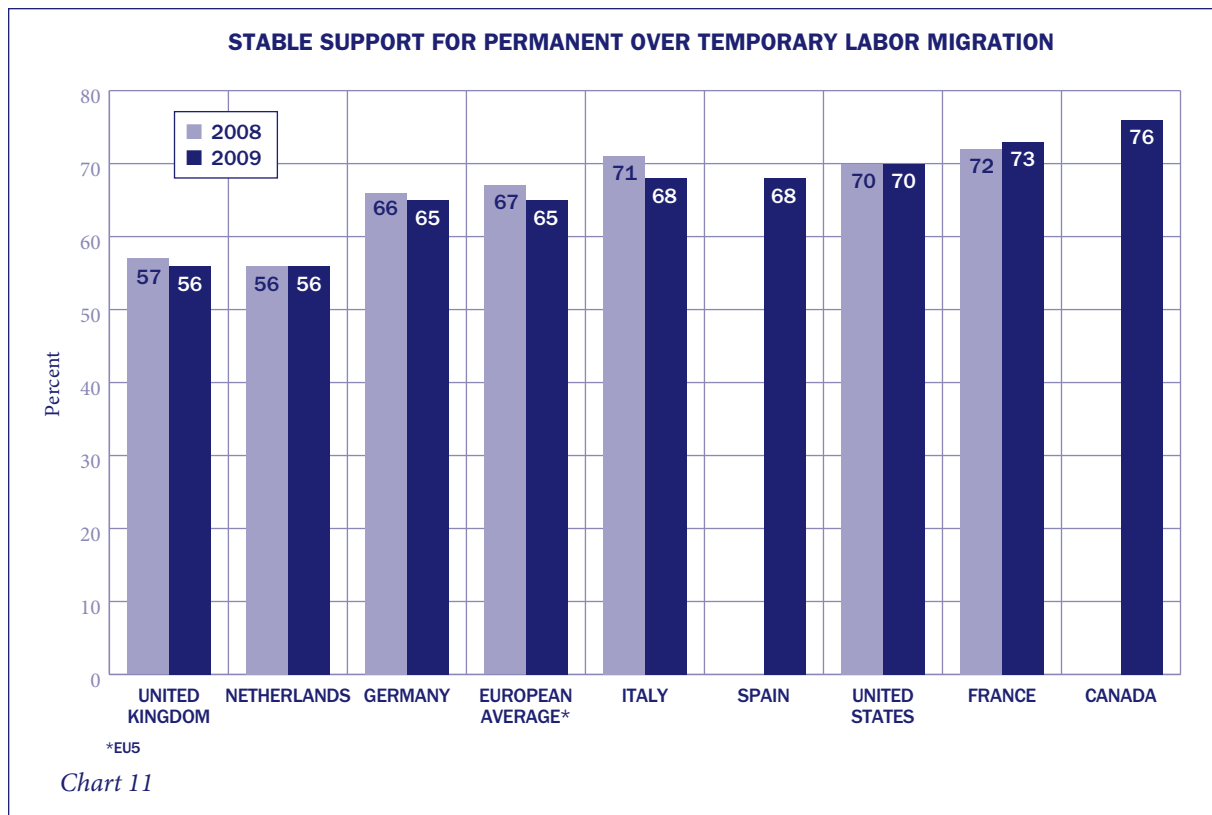
Those respondents who were in favor of permanent over temporary migration were then asked why they thought it better to give immigrants the opportunity to stay permanently. Fifty-four percent of respondents in Europe indicated that “permanent immigrants integrate better into society than temporary immigrants would,” while 43% of Americans and 40% of Canadians answered likewise. The second most popular reason for favoring permanent migration was the idea that the country benefits because

immigrants continue to use their skills there. This reason was cited by 30% of Europeans, 36% of Americans, and 45%—a plurality—of Canadians.

Addressing Illegal Immigration

MOST COUNTRIES OPPOSE OR ARE SPLIT ON LEGALIZATION, EXCEPT FRANCE AND GERMANY

As in 2008, respondents were asked whether they thought that illegal immigrants should be required to return to their home country or given some sort of legal status allowing them to remain. In comparison with the 2008 survey, this year's results showed that there are now majorities in Germany (52%) and France (55%) in favor of legalization—this was an increase in support of 7 and 8 percentage points, respectively. The UK (28%) and Italy (36%) were the countries with the lowest support for legalization, though support for legalization in Italy rose this year, from 27% in 2008 to 36% in 2009. Spain (45%) and the Netherlands (39%) were not largely in favor of giving illegal immigrants legal status, whereas Canada had a plurality (47%) support-



ing legalization; all three countries appear to be split on the issue. The United States was also split but has shifted slightly away from legalization—49% supported this policy in 2008, but only 44% did in 2009. Instead, a plurality of 48% preferred that illegal immigrants be required to return to their countries of origin (see Chart 12).

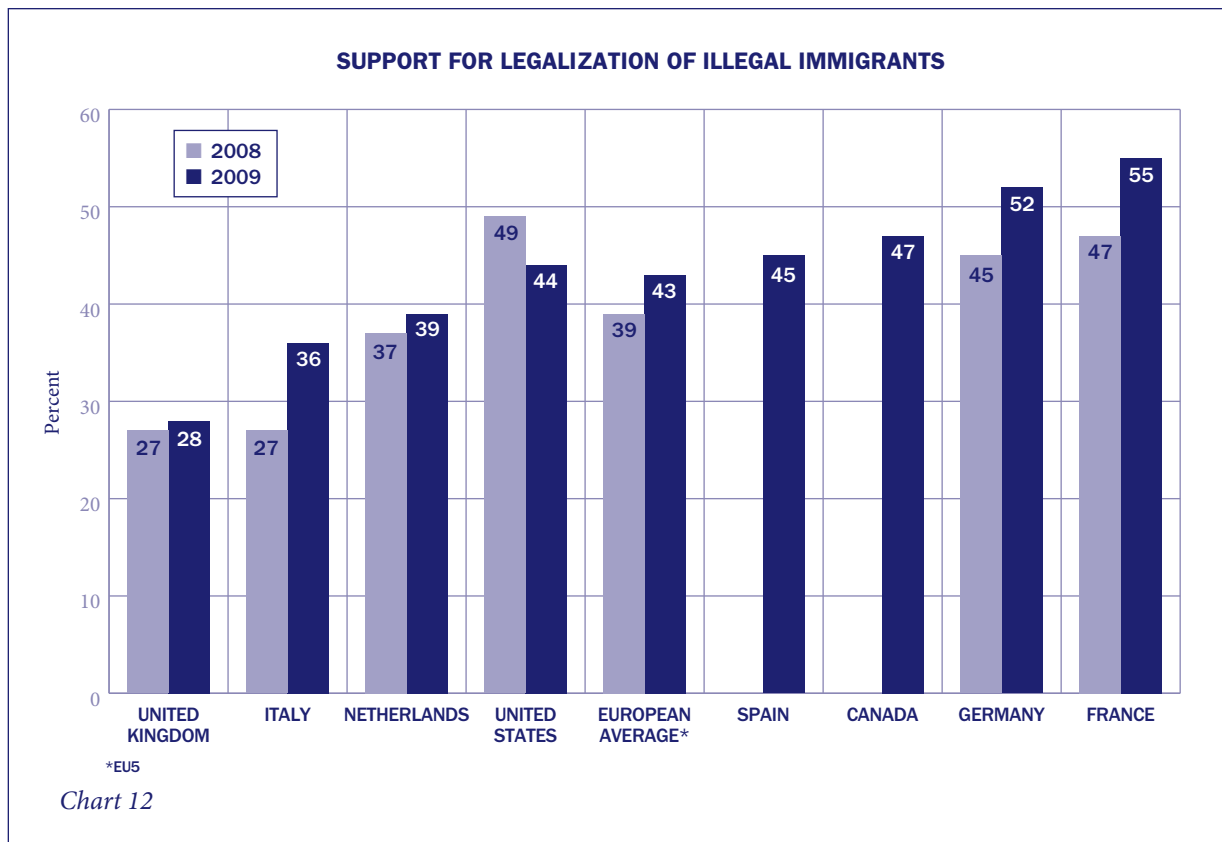
PROTECTION FROM EXPLOITATION IS MAIN RATIONALE FOR FAVORING LEGALIZATION

In all countries, those respondents who were in favor of giving illegal immigrants an opportunity to obtain legal status were asked to specify why they supported this policy. In all countries, a majority or a plurality—55% in Europe, 47% in Canada, and 38% in the United States—said that giving illegal immigrants legal status protects them from being exploited. A significant percentage (33%) of Americans also indicated that their main rationale for support was the fact that it would be impossible to remove everyone living in the country illegally. Thus, it seems that protection from exploitation is the main justification for legalization in Europe

and Canada, while in the United States it is a combination of protection and pragmatism in the face of a large illegal immigrant population.

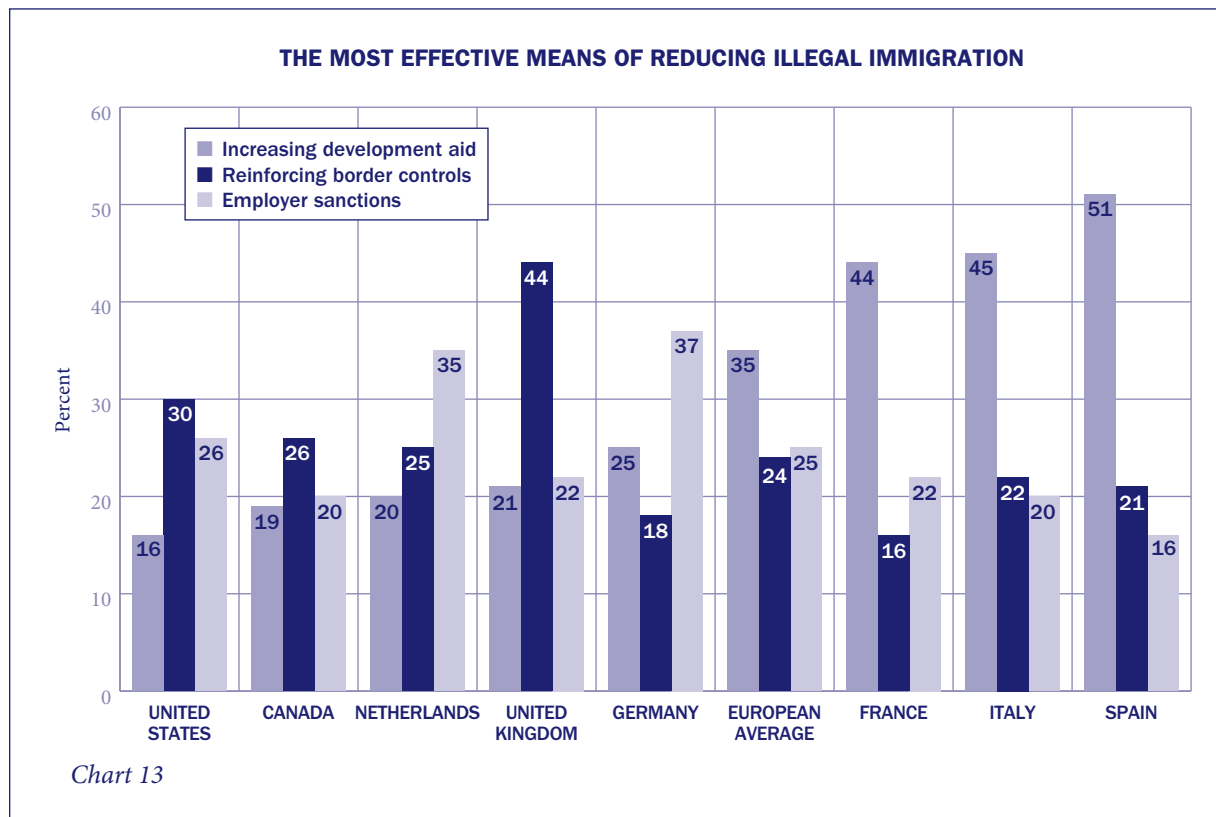
MOST EFFECTIVE POLICIES TO REDUCE ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION VARY BY REGION

As in 2008, all countries surveyed expressed widespread support for a broad variety of measures to reduce illegal immigration. When asked if they supported or opposed such policies, averages of 78% said they would like to reinforce border controls, 65% supported imposing tougher penalties on employers who hire illegal workers, 65% would make it easier for immigrants to enter legally to work or study, and 64% supported increasing development aid to countries whose citizens immigrate illegally. In *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration 2009*, respondents were also asked which of the four policies would be the most effective in reducing illegal immigration. The answers to this question varied greatly by region. Countries bordering the Mediterranean had large pluralities or a slight majority—France (44%), Italy (45%),



and Spain (51%)—who thought that increasing development aid would be the most effective. Reinforcing border controls, by contrast, was seen as the most effective by only 22% in France, 20% in Italy, and 21% in Spain. The country that most favored reinforcing border controls was in fact the UK, where a plurality of 44% saw this policy as the most effective

(see Chart 13). In northern continental Europe, 37% of Germans and 35% of the Dutch would prefer to impose employer sanctions. Respondents in the United States and Canada were more evenly split among border controls, employer sanctions, and increased avenues for legal migration.



COUNTRY PROFILE: SPAIN

SPAIN SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT AID FOR IMMIGRANT-SENDING COUNTRIES

For much of the 20th century, Spain was a country of emigration. It was not until the country's remarkable economic growth in the late 1990s that immigration became a major phenomenon. As a rapidly growing country with need for labor, Spain became attractive to immigrants from many new EU member states, Latin America, and North Africa, and in 2008 the OECD reported that immigrants made up 13% of the total Spanish population. The Spanish public has expressed worry, however, about the phenomenon of illegal immigration in the country. Fifty-five percent of Spanish respondents thought that most immigrants are in the country illegally, and a large majority (71%) were worried about illegal immigration.

When asked what they viewed as the best way to reduce illegal immigration, a striking 51% of the Spanish answered that increasing development aid

to countries from which people immigrate illegally is the best solution. This falls in line with the sentiments of respondents in the other countries on the Mediterranean, Italy and France, where there was also widespread consensus (45% and 44%, respectively) that development aid would be the most effective way to reduce illegal immigration. In light of the well-publicized issue of African immigrants arriving by boat to the country, a small percentage (21%) of Spanish respondents supported reinforcing border controls. It therefore seems that the Spanish would rather create incentives for people to stay in their country of origin than concentrate on stopping them in transit.

IMMIGRATION STATISTICS

Immigrant population in Spain	5,995,962
Immigrant share of overall population	13.4%
Source: OECD International Migration Outlook 2009, data for 2007	



TRANSATLANTIC TRENDS

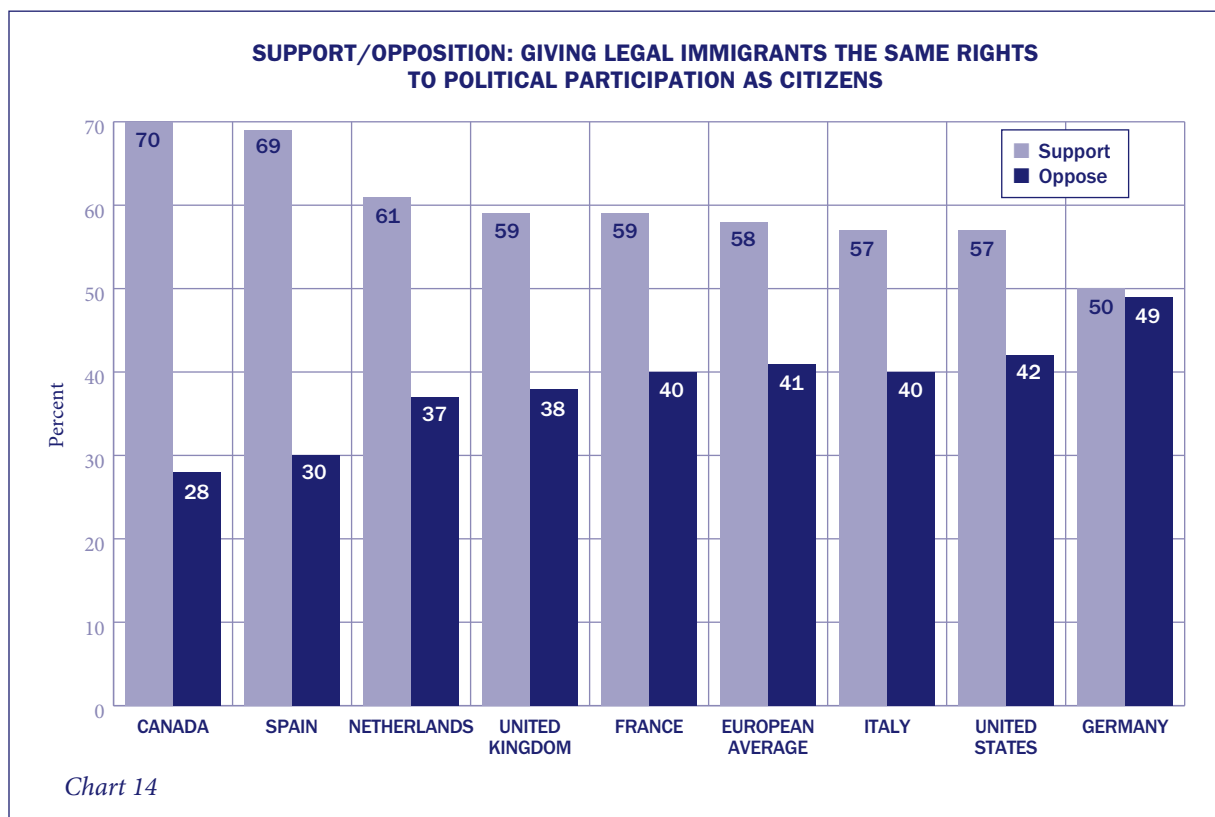
Immigration

Section Three: Integration, Culture, and Discrimination

Meeting the challenges of living in a new country can be a daunting task for immigrants. Integration is a multifaceted process that includes cultural, economic, and political aspects, and successful integration is dependent as much on the willingness of the immigrant as it is on the attitudes of the natives of the host country. *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration 2009* found that there was support—albeit weakening—for granting legal immigrants social benefits and rights of political participation in all countries. However, opinions differed across countries as to whether immigration enriches or negatively affects national culture.

MAJORITIES SUPPORT SOCIAL BENEFITS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION FOR IMMIGRANTS

Majorities in Europe and North America supported granting legal immigrants “the same social benefits” as national citizens (72% in Europe, 66% in the United States, and 75% in Canada). However, year-on-year support dropped in the Netherlands (from 83% in 2008 to 74% in 2009) and the United Kingdom (from 57% to 50%). The British response also included a high percentage of those “strongly opposed” to granting immigrants social benefits (28%). The biggest support for granting social benefits came from Italy (87%) and Spain (84%) (see Chart 14).

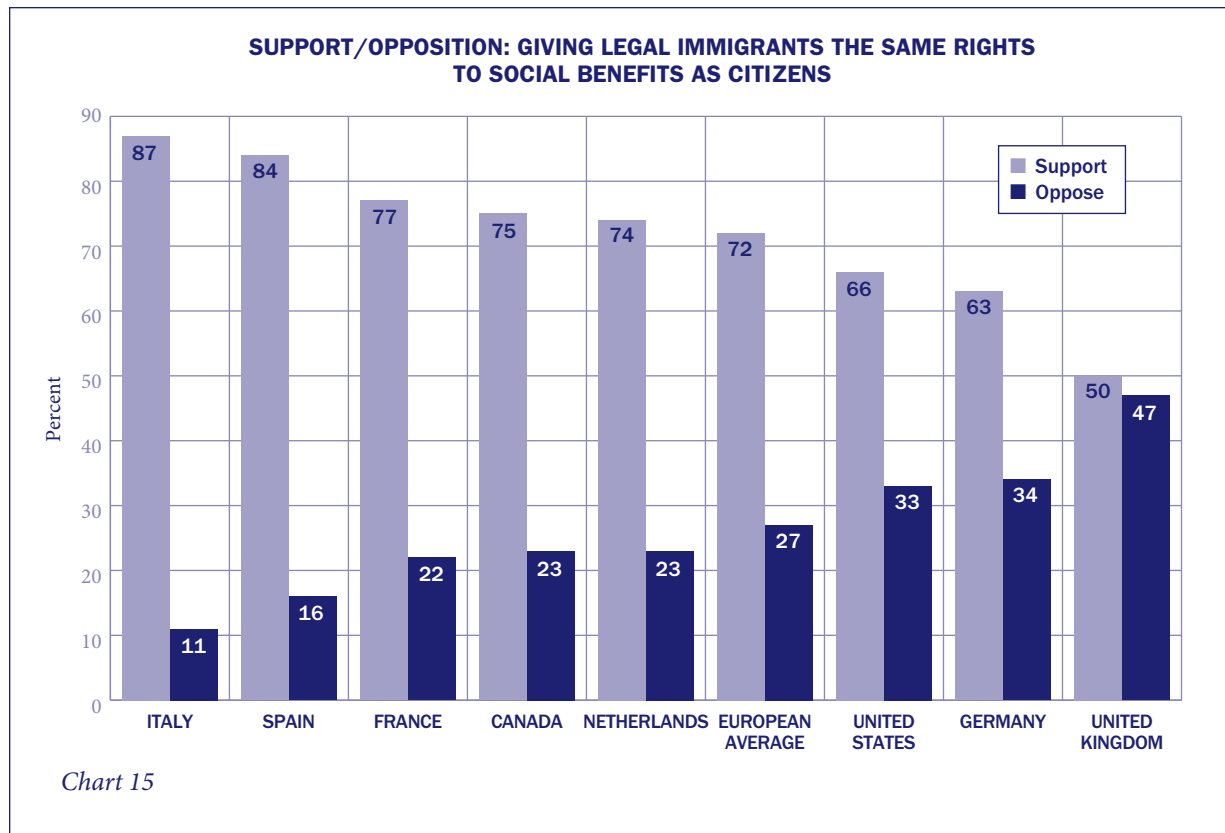


Approval for giving immigrants the same rights of political participation as national citizens also dwindled somewhat since last year. This drop was particularly visible in the Netherlands (from 69% to 61%), the UK (from 65% to 59%), and France (from 64% to 59%). Nevertheless, majorities in all countries still agreed with the policy. The strongest approval for granting immigrants political participation rights came from Canada (70%) and Spain (69%), and the weakest support was in Germany, where 50% were in favor and 49% were against (see Chart 15).

When asked if legal immigrants “should have the right to vote in local government elections,” around half of the Europeans in the sample supported the policy (52% were in favor), with public opinion being the most supportive in France (65%), Italy, and Spain (both 53%). On the other hand, the United States and Canada had majorities (62% and 54%, respectively) who opposed granting local voting rights to legal immigrants.

MIGRANTS MUST BE ABLE TO INTEGRATE CULTURALLY AND ECONOMICALLY

In debates over immigration policies, it is sometimes heard that preference for admission should be given to immigrants who will fit in smoothly with national culture; others maintain instead that the most important thing is finding employment. *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration* gauged public opinion on this debate, and respondents clearly indicated that it is not enough for immigrants to be able to integrate *only* culturally or *only* economically—they must do both. When asked about admitting an immigrant with a good chance of finding a job but who would not fit in smoothly, 66% of respondents rejected this as a bad idea; 67% said the same about admitting an immigrant without a job offer but with the ability to easily integrate culturally. However, when asked about letting in a group of new immigrants who could easily find a job *and* would also fit in smoothly, 75% of respondents thought this would be a good idea. There were, however, some transatlantic differences:



COUNTRY PROFILE: ITALY

SUPPORT FOR IMMIGRANTS' LOCAL VOTING RIGHTS

Italy was among the countries that were most supportive when asked if legal immigrants “should have the right to vote in local government elections”; 53% of respondents were in favor. The Italian constitution currently grants the right to vote only to citizens, but the issue of giving similar rights to noncitizens was already brought to public attention in 2002 by politician Gianfranco Fini, leader of the National Alliance, when he co-sponsored a new immigration law with Umberto Bossi, head of the Northern League.

In his original proposal, Fini suggested extending local voting rights to legal immigrants who had resided in Italy for at least six years, arguing that it was time to give immigrants who work and pay taxes in Italy the right of administrative voting. This proposition was met with criticism by coalition partner Bossi, who argued that

voting is a privilege that should be reserved for citizens. The Bossi-Fini Act was eventually implemented without any local voting concessions for immigrants. Fini later reiterated his proposal, thus reopening the discussion anew. Again, conservatives voiced criticism, declaring that this was not in line with public opinion. Silvio Berlusconi eventually closed the case, saying that giving voting rights to immigrants was not part of the government’s agenda. Nevertheless, several years later, the majority of Italian respondents in this survey seemed to be in favor of Fini’s ideas.

IMMIGRATION STATISTICS

Immigrant population in Italy	3,432,651
Immigrant share of overall population	6%
Source: Istituto Nazionale di Statistica 2009, data for 2008	

North Americans seemed to prefer economic integration, whereas the Dutch put comparatively stronger emphasis on cultural adaptation.

IMMIGRATION SEEN TO ENHANCE NATIONAL CULTURE IN MOST COUNTRIES

There was general transatlantic agreement that immigration enhances national culture with new customs and ideas. The most optimistic were the French, 68% of whom thought that “immigration enriches culture,” as well as Americans and Canadians, of whom 65% agreed. More pessimistic were the British, a plurality of whom (47%) instead thought that “immigration negatively affects national culture.” Respondents of the survey who were born in another country had strong opinions about immigration’s cultural effects: 70% of these immigrants said that “immigration enriches culture.”

DIVISION ON PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO INTEGRATION

When asked about the greatest barrier “that prevent immigrants from integrating,” respondents were split between believing that it was immigrants’ unwillingness to integrate or that it was discrimination on the part of society. Of all respondents surveyed, a plurality (47%) thought that the unwillingness of immigrants was to blame, whereas 37% said that “discrimination against immigrants is the greatest barrier” (see Chart 16). Eleven percent thought that immigrants’ unwillingness and discrimination were equal barriers. Meanwhile, respondents of the survey who also said that they had at least one immigrant parent were more likely to cite discrimination as the main problem for integration; this difference was particularly pronounced in the United States, where 66% of those with at least one foreign-born parent thought that discrimination is the most significant barrier to integration.

COUNTRY PROFILE: THE NETHERLANDS

CULTURAL ADAPTATION MORE IMPORTANT THAN ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Although respondents in the Netherlands indicated that it is not enough to be only culturally or only economically integrated, they put a larger emphasis on cultural adaptation than did other survey respondents. The Netherlands has a long history of multiculturalism: initially guest workers and immigrants from former colonies were encouraged to preserve their own cultures, citizenship was easily obtained, and for immigrants not proficient in Dutch, many government services were provided in their mother tongues.

In the past several years, new immigration and integration laws have been introduced that represent a move away from the earlier multicultural model. In 1998 the Netherlands was the first country in Europe to launch a mandatory integration program for which most newcomers from outside the EU, with the exception of students and temporary workers, had to take 600 hours of language and societal orientation classes. Since 2007 the courses are no longer compulsory, but immigrants

must pass a civic integration exam to be eligible for a permanent residence permit. The examination tests candidates' basic knowledge of Dutch language and customs, and people from countries requiring entry visas must take this examination abroad at a Dutch embassy before traveling to the Netherlands.

Overall, the influence of immigration on culture has become an increasingly important issue in political debate in the Netherlands. Current legislation has the stated objective of facilitating immigrants' smooth integration into Dutch society, and *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration* has shown that 60% of the Dutch believe that immigration enriches their culture.

IMMIGRATION STATISTICS

Immigrant population in the Netherlands	1,751,033
Immigrant share of overall population	10.7%
Source: OECD International Migration Outlook 2009, data for 2007	

CONTACT WITH IMMIGRANTS IMPORTANT PREDICTOR OF OPINIONS ABOUT INTEGRATION

Majorities in all countries said that they felt comfortable having an immigrant as a neighbor, as a boss, or as the partner or spouse of a close relative. Social contact with immigrants had an effect on perceptions about barriers to integration. Respondents who felt uncomfortable having an immigrant as a neighbor were more likely to say that immigrants' unwillingness to integrate was the greatest barrier to integration (60%, compared to the average of 47%). Similarly, 51% of respondents who did not have any friends from another country said that the unwillingness of immigrants to integrate is the greatest barrier to integration; only 42% of respondents with several immigrant friends agreed.

WIDESPREAD OPPOSITION TO GOVERNMENT-PAID LANGUAGE CLASSES

Last year 85% of respondents in Europe and 88% in the United States voiced their support for "offering free language courses" as a means of integrating legal immigrants and their families. However, when asked this year whether the government should pay for these classes, there was widespread opposition. Majorities in all countries, with the exception of Canada, said that "it is not the responsibility of government to pay for language courses." The country most opposed to government-paid language classes was the United Kingdom (73%), followed by the United States (67%). In Canada, public opinion was split, with 48% supporting and 49% opposing government-sponsored language courses.

**DIVISION ON THE GREATEST BARRIER TO INTEGRATION:
IMMIGRANTS' UNWILLINGNESS OR DISCRIMINATION?**

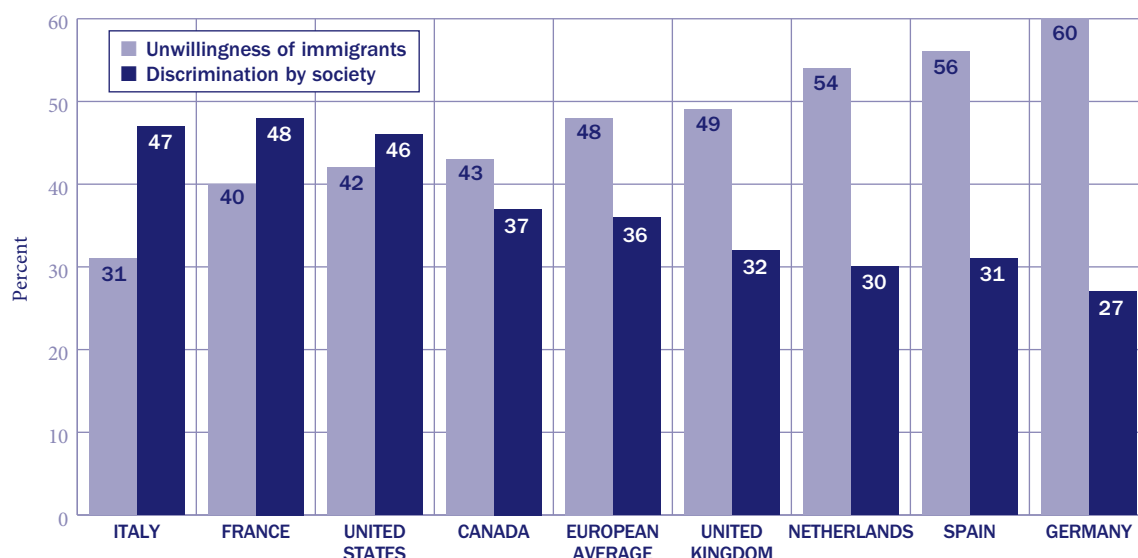


Chart 16

COUNTRY PROFILE: CANADA

STRONG SUPPORT FOR IMMIGRANT INVOLVEMENT IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Large majorities in Canada supported the policies of granting legal immigrants access to the same social benefits (75%) and affording them the same rights of political participation (70%) as national citizens. At least a third of respondents even gave their “strong support” for these policies (38% for social benefits and 33% for political participation rights)—more than in any other country. Canada was also the most supportive of government-paid language classes.

Since the 1980s Canada has accepted more immigrants in proportion to population size than any other country, and its “point system” immigration policy is often used as a model. Relatively easy access to citizenship has led to high naturalization rates in Canada and to correspondingly high levels of immigrant involvement in social and political life. A wide array of government-funded services exists to facilitate integration: The Canadian Orientation Abroad initiative provides orientation for newcomers in

their countries of origin, while the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program helps organizations to deliver useful information to new Canadians, provide translation and interpretation services, and refer migrants to community resources. The Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada program also provides training in English or French free of charge. Finally, the Host Program matches immigrants with Canadian volunteers who encourage participation in community activities and give employment-related guidance. The data from *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration 2009*, targeting issues of social benefits and political participation for migrants, seems to indicate that Canadians support the government’s integration efforts.

IMMIGRATION STATISTICS

Immigrant population in Canada	6,331,694
Immigrant share of overall population	20.1%
Source: OECD International Migration Outlook 2009, data for 2007	



TRANSATLANTIC TRENDS

Immigration

Section Four: Reactions to Governments' Management of Immigration

Formulating an immigration policy that meets the needs of society is a difficult challenge for any government; determining the level at which such policy should be formed and enacted is equally complex. Where does the public stand on immigration policy? At what level in Europe and North America does the public feel immigration policy should be formed and enforced? *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration* examined approval levels for current immigration management schemes, as well as questions surrounding immigration policy jurisdiction and governance.

MIXED VIEWS ON GOVERNMENT'S MANAGEMENT OF IMMIGRATION

When asked how they thought their governments were handling immigration, respondents varied significantly by country in their assessments. In Germany, 71% of those surveyed believed that the government was doing a good or fair job in managing immigration—by far the most positive assessment of all countries surveyed. The Netherlands also had a majority (53%) with a positive assessment, and a majority of Canadians (59%) voiced their support for current management policies.

Not all countries approved of their government's handling of immigration, however. In the United Kingdom and Spain, large majorities, 71% and 64% respectively, believed that their government was doing a poor or very poor job in managing migration. In the United States, 63% shared this view, with over a quarter (29%) indicating that the government was doing a very poor job (see Chart 17).

MOST EUROPEANS SUPPORT A COMMON EU IMMIGRATION POLICY

Similarly to last year, Europeans on average expressed considerable support for EU-level decision-making on

immigration policy (58%). The Netherlands answered with 54% in support of further cooperation, a marked increase from the 47% approval rate in 2008. However, the United Kingdom again separated from its EU peers, with 53% saying that decisions about immigration policy should be made on the national level and only 30% looking for such issues to be determined at the EU level (see Chart 18).

NORTH AMERICANS LOOK TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENT FOR IMMIGRATION POLICY

Large majorities in Canada (74%) and the United States (71%) shared the view that immigration policies should be decided at the national level, rather than the state/provincial or local level. In the United States, however, there was a slight increase in support for state or local policymaking. In 2009, 24% showed a preference for state and local officials deciding immigration policy, an increase from only 17% support in 2008.

SPECIAL FOCUS: ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATION

Transatlantic support for environmental migrants
Environmental deterioration—including natural disasters, rising sea levels, and more frequent droughts affecting agricultural production—could cause an unprecedented number of people to leave their homes in the coming decades. This year's *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration* gauged support for allowing individuals displaced by events linked to global climate change to settle in the countries polled.

Although exact numbers of expected environmental migrants are hard to come by and estimates vary widely, most respondents surveyed expressed support for allowing the settlement of environmental migrants in their respective countries. Canada (75%) and Spain (80%) showed the most support for such measures; European countries polled

ASSESSMENT OF GOVERNMENTS' MANAGEMENT OF IMMIGRATION

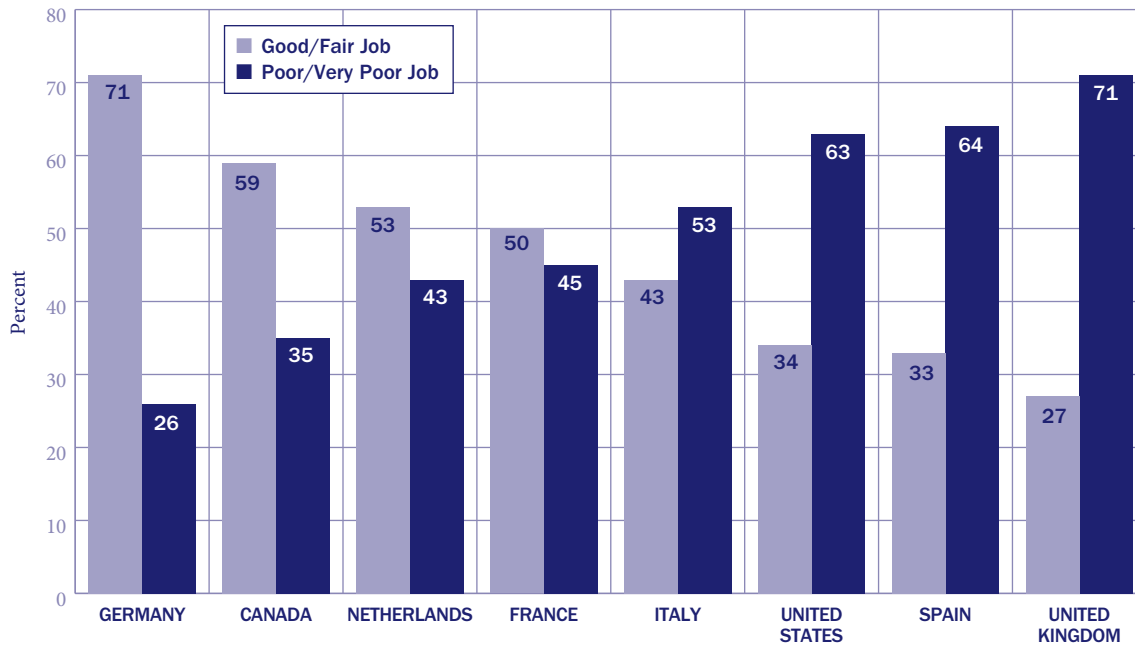


Chart 17

COUNTRY PROFILE: UNITED STATES

DISSATISFACTION WITH IMMIGRATION MANAGEMENT POLICY

In the United States, majorities from all political parties agreed that the government was doing a poor or very poor job in managing immigration. Republicans (76%), Independents (69%), and Democrats (53%) expressed mutual discontent with the government's handling of this issue.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform in the United States was attempted in 2006 and 2007 as a bi-partisan effort under the Bush administration. However, public outcry over a so-called "amnesty" for illegal immigrants, as well as infighting within both the Democratic and Republican parties, prevented the legislation from passing. On the campaign trail, Barack

Obama pledged to restart the immigration debate during his first year as President, but since that time other concerns such as the economic crisis, healthcare reform, climate change legislation, and the United States' involvement in Afghanistan have delayed work on the issue of immigration. Both parties recognize the need for new legislation on this issue, and President Obama has promised to address immigration reform again starting in 2010.

IMMIGRATION STATISTICS

Immigrant population in the United States	41,099,600
Immigrant share of overall population	13.6 %
Source: OECD International Migration Outlook 2009, data for 2007	

COUNTRY PROFILE: GERMANY

MOST SATISFIED WITH GOVERNMENT'S IMMIGRATION MANAGEMENT

Of all countries surveyed, Germans were most satisfied with the steps that their government has taken to manage immigration; 71% of respondents said that the German government had been doing a good or fair job. This satisfaction spans the political spectrum, with 66% of Germans who assigned themselves to the political right thinking that the government has done a good or fair job; 75% of centrists and 71% on the political left shared this view.

In the past decade, Germany has increasingly addressed the question of immigration and integration management and has reformed its legislation in this area, beginning with a reform of the Nationality Act in 1998. In 2005 a new Immigration Act also came into force, which contained provisions on the entry and residence of immigrants and foreign workers, simplified procedures

for highly skilled immigrants, and established integration courses for newcomers from non-EU countries. In 2007 the Immigration Act was modified to introduce a naturalization test and require immigrants wanting to reunite with their spouses in Germany to have a basic knowledge of the German language before entering the country. Generally speaking, government action in the past decade has been more open toward immigrants and immigrant integration, while also being stricter on immigration management. The data from Transatlantic Trends: Immigration seem to indicate that the German public is largely satisfied with this management.

IMMIGRATION STATISTICS

Immigrant population in Germany	10,620,774
Immigrant share of overall population	12.9%
Source: OECD International Migration Outlook 2009, data for 2003	

averaged 68% support; and 59% of Americans also supported allowing environmental migrants to settle in their country. Even in the United Kingdom, where the highest

proportion of respondents saw immigration as a problem, a majority (57%) supported admission of environmental migrants (see Chart 19).

BRITISH SKEPTICISM OF EU IMMIGRATION MANAGEMENT

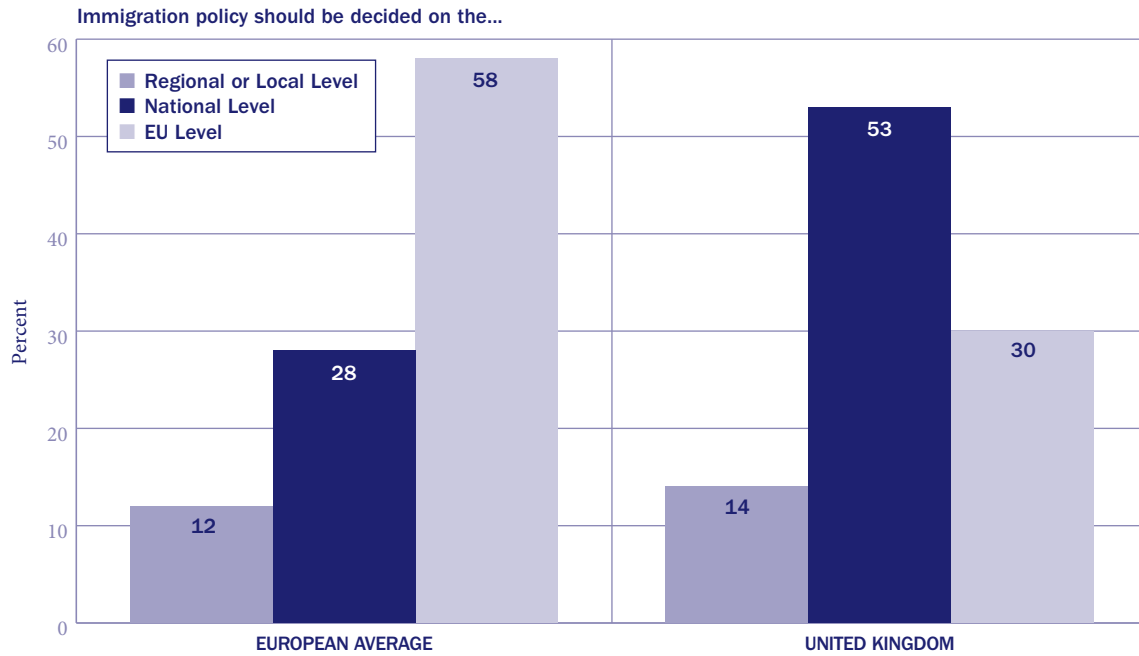


Chart 18

SUPPORT/OPPOSITION: ALLOWING ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRANTS TO SETTLE IN THE COUNTRY

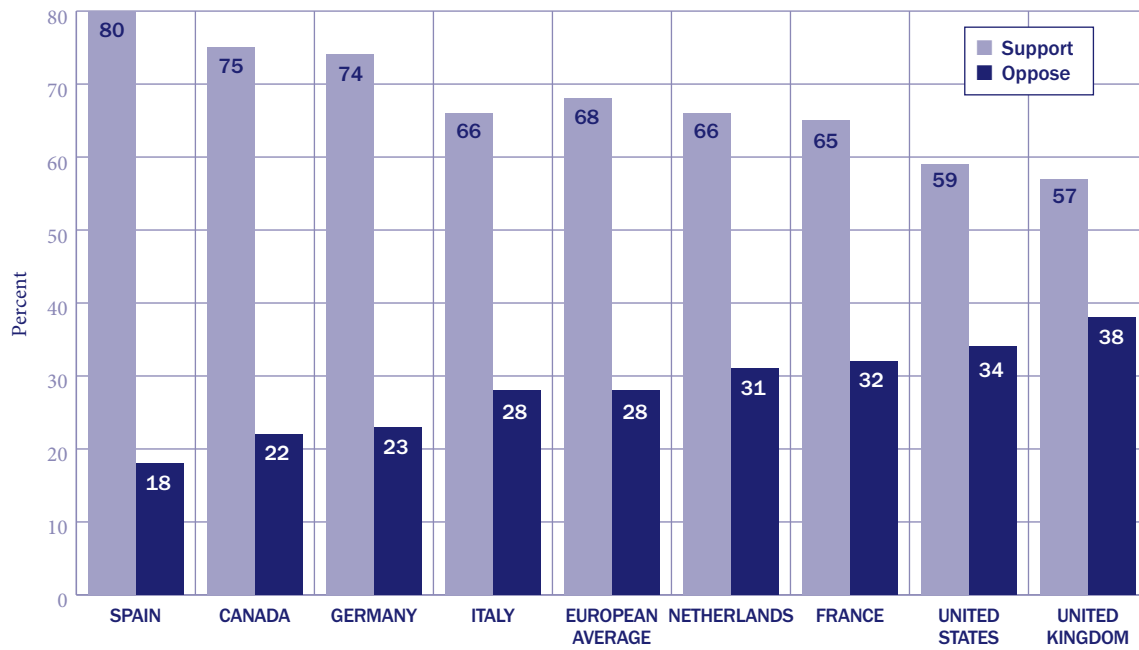


Chart 19



TRANSATLANTIC TRENDS

Immigration

Section Five: Conclusion

The second year of *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration* revealed some important changes over last year's findings and introduced a series of new and topical questions in a growing number of countries. After a careful analysis of the results, the following major themes emerged that could be of importance to policymakers:

The percentage of those who saw immigration as more of a problem than an opportunity increased in the European countries polled by 7 points. Negative views were closely linked to political leanings; in the United States, for example, those describing themselves as Republicans were 15 points more likely to say that immigration was more of a problem in 2009 than they did in 2008.

The survey found that the effects of the economic crisis on perceptions of immigration were complex: majorities did not believe that immigrants take away jobs from the native-born or lower their wages. However, at the household level it was found that those families who experienced financial difficulties in the past 12 months tended to be more worried about legal immigration than those whose financial situation stayed the same or got better.

The public drew a very clear line between legal and illegal immigrants, and illegal immigration was viewed very negatively by people on both sides of the Atlantic. Permanent labor migration programs, however, were favored over temporary schemes because people felt that permanent immigrants integrate better into society than temporary migrants would. The preferred policies for fighting illegal immigration varied widely from country to country: Mediterranean countries preferred the policy of increasing developmental aid to sending countries, the British favored reinforcing border controls, and the Germans as well as the Dutch preferred tougher sanctions on employers who hire illegal immigrants.

On questions of integration, most respondents agreed that immigration enhances their national culture, and they approved of government policies to afford legal immigrants social benefits and political participation rights. However, most also disapproved of their government paying for national language courses for migrants. Nuanced opinions on integration were also found when respondents were asked about the greatest barrier to integration. Americans, Italians, and the French thought that societal discrimination against immigrants was the greatest barrier, while majorities or pluralities in all other countries surveyed thought that immigrants' unwillingness to integrate was the greatest barrier.

People showed various levels of satisfaction with how their governments manage immigration. A fairly high percentage of the Germans and Canadians felt that their government was doing either a good or a fair job of managing immigration, whereas British, Spanish, American, and Italian respondents were the most dissatisfied with their governments' job. Immigration, however, goes beyond being just a national issue. There is considerable support in the continental European countries polled for addressing immigration at the European Union level. Americans and Canadians support decision-making at the national level.

Finally, one big lesson learned from this year's *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration* was that the public seems to know little about the immigrants living in their countries, including their numbers; people in all countries polled consistently overestimated the number of immigrants by wide margins. It seems that educating the public about the immigration situation in their respective countries would be a valuable undertaking and would help to inform future policy debates.