

MIPi: A better index for comparing family reunification policies across Europe

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Abstract

This study develops a new index to measure family reunification policies across 33 countries. Using a implicative scaling model, policy indicators are selected from the Migrant Integration Policy Index database (MIPEX) to create an measurement instrument that is truly uni-dimensional and sensitive to actual policy changes. The new index, the MIPi, singles out language requirements as the core policy instruments of limiting family reunion. The study shows that the new index is consistent with expectations on policy developments in European countries since 2008. In particular, the new index shows that while countries on average become more restrictive, the variation between countries in policy positions has actually increased, and singles out Denmark and the Netherlands as leaders in the “race to the bottom”. Moreover, the new index predicts changes in actual family reunion migration between 2008 and 2012, unlike the existing index created from the database.

Keywords: migration policy index; family reunification; family migration trends; MIPEX
