



IDHEAP

POLICY BRIEF

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The aim behind IDHEAP Policy Briefs is to make the general public aware of scientific research conducted at IDHEAP, underlining its pluridisciplinarity and multidisciplinary, while bringing out its implications for public policy, thereby asserting our place “at the heart of public service”.

How do values influence behaviour and institutions, and how are they shaped? These are the questions at the heart of this issue. The first article looks at discrimination that occurs in the treatment of refugees. It reveals the groups most frequently affected by discrimination and sets out solutions to remedy the problem. The second article uses the example of the Olympic Games to illustrate how human rights have evolved over time. The third article studies the impact of economic institutions on preferences, and stresses the vital role played by the public sector in the creation and dissemination of the value for the common good.

Enjoy!

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The difficulties of integrating male and female refugees into the labour market in Western economies

Inequality and Integration unit Prof. Dr. Flavia Fossati

Introduction

Movements of refugees have been increasing for decades now. The priority for public administrations in Western societies is to ensure that refugees achieve economic integration, which will allow them to learn the country's language and customs, free themselves from welfare payments and contribute to society. Particularly striking is the difference between the rates of labour-market participation of male (50%) and female (40%) refugees during the ten years following their immigration. **The question raised here is whether these differences are due to employer *discrimination* against female job seekers, or whether there are other factors preventing their integration.**

The research process

Studying discrimination is difficult because employers often give socially desirable responses. To get around this problem, we experimented by using an online survey in which a sketch (fictional description of a situation) was presented to respondents. The sketch gave a summary of the life of a refugee whose characteristics (gender, civil status, age, etc.) varied in random fashion. This meant that employers were less likely to notice that we were studying discrimination, and hence responded more sincerely. Employers were shown several sketches presenting people with very different profiles and were invited to indicate the likelihood that they would interview any of the candidates for a job requiring few qualifications. We conducted this study of discrimination in Austria, Germany, and Sweden, since these countries were most affected by influxes of refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan during the "refugee crisis" (2011-2017).

Results

We found that employers favour female refugees over their male counterparts, to a high degree of statistical significance (as shown in Figure 1, where men were assessed less favourably than women by about 0.15 points on a scale of 1-10). Our explanation is that men are discriminated against because of negative stereotypes with which they are associated in the media (criminality, aggressiveness, drug trafficking). We also found that employers discriminate against people with children (Figure 1). The question is to ascertain whether this result hides differences between the sexes. Further analyses show that, unlike men, women face more discrimination if they have children.

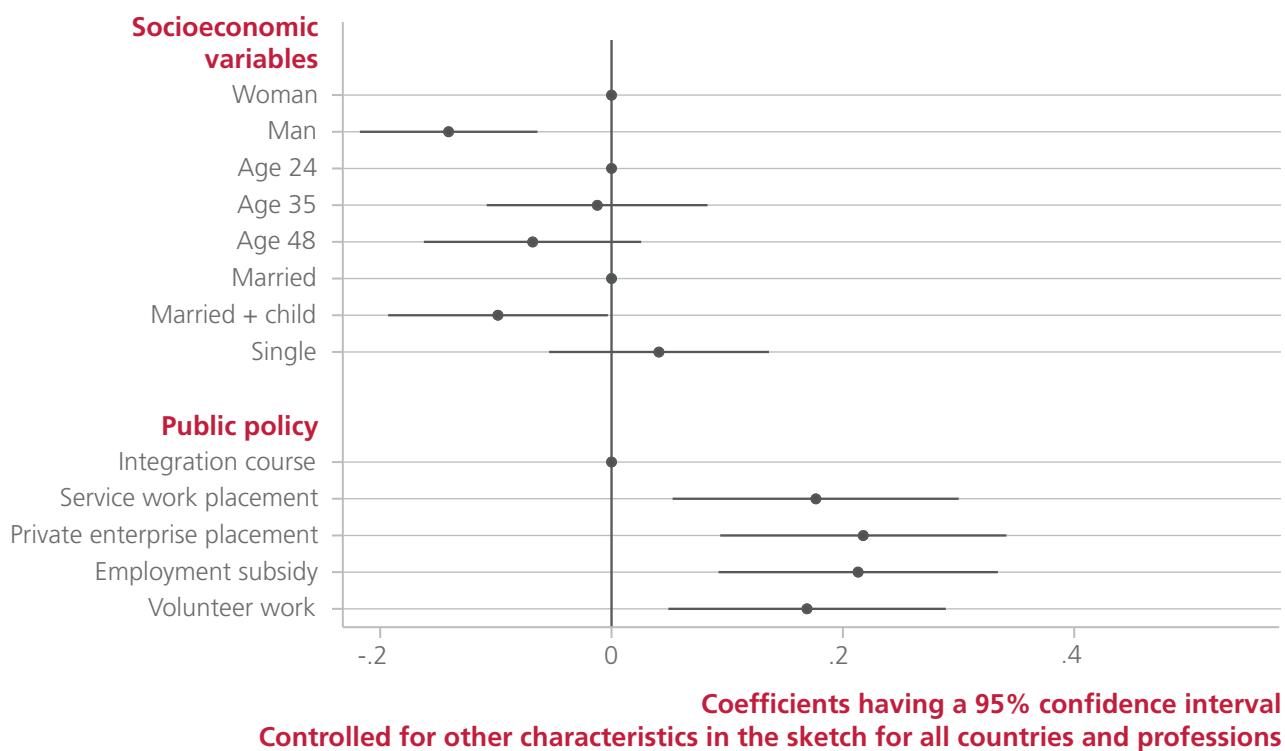




Figure 1 | Effects of fictional CV variables on the probability of obtaining a job interview

Conclusion and implications

Since employers discriminate against male candidates, public administration should make employers aware of stereotypes regarding men from the Middle East and/or Muslim countries. The same goes for refugee *mothers*. Psychologists suggest strategies to eliminate these biases involving an instruction to allow employers to consider refugees' point of view and develop empathy towards them. Mentoring programmes in which a professional introduces a refugee to his or her working network can also be useful.



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Moreover, public administration can help refugees by proposing additional integration measures (see Figure 1). Fossati and Liechti (2020) found that employers are more likely to hire refugees who, in addition to a compulsory integration course, have taken part in other activities such as a work placement or volunteer work. Unfortunately, this finding applies only to employers who had a positive attitude towards immigrants before the study. This means that integration policies have no effect on employers who just do not want to work with refugees.

In conclusion, our findings show that the low employment rates of female refugees who are not mothers cannot be explained by employer discrimination. Rather, low rates probably stem from factors such as traditional gender roles, refugees' lack of education and/or work experience. Clearly, a set of diversified measures is necessary to tackle the economic integration of different groups of refugees.

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The Olympic Games and human rights: an evolving relationship

Regulation of Sport unit Prof. Dr. Jean-Loup Chappelet

A topical question

The FIFA World Cup that ended in Qatar in December 2022 raised many questions about human rights. The media, NGOs and the public in Western countries no longer easily accept the holding of mega-events in countries that violate human rights, and even the participation of countries whose record on the issue is not unblemished. The same goes for the summer and winter Olympic Games which, together with the World Cup, are most highly mediatized mega event.

The modern Olympic Games were first held in 1896, inspired by the hope that peace could grow out of better understanding between peoples created by sporting competitions. Today, according to American historian Barbara Keys (2019), **this pacifist ambition has shifted its focus to the ideal of respect for human rights**, a concept that has evolved greatly since it was enshrined in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen at the beginning of the French Revolution. **The fact that the Olympics have been held regularly for more than a century lets us trace this evolution and situate the events of today in the framework of international public law.**

A relationship that has evolved along with the concept of human rights

Researchers point to *four moments* (see Figure 1) when human rights came to the fore, keeping pace with the development of the concept over the years. First, the *1936 Berlin Olympics* sparked calls for boycotts in the United States and Europe in response to the Nazi regime's discrimination against German Jews. Following World War II, in 1948 the UN adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was then given concrete expression by a whole series of conventions (treaties) between states. In 1960, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) banned apartheid South Africa, but the Games were also affected by other issues of racism incompatible with the Olympic ideal. In the 1960s and 1970s the Olympics were also affected by various boycotts or threatened boycotts by African countries and black athletes. This was the second moment. The third was that

of the *2008 Beijing Summer Olympics* and the *2022 Beijing Winter Olympics*. These Games went ahead despite the repression of the Tibetan and Uyghur peoples that was compared to cultural genocide. The fourth and final moment concerns both the *winter and summer Olympics from 2024 on*. The IOC has awarded them respectively to Paris (2024), Milan (2026), Los Angeles (2028) and Brisbane (2032), in countries where the human rights previously mentioned should not cause issues. **But new rights are being demanded, particularly by athletes, regarding their sharing in the Games' economic benefits and their freedom of expression (as during the Qatar FIFA World Cup and UEFA Euro 2020).**

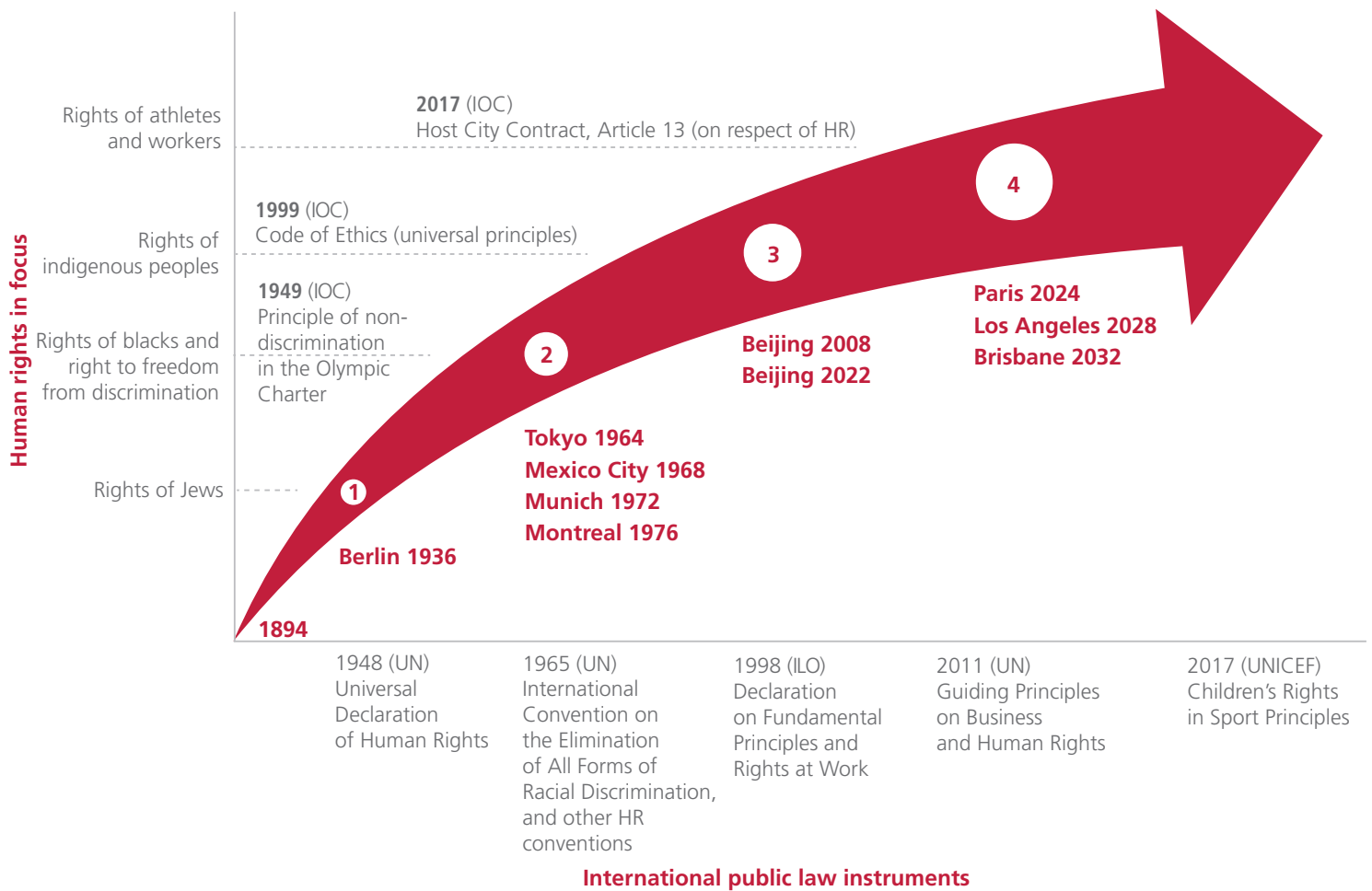


Figure 1 | Four moments in the relationship between the Olympics and human rights.



“New rights are being demanded, particularly by athletes, regarding their sharing in the Games’ economic benefits and their freedom of expression (as during the Qatar FIFA World Cup and UEFA Euro 2020).”



Implications for decision-makers

2011 marked an important turning point with the UN’s adoption of its Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. **From then on, respect of human rights was no longer a matter for states but also for businesses, among them the major governing bodies of world sport, such as FIFA and the IOC.** These organizations now refer to these principles in their constitutions and amend their contracts accordingly. These principles of corporate responsibility were minimally taken up by Swiss legislation (an indirect counter-proposal by the Federal Council further to a 2020 vote that was accepted by the people, but not by the cantons) and will doubtless need to be strengthened in view of the ad-hoc European regulation currently being adopted.

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Can the public sector extend its workers' moral boundaries?

Economics of Regulation unit Prof. Dr. Laure Athias

Introduction

Many decisions involve choosing between individual interest and the common good. For example, when choosing between policies to be implemented, do Swiss public decision-makers consider and internalize the differentiated effects of a given policy on different social groups (the Swiss versus foreigners, for example)? **The disposition to prioritize the common good over individual interest** is equated with a particular value: universalism (that is, the ability to consider equally the well-being of all people, whether they are socially close or distant (Enke et al. 2022)). This value has been given considerable attention in the social sciences literature, since it is a predictor of pro-social behaviour, political opinions, and attitudes towards climate change, among other things, to be considered along with “classic” variables such as income, wealth, education, religiosity or beliefs in government effectiveness. What we know less well, or not at all, is how to generate this value: how an individual can become universalist. **This is the goal of my research presented here: to find out whether economic institutions could shape this value, and through what mechanisms.**

The research process

Philosophy and social sciences have long emphasized the differences between the public and private sectors, in terms of organizational objectives, as regards the relative importance given to the common good and private interest. **The theoretical hypothesis that this research formulates and tests is that the public sector inculcates universalism in its workers by exposing them to the public spirit, in other words, the primacy of the common good over individual interest.**

The Swiss Household Panel provides geolocated individual-level data on respondents' occupational choices between the public and private sectors and on their preferences over time. **This makes it possible to estimate how universalism (and other preferences) varies in the same individuals, exposed to the same labour market, when they move from one sector to another.** Causal identification however comes up against the concern of potential dynamic selection that explains why a worker switches sector. In particular, an individual may switch sector following a “positive shock” to their universalism (by falling in love with someone new, for example!) and may have become universalist before switching sector.


To remove this bias, the study compares the initial universalism of individuals who change sector (prior to the change) with that of individuals who have remained in the same sector, and finds that the selection based on universalism is at the public-service occupation level (education, health and social services, which are in both the public and private sectors) rather than at the public sector level. **It is then possible to capture the causal effect of the institutional sector by focusing on workers who do not work in public-service occupations.**




COMMON GOOD

Results, discussions and implications

Results indicate that 33% of workers who were initially non-universalist become universalist when they switch from the private to the public sector. However, no such effect of the public sector is found on ideology, on attitudes towards welfare and redistribution, or on trust in public institutions. Moreover, workers who become universalist in the workplace adopt the general behaviour that the literature associates with universalists: they have fewer friends, donate less locally but more globally, and act less like “free-riders”. These results suggest that workers have thoroughly internalized this value and that, once internalized, it guides their behaviour.



“The results show that the disposition to prioritize the common good over individual interests can be acquired, specifically when working in the public sector. The public sector instills this mindset in its workers through its institutional objective which, in comparison with the private sector, puts the common good above individual interest. One in three public-sector workers acquires this disposition and keeps it.”



Obviously, the public sector’s effect may vary with the type of state capture (a form of political corruption in which the private interests of a group considerably influence the decision process of a state to their own advantage). **This research leverages historical differences of state capture that have generated persistent cultural differences in terms of individuals’ belief in the state, and in its duty to favour the common good over individual interests, in order to highlight the impact of the public sector on universalism through exposure to the public spirit.**

Since workers may also be parents or friends, and thus spread their values in turn, the public sector has major repercussions on the diffusion of this value throughout society as a whole. One implication of the results is that **a society can make the choice to have a larger public sector to ensure wide dissemination of this value.** The research also suggests that **to be fruitful, any reform of the public sector must combine incentives and moral messages centred on the common good,** exploiting complementarities between the two.

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