

Does immigration undermine public support for integration in the European Union?

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Abstract

It is well-established that negative attitudes towards immigrants strongly decrease public support for European integration. But the impact of actual immigration *levels* on immigration *attitudes* is still contested. As a result, the relationship between immigration levels and EU public support remains uncertain from a theoretical point of view. We offer an empirical study of the link between immigration from the new EU member states from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and EU support at the regional level in Spain, France, Ireland and The Netherlands. The results of the analyses suggest that in all four countries immigration from CEE had negative effects on support for European integration in the host societies. In short, immigration seems to undermine integration, although internal migration within the EU is necessary for the successful functioning of its economic union.

Keywords

anti-immigration attitudes, EU Enlargement, EU public support, European integration, Euroscepticism, immigration

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1 Introduction

Political, economic, and societal integration of democratic states, market economies, and liberal societies imply the free movement of people, capital, goods, and services. Short and long-term migration from one part of the integrating territory to another can alleviate asymmetric economic shocks, foster the development of common identities, and speed up the diffusion of shared norms and ideas. Integration requires and builds on internal migration to address social and economic challenges.

But at the same time, migration can undermine politically the process of integration. Citizens might not like the idea of welcoming newcomers from other parts of the union. Perceived cultural threats and/or competition for jobs, public services and social benefits can lead people in host nations to resent and oppose the arrival of immigrants. Crucially, fear and resentment can turn towards integration as such. Directly and through the actions of opportunistic political elites, negative public attitudes towards immigration, spurred by rising numbers of immigrants, can put limits on the free movement of persons, effectively halting the process of integration. In short, we have a paradox. While internal migration is necessary for economic and societal integration, it can act to subvert both through its unintended political effects.

We study this paradox in the context of the European Union (EU). The process of EU enlargement to the East (the preparations for which started already in the 1990s) spurred a significant level of migration from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) to the old member states in Southern and Western Europe. The increasing presence and visibility of migrants from CEE coincided with a period of decreasing public support for European integration, increasing levels of anti-immigration attitudes in Europe, and the rise of anti-immigration parties to the political scene in a number of countries.

In this paper, theoretically we posit that internal migration should reduce public enthusiasm for (further) integration, that the effect should be most visible at the local/regional level, that it should vary by country, that it should be mediated through the influence of anti-immigration attitudes, and that it should be moderated by current economic conditions. Empirically, we explore the relationship between levels of immigration from CEE and public support for European integration at the local level in four 'old' EU members from Western and Southern Europe - France, Ireland, Spain, and The Netherlands. In order to obtain representative local level estimates of public attitudes towards integration, we look into the results of the referenda on

the ill-fated European constitution in 2005 and 2006. To the best of our knowledge we offer the first empirical assessment of the impact of CEE immigration on EU public support.

We find that, in all four countries we study, a higher number of CEE immigrants registered in a region is associated with lower levels of support for further European integration, after controlling for potential confounders like economic conditions (unemployment), support for the governing parties, and levels of pre-existing immigration. In France, Ireland, and The Netherlands, the negative association is statistically significant.

Altogether, our empirical analyses show that in the EU case internal migration has indeed eroded support for integration during the first decade of the twenty-first century. While it has been well-known that at the individual level anti-immigration attitudes are linked with opposition to the EU (De Vreese and Boomgaarden 2005, Boomgaarden et al. 2011, Lubbers 2008, McLaren 2007), we demonstrate that real-world levels of immigration can fuel the former thus eroding the latter. In more practical terms, our findings raise the question whether the future of European integration is sustainable given the necessity of growing internal migration and the increasing reluctance of Western societies to put up with the presence of more immigrants, be they from their fellow EU member states or not.

2 Immigration and integration: theoretical considerations

The research problem we pose in this article sits at the intersection of vast literatures spanning Political Science, Sociology, Social Psychology, European Studies, and other related disciplines. In this part of the article we will draw from these literatures to sketch a theoretical model of the interactions between immigration, integration, economic conditions and public attitudes. Our contribution is mostly in pulling threads of existing theoretical ideas together, and gauging their implications for the case of European integration. In fact, our main point is that since there are conflicting theoretical expectations about the potential impact of immigration levels on public attitudes towards immigration and integration, the empirical study of this link in the context of the EU gains scientific relevance and, indeed, urgency.

Levels of immigration and anti-immigration attitudes

The effect of the presence of immigrants on anti-immigration (xenophobic) attitudes and behaviors of the host population is theoretically and empirically contested.

Sociologists and social psychologists have long studied inter-group contact and its impact. Allport's influential work (1954) posited that contact with people from a different race or ethnic group will tend to decrease prejudice and negative predispositions and promote mutual understanding *given some conditions* like equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and the support of authorities, law or custom. Contact theory, as this set of ideas came to be known, receives mixed support from empirical research conducted in various settings, including schools, housing projects, and the military, and using a variety of methods, including laboratory experiments, surveys, and participant observation (see the reviews in Amir 1969, Pettigrew 1998 and Pettigrew et al. 2006). On the one hand, evidence for the positive effects of inter-group contact is often found even if not all of Allport's original conditions hold. On the other hand, it proved difficult to specify exactly under *which* conditions the effects would be realized, and whether they will *generalize* from one interaction context to another, from inter-personal to inter-group relations, and from one out-group to others (Pettigrew 1998).

How do these general insights relate to the case of immigrants and their integration in host societies? Most of the micro-mechanisms on which contact theory relies - e.g. learning and the formation of affective ties - require that there is direct and sustained personal contact

(e.g. between a member of the host population and an immigrant). This is unlikely to hold in the general case for immigration - few people from the local population would have direct and sustained contact with immigrants, so their attitudes and behaviours will be informed by a mixture of direct and indirect contact, hearsay, as well as images and frames provided by national and local media and state authorities. As both Allport and Pettigrew emphasize, states and societies can shape contact effects, and we could add that this is likely to be especially so when contact is transient and indirect.

Empirical research has uncovered that direct (face-to-face) contact with immigrants can increase their perceived competence, sociability and morality (Brambilla et al. 2013), but only the change in *perceived morality* might lead to behavioral change like voting for an anti-discrimination party or attending a rally in support of immigrants. Using individual level data from 18 European countries, Manevska and Achterbeg (2011) argue that both economic and cultural logics are significantly associated with the level of perceived ethnic threat. But, interestingly, the perceived ethnic threat seems to be unrelated to the size of the (low-educated and non-Western) immigrant communities in the countries (p.9). The implication for contact theory is that, at least at the aggregate country level, the increased likelihood of intergroup contact that comes with the presence of large immigrant communities has *not* translated into lower levels of perceived ethnic threat in the case of European countries at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Working with the same sample, Schneider (2008) finds that the size of non-Western immigrant communities has a nonlinear relationship with perceived ethnic threat: initially the link is positive but it flattens out and eventually is even reversed (p.62). Importantly, Schneider suggests that the cultural distance between immigrants and the local population rather than education and economic status drives up the perceived level of threat. In line with this finding, Sides and Citrin (2007) argue that 'symbolic' (cultural) predispositions have greater effect on immigration attitudes than economic dissatisfaction. They also show that people overestimate the size of immigrant communities living in their countries (p.487), and that the individuals who tend to overestimate the share of immigrants their country gets compared to others, tend to perceive more negative consequences from the presence of immigrants and to prefer lower levels of immigration to their country (see also Martinez i Coma and Duval-Hernandez 2009).

Schlueter and Scheepers (2010) find an even more complex pattern of relationships in a study of the Dutch case. Objective immigrant group size is related with perceived group size, but not with

the perceived level of group threat. But perceived threat *is* related to perceived outgroup size, disapproval of immigrants and discriminatory intentions. Altogether, Schlueter and Scheepers conclude that '*contextual and individual-level characteristics are important for anti-outgroup sentiments*' (p.285) and that significant indirect associations between outgroup size and anti-immigrant attitudes exist. According to McLaren (2003), intimate contact with minorities reduces preferences for expulsion of immigrants. The size of immigration to a country influences perceptions of threat, but not attitudes as such, and contact mediates the effect of outgroup size at the individual level.

In fact, in addition to contact theory, an altogether different theoretical mechanism for the effect of the presence of an outgroup, like an immigration community, on the attitudes of the host group and intergroup relations has been proposed. The idea is that, rather than understanding, contact fosters competition. Under the loose label 'group threat theory', this mechanism has been studied theoretically (Blalock 1967, Bobo 1999, Quillian 1995) and empirically (for example Semyonov et al. 2004, Wagner et al. 2006), but with inconclusive results. Francois et Magni-Breton (2013), for example, find that both contact and competition are related to tolerance to immigrants in France in a robust and stable manner, but the influence of competition is stronger in places with a relatively high, proportion of immigrants.

Theoretically, the local presence of immigrants can easily magnify the anti-immigration hostility of the local population. The arrival of large groups of immigrants puts pressure on and increases competition for the public services in the area, like (social) housing, public administration, utilities, parking spaces, etc. It might lead to housing segregation, with those from the locals who can afford it, leaving the immigrant-targeted areas. The presence of immigrants might also increase crime and petty nuisances in the neighborhoods. In short, there are good reasons to suspect that the local presence of immigrants can work to increase rather than decrease xenophobic attitudes and the associated vote for radical right parties.

The size of the outgroup is supposed to play a crucial role as a driver of intergroup competition (Blalock 1967, Quillian 1995, Scheepers et al., 2002). But as we already noted above, real outgroup size is not straightforwardly related to perceived group size (see also Semyonov et al. 2004), and its relationship with threat and behaviours is far from simple, linear, and unconditional.

One of the reasons that the aggregate-level relationships are complex, is the fact that different people react in different ways to the presence of, and contact with, outgroup members, and immigrants in particular (individual-level heterogeneity). Some of the individual-

level factors that have been found to correlate with whether people perceive outgroups as threats are socio-economic position (e.g., Gijssberts et al., 2004), education, and religiosity (Scheepers et al., 2002b). More generally, feelings of threat can arise both from concerns related to economic well-being (competition for resources) and to identity (cultural capital). Individual-level opinions about immigrants are also influenced by group cues (who the immigrants are) by triggering feelings of anxiety among the host population (Brader et al. 2008). Generalizing these insights, Davidov et al. (2008) identify two value dimensions - self-transcendence and conservation - that are significantly related with attitudes towards immigration.

Altogether, it is difficult to form unidirectional hypotheses about the link between outgroup size (of immigrant communities) and anti-immigration attitudes and behaviors at the individual level, and even more so at an aggregate level. On balance, individuals who experience direct contact with immigrants might be less likely to have strong anti-immigrant dispositions, but the strength and even the direction of the link depends on characteristics of the outgroup member, the ingroup member, and the nature of the contact.

Moving from the individual to a higher level of aggregation, the positive individual contact effects are likely to be trumped by the effects of immigration presence threat which in their turn are related to the subjective, and more weakly, to the objective size of the group. As few members of the host community would experience direct contact, the indirect effects of presence would start to dominate. Although plausible, such a view does not receive firm unequivocal empirical support.

For example, Schlueter and Wagner (2008) argue, based on data from the European Social Survey, that when we compare sub-national European regions, a larger size of immigrant population in the region increases perceived group threat *and* intergroup contact. Assuming that contact works to decrease threat, the aggregate level effect must be a combination of the two, but the author provide no estimate of the net effect. According to Markaki and Longhi (2013), regions with higher proportion of (non-EU) immigrants and with higher unemployment among the immigrants have individuals with more anti-immigrant attitudes (unemployment among natives in the regions has no effect). Note however that both these studies are based on rather high levels of spatial aggregation (the statistical NUTS-1 and NUTS-2 levels).

An analysis based on instrumental variable estimation finds that in Austria the presence of immigrants has a quantitatively important and statistically significant negative impact on citizens' voting patterns at

the neighborhood level (Halla et al. 2012). More precisely, the authors estimate that 1 percent increase in the presence of immigrants brings a 0.4 percent increase in the vote for the Austrian radical right party.

When looking at these relationships at the district level in Germany, Wagner et al. (2006) find that 'the proportion of ethnic minority members in a population is linked to a reduction of prejudice in the majority' (p.386). DiGiusto and Jolly (2009) also find that larger immigrant populations dampen xenophobic attitudes in the UK. Analyzing the Spanish situation, Martineze i Goma and Duval-Hernandez (2009) find that [r]espondents in provinces with high immigration and a high proportion of Moroccans wanted lower levels of immigration, though having contact with immigrants reduces the negative attitudes toward them. Individuals overestimating the levels of immigration are more prone to have negative attitudes toward immigrants (see also Eschandel et al. (2009) who conclude that perceived threat is a consistent predictor of exclusionism over time, while the proportional presence of immigrants has no impact (also on the basis of material from Spain).

The precise level of aggregation used in the analysis seems to matter. Looking at the link between outgroup size and votes for the French Front National (FN), Della Posta (2013) concludes that the relationship changes depending on the level of analysis: 'At the department...level, large immigrant populations are associated with higher FN vote totals, while t the commune... level, however, large immigrant populations are instead associated with lower FN vole totals' (p.249).

Contextual moderators of the link between immigration presence and attitudes have also been proposed. For example, Francois et Magni-Breton (2013) find the the positive effects of contact are stronger in place with lower unemployment.

Anti-immigration attitudes and support for integration

While the link between outgroup size (immigration presence) and xenophobic attitudes of the host population is theoretically uncertain and empirical understudied in the context of the EU, the link between anti-immigration attitudes and public support for the EU is well-established. Altogether, individuals who disapprove, fear, and feel threatened by immigration are much more likely to oppose further European integration and to evaluate negatively the EU (De Vreese and Boomgaarden 2005, Boomgaarden et al. 2011, van Spanje and de Vreese 2011). It should be noted however that concerns about immigration decrease not only support for the EU but political trust more generally (McLaren 2012).

De Vreese and Boomgaarden (2005) find that anti-immigration sentiments, along with economic considerations and the evaluation of domestic governments are in fact the strongest predictors of attitudinal support for integration. In their influential article, Hooghe and Marks (2005) link attitudes towards immigration to the broader identity dimension which is deemed of primary importance for public opinion on European integration. Boomgaarden et al. (2011) show that (as of 2008 in the Netherlands) anti-immigration attitudes are strongly and negatively related to all five aspects of attitudes towards the EU they identify: affection, identity, performance, utilitarianism, and strengthening. Conversely, members of minorities (including immigrants) are themselves more likely to support European integration (Dowley et al. 2011).

Anti-immigration attitudes are related to general support for European integration, and to specific support for EU involvement in particular areas, like immigration policy. Lahav (2004) finds that citizens have quite accurate estimates of the real levels of immigration within their countries and that these perceptions constrain public support for harmonization of EU immigration policy. Accordingly, Luedtke (2005) concludes that individuals with stronger national versus European identities are more likely to oppose EU control over immigration policy.

Anti-immigration attitudes are related to attitudes towards EU enlargement as well. Lubbers and Jaspers in particular argue that 'The low educated in particular would feature more nationalistic attitudes and consequently express stronger fears about deepening EU integration and increased immigration from new EU member countries.' (2011, p.25). Azrout et al. (2013) discover that having anti-immigrant attitudes strongly predicts opposition to the prospects of Turkish membership in the EU (see also De Vreese et al. 2008), and that average national opposition is related to the size of the Turkish immigrant community in the country. In contrast, looking only at aggregate country-level data, Dixon (2010, p.151) argues that the number of immigrants did not directly nor indirectly shape attitudes towards the entry of individual candidate states during the Eastern enlargement, but the finding does not preclude the existence of an individual-level relationship.

The impact of anti-immigration attitudes is not confined to opinions but influences voting decisions as well. For example, van Spanje and de Vreese (2011) discover that 'anti-immigration attitudes made the leftist vote more Eurosceptic and the rightist vote even more so' (p.418) at the 2009 elections for the European Parliament. Similarly, in the context of national referenda on European issues, anti-

immigrant attitudes have affected individuals' tendencies to support the EU enlargement (de Vreese and Boomgaarden 2005, but see Binzer Hobold and Brouard 2011 on the French referendum on the EU constitution).

Contextual moderators of the relationship between immigration attitudes and EU support have also been proposed. For example, Balestrini et al. 2011 find that the impact of levels of immigration on EU support is conditioned by unemployment levels, while Garry and Tilley (2009) state that a host country's wealth 'increases the salience of economic xenophobia as a driver of [Euro]sceptical attitudes'.

Adapting theory to the context of CEE immigration in the EU

The general theoretical considerations and empirical findings summarized above need to be gauged to the specific case we study - immigration from CEE in the 'old' member states from Western and Southern Europe during the mid-2000s.

For several reasons, the empirical context we focus on can be seen as a rather unlikely case to observe negative effects of immigration presence. First, the cultural distance between the European citizens on both sides of the Berlin Wall is certainly small compared to the distance between the 'native' population of Western Europe and the large groups of African and Asian immigrants that have taken residence in Europe since the 1960s. Second, many Western European societies have long experiences with immigration, so it is perhaps unlikely that any new arrivals can have additional impact. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the CEE countries were in the process of becoming full members of the EU. In the EU, the freedom of movement and work is a fundamental right, so labour migration within the Union *should* be viewed differently than labour migration from other countries. In fact, as some prior evidence shows (McLaren 2001) and the empirical analysis below will demonstrate, the citizens in the 'old' member states do not actually distinguish between labour migration from CEE and from non-EU members and, if anything, seem more sensitive, at least when it comes to EU attitudes, to the former rather than to the latter. The framing of the Eastern enlargement in Western media, which portrayed the accession of CEE post-communist states mainly as a favor the West is doing to the East and not as a deal with benefits to all sides (and the relative lack of attention to the topic), can be suspected to be at least partly responsible for these predispositions of the citizens in the 'old' member states.

The numbers of immigrants from CEE who arrived in Western and

Southern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall till the mid 2000s were substantial and the newcomers became publicly visible as a group in many of the 'old' member states. Moreover, their settlement has been uneven not only between different countries, but also inside the host countries as well. Consequently, we hypothesise that the *effect* of this immigration presence will vary not only between, but also *within* these states. A short example can clarify the mechanisms we consider to be at play.

Starting in the late 1990s, several thousands of Polish and other CEE immigrants arrived in the small *Bollenstreek* region in Holland (mainly in the municipalities of Noordwijkerhout, Katwijk, and Hillegom), attracted by the possibilities for agricultural work. The arrivals soon received considerable local and national media attention, partly because of the problems and nuisances they were accused of causing. The locals were especially troubled by the appalling living conditions of the Poles (many initially set up camps in the nearby forests), by the lack of parking places because of the Polish cars, by increasing petty crime in the area, and so on. In our view, this concentrated local presence of immigrants from CEE should have effects on the attitudes of Dutch citizens at three levels. First, locals who have direct and sustained contact with the immigrants (e.g. employers or doctors) might experience a decrease in existing xenophobic and Eurosceptic attitudes. Second, the national media framing and discussions of the issue (which were rather negative) would increase antipathy towards CEE immigrants and, as a result, European integration in the population as a whole. Third, the *local* communities living in the municipalities where the immigrants settled (apart from the few individuals who have direct contact) would experience an even bigger increase in xenophobic attitudes and Euroscepticism because, in addition to the national framing effect, they directly experience increased competition for local public goods and the threats from the presence of a relatively big and unfamiliar outgroup. So, on average, the locals in Noordwijkerhout would still be expected to exhibit lower support for further European integration than other Dutch citizens, despite the common national-level effects.

This example illustrates the logic behind our main hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: At the regional level within countries, the more CEE immigrants present, the lower the average support for European integration among the local population.

The strength of this relationship itself, and not only the absolute level of Euroscepticism, would be expected to vary from one member state to another due to cross-national differences in how Enlargement and immigration are portrayed by national politicians and the media.

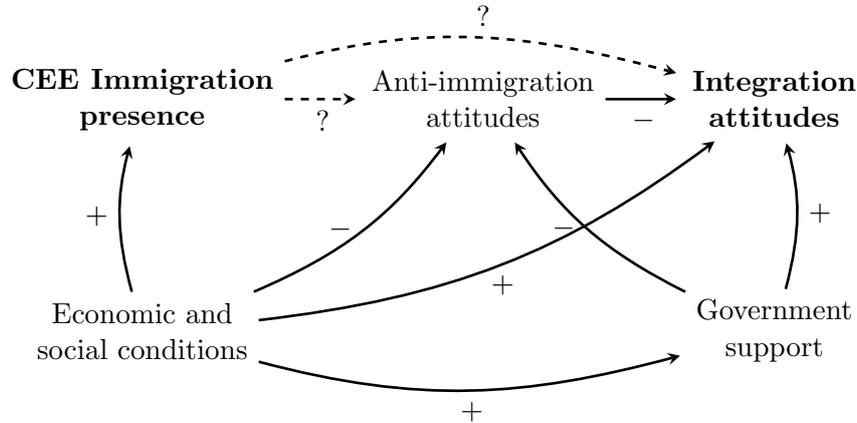


Figure 1: **Causal diagram**

Furthermore, as suggested by the existing literature reviewed above, economic conditions, like the level of unemployment, might also moderate the relationship across and within countries and over time as well.

The link between immigration presence and support for integration is supposed to be mediated mainly through a change in anti-immigration attitudes. It is conceivable, however, that the two are directly related as well. That is, the local presence of a large group of CEE immigrants can decrease support for the EU even if it does not increase xenophobic attitudes, but affects considerations, for example, about the relative economic costs and benefits of integration.

Putting it all together: a tentative model

The theoretical considerations discussed above are summarized in the following causal graphs (Figure 1 and Figure 2). Arrows indicate hypothesized causal links, and the absence of arrows implies the lack of links between the variables. The graph summarizes the relevant causal assumptions we make and is useful for identifying the variables we have to include in the empirical analysis in order to isolate the effect of immigration presence on European integration attitudes. The dotted lines represent the hypothesized links which we want to establish. The supposed direction of the causal link is shown with a plus or minus sign (or a question mark if uncertain).

Figure 1 includes the mediating influence of anti-immigration attitudes, while Figure 2 focuses only on the effects that we can measure in the empirical analyses.

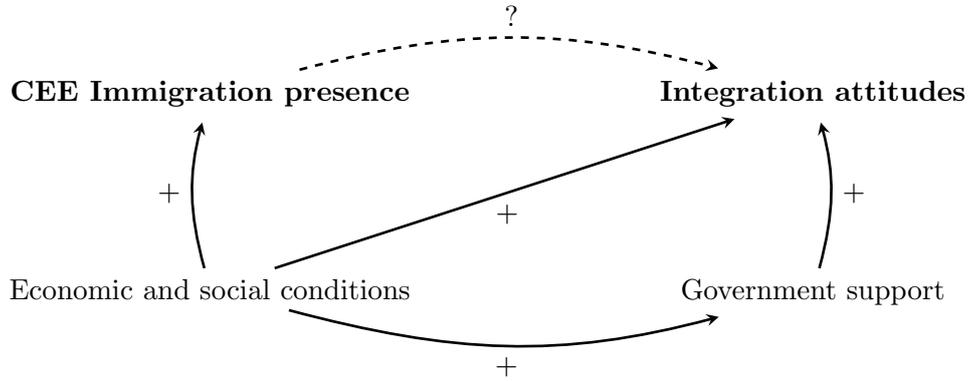


Figure 2: **Causal diagram (simplified)**

Economic and social conditions are supposed to influence the settlement decisions of the immigrants, who would be attracted by more prosperous localities with lower unemployment and more highly-educated population. But as these factors have also been shown to influence attitudes towards the EU, they become potential omitted variables that confound the main relationship we are interested in. Hence, we control for them in the empirical analysis, and we use the size of the pre-existing non-European immigrant community as an additional proxy for the attractiveness of a region.

Incumbent government support is a factor that we include in the models because of the specific setting of our empirical tests, namely the referenda on the European Constitution. Even if this variable does not influence immigration settlement patterns - hence, it is not a confounder - measuring it can help in the estimation of the main relationship we are interested in, because it is a strong predictor of the referendum vote, so controlling for it can take away additional variation in the outcome variable (EU support).

3 Research design

Level of analysis

The theoretical processes outlined in the previous section play out at the community (regional) level. While contact and attitudes are individual-level phenomena, we are interested in the impact of local immigration presence (outgroup size) - which is an aggregate-level phenomenon - on the *average* attitudes of the host communities. At the same time, the state is at a too high level of aggregation as a unit of analysis for our research purposes. We expect variation *within* states in the average attitudes in particular communities (regions), and we expect that the variation will be related to the size of *local* immigration presence. Therefore, the level of analysis for the empirical part of our study is defined as the (sub-national) *region*.

To remind, our aim is not to test contact theory as such, but to establish how direct contact and the indirect effects of immigrant proximity affect attitudes towards European integration. Since the size of the local immigrant population is constant for all individuals living in the same region although individual contact may vary, the individual is not a proper unit of analysis for our purposes. Having individual-level data for the persons sampled within regions would allow for the testing of additional hypotheses (for example, whether within a region the individuals who have had direct contact with immigrants experience a different attitude change than those who only experience indirect effects), but we are not aware of any data source that contains individual-level data on contact with CEE immigrants and attitudes towards immigrants and European integration for the citizens of the EU member states from Western and Southern Europe.

While the appropriate level of analysis is aggregate and smaller than a state, it is difficult to define more precisely at which particular scale of regional aggregation the empirical study should be conducted. At smaller regional levels of aggregation - for example, neighbourhoods - the direct contact effects will play a bigger role vis-à-vis the indirect effects of immigration presence. But once the regional unit gets too big, the direct effects would almost completely disappear, the indirect effects of *local* immigration presence will get diluted, and the only indirect effects that would remain would be the nation-wide ones shaped by political discourse and national policies.

In any case, the precise choice of level of analysis is very much constrained by the available data. When having a choice, we have opted for the lowest level of aggregation possible. In effect, the level of analysis differs in the four countries we study, ranging from *municipalities* in The Netherlands (with a mean of 41, 000 and a maximum

of 790, 000 inhabitants), to *counties* in Ireland (mean of 97, 000 and a maximum of 137, 000), to *departments* in France (mean of 669, 000 and a maximum of 2.6 million), to *provinces* in Spain (mean of 828, 000 and a maximum of 5.8 million). Details are available in Table 1. Overall, the relationship we are looking for would be more likely to be found at the smaller levels of aggregation.

Country selection

We study all countries for which we could obtain recent 1) reliable regional-level estimates of the presence of CEE immigrants, and 2) representative regional-level estimates of attitudes towards EU integration. In practice, the second requirement limits the available choice to the three countries that held referenda on the proposed EU constitution in 2005 - Spain, France, and The Netherlands (Luxembourg excluded due to its size), and Ireland, which held a referendum on the successor of the proposed Constitution - the Lisbon Treaty - in 2008. Other voting data, while available at different levels of aggregation, would not allow for isolating opinions towards the future course of European integration from other ideological and political attitudes and orientations. The usual sources of data on attitudes towards integration and the EU - the multi-national Eurobarometer surveys - do not allow for the construction of representative regional-level aggregates (beyond the very large NUTS-2 level) from the individual data they provide.

Luckily, the four countries for which we happen to have data have all experienced substantial and reasonably-well documented levels of immigration from CEE (with a significant degree of within-country differences in where the immigrants settle) and represent a considerable range of attitudes towards EU integration, with the Spanish population being most EU-friendly, and the Dutch showing the least enthusiasm (at least for the Constitution).

Data and operationalization

In this subsection of the paper we will briefly describe the operationalization of the main variables used in the empirical analyses. Details are available in the Appendix accompanying the main text and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1.

The outcome we model - support for European integration - is operationalized as the percentage of local support for the European Constitution/Treaty of Lisbon at the national referenda in 2005/6 [*EU support*]. While at these plebiscites the citizens expressed approval or

disapproval for a particular *document* rather than for further European integration in the abstract, the two are strongly related, so that we can use the former as a proxy for the latter. The national referenda on the Constitution were also embedded in local politics and, to a different degree in different states, have been used by citizens to express support or opposition to the governing parties (which supported the Constitution). Therefore, we include the support for the governing parties at the time of the Constitution in the region as a covariate in the analysis [*government support*].

The main explanatory variable we are interested in is operationalized as the relative size of the local CEE immigration community. More precisely, we calculate the share of registered immigrants (as of 2005/6) from the ten CEE countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 in a region from the total population of the region [*CEE immigrants*].

We use two variables to capture the possible confounding effects economic and social condition - unemployment and education levels in the region. For the precise definitions and data sources, see the appendix. In the case of The Netherlands, we also control for the income and average level of religiosity of the municipalities.

An important covariate we include in the analyses is the size of the pre-existing local non-European immigrant community [*other immigrants*]. The inclusion of this variable serves a double purpose. First, it provides an additional indirect control for the economic and social attractiveness of a region. Second, it allows us to isolate the *additional* effect of the arrival of 'new' CEE immigrants from a possible effect of existing (non-European) immigration presence on anti-immigration attitudes and support for European integration.

Method of analysis

Our main empirical strategy for the identification of the effect of CEE immigration on European integration support is through conditioning - we build multivariate regression models in which the covariates included block the potential influence of the likely confounders. The remaining association between CEE immigration and EU support in the data can be interpreted in causal terms to the extent that we have successfully blocked all confounded paths between these two variables and we can rule out reverse causality (endogeneity).

We run the analyses *within* each country rather than *pool* the data from the four countries in a multi-level model, because we expect significant differences between the countries in the absolute levels of CEE immigration, attitudes towards European integration, and an additional set of possible confounders which would be very hard to control

for, like the relative attractiveness of countries or the national-level salience of the immigration issue. Furthermore, the precise definitions of our the covariates differ across countries which prohibits pooling the data. In any case, using four separate within-country analyses rather than one pooled multi-level model provides for a more stringent test of our hypotheses. The empirical results presented below are driven only by between-region within-country associations rather than cross-country differences for which a causal effect of immigration on EU support would have been much harder to identify given the many additional possible confounders.

For each country, we use a multivariate linear regression model to estimate the effect of CEE immigrants. Theory does not imply, strictly speaking, a linear form of the association between outgroup size and integration attitudes, so, as an alternative, we estimated generalized additive models (GAM) as well, which allow us to relax the linearity assumption. The GAM indicated deviations from linearity, but no systematic pattern. Given the relatively small number of observations, the GAM estimates are also rather sensitive. Therefore, we choose to focus on the empirical findings based on the more familiar linear multivariate regressions.

Country and level	Min	Mean	Max	St.dev.
Ireland, 42 Counties [LAU-1]				
EU support (%)	34.95	46.03	63.46	6.80
CEE immigrants (%)	0.62	2.07	5.05	0.86
Other immigrants (%)	1.40	4.09	12.95	2.68
Gov. support (%)	25.68	48.99	63.44	7.85
Unemployment (%)	4.07	7.27	11.93	2.00
Education	9050	19087	41291	7910
Popul. (thousands)	67	97	137	22
France, 96 Departments [NUTS-3]				
EU support (%)	31.00	43.56	66.00	6.27
CEE immigrants (%)	0.10	0.73	2.75	0.61
Other immigrants (%)	0.43	3.57	21.51	3.25
Gov. support (%)	14.00	19.77	34.00	3.42
Unemployment (%)	5.20	8.33	12.50	1.57
Education (%)	14.30	22.13	55.00	6.23
Popul. (thousands)	81	671	2,618	503
Spain, 51 Provinces [NUTS-3]				
EU support (%)	56.46	79.10	88.53	7.54
CEE immigrants (%)	0.00	1.33	5.88	1.34
Other immigrants (%)	0.95	5.73	69.05	9.46
Gov. support (%)	26.71	42.35	59.35	7.44
Unemployment (%)	4.71	10.42	20.00	3.63
Education (%)	9.83	19.83	33.58	5.00
Popul. (thousands)	67	828	5,821	1,046
The Netherlands, 466 Municipalities [LAU-2]				
EU support (%)	8.37	38.05	62.38	7.39
CEE immigrants (%)	0.03	0.26	1.37	0.15
Other immigrants (%)	1.40	6.12	34.90	4.08
Gov. support (%)	16.28	55.14	82.45	9.14
Unemployment	0.51	1.39	3.04	0.45
Income	8.90	12.74	20.80	1.35
Education	0.09	0.37	2.54	0.23
Religiosity	0.00	0.13	1.00	0.34
Popul. (thousands)	1	41	790	64

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

4 Immigration and integration attitudes: empirical analysis

Country-level multivariate linear regressions

Table 2 presents the estimates from the four country-level regressions. The table lists the coefficients, their standard errors, and levels of statistical significance. All variables have been z-transformed (centered to have a mean of zero and divided by their standard deviation), so the coefficients are directly interpretable as the expected standard deviation change in EU support for a standard deviation change in the share of CEE immigrants, Unemployment, etc. Thus, the relative size of the coefficients in Table 2 is also comparable across variables.

Variable	Ireland	France	Spain	The Netherlands
CEE immigrants	-0.23* (0.10)	-0.13* (0.05)	-0.11 (0.13)	-0.08* (0.04)
Government support	0.19* (0.09)	0.22*** (0.06)	0.33* (0.14)	0.45*** (0.04)
Unemployment	-0.59*** (0.09)	-0.42*** (0.06)	0.12 (0.14)	0.14*** (0.04)
Other immigrants	0.18 (0.13)	0.04 (0.07)	0.06 (0.12)	0.01 (0.05)
Education	0.35** (0.12)	0.64*** (0.07)	-0.47*** (0.12)	0.28*** (0.03)
Income				0.39*** (0.04)
Religiosity				-0.83*** (0.10)
Adjusted R ²	0.74	0.78	0.54	0.63
Observations	42	96	51	449

*All variables z-transformed. Significance levels: 0 < *** < 0.001 < ** < 0.01 < * < 0.05*

Table 2: **Results from linear regression models of EU support in four countries**

The regression coefficient for the size of local CEE immigrant presence is negative in Ireland, France, Spain, and The Netherlands. On average, net of other effects, regions with a higher number of CEE immigrants have expressed less support for the EU Constitution in all

four countries for which we have data. The association is statistically significant at the 5 percent level in three out of the four countries (Spain being the exception). The substantive size of the effect ranges between 0.08 (The Netherlands) and 0.23 (Ireland) which implies that one standard deviation increase in the share of CEE immigrants in the region decreases on average EU support in the region by approximately 1.5 percentage points in Ireland and 0.6-0.7 percentage points in the other three countries.

The lack of significance of the effect of CEE immigrants in the Spanish case is not really surprising given the very high absolute level of EU support in the country and the high level of aggregation - the Spanish provinces are on average the largest regional units used in our analyses.

The statistical models reported in Table 2 have reasonable fit (adjusted R^2 between 0.54 and 0.78) and the effects of the included covariates are in the expected direction. It is worth noting that the size of the pre-existing non-European immigrant community in the region is not negatively associated with EU support in any of the four countries - the estimated coefficients are positive and statistically insignificant. This indicates that it is specifically the new immigrants from CEE that influence the European integration attitudes of the host societies in Western and Southern Europe, and not the pre-existing burden of (non-Western) immigration as such.

The results of the reported statistical models indicate that immigration from the new member states has eroded support for integration among the citizens of the old member states. But it should be pointed out that the empirical results are sensitive to the exact specification of the models (covariates included, form of the association, etc.)

5 Conclusion

We set out to evaluate the impact of immigration from CEE on the support for further European integration expressed by the people in Western and Southern Europe. Our empirical analyses suggest that immigration has indeed undermined public support for integration. In all four countries we study, aggregate support for the European constitution is negatively associated with the number of CEE immigrants present in the region.

While our results are suggestive, we would caution against a strong causal interpretation of the findings. The models we employ try to isolate the impact of CEE immigration conditional on a number of potential confounders. Nevertheless, given the complex web of relationships between the social, economic, and attitudinal variables we study and the relatively small number of observations in each of our analyses, one should see our conclusion about the possible causal link between immigration and integration as preliminary.

Obviously, more research is needed to probe the generalizability of our findings beyond the four countries we study. Other Western and Southern European states have also received substantial numbers of immigrants from CEE after EU Enlargement, and in many of these states support for Europe has dramatically declined within the same period. Whether the temporal coincidence is more than an accident of history remains to be determined, but our results suggest that there is a plausible set of causal arguments that links immigration and attitudes towards immigration and the EU.

A major difficulty for future research is the lack of representative local level data on the social and political phenomena discussed here. Recent EU legislative action might alleviate the problem of having reliable and comparable data on immigration levels at the local level and by country of origin [reference]. For measuring local and regional level data on social attitudes (towards immigration and the EU) one could turn to the recently-developed technique for estimating local level averages from national data (which is readily available) with the help of multilevel modeling (Park et al. 2004).

The conclusions we offer concern the short-term effects of new immigration. Extending the research over longer time periods might uncover different and more subtle effects of changing immigration levels. Prolonged contact with the immigrants from the East might help forge a common European identity but it could also provoke a parochial drive for national isolation.

At a more general level, our study sheds light on the inherent tension between deepening and widening of European integration. The

Eastern Enlargement and the (still imperfect) freedom of movement and work it has brought to the people from Eastern Europe have widened tremendously the geographical scope of the union. But if indeed new immigration erodes support for integration, as our study suggests, the widening might indirectly put the brakes on further deepening of the European project.

At the same time, external events, like the financial crisis, as well as the internal dynamics of integration pose challenges for which deepening seems to be the only answer. How the EU is going to reconcile these conflicting pressures remains to be seen. One potential answer to the dilemma suggested by our study is to wait for better economic times which might loosen public antipathy towards immigration which in turn suppresses support for integration.

It is more than a little ironic that the dream of free movement, work and settlement in Europe seems to be undermined precisely by its gradual realization. Economic migration from one part of the continent to another is not only conceivable but in fact necessary if the EU's economy is to be truly integrated. For many years after the creation of the single market, mass economic migration within old Europe remained only a theoretical possibility. But when the countries from the East joined, the possibility rapidly became a reality for many states in the West, and for some in the South, of the continent. And the reaction of the host societies has not been a very welcoming one. In fact, in response, societies in Western Europe might have turned against the dream of free movement itself.

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Appendix

This appendix provides additional details about the operationalization and data sources of the variables used in the analysis.

Ireland

EU support is measured as the percentage of votes in favour at the national Referendum on EU Constitutional Treaty conducted in Ireland in 2008. Data per *Dail* constituency is available from Christopher Took and Sen Donnelly: <http://electionsireland.org/>).

CEE immigration is measured by the number of persons whose place of birth is either Poland and/or Lithuania. The data is based on Census 2006 per *Dail* constituency. There is no available information for citizens born in other CEE countries, so we take this as a proxy of CEE levels of immigration. We transformed the numbers into a percentage of the total population in the district.

Population is based on the 2006 Census and captures the persons, usually resident and present in the State on Census Night, as classified by place of birth as percentage of total population. The data is available from the Central Statistics Office of Ireland: <http://census.cso.ie/Census/ReportFolders/ReportFolders.aspx>.

Other immigration is measured by the number of 'Persons usually resident and present in the State on Census Night 2006', whose place of birth is neither a EU member state, nor the UK and falls into 'the rest of the world' in the classification of the Central Statistical office in Ireland. It is taken for our purposes as a percentage of the total population counted.

Government support is computed as the sum of the votes for the three parties forming the coalition government in the 2007 *Dail* Election as a percentage of total number of votes cast. Data is available from the European Election Database (see also Christopher Took and Sen Donnelly: <http://electionsireland.org/>).

Unemployment data is available also from the the 2006 Census 2006 and captures persons unemployed in all occupations and both genders. We compute the measure as the percentage of unemployed from the total number of persons at work and unemployed. Data available at: <http://census.cso.ie/census/ReportFolders/ReportFolders.aspx>.

Education is measured by the number of persons, males and females aged 15 years and over in each *Dail* electoral district who completed a third level degree or higher as of 2006. Data is available at the Central Statistics Office (CSO).

France

EU support is measured as the percentage of favorable votes at the national Referendum on EU Constitutional Treaty in 2005. Regional level results are available at: <http://cdsp.sciences-po.fr/AE.php>.

CEE immigration is measured as the percentage of foreign populations, whose country of birth is one of the new EU10 member states. Additional calculations were needed to capture the number of citizens, whose country of birth is a new member states as not all are available (calculation: EU10 CEE = EU26 - EU14). We take the percentage of CEE foreigners out of the total population as of 2010, given that this is the only available data at departmental level in France.

Population data has been obtained by the French national statistical institute Institut national de la statistique et des etudes conomiques (Insee): http://insee.fr/fr/themes/theme.asp?theme=2&sous_theme=5&nivgeo=99&type=2&produit=0K.

Other immigration is measured by the number of foreign born persons, whose country of birth is outside Europe and/or EU as of 2010. The measurement we take is a sum of the numbers of foreigners born in one of the 30 countries for which separate data is available and are non-member states. Among those are, for example, Tunisia, Russia, Sri Lank, Turkey, Armenia, Vietnam, Serbia, etc. Data is obtained from Insee. The calculated number is transformed into percentage of the total population per department.

Government support is measured by taking the percentage of votes for Chirac (UMP) in the 1st Round of the 2002 Presidential Election. Data is available at: <http://cdsp.sciences-po.fr/AE.php>.

Unemployment is measured as the percentage of unemployed out of the total workforce as of the 1st Quarter of 2005. Data is available and obtained from the French statistical institute (INSEE): http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/detail.asp?ref_id=ir-eds2009&page=irweb/eds2009/dd/eds2009_chomage.htm.

Education is measured as the percentage of citizens, above the age of 15, who have obtained a highest level of diploma in 2010 (short-terms) summed up with the percentage of citizens, above the age of 15, who have obtained highest level of diploma in 2010 (long-terms). Entries for this variable are not available for 2005, but there is available data for 1999. Data per department is available from the INSEE: http://www.insee.fr/fr/bases-de-donnees/default.asp?page=recensement/resultats/doc/conseils_utilisation.htm.

Spain

EU support is measured, based on the percentage of favorable votes at the national Referendum on EU Constitutional Treaty in 2005. Data is obtained from the European Elections Database and the Ministerio Del Interior (Ministry of the Interior): <http://www.elecciones.mir.es/>.

CEE immigration is measured as the number of citizens, legally residing in the region, whose country of nationality is one of the CEE countries. The sum of all citizens born in EU10 MS is calculated (EU10= BG+SI+Sk+EE+HU+LV+LT+CZ+PL+RO) and then transformed into a percentage of the total population. Data is obtained from the national statistical institute (Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE)) <http://www.ine.es/jaxi/menu.do?type=pcaxis&path=%2Ft20%2Fe260&file=inebase&L=1>.

Population is gathered as of 1st of January 2005 and captures all the citizens, legally residing in the region by country of nationality including Spain. <http://www.ine.es/jaxi/menu.do?type=pcaxis&path=%2Ft20%2Fe260&file=inebase&L=1>.

Other immigration is measured by number of citizens, legally residing in the region, whose nationality is neither EU10, nor EU14 as of 1st of January 2005. The number is readily available in the INE data, and we transformed it into a percentage of the total population.

Government support is measured as the percentage of votes for PSOE party (in government in 2005) at the 2004 Parliamentary Election. The data is available from the Ministerio Del Interior (Ministry of the Interior): <http://www.elecciones.mir.es/>.

Unemployment Data on the unemployment rates in Spains provinces is available from the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE). We take the unemployment rate in the first quarter of 2005. Data has been gathered by the statistical institute through Economically Active Population Survey and is available at: <http://www.ine.es/jaxiBD/menu.do?L=1&divi=EPA&his=0&type=db>.

Education is measured as the percentage of people who have completed a higher educational degree either a Master or a Doctoral degree out of the total population of citizens per region. This does not include citizens who are now in the process of completing their degree. The data is taken for the year 2005.

The Netherlands

EU support is measured as the percentage of voters who answered In favor at the national Referendum on EU Constitutional Treaty in 2005. The data has been obtained from the Dutch national election

database KIESRAAD (<https://www.kiesraad.nl/>). The question towards the Dutch public was formulated as follows: Are you in favor of or against approval by the Netherlands of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe?

CEE immigration - the percentage of citizens out of the total population, who were residing in the Netherlands as of 1 January 2005 and whose country of birth is one of the CEE Countries. An immigrant is defined as any person, who is legally residing in the Netherlands for more than 4 months and is registered in the respective municipality and whose country of birth is different from the Netherlands. Since the number of EU foreigners is readily given and it includes all the new 10 MS as of 2004, we subtracted from it the sum of the numbers of foreigners from the old member states, for which separate information is provided. The number of immigrants from NMS equals the number of EU24 (excluding NL) foreigners minus the sum of the numbers of foreigners from Austria, Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, UK, Portugal, Denmark and Greece. The remaining number is transformed into percentage out of the total population.

Population - Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) as of 1 January 2005.

Other immigration is measured by the total percentage of citizens, whose country of birth is not a EU member state nor Bulgarian and Romania as of 1 January 2005. The numbers are readily available from CBS, and needed only to be transformed into the percentage out of the total population.

Government support the government at the time of the 2005 Referendum was a coalition government of three parties - CDA - Christian Democratic Appeal, VVD - People's Party for Freedom and D66 - Democrats 66, since no party received the majority of votes in the 2003 parliamentary election (source: KIESRAAD). The sum of the percentage of votes each party received gives the measure for incumbent government support. Data from: <https://www.kiesraad.nl/>.

Unemployment: an indicator of unemployment levels per municipality are the unemployment benefits provided by each municipality. The data is downloaded from CBS for the year 2005 and is given in numbers of unemployment benefits according to the Unemployment Act (WW) (CBS). In order to make it consistent we transformed the number into a percentage out of the total population of the municipality. The measurement adopted in our dataset is the percentage (0-100) of unemployment benefits out of the total population per municipality.

Education is measured by the number of citizens holding a Masters degree and/or Doctoral degree, summed with the number of citizens holding a higher educational Bachelor degree, transformed into a per-

centage out of the total population. Data has been obtained as of 2005 and is provided by the CBS on municipality level.

Income is tapped by average disposable income data, which is based on official records from the Ministry of Finance and the Dutch municipalities (GBA). Data is provided for previous year and consists of the average personal earnings after the reduction of taxes and shows the average personal income left for spending and saving from CBS. It covers citizens who receive income throughout the whole year for all 52 weeks, including the self-employed. For these reasons 2006 data was downloaded, since it summarizes the average personal income per municipality for 2005. The average disposable income is given in thousands of Euros for each municipality.

Religiosity is measured via a dummy variable (0-1) taken from the percentage of citizens who have voted for the SGP in the 2003 parliamentary election (where 5 % voted = 1, and 5% voted = 0). Data is available from the KIESRAAD database: <https://www.kiesraad.nl/>.

Abbreviations

BE: Belgium, BG: Bulgaria, CZ: Czech Republic, DK: Denmark, DE: Germany, EE: Estonia, IE: Ireland, GR: Greece, ES: Spain, FR: France, IT: Italy, CY: Cyprus, LV: Latvia, LT: Lithuania, LU: Luxembourg, HU: Hungary, MT: Malta, NL: Netherlands, AT: Austria, PL: Poland, PT: Portugal, RO: Romania, SI: Slovenia, SK: Slovakia, FI: Finland, SE: Sweden, UK: United Kingdom.