

Friend or Foe? Attitudes Towards Immigration from Other European Union Countries

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Over the decades Europe has become a destination for different groups of migrants, including mobile citizens from the European Union Member States. At the same time European citizens have become more mobile with a growing number of cross-border practices connecting them to places and people abroad through migration, travel, social networks or consumption practices. The main contribution of this study is in analysing to what extent processes of Europeanization, at an individual and country level, matter for sentiments towards immigration. Data suggest that social globalization processes may produce a sense of threat, but individual transnationalism seems to provide a remedy against prejudice.

Introduction

European citizenship introduced with the Maastricht Treaty, brought with it the right to move freely and reside anywhere in the EU. Recently we observed how intra-EU migration has become a choice for many Central and Eastern Europeans following the EU accession, or Western Europeans who escape the recession-ridden Member States. And although intra-EU migration remains an experience taken up by only a minority of Europeans, European citizens increasingly cross the borders in other ways when travelling, consuming or connecting to others based abroad. This paper¹ will address the question of whether these individual exchanges and interactions matter for how Europeans feel about immigration originating from other EU Member States. Or, is it only a sense of threat that drives the attitudes towards immigrants during the economic crisis?

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Empirically, the academic debate about attitudes towards immigration and immigrants, with some exceptions (Ceobanu and Escandell 2008, Kaya and Karakoç 2012, Meuleman *et al.* 2009), has been developed within Western migration receiving contexts. Research on Western destinations largely examined attitudes towards immigration coming from non-Western origin countries, because this particular group was considered the most problematic for shaping outgroup attitudes. Theoretically, the studies were predominantly to be found in the framework of group threat or intergroup contact theories. These related, respectively, to the threat posed by foreigners and the ways in which negative attitudes can be reduced. Increasingly working with cross-national datasets, these studies enhanced our understanding of how outgroup sentiments are determined on the micro and macro level.

This paper will add to these literatures on the empirical and theoretical fronts. Firstly, there has been little research on attitudes towards migration from within the Western world, including intra-EU immigration. This paper will address this gap as it will examine attitudes towards immigration from within the EU, immigration which is usually considered to be rather 'unproblematic'. This is a valid research topic considering how, in recent decades, the numbers of Europeans on the move rose, due particularly to the new accessions of 2004 and 2007, and growing east to west mobility. More recently, due to the persistent economic recession in the EU, mobility levels from some of the crisis struck economies were on the rise (Recchi and Salamońska 2015). These two different waves of intra-EU migration greatly interested the public. In 2005 the 'Polish plumber' became a dark character in the debate preceding the EU Constitution referendum in France. He came to symbolise the threat of cheap Eastern European labour to Western Europe's working classes. Fuelled by these fears the French rejected the EU Constitution in May 2005. Now, with the economic crisis persisting in Europe, similar sentiments have become important across the English Channel. UKIP, standing strongly against European immigration, has implications for the general debate on immigration in the UK.

Secondly, theoretically this paper will contribute to developing the literature on attitudes towards immigrants with the adaptation of the intergroup contact theory in the European context. Europeans are free to travel without visas and also without passports within the Schengen area. They are encouraged to study abroad, supported by the Erasmus programme. While shopping online within the EU they are free from custom duties. Europeans also increasingly engage in interactions with residents based in other EU Member States. Thus currently we observe a plethora of cross-border exchanges on an individual level (Salamońska *et al.* 2013), which can be interpreted as a form of generalised contact with the other, which reduces the sense of threat posed by

immigration from other EU Member States. This paper will thus ask whether European cross-border practices result in more positive sentiments to immigration originating from other EU member states.

The paper aims to look, too, at attitudinal determinants on the micro and macro levels. The article builds on two main sets of theories typically applied to research on attitudes: group threat and intergroup contact theory which are outlined in the next section. In particular, the analysis extends our understanding of the intergroup contact framework in the European context. The use of Eurobarometer data and methods applied are outlined in the following section. Descriptive results are presented, followed by results and discussion of multilevel logistic modelling. Concluding remarks outline the limitations of this study and sketch some directions for future research.

Theoretical framework

Attitudes towards immigration and immigrants were of interest to academics as far back as the 1950s, when some of the most influential theoretical frameworks in this field were developed (Allport 1954, Blalock 1967, Blumer 1958). These early conceptualisations provided starting points to studies of prejudice stemming from individual characteristics, experiences and relations with the outgroup. At the time due to the unavailability of comparative cross-national data on perceived threats to in-group interests and privileges macro perspective (as opposed to individual ones) remained under-researched. It was only in the late 1980s that items regarding outgroup attitudes were introduced to cross-national surveys: these were initiated at that time, with first Eurobarometer, and then the International Social Survey Programme, the European Values Survey and the European Social Survey, among others. These all provided more measurement items and a better understanding of how attitudes are shaped in a cross-national context. In 1995 Quillian published a paper which for the first time provided a systematic cross-country comparison of prejudice in response to perceived group threats. Quillian tested group threat theory hypothesising that economic situation and size of outgroup relative to the in-group are the two determinants of a perceived threat at the country level. Much of the literature on attitudes towards immigrants and immigration followed the Quillian's tests of group threat theory explaining how negative attitudes stem from the perceived threat of an economic or cultural nature. In addition, numerous authors tested frameworks proposed by Allport (1954) pointing to how social interactions with immigrants may reduce negative sentiments towards outgroup members. The following subsections examine in more detail the two strands of work in the context of attitudes towards intra-European migration.

Why attitudes towards immigration and immigrants tend to be negative? Group threat theory

Group threat theory posits that negative attitudes towards outgroups are a function of competition over resources which leads to other groups feeling threatened (Blalock 1967). The object of the threat may be different, as group competition may be experienced in relation to access to material resources: these include jobs and well paid employment, but also services such as housing and the health system. A threat can also be experienced in relation to power and status. Threats are experienced at different levels. On the micro level, people may feel that their individual position, status, etc. are at risk. On the macro level, individual may experience a sense of threat directed at the group position, status and prerogatives, which may be endangered by the presence of an outgroup (Blumer 1958).

Group threat theory does not assume that the threat actually exists: it may just be perceived to exist. Bobo highlights «subjectively appreciated threat and challenges to group status» (Bobo 1983: 1196). This considerably expands our understanding, as we have to take into account not only individuals' situation but the perception of their situation.

According to group threat framework vulnerable individuals are most prone to express negative attitudes towards immigration. This includes the disadvantaged who are deprived, in material terms, but also those who assess their (or their ingroup's) material situation as negative. This leads to the formulation of the hypothesis 1A proposing that negative feelings towards EU immigration are more likely among more vulnerable groups: the unemployed, persons negatively assessing their individual and country economic situation, the less educated).

As Sides and Citrin point out (2007), beyond the threat to material well-being, immigration may increase a sense of threat in relation to values and identities. Nation building has long been constructed as *us* against a real or imagined *them*. This is why immigrants and immigration may be perceived as a threat to cultural, ethnic or, indeed, the national homogeneity of a given society. This sense of threat may lead to hostility towards the outgroup. In line with reading the threat theory with regards to values and culture, individuals with strong national attachments should feel more challenged by outsiders. Outsiders threaten their values, but also more broadly the homogeneity of a whole society, leading to more negative feelings about outsiders (hypothesis 1B).

Literature has also examined macro factors that contribute to more negative feelings towards immigrants and immigration. As Meuleman *et al.* (2009) highlight, the group threat on the macro level has been operationalised

through measures such as the economic conditions, including GDP level and unemployment, and the size of foreign population. Regarding the economic conditions literature has stressed how when the economic context is unfavourable resources are scarcer, and thus competition between in- and out-group becomes more pronounced during economic crises. This is a very relevant point for the analysis of attitudes which are reported during the prolonged crises affecting Europe. As the recession persists, competition over resources, like jobs, between the natives and immigrants may become more pronounced resulting in more negative attitudes (Gang *et al.* 2013). Curiously, not all existing research corroborates the hypothesis of unemployment being positively related to an increased sense of threat, with some studies finding that unemployment has no effect or, surprisingly, even negative effects (Markaki and Longhi 2013, Rustenbach 2010).

The size of the foreign population is another indicator which has been extensively examined as a determinant of outgroup feelings. According to the original conceptualisation by Blalock (1967) the larger the group the greater the perceived threat. However, the operationalisation of the outgroup differed by study. In the European context first comparative study of attitudes by Quillian (1995) included the size of national groups coming from outside the European Economic Community as an explanatory variable. The analyses measuring the impact of outgroup size largely followed this approach, including the size of community in terms of foreign citizens coming from non-Western countries. In turn Schneider (2008), in order to measure outgroup size, used a number of people with a different country of birth than the country of residence. She claimed this was a more comparable criterion.

Importantly, and as rightly pointed out by Schneider, a larger outgroup size does not necessarily have to increase the sense of threat. With more people coming from other countries there is presumably more possibilities of contact between in- and outgroups, which according to the contact theory, should lead to a reduction in negative sentiments (as originally outlined by Allport 1954). Based on the literature reviewed above, it is thought that a negative assessment of EU immigration is more likely in countries where economic competition is more pronounced; in other terms, countries where GDP is lower, unemployment higher, and the EU migrant share higher (hypothesis 1C).

As outlined earlier, it is not only the economic situation of individuals that matters, be they good or bad, but also the way in which individuals perceive economic situation of their states. This is why analyses need to include a hypothesis referring to individual subjective assessments in different economic contexts. It is thus expected that negative sentiments will be more pronounced among individuals concerned about the economic situation in vulnerable contexts (hypothesis 1D).

While the above section examined the micro and macro factors that contribute to a growing sense of threat among the natives, the following part will inspect the way in which positive attitudes are shaped on the individual and country levels.

How can negative sentiments be reduced? Intergroup contact theory

While group threat theory endeavours to explain where hostility towards immigration comes from, contact theory seeks to understand how this threat sentiment can be reduced. Contact theory outlines how interactions of in-group members with the 'other' can make sentiments towards foreign nationals more positive. In fact, much of the literature followed this line of research linking face-to-face interactions with foreigners at workplaces, schools and in the neighbourhoods.

Existing studies describe how contact between the in- and outgroup can be of different quality (positive/negative), quantity and facilitating context (or lack of it). According to Allport (1954) a distinction can usefully be made between casual, impersonal versus sustained, personal contact and it is the latter that should have the most effect on sentiments.

However, this paper argues that the European context gives opportunities for different kinds of exchanges with fellow Europeans. European citizenship, introduced with the Maastricht Treaty and strengthened with the Lisbon Treaty (Maas 2007), is a tool for creating a European people. European citizens are free to move within the EU in search of work, but also for education, self-development, to follow family or 'just because' (Recchi and Favell 2009, Krings *et al.* 2013). Travel is becoming easier and easier, especially in the passport free Schengen area and there is one currency in the Eurozone, also, facilitating movement. Europeans also travel virtually with most now accessing Internet on a daily basis. Social networks of Europeans often cross the nation state borders (Mau 2010). In addition, consumption practices cross borders as well, with more common online shopping or second property purchase among the wealthier (Wickham 2007). In all these forms, social transnationalism in Europe is argued to be a form of contact with the 'other' which is not only important *per se*, but because it has attitudinal consequences.

Exchanges across borders have been argued to work as learning and trust building processes (Deutsch *et al.* 1957). Data from Germany illustrates how engagement in cross-border practices and transnational networks of family and friends result in more cosmopolitan attitudes (Mau *et al.* 2008). Similarly, in Europe greater transnationalism on the individual level results in less Euroscepticism (Kuhn 2015). Based on contact theory and social transnational-

ism literature a larger volume of cross-border practices at the individual level should positively affect outgroup sentiments (hypothesis 2A).

Similarly, on the country level Mewes and Mau (2013) distinguish between different consequences of the globalization processes which can work as a unifying force or which can lead to divisions. In the former case the civilizing effects of globalization are realised through higher volume of transnational connectivity, which is argued to have a transformative effect on attitudes. Thus we can distinguish between contexts which provide more opportunities for generalised contact with *others* due to more developed social globalisation processes that increase the exposure of residents to otherness². Globalization introduces previously unknown cultures to one another, which results in more interaction and more tolerance (Kaya and Karakoç 2012). Trust in outsiders is higher where the globalization (overall) is more pronounced (Norris and Inglehart 2009). Also the new cosmopolitanism literature sees globalization as a force spreading tolerance and respect of otherness (Beck 2000). Thus, it is expected that with an increase in social globalisation, people will tend to express more positive attitudes towards immigrants (hypothesis 2B).

While Mewes and Mau (2013) highlight how the effects of globalization are mediated by social positioning, this research builds on the fact that effects of social globalization processes are mediated by individual transnationalism. Globalization is not experienced in the same way by all. Rather it depends on individual engagement in processes of interconnectedness. Thus it is expected that for individuals who do not engage in cross-border practices globalization processes may be seen as a threat. This leads to more negative sentiments about immigration originating from other EU Member States (hypothesis 2C).

Data and method

This study draws on the Eurobarometer dataset which is designed and coordinated by the European Commission, Directorate General for Communication (European Commission and European Parliament 2015). The survey was initiated in 1973 and since then its main themes have concerned European citizenship, addressing issues such as European enlargement, the concerns of Europeans on national and European level, health, culture, information tech-

² This unifying force refers to the effects of social globalization providing increased opportunities for contact between cultures. This stands against economic globalization which can also bring with it negative consequences like increased competition and thus anti-immigrant sentiment (Kaya and Karakoc 2012).

nology, etc. Among the topics covered by the Eurobarometer are sentiments towards immigrants and immigration, making it a commonly used dataset in the studies of attitudes towards the outgroup (Gang *et al.* 2013, Quillian 1995, Semyonov *et al.* 2006). Eurobarometer coverage includes the 28 European Union Member States, making it a particularly useful source of cross-national comparative data for academic research on attitudes. This paper adds to the literature employing Eurobarometer 82.3 (November 2014) for empirical analysis. Eurobarometer 82.3 collected 27,901 interviews with respondents resident in the 28 EU Member States with around 1,000 responses per country³. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in order to assure high quality data.

In order to grasp variability in attitudes not only between individuals, but also between countries (see also Bosker and Snijders 1999) the study utilised multilevel logistic regression model with mixed effects, incorporating micro and macro level factors. This was to account for attitudes towards intra-EU migration. The hypotheses tested two theoretical frameworks outlined in the previous section (see tab. 1).

Table 1 – *Hypotheses tested*

No.	Hypothesis
1A	Negative feelings towards EU immigration are more likely among more vulnerable groups (unemployed, persons negatively assessing their individual and country economic situation, the less educated).
1B	Individuals with strong national attachments should feel more challenged by outsiders leading to more negative feelings about immigration coming from other EU Member States.
1C	Negative feelings towards EU immigration are more likely in countries where economic competition is more pronounced, that is where the GDP is lower, unemployment higher, and the EU migrant share higher.
1D	Negative sentiments towards EU immigration should be more pronounced among individuals concerned about the economic situation in vulnerable contexts.
2A	High and medium volume of cross-border practices at the individual level is expected to positively affect outgroup sentiments.
2B	With an increase in social globalisation people are expected to express more positive attitudes towards the EU immigration.
2C	For individuals who do not engage in cross-border practices globalization processes may be seen as a threat, leading to more negative sentiments to the immigration originating from other EU Member States.

³ In smaller countries (Cyprus, Luxembourg and Malta) 500 responses were collected.

Until very recently research on outgroup attitudes focused on immigration from non-Western origins. The Eurobarometer, for the first time, introduced the question pertaining to how intra-EU immigration is perceived by fellow Europeans. Thus the Eurobarometer is the only available data source to address the issue of attitudes towards migration from within the EU. The exact wording of the question was the following: «Please tell me whether the following statement evokes a positive or negative feeling for you: Immigration of people from other EU Member States». Possible answers included: very positive, fairly positive, fairly negative, very negative. The answers were dichotomised into 0 (fairly positive and very positive) and 1 (fairly negative and negative). The analysis focused on a sample of 26,145 persons declaring nationality of one of the 28 EU member states where they were interviewed.

In order to test the economic threat hypothesis the individual level explanatory variables included referred to the socio-economic status of respondents: their labour market situation, the subjective concerns about individual situations⁴ and country situation⁵, social class and education. Moreover, a dummy regarding identification (strong national identification versus at least some form of European identity) was included to test the cultural threat hypothesis. On the country level GDP *per capita* (in PPP), unemployment level and EU-born share were included. As the economic situation may be experienced by individuals with some time lag, the macro variables referred to 2013.

However the real added value of this research lies in testing the adaptation of the contact theory framework in the context of European citizenship. Regarding contact theory, individual level variables measuring contact with the other were derived from the transnationalism index in Eurobarometer. The index variable combined information from five variables referring to individual level cross-border practices in Europe: if a person visited another EU country; read a book, newspaper or magazine in a language other than mother tongue; socialised with people from another EU country; watched TV programmes in a language other than mother tongue; and used the Internet in order to purchase a product or a service from another EU country. The more transnational activities a person engaged in, the higher the score on the transnationalism index. The index was transformed into dummies, referring to high and medium levels of transnationalism, leaving the low transnational group (which was constituted by majority of the sample) as a reference category. At the country level contact the other was measured by the KOF social

⁴ It was a dummy variable consisting of two variables: subjective concern about personal job situation and financial situation of the household.

⁵ It was a dummy variable consisting of two variables: subjective concern about the situation of national economy and employment situation in the country.

globalization index, taking the most recent scoring of each country (2012). KOF social globalization index is built up taking into account a number of factors: data on personal contact, on information flows and cultural proximity⁶. Social globalization, along economic and political ones, are three dimensions of the KOF index measuring the degree of globalization (Dreher 2006). KOF annual data are available for 207 countries for 1970 to 2012.

Additionally, analysis controlled for a number of individual level characteristics, commonly covered in attitudinal research, including gender, age, subjective positioning on a left-right scale and city dwelling.

Descriptive results

Descriptive results point to cross-country variation in the attitudes to intra-EU immigration earlier documented with studies of attitudes towards non-Western immigrants and immigration. The range of attitudes towards the EU immigration is very diverse. The most welcoming was Sweden (where only one in six respondents declares fairly or very negative attitudes); the least welcoming was Latvia (with two thirds declaring negative sentiments). Two other Northern European countries, Finland and Denmark, seem to be welcoming to fellow EU citizens. Luxembourg, with a traditional multilingual mix, is also among destinations which remain positive about immigration originating from within the EU. Among new EU Member States Poland and Romania, recent net senders of their nationals towards Western Europe, are most positive towards the EU immigration. At the other extreme, a majority of respondents in some of the new member states – Hungary, Slovakia, Cyprus and Czech and Latvia – are negative about immigration from other EU countries. Intra-EU migration is also seen in a negative light by a majority of respondents in the UK and Italy.

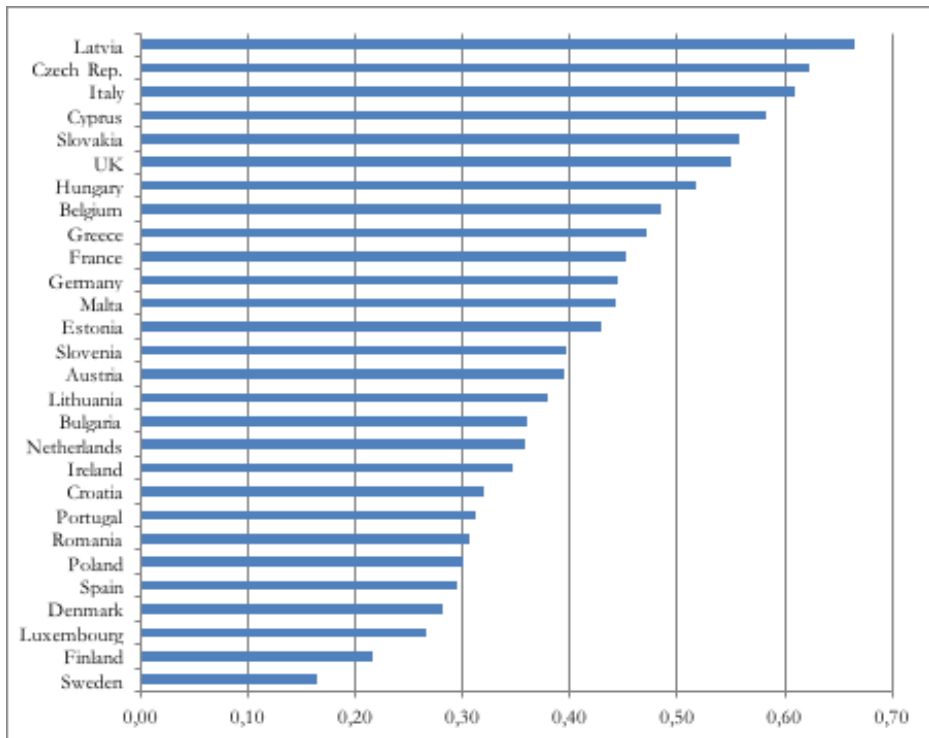
While the descriptive results point to heterogeneity of attitudes within the EU both among ‘old’ and ‘new’ Member States, it is the latter that, on average, hold more negative attitudes. In ‘new’ Member States an average of 45 per cent of respondents declare negative attitudes compared to 38 per cent in the ‘old’ EU. As the item pertaining to attitudes towards EU-immigration was

⁶ Data on Personal Contact includes information about telephone traffic, transfers (percent of GDP), international tourism, foreign population (percent of total population), international letters (*per capita*). Data on information flows includes number of internet users (per 1000 people), television (per 1000 people), trade in newspapers (percent of GDP). Data on cultural proximity includes number of McDonald’s Restaurants (*per capita*), number of Ikeas (per capita), trade in books (percent of GDP).

introduced only in 2014 it is not possible to assess how these attitudes developed across time.

While figure 1 illustrates the breakdown in negative sentiments by EU Member States, it remains unclear what shapes attitudes towards the intra-EU immigration both on the individual and country levels. This is why the following multivariate analyses build on the literature review about group threat and intergroup contact in order to examine attitudinal determinants.

Figure 1 – *Negative (very negative and fairly negative) attitudes towards immigration from another EU member state, percentages*



Note: EB 82.3, N=26,145 weighted data ('don't know' excluded)

Multivariate analyses

A set of logistic models was run in order to test the determinants of the attitudes towards immigration from other EU member states (see table 2). Firstly, an individual level logistic regression model was run (M1). Model 2 (M2) was the multilevel mixed effects logistic model adding country level variables. Model 3 (M3) introduced three cross-level interactions.

Table 2 – Individual and multilevel logistic regressions with dependent variable negative attitudes towards immigration from other EU countries (reference group: positive)

	M1		M2		M3	
	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE
Age when education completed	-0.031 ***	0.003	-0.024 ***	0.003	-0.023 ***	0.003
Unemployed (ref: at work)	-0.024	0.051	0.067	0.054	0.068	0.054
In education (ref: at work)	-0.392 ***	0.080	-0.301 ***	0.083	-0.302 ***	0.083
Not active (ref: at work)	-0.083 *	0.040	-0.078	0.042	-0.080	0.042
Negative job/household situation (ref: positive)	0.272 ***	0.031	0.317 ***	0.033	0.320 ***	0.033
Negative econ./empl. situation (ref: positive)	0.416 ***	0.038	0.610 ***	0.043	0.695 ***	0.062
Working class (ref: middle/upper class)	0.029	0.032	0.099 **	0.034	0.100 **	0.034
Only national identification (ref: national/European)	0.731 ***	0.029	0.758 ***	0.031	0.759 ***	0.031
Highly transnational (ref: low)	-0.479 ***	0.042	-0.562 ***	0.047	-0.554 ***	0.047
Medium transnational (ref: low)	-0.218 ***	0.035	-0.283 ***	0.038	-0.281 ***	0.038
Male	0.004	0.028	0.048	0.029	0.049	0.029
Age	0.003 *	0.001	0.004 **	0.001	0.004 ***	0.001
Right on the political scale (ref: left and centre)	0.235 ***	0.040	0.271 ***	0.042	0.274 ***	0.042
Undefined on the political scale (ref: left and centre)	0.107 **	0.039	0.137 **	0.042	0.139 **	0.042
City dwellers (ref: others)	-0.002	0.032	0.037	0.034	0.036	0.034
GDP per capita 2013 (centred)			-0.035	0.022	-0.036	0.022
Unemployment level 2013 (centred)			-0.049 *	0.021	-0.080 **	0.025
EU born share 2013 (centred)			0.052	0.034	0.051	0.033
KOF Social Globalization Index 2012 (centred)			0.020	0.017	0.026	0.016
Negative econ./empl. situation * Unemployment					0.031 *	0.015
Highly transnational * KOF					-0.022 ***	0.006
Medium transnational * KOF					-0.009	0.005
Constant	-0.464 ***	0.092	-0.912 ***	0.140	-1.018 ***	0.145

Notes: EB 82.3, N=23,308

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

In the first model (M1) only individual level variables were included. In line with expectations derived from group threat theory (hypothesis 1A), less education and subjective concerns about individual economic situation and that of the country increase the probability of holding negative attitudes towards immigration of nationals from other EU countries. Surprisingly, what seems to matter is not objective status (that is the state of being unemployed, where there is no significant effect), but how individuals subjectively assess their situation and the situation of their country more generally. Group threat theory was also corroborated in relation to threat posed by foreigners to out-group values, culture and identities (hypothesis 1B). Strong national identifications (as opposed to holding at least to some extent European attachments) are positively associated with more negative sentiments.

Moving beyond group threat frameworks, there is also very strong evidence corroborating the impact of individual level transnationalism on reducing negative sentiments (hypothesis 2A). In fact, medium and high levels of transnationalism are strongly associated with a smaller probability of holding negative attitudes towards the immigration of fellow EU citizens. This suggests that the contact framework can be extended in the European context to a set of both personal and impersonal cross-border practices. These exchanges provide a more generalised form of contact with fellow Europeans, build trust and thus reduce the sense of threat.

With regards to control variables included in the model, older age and a position on the right of political scale are linked to more negative sentiments.

Upon the introduction of country level variables (M2), significant effects remain in case of all variables (apart from non-active on the labour market). Also when controlling for contextual factors the effect of working class becomes significant in the expected direction. On the country level, however, hypotheses 1C and 2B do not get corroborated. A statistically significant effect was only found for the unemployment level, but in the direction opposite to that expected. This means that in countries with lower unemployment people are less likely to hold negative attitudes. This is a surprising result, but it was also found in other recent studies on migrant attitudes (Markaki and Longhi 2013, Rustenbach 2010). No significant effects were detected for GDP and size of foreign population (share of those born in the EU). This, however, is not limited to this study (Citrin and Sides 2008). Social globalization seems to fuel negative attitudes, but this effect is not statistically significant.

Finally, with the M3 model cross-level interactions were introduced. Regarding group threat theory (hypothesis 1D), it seems that it is subjective perceptions that matter more than actual threats. A statistically significant interaction of unemployment level with subjective concerns about negative situation in the economy and employment suggests that unemployment effect

matters. This effect is mediated by the judgement that the economic situation in the country is, indeed, negative.

Regarding hypothesis 2C, social globalization seems to be a negative force driving a sense of threat. However, high levels of individual transnationalism become a remedy against negative feelings towards foreigners. Interestingly, the same does not hold for those who are at medium levels of transnationalism. This suggests that only with a certain volume of cross-border exchanges do we have attitudinal consequences which matter for how European citizens see EU immigration. This finding is in line with other studies which document how cross-border practices matter in as much as Europeans relate themselves to different facets of the European integration project (Mau 2010, Kuhn 2015).

Conclusions

The last years have seen the emergence of an academic debate on how individual level social transnationalism affects attitudes towards Europe and the European integration project. This paper adds a new perspective to this debate, asking to what extent exercising European citizenship rights affects feelings towards intra-EU immigration.

Recent waves of intra-EU mobility, after the EU enlargements and mobility fuelled by the economic crisis, showed how migrations became part of a life strategy for increasing numbers of Europeans. Although free movement is one of the key rights of European citizens, it does not seem that intra-European mobility was positively embraced by residents of the 28 EU countries analysed in this paper. Why? The issue of intra-EU migration is a part of a broader immigration debate in an increasingly xenophobic Europe. According to the 2015 Eurobarometer respondents in the EU Member States immigration has become the most important concern for Europeans. In this context the mechanisms at play, like economic and cultural threats posed by the outsiders to the ingroup, are similar to those outlined in research focusing more generally on immigrants and immigration. As in previous studies, it is the more vulnerable groups who feel that they face more economic competition from foreigners (persons who are worse off, those negatively assessing their individual and country economic situation, the less educated) and thus express more negative views about the immigration of fellow EU citizens.

The impact of education, as Burns and Gimpel (2000) note in a US context, may be more nuanced. More schooling may mean more training in tolerance, but education is also related to better socio-economic status, which, in turn, coincides with a reduced sense of threat. Moving beyond issues of

tolerance and better socio-economic standing, the better educated are also trained to sound politically correct. The 'sounding right' effect will normally be overlooked in a large-scale survey data, but may be detected during the in-depth interviewing of peers in a qualitative research setting (Byrne 2012).

Another interesting finding is that cultural threats play a role in the case of sentiments towards intra-EU immigration. People strongly attached to their national identity tend to feel that their values and culture are threatened and thus they do not welcome intra-EU immigration.

There is mixed evidence of the effect of group threat theory on the contextual level. From the three measures incorporated into the model – GDP *per capita*, unemployment level and share of the EU born – only unemployment seems to have an effect on attitudes towards immigration from the EU. With a negative coefficient, however, the higher the unemployment levels, the more positive sentiments become. This is not what was expected, but it has been described in other recent studies (Rustenbach 2010, Markaki and Longhi 2013). Importantly, this effect is mediated by how people judge economic conditions in their country. If they are unhappy about their country's situation, they are statistically significantly more likely (than those who are not) to be more negative about the immigration of fellow EU citizens. This is in line with group threat theory, which makes distinctions between real and perceived conditions and their impact on immigration views.

The contribution of this study goes beyond testing group threat framework, which has already received much empirical interest. The underlying question of this analysis was: to what extent processes of Europeanization and globalization at an individual and country level matter for sentiments towards immigration? The Eurobarometer data illustrates how higher levels of transnational practices affect attitudes. When people travel abroad and interact with people from other countries, when they use media and read books in languages others than their mother tongue, or simply shop online within the EU, this amounts to more positive attitudes towards intra-EU immigration. Even if the data suggests that social globalization processes may threaten rather than civilise, as has been hypothesised by some, a high volume of transnationalism seems to remain a remedy against prejudice. This has very strong implications for EU policies, which should encourage and facilitate the mobility of Europeans in building a more welcoming Europe.

There are clearly limitations to this analysis. Firstly, only one time point was available for measurement which does not make it possible to examine how the attitudes towards fellow EU citizens changed over time. It seems plausible to assume the attitudes towards the intra-EU migration have evolved in Western Europe in the light of the new EU enlargements, the economic crisis and public debate about intra-EU migration.

Public debate is of particular importance. Existing cross-national research on attitudes has not incorporated media accounts and the question of how they affect the immigration attitudes. Recent media reporting presenting mass exodus of Europeans from crisis-struck economies towards other destinations, including European ones, do not find strong support in empirical evidence (Recchi and Salamońska 2015). However, they shape public attitudes on immigration. Future research should acknowledge and measure how media representation of immigration, also intra-European one, affects views on immigration.

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