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The Political Assimilation of Immigrants: Migrant-to-Native Differences in Western Europe

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European University Institute

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Abstract

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Keywords

immigration, assimilation, political preferences.

1 We thank Francois Poinas, Philippe de Donder, Simone Moriconi, Xavier Vazquez-Greno, Giulia Tura, Mohamed Saleh, Karine Van Der Straeten, Victor Gay, as well as the participants of seminars at the Toulouse of Economics and the European University Institute for advice and feedback.

The Political Assimilation of Immigrants: Migrant-to-Native Differences in Western Europe

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November 22, 2021

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1 Introduction

Over the past 20 years, immigration has been one of the most controversial issues in European politics, all the more since the so-called 2016 refugee crisis sparked new interest in the matter. In the last few years, European countries have witnessed drastic political changes: Voters in receiving countries have responded to the immigrant influx by increasing their support for right-wing nationalist parties that promote stronger anti-immigrant platforms (Campo et al., 2021; Otto and Steinhardt, 2014; Barone et al., 2016; Dustmann et al., 2019; Becker and Fetzer, 2016; Halla et al., 2017). Against this backdrop, many scholars believe that growing opposition to immigration is mainly driven by anxiety over cultural change,[1] ethnic diversity or weakened social norms (Card et al., 2012; Harmon, 2018; Mendez and Cutillas, 2014; Dustmann and Preston, 2007; Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014-2015; Tabellini, 2020). As a consequence, the integration of foreign-born individuals into the economic, political and social fabric of the state is one of the most important challenges that receiving countries in Western Europe are facing. In this respect, an often overlooked aspect of assimilation regards immigrants' political preferences: it is important to understand whether or not immigrant voters represent a different political bloc from their native counterparts, not least because their preferences could significantly alter the design of public policies in their host societies. To gain a complete understanding of the policy impact of foreign-born populations, scholars need to address a number of issues. What are the patterns of immigrants' political assimilation? How do they differ across immigrants of different social, religious, and ethnic backgrounds? What are immigrants' preferences on issues such as immigration policy itself or European integration? What are the mechanisms behind the assimilation of foreign-born individuals? Although an emerging literature is trying to answer these questions (see for instance Moriconi et al, 2021), the public debate remains ill-informed about the true magnitude of political divergences between natives and immigrants. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to this debate by studying the political opinion gap between first-generation immigrants and natives in Western Europe on issues of redistribution, restrictions on gay rights, European integration, immigration policy, and political trust.

Beside self-interest, the extant literature has stressed the important role of cultural transmission in shaping individual political views. In this regard, immigrants are often subject to horizontal transmission and retain the cultural values of their countries of origin, which have a wide-ranging, substantial and persistent impact on their political beliefs. Transmitted culture is therefore an important determinant of foreign-born individuals preferences regarding redistribution (Luttmer and Singhal, 2011; Hammar, 2020), family and social values (Fernandez and Fogli, 2006), living arrangements (Giuliano, 2007), economic behaviour (Guiso et al., 2006; Tabellini et al., 2010; Henrich, 2000), political and civic participation (Aleksynska, 2011), trust (Algan and Cahuc, 2010), electoral choices (Just et al., 2010), tax morale (Kountouris, 2013), or environmental issues (Litina et al. 2016). At the same time, a large scholarship on immigrants' integration documents the equally important influence of receiving societies on the political attitudes of immigrants and their

[1] A theory that has gained a lot of momentum in the past few years is that of "the great replacement", according to which non-European migration flows are contributing to demographic and cultural changes to the point of replacing the white European majority with non-white, non-European and culturally diverse populations.

children at destination. Although assimilation patterns remain highly heterogeneous across destination and origin countries, several contributions highlight the convergence to country-specific norms of foreign-born residents in matters of interpersonal (Dinesen et al., 2010) and political (Maxwell, 2010) trust, social and economic preferences (Algan et al., 2012; Reeskens et al., 2015; Schmidt-Catran et al., 2017), civic participation (Aleksynska, 2011), gender roles (Breidahl et Larsen., 2016) and social relations (De Palo et al., 2007).

Against this backdrop, we should expect the political gap between natives and foreign-born immigrants to reflect these cultural underpinnings. Our paper investigates the extent to which those are indeed reflected in migrant-to-native differences at the national and subnational levels, as well as over time. In particular, we study whether the heterogeneous nature of these political preferences leads to issue-specific patterns of convergence between migrants and natives. Our paper adopt a comparative perspective and contribute to the literature in several respects. First, to the best of our knowledge, our study is the first one to investigate immigrants' preferences on national immigration policies and EU sentiment alongside other political issues. Second, we address several empirical caveats found in comparable cross-country studies about the evolution of immigrants' political preferences over time (Algan et al., 2012; Dinesen, 2010; Roeder, 2015; Luthra et al, 2018). On the one hand, we focus on adult migrants, i.e excluding foreign-born immigrants who migrated to their country of residence at an early age. While this distinction is mostly absent from the literature, it is however critical to the study of assimilation over time because these early migrants have hardly been exposed to the culture and institutions of their country of origin prior to relocating and have benefited from increased contact with their host society through schooling and education. On the other hand, we deal with cohort effects and self-selection biases which make it hard to isolate the true effect of migrants' time spent at destination on their preferences. Finally, our work is the first cross-country study on immigrants' political assimilation that investigates the role of cultural transmission and the channels through which it operates by exploiting within-country variations in political attitudes at the regional and subregional levels.

Using 9 rounds of the European Social Survey data, our study looks at the political preferences of over 20,000 first-generation immigrant observations living in 16 European countries. We first present descriptive evidence that immigrants are very slightly more conservative than natives on redistribution, yet hold significantly more restrictive views on gay rights, show greater levels of trust in national parliaments and are more supportive of EU unification and open immigration policies. In line with the segmented assimilation theory (Gordon, 1964; Portes and Zhou, 1994), we find that these differences owe mostly to immigrants from low-income countries and religious beliefs, but that other factors such as linguistic ties between the home and host country are also significant predictors of political differences between natives and immigrants. Moreover, after controlling for migrants' background, the evolution of immigrants' political preferences over time and their convergence to subnational norms follow issue-specific patterns. With what regards redistribution, the migrant-to-native opinion gap widens with the time immigrants have spent in their destination country and shows no signs of acculturation to local norms, suggesting that preferences are mostly driven by contextual factors and opportunities. In contrast, among migrants that have lived 10 years or more at destination, within-country differences in opinion about immigration policy no longer exist and the gap in

political trust is reduced by 80%. What's more, migrants' views on both issues are significantly and strongly correlated with the views of natives' living in the same region and those of their local peers - i.e natives with similar occupation and age and living in the same subregional area - with whom they are most likely to interact. Results for restrictions on gay rights and European integration are more nuanced. The migrant-to-native gap does not vary with the time spent at destination, and we find no significant correlation at the regional level between natives and migrants' preferences. However, controlling for regional differences, our analysis reveals that the preferences of native peers' are a significant predictor of immigrants' own political views, especially among those that have spent more time at destination and therefore had increased contact with natives. We attribute this effect to the selective acculturation of subgroups of the migrant population, although the data at our disposal does not allow us to test this hypothesis.
Overall, our comparative analysis highlights the existence of issue-specific patterns which we interpret as a reflection of the fundamentally different nature of migrants' political preferences and the specific role played by self-interest and cultural drivers in shaping these preferences.

This paper is directly related to the empirical research that analyzes the political preferences of immigrants in their host environment. Within this literature, the issue of preferences for redistribution has probably received the most attention. Our work builds from seminal papers on the individual drivers of political preferences, including cultural beliefs and economic self-interest as described in Alesina and Giuliano (2011). On the migrant-to-native gap, Dancygier et al. (2006) show that immigrants are no more likely to support increased social spending or redistributive measures than natives and find support for hypotheses highlighting selection effects and the impact of the immigration regime. Reeskens et al. (2015) analyze the 2008 "Welfare Attitudes" module of the European Social Survey and find that immigrants' views on welfare closely follow those of the non-migrant population of the country they are living in, suggesting strong social integration at the opinion level. Using German longitudinal survey, the findings of Schmidt-Catran et al. (2017) are also consistent with the claim that immigrants' welfare preferences are subject to the influence of their host societies. Turning to political trust, Maxwell (2010) finds that first-generation immigrants have more positive attitudes to national governments in Europe while native-origin and second-generation migrant-origin individuals have similar political trust and satisfaction scores. Using the same data, Algan et al. (2012) documents that the gap in political trust level between first-generation immigrants and natives is exclusively driven by foreign-born individuals with less than 20 years of residence, while second-generation immigrants hold more negative opinions of national political institutions. The present study is also related to Roeder's work (Roeder, 2015) on immigrants' attitudes toward homosexuality, in which she finds that immigrants in Europe hold overall more negative attitudes than natives, and provides evidence of both intra and inter-generational acculturation of these attitudes with declining importance of origin country context. At a more general level, our work is related to comprehensive studies of immigrants' cultural assimilation in the US (Abramitzky et al., 2016) and in particular Giavazzi et al. (2019), which establish that attitudes towards politics and redistribution, sexuality, abortion and religious values show a lower degree of convergence to the prevailing norm than attitudes towards cooperation such as trustworthiness, helpfulness and fairness. Finally, we speak to the literature on immigrants' voting behaviour and electoral participation. Within this

literature, our paper builds from Aleksynska (2011), which documents immigrants' political participation in their destination country, and resonates with recent works on the influence of foreign-born immigrants on political outcomes through cultural transmission (see for instance Tabellini et al., 2021).

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 describes the data used in the analysis. Section 3 characterizes the migrant-to-native gap. Section 4 studies the effect of time spent in the host country on immigrants' political preferences, while Section 5 analyzes their preferences at the subnational level. Section 6 concludes.

2 Data description

We use 9 rounds of the European Social Survey (2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018). The European Social Survey (ESS) was conducted bi-annually between 2002 and 2018 in several European countries. It provides information on individual socio-economic characteristics and various types of political preferences. It also contains information on individuals' migration status and background, including country of birth, allowing to distinguish between native and foreign-born, and the amount of time spent in the destination country for foreign-born. We focus our analysis on Western European, OECD member states, which represent a relatively homogeneous set of countries in terms of political preferences. The sample is restricted to respondents who were older than 16 years old at the time of the interview. We identify natives as respondents born in their country of residence with parents also born in their country of residence to avoid the potentially confounding effects of second-generation immigrants, who are excluded from the model. First-generation immigrants are drawn among individuals born outside of their country of residence. We decide to leave out immigrants born in a foreign country but with one or both parents born in their country of residence as members of this group are very likely to be influenced by their parents' cultural origins and therefore likely to hold preferences that are significantly closer to native peers than immigrants with no prior contact with their host society. This leads to an overall sample size of 272,000 observations, of which 23,880 first-generation immigrants, in 16 countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Table A.4 contains a description of this sample. While it is worth noting that the ESS has not been designed to include or oversample immigrants, which might decrease the power of our general analysis, previous studies have shown that the ESS sampling method is reliable in reflecting the proportion of foreign-born and natives in the population and the actual origin countries of immigrants (Castles and Miller, 2005).

Individual political and policy preferences on five different issues are measured through an ordinal scale. The first one is redistribution. We use respondents' opinion to the following statement: *"The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels"*, to which respondents are asked if they strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or disagree strongly. We recode this question on an ascending 4-point scale in the following way: 0 from strongly disagree to 4 for strongly agree[2]. Using an identical

[2]While the 2008 and 2016 ESS rounds have specific modules on welfare preferences, we choose to use the only question capturing policy preferences for redistribution that is present in all rounds of the survey to maximize the number of first-

scale, the second variable captures political attitudes to Gay rights through respondents' opinion about the following statement *"Gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish"*. We use the same rescaling method as for redistribution to construct the associated dependent variable. Third, we investigate attitudes towards European Union through respondents' position about greater unification of the EU from 0 - *"Unification already gone too far"* to 10 - *"Unification must go further"*. Fourth, we look at migrants' attitudes to immigration policy through respondents' opinion about the following statement on a 0-3 scale: *"To what extent do you think [country] should allow people of the same race or ethnic group as most [country] people to come and live here"*[3]. Last, we study trust in political institutions using respondents' level of trust in their residence country's parliament, on a scale from 0 - *"No trust at all"* to 10 - *"Complete trust"*. Before moving to the empirical analysis, we perform an additional transformation and harmonize political preferences in order to have variables ranging from 0 to 1. This will allow an easier comparison of the results.

Table A.5 and A.6 summarizes the distribution of political preferences for foreign-born and native individuals. Although differences between them are modest in absolute terms, these descriptive statistics suggest that immigrants are slightly more opposed to redistribution and gay rights than Western European natives. They also show markedly higher levels of trust in national parliaments and support for EU unification, and are in favour of more open immigration policies[4].

3 Migrant-to-Native Gap

3.1. Baseline analysis

The first section of our analysis presents a baseline description of the differences in political attitudes between natives and first-generation immigrants in Western Europe. To do so, we estimate a linear model of policy preferences on several covariates and a binary variable for one's migration status:

$$Pref_{ijr} = \alpha + \beta Firstgen_i + \gamma S_i + \delta X_i + \mu_{j,r} + \epsilon_{ijr} \tag{1}$$

where the dependent variable $Pref$ is the preference of individual i surveyed in country j and ESS round r on a specific political issue. The variable *Firstgen* is a categorical variable that identifies first generation immigrants. Notice that in each of our specifications, this variable will characterize an immigrant along different dimensions such as age, origin or citizenship [5]. We control in vector X for several individual socio-economic characteristics such as gender, age, whether or not the respondent is married, education level,

generation immigrants in the sample.

[3]The ESS asks in every round several other questions about individuals' perception of the level of immigration, with mentions to migrants' relative economic position and place of origin. In practice, individual answers to these questions are strongly correlated, and we therefore choose the most neutral of these statements as the reference variable.

[4]It is worth stressing that the correlation between the five policy items is relatively small: The highest pair-wise correlation among all 5 variables is equal to 0.26 for European integration and immigration policy.

[5]We code *Firstgen* as a categorical variable, but it is de facto an interaction between being an immigrant and holding a specific characteristic, e.g. being over 15 years old, being religious etc.

whether the individual lives in an urban area, the respondent's assessment of his or her financial situation, the size of the respondent's household, individual employment status, the level of education and employment status of the respondent's partner, and whether the respondent has ever been unemployed for a period of more than 3 months[6]. We also control for family background based on father's education (tertiary and not tertiary) and whether the father was employed when the voter was fourteen. Finally, we include a full set of country-ESS round fixed effects μ to control for time-variant country-specific factors (e.g. GDP per capita, unemployment, global macroeconomic conditions or immigration flows) that might influence political preferences or simply the way in which respondents answer the survey questions. Summary statistics for natives and immigrants are available in the appendix, in Table A.7. and Table A.8.

Table 1 presents the results from the estimation of model (1) where we distinguish between migrants aged less or more than 15 at the time of migration. Migrants who came to live at an early age in their country of residence are not only much less exposed to the culture and institutions of their country of origin prior to relocating, but also have increased contact with native society through schooling, education and socialization overall, which is likely to play a critical part in their assimilation. Moreover, it is important to stress that children at that age do not make the choice to migrate autonomously, but rather simply follow their parents. For these reasons, people who migrated before the age 15 could display inherently different preferences. [7]. The β coefficients give a partial correlation between being a first-generation immigrant who migrated before and after the age of 15 and specific political preferences[8] They confirm the intuition from the descriptive statistics contained in Table A.6. On average, there is a significant opinion gap between migrants and natives across all five political variables after accounting for individual socio-economic controls and country-round fixed effects. First-generation migrants are more opposed to redistribution, have more conservative views towards gay rights, are more supportive of EU unification and open immigration policies, and possess higher levels of trust in their host country's parliament than natives. In contrast, while they appear to hold significantly closer views to natives on all other political issues, we find no evidence that migrants who migrated before the age of 15 are more assimilated than"older" migrants on matters of redistribution. If anything, migrants that migrated before the age of 15 are relatively less supportive of redistribution, suggesting that political preferences on this issue may not be subject to assimilation. We will show in the following section how this continues to be the case when looking at the effect of tenure on preferences. Results for model (1) are also displayed in the first panel of Figure 1.

Focusing on "adult" migrants who migrated after the age of 15, the average migrant-to-native gap also varies in magnitude across political preferences. It is particularly small for preferences for redistribution, and corresponds to 0.02 standard deviation and 0.01 of the outcome mean[9]. A plausible explanation behind

[6]While being important in predicting political preferences, particularly with what regards redistribution, household income level is missing for almost one fifth of the sample. We instead control for household's main income source, employment status, as well as individuals' assessment of their financial situation instead.

[7]These migrants represent a substantial share (25%) of the entire first-generation migrant sample.

[8]Running the same analysis using a different age threshold, namely 18 years old, yield very similar results, as shown in Table A.1 of the Appendix.

[9]Ceteris paribus, the marginal effect of being born in a foreign country on attitudes to redistribution is equivalent to the effect of living with a partner that has a job. The coefficient - not reported here - associated with partner's employment status in model (1) is -0.005.

such a modest difference is that the role played by socio-economic opportunities, which our model controls for, is relatively greater for redistribution than other political matters. Indeed, migration status is one, if not the strongest individual predictor of other political attitudes. The average migrant-to-native gap on gay rights, European integration, immigration policy and political trust ranges between 0.2 and 0.5 standard deviation. In particular, immigrants have much more restrictive views than natives on gay rights, which is not surprising if one considers that most of the migrants in the sample come from less-developed and socially more conservative countries than Western Europe. This effect corresponds to an average 0.054 gap on a $0-1$ scale. Turning to attitudes to EU integration, the marginal effect of being born in a foreign country corresponds to 13% of the outcome mean and is higher than that of having completed tertiary education. [10] To the extent that political attitudes towards EU unification reflect political beliefs about internationalism, it comes as no surprise that first-generation international migrants are more enthusiastic about European integration than their natives counterparts. Unsurprisingly, they are also significantly more favourable to allowing more immigrants to come and live in their destination country. On that issue, the positive effect of being foreign-born corresponds to 10% of the outcome mean and is 0.8 times that of having completed tertiary education. Finally, immigrants score 0.76 point higher than natives when asked about their level of trust in national parliaments. Ceteris paribus, this opinion gap corresponds to almost twice the difference that exists between an individual with tertiary education and one without. Again, this result is not surprising as research has documented that first-generation migrants are more optimistic and positive about the government of the country where they have self-consciously chosen to emigrate in hopes of improving their lives (Roder et al, 2012; Maxwell, 2010), therefore placing greater faith in their destination country's political institutions.

3.2. Heterogeneity

The ESS detailed individual information allows us to further investigate the nature of these migrant-to-native differences and whether these depend on immigrants' specific background and ascriptive characteristics.

First, we split the immigrant sample into high-income and low-income origin countries, considering that individuals from richer countries possess an economic, political, social and cultural background that is closer to West European natives[11]. Secondly, we investigate whether possessing citizenship of the host country - and thus having full rights and access to services - can impact preferences. Following the same reasoning, and since EU citizens have access to basic services all over the European Union, we also check whether being a citizen of EU countries impacts the preferences of immigrant. Divergence in cultural beliefs and opportunities is also salient at the religious level and may be reflected in political preferences. For instance, contemporary muslim migrants in Europe often face intense discrimination, which creates numerous social, economic, and political problems for integration (see for instance Constant et al., 2006; Bisin et al., 2008). As

[10] The corresponding coefficient is 0.055

[11] The list of high-income countries includes EU-15, Norway, Switzerland, Canada, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, and Israel. All other countries are treated as low-income. On how political and economic factors at the origin can affect the way immigrants assimilate, see for instance Borjas (1987)

a third step, we therefore study migrant-to-native differences based on self-reported religious denomination and on religiosity[12]. Fourth, we look at whether the convergence in political attitudes is stronger for first-generation migrants whose country of origin shared a common language with their destination country. Because linguistic ties can be regarded as a vector of cultural transmission and a powerful tool for integration, we expect immigrants who possess those traits to hold political opinions that are closer to those of Western European[13]. Finally, we study the impact of community size on political assimilation.Migrants' community size at destination may create or remove specific barriers to integration which are associated with lagged or incomplete political assimilation. In particular, the economic approach to cultural integration emphasizes the underlying trade-off between cultural and economic incentives, which posits that there exists a large enough critical mass of immigrants that if the group maintains its distinct culture then, for any immigrant, the cost of switching culture outweighs the benefits of increased interaction. To the extent that political preferences have an important cultural component, one could expect foreign-born that belong to bigger communities to assimilate less because they have more limited benefits from such assimilation. Following previous studies on community behavior (see Card et al., 2008; Munshi, 2014; Advani and Reich., 2015; Giavazzi et al., 2019), we use the share of immigrants from a specific origin country over the population of the destination country to define community size, and construct a binary variable for communities above and below the sample median $(0,5\%)$.[14]

Variable capturing migrants' characteristics are constructed so that natives are coded as the reference category, and are de facto interaction variables. The coefficients for each of these characteristics are estimated in separate regressions in order to provide a more accurate description of the effect of migrants' background on political divergence with natives and reported in Table 1.bis.[15]. The same coefficients are also displayed in Figure 1 and 2 for easier interpretation.

On average, immigrants from low-income countries are slightly more opposed to redistribution than natives, while those from developed countries are significantly more liberal. Several reasons could explain this result. Beside socio-economic opportunities, which our model accounts for, it is possible that migrants from low-income countries may face greater discrimination in access to welfare services, which is known to be a driver of immigrants' support for redistribution (see Renema et al., 2019). The importance of access is indeed confirmed by our result that not having legal citizenship/EU citizenship in the country of residence significantly worsens attitudes towards redistribution. Another possible explanation is that migrants from high-income countries are more familiar with social welfare and better informed about the potential benefits of redistribution, which could explain why they are also more favorable to it. An overwhelming majority

[12]The level of religiosity is defined as a binary variable based on how often respondents pray at home and attend religious services

[13]Data on language proximity comes from the CEPII (Centre d'Etudes Prospectives et d'Informations Internationales).

[14]Because of the scarcity of historical data on immigrants' birth country, the relative size of immigrant communities is measured in 2005 (OECD). Our proxy of community size is therefore potentially problematic for immigrants who migrated a long time ago, when the number of immigrants from the same country of origin was significantly different than in 2005. However, the birth country composition of foreign-born populations in the sample is highly correlated overtime. Because our measure of community size depends ultimately on the relative size of these populations, this reduces the risk of misallocation between small and big immigrant communities.

[15]All results from Table 1.bis are robust to using an ordered probit model on the unstandardized outcome variables, as shown in Table A.2 in Appendix

(over 90%) of migrants from high-income countries are EU citizens, which implies that they are both better acquainted with European social welfare states and entitled to specific rights as citizens of EU member states. Our results, though, show that being a EU citizen has no significant impact on preferences for redistribution. Finally, since immigrants represent a self-selected group of people that are willing to uproot themselves to migrate and are often characterized as risk-lovers, they may be more likely to believe in effort and individualism and show greater reluctance to state provided financial assistance. In this respect, migrants from low-income countries, for whom the risks associated with migration are higher, could be intrinsically more individualistic and self-reliant than migrants from richer countries. Although we are not in a position to say which of these channels is driving our results, it is worth stressing two things: i) we find evidence in line with the idea that access to services is the most important determinant of attitudes towards redistribution and ii) we find no evidence in support of the *welfare magnet hypothesis*, which posits that immigrants from low-income countries are benefit tourists willing to take advantage of generous welfare services in the destination country. Our results also shows that migrants' religious beliefs have a negligible influence on the migrant-to-native gap, while migrants coming from a country that does not share a common language with their host country upon arrival are slightly less supportive of redistribution than natives. To the extent that greater language proficiency helps migrants gain information about social welfare benefits and facilitates access to redistribution, this finding is in line with previous evidence that greater information about the welfare state and its benefits can increase support for government redistribution[16]. Overall, the migrant-to-native gap on redistribution remains small regardless of migrants' background or characteristics, which suggests that cultural differences play a less important part in explaining within-country differences on this specific matter after controlling for individual self-interest.

Unsurprisingly, migrants' cultural background is a critical driver of their relative preferences on gay rights. Foreign-born individuals from high-income countries show no significant differences with natives and the migrant-to-native gap is therefore exclusively driven by immigrants from low-income countries, which are also more socially conservative in many respects than Western Europe and North America. Likewise, religious immigrants are substantially more opposed to gay rights than migrants without religion, even if the gap for these migrants remains significant and sizable. Among religious migrants, Muslims are the most opposed to gay rights: ceteris paribus, the average muslim first-generation immigrants scores -0.27 point (1.06 standard deviation) lower than natives on a 0-1 scale. Similarly, intensity of religious practice has a stronger impact on gay rights preferences. Divergence in opinions exist based on language abilities, but they are much smaller, and potentially driven by the greater influence of host societies' more liberal culture on migrants who share their language.

Moreover, all migrants, regardless of their origin, religious background, or language abilities, display greater support for European integration than natives. The level of economic development of migrants' origin country and whether they share a common language with their residence country are associated with statistically significant but modest changes in the migrant-to-native coefficient (a 0.08 standard deviation in absolute terms). Larger is the impact of being a citizen: individuals who have no citizenship are twice more likely to hold positive views towards European integration than citizens. Nonetheless, EU citizens are also very

[16]See for instance (Bertrand, Luttmer, and Mullainathan, 2000; Borjas and Hilton, 1996)

supportive of European integration. Surprisingly, Muslim immigrants score 0.093 point higher than natives on that issue, higher than any other religious denominations. A possible explanation is that the presence of Muslim immigrants is correlated with comparatively greater anti-European sentiment across Western Europe.

The migrant-to-native gap in political trust is much higher among immigrants from less developed countries. While migrants from richer countries do place more trust in national parliaments than natives on average (0.12 point on a 0-1 scale), much of the migrant-to-native gap on this issue owes to migrants from low-income countries. Democracy and economic development are highly correlated, and it is plausible that immigrants from low-income countries hold non-democratic government responsible for the poor economic outcomes, conflict, political repression or other forms of discrimination that motivated their decision to migrate. Incidentally, their assessment of Western Europe democratic political institutions is relatively higher. A similar argument can be made to explain the very large gap in political trust that exists between Muslim immigrants (around 1.20 point, i.e 0.6 standard deviation) and natives.

Finally, larger community size is associated with a greater migrant-to-native gap on all issues except redistribution. Our results are in line with expectations for most political issues: immigrants that belong to bigger communities display preferences that are more distant from those of natives. However, preferences for redistribution follow yet again a different pattern, which is nonetheless consistent with the theory of the economic literature (Bertrand, Luttmer, and Mullainathan, 2000; Borjas and Hilton, 1996) that information about the welfare state and its benefits can be spread through networks and social chains. In particular, increased contact with co-ethnics with above-average welfare participation rates may raise individual welfare use (Bertrand, Luttmer, and Mullainathan, 2000; Borjas and Hilton, 1996) and in turn increase support for government redistribution.

At this stage of the analysis, our findings suggest that immigrants' institutional, cultural, and religious background are important drivers of the preference gap with natives, while differences in support for redistribution may follow a specific pattern. In the next section, we explore whether these differences remain salient regardless of migrants' background and how they vary with time since migration.

4 Change in migrant-to-native gap over time?

4.1. Econometric Issues

Several studies using the European Social Survey data have shown that time since migration - tenure - is usually associated with a significant reduction in the migrant-to-native gap in political opinions gap (see Algan et al., 2012; Dinesen, 2010; Roeder, 2015; Soelh, 2018). However, these works do not account for potential biases on both observable and non-observable characteristics that make the effect of tenure hardly interpretable.

A first caveat of these studies regards the absence of distinction between first-generation immigrants who grew up in their country of residence and those who did not. As previously mentioned, this is problematic

when studying assimilation because migrants who migrated at an early age are not only much less exposed to the culture and institutions of their country of origin but also have increased contact with native society through schooling and education. As a result, it is reasonable to expect that they hold political opinions closer to those of second-generation immigrants than to those of fellow first-generation immigrants who came to live in that same country later in life, as Table 1 suggests. Second, because the ESS surveys individuals aged 15 and older, these migrants will be over represented in the cohort of individuals who have spent more than 10 years at destination. [17]The identification of the tenure effect could then suffer from a compositional bias as these allegedly more assimilated migrants are only represented in older cohorts (i.e among immigrants that have spent more time in the host country). This would artificially increase convergence between foreign-born immigrants and natives. Therefore, in this section we exclude immigrants who migrated before the age of 15.

A second potential empirical issue regards the nature of our data. Ideally, to study the process of immigrants' assimilation, one should rely on a panel dataset, which allows to track individuals over time. The ESS, though, is a repeated cross-sectional survey, which limits our analysis for a number of reasons. First, as political preferences at the time of migration are likely to vary across migrants' arrival cohorts, we are unable to say whether the migrant-to-native gap is constant across arrival cohorts. A constant gap - or at least a gap whose direction remains constant - is a commonly verified assumption in most assimilation studies, such as studies on labour market integration, political participation or cultural assimilation. Moreover, the drivers of this gap tend to be known.[18] In our analysis, although it is possible that the initial migrant-to-native gap follows a consistent pattern for the most recent cohorts, there is no certainty that this is true of older cohorts who came to live to Western Europe a long time ago, especially since both the composition of migrant cohorts and the culture in their origin countries might have changed over the past decades. As a result, any claims we make about convergence in what follows are always conditional on a preliminary analysis of the evolution of the initial migrant-to-native gap over time. Secondly, if the initial migrant-to-native gap varies across arrival cohorts, it is harder to distinguish between the tenure effect and the cohort effect, which captures migrants' specific preferences upon arrival in their destination country. It is well known that migrants are prone to self-select into migration. While time-invariant selection into migration itself is not generally a problem (the initial migrant-to-native gap would just be lower or higher), it becomes a threat to the identification of the tenure effect if the extent to which migrants self-select on political opinions varied over time.[19] In the absence of longitudinal data, our empirical analysis cannot include individual fixe effects and we therefore need to control for migrants' time of arrival in order to disentangle differences related to the length of stay at destination from those caused by a possible cohort effect. Unfortunately, the time period covered in the ESS data (2000-2020) implies that the length of stay and year of arrival are highly correlated for migrants with the longest tenure,[20] and therefore there is not have enough variation

[17]The proportion of migrants surveyed 10 years or more after they arrived in their host country in the full sample of first-generation immigrants is 60%, against 86% among migrants who migrated before the age 15

[18]One can think of discrimination, the lack of human capital and language barriers preventing access to the labour market, or the lack of opportunities for civic participation (see for instance Algan et al. (2012), Aleksynska (2011), Peri et al.(2020))

[19]For instance, Docquier et al. (2020) have shown that the degree of cultural selection among individuals from MENA migrating to OECD, high-income countries has decreased in the past ten years.

[20]The ESS has interviewed respondents between 2000 and 2020.

to identify the effect of tenure while controlling for the year of arrival of individuals who migrated more than 30 years ago. To tackle these issues, we propose the following solution: we restrict our sample to migrants who have lived in their host country for less than 20 years and migrated after 1995, and build three migration arrival cohorts: 1995-2005, 2005-2010, post-2010. Within each arrival cohort, immigrants are then distributed over four tenure groups based on their length of stay at destination: Within a year since migration, 2-5 years since migration, 6-11 years, and 11-20 years.[21] While this forces us to leave out a large share of first-generation immigrants, thereby limiting the scope of our analysis, this method limits the correlated regressor problem arising from the inclusion of controls for the time of migration, while making sure that the sample contains sufficiently many observations per arrival and tenure cohorts. The restricted sample contains 10,092 immigrants, for which detailed information about tenure and cohort of arrival are available from Table A.9.

A final concern with our interpretation of the tenure effect is the potential selection threat among immigrants by tenure, i.e the possibility that migrants' political preferences are driven by unobserved characteristics that are correlated with their length of stay at destination. In particular, migrants that choose to stay longer in their country of residence might do so also because of their specific political attitudes[22]. This raises a potential identification problem if out-migrants are selected on the basis of characteristics that are directly or indirectly affecting their political preferences, as our estimation would then capture the effect of tenure but also that of unobservable characteristics correlated with the time of residence. This issue is discussed at length in Abramitzky et al. (2016), where authors test the labour market assimilation of US immigrants using repeated cross-sectional and panel data.[23] In the absence of panel data, we partially address the potential threat driven by selection of out-migrants by exploiting the correlation between immigrants' probability of outmigration and their observable characteristics.[24] We apply Oster's (2019) methodology, based on the seminal paper by Altonji et al. (2005). Under the assumption that the relation between the treatment (in our case, migrants' length of stay at destination) and unobserved factors (out-migration) can be retrieved from the relationship between treatment and observable characteristics, Oster's approach allows to compute the relative degree of selection on unobservables δ necessary to have the estimated treatment coefficients equal to zero, where a δ greater than 1 in absolute value is commonly interpreted in the literature as a sign that the potential threat of selection on unobservables is minimised.[25]

[21]These categories are those used by the ESS survey to record foreign-born individuals' length of stay at destination until 2008. For later rounds, we use information provided by the survey about foreign-born respondents' year of arrival in their host country. Specifically, we use the difference between the year respondents were surveyed and the year they claimed to have arrived in the country as a measure of time since migration.

[22]In a recent report, the OECD (2008) estimates that, depending on the countries and time periods considered, 20 to 50 percent of immigrants leave their host country within the first five years after arrival. In 2011, for some of the countries under consideration in this study, foreign-born outflows stood respectively at a ratio of 41 percent, 64 percent, and 76 percent for the United Kingdom, Germany, and Spain. In the case of Europe, close to 50 percent of the original arrival cohort has left the destination country ten years after arrival.

[23]In particular, they show that the results obtained from a repeated cross-sectional dataset differ from those obtained by panel data, and identify out-migration as a concern that arises specifically with the use of the former. In the absence of panel data, we are however unable to perform a similar exercise.

[24]We provide corroborating evidence of this correlation in a dedicated paragraph on outmigration and return rates in subsection 3.2.2

[25]A value of $\delta = 1$ implies that selection on unobservables is as important as selection on observables to produce estimates

4.2. Results

We estimate the following models:

$$Pref_{ijr} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Firstgen_i + \beta_{2,k} Tenure_{i,k} + \delta X_i + \mu_{j,r} + \epsilon_{ijr} \quad (2)$$

and

$$Pref_{ijr} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Tenure_i + \beta_{2,t} Cohort_{i,t} + \delta X_i + \mu_{j,r} + \epsilon_{ijr} \quad (3)$$

The coefficients are estimated on the sample of first-generation immigrants who migrated after 1995 and have spent less than 20 years at destination. The binary variable for one's migration status $Firstgen$ in model (2) captures the average gap between natives and immigrants who migrated less than two years before they were interviewed across all cohorts of arrival. $Tenure$ is a set of dummy variables capturing individual migrants' tenure / length of stay at destination (All tenure dummies are equal to 0 for natives). In model (3), $Cohort$ represents a set of dummy variables, one for each arrival cohort capturing the cohort-specific gap between natives and immigrants who migrated less than two years before they were interviewed. As in the previous section, we control for individual socio-economic characteristics and a full set of country-ESS round fixed effects. We also control for migrants' region of origin and religious affiliation in order to account for compositional effects across arrival and tenure cohorts related to migrants' cultural and religious background.[26] Because migrants' legal status is likely to be correlated with both the time spent at destination and influence political preferences, we also include a migrant-specific dummy variable capturing the citizenship status of foreign-born respondents.

For each policy variable, we report the results of model (2) in the first specification of Table 2. For model (2) - reported in columns 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 -, the coefficients associated with *First-generation immigrant* estimate the average migrant-to-native gap for immigrants who migrated after 1995 and have spent less than two years at destination. Once cultural background is accounted for, migrants coming to western Europe are more supportive of European integration, immigration, and have higher levels of trust in politicians upon arrival, while their views on redistribution and gay rights are no longer significantly different from those of natives. Model (3) - columns 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 - distinguishes between migrants' cohort of arrival. We can see that the direction of the average gap between natives and migrants with less than two years at destination is stable across arrival cohorts for all issues but redistribution and gay rights. Although not statistically significant, the cohort coefficients in column 2 suggest that between 1995 and 2010, immigrants were likely

equal to 0. A value close to 0 indicates implies that an insignificant selection on unobservables compared to observed covariates makes the estimated effect equal to zero, and indicates a higher threat from selection on unobservables. The value of δ can also be negative, given the relation between observables and unobservables. The intuition related to the estimator then remains the same: if $\delta < -1$, then the threat on unobservables is minimized.

[26] To construct the region of origin fixed effects, we use respondents' country of origin variable available in the ESS. Regions of origin include the following categories: Africa, East and South-East Asia, Central Asia, MENA, EU-15 and North America and Oceania, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean. For natives, country is destination is used as the country of origin. The categories used for religious controls are the same as in the previous section.

to hold more liberal views than natives upon arrival but that this difference no longer exists for migrants who migrated in the past 10 years, possibly because of an increase in support for redistributive policies among Western natives in the wake of the global financial crisis. Moreover, the latest migrant cohorts held significantly more conservative views on gay rights than natives living in the same country. In contrast, columns 6, 8, and 10 indicate that those who arrived after 1995 were significantly and consistently more supportive of EU integration and immigration, and held higher levels of political trust, regardless of their time of arrival in their country of residence. These differences are rather intuitive and have been discussed in the previous section.

Turning to the effect of time since migration, at least one of the tenure coefficients is statistically significant for preferences for redistribution, immigration policy, and political trust . For instance, estimates from column 2 imply that the immigrants that have spent between 11 and 20 years at destination have redistribution preferences that are, ceteris paribus 0,047 lower on a 0-1 scale as compared to immigrants with less than 2 years of residency (the omitted tenure group). The coefficients for other policy variables and other tenure groups can be interpreted in a similar fashion[27]. These are sizable changes. With what regards immigration policy, the average opinion gap no longer exists by the time migrants have spent 20 years at destination. The change in migrants' preferences (-0.113 on a 0-1 scale) is equivalent to 0,34 standard deviation and is one and a half times greater in magnitude than the relative positive effect of tertiary education. It may seem somewhat surprising to find that foreign-born attitudes towards immigration become more negative overtime and converge to those of natives. Rather than showing solidarity with future migrants, they become more favourable to closing the door on immigration from the very first years after their arrival. This "club" effect could be explained by the fact that the length of stay is correlated with access to economic, social, and political rights which make migrants less vulnerable to expulsion while at the same time increasing the perceived competition for these rights with potential new immigrants.

The effect of tenure is also significant for political trust. After 20 years of residence at destination, migrants' trust level is on average 0,043 lower on a 0-1 scale (0.2 SD) and the migrant-to-native initial gap is reduced by 80 %. Convergence operates however at a slower rate than for immigration policy. Migrants show relatively few signs of convergence in the first few years after migration (the coefficients for migrants with less than 10 years of tenure are negative but statistically insignificant). Instead, our estimates suggest that only migrants with at least 10 years of residence at destination can be considered significantly closer to natives in terms of political trust. While we are not able to say with certainty whether this convergence is driven by adaptation to new opportunity structures and national context or more broadly by culturally embedded beliefs about governments, this pattern points towards assimilation.

It is worth noting that we find no signs of assimilation for preferences towards European integration and gay rights: The tenure coefficients are sizable in relative terms but not significant at any conventional level. With what regards migrants' political views on gay rights, it is worth stressing that we do not observe any assimilation either when running model (3) on a subsample of migrants from low-income countries, whose views are significantly more conservative than natives upon arrival[28]. This result is at odds with

[27]Table A.3 in the Appendix shows that these results are robust to the inclusion of origin-cohort fixed effects to control for possible region of origin-cohorts specificities.

[28]Results are available from the authors upon request

the previous studies (Roeder, 2015; Soelh, 2018) that found evidence of intra-generational acculturation. However, several methodological differences can explain this difference. First, for reasons detailed previously, we concentrate on immigrants who have lived less than 20 years in their host country, and it is possible that assimilation occur only among migrants with longer tenure. Second, we do not include first-generation immigrants who came to live as children, which are likely to be driving the assimilation pattern observed in previous studies. Last, we control for potential heterogeneous political opinions among migrants at the time of arrival. At any rate, this finding suggests that if immigrants do assimilate, their preferences take a long time to change, which is not surprising if one considers that political opinions about gay rights have large religious and cultural underpinnings that require a long time to evolve.

Finally, we find that redistribution preferences follow a diverging pattern: First-generation immigrants become relatively more conservative than natives during the first 20 years at destination. The coefficient is equivalent to 0.14 standard deviation, and corresponds to one and half time the reduction in preferences that exists between an individual with at least a 3-month long unemployment experience and one without. This resonates with the finding from section 3.1 that foreign-born individuals who migrated before the age of 15 - i.e. those with longer tenure - are relatively more likely to oppose redistribution than those who did so aged 15 or more. A possible explanation is that migration experience for individuals with longer tenure is associated with discrimination in access to welfare services which makes them less likely to support government redistribution.

As mentioned previously, a final concern with our results is the possibility of selection on unobservables, which we address using Oster's 2019 methodology. For all policy variables and all tenure coefficients, we compute the degree of selection on unobservable δ for the fully specified model (the second specification of Table 2) using Oster's suggested bounded value ($R_{max} = 1.3\tilde{R}$), where $\tilde{R}$ is the R-squared of the model with all controls, and assuming that cohort fixed effects are unrelated to the set of proportionally related unobservables[29]. We find that δ is higher that the cut-off value of 1 for all preferences but political trust. On that issue, the value of δ remains however close to 1 (0.916) for migrants with the longest tenure (more than 10 years), which are driving the interpretation of our results. Overall, these tests provide reassurance about the potential threat of selection on unobservables. Moreover, the existing literature identifies several individual characteristics of return migrants in Europe suggesting that we should not be too concerned with the possibility that our results are driven by self-selection of less integrated foreign-born individuals into out-migration. First, immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe are less likely to depart,[30] and our robustness tests (see Table A.3) show that our results hold for the subsample of migrants from low-income countries, which are the least subject to return migration. Second, the return rate in OECD countries after five years is not much higher than the return rate after three years among working-age immigrants,

[29]By construction, the cohort variables are such that immigrants with longer tenure are over-represented in older cohorts, which would increase artificially but significantly the selection of immigrants into tenure based on observable characteristics if they were to be used to compute δ

[30]For instance, in Norway, although the average re-emigration rate after five years is about 50%, the retention rate of immigrants from OECD countries is below 30% while that of immigrants from non-Western countries is above 75% (Bratsberg et al., 2007). Likewise, in Sweden, the probability that an immigrant will leave the country is lower amongst immigrants from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe (Nekby, 2006)

indicating that immigrants who leave their country of destination do so relatively shortly after arrival[31]. This result is largely explained by the fact that, in many European countries, an immigrant can obtain a long-term residence permit after five years of residence, or even take out the nationality of the host country. More generally, the longer a migrant stays in the host country, the less likely he or she is to return home or emigrate to a third country (OECD, 2008; Nekby, 2006). In this respect, our findings show that the changes in migrant-to-native differences are not concentrated during the first years of tenure but rather take place over a longer time period (this can been seen by looking at the differences between immigrants with 2 to 5 years and those with 11 to 20 years in the full model)[32].

5 Assimilation at the subnational level

In the previous section, we have described changes in political opinion gaps at the country level. The changes we have documented may reflect immigrants' economic and social experience at destination and their access to similar or distinct opportunities than natives. At the same time, they may have large cultural underpinnings, which traditionally take longer to evolve. In order to better understand the mechanism at play behind the evolution of immigrants' opinions, we try to disentangle the role played by national opportunity structures from the role of cultural transmission by exploring subnational convergence between migrants and natives' political preferences. We do this by performing two analyses: one at the regional level - where we try to quantify the influence of regional culture on immigrants - and one at the subregional level - where we focus on peer effects.

5.1. Regional analysis

We start by looking at regional convergence between migrants and natives' political views, which we consider relevant for several reasons. First, sub-national cultural norms and ethno-regional identities are likely to influence political preferences. One could mention for instance the Catalan region in Spain or the ethno-linguistic divide in Belgium between Flemings and Walloons, where within-country differences reflect the geography of political and economic events. Another telling example in recent history is probably the German reunification, which has incorporated a large population from the former Soviet block whose political preferences were massively different from West German natives.[33] Moreover, the political preferences that we investigate in this paper are prone to vary across regions of a same country with different levels of economic prosperity, unemployment, immigration density, or the quality of local politicians. Recent studies have indeed shown that the cross-region variation in both the actual and perceived level of these characteristics are able to explain large differences in preferences for redistribution (Alesina and Murard, 2019), anti-immigration and nationalistic sentiment (Moriconi et al., 2019), or political trust (Algan et al., 2017).

[31] International Migration Outlook (OECD, 2008).

[32] This would be problematic, however, if most of the changes in political preferences took place among immigrants with less than 10 years at destination

[33] In fact, Dancygier et al. (2006) suggest that regional differences in attitudes welfare spending between East and West Germans could be more important than differences between natives and immigrants in modern day Germany

Finally, exploiting within-country variation in political preferences allows to somewhat isolate the effect of regional culture by controlling for the effect of common national institutions (see Tabellini, 2010).

The analysis presented here uses the information provided by the ESS about the place of residence of the respondents, reported at the NUTS1 or NUTS2 level. In some instances, we pool respondents from several NUTS2 regions into a single NUTS1 aggregate in some countries for the purpose of representativeness,[34] so that a sufficiently high number of foreign-born individuals is included in each region to allow for a meaningful estimation their regional preferences. Table 3 contains cross-region (within) and cross-country (between) variations in political preferences. There is significant within-country regional variation in natives' political preferences: with the exception of political trust, within variation is close to 50% of the between variation, indicating the existence of significant regional variation in the European countries under study. As a result, analyzing differences between migrants and natives at the regional level can add significant information to our study.

Because of the limited number of regions in the study, using a regression such as model (1) on the immigrant sample and including measures of regional mean political preferences could be problematic. If included one at a time, these measures would capture all other unobserved regional effects, and their own effect will not be identified. If, instead, they are included into regressions together, collinearity is a potential problem. To tackle this issue, we adopt the two-stage methodology formalized by Card and Krueger (1992), and applied to studying culture transmission by Blau (1992), Fernandez and Fogli (2009), and Aleksynska (2011), as well as labour market integration (Peri et al., 2020). In the first stage, we estimate the following regression on the foreign-born sample with host region fixed effects:

$$Pref_{ij} = \alpha + \beta X_i + \gamma \delta_j + \epsilon_{ij} \tag{4}$$

The X vector includes all individual controls from model (1) and survey round fixed effects. We also control for immigrants' citizenship status, time since migration, region of origin and religious background as these characteristics have a significant impact on political preferences and are likely to be correlated with the geographical distribution of immigrants across Europe. δ_j is a host-region specific fixed effect. Errors are clustered at the country level to allow for spatial correlation. In some regions, the total number of immigrants is small and hence the estimates are noisy. In order to address this issue, we exclude from the sample regional units in which too few migrants were surveyed to permit meaningful analysis[35].

In the second stage, the vectors of coefficients on host region effects γ are regressed on natives' mean political preferences:

$$\gamma_j = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \overline{Pref}_j + \mu_c + \epsilon_{jc} \tag{5}$$

where γ_j is the coefficient associated with the fixed effect for region j estimated in equation (4), $\overline{Pref}$ represents the average political preferences of natives in region j, and μ_c is a set of country-fixed effects

[34] A list of all regions is available in Table A.10

[35] Regions where fewer than 25 first-generation migrants were surveyed are therefore excluded from the analysis

controlling for common national institutions. We proxy political preferences in each region with the average across native respondents using survey weights.[36] Regressions are estimated by weighted least squares, using first-stage inverse sampling variances of the estimated region fixed-effects in (4) as weights to allow for different measurement errors across regions. Coefficient β_1 captures the correlation between natives' mean political preferences on the preferences of immigrants in their host region.

The first row of Table 4 summarizes second-stage results for the full sample of immigrants. Coefficients for redistribution, immigration and trust are significant, indicating that regional culture plays a role in explaining the variation in the host-region fixed effects capturing immigrants' preferences.[37] One possibility is that immigrants acculturate to the political preferences of natives. In particular, while we have found very modest differences in preferences for redistribution at the country level regardless of immigrants' cultural background, it is possible that at the national level, cultural drivers of migrant-to-native differences are overshadowed by contextual and institutional drivers, but that migrants remain influenced by natives' culture at the regional level. While country-level analysis fails to isolate the effect of culture from institutions, the large and significant association at the regional level could indicate the acculturation of immigrants to natives' political preferences. Likewise, the coefficient for immigration could reflect the diversity of opinions on immigration and xenophobia in Western Europe, which are themselves the product of cultural and religious traditions and immigration history influencing local attitudes[38]. Cultural convergence on political trust may seem counter-intuitive at first since little variation exists across Western Europe democracies in terms of political regimes. It is however consistent with the cultural theories on political trust, which hypothesize that trust in political institutions originates outside the political sphere in long-standing and deeply seated cultural beliefs about people (see Inglehart, 1997; Putnam, 1993), and the findings of Dinesen et al. (2010), who show that an intergenerational acculturation of trust takes place among non-western foreign-born individuals upon migrating to Western Europe.

If migrants are indeed subject an acculturation mechanism, we should observe a stronger association between native preferences and those migrants that have had increased contact with natives in their host region. To test whether this is the case, we run the previous analysis using tenure-based first-stage coefficients in model (4), i.e where we distinguish between immigrants based on the length of stay at destination (more or less than 10 years). Table 4.bis shows that the partial correlation between migrants and natives' political preferences on trust and immigration is largely, if not exclusively driven by immigrants with longer tenure. For both of these issues, the results are in line with the theory of acculturation. It is worth stressing that linking immigrants with their region of residence at the time of the survey could be problematic for immigrants

[36] According to the European Social survey, statistical inference is possible for most of the NUTS1 / NUTS2 regions in the sample. We check nonetheless that our results are robust to using an epidemiological approach, where natives' political preferences are measured by running model (4) on the sample of native respondents. Results are available from the Authors upon request.

[37] The magnitude and statistical significance of these coefficients hold when we run the analysis on a subsample of migrants from low-income countries. Likewise, excluding one country at a time from model (5) to control for possible outlier countries does not change neither the magnitude nor significance of our results.

[38] For instance, while all European countries have received an increasing number of immigrants in the past decade, Scandinavian and Northern European countries are historically regarded as immigration countries, whereas Southern European states such as Portugal, Italy, and Spain are mostly considered as emigration countries, with sizable differences across regions.

with longer tenure, since we do not observe past mobility and cannot control for the possibility that some immigrants may have lived in different regions of his or her destination country. However, under reasonable assumptions, it would only bias the estimated coefficients downward. Indeed, if anything, migrants who had moved across regions were less exposed to the influence of natives' political preferences in the region where they lived at the time of the survey, and the predicting power of the coefficient should then be smaller for these migrants. In contrast, the coefficient for preferences for redistribution is only slightly larger for migrants that have spent more than 20 years at destination, and a Chow test on differences in coefficients indicates that it is not significantly different at the conventional level from that reported for immigrants with shorter tenure. Regional convergence on that issue is therefore hardly sensitive to the time spent at destination, suggesting that migrants adopt local attitudes towards redistribution not by adjusting to cultural norms but by quickly updating their beliefs, perhaps as a result of contextual factors driving support for redistribution of both natives and immigrants at the regional level.

In fact, to test whether the correlation between natives and immigrants' convergence can be explained by region-specific macro-level factors, we substitute natives' regional political preferences in model (5) with a set of potentially relevant regional effects. These variables include GDP per capita, GDP growth rate, the numbers of years in recession, the unemployment rate, the share of foreign-born population, the share of people at risk of poverty, the rate of net migration, tertiary education attainment, broadband access, the number of active physicians per 1000 people and the homicide rate.[39] These variables are averaged across the period of analysis and included one regional factor at a time given the small number of observations in each regression. With the exception of GDP, which is correlated with immigrants' preferences on both gay rights and redistribution, coefficients for the latter variables are mostly not significant and very small in magnitude. We suspect that this may be because these macroeconomic variables are averaged over several years, which offsets short-and medium-term fluctuations, while attitude variables are in general more persistent and are less likely to fluctuate during the period of interest. It is also possible that factors that affect the general native population at the regional level may not necessarily affect immigrants in the same way. It is worth stressing however that average GDP growth and GDP per capita play a significant part in explaining regional differences in immigrants' preferences towards redistribution, which is another element suggesting that immigrants' convergence in matters of redistribution could be driven by economic context and opportunities.

5.2. Contact with native peers

To further investigate the acculturation hypothesis, we look at the convergence in political preferences at the subregional level. Indeed, if migrants experience acculturation, this should go through contact with

[39]The number of active physicians in a given area is used as a proxy for social (healthcare) expenditure, while broadband access is included as the use of internet can have a significant impact on the formation of political preferences. Homicide rate can be regarded as a proxy for social capital. Data for GDP, growth rate, recessions, homicide rate and number of active physicians comes from the OECD regional statistics database. Data on the remaining variables are taken from the European Regional Database of the European Commission. More information is available from the Appendix

native peers and we should observe as a result some convergence within regions between migrants and those native peers with whom they interact.

The ESS provide some information which allows us to identify immigrants' native peers based on geographical and socio-demographic characteristics. Given that the relevant peer groups for immigrants are defined arbitrarily, there will be some degree of imprecision. Here, we assume that immigrants interact primarily with individuals residing in the same area and who share identical traits along age and occupation. Within regions, neighborhood characteristics are measured for respondents living in a big city, those who live in a medium-size or small city, and respondents living in a country village or in the countryside. Migrants' native peers are also identified through three age bands (15-35, 35-45, over 50) and three occupational groups based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO)[40]. Peer groups are therefore defined as clusters of native individuals from the same geographic area - defined at the subregional level -, in the same age band and with similar occupations. They pool together individuals from multiple survey rounds, but we account for time-varying differences in the empirical model using survey-round fixed effects. We also include in the analysis only those regions included in model (4) as well as native peer groups for which we have sufficiently many peer observations (i.e those containing at least 25 native individuals)[41]. Based on this selection, 2001 peer-group clusters are used in the subsequent analysis.

We estimate the following model on the immigrant sample:

$$Pref_{ijp} = \alpha + \beta X_i + \gamma \overline{Pref}_{jp} + \nu_j + \mu_p + \epsilon_{ijp} \tag{6}$$

where the X vector includes all individual socio-economic controls - including immigrants' time since migration, region of origin and religious affiliation - as well as survey round fixed effects. We capture native peers' political preferences with the variable $\overline{Pref}$, constructed as the weighted average across native respondents in the corresponding cluster. As we try to isolate cultural transmission between the native community and immigrants within regions, the main challenge is to adequately capture peer effects while accounting for regional clustering, i.e regional drivers of political preferences. To do this, we include region fixed effects ν_j. In this way our results are not attributable to variations in regional characteristics and preferences. However, labelling our estimates "peer effects" also requires that γ does not capture the influence of the individual characteristics we have used to construct peer groups. We thus control for the possibility that individuals with similar age, occupation, and dwelling type may share common political preferences across Europe by using group fixed effects μ_p.

Results are presented in Table 6. For each political variable, the baseline panel contains the peer-effect

[40]Details about the construction of peer-groups can be found in Appendix

[41]Running model (4) and (5) on this new sample yields very similar results to those contained in Table 4 and 4.bis: The magnitude and significance of coefficients are left unchanged. Our results are also robust to increasing this threshold and therefore the precision of the measurement of peer-group preferences, which increases with the number of native observations in each peer group.

coefficient estimated in model (6). Following the same line of reasoning as before, coefficients capturing the influence of native peers on migrants' political views should be larger among those migrants that have had greater interactions with natives. To test whether this is the case, we report in the lower panel of Table 6 separate peer-effect coefficients based on immigrants' time since migration (less or more than 10 years).
Regardless of the time spent at destination, we find no significant correlation between immigrants' redistributive preferences and the natives with whom they are most likely to interact, which we interpret as a sign that immigrants' support for redistribution is not subject to an acculturation process. In line with the interpretation of previous results, we therefore reckon that the migrant-to-native association at the regional level is the product of local contextual drivers that influence both natives and immigrants' preferences.
In contrast, the coefficients for immigration policy and political trust corroborate the theory that migrants espouse the political views of peer natives through an acculturation process. This finding is in line with evidence from section 4.2 and 5.1 on the long-run political assimilation and regional acculturation of these preferences. The bottom panel of Table 6 further corroborates this theory, indicating that the correlation between immigrants' preferences and their peers is primarily driven by the population that has spent more time at destination and therefore had increased contact with natives.
More surprisingly, we find a positive and significant association between peer natives' and migrants' political preferences on gay rights and European integration, while no significant correlation was visible at the regional level. This suggests selective local political acculturation of migrants to natives' attitudes, possibly because only some subgroups of the migrant population are subject to the influence of their local native peers within otherwise politically divided regions. For instance, it is plausible that because EU integration has secured economic, social and political rights for a large share of foreign-born migrants, the latter hold relatively idiosyncratic preferences on that issue. As for gay rights, the absence of convergence at the regional level could be explained by the nature of political preferences on that issue, which have fewer self-interest motives and rely more heavily on deep-seated religious and cultural beliefs that are more likely to persist over time among religious and older individuals. Indeed, further analysis reveals that the coefficients on gay rights is driven by the correlation between the preferences of younger immigrants and their peer natives.

This analysis documents the correlation between first-generation immigrants and natives' political preferences at the subregional level. We interpret it as suggestive of the political influence of native peers with similar socio-economic characteristics living in the same geographical area as immigrants. It is worth stressing, however, that our interpretation might be erroneous in the presence of unobserved regional drivers of political preferences that are both peers and region specific. If regional factors - such as, for instance, the degree of discrimination in the regional labor market - are (i) correlated with political preferences, and (ii) affecting one peer group more than another, we may then incorrectly attribute the effect of these unobserved variables to the influence of native peers. [42]. Note, however, that these unobserved characteristics must vary across regions for this to be a problem as we include group fixed μ_p effects in model (6). Finally, to the extent that our analysis plausibly estimates peer effects, it is clear however that those may operate through a number of channels, such as explicit attitudes, revealed behavior, characteristics, and information. We

[42]In other words, it is plausible that peer-group opportunities could be driving our results. However, testing this hypothesis would require information that is specific to every peer-group in every region, and cannot be performed with the data at our disposal

make no attempt and leave it to further research to distinguish between these different channels.

6 Conclusion

As the proportion of immigrants is growing in developed countries, they increasingly influence the scope, shape, and directions of the political life of receiving communities. This paper presents a descriptive analysis of first-generation immigrants' political preferences on redistribution, gay rights, immigration, political trust and attitudes to EU unification, and attempts to provide original insights into the assimilation pattern of these preferences among first-generation immigrants.

At the country level, we find that immigrants are slightly more conservative than natives in terms of welfare preferences. They also hold more restrictive views on gay rights, show greater levels of trust in national parliaments and are more supportive of EU unification and open immigration policies. These differences owe largely to immigrants from low-income countries, but other factors such as religion and linguistic ties between the home and host country are also salient. For instance, immigrants who share a common language with their host country have views that are in general closer to those of natives, while religious foreign-born, and in particular muslim immigrants, hold political opinions that are further from those of natives than non-religious immigrants.

Moreover, our analysis reveals that the migrant-to-native gap changes with immigrants' time spent at destination for all political issues but gay rights and European integration. In particular, among migrants that have lived 10 years or more at destination, differences in opinion about immigration policy no longer exist and the gap in political trust is reduced by 80%. In contrast, while no significant differences in preferences for redistribution are observed upon arrival, immigrants become relatively more conservative than natives with the time since migration, which could be related to discrimination and poorer access to welfare transfers at destination.

Finally, we study immigrants' adoption of local political norms by exploiting within-country variations in political attitudes at the regional and subregional levels. We find a large and significant correlation between immigrants' preferences and natives' political preference in their host region for attitudes to redistribution, immigration, and political trust. Controlling for regional differences, our analysis reveals further that the preferences of native peers of similar age and occupation and living in the same area as immigrants are a significant predictor of immigrants' own political views for immigration policy and political trust. On the contrary, migrants' preferences on redistribution show no signs of acculturation to local norms. Evidence for gay rights and European integration remain inconclusive and deserve greater investigation in the future. Although our study falls short of identifying the exact role played by cultural drivers and self-interest in immigrants' political assimilation, we are therefore able to identify issue-specific patterns which we interpret as a reflection of the fundamentally different nature of migrants' political preferences. Our result do not call for normative recommendations but inform the current policy debate about the integration of foreign-born populations by shedding light on the potential consequences of the naturalization and enfranchisement of foreign-born residents on electoral and political outcomes[43]

[43]In practice, second-generation immigrants born in Western Europe are de facto eligible to naturalization before they reach

Finally, while this paper and the vast extant literature document the influence of European political norms on the preferences of first-generation immigrants from outside Europe, one may ask symmetrically whether immigrants who bring with them the culture of their origin country are in a position to influence natives at destination. Rapoport et al. (2020) and Tabellini and Giuliano (2020) - who found that immigration left its footprint on American ideology via cultural transmission at the time of the New Deal - go some way towards answering this question. This paper neither intends to, nor can provide an answer to this question in the European context. However, whether such influence and transformation of existing societies are indeed taking place is an important issue for further research.

the age of voting, both in ius soli countries and those with a mixed citizenship regime. The consequences of immigrants' political integration are therefore directly and substantially impacted by citizenship policies through the size and composition of the foreign-born population that they add to the franchise.

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Tables and Figures

Table 1: Migrant-to-native gap

	Redistribution (0-4)	Gay rights (0-4)	Europe (0-10)	Immigration (0-3)	Political trust (0-10)
Age at time of migration					
Less than 15yo at migration	-0.0152**	-0.1016***	0.0221***	0.0456***	0.0468***
	(0.0066)	(0.0071)	(0.0077)	(0.0062)	(0.0062)
Over 15yo at migration	-0.0057*	-0.1356***	0.0687***	0.0594***	0.0762***
	(0.0032)	(0.0039)	(0.0040)	(0.0032)	(0.0033)
Observations	237,487	236,854	177,778	235783.0000	235,858

Regressions include individual socio-economic controls, country-survey round fixed effects and account for survey design and population weights. Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Table 1.bis: Migrant-to-native gap, heterogeneity

	Redistribution (0-4)	Gay rights (0-4)	Europe (0-10)	Immigration (0-3)	Political trust (0-10)
Panel A: Origin and access to services					
Origin country					
Immigrant	0.0159***	-0.0005	0.0461***	0.0610***	0.0118**
	(0.0056)	(0.0050)	(0.0069)	(0.0051)	(0.0054)
Immigrant × Low income	-0.0140***	-0.1629***	0.0625***	0.0553***	0.0854***
	(0.0033)	(0.0040)	(0.0041)	(0.0034)	(0.0033)
R-squared	0.1086	0.1697	0.1026	0.1573	0.1361
Origin country - EU member					
Immigrant	0.0011	-0.0604***	0.0690***	0.0865***	0.0564***
	(0.0072)	(0.0077)	(0.0090)	(0.0070)	(0.0073)
Immigrant × No EU Origin	-0.0095***	-0.1466***	0.0576***	0.0549***	0.0739***
	(0.0034)	(0.0041)	(0.0042)	(0.0034)	(0.0034)
R-squared	0.1091	0.1673	0.1036	0.1583	0.1238
Citizenship					
Immigrant	-0.0024	-0.1263***	0.0365***	0.0337***	0.0574***
	(0.0042)	(0.0050)	(0.0052)	(0.0042)	(0.0041)
Immigrant × No citizenship	-0.0126***	-0.1305***	0.0796***	0.0768***	0.0819***
	(0.0038)	(0.0047)	(0.0048)	(0.0039)	(0.0040)
R-squared	0.1084	0.1643	0.1030	0.1577	0.1351
Observations	237,487	236,854	177,778	235,783	235,858

All regressions include individual socio-economic controls, country-survey round fixed effects and account for survey design and population weights. Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Table 1.bis: Migrant-to-native gap, heterogeniety

	Redistribution (0-4)	Gay rights (0-4)	Europe (0-10)	Immigration (0-3)	Political trust (0-10)
Panel B: Culture					
Religion					
Immigrant	-0.0031	-0.0500***	0.0487***	0.0418***	0.0336***
	(0.0051)	(0.0051)	(0.0062)	(0.0048)	(0.0049)
Immigrant × Christian	-0.0088**	-0.1192***	0.0552***	0.0610***	0.0671***
	(0.0041)	(0.0048)	(0.0051)	(0.0042)	(0.0041)
Immigrant × Muslim	-0.0126*	-0.2717***	0.0937***	0.0816***	0.1205***
	(0.0066)	(0.0091)	(0.0082)	(0.0069)	(0.0071)
Immigrant × Other	-0.0074	-0.1620***	0.0264*	0.0091	0.1293***
	(0.0122)	(0.0157)	(0.0158)	(0.0126)	(0.0128)
R-squared	0.1084	0.1717	0.1029	0.1576	0.1363
Religiosity					
Immig	-0.0080*	-0.0621***	0.0491***	0.0514***	0.0463***
	(0.0042)	(0.0042)	(0.0052)	(0.0040)	(0.0042)
Immig × High religiosity	-0.0074*	-0.1852***	0.0676***	0.0608***	0.0900***
	(0.0039)	(0.0050)	(0.0048)	(0.0040)	(0.0039)
R-squared	0.1084	0.1690	0.1027	0.1573	0.1355
Language					
Immig	-0.0135***	-0.1380***	0.0634***	0.0551***	0.0708***
	(0.0034)	(0.0041)	(0.0044)	(0.0034)	(0.0035)
Immig × Common language	0.0072	-0.1038***	0.0478***	0.0602***	0.0677***
	(0.0053)	(0.0064)	(0.0059)	(0.0051)	(0.0052)
R-squared	0.1085	0.1646	0.1026	0.1573	0.1349
Community size					
Immig -0.0112***	-0.1244***	0.0494***	0.0468***	0.0680***	
	(0.0034)	(0.0040)	(0.0043)	(0.0033)	(0.0034)
Immig × Large community	0.0008	-0.1380***	0.0815***	0.0797***	0.0744***
	(0.0053)	(0.0067)	(0.0062)	(0.0057)	(0.0055)
R-squared	0.1084	0.1644	0.1028	0.1575	0.1349
Observations	237,487	236,854	177,778	235,783	235,858

All regressions include individual socio-economic controls, country-survey round fixed effects and account for survey design and population weights. Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Table 2: Assimilation over time

	(1) Redistribution	(2) Redistribution	(3) Homosexuality	(4) Homosexuality	(5) EU	(6) EU	(7) Immigration	(8) Immigration	(9) Trust pol. instit.	(10) Trust pol. instit.
First-generation immig.	0.017		-0.020		0.058**		0.107***		0.054**	
	(0.024)		(0.021)		(0.028)		(0.026)		(0.024)	
Immig × 2-5 years ago	-0.018	-0.020	0.012	0.009	-0.017	-0.016	-0.039*	-0.042*	-0.022	-0.021
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Immig × 6-10 years ago	-0.017	-0.033	0.008	-0.019	-0.026	-0.019	-0.050**	-0.070***	-0.015	-0.009
	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.021)	(0.022)
Immig × 11-20 years ago	-0.024	-0.047**	0.026	-0.020	-0.042	-0.028	-0.081***	-0.113***	-0.052**	-0.043*
	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.020)	(0.023)	(0.026)	(0.028)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.022)	(0.023)
Cohort:										
1995 - 2005		0.040		0.030		0.043		0.141***		0.045*
		(0.025)		(0.024)		(0.031)		(0.027)		(0.025)
2005 - 2010		0.033		-0.016		0.058*		0.117***		0.048**
		(0.025)		(0.023)		(0.030)		(0.026)		(0.024)
post-2010		-0.000		-0.042**		0.061**		0.089***		0.061**
		(0.024)		(0.021)		(0.029)		(0.026)		(0.025)
Obs.	220790	220790	220123	220123	164171	164171	219215	219215	219422	219422
R-squared	0.114	0.114	0.184	0.184	0.105	0.105	0.163	0.163	0.149	0.149
Oster's δ:										
mmig × 2-5 years ago		1.876		-3.665		-0.552		-1.243		-0.881
Immig × 6-10 years ago		-2.791		1.730		13.093		7.055		-0.214
Immig × 11-20 years ago		-1.642		-2.373		3.570		-3.219		0.916

All regressions include individual socio-economic controls, country-survey round fixed effects and account for survey design and population weights. Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Table 3: Between and Within Country Variation of Selected Variables

	Overall	**Between**	**Within**
Political preferences			
Attitudes towards Redistribution	0.784	0.783	0.289
Attitudes towards Gay rights	0.090	0.787	0.034
Attitudes towards EU	0.071	0.057	0.032
Attitudes towards Immigration	0.091	0.082	0.038
Trust in political institutions	0.085	0.090	0.030
Macro variables			
Unemployment rate	4.892	3.673	2.395
GDP per capita (log)	0.304	0.224	0.210
Average GDP growth (2002-2019)	0.007	0.006	0.005
Number of years in recession	2.282	1.925	1.377
People at risk of poverty	5.856	3.419	4.802
Crude rate of net migration	3.291	2.198	2.529
Share of foreigners	4.915	4.225	3.223
Tertiary Educational Attainment	8.270	8.105	4.870
Household with broadband access	10.388	10.642	3.847
Active Physicians Rate (physicians for 1000 population)	1.002	0.621	0.744
Intentional Homicide Rate (homicides for 100000 population)	0.419	0.439	0.276

Table 4: Regional acculturation

	Redistribution	Gay rights	EU attitudes	Immigration	Trust
Regional culture	0.4334***	0.0217	-0.0047	0.3771***	0.5071***
	(0.1179)	(0.1264)	(0.1478)	(0.1030)	(0.1348)
Unemployment rate	0.0029	0.0025	0.0003	-0.0013	-0.0040**
	(0.0020)	(0.0017)	(0.0020)	(0.0018)	(0.0018)
log GDP per capita (PPP)	-0.0426**	-0.0160	-0.0103	-0.0025	0.0307
	(0.0211)	(0.0211)	(0.0213)	(0.0191)	(0.0194)
GDP average growth (%)	0.0184*	0.0141*	-0.0002	0.0020	-0.0021
	(0.0680)	(0.0758)	(0.1968)	(0.0574)	(0.1861)
Number of years in recession	-0.0037	-0.0069	-0.0268	-0.0084	-0.0150
	(0.0100)	(0.0112)	(0.0290)	(0.0082)	(0.0267)
Risk of poverty	0.0034	0.0031	-0.0088	0.0016	0.0057
	(0.0035)	(0.0042)	(0.0121)	(0.0034)	(0.0106)
Net rate of migration	-0.0068	-0.0097	-0.0107	0.0001	-0.0060
	(0.0059)	(0.0065)	(0.0171)	(0.0048)	(0.0158)
Share of foreigners	-0.0015	-0.0025*	-0.0023*	-0.0008	0.0004
	(0.0014)	(0.0013)	(0.0013)	(0.0011)	(0.0012)
Tertiary Education	-0.0003	0.0042	0.0055	0.0017	0.0072
	(0.0028)	(0.0031)	(0.0083)	(0.0023)	(0.0075)
Access to Broadband	-0.0059	0.0029	-0.0058	- 0.0002	-0.0075
	(0.0041)	(0.0048)	(0.0124)	(0.0029)	(0.0109)
Active physician	-0.0124	0.0013	0.0597	0.0207	0.0910
	(0.0209)	(0.0240)	(0.0636)	(0.0174)	(0.0558)
Homicide rate	0.0345	-0.0022	0.1233	0.0395	-0.1780
	(0.0519)	(0.0588)	(0.1529)	(0.0433)	(0.1400)
Observations	115	115	115	115	115

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable: Corresponding destination origin fixed effect from first stage. Estimation method: weighted least squares; with first-stage inverse sampling variances of the estimated fixed effects as weights. All estimators also include dummies for country of residence. 10 regions from the following countries are omitted from the analysis because too few observations precludes from a meaningful analysis: Greece, Spain, France. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Table 4.bis: Regional acculturation with tenure at destination

	Redistribution (0-4)	Gay rights (0-4)	Europe (0-10)	Immigration (0-3)	Political trust (0-10)
Tenure					
Regional culture (Less than 10 yrs)	0.3789**	-0.0537	-0.2060	0.1557	-0.0732
	(0.1814)	(0.2310)	(0.2249)	(0.1655)	(0.2048)
Regional culture (More than 10 yrs)	0.4606***	0.0547	0.2103	0.4409***	0.6982***
	(0.1416)	(0.1531)	(0.1805)	(0.1246)	(0.1639)
Observations	115	115	115	115	115

All regressions include survey round fixed effects and account for survey design and population weights. Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Table 5: Between and Within Peer Group Variation of Selected Variables			
	Overall	**Between**	**Within**
Political preferences			
Attitudes towards Redistribution	0.418	0.336	0.295
Attitudes towards Gay rights	0.402	0.270	0.332
Attitudes towards EU	1.05	0.872	0.883
Attitudes towards Immigration	0.345	0.220	0.277
Trust in political institutions	1.149	0.941	0.781

Table 6: Peer effects

	Redistribution (0-4)	Gay rights (0-4)	Europe (0-10)	Immigration (0-3)	Political trust (0-10)
Baseline					
Peer preference	0.1278	0.1874**	0.3172***	0.1275*	0.1784**
	(0.0869)	(0.1101)	(0.0901)	(0.0776)	(0.0822)
Tenure					
Peer pref. (Less than 10 yrs)	0.1156	-0.0082	0.2199**	0.0062	0.1743
	(0.1021)	(0.1367)	(0.1077)	(0.1265)	(0.0914)
Peer pref. (More than 10 yrs)	0.1331	0.2563**	0.3513***	0.1685**	0.3539***
	(0.0916)	(0.1146)	(0.0967)	(0.1090)	(0.0855)
R-squared	0.1029	0.2110	0.1102	0.1044	0.1217
Observations	15377	15410	11904	15289	14725
Individual controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time and Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Peer-group FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

All regressions include survey round fixed effects and account for survey design and population weights. Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Figure 1

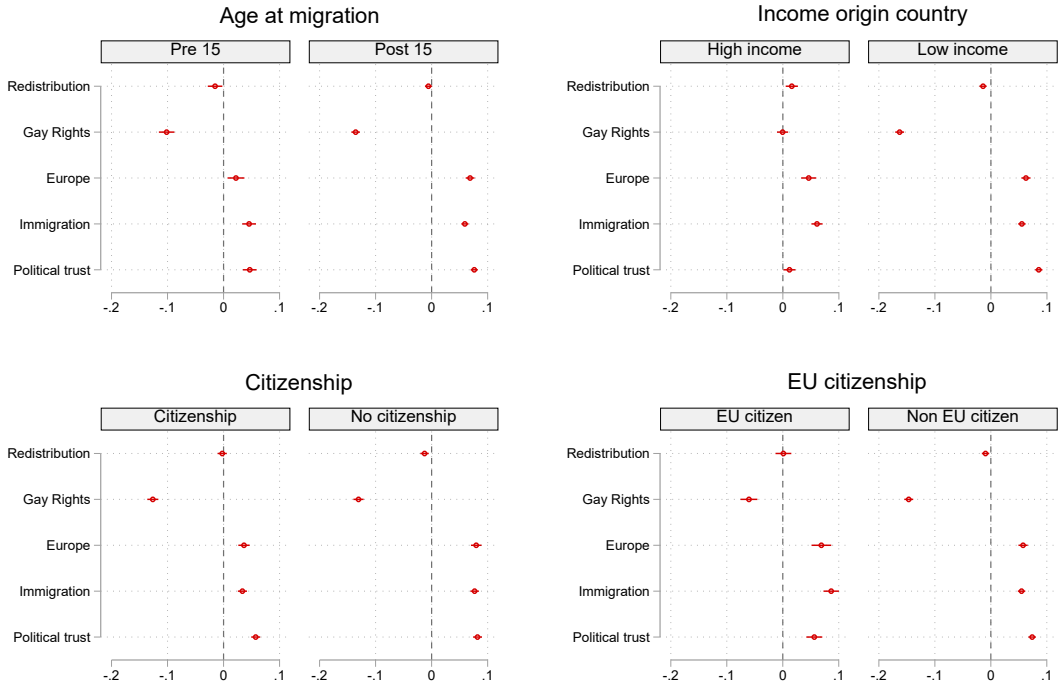
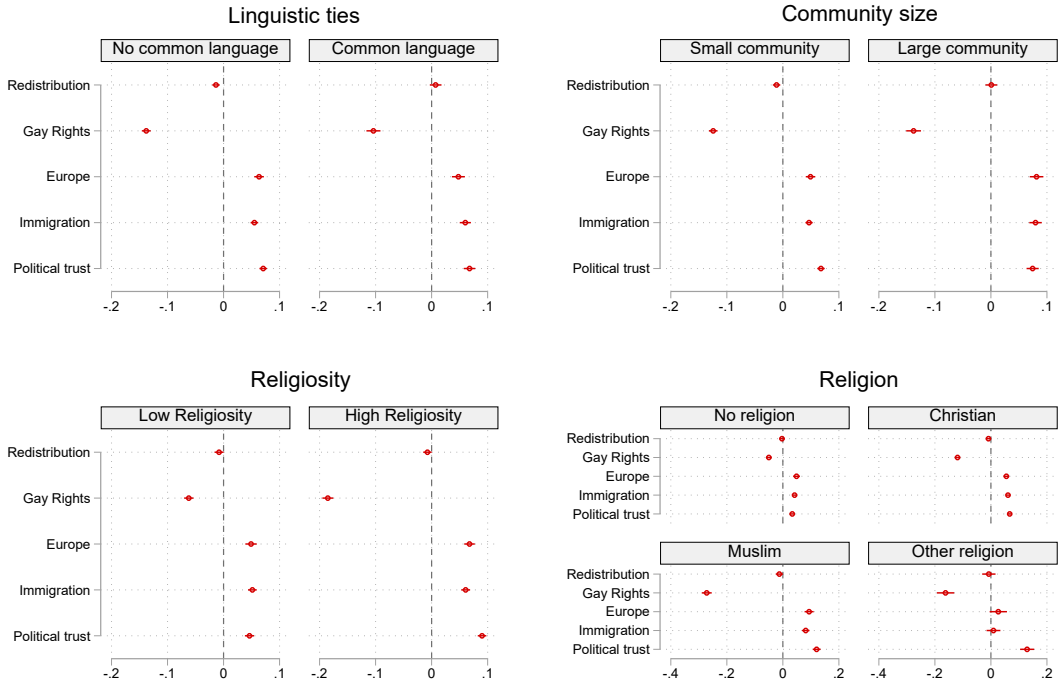


Figure 2



7 Appendix

Alternative analyses

Table A.1: Foreign-born to native gap, 18yo

	Redistribution (0-4)	Gay rights (0-4)	Europe (0-10)	Immigration (0-3)	Political trust (0-10)
Age at time of migration					
Less than 18yo at migration	-0.0166**	-0.1014***	0.0212***	0.0466***	0.0470***
	(0.0065)	(0.0070)	(0.0076)	(0.0062)	(0.0061)
Over 18yo at migration	-0.0052*	-0.1358***	0.0693***	0.0592***	0.0763***
	(0.0032)	(0.0039)	(0.0040)	(0.0033)	(0.0033)
Observations	237,487	236,854	177,778	235,783	235,858
R-squared	0.1084	0.1646	0.1030	0.1573	0.1351

All regressions include individual socio-economic controls, country-survey round fixed effects and account for survey design and population weights. Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Table A.2: Foreign-born to native gap, Ordered Probit

	Redistribution (0-4)	Gay rights (0-4)	Europe (0-10)	Immigration (0-3)	Political trust (0-10)
Age at time of migration					
Less than 15yo at migration	-0.0610**	-0.4836***	0.0916***	0.1948***	0.2197***
	(0.0289)	(0.0316)	(0.0313)	(0.0285)	(0.0282)
Over 15yo at migration	-0.0349**	-0.6098***	0.2765***	0.2491***	0.3529***
	(0.0141)	(0.0162)	(0.0163)	(0.0147)	(0.0150)
Observations	237,487	236,854	177,778	235,783	235,858
Origin country					
Immig	0.0698***	0.0210	0.1871***	0.2727***	0.0573**
	(0.0250)	(0.0272)	(0.0278)	(0.0239)	(0.0244)
Immig × Low income cntry	-0.0701***	-0.7343***	0.2521***	0.2287***	0.3963***
	(0.0147)	(0.0166)	(0.0168)	(0.0153)	(0.0154)
Observations	237,487	236,854	177,778	235,783	235,858
Religion					
Immig -0.0132	-0.2312***	0.1992***	0.1775***	0.1565***	
	(0.0222)	(0.0249)	(0.0254)	(0.0220)	(0.0226)
Immig × Christians	-0.0435**	-0.5607***	0.2219***	0.2580***	0.3092***
	(0.0183)	(0.0203)	(0.0207)	(0.0191)	(0.0186)
Immig × Muslims	-0.0735**	-1.1357***	0.3763***	0.3415***	0.5667***
	(0.0301)	(0.0339)	(0.0337)	(0.0311)	(0.0332)
Immig × Other	-0.0562	-0.7517***	0.1022	0.0249	0.5984***
	(0.0517)	(0.0635)	(0.0637)	(0.0546)	(0.0606)
Observations	237,487	236,854	177,778	235,783	235,858
Religiosity					
Immig	-0.0377**	-0.3011***	0.1994***	0.2192***	0.2151***
	(0.0184)	(0.0200)	(0.0212)	(0.0182)	(0.0191)
Immig × High religiosity	-0.0428**	-0.8130***	0.2717***	0.2534***	0.4180***
	(0.0173)	(0.0197)	(0.0195)	(0.0182)	(0.0181)
Observations	237,487	236,854	177,778	235,783	235,858
Language					
Immig	-0.0699***	-0.6156***	0.2571***	0.2328***	0.3312***
	(0.0148)	(0.0167)	(0.0178)	(0.0158)	(0.0159)
Immig × Common language	0.0366	-0.5001***	0.1897***	0.2505***	0.3074***
	(0.0247)	(0.0282)	(0.0237)	(0.0224)	(0.0236)
Observations	237,487	236,854	177,778	235,783	235,858
Community size					
Immig	-0.0568***	-0.5627***	0.2015***	0.1958***	0.3178***
	(0.0149)	(0.0169)	(0.0177)	(0.0153)	(0.0157)
Immig × Large community	-0.0008	-0.6337***	0.3227***	0.3353***	0.3406***
	(0.0247)	(0.0276)	(0.0250)	(0.0249)	(0.0251)
R-squared	0.1084	0.1644	0.1028	0.1575	0.1349
Observations	237,487	236,854	177,778	235,783	235,858

All regressions include individual socio-economic controls, country-survey round fixed effects and account for survey design and population weights. Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Table A.3: Assimilation over time

	Main results with origin-cohort FE					Low-income countries' immigrants				
	Redistribution	Gay rights	Europe	Immig.	Pol. trust	Redistribution	Gay rights	Europe	Immig.	Pol. trust
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Immig × 2-5 years ago	-0.011	0.015	-0.018	-0.044*	-0.025	-0.028	0.007	0.004	-0.035	-0.024
	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.027)	(0.023)	(0.022)	(0.026)	(0.028)	(0.034)	(0.028)	(0.026)
Immig × 6-10 years ago	-0.024	-0.016	-0.024	-0.075***	-0.014	-0.053**	-0.019	-0.007	-0.067**	-0.013
	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.027)	(0.024)	(0.022)	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.034)	(0.029)	(0.026)
Immig × 11-20 years ago	-0.039*	-0.016	-0.034	-0.117***	-0.046**	-0.056**	-0.014	-0.017	-0.116***	-0.047*
	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.029)	(0.025)	(0.023)	(0.027)	(0.031)	(0.035)	(0.030)	(0.027)
Observations	220790.000	220123.000	164171.000	219215.000	219422.000	218962.000	218274.000	162696.000	217395.000	217769.000
R-squared	0.115	0.184	0.105	0.163	0.149	0.114	0.184	0.105	0.163	0.149
Arrival cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Origin and religion FE	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Origin-cohort and religion FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No

All regressions include individual socio-economic controls, country-survey round fixed effects and account for survey design and population weights.
Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Supplementary tables

Table A4: Full sample, Destination countries

Destination country	Total number of obs.	Native-born obs.	Foreign-born obs.	Number of ESS rounds
Austria	19,370	17,657	1,713	7
Belgium	16,635	14,841	1,794	9
Denmark	11,975	11,386	589	8
Finland	19,225	18,738	487	9
France	17,776	16,215	1,551	9
Germany	26,598	24,255	2,343	9
Greece	9,136	8,479	657	4
Ireland	21,264	19,096	2,168	9
Italy	13,009	12,251	758	5
Netherlands	17,736	16,403	1,333	9
Norway	15,463	14,235	1,228	9
Portugal	15,392	14,766	626	9
Spain	16,744	15,406	1,338	9
Sweden	15,242	13,533	1,709	9
Switzerland	15,670	12,138	3,532	9
UK	20,711	18,650	2,061	9

Table A.5: Dependent variables

Redistribution			Gay rights			Political trust			EU attitudes			Immigration		
Scale	Natives	Foreign-born	Scale	Natives	Foreign-born	Scale	Natives	Foreign-born	Scale	Natives	Foreign-born	Scale	Natives	Foreign-born
0	2.44 %	2.52 %	0	3.07 %	7.15 %	0	7.78 %	5.08 %	0	6.74 %	5.32 %	0	7.08 %	2.61 %
0.25	11.59 %	11.82 %	0.25	5.36 %	9.30 %	0.1	3.80 %	3.80 %	0.1	4.17 %	3.18 %	0.33	24.54 %	16.66 %
0.5	14.92 %	15.85 %	0.5	10.33 %	12.30 %	0.2	7.05 %	7.05 %	0.2	7.44 %	5.63 %	0.66	48.31 %	52.21 %
0.75	44.57 %	45.17 %	0.75	39.83 %	37.08 %	0.3	10.31 %	10.31 %	0.3	10.04 %	7.53 %	1	20.08 %	28.53 %
1	26.48 %	24.65 %	1	41.41 %	3 %	0.4	10.69 %	10.69 %	0.4	9.61 %	7.06 %			
						0.5	19.24 %	19.24 %	0.5	23.24 %	21.58 %			
						0.6	13.26 %	13.26 %	0.6	10.42 %	10.49 %			
						0.7	13.78 %	13.78 %	0.7	10.96 %	12.48 %			
						0.8	9.62 %	9.62 %	0.8	9.43 %	12.96 %			
						0.9	2.81 %	2.81 %	0.9	3.21 %	5.22 %			
						1	1.65 %	1.65 %	1	4.73 %	8.55 %			

Notes: Cross-tabulations account for survey design and population weights. The categories for all dependent variables have been reordered to run from conservative to liberal or negative to positive attitudes.

Table A.6: Political preferences - Natives and first-generation immigrants

	Redistribution (0-4)	Gay rights (0-4)	EU attitudes (0-10)	Immigration (0-3)	Trust (0-10)
Natives	0.703	0.778	0.495	0.605	0.483
Foreign-born	0.694	0.707	0.560	0.689	0.544

Source: Own calculations based on the ESS using survey design and population weights. For all dependent variables, the table presents the weighted average. T-tests show that differences in mean values are significant at 1% between foreign-born and natives, and between foreign-born individuals with less than 20 years and more than 20 years of residency.

Table A.7: Summary statistics - Natives

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev
Age	24,857	48.67	18.44
Male	248,051	0.48	0.50
Married or living with partner	241,715	0.39	0.49
In the labour force and employed	248,051	0.53	0.50
Partner with tertiary ed.	248,046	0.17	0.38
Father working when respondent 14	242,240	0.91	0.28
Father with tertiary ed.	234,969	0.15	0.36
Ever unemployed and seeking work for more than 3 months	247,072	0.26	0.44
Lives in rural area	247,698	0.71	0.45
Log household size	247,820	0.80	0.53
Feeling about household's income nowadays	242,994	1.83	0.80
Political attitudes:			
Redistribution	244,410	0.70	0.26
Homosexuality	243,793	0.78	0.25
EU	180,510	0.50	0.26
Immigration	242,454	0.60	0.28
Trust pol. instit.	243,389	0.483	0.247

Table A.8: Balance table - Immigrants

	Full sample - section 3.1			**Restricted sample 1 - section 3.2**			**Restricted sample 2 - section 3.3**		
	Obs	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**Obs**	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**Obs**	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**
Age	23,887	44.46	16.10	8,914	37.89	9.91	19,185	46.93	15.12
Male	23,887	0.47	0.50	8,914	0.46	0.50	19,185	0.47	0.50
Married	23,391	0.48	0.50	8,790	0.54	0.50	18,766	0.51	0.50
In labour force	23,887	0.58	0.49	8,914	0.64	0.48	19,185	0.59	0.49
Partner tert. educ.	23,887	0.21	0.40	8,914	0.26	0.44	19,185	0.23	0.42
Father working	22,958	0.87	0.33	8,616	0.88	0.33	18,489	0.88	0.33
Father tert. educ.	21,788	0.22	0.41	8,111	0.27	0.44	17,641	0.22	0.42
Ever unemp 3 months	23,753	0.37	0.48	8,860	0.42	0.49	19,073	0.37	0.48
Rural area	23,846	0.57	0.50	8,897	0.56	0.50	19,146	0.56	0.50
Log hh size	23,846	0.91	0.56	8,901	0.96	0.54	19,153	0.88	0.56
Feeling hh income	23,426	2.05	0.89	8,833	2.11	0.90	18,820	2.05	0.89
Low-income origin	23,887	0.73	0.45	8,914	0.77	0.42	19,185	0.71	0.45
No religion	23,171	0.35	0.48	8,914	0.33	0.47	18,559	0.35	0.48
Christians	23,171	0.44	0.50	8,914	0.45	0.50	18,559	0.45	0.50
Muslims	23,171	0.17	0.38	8,914	0.17	0.38	18,559	0.16	0.36
Other religion	23,171	0.04	0.20	8,914	0.04	0.20	18,559	0.04	0.21
Common language	22,395	1.29	0.45	8,740	1.31	0.46	17,894	1.31	0.46
Political attitudes									
Redistribution	23,029	0.694	0.257	8,518	0.68	0.26	18,457	0.70	0.28
Homosexuality	23,100	0.706	0.30	8,556	0.71	0.30	18,509	0.69	0.30
EU	17,728	0.560	0.267	6,634	0.58	0.26	14,263	0.56	0.27
Immigration	22,940	0.689	0.248	8,557	0.71	0.24	18,384	0.69	0.25
Political trust	22,087	0.544	0.246	7,880	0.6 0	0.24	17,576	0.55	0.25

Table A.9: Cohort of arrival and tenure - Immigrants (restricted sample 1)

Cohort of arrival / Tenure group	Less than one year	2-5 years	6-10 years	11-20 years	# of obs.
1995 - 2005	55	515	1,631	2,462	4,663
2005 - 2010	118	1,026	1,037	350	2,531
Post 2010	224	1,167	329	0	1,825
Total # of obs.	397	2,708	2,997	2,812	8,914

Table A.10: List of NUTS regions

Country	Region	NUTS level	Country	Region	NUTS level
Austria	AT11	2	Finland	FI19	2
Austria	AT12	2	Finland	FI1B	2
Austria	AT13	2	Finland	FI1C	2
Austria	AT21	2	Finland	FI1D	2
Austria	AT22	2	France	FR1	1
Austria	AT31	2	France	FR2	1
Austria	AT32	2	France	FR3	1
Austria	AT33	2	France	FR4	1
Austria	AT34	2	France	FR5	1
Belgium	BE1	1	France	FR6	1
Belgium	BE2	1	France	FR7	1
Belgium	BE3	1	France	FR8	1
Switzerland	CH01	2	Ireland	IE04	2
Switzerland	CH02	2	Ireland	IE05	2
Switzerland	CH03	2	Ireland	IE06	2
Switzerland	CH04	2	Italy	ITC	1
Switzerland	CH05	2	Italy	ITF	1
Switzerland	CH06	2	Italy	ITG	1
Switzerland	CH07	2	Italy	ITH	1
Germany	DE1	1	Italy	ITI	1
Germany	DE2	1	Netherlands	NL11	2
Germany	DE3	1	Netherlands	NL12	2
Germany	DE4	1	Netherlands	NL13	2
Germany	DE6	1	Netherlands	NL21	2
Germany	DE7	1	Netherlands	NL22	2
Germany	DE8	1	Netherlands	NL23	2
Germany	DE9	1	Netherlands	NL31	2
Germany	DEA	1	Netherlands	NL32	2
Germany	DEB	1	Netherlands	NL33	2
Germany	DEC	1	Netherlands	NL34	2
Germany	DED	1	Netherlands	NL41	2
Germany	DEF	1	Netherlands	NL42	2
Germany	DEG	1	Norway	NO01	2
Denmark	DK01	2	Norway	NO02	2
Denmark	DK02	2	Norway	NO03	2
Denmark	DK03	2	Norway	NO04	2
Denmark	DK04	2	Norway	NO05	2
Denmark	DK05	2	Norway	NO06	2
Greece	EL30	2	Portugal	PT11	2
Greece	EL41	2	Portugal	PT15	2
Greece	EL42	2	Portugal	PT16	2
Greece	EL43	2	Portugal	PT17	2
Greece	EL51	2	Portugal	PT18	2
Greece	EL52	2	Sweden	SE11	2
Greece	EL53	2	Sweden	SE12	2
Greece	EL54	2	Sweden	SE21	2
Greece	EL61	2	Sweden	SE22	2
Greece	EL62	2	Sweden	SE23	2
Greece	EL63	2	Sweden	SE31	2
Greece	EL64	2	Sweden	SE32	2
Greece	EL65	2	Sweden	SE33	2
Spain	ES11	2	Sweden	SE23	2
Spain	ES12	2	United Kingdom	UKC	1
Spain	ES13	2	United Kingdom	UKD	1
Spain	ES21	2	United Kingdom	UKE	1
Spain	ES22	2	United Kingdom	UKF	1
Spain	ES23	2	United Kingdom	UKG	1
Spain	ES24	2	United Kingdom	UKH	1
Spain	ES30	2	United Kingdom	UKI	1
Spain	ES41	2	United Kingdom	UKJ	1
Spain	ES42	2	United Kingdom	UKK	1
Spain	ES43	2	United Kingdom	UKL	1
Spain	ES51	2	United Kingdom	UKM	1
Spain	ES52	2	United Kingdom	UKN	1
Spain	ES53	2			
Spain	ES61	2			
Spain	ES62	2			
Spain	ES70	2			

Notes on the regional analysis

In this section, we provide the description of the variables, and their underlying sources, which are used as explanatory variables in the regional and subregional analysis in Section 3.3.

Regional level variables

This regional analysis relies on within country information aggregated at the regional level. Natives' political culture at the regional level is computed using the European Social Survey (ESS). Macroeconomic indicators in European countries at the NUTS1 and NUTS2 levels are derived from Eurostat and the OECD regional statistics database. The table below summarizes the core information related to the data used in the analysis.

Variable name	**Classification**	**Period**	**Construction**	**Source**
Regional culture	Political	2002-2018	Individual responses among the native population living in said region averaged over the period using design and population weights	European Social Survey
Unemployment rate (%)	Macroeconomic	2002-2018	Annual values averaged over the period	Eurostat
GDP per capita (PPP)	Macroeconomic	2002-2018	Annual values averaged over the period	OECD regional statistics database
GDP average growth (%)	Macroeconomic	2002-2018	Annual values averaged over the period	OECD regional statistics database
Number of years in recession	Macroeconomic	2002-2018	Number of years with negative GDP growth rate	OECD regional statistics database
Risk of poverty	Macroeconomic	2014-2018	Share of people at risk of poverty averaged over the period	Eurostat
Net rate of international migration	Demographic	2002-2018	Annual values averaged over the period	Eurostat
Share of foreigners	Demographic	2002-2018	Annual values averaged	Eurostat
Tertiary Education	Social	2002-2018	Share of people with tertiary education averaged over the period	Eurostat
Access to Broadband	Social	2006-2018	Share of households with broadband access averaged over the period	Eurostat
Active physician	Social	2006-2018	Number of physicians for 1000 population averaged over the period	OECD regional statistics database
Homicide rate	Social	2006-2018	Number of homicides for 100000 population averaged over the period	OECD regional statistics database

Subregional analysis

The subregional analysis uses peer groups based on the following natives' characteristics:

Age: Three age bands: 15-35, 35-45, and over 50. are created using respondents' age.

Occupation: This variable is constructed based on the ESS variables *iscoco* (for the period 2002 - 2010) and *isco08* (for the period 2012 - 2018) listing individuals' occupation or former occupations based on the ISCO08 classification. We use the 10 major groups from this classification to build a 3-way categorical variable including low-skill, medium-skill, and high-skill occupational groups. Armed forces occupations, Craft and related trades workers, Plant and machine operators, and assemblers, and Elementary occupations are coded as low-skill occupations. Clerical support workers, Service and sales workers, Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers are coded as medium-skill occupations. Managers, Professional, and Technicians and associate professionals are coded as high-skill occupation.

Dwelling: This variable is constructed based on the variable *domicil* describing respondents' dwelling and available from all rounds of the European Social Survey (2002-2018). We use respondents' answer to create subregional geographical clusters from the more to the least urban. Respondents living in a Big city or in the Suburbs or outskirts are coded 1, those living in a Town or a small city are coded 2, and those living in a Country village, in the countryside or in a farm are coded as 3.

Region: We use the same combination of NUTS1 and NUTS2 regions as in the regional analysis. The detailed list of these regions can be found in Table A.7.

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