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Unveiling the Effects of Internal EU Migration on Euroscepticism: A Logit Analysis?from Eurobarometer Data (2014-2021)

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Introduction

Since the establishment of the European Union (EU), its architects envisioned that economic integration would serve as a catalyst for broader unification across political and cultural dimensions. Ernst Haas (1961), a pivotal figure in the study of European integration, articulated the concept of regional integration theory. He said that cooperation between nations could potentially lead to a spillover effect. This effect could lead to further cooperation. Ultimately, supranational governance structures could be created step by step. However, from the early 1990s, the once widespread optimism surrounding the European project and further integration progressively diminished. Public sentiment shifted increasingly from a pro-integration view to increasingly reflect a deepening concern of its future. As the 21st century began, the EU's eastward expansion combined with multiple rounds of refugee crises from allover the world significantly linked public discontent with EU integration to migration issues. (Jeannet, 2018; Pirro et al., 2018). Economic differences among regions are very attractive for immigrants, and the migration potential accumulated over decades under communist regimes are also tremendous. All these reasons drive substantial migration flows from Eastern to Western EU member states. (Jeannet, 2018). For an extended time period, the volume of internal EU migration has been substantial, particularly in Northern and Western Europe where economy are more prosperous. (Bell et al., 2015; Bernard, 2017; European Parliament, 2021).

This thesis investigates the impact of internal EU migration on public trust in the EU. This study contributes to the arguments of the socio-political implications of

immigration in the EU. Many studies have looked into how immigration influences public opinions about European integration. (Azrout et al., 2012a; Evans & Mellon, 2019; Stockemer et al., 2019). This study explores the impact of internal EU migration on attitudes toward the EU. It focuses on the movement of individuals within the EU itself. Unlike broader international migration, internal EU migration is limited to movements within the Union's borders. The movement of these people is governed by specific EU policies like Article 45 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, which allows free movement across member states. (European Union, 2016) This internal movement driven by EU policy contrasts with global migration patterns that are subject to a wider array of local and international laws.

This thesis is highly relevant in today's climate, where public opinion within the EU is sharply divided, with a substantial amount of people are showing less trust and support for the EU (De Vries, 2018; European Commission, 2023a; Lubbers & Scheepers, 2010). This research will define Euroscepticism as a decrease in trust towards the EU, capturing a crucial aspect of public sentiment about European integration. Studying the impact of internal EU migration on Euroscepticism gives valuable insights into the integration process and the social, economic, and political effects of these movements. Understanding this migration is also critical for assessing the effectiveness of EU policies that are aimed at enhancing labor mobility and economic cohesion.

There are six parts in this section. This paper starts with an introduction that sets the scene, outlines key terms, and underscores the major contributions of the study.

The next section studies the existing literature and lays out the hypotheses based on earlier research. Following this, the third section describes the data and variables utilized in the thesis. The fourth section discusses the analytical methods used, evaluating different approaches to identify the most effective one, and explains each model in detail. The fifth section is split into two parts: the first provides a detailed analysis using all the models discussed to integrate insights across different frameworks, followed by country-specific analyses to explore national differences. The final section wraps up the study, summarizing the key findings and suggesting policies and directions for future research.

This thesis contributes to the literature by focusing on internal EU migration as the primary explanatory variable for assessing its impact on Euroscepticism. The study examines the influence of migration within the EU. This migration is individuals from different EU nations who generally share more cultural, economic, and legal similarities with other EU residents compared to non-EU migrants. Over 15 rounds of Eurobarometer surveys are used. So this research enables a nuanced analysis of temporal shifts and trends. Furthermore, by adopting NUTS 2 regions as the primary analytical unit, this approach allows for a detailed investigation of variations at smaller regions. Thereby, the study could offer enhanced insights into regional disparities that may influence Eurosceptic sentiments. This methodological choice distinguishes this study from many existing analyses. Because this choice not typically rely on national-level data, providing fresh perspectives on the dynamics of Euroscepticism in the EU.

This thesis focuses on the effects of internal EU migration on Euroscepticism, enriching the discourse on European integration. It illustrates how the presence of EU internal migrants over a three-year span inversely affects levels of distrust towards the Union. This finding supports the contact theory from Allport (1954). The finding implies that more frequent interactions with EU migrants could enhance trust in the Union, highlighting the positive role of integration processes on how citizens perceive the EU.

Secondly, the thesis uses different interaction models to examine how individual characteristics can influence the relationship between internal EU migration and Euroscepticism. These analyses highlight that higher education levels significantly boost the positive impacts of internal migration on reducing Eurosceptic views. Moreover, the model that includes interaction term of trust in national government shows that individuals initially distrustful of their national authorities experience a significant decrease in Eurosceptic attitudes when internal migration increases. However, while having a strong sense of EU citizenship significantly correlates with lower Euroscepticism, this personal variable does not act as a moderating factor in the interaction models.

Additionally, this thesis demonstrates the varied effects of internal EU migration on Euroscepticism and highlights significant differences across different national landscapes. The findings reveal that internal migration within the EU impacts Euroscepticism in diverse ways depending on the country. For instance, in Spain and Hungary, there's a noticeable increase in Eurosceptic sentiment as internal EU

migration rises. Conversely, countries like Finland, Denmark, and Austria exhibit a decrease in Euroscepticism with higher rates of internal migration.

Literature review and hypothesis

EU internal migration displays notable diversity and volume, with migration rates that vary significantly by region. Studies indicate these rates are particularly high in Northern and Western Europe and tend to decrease moving towards Southern and Eastern Europe. (Bell et al., 2015; Bernard, 2017) De Beer and colleagues (2010) highlight that such regional disparities reflect the uneven distribution across the EU, influenced by diverse economic opportunities and varying living standards across different areas. Contributing factors include the liberalization of border controls, the expansion of the Eurozone, the repercussions of the European debt crisis, and the rapid acceleration of population ageing, all of which may collectively influence these regional differences. (Rowe et al., 2019).

Data from the period 2000 to 2010 highlight significant regional disparities in internal migration rates within Europe. Notably, countries such as Iceland, Finland, and Denmark reported annual relocation rates exceeding 15% of their populations; In contrast, Romania and Poland experienced significantly lower migration rates, each registering less than 2% annually. (Bell et al., 2015). Additionally, approximately half of the European nations are undergoing demographic transitions characterized by an urban concentration in Northern, Central, and Eastern Europe; Conversely, in Western and Southern Europe, there is a noticeable trend of population dispersion to less densely populated areas. (Rowe et al., 2019). From the economic perspective, nations exhibiting higher income levels tend to display more pronounced internal migration intensities, indicating a potential correlation between economic prosperity and the

ability to attract for internal movement. (Bell et al., 2017). However, while much of the existing literature frequently uses internal EU migration with international migration together under general migration studies, and often concentrates solely on internal migration within individual nations, these approaches still offer substantial insights that enrich the understanding of migration dynamics and inform this thesis.

The scholarly examination of migration's impact on attitudes towards the EU, frequently manifested as Euroscepticism when local populations express negative sentiments towards immigrants (Stockemer et al., 2019), is primarily informed by two theoretical frameworks that provide contrasting interpretations. One essential perspective that has be widely studied is the group threat theory (Blumer, 1958; Bobo, 2004; Quillian, 1995), which indicates that competition for resources may prompt local in-groups to perceive immigrant out-groups as threats to their vested interests. (Azrout et al., 2012a; Jeannet, 2018). According to the group threat theory, the presence of foreigners may be perceived as a socio-tropic threat by the citizens of the host country. This perception potentially leads to the belief that out-groups would compete for the limited resources, and therefore pose a risk to the employment and welfare of native residents. (Hollifield et al., 2014). This theory underscores the delineation between in-groups and out-groups among distinct individuals, a process often conceptualized through the lens of social identity. Within the EU, the interpretations and subsequent refinements of group threat theory have evolved in two distinct directions. Both perspectives acknowledge the perception of immigrants as threats by local populations. The first path posits that significant linguistic and

cultural diversity within EU member states intensifies nationalistic sentiments and solidifies political allegiance to individual nation-states. (Duchesne, 2016) Therefore, the threat perceived by local people would increase. In contrast, the second path supports the notion of an emerging pan-European identity. This idea is predicated on common European values and legal norms that supersede national borders.(Pryke, 2019) So the perceived threat might be reduced to a lower level.

However, there may be a conceptual challenge in distinguishing between groups within the context of internal EU migration, which markedly differs from immigration from outside the EU. This is because the movement involves EU citizens relocating within the union's borders, retaining their consistent legal status and rights across member states, which might confound traditional group threat theory's ability to clearly differentiate between in-group locals and out-group immigrants. Consequently, the perceived threats and competition might vary significantly. Given these conceptual ambiguities and the blurred distinctions between in-groups and out-groups, group threat theory may be less effective in addressing internal EU migration. These challenges suggest a need to reevaluate its applicability or to explore alternative theoretical frameworks that more accurately capture the nuances of internal migration within the EU.

In contrast to theories arguing that immigration would lead to increased group threats, Allport's contact theory, proposed in 1954 focuses on the positive interaction between them. He posits that increased inter-group contact has the potential to alleviate stereotypes and reduce pre-existing tensions and prejudices, so immigrants

and local people would have a better relationship. In other words, this theory suggests that fostering interactions among diverse groups can lead to a reduction in prejudicial attitudes and enhance social cohesion. (Allport, 1954) Inter-group contacts are conceptualized as face-to-face interactions between individuals belonging to distinctly identified groups. (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) The foundation of inter-group contact theory is that direct interactions between individuals from different groups, combined with the promotion of such contact opportunities, are conducive to fostering more positive inter-group attitudes. (Schlueter & Scheepers, 2010).

In the beginning, Allport (1954) argues that positive outcomes from intergroup contact, such as reduced prejudice, would only manifest under certain quite strict optimal conditions. These conditions may include shared goals, intergroup cooperation, or institutional support from external authorities. Pettigrew (1998) advanced the contact theory by arguing that the convergence of group status and objectives can diminish intergroup conflict and enhance cooperation. This refinement suggests that only equal status and shared goals among groups could be sufficient for reducing prejudices and fostering positive intergroup relations. Further studies have demonstrated that even casual, everyday interactions in neighborhoods, schools, or workplaces predominantly could also promote more positive intergroup attitudes. This phenomenon is largely attributed to the beneficial effects of frequent intergroup contact, which helps reduce perceived group threats and enhances understanding about the outgroup, thereby mitigating negative intergroup attitudes. (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Schlueter & Scheepers, 2010; Wagner et al., 2006).

Many studies support the contact theory. Schlueter & Scheepers (2010) use data from Dutch citizens demonstrates that a larger immigrant group size enhances the potential for intergroup contact, which is inversely related to the perception of threat and, consequently, anti-immigrant attitudes. In Berg's (2014) research, he discovered that in the United States, whites residing in bigger cities with a higher proportion of mixed-race individuals tend to exhibit more favorable attitudes towards immigrants. These positive perspectives includes a lot, such as general sentiment towards immigration as well as specific attitudes regarding immigration levels, taxation, and employment opportunities. In their research focusing on France, Jolly and DiGiusto (2014) observed that larger immigrant populations contribute to a reduction in xenophobic attitudes among the public.

It it admitted that there are both positive and negative interaction individually, and each people have their different choices that could lead to opposite outcome. But Research indicates that the causal pathway from intergroup contact leading to favorable attitudes toward another group is generally stronger than the inverse process where negative intergroup contacts lead to increasingly negative attitudes. (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006)

A fundamental concept behind contact theory is homophily—the idea that individuals are more likely to engage with others who are similar to themselves. This tendency strongly predicts the formation of social network ties, emphasizing the role of similarity in social interactions. (McPherson et al., 2001) Given the emphasis of this thesis on internal EU migration, it is reasonable to anticipate that inter-group

communication among EU citizens could occur more fluidly compared to interactions with non-EU immigrants. The commonalities in social status, cultural background, and legal rights under EU legislation among internal migrants likely lower the barriers to interaction. Therefore, these people are going to be much easier to connect and get familiar with each other.

In line with contact theory, the reduced perception of ‘otherness’ among EU citizens is expected to promote positive intergroup relations. This reduction in turn could gradually alleviate the tensions that fuel Eurosceptic sentiments. Improved intergroup communication might significantly impact broader sociopolitical debates, which might potentially foster EU integration and bolster support for other related policies, such as policies that could further promote easing the registration of internal migration.

By reducing barriers and promoting a unified European identity, internal EU migration could play a key role in reshaping Euroscepticism, prompting a reassessment of its recent prevalence and intensity across the EU. Since the EU's enlargement in 2004, followed by the financial crisis, there has been a noted increase in Euroscepticism (Brack & Startin, 2015). These developments might have influenced shifts in how different groups within the EU view each other, potentially leading to a more integrated and cohesive European identity.

Following a comprehensive review of the literature on internal EU migration, we now turn to the intricate relationship between Euroscepticism and migration within the EU. The skepticism towards European integration, known simply as

Euroscepticism, plays a significant role in shaping both public opinion and political debate. Research consistently shows that negative perceptions of immigrants correlate strongly with heightened Eurosceptic views (Evans & Mellon, 2019; Stockemer et al., 2019). Historical events like the Brexit referendum have starkly illustrated how fears about immigration can spur movements to leave the EU, with the public citing immigration control as a key issue (Evans & Mellon, 2019). The European refugee crisis further complicates this, as it has thrown into sharp relief the challenges related to welfare distribution and asylum seeker management, fueling Eurosceptic attitudes across member states (Stockemer et al., 2019). Furthermore, discussions around (Islamic) terrorism frequently highlight negative sentiments towards immigration, intensifying Eurosceptic views by linking immigration with security concerns (Jackson, 2007; Azrout et al., 2012a).

Euroscepticism has been extensively explored through various methods and measures across academic studies. (Vasilopoulou, 2009; 2017) This thesis builds on that tradition, using public opinion to understand attitudes towards the EU. Scholars such as Lubbers and Scheepers (2005; 2010) have identified two main forms of Euroscepticism: instrumental and political. Instrumental Euroscepticism looks at the perceived benefits or drawbacks of EU membership, considering whether the union brings enough value to justify its costs. Political Euroscepticism, on the other hand, examines the political implications, weighing how membership might limit national sovereignty while also enabling wider regional cooperation. Further, Evans (2000) studies Euroscepticism by examining pro-European sentiments, while Karp and

Bowler (2006) focus on resistance to deeper European integration. Hooghe and Marks (2007) take a broader approach, using a range of variables to capture the general level of skepticism towards the EU.

This thesis takes a clear-cut approach to assessing Euroscepticism by employing a direct survey question that inquires about participants' trust in the EU. This approach aligns with the concept of regime-specific attitudes, widely recognized as a robust method for measuring such sentiments (Boomgaarden et al., 2011). The choice of this specific question is based on its straightforward nature, which guarantees that respondents' opinions on the EU are explicitly evaluated. Additionally, the consistency of this measurement throughout the extended duration of the dataset is essential; it mitigates the issues of variability that could compromise other potential questions across different survey periods. This makes the trust question a particularly reliable and consistent indicator for reflecting Euroscepticism in this research.

The next part of this literature review studies the diverse factors that contribute to Euroscepticism, especially focusing on the impact of internal EU migration. Euroscepticism emerges from a complex interplay of economic, cultural, and political factors, each significantly shaping how the public views the EU. This section will examine how the movement of people within the EU influences these key aspects, ultimately affecting overall attitudes towards the Union.

First of all, economic factors play a crucial role in shaping public opinion about European integration. The theory of 'objective losers' explains that this integration can create a divide between center and periphery, affecting different social groups in

varied ways (Hix & Høyland, 2022). Those with ample economic and social resources often benefit from the liberalization of markets, so they tend to support further integration. On the other hand, individuals at the lower end of the economic spectrum—like those with less education, unskilled laborers, and welfare recipients—tend to oppose integration. Their opposition is stronger especially during times when their countries struggle economically or face crises, as these periods can exacerbate their existing hardships and amplify Eurosceptic views (Colantone & Stanig, 2018; Serricchio et al., 2012).

The 'subjective losers' hypothesis presents a different perspective, arguing that people's attitudes towards the European project are deeply influenced by their personal interpretations of its effects. This approach underscores the significance of individuals' own assessments, and focuses on how they weigh the costs against the benefits of European integration. It highlights a utilitarian view of social changes and the experience of relative deprivation (Gabel, 2009; Steiner et al., 2023). For example, people who believe that immigration increases competition for jobs or burdens social services might see these issues as direct negatives of being part of the EU. Such views could lead to stronger Eurosceptic feelings, as individuals associate these personal economic challenges with the broader process of integration.

In this analysis, internal EU migration acts as a dual-faceted catalyst influencing Euroscepticism. As EU citizens migrate within the borders of the EU, their integration can either enhance local economies and promote a unified European identity. Conversely, they may also exacerbate nationalistic sentiments and increase

Euroscepticism, depending on their influence and local perceptions of immigrants' influence.

Secondly, Euroscepticism is not just about economics; cultural factors play an essential role in shaping public attitudes. This is influenced by the complex relationship between national and European identities, which can independently affect how people view European integration (Cinpoes, 2008). As the EU's presence grows in economic, social, and political areas, some people have started to identify as European citizens. However, those who prioritize their national identity are more likely to oppose European integration (Fligstein et al., 2012; McLaren, 2006). They often consider EU membership and internal migration as threats to their national community and local identities (Carey, 2002). The visible increase of EU nationals brings different cultural norms, which may clash with those of local communities that have strong national identities. This can lead to negative views toward the EU, especially among those who feel that their cultural identity is being weakened or changed.

Attitudes towards EU integration are often shaped by domestic political cues rather than genuine feelings about the EU itself. Political elites play a critical role, as people tend to rely on cues from leaders and parties to make sense of complex EU issues (Hooghe, 2007). Perceptions of how well the national government is performing also strongly influence opinions on European integration. People assess EU policies based on their views of domestic governance and the quality of democracy in their own country (De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2005). This tendency is

amplified by the general public's limited knowledge of EU affairs, causing them to base their support for the EU on longstanding political beliefs and views of national politics (Garry et al., 2005; Hooghe, 2007).

Internal EU migration adds complexity to how the public perceives EU integration. The movement of EU nationals across borders not only underscores the reach of EU policies but also brings these policies to life at the local level. Recchi (2015) highlights that regular interactions with EU nationals can significantly shape local citizens' views on the EU's effectiveness and desirability. Such encounters may either align with or challenge the political narratives presented by national leaders, thereby influencing public opinion about the EU. Positive experiences with internal migrants can increase support for European integration, while negative interactions might fuel Eurosceptic sentiments.

In summary, internal EU migration affects Euroscepticism through multiple interconnected mechanisms. As EU citizens move across borders, increased interactions can shape local attitudes towards immigration. These interactions may reduce perceived threats and lower Euroscepticism, but they can also heighten it if seen negatively by locals. Moreover, such migration brings both benefits and challenges of EU integration into focus, shaping public opinion through economic, cultural, and political lenses. This complex dynamic illustrates the varied impacts of EU migration on public support for the Union, which this paper aims to explore.

The final part of literature review will give a brief overview to the Euroscepticism in each nations that will be separately studied in the following section. In Spain,

Euroscepticism has historically been considered as a rather insignificant phenomenon, but is recently shaped by inferior economic conditions and increased for a few years. (Real-Dato & Sojka, 2020) The economic crisis significantly influenced public opinion, as citizens questioned the benefits of EU membership during periods of high unemployment and fiscal austerity (Cachafeiro & Plaza-Colodro, 2018). Meanwhile, support for the EU in Spain tends to fluctuate based on the country's economic situation and the perceived impact of EU policies on national sovereignty. (Jiménez & De Haro, 2011; Real-Dato & Sojka, 2020)

Hungary is usually considered a Eurosceptic nation in the recent decade. Euroscepticism increased markedly under the influence of domestic political narratives, such as Orbán's and Kaczyński's discourses, that frame the EU as an infringing entity on national sovereignty and an ineffective decision maker. (Csehi & Zgut, 2020) The rise of such government is contributed by the financial crisis as well as the migration crisis. However, the situation recently is becoming more complex, because it is also argued that despite the government's pronounced Euroscepticism, the populace is increasingly adopting a more Europhile point of view, driven by the tangible benefits accrued from EU membership. (Göncz & Lengyel, 2021)

Denmark has held eight EU referendums, and Euroscepticism is deeply rooted in concerns about national sovereignty. (Nielsen, 2017) Danish Euroscepticism is characterized by a pragmatic approach to European integration, where the population supports economic cooperation but remains skeptical about deeper political integration. (Sørensen, 2016)

Austria is recognized for harboring one of the highest levels of Euroscepticism among the EU member states. Similar to Denmark, this sentiment is largely attributed to a pragmatic approach to European integration, where the populace displays a cautious attitude towards the EU, often perceiving it as a remote and too complex political entity to approach. (Auel, 2018)

Finnish Euroscepticism is not about totally rejecting the EU, however, it focuses on specific concerns regarding sovereignty and national interests (Raunio, 2007). Economic reasons are very significant behind this sentiment, especially during crises or when policies affect critical sectors, such as agriculture and fisheries. This also reflects a pragmatic view of EU membership, where economic impacts on national industries play a key role in shaping public opinion and political debate about European integration (Herkman, 2017; Raunio, 2007).

Comparing Finland, Denmark, and Austria, it is clear these countries have a pragmatic stance towards the EU. They emphasize national interests and sovereignty to a much bigger extent. In contrast, Spain and Hungary show a different pattern, with economic instability and political narratives playing a bigger role in shaping public attitudes towards the EU. These similarities suggest that national-level analyses in these two groups of countries may reveal common trends or implications.

Based on the discussion above, the hypotheses are as illustrated below:

Hypothesis (1): An increase in internal EU migration might correlate with a decline in Euroscepticism. This assertion aligns with the principles of contact theory,

which posits that increased interactions among diverse groups can lead to more positive attitudes between groups and reduced skepticism of receiving group.

Hypothesis (2): The influence of immigration on trust to the EU is expected to vary based on the levels of immigration and distinct national characteristics. This variation suggests that the impact of migration is not uniform across different EU member states, but might have different influence on nations with divergent characters, reflecting diverse socio-economic and cultural contexts.

Hypothesis (3): The interaction between the proportion of internal EU migrants and individual-level indicators—specifically, educational attainment, quantified by years of education obtained (Hypothesis 3.1), trust in the national government (Hypothesis 3.2), and individual identification as EU citizens (Hypothesis 3.3)—will significantly influence public trust in the EU. This hypothesis suggests that these interactions, influenced by socio-economic, cultural, and political contexts, will moderate the effects of internal EU migration on Euroscepticism, reflecting the complex transmission mechanisms at play.

Data description

Variable Name	Description
Not Trust EU (Ref. category = Trust)	Binary variable indicating lack of trust in the EU (1 = do not trust, 0 = trust)
Lagged Immigration percent	Percentage of internal EU immigrants in the NUTS2 region three years ago
Age	Age of the respondent in numbers
Not Trust Government (Ref. category = Trust)	Binary variable indicating mistrust in national government (1 = do not trust, 0 = trust)
Not Identify EU Citizenship (Ref. category = Identify)	Binary variable indicating lack of identification with the EU (1 = do not identify, 0 = identify)
Support Free Movement (Ref. category = Not Support)	Binary variable indicating if free movement is considered to be one of the best EU policies (1 = yes, 0 = no)
Right Wing Position	Political orientation on a scale from 1 (extreme left) to 10 (extreme right)
Male (Ref. Category = Female)	Binary variable indicating people's gender (1 = male, 0 = female)
Employed (Ref. Category = Not Employed)	Binary variable indicating employment status (1 = employed, 0 = unemployed)
Higher Social Class	Social class on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)
Have Partner (Ref. category = do not have)	Binary variable indicating marital status (1 = has partner including married and remarried, 0 = no partner)
Bigger Hometown	Scale of hometown size from 1 (rural) to 3 (large urban)
Higher Education Level	Educational attainment categorized by three levels: 1 (low), 2 (medium), 3 (high)
GDP Growth Rate	Annual GDP growth rate at the NUTS2 level
Country	Spain = 1, Hungary = 2, Finland = 3, Denmark = 4, Austria = 5

Table 1. Description of variables.

To facilitate a more rapid and easier understanding, Table 1 provides a concise

description of all variables involved in this thesis. For all binary variables, a reference category is accompanied after their names. The following part will introduce the data in detail.

This research analyzes data gathered between 2014 and 2021, utilizing Eurobarometer surveys from rounds 81 to 95, excluding round 94 due to its specialized focus on COVID-19-related issues, which are not very central to this study's objectives and do not have related variables. The biannual frequency of these surveys enriches the temporal depth of the dataset and strengthens the robustness of the longitudinal analysis. The data includes respondents' origins, which allows for their classification into NUTS 2 regions. These smaller, localized geographical units provide a more suitable match for the theoretical frameworks of group threat theory and contact theory, which suggest that social dynamics such as intergroup interaction and perceived competition are more distinctly observed at a local rather than a national level. By employing NUTS 2 regions for analysis, this study not only adheres more closely to the theoretical demands but also offers new insights by revealing variations that may be obscured at the national level, thereby contributing a unique perspective to the existing body of research which predominantly utilizes national-level data.

Concerning the sample size, each survey wave across the member states interviews a minimum of 1,000 individuals aged 15 and above. This criterion is applied uniformly in all member states, with the exception of very small countries comprising a single NUTS 2 region. Employing such a substantial sample size

guarantees adequate representation for each region, thereby enhancing the robustness and reliability of the insights into local conditions and sentiments.[1]

The research encompasses five European countries: Spain, Denmark, Austria, Hungary, and Finland, chosen for their geographical diversity and data availability. Spain represents Southern Europe; Denmark and Finland, Northern Europe; Hungary, Eastern Europe; and Austria, Central Europe. The study assigns specific numerical codes to NUTS 2 regions based on nation's geographical location: Spain is coded 1 to 17, Hungary 18 to 24, Finland 25 to 28, Denmark 29 to 33, and Austria 34 to 42. An exhaustive mapping of these codes to their respective regions is detailed in appendix Table 7. Moreover, the analysis excludes certain regions due to data constraints. Notably, Spain's Ceuta and Melilla are omitted, Hungary's regions HU11 (Budapest) and HU12 (Pest) are combined into one entity, which is Közép-Magyarország (Central Hungary), and Finland's Åland region is excluded. This methodological approach ensures a thorough analysis of regional variations within the selected European countries.

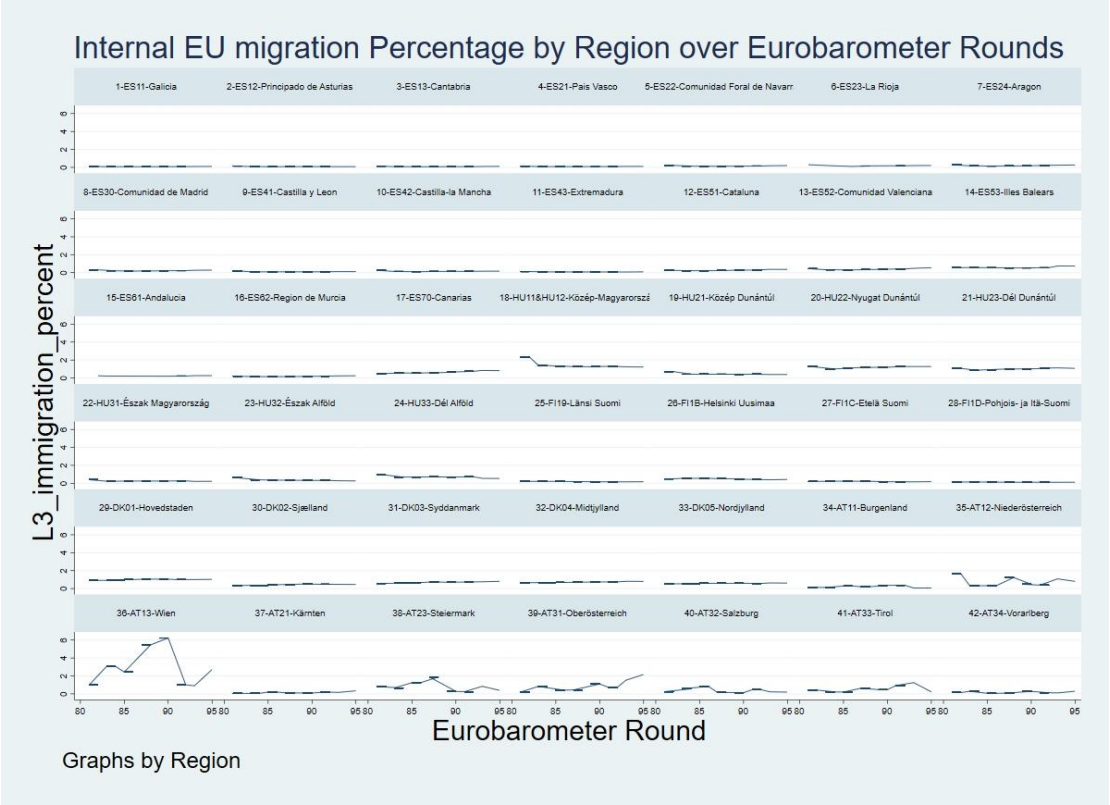
A detailed description of the dataset used in this research is provided in Appendix Table 5. Euroscepticism at the individual level is measured using survey responses validated by previous studies. For example, Yeung (2021) used the question, "Do you think that (our country's) membership in the EU is a good thing or a bad thing?" to capture public sentiment towards the EU. Similarly, Jeannet (2018) used an adjusted measure of distrust towards EU institutions, such as the European Commission, the

[1] On average, each region accounts for over 1,300 observations, with variability stemming from regional differences in population size and geographical extent.

European Parliament, and the Council of Ministers, to evaluate institutional Euroscepticism. These methods ensure that Euroscepticism is measured using empirical data that reflects both personal and institutional views.

This uses a specific Eurobarometer survey item to study Euroscepticism which is 'How much trust do you have in certain institutions? For each of the following institutions, do you tend to trust it or not?'. The focus is primarily on the trust in the EU. Responses of individuals are coded as a binary variable, with '1' indicating lack of trust and '0' indicating trust in the EU. This approach directly measures Euroscepticism by quantifying trust levels in the EU among respondents. Responses marked as 'do not know' are not considered in this analysis.[2] Excluding these responses assumes that they may indicate a neutral stance. This helps ensure that the analysis is not influenced by those who potentially do not demonstrate a clear decision. Thus, it improves the clarity and precision of the results by simply demonstrating two sides. This method is in line with universal practices used to maintain data integrity and validity (Waters et al., 2009; Yeung, 2021).

[2] In the dataset, 6,312 responses are recorded as 'do not know', which is about 8.9% of all observations. These responses are evenly spread across the five countries studied and remain consistent throughout the whole time period. Statistically, they do not show significant differences from other responses, although those who answer 'do not know' to one question are more likely to respond the 'do not know' to many other questions.



Graph1. Percentage of Internal EU Migration by NUTS 2 Region Across Eurobarometer Survey Rounds. Source: Author's own elaboration.

The key explanatory variable in this study is the flow of immigration from EU countries to NUTS 2 regions, which is measured as the lagged immigration percentage. This metric accounts for variations in immigration's effects by considering the proportion of immigrants compared to the total population of the host region, as suggested by Schlueter & Scheepers (2010), Wagner et al. (2006), and Yeung (2021). The data are taken from three years before to allow time for immigrants to integrate and for the local population to interact and become familiar with newcomers. This lagged approach is in line with methods used in previous research, such as Brücker & Siliverstovs (2006), Jeannet (2018), and Vakulenko (2016). The lagged immigration percentages generally range from 0.1% to 2%. Spain

and Finland have generally much lower percentages in internal Eu immigrants. In contrast, Austria, especially the Vienna region (AT13), shows significantly higher levels, which indicates more significant immigration flows compared to other regions in this study.

For the control variables, these are mainly from the Eurobarometer survey. This survey consistently provides numerous choices that can be used as controls in this analysis. The variable 'Not Trust Government' examines the political cue hypothesis on Euroscepticism, which posits that distrust in national governments may indicate a broader mistrust of the EU (De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2005). Individuals who do not trust their national government are coded as '1'. This study hypothesizes that such skepticism is likely to extend from the national government to the EU, which reflects a pervasive mistrust in political institutions at the higher level too. Additionally, the binary variable 'Not Identify EU Citizenship' assesses whether individuals perceive themselves as EU citizens or not. A '0' indicates identification with the EU, while a '1' denotes that people tend not to identify themselves as the citizen of the EU. Another variable, 'Support Free Movement', measures attitudes towards the EU policy of free movement of people, goods, and services. If the answer of the respondent is '1', then it is indicated that he/she considers this policy as one of the EU's best policies. These indicators are crucial for understanding the cultural dimensions of Euroscepticism, where a stronger identification with the EU is associated with less Eurosceptic sentiment, aligning with findings from Fligstein et al. (2012) and McLaren (2006).

The variables 'Higher Social Class', 'Higher Education Level', and 'GDP Growth

Rate' encompass the economic aspects influencing Euroscepticism. The "Higher Social Class" variable is ordinal, with '1' representing the lowest and '5' the highest social class. Educational attainment is categorized by the age when people stop receiving education: '1' for those ending education at or before 17, signifying the age when people usually stop pre-tertiary education and enter the higher level; '2' for those finishing between 18 and 21, indicative of bachelor's degree or its completion; and '3' for post-22 education, suggesting advanced studies, such as Master's and above. (European Commission, 2023b) The 'GDP Growth Rate' serves as a NUTS2 regional measure within the multilevel model, reflecting economic dynamics by region. This variable is widely applied in other papers using multilevel models. (Quillian, 1995; Yeung, 2021) Economically, it is posited that lower social and educational levels and regions experiencing slower economic growth may correlate with increased Euroscepticism, potentially due to heightened competition for jobs and resources among lower-income groups (Hix & Høyland, 2022).

This study incorporates additional control variables that encompass a range of sociodemographic characteristics of respondents, including age, gender, marital status, hometown size, employment status, and political orientation, as these variables are commonly employed in empirical research on public opinion and political attitudes (De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2005; Evans & Mellon, 2019; Jeannet, 2018; Stockemer, 2015; Yeung, 2021). Age is analyzed as a continuous variable, spanning from 15 to 98, with a very small proportion of individuals exceeding 90. Research consistently shows that older individuals tend to exhibit higher levels of Euroscepticism (Kuhn,

2011; Yeung, 2021). Gender is operationalized as a binary variable, where males are coded as ‘1’ and females, serving as the reference category, are coded as ‘0’. The relationship between gender and Euroscepticism is complex and varied, with some studies finding males more Eurosceptic, while others suggest the opposite (Kuhn, 2011; Nielsen, 2016; Sarrasin et al., 2018). Marital status is also treated as a binary variable; individuals in a partnership at the time of the interview, such as married or remarried, are coded as ‘1’, and all others, including those who are single or widowed, are coded as ‘0’. Although marriage is widely used in migration and related social science studies, the influence of marital status on Euroscepticism is generally insignificant (Savelkoul & Scheepers, 2016; Werts et al., 2012). The variable ‘Bigger Hometown’ categorizes respondents’ living areas into three levels: ‘1’ for rural areas, ‘2’ for small towns, and ‘3’ for large towns. This coding highlights the differences in living environments, such as the general amount of immigrants they can meet, which may affect attitudes towards immigration. The variable ‘Right Wing Position’ measures political orientation on a scale from 1 to 10. if the answer is coded as ‘1’, it is indicated that the respondent maintains extreme left-wing views. And if answer ‘10’, respondent is considered as illustrating extreme right-wing views. The variable ‘Employed’ represents employment status, coded as a binary variable. ‘1’ signifies being employed and ‘0’ means the individual is unemployed. These demographic and sociopolitical factors significantly shape individual Euroscepticism, and they are essential for understanding public attitudes towards the EU.

To address the potential ambiguity or insignificance in the relationship between

lagged internal EU migration and Euroscepticism, as observed in Yeung's (2021) findings, this study will focus on NUTS 2 regions. Research by Goodwin & Heath (2016) and Lubbers & Scheepers (2005) highlights the significant variations in Eurosceptic sentiments both between countries and within them. Concentrating on these smaller regional units could be helpful because it captures more subtle differences in public opinion that might be hidden in broader geographical studies at the national level. This regional focus could be crucial for providing a more precise understanding of the different factors influencing Euroscepticism across Europe.

The choice to use smaller regional units instead of national data is also based on the paper's understanding of contact theory, which suggests that the quality and frequency of interactions between immigrants and local populations play a key role in shaping societal attitudes (Allport, 1954; Schlueter & Scheepers, 2010). Therefore, it could provide a much closer look at interpersonal contact and cultural exchanges through analyzing data at the NUTS 2 level. This detailed geographical focus enables a deeper exploration of how social interactions influence local attitudes, improving the accuracy of the analysis, as attitude within one nation might be significantly different. This approach challenges studies like Yeung's (2021), which may miss significant sub-national variations because he simply uses national-level data. By examining more localized regions, this study aims to uncover crucial relationships that broader analyses might overlook. So this thesis could potentially provide a more nuanced understanding of how migration affects Euroscepticism at various scales.

Model

This study uses a logit regression model to explore how internal EU migration affects Euroscepticism. Moreover, a multilevel model using the same dataset is included in the appendix as a robustness check. The main data source is the individual responses from Eurobarometer surveys. The key independent variable is the ratio of internal EU immigrants to the local population at the NUTS 2 regional level. The analysis includes various control variables and time and region fixed effect variables. Additional regional variables are also specifically used to strengthen the multilevel analysis.

To assess the impact of internal EU migration on Euroscepticism, two statistical models are used: the logit model and the multilevel logit model. The multilevel logit model is useful for handling data that is structured at several levels, such as data organized by regions and nations together (Hausman & McFadden, 1984; Kwak & Clayton-Matthews, 2002). This approach helps manage correlations within groups, so more accurate results and standard errors might be calculated if within group differences are notable. However, its effectiveness can be limited by the overlap between individual and regional variables, like economic conditions at the regional level and education levels individually. When faced with multiple overlapping variables, it is better to choose a distinct variable to avoid multicollinearity (Bickel, 2007). Additionally, multilevel models require a significant number of groups, usually more than twenty or thirty, to produce reliable results (Centre for Multilevel Modelling, 2014; Moerbeek et al., 2001; Schoeneberger, 2015). This can be

challenging, especially when looking at national differences. Because no single country in this study has enough NUTS 2 regions to meet this requirement of larger than 20 regions. This limitation could reduce the model's ability to clearly show effects across different levels and complicate the interpretation of national differences. The empirical result by running Stata also show the same outcome.

Given these considerations, the logit model is chosen as the main analytical tool in this thesis. While the multilevel model can effectively handle complex data structures, its need for a large number of groups could complicate the interpretation of results. The logit model, on the other hand, offers a more straightforward way to estimate and explain the relationships between variables (DeMaris, 1992). To enhance the robustness of the analysis, the multilevel logit model is included in the appendix. This approach covering two models allows the study to benefit from both models, so, the findings are suggested to be more reliable through a comparison of different methods. The analysis begins with the implementation of the most basic logit regression model (model 1) that solely incorporates the dependent variable Y and the primary independent variable X, structured as:

$$\text{Logit}\,(P(Y=1)) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X$$

This model serves as the foundation for more complex models.

The next phase involves extending the model to include a suite of control variables C, (model2):

$$\text{Logit}\,(P(Y=1)) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \beta_2' C$$

To address the potential unobserved heterogeneity across regions and over time,

fixed effects for regions and time D and T are integrated (model 3):

$$\text{Logit}\,(P(Y=1)) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \beta_2' C + \delta' D + \tau' T$$

Subsequently, interaction terms I are added to investigate possible moderating effects between the primary variable and certain control variables (model 4 to model 6):

$$\text{Logit}\,(P(Y=1)) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \beta_2' C + \beta_3' I + \delta' D + \tau' T$$

Then, each country is analyzed separately using model 3 to discern differences at the national level.

As a robustness check, the analysis transitions to a multilevel logistic regression model, better suited for data structures reflecting nested regional variations (models 7 and 8). Initially, this multilevel model incorporates the primary independent variable and control variables:

$$\text{Logit}\,(P(Y_{ij}=1)) = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} X_{ij} + \beta'_{2j} C_{ij}$$

Fixed effects for time and country are added subsequently:

$$\text{Logit}\,(P(Y_{ij}=1)) = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} X_{ij} + \beta'_{2j} C_{ij} + \delta_j' D_j + \tau_t' T_t$$

β_{0j} is a random intercept that varies at the regional level j, illustrating the unique contextual effects within each region.

To improve result reliability and avoid potential heteroscedasticity in the data, variance-covariance adjustments are made in all models. This method strengthens the findings through offering a more solid and clear view of how immigration affects trust in the EU across different regions and time periods.

Findings and Discussion

European level analysis

Table 2 is about the step-by-step development from Model 1 to Model 3. Model 1 provides a basic overview as it simply includes the main explanatory variable. Model 2 adds all control variables to examine their combined effects on the results. Going one step further, Model 3 improves the analysis by adding fixed effects for time and region. Therefore, it addresses potential unobserved factors that could affect the findings. This structured approach ensures a thorough evaluation of the variables' impact.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
VARIABLES	**Model 1**	**Model 2**	**Model 3**
Lagged Immigration Percent	-0.156***	-0.129***	-0.136***
	(0.0165)	(0.0185)	(0.0365)
Age		0.00403***	0.00585***
		(0.000619)	(0.000649)
Support Free Movement		-0.107***	-0.0988***
		(0.0199)	(0.0205)
Right Wing Position		0.0512***	0.0679***
		(0.00466)	(0.00490)
Male		0.0545***	0.0573***
		(0.0196)	(0.0200)
Employed		0.116***	0.0907***
		(0.0219)	(0.0226)
Higher Social Class		-0.0563***	-0.0893***
		(0.0108)	(0.0118)
Have Partner		0.0837***	0.0734***
		(0.0203)	(0.0208)
Bigger Hometown		-0.00205	0.0259*
		(0.0131)	(0.0151)
Higher Education Level		-0.128***	-0.0530***
		(0.0131)	(0.0147)
Not Identify EU Citizenship		1.298***	1.301***
		(0.0259)	(0.0266)

Not Trust Government		1.644***	1.666***
		(0.0204)	(0.0215)
Constant	0.0392***	-1.303***	-1.450***
	(0.0123)	(0.0622)	(0.0878)
Time (Round) Fixed Effect	No	No	Yes
Region Fixed Effect	No	No	Yes
AIC	76050.32	60996.95	60216.57
Region	42	42	42
Round	14	14	14
Observations	54,944	53,448	53,448

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 2. The Impact of Internal EU Migration on people's Distrust Towards the EU, from three logit model analysis.

The results from the three models show that the coefficients for lagged immigration percentages are consistently negative and significantly associated with a reduction in Euroscepticism among local population. This suggests that higher immigration levels from three years prior are linked to greater trust in the EU. It supports the contact theory, which proposes that more exposure to immigrants can reduce negative perceptions and foster positive interactions (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Schlueter & Scheepers, 2010; Wagner et al., 2006). This decline in Euroscepticism aligns with the initial hypothesis which indicates that internal EU migration might have positive effects over time. This finding contrasts with Jeannet's (2018) study, which reported increased negative attitudes towards the EU are correlated to the increased internal migration in Eastern European countries. It also differs from

Yeung's (2021) research, which found no significant impact of internal EU migration on Euroscepticism. These discrepancies could be due to different units of analysis and methods used in previous studies.

In Model 3, a regional fixed effect is added to study the unobserved, time-invariant characteristics. These concerns might include historical migration trends, cultural factors, and the length of a region's EU membership. Time-specific effects, based on Eurobarometer's survey rounds, are also included to capture shifts and trends over time. These might involve factors like increasing public awareness of European institutions, as noted by Hönnige and Panke (2015). Including these fixed effects is essential for isolating the impact of studied variables, by controlling for confounding factors that could vary across regions and over time. This adjustment helps provide a more accurate estimation of the effects.

Regarding demographic variables, firstly, the analysis shows a positive and significant relationship between age and Euroscepticism. This finding supports the findings of other related researches that older individuals are more likely to hold Eurosceptic views. This could be explained as generational differences in values or varying levels of acceptance of the EU's integration efforts (Down & Wilson, 2012; Lauterbach & De Vries, 2020). Additionally, the study finds a positive correlation between political orientation and distrust towards the EU. Individuals with right-leaning views show stronger Euroscepticism compared to more left-leaning people. This result is consistent with McLaren (2006), and it highlights the increased Euroscepticism among right-wing groups following the Maastricht Treaty which

deepened European integration (Fuchs, 2011). After that, right-wing groups view the treaty's focus on political and economic union as a threat to national sovereignty, which likely increased Euroscepticism after its implementation from the political orientation perspective (Van Elsas & Van Der Brug, 2014).

Consistent with the domestic political cues theory, the variable 'not trust the government' also has a positive and significant relationship with Euroscepticism. This suggests that individuals who distrust their national government are more likely to distrust the EU as well by potentially following similar logic. This finding supports the idea that dissatisfaction with local politics can extend to affect perceptions of supranational institutions. To be more specific, negative views of national governance may influence opinions on the EU's legitimacy and trustworthiness.

Both the variable measuring identification with the EU and the one reflecting positive views of the EU's 'free movement' policy are statistically significant. This supports cultural or identity-based explanations of Euroscepticism. These results suggest that a stronger affiliation with the EU and a positive appraisal of fundamental EU policies such as free movement are associated with reduced levels of Euroscepticism. This highlights the critical role of cultural integration within the EU, emphasizing that fostering a sense of European identity and appreciation for key EU principles can significantly influence public sentiment towards the European project, potentially diminishing Eurosceptic attitudes.

Aligned with theoretical perspectives that associate economic status with political inclinations, the observation that individuals from higher social strata—generally

those possessing greater wealth—are less prone to Euroscepticism is consistent with economic interpretations of this phenomenon. This correlation illustrates that economic benefits potentially shield individuals from the adverse perceptions associated with EU-related immigration policies, thereby mitigating Eurosceptic sentiments. Additionally, the variable denoting the cessation age of formal education supports this notion; individuals who have undergone prolonged higher educational pursuits tend to display reduced levels of Euroscepticism. This trend may be attributed to the broader worldview and enhanced understanding of EU policies typically fostered through extended academic engagement.

	(4)	(5)	(6)
VARIABLES	**Model 4**	**Model 5**	**Model 6**
Lagged Immigration Percent	-0.115***	-0.148***	0.0598*
	(0.0430)	(0.0381)	(0.0355)
Age	0.00596***	0.00585***	0.00598***
	(0.000653)	(0.000650)	(0.000651)
Support Free Movement	-0.0989***	-0.0985***	-0.102***
	(0.0205)	(0.0205)	(0.0205)
Right Wing Position	0.0676***	0.0677***	0.0658***
	(0.00490)	(0.00490)	(0.00490)
Male	0.0578***	0.0573***	0.0590***
	(0.0200)	(0.0200)	(0.0201)
Employed	0.0888***	0.0907***	0.0908***
	(0.0226)	(0.0226)	(0.0226)
Higher Social Class	-0.0885***	-0.0890***	-0.0865***
	(0.0118)	(0.0118)	(0.0119)
Have Partner	0.0739***	0.0735***	0.0750***
	(0.0208)	(0.0208)	(0.0208)
Bigger Hometown	0.0258*	0.0260*	0.0255*
	(0.0151)	(0.0151)	(0.0151)
Higher Education Level		-0.0533***	-0.0545***
		(0.0147)	(0.0148)

2.Higher Education Level	-0.0108 (0.0346)		
3.Higher Education Level	-0.0530 (0.0389)		
2.Higher Education Level#Lagged Immigration Percent	-0.00713 (0.0429)		
3.Higher Education Level#Lagged Immigration Percent	-0.109** (0.0543)		
Not Identify EU Citizenship	1.301*** (0.0266)		1.300*** (0.0265)
1.Not Identify EU Citizenship		1.269*** (0.0365)	
1.Not Identify EU Citizenship#Lagged Immigration Percent		0.0550 (0.0464)	
Not Trust Government	1.666*** (0.0215)	1.667*** (0.0215)	
1.Not Trust Government			1.928*** (0.0312)
1.Not Trust Government#Lagged Immigration Percent			-0.452*** (0.0395)
Constant	-1.529*** (0.0859)	-1.444*** (0.0878)	-1.650*** (0.0900)
Time (Round) Fixed Effect	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region Fixed Effect	Yes	Yes	Yes
AIC	60214.33	60217.2	60079.85
Region	42	42	42
Round	14	14	14
Observations	53,448	53,448	53,448

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 3. Interaction Models

Following the preliminary analysis presented in Table 3, this thesis progresses to

a detailed examination of Models 4 through 6. Each of these interaction-focused models incorporates a distinct variable representing economic, cultural, or political dimensions, as previously identified in the literature review. The primary objective of integrating these models is to explore the moderating effects of these variables. This approach allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the factors that potentially modify the relationship between internal EU migration and Euroscepticism, enriching the discussion on how different socioeconomic and political contexts within the EU impact public perceptions and attitudes.

Model 4 explores the economic side of Euroscepticism and suggests a possible link to internal EU migration. It uses individuals' educational attainment to investigate how it interacts with immigration levels. The findings show that higher education significantly influences the relationship between internal EU immigration and trust in the EU. So Hypothesis 3.1 is supported. Notably, the interaction term between the highest education category—usually a master's degree or higher—and the lagged immigration percentage shows a clear negative correlation. This means that in regions with higher internal migration, individuals with advanced education levels tend to show less distrust towards the EU. It suggests that higher education may moderate and increase the positive effects of contact theory. So better intergroup relations and reducing Eurosceptic views could be promoted.

To explain with more detail, the impact of this interaction highlights the critical role of higher education in shaping attitudes in diverse societies. People with higher education often have more access to information, stronger social networks, and more

opportunities for cross-cultural interactions (Gurin et al., 2002; Stubager, 2008). These factors help them understand and accept the complexities of of different groups and the European integration. This understanding can foster a more positive view of the EU, which could potentially reduce Eurosceptic sentiments. Moreover, this effect supports the idea that highly educated individuals are more open to integration and less likely to see immigrants as threats (Jenssen & Engesbak, 1994). This openness aligns with the EU's goals of unity, and diversity and contributes to a more cohesive European identity.

Model 5 examines the cultural side of Euroscepticism by focusing on how identifying as an EU citizen affects views on internal EU migration. It introduces an interaction term between EU identity and lagged internal EU immigration rates to see if it influences Eurosceptic attitudes. Contrary to expectations of a further negative influence, this term does not reach statistical significance. Therefore, the Hypothesis 3.3 is rejected. This suggests that the effect of internal EU migration on Euroscepticism does not depend on whether individuals see themselves as Europeans. It implies that deeply rooted attitudes towards the EU are not easily changed by migration trends within the Union for these who identify EU citizens. This finding contrasts with research like Konings et al. (2021), which found that those with a strong national identity react more negatively to immigration increases than those who primarily identify as EU citizens.

In Model 6, the interaction between individuals' trust in their national government and the lagged percentage of internal EU migration is explored. This

model identifies a positive yet not robustly significant coefficient of 0.05 for internal EU migration. This finding is not consistent with earlier models which exhibited coefficients ranging from 0.1 to 0.2 with consistently lower p-values below 0.01. This suggests a potential shift in trust dynamics. It is indicated that disregarding local government distrust might could decrease trust in the EU when faced with rising immigration levels.

Moreover, the interaction term between distrust in the local government and internal EU migration percentage is negative and significant, with a substantial coefficient of 0.45, supporting hypothesis 3.2. This indicates that for individuals who do not trust their national government, an increase in immigration actually reduces their distrust towards the EU. In other words, while generally, an increase in immigration might diminish trust in the EU among those who distrust their national government, it may conversely mitigate their distrust towards the EU. As mentioned in the literature review, although there might be negative and positive interactions, positive interactions are usually more dominating. This could be interpreted as those who distrust their national government, potentially having limited access to EU-related information (Garry et al., 2005; Hooghe, 2007), may receive valuable insights through interactions with immigrants, which in turn can alter their perceptions of the EU.

Table 6, found in the appendix, presents the findings of a multilevel logit regression analysis conducted at both individual and NUTS 2 regional levels. This model is used as part of a robustness check. This analytical approach effectively

accounts for the nested data structure. So a more comprehensive and nuanced examination of effects across various hierarchical levels could be finished. By doing so, the analysis substantially enhances both the validity and reliability of the conclusions drawn in this thesis, offering a deeper understanding of the underlying dynamics (Kwak & Clayton-Matthews, 2002).

The regional GDP growth rate is often used as a higher-level variable in empirical studies because it encompasses various economic aspects such as income, employment, and overall economic health. These factors are essential for understanding the socioeconomic backdrop against which internal EU migration and Euroscepticism are examined.

In Model 7, internal EU migration has a non-significant negative coefficient when all variables are considered. However, once time and country fixed effects are added in Model 8, the coefficient for internal EU migration becomes significant. This change indicates that the fixed effects help account for unobserved differences over time and between countries, revealing a clearer and statistically significant impact of internal EU migration on Euroscepticism.

The Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) in table 2, table 3 and table 6 demonstrates a systematic decrease as variables are sequentially added from Model 1 to Model 3 and from model 7 to model 8, and as the model complexity increases with the introduction of interaction terms from Model 3 onward, indicating an improvement in model fit and explanatory power. This reduction confirms that the extended models, which incorporate broader socio-economic and cultural dimensions,

not only improve our understanding of the myriad factors influencing Euroscepticism but also lend greater credibility to the causal inference that increased internal EU migration may foster greater trust among regional populations towards the EU.

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National level analysis

Then, table 4 systematically presents the analysis performed on a nation-by-nation basis to assess the varied impacts of internal EU migration across distinct countries. This segment details models 1 through 5, each corresponding to a specific country: Spain, Hungary, Finland, Denmark, and Austria respectively. This approach allows for a nuanced exploration of how internal migration influences Euroscepticism within each country, highlighting regional differences and contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of migration's effects across diverse European contexts.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
VARIABLES	**Spain**	**Hungary**	**Finland**	**Denmark**	**Austria**
Lagged immigration	0.616***	0.176***	-0.273	-0.293**	-0.198***

Percent	(0.173)	(0.0471)	(0.185)	(0.125)	(0.0261)
age	0.00676***	0.00327**	0.0143***	0.00324**	0.00862***
	(0.00154)	(0.00144)	(0.00151)	(0.00140)	(0.00166)
Not Trust Government	2.618***	1.048***	1.886***	1.563***	1.966***
	(0.0768)	(0.0462)	(0.0473)	(0.0451)	(0.0489)
Not Identify EU Citizenship	1.328***	1.409***	1.140***	1.219***	1.447***
	(0.0768)	(0.0525)	(0.0581)	(0.0541)	(0.0693)
Support Free Movement	-0.0335	-0.143***	-0.139***	-0.211***	0.0170
	(0.0483)	(0.0427)	(0.0474)	(0.0451)	(0.0487)
Right Wing Position	-0.0915***	0.121***	0.0208	0.0529***	0.108***
	(0.0124)	(0.00987)	(0.0128)	(0.0101)	(0.0124)
Male	-0.136***	0.0675	0.182***	0.181***	-0.00751
	(0.0471)	(0.0421)	(0.0460)	(0.0443)	(0.0486)
Employed	0.113**	-0.0115	0.105**	0.123**	0.216***
	(0.0506)	(0.0496)	(0.0515)	(0.0506)	(0.0557)
Higher Social Class	-0.100***	0.0237	-0.133***	-0.0972***	-0.0740**
	(0.0254)	(0.0271)	(0.0261)	(0.0260)	(0.0314)
Have Partner	0.118**	0.0443	0.157***	0.0830*	-0.0476
	(0.0507)	(0.0427)	(0.0478)	(0.0463)	(0.0502)
Bigger Hometown	-0.0404	0.0628**	-0.0869**	0.149***	-0.149***
	(0.0321)	(0.0297)	(0.0367)	(0.0369)	(0.0278)
Higher Education Level	-0.0363	-0.0117	-0.0530	-0.0554*	-0.208***
	(0.0323)	(0.0348)	(0.0322)	(0.0332)	(0.0376)
Constant	-0.889***	-2.303***	-1.480***	-1.268***	-0.923***
	(0.189)	(0.169)	(0.178)	(0.179)	(0.184)
Time (round) fixed effect	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Round	14	14	14	14	14
Observations	10,095	11,016	10,690	11,372	10,275

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 4. The Impact of Internal EU Migration on Distrust Towards the EU from logit model analysis by country.

These models incorporate time-fixed effects but deliberately omit regional effects within individual nations. This methodological choice is grounded in the observation that regional variances within a single country are generally insignificant, and the

rationale for controlling regional fixed effects is largely driven by national-level considerations. This approach assumes that regional discrepancies are overshadowed by broader national dynamics. Should the findings detailed in Table 2 correspond closely with those presented in Table 1, the analysis in this thesis will not extend further into these results. This streamlined focus aims to concentrate analytical efforts on more pronounced national disparities, thus optimizing the clarity and relevance of the research outcomes.

The analysis presented in these models underscores a notable transformation regarding the primary explanatory variable, which captures the influence of internal EU migration on Euroscepticism. Significantly, the coefficient associated with this variable exhibits a positive shift in Spain and Hungary, indicating an upsurge in Eurosceptic sentiments correlating with increased levels of internal EU migration. This contrasts sharply with the patterns observed in Denmark and Austria, where the relationship remains significantly negative, aligning with the initial findings that suggest higher migration rates are associated with diminished Euroscepticism. Conversely, in Finland, the effect of internal EU migration on Euroscepticism is negative but not statistically significant, implying a neutral impact on public sentiment towards the EU. These observations support Hypothesis 2 by suggesting that internal migration affects Euroscepticism differently across national contexts. This variation may be linked to geographical disparities. For example, Northern and Central European countries like Denmark, Austria, and Finland show negative coefficients. However, Southern and Eastern European countries like Spain and

Hungary have positive coefficients. This highlights diverse regional responses to internal migration within the EU.

The differing impacts of internal EU migration on Euroscepticism across countries can be attributed to various national factors. Economic conditions in particular might play a crucial role. In nations experiencing economic instability or high unemployment, immigration might trigger more negative reactions due to competition for resources. Economic fears are often projected onto migrant populations, increasing distrust (Heizmann & Huth, 2021; Mayda, 2006). For instance, Spain and Hungary, which both are facing significant economic challenges compared to other European countries, also exhibit higher levels of Euroscepticism. This suggests that economic circumstances heavily influence public attitudes toward immigrants and the EU as a whole.

Moreover, the proportion of internal EU immigrants in Spain and Hungary is much lower than in the other countries studied, as shown in Graph 1 and mentioned in some research (Bell et al., 2015). This apparent difference hints that the contact theory, which suggests that greater interaction with out-groups reduces prejudice, may not fully apply here. In regions with few immigrants, locals may have limited direct contact. Therefore, their views are shaped more frequently through media and political narratives rather than personal experience. This indirect exposure can create perceptions of competition for resources, which might consider immigrants as economic rivals instead of contributors to society (Azrout et al., 2012b). Without enough positive interaction, these dynamics can heighten Euroscepticism, as the

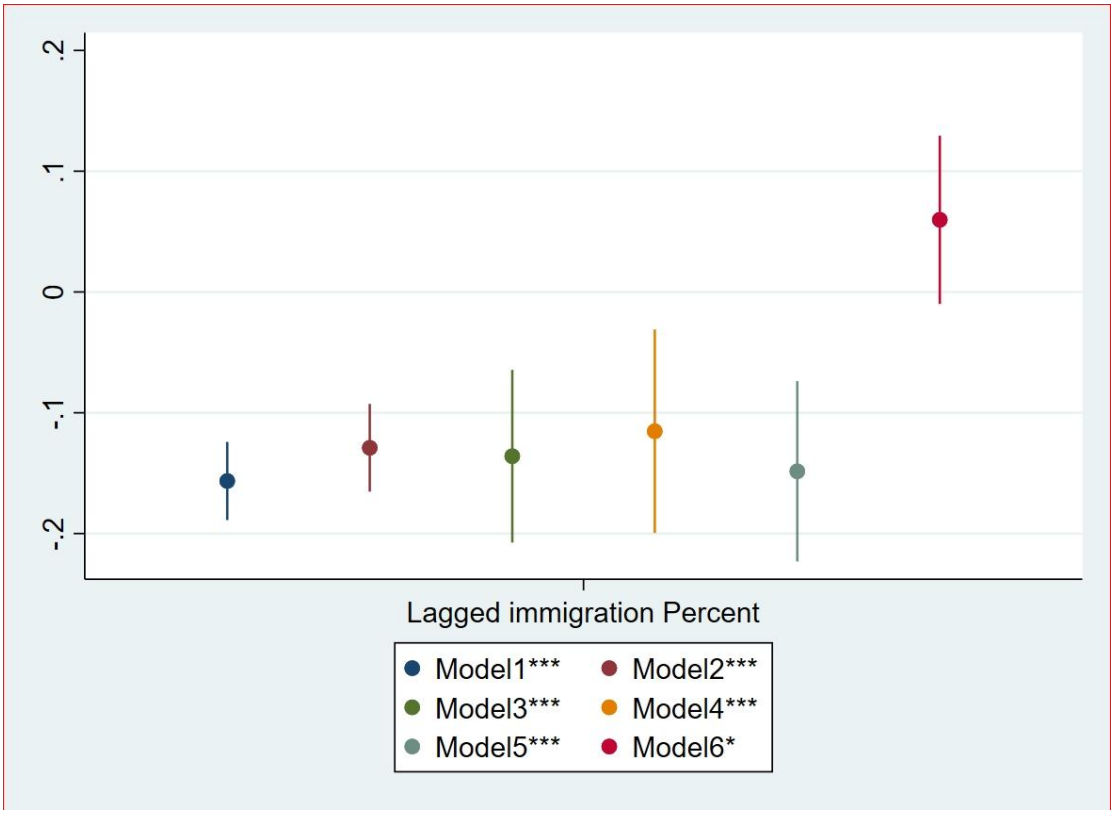
perceived benefits of diversity and integration are overshadowed by economic concerns. This complexity shows that applying contact theory requires careful consideration of specific contexts.

Another interesting finding is the gender difference in Euroscepticism across countries. Previous models generally find that men are more Eurosceptic, but in Spain, women show a higher tendency towards Euroscepticism compared to man. This divergence from the broader trend complicates the understanding of Euroscepticism across different cultural and political settings. Studies (Kuhn, 2011; Nielsen, 2016; Sarrasin et al., 2018) highlight this as a topic needing more research to better understand these differences and the mechanisms behind them.

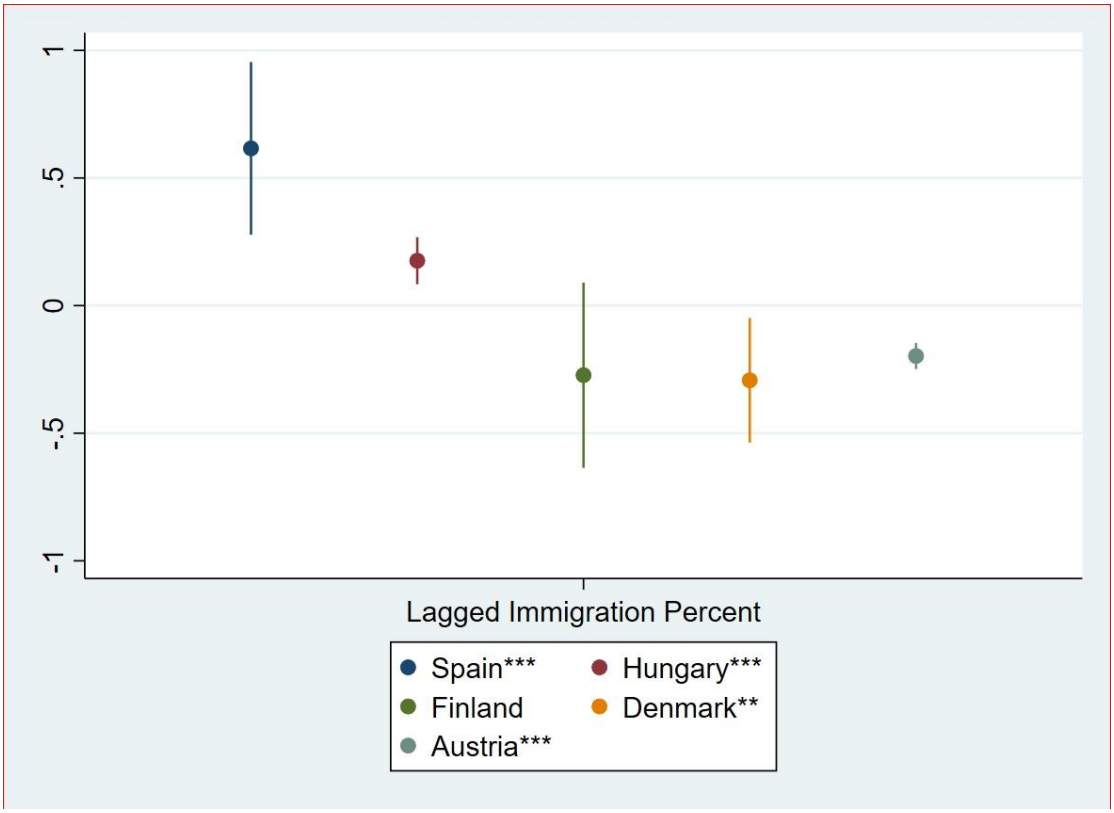
The analysis of education and Euroscepticism also reveals unexpected patterns. Typically, higher education levels correlate with lower Euroscepticism. However, in the country-specific analysis of Spain, Hungary, and Finland, this relationship, although still negative, is not statistically significant. This contradicts Lubbers and Scheepers (2010), who argued that education's influence on Euroscepticism weakens in high-GDP countries. Conversely, this study suggests that in wealthier countries, education has a stronger impact on people's views towards the EU.

For enhanced visual clarity and understanding of the results, this dissertation incorporates two figures that graphically depict the coefficients derived from the main analyses. Graph 2 illustrates the coefficients of the lagged immigration percentage, as calculated across various models presented in Tables 2 and 3. Similarly, Graph 3

demonstrates the variations in the coefficients of the lagged immigration percentage across different countries, detailed in Table 4. These graphical representations facilitate a straightforward comparison of the influence of internal EU migration on Euroscepticism across different analytical models and national contexts, thereby aiding in a more comprehensive interpretation of the data.



Graph 2. Coefficients of lagged immigration percent by models. Source: Author's own elaboration.



Graph 3. Coefficients of lagged immigration percent by nations. Source: Author's own elaboration.

Conclusion

This thesis has conducted a detailed analysis to evaluate the influence of internal EU migration on Euroscepticism, employing both logit and multilevel methodologies to analyze Eurobarometer survey data collected between 2014 and 2021. This study fills a notable void in scholarly discourse by focusing on internal EU migration at the NUTS 2 regional level, a dimension often overlooked in previous research that has predominantly concentrated on international migration and largely at the national scale. A pivotal discovery of this investigation is the discernible negative correlation between the proportion of internal EU migrants who arrived three years prior and the prevalence of Eurosceptic attitudes among the host population. This finding corroborates the contact theory, suggesting that increased interactions with internal EU migrants typically enhance trust in the EU, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of migration's socio-political impacts within the EU.

Moreover, this research incorporates several interaction models to explore the moderating effects of individual characteristics such as education level and trust in the national government on the relationship between internal EU migration and Euroscepticism. The findings suggest that higher education levels can amplify the positive impact of internal EU migration by reducing Eurosceptic sentiments. Additionally, the study indicates that individuals who distrust their national governments may become less Eurosceptic as internal EU migration increases. The analysis also reveals significant national differences: while internal EU migration

appears to heighten Euroscepticism in Spain and Hungary, internal EU migration reduces it in Denmark and Austria. In Finland, however, the relationship is negative but not statistically significant. These outcomes emphasize the importance of national contexts, including economic condition and history in Euroscepticism, in assessing the effects of internal EU migration on Euroscepticism and show how economic and social conditions shape these dynamics across different EU member states.

This research faces several limitations that should be considered. Firstly, the study focuses on only five European countries, due to the lack of clear NUTS 2 regional internal EU migration data. This limited scope may affect the generalizability of the findings due to potential evident national variations. Secondly, relying on self-reported data from Eurobarometer surveys introduces potential personal level biases. Because the accuracy of participants' responses on sensitive topics, like attitudes toward governments and EU institutions can vary. Lastly, the logit models used in this study assume linear relationships between variables. This assumption is the most universal one, but it may not fully capture the more complex, non-linear dynamics influencing Euroscepticism. This could lead to an oversimplification of interactions and effects, which might impact the effectiveness of conclusions drawn.

Future studies could expand geographic coverage by including more EU countries with detailed NUTS 2 data, or by accessing local reports to get data of more nations. This would enhance the representativeness of the research and potentially increase the robustness of the findings. Moreover, further research could explore specific factors contributing to national differences in Euroscepticism related to

internal EU migration. A nuanced analysis of contributing factors, such as economic conditions, political stability, or cultural attitudes toward migrants might be provided by using more sophisticated methodologies. Additionally, incorporating a broader range of variables that capture different aspects of Euroscepticism could deepen our understanding of its underlying drivers. For example, scores that could examine public perceptions of various EU policies or institutions might reveal new insights into what drives Eurosceptic attitudes.

Another promising direction for future research could be a detailed examination of internal EU migration patterns and their implications, as detailed papers in this category are still limited in their numbers and varieties. This focus is essential as it can highlight the unique impacts of internal EU migration, which may differ from movements within a single country or immigration from non-EU states. Such analysis is crucial for designing targeted policies that address the specific challenges and opportunities of EU-wide migration and integration. Further studies could also benefit from qualitative approaches that capture personal experiences and perceptions of EU citizens regarding internal migration. This would provide deeper insights into how these movements shape attitudes towards the EU.

At the end, this thesis aims to offer policy recommendations that are both feasible and conducive to advancing European integration based on the insights from the analysis. Firstly, as observed in the former models, education and public awareness campaigns could be effective in countering the rise of Euroscepticism, especially in regions with significant amount of internal EU migration. These campaigns should

highlight the economic, cultural, and social benefits of migration to help dispel negative stereotypes and misinformation. Secondly, recognizing the role of economic factors in shaping public sentiment towards the EU, it would be beneficial for the EU to increase funding and support for economic development and local education in regions with high level of Euroscepticism. This could reduce economic disparities and foster greater trust and support for the EU. Moreover, promoting intercultural dialogue and engagement among EU citizens can help reduce cultural and social tensions. Therefore, a more unified European identity might be fostered. This might include supporting community-led initiatives, cultural exchange programs, and public forums where people from diverse backgrounds can share their experiences and perspectives.

Appendix

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max
Not Trust EU (Ref. category = Trust)	54,944	0.4886976	0.4998768	0	1
Lagged Immigration Percent	54,944	0.5409135	0.5377707	0.0562835	6.236572
Age	54,944	51.96449	17.71877	15	98
Not Trust Government (Ref. category = Trust)	54,944	0.5409326	0.4983262	0	1
Not Identify EU Citizenship (Ref. category = Identify)	54,944	0.2165114	0.4118705	0	1
Support Free Movement (Ref. category = Not Support)	54,944	0.5809734	0.4934042	0	1
Right Wing Position	53,942	5.286678	2.174319	1	10
Male (Ref. Category = Female)	54,944	0.4841475	0.4997532	0	1
Employed (Ref. Category = Not Employed)	54,944	0.5165259	0.4997314	0	1
Higher Social Class	54,891	2.397406	0.9854192	1	5
Have Partner (Ref. category = do not have)	54,944	0.5311044	0.4990361	0	1
Bigger Hometown	54,944	1.98615	0.7546091	1	3
Higher Education Level	54,470	2.023995	0.803269	1	3
GDP Growth Rate	54,944	2.074819	3.018158	-23.14	11.65
country	54,944	3.014669	1.399817	1	5
Year	54,944	2017.097	2.12722	2014	2021
round	54,944	87.63208	4.15224	81	95

Region	54,944	25.25996	10.2756	1	42

Table 5. Data description

	(7)	**(8)**
VARIABLES	**Model 7:**	**Model 8:**
Lagged immigration Percent	-0.0927	-0.135*
	(0.0933)	(0.0721)
Higher Education Level	-0.0537**	-0.0527**
	(0.0217)	(0.0212)
Age	0.00559***	0.00586***
	(0.00140)	(0.00137)
Not Trust Government	1.678***	1.670***
	(0.137)	(0.138)
Not Identify EU Citizenship	1.300***	1.305***
	(0.0524)	(0.0513)
Support Free Movement	-0.101**	-0.100**
	(0.0395)	(0.0406)
Right Wing Position	0.0677***	0.0680***
	(0.0208)	(0.0213)
Male	0.0576**	0.0565**
	(0.0265)	(0.0270)
Employed (Ref. Category = Not Employed)	0.0760**	0.0905***
	(0.0328)	(0.0335)
Higher Social Class	-0.108***	-0.0881***
	(0.0194)	(0.0206)
Have Partner (Ref. category = do not have)	0.0786**	0.0740**
	(0.0373)	(0.0375)
Bigger Hometown	0.0317	0.0240
	(0.0392)	(0.0375)
GDP Growth Rate [Region]	0.00483**	0.00216*
	(0.00222)	(0.00125)
Constant	-1.513***	-1.272***
	(0.152)	(0.170)
Time (Round) Fixed Effect	No	Yes
Country Fixed Effect	No	Yes
AIC	60730.81	60245.41

Region	42	42
Round	14	14
Observations	53,448	53,448
Number of groups	42	42

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 6. Multilevel logit regression analysis conducted at both the individual and regional levels for robustness check.

NUTS label	NUTS Numerical Code	NUTS Code
Galicia	1	ES11
Principado de Asturias	2	ES12
Cantabria	3	ES13
País Vasco	4	ES21
Comunidad Foral de Navarra	5	ES22
La Rioja	6	ES23
Aragón	7	ES24
Comunidad de Madrid	8	ES30
Castilla y León	9	ES41
Castilla-La Mancha	10	ES42
Extremadura	11	ES43
Cataluña	12	ES51
Comunitat Valenciana	13	ES52
Illes Balears	14	ES53

Andalucía	15	ES61
Región de Murcia	16	ES62
Canarias	17	ES70
Budapest-Pest	18	HU11-HU12
Közép-Dunántúl	19	HU21
Nyugat-Dunántúl	20	HU22
Dél-Dunántúl	21	HU23
Észak-Magyarország	22	HU31
Észak-Alföld	23	HU32
Dél-Alföld	24	HU33
Länsi-Suomi	25	FI19
Helsinki-Uusimaa	26	FI1B
Etelä-Suomi	27	FI1C
Pohjois- ja Itä-Suomi	28	FI1D
Hovedstaden	29	DK01
Sjælland	30	DK02
Syddanmark	31	DK03
Midtjylland	32	DK04
Nordjylland	33	DK05
Burgenland	34	AT11
Niederösterreich	35	AT12
Wien	36	AT13
Kärnten	37	AT21
Steiermark	38	AT22

Oberösterreich	39	AT31
Salzburg	40	AT32
Tirol	41	AT33
Vorarlberg	42	AT34

Table 7. Correspondences between numerical codes and geographic regions

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