Sources of Negative Attitudes Towards Immigrants: A Multi-level Analysis

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ABSTRACT

In recent times, many nations are experiencing an increase in anti-immigrant attitudes on the part of natives. Most papers only explore one or two sources of anti-immigrant attitudes at a time. This paper tests eight different explanations for anti-immigrant attitudes: cultural marginality theory, human capital theory, political affiliation, societal integration, neighborhood safety, contact theory, foreign investment, and economic competition. Analysis is conducted using combined data from the European Social Survey and Eurostat and individual, regional and national level predictors. Results indicate that fear of immigrants or of uncertainty may be one of the main reasons anti-immigrant attitudes arise.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, immigration has become an increasingly salient issue considered problematic by natives of most developed nations. Many of these countries have seen the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments, which are often related to economic conditions and increasing numbers of immigrants. Various researchers have attempted to provide an explanation for the development and change in anti-immigrant attitudes. This paper tests eight explanations for anti-immigrant attitudes. Five of these explanations are measured at the individual level: cultural marginality theory, human capital theory, political affiliation, societal integration, and neighborhood safety. Two explanations, contact theory and foreign investment are measured at national and regional levels and economic competition is measured and all three levels of analysis: national, regional and individual. Methodologically, few studies of anti-immigrant attitudes have been examined with individual, regional and national levels. Consequently, it is unclear which variables are influential and at what level. Some of the individual level variables, such as trust or unemployment rates, may impact anti-immigrant attitudes on a regional or national level. That is, it may be that unemployment at the national level is related to anti-immigrant attitudes whether on an individual level the person is unemployed or not.

Although each of these explanations has been tested to some extent, this is the first paper to my knowledge that tests all of the proposed explanations for anti-immigrant attitudes at once. Mostly this has been due to data constraints. The newly available European Social Survey (ESS), in conjunction with data from Eurostat enables examination of all these theories simultaneously. Consequently, the first aim of this

proposal is to examine all of these theories to determine which ones provide the best explanations for native's anti-immigrant attitudes.

As the number of worldwide migrant's increases, understanding the root causes for the existence of anti-immigrant sentiment is becoming increasingly important. Understanding these causes may have implications for policy makers; it may help nations be more effective in incorporating immigrants in ways that have cultural and economic benefits with less conflict and upheaval. Also, understanding the reasons anti-immigrant sentiments arise may aid in predicting the consequences of the arrival of immigrants of a certain type (i.e. those with limited job skills) or country of origin.

Explanations for Anti-Immigrant Attitudes

Negative attitudes toward immigrants appear to have increased in recent years in Europe. Examples such as the riots in France (October & November 2005) or the anti-Muslim cartoons in Denmark (2005) are often cited. In recent years, anti-immigrant attitudes on the part of natives appear to be increasing, as is exemplified in the rising support of anti-immigrant political parties (de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2005). Multiple explanations for increasing anti-immigrant trends have been presented in the literature, and although some papers address more than one justification, to my knowledge no studies have undertaken a comprehensive analysis of the multiple explanations. Although authors vary in the terminology they apply to their theories, most of the explanations can be grouped into eight categories: cultural marginality theory, human capital, political affiliation, societal integration, neighborhood safety, contact theory, foreign investment, and economic competition. Missing from this list of explanations of anti-immigrant attitudes is racism because the ESS did not contain any direct measure of this variable.

Cultural marginality theory proposes that people will be more likely to have anti-immigrant attitudes when they cannot relate to the culture of the immigrants because they have nothing in common with them (e.g. ethnic background). Huntington's (1996) "clash of civilizations" proposes that nations from different historical civilizations are more likely to be in conflict with each other because the respective societies form their identities based on different languages, religions, customs, and history. Huntington identifies lingering historical conflicts between civilizations and a lack of trust or being able to reach a mutual understanding as the basis for clashes among civilizations. On an individual level, people may be more likely to be at conflict, or in opposition to, people who have very different backgrounds from their own. This could occur for various reasons, such as learning in school that historically people from other civilizations were the enemy. In conjunction with a lack of common factors on which to build trust, such as language or religion, anti-immigrant sentiments may rise.

On the other hand, when individuals can relate to immigrants based on some factor, meaning they feel some cultural affinity, this will promote more pro-immigrant attitudes. Cultural affinity can exist for various reasons, such as coming from a immigrant background or being a member of an ethnic minority. Espenshade & Calhoun (1993) measured cultural affinity by whether the respondent was foreign born of a racial/ethnic minority and found it had some influence on attitudes toward undocumented immigrants to the U.S. Cultural marginality was measured using whether or not an individual has ever been part of a group that has been discriminated against.

Human Capital Theory poses that natives with less education will be more likely to have anti-immigrant attitudes. This theory is probably the most widely tested of all the

theories. Most studies do find significant effects but with several caveats: 1) it is unclear if human capital is related to attitudes toward immigrants at all levels of migrant job skills or whether individuals with low human capital are only more prejudiced when the immigrants are low skilled, 2) the effect of human capital on attitudes toward immigrants appears to be diminishing in recent years (Gang, Rivera-Batiz & Yun 2002). Espenshade & Calhoun (1996) point out that one of the reasons education should be related to more positive attitudes toward immigrants is that it gives individuals a perspective that is contrary to inter-group negativism. Another explanation is that education takes one away from making categorical classifications of people and gives one an ability to see the world in more nuanced ways. Higher education is also related to having a broader set of experiences (i.e. travel) which lead individuals to be more exposed to international culture, whether it be through media or studies, and consequently see immigrants as less of a threat. Finally, those with more education may have lower anti-immigrant attitudes because they have never had to be in competition with them, whether it be for jobs or government resources. Human capital was measured using level of educational achievement.

Political affiliation has also been linked to anti-immigrant sentiments. Espenshade & Hepstead (1996) found that people who are alienated politically may be looking for others to blame and consequently, may be more negative toward immigrants. Also, interest in politics is correlated with higher education and involvement in society, both of which may also lead to lower anti-immigrant sentiments. Although overall levels of political involvement tend to be low, individual and regional variations may impact overall sentiment toward natives. Left versus right political leaning has also been linked

to anti-immigrant attitudes. In various countries in Europe, there has been a recent trend whereby right-wing parties, who support immigration control, are gaining support from the people and control of the government (i.e. France). Many of these movements have been tied to racist sentiments. An exploration of the specific regions and nations where right or left political leaning is prevalent may clarify why differences in anti-immigrant sentiments occur. Political affiliation is measured in two ways: political involvement and left versus right political leaning.

Societal attachment has been associated with anti-immigrant attitudes in various ways. Within the U.S. inter-personal trust (measured by items such as 'in general, people can be trusted') tends to be lower in more ethnically diverse communities (Hooghe et al. 2006). Higher trust should also be related to not blaming immigrants unless one has had a personal negative experience with them. That is, some natives blame many problems on immigrants, such as high crime rates or unemployment, and this should occur less for individuals with high trust levels. In northern European countries national trust levels are higher than in Southern Europe (Inglehart, 1990). Consequently, trust could impact anti-immigrant attitudes regionally or nationally, as well as individually. Individuals who have a spouse or children should be more integrated in society and more interested in the future of society itself. From this perspective, living with family might increase anti-immigrant attitudes because these individuals would be interested in assuring that society remains culturally stable and economically viable (Jackson et al. 2001). Societal attachment is measured through interpersonal trust and whether or not an individual lives with family (spouse or childen).

Neighborhood safety may also be linked to anti-immigrant sentiment because immigrants introduce an element of uncertainty into society by which many of society's ills may be attributed to their presence. Consequently, a lack of feeling of safety in one's neighborhood may be correlated with natives attributing higher levels of violence or crime to immigrants. Neighborhood safety is measured by how safe one feels in their neighborhood after dark.

Contact theory proposes that when people come in contact with immigrants over time in a casual manner, without really developing relationships, they develop suspicion and hostility, which would lead to higher anti-immigrant sentiments (Perrineau, 1985, in Fetzer, 2000). At times this is presented as group position theory (Blummer, 1958) where members of a dominant group develop prejudice toward a subordinate group (in this case immigrants) as they develop their sense of group identity and position in opposition to the minority group. The feeling of having to create a group identity that is opposed to another arises from feeling threatened. With respect to anti-immigrant sentiments, Quillian (1995) argues that the perceived threat can occur for two reasons: 1) if the size of the minority group increases, the majority may feel they are going to have to compete for scarce resources or cultural hegemony, 2) that prejudice increases in times of recession because the majority group blames the subordinate peoples for the economic problems. In this way, high concentrations of immigrants have been associated with anti-immigrant sentiments in Germany and the UK (Gang and Rivera Batiz 1994 and Dustman & Preston 2001 in Gang, Rivera-Batiz & Yun 2002 and the piece itself). On the other hand, Scheve & Slaughter (2001) found that low skilled people are not more against migration in

regions where there is a higher number of immigrants. Contact theory is measured by the number of immigrants at the regional and national level.

Foreign Direct Investment can also play a role in determining anti-immigrant attitudes. World systems theory proposes that migration begins when capitalist countries go into poor nations to try to make a profit from benefits such as cheaper labor or raw materials (Massey et al. 1993). When nations in Europe decide to invest overseas, information concerning poorer countries becomes more prevalent in media and business. Increased knowledge about who the immigrants actually are and the harsh conditions they face in their nations of origin may increase understanding and lower anti-immigrant attitudes.

Economic Competition is another commonly used theory that attempts to explain discrimination toward immigrants. It is presented and measured in one of two ways that differ in the unit of analysis. First, on an individual level various studies theorize that lower skilled natives will be more likely to have anti-immigrant attitudes because they are in competition with the low skilled immigrants that are entering the country (Harwood, 1983 & 1986 in Fetzer, 2000, Scheve & Slaughter, 2001). The link between economic competition and anti-immigrant attitudes may occur because immigrants are overrepresented in lower-skilled jobs. Consequently, it may simply be true that immigrants are taking native jobs at the bottom of the labor hierarchy. Whether due to fear that they will lose their own jobs or anger that immigrants are taking away jobs they shouldn't have rights to, natives will have higher anti-immigrant attitudes in these situations. An alternative reason individuals may increase in anti-immigrant attitudes is that they perceive economic competition exists. That is, there are many portrayals in the

media of poor immigrants moving to richer countries to attempt to improve their life styles. Whether it is true for specific natives that immigrants are threatening their jobs or not, it may be simply that they are more likely to perceive that immigrants are in competition with them and, consequently, they would have higher anti-immigrant attitudes. Economic competition at the bottom of the labor hierarchy was measured by income per capita and unemployment.

In addition to measuring economic competition at the individual level, it can be measured at a more macro or regional level. Natives will have higher anti-immigrant attitudes when, regardless of their skill level, they live in regions where there is high competition for jobs due to factors such as high unemployment. Various studies have shown that whether or not immigrants actually have a negative impact in the form of lower wages or fewer unemployment opportunities is inconclusive (Gang, Rivera-Batiz, & Yun 2002). However, people's perceptions may be very different from reality. That is, rumors or specific cases can provoke a general feeling that immigrants are to blame for economic hardships. An alternative explanation for the link between economy and attitudes toward immigrants is that in times of recession, natives are simply looking for someone to blame (Espenshade & Hempstead, 1996). Economic competition was measured by regional and national unemployment and gross domestic product.

METHODS

This paper used data from the European Social Survey (ESS) and Eurostat. All analysis was conducted using Hierarchical Linear Models in the program HLM with level 1 being the individual level, level 2 being the region and level 3 the nation. Initially each variable was regressed separately to test whether each theory was significant. However,

having all variables in at once produced similar results, which indicated that there were few or no mediating effects among these variables and that each contributed to explaining variations in anti-immigrant attitudes independently.

The European Social Survey (ESS) included representative data for 21 European nations and over 80,000 respondents. Currently, two cross-sectional waves of data are available. Wave 1 was collected in 2002-3 and Wave 2 in 2004-5. This survey covered a wide variety of measures concerning values, attitudes and behavior concerning a range of topics such as politics, culture, economics, and migration. Data was collected via an hour long face to face interview and contains samples of between 1000 and 3000 respondents per country. Respondents were randomly selected representatives of private household residents aged 15 or older within regions in Europe.

Region selection for the ESS was based on the European Union's nomenclature of territorial units for statistics (NUTS), which divides countries into regions according to population size, and economic, geographic and cultural factors (Eurostat). The samples collected in each of these regions by the ESS are representative of that geographical area. The fact that respondents in the ESS are grouped within NUTS regions means that the ESS data can be linked with various region level indicators collected by Eurostat. Also, certain variables of interest that were included in the ESS can be aggregated to construct regional level indicators. The NUTS are classified into three hierarchical subdivisions, where NUTS 1 represents a broader classification of regions and NUTS 3 a more detailed classification. The ESS was collected by each country independently, which led to variation in the NUTS level employed, with half the countries choosing NUTS 2 and about a quarter choosing NUTS 1 and 3. Thus, the number of regions per country varies

from 3 to 40 and the sample size per region from 10 to 1234. Eurostat compiles most of its regional data at NUTS levels 1 and 2, with about 50% of the variables also including NUTS 3. For purposes of this study all NUTS 3 will be recoded into NUTS 2 so that all Eurostat data can be at a similar level. The exceptions are five countries (i.e. France) that were only measured at NUTS 1 in the ESS.

Two countries (Italy and Greece) were eliminated from the analysis due to errors in data collection or missing large amounts of data. The region variable for Italy in the ESS was coded incorrectly and consequently, cannot be matched up to Eurostat data. On certain key variables (i.e. foreign direct investment), Eurostat data for Greece was missing for certain regions. In addition, for five countries (i.e. Austria, Hungary) one of the two waves of data was excluded from the analysis because the variable measuring education or income was either incorrectly collected or did not match the question format for the other countries. Finally, because the study was concerned with natives attitudes toward immigrants, all non-native born respondents were eliminated from the sample (approximately 8%). The final sample size was 58,517.

The dependent variable*, anti-immigrant attitudes* was based on three items measured on a scale of 1 to 10 asking if it is bad or good when people come to live from other countries for the economy, the country's cultural life, and the country in general (e.g. "Would you say it is generally bad or good for [country]'s economy that people come to live here from other countries?") (Alpha=.81).

Cultural marginality theory was measured by a question that asked whether individuals would consider themselves as being a member of a group that is discriminated against in this country? (1=yes, 2=no). *Human capital* was measured by

the education level standardized across European countries, ranging from 0=not completed primary education to 6=completed second stage of tertiary education.

Political affiliation was measured in two ways. Interest in politics was measured by the question "How interested would you say you are in politics?" from 1 = very interested to 4 =not at all interested? Left or Right political leaning was measured by the question "In politics people sometimes talk of 'left' or 'right'. Using this card, where would you place yourself on this scale" from 0 to 10.

In order to measure *societal integration* we used a measure of personal trust and a whether or not one lives with a family member. *Personal trust* was composed by three items on a scale of 0 (no trust) to 10 (trusting) "…would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?", would most people try to take advantage of you if they got the change or would they try to be fair, and do most of the time people try to be helpful or are they mostly looking out for themselves". Whether or not the respondent lives with family is obtained from a residential roster individuals are asked to fill out.

Neighborhood safety was measured by the item "how safe do you feel walking alone in this area after dark?" on a scale of 1=very safe to 4=very unsafe. *Contact theory* was tested utilizing the number of immigrants living in a region or nation as reported by Eurostat. *Foreign Direct Investment* was only available at the national level and was defined by Eurostat as "the category of international investment made by an entity resident in one economy (*direct investor*) to acquire a lasting interest in an enterprise operating in another economy (*direct investment enterprise*)."

Economic competition was measured using a diverse set of variables. When looking at economic competition at the bottom of the labor hierarchy low income per capita and unemployment were utilized to identify individuals who may have higher anti-immigrant attitudes because they feel they are in competition with them. The influence of unemployment was measured by a question that asks whether the individual had been unemployed in the past 5 years. A second aspect of economic competition was that natives may feel that, in regions or nations with economic hardship, immigrants would take away jobs or lower wages and prices. This aspect of economic competition was measured by using regional and national unemployment rates and GDP provided by Eurostat. Both of these variables were available longitudinally up until 2005 with reporting of unemployment rates beginning in 1999 and GDP in 1995. The GDP was measured in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), which is a method of equalizing the purchasing power of currencies across nations. It is based on the principle that identical goods must have one price. PPP sets the U.S. dollar as the standard and calculates how much it would cost to buy a basic set of goods in the U.S. and then compares how much it would cost in another currency and then adjusts the GDP to reflect the different purchasing power of the respective currencies.

Controls used were gender, age, and urban versus rural region of living, as well as a dummy variable for the round of the survey each individual belonged to. In Eurostat, the regional and national number of immigrants for Belgium and Germany were missing. Preliminary analysis where the pertinent countries were removed from the sample indicated that neither of these variables significantly impacted anti-immigrant attitudes nor did they add significantly to the model. Consequently, these variables were removed

from the final model. Finally, all individual level variables were aggregated and tested at both the regional and national levels. Two variables emerged as contributing significantly to the model: national left-right political leaning and regional levels of trust.

RESULTS

Results are presented in two ways. Table 1 shows the effects all the variables have on anti-immigrant attitudes grouped by the eight types of theories tested in this paper. Table 2 shows the effects the variables have on anti-immigrant attitudes grouped by individual, regional, and national levels.

Results by Explanation Type

Of the eight theories tested, five were fully supported by the data, one partially supported, and two not supported by our findings (Table 1). Education was negatively related to anti-immigrant attitudes, which supports *human capital theory.* Having a left leaning political orientation, as well as being interested in politics was negatively associated with feeling opposed to immigrants. In addition, being part of a left leaning nation was associated with positive attitudes toward migrants. These findings support explanations concerning *political integration*.

Explanations concerning the link between anti-immigrant attitudes and *neighborhood safety* were also supported, given that not feeling safe in one's neighborhood after dark was positively associated with being more opposed to immigrants. *Societal integration* explanations were also supported. Interpersonal trust, both on the individual and regional levels were negatively associated and living with family positively associated with anti-immigrant attitudes, as predicted. Finally, having *foreign investments* in other countries was negatively related to anti-immigrant attitudes.

One theory was partially supported by the results. Individual *economic competition* theory was supported given that having been unemployed in the past five years and lower income per capita were associated with higher anti-immigrant attitudes. However, neither of the variables measuring economic competition (GDP and unemployment) were significant at the regional level and, at the national level, they influenced anti-immigrant attitudes in the opposite direction as hypothesized. That is, as national unemployment rates increased and national GDP decreased, anti-immigrant attitudes increased.

Two theories were not supported by the results. *Cultural marginality* theory is called into question because there is no significant relationship between having been a part of a group that is discriminated against and anti-immigrant attitudes. *Contact theory* was also not supported given that number of immigrants at the regional and national level was not related to anti-immigrant attitudes. As far as the controls are concerned, individuals tend to be more anti-immigrant if they are older and from a rural versus an urban region. Gender was unrelated to anti-immigrant attitudes.

The standardized coefficients indicate that interpersonal trust (societal integration explanation) was the strongest predictor of anti-immigrant attitudes, followed by education (human capital explanation), national unemployment rates (economic competition explanation), and political interest (political affiliation explanation). Other strong predictors were feeling safe after dark (neighborhood safety explanation) and being of a left versus a right leaning political party (political affiliation explanation).

Results by Unit of Analysis

In addition to grouping the results by explanation type, grouping them by unit of analysis provides further insight into anti-immigrant attitudes (Table 2). Anti-immigrant attitudes are higher among *individuals* who have been unemployed in the last five years (economic competition explanation), who are more politically right leaning (political affiliation), who don't feel safe in their neighborhoods after dark (neighborhood safety), and who live with their families (societal integration). Anti-immigrant attitudes are lower among individuals who have higher levels of education (human capital) or income per capita (economic competition), as well as those that had higher levels of interpersonal trust (societal integration) and more interest in politics (political affiliation).

At the *regional level* inter-personal trust (societal integration) was the only variable that was significantly related to anti-immigrant attitudes. The relationship between these two variables was negative.

Finally, at the *national level* foreign investment (foreign direct investment) and unemployment rates (economic competition) were negatively associated with anti-immigrant attitudes. National GDP (economic competition) and being a nation with a right political orientation (political affiliation) were positively associated with anti-immigrant attitudes.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Negative attitudes toward immigrants by multiple theories at the individual, regional and national level which heretofore have not been examined collectively. Using data from 20 countries, 135 regions and over 50,000 respondents reveals the strengths and weaknesses of contemporary theories. It is clear from the results (Table 1) that

human capital, political affiliation, societal integration (measured by interpersonal trust and living with family – spouse or children), neighborhood safety, and foreign direct investment explanations are necessary to understanding anti-immigrant attitudes. Economic competition explanations of anti-immigrant attitudes provided mixed results and cultural marginality (measured by "have you ever been part of a group that is discriminated against?") and contact theory (measured by number of immigrants) explanations did not significantly contribute to explaining anti-immigrant attitudes. It is clear from these results that research that examines anti-immigrant attitudes must address multiple explanations in conjunction. Results also indicate (Table 2) that individual, regional, and national level variables are necessary to fully understand anti-immigrant attitudes. Most of the variation was present at the individual level, followed by the regional and national level of analysis (Table 2).

Strongest to Weakest Explanation Type

Among the six explanations that contributed most significantly to anti-immigrant attitudes, *societal integration* had the clearest connection given that interpersonal trust was the strongest predictor of anti-immigrant attitudes. This may occur for two reasons. One is that anti-immigrant attitudes arise, in essence, as a result of fear of the unknown. Immigrants cause fear because they have a culture and language that the individual does not understand. The second possible explanation is that one simply does not trust individuals outside one's immediate circle of friends and family. From this perspective, an individual would have a lack of trust not only toward immigrants, but toward most of society. The societal integration explanation is strengthened because living with family

and lower levels of interpersonal trust at the regional level are also associated with higher anti-immigrant attitudes.

Human capital is also an important explanation for anti-immigrant attitudes, as education was the second strongest predictor of attitudes toward immigrants. As individuals gain more knowledge concerning immigrants and are exposed to a wider variety of experiences, they appear to be either less afraid of immigrants or are able to identify them more. An alternative explanation is that individuals in society with high status are not as threatened by immigrants because they usually come in at the lower rungs of the societal hierarchy.

Economic competition theory was clearly supported on the individual level but at the national level it was significant in the opposite direction from what was hypothesized. At the individual level having been unemployed in the past five years and having lower income per capita were associated with higher anti-immigrant attitudes. This indicates that poorer natives may feel they personally have to compete with immigrants for jobs at the lower rungs of the labor market hierarchy, as these tend to be the types of individuals who have lower income or experience bouts of unemployment.

At the national level, higher unemployment rates and lower GDP were associated with more positive feelings toward immigrants. This contradicts the macro level prediction of the economic competition explanation, which proposes that natives, regardless of personal skill level, will have higher anti-immigrant attitudes when the nation is experiencing economic hardship because they are using immigrants as scapegoats on whom they can blame their problems. Anti-immigrant attitudes may be lower in the face of lower GDP and higher unemployment rates for two reasons. First, in

the face of a bad economy, immigrants may be seen as a new influx of spenders and workers that could provide a boost for the economy. Second, immigrants may be taking jobs at the lowest rungs of the labor market that natives themselves do not want and consequently, may help revitalize the economy.

Political affiliation is associated with anti-immigrant attitudes in that people with right leaning politics at both the national and individual level and less personal interest in politics are more opposed to immigrants. Right leaning political parties tend to promote stricter policies toward immigrants and may reinforce negative stereotypes concerning immigrants being a threat to economic or cultural stability. Political interest is associated with higher levels of education, so it's possible that those who are more knowledgeable about politics are simply more pro-immigrant for the same reasons as educated people.

The *neighborhood safety* explanation was supported in that feeling safe in one's neighborhood after dark was negatively associated with anti-immigrant attitudes. One possible explanation is that individuals that don't feel safe live in neighborhoods with higher numbers of immigrants. On the other hand, people who don't feel safe may be blaming criminal or violent behavior on immigrants and simply associate feeling unsafe with anti-immigrant attitudes.

Nations with higher levels of *foreign investment* were more likely to have citizens with more positive attitudes toward immigrants. This probably occurs because involvement in foreign nations is associated with more media coverage and information being spread about the citizens of those countries. Knowing more about the immigrants leads to fewer fears of the unknown and to more sympathetic views concerning why they are moving to Europe.

The results indicated no significant relationship between being a part of a group that has been discriminated against. *Cultural marginality* may not be a central determinant of anti-immigrant attitudes in Europe because there are too few natives that have multi-ethnic roots. Thus, there may not be enough people that can personally relate to the hardships and discrimination immigrants face to affect anti-immigrant attitudes.

Number of immigrants at the regional and national level also had no significant relationship with anti-immigrant attitudes, calling *contact theory* into question. Across Europe, immigrants may not be concentrated enough to affect anti-immigrant attitudes based on simple numbers. However, there are nations were immigrants are highly concentrated (i.e. France). Whether or not number of immigrants impact anti-immigrant attitudes on a nation by nation basis is the subject of future analysis.

Overall Conclusions

When looking at the possible explanations for the factors that are associated with anti-immigrant attitudes, fear of the unknown or lacking a way to be able to relate to immigrants seems to arise as an important explanation. This was found to be a possible reason for anti-immigrant attitudes in societal integration, human capital theory, political affiliation, neighborhood safety and foreign investment. Fear may be related to anti-immigrant attitudes because they cause uncertainty concerning how immigrants may affect the present cultural and economic society. On the other hand, it does not appear that sheer numbers of immigrants or fears of immigrants destabilizing nations as a whole were consistently associated with anti-immigrant attitudes. This was clear in that number of immigrants was not significant and national economic competition worked in the opposite way than hypothesized.

As far as the levels of analysis, several findings are of interest. As the variance components indicate, breaking the analysis into three levels is necessary to specify the model correctly and all three levels add significantly to the model. Most of the variance is present at the individual level, which indicates that in order to change anti-immigrant attitudes, one must appeal to the individual. Following from the discussion above, providing information concerning immigrants by which natives can relate to them or understand their culture and reasons for moving (e.g. informational programs or more integration of immigrants in public spheres) might be an important way to lower anti-immigrant attitudes.

There is only one variable significant at the regional level (interpersonal trust) versus four at the national. This may indicate that media or information present across nations may be more influential than local beliefs and problems concerning immigration. That is, unless one has a personal problem with immigrants or personally fears the effect they could have, national level factors associated with anti-immigrant attitudes are more significant than regional ones. From this perspective, having a left leaning party and being involved in foreign investment lowers anti-immigrant attitudes. The association between anti-immigrant attitudes and national level unemployment and GDP is less clear and necessitates further study.

It is noteworthy that certain aggregated variables that are significant at some levels and not others. That is, interpersonal trust (*societal integration explanation*) is significant at the regional variable but not national and the opposite is true for the left-right leaning political scale. It seems that, above and beyond personal trust, regional levels of trust can lead the individual to be more tolerant toward immigrants. That is, if

one lives in a region where people generally trust each other, they will be more likely to trust outsiders such as immigrants. The reason national level trust is not associated with anti-immigrant attitudes is that the nation may be too big of a unit of analysis to pick up on how trust directly affects an individual.

As far as left-right political leaning (*political affiliation explanation*), most individuals usually have strong opinions concerning the direction their nation should head, and this would include how they should deal with immigration. However, individuals may be less in touch with local government, as would be indicated by lower numbers of voters in local versus national elections. An alternative explanation is that policies concerning immigration in Europe are almost always decided at the national and not the regional level.

This study would have benefited from having complete data concerning certain variables such as number of foreigners or race/ethnicity. In addition, a wider array of regional and national level variables (e.g. racial composition) may have provided more complete explanations concerning how anti-immigrant attitudes vary and are affected by factors at these levels. Finally, having data from a wider array of countries, such as African or Asian countries would erase the Western nation bias that is present in the current results.

Future research is needed to examine how the relationship between the explanations presented in this paper and anti-immigrant attitudes vary on a regional or national level. That is, education may be more important in one country than another. This would further our knowledge of anti-immigrant attitudes. In addition, future research that examines the effectiveness of policies that influence individual anti-

immigrant attitudes in the ways proposed would be of interest (i.e. expanding information concerning immigrants). Finally, we propose that fear of immigrants is a primary reason many of the explanations presented in this paper are related to anti-immigrant attitudes. Further research that includes measures of fear of immigrants (i.e. are immigrants more likely to criminalize society?) would be helpful to clarify whether fear is the main reason people feel negatively toward immigrants.

This paper examines eight different explanations of anti-immigrant attitudes at the individual, regional, and national level that to date have not been analyzed in conjunction. Data from 50,000 individuals in the European Social Survey and 135 regions and 20 nations in Eurostat indicates that all three levels of analysis are important to understanding anti-immigrant attitudes. Six of the eight explanations contribute significantly to the understanding of anti-immigrant attitudes across Europe: societal integration, human capital theory, economic competition, political affiliation, neighborhood safety, and foreign investment. Cultural marginality and contact theory did not have a significant impact on anti-immigrant attitudes. Across explanation types, fear of the changes immigrants may have on individual lives or national and regional cultures was a prevalent reason for rising anti-immigrant attitudes. Future research should focus on country by country differences in explanations of anti-immigrant attitudes.

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Table 1. Standardized Coefficients and Variance Components Showing Effects Grouped by Explanation Type on Anti-Immigrant Attitudes

	Standardized Coefficients	(Individual) and Regional Variance Components [2]	National Level Variance Components [2]
Cultural Marginality Explanation			
Ind. Ever Been Discriminated Against (DISCRIM)	-.01	.11***	.11***
Human Capital Explanation			
Individual Education Level (EDUC)	-.17***		.01***
Political Affiliation Explanation			
Individual Interest in Politcs (POLINT)	-.14***	.01***	.01**
Individual Left/Right Political Leaning (LRPOL)	.10***	.01***	.01***
National Left/Right Political Leaning (NATLRPOL)[1]	.09***		
Societal Integration Explanation			
Individual Interpersonal Trust (TRUST)	-.23***	.01***	.01***
Regional Interpersonal Trust (REGTRUST)[1]	-.10*		.08*
Individual Lives with Family (LIVEFAM)	.01*	.03*	
Neighborhood Safety Explanation			
Individual Feel Safe After Dark (SAFE)	.10***	.01**	.01**
Contact Theory Explanation			
Regional Number of Immigrants (REG#IM)	not sig. ^		
National Number of Immigrants (NAT#IM)	not sig. ^		
Foreign Direct Investment Explanation			
National Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)	-.08**		
Economic Competition Explanation			
Ind. Been Unemployed in the last 5 yrs (UNP)	.02**	.06**	
Individual Income Per Capita (IPC)	-.03***		
Regional Unemployment Rate (REGUNP)	.02		
Regional Gross Domestic Product (REGGDP)	-.01		
National Unemployment Rate (NATUNP)	-.16***		
National Gross Domestic Product (NATGDP)	.06*		
Controls			
Gender	.01	.02*	.03***
Age	.08***	.01**	.01***
Rural Domicile	.06***	.07***	
Town Domicile	.01	.07**	
Round of Survey	.06***	.03***	.04***
Intercept	N/A	.02***	.10***

^ Data on Number of Immigrants at the National and Regional Level was missing for Belgium and Germany and preliminary result showed these variables did not significantly impact anti-immigrant attitudes. Consequently, the countries were kept in and the variables were deleted from the final model

1 These variables were created by aggregating the corresponding individual level measure.

2 Only Variance Components that were significant were included in the final model.

Table 2. Standardized Coefficients and Variance Components Showing Effects Grouped by Individual, Regional and National Level Explanations on Anti-Immigrant Attitudes

	Standardized Coefficients	(Individual) and Regional Variance Components [2]	National Level Variance Components [2]
Individual Level Variables			
Ever Been Discriminated Against (DISCRIM)	-.01	.11***	.11***
Education Level (EDUC)	-.17***		.01***
Interest in Politcs (POLINT)	-.14***	.01***	.01**
Left/Right Political Leaning (LRPOL)	.10***	.01***	.01***
Interpersonal Trust (TRUST)	-.23***	.01***	.01***
Lives with Family (LIVEFAM)	.01*	.03*	
Feel Safe After Dark (SAFE)	.10***	.01**	.01**
Been Unemployed in the last 5 yrs (UNP)	.02**	.06**	
Income Per Capita (IPC)	-.03***		
Controls			
Gender	.01	.02*	.03***
Age	.08***	.01**	.01***
Rural Domicile	.06***	.07***	
Town Domicile	.01	.07**	
Round of Survey	.06***	.03***	.04***
Regional Level Variables			
Regional Unemployment Rate (REGUNP)	.02		
Regional Gross Domestic Product (REGGDP)	-.01		
Regional Interpersonal Trust (REGTRUST)[1]	-.10*		.08*
Regional Number of Immigrants (REG#IM)	not sig. ^		
National Level Variables			
National Unemployment Rate (NATUNP)	-.16***		
National Gross Domestic Product (NATGDP)	.06*		
National Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)	-.08**		
National Left/Right Political Leaning (NATLRPOL)[1]	.09***		
National Number of Immigrants (NAT#IM)	not sig. ^		
Intercept	N/A	.02***	.10***
	Individual Level	**Regional Level**	**National Level**
Total Variance	2.86	0.46	.042

^ Data on Number of Immigrants at the National and Regional Level was missing for Belgium and Germany and preliminary result showed these variables did not significantly impact anti-immigrant attitudes. Consequently, the countries were kept in and the variables were deleted from the final model

1 These variables were created by aggregating the corresponding individual level measure.

2 Only Variance Components that were significant were included in the final model.