IARIW 2021
Monday 23 – Friday 27 August
Statistisk sentralbyrå
Statistics Norway

Disentangling Aporophobia from Xenophobia in Europe

Octasiano M. Valerio Mendoza

(Universitat Ramon Llull)

Flavio Comim

(Universitat Ramon Llull and University of Cambridge)

Mihály T. Borsi

(Universitat Ramon Llull)

Paper prepared for the 36th IARIW Virtual General Conference
August 23-27, 2021
Session 15: Recent Experiences in Both Official and Academic Approaches to Measuring Poverty
Time: Wednesday, August 25, 2021 [16:30-18:30 CEST]

Disentangling Aporophobia from Xenophobia in Europe

Octasiano M. Valerio Mendoza*[,a], Flavio Comim[a, b], and Mihály T. Borsi[a]

Abstract

This paper analyzes whether the human capital levels embodied in immigrants can explain xenophobic trends for 209 regions in 29 European countries from 1998 to 2018. During the previous decade, migration inflows into Western Europe have been associated with rising nationalism and sentiments of xenophobia. However, if rising xenophobia is directed towards poor migrants and not rich ones, then the rejection of migration itself could be misguided and masking the rejection of the poor. In other words, "aporophobia" might be misconceived as xenophobia. To this end, this study provides evidence of aporophobia in Europe using the European Labor Force Survey (EULFS), European Social Survey (ESS), Eurostat and OECD regional data. The preliminary results indicate that larger inflows of highly educated immigrants are significantly correlated with a lower rejection of migrants. These results suggest that xenophobic regions may, in fact, be rejecting only poor migrants and not rich ones. The rejection of the poor has been scarcely studied in economic literature, and not much is known about it. The findings in this paper bring light to the discussion of a powerful concept which underpins a more just society.

* Corresponding author. Email: octasiano.valerio@iqs.url.edu
[a] IQS School of Management, Universitat Ramon Llull, Spain
[b] Department of Land Economy and VHI, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

1 Introduction

The recent history of European demographics shows a consistent decrease in fertility rates from the late 1960s to mid-1990s combined with an increase in net migration from the mid-1980s onwards, turning immigration into the main determinant of population growth since the 1990s (European Commission, 2020). Future trends based on an ageing population suggest that the negative natural change in population will expand and that immigration should be a key element of the EU's future population decline or growth. Today around 5.1% of the European population (over 23 million people) consists of non-European citizens (Eurostat, 2021). But this change in demographic composition has not been smooth. During the last two decades, migration inflows into Western Europe have been associated with an increase in xenophobia (understood here as anti-immigrant feelings) and derived phenomena such as rising nationalism, changes in the public attitudes towards the welfare state and the size of the public sector and support for far-right policies (Messing and Ságvári, 2019). Tackling the issue of xenophobia seems relevant for promoting social cohesion, public safety, integration, talent attractiveness, social equality, religious and cultural rights, sound health and educational policies and economic prosperity in Europe.

But to what extent is xenophobia an expression of a rejection of foreigners *for being foreigners* or, instead, because they are poor? In fact, Cortina (2017) suggests that in the refugee crisis that unfolds in Europe since 2007, people are rejected not because they come from abroad or are from other races or ethnicities but mostly because they are poor and are perceived as undesirable to the receiving societies. Should this be the case, namely, that xenophobia is mostly directed towards poor migrants and not rich ones, then the diagnostic of 'pure xenophobia' could be misguided, masking what Cortina calls 'aporophobia' (rejection of the poor). This does not mean that xenophobia does not exist but that aporophobia needs to be acknowledged as a relevant form of discrimination.

This is a hypothesis that needs to be empirically examined, which is precisely what this paper aims to accomplish. Following recent evidence that shows how attitudes towards immigration depend on the characteristics of the immigrants and of the receiving societies (Murard, 2017; Moriconi, Peri and Turati, 2019), this paper investigates whether xenophobia is more directed towards low-skilled immigrants vis-à-vis high-skilled ones. For this purpose, it scrutinizes the European Labor Force Survey (EULFS), the European Social Survey (ESS), Eurostat, and OECD regional data for 209 European NUTS2 regions from 1998 to 2018 (21 years). The results indicate that larger proportions of highly educated immigrants are significantly correlated with a lower rejection of migrants and that more xenophobic regions may, in fact, be rejecting only poor migrants and not rich ones. Results are consistent after controlling for race and immigration from EU15 vs non-EU15 countries. The rejection

of the poor has been scarcely studied in economic literature, and not much is known about it. The findings in this paper bring light to the discussion of a powerful concept that underpins a more just society.

The remainder of this paper is organized into five parts. The next part examines the main mechanisms through which xenophobia could take place, introducing aporophobia as an alternative element to be explored. The third part presents the conceptual model to be estimated and the corresponding data to be analyzed. The fourth part evaluates the main results. The fifth part discusses its implications for the literature. Finally, the last part concludes with some suggestions for social and migratory policies in Europe.

2 From Xenophobia to Aporophobia

Xenophobia is a type of prejudice in which people are discriminated against for being foreigners. It is a category that is broader than simple negative feelings and attitudes towards immigrants because it can include prejudice towards people living in other countries. It can range from simple feelings of fear to attitudes of hostility, depending on the origins of particular forms of xenophobia (shaped by different senses of threat or superiority of one's nation-state over others). Having said that, the focus here is on xenophobia towards immigrants. In particular, in relation to negative views of immigrants that people might have. This means that we are not covering expressions related to behavior and actions towards immigrants. Moreover, the issue that we are addressing might just scratch the surface of the problem given that official statistics can only imperfectly register the presence of many migrants with irregular status who have little (if any) interest in unveiling their real identity to census-takers. But on what grounds can nationals discriminate against foreigners?

Immigrants can be made scapegoats of unfortunate social states of affairs such as political instability, unemployment, inflation, recession, violence, crime, lawlessness, terrorism, societal frustration, or any other type of social crisis that might be particular for individual countries or localities (Buck et al., 2008; Daly, 1996; Jolly and DiGiusto, 2013). This might happen either because people misconceive information about the immigrant population due to cognitive constraints or because they are stimulated to do so by political parties driven by electoral advantage (Grigorieff et al., 2020). In a complex world dominated by social media, people might cope with unfamiliar information by using heuristics such as a priori forms of validation or trusting information received from other people, which makes them more vulnerable to fake news (Rydgren, 2004). Xenophobia, like other forms of discrimination, can also transcend individual beliefs towards cultural transformations that may structurally shape segregated societies (Schelling, 1971). At the receiving end, immigrants can be

dehumanized and demonized, enduring violence, insults, low payment, fear, no voice, and undignified living conditions (Crush and Ramachandran, 2010).

There is no negative automatic link between immigration and xenophobia, quite the opposite. Earlier theories, such as Allport (1954), suggest that an increase in intergroup contact that could lead to the perception of common interests and shared humanity could, in fact, reduce prejudice towards immigrants (as well as towards other out-groups, as argued by Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006) or increase altruism (Bursztyn et al., 2021). However, evidence from this theory, named 'contact theory' or 'contact hypothesis', is far from being robust. Paluck et al. (2019) showed how different forms of prejudice, such as racial and ethnic, can be distinctly affected by contact given its idiosyncratic features. In addition, when discussing the causal impact of contact on non-prejudiced behavior, there are selection bias issues that should be considered (Bertrand and Duflo, 2017). One point normally ignored is that Allport (1954) predicted that contact would decrease prejudice provided that some conditions related to common goals, equal status between groups, intergroup cooperation and support of authorities would be fulfilled, which is not usually the case. When these conditions were not met, contact could strengthen xenophobia and other forms of prejudice.

For much of the literature, we find versions of what could be called the 'threat theory', originally defined by Quillian (1995). In its essence, it claims that regions with many immigrants generate a threat to local populations, in particular to those with lower incomes and lower levels of education. Quite often, the economic context is at the heart of the issue, and anti-immigrant attitudes of people are strongest in poor localities with a larger proportion of immigrants (Hjerm, 2009). The argument is that the poor, in particular, suffer from labor market competition, but in fact, opposition might rise provided that the immigrants' skills are similar to the skills of the natives (Moriconi et al., 2019). Competition can also happen at the level of welfare spending. Thus, if locals believe that immigrants exploit the welfare state and crowd out resources from the native poor, they might also feel threatened (Roemer and Van der Straeten, 2006). Similarly, the in-group might feel threatened in its political power or values, morals, and attitudes. In these cases, the conflict might occur between different worldviews (Stephan et al., 1999). Ultimately, in-groups may not accept that the out-groups might challenge the status-quo and the established social hierarchy (Pratto et al., 1994).

Xenophobia is a key element in what could be called 'political discrimination theory', according to which xenophobia is part of political currency used by politicians for political advantage. More specifically, xenophobia can be seen as a response to politicians' spread of hate-creating stories to politically relevant and socially isolated groups, and that might affect the balance of political power

(Alesina and Glaeser, 2004; Glaeser, 2005; Roemer and Van der Straeten; Crush and Ramachandran, 2010). Xenophobia becomes thus part of a hate-speech epidemic in which computer-mediated communication provides a psychological sense of anonymity and deindividuation that promotes radicalized and xenophobic speeches that are part of the political game (Bilewicz and Soral, 2020). Intergroup contact should not be restricted by face-to-face interactions between members of clearly defined groups, as originally put forward by Allport (1954) and Pettigrew and Tropp (2006).

We should not expect that the conditional factors of xenophobia will always be the same under different places or circumstances. Indeed, the evidence discussed by Daly (1996) shows how national circumstances shape xenophobia in Western Europe. It is interesting to mention how attitudes towards migrants prior to the 1970s varied from indifference to official tolerance. Yet, since the mid-1970s, countries have adopted harsher measures, including deportations and limitations of legal rights. Issues such as jobless levels, homelessness, quality of welfare systems, and budget cuts tend to influence the development of xenophobia in different European societies. This does not mean that we cannot look for common trends in different societies, only that we should not be surprised by their differences. For instance, racial discrimination might play a stronger role in shaping xenophobia in Germany, while homelessness might be more decisive in Ireland.

Keeping in mind the relevance of different mechanisms and particular distinct elements that might influence xenophobia in various European countries, it is essential to mention that some of them are more general than others. For instance, where law and order is weak, or violence levels (crimes) are higher, people might feel more susceptible to immigrants' potential threats. When the state of the economy is weak (recessions, unemployment, high inflation), natives can also feel more threatened. On the other hand, more educated people tend to have more positive attitudes towards immigrants, ceteris paribus. Females also tend to have more positive attitudes towards immigrants. Age is often negatively correlated with anti-immigrant feelings, but Beller (2020) has shown how one thing is xenophobia due to ageing processes, another is about the time period that xenophobia is verified, and the third different thing is to consider the relevance of birth cohort that refers to generational effects that affect in particular groups born within a specific time frame (people who share similar historical and social experiences). Xenophobia can also be related in a non-linear way with how people see the role of the public sector.

But what if people are rejected not simply because they have been born in a foreign country but because they are poor? Putting it simply, what if they are rejected not because they are immigrants but because they are poor immigrants? In this case, natives would be rejecting immigrants because

of their poverty and the impression that they have nothing to offer to them. As mentioned above, aporophobia is a neologism created by Cortina (2017) that comes from the union of two Greek words, 'aporos' (the poor) and 'phobia' (rejection, fear, aversion). It refers to a number of situations and circumstances in which the non-poor discriminate against the poor. Aporophobia has been recently added to the Dictionary of the Spanish language published by the Real Academia Española (Royal Spanish Academy), introduced into the Spanish Criminal Code, and included in statistics reports by the Ministry of the Interior of the Government of Spain. There is no other concept in the recent history of social and human sciences that has produced so much impact in such a short period of time in a country. However, this new term which acknowledges a widespread phenomenon of how a society treats its poor, is not limited to its country of conception. The key issue raised by Cortina is the narrowness of a contractualist view of society (understood as a social contract based on mutual advantage) in which those people who have nothing good to offer to society are discriminated against. This means that they cannot generate an expectation of reciprocation. As Honneth (1995) put it, this characterizes a problem of recognition. Often, the poor are not even recognized as creatures of need. Esquembre (2019) notes that aporophobia can be understood as an expression of a 'normative disruption' in this standard anthropology of reciprocity because there is a group of people that do not have any possibility of reciprocation.

Some forms of aporophobia, such as those influencing people's impressions and beliefs about the poor, might affect in subtler and more indirect ways the lives of the poor (through voting, political expressions in social media, etc.) whereas others, that arrive at the level of attitudes and actions can be manifested in hate speech and hate crimes and be more directly felt by the poor. Aporophobia is different from other forms of discrimination in the sense that it is not normally part of one's identity (in the same sense that racial discrimination or xenophobia could be). With rare exceptions, people do not choose to be poor. Through aporophobia, the non-poor would indulge into interpretations of their superiority that would send a calming message to them. In turbulent times aporophobia might fuel a narrative that the poor are the only ones responsible for their poverty and that, to a certain extent, they 'deserve' it.

Martínez (2002) argues that mediatic phenomena might give rise to a 'vicious circle of aporophobia' that starts with the underprivileged groups being accused of crimes, such as stealing, drug dealing, prostitution, etc. Later, these accounts create a perception that makes it much harder for the poor to be integrated into society, increasing the probability that some of them might consider doing an illegal activity in such a way that the original stereotype ends up being reinforced. On the other hand, Andrade (2008) remarks that the rejection of the poor *per se* is not a sociological novelty but that its

use as a critical analytical category for understanding the processes that generate poverty provides a refreshing perspective that might serve as a reminder for the non-poor about their responsibilities towards the poor.

The task of disentangling xenophobia from aporophobia is tantamount to the task of testing Cortina's hypothesis about the role of aporophobia in shaping xenophobia. In particular, if the ground issue is about the foreign poor being treated distinctly from the foreigner non-poor, we should consider reliable ways in which this can be achieved. Cortina (2017) compares rejected refugees with coveted tourists, and this seems sufficient as an illustration for the sake of her argument. However, strictly speaking, fleeing war or starvation cannot be compared to leisurely visiting a country. Nevertheless, if we wish to specifically compare how much individuals are rejected for being foreigners and for being rich or poor, we must consider them going through a similar situation, such as the situation of permanently migrating to a country. In an individual capacity, people basically differ for the different skills they can offer to the receiving country. It seems reasonable then to suggest that individuals can be distinguished between low-skilled and high-skilled individuals and that this categorization can be used to qualify individuals as non-poor and poor, respectively. If controlling for factors that affect xenophobia, such as income, unemployment, age, education level of the population, among others suggested by the literature, we find out that there are lower levels of xenophobia in places where the proportion of high-skilled migrants is higher vis-à-vis low-skill migrants, then this means that part of this xenophobia consists of aporophobia. This might have important policy implications, as explained later.

3 Methods and Data

Our empirical model is a random effects panel regression investigating the relationship between a region's xenophobia and its shares of high-skilled and low-skilled migrants. The baseline model described in Eq. 1 explores whether the level of an area's xenophobia is affected by the exposure of its citizens to the presence of immigrants, as suggested by contact theory.

$$Xe_{j,t} = \alpha + \beta_T Mig_{j,t}^{T} + \gamma_{j,t} + \eta_t + \varepsilon_{j,t} \quad (1)$$

The dependent variable is the xenophobia indicator for each region *j* and period t ($Xe_{j,t}$) while the exposure to migrants is proxied by the share of total migrants per region ($Mig_{j,t}^{T}$). $\gamma_{j,t}$ is a vector of control variables, including GDP per capita (in logs), unemployment, population, median age, and the share of tertiary-educated adults. η_t indicates the regional fixed effects. The paper tests whether

xenophobia is driven by the exposure to, or rejection, of all migrants or if it is mainly directed at poor migrants, as suggested by Cortina (2017) and Comim, Borsi and Valerio Mendoza (2020). "Rich" and "poor" migrants are proxied by the human capital embodied in these populations estimated in the following specification:

$$Xe_{j,t} = \alpha + \beta_H Mig^H_{j,t} + \beta_L Mig^L_{j,t} + \gamma_{j,t} + \eta_t + \varepsilon_{j,t} \quad (2)$$

where the two explanatory variables of interest are immigrants with tertiary education ($Mig^H_{j,t}$) and those with secondary education or less ($Mig^L_{j,t}$).

Table 1: Attitudes towards immigrants in ESS

Questions	Min	Max
(1) Immigrants make country worse or better place to live	0 = Worse place to live	10 = Better place to live
(2) Immigration bad or good for country's economy	0 = Bad for economy	10 = Good for economy
(3) Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants	0 = Undermined	10 = Enriched
(4) Allow many/few immigrants of same race/ethnic group as majority	1= Allow Many	4 = Allow None
(5) Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority	1= Allow Many	4 = Allow None
(6) Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe	1= Allow Many	4 = Allow None

Source: ESS (2002-2018).

To test these hypotheses, this paper draws on four different datasets to create an unbalanced panel for 209 NUTS2 regions in 29 European countries from 1998 to 2018.[1] First, data on xenophobia is collected from the European Social Survey (ESS), which includes nine biennial waves from 2002 to 2018 for over 30 European countries.[2] Specifically, each wave contains the six questions regarding attitudes towards immigrants listed in Table 1. The first three asked respondents whether immigrants contribute towards their country, economy, and culture positively or negatively, measured on a scale of 0 to 10: 10 representing the most positive impression from immigrants. The last three questions are aimed at discerning differences in the types of immigrants that respondents are willing to accept. Specifically, those of the same or different race/ethnic group as the majority in

[1] Austria (AT), Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), Switzerland (CH), Cyprus (CY), Czech Republic (CZ), Germany (DE), Denmark (DK), Estonia (EE), Spain (ES), Finland (FI), Greece (GR), Hungary (HU), Ireland (IE), Iceland (IS), Italy (IT), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Latvia (LV), Netherlands (NL), Norway (NO), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Sweden (SE), Slovenia (SI), Slovakia (SK), and United Kingdom (UK).

[2] Each wave contains a random sample of approximately 1500 individuals that is representative of the population over 18 in each country.

the local country and those from poorer countries outside of Europe. These range from 1 to 4, 4 indicating complete rejection. For each of these questions, the average value is calculated for each region following Eq. 3:

$$Xe_{j,t}^{M} = \frac{\sum M_{i,t}^{j}}{N_{j,t}} \tag{3}$$

where $Xe_{j,t}^{M}$ is the xenophobia (M= Questions 1-6) for region j at year t, calculated as the aggregate M for all individuals i in region j divided by $N_{j,t}$, the sample population for each region and year. [3]

Data for immigrants is taken from the yearly European Labor Force Surveys (EULFS) from 1998 to 2018.[4] Migrants can be identified via three variables "Country of birth", "Nationality", "Years of Residence". The country of birth and nationality are classified into four groups: "National/Native of the country", "EU15", Non-EU15", and "Non-National / Non-Native (in case the distinction EU/Non-EU is not possible)".[5] Whenever country of birth is missing, "Years of Residence" identifies whether they are "Born in this country" or "Number of years of residence in this country". Therefore, migrants are first identified by country of birth if they were not born in their country of residence.[6] Migrants can further be divided into two subgroups, (1) those born in EU15 countries and (2) those born outside the EU15. Furthermore, for each migrant, the EULFS provides information on their highest educational attainment level, which is aggregated into the following four groups: "Low (Lower secondary)", "Medium (Upper secondary), "High (Tertiary)", and "Not applicable (child less than 15 years old)". This paper considers migrants to be high-skilled if they have tertiary educational attainment, while those with lower or upper secondary attainment levels are considered low-skilled.

[3] In addition to the average values, the estimations were also done using alternative dependent variables, including the share of respondents to answer the most negative value (0 and 4 on the 0-10 and 1-4 scales, respectively), and negative ranges (0-4 and 3-4 on the 0-10 and 1-4 scales, respectively). The results by and large remain unchanged.

[4] The EULFS contains large representative samples for each country of several tens of thousands of observations per country per year.

[5] "Country of birth" and "Nationality" in the anonymized microdata is provided in up to 15 country groups for reference years from 2004 onwards. Data from 2004-2018 are aggregated to match the previous years' groupings.

[6] Migrants identified by nationality instead of country of birth are also calculated and used in robustness estimates in the Appendix.

Table 2: Migrants by birth country (Total, High-skill, and Low-skill) in the European Labor Force Surveys 1998-2018

	Total sample	Migrants	High-skilled (HS)	Low-skilled (LS)	LS:HS Ratio
AT	2,997,642	368,464	67,605	280,506	4.15
BE	1,569,708	213,431	52,279	144,443	2.76
BG	634,261	1,805	650	1,068	1.64
CH	987,204	352,369	111,768	238,647	2.14
CY	637,336	107,380	33,596	65,834	1.96
CZ	1,989,978	46,027	6,289	38,249	6.08
DE	6,093,356	804,772	148,145	604,946	4.08
DK	1,814,155	121,864	28,077	53,962	1.92
EE	379,848	41,157	12,969	25,493	1.97
ES	3,294,653	160,554	34,544	107,450	3.11
FI	994,254	28,965	6,757	19,865	2.94
GR	4,333,853	247,838	32,101	200,899	6.26
HU	4,376,382	66,885	13,204	44,943	3.40
IE	3,559,646	416,996	135,528	187,533	1.38
IS	191,786	14,911	4,420	9,966	2.25
IT	10,237,729	654,509	67,485	540,433	8.01
LT	899,789	40,279	10,757	28,596	2.66
LU	540,059	172,712	47,506	102,745	2.16
LV	483,052	61,432	10,077	38,859	3.86
NL	2,158,383	154,950	33,962	105,199	3.10
NO	494,373	42,782	14,438	27,089	1.88
PL	4,339,856	41,991	6,567	32,690	4.98
PT	2,654,590	141,635	30,032	102,168	3.40
RO	3,416,507	2,295	763	1,205	1.58
SE	3,259,385	464,002	144,804	310,340	2.14
SI	999,880	79,757	10,735	66,546	6.20
SK	1,485,223	11,925	2,400	9,099	3.79
UK	2,372,944	222,582	57,872	97,986	1.69
Total	55,292,496	3,868,726	918,656	2,562,983	2.79

Source: Authors' calculations using the EULFS (1998-2018).

Table 2 summarizes the number of observations in the EULFS by country (Total Sample), indicating the number of migrants by country of birth (Migrants), followed by the number of high- (HS) and low-skilled (LS) migrants. The table shows that the large majority of countries have three times more low-skilled migrants than high-skilled migrants. However, this ratio varies across countries; for instance, at the extremes, Italy has close to eight times more low-skilled than Ireland, which has only 50% more low-skilled. The shares of migrants are calculated for each NUTS2 region using the following equation:

$$Mig_{j,t}^{s} = \frac{Stock_{j,t}^{s}}{N_{j,t}} \quad (4)$$

where $Mig_{j,t}^{s}$ is the share of immigrants by skill level s (total, high-skilled and low-skilled) in each region j and year t, measured as the total stock of migrants $Stock_{j,t}^{s}$ divided by the sample population for each region and year, $N_{j,t}$. Control variables are obtained from Eurostat and OECD Regional Statistics for each region, including GDP per capita (constant 2015 USD PPP), unemployment rates, population, median age, and the share of the population with tertiary educational attainment.

The descriptive statistics for the final unbalanced panel are presented in Table 3. The table indicates that the mean average xenophobia for all six questions is roughly neutral at around 5 and 2.5 for the scales of 0-10 and 1-4, respectively. However, the regional variations are quite large, as some regions are near the positive and negative extremes. For example, Epirus, Greece, had the lowest average values (highest xenophobia) of 1.58 and 1.92 for 'immigrants make the country worse' and 'are bad for the economy', respectively, in 2010. Central Greece had the lowest value for immigrants undermine the culture (1.98), also in 2010. Algarve, Portugal had the highest rejection of same-race immigrants in 2006 (3.31); Western Transdanubia in Hungary had the highest rejection of different-race immigrants in 2016 (3.58); and Southern Transdanubia, also Hungary, had the highest rejection of immigrants from poorer countries outside of Europe also in 2016 (3.75). Regarding shares of migrants, a few regions in Poland, Romania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Latvia had few to zero migrants during some years, while the highest shares of total, EU15, and Non-EU15 migrants were in the Lake Geneva Region, Switzerland (2009), Ticino, Switzerland (2007), and London, UK (2016), respectively. The largest shares of total, EU15, and Non-EU15 high-skilled were in the Lake Geneva Region (2018), Zurich, Switzerland (2018), and London (2016). The highest rates of total, EU15, and Non-EU15 low-skilled migrants were in Ticino (2007), Ticino (2004), and Brussels, Belgium (2013).

A *prima facie* analysis based on these aggregate data would suggest that there is no evidence of aporophobia in how Europeans consider the immigrants, given that the mean value of 2.50 for the variable "allow immigrants from poorer countries" indicates a certain neutrality of natives towards poverty. A similar interpretation would apply regarding the variable "allow immigrants from different race", although there is a slight difference in relation to immigrants from the same race. Nevertheless, being an immigrant from a poor country is not the same as being a poor immigrant. For this reason, it is important that we scrutinize these data beyond these averages.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Xenophobia					
Immigrants make country better/worse (Average)	1379	4.95	0.87	1.58	7.43
Immigrants good/bad for economy (Average)	1379	5.00	0.84	1.92	7.14
Immigrants enrich/undermine culture (Average)	1379	5.61	0.99	1.99	8.00
Allow immigrants from same race (Average)	1379	2.17	0.32	1.23	3.31
Allow immigrants from different race (Average)	1379	2.45	0.37	1.57	3.58
Allow immigrants from poorer countries (Average)	1379	2.50	0.38	1.63	3.75
Migrants					
Total migrants (%)	3853	0.07	0.08	0.00	0.48
High-skilled migrants (%)	3839	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.19
Low-skilled migrants (%)	3839	0.05	0.05	0.00	0.37
Total EU15 migrants (%)	3853	0.02	0.04	0.00	0.34
High-skilled EU15 migrants (%)	3839	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.12
Low-skilled EU15 migrants (%)	3839	0.01	0.03	0.00	0.28
Total Non-EU15 migrants (%)	3853	0.04	0.05	0.00	0.32
High-skilled Non-EU15 migrants (%)	3839	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.13
Low-skilled Non-EU15 migrants (%)	3839	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.23
Regional controls					
GDP per capita (constant 2015 USD PPP)	3592	25,151.92	13,059.51	3,400.00	85,053.00
Unemployment rate (%)	3668	9.49	5.90	1.30	37.30
Population (100,000)	3833	23.03	25.98	0.25	181.00
Median age	3843	40.50	3.31	30.30	50.70
Tertiary Educational Attainment	3539	24.75	10.07	5.20	58.40

Source: Authors' calculations using ESS (2002-2018), EULFS (1998-2018), Eurostat and OECD Regional Statistics.

4 Empirical Results

The results for the baseline estimates using Eq. 1 (odd columns) and Eq. 2 (even columns) are presented in Table 4. The table is ordered by rows for the alternative xenophobia variables (see table 1) and the different explanatory migrant variables by columns. Column 1 indicates that for every type of xenophobia indicator, xenophobia is lower in areas that have larger shares of migrants, confirming that contact with, or exposure to, immigrants reduces xenophobic feelings (Allport, 1954; Jolly & DiGiusto, 2013). The results are similar for EU15 migrants (Column 3) and Non-EU15 migrants (Column 5). Nevertheless, once the skills of the migrants are taken into account, shown in Columns 2, 4, and 6, the effect is only significant for high-skilled migrants and not for low-skilled, confirming the aporophobia hypothesis (Cortina, 2017; Comim, Borsi and Valerio Mendoza, 2020). These results indicate that xenophobic sentiments are lower in areas with higher shares of college-educated immigrants, which suggests that the European regions reject poorer migrants but not those rich in human capital.

Table 4: Estimates for xenophobia and migrants by country of birth and skill level.

	(1) All Migrants	(2) All Migrants	(3) EU15 Migrants	(4) EU15 Migrants	(5) Non-EU15 Migrants	(6) Non-EU15 Migrants
Immigrants make country worse or better place to live						
Migrants	2.1838***		4.0130***		1.2406	
High Skill		9.4335***		8.3002*		13.0950***
Low Skill		-0.3979		2.1983		-2.3009
Obs.	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205
Adj. R2	0.2088	0.1956	0.1963	0.1959	0.1930	0.1918
Immigration bad or good for country's economy						
Migrants	3.2554***		5.0676***		2.9134***	
High Skill		12.5086***		11.4813**		17.3575***
Low Skill		-0.1371		2.4137		-1.3747
Obs.	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205
Adj. R2	0.1755	0.1750	0.1629	0.1677	0.1381	0.1410
Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants						
Migrants	2.9435***		5.8312***		0.3156	
High Skill		6.8666***		3.0069		7.9970**
Low Skill		1.4770		7.3416***		-2.0676
Obs.	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205
Adj. R2	0.1341	0.1265	0.1089	0.1157	0.0944	0.0924
Allow many/few immigrants of same race/ethnic group as majority						
Migrants	-1.3238***		-1.4965***		-0.9802***	
High Skill		-3.4919***		-4.5440***		-4.8626**
Low Skill		-0.5340		-0.1128		0.1143
Obs.	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205
Adj. R2	0.1826	0.1684	0.1290	0.1293	0.1417	0.1362
Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority						
Migrants	-1.6254***		-1.8962***		-1.4361***	
High Skill		-5.9039***		-6.2127***		-8.0802***
Low Skill		-0.0972		0.0509		0.4903
Obs.	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205
Adj. R2	0.1270	0.0970	0.0970	0.0879	0.1146	0.1049
Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe						
Migrants	-1.5704***		-1.8612***		-1.2788***	
High Skill		-5.0815***		-5.3474**		-6.4193***
Low Skill		-0.3533		-0.2792		0.1499
Obs.	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205
Adj. R2	0.0728	0.0556	0.0535	0.0473	0.0607	0.0553
NUTS2 Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
NUTS2 FE	No	No	No	No	No	No

Notes: ***, **, and * indicate significance at 1%, 5%, and 10% confidence levels, respectively. NUTS2 controls include the logarithm if GDP per capita, the unemployment rate, the population, the median age, and the share of tertiary educated individuals.

Source: Authors' calculations using ESS (2002-2018), EULFS (1998-2018), Eurostat and OECD Regional Statistics.

The estimates further suggest that individuals in regions with higher shares of skilled migrants are more likely to believe that immigrants make the country a better place to live. However, when considering the migrants' place of origin, these results seem to be driven by Non-EU15 high skilled migrants and not those from EU15. Moreover, the magnitude of the coefficients for "Immigration bad or good for country's economy" indicates that first, only high-skilled migrants are valued. Second, those from outside the EU15 are valued even more than those from within. These results further suggest that the residents of these regions value the reciprocal benefits that the high-skilled migrants, especially from more diverse origins, bring to their countries and economies, as suggested by Cortina (2017). On the other hand, it implies that the perceived xenophobia is directed at those who cannot contribute to improving the country or economy. Regarding contributions to culture, it seems residents appreciate high-skilled migrants from outside the EU15 and low-skilled migrants from within the EU15. These results might be due to the peculiarity of each region, whereby low-skilled labor from neighboring countries might be associated with their corresponding diasporas and respective cultures, cuisines, arts, religions, traditions, etc.

The lower three sections refer to the rejection of migrants. In all three cases, high-skilled migrant shares are associated with lower rejection. The distinction between immigrants of the same race/ethnic group and those of different race/ethnic groups suggest that the rejection of foreigners is not driven by racism. Instead, high-skilled migrants from another race/ethnic group than the majority are associated with lower levels of rejection, especially those from outside of the EU15. However, the final rows reveal that the residents in the sample are more accepting of immigrants of a different race than those from poorer countries. Yet, the acceptance seems aimed at high-skilled immigrants from poorer countries outside of Europe and not the unskilled.

Table 5 includes the estimates with regional dummies for the NUTS2 regions. It reveals that after controlling for the NUTS2 fixed effects, the significance for the total shares of migrants diminishes, while the magnitude of the influence of high-skilled migrants increases. For instance, only the total shares of migrants from EU15 countries are significantly correlated with "immigrants making the country a better place to live". Nevertheless, the estimates for shares of high-skilled migrants are all significant at a 1% confidence level, with coefficients larger than the previous Table. Regarding the economy, only the total percentage of migrants from Non-EU15 countries is associated with more positive outcomes. Furthermore, after controlling for the regional effects, it seems that mainly high-skilled immigrants from Non-EU15 countries are linked to perceptions that they are good for the economy. As previously suggested, the results for culture were likely influenced by the particularities of each region since the results are no longer significant for almost all the estimates.

Table 5: Estimates for xenophobia and migrants by country of birth and skill level with NUTS2 fixed effects.

	(1) All Migrants	(2) All Migrants	(3) EU15 Migrants	(4) EU15 Migrants	(5) Non-EU15 Migrants	(6) Non-EU15 Migrants
Immigrants make country worse or better place to live						
Migrants	1.4486		4.9039**		1.1130	
High Skill		12.1714***		12.7858**		14.8211***
Low Skill		-1.1947		0.9310		-2.5623
Obs.	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205
Adj. R2	0.7762	0.7802	0.7763	0.7770	0.7761	0.7797
Immigration bad or good for country's economy						
Migrants	1.5444		2.9457		2.4002**	
High Skill		12.8527***		7.9553		17.4981***
Low Skill		-1.2463		0.7431		-1.6471
Obs.	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205
Adj. R2	0.7377	0.7424	0.7373	0.7376	0.7394	0.7441
Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants						
Migrants	0.7509		3.6854		-0.1199	
High Skill		6.7238**		4.4290		7.1413*
Low Skill		-0.9174		2.9005		-2.2310
Obs.	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205
Adj. R2	0.7847	0.7857	0.7849	0.7848	0.7846	0.7854
Allow many/few immigrants of same race/ethnic group as majority						
Migrants	-1.1957*		-4.0441***		-1.1723**	
High Skill		-7.0827***		-8.7350***		-7.9249***
Low Skill		0.2172		-1.7884		0.5916
Obs.	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205
Adj. R2	0.6615	0.6706	0.6621	0.6637	0.6626	0.6693
Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority						
Migrants	-1.7861**		-4.8809***		-1.6375***	
High Skill		-9.5106***		-11.1128***		-10.4752***
Low Skill		0.0488		-2.0871		0.6554
Obs.	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205
Adj. R2	0.7401	0.7516	0.7392	0.7414	0.7411	0.7496
Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe						
Migrants	-1.6194***		-3.4914***		-1.4229***	
High Skill		-7.6440***		-8.4367**		-7.8497***
Low Skill		-0.1989		-1.0489		0.1883
Obs.	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205
Adj. R2	0.7600	0.7668	0.7583	0.7595	0.7605	0.7650
NUTS2 Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
NUTS2 FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: ***, **, and * indicate significance at 1%, 5%, and 10% confidence levels, respectively. NUTS2 controls include the log of GDP per capita, unemployment rate, population, median age, and the share of individuals with tertiary education.

Source: Authors' calculations using ESS (2002-2018), EULFS (1998-2018), Eurostat and OECD Regional Statistics.

Table 6:Estimates for xenophobia and migrants by nationality and skill level with NUTS2 fixed effects.

	(1) All Migrants	(2) All Migrants	(3) EU15 Migrants	(4) EU15 Migrants	(5) Non-EU15 Migrants	(6) Non-EU15 Migrants
Immigrants make country worse or better place to live						
Migrants	0.6470		4.8473**		0.5777	
High Skill		12.0809***		11.6332**		14.7870***
Low Skill		-1.1146		2.2235		-2.6055
Obs.	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205
Adj. R2	0.7758	0.7802	0.7766	0.7772	0.7758	0.7798
Immigration bad or good for country's economy						
Migrants	0.5465		2.7300		1.6889	
High Skill		12.7070***		6.9022		17.6359***
Low Skill		-1.2938		1.7250		-1.8109
Obs.	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205
Adj. R2	0.7372	0.7424	0.7374	0.7377	0.7383	0.7442
Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants						
Migrants	0.4066		3.3853*		-0.3001	
High Skill		6.5112**		3.9035		7.0619*
Low Skill		-0.7918		3.3294		-2.2280
Obs.	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205
Adj. R2	0.7846	0.7856	0.7849	0.7849	0.7846	0.7854
Allow many/few immigrants of same race/ethnic group as majority						
Migrants	-0.7400		-3.4512***		-0.8663*	
High Skill		-6.9775***		-7.5077***		-7.8670***
Low Skill		0.2288		-1.9312*		0.6363
Obs.		1205	1205	1205	1205	1205
Adj. R2		0.6704	0.6622	0.6638	0.6611	0.6691
Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority						
Migrants	-1.1404*		-4.0517***		-1.2382**	
High Skill		-9.4343***		-9.8440***		-10.4104***
Low Skill		0.1114		-1.9718		0.6981
Obs.	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205
Adj. R2	0.7378	0.7515	0.7391	0.7415	0.7391	0.7494
Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe						
Migrants	-1.0037*		-2.7900***		-1.0573**	
High Skill		-7.5837***		-7.5380**		-7.8176***
Low Skill		-0.0929		-1.0554		0.2544
Obs.	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205
Adj. R2	0.7581	0.7666	0.7581	0.7596	0.7589	0.7647
NUTS2 Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
NUTS2 FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: ***, **, and * indicate significance at 1%, 5%, and 10% confidence levels, respectively. NUTS2 controls include the logarithm if GDP per capita, the unemployment rate, the population, the median age, and the share of tertiary educated individuals.

Source: Authors' calculations using ESS (2002-2018), EULFS (1998-2018), Eurostat and OECD Regional Statistics.

On the other hand, the NUTS2 fixed effects have magnified the coefficients for the three sets of estimates for the rejection of immigrants. As a result, the estimates supporting contact theory (odd columns) are not all significant, while those confirming aporophobia (even columns) are all significant and with larger coefficients than the previous table. Moreover, the estimates for high-skilled from different race/ethnic groups are larger than those from the same race/ethnic group and those from poorer countries outside of Europe. However, the coefficients for high-skilled EU15 are larger than Non-EU15. Aporophobia in this sense can be inferred here in two ways: first, the preference/acceptance of immigrants from same/different race is higher than that for poorer countries; second, once again, only high-skilled migrants are linked to lower rejection, and not low-skilled.

Evidence from the main controls used in this analysis corroborates much of what has been already put forward by the literature, namely, that regions with higher unemployment display higher levels of xenophobia (as advocated by the threat theory) and that the higher the education level of natives, the lower are the levels of xenophobia (see Table A1). On the other hand, the evidence about the impact of age on xenophobia did not confirm the usual hypothesis that anti-immigrant feelings grow with age. Similarly, regions with higher economic growth tend to be more xenophobic. Whereas the results relative to age can be easily explained by Beller (2020)'s argument that birth cohorts and time periods might influence the simple linear impact of ageing on xenophobia, it is harder to consider why higher economic growth would be correlated with more xenophobia. One possible explanation could be the impact of growth on the attraction of certain unskilled immigrants. Faster growth rates may produce a greater demand for services and unskilled labor. Therefore, regions with higher growth may have more opportunities and thus experience a larger inflow of unskilled immigrants. Furthermore, less-developed areas tend to grow faster and have higher stocks of low-skilled and low-educated people. Another explanation is related to the financial crisis, which is part of our sample. Regions that suffered the most during the crisis exhibited the highest growth rates after. Consequently, regions with high unemployment due to the financial crisis before their recovery growth could have larger xenophobic sentiments, as argued by threat theory. All these results were consistent over all categories employed here (for all migrants, EU15 migrants and Non-EU15 migrants).

Since xenophobic people may not distinguish migrants by where they were born, but instead use visual cues (how they dress or if they look different) or auditory cues (if they speak a foreign language) to direct their xenophobia, the specifications are recalculated by using the nationality of the individuals. Individuals who keep a different nationality than that of their birth country may

exhibit visual and auditory cues that trigger xenophobia. Table 6 reports the estimates for migrants identified by nationality instead of birth. The results, which also include the NUTS2 fixed effects, are mostly consistent with Table 5. Almost all the estimates for high-skilled migrants are significant at a 1% confidence level, further corroborating the aporophobia hypothesis. An important caveat is that all the estimates for Non-EU15 are larger than those for EU15, yet again suggesting that high-skilled migrants are more accepted regardless of race or nationality. Perhaps the existing xenophobia is actually reserved towards those foreigners with lower levels of human capital, and thus, who are unable to reciprocate or contribute towards the prosperity of their host country.

Finally, in order to better apprehend whether the link between the skill of migrants and the perceived xenophobia extends beyond correlation, the models are re-estimated using one- and two-year-lagged explanatory variables, presented in Tables 7 and 8. Using lags is a standard approach in establishing unidirectionality while controlling for reverse causation and in line with the understanding that the causes for xenophobia are seldom instantaneous and cannot be captured in the same time periods. The use of lagged values of explanatory variables also addresses some concerns of endogeneity. However, the choice of lags varies throughout the literature and is often arbitrary or based on rules of thumb. Furthermore, using only one lag can lead to omitted-variable bias if others are also important, and using too many lags can cause overfitting. Therefore, it is of interest to explore the effects of the previous two years' migrant shares (total and by skill level) on the attitudes towards immigrants.[7] The results continue to reinforce the aporophobia hypothesis, whereby the perceived contribution of immigrants to the host country and economy are significantly more positive in areas that have higher shares of high-skilled migrants in the previous years. Similarly, regardless of their origin, the rejection of immigrants is significantly and negatively associated with shares of college-educated migrants in the previous years. Furthermore, the size of the effects appears heightened over time.

[7] Estimates using three- and four-year lags are presented in the Appendix.

Table 7: Estimates for xenophobia and one-year-lagged shares of migrants by birth and skill level with NUTS2 fixed effects.

	(1) All Migrants	(2) All Migrants	(3) EU15 Migrants	(4) EU15 Migrants	(5) Non-EU15 Migrants	(6) Non-EU15 Migrants
Immigrants make country worse or better place to live						
Migrants	1.4895		7.3716***		1.4866	
High Skill		13.2047***		23.6310***		13.1356**
Low Skill		-1.4157		-0.2125		-1.7159
Obs.	1174	1174	1174	1174	1174	1174
Adj. R2	0.7799	0.7844	0.7811	0.7835	0.7802	0.7827
Immigration bad or good for country's economy						
Migrants	0.4239		7.4411***		2.4196**	
High Skill		15.5546***		22.4071***		18.8050***
Low Skill		-2.9344		1.1827		-1.9514
Obs.	1174	1174	1174	1174	1174	1174
Adj. R2	0.7302	0.7377	0.7321	0.7343	0.7325	0.7382
Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants						
Migrants	0.9736		3.3882		0.2584	
High Skill		5.4401		10.9177*		2.7338
Low Skill		-0.1682		-0.2350		-0.4874
Obs.	1174	1174	1174	1174	1174	1174
Adj. R2	0.7842	0.7847	0.7843	0.7847	0.7841	0.7841
Allow many/few immigrants of same race/ethnic group as majority						
Migrants	-1.0724*		-3.6742***		-1.1900***	
High Skill		-5.5576***		-9.5488***		-5.3226**
Low Skill		0.0305		-0.7316		-0.0952
Obs.	1174	1174	1174	1174	1174	1174
Adj. R2	0.6648	0.6698	0.6658	0.6679	0.6665	0.6691
Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority						
Migrants	-1.5014**		-4.6347***		-1.6704***	
High Skill		-8.2673***		-13.3016***		-8.0301***
Low Skill		0.2314		-0.5005		0.0610
Obs.	1174	1174	1174	1174	1174	1174
Adj. R2	0.7480	0.7561	0.7486	0.7520	0.7504	0.7546
Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe						
Migrants	-1.1903*		-4.0380***		-1.3495***	
High Skill		-7.6093***		-12.7867***		-6.8832***
Low Skill		0.4400		0.4103		0.1350
Obs.	1174	1174	1174	1174	1174	1174
Adj. R2	0.7625	0.7694	0.7633	0.7667	0.7641	0.7672
NUTS2 Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
NUTS2 FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: ***, **, and * indicate significance at 1%, 5%, and 10% confidence levels, respectively. NUTS2 controls include the logarithm if GDP per capita, the unemployment rate, the population, the median age, and the share of tertiary educated individuals.

Source: Authors' calculations using ESS (2002-2018), EULFS (1998-2018), Eurostat and OECD Regional Statistics.

Table 8: Estimates for xenophobia and two-year-lagged shares of migrants by birth and skill level with NUTS2 fixed effects.

	(1) All Migrants	(2) All Migrants	(3) EU15 Migrants	(4) EU15 Migrants	(5) Non-EU15 Migrants	(6) Non-EU15 Migrants
Immigrants make country worse or better place to live						
Migrants	1.2948		6.6711***		2.0323	
High Skill		15.4982***		24.6673***		17.0104***
Low Skill		-1.6577		-0.6516		-1.9930
Obs.	1168	1168	1168	1168	1168	1168
Adj. R2	0.7779	0.7839	0.7790	0.7814	0.7787	0.7829
Immigration bad or good for country's economy						
Migrants	-0.6626		6.3238***		1.1126	
High Skill		18.3874***		23.0296**		24.5414***
Low Skill		-4.3240*		-0.0257		-5.1195*
Obs.	1168	1168	1168	1168	1168	1168
Adj. R2	0.7150	0.7252	0.7162	0.7186	0.7152	0.7260
Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants						
Migrants	0.0272		1.8181		0.1981	
High Skill		7.4723**		11.8563*		6.4896
Low Skill		-1.5717		-2.7301		-1.6097
Obs.	1168	1168	1168	1168	1168	1168
Adj. R2	0.7856	0.7868	0.7857	0.7863	0.7856	0.7862
Allow many/few immigrants of same race/ethnic group as majority						
Migrants	-0.8093		-1.9752**		-0.9233*	
High Skill		-7.2876***		-9.8843***		-7.0383***
Low Skill		0.7117		1.8102		0.8020
Obs.	1168	1168	1168	1168	1168	1168
Adj. R2	0.6667	0.6759	0.6665	0.6699	0.6674	0.6724
Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority						
Migrants	-1.0945		-3.6819***		-1.4821**	
High Skill		-10.3350***		-14.5839***		-11.0763***
Low Skill		1.0678		1.2645		1.2009
Obs.	1168	1168	1168	1168	1168	1168
Adj. R2	0.7502	0.7636	0.7510	0.7555	0.7520	0.7610
Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe						
Migrants	-0.7747		-3.1991***		-0.8975*	
High Skill		-9.0418***		-13.6485***		-9.1020***
Low Skill		1.0940		1.4060		1.3841
Obs.	1168	1168	1168	1168	1168	1168
Adj. R2	0.7656	0.7758	0.7666	0.7706	0.7660	0.7724
NUTS2 Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
NUTS2 FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: ***, **, and * indicate significance at 1%, 5%, and 10% confidence levels, respectively. NUTS2 controls include the logarithm if GDP per capita, the unemployment rate, the population, the median age, and the share of tertiary educated individuals.

Source: Authors' calculations using ESS (2002-2018), EULFS (1998-2018), Eurostat and OECD Regional Statistics.

5 Discussion

The evidence analyzed by this paper adds complexity to previous analyses of xenophobia discussed in the introductory section. First, going straight to the main point: we cannot assume that the links between immigration and xenophobia can be assessed independently from aporophobic considerations. This happens because prejudice towards some immigrants seems to be strongly affected by how they are perceived to contribute to society, given their skill attributes. Indeed, native's views on immigration depend not only on the kind of immigrants that people have in mind (and their respective skills) but also on the kind of contribution (e.g., economic) that they expect from them. It is here that aporophobia plays an important role in shaping native's imagination and expectations about the desirability of immigration.

It suggests that generalized views about immigration ('all migrants' category) are not all statistically significant. We have to talk about certain groups of immigrants (such as EU15 or nonEU15 immigrants) to find out relevant results. Indeed, people's views on immigration depend on the kind of immigrants they have in mind. In particular, it seems that aporophobia (rejection of the poor) plays an important role in shaping people's views about the desirability of immigration. It appears that overall desirability (materialized in the concept of 'making a country a better place to live') is strongly influenced by economic advantage, reinforcing a contractualist view of society on the lines described by Rawls (1971) and Cortina (2017). This means that immigrants are rejected whenever they are considered 'not useful' to society. That is why European regions with higher shares of skilled migrants are more likely to have natives who believe these migrants make the country a better place to live.

Aporophobia might have many causes and might be influenced by different factors (Comim, Borsi and Valerio, 2020). There is no scope in this paper to tackle the aporophobia causality issue, but it is worth mentioning that a certain utilitarian culture (Sen, 2009; Nussbaum, 2006) might be behind this contractualist view of society according to which if someone does not contribute to its progress is not fully considered and respected in their humanity (including their human needs). As a result, immigrants that are not considered useful to society are dehumanized and rejected, not because they come from abroad or are foreigners *qua* foreigners, but mostly because they seem to free ride on social advantages without contributing to their provision.

The origin of the immigrants seems immaterial when the main issue is the benefit at stake. Rather, it appears that the most favorable beliefs come when natives consider the economic benefit from non-EU15 migrants. If mutual advantage is all that matters, both Allport (1954) and Quillian (1995)

theories might be accounting for only part of this phenomenon because they depend on the degree of aporophobia related to different types of immigrants. As much as 'contact' and 'threat' matter, they cannot distinguish between xenophobia and aporophobia. In its turn, the existence of aporophobia implies that foreigners are rejected not because they are foreigners but because they are poor and, as such, are not conceived useful to the economy or society at large. This is not about threat but about stigma, prejudice and stereotypes related to aporophobia. This reality might not be unknown to the native poor. Together they reinforce 'political discrimination' and inequality aggravating negative views of natives about people living in poverty.

This does not mean that xenophobia does not exist in its purest form, where immigrants are rejected only for the fact of being foreigners. Rather, it highlights how prejudices are sometimes composed of different elements and might be influenced by distinct circumstances and idiosyncratic elements. By finding evidence that corroborates Cortina's hypothesis, we emphasize the importance of delving into the phenomena of aporophobia that so far has been largely ignored by the literature. The implications for how societies organize their welfare states, fiscal policies, development planning should not be overlooked.

6 Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to empirically examine whether xenophobia in Europe is mostly directed towards poor migrants and not rich ones, as suggested by the aporophobia hypothesis. It created a unique unbalanced panel for 209 European NUTS2 regions during a period of 21 years, drawing from the European Labor Force Survey (EULFS), the European Social Survey (ESS), Eurostat, and OECD regional data. Xenophobia was measured using six different indicators, while the level of educational attainment was used to distinguish between rich and poor migrants. The results indicate that larger percentages of college-educated immigrants are significantly linked with a lower rejection of migrants, suggesting that xenophobia in European regions may be directed only at poor migrants and not rich ones.

The findings in this paper provide new empirical evidence to corroborate the existence of aporophobia. Previous research on aporophobia has been mainly conceptual and philosophical (Adela, 2017; Martinez, 2002; Esquembre, 2019; Comim, Borsi and Valerio Mendoza, 2020). The evidence provided here confirms one of the hypotheses proposed by Cortina (2017), which argues that xenophobia in Europe is directed mainly at poor migrants. It is a step forward in the operationalization and quantification of aporophobia. It also contributes to the body of research on xenophobia by looking at the characteristics of the people who are stereotyped, stigmatized, and

discriminated against vis-à-vis those who reject them. Furthermore, it adds to the emerging group of studies that examine how the skill levels of immigrants affect their host societies (Murard, 2017; Moriconi, Peri and Turati, 2019).

The policy implications emerging from these results are straightforward. First, they provide clarity for European policies aimed at attracting high-skilled labor from outside of Europe. They also highlight the importance of recent efforts by the European Commission to promote "Skills and Talents" programs that assist the Member States in meeting their labor migration needs (European Commission, 2020). On the other hand, they can potentially shed light on the challenge associated with the immigration of low-skilled individuals to regions where some of the structural conditions, such as unemployment and lower education level of natives, might not be favorable. Furthermore, policies aimed at attracting seasonal migrants, incorporating asylum seekers and irregular migrants, such as from human trafficking, may need to be accompanied by skills upgrading programs to ensure better social cohesion and integration in their host regions. Nevertheless, it also raises the question of whether the rejection of the poor in Europe is directed only at foreigners or whether the European native poor are also suffering similar rejection.

Indeed, a proper acknowledgement of aporophobia as a key source of stigmatization and discrimination is important not only for the discussion of themes related to xenophobia but also for widespread forms of discrimination such as racism, homophobia, among others. It is remarkable how aporophobia has been so far ignored in contemporary societies when the poor seem to suffer the highest burden of all kinds of discrimination. This is relevant not only at an individual level but also at a societal level, given that people's beliefs and attitudes shape nations' social choices (Arrow, 1963). Further research can focus on disentangling aporophobia from other sources of discrimination. This is important for developing and implementing specific anti-discrimination policies aimed at reducing particular forms of stigma and stereotypes.

References

Alesina, A. and Glaeser, E. (2004) Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: a world of difference. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Andrade, M. (2008) "¿Qué es la 'aporofobia'? Un análisis conceptual sobre prejuicios, estereotipos y discriminación hacia los pobres". Agenda Social. Revista do PPGPS/UENF. Campos dos Goytacazes, v.2, n. 3, pp. 117-139.

Arrow, K. (1963) Social Choice and Individual Values. Yale: Yale University Press. 2nd edition.

Bazzi, S., Gaduh, A., Rothenberg, A. And Wong, M. (2019) "Unit in diversity? How intergroup contact can Foster nation building." American Economic Review, vol. 109, n 11, pp. 3978-4025.

Beller, J. (2020) "Xenophobia trends in Germany: increasing negative attitude towards foreigners in younger birth cohorts". The Social Science Journal. https://doi.org/10.1080/03623319.2020.1735855

Bertrand, M. and Duflo, E. (2017) "Field experiments on discrimination". In: Handbook of Economic Field Experiments, vol. 1. Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing. pp. 309-393.

Bilewicz, M. and Soral, W. (2020) "Hate speech epidemic. The dynamic effects of derogatory language on intergroup relations and political radicalization". Advances in Political Psychology, vol. 41, suppl.1, pp. 3-33.

Buchowski, M. (2017) "A new tide of racism, xenophobia, and islamophobia in Europe: Polish anthropologists swim against the current". American Anthropologist, vol. 119, n. 3, pp. 519-523.

Buck, B., Hobbs, M., Kaiser, A., Lang, S., Montero, D., Romines, K. and Scott, T. (2008) "Immigration and Immigrants: trends in American public opinion, 1964-1999". Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work, vol. 12, n. 3, pp. 73-90.

Bursztyn, L., Chaney, T., Hassan, T. and Rao, A. (2021) "The immigrant next door: exposure, prejudice, and altruism". NBER Working paper 28448, DOI 10.3386/w28448

Comim, F., Borsi, M. T., and Valerio Mendoza, O. (2020) "The Multi-dimensions of Aporophobia". MPRA Paper 103124. https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/103124/1/MPRA_paper_103124.pdf

Cortina Orts, A. (2017). Aporofobia, el rechazo al pobre. Un desafío para la democracia. Barcelona, Paidós.

Cozzarelli, C., Wilkinson, A. and Tagler, M. (2001) "Attitudes toward the poor and attributions for poverty". Journal of Social Issues, vol. 57, n. 2, pp. 207-227.

Crush, J. and Ramachandran, S. (2010) "Xenophobia, International Migration and Development". Journal of Human Development and Capabilities, vol. 11, n. 2, pp. 209-228.

Daly, G. (1996). Migrants and gate keepers: The links between immigration and homelessness in Western Europe, Cities, Volume 13, Issue 1, 1996, Pages 11-23, ISSN 0264-2751, https://doi.org/10.1016/0264-2751(95)00110-7.

Esquembre, C. (2019) "La Aporofobia como desafío antropológico. De la lógica de la cooperación a la lógica del reconocimiento." Daimon. Revista Internacional de Filosofia, n. 77, pp. 215-224.

European Commission (2020) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the regions. On a New Pact on Migration an Asylum. Brussels, 23/09/2020 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:85ff8b4f-ff13-11ea-b44f-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC_3&format=PDF

Eurostat (2021) Migration and Migrant Population Statistics. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics

Glaeser, E. (2005) "The political economy of hatred". The Quarterly Journal of Economics, vol. 120, n. 1, pp. 45-86.

Grigorieff, A., Roth, C. And Ubfal, D. (2020) "Does Information change attitudes toward immigrants?" Demography, vol. 57, pp. 1117-1143.

Hjerm, M. (2009) "Anti-immigrant attitudes and cross-municipal variation in the proportion of immigrants". Acta Sociologica, vol. 52, n.1, pp. 47-62.

Honneth, A. (1995) The Struggle for Recognition. The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Jolly, S. & DiGiusto, G. (2014). Xenophobia and immigrant contact: French public attitudes toward immigration, The Social Science Journal, Volume 51, Issue 3, 2014, Pages 464-473, ISSN 0362-3319, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soscij.2013.09.018

Martínez Navarro, E. (2002). "Aporofobia", en Conill, J. (coord.). Glosario para una sociedad intercultural. Valencia: Bancaja.

Messing, V. and Ságvári, B. (2019). Still divided but more open: Mapping European attitudes towards migration before and after the migration crisis. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung: Budapest.

Moriconi, S., Peri, G. & Turati, R. (2019). "Immigration and voting for redistribution: evidence from European elections". Labour Economics, vol. 61, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2019.101765

Murard, E., 2017. Less Welfare or Fewer Foreigners? Immigrant Inflows and Public Opinion Towards Redistribution and Migration Policy. IZA DP No. 10805.

Paluck, E., Green, S. and Green, D. (2019) "The contact hypothesis re-evaluated". Behavioural Public Policy, vol. 3, n. 2, pp. 129-158.

Pettigrew, T. and Tropp, L. (2006) "A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory", Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, vol. 90, n. 5, pp. 751-783.

Pratto, F., Sidanius, J., Stallworth, L. and Malle, B. (1994) "Social dominance orientation: a personality variable predicting social and political attitudes". Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, vol. 67, pp. 741-763.

Roemer, J. and Van der Straeten, K. (2006) "The political economy of xenophobia and distribution: the case of Denmark". Scandinavian Journal of Economics, vol. 108, n. 2, pp. 251-277.

Roemer, J. and Van der Straeten, K. (2005) "Xenophobia and the size of the public sector in France: a politico-economic analysis". Journal of Economics, vol. 86, n 2, pp. 95-144.

Rydgren, J. (2004) "The Logic of Xenophobia". Rationality and Society, vol. 16, n. 2, pp. 123-148.

Schelling, T. (1971) "Dynamic Models of Segregation". Journal of Mathematical Sociology, vol. 1, pp. 143-186-

Stephan, W., Ybarr, O. and Bachman, G. (1999) "Prejudice toward immigrants: an integrated threat theory". Journal of Applied Social Psychology, vol. 29, pp. 2221-2237.

Yakushko, O. (2009) "Xenophobia: understanding the roots and consequences of negative attitudes toward immigrants". The Counseling Psychologist, vol. 37, n. 1, pp. 36-66.

Appendix

Table A1: Estimates for NUTS2 Controls from Table 5

	(1) All Migrants	(2) All Migrants	(3) EU15 Migrants	(4) EU15 Migrants	(5) Non-EU15 Migrants	(6) Non-EU15 Migrants
Immigrants make country worse or better place to live						
Log_gdp	-0.8236**	-0.6807**	-0.8393**	-0.7967**	-0.8525**	-0.7401**
Unemployment	-0.0238***	-0.0193***	-0.0236***	-0.0230***	-0.0236***	-0.0187***
Population	0.0000***	0.0000	0.0000***	0.0000***	0.0000***	0.0000
Median age	0.0370	0.0487*	0.0391	0.0429	0.0388	0.0533*
Tertiary edu.	0.0208**	0.0059	0.0219***	0.0176*	0.0215**	0.0088
Immigration bad or good for country's economy						
Log_gdp	-0.9994***	-0.8487***	-1.0131***	-0.9874***	-1.0518***	-0.9277***
Unemployment	-0.0681***	-0.0633***	-0.0676***	-0.0673***	-0.0685***	-0.0631***
Population	0.0000**	0.0000	0.0000***	0.0000***	0.0000**	0.0000
Median age	0.0460*	0.0583**	0.0491*	0.0514*	0.0455*	0.0616**
Tertiary edu.	0.0202**	0.0045	0.0219**	0.0192**	0.0195**	0.0054
Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants						
Log_gdp	-1.2475***	-1.1667***	-1.2572***	-1.2502***	-1.2502***	-1.1874***
Unemployment	-0.0086	-0.0059	-0.0086	-0.0084	-0.0081	-0.0054
Population	0.0000**	0.0000*	0.0000***	0.0000***	0.0000***	0.0000**
Median age	0.0242	0.0313	0.0248	0.0254	0.0265	0.0345
Tertiary edu.	0.0127	0.0044	0.0130	0.0126	0.0140	0.0072
Allow many/few immigrants of same race/ethnic group as majority						
Log_gdp	0.4925***	0.4145***	0.5054***	0.4801***	0.5208***	0.4662***
Unemployment	0.0058*	0.0033	0.0056*	0.0052*	0.0058*	0.0034
Population	0.0000	0.0000	-0.0000	-0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Median age	-0.0484***	-0.0546***	-0.0501***	-0.0523***	-0.0493***	-0.0565***
Tertiary edu.	-0.0021	0.0060	-0.0031	-0.0005	-0.0024	0.0038
Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority						
Log_gdp	0.6394***	0.5373***	0.6572***	0.6245***	0.6797***	0.6086***
Unemployment	0.0069**	0.0036	0.0065*	0.0060*	0.0068**	0.0036
Population	-0.0000	0.0000	-0.0000	-0.0000	-0.0000	0.0000
Median age	-0.0359***	-0.0440***	-0.0389***	-0.0417***	-0.0375***	-0.0469***
Tertiary edu.	-0.0037	0.0069	-0.0053	-0.0020	-0.0043	0.0039
Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe						
Log_gdp	0.6221***	0.5427***	0.6370***	0.6103***	0.6576***	0.6069***
Unemployment	0.0083***	0.0057*	0.0078**	0.0074**	0.0081***	0.0059*
Population	-0.0000	0.0000	-0.0000	-0.0000	-0.0000	0.0000
Median age	-0.0353***	-0.0415***	-0.0384***	-0.0407***	-0.0369***	-0.0435***
Tertiary edu.	-0.0011	0.0072	-0.0027	-0.0000	-0.0017	0.0043

Notes: ***, **, and * indicate significance at 1%, 5%, and 10% confidence levels, respectively. NUTS2 controls include the log of GDP per capita, unemployment rate, population, median age, and the share of individuals with tertiary education.

Source: Authors' calculations using ESS (2002-2018), EULFS (1998-2018), Eurostat and OECD Regional Statistics.

Table A2: Estimates for xenophobia and three-year-lagged shares of migrants by skill level and NUTS2 fixed effects.

	(1) All Migrants	(2) All Migrants	(3) EU15 Migrants	(4) EU15 Migrants	(5) Non-EU15 Migrants	(6) Non-EU15 Migrants
Immigrants make country worse or better place to live						
Migrants	1.3590		6.9006***		2.5610**	
High Skill		14.8881***		25.7833***		16.6390***
Low Skill		-2.0698		-1.0313		-1.5560
Obs.	1029	1029	1029	1029	1029	1029
Adj. R2	0.7993	0.8042	0.8004	0.8028	0.8006	0.8036
Immigration bad or good for country's economy						
Migrants	-0.5599		8.8693***		1.6535	
High Skill		17.9198***		27.9569***		22.8774***
Low Skill		-4.4805**		1.3728		-3.8936
Obs.	1029	1029	1029	1029	1029	1029
Adj. R2	0.7493	0.7582	0.7522	0.7550	0.7501	0.7580
Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants						
Migrants	-0.1374		3.4572*		0.8478	
High Skill		10.6461**		13.7047***		11.8389*
Low Skill		-2.6375		-0.6528		-2.2898
Obs.	1029	1029	1029	1029	1029	1029
Adj. R2	0.8106	0.8129	0.8109	0.8115	0.8108	0.8123
Allow many/few immigrants of same race/ethnic group as majority						
Migrants	0.0831		-1.7549**		-0.4032	
High Skill		-6.3726***		-8.8555***		-7.3755***
Low Skill		1.8165**		1.6612		1.6849*
Obs.	1029	1029	1029	1029	1029	1029
Adj. R2	0.6885	0.6964	0.6893	0.6916	0.6889	0.6945
Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority						
Migrants	-0.7641		-3.3859***		-1.3137**	
High Skill		-8.6436***		-12.9234***		-9.6141***
Low Skill		1.4099		1.1275		1.1446
Obs.	1029	1029	1029	1029	1029	1029
Adj. R2	0.7700	0.7788	0.7714	0.7743	0.7717	0.7773
Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe						
Migrants	-1.0058		-3.4244***		-1.2287**	
High Skill		-6.8465***		-11.6455***		-6.5620**
Low Skill		0.6619		0.6471		0.3908
Obs.	1029	1029	1029	1029	1029	1029
Adj. R2	0.7885	0.7930	0.7893	0.7912	0.7893	0.7913
NUTS2 Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
NUTS2 FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: ***, **, and * indicate significance at 1%, 5%, and 10% confidence levels, respectively. NUTS2 controls include the logarithm if GDP per capita, the unemployment rate, the population, the median age, and the share of tertiary educated individuals.

Source: Authors' calculations using ESS (2002-2018), EULFS (1998-2018), Eurostat and OECD Regional Statistics.

Table A3: Estimates for xenophobia and four-year-lagged shares of migrants by skill level and NUTS2 fixed effects.

	(1) All Migrants	(2) All Migrants	(3) EU15 Migrants	(4) EU15 Migrants	(5) Non-EU15 Migrants	(6) Non-EU15 Migrants
Immigrants make country worse or better place to live						
Migrants	0.6420		9.0407***		2.9992***	
High Skill		19.3727***		32.0909***		19.8792***
Low Skill		-3.6269*		0.1079		-1.8258
Obs.	1017	1017	1017	1017	1017	1017
Adj. R2	0.7988	0.8066	0.8014	0.8044	0.8012	0.8055
Immigration bad or good for country's economy						
Migrants	-1.2681		7.9770***		2.0749	
High Skill		21.8445***		26.2856***		26.7515***
Low Skill		-5.8441***		1.2505		-4.3875*
Obs.	1017	1017	1017	1017	1017	1017
Adj. R2	0.7472	0.7587	0.7491	0.7513	0.7481	0.7585
Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants						
Migrants	0.9326		6.6976***		2.1750*	
High Skill		13.3936**		14.8867*		12.0975**
Low Skill		-2.0655		3.6133		-0.7745
Obs.	1017	1017	1017	1017	1017	1017
Adj. R2	0.8049	0.8077	0.8060	0.8063	0.8058	0.8069
Allow many/few immigrants of same race/ethnic group as majority						
Migrants	0.1697		-1.6759*		-0.4459	
High Skill		-6.5728***		-8.4526***		-6.1357**
Low Skill		1.8788**		1.5463		1.3102
Obs.	1017	1017	1017	1017	1017	1017
Adj. R2	0.6932	0.7006	0.6938	0.6954	0.6935	0.6971
Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority						
Migrants	-0.7668		-3.7358***		-1.5334**	
High Skill		-9.4383***		-15.3158***		-8.9970**
Low Skill		1.3741		1.4421		0.6496
Obs.	1017	1017	1017	1017	1017	1017
Adj. R2	0.7736	0.7826	0.7754	0.7788	0.7763	0.7805
Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe						
Migrants	-0.9657		-3.4990***		-1.3690**	
High Skill		-9.1422***		-15.1665***		-7.9664**
Low Skill		1.1209		1.9580		0.5958
Obs.	1017	1017	1017	1017	1017	1017
Adj. R2	0.7931	0.8007	0.7941	0.7973	0.7946	0.7977
NUTS2 Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
NUTS2 FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: ***, **, and * indicate significance at 1%, 5%, and 10% confidence levels, respectively. NUTS2 controls include the logarithm if GDP per capita, the unemployment rate, the population, the median age, and the share of tertiary educated individuals.

Source: Authors' calculations using ESS (2002-2018), EULFS (1998-2018), Eurostat and OECD Regional Statistics.