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Integration policies and public opinion: in conflict or in harmony?

Marie-Sophie **CALLENS** ^{1,2}

¹ LISER, Luxembourg

² University of Leuven, Belgium

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Integration policies and public opinion: in conflict or in harmony?

Marie-Sophie Callens¹

Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (LISER) & University of
Leuven

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Abstract

This paper investigates the statistical relationship between integration policies and public opinion toward immigrants. Overall, the eighteen reviewed studies indicate that integration policies are strongly associated with the general public's level of perceived threat from immigrants and, perhaps, to their level of anti-immigrant attitudes. Inclusive policies can be said to reduce the level of perceived threat while exclusionary policies tend to reinforce perceptions of threat. Since most studies could not establish a causal link, further research is needed to corroborate the impact of integration policies on public opinion.

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¹ Contact details: Marie-Sophie Callens, LISER, 3, Avenue de la Fonte, L-4634 Esch-sur-Alzette, marie-sophie.callens@liser.lu

1. Introduction

In recent decades, Europe has become de facto a continent of immigration. These demographic changes have come with intergroup tensions and apparently more negative public opinion on immigration and immigrants (Coenders, Lubbers & Scheepers 2003; Semyonov, Raijman & Gorodzeisky 2006). Social issues arising from this diversity are hotly debated in the public discourse in Europe (Ceobanu & Escandell 2010). In the academic world as well, a lot of attention has been given to the analysis of public opinion on immigrants. Different research fields have taken an interest in the topic, such as sociologists, social psychologists, political scientists and, to a lesser extent, economists. Each research stream has tried to explain this phenomenon. Even if these theories were developed far from each other, similar findings have been published (Ceobanu & Escandell 2010). Extensive literature and empirical studies can be found on the determinants of negative attitudes toward immigrants (for an overview see Ceobanu & Escandell 2010; Hainmueller & Hopkins 2014).

While the literature is rapidly growing, the field is still confronted with inconclusive results and question marks about the relationship between public opinion and contextual factors. Recently, several authors have claimed that the literature has focused too much on individual- and group-level measures of economic threat and competition for resources (Ceobanu & Escandell 2010; Hainmueller & Hopkins 2014). One new direction in the field is the investigation of the relationship between public opinion and integration policies, which has been theorised by several authors (Bourhis, Moise & Perrault 1997; Favell 2001). Research on the topic and especially comparative research remains scarce (Schlueter, Meuleman & Davidov 2013), mainly due to the lack of quantitative measures available on integration policies in different countries. Since its publication in 2004, the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) has become the most frequently used index of integration policies for empirical comparative research.

In this paper, I review published articles and working papers on the statistical relationship between public opinion toward immigrants and integration policies, with a strong focus on research using MIPEX. Especially from a policy point of view, it is very relevant to see whether integration policies and public opinion are in harmony or in conflict and whether Integration policies impact on the public opinion or vice versa. I start with a short overview of the relevant literature on public opinion and the theories on the relation between public opinion and integration policies. In the second part of the paper, I assess the existing empirical evidence investigating this relationship.

2. Public opinion: theoretical framework

2.1. Public opinion as an umbrella term

Attitudes and public opinion research is a relative new field of research that grew exponentially with the development of greater multi-country survey data, together with the advancement of statistical programmes for hierarchical data. This increased empirical research has led to rather consistent findings; immigration is a greater topic of concern for the public, and attitudes toward immigration and immigrants are becoming more negative (Ceobanu & Escandell 2010).

Public opinion on immigrants is an umbrella term that is used interchangeably for general or public attitudes toward immigrants (Ceobanu & Escandell 2010; Fetzer 2000), anti-immigrants feelings, prejudice toward immigrants (Stephan, Ybarra & Bachman 1999a) and attitudes toward outgroups. The term public opinion can thus have very different meanings, often depending on the items available in cross-cultural surveys. This leads not only to a theoretical problem, but also to a comparability problem (Ceobanu & Escandell 2010). So far, few efforts have been made to unify the field and come up with a clear definition.

Distinction has to be made between opinion on immigration and opinion on immigrants as they develop differently. The literature mostly focuses on immigrants as they draw upon the racial prejudice literature (Ceobanu & Escandell 2010). The items used in surveys are often more general by referring to evaluations of immigration policies or the consequences of migration for the receiving society. It is crucially important to see how this more generic term is operationalised in empirical studies.

2.2. Out-group attitudes and intergroup threat

The literature on public opinion toward immigrants draws upon several fields of study. The ethnic competition theory (Scheepers, Gijsberts & Coenders 2002), together with the intergroup threat theory (Stephan & Stephan 1996), is the most complete theoretical framework. It is also necessary to distinguish between individual-level theories and group-level theories (Ceobanu & Escandell 2010). As perceived threat is a main predictor and proxy of negative out-group attitudes, this paper's theoretical overview on public opinion includes both perceived threat perceptions and out-group attitudes.

2.2.1. *Ethnic competition theory*

This first theoretical framework combines two different streams: the Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RGCT) and the Social Identity Theory (Scheepers, Gijsberts & Coenders 2002). **RGCT** provides a broad framework to investigate relations between majority and minority groups and negative attitudes toward the out-groups. For a long time, prejudice was only explained through individual characteristics or social psychological theories based on intergroup relations (Jackson 1993; Quillian 1995). Blumer (1958) extended the existing framework by recognising the importance of the group perspective, thanks to his group position theory of prejudice (Blumer 1958; Bobo 1999). Blumer claims that individuals form group positions through a collective process. When people of subordinate groups threaten claims that are believed to be only for the majority group, prejudice will develop because the group position is questioned and threatened. The threat or challenges posed to the group and its position in society are equally important, as the threats posed to the self-interest of the individual (Blalock 1967 in Meuleman 2011). Group conflicts can furthermore be seen as composed of two parts, one part with objective

processes, such as competition between individual members of different groups, changes in the position of the group within the society, and another part with the subjective feeling of threat posed by out-group members toward individual and group interests.

The **Social Identity Theory** has its origins in early research by Tajfel (Hogg, Abrams, Otten & Hinkle 2004). Contrary to RGCT, the conflict according to this theory does not come from material resources, but from a positive group identity and self-esteem. This theory considers that people are members of a social group, which provides them with an identification of themselves in social terms a social identity (Tajfel & Turner 1979). This means that the individual's self-image derives from the social groups to which he/she belongs. Furthermore, social groups have positive or negative value connotations which are based on the comparison with relevant out-groups. The in-group should be positively different from these out-groups in order to have positive connotations. Since an individual seeks to have a positive social identity, the in-group to which he/she belongs should have positive connotations. When this is not the case, the individual will either leave the group or try to make the in-group more positively distinct by achieving superiority over another out-group on certain dimensions. The latter leads to competition between different groups (Tajfel & Turner 1979).

Ethnic Composition Theory combines both RGCT and Social Identity Theory. According to Tajfel & Turner (1979), social identity theory complements RGCT, since the latter did not pay much attention to the development and maintenance of the group identity. The core of Ethnic Composition Theory is that competition, both at the individual and contextual level, will lead to stronger social (contra) identification and, consequently, to negative attitudes toward out-groups (Scheepers et al. 2002). At the contextual or group level, competition is seen as actual macro-social conditions. Whereas at the individual level, this competition is related to the social position of the individual within the majority group and the perceived threat of competition that this individual experiences. These threat perceptions are assumed to mediate the relation between the social position of the individual and negative out-group attitudes.

Nevertheless, **contact theory** is not taken into account by ethnic competition theory. The observation that contact with out-group members reduces prejudice was first put forward by Allport in his intergroup contact theory (Allport 1982; Pettigrew & Tropp 2006). In contrast, ethnic competition theory claims that the size of the minority group increases the level of perceived threat and negative attitudes toward out-groups (Meuleman 2011; Seymonov et al. 2006; Quillian 1995). On the contrary, contact theory argues that large groups of immigrants raise opportunities for inter-group contact and, consequently, lead to decreased perceived threat and prejudice (Dixon 2006; Schneider 2008). Meuleman (2011) argues that the two theories do not contradict, but rather complement, each other on different levels; the ethnic competition theory works more on the abstract level, while contact theory can counter negative attitudes more at the interpersonal level. This was also found in the study of Wagner and colleagues (2006), where the effect of large immigrants groups had a direct, negative effect on prejudice, but this negative effect became smaller when people had more contact with immigrants.

2.2.2. Intergroup threat

Intergroup threat has been found to be a causal predictor of anti-immigrant feelings (Riek, Mania & Gaertner 2006; Schlueter, Schmidt & Wagner 2008). It is important to distinguish between group- and individual-level threats (Rosenstein 2008). Group-level threats refer to threats that concern the receiving society as a whole, whereas individual-level threats focus on how particular individuals experience and view the situation. Another distinction has to be made between perceived and actual threat. Actual

competition is the objective figures and facts of intergroup competition whereas perceived competition deals with the perception of the members of the different groups on the objective competition (Blalock 1967 in Meuleman 2011). Actual competition has an indirect effect, via perceived competition and threat, on negative attitudes vis-à-vis the minority group. It seems that perceived threats plays a bigger role in influencing attitudes than objective threats (Bobo 1983; Stephan et al. 2005; Rosenstein 2008). People form an opinion, even if they are not directly confronted with the actual threat (Bobo 1983). Perceived threat is thus the most used and slightly more correct measure for gaining real understanding about negative attitudes toward out-groups.

2.3. Public opinion and integration policies

Only recently have researchers started to pay attention to the link between public opinion and integration policies, even if this link has been hypothesised for some time (Bourhis, Moise & Perrault 1997; Favell 2001). While various attempts were made,² most studies lack an extensive and comparable dataset on integration policies across a significant number of countries. The appearance of the MIPEX database has allowed for comparisons between countries in a systematic way on a wide range of integration policies, which produced the first empirical and comparative studies investigating this nexus between integration policies and public opinion across countries (Jakobs & Herman 2009; Schlueter, Meuleman & Davidov 2013). Furthermore, looking at this nexus, researchers are moving away from the critiqued exclusive focus on self-interest and economic variables.

Whenever disentangling the relationship between public opinion and policies, the obvious question is one of causality. Does public opinion primarily shape the integration policies? Or do policies primarily change the attitudes of people? This relationship can be defined as dialectic, with effects going in both directions (Jakobs & Herman 2009; Meuleman and Reeskens 2008).

On the one hand, one can argue that policymakers are influenced by the public opinion climate in their country. Lahav (2004) claims that there is a great coherence between public opinion and policymakers and that the latter take into account the general opinion in the field of immigrant integration. Howard (2010) on the other hand argues that public opinion has an impact on the restrictiveness of integration policies, however this will only be the case if the public opinion is activated by far right parties. Freeman (1995) disagrees with these arguments, as he observes that immigration policies remain liberal, despite an increasingly negative public opinion and rise of anti-immigrant parties, because policies are initiated by elites and not by the general public, with the exception of Switzerland's popular referendum model. He therefore argues that public opinion has very minor influence on the creation of integration policies, since these are mainly initiated by pro-migration elites, such as employer's organisations, immigrant associations, human rights organisations, etc. Both Bloemraad & Wright (2014) and Koopmans and colleagues (2012) find that over a period of respectively ten and thirty years more European countries have liberalised or maintained their policies than have restricted them, despite the rise of anti-immigrant attitudes and far-right parties. Other scholars have explained this trend by the fact that policies are path dependent (Koopmans 2012; Koopmans et al. 2013) and that citizenship reforms increase the number of immigrant voters as a counter-balance to the far-right electorate, both of which seem to be far more influential on policy development than public opinion (Ferwerda 2015).

² For an overview on civic and integration policy indices, please refer to the overview study of Helbling (2013).

On the other hand, policymakers and institutions can influence public opinion in their country. Weldon (2006) hypothesises that institutions shape the political discourse about who is a legitimate member of the nation state. Thus tolerance of ethnic minorities is influenced by the dominant ethnic tradition that is then institutionalised through immigrant laws and policies (Schlueter et al. 2013). Building on this theoretical framework, Schlueter and colleagues (2013) postulated two contrasting theories. First of all, integration policies legalize the access of resources for immigrants and symbolic values. According to group threat theory, members of the majority group will feel threatened when these integration policies are rather inclusive. This will increase competition and lead to more threat and negative out-group attitudes. Alternatively, one can follow the normative theory of intergroup relations that states that intergroup norms shape the majority's attitudes toward migrants (Bourhis et al. 1997). Therefore, more inclusive integration policies will be followed by more positive out-group feelings (Schlueter et al. 2013).

Overall, current theory seems to hypothesize that the causality runs from integration policies to public opinion. Only one study to my knowledge has tried to disentangle the causality. Using bivariate autoregressive cross-lagged panel analysis on the country level, Schlueter and colleagues (2013) found that integration policies at one period changed the perceptions of group threat at a second period. No evidence was found for the reverse hypothesis that prior perceived group threat determines subsequent immigrant integration policies. Still, further research is needed to confirm these findings.

3. Methodology

3.1. Overview of literature study

This section briefly discusses the studies included in the literature review. As outlined in the theoretical overview, two different but closely related concepts are used for public opinion: perceived threat and general attitudes toward immigrants. Some studies are also used to broaden the definition of public opinion in order to investigate the relationship with integration policies.

Eighteen studies in total were identified through their use of integration policy indexes, including MIPEX, as an operationalisation for integration policies for their empirical research on public opinion. The full list of the reviewed studies along with some basic information is provided in the appendix. Fourteen are peer-reviewed journal articles, one is a peer-reviewed book article and three are working papers. Most use the European Social Survey (ESS) (ten studies), followed by the Eurobarometer (four studies), European Values Study (EVS) (two studies) and then other datasets, such as International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) (one study), the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) (one study) and the SOM database (one study). The details of the operationalisation of each dependent variable are given in a footnote to provide an understanding of the study's concept of public opinion.

3.2. How do studies operationalise integration policies when studying public opinion?

The MIPEX is used in the most varied ways as a variable in the reviewed studies. Researchers can use just one particular policy area of the MIPEX, namely Labour Market Mobility; Family Reunion; Education (since 2010); Political Participation; Long Term Residence; Acces to Nationality and Anti-Discrimination. Instead, most studies use the overall MIPEX score by averaging the ratings from the six or seven policy areas and thus obtain one score for each country.

A third way is to create a typology of integration regime based on MIPEX. Reeskens (2010) argues that the aggregated scores on the different strands do not really show which countries are homogenous in their integration policies. He applies instead cluster analysis (using Ward as estimation method) on 111 indicators (29 indicators had missing data) of the MIPEX data of 2007 to distinguish between an open policy regime and a restrictive policy regime.³ A second example is Meuleman & Reeskens' (2008) attempt to validate three ideal-typical regimes,⁴ leading to the result that integration policies seem rather different in practice than what was identified in the literature.⁵

4. Findings

The main section discusses the results of studies using a dependent variable for public opinion (perceived threat and general attitudes toward immigrants) and a set of integration policy indicators as

³ Open policy regimes: Belgium, Portugal, Sweden, Great-Britain, Ireland, Finland, Germany, Norway, Spain, the Netherlands, Switzerland and France. Restrictive policy regimes: Austria, Cyprus, Greece, Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, Estonia, Malta, Poland, Lithuania, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia, Luxembourg, Denmark and Latvia.

⁴ For an overview, see Meuleman & Reeskens (2008).

⁵ First most likely class: Norway, Sweden, Finland, UK, Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Spain & Portugal.

Second most likely class: Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Austria, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Hungary and Greece. Third most likely class: France, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland & Ireland.

independent variables. It starts as well with discussing the main individual and contextual factors that so far have been found to influence public opinion. Two other sections are added for studies using MIPEx on closely related topics to public opinion (section 4.2) and on attitudes within minority groups (section 4.3).

4.1. Integration policies and public opinion

4.1.1. *Empirical evidence for individual characteristics*

The individual characteristics related to public opinion on immigrants have been assessed through extensive empirical studies based on the literature's theoretical frameworks. According to ethnic competition theory, negative public opinion can be explained by feelings of competition and threat. The idea is that socially and economically vulnerable people feel more threatened by immigrants than by other people as, for example, they have more to lose through competition in the labour market (Scheepers et al. 2002; Semyonov et al. 2006). Variables indicating competition are often called self-interest variables. So far, the most consistent results have been found for:

- place of residence (urban versus rural) (Careja & Andress 2013; Schlueter et al. 2013)
- social and economic capital (Bircan & Hooghe 2010; Coenders et al. 2003; Scheepers et al. 2002; Semyonov et al. 2006; Valentova & Berzosa 2012).

For example, the studies reviewed show consistent results for education in terms of threat perceptions (Schlueter et al. 2013) and anti-immigrant sentiments (Hooghe & De Vroome 2015). In terms of attitudes among students, even only the expectation of attaining higher levels of education led to more positive attitudes toward immigrants (Isac et al. 2013).

Inconsistent results have been found for some of the hypothesised self-interest variables, such as income (Ceonabu & Escandell 2010; Dustmann & Preston 2007; Mayda 2006) and unemployment status (Dustmann & Preston 2007; McLaren 2003). For example, the study of Careja & Andress (2013) suggests that the less secure one's labour market position is, the more people display threat perceptions, while Schlueter and colleagues (2013) found an effect for being unemployed only in one of their two studies.

In contrast to self-interest variables, social and symbolic factors, values and contract measures could explain much more about the development of anti-immigrant attitudes, according to Ceonabu and Escandell (2010). For example in terms of life satisfaction, people who are more satisfied with their life have lower threat perceptions (Schlueter et al. 2013). People with more nationalist tendencies have more negative attitudes towards immigrants (Ariely 2012). Consistent results have also been identified for values such as religiosity (Billiet 1995), right-wing voting (Billiet 1995; Careja & Andress 2013; Semyonov et al. 2006) and generalised trust (Hooghe, Reeskens, Stolle, & Trappers 2009).

4.1.2. *Empirical evidence for country characteristics*

Country-level societal factors have also been taken into account as sources of threat and competition through more sociological approaches to anti-immigrant attitudes. Most relevantly, contextual factors were found to be much more influential than the individual self-interest situation by Hainmueller &

Hopkins (2014).⁶ Their research shows that people evaluate migrants on the basis of the expected impact that they will have on the national economy, on culture and national identity (Hainmueller & Hopkins 2014). The potential importance of context could explain why inconsistent findings emerge for some of the individual self-interest variables in cross-country studies.

A number of contextual factors have been hypothesized. The size of the immigrant group is predicted by ethnic competition theory to reinforce anti-immigrant feelings, since the majority would feel more threatened by larger groups (Bircan & Hooghe 2010; Quillian 1995, Seymonov et al. 2006). Indeed, perceived size of the group might be a stronger predictor of public opinion than the actual size of the minority group (Bircan & Hooghe 2010; Meuleman 2011). The economic context of a country is another potential source of threat or feelings of competition between in- and outgroups, since bad economic times can increase the feeling of competition between the in- and out-groups.

All of these contextual variables, especially the economic variables, have failed to provide consistent findings in several studies. For example, Schlueter et al. (2013) do not find any effects for the national unemployment rate and welfare state extensiveness, for the share of immigrants in the country and even for more cultural variables such as country-level conservatism. Similarly, Isac and colleagues (2012) find no effect for GDP and share of immigrants in the country. On the contrary, Careja & Andress (2013) found significant effects for the share of foreign born in the country (more positive opinions in countries with larger immigrant populations) and a negative effect for GDP growth, but only on one specific aspect of public opinion, namely the perceived economic role of immigrants. However, consistent with previous results, none of the country level indicators was significant for perceived threat. Two of the reviewed studies did not measure any other country level variable than the integration policies (Kauff et al. 2013; Just & Anderson 2013).⁷ Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) critique this strand of research because these inconclusive contextual variables are constantly reused in research as they are the easiest to operationalize empirically.

4.1.3. Empirical evidence for the dependent variable public opinion

Are integration policies in harmony with the countries public opinion? According to the results on the Eurobarometer question “should non-EU immigrants’ have equal rights?”, a very high correlation (Spearman’s rho .745, $p < 0.01$) emerges with the overall MIPEX score (Huddleston 2012). It seems that the MIPEX score reflects the general public opinion in the country. But is this finding robust and are integration policies impacting public opinion or vice versa?

In this section I discuss the results of the reviewed studies that have as dependent variable different operationalisations of public opinion and as independent variable integration policies. Literature so far seem to suggest that integration policies influence public opinion. But as it was mentioned in the theoretical section, there are contrasting theories on how integration policies impact on public opinion. According to the normative theory of intergroup relations, more inclusive integration policies will be followed by more positive out-group feelings, while the group threat theory states that more inclusive policies will increase competition over resources and lead to more threat and negative out-group attitudes (Schlueter et al. 2013).

⁶ Hainmueller & Hopkins (2014) call contextual factors the sociotropic assessment of the national economic performance (concerns about the national economy etc.).

⁷ Hooghe & De Vroome (2015) included only one other (insignificant) variable, minority population size.

Perceived threat is assessed through four reviewed studies, all of which find that more inclusive integration policies lead to lower perceptions of threat from immigrants (Schlueter et al. 2013; Meuleman & Reeskens 2008). Schlueter et al. (2013) conduct the same analyses using the MIPEX overall score and two different operationalisations of perceived group threat from two different datasets (Eurobarometer 71.3 wave and European Values Study wave 2008).⁸ Careja & Andress (2013) look more specifically at the role of labour market policies (using the MIPEX 2007 Labour Market Access strand) and differentiate between two dependent variables, namely the perception of threat and the perceived economic role of immigrants.⁹ Meuleman and Reeskens 2008 consider the relation between perceptions of economic and cultural threat using ESS, the MIPEX overall score and the six MIPEX strands.¹⁰

All four studies use very similar data but find different types of links between inclusive integration policies and lowering public perceptions of threats. The three studies using the overall score find an effect of inclusive integration policies on lowering threat perceptions. Schlueter et al. 2013 find that integration policies explain most of the variation in the level of perceived threat across countries. In particular, labour market access policies influence how positively the economic role of immigrants is perceived by the general public and especially by blue-collar workers. After Meuleman and Reeskens 2008 control for individual-level characteristics such as age, gender and education, the only significant relationship they find is that countries with more exclusionary integration policies tend to have publics that perceive higher economic and cultural threats from immigrants. The policy most highly correlated with these threat perceptions are political participation policies, meaning that non-EU citizens tend to have fewer political rights in countries where the public tends to perceive immigrants as economic and cultural threats. The authors give as explanation that although these policies are usually not the most important for immigrants in their everyday life, they are often highly mediated and highly symbolic for the public.

Along similar lines, **anti-immigrant attitudes** also seem to be driven by integration policies, according to most of the related studies under review (Ariely 2012; Careja & Andress 2013; Cunningham 2014; Hooghe & De Vroome 2015; Just & Anderson 2013; Kauff et al. 2013). It should be noted that the two of the reviewed studies failed to find significant effects (Meuleman & Reeskens 2008; Isac, Maslowski & van der Werf 2012). Just and Anderson (2013) examine the relationship between a pro-immigrant climate and integration policies as measured by the 2007 MIPEX overall score and Howard's 2009

⁸*Perceived threat: Eurobarometer*: an index of four variables that were summed and rescaled from 0 to 100 so that the higher the score on the index, the more the respondent feels threatened. The four items were: "Immigrants can play an important role in developing greater understanding and tolerance with the rest of the world", "People from other ethnic groups enrich the cultural life in [our country]", "the presence of people from another ethnic group increased the unemployment in [our country]", "We need immigrants to work in certain sectors of our economy". *EVS*: a scale of five items that were summed and rescaled from 0 to 100. The five items were: "Immigrants take jobs away from natives in a country" vs "Immigrants do not take jobs away from natives", "A country's life is undermined by immigrants" vs "A country's cultural life is not undermined by immigrants", "Immigrants make crime problems worse" vs "Immigrants do not make crime problems worse", "Immigrants are a strain on a country's welfare system" vs "Immigrants are not a strain on a country's welfare system", "In the future the proportion of immigrants will become a threat to society" vs "In the future the proportion of immigrants will not become a threat to society".

⁹ **Public opinion about immigrants' potential economic role** is operationalized by two statements: "We need immigrants to work in certain sectors of our economy" and "The arrival of immigrants in Europe can efficiently solve the problem of Europe's aging population".

Threat perceptions is the average of three items: "People from other ethnic groups are enriching the cultural life of [our country]", "The presence of people from other ethnic groups is a cause of insecurity" and "The presence of people from other ethnic groups increases unemployment in [our country]".

¹⁰ The operationalisation of all the items of the study of Meuleman & Reeskens (2008) can be found in appendix.

Citizen Policy Index (CPI) .¹¹ Ariely (2012) similarly measures the relationship between xenophobic attitudes and two different measures of naturalisation policies as their key indicator for integration policies: 2007 and 2010 MIPEX Access to Nationality and Bertocchi & Strozzi's 2001 Citizen Law Dataset (i.e. exclusively *jus sanguinis* or mixed *jus soli* policy).¹² Kauff et al. (2013) take the overall MIPEX score and attitudes toward migrants, which they label diversity beliefs. A similar reasoning was applied in the paper of Hooghe & De Vroome (2015), which investigates general anti-immigrant feelings in comparison to the MIPEX overall score together with two multiculturalism scales: the Banting and Kymlicka's Multiculturalism Policy Index and Koopmans' Index of Citizenship Rights for Immigrants.¹³ Cunningham's article (2014) is the only study in this review that looks at changes in integration policies using MIPEX indicators together with a database on the level of politicisation (i.e. the responsiveness of political actors) in seven European countries.¹⁴

All studies on anti-immigrant attitudes find a significant effect of overall integration policies as measured by MIPEX on anti-immigrant attitudes. According to these findings, more inclusive policies tend to improve attitudes towards immigrants among the general public across European countries, while exclusionary policies tend to harden anti-immigrant sentiments in the population. Looking at the claims made in the public sphere, it seems that changes in the integration policies which diminishes the rights of immigrants, does not lead to less claims by political actors while the opposite holds for policy changes that give more rights to immigrants (Cunningham 2014). Compared to studies using the MIPEX overall score, studies using other operationalisations of integration policies report mixed results. Using the two other citizenship databases, Ariely (2012) and Just & Anderson (2013) suggest that more liberal citizenship policies lead to more favourable climates for immigrants whereas the two multicultural indices fail to find any significant effects in either direction (Hooghe & De Vroome 2015). This may be due technically to the limited number of countries in these two indices. All that said, it should be noted that the two of the reviewed studies failed to find significant effects (Meuleman & Reeskens 2008; Isac, Maslowski & van der Werf 2012). Furthermore, Just & Anderson (2013), Kauff et al. (2013) and Meuleman & Reeskens (2008) did not include any control variables at the contextual level. More research is therefore needed to confidentially establish an effect of liberalising integration policies on liberalising attitudes towards immigrants, as has been predicted in the literature by Weldon (2006).

Overall, the reviewed studies indicate that more inclusive integration policies may reduce the general public's feelings of threat and, perhaps, anti-immigrant attitudes. Inclusive policies can be said to reduce the level of perceived threat while exclusionary policies tend to reinforce perceptions of threat. These findings corroborate the normative theory of intergroup relations and reject the group threat theory. In other words, Integration policies serve as an indicator of the level of trust that the receiving society places in immigrant minorities. It is not borne out in the evidence that more inclusive integration policies

¹¹ In **ESS** (pooled waves 2002 to 2010) three items assess attitudes toward migrants: "Would you say it is generally bad or good for [country]'s economy that people come to live here from other countries", "Would you say that [country] cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries" and "Is [country] made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries". They averaged the scales across all the natives and then took the mean for each country as national indicator of the countries pro-immigrant climate.

¹² **ISSP (2003)**: xenophobic attitudes were operationalized with these five items: "Immigrants increase crime rates"; "Immigrants take jobs away from people who are born in [country Nationality]"; "Immigrants improve [Country Nationality] society by bringing in new ideas and cultures"; "Immigrants are generally good for [Country's] economy"; "The government spends too much money assisting immigrants".

¹³ **ESS**: general attitudes toward migrants, exactly as in footnote 9, but the dependent variable was measured on the individual level.

¹⁴ This database was developed in the framework of the Support and Opposition to Migration (SOM) project. The level of politicization is operationalised by the quantity of claims made by political actors in the daily media coverage over the time-period 1995-2009 in seven European countries (Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Zwitserland, United Kingdom, Ireland and Spain).

increase interethnic competition and lead to higher levels of perceived threat. Integration policies seem to establish the norms of how intergroup relations should be and therefore will regulate public opinion (Schlueter et al 2013;Weldon 2006). As the number of studies continues to grow, clearly this literature review is not the last word in the dynamics between integration policies and public opinion. Indeed, only the study by Schlueter et al. (2013) establishes a clear causal effect of integration policies on public opinion. Therefore, these findings should be corroborated by further research, especially experimental or longitudinal studies.

4.2. Integration policies, trust and the far-right

Integration policies are also being compared to two measures closely related to perceived threat and anti-immigrant feelings: voting for far right parties and general distrust of society.

Two studies used indexes other than the MIPEx as a dependent variable to assess the impact of **far-right parties** on integration policies. Both Howard (2010) and Koopmans et al. (2012) use respectively the Citizen Policy Index (CPI) and Citizenship Rights for Immigrants Index as a dependent variable in their analysis of the liberalisation of integration policies. They both cover the same time period (1980-2008) and take ten (Howard 2010) and eleven EU countries (Koopmans et al. 2012). Howard (2010) investigates the influence of latent anti-immigrant public opinion,¹⁵ while testing alternative hypotheses by looking at the correlations between GDP per capita, national unemployment rates, economic growth, share of foreigners and anti-immigrant sentiment. He does not find any statistical significant relationship, although the relation between support for the far right and CPI liberalisation has a high correlation (0.5 but only significant at the 0.1 level). Koopmans and colleagues (2012) on the other hand find that liberalisations are associated with higher shares of immigrants as citizen voters, while restrictions are associated with higher shares of votes for far-right parties.

Three other studies use MIPEx as an independent variable to assess the impact of integration policies on general levels of trust and voting behavior. Werts et al. (2012) looked at the relationship between the MIPEx overall score and the likelihood of voting for a far right party as a dependent variable. While they did not find any general relationship between the openness or restrictiveness of integration policies and peoples' likelihood of voting for a far-right party, other country-level variables were significant showing that the higher the immigration rate and the number of asylum-seekers, the more likely people were to vote for a far-right party. The inconsistent findings of the three studies strengthen the existing literature that public opinion has a relatively small impact on the integration policies and that the presence of far right parties on its own cannot systematically explain changes in integration policies across European countries.

Both Hooghe & Dinesen (2010) and Reeskens (2010) could not confirm the hypothesis that integration policies affect the levels of **generalised trust** among members of the general public. A significant relationship does not emerge, even despite after using different operationalisations of MIPEx¹⁶ and after controlling for the size of the immigrant population in the population (Reeskens 2010). The small number of studies and inconclusive findings call for further study of the relationship between integration policies, trust and far right voting patterns.

¹⁵ Operationalised as the electoral support of far right parties in national elections over the period 1992-2006.

¹⁶ The level of generalised trust was measured with a three-item index from the ESS, answers ranging from 0-11: "Generally speaking would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you cannot be too careful in dealing with people", "Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance, or would they try to be fair?" and "Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful or that they are mostly looking out for themselves".

4.3. Integration Policies and Immigrants' Self-Perceptions

This last section looks into an underexplored 'other' side of the integration debate: the perceptions of immigrants themselves. It is hard to find any study that uses subjective measures to assess the potential effect of integration policies on shaping immigrants' opinions of their country of residence. The handful of studies investigating migrants' trust in society, subjective well-being or self-reported experience of discrimination find only a few very specific relationships between immigrants' opinion and the integration policies in their country of residence (André, Dronkers & Fleischmann 2008; Hadjar & Backes 2013; Hooghe & Dinesen 2010; Reeskens & Wright 2013; Röder & Mühlau 2012).

Hooghe & Dinesen (2010) find that integration policies, as measured by the MIPEX overall score, do not affect immigrants' levels of generalised trust in one way or another. Röder & Mühlau (2012), in their study of trust in the police and justice system, found that only the strength of a country's anti-discrimination legislation, as measured by the related 2007 MIPEX strand, improved immigrants' levels of trust in the justice system. More generally, André, Dronkers & Fleischmann (2008) did not identify any general relationship across Europe between the type of integration policy and the level of self-reported discrimination among the first or second generation, as measured by ESS.¹⁷ Interestingly, their only significant finding for national immigration or social policies was a negative relationship between naturalisation policies and self-reported levels of discrimination, meaning that immigrants in countries with liberal citizenship policies were more likely to report that they were a member of a discriminated group in society.¹⁸ Reeskens & Wright (2013) compare natives and immigrants (first- and second generation) on national pride and territorial identification, while using integration policies as an explanatory variable. They find that integration policies did not affect immigrants' level of national pride in their country of residence, while integration policies only slightly improved of the level of transnational identification (identification with a supra-national level, namely Europe or the world) among the first-generation and among the general public. Hadjar & Backes (2013) found that in countries with a higher overall MIPEX score, the gap of subjective well-being between native-born and immigrants is smaller than in countries with less integration-friendly policies. They argue that more inclusive integration policies help immigrants to cope with and manage the integration process better which in turn leads to higher well-being.

While these studies are few and inconclusive apart from small effects for specific attitudes, the relationship between integration policies and the lived experiences of immigrants requires much greater attention. Hooghe & Dinesen (2010) argue that perhaps immigrants' experience of the state is more influenced by their treatment by 'street-level bureaucrats' than by national integration policies. Furthermore, these studies use rather imperfect samples and proxies for their target group. Most authors in the listed studies use large-scale surveys, such as ESS and EVS, with very small and select samples mostly 'well integrated' immigrants (Reeskens 2010). Therefore, the results of these studies should be taken with caution as the basis for research using better and more refined data sources.

¹⁷ The authors constructed a discrimination scale on the bases of two ESS questions: "Does the respondent belong to a group which is discriminated against in society" and "What is the reason that your group is discriminated against."

¹⁸ This finding might not seem so counterintuitive if one considers that naturalised immigrants in Europe are less likely to experience discrimination than non-naturalised immigrants but more likely to report it to the authorities (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2009)

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This review of eighteen multivariate studies aimed to investigate the links between integration policies and public opinion about immigrants. First of all, consistent and positive relationship emerged in several studies between countries with more inclusive integration policies (i.e. higher MIPEX overall scores) and lower levels of perceived threat and, to some extent, lower levels of negative attitudes towards immigrants. This finding about the significance of national integration policies for public opinion is even more important since most other country-level characteristics have had inconsistent effects (Hainmueller & Hopkins 2014). Moreover, this finding supports the normative theory of intergroup relations, which assumes that a society's intergroup norms shape the majority's attitudes towards minorities, such as immigrants (Schlueter et al. 2013). Proving that integration policies shape public opinion – and not the other way around – requires sophisticated experimental and longitudinal research in order to test Schlueter et al.'s (2013) finding of a causal effect of policies on public opinion based on their bivariate autoregressive cross-lagged panel analysis. Nor can it be yet excluded that a dialectical relationship between policies and public opinion, in which the two influence each other through constant feedback (Jakobs & Herman 2009; Meuleman & Reeskens 2008).

Second, this initial batch of studies tends to find statistically significant relationships using the MIPEX overall score, but usually not when using any single MIPEX integration policy strand, with only a few exceptions. Future studies with more precise research questions may investigate relationships between specific types of integration policies (e.g. naturalisation, political participation, family reunification, labour market access, anti-discrimination) and clearly articulated measures of anti-immigrant sentiment in the related area of life (i.e. which and how immigrants should have access to the labour market, the right to family reunification, residence security, political rights and representation, access to nationality and protection from discrimination).

Third, analysis of other related but distinct measures of public opinion failed to provide consistent findings. The effect of integration policies is not so clear for generalised trust, far-right voting or attitudes among the immigrant population. The last finding calls for closer attention and the use of better data sources produced in recent years.

Similarly, measuring the dynamics between changes in policies and changes in attitudes merits analyses of changes over time. Most studies under review use a static framework (with the exception of the studies of Cunningham (2014), Koopmans et al. (2012) and Howard (2010)), looking just at one wave or pooling different waves together and using a small time lag between their dataset and the MIPEX data used. Although it is true that intergroup attitudes are relatively stable over time (Breugelmanns, van de Vijver & Schalk-Soekar 2009), policies are more subject to changes, usually at one key moment in time (e.g. major reform due to a shift in government) or in a specific area (e.g. slight change in requirements intended to impact on immigration flows). Public opinion can also change due to highly mediatised events that act as 'shocks to the system' (e.g. terrorist attacks), which can then lead to changes to policies. Longitudinal research would also help to disentangle the causal relationship between policies and opinion.

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7. Appendix

Table 1. Question wording of the ESS immigration items

	Question wording	Answer categories
REJECT	To what extent do you think [<i>country</i>] should allow people ...	1 (many), 2 (some), 3 (a few), 4 (none)
	D4. ... of the same race or ethnic group from most [<i>country</i>] people to come and live here?	
	D5. ... of a different race or ethnic group from most [<i>country</i>] people to come and live here?	
	D7. ... from the poorer countries in Europe to come and live here?	
	D8. ... from the richer countries outside Europe to come and live here?	
	D9. ... from the poorer countries outside Europe to come and live here?	
	D10. ... have good educational qualifications?	
	D11. ... have close family living here?	
	D12. ... be able to speak [<i>country language</i>]?	
ECONOMIC THREAT	D16. ... have work skills that [<i>country</i>] needs?	1 (agree strongly) to 5 (disagree strongly)
	D.19 People who come to live and work here generally harm the economic prospects of the poor more than the rich	
	D21. If people who have come to live and work here are unemployed for a long period, they should be made to leave.	
	D25. Would you say that people who come to live here generally take jobs away from workers in [<i>country</i>], or generally help to create new jobs?	
	D26. Most people come to live here work and pay taxes. They also use health and welfare services. On balance, do you think people who come here take out more than they put in or put in more than they take out?	
CULTURAL THREAT	D27. Would you say that it is generally bad or good for [<i>country</i>] economy that people come to live here from other countries?	0 (bad for the economy) to 10 (good for the economy)
	D28. Would you say that [<i>country</i>] cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?	0 (cultural life undermined) to 10 (cultural life enriched)
	D40. It is better for a country if almost everyone shares the same customs and traditions.	1 (agree strongly) to 5 (disagree strongly)
D41. It is better for a country if there are a variety of different religions.		

Source: Meuleman & Reeskens (2008), based on ESS 2002.

Table 2. List of reviewed studies

Authors	Year	Type	Data sources	Countries included	Dependent Variable	Full Reference
Schlueter, E., Meuleman, B., & Davidov, E.	2013	Journal article	*MIPEX-2nd ed. *Eurobarometer 71.3 wave	AT, BE, CY, CZ, DK, EE, FI, FR, DE, EL, HU, IE, IT, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, PT, SK, SL, ES, SE	Perceived group threat	Schlueter, E., Meuleman, B., & Davidov, E. (2013). Immigrant integration policies and perceived group threat: A multilevel study of 27 Western and Eastern European countries. <i>Social science research</i> , 42(3), 670-682.
			*MIPEX-2nd ed. *European Value Study (4th wave)	AT, BE, CY, CZ, DK, EE, FI, FR, DE, EL, HU, IE, IT, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, PT, SK, SL, ES, SE, NO, CH	Perceived group threat	
			*MIPEX-2nd & 3rd ed. *Eurobarometer 66.3 and 71.3 wave	AT, BE, CY, CZ, DK, EE, FI, FR, DE, EL, HU, IE, IT, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, PT, SK, SL, ES, SE	Perceived group threat & Integration policies MIPEX	
Careja, R., & Andreß, H. J.	2013	Journal article	*MIPEX 1st ed Strand Labour Market Access *Eurobarometer 66.3	SK,LV,HU,LT,MT, EE,DE,EL,CZ,UK, DI,AT,BE,PL,CY,IT ,NL,PT,FR,IE,FI,D K,LU,SE,ES	Perceived (group) threat	Careja, R., & Andreß, H. J. (2013). Needed but Not Liked–The Impact of Labor Market Policies on Natives’ Opinions about Immigrants. <i>International Migration Review</i> , 47(2), 374-413.
			*MIPEX 1st ed Strand Labour Market Access *Eurobarometer 66.3	SK,LV,HU,LT,MT, EE,DE,EL,CZ,UK, DI,AT,BE,PL,CY,IT ,NL,PT,FR,IE,FI,D K,LU,SE,ES	Opinions about immigrants' economic role	

Just, A., & Anderson, C. J.	2013	Journal article	*MIPEX-2nd ed. *European Social Survey (ESS) 2002-2010	AT, BE, BU, CY, CZ, DK, EE, FI, FR, DE, EL, HU, IE, IT, LU, NL, NO, PL, PT, SI, SK, ES, SE, CH, UK	Pro-immigrant opinion climate	Just, A., & Anderson, C. J. (2013). Opinion Climates and Immigrant Political Action A Cross-National Study of 25 European Democracies. <i>Comparative Political Studies</i> .
Kauff, M., Asbrock, F., Thörner, S., & Wagner, U.	2013	Journal article	*MIPEX 2nd & 3rd ed. *European Social Survey (ESS)	BE, BU, CZ, DK, EE, FI, FR, DE, GB, EL, HU, IE, NL, NO, PL, RO, SK, SL, ES, CH, LV, LT, SE	Pro-diversity beliefs	Kauff, M., Asbrock, F., Thörner, S., & Wagner, U. (2013). Side Effects of Multiculturalism The Interaction Effect of a Multicultural Ideology and Authoritarianism on Prejudice and Diversity Beliefs. <i>Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin</i> , 39(3), 305-320.
Meuleman, B. & Reeskens, T.	2008	Conference paper	*MIPEX 2nd & 3rd ed. *European Social Survey (ESS) 2002	NO, SE, FI, UK, NL, BE, IT, ES, PT, DK, EE, LT, LV, PL, AT, SI, CZ, SL, HU, HE, FR, DE, LU, CH, IE	Perceived (group) threat & Attitudes toward immigrants	Meuleman, B. & Reeskens, T. (2008). The relation between integration policy and majority attitudes toward immigration. An empirical test across European countries. Paper presented at Dag van de Sociologie, 29 mei 2008, Leuven.
Ariely, G.	2012	Journal article	*MIPEX-3rd ed. *International Social Survey Program (ISSP) National Identity II	AU, AT, BU, CA, CZ, DK, FI, FR, DE, HU, IE, JP, LV, NL, NO, PL, PT, SI, SK, ES, SE, CH, US	Xenophobia	Ariely, G. (2012). Do Those who Identify with Their Nation Always Dislike Immigrants?: An Examination of Citizenship Policy Effects. <i>Nationalism and Ethnic Politics</i> , 18(2), 242-261.
Isac, M. M., Maslowski, R., & van der Werf, G.	2012	Journal article	*MIPEX 3rd ed. *International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS)	AT, BE, CY, DK, GB, EE, FI, EL, IE, IT, LT, LU, NL, NO, SI, ES, SE, CH	Positive Attitudes toward Immigrants' Rights scale	Isac, M. M., Maslowski, R., & van der Werf, G. (2012). Native Students Attitudes toward Equal Rights for Immigrants. <i>JSSE-Journal of Social Science Education</i> , 11(1).

Hooghe, M. & De Vroome, T.	2015	Journal article	*MIPEX 3rd ed. * European Social Survey (ESS) 2010-2011	BE, CH, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, UK, GR, HU, IR, NL, NO, PL, SE, SI, SK	Anti-immigrants sentiments	Hooghe, M. & De Vroome, T. (2015 in press). How does the Majority Public React to Multicultural Policies ? A Comparative Analysis of European Countries. <i>American Behavioral Scientist</i> .
Cunningham, K.	2014	Book article	*MIPEX *SOM database 1995-2009	AT, BE, UK, IR, ES, CH, NL	Politicization of immigration claims	Cunningham, K. (2014). <i>Policy Shifts and The Depoliticization of Immigration</i> . In: Brennan, L. (Ed), <i>Enacting Globalization. Multidisciplinary Perspectives on International Integration</i> . Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan.
Howard, M.M.	2010	Journal article	*CPI (1980-2008) *Eurobarometer 2000	AT,DK,IT,ES,GR,S E,FI,PT,DE,LU,NL	Liberalisation of integration policies	Howard, M.M. (2010). The Impact of the Far Right on Citizenship Policy in Europe: Explaining Continuity and Change. <i>Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies</i> , 36(5), 735-751.
Koopmans, R., Michalowski, I & Waibel, S.	2012	Journal article	*Citizenship Rights for Immigrants Index (1980-1990-2002-2008)	AT, BE, DE, FR, UK, NL, CH, SE, DK, NO	Liberalisation of integration policies	Koopmans, R., Michalowski, I. & Waibel, S. (2012). Citizenship Rights for Immigrants: National Political Processes and Cross-National Convergence in Western Europe, 1980-2008. <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> , 117(4), 1202-1245
Dinesen, P. T., & Hooghe, M.	2010	Journal article	*MIPEX 1st ed *European Social Survey (ESS)	DK, NO, SE, CH, IE, NL, GB, AU, LU, DE, BE, ES, FR, PT, EL	Generalized trust	Dinesen, P. T., & Hooghe, M. (2010). When in Rome, do as the Romans do: the acculturation of generalized trust among immigrants in Western Europe. <i>International Migration Review</i> , 44(3), 697-727.
Reeskens, T.	2010	Conference paper	*MIPEX 2nd ed. *European Social Survey (ESS)	SE, PT, BE, NL, FI, NO, EK, ES, SI, FR, DE, IE, HU, CZ, EE, PL, DK, SK, EL, AT, CY, LV	Generalized trust	Reeskens, T. (2010, February). Ethnic-Cultural Diversity, Migrant Integration Policies and Social Cohesion in Europe: Investigating the Conditional Effect of Ethnic-Cultural Diversity on Generalized Trust. In <i>Migration: A World in</i>

						Motion' conference, Maastricht (pp. 18-20).
Werts, H., Scheepers, P., & Lubbers, M.	2012	Journal article	*MIPEX 1st ed & 2nd ed *ESS	AT,BE,BG,DK,FR,DE,EL,HU,IT,NL,NO,PL,RO,SK,SI,CH,TR,UK	Radical right-wing voting	Werts, H., Scheepers, P., & Lubbers, M. (2012). Euro-scepticism and radical right-wing voting in Europe 2002–2008: Social cleavages, socio-political attitudes and contextual characteristics determining voting for the radical right. <i>European Union Politics</i> , 1465116512469287.
Röder, A., & Mühlau, P.	2012	Journal article	*European Social Survey (ESS)	21 European countries	Trust in the Police	Röder, A., & Mühlau, P. (2012). What determines the trust of immigrants in criminal justice institutions in Europe?. <i>European Journal of Criminology</i> , 9(4), 370-387.
			*European Social Survey (ESS)	21 European countries	Trust in the legal system	
Andre, S., Dronkers, J., & Fleischmann, F.	2008	Conference paper	*MIPEX-2nd ed. *European Social Survey (ESS)	14 European Countries	Perceived level of discrimination	Andre, S., Dronkers, J., & Fleischmann, F. (2008, May). The Different Levels of Discrimination, experienced by First and Second Generation Immigrants from Different Countries of Origin in the different EU member-states. In RC28 Spring 2008 Conference (Vol. 15).
Reeskens, T., & Wright, M.	2013	Journal article	*MIPEX 3rd ed. *European Values Study	AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, EE, FR, GB, EL, HU, LT, LV, MT, NL, NO, SE, SI, SK	National pride	Reeskens, T., & Wright, M. (2013). Host-country patriotism among European immigrants: A comparative study of its individual and societal roots. <i>Ethnic and Racial Studies</i> , (ahead-of-print), 1-17.

			*MIPEX 3rd ed. *European Values Study	AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, EE, FR, GB, EL, HU, LT, LV, MT, NL, NO, SE, SI, SK	Territorial identification	
Hadjar, A. & Backes, S.	2013	Journal article	*MIPEX 3 rd ed. *ESS (5 waves)	30 european countries	Subjective Well- Being	Hadjar, A. & Backes, S. (2013). Migration Background and Subjective Well-Being. A Multilevel Analysis Based on the European Social Survey. <i>Comparative Sociology</i> , 12, 645-676.

